

InsideOUT

PRODUCED BY THE DENVER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Denver Center
Theatre Company
KENT THOMPSON
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Great Wall STORY

GREAT WALL STORY
by LLOYD SUH
Directed by ART MANKE

DENVERCENTER.ORG
Box Office 303.893.4100

2011/12
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InsideOUT

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Synopsis

On a slow news day in 1899, three Denver reporters decide to dream up a hoax. Their story: the Great Wall of China is being torn down. This headline sells newspapers but threatens to get out of hand when it spreads to Chicago and New York City, where Joseph Pulitzer of the *New York World* decides to investigate. He sends his copy assistant Harriet Sparrow, originally of Denver, to her hometown to discover the origin of the story. ■

PLAYWRIGHT LLOYD SUH

Lloyd Suh's *Great Wall Story* had a reading at the 2011 Colorado New Play Summit. Suh is the author of *Jesus in India*, which premiered recently at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco. His play *American Hwangap* was also produced at the Magic, in a joint venture with Ma-Yi & The Play Company in New York and with Tanghalang Pilipino at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Manila, in connection with the Andrew Mellon Foundation and Lark Play Development Center's Launching New Plays into the Repertoire initiative. *American Hwangap* was published in Smith & Kraus's *Best New Playwrights 2009*, *American Theatre*, and with Samuel French, Inc. Suh's other plays include *The Children of Vonderly*, *The Garden Variety*, *Masha No Home* and *Happy End of the World*, a play for young audiences commissioned by Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis via the NEA New Play Development program. He has been the recipient of grants and awards from the New York Foundation of the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Jerome Foundation, and others. He is an alumnus of Ensemble Studio Theatre's Youngblood, and the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab, and a current member of Ensemble Studio Theatre and the Ma-Yi Writers Lab. He has served since January 2011 as Director of Onsite Programs at the Lark Play Development Center. ■

MYTHS OF THE GREAT WALL

That China has just one Great Wall is in fact a myth: rather, there are many walls, built over several centuries. In some stretches, the wall was only ever an earthen mound to deter mounted invaders. Other areas boast the impressive stone fortifications that gave rise to the original Great Wall myth carried back to the West by early visitors. Most of what we envision today as the Great Wall was built in the Ming Dynasty of 1368-1644, though earlier incarnations were built in the Qin (221-206 BCE), Han (202 BCE-220 CE), Northern Qi (550-577 CE) and Sui (581-618 CE) Dynasties. Many dynasties did not build walls to protect China from northern invaders; in fact, in some periods, the rulers of China were those very northern invaders. For example, Genghis Khan's grandson Kublai Khan breached the Jin Wall and founded the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).

Another common myth of the Great Wall is its visibility from space. In 1923 *National Geographic* declared that "the only work of man's hands which would be visible to the human eye from the moon is the Great Wall of China," reiterating a claim first made in 1893 by *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*. In 2003 China's first astronaut, Yang Liwei, confirmed that the Wall is not visible to the naked eye from space. (The Wall is, of course, visible with the aid of telescopes.) ■

THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

Though not continuous, the portions of the Great Wall built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) cover a distance equal to that between Washington, D. C., and Wichita, Kansas. The Wall can be 15-25 feet thick at the base; the top of the wall is wide and used as a road. The height of the Ming Wall ranges from 20 to 50 feet, with a sentry tower every few hundred yards. The Ming Wall and the walls built before it constitute the world's largest man-made object. Along with the stone and brick wall, the Great Wall system extends some 5,500 miles and incorporates 223 miles of trenches and 1,387 miles of natural barriers, including rivers, cliffs and mountains. It stretches from North Korea and the Bohai Sea, past Beijing, up and down mountains, across Inner Mongolia and the Loess Plateau, along the Silk Road and into the Gobi Desert. ■

EARLY HISTORY OF THE GREAT WALL

As early as the Shang Dynasty in 1700-1025 BCE, short fortifications such as trenches and ramparts were necessary around Chinese settlements as protections from northern invaders. The first organized defensive wall, built by the ruler Chu Huiwang around 615 BCE, probably stretched 300 miles. Four centuries later, a more permanent structure thousands of miles long was raised by the order of Qin emperor Shihuang, whose tomb was opened in 1974 to reveal thousands of terra cotta warriors. The western wall, built across mountains and deserts by the Han emperor Wudi around 126 BCE, laid the path later made famous as the Silk Road trading route that stretched to the Mediterranean Sea.

