



DENVER CENTER FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS
Theatre Company

INSIDE OUT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

The Unsinkable **MOLLY BROWN**



THE UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN

SYNOPSIS

Molly: "You got to show you know you know."

The Unsinkable Molly Brown

Margaret Brown rises from a boisterous tomboy born in Hannibal, Missouri to an international heroine. She leaves her Irish father's side and journeys to Leadville, Colorado in search of riches and success. There she meets and marries J.J. Brown, a miner who is not wealthy but knows the mining business thoroughly. With hard work and perseverance, J.J. strikes it rich in the Little Johnny mine. He and Molly become Leadville celebrities, but Molly insists they must try their fortunes in Denver.

After courting the Denver social scene but being snubbed by "The Sacred 36," Mrs. Brown turns her talents to social causes such as women's suffrage and juvenile justice. The Browns travel to Europe to smooth their rough social edges but return to Denver to pursue business and social matters. After a schism in their marriage, Molly returns to Europe only to endure a year of social boredom with royal society. She sails for home on the ill-fated Titanic; when the ship is sinking at sea, Molly leads a lifeboat of survivors to safety. Her bravery wins the admiration of the society that once spurned her.

MEREDITH WILLSON: THE COMPOSER

Meredith Willson was born in Mason City, Iowa, in 1902 and grew up there. He left for New York in 1920 where he studied at the Institute of Musical Art, now the Julliard School, before he toured with the John Phillip Sousa band. In 1924, he became the first flutist with the New York Philharmonic under Arturo Toscanini (1924-1929).

During World War II, Willson worked for the United States' Armed Forces Radio Service, where he teamed with George Burns, Gracie Allen and Bill Goodwin. He would work with all three as a bandleader and a regular on the Burns and Allen radio program playing a shy

continued on page 3



INSIDE OUT

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Douglas Langworthy Editor

Sally Gass Contributing Writer

David Saphier Education Contributor

Tina Risch Community Services Manager

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THE UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN

Lyrics and Music by Meredith Willson

Additional Lyrics and
Book by Dick Scanlan

Based on the Original
Book by Richard Morris

Musical Adaptation by Michael Rafter

Directed and Choreographed by
Kathleen Marshall

Producing Partners: Joy S. Burns,
June Travis and Daniel L. Ritchie
Contributing Partners: Marvin & Judi Wolf
Supporting Partners: The El Pomar Foundation,
Doug Morton & Marilyn Brown
and L. Roger & Meredith Hutson

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young man trying to get advice on women.

Returning to network radio after World War II, he created the Talking People, a choral group that spoke in unison while delivering radio commercials. He also became the musical director for *The Big Show*, a prestigious comedy-variety program hosted by actress Tallulah Bankhead and featuring some of the world's most respected entertainers. Willson wrote the song "May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You" for the show; Bankhead would speak the lyrics over the music at the end of each show. Willson also worked on Jack Benny's radio program and, for a few years in the early 1950s, he was a regular panelist on the Goodson-Todman game show "The Name's the Same."

After moving to Hollywood to work with NBC, Willson arranged and composed the scores for Charlie Chaplin's film satire of Nazism, *The Great Dictator*, and for the film *The Little Foxes*. He also wrote symphonic

concert pieces and some popular songs.

In his three capacities as composer, lyricist and librettist, Willson evoked a small-town America that no longer existed in the mid-1950s but was still part of the childhood memories of some Americans and in the fantasies of others. This was particularly true of his musical *The Music Man* that featured brass bands and barbershop harmonies. *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, which reached Broadway in November 1960, was another excursion into a similar period of Americana. His third musical, *Here's Love*, was a musical adaptation of the film *Miracle on 34th Street*; it was a commercial success, but was considered the weakest of his musical scores.

He died in Brentwood, California in 1984 and was buried in Mason City, Iowa.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1984/06/17/obituaries/meredith-willson-composer-of-music-man>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meredith_Willson

DICK SCANLAN: LIBRETTIST, WRITER AND ACTOR

Dick was born in the suburbs of Washington, DC and studied at Carnegie Mellon University to become an actor. His short stories in *The Village Voice*, *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Advocate* and *Theatre Week* convinced him to become a writer.

He is the co-book writer (with Richard Morris) and lyricist of the musical *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, which premiered on Broadway in 2002. He is the co-writer, with Sherrie Rene Scott, of the musical *Everyday Rapture*, which opened on Broadway in 2010.

In 2011 it was announced that Scanlan was reworking the 1960 musical *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. Richard Morris originally asked him in 2002, but Scanlan declined because of the work required on *Millie*. After Morris died, his estate contacted Scanlan and asked him to re-write it; again he declined because he had other projects in development. Finally, Freddie Gershon, president of Music Theatre International, asked him again to look at *Molly Brown*,

which is considered an underexposed property of MTI. Scanlan agreed and rewrote the script to change the fanciful fictitious plot to a more factual one.

