

Molly Brown House Museum
Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation

NARRATIVE ESSAY

1. Nature of the Request

The Molly Brown House Museum requests \$121,000 of the \$204,845 needed to produce *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation*, a new permanent panel exhibit and short film. The goal of this project is to use the story of one woman's life to explore the significant changes Americans experienced between the late 1860s and the 1920s. The project will also address the mythology that surrounds Margaret "Molly" Brown's life by revealing the realities of the world in which she lived. As one of the most visited historic house museums in the West, this project marks an important step in the Museum's ability to not only tell Margaret Brown's story but to explore complex humanities issues in a limited space.

Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation is the next step in the Museum's long-range plan, which is based on a National Endowment for the Humanities Consultation Grant awarded in 2001. Through the consultation process, the Museum's tour script and interpretive approach were evaluated and the themes most relevant to Margaret Brown's life were identified and developed by a panel of scholars.

The humanities themes identified during the consultation project are deeply tied to important moments of change in the American story, including the impact of industrialization and technological advances, the reform movements of the Progressive Era, women's shifting role in society and the cultural changes reflected in America after World War I. Margaret Brown was repeatedly drawn into the cities where these issues exploded, such as Hannibal, Missouri in the 1870s; Leadville, Colorado in the 1880s, Denver, Colorado in the 1890s; Newport, Rhode Island in the 1910s; and New York and Paris in the 1920s. Her drive and the economic forces of the day compelled her to these "hot spots," making hers a story with much greater depth than the tall tales traditionally told about her.

Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation is an innovative solution to the long-standing struggle of historic house museums to balance the visceral historical experience with the needs of contemporary audiences. This project will ensure both the preservation of the Museum's historic collections and make the Museum relevant in today's world. The exhibit will be located in the 600-square-foot back porch and rear parlor of Margaret's historic home, which were recently restored to their original condition after serving as office space for more than 30 years.

Since opening this space in 2004, the Museum has used it to present rotating exhibits designed to explore Margaret's era in greater depth. Although the Museum is not requesting NEH support for such object displays, it will continue to use rotating objects to complement *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation*. The permanent exhibit pieces for which the Museum is seeking NEH support will incorporate historic photographs, film footage, panel displays and interactive multimedia kiosks that do not belong in a domestic setting but that can support the period rooms already on display in the majority of the house.

As part of the exhibit, a 17-minute film will bring Margaret's era to life through visual imagery, both historic and contemporary, narration, re-enactment footage, music and scholar commentary. An extended version of this film will be aired on local PBS and public access television stations and will be made available to visitors in the Museum Store. The interactive activities will also be made portable and distributed to libraries and classrooms nationwide, significantly expanding the Museum's audience.

Over the last year, the Museum has conducted new research on Margaret's life with support of scholars who can provide more depth to Margaret's story. The Museum will continue to work closely with these scholars to ensure accurate content for each project component.

2. Introduction

"Margaret Brown is a striking historical figure because she represents the profound changes occurring in America between the Civil War and the 1920s. While she is most famous for surviving the Titanic disaster, she appears in all sorts of other places that are equally significant in American history. In all these different places she finds herself playing a prominent role in economic, social, and cultural change." - Project Scholar Ari Kelman, Professor, University of California at Davis

Margaret Brown's knack for being in the right place at the right time, her independent mind-set and her extraordinary life experiences make her a powerful teaching tool. As Americans continue to struggle with great societal change brought on by new technologies, the definition of equal rights and uncertain gender

roles, her story can provide today's audiences with a glimpse into the historic issues, events and themes that still shape our world.

Born only two years after the end of the Civil War and succumbing to a brain tumor in 1932, Margaret Brown's life was defined by large-scale change. Her generation experienced rapid urbanization, new technologies, social reform efforts, the shifting role of women and a rapidly modernizing post-World War I environment. Carrying with her a passion for action founded in her family's experiences in Ireland's freedom fighting as well as their involvement in the Underground Railroad, Margaret was committed to the world around her and worked on countless social issues. After her childhood in a cosmopolitan river town and her rise to wealth in Colorado's mining community in the 1890s, she moved to Denver, a bursting new urban center driving the western economy. Next, she followed her own personal passion for the arts and for action to Newport, Rhode Island, where women used their social status to push traditional gender roles. Margaret's drive, along with the national fame she gained after surviving the *Titanic* disaster, led her into society's most powerful circles. She confronted J.D. Rockefeller over the rights of coal miners in 1914 and joined forces with women like Alva Belmont and Alice Paul to fight for a national woman suffrage amendment. Throughout her active years, Margaret also remained passionate about theater and constantly recreated herself, spending her last years as an actress and drama teacher at the Barbizon Hotel in New York City, which was quickly becoming the center of American cultural activity (see attached *Short Biography of Margaret Tobin Brown* for more detail).

From Margaret's story, visitors will gain insight into how significant economic, social and cultural changes shaped the early 20th century. They will better understand the Progressive Era, including the social anxieties caused by modernization, technological innovation, massive waves of immigration and the resulting reform efforts that became the forerunners of much 20th-century policy. Finally, connecting visitors to important historical issues through Margaret's story will demonstrate how an individual's story can fit within the larger national narrative.