Centuries passed without concerted efforts at wall-building until the short-lived Northern Qi Dynasty (550-577 CE) pressed millions of laborers into service building and repairing walls, including the first wall near Beijing, which would be rebuilt by the later Ming Dynasty and even more recently renovated to become the Tourist Wall of today.

During the Sui Dynasty (589-618), tens of thousands of laborers built walls thousands of miles across Inner Mongolia. Several centuries later, the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) built the portions of the Great Wall most famous and recognizable today. Despite the impressive amount of wall building they produced, they did not begin until a century into their time in power—and the most impressive stone and brick structures for which they are famous were built in the final century of their reign. ■

TODAY'S WALL FROM EAST TO WEST

Along its length, the Great Wall today ranges from sea to desert, from rebuilding projects to submersion in sand or water, from disrepair and neglect to glorious tourist destination. At its far eastern end, the Wall once reached to the site of Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea. This North Korean section, built by the Han Dynasty around 127 BCE, has in large part disintegrated into piles of ancient rubble. However, at the international border, the Yalu River, Ming Dynasty techniques and materials are being used to rebuild a section of the Wall.

The Great Wall meets the Bohai (Yellow) Sea at Shanhaiguan, “First Gate under Heaven.” This section of the Wall, including Gate Tower, was rebuilt in the 1980s. Submerged debris from the original wall has attracted shellfish, and many of the workers who rebuilt the Wall in the 1980s have stayed in the area as fishermen. Farther inland, the Luan River was dammed in 1982, submerging a section of the Wall in the reservoir Panjiakou, “Great Wall beneath Water.” Two parts of the Wall emerge from the reservoir as islands and reminders of the past.

Farther inland, the annual Great Wall Marathon takes place on and around a stretch of the Huangyaguan Wall in the Tianjin Province; instead of flatter courses’ two-hour record times, the Great Wall Marathon takes even the fastest runners at least four hours. Though only 5.6 miles of the marathon are on the Wall itself, a two-mile staircase of over 3,600 steps at a more than 45-degree angle, dubbed “Heartbreak Hill,” slows all marathon participants to a walk—or a crawl.

Much of the Badaling Wall near Beijing has been renovated and developed to become the Tourist Wall, visited by nearly all travelers to the Chinese capital, including American presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton. This Ming Dynasty wall is the most visited, photographed and famous section of the entire length of the Great Wall. Around it is an amazing array of other attractions, including a ski resort, amusement parks, golf courses and the Badaling Safari World wild game park, where tourists can observe a pride of lions roaming over the distant hills against the backdrop of the Great Wall.

West of Beijing, the Great Wall climbs mountains, caressing ridges as it grandly stretches from peak to peak. Farther from the tourist-driven redevelopment, many sections of this wild Wall have fallen into disrepair. Plants grow in cracks in the Wall, and many materials have been plundered over the centuries for other building projects. Ruined sections and steep inclines are dangerous to travelers, but the area has recently become popular among

adventure hikers.

Stretching across China's autonomous region of Inner Mongolia are remains of some of the earliest defensive border walls built by the Eastern Zhou Dynasty in 770-256 BCE. These simple walls included deep trenches as defense against charges of the mounted Mongol warriors. The Jin Dynasty of 1151-1234 CE also built walls and trenches in this area. In some areas, these ancient walls stand six to nine feet tall and run through countryside and villages. In other areas, the Wall may be worn down to a drivable road, hardly elevated from the surrounding landscape. Many sections of the Wall in Inner Mongolia have been burrowed into for housing; other parts of the Wall may border livestock pens. In the village of Biang Qiang, the highest part of the Wall is the communal gathering place for cell phone reception.

