

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOLOGY AND PREHISTORY

Telephone 54979
(S.T.D. Code 00X2)

Pitt Rivers Museum
South Parks Road, Oxford

Professor Wilson Duff
Anthropology and Sockology
University of British Columbia

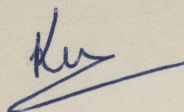
4th February 1967

Dear Wilson:

Well, here is something more for you! There is really very little anywhere about most of the stuff in this Museum, and it was just by one of those curious chances that as I pecked through one or two places where there might have been some information, someone else, looking through Tylor's correspondence, turned up this letter from Boas. Hope it is of value to you! I hope we have photographed the right ones -

All good wishes,

Mours ever,



K.O.L. Burridge

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY,

77TH STREET AND EIGHTH AVENUE.

NEW YORK June 2, 1902.

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY.

Dr. E. B. Tylor,
Oxford, England.

My dear Sir,--

You will remember that a number of years ago you sent me a photograph of a Haida mask consisting of a human face inside of two large folding wings, which, when closed, represent a raven. On top of the inner mask is a small figure of a man with rotatable hand. You asked me at that time to ascertain the significance of the mask. It has taken me all these years to obtain the information that you desire. As I have explained several times in print, it is necessary, in order to obtain the significance of a mask, to find either the maker or the owner. During the last year I have had an investigator, Dr. John R. Swanton, on Queen Charlotte Islands, who spent there a whole year, and through him I have just now learned that this mask was made by Charlie Edensaw. It represents Nenkilstlas, the mythical Raven,-- outside in the form of the raven, inside in human form. The small figure on top of the mask also represents Nenkilstlas. Edensaw said that when the different strings are pulled, this figure begins to shake its hand, which means that the person who wears the mask is higher in rank than all the tribes that were invited. This is all that Dr. Swanton could learn about the mask, which, according to the statement of Edensaw, is evidently a potlatch mask.

Mask

Dr. Swanton has been eminently successful in his work on Queen Charlotte Islands, and I am sure you will be very much interested in his results, which we hope to publish in the course of this year.

With kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,

Franz Boas.

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Pitt Rivers Museum
South Parks Road, Oxford

Professor Wilson Duff
Anthropology and Sociology
University of British Columbia
December 21st. 1966

Dear Wilson:

How nice to hear from you - here is an interim package on your inquiries.

On your photostat:

- 1A: simply has the notation that it was collected by Dr F. Dally in 1868 from Charlotte Island. (It is a mask with moveable eyes, and seal skin beard and whiskers)
- 1B: I'm afraid I can't make out.
- 2A and 3A: This is a 'Mask used in Ghost dances representing the Raven as Creator, with a small figure of the 'Wanderer'. This, a mask with moveable beaks, strings etc, was bought by this Museum in 1891 as a part of the Rev Charles Harrison collection. Just inside the mask I found a letter from Boas to Tylor, a photostat of which I enclose.
- 3B: a set of five masks - all purchased 1891, from the Harrison collection.
- a) Deceased woman with small lip stud. (Haida)
 - b) Stick or mainland Indian for use in native dances
 - c) Devil-Doctor mask (Haida). (SAAGGA with uncut hair and face painted as in war time, eyelids worked with strings)
 - d) Mask representing deceased man (Haida)
 - e) Used by Stick or mainland Indians in dances
- 4C: is simply labelled Haida Mask, PR coll. It will take some research to find out more.

There is also another 'raven Creator' mask in the same display, just beneath the one mentioned above: this is also from the Harrison collection

P.T.O.

Finally: against the entries in the book I found two inserts, which I enclose in photostat (by Gunther).

They refer to pieces which are not in the display you speak about, but are in store.

Now, what do you want done ?

Loans: well, the policy was 'not on any account'. But at present the best I can say is there is no policy. My feeling is that loans inside the country are acceptable, but probably not outside it.

Do you want photos of this lot, from various angles ?

Let me know - this just by way of interim before Xmas overtakes us all -

HAPPY XMAS!

ew
the

K.O.L. BURRIDGE

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