

# THE CLAMPERS' CLAN



## *Clampers' Clan* – Official Marching Song of E Clampus Vitus®

Including excerpts and text from a Grand Council presentation to the Board of Proctors by Loren Wilson, XSNGH

I salute and shout out a stentorious Happy Independence Day to all Clampers! Thank God for the United States of America. We are indeed lucky to live in the Land of the Free. Many in our country have long celebrated Independence Day with parades down the Main Streets of America, most especially Clampers, who are well known for their parade participation.

On this two hundred forty-second anniversary of our independence, I'd like to take a moment to share with each Clamper some little-known historical facts about our organization, E Clampus Vitus®. Long an integral part of ECV® history is this important tenet: the use of poetry, music, marching, and parades.

The arcane music of *The Clampers' Clan* can be contrasted and compared with what I believe could become Clamperdom's favorite movie, *Paint Your Wagon*. Starring Lee Marvin and Clint Eastwood, the movie is a clever reflection on our past as miners and Clampers. It is one of my favorite films, as it embodies the spirit of the gold rush as well as our motto, *Per caritate viduaribus ophanibusque, sed prime viduaribus*. In the movie, the characters portrayed by Lee Marvin and Clint Eastwood each did his best to protect the young widow, and when it wasn't "their turn" they were out and about on the town hoisting a drink while protecting the Orphan. I know many of you have seen the movie. However, to our youngest members who may not be familiar with the film, I encourage you to rent/purchase/stream/download it and think "Clampers" as you watch.

Every organization should have a favorite poet as well. I also believe Robert Service should be the official Poet of ECV. His works best illustrate the feelings and history of our proud order and reflect well on past members who lived long ago during the gold rush years. For example, *The Shooting of Dan McGrew* comes straight from the gold fields. At the turn of the twentieth century, a young Robert Service, working as a banker in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, frequented the bars where he heard tales of toil and adventure from local miners who came to town to drink away their troubles. His small cabin still stands today. From those stories he captured the moment in his numerous works.

If ECV has a favorite poet, then why not a favorite song? Why not a favorite song PBCs can march to? Why not embrace some historical ECV music and make it our official Clamper marching song? Why not revise all of the PBC Handbooks out there to include this music so new members can learn about and relive an important lesson from our past?

Did you know modern day ECV, like our 1915 Corporation, reaffirmed *The Clampers Clan* to be our official marching song? How did this come to pass? The music from early twentieth-century ECV Lodges located in the Sacramento Valley had been lost to history for almost 100 years. A fortuitous discovery by my good friend, XSNGH Al Wilson, and follow-up research two decades later by another good friend, Al's son XSNGH Loren Wilson, enabled our illustrious organization to benefit from their rediscovery of this long-forgotten ECV history of merriment, mirth, and music. So where did this music come from?

While we know quite a bit about nineteenth-century Clampers and their twentieth-century revivers, the period between these two incarnations of E Clampus Vitus is less well-known. We know ECV was incorporated in Marysville on November 6, 1915, and from newspaper articles we know there were over one thousand Clampers forming several lodges operating in the Sacramento Valley. In addition to the Grand Lodge in Marysville, a lodge was instituted in Colusa in 1916. Other lodges existed in Oroville, Chico, and Willows. With the establishment of the new lodge in Colusa, Clampers came for the celebration and parade from the aforementioned California towns, as well as from Arbuckle.

Like Clampers who became inactive in the eastern United States because of the Civil War, so went the Clamper Lodges in the Central Valley because of World War I. The *Colusa Sun* reported that

“Colusa Lodge #6, E Clampus Vitus, a boost organization was instituted in Colusa on June 30, 1916, with 500 members, a parade of 1000 men, and a banquet...The Lodge is showing a tendency toward apathy at present, possibly because of the war.”

It was not until Carl I. Wheat tried to incorporate E Clampus Vitus that he found that it had already been incorporated and was headquartered in Marysville. Only then were these early Clampers recognized.

Sometime around 1980, Al Wilson, returned from a Pair-O-Dice Chapter function and gave his son Loren a copy of some piano music for a marching song entitled *The Clampers'*

*Clan*, subtitled “The Official March Song.” Loren was a music major in college; perhaps this is the reason Al gave him the lyrics.

Loren found this curious, but didn’t think much about it for many years. At the dawn of the twenty-first century he rediscovered the music and showed it to XSNGH Rick Hilgers and XNGH Don “Peanut Butter” Breeland, both Clamper musicians. They also found it interesting, and both felt the song was likely written in the late nineteenth century or early twentieth century.

While helping XSNGH Tom Crawford with his 2005 TRASH Trek, Loren thought it would be seemly to resurrect this Clamper marching song. Loren, a learned musician, scholar, and teacher, utilizing MIDI computer software, created the piano music, arranged for a tenor to sing the words, and created a CD which was given away at Tom’s Trek. Sam Brannan Chapter has also given copies of the march to Koyote Howl participants.

