

HISTORIC DENVER NEWS

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Vance Kirkland, *Ruin of Central City*, 1935. Photo: Courtesy Rob Lewis

THE RISE AND FALL OF MINING TOWNS IN COLORADO

by Rose Fredrick and Olive Witwer, The Art Sol, with Andrea Malcomb, Museum Director

Did you know that the Browns were avid art collectors? Margaret’s art collection celebrated both the female form and women artists such as Helen Henderson Chain and French artist Rosa Bonheur. J.J.’s interests lay closer to his work, as he collected iconically western mining and mountain scenes from such artists as J.D. Howland, who often painted bison and the prairie.

If you visit the Museum today, you’ll see a small sampling of the Brown family’s collection. Most prominently above the fireplace is a landscape painting by Helen Henderson Chain, who, like Margaret, was a woman ahead of her time. To honor J.J.’s artistic interests and Margaret’s dream to turn her Denver home into an art institute, the Molly Brown House Museum has partnered with The ArtSol, an organization creating unique art experiences, to transform the museum’s first floor into an art gallery that is an artist’s view of Colorado mining towns.

Beginning in the 1780s, United States currency was backed by silver, which by the 1860s and 1870s was mined from high mountain Colorado towns like Silverton, Leadville and Central City. Though conditions for miners were harsh, there was always a glimmer of hope that the average working man could make a fortune.

After the Silver Crash of 1893, those dreams of success came crashing down. Miners were forced to live in company housing, shop at company stores, and send their children

to company schools. Freedom to move or change jobs was difficult. Still, there was something in the resilience of immigrants and miners of this time that would mean they would not be down for long. This was certainly true for the Browns.

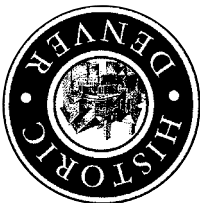
J.J. Brown, a self-taught engineer, was able to capitalize on the Little Johnny Mine at the height of this turmoil. With his reputation among the “silver barons” increasing over the years, in 1892 he was made part-owner of Ibex Mining properties, including Little Johnny. It was suspected that Little Johnny held more gold than had previously been discovered; by the Silver Crash it was producing 153 tons of pure ore a day. This led to the revival of Leadville and its mining community.

The state of Colorado truly was built on the mining industry, and, given our reliance on precious metals for smartphones and green energy technologies, remains a key part of the economy today. While driving through mountain landscapes you will find that most of the mining settlements of the past are now ghost towns and novelties, reflecting the shift away from complete dependence on the industry as well as the changes in how people live today. Yet there is no place within the state’s borders that hasn’t been impacted by the mining industry and the paintings in this exhibit portray the rise, prosperity, and fall of those who built what we know as Colorado today. At *The Rise and Fall of Mining Towns in Colorado*, we invite you to journey into this forgotten world with a new lens, one where

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO



It was wonderful to end 2023 on a series of high notes, between Historic Denver’s 53rd Annual Gala, Colorado Gives Day, and a successful end-of-year campaign. We are continually astounded by the generosity of our supporters and thankful for your contributions and goodwill. We also welcomed seven new board members in November; I am grateful for their expertise, time, and commitment to the organization. With all of your collective support, we work together to affect real change and retain Denver’s historic buildings and urban fabric.

I am excited about and energized for the many things we have planned for 2024. New events and speaker talks include my personal favorite, a series of “cocktails in cool places,” the first of which takes place March 21. As always, our members will know about these events first and we will offer special member pricing whenever we are able.

We are also working with a designer to refresh our brand identity. Our objectives include celebrating the synergies between Historic Denver’s preservation advocacy work and the Molly Brown House Museum — the building we were established to save — because the buildings of the past can shape a vibrant and exciting future for Denver.

One of the best holiday presents was the approval of a grant from the State Historical Fund to continue supporting the Discover Denver project, enabling the city-wide survey to progress to phase 6. A proud partnership with the City and County of Denver, the survey is core to identifying the buildings and places that are important to their communities. I am looking forward to learning more stories from our city’s diverse neighborhoods and the buildings and places that tell them so eloquently.

This is also an easement inspection year, so Historic Denver staff will survey the 73 buildings for which Historic Denver holds easements. I admit that I am looking forward to tagging along on some of these site visits!

I would like to thank you, our supporters and advocates, the Historic Denver and Molly Brown Museum teams, and our dedicated volunteers for their commitment and passion for our organization. It is a pleasure to work with you all, bring on 2024!

John Deffenbaugh
President & CEO, Historic Denver

Seven new members joined the Board of Trustees this fall. Pictured left to right are Kelly Wemple, Ryan Wilcox, Tamil Maldonado, Norm Harris, John Deffenbaugh, Anna Cawrse, Dr. Dwinita Mosby Tyler, and Milo Marquez.



CORRECTION

In the Fall 2023 50 Actions for 50 Places story, *Denver’s Latest Landmark Continues Legacy of Prolific Civil Rights Leader*, Irving P. Andrews’s daughter Lynn, not her sister Liz, is seated on their father’s lap.



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Unless otherwise noted, all photographs were taken by Jay Homstad.



Culture for all.



Mining in the late-19th and early-20th centuries required grueling work and a constant influx of new labor, mostly done by immigrants. Photo: Denver Public Library Special Collections, MCC-3452

THE RISE AND FALL OF MINING TOWNS IN COLORADO

you consider mining towns as cultural and social centers of the West.

On exhibit in the Brown’s grandest rooms will be works by such artists as former Central City Opera set decorator Frank “Pancho” Gates, Eve Drewelow — the first to graduate from University of Iowa’s then-nascent Master of Fine Arts program — and Vance Kirkland, the “Father of Modern Colorado Painting.” Their works range from lithographs to watercolors to oils and span from the 1920s to 1970.

These works are from the collection of Robert G. Lewis, Esq., a corporate lawyer in Denver who represents clients in the energy industry. He has a keen interest in Colorado history and began collecting art with his first paycheck after law school. Since then, he has amassed an extensive collection of Colorado art. In recent years, he has focused on 20th century Modernism in the American West, including national level artists working in Colorado, as well as lesser-known local artists. He is a true connoisseur, searching out exceptional works of art, along with research on the art scene in Colorado. Mr. Lewis’ research and examples from his collection can be found on the website: modernistwest.com.