West of Inner Mongolia is the drought-devastated Loess Plateau; the yellow soil here gave the Yellow River its name. The World Bank and the Green Great Wall project are attempting to improve soil conservation in this dry, dusty region by planting trees. In one area near the Wall, Chinese characters etched on the hills spell out, "Protect the Mother River and Transform the Loess Plateau." In another area, four large towers along the Wall itself have been branded with the message: "Protect Water Solidify Earth." The Ming Walls here are more recent than the Zhou and Jin Walls of Inner Mongolia, but many homes are similarly carved out of the lower part of the tall Wall. Over a hundred million Chinese choose to live in these cave houses, which are well-insulated (though not well-ventilated).

In far Western China, the Great Wall stretches along the treeless landscape, marking the border between the autonomous regions Ningxia and Inner Mongolia. In Chang Cheng Xiang, or "Great Wall Country," much of the Wall is buried in the dramatically shifting sand dunes. A wall from the Han Dynasty runs along the Silk Road between the Qilian Mountains to the south and the Gobi Desert to the north. Often only ten feet tall in this area, the Wall was unremarked upon by the visiting Marco Polo. In bygone days, beacon towers along the Wall sent smoke signal messages back toward Beijing. Today, the Wall borders several sheep pens, with doors cut through the Wall to let the sheep out to pasture.

The western end of the Ming Wall reaches the edge of a cliff 300 feet above the Taolai River. The nearby Jiayuguan Fortress ("Impregnable Fortress under Heaven") was built during the Ming Dynasty to protect Silk Road trade routes; it has recently undergone renovation both by the government and by private entrepreneurs. Businessman Yang Yong Fu used traditional Ming construction techniques in his rebuilding project one mile away from Jiayuguan, echoing the sentiment of Chinese reformer Deng Xiaoping, whose 1980s slogan was "Restore the Great Wall and love China." ■

BOXER REBELLION

In the final years of the 19th century, a Chinese peasant society called Yihequan (“Righteous and Harmonious Fists”) was developing in the poor, overpopulated Shantung District, the birthplace of Confucius. Westerners in China referred to its members as Boxers, based on the martial arts they practiced en masse as they called on their gods to protect and empower them. Originally against their own government and the ruling Qing Dynasty, the Boxers around 1898 shifted the focus of their anger and became violently opposed to foreigners, missionaries and Christians, including Chinese converts to Christianity. In 1900, China was home to nearly 11,000 foreigners from Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany and Japan. Over 850 were Catholic nuns and priests, serving over 700,000 Chinese Catholic converts. About 85,000 Chinese had converted to Protestant Christianity; almost 3,000 foreign Protestant missionaries lived throughout China. The Boxers believed the recent influx of foreigners and Christianity into their country was angering the traditional Chinese gods, causing them to afflict the land with flooding, plagues, famine and drought and to punish its people with starvation, sorrow and unemployment.

By late 1899, Boxers were openly roaming the countryside, eventually killing thousands of Chinese Christians and hundreds of foreign missionaries. The first missionary death was that of Reverend Sidney Brooks, an Englishman who was stripped, tortured and beheaded on New Year’s Eve 1899. Word of the murder reached Beijing on January 2 and did not at first cause undue concern. On January 4, the dowager empress’s counselors promised that Brooks’ murderers would be captured and punished, but it later became apparent that the Imperial Court would not suppress the Boxers. Only in late January did foreign ambassadors begin to realize that Brooks’ death was in fact a prelude to hundreds of other murders of foreign missionaries.

