

Reviews (Exhibitions)

Heritage House.

1900 Associated Road, Fullerton, California, 92831.

Visitor information: [online](#).

Historical site.

Take a step back into Orange County before Disneyland at the Heritage House, located in the Arboretum at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF). The Heritage House was purchased from a catalog and completed in 1894 by Dr. George Crook Clark (1863–1948). Dr. Clark was originally from Ohio. He moved to California after completing medical school in Chicago and married Edith Louisa Johnston (1874–1951), the daughter of Darius D. Johnston (1842–1917). As it turns out, the Johnston-Hargitt House, where the two were married, still stands in neighboring Norwalk, California, and is occasionally open for tours. Dr. Clark was an early civic leader in Fullerton and served as the Orange County Coroner for many years, along with making regular house calls all throughout Orange County. During his decades-long career, Dr. Clark delivered over 2,500 babies all throughout the county, making him directly responsible for much of its early population. The Clark family only lived in the Heritage House for ten years, but its legacy continues to live on as a museum.

The Heritage House is one of three historic houses on the CSUF campus, but unlike the Titan (Hetebrink) House, an 1886 Colonial Revival building, and the Alumni (Mahr/Golleher) House, a 1931 Spanish Revival building, the Heritage House was moved from its original location at the corner of Fullerton's Lemon Street and Amerige Avenue. After the Clark family had left it, the house passed from owner to owner, was eventually threatened by demolition due to a street widening project, but was moved to the Fullerton Arboretum in 1976. There, it served as an office space for many years until Oak Hall was built a couple of hundred yards to the north. It was then fully converted into a museum and remained so until its closure in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During its operation as a museum, the Heritage House was in the hands of the Fullerton Victorian Society, a group of ladies who held various events there and served as docents and curators of its collection. The collection contains about 10,000 artifacts, most of which have been documented in one way or another, albeit not to modern standards. In addition, while the house was serving as a museum, the collection was not necessarily curated or applied to specific exhibitions. Much of it is of the original period, however, it was not properly maintained and left out of permanent display. Docents, dressed in period costumes, frequently catered to third-grade field trips, something I was able to experience for myself at Founders Park in Anaheim (featuring the 1857 Mother Colony House and the 1894 Woelke-Stoffel House) and at Stanley Ranch in Garden Grove (featuring the 1891 Ware-Stanley House and Walt Disney's Garage). For such purposes, the Heritage House's management style may have been suitable, but for a museum—as part of a university—not so much. For the past years, the Heritage House has been under the direction of Trish Campbell, the former exhibition coordinator at CSUF's Pollak Library. Campbell and her team of interns and

volunteers started their work in the fall of 2024. The first order of business was to declutter. Artifacts had been placed throughout the museum without much thought. The parlor, or living room as we know it today, had at one point in time served as Dr. Clark's waiting room. However, prior to the fall of 2024, it looked more like a storage unit. After a few weeks, most of the artifacts were tucked away into the house's many closets and cupboards. In addition to decluttering, interns also worked toward an event on December 6, 2024, which brought donors, potential donors, and others to the Arboretum and its Heritage House to showcase how financial support was being used. Overall, visitors were quite pleased with the progress and eager to return.

In the spring of 2025, the home's enormous textile collection was re-documented. The aforementioned wear and tear was closely examined and particularly noticeable on many of the period dresses. Beautiful, mostly handmade dresses had been left on mannequins for years, not properly maintained, and it showed. Several dresses were in such disrepair that they most likely could not be exhibited and were in dire need of restoration. Progress seemed to move at a snail's pace, but eventually all the dresses and various textiles were recorded and put away to make up the bed in the bedroom. Among the textile collection was a quilt that had been given to Dr. Clark after his graduation from medical school in 1887. This quilt was in fragile condition with many wear marks, and the student interns worked diligently to not inflict any further damage and make sure that it was put away carefully and protected from the elements.

