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Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: **February 27, 2012**

March Artifact of the Month: Engraved Octagonal Pipe

The March artifact of the month is an octagonal ivory pipe with a removable bowl and mouthpiece. Engraved illustrations along the pipe stem depict various hunting and fishing scenes with Bering Sea kayaks, sleds, sea mammals, fish and wolves represented along with serpent-like mythological creatures and thunderbirds. Another pipe with similar designs, presumably by the same artist, is on permanent display in the museum gallery. Both pipes are missing information about who collected them, when, and where.



Tobacco was introduced to Alaska from indigenous Siberian traders sometime during the eighteenth century. The earliest pipes used by Alaska Natives were also obtained through trade with Siberian neighbors. Engraved pipes carved from walrus tusks like this one became a popular souvenir trade item during the late nineteenth century in Alaska. The engraved designs found on ivory pipes are similar to those that decorate drill bows.

To learn more about ivory engraving traditions, please visit the museum on March 10th at 1 p.m. to hear a lecture on the subject by Amy Chan, a doctoral fellow at the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center, as part of our winter lecture series. The Sheldon Jackson Museum is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Winter hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a 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:

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www.museums.state.ak.us

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