

The Makahs assured Swan that he would be the first white man
 to see Lake Ozette. # That may have been native blarney, but the known

history of the Alava coast until then vouches for it as probable

truth. In the journals of the sea-going explorers, there is no

record of longboats aiming ashore along this unnerving stretch of

shore. In July of 1775 at the mouth of the Hoh River, twenty-five

miles south of here, the Spaniard Bodega ^{did send} ~~sent~~ in a boat ~~from his~~ crew
 of seven from his schooner to fill water casks. The waiting Indians

killed five, and two drowned in terror in the surf. With that bloody

exception, explorers cruised respectfully shy of the ^{northern} Olympic Peninsula

^{coast in their scans} ~~shoreline while watching~~ for some major channel ~~with~~ which would prove

to be the ^{phantom} Northwest Passage through the top of America, and they had

a tricky enough time even with that. (Recall Captain Cook, that

tremendous discoverer, offshore somewhere in heavy weather in February

of 1778: "It is in this very latitude where we now were

that geographers have placed the pretended Strait of Juan de Fuca.

But we saw nothing like it, nor is there any possibility that any such

thing ever existed.") Nor were ^{any} shipwrecked crews likely to have set off

^{stumbled} overland and ~~come~~ onto Lake Ozette; the Olympic Peninsula was known to

be a firred jungle vaguely the size of all of England.

Cantwell,
15

Can.

Indeed, there is a strange and welcome slowing-down of exploration where the Olympic Peninsula is concerned. Not until 1889 did an expedition of six men and four dogs traipse entirely across the Olympic Mountains; their exploit was sponsored by a Seattle newspaper and left some of the loveliest peaks of America with the curious legacy of being named for editors. ⁴ Even for a few more years after that the Lake Ozette corner of the Peninsula remained undisturbed, ~~xxx~~ until ^{the} settlers came to its shores--inland from Alava, along the trail Swan walked thirty years earlier--in the 1890's. Their homesteads never really burgeoned, and the lake even now remains remote, lightly peopled. Carol and I once hiked in toward the southern end by a lesser trail, to camp overnight. The solitude was entire except for hummingbirds buzzing my red-and-black shirt.

Now, with a last look toward the beach and the Makah canoe way, to Ozette.

begin to
 Swan's exploration on that day in 1864 we duplicate with eerie exactness. The trail commenced a short distance south of the village and runs up to the top of the hill or bluff which is rather steep and about sixty feet high. So the

route still goes. From the summit we proceeded in an easterly direction through a very thick forest half a mile and reached an open prairie which is dry and covered with fern, dwarf sallal and some red top grass, with open timber around the sides. The very grass seems the same. From the prairie we pass through another belt of timber to another prairie lying in the same general direction as the first but somewhat lower and having the appearance of being wet and boggy. This was covered in its drier portions with water grass and thick moss which yielded moisture on the pressure of the feet. Step from the broadwalk, and drops of moisture from James Swan's pen are on our boots.

By now, this second of the twin prairies has a name, and some winsome history. Maps show the eyelet in the forest as Ahlstrom's Prairie--where, for fifty-six years, Lars Ahlstrom lived a solitary life as one more outermost particle of the American impulse to head for sunset. Through nearly all the decades of his bachelor household here, Ahlstrom's was the ~~westernmost~~ ^{farthest west} homestead in the continental United States.

Originally, which is to say within the first few dozen days after his arrival in 1902, Ahlstrom built himself a two-room cabin close beside the Ozette-to-Alava trail. That dwelling burned in 1916, and he lived from then on in the four-room cabin which still stands, thriftily but sturdily built with big tree stumps as support posts for its northwest and northeast

Doig/

corners, a few hundred yards from the trail. Even now as Carol and I battle the brush to this cabin, all signs are that Ahlstrom kept a trim, tidy homestead life. In his small barn on the route in, the window sills above a workbench are fashioned nicely into small box-shelves. At the cabin itself, the beam ends facing west are carefully masked with squares of tarpaper to prevent weathering. Inside, when Ahlstrom papered the cabin walls with newspapers, he carefully wrapped around the pole roof-beams as well, a fussy touch that I particularly like. Summers in Montana when I worked as a ranch hand, I spent time in bunkhouses papered this way, and neatness made a difference. Always there were interesting events looming out at you--BANKS CLOSE; JAPS BOMB GUNBOAT--or some frilly matron confiding the value of liver pills, and the effect was lost if the newsprint had been slapped on upside down or sideways.

This homestead of Ahlstrom's never quite worked out. Regularly he went off into the Olympic Mountains on logging jobs and other hire to ^{enough money to survive the year.} ~~earn a living.~~ ^{the homestead} On the other hand, ~~it~~ went on never quite working out for five and a half decades, until Ahlstrom, at eighty-six, ^{cut his foot while chopping wood} ~~suffered a foot infection~~ and had to move to Port Angeles for the last year or two of his life.

