

SHIPS LOG 1792

Captain George Vancouver Historical Society



Volume 5 February 2023



WHO IS CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

We are dedicated to the celebration, dedication, and preservation of history, serious and abstract. We believe that all parts of history must be remembered, or it will be skewed. We named this group after Captain George Vancouver who explored and mapped the Strait of Juan de Fuca, between Vancouver Island and the present-day Washington state mainland in 1792.

Down and Dirty History

Captain George Vancouver entered the Strait of Juan de Fuca, between Vancouver Island and the present-day Washington state mainland, on 29 April 1792. His Orders were to survey all of the inlets and outlet on the west coast of the mainland, all the way north to Alaska. Most of this work was in small craft propelled by both sail and oar. This was very dangerous.

He named many of the features that he discovered on his expedition for his officers and friends some of these included,

- Mount Baker – after Discovery's 3rd Lieutenant Joseph Baker, the first on the expedition to spot it
- Mount St. Helens – after his friend, Alleyne Fitzherbert, 1st Baron St Helens
- Puget Sound – after Discovery's 2nd lieutenant Peter Puget,[7] who explored its southern reaches.
- Mount Rainier – after his friend, Rear Admiral Peter Rainier.
- Port Gardner and Port Susan, Washington – after his former commander Vice Admiral Sir Alan Gardner and his wife Susannah, Lady Gardner.
- Whidbey Island – after naval engineer Joseph Whidbey.
- Discovery Passage, Discovery Island, Discovery Bay, Port Discovery and Discovery Park (Seattle).

Death

Vancouver, at one time amongst Britain's greatest explorers and navigators, died in obscurity on 10 May 1798 at the age of 40, less than three years after completing his voyages and expeditions.[15] No official cause of death was stated, as the medical records pertaining to Vancouver were destroyed; one doctor named John Naish claimed Vancouver died from kidney failure, while others believed it was a hyperthyroid condition.[16] His grave is in the churchyard of St Peter's Church, Petersham, in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, England. The Hudson's Bay Company placed a memorial plaque in the church in 1841.[17] His grave in Portland stone, renovated in the 1960s, is now Grade II listed in view of its historical associations

Legacy

Vancouver determined that the Northwest Passage did not exist at the latitudes that had long been suggested. His charts of the North American northwest coast were so extremely accurate that they served as the key reference for coastal navigation for generations. Robin Fisher, the academic Vice-President of Mount Royal University in Calgary and author of two books on Vancouver, states:

This information came largely from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia George Vancouver

CURRENT OFFICERS

Click Picture to email Officer of Choice Directly



Skipper
Tony "Not Kevin Crash" Carlson



Gilligan (Little Buddy)
Kevin "CUZ" Erwin



Scribe
Joe "Squid" Garhart



Quarter Master
Ronnie "Rod" Bundang



Sargent of Arms
Rob "Rack Bastard" Andrew

WHERE WE CAN BE FOUND



Captain George Vancouver Historical Society



Captain George Vancouver Historical Society Public Page

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Reach out to us at CGVHS1792@gmail.com
Or click on any of the officers pictures to email directly

Send Mail To:

Captain George Vancouver Historical Society
25497 Chris LN NE, Kingston, WA 98346

COMING EVENTS

- ◆ *February 4, 1700 Puyallup FOE. Puyallup WA, DOC MAYNARD'S GENERAL MEETING*
- ◆ *February 18, 1233 Sam Barlow, GENERAL MEETING, Trails End Oregon City*
- ◆ *February 18, 1200 POULSBO WA CGVHS GENERAL MEETING at North Kitsap FOE*



MEMBERSHIP CGVHS

1792

For a one time Donation of \$20 you can become a voting member of Captain George Vancouver Historical Society. "Must be present to vote"

1792

MEMBERSHIP CGVHS



Remember Brothers Doc Maynard is holding the General meeting at the Puyallup Eagles on Saturday February 4, 2023 at 5PM and March 4, 2023 at 5pm a good turn out is needed in order to make it cost effective to meet there.

CAPTAIN GEORGE VANCOUVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1792 TERRITORY



