
THE KANSAS COLORED LITERARY AND BUSINESS ACADEMY

A White Effort at African American Education in Late-Nineteenth-Century Kansas

by Philip R. Beard

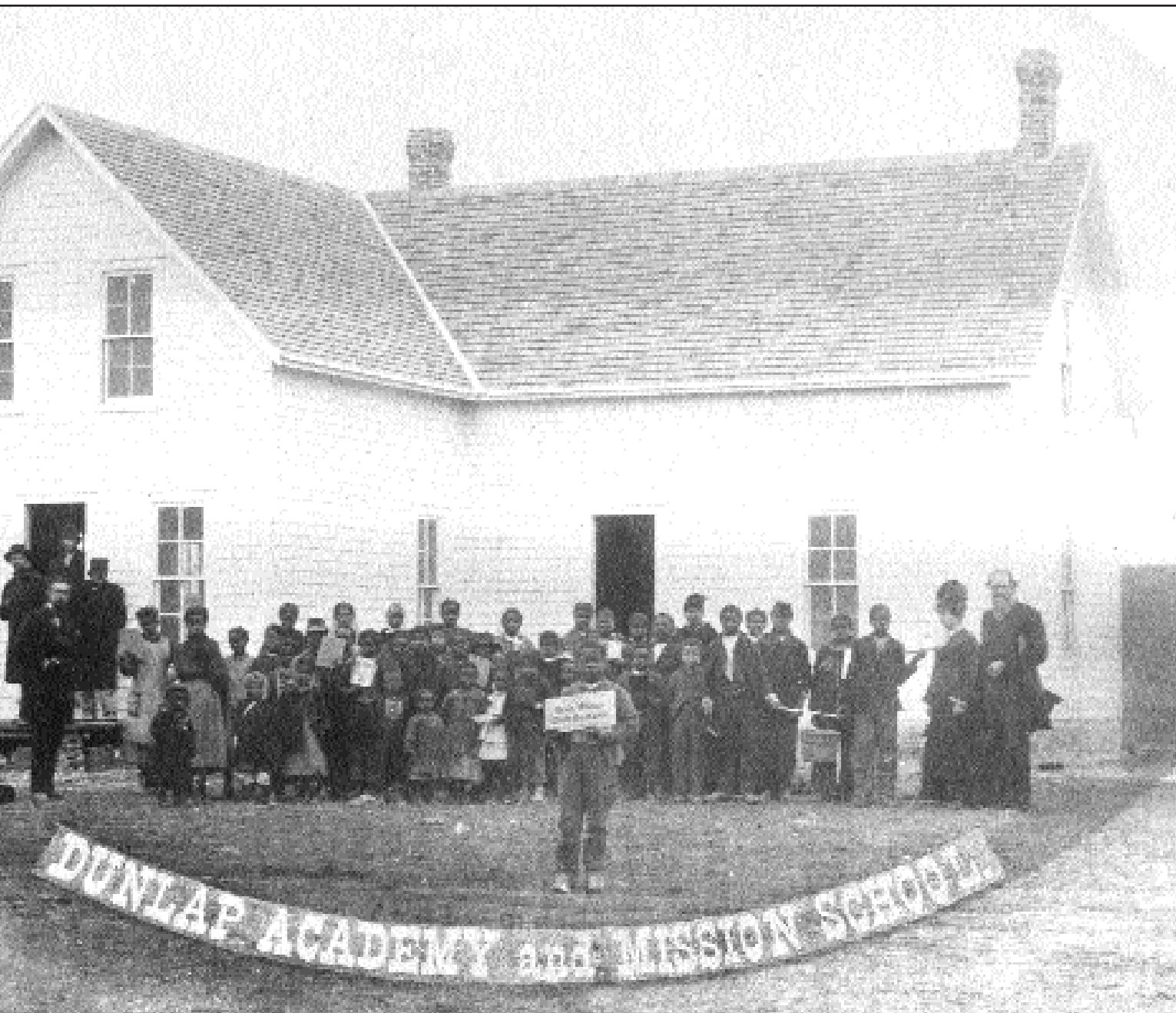
Efforts to provide education for formerly enslaved African Americans burgeoned during and after the Civil War. Most of these efforts have received significant attention, but a nearly forgotten project was undertaken in the 1880s in the tiny community of Dunlap, Kansas. In response to the exoduster movement of 1879, a small band of workers sought to make the town “an educational center for the colored people of Kansas.” Their missionary labors for a small, white, Protestant denomination, the Associate Presbyterian Church, led to the establishment of the Kansas Colored Literary and Business Academy. However, a complex combination of factors, including environmental and socioeconomic conditions as well as struggles within the church itself, led to the school’s closure after only a decade of service. This article describes the origin, progress, and ultimate failure of the school, with a focus on the church’s central role in these events.¹

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1. *Emporia Daily Bulletin*, July 15, 1881; Joseph V. Hickey, “‘Pap’ Singleton’s Dunlap Colony: Relief Agencies and the Failure of a Black Settlement in Eastern Kansas,” *Great Plains Journal* 11 (Winter 1991): 23–36.





The Dunlap Academy, as the school will be called here, was by no means the first or the most extensive educational effort for former slaves. The earliest educational activities actually were initiated by slaves themselves, even before the Civil War.² The earliest predominantly white effort

2. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 6–7; see also

was the Port Royal Experiment on the Sea Islands of South Carolina (free African Americans from the North also par-

Ronald E. Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862–1875* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 4; L. H. Whiteaker, "Adult Education Within the Slave Community," in *Education of the African American Adult: An Historical Overview*, ed. Harvey G. Neufeldt and Leo McGee (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1990), 8.

anticipated). Several organizations, including the American Missionary Association, the Boston Educational Commission, and other Northern freedmen's aid societies, began sending teachers to the Sea Islands in 1861. By 1865 a diverse group of other organizations, including both white and black Northern churches, the Union Army, the African Civilization Society, and the federal Freedmen's Bureau, had joined in the task of educating four million formerly enslaved persons.³

In Kansas numerous educational efforts for African Americans preceded the founding of the Dunlap Academy. In 1857 the Reverend Eben Blachly began providing education in his home at Quindaro Bend. In 1865 Blachly incorporated Freedman University, which was later renamed Western University. Other early Kansas efforts included night schools for adults in Lawrence in 1861 and several schools organized by the Freedmen's Bureau by 1865.⁴

Educational progress waned by the early 1870s but received renewed impetus in Kansas in the wake of the exoduster movement. In February 1880 the Freedmen's Educational Society was established, with activities conducted primarily in Lawrence and Leavenworth. Early in 1881 the Agricultural and Industrial Institute was founded in Cherokee County in southeastern Kansas. Both, however, were short-lived.⁵

3. Maxine D. Jones, "'They are My People': Black American Missionary Association Teachers in North Carolina During the Civil War and Reconstruction," *Negro Educational Review* 36 (April 1985): 78–89; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 450–501; Bobby L. Lovett, "Black Adult Education During the Civil War, 1861–1865," in Neufeldt and McGee, *Education of the African American Adult*, 31–38; Robert C. Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861–1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1964).