I think of Swan and Ahlstrom, who missed each other by forty years on this mossy prairie between Alava and Ozette,

admiring

and judge that if time could be rewoven to bring them together, they would be quite taken with one another. Swan promptly diaries down the facts of the life of Mr. Ahlstrom. . . arrived to America from Sweden at the age of 20 years. . . he and a neighbor have laboured to build a pony trail to the lake by laying down a quantity of small cedar puncheons. . . the rain here does not allow his fruit trees to thrive but his garden looks finely. . . Ahlstrom, with his reputation for conviviality with travelers, takes note of Swan's reputation as a cook and proffers the chance for him to chef a meal for the two of them--maybe halibut cheeks or some other of Swan's coastal favorites.

The trail again, ours and Swan's. After crossing the second prairie we again enter the forest and after rising a gentle eminence descend into a ravine through which runs a

small brook. Exactly so. The little stream that dives under the boardwalk runs very loud, and sudsy from lapping across downed trees.

Where the water can be seen out from under its head of foam, it ~~is~~ *ripples* dark brown, the color of strong ale.

And then the lake, obscure and moody Ozette. Here we found an old hut made in the rudest manner with a few old splits of cedar and showing evidence of having been used as a frequent camping ground by the Hosett hunters. An old canoe split in two was lying in front and bones and horns of elk were strewn about. Now the premises which come into sight are National Park display centers, and rangers' quarters.

At last at the lakeside, Swan had a curiously threatening experience.

Doig/

It was nearly sundown when we arrived and I had barely time to make a hasty sketch of the lake before it was dark. We had walked out very rapidly and I was in a great heat on my arrival and my clothes literally saturated with perspiration. I imprudently drank pretty freely of the lake water which had the effect of producing a severe cramp in both of my legs which took me some time to overcome, which I did however by walking about and rubbing the cramped part briskly. I said nothing to the Indians as I did not wish them to know anything ailed me, but at times I thought I should have to ask their assistance.

So he saved face, and evidently something more. What was it that struck at him with those moments of dismay in his legs ~~the~~ the uncertainty of how the Makahs might react to an ailment, that habit of burying first and regretting later? The remoteness of Ozette itself, like a vast watery crater in the forest?

The next morning, the twenty-third of July, 1864, Swan intended to go out with Peter and sketch his way along the Ozette shoreline, but awoke to heavy fog. He and the Makahs prepared instead to hike back to Alava. *I had accomplished two things. I had proved the existence of a lake and had made a sketch of a portion and as I was the first white man who had ever seen this sheet of water I concluded I would take some other opportunity when I might have white companions*

with me and make a more thorough survey.

Swan never did achieve that more thorough survey. But today, at least, he had the companions to Ozette.

Day nineteen

In continental outline, the United States rides the map as a rudely-carpentered galleon: bowsprit ascending at northernmost Maine, line of keel along the Gulf shores and the southwest borders, the long clean amidship straightness of the 49th parallel across the upper Midwest and West. This ship of states is, by chance, prowling eastward. Or as I prefer to think of it, the figurehead and bow are awallow in the Atlantic while potent Pacific tides gather beneath our aft portion of the craft.

In any event, trace to the last of this land vessel at the ~~westernmost~~ ~~farthest~~ reach of the state of Washington, to the final briefest deckline of peninsula. There is Cape Flattery, where the Makahs of James G. Swan's years lived and where I am traveling today.

Towns thin down along this coast, only three of them in the sixty-five-mile stretch west from Port Angeles, and they tightly hug coves in the northern shoreline of the Cape as if they had just been rolled ashore out of the cold waters of the Strait. Clallam Bay, then Sekiu, then after fifteen final miles of dodgy road, Neah Bay. The

tiny communities exist on logging and seasonal salmon fishing, and there seems to be enough vacant time to cause edginess. The man next to me at the cafe counter this morning at Sekiu was working ~~xxxx~~ his way through hash browns, sunny-side eggs, toast, sausage, coffee, and vehemence. ~~xxxxxx~~

"That kid," he grumped across the room to the waitress, "that kid never did make much of a showing for himself around here. Glad to see him gone."

A moment later, of someone else: "I never liked that SOB anyway." As his fork flashed, it was becoming a close contest whether his food or the local population would be disposed of first.

At Neah Bay, at mid-morning, I am looked at for my red beard and black watch cap. The Makahs of Neah Bay have been studying odd white faces in their streets for well over two hundred years. A Russian ~~ship~~ sailing vessel once smashed ashore, and Swan believed the survivors had left their genetic calling card. ~~Spanish~~ Spanish mariners in the late eighteenth century built a clay-brick fort, which seems to have lasted about as long as it took them to erect it. Every so often Swan and a few interested Indians would dig around in the Spanish shards,

and the sight would stir up ~~a~~ righteousness in him: How different our position from theirs. They came to conquer. We are here to render benefit.

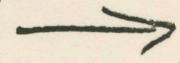
The Makahs might care to argue that point of benefit~~m~~, after a hundred and twenty years as a Reservation people under ~~the~~ U.S. governance. Neah Bay meets the visitor as a splatter of weather-whipped houses, despite its age a tentative town seemingly pinned into place by the heavy government buildings at its corners: the Bureau of Indian Affairs offices, the Coast Guard enclave, the Air Force base on the opposite neck of the peninsula. One building stands out in grace, the museum being built by the tribal council to display the finds ^{from} ~~of~~ an archeological dig southward along the coast at Cape Alava. Despite its brave thrust and the bulky federal presence, the dark forested hills which crowd the bay seem simply to be waiting until the right moonless night to take back the townsite.

