

# The Plague Year Journal

Another fragment from an endless saga  
by Paul Encimer

## The Porno Master

Coho City wasn't much of a city. Population 3,389. It was strung along the length of Coho Creek before it finally fed into the West Branch of the South Fork of the Eel. Currently it was running water in all direction. The rains kept the otherwise neglected Coho shiny clean. This was once the capital of the County before Paul Bunyan junior, the first of the successor to the first Emperor of Logging, thru and threw a fit relocated the seat to Bunyana.

I visited Wishy Whitehead, hippie detective, at his office in the amazing copper castle - the Vets Building. It had been the Opera House or the County Court House or the Whore House or something public and showy. A flimsy cage of an elevator was there to take me to his third floor rooms. The ceilings were low on the third floor and the wrap around windows were narrow enough to run artillery out through.

Whitehead accentuated that with a huge desk, an oversized armchair, a couch of similar proportions and several heaps of cushions. He also had a half dozen rope chairs hanging like mobiles at face level and which could be locked to the floor through deck rings.

Whitehead was not alone today. The lawyer, Albion MacMoon, had angled his Lincoln-esque frame onto one of the armchairs. They stopped their talking to fix a steady gaze upon me, something of a smirk of MacMoon's and a look of pity on Whitehead's.

"Ah, said MacMoon, it's the secretary of the Marquis de Sade."

"The Porno Master," said Whitehead in a tone of feigned awe.

Their response was typical of the reception given to my publication of the **Memoirs of a Class Warrior: the 5th Paul Bunyan**.

I think that was the title, I had placed the manuscript and my notations with a vanity publisher who printed the book one order at a time. It sold, or as Whitehead put it, *soiled* well in Coho and the adjacent counties where the Bunyans were practically co-existent with the white man's way in Northcoast California. The almost mythical Paul Bunyan the first came into the area in 1853 with a passel of rowdies including a dozen children, with several wives and ex-wives and began putting together the huge holdings which established his fortune for his old age, which went well into his nineties, before, legend has it, one of daughters poisoned him for attempts on a grand daughter.

My scornful friends didn't want to hear any of this. It's not the individuals who should outrage us, but the system that harbored them. But the fifth Bunyan was part of a lineage of evil that had strewn the landscape with *Sophoclean, Faulknerian, Ross Mac-Donaldian* crimes. My point is that the Bunyans stood out as though a Great Gatsby had been a Snopes.

It's an all male ensemble here. Gatsby begat upon Snopes. Genetic Engineering of course, not some gay intercourse. Meanwhile they went through women like a colonial Plantation owner. In the successive seraglios where the Bunyan family played out its culture, there was a number one wife but no legitimacy of one child over another.

I had discovered how much this Paul Bunyan was like the previous ones. There really was something to them - a charisma, an archetypal energy that stopped traffic.

## Massacre of Little Point

"So how is our *Serial Murderer's memoir* selling," MacMoon asked. He was in the best position to know that since it was his thriving little vanity press which had broken with tradition and actually paid for the Memoir getting printed. MacMoon as usual had no interest in the money but was after the reputation of the Bunyan family. None of the historical reminiscences he printed had anything much good to say about the Bunyans. Some were nothing but extended attacks.

Barbara Beecher's **Mt. Salvage Regional History** was a first class piece of revisionist history - out to prove that Bunyans were a disaster for the region from day one. Mowry Moore's novel **Days of Crime and Posses** had actually been compared to **All the Kings Men**. Huey Long in this case was the fourth Paul Bunyan who was a prominent Republican conservative - during the Reagan Era reaching a respectable level of power and recognition, a major broker whose influence was felt everywhere and whose personal tragedy was an inability to get an elected office, except - three times - by appointment. And not elected in the aftermath of these appointments twice. The third time it was obvious even to himself that it was hopeless. Bunyan IV was able at one time to control directly 4 out of 5 supervisors, the DA, the Sheriff, and every County court room. The Judges in fact were perhaps the most loyal under the thrall of Bunyan's money and the thrill of Bunyan IV endless parties.

