

## OPEN LETTER TO ALL CLAMPERS #6 – JANUARY 15, 2019

### Al Shumate Speech



Archie Stevenot, XSNGH passing the Grand Council Staff of Relief to incoming SNGH Al Shumate, 1963

**D**r. Charles Albert "Al" Shumate, Dean of San Francisco historians and the third Sublime Noble Grand Humbug of the Ancient and Honorable Order of E Clampus Vitus®, journeyed to "The Golden Hills" in 1998 at the age of 94. Al Shumate had been a Clamper for over 50 years.

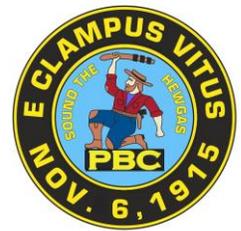
Born in San Francisco, he attended Lowell High School, graduating in 1923 with classmate Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, who became the thirty-second Governor of California. Al then went on to graduate from the University of San Francisco in 1927 with a degree in pre-med and enrolled in Creighton University Medical School in Omaha, Nebraska, where he received his M.D. in 1931. He began his medical practice in 1933. Retirement in 1975 provided him much more time to spend on his love for California history.

While medicine was his profession, history was Al's passion. Noted for his outstanding collection of books on the exploration and early history of California, Al steeped himself in San Francisco and California history, becoming a self-taught authority.

He must have liked to be in the limelight. Al served as an officer and Board member of many organizations such as the California Historical Society, the Conference of California Historical Societies, the San Francisco Corral of the Westerners, and the Native Sons of the Golden West, to mention just a very few. He was also a director of the Western Trail Ride (The Tevis Cup) which sponsors a hundred-mile horseback ride from Lake Tahoe to Auburn, California each year.

Sponsored by Edgar Kahn, PBC Al Shumate was taken into ECV in 1937. Al was later appointed to the ECV Board of Directors in 1950 by Carl Irving Wheat, one of the three founding fathers of our revived Order.

In 1939, during the planning for the incorporation of ECV, bylaws were written by Carl Wheat. While attempting to incorporate, original 1915 Marysville incorporation documents were discovered. Some of the original Directors were still alive! Contacted by Wheat, they enabled the revivers of the Order to more easily assume control of the Corporation. By 1941 the new organization had been incorporated in the great State of California.



At first, this modern-day ECV organization had Presidents. Lee Stopple (1888-1960), Leon O. Whitsell (1876-1966), Carl I. Wheat (1892-1966), and Edgar B. Jessup (1889-1961) served multi-year terms. Of course, all of these early-day ECV presidents were former Yerba Buena Chapter Humbugs and born into an era just emerging from the California gold rush. In 1957 the organization changed the office of president to that of Sublime Noble Grand Humbug in keeping with the language and culture of the Order. The term "president" was then used only for government business.

The first three Sublime Noble Grand Humbugs were Edgar Jessup, Archie Stevenot, and Al Shumate. Al knew all of the early-day organizers of the revived Order, and he mined their minds for as much ECV history as he could get out of them. He truly became the resident ECV historian and scholar.

Al likely learned a lot about the early history of the revived order from Carl Wheat and Edgar Jessup, the first Sublime Noble Grand Humbug. Unlike today, ECV Chapters in those days formed slowly as local history-minded individuals learned about the old-time Clampers. By 1962, thirty years after the inception of our revived Order, there existed 16 active chapters following the merger that year of the William Bull Meek and William Morris Stewart Chapters. ECV at the time was spread across just one state, California. Today, in 2019, it is located in 10 western states: we have 46 chapters, six outposts, and two historical groups wanting Outpost status. Wowser! During the last almost sixty years, the organization has certainly come a long way, due in part to the efforts and encouragement of our past Sublimes.

With all this accumulated knowledge, XSNGH Al Shumate developed his famous speech presented to the San Francisco Westerner's Corral meeting in 1991, for which he received the Westerners International Philip Danielson Award.

For Clamperdom, this historic speech has become one of the bedrock stories solidifying the legend, myth, lore and history of our Order. The speech was recorded by XSNGH Geno Fambrini. Later, this speech was digitized and made available for our web site by XSNGH Loren Wilson.

