

A Tale of Two Totem Poles

Undoubtedly the largest pieces of art in the City Museum collection, the Auk Tribe and Wooshkeetaan Totem Poles were commissioned by the Juneau Centennial Committee as part of the 1980 Juneau Centennial Celebration. Carved by Nathan Jackson and Steve Brown with assistance from Dorcus Jackson in 1980 and 1981 from donated red cedar logs harvested near Wrangell, the two poles were designed to honor the two moieties, Tléix' Shangukeidí (Eagle/Wolf) and Tléix' Laayaneidí (Raven/Crow), of the Áak'w K̄wáan, the original inhabitants of this area. Each figure on the totem poles reveals some part of clan history, represents clan crests, honors the opposite moiety, or represents another culture.

The commission, carving, and raising of two totem poles was an enormous undertaking not without challenges and a concerted effort to do it properly. Before carving began, George Jim, Sr., a Wooshkeetaan elder, was consulted and determined which figures would be included on the Wooshkeetaan pole and provided the following interpretation: The Wooshkeetaan Pole carries the figures and crests for the Eagle moiety and include from the top: Uncle Sam representing the white man and his culture presented to the Native people resulting in citizenship, the shark crest, the murrelet crest, the bear crest, the wolf figure as a reminder of a legend about a wolf claiming the Wooshkeetaan people as part of his family, the Gunakadeit or sea bear crest, the Good Luck Woman honoring the Raven moiety as the opposite clan they marry into, the Spirit Man representing the five powerful Spirit Men who belonged to the village at Daxanáak (Berner's Bay), and the Daxanáak Mountain symbol representing the ancestral home of the Wooshkeetaan people.

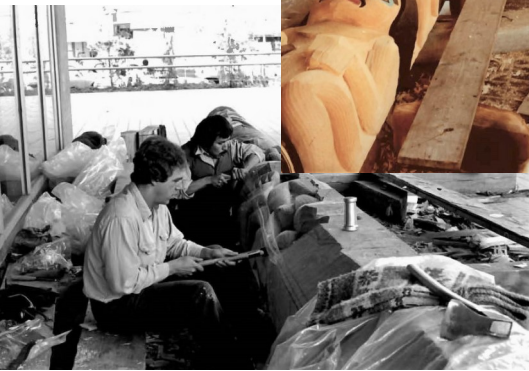
Bessie Vasaya, an Áak'w K̄wáan elder, was consulted for the Auk Tribe Pole and recounted the Good Luck Woman story. The Auk Tribe Pole carries the figures and crests for the Raven moiety and include from the top: Raven representing the moiety, three notches or rings to denote the number of potlatches given, the frog or monster figure with seven stars representing the Yaxté Hít, the Big Dipper House, the dog salmon crest, the summer weasel crest, and the Good Luck Woman who has a baby on her back and is standing on mussel shells.

The correspondence from committee members soliciting guidance from the Alaska Native community demonstrates how far the project moved from their original idea to the final carvings. Initially, the committee wanted one pole to tell the story of Juneau but through dialogue with Alaska Native leaders, they were moved to plan for two totem poles to honor both the Eagle and Raven moieties of the Áak'w K̄wáan.

In June of 1983, the two totem poles were installed in front of the newly completed Centennial Hall. Around two decades later, it was determined that both totem poles needed to be moved to indoor locations to protect them from weather. The Auk Tribe pole was installed inside the atrium at the Juneau-Douglas High School in 2003 and the Wooshkeetaan Totem Pole remains in storage awaiting a new home. The original fixed asset record for the City and Borough of Juneau notes a 100 year life expectancy for these totem poles.



Above: Master Carver, Nathan Jackson.
Right: Wooshkeetaan Pole in progress.
Below: Jackson with Steve Brown.



Master Carver, Nathan Jackson painting the Wooshkeetaan totem pole at the Sealaska Plaza.

Director's Letter

Greetings Friends,



In 1980, the Juneau Centennial Art Committee purchased or commissioned 67 original pieces of art to represent the many facets of the Juneau community over its first 100 years. Included in this collection are 17 paintings, seven drawings, three weavings, two carvings, 31 prints from photos, woodblocks,

silkscreens or ink, a mural, a windowpane, a sculpture and two 40' totem poles. Additionally, a commemorative plaque and banner were included. Overall, the collection tells a story about the diverse people who live here, highlighting Indigenous people, women, children, immigrants, and early explorers and pioneers. It speaks also to the uniqueness of this place captured through the stunning natural beauty and landscape, sacred spaces, the wildlife, the striking effect of the weather, the early industrial efforts of mining and agriculture, the evolving architectural landscape, the challenge and excitement of maritime and aviation travel. This collection of art, known as the Centennial Collection, was one of the first acquisitions of the Juneau-Douglas City Museum which at that time operated as the Last Chance Mining Museum and focused primarily on the city's mining history. The museum expanded its mission and changed its name to the Juneau-Douglas City Museum in 1982.