I have brought with me the copied portions of Swan's diaries ^{where he writes about the} ~~which relate the political~~ position of Cape Flattery ~~among~~ in the tribal geography of the North Pacific. Remoteness and the empty expanses of

Strait and ocean would seem to dominate such a site, but that was not the case at all when Swan lived with the Neah Bay villagers in the early 1860's. He found them carrying on a complicated war of nerves, and occasionally muscles, which would do credit to any adventurous modern nation; south, north and east, the Makahs looked from their pinnacle of land to a tribal neighbor they were at issue with.

The calmest of these rivalries extended southward, about a day's canoe journey down the coast to where the Quillayute tribe lived. The Makahs suspected the Quillayutes of having killed one of their whaling crews which had been blown

downcoast by storm. ^{This} ~~the~~ tale reached Swan time after time at Neah Bay, occasionally with the added note that the murdered Makahs since had been seen as owls with shells hanging from their bills similar to those worn by the Makahs in their noses. [¶] Suspicion of the Quillayutes remained ~~only~~ a matter of muttering, however. With the Elwha Clallams, east along the Strait, the issue was their killing of Swell, and it rankled hard and often. In ^{Swan's} ~~the~~ diary months, ~~at the~~ ^{Neah Bay jousts} ~~early 1890s, the tribes joust~~ repeatedly with Elwha ^{over} ~~about~~ the dead young chieftain. Early on, Swan and a Makah canoe crew returning from Port Townsend brought ^{back} ~~home~~ with them a Clallam chief who wanted to talk peace. ~~(p. 210)~~ The

Clallam breakfasted with Peter, everyone seemed to be pleasant and friendly, ^{but} ~~and~~ the point was ^{sledged home} ~~put across~~ to the Clallams: It is generally understood that if they will kill...Charlie entire peace will be restored. Weeks later, ~~the~~ Clallams ^a ~~come~~ back to ^{parley} ~~talk~~ some more, to no further result. ~~(p. 221)~~ Months later, a Makah elder ^{suddenly} ~~announced~~  that he means to burn up Swell's monument as the Bostons have not

that he would set fire to Swell's monument because the white men had not arranged vengeance for his murder. In evident inspiration, the Makahs now scored a move:

Today Peter stole a squaw from Capt. Jack, one of the Clallam Indians who was here on a visit. The squaw was part Elwha and Peter took her as a hostage to enforce pay from the Elwhas for robbing and killing Swell a year and a half ago. (p. 258) The ransom fell through, the woman was allowed to escape. Peter came to me today with a very heavy heart in consequence of the squaw having absconded. ~~The~~

Just then, the attention of the Makahs pivoted ^{abruptly northward,} ~~north~~ across the Strait, word came that ~~one of their number~~ ^{had} killed a chief ~~or chief~~ on the west coast of ~~one of the Arhosett tribes living on Vancouver Island near Barclay Sound.~~ ...Sah tay hub getting angry because the Arhosett Indian would not agree to his terms, stabbed him with his knife. # Here was a bladed

version of Swell's death, this time with the Makahs on the delivering

end, and Swan now records Neah Bay's jitters about the Arhosetts

sweeping down on them in revenge: ...a whooping and yelling all night

occasionally firing off guns to show their bravery. No enemy however

appeared. (263)

^{now} Here was tension on two fronts, and during a retlatch at Neah

Bay a number of tribesmen from the outlying Makah villages said they wanted peace at least with the Clallams. But Peter said

that he would never be satisfied until he received pay in some shape for the murder of his brother... (p. 268)

Next, however,
~~now~~ intelligence reached the Makahs--and of course Swan's pen--
that the Arhoseetts were having their own problems of pride. This forenoon
Frank told me that he had just received news from his father, old Cedakanim
of Clioquot. It appears that the Arhoseett Indians have been trying to
induce the Clioquots to join them in an attack on the Makahs...They offered
100 blankets and 20 Makah women as slaves provided they could catch them.
Cedakanim and the other Clioquot chief rejected this offer and demanded
a steamboat, a sawmill and a barrell of gold. This difference of opinion
came near resulting in a fight but at length old Cedakanim told them he
would not fight the Makahs nor did he want any pay from the Arhoseetts as
he was much richer than they and to prove this he ordered 100 pieces of
blubber to be given them...This, said Frank, made the Arhoseetts so ashamed
that the sweat ran out of their faces...

(p 306)

Perhaps deciding that it ^{would be} easier to negotiate with enemies

than allies of Cedakanim's sort, the Arhosetts held back to see what

might be forthcoming from Neah Bay.

~~the Makahs might do~~ Agent Webster suggested to the

Makahs that they offer the Arhosetts a peace settlement of, say,

twenty blankets; the U.S. government would provide ten of the blankets.

Given the prospect of getting out of a ^{possible} ~~prospect of~~ war at the cost

of only ten blankets of their own, the Makahs made a show of reluctant

nominating Swan as plenipotentiary:

diplomacy. ...the Indians wish me to go over to the Arhosetts and

find out if they are willing to settle the affair by a payment to

them of blankets, and if so the Arhosetts were to be invited ~~over~~ to

come over and get them, but we were not to carry anything at first

to them but merely to find out the state of their feelings.

