John Todd House
1853-2025

TABOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

October 2025 Newsletter

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Tabor College
1866-1927

Tabor Historical Society News Susan Shepherd

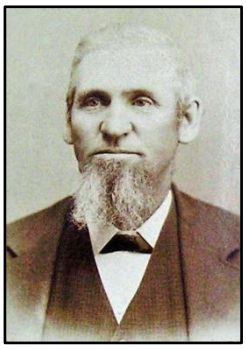
After 16 years as president of the Tabor Historical Society (THS), Chuck Douglass has made the difficult decision to step down. I accepted election to lead the society at our May meeting. I want to take this opportunity to not only thank Chuck but to review the many programs and projects he skillfully managed to preserve Tabor's rich historical heritage. During Chuck's long tenure, an unprecedented number of Todd House restoration projects, now totaling over $400,000, were tackled, designed to keep the 172-year-old structure in the best shape possible. Beginning in 2016 the entire north foundation of the house was raised and reinforced, including original flooring in the ground floor bedroom and dining room. Chuck supervised the raising of grants and, later, coordinated between the local and state agencies and the contractors, who completed projects on time and on budget. Other important work included replastering two upstairs bedrooms, restoration of the home's south porch, windows, and the mudbrick wall in the basement, ensuring craftsmen used material and techniques that would preserve the historical integrity of the structure. Currently underway is a project to restore the home's south foundation. Chuck managed all these projects in addition to keeping an eye on routine maintenance and care of the house. He was frequently found in and around the structure weeding, replacing light bulbs and cleaning. Chuck wasn't afraid to break a sweat; he single-handedly tore out an overgrown lilac bush between the Todd House and Tabor Museum while never missing a single monthly meeting. Finally, as most of you know, Chuck is half of a power couple. His wife Kathy served as secretary of THS and published the newsletter for years, a huge job. She was also active in planning, fundraising, and community relations. Both Chuck and Kathy remain on the board of directors and continue to help when needed. Thanks Chuck and Kathy!

Kathy being interviewed on the history of the Todd House by a local radio station in 2020

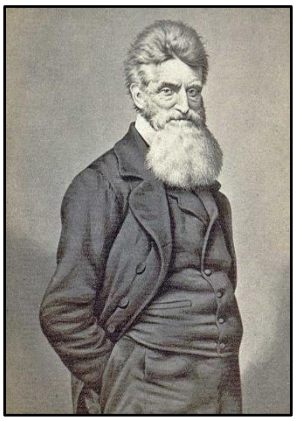
Chuck supervising the restoration of the Todd House's south foundation in 2020

A Tabor Almanac

1855: Lemuel Webb, one of Tabor earliest settlers, described the village of Tabor as a collection of no more than a dozen homes with some being constructed of logs or sod. The only commercial enterprise was the hotel of Jesse West, who acted a postmaster of the settlement. He noted that the most modern building was the school, built in 1854, which was 24 by 30 feet with a ten-foot-high ceiling. The structure was also used as a church, meeting house and court. Webb called Tabor home until his death in 1914.