Highlights from Al's speech include:

- ECV roots tracing back to Virginia and a man named Ephraim Bee.
- Joe Zumwalt's trip to the California gold fields and the first ECV Lodge.
- Formation of the Brotherhood and spread of the Order.
- The notion of frivolity, the absurd, and being "taken (in)" by the Order.
- Reviving the Order by a couple of San Francisco lawyers.
- The discovery of one Adam Lee Moore, who held critical knowledge from the days of old.
- The beginning of Grand Council in 1954, which eventually adopted the town of Murphys in 1957 for its annual ECV meeting.

Reminding us as a way to retain the original spirit of ECV, Al's vignette included the following five dictums that you have heard many times before. Know these words were made famous by one Al Shumate, XSNGH. You will often hear these pronouncements repeated by members across all of Clamperdom. That's proof of the lasting impact of Al's speech.

1. What does E Clampus Vitus mean? Well, that is the greatest mystery of all, because none of us know what it means!
2. What is the purpose of the society? There is a description of the society that all of you have heard. It is claimed ECV is a historical drinking society; others claim it to be a drinking historical society. The debate continues; it has never been solved.
3. The objectives of ECV are well known: Members swear to take care of the widows and orphans – especially the widows.
4. The governing authority of the Clampers is equally as explicit: All members are officers and all offices are of equal indignity.
5. As all Clampers know, no one was in any condition to take minutes, and after a meeting, no one could remember what had happened.

Take a few minutes and listen to Al's speech by clicking on the button adjacent to this article. This speech is one of the gems of modern-day E Clampus Vitus. And while yer sittin' back, planning ta relax, take a look below at the list of sixty-two years of Sublime Noble Grand Humbugs of E Clampus Vitus. These men followed in the footsteps of this revered leader of E Clampus Vitus, the greatest fraternal organization on earth! Someday, you may find your name listed among the next 50!

Thank you for letting me share this information. Just as Al Shumate and others did, the Board of Proctors and I appreciate everything you and your Chapter are doing for our illustrious Order E Clampus Vitus.

Your humble and loyal servant,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Wensrich". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "B" and a long, horizontal flourish at the bottom.

**Bill Wensrich**

Sublime Noble Grand Humbug

**THE ILLUSTRIOUS LIST**  
**OF**  
**SUBLIME NOBLE GRAND HUMBUGS**  
**OF**  
**E CLAMPUS VITUS INC.**

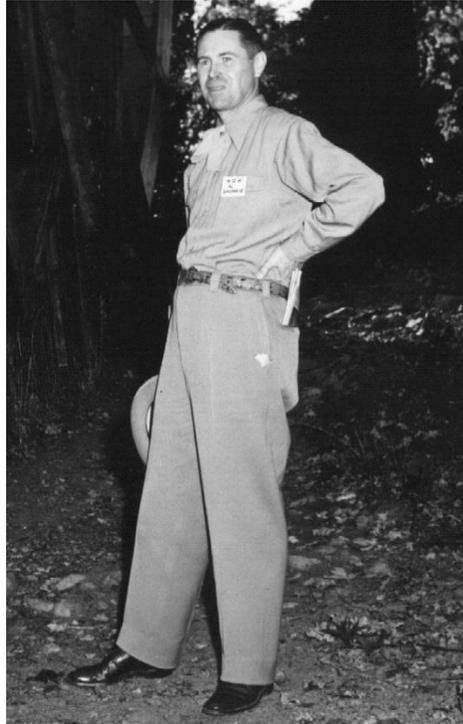
1	Edgar B. Jessup, SNGH	1957 - 1961	26	H.O. "Buck" Jones, SNGH	1994 - 1995
2	Archie D. Stevenot, SNGH	1961 - 1963	27	Rod Stock, SNGH	1995 - 1996
3	Albert Shumate, SNGH	1963 - 1965	28	Geno Fambrini, SNGH	1996 - 1997
4	Sid Platford, SNGH	1965 - 1967	29	Loren Wilson, SNGH	1997 - 1998
5	Charles L. Camp, SNGH	1967 - 1969	30	Rick Hilgers, SNGH	1998 - 1999
6	John E. Porter, SNGH	1969 - 1971	31	Harrison Barton, SNGH	1999 - 2000
7	Hal Goodyear, SNGH	1971 - 1973	32	Frank Houdek, SNGH	2000 - 2001
8	George Washington, SNGH	1973 - 1975	33	John Magnuson, SNGH	2001 - 2002
9	Max M. Johnson, SNGH	1975 - 1977	34	Tom Barry, SNGH	2002 - 2003
10	Bill Byars, SNGH	1977 - 1979	35	Wes Beavers, SNGH	2003 - 2004
11	Earl F. Schmidt, SNGH	1979 - 1980	36	Harold 'Sonny' Marshall, SNGH	2004 - 2005
12	Carl Briggs, SNGH	1980 - 1981	37	David Holmes, SNGH	2005 - 2006
13	Alan Wilson, SNGH	1981 - 1982	38	Thomas Tompkins, SNGH	2006 - 2007
14	Duff Chapman, SNGH	1982 - 1983	39	Gene Brown, SNGH	2007 - 2008
15	Richard B. Hoegh, SNGH	1983 - 1984	40	Dan Stark, SNGH	2008 - 2009
16	Robert Tobey, SNGH	1984 - 1985	41	Tom Crawford, SNGH	2009 - 2010
17	Dail Turney, SNGH	1985 - 1986	42	Glenn Thornhill, SNGH	2010 - 2011
18	Ron Cox, SNGH	1986 - 1987	43	Gary Glud, SNGH	2011 - 2012
19	Sid Blumner, SNGH	1987 - 1988	44	Bob Romer, SNGH	2012 - 2013
20	Al Menshew, SNGH	1988 - 1989	45	Fred Ludemann, SNGH	2013 - 2014
21	Cappy Cook, SNGH	1989 - 1990	46	Ken Berry, SNGH	2014 - 2015
22	C. W. Jones, SNGH	1990 - 1991	47	Jim Waterman, SNGH	2015 - 2016
23	Bill Dore, SNGH	1991 - 1992	48	Brian Nash, SNGH	2016 - 2017
24	Verne Cole, SNGH	1992 - 1993	49	Ken Jaques, SNGH	2017 - 2018
25	Ron Zaitz, SNGH	1993 - 1994	50	Bill Wensrich, SNGH	2018 - 2019