This exhibit is in partnership with The ArtSol, who believe in the transformative power of art to enliven a space, to bring peace and joy, and ultimately to ignite conversations that lead to deeper understanding of human nature. Led by visionary curators and installation experts, The ArtSol collaborates closely with artists and collectors to craft exhibitions apropos to our times. By showcasing diverse mediums such as painting, sculpture, and multimedia installations, The ArtSol forges immersive experiences that resonate deeply, fostering empathy, and expanding horizons. Their exhibitions transcend visuals, provoking meaningful discussions. Through curated exhibitions, they believe artists remind us of our shared humanity and capacity for empathy. Visit theartsol.com for more information. 🌱

THE RISE AND FALL OF MINING TOWNS IN COLORADO

will be on exhibition from January 24 – March 24, 2024, and is included with general museum admission. We encourage visitors to download the Bloomberg Connects app to learn about each painting and get behind-the-scenes content.



UPCOMING EVENTS RELATED TO THE EXHIBITION

OPENING RECEPTION
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2 AT 6 P.M. **TICKETS START AT \$40**

Join us Friday, February 2 at 6 p.m., for an opening night celebration where you can meet collector Rob Lewis, the mind behind The ArtSol, and Museum Curator Stephanie McGuire. Tickets start at \$40 for Historic Denver members; proceeds support the Molly Brown House Museum’s collection.

THE LEGACY OF BOB RAGLAND, THE “NON-STARVING ARTIST”
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20 AT 6 P.M. **TICKETS START AT \$10**

On Tuesday, February 20 at 6 p.m., we will explore the legacy of Denver artist Bob Ragland during an event at the Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art. Known as “the non-starving artist,” Ragland inspired many Denver artists to pursue art as a career. Several of his mentees will be part of a panel discussion this evening, moderated by visual artist Moe Gram. Admission also grants access to the museum, which has put several of Ragland’s pieces on display for this evening.

DINNER WITH ARTISTS: COLLECTOR’S EDITION
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22 AT 5:30 P.M. **TICKETS START AT \$150**

The ArtSol will also host their popular Dinner with Artists event at the Molly Brown House Museum on Thursday, February 22 at 5:30 p.m.,. This special event, hosted by Rose Fredrick, longtime curator of the Coors Western Art Exhibit & Sale, will also feature collector Rob Lewis and Andrea Malcomb, director of the Molly Brown House Museum. They will dive into the exhibition and its connection to Colorado, shedding light on its significance for the Browns. Tickets start at \$150, available on theartsol.com; they include a four-course meal, beer and wine, and the opportunity to interact with fellow guests and speakers.

VANCE KIRKLAND INSIDER TOUR & LECTURE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27 AT 6 P.M. **TICKETS START AT \$20**

On Tuesday, February 27 at 6 p.m., we’ll be hosting our friends from the Kirkland Museum of Fine and Decorative Art at the Molly Brown House Museum. They’ll tell us more about the Vance Kirkland piece included in The Rise and Fall of Mining Towns in Colorado, and reveal the man behind the title of “Colorado’s pre-eminent artist.” Tickets start at \$20 for members.

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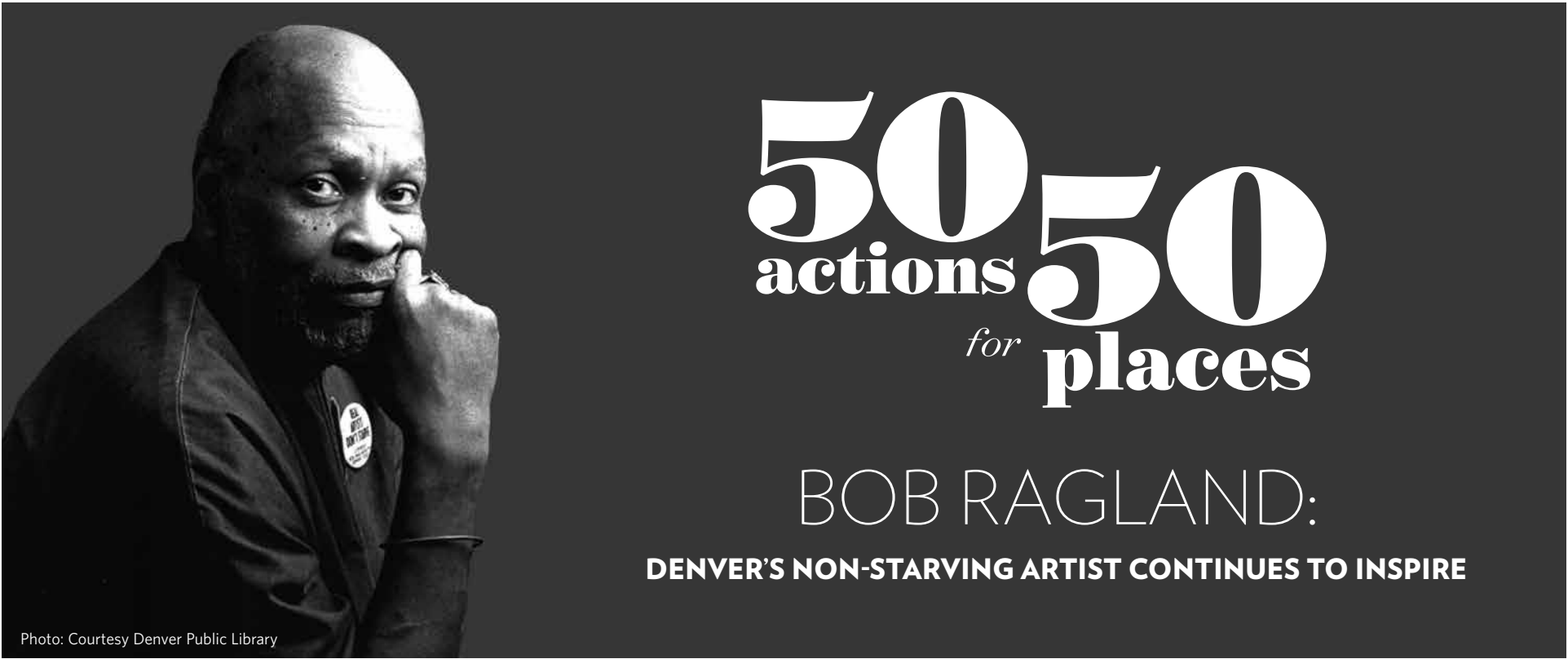
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by Alison Salutz, Director of Community Programs

To call this 50 Actions for 50 Places site “Bob Ragland’s home” is a bit of a misnomer. Ragland purchased this 1902 classic cottage in the Whittier neighborhood in 1972. It became his residence, his studio, archives, and also gallery space for Ragland’s art, which was displayed on both the interior and exterior of the home and garden.

