Over the past one-hundred and seventy years, numerous books and articles have been published concerning the High Plains Epidemic of 1837-38. The earliest accounts, prepared by historians closest to the event, appear to have been the most critical of the parties involved. However, with the arrival of the twentieth century came a kinder and gentler historian. With this shift arose accounts that dismissed any responsibility or accountability for the tragedy. The men involved were simply incapable of understanding the invisible forces of nature, possessed Neolithic powers of reasoning and thought, and were not yet equipped with an understanding of vaccination and quarantine. They were as one authority phrased it, “hapless actors.”

Inculpatory Evidence reexamines the High Plains Epidemic of 1837-38 with a detailed analysis of the smallpox outbreak. It broadens the search for answers to why and how the tragedy occurred. Crucial to solving why it occurred, the author attempts to decipher the true state of human knowledge of smallpox in 1837. The reader will explore the epidemiology of smallpox and examine events of the period that affected the decision-making process onboard the St. Peters as it moved up the Missouri River with smallpox onboard.

Mark Timbrook’s other books include: The Last Hurrah: A Brief History of the Mouse River Valley, Bone Town, Little Chicago, and the Magic City (Minot, Niess Impressions, 2008) and Minot State University (Arcadia Publishing, 2009).