

HISTORIC DENVER NEWS

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"La Alma" by Emanuel Martinez, on the La Alma Recreation Center. Photo: Lyn Berry-Helminger

ART AS A TOOL OF CHANGE: MONUMENTAL MURALS TELL THE STORY OF DENVER'S CHICANO HISTORY

By Lucha Martinez de Luna, Guest Author

Editor's note: Guest writer Lucha Martinez de Luna applied to Historic Denver's Action Fund last year for her Chicano Murals of Colorado preservation project, which she is leading in collaboration with a professor at Metro State University of Denver and a couple of the muralists mentioned in the following article. The project will preserve Emanuel Martinez's "La Alma" mural in La Alma Lincoln Park, and Carlota Espinoza's mural, "Our Lady of Guadalupe." Portions of this article – which explores the origins of these murals and others around Denver – originally appeared in Colorado Heritage, September/October 2015 (Denver: History Colorado, 2015).

Artists create monumental works to promote an agenda of a government and/or a religious system, or to recognize elites within that same system. Art created in a monumental style implies a certain sense of homogeneity in a society, so the duration of that style can reflect the longevity of a particular ideology. Likewise, the destruction of monumental art – or the development of a new style – can mirror a radical change, or a challenge to the prevailing ideology.

At the onset of the Chicano Movement in the late 1960s, Denver, Colorado, underwent just such a change in its monumental art.

For Chicanos, art became a powerful tool to express feelings of dehumanization

and repression in American society and, most importantly, to proudly embrace their heritage. Chicanos utilized art, specifically large, public murals, to stimulate both their memory and their identity while fomenting sociopolitical change in an oppressive social environment.

To understand Chicano murals, it is essential to delve into the complex web of the past – when in the 1960s they began identifying themselves as Chicanos, a sociopolitical term used to spawn a cultural awakening and to actively defy government-assigned labels: Mexican American, Hispanic, and Latino. Determined to learn about their cultural heritage, Chicanos throughout Colorado joined to rediscover their true historical past. The few stories that survived would no longer be quietly told around the dinner table; these stories would be retold through art, poetry, music, dance, and theater on a stage for all to see and hear!

With no textbooks mentioning their presence and no museums to tell their story, Chicanos described their Mestizo (a mix of Spanish and indigenous ancestry) roots to when the Spaniards began to settle in New Spain – today's México (1521) and U.S. Southwest (1598). As Spanish settlements gradually expanded north and south the Mestizo population grew, despite indigenous tribes' fierce efforts to protect their territories.

For Chicanos, this struggle between the indigenous populations of New Spain and the Spaniards became a central theme in their murals: They were forced to confront the

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Photo by Shannon Schaefer Stage

By Shannon Stage, Preservation Coordinator

Tom’s Diner was first built in 1967 as part of a diner chain, Denver-based White Spot Restaurants, associated with post-World War II commercial development of Colfax Avenue. Located at 601 E. Colfax, the free-standing building’s unusual architecture is an expression of the “Googie” style, an architectural type influenced by car culture and the Space Age, which began in the 1930s and was popular into the mid-1960s.

The Diner’s owner, Thomas Messina, recently put the building up for sale, and on May 17 of this year, the city of Denver provided community notice of an application for a Certificate of Non-Historic Status – most often a precursor to demolition.

Thanks to a strong showing of community support to save this iconic diner, Messina and a potential developer made contact with Historic Denver to discuss the future of the building. Additionally, members of “Team Tom’s” – a community group formed to save the diner – submitted a landmark designation application to the city on June 14, which extends the consideration period. The city will take several review steps, and ultimately there could be hearings at the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission and Denver City Council. Historic Denver is working with the community members to identify solutions for the site, and remains in contact with the property owner. Visit our website and Facebook page for updates.

Diner History

The term “Googie” was coined from a California coffee shop that incorporated this style that eventually became popular along highways and major thoroughfares throughout the country. It was viewed as futuristic, displaying features such as cantilevered and tilting roofs, walls, and windows, as well as geometric shapes and acute angles. The style also used expanses of glass, metal, plastic panels, and stone veneers.

The Tom’s Diner building, designed by Armet and Davis of Los Angeles (considered the preeminent designers in this style), incorporates each of these elements, particularly its hexagonal footprint and prominent boomerang-shaped structural trusses that follow the slopes of the roof and project beyond the eaves. Its design and designers were both cited as factors when the Keeper of the National Register officially determined that the buildings was eligible for listing.

The White Spot restaurant chain was founded by Colorado native William F. Clements. Over time, Clements created 29 restaurants, using existing buildings or hiring various architects to design new buildings. Clements hired Armet and Davis to design seven of the White Spots in Colorado between 1961 and 1969. At least four of these have been demolished and, of the remaining three, the Colfax & Pearl location is the most intact and best preserved example.

This location operated as a White Spot until the mid-1980s, and the last representative of the chain closed in 2001. A series of restaurants followed in this building, but none achieved long-term success until 1999, when Messina bought the property and began serving food in the community landmark now known as Tom’s Diner. 🌿

Information in this article was sourced from the National Register of Historic Places nomination form, 2009, prepared by Tom and Laurie Simmons, Front Range Research Associates, Inc.

DID YOU KNOW?

A Certificate of Non-Historic Status is a tool related to the City of Denver’s Demolition Review and Landmark Preservation policies. It is essentially a precursor to a demolition permit, because if it is approved, it provides a property owner with certainty that the building can be demolished without further historic review for a period of five years. The policies are intended to provide the community with an opportunity for robust consideration about the future of a building eligible for local landmarking.



