
KENTUCKY IN THE NEWS

The Kentucky Geographic Alliance – February 2018



On January 31st, a rare event occurred in the night sky- a phenomenon referred to as the “Super Blue Blood Moon”. This is a combination of three events all at once: a super moon, a blue moon, and a blood moon. A super moon happens when there is a full moon that also occurs when the moon is closest to Earth. If a full moon occurs twice in a month, it is called a “blue moon” and this event is the rarest of the three that coincided, hence the saying “once in a blue moon”. A blood moon is the term that is used to describe a total lunar eclipse because the moon has a red tint. This reddish color is due to Earth’s atmosphere bending sunlight towards the red colors in the light spectrum, this bent light then is projected onto the moon, according to [National Geographic](#). The last time that all three of these events lined up and were visible to at least part of the US was in 1866, as mentioned in a [PBS](#) news article.

Unfortunately, Kentucky was not in the best viewing location. [NASA](#) points out that this is because around 6:48 Eastern Standard Time, the Moon was setting and the sun was rising as the Moon was entering into the Umbra- the part of Earth’s shadow that causes the red color during totality. According to the same article by NASA, the best way to watch the eclipse in Kentucky was to go up on top of a mountain or to look out of the windows in a tall building with a view of the western horizon where the moon will be setting.

Lunar eclipses and various other natural events are important to geographers who look at other cultures and how they interact with the Earth. Ancient cultures- such as the Norse- and some modern day cultures and tribes hold beliefs and superstitions related to astronomical events such as the one that occurred on January 31st, as reported by a [National Geographic](#) article. By studying these cultures, geographers can have a better idea of what causes people to hold the beliefs and traditions that they do whenever lunar eclipses and super moons and full moon occur.