



ZOOKSPUR, IA (Dallas County)

Located on the border of Polk and Dallas Counties, Zookspur (or Zook Spur depending on whom you visit with), was an unplatted, unfiled, unincorporated mining village. According to Father Luigi Lugutti, a local priest, the town was also wholly "unattractive," as he described it as such in a 1928 letter. Largely owned by the Scandia coal company, Zookspur was resurrected several times as well... enough to even make the good father nervous as the coal mine work accelerated and decelerated in the area. The community is now known as the "town too tough to die," which is a fitting sentiment.

The founding of the community was rather loosely defined, but the first grouping of residents clustered somewhere near 1915. The village was not

identified as a census designated location, so the official government records do not list the location. The town did support a store (owned by the coal company, of course), a doctor, a school, and several notorious drinking establishments. The post office was established in 1925; previous mail coming from Madrid.

Many of the miners were European immigrants, with Italians making up the largest percentage. Most of these immigrants arrived before World War I, when immigration rule were less restrained and labor laws were conducive to long arduous hours. Most of the boys only attended school through the eighth grade, after-which they would go into the mines. This was common around the state through the 1930s, communities like Oralabor, Enterprise, Bidwell, and Buxton all functioning in the same manner. The village also had a close relationship with the railroad. It had its own depot, and employed many of the African-Americans fresh from the railroad as rookie miners.

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