



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: MARCH 2, 2021**
FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**
SUBJECT: ACCESSION INTO THE MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE'S PERMANENT COLLECTION OF ONE 1870s WOMAN'S DRESS AND SUPPORTING ARCHIVAL RESOURCES

ISSUE:

Approve accession into the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection of one 1870s woman's dress and supporting archival resources.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve accession into the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection of one 1870s woman's dress and supporting archival resources.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

At a virtual special meeting on December 2, 2020, the Museum of Riverside Board, with six of its nine members present for this vote, unanimously agreed to recommend that City Council approve accession into the permanent collection of one 1870s woman's dress and supporting archival resources.

BACKGROUND:

In 2005, the then Riverside Metropolitan Museum accepted twenty-seven objects into its permanent collection (A1695) associated with the late Ida Gertrude Parks Condit (1909-2001), a descendant of nineteenth-century West Riverside pioneers. The donor of the dress currently proposed for accession is the granddaughter of Ida Gertrude Parks Condit. The objects in the earlier gift were used by her mother Mary Isabell Wilshire Parks (1884-1927), great-grandmother Mary Melvina Rabel Webster (1850 Fort Laramie, WY-1925 San Bernardino, CA), and great-great-grandmother Elizabeth Ann Holdaway Rabel (1829 Tennessee-1905 San Bernardino, CA). The 2005 donation included mother Mary Parks's driving duster, shawl, collar, shoes, and purse; great-grandmother Mary Webster's dress and shawl; and great-great-grandmother Elizabeth Rabel's bonnet.

At its meeting on October 28, 2020, with ten committee members supporting and one committee member absent, the Museum's Collections Committee approved a recommendation to accession the 1870s woman's dress and supporting archival resources.

DISCUSSION:

This donation includes a woman's costume and supporting family archival resources. The 1870s two-piece orange wool twill weave dress is a proposed gift from a family descendant. The dress originally belonged to Mary Melvina Rabel Webster. According to family lore, this dress was worn by Mary Rabel when she travelled from Fort Laramie, Wyoming, to San Bernardino, California. The Museum currently has three other items that belonged to Mary Webster.

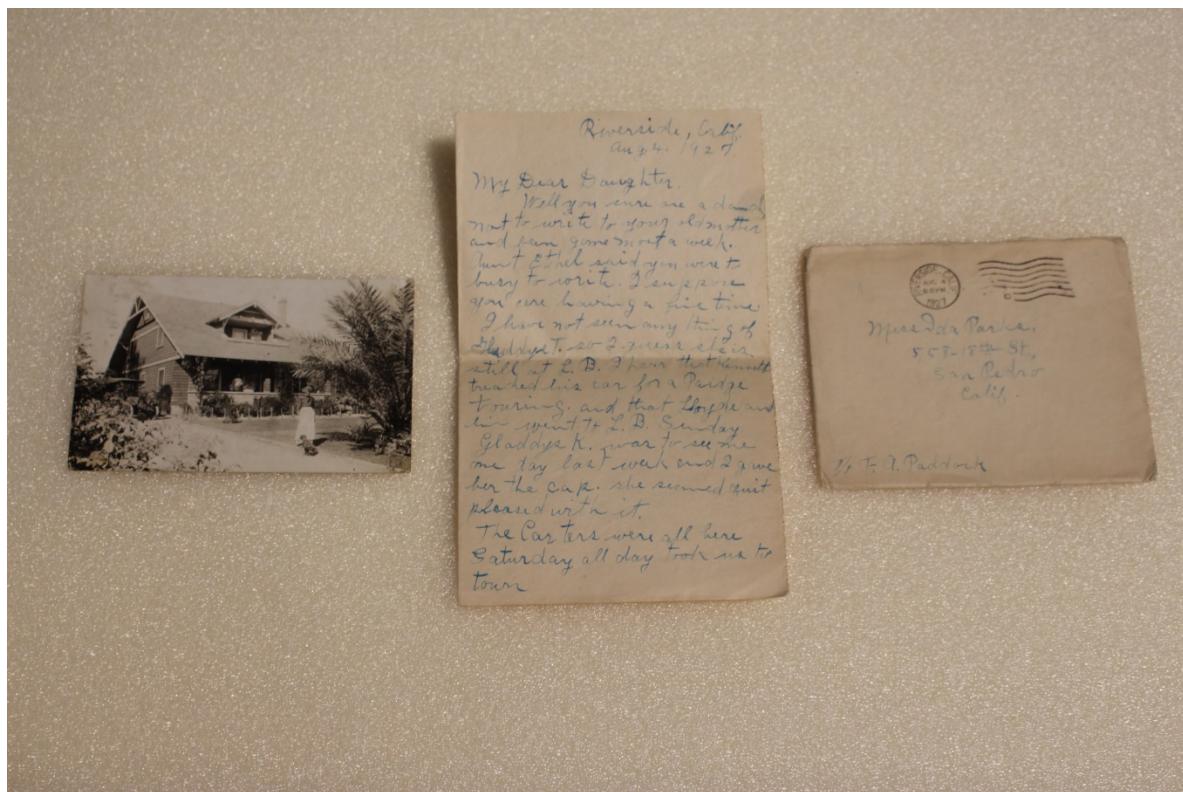
The archival resources include five photographs of Ida Gertrude Parks Condit's mother Mary Isabell Wilshire Parks and four photographs of Ida Gertrude Parks Condit, her 1927 Riverside Polytechnic High School graduation announcement, and the 1931 wedding announcement for Ida Gertrude Parks and Ross B. Condit, as well as five wedding gift cards. One photograph shows Ida Gertrude Parks wearing the dress.

The handmade dress with its bright color, flounces, and trim details exemplifies women's clothing of the mid-nineteenth century. It features details that were fashionable during that time in many American cities. The bright orange color is the result of aniline dyes, a group of synthetic dyes developed in the mid-nineteenth century; their use in textiles was still quite novel in the 1870s. The dress exhibits evidence of having been worn often, a favorite of its owner. The Ida Gertrude Parks Condit family collection and this proposed donation contribute to a deeper understanding of the region's early Euro-American settlers.

Storage space is minimally impacted by this acquisition. Conservation, which is not urgent, will proceed only when funding is available. The condition of the dress is soiled but stable and exhibits remarkably little fading. The condition of the archival materials is good; none requires conservation at this time.







FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Certified as to availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: Moises Lopez, Deputy City Manager
Approved as to form: Kristi J. Smith, Interim City Attorney

Attachment: Museum of Riverside Board Minutes December 2, 2020