TITLE OF COURSE:  From Famine to Flour Mill: an Irish immigrant’s path of success (story of JK Mullen of Denver)- Book Club

INSTRUCTOR(S) NAME:  Linda Keller

COURSE MEETING TIMES:  Tuesdays (February 11 - March 3) 1:00-3:00 pm

COURSE LOCATION:  Ruffatto Room 202

CONTACT INFO FOR INSTRUCTOR:
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INSTRUCTOR BIO:  Linda Keller has been creating and facilitating workshops since 1986 at a variety of adult education and lifelong learning programs. She also spent a decade as a classroom Language Arts teacher, including teaching World Literature at Bishop Machebeuf High School. She is the author of seven books of poetry. Her book, Comet Dreams, was listed as a local bestseller after her reading at the Tattered Cover Book Store in March, 2005. Her website is ljkeller.com

COURSE:  DESCRIPTION
We will read and discuss the biography of J.K. Mullen who was born in Ireland in 1847. Mullen’s father and uncle were crafters of barrels for the local mills in Ballinasloe, County Galway (three oatmeal and one flour mill) and two breweries. However, the advent of the Great Famine brought an end to whatever prosperity the family enjoyed and in 1856 they came to America to escape the Potato Famine. The family located in New York; J.K. left home in 1867 to seek his fortune in milling and, after stops in Illinois and Kansas, in 1871, he came West, ultimately creating a successful flour mill in the mining boom town of Leadville. His name lives on in Denver through J.K. Mullen High School, one recipient of his many philanthropic efforts.


MATERIALS FEE:  Book available on Amazon from various book resellers; approximately $10-$15

Week 1: Please be prepared to discuss Chapters 1-5, p.1-46 of Pride of the Rockies: The Life of Colorado’s Premiere Irish Patron, John Kernan Mullen by William J. Convery. We will create a timeline highlighting important events in this period from 1847-1874 and explore the themes of determination and perseverance.

Week 2: Please be prepared to discuss Chapters 6-9, p.51-95. We will explore the themes of taking risks and how values transform with new experiences.

Week 3: Please be prepared to discuss Chapters 10-11 and 13, p. 99-124 and 137-153. We will contrast the success of Mullen’s business endeavors with the conflicts on the family front. There will be an opportunity for participants to have chosen one of Mullen’s many legacies to report on as referenced in the chapters listed below. As time allows, we will begin them this week.
Week 4: Please be prepared to discuss Chapter 17, p. 195-202. and Chapter 20, p. 229-241. We will continue participant presentations and end with our takeaways on Mullen’s life and legacies.

The Church of St. Leo the Great (Ch. 12)

The Immaculate Conception Cathedral (Ch. 14)

Bronco Buster at Civic Center (Ch. 15)

JK Mullen Home for the Aged (Ch. 16)

Mullen Library and Foundation (Ch. 18)

St. Catejan’s Catholic Church (Ch. 19)

JK Mullen Home for Boys (Ch. 21)