Relevant Scholarship

Margaret Tobin Brown has long captured public imagination, and many are drawn to her larger-than-life persona. Almost immediately after her death, her legend began to grow. Early biographers painted a picture of an ignorant, boisterous and often outrageous western character, marginalizing Margaret's real story as well as important aspects of the history of the American West.

In late 1932, Gene Fowler published his regional best-seller, *Timber Line*, which included a much-fictionalized chapter on Margaret Brown. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, similar articles, as well as reprints of Fowler's version, continued to circulate. Eventually, Fowler sold the rights to his story to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The musical *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, with music by Meredith Wilson and book by Richard Morris, resulted. The musical became a smash hit on Broadway, and the movie of the same name hit theaters in 1964 – also becoming an instant classic.

At the same time, Caroline Bancroft published her Bancroft Booklet series. *The Unsinkable Mrs. Brown* was published in 1963. The Bancroft Booklets claimed scholarly status but were marketed to tourists and only reinforced the stereotypes and misconceptions perpetuated in the musical and movie.

In each of these sources, Margaret's name was attached to a common stereotype of a rough and rowdy Western woman touted by Western writers and entertainers as they created legends. This myth de-emphasized the accomplishments of a woman who struggled with what was socially acceptable, her passionately held convictions and a constantly changing world full of disorder and anxiety. This myth also hides the complexity of the immigrant experience, the urban and sometimes violent nature of the American West, and the ways in which women had to push gender boundaries in order to earn equal rights.

In response to the large quantity of fiction surrounding Margaret, Historic Denver, Inc. made an attempt to provide a more accurate biography in 1984. This biography, by Christine Whitaker, became the main source available to Museum staff, volunteers and visitors, but was largely unsubstantiated. A true scholarly investigation of Margaret's life, drawing on primary resources, was desperately needed.

Finally, in 1999 Kristen Iversen published *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth* while completing her graduate studies at the University of Denver. Iversen's book is the first truly scholarly work on the life of Margaret Brown. Through extensive primary research and interviews with Margaret's descendants, Iversen

addressed the sources of the myth and uncovered the story of a real woman with both ordinary and extraordinary qualities. With the myth stripped away, Iversen's Margaret Brown is far more complex, and far more significant, than the mythologized version.

Currently, the Museum alternates the showing of two films about Margaret Brown for visitors as they await a guided tour. The first, *Unsinkable Elegance*, was produced by the Museum in 1995, before Iversen published her research. Much of this film is based on earlier, inaccurate information. The second film, an A&E *Biography* production, focuses primarily on Margaret's basic biography and does not explore the context of her life, the forces that shaped her or what her actions meant in her own time.

Today, Iversen's research guides much of the Museum's interpretive approach. As one of only a handful of historic sites in the country dedicated to the interpretation of a woman's life, the Molly Brown House Museum can share the story of one woman that also uncovers parts of the American story that are rarely discussed in the public setting, including the great changes Americans experienced during her lifetime and the way mythology and history become intertwined.

3. Description

Project History

The 45-minute guided tour of Margaret's historic home is the primary tool the Museum uses to educate the public. Visitors are told Margaret's life story while they experience the atmosphere of an early 20th-century home. Distinguishing the mythologized Margaret from her real story while also interpreting the historic house setting has always been a challenge. In 2001, the Museum received a National Endowment for the Humanities Consultation Grant to address this issue and streamline the interpretive tour.

As part of the consultation process, a panel of scholars expert in fields relevant to Margaret's life met over the course of two days. The panel analyzed the Museum and its programs and developed clear thematic material most relevant to Margaret Brown's story. This process, in addition to the research of Kristen Iversen, provided the impetus and direction for *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation*.

The scholars who contributed to the consultation were Barbara Levy, education and interpretation consultant specializing in site interpretation planning, tour development, public programming and museum education; Kristen Iversen, primary researcher on Margaret Brown and author of *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth*; Neil Johnson, freelance developer of online strategy and programming for museums; Ross Loomis, evaluation specialist; William Seale, historian and expert on historic house interiors; Marcia Goldstein, chair of the Colorado Coalition on Women's History; Susan Lanman, professor of public history at Metropolitan State College in Denver; and Bill Convery, expert on working-class Irish in Leadville, Colorado.

Since 2001, the Museum has worked to incorporate the thematic material developed during the consultation meeting. First, the tour script was reworked to reflect the panel's recommendations and a new docent-training program was developed. Educational programs reflecting new research and thematic material followed. School programs now include outreach sessions on the Industrial Revolution, mining and women's history. Next, the Museum's website was redesigned and new educational content created. This includes biographical information about Margaret, photographs of the house and a virtual tour of the neighborhood surrounding Margaret's home in Denver.

Throughout this process, the Museum developed temporary exhibits to address different aspects of the Victorian era that helped paint a vivid picture of the context in which Margaret lived. These exhibits include *Victorian Unmentionables, the Undergarments Women Wore*; *The Bridgets – Servants' Lives in Colorado*; *Victorian Summertime* and *Daughters of Adventure, Tales of Intrepid Women Travelers*.

