



# Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD** **DATE: MAY 25, 2022**

**FROM: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE** **WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: DEACCESSION FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF SIX PIECES FROM THE MEIER COLLECTION INCLUDING A CHERRYWOOD ROLLTOP DESK, LIBRARY TABLE AND SIDE TABLE, AMERICAN EMPIRE REVIVAL MAHOGANY BED HEAD- AND FOOTBOARDS, AND DRESSER WITH MIRROR (A1496-109, A1496-113.1a-b, A1496-114.1a-b, A1496-114.2)**

## **ISSUE:**

To approve a recommendation to deaccession from the permanent collection six pieces from the Meier collection, including a cherrywood rolltop desk, library table and side table, American Empire Revival mahogany bed head- and footboards, and dresser with mirror (A1496-109, A1496-113.1a-b, A1496-114.1a-b, A1496-114.2).

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Museum of Riverside Board recommends that the City Council approve deaccession from the permanent collection of six pieces from the Meier collection, including a cherry-wood rolltop desk, library table and side table, American Empire Revival mahogany bed head- and footboards, and dresser with mirror (A1496-109, A1496-113.1a-b, A1496-114.1a-b, A1496-114.2).

## **BACKGROUND:**

In December 1994, the City of Riverside Museum Department (then the Riverside Municipal Museum [RMM]) took possession of the "Meier Collection." It was accessioned into the permanent collection with Museum Board approval in April 1995. The collection came from the Duarte (Los Angeles County) California home of William Baird through a donation of Herbert and Margaret Meier. Mrs. Meier was the daughter of William Baird. According to the Curator of History at the time, the entire donation was accessioned by the Museum with the plan to transfer to the California Citrus State Historic Park (CCSHP) in Riverside at a later date. In 2018, the former curator stated "the Meier Collection ... was to go into the Large Grower Estate residence once established. ...These items came to the RMM for accessioning and storage pending full build out of the park, whereupon we would properly transfer designated artifacts and items to the State."

On October 23, 2019, the Museum of Riverside Board approved a recommendation to deaccession a billiard table and accoutrements from the same Meier collection. This deaccession was approved by City Council on November 19, 2019, and the items were publicly sold with proceeds benefiting the restricted fund for future acquisitions to the history collection.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The objects were donated in 1994 and have not been transferred to the CCSHP in Riverside for the originally intended exhibition in the “Large Grower Estate residence,” because that portion of the CCSHP master plan remains undeveloped. For the past twenty-eight years, the Museum of Riverside (Museum) has provided stewardship of this collection. Their intended transfer to the CCSHP notwithstanding, it is the Museum that holds title to the Meier collection objects, and there is no longer an expectation that this transfer will take place as originally intended. Museum staff has determined in recent consultation with CCSHP staff that the current situation is unlikely to change in a reasonable span of time.

It may be argued that objects in the Meier collection were originally accessioned in error, as it was never the intent that they become a permanent part of the Museum’s collection; rather, they were always slated for transfer to the CCSHP. Records do not reflect why these objects were accessioned into the permanent collection.

The six pieces of furniture fit two deaccession criteria within the 2015 Museum’s Collections Management Policy:

### **Consideration for Deaccession**

**Criteria No. 1** - The object/specimen is outside of the scope of the Museum’s mission and guidelines set by Riverside Municipal Code (Chapter 2.12.), acquisition policy, or is irrelevant to the purposes of the Museum.

**Criteria No. 4** - The Museum is unable to properly preserve or store the object/specimen and to provide proper or adequate environment for their collections.

**Criteria No. 5** - The object/specimen has doubtful potential utilization in the near future in the Museum’s exhibition and public programs.

During the time that the Museum has held the Meier collection, only a hanging lamp and selected citrus objects, kitchen utensils, agricultural tools, clothing, and textiles have been interpreted within the Museum’s own exhibitions and programs, and then only rarely. The furniture has not been used. Most of the Meier collection does not, in fact, date to the heyday of the citrus industry in the late nineteenth century and is inappropriate for the Museum’s late nineteenth century historic site.

Museum staff has determined that the group that includes the cherrywood rolltop desk and the American Empire Revival mahogany head- and footboards, dresser with mirror, library table, and side table, is unlikely to be utilized or exhibited in the foreseeable future, due to its deviation from the Museum’s mission and program plans. The most appropriate course of action is deaccession of the six furnishing pieces from the permanent collection.

When deaccessioned, the objects will be sold at an appropriate auction house or other public sales outlet. Funds realized from this transaction will be retained in a restricted deaccessions proceeds account until used for an appropriate acquisition to the history collection, in accordance with the Museum's Collection and Exhibition Management Policy.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report. Deaccessioned objects will be offered for public sale. Following Museum policy and museum field codes of ethics, net proceeds generated by such sales are restricted to future acquisitions for the permanent collection. Proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned objects are deposited into the Museum Deaccessioned Account 0000721-225252.

Prepared by:  
Certified as to  
availability of funds:  
Approved by:

Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director

Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer

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Dresser with mirror  
A1496-114.1a



Bed headboard  
A1496-114.1b



Bed foot board  
A1496-114.2



Desk



Library table



Side table

A1496-109

A1496-113.1a

A1496-113.1b