Photo: Yelp reviewer Adrian O. (Colorado Springs)



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Culture for all.

ART AS A TOOL OF CHANGE, CONT.

harsh reality of being the creation of the conquered and the conqueror.

Chicanos identified more with their indigenous heritage than their European heritage. By depicting indigenous imagery, particularly in mural painting, Chicano artists told stories of the past, empowering their audience by legitimizing their self-identity and self-worth. Murals in Colorado became a vital component in the urban landscape, specifically in Chicano communities.

The first contemporary Chicano mural in Colorado was painted in 1968 at the Crusade for Justice building, in the Chicano Movement headquarters on Downing Street in Denver. *Mayan Numerals* by Emanuel Martinez was located in the banquet room, the central hub of activity for dances, meals, and meetings. The mural depicted a series of Maya glyphs, inspired by the archaeological site at Copan, Honduras. On the south wall, two Maya figures supported a cartouche containing a tripartite Mestizo head. Martinez first depicted this Mestizo image on an altar to commemorate the end of a hunger strike by Cesar Chavez in 1967. The Mestizo head portrays a profile of an indigenous mother, a profile of a Spanish father, and, in the center, a face of their union, a Mestizo/Chicano.

In 1969, Martinez painted the façade of his and other residents’ homes in the Lincoln Park Housing Projects with bold red and white Zapotec geometric designs. Denver Housing Authority did not appreciate his creative works and threatened to evict him. The residents of the Housing Projects joined together to prevent his eviction and the destruction of the murals, but years after Martinez moved, the entire mural was sandblasted.

The following year, Martinez painted the side of a storage building in the pool area of Lincoln Park at 1100 Osage Street. The center of his mural, a bright, bold sun, represented the fifth sun, from the iconic Mexica Sunstone, often referred to as the Aztec Calendar Stone. For the Mexica, the Sunstone depicted the four previous cycles of creation and destruction, while the center sun, the fifth, portrayed the present era. Martinez replaced the fifth sun, with an image of a Mestizo – symbolizing the creation of Chicanos. Encircling the Mestizo head were two images of Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent deity – one of the most longstanding images in Mesoamerica. Below the sun, Emiliano Zapata, a Revolutionary hero for both Chicanos and Mexicans, stands on the first steps of a pyramid. On the right side of the sun, four hands – brown, black, white, and yellow – are clasped, signifying the “unity of races.” According to Martinez, “the mural stimulates creativity in the community” while also “educating the community.”

A year later, Martinez painted the entire swimming pool building at Lincoln Park with the aid of youth and adults from the community. This mural consisted of multiple bands of diamonds in different colors similar to geometric designs found on Navajo textiles. Above the Navajo designs, a band of stylistic eagles with a sun behind each defined the horizon. The eagle – a logo for the United Farm Workers led by Cesar Chavez – symbolized solidarity with Chicanos throughout the nation. At the south side of the building, a profile of four indigenous people, two on each side, gazed toward the horizon.

When the pool closed in 1971, Martinez applied for a small grant to begin an arts and crafts training program. Housed in the former pool storage building, the program became an instant success. The artist then approached Denver Parks and Recreation, asking if he could turn the storage facility into a recreation center. He became founding director of La Alma Recreation Center and quickly engaged the community to cover the remaining three exterior walls, interior walls, and ceiling with murals. Martinez then received requests from other parks to paint murals on their facilities, such as Argo Park swimming pool in Globeville (mural not extant), Curtis Park swimming pool (mural not extant), and the Robert F. Kennedy Recreation Center (mural not extant). With these murals, Martinez aspired to “use mural painting in Denver, in the way it is used in Mexico, telling the story of a people’s history and their present aspirations.” He added that, “In Mexico, murals are not art for art’s sake. They are a medium of visual education, monumental in size, and become public property.”

In 1972, the momentum of the Mural Movement in Denver came to an abrupt halt after artist Roberto Lucero had just completed two murals on two buildings at La Raza Park. The murals were targeted by City Councilman Geno DiManna, who objected to the paintings. DiManna and Joe Ciancio, director of Parks and Recreation, demanded that City employee/artist Emanuel Martinez paint over Lucero’s mural. Martinez refused, resigning from his position as an official City Muralist.

After the City had Lucero’s mural painted over, DiManna and Parks and Recreation created a new ordinance putting a halt to the painting of any new ones. Other Chicano communities in the country saw deliberate attempts to suppress mural production. In 1974, police raided a Chicano school in Santa Fe, New Mexico, destroying the interior of the school and a recently painted mural. In Denver, the government’s suppression of the Mural Movement lasted for two years, but the effort only resulted in an increase in Chicano muralists and murals in the city.

The following year, Carlota Espinoza painted *Pasado, Presente, Futuro*, a 5-by-20-foot mural at the Denver Public Library’s Byers Branch. With a coastal backdrop, Espinoza depicts the arrival of the Spaniards to the Mexican Gulf Coast in 1519 and the consequent coupling of Hernan Cortez and Marina (La Malinche), his indigenous interpreter/lover. Espinoza describes the mural as a “story of a people: Chicano! It is a story of a people’s

romance with history, from Aztec empires, through Spanish imperialism, from alienation to the struggle to re-win a people’s identity, pride and future.”