I've been reflecting on the Centennial Collection for a couple of reasons. First is how do we, as a community, reflect back over a time period of 100 years and then carry forward or pass on our memories? As we battle the COVID-19 pandemic, people have contacted the museum with questions about the 1918 Spanish Flu Epidemic. Our curator, Niko, has dug in to find out what she can and when I asked her what stood out as something important to carry forward from that event, she notes that the health recommendations in 1918 to combat the Spanish Flu are almost identical to the health recommendations now -- wash your hands, stay physically distant from others, keep social circles small, and wear a face covering. So here we can see the relevance of being able to reach back into the memories left to us 100 years ago but was this memory really meant to guide us 100 year later? Surely, the 1918 Territorial Governor, Thomas Riggs Jr. wasn't thinking that in a hundred years these health mandates would inform our decisions today?

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Mission and Vision

The Juneau-Douglas City Museum fosters among its diverse audiences an awareness of Juneau's cultural heritage, values and community memory so we may draw strength and perspective from the past, inspire learning, and find purpose for the future.

As a public trust, we collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit those materials that document the cultures and history of the Juneau and Douglas area.



— Juneau Douglas —
CITY MUSEUM

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Special Exhibit June 5, 2020 through October 18, 2021

Echoes of War: Unanga̋ Internment During WWII



Murray Gallery exhibit detail.

Our special exhibit brings attention to the history of the Unanga̋ internment camps in Southeast, Alaska. It is the story of the people of St. Paul and St. George (the Pribilof Islands) who were interned in Southeast Alaska at Funter Bay on Admiralty Island from June 1942 to May 1944, and their subsequent return home to the Pribilof Islands. Telling this story in the words of those who experienced it, we aim to highlight this event and shed light on a topic that is often excluded from history books and school curriculums around the country.

Mounting this exhibit posed a unique challenge for the City Museum because very little material culture exists from the camps. The Unangan were only able to bring one bag, never earned enough to accumulate any possessions while in the camps, and returned home to looted and destroyed homes. Having few artifacts to tell this story meant we could not create a traditional museum exhibit. Working with an amazing team from across the state, we designed our most ambitious exhibition yet—the creation of an immersive environment that “transports” the viewer from the Pribilof Islands to Southeast Alaska and back.

Director’s Letter Continued...

The community was likely worn down from war, sickness and a major maritime tragedy resulting in the need to heal; so who had the energy to think about the future? Healing takes time and presence and sometimes even forgetting. The people of the Pribilof Islands interned at Funter Bay during World War II, whose stories are featured in our current exhibit, *Echoes of War: Unanga̋ Internment During WWII*, are still healing from unjust treatment inflicted more than 75 years ago. But looking far ahead is our generative duty so we should take an active role in how we preserve and project our memories of this time into the future.

When I took on the Director position at the City Museum, the City Manager called me to his office and asked me what kind of museum we should have in 100 years. This of course, is not solely up to me, but rather is a central focus to the mission of the museum, for which we, the staff, are the current caretakers and stewards. And this brings me the long way around to the second reason I’ve been reflecting on the Centennial Collection. Clearly, the committee that selected the art to commemorate Juneau’s Centennial put some thought into how to project community memory through the next 100 years. They also anticipated the need for this collection to be cared for and shared by placing it at the City Museum. So now 40 years later, the collection is well cared for, still easily accessible to the public and central to the interpretive work we do through exhibits, education, and research.

But sometimes we need help to carry out our mission. Currently, one piece from the Centennial Collection, the Wooshkeetaan Totem Pole, highlighted in this edition of the newsletter, lies in storage. Wooshkeetaan Kootéeya, carved by Tlingit Artist, Nathan Jackson Yéil Yádi, needs a place to stand where it is protected from the weather. While people everywhere, including Alaska and Juneau, are giving serious consideration to what statues and memorials should hold space upon a place, our mission seems absolutely clear, Wooshkeetaan Kootéeya must be raised to restore balance and to honor the first people of this place, the Áak’w K̄wáan and all Tlingit people, upon whose ancestral home, Lingít Aaní, we now dwell.

