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Quarterly Publication of the Friends of Broomfield History

The Broomcorn *Express*



Broomfield History:
Land and Water

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Cover image: Great Western Reservoir, March 2024, by David R. Feineman

Donation Drive

Please consider making a donation to support the Friends of Broomfield History. Your financial support will play a major role in collecting, preserving, and telling the story of Broomfield. Join us in our effort to build awareness and appreciation for Broomfield's history.



With your donation, you will

- Experience Broomfield's past and history in the making with our quarterly newsletter, the *Broomcorn Express*
- Receive invitations to special events and programs that we host at the Broomfield Depot Museum
- Help provide local history education for 2nd and 10th grade classrooms through the production of educational videos that are free for teachers to use
- Support the ongoing collection of local oral histories
- Enable preservation of records and artifacts in the Broomfield history archives

YES, I want to support the Friends of Broomfield History's work to preserve and share Broomfield's story! Thank You!

Please renew your support at one of the following levels:

- \$20 donation — Basic
- \$50 donation — Contributing
- \$100 donation — Sustaining
- Donation of your choice

Option 1) Select a donation level in our website shop and pay by credit card. Visit <https://friendsofbroomfieldhistory.org/shop>

Option 2) Send a check for one of the levels listed above. Please include your name, phone number and email address. We'll take care of the rest!

Please make checks payable to "FoBH" and mail them to:
Friends of Broomfield History
P. O. Box 274
Broomfield, CO 80038

Thank you for supporting the Friends of Broomfield History!



A Sparkle in My Eye



Crocus flowers and snowdrops in my grandparents' garden.



Andrea Margheim-Minnich President, Friends of Broomfield History

Happy Spring, Friends!

It is a beautiful season. This is the season I was born in, and although I like other seasons, this one is my favorite. Does that happen with all of us? Is your favorite season the one that shares your birthday? A few weeks ago, I took my kids to see the house my siblings and I are remodeling, a 1949 brick ranch-style Denver home my grandparents bought brand-new for \$6,000. It is very similar to the First Filing homes built in Broomfield.

My grandparents came from Nebraska, both grew up in farming families. My grandfather turned their tiny Denver backyard into an oasis for plants, flowers, and berry bushes,

including the tiniest little square for crops. They mostly grew tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots and corn. Growing up I relished the fruits of his labors during summer Sunday dinners. He planted and grew every flower my grandmother ever wanted. The borders of the front and backyard were full of color all season long. When we moved them from their home a few years ago, we found all of the systems he had in place for taking care of the land. It was accurate and precise, and that's what he spent so much of his life doing.

It's been 75 years since they started making their mark of that particular piece of land, and it is very sweet to still see the signs of spring and that labor of love . . . some of my grandmother's favorites and mine as well.

BEAUTIFUL LAKEVIEW VALLEY (Denver's Ideal Suburb)—Located on Three Railroads—You can Live Here and Still Do Business in the City.

20

BUY YOUR LOTS NOW

A HOME IN THE COUNTRY

With More Conveniences Than One in the City and at Far Less Expense.

Only Twenty Minutes From Denver on the New Boulder Electric Line



Lakeview Valley. Front and Back on both the Colorado & Northern and Electric Line Tracks.

We own a large acreage in and around Broomfield, Colorado, now known as LAKEVIEW VALLEY. The town site is located on the line of three railroads, the New Denver & Boulder Electric line, the Colorado & Northern and the Burlington.

The new Electric road brings LAKEVIEW VALLEY WITHIN 20 minutes ride of Denver. The rate run on regular schedule and low commutation rates will be made regular along the line.

Any Lot Offered Will Be Worth Double the Price Now Taken in Less Than One Year.

\$125

Per Lot for a Short Time Only

One Dollar Down and One Dollar Per Week Until Paid For

THIS is the greatest opportunity for homeseekers and investors that has ever been offered the general public. We can sell cheap because we own the ground—we have lived on it for 24 years—we pay no commissions—have no expenses and are willing to give those who buy the best of it. Lots similarly located in other cities of a like size of Denver, would sell for \$500 to \$1,000, and these lots should be worth as much in a very short time.

CHICKENS AND SQUABS CAN BE RAISED and splendid profits made by selling them in Denver. There is plenty of good pasture for cows and the streams of the town will buy the milk.

Cars Leave Sixteenth and Arapahoe Every Two Hours, Starting at 7 A. M.

New Denver & Boulder Electric Line Ticket Office of the road at 16th and Broadway, Denver, Colo. Telephone (NOTE: A transfer from 16th and Broadway to the Broomfield line costs 5 cents.)

Water Once Running in Lakeview Valley, a well can be drilled at a small cost, so that the lot owner can dig the lot that will furnish his own water supply. The lot to be found in Broomfield and Broomfield for property purposes as well as investment use.

COME OUT AND SEE THE LOTS

We will be at the depot to meet all cars with signs for your free use.

Westminster College ranks will be one of the largest educational institutions in the world, or just four miles from Lakeview Valley, and will all contribute to the value of Lakeview lots within a very few years.

A Coal Mine Within Three Miles of the Town. Products at All Times. Coal for \$2 Per Ton.



A Lakeview Valley Home

GET IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR

LAKEVIEW VALLEY is an established town, having a church, hall, school, postoffice, two large mercantile establishments, express and freight and ticket offices, mail and elevator, blacksmith shops, creamery, free mail delivery, telephones, telegraph office. In fact, more conveniences than are ordinarily in many neighborhoods right within the limits.

LAKEVIEW VALLEY is the most beautiful garden spot in Colorado—away from the noise and confusion of the city—surrounded by green fields, lakes and romantic hills—it has an uninterrupted view of one hundred and fifty miles of snow-capped mountains, clear, though a long way off, yet, because of the absolute purity of the atmosphere, seem but a little distance.

The townsite is located on high ground, and from it can be seen miles of the magnificent valley, dotted with established farms, and presenting a scene that is a tonic of peacefulness in itself.

