

HAWARDEN.....how it all began

Calliope

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To many of us, Calliope is a name that may conjure up a few memories, but not of the significance the little town truly deserves. My generation might remember the little “Calliope Store,” primarily because it was the only store in the area open on Sundays. Others may remember the huge brick building that once housed a body shop. Few if any, realize the significance of the location. Not only was Calliope the original county seat, the first school in the county was established there, and it had a thriving main street. Read the excerpt from the 1883 article below, to gain a new insight and appreciation for where it all began – Calliope, Iowa.

Today’s chapter on Hawarden’s history is partially reprinted from the Hawarden Independent, May 17, 1883. The article was entitled: “Calliope and its Businesses.”

The Banner County of Iowa

To the rich men of the east, we say come. To the man of moderate means, we say come. To the man who is working his life away to support his wife and little ones, when there is not a lingering ray of hope to brighten his path,

to him we say, throw off the yoke of bondage and come to this magnificent county and be a man among men, independent as the breezes that blow over our broad and fertile prairies.

Calliope

One of the most important towns in the county and the metropolis is the young city of Calliope. It is beautifully located upon the east bank of the Big Sioux River far above the high water mark, and about mid-way between Sioux City and Sioux Falls. The larger portion of the town is on a high dry bottom; while the smaller, situated near the Northwestern Depot, is the only part ever covered with water, and that only about a week, three or four times a year.

Calliope has made rapid strides in population and wealth. Two years ago the votes cast were about twenty-five. At present there are over two hundred and twenty five voters, making our population over one thousand. Her citizens are mainly Americans of the enterprising and energetic class. Social, refined and intelligent.

The mill and all the machinery is in place on the banks of the Big Sioux, and as soon as the water subsides, the dam will be completed. The time is not far distant when this water will all be utilized for this purpose and mills and manufacturing will line the river. Capitalists should take heed of this matter.

Nearly all kinds of business is presented in our midst and are as follows: Four Lumber yards, Six general stores, Three grocery stores, Two drug stores, Three hardware stores, Six restaurants, Six hotels and many private boarding places, Two banks, Two newspapers, One book store, One large furniture store, Eight land and Insurances offices, Three blacksmith shops, One temporary photograph gallery, Two livery stables, Four draymen (constantly employed), Three harness shops, One shoe shop, One large clothing store, Two agricultural Implement dealers, Two millinery stores, One wagon shop, Five saloons, Four practicing physicians, Four attorneys.

We have three church organizations: The Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational. The Presbyterians already have a fine church erected costing something over \$1800.00. The Methodists have one in the course of

construction and will be finished this coming summer at a cost of not less than \$2500.00 The Congregationalists have just organized their society and hold their meetings in the Northwestern Depot..

Quite a large school house was built here two years ago, costing over two thousand dollars, capable of seating two hundred scholars. It is already found to be too small and another is to be built in the south part of town this Fall, the appropriation having already been made for this building.

Calliope undoubtedly will make as large a place as any inland city in the state. The country surrounding it possibly can be equaled but cannot be excelled in the world, lying at the junction of two great rival railroads, where there always will be competition in freights and will always afford the best of market for all kinds of farm produce

To those thinking of changing their location we would invite them to visit Calliope, before locating elsewhere.

Pretty impressive! The people of Calliope had been deeply disappointed at the loss of the county seat, but were excited when they heard that the Northwestern Railroad Company planned to build a branch line through their town. That would give them two railroad lines, and open the doors for even greater opportunities!

However, once again, the people of Calliope were to be disappointed, when the line was built about a mile south, in a new site named "Hawarden."