February MEETING

Bottle raffle

Work party ideas

Fall Ball: September

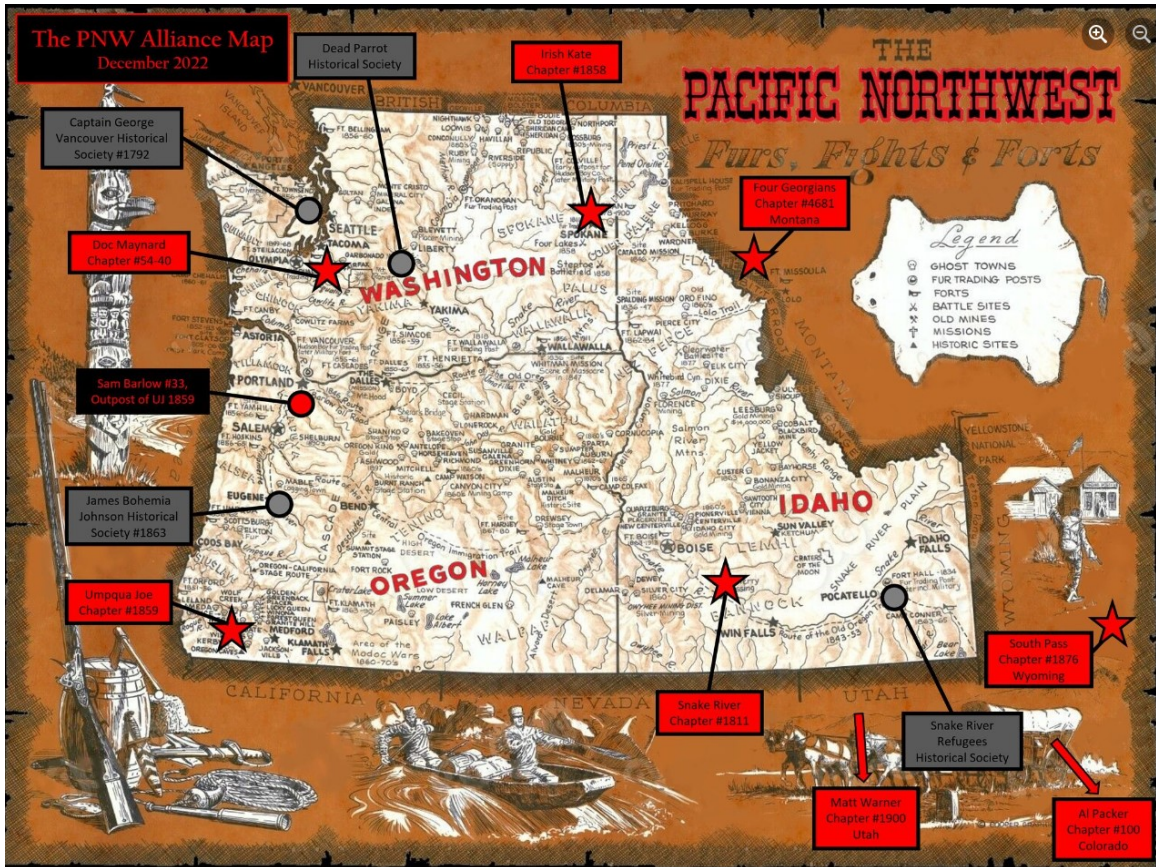
Camp out: Date ?

Picnic to thank Doc: Date June



Please do not drink and drive, there are a lot of programs out there to get you home, please use them or call someone. We love you guys and want to see you next year.

STUFF



Barrowed without permission from Charles Rising, I just thought it was so cool I had to share.



TOP STORIES



Ephraim Bee & E Clampus Vitus

(The following is a series of articles published in [The Doddridge Independent](#))

1846 sketch of Ephraim Bee by Diss Debar. On file at the West Virginia & Regional History Center

Ephraim Bee and Early Doddridge County

Starting this week I want to tell you about the legendary Ephraim Bee, one of Doddridge County's most beloved characters. Ephraim was a blacksmith, innkeeper, magistrate, Militia Captain, Grand Lama of E Clampus Vitus, and was proud to have once been named the Ugliest Man in West Virginia. His gregarious personality and peculiar sense of humor took him from a small tavern in Lewisport to the Virginia State Legislature in Richmond, and then later, in 1863, to the newly formed West Virginia State Legislature in Wheeling. His name not only lives on in Doddridge County, but also in his nationwide fraternal organization, E Clampus Vitus, that is still in existence today.

My research on Ephraim Bee is still a work in progress. I already have a great deal of information on him, but there are literally several hundred Chancery and criminal court cases in Harrison and Doddridge counties that I have yet to read. Ephraim Bee's contributions to Doddridge County are greater than any other individual that I have researched to date.

Ephraim Heaven Sent?

Ephraim Bee was born December 26, 1802 in Salem County, New Jersey, the son of Asa Bee and Rhoda Cox. His family moved to Preston County in Western Virginia sometime prior to 1820. By the time Ephraim moved to present-day Doddridge County in approximately 1822, he was already a master blacksmith. According to Ned Jones in his book [History of Smithsburg](#), "*The blacksmiths filled a long felt want, a want that nothing but a blacksmith could relieve, and the coming of Ephraim Bee was looked upon as a special dispensation of Providence for the relief of the settlers. Of course the old stretchy buckskin log and trace chains were at once discarded and replaced by iron ones.*" Ephraim was able to supply tools, farm implements, muskets, cooking utensils, and nearly all of the necessities needed to sustain the isolated village of Middle Island.

Early Roads

Ephraim Bee married Catharine Davis on June 19, 1823 in Salem, Harrison County, Virginia (now West Virginia) and shortly

afterward moved to the sparse village of Middle Island. He built his blacksmith shop near the base of where Blockhouse Hill is today. At that time there was already a bridge across the Middle Island Creek, about where the bridge by 7-11 is now located. We know this because of an entry in Harrison County Court Minute Book 1818-1820. The entry dated December 22, 1818 reads, *“On a motion of William England it is ordered that John Sommerville, Jasper Newell, Simeon Maxson and William S. Davis to mark a road from New Salem to the Middle Island Bridge.”* Twenty-five years later, in 1843, Ephraim was to play a significant role in providing the hardware necessary for the building of the covered bridge at that spot.

In another entry in Harrison County Minute Book 1823-1825, we find Ephraim Bee already trying to expand the limits of his small village. The entry dated August 18, 1823 reads, *“On a motion of Ephraim Bee it is ordered that William Davis, Joseph Davis, John Jarvis and Nichodemus Boring view a way for a road from said Bee’s to intersect the State Road where it crosses Doe Run.”* The State Road led from Clarksburg to Marietta, with portions of it running roughly where Route 50 runs today. The aforementioned Doe Run is still called Doe Run until it starts its incline up what we now call Jaco Hill. This entry tells us that Ephraim Bee was responsible for the construction of the road that ran from the Middle Island Bridge, through the present town of West Union and on to Doe Run. This information will become more important in a later article in this series.