As it turned out, the Arhosetts did not even have the satisfaction

of receiving an envoy from the Makahs. Swan sent word to them through

Cedakanim, the Clyoquot chief who had faced them down with ^{his wealth of} ~~blubber~~,

and eventually two Arhosetts arrived at Neah Bay to say they would

settle ~~the matter~~ ^{the} for blankets.

Peace ensued for two weeks, until the Elwhas protested that a

cousin of Peter had ^{wounded with a knife} ~~stabbed~~ the brother of Swell's killer, Charlie.

(319)

Peter responded that he was sorry--sorry that ~~him~~ Charlie's brother had only been wounded instead of killed, for he would do it himself if he could get a chance.

Peter being Peter, a chance did come. There is this ultimate

entry by Swan:

no 9
Feb 25, 1866
Tried to get Indians to go to Pt. Angeles for Mr. Webster but all are afraid as Peter on his trip down killed an Indian at Crescent Bay. The Indian was an Elwha and some years ago killed Dukwitsa's father. Peter obtained a bottle and a half of whiskey from a white man at Crescent Bay and while under its influence was intigated by Dukwitsa to kill the Elwha which he did by stabbing him. Peter told me that after he had stabbed the man several times he broke the blade of the knife off in the man's body.

As might be expected, that stabbing invited battle. As might not be expected, the battle lines shaped themselves not between the Makahs and the Elwhas, but the Makahs and the United States. Swan's narrative of move, counter-move, and counter-counter-move:

Mr. Webster arrested Peter this evening and took him on board the sch. A.J. Westen to be taken to Steilacoom, the territorial ~~prison~~ ^{army headquarters}.

...A canoe with a party of Indians followed the schooner and this evening it was reported that they had rescued Peter and conveyed him to Kiddekubbut. I think this report doubtful. I afterward ascertained it was true....Old Capt. John and 16 others came this forenoon to make me a prisoner and keep me as long as Mr. Webster keeps Peter but when they found that Peter had escaped they came to tell me not to be afraid. I said I was not afraid of any of them and gave them a long lecture. John said I had a ~~am~~ skookum tumtum ~~is~~ a brave heart.

...The steamer Cyrus Walker with a detachment of 33 soldiers under Lieut. Kestler arrived at Neah Bay about midnight of Tuesday...~~Early~~ The steamer with Mr. Webster on board proceeded to Kiddekubbut and succeeded in arresting 14 Indians ~~is~~ Peter and thirteen others.

Peter now vanishes from the Neah Bay chronicle, to Swan's
considerable relief. I have tried for the past three years to make
Mr. Webster believe what a bad fellow Peter is, the diary splutters
in farewell. ~~The next, and last, installment~~

A fairly fiery record, these few years of bravado and occasional
bloodshed by the Makahs. Yet it might be remembered that while this
sequence of bluff and bravado and occasional bloodshed was occurring,
Swan's own kin, the United States of America, and its cousin tribe,
the Confederated States of America, were inventing modern mass war
at Antietam and Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. If it is a question
as to which civilization in those years was more casual with life,
don't truly compete with the Civil War's creeks of blood.
the Makahs ~~were not the automatic choice.~~

~~This bloodshed~~

~~REPRODUCED FROM THE ORIGINAL~~

Day twelve

The new year. On Sunday, January 1, 1960, his first
New Year's Day on the coast of the Strait of Juan de Fuca,

Swan opened a ^{tan}pocket diary barely larger than a deck of cards and inscribed:

May it be not only the
commencement of the week, the month and the new year, but
the commencement of a new era in my life, and may good resolve
result in good action.

Day fifteen

What
I have not said ^{what I should} ~~enough~~ about the startling weather ^{of this winter.} In usual winter I can simply accept rain and cloud as our regional ~~the~~ cloak, the season's garment of

interesting texture and of patterned pleasant sound as well. "Rain again," a friend will growl. "Right," I will smile absently. But as rainless day after rainless day has ^{glinted} ~~gone~~ past, it dawns on me ~~that~~ how different is this winter; ~~is different~~ drier, colder. Until yesterday morning,

^{hung} the temperature ~~had been~~ below freezing for four days and nights in a row, the longest spell of its kind I can remember here. I bury ^{our} ~~the~~ kitchen vegetable scraps directly into the garden patch ^{as immediate} ~~for~~ compost, and the shovel has been bringing up six-inch clods of frozen soil, like lowest-grade coal.

What brings the weather to mind is the renewed presence of birds. This morning kindled into bright sun and already, just to be out in the fresh warmth, I have walked up to the rim of the valley. The view west from there is bannered in five blues today: the water of Puget Sound in two shades, azure nearest me, a more delicately inked hue farther out; the foreshore of the Olympic Peninsula in its heavy forested tint; the Olympic Mountains behind their blue dust of distance; the clear cornflower sky.