These exhibits have been well-received, but are limited in scope by the historic house setting. In addition, the interpretive date of the house, 1910, makes it difficult to expand on contextual information essential to a complete picture of Margaret's life. Therefore, the newly restored enclosed back porch and back parlor, formerly used as staff offices, has been designated for further interpretation of the contextual issues of Margaret's life and the in-depth development of the themes identified during the consultation process.

Interpretive Goals

The primary interpretive goals of *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation* are to:

- Explore the significant changes taking place during Margaret's lifetime,
- Break the historical stereotypes and mythologies that surround Margaret Brown's story in order to more deeply understand historical moments and issues,
- More deeply connect today's visitors with the past by helping to draw connections between the significant changes taking place in America during Margaret's lifetime, how these changes impacted individual's lives and what types of changes impact our lives today,
- Engage different types of learners with visual stimuli, music, interactive components and multiple opportunities to connect with the past.

New Research

Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation will again involve a team of scholars who will consult on aspects of Margaret Brown's life, conduct research, provide input and guidance on exhibit development and participate in script development. Each participating scholar represents a different aspect of Margaret Brown's life and was selected for his or her ability to explore parts of her story that are largely untold.

With the support of the Colorado Endowment for the Humanities, these scholars met at the Molly Brown House Museum in 2005. During the 2005 meeting, the scholars gained first-hand knowledge about what visitors see when they come to the Museum and had the opportunity to discuss Margaret Brown, her relationship to the American narrative and the mythology that dominates her story. The scholars also participated in filmed interviews which will be used in script development, in the documentary film and as resource material for the panel exhibit. Transcriptions of the scholars' group discussion as well as their individual interviews will be stored at the Museum for future reference.

Themes of the Project

The project's interpretive goals will be expressed through two dominant humanities themes, developed in consultation with the project scholars: the significant changes taking place in America that impacted not only Margaret Brown's life but the lives of all Americans, and the mythology that has come to surround Margaret Brown's biography.

A Changing America – During Margaret Brown's lifetime, almost every aspect of every American's life changed. Some change was dramatic, others more subtle. However, the most significant changes of the period are well represented by the places in which Margaret found herself.

Hannibal, Missouri – Set along the banks of the Mississippi River, Hannibal was a vibrant river town and tells the story of immigration and equal rights in a transforming, post-Civil War America. Immigrants from around the world were drawn to Hannibal by the economic opportunity created by the trade along the river. The Irish community in Hannibal was especially large, and Margaret's parents joined this community. Atypically, Margaret's family outwardly supported equal rights for all people, including African Americans, and found other progressive families in cosmopolitan Hannibal. This is the first time Margaret's story demonstrates how individual lives can differ from the typical history taught in the classroom and represents the beginning of important shifts in the composition of American communities and American social relationships.

Leadville, Colorado – In the 1870s, the railroad began to supersede river transportation as a major economic influence and Leadville, fueled by railroad connections and mineral resources, replaced places like Hannibal as the major draw for both immigrants and American migrants. The story of Leadville represents the major changes in the American economy that were occurring during Margaret's lifetime as industry replaced agriculture, corporations began to dominate and unbridled capitalism fueled faith in the American dream and unimaginable wealth.

Denver, Colorado – The unbridled capitalism and optimism that dominated in Leadville met stark reality when the price of silver fell dramatically in 1893. By this time, Margaret had married J.J. Brown and the young couple had made their fortune and moved to Denver. However, Denver in the late 1890s was not the economic boom town it had been a decade earlier. Denver was struggling with the impact of

urbanization, economic depression and social unrest. Denver, therefore, represents the changes Americans made in how they viewed reform. Margaret's own progressive activism came into full force during her time in Denver as she worked on juvenile justice reform, public support systems for the poor and labor reforms. As the wife of a wealthy industrialist, Margaret's activism also tells the story of how those with power both sought to improve the world and protect their own status in the face of social anxiety created by poverty, agitating laborers and large communities of immigrants.

Newport, Rhode Island – At the turn of the century, Newport was the pinnacle of American high society. Margaret was drawn to Newport by the independent women who dominated its activities, including Alva Vanderbilt Belmont. Women in Newport were well-educated, well-traveled and often politically engaged. With their social status unquestioned, many of them pushed hard on the boundaries of Victorian gender roles and created new opportunities for women to become involved in the public sphere. These Newport women were especially committed to woman suffrage and Margaret's time there represents the ways in which Americans were changing their conceptions of a woman's place in the world.

Paris, France- Many American women took their newfound public roles to France during World War I, where they participated in ambulance corps, resistance activities and reconstruction. Following the war, Paris' affordability made it a place for Americans at the cutting edge. Margaret's time in Paris after the war represents America's new sense of global relationships as well as burgeoning artistic and literary movements.

New York City, New York – The mobilizing forces Americans experienced during World War I, the constant flow of new immigrants as well as African Americans from the South and new technologies for both work and play made New York the center of American urban life in the 1920s. New York became the country's cultural capital. Margaret's last years in New York, training in the theater and teaching young actresses, represent the increased influence of a national culture as well as the new tension between modernizing urban environments and traditional rural life in America.

Western Mythology – When Margaret's life ended in New York in 1932, the country was poised to change again as the ravages of the Great Depression reached their lowest point. The heady 1920s were over, the American frontier was frontier no more, and new national stories were being born. Margaret's story became part of this process as her myth grew along with the mythology of an American West that never quite matched the real story.