Lemuel Webb



John Brown

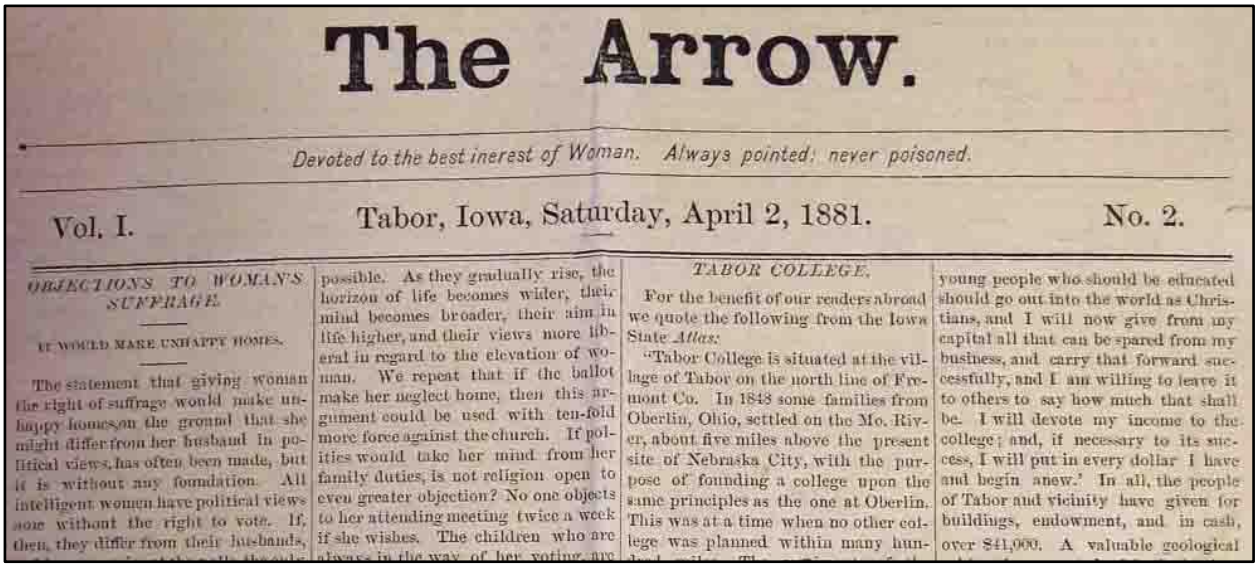
1856: The first visit of abolitionist John Brown to Tabor. He considered Tabor to be a safe haven and used it as a base of operations for his fighting in Kansas Territory. Brown stored 200 rifles in the home of John Todd.

1865: On October 21 Tabor's first Baptist Church was organized.

1866: On July 23 Tabor College was incorporated, based on the Tabor Literary Institute, with William M. Brooks as president. There were 124 residents of the village and vicinity who donated the equivalent of $112 per person to meet the needs of the new school.

William Brooks, college president from 1866 to 1896

1881: Publication of *The Arrow* begins. Owned by James Bede and his wife Flora, the "progressive journal" focused on social issues of the day, like temperance, women's rights, and suffrage. Annual subscriptions were 50¢. The paper ceased publication in less than a year.



The Arrow.

Devoted to the best inerest of Woman. Always pointed; never poisoned.

Vol. I. Tabor, Iowa, Saturday, April 2, 1881. No. 2.

OBJECTIONS TO WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE.

IT WOULD MAKE UNHAPPY HOMES.

The statement that giving woman the right of suffrage would make unhappy homes on the ground that she might differ from her husband in political views, has often been made, but it is without any foundation. All intelligent women have political views now without the right to vote. If, then, they differ from their husbands,

possible. As they gradually rise, the horizon of life becomes wider, their mind becomes broader, their aim in life higher, and their views more liberal in regard to the elevation of woman. We repeat that if the ballot make her neglect home, then this argument could be used with ten-fold more force against the church. If politics would take her mind from her family duties, is not religion open to even greater objection? No one objects to her attending meeting twice a week if she wishes. The children who are

TABOR COLLEGE.

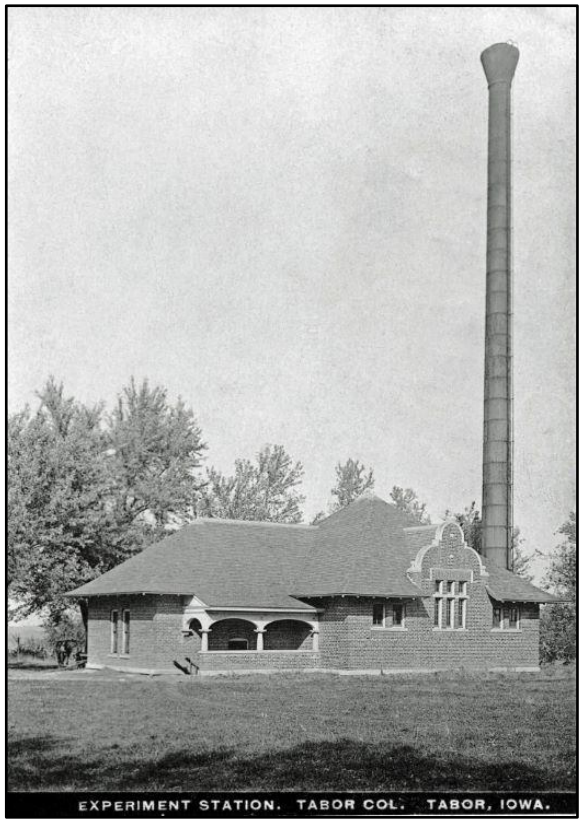
For the benefit of our readers abroad we quote the following from the Iowa State *Atlas*:

"Tabor College is situated at the village of Tabor on the north line of Fremont Co. In 1848 some families from Oberlin, Ohio, settled on the Mo. River, about five miles above the present site of Nebraska City, with the purpose of founding a college upon the same principles as the one at Oberlin. This was at a time when no other college was planned within many hun-

young people who should be educated should go out into the world as Christians, and I will now give from my capital all that can be spared from my business, and carry that forward successfully, and I am willing to leave it to others to say how much that shall be. I will devote my income to the college; and, if necessary to its success, I will put in every dollar I have and begin anew.' In all, the people of Tabor and vicinity have given for buildings, endowment, and in cash, over $41,000. A valuable geological

1895: The Tabor Telephone Company was incorporated. By August of 1900 there was 20 miles of line.

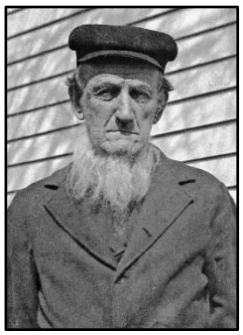
1897: On December 3 the Tabor Beacon reported the first foreign export of local corn, to Liverpool, England, grown by Wallace Coats.



The heating plant smokestack was 108 feet high

1902: In September the Tabor College power plant was completed. Steam boilers and an electric dynamo furnished heat and light to all college buildings. In January 1903 the lines were extended to include the gymnasium.

1906: On July 2 the town council proclaimed that no fireworks or "other explosives" would be allowed on Main Street or in the park on the 4th of July between 8:30 am and 6:30 pm.



Samuel H. Adams

1910: Samuel H. Adams passed on February 26. He was one of Tabor's original settlers and devoted his life to his town, church and college. Beginning in 1854, he became a conductor on the town's Underground Railroad. Adams was also a sustaining booster for Tabor College and donated over $6,000 to the institution.

1911: On August 7, City Ordinance No. 34 was issued requiring persons operating motor vehicles on the public highways of Tabor to "drive the same in a careful and prudent manner, and at a rate of speed so as not to endanger the property of another, or the life and limb of another person."

1911: On October 21 Mr. M.S. Shull opened Tabor's first movie theater, named the Glidden Moving Picture Hall. The theater seated 250 and included an electric piano.

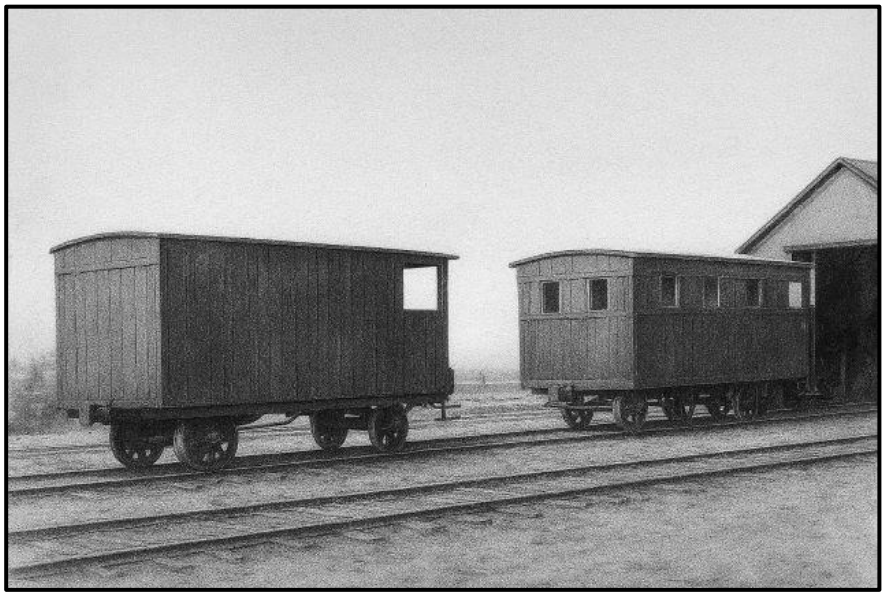
1914: In November two jail cells were installed behind city hall.

