

ALASKA STATE MUSEUMS

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM, JUNEAU ❖ SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM, SITKA

Sheldon Jackson Museum

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CALIFORNIA WINNOWING BASKET ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH FOR NOVEMBER

FOR MORE INFORMATION

ROSEMARY CARLTON, 747-8981

A basket created for food preparation and used by California Native Americans is the Sheldon Jackson Museum's Artifact of the Month for November.

The basket made from twigs and roots is shallow and triangular with a wide open end that tapers to a narrow rounded end. It is twined in an open weave. Research on this type of basket form revealed that a number of indigenous tribes from California and other areas of the west used them for several purposes. The book, "Indian Basketry of Western North America" has a photo of a similar basket that was used by Yokuts of Southern California for food gathering and processing – mainly for separating chaff from grain by tossing the grain in a light breeze. In general, winnowing baskets were used to separate leaves, skins, and hulls from various food items. They have an appearance similar to seed beaters which are used to knock seeds from plants.

Although the Sheldon Jackson Museum now collects artifacts only from Alaska Native cultures, a few Native American objects from other areas were acquired until the 1970s. Each November the museum exhibits one of these pieces to recognize the diverse Native cultures of North American during National Native American Heritage Awareness Month.

The basket may be viewed in the Museum gallery during the month of November. 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. Annual passes and membership in the Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, allowing entry at no charge, are available for purchase.

WINNOWING BASKET



[return to top](#)