In 1976, Carlota Espinoza asked pastor Jose Lara if he would like a 20-by-20-inch painting in Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in north Denver. The plan eventually evolved into a 20-by-20-foot mural that would function as the backdrop for the altar. The mural depicts the iconic scene of the Virgin of Guadalupe looking down at Juan Diego, the indigenous peasant, to whom the Virgin Mary appeared. For Mexicans and Chicanos the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe is a powerful cultural symbol. The North Denver community has changed significantly in the past thirty years, and now the church has more socially conservative, Spanish-speaking immigrants, rather than Chicanos, in its congregation. As a result, a large wall was constructed to cover Espinoza’s mural; it still sparks debate in the community.



“Staff of Life” at Community College of Denver. Photo by Shannon Schaefer Stage

By the late 1970s, mural production branched out into various locations throughout the state, as funds became more available from local institutions and foundations. In 1976, Martinez created the *Staff of Life*, a painting portraying the creation of Mestizos, in one of the Community College of Denver buildings at the Auraria campus. In the center foreground, Marina (La Malinche) and Hernan Cortes grasp the arms of their Mestizo offspring, who is hunched over with a cornstalk sprouting from his neck. Above their ancestors, a contemporary Mestizo man and woman stand on a platform holding books in one hand and seize, in the other hand, the Mestizo plant of creation.

The final mural from the first decade of Chicano murals in Colorado, La Alma by Emanuel Martinez, is located at La Alma Lincoln Park Recreation Center. The 20-by-60-

foot mural, a gift from the artist to his community, depicted a large, stylized eagle with outstretched wings. The body of the eagle, shaped by the profiles of Mestiza women, gazes out toward the horizon, with a cityscape on one side and a ruralscape on the other. This mural, *Staff of Life*, and Espinoza’s murals (with the exception of her mural at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, covered by a wall) are the only that remain from the first decade of murals in Colorado.

Despite initial government resistance, the first decade of Chicano murals flourished, in works celebrating the Chicano presence in Colorado. During the Chicano Movement, murals became an inner voice for Chicanos, to publicly educate the masses about their past. Young artists discovered within themselves the skill to empower Chicanos with monumental art. Each developed a distinct, holistic approach to interpreting the Chicano cultural experience and helped Chicanos reclaim their self-identity. Images of their history on walls defied the deliberate attempt to erase their past and their voice. Murals also brought art to the barrio, instead of being trapped in museums. Within this art, children could see their faces in the images: They looked like the figures in the paintings and felt proud of their heritage. 🌱

LUCHA MARTINEZ DE LUNA is an archaeologist specializing in Mesoamerica. A Colorado native, she actively advocates for the need to provide more accessibility to the arts and cultural sciences, particularly for students of diverse backgrounds.

MURALS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN OUR CITY

and our built environment, as both art and cultural touch-points. When considering the creation of a new mural, it is important to evaluate the impact to the building structure and condition. For example, painting a historic brick façade that has never been painted may cause damage to the masonry over time as the paint traps moisture in the mortar and brick. Paint can also be difficult to remove once applied, creating ongoing maintenance needs. There are a variety of strategies that can be deployed to protect the brick and avoid these impacts, and Historic Denver is happy to provide technical assistance.

RE:DENVER WALKING TOUR OF THE LA ALMA LINCOLN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

6:30-8:30 p.m. | Meeting location TBD

See some of these murals “in person” on July 16! We’re taking re:Denver on the road with two expert guides for a tour of La Alma Lincoln Park. Lucha Martinez de Luna and Ean Tafoya will share their knowledge of the monumental murals in the neighborhood, and La Alma Lincoln Park’s history. Don’t miss this great opportunity to explore this unique neighborhood in detail, and learn about its past and present. **Sign up for the tour on our website, beginning July 1, at historicdenver.org/tours-events/. Meeting location info will be available at that time.**

PRESERVATION BRIEFS



Photo by Shannon Schaefer Stage

Denver’s Newest Historic District: River Drive

Denver City Council unanimously approved our city’s 55th historic district on June 24! Previously approved by the Landmark Preservation Commission in May, this district is the last intact section of a large subdivision from the 1880s called River Front Highlands. It once covered a large swath of the Jefferson Park neighborhood, which has recently experienced significant change – including the demolition of entire blocks, with slot homes replacing historic single-family homes.

This project was a community-driven effort lead by a group of neighbors that applied to Historic Denver’s Action Fund last year, which enabled them to hire Kristi Miniello of Miniello Consulting to research and write the historic district application. Residents helped the consultant by gathering research on each of their homes and diving into the archives at the Denver Public Library.

The block of River Drive has 19 lots with 16 homes that are contributing to the historic district, dating from 1886 to the early 1890s, and a few in the early 20th century. Many of these homes were tied to the Zang Brewery history east of River Drive, and the nearby railroad companies.

Throughout the designation process, the neighbors – in partnership with Historic Denver and with the support of Councilman Rafael Espinoza – hosted community gatherings to present the idea of a historic district, and conducted countless one-on-one conversations with each property owner.

Historic Denver is proud to support this special historic district representing Denver’s early development and the working class homeowners that built the city’s industry – one of the last remaining intact historic blocks in Jefferson Park.

Next Action Fund Deadline: Aug. 1 at 5 p.m.

Historic Denver’s Action Fund program is designed to catalyze innovative neighborhood and community projects that enhance the city’s unique identity, promote and maintain authentic character, and honor cultural heritage as reflected in the built environment. Projects will receive technical assistance, staff support and direct financial investment from Historic Denver. To learn more or apply, visit our website.



