INDIGNANT TIMES

News Nuggets Straight from the Sluice





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From Chumash to Clampers

Long before anybody drove a fence post, filed a deed, or charged extra for a vineyard view, the Santa Ynez Valley was Chumash country. Spanish colonization brought Mission Santa Inés in 1804, along with livestock, agriculture, unfamiliar diseases, forced labor, and a new collection of people claiming authority. Mexico's independence brought another change of management. Following mission secularization in the 1830s, enormous land grants divided much of California into private ranchos, their boundaries described by landmarks that stubbornly refused to remain where lawyers wanted them.

The rancho economy ran chiefly on cattle. Hides and tallow were California's principal exports, the former known as "California banknotes." Vaqueros managed vast herds with considerably less equipment than today's cowboy requires to visit a coffee shop. American rule brought litigation, taxes, squatters, speculators, and drought. The terrible dry years of the 1860s killed cattle by the thousands and ruined ranching fortunes. Great estates were sold, subdivided, or converted to farming. Roads and stagecoaches followed, and settlements grew into Ballard, Los Olivos, and other respectable communities now obliged to tolerate tourists.



The twentieth century brought mechanized agriculture, horse ranches, vineyards, and country estates. Cattle acquired neighbors carrying pruning shears, wine glasses, and opinions about soil.

Rancho San Fernando Rey stands within this procession of California history: Indigenous homeland, colonial frontier, cattle country, agricultural valley, and modern gathering place. Every generation has used the land differently while imagining its arrangement permanent.

Now the gates have opened to E. Clampus Vitus, custodians of history, perpetrators of pageantry, and proven enemies of undisturbed sleep.

How the rancho survives this chapter may be reported in the next edition of Indignant Times.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Having survived two editions, Indignant Times now appears to have become a recurring publication, a development its Editor regards with professional pride and mounting administrative concern. Our purpose is to preserve history, report facts faithfully, and maintain the good humor upon which E. Clampus Vitus was founded. These pursuits are not always easily reconciled. History is inconvenient, facts contradict cherished recollections, and popular legend frequently enjoys better attendance. We welcome corrections, entertain complaints, and reserve the right to distinguish truth from nonsense, however unpopular the distinction may prove.

— Ira B. Certain, Editor

Rancho San Fernando Rey

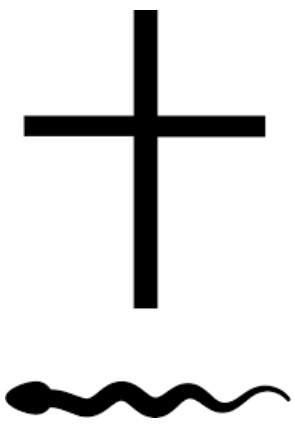
In the days when Alta California was vast and blessedly untroubled by zoning ordinances or neighbors objecting to cattle, this historic ground formed part of Rancho San Marcos, the province's largest single ranch. A mighty land grant was bestowed upon R. and R. Den, whose claim survived California's admission to the Union in 1850, an uncommon triumph of parchment over bureaucracy. Many landowners spent years discovering that possessing land and proving possession were two different misfortunes.

The property later passed through the hands of William Pierce, F. W. Matthiessen, and assorted ambitious persons. From 1869 until 1901, a stagecoach route crossed the ranch, carrying travelers, mail, merchandise, and passengers claiming imminent possession of gold. The journey offered summer dust, winter mud, perpetually hard seats, and the possibility of a highwayman interrupting proceedings before the next broken axle.

In 1938, noted horseman Dwight Murphy acquired the property, raised celebrated Palomino horses, and bestowed upon the spread the noble name Rancho San Fernando Rey. But who in blazes was San Fernando Rey?

Saint Ferdinand the King, better known as Ferdinand III of Castile and León, united the two crowns, expanded Christian territory during the Reconquista, captured Seville in 1248, and somehow fathered fifteen children. Canonized in 1671, he is remembered as a warrior, lawgiver, and saint. Records provide no evidence that Ferdinand ever attended a Clampout.

Lewis Welch later held the ranch during construction of Lake Cachuma and Bradbury Dam. Completed in the early 1950s, the project rearranged the Santa Ynez River watershed and created a reservoir central to the region's water supply. In 1957, John T. Galvin acquired the 31,000-acre domain. Three years later, the ranch hosted the United States Olympic equestrian team during its preparations for international competition. Patricia Galvin rode on the 1960 and 1964 Olympic teams, bringing distinction to family and ranch alike.



The Cross and Serpent. Rancho San Fernando Rey's historic emblem symbolizes the triumph of good over evil and remains in use to this day.

Under Galvin family stewardship, Rancho San Fernando Rey has retained most of the original land-grant boundaries. Its headquarters stand upon Paradise Road, a name no Clamper, promoter, or subdivision salesman could have improved. The family continues to raise cattle, cultivate grapes, and tend olive trees. The ranch therefore produces beef, wine, and oil, a remarkably complete inventory of human necessities. Beef sustains the body, wine fortifies the spirit, and oil keeps everything from sticking to the pan.

After land grants, stagecoaches, Palominos, dams, Olympians, and assorted changes of ownership, Rancho San Fernando Rey remains productive, historic, and sufficiently remote from respectable supervision.

