

Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum

Winter 2015



The Friends of
Sheldon Jackson Museum

January 31, 2015

2015 Native Artist
Residency Silent Auction

hors d'oeuvres
5:30-6:30 p.m

Friends Annual Meeting

6:30-7:00 p.m

Conservator's "Road Show"

featuring
Scott and Ellen Carrlee
Alaska State Museum

Bring your treasured heirlooms and
art and receive advice for your
treasure's care.

The Friends Of Sheldon Jackson Museum
present

The Conservator's "Road Show"

special guests

Scott Carrlee, Curator of Museum Services

Ellen Carrlee, Conservator



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Can't Come to the Museum?

The second graders of Margie Esquiro's classroom recently experienced what happens when a museum curator comes to their classroom. The class was studying Tlingit culture with help of the Sheldon Jackson Museum's hands-on items. Ms. Esquiro decided to take the study a step further. She invited Museum Curator Jacqueline Fernandez to her classroom to present "Curators in Training." The young curators were paired up, given an artifact,

plastic gloves, pencils, a magnifying glass, rulers and a catalog card. Ms. Fernandez then worked with the students teaching them how a curator looks at artifacts, records its measurements, makes sketches of the item, noting details, identifying its origins along with where it came from and what it is; all the details necessary for a museum artifact. The students rose to their task with enthusiasm. There just might be some new curators in the works.



Conservator: *noun*

\kæən-'sæər-vəə-təər, -vəə-'tɔːr;

One that is responsible for the care, restoration, and repair of archival or museum articles

What is a Conservator? Why Should I talk to One?

By Ellen Carrlee, Conservator, Alaska State Museums

On Saturday, January 31, 2015 Conservator Ellen Carrlee and Curator of Museum Services, Scott Carrlee will be at the Sheldon Jackson Museum sharing their expertise on the care and preservation of treasured heirlooms and art from 7-8 p.m. as highlight of the Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum's Annual Meeting and their 2015 Native Artist Residency Program silent auction.

This kind of work is part of the daily work the Carrlee's do at the Alaska State Museum in Juneau, though most times, the questions are asked and answered through phone or internet conversations. The opportunity to come to Sitka and actually see the people and the art that they are advising on is a great treat. The following are some of the common questions that Ellen and Scott are asked:

Can I fix/flatten or clean this myself?

Many questions involve the condition

of an old item, or something that has been damaged. People are curious about whether or not they can safely improve the appearance of an item without damaging it further by accident. In most cases, we can explain how a museum would treat a similar type of item in its own collection, and if it is possible, for you to use the same technique. For example; surface cleaning techniques can improve the appearance of something that is dirty without much expense. These are usually techniques that do not involve liquids and utilize products like soot sponges, cosmetic sponges, vinyl erasers, or Groom/Stick. Matching up the right technique to the right problem is the trick. By being able to see and handle the artifact Ellen and Scott can explain the pitfalls, what might go wrong, and identify if the treatment is expensive, difficult, or time consuming. They can identify if an appearance is "normal" for an artifact or if there is bug infestation or active corrosion. If professional intervention is the best

approach then the Carrlees can offer suggestions how to pursue that.

What is it? What is it made of? Is it "real?"

Material identification is one of the most important aspects of our work as materials can help identify the origins of an object as well as influence how it might deteriorate over time. Some of the Carrlees' discussions with the public involve examining an object for clues about what the artifact is made of and how it was constructed. Stitching, for example, may be a clue. Sinew is often seen on older items, thread is seen over a broad time period, and nylon dental floss was only widely available after World War II. Scott especially loves the questions, "what was this artifact for?" Tool marks, wear patterns, material choices, hints of missing elements, design strategies, and other clues help round out the story an object tells.

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Karen McIntyre
Yup'ik, Athabaskan,
Cup'ik
Bethel, AK.