AWARDS

2002 Tony Award Best Book of a Musical, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* nominee.

2002 Tony Award Best Original Musical Score, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* nominee.

2002 Drama Desk Award Outstanding Book of a Musical, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, nominee.

2002 Drama Desk Award Outstanding Lyrics, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, nominee.

2010 Tony Award Best Book of a Musical, *Everyday Rapture*, nominee.

2010 Drama Desk Award Outstanding Book of a Musical, *Everyday Rapture*, nominee.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dick_Scanlan

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE FIRST *THE UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN* AND THE PRESENT SCRIPT

Diverging from the original show's simple rags-to-riches journey (which had been based on fanciful myths from Gene Fowler's book *Timberline* and stories by local writer Caroline Bancroft), Dick Scanlan, the librettist, draws from Margaret Tobin Brown's full history, from poverty in Hannibal, Missouri to wealth in Colorado. About half the score is from the original musical ("I Ain't Down Yet," "Belly Up to the Bar, Boys" and "I'll Never Say No") and the rest is from Meredith Willson's catalogue of unpublished songs, from which Scanlan matched existing material to his new libretto.

Significant cast changes were the correction of Johnny Brown's name to J.J. Brown, not Leadville Johnny Brown; the addition of Julia Gerrard as Molly's friend; the naming of specific miners such as Erich,

Vincenzo, William and Arthur, and the inclusion of the Tabors, Horace and Baby Doe. More plot time is spent in Leadville with mention of the Ice Palace and specific mines such as the Louisville Mine and the Little Johnny.

When the Browns move to Denver they meet up with Louise Sneed-Hill of The Sacred 36 (see article on Mrs. Crawford Hill and The Sacred 36 later in this study guide), not Mrs. McGlone. Molly spends less energy trying to crack the Denver social register and more on worthwhile social causes such as women's suffrage, Catholic charities and juvenile justice.

<http://www.playbill.com/news/article/158017-Sutton-Foster-and-Marc-Kudisch-Bring-Unsinkable-Molly-Brown-Tub-in-Reading-of-Revised-Musical>

MARGARET MOLLY BROWN

Margaret Tobin was born in 1867 in Hannibal, Missouri to John and Johanna Tobin, a proud Irish Catholic family. She grew up in a cottage built close to the Mississippi River and attended the grammar school run by her aunt, Mary O'Leary. As a teenager she worked stripping tobacco leaves at Garth's Tobacco Company. In 1886 Margaret journeyed to Leadville, Colorado with her sister, Helen.

In Leadville, Margaret shared a cabin with her brother Daniel after her sister Helen returned to Hannibal. In order to pay her share of the bills, she went to work at the Daniels and Fisher Mercantile Store in the draperies department. She met J.J. Brown at a Catholic Church picnic in 1886; they had a whirlwind courtship. Margaret had wanted to marry an extremely rich man to keep her father comfortable in his old age, but she fell hard for J.J. Therefore, she decided "she would be better off with a poor man she loved."¹

On September 1, 1886 Margaret and

J.J. were married and set up home in Stumpftown, outside of Leadville. Margaret began taking lessons in reading and literature, but she had to take a leave when Lawrence Palmer Brown was born in 1887. In 1889 Catherine Ellen was born and nicknamed Helen. Molly became interested in miners' rights and the suffrage movement, along with Baby Doe Tabor. Meanwhile, J.J. was amassing his fortune. When the Sherman Silver Act was repealed in 1893 (see The Crisis of 1893 later in this study guide), Leadville went into a state of gloom with silver mines closing and families moving. However, J.J. was convinced the Little Johnny Mine might become a producer of gold rather than silver. He devised a timber-and-hay bale method to hold back the dolomite sand that had prevented the miners from reaching the gold at the lower depths of the mine. J.J. struck it rich and by 1893, the Little Johnny was shipping 135 tons of ore per day making Brown one of the most successful

mining men in the country. At this point, Margaret decided it was time to move to Denver.

The Browns moved to Denver in 1894 and bought the house at 1340 Pennsylvania Avenue. Molly wanted to join the Sacred 36, a group of Denver's elite socialites led by Louise Sneed Hill (Mrs. Crawford Hill), the scion of Denver society. To this group, birthright, position, and upbringing were what counted in achieving social status. Since Molly had none of these, she was snubbed; her honesty and good nature were not appreciated. Frankly, it came to matter little because the Browns soon rose in Denver society without the help of the Sacred 36. To celebrate their new prosperity and social standing, the Browns toured Europe in 1895.

When they returned to Denver, Margaret threw her energies into charitable work. She was a founding member of the Denver Women's Club that advocated literacy, education, suffrage and human rights. She raised funds to build the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph's Hospital. She found an ally in Judge Ben Lindsey and together they worked to help destitute children and establish the first juvenile court in the country.

After some years of marital harmony, Margaret's interest in miners' rights and J.J.'s supposed affair with a young woman made for tense times in the marriage. Molly

returned to Europe and socialized with her royal friends. She set sail for the United States on the doomed Titanic's maiden voyage and, after saving her lifeboat of passengers, became an international celebrity. She was finally accepted by the Sacred 36, but the recognition did not matter.

Since Margaret and J.J. were both Catholic, there could be no divorce. J.J. died on Long Island in 1922, leaving no will. Margaret battled against her children over the estate in court; Molly wanted a larger share, but she lost. As a result, she became estranged from her children.

Molly died on October 26, 1932, at the Barbizon Hotel in New York City where she had been studying acting. The family withdrew from public life after their failure to correct the folklore spun by Gene Fowler and Caroline Bancroft's tabloid articles. Only recently have they agreed to work with an historian, Kristen Iverson to correct the legend of their mother.

1. Iverson, p. 90.

Iverson, Kristen. *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth*. Boulder, CO: Johnson Books, 1999.

