

Lampe Ranch now on National Register of Historic Places

The National Park Service has listed the Wilhelm Lampe Ranch in Gardnerville in the National Register of Historic Places.

The NPS also approved a special report on ranching in Douglas County and Carson City (formerly named Ormsby) County. The report, called a multiple property documentation form, provides a history of ranching in the area, and establishes registration requirements for historic ranches, making it easier for property owners in the area to nominate their eligible agricultural property to the National Register. The National Register is the nation's official list of places worthy of preservation, recognizing important places and potentially qualifying them for certain grants and tax incentives.

Carson and Eagle Valleys have long been home to people making a living from the land, beginning with the Washoe and Paiute. Euro-American settlement on Washoe lands began in the 1850s alongside Mormon settlement and travel along the California Trail to the gold fields of the western Sierra. The earliest settlers made their living from trading, mostly selling food and hay to those headed to California.

As Nevada experienced its own gold and silver booms by the 1860s, farmers and ranchers supplied mining towns and camps instead. Since that time, amid ebbs and flows in produce markets, extended droughts, and other challenges, agriculture has been an important part of the regional economy in northwest Nevada. Today, dozens of historic ranches dot the Nevada landscape between Douglas County and Carson City, many of which are still in use.

Among these was the Wilhelm Lampe Ranch in southeast

Gardnerville, a 5-acre remnant of what was once a 300-acre operation. Lampe purchased the ranch in 1872, mostly growing alfalfa and raising dairy cattle and sheep, but supporting other crops, including wheat and barley. Lampe became a prominent leader in the German immigrant community of Carson Valley, becoming the land donor in 1885 for the establishment of the Lutheran Church's first building, just south of his ranch.

Under the operation of Lampe's son, William, in the early 1900s, the ranch grew to more than 300 acres. The ranch also includes unique architectural landmarks, including the latest known construction of a Gothic Revival ranch house in Carson Valley, and an impressive barn that has been previously highlighted on the annual barn tours of the Douglas County Historical Society.

Today, most of the former lands of the Lampe Ranch have been development for neighborhoods and churches, but the main complex and a small section of farmland remains, although berries have replaced the alfalfa. Jack and Diana Jacobs operate the Jacobs Family Berry Farm at the property, and continue to preserve this important piece of Carson Valley's history.