

# HISTORIC DENVER NEWS

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**“Make no little plans.**  
They have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably will not themselves be realized. Make big plans, aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever growing insistency. Remember that our sons and grandsons are going to do things that would stagger us.”  
Daniel Burnham, 1909

Inside the Backshop at Burnham Yards. Historic Denver file photo

## MAKE NO LITTLE PLANS: IMAGINING A GREAT FUTURE FOR SITES FROM DENVER’S INDUSTRIAL PAST

by Leah Charney, Historic Denver News Managing Editor

Certain beloved sites, once transformed, seem as though they were always destined for their current use.

To today’s shoppers, it’s as though the former airplane factory that is now Aurora’s Stanley Marketplace was perfectly designed to be a destination retail and dining center, anchored by more than 50 independent businesses and featuring one of the best outdoor children’s playgrounds in the region. Driving down from Highlands along Speer Boulevard, the imposing and impressive REI flagship store reminds precisely of the spot where early Denver began, where the Platte River and Cherry Creek meet (and that it might be time to replace the wool socks, given our recent spate of winter weather). It seems impossible to think that Union Station, now so universally loved as a dining and transportation hub, was threatened with demolition in 1980 and again prior to the 2014 restoration.

By operating from a place of curiosity — asking “What can that building be? How can that place best be used for today’s world?” — we find new opportunities for both preservation and development, and for the two to work hand in hand. We can use historic buildings as one part of the solution to our housing crisis. We can adaptively reuse sites, especially industrial buildings like those mentioned above. We can create surrounding infill and infrastructure that supports stronger economic development and stronger communities.

For the first 140 or so years of our history, Denver was a boom and bust town whose fortunes relied on specific industries — like mining, sugar beets, coal, rubber, and later oil and gas and telecom — that often bubbled before bursting. This history has led to development occurring in fits and starts, with periods of intense construction punctuated by long fallow intervals in between. It also has created opportunities.

When Federico Peña was elected mayor in the 1980s, his administration worked to create a city focused on parks and parkways, multi-modal transportation and connected neighborhoods — a city designed for life, work, and play. Major public projects were born out of Peña’s initiatives, and continued well beyond his time in office. This resulted in bringing professional baseball back to Denver, construction of the Colorado

Convention Center and Denver International Airport, catalyzed RTD’s ability to finally launch their long desired light rail program, and led to the revitalization of hundreds of historic structures, including the creation of the Lower Downtown Historic District. It was nothing short of visionary.

Preservation wasn’t standing in the way of progress then and it certainly isn’t now: Only about 4% of Denver’s current structures have legal protection from demolition. Historic preservation is as much about the past as it is about shaping the future. Historic preservation is as much about the past as it is about shaping the future, with several former industrial sites in the city ripe for the same kind of reimagining as we saw take place in earnest across the 20 years following Peña’s bold vision for Denver.

**“Imagine a great city.”**  
FEDERICO PEÑA, 1983

Zuni Steam Plant powered the growth of Denver’s westward expansion for more than a century, before it stopped generating electricity in 2015 and steam heat in 2019. It was largely constructed in four stages between 1901 and 1926 along the banks of the South Platte River, where it has towered over the La Alma Lincoln Park and Sun Valley communities ever since. The plant was officially decommissioned in 2021, and, in the time since, neighbors have advocated that the building be retained and reused as a community-serving asset.

That the plant blanketed the nearby neighborhoods with its pollutants over its decades of operation is precisely part of why the community desires it to remain and be reimagined. It is those who have historically been affected by its environmental impacts who are asking now that the Zuni Steam Plant transform into a community asset.

When the site landed on Colorado’s Most Endangered Places list in 2024, Jeanne Granville of the Sun Valley Community Coalition reminded us that the greenest building is one that already exists. Granville noted, “While there needs to be some environmental

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# FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO



When considering what to include in this letter, I was torn between looking back to 2024 or forward to 2025. It feels right to focus on the things that define our approach to delivering our mission and supporting Denver's myriad communities.

In 2024, we embarked on a rebranding exercise that culminated in the launch of our new logo in May. Intended to visually represent our commitment to telling the stories of all the city's neighborhoods, it signifies that building preservation resources (and the benefits they can bring) should be accessible to all. This year, we are going one step further by redesigning and relaunching our website, bringing additional accessibility to our largest digital asset. Informing and connecting communities with preservation resources is key to delivering our mission and I can't wait to see the site go live over the next few months.

Another characteristic of 2024 that will continue into 2025 and beyond is our commitment to tackling difficult issues head on nor shying away from making hard decisions. We made the challenging decision to support the evolution of Civic Center Park and its Greek Theater and Promenade. Though it marks a change to the orientation of the current outdoor amphitheater, the suggested design will create a fully wheelchair-accessible performance space at both stage and audience levels while also preserving the Voorhies Memorial, Colonnade of Civic Benefactors, and the iconic murals by Alan Tupper True. At the time of writing the project had not yet been reviewed by the Landmark Preservation Commission, so time will tell whether this project will move forward.

Our work at 1662 Market St., known to most of us as El Chapultepec, and the two derelict houses with commercial additions at 1600-1618 Colfax Ave. illustrates our willingness to work to save places of importance, no matter how difficult or time-consuming. Somewhat paradoxically, the building on Market Street, which was considered non-contributing to the surrounding historic district was saved. We appreciate the willingness of the building's owner and are excited to see the construction unfold. Sadly, the two buildings on Colfax, both of which are contributing structures to the Wyman Historic District, are set to be demolished. We now seek to influence policy in the hope that the neglect, insufficient enforcement, and lack of accountability that led to the pending demise of these two properties does not happen again.

Turning to a very different structure in a different part of the city, I look forward to seeing how our campaign to support the Sun Valley community in their efforts to save the landmark (but not landmarked) Zuni Steam Plant progresses this year. We will approach that with the same rigor and determination that has come to characterize our work over the past five-plus decades.

Finally, this will be a big year for the beloved Molly Brown House Museum. Your generosity allowed us to reach the fundraising target for landscaping enhancements and we also secured a significant grant from the State Historical Fund for masonry and chimney repairs. When our new website launches later in the year it will be even easier to learn more about the State Historical Fund and other preservation resources that can be used to restore and maintain historic properties.

Wishing you all a successful start to this year and looking forward to connecting with many of you over the coming months.

John Deffenbaugh  
President & CEO, Historic Denver



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We are grateful for all who support Historic Denver, including our members and the businesses featured within these pages. Special thanks to John and Suzanne Rohde for their patronage.







MAKE NO LITTLE PLANS CONT. Neighbors want the Zuni Steam Plant turned into a community amenity. Photos: Left, Jay Homstad; Right, Courtesy Jeanne Granville

remediation on the site, if the buildings were saved and re-used, it could open up even more spaces for the community to benefit from.”

