



WSU Media Strategies, Spring Semester, 2024.
Prof. Cara Elizabeth Hawkins-Jedlicka.

Student excerpts from Feature story assignment:

Angela Jaco----

“Along with being homesteaders, the Lorangs were historians. Beginning in 1884 when John and Mary were married, all receipts and many magazines, books and newspapers were kept. Land and other records describe life in detail during homesteading, the Great Depression, WWI and WWII, the sinking of the Titanic, and the Moon Landing and everything in between. “You’re looking at history from the point of view of somebody who doesn’t know the ending of the story,” explains Museum Curator, Diane Conroy. All of these artifacts are up for display in the farmhouse for visitors, but they don’t even begin to scratch the surface of the history that is preserved on the property.....

Though the museum brought in many visitors, it wasn’t what made White Spring Ranch a staple in the community. The Lorang family was heavily involved with the town of Genesee. They photographed and recorded town events, helped in building the school, and held many dances and gatherings on their property. The museum has continued the house’s legacy by hosting many events throughout the year for the community, including yearly ice cream socials and family reunions to keep the spirit of the ranch alive. Each June the museum also hosts a “Little House on the Prairie” event, meant to showcase what life was like for people in the times of the famous Laura Ingalls Wilder books.

White Spring Ranch welcomes visitors every Tuesday and Sunday from 1:00 PM to Sunset. Individuals and small groups can arrange appointments by contacting Museum Curator Diane Conroy at (208) 416-1006. For archives and additional information on the property's history, please visit whitespringranch.org or the White Spring Ranch Facebook page.

Joshua Drozdowski----

White Springs Ranch: A Window into The Past

Located in a sea of green rolling hills and endless farmland in rural Genesee, Idaho lies a monument to American history in the form of an old homestead and farm called White Springs Ranch. Serving as a historical time capsule, White Springs Ranch houses roughly 5000 letters and journals spanning from 1860-1994. These letters and journals document the daily life of individuals living through key historical eras in American History such as WW1, WW2, The Great Depression, and much more.

“When we think of history, we are always looking back on what happened and we know what the outcome will be. What makes these journals special, is that the people who wrote them didn't know the outcome,” Diane Conroy said. “When you read these journals, you live through those problems of the time with them.”.....

After discovering the plethora of historical artifacts stowed away in an old log cabin on the homestead, she found herself invested and fascinated with the stories told through the family’s writings.....

Conroy observed that even though it appeared people were less educated in the past, people were still creative and intuitive. Conroy states it helped that the Lorang family was a family of writers, sometimes writing letters up to 8 pages in length which provide substantial content.

Sydney Young----

Letters Brought to Life Preserving the Past

Nestled in the countryside of Genesee, Idaho, the White Spring Ranch Museum is a testament to the prolonged history of the Lorang family, the local area, and the world. While the rustic charm of the ranch may catch the eye of those passing by, the rich history creates a story that encapsulates the ranch and goes deeper than what meets the eye. White Spring Ranch is not just a museum; it is a living, breathing archive of history preserved through the written words of those who lived it.

WSR's commitment to education surpasses its bounds. For years, the site has been a hub for learning, with students making trips to WSR to scan letters and learn about the deep history of the ranch and the Lorangs. WSR has also embraced the ever-changing digital world, offering an online service where volunteers can transcribe letters via technology, which gets placed on the WSR website, making the letters accessible to anyone in the world. Washington State University's Center of Community Engagement has been a large help to the ranch, bringing more awareness to what they do and more volunteers to help. WSR is also a hub for historians, where people from all over will come to the ranch to add to their historical knowledge.

Frankie Beer----

'We can get back that history before it just disappears'—interview with WSU Kaylee Hoffman

Students like Kaylee Hoffman, a WSU sophomore and project lead for the [Center for Civic Engagement](#) (CCE), are also involved in archiving materials at the museum.

The CCE partners with local organizations to help students get involved in their communities and earn volunteer hours. Each week, 12 students can volunteer at the museum, and Hoffman herself volunteers about four hours per week, she said.....

The Lorang family emigrated from Germany to Wisconsin, eventually landing in Genesee in 1884.

"You're looking at history from the point of view of somebody who doesn't know the ending of the story," Conroy said.

In February, Conroy said she found a telegram from WWII when English men were headed to the trenches in France. The letter was meant to describe the war front's conditions, but the very top of the letter listed football scores. "So that's what they really cared about," Conroy said with a laugh.

.....White Spring Ranch was a community hub 100 years ago, and it continues to invite families to the property today.

Taylor Sauer----

Exploring the White Spring Ranch Historical Archive of Genesee, Idaho

White Spring Ranch is a historical homestead that lies in the rolling hills of The Palouse in the community of Genesee, Idaho. Established in 1884, it holds nearly 170 years of first-hand history in journals, letters, and photos, along with other historical artifacts that can date back to 1854. Recognized as a museum in 2003, the property features three structures: the 1878 Log Cabin, c.1873 (to 1904) Farmhouse and the 1880's Curio Museum.

The White Spring Ranch was first inhabited by John and Mary Lorang in 1885....property is a nationally registered historic site, as it provides first-hand physical documentation of the Lorang Family's progression throughout the 19th and 20th century. There are letters not only from family members but also community members. The documents that are found at White Spring Ranch record the family and community experiencing worldly events such as The Great Depression, both World Wars, and technological advances like 1969's moon landing.

The property can be used as a resource to learning about history, providing a first-person point of view in their journals and letters. An opportunity for knowledge of what happened, when it happened and how people felt at a certain time. The documents that have been found have illustrated what a central part the homestead was in the town of Genesee. It not only served as a home for the Lorang family, but also a gathering center for the community.

