

HAWARDEN...HOW IT ALL BEGAN

THREE HOTELS....MANY STORIES

Chapter 16: By Mary Truesdell Johnson

With the rapidly expanding railroad traffic and increasing activity in Hawarden, there was an immediate need for Hotels and eating establishments to accommodate the daily customers. In 1887 Hawarden boasted three hotels, the St. Nicholas, the Northwestern and the Depot.

The St Nicholas Hotel was located at 827 Kansas (approximately the location of Back to Health). It was advertised as the first brick building in Sioux County and was erected in 1883 by J.C.Brewer. The hotel changed hands several times. In 1910 it became a clothing store and has housed several businesses over the years.

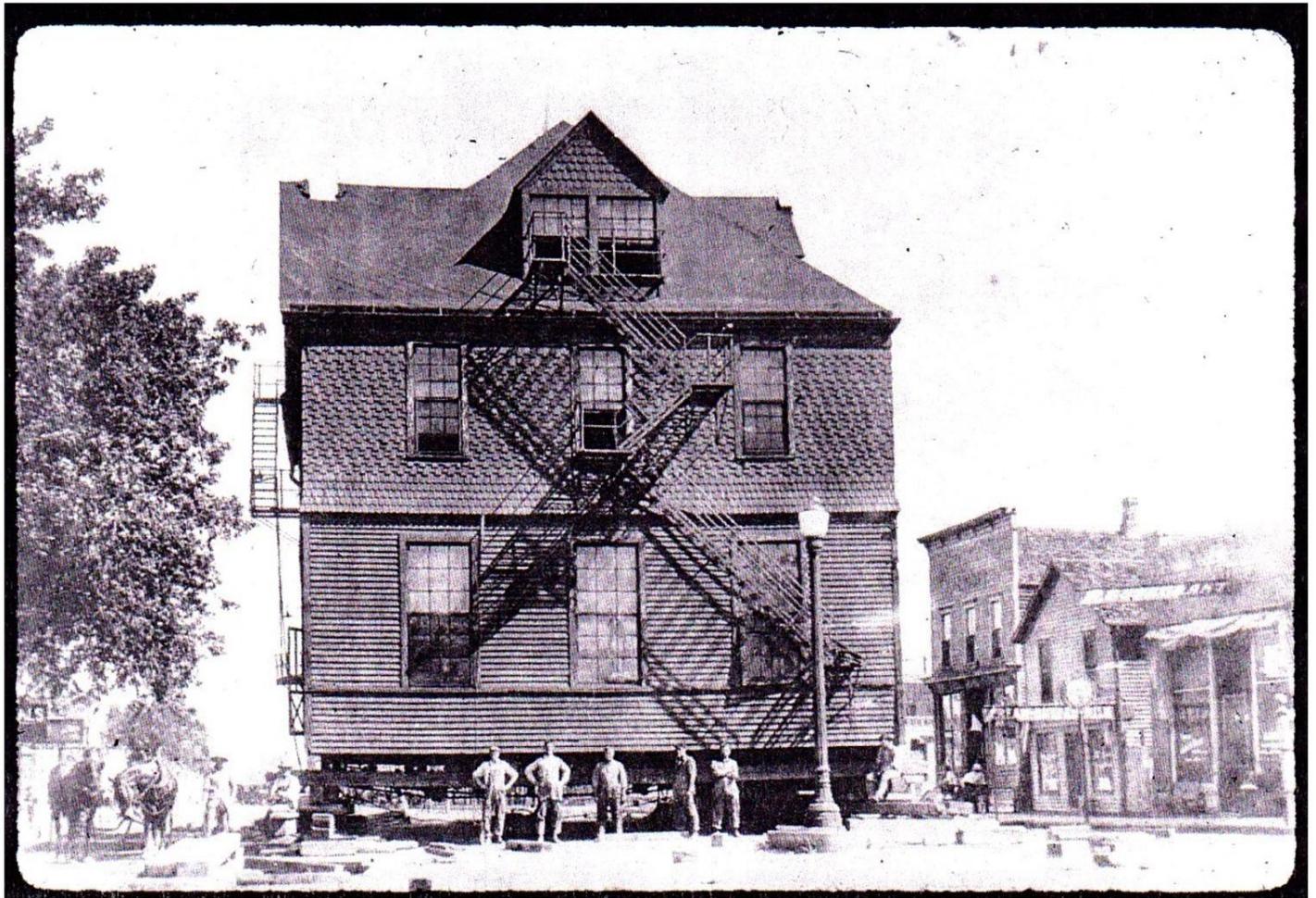
The Northwestern Hotel was built by the Northwestern Railway Co. and was located near the Northwestern Depot at 702 Kansas on the end of Main Street where the McKenney's Furniture now stands. Its location made it very convenient for passenger's arrival and departure. In 1911 the Northwestern Hotel became the Lilley Hotel under the ownership of Mr. & Mrs. J.B. Lilley.

