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Native American Pottery to be Exhibited at University of Illinois

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October 15, 1993

Contact: Carol Brockman, 309/556-3181**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Illinois Wesleyan University's collection of Native American pottery will be exhibited at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) Krannert Art Museum & Kinkead Pavilion from Oct. 22 to Jan. 9. The exhibit is entitled "The Spirit of the Earth: Selections from the John Wesley Powell Collection of Pueblo Pottery at Illinois Wesleyan University."

The collection, acquired by U.S. Army Maj. John Wesley Powell (1834-1902) on expeditions of the U.S. Southwest in the late 19th century, was donated to IWU around 1880 by Powell.

The exhibition will open Oct. 22 to the public at 7-8:30 p.m.

Curators Linda Duke and Maarten van de Guchte will present around 40 items.

Duke said the pottery "has tremendous artistic value and conveys a beautiful and spiritual tradition while acting as a window to a different view of the world."

Duke, a former IWU art history professor, said she became "entranced by the collection" while at IWU and sees this exhibition as an opportunity to "offer more people a chance to see it."

A Zuni guest artist, Eileen Yatsattie, will present a lecture-demonstration in conjunction with the exhibit on the U of I campus Nov. 22-23.

Admission to the museum is free and it is open 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday; 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Wednesday; 2-5 p.m., Sunday; and closed Monday.

Background on Major John Wesley Powell

Powell enlisted as a private in the 20th Illinois Infantry on May 8, 1861. In June, 1861, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant and sent to Camp Girardeau near St. Louis. Promoted to captain in December, 1861, Powell served at Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River. A minieball wound at the Battle of Shiloh resulted in the amputation of Powell's right arm below the elbow.

Powell returned to service, as ordered by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, and participated in the 1863 siege of Vicksburg. As commanding officer of the 17th Army Corps Artillery Brigade, Powell participated in the fall of Atlanta and the

Battle of Nashville. Powell received an honorable discharge on Jan. 14, 1865, following a commission as major and brevet (battlefield promotion) lieutenant colonel.

After declining a nomination as clerk of DuPage county, Powell accepted the position of IWU professor of natural sciences in 1865, resigning in 1868. During his time at IWU, Powell became the first U.S. professor to introduce field work into the college curriculum.

In 1867 Powell accepted the curatorship of the Illinois State Natural History Society museum of which he had been a member since 1854. Powell collected many of the specimens exhibited in the museum.

Powell's first expedition to the West occurred in 1867 and included his wife, his brother-in-law, four IWU students, one student from Illinois State Normal University, and amateur naturalists. Expeditions continued from 1868 to 1872, producing a number of firsts: the climbing of Long's Peak, the exploration of the continental divide, a series of ethnological studies on Western Indian tribes, exploration of the Grand Canyon by white men, and maps of the Grand Canyon. The Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., published Powell's expedition reports in 1875.

Positions held by Powell included: a National Geographic Society founder (1888), second director of the U.S. Geological Survey (1881-1894), first director of the Bureau of American Ethnology (1879-1902), American Association for the Advancement of Science president (1888), Philosophical Society of Washington president (1883), Cosmos Club founder (1878) and president (1888), Anthropological Society of Washington founder and president.

In 1969, the U.S. Postal Service issued a Powell commemorative stamp, marking the centennial of the first Grand Canyon exploration.

IWU has honored Powell with a campus monument and the continued use of the IWU seal--"Scientia et Sapientia"--Powell and Professor Jabez Jaques designed in 1877.