

GRAND COUNTY HISTORY HARVEST

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The History Harvest is an innovative new authentic learning initiative in the Department of History at Colorado State University. This collaborative, team-oriented, and community-based project seeks to create a popular movement to democratize and open American history by utilizing digital technologies to share the experiences and artifacts of everyday people and local historical institutions. This internship focused on Grand County, Colorado by working in collaboration with the Grand County Historical Association.



At each "harvest," community-members are invited to bring and share their letters, photographs, objects and stories, and participate in a conversation about the significance and meaning of their materials to Grand County's history. Each artifact is digitally captured and then shared in a free web-based archive for general educational use and study. Overall, the History Harvest project aims to raise visibility and public conversation about history and its meaning, as well as provide a new foundation of publicly available material for historical study, K-12 instruction, and life-long learning.

INTERNSHIP GOALS

1. Collaborate with the Grand County Historical Association to plan and host Grand County's first History Harvest
2. Record interviews with Grand County residents
3. Document historic artifacts presented by Grand County residents
4. Process artifacts and interviews and upload to a digital archive

CAREER APPLICATION

This internship provided opportunities to develop applicable skills including:

- Event planning
- Graphic design
- Collaboration between organizations
- Advertising through various mediums including posters, flyers, newspapers, and social media

HISTORICAL METHODS

It is our goal that the collaborative, community-based approach makes invisible histories and materials more visible by working with and within local communities to collect, preserve and share previously unknown or under-appreciated artifacts and stories. The artifact-based approach to this project elevates family and local histories by making them more available and, in the process, challenges the supremacy of traditional elite sources by dramatically expanding the pool of historical artifacts easily accessible to students, scholars and everyday people seeking to learn more about our collective past. The harvesting of local artifacts will reveal important new historical materials that are currently buried in attics, basements and archives.

The History Harvest also provides students a unique and often transformative hands-on experience with historical work. With the guidance of a faculty member, students work to plan, organize and promote each harvest and then process and analyze the artifacts and oral history interviews they collect. As a digital initiative, the project takes advantage of innovative new technologies to engage students in building history, reflecting on historical change, collaborating to create interpretive accounts of the materials they collect and sharing what they find with others. The History Harvest project, then, is designed to develop an online space for history and to support a new pedagogical model that allows students to create and participate in a "community of scholars." Since 2010, History Harvest has been adapted and used by educators across the country, and beyond, at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as in upper-elementary, middle and high schools.

OUTCOMES AND PRODUCTS

1. Planned and hosted Grand County's first History Harvest in collaboration with the Grand County Historical Association



NEXT STEPS

Given the lack of involvement in this event, the next steps should consist of assessing the previous weaknesses and preparing changes to ensure the next Grand County History Harvest can be a grand success!