

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

Collier Logging Museum

The Plaques of E Clampus Vitus—Umpqua Joe No. 1859 & Humbug Chapter No. 73

The 43rd in a continuing series of articles prepared by Bill Wensrich

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

Living history day at the Collier Logging Museum was the date Oregon’s E Clampus Vitus Umpqua Joe Chapter set for their 2012 summer Doin’s and historical monument dedication. Robby “Fosdick” Robinson, second Humbug (club president) of the Chapter was hell bent to erect three plaques during his term and establish an Umpqua Joe Chapter plaque presence in counties other than Josephine. The old abandoned Spring Creek campground just north of Klamath Falls was selected as the June weekend clampsite. Located at famous Spring Creek headwaters, mosquitos were found in record numbers. Nonetheless, intrepid redshirts camped and clamped without complaint and a lot of DEET®.

The Collier Logging Museum is located within the boundaries of Collier Memorial State Park. Two brothers, Alfred and Andrew Collier, donated 146 acres to the state of Oregon to create a park honoring their parents. Located at the junction of Spring Creek and the Williamson River, the locale offers campers an idyllic retreat. The outdoor museum includes interesting, rare, and representative logging artifacts. At the museum a window of time provides views of logging practices and technology that affected the development of this region and its culture. A tour through the grounds provides visitors with a glimpse of how logging evolved from using horses, oxen, and felling axes to modern diesel tractors and trucks.

Glenn Hearrell, Chapter founder and Old Prospector, talked to Klamath County representatives who suggested ECV plaque the Logging Museum. Robby dug up logging museum

information and visited the museum on living history day in 2011. Working with Oregon State Park staff, he obtained their approval to set the plaque using a logging theme for the historical monument.

A friend of Robby’s suggested he use an old saw blade and have a welder cut out the script on the blade face. An old 36 inch logging mill circular saw blade was obtained from a collector in Lakeside, Oregon. A computer program was used to cut the wording. Operating overnight, the computerized cutting operation suffered a power outage ruining the plaque saw blade. Recovering from this fiasco, a steel sheet was obtained and a replica saw blade was cut out. It was on this second try steel sheet that the actual plaque history script was cut. Although a terrific plaque ensued, the Chapter learned how easy it is to go way over their historical monument erection budget.

Master craftsman Hearrell and his work crew mounted the saw blade plaque on an ingenious wooden frame of fir logs that compliments the Logging Museum theme. The redwood slab on which the plaque replica saw blade is mounted was obtained in Gasquet, California near Crescent City on the coast.

The dedication ceremony was held Saturday, June 17, 2011. Park ranger Joel Brain, civilians and plenty of redshirts were on hand. “Molar” Mike Johnson, a friend of Glenn’s from the Billy Holcomb Chapter prepared the historical keepsake event handout. The next day the park hosted living history day where period re-enactors demonstrated various logging practices and the use of old equipment.

To view this plaque take Highway 97 40 miles north of Klamath Falls, Oregon. Turn left into the Collier State Park Museum parking lot. There on the left hand side you will find the ECV historical monument. While you’re there enjoy a picnic lunch, walk along Spring Creek and tour the outdoor museum. It will be an enjoyable day well worth your time.

And what did the Clampers say to conclude the plaque dedication? A hearty “What say the Brethren?” was followed

by an even more emphatic, “Satisfactory!”

Bill Wensrich serves on the E Clampus Vitus board of directors. His recently published guide book for the ECV Transierra Roisterous Alliance of Senior Humbugs titled “The Trail to Sailors’ Diggin’s from Paragon Bay” is available for purchase from the nonprofit Del Norte County Historical Society Museum located at 577 H Street in Crescent City, California.



(Courtesy photo for the Illinois Valley News)

Umpqua Joe members Ruben Robles (left), Leo Champagne and XGNH Glenn Hearrell.

The Farrier’s Corner: by Ray and Michelle Smith

George Washington, the father of our ... mules?

Many of us grew up hearing various anecdotes related to George Washington – some of them historical facts, some of them fanciful folklores. As such, we think of many things when we think of Washington. Mules are generally not one of them. Perhaps they should be. And not just mules; mammoth donkeys, too. Yes, old George was an early mule fancier.

Although mules are an iconic symbol of the pioneer days, they were not so common in North America during the early to mid-1700s. Horses were quite common during this period. Oxen and burros were beasts of burden as well. Mules, not so much. George sought to change all of that.

Washington was an accomplished horseman and, by all accounts, an excellent rider. He loved horses and hounds. Yet, he was also known as a practical man, and his mule enterprise was born out of this practicality. He became curious about mules when he learned that they were believed to be more sure-footed than horses, more economical to feed and generally tougher. Mules work hard, require

1/3 less food per day than horses and can go longer without water. Washington began to envision how mules could improve the efficiency of farming.

