

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

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Dear Wilson:

It will take awhile to get your photo order completed. The Gibbs' box and the panels need some conservation attention prior to photography. I wouldn't look for the photos before January. Meanwhile I have enclosed some of the data from our records:

Pipe	Cat. # 717	Gibbs, collected c. 1857	accessioned 1862
Paddles	130,782	Collected by Commodore E. P. Kennedy, USN while serving aboard the USS PEACOCK in 1832 along the NW Coast (later the PEACOCK was one of Wilkes' ships)	accessioned 1899
Paddles	643-4	Gibbs (as above)	
Pipes	2416,2592,2417,2591,2605,2606,2599	Wilkes collected by Wilkes party or part of the HBC collection obtained at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1841	accessioned 1867
Pipe	1746	Dr. J. Evans collected on the Columbia River (this may refer to the Wilkes collection or have been part of it)	accessioned 1857, cataloged 1866
Pipe	10078	Gibbs, (as above but with the notation "Queen Charlotte Ids.")	accessioned 1871

re: housefront and panels

Swan ltrs:

10/76 ".....Arrived from Ft. Simpson 5 packages of boards 4-5' wide of 8-10' long"

30/12/75 ".....W. Husen of Alert Bay will have made a perfect model of an Indian house 30' long by 20' wide; carved, painted and described as a chief's house. This will be marked so it can be put together again."

*Speaking of
Philadelphia Expo 76'*

Examining the housefront and panels, I find the housefront boards to measure from c. 8'6" to 12'9". The panels were apparently attached in sections that average c. 7' by 3'. The housefront across measures c. 38'. Obviously, it is uncertain as to whether Swan's references actually pertain to the housefront or panels. My guess would be that a house model may have been exhibited at Philadelphia in '76 and Swan either succeeded with his plan (re: '75 ltr.) or substituted with an old housefront from Ft. Simpson? (I lean toward the latter since the measurements are way off) As for the panels, the Swan ltr. (10/76) may pertain but, if so, they were not at Philadelphia. Additionally, it is possible the boards have been cut to conform to a uniform size for framing. Maybe Swan measured the 'packages of boards' rather than the boards themselves? Old exhibit photos show the panels on display without any visible identification labels. I reread Swanton's reference and wonder if it might not be interpretive rather than an exact provenience. (12/4/69)

I have re-examined the panels and now am convinced they have nothing to do with Swan. I found old field #'s on the reverse of several that correspond with Swanton's main 'Tlingit' collection (coll. 1904). Previously I had located a catalog number (233,498) indicating a room partition (1) measuring 10'x5' collected by Swanton (field #35). Since the measurements were way off and the quantity wrong, it didn't seem likely they could be Swanton's but the presence of '#35' on the reverse of several panels is a stronger point. Considering Swanton illustrated these panels specifically and the old field #'s jibe, I am indicating on the catalog card the panels are #233,498 A-D, Tlingit and noting the former errors. The panels actually measure c. 7'x7'. Enclosed is an old photo of one of the panels on display without a label. Additionally, most of the items collected by Swanton came from around Wrangel or Kake (NW Kupreanof Id.).

panels
7x7
Swanton

Getting back to the housefront, I have discovered ~~to~~ old labels which seem to indicate it was on display after the Philadelphia Expo. A note on one label is dated: May 20, 1910. The attribution is given as Haida and collected by James G. Swan. Furthermore, there is reference to an entrance pole being displayed with the housefront. Now I am wondering whether the entrance pole (encl.) we now have on display actually belongs with the housefront. For what it's worth, both are square cut entrances. I would suspect that both the pole and the housefront are southern Tlingit or Tsimshian. I guess the squared entrances are more typically Tlingit. Do you think it possible a house would have part of its painted front blocked by an entrance pole? I suppose it's possible they were displayed together just for effect.

Housefront

no

Regarding the Gibbs chest, #638, the provenience given is Ft. Simpson, NW Coast. Looking over Gibbs travels I found him in Wash.-Ore. in 1855; Neah Bay, 1855; Port Townsend, 1857; Victoria, 1857; Nanaiamo, 1857; and Victoria, 1859. Apparently his collection was gathered during that time. I guess that's enough for now. I hope some of it is helpful.

Chest
c. 1857

Sincerely,

George Phebus