

Dear Colleague,

You've probably heard many tall tales of western women: a sharp shooter splitting a hair with her rifle, an old woman freezing in a mine waiting for the rediscovery of gold and a rags-to-riches red head who couldn't read or write. These iconic figures of the Rocky Mountain West- Annie Oakley- Baby Doe Tabor and Molly Brown- have long dominated our perception of women's experiences in the West. During the summer of 2010, the Molly Brown House Museum will conduct two, week-long, residential workshops designed to decipher the difference between life and legend in western women's biographies.

Come explore the West! Join the Molly Brown House Museum during the summer of 2010 for the NEH Landmarks of American History and Culture workshop for school teachers, *Molly Brown: A Look at Life and Legend*. This workshop will be offered to 40 teachers at two different times during the summer of 2010: June 20-25 or July 11-16. The program will begin each week at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday afternoon and will conclude at 4:30 p.m. on Friday.

Through immersive sessions at the 120-year-old Molly Brown House, historic central Denver, the gravesite of Buffalo Bill and the legendary surrounds of Leadville, Colorado, the study of western biography will raise new questions about the interpretation and presentation of the past.

MARGARET BROWN AND THE MOLLY BROWN HOUSE MUSEUM

The Molly Brown House Museum will serve as your host in the Mile High City. The Museum is the primary historic site associated with the legendary life of Margaret "Molly" Brown, *Titanic* survivor, gold miner, suffragette, and western woman. Margaret Tobin Brown, through the varied and diverse telling of her biography, has also become a legend of the American West.

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 of course, the drive into the Western frontier. After her childhood in a cosmopolitan river town, Margaret followed the western promise of wealth and riches by moving to Leadville, Colorado in 1886. After her marriage there to J.J. Brown, and their fortuitous discovery of gold on the heels of the silver crash, she moved to Denver, a bursting new urban center driving the western economy. The Browns purchased their longtime home, now the Museum, in 1894 and quickly became actively involved in the Denver community. While her early biographies paint these years as lonesome due to ostracism by the city's elite, in truth Margaret, as well as J.J., was prominent and well-respected. Margaret joined the local women's clubs, raised funds for a new cathedral and became actively involved in the creation of a juvenile justice center. She even ran for state office twice, once in 1909 and again in 1911. Margaret's drive, along with the national fame she gained after surviving the *Titanic* disaster in 1912, led her more deeply into society's most powerful circles. She confronted John D. Rockefeller over the rights of coal miners in southern Colorado 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.

Almost immediately after her death, Margaret's legend began to grow and change. Early biographers painted a picture of an ignorant, boisterous and often outrageous Western character. Her story became intertwined with romantic images of the frontier region. Her biography became a representation of the Western stereotypes popular during the first half of the 20th century. School children, movie-goers and tourists learned of Colorado's mountain communities, the mining industry, saloon culture, and Western "society" from Margaret Brown's ever-growing life story. However, this biography was full of more fiction than fact, beginning with Margaret's name itself, which was changed to "Molly" over years of storytelling despite the fact that she never used it in her lifetime.

The Molly Brown House itself is a Denver icon, and is a designated state and local landmark, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and received recognition through the Save America's Treasures Program. It stands as an enduring symbol of Margaret Brown's life experiences and western history. The home sits in the Capitol Hill Neighborhood, which was once the domain of the city's elite and is today an eclectic urban community. The home is fully restored to its circa 1910 appearance, with an extensive collection of Victorian and early 20th-century decorative arts. The house is a tool to tell not only Margaret Brown's biography but also to viscerally experience her world and explore the technologies, customs and living conditions of the urban West in its early years.

In addition to the Molly Brown House Museum and several site visits, workshop sessions or lecture discussion session will be held in two locations; in classrooms at Metropolitan State College and in lecture rooms at the Denver Public Library. Metropolitan State College is located on the Auraria Campus at the intersection of Colfax and Speer Blvd. From the hotel participants can take the free shuttle to Curtis and walk from Curtis to the campus. The other location for lectures is the Denver Public Library. Located at 14th and Broadway it is a short walk from the workshop hotel.

CONTENT AND THEMES

"The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two in society. That is its task and promise...No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey." -C. Wright Mills

The workshop will focus on biography as a tool for teaching history in the classroom, and explore the fine line between the real and the romantic in our perceptions of the "wild west." Using Molly Brown as a case study, we will read parts of her various biographies and separate the fact from the fiction in her story. We will expand our look at biography to several of Molly's contemporaries, such as Annie Oakley, Baby Doe Tabor and biographies of the minority groups that are often left out of perceptions of the West. Following this exploration of biography we will debate its ability to provide a compelling narrative, paint a picture of a region, and frame an individual's place in time, as well as its inherent flaws, biases, propensity for stereotypes and mass media-appeal. Topics to be discussed during the workshop include biography, legend, journalistic styles of the early 20th century, the life of Molly Brown, Annie Oakley, Baby Doe Tabor and Justina Ford, Denver's first African American doctor, among others.