Subsequent to these events, Loren found references to one Abe Schneider, who wrote the music for this Official March Song, and pinpointed the copyright date<sup>i</sup>. *The Clampers’ Clan: The Official March Song*; words by Will H. Wright and music by Abe N. Schneider, was copyrighted on March 27, 1916.

In 2016 at Grand Council in Sonora, on the one hundredth anniversary of the song’s copyright date, Loren asked the Board of Proctors to reaffirm *The Clampers’ Clan* as the Official Marching Song of E Clampus Vitus. By a unanimous vote your Board of Proctors did indeed bestow upon *The Clampers’ Clan* this title and honor.

Below are the lyrics, as well as newspaper clippings from that 1915-1916 World War I era, when Prohibition was lurking just around the corner. On the website, click on the highlighted link adjacent to the link for this article. You will hear the song in all its glory in an original format, the way it was sung over 100 years ago.

So, take a moment when you have some precious spare time to sit and relax with a good stiff drink and listen to our official anthem, read a little Robert Service poetry, and discuss with your Brothers at the next Doin’s the notion of an ECV musical called *Paint Your Wagon*. Celebrate our heritage and give a toast of thanks to the Wilson men, and the next time your Chapter marches in a parade, consider singing *The Clampers’ Clan* as you march along!

Thank you for letting me share this information. The Board of Proctors and I appreciate everything you and your Chapter have done for E Clampus Vitus.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Wensrich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

**Bill Wensrich**

Sublime Noble Grand Humbug

## MARYSVILLE (Yuba County) December 10, 1915

“Despite the discomforts of an unpleasant day, several thousand people, representing all parts of Yuba County, and hundreds of visitors attended the celebration held here today under the auspices of the Clampers to dedicate the new \$150,000 reinforced-concrete bridge over the Yuba River. The ceremonies began early this morning with the discharge of thirteen shots of giant powder as a salute, though the most spectacular feature of the celebration was a parade through the principal streets this afternoon by 500 "Clampers" dressed in linen dusters decorated in yellow ribbon and badges and a representation of the slogan adopted for the dedication: "Bury the Hammer and Blow Your Horn."

### March 25, 1916, Sacramento Union-- CLAMPERS TAKE CHICO BY STORM

**Lodge No. 3, E Clampus Vitus Is Instituted With Over 600 Members.** Special to the *Union*. (Butte Co.), March 24.

Chico lodge, No. 3, E Clampus Vitus, was instituted last night in a ceremony of frolic and frivolity in which about 900 yellow-ribboned northern Californians participated. The Armory hall, which was selected for the ceremony, had capacity for about a third of the crowd. The rest crowded about on the outside and approved with blasts from hundreds of horns and exulting shouts. The installation was done by the Marysville lodge.”

All articles quoted below were printed in the *Daily Colusa Sun*.

### June 27, 1916--CLAMPER LODGE TO BE INSTITUTED THURSDAY NIGHT

“The first step for the organization of a Clamper Lodge in Colusa County was made Monday evening when more than 180 members met in the Colusa Theater. The interest in an organization with an object to bury the hammer and eradicate the knocker in Colusa County was the keynote of the speeches. One of the features of next Thursday evening will be a free dance on the pavement in Fifth Street between Market and Jay. Band concerts by the Colusa and Marysville bands and a Clamper Parade which has been an important part of where ever Clampers have been instituted. It is reported that Marysville alone will send 800, and with that number swelled with those from Willows, Chico and Oroville, there will be 1200 Clampers here from the outside and joined with the Colusa members, it will be some parade.”

### June 29, 1916--COLUSA READY FOR CLAMPERS

“Armed with the slogan “Bury the Hammer and Blow your Horn,” the Clampers will make their first attack on the knockers when Colusa Lodge E Clampus Vitus No. 5 will be instituted with more than 400 members recruited from all parts of the county. There are great numbers not familiar with the aims of the Clamper organizations, and to them the Clampers say: “It is a large bunch of boosters, the more the better, joined together with the intention of establishing harmony and working for everything which will benefit the county or community. In organization there is strength, and that is what the Clampers are going to have to help put pep in a movement for friendship and progress.”

### June 30, 1916--CLAMPER LODGE IS INSTITUTED BY THE GRAND OFFICERS

#### Nearly One Thousand Members of the Organization March in Big Parade

“As predicted by the *Sun*, the parade was a hummer, the Colusa Band heading the procession with 500 Colusa Clampers immediately behind and led by the Marysville Band were 400 visiting Clampers...The Clampers are boosters organizing on the plan of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, for the purpose of creating close ties of friendship between each community and working for the development of Colusa County.”

### August 31, 1916--BIG CELEBRATION WELL UNDER WAY

J.J. O'Rourke, chairman of the entertainment committee, has a deal on...for a big hammer he has ordered from the Newton Fire Works Company. From all accounts it is a dandy and when burned with all the pomp and ceremonies that the Clamper can add to such an important occurrence, every knocker, if there are any left in the county, will feel so ashamed of themselves, there is no doubt but they will join the Clampers, and from that time forth forget their old habit and be boosters. [*This in an article regarding a celebration for Admission Day*].

