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[\(Online\)](#) [\(Online Catalog\)](#) [\(Survey\)](#)

SHI'S ARCHIVES, ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS GO VIRTUAL
Institute unveils new state-of-the-art platform

Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) has put digital photographs of more than 900 ethnographic objects and detailed listings of 150 of its archival collections online in a new, state-of-the-art platform.

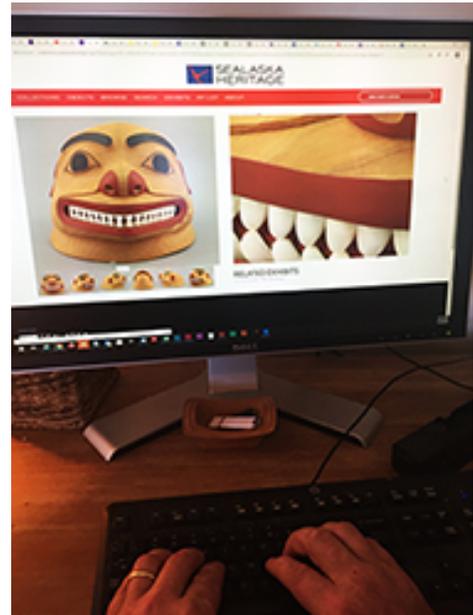
The new system, Proficio, is a catalog database with sophisticated searching capabilities used by many institutions, including the National Park Service. The platform allows users to search holdings by name, culture, artist and topic, among other things, all in one space and view associated digital resources, such as video, photographs and online exhibits.

One of the best things about the new platform is that it makes hundreds of previously unavailable archival and object records accessible and searchable by patrons around the world, said SHI President Rosita Worl.

“Now, even those who cannot make it into Sealaska Heritage to view materials in person have the opportunity to study these objects and archival records remotely,” Worl said. “By displaying our materials virtually, we are able to share them with the world and especially with Native artists who want to study our ancestors’ pieces.”

One of the main differences from the institute’s old platform is the inclusion of photos of objects. For example, people can now see an image of a Chilkat robe that dates to circa 1900 and hover over it to enlarge its details. Another entry shows a Chilkat robe made by the late master weaver Jennie Thlunaut and tells the story behind it. The platform shows old pieces, such as a red cedar dish thought to date to the 1800s, and contemporary objects, such as a warrior’s helmet made by Tlingit artist Tommy Joseph of Sitka.

The system also allows for the display of pieces featured in SHI’s exhibits, including the institute’s current exhibition, *War and Peace*. Another exhibit, *The Wooch Yáx Project*, shows objects that were examined by Ken X'oolxáa Grant and Ruth Eikdoogú Demmert at Sealaska Heritage. At the bottom of each photo, users may click on a link to a video that shows Grant and Demmert sharing indigenous knowledge about each piece.



The site will continue to grow as SHI acquires new collections and continues to digitize existing holdings. SHI plans to upload archival photographs to the site in the near future. SHI is asking patrons to participate in a [short survey](#) to gauge their experience and possibly identify ways to improve the platform.

This project was made possible in part by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Sealaska Heritage Institute is a private nonprofit founded in 1980 to perpetuate and enhance Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian cultures of Southeast Alaska. Its goal is to promote cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding through public services and events. SHI also conducts social scientific and public policy research that promotes Alaska Native arts, cultures, history and education statewide. The institute is governed by a Board of Trustees and guided by a Council of Traditional Scholars, a Native Artist Committee and a Southeast Regional Language Committee.

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