Lewis Maxwell a Close Friend

In 1828 the section of the Middle Island community that Ephraim Bee lived in became the village of Lewisport when Ephraim opened the first Post Office in this area. It was called Lewisport in honor of Congressman Lewis Maxwell, who owned most of the surrounding land.

Within a few short years, Ephraim Bee had not only a blacksmith shop, but also a farm, stables, tannery, tavern and an inn. By 1830 Ephraim and Catharine had already had four children; Josiah, Keziah, Amos and Stinnett. Oral tradition tells us that Ephraim Bee and Lewis Maxwell were close friends, and we find confirmation of this in a Harrison County Deed Book. In a deed dated November 1, 1831 Lewis Maxwell gives to Ephraim Bee a piece of property, *“Beginning 14 feet above the bridge and running thence up the creek...to the main street in the town of Lewisport including his house and blacksmith.”* Apparently Ephraim had built his house and blacksmith shop on property that belonged to Lewis Maxwell quite some time before the deed was written. The price Ephraim paid for this property was, *“In Consideration of Friendship.”*

In 1827 the Northwestern Turnpike was chartered by the General Assembly of Virginia to connect Winchester, Virginia to [Parkersburg](#). By 1837 the Northwestern Turnpike ran right beside Ephraim Bee’s blacksmith shop. The construction of this road led to an unprecedented migration of people from Maryland and Pennsylvania into present-day Doddridge County.

Ephraim Breaks from Church

Sometime before 1827 several members of the Salem Seventh Day Baptist Church who had migrated west towards Lewisport built a meeting house and cemetery on the hill above Ephraim Bee’s blacksmith shop. In 1831 Ephraim was made the first Clerk of what would be known as the Middle Island Seventh Day Baptist Church. But his time at this church was short-lived. In [A History of the Seventh Day Baptists in West Virginia...](#) by Corliss Fitz Randolph, he tells of how Ephraim Bee split from the church:

“At the regular quarterly business meeting of the church in November, following the organization, there was presented to the church a controversy which had arisen between Ephraim Bee and Nathan Davis. This dispute shook the infant church to its foundation, and planted the seeds of trouble for years to come. So serious was it that at the regular meeting in February next, Ephraim Bee was relieved of his duties as clerk of the church until the unfortunate difference should be adjusted.”

Nathan Davis was a Justice of the Peace at this time and had sided with a man named William I. Lowther in a dispute between William and Ephraim. Ephraim felt that Nathan’s ruling was unfair and the matter was taken before the elders of the church. The elders sided with Nathan Davis, and Ephraim was forced to resign his position. You will see later how this feud led to the founding of West Union as the County Seat of Doddridge County.

Bridges Washed Away

Another oral tradition is that the Middle Island Bridge washed away in the Great Flood of 1835. This is supported by documents showing that in 1837, the Northwestern Turnpike Company rebuilt the bridge when the turnpike was constructed. Beyond that, I found a Legislative Petition in which Squire Sayre petitioned the State of Virginia for compensation for the destruction of his grist and sawmill that was ruined when the rebuilt Middle Island Bridge once again, in 1838, washed off its foundation and crashed into his mill. His case was thrown out of the local court because the bridge was a result of an Act of the Virginia Assembly, so Sayre was advised to file a Legislative Petition to seek financial compensation from the state of Virginia. In November 1839 Ephraim Bee gave a statement swearing that he was an eyewitness to the bridge as it washed off its foundation and that he watched the bridge crash into Squire Sayre’s mill. He also stated that he had warned the Northwestern Turnpike Company that the bridge was likely to be washed away just like the old one because it was built no higher than the last. I am still looking for the resolution to this petition.

By 1840 Ephraim and Catharine had had five more children; Wickcliffe, Ephraim W., Huston, Augustus, and Martha. Unfortunately, Huston only lived for six months. He is buried at the Old Seventh Day Baptist Section of the Blockhouse Hill Ceme-

tery. Most likely, Ephraim Bee could see his son's grave from his blacksmith shop. We also know from the 1840 Federal Census that Ephraim Bee had two slaves, a female age 24-35 years and a female age under 10 years.

Diss Debar Arrives

Very shortly, Ephraim Bee would meet a man who would change not only his life, but the lives of so many people in Doddridge County. On April 15, 1846 Joseph H. Diss Debar stepped off of Major Hilderbrand's coach in Lewisport and walked into Ephraim Bee's tavern. The relationship that they formed that day led years later to a contentious power struggle between the two for the House of Delegates in the newly formed state of West Virginia.

Check back next week to read more about the hotly contested battle between Ephraim Bee and Joseph H. Diss Debar. I'll also share the details of a scandalous court case between Elizabeth Burnside and Ephraim Bee. You'll learn how Ephraim proclaimed himself the Grand Hototote of a fraternal order of practical jokers. And so much more.....

Ephraim Bee in Local Politics and Courtroom Scandal

We left you last week with Ephraim Bee, a blacksmith and innkeeper, having settled with his family on the banks of the Middle Island Creek in about 1823. They lived in a small village called Lewisport, which came into existence when Ephraim Bee opened a post office there in 1828. Lewisport was situated near where Blockhouse Hill is located today. In 1831 Ephraim got into a serious quarrel with a local Justice of the Peace, a fellow Seventh Day Baptist named Nathan Davis, that lasted for years and eventually led to the county seat of Doddridge County being located across the creek in West Union.

