

State Historical Resources Commission

RESOLUTION NO. 2007-01

RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION E Clampus Vitus California

WHEREAS, it is said that The Ancient and Honorable Order of E Clampus Vitus was created in West Virginia in 1845 as an elaborate practical joke by tavern, hotel, and stable owner Ephraim Bee, who saw a need for an organization less exclusive than existing fraternal organizations; and

WHEREAS, Joe Zumwalt is credited with bringing the organization to California, where men in the diggings were too free-spirited and boisterous to be welcomed into established lodges. Zumwalt established the first chapter in Mokelumne Hill in 1851, where he found prank-loving, recreation-hungry miners ready to embrace his intriguingly absurd lodge and soon E Clampus Vitus was the largest organization in Gold Rush country; and

WHEREAS, Clampers, spoofing more staid fraternal organizations, address each other as “Noble Grand Humbug” and “Roisterous Iscutis,” bedeck themselves with badges originally fashioned from tin can lids over a non-uniform of red shirts in place of the red union suits favored by their earlier brethren; and

WHEREAS, Clampers were and are a highly-respected organization, in early days helping the families of dead or injured miners, today one of the most active historical organizations in California, dedicated to preserving western and mining history with a never-ending quest for fun, which has erected many hundred historical markers and plaques commemorating sites, people, and events otherwise lost or forgotten; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the State Historical Resources Commission congratulates The Ancient and Honorable Order of E Clampus Vitus on reaching the 75th year of thriving since its revival in San Francisco in 1931, for the diligence of its volunteer researchers, and for keeping alive an all-too-rare appreciation for the absurd, where all are treated “with equal indignity;” and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be recorded in the minutes of the State Historical Resources Commission and a suitable copy presented to E Clampus Vitus.

February 2, 2007

STATE HISTORICAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Donn Grenda, Ph.D.
Chairperson

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA
Executive Secretary