At the River Drive designation hearing (l to r): Joan Bondy (homeowner); Kym Foster (homeowner); Jenny Buddenborg (City of Denver’s Landmarks Preservation Sr. City Planner); Ashton Altieri (homeowner); Kristi Miniello (Consultant); Historic Denver’s executive director, Annie Levinsky, and Preservation Coordinator, Shannon Stage; Jeff Rodgers (homeowner); Donielle Markel (homeowner); Jonas Markel (homeowner).



Photo: Scott Dressel-Martin

Future of Larimer Square Still Uncertain

Just over one year ago, the National Trust for Historic Preservation included Larimer Square on its annual list of the most endangered places in America. This announcement came months after Larimer Square’s owner and partners, Larimer Associates and Urban Villages, announced a redevelopment plan that called for partial demolition of historic buildings, and the addition of two high-rise towers on the block.

Historic Denver later participated in an advisory committee convened by the developer. We expressed our deep concerns about the original proposal, and offered ideas and options for Larimer Square’s owners to add space within district guidelines, and finance repairs and upgrades to these unique buildings. The committee did not reach consensus regarding a dramatic redevelopment concept. Urban Villages then opened a storefront on Larimer Square to conduct outreach, launched a Facebook group called “Protect Larimer Square,” hosted a series of telephone town halls, and visited with neighborhood associations.

The community’s concerns from this outreach must have been clear, because in April the ownership group announced they will no longer pursue demolition of any historic building fabric. Still on the table, however, is their desire to push through the design guidelines and height maximums for Larimer Square, which stands astride two adjacent historic districts. This is a critical piece of the conversation, as amendments to the historic districts’ legal protections would open a Pandora’s box for historic districts across the city.

Historic Denver remains committed to finding solutions for Larimer Square that retain its historic integrity and context while adapting to evolving uses, amenities and changes in the marketplace. We’ve identified a number of opportunities for new additions on the block, as well as the financial incentives and tools that can support the necessary rehabilitation of the historic structures.

At this time, Larimer Associates and Urban Villages have not presented a new development plan. Please stay tuned to our website, Facebook page and enewsletters for updates.

COMMENTS FROM THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL:

“Many months before the plan became public, the developers came and briefed me on the concept that they had. And in my office, I looked at that plan and said, “Whoa, this is going to be a problem. Go back out, meet with Historic Denver, and go back out and engage the community around this new concept.” -Mayor Michael Hancock

“While some see the opportunity to generate profit by building up in Larimer Square, I see the opportunity to define ourselves by refusing to succumb to the profit potential in service of standing firmly in our values and identity.” -Councilwoman-elect Candi CdeBaca

“Larimer Square was Denver’s first historic district that has been a major attraction for visitors. I am very concerned if we let the land owners tinker with this one; it sets a precedent for all the others.” -Councilwoman At-Large Deborah Ortega



Facade, looking north. Photo: Landmark Preservation Commission designation app, 1/28/19

New Denver Landmark: Cableland

Cableland, the official residence of Denver mayors at 4150 E. Shangri La Drive, is Denver’s most recent individual landmark. Passed by city council on April 29, the home is significant in several aspects, though most importantly for its strong tie to notable Denver resident and entrepreneur Bill Daniels, a pioneering and influential leader in cable television.

Daniels originally built Cableland in 1986, as both his private residence and an example of modern technology, amenities and design trends. The home was designed in the Postmodern architectural style, which is meant to be unique and surprising, relying on theatrics and luxury. Exterior features include a multi-level outdoor pool, heated driveway, and even squirrel condominiums. Interior features include a grand entertaining room for 200 people, four bedrooms, 13 bathrooms, three fireplaces, four kitchens, and an internal closed-circuit television system. There are 24 televisions throughout the home, as well as a media room complete with a wall of 64 televisions – created to display each station of Daniels’ Mile High Cablevision Empire at its height.

Landmarks of this age are often at significant risk, considered too young for protection but not yet appreciated by those who remember their construction. The home’s Denver Landmark status will protect it to ensure that this important piece of Denver’s history will be remembered and better understood. Daniels’ influence on our city is undeniable, and the home’s prominent location and civic use make designation at this time wholly appropriate. 🌿

WALKING TOURS
OFF TO A STRONG START



By Alison Salutz, Director of Community Programs

Despite a rainy May, our sixth season of Walking Tours has already ushered more than 300 guests through many of Denver’s most iconic neighborhoods! Led by our amazing volunteer guides, who spent the winter studying hard to provide the best information to guests, each tour shares our favorite stories about Denver’s past.

We have a great new partnership this year: We are partnering with Wynkoop Brewing, which is offering tour drink specials to all of our guests who attend our Friday evening LoDo tour. As in years past, we are also partnering with Clock Tower Events to make the top floors of the D&F Clock Tower available as part of our fascinating Larimer Square tour. Don’t miss this opportunity to experience this unique private space and its breathtaking views of Denver. We offer access to the Clock Tower as part of our Larimer Square tour on Thursdays and Saturdays at 2 p.m.

To further highlight Denver’s unique neighborhoods, community and history, we are continuing to expand our specialty tour offerings. This season, our tours include historic Five Points, in collaboration with the Black American West Museum. Tour guide Terri Gentry will reveal the history of the Welton Street Corridor, and share insights from her childhood in Five Points. We are also featuring Denver’s lavish historic homes with our Mansions of Quality Hill tour. Our third specialty tour explores Curtis Park and its development from a streetcar suburb to a thriving and diverse neighborhood.

