

Historic Preservation Planning Report

METZGER FARM

Westminster & Broomfield
Colorado



Prepared for:
Broomfield-Westminster Open Space Foundation

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Project Background

In June 2004, the City of Westminster engaged Tatanka Historical Associates Inc. (THAI), a Fort Collins-based historic preservation consulting firm, to complete field work, archival research, interviews and historic analysis of the Metzger Farm property. The project was completed by Ron Sladek of THAI. Deliverables for the project include this report and a digital copy of the videotaped interviews with members of the Metzger family.

Scope of Work

This project was conceived as a benchmark historical study of the Metzger Farm. It was not intended to involve the documentation of individual historic features to the standards of Colorado's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) or to involve physical assessment of the condition of the individual buildings. Rather, it was the goal of this project to collect information about the Metzger family, the career of John Metzger, the site's general history, and to gather interpretive information about the historic features that remain there today. This information will guide planning, preservation and interpretation efforts in the future.

In general, it was determined that the Metzger property was originally settled and farmed by the Gay family in the late 1800s. John Metzger purchased the site in 1943. His subsequent transformation of the property into a modern agricultural enterprise largely erased earlier features there, resulting in a farm that is now wholly representative of mid-twentieth century agriculture in Colorado.

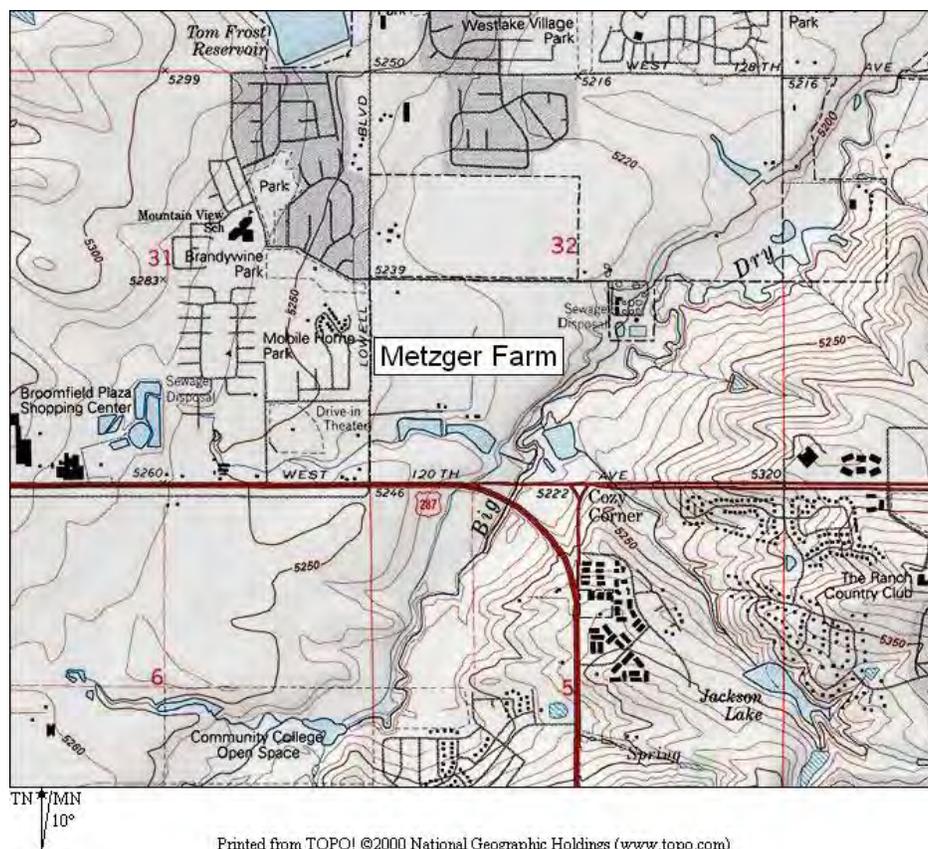
The scope of work on the project was limited to the following activities:

- Field documentation of historic features
- Archival research into the site's history, the background of the Metzger family, and the career of John Metzger
- Completion of interviews with Gip Wilson (27 February 2006) and with Bill and Karen Metzger (13 November 2006 & 19 March 2007) to uncover the family's history along with details regarding the property's background and features
- Production of a final project report

Documentation of the Metzger Farm

Throughout the course of the project, the site was visited several times to photograph, measure and document its buildings, equipment and other features. In addition, the extensive research and interviews provided a tremendous amount of information about the property and its historic features. The following presents the results of our analysis of these historic site characteristics.

General Physical Characteristics: The Metzger Farm occupies much of the southwest quarter of Section 32, Township 1 South, Range 68 West, and has a current street address of 12080 Lowell Blvd., Westminster, Colorado. Its historic mailing address was Box 71, Broomfield. The 152-acre property is bordered on the north by 124th Ave., the east by Federal Blvd. and open fields, the south by 120th Ave., and on the west by Lowell Blvd. and the City of Broomfield.



USGS Lafayette topographic quadrangle (1994)

The farm consists predominantly of former crop fields that are currently fallow and planted with short grasses. These fields are found primarily throughout the northern 2/3 of the site as well as in its southwest quarter. Crossing through the southeast quarter of the property from southwest to northeast is Big Dry Creek. This area of the property also contains numerous trees. The south-central area of the site holds two lakes that are oriented lengthwise on an east-west axis. Together, the lakes, creek, marshlands, and wooded areas make up an estimated ¼ of the area of the Metzger Farm.

Historic Farmsteads: Two farmsteads that predate the Metzger's presence on the property were historically associated with this farm. In the late 1800s, the current Metzger farm was split into two side-by-side 80-acre parcels, each owned by Albert Gay and Susan Gay (*see map on page 38*). One of these consisted of the core home that is now within the expanded Metzger house (this was Albert Gay's parcel). The other was located along what is now the southeast edge of the farm, at a spot now marked by a grove of mature trees just north of 120th Ave. (Susan Gay's parcel). No foundations or other remnants of the farmstead were found in this area.

The Main Entry Road: The property is entered by car from Lowell Blvd. about 500' north of 120th Ave. Lowell was originally an unpaved county road, and the Metzgers had to continually work to keep ahead of the dust that was kicked up every time someone drove by.



View of the main entry drive from the farmstead. View to the west.

From the entry gate along the road, an eastbound unpaved driveway brings the visitor to the farmstead. The long section of driveway running from Lowell Blvd. to the farmstead was finished with crushed red flagstone in the 1940s by John Metzger. In the early 1960s, he had this length paved. The remainder of the farmstead road from the house to the barn, which essentially forms the wider farmyard, was covered with gravel and has never been paved.

Design and orientation of the farmstead: The farmstead was constructed in a relatively central location on the farm, just south and southwest of the center of the ¼-mile square site, both to provide privacy and easy access to any part of the acreage. In addition, this location placed the home away from the roads, which were a source of dust that made it difficult to keep a home clean.

The farmstead's buildings were mostly oriented toward the south and east to take advantage of the winter sun and to face away from the prevailing northern and

western winter winds and weather. For the same reason, few windows, doors or other openings face toward the north and west. The primary exception to this is the main house, which faces toward the west and the property's entrance along Lowell Blvd. However, the house was altered and enlarged and this may not have been the original home's direction of orientation (it probably also faced toward the south).

The farm buildings were constructed in two east-west lines that run along the northern and southern edges of the farm yard. The north line holds the main house, caretakers' house, garage/shop, vegetable garden, root cellar, granary, and milk house. All of these are residential, tool storage/repair, and food-related uses. The south line holds the machine shed, fuel pumps, chicken house, brooder house, barn, loafing shed, and corrals. These are all animal and equipment uses. The distinction of these building types and their placement within the farmstead show evidence of planning, even if informal, that likely was related to the idea of how a model farm of the middle decades of the 1900s should be constructed. These concepts would have been accessible to John Metzger through agricultural literature of the period that advised rural residents on the many scientific and engineering aspects of operating a modern farm.



**View of the farmyard, lined with rows of farm buildings on the north and south.
View to the east.**

Color Scheme of the Farm: Color schemes are not usually associated with farm operations, although many farmers painted their buildings white (a sign of cleanliness, efficiency, and conservative values) and red barns are common across the countryside. However, John Metzger's favorite color was green. He used the color in his home, farm buildings, equipment, and even used green ink in his law practice. He preferred John Deere farm equipment because it was all finished with green paint. This color was offset through the addition of white and red, particularly on the farmstead. The buildings were predominantly white with green trimwork and roofs, and the main entry road was finished with crushed red sandstone. His purebred cattle were also a deep red and matched the overall color scheme of his operation.

The Farm House: The Metzger farmhouse is a rectangular wood frame building with an overall footprint that measures approximately 32' x 60'. When John Metzger purchased the property in 1943, the house was much smaller than it is today. The early home can be seen where the taller roof line and basement walls mark its location at the center of the building. This original farmhouse, which dates from the late 1800s, consisted of that original core together with a small open porch on the southeast. Which direction it faced is no longer known.

During the mid-1950s, the small house was expanded by the Metzgers to the north and south with the construction of additions designed to provide extra living, office, and bedroom space. Until then, the family's bedrooms were all upstairs. John and Betty had the bedroom on the south and their children Bill and Karen shared the north bedroom. Seeking more space for their family, John and Betty had the north and south additions completed and then the front porch added to tie it all together. This expansion project was completed by 1957.



Front (west elevation) of the Metzger Farm House. View to the East.

The expansion and extensive exterior remodeling changed the entire appearance of the building. When it was done, the home faced toward the west and was finished with horizontal siding, new bay windows, 6- and 8-light over 1-light double hung sash windows, and roof-line stickwork balustrades. Open porches with red tiled floors and square posts were installed at the western main entry and off the southeast corner of the home.

One morning during construction, John was standing in the front yard with his architect and builder. They were discussing the design of the front porch and how to make the spans work on its second-floor banister. Bill, a young child at the time, was there as well. He suggested that they install the letter "M" (for Metzger) into the banister rail, in the narrow span centered above the front door. At first the adults were resistant to the idea, but they agreed to do it and the "M"

remains there today. The dormers were original and contain large closets that the kids used to climb into to play. While the exterior was originally covered with wood siding, John had it refaced with metal siding that was easier to maintain.

Where the Metzgers took their inspiration from in terms of the style of the house is not known, although they were working with an architect who drew up the plans. Always deeply involved in every project he undertook, John (and possibly Betty) determined the style of home that he wanted and then left it to his architect and builder to make it happen. All of the exterior work combined to convert the original home from a small, most likely vernacular building to the side-gabled Neoclassical style residence that remains there today. Neoclassical residential architecture was popular in the United States from around 1895 to 1950, and the Metzger farmhouse represents a late but clearly defined version of the style.

Stacked on shelves and on the floor inside the machine shed to the southeast of the house are the green painted shutters that were previously mounted on the house. These were operable and were used to insulate the home in the winter. They were removed from the home and put into storage when the double-paned storm windows were installed.



Rear (east elevation) of the Metzger Farm House. View to the northwest.

Inside the home, the expansion project included taking the original dining room and converting it into a wood-paneled library. At the same time, the original doorway from the kitchen to the dining room was sealed. The dining room was moved to a shared space with the living room north of the kitchen and main entry. A small main-floor restroom and coat closet (with a laundry chute) were removed to create a short hallway that provided direct access from the kitchen to the front entry. The north addition provided the home with a music room (for Betty's organ and baby grand piano) and a master bedroom with its own bathroom.

On the south, the new addition and subsequent changes eventually provided an office and cork-floored meeting room on the first floor, with bedroom space above. The 16' x 16' southwest office was originally constructed as an open porch with tongue-in-groove wood flooring. The family had to regularly sand and oil the woodwork (with linseed oil) so it wouldn't be ruined by the weather. John hung an old airplane propeller from the ceiling to serve as a light fixture. However the porch wasn't used as much as they had anticipated, so he had it enclosed and converted into an office space and library by the early 1960s since he was spending more time working from home. The windows are Lexan and the solid panels between them were installed so John could have bookcases behind them. This room was where John Metzger kept his desk, law books, and business papers.

Rather than work in the home office, John primarily worked in the southeast room known to the family as the "back porch." This space was originally an open porch that was half its current size. During the 1950s expansion, it was doubled in size toward the south and the cork floor was installed. The open porch that extends to the east was also added at that time. The informal "back porch" working room was also where John met with clients and hosted numerous meetings of community groups such as the ditch company. He also maintained an office in downtown Denver.

The home's basement contained (and still contains) two bedrooms, a laundry/utility room, and a former coal room that was converted into a cedar closet. The family used the home's fireplace often and stored firewood in one of the sheds on the farmstead. The house was originally heated with a coal-fired boiler. Coal was delivered to the basement coal room through the window that is painted black in the lower east wall of the building. The boiler was converted to a fuel oil-fired system, which was later replaced by natural gas.

When the construction work was done, Karen was moved downstairs to the new main-floor north bedroom. She was thrilled to have her own bedroom along with its own private bathroom. However, she came home from school one day to find that her parents had moved themselves into the new main floor bedroom, she had been moved back upstairs to the north bedroom, and Bill was moved to the second floor south bedroom. The two basement bedrooms were used during the hot summer months when it was too uncomfortable to sleep on the second floor.

Landscaped Grounds and other Features around the House: Surrounding the Metzger house are landscaped grounds in all directions. The western, front yard was originally occupied by a circular drive of crushed red flagstone that entered from a gate near the yard's southwest corner. Red flagstone was installed by John Metzger so it would look elegant against the white house with its green trim. Flagstone pavers ran from the front porch and circular drive to a gate in the fence along the south edge of the yard at the main road. Some of the paving stones and crushed flagstone may still be found under the grass. Eventually, the circular drive was replaced with the sod found there today.

All of the trees on the Metzger Farm were planted by John Metzger. The row of deciduous trees along the west and north edges of the house's front yard are crabapples that produce alternating white and red blossoms. In the fall, Betty and Karen used to pick the apples to make jelly. Several years later, John decided to make a windbreak around the yard. Behind the crabapple trees, he planted a row of 6"-tall pine trees that have now matured. The landscaping around the house was watered by a pump and piping system from the lake (more below). When the lake was low, or there was something wrong with the pump, they couldn't get water to the yards.



**Landscaping in the rear yard, with the former rose garden at center.
View to the north.**

The circular garden in the rear yard was Betty's rose garden, with the home's septic tank underneath. The garden had a birdbath in the middle surrounded by rose bushes, with irises around the perimeter. The roses are gone, but some of the irises are still there although they've migrated a bit. The tall trees that surround the rear yard and extend along the north side of the house are mature Dutch elms. Several became diseased or reached the end of their natural life span and were removed, so there are now a few gaps where trees used to be.

During the summer months, Bill and Karen strung sheets on the clothesline and played in the shade beneath them. For many years, the clothesline was used for all of the family's laundry, which was done in the basement laundry room. They made a point of washing and hanging all of the bed linens, quilts, and blankets on the clothesline when the alfalfa was being cut in the adjacent field. The harvest reportedly made the linens smell especially wonderful.

The pole-mounted bell off the southeast corner of the house was used to call everyone home. Forged in 1886, it could be heard for a great distance, unless one was operating machinery. If they heard it ringing, family members and farm

workers knew they needed to head to the house right away. That could be for a meal or it could be due to some sort of emergency.



The 1886 farm bell next to the main house.