The height of international conflict in the Boxer Rebellion occurred in the summer of 1900. An eight-nation alliance was created with in excess of 50 warships and more than 50,000 marines and soldiers from Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom (including colonial Australia), France (via French Indochina), the United States, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. In June this international force left the port town Tianjin to march on Beijing, but the dowager empress was by then openly supporting the Boxers and ordered all foreigners killed. The international force was turned back, and the Boxers besieged foreigners in Beijing’s embassy quarter and Catholic cathedral. The siege was not relieved until August; peace negotiations were not resolved until September of the following year. China was made to execute rebellion leaders and pay millions in reparations to the foreign powers; the weakened Qing Dynasty collapsed within a decade.

OVERSEAS MISSIONARY FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

In 1865, English missionary James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) founded the China Inland Mission (later to become Overseas Missionary Fellowship International). This missionary society employed revolutionary methods for the time, including living among the Chinese and eating and dressing as they did. During the Boxer Rebellion, OMF lost 58 workers and 12 children. After a reluctant exodus from Communist China in 1950, the organization spread its work throughout East Asia; their mission magazine, formerly China's Millions, is now published as East Asia's Millions. Today, more than 1,600 OMF workers, representing 30 countries of origin, serve in 12 countries. In 2015 the organization will celebrate 150 years of Christian service in East Asia. ■

DENVER AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Denver's 1900 population of 133,859 made it the 25th most populous city in the United States and third-largest city west of Omaha, after San Francisco and Los Angeles. Denver's population would almost double in the next 20 years. Denver had grown from a small mining town to a young city boasting a university, a grand train station and fine hotels. In 1900, Denver was the seat of Arapahoe County; in 1903 it would become the City and County of Denver. Arapahoe County's population in 1900 was 153,107, including nearly 30,000 foreign-born residents. More than 6,000 Denver residents hailed from Germany; 3000-4000 each from Ireland, Sweden, England and Canada; nearly 2000 from Russia; and over 1000 from Italy. Only 302 Denverites in 1900 had been born in China. Arapahoe County's population was predominantly Caucasian, with only 4,000 African-Americans and 1,700 Native Americans.

The turn-of-the-century city contained nearly 200 churches, including 31 Methodist, 16 each Presbyterian and Congregational, and 14 Episcopal; several churches were for specific communities: German, Scandinavian, African, etc. Denver also had five Jewish congregations, as well as the Religious Society of Friends and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Eleven banks served Denver, which also had four telegraph companies. Sixteen railroad companies passed through town.

The Colorado Seminary was founded in 1864 (only six years after the founding of the City of Denver) by John Evans, Abraham Lincoln's appointed Governor of the Colorado Territory and the namesake of Mount Evans. The institution was renamed the University of Denver in 1880. Originally located downtown, DU is now located 11 miles south on land donated by potato farmer Rufus Clark; this campus opened in 1890; DU produced its first Rhodes Scholar in 1904 and in 1908 was one of the first American universities to open a college of business.

University of Denver alumni include Molson Coors Brewing Company chairman Peter Coors, Miss America 1974 Rebecca Ann (King) Dreman, the former CEO of the National Western Stock Show Pat Grant, Broadway producer Elliott Martin, Hard Rock Cafe founder Peter Morton and former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Trains first reached Denver in 1870 after the Denver Pacific Railroad was laid from Cheyenne, Wyoming, connecting Denver to the newly completed transcontinental rail line. At first, railroads built their own depots in the area; in the late 1870s a

movement developed to create a central Union, which opened a Station on 17th Street west of Wynkoop on June 1, 1881. The original structure burned in early 1894, and Union Station was soon rebuilt with a lower roofline and a stone tower to replace the old wooden one.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Union Station operated 80 trains a day. Until 1958, Union Station served more travelers than Denver's Stapleton Airport. Union Station trains brought many dignitaries to Denver, including Queen Marie of Romania and U.S. presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Taft, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry Truman. The Union Station structure as it is seen today was completed in 1914 and has undergone many recent redevelopment and preservation projects.

