

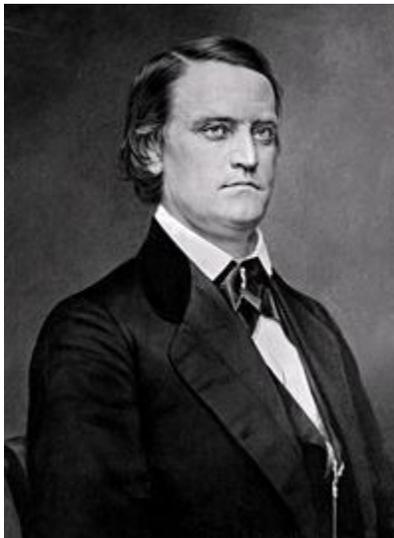


## **It's All in the Name: Breckenridge, Colorado** **Submitted by Scott Myers**

The Town of Breckenridge is located 9,603 feet above sea level in a U-shaped valley on the western slope of the Continental Divide. There are 5.3 square miles within the town boundary. The Town is home to a permanent population of only approximately 3,100 residents.

Long before white settlers from the east crossed the Continental Divide, Breckenridge was part of the summer hunting grounds of the nomadic White River and Middle Park Ute Native Americans. The Town of Breckenridge was born out of America's mid-nineteenth century rush to settle the West during Pike's Peak Gold Rush. General George E. Spencer was one of hundreds of "town builders" who trekked across the West, intent upon locating in the Blue River Valley.

The General formally created the Town of "Breckinridge" in November 1859 and named it after President James Buchanan's Vice President, John Cabell Breckinridge (1857-1861). Breckinridge had also served two terms in Congress (1851-1855). By flattering the United States Government, Spencer hoped to gain a post office. He succeeded and the post office in Breckinridge became the first post office between the Continental Divide and Salt Lake City, Utah.



**John C. Breckinridge**  
**(Attributed to Mathew Brady or Levin Handy)**

Breckinridge was elected to the Senate in March 1861. His sympathies were clearly with the South and he was expelled from the Senate for treason. He received a commission as a Confederate Brigadier General, fought in numerous battles and campaigns for the Confederacy,

and later served as the last Confederate Secretary of War. The little town of Breckinridge quickly and quietly changed the spelling of its name to "Breckenridge," changing an "i" to an "e".

Breckenridge was the center of an active gold mining district up until the early 1900's. Placer mining and hydraulic mining along the creek beds and hard rock lode mining in the surrounding hills yielded millions of dollars in precious metals in the late 1800s. In the years following World War II, Breckenridge became an internationally known ski resort.

**Sources:**

<http://www.findbreckenridgerealestate.com/breck-history.html>

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_C.\\_Breckinridge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_C._Breckinridge)

