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Hawarden....
How it all began.

In order to take a look at the origins of Hawarden, one must look at the two things that seemed to be essential to settlement at the time – a river and then a railroad both of which provided the transportation necessary to occupy a “wild land.”

Hawarden actually had its beginnings north of where it is now located, in Calliope. The following is paraphrased from the Hawarden Centennial book.

Sioux County was first formed by four young men who decided to organize a county in order to receive a regulation county salary. The young men were Frederick M. Hubbell, W.H. Frame, Joseph Bell, and E.L. Stone. They founded the government site and organization was granted on January 20, 1860. At the time they were living in a dugout overlooking the Big Sioux River, in what is today known as “Scott’s Bottom.”



In the spring of 1861, a new town site was located at the north edge of what is now Hawarden next to the Big Sioux River. A courthouse, which also served as a fort was built. The building served as protection from outlaws and Indians, as well as being home for those who founded the settlement.

The settlement was named "Calliope," because Fredrick Hubbel – one of the founders – had been to Sioux City and heard a calliope (accent on the second syllable) playing on a steamboat. The musical instrument had made quite an impression on him, so he suggested that the settlement be named "Calliope," with the accent being on the first syllable instead!

In 1869, Calliope was made up of the courthouse and three log cabins, and had a population of ten inhabitants. Indian uprisings caused the people to return to Sioux City, and abandon the settlement. They returned two years later and the settlement continued.

More people began to settle in Calliope, and a hotel and more homes were built. A stage line was formed so that mail was possible as well as traveling to Sioux City.

In 1872, Calliope was a prospering settlement complete with homes and businesses. Controversy arose however when in the eastern part of Sioux country there was a Dutch settlement called "Orange City." The residents of Orange City felt that the county seat should be moved there – much to the irritation of the people of Calliope.

What follows is one of the great stories connected to this area, and will be detailed at a later date! Stay tuned for guns, keys, saws, sleds and ice!