The septic system from the main house and caretakers' house meet at the septic tank under the rose garden in the rear yard of the main house. From there, the system runs to the south under the road and pine grove to end at a leach field north of the lakes. Just north of the dam/causeway between the lakes is a round metal plate on the ground. This covers the final inspection pit for the leach field, so the purified water could be tested before it ran into the lakes.

The Heating Oil Tank: The silver tank on the ground south of the caretakers' house was installed during the energy crisis of 1973. It was manufactured by Eidson Metal Products of Albuquerque, New Mexico. At that time, the boiler in the main house was fueled by No. 2 heating oil and John wanted to make sure the family could be self-sufficient. He bought the tank and had it installed so the family wouldn't have to worry about keeping the house heated.

The Playground and Caretakers' House: The small open area to the south of the caretakers' house and north of the road, where there is an aboveground tank today, was originally a small playground for the kids. It had sand on the ground, along with a swingset and slide (the slide is still on the site, but is sitting just south of the road). The tree provided shade and the kids would play there for hours. Betty could see the kids from the main house's kitchen and the caretakers could also help keep an eye on them.

When Gip and Betty Wilson lived in the small house, he had a dairy herd and was selling milk to the Watts Hardy Dairy. The truck drivers picking up the milk would always stop by the play area so the kids could sell them mud pies for a

penny. Bill made the mud pies and Karen sold them. Bill jokingly recalled that this arrangement gave him a chance to play in the mud and Karen an opportunity to practice her negotiating skills.

The wood-frame caretakers' house has a footprint of 21' x 36' and was most likely built in the early- to mid-1940s, but may in fact be older. This small building rests upon a concrete foundation, its walls are finished with horizontal siding, and it has a gabled roof. It appears to have been expanded over the years, particularly with shed-roof additions to the east. By 1952 it had reached its current size and appearance.



The Caretakers' House. View to the northwest.

John Metzger recruited married couples to do the caretaking and farm the land, providing them with this small house to live in. Right after World War II, John arranged through Catholic Charities for a displaced German couple named Vladimir and Anna Kiebert (sp?) to immigrate to the United States and live on the farm with their young son Karl. Shortly after they arrived, they had another son. Vladimir farmed the land and Anna babysat Bill and Karen because John and Betty were gone a lot of the time due to his political and legal work. The German family lived on the farm for several years before moving to a home of their own.

Gip and Betty Wilson then moved into the caretakers' house in 1952 and lived there for three years. They eventually moved on to Broomfield, which was just getting built up. After they left, there was a series of caretakers living in the house who were not really farmers but did maintenance work around the place.

The Garage: The garage, dating from the late 1940s or very early 1950s, is a 20' x 36' building east of the caretakers' house that rests upon a concrete foundation. It is of wood frame construction with horizontal siding, and has a side-gabled saltbox roof that sheds most of the snow and rain toward the north

and away from the front of the building. The western portion holds a wide parking space for two autos. This space had sliding doors on the front that have been removed and are now in storage in the machine shed. They were apparently taken down so the garage could be used more like an open carport.



The Garage. View to the northeast.

The eastern half of the building was used as a shop and tool room. It contained a workbench with a vise, grinder, and other tools and equipment necessary for maintaining the farm. This space is accessed by way of a sliding door.

The File Storage Building and Shed: These two small buildings are located east of the garage and rest upon a shared concrete pad. The larger one measures 12' x 24' and the smaller one has a footprint of 10' x 18'. They were both brought onto the property in the 1960s to store John's voluminous legal files and political records. Even though he had an office in downtown Denver, he needed a secure weatherproof place at home for storage.

Where the larger file storage building is now located was an older wood frame bunkhouse that fell down. This previous building was used by temporary farmhands who came to help with planting and the harvest. For a short time, the bunkhouse was used by John Metzger for storage. However, it was too open to mice and the weather and it eventually succumbed to deterioration. The metal shed, manufactured by Childers Steel Buildings of Denver, was acquired first and then the building with the white siding was installed afterward. The larger storage building is still mistakenly called the bunkhouse today, but was never used for anything other than file and records storage. It has the appearance of a factory-made building that may have been designed for use as a mobile construction office.



Large Storage Shed. View to the northeast.



Small Storage Shed. View to the southwest.

The Garden and Root Cellar: The large open fenced rectangular area that runs from east of the caretakers' house to the fence line beyond the granary on the east held the Metzger family's vegetable garden. The western area contained row vegetables, and the central portion was planted with corn. Betty's family was in the corn business near Fort Morgan, so the family knew how to grow corn, which they also enjoyed eating. The eastern area of the garden held vine plants growing produce such as pumpkins and squashes. The entire garden was planted for family consumption.

The garden was irrigated with lake water and the pipes and Rainbird sprinklers are still present along its northern length. The piping system was buried underground for watering the grounds around the houses, but emerged aboveground for the garden. A constant challenge was keeping rabbits out of the garden and the family had to continuously fix the fencing every growing season. Before the irrigation piping was installed, they would flood the garden when the adjacent alfalfa field was flooded.



The Vegetable Garden. View to the west.

In the open space south of the garden between the file storage buildings and granary was a root cellar. This largely below-ground feature has been demolished and filled in. Betty would can and store food in the root cellar. It had a bulkhead door and stairs going down into the ground. There was a light bulb inside that had to be screwed in for it to turn on. To Bill and Karen, the place was mysterious and spooky and they didn't go in there very often.

The Granary: The granary, dating from the late 1940s or very early 1950s, is located in the northeast area of the farmstead and faces toward the south into the farmyard. It is an 18' x 30' wood frame building that rests upon a concrete foundation and has exterior walls finished with weatherboard siding and a side-gabled roof with exposed rafter ends. On the inside, the building holds a central hallway and two grain cribs, one to the east and the other to the west. The interior is finished with smooth, tightly-fitted tongue-in-groove wall paneling and flooring designed to keep the weather and pests out.

Horizontal hinged wood-siding panels on the upper east and west walls were opened to the interior of the cribs so they could be loaded with grain. Loading was accomplished with the help of an Archimedes screw, or augur, which was set onto the ground outside the building. The augur lifted the grain up and into the openings, depositing it into the cribs and filling them from the bottom up. Inside the central hallway are small panels near the floor that were opened to

allow grain to pour out. From the floor, an augur and shovels were used to put the grain into a truck or farm wagon or bucket so it could be taken to feed the livestock.



The Granary. View to the northeast.

This building was altered somewhat after 1955 when two pairs of wood double doors were installed along its south elevation. These opened up the grain cribs, which were evidently no longer needed for this purpose.

The Milk House: The milk house, now demolished, was located on the concrete foundation that can be seen underneath a propane tank just east of the granary. This small building was used to temporarily store milk from the dairy cattle operation that was run by Gip Wilson. It was placed here to be close to the barn, yet far enough away that it could be kept cold and sanitary.

A water line ran underground from the barn to the milk house, providing clean water that was needed to keep the small building sanitized in compliance with good practices and dairy standards. A spigot is still found at this location. The regular washing of the building's interior may have resulted in its deterioration to the point that the building had to be removed.



The Milk House Foundation.

The Stock Standing Shed, or Loafing Shed: The loafing shed, which dates from the late 1940s, is located in the southeast corner of the farmstead and is connected on the south to the corral system.

This long rectangular 20' x 80' building, with a dirt floor and six bays open to the south, was used for livestock to take shelter from the winter weather and summer sun. Its side-gabled saltbox roof has its predominant slope toward the north so the building would shed snow and rain to the north and away from the corral.



The Loafing Shed.

The Barn and Corrals: The barn is located in the southeast area of the farmstead and is connected on the south to the corral system. This 28' x 48'

wood frame building rests upon a concrete foundation and was constructed in the 1940s. Overall, the building is of a compact size, which would have made it easier to keep warm during the winter months. It is finished on the exterior with horizontal weatherboard siding and has a gabled roof capped by a wood frame ventilator. Entrances to the building are found on the east and west, all of them containing Dutch doors that allowed the upper portions to remain open for ventilation while the lower portions were kept closed to keep the animals in or out. Dairy cattle managed by Gip Wilson were brought in and out of the building for milking through the southeast and northeast doors.

Entering the barn through the northwest door, the first room on the left in the northwest corner of the building was the wash room. Gip spent many hours there cleaning and sterilizing milking equipment, which had to be washed with hot water and a disinfectant. The next room to the east was used for calf feeding. It holds an automatic calf feeder that is mounted to the wall. Calf formula powder was put into the top of the machine (some is still in there), which was hooked up to a water line. The powder and water were mixed inside the machine and each calf was fed from a nipple at the bottom of the unit. With this system, the milk from the cows could be sold instead of going to the calves.



The Barn. View to the northeast.

The milking room occupies the entire eastern half of the barn. It contains twenty wood stanchions used to hold the cows in place while they were being milked. While the cows were eating from the troughs in the center of the room, the farmer attached the milking equipment. The concrete floors the cows stood on were slanted away from the middle of the room so they could be washed out the east doors (drain slots are found at the doors). This practice typically had the effect of undermining and washing away concrete foundations over time. The concrete thresholds at the east doors are cracked as a result of floor washing. The attic in this building was never used for storing hay or feed as in some barns.

The southwest room was used as an infirmary for cows that were not doing well and that needed treatment or to be isolated from the others during periods of illness or calving. This space was also used by Karen as a horse stall. The south wall in the interior hallway has long panels that open to allow for feed to be placed into the troughs inside the southwest room.

John Metzger kept his herd of prized Scotch shorthorn cattle in the barn and corrals south of this building and the adjacent loafing shed until he sold them in the early 1950s. His veterinarian for these very expensive animals was from Brighton and was affiliated with Colorado Agricultural College (now CSU) and later became head of the state veterinary board. He would come to the farm frequently, sometimes daily in calving season, to care for the animals' health. The manure from the corrals was collected by a loader and then spread in the crop fields using the manure spreader (see below).



The Milking Room with its Wood Stanchions.

Corn was planted in the eastern fields on the farm to be used as cattle feed. A north-south concrete trough was built along the east line of the corrals next to the loafing shed. Alfalfa hay was stacked to the east of the corrals so it could be thrown over the fence into the troughs. Once a day the cows were also fed corn. In the fall, when the corn was processed, it was chopped (ears and stalks together) and placed into the silage pit in the northern fields next to the windmill. It was then loaded as needed into a truck and brought over to the corrals to be fed to the cows. They got their water from the east lake by simply going through a gate in the corral fence so they could reach the shore to drink.

Outside the south wall of the barn is a stock waterer that is mounted on a concrete pad. This Pride of the Farm unit, manufactured by the Hawkeye Steel Products Co. of Waterloo, Iowa, was connected to the well near the chicken house by an underground pipe. It was used in the winter months when the lake froze over, providing warmed drinking water for the cattle. The Hawkeye Steel Products Co. was founded in 1920 and since then has manufactured numerous products for the agricultural industry under the brand name Pride of the Farm.



The Stock Waterer adjacent to the Barn.

The Truck Scale: The truck scale is found outside the north wall of the barn.



The Interior of the Scale Box.

At this location is a wood platform that trucks would drive upon to be weighed to determine the cost of grain or other agricultural products they might contain. Next to the platform is a wooden box containing the scale. This pitless scale (designed to function without a pit having to be excavated below) was manufactured by the Moline Scale Factory in East Moline, Illinois, one of the country's primary farm-implement factory towns of the 1800s and early 1900s.

The Brooder House: The brooder house, dating from the late 1940s or very early 1950s, is located in the southeast area of the farmstead to the west of the barn. It is a small wood-frame 10' x 12' building with horizontal weatherboard siding, a shed roof, and a panel door on the west. These buildings typically faced to the south to capture the warmth of the sun and were small so they could retain the body heat of the chickens.



The Brooder House. View to the Northeast.

Every spring, a crate of baby chicks was ordered by the Metzger family from Sears. The chicks would either be delivered to the farm by the mailman or the family would get a call from the elevator in Broomfield to let them know they had arrived. The brooder house became their home until they were old enough to move to the chicken house. Roosts were mounted to the walls for laying chickens, and a band of these remains inside the building. Moveable panels at ground level on the south wall could be opened or closed, depending upon whether the chicks were to be let out into their small fenced yard.

By the time Karen Metzger was about ten years old, the building was no longer in use and she convinced her parents to let her convert it to a tack shed for her saddles, halters and other equine equipment. She pastured her horse on the southwest sixteen acres, which had been planted with grass. Karen was very involved in a competitive riding group known as the West Eastlake Range Riders and showed her horse at the Western Stock Show.

The Chicken House: The late 1940s or very early 1950s chicken house is located between the brooder house and the equipment shed. This 16' x 36' wood frame building rests upon a concrete foundation and is finished with horizontal weatherboard siding, a band of south-facing windows, a door on the west, and a shed roof. An additional pair of swinging doors has been cut into the siding in the north wall of the building, presumably after it was no longer in use for its original purpose. Small panels are found at ground level on the south elevation that could be opened or closed depending upon whether the chickens were to be let out into the yard.

The Metzgers raised numerous chickens, which explains the good size of this chicken house. One year, John and Betty decided they also wanted to raise a flock of geese to give as Christmas gifts, and they were also kept in this area. When Bill was about three years old, he went down alone to see the geese and came running home crying with the geese chasing and biting him.



The Chicken House. View to the Northeast.

The concrete pad and cover in the yard south of the building contains the chicken house well. The pipes in the bottom are the transfer points to send water in different directions to outside spigots and to the chicken house, barn and milking house. The pump is gone and was probably removed once the well was no longer needed.

The Machine Shed: The machine shed, or equipment shed, is located to the west of the chicken house and south of the caretakers' house. This 20' x 40' wood frame building was constructed around 1950 to park and store farm equipment that needed to be kept out of the weather. It is open to the south and consists of a dirt floor, walls finished with horizontal weatherboard siding, two large bays, and a saltbox roof. A number of items related to the Metzger farm and mine operations are stored in this building (see below).



The Machine Shed. View to the Northeast.

The Gasoline Pumps: Two buried tanks and two gas pumps are located behind the machine shed and along the south side of the main road within the farm yard. Originally, there were two tall manually-operated Tokheim pumps here. These were operated by first hand-pumping the gasoline from the tank up into a high glass cylinder for measurement. When the right amount was present in the cylinder, the gasoline was released to flow through a gravity-fed hose into the vehicle being fueled. One winter, after the drought of the 1950s ended, there was so much snow and the ground was so saturated that the buried tanks floated to the surface. The tall Tokheim pumps acted as a counterweight and tilted over so far that they almost touched the ground. Since the tanks had to be reburied, John decided to convert the system to electric pumps.



The Electric Gasoline Pumps.

At the time, the gas station at Cozy Corner, at 120th and Federal, was replacing their pumps with more modern ones. John purchased their old Bennett Model 966 electric pumps and moved them to the farm to replace the even older Tokheim pumps. The Bennett pumps, manufactured by the John Wood Company of Muskegon, Michigan, are now collectors' items and restored sell for over \$2,500 each. These are the same pumps that remain on the site today.

When they were purchased, gas was selling for \$.32 regular and \$.35 premium, and these prices remain on the pumps today like a clock that stopped keeping time. The tanks were originally used to dispense regular (leaded) and premium gas for the cars and vehicles used on the farm. None of the farm vehicles required diesel fuel. When unleaded became available, the farm's pump system was used for regular and unleaded gasoline.

