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SEAL OF THE STATE  
**STATE OF ALASKA**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT**

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## Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: November 9, 2007

### ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH TLINGIT CARVED COPPER SPOON

The Sheldon Jackson Museum's Artifact of the Month for December is a unique carved Tlingit copper spoon.

The spoon is typical of the souvenir spoons coming out of Skagway, Alaska in the early 1900s. Several souvenir shops employed Native artists to mass produce souvenir items from Alaska. P.E. Kerns, Herman Kirmse and Jim Williams all owned successful curio businesses in Skagway. The hammered bowl is thought to be characteristic of Kern's shop although others used the same technique.

The design work is engraved on the front of the handle. The first figure is a bird head with the eye form upside down. The next figure is also a bird head, with rounded "teeth" in the lower beak. Attached to the back of the head is a humanoid ear.

The engraving is a modified northwest coast form line design but the artist did not adhere to some of the standard guidelines. For example, no primary and secondary structure is apparent. According to Steve Henrikson, Curator of Collections at the Alaska State Museum, "the humanoid ear ... usually reads as an illustration of transformation between humans and animals, or of the closeness of humans and animals." The upside down eye is an anomaly that occasionally appears in northwest coast designs.

Winter hours at the Sheldon Jackson Museum are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Winter admission is \$3. Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with passes are admitted free of charge.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION: Rosemary Carlton**

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**DECEMBER ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH  
TLINGIT CARVED COPPER SPOON**



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