Project Cares for Metal Artifacts

With funding from a Museums Alaska Collections Management Grant, the Alutiiq Museum is improving its care of metal objects. A $782 grant will help the museum clean and rehouse a small collection of contemporary silver jewelry and complete an inventory of the historic metal objects in its care. Museum Assistant Rebecca Pruitt will locate metal objects in the museum’s care and note the type of metal, its condition, and any previous treatment.

“The Alutiiq Museum historic metal artifacts includes nails to iron axes, a copper kettle, a brass pocket watch, and a lead icon,” said Curator of Collections Marnie Leist. “The care of these items varies greatly and is not well recorded. We need to assess the condition of these items, as a first step in planning their long-term care. In essence, our inventory will allow us to develop other projects to address specific care needs.”

This project is a direct result of a recent professional development opportunity. In September, Leist attended a hands-on instruction in metal care at the annual meeting of the Association of Tribal Archives Libraries and Museums. “The session provided very practical information on how to identify problems with specific types of metal and how to mitigate common forms of degradation,” she said.

As part of the grant-funded project, Leist will share her knowledge with staff members from both the Alutiiq and Baranov Museums. At a joint training session, she will share basic metal care principles to advance artifact preservation in both organizations.

The Alutiiq Museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the history and culture of the Alutiiq, an Alaska Native tribal people. Representatives of Kodiak Alutiiq organizations govern the museum with funding from charitable contributions, memberships, grants, contracts, and sales.

Attached Photo: Rebecca Pruitt inventories metal objects in the Alutiiq Museum’s collections.

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