

## *Margaret Tobin Brown: A Life Less Ordinary* Molly Brown House Museum

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At the time of Margaret “Molly” Brown’s birth in 1867, few American women owned property, educational opportunity was limited and a woman with the privilege of holding a credit card was more than a century away. Women did not vote, they did not travel alone and certainly did not seek media attention. Pants for women were unheard-of and professional training was almost as outrageous. 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 has a tremendous responsibility to not only share Margaret’s story but also to reveal the layers of her extraordinary life within this context, which seems so foreign to today’s audiences.

Born only two years after the end of the Civil War and succumbing to a brain tumor in 1932, Margaret Brown witnessed the profound changes caused by industrialization, technological innovations, social reform movements and the shifting role of women during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, Margaret was not a mere witness, she was an active agent. Carrying with her a passion for action and strong convictions, Margaret helped progress countless social issues.

Margaret first achieved fame after her husband J.J. Brown, a self-taught mining engineer, struck gold in Colorado’s mines in the 1890s. After the family moved to Denver in 1894, Margaret’s egalitarian spirit led her to the most pressing issues of her day. She worked to create a juvenile court system, promoted cultural diversity, helped found the Denver Dumb Friends League and became a patron of the arts. She also became Denver’s first historic preservationist when she saved poet Eugene Field’s home from demolition.

As her skills as a leader, organizer and fundraiser grew, so did her scope. The national fame she gained after surviving the *Titanic* disaster led her into society’s most powerful circles. She struggled against J.D. Rockefeller over the rights of coal miners in the aftermath of the Ludlow Massacre, joined forces with suffrage leaders Alva Belmont and Alice Paul and ran for the U.S. Senate in 1914, six years before women could vote at the federal level. Throughout her active years, Margaret remained passionate about the arts and pursued training in drama. She shared her passion with friends and family and brought her experiences back to Denver in the form of performances and collections.



Now home to some of these collections, the Molly Brown House Museum has earned national acclaim as a historic house museum. In 2005, the Museum was selected as one of twelve national *Restore America* sites and featured on HGTV. The Museum has also earned awards from the American Association for State and Local History for innovative interpretation and regularly receives recognition as Denver’s top historic site. The Museum’s primary programs are tours for the public, which serve more than 43,000 people every



educational programming and publications, the Museum hopes to inspire courage, conviction and proactive change in her spirit.

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*For more information visit [www.mollybrown.org](http://www.mollybrown.org)*

year. In addition, the Museum offers educational outreach programs to schools, scout troops and adult groups. Annual exhibits explore different aspects of Margaret's life. The 2008 exhibit explored women's role in the 1908 Democratic National Convention.

To fulfill its responsibility to women's history, the Museum expanded its mission in 2004 to include the full context of Margaret's life, even when she was away from her Denver home. By continuing to tell Margaret's story through preservation,