



THE DISCOVERY PAPERS



Missourians and the Titanic

One of the most famous survivors of the Titanic disaster was socialite, Margaret Tobin. She was born in 1867 in Hannibal, Missouri. She became known, posthumously, as “The Unsinkable Molly Brown.” At the age of 18, she and her siblings moved to Leadville, Colorado. There she met and married James Joseph (J.J.) Brown.

*Margaret Brown
was known as
Maggie to her
friends.*

He was a mining engineer and for his work at the Little Jonny Mine he was awarded shares of stock and a seat on the board of the IbeX Mining Company. The now wealthy Browns moved to Denver and Margaret began life as a society lady becoming fluent in four languages, delving into all things art and helping to start the Denver Woman’s Club. She and J.J. separated in 1909 with her receiving a sizable monthly allowance and the two family homes in the Denver area.



In 1912, Brown was in Paris visiting her daughter, Helen,

who was studying at the Sorbonne. She received word that her eldest grandchild, Lawrence Palmer Brown, Jr., was seriously ill. Brown was eager to return to America as quickly as possible. The first available liner headed to New York was the RMS *Titanic* and she left from Cherbourg, France, on April 10, 1912, on board the RMS *Titanic*, as a first-class passenger.



The RMS *Titanic* sank around 2:20 a.m., on April 15, 1912, after hitting an iceberg around 11:40 p.m. Brown helped other passengers into lifeboats before she was persuaded to join others in Lifeboat No. 6. She helped row the lifeboat and urged that they return to save people in the water. The Quartermaster in charge of the lifeboat was reluctant to return to pick up additional passengers out of fear of the lifeboat being swamped and overturned by frantic people in the water or the boat being sucked under as the ship slipped into the water. Brown threatened to throw the Quartermaster overboard if the lifeboat did not return.



The survivors were rescued by the ship RMS *Carpathia*, where Brown organized a committee with other first-class survivors to provide necessities and counseling for the second and third-class survivors.

Missouri State Symbols



State Bird

Bluebird

The symbol of happiness



State Insect

Honeybee



Margaret “Molly” Tobin Brown died in 1932, in New York, of a brain tumor. She had been spent her last years as an actress.

There were other Missourians aboard the RMS *Titanic*. Also on the first-class passenger list were Elizabeth Robert and her daughter, Georgette, from St. Louis, who had been traveling in Europe. They were joined by Elizabeth Allen, a niece, and Mrs. Robert’s personal maid, Emilie Kreuchen. Miss Kreuchen raised the alarm to the Robert group to the rising waters in the lower decks. They dressed, gathered a few small items, and headed to the deck. There they were safely loaded onto the second lifeboat.

On board the RMS *Carpathia*, racing to rescue the passengers of the sinking RMS *Titanic*, was a young seamstress from Louisiana, Missouri, Mae Burkhead, returning from her own European adventure. She made her way to the deck to watch the sunrise and overheard a transmission for a “Major Burkhead.”

It was Eric Hawkins, a reporter with the New York *Herald*, trying to reach Miss Burkhead. Hawkins knew that Burkhead was aboard the *Carpathia* and that it was the closest ship to the sinking *Titanic*. He was asking her to put together a story about what was happening and collect some photos. Burkhead had no writing or journalism experience, but set about documenting the disaster. As soon as the ship docked, she hurried to the offices of the *Herald* where, with the help of a stenographer, she completed and submitted her story. She had scooped every news outlet in the country!

Mae Burkhead soon left Missouri to become the Paris correspondent for the *Herald* for 12 years before becoming the Paris correspondent for *The Chicago Tribune* for 25 years. Talk about being in the right place at the right time! What an amazing life!

April is an Incredible Month in History!

It’s amazing how many things have commemoration dates in the month of April. This issue will present a few.

The Shot Heard ‘Round the World’ - April 19, 1775, Lexington and Concord, Mass. Considered the “kickoff” of the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783). The night before silversmith Paul Revere and tanner, William Dawes rode quietly through the countryside alerting the colonists of the anticipated arrival of British troops. They were alerted by a lantern hung in the tower of Boston’s Old North Church. One lantern if the British were coming by land, and two lanterns if they were arriving by sea was the signal. (And in case you don’t remember, it was two lanterns.)