4. Western University, which actually provided a high school level education, survived until 1943, when it was consolidated with the Kansas Vocational Institute in Topeka. See Thaddeus T. Smith, "Western University: A Ghost College in Kansas" (master's thesis, Kansas State College of Pittsburg, Pittsburg, Kans., July 1966), 86–87; see also Orrin McKinley Murray, *The Rise and Fall of Western University* (Kansas City: 1960), 3; Lovett, "Black Adult Education During the Civil War, 1861–1865," 35; Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction*, 11–12.

5. Thomas C. Cox, *Blacks in Topeka, Kansas, 1865–1915: A Social History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 69; C. M. Cooper, "History of the Agricultural and Industrial Institute (Nigger Hill) Crawford Township, Cherokee County, Kansas" (undated manuscript), Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society, 18; Ann Fletcher, "The Agricultural & Industrial Institute for the Colored Race, Cherokee County, Kansas," *Papers in History* 13 (Spring 1982): 11.

Dunlap seemed an unlikely place for an educational center. It was situated far from any major travel routes, midway between Council Grove and Emporia near the eastern border of Morris County. In its heyday the town was a major cattle shipping point on the Missouri, Kansas and Texas (the "Katy") Railroad. At its largest, it boasted a population of no more than one thousand residents. In 1878 Benjamin "Pap" Singleton and his associates settled a group of black migrants from Tennessee on the northern edge of Dunlap, incorporating the Singleton Colony in June 1879. That same year the Kansas Freedmen's Relief Association (KFRA) relocated about eight hundred exodusters from Topeka to Dunlap. The KFRA had been hastily organized in the spring of 1879 by Governor John P. St. John and other leading citizens in response to the sudden influx of exodusters. As these mostly destitute immigrants continued to pour into Topeka, KFRA leaders took steps to move them to other locations.⁶

About the same time, another immigration was transpiring. As part of the national westward expansion after the Civil War, members of the Associate Presbyterian Church were entering Kansas. Some church members had been in the territory at least since 1857, reportedly moving there to support the antislavery effort. Since 1858 the church had consisted of about fifteen hundred members, including eleven ministers, who had refused to join the union that formed the United Presbyterian Church of North America. The Associate Presbyterian Church had originated in 1733 in Scotland, amid bitter religious and political strife. At that time the Scottish government exercised control of one national church through the practice of patronage, which gave large landowners the right to appoint pastors to congregations. When one pastor spoke out against this practice, he was dismissed from his position. He and several other pastors then withdrew from the church. Henceforth they were nicknamed "Seceders." Like many other Europeans, members of this denomination

6. Daniel C. Fitzgerald, *Faded Dreams: More Ghost Towns of Kansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 77–81; Corporation Charters, vol. 9, 617–18, Records of the Secretary of State's Office, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society; Cox, *Blacks in Topeka*, 57–58. For detailed accounts of the exoduster movement, see Robert G. Athearn, *In Search of Canaan: Black Migration to Kansas, 1879–1880* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978); Jim Haskins, *The Geography of Hope: Black Exodus from the South after Reconstruction* (Brookfield, Conn.: Twenty-First Century Books, 1999); Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction*, rev. ed. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986).

eventually came to America seeking freedom to practice their religious beliefs.⁷

Historically, the Seceders strongly opposed slavery. In 1800 the majority of the church's leaders declared slaveholding to be "immoral, evil, and unjustifiable." In 1811 the church directed members who owned slaves to set them free. Because some Southern members ignored this directive, the church in 1831 took the further step of excluding slaveholders from membership. Some church members protested this decision, and in 1832 two ministers, one from Virginia and one from South Carolina, withdrew from the denomination. In 1840 the church softened its stance, addressing a letter to the Presbytery of the Carolinas urging mere "moral emancipation." This accommodation, however, did not ease feelings. The unnamed person who delivered the letter to the Presbytery was reportedly "visited with lynch law" by a mob in Chester County, South Carolina.⁸

As the nation moved inexorably toward war, the church adopted stronger antislavery statements. In 1856 the Synod adopted a letter condemning slavery, the Fugi-

7. Basil G. McBee and Reid W. Stewart, *History of the Associate Presbyterian Church of North America* (Apollo, Pa.: Closson Press, 1983), 12, 37, 39; Wallace N. Jamison, *The United Presbyterian Story: A Centennial Study, 1858–1958* (Pittsburgh: Geneva Press, 1958), 25. The Associate Presbyterian Church no longer exists. Its separate identity ended in 1969 when it united with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. At that time only four widely separated congregations still survived, in Minneola, Kansas; Rimersburg and Four Mile, Pennsylvania; and Washington, Iowa. In a personal conversation with the author, a Minneola church member commented that Associate Presbyterians had moved to Kansas to help make it a free state.

8. Their views would be comparable to what Jacqueline Jones described as the "ideology of evangelical abolitionism," according to which slavery is a sin against God and man because it denies persons the ability to act as fully human moral agents. Deprived of this ability, the slaves descended into a state of "moral degradation." See Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865–1873* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 14; McBee and Stewart, *History of the Associate Presbyterian Church of North America*, 25, 28.

tive Slave Law, the attack on Senator Charles Sumner, and the "outrages in Kansas." After the church union of 1858, the continuing Associate Presbyterian Church maintained strong opposition to slavery.⁹

The first congregation of the continuing Associate Presbyterian Church to be established in Kansas after 1858



Due to the sudden influx of exodusters into Kansas in 1879, depicted here in temporary quarters at Topeka's Floral Hall, the KFRA leaders took steps to move the immigrants to other locations in the state.

was the Bethel congregation, organized in 1867 near Richmond in Franklin County. In early 1880 the pastor, the Reverend Robert A. Boyd, visited two small groups of Associate Presbyterians who had settled in north-central Kansas. Accompanied by Andrew Atchison, a member of the congregation, Boyd also visited a colony of about 125 exodusters who had been settled in Wabaunsee County. Atchison was an 1877 graduate of the state university in Lawrence. Now teaching school near Richmond, he was to be centrally involved in the establishment and development of the Dunlap Academy.¹⁰

9. *Ibid.*, 30.

10. *Associate Presbyterian* (September 1881): 228. Regarding Atchison, see *Kansas Collegiate* (Lawrence), November 22, 1877; "Personal," *Kansas Review* (June 10, 1879): 3; *ibid.* (December 1879): 77; *ibid.* (June 1880): 209; *ibid.* (October 1880): 48; *ibid.* (June 1881): 262; *ibid.* (November 1881): 67; *Hierophantes for 1873–4* 1 (Lawrence: University of Kansas), 14. Hickey, "Pap' Singleton's Dunlap Colony," 27, erroneously identified Atchison (and Maggie Watson, another teacher in the Dunlap Academy) as black. In addition to Atchison's university picture, a May 1, 1991, letter from Atchison's grand-niece, Fern Milligan, confirms that he was white.

