

EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY BY H.E. SMITH

Timid Sims

Directly opposite the Black Rock, on a little knoll, was the cabin of Timid Sims. He, in company with a chance partner, was working on the bank nearby. Sims was always picking up the waifs, stragglers and castaways drifting about the country. His house and scanty larder were ever open to them. He took them as partners, and trusted them as freely as though they had come burdened with trunks full of endorsements and testimonials of good character.

Sometimes they robbed him; sometimes they got drunk and made his house a pandemonium; sometimes they effected the same result without the aid of whisky, by gradually developing sour, surly, ferocious dispositions. The best of the lot carried the gross result in gold dust of a week's washing to Columbia for the purpose of turning it into coin, and after many days' waiting therefore Sims received a letter from the delinquent, stating that he was overwhelmed with shame and remorse, but he had given way to his besetting sin for gambling, and the dust had all gone into the maw of the "tiger." He had not proved an able workman either. His hands seemed never before to have grasped pick and shovel; and after a morning's gasping labor, Sims would often insist that he should remain at home during the afternoon and make himself comfortable, for it was a sore distress to see a man panting and struggling with work to which it was very clear he was unaccustomed.

"You'll get your throat cut one of these nights by some of these chaps you're always picking up," was the rough and condescending advice of Jim Freemantle to Sims. Sims looked as if the idea was entirely new to him, but the next straggler coming along was as readily taken in.

It was about 11 o'clock. Sims and his co-operative straggler had put through their last run of twenty-five buckets, and were "washing down" to see how it had yielded. The sieve and apron of the rocker were taken off. There was a great deal of black sand in bottom of the apparatus. This Sims was running off by means of successive streams of water, poured from his long handled dipper, aided by a peculiar rapid rocking of the machine. Slowly, at the upper end, the black sand deposit assumed the shape of a point, and near the apex, one after another, came out a little run of golden yellow flakes.

"Takes a good deal of dirt to make a little gold, doesn't it?" Said the straggler. "When I was on the North Ford Fork of the Yuba. '51, I got six ounces once out of twenty-five buckets. Them was the times, though."

**Judy Lambert
Register of Deeds
(continued)**