2
~~delicately diluted blue~~ ^{hue} ~~farther out~~ As will happen this time of

year, clouds are ~~lined~~ lined across the southern reach of the mountains

while clear weather holds the northern end, the Strait country. Such

mornings shrug away time. Vessels on the Sound--freighter, tug harnessed,

to barge, second freighter, the ^{way arrow that is the} ~~Edmords~~ Edmords-to-Kingston ferry--seemed

pinned in place, and I had to watch intently before my eyes could begin

to catch the simultaneous motion of them all, inching on the water.

Then as I turned home, the flurry. Robins in fluster at the mouth

of the valley, abruptly dotting suburban fir trees and frost-stiff lawns.

Motion double-quick, headlong. Airful of flying bodies, a vigor in

orbit around fixed beauty of Sound and mountains.

These past iced days, I have tried to picture the birds, up in the innermost branches, fluffed with dismay and wondering why the hell they didn't wing south with their saner cousins. It occurs to me also that the dozey tan cat, as well as the cold, may be

keeping them from sight; ^{may be} ~~it occurs to me~~ that it ~~is~~ time I invited the

cat to be elsewhere for a while. ^{But} That the birds one way or another

can be ^{willed} ~~conjured~~ back, I dare not doubt. A birdless world is unthinkable,

~~to me.~~ To be without birds would be to suffer a kind of color-blindness,

a glaucoma ^{gauging over} ~~annihilating~~ one of the planet's special brightnesses.

Bushtits must bounce again

on the thin ends of birch branches like monks riding bell-ropes.

A fretful nest-building robin--we always have one or two ^{nattering} in the trees

at either ~~end~~ end of the house--must gather and gather ~~brush~~ dry spears

of grass until the beakful ^{bristles} ~~sticks~~ out like cat's whiskers. ^{Towhees, chickadees,} ~~The~~ flickers,

~~the~~ juncos, ~~the~~ occasional flashing hummingbird; ^S ~~the~~ seasonal grosbeaks

who arrive in the driveway and, masked like society burglars, munch

on seeds ^{amid} ~~among~~ the gravel, besides Carol and the pulse of ^{words across paper} ~~language~~

^{everyday necessities} there are few ~~needs~~ in my life, but birds are among them.

And Swan, with his feathered name: birds perpetually aviate across

his horizons. Time upon time I ~~have~~ ^{of birds} ~~marker~~ incidents in his pages.

at Neah Bay,

This forenoon, the tenth of July of 1865, I saw a kingfisher fluttering

in the brook and

supposed he had a trout which he could not swallow. On going to him

I found he had driven his bill into an old rotten stick with such force

as to bury it clear up to his eyes. ~~He~~ was hard and fast. I took him

with the stick to the house and called Jones and Phillips to see the

curiosity. It was with difficulty that his bill was pulled out again.

sent to
suppl. 11.11.11
H. J. 4

4

~~S to Baird, Jul 6 '63:~~

Two years previous, in the same week of July:

mod

I discovered a dead Albatross on the beach yesterday which

had a large dogfish which it had swallowed partially but it was too

large, and while the fish's head rested in the bird's stomach, its

tail was out of its mouth. Consequently the bird was soon suffocated....

I never met with a similar instance of voracity.

Birds routinely conjure instances which ^{seem to} have nothing whatsoever

to do with human ken. I ^{remember} think of my bafflement about last spring's

haunting robin. ~~I had been~~ standing

of my face, veer off just before a collision, then repeat the foray

two more times.

The bird's window fixation grew. A ~~few~~ days later, on my way back into the house from the mailbox, I happened to step ~~inside~~ the workshop

just as the robin arrived outside the glass. ~~Instead~~ ^{and} ~~unmoving~~ ^{stayed} in the semi-dark ~~of the workshop~~ to watch. Counted, unbelieving, as the robin

flung itself from the woodpile onto the window thirty-five consecutive times.

Over and over again, the small creature would fly up so hard its breast would flatten full onto the glass, ~~its~~ feet scraping a quick grasping eeek on the pane, and drop back. A second or two of wait, then repeat.

Flurries erupted two or three times, a particularly frenzied one at the last when the robin flung itself to the window several times in a row as rapidly as it could launch-collide-rebound-launch again.

Once, it turned away and sidled off along the woodpile, then whirled as if to catch the window by surprise and whapped the glass cliff again.

Once, too, the robin paused long enough to ~~it~~ open its bill very wide, as if swallowing--or making a silent anguished protest.

That effort of hurling one's body thirty-five times, at near-full force, against a solid barrier left me dumbstruck. What would be

equivalent for a human body, thirty-five rapid-fire fullback plunges

into a stadium wall? The battering pattern ~~it~~ also unnerved me. I try to stay clear of

the birds' affairs, but neither do I have to put up with hara-kiri

which employs my own windowpane. In front of the target window I

stacked cardboard boxes until they ~~xxx~~ ^{high as} loomed ~~behind~~ the spattered

pattern of attack, hoping the robin would be nonplussed and go nest

in a tree somewhere. Whether it did take itself to a tree, I cannot

be sure ~~know~~. I do know that its haunting madness left my vicinity.