Now that our season is in full swing, it’s a great time to sign up for a Walking Tour! Tickets are available for the entire season at historicdenver.org. Prices range from \$15-20/tour. 🌿



Diane, a Historic Denver docent.
Photo: Scott Dressel-Martin.



VICTORIAN HORRORS IN CAPITOL HILL:
CANDLELIGHT WALKING TOUR

On Oct. 12, we are hosting a candlelight walking tour prior to the members-only Victorian Horrors performance for Historic Denver members and attendees of the National Trust’s PastForward conference.

Before your guide leads you to the Molly Brown House Museum, you’ll enjoy exclusive access to some of Capitol Hill’s finest historic homes that reflect fascinating stories and architecture of the late 19th century. Once you arrive at the Museum, literary spirits from the past – including Edgar Allan Poe and HG Wells – will invade the rooms of the house (and your senses!) with live readings of their classic Victorian horror stories.

Join us for this one-of-a-kind evening of beautiful architecture, intriguing local history and engaging performances!

Watch your email inbox for a link to purchase tickets. (PastForward conference attendees have access to tickets through their conference registration.)

HISTORIC DENVER
WALKING TOURS

Tickets: historicdenver.org

Tours run daily until the end of October. Guided tours include Lower Downtown, Larimer Square (with special access to the D&F Clock Tower), Capitol Hill, and Historic 16th Street. Tours are about 90 minutes long, cover about 1 mile of walking, and are designed to blend engaging stories from Denver’s past with information about its unique architecture.



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DISCOVER DENVER:
RECENT DISCOVERIES

Our Discover Denver program, the citywide building survey Historic Denver leads in partnership with the City of Denver, identifies buildings that help tell Denver’s unique stories. Recently the program’s staff and volunteers have documented many interesting buildings in the North Capitol Hill, Cheesman Park, and Capitol Hill neighborhoods. Here is a sampling of some of the fascinating stories they have uncovered:

Queens Hotel: 1618-1620 Pennsylvania St.



Photos: Discover Denver staff

This structure was built in 1894 by brothers George and Gervase Guise. Now known as the Cornell Condominiums, the apartments were originally known as “The Queens Hotel,” or simply as “The Queens.” The Guise brothers were active developers in Denver prior to the 1893 Silver Panic, and it is likely that this was their last project in the city before they moved westward to Arizona. George Guise died in 1909 after falling into an abandoned mine shaft there. This building served as an upscale boarding house where tenants could live in luxury and eat prepared meals for many years. It was known by a variety of names over the years, including “The Wellington,” “The Harvard,” and “The Rucker.” By 1913, the building had been renamed the Cornell Hotel, a name it retained for the next five decades.

The Gables: 1407 E. 11th Ave.



The large, irregularly shaped apartment building known as “The Gables,” located at the northeast corner of E. 11th Avenue and Lafayette Street, began as two separate residences. While the 1903 Sanborn fire insurance map shows two 2-story brick homes in this location, the 1929 map shows the current configuration of the apartment building with the outlines of the two original residences clearly visible. In 1914, attorney Charles A. MacMillan (the owner of the two homes) asked Denver architect Montana Fallis to alter and add onto the residences, in order to create the existing apartment building. Fallis is perhaps best known for designing the Mayan Theater in Denver. By mid-1915, “The Gables” was advertised in local newspapers with upscale features that included sleeping porches, mission oak trim, and vacuum cleaners.

John A. Rush Residence: 1250 Emerson St.



This home was built in 1894 for the family of Denver attorney John A. Rush, who served as a Colorado State Senator from 1900 to 1904, and as district attorney from 1913 to 1916. He was the author of the 20th Amendment to the constitution of the State of Colorado, known as the Rush Amendment, which created the City and County of Denver by separating it from Arapahoe County. The Rush family lived at 1250 Emerson from 1895 until 1921. ❁

While the histories of some of the city’s buildings are well-known, most have stories still waiting to be discovered.

TO LEARN MORE, OR TO GET INVOLVED WITH DISCOVER DENVER AS A VOLUNTEER, visit discoverdenver.co.

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OUR STORY.**
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By Sigri Strand, Development Manager

In honor of National Historic Preservation Month, Historic Denver held its 3rd annual photo contest in May, titled “Landmarks of Today and Tomorrow.” As a preservation nonprofit that has worked to save the soul of our city for 49 years now, we were curious about which places and spaces are most special to Denverites. We asked for photo submissions highlighting Denver as the unique city that has charmed us all, featuring designated historic landmarks or a favorite neighborhood spot. Both amateur and professional photographers submitted photo entries to Historic Denver, and a jury of our board members selected the winners on June 20.

The Grand Prize winner is Brad Crooks for his image of the Rossonian Hotel in Five Points. We love the composition and quality of the image, and the way it shows people interacting with the building. We are thrilled to see the Rossonian coming back to life, and are proud to participate in the restoration of its iconic sign through a Colorado State Historical Fund grant. This photo portrays the building’s bright future as an anchor in the historic Five Points neighborhood. Brad wins a \$300 gift card thanks to our Prize Sponsor, Mike’s Camera, for his efforts.

The Fan Favorite winner with the most likes on Facebook is Joseph Gaines’s photo of the interior of St. John’s Cathedral. This photo beautifully captures the light and color of this Capitol Hill landmark. Joseph wins a group walking tour of his choice through LoDo, Capitol Hill, or Denver’s Main Street (16th Street Mall).

