



# The Red Tower Clan Galbraith Association



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## Death by Lightning

August 1819

At his seat at Lisanally, near Omagh, Ireland, resided Arthur Galbraith, esq. a gentleman of very large fortune, and of a respectable family.

It had been most oppressively hot, and on Monday about one o'clock began the most awful and alarming storm of thunder and lightning ever remembered at Lisanally. It continued for several hours during which a number of cottages were damaged, and many persons received slight shocks. The concluding peal, which consisted of two discharges of the electric fluid closely following each other, like those of heavy artillery, particularly affected the Galbraith house at Lisanally.

Arthur Galbraith had a remarkable dread of thunder, and when the storm came on he was sitting in his own house, and immediately betook himself to a Bible. He asked every person in the house to go to their devotion until this awful visitation passed. He was sitting on a sofa at a small table, his lady opposite to him; his two daughters and their governess at their work, when he got up, after reading for some time, and unfortunately sat down in a corner and leaned his head back against the wall. He had not been there two minutes until he was struck dead instantaneously. Mrs. Galbraith was thrown on the floor, where she lay quite insensible, one of the children's faces scorched, the other burnt in the neck as if three bars of red hot iron had been laid on it, the window curtains burnt to cinders, and scattered all over the room, the marble

chimney-pieces in three rooms shattered in a thousand pieces, the locks twisted off the doors, and seven hundred panes of glass broke, a dog in the kitchen killed, and every being in the house (except the governess) either less or more injured.

It seemed to have entered at the chimney, where there was a considerable number of iron cranks, etc., and followed the bell wire into the several rooms. The room least damaged was the parlour, to which Mr. Galbraith with his lady and daughters had retired for security. The lightning seems, by a black mark in the upper part of the wall, to have run perpendicularly down to the spot where that gentleman as he sat was leaning, and to have entered at the upper part of the spine following its course through its whole length, to again pursue the perpendicular line on the wall.

Mr. Galbraith on the day before his death had been listening to a sermon on the uncertainty of human life. ♦

### Sources

- *Gentleman's Magazine And Historical Chronicle* July - December 1819 - pg.187-8

- *British Chronical* Sept. 1819 pg.272-3

[Submitted by Simon Parker-Galbreath]

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