



HISTORY OF WELD COUNTY TOWNS

JOHNSTOWN

Incorporated Weld County Town - 1902

In approximately 1883, Harvey J. Parish homesteaded 80 acres between the Big Thompson and Little Thompson Rivers. He then married Mary Wygal. Five children and nearly 20 years later they began planning a town on their land along the Great Western Railway.

In 1902 Parish's youngest son, seven-year-old John, was rushed to a hospital with a ruptured appendix. John's father told him to "hurry up and get well" because their town



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c1905 – Johnstown's First Auto; Town founder Harvey Parish is driving a one-cylinder REO automobile. Parish served as Weld County Commissioner, 1893 to 1902, and Johnstown's first mayor; City of Greeley Museums Hazel E. Johnson Collection #1991.42.1130

was being named "John's Town" in his honor. On November 8, 1902, Johnstown was established and not only did John recover, but he later served as Johnstown's mayor from 1929 to 1934.

A plan was discussed in 1905 of moving Johnstown to the site of Hillsboro because a new railroad was going to bypass Johnstown. The railroad failed and the move never happened.

In 1911 wooden buildings on west Main Street were destroyed by fire, and were later replaced by brick. Johnstown kept growing and benefited from the Mohawk (later

Carnation) Condensed Milk Co. and the Great Western Sugar Company's barium sugar plant, which was the only one of its kind in the world.

Following their new downtown design guidelines, Johnstown approved a program in 2009 to provide matching grants to businesses restoring original storefronts and upgrading façades.

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.