Bunyan V made sure that his partying was a seamless web with his father's - except that power, influence and profit were not the object any longer. Before G-dub in fact there was Bunyan V. He was something big in the the Bush One White House, serial Ambassador to a number of unfortunate Latin American countries during which resources were rapidly extracted, particularly favored Forests.

"*Serial Ambassador*," I responded defensively. The "serial killer" charge rose from a line that went "Serial killers and seducers have a knack in common for sensing women in trouble." Not that this Bunyan in any way admirable. Preying on women was a way of life for him, as his Memoirs attested.

MacMoon's family and associated clans had been at war with the Bunyans since the day after the first Paul cast his shadow over the allied watersheds. It was never "Bunyan country" for them. He and his progeny were Barbarian



invaders - killing an enslaving the native population and oppressing the new settlers. This of course was perfectly rendered in the **Little Point Massacre**, in which most the local Indians and soon after most of the local settlers, were murdered by a semi-professional military troop led by Major Paul Bunyan. (Bunyan claimed the rank from service in the Mexican War).

Whitehead was immersed in this subject - not as a book for his associate MacMoon (Unlicensed, Whitehead practiced his private detecting under the Court authority of lawyer MacMoon). MacMoon already published a book on the Massacre - and attendant atrocities - although the book was available only in photocopy thanks to convoluted court cases (from which some claimed MacMoon as lawyer profited immensely.) MacMoon employed Whitehead purely as an investigator into the genocide's perpetrators. These implicated many prominent local Bunyanphobe as well as Bunyanite families. Complex narratives competed here. Did Bunyan instigate the deaths of the settlers who murdered the Indians. Or was Bunyan irrelevant to these deaths, which resulted in several interlocking feuds which hatched out of the Vigilante attitude that all shared.

The local blogs were currently flaming over the naming of criminal ancestors not Bunyans. MacMoon's clan had more enemies than the Bunyans, linked to the massacres. Take for instance the Miller family. The Killer Millers who actually did more business in slaves than corpses, getting their business affairs capitalized with slavery. They were a Southern family claiming aristocratic connections. The founding Patriarch was Madison Miller, alluding to a connection with James but not Dolly who was sterile. It has been inferred that the connecting link was a quadroon slave of a myriad horde all named Madison. This one in particular married a tenant farmer Miller who was headed for West Texas and thence to Coho County.

Some say that this Miller actually took part as a private in the Mexican War - under the command of Major Bunyan himself! and that this was were the hatred began.

That strain of conflict culminated in the marriage of Bunyan V with Elsa Miller, a **Montague-Capulet** resolution that did not end in Romantic deaths for the pair. Rather it became a **Spy vs Spy** comedy of errors with each attempting murder on the other on numerous occasions. It was a kind of spiderworld courtship, claimed MacMoon who himself was almost certainly an adulterous lover of Elsa Miller. Always adulterous because Bunyan and Miller never attempted legal dissolution.

"Bunyan relied on his married status as an immunization from further legal liaisons," Whitehead concluded. "He despised his father for his seven wives which drained the family coffers."

In fact, it increased the family wealth over-all since a number of half-brothers and half-sisters parlayed their inheritances via mother's alimony into independent fortunes. Bunyan Trucking for instance grew out of shipping success and now had a continent wide range under its name **Success Baggage Express** - which became **Suxpress**, made famous by its titillating **Suxpress** ads.

All this history was punctuated by the appearance in Whitehead's office of Elsa Bunyan nee Miller...

- Paul Encimer  
From a 2009 Blog



Paul revisited **The Plague Year Journal** for decades in various forms, weaving a rich tapestry of fictional characters and archetypes inhabiting our local watersheds, and his mind.

I always read *Greenfuse*  
while my computer  
is getting fixed  
over at

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