Funter Bay History



Japanese forces invaded the Aleutian Islands in early June of 1942. However, in the several years since World War II began, U.S. government bodies were already considering the possibility that such an attack might be eminent. Those who were able, left to live with relatives in other parts of the country. Discussion about evacuating residents of the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands, both native and non-native, began long before the Japanese attack, however they resulted in confusion with no action taken due to the fact that the responsibilities for civil authority were unclear.

After Japanese forces took Kiska and Attu, the United States government moved quickly. Those on St. Paul and St. George were given less than a day to pack and could only take what they could carry (one suitcase or bag) meaning that many tools that would have helped them survive, such as boats and fishing gear, were left behind with the expectation that some would be awaiting them upon arrival. Their destination was unknown.

Residents from St. Paul were relocated to a defunct cannery at Funter Bay on Admiralty Island, and residents from St. George were relocated to an out of use mining site across the bay. The accommodations at both sites were not sufficient to house all of the internees, and the tents provided were not adequate for winter conditions. Buildings erected during the internment period were quick builds with limited facilities. All buildings had little to no insulation or amenities.



A survey was conducted of the local area for a possible water supply but none was found that would meet the approval of a Sanitary Engineer. Conditions were terrible and many became sick (measles and influenza epidemics) due to the poor living conditions. Internees were denied adequate shelter, medical support, or clothing. Although officials of various organizations were aware of conditions at Funter Bay, there was no immediate action taken to relieve the suffering of those interned.

In May of 1943, a seal harvesting crew of Pribilofian men was recruited from the Funter Bay camps. The women, children, and elderly were left behind to mostly fend for themselves. Members of the sealing party were paid less than a third of what they would make in nearby Juneau, and were told that if they did not participate in the seal harvest, it was possible that they would not be allowed to return to their homes after the war.

When the internees finally returned home, most found their homes destroyed by military order or vandalized by military personnel while they were away. They returned home as refugees and spent the next few years rebuilding with little to no support or restitution from the United States government.

The *Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* in 1980 led to a series of public hearings where victims of the internment camps were finally able to testify and be heard. The Commission resulted in the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 which had the U.S. government formally acknowledge and apologize for the internment of the Unangan people and included reparations of about \$1200 to each surviving internee.

Collections

A Message from the Curator



I think that all of us are experiencing a lot of uncertainty these days. With everything that is going on with COVID-19, we are all settling into a new pattern of waiting for the next step to be taken, for the other shoe to drop. We are definitely feeling the same thing here at the City Museum. With so much up in the air, we are doing our best to keep moving forward with exhibit planning but also are making a huge effort to do as much as possible to engage with our community and bring our collections to the wider public.

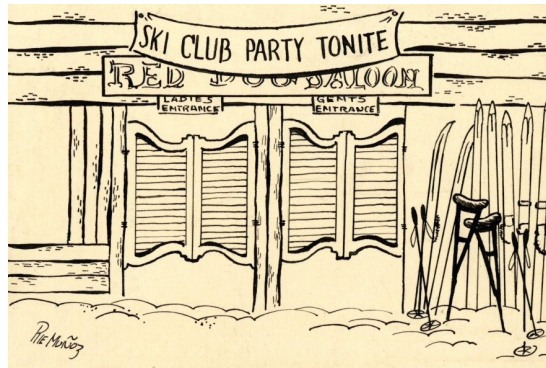
I am happy to have been able to bring our latest exhibit to life in three of our galleries. I am also working with Curator of Public Programs, Elissa Borges, to research and produce a video series that delves into the objects in our collection, Juneau historical figures, and historic buildings in town. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page and YouTube channel for new videos. I am also asking for requests, so if you have a topic you are interested in, please let me know!

Just like everyone else, we are rolling with the punches and are grateful for our wonderful supporters. We will continue to do our best to create new material (collections based and educational) that will be accessible through our website, Facebook, and YouTube. We look forward to seeing everyone when you are comfortable returning. Until then, we're all in this together and we will do our best to continue to serve our community to the best of our ability.

Recent Acquisitions



Salmon River This tapestry by Ray Troll was donated by Larry Cheatham in memory of his parents, James and Barbara Cheatham. Made in Kathmandu, Nepal, the tapestry depicts one of the most famous residents of Southeast Alaska, the salmon. I really enjoy how such an interesting image has been created using carpet materials. I especially enjoy the salmon emerging from the water at the bottom right corner. Overall, I feel like the tapestry captures the personality of the salmon we find so important here in Juneau.