Swan, the twelfth of February of 1863: Quite a number of crows

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have been washed ashore dead. They have a rookery at Waadah Island

and probably the stormy wind that has prevailed for several days with

the thick snow blinded them and they fell into the water... There is

catastrophe of ~~the~~ ^{that} sort here as well, ^{fortunately} although ~~not~~ in bunches. This

house I live in sits as a glass crag in the birds' midst. Badgerlike,

I hunch in here at the typing desk and watch helplessly as the building

imposes ~~its~~ ^{itself} thrusts athwart the birds' paths and ^{once in awhile} ~~all too often~~ kills

them. Grosbeaks have been the most frequent victims of headlong smash against a window. During one of their

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benefit.

The Makahs might care to argue that point of benefit~~ed~~, after a
hundred and twenty years as a Reservation people under ~~the U.S.~~ ^{United States}

governance. Neah Bay meets the visitor as a splatter of weather-
whipped houses, despite its age a tentative town seemingly pinned
into place by the heavy government buildings at its corners: the

Bureau of Indian Affairs offices, the Coast Guard enclave, the Air
Force base on the opposite neck of the peninsula. One building stands
^{alone} out in grace, ^athe museum being built by the tribal council to display

from the finds of an archeological dig southward along the coast at Cape

^{the museum's} Alava. Despite ~~its~~ brave thrust and the bulky federal presence, the

dark forested hills which crowd the bay seem simply to be waiting until
the right moonless night to take back the townsite.

I have brought with me the copied portions of Swan's diaries
^{where he writes about the place}
which relate the ~~political~~ position of Cape Flattery ~~among~~ in the tribal

geography of the North Pacific. Remoteness and the empty expanses of

4

Strait and ocean would seem to dominate such a site, but that was not the case at all when Swan lived with the Neah Bay villagers in the early 1860's. He found them carrying on a complicated war of nerves, and occasionally muscles, which would do credit to any adventurous modern nation; south, north and east, the Makahs looked from their pinnacle of land ^{toward} to a tribal neighbor they were at issue with.

The calmest of these rivalries extended southward, about a day's canoe journey down the coast to where the Quillayute tribe lived.

The Makahs suspected the Quillayutes of having killed one of their whaling crews which had been blown

5

This
downcoast by storm. ~~This~~ tale reached Swan time after time at Neah
Bay, occasionally with the added note that the murdered Makahs since
had been seen as owls with shells hanging from their bills similar
to those worn by the Makahs in their noses. # Suspicion of the

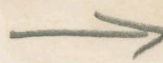
Quillayutes remained ~~only~~ a matter of muttering, however. With the
Elwha Clallams, east along the Strait, the issue was their killing
of Swell, and it rankled hard and often. In ^{Swan's} ~~the~~ diary months, ~~of the~~
^{Neah Bay jousts}
~~early 1860's, the tribes joust~~ repeatedly with Elwha ^{over} ~~about~~ the dead

young chieftain. Early on, Swan and a Makah canoe crew returning
from Port Townsend brought ^{back} ~~home~~ with them a Clallam chief who wanted
to talk peace. (pspt, 210) The

^{Swell's mother}
Clallam breakfasted with Peter, everyone seemed to be pleasant and
friendly, ^{but} ~~and~~ the point was ^{sledged home} ~~put across~~ to the Clallams: It is generally
understood that if they will kill...Charlie entire peace will be

restored. Weeks later, ~~the~~ Clallams ^a ~~come~~ back to ^{parley} ~~talk~~ some more,
to no further result. (p. 221) Months later, a ^M ~~Makah~~ elder ^{suddenly} ~~announces~~

that he means to burn up Swell's monument as the Bostons have not



that he would set fire to Swell's monument because the white men had not arranged vengeance for his murder. In evident inspiration, the

Makahs now scored a move:

Today Peter stole a squaw from Capt. Jack, one of the Clallam Indians

who was here on a visit. The squaw was part Elwha and Peter took

her as a hostage to enforce pay from the Elwhas for robbing and killing

Swell a year and a half ago. (p. 258) The ransom fell through, ^{one of the Makah tribal} the

3. ^{sliders} ~~woman~~ ^{the woman} was allowed to escape. Peter came to me today with a very

heavy heart in consequence of the squaw having absconded. ~~The next~~

Just then, the attention of the Makahs pivoted ^{abruptly northward,} ~~north~~ across the Strait,

word came that ~~somebody~~ ^{had} one of their number killed a chief ~~or head~~

on the west coast of ~~one~~ of the Arhosett tribes ~~living on~~ Vancouver Island, ~~near Barclay~~

~~Saan~~....Sah tay hub getting angry because the Arhosett Indian would

not agree to his terms, stabbed him with his knife. # Here was a bladed

version of Swell's death, this time with the Makahs on the delivering

end, and Swan ~~the~~ records Neah Bay's jitters about the Arhosetts

^{voyaging} sweeping down on them in revenge....a whooping and yelling all night

occasionally firing off guns to show their bravery. No enemy however

appeared. (263)

Bay a number of tribesmen from the outlying Makah villages said they wanted peace at least with the Clallams. But Peter said

that he would never be satisfied until he received pay in some shape
for the murder of his brother... (p. 268)

Next, however,
~~but now~~ intelligence reached the Makahs--and of course Swan's pen--
that the Arhosetts were having their own problems of pride. This forenoon
Frank told me that he had just received news from his father, old Cedakanim
of Clioquot. It appears that the Arhosett Indians have been trying to
induce the Clioquots to join them in an attack on the Makahs...They offered
100 blankets and 20 Makah women as slaves provided they could catch them.
Cedakanim and the other Clioquot chief rejected this offer and demanded
a steamboat, a sawmill and a barrell of gold. This difference of opinion
came near resulting in a fight but at length old Cedakanim told them he
would not fight the Makahs nor did he want any pay from the Arhosetts as
he was much richer than they and to prove this he ordered 100 pieces of
blubber to be given them...This, said Frank, made the Arhosetts so ashamed
that the sweat ran out of their faces...

