1874, a Bancroft diary again, but the biggest and gaudiest of
of this group: about the size and fatness of a paperback book, and
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, the trip across the continent takes now. As before, he lavishes
time and money on his daughter Ellen,

but also swings down to Washington, D.C., to talk with Spencer Baird,
and up to New York with son Charles, sightseeing together from the
top of the new Brooklyn Bridge. He is back in Port Townsend by late
September, spends the autumn getting interested in Amelia Roberts,
closes the year on that odd note of the New Year's Eve sodding of

the grave of the Port Townsend jeweler, Buckley.
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 bare-breasted lady around whom a troupe of cupids perform acrobatics on trapeze lines of flowers.
Sick, robust, drunk, dry, 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 minor paperworks, I take back the slander that Swan's Port Townsend years are more dozeful than his time at Neah. Not much of it is a life I would trade for, though. I suppose. 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 envy Swan the historical moment, just there before America marked that centennial which he went collecting for. Both of my grandfathers, 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; 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.
Day fifty-nine.

Or maybe already the green had given over to red-white-and-blue. A quote discovered which I had put in a notebook during the Bicentennial, 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."
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 becomes Swan the Pen. Sufficiently

He is sixty-two years old, salaried at last, away from Port Townsend and its tempting aroma of whiskey, among the tribal 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 & Lachessa, of the newly elected chiefs, came up 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.

Even more remarkable, today, the nineteenth of March, I commenced painting a Thunder Bird and whale on the top of the chest I bought from Fanny's father. I made up the design from the drawings of whales and Eagles done for me by Haida Indians...

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.
Day twenty

Cape Flattery must have sent the hair creeping on the back of Swan's neck a few times, too. This morning I find that in an article he wrote for the Smithsonian Institution about the Makahs, he listed in firm schoolteacherly style the superstitions of the tribe, then let burst from him some uncommonly uneasy language: "The grandeur of the scenery about Cape Flattery, and the strange contortions and fantastic shapes into which its cliffs have been thrown by some former convulsion of nature, or worn and abraded by the ceaseless surge of the waves; the wild and varied sounds which fill the air, from the dash of water into the caverns and fissures of the rocks, mingled with the living cries of innumerable fowl... all combined, present an accumulation of sights and sounds sufficient to fill a less superstitious beholder than the Indian with mysterious awe."

Yesterday's weather faded and faded, had gone into gray by sundown. This morning has brought sleet, blanking the coastline of the Strait down to a few hundred yards of mingled sky and water and rock. A worker from a construction crew stepped from the room next to mine and looked into the icy mush. He shook his head and plainted: "I need this like I need another ampit."

The feel of Cape Flattery as a kind of everlasting precipice of existence is strong as I repeat routes of Swan's here. When he established himself in the schoolhouse at Neah Bay in 1863, alone with his books and diaries and ready to reason the coastal natives into the white culture's version of education, he became in
that moment the westernmost frontiersman in the continental United States. (Ours the reservation farmer at the moment, moved briefly into the schoolhouse with Swan while his own quarters were being built, but it was Swan who nestled for good into the room atop the school’s square tower.)

Away from the shared household at Webster’s and out here on his pinnacle of the coast, he becomes now the Republic of Swan, newly independent. Population: one; Caucasian and male. Resources: ink, books, and an occasional newspaper off a passing ship. Languages: Bostonian, Chinook, Makah. Politics: Lincoln Republican, soldier-the-Union-back-together-with-bayonet-steel. Industry: light, allotted mainly to educational manufacture. Foodstuffs: a variety ranging from halibut-head chowder to something termed beef hash à la Makah.

Flag: a river of words against a backdrop of black fir forest.

Delightfully situated as he was, in a matter of months after the move to his aerie in the schoolhouse came news from the east which reminded Swan how far he had flung himself. On the tenth of February, 1864:

... a letter from my brother Benj. L. Swan stating that on Sunday Nov. 29 my mother died aged 84 years 7 days and that on Wednesday Dec. 2d my dear wife, Matilda W. Swan, died of consumption.