Cook-off proposal: More Chill & Less Chili

The Chief Chili Chancellor is reportedly considering a sweeping reform of the annual Bastardo's Chili Cook-off. The entire transformation would require changing but one letter.

This modest adjustment would free contestants from the thematic constraints of chili and remove the reins from what little culinary restraint remained. Beans, stews, casseroles, sausages, pies, puddings, pickled curiosities, and unidentified dishes inherited from deceased relatives could all compete upon equal footing, and the whole affair might be considerably more Chill.



The Cook-off is largely viewed as a glorified potluck masquerading as organized competition anyway. Critics warn that abandoning chili standards could produce chaos, indigestion, and arguments over whether macaroni salad constitutes an entrée. Organizers contend that all three conditions already exist.

No final decision has been reached. The Chancellor is believed to be studying the matter carefully, or waiting to see what everybody brings. Until then, contestants are advised to prepare something edible, arrive hungry, and maintain plausible deniability concerning the ingredients. CQA!

Modern Progress Threatens the TCB

The march of progress continues, trampling all who cannot remember a password. Each season brings another contrivance: electronic registrations, digital tickets, mysterious squares to scan, and messages lost after pressing the wrong button. Meanwhile, traditional postage, the last refuge of the Technically Challenged Brother (TCB), has become nearly as costly as a mounted courier.

The TCB therefore faces a grave predicament. Technology will not slow down, postage will not grow cheaper, and nobody has invented an app operated by swearing at it. Without assistance, these Brethren may disappear from our Doins, remembered only through bounced emails and unchecked voicemail.

Their fate is not sealed, if we rise to the challenge. Every Brother capable of opening a link or finding "submit" must adopt a TCB. Make the call. Complete the registration. Print the directions. Progress is inevitable, but abandonment is optional.



In related news, an alarming number of Brothers have disappeared from every known channel of communication. Letters return bearing hostile markings. Emails enter the void. Telephone numbers now belong to strangers who deny all knowledge of E. Clampus Vitus and become increasingly impatient when questioned. In several cases, a Brother's last confirmed contact with civilization was an AOL address established during the first Clinton administration.

This presents a serious procedural difficulty. Chapter proclamations, email notices, ceremonial demands, and other important foolishness cannot be ignored unless they are first successfully delivered.

Accordingly, every Brother is asked to inspect the accuracy of his contact information. If you have moved, changed telephone numbers, abandoned an ancient email account, or entered protective custody without notifying the chapter, kindly correct the record.

Restore yourself to official notice by visiting:
https://dlgyp.org/serious-shit

You may also scan the accompanying code with your telephone camera, provided you can locate the camera, recognize the code, and resist photographing your own forehead.

Let no Brother be left behind because the postage stamp became a password.



Clampers Elude Definition

A fictional report of plausible bureaucratic behavior

County inspectors arrived at an undisclosed ranch after receiving complaints of suspicious activity involving red shirts and cast iron cookware. The inspectors first attempted to determine whether the gathering constituted ranching, food service, historical reenactment, or organized vagrancy. One suspect identified the group as an ancient and honorable order. Another described it as "a Clampout!" A third claimed they were merely passing through, despite having erected a full bar, kitchen, open-air council chamber, and sufficient canvas shelter and provisions to withstand a fortnight.

The inspectors next attempted a head count. This effort failed when several Brothers attempted to be counted twice, one denied being present, and another insisted that cattle maintain independent voting rights. The official estimate was eventually recorded as "between forty and a public nuisance."

Attention then turned to the Cast Iron Cook-off, where the inspectors discovered Dutch ovens filled with chili, casseroles, roasted curiosities, and a suspicious dish that nobody would claim. When asked if the food had been maintained at safe temperatures, a surly cook barked that everything was either hot, cold, or old enough to defend itself.

Inspectors proceeded to the campsite, where folding tables, chairs, and a bewildered and comparatively less dignified few (dressed in blue shirts and tutus) had been arranged under the supervision of a burly man in a leather skirt, armed with a crop whip. After observing the candidates' inability to erect a pup tent, and receiving assurances that they were willing participants, the inspectors deemed them harmless to all but themselves.

Exasperation led to questionable refreshments and increasingly questionable conclusions. The group was not livestock because they were not only able to open gates, but also diligent about closing them behind themselves. They were not agricultural laborers because none had been observed laboring. Despite appearances, they did not meet the definition of wildlife. Eventually classified as a seasonal historical disturbance of limited duration, they were permitted to remain so long as they did not subdivide, attempt to establish permanent government, or reproduce.

Unable to establish any legal grounds for dispersal, the inspectors ultimately deemed conditions SATISFACTORY, though this did little to improve their opinion of the proceedings.

de la Guerra y Pacheco — Chapter 1.5 — Est. 5006

Official Hysterical Keepsake

Exclusively for attendees of the 6031 Fall Doins at Rancho San Fernando Rey.
Courtesy of Our Noble Grand Humbug, Jason "Hot Pants" Haines, AL-XXXVII
& Prepared by your Master of Arguably Amusing Missives, Nick "Hotwheels" Koonce
de la Guerra y Pacheco, Chapter 1.5 of the Ancient and Honorable Order of E. Clampus Vitus
Credo Quia Absurdum!

Credo Quia Absurdum