



ADAM LEE MOORE - Venerated Past Clampatriarch [As he appeared during the Institution of James W. Marshall Chapter No. 49 at Hangtown. April 30, 1935]

ADAM LEE MOORE SPEAKS

The Clampatriarch's Reminiscences of E CLAMPUS VITUS as It Existed in Downieville and Sierra City in the Sixties and Later. IN THE YEAR 1868 was the first time that I had ever heard of the ancient and honorable order of the E CLAMPUS VITUS, and the people of Downieville, Sierra County, State of California, were of the opinion that it would be a great help as well as a great blessing for me to become a member, providing I had pull enough and did not get blackballed; so after asking my few friends that I had at that time, having been there but a few days, and they all thought it would be wonderful if I could make it, I sent in my name, and after due deliberation was accepted, and they proceeded to initiate me.

I answered the usual questions in-the anteroom, the portals were thrown open, and I was conducted to the coffin where they placed my hand on the skeleton and took the blindfold off of my eyes, and there I took the obligation; they then elevated me, for I had said I believed in the elevation of man; and I took it in good part and with the exception of the brand enjoyed the evening, for they made it short for me as there were two more that night.

One of the two got smart and would be tough, so what they did to him I do not think he will ever forget; they rode him over the rocky roads to Dublin till he begged them to quit. This is done with a wheelbarrow with a large wet sponge in it. The candidate is seated, while the by-laws are read to him; then there is a ladder on the floor, rungs down, and the wheelbarrow is run over it, a man at each handle, the C. P. on one side and the C. M. on the other, to see that the Candidate is seated comfortably.

Then they elevated him, first with the tackle, and then in the canvas, and they sure threw him up. At last he said, "Boys, if you will quit I treat," so they passed the Staff of Relief. It was about four O'clock in the morning, and we kept it up till after breakfast, and we kept singing our closing ode, "We'll take a drink with you, dear Brother."

The next time I had a chance to enter the Hall of the E. C. V.'s was about five months after that, in Downieville. I had been working in the Gold Lake district, about twenty miles from there, but I had to have some things, so I came to town; and I was glad I did, for we partly initiated Old McKinsey, and it was some joke on both him and us.

McKinsey at that time had the main saloon in Downieville, and they had been trying to get him for some time; his trade fell off, and some of them suggested it was because he did not belong to the Order, so he thought he had better join. Everything went O. K. till they elevated him, when the ring pulled out of the belt they hoisted him with, and let him fall and sprained his ankle, and the devil was to pay. The N. G. H. and C. P. & C. M. were masked, and all the rest of us left before they unmasked him.

He tried to see who they were, but could not, so he limped to the saloon, got in behind the bar, and got his gun, and came out and looked us all over. We were all playing cards. "Are any of you S. B.'s Clampers that were up in the hall?"

We all turned and looked at him very innocently, but turned back to our games. "If I was only certain," he said, "I would fill you full of lead. I wish I had my gun when those three men took the hoodwink off me; I would have found out who they were, the S. B.'s."

Well, like all Clampers, he became a good one and got lots of new members; I do not think he ever missed a meeting.

The next meeting I attended was of Sierra Valley Lodge, "The Badger." They were the roughest order in my time. They always said, "Throw wide the portals and let the S. B. enter." The night I was there Ned Buntline attended and we sure had a time, as he was smart—having traveled a great deal. He was the writer at that time of most of the dime novels.

They asked him a lot of questions and he had an answer for every one. They asked him, "In your travels did you ever meet any of the persons known as C. S.'s?," and he answered right away, "Not till I came in this hall." Well, the boys were just delighted with him, and there was very little rough stuff, and when they sang the closing ode it was "You'll take a drink with us, dear Brother."

In 1874 - I moved to Sierra City and was installed as R. P. under Joe Carney (the Justice of the Peace), who was N. G. H. at that time; A. C. Bush had resigned in Joe's favor. I think we made a good pair.

We initiated quite a few before Joe went to South America, and after that I took the reins. A good Clamper by the name of Bob Lowden could imitate a woman wonderfully, and you would think it was one you knew if you did not see him. We had a Jew drummer, and, as usual, the sisters were all there, talking to each other and making remarks about the candidate.