West Union Named

The earliest mention of the town of West Union that I've found is May 23, 1839, some six years earlier than the 1845 reported by some historians. A deed between Nathan Davis and his son, Lewis S. Davis, reads in part "... 15 acres with the exception of all the ground or lots laying just north of the Northwestern Turnpike in a place called West Union..." So as early as 1839 there existed two towns separated by the Middle Island Creek, one called Lewisport and the other called West Union. We don't know how long before 1839 that West Union may have been known by that name, and we don't know the name's origin. Ephraim Bee's home at that time was in Lewisport, while Nathan Davis lived with his family on a large farm in West Union. Also living on that side of the creek was Nathan's son-in-law, Samuel Preston Fitz Randolph.

County Seat Contested

Prior to Doddridge County's formation in 1845, there were two factions that fought over the location of the county seat. There was the Ephraim Bee faction, with the support of Lewis Maxwell, who wanted Lewisport to be the county seat, and there was the Nathan Davis faction, with the support of the Fitz Randolph family, who wanted West Union to be the county seat.

A county seat had to be determined before a new county could be formed. Since Doddridge County was being carved out of sections of Lewis, Ritchie, Tyler and Harrison counties, residents from the affected portions of all four counties were asked to sign a petition stating whether they wanted Lewisport or West Union to be the new county seat. (When I viewed these petitions on microfilm at the West Virginia State Archives, seeing the actual signatures of most of our local founding fathers was quite amazing.)

I have not actually counted how many votes each town received, but we know that West Union eventually became the county seat. This was most likely because the Davis and Fitz Randolph families were extremely prominent and had been involved in local government for years. They also had been living in present-day Doddridge County well before Ephraim Bee came here. However, Ephraim Bee's hard work and industrious nature was by far the major reason that the newly founded Doddridge County grew and became as prosperous as it did in those early years.

Ephraim Bee and Nathan Davis' tug-of-war did not end there. The first meeting of the County Court in 1845 was held in Nathan Davis' home because a court house had not yet been built. Ephraim showed up at this meeting under the impression that he had been appointed one of the several Justices of the Peace for the new county. However, Nathan Davis and the other officers contested his appointment. In the end, Ephraim was not appointed to any office at that first court session. This, along with earlier perceived injustices from people like Nathan Davis, led Ephraim Bee to have a very cynical and comical view of his fellow man. I will write more about his views and his founding of E Clampus Vitus in the last article in this series. For now, we will continue to focus on Ephraim's early experiences in Doddridge County.

Diss Debar's Observations

On April 15, 1846 Joseph H. Diss Debar, creator of the West Virginia State Seal, made his first appearance in Lewisport, at the Inn operated by Ephraim Bee's wife. He had come to Doddridge County to inspect a large tract of land in the southwest portion of the county that he planned to colonize. Upon hearing that the name of the inn proprietor's wife was Mrs. Bee and noticing her many children running around the tavern, Diss Debar said that it had never before been his pleasure to dine in a beehive. From that day forward Ephraim Bee's Tavern and Inn became known as the Bee Hive. Given its central location along the Northwestern Turnpike, the Bee Hive became a well known and respected business for many years.

Diss Debar described the discord over the location of the county seat in his Reminiscence of Doddridge County, written in 1883. He wrote, *"But if the name of Lewisport is a puzzle, that of West Union seemed an ironical joke, since it owed its very origin to a state of civic feud and discord from which I venture to surmise, it has hardly recovered to this day. The bone of contention was, as usual, the division of political spoils, and especially the very capital site of Doddridge which had been called into being only a short time before my personal advent....And as another consequence, this red hot state of unpleasantness was kept alive for years until the great secession war."*

At the time Diss Debar wrote Reminiscence of Doddridge County, he and Ephraim Bee had already had their battle over the Delegate seat, but I gather from most of his comments about Ephraim Bee that Diss Debar genuinely liked him and sided with Ephraim on most of the above mentioned issues. I will talk more about Diss Debar and Bee's battle next week,

A Scandalous Allegation

Now I want to tell you a story about Ephraim Bee that will give you a glimpse of his more ornery nature. Until the mid 1800s a marriage bond was given to the court by an intended groom prior to a marriage. This bond guaranteed that there was no moral or legal reason why the couple could not be married and it also helped insure that the groom did not change his mind. If for some reason he did not marry the intended bride, he was in jeopardy of forfeiting the amount of the bond. If the groom did not have the financial resources or the personal recognizance to make bond, then he could get a bondsman, or surety, to sign the bond. The bondsman was often a father, brother, uncle or friend.

On August 21, 1843 Ephraim Bee signed a marriage bond giving his security in the amount of \$150 for the marriage of one Henry Hallam to a woman named Elizabeth Burnside. However, Henry did not marry Elizabeth. This left Ephraim Bee in jeopardy of losing his \$150 bond money. According to court documents, Ephraim took extreme measures to make sure that he didn't lose that money. He had to make it look like Henry had a legitimate reason for not going through with the marriage nuptials. So what did Ephraim do? He actually accused Elizabeth Burnside of being a hermaphrodite. In all of the thousands of court cases that I've read, I've never heard of anyone making that accusation against someone. Perhaps Ephraim went a little overboard, but we certainly see that he was quite capable of saying the most absurd things, which only confirms the legend of his sarcastic wit.