THE FARMS in LAKEVIEW VALLEY remind one of old New England homes. There are thirty lakes within sight of the town, while innumerable orchards stretch for miles in all directions. Splendid scenic drives add to the attractiveness of its good roads. There is not a more beautiful spot in the whole West, nor a more choice place for an ideal life-long home.

RICH SOIL, SUITABLE FOR GARDENING. The soil in Lakeview Valley is extremely rich and any kind of garden truck can be readily raised. NO DESTRUCTIVE HAIL has ever been known to fall within the limits of LAKEVIEW VALLEY.

Office of the Lakeview Valley Lots at 1851 STOUT ST.

(Block 14th and Stout Street Cars Pass the Door)

COLMAN SELLING CO., OWNERS

Phone Main 8717

Lot, 2000 properties with no and get quick results. We have such no other lot in the city and no other lot in the city. This lot is not to be sold at any price.

Denver Post Advertisement for Colman's Lakeview, c. 1910, Broomfield History Collections.

Colman's Lakeview: Broomfield's First Subdivision

By David Allison, Broomfield History Coordinator

When we think about land use and development in Broomfield, one often overlooked story is that of Coleman's Lakeview.* Colman's Lakeview is located just south of the railroad tracks in what is often referred to as "Old" Broomfield and holds the distinction of predating Broomfield Heights (1955) as a subdivision by more than thirty years.

Formed in the 1910s, Colman's Lakeview was advertised as "a home in the country with more conveniences than one in the city and at far less expense."¹ This promotion continues by describing the new subdivision as being in "Beautiful Lakeview Valley—Formerly Broomfield (Denver's Ideal Suburb)—You can Live here and Still do Business in the City."

COLMAN'S LAKEVIEW

Interestingly, the “home in the country” quality of Broomfield and the ease of reaching either Boulder or Denver are the exact same features of the community that were trumpeted by Broomfield Heights’ promoters in the 1950s. The unique location of Broomfield—halfway between Boulder and Denver and in an area that maintained its agricultural character—has been a primary motivation for habitation for over a hundred years.

The advertising for Colman’s Lakeview in the 1910s mentioned other features that would not recur in later marketing for homes in the area. The advertisement refers to the lots as “double the size of a city lot, and large enough to keep a cow, chickens, and have a garden.” By the 1950s, larger lots that were capacious enough to accommodate livestock would be perceived as a relic of a more frugal and agriculturally-focused time.

Also noteworthy, the advertisement boasts of the location as being situated “on the lines of three railroads, the new Denver & Boulder Electric line, the Colorado & Southern and the Burlington.” And with the importance of coal as fuel for heating, the close proximity of the Monarch Mine was mentioned as providing low-cost coal for the community.

One final intriguing tidbit that the advertisers used to promote the subdivision was that “Westminster College (which will be one of the largest educational institutions in the world) is but four miles from Lakeview Valley and will add considerable [sic] to the value of Lakeview lots within a few years.” As you certainly know, Westminster College did not, in fact, become one of the largest educational institutions in the world and was shuttered during World War I due to low enrollment.²

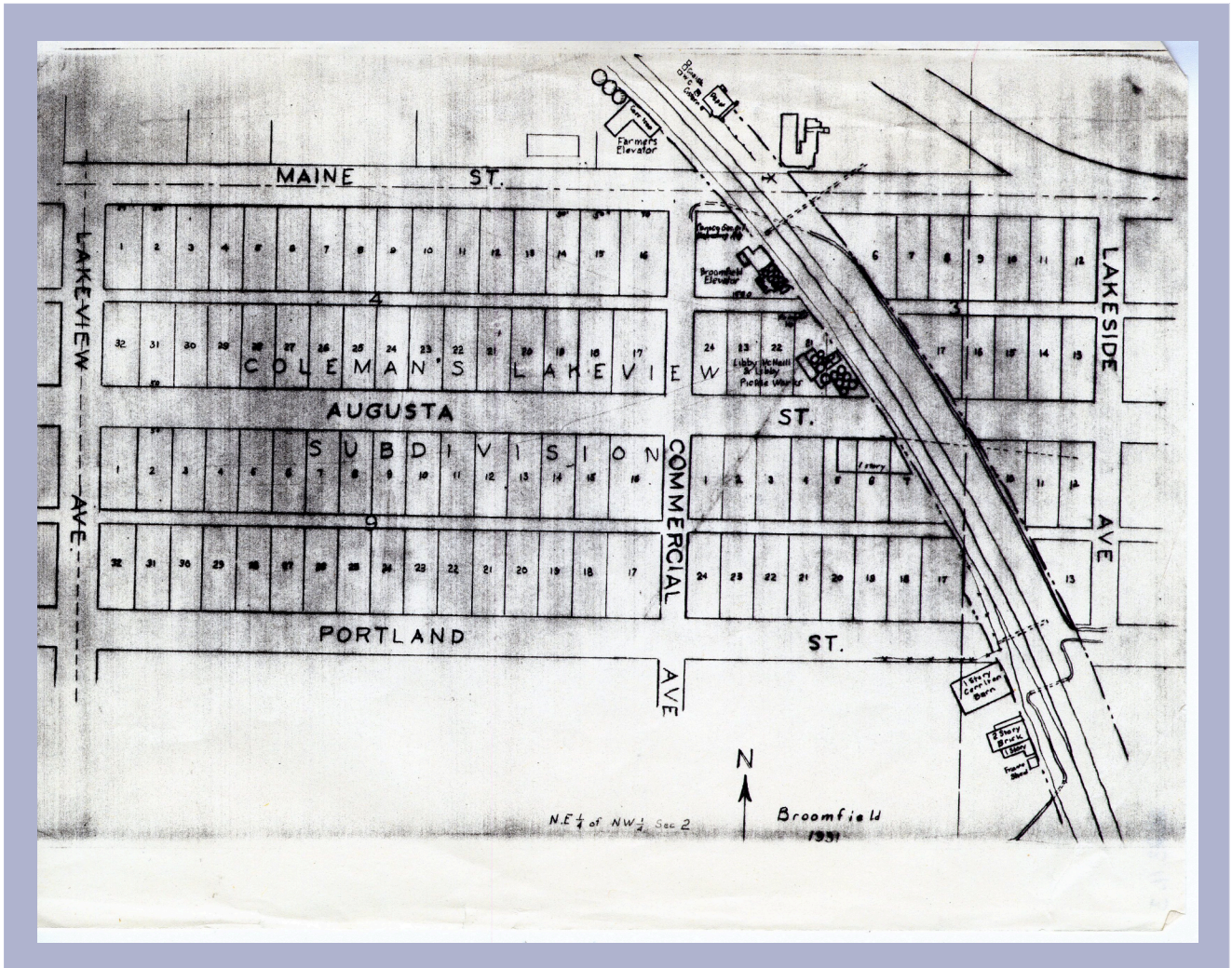
Colman’s Lakeview lives on as the first subdivision in Broomfield. The name “Lakeview Valley” did not persist, however, and the moniker “Broomfield” stubbornly hung on despite challenges from the aforementioned Lakeview Valley and Zang’s Spur. Although Broomfield Heights effectively won the award for fastest-growing subdivision, Coleman’s Lakeview was the first and is the oldest trailblazing subdivision in Broomfield.

