

HAWARDEN.....HOW IT ALL BEGAN

MEMORIES OF A CALLIOPE INDIAN and SCHEMES OF A DREAMER

Chapter: 11

By: Cathy Noble & Mary Truesdell Johnson

Celebrating Hawarden's 125th birthday is in part a bittersweet event. As a former "Calliope Indian," I can't help but wonder what Calliope's future would have held had it not become embroiled in the losing battle with the settlement to the south – Hawarden.

It's not that I don't love Hawarden, or am not proud of its history and its people, I'm just sad that so much of what Calliope was, is now lost. For most people in Hawarden, Calliope is more of a name, than a place.

To me, Calliope is the body shop that my Grandpa Truesdell owned – part of what was once the "Brick Block" in the thriving town of Calliope. It is the Calliope Store, the place I used to pedal my bike to and where we used to stop on Sundays. It is the colored lanterns at Carr's house that I used to beg my dad to drive by on our way to buy popcorn from Schoenrock's stand in Hawarden. It is a part of who I was growing up as a child, and still I grew up unaware of the significance of my surroundings.

Writing these columns has allowed me to learn so much more about the colorful history of the place from which Hawarden got its start. Now I'm even prouder to have grown up a Calliope Indian! So, on this – Hawarden's 125th birthday, let us also remember the little village that started it all! By: Cathy Noble

History books show that as Hawarden grew, Calliope declined. Businesses located for years in Calliope closed up their shops and moved to Hawarden. According to Ken Hansen in his book, "Calliope", there was at least one man, Ed E. Carpenter who still had faith in the old town and tried to save it. Mr. Carpenter was from a town about 20 miles north of Calliope on the Big Sioux, called Beloit. His family was one of the first to settle in that area, and had considerable property there. Carpenter was a GRAND PROMOTER, always wanting to make his mark on the world and always in a hurry to do so! Carpenter was going to make the land between Calliope and Beloit "Carpenter Country".

He decided to build a streetcar track that would run from Hawarden to Calliope and eventually on to Eden (now Hudson, South Dakota) and Beloit. His starting point was Calliope and the line would run both directions from there. At the same time word was received that he had purchased all the dams on the Big Sioux between Sioux City and Sioux Falls and had a contract with a Milwaukee concern to furnish them all with electric generating plants.

He once built a grain elevator with a water tower on top out of scrap lumber. It was a completely non functioning building except for the fact that he took pictures of it and convinced bankers from out east to invest in his schemes. The story goes that he sunk a pier into the river at the north end of Calliope and took a picture at a distorted angle to show that the river was able to navigate large ships, hoping to lure people and their money to Calliope. He also built five houses finished only on the outside and photographed them to promote his new subdivision in Calliope and convince investors to give him money. After the houses had served their purpose, he had them burned.

Carpenter's main project, the streetcar line was one mistake after another. When he started grading the roadbed he forgot the minor detail of getting permission for right of way from the landowners, a small problem which almost put him in jail. When he finally tried to get the official contract for the line connecting Hawarden and Calliope, it was denied, possibly because much of the work he had already completed had ruined several of the city's streets. In 1889, a spark from a train set fire to a pile of railroad tiles that were going to be used for the street car line. With that fire, the remaining hopes of Ed E. Carpenter and Calliope literally went up in smoke. (Calliope, by Ken Hansen p.124)

In 1911, the post office of Calliope was closed and the town officially ceased to exist.

Authors note:

I have at one time seen postcards offered for sale on E Bay of Hawarden's elevated railway. I have always discounted them as someone trying to sell a distorted view of Hawarden as a frontier town and a hoax. After reading the above story in Mr. Hansen's book, I now wonder if some way, somehow, someone got a hold of Mr. Carpenter's original blueprints of the streetcar line he dreamed to build.....just a thought. By: Mary Johnson



The Northside Store or Calliope Store was purchased in May 1951 from Coy Wood, by Golda and Edward Foltz. Mr. Foltz passed away in October 1952 and Golda continued to operate the store until she retired. Golda Foltz passed away in 1992 at the age of 94. The Calliope/Northside Store was probably Hawarden's first Convenience store, as it was often open hours when other stores were closed. It was well known for its fresh cold meat and penny candy, as well as other staples needed by homemakers. Mrs. Foltz was never too busy to help the children pick out their penny candy and spend their nickels. It still stands in its original location.