Original Text from Al Shumate Speech to the 1991 San Francisco Westerner's Corral

## THE MYSTERIOUS HISTORY OF E CLAMPUS VITUS

by

Honorable Brother Al Shumate, M.D., ECV



Circa 1954

When I first came in this evening [June 25, 1991] and saw all the red shirts, I thought that it was a fireman's meeting. However, I realize I am surrounded by friends in Clamperdom. As there are a few Westerners here who are not Clampers, I will give those old sayings we always say about ECV:

First, what does E Clampus Vitus mean? Well, that is the greatest mystery of all, because none of us know what it means!

Second, what is the purpose of the society? There is a description of the society that all of you have heard. It is claimed ECV is a historical drinking society; others claim it to be a drinking historical society. The debate continues; it has never been solved.

Third, the objectives of ECV are well known: Members swear to take care of the widows and orphans -- especially the widows.

Fourth, the governing authority of the Clampers is equally as explicit: All members are officers and all officers are of equal indignity.

These precepts give us some idea why some of the things in the history of ECV are murky. As all Clampers know, no one was in any condition to take minutes, and after a meeting, no one could be who remembered what had happened.

But getting down to what we think we know, the general tradition is that the society had its origin in Virginia, in a mountainous section that broke off during the Civil War and is now West Virginia. The perpetrator was Ephraim Bee, whose origins are as tangled as those of his organization. He was born in Salem, New Jersey or Harrison County, Virginia, in 1799 or 1802, depending on whether you consult Hardesty's Encyclopedia (1885) or Boyd K. Stuller's scholarly paper "Ephraim Bee and E Clampus Vitus" in the West Virginia Review of August 1931, based in part on an article in the Parkersburg State Journal in 1896. Which is right?

Bee's ancestors were ministers. They came from a group called Seven Day Baptists; as the name indicates, Saturday was their Sabbath Day. They left Salem, New Jersey and settled in Salem, Doddridge County, Virginia, where the Seventh Day Baptists had a college. Bee lived there for the rest of his life. Ephraim married Catherine Davis on June 19, 1823, and had ten children with her. After her death, he married a younger woman, Mary Welch, and had seven more children--seventeen in all. So you can see, right from the beginning he was a real Clamper!

Ephraim Bee started out as a blacksmith and remained one for most of his life. He was also an inn keeper. His tavern was appropriately called the Bee Hive. The location was most interesting. George Ezra Dane, one of those who helped revive ECV in 1931, and who was known for his own sense of humor, placed it at Meat House Fork on Middle Island Creek, near the present town of West Union, West Virginia. Its isolation did not bar Bee from participating in public affairs. He had only four months of formal schooling, which most likely qualified him for the West Virginia State Legislature. He was elected in 1863 and re-elected in 1865 and 1867.