In 1949 the Lilley Hotel was sold and operated as a rooming house for a short time. In August of 1950 the office of Otis Radio and Electric Corp. (now Coilcraft) moved into the hotel, followed by the entire Otis Plant in 1952. In 1959 Otis (Coilcraft) moved to its present facilities at 222 Avenue E. In 1962 the Lilley Hotel was torn down to provide a location for a new Jack and Jill Supermarket, later to become McKenney's Furniture.

The Depot Hotel was also erected by the Chicago and Northwestern Railway for the accommodation of their patrons. It was built in the area east of the present Northwestern Depot building for the accommodation of the railroad passengers. This was a large three story frame building and also included an "eating house". Trains stopped at this hotel daily allowing passengers to obtain breakfast and evening meals.

In 1917 D.A. Morgan purchased the Depot Hotel from the railroad, and planned to move the hotel to 722 Kansas (the present location of the First State Bank). The space for the relocated building was 75 ft frontage and 130 ft. depth. The new structure was expected to cover almost the entire space.

The man undertaking the huge project of moving the Depot Hotel was W.J. (House mover) Smith. The building was moved in three sections with guests occupying the Hotel during the moving process. No Hydraulics...only horses, wagons, and man power.



**1917 Moving one-third of
The Depot Hotel
Lamppost may cause a
problem!**

When the three sections were set in place at the new location, additions were built joining the sections into one unit and affording the space of an additional twenty five rooms. The entire building was then covered with a grey stucco to give it a substantial appearance and make the building fire proof from the outside as well as warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The new basement contained a café, the heating plant and laundry room. The lobby was refinished throughout and a beautiful terrazzo floor became one of the striking features. Large plate glass windows gave a splendid view of Hawarden's Main Street. Many people have mentioned that they grew up watching Main Street from the windows of the Gladstone Hotel. The hotel contained about 60 finely equipped rooms. All rooms were steam heated, a number had private bathrooms and all had running water. The Hotel was renamed The Gladstone Hotel, a name picked by Mr. Morgan and his partner, Pete Luchsinger from over one hundred entries submitted by friends and patrons.



Gladstone Hotel 1917 722 Kansas St

During its long existence the Gladstone Hotel entertained many distinguished guests including Congressmen and Governors. It weathered many storms such as the flood of 1926 when water filled the basement and rose to at least the second step leading to the Lobby.

The Morgan family operated the Gladstone Hotel and café until November of 1967 when they sadly locked the doors on the many untold stories and memories of "The Good Old days!"

After serving the people and visitors of Hawarden for over eighty years, the hotel was purchased by the City and demolished in the spring of 1969. The wrecking crew estimated the time to demolish the building to be three to four hours. They started the demolition on Friday, worked through the weekend and by Wednesday of that week the building was down. The demolition was attended by a full crew of "sidewalk superintendents" each day.

The most common comment during the demolition was "If those walls could talk, what stories they would tell." Stories of a young boy sneaking his pony to the third floor and galloping down the corridors, as well as the children of the hotel finding the empty rooms with the best breeze in the summer and choosing to sleep in them on the hot days. Would you believe that a light late at night in a certain third floor window would indicate a Poker game in progress? Stories tell than often after one of those nights you would probably see a disgruntled farmer in town the next day selling a wagon load of grain, or an unhappy store keeper who would slam your purchases down with never a smile. There are stories of the Billiard room and a billiard shark from the Twin Cities who was brought into town to scam the hotel proprietor. Mr. Morgan was well known as an excellent Billiards player and called his bluff. That night they each put \$1000.00 in a hat (held by the owner's 5

year old son), and played one game of three cushion billiards, with a score of 10 billiards to win. When it was over Mr. Morgan put up his cue, picked up the money and walked out. No report was given about the billiard shark's whereabouts. Among other stories, it was also reported that the Gladstone Hotel also often employed Negro jazz musicians to entertain its customers, no discrimination here! Good times, bad times, room and board for people down on their luck, sometimes repaid, most often not. Definitely happiness and sadness, all a part of the "Good Old Days." A time gone by, never to return, except in the stories handed down from one generation to another.

References: Hawarden Independent: April 12, 1917, December, 1917, March, 1969. Hawarden Centennial Book. Memories from Laurie Morgan.