(p. 268)

Perhaps deciding that it ^{would be} ~~was~~ easier to negotiate with enemies

than allies of Cedakanim's sort, the Arhosetts held back to see what

might be forthcoming from Neah Bay.

~~the Makahs might do. Agent Webster~~ Agent Webster suggested to the

Makahs that they offer the Arhosetts a peace settlement of, say,

twenty blankets; the U.S. government would provide ten of the blankets.

Given the prospect of getting out of a ^{possible} ~~prospect of~~ war at the cost

of only ten blankets of their own, the Makahs made a show of reluctant

U. nominating Swan as plenipotentiary:

diplomacy. ...the Indians wish me to go over to the Arhosetts and

find out if they are willing to settle the affair by a payment to

them of blankets, and if so the Arhosetts were to be invited ~~over~~ to

come over and get them, but we were not to carry anything at first

to them but merely to find out the state of their feelings.

As it turned out, the Arhosetts did not even have the satisfaction

of receiving an envoy from the Makahs. Swan sent word to them through

Cedakanim, the Clyo^qquot chief who had faced them down with ^{his wealth of} ~~with~~ blubber,

and eventually two Arhosetts arrived at Neah Bay to say they would

settle ~~the matter~~ ^{the} for blankets.

Peace ensued for two weeks, until the Elwhas protested that a

cousin of Peter had ^{wounded with a knife} ~~stabbed~~ the brother of Swell's killer, Charlie.

(319)

Peter responded that he was sorry---sorry that ~~the~~ Charlie's brother had only been wounded instead of killed, for he would do it himself if he could get a chance.

Peter being Peter, a chance did come. There is this ultimate entry by Swan:

no 9
Tried to get Indians to go to Pt. Angeles for Mr. Webster
but all are afraid as Peter on his trip down killed an Indian
at Crescent Bay. The Indian was an Elwha and some years ago
killed Dukwitsa's father. Peter obtained a bottle and a half
of whiskey from a white man at Crescent Bay and while under
its influence was ~~3~~intigated by Dukwitsa to kill the Elwha which
he did by stabbing him. Peter told me that after he had stabbed
the man several times he broke the blade of the knife off in
the man's body.

As might be expected, that stabbing invited battle. As might not be expected, the battle lines shaped themselves not between the Makahs

and the Elwhas, but the Makahs and the United States. These years passing with remarkable tranquility ~~surprisingly~~ ~~surprisingly~~ at Cape Flattery had been ~~surprisingly~~ tranquil between the natives and the white newcomers, as Swan was aware: I have been reading this evening the report of the Comm. of Indian Affairs and it seems singular to be able to sit here in peace and quiet on this, the most remote frontier of the United States, and read of the hostilities among the tribes between this Territory and the eastern settlements. Peter's knife punctured that state of affairs. Swan's narrative begins to show move, counter-move, counter-counter-move:

Mr. Webster arrested Peter this evening and took him on board the sch. A.J. Westen to be taken to Steilacoom, the territorial ~~prison~~ army headquarters.

...A canoe with a party of Indians followed the schooner and this evening it was reported that they had rescued Peter and conveyed him to Kiddekubbut. I think this report doubtful. ~~I afterward~~ ^{But later: ...} ascertained

it was true....Old Capt. John and 16 others came this forenoon to make me a prisoner and keep me as long as Mr. Webster keeps Peter but when they found that Peter had escaped they came to tell me not to be afraid. I said I was not afraid of any of them and gave them a long lecture.

11

John said I had a ~~skookum~~ skookum tumtum a brave heart.

...The steamer Cyrus Walker with a detachment of 33 soldiers under

Lieut. Kestler arrived at Neah Bay about midnight of Tuesday...~~Early~~ The

steamer with Mr. Webster on board proceeded to Kiddekubbut and succeeded

in arresting 14 Indians ~~Peter~~ and thirteen others.

Peter now vanishes from the Neah Bay chronicle, to Swan's

considerable relief. ~~I~~ I have tried for the past three years to make

Mr. Webster believe what a bad fellow Peter is, the diary splutters

in farewell. ~~The next, and last, installment~~

A fairly fiery record, these few years of bravado and occasional

bloodshed by the Makahs. Yet it might be remembered that while this

sequence of bluff and bravado and occasional bloodshed was occurring at Cape Flattery,

Swan's own kin, the United States of America, and its cousin tribe,

the Confederate States of America, were inventing modern mass war

at Antietam and Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. If it is a question

as to which civilization in those years was more casual with life,

^{begin to} don't ~~truly~~ compete with the Civil War's creeks of blood.
the Makahs ~~were not the automatic choice.~~

