

6 November, 1969.

Dr. William C. Sturtevant,  
Curator, Department of Anthropology,  
United States National Museum,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Bill:

One of the things I had intended to discuss with you last week, but didn't, was Jane Wallen's totem pole project. I knew that you and Dr. Riesenbergs were to be somehow involved, but it was not clear in what way. If you can put in a good word for the project, it would be much appreciated.

I have a number of specific requests which I hope won't take too much of your time and trouble:

1. I would like photographs of the four painted wooden partition screens in the basement storage. George Phebus thought they were collected by Swan from Port Simpson, but they seem to be the ones illustrated by Swanton in his study of the Tlingit (AR-BAE 26, Fig. 106) as Beaver crests of the Decitan of Killisnoo. In fact, most or all of the artifacts in that study seem to be in the Smithsonian collection, although there is not a word of acknowledgment given.

Two implications: first, there must be photographs on file somewhere, since Swanton published one. If there are, I would like copies. It would also be nice to have the whole set photographed again, so that we could study the minor differences among them. Second, if these are not from Port Simpson, then the "painted boards" in Swan's records may indeed refer to the house front.

2. About the house front painting, you said that you might have some more detailed photographs on file. Any chance?
3. The big and beautiful wooden chest collected by Gibbs is the earliest of the style known to me. May I request photographs of all four sides. Again, this thing has been illustrated in a BAE publication without acknowledgment or attribution; this time by Boas, in Tsimshian Mythology. Most of the things he illustrates are in your collection. Again, it must mean that photographs exist.

4. In the conservation Lab. are three argillite chests. I assume they will be put together and photographed soon, and I would like systematic coverage of all four sides and the tops of two of them; 89000, which is by Charles Edenshaw, and 88998, which is by Tom Price (in our opinion). The third is also a Tom Price chest. One chapter in the book I am working on will be a comparison of the styles of these two artists, and the chests, both collected by Swan in 1883, make a nice basis for comparison.
5. May I have permission to publish the photographs you send me, and the other photographs which I have taken myself of Smithsonian pieces?

This is quite a list of requests. One thing which I decided, needless to say, was that I'll have to come back to Washington some time for a longer period.

Many thanks indeed for the kind way you received me, and for the opportunity to join the luncheon club if only for one day (Marg. Halpin has just been giving me some of the history of that).

All best regards,

Wilson Duff,  
Associate Professor.

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