*As a quick sidebar, there seems to be some disagreement about the spelling of “Coleman.” We have a document in our [Broomfield History Collection](#) that refers to “Coleman’s Lakeview” as “Colman’s Lakeview,” without the “e.”

1. All quotations in the article are from this advertisement. “Buy your lots now,” advertisement for Colman’s Selling Co., in what appears to be the *Denver Post*, c. 1915., <https://hub.catalogit.app/9352/folder/entry/73859290-1ceb-11ee-b4e9-21eb93777c32>

2. “Westminster University,” Colorado Encyclopedia, accessed 15 February 2024, <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/westminster-university>.

COLMAN'S LAKEVIEW



Map of Colman's Lakeview subdivision, Broomfield History Collections.

The 1st Bank Center: Soon to be History

By David R. Feineman, Friends of Broomfield History



1st Bank Center on January 23, 2024. Photo by the author.

In Broomfield, a few historic buildings from old Broomfield have been preserved, with prominent examples like the Depot Museum, the Crawford Honey House, and the Brunner Farmhouse. But an imposing structure that was part of Broomfield's more recent history won't be preserved. Opened at the end of 2006 as the Broomfield Event Center, then relabeled the Odeum Colorado, the building currently named the 1st Bank Center has a

highly visible location along Highway 36 at [the eastern edge of the Arista development](#).¹

The building was designed by Sink Combs Dethlefs, prominent large structure architects who are still quite active along the Front Range. Scheduled for demolition 17 years after its construction, the 1st Bank Center will be removed because of its high maintenance costs as well as its inability to compete with

1st BANK CENTER



1st Bank Center on January 23, 2024. Photo by the author.

similar venues in the Denver area. While it was originally planned to be the home venue of local sports teams, that activity was not long lived, and [the promised RTD light rail station that would have simplified access from Boulder and Denver is still off track](#).² After demolition, the site that the building occupies will be subdivided, although exactly what will replace it has not been determined.

1. "1stBank Center," *Wikipedia*, last modified December 5, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1stBank_Center.

2. John Aguilar, "Why Broomfield's 1stBank Center Is Going out with a Wrecking Ball after Just 17 Years," *The Denver Post*, January 21, 2024, <https://www.denverpost.com/2024/01/21/1stbank-center-demolition-broomfield-live-music-debt/>.

The Great Western Reservoir: A Legacy of Our Nuclear Past

By David R. Feineman, Friends of Broomfield History



[Great Western Reservoir as it currently appears on Apple Maps.](#)

[“The past is never dead. It’s not even past.” William Faulkner¹](#)

[“No matter how much time passes, no matter what takes place in the interim, there are some things we can never assign to oblivion, memories we can never rub away.” – Haruki Murakami²](#)

OVERVIEW

If you find yourself driving along North Indiana Street near where it intersects with State Highway 128, looking to the southeast, you’ll see a large man-made lake known as the Great Western Reservoir³ in the foreground and the skyline of Denver in the distance. But unlike the nearby Standley Lake reservoir, there’s no regional park or general access road leading to the Great Western Reservoir, and understanding why requires a bit of digging into our local history.

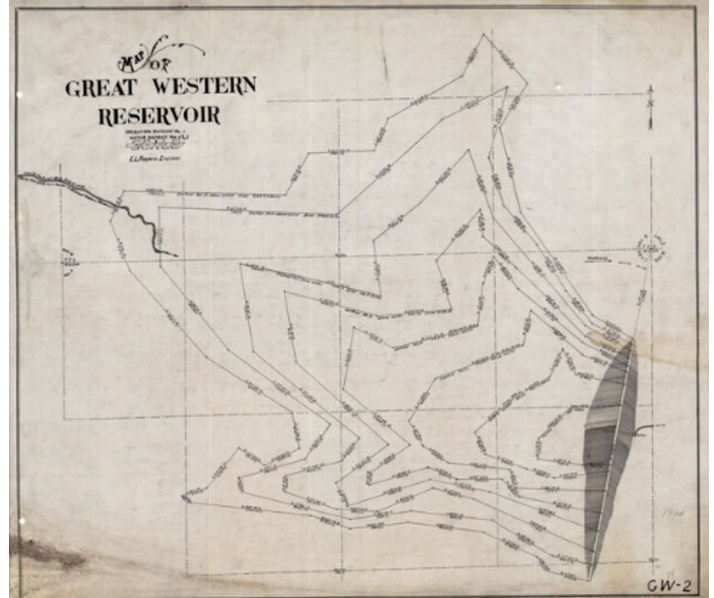
GREAT WESTERN RESERVOIR

BEGINNINGS

Adolph J. Zang created the Broomfield Reservoir and Ditch Company to fund the creation of the Great Western Reservoir for irrigation water for agricultural purposes. The Zang family had already built up a land holding of over one thousand acres. According to one reference, work on the reservoir began around 1903 and wasn't completed until 1911, with water to fill it coming from Clear Creek and Coal Creek.

