



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Heritage House Exhibition Highlights Victorian Love and Courtship

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – A new exhibition at the Museum of Riverside’s Heritage House, opens Friday. *First Comes Love: Courtship in the Victorian Era* highlights objects and images from the Museum’s collections that shed light on a shift in the institution of marriage during the Victorian era (1837-1901), the period during which Heritage House was built.

The exhibition focuses on a cultural transformation that ushered in new expectations and opportunities for individuals, especially women, in their pursuit of love and partnership. Artifacts were chosen by Curator of History Taylor Bythewood-Porter to explore the evolution of courtship over several decades and highlight the ways romantic love changed relationships and empowered women.

This new independence among women echoed through the lives of Riverside residents. During this period, coded rituals expressed emotions in public spaces, and modes of communication between courting couples evolved. Disrupting the rigid constraints of Victorian society, the rise of love-based marriage marked a subtle but significant victory for women’s agency, allowing them a voice in their choice of partner and, ultimately, a step toward greater personal and social liberation.

First Comes Love: Courtship in the Victorian Era will be on view at Heritage House, 8193 Magnolia Ave., through June 29. Special programs will be advertised throughout the spring season.

Experience the exhibition during your free tour of Heritage House. It's recommended to book your tour in advance via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tours-of-heritage-house-tickets-976415213187?aff=oddtcreator>.

About the Museum of Riverside:

The Museum of Riverside, a department of the city of Riverside, holds a large multi-disciplinary collection relevant to the history, culture, and natural science of the region. The Museum has a proud history of exhibitions, programs, and publications foregrounding local and regional achievement. Sites include the downtown Riverside main museum, Heritage House, Harada House, and the Harada House Interpretive Center. All sites except Heritage House are temporarily closed for renovation or rehabilitation. Heritage House is open Friday-Sunday for guided tours; pre-registration for tours is required via Eventbrite. To learn more, visit www.riversideca.gov/museum.



Undated postcard
Museum of Riverside, gift of Bob Skilling,
A1940-19