However, Bee is best remembered as the founder of E Clampus Vitus. He was known throughout the county as a garrulous story teller and practical joker. Legend has it that around 1845, shortly after American minister Caleb Cushing returned from negotiating a treaty with China, Bee revealed that the Emperor of China had entrusted him with certain sacred rituals from the mysterious East. Bee then, brought forth E Clampus Vitus. As an indication of the profound impression it made on his family, Bee's son Herman remembered the name as the "Order of Clampin Vipers." This is a good example of how family legends become distorted.

From the first, all regarded ECV as a burlesque of the widespread secret societies, fraternal and political. In the 1820's and 1830's, some became suspicious of Freemasonry and demonstrated against it. In the next decade, the strong tide of immigration flowing from Germany and Ireland smashed on the rocks of Nativism. In 1844, the year Cushing returned from China, the Native Sons of America and the Order of the Sons of America emerged. 1850, for instance, brought forth the Order of the Sons of the Sires of 1776 and the more important Order of the Star-Spangled Banner. In the mid-1850's, these societies became a powerful political force: the Know-Nothing Party. Members denied all knowledge of the secret societies, hence the party name. Their mystery, mumble-jumble, and elaborate rituals were fertile soil to nourish Bee's spoof.

ECV spread from (West) Virginia to other states. There is documentation of lodges in Bedford Pennsylvania, (1847); Metropolis, Illinois (1849); and Bowling Green, Missouri (1849). Ken Castro of Murphys found evidence in the Stockton San Joaquin Republican of March 7, 1853, of a chapter in Dahlenega, a gold mining community about 65 miles north of Atlanta, Georgia. Miners from that region arrived in California in 1849, and, like the Sonorans from Mexico, helped teach the Argonauts how to mine. The majority of the 49ers knew nothing about gold mining. They thought they could walk up the hill and pick up big chunks of gold.

How did ECV come to California? All accounts agree that a person by the name of Joe Zumwalt was the Apostle. On his way to California in 1849, Zumwalt wandered into a printing office in Bowling Green, Pike County, Missouri, saw the ritual of the Clampers, and brought it along. In 1850, he attempted to establish a lodge in Hangtown (Placerville). It did not succeed because the miners were still moving fast and were not settled down. However, the next year, Zumwalt went to Mokelumne Hill, re-established the Clampers, and, to use an expression found in all the articles, "It spread like wild fire."

As befitting the tangled Clamper history, a question arises as to which Joe Zumwalt. One member of the family, not too many years ago, said that Joseph Zumwalt, a native of Kentucky born in 1800, was the one. Joe left Illinois for California in 1849, dying in the Golden State in 1892. Eve Zumwalt, another member of the Zumwalt family states in a new book, *The Romance of Mokelumne Hill* (1990) that the true founder was Joel Henry Zumwalt. J.H. was born in 1831 in Frankford, Pike County, Missouri, not too far from Bowling Green. The late Judge J.A. Smith of San Andreas, a noted local historian, was also of the opinion that J.H. was the founder. He quoted the Marysville Democrat of February 1896, and the Calaveras Prospect of May 30, 1896, to support his claim. In 1851, J.H. Zumwalt settled in Mokelumne Hill, the birthplace of the first successful Clamper chapter. It was Zumwalt's home until his death in 1906.

To continue the convoluted history of ECV, there is some question as to which organization spread. Was it "Clampus," "Clampus," or "Clampsis?" In 1931, Carl Wheat selected "Clampus," which is the present spelling. In Illinois in 1847, they spelled "Clampus" that way with the "us." However, in Nineteenth Century California, it was always "sus." Did the printer in Bowling Green, Missouri, drop in an extra "s?" Only the Pennsylvanians seem to have adopted the "sis." What is the correct spelling of the Order? ECV was popular because it afforded the young men at the mines with a perfect excuse for horseplay. Furthermore, as in the East, it ridiculed the stuffy secret fraternal, benevolent, and political societies, such as the Masons, Odd Fellows, and in the mid-1850s, Know-Nothings, which were so important in the Gold Rush days. Not only were there chapters in

such well-known towns as Yreka, Nevada City, Auburn, Placerville, Sonora, and Mariposa, but in mining camps, some long gone. There are records of lodges in Morristown, Rabbit Creek (La Porte), Howland Flat, Sawpit Flat, St. Louis, Portwine, Comanche Camp, Yankee Jim's, Freeze Out, and the one I like the best, Hell's Delight. Also the Clampers were in the bigger cities, such as Sacramento, Marysville, Stockton, Petaluma, and Benicia. In San Francisco, it was here as early as 1852.

