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Class of 2011
Colorado Preservation, Inc.

Tonya Public Affairs Executive Summary

This summer, I interned with Colorado Preservation, Inc., a statewide historic preservation non-profit organization that functions to promote preservation throughout Colorado. While at CPI, I worked mainly on the Ranching Survey and the New Deal Survey because I am interested in the public policy aspect of historic preservation.

The Ranching Survey took place in southeastern Colorado, primarily in Las Animas, Otero, and Huerfano Counties. This area is threatened by a possible expansion of the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site, and CPI is working in conjunction with the Piñon Canyon Expansion Opposition Coalition to survey old homesteads and other historic sites on these privately owned ranches. Currently, the Army is interested in expanding the PCMS by over 400,000 acres against the will of the area's cattle ranchers. This would severely damage the region's economy, the base of which is cattle ranching. Therefore, this issue is very much related to regional, statewide, and even national public policy.

I worked on the Ranching Survey both in the office and out in the field. In the office, which is located in Denver, CO, I worked on obtaining census records of the original homesteaders. Many of the initial ranch lands have now combined into enormous, multi-thousand acre ranches; for this reason, many original buildings (or their foundations) still exist now unused on these lands.

My job was to find the original land patent holder, and then track down the homesteader's census records. I looked up over 165 names throughout the three different counties. I then compiled an Excel spreadsheet of some basic information about these patent holders. Another one of my assignments while working in the office was researching and writing a context report on farming in southeastern Colorado, primarily focusing on the same three counties that the Ranching Survey encompassed.

When I worked outside of the office on the Ranching Survey, I was surveying historic sites on ranches in southeastern Colorado. I spent four of my total ten weeks of the internship doing this. Survey consisted of measuring the different features at a site, sketching these features, plotting the features on an overall site map, and taking photos. Going out on survey was a tremendous experience. Visiting the sites allowed me to see the architectural features that are associated with different cultures, and it was very fascinating to visit several of the homesteads of the people whose records I had researched. In all, survey related my work in the field to that in the office.

During my internship at CPI, I also worked on the New Deal Survey. This project worked to identify historic structures in eastern Colorado funded by the New Deal programs (such as the PWA, WPA, or CCC) in the late 1930s and 1940s. CPI has already completed the initial phase of the New Deal Survey, and the organization is hoping to expand the original project. In other words, CPI's New Deal Survey covered eastern Colorado; my task was to compile a word document listing all of the New Deal projects in western and central Colorado sorted by county, nearest post office, organization (for example, PWA, CCC, or WPA), and a short description of the project.

I also wrote a site history for the library at the Colorado State College of Education in Greeley, Colorado. This building addition was paid for in part using Progress Works Administration funds. I looked at PWA records and local newspaper articles to research the structure's history. Then, I compiled the historical information into a report that will be used in the Architectural Inventory Form to nominate the library addition for National Historic Register listing.

As a CPI intern, I learned a great deal about how a non-profit functions on a day-to-day basis. It was extremely interesting to learn how this type of organization funds its activities, from membership dues and donations to public and private grants. In addition, I learned a lot about the field of historic preservation, from the fieldwork to the paperwork behind it. I had a fantastic summer working at Colorado Preservation, and the experience made me want to pursue a career in public policy even more. Overall, my time at CPI was an invaluable opportunity to learn the ins-and-outs of a typical statewide non-profit organization.