HERITAGE HOUSE COLLECTION, 1847-1989

Finding aid prepared by Jennifer Allan Goldman
California State University, Dominguez Hills
Archives & Special Collections
University Library, Room G-145
1000 E. Victoria Street
Carson, California 90747
Phone: (310) 243-3895
URL: http://archives.csudh.edu/
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Heritage House Collection

Dates: 1847-1989

Collection Number: Consult repository.

Creator: Heritage House Museum

Extent: 3 boxes3 linear feet

Repository: California State University, Dominguez Hills Archives and Special Collections
Archives & Special Collection
University Library, Room G-145
1000 E. Victoria Street
Carson, California 90747
Phone: (310) 243-3013
URL: http://archives.csudh.edu/

Abstract: A small collection of materials from and about the Heritage House Museum in Compton, California. Materials include correspondence, ledgers, and paper from the Auxiliary; programs, booklets, and correspondence about the museum itself; and ephemera and journals from the 19th century donated to the museum from citizens of Compton.

Language: Collection material is in English

Access
There are no access restrictions on this collection.

Publication Rights
All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Director of Archives and Special Collections. Permission for publication is given on behalf of Special Collections as the owner of the physical materials and not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained.

Preferred Citation
[Title of item], Heritage House Collection, Courtesy of the Department of Archives and Special Collections. University Library. California State University, Dominguez Hills

Acquisition Information
The Heritage House Collection was donated to CSUDH after the City of Compton started the renovation of the city center in the late 1980s. This required emptying the building and moving the Heritage House to another location. Members of the CSUDH history department were crucial in obtaining this collection.

Processing Information
The collection was inventoried after being accessioned, but not processed.

Project Information
This finding aid was created as part of Early Los Angeles/Rancho San Pedro Manuscript Cataloging Project, a CSU Dominguez Hills Library project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The project started in 2005. Project Director was Greg Williams. Project Archivists were Thomas Philo and Jennifer Allan Goldman.

History
The Heritage House was built in 1869 by A.R. Loomis and later became the property of the Gaines family. The house stood on Lemon Street (later Main Street, then Compton Boulevard) until the 1950s, when the land was acquired by the city to be used for a new fire station. By this time, the house had been deemed the oldest house in Compton, and the newspaper roused community support to protect it from being demolished. The City of Compton provided a site onto which the house would be moved, an area in the city center next to City Hall, the Police Station, and the Post Office. A large volunteer base donated money, labor, and materials for moving the house, as well as the restoration and renovation required to make it into a museum. Members of the community also donated items to be displayed in the museum, many actually used in Compton during the 1860s and 1870s. The museum officially opened to the public on April 14, 1958. An auxiliary, sponsored by the Native Daughters of the Golden West, was formed in the following months, and was responsible for the care and upkeep of the museum. In 1959, a year from the opening day, the Heritage House was named California State Landmark No. 664. This was the first state landmark given in the community.

In 1970, the City of Compton began development of a new Civic Center Complex to replace City Hall and the surrounding buildings. Part of this plan would require the land on which the Heritage House stood. Under pressure from the Auxiliary, as well as Judson Grenier, Professor of History at CSU Dominguez Hills, and members of the community, the City Council
agreed to move the Heritage House into storage instead of demolishing it. Attempts were made to return donated items to the original owners; items that could not be returned were transferred to the Department of Archives and Special Collections at CSU Dominguez Hills.

After a few years in storage, CSU Dominguez Hills Professor of History Howard Holter petitioned the Compton City Council to move the building back to the Civic Center at the corner of West Myrrh Street and South Willowbrook Avenue. The Council agreed, and Holter began renovations on the house. Through the 1980s, Holter created plans for returning the Heritage House to a museum. In 1989, the Compton Community Redevelopment Agency dropped discussion of the plans. The empty building is now used for receptions and occasions by the City of Compton.

**Scope and Content**

Materials include donation forms, membership rosters, financial ledgers, newscroppings, correspondence, programs, booklets, journals, and ephemera from the late 19th century, including pieces from “Godey’s Ladies Journal”. A majority of the documents were created during the renovation and opening of the museum in the late 1950s.

