

## Excerpts from "John Brown's Last Visit to Tabor" in *The Annals of Iowa, 1898*

In reading recently Hon. I.B. Richman's interesting historical sketch entitled "John Brown among the Quakers," I came across a passage in which he refers to John Brown's last visit to Tabor, Iowa. He says, ". . . Here, contrary to his expectations and contrary to the whole former attitude of the people, he was not welcomed, but, at a public meeting called for the purpose, severely reprimanded as a disturber of the peace and safety of the village."

The writer, having been a resident of Tabor at that time and present at the public meeting referred to, would offer the following correction which it seems to him ought to be made. The history of the visit is as follows: . . .

"Captain Brown with his company of eleven slaves arrived safely in Tabor with their escort in February 1859. They came the latter part of the week and remained several days . . . I was handed a paper to be read from the pulpit, saying - John Brown respectfully requested the church of Tabor to offer public thanksgiving to God on behalf of himself and his rescued captives" . . . The interest was so great in the community that at the time appointed the house was filled . . .

John Brown arrived promptly on time and had just begun to tell his story when a stranger came in . . . This man was Dr. Brown of St. Joseph, Missouri . . . It was understood that he was a slave-holder, or at least a strong pro-slavery man; . . . John Brown very quietly remarked that if [Dr. Brown] remained, he had nothing more to say, and soon withdrew from the meeting . . . The withdraw of Brown did not break up the meeting . . . and several hours were spent in the discussion of slavery question and what should be done for the slaves. In this Dr. Brown, from St. Joseph, took an active part . . . He had at his tongue's end . . . passages from scripture used by slave-holders to justify their position.

On the other hand, Brown's men were equally ready with quotation from scripture as well as in arguments . . . I do not remember that any formal action was taken by the meeting, but the sentiments expressed by the prominent citizens of Tabor . . . were simply in harmony with the position that they had always taken . . .

They did not approve the action of John Brown in taking slaves from their masters by force or in an illegal and disorderly way . . .

John Brown was welcomed and treated kindly in every way as his stay of nearly a week at that place abundantly testified. The position taken by the citizens of Tabor at that time, was, I think, not different from that taken by the great majority of anti-slavery citizens of the United States throughout the land. There is little doubt that John Brown was much disappointed that the citizens of Tabor did not fully commend his step . . .

We have referred to this stay at Tabor as his last visit, but his absolutely last appearance, which was only for a few hours, was about the first of September, 1859 . . . He came to the residence of Mr. Jonas Jones . . . When taking leave . . . he said in an impressive way, "Good-bye, Mr. Jones. I do not say where I am going, but you will hear from me. There has been enough said about leaving Kansas. I intend to make a bloody spot at another point . . ." "The outbreak at Harper's Ferry leaves no explanation necessary . . .