

PRESS RELEASE

Sheldon Jackson Museum

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ALEUT WALL POCKET FEATURED IN FEBRUARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Creating household storage space is an age-old problem. Aleut artists in the early 20th century made wall pockets – small bags, pouches, or pockets that were used to store personal items. An example of one of these space-saving containers is the Artifact of the Month for February at the Sheldon Jackson Museum.

This fragile wall pocket is made of embroidered seal gut. The long, narrow pocket has two compartments that might have been used to hold small items. Each compartment has a band of black wool edged in red. Beads and embroidery decorate the pocket with flora and geometric designs. To reinforce the seal gut, each compartment was lined in a thin white fabric and finished with a narrow band of another fabric.

Museum staff members don't know whether this particular piece was used traditionally. Since it remains in very good condition, it was probably made for the art market. After Western contact with Alaska's Native people, many Native-made items began to appear as market art and ended up in personal as well as museum collections. This bag first showed up in a Sheldon Jackson Museum inventory performed by Dr. James Condit, a former curator, between 1931 and 1933.