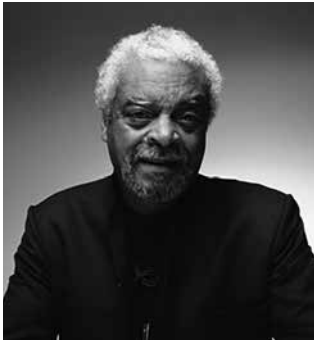
Born in 1938 in Cleveland, Ohio, Ragland enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1956 and was stationed at Fort Carson. In 1959, he completed his service and moved to Denver. He eventually quit a job with the United States Postal Service to become an artist full-time. Working in a multitude of artistic styles, Ragland spent his life dedicated to art and to mentoring. He referred to himself as a “non-starving artist,” sloughing off the stale trope while tirelessly teaching up-and-coming artists that art was something that you could do professionally. “You gotta eat and you gotta have heat,” was an oft-repeated refrain. Before his death in April 2021, he shaped generations of artists with his practical approach to marketing art; thanks to sharing his tips and strategies, countless current artists are part of Ragland’s ongoing legacy.

For this article, we spoke to several of the many fellow artists who consider Bob Ragland to be their mentor. Ragland’s art continues to inspire through its whimsical nature, but the true legacy of Bob Ragland is the lessons he shared with local artists.



Michael Gadlin is not only an established visual artist, he also boasts a career in television and nonprofit. Gadlin began his art education at the Art Students League of Denver, followed by Metropolitan State University of Denver, and Pratt Institute of Art & Design in Brooklyn. Gadlin keeps close pace with the fast-evolving arts environment. He sits on the board of directors at MCA Denver (Museum of Contemporary Art) and serves as executive director of PlatteForum, an artist’s residency in the city.

MG: “I first met Bob Ragland at 21 years old right after college at an art show in LoDo. Instead of waiting for a gallery to pick up our art, we used the storefronts at 18th and Blake, in what today would be considered the Dairy Block. This was before Coors Field transformed LoDo, and it was a great spot for emerging artists.”



Darrell Anderson grew up in Five Points and attended East Denver High School. Following graduation, he joined the U.S. Army and served in Vietnam. Upon his return, Anderson became the first male flight attendant employed by Frontier Airlines. He worked at the airline for 12 years, but never gave up on his art. Anderson has his art in the permanent collection at Denver International Airport, as well as the U.S. Customs House in Denver, and in numerous homes and offices all over the world. Like Ragland, he too has begun mentoring up-and-coming artists.

DA: “I first met Bob Ragland when I was 35 years old and felt that Bob’s example of quitting a Postal Service job gave me the courage to eventually leave Frontier Airlines. He’s an artist who gave more than he took, especially when it came to the many artists he mentored.”



Carmen Avila is a photographer and visual artist born in San Diego, California, and raised in Mexico. She fell in love with Denver, where she now resides. She first met Bob Ragland as an employee of Ford Warren Library, located just a few blocks from his home.

CA: “He used to refer to the library as his office, since he was there daily researching artists and refining ways to promote art. We started chatting and sharing stories, and eventually I started to share with Bob my

desire to be an artist. He immediately offered to be my mentor, and helped support me when I shared my decision with my family and switched my major to art.”

If the adage in real estate is location, location, location, it might have been marketing, marketing, marketing for Bob Ragland.

MG: “Instead of talking about art and style, like many of my professors in art school, Bob gravitated immediately to the practical and marketing side of the equation. How are you marketing yourself? How are you cultivating donors? How are you doing all that you can to make this a career?”

DA: “Bob had simple principles when it came to art: ‘Have no fear in what you want to approach, do what you want.’ But he was adamant that proper marketing was the key to being a successful artist. If Bob were here today, he’d still ask me if I had my business cards on me.”



Bob Ragland, *Red Roof*, 1980. Photo: Courtesy Denver Public Library

In fact, every one of Bob’s mentees shared that he frequently asked them where their business cards were, among ideas to increase public awareness of them and their work.

Bob shared and talked a lot, but he also demonstrated his principles to up-and-coming artists by following his own advice. His extensive Art Mail program is a good example of how to keep personal connections with people. Each of the panelists told us about receiving mail from Bob. His letters were unique in both their content and the fact that the envelopes were richly decorated, making each letter with encouraging words or newspaper clipping he sent into a work of art.

DA: “Bob dedicated a large part of his day to keeping in correspondence. The practice of using the postal service to connect with his mentees, collectors, and fellow artists garnered him respect from some of the biggest name artists of his day.”

MG: “It wasn’t about the art: it was about lifting each other up.”

CA: “Bob was always sending me articles, and asking the same question: ‘Are you still promoting your art?’ ”

50 actions for 50 places

Bob loved to paint, but he also loved to tell young artists to make their own path and cheer them on every step of the way.

CA: “Bob was very blunt. He liked to tell you how it was and wasn’t afraid to break the rules, but he never contradicted himself. His guidance was consistent and really stuck with you. He took a less traditional path with his art and started by selling artwork in church basements. He also diversified his artistic style and worked in many different mediums.”

MG: “In Denver at the time [early- to mid-1990s] there weren’t many Black artists, so Bob and Darrell became leaders within a small community. Instead of a ‘crabs in a barrel’ mentality, they created a sense of community that diffused competition and focused on helping one another.

Bob was at every one of my shows, talks, speaking events, even times when I neglected to formally invite him. One time I was giving a talk at the Denver Public Library, and I didn’t even expect Bob to be there. He comes in, sets up a tripod and starts taking photographs of the event. I asked after what the photos were for, and he had the foresight to know to take promotion photos for future PR ventures, giving me the simple answer, ‘If you ain’t doing it, who is?’

Bob’s success wasn’t based on asking for permission, instead it was about helping artists get out of their own way and promote themselves through good marketing practices.”

DA: “The thing about Bob’s mentoring legacy is, I consider Bob a mentor, and I’ve continued to mentor local artists. I was just checking in on a 22-year-old I’ve been mentoring, and he just finished school and moved to New York to focus exclusively on his design work. So the legacy continues, even though Bob is no longer here.”

Avila was one of the driving forces behind the naming of the Bob Ragland Branch Library, a brand-new branch that opened in RiNo Art Park less than a year after Ragland’s death. When Denver Public Library announced a naming competition, she wrote a paper about his life, went door-to-door through the neighborhood letting them know about the process, made pins, connected with Ragland’s family, and used social media to ensure the honor went to his legacy.

CA: “Bob always carried a pen and wrote down his ideas. When I visited his home and saw his bathroom, there were quotes all over the walls of thoughts and ideas that had come to him.”