Kuspuk and
Fish Skin Artist



SPOTLIGHT:
Native Artist Residency Artist 2014

Karen McIntyre:

An Interview; by Debbie Doland

Karen McIntyre is one of the newest Native artists to participate in the Sheldon Jackson Museum's 2014 Native Artist Residency program. Karen is Yup'ik, Athabaskan, Cup'ik and Irish. As a young child Karen lived in Reno, NV. Her life changed when at the age of 10 she moved back to Alaska to live part time with her Grandparents in Akiak and her aunt in Napakiak. Karen was very inspired by her grandparents who lived a subsistence life style; worked with their hands teaching her the importance of hard work.

Her Grandpa took good care of things and knew the importance of fixing things rather than throwing them away. Her Grandma taught her how to work with her hands, how to sew, to do her best in whatever she did, to re-do it if it wasn't right. She taught Karen to be happy, and thankful and full of grace no matter what kind of work she was doing.

After the village, Karen then lived in Valdez, returning to Reno for a brief time. Later,

she returned to Alaska living in Anchorage, Bethel and now arriving in Sitka, summer of 2013.

Raised in both the Western Culture and the Alaska Native Culture Karen was left with a desire to reconnect with her Alaska Native heritage. So it was with great excitement that she came across a flyer advertising the Fish skin workshop taught by Athabaskan artist Audrey Armstrong. Karen also

(continued)

wanted to learn the art form in order to be able to better understand her heritage and to teach it to others. The art of fish skin sewing was dying until artists like Audrey and Karen committed to passing it on thereby keeping it alive.

Karen joined about 10 others in that class learning the art. At the end of the class the participants were invited to bring their finished work to class to be photographed with it. Karen decided to wear one of the kuspuks she makes. The interest in her kuspuk was so great that Curator Jacqueline Fernandez, invited Karen to offer a kuspuk sewing workshop as part of the 2014 Native Artist Residency program. The hugely successful workshop was offered in September and attended by 10 ladies who had a great weekend sewing their kuspuks. The following weekend, a presentation at the museum allowed the ladies to share their results with the community and learn a little more about the history of kuspuks. For more information; Karen can be found at "Creative Native" on the web.

Kupuk graduates showing off their work.



**Sheldon Jackson Museum
Museum Staff**

Curator

Jacqueline Fernandez

**Security and Visitor
Services**

*Lisa Bykonen
Debbie Doland*

Seasonal Staff

*Robert Hoffmann
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**Friends of Sheldon
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To contact us:

Museum: 907-747-8981
Gift Shop: 907-747-6233



2015 to do List

*Become a member of
the Friends of Sheldon
Jackson Museum*

Benefits of Membership:

Support the Museum
programs and outreach

Free admission for
members and guests

15% off in gift shop

**Collect, Preserve, Research
and Educate: Bits and Pieces**

by Peter Corey

This book review is of a government publication which deals with the importance of bird eggs, mostly seagull, to the Tlingit people of Hoonah. Entitled "*A Study of Traditional Use of Birds' Eggs by the Huna Tlingit*" by Eugene S. Hunn, Darryll R. Johnson, Priscilla N. Russell, and Thomas F. Thornton, with assistance by Kathy Falk; Technical Report NPS/CCSOU/NRTR-2002-02, NPS D-113, 2003 it is of interest to ecologists, anthropologists as well as people interested in the history of Glacier Bay.

For centuries the Huna Tlingit had hunted and gathered in Glacier Bay until it became a National Park at which time their traditional subsistence rights were no longer allowed within the boundaries of the National Park. This publication outlines the traditional use of various bird eggs, especially those of the Glaucous-winged Gull, how they were gathered, prepared and preserved.

Much of the information deals with the effects of the National Park Service regulations on the traditional subsistence practices of the Huna Tlingit. There are many excerpts taken from interviews with Huna people exemplifying their thoughts on the regulations and the harm to traditional activities.

The organization and layout of "*A Study of Traditional Use of Birds' Eggs by the Huna Tlingit*" I found to be a bit confusing. This is not a casual read so plan your time to learn from and enjoy this publication.