### September 8, 1916—ALL READY FOR BIG CELEBRATION

“The decks are all cleared for the Clamper Celebration and venison stew. Colusa is prepared to entertain the Clamper Clan and visitors from all parts of the valley.”

September 6, 1916—OROVILLE WILL CELEBRATE WITH US

“Although it has been in existence but a few months, the Colusa Lodge has been the first to pull off a genuine Clamper celebration and has added to that celebration by sending its newly organized Clamper band to all the other Clamper cities to boost for its celebration. Oroville is No.2 and it is up to Oroville to send a large delegation to Colusa on Admission Day, Saturday September 9. They are a live bunch here in Colusa and this is their first opportunity to play host to the Clamper Clan.”

Abe Schneider was a landmark in the history of Marysville for seventy years. Many organizations valued his membership not only for his musical ability but also for his warm camaraderie. The clampers fondly referred to him as the GRAND ORGANIST.

The item with reference to Mrs. Casey recalls a tragic event when Supervisor Casey was drowned when his automobile ran off the Brownsvalley grade landing upside down in a ditch filled with water.

SCHNEIDER COMPOSES A MARCH FOR THE CLAMPERS

“The March of the Clampers” has been composed by Grand Organist Abe Schneider of Marysville Lodge No. 1. He played it for the first time at the Knight Templars’ ball at Masonic hall Friday night, and it was vigorously applauded.

The march composed by Schneider for the order will probably be adopted as the official march of the Clampers, to be played by the Clampers’ official band when it accompanies the lodge on visits to other cities and when it holds celebrations here.

Schneider wishes to secure words to his march so that it can be sung by the members of the order while marching, and will have the music in shape for the verses in a few days. Just at present he has the orchestra parts written out, but has not yet polished it up into final shape.

The “March of the Clampers” is a stirring piece of music and one that will enable the marchers to keep time while following the band. Schneider will publish it later, and it will be on sale at all music stores in cities which have the Clampers’ organization.

Schneider will demonstrate the “March of the Clampers” on the piano at the next meeting of the lodge, Friday, 11th. Then the boys will have a chance to hear the piece composed by their grand organist.

CLAMPERS NEW MARCH TO BE PLAYED AT LYRIC

Grand Organist Abe Schneider of the Clampers will be at the new orchestra piano at the Lyric theater Tuesday night, and will play his new “March of the Clampers” at that time. He has recently composed the march, and has played it at dances where it made considerable of a hit. He has also written words for the chorus which he will distribute at Friday night’s meeting. The new orchestra piano was tried out by Schneider Sunday, and he was extremely pleased with it, declaring it to be one of the best of its kind he had ever used, and congratulating Manager Benham on its acquisition.

The new orchestra piano is not only a piano, but also contains drum, cymbal, flute, violin, and other attachments, making it almost a complete orchestra. Schneider says that when he plays his “March of the Clampers” on it that it will sound like a whole orchestra.

MRS. CASEY IS EXECUTRIX.

Mrs. Abigail P. Casey, widow of the late J. J. Casey, was appointed executrix of the estate of the latter in the superior court here Monday afternoon. The estate, which consists mostly of real property, is valued at \$6275. The will was made November 28, 1904, and bequeaths the entire estate to the widow with the exception of \$300, which is left to Mrs. Winifred Casey, mother of the deceased.

HOUGHTON & COMPANY DEPARTMENT

# The Clampers' Clan

## Official Marching Song of ECV

Words by WILL H. WRIGHT

Music by ABE N. SCHNEIDER

Arranged by E. Camp

In sun - ny Cal - i - for - nia... In the land the gods love best,  
The Clan, E Clampus Vitus, first showed its golden yellow crest  
To sounds, of Hewgag blowing, 'neath the smiling western sky,  
Its ranks, are always growing, and people shout, as they march by

### CHORUS

Here come the Clampers, the jolly Clam - pers  
They're the pride of our live town  
They're whole am - bition, and only mission  
Is to put the knockers<sup>ii</sup> down  
And when, you hear the Hewgag sounding  
Just, watch them every m - a - n.  
For they're, a jolly bunch of fellows, in the Clam - pers Clan

Be - ware, then all ye knock - ers,.. when a Clam - per comes a - round,..  
Beware ye progress blockers, first slide your hammers under ground  
Get in and join your neighbor, blow your horn at any rate  
You'll do, yourself a favor, if you'll help... to boost the State

CHORUS (repeat)

CHORUS (repeat)

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<sup>i</sup> THE CLAMPERS CLAN Official March Song, words by Will H. Wright, music by A.N. Schneider of US arr by E Camp of US 3967 Mar 27 1916 2 c Mar 27 1916 E 379187 Abe N. Schneider, Marysville, Cal. ( From the US Copyright Office records).

<sup>ii</sup> Knockers are naysayers, people who are negative and unsupportive, putting things down, e.g., they "knock" everything.