very gratifying to me. A Tsimshian woman came up to him: she was Kik-tairlkh, the lone survivor of the Graveyard Spit massacre seven years earlier. She told me through an interpreter that she never should forget my kindness, and that she thought of me every day and considered that I had saved her life. Mr. Crosby called the attention of the Indians at the feast to the fact, and they gave me applause by stamping their feet and clapping their hands, after which one old man made a speech in which he said that I had showed myself a friend of the Simseans and they never would forget...
Days fifty-eight, fifty-nine.

After these steady days of my sorting within their pages, the Port Townsend diaries at last begin to annal themselves.

1869: the year's page-edges glint with gilt respectability. After a decade of daybooks imported from Boston or New York, this is Swan's first western diary, printed by the H.H. Bancroft firm of San Francisco. Plump as a pocket Bible and with a deft flap to bring the covers closed, it is fancier than anything Swan has been writing into since the Neah Bay ledgers, and his entries begin more neatly, purposefully, than the previous year's. He is churchgoing. Has begun to woo the Northern Pacific Railroad and bought some land on the edge of Port Townsend in case the courtship is consummated. Makes his mercantile jaunt to Sitka.

The first half of 1870 was as steadily sunny--Swan at last sees his Makah monograph brought into print by the Smithsonian, and on June 30 hoists a flag to celebrate the marriage of his son—until the satisfying pilgrimage to Utah on behalf of the Northern Pacific. The diary, another Bancroft and near-twin of 1869, shows its own consequences of that hard-used journey: a spine nearly worn through, the covers flaking and fraying.

1871: this diary a "Pacific" imprint; smaller and an enlivening dark-green after the parson-black Bancroft covers.
Swan begins the year with scrupulous routine again, the tidbits of good news—a lock of hair from his new grandson, sale of the last of the Ellen Foster scrap iron, admission to practice as a lawyer—steady until September. Then he is taken ill again. (...First day for nearly 10 days that I have felt like a return to health. I have not been well for some time past, but hope that from this time I may recover both mentally and physically for I am in much need of both.)

Perhaps worse, the Northern Pacific has not come through with the salary he has been trying to obtain for months. Gaps riddle the rest of the pages. Swan ends the year literally at sea, en route home to Port Townsend after a journey to Olympia: At 12 midnight while about midway between Steilacoom and Tacoma...the pilot blew three long and loud blasts with the steamer whistle for New Years.

A brighter year, 1872. The Northern Pacific at last pays up, Swan buys still more land, settles his bills and borrows no more. He does much walking of the Port Townsend headland; is impressed with a touring temperance lecturer and evidently takes another of his periodic vows of dryness. This year the Pacific people have inserted a credo on the calendar page at the front of the diary: "Make your words agree with your thoughts."

For 1873 the Pacific diary featured across the top of each day's page a decorative band of colored lines, red-blue-red, to me reminiscent of the battle ribbon rows on the chests of World War Two servicemen. Combat says it for the year, which arrived on the heels of a New Year's Eve gale and swept on to bring the Northern Pacific's collapse. Swan records long bouts with
neuralgia; Peter's wife, Dukwitsa, arrives from Neah Bay, suffers hemorrhage and has to be put up in Swan's room for nine days. Except for the visit of the tattooed Haidas from the north, the best that can be said of the twelve months is that a brewery has opened... the first brewing made... found it a very fine quality and it reminded me of the home made beer I used to have at home when I was a boy--and that Swan was given the honor of sending the first message on the new telegraph line to Seattle: Flags flying here and every one rejoices.

1874, a Bancroft diary again but the biggest and gaudiest of this group: about the size and fatmass of a thick paperback book, and bound in purple with angled streaks, like the pinstripe suit of a colorblind gangster. Swan is gaudy himself. Another inheritance is to be claimed in Massachusetts and for the first time he travels east by train. (Only seven days now, the journey from Pacific to Atlantic.) As before, Swan lavishes money and gifts on his daughter Ellen as if he was practicing to be rich; also dips down to Washington, D.C., to call on Spencer Baird at the Smithsonian; and up to New York with son Charles... sightseeing together from the top of the new Brooklyn Bridge. Swan is back in Port Townsend by late September, spends the autumn getting interested in Dolly Roberts, closes the year on that queer note of the New Year's Eve sodding of the grave of the Port Townsend jeweler, Bulkeley.
1875: the year of Swan's collecting trip to Alaska aboard the \textit{Wolcott} but also the year the matter of Dolly Roberts comes to nothing. In this diary's calendar pages the publisher, who chose anonymity, decorated each month with some scene of gods or gamins. Swan must have looked with rue upon Miss August, a robust unbloused lady around whom a troupe of cupids perform acrobatics on trapeze lines of flowers.

Sick, robust, drunk, dry, infatuated, thwarted, railroad-hopeful, railroad-undone, off now to Alaska and now to Utah and now to Boston, yearning north toward the Haidas, still ambassadoring occasionally among the Makahs and Clallams from his own white tribe, esteemed author at last for his Makah memoir and dabbler as ever amid mine paperwork. I take back the slander that Swan's Port Townsend years are more dozeful than his time at Neah. Not as much of it a life I would trade for, though. The periodic illness, the steady lure of too much whiskey, the seesaw finances, all or any would be as perpetual earthquakes compared to my even days. (Nor does Dolly Roberts, sweetly though she trills, sound like the best prospect I can imagine."

But I do the historical moment, just there before America's centennial which he went collecting for.

\underline{p. 223A follows}
(Although historical moments may be less different from our own than we like to think: the quote recovered from a notebook I put it in during the Bicentennial hoopla of three years ago; humorist Mose Skinner in 1875, on the eve of the American centennial, proposing a ceremony to match the popular mood: "Any person who insinuates in the remotest degree that America isn't the biggest and best country in the world, and far ahead of every other country in everything, will be filled with gunpowder and touched off.")

Both of my grandfathers, in Scotland and Illinois, were born amid the years spanned by these half-dozen diaries, and with them the family's western impulse. It seems a time when the American landscape had not yet been swathed so hard (although the frontier populace was busy enough at it); a time yet of a green tentativeness about the country, and particularly the west, as if we were still deciding what to make of it, or what it might make of us.
This odd community of time I mentioned at the start of this book of days. Since then I have spent a pair of simultaneous spans with James Gilchrist Swan, the first two months (minus tomorrow) of this coastal winter and the quarter-century after he detached himself from Boston for the Pacific shore. By now, I know of him, what?

That he has failed at two major tasks, teaching to the Makah children and butlering for the transcontinental railroad. The oyster venture at Shoalwater, he seems never to have got engrossed enough in for his abandonment to qualify as failure. His collecting of specimens for the Smithsonian is "attended with success," as Baird periodically hurrahs him, but as a way of earning is a slow dollar indeed. Swan fends rather than amasses. With his Port Townsend collection of not-quite-livelihoods he reminds me of a householder with a leaky roof, distractedly positioning a washbasin under this drizzle, a battered pot under that one, until the plinks somehow are all caught.

That he is a spree drinker, dry for weeks, months— at Neah for years— at a stretch. No constant souse can have written his thousands of diary entries, hundreds and hundreds of letters, frequent newspaper articles, the Smithsonian treatises, and The Northwest Coast.

That he is mildly forgetful, having a tendency to leave behind a book or a spare pair of pants in a hotel room. The big Neah Bay ledger diary once goes into a fluster: This evening I lost or mislaid my spectacles in a singular manner for which I cannot account. I had given two of the boys some medicine and entered it in my book.
which was the last time I had them on. A few minutes afterward I could find them nowhere. The boys and myself hunted for over an hour without success. Next day: I took down my prescription book and to my great pleasure found my spectacles which I had placed in the book and had unthinkingly shut...

That he is not a jokey man, but laughs at the frontier's humor probably more than a sound Bostonian ought to. The Olympic Peninsula settler who has a prized rooster named Brigham Young is cheerfully in Swan's pages, as is the sailor—a Dago or a Russian Finn—who notices the carcasses of skinned fur seals on the shipdeck and asks, Captain will I throw them cartridges overboard? Swan can ping a nice note of irony, as when he stepped from the Neah Bay schoolhouse to watch a Makah tamanous ceremony and was much edified to notice that two of my scholars, Jimmy, who had just recovered from a severe attack of cold, and George, were performing on the beach entirely naked...

That, in the frequent way of solitary persons, he loves song. His regular choiring began long before Dolly Roberts was there to share a hymnbook, and at times he vocalizes in the living room of one friend or another, an occasion he is apt to record as a grand frolic. I imagine his voice as a bit nasal and, the 25 frontier years notwithstanding, notably Yankee in accent.
That he can get very full of himself, particularly when his
own evidence on a matter is contradicted. During a dispute with
a Smithsonian scientist who maintained that fur seals all birthed
their young at the Pribilof Islands off the Alaskan coast because
it was "impossible" for pups to be born in the ocean, Swan tetchily
writes to Baird: I do not believe all the fur seals of the North
Pacific Ocean assemble on the Pribiloff Islands any more than I
believe all the flies of this coast alight on one or two carcasses
of dead animals... (Current science suggests Swan somewhat misjudged
the seals' independence; the Pribilofs are considered to be the single
birthing grounds.) But other times he can go into a dress-blue
funk: the great care and anxiety I feel... Evidently not for long,
and perhaps most often when he has to count another birthday (I
trust that the remainder of my life may be passed more profitably
than it has so far...), but he does know gloom.

That all the regularity in him is channeled down his right
arm into his pen. He may pass from job to job to job with the
liquid hops of a squirrel, but his diary account of his days and
his record of effort to learn from the Indians are the steadiest
kind of achievement. Constantly I am impressed with Swan's care
to be exact; the steady spatter of arithmetic through the diary
pages as he measures things, for instance, and the fact that as
early as his stint at Shoalwater he made it policy that whatever
lore was given him by a tribal member, he would check by later
asking others about it, one by one. A scrupulous correspondent,
Swan is perpetually eager for mail and often answers instantly, putting the reply on the same mailboat. No question: the stickum that holds his life together is in his inkwell.