It’s not hard to imagine Bob Ragland would be honored that one of his mentees took her own idea and ran with it. Join us in honoring Bob Ragland and hearing more about his impact at the “The Legacy of Bob Ragland, the ‘Non-Starving Artist’” panel hosted at Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative art on Tuesday, February 20. Tickets include admission to the museum and viewing of three of Ragland’s paintings. ❁



Bob Ragland, left, at the “Contemporary Black Artists Denver, ‘73” showing at the Denver Art Museum. Photo: Denver Public Library Special Collections, Z-11855

Gadlin once made the mistake of asking Bob how his painting was going, and Bob, always the teacher, replied, “I paint when I want to paint. Don’t worry about the art, focus on marketing.” This differed from the approach of many in the art world who shied away from talking about how to make a living.

NEW PUBLIC HISTORY INTERN AT THE MOLLY BROWN HOUSE MUSEUM JOINS JUST IN TIME FOR ANNUAL DEEP CLEAN

by Mike Erickson, Volunteer & Event Coordinator



Though we diligently care for each object in the Molly Brown House Museum, this time of year we are especially conscious about the condition of each object on public display in the historic home. We showcase over 5,000 artifacts in the museum — from jewelry to bookcases, not to mention the items on the individual shelves — and each is carefully moved, dusted, and inspected every January to allow for every nook and cranny to be cleaned and properly maintained.

Our annual museum maintenance is a big undertaking, and we are happy to simultaneously welcome a new Public History Intern, Katelyn Wilson. Katelyn joins us just in time to experience this important step in the care of the historic Brown home. A volunteer since fall 2023, Katelyn has been enthusiastic in learning each of the volunteer roles at the museum while pursuing her degree in history. As Katelyn has learned already, each belonging and house feature can help us tell the story of Margaret Tobin Brown as well as the history of Denver (and the world beyond) outside of her lifetime.

Katelyn is excited to start the new year as a museum intern. Working with the faculty in the Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU) History Department, Katelyn will gain credits as she learns to interpret and preserve objects in a house museum setting. As a Public History Intern earning credits toward her degree, Katelyn will work directly with the museum’s artifacts to uncover new information and help us interpret the stories we share with more than 50,000 visitors a year. We are happy to have Katelyn on the team and we look forward to supporting her educational endeavors during her time at the Molly Brown House Museum!

LEARN MORE ABOUT KATELYN:

“I was born and raised in Colorado and enjoy scenic living near the Foothills. I am currently a student at Metropolitan State University of Denver and am working towards my bachelor’s degree in history. My deep love of history and its study began at the age of 13 in a seemingly inconspicuous junior high school U.S. History course and only flourished from there as I began to discover the beauties and intricacies of the past. The Molly Brown House’s public history internship appeals to me immensely as I most enjoy studying the social and personal aspects of history, which can be found in the museum’s rich wealth of information. By learning about Margaret Brown, her family, and her positive social influence through primary sources, I will gain the skills and ability to share the House’s incredible knowledge with the community of Denver and beyond.” ❁



The Molly Brown House Museum reopened Saturday, January 20 after every item was carefully inspected and cleaned.

MOLLY BROWN

HOUSE MUSEUM



Photo: Scott Dressel-Martin



Photo: Tom McClure

EDUCATION PROGRAMMING INCLUSIVE OF FAMILIES WHO HOMESCHOOL

by Caroline Grip, Education Associate

Did you know we provide unique experiences for homeschool students? Homeschool Days at the Molly Brown House Museum take place nearly every month of the year and cover a wide variety of topics from Titanic, early Colorado history, mining, women's suffrage, holiday traditions, and more. Each program is different from the last and includes activities in history, science, math, art, and other subjects.

Looking for a way to provide our popular school-based education programs for non-traditional school-aged students, the museum piloted Homeschool Days in 2019. In that first year, three programs were held for 21 learners and their families. With the pandemic, Homeschool Days grew rapidly and have continued to see high numbers of participants. For comparison, in 2023, we held 24 programs for 744 people. One of the reasons these programs are so successful is our understanding of both formal and informal education. Our educators and staff know how to engage people in fun and interesting ways in a historic house setting.

During Homeschool Day the museum is closed to the public. Students cycle through 5 different "hands-on" locations throughout the museum, learning in small groups with our educators. Over two-hours, 30-50 students per two-hour session engage in the same activities, including a final group activity to tie everything that students learned all together. Please be aware that tours of the house are not part of the program. Though students of all ages are welcome to attend, we generally recommend ages 6+. Families come on their own and make new friends while others join another family for the fun!

In addition to our Homeschool Days, we also offer teas and workshops specifically designed for homeschool families as well. If you have any questions, are interested in learning more, or would like to sign up for any of our homeschool activities, please visit the Homeschool Days page of the Learn With Us section at mollybrown.org.

Check out an example of one of our activities below and try it at home:

BUILD A LIFEBOAT

Lifeboats on the Titanic were large enough to carry upwards of 60 people, but many of them were sent off with only 20 people inside. Let's see how many passengers will fit into your lifeboat! For this activity, you will need: tinfoil, a large container with water, and 20 (or more) washers.

Give each student one large square of tinfoil. Ask each student to engineer it into a tinfoil lifeboat. Note that the smaller the piece of tinfoil, the harder it will be to get the boat to float and hold weight. Have students put their boats in a large, preferably deep container of water to see if it floats — if you're doing this activity at home, you could even use the bathtub!

Once their boat is floating, begin to add washers to it one at a time. See how many washers can fit into the boat before it sinks. If the boats can't hold 20 washers, ask students how they could better engineer the boats. What worked well with their designs and what didn't work? Why?

This activity teaches students the principles of upthrust and buoyancy. 🌊



HOMESCHOOL DAYS AT MOLLY BROWN HOUSE MUSEUM 2024 SCHEDULE

February 13	A Servant's Life
March 5	The Life of the Browns
April 15, 16, 22, 23	Titanic: The Aftermath
May 6	Lego City
September 10	Exploration & Survival
October 8	Game Day
November 12	Giving Thanks
December 9, 10	Deck the Halls



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HISTORIC DENVER’S 53RD ANNUAL



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Bar Max	Denver Firefighters Museum	John Deffenbaugh	Stanley Home Museum and Education Center
Barcelona Wine Bar	Denver Museum of Miniatures, Dolls & Toys	Jovanina’s Broken Italian	Stanley Hotel
Bravo! Vail Music Festival	Denver Museum of Nature & Science	KACI HEAD	Swallow Hill Music
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Center for Colorado Women’s History	Erika Massaquoi	La Napoule Foundation	Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum
Clock Tower Tours	Evelyn Waldron	Learned Lemur	Wines for Humanity
Colfax Avenue Business Improvement District	Famous Original J’s at Stanley	Meow Wolf Denver	Winter Park Ski Resort
Clyfford Still Museum	Forney Museum of Transportation	Molly Brown House Museum	
	Four Mile Historic Park	Molly Brown Spirits	



PRESERVATION BRIEFS



Kitt Watkins of Watkins Stained Glass restored eight windows, including several of these 112-year-old windows featuring intricate scrollwork. Photos: Jane Watkins

NEW LIGHT SOON TO STREAM THROUGH RESTORED WINDOWS AT CAPITOL HILL CHURCH

by Mike Owen, Preservation Services Manager



Historic Denver continues to support the ongoing restoration of Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church (CHPC) at 1100 Fillmore Street in Congress Park. Noted architects Fallis & Willison designed the building in 1911 in the Gothic Revival style. Owing to an expanding congregation and growing education programming, the congregation hired another prominent firm, Fisher & Fisher, to design a 1922 addition. Since then, little has changed in more than 100 years!