The Oxford Hotel—Denver's first—opened on October 3, 1891, one block from Union Station. It was designed by Frank E. Edbrooke one year before he designed the Brown Palace, also in downtown Denver. Both hotels are now on the National Register of Historic Places. The Oxford Hotel boasted Gilded Age opulence and its own power plant providing steam heating and electric and gas lighting. The hotel also featured the novel "vertical railway," or elevator; guests could enjoy bird's-eye views of Denver from the upper floors of the five-story structure. The Oxford Hotel today hosts a collection of Western American art and its lobby displays the piano of Colorado's silver baroness Baby Doe Tabor. The hotel's past guests include President Clinton, the Dalai Lama, Lauren Bacall, Robert Redford, Kid Rock, Pamela Anderson, Huey Lewis and the News, Lyle Lovett and the French Ambassador to the United States. ■

DENVER NEWSPAPERS

The *Evening Post* was founded in 1892 by supporters of Grover Cleveland's presidential campaign. Publication was suspended briefly in the depression following the 1893 silver bust. In 1895 the paper was purchased by Harry Heye Tammen and Frederick Gilmer Bonfils, whose daughter Helen Bonfils would own the paper until her death in 1972. Tammen and Bonfils renamed the publication *The Denver Evening Post*; the Evening was dropped in 1901 and the paper has been *The Denver Post* ever since.

The Rocky Mountain News was first published in 1859, before the city of Denver, which was then in Kansas Territory, had been incorporated. In the 1880s and 1890s the newspaper led a crusade exposing crime boss Jefferson Randolph "Soapy" Smith. A 1900 ad for the newspaper declared, "It is the largest paper. It is the oldest paper. It is the leading paper in the Rocky Mountain region." *The Rocky Mountain News* shut down in 2009, a casualty of the recession and shrinking newspaper advertising and readership.

Denver had two other newspapers at the turn of the 20th century: *The Denver Times*, published from 1872 to 1926, and *The Denver Republican*, published from 1887 to 1913. A 1900 ad for *The Denver Times* proudly proclaimed, "The biggest, brightest, best daily in the West. Prints all the news twelve to twenty-four hours ahead of any other Denver paper. Fifteen cents a week delivered by carrier anywhere." ■

DENVER'S GREAT WALL HOAX

All searching for a story, four Denver reporters – one each from the Denver Evening Post, the Denver Republican, Denver Times and Rocky Mountain News – encountered each other at Union Station, so often the starting point of a news flash about a celebrity passing through Denver. However, on Saturday, June 24, 1899, no such easy news was forthcoming. Mutually complaining what on earth they would publish the next day, the four reporters – John Lewis, Al Stevens, Jack Tournay and Hal Wilshire – headed to the nearby Oxford Hotel, perhaps to its gentlemen-only dining-room. Over drinks, they discussed options for stories. At first, each of the four was thinking of a small story for his own newspaper, but then one of them suggested they collaborate on a grand story. If all four newspapers were to publish the same story, it would be more believable and perhaps last longer than a day (and thus sell more papers).

Needing a story that could not be quickly disproved, the reporters settled on faraway China, a country that had closed itself to outside trade and influence and was thus mysterious and unknown. Deciding the Great Wall of China had been out of the news for too long, John Lewis suggested they tear the Wall down. They decided that China wanted to remove the Great Wall as a gesture of international goodwill, and that American businessmen were traveling to China to make bids on the project of tearing down the Wall and pulverizing the rock to reuse in creating roads easing transportation and free trade in the country.

The four reporters left the Oxford Hotel for the nearby Windsor Hotel, where they convinced a desk clerk to allow them to sign four fictitious names in the register and to assert that the reporters had interviewed these travelers passing through Denver on their way to China. One of the supposed interviewees was engineer Frank C. Lewis of Chicago. The reporters swore that night that they would stick to the story as long as the others survived. The hoax was not fully revealed until ten years later, when Hal Wilshire, the only surviving participant, confessed they had made it all up.

