



## Discover the Legacy of the Sporleder Centennial Ranch

Join the Huerfano County Historical Society for  
a fascinating tour of this historic ranch.

We invite you to be part of this living history as  
fourth-generation descendants, **Gretchen  
Sporleder-Orr and Karl Sporleder**, lead this tour  
with passion and dedication to preserving  
their family legacy.

**Saturday, June 21, 2025**

- **8:30a Meet at the Walsenburg Mining Museum, 112 W 5<sup>th</sup> St.**
  - **Cost** (Cash or Check due the morning of):  
\$20 for Members / \$25 for Non-Members / \$10 for Children 12 & under
- **THIS TOUR INCLUDES LUNCH** (Kraut Burgers to celebrate the German heritage, made with locally raised beef, sides/dessert, & a vegan option) (Bring a camping chair or blanket.)
- **Carpooling to the site is encouraged. Please allow 6+ hours for the tour/lunch.**
  - **This tour is limited to 45 participants**

**Reserve your spot** by phone or email and provide your name(s), how many are in your party, a phone number, and confirm "Sporleder Ranch Tour".

### **What to Expect on the Tour**

Guests will enjoy a guided, small-group experience, with segments of participants rotating through the various locations around the ranch.

- A history presentation will be held inside one of the original cabins.
- There will be an optional hike to the ridge to visit the resting place of "Great-Granddaddy".
  - Walk or drive to the original farmhouse, milk room, and corrals.
- Take an optional scenic drive with breathtaking views of the event meadow.

### **Become a member of the Historical Society for as little as \$20 per year!**

Discounts and first-to-know privileges on tours/events! In addition, members will receive a newsletter, free unlimited visits to the Walsenburg Mining Museum, and free digitized noncommercial access to photos. Don't miss this opportunity!



"The world up here is silent, save the  
gentle splash of water, which threads its  
way past grassy slopes and fern-fringed  
banks over the gravelly bottom of the  
winding little brook." – Louis B. Sporleder

**Huerfano County Historical Society**

Established in 1959

719-738-2346 | [HuerfanoHeritageCenter@outlook.com](mailto:HuerfanoHeritageCenter@outlook.com) | [www.HuerfanoHistory.org](http://www.HuerfanoHistory.org)

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**The Sporleder family story** in **Southern Colorado** begins in the **1860s**, with deep roots in the rich history of the region.

Inspired by tales from his uncle August Sporleder, who had established a hotel in the small frontier **community of La Plaza de los Leones (now Walsenburg)**, 16-year-old **Louis B. Sporleder** made a life-changing journey. On July 4, 1875, he arrived at the base of the **Spanish Peaks** after traveling by train from St. Louis to Denver, then continuing by stagecoach into the heart of Colorado.

At that time, Walsenburg was home to fewer than 100 people. Louis quickly established himself, working as a **rancher and trader**. In 1915, he began purchasing the land that would become the **Sporleder Centennial Ranch**—an expanse of mountain beauty nestled beneath the East Spanish Peak.

A true **entrepreneur and visionary**, Louis described himself as a “grower, buyer, and seller of sheep, wool, cattle, swine, poultry, and all kinds of ranch products.” He also **authored *The Romance of the Spanish Peaks***, capturing the unique spirit of the region. Early on, the ranch became a recreational retreat, welcoming guests for camping, cabin stays, and horseback riding through the breathtaking landscape.

Louis B. Sporleder was also a prolific **historian**, documenting the lives of early European settlers, as well as Latino and Native American residents. His legacy lives on in the **Western History Collection at the Denver Public Library**, where his writings span nearly seven feet of shelf space. Artifacts from the Sporleder family are also preserved at our **Huerfano Heritage Center** in Walsenburg.

Today, Sporleder Centennial Ranch remains in the family and is now cared for by the fourth and fifth generations. Louis’s descendants have lovingly **preserved the land and its heritage** for over 120 years. Three original cabins from around 1917 are still in use, and the original farmhouse is undergoing thoughtful restoration. The ranch has evolved from a working cattle and sheep operation to a vibrant hub for **recreation and tourism**, hosting weddings and special events. Visitors are drawn to its wide meadows, forest trails, historic cabins, and unforgettable views of the mystical Spanish Peaks.

In 2018, the ranch was officially recognized as a **Colorado Centennial Ranch** by the Colorado State Senate and House of Representatives. That same year, it received a **Historic Structures Award** for the preservation of its cabins and farmhouse. And most recently, the family established a **conservation easement** to ensure that its natural and historical beauty is protected forever, undivided and unspoiled.

The **Sporleder family** has long been a pillar of the community, contributing through their ranching operations, the Sporleder Selling Company, Sporleder Feeds, their ownership of the local newspaper, *The World Journal*, and serving as elected public officials. The fifth generation of the Sporleder/Orr family is also active in the community. Chay Sporleder is involved in ranching and the Sporleder Feeds business, which is the oldest business in Huerfano County. Ruth, art director and managing editor of the World Journal, has also been on the Board of the Spanish Peaks International Celtic Music Festival for nearly ten years. Conor Boynton-Orr has been instrumental in the procurement and development of the Capitol Hill Park and the Walsenburg River Walk developments. His wife, Josie Boynton, headed up the successful effort to keep Dorcas Circle food pantry open. The dynamic duo of Helena Cappon and husband, Thomas Orr, are the proprietors of one of Huerfano County’s newest businesses, GubGub’s Pizza and Ice Cream. Liam Orr, a musician and a recent graduate of Western Colorado University, is also active in the family businesses.