

Teacher Resource Set

Title	Baca County
Developed by	Laura Douglas, Education ala Carte
Grade Level	9 – 12
Essential Questions	<p>What impact did mechanized agriculture have on Baca County in the early 20th century?</p> <p>How did natural and human factors change the environment and contribute to the Dust Bowl?</p> <p>What role did the Dust Bowl have in developing agricultural policy? How does that policy impact Baca County today?</p> <p>How do Baca County buildings constructed in the late 1800s and early 1900s inform us about life on the Eastern plains prior to the Dust bowl?</p>
Contextual Paragraph	<p>Baca County is the southeastern most of the 64 counties in Colorado, and was created by the Colorado legislature on April 16, 1889, named in honor of pioneer and Colorado territorial legislator Felipe Baca. According to archaeological evidence such as petroglyphs and stone tools and points, the area now known as Baca County was inhabited as early as 2500 BCE. In 1541, Spain claimed this area and by 1720 the Comanche had taken control of the area from the Plains Apache. In 1823, the area won independence from Spain and became part of Mexico, until 1836 when it was part of the Mexican concession to the Republic of Texas. Baca County became part of the Colorado Territory in 1861. By the 1880s, ranches were established and in 1889, a state legislator introduced the bill that created Baca County with Springfield as the county seat.</p> <p>In the 1920s, the arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad led to the establishment of the towns of Walsh, Pritchett, and Bartlett. As the county’s population expanded and agricultural demand swelled, farmers used newly developed farm machines to rip up huge chunks of the county’s native grasses and replaced them with irrigated fields of wheat and corn.</p> <p>Baca County was the hardest-hit county in Colorado during the Dust Bowl (1934–40). When the first of several severe droughts hit the Great Plains in 1934, there were no grass roots to keep the topsoil down, and the incessant wind whipped it up into enormous dark clouds. The wind piled the dust in great drifts, some of which partially or completely covered homes, fences, and cars. Many families were forced to abandon their farms. Wheat was not harvested again in Baca County until 1940, and by then the population had dropped from 10,570 in 1930 to 6,207. This led to soil conservation efforts by the federal government including the purchase of cultivated land by the government to return it to grassland. Today the U.S. Forest Service supervises 220,000 acres of Comanche National Grassland, including Carizzo Creek and Picture Canyon in Baca County.</p>

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Resource Set					
Dust storm. Baca County, CO	Dust storm. Baca County, CO	Meeting on courthouse steps. Baca County, CO. Drought committee	Repossessed combines in lot at Springfield. Baca County, CO	Field of kaffir corn, which is now growing on the Bosley reorganization unit. Baca County, CO	Dust Storm
Dust storm. Baca County, CO, 1936.	Dust storm. Baca County, CO, 1936.	Meeting on courthouse steps. Baca County, CO. Drought committee, July-August 1936.	Repossessed combines in lot at Springfield. Baca County, CO, September 1939.	Field of kaffir corn, which is now growing on the Bosley reorganization unit. Baca County, CO, September 1939.	People stand in a yard on a farm between a house and out buildings looking at an approaching dust storm, possibly near Walsh, Baca County, or Holly, Prowers County, southeastern CO. The devastating dust bowl carried top soil for miles, 1935.
Example of the size and scope of the clouds of dust in Baca County during the Dust Bowl.	The dust storms would black out the sun making visibility very limited.	Farmers in Baca County began to organize in an attempt to minimize the impact of the drought. As a group, they requested assistance from the federal government.	The Dust Bowl resulted in many farmers leaving Baca County for more soil-rich parts of the state and country.	By 1939, thanks to help from the federal government, agriculture began again.	The 1930s drought combined with high winds created catastrophic winds. The Dust Bowl impacted much of the prairie ecosystem.