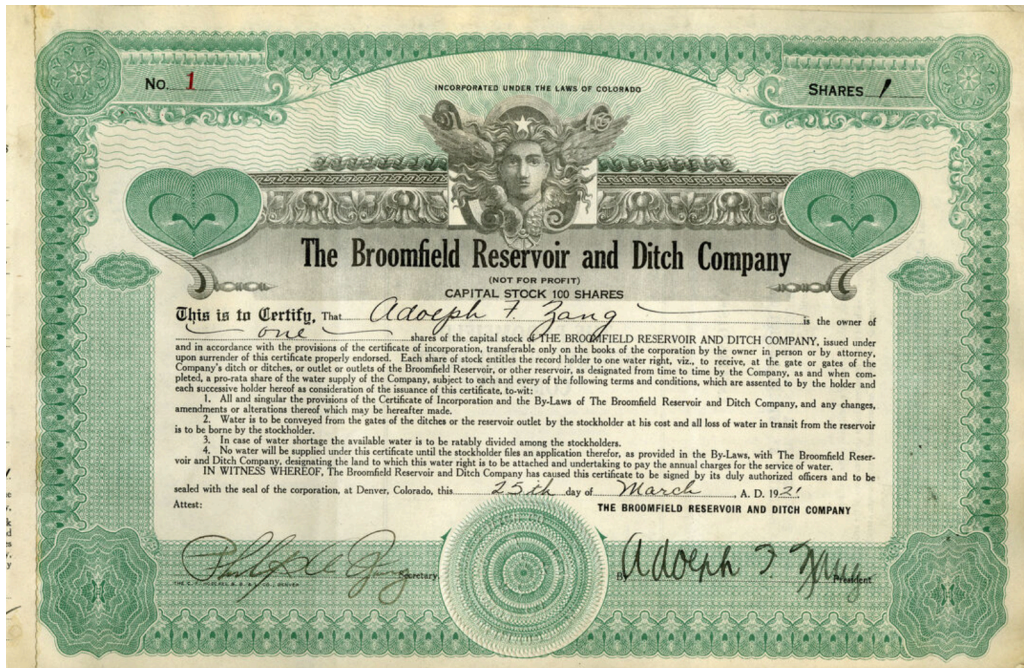
In the archives, we have a map of the original design for the reservoir, created by E.L. Rogers, the project's engineer. The issue of Colorado water rights was just as important in 1903 as it is today, so part of the permitting process involved understanding where the water to fill the reservoir would come from. A.J. Zang made claim to water from the Big Dry Creek, which he would use to fill the Great Western Reservoir. The State Engineer, L.J. Garpeuter, stated that A.J. Zang's claim (certificate below) was approved by the State of Colorado before construction started. A

[certificate from the Broomfield Reservoir and Ditch Company is below.](#)⁴



[Plan for the Great Western Reservoir](#)⁵

Land and water rights allowed Zang to grow essential cash crops for beer production, such as wheat, oats, and barley, which added to the family's wealth.



[The Broomfield Reservoir and Ditch Company stock certificate for A.J. Zang, 1921, Broomfield History Collections.](#)

GREAT WESTERN RESERVOIR



A tour of the Great Western Reservoir for real estate agents, c. 1956. Broomfield History Collections.

THE TURNPIKE LAND COMPANY ACQUIRES ZANG'S RANCH

In the 1950s, the Turnpike Land Company started to market Broomfield Heights as a planned subdivision. The Company itself was a privately held corporation that was run by handful of stockholders with a strong vision to transform farmland into a city. In 1955, they bought what had been the Zang's Ranch. That acquisition allowed the Great Western Reservoir to become a reliable source of water for the expanding town, with the construction of a water main to a new treatment plant. The view was that the

development now had “a reservoir big enough for a population of 30,500 for a year and a half if never a drop was added.”⁶ Having access to water was so important that tours were arranged for Denver-based relators, [which included a stop at the reservoir.](#)⁷

Starting in 1963, the Broomfield Heights Mutual Service Association was [selling water from Great Western Reservoir to the city.](#)⁸ By 1971, expanding Broomfield was getting its water supply from both the Great Western Reservoir and Denver Water.