Denver newspapers ran the Great Wall story for a few days, but then the story spread to other publications across America and beyond, including the Portsmouth Herald and the Lima Daily News. The Chicago Daily Tribune reported that Frank C. Lewis had recently left Chicago, but for Pittsburgh, not China; Chicago's Mayor Carter Harrison, Jr., denied having business interests in the Wall project.

A new Great Wall myth circulated in the mid-20th century after a 1939 article written for the *North American Review* by Denver-based songwriter Harry Lee Wilbur (the article was republished in 1956 in *Great Hoaxes of All Time*). Wilbur, repeating elements

of a sermon by Methodist minister Henry Warren, explained that the Denver newspapermen had concocted the story in 1899 that the Great Wall was to be torn down; but he continued his tale by supposing that the Denver hoax had reached China and that the story had so enraged the Chinese that they had rebelled against foreigners in the Boxer Rebellion. In fact, the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 had its origins deeper in the 19th century and had no relation to the Great Wall hoax created in Denver in 1899, which was probably never reported in China at all. ■

JOSEPH PULITZER

Joseph Pulitzer was born in Hungary in 1847 to a Magyar-Jewish father and German Catholic mother. As a young man, he traveled to the United States to enlist as a substitute for a draftee in the Union Army. After serving a year in the Civil War, he became a journalist in St. Louis, Missouri. He soon shifted into publishing and by 1878 owned the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

In 1883 Pulitzer purchased *The New York World*, where he met great success with the same tactics he'd used in St. Louis: investigative journalism, exposing public corruption, human-interest stories and staged news stunts. One of his news campaigns helped raise the funds necessary for building a pedestal for the Statue of Liberty.

In 1887 Pulitzer's *New York World* hired reporter Elizabeth Jane Cochran, better known as Nellie Bly (1864-1922). Not wishing to be confined to the areas of journalism traditionally given to female reporters, she talked herself into an undercover assignment. In order to investigate reports of brutality and neglect of mental health patients, Bly faked insanity and got herself committed to the Women's Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell's Island (now named Roosevelt Island) in the East River between Manhattan and Queens. Her resulting story "Ten Days in a Mad House," exposed the corruption and established Bly as a force in the publishing world.

The following year, she proposed an attempt to establish a world record for circumnavigation of the globe, inspired by Jules Verne's 1873 *Around the World in Eighty Days*. She embarked at 9:40am on November 14, 1889. The newspaper ran a Nellie Bly Guessing Match contest asking readers to estimate Bly's arrival time to the second; the prize was a trip to Europe. The correct time was 72 days, 6 hours, 11 minutes and 14 seconds: Nellie Bly returned at 3:51pm January 25, 1890.

With a circulation of 600,000, *The World* was America's largest circulating newspaper when Pulitzer himself became the victim of a smear campaign launched by rival newspaper, *The New York Sun*, and its editor Charles Dana in an effort to turn people away from *The World*. Pulitzer's health suffered, and he left the newsroom of *The World* in 1890, though he did maintain an active involvement in the editing and business of the newspaper from afar. Bitter circulation battles with *The World's* rival *The New York Journal*, published by William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951), led to an explosion of "yellow journalism," characterized by sensationalism, scare headlines, fabricated stories and faked interviews. When Cuba rebelled against Spain, the two newspapers sought to outdo each other in their trumped up reports of the fight and their outraged demand for war against the Spanish. After the

brief Spanish-American War, Pulitzer and *The World* toned down the yellow journalism.