The Crop Fields: The open fields have presumably been planted with a variety of crops since the late 1800s. Gip Wilson was the last farmer to work the property as it was becoming increasingly difficult by the 1950s to bring irrigation water to the northern alfalfa and corn fields. Development to the north -- especially the Brandywine development -- was cutting off the water supply for the fields, which came from Tom Frost Reservoir through an open ditch. As a child, Bill Metzger used to help clear out the ditch from the reservoir to the farm. The ditch ran through the front yard of the Opatril family across Lowell Blvd.



View of the eastern crop field. View to the northeast.

John worked with the Colorado Agricultural College (now Colorado State University) to plant test crops on the property and staff from the school would periodically visit the farm. This may be what led to the property being viewed, or possibly designated, as a model farm in the late 1940s. President Eisenhower visited the farm in the 1950s and walked through the corn field where test varieties were being grown. The southern 16 acres south of the lakes were used to grow crested wheat. This area was supplied with water from a well in the southwest corner of the property.

Eventually, John had to abandon the northern ditch and irrigation system because of creeping development. Before he left the Metzger Farm in 1955, Gip plowed under the crop fields and planted them with several types of grass so they could be used for grazing horses and cattle. Since then, the fields were good for one or two cuttings of dryland grass hay each growing season and the family leased the land to a cow-calf operation.



View of the northern crop fields. View to the north.

Stacks of hay were stored in a fenced area (the fencing is still present) to the north of the family garden and granary, where the cattle could not reach it. Electric fencing was installed along the perimeters of the property to prevent the livestock from getting out. Additional electric fencing was also placed just north of the lakes for the same purpose.

Irrigation and Water Wells: All farms in the arid Rocky Mountain west require stable sources of water for them to be successful. The Metzger farm was no exception to this rule. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, the property included water rights to Tom Frost Reservoir along with rights to water from the Golden Ralston Church Ditch Company, Equity Ditch Company, and the Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company. These rights were transferred every time the property was sold. In addition, an 1899 map of the site (*see page 38*) shows that the eastern acreage on the farm was bisected from southwest to northeast by the Wilbur Ditch, which ran along the west side of Big Dry Creek. While these various surface water rights were developed and exercised as an early source of irrigation for crops and livestock, the availability of adequate water for the farm became increasingly problematic during the post-WWII years of suburban development.

On-site sources of domestic and irrigation water were needed and these became more important over time. Once he acquired the property, John Metzger set about ensuring that the farm had ample supplies of water from various sources. The family hired a Denver well driller who placed most of the wells on the farm

and also responded to their pleas for help in the middle of the night and on cold days when the domestic water supply failed. The following details are provided about each of the farm's various sources of water:

Tom Frost Reservoir: The northern and eastern crop fields on the property were originally watered through an irrigation ditch that ran from Tom Frost Reservoir (*see map on page 2*), which was found over ½ mile northwest of the Metzger Farm on the northwest corner of 128th Ave. and Lowell Blvd. However, this ditch had to be abandoned as housing development to the north began to cut off its route in the late 1940s and 1950s.

Broomfield Reservoir: The lakes on the Metzger property were developed along a natural low-lying drainage that ran from Broomfield Reservoir (now known as Brunner Reservoir), over one mile to the west, through the farm and into Big Dry Creek. When John Metzger bought the farm in 1943, neither of the lakes existed but the drainage from the reservoir was present. He simply took advantage of the natural drainage to create the lakes and improve the property.

North Well & Windmill: A well was dug in the north crop field to provide livestock with a source of drinking water. A Dempster No. 12 windmill, manufactured in Beatrice, Nebraska, marks this location. Water was pumped from the ground by the windmill into the adjacent stock tank.



The well, windmill, and stock tank in the north acreage.

Southwest Well: Another well was placed in the southwest corner of the property, with a small wood frame pump house above that sheltered a 25 horsepower electric motor. This well provided excellent water for the southern sixteen acres, which were used to grow wheat. However, this well was abandoned when 120th was widened over the top of it. The small pump house was removed and stored in the northeast corner of the farmstead, where it remains today.



The pump house that was located in the southwest corner of the farm.

Chicken House Well: This is the well marked by the concrete pad and cover south of the chicken house. The pipes in the bottom of the vault are transfer points with valves to send water in different directions. These terminate at outside spigots to the north and west, and also serve the chicken house, barn and milking house. The pump is gone and was probably removed once the well was no longer needed.

Domestic Well: The domestic water well is located in a vault to the north of the west lake and south of the main house. Covering the well and its associated equipment is a concrete pad with a square tin-covered door. This well provided a clean source of domestic water for the main house and caretakers' house, and could also supply the chicken house, dairy barn, and milk house as needed. The vault contains the pump, piping, valves, and a pressure tank. The pressure tank holds both water and air. Water pumped from the well into the tank pressurizes the air until it reaches a certain pressure, causing the pump to shut off. When the pressure goes down as the water is used, the pump goes on again and adds water to the tank. This system provided a reliable supply of water to the houses, with the pressurization bringing the water to the taps.

Abandoned Well: An abandoned water well is located adjacent to the domestic well described above. This older domestic water well was

closed and capped off, and a short length of pipe can still be seen above the surface of the ground.



The abandoned well (foreground) and subsequent domestic well (at center) in the concrete vault. View to the east.

West Lake Well: This well, which is still operating, was installed on the west end of the west lake after the well in the southwest corner of the property had to be abandoned for the widening of 120th Ave. In addition, it was needed for the lakes since the outflow from Broomfield Reservoir and the natural drainage was less reliable. Since it was placed, this well has provided a reliable source of clean water that keeps both of the lakes filled.

Landscape and garden irrigation: Water was, and still is, piped underground from the west lake toward the north to irrigate the pine grove, the grounds around the main house and caretakers' house, and the family's large vegetable garden east of the homes. Just north of the pier, above the shore of the lake, is a small concrete vault holding the pump for the irrigation water. A hose extends from the lake into the vault. From there, it first runs to a spigot that waters the nearby pine trees. The pipe then runs under the road to the sprinkler system around the houses. It emerges from the ground for the system that waters the vegetable garden.

East Lake Well: This well is located below a wood frame pump house that still stands in the woods below the east lake's dam wall. Presumably it was placed there to draw on seepage water from the adjacent reservoir (the east lake). This may be the well that has a line terminating near the southeast corner of the west lake. The exact operation of this pump house and well is unclear at this time and may require further study.



The pump house below the east lake's dam wall.

The Lakes: The two lakes on the Metzger farm, both of them man-made reservoirs dating from the 1940s and 1950s, were developed for irrigation, stock-watering, and fire-fighting purposes. According to Karen Metzger, both dams were excavated and cored decades ago. Coring involved rebuilding the dams with compacted and better prepared materials to strengthen them and reduce seepage.

Water for the lakes was originally provided by natural runoff from the north and west, and in times of drought they would get quite low. John Metzger installed a pump house from the Caulkins Ditch below the lakes to the east (see above) that supplied them with additional water. A horizontal white pipe can be seen projecting from the ground near the southeast corner of the western lake, and this was where the water from the Caulkins Ditch entered the lakes.

After the well in the southwest corner of the property had to be abandoned because 120th was widened, another well was placed on the west end of the west lake. Since then, this well has provided a reliable source of water for both lakes. Every once in a while, when there is a downpour in Broomfield, the excess surface water will run through natural drainages into the lakes on the Metzger farm and the west lake will fill so quickly that the water will top the dam and flow into the east lake.

Together the lakes have matured into a nature preserve and scenic feature of the farm that today is among its most defining features.

West Lake: The west lake was the first to be developed in the 1940s after John Metzger acquired the property. Its retaining wall or dam, covered with concrete rip-rap and lined with trees, now forms a causeway between the two lakes that provides access to the southern acreage. This body of water was originally more open than it is today, because its western portion has been steadily filled with marshland and sediment.

Water enters the lake from the west and flows into the east lake through an unimproved spillway located at the south end of the dam.



The west lake. View to the west.

The west lake is shallower than the east and used to freeze so solidly that Bill and Karen ice skated on it in the winter months. It was also closer to the house and had the pier for getting on and off the ice, which made it more attractive than the east lake. The pier was there earlier, but Gip rebuilt it in the early 1950s because it was deteriorating. The kids used snow shovels to expose the icy surface. Often it was frozen in a rippled pattern due to the wind, so they hauled buckets of water from the house to pour on the ice and smooth it out for better skating.



The west lake pier. View to the south.

Since they lived out in the country and many of their school friends lived in town, Bill and Karen invited friends to the farm to go skating and for parties. They built small bonfires on the bank to roast marshmallows and hot dogs. This was a great place to spend hours ice skating after school and on the weekends. During the warmer months, they swam in the lake and went out in the boat.

East Lake: In the 1940s and early 1950s, the east lake was just a small pond located in what is now the eastern portion of the current body of water. The area between the west lake's dam and the pond was occupied by a low swale, or marsh, filled with cattails. John launched a project to enlarge the pond and turn it into another lake. He brought in earth-moving equipment to build up the dam wall for the east lake and made it sturdy enough to hold a sizable amount of water. The swale, or marsh, was excavated to bring the lake to its current size. The spillway from this lake transports its water to the east into Big Dry Creek.



The east lake. View to the southeast, with the corrals on the left.

The east lake was used during dry years for irrigating the eastern crop fields on the farm. John Metzger installed an aluminum piping system with Rainbird sprinklers that ran aboveground from the northeast shore of the lake into the eastern fields. Segments of this type of equipment are now lying inside the old pump house in the northeast corner of the farmstead.

Sitting along the northwest shore of the east lake is John Metzger's old fishing boat. The aluminum boat has tanks under the seats that are filled with air so the boat is unsinkable. The original oars, no longer present, were aluminum and filled with cork so they would also float. He had a 5-horsepower motor on the boat so he could cruise around the lake and fish.

The Trees: All of the numerous trees around the farm house were planted by John Metzger when he was first developing the property in the 1940s and early 1950s. These are discussed in greater detail above. In addition, he planted most of the other trees found throughout the property.

The grove of pinon pine trees south of the house and north of the west lake was planted by John. He planted them originally because he was toying with the idea of selling pine nuts. However, the plans never panned out because wild animals ate too many of them. John followed an old Native American tradition of placing a fish in each hole before every tree was planted on the property to ensure their health and growth.

All along Big Dry Creek, from 120th for about a mile to the north, there are Russian Olive trees that John also planted. He got 3" seedlings from Colorado Agricultural College and planted them to stabilize the banks of the creek. John planted the trees around the lakes, although the ones on the dam that holds back the western lake are volunteers.

Farm Equipment: A number of historic farm implements and pieces of farm machinery and equipment are present on the site in various locations. The following presents information about these items:

Farmall Tractor: This is a McCormick Farmall Model SH tractor, manufactured by the International Harvester Co. of Chicago. It was presumably used on the farm to pull various implements described above.



The International Harvester McCormick Farmall tractor.

Disk Plow and Chisel Plow: Both of these implements are currently located inside the loafing shed. Each was designed to be pulled behind a tractor. The chisel plow was used to tear up sod or a crop field a few

inches below the surface and pull out the plant roots. The disk was then used to turn the soil so the plants would decompose and add to the nutrients of the soil. In addition, the 16-plate disk plow was used to break up chunks of soil throughout a crop field into smaller pieces.

Ditchers and Plow: Two ditchers are located on the grounds, one just northwest of the granary and the other east of the granary and pump house (this one is sitting upside down). These heavy metal implements were pulled behind a tractor to clean out the shallow irrigation ditches on the farm in the spring so the crops could be watered. The depth and width that the ditchers would dig could be adjusted with handles on the implements. A block of sandstone was wired to one of the ditchers to provide extra weight. The three crop fields to the north of the farmstead and two to the east each had central ditches running through them that had to be opened and kept clear of vegetation and fill.



One of the two ditchers on the site.

Also to the east of the granary is a plow. The three-bottom plow was the standard used for a farm of this size. When the ground was soft, this was pulled behind a tractor to open crop rows for planting.

Oat Roller: This small piece of equipment, of unknown manufacture, is located on the ground inside the machine shed. It was used to roll oats and other grains for animal feed. This made them easier for the livestock to chew. The oats were typically mixed with molasses and other ingredients before being fed to the animals.



The Oat Roller.

Weed Burner: The weed burner is located just east of the granary. This implement was pulled behind a tractor and was used to burn weeds along the ditches. It was manufactured by the Agri-Quip Agricultural Equipment Corporation of La Junta, Colorado. To Bill and Karen, the weed burner was something from science fiction and a huge adventure to operate. It spewed flames from the three jets that were lowered close to the ground to start the weeds on fire.



The Weed Burner.

Post-Hole Auger: On the ground in the northeast corner of the machine shed is an auger that attaches to the Case tractor. This was used to dig post holes when corral fencing needed to be replaced.

Manure Spreader: The manure spreader is located in the yard south of the chicken house. This John Deere implement (Model K, Series 47) was designed to be pulled by a tractor and, although it dates from the 1940s, had changed very little since it first came on the market in the 1800s.

As the spreader was pulled along, the turning of its wheels rotated the chain on the side. This chain moved the floor of the spreader, where the manure was stacked, and turned the tines and blades at the rear. The manure moved into the tines and was sprayed onto the crop field behind the machine, with the turning blades breaking up the larger chunks.



The John Deere Manure Spreader.

Fire Fighting Equipment: There was no fire department near the Metzger Farm in unincorporated Adams County. Eastlake, about five miles to the east, was the closest place to have a volunteer fire department. Because fire was always a concern, John purchased firefighting equipment (hoses and a pump) so the family could fight a fire on its own if necessary. Enough hose was purchased so that it could reach from the lake to any of the buildings on the farmstead. Luckily, the family never had to use it.

The red Hale fire pump is currently located inside the loafing shed. It is mounted on a chassis with wheels so it could be moved around. Hanging on the east wall of the machine shed is the screen and first length of hose that attached to the fire pump. The end with the screen was set into the lake and the length of hose was connected to additional hosing that appears to have been discarded.

Mining Equipment: A number of pieces of mining machinery and equipment are present inside the machine shed and to the east of the granary. These were all used by John Metzger in his 1950s gold-mining operation outside of Georgetown. His father was a miner who died in a mine accident, so mining was kind of in John's blood.

John had helped some people who owned a group of mines in the Georgetown area with their legal and business concerns. When they decided to sell off the properties, John stepped forward and bought the Grizzly Mine. He engaged in limited mining for a time to see if there was any good ore left, but found that the mine was played out.

The following presents information about the mining items that were brought out of the mountains and stored on the farm:

Industrial Blower: This piece of machinery, located east of the granary, was used to bring fresh air into the mine. It was manufactured by General Power Inc. of Quapaw, Oklahoma. The blower had large flexible lengths of rubberized hosing attached to it that extended into the mine.

The air hoses for the blower system look like pieces of dark rubber and are resting on the ground in a pile east of the granary and fence. These were hung from metal hooks along the shafts and tunnels. The large metal rings next to this pile of hoses were used to hold together the ventilation system.



The Industrial Blower from the Mine

Mining pump: This heavy pump is stored on the ground in the machine shed on the site. The red and black equipment consists of an induction motor manufactured by the Louis Allis Co. of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, along with a short section of attached pipe. While this is assumed to have been used in the mine for pumping water, this may actually be the pump that was located in the southwest corner of the Metzger farm.

Drill Steel: Numerous pieces of drill steel of varying lengths are leaning against the west wall of the machine shed. These were used in John Metzger's mine near Georgetown. Attached to air hammers, the drills were used to cut holes into the rock walls of the mine for explosive charges to be placed.