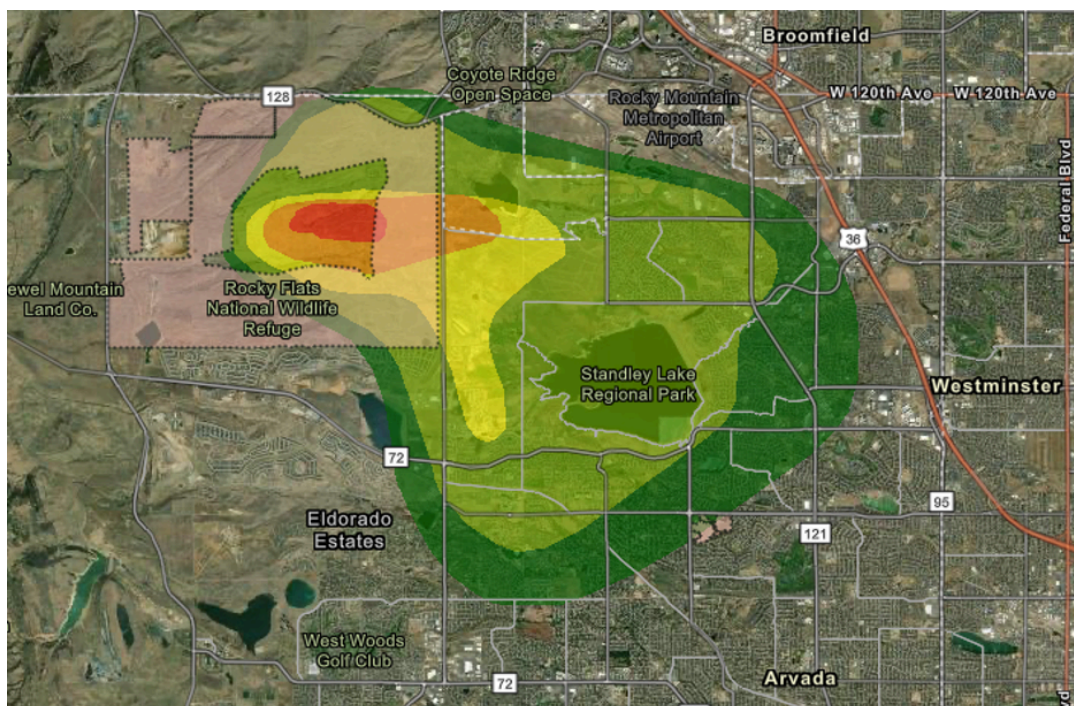
GREAT WESTERN RESERVOIR

CONTAMINATION OF GREAT WESTERN RESERVOIR

Rocky Flats is immediately West of the Great Western Reservoir. From 1952 to 1989, Rocky Flats was home to a factory producing components for nuclear weapons. In 1970, the EPA tested water in Walnut Creek, which both feeds the reservoir and drains out from it, and detected

plutonium in the water, contaminated by leakage from Rocky Flats. [The EPA found 40 times normal levels of plutonium in the layers of mud at the bottom of the reservoir in 1973.](#)⁹ With a half-life of 24,000 years, plutonium-239 is potentially cancer-inducing if inhaled in sufficient quantities, so contamination of the city's primary water supply was understood to be a potentially serious public health hazard. [The map above, redrawn from earlier Department of Energy Data,](#)¹⁰ shows a plume of plutonium contamination originating at Rocky Flats.

Also, in 1973, [radioactive tritium from contaminated scrap material at Rocky Flats was discovered in Walnut Creek and the Great Western Reservoir.](#)¹¹ In 1976, the task force report about the contamination issues originating at Rocky Flats included a statement that the plant's continued operation



Map showing a plume of plutonium contamination originating at Rocky Flats, redrawn from earlier [Department of Energy Data](#)

was important to the local economy. However, a 1977 newspaper article describes the Broomfield City Council's reaction to the task force's report: "That was when we blew our stack," said Goerge [sic] Di Ciero, Broomfield's city manager. "[They had mistakes, accidents and incidents up there and they were, in effect, telling us we should take it because of their payroll.](#)"¹²

On June 6, 1989, the FBI and the EPA raided the Rocky Flats plant to collect data on potential violations of environmental law based on multiple serious incidents related to the release of radioactive plutonium and tritium, and agents stayed on site through June 26. Consequently, Broomfield immediately switched sourcing drinking water to Denver Water. Local citizens dug a ditch to divert water from Walnut Creek around Great Western Reservoir.¹³ Ultimately, a DOE grant

GREAT WESTERN RESERVOIR

and sale of Broomfield's Clear Creek water rights funded the 1991 Great Western Reservoir Replacement Project to build a new Broomfield drinking water infrastructure, including water rights, a new water treatment facility, and a pipeline to bring water to the facility. The 1991 Replacement Project also expanded the secondary water supply through a contract with Denver Water. Interestingly, that agreement was opposed by local environmental groups fearing that water availability in Broomfield would accelerate a mass urbanization mess.¹⁴ By 2004, the Great Western Reservoir had been relegated to being a component of the water reuse system that provides non-potable water for irrigation purposes in Broomfield.

CURRENT EVENTS

The current state of Great Western Reservoir is a legacy of an earlier time in Broomfield that is associated with atomic weapons production. Clearly, a short trip to the west side of Broomfield provides a highly visible local artifact of history that is more powerful than just a stock certificate or an old picture. While researching this topic, I didn't expect to find a Denver Post article dealing with local advocacy groups suing multiple federal agencies to halt work on a trail through the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge—[through what they still considered the most plutonium-contaminated part of the area](#).¹⁵ Before that, the Jefferson Parkway project was supposed to provide a segment of a beltway circling Denver—until Broomfield withdrew its support, [at least in part because of concerns stemming from a high Plutonium sample reading in 2019 on the east side of the Rocky Flats reserve](#).¹⁶

On a more mundane level, the open space surrounding the Great Western Reservoir has been the subject of multiple news articles in recent years because of [bubonic plague infections among the local prairie dog population](#).¹⁷ There is an obvious need to let people know about these outbreaks, which could spill over into surrounding areas; still, it is interesting to read about the plague closing this area of open space that is normally not open to the public.

BIGGER TRENDS

Great Western Reservoir can be seen as part of the wider Front Range story of needing to secure water rights and create a delivery infrastructure to support further development. Obviously, there was urgency and necessity to deliver the Great Western Reservoir Replacement project in 1991, but the timing was also good because at that point, there was less development in the region. Consider that Thornton has water rights from the Cache la Poudre River and cannot get approvals to build a pipeline to access that water from neighboring counties—another example of development occurring where there isn't water, and [creating jurisdictional clashes and elevating environmental concerns](#).¹⁸

We also know that the historic nuclear impact from Rocky Flats is not just a Broomfield concern, nor is it the only environmental concern in the region. [There are concerns about the safety of the Candelas development in Arvada immediately to the south of what had been the Rocky Flats site](#).¹⁹ On December 27, 2023, [homeowners filed a lawsuit about the noise and lead pollution originating from flight activities at the Rocky Mountain Regional Airport](#).²⁰

GREAT WESTERN RESERVOIR

Clearly, concerns about water access and environmental pollution are not confined to Broomfield's local history and the past but continue to be current issues here and in surrounding areas.