There were also chapters outside the state. In 1858, during the great Fraser River gold rush, Clampers went up to British Columbia. That is probably natural, because there were over 20,000 miners from California that went to that fiasco. A book written in 1963, called *Ghost Towns*, of British Columbia, mentioned the establishment of the Clampers in Fort Douglas. I wrote to the author, Bruce Ramsey, and got a letter back that was rather amusing. I had written my letter on stationery of E Clampus Vitus. He said that he came in from lunch, saw the envelope, and thought he was seeing a ghost.

In 1858, a meeting was called in Honolulu, and Clampers were active in Carson City and Virginia City, Nevada, during the Comstock Lode years. However, when the last century came to an end, gold mining and the Gold Rush towns faded. E Clampus Vitus also waned. However there was some activity in Downieville, and Sierra City (1890s), Nevada City (1908), Marysville (1911-1916), Colusa and Willows (1913), and in Quincy (1917-1918). The Quincy Plumas National Bulletin of April 5, 1917, used half of the front page describing a Clamper parade. The other half of the page was devoted to the U.S. Senate's voting for war against Germany! Most likely World War I was a factor in the fading of ECV. By the end of the 1920s, the order was just a memory.

Carl Wheat has written that in 1930, on the "road from Columbia to Parrott's Ferry" he said to his companion, fellow attorney George Ezra Dane, "Let's revive the Clampers. I do not believe this sensational revelation is entirely true. During his last disabling illness, Carl gave me some Clamper materials. In it, I found where he had put aside notes from books and different little articles that he had found about the Clampers. He had been thinking about the Clampers for a long time. Anyway, in 1931, at a luncheon at the Clift Hotel in San Francisco, Wheat, Dane, Leon Whitsell and their friends decided to revive ECV. Frederick C. Clift [of hotel fame] was one of the Charter Members, incidentally.

Dane, Whitsell, and especially Wheat were the most important of those Charter Members. Dane was a San Francisco attorney, who, like Wheat, attended Pomona College and received his law degree from Harvard. In fact, they were in the same law office for a while. Ezra wrote extensively about California. His last book was *Ghost Town* (1941), the story of Columbia, Tuolumne County, which is now a state park (His two daughters hope to republish it in 1992). Dane's tragic death at age 37 occurred in October 1941. I was present in Columbia in September 1947 for the unveiling of a plaque in his honor.

Leon O. Whitsell, the third "founder" was a high official in the Masonic order. He also wrote *One Hundred Years of Freemasonry in California* (1950) and other historical monographs about California. He was well beloved in Clamperdom.

Carl Irving Wheat, the "revivifier" of E Clampus Vitus, was the most remarkable man I have ever met. Carl was raised in Los Angeles and in 1915 received his Bachelor of Arts degree, cum laude, from Pomona College. He served in the U.S. Army Air Service in World War I, and after the war he earned his law degree at Harvard. In the 1920s, he was the Chief Counsel of the Railroad Commission of California. He carried on legal work in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and from the mid-1930s, in Washington, D.C. From 1936 to 1938, he was a telephone rate attorney with the Federal Communications Commission, and was in the Federal Government during World War II.

Carl was one of the first members of the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles and a founder of the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco. His enthusiasm for fine printing resulted in his own hand press, the "Wheat Stalk," and his serving as President of the Book Club of California. He was also a director of the California Historical Society and editor of the CHS Quarterly, and as well as being editor of the Quarterly of the Historical Society of Southern California. Wheat served as President of the Friends of the Bancroft Library and was a member of the National Parks Advisory Board. Of the many books he wrote, his monumental five-volume cartographic study, *Mapping the Trans Mississippi West* (1957-63), stands as his most prodigious work.