Historic Denver has partnered with CHPC since 2000 through our Sacred Landmarks program. We helped the congregation list the building on the Colorado State Register in 2001, as well as during previous grant and project efforts over the years. CHPC has successfully completed four State Historical Fund grants over the last fifteen years. The first project focused on the stabilization of the southwest tower interior structure in 2002. This was followed by a Historic Structure Assessment in 2004 to diagnose the remaining building needs, which led to work on the gable roof portion of the building in 2020.

The current project addresses needs specific to the 1911 tower, like roof restoration, including parapet, and critical masonry work, as well as extensive work restoring the stained glass windows on the west facade. With work on the tower now complete, focus has shifted to the century-old stained glass windows. Spectrum General Contractors completed the on-site work and Kitt Watkins of Watkins Stained Glass has been working on the ventilator windows — windows designed to be opened for ventilation — at the studio for the past few months.

Watkins Stained Glass is a Denver-area company with an impressive history. The family began making windows in 18th-century England, but their Colorado chapter begins with Charles “Clarence” Watkins, who arrived in Denver in 1868. Plenty of his creations still shine, including the stunning atrium lobby skylight in the Brown Palace Hotel (1892) and the Molly Brown House Museum (1889). His work remains in a number of houses of worship, including his potentially oldest remaining works at Trinity United Methodist Church (1888).

With subsequent generations, Watkins Stained Glass has become both a Denver “family tradition” and a legacy business in the greater preservation world. Today, the company is led by fourth-generation owners Phil and Jane Watkins and their daughter Kitt. The family estimates that of the thousands of windows they have created, at least 400 were for churches, but the restorations number more than 10,000!

The ventilator windows that are currently being restored showcase lovely scrollwork made of opalescent glass. Ventilator windows are the pieces that open and close; because of that motion (especially for those in older buildings), they are frequently more damaged than static windows. Fortunately, the church had a salvage vent to be used for parts.

One interesting challenge of State Historic Fund grants is that work on religious iconography, including those depicted in windows, cannot be funded. To navigate this policy, we document and separate stained glass by what it depicts, ensuring compliance. Any wood, glazing, and other structural elements can be included in the SHF grant, as

well as stained glass that includes geometric designs. In the case of CHPC, that means of the nine total windows on the west facade, eight windows are being fully restored. The one large central window with religious iconography will only receive wood frame restoration, though CHPC is planning to address the restoration of the stained glass separately in the next few years.

The project is slated to be completed in March 2024. In December of 2023, we learned that we had received two new State Historic Fund grants. Phase 6 of Discover Denver’s Citywide Survey and phase 2 of the Douglass Mortuary/La Paz Douglass Mortuary roof and mechanical systems rehabilitation project were both awarded; we look forward to bringing you updates on these exciting projects.

HISTORIC DENVER EXPLORES REVOLVING LOAN FUND

by Jay Homstad, Director of Development, and Michael Flowers, Director of Preservation Action

In 2023, Historic Denver was awarded a \$20,000 grant from the 1772 Foundation to conduct a feasibility study exploring the creation of a revolving loan fund focused on historic residential properties. The 1772 Foundation helps preserve America’s historic buildings and farmland for future generations to enjoy and is known nationwide for their work promoting “historic properties redevelopment programs,” frequently referred to as revolving loan funds.

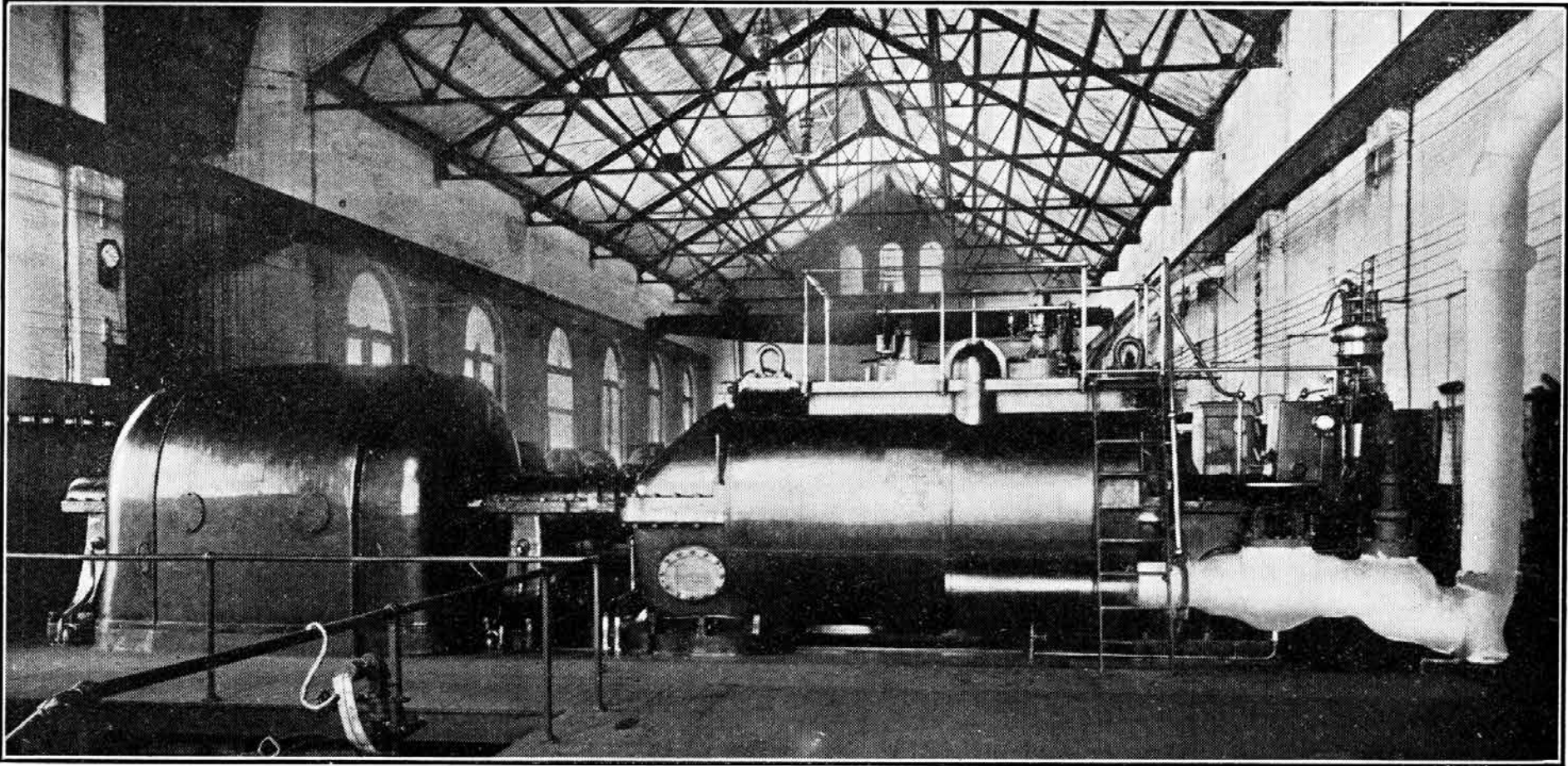
There has long been a gap in financial incentives for historic residential properties: Many existing programs benefit commercial properties and large redevelopment initiatives only. Homeowners are not eligible for all state and federal tax credits and no tax credit provides upfront financing. For those looking to maintain or restore their historic house — including windows, roof, or front porch — we are interested in creating a program that provides financial assistance, which would be unique among available preservation tools.