SUMMARY

The history of the Great Western Reservoir in some ways reflects the history of Broomfield itself, moving from a sparsely populated agricultural area and transforming into a suburban community with new requirements and challenges, including the need to deal with the longer-term effects of surrounding developments. We also know that even after remediating once highly polluted areas and converting them to a wildlife refuge or open space, there is still ambiguity about safety and appropriate new uses for those areas. Off in a far corner of the county and not easily accessible, this area doesn't make the news very often. [Most online references to Great](#)

[Western Reservoir today come from people asking about fishing access](#).²¹ Nevertheless, the Great Western Reservoir is an important piece of our local history that more people should know about.

EPILOGUE

If the preceding historical overview has raised questions in your mind about the state of Rocky Flats-related pollution on the Broomfield environment today, The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has a [document on Rocky Flats Myths and Misunderstandings that may be helpful and reassuring](#).²² There should be no new contamination due to the closure and clean-up of Rocky Flats, although plutonium does remain in Great Western Reservoir sediments.

1. "Requiem for a Nun," Wikipedia, Last modified January 22, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Requiem_for_a_Nun.

2. Sierra Guardiola, "50 Quotes about Time Passing," *Southern Living*, October 5, 2023, <https://www.southernliving.com/culture/quotes-about-time-passing>.

3. See image above from MAPS.APPLE.COM. "Map of Great Western Reservoir," Accessed January 24, 2024, <https://maps.apple.com/?ll=39.899295,-105.153834&q=Broomfield—BroomfieldCounty&spn=0.015976,0.036364&t=h>

4. "The Broomfield Reservoir and Ditch Company stock certificate for A.J. Zang," *Broomfield History Collections*, March 25, 1921, <https://hub.catalogit.app/9352/folder/entry/0ced3f60-473f-11ed-ab8a-bf49b1a63c01>.

5. "Map of the Great Western Reservoir," *Broomfield History Collections*, 1904, <https://hub.catalogit.app/9352/folder/entry/1c09b440-1b6c-11ee-94f2-2d7caf581c4c>.

6. Advertisement quote from *The Broomfield Builder*, a publication of the Turnpike Land Company, <https://hub.catalogit.app/9352/folder/a5ef4790-48a1-11ed-9b74-fb65c00c73a7/entry/272d1b10-48a3-11ed-ab8a-bf49b1a63c01>.

7. "Great Western Reservoir," c. 1956, *Broomfield History Collections*, <https://hub.catalogit.app/9352/folder/entry/26dd7470-48a3-11ed-ab8a-bf49b1a63c01>.

8. "Broomfield Water Resources," *Broomfield.org*, August 2011, <https://www.broomfield.org/DocumentCenter/View/7968/Water-resources-update-2011>.

9. Bill Richards, "Plutonium Taints Their Reservoir." *Washington Post*, March 21, 1977, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1977/03/21/plutonium-taints-their-reservoir/df5da12e-06b0-4171-883c-bba20f14f46d/>.
10. Jessica Peakes, submitted as a final project for GEOG 3053, University of Colorado, Boulder, "A Geographical Study of Rocky Flats and Surrounding Areas," ArcGIS StoryMaps, December 11, 2021, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/773c125c28454013972812b65454a7c2>.
11. Patricia Buffer, "Rocky Flats History," *Energy.gov*, July 2003, <https://www.energy.gov/lm/articles/rocky-flats-site-colorado-history-documents>.
12. Richards, "Plutonium Taints Their Reservoir."
13. Silvia Pettem, *Broomfield: Changes through Time*, paperback, 1st ed. (Book Lode, 2001), 190.
14. Pettem, *Broomfield: Changes through Time*, 87.
15. Katie Langford. "Colorado Environmental Groups File Federal Lawsuit to Halt Rocky Flats Trail." *The Denver Post*, January 8, 2024, <https://www.denverpost.com/2024/01/08/rocky-flats-lawsuit-colorado-physicians-social-responsibility-plutonium/>.
16. John Aguilar, "Arvada, Jefferson County Sue Broomfield over Beleaguered Jefferson Parkway Project," *The Denver Post*, June 6, 2022, <https://www.denverpost.com/2022/06/06/jefferson-parkway-lawsuit-arvada-jefferson-county-broomfield/>.
17. Breanna Sneeringer, "Plague Closes Open Space until Further Notice in Colorado," *OutThere Colorado*, July 13, 2020, https://denvergazette.com/outtherecolorado/news/plague-closes-open-space-until-further-notice-in-colorado/article_aad4b47b-9657-5ecc-b3d6-fa78e7c58051.html.
18. Michael Booth. "Thornton Has Plenty of Water — It's Just in the Wrong Place. And That's a Very Colorado Story," *The Colorado Sun*, September 6, 2023, <https://coloradosun.com/2022/12/04/thornton-water-rights-pipeline-larimer-county/>.
19. Heidi Beedle, "The Nuclear Legacy of Rocky Flats: Health, Contamination Concerns Linger," *Colorado Times Recorder*, April 24, 2023, <https://coloradotimesrecorder.com/2023/04/the-nuclear-legacy-of-rocky-flats-health-contamination-concerns-linger/53105/>.
20. Rob Harris, "Hundreds of Homeowners Sue Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport Alleging Harm to Property Values." *Denver 7 Colorado News (KMGH)*, December 28, 2023, <https://www.denver7.com/news/local-news/hundreds-of-homeowners-sue-rocky-mountain-metropolitan-airport-alleging-harm-to-property-values#:~:text=BROOMFIELD,%20Colo.,have%20hurt%20their%20property%20values.>
21. On the internet you can find pictures of people who say they have caught fish in The Great Western Reservoir. If this is accurate, the activity seems problematic on several levels. For an example see Fishbrain: "Fishing Reports, Best Baits and Forecast for Fishing in Great Western Reservoir," <https://fishbrain.com/fishing-waters/8f-2t8l/great-western-reservoir>.
22. "Myths and Misunderstandings [about Rocky Flats]" *Colorado Department of Health and Environment*, March 18, 2019, <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/hm/rocky-flats-faq> > Myths and misunderstandings (FAQ item).



