

The Major James D. Savage Chapter

Jim Savage 1852 Charter Doin's History

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JOAQUIN VALLEY'S NEW ECV CHAPTER – Jim Savage Chapter #1852

JAMES SAVAGE CHAPTER INSTALLED

(By Ernest J. Nielsen, Noble Grand Humbug)

Being an interesting and brief synopsis of the affairs of San Joaquin's newly created historic Chapter of E Clampus Vitus. It is a resume of the two days pilgrimage and trek of the Ancient and Honorable Order. To high ground at Poole's Ferry went Clampers honoring the frontiersman, Major James Savage who gave his life in August 1852. History of the killing was recited in perfusion, and listened to by eager PBC's and visiting Brethren.

The Jim Savage Chapter No. 1852 of the Ancient and Honorable Order of E Clampus Vitus was instituted in Fresno on February 14, when a large class of PBCs received the ennobling Staff of Relief, as Don Segerstrom, Noble Grand Humbug of Bret Harte Chapter and Archie Stevenot, XNGH and vice president of ECV Inc., officiated at the ancient ceremonies.

The charter was presented to Ernest J. Nielsen, the temporary Grand Noble Humbug of the Jim Savage Chapter at the ceremonies which were held in Bibb Hall in Fresno. The presentation was made by Don Segerstrom, Noble Grand Humbug of Bret Harte Chapter, who made a most touching, dignified and impassioned address.

Ernest Nielsen, who is a country boy from Selma, and reared on a simple farm, was overcome with the solemnity of the occasion. After a momentary pause, he raised his arms to full length, exclaiming: "What Say The Brethren?" The Brethren said "Satisfactory" and with that, Jim Savage Chapter No. 1852 became official.

Mayor Selland Extends Welcome, Followed by Supervisor Foley

Prior to the initiation, the PBCs and Clampers met at the Fresno County Court House, where an official welcome was made to the gathering by Mayor Arthur Selland of Fresno. (Selland was a PBC and did not know what he was in for!) Another welcome was extended by Norman Foley, chairman of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. (Foley, a Clamper, knew what he was talking about.) Nielsen responded to the welcome, by indicating that this was the first time in the 4005 years of Clamper history that anyone had welcomed ECV into any community.

Old Clampers Most Outstanding, Watson and Cardoza Cook Bull for Barbeque.

The arrangements for the initiation, barbeque dinner and slippery gulch, were made by a small group of Clampers in Fresno. It included such old Clampers as LeRoy Guntner, Robert M. Wash, Sid Cruff, with R.E. Dick Denton, heading the general committee. Don Ross, county employee headed the barbeque arrangements and Wayne Watson and Dimas Cardoza, did the actual cooking. LeRoy Guntner handled all the finances, did all the bookkeeping, and mailed all the notices and proclamations. Without LeRoy Guntner the event might never have been held.

Dick Loughead headed the slippery gulch arrangements, and he was able to secure a score of volunteers. What a time they had eating great mounds of food, washed down with choice libation and coffee.

Watson and Cardoza did not cook an old goaded ox, tough on Clamper's teeth. However it was reported by Northern Clampers that yearly (yearling?) bulls, though tender, are sometimes raised on Fresno County salt grass. Even that is better than Los Angeles Cow County beef where stock has a hard job to rustle any feed in sight. All were full of bull when festivities ended. P.S.: No one wonders anymore where Gunter gets his fortitude. He passed his plated the 2nd time.

The proclamation and all printing incidental to the charter event was the result of the talent and fertile imagination of Charles L. Palmer, of the Pacific Gas & Electric Company. Maurice Smith handled all publicity.

Glenn L. Myers, also with the Pacific Gas & Electric Company was the pilgrim who arranged for the pilgrimage to Poole's Ferry on the King's River on February 15.

Denton Honors Jim Savage with Charcoal Sketch, Dinuba KRDU Broadcasts Program.

Dick Denton (Foster and Kleiser Company, outdoor advertising) furnished the Jim Savage Chapter with a huge charcoal sketch of Jim Savage and also a painted plaque which was erected at the site of Poole's Ferry.

The Dinuba radio station KRDU made a broadcast of the ceremonies at Poole's Ferry and the tape of the program was presented to the Chapter. At the ceremony at the ferry site, Robert M. Wash told a gathering of about 100 the history of E Clampus Vitus, and Glenn L. Myers related the life history of Major James D. Savage. Miss Annie Mitchell, secretary of the Tulare County Historical Society welcomed Jim Savage Chapter into the historical groups of the San Joaquin Valley.

Archie and Rosie Add Color to The Occasion. Archie Carves His Name.

Present also was the XNGH Archie Stevenot and Rosie, and it was Archie who inscribed his name on the plaque on the riverbank to make the ceremony official. Archie told the group of the work of ECV in California.

Authors of Note Among PBC's.

At the ceremony there were two new PBCs of the night before. They were Joe Doctor of Tulare, author of "Shotguns On Sunday" and Raymond F. Wood, of the Fresno State College, author of "The Early History of Mariposa County." Clarence Fraser, a historian in his own right for Tulare County, and a recent initiate, was also present.

Clampatriarch "Baldy" Reamer Carried "Staff of Relief."

It should also be noted that the old man of the mountain, Howard J. Reamer of Clarksburg, was given the distinct honor at the Feb. 14 initiation of carrying the Staff of Relief, which chore he did with a credit to himself and honor to ECV. His faithful instruction to the PBCs in the use of the Staff was inspiring to all the Clampers.

The new officers of the Jim Savage Chapter No. 1852 (1852 because that was the year Savage was killed) were duly elected (in undemocratic form) at a dinner at the Basque Hotel on the night of March 3. A nominating committee composed of Charles Palmer, LeRoy Guntner and Robert M. Wash, told the gathering that "a vote against one is vote against them all" – and as a result, all nominated were elected ... including a new office for the Grand Keeper of the Privy Lock. And so ended the grand and glorious two-day celebration that Fresno, Tulare, Kings and Kern Counties will long remember.

Ed. Note: It has been reported to the Pony Express that this stupendous gathering was the result of much preparation. Plenty of history was unfolded, and many really interested in history were present, and participated. "It was not a debacle by any means," reported one, "nor a political gathering to promote any individual in office or running for office," opined another. On Fresno County's new E Clampus Stationery are the words –

***"A Fraternal, Benevolent, Historical Organization"** which is most commendable. A couple of decades ago no man was invited to join the ranks of E Clampus Vitus unless he was interested in history, and had distinguished himself in some manner, in such a field. The membership was small but replete with quality and not quantity. Those were the palmy days that should return again. Looks like Fresno's Jim Savage Chapter deserves high praise, and congratulation. Humbug Nielsen has something to be proud of.*