

Colorado Irrigation Ditches 1870 – 1910
Student Activity #2

It is difficult to imagine how different the irrigation and water distribution system today is in contrast to the early twentieth century. In the absence of modern construction equipment, ditch building was a major endeavor. The availability of water is a key resource in supporting and sustaining cities and agriculture due to our limited rainfall. As the population expanded, so did the need for water resources, diverting water from the main river systems to the arid regions of Colorado.

The Colorado Digitization Program through Heritage West allows access to photographs of the times. Access the site at <http://www.cdpheritage.org/> and click into the Heritage West search box. Search for photos of water ditches or irrigation ditches during the date range of 1870 -1920. Examine the photo carefully and write a letter to a friend on the eastern coast in the late 1800s and explain the concept of an irrigation ditch, their size, and their appearance. Include a description of how the ditches were constructed. Explain how water was distributed. Include a description of the appearance of the surrounding landscape. Review at least 10 photos.

Some suggested call numbers are:

- **Call Number:** MCC-3796
- **Call Number:** CHS.X4782
- **Call Number:** CHS.J3504
- **Call Number:** MCC-1281
- **Call Number:** MCC-1481
- **Call Number:** MCC-1479
- **Call Number:** MCC-3745
- **Call Number:** CHS-L1602
- **Call Number:** CHS-L2555
- **Call Number:** CHS-L1613
- **Call Number:** CHS.X5442
- **Call Number:** GB-8090
- **Call Number:** MCC-1118
- **Call Number:** MCC-2403
- **Call Number:** MCC-1255
- **Call Number:** CHS.X5400
- **Call Number:** CHS.X5704
- **Call Number:** MCC-870
- **Call Number:** MCC-2017