



History of the Land – Lampe Homestead

Legal History Summary

- Original land grant signed by U.S. Grant on August 5, 1872 – 157.39 acres to Lorens Christensen
- Lorens Christensen filed for record Dec. 18, 1874
- Apparent transfer to Wilhelm Springmeyer who owned the house for 13 years before Lampe family resided here
- January 25, 1887 – Bond for Deed/Promissory note with Wilhelm Springmeyer for \$5000 in U.S. Gold coin for the same land plus 8-19 acres additional, paid in \$1000 increments annually, 1889 – 1892. At this point, Maria was pregnant with their first child Mary was born that year.
- January 17, 1922 – Wilhelm and Maria Lampe sold same property to sons Edward E. Lampe and William H. Lampe for \$35,000.
- November 22, 1922 – for \$1 added another 1 acre, apparently where the feed store is now.
- November 22, 1922 – property was transferred from William and Edward to William.
- 1922 - 1964 – Ranch area was increased to approximately 300 acres by acquiring ranches to the east and south.
- 1965 - All property but the 5 acre homestead was sold to Led-Mil, a developer.
- Homestead land was actively ranched until 1970s by Bill Lampe.
- Jacobs purchase – Closed February 2002.

Lampe Family History

- Wilhelm and Maria's love story – Maria's brother, Henry Winkleman, emigrated here first from Hanover, Germany. Wilhelm (who was from Bramen) and Maria fell in love in Germany, so Wilhelm worked for Henry and for William Dangberg for several years until he could afford to bring her here. Maria's father accompanied her to the Carson Valley and confirmed that Wilhelm was well established and could support his daughter. Wilhelm and Maria married in Gardnerville in February, 1887, at the ages of 29 and 22 respectively - and neither one ever saw their parents again. But there were other family members in the valley – Wilhelm's brother who was the town barber and Maria's sister who married John Henningson. (Story about seeing lights from the ranch through kitchen window.)
- Family photos are available showing early house and family minus Mary in front of house (after 1903)
- Maria and Wilhelm had 8 children – Mary, Henry, Frieda, William (Bill), Edward, Walter, Alma, Sene (Sophiene).
- Family life revolved around school and church. The family donated a corner of the ranch property as a site for the first Lutheran Church (located at Lutheran Bridge). Wilhelm along with local men built the church on weekends. Prior to having the church, the Lutherans met in various homes. The pastor lived with the Lampe family for several years until a parsonage was built next to the church. Sundays meant church services and then, in the afternoon, church picnics and baseball games.

Lampe Family History (cont)

- The children walked ½ mile to the school on Centerville Lane near Cottonwood Slough. The elementary grades were on the ground floor and the high school was on the second floor. Learning was very important and homework and report cards taken seriously.
- Mary Annie, who was the first born in 1887, was also the family's first tragedy. She became suddenly ill at age 15 1/2 and died 2 days later of a ruptured appendix, probably here in her bedroom upstairs. The community was shocked because she was considered a smart, pretty teenager with lots of promise and her life ahead. Family members say that her mother Maria never recovered from it and became increasingly devout, reading her Bible every day in the bay window on the west wall of the dining room.
- The family's first car was a 1911 Case. The car was sold by a traveling Case salesman who later married the farmer's daughter, "Frieda".¹ Then a 1917 and 1925 Case. A brother-in-law owned the local Case dealership. Sometime prior to 1920, the house caught on fire and about ¼ of the roof burned. Attic remains charred over one of the bedrooms. The fire was started by sparks from a fire on the east side of the house used to heat the laundry boilers. Imagine the hysteria with the women running to the fields to call the men to put out the flames. Shortly thereafter, the wooden garage was moved across the property and connected to enlarge the chicken coop. A new brick garage was then built. And a new asbestos tile roof was put on the two story part of the house.
- In 1915, Ed, Walter and Bill traveled by train to attend the World's Fair in San Francisco. Stayed in Oakland with their

¹ Updated history from Roger C. Olson, son of Frieda Lampe by note dated June 27, 2013, at the age of 88.

sister Frieda Olson and family. There is a copy of the map of cable car routes from this trip for view.

- 1917 – Bill went to serve in WWI. Corporal Lampe led 8 men in the machine gun infantry through battles in the Argonne, and Bill was in Belgium in Nov. 1918 when he heard about the signing of the Armistice. (There is an old map of France for view)
- Henry, Frieda, Ed and Alma were married in their 20s. Sophiene (Sene) left to pursue a career as an art teacher and artist/flower arranger in San Francisco. At one time she was a professional china painter working for upscale gift shops, hand decorating entire sets of china.
- Walter was still at home in poor health, had seizures since childhood. He died in 1939, at the age of 40.
- Bill took over the farm in 1922, running the operation and looking after his aging parents. The old folks moved into a house in Minden, but Wilhelm could not resist going to the ranch daily to lecture Bill on what to do.²
- Wilhelm died in 1951 at age 93 and Maria died in 1953 at age 88.
- Bill was still single, but very active in the community. He and brother-in-law Alex Glock, Alma's husband and the town grocer, started the first kids' fishing derby at Cottonwood Slough. Bill joined and became president of the Kiwanis. He was an extremely popular and handsome³ bachelor and often squired local ladies to social events. Although childless, he was elected to the school board and served there 17 years. In 1953, aged 59 he married Francis Brockliss of Genoa. They were married almost 20 years when she died in 1972. She demanded the first

² Updated history from Roger C. Olson, son of Frieda Lampe by note dated June 27, 2013, at the age of 88.

