



Solar Eclipse Adventures

"You Seen One Eclipse You Seen 'em All"

<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?search=solar+eclipse+1979&title=Special:Search&profile=advanced&fulltext=1&ns0=1>
<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/solar.html>

This list of rememberings is inspired by not chasing the Great North American **Eclipse** of **2024**. Part of the reason is all the hype and the scary news as I write this a week ahead of time of the traffic jams, supply chain disruptions, shortages, inflated prices and general greed and stupidity prevalent. Other factors include medical and equipment issues and a general malaise and ennui in my head.

So instead of driving and spending I am sitting still and saving, sorting photos, searching old logs and copying notes, to create this look back:

Boston MA 1959 Oct 2 At Sunrise

I vaguely remember this eclipse. I would have been 18. Standing on a cold beach off Boston, looking east to the sun rise from the ocean. Dad brought me to see this event, the first eclipse I can remember.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse_of_October_2,_1959
<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEatlas/SEatlas2/SEatlas1941.GIF>

Pleasant Pond Maine 1963 July 20 Total

Mid summer of 1963 was the first of my major expeditions. My 1963 VW MicroBus was still shiny new. There was to be a total eclipse of the sun with the center line falling across the middle of Pleasant Pond. The Eclipse Expedition itself got under way the week following a business trip to Limestone AFB. Pauli again, Bruce and Johnny. We drove into a farmer's pasture along with hundreds of other cars and trucks and buses and paid the boy at the gate a dollar each for the privilege of sharing this spectacle of nature and getting our water at his well. I selected a spot on the high side of the field, just under the edge of a wood and we set out our tent, fire and stove



Eclipse Camp, Pleasant Pond Maine, 1963

and marked our place in what promised to be an SRO crowd.

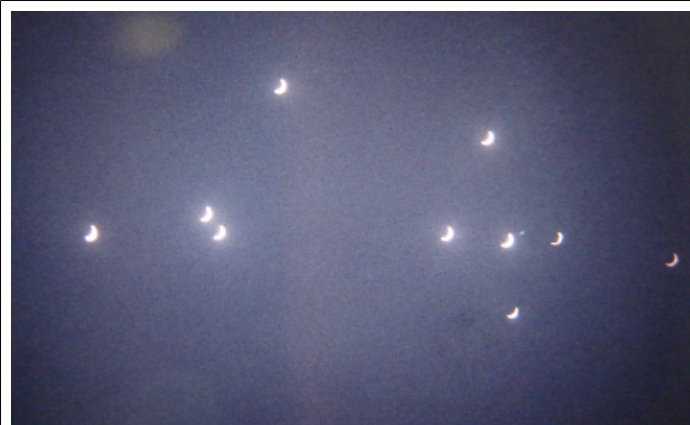
We were a day early and set about using Scoutcraft skills to make a table and a washstand. A big school bus came along side and disgorged a flock of hippies. They lowered a drawbridge where the emergency door was and a motorcycle roared out with water jugs strapped to its sides. It roared back later, full, and I knew somewhere inside me that I would someday live in a bus. Our table was well made and seated us all together for a supper of kabobs and cobbler. The field was cold and dew wet that night and the sky brilliant with stars. I know I was not the only one among us

who marveled at how dark it was here away from the city lights and how super close the stars seemed. We walked around and peered into the telescopes of those nearby and sat round our fire and sang quiet songs or listened to the singing of the neighbors. It was a special time indeed.

<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEmap/SEmapNA/TSENorAm1951.gif>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse_of_July_20,_1963

<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEatlas/SEatlas2/SEatlas1961.GIF>



Pinhole Camera Effect by Forest Leaves

Mt Washington NH 1970 March 7 Partial

My first Winter at The Obs on Mount Washington. Little Jon was our resident astronomer. He set up a telescope in the snow to project an image of the crescent sun.

<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEmap/SEmapNA/TSENorAm1951.gif>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse_of_March_7,_1970

<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEatlas/SEatlas2/SEatlas1961.GIF>



Big John & Little Jon

Nova Scotia Canada 1972 July 10 Total

The 1963 VW MicroBus has been replaced by a 1967 Chevy G-10 van. More seats for more Scouts and a trailer for all their gear. Little Jon with his telescope and two or three kids from Gorham camped in a pasture near Antigonish. The sky was littered with a scattering of cumulus and the pasture supported a complement of cows as well as other campers like us. To the west one could see the moon's shadow approaching. Clouds came and went and the crowd chanted No Clouds—No Clouds. As the sky darkened the cows moo'd and headed and headed for their barn. Birds quieted. The totality. Hardly time to ooh and aah and the sun returned. Cows turned around. Birds sang. We packed up to head home.