Even in the 19th century, the West began to create its own mythology, striving to maintain status as the frontier, a land of opportunity and a place where the American Dream could come true. Horace Greeley and William Byers encouraged young men to "go west," neglecting to share the stories of struggle, labor exploitation and poverty that became the reality for so many. Stories of success like the Browns' overnight wealth were held up as not only the ideal in the West but as the norm, keeping the dream and the mythologized image alive.

Although often portrayed as part of the western narrative, Margaret Brown's story never matched this image either and over time the parts of her story that implicated the West as a place of progressive politics, violent labor conflict, urbanism and fluidity with the East were lost. These aspects of her life did not match the way the West wanted to see itself, as the pure frontier, rural and isolated from eastern decadence. The myth became a function of collective memory that fit people into the types that society recognized and with which it the public felt comfortable.

Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation will explore the different sources of Margaret Brown's mythology in order to better understand how history is created and how the stories of individual lives become part of larger histories. Visitors who arrive at the Museum with an image of Molly Brown created for a stage production or a Hollywood film will leave asking questions about how the fact and fiction are similar and how they are different, drawing awareness to the notion that history is often subjective.

Exhibit Development

While visitors are fully immersed in a historical setting during the guided tour, the *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation* exhibit will include panel displays and interactive multimedia stations that provide a more in-depth interpretation of the context in which Margaret Brown lived. The exhibit elements will highlight the project themes and provide a variety of avenues for visitors to experience the sights and

sounds of Margaret's lifetime, ask questions about Margaret's story and its relationship to American history and draw conclusions about why her myth has remained so compelling.

Currently, visitors have little time to read text during the interpretive tour of the historic house and text boards in the house can detract from the 1910 experience. However, once visitors reach the new exhibit space, they will have as much time as they desire to read text, view interpretive panels and engage in the exhibit space's interactive activities.

First, panel displays mounted against long banks of windows throughout the exhibit area will provide space for information, images and 3D graphics about the issues that dominated Margaret's era, including immigration, industrialization, progressivism, women's roles and cultural change. The panels will reflect design in early 20th century America. These panels will provide visitors with the general descriptions, statistics and dates that defined the era.

Two flip-books with touchable sample materials placed near the panel displays will provide hands-on opportunities visitors cannot have within the period rooms during the guided tour. These flip-books will provide visitors with a sense of America when Margaret was born and America when she died by providing sample materials, photographs and text from the 1870s and the 1920s in a compare-and-contrast format (see *Special Requirements: Exhibition Walkthrough* for more detail).

Additional permanent fixtures in the exhibit space will include two interactive multimedia kiosks where visitors can explore different thematically driven activities. These activities will be designed to provide a sense of Margaret's era in American history as well as encourage visitors to pursue their own interests and make connections between historical events and contemporary issues. The kiosks will include an interactive map, an exploration of Margaret in pop-culture and a sliding timeline that follows the events of Margaret's life as well as the themes embedded in her story, such as women's rights or technological innovation. A listening station attached to the kiosks will allow visitors to listen to music, street sounds, speeches and/or writings, such as Alva Belmont's words on women's suffrage or J.D. Rockefeller on labor conflict (see *Special Requirements: Multimedia Components* for more detail).

Portable versions of the interactive activities on CD-ROM will be available to visitors in the Museum Store and available for use by teachers and librarians. Web adaptations of the panel displays and the interactive activities will also be available through the Museum's website so visitors around the country and world can access the information.

Short Film

The film component of the exhibit will be produced by Havey Productions of Denver, Colorado. Using digital technology, the director will create a visual setting for Margaret Brown's story that includes archival photographs, historic film footage, filmed interviews, letter accounts and re-enactments. Music production utilizing period themes will provide a perfectly timed and orchestrated undercurrent enhancing the mood and message of every scene. Sound effects will bring archival photos to life. Originally produced footage will complement the archival imagery and illustrate the script with stylized reenactments.

The primary visual materials for the film are historic photographs and film footage. A significant number of these resources are located at the Denver Public Library and the Colorado Historical Society. Visual material from the Newport Historical Society and from the Brown family collections, including scrapbooks, will be incorporated. Images of nationally relevant places and events, such as Ludlow, Colorado; Newport, Rhode Island; New York City and postwar Paris will also be used to provide a sense of the places Margaret experienced. These images will come from different collections throughout the country.

In addition to historic imagery, the film director will provide audio narration including primary source materials, such as Margaret's own words in letters and speeches, newspaper accounts of her activities and excerpts from the writings of her peers. Material from scholar interviews about Margaret Brown's life and its relationship to the national story will also be included.

The film will be formatted for both DVD and VHS systems in a 16:9 production format and will be shown at the Museum using an LCD screen. This is the most current format and will allow for sharper images as well as longer-term use.

The film will air at the end of each guided tour of the historic house and will be available via the new exhibit space. The 17-minute length of the film was selected to round-out the 40-minute guided tour of the

historic house. With less than three minutes to explore each of the significant places that influenced Margaret's life, a shorter film is unrealistic. However, the film will loop continuously and visitors can opt in for a small portion or for the entire loop.

