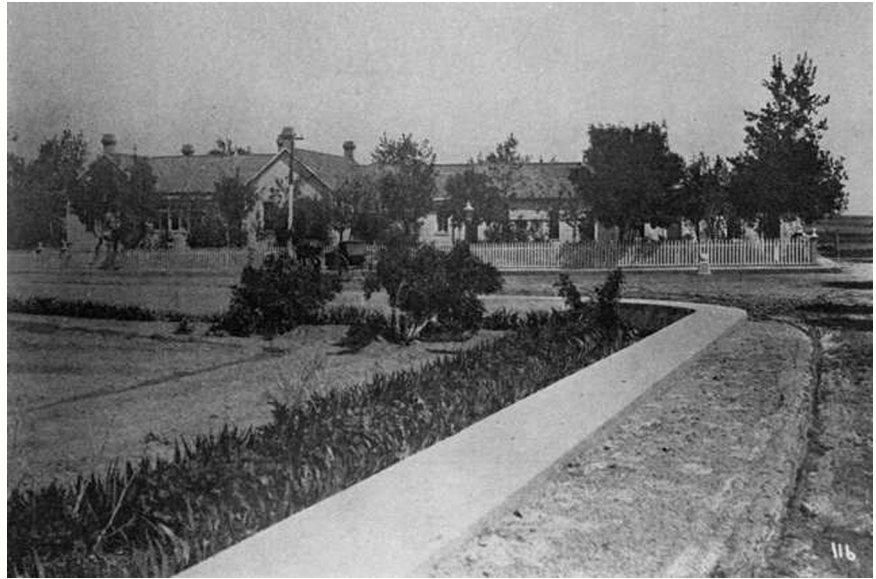
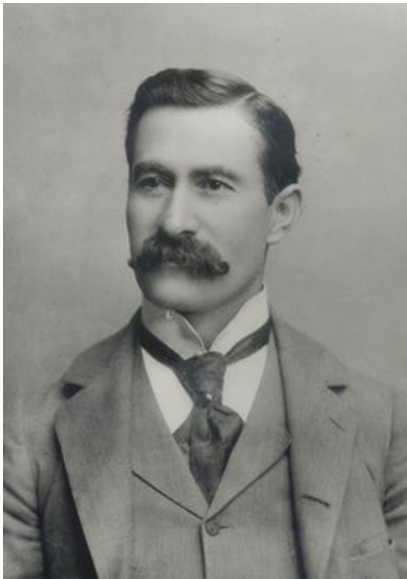


CASIMIRO BARELA

When: 1847–1920

Where: Born in New Mexico, settled near Trinidad, Colorado.

Why Important: Barela served as a territorial legislator and helped write the Colorado Constitution. He represented Colorado as a state senator for almost forty years.



CASIMIRO BARELA

Casimiro Barela was born on March 4, 1847 in Embudo, New Mexico during the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848. Embudo was still part of Mexico at that time. After the war, this territory was turned over to the United States. In 1867 Barela moved to Trinidad, Colorado. He published newspapers and raised sheep, cattle, and horses. He married Josefita Ortiz on his twentieth birthday. They lived on his ranch.

Barela was elected Justice of the Peace in Trinidad when he was just twenty-two. This started his career in politics. He later served as County Assessor, Territory Representative, and County Sheriff for Las Animas County. By the time Barela was twenty-six years old, he also ran a blacksmith shop and a supply shop. Barela was also named postmaster for a town sixteen miles south of Trinidad. The town loved him so much that they renamed the town Barela, Colorado!

In 1875 Barela helped write Colorado's State Constitution. He fought to make sure that the constitution was published in English, Spanish, and German. This made him a hero in the eyes of many people. Barela became a Colorado state senator in 1876. He always worked hard to help people. He supported women's right to vote, pushed for New Mexico statehood, and fought to have laws published in both English and Spanish. Barela is best known for helping to make Columbus Day a holiday in 1907.

After being in the Colorado State Senate for almost forty years, Barela earned the nickname the "Father of the Colorado Senate." He also ran two Spanish-language newspapers. Later, Barela attended the inauguration of Mexico's President Obregon in 1920.

Even though he was successful, Barela's life was not always happy. He and Josefita had nine children, but only three survived. Then in 1883, Josefita died. Barela married Damiani Rivera and they adopted three children. Barela died in 1920 from pneumonia. In 1900 he was honored with a stained-glass portrait in the dome of the Colorado State Capitol.

Sources:

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