

# Preservation, Research, and Grants Project History of the Dearfield Townsite (5WL744)

2022

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## Introduction

In 1971, the Black American West Museum was founded, initially built on the large personal collection of Western African-American historic documents, photographs, books, articles, and audio tapes of black pioneers and their descendants by museum founder Paul Stewart. By the early 1980s, development of the museum, eventually housed in the Justina Ford (Colorado's first African-American woman physician) home and office in Five Points, Denver, led to its interest in show-casing and preserving the history and remaining buildings of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century town-site and farming colony of Dearfield. Working with the Colorado State University-affiliated Western Public History Associates firm, the museum arranged for archival and field studies of the Dearfield town-site in 1984 (Massey et al. 1985), producing its first comprehensive literature, archival, and on-site historical survey. Subsequent Dearfield studies were accomplished in 1993 and 1994, leading to a successful nomination to the National Park Service as a National Register of Historic Places Historic District in 1995 and a subsequent series of research programs and grant and state appropriation projects, allowing the museum to acquire as many of its historic properties as possible and work toward their protection, rehabilitation, and restoration. To date, more than a million dollars have been acquired for Dearfield preservation and research since the first Colorado State Historical Fund grant in 1993. Sustained preservation and research programming began with creation and phased implementation of the Dearfield Strategic Preservation Plan (DSPP) in 2018. In fall of 2021, Dearfield partners initiated a strategic goal of the DSPP, designation of the townsite as a National Historic Site within the National Park Service system. Timing of achievement of that goal, while uncertain, is expected to occur with the next several years. That designation, to date, was facilitated by agreement by the National Park Service to initiate a historic reconnaissance study of Dearfield in early 2023 and preliminary legislation for the designation was submitted to the US. House of Representatives by Colorado congressmen Ken Buck and Joe Neguse in the form of the Dearfield Study Act, on January 22, 2022. Further advancement of the Dearfield Study Act took place on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, when the U.S. House of Representatives Sub-Committee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held a hearing for determination of a recommendation to advance the bill to a future House vote.

### *Chronological listing and descriptions of Dearfield grant programs and associated projects*

1. 5/01/1985-First professional Dearfield Historic Survey. Internally funded by Black American West Museum.

Report produced:

Massey, Rheba, K. Waddell, J. Wooley, J. Albright and J. Marsh  
1985 Historic Survey of the Townsite of Dearfield. Fort Collins, Colorado State University.

2. 1993-Second professional Dearfield Historical Survey to produce a National Register of Historic Places District nomination for the Black American West Museum, Denver, Colorado (funded by Colorado State Historical Fund Grant 93-2-060, \$5,520)

Reports produced:

Dixon, Karen Waddell  
1994 National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Registration (Nomination) Form. Fort Collins, Western Public History Association.

Waddell, Karen  
1994 Dearfield, Colorado: A Survey of Homesteading and Town Development. Fort Collins, Colorado, Western Public History Associates.

3. 1995-Black American West Museum, Inc. Structure Acquisition and Stabilization of Dearfield Townsite, Colorado State Historical Fund Grant SHF 95-02-096 \$85,000

Report produced:

NA  
1999 Historic Dearfield Vision Plan (SHF 95-02-096). Denver, Black American West Museum.

4. 1996-Weld/Dearfield Black American West Museum, Inc. Survey, Access, and Electrical for Dearfield Lodge/O.T. Jackson House, Colorado State Historical Fund Grant SHF 96-0E-008 O.T. Jackson House \$10,500

5. 10/16/1998-Highway 34 Corridor Survey (Colorado Department of Transportation). Not directly associated with Dearfield except for the fact that the town-site's history was addressed as a component of a CDOT highway corridor survey.

Report produced:

Simmons, Thomas H. and Laurie R. Simmons  
1998 Historical Resource Survey: Minor Improvements State Highway 34, Dearfield to Weld-Morgan County Line, Weld County, Colorado. Denver, Colorado, Front Range Research Associates.

6. 2000-2001-Dearfield Preservation Project (funded by Colorado Legislature line item funding). State Senator Gloria Tanner introduced and passed Colorado Senate Bill 00-170 which on

singing by the state's governor, became the Act Concerning the Preservation of Historic Dearfield. The act provided an appropriation of \$250,000 for the "purpose of preserving historic Dearfield and establishing historic Dearfield park". The primary use of the funding went to creation of a historical architect's plan for, and to oversee stabilization construction activities on the O.T. Jackson house. In detail, the project included a complete architectural study and structural assessment of the house and major infrastructure remedies for the house's most severe deficiencies, consisting mainly of: 1) removal of the house off its crumbling concrete block foundation, replacement of that foundation with poured concrete footings, and re-setting it on the new foundation; 2) clearing and cleaning of the house attic, stabilization and repair of roof joists and rafters, and raising to level the then sagging roof ridge line; 3) removal of deteriorating shingles, repair of roof sheeting and re-roofing with green asphalt shingles; 4) repair of window and door frames, repairing doors, and replacing all remaining and broken window glass with durable plexiglass inserts; 5) adding metal rain gutters; 6) pouring a new foundation and partial basement stairway for the original (partial) cellar and adding a wood entry door; and 7) removal of the collapsed front enclosed porch, replacing it with a concrete raised platform and an open lean-to roof. According to one of the project contractors, funding was exhausted before additional needed but less urgent work could be done, including sealing and re-painting of the exterior wood clapboard siding. Except for roof support work, no interior room wall or ceiling stabilization or rehabilitation was done.

