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Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: **May 24, 2010**

June Artifact of the Month: [Tlingit Copper Souvenir Spoon](#)

In December 2008, an auction house auctioned 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 containing 21 pieces 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. One spoon was commercially stamped and the brooch was made by a contemporary artist rendering it outside the museum's scope of collections. The Friends kept those pieces to be used in their annual silent auction fund-raiser held in late fall. Two copper spoons were among the pieces in the lot. This spoon is all copper; the other is half copper and half silver.

This spoon has three figures. The first figure starting at the lower end of the handle is a bird, possibly an eagle. At the top of the bird is a humanoid figure wearing a three-ringed spruce root hat. Each of the figures has a small repoussé circle; the bird figure and the humanoid figure have the repoussé in the eye. There is also a repoussé circle in the hat. The carving is well-executed but the oval peened bowl has an irregular edge.

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.

In Skagway local artists worked in shops where spoons and other objects were mass produced and sold both retail and whole sale. Silver and copper spoons produced in these shops had some distinctive characteristics: peening in the bowls, often round bowls and bowls attached to a handles that might be either manufactured or hand carved. Shops engaged Native craftsman to produce the Native designs highly sought after by the tourist disembarking the steamers.

The spoon can be seen in the museum gallery from June 1 through June 30. Summer hours are daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with \$4 admission. 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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Tlingit Copper Silver Spoon



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