Jacqueline
Fernandez
Curator

When the Curator Goes on Vacation...

In early November I had the privilege of taking a nearly three week vacation.



While I'm not very fond of leaving my beloved Sheldon Jackson Museum or Sitka, not to mention

my loveable and larger than life Australian Shepherd lab mix, Bear, behind when I make my annual East Coast trip, I relish the opportunity it affords me to visit other museums. November 2014 was no exception. I visited a multitude of museums. While the afternoon at the Matisse Cutout show at the Museum of Modern Art was delightful and the trip to the National Museum of the American Indian Museum enjoyable, my most memorable

experiences were had at the Peabody Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology at Harvard University and the



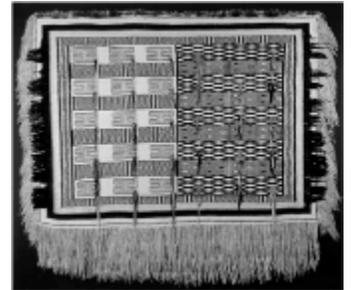
Collections Assistant Laura Costello showing me the "Swift" Robe

American Museum of Natural History. These Museums not only welcomed me, but positively spoiled me with their grace, inviting me to tour their collections storage and see their expansive collection of Northwest Coast artifacts.. The following are a few highlights of what happens when a curator goes on vacation.

The first museum we visited was the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University. Collections Assistant Laura Costello, Museum Curator and Director of Repatriation, Trish Capone and NAGPRA Coordinator Sandra Dong welcomed us. Originally, I had submitted a request to see approximately a dozen pieces including Northwest Coast baskets, stone pendants, staffs, masks, hats, food dishes, skin armor, miniature totem poles, argillite pieces, and what to me sounded most intriguing, the exquisite raven's tail robe collected by Captain Benjamin Swift of

Charleston, MA. during his time in the Northwest Coast fur trade. Ms. Costello kindly showed me the robe in addition to every Northwest Coast piece in onsite storage.

The "Swift" robe is believed to have been made between 1740 and 1760 from the area of northern British Columbia, is made of pure mountain goat wool and features a raven's tail design. The weft is mostly mountain goat wool while the warp is wool with guard hairs added to strengthen it. It has a broad border around a



The "Swift" Robe Image

central design field, fringe on three sides, and a trim of sea otter fur along the neckline. When draped over one's shoulders, the complex, sophisticated, yellow, black, and white geometric designs are perfectly divided down the center. I could just imagine watching this chief's robe being danced-how it would appear as if I were watching two different dancers donning two different robes, depending upon my vantage point.

There were many other pieces at the Peabody that were intriguing including a brightly colored Kwakwaka'wakw headdress resembling a large insect, a hat made from a portion of a Chilkat blanket and fringed with mountain sheep wool and human hair, Tlingit mountain sheep horn spoons, Tlingit spruce root baskets, shaman amulets, miniature totem poles, feast dishes, wooden effigies and much more. Another highlight, though not in collections storage, and not exclusively pertaining to Northwest Coast material was the exhibition "The Art of War". This exhibit included Tlingit and Persian daggers, Ainu and Indonesian knives, French Polynesian war clubs, Zulu shields, Chinese body armor, Ecuadorian mace heads, a Micronesian war helmet made

out of a complete puffer fish, several personal effects of Lakota leader, *Tašúŋke Witkó*, Geronimo, and so much more.

My second collections storage visit was no less exceptional than my first and took place in New York City



Moveable Kwakwaka'wakw mask at Peabody

at the America Museum of Natural History.

Curator of North American Ethnology, Dr. Peter Whitley kindly arranged for me to meet

with Associate of the Division of Anthropology,

Laila Williamson and his colleagues Adam Watson and Lois Sherr Dubin.