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https://www.loc.gov/item/fsa1998018172/PP/	https://www.loc.gov/item/fsa1998018173/PP/	https://www.loc.gov/item/fsa1998019685/PP/	https://www.loc.gov/item/fsa2000015395/PP/	https://www.loc.gov/item/fsa2000015380/PP/	http://digital.denverlibrary.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15330col122/id/13707/rec/1

Dust Storm	Mr. Bosley of the reorganization unit standing in a field of sudan grass	Home of Mr. Bosley and the Bosley reorganization unit.	F. D. R. in Denver	Dust storm in southern CO	Colorado Millennial Site
View of a dust storm over rooftops of wood frame buildings, including a Conoco station, possibly in Walsh, Baca County, or Holly, Prowers County, southeastern Colorado. A "Quaker State Motor Oil" sign is on the gas station. The devastating dust bowl carried top soil for miles, 1935.	Mr. Bosley of the reorganization unit standing in a field of sudan grass on his farm in Baca County, CO. This grass is one of the best cover crops which can be grown in this region in order to bring it back from its present stricken stage due to dust storms, September 1939.	Home of Mr. Bosley and the Bosley reorganization unit. A project commanding FSA (Farm Security Administration) attention. Baca County, CO, September 1939.	United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt speaks from a podium in Denver, Colorado. The Colorado State Capitol portico and dome are in the background, 1936.	Several automobiles and utility poles are shrouded in a dust storm, possibly in Walsh, Baca County, or Holly, Prowers County, southeastern Colorado. The devastating dust bowl carried top soil for miles, 1935.	The site contains evidence of long and diverse human occupation through prehistoric and historic periods. The location offered a permanent water supply natural shelters along the projecting bluff. The site also contains a large array of rock art whose range of styles demonstrates the evolution of rock art through time.

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<p>Pictures from the heart of Baca County during the dust storm.</p>	<p>Farmers such as this one were subsidized by the government to plant native grasses after the Dust Bowl to help restore the land.</p>	<p>The home of Mr. Bosley reorganization unit who was supported by the federal government to rehabilitate the farm land in Baca County.</p>	<p>Franklin Delano Roosevelt was critical to providing aid received by counties such as Baca to recover from the effects of the Dust Bowl.</p>	<p>The effects of the Dust Bowl would last a decade in Baca County and it would go on to suffer other cycles of drought over the next several decades.</p>	<p>An 1868 skirmish here between soldiers of the U.S. 7th Cavalry and Cheyenne Indians was the last historically documented Plains Indian/military engagement in southeastern Colorado.</p>
					<p>Although the Colorado Millennial Site is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as of April 4, 1980, as of 2017 the file has not been digitized and cannot be accessed via that site.</p> <p>The site also includes Hackberry Springs and Bloody Springs.</p>
<p>http://digital.denverlibrary.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15330coll22/id/13533/rec/3</p>	<p>https://www.loc.gov/item/fsa2000015390/PP/</p>	<p>https://www.loc.gov/item/fsa2000015383/PP/</p>	<p>http://digital.denverlibrary.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15330coll22/id/18974/rec/28</p>	<p>http://digital.denverlibrary.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15330coll22/id/13651/rec/100</p>	<p>http://legacy.historycolorado.org/oahp/baca-county</p>

