

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Tabor Congregational Church

other names/site number Tabor Congregational United Church of Christ

2. Location

street & number 403 Elm Street N/A not for publication

city or town Tabor N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Fremont code 071 zip code 51653

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
 national statewide x local

Barbara A. Mitchell
Signature of certifying official

August 22, 2011
Date

DSHPO
Title

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

 other (explain): _____

Joe Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

10-6-11
Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION / religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION / religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19th CENTURY / Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Stone / Limestone

walls: Brick

roof: Asphalt

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Tabor Congregational Church is a large brick Gothic Revival church built from 1872 to 1875. It is located in the block northeast of the town square in the small community of Tabor in Fremont County in southwest Iowa. The surrounding area is primarily residential in nature, with the commercial buildings concentrated in two blocks along Main Street to the east. While Tabor grew from a population of 320 in 1880 to 934 in 1900, it remained nearly steady after this point with a population of 993 in 2000. Thus, Tabor Congregational Church has stood as a landmark within the community since its completion in 1875, with the bell tower visible throughout the small community as well as the surrounding rural countryside. The brick church reflects the Gothic Revival style in the prominent bell tower, pointed arch windows and entries, and buttresses. The 57 by 93 foot church was designed to accommodate 1000 people, including seating in a balcony around the sides and rear. A full basement provides classroom and gathering space. The interior was redesigned after a 1945 fire destroyed the sanctuary. The church retained its original windows on this main level, though several basement windows required replacement from fire damage. Tabor Congregational Church is in excellent condition, and it continues to be used by the congregation today.

Narrative Description

Tabor Congregational Church sits on the north side of Elm Street to the northeast of the town square. The overall form of the church is rectangular with a gable roof. The brick church sits on a stone foundation, and the roof is clad in asphalt shingles. The square bell tower is centered on the south elevation. The tower is brick construction to near the gable peak of the main section of the church, and the top of the tower is wood construction with Gothic detailing and spires. This top wood portion was reconstructed in 1964 after major wood deterioration. The Tudor arch entry in the base of the tower has a raised arch lintel, which is repeated for the window openings. The acute pointed arch double-hung wood windows on the main level of the church have six rectangular lights and the divided light arch in the top sash with a four-light lower sash. The prominent window in the south side of the bell tower features two of this type of window combined into a larger pointed arch opening. The two-over-two-light double-hung wood segmental arch basement windows were replaced in character with the originals after the 1945 fire. The raised lintel wraps around the top of the basement windows similar to shoulders, creating a half-oval profile. Brick stepped buttresses with stone detailing are found on each side of the church and bell tower. The eight buttresses on the east and west sides create seven window bays, with the sixth buttress from the front on the west side replaced by a large brick chimney. Two segmental arch basement entries are found on the east side, one in the base of the bell tower and the second in the first (south) bay of the main section. This second entry now leads into the elevator. The three-sided brick apse projects on the north side, with large Tudor arch basement entries on the east and west sides. The west entry has been replaced with a window. Paired drop wood brackets are found under the wide eaves of the roof. The north side also has a main level segmental arch entry with wood door and metal fire escape.

The main entry into the church is through the large wood double doors in the base of the bell tower on the south side. The central stairs in this vestibule (1A) lead up into the church. The stairs along the west side led down into the basement. The east hall to the basement entry is open to this level, with the rail extending around to the wall. The wood stair rail features pointed arch insets. Double wood doors lead into the main

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portion of the church, entering under the south balcony. Small rooms are located on either side of this space under the balcony, currently an office on the west (1C) and a cry room on the east (1D). The elevator added in 1996 occupies part of this east space. The interior treatment of the windows throughout the church includes walls angled back to the sash, which is surrounded by a simple frame. The woodwork is painted. The nave (1B) is oriented to the altar at the north end. This altar area was redesigned after the 1945 fire and dedicated in 1948. It retains high integrity from this period, based on a photograph taken soon after completion (Figure 24). The side balconies were also removed during this remodeling, as they were not necessary for space for the congregation. The side aisles were retained by incorporating rectangular columns with pointed arches between them on the east and west sides. These side aisles have an arch ceiling. The wood pews in the church also date to this remodeling, while carpet has since been added. Stairs along the east wall lead up to the balcony on the south side. Historic wood individual seating remains in the balcony. Closets are found around the altar area on the north end of the church, and an emergency exit is provided in the northeast corner. Two sets of half-flight stairs lead down from the main entry to the basement. A secondary entry to the basement is also found on the east side of the tower. On either side of the main hall on the south end of the basement are two classrooms (0B, 0C). Both classrooms have historic four panel wood doors with heavy molding and transom windows from the hall. They also have wood wainscoting around the lower walls. The elevator added in 1996 exits into the east classroom. Double doors lead into the main fellowship hall space (0D). The main level floor is supported by columns placed regularly throughout this space. The kitchen (0F) is located in the center of the north end of the basement, expanded under the aspe during the 1940s remodeling. A north exit from the basement is accessed by stairs in the northeast corner of this space. A third classroom is located to the east of the kitchen (0E). A hall with historic tiles on the lower portion is found west of the kitchen, leading past the kitchen and to the women's bathroom (0I). The men's bathroom is located west of the women's and accessed from the furnace room (0G). Both bathrooms have been recently remodeled.

Tabor Congregational Church retains good integrity from its completion in 1875 and excellent integrity from the remodeling in the middle of the 20th century. The church retains strong integrity of location and setting. The church sits on its original site to the northeast of the public square. Residences are found on surrounding streets, and Tabor is similar in size as it was 100 years ago. Thus, it retains physical prominence within the setting of this small town. The integrity of materials, design, and workmanship is excellent on the exterior. The brick walls, brick and wood tower, wood multi-light pointed arch windows, wood basement windows, and overall design of the church are intact. The sympathetic replacement of the basement windows and wood portion of the tower have not compromised the integrity of the design of these features, with historic materials replaced in kind. The materials, design, and workmanship of the interior is excellent as well, primarily dating to the remodeling completed in 1948. The overall layout of the church during its first 73 years was respected in the retention of the orientation of the church, maintenance of the south balcony, and inclusions of side aisles in place of the original side balconies. These side aisles were designed to incorporate pointed arches, further reflecting the original Gothic Revival design. Inset pointed arch panels were incorporated into the redesigned altar area at the north end of the church. Historic photographs demonstrate a high degree of current integrity to this remodeling. Stained glass windows have since been added in the pointed arch panels on either side of the altar. The overall feeling of the Tabor Congregational Church and association to the significant history of Tabor are demonstrated through these architectural features and the continued prominence of the church within the community. Within the community as a whole, the church feels like a large 1875 Gothic Revival church built at the pinnacle of the settlement period in Tabor. The association of the church to this period as well as to its role in the social history of Tabor over the next nine decades remains intact. The church continues to stand as perhaps the most well-known and recognized landmark in Tabor.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

RELIGION

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1875 – 1964

Significant Dates

1875

1948

1964

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nutting, John Keep

Weatherhead, John

Goode, John

Jensen, Jocheis Chris

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Tabor Congregational Church spans from the completion of the building in 1875 to the reconstruction of the tower in 1964. Construction on the church began in 1872, and it was completed and dedicated in 1875. The church was directly linked to the social history of Tabor at this time, and it has continued to be an integral part of this history through the 20th century. From the early 1900s to the 1960s, the membership of Tabor Congregational Church correlated to one-third to one-half of the population

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of Tabor. The church was utilized as the venue for large community events, as well as for church activities. Significant dates in the 20th century include the completion of the interior remodeling in 1948 (after the 1945 fire) and reconstruction of the wood portion of the tower in 1964. The period of significance thus ends at 1964, after this major work to sustain the character of the church and near the typical 50-year-old cut-off for National Register significance.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Criteria Consideration A for religious properties is met as the significance of Tabor Congregational Church lies in its architecture and its significant role in the settlement/development and social history of Tabor.

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Tabor Congregational Church is significant at a local level under Criteria A and C, and it meets Criteria Consideration A. The architectural significance under Criterion C lies in the prominent Gothic Revival architecture of this large brick church completed in 1875. The pointed arch windows, bell tower, and buttresses tie the architecture of this church to this style as well as to the historical antecedents of Congregational churches in New England. Tabor Congregational Church is also significant under Criterion A as the key driving force in the settlement of Tabor and the subsequent social history and development of the community. The town was founded by the early Congregational church leaders in 1852, and the church and town policies were intertwined through the 19th century. The Tabor Congregational Church continued to function as the central organization in the community well into the 20th century, and the church served as a social gathering, performance, and meeting space outside of church functions. It underwent a significant interior remodel completed in 1948, and it continued to be maintained as an active community landmark with exterior tower work in 1964. Through this period, the membership of Tabor Congregational Church continued to be correlated to approximately one-third of the population of Tabor.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)

Tabor Congregational Church is significant under Criterion C for its brick Gothic Revival architecture. The Gothic Revival style for churches gained popularity in the 1840s and 1850s, reflecting English medieval parish churches. Architectural features emphasized the vertical to reach towards heaven, and bell towers and pointed arch windows were key elements. Tabor Congregational Church has small spires around the top of the square tower, which also has pointed arch panels and trefoils. The pointed arch windows and entries were utilized throughout the church, and stepped brick buttresses trimmed with stone elements "support" the walls of the church and tower. The basic rectangular plan follows the pattern of early Congregational churches in New England with the entry opposite the pulpit. Interior remodeling after the 1945 fire retained the side aisles on the interior and incorporated additional pointed arches within the interior design. The Tabor Congregational Church is locally prominent visually as the church tower continues to be the tallest point in Tabor, and it is visible from the surrounding rural countryside when approaching the town. The newspaper noted in 1940: "The tower has been a landmark of the community all these years" ("Consecrated to God 65 Years Ago," *Tabor Beacon*, June 6, 1940). Tabor Congregational Church is the largest church in Tabor, and one of the largest and earliest churches in southwest Iowa. It is the most prominent example of Gothic Revival architecture throughout this area.

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Tabor Congregational Church is also significant under Criterion A for its role in the early settlement and development of Tabor and the subsequent social history and development of the community. When the early settlers chose this location for Tabor in 1852, they envisioned a community based on religion and education. Belva Laird Miller wrote in 1968: "The history of the Tabor Congregational Church cannot be separated from the town of Tabor and Tabor College, for all three were founded by the same group of people" (Miller 1968: 1). Religion provided the driving force for the settlement and development of the town. The first two decades focused on nurturing their small settlement, building a school that also functioned as a church and meeting hall, formalizing the town, and establishing a school and then Tabor College in 1866. With the initial college building complete, they turned their attention to raising funds to construct a church large enough to seat 1,000 people in a town only one-third this size. The construction of the church marks the pinnacle of the initial development of the community, and the church became the physical center of the community for decades to follow. For the next 50 years, Tabor Congregational Church dominated community life in Tabor, providing the largest performance and gathering space in town. It hosted performances, lectures, recitations, recitals, and graduations, in addition to serving as the center of religious life of the majority of its residents. Tabor Congregational Church grew to 328 members in May 1890, reflecting over 60% of the town's population. Only Congregational churches in the significantly larger communities of Dubuque, Des Moines, and Grinnell had more members. Membership stood at slightly over 500 for the first decades of the 20th century, correlating to about half the population of Tabor. After the closure of Tabor College in 1927, Tabor Congregational Church continued to occupy a prominent role in the community through the middle of the 20th century. It continued to be used as meeting space for community groups and organizations, as well as hosting large events such as graduations and performances. The church recorded 307 members in 1950, over one-third of the town's population of 869. It continued to play an active role in the social history of Tabor over the next decades, with the 280 members in 1960 again correlating to approximately one-third of the population of the town. The importance of the church within the community was reaffirmed after the 1945 fire with the significant interior remodeling completed in 1948, as well as additional repair work through the 1950s and into the 1960s to maintain this active community landmark.

Developmental history/additional historic context information

From the beginning and resounding throughout the years, the history of Tabor has been tied to Tabor Congregational Church. From settlement in 1852 to the construction of this church in 1875, the history of the church and community shared ideals, personnel, and policies. In his anniversary speech on October 9, 1932, Reverend Fred Lebert noted:

Eighty years ago a company of people from northern Ohio who had lighted their torches of religious and education enthusiasm at the flame of Oberlin came to this community with the purpose of planting here a college and a church. They were high minded and sturdy people with strong religious convictions and enthusiasms. The Pilgrims brought to New England scarcely any truer motive or loftier purpose. They were willing to put into the venture their lives and their fortunes. They stamped the community with the impress of their ideas and ideals and that stamp has persisted through the years.

("Historic Church in Anniversary Meeting," *Tabor Beacon*, October 12, 1932, 1)

For the next fifty years, Tabor Congregational Church was integral in the life of Tabor, directly tied to the community leaders and Tabor College. With the closing of the college in 1927, the church continued to fill a vital role in the community and community events. The "stamp" of the church on the development and character of the community continued to be noted into the 1960s: "The town of Tabor was founded on religion. The founders came from Oberlin, Ohio, founded a town, a college, and a church in 1852. They were deeply religious. Because of their strong religion and character, the citizens of Tabor follow the example of the founders and live their religion" (Miller 1967: 8).

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Settlement and early growth of Tabor

The Congregational Church traces its roots in the United States to the Pilgrims in Massachusetts in the 17th century. Education was important to the church with several institutes and colleges organized in this period, including Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Williams, and Amherst. Congregationalists were later noted as the largest and most influential group in America in the late 17th century. The church did not have a central unifying organization, but it organized many missionary societies that resulted in the formation of new Congregational churches as well as their ongoing support (Kuhns 1951: 189-191; Douglass 1911: 225). Missionaries and settlers carried the Congregational church ideals west, with more than 100 Congregational churches in Ohio, 20 in Michigan, 36 in Illinois, six in Indiana, and four in the Wisconsin territory by 1838. The American Home Missionary Society sent representatives into the new Iowa territory as well, spurring the formation of several churches including a large congregation in Denmark, Lee County. As a result, the Congregational Association of Iowa was organized on November 6, 1840. They organized Denmark Academy in 1843, and they established Iowa College in Davenport in 1846. Through this pattern, 63 Congregational churches were established in Iowa by 1854, with a total of 2,296 members (Kuhns 1951: 193-195; Douglass 1911: 225-226).

The Congregational church and community of Tabor followed a related yet distinctly different pattern of formation. In 1847, Lester and Elvira Gaston Platt settled in Fremont County near the Missouri River. After attending Oberlin College in Ohio, they had moved to what would be Nebraska in 1842 to teach among the Pawnee Indians prior to relocating to Iowa. Her brother, George Belcher Gaston, and his wife Maria Cummings Gaston, had also settled in Nebraska as missionaries to the Pawnee Indians on the Loupe fork of the Platte River in 1840. George Gaston was born in Danby, New York, on November 8, 1814. After becoming a member of the Congregational church around 1827, he moved with his family to Oberlin, Ohio in the fall of 1834 (Todd's history of church in *History of Fremont County* 1881: 574). Presbyterian ministers John Shipherd and Philo Stewart founded Oberlin in 1833 to create a religious community that more closely reflected their community values and would serve as a training ground for additional missionaries in the West. Oberlin Collegiate Institute, which would become Oberlin College in 1850, began in December 1833, with the unique policy of not refusing admission based on gender or race (Reynolds 2005: 60). In 1837, George Gaston married Maria, and soon they went as missionaries among the Pawnee Indians through the Congregational Church's American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). After serving as a missionary for five years and government employee for two years, they returned to Ohio in 1845 due to the family's ill health. They settled near Oberlin again, but George did not forget the people or potential of the western prairies (Todd's history of church in *History of Fremont County* 1881: 574-75).

Plans for a settlement similar to Oberlin percolated in the mind of George B. Gaston throughout the summer of 1847. He had been impressed with the Missouri River valley and witnessed the good influence of Oberlin on the frontier of Ohio. He began to envision a settlement on the frontier that focused on the combination of religion and education offered in Oberlin, and his interest began to spread to others in Oberlin (Todd's history of church in *History of Fremont County* 1881: 575). John Todd graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1841 from the institute in Oberlin and entered the theological seminary. Todd later noted that the school promoted clear, independent thinking and devotion to truth and liberty – both civil and religious. Whether from previous acquaintance or recommendation, George Gaston called on John Todd in Clarksfield, about 15 miles from Oberlin, in the summer of 1848 to interest Todd in becoming the minister for his settlement in Iowa. While Todd was intrigued with the concept, he wished to see the potential area before committing. In September 1848, the group from Oberlin started from Ohio for southwest Iowa. The party included George B. and Maria C. Gaston and their three children, Samuel H. and Caroline Matthews Adams, Caroline's brother Darius P. Matthews, Josiah B. Hall, and Reverend John Todd. This small group of settlers located on the bend of the Missouri River north of the bend at Fort Kearney and the future Nebraska City (Todd 1906: 7, 20-27). The

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southern bend became known as "Devil's Bend" due to the liquor establishments and resulting rowdiness of the area. These residents gave the settlement on the upper bend the name of "Civil Bend" due to the stark differences in the settlers. It remained the most popular name until the railroad was later completed and the nearby station became Percival (Farquhar 1943: 340-41).

Over the next few years, the vision of George Gaston to create a settlement on the prairie organized around religion and education took tangible form. Fremont County was organized in April 1849, and a central location was selected for the county seat of Sidney in May 1851. John Todd and Josiah B. Hall, who had traveled back to Ohio, returned to Iowa with their families in spring 1850. The church had been organized, a temperance society started, and lifestyle principles set, such as adhering to the Oberlin principle of abstaining from tea and coffee (Todd 1906: 20, 36-37; Farquhar 1943: 341-42). Settlers near the river had been plagued by mosquitoes and ague (malaria) since arriving, and floods extended through the Missouri River bottoms in 1851. Thus, the Gaston, Adams, and Todd families moved inland in April 1852 to houses on claims southwest of the future site of Tabor, about nine miles north of Sidney. On April 27, 1852, a Sunday School was organized at Rev. John Todd's log cabin, consisting of six adults and five children. In the summer of 1852, the town site of Tabor was acquired. Samuel H. Adams assembled four poles in square to signify the foundation of his home and claim preemption status for 160 acres. He then hauled up parts of his house near Civil Bend to complete the dwelling, and G.B. Gaston built a new one-and-one-half-story frame house. Several names were sent as possibilities for a post office, and Tabor was selected, which had been included in reference to the Biblical Mount Tabor (Todd's history of church in *History of Fremont County* 1881: 577; Todd 1906: 42-43; Farquhar 1943: 347; Miller 1968: 2).

The Congregational Church of Tabor was then organized on October 12, 1852 at the log cabin of Rev. John Todd, while Origen Cumings of Amherst, Ohio, and brother of Maria C. Gaston, was visiting the community. Eight persons joined, encompassing the two Gastons with their two sons, two Adams, and the two Todds. Wednesday was set as the regular mid-week prayer. The first Monday was a prayer meeting for missions in conjunction with a meeting of the American Board of Congregational Foreign Missions, and the last Monday was an anti-slavery prayer meeting. Church services were conducted in a grove on Todd's property during the warm months, and in his cabin during the winter months (Todd's history of church in *History of Fremont County* 1881: 578; Todd 1906: 20, 43; Farquhar 1943: 347-348; Miller 1968: 2). The families were also busy with the organization of additional groups. In June 1852, the county Washingtonian Temperance Society was organized in Sidney, with mostly people from Tabor and Civil Bend (Todd 1906: 43; Farquhar 1943: 348).

The town of Tabor grew significantly in 1853. In spring, Origen Cumings and his family, his sister Abbie Cumings, William J. Gates and family, Jesse West and family, John Hallam, and Joseph Munsinger arrived. Nearly all the families were from Ohio, and many had Oberlin connections. On June 11, 1853, Tabor church had its first accession of new members. Work also progressed on a house for Reverend John Todd in town, and he moved here in August 1853 (listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975). Church services were moved to the northwest room in the home of G.B. Gaston on the southeast corner of Orange and Park streets. Jesse West became the postmaster and blacksmith, and soon began to build the first hotel. In fall of 1853, S.R. Pearse, James K. Gaston (believed to be a distant relative of G.B.), William L. Clark, and James L. Smith arrived as well. The Smith family brought G.B. Gaston's nephew Loren Hume, who moved in with the Gaston family. Darius P. Matthews and wife Rachel Tucker Matthews also moved to Tabor from Civil Bend and joined the church at Tabor in October (Todd's history of church in *History of Fremont County* 1881: 578-79; Todd 1906: 45; FCHBC 1996: 48; Letter of Q.C. Todd 1921, Tabor Historical Society; Farquhar 1943: 350). Thus, the town of Tabor grew with increase in members of Tabor Congregational Church.

The town continued to develop along the founding principles envisioned by the leaders of Tabor Congregational Church through the 1850s. The first town meeting was held on February 23, 1854 to raise subscriptions to build a school. The school was built at the northwest corner of Center and Elm over the

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summer (moved around 1890 to the east by L.E. Webb and incorporated into his house). The bell brought by Jonas Jones was hung in the tower when it was completed, the first bell in western Iowa. By November 1854, services of the Congregational Church were held at the school, and Todd taught school over the winter of 1854-55. Todd later reported that the church had around 40 members by the end of 1854 ("A Few Facts About Tabor's Early History, *Tabor Beacon*, July 23, 1952, 2; Todd 1906: 46; Todd's history of church in *History of Fremont County* 1881: 579). By 1854, Tabor also had the benefit of a location along a stagecoach line (Figure 6). The line carried mail and passengers from St. Joseph, Missouri, north through Sidney and Tabor in Fremont County, through Glenwood in Mills County, and finally to Council Bluffs (Todd 1906: 47). Four new members were added to the church in 1855, followed by 31 in 1856 to bring the total of church members to 75 (Todd 1906: 46; Todd's history of church in *History of Fremont County* 1881: 579).

While focused on community building, the anti-slavery stance of the Tabor residents remained firm. A September 1, 1855 notice states: "A meeting of the Antislavery friends of Fremont County will be held in Sidney on Saturday September 15, 1855 at 11 o'clock A.M. All interested in resisting the encroachments of American slavery are invited to attend. Addresses alternating with appropriate music may be expected on the occasion." Samuel H. Adams later recalled that he attended with John and Martha Todd and Elvira Platt. Upon commenting on a rowdy group of drunks outside the meeting, he felt that they narrowly escaped town and only after he had amended his comment to the crowd (Todd 1906: 48; *Tabor Beacon*, November 24, 1905 – vertical files, Tabor Library). In addition to attending meetings, there are two recorded incidents prior to 1860 of residents in Tabor assisting fugitive slaves, one in July 1854 and the second in December 1858 (Todd 1906: 60; Silag et al 2001: 54).

The significant increase in 1856 was likely partially due to the waves of "Free State" emigrant trains to Kansas that passed through Tabor in summer and fall of this year during the period of debate on whether Kansas would be a free or slave state. The summer of 1856 found Free State advocates dealing with the destruction of their leadership in Kansas and increased armed conflict against Free State settlers. Missouri forces progressively turned back additional numbers of settlers moving across Missouri, virtually shutting down this route. The national fight for the slavery status of Kansas focused on Iowa. James Lane had already begun to advocate for a more northern route in May, and other Free State and emigrant aid society leaders also saw the need for this path. A route across southern Iowa was plotted and utilized in July. The anti-slavery settlement of Tabor became the natural western terminus, serving a resting point for settlers before embarking into the pro-slavery hostilities in Nebraska City and Kansas. Additionally, it served as a point of retreat for Free State men fighting in Kansas. The small community of Tabor played a large role in the fight for Kansas during the summer and fall of 1856. The prominence of Tabor in the ensuing emigrant route across Iowa has received considerable recognition. Early 20th century historian Irving B. Richman, of Muscatine, Iowa, stated:

Three facts gave Tabor its importance in slavery days: its location in a free state; the intense anti-slavery sentiment of the people; and its proximity to the northern line of Kansas Territory...When in 1856 access to Kansas for Northern settlers, by way of St. Louis and the Missouri River, was practically denied by the Missourians, a new route through Iowa and Nebraska Territory was opened up by Dr. S.G. Howe and other Massachusetts men; and this route had Tabor and Nebraska City for its western termini (Richman 1904: 15).

Historian Glenn Noble noted that "Tabor, on the route and a western Iowa haven of Brown, was a staging area for armed companies on the way to Kansas" and that "Free state travelers recognized Tabor as the last village where sentiment would be fully in accord with their views and where residents would strive to accommodate them energetically" (Noble 1977: 2, 39). Iowa historian Morton Rosenberg acknowledged that while Iowa City was the eastern focal point, "The little town of Tabor became the headquarters of the northern Kansas forces. Free state men made little or no effort to conceal their trips through Iowa, backed as they were by a Kansas Committee" (Rosenberg 1972: 139). Likewise, historian Leland Sage stated that Tabor "served as an arms depot for men going to the battles in Kansas, and a hideout and medical aid station for those coming back from the wars" (Sage 1974: 138). Additional information on the role of Tabor in the

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Kansas issues and relationship to the activities of John Brown can be found in the "Tabor Anti-Slavery Historic District" nomination (listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2007).

The formalization of the town of Tabor occurred concurrently with the establishment of the Tabor Literary Institute, utilizing the same initial group of people directly associated with Tabor Congregational Church. Tabor Literary Institute was formed in December 1853, with the principle similar to Oberlin's that neither race nor sex was a condition of admission. The first trustees included John Todd, George B. Gaston, Jonas Jones, Origen Cummings, and James L. Smith of Tabor, and John W. Smith of Civil Bend. Planning for the institute spanned the next few years, and Tabor Literary Institute opened on November 3, 1857 in the school building constructed in 1854 under the leadership of principal William Brooks. The goal of the program was to prepare students for teaching, college, and business (Brooks' history of Tabor College in *History of Fremont County* 1881: 594-95; Farquhar 1943: 363-64). On May 15, 1854, residents of Tabor held a town meeting to address "the village plat and matters connected therewith," appointing a committee of three (John Todd, Jonas Jones, J.L. Smith) to draft the plat. The initial plat was not accepted, and work to formalize Tabor was picked up in 1857. A plat of Tabor was accepted on September 28, 1857, and the suggestion to widen Main Street to 80 feet north of the county line was accepted. The final plat of Tabor was filed on March 8, 1858, nearly the same as the original 1854 plat (Figure 7). The land designated as the public square carried the condition that it must be fenced within one year. Similarly the land designated as college grounds would only be donated to Tabor as such if a building at least 40 by 60 feet was constructed within three years (*History of Fremont County* 1881: 568-69; Todd 1906: 46; Farquhar 1943: 366). With these community projects, Tabor Congregational Church grew to 96 members by the end of 1858 (*Manual of the Tabor Congregational Church* 1877 in Congregational Church files).

Since the land donated for the college grounds carried the condition of construction, the leaders in Tabor turned their attention to a building project. On July 28, 1859, they approved a motion to build a structure for an advanced school that would also be incidentally used for church purposes. Fundraising and construction spanned the next year, and the 32 by 42 foot frame building was completed on the northwest corner of Elm and Center streets in August 1860. The building became known as the college chapel or simply the chapel, and it served as school, church, and meeting house for all public gatherings into the 1870s. The bell from the school was then moved to this new building. The title for the property was transferred to the Tabor Literary Institute on December 13, 1861. After the Civil War with church membership reaching 156 in 1865, an additional 24 feet was added to the building, enlarging it to 32 by 66 feet (Farquhar 1943: 366-6; J. Peter Wagner, "Fourscore and Five Years of Tabor Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1937, 5; Todd's history of church in *History of Fremont County* 1881: 579; Todd 1906: 45).¹

George Gaston, Reverend John Todd, and the other trustees of Tabor Literary Institute continued to envision their ideal town of Tabor with a true college. On December 7, 1865, they voted to expand the institute to full college classes, and they received support from the Council Bluffs Association of Congregational Churches on March 24, 1866. With fundraising for a building and endowment through spring, the institute was reorganized and incorporated as Tabor College on July 23, 1866. Classes opened on September 5, 1866 under the leadership of William Brooks, with men and women of all races admitted. Bricks for a three-story brick building on the southeast corner of Center and Elm streets were made, and walls were started in spring 1868 with the assistance of the student body. The building, known as Boarding Hall (later Tabor Hall, and then Woods Hall), was dedicated in September 1869 with an address by Reverend John K. Nutting, pastor of the Congregational Church in nearby Glenwood. The dining room, kitchen, and parlors were located on the first story, with women living on the second story and men on the third story. The chapel continued to be used by

¹ The chapel continued to stand on this northwest corner until 1911 when it was demolished for materials for the new college gymnasium on this site.

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the college as well (Farquhar 1943: 367-371).² Tabor College offered either a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree, and they continued their high school courses through the "Academy" to prepare students for college or conclude their education. The Academy had over 100 students enrolled from 1867 through 1890 (Farquhar 1943: 373; Newlon 1990: 26).

With the college established, attention again turned back to the town of Tabor and Tabor Congregational Church. On April 27, 1868, discussions resumed at town meetings to incorporate the community. George B. Gaston, John Todd, William M. Brooks, Johnson Wright, and M.L. Carpenter were appointed commissioners for a September election on the issue, and all 33 voting residents of Tabor voted to incorporate the town. George Gaston was elected as the first mayor in November, with John Todd, M.L. Carpenter, D.B. Speers, H.D. Ingraham, and J.F. Sanborn serving as trustees and E.S. Hill as recorder (*History of Fremont County* 1881: 573). With the growth of the town and college, Tabor Congregational Church continued to grow significantly, with 237 members listed in 1868 (*Manual of the Tabor Congregational Church* 1877 in Congregational Church files). George Gaston's vision of creating a town centered on education and religion was nearly complete. The construction of a large brick church would be the last piece of the equation to mark the peak of the initial settlement and development of Tabor and fulfill his vision.

Architecture and construction of Tabor Congregational Church

In a town founded on religious principles, the construction of the church marks the pinnacle of the initial development of the community, and the church becomes the physical center of the community for decades to follow. This would be the case for Tabor Congregational Church. Nearly 100 years later, a historian would write: "Because of the close relationship of the church and college, what affected one affected the other, and in 1870 it became apparent that a church must be erected large enough to fit the needs of a prospering community, college, and church" (Miller 1968: 2). With 244 members in 1870, a sizeable church was envisioned, large enough to seat 1,000 people (*Manual of the Tabor Congregational Church* 1877 in Congregational Church files). While a frame church was considered, it was nearly as costly as a brick church of this size, while a brick church was viewed as more substantial ("65th Anniversary Congregational Dedication," *Tabor Beacon*, June 13, 1940). As designs were considered, initial funds for quarrying the stone foundation were raised through subscriptions recorded in the church records on October 19, 1869. At this time, Solomon Jones, Samuel Dalton, John Todd, M.L. Carpenter, and W.G. Clark each pledged \$10 (Congregational Church records). The final costs for the Tabor Congregational Church would total around \$22,000 plus a significant amount of donated labor.

For the plans for Tabor Congregational Church, the members looked to one of their own, Reverend John K. Nutting, pastor of the Congregational Church in nearby Glenwood. He had recently been called to Glenwood in 1869, offering the dedication address for Boarding Hall in Tabor in September. Perhaps through these interactions, the congregation at Tabor learned of his experience with church design and construction. John Keep Nutting was born in Massachusetts in 1832. He noted in 1908 that "having previously studied architecture, it was my pleasure to plan and build many churches, without interfering with my pulpit or pastoral duties" (Nutting 1908: 135). However, it is unclear when he would have studied architecture as his other autobiographical writings state that he graduated from Williams College in 1853 and taught briefly before entering the seminary at East Windsor, Connecticut. He married in 1857 and moved to Iowa in 1858, first to Polk City and Eddyville. In 1859, he accepted a call to Bradford in northeast Iowa, slightly east of Nashua in Chickasaw County. During his nine years here, the congregation built a church and established the Bradford Academy, offering "high school" instruction similar to the academy in Tabor. Rev. John K. Nutting designed the small frame church, which would become famously known as The Little Brown Church in the Vale through

² Boarding Hall (or Ladies Hall) was later known as Tabor Hall, and it was remodeled in 1918 and renamed Woods Hall. It stood on this southeast corner until it was demolished in the 1980s.