For those who would like to take Margaret's story home, an extended 25-minute version of the film will be sold in the Museum Store. This extended version will also air on local PBS stations and public access stations and will be available to such stations in other cities. (See attached *Special Requirements: Audiovisual Component* for more detail).

4. Audience

The Molly Brown House Museum is visited by more than 43,000 guests each year, making it one of Denver's most popular attractions and a common field-trip destination for local school groups. Additionally, the Museum's website, www.mollybrown.org, receives more than 200,000 visitors each year.

In 2004, the Museum conducted a back-end evaluation and the results indicate that *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation* is a natural expansion of the Museum's interpretation and will appeal to a wide audience. Free-response sections of the survey revealed that Museum visitors are excited to learn that Margaret Brown's story extends beyond her experiences on the *Titanic*. Visitors consistently indicated that they were interested to learn about her political activism in Denver, her commitment to women's rights, her passion for the arts and the national events that shaped her life.

In addition to free-response questions, the survey revealed that more than half of all Museum visitors reside outside the State of Colorado and more than 60% are women. 79% of Museum visitors are over the age of 36, 63% are married, 37% earn more than \$75,000 annually and 65% have earned either a bachelor's or graduate degree. Only 7% have not attended college.

Outreach

In addition to better serving its current audience, *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation* will allow the Museum to reach an expanded national audience. While the *Titanic* story currently draws many visitors, the new exhibit and film will make the Museum more relevant to all types of visitors. In addition, the new exhibit includes innovative means to explore history that will encourage increased repeat visitation. Finally, the portability of the exhibit's interactive activities, as well as the documentary film, will provide the Museum with a vehicle to share Margaret's full story with people who may never have the opportunity to visit Denver. Currently, Museum volunteers in other states provide outreach programming that can be expanded through the use of these new materials.

Additionally, *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation* will allow the Museum to offer better programming to schools both locally and nationally. The *Curriculum Framework for Teaching with Historic Places* published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation states that heritage programs focus almost exclusively on local history: "Rarely are heritage education programs designed to connect local history to the larger themes, issues and events that teachers must cover in the required curriculum." *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation* does just this, tying a local heroine to national events. As a result, the project will allow the Museum to reach out to a larger number of students, especially older students who typically do not study local history but do study American history.

Through this project, the Museum also hopes to reach out to minority groups who are underserved by the arts and cultural community. Margaret Brown's story has proven inspiring, particularly to visitors who are less advantaged, because of the obstacles she was able to overcome. By providing a more tangible and in-depth interpretation of her era, the Museum is more relevant to a diverse population that may also experience the anxieties of immigration, changing technology or cultural shifts. The Museum recently added a Spanish language section to its website and will further develop Spanish-language resources as the project moves forward. The Museum will also continue to reach out to underserved schools and non-profit organizations by offering financial aid for field trips and outreach programs through the Museum's relationship with Denver's Scientific and Cultural Facilities District. Free days throughout the year make the Museum accessible to a broad audience.

Marketing

Marketing efforts for the project will include a national press release, direct-mail notification to more than 4,000 Museum supporters, articles in an organizational newsletter that reaches more than 5,000 households, and advertisements in publications such as AAA's *Encompass*, the *Denver Post* and *5280 Magazine*. The Museum will also reach out to new markets created by the recently expanded Colorado Convention Center by advertising with the Denver Metro Visitors and Convention Bureau.

In order to raise local awareness and support, the Museum will host a large community event to showcase the new film upon completion. This event will take place at a local historic theater and will be followed by an open reception at the Museum. Local and state officials, community members and the general public will be invited to attend the opening, which will include promotions about the new exhibit as well as the film.

Finally, the Museum's website is a powerful marketing tool. Currently, more than 16,000 people visit the site each month. The new interactive components, the exhibit and the film will be described on the site and many of the project resources will be made available.

Evaluation

During the production of both the exhibit and film, the Museum will rely on test audiences, drawn from Museum supporters and the general public, as well as the project scholars, to evaluate the materials and make format and content suggestions before final production.

In order to track the effectiveness of *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation* after production, the Museum will conduct visitor surveys to determine whether or not visitors are connecting with humanities themes and also to determine which marketing efforts are most successful. The Museum will continue to track visitor attendance carefully and attendance numbers will be analyzed to determine the impact of *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation*.

5. Organization History

Historic Denver, Inc. was founded in 1970 by citizens who were increasingly alarmed at the loss of Denver's historic fabric due to urban renewal and insensitive development. Led by Ann Love, wife of Governor John Love, a grassroots effort formed to save the home of *Titanic* survivor Margaret Tobin Brown. Through volunteer efforts, the house was restored to a circa 1910 period. Under the continued ownership of Historic Denver, the Museum has undergone three major phases of restoration over the last 35 years but has remained open to the public throughout each effort.

The annual operating budget for the Molly Brown House Museum, when separated from Historic Denver, is approximately \$500,000. Earned revenue from the Museum's 43,000 annual visitors provides a significant portion of the operating budget each year. Museum Store sales, grants, special events, sponsorships, and a membership program provide additional funding. The total annual operating budget for Historic Denver is \$1.2 million, which includes all Historic Denver activities, such as educational seminars, an easement program, the publication of guidebooks about Denver architecture, a Sacred Landmarks Preservation program and an Urban Living Program designed to support the stewardship of Denver's privately owned historic homes.

