

**Pedro Trujillo Homestead**  
Baca National Wildlife Refuge – South Central Colorado

From The National Register of Historic Places Registration Form  
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Note: This property is not currently included on the Refuge but will be added in the near future.



Creation of the Homestead

Pedro Trujillo, the son of San Luis Valley pioneer Teofilo (or Tiofilo) Trujillo (1838-1915), homesteaded the site of this ranch. Pedro's father, born in New Mexico when it was a possession of Mexico, had settled a mile to the northeast of this site in about 1866. He was one of a wave of New Mexican settlers who moved north and occupied lands in southern Colorado during the 1850s and 1860s. The senior Trujillo raised both cattle and sheep, with sheep eventually predominating. The 1885 State Census reported that he had 600 sheep, 500 lambs, and 70 cattle and produced 450 tons of hay.

Pedro Trujillo, born in Taos, New Mexico, in 1866, and raised on Teofilo Trujillo's homestead, settled on this 160-acre tract of land in October 1879, at the age of thirteen years. As a first generation American, Pedro's life reflected the cultural tension created by the contact of traditional Hispanic lifestyles and agricultural practices with that of Anglo-Americans moving into the area. Rather than erecting a traditional adobe dwelling as his father had, Pedro built this two-story log dwelling which was more in keeping with Anglo-American dwelling construction in the vicinity. In his use of the land, Pedro's approach also differed markedly from that of his father. In about 1933, Civil Works Administration worker Charles Gibson, Jr., interviewed Pedro and wrote this account:

As Teofilo prospered, he added a band of sheep to his holdings of cattle and horses, and trouble developed between him and his son Pete. The boy was extremely fond of horses and was a wonderful horseman. His friends claim he could ride anything on four legs, and he says now that his years of Broncho busting is probably the cause of his present crippled condition. Pete refused to become a sheep-herder and argued with

his father that the sheep would cause him trouble, as that had always been a cattle country.

Before he was of legal age, Pete filed on a homestead three-quarters of a mile west of his fathers [sic] place, and set up his own establishment, confining his efforts to the raising of horses and cattle. <sup>1</sup>

Pedro Trujillo's original homestead parcel included the West ½ of the Northeast ¼ and the Southeast ¼ of the Northeast ¼ of Section 11 and the Southwest ¼ of the Northwest ¼ of Section 12. No improvements were present on the land when he settled. In December 1885, Pedro stated in his pre-emption proof testimony that he had built a three-room house, a stable, a windmill, a corral, and 1.5 miles of fence, with a total value of about \$1,100. He raised hay on 120 acres and had three acres in vegetables. Given Pedro's youth at the time of settlement and his proof testimony, it is unclear if his father provided assistance in establishing the homestead or how closely the two men were associated in ranching operations. Pedro's land abutted that of his father, and he is not listed separately on the agricultural schedule of the 1880 Census. <sup>2</sup>

Pedro married Sofia (Sophia) Martinez in 1885, when he was nineteen and she was thirteen. The couple had sixteen children, nine of whom were born while they were living at the homestead. Pedro added additional lands to his holdings over the years, including a Cash Entry patent (1891), a purchase of state land (1900), and a Desert Lands patent (1901), and eventually amassed more than 500 acres. <sup>3</sup>

#### Conflict Between Cattle and Sheep Raisers

In early 1902, conflict between cattle ranchers and sheepmen in the area impacted the Trujillo family. As one of the largest sheepraisers in the area, Teofilo Trujillo became the target of violent intimidation by cattle operators. In January 1902, about ninety head of his sheep were killed and others driven away by employees of cattleman George Dorris. The Mosca Herald commented that "the war that has raged between the cattle and sheepmen of the state has broken out in this vicinity." The Alamosa Courier described Trujillo as "an inoffensive old man who has lived in this vicinity for the past forty years as a law-abiding citizen." In February, Teofilo Trujillo's house (including a reported \$8,000 in cash on hand) was burned to the ground.