Broomfield Soil

By Sandra Roberts, Editor

In the early 1990s, I became a first-time homeowner in Broomfield. The house was small, but the yard was large, and I was ready to work the soil (and make plenty of mistakes). But there was one mistake I didn't make: I noticed the clay soil in my yard, and I added amendments before I planted.

Growing up with Northern California red clay, now known as "[San Joaquin soil](#),"¹ I acquired a small amount of gardening wisdom. I knew that unless the plants loved clay (and some do) Broomfield's [soil needed to be carefully amended for new plants and trees](#).² What I didn't know was that Broomfield clay was different. It wasn't like red clay, which may expand only moderately. Broomfield clay is bentonite, a truly expansive soil.

According to the [CSU Extension website](#),

All major population centers in Colorado are partially located on expansive soils. These soils, called bentonite, contain a clay mineral that swells when it gets wet and shrinks upon drying.³

CSU goes on to say that "Swelling soils cause damage to thousands of homes every year."



Roberts COMMERCIAL PHOTO

"Drilling Operations are underway at Atlas Industrial Park near Broomfield, preparatory to site preparation for a multi-million dollar project by Trasamerica Development Co. The Boulder-based consulting engineering firm of R.V. Lord and Associates has been retained to conduct soils and foundations investigations of the area, and a drilling rig has been busy on site." c. 1965, not far from the intersection of 287 and Midway Blvd., Broomfield History Collections.

Who among us has not seen (and tried to ignore) ceiling and wall cracks resulting from "settling" under our foundations?

Broomfielders have acclimatized to sunken and/or cracked basement floors, driveways, porches, and sidewalks. Take a walk in a neighborhood that's a few years old, and you'll see plenty of cracks beneath your feet. Even the owners of Flatirons Mall, which was completed in 2000, may have been surprised when the walls and floors of some buildings began to heave. Contractors had tested the

soil and filed their mitigation plan with the City of Broomfield before breaking ground, but [the soil didn't cooperate](#).⁴

What is bentonite and why do we have it here?

The [Colorado Geological Survey website](#)⁵ tells us that bentonite is a “volcanic ash clay found in many parts of the world.” It is created when ash is put under high pressure, and seawater is added to the mix.

Colorado has long been a source for bentonite, which is used in a [wide variety of products today, including cat litter, ceramics, paint, and even medicine](#).⁶ However, [Wyoming](#)⁷ currently produces the most bentonite of any state, and [China](#)⁸ produces more bentonite than any other country. Colorado still produces bentonite, which was historically used in bricks. Here's one man's description of what it was like to make clay bricks in Ft. Collins in the early 1900s: <https://history.fcgov.com/anecdotes/23>.⁹

As Broomfield and other Front Range towns have spread out over our expansive soil, we've learned more about how to build safely in Colorado.

Once you're in your home, [CSU Extension](#) offers some good advice about keeping your foundation in good condition:

Begin landscaping with a site that has been graded so water drains away from the house. Plant vegetation no closer than five feet from the foundation, unless the plants have very low water requirements. Xeriscape-type groundcovers and mulches are especially useful near houses because they can help reduce extreme moisture fluctuations.¹⁰

Over the years, I've learned a little more about gardening and caring for my landscape. At one point, I learned about the Master Gardener program through one of my colleagues, who was a Master Gardener herself. For decades, the City and County of Broomfield has worked with CSU Extension as part of the [Master Gardener program](#)¹¹ to provide detailed and personalized help to individuals with questions about caring for their landscape, and CSU Extension “holds hands-on workshops at the vegetable teaching garden,” which is located at Broomfield's Brunner Farmhouse. You can check out their website at <https://broomfield.extension.colostate.edu/local-programs/gardening-horticulture/>.¹²

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Settlers and Homesteaders in Nineteenth Century Broomfield, Part I

By Roberta Depp, Friends of Broomfield History



Church Ranch on Old Wadsworth, c. 1890-1950, Broomfield History Collections.

THE LURE OF GOLD

The disparaging descriptions by early explorers (“unfit for human habitation,” “howling wilderness”), challenges of geography, and hostile native inhabitants delayed white settlement of Colorado. Midwest land was easier to till, and the gold fields of California attracted people seeking fortune in the west. However, in 1858, when Georgian William Green Russell decided to

leave gold prospecting in California and try the Rocky Mountains instead, things began to change. Russell and his party joined a wagon train of Cherokees at the Arkansas River, traveling with them to the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River, where Russell planned to prospect for gold. The Cherokees had been traveling a route along the front range since 1849, going north to Laramie, where they met up with the

SETTLERS AND HOMESTEADERS

Oregon Trail, and then west to California. A second arm of the Cherokee Trail went further west and then north, joining the original trail at Fort Collins. This route, known as the Overland Trail, roughly follows present-day Hwy 287 and passed through land which later became Broomfield. Russell's group found enough gold to set off the great Pike's Peak gold rush.

While many came to Colorado looking for gold, others saw an opportunity to build towns or make a living providing services or goods. Thus, Denver City and Auraria were quickly plated. In 1859, when gold was discovered at the mouth of Boulder Canyon, Boulder City also emerged. Stage stops were established to help service the miners, early town developers, and other travelers to the area. In 1864, two Overland Trail stops were situated in what was later to become Broomfield. The Rock Creek Station was located on the north along present Hwy 287. The Church's Crossing Stage Stop was south along the east side of present-day Old Wadsworth Boulevard. Ben Halladay, the owner of the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company that operated the stops, selected the western branch of the Cherokee Trail as it was considered safer than the eastern branch from Indian attacks. Halladay also obtained a government contract to carry the mail.