He was an amazing, amazing man, who could tell many stories. I had the pleasure of taking some trips with him, and I was always amazed at Wheat's knowledge of everything. One trip I remember was going to Downieville to dedicate a plaque to Clamper Adam Lee Moore. In the front seat with Wheat was Dr. John Lawrence, head of the Donner Laboratory in California, and brother of Ernest Livermore, of today's Livermore Laboratory. They discussed nuclear medicine.

Another thing Wheat did is one that I never did when I was driving. I would drive to the place. Carl Wheat had to go off on every dirt road between Camptonville and Downieville to show us some building or mine. He knew the area completely!

Carl became ill at the Bohemian Club's Grove and died at the age of seventy-four. I was one of the speakers at the services for him on June 17, 1966. Two years earlier, on May 30, 1964, the Grand Council had unveiled a plaque in his honor on the Wall of Comparative Ovations in the old gold town of Murphys.

Carl's great love was for the Clampers. He was the first Noble Grand Humbug of the San Francisco Chapter and of the Los Angeles Chapter. In 1954, he was given the title of "His Benign Austerity," and he always called himself the "Perpetual N.G.H. [Noble Grand Humbug] of Skunk's Misery," referring to the name of a mining camp he found on a map while writing his own beautiful, scholarly *Maps of the California Gold Regions* (1942). As X.S.N.G.H. (Ex-Sublime Noble Grand Humbug) Sid Platford said, "There is only one Wheat; the rest of us are chaff."

Carl Wheat "discovered" a Clamper of the old order, who aided the revival immensely. Adam Lee Moore was the last N.G.H. of Balaam Lodge in Sierra City. Adam always referred to it as "Sigh-era." He was the link, in Wheat's words, in the

"Apostolic succession from the Clampatriarchs of old." Moore had an excellent memory and recalled the words of the old initiation ritual.

Moore had been a red-shirted miner and stage coach driver among other things, lived to be 99, and was quite a person. I had the pleasure of driving with Adam Moore, his wife, and Lee Stopple from San Francisco to Downieville on May 31, 1941. We were delivering a new charter for a meeting of the Chapter and initiation to be held that night. I was a lot younger then and more easily shocked, and I know I was shocked when the PBCs [Poor Blind Candidates] came down the main street of the town, with people lining the sidewalks, holding torches and chanting a dirge: "Poor sons of bitches, E Clampus Vitus, poor sons of bitches." Tired after the drive and initiation, I said to Adam, "I'm going to bed." I'll never forget his answer, and he had just turned 94 at the time, "Ain't yah going to dance?" And he went!

In May 1932, the "Chapter Redivivus" made its first pilgrimage to the gold country, first to Camptonville, then on to Downieville and Sierra City. Carl Wheat became the first Noble Grand Humbug. This trip to the "Diggin's" was aided by a Clamper of the old order, William Bull Meek. (A chapter bears his name in the Nevada City area.) Meek, a native Californian born in 1857 drove freight wagons over the Henness Pass in his youth and served many years as Wells, Fargo & Co.'s agent in Camptonville. He was a Clamper in Marysville in the 1890's and was 79 when he died in 1936.

I have a letter Meek wrote to Wheat regarding that first enclamping. He was a Justice of the Peace, and this letter was written on the stationery of the Justice Court of Camptonville Township: "I am glad to learn that E Clampus Vitus is going to be revived and hope that the new life of the Order will be as complete as the original. Mr. Labadie passed away this winter, but Mrs. Labadie still conducts the Hotel. I have spoken to her regards your coming and she says if a crowd comes . . . she quotes a rate of one dollar per person per bed and fifty cents a meal. She has enough rooms to accommodate about 34 people." As you can see, the Clampers that went up there were all affluent. How prices have changed on Clamper treks!

After that trek, Clamperdom proceeded to enlarge. PBCs were supposed to have an interest in California history, and by 1936, the Clampers could boast of many of the era's most respected historians, bibliographers, historical society presidents, journal editors, printers, and collectors from throughout California. Clampers included: Herbert E. Bolton, Lindley Bynum, Robert E. Cowan, Charles P. Cutten, Francis P. Farquhar, Ed Grabhorn, Phil Townsend Hanna, Edgar B. Jessup, Lawton Kennedy, J. Gregg Layne, George D. Lyman, Thomas W. Norris, Terry E. Stephenson, Douglas S. Watson, Henry R. Wagner, Jerry Wickland, and Ernest A. Wiltsee.