The Mosca Herald reported that "Trujillo had one of the best ranch houses in the valley and the loss was considerable." <sup>4</sup> One local history publication provided this perspective on the conflict:

In the Valley the range war was not only between owners of sheep and cattle but between persons of different cultural backgrounds. It is generally believed in the Valley that it was because of his refusal to sell his land to a cattle interest that Teofilo's ranch house was burned to the ground in 1902. <sup>5</sup>

In early March 1902, Teofilo Trujillo sold his ranch and its water rights to cattlemen Loren B. Sylvester and Richard W. Hosford of the Medano Ranch for \$30,000 and moved to the town of San Luis. Pedro sold his ranch in the same transaction and moved to the Sargent area, where he purchased 400 acres of land with water rights and later served as a deputy sheriff. Trujillo descendants believe that Pedro moved at the same time because he was also threatened, noting that "even if Pedro raised cattle and not sheep, he was still Teofilo's son and faced the same dangers." When Pedro Trujillo died in 1934, the Monte Vista Journal noted that "he played an important part in the early development" of the San Luis Valley. <sup>6</sup>

The Trujillo lands became part of the holdings of Sylvester and Hosford, who had purchased the adjoining Medano Ranch in 1901. After the original owner's departure, the Trujillo homestead was occupied by Euliojio Martinez who worked on the expanded ranch into the mid-1930s. During the later years of the Linger family era at the Medano Ranch (late 1930s and 1940s), the log dwelling was used to house ranch hands but was considered less desirable due to its isolation. A 1937 aerial photograph shows the house, the corral divided into sections, the stable (with what appears to be a fenced enclosure to the west), and three buildings that are no longer extant: two small buildings on the north side of the corral at the east end and a building north of the house. The homestead, acquired by The Nature Conservancy in 1999, is not currently occupied.

### Description of the Remains

The Pedro Trujillo homestead in rural Alamosa County, Colorado, was established in 1879 and functioned as a small cattle ranch until 1902, when it was acquired by a large cattle operation. The historic complex includes a two-story log dwelling, a log stable, and a large corral area. The site includes landscape features and two significant archaeological concentrations.

#### *Homestead Site: 1879*

The homestead site includes a well and a circular metal stock tank (with a willow tree growing in it) about 30 feet south of the house, as well as a wood post fence with a collapsed gate in front of the house to the east. Two artifact concentrations, one around the house and one at the northeast corner of the corral, are features of the site. Artifact Concentration 1 surrounds the house and contains both prehistoric and historic artifacts, including buttons, square nails, glass fragments (purple, clear amber, and cobalt), milled lumber, cans, bricks, white ceramic fragments, leather and miscellaneous metal scrap, three manos, and two metates. Artifact Concentration 2 at the northeast corner of the corral contains a metal sign, miscellaneous metal parts and scraps, purple glass fragments, clear glass, and Native American ceramics (probably from the Northern Puebloan area). The artifacts in the two concentrations represent evidence of domestic occupation and disposal of broken or used items, and remains associated with ranching operations/construction and maintenance activities. The dates of the artifacts range from possible prehistoric/protohistoric times to the documented historic period occupation.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Ranch House: 1879-85*

The ranch house is an east-facing two-story rectangular (16' X 20') log dwelling with a one-story lean-to log projection on the rear. Most of the windows and doors are missing and the house has been open to the weather and animals for some time. The house has a side gable roof with standing seam metal roofing (partially missing, with horizontal planks exposed) and overhanging eaves. The design is similar to that of a nineteenth century 1-house, although the stairs are located to the side rather than in the center. The house is composed of mostly unhewn logs, with wide sections of daubing between the logs. The corner logs of the main part of the house have V-notched tops with round bottoms, with some vertical boards placed over the notches. The rear projection has square-notched logs. The house has a log pier foundation with concrete along the foundation at the front of the building.

The east wall (facade) has round logs on the upper story and square-hewn logs on the lower story. There is a center entrance with plain board surround flanked by tall, narrow windows with plain wood surrounds that are without glass and boarded up on the lower part. Centered above the windows on the second story are window openings of similar size (one window retains the four-section upper part of its frame).

The north wall is composed of round logs extending to the eaves and has no openings. There are plain frieze boards. The north wall of the one-story shed roof projection is composed of square-hewn logs with square notches with wide daubing and the upper section of the wall under the eaves is clad with vertical boards. There is concrete on the foundation of the projection. There is one window opening on the north wall of the projection.

The west wall (rear) of the house has a deteriorated red brick chimney on the slope of the roof. The one-story projection has wood shingle roofing and a (somewhat newer) orange brick chimney with metal top. The wall of the projection has square-hewn logs with square notches. There is a rectangular window opening on the west wall of the projection.