That he has a quality I do not know what to call except gallantry. An ingredient of it must be New England manners. In the diary he misters even as old a friend as Webster, and is an instinctive caller on friends, welcomer of strangers, visitor of the ill (white or Indian), sharer of magazines and books and probably bottles. But it goes beyond that, into the attitude he seems to hold that the human race is a kind of fascinating commonwealth. Swan does not have this perfected; the Indians regularly exasperate him into an inked mutter of savages. Consistently, however, he respects their skills and lore and is able to see and judge them; and for that matter his own white tribalists of Port Townsend and the Strait country, as individuals rather than a corps. Which must be the most valuable possible discernment for a diarist.

What escort he has been. The ancient woman Suis whom Swan in his Shoalwater years had questioned about the natives' names; she spoke to him of the carrying influence of ancestors, first people. For those of us on this long coast now, successor tribe to Suis's in our pale thousands and thousands, Swan is of our own first people. (Making those of us of this moment, in T.H. White's term, the after-people: the ones for whom "music and truth and the permanence of good workmanship...the human contribution to
the universe" are inheritance to try to add to.) Swan is doubly valuable to me because the people of my own blood are gone now, buried in Montana, the storytellers, reciters of sayings, carriers of the Scots lowland voice that is scarcely traceable on my tongue, and Swan filling his days and mine with his steady diary lines is an entrancing winterer—a tale-bringer, emissary from the time of the first people—such as I have not been around in the years since. He seems a kind of human bonus, a dividend to me for making this chronological passage. And there still is a month of him to collect.
Day sixty

The Bone River is flowing into itself, turned backwards by the tide of Willapa Bay advancing between its banks. For some hundreds of yards here at its mouth the Bone slowly, slowly creeps back toward its origin, like a bolt of olive-drab cloth surreptitiously trying to roll itself up.

The course of the Bone here where Swan filed his riverside land claim in 1853 does some final indeterminate wandering before snaking into the northeast side of sprawling Willapa Bay, or Shoalwater Bay, as it was in Swan's time here. Even today, with the highway and its sporadic towns, there is a sense of this area going its own geographical path indifferent to man. The ridge country around Willapa, for instance, is single-purposed: it bulks there to produce trees in the way a porcupine exists to feature quills. The devoutest admiring mutters about the Northwest forestscape—thick as hair on a dog's back...timber till you can't sleep—chant themselves when you gaze around this region. Yet an onlooker will see too what already is in his eyes, and as with nearly any other frontier site where white men could manage to whittle a clearing Shoalwater was declared by its earliest American inhabitants to have high metropolitan prospects. Swan almost at once was prophesying Shoalwater Bay, as a harbor, will be
of great importance to Washington Territory as soon as its advantages are known...

He was more specific about the glories of his own chosen site here: a fine level prairie, containing five or six acres of marsh, and as many more of elevated land above the reach of the highest tides...a fine grove of spruce trees sheltered the place from the north wind...Specific if overoptimistic, for his real estate hopes were_ to have away with him in those phrases. The meadow-like area is more bog than otherwise. Fen country, really, trying to decide whether to remain marsh or become something more. As for the spruce shield against the north wind, the benefit is moot; weather roars through here from the southwest or west, fresh off the Pacific. (Weather, that is to say, such as the southwester—great gusts would come sweeping over the cliff, and, descending on us with a whirl, seemed as if they would tear everything before them—which sluiced apart Swan's fireplace in his new riverside cabin in 1853.)

The weather today—the eighteenth of February—is only mildly fitful, an occasional shower rising in the hills east of the bay. Last night, however, brought in one of those whooping southwest storms. Wind screamed through the door of my motel room until I folded lengthwise strips of newspaper and jammed every crack. Then sometime in the middle of the dark the door burst open, the newspaper strips flying through the room like white swords.
"What the Jesus...?" I shouted blearily.

"Security," intoned a voice outside. "You forgot to lock your door. Be sure to lock your door."

From security which flings open my door in the black stormy hours of the night, may I hereafter be preserved. I yawn and try to walk myself awake along the riverbank. Swan visited his empty land in 1868. (Indians glad to see me, he reported of the reunion with his Chinook and Chehalis neighbors of fifteen years before.) It is still empty. Empty, that is, except of the sounds of water. Here at Willapa water makes gradation upon gradation, exists in almost every conceivable form except iceberg. Tide, stream, current, seep, all are steadily at work, sometimes almost within touch of each other. Off the high clay cliffs on the south side of the river, a few jets of water as big around as my arm, the Willapa Bay version of a trickle, dive loudly into the Bone.

A sharper sound: oyster shells clink as I walk across them. Swan mentioned such heaps, left over from an Indian settlement, when he took claim on the land and probably there has been one such brittle midden another on this riverbank since humanity arrived.

This oyster turf beside the Bone is Swan's western path not taken, which is why, after the last few days of talking Swan, I have returned to have one more look at his very first Northwest site. Right here, or rather over there a few hundred yards where the river encounters the bay, he passed up his best commercial opportunity as if it was cold gravy. All those years ago Swan alit at Willapa nee Shoalwater with as much mercantile knowledge
as anyone on the coast north of San Francisco, connections in the Bay city, money in his family, understanding of the Indians, a temperament for the climate. The oysters beckoned for the taking, were said to lie like rich reefs, "in layers of two to three feet in thickness." They were more than palatable; Swan himself noted that they rivaled English Channel oysters, having the same strong, coppery taste. But when the fat beds of Willapa oysters eventually were systematically harvested and made an industry—which grew to the point where, between 1870 and 1876, well over a half million bushels were shipped to San Francisco—and furnished a few fortunes, Swan was years gone.

It can be seen now that he spent his few years here on exactly the wrong shore of Willapa Bay. On this eastern side, there is no longer a trace of Bruceport, the erstwhile "settlement" of Swan and Russell and the other earliest oystermen, except for a commemorative highway plaque. But across the water is quite another matter. There the Long Beach Peninsula, another of the geographic whimseys of the Washington coastline, stretches between the Pacific and Willapa Bay like a tremendously long and crowded picnic table. Modern pushy members of the family, the motel towns, Long Beach, Ocean Park, Oceanside, are gathered along the coastal side with their belly buttons out to the sun and their neon trinkets glinting wildly off one another, while away at the north inland end drowses the gray-gowned maiden aunt of the mob, Oysterville.

Had Swan poled across the bay from Bruceport to settle at Oysterville and work the oyster business from there, he might
well have made it to prosperity. The village—it actually is less than that, simply a handful of handsome rangy houses of the last century, on wide lots opening out to Willapa Bay and the dark bristling ridges beyond—seems these days to exist solely on memory and cozy isolation, but it had its era of oyster bonanza.

The site, I suppose, was too far from activity for Swan; in the end, he always was drawn to a busy port. Yet Oysterville encapsulates exactly the sort of frontier gentility Swan seems suited for. I can see him there in one of the toplofty houses, spending an hour each morning on the accounts ledger of his oystering enterprise and two hours on a monograph about the local Indians, his second wife—a sea captain's widow, say, from Astoria, and bearing more than incidental resemblance to Matilda—summoning him to noontime dinner of clam chowder and lightly baked salmon and wild strawberry shortcake, then in the afternoon a long-bearded crony or two from the Bruceport days drooping by to spin tales. (Perhaps the single most comfortable line in Swan's thousands of diary entries is an evening he records simply as telling stories and eating apples.)

But I also see him, this time in actuality here on his fortuneless side of the bay in 1868, mulling whether to veer his life this direction again (a jot in the diary about the nearest sawmill's price on lumber for a cabin) and then dropping the notion like one more empty oyster shell. Men and women are hard ore. We do not change composition in momentary fires.
Being Swan—being, that is, like any of us who do not go through life as if it were a footstep wide—he must have considered any Willapa Bay site, Oysterville or the riverland, as finally too far from activity for him. In the end, he always is drawn to a busy port. Drawn as well to the uppermost rim of the American Northwest, to that specificity, magnetism of geography, operating so strongly on some of us along the shoreline of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound. Which in turn is to say, drawn to the several Port Townsend years just told by the diaries.

There is a limit to how much you can admit about your future at any one time, however, and Swan now does a little ritual of 1868 just-in-case. He concludes his visit to the claim by penning an absentee owner's fussy plaint—

Notice

All persons are hereby cautioned against trespassing upon my donation claim on the Querquellin or Bone River, either by cutting or removing timber or any other property or by pasturing stock or building residences. All such persons will hereafter be dealt with according to law. Mr Wm H Clark will attend to any business connected with my claim during my absence from the bay...

—and in his saunter away from the posted piece of paper, for the last time sets foot here beside the Bone.
Day sixty-one

Capt John came to my house this afternoon, the sixteenth of November of 1878, and told me the following queer yarn. He says that at the time Ah a yah's son died at Hosett, Peter, whose sister is mother of the boy, and Ah a yah were putting the body in a box for burial. They had that portion of the lodge screened with mats and fastened the door so that no one but themselves should be present. A woman however who was in the lodge unobserved made a hole in the mat screen and looked through. She first heard the dull sound of something chopping, and saw Peter and Ah a yah cut off both the boys arms below the elbows and then put the body in the box and bury it.

Some time the past summer the Indians found near a small brook which runs near Ah a Yahs house two human fore arms & hands or rather the bones, one end of which rested in a tin plate and the hands rested on a stick held by two forked sticks, so they could be roasted before a fire, the remnants of which were plainly seen. The marrow which had melted into the plate had mostly been removed but some remained which was hard and white.

These were lethal doings, Captain John solemnly explained to Swan. With the substance in the plate Peter had cast a spell—bad medicine— which took the life of a boy of the tribe.

