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## Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: **January 23, 2012**

### February Artifact of the Month: Ceremonial Headpiece

The February artifact of the month is a wooden ceremonial headpiece representing a dogfish (shark). Nailed to the front of the hat a carved plaque depicts the dogfish's facial features including an elongated forehead, drooping eyes, gill slits along the cheeks, and teeth. The spine is represented along the top of the hat extending into a tail. The hat is embellished with abalone inlay, relief carving and red, black and greenish-blue paint. Cloth straps attached to the brim of the hat were used to secure the hat to a wearer's head.

In 1973, the Sheldon Jackson Museum purchased the hat from Ruth Saunders, wife of the Rev. C.C. Saunders, a Presbyterian minister who served in Juneau from 1929-1932. According to a letter from Mrs. Saunders in the Sheldon Jackson Museum archives, it was found in the manse at Juneau when her family moved there in 1929. In her letter Mrs. Saunders describes the hat as "a Chilkat ceremonial hat worn at potlatches. It was filled with down and as they danced the down fell out like snow."



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The headpiece will be on display at the Sheldon Jackson Museum from February 1st through the 29th.

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

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Phone (907) 747-8981 Fax (907) 465-3004

[www.museums.state.ak.us](http://www.museums.state.ak.us)