

Linda S. Thibodeau
Director
Division of Libraries, Archives,
& Museums
lam.alaska.gov



Robert C. Banghart
Chief Curator
Alaska State Museums
395 Whittier St.
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1718
907.465.2901

Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: January 27, 2010

**SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM
ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH FOR FEBRUARY:
CHARLES EDENSHAW SILVER POTLATCH SPOON**

In December 2008, an auction house auctioned the portions of the estate of Linda Trusdell, owner and operator of Crown and Eagle Antiques of New Hope, Pennsylvania. Among the hundreds of items in the sale was a lot of Northwest Coast silver and copper souvenir spoons and one brooch. The Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum donated the funds for the museum's successful bid on the lot. The lot contained 21 pieces of silver or copper, 20 spoons and the one brooch. One spoon was commercially stamped and the brooch was made by a contemporary artist rendering it outside the museum's scope of collections.

Among those spoons was one made by well-known nineteenth-century Haida master carver, Charles Edenshaw. The spoon with a bird's head at the end of the handle was a style he was known to produce. The finely executed hatch marks and wide form lines, shapes of the eyes and other ovoids are also characteristic of his work. Museum Curator Rosemary Carlton, was in great hopes this might be an Edenshaw piece when the lot arrived, but wanted to confirm with other curators. Former Sheldon Jackson Museum Curator Peter Corey and Alaska State Museum Curator Steve Henrikson both thought it might be an Edenshaw but suggested she contact Steve Brown and Bill Holm who have both studied Edenshaw's work in depth. After seeing the photos of the spoon both Brown and Holms unequivocally attributed it to Charles Edenshaw. This is the first piece of silver engraving by Edenshaw in the collection. A large argillite compote by Edenshaw is one of the early pieces collected by Sheldon Jackson and presented to the museum in 1888.

By the end of the nineteenth century, engraving on silver, copper or gold spoons, pickle forks, bon bon spoons, tongs, bracelets, earrings, brooches, barrettes and numerous other objects had become part of a lucrative occupation for a number of Northwest carvers. The objects, some finely crafted, others not so finely carved, made their way into the hands of hundreds if not thousands of early tourists to Alaska's Inside Passage. Today those treasured souvenirs show up regularly on Internet sites such as eBay or on occasion at the large auctions houses found literally around the world.

The spoon can be seen at the museum during February and can be viewed on our web site at www.museums.state.ak.us. Winter hours 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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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

[return to top](#)

[SJ Artifacts-of-the-Month](#) | [press releases](#) | [SJ home](#) | [Alaska State Museums](#)