

Entries from James G. Swan's diaries

May 27, 1875- Authorized Dr. Powell to give 100 blankets for the big canoe ( at Alert Bay) if she is delivered in good order in Victoria.

June 10- Wrote Dr. Powell about the big canoe and gave order on him to Huson to pay Huson \$225 when he receives the canoe in good order.

Aug. 5- Went to Victoria . Found some Haidah Indians to paint my canoe.

Aug. 6- Took William McCurdy this morning to see big canoe then got some paints and arranged with Senerketes and Sam, two Haidahs , to decorate same.

Aug. 11- Wrote Dr. Powell requesting him to get painter to paint inside of big canoe Indian red as high as tip of thwarts, gunwales black four inches wide inside of canoe leaving space between the black and red paint for decoration in red.

Sep. 26- Wrote Rev. S. Crosby, Fort Simpson to send me the carved pole and any other curiosities he can obtain, particularly children's dolls and unfinished work.

Nov. 17- Wrote Prof. Baird (at Smithsonian) relative to..... carved pillar and painted boards which Mr. Crosby has for me at Fort Simpson and about Baronovitch letter relative to another carved post.

Dec.17 - Steamer California arrived bringing me a carved column and two boxes of Indian curiosities from Baronovitch at Karta Bay.

Dec. 27- Saw Westley Huson of Alert Bay and agreed with him for a lodge to be made of cedar 30 by 20 feet for Centennial.

April 1, 1876- Big canoe towed to Esquimault by steamer Gertrude... to be shipped in steamer Dacotah.

April 17- Learns big canoe reached San Francisco safely.

In Swan's journal of the cruise of the Walcott he said Westley Huson, ~~a teacher~~, was the owner of the big canoe. "It was made at Nootka and brought around the north end of Vancouver Island by Moquilla, a direct descendant of the Moquilla so often mentioned in the narratives of the early traders and voyagers to Nootka. She was given ~~to~~ by him to Cla-co-tlor, chief of the Nimpkish Indians at Alert Bay, who gave all his property to Moquilla in return. Cla-co-ltas has since been obliged to obtain supplies of Mr. Huson and ran up so large an account that Huson had to take the canoe for his pay."

The Colonist on July 17, 1875 and again on Aug. 10 and Oct. 2 wrote about the canoe, the final correct dimensions apparently being 60 feet long 8 feet wide and 4 feet high. It said "the bows and stern are now being ornamented with heraldic devices, bears, eagles, whales, etc. and a fabulous animal supposed to devour siwashes."

Since Swan hired Indians to decorate the canoe in Victoria, it could be that he also had them embellish the house boards.

In a letter to the Smithsonian Nov. 29, 1875 he mentioned purchasing a Fort Rupert Canoe from Dr. Powell, a totem pole and other items.

This letter of April 9, 1876 covers shipping:

You have no idea how I have been annoyed about shipment of my collection. The canoe has been here 9 months and several large packages have remained in the agent's warehouse 4 months. ... A small steamer towed the big canoe and took on board the large packages and took them to Esquimault. After two canoes were placed on the Dakota, while he was attending to the slings they discharged freight into the small steamer and covered my cases with 60 tons of freight and they were taken back to Victoria..... The big canoe is immense. The donkey engine could not lift her and ~~she~~ a powerful tackle was rigged and Mr. Tibballs ordered 100 passengers and ship's stewards to pull on the falls and the united strength aided by a donkey engine lifted the canoe ... to the deck where (it was) lashed without the least marring her paint... She must weigh about 5 tons.

I can't find anything more mentioning house or housefront, but then I didn't write down absolutely every word Swan wrote. Since he packed most of his exhibit in cases and some were very large, my guess is that the house, was ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ to be assembled in Philadelphia and it may not have been very complete.

MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH  
COLUMBIA  
STATE LIBRARY

Vol. No.