



Angela J. Linn
Senior Collections Manager, Ethnology & History
University of Alaska Museum of the North
907 Yukon Drive
P.O. Box 756960
Fairbanks, AK 99775

Eiteljorg Museum

November 18, 2014

Dear Angie,

Thank you for your assistance identifying objects in the Museum of the North's collections over the past three months. As you know, the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art is organizing the exhibit *Gold! Riches and Ruin*. This exciting exhibit explores the historical and cultural significance of gold in the American West. The exhibition is scheduled to open at the Eiteljorg on March 7, 2015 and close on August 9, 2015. We would like to formally request to borrow a number of items from your collections for inclusion in this exhibit. Your consideration and that of your colleagues is most appreciated.

The objects and images we plan to display, including those requested here, tell the stories of people, their relationships with one another, with the landscape, and with the gold they sought and took from it. These are stories of perseverance, adventure, innovation, and success, but also of greed, violence, sacrifice, and failure. They illuminate the significance of gold to American culture, and the role it has played in forging a national identity.

Three gold rushes in particular will serve as the foundation of the content in the exhibit: the California Gold Rush, the Black Hills Gold Rush, and the Yukon-Klondike Gold Rush. In addition to these historic gold rushes, the exhibit will also address the broader appeal of gold up to the present day, and its continuing cultural resonance as a marker of success and status. The presentation will include a wide array of objects and images including mining equipment and tools, paintings and prints, journals and diaries, clothing and personal effects, and of course, gold itself, in its myriad forms, including nuggets, coins, bars, and jewelry.

This exhibit will demonstrate how the promise of gold in the American West lured men and women from all walks of life, and a multitude of different cultures, ethnicities, nationalities, and backgrounds, in pursuit of wealth and adventure. Gold not only influenced the movement of people into the American West in profound ways, it also greatly affected the lives of the indigenous peoples already occupying the regions. Moments of contact, conflict, and cooperation between diverse people in a shared landscape will be one of the focal points of the exhibit. The story of *Gold! Riches and Ruin* is one of nation-making, expansion, and shaping of the American national character. At the same time, the story has chapters on the destruction of indigenous nations, broken treaties, and exploitation of the environment.

500 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2707
P (317) 636-9378 F (317) 275-1400 W eiteljorg.org

**Eiteljorg Museum of
American Indians and Western Art
Telling Amazing Stories**

Unless otherwise noted, all requested objects will be exhibited in enclosed, secure cases. I am writing to formally request to borrow the following for *Gold! Riches and Ruin*:

Gold Poke; UA69-051-0001:

Gold pokes were a common part of a miner's outfit, and were also used by banks for storing and transporting gold. They are also a physical representation of the accumulation and exchange of wealth in the form of gold.

The Klondike Game; UA2010-011-000AB

One of the themes the exhibit explores is how gold rushes have been depicted in and influenced American popular culture. The Klondike Game will be paired with other examples of how the Yukon-Klondike Gold Rush in particular has been presented to and consumed by not only the American public, but audiences around the world.

Gold Nugget Bracelet, Gold Nugget Earrings, Gold Nugget Necklace, Gold Necklace, and Gold Pocket Watch; UA2000-011-0002, UA2000-011-0003AB, UA2000-011-0001, UA81-003-0087, and UA99-021-0001AD

These examples of gold jewelry/accessories are beautiful, concrete examples of the fruits of gold mining.

Cribbage Board; UA94-009-0041

A recurring narrative thread throughout the exhibit is the meeting of indigenous communities and the prospectors/merchants/settlers coming into their homelands in pursuit of gold. This cribbage board shows the interaction of different cultures in the Arctic.

These objects have the power to generate moments of learning and wonder for our audiences, and to anchor the interpretive messages of the exhibit to the physical world.

All expenses associated with your loan, including packing, shipping, and insurance, will be covered in full by the Eiteljorg Museum. Our Director of Museum Collections, Amy McKune, and Registrar, Christa Barleben, will be happy to address any facilities questions, and to provide a facilities report upon request. Ms. McKune can be reached at 317-275-1358, or by e-mail at amckune@eiteljorg.com. Ms. Barleben can be reached at 317-275-1359, or by e-mail at cbarleben@eiteljorg.com. For more information about the exhibit itself, you can reach me at 317-275-1327, or by e-mail at jblume@eiteljorg.com.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this request. We sincerely hope that you will be able to participate in this provocative exhibition.

Sincerely,



Johanna M. Blume

Assistant Curator of Western Art, History, and Culture
Eiteljorg Museum