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the popular song of William Pitts (Figure 8, listed on the National Register of Historic Places). The gable-roof frame church with a square bell tower was built from 1860 to 1864, and only brown paint could be afforded for the building at this time (Douglass 1910; Nutting 1908: 133; Nutting 1915: 20-24).

Thus, when Reverend John K. Nutting was selected for the Tabor Congregational Church, this would be his second, but not last, church design. He would later write:

Beginning with the little brown church at Bradford I furnished plans for the first church building at Rockford later destroyed by a cyclone, the church at Tabor, rebuilt the parsonage at Glenwood, built the large church at Austinburg, Ohio, and later the churches at Thompson and Gaza. In most of these I drew all of the plans and specifications, and several instances I personally superintended the entire work, while doing also the work of the preacher, usually without vacation. Church building has been my recreation. (Douglass 1910)

Nutting noted in 1908: "The church at Tabor, Iowa, is the largest and most costly of these; that at Austinburg, O. [Ohio], is the best, and nearly as large. That at Gaza, Iowa, is the least expensive – being tasteful and attractive, and seating nearly 200, while costing only \$616. But at Bradford, Iowa, stands the first and most famous of them all, 'The Little Brown Church in the Vale'" (Nutting 1908: 133). The church at Austinburg, Ohio, was also a large brick structure, with final costs of \$16,000 plus donated labor and materials (Figure 9, listed on the National Register of Historic Places) (Nutting 1915: 27). In his lengthy c.1915 autobiography, Nutting included the following six churches among his designs: The Little Brown Church in the Vale, Bradford, Iowa (1861-64), Tabor Congregational Church (1872-75), Congregational Church, Austinburg, Ohio (1874-77), church in Millbank, South Dakota (1882-1883, converted to house in 1883), small church at Gaza, Iowa (1896), and Union Congregational Church (Little Brown Church in the Glade), Crystal Springs, FL (1914) (Nutting 1915: 23-41).

The design chosen for Tabor Congregational Church reflected the Gothic Revival style, tracing its antecedents to old English parish churches and the type of churches built by Congregational settlers in New England. These early churches were usually buildings with a low pitch gable roof that were rectangular in plan and often had a square tower centered on the entry end. The Gothic Revival style for churches gained popularity in the 1840s and 1850s with an appreciation of English medieval parish churches cited as appropriately religious. Richard Upjohn and James Renwick popularized the style across the United States through the 1850s and 1860s. Gothic Revival churches were often built in brick with a basic rectangular nave that might be embellished with transepts, tower, vestibule, and lofts. The stylistic elements reached to the heavens, and the tower with a belfry was important in this regard and as a design element. The tower was either flat or topped by a spire. Pointed arch windows were nearly universal on all Gothic Revival buildings, often referred to as Gothic arch windows. Other characteristic features of the style include trefoils or quatrefoils, stepped buttresses, recessed openings, and wood doors with iron strap hinges (Rifkind 1980: 137-138).

Tabor Congregational Church reflects several of these Gothic Revival elements. The basic rectangular plan follows the pattern of early Congregational churches in New England with the entry opposite the pulpit. The main level and tower feature pointed arch windows, and decorative brackets are found under the eaves. The original design for the bell tower called for a spire (Figure 10), which was modified during the design phase to a square tower (Figure 11). Early historic photographs show that this exact design was not built, apparently modified during construction (Figure 12). Small spires extend around the top of the tower, pointed arch panels are prominent, and trefoils are used as design elements. Stepped brick buttresses trimmed with stone elements "support" the walls of the church and tower. Worshippers entered the base of the bell tower into a small vestibule, ascending to the main church level. On the interior, a loft or balcony extended around the sides and rear, supported by columns (Figure 13). Thus, the main level had side aisles with pews under these lofts.

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With the initial subscriptions received in October 1869, the 244 members of Tabor Congregational Church in 1870 began the daunting task of additional fundraising and actual construction. In spring 1871, the building committee of Reverend John Todd, George B. Gaston, Samuel Dalton, Solomon Jones, and H.W. Howard made plans to move forward, with the first payment for stone issued on June 22. Work for the foundation then began in summer 1871. John Goode was selected as stone mason for the foundation work, and the community donated additional labor. Stone was quarried from the Missouri River bluffs about 12 miles away and hauled to Tabor by church members. The contract for the brick walls was then awarded to John Weatherhead on May 7, 1872 by the building committee. Approximately 200,000 bricks from his brickyard were to be used, and September 20 was set as the completion date. The roof timbers were hewn by hand and set in place in fall 1872 with all men of the community gathered to raise the roof. A strong wind broke a number of the roof timbers and damaged the north wall in December 1872. Thus, additional costs estimated at \$500 were incurred to replace the roof timbers and repair the wall in early 1873. The school district of Tabor officially transferred Lot 3 in Block 7 to the Congregational Church on December 31, 1872 (*Manual of Tabor Congregational Church 1877* in Congregational Church records; "Historic Church in Anniversary Meeting," *Tabor Beacon*, October 12, 1932, 1; J. Peter Wagner, "Fourscore and Five Years of Tabor Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1937, 5; Rev. Peter Jacobs, "Reminiscences," *Tabor Beacon*, December 8, 1938; Miller 1968: 2).

George B. Gaston did not live to see his full dream of a religious community on the prairie of western Iowa with a college and strong church come to fruition as his death occurred in May 1873 at age 59, two years before the completion of the church. Reverend John K. Nutting also did not see the final construction of the church that he designed, as he left Glenwood in 1873. The remaining church leaders carried on the task after Gaston's death, with James L. Smith, L.E. Webb, and William M. Brooks added to the building committee. The exterior work was completed by spring 1874, and the contract for plastering the church was awarded to John Weatherhead on July 6, 1874. His work included three coats on the church audience room walls, lower walls, and basement walls to be completed by October 1, 1874. During this year, the membership in the church grew from 256 in 1873 to 323 by the end of 1874, likely with the growth of Tabor College and church building campaign. Services began to be held in the basement of the church on the second Sunday in January 1875 (*Manual of Tabor Congregational Church 1877* in Congregational Church records; J. Peter Wagner, "Fourscore and Five Years of Tabor Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1937, 5; Rev. Peter Jacobs, "Reminiscences," *Tabor Beacon*, December 8, 1938).

On June 8, 1875, Tabor Congregational Church was dedicated. Reverend John Todd provided an account of the early days of the church. The new brick church measured 57 by 93 feet with a seating capacity of 1,000. He also reported on the finances of the construction, with total costs of \$22,000 including pulpit, chandeliers, and furnaces. William Brooks, president of Tabor College, also preached, as the dedication service occurred on the same day as graduation for the college, held within the new church. At the time, the church needed \$2,600 to satisfy their debt. Rev. E.S. Hill of Atlantic, Rev. E.S. Williams of Glenwood, Rev. C.E. Melvin of Red Oak, Rev. A.T. Wood, and Rev. J.W. Pickett from Des Moines also spoke at the dedication (*Manual of Tabor Congregational Church 1877* in Congregational Church records; "Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, December 13, 1895, 19; "Consecrated to God 65 Years Ago," *Tabor Beacon*, June 6, 1940; J. Peter Wagner, "Fourscore and Five Years of Tabor Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1937, 5).

Tabor Congregational Church and the social history of Tabor

The town of Tabor continued to develop through this period of construction of the Tabor Congregational Church, retaining its strong link with the church. The population remained nearly steady, growing from 310 in 1870 to 320 in 1880. In 1876, the town included three dry goods stores, two grocery stores, a meat market, a drug store, three doctors, two millinery stores, a furniture store, a harness shop, a shoe store, a shoe shop,

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two blacksmith shops, a wagon maker, a nurseryman, a post office, and a tavern. Additionally, Tabor had ten boarding houses, likely a direct result of Tabor College. Both the Masonic Lodge and Odd Fellows had around 30 members, and the "the greater percent of people are church members." A small contingent of Baptists organized in Tabor in 1865, and a new Methodist Episcopal group had also formed. However, the Congregationalists continued to dominate the community. In comparison, Tabor had "one Congregational church, costing about \$22,000; one Baptist church, costing \$2,000...one M.E. church, costing \$300" (Lingenfelter's History of Fremont County, July 4, 1876, in *History of Fremont County* 1881: 45).

Tabor Congregational Church also stood out across the state and country in 1877 with a total of 335 members in a town of approximately 320. Across the country, only 67 Congregational churches outside of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York had over 300 members. Only two other Congregational churches in Iowa had over 300 members, Dubuque with 337 members and Grinnell with 538 members. Dubuque was a significantly larger community, with a population of 22,254 in 1880. Iowa College, originally founded in Davenport, was moved to Grinnell in 1859, creating a more central location for this primary Congregational college in Iowa. In 1880, Grinnell had grown to a population of 2,415, correlating to about 22% of residents attending the Congregational church. Only six other Congregational churches in Iowa reported membership of over 200, five in the larger communities of Burlington, Des Moines, Keokuk, Muscatine, and Waterloo. The early Congregational Church in Denmark (Lee County) had 214 members in 1877, with Denmark Academy continuing to operate in town.³ The membership in the church in Denmark was around 23% of the 1880 population of 937 in the town and surrounding township, similar to the church in Tabor with membership around 26% of the 1880 population of 1,280 in the town and surrounding township (Cushing 1877: 99-180, Iowa on 116-120).

Through the last quarter of the 19th century, Tabor Congregational Church was attended by "practically all" members of the community, and all large gatherings and special ceremonies were held at the church ("The Church in College History," *The Cardinal*, January 26, 1925). Each Sunday, the seating area and balconies were filled with people. Social events, such as concerts, performances, and graduations were also held at the church. Attendance at these events filled the church to its 1,000 seat capacity, with additional chairs placed in the aisles ("The Church in College History," *The Cardinal*, January 26, 1925). Tabor Congregational Church hosted the Council Bluffs Association annual meeting in 1877 and the state Congregational conference in 1878. The school on the corner was moved to the east and incorporated into the house of L.E. Webb on the south side of Elm Street. Tabor College owned three buildings in 1875 valued at \$24,000, the college chapel, Boarding Hall (1869), and the two-story frame Music Hall built in 1875⁴ (Todd 1906: 46; "65th Anniversary Congregational Dedication," *Tabor Beacon*, June 13, 1940; Andreas 1875). A sketch of Tabor in the late 1870s shows this collection of buildings at the northeast corner of the public square (Figure 12).

The 1880s brought changes to Tabor Congregational Church and further developments for the town and college. On January 31, 1883, Reverend John Todd retired as active pastor at the church, though he would remain as pastor emeritus until his death on January 31, 1894. He had served the congregation since its start in 1852 ("Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, December 13, 1895, 19; Farquhar 1943: 365). Dr. J.W. Cowan arrived to take over pastoral duties, and he had a particular interest in the welfare of its children. The Women's Missionary Society was organized in 1873, and Dr. Cowan recognized a need for a youth group. On March 27, 1884, he organized the Junior Christian Endeavor Society to address this need. This group would then become a model for Congregational churches across the state and country. The 1911 history of the Congregational Church in Iowa confirms that "The first Junior Endeavor Society in the state or in the world was at Tabor, organized under the suggestion and by the inspiration of the pastor, J.W. Cowan" (Douglass 1911: 231). President William Brooks continued to develop Tabor College, leading efforts to construct Whitten Cottage in 1882 as a dining hall and women's dorm. In 1884, his brother, architect S.C. Brooks of Cleveland,

³ Bradford Academy in Chickasaw County closed in 1877.

⁴ Music Hall was later moved a block south and used as City Hall. It continues to stand at 416 Orange Street.

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designed a large three-story building for the college that would be known as Gaston Hall. This building was sited near the center of the college grounds in the block north of the public square and constructed from 1886 to 1887. Gaston Hall included offices, recitation rooms, laboratories, library, and rooms for literary societies as well as a clock tower that chimed on the hour⁵ (Farquhar 1943: 376-77; Miller 1966: 7).

The town of Tabor, Tabor College, and leaders of Tabor Congregational Church combined efforts in 1889 to connect Tabor to the Burlington and Wabash railroads at Malvern, ten miles to the northeast. The college had a desire to provide improved transportation options for its students. With unanimous approval from the town, a 5% tax for the construction of the railroad was passed, and Thomas McClelland, dean and professor of philosophy, became president of the railroad. The college issued \$4,300 in bonds to retain controlling interest in the railroad as well as buying a used engine from the Burlington railroad and leasing it to the Tabor and Northern Railroad. Service began in 1890 on this railroad widely noted as the shortest railroad in the world. The college continued to run the railroad for eight years. In 1898, the trustees decided that the college should sell the railroad, which was then bought by trustee Robert McClelland, a coal merchant in Omaha, on January 12, 1899. In addition to passenger service, the railroad did a heavy business in shipping, particularly cattle (Farquhar 1943: 387-388; Miller 1966: 8).

The *Tabor Beacon* recognized in 1895 that "For many years the Tabor church has occupied a prominent position in the state, and as a college church, has no doubt exerted a specially wide and potent influence outside of its own community. It has always been in the vein of moral reform, one of the first churches of its records, being occupied with resolutions concerning slavery and temperance" ("Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, January 25, 1895). Tabor Congregational Church continued to stand out among churches across the state, with 328 members at the time of the 50th anniversary of the Congregational Association of Iowa in May 1890. Only churches in Dubuque, Des Moines, and Grinnell had more members. In the two college towns, the 328 members of the Tabor church represented 65% of the town population of 503, while the 720 members in Grinnell represented 22% of the town population of 3,332 (Douglass 1911: 253). Two of the seven keynote speakers were from Tabor, with William Brooks speaking on "Fifty Years of Education in Iowa" and John Todd speaking on "Early Congregationalism in Southwestern Iowa" (Douglass 1911: 261). Membership in the Tabor church continued to grow, and it reached 450 members in 1893 (*Tabor Beacon*, October 17, 1902).

Tabor Congregational Church continued to dominate religious life in Tabor as the church grew in numbers and programs. A revival held in the opera house in January 1894 resulted in the formation of the First Christian Church of Tabor, which built a small gable-roof frame church a few years later. The Methodist Church of Tabor then organized in February 1894, building a small gable-roof frame church in 1900. The Congregational Church reported it had 454 members in December 1895, compared to 55 members of the First Baptist Church and fewer within the two new churches. Dr. A.R. Thain took over as pastor at Tabor Congregational Church in May 1894. He led efforts with his wife to form the Woman's Union, which incorporated the earlier groups into one organization. In 1896, a large pipe organ was installed in the front of the church at a cost of \$1,400. President William Brooks announced his retirement from Tabor College in June 1895, and he officially stepped down in 1896. Richard C. Hughes became the acting president in 1896, officially inaugurated in October 1897. During this period, the articles of incorporation were rewritten and adopted in June 1897, maintaining a close relationship with the Congregational Church by requiring 12 of the 20 trustees be members of the church. The church also maintained its key role within the community as a site for large events. During this period, Tabor High School held their commencement at the church, and Tabor College used the church for their Baccalaureate Sunday (FCHBC 1996: 54; Miller 1967: 9; *Tabor Beacon*, December 13, 1895, 19-20; "Historic Church in Anniversary Meeting," *Tabor Beacon*, October 12, 1932, 1;

⁵ Whitten Cottage was demolished in 1934 for materials to repairs the other college buildings.
Gaston Hall was demolished in 1951.

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Farquhar 1943: 377; J. Peter Wagner, "Fourscore and Five Years of Tabor Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1937, 5; Congregational Church files).