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<p>National Register Nomination Form for the Springfield School House October 5, 1977</p>	<p>Springfield School House c. 1977</p>	<p>Two Buttes Dam northeast of Springfield, CO State Register March 8, 1995</p>	<p>Commercial Hotel (Stage Stop Hotel) 1033 Main St. State Register September 10, 2003</p>	<p>National Register Nomination Form for Stonington Church, March 4, 1996</p>	<p>Stonington Church First Methodist - Episcopal Church c. 1995</p>
<p>The Springfield School House was constructed of native sandstone from a quarry east of Springfield. It has a gable roof with cedar shingles and a belfry for the school bell.</p>	<p>The school house served as a monument to settlers who came West in the late 19th century.</p> <p>The rock building was replaced in the 1920s.</p>	<p>The 1909 dam is significant for its engineering as an intact example of a turn-of-the-century earthen dam built to aid in irrigating portions of southeastern Colorado.</p>	<p>The Commercial Hotel / Hamilton Hotel is Springfield's longest functioning and oldest surviving hotel. It opened in 1920 and operated continuously up to the present.</p>	<p>W. S. Murray, postmaster in a small Kansas town across the border from Baca County built the Stonington church. He was also responsible for building many of the early residences.</p>	<p>Stonington Church is a one story, wood frame building with pointed arch windows. It was constructed in 1917 and the interior remodeled during the 1980s. It is in fairly good condition with little alteration since its construction.</p>
<p>The first school house in Springfield is a well-preserved example of pioneer prairie architecture. It sits alone in the midst of buffalo grass native to Colorado and the Western plains.</p>	<p>The original school house was sold and became the home of the Springfield Masonic Lodge #153 in September 1922.</p>	<p>Intended to irrigate nearby farm land, the resulting reservoir was much better used as a site for hunting, fishing, boating and swimming.</p>	<p>Known as the Commercial Hotel from 1920 to the mid-1930s, the hotel operated as the Hamilton Hotel from 1943 until 1970.</p>	<p>Funds for construction and labor were donated by residents of the community. The church was a marvel in this sparsely settled, economically poor area.</p> <p>The dedication took place on December 9, 1917. A new bell and bell tower were added March 18, 1918.</p>	<p>The railroad facilitated its construction by transporting lumber to the area.</p> <p>The church is an example of the Late Gothic Revival architectural style. This style remained the most influential style for churches well into the 20th century.</p>

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<p>https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/AssetDetail?assetID=ca2c93f0-57df-42dd-87b5-272fa819918e</p>	<p>https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/16658a7d-2102-4777-9e82-313587781c03/?branding=NRHP</p>	<p>http://legacy.historycolorado.org/oahp/baca-county</p>	<p>http://legacy.historycolorado.org/oahp/baca-county</p>	<p>https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/c57c0c87-92cd-4073-9d3b-d55af50d9622?branding=NRHP</p>	<p>https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/de684c72-40bf-400a-b64e-c17af47f5cdd?branding=NRHP</p>

<p>Two Buttes Gymnasium</p>					
<p>Constructed between 1935 and 1937 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the gymnasium is significant under the <u>New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains</u> Property Documentation Form.</p> <p>The gymnasium is an important example of <u>WPA Rustic Style</u>.</p>					
<p>This community building is a good example of the efforts of the WPA to boost morale during the Depression through the construction of buildings for the enjoyment of the entire community.</p> <p>Two Buttes residents attended school-sponsored activities such as basketball games, music performances and festivals in the building</p>					

					
<p>http://legacy.historycolorado.org/oahp/baca-county</p>					

Foundations Annotations	
Curriculum Connections	
<p>History</p> <p>Economics</p> <p>Geography</p>	
Curriculum Standards	
<p>CO State History Standard 2: The key concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, complexity, unity and diversity over time. (High School)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Investigate causes and effects of significant events in United States history. g. Analyze the complexity of events in United States history. <p>CO State History Standard 3: The significance of ideas as powerful forces throughout history. (High School)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Investigate the historical development of and impact of major scientific and technological innovations. 	

Curriculum Standards (continued)

CO State Economics Standard 1: Productive resources – natural, human, capital – are scarce; therefore, choices are made about how individuals, businesses, governments, and societies allocate these resources. (High School)

- a. Analyze the relationships between economic goals and the allocation of scarce resources.

CO State Economics Standard 2: Understand the allocation of scarce resources in societies through analysis of individual choice, market interaction, and public policy. (High School)

- c. Identify government activities that affect the local, state, or national economy.
- d. Give examples of the role of government in a market economic system.

