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Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

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SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH FOR JANUARY: NUNIVAK ISLAND KAYAK MODEL

The January Artifact of the Month at the Sheldon Jackson Museum is a model kayak from Nunivak Island.

Sheldon Jackson spent many summers from 1890 – 1902 on trips to the Arctic regions of Alaska as General Agent of Education for the United States Government. He established schools and began importing reindeer from Siberia. On these trips, he also pursued his love of collecting. Most of the objects collected by Jackson bear his name and sometimes the date and place where he collected them, as that was the standard nineteenth century practice. Jackson also accepted objects from other northern travelers to be placed in the Sheldon Jackson Museum. This well-built model may have been one of those objects; no records were left to verify how it became part of the collection.

The model is carefully crafted in the Nunivak Island kayak style, complete with tools for the hunt: feathered harpoon with a bone fore shaft and tiny harpoon point attached with sinew and a float board for the line, a throwing board, 3 pronged bird spear and double bladed paddle. This model was made for sale but often, others were made for children to play with.

Twenty years ago, this model, along with nearly 70 other objects, traveled back to their place of origin, the greater Yukon- Kuskokwim area. The Coastal Yukon Mayor's Association sponsored the exhibition in Mountain Village and funded the travel of Native elders to Sitka to select masks and objects of daily life.

The model can be seen at the Sheldon Jackson Museum January 1 through January 31. Winter hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with passes are admitted free of charge. The images can also be viewed on our website at http://www.museums.state.ak.us/sheldon_jackson/artifact_of_month.html.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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NUNIVAK ISLAND KAYAK MODEL



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