Gardner-Denver Compressor: This heavy piece of equipment on wheels is a Gardner-Denver diesel-fueled compressor manufactured in Quincy, Illinois with a General Motors engine. The compressor provided pneumatic pressure for air hammers used in the mine. The yellow, white and pink pneumatic hoses on the ground east of the fence are short lengths of the hoses that ran from the compressor to the air hammers.



The Gardner Denver Compressor

Miscellaneous mining equipment: On the ground across the fence to the east of the granary are piles of miscellaneous mining equipment. These include metal ladders that could be connected to one another inside the mine to climb up and down the shafts. Several pieces of rail are also found on the ground – these were part of the narrow-gauge system used to run ore cars in and out of the mine.

Truck Mounted Compressor: This early 1950s Ford truck, with a large LeRoi compressor mounted on the back (manufactured in the 1940s in Milwaukee, Wisconsin), was used in John Metzger's mining operation. The signs on the doors refer to Armco Metal Products Division.



The Truck-Mounted Compressor.

Ore Sample Crusher: This small-scale grey crusher with flywheels on the sides was used at the mine to crush small ore samples for testing. It was manufactured by the Nevada Engineering Works of Reno, Nevada.



The Ore Crusher

The Loch-in-Vale Signs: When John Metzger started breeding and showing registered Scotch shorthorn cattle in the 1940s, he decided that his new farm needed a name, which was typical of purebred cattle breeders. He came up with the idyllic Scotch name “Loch-in-Vale Farm” (Lake in the Valley) because of the combination of his imported cattle and the presence of a lake on the farm. The shorthorn cattle were beautiful animals of a deep russet red color, with curly hair, white faces, and white tufts on the ends of their tails.

The small wood signs bearing this name that are stored in the machine shed were mounted at the entrance to the property along Lowell Blvd. The signs are white and green, the buildings were white and green, and the entry road and cattle were red, all of these fitting into John’s overall color scheme. Photos of the entrance and cattle were taken to promote the breeding operation.



The much larger sign on the floor of the shed was the result of John’s love of hunting. Because agriculture was not that profitable, he came up with the idea of turning the farm into a hunting club. John planned to bring in game birds and charge a fee for hunting. He intended to mount the sign on the farm to advertise the enterprise. The concept was based upon Nilo Farms, which he had visited. Nilo Farms was owned by the Olin Matheson Company, a well-known manufacturer of shotgun shells and hunting equipment, and was founded in 1952 on a square mile property outside of Brighton, Illinois. The firm developed a model system for how a small game preserve could be established for hunters. The idea was that the birds would be fed on the Metzger farmstead and then transported to the eastern edge of the property, which at that time extended ½ mile farther to the east than it does today. There they were to be released and as the birds flew back to the farmstead to eat, hunters would shoot them. Betty, Karen and Bill were horrified by the idea of their farm being turned into a hunting club. Tears were shed and they had many arguments with John over the idea. In the end, the sign was never put up and the whole idea faded away.

Early History of the Property: 1800s-1940s

Research completed on the Metzger Farm for the years prior to its purchase by John Metzger revealed somewhat sketchy information. This time period could benefit from additional research in the future. What could be determined was that the property was homesteaded by Albert B. Gay in the early 1880s, and he received the patent on the farm from the US government in January 1885. Albert may have been involved in the Colorado mining industry in the late 1870s prior to settling in the countryside north of Denver.

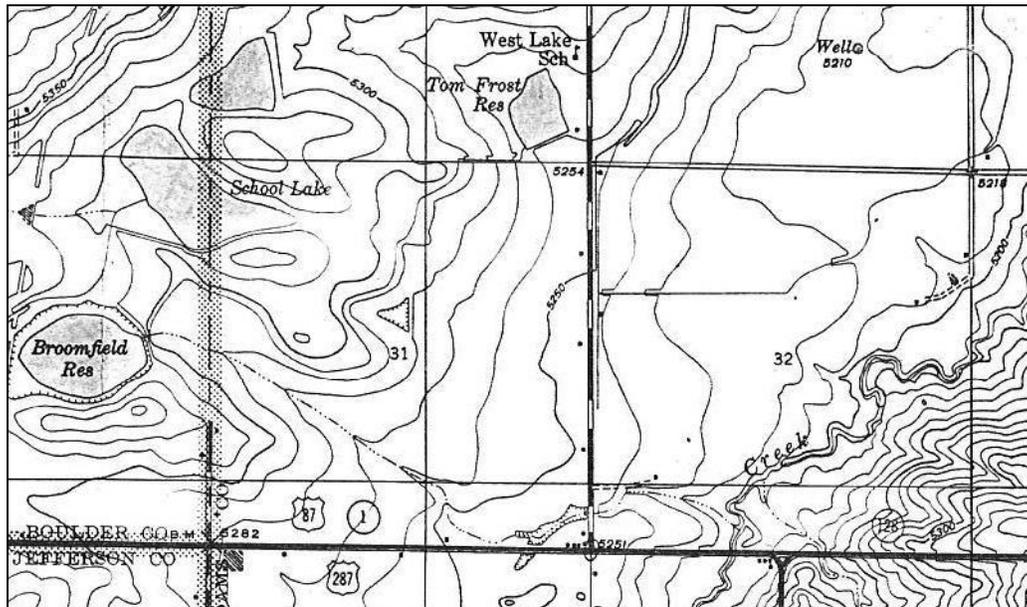
By the late 1890s, the property consisted of two separate parcels (*see map below*). The eastern 80-acre parcel was owned by Susan Gay and the western 80-acre parcel was owned by Albert Gay. While Susan and Albert appear to have been related to one another, no information was found to indicate how. Separate homes were found on each of these parcels. The Susan Gay home was located in the southwest corner of her parcel just north of Road No. 120, today's 120th Ave. This home was evidently removed by the 1940s, and no physical evidence remains of its historic presence there other than a grove of mature trees. The Albert Gay residence was found where the Metzger house is located today. This was the original farmhouse that now forms the core of the enlarged building.



Willits Farm Map, 1899

A natural drainage historically ran from west to east through the area where the ponds are found today, terminating in Big Dry Creek to the southeast. In keeping with rural tradition, this feature was likely to have been known locally as Dollison's Draw or Gay's Draw for the property owners through whose land it ran.

By the 1940s, this draw was acting as an outflow channel for Broomfield Reservoir, located 1.25 miles to the west (*see map below*). Bisecting the eastern Susan Gay parcel around 1900 were the Wilbur Ditch and Big Dry Creek, both oriented on a southwest to northeast axis. A portion of the Wilbur Ditch was later incorporated into what is now the eastern dam wall for the east lake. Although its historic upstream course to the southwest is no long apparent, a downstream stretch of the ditch survives to the northeast of the dam, exiting the Metzger Farm property along its north-central edge.



USGS Lafayette Quadrangle, 1944

Members of the Gay family continued to own and farm the southwest quarter of Section 32 prior to selling it to Denver attorney James T. Burke in August 1935. Burke was born in Minneapolis in 1898, served in France during World War I, and came to Denver in 1921. Five years later he obtained a law degree from Denver's Westminster Law School. After working in private practice for a few years, Burke took a job with the district attorney's office and served there from 1929 to 1935. He was elected to two terms as Denver district attorney, holding the position throughout the 1940s. In 1940, Burke purchased additional water rights for the farm, which by then consisted of the entire south half of Section 32 (bordered by 120th Ave. on the south, 124th Ave. on the north, Zuni St. on the east and Lowell Blvd. on the west). At that time, he acquired twenty-five inches of water from the Golden Ralston Creek & Church Ditch Company together with twenty-five shares of stock in the Equity Ditch Company.

Three years later, in August 1943, James and his wife Isabel sold the entire 320 acres to fellow Denver attorney John Metzger. This purchase included sixty-five inches of water from the Golden Ralston Creek & Church Ditch Company, eighty-five shares of stock in the Equity Ditch Company, and ten shares in the Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company. A separate transaction between the same parties transferred ownership of Tom Frost Reservoir in the southeast corner of Section 30 (*see map above*).

The Life of John Metzger: 1911-1984

The Early Years, 1910s-1920s: Stories of John Metzger's childhood and years as a young adult are varied and incomplete, largely because throughout his adult life he was reluctant to provide family, friends or the media with a substantial, reliable account of his early years. In addition, he was orphaned at a young age and in the process lost contact with almost all of his remaining family. Metzger's failure to share details about his and his family's past appears to be rooted in the difficulty of his childhood, although his own penchant for telling tales and shaping his own unique image to gain political office may also have come into play.

While he provided tidbits of information for numerous newspaper articles and other publications, the details found in each printing did not always correlate with other stories of his early years and always appeared to be lacking some essential facts. For example, many reports state that John Metzger was born in the northeastern plains town of Sterling, Colorado on 4 April 1911. Others say that he entered life as late as 1914 in a sod house on a homestead near Merino. The date of his birth seems to reliably have been April 4th, and both Sterling and Merino are found in Logan County about twenty miles from one another. However, the Metzger family believes that John may actually have been born in the Cripple Creek mining district around 1911 or 1912, although the county records from this time period have been lost. In essence, the precise location of his birth, and even the exact year, are no longer known.

The family's own accounts of John Metzger's early years seem to be more reliable, although his children (Bill and Karen) admit that even they are not completely sure what was fact and what was merely a tale told by their father. As Karen stated in a 2006 interview, her father "was full of homespun tales. He loved to spin yarns. And part of the problem was, he'd get himself going and you never knew how much was fluff and how much wasn't. But it was always entertaining." What the family does know is that John endured a stressful upbringing and that he had difficulty speaking of those years throughout the remainder of his life. When the family's stories are combined with information gleaned from published materials, a more complete picture of the life of John Metzger begins to emerge.

John William Metzger was the son of Charles William and Nora Mahoney Metzger. Charles' family was reportedly of Dutch heritage, although the name Metzger is of Germanic origin, and he may have been born in Ohio or another of the Great Lakes states. A Spanish-American War veteran, he served in the cavalry in the Philippines and then evidently homesteaded property in Logan County in the early 1900s. After abandoning the homestead a few years later, he turned to mining in the Cripple Creek district.

Nora's ancestors hailed from Ireland, but where and when she was born is no longer known. She had been married previously to a man named Lacaille (possibly French-Canadian, pronounced "la-kai"), who worked as a miner in Cripple Creek. Nora is believed to have had three children with him. Their son Brian later lived in Washington and became an engineer with the Dupont

Company. Another Lacaille son died in an auto accident in his twenties. No details are known about the third child.

After the death of her first husband in the mines, Nora married miner Charles Metzger and had three children with him. The timing of their marriage strongly suggests that their children were born in Cripple Creek and not in Logan County. The couple had a daughter, Margaret Elizabeth, who later became known to Bill and Karen Metzger as "Auntie Peg" or "Peggy." Another daughter named Helen became a nurse but died of tuberculosis. Both were older than John, their third child. All of the children were raised in Cripple Creek, and were baptized at the Catholic Church in Woodland Park. Around 1917, Charles was severely injured in a mining accident when a machine fell on him, and he soon died of his injuries. John was very young, probably no older than six, at the time his father died and left the family stranded. As devastating as that was, Nora died from ovarian cancer a few years after Charles was killed.

Orphaned at a young age, the children were left with no other family nearby to whom they could turn for support. Margaret and John became wards of the state and were sent to live in the Colorado Children's Home in Denver. In accordance with standard practice at the time, as they each reached the age of twelve the Metzger children were removed from the Children's Home and indentured to two different families. Margaret was placed with a family in Denver, where she worked as a nanny, housekeeper, and cook. She graduated from South High School and then went to St. Anthony's Hospital to be trained as a nurse. After receiving her certification, Margaret worked in the emergency room there and went on to pursue a very successful career in nursing (more about this below).

John had a more difficult time than Margaret with his situation. Indentured to the Johnson family near Sterling, he was put to work on the farm in exchange for room and board. He found himself assigned hard chores and reportedly developed a contentious relationship with a son in the family. Eventually, he was blamed for a farm gate having been left open, allowing the livestock to run loose. Metzger denied the accusation and at the age of fourteen ran away and made his way to Denver. Totally on his own and living in rooming houses, he supported himself washing dishes, waiting tables in a hospital, and milking cows at a dairy.

Entering Law and Politics, 1930s: Eventually, Metzger took a job as a typewriter salesman and one day stopped by the downtown office of successful pension and probate attorney Hugh Neville. The persuasive youth talked his way past the secretary and proved so convincing a salesman that the attorney purchased a typewriter that he didn't need. Neville took the boy under his wing, encouraged him to stay in high school, and later pushed him to enter night school to study law. In his late teens and early twenties, John attended night classes at the Westminster School of Law (now part of Denver University) and worked as Hugh Neville's law clerk during business hours.

Neville suffered from cancer of either the throat or jaw and had increasing difficulty speaking. His practice largely involved representing many of the

Spanish-American War veterans and their widows in Colorado. Over time, whenever he had to speak in court Neville had Metzger present on his behalf. He came to rely heavily upon the young man, who had essentially become his apprentice. During this period, Metzger got to know many of the veterans and their families, and he continued to serve their legal needs for years afterward. For his work on their behalf, he was presented with an honorary membership in the United Spanish War Veterans organization. People who knew John from these early years called him “Billy” (short for his middle name, William) the rest of his life. Those who met him later simply called him “John.”

A close friend of Hugh Neville’s was Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice Haslett P. Burke. Burke was a long-time resident of Sterling, veteran of the Spanish-American War, and a former lecturer at the Westminster Law School. Acting upon Neville’s recommendation, in 1936 Burke admitted John Metzger to the bar on motion although the young man had not received a formal law degree. His admission to the bar without a degree is considered one of the last times in Colorado that anyone entered the field of law under such circumstances. The newly-minted attorney continued to work with Neville and eventually took over the senior attorney’s practice as his health declined. He was also mentored by Haslett Burke, who looked after Metzger and steered work in his direction.

During his association with Hugh Neville, John Metzger became a “people’s attorney” who based his general legal practice upon the varied needs of his clients, many of whom were common people. His attitudes about the law were clearly shaped by his experience as an orphaned child, his struggle to survive as a young adult, and his coming of age during the difficult years of the Depression. Throughout his career, he emphasized the “counselor” part of his mandate as an attorney and took this element of his work seriously. He primarily advised and represented his private clients to resolve issues involving widows’ pensions, probate matters, estate planning, real estate, and small businesses. Metzger wasn’t interested in complex civil litigation, although he was quite bright and capable when it came to taking on complicated cases. Every task he took on for the remainder of his life was pursued with energy, enthusiasm, and a passion for self-education. In addition to his practice, he took a position as clerk and referee of the Denver Juvenile Court, where he served from 1938 to 1941.

During the 1930s and early 1940s, John Metzger supplemented his income by purchasing neglected homes, living in them while completing repairs, and then renting them out to pay the mortgage or selling them for a profit. His first home of his own was at 779 Glencoe St. in Denver, which he had built as a duplex -- he lived in one unit and rented the other out. John worked primarily as a sole legal practitioner and was fiercely independent. While he was never with a firm, he did share offices in the prestigious Equitable Building (730 17th St. in downtown Denver) with other attorneys who then split the costs of overhead and support staff. His office remained in downtown Denver, even when he was later living in the countryside. Metzger also found that he could supplement his income with the preparation of his client’s tax returns, which he tackled each tax season.