Rogoff, David. "Denver's Unsinkable" *Molly Brown*. Boulder, CO: Stonehenge Books, 1980.

<http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-survivor/molly-brown.html>

JAMES JOSEPH BROWN

J.J.: "Your future's staring you in the face. Not a picture, a real man."

The Unsinkable Molly Brown

James Joseph Brown was born in Waymart County, Pennsylvania on September 27, 1854. He was schooled by his mother and eventually attended St. John's Academy in Pittston, Pennsylvania. In 1877, at the age of 23, he left to pursue a mining career. First, he worked on farms in Nebraska. He knew of the fortunes to be made in mining but was very pragmatic. Believing in hard work more than good luck, he went to the Black Hills of South

Dakota where he worked in the placer mines for two years.

In 1880 Brown hopped a train to Colorado where he spent a month in Georgetown; then he spent two more years in Ashcroft near Aspen. J.J. headed to Leadville after studying geology, a science that taught him how to sink a shaft. With knowledge, experience and a growing network of contacts, J.J. became the shaft manager for mines owned by David Moffat and Eben Smith in 1885. In a few years he became superintendent of the Maid and Henriette mines. His method of using baled hay and timbers prevented many a cave-in and allowed for gold to be mined in the Little Johnny Mine.

In 1886 J.J. and Molly were married after she succumbed to his personality, charm and the fact that he had a steady job. Both enjoyed Leadville's social life and attending events at the Tabor Opera House; J.J. heard author and playwright Oscar Wilde in 1883. Both educated themselves with lessons in reading, literature and music.

J.J. was appointed superintendent of the Ibex Mining Company while Molly was concerned with miners' rights and the suffrage movement. When they moved to Denver in 1894, J.J.'s business required much travelling; while he was away, Molly heard disquieting rumors.

In declining health, the Browns moved to Ireland in 1899 for one year for J.J.'s

recuperation. The stay did very little, for they returned to Denver the following year. In 1909, he had a hernia operation. On September 5, 1922, J.J. suffered a heart attack; Molly rushed to get to his side but he died alone. He is buried in Westbury Village, Long Island. At the time of his death, Margaret told newspapers, "I've never met a finer, bigger, more worthwhile man than J.J. Brown."¹

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org>

Iverson, Kristen. *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth*. Boulder, CO: Johnson Books, 1999.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Joseph_Brown

LEADVILLE, COLORADO

J.J.: "Maybe Leadville has more to offer than you give us credit for."

The Unsinkable Molly Brown

Leadville was the greatest of all the Colorado mining regions; its history is a series of boom and bust periods following the fortunes of the mining industry.

Placer mining [mining for alluvial or loose surface deposits] for gold was started in California Gulch in 1859. By 1861, 5000 prospectors covered the area and the settlement of Oro City was established. The placer deposits quickly disappeared; by the 1870s the area was almost deserted. In 1878 a metallurgist named Alvinus Woods and his partner William Stevens visited the area; they discovered that the local sands were composed of lead carbonate with an extremely high silver content. The mother lode was discovered on the side of Iron Hill. This finding led to the second boom in the area; the silver rush would lead to the founding of Leadville.

Thousands were drawn to the area by the discovery of silver in the mid-1870s. As a result of this explosive growth, the city of Leadville was incorporated in January 1878. At an elevation of 10,200 feet, it is the highest incorporated city in the country. By the end of 1879, the population in Leadville reached 18,000; by 1893 the estimated population reached 60,000. This was the

period when great fortunes were made and lost throughout the district.

By 1881 there were 14 smelters and reduction plants operating in the Leadville district. Some of the leading mining properties in the district included the Matchless, Morning Star, Iron Silver, Catalpa, Chrysolite and Little Pittsburgh.

The demonetization of silver in 1893 resulted in the closing of most of the silver mines around Leadville. All but one of the smelters closed, but the survivor became the great Arkansas Valley Smelter that operated into the 1960s. As the local economy declined in the wake of the Silver Panic, significant gold deposits were discovered in the eastern portion of the district. This led to the third boom in Leadville's history.

The discovery of rich gold deposits in the area reinvigorated the Leadville district. The Ibex Mining Company became a leader in the district, acquiring many of the older silver workings and reopening them. The lead and zinc ore pulled from the mines contained significant amounts of manganese and bismuth in addition to gold. This broader base of production allowed the district to maintain a reasonable level of prosperity until the Great Depression, when low world metal prices, increasing costs of production and limited capital resources gradually closed down most of the operations.

During the boom years of the 1870s to the 1890s, Leadville's economy demanded significant rail connections. Three railroads operated in the district for more than 30 years, which moved thousands of tons of ore from Leadville to smelters, brought in merchandise, mining supplies, coal for fuel and building materials. Passenger traffic in and out of the area was significant because the only other means of reaching Leadville was by stagecoach.

Leadville hosted governors, senators and three different presidents. The town has memories of the visits of Sarah Bernhardt, Buffalo Bill Cody, Maude Adams and Oscar Wilde.

Blair, Edward and Churchill, E. Richard.
Everybody Came to Leadville.
Ft. Collins, CO: First Light Publishing, 1999.

http://www.narrowgauge.org/ncmap/ted/dspp2_leadville.html

THE TABORS

In 1860, when the California Gulch discovery was made just south of present day Leadville by Woods and Stevens, Horace Tabor and his first wife Augusta arrived with their son Maxey. They had left their farm in Kansas, arrived in Denver and, after hearing about the success in Leadville, decided to head west up the mountains.

