PROJECT SCROLL RESEARCH NOTE 2026-19

E Clampus Vitus in Georgia, 1852–1877: the Columbus lodge in its own town's newspapers, its gift to a church school, and "the Old Eclampsus Vitis" of Washington, Georgia

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SUMMARY

The order's lodge at Columbus, Georgia, has been known only from a few lines of the *Columbus Enquirer* (printed there as the *Inquirer*) extracted in a California paper in March 1853. The Columbus papers themselves, digitized by the Digital Library of Georgia, give the lodge's first winter. A notice dated 9 December 1852 announced that "A LODGE of the Ancient Order of E Clampsus Vitus, will be organized at the Columbus Guards' Armory, on THIS EVENING ... By order of the N. G. H." On 14 January 1853 a called meeting summoned "those persons who have heretofore been notified of their election," signed by I. T. Robinson, Secretary; the *Columbus Enquirer* of 18 January carried a "regular meeting" with "business of importance" and candidates for initiation. On 9 February the managers of the Parochial School of Trinity Church thanked "the honorable society of 'E Clampsus Vitus' for their liberal and timely gift of $25 00," the earliest gift by the order yet found east of the Rockies (California lodges had given to firemen, a road fund and a school in 1852–53). A generation later the *Washington Gazette* of Washington, Georgia, reported (15 December 1876) that "the Old Eclampsus Vitis held a meeting on last Monday night, when two outside barbarians were initiated into the mysteries of this ancient and honorable order."

THE RECORD

1. ***Southern Sentinel*** **(Columbus, Ga.), 16 December 1852, p. 3: notice dated 9 December 1852**

> *"A LODGE of the Ancient Order of E Clampsus Vitus, will be organized at the Columbus Guards' Armory, on THIS EVENING, the 9th inst., at 7 o'clock. By order of the N. G. H."*

Georgia Historic Newspapers, Digital Library of Georgia · See the record (https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn82015296/1852-12-16/ed-1/seq-3/)

2. ***Tri-weekly Times and Sentinel*** **(Columbus), 14 January 1853, p. 3**

> *"THERE will be a called meeting of this order on FRIDAY NIGHT, 14th inst. Those persons who have heretofore been notified of their election, will please be in attendance, as this meeting is intended for their benefit. ... By order of the N. G. H. I. T. Robinson, Secretary."*

Georgia Historic Newspapers · See the record (https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn89053814/1853-01-14/ed-1/seq-3/)

3. ***Columbus Enquirer*****, 18 January 1853, p. 3**

> *"E Clampsus Vitus. Regular meeting this evening," with "business of importance" to lay before the order, and candidates for initiation (machine-read text).*

Georgia Historic Newspapers · See the record (https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn82014931/1853-01-18/ed-1/seq-3/)

4. ***Tri-weekly Times and Sentinel*****, 12 February 1853, p. 2 (also** ***Weekly Times & Sentinel*****, 15 February 1853, p. 2): communication dated 9 February 1853**

> *"The Managers of the Parochial School of Trinity Church desire to present their most grateful acknowledgments to the honorable society of 'E Clampsus Vitus' for their liberal and timely gift of $25 00."*

Georgia Historic Newspapers · See the record (https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn89053814/1853-02-12/ed-1/seq-2/)

5. ***Columbus Daily Enquirer*, 8 August 1875, p. 3: the paper's look back at 1853**

> *"An order appears for a regular meeting of E. Clampsus Vitus, by order of N. G. H. and signed Peabody, secretary."*

Georgia Historic Newspapers · See the record (https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn84024797/1875-08-08/ed-1/seq-3/)

6. ***Washington Gazette* (Washington, Ga.), 15 December 1876, p. 3**

> *"The Old Eclampsus Vitis held a meeting on last Monday night, when two outside barbarians were initiated into the mysteries of this ancient and honorable order. Another meeting will take place to night."*

Georgia Historic Newspapers · See the record (https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn85034211/1876-12-15/ed-1/seq-3/)

7. ***Washington Gazette*, 12 January 1877, p. 3**

> *"Are there any more candidates for initiation into the Old Eclampsus Vitis?"*

Georgia Historic Newspapers · See the record (https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn85034211/1877-01-12/ed-1/seq-3/)

WHAT IT CHANGES

Columbus, Georgia, moves from a single second-hand extract to a lodge with a dated founding (9 December 1852, at the Columbus Guards' armory), a named secretary, a winter of meetings and initiations, and a gift of $25 to a church school, the earliest recorded gift of the order east of the Rockies. Washington, Georgia, is added as a new place, showing the order still initiating in Georgia in 1876–77.

LIMITS

The Columbus Enquirer notice of 18 January 1853 and the Washington Gazette items were read in the machine-read text; the other Columbus notices were read on the

page images. The two Columbus papers give different secretaries (I. T. Robinson on 14 January; "Peabody," as the Enquirer recalled in 1875). Nothing shows whether the Columbus lodge of 1852 and the Washington lodge of 1876 were connected, or how long either lasted.

WHAT WE SEARCHED BEFORE CALLING IT NEW

Georgia Historic Newspapers for every spelling of the order's name (Clampsus, Clampus, Eclampsus, Clampses, Eclampsis, Clampsis, Eclampus, Vitis), 1845–1895; Chronicling America's Georgia titles; the California Digital Newspaper Collection for the Columbus extract of 1853; the order's histories (*Then and Now*, 1966; Slopes, 2000).

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.

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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). https://ecv13.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Then_and_Now_1966.pdf
2. *San Joaquin Republican* (Stockton), 2 March 1853: extract from the *Columbus Inquirer*. California Digital Newspaper Collection. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SRP18530302.2.12.3
3. Seth Slopes, *E Clampus Vitus* (2000), with its dated chronology of places. https://archive.org/details/eclampusvitus0000seth

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:

- `columbus-ga-1852` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#columbus-ga-1852)
- `washington-ga-1876` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#washington-ga-1876)

HOW TO CITE THIS NOTE

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