

HAWARDEN ...HOW IT ALL BEGAN

PATRIOTISM AND HEROES

Chapter 44

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Patriotism and Heroes are not words exclusive to Hawarden or to any community or city in our great United States of America.; but Hawarden and Calliope can certainly be proud of their heroes who have fought for our liberty and freedom since the Civil War. Hawarden paid tribute to one of these men on February 12, 1942 when John H. Huyck (the last Civil War Veteran in Sioux County) was laid to rest at Grace Hill Cemetery in Hawarden, Iowa.

John H. Huyck was not a Hawarden native; he was born in Watertown, Wisconsin in 1846. He joined the Wisconsin Volunteers as a cook's helper at the age of 15 at the start of the Civil war. His tour of duty was cut short when someone discovered his age and he was discharged. The young John Huyck immediately left for Illinois and joined the 134th Illinois Infantry of the Union Army. Mr. Huyck stayed with this group through several minor scrimmages until the age of 19 when he was discharged. At this time he found himself in Lincoln, Neb. in the early 1870's, at the time Calliope was becoming settled. John Huyck visited the area as a member of the gang surveying for the Sioux City and Pembina railroad. He often spoke of a very unhappy Irishman he met whose property was in the direct path of the railroad. Could this man be the answer to why the route of the tracks veered away from Calliope and ended in Hawarden? We may never know that answer, but Huyck remembered him protesting vigorously against the intrusion.

Mr. J.H. Huyck passed away at the age of 95. He was blessed throughout his life with a rugged, erect, active body and an even more active mind. Those who remember Mr. Huyck will always associate him with his Model T Ford which at the age of 88 he drove by himself to Watertown, Wisconsin to revisit his childhood home. In 1938 he was accompanied by his son to the 75th Anniversary of Gettysburg in Gettysburg, Pa. This celebration was attended by veterans of both the Union and Confederate Armies. It was the only meeting of these old soldiers that had opposed one another on the battlefield three quarters of a century earlier. At the age of 93 John Huyck quit driving –after strong protests – and when the state refused to renew his driver's license.

John Huyck was an aviation enthusiast and for many years, on his birthday, he would fly commercially from Sioux City, Iowa to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to commemorate the day.

John H. Huyck, Sioux County's last Civil War Veteran was laid to rest on February 12, 1942. It seemed a fitting day to say goodbye to this man whose life had spanned almost a century and fought in the Civil War with President Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief. He also lived to see the United States fight in three more wars. To respect Mr. Huyck's duty to his country, the business establishments in Hawarden were closed during the time of the funeral. The flags that were flown in honor of President Lincoln's birthday were lowered to half mast during the funeral. John H. Huyck's grave is located just west of the large memorial at Grace Hill Cemetery.

John Herrick Huyck was a step-grandfather to Clayton B. Thompson, well-known lawyer and Mayor of Hawarden. He was a step great grandfather to Dann Thompson and Ronald Thompson. Mr. Huyck lived in a house on the same property as his son's at 1208 Ninth Street in Hawarden.

This story is only one of hundreds that could be told of the countless veterans that have served their country and returned to Hawarden and the area to live their lives. Their love of country is an everlasting legacy.

The Two Oakes Post 254 of Hawarden is an example of the companionship these veterans have formed and fostered through the years. On October 17, 1919 a Charter was granted to organize the American Legion Post in Hawarden for the purpose of fellowship and aiding and assisting Veterans and their families. The Hawarden Post was named in Honor of Glenn Oakes, a sergeant in the Canadian Army and his brother Harry a lieutenant in the US Army. Both boys were

killed in action in France during WW1. They were the sons of Henry Oakes of Hawarden; thus the name "Two Oakes Post 254".

The Commander of Two Oakes Post 254 in 1920 was Seal Van Sickle. Seal was also a talented artist, having studied in Chicago. In 1943, members of Two Oakes Post erected a Honor Roll Board at the south end of Main Street to honor the men and women from this area who were serving in WWII. This large billboard was a work of art; names of all service men and women were printed on each end and the large scene in the middle, painted by Seal Van Sickle, depicted each branch of the military in action and in vivid color. How many years it remained at the south end of Main Street, I do not know; I have never been able to find what happened to it. I am sure at one time it was appropriate to dismantle it and remove it from its place of prominence. I know things do not last forever, but what a treasure that painting would be for the Veterans Museum at Calliope Village.

Two Oakes Post has been a part of Hawarden for over ninety three years. Their projects are many and their service to the community invaluable. A recent accomplishment is the WWII Memorial at Veterans Memorial Park on Avenue E. The Avenue of Flags displayed each year at Grace Hill Cemetery on Memorial Day and July 4th weekends to honor deceased Veterans now totals over three hundred and eighty flags. These flags blowing in the wind are a silent reminder of the loved ones who have served their county, many giving the ultimate price. They also remind us each time they fly that "FREEDOM IS NOT FREE".