The Gulch had been panned out; however, by 1862, the Tabors left the area heading back east over Mosquito Pass. Horace had built a cabin in an area called Buckskin Joe, become involved in community affairs and opened a grocery store. But the appeal of California Gulch brought the Tabors back in November of 1868, where they once again opened a store. Horace became postmaster of the town then called Oro City. Later he moved to Leadville, where he became the city's first mayor and second postmaster.

Tabor was known to be a generous man and that generosity paid him big dividends. In 1878, two immigrants, August Riche and George Hook, walked into the store and asked Horace if he would grubstake them. Tabor did, three times; the first cost him a mere \$17. A month later, on May 15, the group knew they had a bonanza on their hands, the Little Pittsburgh Mine. By the end of the summer each received a \$10,000 dividend. Tabor quickly asserted himself leader of the silver mining community.

In 1880, an attractive 25-year-old divorcee named Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt Doe arrived in Leadville. Her presence was soon discovered by Tabor, who began a discreet relationship with her. By summer of 1880, the affair was no longer discreet; Horace moved out of his house and asked Augusta for a divorce. She refused. Horace

consulted with an attorney in order to secure a divorce, which he finally did in Durango, Colorado. It was not a legal divorce; whether Horace knew this or not is unknown. The fact remains that he and Elizabeth (soon to be known as "Baby Doe") were secretly married in St. Louis in 1883. Augusta fought vigorously against this so-called "divorce", but it was too late. She asked for separate maintenance, which was estimated at two to three million dollars, and moved to Pasadena, California.

Horace Tabor's fame grew; he served as senator from Colorado for 30 days as a political appointment for Henry Teller's vacated senatorial position. But the scandal of the alleged divorce and marriage raged on; it was an embarrassment to Denver as well as to Washington and irritated prominent figures in high social circles. However, on March 1, 1883, the marriage between Horace and Baby Doe was finally legalized.

When Congress repealed the Sherman Silver Act, the government was no longer in the market for silver. Prices for silver dropped precipitously and it became impossible to continue operations. Horace Tabor, failing to listen to the advice of others and diversify, faced ruin. He also had made a number of unsuccessful investments in foreign mining ventures that had failed. His reserves were gone; he and Baby Doe lost everything. Nevertheless, Horace never lost faith in the future and told Baby Doe to hold on to the Matchless Mine. He died in 1899 at the age of 66. When offers were made to Baby Doe to sell the mine, she refused. Misfortune had made her skeptical of mankind and she

mistrusted everyone who offered her relief.

She returned to Leadville, penniless but steadfast. She lived out her days in a one-room shed near the Matchless Mine where she died at the age of 81. Baby Doe became a legend — the inspiration behind two books, a Hollywood movie, two operas, a musical, a screenplay and an enduring legacy.

Karsner, David. *Silver Dollar: the Story of the Tabors*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1932.

<http://www.leadville.com/history/tabor.htm>

The Denver Post, May 27, 1908. "By 10 Minutes, Widow Saves Tabor's Mine".

THE LEADVILLE ICE PALACE

ERICH: "Wait till you see: a castle carved out of ice."

The Unsinkable Molly Brown.

As prosperity waned in Leadville, Colorado, civic boosters decided the town needed to attract tourists to revive its flagging economy. They settled on a grand ice palace, which would be a permanent structure — used for carnivals and events in the winter and public meetings in the summer. It was decided the palace would be built on top of the prominent Capitol Hill where it would dominate the cityscape.

Enough money had been raised for the construction to begin in November 1895. The structure was not actually built out of ice, though; the ice blocks were for appearance only. The Palace was supported by a framework of girders, trusses and timber. Five thousand tons of ice was required for the walls, much of which was hauled in from the faraway Palmer Lake, between Denver and Colorado Springs. Upon arrival at the construction site, the ice was trimmed and placed into forms. It was then sprayed with boiling water that helped to bind the 22-inch thick blocks together.

On January 1, 1896, after much publicity and promotion, the Leadville Ice Palace had its grand opening. More than 2000 visitors arrived to marvel at the five-acre palace with its 90-foot-high octagonal ice towers complete with turrets, a 20-foot-wide promenade, electric lights frozen within the ice blocks, prismatic search lights and a 190-by-80 foot skating rink.

Welcoming visitors at the main entrance was "Lady Leadville," a 19-foot-tall ice sculpture on a 12-foot ice pedestal, her right

arm pointing to the prosperous mines to the east of town. Independent vendors set up shop adjacent to the Ice Palace, hoping to cash in on the attraction.

At that time there were three railroads servicing Leadville; the hope was that the winter season would bring record numbers of crowds. The railroads promoted the attraction and offered special roundtrip fares.

But things didn't work out quite as the city had expected. Within days of the Palace's opening, rumors began circulating in Denver newspapers of problems in Leadville such as the palace ice melting and falling walls. The papers also warned of limited food availability and supposed thieves in the area. *The Leadville Herald Democrat* assured readers these rumors were false with little merit. Many visitors came only for one day, packing their own lunches, to the dismay of restaurants and vendors.

As fate would have it, March of 1896 brought unseasonably high temperatures and lower attendance figures. The Palace actually began melting as snow began receding from the mountainsides. On March 28, the last official ceremony of the Winter Carnival was held.

