

# Building Connections with the Black American West Museum

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## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Building Connections project focuses on compiling and organizing archival research, material culture, and literature of Black Colorado history into one document to establish and organize a central reference guide for the Black American West Museum and Cultural Center. The Black American West Museum as one of the few museums dedicated to showcasing Colorado's Black history possesses many resources. The latter half of the project focused on diversifying and supplementing 4-H curriculum based on the research and findings at the Black American West Museum and supplemental research to have educational activities that reflect a diverse student body.

## INTERNSHIP GOALS

- 1) Work with the Black American West Museum & Heritage Center and the Dearfield Dream Project to research the physical and cultural connections between the BAWM and Dearfield;
- 2) Work with Denver County Extension to determine opportunities for youth programming and engagement;
- 3) Conduct graduate-level archival historical research and engage the appropriate secondary historical literature to document the connection between the BAWM and Dearfield;
- 4) Make site visits to properties and attend organization meetings as needed; and
- 5) Produce a small educational element determined by the Denver County Extension office to substantiate the new relationship.

## HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

- Continued to develop research skills by engaging in archival research, material culture, and literature
- Learned how to develop educational programming and historic interpretation for children
- Aided in the establishment of my digital skills

## WHAT YOU DID

### Reference Guide

- Worked with the Black American West Museum to search through their collections
- Research and used local newspapers, photographs, articles, and material culture
- Archival research
- Establish a comprehensive reference guide on Dearfield and Denver's Black History
- Created educational activities based on Western History



## WHAT YOU LEARNED

Black history of the West, and specifically Colorado is often overlooked. The Black American West Museum continues to be a keeper and leader of Black Colorado history. The museum's extensive collection and deep personal connection with the Five Points area and Dearfield highlights that history is not too long ago and is personal. Through working with the BAWM, I was able to make connections and learn history in a way that literature would not have been able to teach me. The BAWM also demonstrated the significance of community-based history.

The Denver County Extension allowed me to practice my historic interpretation skills and showcase my creativity in different ways by making educational activities.

## NEXT STEPS

- Continue to build and maintain a relationship with the Black American West Museum
- Research history of Dearfield and Black communities in Colorado

