

Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: JUNE 24, 2026**
FROM: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE
SUBJECT: RECOMMEND ACCESSION INTO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF FIVE (5) LOTS OF ARCHIVAL AND HISTORIC ITEMS

ISSUE:

To recommend to City Council to approve accession into the permanent collection of five (5) lots of archival and historic items.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board recommends that City Council approves accession into the permanent collection of five (5) lots of archival and historic items.

BACKGROUND:

All of the items discussed in this report were donated to or acquired by the Museum at dates from 1997 to 2010 but, for unknown reasons, were not processed and fully documented upon arrival. Work currently underway to inventory collections, improve artifact housing, and rearrange storage leads to the discovery of items such as these.

At its meeting on March 11, 2026, the Museum's Collections Committee voted unanimously in support of recommending that the Museum Board forward recommendations regarding all five (5) lots of archival and historic items to City Council.

DISCUSSION:

To "accession" an object is the process of including it formally in a museum's permanent collection, which is the category of collection for which the greatest effort will be made to preserve the object in perpetuity and document it fully.

LOT 1 – Seven (7) color postcards

These items are accompanied by a donor's temporary receipt dated June 17, 1999. The

postcards are blank. They document in color the Serra Cross overlooking Riverside, the Mission Inn Hotel and Spa, the summit of Mt. Rubidoux when visitors could drive up the mountain, the Glenwood Mission Inn Campanile, the entrance to the Mission Inn covered in ivy, California Baptist College, and the Peace Tower on Mt. Rubidoux.

The Museum's early- to mid-20th-century collections are sparse, and these images would contribute to filling in that timeframe. These postcards improve the Museum's ability to document how Riverside has changed over time, and they reflect sites its population valued. Most of the Museum's existing photo collections are black and white; because they are in color, these postcards expand the range.

LOT 2 – One (1) Buddhist memorial scroll

This scroll was accompanied by a donor letter dated August 2005 stating, "this orange scroll is the one that was hanging over the main entrance of the mortuary. It is given by the abbot of the His Lai [Buddhist] Temple, of which Mr. Frank Chen was a member." The letter continues, "the monks advised that the white scrolls hanging around the interior should be burnt by the family, but that the museum could keep this orange one."

Mr. Frank Ting-Kuo Chen (1941-2005) was a businessman born in Taiwan who later moved to Moreno Valley. He helped establish the Chinese Student Association at UCR, was appointed as an official delegate of Taiwan's Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, founded the Inland Chinese Association, established the Inland Riverside Chinese School, and was the main catalyst for the construction of the Chinese Pavilion in downtown Riverside. On June 15, 2005, the United States Congress recognized Frank Chen in the Congressional Record. He is buried at Olivewood Cemetery.

This object supports documentation of the life of an influential Riverside resident, Mr. Chen, and Buddhist funerary practices in Riverside. As an immigrant who spent his time in Riverside supporting Chinese immigrants, Mr. Chen's story is one that exemplifies diversity and community engagement while documenting the positive impact just one person can have on an entire community.

LOT 3 – One (1) pair of binoculars with four (4) accompanying documents

These items were donated in 2010. The donor notes that his great aunt participated in a World War I program called "Eyes for the Navy" in which citizens rented their optical equipment to the Navy for the duration of the war. The Navy required this program because, at the time, optical supply production was based in Austria and Germany, two of the countries with which the United States and the Allies were at war. These binoculars are accompanied by a certificate acknowledging participation in the program, for which \$1 in rent was paid.

These materials illustrate a local civilian's contribution during World War I. Each of the pieces works together to document how a local woman heard a call to action and contributed to her nation's efforts. It serves to tie the Riverside community to a larger global event through the lens of one woman's individual and personal contribution to the war effort.

LOT 4 – One (1) set of miniature Bardell photographs

This set was purchased by the Museum in 2007. Bardell Fototone Miniatures were produced

by J. C. (James Charles) Bardell (1884-1954) of San Francisco in the 1910s and 1920s. This set is dated 1923. It includes images of plant life of Southern California, presumably around or near Riverside, and images of orange groves, Mt. Rubidoux, the Carnegie Library, Sherman Indian School, the Glenwood Mission Inn, and the Riverside County Courthouse.

The contents of this donation document the cultural and natural history of Riverside and its people in the early 20th century. The photo set supports the Museum's mission to preserve the local history of the city. The Museum does not have other photo miniatures of this nature.

LOT 5 – Two (2) parking coins

These objects were donated in 1997. An accompanying note stated, "these were used in about 1960s in formerly Sterling Savings was Citrus Belt Savings and Loan on Market Street." The coins are more likely dated to the 1940s or 1950s because Citrus Belt Savings took over the location in 1951. The location is now home to the Riverside Community College's Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties. The site was designed by Los Angeles architect Stiles O. Clements and was occupied by at least three banks prior to its current use.

The Museum's mid-20th-century collections are sparse, and these two (2) coins would contribute to filling in that timeframe. The donation adds to the documentation of Riverside, its residents, and local business.

Notes regarding the current condition and storage requirements for these five (5) lots of historic materials follow:

LOT 1 – The postcards are in good and stable condition and have minimal storage requirements.

LOT 2 – The Buddhist scroll is in stable condition and can be accommodated in the Museum's recently expanded rolled storage area.

LOT 3 – The binoculars and accompanying documentation are in fair to good but stable condition. Storage requirements are minimal.

LOT 4 – The miniature photographs are in good and stable condition. They are very small and pose minimal storage challenges. Photographs require conditions cooler and drier than most other collections, and the Museum has the ability to provide this.

LOT 5 – These tiny objects are in good and stable condition and require a minute amount of storage space.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Robyn G. Peterson, Museum Director
Reviewed by: Ann Lovell, Manager of Operations

LOT 1



Color postcards

LOT 2

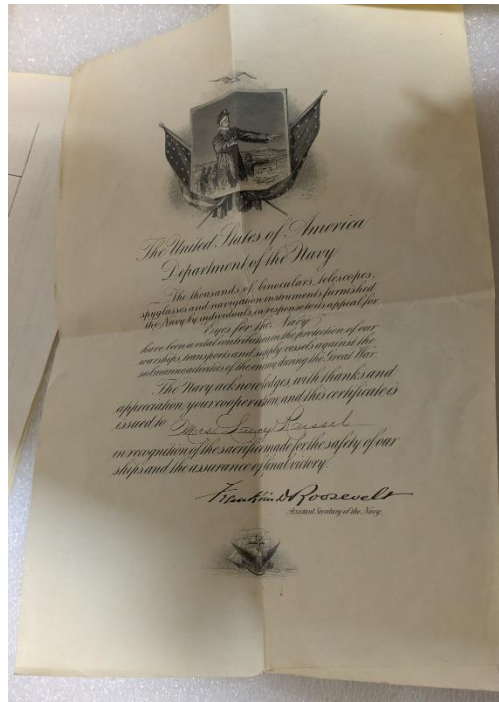


Buddhist memorial scroll

LOT 3



Binoculars (late 19th to early 20th century)



Certificate (circa 1918)

LOT 4



LOT 5:

