

HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP

CITY OF RIVERSIDE WOMEN'S HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT DECEMBER 2025



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Cover: Clockwise from upper left: Military women at the Mission Inn (University of California, Riverside); Women's Uplifting Club, c. 1936 (Johnetta Clay and the Museum of Riverside); Girls from the Sherman Institute on a YWCA outing (Los Angeles Public Library); Universalist ladies of Riverside in 1898 (California State Library); Helen Ahn (Yi Hye Ryon, Los Angeles Public Library); Emma P. Barrett Boyd (University of California, Los Angeles).

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INTRODUCTION

This historic context statement was prepared at the request of the City of Riverside (City). In March 2025, the City contracted with Historic Resources Group (HRG) to prepare a Women's Historic Context Statement. As a focused study, this document is limited in scope to women's history in Riverside and is intended to supplement other existing studies.¹ This project will serve as a foundation for historic preservation planning efforts for historic resources associated with women's history in Riverside going forward.

This historic context statement is divided into two sections. Section 1 provides a narrative overview of significant milestones of women's history in the United States and their association with people and events in Riverside. Section 2 outlines the established eligibility criteria for designation at the federal, state, and local levels and provides guidance for the evaluation of potential historic resources that are associated with women's history in Riverside.²

This historic context statement is intended to be a living document that is updated as additional scholarship about women's history in Riverside is completed, and as time progresses and properties that have a recent association with women's history become eligible for historic designation. The project follows guidance and standards developed by the National Park Service and the California State Office of Historic Preservation for conducting historic resources studies; specifically, the project is being developed using the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) approach. Guiding documents include:

- The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning
- *National Register Bulletin No. 15: How to Apply the National Criteria for Evaluation*
- *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Nomination Form*
- *National Register Bulletin No. 16B: How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form*
- *National Register Bulletin No. 24: Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning*
- The California Office of Historic Preservation's *Instructions for Recording Historical Resources*

The historic context statement is intended to establish a baseline history of women's history in Riverside and provide a framework for evaluating potential historical resources. The development of this historic context statement is part of a larger City effort to

¹ For more information on the general history of Riverside, see current studies maintained by the City. Historic surveys and studies are made available to the public via the City's website at: <https://riversideca.gov/historic/surveys.asp>. The *Citywide Historic Modernism Context Statement* (2009) contains a comprehensive history of the city's development. Other groups in Riverside have also received greater in-depth investigation through focused studies, including the history of the Latino, Chinese American, Japanese American, and LGBTQ+ communities.

² Following additional research, properties mentioned in the narrative will be identified as extant or not extant.

recognize women's history in Riverside. In addition to this historic context statement, the City and students and staff from the University of California, Riverside (UCR) are preparing a story map and conducting oral histories to document the people, places, and stories of women in Riverside. The oral history project gives voice to the community members who made notable contributions to this history; their stories are also referenced in this document.

Contributors & Acknowledgements

This project was a collaborative effort between the City of Riverside, Historic Resources Group (HRG), and the University of California, Riverside (UCR). The project was completed under the direction of the City's Community & Economic Development Department Planning Division and managed by Scott K. Watson, Historic Preservation Officer. Additional assistance was provided by Katie Dunlap, Planning Technician.

The HRG project team consisted of principal authors Alexandra Perlman, Senior Architectural Historian, and Mariana Ruiz, Architectural Historian. Oversight was provided by Christine Lazzaretto, Managing Principal. All are qualified professionals who meet or exceed the relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards Professional Qualification Standards.

Alexandra Perlman, Senior Architectural Historian, has a Master of Arts in Art History, Criticism and Conservation from the University of Texas, Austin and a Bachelor of Arts in History with minors in Spanish and Classical Archaeology from Saint Anselm College. She has 10 years of experience managing historic resources surveys; developing historic context statements; conducting environmental review; and evaluating historic resources at the local, state, and national levels. Alexandra has authored and co-authored several citywide and focused historic context statements, including those for the cities of Pasadena, Pomona, Riverside, and Paramount. She has also contributed to the *African Americans in California* Multiple Property Documentation Form and authored nominations for listing on local, state, and national registers. She has managed several historic resources surveys, including in the cities of Alhambra, Beverly Hills, and Paramount. Additionally, Alexandra is a Registered Professional Archaeologist (RPA). Alexandra meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards* in Architectural History, History, and Archaeology.

Mariana Ruiz has over 12 years of experience in cultural resource management, art conservation, and collections management working in the Southwestern United States. Her experience includes conducting historic resource surveys, archival research, compiling nominations for the National Register of Historic Places, and producing photo and GIS documentation. Her expertise also includes developing historic context statements, performing site inspections, providing maintenance plans, compiling historic resource evaluations, and consulting on preservation planning. Her first major preservation project

was the Watts Towers Conservation Project in Los Angeles where she was involved in materials conservation, treatment and stabilization recommendations, and project documentation and research. Additionally, she has worked with several cultural institutions and planning firms, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Nevada Museum of Art, the Nevada Preservation Foundation, the City of Las Vegas Office of Cultural Affairs, Ammerman & Associates, and Historic Resources Group. Mariana holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Fine Art with a minor in Mathematics from Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles, CA.

Christine Lazzaretto, Managing Principal of Historic Resources Group, has a master's degree in Heritage Conservation from the University of Southern California and a bachelor's degree in art history from Pennsylvania State University. She is the founding Vice-President of Docomomo/Southern California, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of historic resources from the modern era. Christine serves on the Board of Trustees of the California Preservation Foundation and is a lecturer in the University of Southern California Heritage Conservation Summer Program. Christine has extensive experience in the preparation of historic context statements, National Register Multiple Property Documentation Forms, and nominations for historic designation. She was the project manager for the development of citywide historic context statements for Pasadena, Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo, Beverly Hills, Palm Springs, South Pasadena, and Santa Monica. Christine meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards* in History and Architectural History.

Dr. Catherine Gudis, Associate Professor at UCR, provided invaluable time and expertise throughout the project, and contributed to the historic context statement. Graduate student Peyton Beeli authored portions of the historic context statement and provided invaluable research assistance.

The project team is grateful for members of the community who contributed research information and suggestions related to the people and places associated with women's history in Riverside. The project team would like to extend their gratitude to the members of the Riverside Historical Society, particularly Debbie Quick Netwon, for their assistance.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

Sources consulted as part of this investigation included primary and secondary literature regarding the history of women in Riverside. Sources specific to this history that are of particular note include *Anthology of Women in Riverside, 1870-1970* by the Riverside Historical Society, edited by Debbie Quick Netwon. This book provides excellent information on significant women and organizations in Riverside. Additionally, “Forgotten Space: The Places Women Occupied in the City of Riverside, California, 1870-1940,” by Teri Delcamp provides invaluable research and considerations regarding the historic preservation of women’s spaces in the city. Additionally, the following repositories, sites, and organizations were consulted for this study:

- California State Archives
- California Office of Historic Preservation Built Environment Directory (BERD)
- Calisphere
- Historical Newspapers
- March Field Air Museum
- Museum of Riverside
- Online Archive of California
- Riverside City Directories
- Riverside National Archives
- Riverside Public Library
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps
- U.S. Census records
- University of California Riverside (UCR) Special Collections and University Archives

Several historic context statements focusing on women’s history provided helpful guidance for researching and organizing this study, including the *Los Angeles Citywide Women’s Rights in Los Angeles* (2018) by Historic Resources Group; *The Women’s Suffrage Movement in Washington, DC: 1848-1973* (March 2024) by Quinn Evans; *Oregon Women’s Labor History: A Historic Context Statement* (2024) by Northwest Vernacular, Inc. and SJM Cultural Resources; *Historic Context for Suffrage and Women’s Rights in Nevada* (November 2021) by Alicia Barber and ZoAnn Campana; and *Women’s History in Olympia: First Settlement, 1846 to 1948* (July 1998) by Shanna Stevenson.

Period and Scope of Study

The study area for the project reflects the current boundaries of the City of Riverside. The scope of this historic context statement covers national, State, and local events and movements in order to provide a broad framework for understanding local women’s history in Riverside. The period of study begins with a discussion of the earliest

inhabitants of the area, namely the Cahuilla, Luiseño/Juaneño, Serrano, and Tongva Native Americans, and ends in 1990.

The 1990 end date for this study was chosen for several reasons. In general, the late 1980s and early 1990s are identified as the transition between Second Wave and Third Wave feminism. Second Wave feminism focused on challenging traditional gender roles, raising public consciousness about women's oppression, and advocating for equal rights including the right to abortion. By the 1990s, the movement had evolved due to the emergence of new feminist theories and ideas, including intersectionality, sex positivity, and media perceptions. National events associated with women's rights that signaled this shift include the 1991 Anita Hill testimony in opposition to the confirmation of a Supreme Court nominee accused of sexual harassment, and the 1990s underground feminist punk rock bands in "Riot Grrl" groups.³

The identification and preservation of resources significant for their association with women's history is relatively rare, both in Riverside and nationwide, and as a result these resources are threatened. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider a broader period of study to allow for the identification of potential resources before they are lost. In this way, this document also provides the groundwork for future studies in Riverside and the identification of resources associated with the more recent past. The end date of study was chosen to be consistent with other context statements related to women's history in California. For example, the *Women's Rights in Los Angeles Historic Context Statement* covered history up to 38 years in the past, and the *Oregon Women's Labor Historic Context Statement* includes events up to 1990, which was 34 years in the past.

Guidelines for Evaluation

A property may be designated as historic by national, state, and local authorities. In order for a building to qualify for listing in the National Register, the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), or as a local landmark, it must meet one or more identified criteria of significance. The property must also retain sufficient integrity to continue to evoke the sense of place and time with which it is historically associated.

This historic context statement provides guidance for listing at the federal, state, and local levels, according to the established criteria and integrity thresholds. In general, a higher integrity threshold is needed for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; properties that may not retain sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register may be eligible for the California Register or for local designation.

³ "Feminism: The Second Wave," *National Women's History Museum*, June 18, 2020, accessed on October 23, 2025 at: <https://www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/feminism-second-wave>; "Feminism: The Third Wave," *National Women's History Museum*, June 23, 2020, accessed on October 23, 2025 at: <https://www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/feminism-third-wave>.

In addition, properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years must be “exceptionally important” as outlined in National Register Criteria Consideration G. In general, designation criteria are based on four overarching concepts:

1. Properties associated with historic events.
2. Properties associated with significant people.
3. Properties that are significant for their design, architectural style, or association with a significant architect.
4. Properties that have potential archaeological significance.⁴

These concepts are included in the designation criteria for listing at the federal, state, and local levels. In general, properties associated with those aspects of women’s history discussed in this study will be eligible for an association with an important event or person. Section 2 provides additional information about criteria for designation and the evaluation of potentially eligible properties.

Notes on Terminology

The language used to discuss sexuality and gender is constantly evolving. Terminology used over the past few centuries can be highly fraught and prejudiced by today’s standards, while also reflecting the generally held beliefs that defined each historical era. Such terminology has been the subject of debate amongst scholars.

Whenever possible, the full names of women significant in the history of Riverside are provided in this context. Because women were often referred to by their married association in published documents (e.g., Mrs. R.L. Haney), their given names were not often recorded. Census and other records have been used whenever possible to identify their full names; however, the given names of some women have eluded current research efforts.

It is additionally useful to distinguish what has now become known as First, Second, and Third Wave Feminism. First Wave feminism was a period of feminist activity and thought that occurred during the 19th and early 20th centuries throughout the Western world focused on obtaining the right to vote. Second Wave feminism began in the early 1960s in the United States and eventually spread throughout the Western world and beyond. Third Wave feminism encompasses several different strains of activity, beginning in the 1990s and continuing to today. Third Wave feminism attempts to expand feminism to include women of all ethnicities, nationalities, regions, and cultural backgrounds.

⁴ Archaeological significance is outside of the scope of this project.

Acronyms are used throughout this historic context statement and are abbreviated after their first usage within the document. Those used most often are as follows:

CFWC – California Federation of Women’s Clubs
CSA – Community Settlement Association
DAR – Daughters of the American Revolution
EEOC – Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
ERA – Equal Rights Amendment
FEPC – Fair Employment Practice Commission
GFWC – General Federation of Women’s Clubs
LWV – League of Women Voters
NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NEA – National Education Association
NOW – National Organization for Women
NWP – National Woman’s Party
RWC – Riverside Women’s Club
UDC – United Daughters of the Confederacy
WAVAW – Women Against Violence Against Women
WCND – Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense
WCTU – Women’s Christian Temperance Union
WJCC – Women’s Joint Congressional Committee
WLAA – Women’s Land Army of America
YWCA – Young Women’s Christian Association

Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality attempts to address the diverse voices within a community, and the layers of nuanced history of specific communities.⁵ By their very nature, in thematic studies such as this one, cross-group connections and intersectional identities are often not adequately addressed. Associating resources or buildings with one group of people over another “...runs the risk of denying the layering of history and the shared streets of the present.”⁶ As described by historians Donna Graves and Gail Dubrow, “applying a single lens of gender, race or ethnicity, sexuality or any category of social analysis to the practice of historic preservation risks misrepresenting the layered histories of place and forecloses possibilities for political mobilization across identity lines in the interest of fostering greater social cohesion.”⁷

⁵ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: 1989, Issue 1, Article 8.

⁶ Donna Graves and Gail Dubrow, “Taking Intersectionality Seriously: Learning from LGBTQ Heritage Initiatives for Historic Preservation,” *Public Historian* 41, no. 2 (2019), 310.

⁷ Graves and Dubrow, 313.

As historian and preservationist Teri Delcamp notes regarding the role of women in Riverside:

It would be a fallacy to say that only certain buildings were associated with women because practically every building in Riverside was associated in some way or another with women's presence or activities. The same, of course, is true for men, but the fact remains that most of the written history about Riverside and many of its designated Landmarks and other historic sites are about men. Women exercised agency in numerous respects and influenced how Riverside developed from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries, and many sites are tangible links to this past.⁸

Operating with an awareness of intersectionality, this historic context statement acknowledges that women have historically been underrepresented in the historic record. Much of the history on women that does exist is focused on the activities of white middle- and upper-class heterosexual women, without acknowledgement of the additional forms of oppression faced by women of color and LGBTQ women. Certain historically underrepresented women (including African American, Native American, Latino, Asian American, Muslim, Jewish, bisexual, transgender, and queer, among others) remain inadequately documented in available sources about women's history in Riverside and nationwide. As a result, these groups have been marginalized both historically in traditional media and subsequently within the historical record. This absence of information on women of other ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, and sexual orientations inevitably leads to an incomplete history that fails to take intersectionality into account. We acknowledge these limitations and hope this historic context statement serves as a living document that will continue to be expanded as additional information and history is brought to light.

⁸ Teri Delcamp, "Forgotten Spaces: The Places Women Occupied in the City of Riverside, California, 1870-1940," master's thesis, California State University, San Marcos (April 22, 2015), 75.

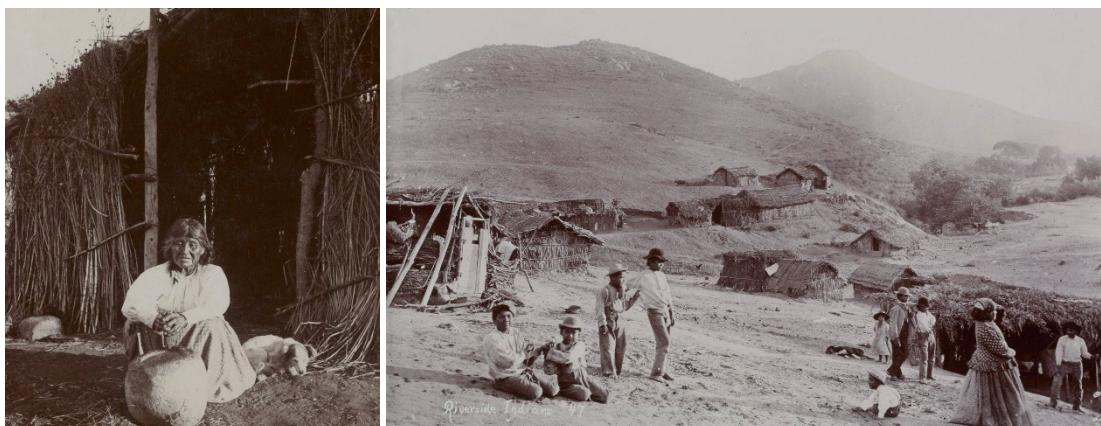
SECTION 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This section provides a general history of women in Riverside until the late 20th century. It is organized chronologically and explores the significant roles that women played in Riverside, along with a discussion of significant local events, people, places, and potential historic resources.

EARLY HISTORY

Indigenous Riverside

Present-day Riverside is the ancestral home to several Native American groups, including the Cahuilla (Ivilyuqaletem); Luiseño/Juaneño (Payómkawichum; Acjachemen); Serrano (Maarrêngä'yam; Yuhaviatam); and Gabrielino (Tongva; Gabrieleno; Kizh).⁹ While tribal lands historically shifted, generally, the Luiseño were to the north of present-day Riverside; Serrano to the east; Cahuilla to the south; and Gabrielino to the west.¹⁰



Cahuilla woman using a stone mortar and pestle, c. 1900 (left); Cahuilla village in Riverside at the Big Spring Rancheria near Mount Rubidoux, c. 1885 (right). *Huntington Library*.

Native American women played important roles amongst the Cahuilla, Luiseño/Juaneño, Serrano, and Gabrielino. Women were integral to tribal and family structures, and performed essential domestic, agricultural, and artistic roles. They were often tasked with gathering foods, preparing meals, building homes, and weaving baskets.¹¹ Women used outcroppings of bedrock to mill seeds and nuts and transported goods in woven baskets.

⁹ This historic context statement acknowledges and respects that each Native American tribe has the right for self-identification and for that choice to be honored. Because the area that now comprises the City of Riverside is in the ancestral home of several distinct Native American tribes, this historic context statement adopts a single name when referring to each tribe. Other names that are associated with the group are included in the first mention of a tribe in parenthesis to foster greater inclusivity in the discussion of Riverside's original inhabitants.

¹⁰ Clifford Trafzer and Jeffrey Smith, *Native Americans of Riverside County* (Charleston, NC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 7; *Native Land Digital*, accessed on July 2, 2025 at: <https://native-land.ca/>

¹¹ Trafzer and Smith, 27, 54-55.

In some tribes, Native women could serve as village/clan and spiritual leaders. Chiefs typically led their villages and often spoke multiple languages, negotiated social relations, and directed the community's seasonal migrations.¹² Among the Cahuilla, some women served as *puls*, or medicine women. Cahuilla Ruby Modest, a *pul*, reported that girls in her tribe occasionally underwent the *kikisulem* ceremony, saying "In the old days, young Indian boys and sometimes girls were initiated into their visionary powers."¹³ Women shamans also existed among the Luiseño/Juaneño; Albaña, a Luiseño/Juaneño woman, revealed that her great aunt was a shaman.¹⁴ Luiseño/Juaneño, Cahuilla, and Gabrielino girls were likely subject to elaborate puberty ceremonies. Adult men and women performed special dances to commemorate young girls that reached maturity.¹⁵

Spanish Era

From the 16th through the 18th centuries, Spanish explorers sailed along the west coast of North America on behalf of the Spanish empire. This territory included the present-day state of California, which encompassed the area known as Alta California. Early explorers included Hernando de Alarcón in 1540 and Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in 1542. Alarcón and Cabrillo were amongst the first Europeans to set foot on California soil.

In 1769, the Spanish government dispatched an expedition led by Captain Gaspar de Portolá, the newly appointed governor of Baja California, and Franciscan Father Junípero Serra to establish the first Spanish settlement in Alta California. Portolá founded a military outpost at the Presidio of San Diego, thereby claiming the land as Spanish territory. The Franciscans subsequently established 21 missions in California, including the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel (San Gabriel Mission), which was located approximately 45 miles west of present-day Riverside. These efforts marked the beginning of a coordinated campaign by Spanish missionaries and military to impose European religious beliefs and social and cultural ideals upon the existing indigenous population, leading to the widespread abuse of, and injury to, Native Americans through enslavement, forced religious conversion, and the introduction of infectious diseases.

¹² William McCawley, *The First Angelinos: The Gabrielino Indians of Los Angeles* (Banning, CA: Maliki Museum Press, 1996), 133-140; Lowell John Bean and Charles R. Smith, "Gabrieliño," in *California*, ed. Robert F. Heizer, vol. 8, *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. Robert F. Sturtevant (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 544; Lynn H. Gamble and Glenn S. Russell, "A View from the Mainland," in *Catalysts to Complexity* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Los Angeles, 2002), 105; Lisbeth Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 17-18.

¹³ Ruby Modesto and Guy Mont, *Not for Innocent Ears: Spiritual Traditions of a Desert Cahuilla Medicine Woman* (New Southwest, CA: Sweetlight Books, 1980), 26; Erika Pérez, "The Paradox of Kinship: Native-Catholic Communities in Alta California, 1769-1840s," in *On the Borders of Love and Power: Families and Kinship in the Borderlands*, Ed. David Wallace Adams and Crista DeLuzio (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 238.

¹⁴ Ruby Modesto and Guy Mount, *Not for Innocent Ears: Spiritual Traditions of a Desert Cahuilla Medicine Woman* (Angelus Oaks, CA: Sweetlight Books, 1980), 1, 26; Constance Goddard DuBois, "Religion, of the Luiseno Indians of Southern California," (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1908), 11; Erika Pérez, "The Paradox of Kinship: Native-Catholic Communities in Alta California, 1769-1840s," in *On the Borders of Love and Power: Families and Kinship in the Borderlands*, Ed. David Wallace Adams and Crista DeLuzio (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 242.

¹⁵ Gerald A. Smith and Steven M. Freers, *Fading Images: Indian Pictographs of Western Riverside County* (Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1994), 13-22.

Many Native Americans in Southern California were taken from their homelands – including those in present-day Riverside – and placed into nearby missions, such as the San Gabriel Mission in the nearby San Gabriel Valley. Established in 1771, records from the San Gabriel Mission report contact with clans at the villages of Guachama and Yukaipa’t and the subsequent baptisms of those Maara’yam (Serrano) people at the Mission.¹⁶

In 1773, the Spanish Crown sponsored six Christianized Indian women and their families from Baja California to travel north to the San Gabriel Mission. The aim of the migration was to populate the Mission San Gabriel and better “guide” the local indigenous population. Upon their arrival, these women often served as “spiritual parents” to indigenous pupils at the missions.¹⁷

Two years later, Juan Bautista de Anza led an even larger party north into California, a majority of which was comprised of women and children.¹⁸ The records of the journey frequently mention pregnancies, miscarriages, and births along the way.¹⁹ Franciscan friar Father Pedro Font punctiliously recorded the Anza journey, making note of the topography and the Indigenous populations they encountered. In his records, Font indicated that the people on the Santa Ana River (in the southern part of present-day Riverside) were already wary of the Spanish and generally avoided contact with them. On December 29, 1775, he observed:

Before we halted [on San Jacinto River 3 miles above San Jacinto] a few Indians who were camped on the banks of the river, armed with their bows and arrows, permitted themselves to be seen at a distance, but they did not wish to come near us although we called them. These Indians are of the Jeniguechi tribe and are very similar in all respects to the Jecuiches of the sierras.²⁰

Early records of the Spanish arrival in California frequently note that both Indigenous men and women hid upon seeing the soldiers; women were particularly vulnerable in these situations and are recorded as subjected to rape and violence. In one incident, Scottish merchant Hugo Reid recalled that a group of Spaniards restrained the adult male Native Americans in the general area of Riverside and made “signs of their wish to procure

¹⁶ “Our History,” *Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation*, accessed on April 24, 2025 at: <https://sanmanuel-nsn.gov/culture/history>

¹⁷ Amongst these leaders were Feliciana who sponsored a girl from the village of Juyuvit in 1776 and Ana Maria, a *madrina* from the Jautbit *rancheria*, who served her Mission San Gabriel community by sponsoring 202 neophytes from 1808 to 1815. Bouvier, 67; Pérez, “The Paradox of Kinship,” 243.

¹⁸ Virginia Marie Bouvier, *Women and the Conquest of California, 1542-1840*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), 58.

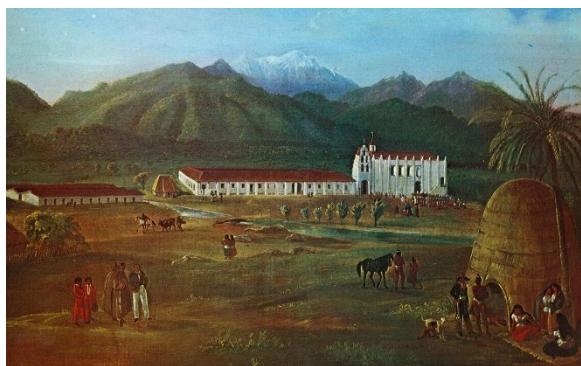
¹⁹ Bouvier, 63.

²⁰ Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Anza’s California Expeditions, Font’s Complete Diary of the Second Anza Expedition*, vol. 4 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930), 163 in Chester King and NEA, “Ethnographic Overview of the Angeles National Forest: Tataviam and San Gabriel Mountain Serrano Ethnohistory,” prepared for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (February 6, 2004), 17.

women—these having again fled to the thicket, at first appearance of their coming. Harsh measures obtained for them what they sought.”²¹ After the assault:

The women were considered contaminated, and put through a long course of sweating, drinking of herbs, etc. They necessarily became accustomed to these things, but their disgust and abhorrence never left them till many years after. In fact, every white child born among them for a long period was secretly strangled and buried.²²

Like their treatment of Native Americans encountered along the journey north, the Spanish also mistreated the local population at the Mission San Gabriel. Life at the mission was difficult for the local Indigenous population, and exploitation of Native labor included the physical construction of the mission itself, as well as agricultural labor and specialized trades. Women played a critical role in the running of the missions, including supervising, teaching, and executing basic household tasks such as cleaning, cooking, sewing, laundering, and caring for the sick, among others.²³



Painting of San Gabriel Mission by Ferdinand Deppe, 1832.
Californai Historical Society.

missions were “never whipped in public, but in an enclosed and somewhat distant place that their cries may not excite a too lively compassion, which might cause the met to revolt.”²⁶

The mission practiced a form of penal servitude that exploited the local Native population and often forced their conversion through coercion or violence.²⁴ Punishments at the Mission included food rationing, solitary confinement, public humiliation, and corporeal violence, such as flogging and the *Ley de Bayona*.²⁵ Mission priests were instructed by Mexico City to punish neophytes secretly, especially women. In 1786, the Frenchman Jean de La Perouse observed that women at the

²¹ Hugo Reid, Letter No. 16, “First Arrival of the Spaniards,” in Susanna Bryant Dakin, *A Scotch Paisano in Old Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939), 261–262.

²² Reid, 261–262.

²³ Bouvier, 85.

²⁴ Benjamin Madley, “California’s First Mass Incarceration System: Franciscan Missions, California Indians, and Penal Servitude, 1769–1836,” *Pacific Historical Review* 88, no. 1 (2019): 14–47; Hiram A. Reid, *History of Pasadena* (Pasadena: Pasadena History Company Publishers, 1895), 25–26; Bouvier, 95.

²⁵ The *Ley de Bayona* included tying a shotgun behind the person’s knees and tying their hands to the gun, which was “very painful.” Eulalia Pérez, *Testimonios: Early California Through the Eyes of Women, 1815–1848* (Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 2006), edited by Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, 109; John Mack Faragher, *Eternity Street: Violence and Justice in Frontier Los Angeles* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016), 39.

²⁶ Malcolm Margolin, ed., *Monterey in 1786: The Journals of Jean Francois de la Perouse* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1989) in Bouvier, 95.

Oppressive ideologies about sexuality and marriage permeated Spanish relationships with Native women. At night, unmarried women and girls over the age of seven were locked in a communal room known as the *monjero*, which served as a form of chastisement and likely a site of sexual exploitation.²⁷ These small rooms had thick walls with barred windows, which served to limit communication between the women and people outside. Because these rooms were small, overcrowded, and unventilated, women were more likely to die at the missions than men. As the data for the early 19th century reveals, women were especially vulnerable to complications arising from venereal diseases such as syphilis.²⁸ Epidemics frequently broke out in the missions, with inhabitants suffering from communicable diseases such as measles, smallpox, and dysentery. In 1814, Fray Luis Gil and Fray José María de Zalvidea noted that “the number of deaths is double that of births... If the government does not supply doctors and medicine, Upper California will be without Indians at all.”²⁹

Despite—or perhaps because of—these travails, some women sought to break free from the mission system. One such notable woman was Toypurina, a Gabrielino spiritual leader from the village of Japchivit who led a revolt at the mission in 1785. Toypurina teamed with three other leaders to start the revolt: neophyte Nicolás José from Shevaanga; Tomajasaquichi from Tujubit; and Ajiyivi from Hahamog’na. The revolt was in direct reaction to the Spaniards’ attempts to deny the population their cultural dances, ceremonies, and rituals.

Toypurina later testified that she “was angry with the Padres and with all of those of this Mission because [they] are living here on my native soil, for trespassing upon the land of my forefathers.”³⁰ According to records, Toypurina prophesized that the Spanish soldiers would be dead before the attack began, and warriors from more than eight villages joined the attack on the mission, traveling from over 40 miles away. The soldiers at the mission, likely having been warned in advance of the attack, withstood the revolt and captured several dozen people, including the four leaders. Although the revolt failed and Toypurina was exiled, the event demonstrated local resistance to the mission system. Toypurina is remembered as a leader who fought for indigenous independence during a period of systemized oppression.

²⁷ Perez recounted that unmarried women at the San Gabriel Mission outside after curfew were “locked up” in the monjero. The sites were also places of sexual exploitation and assault; see Antione Tibesar, ed. *Writings of Junípero Serra* (Washington, DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955-1966), I:363; Madley, “California’s First Mass Incarceration System,” 24, 34; Reyes, *Private Women, Public Lives*, 113.

²⁸ Pérez, “The Paradox of Kinship,” 241.

²⁹ Maynard Geiger, “Mission San Gabriel in 1814,” *The Historical Society of California* 53, no. 3 (September 1971), 242.

³⁰ Steven W. Hackel, “Sources of Rebellion: Indian Testimony and the Mission San Gabriel Uprising of 1785,” *Ethnohistory* 50, no. 4 (Fall 2003), 654; Maria Lepowsky, “Indian Revolts and Cargo Cults,” in *Reassessing Revitalization Movements*, ed. Michael E. Harkin (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 7; Cheyenne M. Stone, Glenda Armand, and Katie Dorame, *Toypurina: Japchivit Leader, Medicine Woman, Tongva Rebel* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2024).

At the San Gabriel Mission, another woman played an important role: Eulalia Pérez. In her memoir, mission stewardess, or “keeper of the keys,” Eulalia Pérez remembers how her responsibilities grew over her tenure at the Mission:

I began to do a lot of work at the mission. When somebody came to buy a fanega of wheat or corn or something else, I was the person who went and witnessed the handing over of the grain... when ships arrived at the port... the fathers would select from the invoices the goods needed at the mission... Later when I had enough time, I would board the ship with some servants to receive the goods. I was always authorized to take any goods I thought might be useful for the mission.³¹

Eulalia Pérez supported the Christianizing efforts of the mission, and in mentioning the severe punishments imposed on Native Americans who were charged with infractions of mission rules, claimed that the priests “showed much concern for the Indians.”³² She was later granted a rancho from Indian land that had been claimed by the mission.

In 1819, the San Gabriel Mission founded an *estancia* (rancho) known as Rancho San Bernardino at an indigenous village known as Guachama in the San Bernardino Valley. Serrano and Cahuilla workers at the estancia constructed an irrigation ditch, known as a *zanja*, to bring water to the site and surrounding area. Despite this improvement, the estancia was relatively short lived, and approximately a decade later, the missionaries relocated their efforts in the valley further east to present-day Redlands. There, the mission established a chapel and adobe grain house.³³ The site was later known as the “Asistencia.”³⁴ Like the Rancho San Bernardino, the Asistencia was also short lived. In 1834, the mission system was secularized, and the Redlands site was abandoned.³⁵



Eulalia Perez, c. 1870. *University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library.*

³¹ Bárbara O. Reyes, ed. *Private Women, Public Lives: Gender and the Missions of the Californias* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009), 241; Reid, History of Pasadena, 25-26.

³² Reyes, 244.

³³ Father Sanchez of San Gabriel Mission in 1827, cited in George William Beattie, *California's Unbuilt Missions: Spanish Plans for an Inland Chain* (San Bernardino: 1930), 43.

³⁴ R. Bruce Harley, “The San Bernardino Estancias,” *California Missions Foundation*, accessed on July 29, 2025 at: <https://californiamissionsfoundation.org/articles/the-san-bernardino-estancias/>

³⁵ Beattie, *California's Unbuilt Missions*, 39.

Mexican Era

In 1821, Mexico gained its independence from Spain, and Alta California became a Mexican province. At that time, about thirty land grants throughout the territory had already been presented to Spanish soldiers and government officials by the King of Spain. However, no titles were actually transferred as part of this effort; Spanish governors were authorized to give concession to the individuals, which allowed them to raise livestock in certain areas without a formal deed. The “rancho system” as it is known today, which transferred ownership, was instead unique to California under Mexican rule in the 1830s and 1840s.

By the 1830s, an increasing number of Mexicans were migrating and settling in the region, and the focus on secular agricultural settlement increasingly overshadowed the mission system. Consequently, in 1833, the Mexican Congress passed the Act for the Secularization of the Missions of California. Franciscan padres abandoned the missions, and the new Mexican government seized most mission lands from the Catholic Church. As a result, the Mission San Gabriel and its lands were divided, sold, or abandoned. Of the nearly eight million acres of mission lands in California, nearly all were divided amongst 50 Mexican men and women. These elite landholding families were known as *Californios*.³⁶

Under Spanish and Mexican law, white³⁷ *Californio* women could legally control their property and wealth and could litigate on questions related to their person, families, and land holdings. With these rights, women landowners played important roles in California’s history. Women had the right to inherit land and property equally with their male siblings, and women retained their own property even after marriage. As recorded by historian Lisbeth Haas, “Adult women could conduct their own legal affairs, write their own wills without the consent of their husbands, serve as attorneys for elderly relatives, be guardians of their children...and adopt children with government permission.”³⁸ As a result, “women had acknowledged roles in the public sphere.”³⁹

In practice these rights were limited to those women deemed racially “decent,” i.e. Spanish and *Californio* women, as opposed to those women that prejudice and colonialism deemed “indecent.”⁴⁰ These laws established the practice and logic of placing whole categories of women outside the protection of society, largely including Native American women.

RANCHO JURUPA AND SAN BERNARDINO

Following the secularization of the Mission system by Mexico in 1834, lands owned by the California missions were divided into land grants. In 1838, Juan Bandini was granted the

³⁶ Heather Valdez Singleton, “Surviving Urbanization: The Gabrieleno, 1850-1928.” *Wicazo Sa Review* 19, no. 2, Colonization/Decolonization, I (Autumn 2004), 50-51.

³⁷ In early census records, Hispanic people were counted amongst the white population.

³⁸ Haas, 82.

³⁹ Haas, 82.

⁴⁰ Haas, 82.

Rancho Jurupa, an approximately 40,500-acre land grant that encompassed present-day Riverside.⁴¹ The following year, Antonio Maria Lugo, along with his three sons and Diego Sepulveda, received the 37,000-acre Rancho San Bernardino, land previously owned by the San Gabriel Mission. Lugo's son José del Carmen Lugo and his family resided in the former estancia at Guachama. The Jurupa and San Bernardino ranchos spanned much of the Santa Ana River and the San Bernardino Valley.

Bandini and Lugo raised livestock on their ranchos and were frequent victims of horse and cattle theft. Thieves of all backgrounds and identities stole from these outlying ranchos, including American traders and other adventurers. Additionally, Native Americans often led to raids on Mexican ranches. Stripped of their lands, Native people obtained livestock and other supplies necessary for their survival from ranchers. Thefts—which served as acts of resistance—were largely attributed to distant tribes across the Southwest including the Ute, Paiute, and Mojave.⁴²

After losing stock animals to raiders, Bandini and Lugo contracted with eighteen families from Abiquiú, New Mexico to settle on and guard the northern end of their properties. In 1841, under the leadership of Lorenzo Trujillo, Santiago Martinez, and Hipolito Espinosa, a group of Spanish-speaking residents of Spanish, Mexican, and Native American ancestry traveled west into Alta California. The caravan was led by Taos residents John Rowland and William Workman and heralded the massive overland emigration rush to come. Many of the party were women. Party member Isaac Givens described the group as “a party of New Mexicans, some twenty-five in number, about half of whom were women and children, who asked and were granted the privilege of traveling with us.”⁴³

Upon arrival, the families founded the community of Politano, before moving a few miles west and forming the communities of La Placita de los Trujillos (1844) and Agua Mansa (1845).⁴⁴ The migrants cultivated subsistence farms, organized a community school, and erected a church. In the early 1850s, La Placita, Agua Mansa, and the neighboring community of Jurupa were consolidated into the township of San Salvador. San Salvador became a nucleus for newly arriving Spanish-speaking colonists, who traveled through the valley over the improved trails from Mexico and New Mexico.⁴⁵ By 1855, San Salvador

⁴¹ Bandini to Stearns, 14 de Diciembre de 1839, 30 de Marzo de 1841, 3 de Mayo de 1841, Abel Stearns Coll., SG Box 5, HL. See also Bandini, San Gabriel, to Stearns, 23 de Septiembre de 1838, 31 de Diciembre de 1838, 5 de Abril de 1840; Bandini, San Juan del Río, to Stearns, 26 de Septiembre de 1841, Abel Stearns Coll., SG Box 5, HL, as quoted in Victor A. Walsh, “The Casa and The Don: Juan Bandini’s Quest for Homeland in Early San Diego,” *Journal of San Diego History*, (2011), 39.

⁴² Genevieve Carpio, *Collisions at the Crossroads: How Place and Mobility Make Race* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 28.

⁴³ Isaac Givens, “An Immigrant of ‘41,” no date, MS, Box C-D, folder 246, p. 12, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, cited in Paul R. Spitzzeri, “To Seduce and Confuse: The Rowland-Workman Expedition of 1841,” *Southern California Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (Spring 1998), 37; Mermilliod and Ringhoff, 8-21.

⁴⁴ Steve Lech, *Pioneers of Riverside County: The Spanish, Mexican, and Early American Periods* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2012), 53-54; R. Bruce Harley, “An Early Riverside Suburb at La Placita,” *Journal of the Riverside Historical Society* 7, February 2003, 14-15; Caprio, 29.

⁴⁵ Joyce C. Vickery, *Defending Eden: New Mexican Pioneers in the San Bernardino Valley* (Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1984), 50.

boasted approximately 200 residents.⁴⁶ By 1860, it had 1,092 residents, of which 458 were women: 453 Hispanic/White women, 2 Black women, and 4 Native American women.⁴⁷

Women played a significant role in establishing these new communities, as well as serving as matriarchs of the founding families. One example of this role is reflected in the Trujillo family itself, which was led by numerous notable women over many decades. A testament to the family's tenacity is the Trujillo Adobe, constructed in 1862 by community leaders Lorenzo and Maria Dolores Archuleta Trujillo, which housed generations of the family. The adobe, now a ruin, remains the last aboveground building vestige associated with the community of San Salvador de Jurupa (Agua Mansa-La Placita de los Trujillos). It is located at 3669 W. Center Street in Riverside (extant).⁴⁸



Trujillo Adobe, c. 1909. *Riverside Municipal Museum*.

Notable pioneer Mercedes Alvarado Jensen was born in 1837 to the Californio Alvarado family of Los Angeles. In 1854, she married Danish sea captain Cornelius Jensen and settled in Agua Mansa. Recognizing the need for commerce and trade in the nascent community, Mercedes and Cornelius Jensen established the town's first general store and post office. In addition to the demands of running a

business, Mercedes also raised a dozen children, eight of whom survived past childhood.⁴⁹ In 1862, a flood decimated Agua Mansa, and the family was forced to relocate outside of the leveled town. In 1865, they purchased a tract of land whereon they built a Danish style brick house, known as the Jensen-Alvarado Ranch (4307 Briggs Street, extant).⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Debi Howell-Ardila, Rincon Consultants, Inc., *Riverside Latino Historic Context Statement*, prepared for the City of Riverside (2018), 21; John Brumgardt and William David Putney, "San Salvador New Mexican Settlement in Alta California," *Southern California Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (Winter 1977); Carpio, 29.

⁴⁷ Table 3, "Population of Cities, Towns, & C.," U.S. Census, State of California, 1860, 31.

⁴⁸ The Trujillo Adobe was designated as a City of Riverside Landmark No. 130 in 2015 – making it the first building in the city to be landmarked for its association with Latino heritage. It was listed as a State Point of Historic Interest in 1968. In 2025, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See nomination for additional information: Jennifer Mermilliod and Mary Ringhoff, "Trujillo Adobe," *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, August 22, 2024.

⁴⁹ "Jose Jensen, for 69 Years Resident, Dies," *Riverside Daily Press*, August 8, 1930, 8.

⁵⁰ The ranch is California Historical Landmark No. 943 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is the oldest non-adobe structure in the Inland Empire. "In the Shadow," *San Bernardino County Sun* December 30, 1914, 4.

By the end of the Mexican Era, the Jurupa Rancho was largely divided by sales and subsequent divisions. In 1843, Juan Bandini sold a portion of the Jurupa Rancho to Benjamin D. Wilson who, in turn, conveyed it to Captain James Johnson and Colonel Isaac Williams. The new owners sold it to Louis Rubidoux and Maria Guadalupe Garcia Rubidoux in 1847, and another portion of the rancho was sold by Juan Bandini to his son-in-law, Abel Stearns in 1857.⁵¹



Mercedes Alvarado Jensen, 1888 and Jensen-Alvarado Ranch. *Huntington Library and Riverside Convention and Visitors Bureau.*

By the time that California became a U.S. State in 1850, an increasing number of Americans resided in present-day Riverside, including several men who had married into *Californio* families. The late 19th century ushered in a new period of migration and immigration, as people of various backgrounds settled in the newly American territory.

Early American Period

In the 19th century, most aspects of women's lives were completely under male control. However, one protection for California women in the American period was assured by *Californio* families: married women in the state retained "the right to hold as separate property any real or personal property which came to them by way of a gift, device or descent prior to or following their marriage."⁵² As an increasing number of *Californio* women married Anglo pioneers, many *Californio* families worried that property would be taken out of their hands. The *Californios* at the Constitutional convention of 1849 therefore insisted that what had long been part of Mexican civil code be inserted into the laws of the new state.⁵³

⁵¹ *An Illustrated History of Southern California* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1890), 410-411.

⁵² Linda Louise Pixley, "A History of Los Angeles Women, 1850-1900," (master's thesis, University of Southern California, June 1975), 3.

⁵³ Pixley, 12.

The 1861 California Married Women's Property Act also gave women more control over their property. With this Act, a married woman in California had management and control of her separate property, which was no longer accessible to her husband's creditors. After 1864, a woman no longer needed her husband's consent to execute a will, although she could only include her separate property.⁵⁴

In present-day Riverside, Maria Guadalupe Garcia Rubidoux, inheritor of the Rubidoux homestead, was responsible for its ultimate fate. Born in 1811 in New Mexico, Maria Guadalupe Garcia married French trader Louis Rubidoux in 1834. The couple relocated to San Salvador in 1841-1843 and purchased a portion of the Jurupa Rancho in 1847. Upon Louis Rubidoux's death in 1868, his widow Maria Guadalupe Garcia Rubidoux served as executrix of his will, ultimately deciding to divide and sell the land to a proposed silk culture enterprise.⁵⁵ The Rubidoux adobe is no longer extant.⁵⁶

In 1868, a nascent silkworm colony known as the Silk Center Association was founded on the previous Rubidoux land by Frenchman Louis Prevost. His untimely death in 1870 compelled his co-investors to abandon the project, just before the state of California withdrew the high promotional bounties it had been offering for the planting of mulberry trees and silkworm cocoons.⁵⁷ Investor Thomas W. Cover sought purchasers for the property, ultimately identifying the party from the East that included members of the Southern California Colony Association in 1870.

Meanwhile, the community of San Salvador was challenged for its right to the land twice during the new American period: once by Juan Bandini in 1853 and again by Abel Stearns in 1868. It ultimately succeeded in its claim and continued to prosper into the 1870s. However, when Riverside was founded to the immediate south of San Salvador in 1870 and the Railroad created the "spite" city of Colton to the north, San Salvador's citizens were pulled away by the greater opportunity for economic gain in the two new towns.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Kristine S. Knaplund, "The Evolution of Women's Rights in Inheritance," *UC Law SF Journal on Gender and Justice* 19, no. 1 (Winter 2008), 4.

⁵⁵ Gerald D. Adix, "Strange Chain of Circumstances Brings to Light Historic Paper," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, September 29, 1958, 56; "Rubidoux," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 18, 1955, 163.

⁵⁶ The Rubidoux adobe was located at the 5575 block of Mission Boulevard. A monument to the grist mill is located at 5540 Molina Way, Rubidoux.

⁵⁷ Lech, *Pioneers of Riverside County*, 120-121; Patterson, 35; Robert Hornbeck, *Roubidoux's Ranch in the Seventies* (Kessinger Publishing, 1913), 105-106.

⁵⁸ Brumgardt and Putney, "San Salvador New Mexican Settlement in Alta California," 362; Vickery, 75-76.

WOMEN IN RIVERSIDE, 1870-1889

In the Spring of 1870, a group of white prospectors traveled west with the purpose of “securing a tract of land where a colony of eastern friends might find a home – first as a healthful resort, and second, for the raising of semi-tropical fruits.”⁵⁹ Led by John W. North, the group called themselves the Southern California Colony Association (Association). North briefly considered buying land in present-day Pasadena or Los Angeles before the group met with Thomas W. Cover, who convinced the Association of the merits of the 8,735-acre former silkworm farm site. The Association purchased 6,000 acres at \$3 per acre that same year.

Between 1870 and 1875, dozens of families—largely white and of the upper-middle-class—made the trek west to the nascent colony. The Association decided upon the name “Riverside” in 1871 and laid out the new town in the style of Philadelphia with all streets at right angles.

The new settlers included women and children who set about developing the new site. Ann Hendrix Loomis North, married to John W. North, settled in the new town with her husband.⁶⁰ Ann North was raised in a staunchly abolitionist and pro-temperance household and married John North in 1848. She was an accomplished musician and cultivator of roses, who experimented with citrus fruits in the new colony.⁶¹

Early settler Mrs. D.C. Twogood remembered of the early days: “In every direction, as far as the eye could see, was a sandy desert. Homesick? Oh yes, the women who came in those days were homesick. How could we help being?”⁶² Resident James Boyd, who moved to Riverside in 1872, later romanticized the role that pioneer women held in is founding:

Every woman had to do her own cooking and bread making. The nearest bakery was in San Bernardino. There were no laundries and except when anyone could be hired from the outside the washing was done at home...Everybody was healthy, happy and content, and the kiddies ran out in the hot sun bareheaded, barefooted, and half naked...Water changed the situation when sick women began to go out in the early morning planting vines and flowers and vegetables and gaining health in the open air and sunshine. And then came real homes with everything in the surroundings to make them until the little cottage would be a mass of climbers and ever-blooming roses.

⁵⁹ Dr. James P. Greves, 1883 as quoted in Elmer Wallace Holmes, *History of Riverside County, California with Biographical Sketches* (Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1912), 26.

⁶⁰ Merlin Stonehouse, *John Wesley North and the Reform Frontier* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1965), 220-232; Tom Patterson, *A Colony for California* (Riverside: Press-Enterprise Company, 1971), 104.

⁶¹ Debbie Quick Newton, “Ann Hendrix Loomis North,” *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California 1870-1970*, ed. Debbie Quick Newton (Riverside, CA: Riverside Historical Society, October 2025), 196.

⁶² Mrs. D.C. Twogood in Patterson, 104.

The wife made the home and contributed her share in making Riverside the city of homes that it now is.⁶³

Agriculture and Labor

The primary economy of early Riverside was focused on agriculture, particularly citrus cultivation. The Gage Canal, completed in 1884, brought water to 160 acres in Riverside and allowed for widespread irrigation. As a result, the city's population steadily climbed and expanded to the northeast of the city center.

In the 1870s, early settlers, many of whom were women, successfully cultivated raisin grapes, often packing and shipping their own crops. Private owners of fruit handling and packaging companies also occasionally hired women. However, by the early 1880s, grape production in the Central Valley had outpaced the yields in Southern California, and the raisin business began to decline in Riverside. Residents increasingly looked towards other potentially profitable pursuits.⁶⁴ One such profitable pursuit appeared in the form of citrus.

Riverside resident Eliza Lovell Tibbet is frequently credited with the establishment of the Washington navel orange in Riverside. Born in Cincinnati in 1823, Eliza Tibbet relocated to Washington, D.C. where she was an activist for progressive social causes, including suffrage. Upon arriving in Riverside in the early 1870s, she and her husband Luther Tibbet wrote to an old neighbor of theirs in Washington, D.C., Dr. William Saunders, who oversaw experimental gardens at the U.S.

Department of Agriculture. Saunders had secured 12 samples of Washington navel oranges from Brazil, and at the Tibbet's urging, sent two of the samples to them in Riverside to see how the fruit handled the California climate.⁶⁵ Settling on the skirts of the city's new irrigation fields, according to common lore Eliza planted the trees in 1873 just outside her door and used dishwater to irrigate them. Bearing fruit in 1876, the Washington navel oranges were quickly recognized as a successful experiment.



Eliza Tibbets, c. 1880. *University of California, Riverside.*

⁶³ James Boyd, "History of Riverside," in *History of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties*, ed. John Brown Jr. and James Boyd. vol. 1 (Chicago: Western Historical Association, 1922), 373-374.

⁶⁴ Boyd, 443.

⁶⁵ Patricia Ortlieb and Peter Economy, *Creating an Orange Utopia: Eliza Lovell Tibbets and the Birth of California's Citrus Industry* (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation Press, 2011), 58.

Horticulturalists transferred the seedling trees, and citrus groves increasingly peppered Riverside's evolving landscape.⁶⁶ The Tibbets residence was located on Central Avenue (not extant).

Pioneers began to cultivate citrus, although it was at first considered an experiment. By 1876, however, the "fine quality of the few oranges grown was realized," which "gave great encouragement to those that were [in Riverside] and lent to an astonishing impetus to the causes of emigration."⁶⁷ Although other crops, including apricots and grapes were cultivated in Riverside, oranges and lemons quickly became the primary crop in town. As historian Kevin Starr notes:

Citrus, citrus, citrus was the ambience and *raison d'être* of Riverside, especially after the Santa Fe inaugurated direct shipments East in 1886. By 1909, Riverside was shipping 2.3 million crates of oranges and lemons East. Each Spring Riverside was awash with the scent of orange blossoms. Tourists from the Eastern states came out to see and smell the blossoms in much the same manner that others toured New England to enjoy the foliage of autumn.⁶⁸

Women in Riverside were indispensable in the new citrus enterprises. In addition to Eliza Tibbets' introduction of the plant, women played crucial roles in the business, from owning groves to working in the packing houses.⁶⁹

Martha and John Hewitt were one such enterprising couple. The Hewitts owned and cultivated a ten-acre grove. Additionally, Martha Hewitt came to play a significant role in the establishment of women's societies in Riverside. She served as the president of Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), founder of Riverside Women's Club (RWC), president of Red Cross Society, and as president of Women's Auxiliary of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). In 1885, she and her husband hired architect Augustus W. Boggs to design and build an Eastlake Victorian style house on their orange grove at 3050 Orange Street (now known as the Hewitt House, extant).⁷⁰ As a result, her residence and citrus grove occasionally served as a location for various social and organizational meetings in the new community. In 1909, Martha Hewitt subdivided her property into 43 residential lots and moved the house to face Orange Street.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Hornbeck, 167; Esther H. Klotz, "Eliza Tibbets and her Washington Navel Oranges," in *A History of Citrus in the Riverside Area*, ed. Esther H. Klotz, Harry W. Lawton, and Joan H. Hall (Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1989); Patricia Ortlieb and Peter Economy, *Creating an Orange Utopia: Eliza Lovell Tibbets and the Birth of California's Citrus Industry* (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 2011); Caprio, 33-34.

⁶⁷ A.A. Bynon & Son, *History and Directory of Riverside County, 1893-1894* (Riverside, CA: Riverside Daily Press Office, 1894), 27.

⁶⁸ Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 146.

⁶⁹ In addition to those listed herein, other notable early citrus growers in Riverside included Hattie Traver and Sarah Battles. For more information, see: Ruth West, "The Fruits of Their Labor: Women of the Groves," *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California, 1970-1970*, 264-273.

⁷⁰ The property is City of Riverside Landmark No. 93.

⁷¹ Esther H. Klotz and Joan H. Hall, *Adobes, Bungalows, and Mansions of Riverside, California* (Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1985), 37-39.

Mrs. Catharine Bettner, an active member of the community and widow of an early citrus pioneer, moved to Riverside in 1876. There she built the Heritage House in 1891, which was designed by Los Angeles-based architect John A. Walls (8193 Magnolia Avenue, extant).⁷² Bettner resided at the house until 1928.

Citrus increasingly became a staple in Riverside's economy, with Chinese, Japanese, and women workers making up a large proportion of the laborers by the late 19th century. Chinese American workers were important citriculturists, often having had experience with the plant in China. Their knowledge was indispensable, as many white grove owners were ignorant about the crop's particularities.⁷³

While Chinese men made up a notable portion of the population of Riverside—often laboring in the agricultural fields—Chinese women were largely absent from the early community. This was primarily due to the 1875 Page Act, which sought to prohibit the immigration of Chinese prostitutes by requiring women emigrating to the United States to provide extensive documentation. The Act inevitably resulted in hostilities towards Chinese women and virtually banned them from emigrating to the country from 1870 to 1880.⁷⁴ Subsequent passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 further prohibited immigration from China and outlawed the naturalization of Chinese Americans in the U.S. for a period of ten years.⁷⁵ The ban was extended by the Geary Act of 1892 for another decade. As a result, very few Chinese women emigrated. The laws, coupled with anti-Chinese sentiment and violence, led many grove owners to hire Japanese workers over Chinese workers.



Heritage House, 2021. *Museum of Riverside*.

⁷² The Catherine Bettner House/Heritage House is City of Riverside Landmark No. 5 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Klotz and Hall, 92.

⁷³ Riverside Municipal Museum, *Life in Little Gom-Benn: Chinese Immigrant Society in Riverside, 1885-1930* (Riverside: Riverside Municipal Museum, 1991).

⁷⁴ Carpio, 48.

⁷⁵ Rosalind M. Sagara, *Chinese Americans in Riverside Historic Context Statement*, prepared for the City of Riverside by Historic Resources Group, September 30, 2016.

In Riverside, Japanese men were frequently employed as citrus laborers and Japanese women were employed in the packinghouses. Early census records indicate that *Issei* women resided in labor camps and boarding houses around Riverside.⁷⁶ A consistent critique of Japanese women by white City officials was that they worked in the fields and packinghouses, rather than taking care of the home. Japanese women were frequently blamed for their impoverished living conditions and substandard sanitation. Because Japanese residents were unable to own property or long-term leases, Japanese residents likely felt expenditures were better spent on goods that could be taken with them when forced to move, rather than home improvements.⁷⁷ As discussed in the next chapter, Koreans increasingly worked in the citrus groves in the early 20th century.

White women were also hired to work in citrus packinghouses, largely wrapping and boxing oranges.⁷⁸ Early Riverside settler James Boyd wrote that packinghouse oranges were “in the hands of clean and neat women and girls” and that “the woman worker in Riverside has been crowned with honor.”⁷⁹ As historian Audrey Maier recounts, the “story of packinghouses is the story of women working together to build communities and make their way in Riverside.”⁸⁰



Women and men packing oranges in Riverside, n.d. *California Historical Society*.

⁷⁶ *Japanese Historic Context Statement*, 43.

⁷⁷ Carpio, 113.

⁷⁸ Boyd, 468.

⁷⁹ Boyd, 494.

⁸⁰ Audrey Maier, “Women’s Work,” *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California, 1870-1970*, 288.

Church Societies and Spiritualism

As with many settlements in the West and elsewhere, religion and spirituality were key pillars of the new colony, especially among women settlers. Reverend I.W. Atherton later remembered that the few people then residing in Riverside were greatly divided amongst religious lines: "Among them were representatives of every phase and type, both of belief and unbelief."⁸¹

Some of the earliest women settlers of Riverside were followers of Spiritualism. Spiritualism recognized the equality of the sexes and allowed women to hold leadership roles within the religion. Spiritualists, including those in Riverside, often fought for women's rights, the abolition of slavery, and health and reform movements. In the 1890s, Spiritualism was increasingly intertwined with the early suffrage movement; in many ways the self-confidence that women gained in Spiritualism was what allowed the suffrage movement its ultimate success.⁸²

As recorded by historian Elmer W. Holmes, Riverside hosted several notable women Spiritualists:

In the first few years of the colony there came to settle here a coterie of spiritualist and free thinkers, rather clannish in their ways, all of whom have long since passed away, leaving no descendants here to take pride in the beautiful city whose building they helped initiate. Nothing remains to remind one of their presence except the names of a few of our public streets—Denton, Cridge, Tibbets, etc.—and the record of the efforts of Mrs. L.C. Tibbets to secure from the government the original navel orange trees from which have been propagated the millions of trees which have made Riverside and California famous and wealthy.⁸³

One early notable member of the Riverside colony was Annie Denton Cridge. Cridge, a suffragette, spiritualist, and vegetarian socialist was the author of powerful work of utopian fiction, *Man's Rights; or, How Would you Like It?* Cridge believed that women's emancipation and healthy living required a large-scale reorganization of societal relations. She sought to make these beliefs a reality in the last years of her life, when she relocated to Riverside in 1870. Subscribing to the Associationist movement—a popular 19th-century communal movement that encourage the creation of utopian communities—Cridge sought to create in Riverside a sanitary agricultural farm. Upon her death in 1873, her

⁸¹ Reverend I. W. Atherton, "Early Churches," in Hornbeck, 152.

⁸² Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 193.

⁸³ Holmes, 38-39.

husband recalled that “believing that occupation on the land was the keystone of woman’s independence,” Cridge spent the last years of her lifeforce sustaining the colony.⁸⁴

Citrus cultivator Eliza Tibbets was also a Spiritualist and dabbled in the occult. Mary North Shepherd remembers that Eliza held a séance one night in the North home where she “was entirely unconscious of her words or actions and had to be told later of what had transpired.”⁸⁵

Additionally, mainstream religious institutions gained traction in Riverside, as settlers established various churches and organizations in the town. Churches often had female-oriented groups, including the Ladies Aid Society and the Ladies Sewing Society, which raised funds through charity events and festivals for various church causes. As historian and preservationist Teri Delcamp notes:

Virtually all of the churches had women’s groups and mission organizations, and these groups were instrumental in education, uplift and outreach to local residents... Local minority residents were often involved in church-affiliated programs such as the Korean Mission and Japanese Mission.⁸⁶



Universalist ladies of Riverside, 1898. *California Revealed*.

One early women’s group that was closely associated with religious institutions was the Riverside Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). The WCTU was founded in Riverside in 1883, mere months after the organization’s national founder, Frances E. Willard, spoke in the city about the movement’s benefits. In Riverside, each of the

⁸⁴ Ashley Garcia, “A Healthy Paradise: Annie Denton Cridge’s Feminist Utopia,” *Commonplace* (June 2022) accessed on July 3, 2025, at: <https://commonplace.online/article/a-healthy-paradise/>.

⁸⁵ Ortlieb and Economy, 69; Patterson, 105.

⁸⁶ Delcamp, 29.

established churches elected vice-presidents of the group, including the Congregational, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Universalist churches.⁸⁷

The main goal of these religious and social groups was to achieve temperance through local civic and legal channels. The movement bemoaned the devastation wrought by alcohol amongst the working classes and poor. While these “white-ribboners” consistently and “persistently fought the saloon evil,” they were also involved in maintaining public libraries, public schools, and staffing the county fairs.⁸⁸ In 1883, the *Ontario Fruit Grower* published the following announcement:

The Women’s Temperance Christian Union organized in Riverside, feeling deeply the need of working for the cause of temperance in this place, which to add their mite [*sic*] on the side that may open up the way for effectual work, and believing that legal incorporation is the first step in order, they hope that the effort at present being made will terminate in an incorporation of the whole valley.⁸⁹

The WCTU grew in significance into the late 19th and early 20th centuries and is discussed in greater detail in the following section.

SECULAR GROUPS

As the religious societies multiplied, and residents increasingly splintered off along the lines of their denominations, the women of Riverside increasingly sought to establish their own secular social groups, not divided along lines of religion. In 1912, historian Elmer W. Holmes recounted:

In every effort made to build up and beautify the city the women of Riverside have ever given a most generous and loyal support. As always in school and church affairs their influence for good has been conspicuous. But when, with the growth of the city there came the inevitable segregation which multiplied the church organizations, and there was a tendency because of this for them to lose touch with each other in the broader field needing unity of effort, they came together in organizations which have strengthened them in aiding the educational, social and material improvement of the community.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Holmes, 84.

⁸⁸ Holmes, 84; Marie L. Kreider and Michael R. Wells, "White Ribbon Women: The Women's Christian Temperance Movement in Riverside, California," *Southern California Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 126; Peyton, Beeli, "A 'White Ribbon' City: The Riverside Women's Christian Temperance Union in Place," unpublished paper, December 13, 2024, 1.

⁸⁹ "For Incorporation," *Ontario Fruit Grower*, June 13, 1883, 1.

⁹⁰ Holmes, 127. As a result, a majority of women's groups were founded in the city after 1890 and are discussed in the next chapter.

Early Professionals

Early professional women in Riverside primarily represented vocations that were considered proper for women of the time period, such as teachers, librarians, nurses, tailoress/dressmakers, and boardinghouse proprietors. However, in 1880s Riverside a small number of women held new or less common positions, such as telegraph managers/operators and physicians.⁹¹

Teaching was one of the first “respectable” professions open to women in the 19th century. Education was largely considered an extension of women’s traditional roles in raising children, and American education was increasingly feminized by the 1880s.⁹² Most women teachers were single, although some continued to teach after their marriage. Certificates to teach at country schools were considered relatively easy to obtain, and as such provided young women with the means to support themselves and their families on the frontier.⁹³

The first school in Riverside was founded in 1871, and by the late 1880s there were three school districts in the area: Riverside School District, Arlington School District, and Magnolia School District.⁹⁴ While the first few teachers at these schools were men in the 1870s, women soon came to fill a majority of teaching and principal positions by the 1880s. From 1883 to 1884, San Bernardino County schools (in which Riverside was included at the time) recorded a change in the ratio of male and female teachers: in 1883 there were approximately 17 male teachers and 50 female teachers; the following year in

1884 there were 3 just male teachers and 46 female teachers. Salaries did not adjust accordingly, with men earning approximately \$73.20 and women earning \$62.00 in 1884.⁹⁵ By 1891, there were a reported 104 female teachers and 23 male teachers in the County.⁹⁶

A small Black community emerged in Riverside in the 1870s and 1880s, largely composed of formerly enslaved people who moved from the South. While some journeyed west with the Mormons who founded San Bernardino, and later settled in Riverside, there was also a move by local Black residents to bring their families directly from Southern states, such as Alabama and Georgia.⁹⁷ Black residents were largely



Alice Rowan, n.d. *City of Riverside*.

⁹¹ City of Riverside, City Directory (Riverside: Riverside Directory Co., 1889); as noted in Delcamp, 37-38.

⁹² Myres, 248.

⁹³ Mrs. Jean Aldrich Koethen, quoted in Patterson, 364.

⁹⁴ Patterson, 361-363.

⁹⁵ “Summary of Report of Superintendent of Schools,” *Press Horticulturalist and Riverside County Reflex*, July 25, 1885, 3.

⁹⁶ “The County Schools,” *Press Horticulturalist and Riverside County Reflex*, August 1, 1891, 2.

⁹⁷ Hillary Malson, *Plots on the Periphery: Black Women-Led Grassroots Planning in Inland Southern California*, diss.

(University of California Los Angeles, 2025), 59; Riverside Municipal Museum, “Westward to Canaan:” *African American Heritage in Riverside, 1890-1950*, exhibition brochure, 1996, 2-4.

limited to reside in East Riverside, where city officials founded a public school and park for Black residents.⁹⁸

One notable resident was Alice Rowan. The daughter of freed slaves who migrated with the Mormons westward in 1851, Rowan attended the State Normal School in Los Angeles before relocating to Riverside.⁹⁹ Rowan was active in Riverside as early as 1889, where she taught music and held concerts for her pupils at her home (476 E. Twelfth Street, not extant).¹⁰⁰ In 1896, she was hired as the first Black teacher in the city, and instructed a class at the Trujillo School in La Placita.¹⁰¹ Rowan married Reverend Frank Johnson in 1892, and the couple became successful entrepreneurs and proprietors of the Riverside Carriage Company.¹⁰² According to the *Press and Horticulturalist*, she was “well known for her intellectual accomplishments.”¹⁰³

Miss Eugenie Fuller, who was a teacher and administrator in Riverside from 1886 to 1912, was another notable early woman teacher in Riverside.¹⁰⁴ Fuller served as the principal of the Riverside High School and disapproved of the segregation of male and female students in secondary school. She resided at 4187 Mission Inn Avenue (extant).¹⁰⁵

Another professional arena in which women were more generally accepted during this era was the library. The Riverside Library Association, founded in 1879, was the first formal organization in the city, and evolved into a tax-supported, public library on July 9, 1888.¹⁰⁶

Mary Montague Smith served as the first librarian from 1888 until her death in 1900. Smith was a graduate of the Bradford Academy in Massachusetts and was “one of the best educated residents of Riverside.”¹⁰⁷ Widow to the late Reverend G.L. Smith, she dedicated herself to the library. She created a separate reading facility for children and allowed them to check out library books, a radical idea for the time.¹⁰⁸ Historian Holmes remembered of Smith: “She brought to the work exceptional ability and enthusiasm, and her

⁹⁸ Malson, 60.

⁹⁹ “San Bernardino Notes,” *The Evening Express*, December 27, 1892, 7; R. Bruce Harley, “An Early Riverside Suburb at La Placita,” *Journal of the Riverside Historical Society* 7, February 2003, 16-17.

¹⁰⁰ “Sociable of the Colored People,” *Riverside Daily Press and Tribune*, February 1, 1889, 3; “Charming Recital Gives Pleasure to Music Class,” *Morning Mission and Riverside Enterprise*, August 19, 1909, 2.

¹⁰¹ “Teachers Employed,” *Riverside Enterprise*, July 29, 1896, 1.

¹⁰² *Riverside African American Civil Rights Historic Context Statement*, 27-28.

¹⁰³ “Town and County,” *Press and Horticulturalist*, December 24, 1892, 3.

¹⁰⁴ Patterson, 365.

¹⁰⁵ She resided at the house from at least 1920 until the time of her death in 1933. She previously rented and resided at the Reynolds Hotel in Riverside. Ancestry.com. 1920 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010; Janice Covel, *For the Record: Eugenia Fuller, A Documented Narrative* (NY: Manhattan Publishing Company, 2011).

¹⁰⁶ Ronald J. Baker, *Serving Through Partnership: A Centennial History of the Riverside City and County Public Library, 1888-1988* (Riverside: Riverside City and County Public Library, 1988), 1-2.

¹⁰⁷ Baker, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Baker, 8.

conscientious efforts in organizing the institution is largely due its success.”¹⁰⁹ In 1890, Smith traveled for her health and her assistant Grace L. Mansfield was appointed “Acting Librarian.” Smith died that year. Her obituary in the *Press and Horticulturist* recalled, “It is hardly probable that a city of this size can again obtain so accomplished a librarian; for literary taste, executive ability and thorough knowledge of such work are seldom united in one person.”¹¹⁰

Medicine was another profession held by at least two women in Riverside during this time period: Dr. Dorothea S. Hall and Dr. Fannie E. Williams.

Dr. Dorothea S. Hall moved with her husband, Dr. John Hall, to Riverside in 1873. They both studied at the Western Homeopathic College in Cleveland, Ohio. As Holmes remembered, “Mrs. Hall practiced medicine in the new colony for a time and ministered otherwise to the needs of the families of the pioneers” while her husband gave up medicine to pursue horticulture.¹¹¹ Dr. Dorothea Hall was active in, and served as editor of, the WCTU in the mid- to late 1880s. In 1886, she wittily wrote that the WCTU Committee “is busy finding the very best medicine for our saloon. Fortunately, women can read these times, and think a little, too.”¹¹² When she retired from the medical profession, she ministered at the Sunday School and the Universalist Church.¹¹³ Dr. Hall was also involved in several real estate dealings alongside her son, Priestley Hall, who purchased and subdivided over 280 acres of southeast Riverside into the “Hall’s Addition” Tracts. Dr. Hall resided with her husband at their original homestead, known as “Cosy Dell,” until 1889 when they moved to a corner house at the intersection of Date and Park avenues. Upon the death of her husband in 1896, she moved in with her son, Priestley Hall and daughter-in-law Agnes Hall at Rockledge, 2812 Ivy Street (extant) until she died in 1909.¹¹⁴

Dr. Fannie E. Williams graduated from medical school at the University of Iowa in 1867 and practiced in Joplin, Missouri before relocating to Riverside in 1887. Dr. Williams was active with the Riverside WCTU and gave monthly lectures on the effects of alcohol and narcotics. She passed away in 1889.¹¹⁵



Mary Montague Smith, c. 1890. *Riverside Public Library*.

¹⁰⁹ Holmes, 97-98.

¹¹⁰ “Obituary: Mrs. Mary M. Smith,” *Press and Horticulturalist*, December 14, 1900, 3; Baker, 10.

¹¹¹ Holmes, 402.

¹¹² “Riverside Department, WCTU,” *Riverside Daily Press and Tribune*, October 21, 1886, 1.

¹¹³ Joyce E. Warhop, “Riverside’s Founding Mothers for Health, Community Service, and Leadership,” *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California, 1870-1970*, 283.

¹¹⁴ Klotz and Hall, 68; “Local News,” *Riverside Daily Press*, May 8, 1889, 3; “Hall’s Addition Improvement Association,” *Riverside Enterprise*, 3; The residence was built by Priestley Hall in 1889. It is listed as a City Landmark. “Passing of Pioneer, Dr. Dorothea A. Hall,” *Morning Mission and Riverside Enterprise*, August 29, 1909, 2.

¹¹⁵ Warhop, “Riverside’s Founding Mothers for Health, Community Service, and Leadership,” *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California, 1870-1970*, 286.

Other women professionals included stenographers/typists and telegraph operators.¹¹⁶ Sisters Katherine (Kate) F. and Agnes Overton were the first telegraph operators of the Western Union Telegraph office. Kate Overton first hired and made a regular operator in the city in 1879.¹¹⁷ Overton occasionally managed the San Bernardino and Los Angeles telegraph offices when necessary, and her younger sister Agnes Overton covered the Riverside office as needed as early as 1883.¹¹⁸

In 1887, the *Riverside Daily Press* wrote that “Misses Overton, Kate and Agnes, have conducted the telegraph office in this city for years to the satisfaction of their patrons.”¹¹⁹ Agnes was also involved with the WCTU and a noted vocalist, while Kate was a real estate entrepreneur and at one time was considered one of the wealthiest residents in Riverside.¹²⁰ At various times both Kate Overton and her sister Agnes, who married Priestley Hall and became Agnes O. Hall, resided at Rockledge, the property built by Priestley Hall at 2812 Ivy Street in 1889 (extant). Agnes O. Hall resided there from the time of her marriage to Priestley Hall in 1890 until her death in 1933. Kate Overton briefly resided there in 1912.



Rockledge, 2812 Ivy Street, 2025. *Historic Resources Group*.

¹¹⁶ “Business Locals,” *Riverside Daily Press*, March 7, 1887, 5.

¹¹⁷ In 1893, the *Riverside County Reflex* wrote that Miss Kate F. Overton was “a lady for whom every businessman in Riverside would fight if occasion required. She is every inch a lady and at the same time, as we have heard it expressed, ‘there is no better businessman in town than she.’” “Town and Valley,” *Riverside Press and Horticulturalist*, August 30, 1879, 4; “The Evans Block,” *Riverside County Reflex*, August 26, 1893, 1.

¹¹⁸ “Arlington Improvements,” *Press and Horticulturalist*, May 8, 1880, 3; “Town and Valley,” *Press and Horticulturalist*, December 22, 1883, 3.

¹¹⁹ “Local News,” *Riverside Daily Press and Tribune*, March 4, 1887, 3.

¹²⁰ “A Riverside Nightingale,” *Press and Horticulturalist*, October 29, 1885, 3; “Concert at the Congregational Church for the Benefit of WCTU,” *Riverside Daily Press*, December 8, 1887, 2; “Wealth of Riverside,” *Riverside Daily Press*, August 11, 1887, 2.

PROGRESSIVE ERA AND GROWING RIGHTS, 1890-1919

During the Progressive Era, which generally spanned from the 1880s to the 1920s, there was an increased effort to reform society in the United States. Increased urbanization, an expanding middle class, and a growing number of women involved in the labor and reform movements brought issues of gender and social inequality, working conditions, prohibition, and women's suffrage to the forefront of political thought. Scholars have identified this era as First Wave Feminism. During this period, women formed their own groups, which could serve as social organizations or, increasingly over time, also worked to promote suffrage, social reform, public health and social welfare, and improved educational opportunities. Many women formed professional, civic, and religious societies to discuss, debate, and ultimately combat perceived societal issues.¹²¹

Growth in women's professional employment was rapid from the late 19th century to early 1920s. Among employed women nationwide, the number serving in professional service increased from 8.2% in 1900 to 14.2% in 1930. In fact, women composed a much larger segment of professionals than of the overall labor force. Three-quarters of the rise in women professionals was attributed to the expansion of teaching and nursing. Other fields varied in the number of practicing female professionals, including lawyers, doctors, college professors, teachers, scientists, and other groups.¹²²

In the late 1890s, the booming population of Riverside reflected general nationwide trends. Between 1880 and 1890, the Riverside's population grew threefold, from approximately 1,350 to 4,600 residents.¹²³ Riverside women formed several social organizations in the late 19th century, as well as more advocacy-focused groups. These social clubs oftentimes took up various causes and initiatives and sought to increase public awareness and educational activities, fundraising to support their own organization or activities related to their cause.¹²⁴ Riverside hosted many women's clubs over the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a selection of which are included below.¹²⁵

This chapter is divided into broad categories in which Riverside women were heavily involved. Within each of these reform movements were several local organizations or institutions founded by Riverside women. Causes and groups include a need for social spaces; the temperance and suffrage movement; health and sanitary works; education for the masses; and professional women.

¹²¹ Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 199.

¹²² Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 217.

¹²³ Howell-Ardila, 22; Irving G. Hendrick, *The Development of a School Integration Plan in Riverside California: A History and Perspective* (Riverside, CA), September 1968.

¹²⁴ Quinn Evans, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Washington, D.C. Historic Context Statement*, March 2024, prepared for the District of Columbia Office of Planning, 3-1.

¹²⁵ Note that this is not an exhaustive list of all

Women's Social Clubs

By the 1890s, the diversification of churches in Riverside compelled women who had previously been brought together through weekly prayer but now attended different services to seek comradeship in new venues. Diversification of religious institutions could lead to greater isolation from social engagements, particularly among housewives and mothers, and women strove to create spaces where they could meet and confer.¹²⁶ As a result, women both nationwide and in Riverside formed women's organizations as a secular means to gather and share their lives and thoughts.¹²⁷ These groups met both in public and private spaces: meetings and events were often held in churches, meeting halls, and private member's homes.

However, their male counterparts did not always approve of these new groups. Historian and resident James Boyd aptly summarized the early prejudice with which the men of Riverside met these early organizations:

At first when a Woman's Club was heard of, it was received as a wonder by the men folks and the question was asked, whatever could the women want by organizing a club? We had been hearing of woman's right and woman suffrage away in the dim and misty past, and of bloomer costumes with a good deal of ridicule, and even of active opposition from certain quarters so long ago, in fact, that the name of Susan B. Anthony is not to the younger generation much more than a tradition, but for all that, universal suffrage is today a fact without creating a revolution. But a "Woman' Club," whoever heard of such nonsense? What is it anyway? No one seemed to be able to throw any light on the movement. Could not the women "ask their husbands at home" as had been written ages ago, and submitted to for just as long?

At first Women's Clubs were looked on by men as something sort of mysterious, and as no men were admitted, there was all the more curiosity manifested by them. However, they came to be recognized as legitimate institutions as time went on.¹²⁸

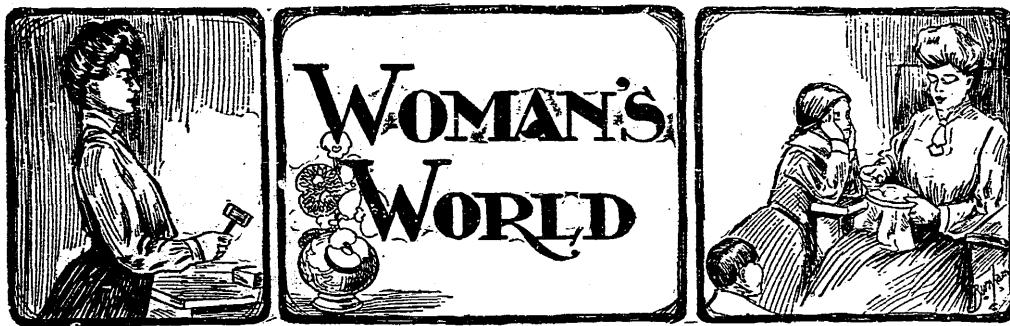
Preeminent amongst the women of Riverside who helped initiate the movement towards women's clubs was Mary Elizabeth Darling. Locally, Darling founded the Socorro Club in 1893, Riverside Woman's Club in 1896, and the Extemporaneous Drill Club/Wednesday Morning Club in 1902. At the state level, Darling was elected by the California Federation of Women's Clubs (CFWC) as the Southern District President in 1902; General President in 1903; and Emeritus President in 1911. Nationally, she was given the distinction of being named Pioneer Clubwoman of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) in

¹²⁶ Jane C. Croly, *The History of the Woman's Club Movement in America* (New York: Henry G. Allen & Co., 1898), 240.

¹²⁷ Cott, 243.

¹²⁸ Boyd, vol. 2, 667.

1941.¹²⁹ Her residence (not extant) was located in the area that is present-day Shamel Park and was a regular venue for women's group meetings and events.



Women's World newspaper section, 1904. *Riverside Daily Press*.

SOCORRO CLUB

The Socorro Club, founded in 1893, was largely social in nature, although it also took up various local causes, such as the beautification of Magnolia Avenue in the city. The club largely met at the homes of its presidents, which included Darling (1893), and other members. Frequent activities of the club included floral arranging; singing and dancing; and discussing art and architecture.¹³⁰

RIVERSIDE WOMEN'S CLUB

The Riverside Women's Club (RWC) was formed in 1896 by Mrs. Martha E. Hewitt and Dr. Sarah E. Maloy. Originally organized with 16 charter members, the founders envisioned the organization as a group "where character, not social position or wealth, should be the basis of club aristocracy."¹³¹ The club featured classes in art, home studies, philanthropy, music, and Shakespeare. The RWC joined the General Federation of Women's Clubs in November 1897 and was a charter member of the CFWC in January 1900.

The first major project of the club was the establishment of a downtown Woman's Rest Room with a children's health clinic. The second project was to create an Industrial Bureau that sought to match employers with potential employees.¹³² The group was instrumental in the City Beautification improvements in Riverside (discussed in more detail below). The group helped establish the Riverside Carnegie Library, Riverside Community Library, and Riverside Community Hospital.¹³³ In November of 1908, the club hosted the Southern

¹²⁹ "Mrs. Darling Dean of Club Women," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 13, 1942, 11.

¹³⁰ "The Socorro Club," *Press and Horticulturist*, March 28, 1896, 1.

¹³¹ Holmes, 127.

¹³² Delcamp, 45.

¹³³ "Riverside Women's Club," 2024, accessed on August 7, 2025 at: <https://riversidewomansclub.com/>

District Federation of Woman's Clubs in Riverside.¹³⁴ By 1912, the club had approximately 200 members.¹³⁵

For the first few years, the group held regular meetings at the Odd Fellow's Hall (1905-1907).¹³⁶ In 1908, architect F.P. Burnham was hired to design the Women's Clubhouse and Masonic Temple (3650 Eleventh Street, not extant). The group sold their clubhouse to the Elks Lodge in 1916 and met in rented quarters until 1921, when they raised funds for a new building (The Women's Club, 4092 Tenth Street).¹³⁷

In 1904, a dozen Japanese women in the city formed a Japanese Women's Club.¹³⁸ The club took an active stance in raising relief funds for various events, including the 1904 Russo-Japanese War and the 1923 earthquake and fire. It partnered with other Japanese organizations including the Japanese Association of Riverside, the Japanese church, and the Japanese Gardeners' Association, to raise over \$4,000 in donated funds for the earthquake and fire of 1923.¹³⁹



Riverside Japanese Women's Club, 1908. *Museum of Riverside*.

¹³⁴ "Local Club Notes," *Riverside Daily Press*, November 14, 1908, 11.

¹³⁵ Holmes, 127; Boyd, 667-668.

¹³⁶ City of Riverside, City Directory (Riverside: Riverside Directory Co., 1907), 25.

¹³⁷ Patterson, 232.

¹³⁸ "Patriotic Women," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 16, 1904, 5; "Memorial for Woman," *Riverside Enterprise*, April 17, 1914, 1.

¹³⁹ "Local Japanese Give Generously," *Riverside Enterprise*, September 21, 1923, 4.

The club met at the residence of Mrs. Shibata on Fourteenth Street. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map images of the property show it as “Japanese Shanties” with boarding house, billiards, and barber at the intersection of Fourteenth Street and Clifton Boulevard.

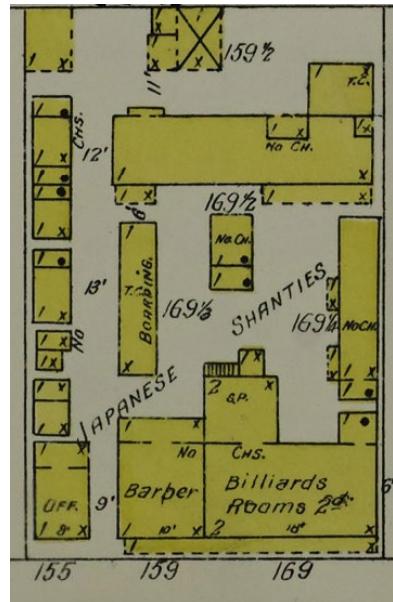
TUESDAY MUSICAL CLUB

Tuesday Musical Club was a women’s social organization that sought to foster a love of music among its members. It started in private homes in the late 19th century before relocating to the YMCA Hall, then the Women’s Clubhouse. The organization held regular concerts for the community, offering various musical performances.¹⁴⁰

Women’s Auxiliaries & Sororal Orders

Sororal (and fraternal) associations comprised much of the social activities in Riverside during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These associations were a ubiquitous part of the American social landscape with millions of members in the country. These self-selecting sisterhoods provided mutual aid to members, enacted group rituals, and engaged in community service. Orders often provided insurance against sickness and death to their members. The orders were distinguished from other benefit societies by their character as quasi-Masonic bodies, whereby members recognized a kinship to one another but were also situated within hierarchy of relationships based on their initiations and rites.¹⁴¹ These voluntary organizations were very common in Riverside.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF; Odd Fellows) was one of the earliest fraternal societies in America to establish honorary membership for American women: the Rebekah degree created in 1851. The Masonic degree of the Eastern Star was established not long after in 1853.¹⁴² Following the Civil War, secret societies grew in popularity and established numerous women’s organizations. The women’s orders such as the Order of the Eastern Star, the Daughters of Rebekah, and the Pythian Sisters were defined by their connection to already existing male organizations, with member eligibility determined not by a woman’s individual qualities but by her relationship to a man.¹⁴³ Despite these



considerations, the societies had a clear feminist significance in the mid- to late- 20th century. As argued by historian Mary Ann Clawson:

The right of women to associate with each other in secular public settings was not yet totally accepted. More controversial was the propriety of a woman's presiding over meetings, at a time when it was still relatively unusual for women to speak in public...Thus, seemingly trivial changes to the rules governing the auxiliaries indicate significant reevaluations of women's capacities for self-government and public competence.¹⁴⁴

In Riverside, women's auxiliaries and organizations of the Odd Fellows, Masons, Knights of Pythian, Woodmen of the World, and Knights of the Maccabees were all active.¹⁴⁵ The Ramona Rebekah Lodge No. 156 (founded by 1892) and the Poinsettia Rebekah Lodge No. 408 (founded by 1907) of the Odd Fellows met at the Odd Fellows Hall at the corner of Ninth and Main streets (not extant).¹⁴⁶ The Rathbone Sisters, Riverside Temple No. 12 of the Knights of Pythias were founded in 1892 and met at Pythian Hall (820 Orange Street, not extant) and Pythian Castle.¹⁴⁷ Orange Circle No. 15 Women of Woodcraft were active from at least 1897 to 1917, meeting at Freeman Hall and Fraternal Hall.¹⁴⁸ The Ladies of the Maccabees Hive No. 5 were active from at least 1898 to 1917; they met at the Fraternal Hall.¹⁴⁹ The Ungava Chapter No. 106, Order of the Eastern Star, was established in 1890. Early events included community picnics and gatherings.¹⁵⁰



Odd Fellows Hall, 1910. *Museum of Riverside*.

¹⁴⁴ Clawson, 56.

¹⁴⁵ City Directory, 1907, 22; City Directory, 1911, 23-25; City Directory, 1913, 20-23; City Directory, 1917, 13-15.

¹⁴⁶ City Directory, 1907, 22; City Directory, 1911, 22; "Local News," *Riverside Enterprise*, May 10, 1892, 3.

¹⁴⁷ "Riverside Temple No. 12 Pythian Sisters," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 9, 1892, 3.

¹⁴⁸ City Directory, 1917, 14; "Local Notes," *Riverside Daily Enterprise*, September 26, 1897, 5.

¹⁴⁹ "Memorial Day Exercises," *Riverside Daily Press*, May 28, 1898, 5; City Directory, 1917, 13-15.

¹⁵⁰ Linda Bernhard and Kelly Padilla, "Order of the Eastern Star: Ungava Chapter No. 106," *Anthology of Women in Riverside, 1970-1970; "Return from Grand Lodge,"* *Riverside Daily Press*, June 8, 1912, 5.

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) were active in Riverside. Founded in 1890 in Washington, D.C., the DAR is a nonprofit organization that promoted historic preservation, education, and patriotism. In Riverside, the Aurantia Chapter of the DAR was organized in December of 1905. The Rubidoux Chapter of DAR was established in 1910.¹⁵¹ UDC is a neo-Confederate hereditary association for female descendants of Confederate Civil War soldiers. UDC was active in Riverside with the J.E.B. Stuart Chapter No. 815 by 1907.¹⁵² Both groups frequently met at the members' residences.

Racial discrimination was present in fraternal and sororal organizations across the United States; as a result, many African Americans organized large numbers of fraternal and sororal voluntary federations.¹⁵³ Several Black women's sororal societies and organizations were active in Riverside. From at least 1907 to 1930, the Elizabeth Chapter UD of the Colored Masons and Magnolia Lodge No. 5470 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows (GUOOF) met at 2935 E. Twelfth Street (not extant). The Household of Ruth (1907-1912) was also hosted at the lodge. Of the Elizabeth Chapter, Mrs. A. Simpson W.M (1907), O.A. Wilson (1911) Nora Goodwin (1917), and Mrs. J.J. Nashburn (sec 1907, 1911) served as leaders.¹⁵⁴



Grand Lodge and Grand Court, n.d. *Our Past*.

¹⁵¹ "Aurantia Chapter Daughters of American Revolution Observe Fifth Birthday," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 9, 1910, 7; "New Chapter is Organized," *Riverside Daily Press*, July 2, 1910, 4.

¹⁵² "Women's Clubs," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 5, 1907, 4.

¹⁵³ Theda Skocpol and Jennifer Lynn Oser, "Organization Despite Adversity: The Origins and Development of African American Fraternal Associations," *Social Science History* 28, no. 3 (Fall 2004), 367.

¹⁵⁴ Riverside City Directory (Riverside: Riverside Directory Co., 1907), 19-20; City Directory, 1911, 21-11.

In a manner similar to women's auxiliaries, the *Riverside Enterprise* recorded in its "Local Lodge Lore," section that a "number of Korean wives [who] formed a cooperative society with a capital of more than \$100,000. It is a buying organization principally, and its main object is to combat high living costs. The society is composed entirely of Korean women."¹⁵⁵ The name of the organization, if any, and its location were not provided.

In 1904, Chapter J of the Philanthropic Educational Organization (P.E.O.) Sisterhood was formed in Riverside. It was the tenth P.E.O. chapter to be formed in the state and thereby named after the 10th letter of the alphabet. The group specialized in providing educational opportunities for female students, although this message was not widely known at the time of its creation. In the announcement of the group's formation, the *Riverside Daily Press* wrote:

Just what the three mystic initials stand for is a secret known only to the members of the order. Some envious masculines declare they mean "Petticoats Enter Only" ... The purposes of the order are mainly social and literary, and it is not a benefit organization.¹⁵⁶

NEIGHBORS OF WOODCRAFT

In 1920, the Neighbors of Woodcraft purchased a 15-acre property at 342 Magnolia Avenue, owned by D.L. Galloway and J.E. Turner for \$50,000. The property consisted of a large 22-room house, a six-room bungalow, some stock and machinery, and several fruit trees. The property was acquired by the fraternity to build a new \$250,000 retirement home for elderly members of the Neighbors of Woodcraft. At the time of the acquisition, the order consisted of over 50,000 adult members and 2,000 minors, both male and female, operating in the western United States of California, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada. Business headquarters were located in Portland, Oregon, under the leadership of Mrs. Carrie Van Orsdall, grand guardian and co-founder of the organization since 1897.¹⁵⁷



Groundbreaking for the Neighbors of Woodcraft Retirement Home, c. 1920. *University of California, Riverside*.

By 1921, the order expanded the property to 65 acres and adapted the Magnolia home and farm as an interim retirement home for its elderly members. The large house and cottage

¹⁵⁵ "Local Lodge Lore," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 4, 1921, 4.

¹⁵⁶ "Of Many Lodges There is Surely No End," *Riverside Daily Press*, August 13, 1904, 5.

¹⁵⁷ Rachel Murell, "The Women of the Woodcraft Home," *Anthology of Women in Riverside, 1870-1970*, 346; "Woodcraft Home Will Be Built In Riverside At Cost Of \$250,000," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 12, 1920.

housed approximately 35 members, with amenities including a living room, library, kitchen and dining room, a sun parlor, sleeping porches, and laundry. The farm and garden provided fresh food for the house, including meat, dairy products, vegetables and fruits. Mrs. Florence Wehrley was the superintendent of the home, supported by the members of the Riverside lodge, Orange Circle No. 15.¹⁵⁸

Construction of the new two-story buildings for the retirement home began in 1924, designed by architect Henry L.A. Jeckle in the Spanish Revival style. The hospital building was completed first in 1925, followed by the main building in 1926. The new retirement home was of concrete reinforced construction with an H-plan, featuring communal amenities on the ground floor and private residences on the second floor. The retirement building contained 107 bedrooms with private bath; superintendent quarters; and an auditorium with a 500-person capacity. A cafeteria, living room, and an Octagon Sun Parlor made up the remainder of the building. Exterior Spanish colonnades connected the main building to the hospital wing, and a driveway lined with palm trees completed encircled the building. The old buildings of the Magnolia property were ultimately demolished and cleared for picnic ground.¹⁵⁹

In 1926, thirty-five patients resided at the Woodcraft Home; several years later, the number had grown to 137. In response to the rising numbers, the hospital expanded in 1931, adding the front portion of what today is the Annie Gabriel Library of the California Baptist University. A four-story dormitory, designed to house all members of the fraternal organization, was built between 1933 and 1934 behind the Administration building.¹⁶⁰ Finally, a laundry and boiler room were added in 1938, the last building constructed by the Order. Land purchased over the years expanded the Woodcraft property to a total of seventy-five acres.¹⁶¹

The local Riverside Woodcraft chapter, Orange Circle no. 15, as well as other nearby circles, held social gatherings and community events at the Woodcraft home in the Fraternal Brotherhood Hall. Although the Order was an integrated fraternity, the Riverside Chapter consisted of an exclusively female leadership. In 1929, the *Riverside Daily Press* reported on the elected offices of Orange Circle No. 15 consisting of May Buckus, past guardian neighbor; Emma Lockyer, guardian neighbor; Edithe Holte, advisor; Rose Harmon, magician; Josie Heaslet, attendant; Fannie Friend, clerk; Mary Vaught, banker; Nellie Johnson, captain of guards; Edna Kemp, musician; Harriet Towner, flag bearer; Fella

¹⁵⁸ "Neighbors of Woodcraft Have Established Charming Home Here," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 15, 1921.

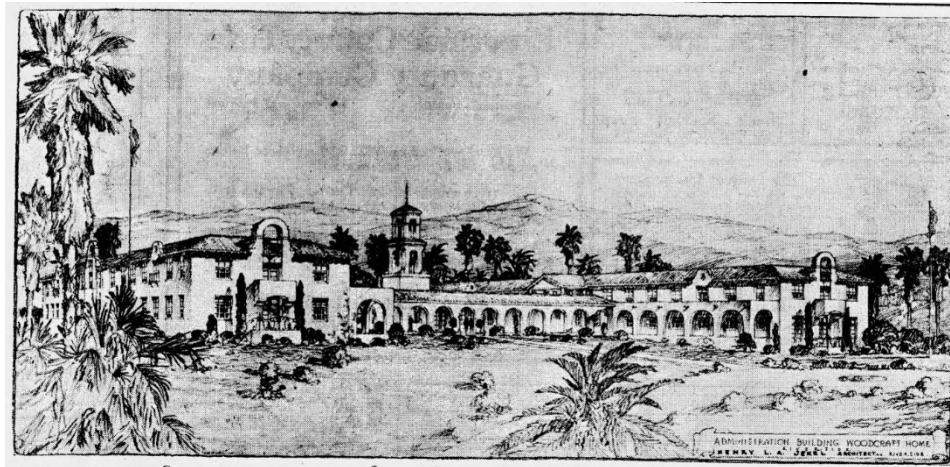
¹⁵⁹ "Neighbors of Woodcraft Occupy Pretentious New Home," *Riverside Daily Press*, July 28, 1926.

¹⁶⁰ Keith L. Yates, *History of the Woodcraft Home* (Portland: K&B Printers, 1975), 10. As cited in Michelle Nicole Healey and Lori Michelle Henson-Angulo, "A Glimpse into the History of California Baptist College," *Journal of the Riverside Historical Society* 8 (2004): 25,

https://www.riversidehistoricalsociety.org/_files/ugd/6eb138_a60de3855a4d41b88b1c2c165ebb08b6.pdf

¹⁶¹ Healey and Henson-Angulo, "A Glimpse into the History of California Baptist College," 28.

Ferguson, inner sentinel; Louisa Putman, outer sentinel; Viola Dunabr, Clara Wise and Emma Gilmore, managers, and Anan Hagen, correspondent.¹⁶²



Administration Building at Woodcraft Home, 1926. *Riverside Daily Press*.

The Woodcraft home continued expanding until the 1930s when social security drastically decreased membership and the need for the organization altogether. Social security, the rise in living costs in Riverside, and California real estate taxes, drained the financial capabilities of the fraternity.¹⁶³ In 1952, faced with financial strain, the Order decided that a new, smaller, and more practical home should be selected. After a three-month search, the Order purchased a new home in Hood River, Oregon.¹⁶⁴ The organization officially moved in early June 1953, although several elderly members who were too sick to relocate remained in the hospital building. The rest of the buildings remained vacant until 1955 when the property was purchased by California Baptist College.¹⁶⁵

The Suffrage and Temperance Movements

In addition to more generalized women's clubs and secret sororal societies, women also took initiative in creating specialized groups that sought to bring about progressive change in specific aspects of society. Two of the largest societal issues around which these organizations were formed were suffrage and temperance/prohibition.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

In the early 20th century, many upper-middle-class women—quite a few of whom were college-educated—fervently took up one cause in particular: women's suffrage. On the

¹⁶² "Orange Circle Installation," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 22, 1929.

¹⁶³ Yates, History of the Woodcraft Home, 11. As cited in Healey and Henson-Angulo, "A Glimpse into the History of California Baptist College," 25.

¹⁶⁴ Yates, History of the Woodcraft Home, 13. As cited in Healey and Henson-Angulo, "A Glimpse into the History of California Baptist College," 28.

¹⁶⁵ Healey and Henson-Angulo, "A Glimpse into the History of California Baptist College," 28.

ground, this translated into the establishment of numerous groups and organizations, which could focus solely on suffrage or included suffrage as one element in a comprehensive approach to women's rights. Groups often hosted lectures, fundraising events, and debates to discuss the merits of a women voting. Many women linked suffrage to other issues relevant to women's rights, including labor, education, property rights, woman and child wellness, and marriage equality, among others.

The amendment for the women's right to vote was first brought before the state in 1896. Despite dedicated efforts by California suffragists, the amendment was defeated by just over 26,000 votes. In the face of this setback, many women in the state, including advocates in Riverside redoubled their efforts to secure the right to vote in the early 20th century.

In Riverside, this effort included the founding of the Extemporaneous Drill Club (later known as the Wednesday Morning Club) by the Universalist Church and Mary Elizabeth Darling in 1902. The group studied parliamentary usage and trained its members in orally presenting their views on current events. Upon its founding, the *Riverside Enterprise* wrote that the group aimed to teach women how to "preside" and provide a venue for them to "meet for mutual advice, practical help, and above all the sympathy of experience."¹⁶⁶ The Extemporaneous Drill Club debated various topics, including the "Property Rights of Women in California;" the "Sanitary Conditions of Our City;" and the "Rights of Women."¹⁶⁷ In 1910, the group changed its name to the Wednesday Morning Club.¹⁶⁸ The group met at the YMCA Hall, Odd Fellows Hall, and Women's Club over its tenure.

Founded in 1904, the Political Equality Club sought to "promote woman's suffrage, to perfect the members in parliamentary usage, and to study civic government and political economy."¹⁶⁹ Both men and women could become members of the group which met regularly at the Universalist Church (All Saints Church; 3525 Mission Inn Avenue, extant).

Black women were largely excluded from white suffrage associations, and as a result set out to establish extensive networks and their own organizations. In the 1890s, groups in Riverside included the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), which incorporated in 1904 as the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC).¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ "A New Club to be Formed by the Women," *Riverside Enterprise*, February 18, 1902, 3.

¹⁶⁷ "Captain McIntyre Talks to Extemporaneous Club," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 5, 1902; "Women and Clubs," *Riverside Enterprise*, November 6, 1903, 6; "Local Club Notes," *Riverside Daily Press*, May 12, 1906, 6.

¹⁶⁸ "What's In a Name?" *Riverside Daily Press*, May 7, 1910, 10.

¹⁶⁹ "Political Equality Club," *Riverside Daily Press*, May 28, 1904, 7; "Political Equality Club," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 27, 1904, 5.

¹⁷⁰ NACW Constitution, quoted in Leslie 2012.

In 1902, the Black women of Riverside founded the Twentieth Century Club, which met weekly at the Second Baptist Church.¹⁷¹ Mrs. Corinne Simpson served as president.

Corinne Simpson was heavily involved in Black sororal communities and women's clubs in Riverside. Simpson moved to Riverside in 1887 from Atlanta, Georgia, where she and her husband, Reverend Augustus Simpson of the A.M.E. Church, were prominent Black citizens.¹⁷² They resided at 103/113 Brockton and later the intersection of Orange and Russell Streets, before moving to Glen Avon.¹⁷³

In addition to women of color, men also began to support women's suffrage in the early 20th century. In Riverside, the Present Day Club was particularly vocal in its discussion of the topic and invited such speakers as the lawyer and suffragette Abbie Laughlin to discuss the subject.¹⁷⁴ The lecture was part of an active campaign for inducing the State Legislature to resubmit the question of woman suffrage after the 1896 defeat.

Minerva Cook Estudillo and her husband Senator Miguel Estudillo were particularly active in promoting women's suffrage. As early as 1904, Senator Estudillo lectured on the need for suffrage at the local Political Equality Club and Present Day Club, arguing that "enfranchised women will be the great foe of the social and political evils that are gaining ground. The safety of the republic lies in the vigilant and aggressive patriotism that our progressive women foster."¹⁷⁵ Minerva Estudillo served as president of the Wednesday Morning Club and was a fervent suffragist.¹⁷⁶ The Estudillos resided from 1918 until 1949 at 4515 Sixth Street (Gamble-Estudillo Holmes Home, extant).¹⁷⁷

In the autumn of 1911, local rallies and meetings in support of suffrage mounted, as national and state leaders of the cause visited Riverside, redoubling efforts of local advocates. In September, State Senators M. Estudillo and C. Lee Gates, alongside Chicago Judge Catherine Waugh McCulloch held an open-air rally for the cause at the intersection of Eighth and Orange streets in Riverside. The *Riverside Daily Press* covered the event:

If the enthusiastic applause which the audience vouchsafed the speakers is any criterion of the attitude of the state at large on the question of "votes for women," the fair sex may be addressed as "Citizens" in the full sense of the word after the 10th of October next.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷¹ "Of interest to" "Of Interest to Women," *Press and Horticulturalist*, November 4, 1902, 2.

¹⁷² "In Memoriam," *Riverside Enterprise*, August 14, 1923, 8.

¹⁷³ "In Social Circles," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 7, 1901, 4; City of Riverside, City Directory (Riverside: Riverside Directory Co., 1911), 187.

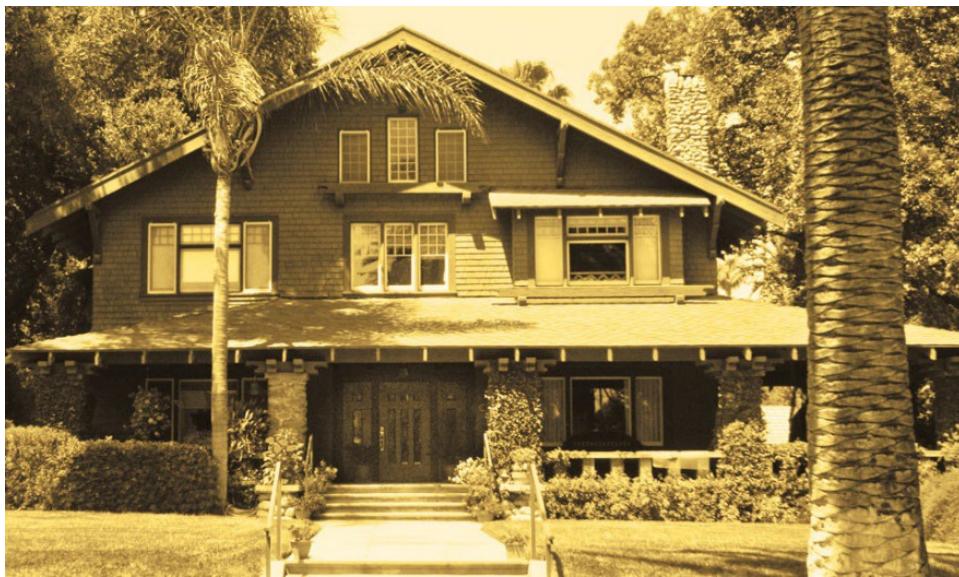
¹⁷⁴ "Forcible Arguments for Women's Suffrage," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 18, 1904, 3.

¹⁷⁵ "Estudillo's Address Before Suffragists," *Riverside Daily Press*, May 31, 1904, 7; "How Liberty is Invaded," *Press and Horticulturalist*, April 1, 1904, 8.

¹⁷⁶ "Clubs Should Stand by Guns Riverside Women on Suffrage," *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, July 11, 1912, 3.

¹⁷⁷ The property is City of Riverside Landmark No. 34.

¹⁷⁸ "Strong Plea for Women," *Riverside Daily Press*, September 21, 1911, 10.



Gamble-Estudillo Holmes Home at 4515 Sixth Street, 2011. *Museum of Riverside*.

Due to the swell of grassroots support and legislative efforts, on October 10, 1911, the State of California accorded women the right to vote with the Fourth Amendment. Riverside County voted for suffrage by a margin of 400 votes (1,790 for; 1,351 against).¹⁷⁹

THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT

Perhaps liquor most affronted the Progressive sense of social order. The California Progressive anti-saloon movement bemoaned the devastation wrought by alcohol amongst the working classes and poor.¹⁸⁰ Like elsewhere in the state and country, temperance was a subject at the heart of Riverside's founding when residents debated the merits and harms of saloons in the town. Following the 1883 visit of Frances E. Willard, the national founder of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the women of Riverside incorporated their very own chapter. The WCTU was particularly active in the maintenance of libraries and in educating the public on the harm of alcohol through published materials, lectures, and school instruction.

A curfew law enacted in 1906 involved watching cases of illegal sale of liquor and presenting them to the city. They also sought to close the pool rooms and the Orpheum Theatre on Sundays.¹⁸¹ The state WCTU convention was held in Riverside in June of 1906; Stella B. Irvine was elected Vice President of the state organization at that time.¹⁸² The WCTU's efforts were ultimately successful, and Riverside became a "saloonless" dry county in January 1918 (Ordinance 134).

¹⁷⁹ "County Strong for Amendments," *Riverside Daily Press*, October 11, 1911, 1.

¹⁸⁰ Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 244-245.

¹⁸¹ "Annual Report of WCTU Secretary," *Riverside Enterprise*, March 22, 1906, 3.

¹⁸² "Annual WCTU State Convention," *Riverside Enterprise*, June 8, 1906, 4.

Early leaders of the WCTU included Stella Blanchard Irvine, Sophia Wbber, Sabra Booth Kline, Elizabeth Kyes, and Nancy Johnson Button.¹⁸³ At the time of its founding, the WCTU met at the Universalist Church. It later met in many different venues, including the All Saints Universalist Church; the United Presbyterian Church; YMCA; Odd Fellows Hall; Woman's Clubhouse; Reynolds Hall; and First Methodist Church, among others.

The Universalist Church was instrumental as an early venue for WCTU meetings when other spaces were unavailable (3525 Mission Inn Avenue, extant). Built in 1891 of red sandstone, it was designed by architect A.C. Willard in the Gothic Revival style.¹⁸⁴ The WCTU regularly met at the church from at least 1902 to 1907.¹⁸⁵ Another recognizable space associated with the WCTU in Riverside is the 1907 commemorative temperance water fountain, located at Mission Inn Avenue and Orange.¹⁸⁶ As recorded by public historian Peyton Beeli, "water fountains were commonly installed by temperance unions, often in front of saloons, as an effort to provide an alternative to alcohol."¹⁸⁷ The home of Stella Blanchard Irvine, Stel-Lew-Vine (3115 Brockton Avenue, extant) was closely associated with the WCTU.



Universalist Church, 1905. *University of California, Riverside.*

Stella Blanchard Irvine was a pioneer in Riverside's various women's organizations. Irvine moved to Riverside in 1882 where she led the temperance and prohibition movements. Irvine served as the National Sunday School Superintendent for the WCTU several times from the 1890s through the 1920s and was the California WCTU president from 1915-1919. She also organized the first Sunday school teachers' training class in the U.S. (First Methodist Church, Riverside, California, 1906); served as the National and World WCTU

¹⁸³ Peyton Beeli, "The WCTU in Riverside: White Ribbon Women," *Anthology of Women in Riverside, 1870-1970*, 372.

¹⁸⁴ Hal Durian, *True Stories of Riverside and the Inland Empire* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013), 25; Steve Lech, *Riverside in Vintage Postcards* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 41.

¹⁸⁵ It ultimately moved because of streetcar noise. "W.C.T.U. Hereafter to Meet in U.P. Church," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 23, 1907, 3.

¹⁸⁶ The fountain is in the collection of the Museum of Riverside. It was added to the list of Riverside "cultural heritage monuments" sometime in 1973.

¹⁸⁷ Beeli, "A 'White-Ribbon' City: The Riverside Women's Christian Temperance Union in Place," unpublished paper, December 13, 2024, 12.

Director of the Sunday School Department; and headed the Korean Mission of the Presbyterian Church. Irvine frequently held events, including WCTU meetings, at her home, Stel-Lew-Vine at the height of her career.¹⁸⁸ As recorded by historian Terri Delcamp, “the home’s approved Landmark plaque text acknowledges her [Irvine’s] name and her involvement with the WCTU, noting that the French Normandy Revival style home... was ‘designed especially to hold the functions of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union.’”¹⁸⁹



Workroom in the Irvine House, Sel-Lew-Vine at 3115 Brockton Avenue, 1909. *Riverside Public Library*.

In 1896, 16 Black women in Riverside voted to form a “Colored” WCTU chapter. As recorded in the *Press and Horticulturalist*, “it is hoped that much will be accomplished for soberness and purity by this new organization.”¹⁹⁰ The chapter’s first president was Mrs. Jennie Edwards.¹⁹¹ The organization was active over the ensuing years. In 1905, it hosted lectures by Mrs. Lucy Thurman, the only Black founder of the WCTU and the national Superintendent of Work Among Colored People. The following year, the *Riverside Enterprise* reported that “the superintendents of the various departments are very zealous in their work and are vying with each other to produce the most interesting programs on their respective days.”¹⁹² The group was active until at least 1916 and regularly met at the Second Baptist Church, at the corner of Twelfth Street and Howard Avenue (not extant).¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ The residence is listed as City Landmark No. 35.

¹⁸⁹ Delcamp, 61.

¹⁹⁰ “Colored WCTU,” *Press and Horticulturalist*, July 25, 1896, 3; *Press and Horticulturalist*, August 1, 1896, 3.

¹⁹¹ Jennie Edwards (Mrs. Prince E. Edwards) resided at 1070 Eleventh Street (demolished. “The Annual Convention,” *Riverside Daily Press*, April 3, 1907, 3.

¹⁹² “Doing Good Work,” *Riverside Enterprise*, January 2, 1906, 5.

¹⁹³ “W.C.T.U. News,” *Riverside Daily Press*, August 3, 1911, 2.

Japanese women in Riverside were also involved with the WCTU. In 1905, visiting Japanese WCTU leader Uta Hayashi met with local women and convinced them to form their own chapter. The Riverside Japanese WCTU had 8 members at the time of its founding, including Mrs. Ulysses S. Kaneko, Mrs. George Kaneko, Mrs. Ima Kasama, and Mrs. Mitsu. Within a year, it was reported as having 16 members which included “all the Japanese women in the city.”¹⁹⁴ At the annual state convention in Riverside its members were met with a “burst of applause” as they carried the flags of Japan and the United States across the platform.¹⁹⁵ It held meetings at the home of its President, Chiyo Kaneko.¹⁹⁶

Chiyo Kaneko immigrated to the United States circa 1881 with her husband Ulysses S. (U.S.) Kaneko.¹⁹⁷ The couple briefly lived in Redlands before they moved to Riverside in 1886, where they settled and raised their two sons, Arthur and George. The family operated the Golden State Hotel and Café located in the Roosevelt Building (3631 University Avenue, extant) from 1904 to 1918.¹⁹⁸ Chiyo Kaneko was heavily involved in managing the business; as reported by the *Riverside Enterprise*, in 1905, U.S. Kaneko sold the Golden State hotel, café, and billiard parlors to his wife Chiyo, including “all of the furniture and fixtures of the fifty rooms in the hotel and furnishings in the café and billiard... and the right of conducting the business under its present name. The consideration is \$12,000 in gold coin.”¹⁹⁹

The Kanekos resided in a suite at the Golden State Hotel and Café and Mrs. Kaneko regularly hosted notable Japanese women’s events there, including meetings of the Japanese WCTU and Suginkawai Society (a Japanese women’s organization of the Red Cross) in 1906 and 1907.²⁰⁰ The Kaneko family was briefly embroiled in a liquor debate, when the city revoked U.S. Kaneko’s liquor license for his dining room after several men were found drunk in the hotel’s pool room.²⁰¹ At the time of her death in 1914, her funeral

¹⁹⁴ “Annual WCTU State Convention,” *Riverside Enterprise*, June 8, 1906, 4; “Closing Sessions of State W.C.T.U. Convention,” *Riverside Daily Press*, June 8, 1906, 6.

¹⁹⁵ “Annual WCTU State Convention,” *Riverside Enterprise*, June 8, 1906, 4.

¹⁹⁶ “White Ribbon Enthusiasm: The Organization of a Japanese WCTU Here in Riverside,” *Riverside Enterprise*, October 24, 1905; “Japanese W.C.T.U. Holds Interesting Meeting,” *Riverside Daily Press*, January 16, 1906, 5; “Riverside County Woman’s Convention,” *Riverside Enterprise*, April 3, 1907, 2.

¹⁹⁷ At the turn of the century, U.S. Kaneko was reportedly the only naturalized Japanese person in California; as reported by Donna Graves: “In 1914 [Kaneko’s] citizenship was challenged by a U.S. District Attorney based on the argument that the judge was in ‘error’ in granting him naturalized status eighteen years prior. Although the *Los Angeles Times* speculated that the case might mean that Kaneko and his eldest son’s citizenship could be forfeited, and that ‘the future rights of the Japanese may be determined,’ the case was dismissed making Kaneko the only Japanese American naturalized citizen whose status was confirmed in court.” Graves, 64; “Honor Memory of Prominent Japanese,” *Riverside Daily Press*, February 13, 1918, 4.

¹⁹⁸ “Roosevelt Building is Now Completed,” *Riverside Daily Press*, August 12, 1904, 5; “Golden State Hotel Will Open Saturday,” *Riverside Daily Press*, September 1, 1904, 4; “Golden State Hotel,” *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, December 1, 1918; Tom Patterson, “A 1905 Episode Suggests Some Ambiguities in how Riverside Once Treated its Japanese,” *Sunday Press-Enterprise*, July 8, 1979, 10.

¹⁹⁹ “Important Sale of Real Estate,” *Riverside Enterprise*, August 12, 1905, 5.

²⁰⁰ “Japanese W.C.T.U.,” *Riverside Enterprise*, January 17, 1906, 2; “Japanese Red Cross,” *Riverside Daily Press*, April 16, 1906; “Japanese Wedding,” *Riverside Daily Press*, August 30, 1904, 5.

²⁰¹ “Must Close on Sunday,” *Riverside Daily Press*, April 30, 1907, 4.

was attended by over 200 persons, including representatives of the Japanese Woman's Club, the Methodist and Congregational missions, and the local Japanese association.²⁰²



Roosevelt Building, 3631 University Avenue, 1906. *Museum of Riverside*.

Charity, Health, and Sanitary Works

In addition to the suffrage and temperance movements, many American women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries dedicated themselves to health and sanitary works as part of the Progressive agenda. Largely supported by middle-class urban society, reformers formed hundreds of social purity and social hygiene groups nationwide that set desirable moral standards for family life.²⁰³

In Riverside, much of the Black, Asian, and Latino populations had settled on the east side of the city, with the Latino community centered to the south of University Avenue (formerly Eighth Street) and the African American community to the north.²⁰⁴ By the 1910s, it was estimated that there were 300 Italians, 800 Mexicans, and 300 Armenians in Riverside.²⁰⁵ Many residents worked as orange pickers or were employed as domestic

²⁰² "Japanese Funeral: Impressive Ceremonies for Wife of Prominent Business Man," *Riverside Enterprise*, January 13, 1914.

²⁰³ Bronski, 87.

²⁰⁴ Howell-Ardila, 24; PCR Services Corporation, "Casablanca and Eastside Communities: Cultural Resources Survey," Prepared for the City of Riverside Planning, 2001.

Department, Riverside, California, October 2001

²⁰⁵ "City Home League to Assist Foreigner in Riverside is Desired," *Riverside Enterprise*, June 9, 1914, 9; Boyd, 657.

workers or gardeners. As such, many white women in Riverside set about to “improve” these spaces, including through establishment of a community settlement house.

Part of the new emphasis on sanitation, a public restroom for women opened in 1916 at the corner of Eighth and Main streets. According to the *Riverside Daily Press*, “visitors will find that a most comfortable, quiet and cleanly place has been arranged for the pleasure of the women shoppers in the city...it is the intention of the women of the city whose work has secure the rooms that everything shall be kept scrupulously clean.”²⁰⁶ The resultant Restroom Club provided restroom amenities in Downtown Riverside for women and children. The group was transformed into the Friendship House by the Riverside Women’s Club in 1920, and in 1930, the project was taken over by a board of 30 directors from representative women’s organizations and Riverside Churches. After the depression, the self-supporting Friendship House was located at 3679 Market Street and officially renamed in 1942.²⁰⁷

COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT HOUSE/CITY HOME LEAGUE

Beginning in the 1880s, the American settlement movement was a social reform effort that established “settlement houses” in poor urban neighborhoods to provide social services, education, and community support. The first settlement house in the United States was founded in New York in 1886, followed by the Hull House in Chicago spearheaded by Jane Addams in 1889. The movement was largely a reaction to a growing immigrant population, large-scale industrialization, and the problems of urban slums.²⁰⁸

Women played a prominent role in the settlement house movement by claiming a special responsibility as “municipal housekeepers” for their larger home: the city. Middle-class, native-born white women often founded these settlement houses, which were typically large buildings in dominantly immigrant neighborhoods. Settlement houses provided services for the community including day nurseries, kindergartens, courses in childcare and domestic science, English language skills, and cultural activities. Although settlement movement was not always aligned with religions, some houses were affiliated with religious groups.²⁰⁹

In Riverside, the first settlement house was established by the Riverside City Home League in 1914. Funded by private sources, the City Home League dedicated the settlement house, or the “House of Neighbors,” on Fourteenth Street in the largely Latino East Riverside in 1917 (177 W. Fourteenth Street, not extant).²¹⁰ The settlement house provided English language classes, health care (prenatal care), sewing instruction,

²⁰⁶ “Public Rest Room for Women to Open,” *Riverside Daily Press*, April 18, 1916, 5.

²⁰⁷ Steen, “Women Take Active Part in City Life;” eth Teters, “Friendship House Cheery Haven of Rest for Women,” *Riverside Daily Press*, April 2, 1948.

²⁰⁸ Michael B. Kahan, “Urban America,” in *A Companion to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, ed. Christopher McKnight Nichols and Nancy C. Unger (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2022), 37.

²⁰⁹ Kahan, 38.

²¹⁰ “City Home League Plans for Year,” February 28, 1917; *Riverside Daily Press*, 4; “City Home League Settlement House Formally to Open Next Wednesday,” *Riverside Enterprise*, March 10, 1917, 6.

citizenship classes, and social etiquette classes. Additionally, it had a playground and maternity ward for children and mothers.

The group worked closely with the YWCA, and at the time of its founding recounted that two YWCA “clubs composed of colored girls [were] to have their headquarters there.”²¹¹ Within the first month of its opening, the child welfare committee had hired doctors to examine 35 Japanese, Mexican, Black and white children, with interpreters available. Among those doctors hired included Dr. R.E. Moss, Dr. H.A. Atwood, Dr. J.W. Dowd, and Dr. Annie McRobie Ross.²¹²

In 1920, the City Home League moved operations to a new plant on Thirteenth Street in present-day Lincoln Park (261 E. Thirteenth Street, not extant). The *Riverside Enterprise* described the new location, as “not elaborately planned for its architectural magnificence, but consists of a homelike group of buildings...clean, comfortable, roomy and attractive.”²¹³ Buildings included a 2-story adobe residence, community social hall, and a row of boys’ workshops.

According to Riverside resident and historian James Boyd in 1922, “The movement has succeeded beyond the expectations of the founders and will contribute largely in doing away with undesirable spots in the city’s humbler quarters.”²¹⁴ In 1923, the City Home League changed its name to the Community Settlement Association (CSA). At that time, its objective was:

To maintain a Social Settlement which shall be a center for personal service and mutual helpfulness for civic, social, and moral betterment in sections where conditions of living are difficult and where peoples of poor circumstances and foreign birth abound. Its object, furthermore, shall be to cooperate and coordinate those social service activities of the church, clubs and philanthropic organizations of the city of Riverside at large, which can better be carried on by one organization than by scattered groups. The association shall endeavor to preserve a spirit of mutual friendliness, respect and service in its relations with its neighbors of every race and creed.²¹⁵

Isabelle (Belle) Rutherford, Kate Dudley Johnson Wheelock, and Stella Atwood were instrumental in creating the City Home League and settlement house. Early presidents of the City Home League included Rutherford from 1914 to 1916 and Wheelock from 1917 to 1922. Rutherford had been involved in the Spanish and Korean missions in Riverside since

²¹¹ “City Home League Settlement House Formally to Open Next Wednesday,” *Riverside Enterprise*, March 10, 1917, 6.

²¹² “Foreign Babies are Examined,” *Riverside Daily Press*, April 20, 1917, 7.

²¹³ The buildings were previously occupied by a Japanese and Mexican employment agency; J.R. Gabbert, “City Home League Filling Great Need Here: Success has Marked Work of Local Settlement House: Has Grown Much ‘Like Topsy,’” *Riverside Enterprise*, January 9, 1921, 7.

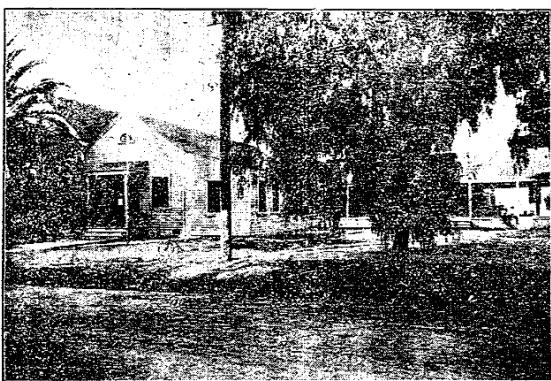
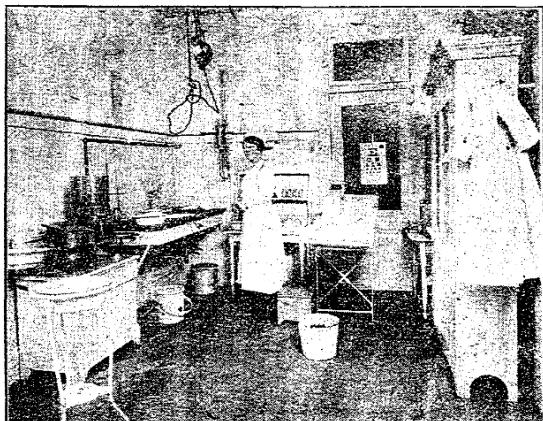
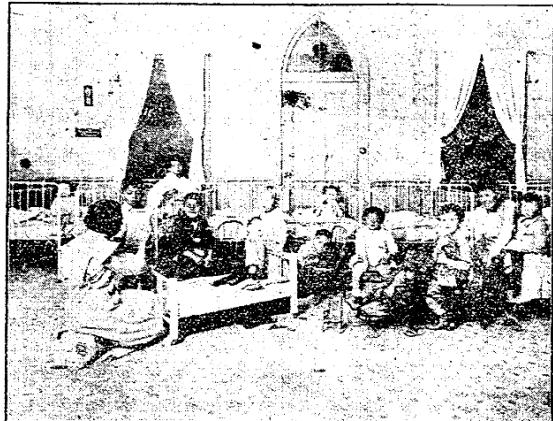
²¹⁴ Boyd, 658.

²¹⁵ “Community Association is New Name,” *Riverside Daily Press*, March 24, 1923, 3.

the early 20th century; in 1905, she was recorded as one of the teachers at the Korean mission who taught the women English.²¹⁶

Rutherford lived on Lemon Street (not extant) from at least 1900 to 1910. In 1927, she moved into her sister's (Helen M. Fraser) residence at 4570 Indian Hill Drive (extant). She continued to reside there until her death in 1960.²¹⁷ Rutherford's niece, Frances Fraser, also resided at the house; she is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

VIEWS SHOWING WORK THAT IS BEING DONE AMONG FOREIGN RESIDENTS



The upper left hand picture shows a scene that can be witnessed nearly any day in the Day Nursery conducted by the City Home League on Fourteenth street. The upper right cut presents a glimpse of a sewing class at the Settlement House on Thirteenth street. The photograph at the lower left shows the Riverside county clinic, an outgrowth of the City Home League's efforts. The lower right cut is a general view of the Settlement House, where the City Home League has its headquarters.

City Home League, 1921. *Riverside Enterprise*.

²¹⁶ "Calvary Church," *Riverside Enterprise*, December 7, 1905, 6.

²¹⁷ She lived at 1011 (present-day 4011) Lemon Street. Klotz and Hall, 103; "Rutherford Private Rites Scheduled," *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, February 27, 1960.

YWCA

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) was first established in the United States in 1858 with the Ladies' Christian Association in New York City. It spread to California by 1876, when Frank Browne founded the Oakland YWCA. The organization adopted the Christian mission to provide shelter and moral uplifting for single women, often through the organization of job training and placement programs; recreation; and language courses.

The Riverside YWCA was organized in December of 1905 with 192 members and Dr. Louise Harvey Clarke serving as the first president.²¹⁸ An early focus of the group was on physical education and exercise: the group raised funds for a gymnasium program run by physical culture director Mrs. Kate Richardson of San Francisco. In 1906, a group of young women organized the Altruistic Club, a philanthropic group that sought to "dispense aid and good cheer" to those in need.²¹⁹ That group lasted until 1976.²²⁰



YWCA Altruistic Club, 1906. *University of California, Riverside*.

Within two years, the YWCA had grown to over 400 members and sought bigger headquarters. In 1907, it purchased space in the Reynolds Building, equipped with gymnasium, auditorium, and dining room (not extant). Growth continued into the 1910s, and the group sought to construct its own building.²²¹ The evolution of the organization's

²¹⁸ "Regularly Organized," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 6, 1905, 3.

²¹⁹ Bonnett Dorris, "History of the Riverside YWCA," presented at the YWCA's 70th Annual Meeting, March 26, 1976, Laura Klure Collection of the Riverside YWCA Archives (MS 409), Box 3., University of California, Riverside.

²²⁰ Jennifer Mermilliod, "The YWCA as an Indicator of Social Capital in the Community of Riverside," unpublished paper, 2001, Laura Klure Collection of the Riverside YWCA Archives (MS 409), Box 3., University of California, Riverside.

²²¹ "Y.W.C.A. Quarters in New Building Are Completed," *Riverside Enterprise*, November 19, 1907, 2.

spaces, culminating in its construction of a YWCA headquarters, reflected the group's priorities. As historian Karen McNeill argues:

While YWCAs were contested and dynamic sites of power, class, and ethnic relations, they symbolized the increasingly diverse roles that women played in the urban landscape as workers, policy developers, and educators in the public sphere. In fact, YWCA buildings became one of the most commonly recognized urban spaces for women in the country, including California cities, and the buildings stood as idealized monuments to noble womanhood. In their copious publicity for the new YWCA building at Seventh and Lime streets, Riverside women were quick to build on these ideas...Above all, the building was a manifestation of women's leadership.²²²

The YWCA, designed by notable architect Julia Morgan, was completed in 1929. Morgan ignored businessman Frank Miller's (of the Mission Inn) request that the new building be of the Mission Revival style to match the Mission Inn and instead adopted a more modern style that symbolically "rejected male authority."²²³ It is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

THE MEDICAL FIELD

Several notable women were involved in the health field, acting as nurses and physicians. Women in the medical field included doctors Louise Harvey Clarke, Sarah E. French Maloy, and Annie McRobie Ross; City Hospital Superintendents Kate Caldwell, Edna Crooks, and Mary J. Corry; and countless nurses, including Charlotte Fay. Locations significant for an association with these women could be their residences, places of employ, or spaces in which they volunteered or served as club members.

Physician and surgeon Dr. Louise Harvey Clarke was particularly active in Riverside. Clarke studied at the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, receiving her M.D. in 1892. She moved to Southern California in 1893 and was a vocal advocate for the health and education of women of Riverside.²²⁴ Dr. Clarke was a member of the Riverside County Medical Society (RCMS), serving as the secretary/treasurer in 1901 and the first woman president in 1902. She helped found the Riverside's Professional and Business Women's (Woman's) club



Dr. Louise Harvey Clarke, 1918. *Oakland Tribune*.

²²² Karen McNeill, "Women Who Build," Julia Morgan & Women's Institutions," *California History*, 89, no. 3 (2012), 54.

²²³ McNeill, 55.

²²⁴ George H. Kress, "Louise Harvey Clarke, M.D.," *A History of the Medical Profession in Southern California* (Los Angeles: Press of the Times-Mirror Printing and Binding House, 1910), 119.

in 1903 and was a charter member of Chapter J of the P.E.O. sisterhood. Dr. Clarke represented the Riverside Chamber of Commerce as a delegate to national conventions. Clarke served as the first president of the YWCA (discussed in greater detail below).²²⁵ Meetings were regularly held at her residence. Over the course of her life, she lived on Orange Street (4046 Orange Street, not extant) and at 3456 Ramona Drive (extant).²²⁶

Dr. Sarah E. French Maloy graduated from the Hahnemann Medical College in Chicago and specialized in obstetrics and diseases experienced by women and children. Dr. Maloy moved to Riverside in 1895, where she and her husband established a family medical practice first at the Mission Inn (Glenwood Hotel) and later in suite 308-309 of the Loring Building (3685 Main Street, extant).²²⁷ Dr. Maloy often offered her services for free through the town's charities and was instrumental in the founding of the RWC. In addition to her main offices in the Loring Building, she also held rooms for her homeopathic practice at the Mission Inn.²²⁸ Dr. Maloy lived in various residences along Seventh Street (present-day Mission Inn Avenue), none of which are extant.

Dr. Annie McRobie Ross was born in Scotland before immigrating to the United States in 1886 at the age of 13. She became an Osteopathic physician, practicing in Los Angeles before moving her practice to Riverside in 1911. She had a private practice in Suite 310-311 of the Loring Building (3685 Main Street, extant) from 1914 until at least 1919.²²⁹ She resided at 4192 Mission Inn Avenue (extant) from at least 1911 to 1934.²³⁰ In addition to her private practice, Dr. Ross was involved in the Women's Missionary Society, YWCA, Red Cross, City Home League, and Zonta Club. She continued to practice in Riverside until her death in 1936.²³¹

Riverside City Hospital/County Hospital

The Riverside City Hospital was founded in 1902 in a 12-room house on Eleventh and Orange streets. At the time of its founding, Miss Kate Caldwell served as the Superintendent of the hospital, previously holding that role at the Good Samaritan hospital of Los Angeles.²³² The hospital featured a training school for nurses under the direction of Miss Caldwell, which held its first graduating class of seven women nurses in 1905.²³³ That year, the new hospital was built fronting on Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Walnut

²²⁵ "Societies," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 38 (February 1, 1902): 341; Holmes, 119; "Business Women Organize a Club," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 31, 1903, 3; DelCamp, 48.

²²⁶ The residence at 3456 Ramona Drive is designated as City of Riverside Landmark No. 116. "Dr. Louise Harvey Clarke Dies at Her Home on Ramona Drive," *Riverside Daily Press*, August 28, 1934, 3.

²²⁷ City of Riverside, City Directory (Riverside: Riverside Directory Co., 1911), 146.

²²⁸ Warhop, "Riverside's Founding Mothers for Health, Community Service, and Leadership," *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California, 1870-1970*, 284.

²²⁹ "Red Cross Gets 135 Garments," *Riverside Enterprise*, September 26, 1914, 1; City of Riverside, City Directory (Riverside: Riverside Directory Co., 1915), 182; "Osteopaths of Two Counties Have Meeting," *Riverside Enterprise*, February 20, 1919, 5.

²³⁰ Original address of 1192 Seventh Street. City of Riverside, City Directory (Riverside: Riverside Directory Co., 1911), 176; U.S. Census, 1934.

²³¹ "Dr. Annie McRobie Ross," *Evergreen Memorial Historic Cemetery*, accessed on September 2, 2025 at: <https://evergreen-cemetery.info/people/dr-annie-mcrobie-ross/>

²³² "The Riverside City Hospital is Now Open," *Riverside Enterprise*, October 28, 1902, 5.

²³³ "The Directors Adopt Plans for Hospital," *Riverside Enterprise*, October 29, 1903, 6; "City Hospital Nurses Have Commencement," *Riverside Enterprise*, April 18, 1905, 4.

streets. Miss Edna Crooks (later Mrs. D.L. Macquarrie) was hired as superintendent and took over training nurses at that time. Superintendent Crooks championed the expansion of the hospital to include a maternity ward and a ward for contagious diseases.²³⁴

In 1911, the Board elected Miss Mary J. Corry as the Superintendent of the hospital. Corry was a graduate of the Tyrone Hospital in Ireland, where she was in charge of the operating room for seven years, then completed a postgraduate course at the Presbyterian Hospital at Chicago before moving to Riverside.²³⁵ Superintendent Corry was a supporter of women's suffrage. In 1911, she was recorded as saying: "as a nurse I want suffrage because I am held responsible for conditioning and should have some say in what those conditions should be...Women are, by nature, housekeepers and nurses. Let them have a hand in the city's housekeeping and nursing."²³⁶

The Spanish Influenza of 1918 affected residents of Riverside, with many sick people seeking aid at the Riverside City Hospital. The Nightingale Club was founded during the epidemic. Charlotte Fay was a 21-year-old nurse at the hospital when the sickness hit. Fay was infected with influenza while caring for those stricken, then contracted pneumonia. She died in 1918, and Riverside's Chapter 28 of the Disabled American Veterans was named in her honor.²³⁷

In 1919, Miss Florence Barton Loring provided funds for the construction of a new Loring Memorial Nurses home. Designed by notable architect G. Stanley Wilson, the building housed a woman's and children's ward and was constructed in 1921.²³⁸ The Riverside City Hospital burned down due to defective wiring (not extant).²³⁹

Education

In 1891, the *Riverside Enterprise* reported on the efforts for women to teach at universities, reporting, "Why is it that a woman teacher is deemed so necessary through all the grades, from primary to those of the graduating class of the high school, and yet she should be deemed so pernicious and disastrous in colleges?"²⁴⁰ Yet, nearly 15 years later, the *Enterprise* bemoaned the increase in the number of female teachers in relation to males. At that time, the editor of the paper encouraged a restoration of the "balance between the sexes in the teaching profession," claiming that "the proper development of children requires the influence of man as well as that of woman, else they become effeminate in their views of life."²⁴¹ He continued:

This lopsided condition can be seen in our own city. The principal of the high school is a woman. The principal of the Longfellow school is a woman, the

²³⁴ "Institution a Credit and a Necessity," *Riverside Enterprise*, December 8, 1907, 37.

²³⁵ "Board Selects Miss M.J. Corry," *Riverside Daily Press*, November 24, 1909, 4.

²³⁶ "Are the Women of Riverside in Favor of Equal Suffrage," *Riverside Daily Press*, September 16, 1911, 9.

²³⁷ "Influenza Situation Grave," *Independent Enterprise*, October 23, 1918.

²³⁸ "Broader Field for Riverside City Hospital is Planned," *Riverside Enterprise*, May 6, 1919, 4.

²³⁹ "Riverside City Hospital Burns," *San Jose Mercury Herald*, February 26, 1921, 9.

²⁴⁰ "Women Professors," *Riverside Enterprise*, September 19, 1891, 4.

²⁴¹ "Why Cast Ballots out of Sympathy," *Enterprise*, November 3, 1906.

principal of the Irving school, the principal of the Grant school, the principal of the Palm Avenue school, the principal of the Lincoln school are all women. Now and effort is being made to fill Superintendent Hyatt's place with a woman.²⁴²

Despite this gender inequity in secondary education, women played an important role in the profession in Riverside. Of the 11 schools listed in the 1905 Riverside city directory, ten had women principals. A large number of teachers were women.²⁴³

Mothers were active participants in their children's education. Stella Atwood founded the Riverside Parent Teachers Association (PTA) in 1912.²⁴⁴ In 1917, she established the founded and chaired an Indian welfare committee in the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), Southern California. Atwood was the chair of the GFWC's national committee on Indian welfare from 1921 to 1928.

NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN AND THE SHERMAN INSTITUTE

The Sherman Institute, an off-reservation boarding school for American Indian children, was founded in Riverside by Harwood Hall in 1903. Originally founded as the Perris Indian School in 1892, the school was relocated to Riverside largely due to the petitions of the Mission Inn's owner Frank Miller. Miller anticipated that his hotel tourists would journey to the area to interact with the Native American students.²⁴⁵ Miller utilized the students as a source of cheap labor and entertainment, many of whom were young women.

The children at the Sherman Institute were seized from their families and tribes and forcibly relocated to the schools in an attempt to "civilize" them. In 1907, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs allowed local police officers to use force if parents refused to surrender their children.²⁴⁶ Operated by the federal government, the Sherman Institute was intended to "enable the Indian, who [could] no longer exist in a wild state, to meet the requirements of modern



Exterior view of the Minnehaha Dormitory, c. 1920.
Sherman Institute Museum.

²⁴² "Why Cast Ballots out of Sympathy," *Enterprise*, November 3, 1906.

²⁴³ Palm Heights Historic District, 88.

²⁴⁴ "Home Missions Feature of Week," *Riverside Daily Press*, November 19, 1912, 3.

²⁴⁵ Christina Rice, "The Sherman Institute of Riverside, California: A History in Photos," *Los Angeles Public Library*, (2017), accessed on December 9, 2025 at: <https://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/blogs/lapl/sherman-institute>

²⁴⁶ Jean Pfaelzer, "The 'Outing Programs' Human Trafficking at California's Native American Boarding Schools," Supportive Testimony H.R. 5444 / S. 2907 the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the U.S., from *California A Slave State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2023), 9.

profess and to appreciate and secure for himself the best there is in our civilization.”²⁴⁷ This narrative of the “vanishing Indian” denied Native people a place in modern Riverside and sought to integrate them into white society. The institute’s assimilation campaign sought to systematically eliminate Indigenous cultural practices.²⁴⁸

Female students at the Sherman Institute were separated from their male counterparts and trained largely in domestic sciences, including cooking, sewing, cleaning, and healthy living. They lived in the Minnehaha dormitory on campus and were encouraged to embody the Euro-centric Victorian characteristics of femininity: obedience, purity, piety, domesticity, selflessness, cleanliness, and dedication to the family.²⁴⁹ Volunteers from the Riverside Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) instructed girls in “moral” and domestic ideologies and held weekly lectures on how to develop “appropriate female faculties.”²⁵⁰

The Sherman Institute was closely associated with the WCTU. An internally published historic overview of the Southern California WCTU from 1924-1964 writes, “as Sherman Institute is in this County much interest has been centered around Indian work. Members have taught in the Sunday School, supervised clubs, organized LTL’s [the Loyal Temperance Legion, the WCTU youth chapter] and introduced the Indians to much alcohol education.”²⁵¹



Girls from the Sherman Institute on a YWCA outing (left) and with garden tools (right), 1925. *Los Angeles Public Library*.

²⁴⁷ Quoted material from founder A.C. Tonner, “Address,” 1903, Binder 1, Sherman Indian Museum Collection, in Carpio, 35.

²⁴⁸ Carpio, 35.

²⁴⁹ Katrina A. Paxton, “Learning Gender: Female Students at the Sherman Institute, 1907-1925,” in *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences*, ed. Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 177-182.

²⁵⁰ Carpio, 35.

²⁵¹ Jennie Ray Thompson, Zella C. Hunt, and Nellie M. Smith, *Victories of Four Decades: A History of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of Southern California: 1924-1964*, State Executive Committee of Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of Southern California (1964) as cited in Beeli, “A ‘White-Ribbon’ City,” 9.

The Sherman Institute sought to hire out girl students through the “outing system” (whereby students were sent to work in local white homes and businesses) to further instill Euro-American gender norms on students.²⁵² In 1909-1910, the Sherman Institute sent 86 students out to work. Between 1910 and 1918, its outing matron placed over 1,500 Sherman students.²⁵³ Young Native women were frequently sent to white homes as maids and babysitters. White families were allowed to loan the girls to other households for weeks or months. Mary Barker reported that while she was shipped from family to family, the Sherman Institute failed to supervise any of her “assignments.”²⁵⁴ Of the original buildings built during 1901-1902, only the Administration Building remains (9010 Magnolia Avenue).²⁵⁵

CASA BLANCA

In 1911, Ysabel Olvera and Margarita Solorio, two residents of the Riverside neighborhood of Casa Blanca, collected 80 signatures and petitioned the Riverside Board of Education to open a school in their community. Casa Blanca was a largely Latino neighborhood where several labor camps and settlements were established along the Santa Fe railroad tracks.



Casa Blanca, 1923. *City of Riverside*.

²⁵² Katrina A. Paxton, “Learning Gender: Female Students at the Sherman Institute, 1907-1925,” in *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences*, ed. Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 177-182.

²⁵³ Pfaelzer, 28.

²⁵⁴ Pfaelzer, 22.

²⁵⁵ The Administration Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Ramona K. Bradley, “Administration Building, Sherman Institute,” *National Register of Historic Places Nomination*, November 1977.

The approximately 70 school-age children in the community were forced to walk over a mile to reach the nearest schools, Palm School and Victoria School. As a result of the petition, the Board provided makeshift classrooms in 1913 and built a wood-frame school on Madison Street. The school burned in 1923, and a concrete school was erected later that year (3060 Madison Street, extant).²⁵⁶

Business & Professional Women

New professional women moving into Riverside increased social awareness of the community. In 1893, the following occupations were held by women in Riverside: horticulturist, farmer, fruit and orange grower, chambermaid and domestic, capitalist, cook, school principal and assistant principal, postmistress and postal clerk, laundress, physician, music teacher, linguist, typewriter and stenographer, assistant librarian and library attendant, Deputy County Recorder, art school owner, photographic retoucher, delivery clerk, hairdresser, draftswoman, and musician²⁵⁷ New professional women moving into Riverside also increased social awareness of the community.²⁵⁸

One business in which women excelled—nationally, in the West, and in Riverside—was in hotel and boardinghouse enterprises. The notable Mission Inn of Riverside was a success largely because of the work of two women. In 1876, Christopher and Mary Anne Miller built a 12-room adobe boardinghouse, known as the Glenwood Cottages. The hotel was expanded in 1878, and sold to Miller's son, Frank Miller in 1880.²⁵⁹ Miller and his wife, Isabella Hardenburg Miller, remade the hotel into the Mission Inn, a Spanish Colonial Revival style “neo-Franciscan fantasy of courts, patios, halls, archways and domes” with the aid of architects Myron Hunt and G. Stanley Wilson.²⁶⁰ The Mission Inn was an immediate success—it hosted President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903 and President William H. Taft in 1909. As noted by historian Kevin Starr, “The Mission Inn...put Riverside—and Frank Miller—on the map, which was where every good booster wanted to be.”²⁶¹

While Frank Miller was the face of the Mission Inn, his female relatives all contributed to its success. As identified by historian Jennifer Dickerson, Mary Anne Clark Miller, Alice Ruth Miller Richardson, Isabella Hardenberg Miller, Allis Miller Hutchings, and Marion Clark Miller all played important roles in the Mission Inn's establishment and development.²⁶² Mary Anne Clark Miller, mother to Frank Miller, was the matriarch of the

²⁵⁶ Frances J. Vasquez, “Ysabel Solorio Olvera—Champion for Education Equity,” *Anthology of Women in Riverside, 1870-1970*, 204-205.

²⁵⁷ City of Riverside, City Directory (Riverside: Riverside Directory Co., 1893); as noted in Delcamp, 37-38.

²⁵⁸ Despite these improvements in women's representations and rights, prejudices in the written record remained. In Elmer W. Holme's 1912 *History of Riverside County, California with Biographical Sketches of the Leading Men and Women of the County...* of the 332 biographies included, only six were of women. Of those six women, two (Dr. Dorothea S. Hall and Dr. Anna W. Deputy) resided in the City of Riverside; Holmes, 402 and 627.

²⁵⁹ Steve Lech, *Riverside's Mission Inn* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Press, 2006), 7.

²⁶⁰ Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 87.

²⁶¹ Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era*, 87.

²⁶² Jennifer Dickerson, “Women of the Mission Inn,” *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California, 1870-1970*, 274-279.

family and founded the Mission Inn with her husband Christopher Miller. Alice Ruth Miller Richardson, Frank's sister, played a pivotal role in the business' success by managing the hotel's day-to-day affairs. Isabella Hardenberg Miller, wife to Frank, was Riverside's first schoolteacher, and furthered Frank's education and intellectual pursuits, in turn improving the Mission Inn and contributing to its growth. Allis Miller Hutchings and Marion Clark Miller, Frank's daughter and second wife, respectively, both served on the board of directors that ran the Inn following Frank's death.²⁶³

Another hostelry was found across Riverside in the Chinatown neighborhood where Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, and Korean residents lived.²⁶⁴ In 1901, Koreans Song Kuang Do and Paik Sin Koo and their family moved to Riverside when they were displaced during the Japanese occupation of Korea. The family, including daughter and later writer Mary Paik Lee, established a boardinghouse and bathhouse in the city. Boardinghouses were one of the few business opportunities available to women in the west, although most only offered meals, not lodging.²⁶⁵ The family borrowed credit extended by Chinese merchants to set up the establishment and the matriarch of the family, Song Kuang Do, cooked for about 30 citrus workers. Lee remembered life in Riverside for her mother, including the hard work and how she had to cut her long, thick hair when it became a nuisance: "it must have caused her much grief to lose her beautiful hair, but she never complained. We had already lost everything else that meant anything to us."²⁶⁶

Another Korean woman to make a lasting impact on Riverside was Lee Hye Ryon (Helen Ahn), wife of Korean statesman Chang Ho Ahn (Dosan). The recently wed Ahns emigrated from Korea to California in 1902. They briefly lived in San Francisco, where they established a Korean Friendship Association, before settling in Riverside in 1904.²⁶⁷ Dosan and his wife founded the Korean Employment Bureau out of 1532 Pachappa Avenue in 1905 (not extant).²⁶⁸ The Bureau was instrumental in the establishment of a vibrant Korean community in Riverside, which largely supported the citrus harvest.

Several groups were formed by and for professional women involved in Riverside's business by the early 20th century. The Professional and Business Woman's Club was founded in 1903 by Dr. Louise Harvey Clarke and several other businesswomen.²⁶⁹ The club met at the Riverside Business College and at Dr. Clarke's home.²⁷⁰ In 1919, Black women in Riverside organized the Women's Industrial Club which was dedicated to raising

²⁶³ Jennifer Dickerson, "Women of the Mission Inn," *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California, 1870-1970*, 274-279.

²⁶⁴ Originally constructed by the Chinese population in the 1880s. Jared Farmer, *Trees in Paradise* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2013), 259.

²⁶⁵ Sandra L. Myres, *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience 1800-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 243.

²⁶⁶ May Paik Lee, *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America* (Tacoma: University of Washington Press, 1990), 15.

²⁶⁷ Kim and Patterson, 4.

²⁶⁸ Edward T. Chang and Hannah Brown, "Pachappa Camp," *California History* 95, no. 3 (Fall 2018), 49.

²⁶⁹ "Business Women Organize a Club," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 31, 1903, 3.

²⁷⁰ "Local Club Notes," *Press and Horticulturalist*, March 3, 1905, 7.

the wages of the working class. Mrs. L. Davidson served as president.²⁷¹ No information on the location of these meetings was found.



Helen Ahn (Lee Hye Ryon) and children, n.d. *Los Angeles Public Library*.

Several women were significant for owning and operating businesses, including early Latina resident Olive Trujillo and Black resident Emma P. Barrett Boyd. Olive Trujillo, born at the Trujillo Adobe (3669 W. Center Street, extant) in 1906, attended the local Trujillo School and made Riverside her home. She was an enterprising businesswoman who started as an accountant before opening and operating Johnnie's Grill and Old South Tea Room in Riverside with her husband George Vlahovich.²⁷²

Emma P. Barrett Boyd was born in Los Angeles. She married Robert James Boyd, who owned a barber shop there and they had four children: Barrett, Willis, Helen and Edward. Her first child, Barrett, was born in 1904 or 1905. By 1917 the family was living in Riverside, and Emma and Robert were still there in 1947.

Into the 20th century, Riverside libraries continued to employ women as librarians and librarian assistants. The RWC was the first to request funds from steel magnate Andrew



Emma P. Barrett Boyd, 1902. *University of California, Los Angeles*.

²⁷¹ Jay Hawker, "Riverside's Snap Shots," *California Eagle*, August 2, 1919, 3.

²⁷² R. Bruce Harley, "An Early Riverside Suburb at La Placita," *Journal of the Riverside Historical Society* 7, February 2003, 22.

Carnegie for establishment of a library. Designed by Los Angeles architects Burnham and Blieser, the Mission Revival style building was completed in 1903 (456 Mission Inn Avenue, not extant).²⁷³



Riverside Library School for Librarians, 1915. *Riverside Public Library*.

Library expansion continued. Riverside librarian Margaret Kyle was responsible for establishing the Arlington Branch Library in 1909, which allowed a greater number of residents to access and utilize the library collection. The Classical Revival style building was designed by local architect Seeley L. Pillar and located at 9556 Magnolia Ave (extant).²⁷⁴ In 1912, librarian Joseph Daniels and the Library Board's first woman member, Belle N. Patterson, authorized the establishment of a library school to train librarians. A majority of the teachers and students were women.²⁷⁵ Dorothy Daniels, daughter of Joseph Daniels, attended the librarian school and took over supervising the Arlington Branch Library. She "helped transform this branch into an active community center for the rural, southern half of Riverside."²⁷⁶

²⁷³ Baker, 13.

²⁷⁴ Baker, 15-17.

²⁷⁵ Baker, 22-24.

²⁷⁶ Baker, 33-34.



Arlington Public Library in Riverside, 2017. *City of Riverside*.

Arts & Culture

From 1890 to 1920, women in the arts were increasingly recognized artists themselves, gaining access to art schools and participating in major movements like Impressionism and emerging modern styles. In Riverside, women were active in many different fields, including singing and music; acting and theater; fine and visual arts; and literature, among others.

Music was one area in which Riverside women excelled. Perhaps most famous in this genre was local Marcella Craft, a noted operatic soprano, who moved with her family to Riverside in 1887. With contributions from local Riverside businessmen, Craft was able to study opera in Boston. Craft regularly returned to Riverside to sing at the Mt. Rubidoux Easter Service; she was the lead almost every year from 1915 to 1922 and again in 1933. In 1917, Craft purchased a home for her parents on Prospect Avenue (later renamed and renumbered as 4539 Main Street, not extant), in which she herself settled from 1932 to her death in 1959. In Riverside, she founded the Riverside Opera Association in 1932.²⁷⁷

Riverside's proximity to Los Angeles and the entertainment industry drew many local women into the professions associated with "Tinseltown," or Hollywood. Examples include Madge Kennedy and Maude George. Madge Kennedy, born in 1891, was a silent film star who lived most of her youth in Riverside. Maude George, a character performer

²⁷⁷ Hal Durian, "Marcella Craft: Talented and Crafty," *True Stories of Riverside and the Inland Empire* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing Incorporated, 2013); Cindy Patton, "Marcella Craft – Riverside's International Opera Star," *Journal of the Riverside Historical Society* 19, January 2015, 6-24.

from Riverside, often portrayed an aristocratic lady in many silent drama films. She starred in over 50 film-based projects, mostly with Universal Studios in the 1910s and 1920s.²⁷⁸

Literature was another field in which Riverside women excelled. Margaret Adelaide Arnold was one such writer who contributed stories and verses to *Scribner's*, *Atlantic*, *Yale Review*, *Poetry*, *Villager* and other magazines. She resided on Victoria Hill in Riverside.²⁷⁹ Mary Elizabeth Darling, founding member of the RWC and Wednesday Morning Club, was an avid historian and writer. In 1937, she wrote a six-part history of Riverside entitled "A Glance." The articles appeared in the *Riverside Daily Press*. Darling lived on Arlington Avenue (not extant), the location of present-day Shamel Park. She relocated to the Mission Inn following her husband's death.²⁸⁰

Women in Riverside During World War I, 1917-1918

From April 6, 1917, to the armistice on November 11, 1918, American involvement in WWI brought women in Riverside into military service not only as mothers of soldiers, but also as signal operators, farmers, producers, and volunteers that contributed towards the national war effort both directly and indirectly. Women's clubs were a key facilitator of their war service. Groups that had in the prewar period been avenues for social and economic agency for women, like the YWCA, the Red Cross, and the Navy League, became devoted to the war effort through the acquisition and creation of supplies, monetary drives, and social services.

As historian Lynn Dumenil writes, "during World War I, the federal government, as during the Civil War, drew heavily on the unpaid labor of white, elite, and middle-class women to implement scores of programs and drives during wartime."²⁸¹ As the demographic with the most resources and leisure time to devote to voluntarism, affluent, educated, white women were at the center of domestic wartime efforts.²⁸² Participation in local mobilization brought women further into the public sphere through both their individual work and a novel coalescence of women's organizations with different agendas in service of the war. The work of Riverside women, both during the war itself and its immediate aftermath (marked by the Spanish Influenza pandemic), was a vital part of Riverside's contributions to national mobilization.

²⁷⁸ Mandy Newton, "Maude George," *Anthology of Women in Riverside, 1870-1970*, 123.

²⁷⁹ Max Binheim, *Women of the West*, (Los Angeles: Publishers Press, 1928), 19.

²⁸⁰ Glenn Wenzel, "Mary Elizabeth Darling: Weaving the Social and Historical Tapestry of Riverside," *Raincross Gazette*, <https://www.raincrossgazette.com/mary-elizabeth-darling/>

²⁸¹ Lynn Dumenil, "Women's Reform Organizations and Wartime Mobilization in World War I – Era Los Angeles", *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol. 10 No. 2 (April 2011): 215.

²⁸² Dumenil, 215.

RIVERSIDE WOMEN: “HELLO GIRLS” & “FARMERETTES”

The Signal Corps Female Telephone Operators Unit, or “Hello Girls,” were a unit of women switchboard operators bilingual in English and French who served with the American Expeditionary Force in Europe. In 1917, 223 of these women (around 37 from California alone) went overseas to assist with logistical operations for American forces, including Helma Greenlund of Riverside.²⁸³ Described as a “former popular telephone operator” in the city by a 1918 article from the *Riverside Daily Press*, Greenlund went on to become the Chief Supervisor at Lomita Telephone Exchange and returned to Paris in 1930 for the Women Overseas Service League Convention.²⁸⁴ Greenlund and the “Hello Girls” provided a vital service that was only later recognized with full veteran benefits for the women switchboard operators.

Greater Riverside County was serviced by the Women’s Land Army of America (WLAA), an organization prominent in California. The WLAA was founded by a “consortium” of women’s organizations in order to fill the shortage of agricultural labor created by departing male soldiers with trained women farm workers.²⁸⁵ Elsinore in Riverside County became a hub for their operations, owing to the region’s “lucrative contracts with the U.S. military to supply troops with dried and canned fruit” and the importance of the citrus industry’s continued operation to the national economy and the war effort.²⁸⁶ As part of the WLAA, young women like Leila Woodward, formerly of Riverside but studying in Pasadena, lived in a camp in Elsinore and



Operators Jane Conway (left) and Miss Helena Greenlund (right, of Riverside), Signal Corps Unit, No. 6 Tours, Indre at Loire, France, 1919. NAID: 86708366. *National Archives*.

²⁸³ Cortland Jindra, “The Californians of the Hello Girls,” World War I Centennial, United States World War One Centennial Commission, 2024. <https://www.worldwar1centennial.org>

²⁸⁴ “California Girls in Signal Corps: Twenty-Eight Women from This State Are Women Operators,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), July 15, 1918. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>; “Keystone Items: Arrives in New York,” *Daily Press Journal* (Wilmington, CA), July 10, 1930, 6. <https://www.newspapers.com>

²⁸⁵ Elaine F. Weiss, “Before Rosie the Riveter, Farmerettes Went to Work,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, Smithsonian Institution, May 28, 2009, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com>

²⁸⁶ Weiss, “Before Rosie the Riveter.”

worked in rural regions like Elsinore and Hemet for the South Elsinore Development Company.²⁸⁷



Women's Land Army of America posters, 1918. *Library of Congress*.

The “farmerettes” harvested fruit, planted and plowed, operated heavy machinery, and dug holes for orange trees among other agricultural tasks and farm chores.²⁸⁸ Not only learning valuable skills, the WLAA volunteer’s importance enabled them to negotiate for high pay and desirable working conditions, contributing to a growing sense of female capability and independence. Both the WLAA and the Signal Corps Unit saw Riverside women participating in the formal war effort through national, government-sanctioned services. The vast majority of their work, though, took place in the informal sphere through local charity and volunteerism, especially with the Red Cross.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL MOBILIZATION: SERVICES & SUPPLIES

Most women in Riverside who participated in the war effort from 1917-1918 did so in their capacity as club women. Church groups, the YWCA, and other collectives channeled much of their volunteer work through the organizational framework of the Red Cross,

²⁸⁷ “Elsinore Will Give Women Farm Workers Warm Welcome Tomorrow: First Quota of Women's Land Army of America Will Arrive at Lake City Tomorrow from Los Angeles,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), April 30, 1918. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

²⁸⁸ “Girl Farmers Come to Town: Two of the West Lake School Unit Express Satisfaction with Work,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), July 30, 1918, 4. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

which had been federally requisitioned to provide and equip base hospitals on the European continent.²⁸⁹ Women as individuals or with groups joined Red Cross chapters, including the Riverside chapter, which had sewing rooms located on the second floor of the Reynolds Department Store on the corner of Main and Ninth streets.²⁹⁰ The most common forms of Red Cross work were the knitting of warm clothing; creation of care packages or Christmas boxes to send to individual soldiers abroad; making of surgical dressings and hospital garments; and raising funds in the form of bonds and donations.²⁹¹ Specific local chapters received orders or assignments from the Pacific Division. In late 1918, the Riverside chapter conducted a local drive to collect fruit pits as part of a “fruit pit campaign.” In November, the chapter received a two-week rush order to sew 1,000 pairs of pajamas.²⁹²

Women either met in groups at the Red Cross sewing rooms to fill orders or were assigned a certain amount of material individually to sew or knit and then returned the finished garments to headquarters. Though much of the publicity advertised the opportunity to specifically support local boys and Riverside’s own “Company M,” in actuality this material connection between soldier and hometown rarely existed, and the garments were collected over the entire Pacific region and distributed according to the needs of the military.²⁹³ In November of 1918, Corresponding Secretary Martha Wright of the Preparedness Chapter Navy League of Riverside published in the *Riverside Daily Press* an inventory of the group’s work from April 7, 1917 to November 26, 1918, providing an example of the scale and form of local women’s volunteer production during the war. Some of the 10,563 new articles that the chapter sewed or assembled at their headquarters at the home of Mrs. A.L. Woodill at 590 Fourteenth Street included: 4,016 knitted pieces, 1,772 hospital shipments, 3,876 assorted “garments,” 127 “good cheer bags,” and 271 fabric articles for the March Field Hospital.²⁹⁴ As just one group of women among many doing similar work, the output of women’s organizations can be inferred to have been hugely significant to wartime operations, a fact that was recognized by the U.S. government in their requisitioning of the Red Cross for war work.

The First World War’s mobilization of American women on the “home front” created an opportunity for collaboration between many of these previously unconnected women’s groups, especially in Riverside. The Navy League started as a small group of women from

²⁸⁹ Dumenil, 236.

²⁹⁰ “California Girls in Signal Corps: Twenty-Eight Women from This State Are Women Operators,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), July 15, 1918. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>. Reynolds became a Montgomery Ward’s Department store by 1954. While the original building is no longer extant, the site is adjacent to the City Hall built in 1975 and is occupied currently by Arcade Coffee Roasters.

²⁹¹ “Red Cross Notes,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), November 15, 1918. The creation of surgical dressings and hospital garments seem to be the most in demand services, each having their own “department” within the Riverside Red Cross and continuing from 1917 through 1919.

²⁹² “Red Cross Notes,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), November 15, 1918.

²⁹³ “History of Navy League Is Full: At Request of War Relief Council Statement Is Prepared by Miss Martha Wright, Corresponding Secretary of the Chapter—Work of Organization Is Extensive,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), December 6, 1918. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

²⁹⁴ “History of Navy League.” The original house at 590 Fourteenth Street is no longer extant, and the lot now has a different address.

All Saints Episcopal Parish House, who organized first aid and nursing classes—as the Red Cross expanded, they ceased their courses and folded them into the larger organization.²⁹⁵ The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) sewed for the Red Cross at their meetings, and were a part of the larger W.C.C.S. or “War Camp Community Service” organization that held social events for March Field and other local soldiers.²⁹⁶

Much of this coalescence occurred in 1918 in response to the activation of March Air Field and its corresponding training camp and hospital. A “women’s church federation” was formed with delegates from 32 of the city’s churches, led by YMCA members Mrs. E.M. Bonnett and Mrs. G.T. Roberts. The “federation” was created “to avoid overlapping in the field of work which is to be taken up by churches of the city with regard to the welfare of the soldiers of March field and of the wives of men stationed there who are coming here to live.”²⁹⁷ The creation of this united body of women, though for charitable and social purposes, represents the new degree of collaboration between these women’s clubs and the corresponding increase in social power and visibility that the First World War afforded them.

RIVERSIDE WOMEN IN 1918: MARCH AIR FIELD AND THE SPANISH INFLUENZA

March Air Field was established in February 1918 as the Alessandro Flying Training Field for new Air Service (later the Air Force) recruits preparing to deploy to Europe.²⁹⁸ A large component of local Riverside women’s “war work” in 1918 was facilitating this training by offering material and labor assistance, hosting families and social events, and otherwise catering to soldiers training at the base.²⁹⁹ Notably, the rise of the Spanish Influenza the same year led to the creation of a hospital on the site.³⁰⁰ Riverside women were significantly involved there as nurses and providers of bandages and other materials.³⁰¹

The YWCA maintained a particularly close relationship, having received a government mandate to support activities on and around March Air Field.³⁰² Women from Riverside did as mentioned work as nurses in the March Field hospital. The *Daily Press* in 1918 writes of a Mrs. Harold Polkinghorn who fell ill while “doing emergency nursing in the March Field hospital” and women from the Navy League served as relief nurses during influenza

²⁹⁵ “History of Navy League”

²⁹⁶ “W.C.C.S. Activities,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), January 25, 1919. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

²⁹⁷ “Federation of Women Formed: Will Take Charge of Church Activities on Behalf of Military Men and Wives,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), June 7, 1918. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

²⁹⁸ “March Air Reserve Base,” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, last edited June 26, 2024, accessed July 19, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_Air_Reserve_Base.

²⁹⁹ “San Diego Girls Working in March Field Offices,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), November 5, 1918.

<https://cdnc.ucr.edu>. It is unclear whether Riverside women worked directly on the base. Two young women from San Diego, Frances Cox and Florence Doran, are noted to have been stationed at March Field “having enlisted in the aviation branch of the army in a clerical capacity,” but no local women are specifically mentioned.

³⁰⁰ I have been in contact with the resident historian at March Air Field, who is getting back to me about the nature of the hospital at the Field itself. Another makeshift hospital was set up in the city at Twelfth and Chestnut streets in 1918, at which the Nightingale Club volunteered, but that building is no longer extant.

<https://www.pressenterprise.com/2013/01/31/riverside-nightingale-club-to-mark-95-years/>

³⁰¹ “Red Cross Notes,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), January 7, 1919. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

³⁰² “In Social and Club Circles: Y.W.C.A. Moves to New Home, Association Settled in Commodious Quarters on Main Street,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), July 15, 1918. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

outbreaks.³⁰³ Mrs. Estell Rouse, the “local chairman of nursing service” for the Red Cross in 1918, also assisted with Riverside’s influenza response at the hospital, implying the participation of at least a group of local nurses.³⁰⁴



Riverside Nurse in “Flu” Mask

Riverside nurse in mask, 1918.
Independent Enterprise.

In the same year she founded the Married Nurses Club, a women’s group now called the Nightingale Club which still funds nursing scholarships and meets monthly around the city. Outside of nursing, the YWCA and other women’s groups contributed significant resources to the camp and hospital in the form of local produce and foodstuffs such as “fruit and jelly,” as well as knitted clothing, care packages like a “Christmas box,” and surgical dressings similar to the work done by the local Red Cross.³⁰⁵ This work also continued after the formal armistice, with women sewing and knitting garments for European refugees. With the opening of March Air Field, women in Riverside were able to see many of the fruits of their labor and establish the local-to-local connection that they desired from Red Cross work. This beneficial arrangement quickly made March Field the focus of the charitable efforts of local women.

The YWCA under its “War Secretary” Mrs. Armin Hentschke provided a social life for soldiers at March Field throughout 1918 and into 1919. A dedicated “hospitality center” at the Lovekin property or “Dyer House” on West Main Street between Eleventh and

Twelfth streets served as an employment department, social club, kitchen, and receiving room, extending “a cordial welcome, not only to the visiting women relatives of the men at March Field, but to the men themselves.”³⁰⁶ Wives, mothers, and other female relations of soldiers would “receive courteous attention by the hostesses and secretaries in charge” until their family member was able to come from the field to meet them for visits. The hospitality center facilitated the YWCA’s support of March Field while maintaining traditional feminine roles in service and hospitality. This continued onto the base itself; Miss Constance Girdlestone, Miss Olga Hammond, Miss Dolly Bettner and Miss Marion Partridge were young women volunteering through the YWCA to conduct “real war

³⁰³ “San Diego Girls,” “History of Navy League is Full”

³⁰⁴ “Red Cross Notes,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), September 30, 1918. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

³⁰⁵ “Red Cross Notes: Reputation at Stake,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), January 7, 1919. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

³⁰⁶ “In Social and Club Circles: Y.W.C.A. Moves to New Home.” The Dyer House is no longer extant, though Otis T. Dyer, its original owner, was an early Riverside settler and is listed as living in the house in 1891. The block currently holds the Riverside Family Courthouse and is near the Riverside Historic Courthouse.
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2469/records/1414118172?tid=&pid=&quer>

service” to “teach the boys in the aviation camp to dance.”³⁰⁷ Another YWCA program called for Riverside women to volunteer to host March Air Field boys in their homes for a few days for Thanksgiving, many of whom were recovering from influenza.³⁰⁸ Positions that affluent white women in Riverside were used to holding—mother, hostess, club member—were commandeered here for the war effort.

Outside of the “Hello Girls” and WLAA, Riverside did not hold as many opportunities for women to participate in industrial work as other regions. This aligns with the city’s agricultural character as well as its relative affluence in the 19th and early 20th centuries, especially in the typical “club woman’s” demographic—white citrus growing or urban professional families. While significant African American, Mexican, and Asian populations in Riverside in this period undoubtedly participated in efforts on the “home front,” their racial exclusion from the most prominent women’s groups and discouragement from leadership roles creates noticeable gaps in the archival record of women’s participation in the First World War. Despite the need for continued research, the value of women’s contributions to the war effort in Riverside is apparent. Through service and women’s organizations, local women provided vitally needed supplies, funds, nursing, agricultural labor, and social work that stimulated the economy and facilitated wartime operations.

On April 19, the City of Riverside a memorial plaque in Riverside’s White Park dedicated to the “mothers of boys from Riverside County California who fought for democracy” in the First World War.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ Ina Young Kelley, “Dancing Class Makes a Hit: Aviators to Be Taught to Trip It Lightly Under Auspices Dance Committee,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), May 20, 1918. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

³⁰⁸ “Share Joys with Soldier: Riversiders Asked to Open Homes Thanksgiving Day to Uniformed Men,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), November 9, 1918. <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

³⁰⁹ Glenn Wenzel, “Historic White Park Tribute to Riverside Mothers of WWI Soldiers,” *Raincross Gazette* (Riverside, CA), May 26, 2022.

CIVIC AND GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT, 1920-1941

Post-Suffrage Women's Organizations

Following World War I, women's organizations returned to social programming after dedicating their time and resources to the support of American troops on the Homefront. However, in contrast to the pre-war era, these once-social clubs now centered activism in support of equal rights, women's issues, professional development, and charity work.

After ratification of the 19th amendment in 1920—which granted women the right to vote—women continued to face a battle for political integration and full citizenship.³¹⁰ Women's economic and social injustices – perpetuated by sexist laws and anti-suffragists— limited their financial stability, right to community property, wages and labor rights, and child custody. The continued resistance to women's claims for full citizenship marked the interwar years. Women vigorously pressed for non-discriminatory legislation and inclusion in party politics during this era.³¹¹

Ironically, obtaining the vote threatened the coherent basis upon which women participated in political affairs. The pre-war suffragist coalition split over tensions between operating within the existing political framework and forming a separate party which would place women's interests first.³¹² On a national scale, the League of Women Voters (LWV), initially favored a gender-based plan of action, distinguishing it from the National Women's Party (NWP), which wished to abolish all sex-based legislation in favor of obtaining an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution.³¹³ However, the low turnout of women voters in 1920 led the LWV into a non-partisan stance to prioritize voter education. By 1924, it led a massive campaign to “Get out the Vote,” a program that, by the end of the decade, would evolve into the organization's main mission.³¹⁴

Although the LWV attracted a small fraction of former suffragists in the U.S. (approximately 5-10%), women retained their activist stance through membership in other organizations.³¹⁵ Women's domestic political culture continued from the 19th century into the 1920s and 1930s, working towards incremental reform in the tradition of earlier movements. Business and professional women's organizations arose from an increase in the number of educated and working women. Women service societies such as the Altrusa, Quota, Zonta, and Soroptimists Clubs, also fought for civic issues.

³¹⁰ However, the enfranchisement of Black women in some parts of the country was not ensured until the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

³¹¹ S.J. Kleinberg, *Women in the United States 1830-1945* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 283.

³¹² Kleinberg, *Women in the United States 1830-1945*, 282.

³¹³ Kleinberg, *Women in the United States 1830-1945*, 284.

³¹⁴ Liette Gidlow, “Beyond 1920: The Legacies of Woman Suffrage,” *National Park Service*, accessed on October 16, 2025 at: https://www.nps.gov/articles/beyond-1920-the-legacies-of-woman-suffrage.htm#_edn

³¹⁵ Kleinberg, *Women in the United States 1830-1945*, 285.

Furthermore, after ratification, suffrage leaders forged an alliance to bring their collective political power to impact the legislative process. Soon twenty organizations, including the LWV, the GFWC, the National Consumers' League, the National Women's Trade Union League, and the WCTU, had banded together to form the Women's Joint Congressional Committee (WJCC). Claiming to represent a combined membership of twenty million women, the WJCC advanced a legislative agenda that put women and children first.

RIVERSIDE WOMEN'S CLUB AND CIVIC ISSUES

Following national trends, Riverside's women's clubs proliferated through the 1920s and 1930s, pushing social reform and equal rights. The Riverside's Women's Club continued its support of social activities and entertainment; however, the club also supported the California's Federation of Women's Clubs (CFWC) movement for social reform.

By 1921, the RWC included approximately 300 members. Given its increase in membership and community programs, the club acquired a lot at Tenth and Orange streets to construct a new clubhouse. The clubhouse was of concrete and framed construction, designed in a bungalow cottage style, and built by local contractor, L.C. Waldman. Amenities include a reception hall, large parlor with fireplace, a large kitchen and dining room, an auditorium with a ticket window, and a director's room used for meetings and small study classes. "Social affairs, better acquaintances, literary work and greater civic effort"³¹⁶ were emphasized with the construction of the new clubhouse. Additionally, a girls' auxiliary was developed.³¹⁷

In 1923, the Southern District Convention of the CFWC took place in Riverside, and state and local district leaders hosted approximately 500 club attendees in different settings of the city, including the Mission Inn and the Congregational Church. Mrs. Thomas G. Winter, then-president of the GFWC, addressed the convention, reacting to the recent voting power acquired by the women, urging men and women to unite for the welfare of the country.³¹⁸ Winter declared, "Nothing great can come from half effort, but when we stand together, no matter how high the ideal to which we aspire, we can attain our end. If women stand together, they can solve the great problems of the country."³¹⁹ This newly acquired civic duty was also noted in the *Riverside Daily Press* by writer Katherine E. Oliver, who reported on the conference. Oliver wrote that compared to the history of early women's clubs, which were focused on social and cultural programming, modern club members had adopted a focus on family life and patriotism due to the hardening impacts of World War I. Oliver notes that the 1920s women club themes included "Americanism,

³¹⁶ "Riverside Women's Club Will Have Club House," *Riverside Daily Press*, August 20, 1921.

³¹⁷ "Riverside Women's Club Will Have Club House."

³¹⁸ "Unified Womanhood Can Accomplish Modern Miracles," *Riverside Daily Press*, November 16, 1923.

³¹⁹ "Unified Womanhood Can Accomplish Modern Miracles."

social services, [and] internal relations" correlated to women's impact and influence on the Homefront.³²⁰

In 1926, the CFWC Annual Banquet was held at the Mission Inn, hosting 600 women, as part of the 25th anniversary celebration of the annual convention. Dr. Mariana Bertola, then-president of the CFWC, spoke on the state of the nation, politics, education, adult education, and the goal of the federation – "Service to humanity is the rock upon which the Federation is founded,"³²¹ she stated. Other speakers during the convention included Mrs. W. A. Fitzgerald, past state president, who spoke on topics such as women and public service, support of the newspapers, and women's social progress. Lal Chand Mehra, Indian scholar and actor, addressed the banquet, speaking on the progress of American women compared to that of Indian women. Finally, at the closing ceremony, the female newspaper writers reporting on the convention were presented and acknowledged for their professional work as examples of women's social progress.³²²



California Dining Room in the Mission Inn, c. 1905. *Museum of Riverside*.

In 1927, the RWC hosted Federation Day celebrations at their clubhouse on Tenth and Orange streets. Guest speakers included Mrs. Edward Franklin, Vice-President of the GFWC, who spoke on the advancement of women's club. Mrs. Franklin noted that

³²⁰ Katherine Elspeth Oliver, "Club Conventions Now as Compared to Early Days," *Riverside Daily Press*, November 16, 1923.

³²¹ "Club Leader Gives Address," *Riverside Daily Press*, May 7, 1926.

³²² "Club Women Make History," *Riverside Daily Press*, May 8, 1926.

women's clubs were no longer about self-improvement and self-culture for its members, but about the "improvement of the city, the state, and the nations."³²³ Women's clubs worked towards the aim of male and female collaboration, and widen their scope to include "matters civic, state, national, and international."³²⁴

The following year, at the fourth annual Institute of International Relations conference hosted at the Mission Inn, the GFWC was represented by Mrs. Thomas Winters, past president. Mrs. Winters' gave a talk on the role of Women's Organizations in International Peace, stating that basic understanding, communication, and respect for different world views were key toward international understanding and peace among countries.³²⁵ In 1929, women club members were again represented in the fifth Institute conference at the Mission Inn under the theme of "Agencies for International Understanding," this time with three different speakers' series addressing women's role in international relations.³²⁶

Miss Josephine Seaman, Vice-President of the CFWC, spoke on "International Relations – An Increased Interest;" Miss Evaline Dowling, chairman of the World Friendship Committee, and delegate of the World Federation of Education Association, spoke on the topic of "Internal Co-Operation;" and the California League of Women Voters, represented by Mrs. Margarete Brooks, spoke on the topic of "the National League of Women Voters' Program in the Department of International Co-Operation to Prevent War."³²⁷ Mrs. Brooks noted that the League promoted international good-will by supporting certain national policies, such as the adherence to the World Court, and also conducted studies addressing social, cultural, and economic issues from the female perspective.³²⁸

Women in the Workforce

Through the 1920s and 1930s, women's role within the family economy was altered: more women took jobs outside of the home and replaced children under the age of 18 as the secondary breadwinners in the family. As the perceived productive value of women's labor within the home declined, and as Americans placed a higher value on education and consumption, traditional family size shrank, and more women sought work outside homemaking. Additionally, WWI and immigration restrictions withered the supply of potential lodgers, and greater affluence resulted in fewer people willing or needing to share a room in someone else's house. The shift to employment outside the house attested to women's economic resilience and the near demise of earning a living through household endeavors.³²⁹

³²³ "Federation Day at Women's Club," *Riverside Daily Press*, October 26, 1927.

³²⁴ "Federation Day at Women's Club."

³²⁵ "Noted Club Woman Addresses Institute," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 12, 1928.

³²⁶ "Women's Clubs Are Agencies for Peace," *Riverside Daily Press*, November 12, 1929.

³²⁷ "Miss Seaman to Speak Tomorrow," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 9, 1929.

³²⁸ "Women Voters at Institute Dinner," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 12, 1929.

³²⁹ Kleinberg, *Women in the United States 1830-1945*, 207.

Race, ethnicity, age, and marital status continued to have an impact on the proportion of women holding jobs outside the home, however, as well as the type of work they did. Women's employment expanded most strongly in the clerical and professional sectors, with the proportion of female workers in industry fluctuating as other jobs opened and industrial production ebbed and flowed. White women, compared to Black women, showed growing economic independence by staying in the workforce after marriage. White women increasingly consolidated their hold on white-collar occupations but had a large presence in textiles, clothing manufacturing, and food processing, with small progress on the fringes of heavy industry, including sewing seat covers, and other "nimble-fingered" tasks in car and truck factories.³³⁰ According to U.S. census records, twice as many married white women worked in 1940 as in 1920, while married Black women's employment, in contrast, dropped from 32.5% gainfully employed women in 1920 to 27.3% in 1940.³³¹

By 1920, approximately 39% of all employed women held professional, managerial, clerical, and sales positions, rising to 45% in 1940.³³² Women college graduates expanded their range of occupation to include personnel management and business careers. Women also made some progress in gaining significant government posts during Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency, including Francis Perkins, the first women to attain cabinet rank as Secretary of Labor.³³³ However, white collar jobs sustained a hierarchy for men and women. Men dominated senior office positions and those requiring physical labor, while women increasingly filled repetitious, routing, or junior slots in the office hierarchy.³³⁴

Several notable exceptions occurred in Riverside, where women broke into male-dominated fields in the 1920s and 1930s. Such professional women included builder Nellie G. Dunn, landscape architect Dorothy Dunbar, and banker Mayme Bonham, among others.³³⁵

Fondly known as the "lady builder," Nellie G. Dunn was born in 1885 in Utah, before relocating to Riverside in the 1920s, where she embarked on a career of prolific residential building. Dunn constructed many houses in the Wood Streets, Palm Heights, and Magnolia Center of Riverside in the mid- to late- 1920s. Dunn purchased several lots in a tract and constructed "builder" houses, often from standard designs or pattern books.³³⁶ As recorded in the *Riverside Enterprise* in 1924, "What promises to be another triumph for

³³⁰ Kleinberg, *Women in the United States 1830-1945*, 209-210.

³³¹ 1920, 1930, and 1940 Occupational Statistics from the US Census. Cited in Kleinberg, *Women in the United States 1830-1945*, 208.

³³² US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States from Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, DC, Government Printing Office, 1960), 74. As cited in Kleinberg, *Women in the United States 1830-1945*, 211.

³³³ Kleinberg, *Women in the United States 1830-1945*, 210.

³³⁴ Kleinberg, *Women in the United States 1830-1945*, 211.

³³⁵ See *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California, 1870-1970* for more biographies of notable early women professionals in Riverside.

³³⁶ For more information see: Jennifer Mermilliod, "Mrs. Nellie G. Dunn, Riverside's Lady Builder," *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California 1870-1970*, 101-107.

Mrs. Nellie G. Dunn. Riverside architect and builder, is the new Palm Avenue tract, heralded as the city's newest, distinct residential district.”³³⁷

Landscape architect Dorothy Dunbar was a Riverside native who studied at Riverside City College before embarking on her career. Dunbar designed several notable spaces in Riverside over the course of her life, including a large portion of Fairmount Park, March Field, and the Community Settlement House. She later went on to teach landscape architecture classes at Riverside City College and was involved in the City Beautification Committee, YWCA, and Zonta Club.³³⁸

Another woman professional who excelled in a male-dominated field in Riverside during this period was banker Mayme Bonham. Earning a diploma from the American Institute of Banking in 1931, Bonham worked at the Security Savings Bank of Riverside and served as the president of the Riverside County chapter of the American Institute of Banking. Bonham was involved in the Association of Bank Women and the Riverside County Red Cross chapter.³³⁹

Professional Women's Organizations

YWCA

In Riverside County, 5,362 women over the age of 10 held gainful employment in 1930 across all industries, including agricultural, industrial, and professional trades. The highest numbers of women employed were noted in professional and semiprofessional services, and in wholesale and retail trade, with over 2,000 employed women combined in those industries.³⁴⁰

Given the rise in professional employment of women, in 1927, the YWCA was actively fundraising through a building fund campaign to construct their own gendered facilities geared towards the professional working woman. The *Riverside Daily Press* reported, “With the advent of women into the business world the same corrective and preventative measures for health must be secured for them as for men.”³⁴¹

In the 1920s and 1930s, the YWCA organized separate clubs for Japanese American, Mexican American, and African American young women, as well as students at the

³³⁷ “Woman Develops Real Estate Tract,” *Riverside Enterprise*, September 21, 1924, 4 as included in Mermilliod, “Mrs. Nellie G. Dunn,” 105.

³³⁸ Jennifer Mermilliod, “Character Gives Splendor to Beauty.’ – Dorothy Dunbar,” *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California, 1970-1970*, 94-100; Margaret Steen, “Few Women in Field: Landscaping her job,” *Press-Enterprise*, September 22, 1963, 44.

³³⁹ Ken Crawford, “Mayme Bonham (Davidson): Riverside Banking Pioneer,” *Anthology of Women in Riverside, California, 1870-1970*, 87-88.

³⁴⁰ US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1930 Census: Volume 3. Population, Reports by States, Part 1: Alabama-Missouri* (Washington, DC, Government Printing Office, 1932), 273.

³⁴¹ “Riverside Women Need Adequate Gymnasium and Pool Equipment,” *Riverside Daily Press*, May 28, 1927

Sherman Indian School. These segregated clubs mirrored activities of the white clubs' including drama, arts and crafts, outdoor recreation, and nature study.³⁴²



Native American girls of Sherman Institute holding YWCA signs, 1925. *Los Angeles Public Library*.

In the 1920s, Riverside's YWCA developed five clubs to support working women, and to provide social and philanthropic opportunities to its members. These clubs managed the fundraising activities of the YWCA and conducted philanthropic work during the holidays. The first club to be founded by a cohort of businesswomen was the Altruistic Club.³⁴³ The motto of the club was "Not what we give, but what we share."³⁴⁴

A second group, the *Ayuda* Club, which translates to "to help" or "to serve" in Spanish, was founded for businesswomen to strive for self-development and mutual helpfulness. The club strived to uphold the ideals of the YWCA and provide a social atmosphere for the businesswomen of the City.³⁴⁵ In 1924, a third business girl club, the College Corner Club of the YWCA, was formed to provide a gathering place for the college women of the City; to stimulate the greater interest of the YWCA; and to assist in the promotion of its programs.³⁴⁶ The College Corner Club was originally organized as a social club, and transitioned into philanthropy work by 1927.³⁴⁷ The *Adelante* Club, or the "move forward"

³⁴² Dona Graves, "Japanese American Heritage and the Quest for Civil Rights in Riverside, California, 1890s-1970s," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2011) Section I, 37.

³⁴³ "Business Girls Take Active Park In the Affairs of the Y.W.C.A.," *Riverside Daily Press*, October 19, 1929.

³⁴⁴ "Business Girls Take Active Park In the Affairs of the Y.W.C.A."

³⁴⁵ "Business Girls Take Active Park In the Affairs of the Y.W.C.A."

³⁴⁶ "Business Girls Take Active Park In the Affairs of the Y.W.C.A."

³⁴⁷ "Riverside's New Y.W.C.A. Affords A Beautiful and Useful Home for The Young Womanhood of the City."

club translated in Spanish, was founded by a cohort of young businesswomen and teachers. The purpose of the club was social interaction; to uphold the ideals of the YWCA; and to welcome young women of the City that were lonely and in need of friendship. The Selo Club was the youngest of the organizations, consisting of younger business girls in the city, some of whom were still attending school, and others who were recent members of the workforce.³⁴⁸

Additionally, the High School Girls Reserves organizations expanded to 13 groups by 1927. That year, the businesswomen's clubs held a combined membership of 210 members, and the Girl Reserves had a total membership of 228. According to the YWCA, there were approximately 2,500 Riverside women interested in YWCA activities in 1927, an amount that their old facilities could not accommodate.³⁴⁹

The new YWCA building was completed in 1929, designed in the Mediterranean Revival style by renowned architect, Julia Morgan. The *Riverside Daily Press* reported that the fundraising and project management for the new buildings was all overseen by women. The new building (3425 Mission Inn Avenue, extant), featured a spacious interior lobby with a tiled fireplace adorned with landscape paintings by artists Evylene Nunn Miller and Nell Walker Warner. French doors opened out from the lobby to the center patio with a fountain and landscaping designed by Mrs. H. N. Dubar and her daughter, Mrs. Dorothy Dunbar.



YWCA Riverside Clubhouse rendering by Julia Morgan, 1929. *California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.*

Amenities of the new YWCA building include a gym with a stage and dressing rooms; heated pool and locker rooms; kitchenette and a small dining room; club rooms; conference rooms; three small meeting rooms; and a quiet room for resting and sleeping. Additional sleeping quarters for traveling members were provided. The building was topped with a spacious roof garden, with tennis and basketball courts.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ "Business Girls Take Active Park in the Affairs of the Y.W.C.A."

³⁴⁹ "Riverside Women Need Adequate Gymnasium and Pool Equipment."

³⁵⁰ "Riverside's New Y.W.C.A. Affords A Beautiful and Useful Home for The Young Womanhood of the City."

ZONTA CLUB

The Riverside Zonta Club was founded in 1930 by Dr. Annie McRobie Ross as an outgrowth of the YWCA. It was a branch of the international organization for business and professional women and sought to encourage high ideals and honest business methods, ethical standards, and promote fellowship among members.³⁵¹ Topics discussed by the group included the advantages and disadvantages of an 8-hour work day; the trend of modern education; and the purpose of the Federal Emergency Relief administration.³⁵² The group regularly met at the Mission Inn.

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB

In 1930, a group of business and professional women of Riverside organized a branch of the National Business and Professional Women's Club.³⁵³ Margaret B. Chase served as the first president, holding regular meetings at the Mission Inn. In December 1931, the group hosted the conference of the California League of Business and Professional Women at the Mission Inn. Topics of lectures and discussions held by the group included "Better Buymanship" and "Women's Quest for Opportunity."³⁵⁴ The group was active into the postwar era.

Charitable Organizations and the Community Chest

Charitable organizations continued to proliferate during the 1920s in Riverside, driven by women's clubs and religious groups working together to improve the community. One of the main organizers of charitable work at the time was the Community Settlement Association (CSA; previously known as Riverside City Home League). By the early 1920s, the CSA was a key community stakeholder in the East Riverside neighborhood, and provided basic amenities like showers and laundry to the Mexican American population. In 1924, the CSA established a weaving department at the House of Neighbors, the model home of the CSA on Thirteenth Street in present-day Lincoln Park (261 E. Thirteenth Street, not extant), providing weaving classes to the community.³⁵⁵ The new weaving room featured seven new looms and weaving supplies to accommodate seven to twelve students. Weaving students produced clothing and accessories, tweeds and homespun goods. The weaving department became a reliable source of profit for the CSA. In 1925, the CSA accrued \$3,400 in cash from sales of handspun goods.³⁵⁶

³⁵¹ "Zonta Club is Formed by Women," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 28, 1930, 8.

³⁵² "Eight Hour Workday for Women Zonta Topics," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 13, 1930, 9; "Supt. Landis is Zonta Speaker," *Riverside Daily Press*, May 9, 1930, 8; "Official Gives Address at Meeting Held by Women's Group," *Riverside Enterprise*, February 24, 1934, 7.

³⁵³ "Local Women Form Branch of National Women's Club," *Riverside Enterprise*, October 14, 1930, 4; "Business and Professional Women Launch Newest Club," *Riverside Enterprise*, November 11, 1930, 4.

³⁵⁴ "Consumer's Problems Discussed by Business and Professional Women," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 14, 1934, 10; "Riverside Wins Attendance Cup," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 20, 1936, 8.

³⁵⁵ "Much Demand for Homespun," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 12, 1924.

³⁵⁶ "Help For Those Who Help Themselves Winning Way," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 21, 1925.

The CSA also provided a maternity delivery center housed in their maternity cottage (261 E. Thirteenth Street, not extant), providing services at no cost for mothers in need. Due to the cost prohibitive nature of prenatal and newborn care, the program was not fully realized until 1921 with the passing of the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act.³⁵⁷ By 1925, the maternity cottage was modernized and furnished with three bedrooms, two private rooms, bath and shower, a nursery, and a delivery room with updated equipment. The maternity cottage was overseen by one nurse, and in 1925, 22 babies were delivered and approximately 488 house visits were conducted.³⁵⁸ Additionally, in 1923 the House of Neighbors began providing night classes, including English instruction, in addition to social functions, in an effort to “Americanize” the Spanish-speaking community. The House of Neighbors featured a stage, fireplace, and lounge for those lacking in comfortable home amenities.³⁵⁹

During the 1930s, the CSA reached out to the influx of Black residents arriving in Riverside from the southern United States and expanded services to include sport teams and recreation. However, in 1941, Riverside’s Mayor Walter D. Davison (who had campaigned on cutting expenses) eliminated City funding for the CSA’s social workers and asked the organization to vacate the City-owned buildings on Thirteenth Street in present-day Lincoln Park. At that time, operations ceased, and the CSA was disbanded until the postwar era.

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CHEST AND OTHER PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS

Many of the functions of the CSA were partially funded by the annual Riverside Community Chest. Founded in 1924, the Riverside Community Chest provided funding to local philanthropic organization, both religious and secular, through a yearly fundraising campaign supported by the Riverside Chamber of Commerce.³⁶⁰ Each member organization of the community chest, averaging 12 each year, would submit a yearly budget, combined to determine the annual fundraising goal of the chest. Financial pledges were made by residents of Riverside and could be allocated to their organization of choice.

In its inaugural year, the chest raised approximately \$45,000, well surpassing the \$42,255 budget allocated to its nine member organizations. The philanthropic organizations included the CSA, the Red Cross and Veterans Relief, the YWCA, St. Vincent de Paul, the Boy and Girl Scouts, the Riverside Community Clinic and Tuberculosis Association, the Salvation Army, and the Kiddie Kamp.³⁶¹ Both the Riverside County Clinic and the Kiddie

³⁵⁷ “Charity Organizations Tell of Annual Work,” *Riverside Daily Press*, December 4, 1923.

³⁵⁸ “Maternity Cottage Has New Equipment,” *Riverside Daily Press*, August 22, 1925; “Community Settlement House Lends Helping Hand to Many Who Find Need for Friendship,” *Riverside Daily Press*, November 3, 1926; “Help For Those Who Help Themselves Winning Way.”

³⁵⁹ “Charity Organizations Tell of Annual Work;” “Help for Those Who Help Themselves Winning Way.”

³⁶⁰ “Community Chest What It Does,” *Riverside Daily Press*, January 21, 1924.

³⁶¹ “Community Chest Workers Are Nearing \$30,000 Mark,” *Riverside Daily Press*, February 14, 1924; “Community Service Fund Is Growing,” *Riverside Daily Press*, March 7, 1924.

Kamp were originally founded by the CSA, under the direction of Mrs. Isabella Ross, nurse and a founding member of the CSA.³⁶²

The Community Chest raised \$56,000 in 1925, approximately \$12,000 short of the estimated budget.³⁶³ Similar shortcomings were experienced in 1926 and 1927, with a deficit of approximately \$13,500 each year.³⁶⁴ By 1928, underfunding and delinquencies on pledges created financial stress for the member organizations, with many cutting their operating budget by approximately 20%. The Executive Committee of the Community Chest ultimately decided to dissolve the Chest Fund in 1928 allowing the member organization to resume their individual fundraising campaigns starting November 1 of that year.³⁶⁵

CHARITY TREE

The Charity Tree was founded in 1912 by Ethan Allen Chase, with Mrs. Charles L. Nye as the elected president of the organization. The Tree was originally organized with 10 “branches,” or departments, who aimed to raise \$100 during the year for philanthropic work. In January 1918, the Tree took over the Red Cross shop on Ninth Street selling salvage materials donated by the community. By 1922, Tree had raised over \$41,000, in support of local organizations like the CSA, the Riverside County Clinic, and the Riverside Community Hospital, as well as individuals and families in need of medical care. Two months out of the year, local philanthropic organizations were given the opportunity to manage the shop and retain the funds earned for their organizations, including the Salvation Army, the YWCA, and the RWC. The Tree’s primarily philanthropic aide was for physically disabled children in need of orthopedic medical services at no cost to the family.³⁶⁶ The Tree donated \$150 a month to the Riverside Community Clinic to continue the expansion of the clinic, including its annual pediatric wellness check-ups, ophthalmology department, and its tuberculosis department.³⁶⁷

To support the growth of the organization, the shop was relocated to 1227 Main Street (not extant) in 1925, and later moved again in 1927, to a storefront on Market Street between Ninth and Tenth streets.³⁶⁸ Mrs. C. L. Nye was manager of the shop between 1918 through 1930. By 1930, the Charity Shop grossed \$90,000 since the initial management of the shop in 1918, contributing all the money to charitable work.

³⁶² “Tribute to Isabella Ross”

³⁶³ “Receive \$56,000 For Chest Fund,” *Riverside Daily Press*, October 29, 1925.

³⁶⁴ “Need \$12,803 Yet for Chest,” *Riverside Daily Press*, November 16, 1926; “Last Minute Work by Flying Squadrons for Chest,” *Riverside Daily Press*, December 8, 1927.

³⁶⁵ “No Community Chest. What Now?,” *Riverside Daily Press*, June 27, 1928.

³⁶⁶ “Charity Tree Hears Report,” *Riverside Daily Press*, November 7, 1922.

³⁶⁷ “Charity Tree Helps Clinic,” *Riverside Daily Press*, December 7, 1923.

³⁶⁸ “Charity Shop in New Home,” *Riverside Daily Press*, October 16, 1925; “Charity Shop Will Be Moved,” *Riverside Daily Press*, January 21, 1927.

RIVERSIDE COUNTY CLINIC

The Riverside County Clinic was founded in 1919 as an outgrowth of two part-time clinics: one maintained by the Riverside's Women Club and the other by City Home League (later the CSA).³⁶⁹ Mrs. Isabella Ross was the charge nurse responsible for the staffing and care of patients at the Clinic, especially caring for young children suffering from tuberculosis. Nurse Ross expanded the clinic into a two-room facility in the Loring block with a full-time tuberculosis nurse and sought physicians and dentists to provide medical treatment at no cost to patients.³⁷⁰

By 1923, the Riverside County Clinic had its own board of directors composed of representatives of various local organizations. It employed two full-time nurses, one for the clinic rooms, and one for the tuberculosis wing, while volunteer physicians and dentists provided medical treatment. The clinic was available to anyone at little or no cost to receive a single examination and a one-time treatment. The clinic received \$150 per month from the Charity Tree organization, while the Board of Supervisors, the seal sale, and other sources, provided additional financial support.³⁷¹

The clinic was relocated in 1925 when the Riverside Community Hospital opened, and clinic services were transferred to the first floor in the northwest wing of the hospital. Due to the community support, the Clinic was able to expand its services in 1925 to include general wellness checkups for school age children, a monthly orthopedic clinic, and an increase in the frequency of the dental clinic. Approximately 21 affiliate groups were represented on the board of directors in 1925, including women organizations such as the Charity Tree, the Nightingale Club, the RWC, the Community Settlement Association, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Aurantia Chapter of the DAR, and the County Federation of Women's Clubs.³⁷²



Mothers and children in front of Riverside County Hospital, c. 1925. *University of California, Riverside*.

³⁶⁹ "Clinic Will Move Monday," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 6, 1925.

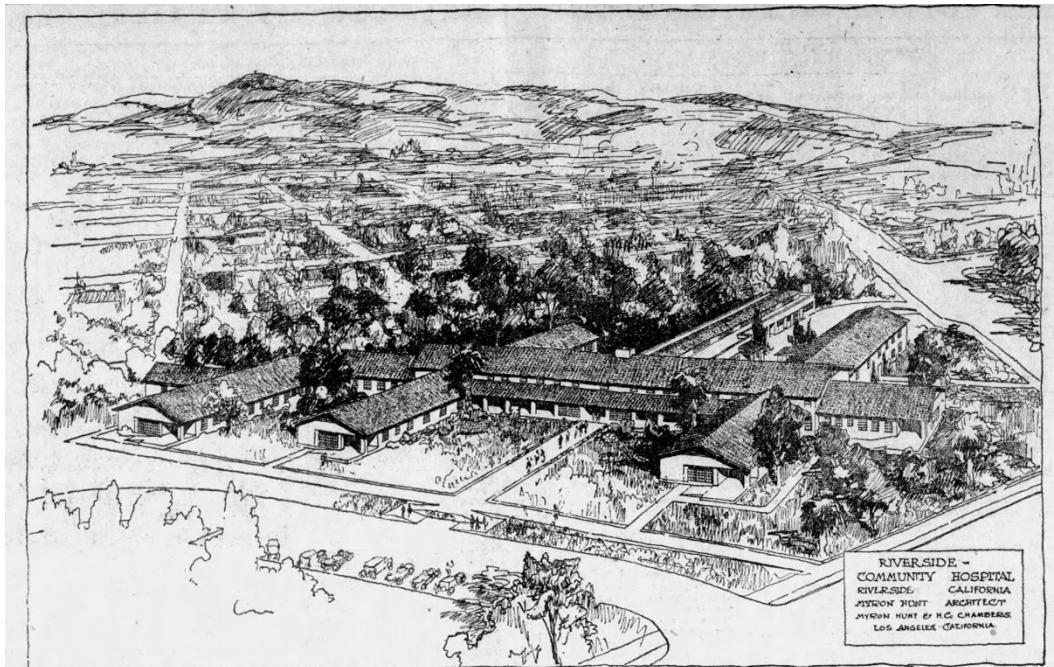
³⁷⁰ "Tribute To Isabella Ross," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 8, 1926.

³⁷¹ "Charity Organizations Tell Of Annual Work," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 4, 1923.

³⁷² "Clinic Will Move Monday."

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

To meet a shortage of hospital facilities in Riverside County and to further increase its services to the community, the Riverside Community Hospital board of directors began a building fund campaign in 1920 to develop a new 100-bed hospital facility.³⁷³ The building fund budgeted at \$250,000, was funded through community pledges and organizational support. By 1922, the hospital acquired a corner lot at the intersection of Magnolia Avenue and Fourteenth Street and hired noted architect Myron Hunt to design plans for a two-story Spanish Colonial Revival style hospital building.³⁷⁴ The Riverside Community Hospital opened its new facilities in 1925 under the direction of Hospital Superintendent, Ms. Nellie M. Porter. Hospital services and patients were relocated from the old hospital on Walnut and Twelfth streets to their new location at 4445 Magnolia Ave (extant). The new hospital facilities were designed to treat approximately 100-125 patients, featuring an emergency center, a surgery unit, a maternity ward, a laboratory, an X-ray unit, a student nursing program, an osteopathic department, and the Riverside County Clinic.



Riverside County Hospital, 1922. *Riverside Daily Press*.

In support of women's health, the maternity ward featured new beds and room furnishings supplied by the Charity Tree to treat 18 women and 18 babies, in addition to the 46-patient capacity in the surgical and medical wards. By March 1925, the hospital saw on average one baby a day being born in the maternity ward. Additionally, in an effort to increase the popularity of the maternity ward and encourage women to give birth in

³⁷³ "Community Hospital Campaign Starts Tonight at Glenwood Mission Inn," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 29, 1920.

³⁷⁴ "Beautiful Drawings by Myron Hunt," *Riverside Daily Press*, September 25, 1922.

hospital, as opposed to a high-risk home birth, the hospital decreased their fee to \$40 for a 10-day hospital stay.³⁷⁵

Upon opening, the hospital staff consisted of seventeen doctors, five graduate nurses, and twenty-five student nurses in the training program. The nursing training program was an affiliate program with the Riverside Junior College and the Riverside Community Hospital, inaugurated in 1924. The nursing program supported 35 junior college students, predominantly female students over the age of 18 with a high school diploma, with practical nursing training and courses at the Riverside Community Hospital. Boarding was provided at the old hospital building, supported by the Women's Auxiliary to the Community Hospital. The nursing program was headed by Ms. Nellie M. Porter, as hospital superintendent; Miss Dorothy Koethen, a head instructor of nursing; and Miss Emma Houghton, instructor of nutrition and diet.³⁷⁶ Lecture courses were offered by physicians and surgeons from Riverside.

Prior to joining the Riverside Community Hospital, Porter gained professional experience working in Chicago, Sioux City, and Seattle. She graduated from the Samaritan Hospital at Sioux City, Iowa and took post graduate courses at the University of Washington. She did her post graduate work at the Presbyterian Hospital at Chicago and at the Chicago Lying-in Hospital. Porter became the superintendent of the Samaritan Hospital at Sioux City for five years; and later the superintendent of the school of nursing at Chicago Lying-in Hospital for three years. She was also a nursing instructor at the Seattle General Hospital for two years. She relocated to Riverside from Seattle in February 1924 to take on the superintendent role of the Riverside Community Hospital during its transitional period into its new facilities.³⁷⁷ Ms. Porter resigned in 1926 and returned to her home in Seattle; her position was subsequently filled by Dr. J.B. Tyrell in 1926 and Dr. Van Zwalenburg in 1927.³⁷⁸

The Community Hospital continued to obtain financial support from the Community Chest and the Community Tree Association through the 1920s for their humanitarian work at a minimal cost to the community. Additionally, the Women's Auxiliary, founded in 1926, provided additional financial support and donations to the hospital through public events, such as the annual charity ball at the Mission Inn. By 1928, the Auxiliary had donated over \$2,000 to the hospital, in addition to renovating the old hospital for the nursing training program, beautifying the hospital ground, contributing large quantities of food, bedding, and surgical equipment, and overall developing public interest for the Community Hospital.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁵ "Baby A Day At new Community Hospital," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 14, 1925.

³⁷⁶ "New Hospital Includes Nurses Training School," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 13, 1925.

³⁷⁷ "New Hospital Includes Nurses Training School."

³⁷⁸ "Van Zwalenburg Heads Hospital," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 4, 1927.

³⁷⁹ "Optimistic Note Runs Through Community Hospital Annual Report," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 12, 1928.

RELIGIOUS CHARITABLE GROUPS

In addition to the many church groups in the City managing their own philanthropic work, the WCTU and the YMCA collaborated in 1929 to develop a “home center” for March Field Soldiers, hosted at the YMCA. In just six months, 225 volunteer women contributed to the service, while 100 persons assisted in the 22 programs. Programs and meals were provided each Wednesday and Saturday evening, beginning with a short religious service by I.W. Larrymore, physical director of YMCA. On Saturday, programming included glee club practice. Support for the program was provided by the Riverside and California State WCTU organization, and as well as by other local organizations including the Ladies’ Aid of the First Methodist Church, the Woman’s Relief Corps, the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, and the WCTU. On a national scale, home centers were conducted all over the U.S. at many army posts and naval stations by the WCTU. The objective of these centers was to provide a Christian atmosphere for the soldiers, giving them wholesome amusement and Christian influences.³⁸⁰

Arts and Culture 1920 – 1940

In the 1920s and 1930s three distinct new arts organizations were formed in Riverside, derived from the social program of the women’s organization and sororal clubs: The Riverside Community Playhouse, Riverside Art Association, and Riverside Opera Association.

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY PLAYHOUSE

In 1925, Janet Scott founded the Riverside Community Players as the Drama Group of the RWC. Scott was a lifelong resident of Riverside who had professional theater training in New York. Scott continued her career on stage, in movies, and radio, in Hollywood and New York, with short intervals in Riverside.³⁸¹

The organization grew in accordance with the community players’ tradition. Its members spent hours training themselves at home; they built sets, printed tickets, distrusted advertising, built scenery, arranged lighting, ushered, and swept floors. They performed in private homes, barns, and school auditoriums.³⁸² In September of 1926, 27 charter members, led by Janet Scott and James Coleman Scott, met to elect officers and officially launch the Community Players. As an independent entity, the first productions were presented at the Loring Opera House (3685 Main Street, not extant).³⁸³ After two seasons, in 1928, the Loring became the Golden State Movie Theatre and the Players moved to Central Junior High School.³⁸⁴

³⁸⁰ “Center Completes First Six Months,” *Riverside Daily Press*, November 5, 1929.

³⁸¹ Patterson, *A Colony for California*, 401.

³⁸² Patterson, *A Colony for California*, 401.

³⁸³ The theater portion was demolished following a fire in 1990.

³⁸⁴ “Our History,” Riverside Community Players, accessed September 2025, <https://www.riversidecommunityplayers.com/our-history.html>

In 1930, resolved to finally have a home of their own, the Players held fundraising events and raised over \$4,000 to purchase the former Washington School building at Twelfth and Almond streets. Remodeling work was carried out nightly and on weekends, and in May 1930 the Players production of *The Queen's Husband* opened in their new home. The Washington School became the Player's headquarters for 20 years until 1950, when school district purchased the property to construct a new administration building.³⁸⁵ In 1953, the Player's raised funds to construct their own theater at the Evans Park Property (4026 Fourteenth Street, extant) which was designed by architect Herman Ruhnau.³⁸⁶

RIVERSIDE ART ASSOCIATION

The Riverside Art Association was founded in 1931 by artists Willet S. Foster, Richard Allman, Riverside City College art instructor, and Mrs. Estelle Rouse, amateur artist and social leader. The Mission Inn soon became the patron of the organization. The Inn provided space for the display of some of its members' paintings, and in return, the Association presented and prepared programs for the entertainment of Mission Inn guests.³⁸⁷ Due to the association's interest in classical rather than modern art, some members briefly splintered off to form the separate Art Guild; the two groups joined forces once again in the early 1950s. The regrouped Association attained non-profit status in 1954 and set about finding its own space where members could exhibit their work and offer classes.

RIVERSIDE OPERA ASSOCIATION

The Riverside Opera Association was founded in 1932 by opera singer Marcella Craft. As discussed in the previous section, Marcella Craft was a noted operatic soprano, who moved with her family to Riverside in 1887 before touring Europe. Upon her return to the U.S. due to Hitler's rise to power, Craft focused on establishing a resident opera company to give back to the Riverside community that supported her operatic career. Prior to Craft's establishment of the Riverside Opera Association (ROA) in 1932, Riverside already had a fair amount of experience and exposure to opera. Touring opera companies had regularly visited the city since the 1870s, performing in venues such as the Loring Opera House, the auditoriums of the social clubs in the city, in local churches, and in other locations.³⁸⁸

But Riverside had no active resident opera company in 1932 when Craft founded ROA. Craft was able to obtain the support for her new project from A. G. Paul, President of

³⁸⁵ "Our History."

³⁸⁶ Landownership disputes continued through the early 1990s and by 1993, the Players finally acquired full ownership of the land on which the Playhouse was constructed; "Our History."

³⁸⁷ Patterson, *A Colony for California*, 402.

³⁸⁸ Cindy Patton, "Marcella Craft and the Riverside Opera Association," *Journal of the Riverside Historical Society* 21 (2016): 6, https://www.riversidehistoricalsociety.org/_files/ugd/6eb138_440e17354c704e458d254639e2a7e0de.pdf

Riverside Junior College (RJC), and Ira C. Landis, Superintendent of Riverside City Schools.

With the approval of the governing body of the school district, which then had the charge of RJC, Paul and Landis arranged for Craft's fledgling local opera company to use the auditorium at the college for its performances, free of charge.³⁸⁹ Under her creative direction, ROA became a teaching institution, providing an "opportunity to young singers to learn and actually to perform roles, with orchestra, and before the public."³⁹⁰

Strategically, Craft required that all opera's at the ROA be performed in English to reach a wider audience. Paul and Landis also incorporated the ROA into the Extension Division of the Junior College's Adult Education program. Craft was hired as a professor in the Extension Division, earning a faculty salary for her work with the ROA, initially earning \$2 an hour for working two and a half hours a week. Later, her pay increased to \$500 a year in 1934, \$1,200 in 1937 and \$1,300 in 1939.³⁹¹

Craft received support for the ROA from H. Norman Spohr, choral director and Professor of Music at RJC. Gustav Hilverkus, director of instrumental music in the Riverside public schools, and the director of the Riverside Municipal Band (also known as the Riverside Military Band) was an ROA supporter. Craft would recruit non-professional musicians for the ROA orchestra and chorus from both Spohr's and Hilverkus' ensembles.³⁹²

Stage and costume production was supported by community members and RJC personnel and students, at the time. Richard Allman supervised the design and construction of sets and stage properties and Mrs. Norman Spohr the creation of the costumes. Later, other community members and theater production professionals would assume these duties.³⁹³



Marcella Craft at Easter Services on Mt. Rubidoux, 1917. *Museum of Riverside*.

³⁸⁹ Patton, "Marcella Craft and the Riverside Opera Association," 7.

³⁹⁰ Program notes from April 12, 13, 1957 production, "A Festival of Opera," ROA production programs, Riverside Metropolitan Museum. As cited in Patton, "Marcella Craft and the Riverside Opera Association," 7.

³⁹¹ Patton, "Marcella Craft and the Riverside Opera Association," 7,9.

³⁹² Patton, "Marcella Craft and the Riverside Opera Association," 8.

³⁹³ Patton, "Marcella Craft and the Riverside Opera Association," 8.

Due in part to the community's interest in the performing and fine arts, the Municipal Auditorium (3485 Mission Inn Avenue, extent) was commissioned in 1929 by Frank Miller, designed by Arthur Benton and G. Stanley Wilson. Miller commissioned Benton (and then Wilson) to design Riverside's memorial to American war dead. In 1925, Miller deeded the land for the auditorium to the city with the stipulation that the property be "maintained in perpetuity" as a Soldiers' Memorial with exhibit space and meeting hall. True to Miller's original wishes, the auditorium maintained its central role as a center for the arts for fifty years (dance, opera, pageants, exhibits, "big bands," lectures, etc.).³⁹⁴



Riverside Opera Association, 1934.

University of California, Riverside.

Women during the Great Depression and the New Deal

The stock market crash of 1929 brought about major fiscal repercussions in the United States and ushered in the period known as the Great Depression. Consumer spending and investments dropped, which in turn led to industrial fallbacks and heightened unemployment. Nationwide, over 6 million people were unemployed by 1931, as four waves of banking panics forced many banks to liquidate loans and close. Contemporaneously, the Dust Bowl of the 1930s forced waves of migrants from the Great Plains region of the country, many of whom traveled to California seeking fertile agricultural lands.

During this period, President Franklin D. Roosevelt attempted to jumpstart the American economy and to put Americans back to work with the New Deal. Comprised of several arms and programs, the New Deal evolved over the 1930s to address the needs of Americans.

The 1933 Public Works Administration (PWA) focused on the construction of highways and public buildings, while the Works Progress Administration (WPA), created in 1935, was designed to fund much-needed infrastructure projects, employing a largely unskilled workforce. Additional New Deal-era programs included the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and the 1935 State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA).³⁹⁵

³⁹⁵ "Projects in Riverside," *The Living New Deal*, <https://livingnewdeal.org/us/ca/riverside-ca/> (accessed November 2025).

These programs were the source of commissions for architects and artists alike during an otherwise bleak period, and resulted in the construction of new infrastructure, bridges, schools, and libraries, among other projects.



Headline during the Great Depression, 1933. *Riverside Daily Press*.

Women in Riverside during the Great Depression were active in contributing to relief efforts and sought work themselves. Like men, women looked to provide for their families during the growing hardships of the 1930s, working in largely traditional roles and positions. For example, the Riverside YWCA and the Employment Service recorded that between 1933 and 1936, 729 women asked for work and 615 were placed in jobs doing housework, practical nursing, beauty trades, and waitressing.³⁹⁶

Over 1,200 Riverside residents took advantage of adult education courses held under the auspices of the Riverside city school system with financial aid from the Federal Emergency Education Relief funds. Among those taking courses in the mid-1930s were:

...Housewives and decorators learning the latest ideas in interior decoration; musicians practicing operas for their own and the community's enjoyment...mothers learning how to discover and correct wrong habits in children; playground directors acquiring greater skill in directing and women making better dresses and young girls learning better housekeeping.³⁹⁷

Hundreds of women in Riverside found employment in a new sewing shop that was opened in the courthouse basement. When it was established in April by the WPA, 6 of 50 unemployed women who had registered for work with the county worked in the sewing shop. By the end of the month, 175 women were employed there.³⁹⁸ By December 1935, over 700 women in Riverside were working on the sewing project.³⁹⁹ The sewing room included all stages of a garment's construction, from cutting to sewing, and final inspection. Finished products were distributed by certified case workers of various relief agencies to the public.⁴⁰⁰ Mrs. Florence Pierce and Mrs. Alice J. Allender of Riverside served as directors of the sewing project.

³⁹⁶ Bonnett Dorris, "History of the Riverside YWCA," presented at the YWCA's 70th Annual Meeting, March 26, 1976, Laura Klure Collection of the Riverside YWCA Archives (MS 409), Box 3., University of California, Riverside.

³⁹⁷ "1,200 Persons Enrolled Here in Adult Education Projects," *Riverside Daily Press*, May 12, 1934, 2.

³⁹⁸ Delcamp, 76.

³⁹⁹ "December 27, 1935," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 27, 1947, 14.

⁴⁰⁰ "Unemployment Project Continues to be Serious in Riverside County; Relief Projects Extensive," *Riverside Enterprise*, April 28, 1936, 8.



Jane H. Dodge, 1938. *Riverside Daily Press*.

From 1923 to 1937, Mrs. Jane H. Dodge served as the director of the county department of welfare and relief.⁴⁰¹ Dodge founded a girls health camp in Banning; held fundraisers for children's coats and shoes; and organized old age securities aid funds.⁴⁰² Dodge's dismissal in 1937 came as a surprise to many, when she was ousted for Corona's T.E. Murray with immediate effect after over a decade of success leading the office. Supervisor Stanfield based his motion on the opening statement that "this is a man's job." Dodge challenged the removal, claiming that the real reason was that she was planning to ask for Murray's resignation and stating "I am going to challenge this move all over the county. This is nothing but retaliation."⁴⁰³ Although she did not appear to regain her previous title, Dodge continued to work at the county department. She resided at 4561 Beatty Drive (extant).⁴⁰⁴

Women found employment through federal programs dedicated to the arts. Women artists active in Riverside New Deal programs included Vera Rosalyn Kyes and Freda Clarissa Oien DeCastro. Vera Rosalyn Kyes was an artist and educator in Riverside. In 1927, she joined with fellow artist Helen E. Jackson to open the "Artists Den," a studio where they offered classes in painting, needlework, paper costumes, interior decorating, and waxed paper flowers (2778 Denton Street, extant). The studio was only located at the location for one year before it was reestablished at Kye's studio at 3696 Franklin Avenue (not extant).⁴⁰⁵ During the Great Depression, the studio operated in connection with the Federal Emergency Education program. Kye also taught art through the WPA.⁴⁰⁶

During this period, the Riverside Opera Association received financial and personnel support from the local Federal Music Project (FMP) of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). After its establishment in 1935, the FMP would financially support the ROA orchestra, as well as other personnel such as some chorus members and stagehands. Specifically, the FMP provided paid relief for many unemployed musicians in exchange for their participation in live musical and dramatic performances.⁴⁰⁷ This important federal support allowed the ROA to direct its limited income from performances and donations

⁴⁰¹ "Riverside Happenings," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 1, 1938, 18.

⁴⁰² "Children's Health Camp to be Opened March 15 Near Banning," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 25, 1931, 2; "Coats for Children in Want Requested," *Riverside Enterprise*, November 17, 1933, 3.

⁴⁰³ "Supervisors' Board Removes Mrs. Dodge as Relief Director," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 14, 1937, 1.

⁴⁰⁴ "Welfare Worker Hurt in Wreck," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 28, 1938, 5.

⁴⁰⁵ "Opening of the 'Artist's Den,'" *Riverside Daily Press*, May 7, 1927, 3.

⁴⁰⁶ Ken Crawford, "Vera Rosalyn Kyes: Riverside Artist," *Anthology of Women in Riverside, 1870-1970*, 172.

⁴⁰⁷ Kenneth J. Bindas, *All of this Music Belongs to the Nation* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), x-xi. As cited in Patton, "Marcella Craft and the Riverside Opera Association," 8.

toward other aspects of opera productions, such as the purchase of music, the construction of scenery, and the creation of costumes. This FMP support helped keep ticket prices affordable, which ensured full audiences for ROA productions. With the rehearsal space, technical support, and the auditorium provided at no cost to the ROA by RJC, Craft had the resources to direct several opera productions annually throughout the course of the Depression, at a time when many other arts organizations struggled to survive.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁸ Patton, “Marcella Craft and the Riverside Opera Association,” 8-9.

WOMEN DURING WORLD WAR II, 1942-1944

World War II brought about major changes for women nationwide. Moving beyond traditionally feminine roles, Riverside women became pilots, industrial workers, civil defense volunteers, and military personnel. They filled positions normally held by men, and motivated by duty or opportunity, forged new paths in male-dominated spaces. Women of color played an especially vital part in the support of Black and Hispanic troops stationed in the Riverside area, building social and community support for soldiers who often faced segregationist or discriminatory policies. Riverside women's participation in the Second World War parallels the First in the continued operation of charitable organizations such as the YWCA, USO, and Red Cross, but during World War II new opportunities for formal employment cemented women's place in the local workforce. Their service to the war effort at home, at camp, and abroad was key to Riverside's success during a time of rapid growth and change.

The City of Riverside and the surrounding area saw significant mobilization during World War II, as the city facilitated the expansion and operation of Camp Anza, Camp Haan, and March Field which combined hosted over 700,000 soldiers over the duration of the conflict.⁴⁰⁹ Local women were integral to the functioning of these military camps and of the city itself during wartime. Women in Riverside had been involved in war work during World War I as civilian volunteers, nurses, suppliers, and social hosts, and these roles only expanded in the 1940s as the region became a military hub and gateway to the Pacific Theater.

Volunteerism at Home

The most prominent organization in service of soldiers and wartime personnel in Riverside was the United Service Organizations (USO), which became the primary provider of recreational and social services for those brought to Riverside by wartime operations. Buildings commandeered by the USO dotted the city. The YWCA at Seventh and Lime streets became a USO building in January 1942, and the YMCA on Eighth Street followed shortly thereafter in March alongside another USO building in Arlington (9462 Magnolia Avenue, extant).⁴¹⁰ Women held leadership positions at the new YWCA-USO including Miss Ruth Campbell and later Eunice Schmidt and Marguerite Hogue as directors.⁴¹¹ Staffed mostly by women volunteers, USO centers such as these provided "dances, games, swimming, reading and writing facilities and many other recreational opportunities" for men in the Armed Forces.⁴¹² Dances on the roof of the YWCA and YMCA buildings or in the Mission Inn proved especially popular for servicemen and young local "hostesses" who

⁴⁰⁹ Camp Haan at its peak hosted 80,000 troops, March Field supported over 75,000, and Camp Anza processed more than 600,000 through its doors. "The March Field Story," March Air Reserve Base, Accessed September 1, 2025.

⁴¹⁰ "USO Provides Recreation Centers for Service Men," Riverside Enterprise (Riverside, CA), Saturday, September 25, 1943, 20. Both the YWCA and YMCA downtown are extant, currently as the Riverside Art Museum and the Life Arts Center, respectively.

⁴¹¹ "USO Provides Recreation Centers"

⁴¹² "USO Provides Recreation Centers"

accompanied them, and these were often sponsored by local clubs and charitable organizations.⁴¹³ Another USO building at 3980 Orange Street (not extant) was requisitioned specifically for Black troops, and with W.C. McCleary as director and May Hill as associate, provided many of the same services as the Seventh and Eighth Street buildings for their constituents.⁴¹⁴ This building was managed and staffed by an African American team, and provided a kitchen and bathrooms for women as well as a large social hall which hosted “films, dances, art shows, literature displays, and socials.”⁴¹⁵ Dedicated in 1943 to provide a space for soldiers excluded from the other USOs, the committee in charge was composed almost entirely of Riverside women.⁴¹⁶

Orange Street Colored USO Dedication Tomorrow



Left to right. Miss Verna Gordon, Mrs. Maxine Williamson, Mrs. Mary Hill, associate Riverside USO director, Harvey McDowell, Mrs. R. J. Boyd, chairman of the committee of management, W. C. McCleary, director, Mrs. John McDowell, Chaplain S. J. Williams, March Field, Miss Lorraine Robertson, Mrs. Viola Fleming.

USO Dedication, June 12, 1943. *Riverside Daily Press*.

In addition to social events, the USO and other service organizations also provided housing for new arrivals to Riverside, especially young women and their families who had husbands or relatives stationed in the area. The USO's Dorothy Harth ran a Traveler's Aid service at the local bus depot, where information desks directed new residents to housing and services immediately upon arrival.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹³ “Patriotic Theme Marks USO Dance,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), May 25, 1942; “Mexican Women Organize New Club,” *Riverside Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), April 4, 1943.

⁴¹⁴ “USO Provides Recreation Centers.”

⁴¹⁵ Steve Lech, “Riverside’s Negro USO Club,” in *Riverside During WWII*, Riverside Historical Society.

⁴¹⁶ Steve Lech. These women include Miss Verna Gordon, Mrs. Maxine Williamson, Mrs. Mary Hill (associate Riverside USO director), Mrs. R.J. Boyd (chairman of the committee of management), Mrs. John McDowell, Miss Lorraine Robertson, and Mrs. Viola Fleming. The building at 3980 Orange St. is no longer extant; the site currently houses the Riverside County District Attorney’s Office.

⁴¹⁷ “USO Provides Recreation Centers.”



Couple dancing at March Field, 1942. *Los Angeles Public Library*.

women and many of the men who arrived in Riverside during the war were assisted in some way by a women's organization.

The work of women's volunteer organizations further expanded beyond the YWCA-USO or social activities, especially as women of color found spaces to make their own impact on the war effort. In a reflection of the importance of agriculture to the city's economy, women volunteered to replace farm workers in the 1942 harvest. Young Riverside and Arlington women were recorded as "volunteer agricultural harvesters" working alongside ranchers to harvest walnuts, tomatoes, and grapes under the auspices of the U.S. Employment Service.⁴¹⁸ In 1943, local 4H clubs as well as indigenous women living on reservations in rural Riverside County were reported to be growing "Victory gardens" and raising beef cattle for use by the armed forces.⁴¹⁹ Other organizations like the Women's

The YWCA led the effort to expand temporary housing options in the city to meet the rapid increase in demand brought on by the combined mobilization of Camp Anza, Camp Haan, and March Field. A women's dormitory they "established as a war service" in the Fox Theater (3801 Mission Inn Avenue, extant) accommodated 54 women nightly, and the Salvation Army hosted another dormitory at Eighth Street (now University Avenue) and Fairmount Boulevard. Run by Mrs. Allie R. Allen, it was designed to house soldiers' wives with small children or women travelers from all over the country, and the women working there cared for 8-12 children daily throughout the war.⁴¹⁸ Another YWCA dormitory at 2931 Twelfth Street (extant) opened in 1944 to provide housing to young Black women who were struggling to find lodging in the city.⁴¹⁹ Most of the

⁴¹⁸ "USO Provides Recreation Centers." The wartime Salvation Army building is no longer extant.

⁴¹⁹ "YWCA Opens 'Dorm' on Sunday," *Riverside Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), March 11, 1944. The building as it was in the 1940s is still standing and currently houses the Orange Valley Masonic Lodge #13. In 2025, the city of Riverside is moving to make the building a City Landmark for its cultural and historical importance to the local Black community and Eastside.

⁴²⁰ "Women Volunteers for Harvest Sought," *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), September 26, 1942.

⁴²¹ "Indian Women, Youths Raise Food to Aid War Effort," *Riverside Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), May 9, 1943.

Association of Aeronautics continued the longstanding women's service of sewing surgical dressings, making 1,500 of them each week for the March Field Hospital in 1944.⁴²²

The most important social and volunteer institution outside of the USO was the Lincoln Park Center on Thirteenth Street and Park Avenue (not extant). Despite rapid growth of the Black population of Riverside in the wartime period, racial segregation restricted most Black Riverside residents and other people of color to the Eastside neighborhood.⁴²³ In the middle of Eastside, the Lincoln Park Center served as the hub for a multitude of war service organizations run by women of color, and as a center of community life. Mexican American women including Mrs. Delfina Vasquez, unit chairman, and Mrs. Carmen Macias, vice chairman, organized the "Victoria" Red Cross Unit and held their meetings at Lincoln Park.⁴²⁴ A "Club Victoria" also served a similar purpose to the USO, where women led by Mrs. Rose Baca, Delfina Vasquez, and Mrs. Carmen Macias organized assistance and entertainment for Latino military personnel and local youth at the Center.⁴²⁵ African American women also used it for similar social and volunteer activities, meeting to form a Red Cross unit of Black women in 1942, hosting a "victory tea" sponsored by their Republican Study Club in 1943, and throwing a party for Black soldiers returning from service in the South Pacific to Camp Haan in 1945.⁴²⁶ Gay Caroline, a prominent Black resident and civil rights activist who worked in Riverside's Recreation Department, ran the Lincoln Park Center in the 1950s and 1960s. She was additionally involved with the Riverside USO during the war—she was a Red Cross worker in the South Pacific during the postwar American occupation of Japan and the Philippines.

The Lincoln Park Center was at the core of the wartime work of Riverside's women of color, and served populations excluded by the white-exclusive locations and chapters of service organizations such as the USO or YWCA. It was women volunteers and organizers, through local chapters of these organizations, who provided necessary social and community services to the wartime population of Riverside. While these roles conformed to a traditional sense of femininity and domesticity that paralleled women's service in World War I, other residents ventured into the formal workforce for the first time in a civil or military capacity, participating in the city's mobilization.

"Women's Work" in Wartime Riverside

More than six million women across the country entered the wartime workforce during the Second World War, and Riverside residents were no exception.⁴²⁷ The United States

⁴²² "Surgical Dressings Made for Hospital," *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), March 17, 1944.

⁴²³ Catherine Gudis, "Claiming Our Space," ArcGIS StoryMap.

⁴²⁴ "Mexicans Form Red Cross Unit," *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), May 27, 1943.

⁴²⁵ "Mexican Women Organize New Club," *Riverside Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), April 4, 1943. The Lincoln Park Center's original wooden buildings are no longer extant, but a more newly built community center is still in operation in the park.

⁴²⁶ "Red Cross Begins Home Service Series," *Riverside Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), December 16, 1942; "Lincoln Park Center to Be Scene of Gathering," *Riverside Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), October 24, 1943; "Negro Soldiers Safely Home from Overseas," *Riverside Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), January 21, 1945.

⁴²⁷ "Research Starters: Women in World War II," The National World War II Museum, Accessed September 1, 2025.

Employment Service Office at 3469 Main Street (not extant) advertised jobs for women in a 1943 *Daily Press* article that included the usual positions of teachers, clerk typists, and “dining room girls.” The same entry, though, also called for radio mechanic learners, laborers, service station operators, and medical technicians.⁴²⁸ This expanded sense of “women’s work” reflected a growing trend throughout the United States and California, as women were called on to fill industrial positions, take charge of civil defense, and become more actively involved in the logistical and public aspects of their communities’ war efforts. However, their new status remained tied in many ways to a feminine identity. Women were portrayed as having delicate hands better suited to operate intricate machinery, utilizing previous skill sets as wives or mothers, or cutting a figure in their factory uniforms; the ideal worker was always still a young, unmarried woman. Though they were often considered from this patriarchal perspective, women built a reputation as patriotic, competent workers and gained the respect of their male colleagues and constituents. Volunteer organizations and employers recruited women of all ages who were willing and able to take over many essential civilian services in the city, to the benefit of the entire community.⁴²⁹

In the city itself, many women in Riverside joined new organizations dedicated to the war effort and its ancillary economy, including the Women’s Ambulance and Defense Corps (WADC). The WADC trained local women in civilian skills that were designed to secure the “home front,” preparing them to assist in both war emergencies and natural disasters, especially in the first years of the conflict. Wearing uniforms and trained with rifles, radios, first aid, gas masks, and ambulance driving, these volunteers took responsibility for the security of the city of Riverside.⁴³⁰ Riverside, Arlington, and nearby Redlands all had units, some founded even before the events of Pearl Harbor in December 1941—a company of 80-90 women enlisted at the Mission Inn in June of that year.⁴³¹ The Arlington WADC run by Lt. Peggy Reichert had headquarters at 9472 Magnolia Avenue (extant) where they conducted defense drills regularly.⁴³² Another *Daily Press* article in May 1942 recorded an upcoming meeting at Fourth and Main streets, where the women of the WADC would be hosting a class in “motor mechanics,” opening their training to women throughout the city.⁴³³

⁴²⁸“Jobs Open,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), July 28, 1943. The building at 3469 Main St. is no longer extant; the area is now home to the Riverside Convention Center and the Downtown Arts and Culture District.

⁴²⁹“Green Hands Trained for Jobs in War Industries,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), July 2, 1942.

⁴³⁰Joe Blackstock, “Women’s Corps Stepped Up to Aid the Homefront During World War II,” *Daily Bulletin*, June 19, 2023.

⁴³¹“Women’s Corps Stepped Up”

⁴³²“WADC Unit Plans First Aid Station,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), July 30, 1942. The building at 9472 Magnolia, built in 1909, is still extant.

⁴³³“Defense Session,” *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), May 25, 1942.



Military Women at the Mission Inn, 1940s.
University of California, Riverside.

Women in Riverside volunteered for civil defense assignments including in aircraft observing towers, as air wardens, and on fire watch.⁴³⁴ Others joined organizations such as the Red Cross Motor Corps as drivers transporting people and supplies, or the Riverside County Canteen Corps providing foodstuffs for war-related meetings and events.⁴³⁵

The Red Cross was a hugely popular vehicle for women's work and volunteerism. Nursing has long been a key role for women in times of conflict, and this continued in the Second World War. Riverside area nurses staffed hospitals in the city and at March Field as well as both local army camps where they were responsible for the care

of thousands of soldiers. Some more experienced nurses joined the armed forces through the Red Cross and went as far as Honolulu in 1942, Australia in 1943, and France in 1945, while others drawn to wartime service trained as nurses' aides or in general first aid to assist on the home front.⁴³⁶ Galvanized by advertisements, popular media, and patriotic public sentiment that encouraged involvement in the war effort, women took on demanding and difficult work that placed them visibly in the public sphere. Between the women working in these organizations, the women managing and training them, and the women recruiting them, the war created networks of skilled, professional women throughout Riverside and the surrounding area.

Riverside also saw a significant number of women take on industrial jobs in factories and on production lines, as much of the city's manufacturing was reconnoitered for defense

⁴³⁴ "Mayor Washburn Receives Insignia," *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), July 30, 1942.

⁴³⁵ "Red Cross Staff Enthusiastic Over Success of Blood Bank," *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), July 28, 1943.

⁴³⁶ "Overseas Nurse Raised in Rank," *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), February 10, 1945; "Red Cross Nurses Get Urgent Call," *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), January 5, 1942; <https://www.genealogybank.com> "Training Class for Nurses' Aides Opens," *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), January 5, 1942; "Red Cross Provides 37 Trained Nurses," *Riverside Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), January 1, 1943.

purposes. Food Machinery Corporation and Hunter Engineering Works both converted their peacetime operations into war industry. Food Machinery's factory on Twelfth Street, 3000 block, originally built citrus packing equipment, but transitioned to assembling "treaded amphibious landing craft," especially the LVT(A) 4 Water Buffalo, an "armored craft with a turret-mounted cannon."⁴³⁷ J.L. Hunter's factory on Columbia and Iowa Avenue produced "precision tools for war industries" alongside parts for aircraft. For both companies, wartime increases in demand facilitated the almost doubling of output capacity and personnel, but Hunter Engineering notably filled many of those new positions on their lines with women industry workers.⁴³⁸ In 1943, the *Daily Press* highlighted "the percentage of women defense workers on its payroll" as excellent and well-trained artisans.⁴³⁹ Other women increased their role in vital pre-war production to account for a loss of male workers; by World War II Hispanic women "performed the majority of packinghouse labor" that allowed the economically vital citrus industry to continue during wartime.⁴⁴⁰ Taking on new roles and learning new skills, Riverside women proved integral to wartime operations in a civilian capacity. Many other women would continue to aid the war effort through their recruitment into the armed forces themselves, and their work at Riverside's most important military sites: March Field, Camp Anza, and Camp Haan.

WACs and WASPs: Women at March Field, Camp Anza, and Camp Haan

Women in Riverside who joined the military in a formal capacity most often participated in the Women's Army Corps (WAC), while a select group were trained as WASPs (Women's Air Force Service Pilots). The WACs were considered members of the armed forces, their branch created to take up non-combat roles to "free up" men for combat duty.⁴⁴¹ Uniformed Air-WACs like Sgt. Grace K. Flynn first came to March Field in 1942, and worked in service and support roles such as secretaries, logistical workers, transport drivers, weather observers, and radio operators.⁴⁴² Many of the same jobs and positions women took on in the city were replicated in microcosm at Camp Anza, Camp Haan, and March Field. Local women worked salaried jobs in all three of the camps outside of the Red Cross or the WAC, as entertainers, librarians, social workers, laundresses, teachers, administrative workers, or other typically feminine occupations that were essential to the

⁴³⁷ "Riverside: Remnants of World War II Remain," *Press-Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), April 3, 2014. Catherine Gudis, "Claiming Our Space." The Food Machinery Company factory buildings encroached on Lincoln Park in Eastside and demolished low-income housing that included the site of Pachappa Camp, the first Korean settlement in the U.S., and a Japanese community. The area of both FMC (Eastside) and J.L. Hunter's (Columbia & Iowa Ave) wartime factories remain industrial, but the companies no longer produce there.

⁴³⁸ "Women Aid War at Hunter Company," *Riverside Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), January 1, 1943.

⁴³⁹ "Riverside Busy at War Work," *Riverside Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), September 25, 1943.

⁴⁴⁰ "Eastside: Citrus Historic District," Live from the Frontline: A People's History of the I.E.

⁴⁴¹ Kelly A. Spring, "In the Military During World War II," National Women's History Museum,

⁴⁴² "Air-Wacs Busy in Many Jobs for U.S. Army," *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), December 17, 1943. Glenn L. Lewis and the Office of Information 22nd Bombardment Wing, *The March Field Story*, March Field Museum.

camps' daily functioning.⁴⁴³ Working as a typist at Camp Anza in 1944, Geraldine Marr remembers that for her and her fellow employees doing payroll for stationed pilots, "most of your coworkers were also from Riverside. They were all people from the local area."⁴⁴⁴ This close relationship between Riverside and the camps applied to all areas of camp life, especially socially—organizations such as the Red Cross, USO, Gray Ladies, or other clubs from the city provided services or hosted activities for servicemen at the bases themselves. Entertainment was highly valued, and young women acted as hostesses for dances or as show performers for both black and white soldiers, as dances were often segregated.⁴⁴⁵ Black troops at Camp Haan hosted women from the University Heights League for a dance in May 1942, and had famous actress Hattie McDaniels headline a chorus show a month later.⁴⁴⁶



WAC Pvt. Helen M. Lee and Lt. Helen L. Curry at March Field, December 1943. *Riverside Enterprise*.

Additionally, WACs took on more hands-on, industrial tasks; women became machinists working in the sub-depot machine shops, welding, balancing propellers, and building or repairing elements of aircraft.⁴⁴⁷ WACs Beverly Derry and Vivienne Harmon, natives of Los Angeles, worked packing and repairing parachutes as supervisors in the March Field parachute department.⁴⁴⁸ Helen M. Lee served as the first Chinese American as a WAC at March Field, enrolling in 1943. Born in the United States and raised in China, Lee and her brothers fled to California when Japan attacked China.⁴⁴⁹ Lee briefly studied English at University of California, Berkeley before heeding her

⁴⁴³ "Los Angeles Woman to be in Charge of Post Library," *Camp Haan Post Beacon* (Riverside, CA), March Air Field Museum.

⁴⁴⁴ Marr, Geraldine. Interview by Christeen Taniguchi, Ben Taniguchi, Frank Teurlay, Erin Gettis, and Kim Johnson. *City of Riverside Camp Anza/Arlanza 2006–2007 Certified Local Government Grant Historical Resources Inventory and Context Statement*, September 2007. Riverside, CA: Galvin Preservation Associates, 2007.

⁴⁴⁵ "Riverside Women's League Entertained at Camp Haan," *California Eagle* (Los Angeles, CA), May 7, 1942, p. 14.

⁴⁴⁶ "Riverside Women's League Entertained at Camp Haan"; "Hum-Dinger Negro Show Coming Sunday," *Camp Haan Post Beacon* (Riverside, CA), June 11, 1942, March Air Field Museum.

⁴⁴⁷ "Women Take Tough Jobs at March Field," *Riverside Daily Press* (Riverside, CA), July 10, 1942.

⁴⁴⁸ "Pulchritude and Silk in March Field's Parachute Department," *Camp Haan Post Beacon* (Riverside, CA), August 6, 1942, March Air Field Museum.

⁴⁴⁹ "Chinese Girl on Duty as WAC at March Field Post," *Riverside Enterprise*, December 4, 1943, 12.

father's advice to join the military and aid China in the war against Japan.

Some women took their technical training a step further and became pilots themselves in the WASP program, a women pilot's organization assisting Air Force operations at 126 U.S. bases. The primary duties of WASPs were similar to WACs in that their participation was designed to free up their male counterparts for combat duty.

WASP pilots were most often utilized to move targets for training and to ferry planes to where they were needed at other bases. Trained and stationed at March Field, a small group of around 20 pilots had experience both with twin- and four-engine planes and were utilized in non-combat missions such as: "towing targets, daytime tracking missions, nighttime searchlight tracking missions, radio control work, strafing, laying of smoke, simulated bombing attacks, instrument flights, administrative flights and ferrying."⁴⁵⁰ The WASPs were highly skilled after a month of intense training not dissimilar from their male counterparts, and after training in Riverside were utilized at Fourth Air Force bases across the country.⁴⁵¹

Japanese Women in Riverside

Riverside in the first half of the 20th century was home to a robust Japanese community that was massively disrupted by the United States' policies in response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor and Executive Order 9066.⁴⁵² Japanese and Japanese American women in the city were barred from participating in much of this new world of women's military, social, and industrial work that the Second World War had opened. Instead, women like Lily Fujimoto and Sumi Harada alongside their families were forcibly removed from their homes on May 23, 1942, and incarcerated in camps across the western United States.⁴⁵³ Japanese American women faced incredible hardship and state violence during this period of alienation and discrimination.

Most Japanese American residents of Riverside were sent to Poston, Arizona, where women worked to maintain the camp itself through assigned jobs (though only American citizens, usually second-generation *Nisei*, were paid) and lived in harsh military-like conditions with little privacy. Despite daily traumas, vulnerability to violence against women, and the denial of their civil rights, women sustained their families and communities by continuing pre-incarceration routines and participating in camp-established social and cultural institutions like schools, newspapers, and clubs.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵⁰ Glenn L. Lewis and the Office of Information 22nd Bombardment Wing, *The March Field Story*.

⁴⁵¹ "WASPs Scheduled to Leave March Field Air Duties," *Riverside Enterprise* (Riverside, CA), November 1, 1944.

⁴⁵² Executive Order 9066 was issued on February 19, 1942 by President Franklin Roosevelt, authorizing the forced removal of all persons deemed a threat to national security from the West Coast to relocation centers further inland, resulting in the incarceration of approximately 122,000 Japanese Americans.

⁴⁵³ "Japanese Americans in Riverside," Asian American Riverside, University of California, Riverside,

⁴⁵⁴ "Behind the Wire," Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History, Library of Congress, Accessed September 1, 2025.

Others like Riverside resident Miné Okubo, sent to Topaz, Utah, used art to document and process the experience; Okubo's powerful graphic novel *Citizen 13660* was published in 1946. Lily Fujimoto and Sumi Harada both eventually returned to Riverside, and in the immediate postwar period Sumi opened her family home at 3356 Lemon Street (extant) to displaced Japanese American families returning to the area as they rebuilt their lives.⁴⁵⁵ The Fujimoto family did not return until the 1980s. While forced to reside in these remote concentration camps, women maintained many of their most vital community roles as teachers, caretakers, and cultural producers while fighting for the restoration of their rights and liberties.



Miné Okubo in 1945 and *Illustration of People During a Meal* by Miné Okubo in *Trek*, 1943. University of California, Berkeley.

⁴⁵⁵ "Place: Harada House," National Park Service, Published May 4, 2021. The Harada House is currently designated a National Historic Landmark.

WOMEN IN THE POSTWAR ERA, 1945-1959

Although many women returned to more traditional gender roles after World War II, a small but persistent group of women sought work outside the home, higher education, and continued their civic engagement — often through social justice, civil rights, or labor issues. Rather than regard the postwar period as one of complete dormancy for women's rights, it created the enabling environment for the next historic phase for women — the women's liberation movement and the modern civil rights movement.⁴⁵⁶

Postwar Readjustment and the Nuclear Family

The Second World War provided American women an opportunity to enter the work force in large numbers, more than any prior time in modern history. Particularly, young single women saw a jump in employment from 19.9% in 1940 to 41.8% in 1944.⁴⁵⁷ Following the end of the Second World War, approximately half of the wartime entrants were forced out of work as servicemen returned to the job force. In 1946, the female labor force had dropped from its wartime peak of 19,170,000 to 16,896,000.⁴⁵⁸ The GI Bill provided servicemen the opportunity to buy FHA-approved homes with no down payment, civil-service job preference, reemployment rights, as well as educational opportunities through manageable student loans — advantages that were available to only a few women.⁴⁵⁹ Additionally, the transition of war-related industry back into home goods and scientific innovation lead to economic growth, and with that a rise in marriage rates,⁴⁶⁰ a population boom, and suburban development throughout the United States.

The anxiety of the postwar readjustment period created an apt environment for the resurgence of “protectionists” and their anti-ERA campaign, as examined by historian Rebecca DeWolf. DeWolf states that after 15 years of economic and political turmoil in the United States — shifting from a decade of depression followed by five years of war — this period of instability proceeded considered changes regarding women's social status, as it extended women's public responsibilities and enhanced their values as citizens.⁴⁶¹ After World War II, however, women's new social status as economic drivers and heads of households brought about a pervasive feeling of distress regarding the future of conventional social arrangements, especially those that concerned women's traditional roles as wives and mothers. In the mid-to-late 1940s, this social anxiety developed into a

⁴⁵⁶ Winship, “Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Women's Rights in Los Angeles,” 58.

⁴⁵⁷ Claudia D. Goldin, “The Role of World War II in the Rise of Women's Employment,” *The American Economic Review*, September 1991, Vol. 81, No. 4 (September 1991), 742.

⁴⁵⁸ Rebecca DeWolf, *Gendered Citizenship: The Original Conflict Over the Equal Rights Amendment, 1920-1963* (University of Nebraska Press: 2021) 178.

⁴⁵⁹ DeWolf, *Gendered Citizenship*, 176.

⁴⁶⁰ Marriage rate, which was 84.5 per thousand women in 1945, jumped to 120.7 in 1946, according to Rebecca DeWolf, *Gendered Citizenship*, 178.

⁴⁶¹ DeWolf, *Gendered Citizenship*, 175.

popular desire to establish traditional gender roles, since many Americans felt that social stability would come only after women had returned to their traditional domestic duties.⁴⁶²



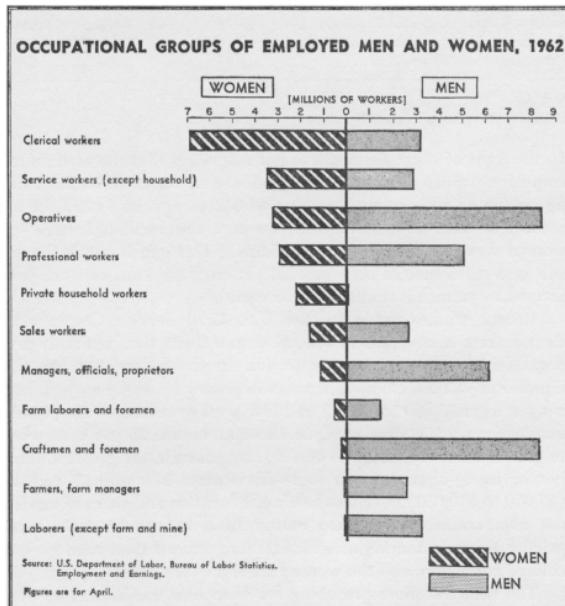
Women workers celebrating a co-workers engagement, c. 1960. *National Archives*.

and wife worked jumped from 3 million, or 11%, in 1940, to almost 7 million, or 20%, in 1948. In 1948, moreover, approximately 4.5 million mothers with children under the age of eighteen were employed; they made up nearly 25% of the total female labor force. By 1952, approximately 10.4 million wives held jobs, which was 2 million more than the highest number of women employed during World War II and almost three times the number employed in 1940.⁴⁶³

Esther Peterson, former director of the United States Women's Bureau, shed light on the type of jobs available to American's 25 million working women in the postwar period. According to Peterson's research, the greatest expansion in women's employment between 1940 and 1960 was in the clerical field, although the number of women employed in the 11 broad categories reported by the Bureau of the Census increased in every field except farm work. The percentage of women workers in some categories declined or remained the same. For instance, the number of professional women workers increased

The fallacy of the nuclear family, however, was ultimately exposed when women didn't leave the work force. Although there was a sudden drop in the number of women employed in the immediate postwar period, that figure continued to increase over the long term, especially for married, middle aged, white women.

According to DeWolf, when the 1940s concluded, one in every four married women (with husband present) was in the labor force, where they constituted 52% of all women workers. Additionally, the number of couples in which both husband



Women and men in occupational roles, 1962. Esther Peterson, "Working Women," *Daedalus*, Spring, 1964.

⁴⁶² DeWolf, *Gendered Citizenship*, 175.

⁴⁶³ DeWolf, *Gendered Citizenship*, 179.

from about 1.6 million in 1940 to 2.9 million in 1962. However, they constituted 13% of all women workers in both years. The number of women operatives also increased from nearly 2.2 million in 1940 to over 3.3 million in 1962. But in 1940 they represented 18% of the female work force, and in 1962 only 15%.⁴⁶⁴

On the other hand, clerical women workers increased from 2,530,000 in 1940 to 6,948,000 in 1962, while their percentage distribution rose from 21% to 31% of all employed women. While the number of women in private household work increased slightly, the percentage of all women domestic workers declined from 18% in 1940 to 10% in 1962. This postwar trend in women's employment showed a move away from unskilled, manual labor, to those requiring a high degree of skill and a more solid educational background.⁴⁶⁵

Although slightly hindered by the idea of the nuclear family, women's college enrollment rose steadily following the end of the war. From 1920 to 1960, college enrollment of women more than quadrupled in the United States. In 1920, there were fewer than one-third of a million women college students; in 1960 the figure was one and one-quarter million. Bachelor's degrees awarded to women also increased from 16,642 in 1920 to 104,000 in 1950 and approximately 140,000 in 1960 – "more than an eightfold growth in 40 years."⁴⁶⁶

Women in the Labor Force

Women in Riverside followed the national trends after the war, with a majority of women returning to housewife duties. According to the 1950 U.S. census, the total female population in Riverside was recorded at 26,642, of which 19,061 women of working age (14 years old and over) were reported. Of those women eligible to work, only 29% made up the female workforce and 54% were reported as not working outside the home, with most listed as "keeping house."⁴⁶⁷

The majority of employed women held clerical positions, followed by professional and technical workers, and thirdly, service workers. The top four industry groups in 1950 for women in Riverside were retail trade (13%), private housework (10%), medical and health services (9%), and public educational services (9.5%).⁴⁶⁸ Notably, 4% of working women were nonwhite in 1950.⁴⁶⁹ It is important to note that census data for 1950 is limited as to the type of labor nonwhite women did, but from newspaper accounts, a majority of the

⁴⁶⁴ Esther Peterson, "Working Women," *Daedalus*, Spring, 1964, Vol. 93, No. 2, The Woman in America (Spring, 1964), 683.

⁴⁶⁵ Peterson, "Working Women," 683.

⁴⁶⁶ Peterson, "Working Women," 677.

⁴⁶⁷ Bureau of the Census, "Census of Population: 1950, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 5 California," Table 35 (US Department of Commerce: Washington, DC), <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1950/population-volume-2/37778768v2p5ch3.pdf>, accessed November 2025.

⁴⁶⁸ Bureau of the Census, "Census of Population: 1950, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 5 California," Table 35.

⁴⁶⁹ Bureau of the Census, "Census of Population: 1950, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 5 California," Table 36.

black workforce in Riverside in 1950 were janitorial service employees or domestic workers.⁴⁷⁰

By 1960, the population of working women (14 years old and over) in Riverside reached 30,811. Thirty-four (34) percent of those eligible to work comprised were employed. Notably, the largest population of women workers was between the age of 45 to 64 years old – making up 31% of the labor force. Fifty-seven (57) percent of the labor force were married women with husbands present; 12% were married women with husbands and children under the age of 6. The majority of working women in 1960 were employed in clerical jobs (35%), holding roles as secretaries, stenographers, and typists; followed by professional and technical workers (19%), including elementary and secondary school teachers (8%); and service workers (12%) including waiters, bartenders, cooks, and counter workers. Nonwhite women workers accounted for 5% of the total labor force.⁴⁷¹

In comparison to 1950, by 1960 16% of women eligible to work were reported married with their husband present – assumed housewives. An approximately 25% of working-age women in 1960 were reported as not in the labor force, categorized as “other, under 65 years old.”⁴⁷² It is unknown what this group of women tended to, whether they were widowed or divorced, physically unable to work, and/or if they lived with other family members.

Although a majority of women in 1960 were not the workforce,⁴⁷³ there was an overall steady increase in women working, from 26% in 1950 to 34% in 1960. From industry, to education, to professional women – Riverside saw a range of women workers in the postwar period, considering major social, political, and economic adjustments of the mid-20th century.

WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

After World War II, the war industry rapidly transitioned back to civilian production to meet a high demand for goods that had been unavailable during the war. Riverside became a major center for aluminum fabrication primarily due to the Hunter brothers and the Hunter-Douglas Company. Other industries, including technological and scientific research industries, were attracted to Riverside in search of room for expansion, and for the opportunity to train people to do their work. This led to the expansion of higher education institutions for education and training support, as well as employee amenities

⁴⁷⁰ Refer to the section of “African American Women in the Labor Force” for more details.

⁴⁷¹ Bureau of the Census, “Census of Population: 1960, Volume I, Characteristics of the Population, Part 6 California,” Table 73-75, (US Department of Commerce: Washington, DC), <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1960/population-volume-1/vol-01-06-g.pdf>, accessed November 2025; Bureau of the Census, “Census of Population: 1960, Volume I, Characteristics of the Population, Part 6 California,” Table 77.

⁴⁷² Bureau of the Census, “Census of Population: 1960, Volume I, Characteristics of the Population, Part 6 California,” Table 73.

⁴⁷³ According to 1960 US Census records, 64% of the female population of Riverside was not in the workforce.

such as housing, shopping centers, and recreational facilities.⁴⁷⁴ For women, the opportunity for employment and education were a catalyst to enter more technical fields than had been available in the pre-war years.

After the war, the Hunter Douglas Company reverted to producing venetian blinds. They revolutionized the industry by developing a method for aluminum casting, applicable to not only venetian blinds but to many other products. Additionally, the company entered the plastics field to make ladder tapes to hold the strips together in the form of venetian blinds – replacing fabric tapes that required labor intensive machine sewing. The Hunter company sold both the semi-manufactured materials – aluminum strips and plastic tape – and the fabricating tools.⁴⁷⁵ In 1950, the plant employed approximately 100 women out of 500 employees.⁴⁷⁶

Other industrial newcomers in Riverside included Bourns Laboratories Inc. in 1950 and Rorh Corporation in 1952. Bourns Laboratories relocated to 6135 Magnolia Ave (extant) in 1950 from Pasadena with financial assistance from the Riverside Chamber of Commerce. Founded by Marlan and Rosemary Bourns, the company invented the first miniature linear motion and vane position potentiometers, propelling their small business into a global corporation, manufacturing a range of products that impact almost every aspect of today's electronics industry.⁴⁷⁷ The company's assembly department featured women employees assembling and testing potentiometers in the company's Riverside headquarters. Lettie Ann Glover was the project engineer supervisor in the chemical and element department.⁴⁷⁸

Notably, Bourns contributed to the 1969 moon landing, designing the linear motion potentiometers that were used in the lunar module landing control and in the pressure transducers that regulated astronauts' oxygen as they walked on the moon.⁴⁷⁹

Rohr Corporation branched from its parent plant in Chula Vista in 1952. Located in one of the largest wartime buildings at Camp Anza, Rohr specialized in the assembly of aircraft "power packages" and by 1970, it was the maker of streamline rail cars for the new San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit system.⁴⁸⁰ In September 1955, Rohr reported 273 women at the Riverside plant, 15% of the total workforce, limited to light precision tasks, repetitive operations, and sub-assembly work, as well as office work. Only one woman at Rohr, Mrs. Curtis R. Lewis, held a professional position as a technical illustrator doing isometric and perspective drawings.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁴ Patterson, *A Colony for California*, 427.

⁴⁷⁵ Patterson, *A Colony for California*, 430.

⁴⁷⁶ "Magnolia BPW Club Observes National Week," *Riverside Daily Press*, October 21, 1950.

⁴⁷⁷ Patterson, *A Colony for California*, 430.

⁴⁷⁸ Martha McLean, "WOMEN: Answer to Shortage of Scientific Personnel? If...," *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, May 20, 1956.

⁴⁷⁹ Gordon Bourns, *Beyond Our Wildest Dreams* (Bourns Inc, 2022) 83.

⁴⁸⁰ Patterson, *A Colony for California*, 432.

⁴⁸¹ McLean, "WOMEN: Answer to Shortage of Scientific Personnel? If..."

In 1956, the *Riverside Independent Enterprise* highlighted women in the scientific and technical fields in Riverside County. The article, aptly titled “WOMEN: Answer to Shortage of Scientific Personnel? If...” emphasized that women were well suited to take on more scientific and technical positions, *if* society was more open to accept women in such positions and *if* young women were educated to “look upon the scientific field as a proper and promising one.”⁴⁸² The article noted eight women worked at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory in Corona (NOLC), including Virginia Parker, librarian; Imelda McNee, scientist; Bernice F. Robinson, editor; Lois Pochop, technical illustrator; Catherine M. Douglas, chemist; Eshter C. Jackson, statistician, Rita Todorovo, mathematician; and Elizabeth Budd, editor. Several women worked at the Motorola Research Laboratory (8330 Indiana Ave, not extant), including Mrs. Myrtle Knauf, a graduate from the University of North Dakota with a degree in physics and mathematics. Knauf had a background in teaching and conducting scientific war work. She was a physicist at the National Bureau of Standards during World War II and later taught with the Army’s special training program. She later moved to work at NOLC.⁴⁸³

At Food Machinery Corporation, Ethel Nelson was a senior draftsman and dubbed “Grandmother Moses” where she was the only woman among 30 men.⁴⁸⁴

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE

The employment of Black women in the postwar years was complex and limited due to racial discrimination and a lack of educational opportunities. Esther Peterson analyzed the issues and statistics around Black women’s employment in the U.S. in 1964. According to Peterson, jobs for Black women were reserved at the lowest economic level or at the professional level, with very few opportunities for employment in between. Jobs in sales, clerical work and skilled occupations were often closed to Black women, and in turn, discouraged young African American women from training for those fields. Nevertheless, Peterson notes, the number of non-white women employed as clerical, professional, sales and miscellaneous service workers increased considerably between 1940 and 1960 – in 1940, less than one-fifth of all Black women workers in the U.S. were in these occupations. By 1960 more than one-third of all employed Black women were in these jobs. The largest number of nonwhite women in 1963 was in private household work, which employed 1,026,000 in the U.S. The second highest number, 696,000, were service workers (other than household), and in third place were 391,000 operatives.⁴⁸⁵

Overall, a total of 2,455,000 Black women were employed in 1960 across the U.S., as compared with 1,870,000 in 1950. They made up a majority, approximately 94%, of the nearly 3 million nonwhite women workers in the labor force in 1960. This number, which comprises both the employed and those looking for work, represents a 35% increase over

⁴⁸² McLean, “WOMEN: Answer to Shortage of Scientific Personnel? If....”

⁴⁸³ McLean, “WOMEN: Answer to Shortage of Scientific Personnel? If....”

⁴⁸⁴ McLean, “WOMEN: Answer to Shortage of Scientific Personnel? If....”