A revolving loan fund differs from a grant but can be structured to help homeowners afford necessary repairs. By providing immediate use of funds for repairs or to help fund a larger project, the revolving loan fund issues low-interest loans to facilitate the preservation of historic resources. Once repaid, the funds are available for other homeowners, and tax credit programs would still apply to these properties.

The feasibility study is being carried out by Donna Ann Harris and Elizabeth Watson, a research team with extensive experience conducting revolving loan fund feasibility studies and supporting communities with their historic cultural landscapes. Nearing completion, the Historic Denver study will include recommendations on how to structure the program in light of the landscape of existing programs. Historic Denver can also use the study to apply for seed funding, which would establish the initial funds for the program.

Though the program’s details remain to be determined, the main goal is clear: We are committed to exploring all options to provide financial assistance for historic properties that are either contributing to a Denver Landmark District or individually listed landmarks. For now we anticipate that loans will provide crucial funds for maintenance projects.

We appreciate the 1772 Foundation’s belief in our vision and for providing the funds to explore this tool for Denver. We also thank the donors who contributed to cover the remaining costs of conducting the study; their commitment to supporting our cities historic assets has lasting impacts.



Westinghouse-Parson's Turbo Generator, Capable of Lighting 150,000 Lamps, Recently Installed at the Lacombe Station of the Denver Gas and Electric Co. (Photo by Schwartz)

This 1910 edition of Denver Municipal Facts (Volume 2 Number 30), shows the interior of the Zuni Steam Plant, previously known as the Lacombe Station or LaCombe Power Plant. Photo: Denver Public Library Special Collections, C352.078883 D4373mu

COMMUNITY CALLS FOR THE ADAPTIVE-REUSE OF ZUNI STEAM PLANT

by Michael Flowers, Director of Preservation Action

The Zuni Steam Plant has been a continuous presence on the banks of the South Platte River since its construction as a coal-burning plant in 1901. Charles LaCombe, the plant's founder, constructed it with state-of-the-art alternating current generation to provide electric service — a new industry — to residents of a growing metropolis. This plant added to the energy capacity necessary for Denver's expansion throughout the 20th century, including steam heat.

Its smokestacks have towered over the communities of La Alma Lincoln Park and Sun Valley as an established Denver feature ever since. After a century of service, and environmental impact on surrounding residents, the Zuni Steam Plant is now vacant and without a use. Xcel Energy ceased using the plant for electricity generation in 2015 and the plant stopped generating steam heat in 2019. By 2021, it was officially decommissioned.

The plant's legacy, while widely beneficial to the growth of the city, presents a complicated past for the neighbors who have historically been affected by its environmental impacts. Still, these communities are steadfast in their belief that the building should be retained and reused as a community-serving asset. But its future is far from certain.

In November, Historic Denver sent an open letter to Mayor Mike Johnston and Denver City Council on behalf of a dozen Registered Neighborhood Organizations and 22 concerned community partners asking, "How will you work with us to retain and reuse the Zuni Steam Plant as a community asset?" The letter is an expression of concern for the loss of legacy buildings that represent Denver's diverse history and a specific request to breathe new life into a piece of their built heritage.

The adaptive reuse of industrial buildings is not a new concept. While many of these buildings once served to put pollutants into the air, often in underserved communities, reusing these existing structures provides the opportunity to address the wrongs of the past. Across the U.S. are stunning examples of how other communities have turned their vacant power stations into community assets. The Beloit Powerhouse was turned into a student union and recreation center to serve Beloit College in Wisconsin. The former powerhouse at Union Station in Kansas City, Missouri, currently houses the Todd Bolender Center for Dance and Creativity, which hosts hundreds of performing arts students a year. And, a local example, Denver's REI flagship store is housed in the former Denver Tramway Powerhouse.

Conversion to a new use isn't without complication, however. It should come as no surprise that a former coal plant has its share of on-site contaminants, though remediation occurs regardless of reuse or demolition. Because power companies rarely adaptively reuse their own buildings, the letter also calls for the city to act on its "right of first refusal," and purchase the property from Xcel. This option exists under the franchise agreement between Xcel and Denver concerning electricity operations.

It will take considerable effort to turn the Zuni Steam Plant into something that can benefit Sun Valley, La Alma Lincoln Park, and other neighbors. Projects like these often take time, but other cities across the country prove it is possible. Historic Denver remains a committed advocate for the community and we stand alongside these individuals and organizations who envision a bright and vibrant future for the steam power plant — one that serves local neighborhoods, creates amenities and employment opportunities, and replaces the buzz of electricity with the buzz of activity. 🌱



The Zuni Steam Plant has towered over the South Platte River — and the La Alma Lincoln Park, Sun Valley, and West Colfax neighborhoods — since 1901.

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A number of Basement Houses, also known as Hope Houses, still remain in the Westwood neighborhood in Southwest Denver. Photo: Discover Denver

UNDERGROUND HOMES FULL OF HOPE IN THE WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

by Kerry Baldwin, Research & Evaluation Coordinator, Meaghan Heinrich, Survey Coordinator, and Beth Glandon, Director of Research and Engagement

Discover Denver volunteers come across unique and surprising buildings in every neighborhood visited by the project. In Westwood, we stumbled upon nearly a dozen incredibly interesting residences known as “Basement Houses.” With most of the living space below ground, the Basement House is a 20th-century version of the prairie dugout — a dwelling commonly constructed by early settlers in states across the Great Plains. Because these were often built with the hope of later enlarging the home by adding another story above ground, the Basement House is also commonly referred to as a “Hope House.”