As most people know, mules are the sterile hybrid offspring of a male donkey and a female horse. They are rendered sterile due to an uneven number of chromosomes resulting from the hybridization. So, George could not simply purchase a john and a molly mule and make baby mules. There-in lies the rub; he needed a donkey. He also needed a large donkey if he intended to produce large draft mules.

Fine large donkeys were available in Europe at the time. The best supposedly came from Spain, but the story gets more complicated. George couldn’t simply send off to Spain for a mail order donkey. No breeding stock mammoth donkeys were allowed to leave the borders of Spain without express permission from King Charles III of Spain. George had to somehow petition the king in order to acquire a donkey.

George initially attempted to procure jacks in 1780. Unfortunately, the Cuban merchant acting as intermediary died before the deal could be completed. Another four years would pass before any further action

was taken to acquire the animals. In 1784, a U.S. diplomat attached to the Spanish court approached the king to express Washington’s interest in mammoth jacks.

The Revolutionary War had been fought and won by the time Washington entered into his mule breeding venture. Luckily for George, his reputation had spread far and wide and the king of Spain was a big fan. He shipped two large breeding stock jacks to Washington. According to Thomas Jefferson, the king replied with, “Two of the very best to be procured and sent to you as a mark of his respect.” Unfortunately, one died in transit. The other arrived safely at Mt. Vernon, with his handler, in 1785. Washington named him “Royal Gift” and soon began marketing him at stud, serving both mares and donkey jennets.

Royal Gift became quite a celebrity, touring all around the southern states advertising his stud services and promoting the practicality and usefulness of mules and mammoth donkeys. Yet despite his pedigree, Royal Gift proved to be a less than eager breeder. He was frequently sulky and refused to cover mares and jennets. When he was successful at breeding, few offspring resulted. Washington’s sense of humor was displayed when he remarked, “If Royal will administer,

he will be at the service of your mares. But at present he seems to be too full of royalty to have anything to do with a plebian race.” Washington eventually began keeping Royal Gift in the regular company of two jennets and his breeding ability improved.

Sadly, Royal Gift suffered serious injuries resulting in permanent lameness while on loan to a South Carolina planter in 1793. He was never able to work or breed again and was retired to pasture. He died in South Carolina in 1796.

Following the death of Royal Gift, Washington used two other jacks for breeding. One, Compound, was the offspring of Royal Gift and a very successful breeder. The other was an unrelated jack named Knight of Malta. In 1785, at the beginning of his mule breeding odyssey, Washington owned 132 horses at Mount Vernon. By 1799, that demographic had changed and Washington owned 27 horses, 20 donkeys and 63 mules. It all started with Royal Gift. As a result, many American mules and mammoth donkeys can trace their lines back to Washington’s animals.

Information from Bakma, Johannah. “Royal Gift (Donkey)”. Washington Library for Digital History. George Washington University. www.mountvernon.org/library.

Oregon marijuana prices dive - and sales soar

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Rampant overproduction in Oregon’s market for legal, recreational marijuana has produced a 50 percent drop in prices, according to state economists. That widely documented collapse has been tough on farmers and retailers - but a boon for consumers.

A new state analysis finds the price collapse sparked a big uptick in marijuana purchases and a corresponding increase in associated tax revenue, the Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

“Lower prices are helping to

drive the volume of sales higher and induce black and medical market conversions into the legal, recreational market,” said Josh Lehner of the Oregon Office of Economist Analysis.

Recreational marijuana sales in Oregon will be nearly \$543 million this year, up 29 percent from 2017 and well above economists’ expectations, forecasts show.

When Oregon legalized marijuana four years ago, expectations were enormous for the newly legal market. The state created incentives for producers to

leave the black market, leading to overproduction and the ensuing price decrease.

A state study found the retail cost of a gram of marijuana plunged from \$14 in 2015 to \$7 last year.

Recreational marijuana remains a small industry, relative to the size of Oregon’s economy. For comparison, economists note that cigarette sales are 40 percent higher than marijuana sales. But legal marijuana is growing fast - state forecasts suggest it will be a billion-dollar market in 2025.

While Oregon has no general

sales tax, it does levy a 17 percent sales tax on marijuana. Marijuana taxes generated nearly \$70 million in revenue last year and are forecast to generate nearly \$90 million in 2018.

State forecasters believe marijuana may eventually play a more important role in the state’s economy.

“The real economic impact from recreational marijuana will come not from the growing and retailing, which are low-wage and low value-added market segments,” economists wrote in a revenue forecast issued last week.

“It will come from higher value-added products like oils, creams, and edibles, in addition to niche, specialty strains.”

The rise of marijuana in Oregon could evoke the emergence of craft brewing in the state, the economists wrote, with value-added production augmented by a cluster of suppliers and support industries.

“The long-term potential of exporting Oregon products and business know-how to the rest of the country remains large,” economists wrote, “at least once marijuana is legalized nationwide.”

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