<http://cozine.com/2009-december/the-leadville-ice-palace-a-look-back/>

MRS. CRAWFORD HILL AND THE SACRED 36

Louise Sneed was a Southern Belle born in North Carolina about the time the Civil War broke out. After the death of her parents, she moved to Memphis where she lived with an older sister. She was unable to find a suitable husband in the post-Civil War South, and in 1893, unmarried and approaching spinsterhood, she came to Denver to visit some cousins. They threw a gala party for their guest and, at the party, Louise was introduced to Denver's most eligible bachelor, Crawford Hill, who was to inherit a small fortune from his father, former Senator Nathaniel Hill, who had founded a smelter in Black Hawk. Louise set her sights on Crawford and in 1895 they were married in what was proclaimed the wedding of the year in Memphis. The new Mr. and Mrs. Hill moved into an apartment in the present day site of the City and County Building, where they had two sons. Louise set out to conquer Denver society of which her mother-in-law was already a fixture, even though Louise had stated when she arrived here that Denver was a "social backwater."¹

In 1905 the Hills built a large mansion on Capitol Hill at Tenth and Sherman streets, which still exists although it now houses law offices. In it they had a large drawing room that was 72-feet long and Louise found it would accommodate nine tables for card games with four people at each table. Every month or two she would invite 36 leaders whom she considered the *crème de la crème* of Denver's high society to play whist or bridge. Those leaders became known as The Sacred 36 and "it was to this group that Molly aspired but was never invited, causing her to label Louise Hill as the "snobbiest woman in Denver."²

Around 1914, Louise met a dashing polo player named Buckley Wells. He also was the president of the Smuggler-Union gold mine, had other mining interests, and was a general in the Colorado National Guard. He and Louise hit it off and soon they became involved in a torrid affair. Apparently Crawford Hill not only knew of the illicit affair but also followed it, for the three of them sometimes dined together and occasionally went on trips together. In the foyer of their mansion Louise hung two portraits, one of Crawford on one wall and on the other wall she had an even bigger picture of Buckley.

Buckley's wife Grace was not tolerant and in 1918 she divorced him. In 1922 Crawford Hill died and since they were both now single, Louise thought Buckley would marry her. Instead he eloped with a blond divorcee from Nevada; an irate Louise was heard to say, "I'll break him."³ Using her social and political contacts, she got many of his financial backers to withdraw their support, and at the age of 31, on the verge of bankruptcy, Buckley Wells committed suicide.

Louise never remarried and continued to live in their home until the Second World War when it became increasingly difficult to find domestic help to keep up the mansion. So Louise moved to the Brown Palace Hotel where she became something of a recluse.

1. <http://fairmountheritagefoundation.org>

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid

<http://fairmoumtfoundation.org/louise-sneed-hill-and-denver-s-sacred-thirty-six>

THE TITANIC

On the morning of April 10, 1912, 914 passengers boarded the *RMS Titanic* at Southampton, England. At noon, the ship left port and headed for Cherbourg, France, where it made a quick stop before heading to Queenstown (now called Cobh) in Ireland. At these stops, a handful of people disembarked and a few hundred boarded. By the time the ship left Queenstown at 1:30pm on April 11, 1912 heading for New York, she was carrying more than 2,200

people, both passengers and crew.

The first two days across the Atlantic, April 12 and 13, went smoothly. The crew worked hard and the passengers enjoyed their luxurious surroundings. Sunday, April 14, 1912 also started out relatively uneventfully, but later became deadly. Throughout that day, the *Titanic* received a number of wireless messages from other ships warning about icebergs along their path. However, for various reasons, not all

of these warnings made it to the bridge. Captain Edward J. Smith, unaware of how serious these warnings had become, retired to his room for the night at 9:30pm. At that time, the lookouts had been told to be a bit more diligent in their observations, but the ship was still steaming full speed ahead.

The evening was cold and clear, but the moon was not bright. That, coupled with the fact that the lookouts did not have access to binoculars, meant that the lookouts spotted the iceberg only when it was directly in front of the *Titanic*.

At 11:40pm, the lookouts rang the bell to issue a warning and notified the bridge by phone. First Officer Murdoch ordered a sharp left turn and commanded the engine room to put the engines in reverse. The *Titanic* did bank left, but it wasn't quite enough. Thirty-seven seconds after the lookouts warned the bridge, the ship's starboard (right) side scraped along the iceberg below the water line. Many passengers had already gone to sleep and were unaware that there had been a serious accident. Those passengers who were still awake felt little as the *Titanic* hit the iceberg. Captain Smith, however, knew that something was very wrong and returned to the bridge.

Taking a survey of the ship, Captain Smith realized that the ship was taking on a lot of water. Although the ship was built to continue floating if three of the bulkheads filled with water, six were already filling fast. Realizing that the ship was sinking, Captain Smith ordered the lifeboats uncovered and told the wireless operators to send out distress calls.

At first, many of the passengers did not comprehend the severity of the situation. It was a cold night and the *Titanic* still

seemed like a safe place, so many people were reluctant to get into lifeboats when the first one was launched at 12:45am. As it became increasingly obvious that the ship was sinking, the rush to get on a lifeboat became desperate. Women and children were to board the lifeboats first; however, early on, some men were allowed to get into the boats. To the horror of everyone on board, there were not enough lifeboats to save everyone. During the design process, it had been decided to place only 16 standard lifeboats and four collapsible ones on the *Titanic* because any more would have cluttered the deck on the purportedly "unsinkable" ship. If 20 lifeboats had been on the ship and properly filled, 1,178 people could have been saved (just over half those on the boat).