Dubin is a leading authority of North American Indian beadwork, and ceremonial regalia, author of *The History of Beads: From 30,000 B.C. to the Present* and *North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment from Prehistory to the Present*, former curator of the superb "Totems to Turquoise" Exhibition and curator of the exhibit *"Glittering World: Navajo Jewelry of the Yazzie Family"* as well as author of the

book by the same name. Though not

employed by AMNH, Dubin graciously agreed to join us in our collections storage and spent her entire morning and early afternoon opening drawers and examining the collection, commenting on beaded pieces and items of adornment; remembering aloud her experience



working with contemporary artists whose work we were looking at, some of which was generously purchased by Dubin, herself. Of all the pieces I viewed at AMNH, my favorite was a Tlingit shaman's headdress collected by Lieutenant

George Thornton Emmons. From the top of the headdress, one could not tell it was anything special or particularly interesting, but when gently lifted from its tray and faced forward, you could see carved eyebrows curving down to the right side of the face into a tongue which protruded from an open mouth with elaborately carved teeth. The headdress had faded blue green, bright red, and black paint, flaring nostrils, abalone inlay eyes, ermine fur, and a long hand carved ivory appendage coming off the side with what appeared to be the head of a wolf complete with individual teeth, eyeholes, and nostrils.

After a phenomenal nearly four hour long visit viewing everything from some of the Yuquot whalers' shrine pieces, to Nisgaa masks, Tlingit and Haida carvings and bentwood boxes,



Shaman's Headdress, AMNH

Tlingit beaded collars, Tlingit beaded baskets, Yup'ik beaded armbands, to contemporary Haida and Tlingit bolos, bracelets, and pendants, Ms. Dubin generously invited my traveling companions and me to lunch at nearby Isabella's, a charming bistro on the upper West Side. After that, knowing of our interest in the landscapes of New York, she took us to the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park, a memorial designed by Louis Kahn with Dubin's assistance. Dubin also has a degree in Landscape Architecture.

While I was unable to visit all of the museums and collections storage rooms I would have liked, the trip to the East Coast was among the best



and most memorable vacations I have had in years and it was largely due to the generosity and kindness of my hosts, including the staff at the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, the American Museum of Natural History, and Ms. Dubin. What delightful experience for a

curator coming thousands of miles to be so warmly welcomed. I sincerely hope that I can repay the favor someday to my new friends in New York and Boston and welcome them to the Sheldon Jackson Museum to share the holdings we have here in Sitka. It would be a privilege.

Finally, I would invite and encourage you to visit us, should you be fascinated inspired, and curious about the Alaska Native art and artifacts at the Sheldon Jackson Museum. Anyone is welcome to make an appointment with the curator; we strive to accommodate requests in a timely fashion and consider it part of our mission. Whether you are an artist seeking inspiration, another museum professional, scholar or academic, or just a curious resident or visitor in Sitka, I would be pleased to meet you.

-Jacqueline Fernandez, Curator

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page 5:
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Swift Robe: Peabody Museum website

page 6:
Moveable Mask: Barth T.F. Hamberg
AMNH staff: Barth T.F. Hamberg
Shaman's Headdress: Barth T.F. Hamberg
Ms. Dubin; Barth T.F. Hamberg

1894**Sheldon Jackson****2014****120 years ago**

by Rosemary Carlton,
author *Sheldon Jackson, Collector*

In 1894 Sheldon Jackson found a contractor for his dreamed of new museum building, continued fund-raising following the economic depression of 1893, sold artifacts to the Field Museum, refreshed his friendship with Captain Michael Healy, met the architect who would design his museum, and selected and cleared land for the construction of the building.

As was usual for Jackson, he spent the winter of 1893-94 on the east coast. During that time he met a man from Boston, John G. Smith, a building contractor and devout Baptist. He was knowledgeable about concrete construction and an avid supporter of Christian missions. So eager was Smith to do Christian work he prepared to leave Boston in February, 1894 to travel with Jackson to Sitka. Unfortunately, the Panic of 1893 still affected the U.S. economy and donors were holding on to their money.