CO State Geography Standard 1: Use different types of maps and geographic tools to analyze features on Earth to investigate and solve geographic questions. (High School)

- d. Locate physical and human features and evaluate their implications for society.

CO State Geography Standard 2: Explain and interpret geographic variables that influence the interactions of people, places and environments. (High School)

- a. Apply geography skills to help investigate issues and justify possible resolutions involving people, places, and environments.
- b. Identify, evaluate, and communicate strategies to respond to constraints placed on human systems by the physical environment.
- c. Explain how altering the environment has brought prosperity to some places and created environmental dilemmas for others.
- d. Research and interpret multiple viewpoints on issues that shaped the current policies and programs for resource use.
- e. Explain how information and changing perceptions and values of places and environment influence personal actions.

Content and Thinking Objectives

Students will be able to:

- analyze the complexity of events in US History.
- analyze the effects of mechanized agriculture on wheat production.
- analyze the impacts of the Dust Bowl on the economy and the environment and built environment.
- discuss how scarcity of resources affects people.
- give examples of how the built environment informs us of our past.

Content and Thinking Objectives (continued)

Based on the Colorado Department of Education Content Connections:

https://www.cde.state.co.us/contentareas/contentconnections/5gr_changetransform

The Colorado Department of Education Prepared Graduate Competencies at:

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/cosocialstudies/cas-ss-corrections>

Inquiry Questions, Activities and Strategies**Inquiry Questions**

Why was the government concerned about wheat production in 1930? What did farmers do in response to this concern? Describe the positive and negative aspects of the bumper crop of 1931. What were the two factors that made the harvest of 1932 a double disaster for southern Plains farmers? Describe the effect of the drought and depressed wheat prices on families in Baca County and the Great Plains.

The hardest years of the Dust Bowl were 1932–1937. Explain how the price of wheat during this time indicates that these were difficult years using your knowledge of supply, demand and price.

What is the relevance of the Dust Bowl today?

What lessons can be learned from the Dust Bowl and how does that relate to farming today?

What impact did the Dust Bowl have on current land use and sustainability practices?

How does the impact and the recovery of the Dust Bowl compare with more recent weather disasters such as Hurricane Katrina?

Inquiry Activities

Research Black Tuesday and the stock market crash. How did it impact the Great Plains farming communities and Baca County?

Inquiry Questions, Activities and Strategies (continued)

President Franklin D. Roosevelt sought to solve Depression-era problems by providing government solutions via “relief,” “recovery,” and “reform.” In April of 1935 he signed the Soil Conservation Act, which was an agricultural reform program that offered incentives to those farmers who will adopt the new farming methods. Prior to this time, farmers had been suspicious of the government but by 1937, they were asking the government to help regulate the land by forcing farmers to take better care of their soil. Eventually, conservation districts were established to enforce better farming methods and gradual progress was made. Discuss the pros and cons of federal aid to farmers. Explain the meaning of each of FRD’s “Three Rs” and what they meant to the people of Baca County

Research and describe the Farm Security Administration. Examine the Bosley reorganization unit photos included here as well as others at <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004674059/> What role did the Bosley reorganization unit play in Baca County?

Select one of the preserved buildings or structures from the resource set and explain how it contributed to the Baca County community and how it provides insight into life on the Eastern Plains in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Assessment Strategies

Depending upon how one uses the resources and which standards are chosen, assessment can take many forms. For example:

CO History Standard 2 (f-g) and CO History Standard 3 (b) (High School) Research the history of modern agricultural machinery, including small gasoline tractors and the combine harvester. Explain how modern machinery changed the way farmers planted and produced wheat in the Great Plains farming communities and Baca County. Explain the environmental impact and economic value the modern machinery had on the Great Plains. What world events encouraged the expansion of wheat farming in the Great Plains? Examine the resource set photo of combines in Baca County. Why do you think they were being repossessed?