The 2nd Prize Winner is Andrew Ledbetter for his photograph of the J. Solf Building, a beautiful Queen Anne located in the Sun Valley neighborhood. We loved this image for its vibrant colors, and because it takes us to a quiet neighborhood – highlighting the fact that historic gems are tucked away in all corners of our city. The 3rd Prize Winner is Zachary Dougherty for his image of the Children’s Fountain in City Park. This image shows a unique perspective of City Park, a beloved landscape and landmark in our city. Our 2nd and 3rd Prize winners will also receive a Group Walking Tour of their choice.

The following Honorable Mentions will receive a membership to Historic Denver:

- David Stremme – The Wild Chipmunk at Lakeside Amusement Park
- Don Gardner – Trinity United Methodist Church
- Greg Sorensen – The Skybridge in the downtown Wells Fargo Center
- Lisa Crimando – People dancing at Cheesman Park Pavilion

These photos all highlight a wide range of places and spaces that give our city its soul. The entire album of entries can be viewed on our Facebook page at [facebook.com/historic.denver](https://www.facebook.com/historic.denver). Many thanks for your time and thoughtful submissions, photographers! 🌸



2nd Prize Winner: Andrew Ledbetter, J. Solf Building in Sun Valley



Grand Prize Winner: Brad Crooks, The Rossonian Hotel in Five Points



Fan Favorite: Joseph Gaines, St. John's Cathedral in Capitol Hill



3rd Prize Winner: Zachary Dougherty, Children's Fountain in City Park



PASTFORWARD CONFERENCE
COMING TO DENVER IN OCTOBER

The National Trust’s annual conference is returning to Denver for the first time since 2003! Our city has grown and changed dramatically since that time. We are looking forward to showcasing some of Denver’s unique preservation stories, both successes and challenges.

This three-day conference, the premier educational and networking event for preservationists from around the country, will feature key note speakers, education sessions, networking events and TrustLive – marquee presentations given by thought-provoking leaders and new voices, followed by a TalkBack segment with additional topic experts who contribute their ideas and experiences.

In addition to carefully crafted sessions and events, PastForward offers Field Studies that bring conference attendees out of the conference hotel and into Denver’s unique neighborhoods.

Historic Denver will be facilitating and assisting on several of these Field Studies throughout the conference:



Photo: Paul Brokering



Photo: Lyn Berry-Helmlinger

Our Overview Tour will help conference participants get to know the city, from its first commercial block and early homes to a rapidly growing, modern city, offering its residents the best of both past and present. We’ll explore some of Denver’s most iconic buildings, get a flavor for its distinct neighborhoods and discuss how historic preservation impacts city planning. This tour will be offered daily to conference participants.

Denver’s Westside is an important neighborhood, as a founding site of the city of Denver as well as a cultural site for the rise of the Chicano Movement in the late 1960s. Our neighborhood guides will share information about areas including the 9th Street Historic District, Casa Mayan, La Alma Lincoln Park (and the Chicano murals there), as well as their own families’ rich history and contributions to the community. This tour will be offered on Thursday, Oct. 10.



Photo: Historic Denver archives



Photo: Brandon Marshall

To explore the many contributions of women to Denver’s history, our Women’s History Tour will connect the lives of Libby Byers, Margaret Brown, Anne Evans, and Justina Ford by way of a bus tour that includes several stops to tour historic homes. This tour will be offered on Thursday, Oct. 10.

Mike McPhee, author of the Dana Crawford biography “50 Years Saving the Soul of a City,” will lead tour goes through the highlights of Dana Crawford’s Denver projects, from Larimer Square and Union Station to the Flour Mill and Acme Lofts. This tour will highlight Crawford’s indelible impact on the city and how it looks today. It will be offered on Thursday, Oct. 10.



Photo: John Olson

To explore Denver’s Five Points neighborhood, we will begin at the Blair Caldwell Library, then follow the Welton Street Corridor to the Black American West Museum. Along the route, hear about the people and stories that have made this neighborhood an important cultural district. This tour will be offered on Saturday, Oct. 12.

The conference recently announced its keynote speakers, which include singer/songwriter Amythyst Kiah, Justin Garrett Moore (executive director at the New York City Public Design Commission), and singer/songwriter Dar Williams. ❁

PASTFORWARD CONFERENCE

Oct. 10-12
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MOLLY BROWN HOUSE MUSEUM

THE IRELAND/DENVER CONNECTION: THE BROWNS' IRISH ROOTS RUN DEEP IN COLORADO

By Andrea Malcomb, Director of the Molly Brown House Museum



Photos by Alan Groarke

conducting research for his doctoral dissertation on Irish immigration to Colorado during the silver boom days of the 1870s and 1880s.

The unmarked graves in Leadville, which disappear into the trees all around the cemetery, became a mystery for Walsh to solve, as well as an ongoing project dedicated to restoring the names of the Irish miners, their wives, and their children who are buried here. Most of the Irish miners were buried in the “Catholic Free Section” because they could not afford the \$15 fee for a plot. Many of these simple, wood markers have since rotted away. Today, the only way to tell where the graves are located is to look for where the ground dips in even rows.

In an interview with Denver Westword’s Brad Weismann in 2016, Walsh said:
“Life expectancy was short, in the thirties, and infant mortality was high. There are hundreds of infants and children buried out there. Of course, for the workers, a big killer was mining accidents, but a lot of the time they just listed cause of death as pneumonia. It was used as a catch-all term. There was typhoid, black lung. It’s a story that has been waiting to be told. It’s important to note that, though two-thirds or more of the dead there are Irish, there are many there who were not. We want to recognize everyone.”