I listened very attentively to the recital of this fabulous tale just to find out to what lengths Johns superstitions will lead him but the idea of Peter roasting the arms of his own nephew to
extract grease to work bad medicine to kill his enemies, is too monstrous and absurd for me to believe without better proof than Capt John...

Captain John's busy tongue: the mysteries of Peter: Swan's recording pen. Unmistakably, life at Neah Bay.

Swan returned to Cape Flattery in mid-August of 1878, once more kited on the wind of Henry Webster's political fortunes. Newly appointed as collector of customs for Puget Sound, Webster named Swan his inspector at Neah Bay. A job at last exactly Swan's size and fit. The first several months of each year a small fleet of schooners in the fur seal trade now worked out of Neah Bay. Swan was to make sure their sealskins were the harvest of Makah canoe crews launched from the vessels, rather than any catch from the natives of alien British Columbia across the Strait. Another trader at Neah dealt in the oil of the small sharks called dogfish, a useful lubricant for sawmill machinery. Swan similarly was to see that the dogfish oil remained all-American, or had the proper import fee paid. As to the Makahs themselves, original merchants of Cape Flattery, they were to be regularly cautioned against trading dutiable goods with the British Columbia tribes. Those few tax sentry tasks made were the sum of Swan's new job: otherwise, he was free to read, write and, finally, collect one single salary he could live on.

His new prosperity wasn't fancy: as assistant customs collector, he received about a hundred dollars a month, but it was steadier than
his life had been in Port Townsend the past few years. The diaries of 1876-77 show a number of gaps, the dangerous silences when Swan is either ill or in whiskey; one void follows the note that he has been enjoying Scotch whiskey punch with some chums. Then he begins to regain himself when Neah Bay becomes a prospect again, in late 1877. His welcome back to Neah the next year was generous.

A former Puget Sound steamboat captain named Charles Willoughby now held the job as agent of the Makah Reservation, and Willoughby promptly dealt Swan into the doings of the
agency by calling on him to interpret to the Makahs. Swan in turn thought well of the Willoughby style of administration, as when an election process was set up to choose tribal leaders: One feature in the election was that several women voted by permission of the Agent—this a dozen years before any state permitted women the vote, and forty before the nation did—thus establishing a precedent in this tribe of womans suffrage which is right, as the women of the tribe always have a voice in the councils. This is the first election ever held by the Indians here, and will be followed by similar elections in Wwach Tsooess & Hosett.

Another amendment to Makah life, however, Swan's pen liked not at all. While at the Lighthouse yesterday, Capt Sampson informed me that whales have been quite plenty around the vicinity of the Cape this Spring but the Indians have not been after them as they devote themselves exclusively to sealing. I think the business as now conducted is a positive detriment to these Indians. They neglect all other avocations during the sealing season, from January to June, and the money they receive for the skins they secure is either gambled away or is spent for flour, bread, sugar &c, is distributed in potlatches to their friends.

Not only in their In other ways besides the lapse from whale hunting did the Makahs seem less dramatic and turbulent in the past. Instead, after twenty years of persistent Reservation administration, they had become not quite citizens of either their ancestral world or the new white world, but of some shifting ground between; as though the Cape Flattery "earthshakes" Swan used to record in his schoolhouse tower
were sending tremors up through the tribal society as well. On the one hand, the customary ceremonies of the tribe lived roaringly on:

The Indians had a great time last evening. They visited the various lodges and performed some savage scenes one of which was eating raw dog. A lot of boys imitated raccoons and climbed on Davids house and entered through the roof throwing everything down from the shelves and making a deal of mischief. Other boys imitated hornets and had needles fastened to sticks with which they pricked every one they met. Today they had the thunder bird performance and a potlatch. These Makahs are as wild and savage in their Dukwali performances as when I first knew them twenty years ago.

But another day, Swan is startled when the schoolgirls, playing in a corner of his office, pretend they are holding a tea party and begin by primly reciting grace.

There is a moment in the diary when the tilting to the Makahs, perhaps a lurch to the future can almost be seen to be happening. Swan is called to interpret as Makah mothers bring in youngsters who are to begin school. The schoolroom baffles the little newcomers. They were as wild as young foxes and some were quite alarmed and struggled and bellowed. The school girls were standing outside to receive them and they looked so nice and neat, that it reminded me of what I have read about tame animals being taught to tame and subject wild ones.
And one mark further of change in the tribe. Neah Bay in these years has a chief of police, and he is Peter.

In other areas besides Peter's psyche Neah Bay showed itself as a greatly tamer place now than in the early 1860's.

Regularly each week, a steamship chugged in; no more three-day canoe trips to Port Townsend. Another vessel was on station in the bay with pilots to go aboard ships entering the Strait. There was even an official but underfunded lifeboat station. (When Swan and the Makahs watched a few annual practice rounds being fired from the station's mortar, Old Doctor told me he thought the mortar would be a fine thing to kill whales with.) Willoughby's Reservation staff of whites was much expanded from Webster's original shaggy little crew of bachelors. Wives and children, even a woman schoolteacher, were on hand now. This new Neah Bay is capable of social whirl which reads almost giddy in the pages where Swan used to record the pasttime of warring on skunks:

Mrs Brash and Mr Gallick came up today and dined. After dinner Mrs Willoughby, Miss Park, Wesley Smith and I sang, or tried to sing the Pinafore but with poor success as I had a bad cold and a head ache and the others were not feeling well and to crown all our dis-comfort the organ was badly out of tune, but we blundered through it some how and our audience said we did well, but I did not think so...
Mr Fisher, Charley Willoughby and Mr Plympton came in this evening and I read from Scribner's magazine the "Uncle Remus" stories which amused them very much particularly Mr Fisher who pronounced them "Doggoned good yarns."

If Neah Bay was changing, so was Swan, at least the diarying part of him, and tremendously for the better. After years of crabbed pocket diaries, these thirty-six months at Neah, August of 1878 to August of 1881, are exquisitely, almost artistically, penned. Swan returned to the grand 1866 ledger which he had been using only to copy letters of almighty importance, such as his blandishments to the Northern Pacific, and resumed the day by day superior script he had practiced in the last years of his previous Neah Bay life. When he reached the bottom of the ledger's final page on the 30th of June, 1879, he procured an identical leather-covered volume and invented even more elaborate diarymanship, annotating events in the margins and summarizing each month with a stupendous double-page weather chart which recorded Cape Flattery's nudge of temperature and drift of breeze.

In more than penmanship, these are high years for Swan. He is puttering usefully, staying sober and enjoying health. His days seem not only better kempt, but glossed.

Last night was very calm and at 11 PM there was but little surf on the beach and the air being perfectly still the least sound could
As the swell of the ocean gently fell on the sands and receded it sounded like harmonious music. I laid awake an hour listening to it. The air seemed at times filled with...the steady notes of some great organ.

Indians out again tonight after ducks. Their torches make the bay look as if a number of vessels were lying at anchor.

Called on Capt. John...He then gave me the words of a wedding song, which originated with the Nimpkish Indians in Alert Bay...When a Nutka man buys a Nimpkish woman and she is brought home, they sing,

"Ya ha haie, ya ha haie
Halo hwai kook sa esh
Yaks na artleesh, mamats sna aht
Cha ahk wyee, cha ahk wyee,
Ya ai ho ho ho ho hoo hoo"

and may be rendered thus. I have a strong house on an island full of presents, and I will toss you there as if you were a bird.

The final word is a jingle like row de dow dow in an English song.

John could not give me the full explanation of the words but said there would be some Nutka Indians here before long and I could find out from them the exact meaning, but I inferred that it was as difficult for him to explain what the words meant as it would be for me to interpret Mother Goose's melodies to him....
Capt Dalgardno, Pilot Stevens and Mr Fisher made me a visit this evening and we had a pleasant time telling stories in which Fisher as usual carried off the palm. He told about firing a 4th of July salute in a mining camp in California with a quicksilver can, which at the last discharge kicked through a pine stump then flew into a miners cabin knocked the top off a loaf of bread and finally jumped into a bunk among the blankets.

Fisher, the Reservation farmer, is a particular boon to Swan, the kind of rumbustious frontier character he has savored ever since the days of the oyster boyos at Shoalwater Bay. Fisher shot two very fat wild geese a short time since and eat them both at one meal and drank up about a pint of Goose oil. It rather loosened him up for a couple of days....Fisher sent an order to the "Toledo Blade" for a book on horse diseases and received by mail yesterday a copy of Pictorial Bible Biography with a postal card that they had sold out all the horse books...
But Fisher is a now and then performer, showing up when Swan's assiduous pen takes time off to chuckle. The most frequent figure in the diary of this second Neah Bay stint is the most affectionately written ever.

Little Janji and Joe Willoughby amused themselves this forenoon in my woodshed splitting sticks for kindling, while so engaged they hear a noise and ran in and slammed the door too. Joe said "Something out there will bite us. - What is it, a squirrel or a rat? I asked. No said Janji "big bee bumble bee." I went out and saw nothing and told the boys there was no bee there. "Yes said Janji, hear him sing." Just then the fog whistle blew at Tatoosh Island and the distance made the sound hum like a bee. I explained to the little fellows what it was but they didn't believe me and Joe ran home. Ginger said, "Josie fraid, I not fraid I big boy I not fraid Bumble bee." He then went out and caught a bee in a fox glove blossom which he killed by stepping on it and then showed it to me in triumph....I told him he is the chief of the bumble bees, and he is very proud. He still thinks the fog signal is an immense bee in which he intends to kill with a hatchet....

He reminds me of my boyish days....is constantly in motion never at rest from the time he gets up till he goes to bed and is as healthy a little boy as there is....Jimmy's relatives were at Capt Johns house, they were telling little Ginger how kind I am to him, when to the surprise of every one the little child said "I love Mr Swan and when I am a big
man I will marry a Boston kloochman and have a big house and Mr Swan shall come and live with me and I will take care of him when he is old..."