The double deaths staggered Swan for days. As I read the lines, the same scimitar of bay before me as Swan stared to during the writing of them, his distress and realization thus like a slow surf.
nearly paralyzed with grief.

had fondly thought that I might once again go home and be joined
with my dear wife and children, but it was ordered otherwise
acting, breaking heart.

but little sleep last night went to bed at two and got up at six

Severe pain in my teeth today. Sick in body and mind.
Days six, seven, eight, nine, ten

I have begun to follow Swan exactly year by year through his diaries. They hold the second four decades of his life and at least 2,500,000 handwritten words.

The diaries dazzle me. First, simply by their number and variety:

out of their gray archival boxes at the University of Washington library, they could be the secondhand wares of an eccentric stationer. Some are mere notebooks with cheap marbled covers, and occasionally even a school exercise book will sidle into the collection, but most are formal annual volumes (for the purpose of registering events of past, present, and future occurrence, announces the opening page of the 1860 diary) and a good number of them have deft clasps to snug themselves closed against from outsiders' eyes. It exaggerates to say no two are alike, but I have not yet been able to sort out a trio.

No two are alike, but I have not yet met a trio. Black-covered and green, tan and faded maroon, what the diaries do have in common is that nearly all are small enough to fit into the palm of a hand, or a busy pocket. Those that won't are two tomes, such as the aristocrat of the congregation, 1866.
May 1866 Diary and private journal of James G. Swan, being a continuation of daily record commencing July 1862 at the Makah Indian Agency Neah Bay, Washington Territory.

A fat tan ledger some nine inches wide and twelve high, weighs four and a quarter pounds and displays an elaborately hinged and embossed spine and a cover panel of leather into the middle of which has been tooled, in rich half-inch letters, J.C. Swan.

but what browsing I have done into any of the diaries has been seductive. Opening the pages of Swan's years is like entering a room filled with jugglers and tumblers and swallowers of flame, performance crowding performance.

This morning we discovered a large wolf in the brook dead from the effects of some strychnine we had put out. It was a she wolf very large and evidently had five whelps. Maggs and myself skinned her and I boiled the head to get the skull....

D 23, '76

Mr Fitzgerald of Sequim Prairie better known as "Skip," walked off the wharf near the Custom House last night and broke his neck. The night was very dark and he mistook the way....Jimmy had the night mare last night and made a great howling. This morning he told me that the memeloose were after him and made him crazy. I told him this memeloose was dead squid which he ate for supper very heartily....Mr Tucker very ill with his eye, his face badly swelled up. This evening got Kitchook's Cowichan squaw to milk her breast...
Come they did not, of course—could not except as I would re-invent their lives—and but for Swan's scanty visits back to Boston heard their father's voice only from across the continent, by the paper echo of mail, for the next half century.

Evening, last inches of the leaden day. Ellen and Charles missed sprigs of knowledge indeed when their father left them to Boston. From Swell's tribe, the Makahs, Swan noted down that their version of the sun arrived robustly each morning by thrusting away the stars with his head and trampling night underfoot. Rainbows, they considered, had claws at either end to seize the unwary. Comets and meteors were the luminous souls of dead chiefs. As for the mysterious northern lights that sometimes webbed the sky beyond the Strait, Swell explained them astutely to Swan:

Under that star, many snow's sail from here in a canoe, live a race of little men, very strong, who are dressed in skins. They look like Indians, but they are not taller than half the length of my paddle. They can dive down into the sea and catch a seal or a fish with their hands. Their country is very cold, and they live on the ice where they build great fires, and that light is the fires of those little people...
Day two

His name was James Gilchrist Swan, and I have felt my pull toward him ever since some forgotten frontier pursuit or another landed me into the coastal region of history where he presides, meticulous as a usurer's clerk, diarizing and diarizing that life of his, four generations and as many lightyears from my own. For example, this:

This is the 18th day since Swell was shot and there is no offensive smell from the corpse. It may be accounted for in this manner. He was shot through the body & afterwards washed in the breakers—consequently all the blood in him must have run out. He was then rolled up tight in 2 new blankets and put into a new box nailed up strong.