Jackson was undaunted. Throughout 1894 he continued the work of soliciting funds from east coast supporters. Mrs. Eliot F. (Margaret) Shephard and another recent widow, Mrs. William Thaw, were high on Jackson's list of potential donors. With \$1000 of his own money, and possibly \$2000 from each widow, Jackson felt confident he could complete the museum project. Smith would work for the token sum of \$50, and Training School students would supply labor. Jackson told the potential donors the building would be completed by the end of the summer 1895. The building was completed, but it was another two years before the Museum opened its doors to the public.

Once back in Sitka, Jackson took time in the spring of 1894 to smooth some ruffled feathers within the Revenue Cutter Service. For the previous four summers Captain Michael Healy and his crew of the *USRC Bear* followed instructions to get Jackson to and from his various schools and missions. However, by late 1893, Jackson's continual requests and expectations of assistance beyond mere transportation drove Healy to complain to his superior. Healy felt that Jackson had led teachers and missionaries to believe "the (cutter) *Bear* goes and comes at his bidding." Jackson had an official letter of thanks sent to Captain Healy for his assistance in collecting and transporting artifacts to the Sitka museum. He also proposed a public reception in honor of Captain and Mrs. Healy to be held during their stopover at Sitka in May of 1894.

Apparently the reception was huge success. Paid for in part out of Jackson's own pocket, the reception took place on the 15th of May. According to a report in the *Alaskan* (newspaper) this was one of the most "notable social events" to have occurred in Sitka in some time. Noting in his diary that all the "principal Government officials, Naval Officers and Citizens were present," Jackson appeared to see the event as a political success as well.

Although Jackson didn't collect as many artifacts during his 1894 annual trip to the Arctic and western Alaska as he had the

previous year he did add a number of masks and other objects from Pt. Hope. He noted in his diary that he "bought a large number of masks at 2-3 cents apiece." Just recently a researcher was in the museum specifically, studying those masks.

On returning to Sitka in the fall Jackson chose a site on the grounds of the Training School for the new museum and had it cleared in preparation for the construction of the octagonal concrete structure. During a stopover in San Francisco, Jackson met with architect Charles Geddes, who drew up plans for an octagonal concrete structure. As no record of payment to Geddes has been found, it is possible that Geddes, like building contractor, John Smith, may have donated all or part of his services to building the museum. Smith rearranged his schedule in order to meet Jackson in San Francisco in May of 1895 then proceeded north to Sitka to erect the octagonal, concrete structure which still houses the Sheldon Jackson Museum today.

Finally, Jackson was able to sell some artifacts for \$492 to the recently opened Field Museum in Chicago where the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 had taken place. Jackson's financial notes are unclear if the money went to pay himself back for artifacts purchased, to the Bureau of Education or to the building fund for the Sitka Museum.

Many other activities such as the reindeer project along with setting up schools in the Arctic and western part of Alaska filled out Jackson's busy schedule that year of 1894.

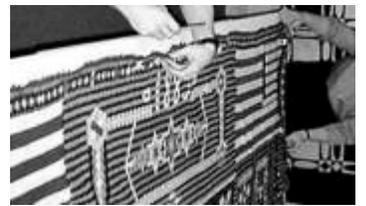
Ellen and Scott dream of a future museum exhibit titled; "*What is IT?*"

What should I do next?

While the Carrlees will not offer any monetary appraisal or perform actual treatments on the artifacts, they can advise you how to find reputable people and what you might expect from them. They can give you advice about how to display something precious in your home without damaging it, or how to keep it in good condition for generations to come. The Carrlees can offer advice on museum quality packing and shipping techniques as well further resources that may help to answer questions they are not able to answer. Their expertise is strongest in objects but they can offer information related to paintings, books, textiles, and works on paper.

If you're not able to join the Friends January 31, Scott writes a monthly museum bulletin found at <http://museums.alaska.gov/bulletin/bulletin.html>

Ellen also offers a conservation themed web blog that can be found at <https://ellencarrlee.wordpress.com/>



Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum

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[Recipient]