

BACA DITCH
North bank of Purgatoire (Las Animas) River
Trinidad
Las Animas County
Colorado

HAER CO-100
HAER CO-100

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

BACA DITCH

HAER No. CO-100

Location: North bank of Purgatoire (Las Animas) River, Trinidad, Las Animas County, Colorado

Date of Construction: Started November 30, 1861; the ditch was in use by 1862

Builders: Felipe Baca and two Frenchman, one named Charles Romonde

Original Owner, Use: The Baca Irrigating Ditch Company, irrigation

Current Owner, Use: Privately owned, irrigation

Significance: The Baca Ditch, constructed in 1861, was one of the earliest irrigation efforts in Colorado.

Description: The ditch is located on the north bank of the Purgatoire River near the center of Trinidad. From its headgates, the ditch flows in an easterly direction an undetermined distance.

Since its initial construction, the Baca Ditch has been much altered due to normal maintenance. Its headgates, originally on the north side of the Purgatoire River near Commercial Street, are now located about 100 yards downstream. The modern headgates and diversion dam are steel and concrete.

History: The Baca Ditch was begun in November 1861 by Felipe Baca and two Frenchman, one named Charles Romonde. Baca was one of the pioneer settlers in the Trinidad area and one of the founders of the town. The ditch was originally constructed to carry 23 cubic feet of water per second; in 1880, the ditch watered 400 acres. It was the third constructed in the immediate area, but it was later awarded priority number one on water taken from the Purgatoire River.

Sources: Court Decrees Rendered on Water Rights Adjudication in the Purgatoire River Basin. Ca. 1880. Copy of this typescript in the possession of Mr. Joe Tarabino, Trinidad, Colorado.

McHendrie, A.W. "Trinidad and its Environs." *The Colorado Magazine* VI, no. 5 (September 1929): 165-170.

Tarabino, Joe, Trinidad, Colorado. Interview by field team, July 22, 1971.

Taylor, Morris F. *Trinidad, Colorado Territory*. Trinidad, CO: Trinidad State Junior College, 1966.

Historians: Steve Rae and T. Lindsay Baker, July 22 and October 2, 1971

Project

Information: The Baca Ditch was inventoried for the Historic American Engineering Record as part of the Southwest Water Resources Project, a joint project with the Texas Tech Water Resources Center. The survey was subsequently published as *Water for the Southwest: Historical Survey and Guide to Historic Sites* by the American Society of Civil Engineers in September 1973.