The N. G. H. said, "Mrs. Manchester, you will have to stop talking or leave the hall," and just before they took off the hoodwink the N. G. H. ordered the sisters to retire, they tiptoed out, and Bob said "Good night" in their different voices; and they finished with the Jew. Mrs. Manchester had met the Jew at the hotel, and knew they had caught him, so the next morning, when she met him in front of the hotel, she said: "Good morning. So you joined the Clampers last night! How did you like it?" He stopped in front of her, shook his finger at her, and said: "Dont' ever speak to me again!

I want nothing to do or say to a woman that associates with them!" There were some very bright men who had the most honorable office of N. G. H.—Judge Tom Bowers, Tiry L. Ford, Sheriff A. C. Bush, Judge Frank Cowden, and many others; with the exception of myself, all very bright men.

There was a chicken and egg peddler by the name of Adams joined, and after closing he got in a row with Bill Gardner, and by some means while wrestling around Bill he got a bottle of red ink spilled over him, on his hands and so on Adams.

In come Mr. Sheriff and arrested Adams, so they took Adams and had a trial, and Adams' lawyer saw that the jury were all Clampers.

Judge Cowden was the judge. The case went to the jury, and it looked bad for Adams; the judge told the jury that they ought to bring in a verdict of guilty.

When the jury filed out, the lawyer told Adams to give the Clamper sign; they were not gone long and when they came back the judge asked for their verdict, and the foreman said "Not guilty!"

Oh, he was grateful to the Clampers!

That night they took him to the bank and had out a box (W. F. Co.'s) with 5,000 in it—\$20 goldpieces, wrapped in rolls. They broke one open and showed it to Adams, wrapped it up again and locked the box, and asked him if he would take it to Marysville because that was where the Clampers kept their money.

He said "I had better go with the stage, and then come back and get my wagon." They told him if he had any trouble to give the sign, as there were pretty sure to be Clampers to help him.

The next morning the stage stopped at the bank and Adams put the box on and the boys bade him good-bye and gave him the sign. They stopped the stage three times, and three times Adams gave the sign and they lowered their guns and walked away.

Adams told everybody what a fine thing it was to belong to the E. C. V.'s. When he got to Marysville the stage drove to the bank, Adams got down, took the box into the bank, told the cashier he had the Clampers' money, \$5,000, and please to give him a receipt.

The cashier told him to wait till he counted the money. He unlocked the box, and there was nothing but iron washers.

Adams looked, and the cashier told the bank policeman to hold him till he heard from Downieville.

The next day they told him they had heard from Downieville, and somebody must have given him the wrong box, and that he was all right and a good Clamper.

He was a happy man, then; he always swore by the Order.

Up to the year 1880 almost every mining camp had an E. C. V. Lodge; but although they had about the same ritual, they had different implements of torture, and these were used according to the temperament of the candidate.

Barnum said, "You can fool some of the people all the time, all the people some of the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time." Well, we fool them all the time; if you do not think so, join the E. C. V.'s.

Most of the people that are not members of the Order have no conception of the good work and good deeds that was done by the Order in the early days in California, to a family or persons in distress, or needing help.

Whether they belonged to the Order or not made no difference; when they called on the Clampers they got help, and without any red tape, but at once.

Most of the money given was raised by giving dances, the hall and music free and the ladies providing the food; sometimes, when in a hurry, by subscription; but it always came. They always said that the different lodges had nice dances, but that the Clampers had the biggest balls of any of them!

We had many a jolly and happy time in the different Clampers' halls. We certainly had the biggest attendance at our balls, for all knew that it was to raise money to help someone in need, and so they came from the different towns.

We had the biggest Fourth of July celebration that was ever held in Sierra County. Frank Anderson, a lawyer, made a Clamper speech that was wonderful. We had a fine parade.

My little daughter was four years old and dressed as Martha Washington, and Roy Fletcher dressed as Washington, and they rode on the hose carriage and the fire company pulled them.

Our flag was a hoop skirt with the sign on it, "This is the flag we fight under." Then Jim Cane, a lawyer, had a big buck goat, and he gilded his balls and they sure looked brilliant in the sun, old Jim leading him. At night the Clampers rigged up in fancy costumes and masked. I had a skin-tight black rig and rode my white pony. We had a big time, and ended with a fine ball; everybody was happy; and they all thought that the Clampers were angels instead of jest men.

And so recorded,

by ADAM LEE MOORE, N. G. H., Balaam Lodge, No. 107,304-, of Sierra City & Clampatriarch of Chapter Redivivus of Yerba Buena & of Platrix Chapter No. 2, Pueblo de Los Angeles.

(Born May 5, 1847. - Went West - Nov. 13 1946. R. I. P.)