The Clampers went to the Indian Reservation outside of Tuolumne City on the Memorial weekend of 1937. Chief William Fuller was a Clamper. I remember it well because I was a PBC. I was invited to become a Clamper by a schoolmate of mine in grammar and high school, Edgar Kahn. "Cable Car" Kahn, as we called him, was the author of Cable Car Days in San Francisco (1940). Anyway, Edgar was rather serious in some ways, and he said to me, "Al, don't bring any liquor because it's an Indian reservation. It's illegal. Also, Clampers are hardy, bring a sleeping bag." I did. At first we had an Indian dinner. I'll never forget it because I didn't eat it. It was fried grasshoppers and acorn bread. Try it some time. Anyway, I put my sleeping bag on the cold hard ground and prepared to sleep. Every Clamper, who had sense, left and went down to the hotel and the nearest bar. Hardly had I put down the sleeping bag, when the Indians who had performed the dances and served the horrible food, started eating hot dogs. They had hired a Filipino jazz band to play, brought out whiskey from every place, and got as drunk as skunks.

In 1939, E Clampus Vitus adopted a "Clampconstitution," but when efforts were made to incorporate the order, they found that the Marysville group had done so in 1915. Lee Stopple, the N.G.H. of Yerba Buena in San Francisco, scheduled a meeting in Marysville with the surviving directors. On May 18, 1940, he arranged a merger, and became President of the Board of Directors. From then on, the Clampers have had their incorporation papers.

After World War II, Carl Wheat returned home from Washington, D.C., and again there was activity. He put in new Directors and in 1950, I became one. Later Carl wrote new by-laws, which called for the formation of the Grand Council of Venerable Clampatriarchs. At Mariposa, on May 8, 1954, the council came into being; all present and past Noble Grand Humbugs were members. In 1957, when the council met at Murphys, Ed Jessup became the first Sublime Noble Grand Humbug of the Grand Council. Since then, the Grand Council has met in Murphys, first every two years, then yearly.

Since 1957, E Clampus Vitus has grown in an amazing manner. It has over 40 chapters now. While ECV has spread, serious orders such as the Odd Fellows, once so popular and influential, have faded. Ephraim Bee would be astonished!

However, the growth of the Clampers is not that surprising considering the amazing service it has done for the nation. One example will suffice. In 1937, when I was a PBC, Sir Francis Drake's "plate of brass" claiming California for England had appeared just the year before. Tests in recent years have virtually destroyed its credibility on metallurgical analysis, but in 1937, the Clampers were concerned about California being claimed by the English King.

Drake had claimed that the Miwok Indians had "freely resigne(d) their right and title in the whole land." William Fuller, who was hereditary chief of the Mi-Wuks, knew he had the authority to nullify the Englishman's claim. Before the assembled Brethren, he made this clamplamation:

Bee it knowne unto all men by their presence: Whereas, in the year of Grace of 1579, the Great Hi-oh, of the Mee-Wuks was seduced by that buccaneer, Francis Drake to deliver this land of Nova Albion to Elizabeth ye Queene, and Her successors forever. Now, therefore I the present Chief Hi-oh, of the MeeWuk Nation, do now revoke said grant on grounds of

deceit, fraud, and failure to occupy the said domain. William Fuller, G.H. Done in the presence of E Clampus Vitus, May 29, 1937.

A copy of this revocation reached the desk of the President of the United States. I have it on absolute authority, from a person of prominence. I cannot mention his name, but he was in Washington, D.C., at that time. He said that it was the first time that he had seen President Franklin D. Roosevelt smile in a long time. Roosevelt knew that our glorious State would remain part of the Union. Thanks to ECV, you and your children are still under this flag, this glorious Star Spangled Banner!

However, you will not find this proclamation in the text books of your children. You will not find it in the standard histories. Do the Clampers resent that? No! Why not? Because they are a meek group; a group that would never blow its own horn. They give aid to the widows, but do they expect to be thanked? No! Do they expect them to say "Satisfactory?" No! E Clampus Vitus is a self-effacing group with a mysterious past!!

**Presented by Dr. Albert Shumate, M.D., ECV author of numerous books on San Francisco history, and a Humbug of Sublime, Noble, and Grand proportions, to the San Francisco Corral of Westerners on June 25, 1991. It won the Westerners International Phillip A. Danielson Award for best presentation to a Corral by a Westerner in 1991.**

**NOTE: Source material for this letter provided by XSNGH Tom Barry and XSNGH Loren Wilson.**