

Deep Serpent River [1887-Hell's Canyon, Oregon-murder ballad on true event]

We pushed up big river in the Year of the Dog,
Broke our backs to fill our sacks, in the Year of the Hog.
We had no names, we made no claims; in Gum Sahm we all had one aim:
Survive our sojourn, then return to the home from whence we came.
 Clan and companion, we worked that demon canyon
 For the tales we'd been told of a mountain of gold.

 Deep Serpent River, wash over me, take my bones back home across the sea.
 Take my bones back home, set me free.

In Enterprise, Blue heard some news of Chinamen with braded queues,
Mining on some bottom land; he formed a gang and made a plan.
Yielding hatchet, knife, and gun, they fell upon us one by one,
Nowhere to hide, nowhere to run; and thus, the bloody deed was done.
 Clan and companion, died deep in the demon canyon,
 Killed body and soul, massacred for gold.

Blue and Vaughn and the rest moved on, some deep into Idaho.
Where they all went, how our gold was spent, no one will likely know.
The court tried three, they all went free; the truth was lost to history.
In the end, no one gave a damn, about dead Chinamen.
 Clan and companion, left to haunt this demon canyon,
 For if the truth were told, we were murdered for more than gold.