Writing about their trip, Boyd described a scene that may have sparked the idea of establishing a school for the black settlers: "We arrived at the colony on Saturday; going to the main building in the evening, we found many of them engaged in prayer meeting, which was conducted to the best of their ability; some were amusing themselves

Missionary Aid": "Let no one say to these hungry and destitute souls, 'Be ye warmed and filled,' while he contributes nothing for their relief." When the Synod met the last week of May, it directed the treasurer of the board of the Freedmen's Fund to use all available money for "the prosecution of mission work among the freedmen in the West." Because the total amount available was only \$276.24, the board recommended that the Synod urge congregations to take up collections to support the new mission work in Kansas.¹²

HO!
—702—

Dunlap Colony.

—
Morris County, Kansas.
—

The Most Prosperous Colony in the State.

—
75,000 Acres
Of Government Land yet remains to be settled.

—

THE Kansas Freedmen's Relief Association has discontinued its work as a chartered organization. None need expect help or direction from such sources any longer. The tide of immigration of colored people, however, still continues. I cannot stand idly by when I see so much need of intelligent direction to my people. It is a great mistake for the leaders of bodies of our people from the South who wish to settle on

Encouraging black settlers to make Dunlap their home, this column touts the attributes of the colony, including an "Industrial School" established by "Rev. Mr. Snodgrass."

with trifles, while others were manifesting a deep interest in the exercises. A few of them only are able to read, and these mostly of the younger class."¹¹

The church responded quickly to Boyd's report. In May 1880 the editor of the *Associate Presbyterian*, the church's monthly magazine, issued "A Special Call for

The Synod appointed the Reverend John M. Snodgrass to serve as a missionary in Wabaunsee County "for twenty Sabbaths" (about five months) because he already had been working among African American families in Monroe County, Iowa. Snodgrass left for Kansas on Thursday, June 24, 1880, and headed for Topeka. There he contacted members of the KFRA, who encouraged him to go to Dunlap instead. Shortly after arriving, Snodgrass wrote a letter explaining that the KFRA "had already settled over one hundred families in the town, and within five miles of it, and would settle more at this point. It would hence become a center of influence for other colonies planted in different localities around it." Snodgrass also reported that John M. Watson, a KFRA member, had encouraged him to "go to work here quietly and peaceably, mind no one who may oppose, quietly teach the gospel, and instil [sic] your principles. This, with a good school, and in three years you will have a good self-sustaining missionary point, which will have a good influence over the colored people for fifty miles around this town."¹³

In Dunlap, Snodgrass found lodging with exodusters Peter and Martha Howard.¹⁴ He commenced his mission-

12. Ibid. (May 1880): 97; *ibid.* (July 1880): 166, 186. The Freedmen's fund had been established in 1872, when five hundred dollars from the estate of John Walker was given to the Synod: "the proceeds [interest] are to be used by the direction of Synod for the benefit of the Freedmen." *See Associate Presbyterian* (July 1873): 59.

13. Ibid. (July 1880): 186; *ibid.* (November 1880): 291; *ibid.* (August 1880): 218, 220–21. Watson was a Quaker whom Snodgrass identified as "the leading agent of Mrs. Comstock." Elizabeth Comstock was a Quaker who came to Kansas specifically to assist the exodusters. *See* Caroline Hare, *Life and Letters of Elizabeth L. Comstock* (Philadelphia: J.C. Winston, 1895). In fact, Comstock, Watson, and Laura Haviland (also a Quaker) soon assumed the bulk of the work of the KFRA. *See* Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction*, 230–31.

14. *Associate Presbyterian* (November 1880): 296. In a letter to Elizabeth Comstock dated March 12, 1880, Hampton Smith identified Howard as one of the many black refugees who had come to Dunlap. *See* Horatio

11. *Associate Presbyterian* (March 1880): 37–38.

ary efforts without delay and also visited with board members of the local school district (No. 40). He reported that the school board had decided to establish racially separate schools, and so he offered to provide a teacher for the black students. The *Council Grove Republican* also noted this decision, adding that the voters agreed to provide “a portion of the school funds” to pay the teacher. Snodgrass wrote to Mattie Anderson, a single woman who was a member of the Pleasant Divide, Iowa, Associate Presbyterian congregation. Anderson agreed to teach and arrived a week or so later. Because they did not want to wait until the public school opened in the fall, they immediately began a mission school, which soon had “forty-five scholars on the roll, five of whom are adults.” Nineteen other persons, including some mothers, could not attend, probably because they had to work to provide for their families.¹⁵

In allowing the establishment of separate schools, the Dunlap school board was in violation of Kansas law. In 1876 the state legislature had passed a statute outlawing racial distinctions in public schools. Then, in 1879 the legislature backed off this position by granting first-class cities (those with more than fifteen thousand population) authority to segregate their elementary schools. Dunlap, with a population of fewer than one thousand, was a third-class city and should have provided integrated primary schools.¹⁶

Perhaps the school board felt that a “mission” school was exempt from the laws governing the public schools. Regardless, when the white primary public school in District 40 opened on October 11, 1880, the church’s mission school for black students continued to operate separately. The terms for both schools lasted four months (exactly eighty days) through February 8, 1881. Mattie Anderson and the teacher of the white students, William C. Townsend, each taught exactly the same number of pupils (fifty-seven), although Anderson received lower wages than Townsend. At the end of the term, Anderson left Dun-

N. Rust, “Scrapbook Relating to the Negro Exodus from the South to Kansas” (1880), 82, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society; see also U.S. Census, 1880, Kansas, Morris County, Dunlap, 8. Snodgrass described Howard as a Baptist minister, but Smith’s letter and the 1880 census identified him only as a “laborer.”

15. *Council Grove Republican*, August 21, 1880; *Associate Presbyterian* (November 1880): 294–95.

16. Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America’s Struggle for Equality* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 370–71; James C. Carper, “The Popular Ideology of Segregated Schooling: Attitudes Toward the Education of Blacks in Kansas, 1854–1900,” *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 1 (Winter 1978): 262–63.

lap and Maggie Watson, another single Associate Presbyterian woman, took her place.¹⁷

In light of this initial success, Snodgrass urged the church to continue supporting the Dunlap work. At its May 1881 meeting, the Synod concurred and unanimously appointed Snodgrass as missionary; it also approved the establishment of a school.¹⁸ Snodgrass soon followed this decision by stating a primary—and often repeated—motive for the undertaking:

In consideration of the fact that American slavery most unjustly deprived these people of a Christian education, we as a people and nation are most solemnly bound as far as we can to make repairs for this their dreadful loss. The good of the whole nation requires this, and especially the State of Kansas. . . . We owe it to them [the State], ourselves, and especially to the Freedmen that we carry on this work of Christian education and missionary work at Dunlap, unless this open door is hereafter closed.¹⁹

Snodgrass’s concluding sentence distinguished two parts of the mission project: “Christian education” referred to the school that had been approved, while “missionary work” designated Snodgrass’s own assignment to present the Christian gospel to the exodusters. As will be seen, Snodgrass initially viewed these two tasks as mutually supportive and complementary, but as the work progressed he changed his mind, eventually leading to disagreements that contributed to the failure of both tasks.