One goal of the current Heritage House team is to make the house as accessible as possible to anyone. During the spring of 2025, each team member set out to research and craft an online exhibition. In the future, online exhibitions will be uploaded to the Heritage House page of the Arboretum's website. Topics are diverse, ranging from the Basque community of early Orange County to culinary history. Simultaneously, physical exhibitions are also being developed. The fall of 2024 featured a toy exhibition, as the Clark family included three children. Various toys from the turn of the twentieth century were showcased, including cast-iron banks, card games, puzzles, and even a few board games, and a graduate student, who also happened to be the House's very first intern, developed the appropriate labels. This exhibition has been deinstalled and is currently being replaced by one centered around the ostrich farms of Orange County. The plan going forward is to keep exhibitions fresh. In the years leading up to the pandemic, visits to the Heritage House had slowed significantly, perhaps due to the fact that exhibitions never rotated. Yet the same collection and the same displays only remain interesting and enticing for so long, especially in today's world. For a museum to be successful, it must constantly adapt and keep fresh. Although the Heritage House is not regularly open to the public at the time of writing this review, its curatorial team is always looking for ways to attract people to create a different experience every time someone steps inside.

Apart from tending to the museum's scholarly aspects, the Heritage House team is also tasked with maintaining the house itself. Since the fall of 2024, two rooms have been stripped of the original wallpaper, due to existing damage, and repainted. In addition to the walls, the floors—which had numerous cracks due to decades of people walking over them—have also

been repaired. The antique rugs in the bedroom, parlor, and dining room have all been professionally cleaned and repaired. As the weeks pass, the house inches closer to reopening, although, at this point, we do not know when that will be. The direction for the future may well be paid programming. Unlike in the past, it will not be open to the public “whenever;” rather, it will be opened on certain occasions, and guests will have to purchase an entry slot, which will help support the museum’s upkeep. In addition to this, there are plans to host more of the aforementioned third-grade field trips, enabling children in the area to learn about their local history, hopefully soon.

As it is now, just about anyone would find enjoyment in touring the Heritage House. The kitchen is fully equipped with a cast-iron stove, telephone, icebox, and pie safe, which have since been rearranged to create a more aesthetically pleasing space. As one moves into the dining room, one is met with a Victorian-era floral wallpaper, which may or may not have been in the house originally but is nonetheless unique. Straight ahead stands the China cabinet in which several pieces from the Clark family are kept. Turning to the left, one enters the bedroom. The cast-iron bed frame holds almost the entire textile collection, including ladies’ dresses, Dr. Clark’s quilt, and various other things catalogued by the museum’s team. Walking a little further into the house, one enters the parlor. On the north wall, one can see an organ which, unfortunately, does not work; however, plans are in place to restore it. On the floor lies an oriental rug with a beautiful pattern that anyone would like to have in their own home. Standing next to the fainting couch is a porcelain doll that may be creepy to some; however, it once belonged to Lucy Eudolpha (1903–1970), Dr. Clark’s daughter. Also, in the parlor, there is a decent-sized cabinet reserved for a future rotating exhibition program intended to attract visitors. Finally, one arrives at the doctor’s office. Above the doctor’s desk hangs his diploma from the Hahnemann Medical College in Chicago, an institution specializing in homeopathy. Tucked far in the corner is the pharmacy, which may have actually been Dr. Clark’s exam room when he originally lived in the house; it now houses his original microscope along with several medical textbooks that once belonged to him. On top of the desk is an electrotherapy device: for a time in the early 1900s, Dr. Clark experimented with this methods, however, we do not know the extent of his practice using them.

Both the museum team and the Arboretum hope to open the house to more visitors in the future. When open, it will be a must-see for anyone on campus or living in the area. Orange County features many historic homes turned into museums. Notable examples include the Dr. Willella Howe-Waffle House (an 1880s Victorian) and Medical Museum in Santa Ana, the aforementioned Woelke-Stoffel House in Anaheim, and the Albert Sumner Bradford House (a 1902 Colonial Revival) in Placentia. By the time Heritage House finally opens to the public, it will surely rival any other historic home in the county.