Like Captain John, Swell was a chieftain of the Makah Tribe of Cape Flattery, that westmost prow of this coast. I know the beach at Crescent Bay where his life was snapped off. Across on the Canadian shore of the Strait of Juan de Fuca the lights of modern Victoria now spread as white embers atop the burn-dark rim of coastline, and west from the city occasional lighthouses make blinks against the black as the Strait seeks toward the Pacific. But on Swell's final winter night in 1861, only a beach campfire at Crescent on our southern shore flashed bright enough to attract the eye, and Swell misread the marker of flame as an encampment of traveling members of his own tribe. Instead, he stepped from his canoe to find that the overnighters were of the Elwha village of the Clallam tribe, among them chanced to be a particular rival of Swell, and his bullet spun the Makah dead into the cold quick surf.

It was a killing less casual than the downtown deaths my morning newspaper brings me three or four times a week—the Elwhas and the Makahs at least had the excuse of lifetimes of enmity, on that I might go see.
Karen—this may seem familiar; you typed one version in my first batch, but this is slightly different, and I'll decide between the two later.

Day one

...Capt John was here today, Swan writes from a century ago, and I related to him a dream I had last night, in which I saw several Indians I formerly knew who are dead. John said it was a sign the "memelose" or dead people are my friends and I would soon see that they would do something to show their friendship....

Fifteen past nine. Out in the dark, the Sound wind visits favorite trees, is shaken off, hankers along the valley in stubborn search. The gusting started up hours ago, during the wink-like pause of daylight that is December evening, and by now seems paced to try to last the night. Until the wind arrived the day was nordsunless, but silent and dry. The neighborhood's lion-colored cat, inspector-general of such weather, all morning tucked himself atop the board fence outside the north window as I read Swan. Out of his doze each several minutes a sharp cat ear would twitch; give the air a tan flick just to be certain it still could. Then the self-hug into snooze again.

The breakers, now the third morning after Swan's dream, tore up the beach and rooted out immense numbers of clams which were thrown up by the surf. I gathered a few buckets full and soon the squaws and Indians came flocking up like so many gulls and gathered at least fifty bushels....

Nine eighteen. I see, by leaning to hear into the wind, that the night-black window which faces west off the end of my desk collects the half of me above the desktop and its spread sheaf of copied
diary pages into quiet of my own. My square-bearded face reflected
there could be a photographic plate of any of the museful old
Scotsmen who transplanted our family name to the western mountains
of America. I think of another set of Swan's words. The time he
tells of a canoe crew of Makahs, Captain John's coastal tribe, stopping
for the night at the cabin of an Olympic Peninsula settler; of how they
swung the canoe mast wrong while stowing it and crashed an end through the
hard-bought one window of the homestead cabin; of the settler's highest
fury, as if they had shattered a diamond. This suburban house of mine

glints with thirteen more
windows besides the glass my reflection occupies, windows to every
direction and inclination. Wobbly mast-bearers could pass none of
my walls without creating crystal.

Nine twenty. Capt John told me, this the morning following the
beach bonanza, that the cause of the great quantity of Clams on the
beach yesterday was the dead people I dreamed about the other night
and they put the clams there to show their friendship....

Nine twenty-one, and now winter. The numbered throb of the moment--
this arrival of season at precisely 2121 hours of December 21--takes us
through solstice as if we too are being delivered by a special surm.
The wind and I and the fencetop cat, and yes, Swan and Captain John and
the restless memories of departed Makahs: the lot of us, now in the
coastal time of beginnings.
Day 49

About daylight this morning, the twenty-first of September, 1888, a party of 26 Chalams attacked a party of 18 Chimseans who were asleep near Dungeness light, and killed 17 of them.