A few hours in Neah Bay, fitting its geography onto Swan's era--

a breakwater has been built from the west headland of the bay to Waadah

Island; the Bureau of Indian Affairs buildings top the eastern point

where Webster's trading post ~~was~~ stood--and I ~~had for~~ ^{turn toward} the ocean. Cape

Flattery is, as I have said, ~~the farthest west~~ ^{as far west as} you can go on the

^{along its Pacific extremity} mainland forty-eight states of America, but there are thrusts of

^{ultimate sharp} cliff actually out into the ocean; points of landscape as if a *new*

^{for} compass heading had been devised there, west-of-west.

from a logging road I climb down the forest trail
to the tip of the Cape's longest finger of headland. At the trailhead
the Makah Tribal Council has nailed up alarming signs...Rugged High
Cliffs...Extremely Dangerous Area...enter at own risk. The final brink
of the trail lives up to them by simply snapping off into mid-air.

There, some eighty or hundred feet above the Pacific, rides an
oceanlookers' perch, an oval of white hardpack clay about twenty feet
wide and thirty-five long. A clawnail hardness for this last talon
of cliff. Behind, on all sides, the continent shears away. The Cape
forest flows determinedly out onto the cliff edges. Some trees have
their roots actually above the ocean water.

Surf pounds underfoot with surprisingly little noise, but wind
makes up for it. I crouch carefully, not to be puffed off the continent,
and look out the half-mile or so to Tatoosh, the lighthouse island here
at the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. While at Tatooshe,
pioneer James C. Swan entered in his diary on July 18, 1864, I counted
18 vessels in sight.

Now machines instead of humans operate the Tatoosh light, visitors are none, and the tiny white cluster of lighthouse, residential quarters, water tower, and a collapsing shed are visual echoes of emptiness. Tatoosh simply rests out there like a fat stepping-^tstone off the end of the continent, and the next foothold beyond it is Asia.

In the 1860's, the Makah tribesmen told Swan that below these cliffs, in hours of calm water, they sometimes hunted seals. Caves are said to drill back in very far at the base of the cliffs, and so a Makah would approach by canoe, swim or wade in with a lighted torch and a knife, and stalk back along the tunneled floor of the cave until he came onto drowsing seals. The blaze of the torch confused the animals, and the hunter took the chance of their confusion to stab them.

There was risk, Swan noted. Occasionally the torch will go out, and leave the cavern in profoundest darkness.

Profoundest darkness, and naked knife-bearing men who would face it. I stand atop this last rough end of the continent and think of what men could do before they found other, easier routes. Where the Makahs of Swan's time on Cape Flattery are concerned, ^{that can be thought of} ~~I think of that~~ often.

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 the ^{an} Smithsonian article ^{for Smithsonian} he wrote ^{ad} about the Makahs, he lists the tribal superstitions in firm schoolteacherly style, then this uncommonly uneasy language burst from him:

~~prose, he once put down:~~ 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.

he
didn't
sign -
his pen
seems
to
write
of them

Yesterday's weather faded and faded, had gone into gray by sundown.

This morning brought sleet, blanking the coastline down to a few hundred yards of ~~and~~ merging earth and water. A worker from a construction crew stepped from the motel room next to mine and looked into the icy mush. He declared: "I need this like I need another armpit."

(Nov. 10, 1864)

The attendance at school has been very meagre the past week and
this afternoon I sent for Youaitl (Old Doctor) and had a long talk
with him on the matter. I told him that the Government at Washington
had been at great expense to have the school house built and now I
wanted the children to come and be taught and wanted him to let his
second son Kachim come and board with me and be one of a class with
Jimmy, that his board and schooling would cost nothing, that I proposed
to teach Jimmy's class by themselves and then teach the smaller children
who could come as day scholars. That is a few of the boys took an
interest to learn others would be induced to come, and finally all the
children could be taught. I also told him that the old men were dying
off and these boys would shortly take their places and if they would
come and learn now they could be useful when they grew up and could
better adapt themselves to the white men's customs than the old men
who were so prejudiced against the whites.

Old Doctor said my talk was all good, all good and he would send
the boy and talk to the other Indians...

Day twenty-two

This morning

~~Later~~, at the motel and nagged by a murmur of memory, I finally ~~find~~ ^{found} the entry, Swan's diary words of this ~~the~~ exact date, one hundred thirty-nine

years ago. January eleventh, 1860. Cloudy and calm. This is my birthday,

42 years old. I trust that the remainder of my life may be passed more

profitably than it has so far. Self investigation is good for birthdays.

Tonight, after another coastal day back and forth between Swan's words and the actuality of Cape Flattery:

no #1

"Some men and women are never part of the time they were born into,"

Carol's voice read^{ed} to me as I hunch in the phone booth at Clallam Bay,

"and walk the streets or highways of their generations as strangers...."

~~Where the hell is this~~ Mr. Doig's story reinforces our diminishing conviction that

there is something special in American earth, in American experience and in

the harrowing terms of American survival. Where there is no longer a house

of sky..." The ^{earlier} ~~earliest~~ words bounce back and forth between my ears: never

part of time they were born into...walk their generations as strangers...

A train of language I might have written of Swan, but it has been written

of me, in the pages of the New York Times Book Review.