Pulitzer died in 1911 and is remembered today far more for his public service than for his foray into sensationalism. In 1917 the first Pulitzer Prizes were awarded honoring excellence in journalism. ■

THE SPARROW

by Paul Laurence Dunbar

*A little bird, with plumage brown,
Beside my window flutters down,
A moment chirps its little strain,
Ten taps upon my window-pane,
And chirps again, and hops along,
To call my notice to its song;
But I work on, nor heed its lay,
Till, in neglect, it flies away.*

*So birds of peace and hope and love
Come fluttering earthward from above,
To settle on life's window-sills,
And ease our load of earthly ills;
But we, in traffic's rush and din
Too deep engaged to let them in,
With deadened heart and sense plod on,
Nor know our loss till they are gone.*

(This poem is quoted in the play by Harriet.)

TIMELINE

- 771-256 BCE:** Eastern Zhou Dynasty
- 656 BCE:** First state wall built
- 221-206 BCE:** Qin Dynasty
- 215 BCE:** First Emperor of Qin orders a Long Wall built
- 202 BCE-220 CE:** Han Dynasty
- 121-102 BCE:** Han expand Wall
- 265-316:** Western Jin Dynasty
- 281:** Jin begin building walls
- 386-557:** Wei Dynasties
- 423:** First Wei Wall built
- 446:** Second Wei Wall built
- 550-577:** Northern Qi Dynasty
- 552-564:** Northern Qi build walls across north China
- 581-618:** Sui Dynasty
- 581-587:** Long Walls raised in north China
- 607-608:** More walls built
- 947-1115:** Liao Dynasty
- 908:** Liao begin building walls in Manchuria
- 1115-1234:** Jin Dynasty
- 1166-1201:** Jin build walls in Manchuria and Mongolia
- 1211:** Genghis Khan's first assault on Jin China
- 1271-1368:** Yuan Dynasty, founded by Kublai Khan
- 1271-1295:** Marco Polo visits China
- 1368-1644:** Ming Dynasty
- 1470s:** Ming Wall building
- 1560s-1570s:** Walls built near Beijing
- 1644-1911:** Qing Dynasty
- 1858:** Denver City founded (incorporated in 1861)
- 1859-2009:** *Rocky Mountain News* published
- 1861:** Colorado Territory organized
- 1865:** Overseas Missionary Fellowship International founded

1867: Denver City, renamed Denver, becomes Colorado Territory's capital

1872-1926: *Denver Times* published

1876: Colorado achieves statehood

1883: Joseph Pulitzer purchases *The New York World*

1892: *Denver Post* founded

1894-1895: China's Qing Dynasty weakened by First Sino-Japanese War

February 1899: Philippine-American War begins

February 1899: U.S. Congress approves voting machines for federal elections

February 1899: First fatal accident in a gasoline-fueled car

May 1899: First Hague Peace Conference

June 1899: Denver newspapers report the Great Wall of China will be torn down

July 1899: Horatio Alger dies

July 1899: Newsboys Strike in New York

October 1899: Second Boer War breaks out in South Africa

December 1899: Large standing stone at Stonehenge falls over

January 1900: United States Census estimates country's population at 70 million

March 1900: Breaking ground for underground railroad between Manhattan and Brooklyn

May 1900: Utah coal mine explosion kills 200

August 1900: International troops free Boxers' hostages in Beijing (then Peking)

November 1900: President William McKinley reelected

1911: Chinese Revolution ends Qing Dynasty, establishes Republic of China

1917: First Pulitzer Prizes awarded

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CONNECT

A series of free discussions providing a catalyst for discussion, learning and appreciation of the productions

Perspectives - Denver Center Theatre Company's own "Creative Team" and community experts host interactive, topical discussions with attendees that provide a unique perspective on the production. This provides an in-depth connection that makes the stage experience even more rewarding.
3/16, 6pm, Jones Theatre

Talkbacks - Perhaps the best way to fully appreciate a production is by engaging in a stimulating dialogue with your fellow audience members and the actors who bring it to life.
3/25, Post-show

Theatre & Theology - In our continued partnership with Pastor Dan Bollman of the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod and cast members, this discussion examines the relevant connections to the productions through a theological lens.
3/27, Post-show

DCTC@The TC - Discover the secrets behind the art and the artist at the DCTC. Gain deeper insight into the artist's journey to the creation and development of their work. Gregory Smith, Director of Audience Development for the Denver Center for the Performing arts, hosts these lively and engaging discussions with directors, writers or cast members of the current DCTC productions.
3/27, noon, Tattered Cover LoDo (1628 16th St.)