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*World of the Terracotta Warriors:
New Archaeological Discoveries in Shaanxi in the 21st century.*

Lead curator: Tianlong Jiao.

Bowers Museum: 2002 N Main St, Santa Ana, California 92706.

Visitor information: [online](#).

Temporary exhibition: May 24, 2025, to October 19, 2025.

In 1974, one of the most important Chinese archaeological sites was discovered in the province of Shaanxi, where several thousand sculpted life-size terracotta warriors had been lying relatively untouched for over two thousand years. Their statues represented armored infantry, officers, and generals, and they were accompanied by horse drawn chariots, animals, and court personnel. Commissioned by Qin Shi Huang (259–210 BCE), the first emperor of China (r. 221–210 BCE), 700,000 soldiers and workers had created them for the sole purpose of protecting the emperor in his afterlife. The famous terracotta warriors are just one of the many archaeological finds in the province of Shaanxi, which holds many hidden treasures, landmarks, and other secrets that span thousands of years, and the oldest of them go back to China's earliest civilizations, which rival those of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia.

After almost twenty years of new archaeological explorations in the Shaanxi region, the Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Promotion Center, alongside other museums and archaeological institutions from the area, recently returned to the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, California, where it had last exhibited some of its treasures in 2008. This return exhibition, *World of the Terracotta Warriors: New Archaeological Discoveries in Shaanxi in the 21st century*, is designed by Bowers chief curator Dr. Tianlong Jiao, a specialist in Chinese archaeology who has worked for the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, the Hong Kong Maritime Museum, and the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Hawaii. Jiao's expertise is perfectly suited for this foray into the ancient civilizations of the Shaanxi region between 2300 and 206 BCE. The exhibition features more than 110 ancient artifacts, never before exhibited outside of China, alongside photographs of archaeological dig sites and immersive digital experiences, thereby allowing visitors to gain an unprecedented glimpse into Shaanxi. It traces the region's history from the 4,000-year-old city state of Shimao, through sites of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, to the terracotta warriors of Qin Shi Huang's mausoleum.

When entering the Bowers's mission-style building, visitors encounter the exhibition gift shop and the nine paintings *Sacred Realms: Buddhist* in the Freedman Galleria. As they enter the *World of the Terracotta Warriors* exhibition, they are greeted with a screen explaining how the exhibition showcases various archaeological artifacts throughout Shaanxi's history. Next to the screen is a URL code, which provides access to a free exhibition guide with pictures of the artifacts as well as labels of the exhibits. The first artifact, located at the entrance, is a stone sculpture from the Shimao civilization, depicting two horses facing a bull's head, which indicates that even as far back as 2300 BCE, working animals played an important role. Next to this artifact is an exhibit that displays the history of the Shimao site, the largest urban settlement in north-central China's North Loess Plateau between 2300 and 1800 BCE. This settlement was protected by a perimeter of stone watchtowers and two large circles of stone walls, and at its core was the citadel of Huangchengtai. This central location was guarded by

incredibly steep stone walls that acted as a final defense for the urban settlement. Archaeologists were able to excavate various artifacts, such as divination-related oracle bones, dowry shells, murals, and of course jade. Beyond this exhibit, visitors encounter artifacts from Lushanmao, another significant urban center in the North Loess Plateau between 2300 and 2100 BCE. At the end of this section of the exhibition, museumgoers are rewarded with an interactive experience that features a reproduction of Shimao's walls, filled with pieces of jade that—when pulled—show trivia about Shimao, such as how they traded with other civilizations from the Eurasian Steppe. This experience reflects the real-life historical practice of inserting jade into the walls and foundations of important structures at both Shimao and Lushanmao.