1920: Street paving begins. The population of Tabor is 1,186.

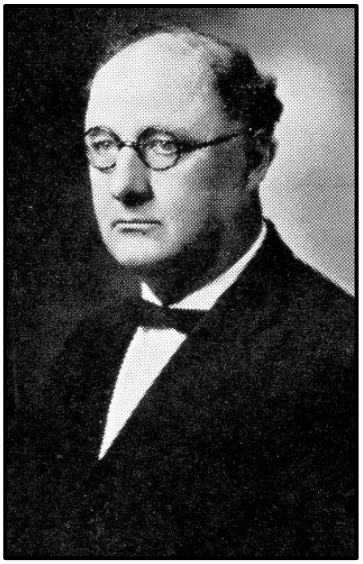
1925: On December 24, the State Bank of Tabor and First National Bank of Tabor combined to form the First State Bank.

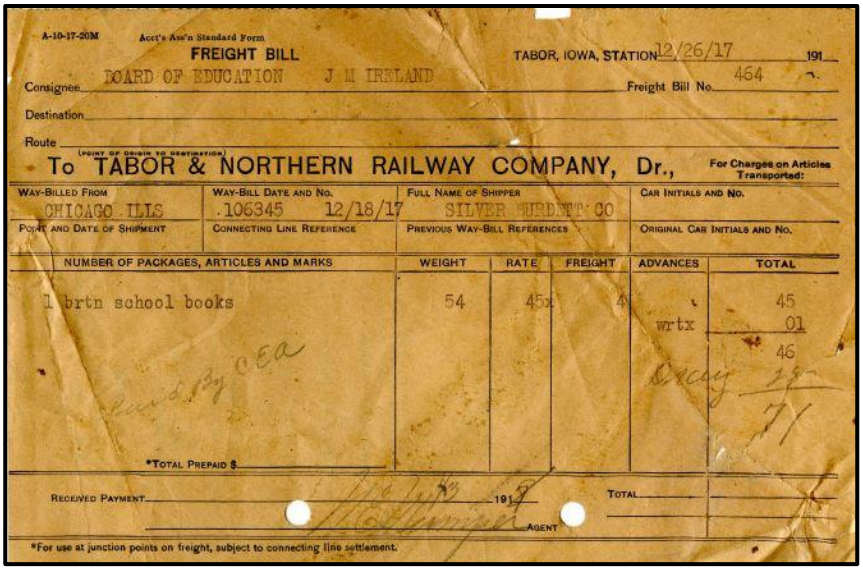
T&N Tidbits

The construction of the Tabor & Northern Railroad was one of Tabor's proudest accomplishments. Operating between 1890 and 1934, it was a nearly nine-mile line running between Tabor and Malvern. Although it never made a large profit, during its heyday it generated a modest return to its stockholders hauling freight and passengers. It was a labor of love to build and run. Here are a couple of interesting tidbits of information about the railroad.



After World War I the tiny railroad began feeling the pinch of competition from automobiles and trucks. By the mid-1920s passenger business had dropped to the point that it was no longer profitable to run the entire train for only a handful of passengers. As a solution, the railroad built two "motor buses," constructed entirely on site. The buses were powered by Model T engines. The effort, unfortunately, was unsuccessful with the buses being referred to as the "Toonerville Trolley." The bus without windows (left) was likely used for small parcels of freight or mail. This is the only known photograph of the buses.