Little Jon & Gorham Kids

<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEmap/SEmapNA/TSENorAm1951.gif>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse_of_July_10,_1972

<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEatlas/SEatlas2/SEatlas1961.GIF>

<https://www.nytimes.com/1972/07/11/archives/for-2-minutes-there-wasnt-any-sun-for-1500-visitors-at-nova-scotian.html>

Winnipeg Canada 1979 Feb 26 Total

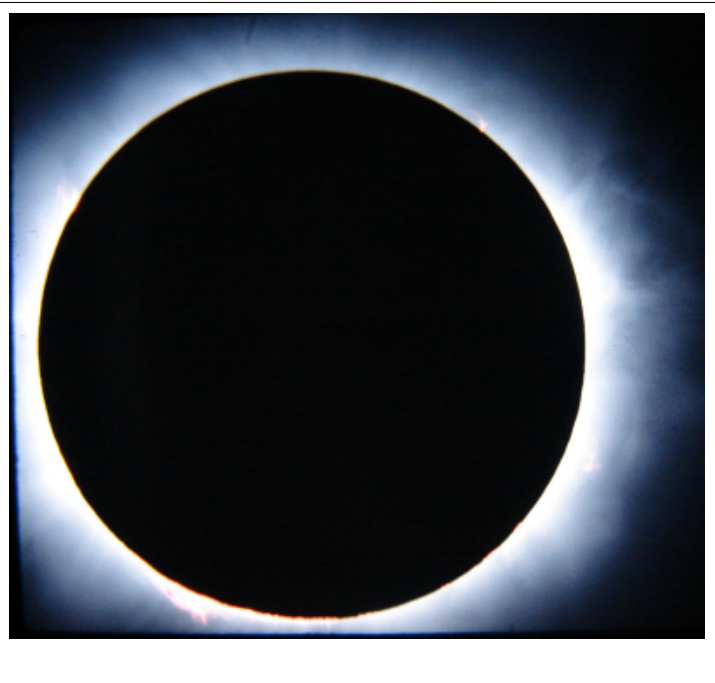
A combined effort of Tr202 and the Gorham HS Science Club took place during the February 1979 school break and my shift off from The OBs. Two vehicles and an equipment trailer were headed to Winnipeg via Montreal and The Trans-Canada Highway. Alan, held back for tests at school, would fly to meet us later. The trailer was loaded with two Celestron Telescopes, video and still cameras, food and fuel. We had arranged for dormitory space at some uni in Winnipeg.



Winnipeg See below: 7902#4631

In the Willshedoit kids slept where they could, pissed in the funnel, cooked and washed, and took turns navigating. The boys made grilled cheese sandwiches and filled Thermoses with hot water. When a meal was ready I would call the other driver by ham radio and then stop to hand them a food box. Later they would call us and we would stop to retrieve their dishes. Drive on.

At the furthest point north, over the top of Lake Superior, on a frost heaved road, at 40 below, the towbar of the trailer broke. Eventually a wrecker carried the trailer to some small town near Thunder Bay and we moved what we could into the van and car. Play space became cargo hold. In Thunder Bay at dawn we stopped at a donut shop. On the front doors of the Willshedoit were placards: Mount Washington Observatory Eclipse Expedition. Presently a man came in asking "Who owns that yellow van with the signs...?" and the boys pointed at me. Turned out this guy was the DJ of the station playing on the radio behind the counter and he wanted to interview us. He was especially impressed we had a bunch of kids out to view the eclipse.



I don't recall the uni at Winnipeg where we stayed nor the name/location of their Field Site where we

set up our telescopes and cameras next to theirs. I do recall at totality seeing the fabled “Shadow Bands” on the field of fresh snow. And of course on the way home we had to pick up the repaired trailer.

<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEmap/SEmapNA/TSENorAm1951.gif>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse_of_February_26,_1979
<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEatlas/SEatlas2/SEatlas1961.GIF>
<https://www.solar-eclipse.info/en/eclipse/location/1979-02-26/5269-Winnipeg/>

7902#4631_Tr202, Eclipse Exp, Winnipeg, N5-35.jpg
L-R: ajo, Alan Bouchard, Tom Miller, Steve R, David G, Gary Bergeron, Chuck S (high school teacher), Travis Hodgdon, Scott, Chip (Jones? I'm not sure)

Virginia 1984 May 30 annular

I headed off to an eclipse the Summer 1984 into the face of a “Rain Likely” forecast. Given the general reliability of forecasts by the Weather Service (50% Correct less than half the time) I figured what the hell... We rode my 750-4 Honda south from Nashua, headed for somewhere in Virginia. The boy, Morehouse, riding pillion and I were equipped for camping and planned on tent space in some town park on the center line.

The first night on the road we camped in a grave yard in eastern Pennsylvania. Rain began the morning of our second day and continued throughout the day. We road south close behind a semi, drifting from side to side let the driver know we were there and at the same time I was chatting with other eclipse hopefuls on the ham radio. One group travelling south ahead of us had reserved a block of motel rooms, they invited us to join them.