Once finished with this interactive portion, visitors continue to a room dedicated to the Zhukaigou culture and the Shang dynasty, which lasted from c. 1600 to c. 1050 BCE. It mainly features a wall covered in photos of the Wayaogou site, which was home to nine large tombs dating back to the years between 1200 and 1000 BCE. Of these tombs, two were only recently excavated (2023), and inside archaeologists discovered chariots, possibly the earliest of their kind, painted in lacquer and covered in bronze ornaments. By the wall of photographs are artifacts from the Shang Dynasty, including daggers, earrings, and ceramics, such as tripod vessels otherwise known as *Li*. Following this artifacts exhibit is a long hallway dedicated to the Zhou dynasty, a civilization lasting from c. 1050 to 221 BCE. Its exhibits are largely divided into two sections, those of the Western Zhou and the "Spring and Autumn" period, which represented the two halves of the dynasty's history. While exploring this section of the exhibition, visitors realize that, by this point in time, bronze tools had become far more widespread, as many of the artifacts are bronze tools, ornaments, and weapons. While the Zhou dynasty did produce gold artifacts, such as ornaments and belt buckles, it was their jade artifacts that encompassed a far greater variety of not just ornaments, but also figures and jewelry, which often featured agates.

At the end of this hall, visitors enter the main attraction: several of the first emperor's terracotta warriors from his mausoleum complex. This is easily the largest room of the exhibition, larger than all the previous rooms combined. The first thing visitors notice when they enter is a half-sized replica of a terracotta and bronze chariot. Then, encased in protective glass, are several life-size terracotta warriors of various ranks, from lowly foot soldiers to large and imposing generals with upward-facing boots denoting their status. Next to this is a second interactive experience, a screen to digitally paint the terracotta warriors in their original colors. From here, visitors enter the final hallway, dedicated to the process of creating the terracotta warriors. A nearly eighteen-foot-long model depicts the arduous process of producing a single terracotta warrior, going through the hands of dozens of workers and craftsmen, the latter of whom would sculpt a face based on a real-life warrior. A single terracotta warrior statue has a modern worth of four and a half million dollars, so, it is little wonder that the real deal at the Bowers is protected by thick glass.

To cap off the experience, the most technological part of the exhibition features a three-sided room that reproduces the burial of the emperor Qin Shi Huang and what he expected to experience after his death. Using large, screen-covered walls and surround sound, this

immersive video has visitors watch as Qin Shi Huang's spirit is carried away while his terracotta entourage gains a lifelike sentience—from his armored warriors, who surrounded the emperor's private carriage, to the various animal sculptures, including horses that would roam the surrounding land, and even waterfowl that would take to the air to accompany the emperor's final journey. With that, the immersive experience ends and visitors make their way toward the exit, but not before they are shown photos of the men and women who have worked on excavating the first emperor's mausoleum, using modern technology to restore terracotta figures, constructing an onsite museum, and even setting up a laboratory right on top of the site to allow for the efficient study of the tomb.

World of the Terracotta Warriors showcases the various discoveries and new knowledge gained over the past twenty years in Shaanxi. It also depicts an evolution in the understanding of some of China's earliest civilizations, and how far scholars have come in unlocking the hidden mysteries of their first emperor's mausoleum by using modern technologies. The Bowers Museum's terracotta warrior exhibition is a comprehensive celebration of China's ancient past that can be shared with nations from around the world. At the time of writing this review, the exhibition has ended, yet that does not mean that the artifacts are being shipped back to China; instead they make their next stop at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. For those curious about China's long history, the Chen Art Gallery in the city of Torrance, California—a hidden gem in the Sunrider International Building on Abalone Avenue—features over 1,000 artifacts across five thousand years from the Neolithic era to the early twentieth century. Meanwhile, for museumgoers who have a deep-seated curiosity for ancient tombs, the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose, California, is an ideal destination, as it features the largest collection of Egyptian artifacts in the western United States, including a tour on ancient Egyptian funerary practices. All these are thrilling experiences that offer a unique look into the distant past.

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