In 1846 Elizabeth Burnside decided that her reputation had been ruined and sued Ephraim Bee for \$500 for his alleged slanderous words. Elizabeth's plea read:

"The plaintiff, is a single woman unmarried, and is no wise defective in her natural formation and not a hermaphrodite. Yet the said defendant....to deprive her of intermarrying and obtaining a worthy husband....on the 1st day of April 1845 falsely and maliciously spoke and published of and concerning the Plaintiff....said she is a hermaphrodite and that he told her intend husband so and that he broke off the match...and said words so spoken lead to violence and breach of the peace...."

A doctor named James McCally of Harrison County was subpoenaed to *"testify and the truth to speak on behalf of Elizabeth Burnside in a certain matter of controversy before our said court."* Unfortunately the case was dismissed before the doctor could testify. No other documents can be found concerning this case. My guess is that Elizabeth was not really a hermaphrodite or else a doctor would not have been subpoenaed to speak on her behalf. Perhaps the case was settled out of court, but we will probably never know.

I hope you are starting to get a picture of the many sides of Ephraim Bee. It appears that he was either a man you loved or a man you hated. I will be telling you much more about Ephraim next week, from his role in the Civil War to his bid for the State Legislature.

Ephraim Bee: From Blacksmith to High Profile Politician

To pick up where we left off last week, I will now tell you about Ephraim Bee and his role during the Civil War, his suspected ties to the Underground Railroad, and his journey to the State Legislature. This article will consist mostly of newspaper articles from that time.

First I want to share a newspaper article that I found about a flood in 1852 that affected most of West Virginia. It was published in Cooper's Clarksburg Register on April 14, 1852.

Mr. Editor: Middle Island Creek is now higher by about 3 feet than it was ever known before, and the damage done to the owners of mills, lumbermen and farmers, is immense. The stream during the day has been filled with rails, sawlogs, plank, haystacks, wash-tubs, barrels, bee gums and such. I also saw a pair of bedsteads flooding down the stream.

Ephraim Bee, at West Union, lost a stable with his flock of chickens in it, his meat house with between 2000 and 3000 lbs. of bacon started and floated about 50 yards, and lodged; and they seized upon that opportunity, went to it on a raft constructed for the occasion, and made it fast by a cable; but they suppose that a large amount of their bacon has floated off. --- Several of his other buildings are said to be afloat. Young Gateel [Thomas Gatrell], living at the end of the bridge had to move out of his

house about 3 o'clock this morning, and the water raised up to near the top of the door. Mr. Jeffrey's, three-fourths of a mile above town were taken from their domicile this morning by some of their friends by means of a canoe. Mr. Jeffrey's corncribs were washed off with about 150 bushels of corn. The Pike bridge across Rock Run, by Jeffrey's house, is gone.

Leaves Lewisport for Cabin Run

Another article in the Wheeling Intelligencer, dated July 18, 1863, was titled *First West Virginia Legislature, Biographical Sketch of Ephraim Bee*. One particular sentence that caught my eye said, "In 1852 he abandoned blacksmithing and moved upon the farm where he now lives. Latterly has been jobbing in lands and owns many thousand of acres of wild lands in that region."

We know that Ephraim Bee moved to Cabin Run, in the Central District in Doddridge County, at some point before the Civil War. Given both of the above articles, I think we can surmise that his move to Cabin Run was the result of the flood destroying his property in Lewisport.

I still do not know what happened to the Bee Hive inn or how long it was in operation. The only additional information that I have on the Bee Hive pertains to its supposed role in the Underground Railroad. Oral history states that on occasions when Luke Jaco was moving slaves in and out of his cave, that Ephraim Bee would stage a brawl to bring all of the local constabulary to his tavern so that Jaco could move slaves without being detected. In the remainder of this article you will see more references to Ephraim Bee and his views on slavery. At times they seem to refute oral history.

Organizes Home Guard in Doddridge

Ephraim Bee was responsible for forming the first Home Guard in Doddridge County, which protected citizens and supplies, such as horses and guns, from falling into the hands of the rebels. He obviously had some knowledge of how to organize such a unit and how to recruit local men into service. He wrote the following letter to Governor Pierpont of Virginia in 1861. I am giving you my best translation of his letter. Ephraim Bee had only a fourth grade education, so much of the spelling was done phonetically:

*Oxford, Doddridge Co Va,
July the 24, 1861*

*Dear sir, permit me to address a few lines to you. Some two months ago our country was filled with spies and traitors. For our own protection I called my neighbors and formed a company of 120 men and boys able to bare arms. We drew an article, all signed and elected officers and appointed a committee of safety. Our company is known by the Doddridge County Rangers under the control of the said committee who have taken 81 traitors and taken them to camp on the railroad. They took the Butler oath on yesterday. We formed ourselves into a company subject to the call of the governor of Virginia to go to any place in Northwestern Virginia who maybe call on. We only have 30 guns in our company who would like to drill at Oxford, most all of company have families and are farmers. Please instruct us how to organize so who can receive arms and where our service would be needed. Give me all the information necessary to get arms. If we had arms we would start forthwith to Yellow Creek and Leading Creek and the West Fork of the Kanawha where the rebels have run of more than 30 good union men. They came to my son's house, took his guns and in a few days came and shot at him. He escaped to the woods. He stayed in the woods two days, got his hours and traveled 20 mile through the woods not daring to travel any road or path for they were all guarded by the rebels. He left his wife with a child 10 days old. If [?] rebellion forthwith please write to me. Yours truly,
Ephraim Bee*

His Political Views

Below is another excerpt from the article in the July 18, 1863, Wheeling Intelligencer article that further explains Ephraim's political bent and his views on the Civil War:

Mr. Bee opposed the secession of Virginia from the time it was first talked of; and was the first man on the waters of Hughes' River, in the spring of '61, before the passage of the ordinance, to raise the stars and stripes over his house. He also began the organization of the first home guard company raised in his county, and has been a member of it ever since. He of course voted against the ordinance of secession, and exerted his influence in the same direction. He also voted for a division of the State in October, '61 – for the constitution when first adopted, and for the amended constitution. Politically, he was always a democrat, up to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise by the Kansas-Nebraska bill. The first, second, and third votes he ever gave for Gen. Jackson. The Kansas-Nebraska business put him out with the democratic party, and he voted in '56 for Fillmore, and in '60 for Bell and Everett.