**Arrangement**

Arranged in two series:

- Series I. Auxiliary (1957-1973)
- Series II. Museum (1953-1989)

**Subjects**

California -- Division of Beaches and Parks

Cottages -- California

Historic buildings -- California -- Compton

Small houses -- California -- 19th century

**Personal Names**

Dollarhide, Douglas

**Corporate Names**

Native Daughters of the Golden West

**Geographic Areas**

Compton (Calif.)

**Genre/Form**

Magazine illustrations -- 19th century

Women's periodicals -- American -- 19th century

**Related Material**

The following collections are available in the CSUDH Archives and Special Collections:

- Compton History Collection
- Robert C. Gillingham Working Papers
- South Bay Photo Collection

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**Auxiliary 1957-1973**

- **Physical Description:** 4 folders, 2 books
- **Scope and Content Note:** Materials created and collected by the Auxiliary, including by-laws, membership cards, receipt book, membership lists, and correspondence, including letters from the 1970s on the removal of the Heritage House from the Civic Center.

**Box 1**

- Record book, with minutes, notes, membership lists, and correspondence 1957-1971

**Box 1, Folder 1**

- By-laws, blank letterhead, blank membership cards, meeting minutes 1959

**Box 1, Folder 2**

- Auxillary financial ledger (cover removed) and duplicate receipt book 1959-1973

**Box 1, Folder 3**

- Correspondence and newscrapings 1957-1970

**Box 1, Folder 4**

- Membership lists 1958-1969

**Box 2**

- Heritage House Scrapbooks of clippings and photos (photos removed to box 3) 1957-1959
**Museum 1953-1989**

**Physical Description:** 12 folders, 14 artifacts and books

**Scope and Content Note**

Materials not related specifically to the Auxiliary, including the Native Daughters of the Golden West Compton Parlor Pioneer book; donation records and receipts; details on the renovations made to the Heritage House; dedication programs; items from the dedication as State Landmark No. 664; and correspondence and plans from the 1980s renovation. Also, items donated to the museum that were not returned, including railroad tickets, a report card, coursework for classes including sewing, ladies journals, and rare books, which have been cataloged separately.

| Box 1, Folder 5 | Native Daughters of the Golden West, Compton Parlor, Pioneer Roster and record book, including histories, membership rosters, and minutes 1953-1968 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Lists of donations and donors 1957-1958 |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Compton piano - history, correspondence, and research materials circa 1958 |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Renovation history, “Construction and Furnishing of Heritage House,” and correspondence 1958 |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | Heritage House Dedication - programs 1958 |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | State Landmark dedication, correspondence, programs, landmark maps 1958-1959 |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | "Heritage House Speaks" book, by Maude Walton Cleland and Margaret M. Forsythe 1958 |
| Box 1, Folder 12 | "Heritage House Treasures" booklet 1958, 1962 |
| Box 1, Folder 13 | "The Story of the Heritage House" by Margaret Forsythe, in California Historian, Vol 7, No 3 1961 |
| Box 1, Folder 14 | Slideshow script and correspondence 1959, 1964 |
| Box 1, Folder 15 | Ephemera, including early railroad tickets, invitations, report card, and timeline of Compton history no date |
| Box 1, Folder 16 | Redevelopment/renovation correspondence, reports, plans, and sketches 1982-1989 |
| Box 2 | Scrapbook of engravings from Peterson's Ladies Journal, 1876 made 1934 |
| Box 2 | Easter project by Gertrude Lofthouse at 6th St. Kindergarten 1897 |
| Box 2 | Composition book of poems, Gertrude Lofthouse, 6th St. School no date |
| Box 2 | Sewing book, with examples, Gertrude Lofthouse, 5th grade circa 1902 |
| Box 2 | Class list 1895 |
| Box 2 | Godey's Ladies Book, April 1870 |
| Box 2 | Godey's Ladies Book, April 1868 |
| Box 2 | Small tin-type portrait album no date |
| Box 2 | Small daguerreotype in case no date |
| Box 2 | Compton Piano (in reading room) circa 1860 |
| Box 2 | Frank Hann violin (in reading room) 1889 |