The following project proposal was created by a community partner of the Upstate Institute to describe the way they would like to engage with a Colgate student this summer. The research project proposed will be a full-time research project conducted by a Field School Fellow this summer. Below, the partner describes their organization and the research project, as well as a statement of benefit derived by the community for this project. The proposal also mentions logistical considerations and required skills for a student interested in doing this work.

The Farmers Museum, Cooperstown, NY
https://www.farmersmuseum.org/

Introduction
The Farmers’ Museum has deep roots in New York State’s rural past. The land has been part of a working farm since 1813, when it was owned by James Fenimore Cooper. The museum opened its doors to the public in 1944. At that time, the museum had 5,000 tools and objects, including important collections amassed by the Otsego County Historical Society William B. Sprague, founder of the Early American Industries Association and the Wyckoff family, one of Brooklyn’s oldest farming families. Today the museum’s collections have grown to more than 23,000 artifacts. Our mission is to cultivate an understanding of the rural heritage that has shaped our land, communities, and American culture and our vision is to focus on interpretive quality, authenticity, and visible improvements annually. Under the direction of Patrick MacGregor, Assistant Manager of Interpretation and Barbara Luhmann, School and Youth Program Coordinator, we will continue to strengthen the museum’s reputation as a highly desirable destination and regional resource (real and virtual) for adults, families, and school groups, and as a leader among outdoor history museums. The Farmers’ Museum is seeking a motivated student with technology based knowledge to assist the education staff in bringing our 19th Century Historic Village into the 21st Century. For contact information, please contact to Barbara Luhmann, b.luhmann@farmersmuseum.org, (607) 547-1461 or Patrick MacGregor p.mcgregor@farmersmuseum.org, (607) 547-1527.

Project Description
How can a 75-year-old museum make itself relevant to young people aged 13 to 30? How can we use 21st Century technology to help educate our public as well as school children the knowledge and collections we have to offer? This internship will seek ways of engaging millennials and younger children by preparing a prospectus for operating an interactive cultural center in this social ecosystem through technology based systems such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Visual representation and experience amenities are key components of engaging any group, including 13-30 year olds. “Digital” conversation is
just one piece of the bigger puzzle. A specific project may include creating a digital wall of the 19th Century Collection that is typically not available to the public and school children and developing interactive stations for the public and school children to role play and engage the interpretive staff. With the assistance of the Education staff the intern will help transform and move the museum towards a greater openness to diversity among their visitors. Research will be key in creating a welcoming, engaging museum that will embrace these “millennial” values, serving the entire public audience. Preparing program costs and a Management Presentation will be the culmination of the final project.

The education department here at The Farmers’ Museum has engaged in technology based education programs with our interactive website “Harvest of History” www.harvestofhistory.org and distant learning programming for Otsego and Delaware Counties. This area is also open for the intern to gather information, improve and incorporate into new technology based programing.

**Statement:**

Museums around the world are holding about 4.2 billion objects from history, preserving cultures and looking for answers not only about the world’s past, but its future. Most objects are unknown to the public and not on display. We have an opportunity now to move our historic village into the 21st Century by digitizing the information by using virtual reality, which makes it possible to experience our collection as a whole. Imagine watching a 19th Century Family work on the farm before your eyes at a local museum. As animation develops, it is becoming easier to portray realistic images and model them digitally. In addition, while The Farmers’ Museum strives to be a welcoming place, the way museums communicate can inadvertently exclude and alienate visitors. Words have the power to reinforce or negate the social value of museums. Taking down key barriers which have prevented young adults from attending museums will be identified during this program. The development of exhibitions which cater to group engagement and allow them to share and compare, not just simply read and review will help move the 19th Century historic village into the 21st Century.

**Logistical Considerations:**

For this project, the intern will have the flexibility to work part time or full time. Duties will be performed at our site here in Cooperstown, NY with remote research and writing projects available. The intern will be encouraged to utilize their own resources along with The Farmers’ Museum collection which is readily accessible and includes our historic buildings and interpretive staff. Supervision will be done by the Assistant Manager of Interpretation and our School and Youth Groups Coordinator.
Training & Skills:
During the 2019 summer field school project, the intern should have the ability to work with minimal supervision, engage research on a computer, and have firsthand knowledge of social media platforms for use. The intern will interface with an interpretive historic staff and attend weekly program planning meetings with representatives from multiple departments. The intern will need to have strong communication skills while working in different interpretive areas and interactive with possible guest and school children visiting the museum.