



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2020**

FROM: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: ACCESSION OF ONE (1) 1870s WOMAN'S DRESS AND SUPPORTING ARCHIVAL RESOURCES INTO MUSEUM PERMANENT COLLECTION

ISSUE:

Recommend that the City Council approve the accession of one (1) 1870s woman's dress and supporting archival resources into the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board recommend that the City Council approve the accession of one (1) 1870s woman's dress and supporting archival resources into the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection.

BACKGROUND:

In 2005, the then Riverside Metropolitan Museum accepted twenty-seven (27) 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 included in the 2005 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) and 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.

DISCUSSION:

The current 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. It 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 (3) other items that belonged to Mary Webster.

The archival resources include five (5) photographs of Ida Gertrude Parks Condit's mother Mary Isabell Wilshire Parks and four (4) 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 (5) wedding gift cards.

This handmade dress with its bright color, flounces, and trimming details exemplifies women's clothing of the mid-nineteenth century. It features details that were fashionable during that time in many American cities. Its 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. It 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.



Bodice front



Skirt front



Ida Gertrude Parks wearing the dress.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report. Storage space is minimally impacted by this acquisition. Conservation, which is not urgent, will proceed only when funding is available.

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

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

Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Moises Lopez, Deputy City Manager