

Sheldon Jackson Museum

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MARCH ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH **[TLINGIT MODEL DANCE PADDLES](#)**

Sheldon Jackson Museum's Artifact of the Month for March is a pair of Tlingit dance paddles. According to the late Les Yaw, superintendent of Sheldon Jackson School in 1930 and President of the college 1944-1952, the paddles, along with a number of other Alaska Native items, were placed on loan to the Museum sometime between 1920 and 1940 by Bessie (Mrs. Theodore) Kettleleson. When the State of Alaska purchased the Sheldon Jackson Museum from Sheldon Jackson College, Mrs. Kettleleson's estate deeded all of the items to the Museum.

The paddles, described as models, are similar to actual Tlingit dance paddles, but there is no documentation to confirm that these were ever used in that manner. The time period they were collected suggests they were made to be sold as market art. Each of the paddles has a remnant of an adhesive sticker which supports the idea that they were purchased as souvenir items. Model paddles were and are still sought-after souvenir items that reflect Native culture but are small and easy to take home.

A form line design is painted in black, red and light blue/green on one side of each paddle; the reverse sides are carved also following form line design, but no paint is used. The paddles are a little over 17" long and 2 3/4" at their widest point.

Winter hours at the museum 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. This artifact-of-the-month can also be seen on our website at www.museums.state.ak.us.

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