

ALASKA STATE MUSEUMS

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM, JUNEAU ❖ SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM, SITKA

Sheldon Jackson Museum

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MARCH ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH **KAT-LE-AN'S NIGHTSTICK AND HANDCUFFS**

The Sheldon Jackson Museum's artifact of the month for March features a recent donation: the nightstick and handcuffs used by Tlingit policeman, Kat-le-an (K'alyaan) in the 1890s. Kat-le-an was a leader of the Sitka Kiks'.adi. The late Esther Littlefield bequeathed the pieces her uncle, Kat-le-an, had left in her family's possession and Mrs. Littlefield's son, Louie Simpson, donated them to the museum in August of 2005.

Kat-le-an was first appointed as an "Indian Policeman" in 1880. The previous year, the white community in Sitka had asked for urgent help from military officials, resulting in the arrival of the H.M.S. Osprey from Canada and the U.S. Navy's U.S.S. Jamestown. The military soon determined that any danger was exaggerated and Captain Beardslee, Commander of the U.S.S. Jamestown, worked to mend relations between the Native and white communities. One of the first steps was to appoint leaders from the two leading clans in Sitka. Kat-le-an was appointed as policeman representing the Kiks'.adi clan, and Annahootz became the Kaagwaantaan policeman. Equipment, uniforms and commission papers were issued to the newly appointed Native police. Records show that Kat-le-an was reappointed in 1880, 1890, 1906, 1907, and 1908.

The handcuffs are the Darby style of cuffs made by the Providence Tool Company of Rhode Island. This company was known for the manufacture of military equipment around the time of the Civil War.

The handcuffs and nightstick will be on exhibit March 1-31 and can also be viewed from our website at www.museums.state.ak.us.

Winter hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. General admission is \$3. Visitors 18 and younger, Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, and those with passes are admitted free of charge.

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