Has always until recently been a strongly pro-slavery man, but never owned but one slave. When the rebellion broke out he deprecated the agitation of that question but as soon as he discovered that slavery was at the bottom of the rebellion and was forcing a bloody war on the country, his convictions underwent a complete change. He voted for the constitution with the emancipation amendment in it, favored the President's proclamation last September; and wants every Southern State in rebellion to be brought back as free States, and to let slavery alone in the border States to be managed as they see fit. He would be glad if today Virginia were free soil from the Allegheny to the tidewater, and if West Virginia had not a negro in it. He is even in favor of arming the negroes, and making them help whip the rebels into subjection. Wouldn't give twenty-five cents for a

hundred of the best negroes he ever saw, and taken altogether may be set down as a pretty strong anti-slavery man at this time. He is so strong a Union man that he told the people when electioneering last spring that he was for sustaining the government if it took every man in the country to do it, and the government had to be carried on by the women and children.

In person Mr. Bee is about five feet ten or eleven inches in stature, and of large muscular frame. Shaves smooth and wears his hair, which is light colored, and slightly tinged with grey, cut very short; eyes light blue, and face rather striking but not handsome. In conversation talks incessantly and with a peculiar tone of voice which runs up an octave about the middle of each sentence leaving upon the hearer an impression of grief. Has an inexhaustible fund of humor and anecdote for all places and occasions, and is therefore the centre of every circle he happens to get into. Is quite widely known in Western Virginia as many men who have spent their lives in public station.

Wins Contested Legislature Election

At the time that the foregoing account of him was written, Ephraim Bee was in the midst of a battle for a seat in the State Legislature in Wheeling, West Virginia's first capital. He was up against none other than Joseph H. Diss Debar, the man who first called Ephraim's hotel the Bee Hive.

On May 28, 1863, at the Doddridge County election for a member to the House of Delegates, Ephraim Bee received 256 votes and Joseph H. Diss Debar received 246 votes. On June 13, 1863, Diss Debar contested Bee's victory on the grounds of fraud and illegalities. He claimed that Bee had residents of other counties cast votes for him. After the Committee on Elections and Privileges met on September 4, 1863, they concluded that several votes cast on both sides were illegal and the new tally was 239 votes for Bee and 242 votes for Diss Debar. However, both candidates were allowed to make a plea for their case after the final votes were counted. When all was said and done, for reasons still unclear to me, Ephraim Bee was proclaimed the winner and elected to the House of Delegates. The following article appeared in the Wheeling Daily Intelligencer on September 22, 1863:

SETTLED. – The contested election case which has occupied the attention of the House of Delegates for the past two days, was finally settled yesterday afternoon in favor of Mr. Bee the vote appears to have been a very close one, and one that seems to have puzzled many of the leading members of the House. The subject was a knotty one and appeared difficult to unravel. The Committee on Elections and Privileges had the matter before them some three or four weeks, and spent several whole days in its consideration, when they reported that they could not arrive at any conclusion, and asked that the matter be referred to another committee. A vote of the House sent the matter before the Judiciary Committee, which reported in favor of Mr. Diss Debar. Mr. Bee and Mr. Diss Debar occupied the attention of the House with their remarks the whole of the past two days. – At the close of the debate yesterday evening the “engagement” became general, and quite an interesting affair was presented to the assembled crowd. At five o'clock a vote was taken, when the report of the Judiciary Committee was rejected, by a vote of twenty to eighteen. – So Mr. Bee retains his seat.

But all was not lost for Diss Debar. Being the established artist that he was, he was given the opportunity to create the State Seal for the brand new state of West Virginia. Diss Debar's design for the seal was accepted by the committee without alterations and is the exact same seal we see today.

So far we have learned that Ephraim Bee was a successful blacksmith, hostler, postman, land prospector, captain and was active in local and state government. In next week's article, which will conclude this series about Ephraim Bee, I'll tell you how he was once voted The Ugliest Man in West Virginia and formed a national order of practical jokers.

Ephraim Bee and the Founding of E Clampus Vitus

The three previous articles in this series revolved around the legendary Ephraim Bee and his role in early Doddridge County. This week's concluding article will focus more on how his unique personality and sensibilities brought about a similarly unique fraternal order of jokesters and humanitarians that is still in existence today, over 165 years later. The exact origins of this organization are unclear, but we do know that shortly after 1850 Ephraim Bee proclaimed himself the Grand Hototote of the Ancient and Honorable Order of E Clampus Vitus.

We are told that the reason Ephraim Bee created E Clampus Vitus was to thumb his nose at the pretentious and exclusive fraternal organizations of that time, where membership was based on wealth and social status. Ephraim's principal occupation was blacksmith, and he had very little formal education. We know from two independent sources that he had a speech impediment of sorts. He was quoted as pronouncing his name 'Ephwaim' and referring to the local creek as 'Middle Island Quick.' We have no documentation that Ephraim was denied entry into the other organizations, but given his occupation, his lack of education and his oratorical deficiencies, it seems unlikely that he would have been granted entry. Perhaps this is why he felt the need to create an organization where all members were considered equals and never took anything too seriously.

