CREDO QUIA ABSURDUM

E Clampus Vitus on Paper

The ancient and honorable order, from its first appearance in print in 1846 to its fifty-one chapters today

1845–1851

Before California

c.1845	Ephraim Bee of West Union, Virginia, receives his commission, says the story. LEGEND
1846	February: a Connersville, Indiana, letter jokes of "the 'Eclampsus Vitus' society, an order of which, we have in our town." The earliest dated record.
1846	Spring: a lodge at Cassopolis, Michigan. Charter members Dr. E. J. Bonine, Laban Harter, J. P. Osborn and Dr. L. Osborn.
1846	July: "Tent No. 43 of the order of Eclampees Vitus" meets at Indianapolis, "attired in full regalia."
1847	January: the Indiana House tables a bill to incorporate Jackson Lodge of Centreville, for "a species of animals" it does not wish to "improve the breed" of.
1847	The Cassopolis ball of the winter just past had "over two hundred badges." At Bedford, Pennsylvania, a lodge meets by one tallow candle.
1849	Bonine and Harter of the Cassopolis lodge go overland to California. A Metropolis, Illinois, record book is cited; the ritual is printed at Bowling Green.

1852–1915

The Gold-Rush Order

1852	March: "the new order introduced recently into Virginia" is dog Latin, says Alexandria, for "squeezing the life out of you."
1852	April: the members of the E. C. V. are called to their hall at Stockton, the earliest California notice; David Lodge No. 1. May: a Sanhedrim at San Antonio, Texas.
1853	March: the California Senate debates lending the order its chamber, then strikes the debate, 10 to 7. Murphys gives $150 toward a school. Columbus, Mississippi: a mock charter for "Balaam, Lodge No. 1."
1855	Sacramento initiates "nearly five hundred persons" in three weeks. A Clarksburg, Virginia, paper names Ephraim Bee the order's "Gwand Iwiseutis," the earliest record of him in it.
1856	Steamboat Jake is initiated at Yreka. NOT 1852
1857	The ritual sold by mail: "$5 per set of three."
1858	February: Ephraim Bee initiates at Richmond. April: the order's emblem reaches Honolulu "per bark Yankee."
1867	Bee initiates at Wheeling, "the recognized American head" of the order.
1884	"The Royal Platrix has sounded the hewgag" at Sierraville.
1896	Lord Sholto Douglas is initiated at Marysville.
1915	Marysville incorporates the order and buries a hammer in the Yuba.

1931–TODAY

Revived

1931	Carl I. Wheat calls "a small group" with "large ideas" to lunch at the Clift Hotel, San Francisco; with G. Ezra Dane and Leon O. Whitsell, he revives the order. Adam Lee Moore of Sierra City brings the old ways.
1934	*The Enigmatical Book of Vitus*, the revival's first book.
1936	Drake's Plate of Brass is "found": a Clamper joke that fooled the experts for decades.
1939	Plaques: John M. Studebaker's at Placerville, in August. Today the Historical Marker Database lists 1,876 in the order's series; at least 149 California Historical Landmarks bear its hand.
1966	*Then and Now* hopes that "some day someone will ... compile a complete list" of the early lodges.
2026	The list so far: 89 places on record before 1905, each with its source. Fifty-one chapters in eleven western states.

Sources for every line, and the full register of early lodges: projectscroll.com/news/e-clampus-vitus-the-complete-record · Discovery and research by Michael Urbanski · Project Scroll, 2026.
Dates are those of the earliest surviving record; "legend" marks a date no record supports.

Satisfactory!