Once the last lifeboat was lowered those remaining on board reacted in different ways. Some grabbed any object they might float, threw the object overboard and jumped in after it. Others stayed on board because they were stuck within the ship and determined to die with dignity. The water was freezing, so anyone in the water for more than a couple of minutes, froze to death. At 2:15am on April 15, 1912, the *Titanic* snapped in half and then fully sank two minutes later.

Many ships received the *Titanic* distress calls, but it was the *Carpathia* that was the first to arrive as seen by survivors in the lifeboats around 3:30am. Once the survivors were on board, the *Carpathia* headed to New York, arriving in the evening of April 18, 1912. In all a total of 705 people were rescued.

<http://weatherwatch.com/icebergs-greenland-titanic>

<http://history1900s.about.com/od/1910s/p/titanic.htm>

THE CRISIS OF 1893

The crisis of 1893 had numerous causes. Railroads were overbuilt, allowing silver mines to be opened and silver to flood the market. The Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890 required the United States government to buy millions of ounces of silver, driving up the price of the metal. Ten days after the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad declared bankruptcy, Grover Cleveland was inaugurated as President. He urged Congress to repeal the Sherman Silver Purchase Act. His action prompted a run on the banks as people withdrew their

money and redeemed silver notes for gold. The United States Treasury's gold supply dwindled, causing the nation's credit rating to suffer. With the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, the over-abundance of silver led to the closure of mines in the West, a fact which forced railroads serving mining communities to fold. Denver was particularly hard hit by the ensuing economic downturn.

The effects of this crisis affected most areas of the economy. Agricultural distress was widespread; coal miners and Pullman

workers went on strike. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad ceased its ambitious plans and switched from narrow gauge railroad to standard gauge. The Democrats and President Cleveland were blamed for this situation; therefore, the presidential election of 1896 was fought over economic issues and was won by pro-gold, high tariff Republicans.

The repercussions in the West were severe. The silver economy folded and many banks suspended payment. Numerous wealthy men including Horace Tabor

suffered severe losses. Denver lost 14,000 jobs; five thousand indigents slept in parks or under bridges while other families left the city. The consequences were severe as people lost confidence in government and its leaders.

www.Saylor.org/site/wpcontext/uploads/2011/08/Hist312-101.2/Panic-of-1893-pdf.

http://ellensplace.net/hcq_fac.8.html.

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MOLLY AND THE MINERS

“Leadville, like many other mining communities, was a microcosm of contentious race and labor relations at the end of the 1800’s.”¹

The mining community was comprised of immigrants from many parts of the world. They were limited as to where they could work; as company laborers, they were forced to live in company houses, buy at company stores and send their children to company schools. A few executives at the top exercised enormous control over this large population of miners. For example, J.J. Brown knew what a miner had to do to earn his salary, but he also knew what he had to do to keep his employees on the payroll. As a top flight mining man, he became a stockholder in the Ibx Mining Company. As a result, J.J. found himself defending the mine owners’ positions.

Molly had a different viewpoint. With her strong social conscience, Margaret observed the inequities of society: some men who made a fortune overnight and other families left destitute by the boom and bust effects of the Leadville mining community. She resolved to do what she could.

On September 23, 1913, coal miners at Ludlow, north of Trinidad, struck over safety issues, guaranteed minimum wage and the eight hour day. The mine was owned by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company in Pueblo, a Rockefeller enterprise. Colorado had laws regulating mine safety, but the company refused to enforce them. Shortly after the strike began, conflict escalated when Baldwin-Felts, a detective agency, and the Colorado National Guard appeared on the scene. Miners and their families were evicted from their homes. Later, militiamen and company guards shot and burned to death 18 striking miners and their families. They then set fire to the tents where four women and 11

children were huddled.

When Margaret learned of the massacre, she said, “It makes no difference to me where I go. I am ready to go anywhere I’m needed.”² She organized a nurse’s corps to go to the site and provide immediate relief. Meanwhile, she remained in Denver to muster financial support, arranging a benefit entertainment, the proceeds of which would buy clothing and shoes for miners’ families. Molly insisted she was not taking sides and was only providing help. She was neither pro-capital nor pro-labor; she made the point that militiamen had not been paid since January and that the strikers had been out of work since September.

If J.J. had an opinion, he did not voice it. Like John D. Rockefeller, the major owner of Colorado Fuel and Iron, and John Charles Osgood, another mine owner, he may have felt, “it was the miners’ own fault if they weren’t happy; after all, they had voluntarily gone to work.”³ Conservative thinkers were fierce opponents of unions and of any social legislation that limited a business’s right to run their own affairs as they saw fit. Though Rockefeller was vilified for his position on Ludlow, it didn’t seem to affect his bottom line.

1. Iverson, p. 96.

2. Iverson, p. 197.

3. <http://mountainnews.net>

Iverson, Kristen. *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth*. Boulder, CO.: Johnson Books, 1999.