⁴⁸⁵ Peterson, “Working Women,” 687.

the number of nonwhite women workers in 1950. One out of eight women workers were nonwhite both in 1950 and in 1960.⁴⁸⁶

Notably, Peterson analyzes that the percentage of Black women in the labor force was higher for many decades prior to World War II, than that of white women. In 1900, 41% of nonwhite women were gainfully employed, whereas only 17% of white women were in the labor force. By 1963, although there were far more whites and far fewer nonwhites among women workers, the proportion of nonwhites with a job was still a fourth greater than the proportion of whites. Black mothers also tended to work outside the home to a greater extent than white mothers. In 1960, 31% of nonwhite married women living with their husbands and having children under six years of age were in the labor force. This compared with 18% for white women.⁴⁸⁷

Postwar statistics on employed women of color in Riverside county is very limited. Census records from 1950 reveal that 4% of working women were nonwhite.⁴⁸⁸ The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) estimated that only 3% of Riverside's Black community worked in Riverside at the time.

"Riverside has no negro [sic] doctors or lawyers. The 3% estimate includes businessmen – barbers, morticians, café owners, cleaners, beauticians, innkeepers, garagemen, filling station operators, music shopkeepers, realtors and caterers."⁴⁸⁹ These businesses were run by Black people for Black people, with exception of the Black manned wash rack on Main Street near Fourteenth Street (extant), and a catering shop. Approximately, 70 Black airmen and one Black officer, a flight surgeon, lived in the Riverside area with their families. While some ex-GIs operated their own trucks for hauling oranges.⁴⁹⁰

In Riverside, Black workers were a small factor on payroll. Riverside's two largest industrial payrolls, Hunter-Douglas and Food Machinery employed a total of 18 Black employees in 1950 – 11 at Hunter Douglas, including janitors and a watchman; and seven at Food Machinery, mainly custodians.⁴⁹¹ Other janitors worked at the Loring Building, the Evans Building, Keystone drugs, Rouse's Department Store and elsewhere. Two women, Hazel Russell and Mrs. Johnne Lott were employed as teachers at Casa Blanca and at Irving School.⁴⁹² Black residents represented less than 1% of the civil service placement on the City or County level. With approximately a

⁴⁸⁶ Peterson, "Working Women," 683-684.

⁴⁸⁷ Peterson, "Working Women," 683-684.

⁴⁸⁸ Bureau of the Census, "Census of Population: 1950, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 5 California," Table 36.

⁴⁸⁹ Beth Teters, "Sparse Statistics Augmented By Cooperation of Negroes, Library," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 13, 1950.

⁴⁹⁰ Beth Teters, "Sparse Statistics Augmented By Cooperation of Negroes, Library," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 13, 1950.

⁴⁹¹ Beth Teters, "Negro Housing Varies From Adequate to Bad," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 14, 1950.

⁴⁹² Teters, "Negro Housing Varies From Adequate to Bad,"

third of Black residents being active church goers, the Hunter and FMC churches employed nearly 20 Black residents in Riverside.⁴⁹³

The NAACP asserted that most of Riverside's Black residents in the mid-century were railroad workers with headquarters in San Bernardino or Colton, or else worked in mountain or desert resorts while maintaining families in Riverside.⁴⁹⁴ With limited employment opportunities, African Americans in Riverside were often in positions that offered little upward mobility, and many chose to leave the city to find employment elsewhere.⁴⁹⁵

THE WOMEN'S AIR FORCE (WAF) AT MARCH FIELD

The WAFS/WASP program was deactivated on December 20, 1944, as the country returned to peacetime activity. March Air Field reverted to its operational role and became a Tactical Air Command (TAC) base. When President Harry Truman signed The National Security Act of 1947, creating the Department of Defense, the U.S. Air Force (USAF) became a separate military service, turning March Air Field into March Air Force Base (AFB).⁴⁹⁶

A year later, President Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act on June 12, 1948, legally permitting women to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces in a number of official capacities. Most importantly, the act allowed women to serve in all four branches of the military. Previously, women serving in the military could enlist as volunteers in clerical positions or work as nurses, though Congress did briefly give the Women's Army Corps (WAC) full army status during WWII.⁴⁹⁷

Following the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, the Women's Air Force (WAF) was established for women to serve in non-combat roles within the USAF. Originally, WAF was limited to 4,000 enlisted women and 300 women officers, all of whom were encouraged to fill a variety of ground duty roles—mostly clerical and medical—but were not to be trained as pilots, even though the United States Army Air Corps (USAAC) had graduated the first class of women pilots in April 1943, during wartime.⁴⁹⁸

WAF recruitment was rigorous due to the limited number of positions. Enlistment in the WAF was open to single women between the ages of 18 and 34 years old with a high

⁴⁹³ IS Architecture, "City of Riverside African American Civil Rights Movement Historic Context Statement (1870-1976)," (City of Riverside, 2022), 44.

⁴⁹⁴ Teters, "Fundamentals of Negro Life Probed in Series."

⁴⁹⁵ "City of Riverside African American Civil Rights Movement Historic Context Statement (1870-1976)," 43.

⁴⁹⁶ The Rose Institute, "The Many Lives of March ARB," *Inland Empire Outlook* V, no. 4 (2015): 20, https://issuu.com/roseinstitutecmc/docs/ieo_fall_2015_final_web.

⁴⁹⁷ Natalie Walker, "The Women's Armed Services Integration Act," The Truman Library Institute, accessed November 2025, <https://www.trumanlibraryinstitute.org/truman-and-womens-rights/>.

⁴⁹⁸ Martha Lockwood, "Women's legacy parallels Air Force history," Air Force News Service, September 18, 2014, <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/497548/womens-legacy-parallels-air-force-history/>.

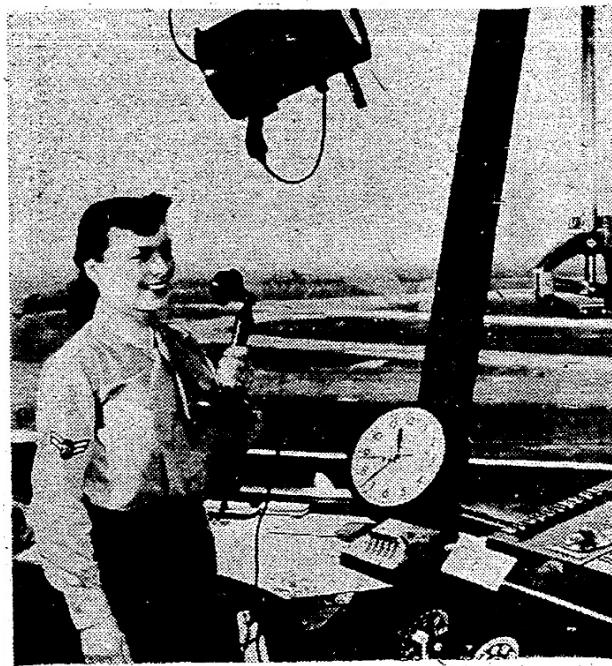
school diploma, no dependents, and U.S. citizenship by either birth or naturalization. Applicants were required to meet USAF physical standards and the Armed Forces qualification test for mental aptitude – with a minimum percentile test score of 65%, as compared to the 10% minimum percentile qualification for male enlistees.⁴⁹⁹

By 1952, there were 163 WAFs stationed at the 4106th WAF Squadron at March AFB with Lt. Marjorie Murray as the commanding officer and Second Lt. Doris H. Dalack as the adjutant and supply officer. WAFs at March AFB held a fair representation of 446 jobs available out of the 558 classifications within the entire USAF at the time. Typical WAF jobs included parachute rigger, weather observer, librarian,



WAF Service Pilots flight team walking from the "Pistol Packin' Mama." *WASP Museum*.

stenographer, supply technician, control tower operator, and inspection team.⁵⁰⁰



Cpl. Helen "Lee" Pawlak, 4106th WAF Squadron. *Riverside Independent News*, 1951.

Within the Strategic Air Command (SAC), WAFs held a range of positions in nine of the SAC's non-tactical units, ranging from office to kitchen, from flight line to medical labs, and from gymnasiums to weather bureau. At March AFB, Cpl. Katherine Howard of the 4106th WAF squadron was the only WAF control tower operator at the base in 1951, with training in the ground-control approach (GCA) system – both highly technical jobs requiring specialized training and skill. Sgt. Helen Pawlak, also of the 4106th WAF squadron, was another control tower operator and later worked

⁴⁹⁹ Beth Teters, "WAF at March Air Force Base Plays Vital Role in Defense," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 9, 1952; "Base of Choice Now Offered Reenlisting WAF Personnel," *The Team March Beacon*, April 10, 1953.

⁵⁰⁰ Beth Teters, "WAF at March Air Force Base Plays Vital Role in Defense," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 9, 1952

with Flight Service in Base Operations as a dispatcher directing transient aircraft and personnel.⁵⁰¹

In 1952, there were five barracks at March AFB dedicated to WAF housing, with a limited number of officers residing off base and 15 WAF personnel married to Airmen stationed at the base.⁵⁰² In 1953, new WAF barracks were constructed by the Gould and Cross Construction Company. The modernist, three-story, masonry brick structure was designed to house 197 WAF personnel, with a maximum of three people per room. Amenities included in-room storage and washbasins, shared bathrooms, three communal lounges, telephone booths, ice-water fountains, and storage closets.⁵⁰³ Recreation facilities for WAF at March AFB included a theater, bowling, tennis, handball, swimming, golf, softball, a library, a hobby shop, and service and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) clubs.⁵⁰⁴

During the Korean War (1950-53), the only WAFs permitted to serve in the Korean battle zone were medical air evacuation nurses. Servicewomen who had joined the Reserves following World War II, were involuntarily recalled to active duty as WAF. Together, with already in-service WAFs, the women carried out support roles at rear-echelon bases in Japan. They were air traffic controllers, weather observers, radar operators and photo interpreters. Nurses served stateside, and flight nurses served in the Korean theater.⁵⁰⁵

By the end of the Korean War in 1953, 12,800 WAF officers and enlisted women were serving worldwide, and in 1955, Air Force nurses experienced a moment of turnabout when men were accepted into the Air Force Nurse Corps.⁵⁰⁶

Back at March AFB, the SAC WAF unit led a pioneer integration program which resulted in the deactivation of the 26th WAF Squadron on January 15, 1954, along with the WAF commander, the adjutant, and the first sergeant. SAC WAFs now reported directly to each assigned department for duty, administrative purposes, and discipline. New titles in connection with the SAC WAF program were changed to WAF Adviser, instead of Commander, and NCOIC of Dormitory, formerly First Sergeant. These positions were filled by 2d Lt. Phyllis Cato, and M/Sgt. Betty J. Gray, respectively.⁵⁰⁷

By mid-century there were approximately 10,800 WAFs serving in 19 officer and 34 airmen career fields, stationed in Japan, Hawaii, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, England, Wales, Newfoundland, Alaska, and the United States.⁵⁰⁸ March AFB

⁵⁰¹ "Many Key SAC Jobs Now Filled by WAFS," *The Team March Beach*, November 2, 1951.

⁵⁰² Beth Teters, "WAF at March Air Force Base Plays Vital Role in Defense," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 9, 1952

⁵⁰³ A/3C Charles Dow, "Sensational New WAF Barracks Features Finest Air Force Living," *The Team March Beacon*, May 01, 1953.

⁵⁰⁴ Beth Teters, "WAF at March Air Force Base Plays Vital Role in Defense," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 9, 1952

⁵⁰⁵ Martha Lockwood, "Women's Legacy Parallels Air Force History," *Air Force News Service*, September 18, 2014.

⁵⁰⁶ Martha Lockwood, "Women's Legacy Parallels Air Force History," *Air Force News Service*, September 18, 2014.

⁵⁰⁷ "Pioneer WAF Program," *The Team March Beacon*, January 29, 1954.

⁵⁰⁸ "Happy Birthday, WAF!" *The Team March Beacon*, June 25, 1954; Hawaii and Alaska were granted statehood in 1959.

totaled 155 WAF in 1954, and increased to 250 by 1956.⁵⁰⁹ The expansion in the WAF program at March AFB required the expansion of the women's barracks to include two more buildings, offering private rooms.⁵¹⁰



WAF members of March AFB attending the 1959 SAC 15th AF NCO Academy, Major Mary C. Lynn at far left, 1959. *The Team March Beacon*.

WAFs continued to expand their service and education at March AFB, including selected candidates for the MATS Flight Stewardess School.⁵¹¹ In 1956, four WAF master sergeants from March AFB attended the NCO Academy School at Barksdale, LA, making them some of the first women to ever attend the training. The four WAF officers included M/Sgt. Mary J. Schimpf, 807 Hq. Sec.; Margaret Corbett, 807th Hq. Sw. Sec.; Geneve Elliot, Medics; and Mary Burge, 15th Air Force. NCO Academy training was aimed at reacquainting senior NCOs with supervisory responsibilities and good leadership skills.⁵¹²

In 1959, the SAC's 15th AF NCO Academy at March AFB became integrated with WAF officers. Twenty-four WAF master and technical sergeants from SAC's installations throughout the US attended the five-week course, including seven co-eds from the March AFB – Sergeant Alice G. Harshaw, Guthalee Clark, Rita Hanley, Gertrude Hudgson, Mary Jo Mears, Ida D. Pflanz and Jackeline J. Griffith.

⁵⁰⁹ "Happy Birthday, WAF!" *The Team March Beacon*, June 25, 1954; Bill Leahy, "WAF Celebrates 8th Birthday Tomorrow," *The Team March Beacon*, June 29, 1956.

⁵¹⁰ Bill Leahy, "WAF Celebrates 8th Birthday Tomorrow," *The Team March Beacon*, June 29, 1956.

⁵¹¹ Bill Leahy, "WAF Celebrates 8th Birthday Tomorrow," *The Team March Beacon*, June 29, 1956.

⁵¹² Betty Duzeneck, "March Send 4 WAF to 1st NCO Academy Class May 16," *The Team Beacon*, April 13, 1956.

Women Service Organizations

Women service organizations at March AFB were composed of NCO wives and volunteer WAFs to serve the women and families stationed at the base. The NCO Wives Club was an important part of service life at March AFB. One out of 50 NCO wives belonged to the organization at March AFB. This small group acted as representatives of all the NCO wives at the Youth Council, Dependents Association (DA), Teenage Club, Preteen Club, and other base organizations.⁵¹³

Each month members of the NCO Wives Club donated their time to local causes, including Girl's Town in Arlington, Girl Scouts, and Cub Scouts in Riverside County. The Dependents Assistance Program benefitted from the support of the Wives Club – in 1955 the NCO wives club president was a member of the DA advisory council, while club members were involved with the DA Welcoming Committee, the Casualty Committee, the Publicity Committee, and Personal Service Committee.⁵¹⁴

The Dependents Assistance (DA) Program at March AFB was a service organization lead by women volunteers, either spouses or military personnel. The objective of the DA was to provide referrals for specific counseling services for military spouses and dependents. The DA worked with organizations on base and within the local Riverside Community, such as the Red Cross, Chaplain, Legal Office, Family Service, and Air Force Aid.⁵¹⁵ Additional aid services ranged depending on the need of the service men and their families, including financial assistance, travel expenses, childcare and homecare, furnishings and home goods, and even updated brochures on oversees bases, etc. Community programs outside the base include the Wives Lecture Courses held in Arlington and Riverside, at the Magnolia Grammar School Auditorium.⁵¹⁶

By 1955, the DA Center at March AFB expanded to sustain an almost 300% increase in assisted cases each month. On average, the monthly total of 250 personnel or dependents were aided in 1954 and reach 780 in the month of March 1955. This increase was



Mrs. Honey Simons, chairman of the Dependent's Assistance's Personal Services committee, and M/Sgt. Joe Esperanza, NCOIC of D/A, organizing the SAC Wives Course, 1955. *The Team March Beacon*.

⁵¹³ Roma Torch, "Women's Activities Work Towards Betterment of Airman's Life," *The Team March Beacon*, April 29, 1955.

⁵¹⁴ Roma Torch, "Women's Activities Work Towards Betterment of Airman's Life."

⁵¹⁵ "D.A. Veteran Wives Invited to Aid Newcomer Wives," *The Team March Beacon*, November 24, 1955.

⁵¹⁶ Roma Torch, "Women's Activities Work Towards Betterment of Airman's Life."

attributed to the larger facilities and offices on base, making room for more utilization of volunteer workers. Over 200 women were active trained volunteers working for the DA in 1955; volunteer hours increased from 200 hours/month in 1954 to over 652 hours/month in March 1955.⁵¹⁷

In 1957, the General Federation of Women's Club began extending invitations to Air Force Wives' clubs for affiliation. By encouraging service wives' clubs to affiliate, the federation aimed to make it easier for service families to integrate into community life when they transferred to new stations. Since the Federation had affiliates in all parts of the country and many foreign nations, affiliates served as a means for service wives to get acquainted with new neighbors.⁵¹⁸

Postwar Women's Organizations

Women's clubs continued to support social and civic efforts for women in Riverside during the postwar period, including community service groups, political affiliates, and professional and educational organizations. By 1955, the Riverside Daily Press noted that women's organizations numbered well over 200.⁵¹⁹ Among the established organizations, new groups included the American Legion Auxiliary, the Junior's Woman's Club, and the Soroptimist International of Riverside.

The Newcomers to Riverside was established in 1950. At 100 members in 1955, the purpose of the club was to help women get acquainted with each other, as well as the community. Membership was geared for women with less than 9-month residency in Riverside, up to 2 years. A college newcomers' club was organized by UCR women whose husbands were linked with the Citrus Experiment Station, but which later expanded to include other allied groups from the university.⁵²⁰

Community Service Groups (CSG) included, Junior Aid, Friendship House, the Children's League, and Osteopathic Hospital Auxiliary, organized in 1950. Junior Aid formed in 1928 and fostered three CSGs, the Visiting Nurse Association, the Children Consultant Service, and the New Family Service Association. The Children's league, organized in 1949, sponsored the Children's Wing of the Community Hospital, as well as an assistance fund for sick children.

By 1948, the Friendship House (3679 Market Street, not extant), originally founded in 1920 as the Restroom Club by the Riverside Women's Club, became a place for women to rest, prepare a warm lunch, and socialize. Mrs. Ethel S. Ball, the full-time hostess, was paid by City funds. All other activities of the Friendship House were budgeted and paid for by subscriptions and an annual rummage sale. Friendship House operated as an employment

⁵¹⁷ Roma Torch, "Women's Activities Work Towards Betterment of Airman's Life."

⁵¹⁸ "All AF Wives Clubs Invited to Join International Federation," *The Team March Beacon*, February 1, 1957.

⁵¹⁹ Margaret Steen, "Women Take Active Park in City Life," *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, June 19, 1955.

⁵²⁰ Steen, "Women Take Active Part in City Life."

bureau, receiving requests for help and applications for work from women across the city. All types of women workers were registered, including nurses, stenographers, domestic workers, and others. In February 1948, Friendship house reported 289 work applications, 108 placements, 1250 patrons, 105 requests for help, and 825 telephone calls.⁵²¹

Women with military ties founded new organizations during the postwar period, building upon the legacy of the DAR. Families of World War veterans organized the American Legion Auxiliary (2979 Dexter Drive, extant), with chapters in Riverside, Arlington, Mira Loma and Rubidoux. Other military auxiliaries included the auxiliary for Women of Veterans for Foreign Wars' families; while Gold Star Mothers Club was organized for women whose sons died in the wars.⁵²²

As part of the growing social events in the community, the Riverside Community Flower Association was incorporated in 1950 with Mrs. Melbourne Alexander as President, representing the Women's Club and the Victoria Garden Club. The aim of the Association was "to produce a flower show for the enjoyment and education of the community."⁵²³ The Association was begun c. 1900 when Mrs. John Mylne organized planting seven miles of ragged robin roses along Victoria Ave. Mrs. Mylne's work earned Riverside the title of "City Beautiful." Between then and 1950, hundreds of women dedicated their time to enhancing the tradition.

For many years, the Riverside Women's club and the City Beautiful Committee of the Chamber of Commerce staged flower shows, but usually only members exhibited. After World War II, additional organization joined, including the Riverside Garden Club, the Alvord Women's Club, and the Victoria Garden Club – staging small shows within their own membership. In 1947, under the leadership of Howard Starke, then president of the Riverside Garden Club, the Riverside women club, the Alvord Club and the Junior Women's club, and the Begonia Society, formed the nucleus of the Riverside Community Flower Show Association. In 1958, the association had grown to include seventeen sponsoring organizations, each providing two delegates. The Soroptimist Club handled the public relations, while the American Association of University Women, handled the marketing. By 1958, Riverside Community Flower show was the largest amateur flower show in Southern California.⁵²⁴ The theme for the 1958 flower show was "Beauty for Everybody."

Black women social groups in the City's Eastside included the Eastside Garden Club and the Women's Republicans Study Club, among others.⁵²⁵ Recreation for the Black community included the Lincoln Park Recreational Center, which provided swim lessons and other activities; the Settlement House, which offered neighborhood

⁵²¹ Teters, "Friendship House Cheery Haven of Rest for Women."

⁵²² Steen, "Women Take Active Part in City Life."

⁵²³ "Beauty for Everybody," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 13, 1958.

⁵²⁴ "Beauty for Everybody," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 13, 1958.

⁵²⁵ Teters, "Fundamentals of Negro Life Probed in Series."

recreational and education programs; and church-hosted activities such as dinners, pie socials, concerts, and youth programs.⁵²⁶

RIVERSIDE JUNIOR WOMEN'S CLUB

The Riverside Junior Women's Club (JWC) was organized in 1942 by Mrs. Roy Lay. The group was a federated club part of a larger syndicate of national, state, district, and country Junior Clubs. Two advisors from the Riverside Women's Club were part of the Junior board, with junior members ranging in age from 16 to 35.⁵²⁷ The junior club emphasized community service in its membership, with each member required to serve a minimum of 50 hours of service per year. The organization's objectives were intellectual advance of women, social enjoyment, and community service in accordance with the parent club.⁵²⁸

In 1951, The Riverside JWC was one of 8 clubs in the Riverside County Federation of Junior Women's Clubs, which was organized in 1951.⁵²⁹ In 1953, the Riverside group's main project was the Children's Dental Health Service, which aided all City school children from kindergarten through high school. At the urging of the Riverside Junior Women's Club, the Board of Education appointed a school dentist to conduct dental health examinations and emphasizes the importance of preventing dental decay in young children as soon as possible. The junior club assisted the dentist by conducting clerical work and providing financial aid to children in need of dental work – donating approximately \$500 annually. By 1953, junior club members contributed more than 1071 hours of volunteer work. Other annual Riverside JWC events included the children's Christmas party, an Easter egg hunt, spring formal dance, public affair dinner, mother-daughter banquet, and senior May breakfast.⁵³⁰

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB (BPWC)

In support of professional businesswomen, Riversiders founded the Riverside Business and Professional Women's Club in 1930 with 14 charter members. By 1953, the organization included a total membership of 85 women, with the national goal to "elevate standards of women in business and the professions, and to expand opportunities to business and professional women in the United States through education along lines of industrial, scientific and vocation activities."⁵³¹ Part of a national and state-wide federation, the Riverside BPWC was one of six BPWC's in Riverside County, including Corona, Elsinore, Hemet, Indio, and Magnolia Center.

⁵²⁶ Teters, "Fundamentals of Negro Life Probed in Series."

⁵²⁷ "Riverside Jr. Woman's Club," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 22, 1953.

⁵²⁸ "Riverside Jr. Woman's Club."

⁵²⁹ "County Juniors Name Chairman," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 27, 1951.

⁵³⁰ "Riverside Jr. Woman's Club."

⁵³¹ "BPWC," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 22, 1953.

Every club in the federation was granted an opportunity for political involvement by presenting resolutions regarding new bills or amendments on any government level.⁵³²

The Riverside chapter was an active participant in supporting both district and statewide initiatives. In 1946, the Riverside BPWC hosted a two-day conference for the board of directors of the California Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs at the Mission Inn. Board members were led by the Southern District President, Mrs. Eleanor J. McClaskey, a native of Riverside, and Miss. Ruth Warren, president of the Riverside BPWC chapter.⁵³³ In 1947, a special session was held for the nomination of officers and the endorsement of two Riversiders for district and state offices.⁵³⁴

In 1949, Riverside welcomed two additional BPWCs, one in Magnolia Center and the other in Arlington. The two clubs were first introduced to members of the Southern District in 1949, during the 26th annual convention of the Southern District California Federation of BPWCs, held at the Mission Inn. Over 300 members were hosted by the federation, where Kean Wallace and Jane Lunt, officers of Magnolia Center BPWC and, Elba Hadley, president of Arlington BPWC, were introduced.⁵³⁵ By 1953, the Magnolia Center BPWC had increased its membership by 34%, and was an active participant in the community. The club raised money through a fashion show to fund a woman's scholarship for Riverside College; participated in Arbor week planting trees in Shamel Park; and sponsored 12 children to attend Day Camp during the summer of 1953.⁵³⁶

In 1950, the Riverside BPWC hosted the midwinter conference of the Southern District of California BPWC at the Mission Inn. Approximately 130 delegates attended the conference, along with 250 guests.⁵³⁷ That same year, in observance of National Business Women's [sic] week,⁵³⁸ the Riverside BPWC hosted 'Bosses Night', bringing together nearly 100 Riverside businesswomen and their employers for a dinner banquet at the Mission Inn.

Through the 1950s, Riverside BPWC, along with Magnolia Center and Arlington, continued in the tradition of observing annual Business Women's Week, hosting a range of activities highlighting local businesswomen. In 1953, for the 26th annual national observance, the organization highlighted women's contributions to the economic, social, and political life of the community. In 1956, Riverside BPWC president, Elsie Lansing, met

⁵³² "County Business Women Convene," *Riverside Daily Press*, October 8, 1945; "BPWC."

⁵³³ "BPWC Still Seeks Convention Site," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 14, 1945.

⁵³⁴ "Business Women Nominate," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 5, 1947.

⁵³⁵ "Over 300 at BPW Conclave," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 25, 1949.

⁵³⁶ Olive Condon, "Magnolia Center BPWC," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 22, 1953.

⁵³⁷ "Business Women Gather Here for Winter Conclave," *Riverside Daily Press*, January 21, 1950.

⁵³⁸ National Business Women Week was an annual event initiated in 1924, by Emma Dot Parker, executive director of the National Federation of Professional and Business Women's Club, to give local communities an opportunity to become better acquainted with the Federations program and spotlight local businesswomen's work in the community; "Many Businesses Represented as BPW Entertains Employers," *Riverside Daily Press*, October 20, 1950.

with local businesswomen to plan the weeks activities, including a luncheon and tour of selected small business in the downtown Riverside area owned by fellow club members.⁵³⁹

In addition to the BPWC, other professional clubs included the Soroptimist Club founded in 1948, the Altrusa Club formed in 1954, and the Quota Club formed in 1955. Other business clubs include the Legal Secretaries, the National Secretaries Association, the Credit Women's Club, and the Home Economic Association. Teachers and educators were supported by the Association for Childhood Education, Delta Kappa Gamma and Alpha Delta Kappa, the latter two being honor societies.⁵⁴⁰

Education

The postwar boom brought to Riverside a large surge of students in the early 1950s. Enrollment increases from five to ten percent annually were noted after the end of World War II. In 1953, the three Riverside City school districts saw a total average daily attendance of 13,000 students, compared to half that amount in 1942-1943. This increase in attendance led the Riverside School Board to approve building bonds in 1949 to construct new schools and to improve many of the school district's facilities. By 1953, three new schools were built: Pachappa Elementary, Madison Primary, and Jurupa Junior High School. Major additions and alterations were made at Bryant, Fremont, Jefferson, Liberty, Longfellow, Magnolia, and Palm elementary schools, including construction of auditoriums, all-purpose rooms, and gymnasiums. New classrooms alone totaled more than 80 by 1953.⁵⁴¹

In Riverside's three school districts of more than 500 teachers and administrators, women accounted for approximately 9.5% of educators in 1950s, and approximately 8% percent in 1960.⁵⁴² The percentage of African American women educators in the district are currently unknown; however, the postwar period saw an increase in educators of color as the school district moved towards racial integration in the 1960s.

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN EDUCATORS

In 1947, Hazel Russell was the first African American teacher hired by the Riverside School District to teach at Casa Blanca Elementary School (3060 Madison Street, extant), seven years before the Supreme Court's ruling on *Brown vs. The Board of Education*. Mrs. Russell arrived from Texas and taught at the school for over a decade,

⁵³⁹ "Plan for Business Women's Week," *Riverside Daily Press* October 8, 1953; "Business Women To Observe Week," *Riverside Daily Press*, September 23, 1956.

⁵⁴⁰ Steen, "Women Take Active Part in City Life."

⁵⁴¹ "School Shape Your Child's Future; It Pays to Get Acquainted with Them," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 22, 1953.

⁵⁴² Bureau of the Census, "Census of Population: 1950, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 5 California," Table 35; Bureau of the Census, "Census of Population: 1960, Volume I, Characteristics of the Population, Part 6 California," Table 74.

before moving on to teach at junior high school, Cal State Fullerton, and Riverside Community College.⁵⁴³

In 1950, Irving and Casa Blanca Elementary Schools absorbed virtually all children of color due to de facto segregation. Another African American teacher, Mrs. Johnne Lott taught grade school at Irving School during the 1950s.⁵⁴⁴ At the time there were approximately



Casa Blanca School Staff, Mrs. Hazel Russell pictured second row, center, 1963. *The Press Enterprise*.

300 Black children in Riverside's lower grade schools—272 alone attending Irving and Longfellow Elementary Schools and University Heights Junior High (UHJH).⁵⁴⁵

By 1954, Black PTA leadership was on the rise with more African American student enrollment in various other schools. Mrs. Albert Simpson was the 1954 president of the Irving School PTA, while Mrs.

George Stowers Jr. was the president of the Casa Blanca PTA, both Black women. Notably, Mrs. Stowers led a one-woman campaign to develop curbs and gutters for Opal Street where she lived. Mrs. Stowers' civic leadership was an example of the increasing sense of community activism among Black residents.⁵⁴⁶

Another notable woman of color included Mrs. Julius Williamson, mother of four and the first African American woman officer of the mixed Longfellow's PTA chapter. Williamson was a member of the Community Settlement Association board and previous board member of the Community Chest and Community Council, secretary of the NAACP and of the Women's Political in Study Group, and an active member of the YWCA. Williamson was past president of the University Heights PTA.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴³ Bryan Hagan, "Riverside Unified First Black Teacher, Hazel Hawkins Russell, Dies at 93," *The Riverside Press Enterprise*, August 19, 2017.

⁵⁴⁴ Beth Teters, "Fundamentals of Negro Life Probed in Series," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 15, 1950.

⁵⁴⁵ Teters, "Fundamentals of Negro Life Probed in Series."

⁵⁴⁶ Ryan Hagen, "Riverside Unified First Black Teacher, Hazel Hawkins Russell, Dies at 93," *Press Enterprise*, August 19, 2017.

⁵⁴⁷ Teters, "Fundamentals of Negro Life Probed in Series."

By 1954, there were four Black teachers in Riverside's public schools: Mrs. James Jordan and Mrs. Johnna Lott at the Irving school, and Mrs. Jean Grier and Mrs. Hazel Russell at the Casa Blanca school.⁵⁴⁸

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The Riverside Council of the California Congress of Parents and Teachers, also known as the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) was organized in 1921 by A.C. Fulmor, the first and only male president. The Riverside PTA council had the largest enrollment of women but also included a large number of men. In 1953, the Council featured 27 units, including 22 elementary schools, four junior high schools, and one Poly High School. Three of those were organized in March of 1953, including Madison PTA, Pachappa PTA, and Casa Blanca PTA. Parents eligible for inclusion into the Council had to belong to a unit within the Riverside High School District. In 1953, the Riverside PTA membership numbered 10,855 members, an increase of over 2,000 members in one year.⁵⁴⁹ Officers in 1953 were comprised of an all-women group, led Mrs. Tom Sallenger, president and Mrs. Hugh E. Felps, vice-president. By 1955, the council added two additional PTA units with an enrollment of 12,744 members.⁵⁵⁰

The objective of the PTAs were to promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church and the community; to raise the standards of home life; to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth; to bring together a closer relationship between the home and the school; to promote cooperation between parents and teachers in regard to teaching children; and to support the physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing of students.⁵⁵¹

As part of their commitment to community service, the Riverside PTA Council participated in the annual Mother's March, in cooperation with the March of Dimes. Other community outreach included the Mothersingers group, led by Dr. Roberta Bitgood, minister of music at Calvary Presbyterian Church. The Mothersingers group, composed of women singers, all PTA members, met weekly to practice their performances for different associations in the council or for other interested groups in Riverside.⁵⁵²

Membership in any Riverside PTA was open to people of all races, creeds, beliefs, and circumstances. Membership was based on payment of dues and a commitment to the education development and wellbeing of children in the community.

⁵⁴⁸ Beth Teters, "Reporter Looks at Negro Role in Community Life," *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, February 12, 1954.

⁵⁴⁹ "Riverside PTA Council," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 22, 1953.

⁵⁵⁰ Margaret Steen, "Women Take Active Park in City Life," *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, June 19, 1955.

⁵⁵¹ "Riverside PTA Council."

⁵⁵² "Riverside PTA Council."

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN (AAUW)

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Riverside branch was organized in 1943 for women with college degrees.⁵⁵³ The goal of the association was to support women college graduates by uniting and opening doors in education that were previously inaccessible and to engage in community service work.

The group held local talks on the topics of women's civic, economic, and social contributions. In 1946, the branch held a discussion on the theme of "Women of Many Nations and Their Contribution to World Peace." Topics of discussion included "Women's accomplishments in science"; "Women's activity in politics as economists"; and "Women in the business world, in cultural fields, and as missionaries, who have contributed to internal understanding."⁵⁵⁴ In 1952, as a part of its international program, the branch participated in the annual Institute of World Affairs (IWA) and sponsored a dinner meeting in connection with its sessions at the Mission Inn. Events were regularly held at members' private residences, as well as in public spaces such as the Mission Inn.⁵⁵⁵

By 1953, the Riverside AAUW numbered 247 members, each one of whom participated in one or more of the branch's 11 study groups, used to develop "practical education work" as designed by the 1882 founders of the AAUW. The Riverside study groups included a group for recent graduates, and others for community service, internal relations, current affairs, literature, mental hygiene, creative writing, and bridge.⁵⁵⁶

The two community driven groups were the mental hygiene group and the community service group. The mental hygiene group worked with the Riverside County Mental Hygiene Society to bring the State Mental Hygiene Clinic to Riverside. The group conducted quarterly collections of books, magazines, and other articles, to use in therapy for patients at the Patton State Hospital. Additionally, recent graduates met regularly with teenage girls at Juvenile Hall to provide support services.⁵⁵⁷

The community service group sponsored parties for servicemen at the nearby military installations. Through the branch's community contacts chairman, branch members helped at USO parties and served refreshments once a month at the Braille Auxiliary programs.⁵⁵⁸ Scholarships and fellowships were principal projects of the branch, which gave three or four local scholarships of \$100 each year to girls going to college. Additionally, the branch contributed annually to the state AAUW fellowship fund through which women from other countries were afforded travel to the United States to conduct specialized research or study in different fields. The branch established the Riverside, California

⁵⁵³ Steen, "Women Take Active Part in City Life."

⁵⁵⁴ "Women and World Peace Theme of Study Group," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 19, 1946.

⁵⁵⁵ "Local women To Play Active Role in World Institute Events," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 9, 1952; "AAUW Dinner: Women's Groups Active In World Institute Plans," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 8, 1953.

⁵⁵⁶ "Riverside Branch, AAUW," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 22, 1953.

⁵⁵⁷ "Riverside Branch, AAUW."

⁵⁵⁸ "Riverside Branch, AAUW."

Scholarship Fund to support college women in different ways – from international study grants; to college enrollment fees; to purchasing necessary supplies, like glasses.⁵⁵⁹ Additionally, the branch also followed the California Legislation closely to by the education chairman whose committee met with members of the Riverside Board of Education to discuss pros and cons of various proposed measures focusing on education and women's rights.⁵⁶⁰

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE

The University of California, Riverside was founded in 1954 from the foundation of the UC Citrus Experiment Station, established in 1907. As World War II came to a close, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the G.I. Bill into law in 1944, eventually funding education and training programs for 7.8 million veterans. Supported by local Riverside boosters, including the chamber of commerce, local educators, and community and political groups, the group lobbied California legislators and the UC Regents to establish a UC campus in Riverside. The lobby was successful, and in 1948, Governor Earl Warren signed off on a \$2 million plan to help shape a new campus in Riverside.⁵⁶¹



DEAN OF WOMEN
Loda Mae Davis

Losa Mae Davis, 1954. *The Highlander*, UCR.

On February 15, 1954, 65 professors and 127 students formally launched the newest University of California campus, led by provost Gordon Watkins. The campus opened with the College of Letters and Science as four divisions: humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, and life sciences, in addition to a university library and a department of physical education. The academic program placed primary emphasis on excellent undergraduate teaching with special incentives for student achievement.⁵⁶²

The Citrus Experiment Station, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1957, had increased its staff from the original two to 265, composed of 115 academic personnel assisted by 150 research technicians; the experiment station had a complex of laboratory and office buildings, greenhouses, and many acres of experimental plantings. Its activities covered nearly every crop grown in Southern California and had extended to any other plant of scientific interest in numerous foreign areas.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁹ "Riverside Branch, AAUW."

⁵⁶⁰ "Riverside Branch, AAUW."

⁵⁶¹ UCR 2020 Strategic Planning Working Paper, "The History of UCR," 4-5, <https://strategicplan.ucr.edu/>, accessed October 2025.

⁵⁶² "The History of UCR," 6.

⁵⁶³ "The History of UCR," 7.

In 1953, UC Regents appointed Loda Mae Davis as the first dean of women, associate dean of students, and assistant professor of social science. Davis graduated from UC Berkeley in 1923 with honors in commerce and started her career in merchandising as an assistant to the president and merchandise manager of the Emporium, the largest San Francisco department store at the time. After she returned to Berkeley to receive her Master of Science in business in 1932, Davis served as an advisor to students at UC Berkeley and later taught at San Mateo Junior College, developing courses in consumer education.⁵⁶⁴ An economic analyst, consumer rights advocate, and world traveler, Davis worked for the Works Project Administration in 1936 and other Federal entities during the Roosevelt administration. In 1940, she became a consultant in the Consumer Division of the National Council of Defense, a job which led to her becoming the head of the first field staff of the Office of Price Administration. Following World War II, she worked for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) supply program in Austria.⁵⁶⁵

UCR Female Student Body

Between 1954 and 1960, women students on the UCR campus began organizing and partaking in student government, sports, and social clubs, supported by Dean Davis and the Dean of Student office. In 1954, the Associated Women Students (AWS) of UCR organized on campus. AWS led welfare projects on campus, established women's honorary organization such as Mortar Board, and dealt with matters concerning women's issues.⁵⁶⁶ Additionally, the organization planned social and fundraising activities on campus, including fashion shows, cookie sales, and social picnics.⁵⁶⁷ In 1956, the student government saw an active participation from women students and in 1957, UCR Senior student Carla Hunter was voted the first female senior class president.⁵⁶⁸

By 1959, annual AWS projects included a mother-daughter tea, and social events, like hayrides and dances. The annual AWS Women's Day honored coeds with banquets, fashion shows, and a presentation of awards to outstanding women on campus. AWS expanded their sponsor system, most importantly, to sophomore, junior, and senior girls, which were chosen as advisers to freshmen coeds. Sponsors helped students get acquainted with social and academic aspects of the campus life during the first year. The AWS board of 11 elected representatives led general AWS policy with the advice of Dean Davis.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁴ "Learning to Live in Group Important, Says New Dean," *The Riverside Daily Press*, November 5, 1953.

⁵⁶⁵ UCR Library "Loda Mae Davis, UCR's pioneering woman," February 28, 2020,

<https://library.ucr.edu/news/2020/02/28/loda-mae-davis-ucr-s-pioneering-woman>, accessed October 2025.

⁵⁶⁶ "AWS Organizes on Campus; Elects Brumgardt Pres.," *The Highlander*, April 9, 1954.

⁵⁶⁷ "AWS Representatives UCR Coed Gp.," *The Highlander*, November 5, 1954.

⁵⁶⁸ Geroge Beattie, "Editorial: To Be or Not to Be...," *The Highlander*, March 13, 1956; "Hunter Is First Women President," *The Highlander*, October 29, 1957.

⁵⁶⁹ "Women's Work Is Never Done," *Riverside Daily Press*, October 13, 1959

In 1958, the Women's Recreational Commission (WRC), a coalition of women students under the commission of the AWS, successfully lobbied for the establishment of women's sports organizations on campus. As an introduction to women's sports, basketball, badminton, and swimming were offered and funded by the physical education department.⁵⁷⁰ Other opportunities for women include mixed men and women's tournaments offered by the Intramural program.⁵⁷¹

One of the biggest obstacles for the first women's class was accessibility to housing. From the time of UCR's inauguration until 1959, the campus did not have student dormitories. Unlike male students who could more easily acquire a room to rent, job, and access transportation, single women faced housing restrictions due to discrimination, financial hardships, and lack of personal transportation.

The first approved women's housing by the UCR provost was the Canyon Crest Town apartments in 1956.⁵⁷² However, unlike the men's housing in Cayon Crest, women's housing followed strict housing regulations and hours for single students, including chaperones for parties and for entering the men's housing, as required by UCR.⁵⁷³ Consequences for breaking any of the rules resulted in "campusing," or "restriction to the students' house for the time specified."⁵⁷⁴ The University received some harsh criticism for the antiquated policy through the student paper, *The Highlander*, calling for women's right to self-govern and adapt their own housing policy.

Women students were proving to be self-reliant and no longer tied down to gender norms. By 1957, half of coeds at UCR worked part-time to help finance their higher education. Most of the women that worked more than 28 hours a week held office positions, such as receptionists, clerks, typists, and stenographers. While others found flexible job opportunities working as models, lifeguards, recreational leaders, waitresses, camp counselors, usherettes, tutors, readers, laboratory helpers, and window display assistants.⁵⁷⁵

By 1959, student enrollment totaled 1,266, up 26% compared to the fall of 1958. Proportionally the demographics were more freshmen, more women, and more humanities majors, making up 24% of the student body; physical sciences remained the largest major, however, with 31% of the student body. The freshman class jumped 51% from 300 to 452, making up 37% of the student body. An increased number of women students was noted with an enrollment rate of 42% in the fall of 1959, up from 33% a year

⁵⁷⁰ Pat Allen, "The Better Half," *The Highlander*, February 25, 1958.

⁵⁷¹ "Women's Sports to Organize," *The Highlander*, October 29, 1957.

⁵⁷² Canyon Crest Town housing was constructed as war housing during World War II for military personally with families. Approximately 275 dwellings were constructed on the eastside, near Canyon Crest Drive and Blaine Street. A few pockets of WWII housing remain, although most of the area has been redeveloped with residential housing.