As a young single lawyer, John Metzger did not cook for himself. Instead, he took all of his meals at area restaurants and as a consequence found a surrogate family for himself with Fred and Emily Hunt and their son Fred Jr. The family owned Hunt's Tea Room, a restaurant located near East High School that Metzger frequented. In addition to the restaurant, Fred Hunt owned a busy real estate office, Hunt For Real Estate, on East Colfax. He engaged John Metzger to handle the legal research and documents needed for the firm's real estate transactions. Because title companies were not yet in existence, an attorney was typically hired to examine the abstract and make sure that the chain of title was clean. They were paid as much as \$25 to examine each abstract, work that often required research at the county courthouse although review of the documents could be accomplished in the evenings and on weekends to pick up extra cash. This opportunity provided Metzger with an introduction to real estate law that served him well the remainder of his career.

In 1928, Metzger got his first taste of politics when he attended the Democratic Party's national convention in Houston, where he cheered the nomination of Alfred E. Smith for president. During the Depression, President Roosevelt gave people hope and John became involved in Democratic politics, frequently rooting and fighting for the underdog. He and friend Charles Brannan organized the Colorado Young Democrats in 1934. Brannan became a lawyer and went on to serve as Colorado's secretary of agriculture. A loyal supporter of President Roosevelt and his New Deal programs, Metzger was elected to three terms in the 1930s as the organization's president and became editor of *Colorado Young Democrat*. Also during the 1930s, Metzger was offered an opportunity to serve on the Veterans Administration's Civilian Board of Review for Colorado to review pension and compensation claims. However, he declined the appointment in favor of representing the interests of veterans and their families. Because of his work for them, he received an honorary membership in the United Spanish War Veterans.

World War II, Farm & Family, 1940-1948: John Metzger was turned down for active service in World War II due to ulcers. Eager to support the war effort, he partnered with Fred Wallace, a brother of Bess Truman (whose husband Harry was serving as vice-president at the time), with the goal of opening a munitions plant in Denver. They engaged engineer Herbert Tautz and established the John W. Metzger Co., later known as the Arapahoe Manufacturing Company. The firm built a plant at W. Oxford Ave. and S. Santa Fe Dr. and hired as many as 200 employees to manufacture 22 million 20mm anti-aircraft projectiles for the navy. Metzger later recalled that the firm didn't make a lot of money, yet he expressed pride in the fact that they reduced the cost of the projectiles from an initial thirty-one cents to nine cents each, with an extremely low failure rate that netted the plant an Army-Navy "E" for excellence.

During the war, John's sister Margaret initially worked as an occupational health nurse in the munitions plant. She then joined the navy and was stationed at a field hospital in Guam. After the war, Margaret went to Catholic University in Washington, DC on the GI Bill and obtained a masters degree in nursing. She

returned to Denver and taught for a while at St. Anthony's Hospital before joining the nursing faculty at Loretta Heights College. Before long, she was placed in charge of the program. Through this position, Margaret expanded her work to include the establishment of nursing programs on Native American reservations throughout the southwest, traveled to South America to set up nursing programs, served on state and national nursing accreditation boards, and became a driving force in the professionalization of nursing in Colorado. Margaret was an independent career woman, never married, and died in the late 1990s.

In August 1943, while still a bachelor, John Metzger purchased a 320-acre rural farm property in the countryside north of Denver near the town of Broomfield. By that time, he was a good friend of James T. Burke, Denver's district attorney. One day, the two were talking about living in the country and Burke mentioned that he and his wife Isabel were discussing moving back into the city because she found it too lonely on their farm. They arranged for John to visit them for lunch. He took a look at the place, which at the time consisted of crop fields along with the main house (which was 1/3 the size it is now), the smaller tenant house next door, and a bunkhouse that is now gone.

Metzger struck a deal to purchase the property together with its water rights and Tom Frost Reservoir, located just over 1/2 mile to the north along Lowell Blvd. To raise the needed funds, he sold the rental homes he had acquired in Denver over the previous decade. A few days after purchasing the farm, James Burke returned and said that he had made a mistake selling the property. Metzger replied that he was happy with the arrangement and did not want to relinquish the property.

John lived on the farm as a bachelor for just a short time. He initially established a dairy there, however this was soon scrapped in favor of raising and breeding registered Scotch Shorthorn cattle. He imported bulls valued at \$10,000 each and hired a large-animal veterinarian from Brighton who visited the farm frequently, sometimes daily, to check on the cattle. During this time, Metzger named his farm "Loch-in-Vale," Scottish for Lake in the Valley.

By 1944, Metzger was a successful lawyer and munitions manufacturer in Denver. His secretary, who was very interested in him, was from Fort Morgan and during the summer of 1944 invited John to drive there for a visit. While there, she told John about her friend Betty Amen and they visited the family home to see her. Betty played the piano for her guests and John found her to be very intriguing. He discovered that Betty was living in Denver and after returning to the city asked her for a date. They were married on 26 December 1944.

Betty Bernice Amen was the oldest of three children born to John and Pauline Eisenach Amen, who were in the farm and cattle business. Both of their families were originally Germans from Russia who had immigrated to Colorado in the late 1800s from Nebraska. Betty grew up on the family farm midway between Fort Morgan and Brush in Morgan County. Her family was large and close – she seemed to be related to half of the people in Morgan County. After graduating from grade school in Brush, Betty moved to Denver in 1940 to attend the Lamont

School of Music at Denver University on a music scholarship. During the war she performed locally for the USO, graduating in 1944 with a degree in piano performance. She also played at churches, on KOA radio, and taught private lessons. Through their marriage, John Metzger gained the family and stability he never had, and the couple remained close to Betty's family the rest of their lives. One year after their wedding, the couple started a family of their own with the birth of their daughter Karen in 1945, who was followed by John William in 1949.



John W. Metzger is proud of his farm and the cattle, such as the animal he shows here, which he breeds for fun and profit.

Denver Post, 5 June 1949

Both John and Betty had spent time on farms as children, and they decided to pursue farming as adults, even though John was professionally a lawyer. The couple determined to improve the property in Adams County. They had additional buildings constructed to fill out the farmstead and planted all of the trees around the house and farmstead and along Big Dry Creek. John worked with the extension service at Colorado State University to design test plots for crops, and excavated and installed the ponds using heavy earth-moving equipment. They invested in shorthorn breeding cattle and dairy cattle. In 1949, the Metzgers turned down an offer of \$150,000 for its sale.

Colorado Attorney General, 1948-1951: By the late 1940s, Colorado was emerging from many years of Depression and war. Numerous concerns had been set aside to be dealt with at a later date. Old ways of doing business and conducting politics were no longer appropriate, and in some cases even ethical, in the emerging post-war world. As with the rest of the nation, the state also suffered from neglected infrastructure, both in terms of its highways and technologies, and in the structure of its government and law enforcement.

John Metzger attended the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia in 1948 as a delegate. In his new home in Adams County, he had involved himself in local politics and the betterment of the community. Before long he found himself serving as the county Democratic Party chair and Colorado's Second Congressional District Chairman. In the countryside surrounding his farm, Metzger organized a volunteer fire department, a soil conservation district of two hundred thousand acres, and a weed control district. As the 1948 elections approached, he was asked by party officials to run as the Democratic candidate for the office of state attorney general and accepted the invitation. Riding upon a wave of Democratic support for President Truman and other local and national candidates, Metzger was elected to office and soon found himself going to work daily at the statehouse.

In December 1948, attorney general-elect Metzger was in the process of selecting a staff of lawyers for his office. All of the young attorneys he appointed as assistants and deputies were recent World War II veterans and many were graduates of the University of Denver's law school. The group included Benjamin Stapleton Jr., son of the city's famed mayor of the 1920s, who had also been involved in legal work with navy veterans. According to Metzger, his preference for hiring veterans was based in his belief that "men who have been in the military forces are well able to work together without friction." He also added some racial diversity to his staff through the hiring of Denverite Wendell Sayers, an African-American attorney who specialized in real estate. Sayers may have been the first African-American appointed to serve in the attorney general's office. On 11 January 1949, Metzger and his staff took office ready to deal with the state's numerous legal issues.

Within days, Metzger and his staff began to vigorously pursue a backlog of more than 1,600 cases that needed to be addressed. Among these were numerous inheritance tax cases, condemnation suits brought by the highway department, and a number of Supreme Court appeals. Metzger immediately began raising concerns about a host of problems regarding methods used by state agencies to conduct their business. During his first few months in office, he began to address legal concerns with the state legislature's recent vote to raise its pay, the illegal hiring of outside attorneys by state agencies, and problems with the recently-legalized dog and horse racing business in Colorado. The attorney general's office was also flooded with requests from state agencies for legal opinions on a variety of issues.

In early 1949, Metzger got into a disagreement with the state highway department after criticizing the agency for what he termed "extravagant practices" in purchasing rights-of-way for highway construction. After reviewing a contract for the acquisition of a small parcel of land for what appeared to be an exorbitant price, Metzger exercised his authority as attorney general and insisted that this and all future purchases be approved by the state highway board rather than being subject to the sole discretion of the state highway engineer. Mark Watrous, who served as the state highway engineer, countered that this requirement would make the development of highways in the state too

complicated. However, Metzger insisted that the department follow the law by providing written reports to the highway board detailing planned acquisitions. Watrous responded that “if we have to do this, go through all these delays, we might as well quit building highways.” This case was just an early example of Metzger’s goal of shaking up business as usual.

Metzger again raised questions about state practices in April, this time regarding a contract the state industrial commission had signed with General Rose Memorial Hospital. The contract called for the commission to pay over \$51,000 to the hospital from the workman’s compensation fund in exchange for a guarantee that fourteen beds would be reserved for patients covered by the insurance fund. The attorney general objected to the arrangement, stating that the exclusive agreement violated the state’s constitution and unfairly made an award without being put out to bid.

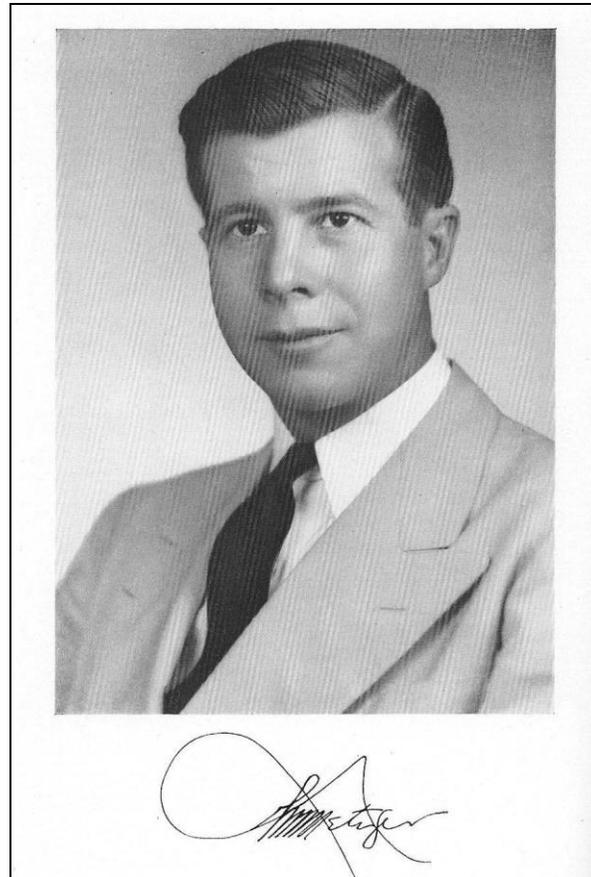
A few months later, Attorney General John Metzger was faced with the issue of gambling in the former mining towns of Central City and Cripple Creek, along with other mountain resort towns. It was brought to his attention, and the attention of the media, that gaming going on in the towns was controlled by the Smaldones, Denver’s primary organized crime family, together with other organized crime leaders in Denver and Pueblo. These activities were clearly in violation of the state’s anti-gambling law, and the media reported that many tavern owners throughout the state were being pressured by racketeers to introduce slot machines into their establishments.

However, because the communities often benefited financially from gambling by taking a cut of the revenues, local authorities were reluctant to enforce the law. By July, Denver’s newspapers were printing bold headlines about Metzger’s efforts to eliminate illegal gambling from the state and to act against the Smaldones and other crime syndicates. Tavern owners demanded that if they were going to be required to remove slot machines, the state should force their removal from other locations throughout the state. Metzger agreed with them, and launched a statewide effort to end illegal gambling in Colorado. This thorny issue persisted throughout the remainder of his term as attorney general.

In June 1949, Metzger began working to remove legal obstacles to the construction of a toll road between Denver and Boulder. The Golden Chamber of Commerce filed a suit to stop the project, and the Longmont Chamber launched a petition drive to force the issue to be presented as a referendum. The issue ended up in court, where Metzger represented the state’s interest in seeing the project continue. He became involved with this effort again as a private attorney in the 1950s (more about this below).

Another issue faced by the attorney general revolved around a claim that most of the families of patients residing in the state mental hospital in Pueblo were failing to contribute to the cost of their care. Metzger sought to uphold state law, which explicitly required that families with adequate financial resources pay for the care of their relatives. In addition, he found that war veterans were also required to pay a per diem charge for their stays in the Pueblo facility. By September 1949,

his office was launching cases against individual families who were financially capable of paying for their relatives' stays in the state hospital but who had so far avoided contributing to the cost of their care. That same month, Metzger threatened to remove county judges who failed to enforce the law and determine the financial status of people committed to the state hospital.



John Metzger, circa 1948

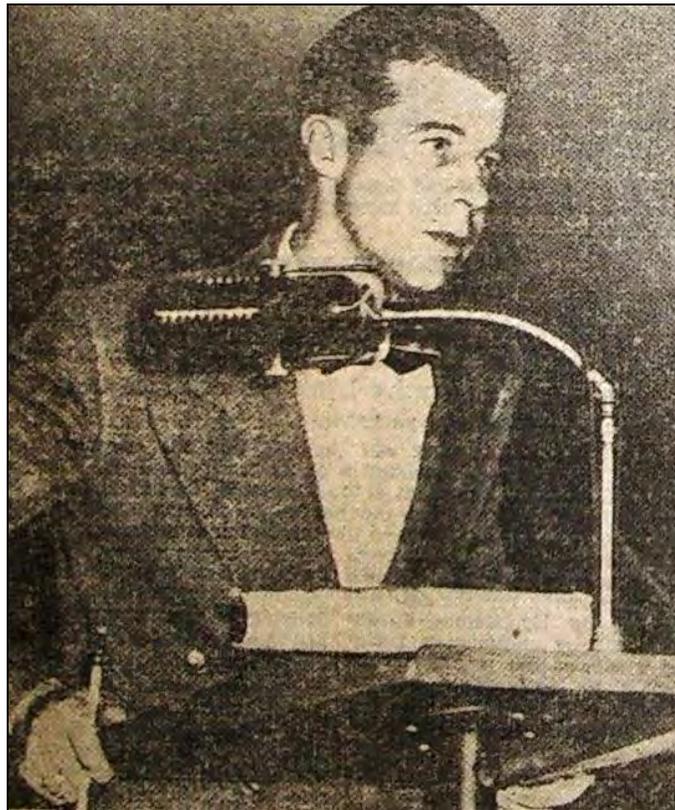
If all of these issues were not enough to keep his office busy, Metzger got into a fight with the University of Colorado over control of the Colorado General Hospital and the Colorado Psychopathic Hospital, both of which were managed by the board of regents. Metzger was of the opinion that the hospitals were not part of the university, that their employees needed to be classified as civil servants, and that appropriations for the facilities should be handled by the state treasurer and controller's offices. He accused the board of regents of commingling funds earmarked for these two facilities and the university itself, charging that some of the hospital's monies were being used for unrelated university expenses.

