

Dearfield Brieflets

Issue 2 | April 2022

Welcome to the second quarterly newsletter of the Dearfield Dream Project. This issue celebrates new accomplishments and upcoming activities and events. You can get involved by attending an event or volunteering for one of our projects!



You're Invited!

2022 Dearfield Conference

Saturday, May 21, 2022

9:00 AM - 3:45 PM

In Person and Online

This year's Dearfield conference, the eighth since 2012, will be hosted from a new multi-media room located on the lower level of University of Northern Colorado's Michener Library.

For those attending in person: Small snacks will be provided. There are several restaurants within walking distance available for lunch, but you are also welcome to bring your own lunch. Per current UNC policy, masks and social distancing are encouraged, but not required.

Please RSVP to robert.brunswig@unco.edu by May 14th.

If you can't come to the conference in person, don't worry! Sessions and

presentations will also be streamed live on Zoom.

For those attending online: Everyone receiving this newsletter will receive a Zoom link on Thursday, May 19th. Anyone who is not currently receiving this newsletter is still welcome to join the fun! Just email robert.brunswick@unco.edu to receive a conference link and subscribe to the newsletter.

Here are some highlights to look forward to:

- Congressmen Ken Buck and Joe Neguse will present about the current House of Representatives legislation working toward designating the Dearfield townsite as a National Historic Site
- Denver and Greeley based genealogy organizations will present past and future research projects on Dearfield residents
- Dearfield documentary producers, including Donnie Betts, Charles Nuckolls, Noel Black, and Kevin Strong will show clips of their work, describe their creative experiences, and discuss possible future projects



Visualize Dearfield's Past

Digital Dearfield Images Now Available

The University of Northern Colorado Archives and Special Collections digitized a

series of Dearfield and Dearfield-related photographs donated by Paul Stewart's family. The scanned images include Mr. Stewart's notes on each photograph. All of the materials are located on Digital UNC. **Click the button below to start exploring.**

[Explore Digital UNC >](#)

We are Honored and Humbled...

...to receive the State Honor Award from Colorado Preservation, Inc.

On March 31st, the Black American West Museum received notification from Colorado Preservation, Inc. that the museum and its partner, the Dearfield Preservation Committee, is being awarded the prestigious State Honor Award. In part, the award recognizes that:

"The Black American West Museum and Dearfield Preservation Committee have created a strong partnership with the University of Northern Colorado and other area institutions to promote archaeological research and scholarship about Dearfield and to promote the preservation and interpretation of the remaining buildings on the Dearfield site. The strong leadership shown in protecting the integrity of the Dearfield National Historic District against encroaching development was also a milestone in preservation efforts."

Colorado Preservation, Inc. is our state's premier historic preservation non-profit organization and is celebrating 2022 as its 30th anniversary.

Now Open
at the Greeley History Museum



Black and White in Black and White:

Images of Dignity, Hope, and Diversity in America

and

The Faces of Dearfield

Featuring the artwork of Julie Vaught

[Read more about the exhibits >](#)

Tracing the Jacksons' Roots

Black Genealogy Search Group of Denver – Dearfield Project

In September 2021, the Black Genealogy Search Group (BGS) of Denver voted to

begin a major new research project pertaining to the founders of Dearfield, Colorado. As most genealogists know, research regarding African American families is a very distinct process, and the members of BGSB Denver are very accomplished in this type of research.

The group met to kick off the new project in January. We plan to examine the genealogies of Dearfield's founder, Oliver T. Jackson, his parents and siblings, his first wife, Sadie Cook, his second wife, Minerva Matlock, and their extended families.

Even in the short time since we began, the group's members have already made some exciting discoveries. The beginning stages of the research already show that both O.T.'s father, Hezekiah Jackson, and one of his fathers-in-law, Major Cook, were free people of color living in Virginia before 1850.

Stay tuned, because the discoveries are only just beginning. We can't wait to share them with you!

[Read More and Volunteer >](#)



Ready to get your hands dirty?

The Dearfield 2022 Archaeology Field Season is coming up!

Period 1: June 3 - June 4

Period 2: June 10 - June 11

Period 3: June 17 - June 18
Period 4: June 24, 25, and 26

Interested in volunteering? Contact Dr. Bob Brunswig at robert.brunswig@unco.edu, anytime **after May 1st**. Be sure to include which day(s) you would like to participate in your email. ***Please Note:*** Only 10-11 volunteers will be accepted for each field day in order to maintain an orderly excavation and effective on-site supervision. At this time, all of the dates have open volunteer slots.

