Day fifty-five

Storm. Fence float. Goosedowner. None of which is fractionally enough word for such weather. Nightlong, rain swatted walls and windows, the wind pounded and ripped among the valley trees. Carol and I jerked awake at the gale's first try at peeling the roof from the house, never fully entirely slept from then on. I was certain that the birch trees outside the bedroom would be bending, eluding, as they always do in southwest blows. I was equally certain I would be greeting one or more of them in through the rafters any moment.

After breakfast--the birches still stood, although branches thicketed the lawn as if someone had spent the night up in the limbs with a pruning saw--I slumped away to try for sleep, Carol drove up the hill to meet her classes. The wind roared on. In minutes I admitted myself more or less awake for good, managed to decide that I would head for Shilshole to see this weather at full run on the Sound.

In the car: full run hardly says it either. Wind-flung clouds dive almost into the streets. Just beneath their reach traffic lights dance like lanterns swung by frantic trainmen. People waiting for buses try to squeeze themselves narrow enough to fit the lee spaces behind telephone poles. Everywhere a sprinkle of evergreen branches has sifted down, as if the city has been seeded with them by a giant foresting hand.

In restaurants I pass, people are talking to each other with their hands. Famous weather, a man said to me on a Killarney street one wan but rainless spring morning, famous weather. This gale, the unruliest in the dozen years I've lived beside Puget Sound, is going to have name of its own sort. It takes much to draw a gesture from a Puget Sound resident, but steaming mugs of coffee are being waved around in there to punctuate
the expostulations that somebody's daughter and son-in-law got up this morning to find a Douglas fir limb exploded down through the carport roof, that they themselves will not even attempt driving to the job at Boeing this morning, that there's been nothing like this christly wind since the Columbus Day blow of '62.

At Shilshole: I lean my way out onto the fishing pier. A bird lifts hazardously in front of me near the boat ramp. Incredibly, it is a kingfisher, blown in from some forested river bank or another and looking very weary of wind. I glance west, north, south, and find the Sound entirely empty of ships and boats, the first time I have seen it so in my dozen years. The next surprise is that along this shore. Oddly, the weather is not the steady rage down here that it is in our valley. There is a harsh uneven chop to the water, but no higher than a tugboat's bow, and not much breakage of wave along the shoreline. I realize what is happening: instead of crashing the waves ashore here, the southerly wind is skidding the water the length of the Sound. When all the miles of chop finally fetch up against the banks of Whidbey Island the banging spray must be colossal.

Out of the wind which whangs among the harbor's sailboat masts seeps a high agitated whistling, like the cry of mournful birds. Souls of displaced kingfishers, most likely. In the clouds to the west the Olympic peaks pop through into whetted outline every so often, and unexpectedly, sunshine through some
Day fifty-six

Innocent weather today. Clouds wander sheep-like along the horizon as if unacquainted with rain, never any lust to meet the wind and go dancing raucously on the grave on a bridge.

In one or another of his earliest sojourns at Neah Bay, Swan had watched a Makah pageant of marriage proposal. According to what he wrote later for the Smithsonian, into the bow of a beached canoe stepped a man with a whaling harpoon. Another Makah sailor climbed in amidship and held a seal skin buoy as if ready to cast it onto the waves: A third man, the steersman, alertly knelt in the stern with paddle poised.

Onto the shoulders of eight men were hoisted the canoe and its crew of three and through the air in its above-sand voyage toward the lodge of the family of the girl being wooed, the whaling pantomime slowly sailed.

In front led a fourth Makah actor, a man beneath a blanket and creeping on all fours, occasionally raising his body to imitate a whale when blowing. At intervals the Indian in the canoe would throw the harpoon as if to strike, taking studious care, however, not to hit him.

Behind the man-whale and the airborne sailors strode a chorus of the suitor's friends, singing, drumming, shaking rattles. The burthen of their song was, that they had come to purchase a wife for one of their number, and recounted his merits and the number of blankets he would pay.

At last, as the procession reached the lodge, the mock whale scuttled to one side; there was an instant of poised expectation among the entire tableau; and the harpoonist with full might whammed his harpoon into the cedar plank door.
This operation, deadpanned Swan, may be said to be symbolical of Cupid's dart on a large scale.

Evidently some splinter of that great dart flew and buried itself years deep within the watching guest. Just before Christmas of 1874, into Swan's diary pages arrives the name of Amelia Roberts. It sparkles there fifteen times in the next two months, and oftener and oftener "Amelia" is fondly burnished down to the attractor's nickname, "Dolly."

This is new. Over the years Swan's words on women have been scant. In 1863 when the Neah Bay employees invited ashore to Fourth of July dinner the captain of a trading vessel, it was rare exuberance, perhaps lubricated by a holiday bottle, for Swan to note that the captain was accompanied by a very handsome specimen of savage beauty in the person of a Stikene squaw whom he had brought down in his schooner...

There are the warm diary entries about the Makah housekeeper, Katy. A single wisp on a spring evening at Port Townsend in 1869, when Swan had gone calling on friends: Mrs. Phillips and her sister from Whidbey Island were present. I was much interested in Mrs. Phillips from her strong resemblance to my late wife. But little else. Until now these drumbeat inscriptions of Dolly, Dolly, Dolly.