Examples of adaptive reuse in former power plants can be found across the globe, including as nearby as the former Fort Collins Municipal Power Plant, which became a research facility and extension site of Colorado State University in the early 1990s. The Blackhawk Generating Station in Beloit, Wisconsin, became a student union and recreation center that opened in February 2020 to serve Beloit College. Beyond higher education examples, Seaholm Power Plant in Austin, Texas, transformed in 2016 into office space and a restaurant surrounded by new construction of 280 residences, a smaller commercial building that includes a grocery store, and a downtown parking garage. And London’s Tate Modern Museum is located in the former Bankside Power Station, where more than 40 million visitors have gaped at stunning art since it opened in May 2000.

Even with the outpouring of support from citizens, community organizations, and other partners, Zuni Steam Plant’s own fate is quite precarious. Colorado Public Utilities Commission granted Xcel the right to “decommission, dismantle, and demolish all structures, and remediate and restore the former plant” in 2021. That prompted the Denver City Council to step in and ask Xcel to reconsider their plans. In the time since, Xcel has begun some of the remediation process but has left the vacant power station and its related buildings intact. For now.

The city has first right of refusal to purchase the site, and recent interest expressed by the Denver mayor’s office provides a ray of hope for its preservation. If neither the city nor an outside buyer interested in keeping the historic assets steps forward, the Zuni Steam Plant will likely be lost; Xcel may find it easier to sell the property if the site is demolished.

**“If we don’t demand the quality of development of the public realm we want, we’re going to get the kind of private development we deserve.”**

JENNIFER MOULTON, 1997

Blueprint Denver, the citywide land use and transportation plan first adopted in 2002 and most recently updated in 2019, calls for complete neighborhoods that continually evolve while retaining the authentic places that make them special. Nowhere does that seem more possible than at Burnham Yard. Like the Zuni Steam Plant, Burnham Yard represents an opportunity to reimagine a historically industrial site as a modern hub for community activity and sustainable growth.

When Denver & Rio Grande railroad built its main yard in 1871, five years before Colorado became a state, the Burnham Yard prompted industrial and residential growth in Denver and beyond. Thousands from the nearby working class neighborhoods of La Alma Lincoln Park and Baker were also deeply impacted by the yards and their histories are closely interwoven over the nearly 150 years that the land served as a rail yard and service facility.

After Burnham Yard closed in 2016, Historic Denver produced a full report with Square Moon Consultants that identified six surviving historic buildings and three historic sites that should be considered for preservation and reuse. These included the 1906 Prairie School-influenced Roundhouse Foreman’s Office; the 1901 Coach Shop, which was gutted by fire in 2021 but whose brick facade could be integrated into a new, modern structure that plays with what remains of the past; and the most visible structure, the 1924 Backshop (Locomotive Shop), which abuts the 8th Avenue Bridge.

The Colorado Department of Transportation

(CDOT) commissioned an environmental study in 2019 that found that the site could be remediated and reused for multiple purposes. CDOT decided to purchase the land for \$50 million in 2021 with plans to move existing freight tracks along the Valley Highway to the Burnham Yard site to enable expansion of I-25. The remaining land was to be developed into a live-work-play community, reconnecting the 58 acres of former rail yards to the La Alma Lincoln Park neighborhood, leading Gov. Jared Polis to say, “Burnham Yard is a transformational transit property for our state and can help Colorado meet our goals for making housing more affordable, commutes shorter, and our air cleaner.”

The remaining historic assets and sheer size of the site offer a significant opportunity: As Historic Denver has noted repeatedly over the years, historic buildings are flexible and adaptable, and have proven over generations that they can be modified to serve a community’s needs, offering density without demolition. The surrounding open parcels can be developed alongside to weave a piece of the city back together on an even greater scale than similar sites, like the 12-acre mixed-use former Coca Cola plant turned Bottleworks District in urban Indianapolis or 16-acre Sears distribution center than became Ponce City Market in Atlanta, which abuts the 22-mile loop of parks, trails, and transit that comprise the Atlanta Beltline.

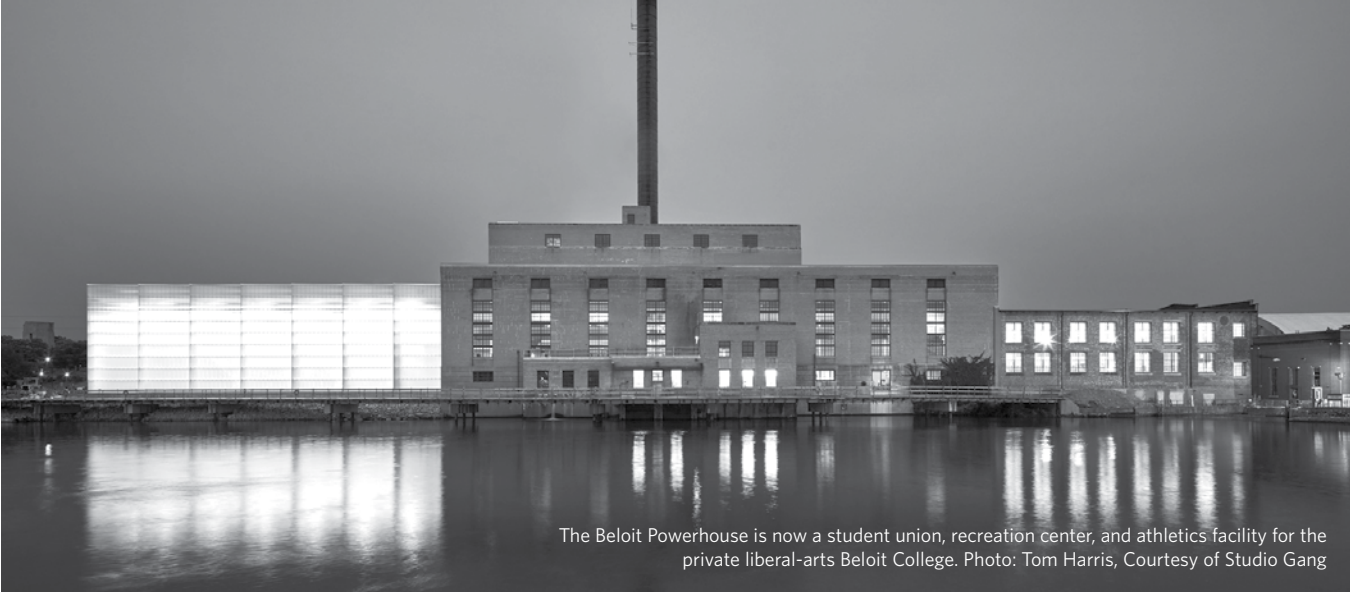
Burnham Yard was once a major center of activity in Denver, providing employment for thousands, catalyzing adjacent development, and linking communities throughout Colorado and the West. It can be again, but, like Zuni Steam Plant, its future is uncertain. In November 2024, CDOT announced that they no longer plan to complete interstate expansion and the agency is now positioning the property for sale. City planners have stated their hope to complete an area plan to help guide the site’s redevelopment, but that work will only begin sometime this year and may not be completed in time if CDOT successfully sells the parcel first.