Needless to say, the regents were very unhappy with his analysis and vowed to resist Metzger's decree. The dispute became public as the regents challenged Metzger to prove his claims in court, insisting that their oversight of the hospitals and their finances were above board, audited annually, and open for public review. The *Rocky Mountain News* editorial board addressed the issue in its pages (7/20/49, p. 24): "Attorney General Metzger, who has been conducting a

Tatanka Historical Associates Inc.

one-man band at the Statehouse for several months, is badly out of tune in his latest standoff against the management of the University of Colorado.” After failing to have the regent’s court case dismissed, Metzger and the board of regents compromised in their dispute.

In July, Metzger appealed to President Truman to intervene in war department plans to disinter the bodies of 373 veterans from the recently-closed Fort Logan cemetery. The government planned to remove the bodies to a cemetery in the eastern United States after Congress declared the site surplus. Metzger met with Colorado veterans groups to discuss their desire to see the war department continue to care for the site until a state agency or veterans’ group could be found to take on its \$2,000 annual maintenance cost.



John Metzger Conducting Hearings at the Statehouse, July 1949

During the same election that brought Metzger into office, Colorado voters approved a pari-mutuel racing law that allowed for the licensing of horse and dog tracks throughout the state. In July 1949, Metzger ordered the state racing commission’s Chicago-based consultant to clear out of what had essentially turned into a long-term job. The consultant refused to resign from the \$800 per month position. However, he was soon pushed out by both Metzger and Colorado Governor Knous after the racing commission decided that it had no choice but to release the consultant from his contract. Continuing his review of the state racing commission’s operations, Metzger conducted hearings and questioned witnesses at the State Capitol. The hearings exposed the fact that

members of the state legislature had been pressuring the racing commission to approve franchises for race track applicants in exchange for political favors.

Editorial columnist Lee Casey wrote about the state's youthful, active attorney general in the 12 July 1949 issue of the *Rocky Mountain News* (p. 19). In his column, Casey provided the following analysis: "Thus far in his career, Mr. Metzger has not demonstrated the possession of a great store of legal learning. But he is certainly active, he pokes his long nose into everything and he doesn't mind trouble. And thereby he affords a decided contrast to most of the incumbents of his high office. To date, he has no called strikes against his record. He never hesitates to try. More than a few citizens viewed Mr. Metzger's elevation to his high position with concern. Their fears have not been justified. He affords welcome relief from the reluctance of so many officials to take a position. He may get into trouble but at least he gives the action that is badly needed in public life."

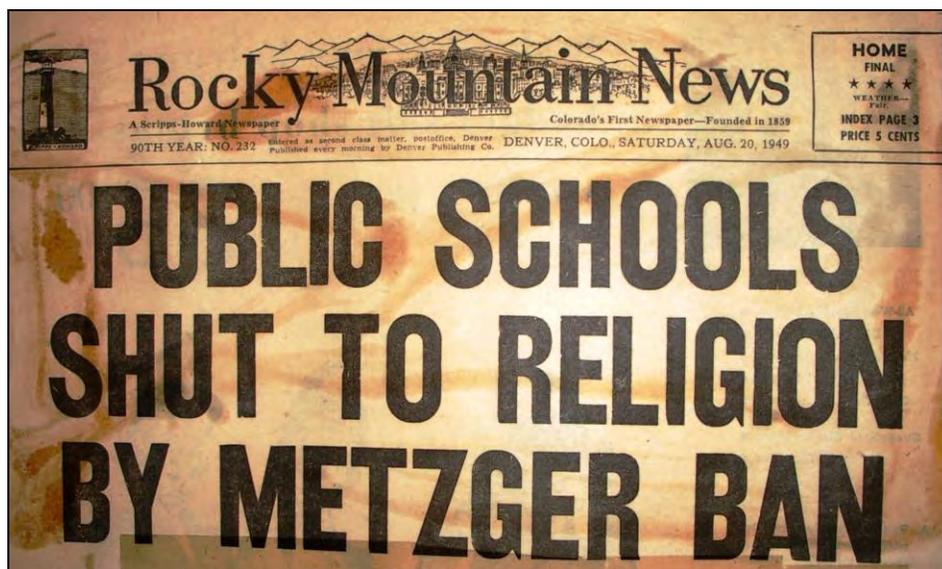
Later that same month, the *Rocky Mountain News* (7/24/49, p. 1A) ran a full-page feature article that answered their own headline question: "Who is this Fellow John Metzger?" In the article, the paper declared Metzger a political accident and detailed how he was swept into office as an unlikely Democratic Party replacement for another candidate who had withdrawn his name from consideration at the last moment. On the stump, Metzger had spoken energetically in favor of presidential candidate Harry Truman. With Truman's win, Metzger had landed a plum position with the state as numerous other Democratic candidates rode into office on the Democratic wave that characterized the 1948 election. According to the paper, Metzger attacked his new job with "the courage of the movies' version of Tarzan wrestling an alligator." His bold decisions as attorney general frequently startled (and often worried) both Republican and Democratic party leaders as he shook up the old ways of doing business in the state on every level. The paper's columnist declared him "the hottest thing on the Democratic horizon."

In terms of his personal style as attorney general, Metzger was said to enjoy digging up forgotten or little-used laws that were on the books and employing them to help his cases. He reportedly took great pleasure in citing these laws and then watching his opponents struggle with their responses. A strategic thinker and planner, Metzger sometimes arranged to lose cases in the lower courts in favor of the opportunity to win them upon appeal, which often sped up the process of getting the result he wanted. The *Denver Post*, in June 1949, wrote that Metzger "became a lawyer in a way it can't be done. He won his office in an election he couldn't win. He has ignored politics and protocol, meddling in matters that would mean the political scalp of another man. Thus far, Metzger's luck has held and officialdom could only gnash its collective teeth."

In August 1949 Metzger became entangled in a dispute with the state planning commission, which accused the attorney general of improperly criticizing its work with prominent Denver architect Robert Fuller to improve a building at the State Industrial School for Boys. The project's management contract had been awarded to Fuller without being put out for bid and Metzger blasted the

commission for not handling the award in compliance with state purchasing laws. Governor Knous agreed with Metzger and ordered that the project be re-awarded based upon a competitive bid process and that Fuller be engaged at a lower rate of remuneration.

On the 20th of that same month, the *Rocky Mountain News* printed the bold front-page headline: “Public Schools Shut To Religion By Metzger Ban.” For years, students throughout Colorado had been provided with approved “released time” during regular school hours so they could attend religious school. In a decision that had long-reaching implications, the attorney general ruled that public school students were no longer to be released from classes for religious instruction and the state’s public school facilities could not be used for such purposes. Objections to released time for religious instruction had been raised for years by the leading national Jewish organizations, which argued that the practice violated the separation of church and state. Released time, they asserted, also underscored religious differences in the public schools and led to inter-religious friction, proselytizing by school authorities, and the occasional pressurizing of minority children to attend religious training outside of their beliefs.



Although a dedicated member of the Catholic church, John Metzger agreed with this analysis and demanded enforcement of the Colorado Constitution (Section 8, Article IX), which states that “No sectarian tenets or doctrines shall ever be taught in the public schools.” In addition, he cited the US Supreme Court decision banning the use of public school buildings or facilities for religious classes, which violated the first amendment to the Constitution. Buttoning his argument tightly against objections that were sure to come, Colorado’s attorney general stated that these long-time practices were to be halted because children released from classes for religious instruction were in violation of the state’s compulsory education laws.

For months, speculation in Colorado’s political circles was that John Metzger planned to run for governor the following year. In August 1949, he stated emphatically that he had no intention to become a candidate in any future

political race, including the office of attorney general. While speculation continued about his future plans, Metzger pursued a battle against the Bureau of Reclamation regarding its plans to alter the Colorado River and Gunnison River in such a way that trout fishing would be damaged. His successful efforts made him a hero to fishing enthusiasts throughout the state.

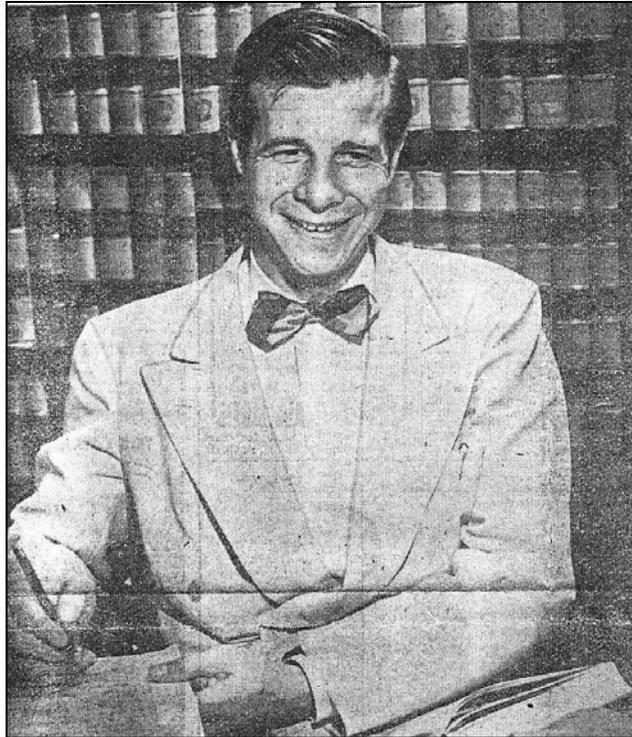
The following month, John Metzger traveled secretly to Kansas City, Missouri to meet with President Truman and other Democratic Party leaders. Rumored to be close to the president, he appears to have been called to the meeting to discuss strategic political issues in Colorado. During the attorney general's absence, his office staff informed the media that he was both home ill and busy transacting cattle business. The discrepancy raised suspicions and the media soon tracked Betty Metzger down at the family farm outside of Broomfield, although she declined to comment on her husband's whereabouts.

Dogged research by a *Denver Post* reporter revealed that Metzger had checked into a Kansas City hotel. When the reporter called his hotel room, the phone was answered by Byron Rogers, Denver's Democratic county chairman, who confirmed that the state attorney general was in the vicinity. The reporter also learned that the Colorado delegation had traveled to Kansas City not only for meetings but also to attend a dinner that evening for the national Democratic Party chairman, where Truman was scheduled to speak. Although the mystery of Metzger's disappearance was solved, the trip had the direct consequence of heightening statehouse and political speculation that John Metzger was laying plans for higher political office. In the months following the trip, his interest in the governorship became increasingly apparent and a fact no longer denied.

Whether one agreed with his opinions and style or not, John Metzger was consistently portrayed in the media as an energetic, principle-driven attorney general. *Rocky Mountain News* columnist Lee Casey described him as a political figure "as intense in his beliefs as he is explosive in his utterances." Describing the "Metzger charm," Casey went on to say that "he has brought to the Statehouse the impudence that has been sadly lacking. While other dignitaries sat and waited for something to happen and played their hands close to their vests, Metzger has made things happen. He frequently plays a pair of deuces as though he held an ace-full. Nonetheless he has shaken, to the public benefit, a lot of dry bones at the Capitol. He has been known to issue in a week more opinions than some attorneys general have put out during a full two-year term."

In November 1949, in a headline-making move, John Metzger asked the Colorado Supreme Court to remove state highway engineer Mark Watrous from his position as head of the highway department. Frustration with the department kept reappearing in the form of complaints from the governor, good roads advocates, and motorists, all of whom were dissatisfied with the poor condition of the state's highways. The department was known to engage in little formal planning for highway improvements, and as discussed earlier sometimes paid exorbitant prices for acquisitions. Problems such as these were attributed by the attorney general to stem directly from the inexperience and stubbornness of the department's long-time director. Metzger claimed, in his request for removal, that

Watrous was wholly unqualified for his position and was unlicensed as an engineer when hired. The battle that ensued between the attorney general and highway department director played itself out in public among the headlines of the *Denver Post* and *Rocky Mountain News*, with each party throwing verbal barbs aimed to discredit one another.



John Metzger, Attorney General - 1949

The following month Metzger stirred up a firestorm when, in a shocking move, he publicly criticized the state's sheriffs and law officers for their failure to move against illegal gambling. He called for the legislature to provide the state patrol with the power to step in and enforce both state laws and local ordinances. The state's sheriffs and officers responded as expected, with outrage regarding what they saw as Metzger's outlandish claims. The *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph* quoted Larimer County's sheriff, who posed the question "What does Attorney General Metzger think he is, king of Colorado or what?" (28 December 1949) Newspaper articles throughout the state asked similar questions. For its part, the head of the state patrol announced that his agency was busy enough with its already-assigned duties that it could hardly afford to be enforcing local laws. Metzger shrugged off concerns that with such powers the state patrol could eventually become a militia controlled by an unscrupulous future governor.

The 1950 *Colorado Employees Year Book* included a section on attorney general John Metzger, stating that "never in the history of the state has the office of the Attorney General been so well known and so much respected." Metzger was described as having rendered twice as many opinions as any preceding attorney general. It continued, "Always when such a character moves into the political limelight there are those who criticize him fiercely and there are those who

support him. But over and above all of the criticism or praise, out at the family home near Broomfield is a little woman, a happy boy and a sweet girl who say 'Dad is the greatest man on earth.'"

Metzger launched into the year 1950 as controversial as ever, speaking out against temperance supporters who were preparing to blanket the state's schools with their anti-alcohol message. He was convinced that it was "just as harmful for these do-gooders to be propagandizing the children in the schools as it would be for the wets to be propagandizing the children." Metzger stated that not only was the effort inappropriate, it was also likely to be against the law. Some local school officials, who were required to provide alcohol abuse education, were incensed that the attorney general was telling them who they could or could not engage for such instruction.

In May, Metzger stirred up anger at the statehouse as well as across the street when he suggested that the Colorado State Historical Society be removed from its museum building at 14th Ave. and Sherman St. so the property could be turned into offices for his department and the state supreme court. He informed the media that in his opinion the historical relics in the museum's collection were worthless and should be dumped into City Park Lake. Although Metzger appeared to be joking, the attorney general's comment was taken seriously and was not well received by either legislators or the keepers of the state's heritage.

The following month, the attorney general continued his criticism of law enforcement officials, although this time he included district attorneys throughout the state. Metzger leveled the charge that Colorado's district attorneys were failing to enforce laws against gambling, largely due to what he described as their own laziness. The *Rocky Mountain News* spoke out on its editorial page with a terse June 14th statement that more action and less oratory were needed from the state's attorney general. The newspaper's editors felt that Metzger was making far too many claims about organized crime, illegal gambling, and the failure of law enforcement in the state with too few details provided to the public to support his outcry. Around the same time, Metzger and Governor Johnson got into a public dispute, aired in the newspapers, about the extent of vice and its impact upon local law enforcement. Metzger took one last swing at the organized crime issue, claiming that there was an "unholy alliance" in Colorado between law officers and gamblers that protected illegal gambling and vice throughout the state.