CO Geography Standard 2 (a-d) (High School) Describe the impact of the dust storms on the environment of the Great Plains and Baca County. Consider the conditions that occurred in the late 1920s and early 1930s that led to the dust storms, and the natural and human factors that contributed. What could farmers have done to reduce the impact of the dust storms? Why didn’t they do these things, even though the dust storms were getting worse?

Other Resources

Web Resources

National Register of Historic Places: <https://www.nps.gov/nr>

Colorado State Register of Historic Properties: <http://www.historycolorado.org/oaHP/colorado-state-register-historic-properties>

Articles from the Colorado Encyclopedia:

- <http://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/baca-county>
- <http://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/dust-bowl>

Depression and the Dust Bowl: http://coloradopreservation.org/crsurvey/rural/baca/sites/baca_resources_depression.html

History Colorado, "Eighty Years Ago This Week Dust Bowl Storm Wreaks Havoc on Colorado Plains"
<http://www.historycolorado.org/news-room/eighty-years-ago-week-dust-bowl-storm-wreaks-havoc-colorado-plains>

Secondary Sources

"The Dust Bowl: A Film by Ken Burns": <http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/dustbowl/legacy/>

"The Dust Bowl" Rocky Mountain PBS *Colorado Experience* episode: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKSvgTzgMrA>

The History Channel: <http://www.history.com/topics/dust-bowl>

Joey Bunch, "For Southeast Colorado, a New Dust Bowl Is Blowing In" *Denver Post*, April 6, 2014: <http://www.denverpost.com/2014/04/05/for-southeast-colorado-a-new-dust-bowl-is-blowing-in/>

Secondary Sources (continued)

Resources from History Colorado – Historic Marker Text for Baca County: <http://www.historycolorado.org/research/historic-markers>

- The Dust Bowl
- Prehistoric Peoples
- Rock Art
- Border Welcome Sign
- Regional Map

Dust Bowl - A 1950s Documentary UtahAgClassroom: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM3ZHMBhP2k&feature=youtu.be>

FDR's Fireside Chat on the Drought and the Dust Bowl: <http://www.history.com/topics/dust-bowl/videos/fdrs-fireside-chat-on-dust-bowl>

Roy I. Kimmel, "Unit Reorganization Program for the Southern Great Plains," *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Proceedings Number (February 1940), pp. 264-269

Preservation Connection

Although the Dust Bowl was probably the most significant event of the 20th century for Baca County, the events prior to the 1930s play important parts in fully understanding the county over time. A Paleo-Indian archaeological site near Ruxton labeled as the Colorado Millennial Site includes Hackberry Springs and Bloody Springs. The site was inhabited as early as 2500 BC as evidenced by rock art, stone tools, projectile points and other artifacts.

From 1541 until 1889 when Baca County was founded, the area belonged to Spain, Mexico, Texas and the Kansas and Colorado Territories. The earliest cattle ranching settlement began in 1882 and settlers came to the region thereafter. The Expanded Homestead Act of 1909 encouraged settlers to attempt dry land and irrigation farming. From 1915 to 1925 Baca County saw increased population engaged in homesteading but by the early 1930s most of those attempts had failed and were abandoned.

With the founding of Baca County and naming of Springfield as its county seat, the once sparsely populated area changed significantly. As settlers moved the area was transformed. The built environment reflected the growing needs of settlers migrating to the county. Churches, schools, hotels and residences were erected. The arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad brought even more change by supplying building materials for many of these new structures. Preservation of these buildings allow us to go back in time to imagine and better understand life in a small, eastern plains farming town at the turn of the 20th century before it was devastated by the Dust Bowl.

Preservation Inquiry Questions

How does the preserved built environment in Baca County inform us about life on the Eastern Plains of Colorado both today and in the past?

What do the changes in use of these buildings over time say about the benefits of preservation?

How might the built environment been affected in the years immediately following the Dust Bowl?

Why is it important to preserve what limited historic resources we have in Baca County?

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