The throughline to these sites is not only their scale: Each represents a significant amount of land, but also reusable historic assets and an industrial past. Both present an opportunity to think strategically about what these sites could be for our city and how preservation can go hand-in-hand with growth and development in both places. What is our present and future vision for Denver? How can we add vibrancy to our neighborhoods, create better connected spaces, and retain historic buildings that have been part of Denver’s landscape for years?

Together, new and historic buildings create a dynamic and livable city, where preserving the places that are anchors in our community — and adapting them to meet modern needs — results in a vibrant mix of old and new. ■

## STAY UPDATED

on news and plans for both Zuni Steam Plant and Burnham Yards by visiting the “Current Issues” page at [historicdenver.org](https://historicdenver.org)



The Beloit Powerhouse is now a student union, recreation center, and athletics facility for the private liberal-arts Beloit College. Photo: Tom Harris, Courtesy of Studio Gang





Today, the 17 Mile House is part of a 70-acre open space farm park in Arapahoe County. The site includes the mile house, barn, and silo. Photo: Dreamstime

**THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL AND MILE HOUSES: THOSE WHO CREATED  
A WAY TO STAY WHILE OTHERS WERE JUST PASSING THROUGH**

by Jessie Foster, Guest Contributor

As you drive along Leetsdale Drive and Parker Road through Denver, Glendale, Aurora, and Parker, you are driving on top of history. Underneath the now paved road is one of the original dirt thoroughfares for those traveling by foot, wagon, and stagecoach to the Pikes Peak regional gold fields. Named after the Smoky Hill River, the Smoky Hill Trail was composed of three branches: north, middle, and south. The south branch brought travelers from the eastern Kansas Territory all the way to the barely bustling (by today’s standards) Denver City.

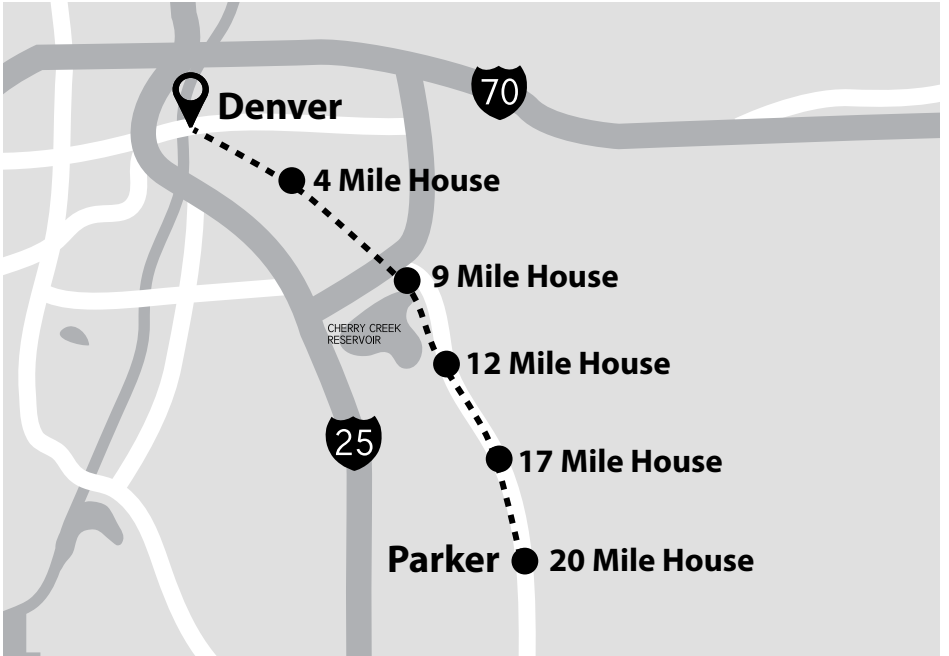
Today, you can trace the passageway of the Smoky Hill Trail not just on a map but by visiting several of the Mile Houses that still stand as historic markers. During the 1850s and 1860s, savvy business-minded individuals seized the opportunity to profit from the high volume of travelers. There were six known Mile Houses that served as trail markers indicating how many miles remained until reaching Denver City, located at today’s intersection of Colfax Avenue and Broadway, where a historic trail monument marks the spot.

Like our modern-day rest areas and gas stations along highways, the Mile Houses — often family-owned homesteads — were also used for public lodging or respite, community gatherings, trading, and stagecoach stops. According to historian Bette D. Peters, those that served as stage stops were classified as either way stations or home stations. A way station would primarily focus on switching out the horses for the stage companies and having extra teamsters ready, while home stations were places where passengers could get a home-cooked meal and possible lodging accommodations.

Some time between 1862 and 1864, Alfred Butters built a one-room log cabin near the present-day Old Town Parker. Attached to his cabin was a makeshift post office for travelers to post notices or gather additional provisions. It became known as the Pine Grove Post Office and also as the Pine Grove Way Station, and today is frequently referred to as the 20-Mile House. Though the old cabin was eventually torn down, the original post office area was restored by the Parker Area Historical Society and sits at the intersection of Main Street and Stage Run Road. Today, visitors can see the post office structure and historic trail markers for both the Smoky Hill Trail and the Cherokee Trail. Because the southern branch of the Smoky Hill merged with the Cherokee Trail near the site of the 20-Mile House, these two trails are sometimes referred to interchangeably.

If you follow Parker Road three miles west of the 20-Mile House, you will eventually drive by the 17 Mile House Farm Park. It is generally believed that freight owner and gold-seeker George C. Schleier built the original part of the structure in 1862. However, it wasn’t until 1866 when the new owner, Mary Hightower, turned the house into an inn for travelers. She was one of two widows known to have supported themselves and children by purchasing property along the trail and turning their homes into inns or stage stops. The 17 Mile House transferred ownership several times and eventually was in danger of being torn down for development. The Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society helped to save the property from destruction. In 2000, the Trust for Public Land took ownership and now the house (and surrounding 30 acres) belongs to the Town of Parker and Arapahoe County Open Space under a conservation easement. The 17 Mile House is a prime example of grassroots preservation where the community and local agencies came together to preserve local history.

Although the remnants of the Twelve Mile and Nine Mile Houses are no longer visible, they were both located at the present-day site of Cherry Creek State Park. The Twelve Mile House was located near Parker Road and East Orchard Road; there is now a horse stable called Twelve Mile Stables near the vicinity of the old house. Being one of the larger homes, the Twelve Mile House functioned as a stage stop, a lodge, and a place for community dances. Owners John and Jane Melvin often hosted dinners and community dances, like several of the other Mile House owners. The Nine Mile House sat near the intersection of Parker Road and I-225, and is the namesake of the present



day Light Rail stop.

Unfortunately, less information exists regarding the Seven Mile House. However, an excerpt from Margaret Long’s book, *The Smoky Hill Trail*, states that the Seven Mile House, “was formerly the O’Neil Ranch” and located on the “east bank of the Cherry Creek and the west side of the valley road which runs parallel to Colorado 83 (Parker Road).”

