PROJECT SCROLL RESEARCH NOTE 2026-15

The forgotten revival of E Clampus Vitus, 1915–1920: the Marysville boosters' lodges, numbered one to eight, and how the war ended them

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SUMMARY

The order's own histories record that E Clampus Vitus was incorporated at Marysville, California, on 9 November 1915, and that this corporation was handed to the revivers of 1931 in 1940; they say nothing of what the corporation's members did in between. The newspapers of 1915–1920 show a revival of the order as a boosters' club, with numbered lodges in eight towns of the Sacramento Valley and the northern Sierra. Marysville No. 1 met on 22 October 1915, when "no less than one hundred and seventy Clampers were in line" behind "ye ancient 'Hew Gag,'" with "enthusiastic old members of former organization"; its first big show, on 10 December 1915, buried a hammer in the Yuba under the slogan "Bury the Hammer and Blow Your Horn." Oroville No. 2 was instituted on 27 January 1916, Chico No. 3 on 23 March, Willows on 20 May (No. 4 or 5, the papers differ), Colusa on 29 June (No. 5 or 6), Red Bluff No. 7 received its charter on 6 November 1916, and Quincy No. 8 was organized on 11 February 1917. A grand lodge met at Marysville on 11 November 1916, filling the old offices, and chose Oroville for 1917. The war ended it: "There was to have been a Grand Lodge held in Oroville in October, 1917, but about that time the men in the towns mentioned were either in France, on their way, or scheming up some plan to be on their way, so the Grand Lodge fell through," and by January 1920 "the American Legion is taking the place of the old order," under the headline "E. Clampus Vitus Very Deadibus

> Aroundaboutibus” (Colusa Daily Sun, 27 January 1920). Quincy alone revived its lodge, on 25 January 1920. The revival is the missing link between the gold-camp order and the corporation the revivers of 1931 inherited.

THE RECORD

1. **“Clampers Hold First Rousing Meeting,” *Marysville Daily Appeal*, 23 October 1915**

   > *“No less than one hundred and seventy Clampers were in line. They followed ye ancient ‘Hew Gag’…”; organized “with assistance of enthusiastic old members of former organization.”*

   California Digital Newspaper Collection · See the record (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=MDA19151023.2.10)

2. **“Dedicate Yuba River Bridge,” *Sacramento Union*, 11 December 1915**

   > *The celebration “under the auspices of the Clampers”; five hundred “dressed in linen dusters” under the slogan “Bury the Hammer and Blow Your Horn”; “L. B. Crook, president of Marysville lodge, No. 1, E. Clampus Vitus.”*

   California Digital Newspaper Collection · See the record (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SDU19151211.2.52)

3. **“Clampers Society Growing Rapidly,” *Sacramento Union*, 9 January 1916**

   > *Marysville No. 1 grants Oroville “lodge No. 2”; “there are 500 people ready to be made Clampers.”*

   California Digital Newspaper Collection · See the record (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SDU19160109.2.246)

4. **"Clampers Take Chico by Storm,"** ***Sacramento Union*****, 25 March 1916**

> *"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."*

California Digital Newspaper Collection · See the record (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SDU19160325.2.164)

5. **"Four Hundred Taken in by Willows Clampers,"** ***Sacramento Union*****, 22 May 1916**

> *Willows instituted on 20 May 1916 as "lodge No. 5" (the Marysville Daily Appeal of 20 May calls it No. 4).*

California Digital Newspaper Collection · See the record (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SDU19160522.2.105)

6. **"Colusa Clampers Lodge Instituted,"** ***Sacramento Union*****, 1 July 1916**

> *"1400 visiting Clampers from Marysville, Oroville, Chico and Willows" at the opera house; "Colusa lodge No. 5" (No. 6 in the Colusa Herald, 23 November 1916).*

California Digital Newspaper Collection · See the record (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SDU19160701.2.66)

7. **"Red Bluff Granted Charter for Clampers,"** ***Sacramento Union*****, 8 November 1916**

> *Marysville votes "Red Bluff lodge No. 7" its charter, 6 November 1916.*

California Digital Newspaper Collection · See the record (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SDU19161108.2.70)

8. **"Quincy Lodge No. 8 of E. Clampus Vitus Was Organized Last Sunday,"** ***Feather River Bulletin*** **(Quincy), 15 February 1917, p. 1**

> *"Quincy Lodge No. 8, E. Clampus Vitus was organized ... with a membership of seventy-five citizens" (read in machine-read text).*