The south wall of the projection has board and batten siding on the upper part of the wall and square-hewn logs with square notches. There is an off-center entrance on the south wall of the projection. The south wall of the house has round logs with V notches. The wall has a small window on the first story with plain board surround.

According to a study of the building performed by Mark Jones in October 2002, the interior finishes of the building were originally adobe mud and straw plaster, with lime wash and paint. Later, some areas were wallpapered. The wood floors were originally set on log girders laid on the ground. The addition had a beadboard ceiling.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Stable/Barn: pre-1885*

The rectangular stable is 52 feet in length and is composed of round and square-hewn logs. The building has a low gabled roof. The south half of the stable has stalls with wood plank floors and is open on the east and partially collapsed. The north half of the building has a low entrance near the center with upright logs on either side and hinged vertical board doors. The north wall of the stable is composed of short scrap pieces of wood. The interior is divided into three intact stalls with wood boxes at the rear and has wood plank walls. Trujillo descendants indicate that this building was used as a horse barn.

#### *Corral: north portion probably pre-1885; southern portion post-1937*

The large corral area is divided into pens and has a long, wide alley. The pens are composed of horizontal boards and log posts. There is a vertical board fence on the north and a pole fence on the south. Gates in the corral have tall poles and cross-pieces. There is a swinging gate at the southeast end and other gates with metal chords. Corner gate complexes permit four pens to be opened and closed for access to other pens or alleys. The loading chute is at the northwest corner and there is also a branding chute. There is a metal trough. A collapsed woven wire and log fence is west of the corral.<sup>9</sup>

#### Endnotes

- 1 Pedro Trujillo, Interview, Civil Works Administration, Alamosa County, Colorado, Charles E. Gibson, Jr., interviewer, 1933-34, in the files of the Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado.
- 2 Pedro Trujillo, Homestead Entry Case file, number 717, 168.11 acres, Township 40 North, Range 11 East, Section 11 (NE ¼ NE ¼, S ½ NE ¼, NW ¼ NE ¼) in the files of the National Archives, Record Group 49, Washington, DC. Pedro's daughter, Andrea Trujillo Lujan, believes that his operation was independent, noting that Pedro was a cattleman. He also had horses and mules. See, Andrea Trujillo Lujan and Maria Tita Causby, "Medano Ranch,"

Monte Vista, Colorado, answers to questions posed by Marilyn Martorano and Thomas H. Simmons, November 2003.

- 3 Pedro Trujillo, family group sheet, undated, prepared by Maria Martinez, Monte Vista, Colorado; Pedro Trujillo, Cash Entry patent, number 772, 3 March 1891, 160 acres; Desert Land Act, number 36, 8 August 1901, 80.26 acres, Township 40 North, Range 11 East, Section 12 (SE 1/4 NE 1/4) and Range 12 East, Section 7 (lot 2); and State Land Purchase, number 1717, 29 January 1900, 120 acres.
- 4 *Alamosa Courier*, 8 February 1902; *Center Dispatch*, 7 February 1902 (citing an article in the *Mosca Herald*); *Saguache Crescent*, 30 January 1902 (citing an article in the *Mosca Herald*).
- 5 Sargent Centennial Bicentennial Committee, *Sargent Stanley Community Reflections* (Sargents, Colo.: Sargent Centennial Bicentennial Committee, 1977?), 209.
- 6 *Alamosa Courier*, 1 March 1902; *Monte Vista Journal*, 1 March 1902 and 29 June 1934; Andrea Trujillo Lujan and Maria Tita Causby, "Medano Ranch," Monte Vista, Colorado, answers to questions posed by Marilyn Martorano and Thomas H. Simmons, November 20.
- 7 The discussion of archaeological artifacts and their significance at the site is drawn from survey forms prepared by M. Martorano, T. Hoefer, D. Killam, and D. McClellan, RMC Consultants, Inc., Lakewood, Colorado, October 2002.
- 8 Mark Jones Associates, "Preliminary Field Assessment Medano Ranch Headquarters Complex & Trujillo Homestead," Prepared for RMC Consultants, 6 May 2003.
- 9 A corral was present in 1919, when Andrea Trujillo Lujan (daughter of Pedro) worked on the ranch one summer and lived in this house; she was born in 1904, so did not live in this house while growing up. Andrea Trujillo Lujan and Maria Tita Causby, "Medano Ranch," Monte Vista, Colorado, answers to questions posed by Marilyn Martorano and Thomas H. Simmons, November 2003.