

Morse-Tabor Block [No. 117 & No. 115]

1874 – W.H.H. Morse & Dr. Philander Tabor

Late in 1874, **Morse & Barnett Dry Goods** re-opened in their new building. John Barnett withdrew from the partnership two years later. W.H.H. Morse soon found a new partner in W.H. Littell. **Morse & Littell** flourished from 1879 through 1893 when Littell, too, decided to strike out on his own. Morse kept his shop until 1900, having put in over 30 years in the dry goods trade. He sold to Daniel F. Logan, who, with **Logan Dry Goods**, kept the store's tradition alive for the next 28 years.

Dr. Philander Tabor and his son, Byron, also re-opened **Tabor & Son Drug Store** before the end of 1874. In 1878, Dr. Tabor sold his interest to his cousin, Judge Stephen J.W. Tabor, who had recently

returned to Independence after serving sixteen years as Auditor of the U.S. Treasury. The name of the drug store was changed to **Tabor & Tabor** to reflect the new ownership. Judge Tabor withdrew from the business in 1882 and Byron became sole owner. He was known for the many exotic animals that he owned and sometimes displayed at the store. In 1922, health issues forced him to retire.

The town's **Free Public Library**, of which it was so very proud, had been in the Wilcox Block before the Great Fire. The entire collection was destroyed, excluding those items checked out to patrons. The library board set to acquiring a new collection that was housed on the 2nd floor of Morse's Building. The **Public Library Reading Room** was located across the hall in the Tabor

building. The library remained here until March 1, 1895, when it was moved to the 2nd floor of the new Munson Building on 2nd Street NE, built by Perry Munson.

A variety of doctors and lawyers also rented office space on the 2nd floor of the block. **H.W. Holman**, a Civil War veteran known as “Cap,” also maintained a law office here from 1877 through 1892. In 1903, **Harry C. Chappell**, a lawyer and historian, opened his law office. Chappell is best known for co-authoring the 1914 *History of Buchanan County and Its People* with his wife Katharyn.

In 1898, the **Iowa Union Telephone Co.** (later known as Iowa Bell Telephone) set up shop above Morse's Dry Goods. Established in 1888, the company was the first to erect telephone poles in the town.

They operated their exchange from this location through 1909.

Judy Olsen – May 2021