

HAWARDEN....HOW IT ALL BEGAN

THE GLOVES ARE OFF

Chapter: 9

By: Mary Truesdell Johnson

In October of 1882, it became apparent to the citizens of Calliope that they needed to “stake their claim”. Calliope had grown significantly, but that “thorn in their side” settlement called Hawarden was also growing and Calliope decided to legally set their boundaries so that everyone was aware of who was in control. A vote was held to incorporate their town site known as Calliope as well as the southern territory called Hawarden. The vote was 79 in favor of the Incorporation and 15 against. Calliope officials now had control over the entire area where the two towns were located.

The fight was on and the gloves were off. This turn of events marked the beginning of a long and bitter rivalry between Calliope and Hawarden. A rivalry that may have equaled or exceeded the old opposition between Calliope and Orange City.

Calliope’s real growth spurt had begun in 1880 when C.W.Cutler and Alex Johnson who were proprietors of the town site offered free lots to promote the town’s growth. Homes and business sprang up and farmers soon learned that they could get fair prices and honest weight for their grain in Calliope. This brought many customers and a large trade in grain and other merchandise which helped Calliope experience the growth it had been hoping for. A large amount of trade came from South Dakota and the people soon realized that a bridge was needed across the Sioux River. A committee with members from both Sioux County and Union County was formed and at their second meeting they awarded a contract to a company from Ohio to build the bridge.

After the small pox epidemic and severe winter of the early months of 1881, the large amounts of accumulated snow started to melt, causing the Sioux River to rise so high that all the railroad bridges and many of the tracks were damaged or swept away. This slowed any expansion until repairs could be made. In June of 1881 the bridge to South Dakota was completed and the future again looked bright. The town boasted three hotels with plenty of guests, one doctor, one minister, five school teachers, two black smiths and six or seven carpenters. Calliope reported \$85,000.00 worth of improvements to dwellings and businesses in 1882. All buildings old and new were occupied. The Bank of Calliope was organized in May of 1882.

While Calliope was growing in the north, the Northwestern Railroad was also establishing itself in the area called Hawarden in the southern location. The Calliopers claimed that the Northwestern Railroad was trying to destroy their town and enrich the town of Hawarden where they owned a large share of land. Calliope also claimed that the town of Hawarden could never be built up, as the land was low and swampy and anything built there would be washed away in the spring floods. This did come to pass in the spring of 1883 when the flood waters invaded Hawarden and washed part of it away. The Calliopers came down to gloat. They came in their boats and paddled up and down Hawarden's business district offering to be of assistance, with an "I told you so" look on their faces.

Instead of the flood convincing the railroad that Hawarden was a poor investment, a group of men from Hawarden convinced the railroad to spend a great deal of money building diversion ditches to prevent another occurrence.

The railroad also built an eating house and hotel in Hawarden as well as managed to have a town law enacted that prevented Calliope hotel owners and delivery drivers from approaching the depot to solicit customers. This order was immediately enforced and it wasn't long until a ruckus arose. A hotel owner and others from Calliope went to the depot with willow clubs in hand to challenge the law. Several of the Calliopers ended up in jail charged with conspiracy. The trial was held in Ireton and eventually the Calliopers were acquitted of the charges against them.

Incidents such as these were frequent and Calliope would not back down. The May 28, 1885 issue of *The Independent* stated: "***as fast as one store goes out of Calliope another and a better one comes in. Calliope is bound to live, although her misfortunes are many and her enemies have worked hard, she is a brave little burg and still defies them. She will continue to flourish and be a city when Dry Creek shall have washed the little, insignificant place which sets herself up as her rival down the Big Sioux.***" Strong words and wishful thinking.

By the fall of 1885 many Hawarden residents and business men decided they no longer wanted to be under the control of Calliope. It was very obvious that the Calliope city fathers were extremely loyal to Calliope and not willing to help Hawarden in any of their endeavors. Notices of a plan to free themselves from the domination of Calliope were posted on trees, buildings, etc. in Hawarden to build up support for a change. The August 20, 1885 issue of the *Independent* (still published in Calliope) stated that: "***signs have been posted in the area to the effect that the south end of the incorporated town of Calliope (known as Hawarden) would attempt to draw off from parental protection and set up housekeeping for itself at the September court. This stripling, like all others, as soon as she is large enough to toddle, thinks she can hoe her own row. But Mother Calliope says "no" and will at once proceed to administer chastisement to the rebellious, ungrateful young upstart***".

Next week: Divorce trial – Hawarden accuses Calliope of cruel and inhuman treatment. It's the Indians vs. the Pollywogs!