Subject to withering criticism from law enforcement statewide, much of it aired in the newspapers, Metzger responded to his attackers in a 15 June 1950 *Rocky Mountain News* article (p. 44). According to Metzger, "All through history, there've been men like me – men with the courage to stand up and fight. We're always subjects for attack. They assassinated McKinley and Lincoln. What will they do to me?" In the following years, after Metzger had finished his term as attorney general, his claims against organized crime in the state and the collusion of certain public officials were proven to be true. Because of his efforts in Colorado, John received an offer from Senator Estes Kefauver to join his Washington-based national commission against organized crime. This was one

of several offers Metzger received to leave Colorado and fight crime in other states, all of which he turned down.

With a wife and children living in the countryside during his crusade against corruption and organized crime, Metzger was concerned for their safety. When the family returned home at the end of each day, Betty and the kids waited at the back door while John walked through the house making sure that everything was safe. He was justifiably concerned about reprisals. John carried a revolver in the glove compartment of his car because he wasn't sure if someone might try and harm the family, particularly by coming to the farmhouse when they weren't home. There were no burglar alarms in those days, and the place was accessible. The family wasn't living in tremendous fear, but did feel that it was reasonable to exercise care for many years. They were miles from town and surrounded by good-hearted farmers. Even so, John always double-checked the doors and windows on the house, autos, and farm buildings to make sure that everything was kept locked.



Denver Post, 13 June 1950

That August, Metzger was appointed by Governor Johnson to a special committee that was tasked with the job of investigating long-time state prison warden Roy Best for reportedly misusing prison funds for his own benefit. By the end of September, Warden Best was indicted on five charges of embezzlement.

One month later, John Metzger reported to the media that he was calling for legislation outlawing the Communist Party in Colorado. He claimed that his office had proof that the party's leadership was plotting to bomb Denver communications and utilities facilities and to seize city and state government offices. The local office of the FBI refused to comment on the charges and Metzger declined to identify his source of information. In the end, his charges were determined to be unfounded and the whole matter was dropped.

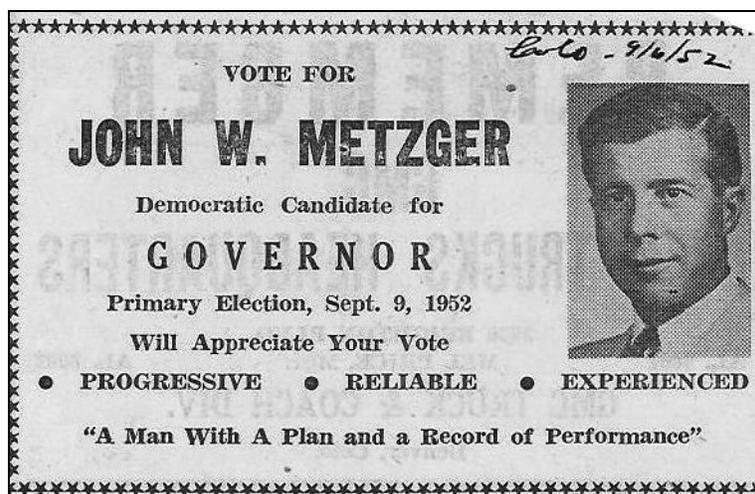
During the summer of 1950, Metzger announced plans to run for re-election to the office of attorney general. However, his bid was turned down by the voters and he found himself out of office in early 1951. By the time he left office, John Metzger had issued well over 700 opinions on legal issues throughout the state and his staff had handled more than 1,300 cases. Among the numerous actions that he initiated, while some were dropped by the attorney general's office, he was reportedly reversed by the state Supreme Court on only one occasion, a record hailed as a testament to the legal strength of his arguments.

The OPS and Running for Governor, 1951-1952: In April 1951, Denver's newspapers reported that former attorney general John Metzger had accepted a position as regional enforcement officer with the Office of Price Stabilization. He was appointed to serve as the agency's enforcement watchdog, with an official title of special assistant US Attorney. During his time there, the OPS staff was primarily engaged in reviewing prices at regional businesses such as restaurants, used car dealerships, and meat packing plants. Metzger continued with the OPS until resigning in February 1952, sparking rumors that he might be launching an effort to become re-elected to office. According to Metzger he was leaving the position to resume his private legal practice.

However, as suspected he soon announced himself to be a Democratic gubernatorial candidate, running under the campaign slogan "A man with a plan and a record of performance." In the election, Metzger sought to oust incumbent Republican governor Dan Thornton. By the time the campaign was underway, he was well-known throughout the state as a former clerk of Denver's Juvenile Court, an outspoken state Attorney General, and recent OPS enforcement officer.

Metzger had been actively practicing law for sixteen years, had been active in Democratic politics for two decades, and was engaged in legal work as well as farming and cattle ranching. He brought with him to the race his appeal as an orphan who made something of himself, his direct language when arguing in favor of enforcement of the law, and his willingness to stand up against political corruption and the old (and sometimes illegal) ways of doing things. On 10 September 1952, the *Rocky Mountain News* declared "Metzger Wins!" in a bold front page headline announcing his successful trouncing of his competitors in the Democratic primary. To finish off the race, he engaged the assistance of a campaign manager, Benjamin Stapleton Jr., who had worked for Metzger in the office of the attorney general.

The remaining weeks prior to the November election were spent traversing the state conducting a door-to-door effort seeking voter support. John Metzger drove an estimated 6,000 miles during the course of the campaign. At each of more than 200 stops, he made speeches focusing upon an eleven-point program of statewide issues that he felt needed to be addressed. This program included tackling concerns he had about the economy, public institutions, mining, industrialization, and taxation. Metzger impressed many along the campaign route. He was witty and engaging with audiences, speaking to groups numbering in the hundreds at each stop. Some challenged him because of his youthful looks, insisting that he appeared to be too young to become governor. Metzger was quick to point out that he had been practicing law for seventeen years and was only slightly younger than Governor Thornton. He also impressed rural audiences with his extensive knowledge of farming and ranching, talking to county folk about crops and cattle and the agricultural market.

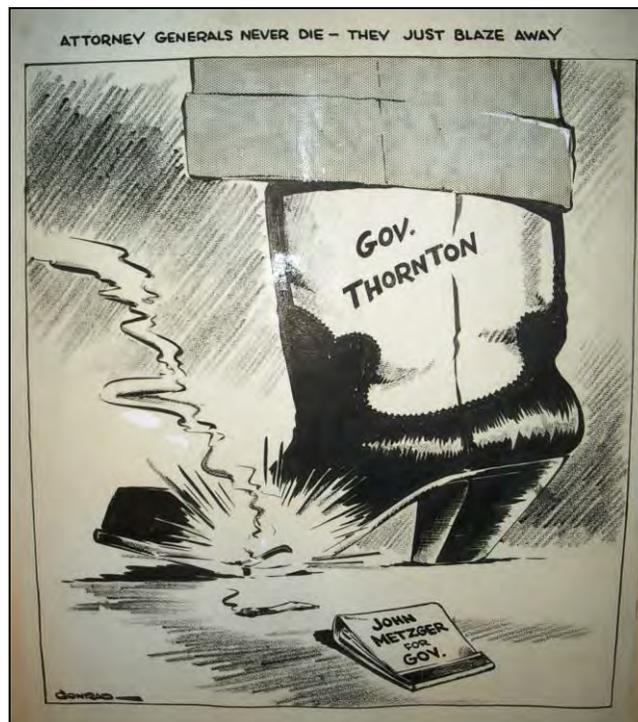


John Metzger was endorsed by W. H. Adams, the Democratic Party's patriarch. Perhaps even more important, he gained the active and vocal endorsement of Colorado's senior senator, Ed Johnson. This single endorsement garnered additional support for the candidate in statewide Democratic circles, both among the party's leadership and its electorate. One week before the election Johnson predicted that Metzger would win, but only by a narrow margin. Metzger received an additional boost from President Truman, who spoke highly of him while on a whistlestop tour of Colorado. Finally, John Metzger turned to broadcasting to get his campaign messages out, not only using radio but also the new medium of television.

The election of November 1952 resulted in a surprise for Colorado Democrats as the Republicans swept both national and state offices, riding the wave of Dwight D. Eisenhower's tremendous post-war popularity. In spite of all his efforts and endorsements, the candidate was trounced by incumbent Republican Governor Dan Thornton by a margin of two to one. With this single election, John Metzger's hopes of attaining the governorship, and his short but active career as an elected official, were over.

Attorney and Occasional Candidate, 1952-1962: Following his bitter defeat in the 1952 gubernatorial election, John Metzger stayed active in local and state politics as a vocal member of the opposition party. The Democratic conventions, and even the Adams County conventions in Brighton, were exciting for the family to attend and Bill and Karen were taken by their parents to these events. They later remembered cheering and singing and discussions going on in smoke-filled back rooms where local political hacks hammered out the planks of the platform. Betty played the Star-Spangled Banner on the piano to get everyone singing. Halfway through the convention, when people started swinging at each other, she would play the national anthem again to get everyone refocused. The conventions would go on far into the night with discussions and speeches and the counting of ballots.

The former attorney general occasionally appeared in newspaper articles throughout the state, primarily attracting attention for his fierce criticism of the Republican administrations in Washington and Denver. Always outspoken, Metzger felt the Republicans were failing to fulfill their campaign promises and provide reputable leadership. By 1954, he was attacking McCarthyism and leveling criticism against the Republicans' handling of state and national affairs, sounding like a seasoned Democratic Party political strategist. During this decade, Metzger also made several half-hearted passes at running for attorney general, governor, lieutenant governor, and for a seat in Congress. None of these races proved successful for him.



The same period also brought Metzger much success with his law practice. Metzger had a thriving farm, investments, and property holdings that provided good income for his family. He also became president of the *Mining Record*, one of the oldest newspapers in the state. Freed from the demands of state office,

Metzger organized the West Adams County volunteer fire department, a soil conservation district, and served as director of a ditch company. He was reportedly one of the first farmers in the region to employ the method of applying herbicides to crop fields by airplane. When area farmers needed to discuss and negotiate ditch rights, John organized the meetings and they were held on the back porch of the family home. Marital squabbles and problems with wayward children in the community were brought to John Metzger, the “people’s attorney,” to handle.

During the mid-1950s, when it became clear that the Denver-Boulder toll road was going to be constructed, a company was formed known as the Turnpike Land Company. It involved Bal Swan of Empire Savings & Loan, housing developer Kenneth Enser, and several others. The company purchased hundreds of acres several miles west of the Metzger Farm with plans to develop the land into the Broomfield Heights subdivision. John Metzger was engaged to prepare the incorporation papers. In order to develop the land and build houses, they needed more water. Metzger handled the real estate transaction and negotiated with area farmers to purchase as much of their water rights as possible. He amassed adequate water rights for the company to build Great Western Reservoir, which became the source of water for the town of Broomfield for many years. Essentially, John did the groundbreaking legal work that resulted in the growth of the City of Broomfield.

While John was busy with his legal practice, Betty was taking care of the family’s needs and raising the children. She shopped for groceries once a week at the Piggly Wiggly or at the Miller Supermarket in Denver. During the summer months, she dropped the kids off at the Woodbury Branch of the library at Federal Blvd. near 33rd Ave. On the way home, they would sometimes stop by the Frosted Scotchman, a drive-in at 50th & Federal with waitresses on roller skates, for hamburgers and malted milks and rootbeer floats. Federal Blvd. in those days was two lanes and had trees on both sides. In the heat of the summer, the street was cool. The northern edge of the city was around 52nd Ave. and north of that was an airport on Federal Blvd. south of 104th. At one point during the Eisenhower administration, the president briefly visited the Metzger Farm to observe the family’s work with cattle breeding and to walk through its field of test crops of corn.

One positive effect of his high profile in the state was that during the presidential campaign of 1959, Metzger was asked to drive Robert Kennedy from Denver to Cheyenne. This gave them a chance to discuss regional issues that would be pertinent to the campaign. John became an avid Kennedy Democrat, and he was particularly fond of Bobby Kennedy because of their shared interest in the law. In 1962, John Metzger chose to make a serious run for a repeated term as attorney general. This time, he spoke to the public of his continued vigor and determination, coupled with maturity and years of experience with the law and with life. Unfortunately, Metzger endured another defeat in the election. Out of high-profile politics and campaigning for good, Metzger turned to other interests and pursuits that occupied him throughout the remainder of his life.

The Trianon, 1960-1967: By 1960, the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration operated St. Anthony's Hospital in Denver, St. Francis Hospital in Colorado Springs, and various other hospitals. The Sisters was an order of nuns devoted to nursing and teaching. John Metzger's sister Margaret was on the faculty of Loretto Heights and worked at St. Anthony's Hospital, where she came to know many of the nuns. Years earlier, the nuns had developed a relationship with a fellow named Blevins Davis, who owned a large mansion in the Broadmoor area of Colorado Springs. He also owned the former Woodmen of the World tuberculosis sanitarium. This facility, and its expansive grounds, was located on the west side of Interstate 25 between Denver and Colorado Springs just north of the Air Force Academy property. On the site were a number of large red brick buildings and cottages.

Located at 21 Broadmoor Ave., the 22,000-square-foot Davis home was a scaled-down replica of the Grand Trianon at Versailles. The building was constructed in 1907 by Charles and Virginia Baldwin, who originally named it Claremont. Charles Baldwin, the son of an admiral, graduated from Harvard, became a business executive and playboy, and was known in Colorado Springs as an avid polo player. Virginia was the heiress of an estate originating in Nevada's Comstock Lode, and came to the marriage holding massive silver, gold and timber interests. The wealthy couple settled in Colorado Springs around 1900 and had plans prepared for a showplace home to be constructed near the Broadmoor that would be based upon the design of France's Trianon palace.

The building was constructed of steel and concrete, with facing of white terra cotta. Many of its rich interior finishes were imported from Europe, and the home was furnished with antiques. A lover of fine art, Virginia amassed an extraordinary collection of paintings and sculptures, some of which decorated the landscaped grounds. Well-read and fond of literature, Charles built a collection of 15,000 books, many of them signed first editions. Filled with artwork, antiques, and a two-story library of books, the mansion and its grounds joined an elite group of the greatest estates in the country. From the time it was completed, the home became the scene of numerous extravagant parties and dinners hosted by the Baldwins. The couple suffered from tragedy as their two children both died in childhood, leaving them with no heirs. Charles Baldwin later became debilitated by a stroke and died in 1934. Virginia remarried, this time to a Russian nobleman, and moved to San Francisco.

The Baldwin property was sold in 1949 for a reported \$250,000 to Charles Blevins Davis, who abandoned its earlier name and simply called it the Trianon. By that time a bon vivant and impresario, Davis started his career as a high school principal in Independence, Missouri, where he befriended Harry and Bess Truman. He went into the radio business in New York City and by the 1940s was producing Broadway shows. From 1952 to 1956, Davis produced the revival of *Porgy and Bess*. He was backing the American Ballet Theater production at a cost of \$350,000 per year and was the company's president when the show was taken on a worldwide tour that included its famous performance in Moscow.

In 1946, Davis married Marguerite Sawyer Hill, the widow of James N. Hill and an heir to the Great Northern Railroad fortune. When she died in 1948, Davis was named an executor of her \$9 million estate. The following year he purchased the mansion in Colorado Springs and spent a fortune restoring and remodeling the building. However, when Marguerite's estate was probated in New York it was discovered that she had willed \$2.75 million to charity. The high cost of maintaining the property, combined with his financial commitments on Broadway, may have led Davis to agree to donate the Trianon to the Sisters of St. Francis as a round-about fulfillment of his former wife's wishes. This was accomplished even though objections were raised by some of Marguerite's family members.

