

The Plaques of E Clampus Vitus: by Sublime Grand Noble Bill Wensrich

The sixth in a continuing series of articles prepared by Bill Wensrich about regional Clamper plaques.

“If you ain’t plaque’n, then you ain’t Clampin’”

Hudson Bay Trail Marker

The Plaques of E Clampus Vitus--Humbug Chapter No. 73

The notion to have E Clampus Vitus place Trail Markers came from one William Joseph “Mac” McKellar. When I first met Mac in 2007 he was an institution with the Yreka ECV Humbug Chapter holding title as Chapter Historian. Known for leading Chapter sponsored plaque and historical treks, his death in January 2008 was a blow to both community and Chapter members. A Charter member and founder of the Chapter, Mac saw to the placement of four Trail Marker plaques over a period of three years. The first trail marker, commemorating the Hudson Bay Pack Trail, can be found at the Etna City Park entrance. This historical

marker serves as the Chapter’s sixth plaque. Hudson Bay Company, the world’s oldest fur trading company incorporated in 1670, monopolized new world fur trade for almost two centuries. Establishing a network of trading posts, the company controlled most of the Pacific Northwest fur trade by the early eighteen hundreds. To protect their interests north of the Columbia River, HBC established Ft. Vancouver with the Americans in the winter of 1824-1825. The fort was jointly occupied under provisions of the 1818 treaty convention between the United States and Britain. From 1825 to 1843 HBC sent fur brigades annually to explore and develop southern Oregon and northern California trapping and trade routes. Trappers were sent south from Fort Vancouver to the Sacramento River along trails that later became known as the Siskiyou Trail, Hudson Bay Company Pack Trail and the Oregon-California Pack Trail. The most important route used by fur-brigades was the north-south trail located on the west side of the Willamette River. It was preferred over the east side route because of easier to ford smaller coast range streams

in lieu of crossing creeks flowing from the Cascade mountain range. The packtrail followed the Umpqua and Rogue River valleys of western Oregon before summiting the Siskiyou Mountains on the California border. From there the trail used the Shasta and Sacramento River valleys to eventually reach the Mexican pueblo of Yerba Buena, later renamed San Francisco. Many branches and other recognizable tracks were later developed; this network of commonly traveled tracks, parts of what used to be Indian trails, began bearing increasing amounts of trapper, livestock and teamster traffic. Eventually, it simply was referred to as the Hudson Bay Pack Trail. Traveling as far south as San Francisco Bay in 1832-1833, HBC trappers were often the first Euro-Americans to explore uncharted territory. By 1836 HBC’s Southern Party fur-brigade led by Thomas McKay went to explore the Pit River region. On this trip they discovered and trapped in Scott Valley where game was so plentiful they called the location Beaver Valley. With Tom McKay on that trip was

Stephen Hall Meek, who later became famous as trapper, explorer, and wagon train guide known for his failed 1845 Meek’s cutoff fiasco. Meek’s HBC trapper trip description illustrates some of the history Mac McKellar’s trail marker preserves. “In the spring of 1835, I started for the Willamette valley, and when I reached Walla Walla engaged to the Hudson Bay Co., staying until the spring of 1836 at Vancouver. That spring I went with a party of men under the celebrated Tom McKay to California, trapping Scott River and the Sacramento. We went to Yerba Buena (San Francisco) and left our furs with the agent of the company, Mr. Ray, and then returned, trapping on the American, Yuba, Feather, Pit, McLeod and Shasta rivers, and then to Vancouver.”

HUDSON BAY TRAIL MARKER
ORIGINATED IN 1836
ERECTED SEPTEMBER 16, 1978 BY
THE SISKIYOU COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY AND HUMBUG CHAPTER NO.
73 E CLAMPUS VITUS

Today in History: by The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, March 28, the 87th day of 2018. There are 278 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On March 28, 1898, the U.S. Supreme Court, in United States v. Wong Kim Ark, ruled 6-2 that Wong, who was born in the United States to Chinese immigrants, was an American citizen.

On this date:

In 1797, Nathaniel Briggs of New Hampshire received a patent for a washing machine.

In 1834, the U.S. Senate voted to censure President Andrew Jackson for the removal of federal deposits from the Bank of the United States.

In 1930, the names of the Turkish cities of Constantinople and Angora were changed to Istanbul and Ankara.

In 1941, novelist and critic Virginia Woolf, 59, drowned herself near her home in Lewes, East Sussex, England.

In 1942, during World War II, British naval forces staged a successful raid on the Nazi-occupied French port of St. Nazaire in Operation Chariot, destroying the only dry dock on the Atlantic coast capable of repairing the German battleship Tirpitz.

In 1943, composer Sergei Rachmaninoff, 69, died in Beverly Hills, California.

In 1955, John Marshall Harlan II was sworn in as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1969, the 34th president of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, died in Washington D.C. at age 78.

In 1978, in Stump v. Sparkman, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld, 5-3, the judicial immunity of an Indiana judge against a lawsuit brought by a young woman who’d been ordered sterilized by the judge when she was a teenager.

In 1979, America’s worst commercial nuclear accident occurred with a partial meltdown

inside the Unit 2 reactor at the Three Mile Island plant near Middletown, Pennsylvania.

In 1987, Maria von Trapp, whose life story inspired the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical “The Sound of Music,” died in Morrisville, Vermont, at age 82.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush presented the Congressional Gold Medal to the widow of U.S. Olympic legend Jesse Owens.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush declared that Iraq was standing at a defining moment as it struggled to put down heavily armed Shiite militias in new flare-ups of violence. Cuba made it legal for its citizens to own cellphones in their own names.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama, flanked by grim-faced mothers who lost their children to guns, urged lawmakers not to “get squishy” in the face of powerful forces against gun control legislation. Pope Francis

washed and kissed the feet of a dozen inmates, including two young women, at a juvenile detention center in a surprising departure from church rules that restricted the Holy Thursday ritual to men. British actor Richard Griffiths, 65, remembered by movie fans for being grumpy Uncle Vernon in the “Harry Potter” movies, died in Coventry, England.

One year ago: President Donald Trump proposed immediate budget cuts of \$18 billion from programs like medical research, infrastructure and community grants so that U.S. taxpayers, not Mexico, could cover the down payment on the border wall. Wells Fargo said it would pay \$110 million to settle a class-action lawsuit over up to 2 million accounts its employees opened for customers without getting their permission.

Today’s Birthdays: Author Mario Vargas Llosa is 82. Country musician Charlie McCoy is 77. Movie director Mike Newell is 76. Actress Conchata Ferrell is

75. Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte is 73. Actress Dianne Wiest (weest) is 72. Country singer Reba McEntire is 63. Olympic gold medal gymnast Bart Conner is 60. Actress Alexandra Billings (TV: “Transparent”) is 56. Rapper Salt (Salt-N-Pepa) is 52. Actress Tracey Needham is 51. Actor Max Perlich is 50. Movie director Brett Ratner is 49. Country singer Rodney Atkins is 49. Actor Vince Vaughn is 48. Rapper Mr. Cheeks (Lost Boyz) is 47. Actor Ken L. is 45. Singer-songwriter Matt Nathanson is 45. Rock musician Dave Keuning is 42. Actress Annie Wersching is 41. Actress Julia Stiles is 37. Singer Lady Gaga is 32. Electronic musician Clayton Knight (Odesza) is 30.

Thought for Today: “It isn’t what people think that’s important, but the reason they think what they think.” — Eugene Ionesco, Romanian-French playwright (born in 1909, died this date in 1994).

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