Gifts to her begin to dollop from Swan like honey from a pitcher: sewing box, market basket, inkstand, writing desk, earrings, a painting, collections of seashells. Dolly full of fun, the diary exults. Dolly weighs 127 pounds and measures 5 ft 4½ inches, it commends.

One other reckoning does not reach its pages. That winter of 1874-75, James G. Swan reached his fifty-seventh birthday. Dolly Roberts was sixteen.

That canyon between their ages perhaps did not gape as widely as it
would in later eras, but it was chasm enough. There were Swan's other fissures as well: his thin finances, his drinking. Indians sometimes slept—good gracious, sometimes lived!—in his office. Swan himself periodically dwindled across the horizon to Sitka or Utah or somewhere. Plenty, in short, for Dolly's mother, and maybe even Dolly, to mull about Swan the swain. And Port Townsend being the compound of New England small town and muscular western port it was, whatever could be brought up against Swan stayed in the air a doubly long while, as tittle-tattle among the mercantile families on the bluff (Dolly was the niece of prominent merchant F. W. Pettygrove, one of the town's founders), heavy winks and nudges among the waterfront saloon constituencies.

Unpromising odds, Yet as the ongoing diary lines about Dolly indicate, Swan had a bridgehead in the situation. He had been smitten with young Miss Roberts in, of all locales he ever can be found at, the Port Townsend Episcopal church choir.

Against Port Townsend's night in, night out whiskey baritone, that choir must have been a very wavery Sunday trill. Sometimes the hymning voices were six or seven, sometimes as few as four. But consistently in late 1874 and early 1875—the diary begins to show dogged stints of church-going by Swan as long ago as 1869— they included Mrs. Roberts and her daughters Dolly and Mary, and Swan. (Mr. Roberts is a mysterious absence, both from the choir and the household. Deceased? Absconded? A sea captain?) Swan quite promptly begins to drop by the Roberts home
for rehearsal of the church music. Then he begins gifts of
food--scallops, salmon--and naturally is invited to share supper.
Henry Webster, also at loose ends in Port Townsend just then and
still Swan's stalwart, might be asked to join in as well. One
fine February Sunday there even a morning's genteel stroll, Swan and
Webster and Dolly and Mary, in the course of which the young
women probably heard more than they wanted to know about the
singularities of life at Neah Bay.

What came of Swan's season of romantic hovering was just
what could be expected: letdown. The choiring goes on, but
the gifts and visits slow a bit, and then become more widely--
more respectably?--spaced.

Swan never speaks it in the diaries but the increasing
intervals say it for him. Sometime here the moment occurs,
invisible but sharp, when the fact registers on Swan, as it
probably already had on Dolly with some help from her mother,
that the choirmember and the white-bearded frontiersman are not
a likely match. I find ahead in the diaries that for a number
of years to come, Swan will continue a fond proximity to Dolly
and the Roberts family. Not this daily nearness of an infatuated
suitor, however. More like the weekliness of a favorite bachelor
uncle.

So then. Who would have thought the clerkish whiskeyfied
aging dabbler had such steam in him? But of course he did,
exactly because he had never shown so, and I find his infatuation
as entirely marvelous as it was foolish. Wish such a season to any of us, man or woman, so long self-locked into aloneness. Let the blaze come out, for once, from within the bones. I say emotional paroles are due the alone of this world even if, like Swan's, the outing turns out to be quick and bittersweet. Better that than simply bitter.

Meanwhile, early in that spring of 1875, a territorial newspaper carries this item:

**MARRIED:** In Portland, Oregon, April 3d, Henry A. Webster and Mary E. Roberts, both of Port Townsend.
Day fifty-seven

I am negotiating for the purchase of the largest canoe ever built on this coast, Swan to Baird, another spring day of 1875. It is at Alert Bay, Vancouver Island. It measures 75 to 80 feet long...

The great canoe's reputation proved to be somewhat vaster than its actual dimensions—sixty feet in length—but it still was a titanic craft, able to carry a hundred persons. What was more, Swan himself could go north in pursuit of the canoe and whatever other tribal items caught his fancy along the coast of British Columbia and southeastern Alaska. Baird had seen a glint of opportunity: the U.S. Indian Bureau wanted to have a major exhibit at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, and after the Exposition the exhibit items could pass to the Smithsonian. The way they would reach the Indian Bureau exhibit was from Special Commissioner James G. Swan, salaried at $200 a month and offered the U.S. revenue cutter Wolcott to convey him around the North Pacific.

Left for Victoria on Steamer...with Lieut Kilgore, to purchase charts and other articles for Wolcott & for me to get some silver to take north to make purchases, the seventh of June, 1875. That same night the Wolcott docked long enough to take the pair of them aboard, and about 12 Midnight the cruise began.