Janji is very polite and will open the gate for me to pass through. The only instance of an Indian's politeness that I ever knew. If he lives, he will be a superior man and may be of great service to his tribe.

Jangi Claplanhoo, "Ginger," was the son of Jimmy, Swan's first student nearly twenty years before. Swan, refugee from Boston family responsibilities for nearly half of his life, now becomes a kind of honorary frontier grandfather. The diary is open about it: Ginger, he writes, is a dear little fellow and I love him very much... Or, more open still, that fretful little earlier phrase about the boy: if he lives. Swan had written that of another Makah once, when he met Swell.

One other significant newness in the pages of this second Neah Bay life of Swan's. The Indians of the past--elip tillicums, the first people, the woman Suis had called them at Shoalwater all those years before--are having their effect on Swan's night hours. The incident of Swan's-dream-of-the-dead-and-subsequent-gift-of-clams occurs, and another as well. The twenty-seventh of February, 1879:

I had a dream last fall that...Boston Tom came to me and requested me to move his wife's remains so that the salt water should not wash them away but I did not know till today where she was buried. A few more storms will wash the grave away. Dashio promised to have the remains removed as soon as the weather gets settled...
Swan seems not to know what to make of these nighttime visitations. Nor do I. Evidently Captain John is going to have to be our final source.
Day sixty-two

In Cardiff I remember hearing of the Welsh custom of nicknaming by item of livelihood. It was said that in one village, the mechanic was known as Evans the Garage, and his father, local purveyor for a medicinal liquid of some sort, as Evans the Oil. By that standard, in 1880 this winter companion of mine truly becomes Swan the Pen.

He is sixty-two years old, sufficiently salaried at last, away from Port Townsend and its tempting aroma of whiskey, among the Makah community he knows perhaps better than his own white tribe. He celebrates all this in ink, ink, ink.

...This forenoon, the third of January, called to see Capt John. Mary Ann made me a New Years present of a cap of Sea otter skin which she had just finished. It is a very nice one and very warm. Little Janji was very well and very lively, and told me the cap was a present from him.

Peter, David, Albert & Lechessar, of the newly elected chiefs came up, the fourteenth of February, to get their "papers" or certificates of election which Capt Willoughby gave them in my office. They were then told to choose one of their number as head chief for one year and they chose David.

Today, the nineteenth of March, I commenced painting a Thunder Bird and whale on the top of the chest I bought from Fannys father. I made up the design from the drawings of whales and Eagles done for me by Haida Indians...
This remarkable year, even mishap amends itself. This forenoon, the twenty-first of March, while splitting a stick for kindling it flew in my face injuring my right eye, and cutting my eye brow and nose. I expect a weeks black eye in consequence....I thought it would be imprudent for me to go up to the house to dinner this evening as it was raining and I feared I might take cold in my eye. So Mrs. Willoughby sent my dinner down in grand style. First the Captain came then Mrs. Willoughby and with her 16 school girls each one bearing something. One had soup, another meat, another bread, the 4th one had pie, 5th had pepper, 6th salt, 7th vinegar and so on...and the smallest one Emma, had my napkin.

With the arrival of spring, Swan does his summary of the seal fishery for the quarter ending March 31—1,474 seals harvested by the Makah canoe crews and the schooners Lottie, Champion, Eudora, Teazer and Letitia. Then back to notes of pleasure:

Frogs in full blast tonight for the first time, the twenty-second of April.

One of the Rhododendron plants which came from Port Townsend and was set out by me Dec 31 1878 has blossomed, and today—the thirtieth of May—is in full bloom. This is the first time a Rhododendron ever bloomed in this portion of Clallam County. They are found at Port Discovery but I think not farther west than Sequim Bay. I have 30 plants
and think nearly every one will blossom next year.

Neah Bay is not yet so domesticated it can pass a year without commotion. In late June, the body of a visiting Quillayute Indian is found in the forest, murdered and robbed. When the investigation proceeds more slowly than the Quillayutes think it should, Swan has a talk with Peter. Said he "you remember when I killed a man at Crescent Bay for helping to kill my brother Swell I thought I was right but Mr. Webster put me in the fort at Steilacoom and kept me there a year I have learned better since then and now I am the head of the police and Washington pays me to look after the bad people." In a week, Peter is stepping aboard a schooner to take the Makah accused of the murder to Port Townsend for trial.

Swan does his second quarterly report, the final one, on the seal harvest, finds that the total is up to 6,268 skins.

This has been another delightful day, the sixteenth of July, the temperature just about right, with a refreshing breeze and everything looking charming. My flower garden looks very pretty Fox gloves, white and purple, and blue Canterburybells... My roses are beginning to bloom and Lillies ready to expand... If our season is later than up sound it is very welcome, for while everything here is green and fresh, at Port Townsend and on Whidbey Island the ground is parched and flowers are done.
Swan has reason to find charm in his Neah Bay days. By jaunt regular steamship, he can go to Port Townsend once a month, tend to a few office chores there, see friends and be back at across the Strait, Neah within a day or so. Visits to Victoria are equally easy. As much time as he wants, His official duties are so light he can spend on personal correspondence, and letters constantly flow off, to Baird, to Ellen and other relatives, to any number of acquaintances out of his past two decades in the Pacific Northwest.

Brief aggravation on the nineteenth of August: The calves have annoyed me so much by running in my back door whenever it is open that today I put up a temporary fence of poles but I doubt if it keeps them out. But then the year purrs along again. Swan draws a salmon as the pattern for the new weather vane put atop the schoolhouse. Sends off to tailor in Boston for a suit of Navy Blue Beaver Cloth. Cheerfully reimburses Webster, that dogged practitioner of patronage, $24 as my assessment to National Republican Committee... Has a chuckle when the chief of the Makahs reports his impression of Rutherford B. Hayes, the chief of the whites making a visit to Puget Sound:

David returned from Seattle & Port Townsend. Says he saw the President, but had about as lief see me... I think David expected to have seen him in uniform. Discovers that he himself has unsuspected white-

considerable tribal standing: Mrs Webster told me that when President Hayes and wife called on her, they expressed their regret that I had not come up from Neah Bay as they had heard.
of me at Olympia. She said that President Mrs Hayes, Gen
Sherman & Daughter, Gov & Mrs Ferry, Secretary Owings & others
of the Presidential Party called at my office but I was not
there and they then learned that I was not in town.

Even early winter looks just dandy to Swan. Driving NE
Snow Storm 3 inches fell to 7 AM, the fifth of December...I
think it auspicious to have winter set in at this time of year.
The more cold weather we have now, the better the prospect
there is for an early spring.

By the end of 1880, Swan has filled 366 sumptuous ledger
pages with daily entries, done twelve elaborate tables of
day-by-day.
Marked weather, kept account of the seal harvest, written
413 letters (and received 185), and had the President of the
United States knock on his door. Writ large in more ways than
one, this year of Swan the Pen.
Day sixty-three

A quiet rain, which hangs bright beads on the birches, at the end of every branch, and strung at random between, elves' balloons of silver against the evergreen valley slope.

Swan's weather at Neah this date, the twenty-first of February, in 1881: very heavy rain during night 3.25 inches fell stormy dull day. This is the perihelion of Venus Jupiter & Mercury and the last quarter of the moon. The weather is quite warm and buds are well started.

Another 1881 entry: the twenty-fourth of May;

The Teazer brought the "Intelligencer" and "Argus" in which is the announcement that Mr H A Webster Collector of Customs has been removed from office and this will of course remove me...

The twenty-seventh of July:

Arrived at Port Townsend from Neah Bay at 2 o'clock PM. Called at Custom House and reported myself to the new Collector A W Bash...Received an invitation to tender my resignation as Inspector of Customs which I took into consideration. Dined at Mr Websters and gave Mrs W a bouquet of flowers which I brought from my garden at Neah.

The first of August:

Left Port Townsend at 11 AM for Neah Bay to get my things...Before leaving I handed Collector Bash a letter in which I declined...
my resignation and he in turn gave me a notification that my services were no longer required...

The second of August:

Very pleasant morning and smooth all night. Arrived at Clallam Bay at 6 AM and after leaving mail proceeded on to Neah where we arrived at 9 AM. Capt Munroe blew the whistle before we reached Baadah, and on rounding the point Mr C M Plympton teacher came off in a canoe and took me ashore.

I immediately commenced packing my things and was assisted by Jimmy and others.

I gave Jimmy all my floor mats, an empty barrel, a lot of coal oil cans and a variety of stuff.

I gave all my little garden tools to Ginger and distributed a lot of other things to Martha, Ellen, and some other children and to Martha I gave many of the flowers in the garden particularly my white lillies and Tiger lillies.

I feel more regret at leaving my flowers and plants than anything else, as they have been a source of pleasure the past three years.

At last all was packed, and boxes and packages taken to the beach and put into Kichusams canoe, and soon the Dispatch came up and anchored and my things were taken off. It took two canoe loads. I went on board in the last canoe after bidding good bye to the family and friends I
have lived with the past three years. The school children will miss a kind friend.

I do not regret leaving Neah Bay as I think I can do better elsewhere....
Day sixty-four

As it is better late than never—Baird of the Smithsonian, the last day of January, 1883, blandly about to incant a miracle—I may perhaps be able to arrange for an exploration under your direction during the present summer...

Not simply an exploration: the exploration, Swan to the home islands of the Haidas, the Queen Charlottes.