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remodel of the house in the early 50s, modernizing the kitchen and expanding the living room, thereby eliminating the bay window on west wall where Maria read her Bible and tended lots of plants.

- In his 80s, the Bill experienced declining health, suffering a horrible burn accident when he was 85. He was cleaning spark plugs with a brush and gasoline when a spark ignited his pants, burning both legs up to his waist. After extinguishing the flames in a nearby water faucet, he put away his tools and equipment before calling neighbor Jim Hussman to take him to the Carson Tahoe Hospital. He was hospitalized for 4 months and became the darling of the nurses. When an older lady came to interview Bill for historical information about Carson Valley, he gave her a big kiss as she departed remarking “just because we’re old doesn’t mean we don’t have feelings”.⁴ His sister Sophiene returned from the Bay Area to cook and care for him. Later Sophiene’s son Ron and his wife Linda supervised his care givers until his death at the age of 98. Linda and Ron lived in the house until the Jacobs purchased it in 2002.

Ranch Life

- Originally a large dairy farm with a full time milker, and also hogs for sausage and hams with a full time “hog man” who died in the bunkhouse. (There is a story about Wilhelm drinking warm lard rendered from slaughtered hogs.) December sausage-making season was Wilhelm’s favorite time of the year. He loved lowering the slaughtered pig into the great iron pot near the bunk house

from which it emerged bristle-free and as white and shiny as a baby’s bottom.⁵

- Chicken coop had several hundred chickens at all times, supplying the family and local grocery stores and the Gardnerville Mercantile.
- In the early years, the eggs, butter and cream were taken by horse and wagon to Bodie and Virginia City. (There is a story about teenage boys coming of age)
- Later, milk was picked up in 10 gallon cans by Arnold Settlemyer’s milk wagon and hauled to the creamery on Waterloo Lane.
- Later, in an effort to diversify, Wilhelm bought 80 head of beef cows, and the operation of the dairy ceased. There are farm journals showing this.
- Raised alfalfa hay, barley and grains to fatten the cattle for market.
- Wilhelm also owned and operated an ice business, using a huge pond in what is now Lampe Park. Ice cutting machines scored the ice into various sized blocks and then men would lift the blocks with pry bars. This company supplied other ranches, restaurants, ice cream parlors, saloons and grocery stores in Gardnerville and Minden. Sawdust was used to insulate the ice.
- Always looking to increase the family’s income, Wilhelm contracted to haul hogs from the creamery on Waterloo to Carson City. The creamery bought pigs and fattened them on skim milk and then sold them to the markets.
- There were 15 – 20 ranch hands during the haying season each summer. The bunkhouse was set up for 3 men, so the rest slept in large canvas tents at the edge of the field where the churches now stand. The men shaved with a mirror hug from a tree branch and used a privy near the bunkhouse. In the 1930s the old privy

⁴ Updated history from Roger C. Olson, son of Frieda Lampe by note dated June 27, 2013, at the age of 88 ½.

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with boundary lines where each field and crop are identified.

Ranch Life (cont.)

was replaced with a new modern WPA outhouse, which still stands.

- Ranch hands were paid cash from an old safe that sat on the porch. Grandson Roger Olson tells the story of how Wilhelm got the safe in about 1900. It was originally the Henningson Ranch safe, but Henningson lost the combination, so thought the safe was worthless and gave it to his brother-in-law Wilhelm. Wilhelm contacted the state prison in Carson City, and one day several cars rolled into the property and armed men got out accompanying a prisoner in shackles. The safecracker named Bobby cracked the safe and once Wilhelm had the combination, he was able to pay the weekly payroll from the safe well into the 1960's.⁶
- Maria and her daughters were essential to a successful haying season. They awoke early to prepare huge breakfasts of pancakes, eggs, ham steaks, sausage, mush, toast and coffee, served at 6 a.m. The noon meal was the biggest of the day and took all morning to prepare. Then came family chores like laundry, cleaning, and canning. Maria tended a huge garden – about ½ acre of vegetables plus a small fruit orchard. Family members say that she would not allow any of the men to work in her garden, because she thought they wouldn't do it right. She also grew lots of flowers, as evidenced by the seed orders in the family order book. At the end of a long day she would prepare a lighter meal for supper.
- During the Great Depression, many of the family returned, and everyone worked the ranch. It was the only way to make sure everyone had enough to eat.
- Framed blueprints are available to show the use of the property in 1916 and 1930

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