

## HAWARDEN....HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Prosperity, Small Pox and Rumors.

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Even though Calliope was no longer the Capitol of Sioux County, it continued to prosper for several more years. The stage coach continued to run between Sioux City and Sioux Falls until 1879 when the new north-south railroad eliminated the need for a stagecoach. This was an asset to the area and if anything, the growth of Calliope was more energetic after the raid on the courthouse than before.

This good luck and prosperity was not to last however. Hard times were just around the corner.

At the end of December 1880, the owner of the General Store in Calliope made a trip to Sioux City by way of Elk Point to purchase supplies for his business. As Ken Hansen reports in his book CALLIOPE, the business man spent the night on his trip in the town of Jefferson in Dakota Territory.

The story tells that the bed given to the man to sleep on had been slept on a few nights previously by a man suffering from Small Pox. Unaware of the impending disaster, the Calliope business man continued on his mission and returned to his home and business without a worry. A few days after his return home, he became ill and was bedridden for several days. He began to feel better and eventually went back to work at his store, meeting customers and helping them with their purchases. This unsuspecting man had no idea that he had small pox and was spreading the disease to every customer he came in contact with. A few days later, one of his customers who had previously survived the dangerous disease came into the store and immediately recognized the symptoms the proprietor displayed and informed him and the town of the fate that was in store for them. The results were devastating.

The store owner was immediately quarantined, but it was too late. A full fledged small pox scare had consumed the town.

As the news of the epidemic spread the consequences were great. Trains would no longer stop in Calliope under any circumstances. During one of the worst winters of all time the town was unable to receive supplies by rail or any other means. Every town in the area posted guards at their entrances to make sure that none of the "infected Calliopiers" wandered into their towns. No mail could be received in Calliope and none could be sent. It soon became a rumor that spread as fast as the disease itself that everyone in Calliope was either dead or dying.

Out of desperation, because their supplies were so low, two men from Calliope headed toward Portland (now Akron) with a team of horses, a buggy and a shot gun on a bitterly cold morning. They were not going to return without the supplies they desperately needed for the people to survive. They managed to slip into Portland before the town's guards were posted, and entered the hotel causing quite a panic. Only one man dared to approach the men from Calliope. When the Calliopiers told their story of desperation, he agreed to secure the provisions for them, but refused any money in return. He feared the money would be contaminated with small pox germs.

For all the rumors that were spread about the unstoppable death in Calliope, the actual records show sixteen confirmed cases of small pox with only two deaths. Both deaths were reported to have been caused as much by the severe cold of that winter as from the disease itself.

Many untrue rumors spread about the town and the disease that later were discounted as just that....untrue rumors. Unfortunately, the damage had been done. The town had incurred a legacy that would not soon be forgotten. Small pox returned the next winter, but the town was prepared and recognized the symptoms. Their quick response proved valuable and only one person died that year.