

ADR12.1 History and provenance

Provenance refers to an object's source, its history of ownership and use from the time it was created to the present. Provenance includes the entire life of the garment.

Details of provenance include:

- where the object was made or discovered
- who made it
- who has owned the object
- what has it been used for.

Documentary evidence of provenance such as original receipts, newspaper clippings and photographs add to an object's historical value. Any information related to an object is a valuable contribution to that object's history.

Historical context

Historical context refers to the interrelated conditions in history in which something existed. Answers to the following questions can help establish historical context.

- What was happening at this particular time and place?
- What sort of society was it?
- What were their beliefs or values?
- What were the roles of men and women at the time?



Women's silk bodice (detail), Doucet, Paris, France, 1896. Powerhouse Museum collection, purchased 1959. H6008

Labels and the information they provide should be carefully documented.

- This register includes items that have originated from or travelled overseas, but garments should have some connection to NSW, Australia.
- The outfit may have been owned by or worn by several people. Please record all known owners and wearers of the garments.
- Tracking family histories can be helpful. By looking at appropriate age and contemporary fashions, you can determine who could or could not have worn the garment.
- Include maiden names where possible, as these are useful for tracking family histories.

Date or date range

If you know a specific date for an object, enter that date, for example, you know the dress was worn for a wedding in 1880.

If you don't know a specific year, provide an approximate date range eg 1875–85. Use this date range format instead of, for example, about 1880.

Cost

If known, how much did the garment cost? Indicate if this was the price to purchase the item ready made or the price paid for the materials. This may include threads, trimmings, fabric or dressmaker/tailor costs.

If known, the price paid for the garment in recent times is also of interest, for example, the price a collector paid at auction.

Where possible, indicate the date a particular price was paid.

Resources

For further information on researching provenance and history. *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections*, Collections Council of Australia, <<http://significance.collectionscouncil.com.au>>.

The Australian Dress Register is an initiative of the Powerhouse Movable Heritage NSW program, which is coordinated through the Museum's Regional Services program to support research and documentation of cultural heritage collections.

This information sheet is part of a series developed by the Powerhouse Museum, December 2009.

500 Harris St Ultimo Sydney + PO Box K346 Haymarket NSW 1238 + www.powerhousemuseum.com

Telephone (02) 9217 0220 + Facsimile (02) 9217 0355 + Email regionalservices@phm.gov.au