Church's Station, run by George Church and his wife Sarah, was one of a string of "regular" or "home stations" where travelers could be lodged and fed. These were generally placed in ten- or eleven-mile intervals. It was eleven miles north of Denver. The Rock Creek Station, managed by Thomas Lindey, was an intermediate "swing" station where corrals

were maintained for horse changes. George Church originally came to prospect for gold but found it more profitable to provide services. His station included a twelve-room bunkhouse where stagecoach passengers could spend the night. A number of Colorado "firsts" have been attributed to his energy and ambition: first to raise Hereford beef cattle, first farm to grow dryland wheat, first to bring irrigation and build water storage reservoirs on the eastern slope. Later, he owned a ranch in Middle Park where cattle were summered and then driven back to Broomfield in the fall. The stage stop was operated until 1924.

EARLIEST LAND SEEKERS

When the Colorado Territorial Legislature created the original seventeen counties in September of 1861, surveyors quickly began mapping out townships. Each township contained thirty-six numbered sections of one square mile (640 acres), which were then divided into quarter sections of 160 acres. The legal descriptions were recorded in the territorial land offices and the General Land Office (later named the Bureau of Land Management) in Washington, D.C. These legal descriptions were necessary in order to transfer the land into private ownership. The Boulder County survey for the Broomfield area began in October of 1861 and was completed by September 1864. At that time Broomfield was yet to be named and was just referred to as Section 35.

The first farmers in the area were squatters, but after the surveys, they could claim right of pre-emption and, for a small fee, purchase the land they had settled. Surveyor George Pierce was one of the first farmers in Broomfield. He was joined by Willis Gregory and Stephen Goodall. All three farmed along

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Index entry: 1862 Land Patent for Susan Gay, Adams County.

Rock Creek and obtained legal title to their lands in 1864. Other farmers followed through the 1860s, but most moved on, selling their farms to those who came later. Lack of water and grasshopper swarms were some of the challenges for these early settlers. However, for some reason, Broomcorn was not appealing to the insects, so it became an ideal crop to grow in this area. A good market was also available for the stems that could be sewn into brooms.

By the 1870s, the Church and Rock Creek stations were established farms. Lindsey had sold the Rock Creek station to James B. Foote in 1866. By 1870, Foote, in partnership with his sister Mary and her husband

Lafayette Miller, was running a hotel and tavern called the Miller Tavern Ranch. The stagecoach line had been sold to Wells Fargo & Company in 1866, but traffic was steadily declining on the route. The Millers sold the station in 1871 to Abner Goodhue and J. A. Bates and purchased other land of their own. Another early farmer of this era was John Palmer Graves, who married Mary Ema Wadsworth in 1873. Mary was the daughter of Benjamin Franklin Wadsworth, the founding father of Arvada and namesake of Wadsworth Boulevard. John operated his farm until 1912 when he turned it over to his sons. Of the earliest settlers, the Graves and Church families were among the few to remain for several generations in the Broomfield area.

SETTLERS AND HOMESTEADERS

On the eastern side of Broomfield, in Adams County, another early family set down roots that continue to the present day. The Gay family settled on land that is now known as the Metzger Farm Open Space along Big Dry Creek. Susan Gay, a widow with several children, filed in 1870 on an 80-acre piece of property. Married women were generally not allowed to make entry (apply) for a land patent under the Homestead Act. Susan built a house on what is now the corner of 120th Avenue and Lowell, improved the land and received a patent (title) six years later in 1876 from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management—a remarkable accomplishment for a woman of that era. Later, her son Albert purchased several nearby 80-acre sections, including the upper portion of the Metzger property where the house sits. The main part of the Metzger house was his original home. The Homestead Act and the federal government's distribution of land to the railroads would have a significant impact on future Broomfield land holdings.

To be continued in the next issue

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The History of Our Logo

By Rachel Courtney, Friends of Broomfield History

Andrea Margheim Minnich and Rachel Courtney met in March 2022 at a Broomfield PULSE networking event. When Rachel introduced herself as a graphic designer, the conversation went quickly from there. Andrea and Rachel describe their meeting:

Andrea: I said, “Really? I need a designer! I need a banner.”

Rachel: And I said, “Great! When do you need it?”

Andrea: “Yesterday!”

Rachel: Of course at this point, I figured, aah, another client who needs something immediately. Let's see where this goes! I was surprised that Andrea texted me right after the meeting and sent the information she needed for the banner. At that point I realized the banner would need a high-resolution logo for it, and that a logo didn't really exist, or wasn't popular anymore.

Andrea: I sent a very sophisticated drawing of the logo (laughs)



Andrea's initial rough draft

Rachel: I had just met Andrea, so I didn't know that she was a lot of fun and that I could have directly asked, “What in the world is that?!” So I tried my best to come up with a professional and polite way to ask. For some reason my brain was not reading the paper scroll in the background as such. We quickly texted back and forth and worked out that the organization wanted Colorado flag colors in the logo. Fonts included a script for “Friends of,” something very readable for “Broomfield,” and a similar font to the History channel's for “History.” Design elements included a scroll-like piece of paper, a quill, and broomcorn.



But what in the world is broomcorn?! I was really excited that Andrea was able to articulate that it looked similar to a corn stalk, but with a different amount of blooms at the top. I sent her a few iterations of that: one yellow thing atop the stalk, three, five...



Rachel's first three proofs

Andrea: Each proof got closer to what I wanted.

Rachel: As I look back on the drawing, it's very clear what Andrea wanted. She did a great job drawing it, but I didn't see what each element was. I am really grateful for that chance meeting and that I happened to sit at Andrea's table.

Rachel owns [Pretty Nice Creations](#) and has since worked with Andrea on banners, fliers, yard signs and social media posts.

NOTE: Our logo will change a bit in the future, as we are in the process of rebranding to the name our original organization, the Broomfield Historical Society.

However, we'll keep the same look and feel of the logo that Rachel designed.

Stay tuned!



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