

# ARCHIVING OUR STORIES: THE ART OF RANCHING AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN ROUTT COUNTY

Intern: Avery Anderson  
Supervisors:  
Dr. Leisl Carr Childers, Project Historian, CSU History Department  
Tami Eggers, Project Director, Routt County 4-H and CSU Extension  
Linda Meyer, Project Archivist, CSU Libraries  
Jacie Rex, Project Coordinator, Douglas County 4-H and CSU Extension

## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Art of Ranching is a multigenerational history project that works with 4-H youth, historical agricultural families, and their descendants. The project began with Tami Eggers, the 4-H Youth Development Specialist, in 2021 in Routt County. She imagined bringing together 4-H youth, historians, college interns, Extension specialists, and individuals from historic ranches to preserve the stories of the county's agricultural roots.



Since that time, it has expanded to other counties, including Douglas, Elbert, Garfield, Logan, and Custer. The concept of ranching stands in for all agricultural work.

The project's goal is to preserve the many stories of historic farms, ranches, and agriculturalists throughout Colorado, promote an interest in community history with local youth, and establish connections between youth and their elders across generational lines. The Art of Ranching Project supports the CSU Extension mission by sharing knowledge and skill sets within the community. This then allows us to share these stories with the general public and academics to further education.

## INTERNSHIP GOALS

1. Complete training in oral history education processes and protocols
2. Learn archival processes and protocols
3. Implement learned skills in archivist work and oral history collection
4. Process and organize Art Of Ranching materials and correlate to other materials preexisting in the Agricultural and Natural Resources Collection of CSU Archives
5. Inventory and deliver archival material to CSU Libraries
6. Enhance existing participant collections
7. Engage with 4-H Youth and participants in Routt County in local history practices

## CAREER APPLICATION

- Gained skills in historical preservation, transcription of oral histories and other collected information, and archival processing
- Developed worksheets and materials for an educational 4-H workshop focused on agriculture and historical Colorado apple production
- Processed archival materials related to CSU Extension and Colorado agriculture to make materials accessible for public use and reference

## HISTORICAL METHODS

During my internship, I applied a combination of historical methods centered around archival research, oral history, and broader historical analysis. I was guided by a clear historical methodology. Archival work involved locating and examining primary sources such as maps, photographs, planting records, and correspondence through CSU's special collections, using finding aids and archivists' guidance to identify relevant materials. Each source was evaluated for authenticity, context, and purpose, with documentation of provenance for accurate citation. Oral history methods complemented this work by identifying and interviewing narrators connected to ranching history, preparing open-ended questions, recording and transcribing their accounts, and analyzing these accounts. These testimonies added personal, cultural, and emotional dimensions to this work. My methodology integrated environmental, social, and public history approaches in an effort to understand the ranch history in Colorado as integral to agricultural labor and community work force. Focusing on oral testimonies with archival evidence and connecting my findings with existing historiography allowed for deeper analysis of project materials. By combining these methods with a public history model the project preserved and interpreted ranching legacy in a way that is both historical and accessible to the wider community.



## OUTCOMES AND PRODUCTS

1. Processed materials for the Art of Ranching Project and Agricultural and Natural Resources Collection of CSU Archives
2. Conducted oral history interviews with Art Of Ranching project participants
3. Transcribed oral history materials of recorded transcripts for the Art Of Ranching Collection
4. Travel to Routt County to engage with local history, community, and historical sites
5. Logged photographs of historical ranch sites for Art Of Ranching Collection



## NEXT STEPS

- Continued transcription of oral history materials in order to continue to provide historical materials for public access
- Documentation of local and community history in Routt and Douglas Counties
- Advocation for preservation of agricultural history in Colorado and the American West
- Processing documents and materials for CSU Libraries and CSU Archival Collections
- Fall semester internship with the National Archives and Records Administration