

COMMUNITY

Mystery meat from 1876 Olympian Springs “shower” returns to Bath County

By Cecil Lawson
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The last known remaining sample of a mysterious substance thought to be meat which rained down from the sky 148 years ago in Bath County made an appearance this past Saturday at the Bath County History Museum.

The sample, now is a corked glass bottled filled with alcohol, is kept at the Monroe Moosnick Medical and Science Museum at Transylvania University in Lexington.

Dr. Kurt Ghode, Professor of Art and Art History, and Dr. Jamie Day, Professor of Physics, both of Transylvania University, were custodians of the sample at the museum on Saturday and offered their knowledge and insight into the infamous incident.

On a clear and sunny Friday, March 3, 1876, between 11 a.m. and noon, a Mrs. Crouch in Olympian Springs witnessed the descent of what she described as “flakes” of a meat-like substance falling onto the yard of her home into a 100 by 50-yard area of the family farm. Crouch said the shower lasted about two minutes.

This “shower” was also witnessed by Crouch’s 11-year-old grandson. A boarder at the Crouch home, Sadie Robinson, a school mistress, came out immediately after the shower. Other residents, including Harrison Gill, the owner of the famous nearby Olympian Springs Resort, also saw the fallen substance after the incident and was cited as credible witness.

News outlets from across the country, including the New York Times, the New York Herald, and Scientific American, reported the story and included all sorts of speculation on its origins and composition.

The Crouch home place in Olympian Springs was said to be located about two miles south of the famed resort. The resort, known for its mineral springs, was a well-known destination and on a long-used stagecoach line from Lexington.

Dozens of samples were sent out all over the country for testing and even tasting. Local people who got up their courage to taste it described it variously as “fowl,” “frog,” “mutton,” and even “bear.” One scientist described it as “nostoc,” a type of bacteria which appears following rainstorms on otherwise barren ground. There was

no scientific consensus at the time, or now, on exactly what the substance was.

Transylvania University wound up with one of those samples. Dr. Ghode said that the Kentucky Scientist, a publication of the time, was produced at Transylvania (Kentucky University at the time) and may have requested a sample, or a sample was sent to them from Olympian Springs. He said there seemed to be two or three people in Bath County who were the source of the meat samples.

Dr. Ghode believes that the “only believable remaining” explanation for the sample is vulture vomit. He said that explains why there were so many conflicting answers for how the meat tasted.

He noted that vultures can fly as high as 20,000 feet in the air, and in Kentucky in the 1850s it was reported that they used to travel in flocks of as large as 500 birds. He also speculated that if a flock that large vomited from that high, it probably would have created a much larger area of spread on the ground.

He also said that DNA testing was done several years ago on the sample and that there were two results: it most closely matched with goat meat, but “was

definitely too contaminated to be sure.”

“It all depends on how the stuff was preserved,” said Dr. Day, discussing DNA analysis.

Charles Fort, an American writer and collector of scientific anomalies, popularized the incident in his “The Book of the Damned” (1919), calling it “The Kentucky Phenomenon” and comparing it with dozens of similar incidents reported throughout the world.

The Olympian Springs Meat Show has enjoyed a renaissance of interest over the past several years, appearing on dozens of TV and YouTube segments on strange and unexplained phenomena.

Bath County Tourism Director Brent Frizzell said the museum saw a record crowd turn out for the exhibit, with a steady flow of interested people throughout the day looking to get a glimpse of the mystery meat.



Photos by Cecil Lawson
The last known sample of a meat-like substance which fell from the sky near Olympian Springs on March 3, 1876, was on display this past Saturday at the Bath County History Museum.

Minihan
cont. from pg. 1

connection with the City of Owingsville, and they have worked closely with Zachary Bray, a University of Kentucky law professor, who assisted with the application for a roadside historical marker through the Kentucky Historical Society (KHS).

Mayor Hunt shared a letter from Jim Seaver, KHS’s community engagement coordinator, who said that the application for the marker was approved by their review committee.

Hunt said the local committee will meet again next month, and someone will be appointed as caretaker of the monument. The monument will be installed by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. No location has been selected at this time.



The committee last year came up with a fundraiser through the sale of miniature Minihan saddles, which proved popular. Mayor Hunt said there will be another round of orders taken in the near future for the sale of more of these miniature saddles.

The committee has also

discussed the placement of another monument, such as a life-sized Minihan saddle sculpture near the historical market, as well as a mural to commemorate Minihan.

The News-Outlook will continue to follow this story as it develops.

Hart
cont. from pg. 1

during World War II.

Upon returning from service, he worked at and retired from the Bluegrass Army Depot. He was also a tobacco farmer for 50 years and life member of The Committee of 101 at the University of Kentucky. He also enjoyed fishing.

