

A L A S K A S T A T E M U S E U M S

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM, JUNEAU ❖ SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM, SITKA

Sheldon Jackson Museum

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CARVED SPOON

AUGUST ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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An unusual carved wooden spoon is the Sheldon Jackson Museum's Artifact of the Month for August.

Charlotte Ballard of Seattle donated this wooden spoon to the museum in June 2003, along with a Russian brass spoon and Aleut wood peg calendar. Ballard's father collected the pieces when the family lived in Valdez from 1906 to the mid-1930s.

The origin of the wooden spoon is something of a mystery. The Sheldon Jackson staff consulted museums around the state and only one, the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, had anything similar. Their spoon was associated with the Cook Inlet area, which potentially encompasses both Athabascan/Tanaina groups and Alutiiq/Chugach.

The spoon at Sheldon Jackson has a long pointed bowl, with red ochre pigment painted on the handle and the rim—a characteristic that may have been used by either group. It does not appear worn by use. Ballard's father may have purchased it from someone making and selling traditional spoons for the art market.

The Artifact of the Month series at Sheldon Jackson Museum offers visitors an opportunity to view various pieces that aren't on permanent exhibit or are new to the collection.

The spoon may be viewed at the museum from August 1-31. Summer hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Adult admission is \$4; youth 18 and under and those with passes are admitted free.

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