

# A L A S K A S T A T E M U S E U M S

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM, JUNEAU ❖ SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM, SITKA

## Sheldon Jackson Museum

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### **JULY ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH**

#### **TLINGIT CARVED SILVER SOUVENIR SPOONS**

Three Tlingit carved silver souvenir spoons donated to the Sheldon Jackson Museum by the Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum are the featured artifacts for July. All three spoons were offered for sale through eBay, the online auction house.

The two larger spoons with repoussé (can you define this word?) bear heads and carved fish figures are attributed to turn-of-the-century local carver Rudolph Walton. On the back of the spoons' bowls is written "Sitka 1892" in the style known to be used by Walton. The earliest works attributed to him are dated 1892. Walton lived in Sitka from 1867 to 1951. He was widely known for his silver and wood carving and made many spoons, bracelets and other items for the tourist trade. He was the proprietor of Rudolph Walton and Son Store on Katlian Street until 1920.

The third small spoon has what appears to be a raven carved on the handle. The short handle suggests it may have been a baby spoon or other specialty spoon. Silver souvenir spoons in a wide variety of forms were sought-after items for travelers throughout the Americas. The designs on the spoons often reflected events or places from which they originated. Northwest Coast formline designs became a style much in demand by late nineteenth and early twentieth century steamship visitors to Alaska. Carvers such as Walton made hundreds of spoons and other silver pieces to sell to the eager shoppers. These spoons are now showing up regularly on auction sites such as eBay. The two Walton spoons came from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the small spoon came from Nicholson, Pennsylvania.

The spoons can be seen at the Museum from July 1- July 31. Summer hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. General admission is \$4. Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with passes are admitted free of charge.

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