Project Management was by:

Colorado State University  
Architectural Preservation Institute  
Guggenheim Building  
Fort Collins, CO 80523

7. 2002-Weld/Dearfield Black American West Museum, Inc. Dearfield Townsite Land Maintenance & Acquisition Plans. Colorado State Historical Fund Grant 02-02-068. \$34,000

Reports produced:

Watada, Stuart

2003a Historic Dearfield, Colorado, Land Acquisition Study, Vol. 1: Report to the Colorado State Historical Fund. Denver, Colorado, Black American West Museum & Heritage Center.

2003b Dearfield Townsite Exterior Maintenance and Security Plan, Vol 2: Report to the Colorado State Historical Fund. Denver, Colorado, Black American West Museum & Heritage Center.

8. 2003-Black American West Museum, Inc. Colorado State Historical Fund Archaeological Assessment Grant 2003-AS-013. Dearfield Townsite \$ 9,986.

Report produced:

Noisat, Brad

2003 An Archaeological Assessment of the Dearfield Site, Weld County, Colorado. Niwot, Colorado, Niwot Archaeological Consultants.

*Note: Dearfield grant and preservation efforts developed a new trajectory with formation of the current Greeley-based Dearfield Preservation Committee, established by William Garcia, then Weld County Commissioner. The committee's first meeting was on March 11, 2008.*

9. 2009-Colorado Preservation, Inc. (on behalf of the Black American West Museum and filling station property owner to halt demolition of the property and in advance of its donation by the owner to the museum). Historic Structure Assessment of the Dearfield Filling Station. SHF Grant 09-HA-004. \$14,578.

Report produced:

NA

2009 Dearfield Filling Station, Historic Structures Assessment, Project #2009-HA-004, October 5, 2009. Denver, Andrews & Anderson Architects, P.C., for Colorado Preservation, Inc.

10. 2011-Internal University of Northern Colorado research grant: The Dearfield Dream Project: Advancing Faculty-Student Research and Engaged Scholarship at UNC and Beyond. University of Northern Colorado Provost's Fund Grant, \$3,106. 2011. Principal Investigators-George Junne and Robert Brunswig.

Reports produced:

Brunswig, Robert H.

2011 Preliminary Report on 2011 Archaeological Investigations at the Historic African-American Farm Colony site of Dearfield, Northeastern Colorado. Greeley, Department of Anthropology, University of Northern Colorado.

Brunswig, Robert and Petra Kordischova

2012 Dearfield, an Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century African-American Community in Northeastern Colorado: Report on 2011 Archaeological Field Investigations. Greeley, University of Northern Colorado, 2012.

11. 2012-University of Northern Colorado. Dearfield Archaeological Assessment, Colorado State Historic Fund grant 12-AS-010. \$9,957. Principal Investigators-Robert Brunswig and Andrew Creekmore, Department of Anthropology, University of Northern Colorado.

Reports produced:

Brunswig, Robert and Andrew Creekmore

2014 Dearfield: an Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century African-American Community in Northeastern Colorado: Report to the Colorado State Historical Fund on 2012 Archaeological Field Investigations. Greeley, Colorado, Department of Anthropology, University of Northern Colorado.

12. 2019-University of Northern Colorado. Phase 2 Implementation of the NRHP-designated African-American Dearfield Townsite Preservation Plan: Building Stabilization and Securitization Colorado State Historical Fund, Development & Acquisitions Grant #2020-M1-006. Grant Total (with 25% Cash Match by Colorado State University, and \$3,000 cash contribution by Colorado Preservation, Inc.), \$42,995. Grant Project Period: 2019-2021.

Report produced: Periodic SHF Progress Reports, Final Project deliverables and Financial Report submitted mid-July 2021 and grant closed out.

13. 2019-University of Northern Colorado. Archaeological Investigations of Dearfield Site. Colorado State Historical Fund Archaeology Mini-Grant #2020-M2-003. Grant Total (with UNC Cash Matches of \$1,000), \$11,943.

Report produced:

Brunswick, Robert H.

2022 Survey and Excavation of Properties associated with Squire Brockman, an early Historic Resident, Blacksmith and Mechanic at the Historic Dearfield Townsite and National Register of Historic Places District in 2020: Report to the Colorado State Historical Preservation Fund (SHF Grant Project #2020-M2-003). Greeley, Colorado, Department of Anthropology, University of Northern Colorado.

14. 2021-University of Northern Colorado. 2020 African American Civil Rights Grant Program, National Park Service. Historic Building Rehabilitation at the NRHP District African-American Townsite of Dearfield, Colorado. Grant award notification, July 26, 2021. Grant Total \$497,776. Project director-Robert Brunswick, co-project director-George Junne.

15. 2022-University of Northern Colorado. Phase 4 Dearfield NRHP Building Construction Plans and Specifications for National Historic Site Museum Facilities. Colorado State Historical Fund Archaeology Mini-Grant #2022-M2-008. Grant Total \$49,216. Project director-Robert Brunswick.

Total Grants and State Government Appropriations to Date: Colorado SHF grants, Colorado General Assembly, and UNC internal funding 1993-2022: \$1,027,577.