

Sheldon Jackson Museum

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APRIL ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH **IVORY AND SILVER CRIBBAGE BOARD**

The Sheldon Jackson Museum's Artifact of the Month for April is an ivory and silver cribbage board created by Rudolph Walton/Kaawootk' (Little Bead) Aakw'tatseen (Lively Frog in a Lake), Kik'sadi Tin.aa Hit (Copper Plate House).

The Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum purchased this piece through eBay from a dealer in Fenton, Michigan, and donated it to the Sheldon Jackson Museum.

The museum has one other silver and ivory piece by Walton: an ivory tusk carved in the form of a totem pole with an engraved cap on the tip and on the bottom of the pole. The new cribbage board is unique in that it has Walton's full American name in cursive on it. Only one other piece in the collection has his signature: "Aakw'tatseen" is engraved on a silver souvenir spoon.

The cribbage board has two other names on it that identify who the board was made for,, General O.L. Spaulding,, and who it was from, L.P. Wright. Spaulding was Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Treasury Department in 1890-1893 and 1897-1903, which helps explain his connection with Alaska. The U.S Revenue Cutter Service was under the Treasury Department at that time. Spaulding also had a son who was serving as a lieutenant with the U.S. Army in "North West Alaska" from 1898-1899.

Although the museum has information on Spaulding, Wright – the man presenting the cribbage board – poses questions: Who was he? What was he doing in Alaska? Was he in Sitka or did he commission the piece from having seen other works by Walton? If anyone has any information on L.P. Wright, please contact the museum.

It is possible that Walton made and sold the cribbage board in his Sitka shop. Walton mentions working with ivory, carving totem poles and other objects, but his most prolific work was in silver. Both ivory pieces have engraved silver caps on either end. Wright presented the board to General Spaulding but without knowing who Wright was, it can only be speculated why he presented the general with this remembrance of Alaska.

Winter hours at the museum are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. General admission is \$3. Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with passes are admitted free of charge. This artifact-of-the-month can also be seen on our website at www.museums.state.ak.us.

[return to top](#)

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