Finally, the last stage stop and Mile House before Denver City is the Four Mile House. In 1859, brothers Samuel and Jonas Brantner built a small log cabin located next to Cherry Creek (now surrounded by present-day Glendale). Realizing this wasn’t their ideal spot for agricultural development, they sold a year later to Mary Cawker, a widow and single mother of two. She was the first to operate the log home as a stage stop and tavern. Over the years, several additions were added to the original log structure. Today, the original log structure is hidden behind an updated siding to help protect it. However, if you take a tour of the building, you can see the original interior structure of the log cabin. This part of the Four Mile House is considered the oldest standing structure in Denver.

There are mile markers, whether it be on the road of life or just your everyday commute, that signify where you are and how far you have traveled. The Smoky Hill Trail and Mile Houses are reminders that history is often right under our feet. And, thanks to historic preservation, it is often found right beside us! When you visit one of these still-standing sites you don’t have to imagine history — you can see it right in front of you. Architecture becomes the artifact, but the Mile Houses are more than old relics of a bygone era, they tell the stories of courageous, forward-thinking women and men. While others were merely passing through with visions of gold and grandeur, the Mile House operators were staking claims of their own and finding ways to make a life. Much has changed since travelers walked the dusty Smoky Hill Trail. However, several significant mile markers remain, reminding us where we have been and how far we have come.

*Jessie Foster works as a park guide for Rocky Mountain National Park. She has a master’s degree in public history from the University of Colorado at Denver and served as a 2016 Koch Fellowship recipient for History Colorado. She is an advocate for public lands, hidden histories, and historic preservation.*



The Public House Bar and Roberta’s Pizza at Urban Cowboy are housed in the Schleier Mansion’s historic carriage house. Photo: Ben Fitchett

**FROM MILLIONAIRE’S ROW TO BOUTIQUE HOTEL: URBAN COWBOY NOW OPEN IN THE SCHLEIER MANSION**

by Leah Charney, Historic Denver Managing Editor

In the early 1880s, when Denver’s monied elite began moving to Capitol Hill, “Millionaire’s Row” sprang up along Grant Street. Early adopters to the neighborhood showed their success by building in proximity to the Colorado State Capitol. Businessman George Schleier built his mansion at 1665 Grant Street — a prominent location on a hill overlooking downtown and a mere two blocks from the gold dome.

The 17,000-square-foot George Schleier Mansion was designed and constructed by prominent architect Frank Edbrooke (who also designed The Brown Palace a few blocks away). Built of red sandstone with an onion-shaped dome tower, the house was Edbrooke’s grandest and most ornate among his residential designs. Interior features include seven fireplaces, plaster ornamentation, original stained glass, and a staircase with hand-carved gargoyles and swans. The mansion was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 and is one of the 73 easements held by Historic Denver. And now, after decades as offices, the elaborate mansion has been reborn as the boutique hotel Urban Cowboy Denver.

Fourth in the Urban Cowboy portfolio of bespoke lodging, the Denver outpost combines history with high style to cater to design-driven travelers. Transformed into a 16-room boutique hotel, bar, and restaurant, the mansion underwent a multi-year restoration before opening in October 2024 — including of the hand-carved coffered ceilings — while simultaneously updating to cater to the needs and desires of modern travelers. In addition to carefully curated antiques and artifacts and custom wallpaper, each room now includes a copper soaking tub; the Honeymoon Suite has two. Urban Cowboy is no stranger to adaptive re-use, including a Nashville property that is also located in a Queen Anne mansion. Reimagining the Schleier Mansion was also made easier thanks to historic tax credits, which were used for both interior and exterior renovations.

Urban Cowboy Denver also includes on-site food and beverage options. The Parlor Bar inside the main property is a wine bar with bottles, wines by the glass, and wine-based cocktails; drinks here can also be enjoyed on the expansive patio. The former carriage house, where the Schleier family once kept a horse and buggy, is now Roberta’s wood-fired pizza and Public House Bar. The aesthetic of the two-story spot (the upstairs is an event space) was inspired by the saloons of Denver’s earliest days, when George Schleier first arrived to town.

Though perhaps not a name as well-known today as others who came to Denver at the same time (like Byers or Clayton), George Schleier made his mark as a pioneer and in real estate. After immigrating from Germany as a child, Schleier spent time in Ohio, New York, and Wisconsin before he made it to the newly-founded Denver in December 1858. After overwintering, he and six others set out in June 1859 to seek their fortunes in the mountains. Instead, they erected a toll bridge across the high waters of Clear Creek, where Golden is today. The bridge, which cost \$600 to construct, is said to have paid for itself in its first day operating! Schleier returned to Denver, where he is credited with erecting the first two-story house in the nascent city. He later served in government as City Tax Collector for 1866 and 1867 and was elected to Denver City Council in 1886. He died in 1900 at the estimated age of 75.

But even in death, Schleier was housed in one of the largest and fanciful crypts at Fairmount Cemetery: He is permanently ensconced in a two-tone granite miniature chapel complete with quoining and a hewn stone base. It’s no mansion, but, as forever homes go, it’s quite grand.

**WELTON STREET CAFE NOW COOKING AGAIN**

by Leah Charney, Historic Denver Managing Editor

After more than two years, Welton Street Cafe reopened its doors on November 8, 2024. A Five Points mainstay since 1986, the newest location is open at 2883 Welton St. The restaurant, initially opened by Mona and Flynn Dickerson, is now operated by three of their nine children. Welton Street Cafe was nominated to the 50 Actions for 50 Places campaign in 2021. Historic Denver partnered with the Dickerson family to help them apply for and manage a \$40,000 Backing Historic Small Restaurants grant awarded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The new space is in a one-story 20th Century commercial building and is double the size of their previous location. Though the menu items feel familiar, the new Welton Street Cafe boasts a brand new bar! They are now open for lunch and dinner, but if you’re planning to pop by for one of their famous pates (a Caribbean-style savory hand pie) a reservation is strongly encouraged.

**IT’S WONDERFUL, BUT IT’S NOT HISTORIC-HISTORIC**

by Mike Owen, Preservation Services Manager

Owners of historic properties often come to Historic Denver during estate planning after they’ve lived in their home for decades. But it’s time to retire, and think about how to sell their historic home to a buyer who won’t demolish it. A great way to protect the building is to designate it. Since State and National Register designations are generally honorific, with little to no demolition protections, we often guide owners to the Denver Landmarks Preservation Commission. Alternatively, an easement could be placed on the property if it were placed in the State Register.

If the building is not part of a historic district already, to qualify as a Denver Individual Landmark a property must be at least 30 years old, retain its historic integrity, and meet at least three of 10 significance criteria. But what if the building does not technically meet those criteria? Are there other options? Yes... but it’s complicated... and not so clear cut.