During World War II, many military personnel were stationed in Denver at one of the local military bases, while thousands of workers were employed locally in defense-related facilities, including at the Denver Ordnance Plant located just west of Westwood. After the war, many chose Denver as the place they wanted to settle and raise a family. The resulting housing shortage saw families renting rooms in existing homes, living in converted garages, and even in abandoned railroad cars. Because of its low cost and the fact that there were no zoning restrictions, Westwood was an attractive place for those wanting to make the Denver area their home, and constructing a Basement House was an economical way to build a basic home that could be expanded later as funds allowed.

Often constructed with a concrete floor about six feet below grade and formed concrete walls projecting a few feet above grade, the Basement House was accessed either via a covered, exterior stairwell or a covered entryway on the roof. Inside the Basement House the floor plan was similar to other modest houses of the postwar period. When finances allowed, the roof could be removed and another story added. The original dwelling then became the basement.

Basement Houses in Westwood took a number of forms. Most had nearly-flat roofs with an exterior covered entrance leading down into the home, while others appeared as half-height houses with touches of mid-century style. Undoubtedly, hope won out and many of Westwood’s Basement Houses were enlarged by their owners, making them difficult for Discover Denver volunteers to distinguish from other surrounding houses. But it was a treat for Discover Denver volunteers to be able to see and document this unique building form first-hand, and in some cases have the opportunity to talk with their current owners.

A partnership between Historic Denver and the City and County of Denver, Discover Denver is a citywide building survey focused on identifying the buildings and areas of the city that are historically, architecturally, or culturally significant. Community volunteers are key to the success of the project – visit discoverdenver.co/volunteer for more information and to find out how you can get involved! 🌱

VOLUNTEER

No expertise is required to volunteer with Discover Denver: If you love old buildings, history, or want to learn about Denver’s unique neighborhoods, we need you!

FIELD SURVEY

Use handheld tablets to photograph individual buildings and document their architectural features. Three-hour shifts are available on weekdays and weekends.

BUILDING RESEARCH

Work at your own pace and preferred location to determine who designed, built, owned, and lived in a building over time and whether any significant events have occurred there. Researched buildings have been identified through field surveys or brought to our attention by the community.



The architect who now owns this Basement House in Westwood told Discover Denver volunteers that his home is very energy efficient. Photo: Discover Denver

HISTORIC PROPERTIES *deserve an* EXPERT



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Pictured Above: The Richthofen Castle in Montclair, Sold by Casey in 2012.

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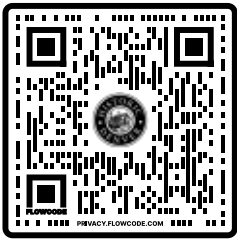
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Your membership supports the ongoing work of Historic Denver and the Molly Brown House Museum, enabling us to continue protecting our city's irreplaceable cultural touchstones.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU INCREASED YOUR MEMBERSHIP GIVING LEVEL?

If you're in a position to provide additional support to Historic Denver this year, consider increasing your membership level to the next tier. Or, spread out your dollars by becoming a Keystone Member and giving monthly.

Thank you for empowering us to advocate for the historic buildings and landscapes that tell Denver's diverse story by increasing your giving level today!



Scan here to check your membership status or renew today.

You can renew your membership online, sign up for museum tickets and special events, and more on the Member Login page of our website.

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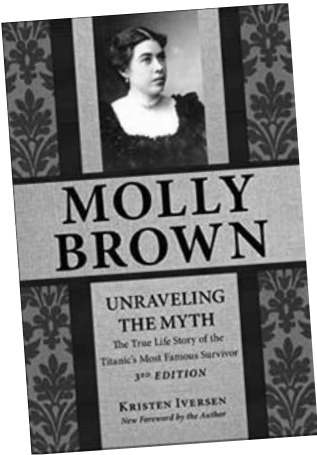
Photo: Courtesy Rob Lewis

**THE RISE AND FALL OF MINING TOWNS
IN COLORADO: OPENING RECEPTION**

Friday, February 2 ♦ 6 p.m.
Molly Brown House Museum
\$40 Member ♦ \$45 Non-member

J.J. and Margaret Brown collected mountain and mining-themed art works, including the painting by Helen Henderson Chain seen in the museum’s collection today. In this spirit, the Molly Brown House Museum will showcase an exhibit of works depicting Colorado mining towns from prominent early 20th-century artists. The paintings in *The Rise and Fall of Mining Towns in Colorado* portray the prosperity and ultimate downfall of these towns and the lives of those who built Colorado, including the Brown family. We invite you to journey into this forgotten world with a new lens, considering mining towns as cultural and social centers of the West.

Join us for the opening night of this uniquely set art exhibit where early twentieth-century artworks are on view in the grand rooms of the Molly Brown House. The reception includes art talks with the collector, Rob Lewis, along with The ArtSol and Curator Stephanie McGuire.



**COMMUNITY BOOK CLUB - MOLLY
BROWN: UNRAVELING THE MYTH**

Sunday, February 4 ♦ 12:30-2 p.m. ♦ Virtual or in person at Molly Brown House Museum ♦ Free

Join the Molly Brown House Museum and the Center for Colorado Women’s History, as we read and discuss books related to women’s history, Colorado history, and books by women authors from Colorado. Book titles and locations can be found on the Adult Programs page of the Learn With Us section of our website, mollybrown.org. Meetings are held in person and online via Zoom. Let’s read!

This month’s book is the award-winning *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth* by Colorado author Kristen Iversen.

**THE LEGACY OF BOB RAGLAND, THE
“NON-STARVING ARTIST”**

Tuesday, February 20 ♦ 6-7:30 p.m.
Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art
\$10 Member ♦ \$15 Non-member (includes admission to Kirkland Museum)

Known as “the non-starving artist,” Bob Ragland inspired many Denver artists to pursue art as a career and shake off the expectation that art would not provide a living wage. His mentees continue to actively contribute to Denver’s art scene and will share their favorite memories and inspirational words from Bob. During this panel, visual artist Moe Gram will moderate a conversation with fellow artists and Ragland mentees Darrell Anderson, Carmen Avila, Michael Gadlin, and Ron Hicks.