The Molly Brown House Museum's mission is to "accurately portray the story of Margaret Tobin Brown within the context of her lifetime through ongoing research, artifact collection, preservation and educational programming in order to inspire courage, conviction and proactive change in her spirit."

Museum programming includes daily tours of the historic house, an authentic "Victorian Eating Experience" program and several outreach programs for children and adults. School programs include a traveling mining trunk presentation, a program about Denver history, an interactive activity about the Industrial Revolution and women's history sessions. Adult education programs include *The Outrageous Times of Molly Brown*, *Victorian Women's Lifestyles* and *The Sinking of the Titanic*. The Museum also presents rotating exhibits in the historic setting. In 2003, the exhibit and living history play, *The Bridgets – Servants' Lives in Colorado*, won a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History for bringing to light a subject that is rarely addressed in historic house museums.

The Museum's largest and primary interpretive tool is the house itself: an 1889 Richardsonian Romanesque/Queen Anne structure. The property includes restored period gardens, a carriage house that acts as a visitors' center, museum store and offices, and original stone retaining walls used by the Browns in landscaping. The buildings are listed on both the local and national registers of historic places. Since being saved from demolition in 1970, the house has undergone extensive restoration based on careful research and period evidence including a remarkable series of interior photographs taken in 1910. Materials include indigenous rhyolite and sandstone, golden oak, cherry, mahogany, brick, plaster, anaglypta and lincrusta-walton. The collection includes original Brown artifacts and period pieces that reflect the life of an upper-middle-class family in turn-of-the-century Denver. The collection serves as an increasingly important record of early 20th-century American life – reflecting tastes, manufacturing techniques and technological advancements.

6. Project Team

Museum Staff

Kerri Atter is the director and curator of the Molly Brown House Museum and will provide leadership for all team members. Atter earned her master's in museum studies at Harvard University and has worked at the Molly Brown House Museum since 2000. In addition to managing day-to-day activities at the Museum, Atter determines the Museum's interpretive approach and will serve as project manager for the Museum's interpretive expansion. She will be instrumental in the development of all project components, including coordination with consulting scholars, research, exhibit design, and script development as well as general project administration.

Annie Robb is the assistant director at the Museum. Robb earned her B.A. in history at Colorado College in 2002 after completing an honors thesis on women and urban development in Denver during its first quarter century. Robb has worked at the Museum since July 2003 and will assist with interpretation and project implementation, provide support throughout the project, identify potential funders, manage outreach and publicity and conduct necessary research.

Heidi Trevithick is the museum educator. Trevithick earned her B.A. in history and Political Science at Colorado College and received her teaching certificate in secondary social studies curriculum from the University of Colorado at Boulder while working toward her master's degree in education. Trevithick has four years of classroom experience. She has worked at the Museum for seven years and will be responsible for the development project-related materials that meet national education standards.

Consulting Scholars

Kristen Iversen is the author of *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth* and the leading scholar on the life of Margaret Brown. Iversen participated in the Museum's 2001 Consultation Grant process and has contributed significantly to the Museum's current interpretation through her extensive research. Iversen earned her PhD in creative writing from the University of Denver in 1996 and has authored several books and articles, including the entries about Margaret Brown in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and the Oxford University Press National Biography Series. Iversen currently teaches at the University of Memphis. Iversen has been interviewed for this project and will provide ongoing guidance about archival resources, script development and thematic content.

Eileen Warburton is an independent writer, scholar and editor in Newport, Rhode Island. Warburton earned her PhD in English at the University of Pennsylvania in 1980. She has conducted research on the history of Newport and published several articles on women's history, including "Newport Women, A Power Trip," and "Nineteenth Century Rhode Island Women, Into the Public 'I.'" Her expertise will help illuminate Margaret Brown's relationships and activities in Newport and in relation to the women's suffrage movement. She has been interviewed for the film and will conduct additional research about Margaret's role in significant Newport activities, including the 1914 Conference of Great Women.

Ari Kelman is a professor of American history at the University of California at Davis. Previously a member of the faculty at the University of Denver, Kelman earned his PhD from Brown University in 1998 and received a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship in 2004. He served as a consultant for the 1999-2000 *American Experience* documentary series and worked as a consultant for the History Channel.

In addition to participating in a filmed interview, Kelman will provide contextual information and feedback about the Industrial Age, the Progressive Movement, and the life and times of Margaret Brown.

Eric Rauchway is a professor of American History at the University of California at Davis where he focuses on U.S. political, cultural, and intellectual history and the American rise to world power in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Rauchway has published extensively on America in the Progressive Era, America's relationship with the world in the Progressive Era and teaches courses on American Cultural History in the 20th century. Rauchway will provide input on Margaret's role in the Progressive Movement as well as provide contextual information about the cultural changes in which Margaret participated in the 1920s.

