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## Press Release

SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: June 26, 2008

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### **JULY ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH** **[ATHABASCAN WILLOW ROOT BASKET](#)**

The July Artifact of the Month is a small contemporary Athabascan willow root basket possibly made by Athabascan basket maker, Lina Demonski in the 1950s when she lived in Anvik.

Demoski, an Athabascan willow root tray and basket maker, demonstrated her art at the museum in May of 2004 as part of the Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum's Native Artist Demonstrators Program. While looking at the artifacts on exhibit, she identified a willow root basket as one she had made many years ago when she lived in Anvik. It was soon discovered that this small similar basket that came to the museum from the same source may also have been made by Demonski.

The baskets and a willow root tray were collected by Lois Morey in the 1950s when she supervised the schools in the Anvik area. She donated the two baskets and tray to the museum in 1979. The baskets and tray were purchased in Anvik and may have come from there, Shageluk, or Holikachuk. Demonski is from Anvik and was living there at that time.

A specific technique Demonski uses for attaching the bottom coil of the rim to the lid was the clue that told her it was her work. The unique method of attaching the bottom coil of the lid to the body of the lid was done only by her and possibly one other basket maker she had shared the technique with. She makes four stitches, skips an area, stitches four more, and so on around the lid, fastening the lower coil to the main part of the lid.

Both the larger basket on exhibit and the small basket in collection storage clearly exhibit this technique. The baskets and trays came into the museum's collections during the time contemporary objects were still being acquired. The museum no longer collects material made after the early 1930s.

The basket can be seen in the museum gallery July 1 through July 31. Summer hours at the Sheldon Jackson Museum are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Summer admission is \$4. Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with passes are admitted free of charge. The basket can also be viewed online at [http://www.museums.state.ak.us/sheldon\\_jackson/artifact\\_of\\_month.html](http://www.museums.state.ak.us/sheldon_jackson/artifact_of_month.html).

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