Walsh’s efforts to restore names to the unmarked graves have since catalyzed into a memorial project in Evergreen Cemetery dedicated to all of the Irish immigrants who made the Rocky Mountains their home. Ambassador Mulhall’s visit is tied to Ireland’s commitment to this memorial project through grant funding, provided by the Irish



government and facilitated by INCO and Consul General Adrian Farrell. Fundraising partners on this project include Jim Walsh and the Rocky Mountain Irish Roots Collaborative; the Irish Network Colorado (INCO); Denver’s Honorary Consul to Ireland Jim Lyons; the Friends of Historic Evergreen Cemetery, and Leadville residents Kathleen Fitzsimmons and Luke Finken; former Denver Auditor Denis Gallagher; Noel Hickey through his Celtic Tavern; and our own Molly Brown House Museum.

Research continues this summer, through a partnership between Walsh’s UCD department, our Museum, and Project Children, a program that places Irish students at American internships each summer. Project Children was established in 1975 by NYPD bomb squad member Denis Mulcahy, to help children from Catholic and

In May, the Molly Brown House Museum was honored to host a reception for the Ambassador of Ireland to the United States, H.E. Daniel Mulhall. The ambassador’s visit to Colorado was arranged by outgoing Consul General of Ireland Adrian Farrell (who is based out of the Irish Consulate in Austin, Texas), and supported by several stakeholder groups in Colorado, including the Museum.

The primary reason for Mulhall’s visit lies some 100 miles southwest of Denver in Margaret and J.J. Brown’s former hometown of Leadville, Colo. The town’s Evergreen Cemetery, established in 1877, contains “somewhere between 1,200 and 2,000 unmarked graves,” according to University of Colorado – Denver professor Jim Walsh. He made this discovery while

Protestant backgrounds escape “The Troubles” of the Northern Ireland Conflict and live together in the United States over the course of a summer. The project ran for 40 years and brought more than 23,000 children to the U.S. The organization’s newer internship program, established in 1995, continues to bring students to the U.S. to live and work.



educational, and cultural ties between Ireland and the U.S. She also met with Alan Groarke and Lisa Switzer of INCO to learn more about the Leadville memorial project. Mulhall, in his remarks during the reception held at the Molly Brown House Museum on May 13, repeated O’Connor’s invitation to further open up business and travel between Denver and Ireland.

Historians Tom Noel, Denis Gallagher, and Jim Walsh will each tell you that the influence of the Irish runs deep in Denver. It can be seen threading through our social, economic, and political past, and in traditions many Denverites hold dear. It lives through such groups as the Irish Network Colorado, Denver’s large St. Patrick’s Day parades, the Colorado Irish Festival, and countless other events, all reported on by Denver’s Celtic Connection newspaper. The struggles and achievements of the Irish in Colorado helped shape this city into what it is today, and in Denver you can still find those deep Irish roots all around, including at the Molly Brown House Museum.

Ambassador Daniel Mulhall’s visit comes on the heels of a March visit to Denver by the Irish Minister for High Education, Mary Mitchell O’Connor. Minister O’Connor met with various officials, including the governor and the mayor, to promote economic,

“EVERYONE BUT THE BROWNS:” 1340 PENNSYLVANIA ST. THROUGH THE YEARS



A historical photo of the parlor at the Museum, when Art Leisenring owned the house. From the Art Leisenring Collection.

MOLLY BROWN HOUSE MUSEUM SUMMER EXHIBIT OPEN MAY 8 - AUGUST 26

Included in museum general admission. As always, members are free!

Summer Hours at the Museum

June 3 – Aug. 18	Monday through Friday: First tour starts at 9:30 a.m. Last tour starts at 3:30 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday	First tour starts at 10 a.m. Last tour starts at 3:30 p.m.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:
FRAN SCHILT

By Kim Popetz, Volunteer and Events Coordinator

Fran Schilt, one of our longest-serving volunteers, is leaving us to rejoin her family in Wyoming. When she became a volunteer at the Molly Brown House Museum in June 1996, she told our scheduler that she would be coming in every Thursday morning to guide tours. Fran did exactly that until this past April. We are going to miss her terribly.

We are not the only organization in the Denver metro area that will miss Fran. She belonged to more than one historical and costume society, and was a long-serving volunteer at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

While reliable is a word often used to describe Fran, staff and volunteers at the Museum also use the words faithful, resilient, thoughtful and motherly. Museum Specialist Hannah Herron recalls Fran’s last event, when she and Fran were greeting guests in the doorway of the Museum. Fierce winds started swirling all of the petals from nearby flowering trees, making little tornadoes in the air all around them. Hannah estimates that about 3,000 of these little petals blew into the entryway along with the guests! Fran had asked to be stationed in that area for the event. When Hannah returned to that area toward the end of the night, she found that Fran had picked up every single petal by hand!

Aileen Waski, the Museum’s Visitor Services Manager, describes Fran as an “undercover wild child,” and more than one person mentioned Fran’s sneaky sense of humor and amazing laugh. My personal favorite was the time Fran appeared next to my desk with one of her beautiful costume skirts raised into the air (did I mentioned that she is an accomplished seamstress and costume maker?), showing off the details that most people she encountered would never get to see: the wacky tights she was wearing underneath, that perfectly encapsulated her sense of humor. They also, somehow, always matched beautifully.