Site visits to authentic historic places will frame workshop conversations and provide immersion into the lives of those discussed. The workshop will begin in Denver with the Molly Brown House Museum and the Black American West Museum, former home of Justina Ford. The workshop will then hit the road on a field trip to Golden Colorado, site of

the Buffalo Bill Museum and Gravesite to understand Annie Oakley's story and the power of western myth as perpetuated by Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. From there the group will travel to Leadville, Colorado, an early mining town that produced large quantities of gold and silver. At its height, Leadville was the most prosperous town in Colorado and many western legends walked its streets, including silver baron Horace Tabor. The group will visit his legacy, the Tabor Opera House, as well as the Matchless mine, where his second wife Baby Doe Tabor lived out the rest of her life and famously died waiting for another gold strike. As Leadville was also the place where Margaret and J.J. Brown met, the group will have the opportunity to visit the church where they were married and explore the intact downtown where they once shopped, dined and socialized.

As part of the workshop participants will be responsible for reading a number of secondary and primary sources. Prior to arrival we will ask participants to read Kristen Iversen's biography of Margaret Brown entitled *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth*, as well as excerpts from the first Brown biography, *Timber Line*, by Gene Fowler. Additional suggested readings that will be provided during the workshop include Quintard Taylor's *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West*, and Tom Noel's *Denver, Mining Camp to Metropolis*. Select articles on western biography and excerpts from 20th century newspapers will be included in teacher packets. Participants will have the opportunity to view the 1963 production of the *Unsinkable Molly Brown*, starring Debbie Reynolds as well as the recent Molly Brown documentary, *Biography of a Changing Nation*.

The goals of the workshops are to:

- Explore the many aspects and attributes of biography as a humanities subject and as a tool for historical analysis
- Use the biography of Margaret Brown as a case study to reveal biography's past application to historical understanding and popular culture
- Examine the relationship between fact and fiction in Western biographies and history
- Provide opportunities to compare primary and secondary sources to understand the sources and pitfalls of biography
- Provide participants the opportunity to develop materials, based on humanities content of the workshop, which are suited for inclusion in classroom curricula.

FACULTY

The workshop scholars are experts in the content of the workshop. A mix of Western scholars, biographers and teacher facilitators will ensure that the workshop session will be both scholarly and include useful pedagogy to develop curriculum and lesson plans.

Scholars

Anne Hyde will serve as the lead scholar. Anne is a professor of history at Colorado College. Her publications include *The West in the History of the Nation* and *Nothing New Under the Sun: Continuities in the West*. Anne will be joined by Kristen Iversen, who published the preeminent biography on Margaret Brown; *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth*. She will lecture on the process and challenge of writing biography. Currently, Kristen teaches in the English Department at the University of Memphis. To flesh out the full story of western life Modupe Labode, currently a history professor at Purdue University, and the former Colorado State Historian, will lecture on the complexities of western history and the untold

stories of minority populations in Denver. This will be complimented by Laura McCall's perspective on gender in the west. Laura is a professor of history at Metropolitan State College. She co-edited *A Shared Experience: Men, Women and the History of Gender* and *Across the Great Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West*.

To help participants apply this knowledge the scholar team will include Peggy O'Neill-Jones, the Regional Director of Teaching with Primary Sources, a regional chapter of the Library of Congress program. Peggy's research focuses on education technology and its integration in instruction. Kelly Long, professor of history at Colorado State University, will lecture on the use of resources in the classroom to teach history and biography and lead participants in the use of a variety of strategies to support content integration.

Teacher Facilitators

Our teacher facilitators for the workshop will be Sally Purath and Michelle Pearson. Each brings vast years of experience teaching K-12 students. In addition to teaching experience, our teacher facilitators have attended Landmarks in American History workshops prior to working on this program, and both are master teachers with the Library of Congress.

Museum Staff

As the host site, staff from the Molly Brown House Museum will administer and manage the workshop. Annie Levinsky, Executive Director of Historic Denver, will provide background content on the Museum and on Denver's key historic sites. Annie has worked at Historic Denver and the Molly Brown House Museum since 2003. Alison Salutz, Director of Programs for Historic Denver and the Molly Brown House Museum, will serve as the workshop manager. Alison has extensive expertise teaching with historic places and works with more than 7,500 students a year through fieldtrips and outreach programs. Alison will be the main contact for teachers both before and during the workshops.

ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Prior to the start of the workshop, participants will be mailed a reading list. Completion of the reading list prior to your arrival in Denver is recommended. Reading list materials will include articles by workshop scholars, background information on the lives of the women we will be discussing, selections from the various myths and legends, and information about traditional Western depictions versus contemporary scholarship on the West. The pre-workshop readings will be primarily secondary sources.

