

Louisa County Clubs, Meetings & Chapter News

COMMUNITY CLUB

February 19, 2026

Attendees: 29

Lamoyne Buser gave the invocation.

Motion to approve last month's meeting minutes by Doris Mougín, second Kathy Vance.

Motion to approve treasurer's report by Doris Mougín, second by Twyla Peters.

Paul Kissell gave a report from the school. Jeff Maeder will serve as interim superintendent.

State wrestling is happening now. One student is in the championships, three are in wrestle backs. After an audit of facilities, a committee is being formed to make a 10-year plan with Randy Phillips.

Colonial Manor is holding monthly socials. There's also an audiobook club every other Friday from 9:30 to 11 a.m.. Grief support at the assisted living March 11 from 1 to 2 p.m.

Lamoyne Buser reported there is a Saturday night soup supper fundraiser benefiting the eye bank.

No report from the Louisa County Fair Board.

Alex Mincer reported the volunteer fire department has been very busy with grass fires.

Tyson reported they are not currently hiring for production. They are hiring for maintenance and supervisors.

The Legion Auxiliary will hold a soup supper on Feb. 23 at the Legion for a free will donation. Proceeds benefit two local girls going to Girls State. A chicken and fish fry will be held March 4.

Chrissy Marthers of Columbus Discoveries handed out pamphlets summarizing the organization's accomplishments over the last year.

Cori Milan reported a number of local women recently participated in Annie's Project. Louisa Development Group submitted a grant application for paint for a bump outs designed in the Community Visioning process as a pilot project. We will find out if we were awarded the grant in April. Also looking into signage options now that 92 construction is wrapped up. There is

lead testing assistance available for folks who qualify.

Kenan Todd reported the city is transitioning back to their old logo. A city website will be launched in July. The new website will be capable of taking payment. A photo contest will be organized to supply the city with quality photos to use on the new site. The park board will be reinstated. The council is reviewing the code book to remove ordinances or begin enforcing them. There will be a spring clean up event before enforcement on junk and property maintenance laws.

Kathy Vance introduced presenters, Ashton and Claire, from Ranger Power to talk about the South Paw Solar Project. Following the presentation, there were questions from members.

Meeting adjourned at 12:56 p.m.

CHAPTER R.T.T.

The meeting of Chapter R TTT Society met at the Civic Center on Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 5:00 P.M. Susie Edwards was the hostess. President Susie Edwards called the meeting to order with six members present. The minutes from the previous meeting were read and approved as is.

Correspondence - Susie shared highlights from the most recent Tidings newsletter.

Committee Reports:
Camp - none
Ways & Means - none
Hospitality & Program - We will meet Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at City Hall beginning at 5:00 p.m. Faye Jay is the hostess.

Altruistic - none
Social - none
Old Business - State Convention is April 10-11, 2026 in Johnston. If anyone wants to attend, let Susie know ASAP as registration is due March 31, 2026.

New Business - Renea Jay let Susie know that we needed to make two minor changes to our bylaws. She made those changes and sent them back for approval.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Recording Secretary,
Shannon Salazar

LOUISA'S hiSTORY

A 20th Century History of Louisa County, Iowa

Pioneer, Soldier, Preacher & Mayor of Fredonia

by FRANK BEST

How many have heard of the 37th Iowa Infantry? They were organized in Muscatine and mustered into service December 15, 1862. They were affectionately known as Iowa's "Graybeard Regiment." Why such a nickname? Well, because all the men who joined the 37th were beyond service age. To be a member you had to be at least 45 years old. Although many were in their 50s, 60s, and 70s. One member, Curtis King, enlisted at 80 years of age. The 37th spent most of the war guarding supply trains and prisoners of war. This helped keep the more able-bodied men at the front. Also, the Graybeards became a living poster for those willing to step up and fight for their country. The message was used to help increase recruitment. Another fun fact is that many of the men in this regiment had sons and/or grandsons fighting in other regiments.

Now, I first learned of the Graybeards years ago from Verl Lekwa. It had to be one of our history outings that he told me the story. There were some men from his home county of Cedar that had been members of the Graybeards. Later I would find out one of them was a relative of mine!

Now, did you know we have a member of that famous regiment buried right here in our community?

Mr. John G. Coleman, who was at one time also the Mayor of Fredonia, was in fact a member of the Graybeards. John is buried in the Fredonia Cemetery. In 1862 when John enlisted into service, he listed his age as 60 years old. I can't even imagine enlisting into the service at the age of 60. John would serve 7 months in the service before he was discharged for disability while serving in St. Louis.

While in St. Louis John was serving by guarding Southern prisoners of war.

So, who was John G. Coleman?

He was a lawman, grocery merchant, and Methodist minister, who was originally one of the very early settlers of Muscatine. According to an article found in the Muscatine Journal in 1877, at that time he was the oldest original settler of Muscatine, still living. He would become one of Muscatine's first Justices of Peace in 1837, with an office in the Silverman & Companies Bank building. John was also one of Muscatine's earliest grocery merchants. John kept his grocery store in the area where Iowa Avenue meets River Drive, in Muscatine.

Another fun story from the Journal involved a fine barrel of whiskey that had arrived for John's store. Whiskey was a big-ticket item for grocers at that time. Well, John had just received a brand-new barrel of whiskey shipped in from St. Louis. Now John was not a drinking man, so that evening he called three of his friends to come down and sample the new drink. Two of his friends were doctors just starting their practices in Muscatine.

Also, a good friend was a young lawyer just starting out. Well, the young men all felt that the whiskey was good enough to sell in the store. Almost too good to sell in the store. The young men put their heads together and decided if they could sneak into the store and add water to the barrel, the whiskey would rise to the top and they could remove it leaving the less potent liquid. So, for several nights the men carried in two containers, one filled with water and an empty container in which to carry out the whiskey. Then one day, it was brought to John's attention that the whiskey wasn't very good. Since he was not a drinking man, he called his friends in for another taste test. Well, it was determined that the original drink was very good, but the remainder of the barrel was not up to par. They described it as tasting like "rainwater". The attorney offered his services to help John on the legal front to get his money back from the mercantile he had purchased it from in St. Louis. Years later the truth came out, and everyone had a good laugh about it.

John eventually left Muscatine for Johnson County. Later in the early 1850s he ended up setting up shop in Toolesboro, and by 1856 he had finally settled into Fredonia. It was here in Fredonia that John would settle down with his grocery store, preaching the good book on Sundays and making sure that law was enforced in the small town. It was also while living here in Fredonia that John, at age 60, would answer the call to serve his country. John G. Coleman was a true pioneer of the state of Iowa, a real defender of the Union, and someone who cared enough about his community to step up and serve them.



The Columbus Gazette and our friends at Colonial Manor are pleased to present stories featuring the rich history of Louisa County.

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LAST WEEK'S
Mystery Person??
Carl Small

Say "THANK YOU" to a Veteran!
Brick application forms are now available for the All-Veterans Memorial site in Grandview.
Contact - Larry Dessner (319)530-8355 for more information.