We recently met with an owner of a lovely craftsman home in Washington Park. Built in 1923 by Louis C. Pakiser, the historic home has an incredible amount of integrity and historic fabric both outside and in. We’ve begun the discussion with the owner of researching the building further to see if it would qualify as a Denver Landmark. If it doesn’t, that should in no way imply the building is somehow less important or “less historic.”

These conversations arise from time to time, and when they do, I am reminded of the famous line from Seinfeld, “It’s not you, it’s me.” (You have to forgive me, since I’m from New York, all of life’s challenging interactions can be summed up and explained in a Seinfeld episode.) Or in this case, the house is wonderful and historic, but not historic-historic. It’s not you, it’s me (and the criteria I have to work with). And that’s the truth, because there are some incredible buildings that may just not technically meet certain city and/or state criteria for landmarking.

The state statute requires “Conservation easements relating to historical, architectural, or cultural significance may only be applied to buildings, sites, or structures which have been listed in the national register of historic places or the State Register of Historic Properties, which have been designated as a landmark by a local government or landmarks commission under the provisions of the ordinances of the locality involved, or which are listed as contributing building sites or structures within a national, state, or locally designated historic district.” So, if the property does not meet any of those requirements the owner could not record a conservation easement against the property and Historic Denver could not hold an easement for this property.

The owner could talk to an attorney about putting some kind of agreement in place to preserve it, but enforcement is tricky. For example, they may be able to put the house in a trust with explicit instructions to the trustee to preserve the house, but that may not be a viable route since they would likely need to have enough assets in the trust to provide for maintenance, insurance, etc. for the house. They could also sell (or donate) the house to an organization or person who would agree to protect it, but there are practical enforcement issues there as well.

So how can an owner find a preservation-minded buyer who won’t demolish their house if there isn’t a formal legal protection in place? Perhaps that’s where you come in. Maybe the preservation community can find a buyer who’d be interested in buying the house with the promise of not demolishing it. Perhaps an agreement can still be placed on the property even if enforcement seems murky. Maybe a unique financial arrangement such as the owner holding the mortgage, will allow the owner flexibility to accept a slightly lower offer on the house with the promise the building won’t be demolished. Then the owner (seller) could recoup that money with the interest payments. (Note: Before proceeding with any of the above an owner should consult their real estate attorney and broker.)

We are always looking for more options to put out there for our preservation-minded community. The homeowner in Wash Park has not put the house on the market yet while they conduct additional research hoping the house will be eligible for local designation. We hope to provide more information about this particular house’s story in a future article. In the meantime, if you have a personal anecdote about a similar situation, or would like more information about the house mentioned here, please reach out at mowen@historicdenver.org ■





Left: The preservation team, Mike Owen, Jay Homstad, and Beth Glandon. Center: Sarah May with the Unsinkable herself. Right: Christine Schulze

NEW YEAR, NEW VISION

by John Deffenbaugh, President and CEO

Across 2024, we made a number of changes to the organizational structure to benefit and further unite the Historic Denver and Molly Brown House Museum teams as well as solidifying a strong future for 2025 and beyond.

The venerable **Andrea Malcomb** was promoted to the role of Vice President, complementing her continued stewardship as Museum Director. Andrea marked her 25th anniversary with the organization in 2024 and has been director of the Molly Brown House Museum since 2009. Under her leadership, the museum has excelled. In addition to telling the story of Margaret Brown’s philanthropy and social causes far beyond that fateful night in 1912, the museum is one of the most successful historic house museums and women’s history sites in the country. In her new role, which she has held since the summer, Andrea manages a range of crucial operational matters across the whole organization.

Education is a golden thread that runs through many of the projects and initiatives across our organization. Access to clear and factual information, at any age, enables coherent decision making across the city. This, in turn, supports the delivery of our shared vision, mission, and values. Over the summer we also made a number of organizational changes impacting our education team.

After seven years as Director of Community Programs, **Alison Salutz** was promoted to Director of Education and Community Impact. Alison has been with the organization for a total of 12 years, first working in education at the Molly Brown House Museum before a six-year span at History Colorado, where she was responsible for developing K-12 and family programs. In her role there, she developed and facilitated the Spark Program, offering programs for individuals with memory loss and their care takers in partnership with

the Colorado Alzheimer’s Association. Alison now leads the newly reimagined education team and oversees the delivery of programs and initiatives to all ages.

**Christine Schulze** was promoted to Lifelong Learning Coordinator after previously serving as Museum Educational Assistant at the Molly Brown House Museum. Christine has always had a keen interest in education, previously working with Denver Public Schools as a paraprofessional. She returned to school to finish her history degree, where she focused on historic preservation and public history. Christine manages the delivery of cross-organizational initiatives aimed at adults, including speakers bureau programs, events, and walking tours.

**Sarah May**, who joined the organization in 2024 as Bilingual Educator, has now taken on the role of K-12 Education Coordinator. Sarah is a trained teacher with experience in curriculum development. As an elementary English language acquisition teacher, she cultivated inclusive learning environments and crafted lessons scaffolded to students’ needs and interests, teaching in both English and Spanish. Additionally, her position as Director of Community Partnerships for a large nonprofit equipped her with adaptability in engaging communities from diverse backgrounds. She manages the delivery of our curriculum aimed at the younger generations, delivered both in their places of education and on-site at the Molly Brown House Museum.

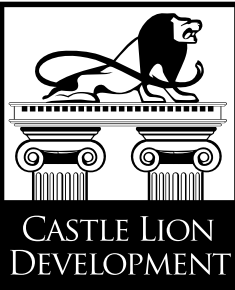
In December 2024, we announced changes to our Preservation and Museum Collections teams. **Beth Glandon** was promoted to Senior Director of Preservation and Advocacy and will now manage Historic Denver’s overall preservation team, including continuing to oversee the Discover Denver citywide survey. Beth has been with Historic Denver for 10 years and has a wealth of expertise in building preservation, marketing, research, and community engagement.

Many of you will be familiar with Beth from Discover Denver outreach days and volunteering for the survey, which is key to identifying hidden gems that tell the stories of our communities. She has an uncanny ability to find an answer to the most tricky research question with a click of a mouse.

**Jay Homstad** was also promoted from Director of Development to Director of Preservation Advocacy and Membership. On behalf of Historic Denver’s members and our city’s diverse communities, Jay will advocate for saving the buildings and places that tell the story of our city. Jay holds his master’s in Building Preservation from the University of Colorado, Denver, and is passionate about the importance of existing and historic buildings to the future of our city.

For over two years, **Abby Wedlick** has been a Collections Care Associate at Molly Brown House Museum. In this time, Abby has done amazing work to update our collections records. She recently completed a Master’s in Library Science with a concentration in archives from Simmons University in Boston. In her expanded role as Collections Specialist, Abby will ensure the continued care and documentation of the museum’s collection.

We greatly value the talent and significant contributions of our entire team. Historic Denver will shortly be posting to hire a Director of Philanthropy. Please keep an eye on our e-newsletter and website for further information about this position and how to apply. ■



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# MOLLY BROWN

## HOUSE MUSEUM

### ENJOY A SNEAK PEEK OF THE “REMINISCENCE” PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

Through May 25, 2025, the Molly Brown House Museum is featuring a selection of the Brown family’s collection of Colorado landscape photos next to awe-inspiring works by Colorado photographer Dustin Keirns.