Patricia Limerick is the director for the Center for the American West at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Limerick earned her PhD at Yale University in 1980 and was awarded the MacArthur Fellowship in 1995. She served as a consultant for the PBS documentary *The West* and has published extensively on topics related to the American West. Limerick provided contextual information about the American West and where Margaret Brown fits into the story during an interview in December 2005. NEH funds will not be used to support Limerick's future involvement but her input will be included in the final products.

Modupe Labode is the chief historian at the Colorado Historical Society. Labode earned her D. Phil. in history from Oxford University and then worked as an assistant professor at Iowa State University. Her research at the Colorado Historical Society has included lectures on Margaret Brown as well as publications on aspects of the period in which she lived. Labode will provide a sense of how Margaret's story fits into the larger picture of Colorado and western history. NEH funds will not be used to support Labode's future involvement but her input will be included in the final products.

Film Production

Jim Havey has been making documentary films for more than 25 years. After graduating from St. Ambrose College with degrees in political science and sociology, Havey founded Havey Productions in 1979. His work has won recognition for excellence from the Art Directors Club of Denver, the Association for Multi-Image International, the Business and Marketing Association, the Public Relations Society of America and the Telly Awards. His past projects include documentary films for Denver's Botanic Gardens, the Four Mile Historic Park and the Aspen Historical Society. Havey will be interviewing scholars, selecting photographs, filming, editing and producing the film portion of *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation*. He will work closely with the project director and scholars on script development.

Nathan Church graduated from the University of Northern Colorado with a degree in visual arts and graphic design. He joined Havey Productions in 2001 as Art Director and Film Editor. Church will be assisting Havey with photo selection, digital enhancements, editing and production.

Lee Stametz will be producing the original score for *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation*. Stametz studied music at Juilliard and the Manhattan School of Music and has served as the music director and composer for more than 20 Denver Center Theater Company productions. His composing credits include PBS documentaries, industrial films, historical and biographical documentaries, children's videos and feature films.

Exhibit Design

John Carr, owner of Atomic Design, has independently designed and produced exhibits since 2001 after serving as the exhibit designer and curator of history at the Fort Collins Museum and at the Estes Park Area Historical Museum. Carr's past exhibits have included *Alpine Warriors*, *A History of the 10th Mountain Division* and *A Century of Cycling, A History of the Bicycle*. Carr earned an Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History in 2000. Carr will be responsible for consulting with the Museum staff about exhibit content as well as the design, construction and installation of exhibit pieces.

Chris Miller, CEO and co-founder of Havoc Interactive, holds a B.A. in technical communications from Metropolitan State College. Prior to starting Havoc, Miller worked as a senior web developer for bCandid Software and for GE Access. Over the last five years, he has designed and implemented multimedia

Molly Brown House Museum
Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation

presentations and concepts for Mapquest, Digital Ranches and Verizon. Miller will be responsible for the design and implementation of the multimedia, interactive exhibit activities.

7. Plan of Work

Month	Task	Participants
PRE-PRODUCTION Supported by CEH and Museum Funds	PRIOR TO OFFICIAL GRANT PERIOD* This stage of the project is supported by the Colorado Endowment for the Humanities and internal Museum funds	
September 2005	Colorado Endowment for the Humanities funds received to support pre-production costs	Project Director
October 2005	Schedule initial scholar meeting	Project Director
November 2005	Host initial scholar meeting	Project Director & Filmmaker
	Conduct initial on-site scholar interviews	Project Director & Filmmaker
December 2005	Continue initial scholar interviews	Project Director & Filmmaker
	Develop plans for permanent exhibit components	Project Director & Exhibit Designers
	Conceptualize multimedia activities	Project Director & Exhibit Designers
	Begin interview editing and transcription	Filmmaker
January 2006	Prepare NEH grant application	Project Director
	Continue interview editing and transcription	Filmmaker
	Complete initial Film Treatment	Project Director & Filmmaker
February-September 2006	Collect remaining photographs and primary source materials for film and exhibit	Project Director & Filmmaker
	Complete script for documentary film	Project Director and Filmmaker
	Secure remaining usage rights for photographs	Filmmaker
PRODUCTION	OFFICIAL GRANT PERIOD BEGINS This stage of the project will be supported by NEH funds if granted and any matching funds raised prior to this date will not be spent until after the grant period begins	
October 2006	Review plans and confirm timetable	Project Team
	Plan re-enactment shots for documentary film	Filmmaker
	Complete plans for interactive activities, submit to scholars for review	Project Director & Exhibit Designers
	Develop evaluation questions for viewers/visitors	Exhibit Designers and Museum Staff
November & December 2006	Scholars conduct final review of film narrative and script	Project Team
	Begin design of interactive activities	Exhibit Designers
	Begin composition of musical score for film	Composer
	Draft exhibit text	Staff & Exhibit Designer
January 2007	Install technological equipment for film projection	Museum Staff
	Continue development of exhibit text	Exhibit Designer
	Begin implementation of marketing plan	Project Director & Marketing Consultant

Molly Brown House Museum
Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation

February 2007	Organize focus group to review film	Project Team
	Begin exhibit fabrication	Project Team
	Review and approve design of interactive activities	Project Director
March 2007	Host focus group to review film	Project Team
	Complete final edits on film	Filmmaker
	Begin final programming of interactive activities	Exhibit Designers
	Scholars and staff review and finalize exhibit text	Project Scholars & Exhibit Designers
April 2007	Complete film and order DVDs	Filmmaker
	Continue exhibit fabrication and programming on interactive activities	Exhibit Designers
May 2007	Complete exhibit fabrication	Exhibit Designers
	Test interactive activities	Exhibit Designers & Museum Staff
	Send invitations and marketing materials for film opening	Museum Staff
June 2007	Finalize interactive activities	Project Team
	Install exhibit panels & kiosks	Exhibit Designers
	Receive RSVPs for film opening	Museum Staff
July 2007	Film opens at a local historic theater	Project Team & General Public
	Exhibit opens at the Museum	Museum Staff
August 2007	Web adaptations of interactive activities and exhibit information "goes live" at www.mollybrown.org	Project Team
	DVD and VHS version produced for sale, includes additional materials	Filmmaker
	Final audience evaluation begins	Museum Staff & Public
September 2007	Visitor surveys continue on-site and on-line	Museum Staff & Public
October 2007	Visitor surveys continue on-site and on-line	Museum Staff & Public
November 2007	Final reports, including financials, produced	Project Director

8. Fundraising Strategy

In order to begin pre-production efforts related to *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation* the Molly Brown House Museum has set aside \$10,000 in annual funding from Denver's Scientific and Cultural Facilities District as well as significant Museum funds to cover initial research costs, planning and pre-production efforts. In 2005, the Museum also received a \$9,000 grant from the Colorado Endowment for the Humanities to support pre-production costs related to the project, including initial scholar interviews and script development for the documentary film.

In order to raise the remaining funds needed to implement *Molly Brown: the Biography of a Changing Nation*, the Museum will seek the support of local foundations and donors. Proposals are currently pending with the Just Media Fund, the Union Pacific Foundation, the Schlessman Family Foundation, the Mabel Hughes Foundation and others. Additionally, Museum staff will seek corporate sponsorship to support specific project elements.

In the spring of 2006, the Molly Brown House Museum will conduct a direct mail appeal to encourage Museum supporters to donate to this project and participate in the exciting changes taking place at the Museum. Finally, Historic Denver has committed more than \$40,000 to cover staff time spent on implementation.

Funding for the restoration of the space where the exhibit and film will be located was part of a separate project, completed in 2003. Grants from several local foundations and Home and Garden Television matched a Colorado State Historic Fund Grant to complete this preparatory project. The total cost of the restoration and preparation was \$391,800.

APPENDICES

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF KEY SOURCES INFORMING THE PROJECT

Newspapers and Journals

Colorado Heritage News
Newport Daily News
Denver Post
Denver Republican
Denver Times
Leadville Herald
New York City Daily News
New York Times
Rocky Mountain News

Books

Bancroft, Caroline. *The Unsinkable Mrs. Brown*. Boulder, Colo.: Johnson Publishing Company, 1963.

Chernow, Ron. *Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.* New York: Random House, 1998.

Christy, Howard Chandler. *The American Girl as Seen and Portrayed by Howard Chandler Christy*. New York: Moffat, Yard & Co., 1906.

Cullen-Dupont, Kathryn, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Women's History in America*. New York: Facts on File, 1996.

Dary, David. *Red Blood and Black Ink: Journalism in the Old West*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998.

Hill, Agnes Leonard. *Social Questions No. 2: What Makes Social Leadership?* Denver, Colo: Chain and Hardy 1893. Western History Room, Denver Public Library.

Hunter, Kathleen & Charles White. *Teaching with Historic Places: A Curriculum Framework*. Washington D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1995.

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

Larsen, Charles. *The Good Fight: The Remarkable Life and Times of Judge Ben Lindsay, the Colorful American Reformer Who Helped Start the Juvenile Court System, Advocated Sexual Revolution, and Battled the Establishment in the Early 20th Century*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972.

Leonard, Stephen J. & Thomas J. Noel. *Denver: Mining Camp to Metropolis*. Niwot, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 1990.

Pascoe, Peggy. *Relations of Rescue*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Rauchway, Eric. *The Refuge of Affections: Family and American Reform*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Rector, Margaret. *Alva, The Vanderbilt-Belmont Woman*. Wickford, R.I.: Dutch Island Press, 1992.

Sangster, Margaret E. *Good Manners for All Occasions*. New York, New York: 1904.

Schneider, Dorothy & Carl J. *American Women in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920*. New York, New York: Facts on File, 1993.

Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. *Disorderly Conduct, Visions of Gender in Victorian America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Whitacre, Christine. *Molly Brown: Denver's Unsinkable Lady*. Denver, Colo.: Historic Denver, Inc., 1984.

Whitney, Chadwick. *Women, Art, and Society*. New York, New York: Thames & Hudson, Inc., 1990.

Historic Manuscript Collections

Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado

An inventory of the papers of James Joseph Brown, Margaret Tobin Brown, Lawrence P. Brown and Mildred Gregory Brown

James G. Ducey Collection of Colorado Mining Papers : 1899-1930.

The Denver Women's Club minutes and notes.

Denver Public Library

Margaret Tobin Brown Papers

Fred Mazzula Papers

Private Collections

The Iversen Collection.

The Vollrath Collection.