The American Civil War (a.k.a The War Between the States) April 12, 1861 (the beginning), April 9, 1865 (the end) The American Civil War began with the firing on Fort Sumter in South Carolina and ended with the surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at the McLean House in the city of Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

The Surrender in the McLean House

Capture of the United States Army Arsenal of Deposit at Liberty, Missouri, April 20, 1861. The Liberty Arsenal (as it was commonly known) was established in 1836. It was built on a bluff above the Liberty Landing, about three miles south of Liberty. The first time it was raided was on November 27, 1855, by pro-slavery forces securing weapons to fight in the conflicts in the Kansas Territory (known as Bleeding Kansas) over Kansas Statehood as a free or slave state. A week after the fall of Fort Sumter, the arsenal was captured again on April 20, 1861, by about 200 Missouri secessionists (those who supported Missouri seceding from the United States). It was surrendered without a fight by the post commander and the arsenal was stripped over the next week. Cannons, small arms, equipment, tools, munitions, and more than 12,000 pounds of powder and 400,000 cartridges were looted. When the war ended, the arsenal was not reestablished.



The Liberty Arsenal

The Explosion and Sinking of *Sultana* April 27, 1865. The *Sultana* was a side-wheel steamboat on the Mississippi River. She ran a regular route between St. Louis and New Orleans and frequently was commissioned to carry troops. The Captain was James Cass Mason of St. Louis. He left St. Louis on April 13, 1865, headed for New Orleans, Louisiana. The boat reached Cairo, Illinois, on April 15, where Mason learned of the death of President Abraham Lincoln. As he headed down river, Mason spread the news knowing that

telegraphic communication with the Southern states was almost totally cut off. At Vicksburg, Mississippi, Mason was offered a deal by the quartermaster there. Prisoners from the Confederate camps at Cahaba in Alabama and Andersonville in Georgia were awaiting release to the North at a small parole camp near Vicksburg. The U.S. government was offering \$2.75 per enlisted man and \$8 per officer to any steamboat captain who would take them north. The quartermaster offered Captain Mason a full load of 1,400 parolees if Mason would agree to compensating the quartermaster with a kickback. Mason readily agreed.

The *Sultana* continued on its way to New Orleans spending the news of the President's assassination. On April 21, 1865, Mason left New Orleans headed back up river with about 70 cabin and deck passengers, a small amount of livestock, and a crew of 85. About ten hours from Vicksburg, one of the boat's four boilers sprang a leak forcing the *Sultana* to limp into Vicksburg for repairs and pick up the additional passengers - the 1,400 parolees.

The recommended repairs would take days, according to the mechanic brought to repair the boiler. Those few days meant the parolees would be sent home on other boats. Mason and his engineer convinced the mechanic to make temporary repairs to the boiler. The repairs were made in one day while the parolees were boarded. Due to a mix-up, all the parolees from the Vicksburg camp were boarded onto *Sultana* - 1,960 paroled prisoners and 22 guards.

Adding them to the souls already on board, the *Sultana* left Vicksburg with a total of 2,137 people. The capacity of the boat with a crew of 85 was 376 passengers and cargo.

The Mississippi River was experiencing one of the worst spring floods in its history so traveling upriver was a challenge of overflowed banks, swirling waters, and trees buried in water up to the tops. At Memphis, Tennessee, 120 tons of sugar was offloaded and about 200 men disembarked. She took on a new board of coal and headed up river again. About seven miles north of Memphis, around 2:00 a.m. on April 27, 1865, the boilers began exploding. The explosion of steam demolished the pilothouse, casting the boat adrift without a pilot. Some of the passengers on deck were thrown into the water and a large section of the boat was destroyed. *Sultana* quickly became a floating inferno.

A passing steamer *Bostona* quickly came to the rescue of survivors struggling in the water, fighting the icy waters. Some survivors were discovered at the Memphis waterfront and their cries alerted crews of docked steamboats and U.S. warships to join the rescue effort. The exact death toll is unknown. It is thought to be, based on recent evidence, 1,168. The

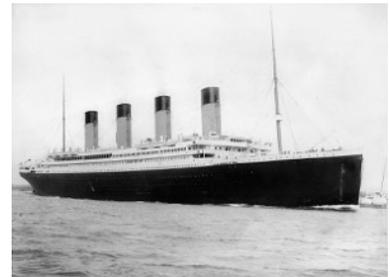


survivors began holding reunions, which continue to this day. No one was ever held accountable. It is said to be the greatest maritime disaster in the history of the United States.