A-10-17-20M Acct's Ass'n Standard Form

FREIGHT BILL

TABOR, IOWA, STATION 12/26/17 191

Consignee BOARD OF EDUCATION J M IRELAND Freight Bill No. 464

Destination

Route

To TABOR & NORTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY, Dr., For Charges on Articles Transported:

Way-Billed From	Way-Bill Date and No.	Full Name of Shipper	Car Initials and No.
CHICAGO ILLS	106345 12/18/17	SILVER BURDETT CO	
Point and Date of Shipment	**Connecting Line Reference**	**Previous Way-Bill References**	**Original Car Initials and No.**

Number of Packages, Articles and Marks	Weight	Rate	Freight	Advances	Total
1 brtn school books	54	45x	4	wrtx	45 01 46

*Total Prepaid $

Received Payment 191 Total

Agent

*For use at junction points on freight, subject to connecting line settlement.

A T&N freight bill for a shipment of schoolbooks to Tabor High School in 1917. The order was made by James Myron Ireland (left), superintendent of Tabor public schools for 22 years.

Kicking the Habit . . . in the 1870s

Luckily for us, the Reverend John Todd wrote out his sermons and the Tabor Historical Society maintains over 1,400 of those that survived. Most of his messages were based on scripture and dealt with spiritual matters. But on a regular basis he addressed social issues he felt had an important impact on his congregation. One such sermon, delivered on May 14, 1876, concerned the use of tobacco, a destructive habit, in Todd's view, that was at the time a large industry and a major source of tax revenue for the federal government. Excerpts from his sermon (below) have a modern ring to them, especially when considering they are almost 150 years old.

Tobacco is a poison . . .. It affects the nervous system, and a single drop of the concentrated oil which it contains will destroy life.

The soothing, quieting influence [of tobacco] is produced by the nicotine which operates as a narcotic stimulant, and as experience shows, tends to form a pernicious and filthy habit which constantly urges its victim on to greater excess.

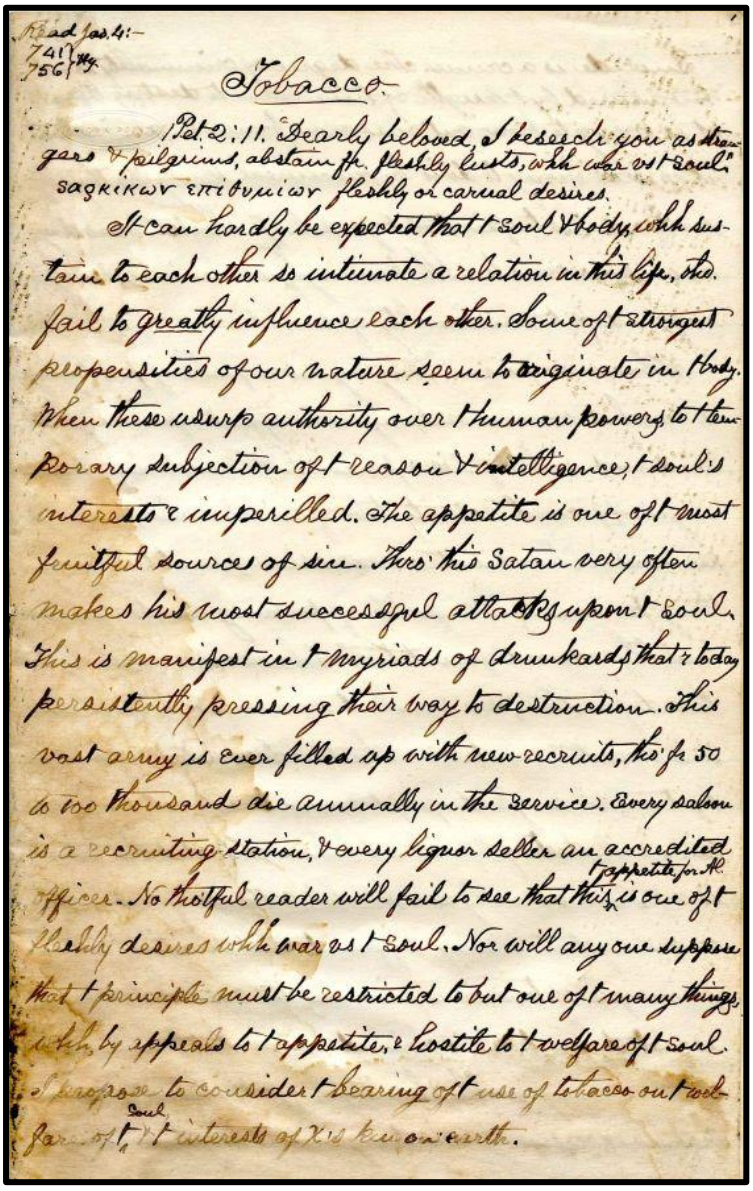
The sufferer defiles his nasal organ making it unfit for its intended use.