Even before the Synod’s formal decision to establish a school, Snodgrass had announced plans to construct a school building on a corner lot in Dunlap using the abundant limestone from the nearby quarry.²⁰ Some months

17. *Records of the Morris County Superintendent of Public Instruction Annual Report and Census of School Districts, 1881–1966*, microfilm AR5766, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society; *Associate Presbyterian* (February 1881): 20; *ibid.* (September 1881): 227.

18. *Associate Presbyterian* (July 1881): 190–91.

19. *Ibid.* (June 1881): 131; see also *ibid.* (December 1881): 32; *ibid.* (October 1885): 164; *ibid.* (March 15, 1887): 69. The idea that the nation owed a debt to the former slaves was frequently expressed by abolitionists and missionaries. See James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 154; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 217.

20. *Associate Presbyterian* (November 1880): 297–99. The “corner lot” actually was two lots, 57 and 59, in Block 38 of Dunlap. See deed record, book P, 99, April 19, 1881 (filed August 20, 1881), Morris County Register of Deeds, Council Grove, Kans. According to a local newspaper, two local businessmen, “Messrs. Pickering and Summers,” had opened a quarry whose stone was “unsurpassed for excellency for cut work.” See *Dunlap Chief*, March 3, 1882; see also *Associate Presbyterian* (September 1881): 227.

later two area newspapers reported that the church still planned to build a two-story stone schoolhouse, but that a temporary wooden frame building would be put up first “to be used as a boarding hall after the permanent building is ready for occupancy.” An L-shaped, two-story frame schoolhouse with two rooms on each floor was completed by early 1882. However, a stone schoolhouse never was built, probably because of financial constraints.²¹

Snodgrass also invited Andrew Atchison to help organize a high school for the black settlers. In addition to teaching school since graduating from the state university, Atchison had become a student of theology with the intention of becoming a minister in the Associate Presbyterian Church. But when Snodgrass solicited his assistance, Atchison immediately headed for Dunlap.²² When he arrived, he found Snodgrass’s wife, Catharine, heavily involved in the mission work. She was teaching adult classes in the evening, had assisted with the primary school during the past session, and had helped with the refugee relief work during the past severe winter. She also had begun teaching in a new school for black students, organized as District 61.²³ This new district comprised nine sections of land southwest of Dunlap in the center of Valley Township. Many exodusters had settled in this area, and three of them became the first officers of the new school district: Edmund H. Smith was director, John J. Johnson was clerk, and Boston Starkey was treasurer.²⁴ Atchison began teaching in District 61, allowing Mrs. Snodgrass to return to her numerous duties in Dunlap.

21. *Emporia Daily Bulletin*, July 15, 1881; *Morris County Times* (Council Grove), July 22, 1881; *Associate Presbyterian* (June 1882): 144; *Americus Weekly Herald*, November 17, 1881; *Dunlap Chief*, March 3, 1882. In 1896 the property was purchased by Henry Curtis. In 1898 Curtis sold it to a Dunlap businessman, Alfred Parrish, who moved the school building to Commercial Street in Dunlap and turned it into a family home. Many years later a fire destroyed the building. See warranty deeds, book 16, 86, and book 15, 615, Morris County Register of Deeds; Hickey, “‘Pap’ Singleton’s Dunlap Colony,” 31.

22. *Associate Presbyterian* (September 1881): 245; *ibid.* (December 1881): 332; *ibid.* (July 1882): 196.

23. Letter dated July 29, 1881, published in *Associate Presbyterian* (September 1881): 245. The Snodgrass family had moved to Dunlap in the fall of 1880 and had taken out a mortgage on forty acres of land near Dunlap in February 1881. See *Associate Presbyterian* (December 1880): 325; deed record, book E, 484, Morris County Register of Deeds.

24. Morris County originally had been divided into sixty school districts. See *Council Grove Republican*, February 7, 1880. See *Records of the Morris County Superintendent of Public Instruction Annual Report and Census of School Districts, 1881–1966*, for a description of the boundaries of District 61. Smith identified “Boston Strohie” and “Edwin Smith” as refugees (no “J. J. Johnson” was listed), writing that all the refugees had located about five miles southwest of Dunlap and “near each other.” See Horatio N. Rust, “Scrapbook,” 82. According to land records, in 1881

After the end of the 1881 school term, Atchison wrote a letter to Governor St. John requesting his opinion about “a plan devised for the assistance of the Colored people who wish to obtain permanent homes in this locality.” Atchison described the founding of the Freedmen’s Aid Association of Dunlap by some “citizens of the village.” In addition to Atchison, who served as secretary, the association’s officers were Snodgrass, president; the Reverend M. Bell, vice-president; Edwin D. Bulen, treasurer; and Columbus M. Johnson, soliciting agent (the person responsible for seeking financial support). Bell was probably Marion Bell, a black pastor of the African Methodist Church on the north side of Dunlap. Bulen was an up-and-coming businessman who owned a general store and served as postmaster. Johnson was one of “Pap” Singleton’s associates who had helped coordinate the immigration of black settlers to Kansas. Both Bulen and Johnson later became board members of a new bank in Dunlap.²⁵

After noting the establishment of the association, Atchison outlined its six purposes:

- (1) To secure a report of the condition of the Refugee settlers in this locality from time to time.
- (2) To assist those who would otherwise require the care of the County.
- (3) To assist those who may have difficulty in securing land claims.
- (4) To purchase a tract of land near the village of Dunlap, which shall be sold to Refugee purchasers in small lots, or brought under cultivation to furnish labor for a short time to those who may have just arrived from the South.

“Boston Starkey,” “Edmond H. Smith,” and “John J. Johnson” each purchased quarter-sections of land within the boundaries of District 61. See Kansas Tract Books, roll 15, vol. 47, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

25. Andrew Atchison to John P. St. John, August 22, 1881, Correspondence Received, folder 15, box 13, John P. St. John Administration, Records of the Governor’s Office, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society, hereafter cited as Governor’s Records. On Reverend Bell, see *Council Grove Republican*, February 3, 1882, April 20, 1883; see also Andrew Atchison, “Important Announcement! The Freedmen’s Aid Association of Dunlap, Kansas,” in “Freedmen’s Aid Assn. Pamphlets, Dunlap, Kansas,” Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society. On Bulen, see *Dunlap Chief*, March 3, 1882. On Johnson, see Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction*, 111. The *Council Grove Republican*, June 27, 1884, lists Bulen and Johnson as members of the board of directors of the new Dunlap Bank. The 1885 census lists Bulen as a banker. See Kansas State Census, 1885, Morris County, Dunlap.