Volunteers will receive a field guide, a map to the Dearfield townsite, and a summary document describing the site's history and present-day research.

This is the fifth annual archaeology program at Dearfield since 2011. This season, fieldwork will take place at the collapsed "granary", a former boarding house and grocery store constructed in 1914. The Granary was owned by Denver's Reverend Thomas Hazell who supervised student ministers at the nearby Dearfield Union Presbyterian Mission Church. A succession of student pastors roomed in the building while serving at the mission church.

Dearfield in the News

Progress toward designating Dearfield as a National Historic Site

Two of Colorado's Congressmen, Ken Buck and Joe Neguse, have begun the lengthy process of designating the Dearfield townsite as a National Historic Site.

Dearfield, as a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) District (1995), would move into greater national prominence with designation as a Historic Site. It would also go under the protection and support of National Park Service oversight and administration.

The designation process will take several years. It officially began with a Buck-Neguse bill, "The Dearfield Study Act", introduced in Congress on January 22nd, 2022. In February, both of Colorado's U.S. Senators, Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper, joined the designation process from the Senate side.

More information about this designation will be included in future newsletters.

A Look Back to Early Dearfield

Stories and Facts about the Colony and its two towns, Dearfield and Chapelton

This column was written by Bob Brunswig, co-chair of the Dearfield Committee and retired UNC professor

During the early 20th Century, the Dearfield Colony was featured or mentioned in such prominent African-American civil rights publications as the *Southern Workman* and the NAACP's magazine, *The Crisis*.

O.T. Jackson, before founding the town and colony, wrote to national African American rights leader Booker T. Washington asking for his endorsement, but Washington declined, stating he didn't wish to show favoritism for Dearfield over other similar ventures of the day.

After Washington's death in 1915, his widow, Mary Murray Washington, and son, Booker T. Washington, Jr. and his family, visited Dearfield in 1918, promoting its accomplishments.

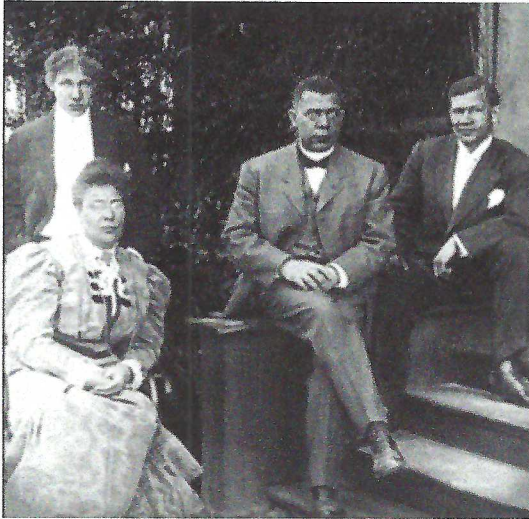
Historical photos (like the ones below) show Washington and his family posing, often with Jackson, in

They also met with its residents in the Jackson community center (later the Barn Pavilion) and stayed at the Dearfield Lodge (today's Jackson House).

When Mary visited the colony in 1918, she was already a major civil rights personality and national leader in her own right, being Principal of the Tuskegee Institute and co-founder of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW). She was NACW president from 1912 to 1916.

Mrs. Washington was accompanied in her visit to the colony by Mary Fitzbutler Waring, a daughter of African-American physicians, later a physician herself and president of the NACW in 1933. At the time of her visit to the colony's second town, Chapelton, Mary Washington was attending the national NACW convention in Denver along with Dearfield Colony residents and

the town's gardens and fields.



convention delegates Ida N. Holley and Helen Robinson.

(Left) Booker T. Washington (center), poses with his sons (left and right), and his second wife, Mary (lower left), 1906. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

(Below) Booker T. Washington Jr. (center), O.T. Jackson (left), and the rest of the Washington family in a corn field at Dearfield, 1918. Courtesy of UNC Paul Stewart Collection.



Would you like to support the Dearfield Dream?

Your financial support helps us preserve the town of Dearfield's past, present, and future! You can donate through the Black American West Museum & Heritage Center website by clicking the button below. Make sure to select "Dearfield Project" from the drop down menu.

Donate Today

Stay Tuned....

Over the next few newsletters, we'll have updates about

- 2022 Dearfield Day
 - News from the Conference
 - News from the Archaeological Field School
 - Ongoing Legislation
 - The Latest Grant Projects
 - **And much more!**
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