The numbers of the situation have never been certain—Swan himself next hears the death toll given as 19—but one Tsimshean woman did survive the ambush, and the strand of beach that was the killing ground has become known as Graveyard Spit. That single bloody dawn tided over nature's fact about the little coastal loop of sand, which is that here is one of the stubbornest sites of life anywhere. Graveyard Spit is a pocket desert, sheltered into its thirstless ecology by larger Dungeness and the dry rain-shadow which extends north from the Olympic Mountains out over the Strait. Rubbery buttons of flowers and varieties of crawler-plants hug low and determined onto the beach-like hundred acres or so; sand rodents make tiny roads among them, and are ambushed by nighthawks in whistling dives.
the twenty-ninth of September,
Went with Agent King to Pt Discovery relative to the
Indians murder at Dungeness... Mr King had a talk with the
Indians implicated in the Simsean murder and told them
they must go to the Reserve tomorrow.

It can't be known whether the incident conformed to the version
"a gentleman from Dungeness" furnished the Olympia newspaper; that
"as the unfortunate victims were all asleep at the time of the attack,
the murderers made quick work of it, and then commenced mutilating
the bodies, dismembering them, throwing the legs here, the arms there,
and the hands elsewhere." Likely there was an element of revenge,

Nor is it definite that the survivor "received seven stabs and cuts
in her right side, three near the heart, and others on her head, arm
and hip," although that relentless counting suggests mightily that the

informational gentleman was Swan. What seems sure is an element
of revenge in the attack, product of the history of raids into the

Strait and Puget Sound by the powerful tribes from the northern
reaches of the British Columbia coast—Haidas, Tlingits, Tsimshians.
The immediate motive, however, was that the Tsimshians overrunning
on the sheltered spit had just finished a summer of work in the

Puget Sound sawmills, and their homebound canoe rode low in the
water with the goods they had bought.
S 30 '68

the thirtieth of September.

This morning Mr King started for Hoods Canal with the Indians and their families whom he yesterday told to go.

He also requests me to proceed with the Duke of York to Dungeness & get the rest of the murderers and also to get all the goods I can recover & return them to the Simeans.

Arrived at Dungeness and told the Indians to go tomorrow.

F22, '68—list of goods S recovered; also lists what the Tsimshians said they had in canoe:

Swan salvaged the canoe, some six sails and few paddles, four sacks of flour and four trunks and four guns; five gallons of molasses; missing were $330 in coin, silver jewelry, blankets, clothing. According to which the Tsimshian woman, were $330 in coin, a quantity of silver jewelry, some blankets and much clothing.

Oct. 1, '68

Slept at Mr Clines last night & made a memo of articles saved from Chimsean canoe.

Indians say that Charley Blake & Smalley advised them not to go to Hoods Canal & consequently none left with me altho some promised to go & meet me at Pt Townsend.

Left Dungeness river at 10 am & reached Pt. Townsend 6 Pm.
That Swan could nod to the divvy of opinion among the Clallam raiders and blithely canoe home to await those who promised to go to the Reservation with him says all about his authority among the Northwest natives. He could be as supple, bendable, as they were; in the hard-edged white society which had taken over this coast, one man of contours.

Indians arrived this forenoon, the second of October, from Dungeness for Hoods Canal.

Started from Port Townsend at 1 PM with Patrick Henry, Emily & Dan in lame Billy's canoe.

The Dungeness Indians in two canoes, with 2 small canoes towing.

The canoe flotilla went south up Admiralty Inlet, the high clay bluffs of Whidbey Island announcing one shore and the blunt timbered headlands on the Olympic Peninsula side the other; paddled for Foulweather Bluff and the entrance to the eighty-mile fjord called Hood Canal; passed Port Ludlow, with its lumber schooners tethered like workhorses; and camped for the night at the next sawmill village, Port Gamble.