He had tugged at Baird's sleeve about the topic for ten entire years. Now there was some quick back-and-forthing on money—Swan:

Will you kindly allow me to remind you that I have received no salary for my work...I support myself wholly by office work which in a place like this is but a mere stipend, and I cannot leave to go on any expedition to make collections but I find on my return that I have lost business....Baird: I am not unmindful of the very great service you have rendered...our funds are either so limited or tied up that it is extremely difficult to use them as I would like—until they worked out that Swan would receive $300 a month for at least three months in the Queen Charlottes, plus an allowance for expenses and purchases of Haida art—made it plain he wanted his money's worth: You will understand that we want the fullest collections of all kinds, especially of objects connected with the fisheries and with hunting, to include models or originals of boats and canoes, weapons, hunting and fishing dresses, &c. As stated, I want you to make the most exhaustive memoranda as to the manufacture and application of the various articles gathered by you.
Swan, at age sixty-five, is about to have the one more west he has wanted.
Day sixty-five

The water route to Port Townsend, hastily recreated after a lapse since steamship days now that the Hood Canal bridge lies tumbled beneath three hundred feet of riptide. That void atop the waves has made Port Townsend more queerly isolated and central than ever: without the bridge, the drive to Port Townsend and the Olympic Peninsula beyond is so long, south all the way around Hood Canal, that the state ferry system has installed this nautical shortcut.

The big green and white ferry Kaleetan spins north out of the Edmonds ferry slip as if having decided to make a break for Alaska, and the newness of direction sends itself up from the deck plates through my body, a vibrant return to the time when passenger craft skimed up and down the Sound and Strait in purposeful day-long voyages instead of flat across the channels in quick commuters' hops. The fresh sense of surging out onto the water world is not illusion; the Kaleetan, at 18 knots, will take an hour and a half to reach Port Townsend.

The day is dark enough that the first of the lighthouses to slide past the ferry, Point No Point, still has its light winking. Behind it, the shoreline of the Peninsula guts blackly along the gray canyon of water and sky, Whidbey Island abuts-shore to the east. I have brought along Swan in scholarly tatters, notes and photocopies and snippings, but the wide water and its dikes of forest keep my eyes. Time enough for Swan's future at the two coffers of it waiting for me in Port Townsend.
Some dozens of minutes and Foulweather Bluff, named by Captain Vancouver as the North Pacific rain ran into his ears. Strangely, Puget Sound and now Admiralty Inlet seem broader, out here as the ferry goes along the center of their joined water like a zipper up a jumpsuit, than when I look across from either shore; the wave-ruffled distance in both directions somehow adds up extra.

More mid’channel minutes, until the Kaleetan sprints north past Fort Flagler, opposite Port Townsend, as if still determined on Alaska, then at last yields slightly west with a graceful dip and begins to wheel direct onto the hillside town.

Seen here from the water, Port Townsend stands forth as a surprising new place. It regains itself as the handsome port site of its beginnings, the great water-facing houses look correct and captainly on their bluff, the main street is set broadside along the shore as it ought to be in a proper working wharf town. Instead of the dodgy glimpses along its downtown through too many cars and powerlines, this Port Townsend looks you level in the eye and asks where you’ve sailed in from.

Docking this ferry is also from maritime days of the last century. Kaleetan is far too massive for the tiny ferry slip, like an ocean liner coming in to moor to a balcony, and the crew must show seamanship. One ferryman fishes out with a boathook, snags a large hawser off pilings at the port bow. With that our vessel is snubbed while a tugboat hustles in and butts the stern around until, slotted just so,
the ferry can make a final careful surge to the little dock ramp. The elephant has landed.

Many of us who step off as foot passengers could be our great-grandparents coming ashore at Ellis Island, Montreal, Boston: beards, duffel coats, parcels, suitcases. A number of us, as I am, in watchcap and waterproof jacket, which I suppose would mark us as crew of an immigrant windship. Three ministers are prim among us, over from Seattle for the day on some missionary duty or another. Women carry children ashore, mothers greet daughters, husbands wives, huge trucks ease off the ferry, others snort aboard, turmoil of drayage and pilgrims such as the town hasn't seen in eons.

But a block or so from the ferry landing, within a dozing quiet from some other vector of the last century, the carved cane reposes in its glass museum case. I squat and begin to inventory. The handle is ivory carved into a perfect fist the size of a child's right hand. Through the grasp of the fingers, like a held rattle, and out the circling grip of thumb pressed onto forefinger, twines a snake. The ivory reptile then writhes through air down onto the wrist. There above where the tiny pulse would hammer, the snakehead rests. Except that it is not at rest, but in mid-swallow of a frog, eternally doomed in its try to escape around the rim of wrist.

I check my notes. Swan first saw this creation in the village of Masset in the Queen Charlotte Islands on the tenth of July, 1883.
The carver, one of the Haida magicians either in wood, stone, or in gold or silver, still was at work on the cane. Swan asked the artisan's price—ten dollars—and said he would be back.

A second snake, this one of wood, drives up the cane from the bottom in three precise writhes covering most of the length, until the head poises very near to the carved struggle of snakehead and frog. After snake eat frog, the outlook seems to be snake eat snake. This deft crawler along the cane length has a broad scalloped design along the middle of its back, with cross-hatched scales along either side of the broader cuts. It also has tiny blue-green abalone eyes, a gentle everlasting glitter.

Snakes white and brown, contorting a stick of wood into struggle, legend, art. I very nearly reel back from this example of Haida blade magic.

Over lunch in a restaurant which confusedly has tried to rig its interior as a shipdeck, I think of Swan coming upon the snake-cane six hundred miles to the north of here. Keen as he was about art of this coast, he must have felt like a prospector whose boot has kicked up a potato-sized nugget in front of him. The carved scene ripples the other way in me, from art out into life. I see back to the instant when a jay attacked into the garden outside my window, its flash of blue and black and the high excited HEEP HEEP HEEP cry and then the toss of the garter snake which had been sunning on the warm dirt. In combination of grappling and chopping, the jay
finished off the snake in an instant, then undertook to pull it apart, like a man trying to stretch an inner tube he is standing on. After a few minutes of tugging, the jay dropped the loop of corpse in disdain, bounded across the garden in three arrogant hops and flew off. When I went out to look at the snake I found it as long as the span of my hand, nine inches: gray-green with three strings of yellow down its length. In places the jay had frayed through the body, small ruptures like those a knife makes in rubberoid wiring. Even as I bent in study of the snake, not two minutes after the jay's ambush had begun, an ant clambered on like a pirate coming aboard a derelict schooner, dashed in and out of the snake's open mouth and up to a quick circle of the flat skull, then raced off in exploration of the first body-rip. How sudden it all, the same eternal suddenness of the ivory frog sinking down the ivory snake's gullet.

End of the Port Townsend day, the Kaleetan churning a fast white current away from the town. In the early dusk—hard to tell this day's darkness from its daylight—I can see from the afterdeck back to today's second reference point of Swan's embankment toward the Queen Charlottes that early summer of 1883. The bespired red-brick courthouse, and in it the records of the municipal court which Swan himself presided over in some earlier years, and within those records this verdict from the twenty-sixth of May, 1883:
It is Ordered, Adjudged and Decreed that...James G. Swan is an Habitual Drunkard as described in Section 1674 of Code of Washington Territory. And it is hereby further ordered...to every Dealer in Intoxicating Liquor and to all other persons residing in the County of Jefferson...not to give or sell under any pretence any Intoxicating Liquor to said James G. Swan...
Day sixty-six

Unfold a map of the North Pacific, and you notice, some six hundred miles north of the British Columbia capital of Victoria and not far under the overhang of Alaska, a large stalactite-like shard which has fallen free of the continental cliff of shoreline. The illusory plummet has carried the chunk fifty miles to sea, striking its western edge into some of the trickiest weather of the entire Pacific and shattering the landmass into a hundred and twenty-five fragments from the size of rocky hummocks to big adrift peninsulas. Swan's telling of the geographic proportions: The extreme length of the group from North Point, North Island to Cape St James the southern extremity is 156 miles. The Islands of the main group are North, Graham, Moresby and Prevost. Graham and Moresby, are the largest and constitute nearly eighty five per cent of the whole area...

White seagoers had arrived in the late 1780's--the islands received their name from the British captain who sailed in on the trading vessel Queen Charlotte--but except for the Hudson's Bay post at Masset and a dogfish oil refinery at Skidegate, white enterprise and settlement across the next hundred years remained strangers to the Haida homeland. (This changed sharply at the end of the nineteenth century, and on into this: the Queen Charlottes now count a population of about 6,000, the majority of it non-Haida.) Here in 1883, then, the archipelago still was, as Swan so heavily had hinted a decade before in his Smithsonian article on Haida tattoo patterns, not familiar territory to whites, and
his own prime intention lay with the least known geography of all: the west coast of the Queen Charlottes, that region swept peopleless by the smallpox epidemic among the Haidas two decades earlier.

The idea wafted to Swan out of the report of the previous white expeditionary to the Charlottes. Geologist George M. Dawson in the mid-1870s had been able to sail and clamber at will among the Charlottes, except: "The time and means at my disposal did not enable me to make a survey or geological examination of the west coast of the islands, which would require to be carried on during the early summer... the least boisterous portion of the year. It is a very dangerous lee shore for sailing craft..." Swan pointed out to Baird at the Smithsonian the west shore's defeat of Dawson, nor has any one visited this Coast or examined it who has made any reliable report. Since he, Swan, would be in the Charlottes anyway...

Running a little late in life as usual, Swan at six and a half decades intends an expedition which I, twenty-five years younger and with the advantages of modern equipment, can never hope to duplicate. The point is moot this winter, since this season is not the necessary "least boisterous portion" of the weather year, but precisely its most. The still-unpopulated western coastline of the Queen Charlottes remains one of the remotest loose ends of North America, and winter flags it with surf, gust, downpour.

Telephoning to the Queen Charlotte communities to ask about hire of a fishing boat or airplane or even helicopter to glimpse some of that shore, I am roundly advised to forget even that notion,
wait for a summer. Which, remembering the one near-drowning this North Pacific coast warned me with a few years ago, I decide I had better accept as gospel. Even in summer, as Swan is aiming for, I cannot have the means he did. The advice had been held out by Dawson to whomever adventured in next: the Queen Charlottes' west shore "would, I believe, be most easily dealt with in one of the canoes of the country manned by a good Indian crew." To Swan, rider of canoes throughout the frontier half of his life, those words chimed exactly right. To me, footsoldier of a considerably tamer west, they can only be rue, and useful comparison of some of Swan's capabilities and my own.

