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## Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH FOR DECEMBER: YUP'IK CHILD'S PARKA**

A parka made for a four or five year old is the Sheldon Jackson Museum's Artifact of the Month for December.

The fur parka is made from caribou hide, wolf fur, wolverine, and beaver or marten. On each shoulder there is a red cloth and hide epaulette with geometric design patterns created from squares of various shades of caribou hide. The parka is designed to slip over the child's head and the hood to come forward and protect the face.

The parka is typical of the style found in Southwest Alaska. The furs are quite brittle and had many tears. Fortunately the Alaska State Museums have a conservator on staff as well as visiting conservation interns who worked to stabilize and repair the parka. It spent nearly a year in the conservation lab in Juneau and was recently returned with a support mount which can be used for exhibiting as well as for long term storage.

During its time in the laboratory, two small holes were discovered in the back of the neck suggesting that a "boasting tail" found on a male's parka might be missing. The boasting tail would have been made of wolverine fur and might have indicated hunting abilities of an individual or in this case, possibly a family.

The design pattern around the bottom is qamuuraq – meaning to pull something as when a sled is pulled over the snow leaving tracks. Backing that fur design is a cloth lining made from a used sugar sack. The Snowflake Sugar Company existed between 1928 & 1934 in NY state. These dates help establish a time when the parka was probably made.

The parka came into the collection in 2008. The Museum was the successful bidder when it came up for auction at an auction house.

The parka can be seen at the Sheldon Jackson Museum December 1 through December 31. Winter hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with passes are admitted free of charge. The images can also be viewed on our website at [http://www.museums.state.ak.us/sheldon\\_jackson/artifact\\_of\\_month.html](http://www.museums.state.ak.us/sheldon_jackson/artifact_of_month.html).

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Phone (907) 747-8984 Fax (907) 465-3004  
www.museums.state.ak.us

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