Higher Education Advisory Discussions - Audience members gain scholarly insight into the productions through discussions, facilitated by faculty members from regional colleges and universities.
4/1, Post-show

QUESTIONS

PRE-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. What is a lie? Are there different types of lies? What is the difference between an exaggeration, an embellished story and completely fabricated story? How does a story or a lie get a life of its own?
2. Why do people lie? Why do people believe lies? What makes people believe lies that they know to be false?
3. How would you define “yellow journalism?” Does yellow journalism exist today?

POST-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. What causes the three newspaper men to create and perpetuate the story about the demolition of the Great Wall of China?
2. How do the different newspaper men feel about the repercussions of the story they created? How does Stevens’ confession differ from King’s confession? What was a result of their story that they were not expecting?
3. Why was their story able to create the buzz that it did in 1899 and to be accepted as truth? Could this form of yellow journalism take place in today’s technological age?
4. How would you characterize the relationship between Jack Tournay and his son, Charles?
5. Why does Charles Tournay get in trouble at school? What are the consequences of his actions? How does it affect the relationship with his father?
6. What does the Great Wall of China signify for Charles? What does the demolition of the Wall represent to others?
7. How does Harriet investigate the story for Mr. Pulitzer? What does she find out and are there any surprising revelations?
8. How would you describe the way Harriet is treated by her editor? What analogy does Mr. Pulitzer make and why does he make it?

ACTIVITIES

HISTORIC TIMELINE

1. Ask students to research significant events in Denver history leading up to, during and following the play *Great Wall Story* 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 *Great Wall Story*? What are the parallels of these significant Denver events to United States history and/or global events?

GREAT WALL STORY TIMELINE

1. Ask students to chart the journey of the newspaperman Jack Tourney or one of the other characters in the play *Great Wall Story*.
2. Create a timeline and plot the events of your chosen character.
3. Discussion Questions: What significant events happened in that character's life? Track the events in the first timeline and compare them to the character's life.

Colorado Model Content Standards

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

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

YELLOW JOURNALISM WRITING

Materials: Newspapers, pen and paper

For this exercise, students are going to take an actual event or a moment in time and exaggerate the event to make it even more exciting.

Part I – Embellishing the facts

Select a newspaper article. The article can be from any section including the sports page. Read the article and make some notes about the event that has happened and the characters that were involved. Condense the story into three parts; a beginning, middle, and end and write them in three paragraphs.

Keep the opening paragraph of the article written by the journalist.

Change the middle of the article by adding exaggerations about the event or the characters involved. Pay attention to details.

Add the original ending of the article as written by the journalist.

Read the new article with your embellished moments.

Add some more exaggerated moments and continue to make the story even more outlandish and exciting, and yet try to keep the integrity of the original article.

Discussion Questions: Discuss how the story may or may not have changed. Did the characters and the situation stay believable even with your additions? Is there a certain point where the story becomes too unbelievable?

Part II – Manipulating the facts

Select another newspaper article.

Identify some key moments, some people involved and a couple of facts about the story. These details and facts are not to be changed.

Manipulate the story by using phrases, vocabulary and inference to slant the story into a new perspective. If we have an eyewitness account of an event, how can we keep the details the same but completely change the perspective?

Compose a new article that incorporates this new perspective.

Discussion questions: Discuss how the story may or may not have changed. How did the manipulating author change the perspective of the article? How effective were the changes?

Colorado Model Content Standards

Writing PG: Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes.

Writing PG: Write with clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.