- (5) To encourage and aid the Board of Missions of the A. P. Church in establishing a literary and business academy at this place for the benefit of the Colored people of the state.
- (6) To solicit contributions for the accomplishment of these ends.²⁶

The proposed literary and business academy would have “merely nominal tuition, with the course of instruction, for the present, reaching to the Freshman Class of the State University, to be thoroughly equipped with teachers and apparatus, and adapted in every way as closely as possible to the wants of the Colored youth of the West.”²⁷ In his response, St. John questioned the wisdom of maintaining racially separate schools, but he deferred to the judgment of those in Dunlap. Atchison and his fellow workers chose to proceed with their plans, for on September 29, 1881, they filed the corporation charter of the Freedmen’s Aid Association of Dunlap, Kansas.²⁸

As Atchison’s list of the association’s purposes indicates, the founders not only intended to provide a school, they also planned to help the refugees buy land. In so doing, they were not the first group to support black land ownership. During its brief existence, the KFRA had assisted refugees in purchasing from 40 to 160 acres. Earlier attempts to provide former slaves with land, either free or at minimal rates, had been undertaken as part of the Port Royal Experiment. But for various reasons, including opposition by some abolitionists who believed that making land too easy to obtain was excessive charity that would undermine the former slaves’ personal initiative, only a minority of the former slaves in the Sea Islands managed to acquire and keep property.²⁹

26. Andrew Atchison to John P. St. John, August 22, 1881, Governor’s Records.

27. Ibid. For a description of the “academy” in nineteenth-century America, see Frederick M. Binder, *The Age of the Common School, 1830–1865* (New York: Wiley, 1974); TheodoreSizer, ed., *The Age of the Academies* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964).

28. John P. St. John to Andrew Atchison, September 3, 1881, box 12, Governor’s Records. Carper notes that “a significant minority of Kansans,” including the Kansas State Teachers Association as early as 1866, favored integrated schools. See “The Popular Ideology of Segregated Schooling,” 258–59. *Corporation Charters*, vol. 13, 76–77.

29. *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 19, 1881; McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality*, 167; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 211, 214–15, 218, 346–77. For more recent comments on the attitude of African Americans toward education and land, see Jack E. White, “Enough About Slavery,” *Time* (November 2, 1998): 56; Anne P. W. Hawkins, “Hoeing Their Own Roe: Black Agriculture and the Agrarian Ideal in Kansas, 1880–1920,” *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 22 (Autumn 1999): 202.

The Dunlap group’s plan was unusual in that it linked the purchase of land to the support of the school.³⁰ The association soon publicized this project and solicited financial assistance through three circulars distributed in late 1881 and early 1882. In the first circular, Atchison explained that the association was requesting contributions to purchase land near Dunlap “to be sold to the Refugees on easy terms and their payments to be added to the school fund.” In the third circular he elaborated: “The land will be sold to the refugees on easy terms, their payments to form part of an endowment fund for the Literary and Business Academy and also to help those of the colonists unable to help themselves.” To encourage liberal contributions, he reiterated the components of the educational center taking shape in early 1882: “We have also organized in the colony two primary schools of 60 pupils each, a school for adults, a sewing school, and also a circulating library and reading room.”³¹

The second circular included a testimonial vouching for Atchison’s trustworthiness, signed by James Marvin, chancellor of the state university; Francis H. Snow, a professor of natural history at the university; Delos Walker, a physician from Greeley, Anderson County, Kansas, located some fifteen miles southeast of Atchison’s hometown of Richmond; and Robert Boyd, his pastor. The third circular repeated this testimonial and added a statement of support signed by twelve leading Dunlap citizens, including Townsend, now identified as principal of the white school.³² The circulars also included the association’s statement of purpose.

30. At one point the Port Royal Experiment included a plan to provide education through income from leasing “school farms,” but most efforts involved attempts, supported by the missionaries, to give free land to the freed slaves. Others favored auctioning land or selling it for the low rate of \$1.25 per acre, but the income was not designated for education. See Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 158, 211, 218, 221, 223, 280.

31. The circulars are not dated, but internal evidence makes it clear that they were written after the association was incorporated on September 29, 1881, and before February 1, 1882. See Andrew Atchison, “Important Announcement! The Freedmen’s Aid Association of Dunlap, Kansas,” in “Freedmen’s Aid Assn. Pamphlets, Dunlap, Kansas”; Atchison, “Quarterly Report of the Freedmen’s Aid Association of Dunlap, Kansas,” in *ibid.*; Atchison, “Freedmen’s Aid Association of Dunlap, Kansas,” in *ibid.*

32. Professor Snow sponsored the university’s Natural History Society, of which Atchison was a cofounder in 1873 and president during the spring 1875 term. See *The Kansas Kikkabe* (Lawrence, Kans.: Lawrence Journal Steam Printing Establishment, 1882), 45; *Observer of Nature* (March 4, 1875), 1. The other Dunlap signers and their occupations were: C. E. Kidd, justice of the peace and chairman of the school board; George Brown, lumberman; Bernard and Pruitt, hardware merchants; N. Amsbaugh, merchant; Joseph Dunlap, farmer; M. H. Wright, blacksmith; S. M. Scott, contractor and builder; G. A. Pruitt, physician; A. Showers, physician and druggist; J. W. Liliard, physician; and George H. Loy, hardware merchant.

In addition to these circulars, the association prepared a flyer advertising the opening of the Kansas Colored Literary and Business Academy on Monday, December 5, 1881. The pamphlet outlined terms of admission and courses of instruction, presented a school calendar, and noted inducements to attend the academy. Terms of admission involved passing “a creditable examination in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic to Percentage, Elements of Language, and Elements of Geography.” A three-year literary and normal course was intended to prepare students to attend the state university in Lawrence, and a two-year business course would train graduates for various occupations, such as “commercial clerkships.” A primary inducement to attend the academy was that it was free, with only a “contingent fee of Two Dollars a term.” The flyer also promised that the academy staff would help graduates obtain jobs as teachers or clerks, and would “live *for* and *with* our students.” In addition, a “large collection of Fossils, Minerals, and Insects” was available for the students to study. Other inducements included “vocal culture, both for oratory and music,” and a new building.³³

The flyer also described a previously unmentioned purpose: “Espesial attention will be paid to Colored Preachers who may desire primary instruction, or to acquaint themselves with Church History or the Bible in the original [Hebrew and Greek languages].” That is, the academy founders not only intended to provide educational opportunities for black children, high school youth, and adults in general, but they also desired to offer specific instruction to the African American preachers in Dunlap. By early 1882 there was indeed a broad vision for “an educational center for the colored people of Kansas.”³⁴

Despite this initial progress, the Dunlap workers also faced opposition. In addition to temporary resistance to the mission by some of Dunlap’s white residents, some of the black religious leaders among the settlers objected to the white schoolteacher. According

33. Andrew Atchison, *Kansas Colored Literary and Business Academy* (Council Grove, Kans.: Republican Print, n.d.), in “Freedmen’s Educational Society Pamphlets,” Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society. The collection of fossils, minerals, and insects may have been assembled by Atchison. While a university student, he had collected five hundred bugs and donated them to the school. After he graduated, the *Kansas Collegiate*, June 10, 1879, reported that “he still collects bugs.”