<http://www.umva.org/?q=content/ledlow-massacre>

<http://mountainnews.net/2014/04/15/lessons-ludlow-100-years-later>

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Mrs. Brown and the Alliance Française de Denver

On September 16, 1903, *The Denver Times* printed the following: “The formation of a distinctively French-speaking club will be an event of the next few weeks. The proposed Alliance Française, which is to be organized by Mrs. James J. Brown at her home, 1340 Pennsylvania Avenue early in October, will be open to the French-speaking people of Denver and will be the inauguration of a new style of club work. Points of special interest to those for whom France holds a certain charm will be discussed and the club will be one of the most unique and interesting that has ever been attempted in Denver. ... Mrs. Brown has spent several years in Paris and other cities of importance in France and is quite familiar with phases of French life, which will be a basis for discussion. Already a great number of applications have been made for membership and the new organization promises to be launched with due éclat.”

The Alliance Française was founded in Paris in 1883 by prominent artists and intellectuals of the time, including scientist Louis Pasteur (who discovered pasteurization) and writer Jules Verne (who wrote *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*). Now, there are more than 800 chapters in 137 different countries around the world. The Denver chapter, founded in 1897, endures as one of the oldest nonprofits in the area. Its mission is to encourage the study of French cultures and language and to foster cultural, intellectual, artistic, and friendly exchanges between the French-speaking world and the local community.

The Browns first visited France in 1895, just a couple of short years after James Joseph “J.J.” Brown made a fortuitous gold strike at the Little Johnny Mine in Leadville, Colorado. During their grand European tour Mrs. Brown became enamored with Paris’ culture, fashion, and architectural beauty. Having hired private tutors back home, the Browns were conversant in French and enjoyed their travels throughout France. After their return, the local newspapers regularly described the elegant gowns which she brought back from Paris, often setting the season’s fashion trends for Denver.

Mrs. Brown and the children were making regular trips to France when daughter Helen began attending a Paris convent school in 1901; she would then later finish school at the Sorbonne. Inspired by the salons of Paris society, in 1903 Margaret helped organize the Denver chapter of Alliance Française, a club dedicated to French culture. She frequently offered the use of her home for French-language classes and Alliance Française assemblies.

On April 10, 1912, as the Titanic descended into the ocean, Margaret boarded lifeboat number six and made it safely to the Carpathia. There, she used her skills in French and other languages to help fellow survivors find family and assistance. By late summer of 1914, it became apparent that war was escalating as Germany advanced toward Paris. Mrs. Brown helped to establish medical relief facilities in France and launch a motorized ambulance pool stationed on the northern edge of Paris. Mrs. Brown became one of many American women with the means and the desire to help a country near and dear to her. In February of 1932, just months before her death, she received the French Legion of Honor Chevalier award as a culmination of her lifelong affinity and support. Margaret’s Alliance Française de Denver endures to this day. Don’t hesitate to visit and share her passion for French language and culture.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alliance_fran%C3%A7aise

<http://www.fondation-alliancefr.org/?cat=1>

<http://www.afdenver.org/>

<http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-survivor/molly-brown.html>
Malcolm, Andrea. *Vive la France! Molly Brown and Her Life in France*. *Historic Denver News*, Summer 2014.

The Unsinkable Molly Brown

STUDY QUESTIONS

Pre-Performance Questions

- 1) What do you already know about Margaret “Molly” Brown’s life? Which parts of her life are mythical, which parts are factual, and which parts could be either?
- 2) Why is the nickname “Unsinkable” fitting for Molly Brown? What other times in her life does she live up to the name other than her experience on the Titanic?
- 3) If you had abundant wealth, what philanthropic organization would you fund or start? What organization would benefit our local/global community?

Post-Performance Questions

- 1) How do the costumes, lighting and other scenic elements add to the production?
- 2) How would you describe the character of Mrs. Margaret “Molly” Tobin Brown?
- 3) What are Molly Brown’s aspirations? What is the significance of the calendar?
- 4) How would you describe the courtship and marriage of Molly and J.J.?
- 5) Why did Molly Brown want to leave the town of Leadville? Why did J.J. want to stay?
- 6) What caused the Louisville Mining Company to close down? What did J.J. invent to change his fortune and the fortune of the town?
- 7) How are other historical figures portrayed in the play? Horace and Baby Doe Tabor?
- 8) How are social class and social class struggles depicted in the play? Where are these struggles still evident in our country and in the world today?
- 9) Is Molly Brown portrayed any differently when she arrives in Denver?
- 10) How does the Sacred Thirty-Six in Denver welcome her and include her in the city’s activities?
- 11) What prompts Molly to begin her charitable undertakings?
- 12) Why does Molly decide to run for congress? What obstacles are in her way and how does she handle them?
- 13) Why do J.J.’s friends call him a “hypocrite?” Explain why he may or may not deserve this title?
- 14) Does J.J. believe in unions? What is his policy about unions in the mining business?

ACTIVITIES

Personal Calendar Making

Create a calendar that has your dreams and aspirations in it. Find an old calendar to use as a template or use a current calendar. Collect pictures from old magazines or newspapers, scan photographs from your life or draw/sketch a picture for inclusion. For each month, create a collage of images, use a single image, draw your own picture or fill in the month however you would like to best demonstrate the following categories.

For the first three months of the year—January, February and March—create a representation where you think you are now in your life drawing from the past and present. This would include physical and emotional states.

For the next three months—April, May and June—create pages to predict where you plan on being in the very near future.

Use the final six months—July through December—to fill in the months with an image or images that will represent where and what your future holds.

Visual Art PG: Recognize, articulate, and debate that the visual arts are a means for expression.

