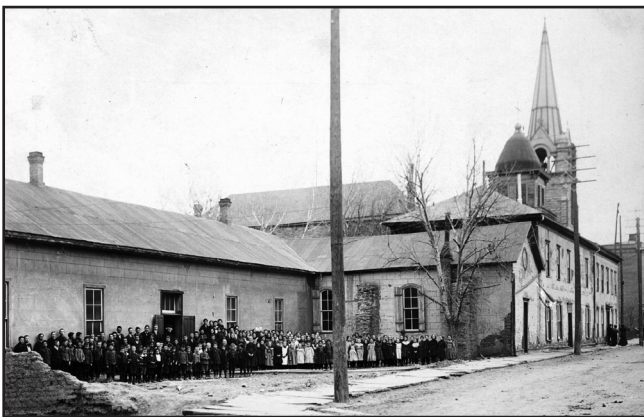# History of the Sisters of Charity in
Trinidad, Colorado

1870 – Three Sisters of Charity opened Holy Trinity School in a six-room adobe built by Felipe and Dolores Baca. Initially they had 30 pupils but their numbers increased when they accepted responsibility for the public school as well as boarders at St. Joseph Academy.

Sisters who taught in Trinidad in the early 1870s: (back, from left) S. Blandina Segale, S. Fidelis McCarthy, (front, from left) Eulalia Whitty and Marcella Huller.
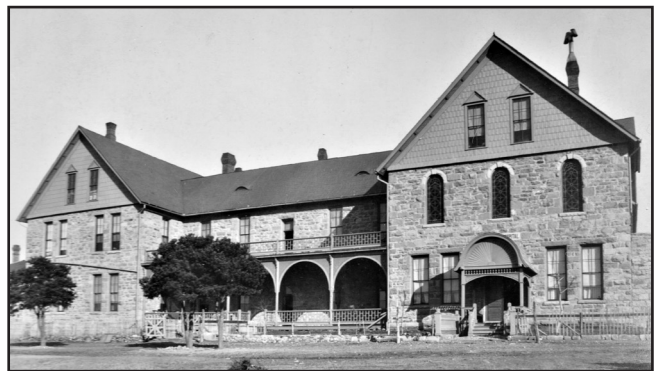
1873 – A new building to accommodate St. Joseph Academy opened thanks to funds collected by the Sisters on begging trips led by S. Fidelis McCarthy. Three years later a new public school building opened due to the ingenuity of S. Blandina Segale and the willing hands of the townspeople.

A new building to accommodate to St. Joseph Academy opened in 1873.

1888 – A new three-story stone building, used for both the academy and the public school, was opened.

1889 – Five Sisters, under the leadership of S. Catherine Mallon, opened Mount San Rafael Hospital with the generous assistance of Rev. Charles Pinto, S.J., Dr. Michael Beshoar, and citizens of Trinidad.

Mount San Rafael Hospital was opened as a two-story, 40-bed hospital in 1889.

1892 – Sisters withdrew from the public school due to a requirement prohibiting them from wearing religious habits while teaching there. Holy Trinity parish school opened and the Sisters taught there as well as at St. Joseph Academy.

1908 – After a statue of the Virgin Mary was discovered on a hillside near Mount San Rafael Hospital, the Sisters built a small grotto that developed into the Ave Maria Shrine.

Ave Maria Shrine near Mount San Rafael Hospital.

1913-'14 – A massive strike organized by the United Mine Workers turned Trinidad into a battleground between mine owners and strikers. At different times both the Colorado National Guard and the strikers were headquartered within the shadow of Mount San Rafael Hospital. Many of the injured were treated at the hospital and Mother Jones, a labor organizer, was incarcerated at the hospital for 10 weeks.

1922 – St. Joseph Academy closed, but the high school was continued as Holy Trinity High School.

1947 – A new Holy Trinity High School building was completed, followed in 1948 by a grandstand, and in 1958 by a new gymnasium.

The new Holy Trinity High School was built in 1947.

1962 – Holy Trinity High School became Trinidad Catholic High School, a diocesan school.

1968 – The Sisters of Charity withdrew their sponsorship of Mount San Rafael Hospital. The facility was purchased by the Trinidad Area Health Association, Inc.

1968 – Sisters Florence Cremering, Marie Amadea Heaney and Jean Therese Durbin moved into a four-room frame house and opened a Head Start Program, classes for parents, and other family assistance programs.

1974-'99 – S. Isabella Glenn, a native of Trinidad, served as teacher and principal at Trinidad Catholic High School. She was widely known for the success of her debate teams.

1980 – After completing a fused glass window of the Burning Bush for the new Mount San Rafael Hospital, S. Augusta Zimmer was commissioned to create a ceramic mural depicting the history of Trinidad. Five years into the execution, the 12-foot-high, 28-foot-long mural was installed in the lobby of the hospital in 1980.

S. Augusta Zimmer created the 2,000-pound ceramic mural that hangs in the hospital's lobby.

2008 – After teaching 24 years at Trinidad Catholic High School, S. Donna Bryant left the school. A total of 444 Sisters of Charity lived and worked in Trinidad for 138 years.

(Back row, from left) Sisters Isabella Glenn, Donna Bryant, (front row, from left) Ruth Anthony Lehman and De Paul Sandoval taught at Trinidad Catholic High School.

For additional materials related to the history of the Sisters of Charity in Trinidad, Colorado, please visit the Sisters of Charity website at *www.srcharitycinti.org/who-we-are/archives/historical-resources/servant-of-god-blandina-segale-sc/*.