From the artist: *Reminiscence* is a story of our not-so-distant past. It is a story of Colorado, of the people who settled here in prospect for riches and a mining boom that drastically shaped the social and economic landscape of the state. It speaks of a time that was fast and furious, and most of its mark faded back into the landscape almost as quickly as it rose out of it.

This series builds a bridge between past and present, showcasing the structures and artifacts that remain in the landscape from these early settlements in our Centennial State. Contemporary images are displayed alongside historic images from the Molly Brown archives that provide a window into life during Colorado’s mining heyday. The photographic artifacts feature boomtowns, modest settlements, and the veins that carried the lifeblood of the economy — railroads that cut through the rugged terrain.

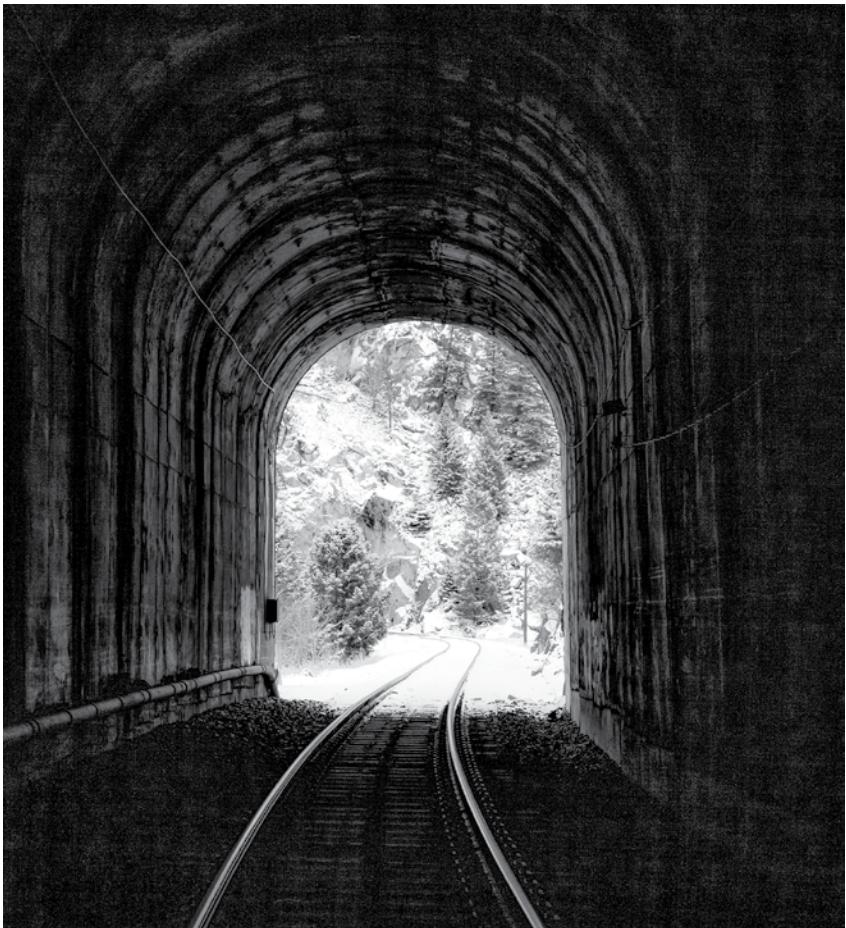
Today, what remains are fragments: jagged, weathered structures and glimmering rail lines that punctuate the landscape. They stand as testaments to both the industry’s

influence and abandonment that followed as resources dried up. These images evoke a haunting beauty, capturing the tension between human endeavor and nature’s resilience. What remains also serves as a reminder of what it took to carve out an existence in these beautiful, but hard and deadly mountains.

*Reminiscence* is also a statement on our responsibility to protect Colorado’s iconic wilderness, history, and dignity. By acknowledging the past, we can shape a better future — one where our state’s natural and cultural heritages are preserved. One on which future generations can also reminisce. ■

## BOOK YOUR TICKETS

at [mollybrown.org](https://mollybrown.org) to experience the full exhibit! The exhibit is included with general admission.



Top: Modern photos by Dustin Keirns. Bottom: Photos from the Brown family’s collection.





This building at the corner of 1st Avenue and S. Broadway was built in 1901 as the First Avenue Hotel and was home to the Stuart Hotel from the early 1920s into the 1950s. Photo: Denver Public Library Special Collections, X-22401

DISCOVER DENVER MARKS 10 YEARS OF DISCOVERIES

*Historic Denver News* often features articles focused on the Discover Denver citywide building survey project, its volunteers, and interesting buildings documented by the project. Ten years in, we thought it might be interesting to revisit how the project came to be, where it's been and where it's heading, and how you can get involved.

As a refresher, Discover Denver is a survey of the city's buildings with the goal of identifying places with historical, cultural, or architectural significance. A partnership between Historic Denver and the City and County of Denver, the project is funded by the partner organizations and by grants from the History Colorado State Historical Fund. Community volunteers play a huge role in the project by documenting buildings across the city and researching building histories.

The idea of documenting the entirety of Denver's built environment was conceived in 2004 by the City's Community Planning and Development department. A study performed that year estimated that using survey tools of the time (pencil, paper, and a camera), a citywide survey would take many decades to complete and cost approximately \$75 million. The idea was shelved until 2010 when the City approached Historic Denver about partnering on a survey project. A new study was performed to craft an efficient and cost effective survey approach, and the resulting proposed methodology was largely patterned after that of SurveyLA, a citywide building survey of Los Angeles. Funded mostly by a \$2.5 million grant from the J. Paul Getty Trust,

SurveyLA began the year before with work primarily performed by paid historic preservation consultants. Without a funder such as the Getty Trust, it was suggested that Denver's survey be performed by volunteers along with a small number of paid staff. SurveyLA donated their proprietary survey software to Denver's survey project, and plans were put in place to try out the methodology and software in a pilot program.

The name "Discover Denver" was coined for the project, and the pilot program began in 2012. Field testing of the methodology and software was performed in different parts

of the city and on a variety of building types. Volunteers documented buildings using SurveyLA's software, which ran on heavy and expensive laptop computers. As Discover Denver could only afford two laptops, surveying was extremely slow. The Harvey Park neighborhood, small parts of Park Hill and Berkeley, and former streetcar commercial districts embedded in the Cole and Globeville neighborhoods were documented during this test phase. The pilot allowed Discover Denver to learn what worked well (the use of volunteers, many of whom are still with the project!), and also what needed refinement (the SurveyLA software was cumbersome, expensive to maintain, and not the right fit for Denver's surveying project).

