

**Title:** Continuing the Legacy: Ensuring the Future of the Bee Family Centennial Farm Museum, Phase II

**Faculty Mentor:** Adam Thomas (Public Lands History Center, Department of History, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO; [Adam.Thomas@colostate.edu](mailto:Adam.Thomas@colostate.edu))

**Other Mentors:** Amber Webb (Family Consumer Science Agent, Larimer County Extension, Fort Collins, CO; [webbam@co.larimer.co.us](mailto:webbam@co.larimer.co.us))

**Location:** This project will take place in Fort Collins, Colorado.

**Goals, Scope, and Objectives:** The overall goal of this internship is to provide the student with opportunities to develop skills in public history, public communication, and not-for-profit organizational management by amending and creating real-world museum management and planning documents. To meet this goal, the scope of work includes (1) supporting summer museum operations, including leading tours, to understand and evaluate daily practices; (2) complete sections of the museum management plan, as needed; (3) research public entities that may be able to support museum operations in the long term, including CSU, Larimer County, and History Colorado (especially the Colorado Centennial Farm and Ranch Program); (4) research potential partnerships with these entities and help develop relationships; (5) write a museum transition plan that analyzes the costs and benefits of various partnership scenarios. This internship fulfills an important objective of fostering relationships among CSU Extension, CSU Public Lands History Center, CSU History Department, and the Bee Farm Museum. It also fulfills the objective of helping plan the long-term preservation and operation of an important site in Colorado's agricultural history and the invaluable artifacts and records it contains. The intern will primarily work with Bee Farm staff and directors.

**Background:** The Bee Farm Museum maintains and interprets perhaps the most complete record of a single family's efforts to homestead and farm the high plains of northern Colorado. The agricultural history museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that preserves the Bee Farm National Register Historic District, located about nine miles northeast of downtown Fort Collins. Since the museum opened to the public in 2002, a very small group of Bee family members have dedicated themselves—without compensation—to cataloging and preserving thousands of artifacts and documents; constructing exhibits; maintaining historic structures; raising crops and livestock historically associated with the farm; and leading hundreds of public tours and educational programs. However, these family members are getting older; thus they are increasingly interested in securing the future operation of the museum beyond the Bee family. An Extension intern in summer 2021 developed a museum management plan; the summer 2022 internship will build on that success by developing plan that will provide realistic scenarios for a public-family relationship that will help ensure the continued operation of the museum.

**Outcomes:** By the end of the internship, the intern will develop skills necessary to: (1) research and analyze historic farm museum operations and (2) develop partnership scenarios with cost-benefit analysis to guide the transition of the farm into a public-family cooperative organization.

**Mentor Backgrounds:** Dr. Adam Thomas is a practicing public historian who serves as the undergraduate internship coordinator for the CSU History Department and is president of the Bee Farm Board of Directors. Amber Webb is the Family Consumer Science Agent for Larimer County Extension. She has worked on historical farm operations in Pennsylvania and, via Extension, Weld County, integrated with an ag tourism component and public education.

**Travel Funds:** As this internship is located within Larimer County, no travel funds are necessary.