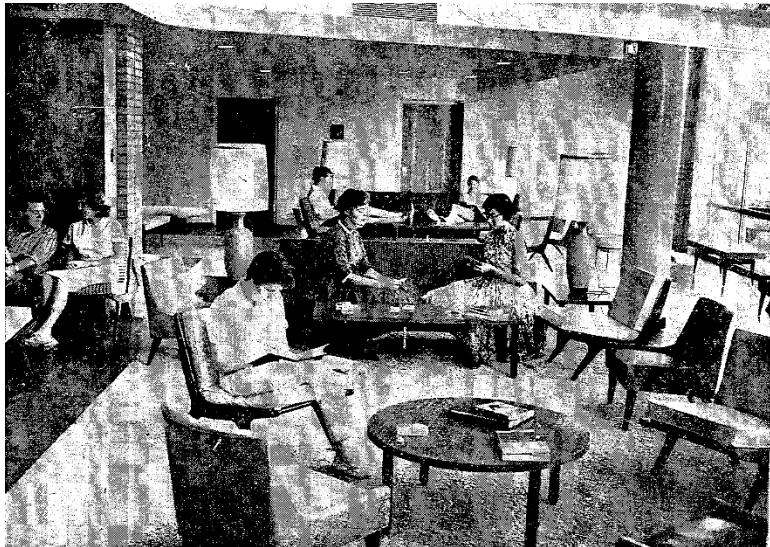
⁵⁷³ "Coed Housing Rules Released," *The Highland*, December 4, 1956.

⁵⁷⁴ "Coed Housing Rules Released," *The Highland*, December 4, 1956.

⁵⁷⁵ "The Goal Is Education," *The Riverside Independent Enterprise*, May 26, 1957.

prior. The 1959 freshman class, itself, was composed of 53% women, an inclination of the structure of the future student body.⁵⁷⁶

To support the rise of the student body, the first dormitories opened on campus in the fall of 1959 for approximately 313 women students and 342 male students.⁵⁷⁷ More than half the women in the halls were freshman women, who were required to live in the new residence halls their first year. With the support of Dean Davis, the new women's dormitories no longer implemented housing restrictions for upperclassmen (or men) and were governed by a Residence Hall Association, an elected governing body of women students, making UCR the first UC to grant women the same dorm privileges as men.⁵⁷⁸



UCR Coeds in the new women's dormitory, 1959. *Riverside Independent Enterprise*.

Service and social clubs flourished with the opening of the dormitories. The Riverside chapter of the Prytanean, a statewide honor and service organization within the UC system was dedicated to junior and senior women selected for their past service to the school. Programs include speaker series on campus from a broad range of academic topics.⁵⁷⁹

The Glengarries and Balmorals originated on UCR campus, with approximately 35-40 girls each. Both clubs met university needs for service, including ushering at plays and concerts; service at banquets and selling tickets at games; and fundraising for Uni Camp and summer camp for underprivileged children. The Glens extended their service to

⁵⁷⁶ "Residence Hall Start Mild Transition," *The Riverside Daily Press*, October 13, 1959.

⁵⁷⁷ Marylin Jacobsen, "It's New; Esprit de Dorms," *The Riverside Independent Enterprise*, September 27, 1959.

⁵⁷⁸ "Freshman Girls Must Live In Residence Halls – Davis," *The Highlander*, April 29, 1959; UCR Library, "Loda Mae Davis, UCR's pioneering woman," published February 28, 2020, <https://library.ucr.edu/news/2020/02/28/loda-mae-davis-ucrs-pioneering-woman>.

⁵⁷⁹ "Women's Work Is Never Done," *Riverside Daily Press*, October 13, 1959.

include a toy drive for Riverside Community Settlement house, and hosted parties for children there.⁵⁸⁰

The Canyon Crest Housing project was retained with the opening of the new dormitories but was adapted to house married student couples. By 1949, married students accounted for one in every ten across the US, compared to the early 1930s, where they accounted for one in every 122 students. This rise in married students was due in part to the GI Bill, which offered educational grants and benefits to returning servicemen up to \$160 a month. Young couples were no longer following the linear tradition of adulthood – i.e. finishing college, followed by a job, then marriage, then family growth. In 1959, most young couples were getting married, attending college, working, and growing their family simultaneously.⁵⁸¹

At UCR, married students accounted for 14% of the student body in 1959; slightly lower than the 21% of the 1,006 total enrollment in 1958 – 14% men and 7% women.⁵⁸² The most common demographic of married students was (1) married student couple, or (2) the wife of the student. As a married student couple, the co-ed combined her studies with marriage, sometime family, and often a part-time job. As the wife of a student, young woman combined marriage, a full-time job, and family, to be the breadwinner of the household, supporting her husband through undergraduate or graduate school.⁵⁸³ Most women were employed as teachers, secretaries, nurses, caretakers, door-to-door sales[women], librarians, counselors, or held part-time jobs at the university.⁵⁸⁴

Politics and Civic Representation

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT AND THE POSTWAR PERIOD

World War II provided the right combination of patriotic zeal for democratic ideals and a broad appreciation for women's wartime contribution which led to a surge of support for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) from both the Democratic and Republican parties. By the end of the war, however, the postwar readjustment anxiety and society's return to traditional gendered roles began to drive the national outlook back to a division between the rights of men and women.⁵⁸⁵

According to historian Rebecca DeWolf, in 1944, ERA opponents organized the National Committee to Defeat the Un-Equal Rights Amendment (NCDURA), a coalition of predominantly prominent liberal ERA opposition. After World War II, the NCDURA

⁵⁸⁰ "Women's Work Is Never Done," *Riverside Daily Press*, October 13, 1959.

⁵⁸¹ "The College Wife...New Personality on UCR Campus," *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, March 13, 1959.

⁵⁸² "Fewer Married Students; Is UCR's Trend Changing?," *Riverside Daily Press*, October 13, 1959.

⁵⁸³ "The College Wife...New Personality on UCR Campus."

⁵⁸⁴ Marylin Jacobsen, "It's a Great Life...If You Can Take It," *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, March 13, 1959.

⁵⁸⁵ DeWolf, *Gendered Citizenship*, 175,178.

worked with conservatives to increase opposition of the ERA as it made progress in the Senate.

In preparation for the 1946 Senate floor debate on the ERA, the NCDURA worked with Senator Robert Taft (R-Ohio), to distribute a copy of the “Freund Statement” to every senator. The Freund Statement was an extensive essay by eminent legal scholar and longtime ERA opponent, Paul Freund, that outlined various arguments against the amendment. Before the debate, the NCDURA and its allies in the Senate also introduced into the *Congressional Record* a syndicated article denouncing the ERA written by former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.⁵⁸⁶

The political counterattack was successful, and in July 1946, the ERA failed to obtain the two-thirds senate majority vote required for passage of a constitutional amendment. Between 1946 and 1947, NCDURA’s leaders continued to build relationships with prominent ERA opponents, while developing a joint resolution that aimed to eliminate harmful discrimination against women while reaffirming equitable sex-based legislature affirmed by ERA opponents.⁵⁸⁷

The Women’s Status Bill included two main objectives: 1) to declare a general national policy regarding sex discrimination, and 2) to establish a presidential commission on the status of women. For the policy statement, the bill called for the elimination of distinctions on the basis of sex except for those that were “reasonably based on differences in physical structure, biological, or social function,” such as maternity leave for women only and combat service for men exclusively. The purpose of the bill’s proposed presidential commission was to investigate sex-specific laws and make recommendations at the appropriate federal, state, and local levels. To bolster support for the bill, the NCDURA changed its name to the National Committee on the Status of Women (NCSW) in the spring of 1947.⁵⁸⁸ Notably, this was the first time that opponents of the ERA enlisted the power of the federal government to help establish a degree of equality for men and women, while still supporting what they considered sensible sex-based laws and customs.⁵⁸⁹ Prior to the Women’s Status Bill, ERA opponents argued that legislative action on specific women issues should come from the state legislature, deeming it “specific bills for specific ills.”⁵⁹⁰

By 1948, nine (9) states prohibited sex discrimination in regard to pay and the federal government requires equal pay only for its administration. Twenty-four (24) states had general minimum wage laws for women, while forty-three (43) states had general maximum labor hour laws for women. Four (4) states provide protection on the same

⁵⁸⁶ Rebecca De Wolf, “The 1940s Fight Against the Equal Rights Amendment Was Bipartisan and Crossed Ideological Lines,” History News Network, published May 2, 2021, <https://www.hnn.us/article/the-1940s-fight-against-the-equal-rights-amendment>.

⁵⁸⁷ De Wolf, “The 1940s Fight Against the Equal Rights Amendment Was Bipartisan and Crossed Ideological Lines.”

⁵⁸⁸ De Wolf, “The 1940s Fight Against the Equal Rights Amendment Was Bipartisan and Crossed Ideological Lines.”

⁵⁸⁹ DeWolf, *Gendered Citizenship*, 195.

⁵⁹⁰ “Not all Clear Sailing for Equal Rights Amendment,” *Riverside Daily Press*, April 9, 1946.

basis for men and women. Virtually every state had special health laws for the protection of women workers.⁵⁹¹ Both democrats and republicans supported equal rights and equal pay for women across the country, however, the support was based on equitable sex-based legislation not the principal belief of equal rights for both men and women.

Back at the federal level, the NCSW introduced a version of the Women's Status Bill into Congress every year until 1954. While the measure failed to pass Congress, it did provide the blueprint for what would become President John Kennedy's Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, which was created in 1961.⁵⁹²

The ERA was reintroduced to the Senate in January 1950. A modification to the essential wording of the ERA by Senator Carl Hayden (D-AZ), however, resulted in a rider to the ERA, specifically referencing the female sex — which opponents feared could nullify the gender equality of the language in the original Amendment. The Senate passed the ERA with the Hayden rider with a vote of 51-31, but it was stalled in legislative limbo in the House and Senate chambers by staunch ERA supporters, ultimately lacking the congressional support necessary for potential ratification by the states.⁵⁹³ With the apparent defeat of the ERA in congress, both political parties became less interested in the issue, and they eventually removed support for the ERA from their party platforms in the early 1960s.⁵⁹⁴

WOMEN'S POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT



1952 Republican National Convention. National Archives.

Although postwar support for the ERA was considerably diminished by the NCDURA and their allies in Congress, women across the U.S. were demonstrating their involvement and influence in local, state, and national politics.

Women's electoral impact was first significantly felt in the 1952 presidential election, when in an unprecedented turnout, nearly 17.6 million women voted for Dwight D. Eisenhower out of the nearly 34 million votes cast in his favor.⁵⁹⁵ Never had a political campaign gone so far to

⁵⁹¹ "Economic Discrimination Against Women Continues to Lessen," *Riverside Daily Press*, August 13, 1948.

⁵⁹² De Wolf, "The 1940s Fight Against the Equal Rights Amendment Was Bipartisan and Crossed Ideological Lines."

⁵⁹³ Sian Winship, "Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Women's Rights in Los Angeles," (City of Los Angeles Department of Planning, 2018), 55.

⁵⁹⁴ DeWolf, *Gendered Citizenship*, 201.

⁵⁹⁵ "Women Unite for Ike!," U.S National Archives for Google Arts and Culture, accessed October 2025, <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/women-unite-for-ike-u-s-national-archives/SQUXMprbfV4KQ?hl=en>

court the women's vote as did the Eisenhower campaign. For the first time, political propaganda was specifically catered to women, including posters, television advertisements, magazine articles, and even fashion. The Ike Girl's, as they came to be known, joined the Eisenhower Nixon Bandwagon to propel "Ike" to landslide victories in 1952 and again in 1956, with 52.5% of the total vote.⁵⁹⁶

Women were drawn to Eisenhower's candidacy for several reasons. Ike stressed the issues that were important to women at the time, including education, social welfare, public health, labor, and the ending of the Korean War (1953). Eisenhower's campaign also recognized the growing role of women in state, local, and national affairs, especially after the adoption of women's suffrage, and made extensive use of women campaign workers, including Bertha Adkins, political activist and community leader. Adkins was appointed Executive Director of the Women's Division of the Republican National Convention in 1952. She encouraged women to become active in politics and arranged for women to meet Eisenhower during "Breakfast with the President" events. In 1958 Eisenhower appointed Adkins Under Secretary of Health Education and Welfare.⁵⁹⁷

Although a supporter of women's rights, Eisenhower's public opinion on the ERA was cautionary due to the conservative values of the republican party. While much of Eisenhower's legislation was in line with the progressive values of the ERA, he faced pressure to appease a conservative base and to tackle the complexity of the cold war, including the charges of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy about Communist infiltration of government agencies, and budgeting the federal economy, following the depression years.⁵⁹⁸

Despite his ambivalent views on women's rights, President Eisenhower's appointment of women to high-level positions in his Administration helped lead the way for the subsequent supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment and the Women's Liberation Movement of subsequent decades.⁵⁹⁹



Dwight D. Eisenhower witnesses Frank K. Sanderson swearing in Mrs. Katherine G. Howard, as Deputy Administrator of the Federal Civil Defense Administration, 1953. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

⁵⁹⁶ Betty Pryor, "Eligible Women Outnumber Men," *Riverside Daily Press*, November 7, 1960.

⁵⁹⁷ "Women Unite for Ike!"

⁵⁹⁸ Chester J. Pach, Jr., "Dwight D. Eisenhower: Domestic Affairs," University of Virginia Miller Center, accessed November 2025, <https://millercenter.org/president/eisenhower/domestic-affairs>

⁵⁹⁹ Barbara Constable, "A Guide to Historical Holdings in the Eisenhower Library: Women's Studies," Eisenhower Library, accessed November 2025, <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/subject-guides/pdf/womens-studies.pdf>

His appointments of women were to positions in his Cabinet, as U.S. Ambassadors, and as representatives to the United Nations – some 42 women in all.⁶⁰⁰

In 1959, a bipartisan survey conducted by the Women's Division of the Republican National Committee showed 20,000 women in county governments, and 10,000 women, including four mayors, in municipal offices. There were 753 women in high appointive jobs in state and territorial governments, 41 women in elected state offices, 17 women in the United States Congress, and 347 women representatives in state legislature, compared with 214 a decade prior.⁶⁰¹ Furthermore, six women served as ambassadors since 1949 and in 1959, one-fourth of all US foreign service personnel were women. In the judicial field, approximately 135 women were serving in 1955. Elsewhere in the federal government, there was about a 20% rise in the number of women with professional classifications than a decade prior. Some of the highest-ranking women in office in 1959 were Bertha Adkins, undersecretary of Health, Education, and Welfare; Ivy Barker Priest, treasurer; Daphne Leeds, assistant patent commissioner; Dorothy McColough Lee, chairman of the Subversive Activities Control Board; and Anne Wheaton, first woman associate press secretary at the White House.⁶⁰²

LOCAL POLITICS AND WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Riverside women followed national postwar trends by establishing their position in city government and founding political organizations. In 1950, the Riverside Democratic Women's Forum was established to support the election of democratic candidates at the local and state level. Thelma Zulch, Riverside attorney, was elected as the first president of the forum with Dorothy Jacobson as the vice-president and program chairman. In the spring 1950, the forum hosted state



Organization for Women in Government, 1953. *Riverside Daily Press*.

⁶⁰⁰ "Women in the 1950s," Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum, and Boyhood Home, accessed October 2025, [https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/women-1950s#:~:text=The%20image%20of%20American%20women,Civil%20Defense%20Administrator\)%20and%20others](https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/women-1950s#:~:text=The%20image%20of%20American%20women,Civil%20Defense%20Administrator)%20and%20others)

⁶⁰¹ Patricia Wiggins, "Notable Gains Whet Tastes of Women on Political Front," *Riverside Daily Press*, December 27, 1959.

⁶⁰² Wiggins, "Notable Gains Whet Tastes of Women on Political Front."

Democratic political candidates to a reception and tea at the Riverside YWCA. The reception was open to members of all Democratic women's organizations in Riverside County.⁶⁰³ In 1950, the forum hosted Congresswomen Helen Gahagan Douglas to campaign for her U.S. Senate position.⁶⁰⁴ In the fall of 1950, new officers for the forum were selected, included Mrs. Mary Gleeson as president, and Mary O'Keeffe, as Vice President.⁶⁰⁵

In 1952, a coalition of volunteer staff for the Democratic headquarters organized the Riverside Women's Democratic Club, under the auspices of the Riverside County Democratic Central Committee.⁶⁰⁶ Republican women established the Riverside Republican Women Federation in 1952 with 53 charter members. Led by Mrs. Charles Gibson, president, membership was open to any interested Riverside women voter with \$1 membership dues. Inaugural guest speakers at the founding meeting in the Magnolia dining room of the Mission Inn were Glenn Gurtner, member of the Republican Central Committee, and Moulton Phillips, Republican candidate for Assembly.⁶⁰⁷



Nancy O'Neill, 1953. *Riverside Daily Press*.

A year later, the newly founded Organization for Women in Government endorsed Thelma H. Goodspeed and Nancy O'Neill, the only women candidates for the City Council. The organization was a non-partisan group, meant to "encourage participation of women in the political structure of the community."⁶⁰⁸ Open to any interested women, without dues, the organization was led by Mary O'Keefe as president. Approved committees included ways and means; public relations; news service; membership; information; radio; telephone; and parliamentarian.⁶⁰⁹ In March 1953, a second public campaign was held at Casa Blanca School for Goodspeed and O'Neill, with entertainment from the surrounding community, followed by another public meeting at the Liberty School.⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰³ "Demo Women To Hear Candidates," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 27, 1950.

⁶⁰⁴ "Demos Ready for Douglas Visit," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 24, 1950

⁶⁰⁵ "City Demo Forum Elects Officers," *Riverside Daily Press*, September 16, 1950.

⁶⁰⁶ "Democratic Women Here To Form Permanent Organization," *Riverside Daily Press*, November 11, 1952.

⁶⁰⁷ "53 Charter Members Launch Republican Women's Unit," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 24, 1952.

⁶⁰⁸ "Women's Group Endorses O'Neil and Goodspeed," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 17, 1953.

⁶⁰⁹ "Women's Group Endorses O'Neil and Goodspeed," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 17, 1953.

⁶¹⁰ "Women's Political Society to Meet In Casa Blanca," *Riverside Daily Press*, March 23, 1953.

The Riverside Women's Club also came to the support of both women city council candidates by hosting a fashion show in April 1953. Under the theme of "California Living," the show featured the candidates among the models showcasing casual clothes for all ages, including men's fashion.⁶¹¹

Both O'Neill and Goodspeed were elected to seven-member council under the chairmanship of Mayor E.V. Dales. O'Neill was elected to the City Council by Second Ward voters in the fall of 1952. She won a nomination on the final ballot through a successful write-in campaign in the 1952 primary election and beat out the incumbent, Harry Fowler, to secure a council seat. During her inaugural term in office, O'Neill supported the relocation of the City Dog Pound and the Humane Society animal shelter, while also working on the city's juke box license ordinance. O'Neill was born in 1918 and moved to Riverside in 1946 where she took an active role in community projects, including the Riverside PTA, participation in the Community Chest, United Fund, and Red Cross drives. She was past president and director of the Children's League and a Girl Scout official.⁶¹²

Goodspeed was a business executive, newspaperwoman, and member of the Board of Freeholders, which in 1953 drafted the City Charter providing an outline for a City Manager form of government.⁶¹³ Goodspeed was born in 1902 and moved to Riverside County in 1928. She developed a career in the newspaper industry as editor of the Indio News, associate editor of the Palm Springs Limelight, and manager of the Palm Springs Printing Company. During her campaign for Riverside city council, she was a writer for the Indio Date Palm and Hemet News and served as secretary-treasurer of the Riverside printing and lithography plant, while her husband was the co-owner of citrus groves in Arlington Heights. During her time on the Board of Freeholders, Goodspeed was an active participant in several committees, including chairman of the study committee, secretary of the public elections committee, and a member of the board's public relations and speakers' bureau group. Goodspeed was active in many civic groups, including the Riverside Women's Club, Girl Scout Council, Community Settlement Association, Soroptimist Club, Order of the Eastern Star, and Community Planning Forum.⁶¹⁴

Political-minded bipartisan groups were founded in Riverside in the postwar period, including the Pro American Riverside chapter, which was



Thelma A. Goodspeed

Thelma A. Goodspeed, 1953.
Riverside Daily Press.

⁶¹¹ "Election Candidates to Appear At Fashion Show Friday Night," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 8, 1953.

⁶¹² "Mayor, City Council Candidates Viewing in Tomorrow's Election," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 13, 1953.

⁶¹³ "Women's Group Endorses O'Neil and Goodspeed," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 17, 1953.

⁶¹⁴ "Mayor, City Council Candidates Viewing in Tomorrow's Election," *Riverside Daily Press*, April 13, 1953.

established in 1945 as part of a national, bipartisan organization meant to support educational and civic programs. The nation organization was founded in 1933 in Seattle by Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt Sr. Pro America consisted of state and local units. Among its members and board were Republican, Democrats, and Independents. The organization deemed all issues and candidates against the U.S. Constitution before lending support. The Riverside Pro America unit was established with the support of 33 founding members. By 1953, the organization had grown to 165 active members, including residents of Corona, Perris, and Banning. The organization held monthly meetings at the Victoria Club to discuss national, state, and local politics. Informal meetings with legislature were held between sessions to discuss and learn about pending bills. In addition to supporting a political agenda, Pro American supported educational endeavors, like providing college scholarships to local college women.⁶¹⁵

Statewide political conventions continued to assemble in Riverside during the postwar period. In 1956, the Southern California division of the California Federation of Republican Women hosted the third annual School of Politics at the Mission Inn. The extensive-one day event gathered 400 delegates from clubs in eight counties for courses in precinct work, club organization, programming, and other phases of campaigning and "Americanism."⁶¹⁶

In 1957, Riverside County voters approved the formation of a temporary freeholders committee to draft the 1958 county charter. Mary O'Keeffe put out a call to action in the *Riverside Independent Enterprise* to all eligible and well-known women to apply for an opportunity to serve on the board of freeholders. O'Keeffe was pushing for at "least one women freeholder from each supervisorial district" for her own personal desire to "live in a community that has the best form of government."⁶¹⁷ As part of the search, O'Keeffe reached out to several organizations with prominent women leaders, including the Riverside League of Women Voters, Soroptimists, Zontas, Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and the Riverside Woman's Club. Ultimately, two women out of 28 candidates were voted as members to the board of freeholders, Helen Hester of Coachella and Myra R. Linn of La Sierra.⁶¹⁸

The Riverside County Charter was finalized in March 1958 and was fully endorsed by the League of Women Voters (LWV, discussed below). During the review process, the League conducted an intensive study on each specific aspect of the charter and attended all the meetings of the Board of Freeholders as they drafted the charter. After their review, Mrs. Edward Rudin, League President stated, "League opinion is that greater government

⁶¹⁵ "Pro America," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 22, 1953.

⁶¹⁶ "GOP Women's Federation to Convene Here," *Riverside Daily Press*, February 24, 1956.

⁶¹⁷ "Mary O'Keeffe Seeks Women as Freeholders," *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, April 30, 1957.

⁶¹⁸ "Mary O'Keeffe Seeks Women as Freeholders," *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, April 30, 1957; Clarence Carpenter, "Freeholder Board Elected," *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, June 12, 1957.

efficiency can be effected under a charter form of government designed to incorporate an administrative reorganization of the County's government structure.”⁶¹⁹

The Charter Observer Committee, headed by Mrs. Charles Ford, set forth eight specific areas of interest for consideration by the board of Freeholders, all which were actively addressed in the draft. The eight points included establishment of an administrative county head; re-districting, when needed; improved procedures for coordination of county departments; decrease in election officials; establishment of a merit system; and provisions for adding new county services, when needed.⁶²⁰

The charter, however, was rejected by voters, by nearly a 2 to 1 count. Anti-charter organizers, led by Judge Vernon H. Hillard and County Supervisor William Jobes, argued that the charter would make county government more costly and would deprive the voters in of many controls, ultimately swaying voters to reject the draft.⁶²¹

RIVERSIDE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The League of Women Voters was organized in 1953 by president Mrs. Richard G. Brill with 50 members. As part of the National League of Women Voters, the group's purpose was to promote informed and active participation of all citizens in government.⁶²² As a non-partisan organization, the league did not support political parties or candidates but sought to educate citizens on the impact of national, state, and local legislature.

Within its first year of service, the league conducted a “Know Your Town” survey to compile statistics and information on Riverside's local government, including education and recreation in the city, fire and police protection, and public health and transportation. The resulting 30-page booklet was available to all residents upon request. The league undertook its first “voter service” project at the special election in January 1954, with a get-out-the-vote drive. Approximately 1,500 phone calls were made to remind people to vote.⁶²³

In 1955, the league undertook its first local study on the topic of “How Safe is Riverside?” Members gathered facts and figures and discussed their research at “unit” meetings – groups of 15 to 20 women – to allow each member an opportunity to discuss. The study resulted in league support for hiring a city traffic engineer and improvement in fire and police protection.⁶²⁴

⁶¹⁹ “Women Voters Support County Charter,” *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, March 20, 1958.

⁶²⁰ “Women Voters Support County Charter,” *Riverside Independent Enterprise*, March 20, 1958.

⁶²¹ “Hilliard, Jones Lead Charter Vote,” *Riverside Daily Enterprise*, June 5, 1958.

⁶²² The League of Women Voters of Riverside, *Its First Ten Years*, 1963, 1.

⁶²³ *Its First Ten Years*, 3.

⁶²⁴ *Its First Ten Years*, 5.



Riverside League of Women Voters registering people to vote, c. 1950s. Source: *Its First Ten Years*.

copies of "Facts for Riverside Voters" were published; 4,000 "Capsule Pros and Cons" on the ballot measures were given away; and 900 people attended eight "Pro and Con" sessions on ballot measures.⁶²⁶

In 1957, the LWV was set to study the proposed City Charter drafted by a citizen elected board of Freeholders. The league sent observers to the weekly meeting of the Board, and published a booklet, "The Big Question on County Charter," to disseminate the information to the public. The league reached a consensus during the "Charter Consensus Week" to unanimously support the proposed charter. Coffees, rallies, sandwich boards, and a door-to-door campaign were among the league's contributions to the campaign

The league "observer program" was inaugurated in the fall of 1954, where league members regularly attended meetings of the City Council, Board of Supervisors, and other boards of local government. That fall, the league initiated their voter registration campaigns, supported by local residents. League booth, "votemobiles" and tables at stores and the newspaper office later became a familiar pre-election activity of the league.⁶²⁵ That year the league also initiated their first candidate meeting. The meeting brought an overflow to the Palm School and full coverage from The Press. The league set a precedent for these meetings moving forward – providing equal treatment for all candidates and emphasis on providing information on the issues at hand.

For its first national presidential election in 1956, the LWV's 12 registrars worked to turn in 1,773 voter registrations; 2,000 "Voter's Guides" were distributed; 13,000

⁶²⁵ *Its First Ten Years*, 6.

⁶²⁶ *Its First Ten Years*, 10.

made by the county-wide Citizens Committee for the Charter. The effort was ultimately unsuccessful, and the proposed charter was rejected by voters at the June 3rd election.⁶²⁷

In 1958, the LWV carried out another local study with the support of city manager, Ken Hunter. The study was emphasized on “services of city government.” League members examined how functions such as recreation and other services fit into the structure of city government, looking at the needs and methods of financing. The study resulted in support of the development of the city’s recreation and park program, including the Santa Ana River area, and “directed and coordinated city planning for lesser public works,” such as streetlights, sidewalks, and curbs.⁶²⁸ Through 1960, the league continued with its support of long-range planning and adequate financing for capital improvements in Riverside.

AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICAL AND CIVIC GROUPS

The only organized women’s political group in the black community was an affiliate of the National Republican Women, called the Women’s Political Study Club – one of 32 units in California.⁶²⁹

The Riverside Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was established in 1942, with their first President being Omar Stratton, renewing efforts that had begun with the Citizens Committee in the 1930s.⁶³⁰ In 1947, Mrs. Blessie Adams was voted President of the Riverside NAACP chapter, with Maxime Williamson as First Vice President, William Lacey, secretary, Lottie Williamson, assistant secretary and Mrs. Frank Tillie, as treasurer.⁶³¹ Adams led the Riverside chapter until c1950, when Reverend L.B. Moss of pastor of the Park Avenue Baptist church was elected president, followed by William Davis in 1953, who was elected president for two terms.⁶³²

Over the following few years, the Riverside NAACP fought to end segregation in downtown commercial establishments, and to increase job opportunities. Movies and restaurants were reportedly desegregated in the 1940s, although motels were not. The NAACP and other social groups supported Reverend Moss (Preacher from the Park Avenue Baptist Church) in his 1946 unsuccessful bid for a seat on the City Council, and through the 1950s brought hiring discrimination complaints to the State Fair Employment Practice Commission.⁶³³

⁶²⁷ *Its First Ten Years*,15.

⁶²⁸ *Its First Ten Years*,16.

⁶²⁹ Beth Teters, “Negro Housing Varies from Adequate to Bad,” *Riverside Daily Press*, February 14, 1950.

⁶³⁰ “City of Riverside African American Civil Rights Movement Historic Context Statement (1870-1976),” 42.

⁶³¹ Mrs. Adams Named Head of NAACP Chapter Here,” *The Riverside Independent Enterprise*, November 18, 1947.

⁶³² Beth Teters, “Series Explores Life Among Riverside’s 300 Negroes [sic],” *Riverside Daily Press*, February 13, 1950; “Riverside Unit, NAACP, Elects New Officers,” *Riverside Daily Press*, December 8, 1953.

⁶³³ “City of Riverside African American Civil Rights Movement Historic Context Statement (1870-1976),” 42.

SECOND WAVE FEMINISM AND WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE, 1960-1990

To be added in January 2026.

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Appendix A. Properties Associated with Women's History in Riverside

ADDRESS / LOCATION	NAME	TYPE / YEAR BUILT	LISTING STATUS	SIGNIFICANCE
4366 Bermuda Avenue	Community Settlement House	Private Institution /1947	National Register of Historic Places	Associated with the Community Settlement Association, a female led organization dedicated to philanthropic work in the Mexican American community in Riverside.
4307 Briggs Street	Jensen-Alvarado Ranch	Residence / 1865	California Historical Landmark No. 943; National Register of Historic Places	Built by notable pioneer Mercedes Alvarado Jensen and sea captain Cornelius Jensen who settled in Agua Mansa. Recognizing the need for commerce and trade in the nascent community, the Jensens established the town's first general store and post office. In addition to the demands of running a business, Mercedes also raised a dozen children, eight of whom survived past childhood.
3115 Brockton Avenue	Irvine House (Stel-Lew-Vine)	Residence / 1906	City of Riverside Landmark No. 35	This home was built for Stella Blanchard Irvine and Len Irvine. Stella Irvine was regional president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the thirty-two-room house was designed especially for hosting WCTU functions.

ADDRESS / LOCATION	NAME	TYPE / YEAR BUILT	LISTING STATUS	SIGNIFICANCE
3669 W. Center Street	Trujillo Adobe	Residence / 1862	City of Riverside Landmark No. 130; State Point of Historical Interest No. P75; National Register of Historic Places	The Trujillo Adobe is the only remaining site of the first non-Native settlement in the region, which predates the founding of Riverside. The settlement was the community of La Placita de los Trujillos established circa 1845 by Maria and Lorenzo Trujillo with their family and fellow emigrants from New Mexico.
2365 Eleventh Street	Miné Okubo Childhood Residence	Residence /c. 1900	City of Riverside Landmark No. 149	The property is associated with Japanese resident Miné Okubo, who lived at the residence from 1925 to 1933. The Okubos rented the property until 1931, when Miné's father, purchased it in the name of his eldest, American-born daughter Yoshi Okubo. Miné Okubo was incarcerated during World War II and sent to Topaz, Utah. She used art to document and process the experience; Okubo's powerful graphic novel <i>Citizen 13660</i> was published in 1946.
4026 Fourteenth Street	Riverside Community Playhouse	Theater/ 1953	None	The Riverside Community Playhouse was designed by architect Herman Ruhnau. The club began as an extension of the Riverside Women's Club Drama Department but evolved into a

ADDRESS / LOCATION	NAME	TYPE / YEAR BUILT	LISTING STATUS	SIGNIFICANCE
				significant arts and cultural institution for women in Riverside.
4570 Indian Hill Drive	Frances Fraser and Isabelle (Belle) Rutherford Residence / William Fraser House "Clune"	Residence / 1927	City of Riverside Structure of Merit No. 38	Frances Fraser (niece) and Isabelle (Belle) Rutherford (sister-in-law) of William Fraser both lived at this residence. Frances Fraser was Dean of Women at Riverside Junior College. She led the Associated Women's Students' group and frequently held social gatherings for the female students at her home. YWCA meetings were also held at the residence. Isabelle Rutherford was instrumental in creating the City Home League and settlement house and served as president from 1914 to 1916.
3060 Madison Street	Casa Blanca School	Public Institution / 1923	Owned by Religious Organization	Casa Blanca School was founded by Ysabel Olvera and Margarita Solorio in 1911 and built in 1923. These two female residents of the Riverside neighborhood of Casa Blanca collected 80 signatures and petitioned the Riverside Board of Education to open a school in their community. Casa Blanca was a largely Latino neighborhood where several labor camps and

ADDRESS / LOCATION	NAME	TYPE / YEAR BUILT	LISTING STATUS	SIGNIFICANCE
				settlements were established along the Santa Fe railroad tracks.
4445 Magnolia Avenue	Riverside Community Hospital	Hospital/ 1925	None	The Riverside Community Hospital was designed by architect Myron Hunt and was associated with women's health. The hospital had a new maternity ward and Riverside County Clinic. It was briefly spearheaded by Ms. Nellie M. Porter, hospital superintendent from 1924-1926.
8193 Magnolia Avenue	Catherine Bettner House/ Heritage House	Residence /1891	City of Riverside Landmark No. 5; National Register of Historic Places	Mrs. Catharine Bettner, an active member of the community and widow of an early citrus pioneer, built the Heritage House in 1891. It was designed by Los Angeles-based architect John A. Walls. Bettner resided at the house until 1928.
8432 Magnolia Ave	California Baptist University	Private Institution /C1922	Unknown	The retirement home (now W.E. James Building) and hospital (now Ann Gabriel Library) were originally built by the Neighbors of Woodcraft as a retirement complex for its members. Predominately a women's organization, the Neighbors of Woodcraft retirement home was active between 1922-1955, when

ADDRESS / LOCATION	NAME	TYPE / YEAR BUILT	LISTING STATUS	SIGNIFICANCE
				it complex was acquired by California Baptist University.
9556 Magnolia Avenue	Arlington Branch Library	Public Institution / 1909	City of Riverside Landmark No. 46	Riverside librarian Margaret Kyle was responsible for establishing the Arlington Branch Library in 1909, which allowed a greater number of residents to access and utilize the library collection. Women were instrumental in the establishment and continuation of libraries in Riverside and represented a majority of the work force. The career was one of the few available to women in the late 19 th and early 20 th centuries.
3673-99 Main Street	Loring Building	Business/ 1904	City of Riverside Landmark No. 21	The Loring Building is significant for its association with several notable female physicians, including Dr. Annie McRobie Ross and Dr. Sarah E. French Maloy, and as the site of the Riverside County Clinic. Dr. Maloy specialized in obstetrics and diseases experienced by women and children and practiced out of suite 308-309 of the Loring Building in 1912. Dr. Annie McRobie Ross was an Osteopathic physician who

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				<p>practiced in suite 310-311 from at least 1914 to 1919.</p> <p>The Riverside County Clinic was an extension of the Community Settlement Association (CSA), founded by Mrs. Isabella Ross, nurse and founding member of the CSA. The Riverside County clinic was located in the Loring Building from c. 1919-1925.</p>
4050 Main Street	Superior Court of California, County of Riverside)	Courthouse/ 1904	City of Riverside Landmark No. 2	In 1933, during the Great Depression, a new sewing shop was opened in the courthouse basement. By the end of the month, 175 women were employed there.
4800 Magnolia Ave.	Riverside Community College Auditorium (previously Riverside Junior College)	Public Institution /1924	City of Riverside Landmark No. 48 (Quadrangle)	For nine seasons between 1932-1941, the RCC Auditorium was the home of the Riverside Opera Association, led by prominent opera singer, Marcella Craft.
3425 Mission Inn Avenue	Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Building	Public Institution / 1929	City of Riverside Landmark No. 18	The YWCA, founded in Riverside in 1905, was actively fundraising for their own building by the 1920s. Their campaign to construct their own gendered facilities was primarily geared towards the professional working

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				woman. The new YWCA building was completed in 1929. It was designed in the Mediterranean Revival style by renowned architect, Julia Morgan. It now serves as the Riverside Art Museum.
3525 Mission Inn Avenue	Universalist Unitarian Church	Religious Institution / 1892	City of Riverside Landmark No. 3; National Register of Historic Places	The church Universalist Unitarian Church hosted meetings for several notable early women's organizations in Riverside, including the Extemporaneous Drill Club/ Wednesday Morning Club, the Political Equality Club, and the WCTU.
3649 Mission Inn Avenue	Mission Inn	Hotel/ 1876-1931	City of Riverside Landmark No. 1; CA State Historical Landmark No. 761; listed in the NRHP.	The Mission Inn was associated with the women's club movement as a social/gathering place for community meetings and public events, including the Riverside Women's Club, Zonta Club, Riverside Art Association, and the Riverside Opera Association.
4187 Mission Inn Avenue	Eugene Fuller Residence	Residence /1904	None	Eugenie Fuller, who was a teacher and administrator in Riverside from 1886 to 1912, was a notable early female teacher in Riverside. Fuller served as the principal of the Riverside High

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				<p>School and disapproved of the segregation of male and female students in secondary school. She resided at the house on Mission Inn Avenue.</p>
3050 Orange Street	Hewitt House	Residence / 1885	City of Riverside Landmark No. 93	<p>The property is associated with Martha Hewitt, former president of WCTU, founder of the Riverside Women's Club, president of the Red Cross Society, president of the Women's Auxiliary of the YMCA, and developer of the Hewitt Place subdivision in Riverside.</p>
3456 Ramona Drive	Dr. Louisa Harvey Clarke Residence	Residence / 1928	City of Riverside Landmark No. 116	<p>Dr. Louisa Harvey Clarke was a member of the Riverside County Medical Society (RCMS), serving as the secretary/treasurer in 1901 and the first woman president in 1902. She helped found the Riverside's Professional and Business Women's (Woman's) club in 1903 and was a charter member of Chapter J of the P.E.O. sisterhood. Dr. Clarke represented the Riverside Chamber of Commerce as a delegate to national conventions. Clarke served as the first president of the YWCA.</p>

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4515 Sixth Street	Gamble-Estudillo Holmes Home	Residence / 1911	City of Riverside Landmark No. 34	Minerva Cook Estudillo and her husband Senator Miguel Estudillo were particularly active in promoting women's suffrage. Minerva Estudillo served as president of the Wednesday Morning Club and was a fervent suffragist. They resided at the house from 1918 until 1949.
4092 Tenth Street	Riverside Women's Club (RWC)	Private Institution / 1921	None	The Riverside Women's Club (RWC) was one of the first and oldest women's groups in Riverside. It was formed in 1896 by Mrs. Martha E. Hewitt and Dr. Sarah E. Maloy. Originally organized with 16 charter members, the club featured classes in art, home studies, philanthropy, music and Shakespeare. The RWC joined the General Federation of Women's Clubs in November 1897 and was a charter member of the CFWC in January 1900.
2586 University Avenue	Freda Clarissa Oien DeCastro Residence	Residence / 1901	City of Riverside Structure of Merit No. 155	Freda Clarissa Oien DeCastro created the 1935 WPA-funded "peace" mural on the stage fire curtain at the Riverside Municipal Auditorium and Soldier's Memorial building. DeCastro graduated from Riverside Polytechnic High

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				School in 1928 and from Riverside Junior College in 1930.
3616-38 University Avenue	Golden State Hotel, Roosevelt Building	Business/ 1904	City of Riverside Landmark No. 90	<p>The Golden State Hotel is significant for its association with the several Japanese women's groups and Chiyo Kaneko. Chiyo and her husband Ulysses S. (U.S.) Kaneko immigrated to the United States circa 1881 and settled in Riverside in 1886, where she operated the Golden State Hotel and Café, located in the Roosevelt Building, from 1904 to 1918. The Kanekos resided in a suite at the Golden State Hotel and Café and Mrs. Kaneko regularly hosted notable Japanese women's events there, including meetings of the Japanese WCTU and Suginkawai Society.</p>

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3650 Arlington Avenue (Shamel Park)	Mary Elizabeth Darling Residence	Residence	Mary Elizabeth Darling founded the Socorro Club in 1893 and the Extemporaneous Drill Club/Wednesday Morning Club in 1902. She was a founding member of the Riverside Woman's Club in 1896. At the state level, Darling was elected by the California Federation of Women's Clubs as the Southern District President in 1902; General President in 1903; and Emeritus President in 1911. At the national level, she was given the distinction of being named Pioneer Clubwoman of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1941. She regularly held club meetings and events at her residence (not extant), which was located in the area that is present-day Shamel Park.
3650 Eleventh Street	Women's Clubhouse and Masonic Temple	Private Institution	In 1908, architect F.P. Burnham was hired to design the Women's Clubhouse and Masonic Temple. The group sold their clubhouse to the Elks Lodge in 1916 and met in rented quarters until 1921, when they raised funds for a new building (The Women's Club). The building was later demolished.
4445 Magnolia Avenue	Old Riverside Community Hospital	Private Institution	Home of the Riverside Community Hospital until 1925, then room and board for the nursing training program, and later osteopathic department for the hospital.
3679 Market Street	Friendship House	Community Center	Friendship House originally founded in 1920 as the Restroom Club by the Riverside Women's Club. By 1950, it operated as an employment bureau, receiving requests for help and

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			applications for work from women across the city.
2933 East Thirteenth Street	CSA House of Neighbors	Private Institution	The House of Neighbors was the model home of the Community Settlement Association from 1917-1941. The CSA took over three City-owned buildings and adapted them to serve the community's needs. The facilities included a nursery school, a clothing store, bathing facilities, laundry facilities, classrooms/recreation hall, a transient cottage, and a maternity cottage.
476 E. Twelfth Street	Alice Rowan Residence	Residence	Alice Rowan was the daughter of freed slaves who migrated with the Mormons westward in 1851, Rowan attended the State Normal School in Los Angeles before relocating to Riverside. Rowan was active in Riverside as early as 1889, where she taught music and held concerts for her pupils at her home. In 1896, she was hired as the first Black teacher in the city and instructed a class at the Trujillo School in La Placita. Rowan married Reverend Frank Johnson in 1892, and the couple became successful entrepreneurs and proprietors of the Riverside Carriage Company.
Eastside Riverside	Canyon Crest Town Housing Project	Housing Project	Canyon Crest Town housing was constructed as a war housing project during World War II for military personally with families. Approximately 275 dwellings were constructed on the eastside, near Canyon Crest Drive and Blaine Street. In 1954, the UCR acquired the housing project to house

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			female students near campus prior to the construction of formal dormitories.