

LAS TRAMPAS CANOA
Near New Mexico Highway 76
Trampas vicinity
Taos County
New Mexico

HAER NM-26
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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

LAS TRAMPAS CANOA

HAER No. NM-26

- Location:** Near New Mexico Highway 76, Trampas vicinity, Taos County, New Mexico
- Date of Construction:** Unknown
- Original Use:** Irrigation and domestic use
- Current Use:** Irrigation
- Significance:** The Las Trampas Canoa is significant as a rare operating example of this once common water-supply structure.
- Description:** A *canoa* is made by hollowing out a log with a hand tool and supporting it across a stream by a framework also made of timber. It is among the earliest methods for transporting water for irrigation across small streams or depressions.
- The Las Trampas Canoa is constructed of two dug-out logs supported on a sawn timber frame above an intermittent stream. The logs of the flume were hand cut with axes and show clearly the axe marks on both the inside and outside. The canoa is about 12" wide (inside) and about 6" deep and measures about 30' long and 20' high. It is estimated to carry one-half cubic foot of water per second. Although it has been replaced several times, it is still in use today.
- History:** The Las Trampas Tract, which was part of an early Spanish land grant, covers a high mountain valley little more than a mile in length and a quarter mile wide in northern New Mexico. The valley is surrounded on three sides by the Carson National Forest. The valley runs in a southeast to northwest direction with a small river known as the Rio de Las Trampas running down its middle. The village of Trampas, located in the center of the valley, was settled in 1751. Fray Dominguez, who was in charge of the census, reported sixty-three families living at Trampas in 1776.
- Two acequias receive water at the head of the valley and run parallel to the river, one on each side. Water is diverted from these acequias to irrigate the fields located between them and the river. The Las Trampas Canoa, or

log flume, carries the acequia running on the northern side of the valley over an arroyo near State Highway 76.

Sources:

Arneson, Edwin P. "Early Irrigation in Texas." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* XXV, no. 2 (October 1921): 121-130.

Davis, W.W.H. *El Gringo: or, New Mexico and Her People*. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1857.

Dominguez, Francisco Atanasio. *The Missions of New Mexico 1776*. Translated by Eleanor B. Adams and Angelico Chavez. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1936.

Hutchins, Wells A. "The Community Acequia: Its Origin and Development." *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* XXI, no. 3 (January 1928): 261-284.

Historians: Steve Rae and T. Lindsay Baker, January 10, 1972

Project**Information:**

The Las Trampas Canoa 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.