Fran is definitively multi-talented and hard-working. In addition to repeatedly



Photo courtesy of the Molly Brown House Museum.

receiving rave reviews for her tours over the years, she also headed up many of our hat workshops, made a Victorian Halloween costume and a replica of Margaret’s stage costume for exhibit, and volunteered her time for fashion shows and Museum events galore. Another Museum volunteer, Annie, recalls that Fran offered to help at a hat workshop, despite having no hat-making experience and no talents in that area. Part way through the event, Annie approached Fran, distraught by the mess she had made. Covered in hot glue and feathers, having never used a glue gun before that night, Annie said, “I was tarred and feathered.” Fran just laughed and said, “You know, you could have sewed all of that on” in her typical deadpan manner, and then proceeded to clean Annie up – recommending that she just give advice for the remainder of the workshop.

While we could go on for hours about the fun Fran brings to every occasion, I will close by saying that, even in leaving us, Fran has created

a true legacy. She recently brought in more than two decades worth of letters, notes, fliers, and newsletters from her time at the Museum. She had painstakingly saved and catalogued everything in binders, giving us a little history of ourselves as she leaves to rejoin her children and grandchildren in Wyoming.

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Historic Denver offers diverse volunteer opportunities at the Molly Brown House, though our Walking Tours program, and through Discover Denver. Learn more at historicdenver.org.

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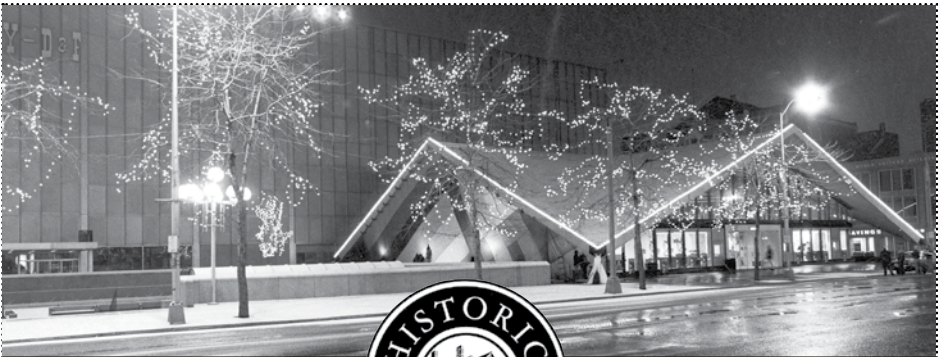
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



To purchase tickets to upcoming events at the Molly Brown House Museum, visit mollybrown.org.
Events are held at the Molly Brown House Museum, 1340 Pennsylvania Street, Denver.



ATTEND OUR FIRST-EVER HISTORIC DISTRICT ROUNDUP!

Wed., July 10 | 5:30-8 p.m.
Centennial Hall at Johnson & Wales University, 7150 Montview Blvd. #1

Historic Denver homeowners: As Denver continues to grow and change, your historic district only becomes more important. Come meet fellow historic district residents, learn what’s happening in historic preservation policy, dive into hot topics, and share your ideas and interests with our team. The evening will include light refreshments, an opening presentation and breakout sessions. To RSVP, send an email to info@historicdenver.org.

Topics include:

- Historic places at risk
- What Blueprint Denver says about historic preservation
- The future of historic districts
- Design Review 101
- Sustaining Denver’s parks and parkways
- Accessory Dwelling Units in historic districts



RE:DENVER WALKING TOUR OF THE LA ALMA LINCOLN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

Tues., July 16
6:30-8:30 p.m. | **FREE admission**

We’re taking re:Denver on the road! Join us for a tour of La Alma Lincoln Park with two expert guides, archaeologist Lucha Martinez de Luna and Historic Denver board member, Ean Tafoya. This duo will share their knowledge of the monumental murals in La Alma Lincoln Park and their history. Don't miss this great opportunity to explore this unique neighborhood in detail, learn about its past and present, and see a few of the beautiful murals that grace the walls of its buildings. **Sign up for the tour on our website, beginning July 1, at historicdenver.org/tours-events/.**



MARGARET BROWN'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

Thurs., July 18 | 6-8 p.m. | **Tickets: \$20**

Join us to celebrate the Unsinkable Margaret “Molly” Brown, on what would have been her 152nd birthday! This casual Edwardian garden party at the Molly Brown House Museum will charm you with live music, lawn games (croquet, anyone?), punch and cake. Edwardian attire is not required, but wouldn't it be fun to dress for the occasion?



Photo: Library of Congress

SALON SERIES: WHAT WOULD MARGARET BROWN DO?

Women’s Organizations Then and Now
Thurs., July 11 | 5:30-7 p.m.
Molly Brown House Museum

Join us to learn the history of organizations such as the League of Women Voters, National Woman’s Party, National American Woman Suffrage Association, American Woman Suffrage Association, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, American Civil Liberties Union, the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union, and more! We’ll discuss which groups are actively championing women today. Our Salon Series identifies and tells underrepresented women’s stories, and looks for the causes and issues that encourage gender equality.



Photo: Denver Public Library

INSIDER TOURS AT THE MUSEUM: MARGARET BROWN'S EARLY LIFE

Wed., July 10 | 9-10:30 a.m.
General Admission

Margaret came of age in the bustling river town of Hannibal, Missouri. Let’s learn about life for a young girl growing up as the daughter of Irish immigrants in post-Civil War America.



FREE DAY AT THE MUSEUM

Thurs., Aug. 1

Celebrate Colorado Day with us for free at the Molly Brown House Museum, thanks to funding from the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD).



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