During the workshop we will continue studying biography by examining selected readings which cover the lives of Molly Brown and her contemporaries, primary sources from the collection of the Molly Brown House Museum, the Denver Public Library and the Library of Congress, and excerpts from periodicals of the period.

Workshop attendees will be expected to research and develop lesson plans or other classroom material that incorporates the information learned during the workshop into their curricula. At the end of the workshop week, you will be asked to make an informal presentation to your colleagues about your plans for this teaching activity. Within a month of the completion of the workshop, we will ask you to send us an electronic version of your classroom activity or lesson plan for dissemination and posting on the Molly Brown House Museum website, among others.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Located in central Denver and within walking distance of the workshop hotel and classroom space is the central branch of the Denver Public Library. This library is home to the Western History Department, a preeminent collection of primary and secondary sources about the West. These resources will be available to workshop participants during the library's regular hours of operation. It is located across the street from the Colorado Historical Society, also a repository of primary source material.

Wireless internet access is available free of charge at the workshop hotel for those who bring laptop computers. If you do not have a laptop computer we have made arrangements with Teaching with Primary Sources to lend 10 computers to participants on an as needed basis. We have also booked the computer lab at Metropolitan State College for daytime lecture sessions and an evening work session.

HOUSING AND MEALS

A room block has been reserved at the Comfort Inn Denver. Located at 401 17th Street, and attached to the historic Brown Palace, the Comfort Inn is conveniently located one block from the free 16th St. Shuttle, which will take participants within walking distance of the Denver Public Library and the Metropolitan State College campus. The negotiated hotel rate is \$85.00 per person/night, plus tax for two double deluxe beds. Rooms are available for double occupancy; at \$42.50 each, however the decision to share a room can be made at your discretion. A full breakfast is included in the cost of the room, as is internet access. This is the recommended hotel; however, participants are welcome to make their own arrangements.

For most of the workshop week participants will make their own lunch and dinner arrangements. There are numerous restaurants near the workshop session sites as well as the hotel. You will be provided with a list of nearby restaurants for your convenience. The Molly Brown House Museum will arrange for a luncheon on the final day of the workshop.

STIPEND

Teachers selected to participate will receive a stipend of \$1200 at the conclusion of the program. Stipends are intended to help cover living expenses and travel expenses to and from the workshop city. Stipends are taxable.

CREDIT

For those who are interested, three credits for continuing education will be available for participants at a minimal cost (approximately \$60.00 per credit hour) through Adams State College in conjunction with the Teaching with Primary Sources Program and the Molly Brown House Museum. All participants will receive a certificate of completion with contact hours, which they can submit to their districts/states individually according to their own requirements.

ABOUT DENVER

The Denver area has many local attractions to make your stay enjoyable. Known for having 300 days of sun throughout the year, the summer is a great time to come to Denver. In addition to seasonal entertainment during your stay, you can visit the Denver Art Museum and see its recent addition designed by Daniel Libeskind. The Denver Museum of Nature and Science features rotating exhibits on a variety of topics in addition to its permanent galleries, IMAX and planetarium. Right next door you'll find the Denver Zoo,

the fourth most popular zoo in the U.S. Denver is home to many great shopping centers including the shops in historic Lower Downtown, posh Cherry Creek Mall, and eclectic neighborhood business districts. Dining in Denver is also a treat, and within walking distance of the hotel and the free mall shuttle you can reach all variety of dining options.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

A completed application packet consists of three copies of: a NEH cover sheet (**which you must fill out on-line and then print for submission with your application**), your resume, and the application essay. Perhaps the most important part of the completed application is the essay, no longer than **one double-spaced page**. This essay should include information about your professional background and interest in the subject of the workshop; your special perspectives, skills, or experiences that would contribute to the workshop; and how the experience will enhance your teaching or school service

We also require a letter of recommendation from the principal or department head of your teaching institution, or the head of a home schooling association in support of your application. This letter should address your ability to integrate the lessons and experiences of the workshop into your current professional responsibilities. One copy of this letter of recommendation (in a sealed envelope) should be included in your application packet.

Please collate all elements of your application into three packets, each of which contains the cover sheet, resume, and application essay. Include the sealed letter of recommendation in your package. The completed package should be postmarked no later than March 2, 2010 and should be addressed as follows:

Alison Salutz
Molly Brown House Museum
1340 Pennsylvania St.
Denver, CO 80203

The complete application instructions can be found attached to this letter.

I hope that this letter has given you a good sense of our workshop and has answered many of your questions. If you need additional information, please e-mail me at: asalutz@mollybrown.org. Thank you for your interest in our program and we look forward to receiving your application.