Birth of Queen Elizabeth II - April 21, 1926, Elizabeth Alexandra Mary, Queen of the United Kingdom and 15 other Commonwealth realms, turned 95 years old this year. She is the longest-lived and longest-reigning British monarch and the longest-serving female head of state in world history. She became Queen at the death of her father, George VI, on February 6, 1852. Her coronation was held on June 2, 1953.

Sinking of the RMS *Titanic*, April 15, 1912, The RMS *Titanic* was a luxury steamship that sank off the coast of Newfoundland in the North Atlantic Ocean, during its maiden voyage from Southampton, England to New York City, New York. The ship left Southampton on April 10, 1912, stopped in Cherbourg, France, and Queenstown (Cobh), Ireland, before heading out to New York. There were 2,240 souls on board. Four days later, on April 14, reports were received of icebergs ahead. Around 11:30 p.m. a lookout spotted an iceberg dead ahead and sounded the alarm. The ship was turned to avoid making direct contact and *Titanic* grazed along the side of the berg. The iceberg slashed a 300-foot-gash in the hull below the ship's waterline. After an assessment was made, it was estimated that the ship might remain afloat for an hour and a half, maybe a little more. The wireless operator began sending "S.O.S." and the crew began loading the passengers into lifeboats.



The ship survived for close to three hours - precious minutes. In her final minutes, *Titanic* was nearly perpendicular before slipping beneath the ocean's surface about 2:20 a.m. on April 15. Her lifeboats contained only 705 survivors.

The Missouri Rockets

In 1926, Russell Markert debuted his new dance troupe “the Missouri Rockets” in St. Louis. His goal was to create a dancing troupe of absolute precision and uniformity in their movements as dancers. (Sounding familiar?) That same year, Markert and his Rockets performed on Broadway in New York. Showman S.L. “Roxy” Rothafel saw their performance and approached Markert to form another group for him. The new group soon debuted at the Roxy Theater as “The Roxyettes” but by 1932, they moved to Radio City Music Hall and changed their name to the “Rockettes.” Russell Markert was their choreographer until his retirement in 1971.



Time Travelers At the Ready.....?

By the end of May, all should be in readiness for the Time Travelers to begin adventuring! More than a year ago now, we planned our first outing at the world

headquarters of the United

Federation of Doll Clubs, Inc., just as the world closed due to the pandemic. In honor of World Doll Day, on Saturday, June 13, 2020, you are cordially invited to a special afternoon open house, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The annual doll exhibit will be in full swing. There will be goodies, opportunities to sign up for future activities, and all the particulars for the Missouri Bicentennial Essay Contest. (Hint: You might get some ideas from the exhibits.) Even if you aren't “in” to dolls, there will be lots of fun things to do!



Learning About the Past Through Dolls

Dolls help us to not only learn about the past but honor events and people . This month we look at some dolls that relate to the people in the history stories in this issue.



In honor of the Queen's 95th Birthday, Funko POP Queen Elizabeth II. Quite a likeness, don't you think? Love the corgi.

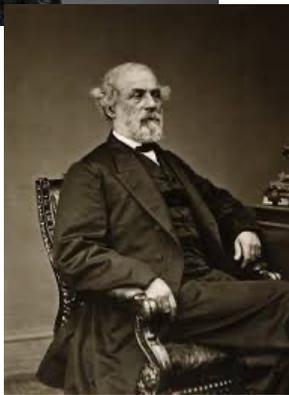


"The Unsinkable Molly Brown.

Doll by Jan McLean "Molly Brown, Heroine of the Titanic" 21 inch Porcelain



The stars of the surrender at the McLean House were *Generals Lee and Grant*. These two figures are by *George S. Stuart*.





The Radio City Music Hall Rockettes have been honored as a doll many times over the years. This is a 10 inch Madame Alexander "Carol of the Bells Rockette"

The Discovery Papers is created for the Westport Historical Society/Harris-Kearney House as part of the Time Travelers program.

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