

HAWARDEN...HOW IT ALL BEGAN

How Old is Old?

Chapter 12

By: Mary Truesdell Johnson

125 years – How old is that? Ask a child or teenager and they will say “ancient,” or “older than dirt.” But is it really that old? The United States will be 236 years old in July. The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock in 1621, that’s 391 years ago! Compared to the above, Hawarden is still a baby!

While researching information for these articles the subject of time has been running through my mind. My grandmother was born in 1881, that means she was six years OLDER than Hawarden! She lived to be 98 and that boggles my mind. The fact that the people I knew and loved would be older than Hawarden if they were still alive just amazes me!

The reality is, that was over a century ago. As a child and young adult, a century was what you studied in your history books. When I turned 50, I never thought of myself as being one half a century old. When I was born, Hawarden was only 52! That is just a blink of an eye in my perspective.

Our class celebrated our 50th Class Reunion in 2007. Those 50 years went by faster than the speed of sound. It was only yesterday that we were tromping across the footbridge and going to proms, and yes, graduating. Then there is the perspective of raising a family. How can children go from babies to fifty in 30 seconds? Sounds like a drag race or something similar. Hawarden was only 75 years old when my youngest children were born. I can relate to 75, I’ll see it in a few years, and it doesn’t seem old at all!

Over a span of 125 years, Hawarden has had its challenges and its accomplishments. Obviously there have always been naysayers, as well as those who saw Hawarden’s potential and were willing to fight for it. There are people who love this town and will always call it home, no matter how far away life takes them. And, there are people who have lived here and move away without any lasting attachment. Some people fall in love, and some don’t - it’s a fact of life.

Our ancestors have passed the torch to the generations of people who are here to celebrate this huge event. It is now our responsibility to continue to support our town and help it “mature” into a city where people can live and enjoy life.

Hawarden may never become the industrial mecca that our pioneer fathers dreamed of, or the cultural giant that others predicted, but it is, and can be, a town looking to the future, preserving our history, and embracing the modern technological age.

Hawarden offers a quality of life that replicates what our parents, and grandparents dreamed of only a few, short-years ago when they built the 1st Courthouse in Sioux County, held the 1st National election in Sioux County, built roads, bridges, mills, ice houses, and welcomed all who chose Hawarden as their home.

A diverse group of settlers helped shape Hawarden into the town we love. A patchwork quilt of nationalities who continue to color and enhance the framework of our lives. It falls on us, and those who follow us, to continue to nurture our hometown as it goes into its next phase of life. Whatever happens to Hawarden in the next quarter of a century will be guided by the hands of people who live here now, and will be reported in the history written in 2037.