As to why Swan decided to dare the Charlottes' western shore, when the Haida population and the material he sought to collect for the Smithsonian were peppered along the eastern coastline, the answer does not show itself in his diaries or the letters to Baird. My hunch is that whatever he told himself in his justifying Boston way, he wanted to do it for the edge of challenge, as the Makahs canoeing downcoast along Cape Flattery could not resist darting themselves through the tide rip tunnels in the searocks. Swan held no small estimation of himself as a coastman; a true coastie, in the Dungeness lighthouse keeper's sudden fine phrase to Carol and me; and here lay one of the last unknown rims of western shore. An extra west, one more over-the-horizon territory for the curiosity that worked in him like a second heart. For certain, this is greatly the broadest leap I have been close enough to see Swan take--his 1849 decision to cast himself west to California being lost to time--and I settle in with anticipation to watch how he will manage it.
From under that Port Townsend civic cloud of decreed drunkenness, which at least was newly lined with the Smithsonian's silver, Swan sets off for the Queen Charlotte Islands in mid-June of 1883. He voyages in rare style, out of Victoria aboard the Otter, a Hudson's Bay Company supply steamer. In effect, he is traveling to the Queen Charlottes as the invited guest of British Columbia's Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Dr. Israel Wood Powell. Of their time, Powell and Swan are perhaps the two white men of the Pacific Northwest most ardent and informed about the coastal native cultures, and long have known each other through Swan's visits across the Strait to Victoria. Powell's cachet, particularly in vouching for Swan to the Hudson's Bay Company whose ships and trading posts were the supply line into the North Pacific, was ideal, and with it came the suggestion that Swan be accompanied by one of Powell's field agents, James Deans. The one hitch in this supremely hospitable arrangement is that Deans missed the boat.

Swan shrugs--watched for Mr. Deans till the Steamer was under way but he did not appear, the diary reports, and lets it go at that--and settles back to savor the cruise of the Otter. Not much of event has happened to him in the almost two years since leaving Neah Bay. Wait, there is this: Henry Webster's death, which Swan inscribed and then drew triple lines around, crosshatching them darkly at the corners and center until the result looked eerily
like the sketch of a coffin. But otherwise, except for a dab of added enterprise when a Haida bracelet maker named Ellswarsh worked for awhile out of the back room of Swan's office, Swan's Fort Townsend routine consisted of the minor paperwork chores of old, and the bald patches in the diary which led up to the citation for chronic drunkenness. An overdue change, this shipboard life which Swan is more than veteran at. Since his jaunty voyage to Britain four decades earlier, I count more than a year of his life spent on vessels breasting off to somewhere or other. The Otter's seven-day slalom of supply calls along the North Pacific coast, to Metlakatla and Fort Simpson in British Columbia and Fort Wrangell in Alaska, promise a particularly cozy round of visits for Swan, who by now seems to know every living soul, Indian and white, from Shoalwater Bay to Sitka.
Swan, it ought to be reported, is writing now in triplicate, or rather, in three versions which add up to triplicate and then some. During each day he pencils into a pocket diary, and in it flash his touches of mood, occasional grumbles (the Metlakatla stop-over:...the hour was too early for these settlers who had but just got up. I notice this listlessness, and desire to lie in bed mornings to prevail in Victoria and everywhere I have been in British Columbia and Alaska. Sit up late at night and get up late in the morning. Worse at Fort Wrangell: Arrived...at 8 A.M. and found the whole town asleep.) or frets or chuckles amid the
his touches of mood, occasional grumbles or frets or chuckles amid the doings of the day. At first chance he transcribes, in that brown ink, into a small squarish hardbound composition book. This version is narrative at fuller flow, expansion of the pocketed days. Next exists the fifty-page report he later drew up for the Smithsonian, typed--shakily--and with historical background of the Queen Charlottes periodically swatched in. I have had no small amount of decipherment to do on James Gilchrist Swan the past two months, but never before triangulation.

What is happening is this: in a sense, just as Swan is being whetted against a new edge of the continent now, so are the diaries. As I have begun to go through the simultaneous three, it occurs to me that with their blend of detail and elucidation and reprise they are truly taking their place with those supreme westering pages, Lewis and Clark's and young Patience Loader's. To tell his Queen Charlottes journey in any higher style, Swan would have to hymn it. And after the ledgerly reports of contentment from his 1878-1881 stint at Neah Bay and the unreported discontents of his Port Townsend life of 1882 and early 1883, these diaries' frank completeness is unexpected and welcome, like having a trout begin to sing to you up through its pond. These next days I am going to stand back a bit and give the busy pages vocal space.
at the end of the afternoon of June twenty-fifth, a shore which appeared low and quite level, but as it was very rainy we did not get a good sight.

The dim landfall is Graham, largest island of the Charlottes.

Arrived at Massett at 5 PM....Delivered my letters of Introduction...took account of my freight as it was landed--wisely: 2 sacks flour short in my count & notified Purser Sinclair--and then went to a very comfortable cottage in the enclosure of the HB Co.
Off the Otter's gangplank with Swan steps the one expeditionary companion he has hired, described in a letter to Baird as a very intelligent young Haida man, a worker in jewelry, a painter and a tattooer who has been with me about 3 months... Johnny Kit Elswo is the keg-chested fellow beside Swan in the second Victoria studio portrait, and his jacket-and-trousers attire does not hide that he is a new example, perhaps in his mid-twenties, of the outdoor artists in which the Haidas had been so rich. Johnny (Swan calls him so in the diary, and I will follow that) has become the latest in Swan's line of Indian confidantes—Swell, Captain John, the Port Townsend Clallam chieftain Duke of York, Jimmy Claplanhoo—and promises to be especially valuable to Swan as hired helper on this expedition. The most faithful intelligent and reliable Indian I have seen, as Swan touts him to Baird, Johnny is from the village of Cumshewa on an eastern midpoint of the Queen Charlottes shoreline and can show me things of Indian manufacture that the foreign collectors never have seen.

He at once proves to have less exotic talents as well: This forenoon the roof of the house I am occupying, took fire from old stove pipe falling down. Johnny & another Indian put it out with buckets and Mr McKenzie furnished new pipe which Johnny fixed all right.

Swan is advised at Masset that the man he needs is the chief who, before smallpox emptied the area, ruled on the absolute northwesternmost
fragment of the Charlottes, then called simply North Island, now on the maps as Langara Island. With that chief and his canoe crew North Island could serve as the piton for the journey along the western shore: relatively calm waters from Masset to North, assured shelter there on the chief's home isle, then the headland to headland descent by canoe seventy-five miles down the coast to Skidegate Channel, the passageway between Graham and Moresby Islands, and through to the settlement at Skidegate at the southeastern corner of Graham Island.

The one omission in the smooth plan echoes the absence of Deans back at the Victoria dock. At the moment, the chief is away somewhere on another canoe errand.

On wait at Masset, Swan begins to entertain himself typically, with his pen. Goes out and counts the Haida community; sixty-five houses old and new nearly all of them with a carved column or pillar in front, covered with heraldic devices...of the family residing within, and representing some legend...Does whatever collecting is possible: Johnson brought me a fine model of an ancient war canoe with mat sails, paddles and everything complete. The Haidahs were formerly a warlike people and a terror to all the Coast tribes...but they have become peaceful lately and no war parties are now sent out, and the ancient canoes have all decayed and gone...Johnny was of great assistance in trading and purchased everything much lower than I could. The Indians remonstrated with him and asked him why he liked the white man better
than his own people? Because, was the reply, "the white man pays me, you pay me and I work for you." This logic did not suit them but they let Johnny alone and I succeeded in obtaining some very interesting specimens. Visits companionably with Masset's handful of white residents, Alexander McKenzie trader, Charles W.D. Clifford of the Indian Service who was there on a visit and Reverend Charles Harrison the Episcopal Missionary and his wife all of whom were most courteous...

Swan also passes his tests, Haida and white, as a guest. One item I noticed especially in Swan's consignments of supplies taken aboard the Otter in Victoria was a copper tank for specimens of fish he is to obtain from the waters surrounding the Queen Charlottes. A Baird idea, of course. Besides his duties at the Smithsonian where he had become Secretary after the death of Joseph Henry several years before, Baird in his spare time had assumed charge of the U.S. Fish Commission. He had tapped Swan into the Fish Commission payroll for occasional collecting of fish in the Cape Flattery region, and now Baird wanted samples from the North Pacific. Swan, nobody's amateur when it comes to packing for a journey, filled the fish tank with the fruit oranges bought in Victoria, opens the lid and bestows them on the Hudson's Bay and the moral Haidas.

Next, the first of July, An Indian sold me 2 halibut heads for 2 pieces of tobacco and I made a real old fashioned down east chowder which we had for breakfast. Mr McKenzie and Mr Clifford pronounced it delicious...Then I showed Johnny how to make a plum pudding which was
done by 5 PM & served with baked salmon...This being "Dominion day,"
which is celebrated by the Canadians & provincials they considered that
my cooking was done in compliment to the day, which however I knew
nothing about till this evening.

Clifford, the Canadian Indian agent, walks Swan to the burial
ground near the entrance to Masset Inlet that afternoon. Beyond the
gravestones—the christianized Haidas now were importing them from
Victoria—they see the platforms which elevate the remains of a trio
of tribal skagas, medicine men. The skeletons show through the
rotting plank coffins, rather as if the skagas are getting restless
about eternity. Together with their sacred bones, Swan knows, will be
the carved instruments of magic, medicine sticks and implements of
office...But we did not care to examine too closely at this time for
fear of giving offence, so we turned our attention to examining the
surrounding scenery.