John Metzger was hired to represent the Sisters in a complex transaction through which they received not only the Trianon, but also the several hundred-acre Woodmen of the World property. Metzger arranged for the properties to be transferred to the Sisters in 1952 at virtually no cost to them. He traveled to New York several times to take part in the negotiations, and accepted virtually no fee for the work. For years afterwards, the Sisters sent a box of hand-crocheted and embroidered linens to the Metzger family each Christmas to thank John for his work on their behalf.

By the end of the 1950s, the Sisters began to realize that they could not handle the Trianon due to the high cost of its upkeep. In addition, they found that they had no good use for the property. John Metzger brought in investors from Denver and a foundation was established to run the property as a salon, complete with lectures, concerts, classes and cultural events. However, the residential neighbors and the Broadmoor Hotel were less than thrilled with these plans. They began to exert pressure to have the Trianon closed.

Around 1960, the Trianon was transferred into a private Metzger family foundation and John laid plans to operate the property as a museum. To raise funds for its purchase and operation, he sold the eastern 160-acres of the family farm near Broomfield. John, Betty, Karen and Bill traveled to Colorado Springs every weekend to clean the building, make repairs, and prepare it for opening. The family began providing tours of the mansion and its extensive grounds and art and book collection, charging \$1.00 per adult (children were free). Although busloads of visitors arrived in 1961 and 1962, they did not come in numbers large enough to cover repayment of the mortgage and the high cost of the property's maintenance and insurance.

Because the city's zoning regulations prohibited the property's use as a commercial operation, even an admission-charging museum, John renamed it the Trianon School of Fine Arts because schools were an allowed use in a residential zone. A lengthy zoning battle took place throughout 1963 with Metzger on one side, the Broadmoor Hotel and wealthy area property owners on the other, and the city in the middle. On 23 January 1964, a rally attended by 3,000 citizens was held in the Colorado Springs City Auditorium. While many of those who attended supported Metzger's efforts, the zoning change was denied by the city.

By the fall of 1964, John Metzger had established a "Save the Trianon" fund and was proposing to dismantle the building and move it to the family farm near Broomfield. Although the fund, managed by the First National Bank of Denver, collected \$175,000 in donations from across the state, this was far short of the estimated moving cost of \$675,000. The move was eventually determined to be too costly and in April 1965 John Metzger directed that the donations be returned.

By 1966, Metzger found it necessary to sell large portions of the Trianon's art and book collection. Guests were still being taken on paid tours, but the revenue was hardly enough to cover the property's expenses. Many of the 15,000 books in the library were sold to Colorado State University and form the core of its rare book collection. Pieces from the art collection were also auctioned off to raise funds. Eventually, John Metzger reached the point where he could no longer maintain the property, and it was sold in 1967 to the Colorado Springs School for Girls. This later became the co-ed and exclusive Colorado Springs School, which is still housed there today.

During the sale, the Metzger family foundation retained ownership of the remaining art collection from the Trianon. The artwork was brought to Denver and placed in a building at 14th Ave. and Tremont St., which became known as the Trianon Art Museum. John Metzger purchased and devoured numerous books about the world of international art collecting, and he spent hours educating himself in the field of art just as he did years earlier in the field of law. He and Betty ran the museum for years, and the Metzger family continues to own and operate the small museum through the present day.

In addition to his many other interests, John Metzger was also fond of firearms. He carefully acquired a collection of historical weapons, many of them with ornate tooling and inlaid materials. His gun collection was displayed together with the Trianon art in the museum in Denver. It included a Serial #1 Gatling gun and a ten-pound mountain Howitzer like those used in the Civil War. John became a licensed gun dealer so he could trade guns that were only allowed to be held by collectors. Some of these had to be disposed of to other collectors after his death. He befriended a young man who was also seriously involved in collecting, who he engaged to make bullets for the antique guns. The Metzgers have film footage of the Gatling gun being used on the farm, where they would shoot at hay bales stacked ½ mile away. Each fourth of July, the family and their guests were allowed to take turns operating the gun.

Mining and Other Pursuits, 1960s-1980s: Another of John Metzger's lifelong interests was mining. He was fascinated with the subject and became a member of the Colorado Mining Association. Through a series of trades, he ended up owning a historic mining property in Clear Creek County. Known as the Grizzly Mine, it was located several miles southwest of Silverplume, halfway to the back side of Torrey's Peak. During the 1950s, Metzger purchased equipment and operated the mine with a partner, looking for gold and silver. However, the bottom fell out of the market and the mine sat inactive for many years. In the

1970s he reactivated the mine together with a classmate of his son Bill, who was also John's godson. The classmate's father was an attorney who shared an office suite with John for many years and they were old friends.

The men knew that the mine had produced in its earlier years and with new technology and rising ore values could possibly be profitable again. The mining pursuit replaced John's focus upon the Trianon, especially once the art collection found its home in the Denver museum and was being run comfortably by Betty. This became John's weekend project. Bill and Karen went into the mine with their father when they were children. The family still owns the Grizzly Mine, which today retains some of its old buildings and sections of rail. The portal is closed with padlocked steel doors and the tunnel is probably collapsing behind them. When the operation was finally abandoned, pieces of mining equipment were transported to the Metzger Farm in Adams County for storage. These are the items that remain there today.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the family ended up with a mountain hay ranch in Middle Park that John had acquired. The Metzgers hired a caretaker who had grown up on a dairy farm near 120th and Sheridan, and he managed the ranch for them. Many of the farmers living around the Metzger property in Adams County were Czech and Slovak immigrants and first-generation Americans who had settled there around the 1920s. Most owned 80-acre and 160-acre farms where they grew alfalfa, corn and wheat, and raised stock. These families were frugal and old-world in many ways, managing farms that were modeled in the European tradition of owning just enough land to produce for the family, with a little left over to take to market. Over time, they sold their land for suburban development that is continuing today.

John Metzger's Legacy: John Metzger was energetically involved in numerous pursuits throughout his adult life, so his involvement with the Trianon, the mine, the art museum in Denver, and many other undertakings aside from the fields of law and politics was not surprising to his family. Growing up, their father's varied interests encouraged his children Bill and Karen to involve themselves in many activities throughout their school years. The family home outside of Broomfield felt secure, providing them all with a sense of stability. Each of John's developing interests simply became the latest of the family's numerous eclectic adventures. Metzger's library included not just how-to books, but literature on many subjects, all of which he studied with enthusiasm. He had not received much in the way of educational opportunities as an orphaned child, so he spent his adult years educating himself about whatever subjects interested him.

Betty held everything together throughout their marriage, making sure that throughout John's pursuits in law, politics, cattle raising, dairy farming, the Trianon, and the mine the kids were in uniform for school, got their homework done, practiced their music, and dinner was on the table every evening at 6:15. John was a powerful force, and he brought the family into every one of his adventures. Through frequent meetings with his wife and children, he regularly sought his family's opinions and then made his decisions. Metzger always hid

the down side of the family's finances from the kids – this was never part of family discussions. He would just mention that he was going to sell something like land or art. Between John and Betty, they just kept things going.

John Metzger's life was full and active, and he seems to have accomplished more in a day than most found possible. He pursued his role as attorney general seriously and with tremendous vigor and dedication. Demanding compliance with the law to a degree bordering upon zealotry, he rooted out long-standing graft, corruption, criminal activity and sloth as he worked to extract Colorado from the old closed-society ways of running government and doing business and move it toward a new era of efficiency and legality and openness.

The Trianon project in particular turned into more than he had expected, consuming much of his energy in terms of finances, emotional investment, and stress. Although he kept moving, the pace of his life seems to have resulted in physical ailments and it eventually wore him down. John Metzger died of cancer in Denver's Rose Hospital on 25 January 1984 at the age of around 71 and his remains were placed in the mausoleum at Fairmount Cemetery. Following his death, Betty continued to operate the Trianon Art Museum in downtown Denver through the early 2000s. Daughter Karen became an attorney and went on to fill out an honorable career as a Denver District Court judge and a member of the Colorado Court of Appeals. Son Bill became a movie writer and producer in Hollywood and later Florida.

In an obituary written by the paper, John Metzger was remembered by the *Denver Post* as "the volcanic boy wonder of Colorado politics...who displayed a unique, bipartisan flare for public insult and criticism that disturbed more staid politicians. He was especially fond of criticizing district attorneys and what he called the breakdown in local law enforcement in Colorado" (26 January 1984, p. 8A). According to his family, John was a born politician, in the best sense of the word. When he was growing up, there was a small class of people in society who really ran things, mostly from behind closed doors. It didn't really matter what the merits were of any cause, or how hard people worked. If you were part of that small coterie, you were in. And if you were out, you were out.

John Metzger disliked the fact that society was like that. He favored meritocracy, because his life was built upon achieving things through his own efforts. He loved people and organizations. He loved being attorney general, even for a short time, and working for the people of Colorado because he loved crusades. He was a genuine idealist, always ready to fight for fairness and the rule of law. Perhaps his greatest legacy is that he serves today as an example of time well-spent and a life well-lived, filled to the brim with the active pursuit of whatever is found to be important and worthwhile and meaningful.

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Numerous resources were consulted during the course of this project to obtain information about the property's history and the background of the Metzger family. Resources as varied as newspaper articles, title documents, maps, published books, and online records were consulted. In addition, Gip Wilson and Bill and Karen Metzger were interviewed at length regarding family history, site characteristics, and to explore various elements of the Metzger family's background and relationship to the property. Although the research completed was extensive, much additional information may be found regarding the farm's early history and various aspects of the life and career of John Metzger. The following resources were consulted for this report:

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"Backlog of 1600 Cases Greets Atty General" (1/16/1949)

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"Carrel, Sheriffs Rap Metzger's Police Plan" (12/28/1949, p5)

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"Former Denver DA, James Burke, Dies" (8/5/1961, p12A)

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"Ike and Metzger Favored to Win" (11/3/1952, p12)

"Is Metzger Running? Well, Maybe" (8/25/1949)

"Ike Thornton Continue to Hike State Leads" (11/5/1952, p6)

"John W. Metzger" (8/17/1952)

"Keep CU Out of Politics!" (7/20/1949, p24)

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"Longmont Chamber Launches Petition to Bar Boulder Toll Road" (6/18/1949)

"Metzger Bans 'Released Time' Religion Classes for Colorado" (clipping, no date)

"Metzger Blasts GOP Efforts in Colorado and Nation" (3/14/1954, p30)

"Metzger, C.U. Compromise in Fund Dispute" (7/31/1949, p1)

"Metzger Decides-He'll Run for State Attorney" (7/12/1950)

"Metzger Declines to Describe Kansas City Chat with Truman" (10/1/1949, p5)

"Metzger Files Answer To \$10,000 Libel Suit" (4/20/1950, p61)

"Metzger Names Ass'ts, Deputies for Coming 2 Years" (clipping, no date)

"Metzger Plan to Seize State Museum for His Office Evokes Outcry" (5/27/1950)

"Metzger Resigns as OPS Watchdog" (2/3/1952, p6)

"Metzger Says Russ Flag at Civic Center Must Go" (clipping, no date)

"Metzger Seems Ready for Congress Race" (6/5/1958, p32)

"Metzger Seen Way Out in Front" (clipping, no date)
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 "Metzger Threatened With 2nd Slander Suit" (12/11/1949)
 "Metzger to Broaden Scope in School Suit" (10/7/1949, p8)
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 "Metzger Warns Judge to Do Duty" (8/20/1949)
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 "Metzger Wins Golden School Row" (8/12/1949, p16)
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 "Monaghan Sobs at Race Inquiry" (7/23/1949, p5)
 "Moore Picked For Metzger's State Staff" (clipping, no date)
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 "Old Fashion Primaries" (8/12/1962, p51)
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 "Pressure Laid To Legislatures" (7/19/1949)
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 "Pueblo Packing Plant First Hit in OPS Drive" (9/28/1951)
 "Racing Aide Defies order by Metzger to 'Clear Out'" (7/10/1949, p5)
 "Racing Board Spurned Bribes, Threats, Probe Told" (7/20/1949, p6)
 "Regents Pan Metzger, Ask He Withdraw" (clipping, no date)
 "Sheriffs Rap Metzger's Plan" (12/28/1949, p42)
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 "State Attorney General Adds Three to Staff" (12/30/1948)
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 "State Plan Board Stripped of Powers in Metzger Ruling" (clipping, no date)
 "State's OPS Leads Nation In Controls Enforcement" (clipping, no date)
 "Stormy Attorney General Seeks Return Engagement" (7/29/1962, p32)
 "Thornton or Metzger? Tomorrow Tells" (11/3/1952, p1)
 "Three Appointed to Staff of Attorney-General Elect" (12/29/1948)
 "Truman's Aid in Cemetery Case Sought" (7/16/1949)
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 "Who is This Fellow John Metzger?" (7/24/1949)
 "Why Civil Service Doesn't Work" (9/22/1949, p23)

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- “Metzger Warns Offices: Keep Contracts Legal” (clipping, no date)
- “Metzger Will Not Run For Anything, He Says” (8/23/1949)
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- “The Record of John W. Metzger” (clipping, no date)
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Interviews

Bill & Karen Metzger. Conducted by Ron Sladek, Tatanka Historical Associates Inc. Westminster City Hall, 13 November 2006.

Bill & Karen Metzger. Conducted by Ron Sladek, Tatanka Historical Associates Inc. Metzger Farm, 19 March 2007.

Gip Wilson. Conducted by Ron Sladek, Tatanka Historical Associates Inc. Metzger Farm, 27 February 2006.

Websites

The Political Graveyard - www.politicalgraveyard.com

Colorado Springs School - www.css.org

Colorado State Archives – www.colorado.gov

Title Documents (Adams County)

15 August 1943	Grantor: James T. Burke Grantee: John W. Metzger	Warranty Deed Book 289-Page 533
13 August 1935	Grantor: Nellie A. Nipko Grantee: James T. Burke	Warranty Deed Book 225-Page 412
5 October 1934	Grantor: Mary E. Gay Grantee: Nellie A. Nipko	Warranty Deed Book 219-Page 308
13 October 1933	Grantor: Albert B. Gay Grantee: Mary E. Gay	Warranty Deed Book 211-Page 353
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15 August 1943	Grantor: James T. Burke Grantee: John W. Metzger	Warranty Deed Book 289-Page 533
13 August 1935	Grantor: Nellie A. Nipko Grantee: James T. Burke	Warranty Deed Book 225-Page 412
5 October 1934	Grantor: Mary E. Gay Grantee: Nellie A. Nipko	Warranty Deed Book 219-Page 308
13 October 1933	Grantor: Albert B. Gay Grantee: Mary E. Gay	Warranty Deed Book 211-Page 353
5 January 1912	Grantor: Susan Gay Grantee: Albert B. Gay	Quit Claim Deed Book 37-Page 493
6 July 1910	Grantor: Fred L. Howe Grantee: Susan Gay	Quit Claim Deed Book 37-Page 308
18 April 1908	Grantor: Humphrey Morris Grantee: Fred L. Howe	Warranty Deed Book 39-Page 271
26 November 1904	Grantor: Susan Gay Grantee: Humphrey Morris	Warranty Deed Book 32-Page 131

Bureau of Land Management / General Land Office Documents

Patentee: Albert Gay
Issue Date: 1/30/1885
Acres: 80 (W $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 32, T1S-R68W)
Document #: 3644
BLM Serial #: COCOAA 066903