**DINNER WITH ARTISTS: COLLECTOR’S
EDITION**

Thursday, February 22 ♦ 5:30-9 p.m.
Molly Brown House Museum ♦ \$150/person

Be a part of this special evening, hosted by Rose Fredrick of The Art Sol and featuring Rob Lewis, the collector of the pieces in *The Rise and Fall of Mining Towns in Colorado*, and Museum Director Andrea Malcomb. They will dive into the exhibition and its connection to Colorado, shedding light on its significance for the Browns. Tickets are available at theartsol.com and include a four-course meal, beer and wine, plus the opportunity to interact with fellow guests and speakers.

**VANCE KIRKLAND INSIDER TOUR &
LECTURE**

Tuesday, February 27 ♦ 6 p.m.
Molly Brown House Museum
\$20 Member ♦ \$24 Non-member

Want the inside scoop and to know ALL the things about the museum and untold parts of Denver history? Then our Insider Tours and Lectures are made for you!

The Molly Brown House Museum’s The Rise and Fall of Mining Towns in Colorado exhibit includes a special Vance Kirkland lithograph. Join Curator Stephanie McGuire in welcoming staff from the Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art to learn more about “Colorado’s preeminent artist.”



Photo: Courtesy Denver Public Library

**COLORADO THEATRE IN NON-
TRADITIONAL SPACES: CAVALCADE OF
WOMEN**

Saturday, March 2 ♦ 7 p.m. ♦ Molly Brown House Museum ♦ \$35 Member ♦ \$40 Non-member

Colorado Theatre in Non-Traditional Spaces is coming to the museum to share stories of notable people through the medium of theater! Join us in rooms throughout the historic home of Margaret Brown to meet such Colorado legends as Clara Brown, Mattie Silks, and Helen Bonfils.

**1340 PENN AFTER HOURS: WOMEN
ARTISTS**

Thursday, March 14 ♦ 7-9 p.m.
Molly Brown House Museum
\$16 Member ♦ \$20 Non-member

From Salon de Paris to en plein air, the “New Women” of the late 19th century were bucking trends and pushing society’s limits. Explore the female artists Margaret celebrated by hanging their works in her home and others who fought for the same recognition as male painters. As with other 1340 Penn programs, expect to hear racy tales and explore taboo topics while sipping cocktails at the historic home of Margaret “Molly” Brown.

INSIDER TOUR: ORGANIZING WOMEN

Tuesday, March 19 ♦ 6 p.m.
Molly Brown House Museum
\$20 Member ♦ \$24 Non-member

Want the inside scoop and to know ALL the things about the museum and untold parts of Denver history? Then our Insider Tours and Lectures are made for you!

This Women’s History Month, join Museum Director Andrea Malcomb for a conversation on the power of women when they collectively convene. As we walk through the historic home we’ll explore the impact of women, from clubs to political action, from Margaret’s time to our own.



Photo: Courtesy Library of Congress

CLOCK-TALES AT THE CLOCK TOWER

Thursday, March 21 ♦ 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Daniels & Fisher Tower
\$35 Member ♦ \$40 Non-member

Join us for a unique evening 400 feet above Denver in the Daniels & Fisher Clock Tower! Author Mark Barnhouse will join us to share insight on the history of the building that was modeled after the Campanile of St. Mark’s in Venice and was once the tallest west of the Mississippi. In addition to the views, the evening also features refreshments.

TITANIC ESCAPE!

Thursday, April 4 and April 18
Entry begins at 6:30 p.m., last entry at 8 p.m.
Molly Brown House Museum
\$20 Member ♦ \$25 Non-member

It’s 1:20 a.m., April 15, 1912. You are locked in the bowels of the ship with your fellow 3rd class passengers as the Titanic begins its descent into the ocean. Can you solve the puzzles to travel from deck to deck and get on a lifeboat before the ship becomes fully submerged?

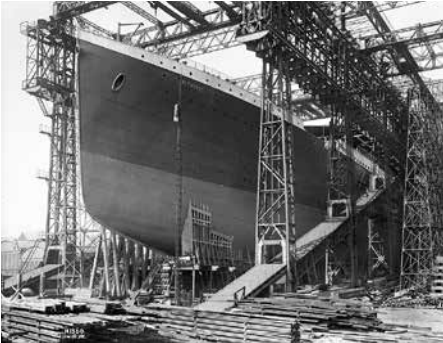


Photo: Courtesy Library of Congress

TITANIC TEA

Saturday, April 6 ♦ 10:20 a.m. and 1:20 p.m.
Molly Brown House Museum
\$45 Member ♦ \$50 Non-member

Enjoy tea in the historic home of a woman who not only survived the sinking but made headlines as the Heroine of the Titanic. Learn about Brown’s experience on the Titanic then enjoy a high tea with fruit, scones, tea sandwiches, desserts, and Margaret’s favorite blend of tea.

**COMMUNITY BOOK CLUB - GOLD FATED
FAMILY**

Sunday, April 7 ♦ 12:30-2 p.m. ♦ Virtual or in person at Center for Colorado Women’s History ♦ Free

Join the Molly Brown House Museum and the Center for Colorado Women’s History, as we read and discuss books related to women’s history, Colorado history, and books by women authors from Colorado. Book titles and locations can be found on the Adult Programs page of the Learn With Us section of our website, mollybrown.org. Meetings are held in person and online via Zoom. Let’s read!

This month’s book is *Gold Fated Family* by Jody L. Pritzl, whom we are lucky enough to also count on as a Molly Brown House Museum volunteer!

DEEPER DIVE: TITANIC

Tuesday, April 9 and Tuesday, April 16 ♦ 6 p.m.
Molly Brown House Museum
\$20 Member ♦ \$24 Non-member

The White Star Line promised the finest accommodations on its maiden voyage. From spacious Dining Saloons to the Promenade Decks, join us for a tour in the home of Margaret “Molly” Brown to explore the varied experiences on Titanic’s one and only voyage.

**ROOM FOR TWO? TITANIC IN POP
CULTURE**

Thursday, April 11 ♦ 6 p.m.
Molly Brown House Museum
\$20/member ♦ \$24/non-member

One of the greatest movie debates ever asks, “Was there room for Jack?” Join us at the home of the “unsinkable” Margaret Brown, heroine of the Titanic, for a light-hearted exploration of the Titanic story in pop culture, paired with movie-themed snacks and cocktails.

**COLORADO THEATRE IN NON-
TRADITIONAL SPACES: MOTHER JONES**

Saturday, April 13 ♦ 7 p.m.
Molly Brown House Museum
\$35 Member ♦ \$40 Non-member

Colorado Theatre in Non-Traditional Spaces is coming to the museum to share stories of notable people through the medium of theater! Join us in advance of the 110th anniversary of the Ludlow Massacre to learn about Mary Harris “Mother” Jones, America’s “most dangerous woman” and labor advocate.