



## HISTORY OF WELD COUNTY TOWNS

### **FIRESTONE**

*1908 Incorporated Weld County Town - 1908*

St. Vrain State Park near Firestone is the location where Fort Junction was built: it was a sod fortress built during the Colorado War (1863-1865). It was constructed by the Lower Boulder St. Vrain Valley Home Guard, a volunteer militia organized to protect local settlers from Native American attacks.

John McKissick and his brothers were in the St. Vrain Valley Home Guard. This affiliation led to John being elected Weld County Sheriff in 1865 and his brother, Thomas, succeeded him in 1867. The McKissick brothers purchased railroad land in southwestern Weld County to establish a coal mine; in 1872 they opened the McKissick, Colorado's first production coal mine (mine requiring tunnels, mining equipment and employees). It was located where today's Saddleback Golf Course is in Firestone.

In 1907, the Denslow Coal & Land Company purchased 160 acres of Thomas McKissick's land from his widow. That same year Ohio brothers Jacob H. Firestone and David R. Firestone and their nephew John H. Buchanan and his son Clarence S. Buchanan bought Denslow out and started the Firestone Coal Company, establishing the Firestone coal mine. A town was established there in 1908, named Firestone, after Jacob Firestone.

Up until 1947 five coal mines operated in Firestone. During its production Firestone's Grant Mine produced enough coal to fill a coal train 200 miles long. The coal train tracks have since been abandoned and where the old train track bed was is now the Firestone Trail. Over 12 miles long, this trail connects area parks, the St. Vrain Legacy Trail and the Colorado Front Range Trail. *The above information is gleaned from the upcoming book, Weld County Towns: The First 150 Years, researched by the City of Greeley Museums staff, Nancy Lourine Lynch head writer.*