The cost of the indulgence is a secondary matter and yet it is an item not small. According to internal revenue reports, $250 million worth of tobacco is used in this country annually.

Inducing the youth to use the weed is to deliberately attempt to entrap the young and inexperienced and is worthy only of a demon.

The time is coming when the use of tobacco is to be preached as a sin.

Suicide is a crime, not measured by the length of time taken to destroy life. . .. It is wrong to do it piecemeal, slowly.



Read Jas. 4:-
741
756

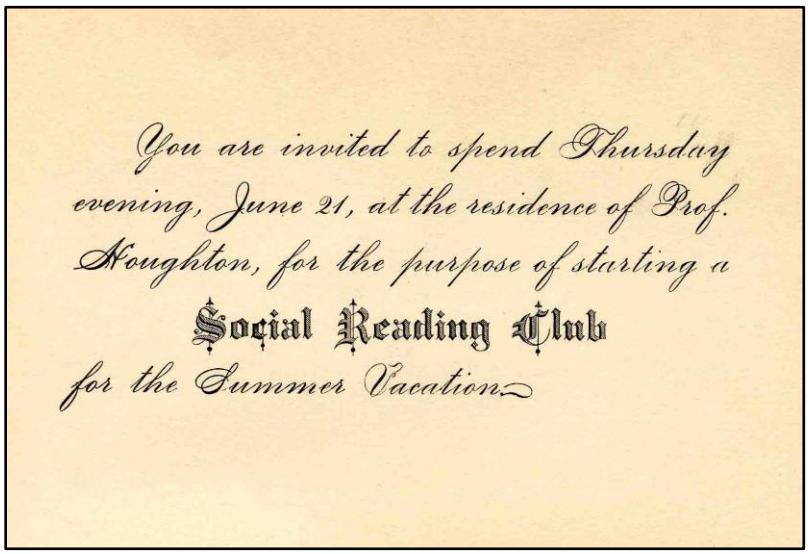
Tobacco.

Pet. 2:11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers & pilgrims, abstain fr. fleshly lusts, wh. war vs t soul. σαρκικων επιθυμιων fleshly or carnal desires.

It can hardly be expected that t soul & body, wh. sustain to each other so intimate a relation in this life, shd. fail to greatly influence each other. Some of t strongest propensities of our nature seem to originate in t body. When these usurp authority over t human powers, to t temporary subjection of t reason & intelligence, t soul's interests r imperilled. The appetite is one of t most fruitful sources of sin. Thro' this Satan very often makes his most successful attacks upon t soul. This is manifest in t myriads of drunkards that r today persistently pressing their way to destruction. This vast army is ever filled up with new recruits, tho' fr 50 to 100 thousand die annually in the service. Every saloon is a recruiting station, & every liquor seller an accredited officer. No thotful reader will fail to see that this appetite for N. is one of t fleshly desires wh. war vs t soul. Nor will any one suppose that t principle must be restricted to but one of t many things wh. by appeals to t appetite, r hostile to t welfare of t soul. I propose to consider t bearing of t use of tobacco on t well-being of t soul & t interests of Xs kg on earth.

The effect of tobacco on the entire man—physical, moral and mental is most disastrous.