Origins of E Clampus Vitus

I have found references to E Clampus Vitus (ECV) as early as 1853 in newspapers from New York to South Carolina, as well as two first-hand accounts of Ephraim Bee and his incomparable wit, humor and peculiar appearance. Below is an article that appeared in the Parkersburg State Journal in 1896 entitled *Story Of An Old-Time Secret Order and Its Founder*, author unknown:

There is a vein of humor and absurdity running along through human nature that makes the wit and clown the admiration of the mass of mankind. The man who can get the laugh upon his fellow men becomes a shining light and leaves his sober matter-of-fact friend in the background The real wit of the world is not an artificial product but a natural one. And the greatest and most original one I ever knew was an unlettered son of West Virginia, Ephraim Bee, of Doddridge county.

Many years ago when a youth in my teens, I taught school in one of the back counties of this state. In the fall of 1847 one bright September morning, a man with a drove of hogs halted before the schoolhouse door and beckoned for me to come out. I did so and found the most remarkable specimen of mankind I had ever beheld. His features were certainly the most irregular and unprepossessing I had ever seen. He wanted to know whether I could direct him where he could get feed for his horses and rest as he had traveled all night. I directed him to where I had been stopping and when the school closed at evening and I got to my boarding house I found the strange gentleman there.

He greeted me pleasantly and we had a long conversation. I soon found that, while a gentleman of no culture, he was a man of great natural ability, strong common sense, keen wit and love of fun. Some years afterward, in Jackson county, I met my old friend, the horse trader. In the meantime he had accumulated money and influence and had been elected a member of the Legislature of the State and had developed into a great wit and practical joker. In fact, he had concocted the celebrated secret order of the E Clampus Vitus, once so famous in this section of the country.

At that time the distinguished linguist and orator, Caleb Cushing, was our minister to China and by virtue —so Mr. Ephraim Bee said— of a charter authorized and directed by the Emperor of that great Celestial Nation, and communicated directly to Mr. Cushing, and by him transmitted by a special messenger selected from one of the descendants of the great Confucius, the rules, secrets and sacred mysteries of the ancient order of E Clampus Vitus were delivered to our venerable friend, Ephraim, at Richmond, while he was a member of that august body, the Legislature of Virginia. Ephraim was elated at the distinguished honor which had been so unexpectedly conferred upon him. And like all new converts he set to work with zeal and energy to make proselytes, and in a short time had converted nearly all the members of the Legislature and even the mayor of the city of Richmond and came very near making a convert of the then Governor of the State.

The E Clampus Vitus was conceived in fun and was a most admirable burlesque upon the modern tendency of mankind to run into secret societies. It is said that no woman can keep a secret but it is a notorious fact that there is no creature on the globe that has such a yearning, such an inordinate desire for secret societies and organizations, as her brother man.

Availing himself of this tendency Mr. Bee constructed his E Clampus Vitus. The most profound secrecy was enjoined upon its members and the means resorted to secure the faithful performance of the vow was unique and successful. The candidate was initiated in a room where there was only a blue or red glimmering light, with every member more or less disguised. The first thing in order was a solemn prayer and a doleful song, which signified the misfortunes and uncertainties of life. Then the candidate was sworn to answer any and all questions that might be propounded to him by the Grand Hototote. These questions were often of a very delicate and embarrassing character and the replies often brought upon the victim the shouts and jeers of those present.

These forms and ceremonies of the initiation depended upon the peculiar idiosyncrasy of each individual applicant. If he was very sensitive and proud some means were devised to humiliate him; if he was self-conceited and vain he was compelled to disrobe himself and often plunged blindfolded in a tub of foul or ice water according to the season, and the tortures and supplications of the victim afforded merriment for all present.

For years the E Clampus Vitus was a never-failing source of amusement to the fun-loving men of Virginiaand occasionally indulged in the fun of initiating some poor mortal who had more vanity than brains. If all secret societies were as harmless and inculcated the same grand virtue of humanity, so beautifully portrayed by the Apostle Peter, the world would be much better than it is.

Col. Ephraim Bee was an ardent Union man during the civil war and exercised a powerful influence among all his acquaintances in that behalf. He was a noble man and all his strong natural faculties were turned to virtue's side.

He lived to a green old age loved and respected by all who knew him.

A Memorable Encounter with Ephraim

From this first-hand account, we can see that Ephraim Bee was a well respected man with a unique sense of humor and an intolerance for over-inflated egos. Below is a humorous article from the [Tyler Star News](#), written by H. Smith in 1931:

Ephraim Bee, of Doddridge County, was a famous character in his day and I may add an unusual man and his descendants in this day are among the prominent citizens of Doddridge, Ritchie, Wood and other counties in West Virginia.

I remember seeing him but the one time. A number of us smaller lads had been fishing in Middle Island and were following the road home. Suddenly, someone said, "Here comes Ephraim Bee" and we scattered like a covey of quail, jumped the fence into the Alf Conaway's field and fled across its briary surface as if the foul fiend were after us. I remember a glimpse of a rather large man with a long snow white beard and riding a fine horse and to our relief he passed on without so much as a glance in our direction. Why we were frightened I do not know.

It has been said of him that he was so ugly that he was fascinating. The same thing was said about Abraham Lincoln, but I cannot conceive of that great humanitarian and lover of his fellow men as being even homely because of the soul that illumined the rugged features. But boys are not analytical. Ephraim Bee by his staunch adherence to the Union and the many devoted friends that he had was ugly only on the outside.