He is survived by his loving wife of 76 years, Beulah Mae Moore Hart, their son Frank C. Hart III (Flo), daughter Angie Hart, four grandchildren - Michael S. Hart (Dominique), Sarah L. Weiner (Eric), Thomas M. Hart (Maddie Cheek) and Anthony Cerelli (Megan Ewalt) - as well as six great-grandchildren: Ina Hart, Josephine Hart, Esther Weiner, Elliot Weiner, Natalie Weiner, and Gabe Cerelli. Frank also leaves behind several nieces and nephews who will cherish

his memory.

Visitation was held at the Sharpsburg Christian Church this past Friday, with Pastor Johnny Baber officiating. He was buried in Crown Hill Cemetery with full military honors performed by American Legion Post 22.

Michael R. Gray Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.



Lana Routt, of Owingsville, listens as Dr. Kurt Ghode and Dr. Jamie Day, both of Transylvania University, discuss the history of the 1876 Bath County Meat Shower.

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
BATH CIRCUIT COURT
DIVISION I
ACTION NO. 21-CI-90148
ELECTRONICALLY FILED

MID SOUTH CAPITAL PARTNERS, LP

PLAINTIFF

v.

NOTICE OF COMMISSIONER'S SALE

ESTATE OF RICKY WILLIAMS, ET AL

DEFENDANTS

By virtue of a Judgment and Order of Sale entered in Bath Circuit Court on April 19, 2024, to raise the sum of \$8,002.48, interest, fees, and the costs of sale, I will expose for sale to the highest and best bidder at the Courthouse door, in Owingsville, Bath County, Kentucky, on Saturday, August 17, 2024, at the hour of 12:00 p.m., the following described property:
Property Address: 422 E. Hwy 60, Owingsville, Ky 40360
PVA Map No.: 043-30-03-005.00

BEING THE SAME PROPERTY conveyed to Ricky Lee Williams by Deed from Jenifer Campbell Williams dated September 4, 2013, of record in Deed Book 232, Page 424, Bath County Clerk's Office.
AND
Property Address: Kendall Springs Road, Owingsville, Ky 40360
PVA Map No.: 043-00-00-043.00

BEING PART OF THE SAME PROPERTY conveyed to Rick Williams by Deed from Susan David Sims Clark Wills and Gene Wills, dated December 31, 1994, of record in Deed Book 178, Page 383, Bath County Clerk's Office.
This property is sold subject to all real estate taxes, easements, and off-sales of record; and reference is hereby made to the office of the Bath County Clerk.
The terms of the sale shall be ten (10%) percent cash or check at the time of sale and the balance on credit of thirty (30) days with privilege of the successful bidder to pay in full at the time of sale. The successful bidder requesting credit must execute bond with approved surety bearing interest at the rate of twelve (12%) per annum from date of sale until paid, which bond shall have the full force and effect of a Judgment and should execution be issued thereon, no replevy shall be allowed. A lien shall exist and shall be retained by the Commissioner on the property sold as security for the purchase price.

/s/ Earl Rogers III
Hon. Earl Rogers III, Master Commissioner
Bath County
Campbell, Rogers & Stacy, PLLC
Attorneys at Law
154 Flemingsburg Road
Morehead, KY 40351
(606) 783-1012
(606) 784-8926 fax

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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
BATH CIRCUIT COURT
DIVISION I
ACTION NO. 24-CI-90050
ELECTRONICALLY FILED

OWINGSVILLE BANKING COMPANY

PLAINTIFF

v.

NOTICE OF COMMISSIONER'S SALE

KRISTA L. JONES STATON

DEFENDANTS

By virtue of a Judgment and Order of Sale entered in Bath Circuit Court on July 17, 2024, to raise the sum of \$52,116.22, interest, fees, and the costs of sale, I will expose for sale to the highest and best bidder at the Courthouse door, in Owingsville, Bath County, Kentucky, on Saturday, August 17, 2024, at the hour of 12:00 p.m., the following described property:
Property Address: 123 Treadway Drive, Owingsville, Ky 40360
PVA Map Number: 043-40-01-004.00

BEING THE SAME PROPERTY conveyed to Krista Jones by Deed from Alma M. Craig, dated December 8, 2004, of record in Deed Book 208, Page 383, Bath County Clerk's Office.
This property is sold subject to all real estate taxes, easements, and off-sales of record; and reference is hereby made to the office of the Bath County Clerk.
The terms of the sale shall be ten (10%) percent cash or check at the time of sale and the balance on credit of thirty (30) days with privilege of the successful bidder to pay in full at the time of sale. The successful bidder requesting credit must execute bond with approved surety bearing interest at the rate of twelve (12%) per annum from date of sale until paid, which bond shall have the full force and effect of a Judgment and should execution be issued thereon, no replevy shall be allowed. A lien shall exist and shall be retained by the Commissioner on the property sold as security for the purchase price.

/s/ Earl Rogers III
Hon. Earl Rogers III, Master Commissioner
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