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Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SHIPWRECK ARTIFACTS ON VIEW AT THE ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

Even though fall is almost here, Juneau residents still have time to see the Alaska State Museum's special summer exhibitions. Additionally, as part of the "First Friday" art walk, artifact materials recovered recently from the wreck of the *Torrent*, Alaska's oldest known locatable shipwreck in Alaska, will be available for viewing. The museum will be open and free to the public from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 4. The museum is hoping Civil War artillery buffs or sailing ship enthusiasts will stop by and participate in an informal discussion about materials and technology of that period.

The *Torrent*, a U.S. Army supply vessel, was wrecked and sank in July of 1868 near Port Graham, on the Kenai Peninsula. In 2006, a team of four investigators led by Steve Lloyd started an expedition to find the remains of the shipwreck. In October 2007 the team announced that it had found the remnants of the ship. Numerous metal objects were found on the wreck, and some are currently being conserved at the State Museum.

Museum Conservator Ellen Carrlee said, "A bronze mountain howitzer has been sent south for treatment, but we have numerous small items we are preserving and would like assistance in identifying. These include fragments of armaments or ordnance and objects associated with sailing ships of the time. I would like to connect with people who are enthusiasts and collectors of this kind of history. Since these objects are still being treated for conservation, we will only have them out during the Friday evening artwalk."

The general public is also welcome to stop in for a look. The *Torrent* was built in 1852, and was about 150 feet long with two decks. The crew and passengers survived the wreck, but the ship was never salvaged.

The other two exhibitions on display are: “Yuungnaqpiallerput (The Way We Genuinely Live): Masterworks of Yup’ik Science and Survival,” which explores the ways traditional Eskimo culture developed tools and technology for living in the harsh environment of western Alaska, and “Self Constructions,” recent contemporary artworks by Da-ka-xeen Mehner, an artist of southeast Alaskan Tlingit ancestry. Both exhibits will be up until Oct. 17. Also on display is the new Science on Sphere exhibit with over 300 dynamic views of our planet and astronomy.

Hours at the museum are 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily through September 22, although the museum will be closed Sept. 7 for Labor Day. First Friday admission is free. Regular admission is \$5. Visitors 18 and under are admitted free of charge. An annual pass that allows unlimited visits to the Alaska State Museum and the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka is available for \$15. Assistance is available for visitors with special needs. Please contact Visitor Services at 465-2901 before the visit or for further information.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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