

**Patience Frederiksen**

*Director*

Division of Libraries, Archives,  
& Museums

lam.alaska.gov

SEAL OF THE STATE  
**STATE OF ALASKA**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT**

**Addison Field**

*Chief Curator*

104 College Drive  
Sitka, Alaska 99835  
907-747-8981

**Press Release**

**ALASKA STATE MUSEUMS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: April 5, 2017**

**SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM APRIL ARTIFACT  
OF THE MONTH**



The Sheldon Jackson Museum's April Artifact of the Month are two Tsimshian baskets (2016-2-74, 2016-13-1). Both baskets are attributed to the same artist, made in a similar style, and are of the same materials. The smaller of the two baskets was collected by Peter Corey and left to the museum in a bequest. The larger of the two was donated by Bill DeArmond. His paternal grandparents collected the basket in Sitka "well before World War II," but he was uncertain of the source. Both baskets, acquired by the museum in 2016, are made of cedar bark, cylindrical in

shape, lidded, decorated with false embroidery in natural grass, and are attributed to Lucy Rainman, a Tsimshian Weaver.

The smaller of the two baskets' lid has a slightly raised flat finial shape on top and has a group of six single lines of false embroidery in grass. The walls of the basket have a single design band in natural grass false embroidery the blanket border pattern. This pattern was copied from blankets introduced to the Northwest Coast by the Hudson's Bay Company. Corey, the former curator of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, attributed this basket to Lucy Rainman. A note that came with the basket from Corey had the artist's name and the year 1984 inside, but it is unclear if the note indicated the year he acquired the basket or the year it was made or both. This basket is very similar to another small basket donated by Corey.

The larger basket top has a slightly raised center with two double rows of undyed grass around its center. The outer rim of the lid has a row of parallelograms alternating in a step-like formation. The base of the basket has three design bands including a top band of repeating rectangular shapes at a slight diagonal forming a step-like pattern. The central design band is made of natural grass and at first glance, looks like the Blanket Border pattern on the smaller of the two Artifacts of the Month, but it is in reverse with the top step pattern facing to the left instead of the right. The bottom design band is similar to the top but slightly smaller in size. This basket was looked at by Tlingit weaver Teri Rofkar not long after it was donated and she attributed it to Lucy Rainman based upon its design patterns. "If it is not by Lucy, it must be by one of her students," said Rofkar.

Lucy Rainman was born in October 1905 in Metlakatla. She worked as a housemother for seven years at Mount Edgecumbe High School in Sitka. She was fond of basket weaving, knitting, crocheting, singing, and sewing and was an active member of the Metlakatla Presbyterian Church. She taught many well known weavers during her lifetime including Haida weaver Diane Douglas-Willard. Rainman passed away in Anchorage in 1992.

The April Artifact of the Month will be exhibited until April 30th. The museum is home to forty Tsimshian baskets. They include twined, plaited, and openwork basketry and baskets embellished with dyed and natural grass false embroidery. The April Artifacts of the Month and other examples of basketry may be seen Tuesday through Saturday between 10am and 4pm. The museum is closed for lunch from noon to

1pm. General admission is \$3 and free for those 18 and under or members of either the Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum or Friends of the Alaska State Museum.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Jacqueline Hamberg

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

[www.museums.alaska.gov](http://www.museums.alaska.gov)