

## **EARLY HISTORY OF CLOUD COUNTY BY H.E. SMITH**

### **Timid Sims**

“There’s about two bits here, I guess.” Said Sims. “Well, that’s better than nothing, and we ain’t beholden to any one for it either. I like a gold claim for one thing; it pays you just the same whether you’re Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant, Republican or Democrat. I say, Tom, if those Chinamen start to cross the river in that old boat of Wang Chu’s, they’ll drown.”

The boat had started, and was gliding up an eddy in direct opposition to the course of the stream. For the immense mass of water rushing down and striking the rocks at the narrow entrance of the Big Canon, caused a portion nearest shore on either side to be sent directly back full three hundred yards. For this distance there were two smooth currents running up; between them, a foaming, surging current, rushing down.

By taking advantage of these upward eddies a skillful boatman could land his craft on either side nearly opposite the point from which he had started. Wang Chu and his passengers sailed smoothly along until the upper eddy being reached; the boat’s head was turned into the mid current. Then it seemed as if seized by a monster. It was whirled around like a top, shot for a second on the top of a great surge, and shot down again out of sight and under. There was a momentary glimpse of the five men, paddling wildly and half rising from their seats; the next they were all gone. A hundred yards below, like a-whale shooting out of water to blow, came the boat, bottom up from the depths, and clinging to her was Wang Chu. It was dashed against the Black Rock, and pressed under by the current.

Wang Chu sprang on the rock. The rest were never seen. Sims and the straggler gazed like men in a dream. There, before them, were still the rushing, roaring stream, the sun shining, the birds singing; all going on and having gone through it all as though nothing was happening or had happened, and, in five seconds, four human beings snatched from life to death!

Wang Chu must be rescued. There was the poor, half-submerged creature on the rock, the ice-cold current at times dashing clear over him, and striving, as it were, to tear him from his hold; and between him and the shore the merciless stream, which could as easily sweep away a thousand men as one.

There he remained until near night. Gradually the population of Texas Bar and Bixel’s Flat accumulated on the spot. All measures to float him a line, by which he might be hauled on shore, proved abortive.

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