34. Atchison, *Kansas Colored Literary and Business Academy*; *Emporia Daily Bulletin*, July 15, 1881.

to Snodgrass, when the school board approved Mattie Anderson as teacher of the black children, a young black minister protested and some other refugees joined him. They apparently wanted a black teacher. Exoduster Peter Howard, on the other hand, heartily supported the school. In the winter of 1880, he indicated plans to attend himself. Although the Dunlap workers did not respond immediately to the concern for a black teacher, in 1883 Lottie Barmen, a black woman from Pennsylvania, joined the school’s staff for the 1883–1884 term. The next year Georgia Smith, another black woman from Topeka, replaced Barmen and taught several terms between 1884 and 1888.³⁵

More surprisingly, opposing voices arose within the Associate Presbyterian Church itself. Skeptical church members posed two questions: “Are these people [the refugees] likely to become Seceders? When will the Mission become self-sustaining?”³⁶ The second question reflected an economic concern that became a sticking point, even for many outside the Associate church, after the exodusters arrived. The first question, however, was a central denominational issue. Ever since the secession in Scotland, the church had held firmly to a distinct set of beliefs and practices, preferring to survive as a small remnant rather than enter the union of 1858. Thus the primary expectation of some church members was that the Dunlap mission workers would extend the denomination. It is noteworthy that these questions were posed in September 1881—barely a year after the work had begun. They were to be raised repeatedly during the decade of the mission’s existence.³⁷

Hard feelings that could have undermined the mission work were precipitated by Andrew Atchison himself

35. *Associate Presbyterian* (June 1881): 129; *ibid.* (November 1880): 294–95. Former slaves expressed a similar preference during the Port Royal Experiment. See Morris, *Reading, ‘Riting, and Reconstruction*, 13–14. Specific reasons for white resistance are not mentioned. See *Associate Presbyterian* (November 1880): 296. Howard lived in Dunlap until his death on April 19, 1894. He is buried in Dunlap’s black cemetery. See *Dunlap Weekly News*, May 5, 1894. On Lottie Barmen, see *Associate Presbyterian* (July–August 1884): 211. On Georgia Smith, see State Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Fourth Biennial Report, 1883–1884* (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1886), 127; *Associate Presbyterian* (October 15, 1888): 256; *ibid.* (June 1, 1889): 187. These sources are somewhat unclear about how many terms Miss Smith taught. She may have taught in 1884–1885, left Dunlap, then returned to teach again in 1887–1888 and 1888–1889.

36. *Associate Presbyterian* (September 1881): 228.

37. *Morris County Times*, July 2, 1880; *Associate Presbyterian* (February 1881): 20; *ibid.* (June 1881): 129–31; *ibid.* (April 1885): 83–85; *ibid.* (March 1, 1887): 41. On the denomination’s strict adherence to its standards, see William L. Fisk, “The Seceders: The Scottish High Church Tradition in America,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 62 (Winter 1984): 291–305.

when, early in 1882, he applied to become justice of the peace of Valley Township, replacing local businessman C. E. Kidd, who had resigned. When Governor St. John appointed Atchison, numerous Dunlap citizens and businessmen immediately sent a petition to the governor in protest. A local newspaper editor candidly explained: "The gentleman [Atchison] is not, and never will be, identified with the business portions of this community; and it looks too much like importing carpet-baggers here to hold office." Seeking to help resolve the conflict, Columbus Johnson, Atchison's fellow officer in the Freedmen's Aid Association, promptly wrote the governor and urged him to nullify the appointment so as to avoid damaging "the good feeling between our friends both white and colored."³⁸

In light of the commotion, Atchison gave up his aspiration to become justice of the peace. N. H. Amsbaugh, one of the Dunlap businessmen who recently had endorsed Atchison's fund-raising efforts for the school, wrote to St. John about Atchison's change of heart and urged the governor to instead appoint F. M. Beatty, "a man who is known here to be well qualified and whose appointment would be agreeable to [a] large majority of this community." Atchison soon left for Ohio, probably on a fund-raising trip for the academy, which once again became his focus after a well-intentioned but ill-advised attempt to become justice of the peace.³⁹

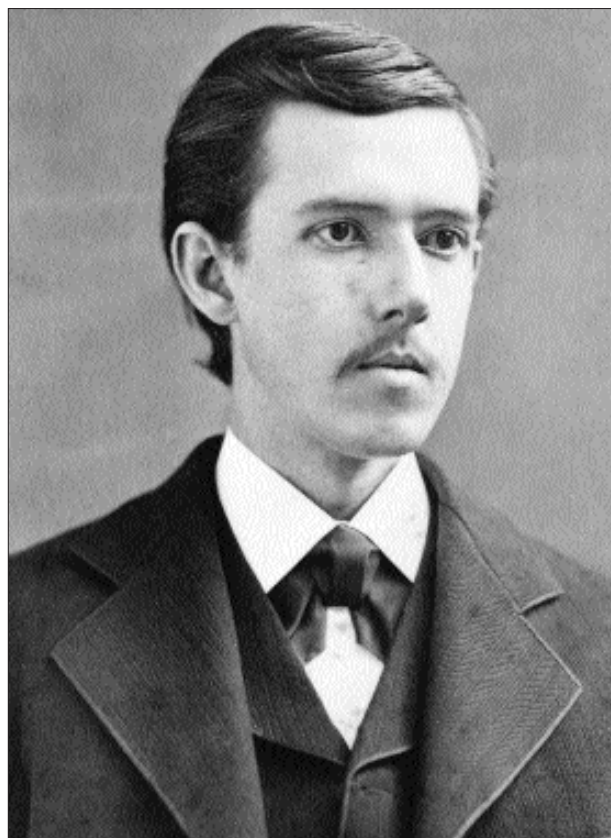
This incident does not seem to have caused any permanent ill will, for the Dunlap mission was flourishing in early 1883, as awareness of its work spread beyond Kansas. L. S. Childs, a "colporteur" (peddler of devotional literature) for the American Tract Society who had visited Dunlap, wrote several reports to the *New York Weekly Witness*, a national temperance newspaper, about the expanding mission. In one account, he noted that the workers had established "two day-schools, besides an academic and business department; and in the evening they have a class for laboring men, and women that cannot get out to school they teach in their homes." Mentioning Maggie Watson and Andrew Atkinson [sic] by name, Childs urged his readers to contribute generously because the teachers received only \$120 from the "School Fund."⁴⁰

38. *Dunlap Chief*, March 31, 1882; *Kansas Cosmos* (Council Grove), March 30, 1882. Columbus Johnson to John P. St. John, April 3, 1882, folder 18, box 16, Governor's Records.

39. N. H. Amsbaugh to John P. St. John, July 2, 1882, folder 18, box 16, Governor's Records.

40. *Associate Presbyterian* (January 1883): 384; *ibid.* (March 1884): 40. *New York Weekly Witness*, February 8, 1883; see also *Associate Presbyterian*

Atchison also noted the expansion of the mission. They hired a new assistant teacher for District 61: A. J. Harbison, a deacon from the Bethel congregation. In addition, Snodgrass and some of the black settlers had constructed a new building in that district. Maggie Watson had fifty students in the District 40 primary school, while Atchison had twenty-



Andrew Atchison came to Dunlap to organize the academy and served as its principal and developmental leader until 1888.

ty-three students in the high school as well as twenty-five adult men attending a night school. In light of these activities, Atchison issued a call for "an endowment of at least ten thousand dollars for the school."⁴¹

(March 1883): 57–58. About this time John Henry Waller, a former slave who became a prominent Kansas lawyer, editor, and political figure, noted the success of the Dunlap colony in his newspaper *The Western Recorder*, July 6, 1883.

