



NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM
OF BROWN COUNTY
BRIDGING COMMUNITIES. CONNECTING GENERATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Recently Conserved Civil War Gown Now On Exhibit.

Green Bay, WI—September 23, 2020— *Guns & Gowns* features twenty historic gowns and forty firearms from the collection of the Neville Public Museum of Brown County.

When researching gowns for the exhibit staff came across a dress donated by Josephine Buchanan Lenfestey in the 1990s. They were fascinated with the signature silhouette, plaid silk, and puffy sleeve design, and knew they wanted to find a way to exhibit it. Because of its condition it had not been exhibited since its donation. The decision was made to send this dress off for conservation to the Midwest Arts Conservation Center in Minneapolis.

Why conservation? This dress is a great representation of not only fashion, but historically what was happening at the moment in time the dress was made. The Civil War affected every part of life. Before the war, the fashion industry was thriving. Queen Victoria was influencing style. The silk trade opened with Japan in 1853. The Industrial Revolution was making fabric production more efficient. Southern slave-produced cotton was sent to the North for processing in textile mills. But during the war, the fashion industry halted. The United States dedicated every piece of fabric to the war. Based on its design it is believed this dress was made just before the Civil War broke out.

Why on display now? The plan for pick up needed to be adjusted due to Covid -19 travel restrictions. Museum staff were required to wait until this month to make the trip to Minneapolis. *Guns & Gowns* will be on display until February 28, 2021.

About the Neville Public Museum Collection

The Neville Public Museum Collections Department supports the museum's mission through the management and preservation of our collections. There are over one million items in the permanent collections, including historic artifacts, original artworks, archeological objects, still photographs and film.

For more information about *Gun & Gowns* and other upcoming exhibits please visit <https://www.nevillepublicmuseum.org/exhibits>

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