Visual Art PG: Explain, demonstrate, and interpret a range of purposes of art and design, recognizing that the making and study of art and design can be approached from a variety of viewpoints, intelligences, and perspectives.

Timelines

Historic Timeline

1. Ask students to research significant events in Colorado and United States history leading up to, during and following the play *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* and to place them in chronological order.
2. Create a timeline using the information gathered.
3. Discussion Questions: What changes or innovations were happening during these times? How was the world changing? How are these historical events included in the play *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*? What are the parallels of these significant Colorado events to global events?

Molly Brown Timeline

1. Ask students to chart the journey of Molly Brown in the play *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*.
2. Create a timeline and plot the events of your chosen character.
3. Discussion Questions: What significant events happened in Molly Brown's life? Track the events in the first timeline and compare them to the character's life.

History PG: Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history.

History PG: Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures.

Location Representation

Split the class into three groups. Explain that each group is to select people from the past or the present to represent their geographic location at a global conference. Due to the size of the conference, each group will be limited in their selection of only three people to best represent their group. Each group will decide on the criteria for which the people will be selected for inclusion and compile a list of their representatives.

One group represents the state of Colorado.

One group represents the United States.

One group represents the earth.

Discussion questions: What was the criteria developed for selecting the people? Were some of the choices similar? Why were these people selected? Did anyone argue to include someone that had value to them personally but not for the group as a whole?

Civics PG: Research, formulate positions, and engage in appropriate civic participation to address local, state, or national issues or policies.

Geography PG: Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world.

Status Card Game

Material needed: Deck of cards

Choose five students and have them stand in a line in front of the class. Without looking at the card, each student receives a card that they are to place face out on their forehead. Explain that the cards' ranking is equal to the student's status in relation to the other students. For example, a student with a queen would have high status, but a king or an ace would have more and a two would have the least amount of status.

Students must determine their status in relation to the other students through an improvisation game. Because the students are not able to see their cards, they must behave in the position that the other students might treat them.

After the exploration, have the students line-up in the order where they think their card would place them.

Discuss the activity: How does it feel to be treated well or poorly by your peers?

What are some of the ways that you were treated to indicate what your status was? How could you tell if it was a high card or low card? What about a middle card?

Discuss the play: Who are the characters in *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* that have more status than others? How do the characters interact and display that they have more or less status than the other characters? Which characters use status for their advantage?

Social Science PG: Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens.

Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.

UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES

Make your experience unforgettable when you join us for one of these insightful, educational events:

Insider Perspectives

Get an exclusive insider's perspective of each play when you join us for a professionally-moderated discussion with our creative team. Held at the Ricketson Theatre. Free.

Sep 12 | 6pm | *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*

Page to Stage Book Club

Read the book, see the play and join the discussion. Held at the Tattered Cover, 2526 E. Colfax Ave. Free.

Sep 10 | 5:30pm | *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth* by Kristen Iversen

Page to Stage Discussions

Delve into the creative process behind our shows when you join our actors, playwrights and directors for an in-depth discussion about their work.

Held at the Tattered Cover, 2526 E. Colfax Ave. Free.

Sep 23 | 12pm | *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*

Talkbacks with the Cast

Join a fun and engaging discussion with the actors directly after select performances. Free.

Oct 12 | *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*

Talkbacks with Higher Education Advisory Council

Participate in a topical discussion led by members of our academic community held directly after select performances. Free.

Sep 28 | *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*

Theatre & Theology Talkbacks

Join Pastor Dan Bollman of the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod to examine each show through a theological lens directly after select performances. Free.

Sep 23 | *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*

Theatre Thursday

Enjoy a complimentary cocktail, tasty bar bites, live music and a ticket to the show.

Sep 18 | 5pm | Bonfils lobby | \$60 with code THURSDAY | *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Denver Public Library recommends:

Read!

More than Petticoats: Remarkable Colorado Women by Gayle Corbett Shirley

Margaret Tobin Brown was just one of many revolutionary women living here in Colorado during the early 1900's. This book tells the stories of 14 different women who broke down barriers and were far ahead of their time. Among Molly Brown's contemporaries were Caroline Churchill, a journalist who ran the nation's first all-female newsroom; the charismatic Ute Indian leader, Chipeta; Julia Holmes, the first woman to scale Pike's Peak and many more.

Watch!

Molly Brown: Biography of a Changing Nation (Harvey Productions, 2007)

This documentary produced by the Molly Brown House Museum places Molly's life as a champion for women's rights and social activist in a larger historical context. Go beyond the Titanic and see how Brown capitalized on her husband's wealth to fight for the causes she believed in. Topics discussed include the Ludlow Massacre and women's suffrage, as well as Brown's own political ambitions.

Listen!

The Titanic Requiem by Robin Gibb and RJ Gibb

This piece was composed by the Bee Gees' Robin Gibb alongside his son RJ as a tribute to the lives lost on the RMS *Titanic*. With stunning music performed by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and RSVP Voices choir, along with vocals from Gibb himself, this recording is a favorite among both classical music fans and Titanic history buffs alike.

Download!

A Night to Remember by Walter Lord

Find out more about the tragedy that befell the "unsinkable" ship with Walter Lord's 1955 classic. Drawing on personal interviews with survivors of the disaster, Lord created a masterpiece that remains to this day one of the definitive books on the subject. Download the eBook or audio eBook from downloadmedia.denverlibrary.org.



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