You would expect that this bonanza from Baird, steamship and silver and all, might be the change of western scene Swan seems to have been angling toward. Certainly it provided distance and fresh enterprise: for the next forty-four days Swan records ports of call all
along the broken coast of the North Pacific and buys busily,
hundreds of items ranging from the giant canoe for $225 to wooden
berry spoons for 25¢ each. (Only the wonderfully carved poles of
the coastal villages eluded him. At last, at Howkan village on
Prince of Wales Island, he is given a forthright explanation.
"These posts are monuments for the dead and we will not sell them
any more than white people will sell the grave stones or monuments
in cemeteries but you can have one made for you." Swan at once
put his order in.) But his account of the Wolcott cruise does
not read that way to me. The scrupulously-daily-as-ever journal
is somehow perfunctory about the new tribes he was among, the
Bella Bella and Tsimshian and Tlingit, vivid artistic peoples all;
the pages show duty, but not bounce of spirit. It may have been
that Dolly Roberts still was on Swan's mind. She definitely poises
there on the seventeenth of June, her birthday. A pair of Wolcott
officers--with straight faces or not, I cannot tell--join Swan in
toasting the handsomest, liveliest, and most lady like belle of
Port Townsend. There was this, too: Swan undoubtedly spent time
in gab among the Wolcott's eight officers and crew of twenty-nine
which otherwise would have gone into diarying. Swan's pen simply
may have been visited to distraction.

Just twice does his Wolcott account leap to life for me, and
oddly, the backdrop each time is death.

--At Fort Tongass, I went ashore with Lieuts Hewitt & Kilgore
and walked over a villainous trail to the Indian village on the
west side of the Island where I witnessed a most interesting scene.
It was the body of a woman, niece of Yah sood... laid in state. The Indians said she had a fall accidentally which injured her spine and bringing on premature child birth, last night or early this morning she died. I saw Yahsood outside his house evidently in great mental affliction. I told him I had come to visit at the lodges but out of respect to his feelings I would not call on any more but go on home. He then invited me to go in his house and see the corpse which I did.

The body was dressed in the best attire, the face painted red and hair nicely combed. On the head was a sort of crown curiously carved, and on the back part was a sort of apron or cloak reaching to the ankles, thickly covered with ermine skins. On her right near her head was her husband, on her left was her father, at her feet were her mother and two aunts, and two or three other women. The deceased was about 20 years of age very regular and pretty features and looked as if asleep. The poor old father kept up a conversation with his dead daughter. The husband's head was bowed to the ground with grief and the women were all weeping. It was a very affecting sight. I addressed a few words of sympathy.

This is the first scene of the kind I ever saw.

--At Fort Simpson, Swan went to a wedding feast by special invitation of the Indians, through their pastor Rev Mr Crosby. Swan sat in a place of honor near the bride and groom with Reverend Crosby and his wife and Lieutenant Kilgore. We were served with a nice roast goose & roast ducks potatoes bread cake tea & coffee &c. 6 or 8 young men dressed like hotel waiters attended on us and the whole passed off pleasantly. Then, an incident occurred which was
very gratifying to me. A Tsimshian woman came up to him: she was Kik-tairlk, 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 winnowing 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 start off 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 is 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 mystifying 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, 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 at Port Townsend--that a brewery has opened, tasted 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 fatness 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, Bulkely.
1875: the year of Swan's collecting trip to Alaska aboard the 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 amassador occasionally among the Makahs and Clallams from his own white tribe, esteemed author at last for his Makah memoir and dabbler as ever amid minor 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 envy Swan the historical moment, just there before America marked that centennial which he went collecting for.
(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, 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.
That 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. Oysterering 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 Fort Townsend collection of not-quite-livelhoods 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 people, he loves song:
his obirig began long before Dolly Roberts was there to share
a hymnbook, and after an evening when one friend fiddles, another
strums the banjo, and a couple of others vocalize with Swan, he
exults that it was a grand frolic...I have not had such a funny
time nor laughed so much for years. I imagine his voice as a bit
nasal, still Yankified after the 25 frontier years; we do not
easily shed habits the mouth learned earliest.
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... (Swan, who had seen seal pups brought in by the Makahs from the offshore waters of Cape Flattery, was correct in the argument.) 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 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 entirely 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 Shoal-water 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 running 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 a whooping storm. Wind screamed around 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 or another on this riverbank since humanity arrived.

This mystery 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 narrow but 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 dropping 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
briefly
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 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 of a month follows the note that he has been enjoying Scotch whiskey punch with some chums. But 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
agencies 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 women's 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 Waatch 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.

In other ways besides the lapse from whale hunting, the Makahs seem less dramatic and turbulent as 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 Dukwalli 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 tilt to the Makahs, perhaps a lunch 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 discomfort 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 Scribners 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 last 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 every 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
be noticed.... 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 eah
Yaks na arleesh, mamats sna aht
Cha akh wyee, cha akh 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 his 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 my woodshed which he intends to kill with a hatchet....

He reminds me of my own 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...."

Jangi 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 Year’s 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
calculates 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 time 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 purls 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 chortle 
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
monthly 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, the winter of 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 boquet 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 tendering
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 N 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 to me 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 north to 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 it was 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 artifacts. Baird 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.