Ceremonies of Canadian-American amity aside, Swan paces the
Masset shoreline day upon day, because still there is no sign of
his canoemen. The site at least had its beguilements. Wild straw-
berries, fat little pellets of flavor, virtually carpet areas of the
island. Elsewhere, for miles as far as the eye could reach were acres
of wild roses in full bloom. McKenzie told Swan he had been visited
the previous summer by a Russian traveler who marveled: "This is
Bulgaria, the land of roses!"
Swan's own comparison is less exotic but as emphatic:

The whole region about Masset reminds me of the appearance of the land of Neah Bay...covered with the same kind of forest and shrubbery. It is an Indians paradise, plenty of fish and berries in summer, wild geese and ducks in myriads in the fall and all winter, and with but little physical exertion their every want is supplied.

The pause; the propositional line which is as close as Swan ever comes to disclosing calculation:

If there was a regular communication between this place and Victoria by steam so that one could come and go at least twice a month, I would as soon reside here as at any place I know.
Two weeks and a day after Swan's arrival at Masset, paragraphs of promise. The ninth of July: The old chief for whom I had been waiting returned home today. His name is Edinso or, as the whites pronounce it, Edin shaw.

By letter to Baird the next day: The Chief of North Island, who has been absent, will be starting shortly to go with me to that interesting place and till he is ready I shall busy myself collecting specimens of fish, and dredging for molluscs. The familiar financial sign-off--My Indian, Johnny Kit Elswa has proved of great service in purchasing articles at far less prices than I could, as tourists and collectors have advanced prices greatly. Mr. McKenzie tells me that my purchases are actually lower than he has paid Indians for the same kind of articles--and Swan is away to begin dickering with the canoe chief.

Edinso. There is a story of him terrible as any mythic lightning flung down from Olympus. When smallpox erupted in Victoria in 1862 a group of Haidas led by Edinso was there. Whether to clear the Haidas from the disease's path or simply to get the obstreperous Edinso out of town--the Daily British Colonist once called him "a perfect fiend" when he had a few drinks in him--it is not clear, but the governor of British Columbia ordered in a gunboat to tow the Indians home. Not far north along the coastline of Vancouver Island, Edinso pulled out an axe and hacked free his canoes. He put to shore with his followers, they made camp, defiantly returned to Victoria, and
smallpox swept them. When Edinso eventually led home to the
Queen Charlottes those who had survived, the epidemic went with them.

Which of course is only to say that horror came to the Haidas
on one wind rather than the next. Yet that wind was Edinso's, as if
fate couldn't leave him alone.

Edinso likely was in his early seventies when Swan met him and
started to talk canoe charter, and for decades had been a name in the
North Pacific for the sumptuous potlatches he had thrown; for whirling
a Tsimshian chief into the path of a gunshot intended for him during
a tribal fracas; for traveling about the Queen Charlottes in his
glory days in a canoe "twelve fathoms in length, elaborately carved
and painted at both ends, manned by a large number of slaves and
dependents." By now, however, he also was a fading figure, an aging
sea-soldier who was merely one of a dozen chiefs basing themselves
at Masset since their villages had died or dwindled and trying to
accommodate to the tribe's narrowed future. In the mid-1870's
a missionary had arrived at Masset and impressed some of the Haida
leaders with Christianity's magic of inoculations and other medical
care. Within a few years a number of the chiefs and even some of
the shamans who had most desperately resisted the missionaries
came into the new fold. Edinso, with whatever level of enthusiasm,
was one of these Haida leaders to decide that the gospel bearers
were a milder plague than the horrific invisible diseases. He
made his peace as well with the officialdom in Victoria, even
erecting a carved column topped with the figure of the governor
of British Columbia in frock coat and silk hat.
But political accommodations with the white world were one matter, canoe charter was another. Swan would just have to wait longer, Edinso serenely told him, until he completed a trading trip to Fort Simpson on the British Columbia mainland. Meanwhile, wouldn't Swan care to look over a lot of ancient things he had for sale?

The tenth of July, in probably not the best of moods, Swan shops through Edinso's items. As he asked too much I did not purchase, the diary says shortly. What did seize Swan's interest was the project of the chief's nephew, Charley Edinso, a carver at work on a pair of caneheads made from the ivory teeth of a walrus. Two beautiful canes nearly finished, Swan records, each representing a serpent twined around the stick which was a crab apple sapling...on top of one was a clenched fist: yes. The writhing Fort Townsend museum piece in gestation.

The depiction, Charley Edinso enlightens Swan, is the hand of Apollo's priest Laocoon, mainly grappling the serpent as it crushes him to death for trying to warn his fellow citizens against the Trojan horse. The Haida carver did not have an advanced knowledge of Greek mythology, although I would not put it past the best of Haida artists to tune in from the very air whatever lore they wanted for the day. Simply a picture from a London illustrated newspaper which had found its way across the planet to Masset.

As for the other canehead, Swan squints close to find that this one is merely the head of an elephant. Newsprint provided these astounding
details—thrust of tusks, bend of trunk—too: a picture of Barnum's Jumbo, representing the hoisting on board a steamer when bound to New York.

Veteran shopper of Indian art that he is, Swan is dazzled. Beautifully carved, the diary says again, then the cautious prod to Charley Edinso about price. He asks $10 each. Swan may even manage to keep a straight face as he says he'll think on it.

Edinso pushes off across Dixon Entrance and Hecate Strait toward Fort Simpson, Swan strolls down to watch a Haida canoe maker at work. As a canoe connoisseur, Swan is closely interested in the process of molding a hollowed log into a craft of honed grace. The builder first softened the wood by filling...with water which he made to boil by putting red hot stones in it. The canoe was then partially spread and allowed to remain for a day...The next morning after heating the water again with hot stones he built a slow fire of rotten wood and bark on the ground along the sides of the canoe to render the wood perfectly soft, or as he said, "to cook it," and then stretched the sides apart as far as possible and kept them in position by means of stretchers or thwarts. I measured this canoe before he commenced to widen it and found that amidship, the opening was two feet eight inches wide, after he had finished the canoe I again measured it at the same place and found it was four feet nine inches...

Days peel this way from Swan's Queen Charlotte summer with practically no effort at all. On the twenty-first of July, a canoe
at last glides up Masset Inlet. Not Edinso; out steps the tardy James Deans, by way of a supply steamer which brought him as far as Skidegate. Swan shows no measurable enthusiasm about the arrival.

Instead, now that he has been beached at Masset for a solid three weeks, Swan's thoughts turn inward. Stomachward.

Not that his menu thus far hasn't been fertile as usual. Johnny cooked a nice breakfast, runs one diary report, a stew of Potatoes and onions, Griddle cakes or "Slap Jacks" as Johnny calls them, and nice coffee—Another... Made some clam fritters for breakfast which were very fine. And again: Today I made a pudding of the roots of the brown lily... first boiled the root, then mashed and mixed with eggs, milk, sugar and spice and baked... I think it is the first pudding ever made of this kind of root. But if his own palate is faring splendidly, the victuals of the Hudson's Bay colony horrifies him. Prior to my advent, the H.B. Company people were content to live on Indian dried salmon cured without salt, canned meats, beans, peas and salted fish... In other words, like a colony of Martians bivouacked in an orange grove and eating galactic K rations. So I thought to give them a treat.

The diary pages now whoosh with Swan's marine gathering and garnishing... some clams which I put in a tub of water for two days to get rid of the sand... large crabs nicely boiled in salt water. Some fresh trout and fresh salmon... A soda-biscuit stuffing prepared for the trout, enhanced with dried herbs... fat bacon chopped fine... three cloves of garlic bruised, pepper and salt and water, the whole rubbed into a uniform mass with a potato masher.
Swan chefs on to crabs, clams, salmon. When all was ready, I called the gentlemen to the repast which may be enumerated as follows, clam chowder, baked trout, roasted salmon and deviled crab, with a dessert of wild strawberries and strawberry short cake, coffee and tea; a banquet of natural products which elicited encomiums of praise from the guests.

Even the glazed encomiums are not his final word. Where food is concerned, there seems never to be one with Swan. Two days later he is busy preparing an octopus salad and serving it up to his Hudson Bay converts with chutney sauce and another of his culinary perorations:... when one knows how to render such food palatable it will be found that many a relishing and nutritious meal can be had from articles which previously excited disgust.
Day sixty-seven

Swan's sunny idyll of strawberries and roses begins to be over.

The final Thursday in July at Masset:

Mr. McKenzie succeeded in harvesting his crop of hay this afternoon...

The Indian children...Minnie and Charlotte were full of fun and frolic this PM I told Mr. Deans it was a sure sign of rain, as children and little pigs and kittens always were unusually frolicsome at approaching changes of the weather...

Friday: Rain...commenced at 9:30 PM. It being a dull day I remained in the house drawing sketch of Johnson's fish trap.

Saturday: Weather showery. Swarms of gnats were very troublesome all night. This morning I killed quantities on the window with the fumes of burning matches...

Sunday: No proper time to putting here so long as this gale lasts...must be wind...were between here and Fort Simpson...

I think if he does not get back by Tuesday that I will get Weeah to try to take me to North Island. Swan took his mind off Edinso with the youngsters of Masset. After church some children came to look at some pictures of the Zuni Indians in the Century Magazine of December 1882, when they looked at the dancing scene and masquerade performances in the February number they chatted like magpies...
On Tuesday, the last day of July, the details pause as Swan notes a favorable wind and hopes as I am very anxious to be starting off that it will waft in old Edinso.

