

Hard-used

unused in Day 57

--At the trading post at Shigan, ~~the~~ Swan and the cutter officers heard that an Indian had found the body of a man lashed to a spar which had been cast ashore at Kikani the most southern portion of Prince of Wales archipelago. From the body he recovered the cuffs, sleeve buttons, \$40 coin and a bunch of keys. The cuffs had been recognized in Sitka as the officer's trim of an army paymaster lost in the wreck of the steamship George S. Wright two and a half years before. The Indian said he buried the remains and would provide produce them if paid for so doing.

Day 57: Swan at end of Wolcott diary writes a paper on candlefish;  
link to Clark's sketch in ~~px~~ Day 39.

The eventual largesse from this year of collecting was vintage Swan -- hundreds of items ranging from the great canoe and carved posts the size of respectable trees to a bearclaw whiskey cup, elk horn wedges, and rattles made of goat hoofs.

Swan long had been eager to make a grand expedition through the Indian settlements of the North Pacific. His chance came with plans for the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, a world's fair to celebrate the first century of nationhood in 1876. Baird arranged for Swan to become a special commissioner, at \$200 a month, to collect for the Indian Bureau's exhibits at the Exposition. Naturally, the exhibits would pass to the National Museum of the Smithsonian afterwards. (Ultimately, a total of 78 freight cars of specimens from assorted Exhibition displays ended up in Baird's overflowing domain.)

And in March, 1875, Swan cheerfully informed Baird:

"I am negotiating for the purchase of the largest canoe ever built on this coast. It is at Alert Bay, Vancouver Island. It measures 75 to 80 feet long . . ." The canoe's reputation proved to be somewhat vaster than its actual dimensions, but still it was a magnificent 60-foot craft. (Baird lukewarmly referred to the prize craft in the annual report as one of the "more conspicuous objects already collected by Mr. Swan.")

Swan was in his glory in 1875, one of the rare moments in his life when he could spend his time poking around the frontier and earn a decent salary besides. The U.S. Revenue Service steamer Wolcott conveyed him wherever he wanted to go on the northern Pacific Coast to buy for the Philadelphia Exposition. He cruised and bought, bought and cruised. One of his lists shows an omnivorous span of purchases ranging from wooden berry spoons for 25 cents each to "one headdress with mantle of ermine fur, \$48."

If Baird thought, however, that a stipend for fish specimens would hold Swan, he failed to reckon with his man's determination to be paid for searching out Indian artifacts and relics as well. In January, 1874, Swan wrote to Baird that he had been visited by an Austrian man of science, Dr. Steindrachner, "who in behalf of his Government and for the Royal Zoological Museum at Vienna purchases of me and pays me on the spot." Baird hurriedly wrote back that he had high hopes that an arrangement could be worked out to put Swan on the payroll of the Department of Interior's Indian Bureau for his artifact collecting.