My uncle, the late David H. Morey, has told me many times, that the only thrashing that he ever had from his beloved step-father, Harrison Hardman, was innocently caused by Ephraim Bee. He and Mr. Hardman were great friends and on one of his visits in that McElroy home the two were busily talking. Uncle Dave and Uncle Oll could not keep their charmed eyes from the ugly features of the visitor and drew nearer till they were looking right up into his face. Harrison commanded them to leave the room, which they did, but they were irresistibly drawn back and were soon again looking him right in the face. This time Harrison drove them out, closed the door and after the departure of the visitor took them to the woodshed and gave them a complete lacing which they did not soon forget.

ECV Lives On

With its origins long ago in Doddridge County, E Clampus Vitus remains an active national fraternal organization, mostly in the western states, with an agenda of humanitarianism and the promotion of local history. Despite its serious mission, ECV's members universally display the humor and unpretentiousness for which its founder was known. Returning to their roots, ECV chapters have dedicated two monuments to Ephraim Bee's memory in Doddridge County. One is located along the North Bend Rail Trail behind the football field in West Union, and the other is in front of Stoney Bee's Sporting Goods store on Sunnyside Road. (Stoney is the great-great-grandson of Ephraim Bee.) Many "Clampers" from across the country have purchased memorial bricks for the new sidewalk outside of Porter's Grinds & Finds on Main Street in West Union.

Ephraim Bee, through hard work, shrewd business decisions and sheer determination, rose from humble beginnings to become a very prominent, influential and wealthy man. In 1870 his real and personal property was valued at almost \$80,000, equivalent to about \$1,400,000 today. His legacy as a larger-than-life historical figure not only lives on, it continues to grow. What would Ephraim himself think of all this? Most likely, he'd think it was a pretty good joke.

(NOTE: These four articles, written by Heritage Guild member Jennifer Wilt, originally appeared in [The Doddridge Independent](#) as part of her weekly column "Our Heritage: The REAL History of Doddridge County.")

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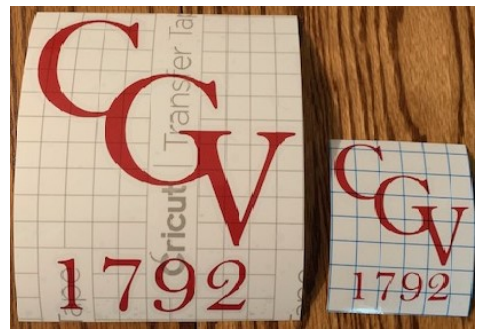
Cool Swag



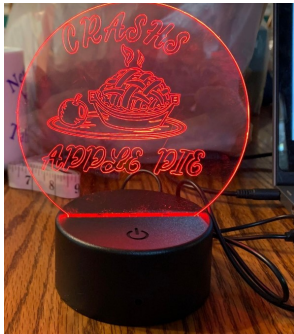
Tee Shirt
\$20



Pull Over Hoodie
\$40



6" decal and 3" decal
\$7 \$5



Crash's Apple Pie lit Sign
\$20



Coffee Mug Design 1
\$20



6" decal
\$10



Flag
\$15

I can make custom Items as well. Custom Signs, cups, mugs, decals, and shirts your art work or I can try to come up with something, Lets talk. crash2977@gmail.com

SOME BLASTS FROM THE PAST



In trouble again



Rangers House



Because of Hard Work but only the Beginning



Crash's Apple Pie

SKIPPEERS SCUTTLEBUTT

Good Day folks, I just wanted to take the opportunity to talk about what we have accomplished what we are working on and what we hope to do in the future. I do not have a lot to report this month and I know the story I shared was a bit long winded. I thought the story was worth the read. In our last meeting we had Dan visit and had a great time. We followed the meeting by having drinks at the Slippery Pig not sure but this may become an official watering hole We discussed our Fall ball that will be September 16. We are working on all kinds of surprises for this event. We will also be having a picnic on July 15 this will be a blast and will be family friendly. There will be a 6 way doins in Idaho in September this will be an awesome spot to bring your PBCs in. I am not just saying that because I am one of the Hangmen this year, this should be a great time. So there is lots of cool and exciting stuff coming up this year, I am looking forward to clamping with yall this year. Sorry got to cut this off a little short this month to make up for the long story, go ahead and support the historical society and order some Merch email me at crash2977@gmail.com. Cheers Brothers

V/R

Tony "CRASH-Not Kevin" Carlson

GILLIGANS BLOG

Our Little Buddy is off doing research to help make this group the best that it can be, gathering information and stories that will both entertain and enlighten us for some time. We wish him and his Widder God Speed to bring them home safely.



E Clampus Vitus ® "The Clampers"

Dan Martin · 12h · 🌐

Just a reminder for brothers dealing with shit, there's a Clamper group that's only about getting you through it. The most serious shit ever! No jokes, no memes and no BS.



CLAMPER DOWN - Brothers Helping Brothers >

Facebook Page Check them out

CONGRATULATIONS

To Our Newest Papered Members

Dan "Tuna" McCormick



Thank You for Donating your Treasures

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT OUR NEXT MEETING, FEEL FREE TO SHARE THIS PUBLICATION

Warning

Reading this publication has been known to inspire men to take part in events and do things they would not normally do. It has been reported that reading this publication could inspire sudden bouts of brotherhood and friendships that last a life time. Thank you for your support. What Say The Brotheren?