It does not, and the next day Swan sits back and listens to McKenzie and Johnny Kit Elswa discuss a Haida method of fixing guilt. When a person is taken sick and foul play is suspected two men, not doctors but relatives, drink salt water for four successive days. In this water a frog dried and pulverized is stirred and mixed. This causes purging and vomiting. This cleansing of the system enables them to see clearly both mentally and physically... A wood mouse having been caught is put in a little cage, and set up on a box or table. Its first impulse is to retire to a corner and setting on its hind legs it remains immovable for a short time. While it is quiet the men question it to learn who made their relative sick. They name the persons suspected... The person whose name causes the mouse to nod its head is considered the guilty one, and unless he or she pays a number of blankets or give a present of equal value they will have the same sickness and die.
By now, Swan has been encamped at Masset long enough for hair to grow down to meet his collar, so Johnny Kit Elswa trims him as well as any barber and better than most... The young Haida shines steadily in the triple diarying. I like particularly his imaginative moment early in the Masset sojourn: Johnny...procured a bottle of Lime juice and a bottle of Raspberry syrup at the store and made a drink which he said was to celebrate the fourth of July... A good interpreter, a good cook and good valet, Swan praises him to the diaries, and a splendid hand about a camp and managing a canoe, young active and strong, and faithful in looking after my interests. It might be added, no slouch in other interests, either. Before their time in the Queen Charlottes is ended, Swan will act as scribe for his helper: Wrote to Rev Charles Harrison Massett that Johnny wants to marry Charlotte...

Friday, August fourth, no Edwinso. Wrote letters and packed specimens today.

On Saturday, Swan buys the pair of Charley Edwinso's extraordinary canes. They are beautifully carved and when varnished will look finely.
Day sixty-eight

"In Northwest coast art, perhaps more than in any other art, there's an impulse to push things as far as possible."

"Haida artists worked mostly within a rigid, formal system, but occasionally burst out and did crazy, wild things which out-crazied the other people of the Coast."

"They weren't bound by the silly feeling that it's impossible for two figures to occupy the same space at the same time."

As an accompaniment to Swan's notes on Haida art I have been reading..."
Indian Art of the Northwest Coast: A Dialogue on Craftsmanship and Aesthetics, by Bill Holm and Bill Reid. In my kingdom, the pair of them will be the highest priests. Holm of the University of Washington's Burke Museum and Reid himself a Haida artist, they sat to discuss item by item one of the great exhibitions of Northwest Indian art—the Haidas, Kwakiutls, Tlingits, Tsimshians, Bella Bellas and Bella Coolas created so much there has come to be a kind of academic sub-industry based on numerous museum holdings—and the talk of Holm and Reid as they pass back and forth incredibly carved pipes and dagger hilts and ceremonial masks is as exuberant and nuanced as their topic. The quotes are from Reid, who has done a carving as great as any of those of his ancestors: a depiction of Raven, as the Haida legend vows, discovering mankind in a clamshell; the clever bird poised atop, wings cupped out in shelter—or is it advantage?—while tiny mankind squirms to escape the birth-shell, pop forth from the sea-gut of the planet. Reid's insights make me wish for more rumination from Swan while ensconced at Masset, with those carved poles looming as skyline around him. What does say of that most famous Haida art is this:

These carved columns are pictographs, and the grouping of animals illustrate Indian mythological legends... They are all made of the cedar (Arbor Vitae), which abounds on the Islands and attains a great size. In order to relieve the great weight of these massive timbers they are hollowed out on one side and the carving is done on the other or front side, so that what appears as a solid pillar
is in reality but a mere shell of about a foot in thickness,
thickly covered with carvings from base to summit....These columns
are generally mentioned as "totem poles" without regard to their
size some of which are six feet in diameter at the base and ninety
feet high, and to call such great monuments poles is as inapplicable
as to apply the term to Pompeys pillar or Cleopatras needle or
Bunker Hill monument.
Day sixty-eight

Two days for the price of one this morning, and Swan will have
to fend without me at Masset. I have clambered from bed early for
the cosmic bargain.

At first daybreak I am atop the eastern rim of our valley,
scouting the viewpoints at Carol's campus, and in minutes am
shivering like a sentry who has had to walk the high ground all
night. The eclipse, a total one, the rare magical blot of moon
precisely across sun, will occur above the southeast horizon.
People are reported flocking to the Columbia River and the high passes
of Idaho and Montana to watch from amid the swath of totality.

Among the college's terraces of walkways, I finally find and
settle to the most direct parapet.

The sky is an impassive gray. I like it that the veil of
cloud will add second mystery to the eclipse, the kiss of sun
and moon will take place beyond our range and yet somehow in-
visibly pull light up out of our eyes. Like owls, we will be
made to go more dim-sighted as the day rises.

A hundred and seventeen winters ago, Swan stepped into a
December night at Cape Flattery to spectate the reverse of
this, an eclipse of the moon. There was a large party gathered
that evening at the house of a chief who was giving a feast.
I had informed some of the Indians during the day that there
would be an eclipse that evening, but they paid no regard to
what I said, and kept on with their feasting and dancing till
nearly ten o'clock, at which time the eclipse had commenced.
So far this morning, only the birds have commenced, the weet weet weet of sparrows blithely insistent in tree and bush. Yet the day in some way does seem stalled, slipping cogs. At 7:18, an exact hour before the eclipse and some twenty minutes after sunrise, the morning remains wan enough that the breast of a seagull atop a light pole shines out white as a pearl on mud.

A third of an hour more and Carol joins me, having sent her class out to write about the double-yolked dawn. We sip coffee out of styrofoam and wait for the day's half-light to swoop away.

Swan cherished the sorcery of foretelling--of harkening to an almanac calendar in the front of his 1882 diary while the Makahs preferred to use the logic of the moment for their divinations. The moon they believe is composed of a jelly-like substance, such as fishes eat...They think that eclipses are occasioned by a fish like the "cultus" cod, or Toosh-kow, which attempts to eat the sun or moon, and which they strive to drive away by shouting, firing guns, and pounding with sticks upon the tops of their houses.

A few minutes before eight, a helicopter buzzes across the southeast, a blacker bug now than in its pass a half hour ago.

Swan was rubbernecking interestingly up at the vanishing moon when the fact of eclipse began to terrify the Makahs.

Some of them coming out of the lodge at the time, observed it
and set up a howl, which soon called out all the rest...They told
me that the toosh-kow were eating the moon, and if we did not
drive them away they would eat it all up, and we should have
no more....

Minutes past eight, a breeze restlessly tosses the dim colors
atop the campus flagpole. The loophole beneath the clouds to
a few bottom slopes of the Cascades is losing light. Students
begin to shoal in front of all the campus buildings. One calls
across to another, "Why do you wanna watch it get dark? It does
it every day."

Swan eyeing the Makahs: As the moon became more and more
obscure, they increased their clamor, and finally, when totally
obscured, they were in great excitement and fear....There was
a most infernal din, and to help it out Jones and myself got out
the swivel and fired it off...

By 8:14, the sparrows nearest our parapet are scrunching as
far back into the middle of a tree as they can get, and muttering
an apprehensive t-t-t-t.

In the next minute, a flight of them whirls high overhead,
flinging themselves over the forested fringe of the campus
and evidently back to their night's refuge.

A minute again, and the college's automatic lights flick on,
like blue-white flares struck against the dimness. The clouds
go a deeper, more glowing gray.
At 8:18 a.m., totality, it is deepest evening.

Swan with his gunfire chased the eclipse from the Makah's moon. The noise, which was so much louder than any they could make, seemed to appease them, and as we shortly saw the very edge of the moon make its appearance after its obscuration, they were convinced that the swivel had driven off the toosh-kow before they had swallowed the last mouthful.

Within three minutes, we stand in a quickening dawn. The birds pick up their day again. At 8:30, on the stroke, the campus's sensor lamps douse out around us.
Day sixty-nine

Monday, the eighth of August, 1883, 8:30 that morning, a splash of canoe paddles at last. Swan, Johnny Kit Elswa and Deans push off from Masset, in company with Edinso and his squaw, three men and two boys. I am to pay Edinso $1.00 per day. His wife and the three men 75c each and the two boys 50c each and canoe 50c per day...which makes a total of $5.50 per day, plus rations.

The expedition's start had not been promisingly smooth. Edinso did not give instructions about stowing the things and when I got in I found myself perched up on some boxes with Mr. Deans. Old Edinso asked in a curt manner why I sat so high up. I told him...if he wanted me to stow his canoe I could do so. I then ordered several packages placed properly and made myself comfortable and we proceeded on...

After that bit of bramble, the canoe rides before a fair but light wind west past Wiah Point, its passengers let out fishing lines with spoon bait and trawled them astern and soon caught three large salmon. Edinso's squaw had about two gallons of strawberries and a lot of red huckleberries and she gave up as many as we could eat.

The floating picnic crosses Virago Sound by mid-afternoon and a stop then called to cook a meal for the canoe crew. Mr. Deans and I lunched on strawberries, sardines, bread and cold coffee.

They go on to make their first-night camp at a village called Yatze; little to recommend it even to Indians, Swan thinks. The Haida villagers
of Yatze are gone somewhere, a few wan potato patches and one lonely carved monument the only signs of life. Human life, that is. Mosquitoes and gnats were plentiful and...quite lively.

As if not wanting another clear look at the place, the canoers paddle out of Yatze the next morning before dawn. Edinso complains of having sprained his back while launching the canoe and, Swan notes perhaps a bit apprehensively, is quite cross, but the expedition progresses west several miles to the Jalun River before breakfasting.

The queer beach there impresses Swan as a singular exhibit of volcanic action in which the lava had burst up through the upper strata of rocks as though the region had boiled up like a pot. The lava...of a brick red color and a pale sulphur yellow in places, filled with boulders and pebbles of stone blackened outside with the heat and looking like a gigantic plum pudding. This is the first instance I have seen of such an evident volcanic action on the direct sea beach.

In early afternoon Pillar Point is passed, and Swan hurriedly pencils a sketch which shows it as a ninety-foot-high spike of stone driven into the offshore shoals.

A few hours later the canoe eases ashore at Edinso's own village, Kioosta, deserted except for many carved columns the handsomest of which are in front of Edinso's house.

Swan is in his tent after supper this second night out from Masset, possibly congratulating himself on the expedition's unruffled progress, when Edinso drops by to inform him of new terms of canoe hire: he and the crew desire hot biscuits and coffee to be served them every night.