The turn of the century brought an increased emphasis on music to Tabor, focused on the church and college. The installation of the pipe organ in 1896 and President Richard Hughes' love of music provided a new tradition and legacy for Tabor Congregational Church. In 1952, the *Tabor Beacon* noted "For 75 years Tabor Church and Tabor College were closely united each giving strong support to the other. The Christian College gave strong leadership to the church. This was especially true of music, giving the church a well-deserved fame for organ, choir, and oratorio productions" ("History Reveals Record of Great Influence," *Tabor Beacon*, October 1, 1952). Plans in 1898 for a new building for a conservatory of music took shape with a donation from Samuel H. Adams, and the two-story Adams Hall was built over the next few years with pressed brick and interior oak woodwork.⁶ While this hall had a large auditorium, Tabor Congregational Church continued to provide the largest performance venue. Claude J. Nettleton taught violin, holding his annual concert at the church as well as recitals of his violin pupils in the first decade of the 20th century. The Conservatory of Music also held their student recital in the church. The Tabor Oratorio Society formed in this period, holding concerts at Tabor Congregational Church as well (Figure 13). The church was filled for their annual performance of Messiah at Christmas. Additionally, the church continued to be used for graduations within Tabor, as well as oratories and lyceum lectures in addition to regular church services. During this period of cultural programs in Tabor, the Tabor and Northern railroad ran additional trips from Malvern to bring in attendees and return them following the programs. In 1904, the church bell, brought by Jonas Jones to Tabor in 1854, was moved from the college chapel to the bell tower of Tabor Congregational Church (Farquhar 1943: 379; Miller 1966: 7; programs and notices in Congregational Church files; "Congregational Church's 125th Anniversary Beautiful," *Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1977; Jessie Weatherhead, "Tabor, Malvern boasted world's shortest railroad," *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, clippings file, Congregational Church; "The Church in College History," *The Cardinal*, January 26, 1925).

At the time of the 50th anniversary celebration on October 12-13, 1902, Tabor Congregational Church reported 524 members. Among the 307 Congregational churches in Iowa, it stood as the third largest in terms of size (*Tabor Beacon*, October 17, 1902; "65th Anniversary Congregational Dedication," *Tabor Beacon*, June 13, 1940). It also represented over half of the population of Tabor of 934 residents. The prominence of Tabor Congregational Church also continued at the local level. The churches of Tabor were highlighted in the *Tabor Beacon* on June 15, 1906 (Figure 14). The photographs demonstrate the comparative size and prominence of Tabor Congregational Church in contrast to the Christian and Methodist churches.

The members of Tabor Congregational Church turned their attention to building improvements in 1907 by design and by disaster. In February 1907, the trustees decided to build a parsonage not to exceed \$3,000 in costs on the corner of the church lot, on the original site of the 1854 school. The contract was awarded in April, with Arthur C. Weatherhead laying the foundation and George Ledgway serving as the general contractor. On July 6, 1907, a tornado swept through Fremont and Mills counties, clipping the north portion of Tabor. The greatest damage in town was to the Congregational Church. Damage was estimated at around \$5,000 with the north portion of the roof complete torn off and the heavy rain destroying the pipe organ and interior (Figures 15 and 16). The roof repairs spanned a few months, and the rededication was held at the first service in the repaired church on October 13, 1907 (Figure 17). Rev. F.G. Wilcox spoke on "The importance to the community of a place of public worship," and the building committee reported expenditures of \$1,500 with much donated labor. The organ and piano had not yet been repaired, and gas lights were under consideration. The second pipe organ for the church was then installed in 1908 at a cost of \$2,500, with money raised through subscriptions, church suppers, and concerts by the Tabor Oratorio Society. In March 1909, the church voted to wire the building for electric lights. Concrete sidewalks were also installed in front of

⁶ Adams Hall is the last brick and largest building associated with Tabor College to remain standing. It is located one block west of Tabor Congregational Church on the northeast corner of Elm and Park streets.

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the church in 1909 (Congregational Church records; J. Peter Wagner, "Fourscore and Five Years of Tabor Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1937, 5; "Wind, Hail and Rain: Most Destructive Storm in History," *Tabor Beacon*, July 12, 1907, 1; "Church is Rededicated," *Tabor Beacon*, October 18, 1907; Miller 1968: 3; "Historic Church in Anniversary Meeting," *Tabor Beacon*, October 12, 1932, 1; *Tabor Beacon*, March 26, 1909).

The *Atlas of Mills and Fremont Counties, Iowa* published in 1910 shows the relationship of Tabor Congregational Church and the college, as well as the nearly full development of this institution (Figure 18). The large footprint of the church is depicted on the northeast corner of Elm and Center streets, with the parsonage immediately on the corner. Gaston Hall occupies the center of the college grounds, with Adams Hall to the west. Tabor Hall (originally Boarding Hall) is located to the southeast across the street from the original college chapel, which had been converted to a gym. This building was deemed beyond repair in fall 1911, and students volunteered their labor to construct a new building if the trustees purchased the materials. In early November, they began construction of the new Griswold Gymnasium to the northeast of Gaston Hall, salvaging some materials from the chapel (Farquhar 1943: 382). The 45th annual commencement of Tabor College was held at Tabor Congregational Church in June 1911, and the church continued to be used for recitals of the Conservatory of Music through this decade (Figures 19 and 20) (Congregational Church files). Tabor Congregational Church also hosted the state Congregational conference again in 1913 ("65th Anniversary Congregational Dedication," *Tabor Beacon*, June 13, 1940).

Work continued on the interior of Tabor Congregational Church into the 1910s. The interior had not been redecorated since construction and the tornado damage, and money was raised in 1915 for this effort as well as paying off the final debt on the parsonage. The walls of the main level and basement were painted in soft browns, the woodwork refinished in grained oak, a new sloping floor of hardwood was installed, wood pews were refinished, and the rostrum enlarged. The church was rededicated on November 7, 1915, and the final \$1,000 to pay for the work was raised on that day ("Church Re-dedicated Free of All Debt," *Tabor Beacon*, November 11, 1915, 1). This remodeling was appreciated by a large number of visitors in attendance on November 10, 1918 for the 100th anniversary celebration of Reverend John Todd's birth ("Honor to Memory of Rev. John Todd," *Atlantic News-Telegraph*, November 14, 1918).

Even as the church celebrated its significant history, the era of the combined strength of Tabor Congregational Church, Tabor College, and the town of Tabor was approaching its close. The population of Tabor had continued to increase in the early 20th century, growing from 934 in 1900 to a peak of 1,186 in 1920. As the town grew, it became more religiously diversified. By 1916, Tabor supported five churches and Tabor College (*Iowa State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1916-1917*: 897). Membership at Tabor Congregational Church continued to be around half of the town's population, ranging from 450 to 500 in this period (Congregational Church records). However, enrollment was down at Tabor College and the associated Academy for secondary education. The town of Harlan offered 20 acres to move Tabor College about 50 miles north, stirring up local support for the college to retain it in Tabor. At a town meeting in October 1917, they decided that Tabor College would remain in town with an effort to improve its buildings. With a donation of real estate from H.T. Woods and his wife, bonds were issued for \$18,000 to remodel the original Boarding Hall in 1918 as a women's dorm. This building became Woods Hall at the dedication in October 1918 (Farquhar 1943: 383-84; Miller 1966: 7).

The town of Tabor also stepped up when the issue of the railroad arose in 1920. Rail traffic was down with the increase in truck traffic. Robert McClelland sold the railroad to a group of Tabor citizens for \$27,000, and it continued running under the organization. This attracted attention at the time: "The Tabor & Northern Railroad, known throughout the country as the 'shortest and smallest' railroad in the world, has acquired new fame. It is now said to be the only railroad in the world owned by a town" ("A Town Owns This Railroad," *The Express Gazette*, Volume 46, April 1921, 128). Passenger service consisted of a box car with benches, and

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several flag stops filled out the timetable that fit on a four by six card. The railroad continued to operate for another decade before it was completely closed out ("A Town Owns This Railroad," *The Express Gazette*, Volume 46, April 1921, 128; Jessie Weatherhead, "Tabor, Malvern boasted world's shortest railroad," *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, clippings file, Congregational Church; "T&N Railroad was Busy Line," *Tabor Beacon*, July 23, 1952).

However, efforts to revitalize the educational component of Tabor were not successful in the 1920s. With strong local high schools, enrollment at the Academy had been declining since 1900. In 1920, the first year was closed, followed by the second year in 1921 and third year and the Academy in 1922. Efforts to sustain Tabor College with further financial support resulted in the reorganization in 1925 under the enthusiastic leadership of an Episcopalian graduate. Requirements for trustees were rewritten to include five from the Congregational Church and five from the Episcopal Church. Though it did result in increased enrollment, the necessary funds to maintain the school did not follow. Thus, Tabor College closed after graduation in spring 1927 (Farquhar 1943: 373, 385-386, J. Peter Wagner, "Fourscore and Five Years of Tabor Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1937, 5). As a later historian wrote: "Congregationalism found its natural center at Grinnell, and Tabor was closed in 1927" (Kuhns 1951: 206).

Sustaining Tabor Congregational Church within the community of Tabor

By the late 1920s, Tabor Congregational Church had entered an era where it stood somewhat independently in Tabor yet maintained a strong place within the community and town life. Throughout the next four decades, its early history and prominence in the community were well recognized as the church found its role in Tabor for the middle of the 20th century. On September 4, 1927, Tabor Congregational Church celebrated the 75th anniversary of its founding, with a paper read on the early history of Tabor, the church, and the college ("Congregationalists Have Big Day Sunday," *Tabor Beacon*, September 8, 1927). This celebration spurred regular 5-year interval celebration of the church and its history over the next decades. The 80th anniversary of the church was celebrated on October 9, 1932. Reverend Fred Lebert recognized the early founders of Tabor had come "to this community with the purpose of planting here a college and a church," and a historical pageant relived each decade ("Historic Church in Anniversary Meeting," *Tabor Beacon*, October 12, 1932, 1). Tabor Congregational Church continued to have over 400 members at this time.

The 85th anniversary of Tabor Congregational Church was celebrated on October 17, 1937 with 20 local businesses sponsoring the celebration and publications, a significant number of businesses in the small community. The church had 389 members in 1937, with the town of Tabor recording a population of 976 in 1940 (Figures 21 and 22). Several addresses were given, and a basket dinner was held at the church (J. Peter Wagner, "Fourscore and Five Years of Tabor Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1937, 5; "Church Celebrates 85 Years of Active Work," *Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1937, 1; *Eighty-fifth Anniversary, October 17, 1937*, Tabor Congregational Church, Tabor). Rev. J. Peter Wagner remarked:

Tabor church has had a phenomenal history. From the very beginning she occupied the leading place in the community. The history of the church was the religious history of the community. At one time every adult citizen of Tabor belonged to the church. She was the mother of old Tabor College, and side by side they flourished. Both have had a far reaching influence. She was the first Congregational Church in Southwest Iowa, and one of the earliest in the state...From the earliest days this church stood for union of all Christians in places too small to support more than one church. For many years people from various faiths worshiped here. In the days of slavery she took a strong stand against slave traffic...When the temperance question was to the fore she stood in the front ranks, permitting no one to be a member of the church who dealt in or drank intoxicating liquors...She had stood for coeducation regardless of race, color, or creed. (J. Peter Wagner, "Fourscore and Five Years of Tabor Congregational Church," *Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1937, 5)

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By the 1940s, Tabor Congregational Church itself had adopted a type of commemorative quality as a physical embodiment of the early history of Tabor as well as being well-recognized as a community landmark. However, the church was also an active part in the community, numbering 427 members in 1940 and continuing to provide gathering space for large events. Within the town of 976 residents, the church continued to boast the largest membership, with its numbers correlating to over 40% of the population. The 65th anniversary of the dedication of the church building was held on June 9, 1940, with several speakers and events. The *Tabor Beacon* recognized that "The present structure is a beautiful monument to the vision, heroic giving, and faith of the pioneers of that day," and "The tower has been a landmark of the community all these years" ("Consecrated to God 65 Years Ago," *Tabor Beacon*, June 6, 1940). Repairs to maintain the church were conducted over the next few years, including painting the church and parsonage, redecorating the interior, repairing the tower, installing a new furnace, and replacing glass and putty in broken windows (Church records, Misc. Book C, 221-234). At the 90th anniversary celebration of the church body, the program noted that "The Tabor church is a distinct landmark of western Iowa. It represents a striking type of architecture. It is the only church building in which this congregation has worshipped. To many it is a most sacred shrine. Let us preserve it for future generations" (Program, Ninetieth Anniversary Service, The Congregational Church, Tabor, Iowa).

The former Tabor College buildings continued to stand in the community and be utilized for various purposes in this period. At a sheriff sale in December 1933, the town of Tabor officially acquired title to all the college property to satisfy property taxes. They agreed to lease the buildings to a new Tabor College, organized by Methodist minister Rev. Clark W. Howard who was also Chaplain of the Iowa Department of the American Legion. With the buildings not maintained since 1927, several repairs were required, and Whitten Cottage was demolished for materials for repairs. The new Tabor College opened on September 14, 1936. This effort lasted a few years, and it was reorganized again in 1941 as a school focused on students requiring more individual instruction, which then closed in 1943. During World War II, prisoners of war were housed in the buildings, and the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) used them for meetings after the war. When fire destroyed the elementary school in 1949, Adams Hall was remodeled for this purpose. Woods Hall was remodeled into apartments, and without a buyer or use, Gaston Hall was demolished in 1951 (Farquhar 1943: 386, 388-390, 393; "Tabor College's Old Gaston Hall Vanishing From Scene," *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, January 22, 1951, 10).

Disaster struck Tabor Congregational Church again on November 3, 1945 when a fire that started in the furnace spread throughout the basement and main level, destroying the pipe organ and interior features. The fire department was successful in saving the walls and exterior, and the main level windows escaped with minimal damage ("History Reveals Record of Great Influence," *Tabor Beacon*, October 1, 1952; Burke Gillespie, "Ravaged by Fire, Historic Tabor Church Lays Plans to Continue Bright Heritage," *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, November 18, 1945). On November 19, a committee met to discuss repairs and remodeling. After studying the situation, they concluded that while it was regrettable that the original interior design was destroyed, it provided an opportunity for updating the design. Architect J. Chris Jensen of Council Bluffs was consulted to draw preliminary plans, which were presented to the congregation on February 17, 1946.⁷ The plans were accepted, and the decision to modernize the church moved forward. Work began to clean up debris and raise funds for construction, with work proceeding as funds were available. Funds for a new roof were transferred to the remodeling fund, and new pews, new altar furniture, new plastering, a new organ, and a new roof were installed as part of the project. Pointed arches were added to the interior of the church, reflecting the original Gothic Revival design and design of the windows. In the basement, the kitchen and

⁷ J. Chris Jensen was an architect who practiced for over 50 years in Council Bluffs, having designed 773 buildings by 1944. At age 72, he was retired from general practice, though continuing to consult on design issues. His daughter, Gladys Dunsdon, lived in Tabor. He died in August 1946 ("J. Chris Jensen Looks at Life," *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, September 23, 1944, 3; "J. Chris Jensen Dies Suddenly," *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, August 19, 1946, 1).

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bathrooms were also remodeled, with the hall tile donated. Several other donors gave funds for the pulpit and lectern, pastor's study, altar, cross, candelabra, and Bible. On March 16, 1947, the basement was complete, with services held here until Christmas. The kitchen was nearly finished in April. The remodeled main level had a seating capacity of 300, with additional seating in the rear balcony. The rededication of the church was held on March 14, 1948, with all associated debt paid (Figure 23) (report of Fern Williams, Secretary, Advisory Committee, June 28, 1949, in church records; Church Records, Misc. Book C, 260-267; "History Reveals Record of Great Influence," *Tabor Beacon*, October 1, 1952). An organ recital for the community was held in the afternoon following the dedication ("Congregational Church and Furnishings Dedicated Sunday," *Tabor Beacon*, March 18, 1948). An interior historic photograph from this period shows that this 1940s interior design remains intact today (Figure 24).

Building improvements continued on the exterior in the early 1950s as Tabor Congregational Church continued to meet the needs of the community as well as the congregation. The church recorded 307 members in 1950, over one-third of the town's population of 869 (Congregational Church records). In fall 1951, nearly \$3,000 was spent on repointing the brick church walls, pouring a concrete footing around the foundation, caulking window frames and doors, tower work (including placing a false roof, siding the north side, painting new wood, bracing and anchoring it with wire cable), installing concrete steps in front of church, placing splashers at downspouts, bricking up the church kitchen window, and repairing the chimney and installing a concrete cap (Report on Building Repair Fund, church records). With an increase in automobiles, traffic congestion around the church on Sundays and during other large meetings was noted to be a town problem by June 1954. The church and town worked together to establish a parking lot on the east side of the church, with the rock quarry donating 100 tons of crushed rock to be hauled to and spread out on the lot ("Church Parking Lot Expected to Relieve a Traffic Problem," *Tabor Beacon*, June 16, 1954). A number of community events continued to be held at the church through this period. For example, a book review and tea was held at the church in April 1954. Graduations for the high school were held at Tabor Congregational Church, as well as alumni gatherings. The church hosted a dinner meeting of regional bankers in December 1960, and the Girl Scouts held their anniversary program at the church in March 1961 (*Malvern Leader*, April 9, 1954, 1; *Malvern Leader*, May 28, 1959, 9; "Bankers Met In Tabor Tuesday," *Malvern Leader*, December 8, 1960, 1; *Malvern Leader*, March 30, 1961, 5; *Malvern Leader*, July 22, 1965, 11).

In the late 1950s, the Congregational Church in America underwent a reorganization and merger that created the United Church of Christ. The Congregational churches voted in 1957 to unite with the Evangelical and Reformed Church. The new constitution of the United Church of Christ was ratified in 1961. Tabor Congregational Church then became part of the United Church of Christ, initially adopting the name Tabor Congregational Church of Christ (Miller 1968: 7). Related to this shift, the church property including the church and parsonage (Lot 3, Block 7) was transferred to the United Congregational Church of Christ on September 22, 1963 (Fremont County Deed Book 62: 192).

One additional major repair was required at this time for Tabor Congregational Church to sustain its prominence in Tabor through the end of the 20th century. The wood portion of the nearly 100-year-old bell tower had suffered deterioration over the years, with the bell unused for several years due to safety concerns. In 1963, it was determined that the tower was a public safety risk, and it was removed and rebuilt with a similar size, design, and features as the original. The 300 pound bell was lowered for the reconstruction, and it was later mounted on a stand in front of the church. At the same time, the brick walls were repointed. On May 2, 1964, the new tower was dedicated, along with the tower lights and chancel cross ("88-Year-Old Church Tower Becomes Another Page in Tabor's History," *Tabor Beacon*, September 11, 1963; "Many Were Present for Church's Rededication," *Tabor Beacon*, May 6, 1964). Membership at Tabor Congregational Church of Christ continued to be nearly steady, with its 299 members in 1964 continuing to correlate to approximately one-third of the population of Tabor (Congregational Church records).

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Since 1964, maintenance projects have occurred as needed with no major changes to the key design elements on the exterior or interior of the church. A new asphalt roof was installed in fall 1991. Stained glass windows were placed at the front of the interior of the church, and new furnaces and wiring were installed. In 1996, an elevator was incorporated into the small rooms on the main and basement levels in the southeast corner of the church. Tabor Congregational Church continues to serve the community of Tabor as a church in the early 21st century, and it plans to be here for many decades to come.

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Preparation of this nomination is supported financially in part by the State Historical Society of Iowa, Historical Resource Development Program (Resource Enhancement and Protection program).

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): Iowa Site Inventory #36-00035

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	15	274835	4531165	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundary for the property is the parcel boundary for the east two-thirds of Lot 3 in Block 7 of the town plat of Tabor. This boundary is depicted on Figure 3.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

This is the parcel of land historically and currently associated with the church.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rebecca Lawin McCarley
organization SPARK Consulting date July 25, 2011
street & number 17 Oak Lane telephone 563-324-9767
city or town Davenport state Iowa zip code 52803
e-mail sparkconsulting@octaspark.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Photographs:** **Representative** black and white photographs **of the property.**
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Tabor Congregational United Church of Christ
street & number 403 Elm Street, P.O. Box 307 telephone 712-629-7215
city or town Tabor state Iowa zip code 51653

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

The photographs of Tabor Congregational Church in Tabor, Fremont County, Iowa, were taken by Rebecca Lawin McCarley, SPARK Consulting, on August 10, 2010. The digital photographs were printed with HP 100 photo gray Vivera ink on HP Premium Plus Photo Paper (high gloss). The photographs were also submitted digitally, per current guidelines. Sketch maps depicting the location of the photographs are found on the following page.

1. Setting of Tabor Congregational Church, camera looking northwest.
2. Tabor Congregational Church, camera looking northwest.
3. South elevation of church, camera looking north.
4. West elevation of church, camera looking east.
5. North elevation of church, camera looking south.
6. East elevation of church, camera looking west.
7. Detail on east elevation of church, camera looking west.
8. Entry in south side of tower, camera looking south.
9. Main level of church, camera looking north.
10. Main level of church, camera looking south.
11. Aisle on west side of main level, camera looking south.
12. Balcony on south side, camera looking east.
13. Classroom (0C) in basement, looking southwest.
14. Classroom (0B) in basement, looking northwest.
15. Fellowship hall (0D) in basement, looking northwest.
16. Kitchen (0F) in basement, looking north.

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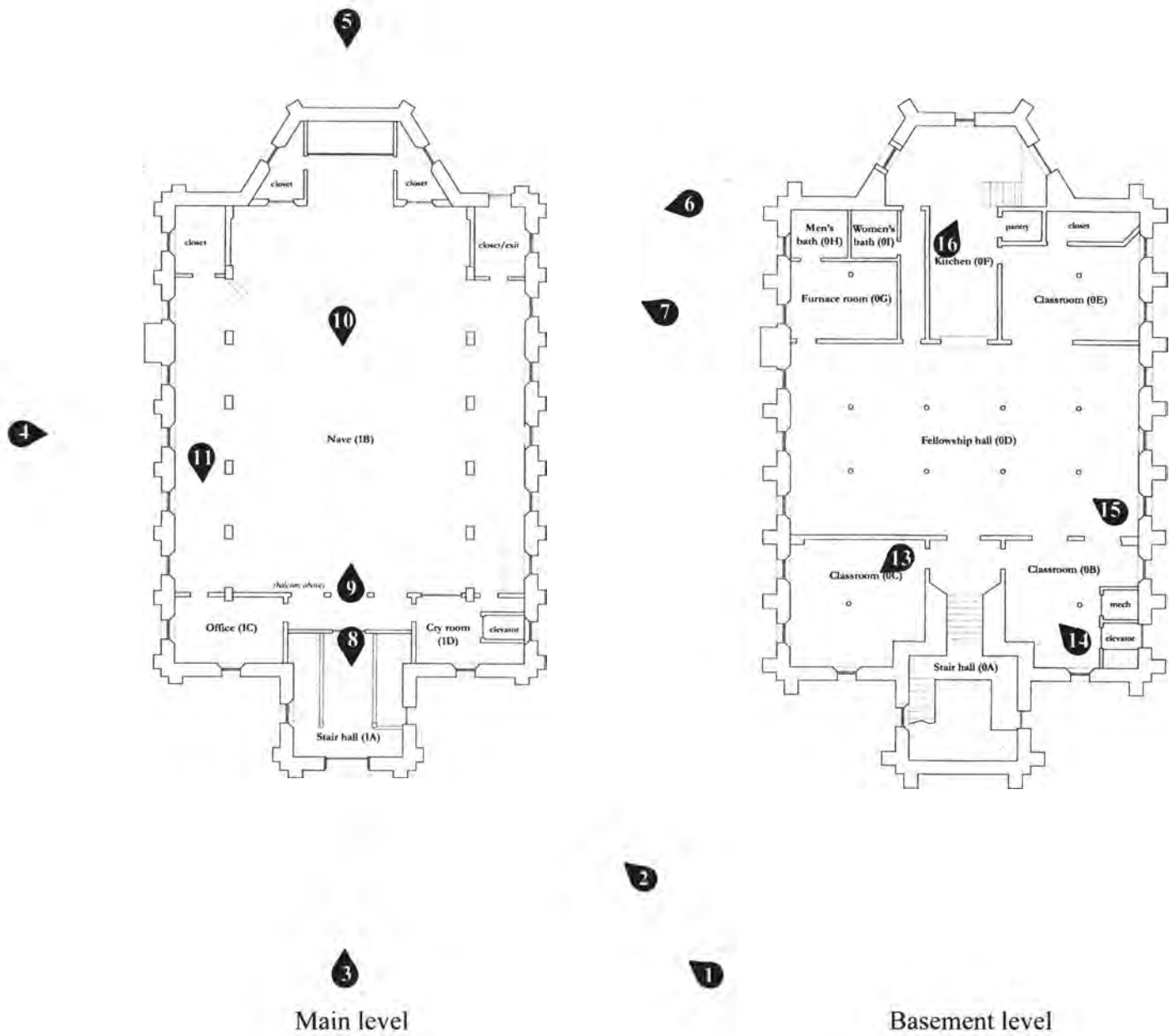


Figure 1. Photograph key

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Maps:

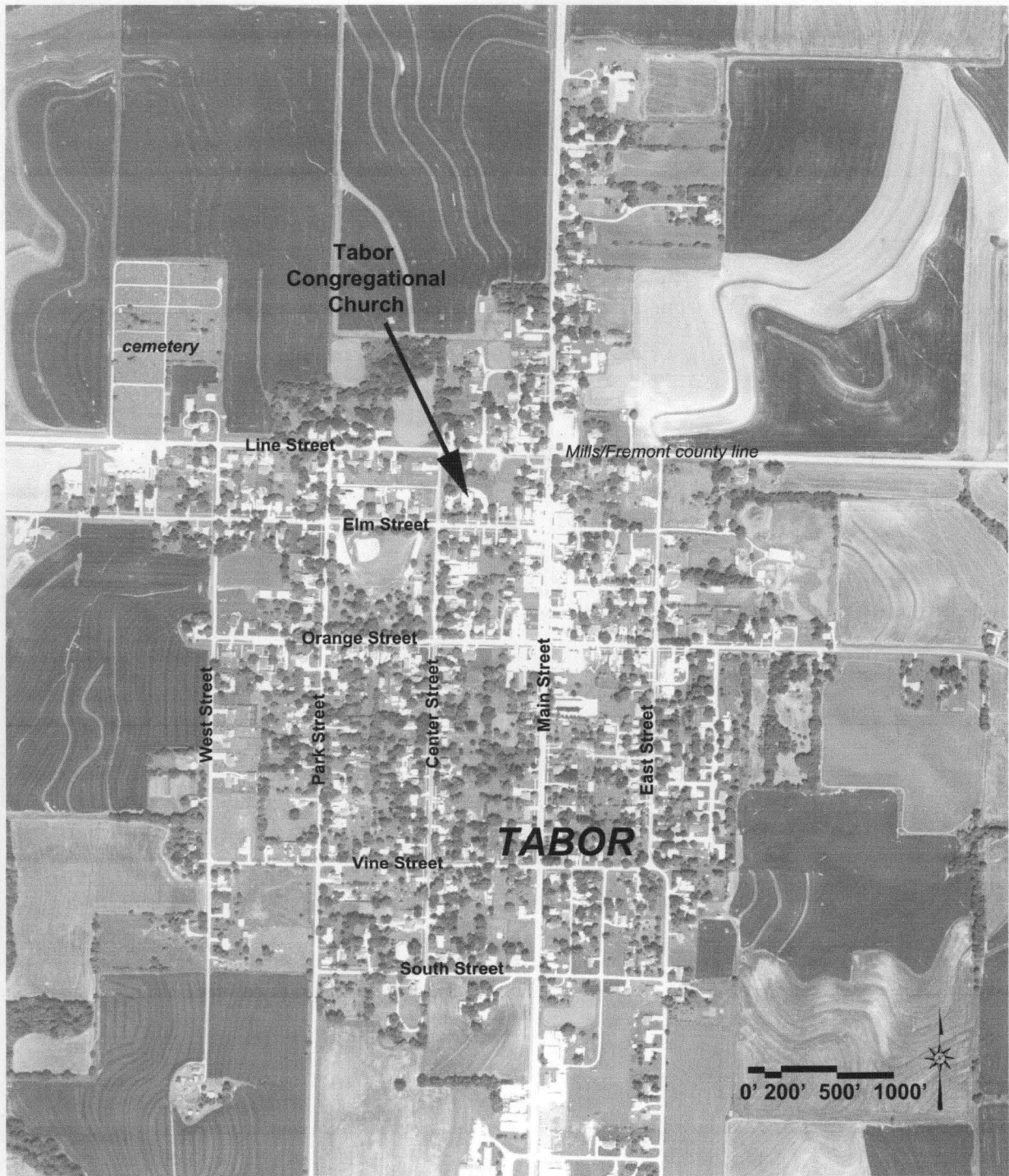


Figure 2. Location map

(Base aerial photograph, 2009: Iowa Geographic Map Server, ortho.gis.iastate.edu)

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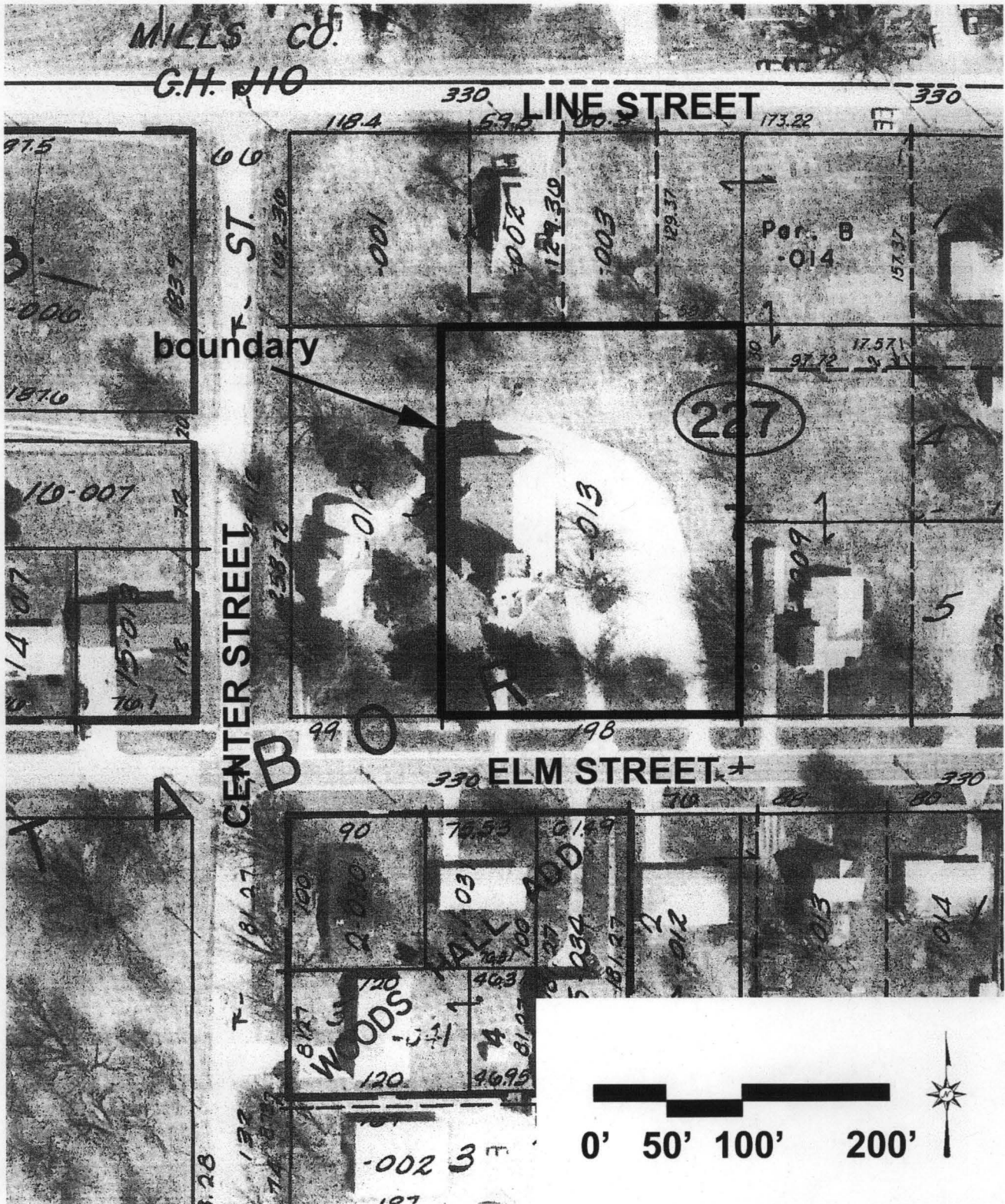


Figure 3. Site plan with National Register boundary
(Plat map courtesy of Fremont County Assessor, Sidney, Iowa)