Rie Muñoz This collection of Rie Muñoz original artwork includes five paintings and 55 political cartoons donated by Juan Muñoz from the Rie Muñoz Gallery. Included in the collection are Rie's first and last paintings of St. Nicholas Church and her study that led to her painting, Chilkat Dancers, which hangs in the City Museum after spending years at the Juneau International Airport. The political cartoons are surprisingly relevant and we hope to use many of them in our Rie Muñoz retrospective exhibit in 2022.



Museum News



Health and Safety Information

After a twelve week closure between March 15th and June 4th, the City Museum reopened on June 5th with reduced hours and new health and safety protocols in place.

To protect our staff, volunteers, and visitors, we created and have implemented a detailed COVID-19 mitigation plan which promotes a hygienic museum environment. Currently we are open to the public Thursday through Sunday and closed for additional deactivation Monday through Wednesday. Face masks are required in the museum and surfaces are sterilized at least twice daily. To read the City Museum's COVID-19 Mitigation Plan in full, please visit our website.

Plexiglass shields have been installed on both sides of the front desk.

Coming Soon: Online Museum Store

Administrative Assistant, Mindy Henricksen, continues to stock the Museum Store with special merchandise created by local artists, jewelers, authors, and other local small business owners. Currently, Mindy is working towards creating an online museum store so that you can purchase some of these items through our website. We hope to have the online store up and running in the near future.



The City Museum Store also sells a variety of historic memorabilia.

Volunteer Spotlight



Dan Beason has been a City Museum volunteer for 25 years and was recognized by the Juneau Assembly on July 13th for his exceptional donation of 7000+ hours to the museum which is the equivalent of 3.6 years of fulltime work.

Thank you, Dan!

Enjoy Free Museum Admission

Admission to the City Museum is FREE during the months of June, July, and August thanks to a generous donation by the Friends of the Juneau-Douglas City Museum.

Thank you FoJDCM!



Museum Hours

Gallery Hours

Thurs.-Sunday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

By Appointment Only

Thurs.-Saturday 8:30 am to 10:00 am

Museum News

New Museum Logo

You may have noticed we have a new logo! Earlier this year, City Museum staff worked together with a local graphic artist, Rizza of Z Squared Graphic Design, to create a logo representative of the Juneau-Douglas City Museum. After considering many different ideas and discussing how the City Museum has evolved over time to represent the diverse history of both Juneau and Douglas, we chose the old Douglas bridge to serve as a symbol of connectivity between the two communities. To the right are four versions of the new logo.



Popular Winter Program Fundraiser



Betsy Longenbaugh and Ed Schoenfeld present to a sold-out crowd in the Murray Gallery.

As a fundraiser for the City Museum this year, local historians and City Museum volunteers, Ed Schoenfeld and Betsy Longenbaugh, researched, created, and presented three different programs on murder from the early days of Juneau and Douglas. The popular program series titled, *Death by Chocolate: An In-Depth Look at Historic Murder in Juneau* was accompanied by a thematic chocolate dessert served in the Murray Gallery. All three programs sold out in advance with long waiting lists.

The idea for the fundraiser stemmed from the 2018 Juneau History Grant awarded to Ed and Betsy to help them fund the research, creation, and delivery of

a public presentation for the City Museum titled, *Juneau's Dark Past: Early Murders in the Capital City*. Following the success of this presentation, Ed and Betsy created and led monthly *True Crime: Capital Killers* walking tours in the spring and summer of 2019.

Now Ed and Betsy are onto their next project— publishing a book. Their *Death by Chocolate* presentations have been drafted into three chapters and were received favorably by an interested publisher who has requested six more chapters. Fans of the *Death by Chocolate* series can look forward to six new presentations in the near future.



Betsy Longenbaugh and helper, Maggie Schoenfeld, serve a decadent chocolate dessert.

155 South Seward St.
Juneau, AK 99801

JUNEAU DOUGLAS
CITY MUSEUM



The Wooshkeetaan Totem Pole

Join us as we journey towards installing the
Wooshkeetaan Totem Pole in a new indoor location!



Make a donation

To help with installation costs, donations can be directed through the Friends of the Juneau-Douglas City Museum at fojdcm.org or by sending a check to PO Box 22450, Juneau, AK 99802

Volunteer

To volunteer to serve on an advisory or steering committee call Beth Weigel at 907-586-3572.

Follow our progress

For updates, videos, and historical tidbits about the Wooshkeetaan totem pole, visit our website, Facebook page and YouTube Channel.

Website

www.juneau.org/museum

Facebook

www.facebook.com/JuneauDouglasCityMuseum

You Tube Channel

www.youtube.com (search for Juneau Douglas City Museum)