Following adjustments to the methodology, and the development of new survey software which runs on inexpensive handheld tablets, 2014 marked the official start of the Discover Denver survey. During the first two years of the project, volunteers and staff documented buildings in the Jefferson Park, Globeville, and Elyria-Swansea neighborhoods. Moving street by street, volunteers were able to see how each neighborhood developed and appreciate and document details in the buildings that otherwise go unnoticed by passersby.

Since its start in 2014, Discover Denver has documented nearly 40,000 of Denver's buildings in neighborhoods across the city. While Discover Denver has continually tweaked its survey software and methodology to increase the project's speed and efficiency, it has continued to rely on community volunteers to photograph buildings, document their features, and research the histories of buildings with an interesting story to tell.

Project partners Historic Denver and the City and County of Denver are presently working on a new website where information about each surveyed building can be found, including histories of selected buildings. Stay tuned for the launch of the site!

Public involvement in Discover Denver is key to the project's success! Discover



This Clayton neighborhood Foursquare was built of ornamental concrete block in 1905 by Alexander Kenty, a plasterer. In the 1960s it housed clergymen associated with the nearby St. Luke Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Photo: Discover Denver Survey



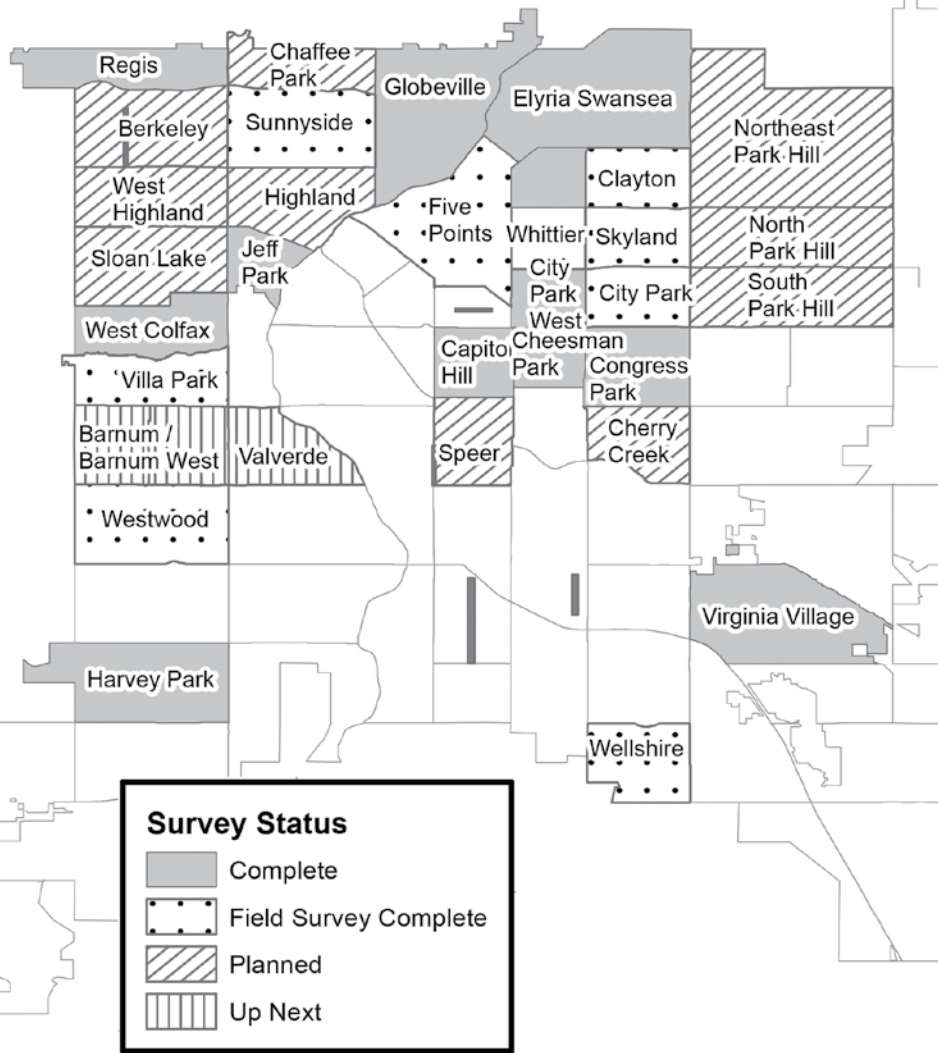
The Harvey Park neighborhood has a concentration of Contemporary Style homes designed by noted mid-century architect Cliff May. Materials were fabricated in California and then shipped to Denver where the homes were assembled on site. Photo: Jay Homstad



Denver’s corps of volunteers is made up of a wide variety of individuals. Some volunteers have experience as historians, architects, or city planners, but most have no formal training in history or architecture and just want to learn more about their city or neighborhood. Trainings for new field survey and building research volunteers are held by project staff roughly every other month throughout the year. Through these trainings, new volunteers gain the skills they need for their volunteer role.

In addition to volunteers, the project is continually seeking information from the public about buildings that have an interesting story to tell or that are important to their community. To share what you know about the history of a building, your neighborhood, or even your own home, you can upload information through the project website at [discoverdenver.co](http://discoverdenver.co), or by attending one of Discover Denver’s community “Discovery Day” events.

Discover Denver is a project for everyone. It seeks to uncover previously unknown stories about our diverse and layered past, and educate the city’s residents about the city they call home. Want to get involved in this fascinating project? Fill out a volunteer interest form on the Discover Denver website, or reach out directly to Beth Glandon at [bglandon@historicdenver.org](mailto:bglandon@historicdenver.org). ■



See where Discover Denver has been since officially launching in 2014 and where it is heading.



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HISTORIC DENVER’S 54TH ANNUAL



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We thank all the sponsors who made our 54th Annual Gala & Awards Dinner, held October 10, 2024, possible. We are grateful for your support and continued commitment to save the places .that tell the story of our city stories of Denver’s diverse history.

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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### 2025 WALKING TOURS OFFERED THROUGHOUT WINTER

Historic Denver continues to offer our walking tours throughout the year. Explore some of Denver’s most iconic neighborhoods and business districts. Looking for something to do with those guests in town for the Stock Show? Take a tour of Larimer Square and end with watching the sunset from the top of the Daniels and Fisher Clocktower!

### REMINISCENCE EXHIBIT OPENING EVENT

Friday, February 7 ♦ 6-8 p.m.  
\$10 Member ♦ \$15 Non-member

This winter and spring, the Molly Brown House Museum is featuring a selection of the Brown family’s collection of Colorado landscape photos next to awe-inspiring works by Colorado photographer Dustin Keirns. Join us to be first to see the exhibit while also getting to engage with both the photographer and curator of the museum.

### 1340 PENN AFTER HOURS: STATE OF UNDRESS UNDERGARMENT SHOWCASE

Thursday, February 13 ♦ 6:30 p.m.  
Molly Brown House Museum  
\$25 Member ♦ \$30 Non-member



Come to the first installment of our 1340 Penn After Hours series, where we will uncover the layers of undergarments worn in Margaret Brown’s lifetime. Expect a showcase of historic wares and luxurious company at this fun speakeasy-style event! Signature Cocktail (21+) or Mocktail provided with ticket.

