

# Haida: Life. Spirit. Art.

Key Artifacts	
	<p><b>Bowl</b> 1800–1850 © McCord Museum, ACC1172 Photo: Marilyn Aitken</p> <p>A superb carver has depicted a raven's head protruding from one end of this bowl, a human clasped in its beak. Another human with outstretched arms grasps the front of the bowl. A hawk's head emerges where the raven's tail should be, and complex formline designs trace wings (or are they killer whale teeth?) across the sides.</p>
	<p><b>Spoon</b> 1800–1850 © McCord Museum, ACC1233.7 Photo: Marilyn Aitken</p> <p>A highly accomplished artist carved the handle of this spoon, possibly illustrating a popular myth—Raven with a broken beak. A blind halibut fisherman snares the beak of the mischievous Raven, who has been stealing bait. Raven struggles and finally his beak breaks off. He later snatches it back and hurriedly sticks it on, but the beak just dangles from his chin.</p>
	<p><b>Chest</b> 1900–1925 Thomas Moody (about 1877-1947) © McCord Museum, M5922.1-2 Photo: Marilyn Aitken</p> <p>This miniature chest, by Skidegate artist Thomas Moody, was modelled after the wooden chests designed to hold ceremonial objects in a chief's home. He has depicted a bear on one side and a beaver wearing a hat with three potlatch rings on the other. The lid depicts a bear, in formline, with a frog in high relief.</p>



**Gambling game**  
1800–1850  
© McCord Museum, ME892.2.0-55  
Photo: Roger Aziz

Gambling games were popular among the Haida, and these, too, provided an opportunity for artistic expression. This set of gambling sticks was stored in a deerskin container, which opens up to reveal a formline painting that may depict a mythological aquatic creature. The 50 maple sticks are decorated with painted bands and motifs burned into the wood. The tips are inlaid with abalone shell.



**Raven rattle**  
1800–1850  
© McCord Museum, ME892.12.2  
Photo: Marilyn Aitken

Raven rattles were an important part of a chief's ceremonial regalia. A raven is shown holding something in its beak, possibly evoking the legend of Raven bringing sunlight to the world. A human reclines with his tongue extended to a frog's mouth, perhaps a symbolic reference to exchange with the animal and supernatural world.



**Mask**  
1800–1850  
© McCord Museum, ME892.32.2  
Photo: Marilyn Aitken

In Haida myths, more than 50 supernatural killer whale chiefs are recognized as controlling the food resources of the sea. The whale chiefs can be identified by unique traits, including multiple dorsal fins. This mask may depict a supernatural human or ancestor with two blue killer whale fins over his eyes, indicating a lineage affiliation.



**Painted basketry hat**

1875–1900

Woven by Isabella Edenshaw (about 1858-1926) and painted by Charles Edenshaw (about 1839-1920)

© McCord Museum, ME928.57.3

Photo: Marilyn Aitken

The renowned weaver Isabella Edenshaw created hats and baskets on which her husband Charles painted beautiful designs. In this instance, he has depicted the myth of Raven with a broken beak. The hat displays Charles's "signature"—a four-pointed star with each point divided into red and black segments.