From the Archive

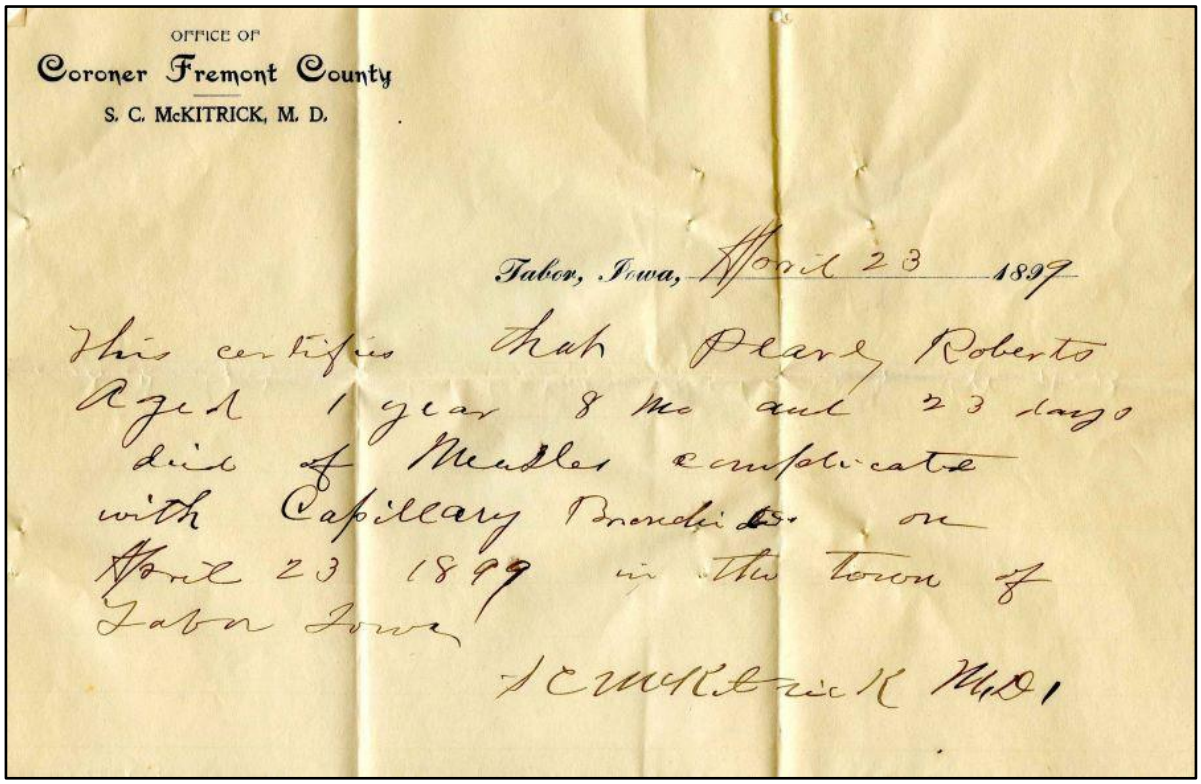


You are invited to spend Thursday evening, June 21, at the residence of Prof. Houghton, for the purpose of starting a

Social Reading Club

for the Summer Vacation.

Book clubs are popular pastimes today but are nothing new, as evidenced by an 1877 invitation to join a reading club sent to friends and colleagues by Professor George Houghton, of Tabor College. Houghton was a professor of mathematics and civil engineering. Unfortunately, we don't know what they read.



OFFICE OF
Coroner Fremont County
S. C. McKITRICK, M. D.

Tabor, Iowa, April 23 1899

This certifies that Pearl Roberts
Aged 1 year 8 Mo and 23 days
died of Measles complicated
with Capillary Bronchitis on
April 23 1899 in the town of
Tabor Iowa

S C McKitrick M D

The death certificate for Pearl Roberts, signed by Dr. Salathiel McKitrick, April 23, 1899. Pearl died of measles at not quite two years of age. During the spring of 1899 there had been outbreaks of the disease in southwest Iowa, including Glenwood, Tabor, and Thurman. Both adults and children were stricken.