Morehouse

to

Rain continued into the day of the eclipse. A few of that group, more desperate than me, chartered a plane to get them above the clouds. My self, my companion and others, watched the show on the TV the motel provided. The ride home was bright and sunny of course.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse_of_May_30%2C_1984
8407#4775_VA Eclipse Exp, S Morehouse, N3-12.jpg
<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEatlas/SEatlas2/SEatlas1981.GIF>

Prescott AZ 2012 May 20 Annular at Kevin Glover's home

Kevin was someone I knew, a friend of a friend. Their home was in The Granite Dells near Watson Lake. Great place for kayaking and biking and of course for watching this eclipse.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse_of_May_20,_2012

<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEatlas/SEatlas3/SEatlas2001.GIF>

Prescott AZ (?) 2012 June 5 Transit of Venus at Kevin Glover's home

Not really an eclipse of course but included here due to the transit's extreme uniqueness. [Transits of Venus](#) are among the rarest of predictable celestial [phenomena](#) and occur in pairs. Consecutive transits per pair are spaced 8 years apart, and consecutive pairs occur more than a century apart...

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_transit_of_Venus



Foto by Kevin Glover

Driggs ID 2017 August 21 Total at The Dead Roach Ranch

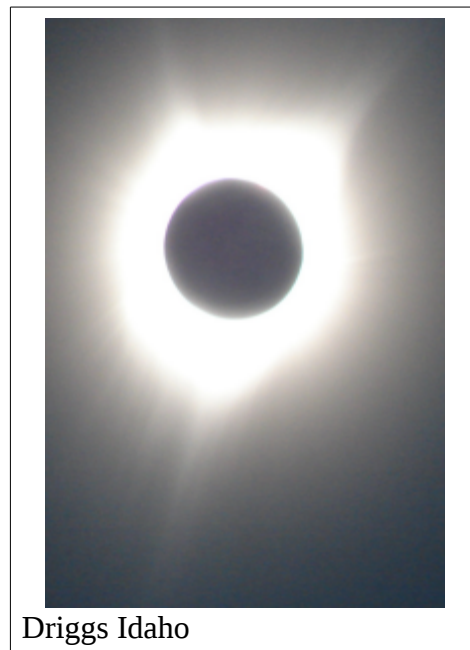
Headed for the eclipse and a visit with OAE Tony Marchetti. Convoy of two: Spencer in the Arctic Fox had the back door. Wishing for clear skies. Not withstanding my Annual Migratory

excursions between Tonopah and Pie Town I've not been on a road trip adventure outside of these two states since my 2011 visit to Astoria Oregon. On the road by mid-day: Pie Town, Quemado, almost to Grants. Now in La Ventana Natural Arch Rest Area at the north end of The Narrows on Hwy 117. Off to a good beginning. After extra rememberings the only thing I forgot was to fill my ice cube bag. I'll pay for that faux pas with warm G&Ts until I find an ice cube store.

<http://thecatdragdinn.org/ajo17c.html>



Stamp & Postmark



Driggs Idaho

I stayed up all night keeping the clouds swept away, wore out two besoms which I will have to replace before next eclipse, but there was

little I could do about the smoke and haze.

The first thing of note was the drop in temperature. At that hour in the morning the day had warmed to 73f from the 42f observed at dawn but as the moon encroached more and more the temperature slid downwards. By about 70% obscured, daylight was noticeably dimmer, shadows were sharper, output from the PV array on *The Cat Drag'd Inn* was down from the 20-30 amps normal at that time of day to only 15 amps, and the air was cold enough to run inside for a warm woolly jumper.

We had laid out on the grass a fine white wool blanket, frayed around the edges but not too moth-eaten and just at the moment of totality were able for a fleeting instant to see the fabled shadow bands. The temperature was down by ten degrees by then. The sky was dark, at least one planet was visible, my camera wanted to turn on its flash. Hurricane Hazel-Rah curled up for a nap—but that was nothing unusual so I doubt we can attribute her behaviour to the lack of sun.

And then moments later, The Diamond Ring heralded the end of totality, the return to viewing devices, and hopefully to warmth. But the temperature dropped another two degrees before turning up again. Lowest observed was 60f. Think about that. How fast the air cooled! Wouldn't take but a few hours for the earth to freeze if the sun were to go out altogether.

<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEmap/SEmapNA/TSENorAm2001.gif>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse_of_August_21,_2017
<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEatlas/SEatlas3/SEatlas2001.GIF>

Quitman TX 2024 Total Watched on telly in Tonopah AridZona

Reservations were made for camping in the backyard of Mark Williams in Quitman but the closer I got to departure the more things went wrong. Karma? The Cosmic Muffin? Some inner insight of my own I was too dense to recognize? I could not see my way clear to chase this one and so watched with a pinhole camera and the NASA channel. Oh Well.

You seen one eclipse, you seen 'em all, eh?

<https://www.timeanddate.com/eclipse/map/2024-april-8>
<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEmap/SEmapNA/TSENorAm2001.gif>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse_of_April_8,_2024
<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEatlas/SEatlas3/SEatlas2021.GIF>



Hurricane Hazel-Rah



Pin Hole Camera View at 1120

No. Not so. Every eclipse is different. I wrote that “...seen ‘em all...” to ameliorate my angst and anguish over missing a more direct involvement this time. The place, the weather, the people you are with, the others you are surrounded by, all those factors contribute to the uniqueness of each eclipse. To help make this eclipse unique I did some different viewing. The pinhole, watching totality six times over on the telly courtesy of NASA, observing the variation of solar insolation on the solar PV array... all those things helped. But still, nothing beats being there.