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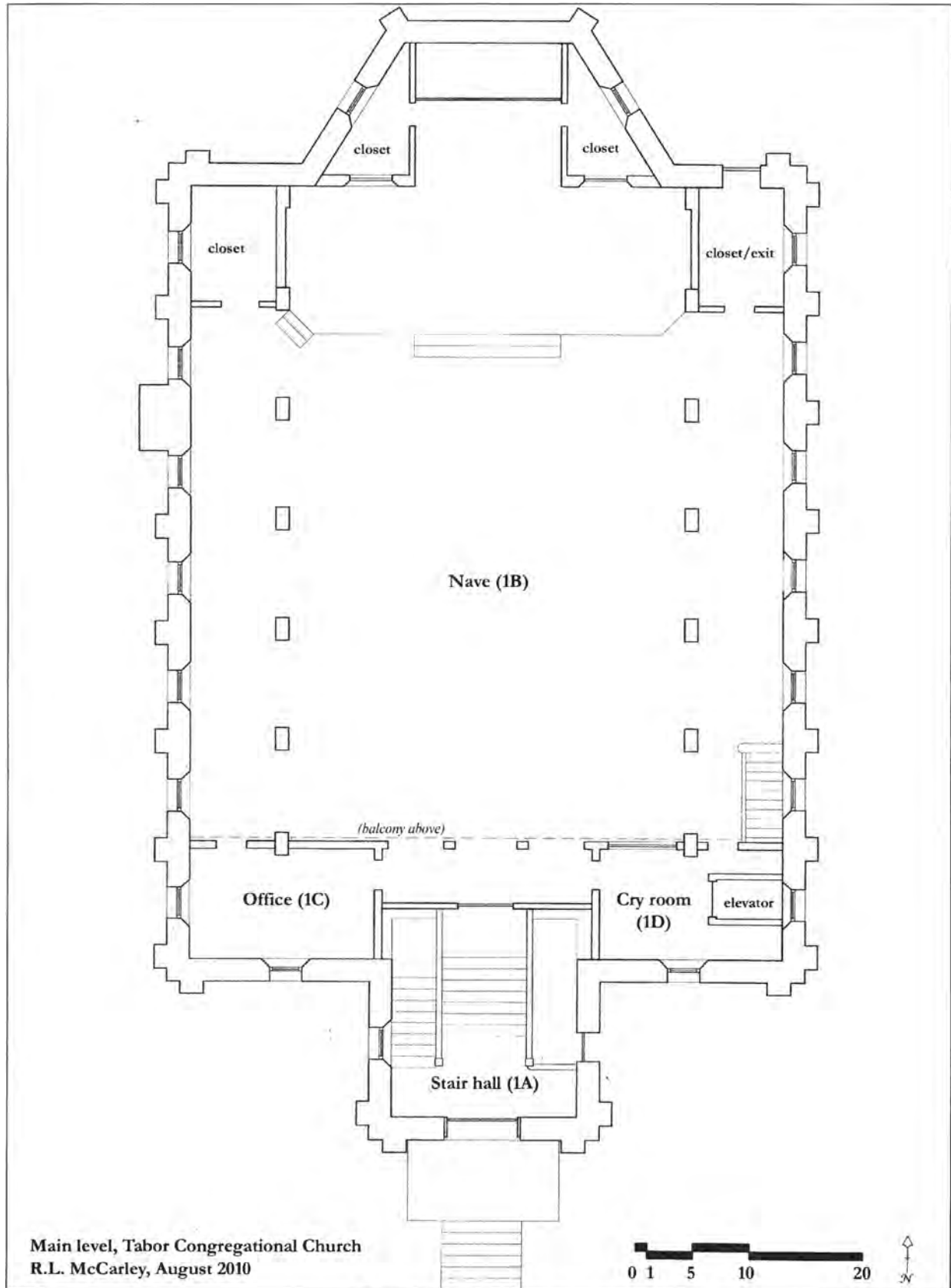


Figure 4. Plan – Main level

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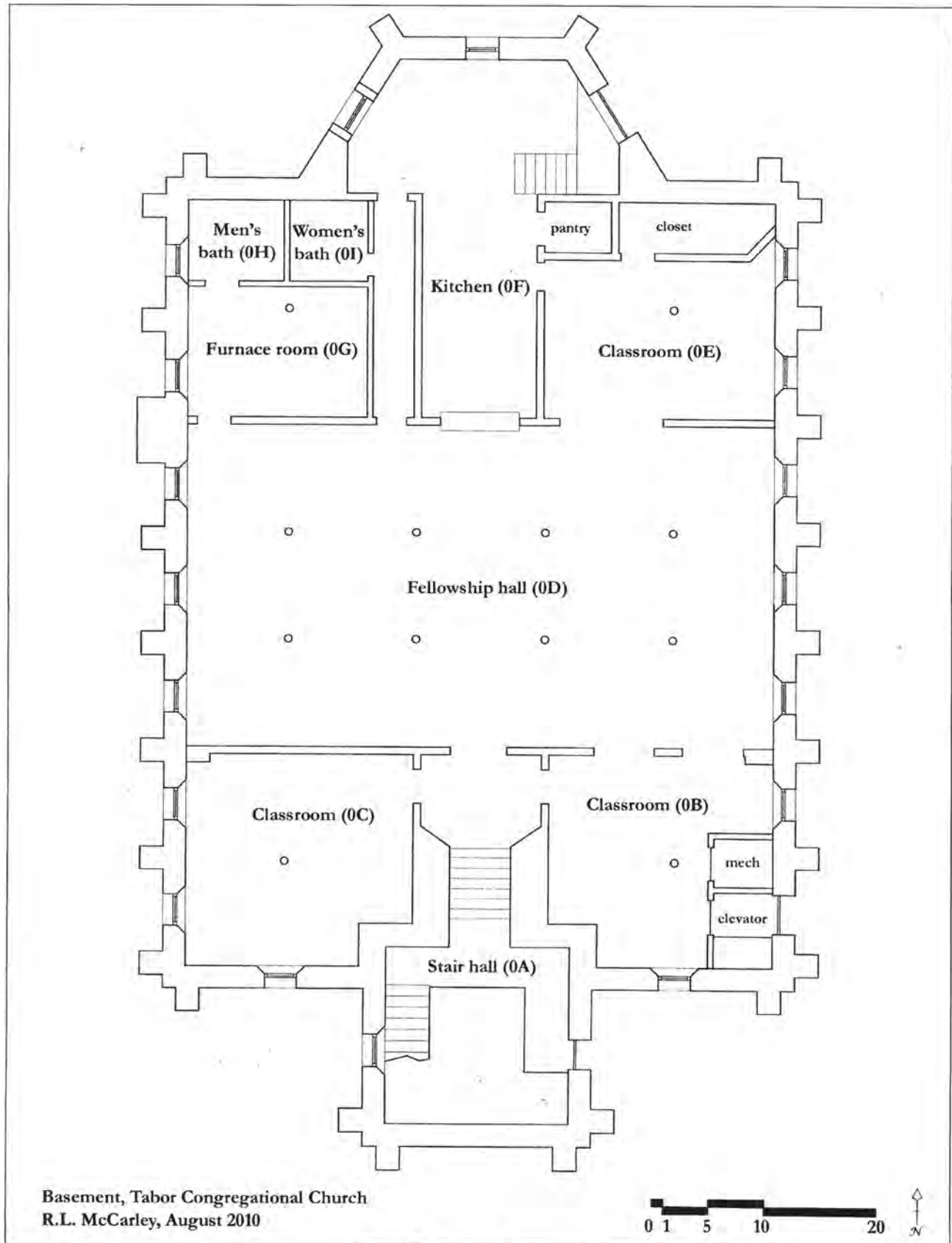


Figure 5. Plan - basement

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Images:

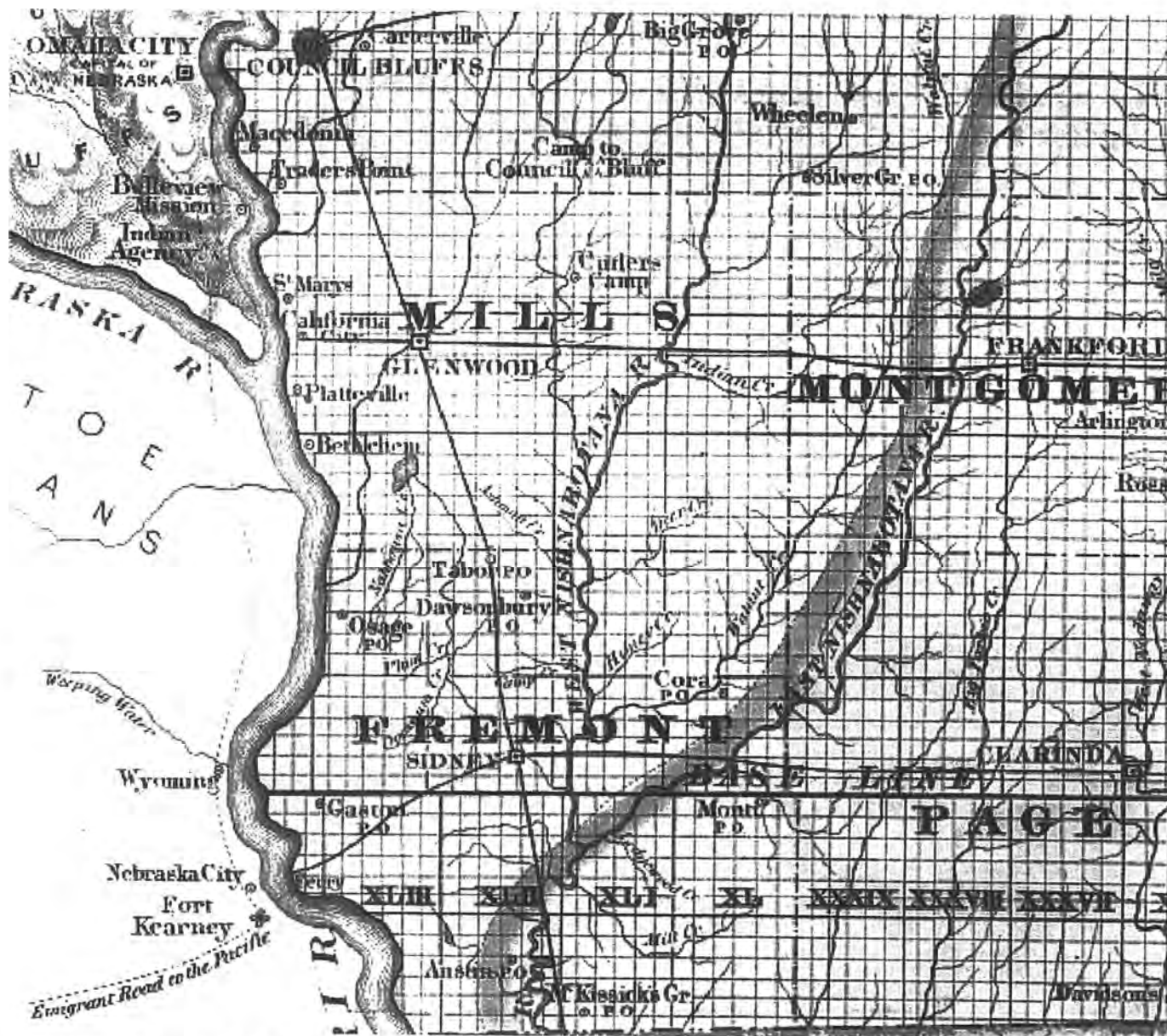


Figure 6. Southwest section of Parker's sectional & geological map of Iowa, 1856.

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**Figure 8. The Little Brown Church in the Vale, Nashua, Iowa (McCarley 2010).
(designed by J.K. Nutting and built in 1860-64)**

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**Figure 9. Congregational Church in Austinburg, Ohio
(Austinburg United Church of Christ website: www.austinburgucc.org).
(designed by J.K. Nutting and built in 1874-1877)**

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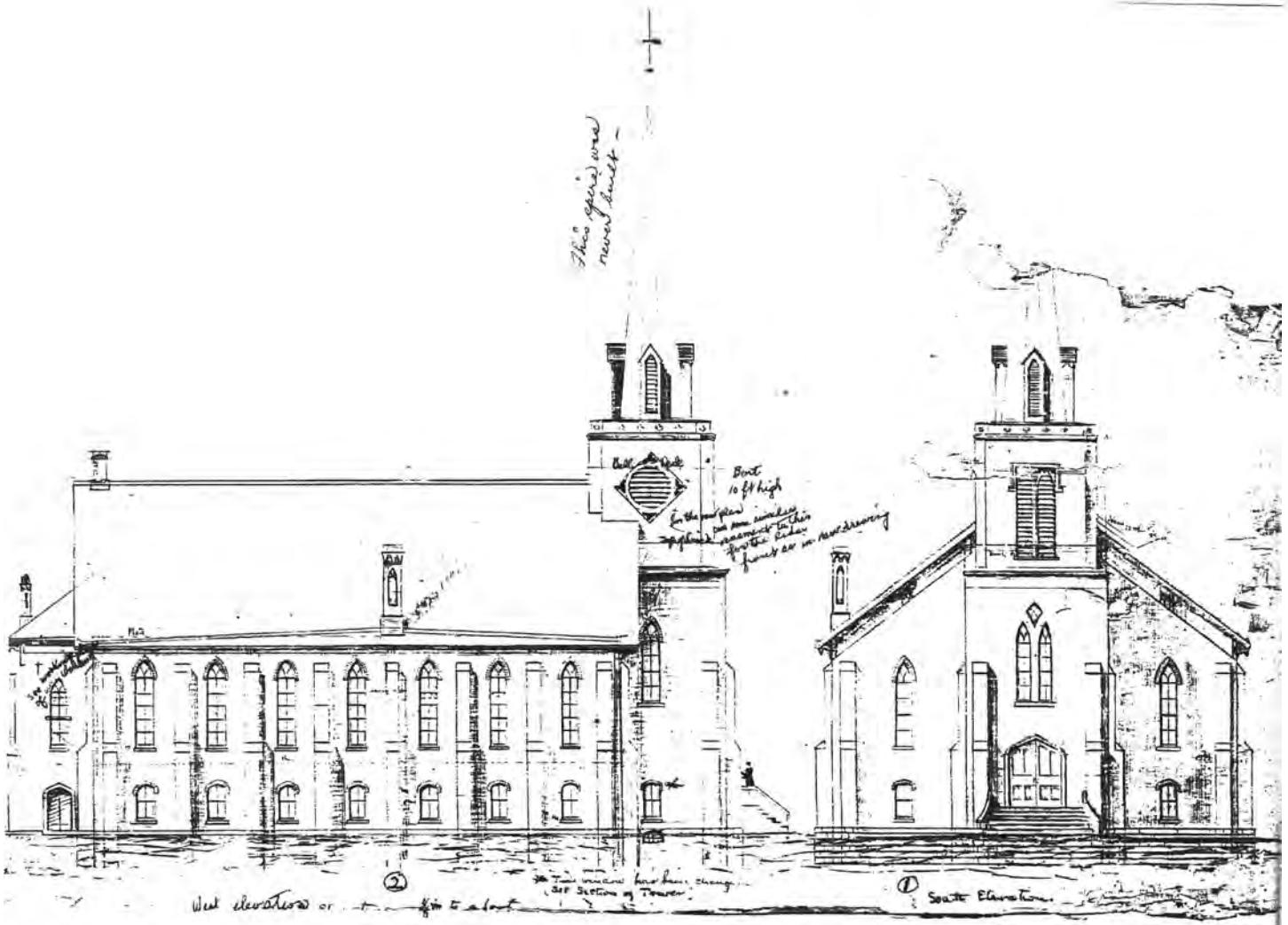


Figure 10. Original design drawing of Tabor Congregational Church, circa 1870 (Congregational Church files).

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Notes.

By reference to the original elevations, the difference between the old plan and the new will I think be understood.

In the old plan the wood work was drawn ~~in~~ in, three feet smaller than the brick.

In the new, there is merely a re-entrant angle - corner left out - of 15 inches deep.

The brick cornice is however laid out eight inches, and a water table added, with a face-mold, projecting beyond the brick.

The bent supporting the bell clock is ten feet high, and should be put together in the most substantial manner. The remaining stories will be framed upon it.

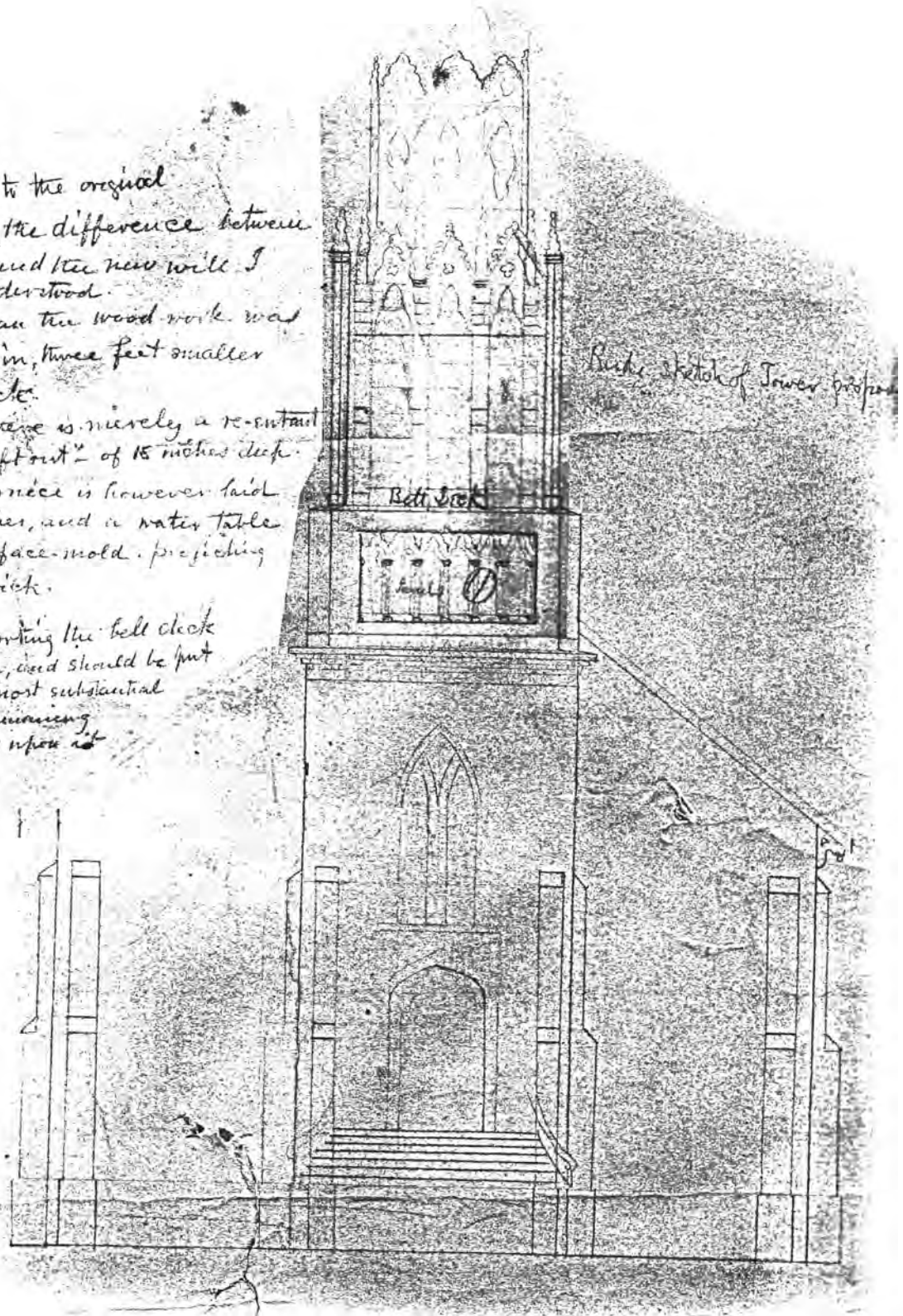


Figure 11. Revised design for tower of Tabor Congregational Church, circa 1870 (Congregational Church files).

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Fremont County, Iowa
County and State

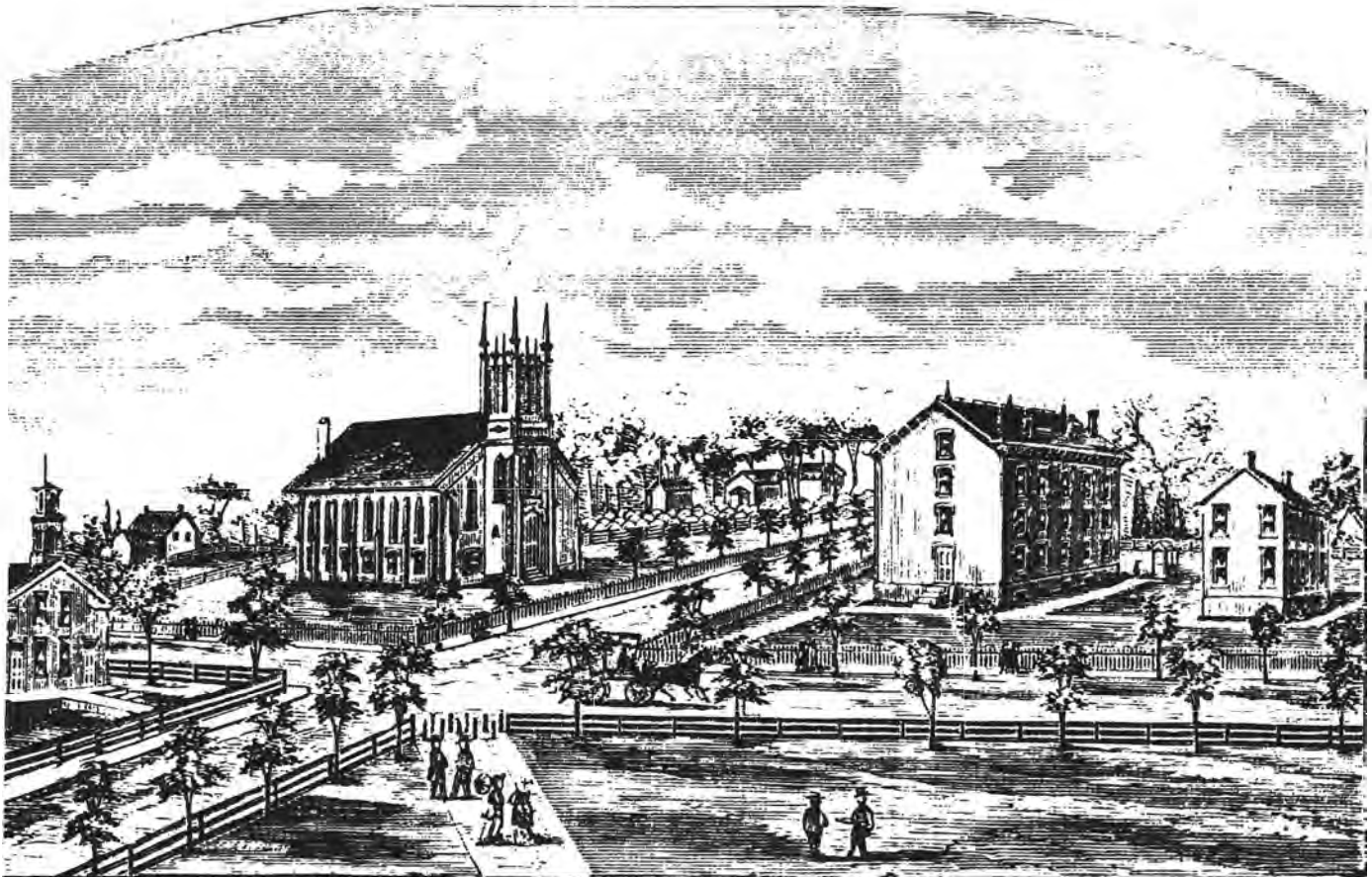


Figure 12. Sketch of buildings in Tabor in late 1870s, looking northeast from public square: college chapel (demolished), Tabor Congregational Church, Boarding (Woods) Hall (demolished), and Music Hall (moved) (reprinted in *Tabor Beacon*, July 23, 1952, 2).

Tabor Congregational Church
Name of Property

Fremont County, Iowa
County and State



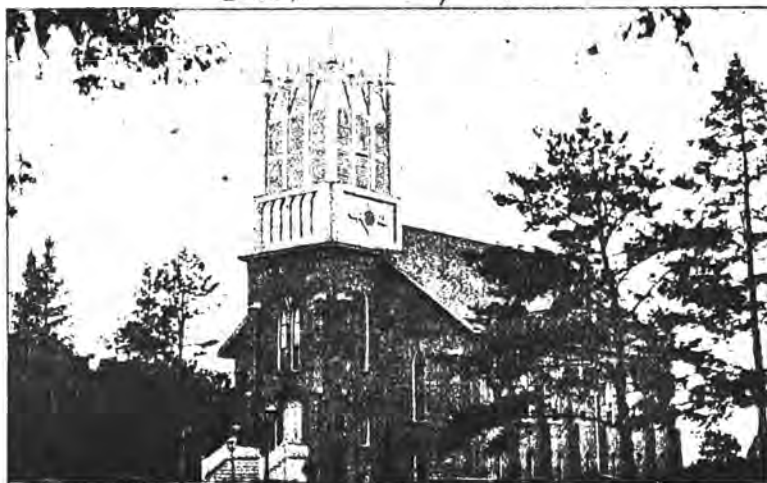
Figure 13. Early photograph of interior of church, likely around 1900 (Congregational Church files).

Tabor Congregational Church
Name of Property

Fremont County, Iowa
County and State

Tabor Churches

JUNE 15, 1906



Congregational--Seating Capacity 1200



Christian

PASTORS.

Rev. J. W. Ferner...Congregational

Rev. E. V. McCormick...Christian

Rev. Peter Jacobs.....Methodist



Methodist

Tabor has three church organizations—Congregational, Christian and Methodist. The first two own their places of worship. The Methodist denomination occupy the old Baptist church building, that society having

disbanded several years ago. Besides these is the Hephzibah Faith Home association, of the Holiness faith, whose purpose is the training of missionaries for foreign fields. This organization owns a tract of forty

acres at the southwest edge of the town, has its own church, school and printing plant. Rev. L. B. Worcester is in charge, also edits the two publications issued, The "Sent of God" and "John Three Sixteen."

Figure 14. Photographs of Congregational, Christian, and Methodist churches in Tabor (Tabor Beacon, June 5, 1906).

Tabor Congregational Church
Name of Property

Fremont County, Iowa
County and State

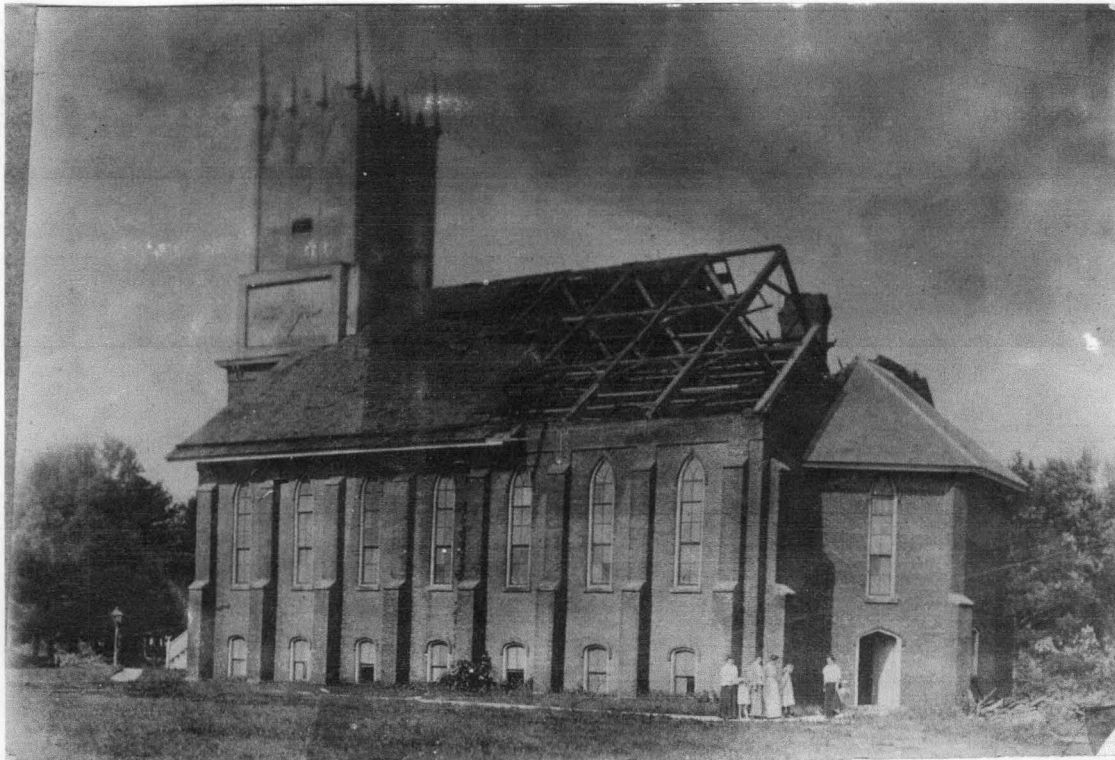


Figure 15. Tabor Congregational Church after July 1907 tornado (Congregational Church files).



Figure 16. Interior of Tabor Congregational Church after July 1907 tornado (Congregational Church files).

Tabor Congregational Church
Name of Property

Fremont County, Iowa
County and State



Figure 17. Tabor Congregational Church after 1907 repairs (Congregational Church files).

Tabor Congregational Church
 Name of Property

Fremont County, Iowa
 County and State



Figure 18. Tabor in 1910 (Atlas of Mills and Fremont Counties, Iowa 1910: 93)

Tabor Congregational Church
Name of Property

Fremont County, Iowa
County and State



Figure 19. Tabor Congregational Church, 1911 (*Cardinal 1911*, Congregational Church files)



Figure 20. Tabor Oratorio Society in church, 1911 (*Cardinal 1911*, Congregational Church files)

Tabor Congregational Church
Name of Property

Fremont County, Iowa
County and State

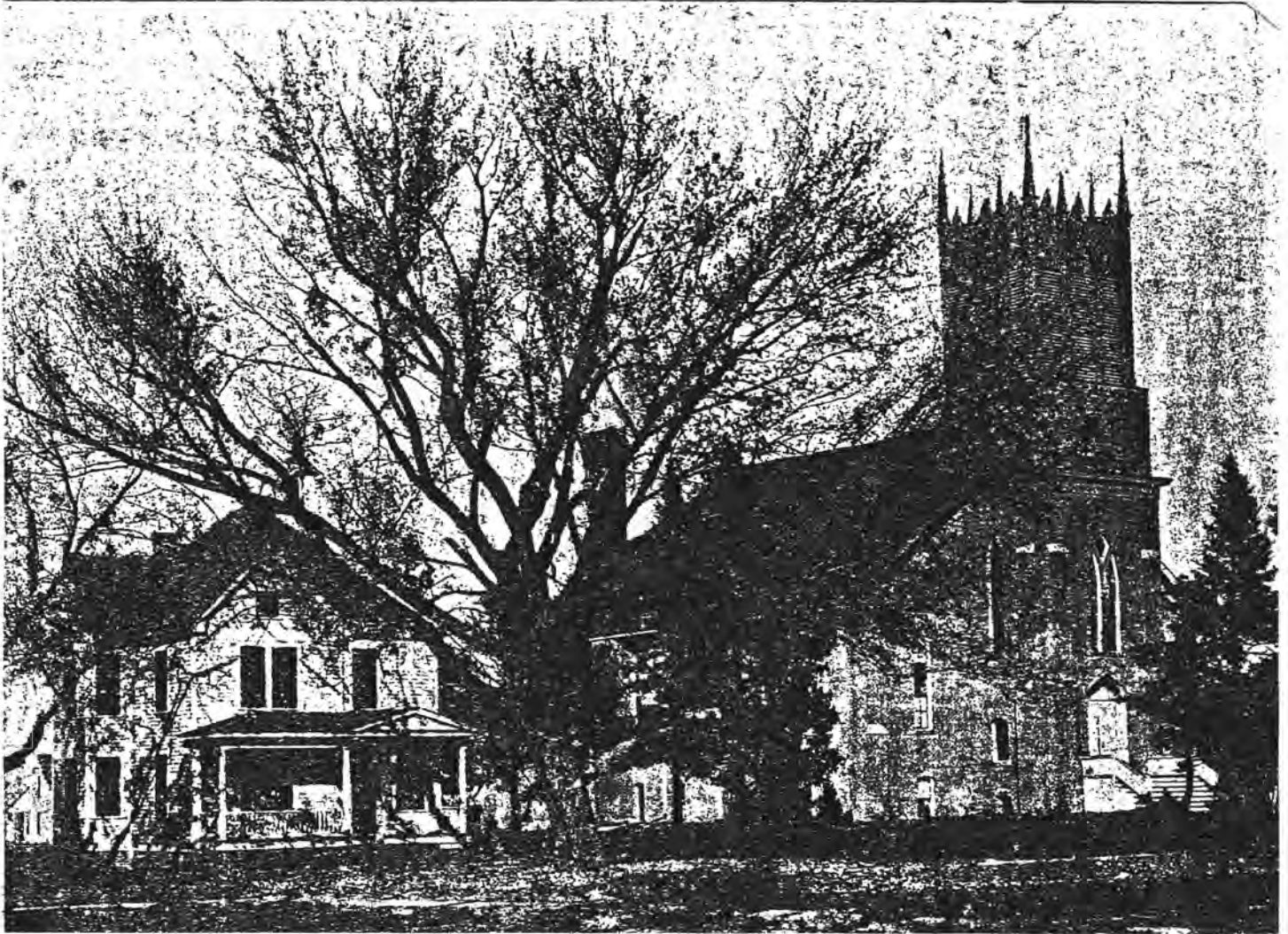


Figure 21. Tabor Congregational Church and parsonage in 1937 (*Tabor Beacon*, October 20, 1937, 5).