Paid my hotel bill at Port Gamble, the third of October. $1.00 & started at 8 am for Hoods Canal.

...opposite Sebec near mouth of Nuth lu wap--took lunch.

...6 PM camped at bend in Canal opposite Hunhumi.
Where Swan's canoe party that morning came around the first
point of land after leaving Port Gamble, a highway bridge
today sweeps across the water on barge-sized concrete pontoons.
The five canoes would look like driftwood passing beneath the girderwork
of the span. A few miles more, a huge military base is being built
for nuclear-missile-bearing Trident submarines. The killing capacity
of Swan's passing Indians compares to that of a Trident as a
jackknife to bubonic plague.

Started at 7 AM after eating breakfast and breaking up camp, the
fourth of October. Arrived at Reservation at noon. Mr King paid me
$25. coin....Left Reservation at 3:45 PM & camped at 7 PM about 10
miles down the Canal.

The next day, Swan was back in Port Townsend by suppertime.

The next day, last line of the Graveyard Spit saga, Swan was
back in Port Townsend by suppertime.
Day fifty-seven

Lot of Hydah Indians with me this day in office, the tenth of May of 1873. I copied the tattoo marks on the back and breast of Kitkune...

He did indeed, and the creatures from Kitkune's epidermis up at me now, from the pages of Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge No. 267. The breast tattoo is a head-on image of a codfish, twin twin tails looping beneath its gills to both sides: it is a broadline of some tropical mouth-breather which might gape at you from an aquarium tank. The creatures of the back—a pair of them, sitting up and facing to opposite directions like book ends—are crossbreeds of killer whales and wolves. They have snouted heads with teeth like sawpoints, jaws long and pointed as fork tines, broad curved scimitar-like tails, and an extra eye just beneath the neck.

Swan plainly was enchanted with the skin art of the visiting Haidas, plainly enchanted Swan.

He sketched a dozen of the patterns—the most decorative visitor seems to have been a backooy villager named Kit-ka-gens, who had a thunderbird across his back, squids on each thigh, and frogs on each ankle—and lamented that they were but a portion of the whole which were tattooed on the persons of this party...

He sent another of his letters to Baird was on its way, proposing the article for Contributions. (Proposing a bit nervously, given the problems of all these whale-wolves and ankling frogs: the Haidas, Swan assured Baird,
are no more grotesque in their attempts to imitate nature than are our designs of griffins, dragons, unicorns and other fabulous animals.

(June 3, '73)

His fascination with the Hadassas is understandable.
The Haidas surge in the history of this coast as a Pacific Northwest version of Vikings. Writers are captivated with the analogy of raids down from northern waters, canoes like small dragonships, fur-shirted warriors bursting from them. Swan never blazons that comparison, and I think he was right. The Haidas of his time amply deserve attention just as Haidas. Undo the past, and imagine a few hundred thousand Haidas along this coast from their home islands, the Queen Charlottes, south down the coast to the Columbia River, prime them with firepower equal to ours, and white civilization still might be waiting to set its first foot ashore here. The Haidas, from all I can judge, would have warred implacably as long as we could have stood it, then negotiated us to a frazzle.

