

PRESS RELEASE

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>**EARLY SCIENCE BULLETIN ABOUT MUIR GLACIER ON DISPLAY IN MAY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FOR MORE INFORMATION: #9; CAROLYN YOUNG, 747-8981

The Sheldon Jackson Museum will display an 1887 publication about early scientific observations of Muir Glacier as the Artifact of the Month for May. The pamphlet, *The Muir Glacier in Alaska*, is *Bulletin #2* of the Society of Alaskan Natural History and Ethnology, an organization formed in 1887 by Rev. Dr. Sheldon Jackson and a group of educators, scientists, and interested Sitka residents. The purpose of the organization was ". . . to collect and preserve in connection with the Sitka Industrial and Training School, specimens illustrative of the natural history and ethnology of Alaska and publications relating thereto."

Each year, in observance of Jackson's birthday on May 18, the Museum exhibits an artifact he collected or another memento that highlights his contributions to Alaska history. Jackson was a missionary and the U.S. government's General Agent of Education in Alaska, but he was also a passionate collector with an interest in science. After visiting Alaska for the first time in 1877, Jackson began collecting artifacts including Alaska Native materials, natural history specimens, and artifacts from Russian and Finnish colonists. Many of those artifacts are still housed in the Museum that he founded in 1888.

Though fascinated by items that could be arranged in a display case, Jackson had interests that ranged beyond the doors of his Museum into the very landscape of Alaska. He asked Professor G. Frederick Wright of Oberlin College to write *Bulletin #2*.

Wright and two others visited Muir Glacier in 1886 "to make some investigation of glacial phenomena in Alaska." Wright first published his observations in the *American Journal of Science* in January 1887. Jackson, an avid reader, may have seen the original article and approached Wright on behalf of the Society of Alaskan Natural History and Ethnology. The bulletin includes 22 pages of description and observations about the glacier and Glacier Bay, but it's not all science. The back cover features advertisements aimed at the 19th-century tourist trade praising the merchandise sold by Koehler & James of Juneau and Edward de Groff of Sitka.