41. *Associate Presbyterian* (March 1883): 35. Harbison also ran a meat wagon in Dunlap in connection with the market of C. Craig to supply rural farmers. See *Dunlap Reporter*, July 27, 1883. In 1884 Harbison met with County Superintendent of Schools A. G. Campbell about the academy. See *Kansas Cosmos*, February 1, 1884. *Associate Presbyterian* (March 1883): 34–35.

At its May 1883 meeting in Duncanville, Illinois, the church approved the incorporation of the high school as an academy. According to its charter, the purpose of the academy was "to offer to the citizens of Kansas of African descent such an education as will qualify them for teaching in the public schools, for the management of business,

chancellor James Marvin; O. S. Munsell, an attorney and publisher of the *Council Grove Republican*; Judge Solon O. Thacher; A. B. Jetmore, a distinguished attorney; Alfred Fairfax, the former slave and director of the KFRA who subsequently became the first African American elected to the Kansas legislature; and a Reverend Porter, a non-Associate Presbyterian minister from Fort Scott.

Bulen and Johnson, officers of the Freedmen's Aid Association, also agreed to serve on the board, while Atchison, Boyd, and the Reverend H. L. Brownlee represented the church.⁴³

Atchison called the new board of directors to meet on July 5, 1883, in Dunlap. The day before, about twelve hundred people, both white and black, gathered to celebrate Independence Day, with Jetmore delivering

"the oration of the day." When the board met, it adopted bylaws and elected officers: Cordley, president; Bulen, vice president; Johnson, treasurer; and Atchison, secretary and soliciting agent.⁴⁴

By 1884 the academy seemed to be making rapid progress. When the board of directors held its second annual meeting at Dunlap on May 20 of that year, the members decided that a new building was vital to the success of the school. They therefore determined to solicit pledges totaling five thousand dollars, "the subscription to be valid on condition that the sum of \$3,500 be secured within two years." Atchison immediately began local fund-raising efforts. Dunlap business owners pledged \$755, and the African American residents promised to con-

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT !

**The Freedmen's Aid Association
of Dunlap, Kansas.**

INCORPORATED SEPT. 29, '81.

Rev. JHO. M. SNODGRASS, Pres. ANDREW ATCHISON, Sec.

A portion of one of several promotional circulars prepared by Andrew Atchison to encourage "sustaining at Dunlap a Literary and Business Academy for the benefit of the Colored People of all sections of the country."

for mechanical industries, and for an honorable home life. Also to encourage the settlement of colored families in country districts where they shall have the opportunity of education." The Synod of the church retained authority to elect nine of the twelve members of the board of directors, with the remaining three members to be elected by the board itself. The Synod also reserved the right to appoint the principal of the academy. The board was to report annually to the secretary of the church's Board of Home and Foreign Missions.⁴²

Before the Synod meeting, Atchison asked some prominent Kansas figures to serve as directors, hoping to gain representation from all parts of the state. He gained the consent of a number of leading men, including the Reverend Richard Cordley, the well-known Congregational Church minister then living in Emporia; state university

42. *Associate Presbyterian* (September 1883): 246; Corporation Charters, vol. 11, 568-69; see also *Dunlap Reporter*, July 20, 1883.

43. *Council Grove Republican*, May 18, 1883.

44. *Associate Presbyterian* (September 1883): 247; *Council Grove Republican*, July 13, 27, 1883; *Dunlap Reporter*, July 20, 1883.

tribute \$250.⁴⁵ Soon thereafter, Atchison left Dunlap to attend the church's annual Synod meeting. While en route he wrote a glowing letter thanking the contributors. Their generosity, he wrote, led him to envision the academy as a "Hampton or Carlisle in Kansas," a reference to the two well-known schools for African Americans and Native Americans. Atchison also stated that he was now going to push for an endowment of twenty-five thousand dollars for the academy.⁴⁶

Another development further reinforced the perception of the academy's emerging success. At the end of the 1883–1884 school term Atchison submitted a formal report on the academy's status to Henry C. Speer, the state superintendent of public instruction. There were 175 students enrolled: 90 males and 85 females, of which 45 were adults. No tuition was charged. The teachers, in addition to Atchison, were Maggie Watson, Georgia Smith, and R. B. Atchison in the primary schools; Lucretia P. Fulton, instructor in woman's work; and Snodgrass, instructor in music. As previously noted, Georgia Smith was an African American woman from Topeka, while R. B. Atchison was an Associate Presbyterian minister from Bloomfield, Ohio. Fulton was a white Presbyterian from Topeka who had assisted the exodusters when they first came to Kansas.⁴⁷

Although the report to the state superintendent gave a positive picture, the editor of the church's magazine presented a less optimistic view in light of Andrew Atchison's recent fund-raising efforts for a new school building: while Dunlap residents had pledged a total of \$1,005, the church's members had contributed only \$771.69 during the past year. The combined total of \$1,776.69 was far short of

even the minimum goal of \$3,500 set by the board of directors. The money apparently was not raised, because there was no subsequent report that a new school building was constructed.⁴⁸

Despite financial uncertainty, the mission seemed to be progressing in the mid-1880s. In 1884 Snodgrass reported approvingly that Fulton intended to develop two projects in Dunlap: an orphanage and a small fruit farm to furnish work for the refugees.⁴⁹ These two projects apparently succeeded temporarily. In a report to the 1886 meeting of the Synod, Atchison noted that the workers had purchased a farm, "the products of which will be used chiefly for this work," by which he meant the orphanage. They also constructed an addition to the mission building to provide "a convenient home for the three teachers employed this year and for *five poor pupils*." The goal was to house twelve to fifteen students in the coming year. Atchison may have been referring to this farm in a circular reporting that a woman from Maine had left three thousand dollars for the refugees, and that in the spring of 1886 the trustees of her will had purchased 240 acres of land near Dunlap and expected to purchase 40 more acres in the near future. This land was to be placed under the care of the Dunlap workers to help support the academy.⁵⁰

Still another sign of apparent progress involved the transfer to the academy, in 1885, of about four hundred acres of land owned by the Agricultural and Industrial Institute in southeastern Kansas. Elizabeth Comstock and like-minded Quakers had organized this institute after the KFRA disbanded in early 1881 to assist and educate exodusters in that part of the state. However, two Quaker groups disagreed over how the institute should be operat-

45. *Associate Presbyterian* (June 1884): 213.

46. *Council Grove Republican*, May 30, 1884. Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was founded by a white man, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, in 1868 in Hampton, Virginia. Although it was commonly seen as a technical vocational school, its primary focus was to train African Americans to become teachers who would educate Southern blacks to accept a subordinate position in society. See Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 33–78. From 1879 to 1918 Carlisle Indian School was operated on a U.S. Army post at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. See *Encyclopedia Americana*, s.v. "Carlisle."

47. State Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Fourth Biennial Report, 1883–1884*, 127. In this report, the term "academy" referred to all the schools founded by the mission: the two primary schools and the high school. On R. B. Atchison, see *Associate Presbyterian* (May 1928): 159. It is not known whether R. B. Atchison and Andrew Atchison were related. On Mrs. Fulton, see Horatio N. Rust, "Scrapbook," 78; Negro clippings, vol. 4, 59–61, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society. Atchison described Fulton as a woman with "much experience as a missionary among the colored people." See *Associate Presbyterian* (June 1884): 139.

