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Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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February Artifact of the Month: Small Sled from Cape Prince of Wales

SITKA – This month, visitors to Sheldon Jackson Museum can view a small sled made of wood and ivory that was collected at Cape Prince of Wales. Finely shaped ivory runners are lashed to wooden cross bars with skin cord.

Small sleds were used in coastal communities to transport meat, skins, baleen, blubber, bone, and ivory from the edge of the ice to villages where they were processed and stored in raised caches.

Ivory runners from tusks are very slippery but wear down quickly as sled runners. Small sleds could be pushed or pulled by hand or with the help of dogs. A small sled might also be used to transport a kayak across the ice, and when open water was reached, the sled would be carried on the kayak.



A photograph from 1892 shows Rev. Dr. Sheldon Jackson at Cape Prince of Wales during the introduction of Reindeer to Alaska. Jackson's travels to the Arctic and Western Alaska were made possible when Revenue Cutter Service captains were ordered to help the Presbyterian missionary and federal Agent for Education set up schools in remote regions of Alaska. Capt. Michael Healy was one of these captains who Jackson sailed with on the revenue cutter Bear off and on for over 12 years. Each year during February, Black History Month, the Sheldon Jackson Museum recognizes the achievements of Healy, the first African-American captain in the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service. Healy, born to a slave woman and a plantation owner in 1839, has long been recognized for his contributions to transportation and public safety in the 19th-century Alaska. He served in the Revenue Cutter service, the forerunner to the U.S. Coast Guard, for nearly 38 years. Healy and his crews often assisted Jackson in building schools, collecting artifacts and delivering them to Sitka and other ports.

Winter hours at the Sheldon Jackson Museum are 10a.m. to 4p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. General admission is \$3. Visitors 18 and younger and pass holders are admitted free of charge.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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www.museums.state.ak.us