The actual arithmetic is that as late as 1835, perhaps as many as six thousand Haidas lived in the Queen Charlotte Islands, and by 1885 there were eight hundred. *Alcohol and other allurements of white frontier society had made* a *call of* but *more terrible harvest yet,* traditional way of life, civilization's diseases killed these warrior people like kittens. A smallpox epidemic in 1862 spread north out of Victoria and devastated the natives of the British Columbia coastline: no one knew the total of corpses—a ship's captain counted a hundred, scattered along the shores like flotsam, on a voyage from the Stikine River to Victoria—but the estimate has been that of a coastal Indian population of perhaps sixty thousand, one-third perished. Among the Haidas, particularly smallpox outbreak obliterated three of several strong villages along the remote lengthy western margin of the Queen Charlottes archipelago. That entire west shore population, reported a visiting
If the Haidas were a diminished tribe, in accustomed retreat to the safest of their shores, they remained a profound academy of artists. Besides the tattoo pages in Swan's Contributions article, he sketched a few of the stone carvings the visiting Haidas had brought with them—miniatures of the carved cedar poles which soared in their villages—and I can barely pull my page from the one that has four fantastic figures lined one atop the other. Or as Swan explains, two sets of two creatures:...the lower one is Hoorts the bear holding in his paws the Stoo or crayfish. The upper figure is the Tsching or Tsing, the beaver, holding the Tl-kam-kosten or frog...The Indian, however rude or grotesque his carvings or paintings may be, is always true to nature. He knows that the bears eat crabs, crayfish and other littoral marine crustacea, and that the frog is the fresh-water companion of the beaver...If the carver had reversed the grouping, he would have been laughed at by his friends...

The linework is as fluid as the logic; no inch of the carving is without some thrust of action, something amazing about to begin. The beaver could be some creature of Mayan art gone mad; the frog he holds looks like some semi-human doing a handstand while wearing a gas mask; the bear could be a South Seas version of a philomelopopic grizzly; the crayfish being plucked up backwards into his jaws is clearly from Venus. Restless skilled minds are behind
this deftly-stacked menagerie; minds which took magic from the forest and ocean and merrily made it art.

Swan caught an idea from the Haidas during that day of tattoo-tracing in his Port Townsend office, and it became the underpattern of his Contributions article: the Haidas were a most intriguing tribe—of larger stature, better proportion, and lighter complexion than the Strait and Sound tribes—whose home villages in the Queen Charlotte Islands—a healthy picturesque territory—ought to be visited—if the Government would empower some person here, and appropriate sufficient funds to be expended—by someone probably named Swan.

That notion stayed with Swan, I find, as if one of the Haidas had engraved it on the inside of his Swan's forehead. Over the next years, Swan's letters to Baird say steadily this: I am more desirous of making explorations in the Queen Charlotte Island Group than of doing anything else.

And Baird's to him say as steadily only: I hope that one of these days...
Later: something remembered as I stare at Swan's sketch of Beaver fondling Frog, Bear sampling Crayfish. When we returned from our year in Britain, Carol brought with her a recording of African Sanctus, the fusion of African songs and dances with Western choir music, and began to use it in her seminars to show the queer power of rhythm, the sophistication of "primitive" folk-art. The Haida work is something like that Sanctus: anthems of existence, modulations of the creaturedom which we too belong to.

Carved music, and Swan was right to let it take him by the ear.
Day thirty

Seventy-nine diary pages later, this:

(624) March 20, 1866. I found that the dogs or skunks have been disturbing Katy's grave and that the body is partly exposed and flesh gnawed from the bones. Swan sawed up a plank and protectively boxed in the grave. I did this for the reason first that I wished to cover the body from sight, then, as she was a slave I wished to show the Indians that we consider slaves as good as free persons and lastly I wished to give the natives an idea how we made graves among civilized people. Possibly something even more than that nervous rattle of reasons. The next day, the twenty-six first day of spring of 1866, Swan planted daisies on her grave.
Day four

How much comes out our fingers from earlier eyes. Clearing a shelf for Swan's reams

of diary, I find that my daybook of winter is not the family's first,

testering pile of mementoes, one of my grandmother's address books and into which she jotted everything from recipes to her schedule of television soap operas. And the first day of Montana winter weather each year.

our first real cold spell

and lite snow falling and blowing Nov. 20 1963 2 below... our first snow storm Sept the 15-1965... our first snow storm 1 inch when I got up this morning Sept 14-1973.

That early snow of 1973 was her final such entry. The autumn of the next year, she was dead, the last of the family to pass from our Montana valley. Evidently the habit of recording winter's onset has moved here to land's edge, into me.