### VINTAGE VALENTINE TEA

Saturday, February 22 ♦ 10:20 a.m. and 1:20 p.m.  
Molly Brown House Museum  
\$45 Member ♦ \$50 Non-member

Let’s recall popular Valentine’s Day traditions with tea at the Molly Brown House Museum. Explore the historic home then enjoy a high tea with fruit, scones, tea sandwiches, desserts, and Margaret’s favorite blend of tea.

### COCKTAILS IN COOL PLACES: WELTON STREET

Tuesday March 4 ♦ 5:45-7:45 p.m.  
\$35 Member ♦ \$40 Non-member



Our Cocktails in Cool Places program moves into its second year starting in Five Points, historically called the “Harlem of the West.” The program begins at the Blair Caldwell Library where we will revisit redlining practices in early Denver, which shaped the neighborhood and continues to impact it now. After the conversation there, we will walk down Welton Street to Urban Sanctuary yoga and wellness studio, whose business is focused on remaining accessible to the community. The building was originally constructed for Douglass Mortuary, owned by Lewis and Frederick Douglass Jr., sons of abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

### GIRL SCOUT CREAM TEA

Saturday, March 8 ♦ 11:20 a.m. and 12:40 p.m.  
Molly Brown House Museum ♦ \$20 per person

Want to experience a day in the life of Margaret? Join us for a special self-guided tour of the house followed by a Cream Tea in the 3rd Floor Ballroom!

### BEHIND THE SCENES: TRUTH ABOUT BROWN FAMILY GOLD

Tuesday, March 11 ♦ 6 p.m.  
Molly Brown House Museum  
\$10 Member/\$15 Non-member

Join the curator at the Molly Brown House

Museum for a special behind-the-scenes experience looking into the truth and myth about the Brown family wealth. Through source documents, we get a truthful look into the family’s money.

### ZANG MANSION TOUR

Wednesday, March 19 and Wednesday, April 9  
5:30-7 p.m. ♦ 709 N Clarkson St  
\$25 Member ♦ \$30 Non-member

Adolph Zang is most often associated with Zang Brewery, which has its own fascinating history as one of Denver’s most prominent businesses. His impressive family home located at 7th and Clarkson Streets was financed by his brewery and his mining interests. Designed by Frank Eberley in 1902, the residence remained in the Zang family for over 50 years. Today it serves as beautiful executive office space after painstaking efforts were made by its current owner to preserve the luxury of the mansion and the history of the family and its legacy.

Learn more about the Zang family during this 90-minute tour of their exquisite three-story mansion. Because of the historic nature

of the home, the tour will require guests to ascend and descend narrow staircases and deal with low ceilings.

### TITANIC TEA

Saturday, April 12 ♦ 10:20 a.m. and 1:20 p.m.  
Molly Brown House Museum  
\$45 Member ♦ \$50 Non-member

Margaret “Molly” Brown was unsinkable in more ways than staying afloat in the *Titanic* disaster in 1912. Learn about her life by exploring the historic home then enjoy a high tea with fruit, scones, tea sandwiches, desserts, and Margaret’s favorite blend of tea.

### 1340 PENN AFTER HOURS: TRANSATLANTIC TITANIC TRIVIA!

Thursday, April 17 ♦ 6:30 p.m.  
Molly Brown House Museum  
\$25 Member ♦ \$30 Non-member



Are you a *Titanic* trivia pro? Come test your knowledge at our second 1340 Penn After Hours event where we will test your knowledge of *Titanic* history and pop culture through trivia and other activities in the historic home of *Titanic* survivor, Margaret “Molly” Brown! Signature Cocktail (21+) or Mocktail provided with ticket.

### LEARN AT MRS. BROWNS: DERBY HAT WORKSHOP

Saturday, April 26 ♦ 1:00 p.m.  
Molly Brown House Museum  
\$40 Membe ♦ \$50 Non-member

With the 151st Kentucky Derby coming up we are hosting a hat-making workshop! We will look at some of the ways Margaret Brown enjoyed hats and get a glimpse of hats of Kentucky Derby past. Instruction and supplies are included with the ticket.

### BOOK A SPEAKERS BUREAU IN 2025

We continue to offer our popular Speakers Bureau programs to libraries, retirement homes, community centers and social groups throughout the metro area. Topics range from local history to life in Victorian times to various holiday traditions and more. See the Adult Programs page of [mollybrown.org](http://mollybrown.org) for a list of programs and to fill out a request form for your group.

### HOMESCHOOL DAYS



### HOMESCHOOL DAY: VICTORIAN VALENTINES

Monday, February 10 ♦ 9:30am-11:30am  
Molly Brown House Museum  
\$14/ Student ♦ \$5 Adult, Non-  
participating Siblings Free

Celebrate the charm of 19th-century Valentine’s Day at the Molly Brown House Museum! Students will craft ornate valentines using Victorian-inspired materials, uncover the secret meanings behind flowers and symbols, and discover how people like Margaret Brown celebrated this heartfelt tradition.

### HOMESCHOOL DAY: WOMEN IN COLORADO

Monday, March 10 ♦ 9:30am-11:30am  
Molly Brown House Museum  
\$14/ Student ♦ \$5 Adult, Non-  
participating Siblings Free

Discover the inspiring stories of women who helped shape Colorado’s history! Students will explore the lives of trailblazers like Margaret Brown, plus suffragists, homesteaders, and entrepreneurs through hands-on activities, interactive storytelling, and crafts celebrating their incredible contributions to the state.

### HOMESCHOOL DAY: BUILDING THE TITANIC

Monday, April 7 and 14 ♦  
9:30am-11:30am ♦ Molly Brown House  
Museum ♦ \$14/ Student ♦ \$5 Adult,  
Non-participating Siblings Free

Explore the fascinating story of how the *Titanic* was built! Through interactive activities, students will learn about the ship’s design and construction, discover the technology of the era, and uncover the lives of the workers who made the RMS *Titanic* a reality.



### EXCLUSIVE GROUP EXPERIENCES AND THEMED EVENTS AT THE MOLLY BROWN HOUSE MUSEUM

Did you know that the Molly Brown House Museum offers a variety of exclusive group experiences designed to educate and celebrate?

Whether you’re gathering loved ones, hosting a conference, or seeking a unique venue for a special occasion, the historic home of Margaret Brown provides a range of customizable options. Your group can enjoy a guided tour of the museum, where a knowledgeable guide will lead you through the storied past of this iconic Denverite. For an added touch of elegance, high tea service is available, complete with scones, sandwiches, and desserts in the charming third-floor museum space. Reception-style gatherings can also be arranged, featuring light beverages and snacks to complement your museum visit. Each experience includes museum admission or a tour, ensuring a memorable outing for every guest.

To explore these experiences or to schedule your own private event, simply submit an inquiry through the Molly Brown House Museum Event Inquiry Form via the QR code below.



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