

## **Kevin Moore—Curator of Artifacts**

Curator of Artifacts at Rutherford B. Hayes Museum in Fremont, Ohio, Kevin Moore discusses several important topics throughout this interview. Moore explains the history behind studying eclipses, and how this information appears within the museum's exhibit, 'Chasing Totality'. The interview continues with an overview of the exhibit, if eclipse tourism was instantaneous, and what events will be occurring in Sandusky County.

Interviewee: Kevin Moore (KM)

Interviewers: Alex Eckhart (AE), Ernest Okine (EO), Trenton Nelson (TN)

Date: October 20, 2023

Location: Zoom in Kuhlin Center, Bowling Green State University

[START OF INTERVIEW]

[Note: Some tangential discussion from the audio file has been omitted]

**AE:** [00:01:24] Alright, so we're just gonna get started. My name is Alex Eckhart, I am a history undergraduate.

**EO:** [00:01:29] My name is Ernest Okine. I'm a second-year history student.

**AE:** [00:01:33] Do you just wanna introduce yourself? Your name, title, organization, number of eclipses you've seen, if any

**KM:** [00:01:43] Well, my name's Kevin Moore. I'm the Curator of artifacts here at the Ruther B. Hayes Library that's in Fremont, Ohio. And I have seen one eclipse, there was one that partially could be seen from this area in 2017.

**AE:** [00:02:05] Alright. So where is the Hayes presidential center located? Like, where is it in the path of totality?

**KM:** [00:2:11] Okay. So that's a really good question, and that's partly why I came down. I'm gonna flip this. We have a map in our exhibit that talks about the April 8th, 2024, solar eclipse and part of our exhibit deals with the history of studying eclipses deals with during ages lifetime. But we also talked about the science of eclipses and the one that's coming up. But if you look at this map, it shows you the path of totality, and it's got these and almost like topographic. It's got these gradations on it based on how long you'll be able to see the eclipse. And if you look and you guys are right here, Bowling Green and Fremont is right here, a little bit closer to the center. But we look like we're gonna get about 3 minutes and 30 seconds worth of eclipses.

**EO:** [00:03:12] Okay, so let's talk about this exhibit, 'Chasing Totality'. Can you tell us more about it?

**KM:** [00:03:17] Yeah, absolutely. This exhibit...this exhibit facing totality has 3 parts. In one section we talk about the science of eclipses, different types of solar eclipses that you can see here on Earth, like the annular eclipse which we just saw last week. A total solar eclipse, what we'll have, and we even go so far to talk a little bit about what eclipses exist elsewhere in [inaudible]. We also talk about how eclipses have been understood throughout history. So, for example, we look at how Chinese tribes recorded eclipses on oracle bone. We talked a little bit about how the Maya were able read eclipses, how it appears in Vikings folklore, and then we talk a little bit about the science of it. The first effort to kind of study them, figure out how they work, how to predict them. This is the reproduction of print that Edmund Haley created predicting the path of an eclipse in 1715, over Southern England. And one of the artifacts that we have that super excited about is, there's an Austrian astronomer named Theodore Polber, who took it upon himself to calculate the mass of every single solar and lunar eclipse that occurred or will occur between 1207 BC, And 2161, AD or C. And he recorded them all in a book in a table, and we have a copy of that book from the University of Michigan and the highlighted one—this book was printed in 1887—the highlighted one is our 2024, April 8<sup>th</sup> eclipse. And so part of our exhibit talked about the efforts to understand eclipses and then the meat and potatoes so to speak, and our connection to Rutherford B. Hayes, we talk about a specific eclipse that occurred in 1878, where several astronomers went to an eclipse that passed through Wyoming Territory named Colorado, and they studied it for very different purposes. Someone is approved within the orbit of Mercury. and even Thomas Edison went, and he wants to measure the temperature of the sun's corona. And this is the device that used for that, and that's unknown to us from the Henry Ford meeting in Dearborn, Michigan.

[Note: Some tangential discussion from the audio file has been omitted]

**AE:** [00:07:59] Are you ready for the next one? [off screen response] Okay, so you kind of mentioned that eclipse during Hayes Presidency. Would you say that this is the first recorded instance of eclipse tourism?

**KM:** [00:08:13] No, no, I don't think so at all. I think as soon as we were able to predict eclipses, people were curious to see them. So, for example, we do have a quote from Rutherford B. Hayes diary from 1851, where he knew that the eclipse going to be happening on a certain day. And he went outside to go check it out, and it was cloudy, so he writes about, 'Unfortunately, I couldn't see it'. But even in 1860 and 1861 scientists knew that eclipses would be happening, and they knew where they were happening. So the first ever photograph of an eclipse was taken in Prussia, I believe, and the photographer had to travel to the location of the eclipse. And basically the academic community, particularly astronomers, they would, they became the first umbra file in the mid nineteenth century. They would travel all over the world to view and study equipment.

**EO:** [00:09:29] Okay, so this is the final question, what are the Hayes Museum's plans for the Eclipse day?

**KM:** [00:09:35] So Sandusky County, where we're located expecting a lot of tourism, of a lot of people from out of town, perhaps over 100,000 people to come to Sandusky County. And so we are working with the County Visitors Board to come up with some event. And what we're going to do is create an event called Spiegel Glow. Our property is called Spiegel Grove, there was a play on that name. But we're going to have on that week. We're not doing anything the day of, but the weekend before we're gonna have a ticketed event on Friday night where people can come and they can tour some specific areas of the museum in the dark. We will have a tour talking about specific nights, objects, we are going to have what we're calling space stations where and this is for this is a family event with kids considered as well. Where there'll be space trivia there will be a local Craft shop called Pottery Perfection. We'll be doing crafts, we're gonna have photos with a backdrop. I'm going to be giving tours of the of the eclipse exhibit. And the county parks authority is going to be giving a talk about what animals do during an eclipse. There'll be, you know, there'll be snacks and refreshments and that type thing. And we're also going to be partnering with an astronomy club to do a Skywatch on our property in the spring, where people can bring their telescope, and learn a little bit about looking at the stars.

**AE:** [00:11:34] Yeah, that's really cool! That's all we have. Thank you so much for meeting with us and answering all of our questions.

[Note: Some tangential discussion from the audio file has been omitted]

[END OF INTERVIEW]