

ALASKA STATE MUSEUMS

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM, JUNEAU ❖ SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM, SITKA

Sheldon Jackson Museum

104 College Drive, Sitka, AK 99835

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

Home page: <http://www.museums.state.ak.us>

BEADED SPRUCE ROOT BASKET IS MARCH ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

FOR MORE INFORMATION

ROSEMARY CARLTON, 747-8981

A rare bead-covered spruce root basket is the Sheldon Jackson Museum's Artifact of the Month for March. Each March, an artifact made or used by women is featured in celebration of National Women's History Month.

The basket is a recent donation from former museum curator Peter L. Corey. Corey purchased the basket from an on-line auction house where it was being advertised as a Woodlands Indian basket possibly from the upper New York state region. Fortunately, Corey recognized it as a rare Tlingit basket and was the successful bidder. Although there were some breaks in the beadwork, Corey had local Tlingit beader Cass Pook, who works with antique beads, make repairs using contemporary threads. A thread that can be distinguished from the original is used so that future researchers can tell what is original and what has been repaired.

The small, 3.5" high lidded basket is twined in the "weave-in-between" style (a row of twining alternating with a row of plating.) The beadwork is netted and may have attached to the basket by a strip of felt sewn to the basket to hold the beadwork in place.

The museum has only one other of these unique beaded baskets. Although there is no solid information on how either may have been used, these sorts of baskets most likely were made for sale. A woman's skills in both spruce basket weaving and beading are evident in this brightly colored beaded basket. A beaded loop handle is part of the netting.

The Artifact of the Month series at the Sheldon Jackson Museum offers visitors an opportunity to view various pieces that aren't on exhibition or are new to the collection.

The basket may be viewed in the museum gallery during February. Winter hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Admission is \$3. Visitors 18 and younger and those with passes are admitted free of charge.

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