



photo courtesy of Anchorage Museum of History and Art

*An Eskimo gut parka, made in about 1900, is part of the new exhibit at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art.*

***Jan. 17 to Feb. 21 in Anchorage***

## **Exhibit features Native artifacts**

**Innerskins/Outerskins: Gut and Fishskin**, an exhibit of 55 traditional artifacts made from gut and fishskin by Alaska Native peoples, opens at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art Jan. 17 and will remain on view through Feb. 21, 1988.

The exhibition also includes 41 innovative works by contemporary artists who use gut or fishskin as a medium.

The traditional containers, clothing and other artifacts, including six objects on loan from the Anchorage Museum, are tributes to human resourcefulness in Alaska's harsh environment. Nothing was wasted. Alaska Natives recognized gut and

fishskin as valuable resources and transformed them into waterproof garments, bags and windows.

The objects also represent a look into the belief systems of traditional Alaska Native cultures, for whom gut and fishskin were spiritually charged materials, equally impenetrable by threatening natural elements and by hostile otherworldly forces.

The exhibition was organized at the San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum by Guest Curator Pat Hickman, a respected textile historian, fiber artist and instructor at San Francisco State University. Hickman's interest in gut and fishskin began when she first viewed a gut parka 10 years

ago. Since then, she has traveled to Alaska to study traditional objects and methods and has worked extensively with gut herself.

"It is curious that gut, an inner membrane, has become an outerskin, tough and protective, despite its fragile appearance," she said. "This transparent membrane is a skin between life and death, a link between the animal and human worlds, the worlds of giver and receiver."

The exhibit will be on view at the University of Alaska Museum in Fairbanks March 17 through April 23 and at the Alaska State Museum in Juneau May 15 through June 21, 1988.