

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS: THE DRUM



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Charlie Swan, Makah cultural leader, Neah Bay, August 1945



In August of each year, the Makah people hold their annual Makah Days celebration at Neah Bay. In their 1945 festival, the Makah also celebrated the end of World War II, the imminent return of tribal members serving in the military, and the dedication of a new housing project on the reservation. Tribal leader Charlie Swan, whose son served in the Pacific, led the dancing. In this August photo, Swan wears a button blanket and wooden mask, and he holds a painted drum. Swan, who was well known for his dancing, had a dance troupe which gave performances throughout the Pacific Northwest. Negative Number: PI-23865



Indians in ceremonial costume, Seattle, 1931

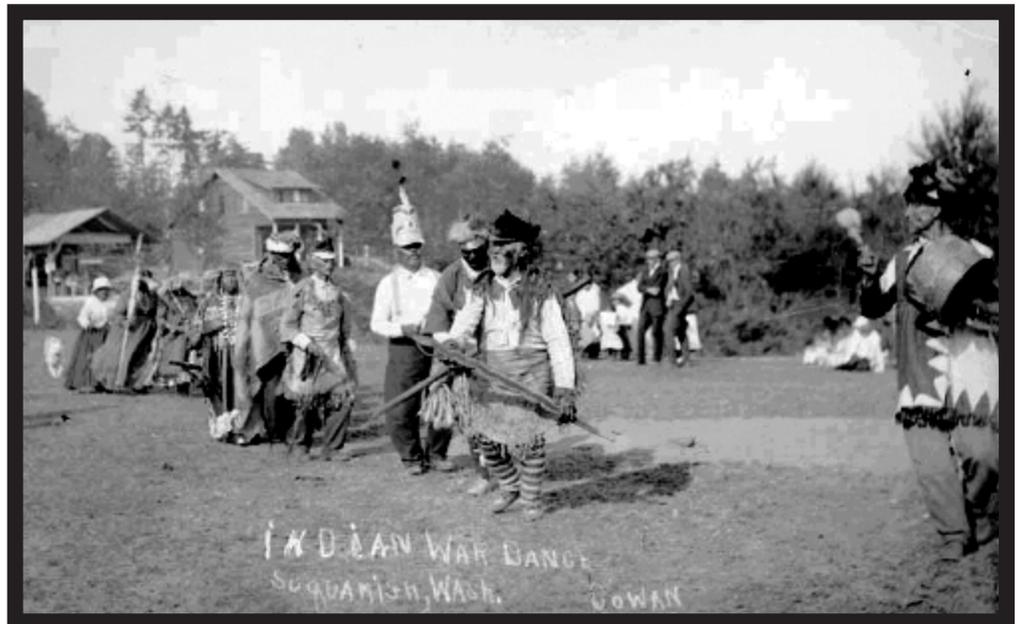
A group of Indians dressed in elaborate dance costume were photographed in the summer of 1931, possibly in connection with a display of Northwest Indian culture at the Seattle Exposition and Home Show. The two men on the right wear feather headgear typical of Coast Salish spirit dancers. The man on the left holds a painted drum which also appears in photographs of a group identified as Chief Blackthunder, Skykomish. This photograph is a valuable document as it was quite rare for people to display these costumes outside of their ceremonial context. Negative Number: PI-23790



Bone game at the Swinomish smokehouse, January 22, 1946

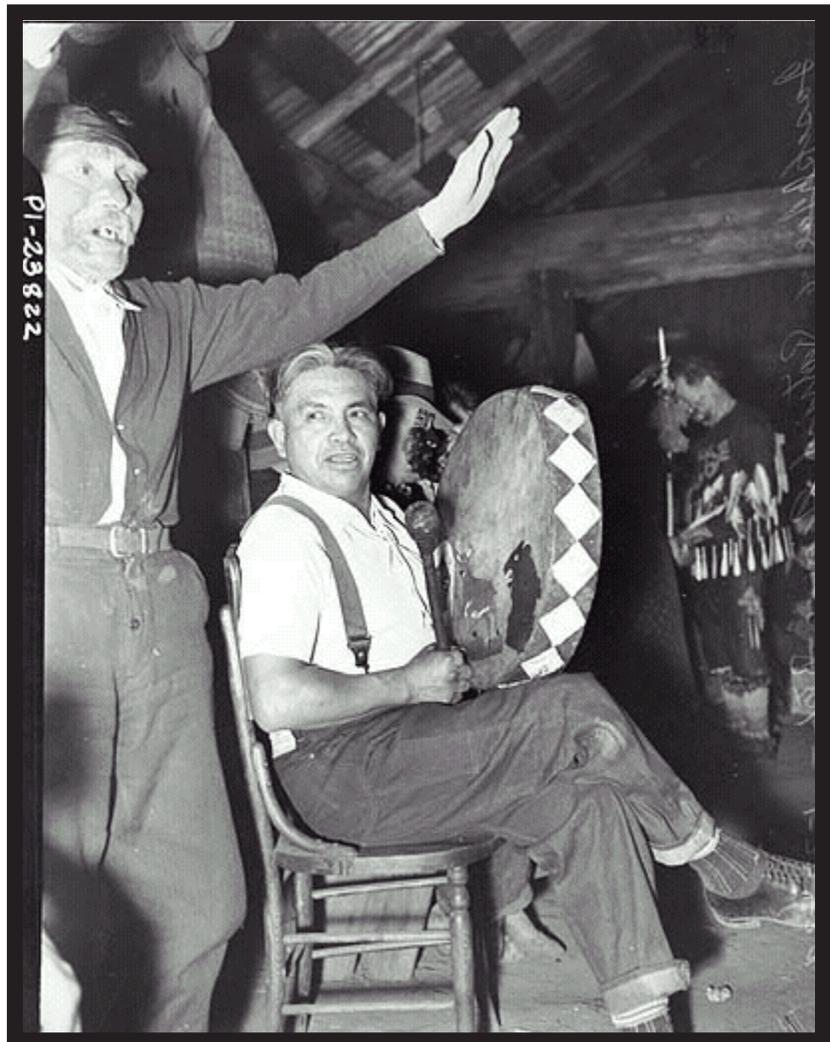
The January 22, 1946 Treaty Day celebration at the Swinomish Reservation at La Conner featured the gambling game known as slahal or the bone game. Two teams of players sat in lines facing one another, with one player holding the pair of bones and the others singing and beating time with sticks and a drum. This photograph shows one line of players. Abel D. Joe of Swinomish sits to the left of a group of tall scoring sticks placed in the ground. He chants while holding one of the game bones in his open hand. Two drummers sit to the left; other players sing and drum the floor with sticks. Negative Number: PI-23871

Man with drum leads a line of men & women in ceremonial dress in a dance. Men wear a variety of decorated hats and headresses, fringed tunics, women in dresses with necklaces and headbands. Various onlookers visible in background. Negative Number: NA1950



Suquamish dance during 'Chief Seattle Days', annual powwow at Suquamish, Washington, 1912

On January 22, 1939, Native American tribes living at the Swinomish Reservation, near La Conner, Washington, held their annual Treaty Day observance. The event marked the anniversary of the 1885 Treaty of Point Elliott which transferred their traditional lands to Washington Territory. In this photo, Patrick George (r.) beats on a drum while tribal elder Joseph Joe (l.) sings. According to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer article which accompanied the photo, the 1939 Treaty Day events included feasting, singing, and drumming as well as discussions of taxes and government promises. Negative Number: PI-23822



Swinomish drummer and singer at the Treaty Day observance, January 22, 1939