California Digital Newspaper Collection · See the record (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=FRB19170215.1.1)

9. **"Clampers Will Boost Entire Valley Section,"** ***Tehama County Daily News*** **(Red Bluff), 14 November 1916**

> *The grand lodge of 11 November 1916 at Marysville re-elects L. B. Crook Grand President and chooses Oroville for 1917, in "the 'bury the hammer and blow the horn' spirit."*

Jim Cirner, "ECV ® Back in the Day" #3 (clipping) · See the record (https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10222524708678936&type=3)

10. **"E. Clampus Vitus Very Deadibus Aroundaboutibus,"** ***Colusa Daily Sun*****, 27 January 1920**

> *"There was to have been a Grand Lodge held in Oroville in October, 1917, but about that time the men in the towns mentioned were either in France, on their way, or scheming up some plan to be on their way, so the Grand Lodge fell through." "The American Legion is taking the place of the old order."*

California Digital Newspaper Collection · See the record (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DCS19200127.2.11)

11. **"Clampers Revived,"** ***Colusa Daily Sun*****, 2 February 1920, from Quincy, 31 January; and "Clampers Lodge Revived Sunday,"** ***Plumas Independent*** **(Quincy), 29 January 1920, p. 1**

> *"Quincy lodge No. 8, E. Clampus Vitus, a pioneer order of California, has been revived and reorganized," by "15 or 20 former members."*

California Digital Newspaper Collection · See the record (https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DCS19200202.2.42)

WHAT IT CHANGES

The order's 1966 history, *Then and Now*, gives the Marysville incorporation of 9 November 1915 and the handover of 1940, and is silent on the years between; no history of the order we have read names the lodges of 1915–1917, their numbers, the grand lodge of 1916, or how the revival ended. The newspapers show that the corporation the revivers of 1931 inherited had been, for a few years, a live order of eight lodges and some thousands of members, run as a boosters' club for the valley

towns, and that it was the First World War, not neglect, that ended it. Most of the newspapers were found through the public albums “ECV ® Back in the Day” of Jim Cirner, Sublime Noble Grand Humbug No. 54 of E Clampus Vitus, which pointed to the clippings; the Colusa Daily Sun’s account of the end, of 27 and 28 January 1920, was found in the newspaper collection.

LIMITS

The lodge numbers are those the papers gave, and they disagree: Willows is No. 4 in one paper and No. 5 in another, Colusa No. 5 and then No. 6, and a “Sacramento Lodge” was announced as No. 5 and then No. 4, perhaps a lodge that took a number and never met. The day Red Bluff No. 7 was instituted is not recorded in the papers read. Several items were read only in machine-read text, as marked. Membership figures are the papers’ own, and boosters’ figures. The corporation’s own minutes for 1915–1920 have not been found.

WHAT WE SEARCHED BEFORE CALLING IT NEW

The California Digital Newspaper Collection, 1915–1921, for “Clampers,” “Clampus Vitus,” “Clampsus” and “Grand Lodge” with each town (the *Sacramento Union*, *Marysville Daily Appeal*, *Chico Record*, *Colusa Herald*, *Colusa Daily Sun*, *Feather River Bulletin*, *Plumas Independent*, *Red Bluff Daily News*); *Then and Now* (1966); *Credo quia absurdum* (1949); Jim Cirner’s albums “ECV ® Back in the Day” #1–3; ecvinc.org and chapter histories; web searches for the lodges by name.

Our standard for calling a finding new is set out in How we research (projectscroll.com/how-we-research/), and how we weigh each kind of record in Scrollsigns (projectscroll.com/scrollsigns/).

"New" means new to print as far as we can tell. If you know of an earlier publication, tell us and we will credit it here and raise the note's version.

WORKS CITED

Earlier work, catalogues and databases named in this note, besides the records quoted above.

1. E Clampus Vitus, *E Clampus Vitus: Then and Now, 1852–1966* (Stockton, 1966), pp. 19–25. https://ecv13.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Then_and_Now_1966.pdf
2. E Clampus Vitus, *Credo quia absurdum* (Placerville, 1949). https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.31822035077338

THE FULL STORY

The finding is set out in context, with the rest of its sources, in E Clampus Vitus: the complete record (projectscroll.com/news/e-clampus-vitus-the-complete-record/). In the discoveries register:

- `revival-lodges-1915-1917` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#revival-lodges-1915-1917)
- `revival-end-1920` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#revival-end-1920)

HOW TO CITE THIS NOTE

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