

**MASSET,****Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia.**

Prof. G. T. Swan, in a letter to the Port Townsend *Argus*, thus describes the above named village, its industries, inhabitants and the natural fertility of this little known portion of the provincial domain:

Masset village is situated on the eastern shore of Masset Inlet, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Dixon's entrance. The shore takes a bend toward the east, and the village faces the south. This bend is too slight to be shown in the chart of the Inlet, which is represented as running almost due north and south. The country is level, and there is much open pasture land which is covered with a luxuriant growth of grass and wild pea, affording the richest kind of pasture, as the fine condition of Mr. McKenzie's cattle proves. The shores of the Inlet present the same appearance as the country back of Whidby's Island and Swinomish. There is a dense growth of spruce, hemlock, and cedar, and in the interior, near the mountain, is the yellow cypress or Sitka cedar, as it is called on Puget Sound. The Spruce is very large and makes excellent lumber, and the cedar also grows to a very large size.

Masset is the canoe building place of Queen Charlotte Islands, more canoes being built here than at any other village. There are now quite a number of large ones in the course of building, and I now have a good chance to set the method and make sketches of canoes just hewn out, and the same canoe after being properly finished. After the canoe has been mostly hewn out red-hot stones are placed in it, water thrown in and the canoe covered over with mats and sails to keep in the heat. I examined one to-day, the water fairly boiled, and when the wood was softened by the steam and heat, sticks were inserted and the sides gradually pressed open till about the desired width was obtained. The canoe is then allowed to remain over night. The next day new hot stones and water are put in, and a slow fire is made on the ground, along the bottom of the canoe. This toughens the wood and allows it to be made wider by the stretching until it is as wide as safety will permit, and then when cold it is finished off with chisels and hand adzes, and thwarts are inserted and the knot holes ingeniously stopped, and the canoe is ready for painting. Those canoes are sold to the Indians at Fort Simpson and Skidgate, and other villages, and are famous for their neat appearance.

The houses of the Masset Indians of the old construction are massive buildings, about 50 feet square, some made longer. In front of each is a carved column, made of the trunk of a cedar tree, hollowed out behind to lessen the weight. Some of these are 75 feet high. On the front side are carved devices indicating the

tokens or family crests, which are represented by bear, beaver, frog, eagle, raven, seal, halibut, shark and other animals, grouped together in fantastic manner, to illustrate some ancient legend. Every column has its history, and some of the legends are as interesting as the tales of the orgies.

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