Tabor Congregational Church
Name of Property

Fremont County, Iowa
County and State

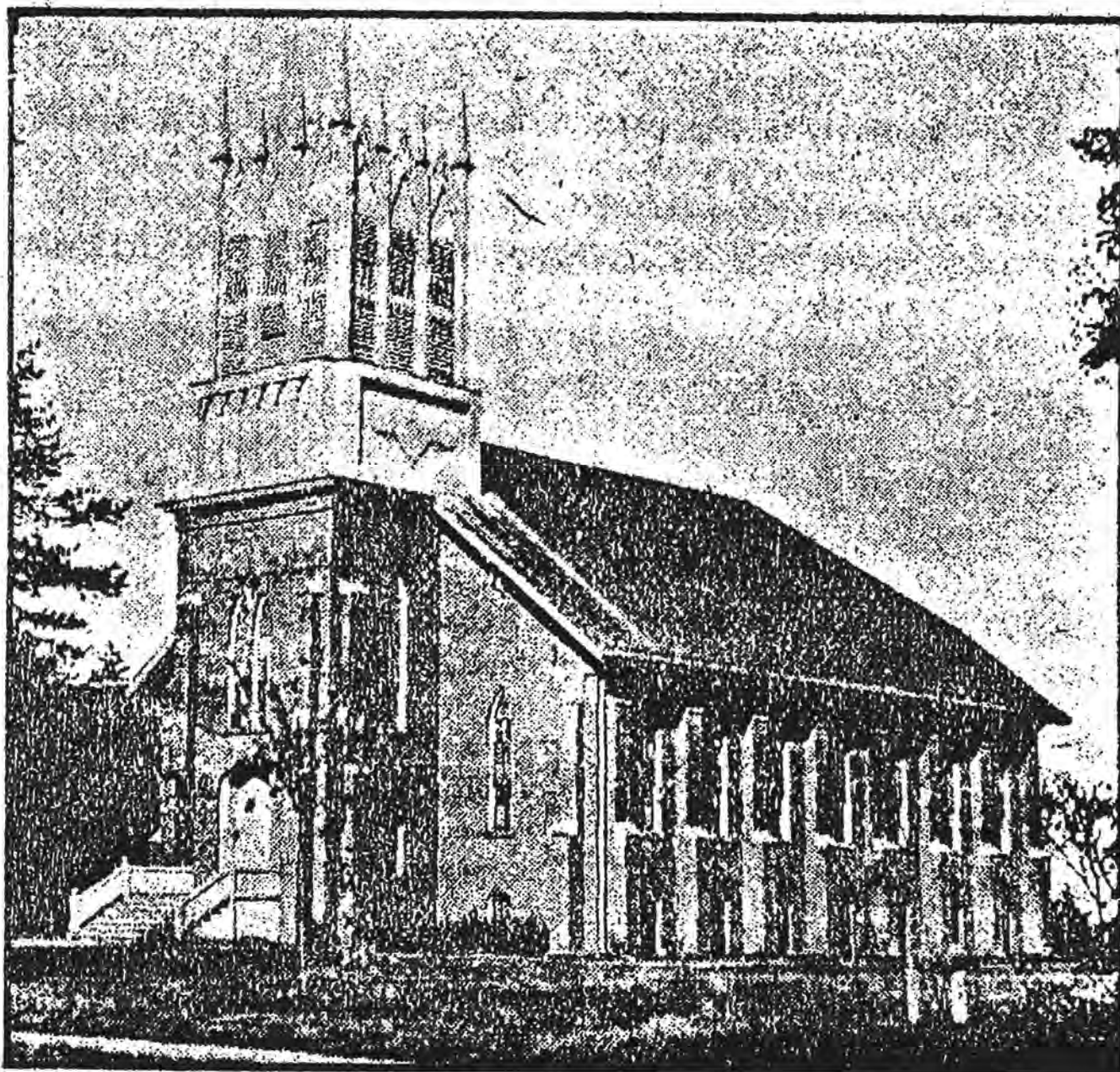


Figure 22. Tabor Congregational Church around 1938 (Congregational Church files).

Tabor Congregational Church
Name of Property

Fremont County, Iowa
County and State

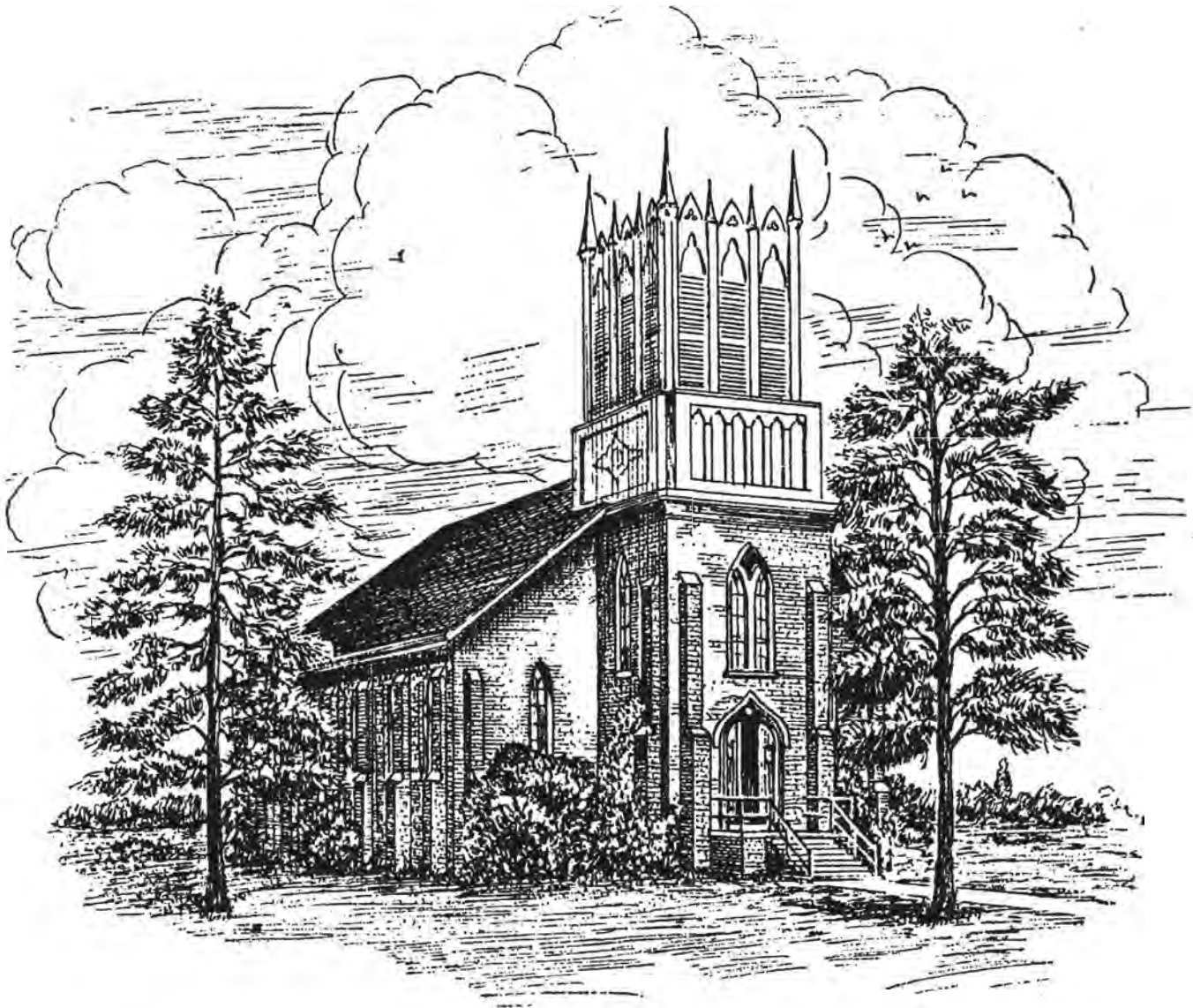


Figure 23. Tabor Congregational Church at rededication in 1948 (Congregational Church files).

Tabor Congregational Church
Name of Property

Fremont County, Iowa
County and State



Figure 24. Interior of Tabor Congregational Church around 1949 (Bound scrapbook, Congregational Church).

Tabor Congregational Church
Name of Property

Fremont County, Iowa
County and State



Tabor Congregational Church of Christ
(UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST)

RILEY W. SANSON, JR., *Pastor*

Figure 25. Tabor Congregational Church in late 1960s (Congregational Church files).

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Tabor Congregational Church
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Fremont

DATE RECEIVED: 8/26/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/21/11
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/06/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/11/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000720

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10.6.11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 1



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 2



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 3



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 4



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 5



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 6



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 7



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 8



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 9



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 10



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 11



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 12



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 13



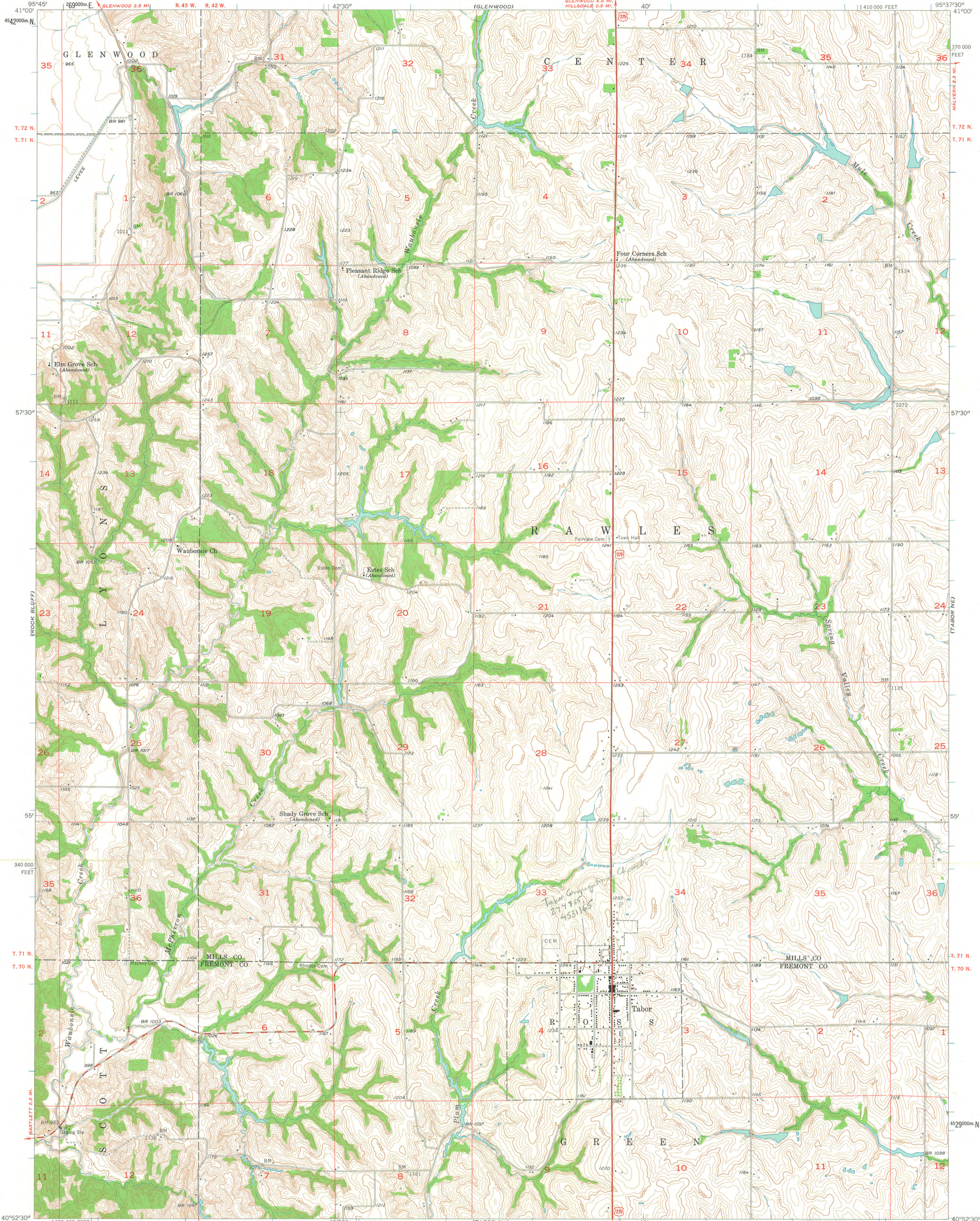
Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 14



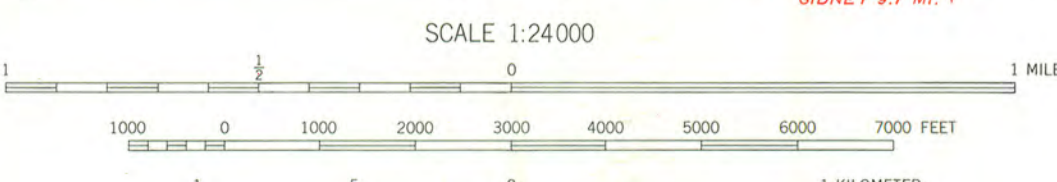
Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 15



Tabor Congregational Church, Fremont County, Iowa, Photo 16



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey as part of the Department of the Interior program for the development of the Missouri River Basin Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods
Aerial photographs taken 1952. Field check 1957
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Iowa coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue



ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route	

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER 25, COLORADO OR WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
AND BY THE IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

TABOR, IOWA
N4052.5-W9537.5/7.5
1957

OCT 08 2010

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

MARY TIFFANY COWNIE, DIRECTOR

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR

KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR



STATE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY of
IOWA

JEROME THOMPSON
ADMINISTRATOR



MATTHEW HARRIS
ADMINISTRATOR

600 E. LOCUST
DES MOINES, IOWA
50319

T. (515) 281-5111
F. (515) 282-0502

CULTURALAFFAIRS.ORG

August 25, 2011

Carol Shull, Chief
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye Street, N.W.-- 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

The following National Register nomination(s) are enclosed for your review and listed if acceptable.

- Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, 633 Walnut Street, Waterloo, Black Hawk County, Iowa
- Crozier, J.T. and Mollie (Penrose), Residence, 627 Ilion Avenue, Chariton, Lucas County, Iowa
- School Number 6, 1420 W. 16th Street, Davenport, Scott County, Iowa
- Historic Railroad District, From Main Street to the BN/SF RR Tracks between Washington and Marion, Ottumwa, Wapello County, Iowa

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Foster Hill".

Elizabeth Foster Hill, Manager
National Register and Tax Incentive Programs