48. *Associate Presbyterian* (July–August 1884): 212.

49. Snodgrass reported that the teachers themselves had been caring for an orphan boy about fifteen years old, "as a matter of seemingly absolute necessity. When he came to their hands, he was very filthy, destitute, and immoral; now he is quite obedient and a well behaved boy, and learns well." See *Associate Presbyterian* (March 1884): 41.

50. *Ibid.* (September 1886): 233–34; "An Urgent Appeal in Behalf of a New and Important Charity," (N.p.: n.d.). Hickey, "Pap' Singleton's Dunlap Colony," 30, reported that the woman from Maine was Ann Jamison. The 1885 census indicates that a "J. M. Snodgrass" owned 280 acres that included 12 apple trees, 75 peach trees, and 6 cherry trees "in bearing," and 64 apple trees, 1 pear tree, and 5 plum trees "not in bearing." See Kansas State Census, 1885, Morris County, Dunlap. It is not known whether Jamison's gift was used to purchase the fruit farm or whether the Snodgrass acreage is the farm to which Atchison referred.

ed, contributing to the decision to turn it over to the Dunlap mission workers. The transfer took place on June 27, 1885, when the Associate Presbyterian Church received the institute property for one dollar, subject to mortgages of forty-three hundred dollars. In 1888 the church sold the property for twelve thousand dollars (subject to mortgages of seventy-five hundred dollars) to help pay Dunlap mission expenses.⁵¹

Later in 1885 the academy was noted briefly—and anonymously—in a prominent national publication. In its September 1885 edition *Century Magazine*, a New York literary journal that featured prominent nineteenth-century authors such as Henry James and William Dean Howells, published an article praising the work of the academy. Neither the author nor the academy was mentioned by name, but in “Huddling in the Town and Living in the Country” the writer clearly was referring to the school: “Two hundred families of these refugees were found huddled together in great destitution in Morris County. For their relief a school was planted among them, in which the young receive instruction, both intellectual and industrial.”⁵²

The *Century* author shared the view, previously expressed by Atchison and others, that the immigrants would fare better in the country than in urban areas. The writer also described the Dunlap workers’ vision for the school: “They hope that the school will prove to be the organizing center of the community; and that by its libraries, its free instruction, its active interest in the general welfare of the people and the promotion of a more stimulating social life, it will furnish an element in which rural life is generally wanting.”⁵³

51. Cooper, “History of the Agricultural and Industrial Institute,” 18, 52–53; Fletcher, “The Agricultural & Industrial Institute for the Colored Race, Cherokee County, Kansas,” 11, 15; Randall B. Woods and David A. Sloan, “Kansas Quakers and the ‘Great Exodus’: Conflicting Perceptions of Responsibility Within a Nineteenth-Century Reform Community,” *The Historian: A Journal of History* 48 (November 1985): 37; *Associate Presbyterian* (July 1885): 188, 224.

52. *Century Magazine* 30 (September 1885): 803.

53. *Ibid.*; *Associate Presbyterian* (March 1883): 34. An African American minister, the Reverend William H. Yeocum, argued in an 1879 lecture that the exodusters should go to the country because it cost more to live in the city than they could earn. See Robert Lee Chartrand, “The Negro Exodus from the Southern States to Kansas: 1869–1886” (master’s thesis, University of Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri, 1949), 46. Hawkins, “Hoeing Their Own Row,” 207, noted that black farmers themselves sometimes advocated living in the country. Hawkins suggested that this perspective derived from an agrarian idealism espoused in early America by persons such as Thomas Jefferson and Henry David Thoreau. Encouraging black ownership of rural land often was seen as an answer to racial injustice.

Shortly after this article appeared, Atchison indicated a probable, and significant, change in the academy’s status. Because many of the refugee families had paid for their land, they were now taxpayers. Therefore, they could choose to send their children to the public school. In that case, “only such children will be received into the Academy from the Dunlap community as prefer our school to the public school, and are willing to comply with all the regulations for their special training; and also such pupils as come from abroad who desire a practical Christian education.” As Atchison anticipated, in 1886 the mission workers turned over to the county school board the two primary schools they had been operating. Thus the academy “stood on an independent basis, separate from the Public school,” with two grades consisting of 60 students.⁵⁴

Despite the loss of students to the public school, the academy still appeared to be prospering in 1886 and 1887, with the church reappointing Atchison and Watson as teachers. However, in November 1886 Watson left Dunlap and was replaced by Mollie Ralston, another single white woman.⁵⁵ Also during this time, Snodgrass, now about sixty-five years old, asked to be relieved of his duties because of declining health. In his place the church appointed three men to serve brief terms as the missionary to Dunlap: the Reverend William Porter (September–December 1886); Thomas C. Maughlin (January–March 1887); and the Bethel congregation’s pastor, the Reverend Robert Boyd (April–June 1887). Snodgrass then was given the task of visiting various congregations and other places to solicit funds on behalf of the mission work—hardly, it would seem, a less strenuous responsibility.⁵⁶

As the end of the decade approached, the Dunlap workers increasingly faced the two-fold criticism: the black settlers were not joining the church, and repeated financial appeals were irksome. In response, in 1885 Snodgrass and Atchison reported that two settlers (whom they did not name) had joined the local congregation and that several others “purpose to connect with our Church at no distant day.”⁵⁷ In 1887 Snodgrass responded to these concerns in

54. *Associate Presbyterian* (September 1886): 233; *ibid.* (October 1885): 268.

55. *Ibid.* (November 1886): 320.

56. *Ibid.* (July–August 1886): 183; *ibid.* (November 1886): 320; *ibid.* (January 1887): 372; *ibid.* (February 1, 1887): 21. Beginning with the February 1, 1887, issue and continuing through January 15, 1889, the *Associate Presbyterian* magazine was published twice a month.

57. *Ibid.* (July 1885): 164. It is not known whether they ever did.

detail in a three-part article, "Is the Dunlap Work a Failure?" Answering that question with a decisive "no," Snodgrass contended that many refugees had experienced significant success. Many of them, especially the children, had learned to read the Bible. Moreover, most of the exodusters now owned their own land and homes. Snodgrass charged that the true cause of any failure was the church's own "dreadful barrenness in spiritual labor pains," adding "I am not blaming any one in particular, nor any one more than myself."⁵⁸

Nevertheless, Snodgrass did not ignore the importance of financial support. In an article plainly titled, "Must Have Funds," he once again reminded readers of the need for liberality and also revealed his own needs:

I am not going to complain, but state simply a fact. I have had money due me for more than a year and having to borrow in its place, I will have to pay some \$18 or \$20 interest on money due me this year. Now this item in connection with my small salary this year is no small sum out of pocket simply because the church can't pay her debts on time. But I am not the only one thus tried. . . . Some may feel that they are doing all they can, and it may be so. I am not finding any fault, only we must have more money or our workmen and work too will be dreadfully crippled.⁵⁹

Some months later Snodgrass reported the results of his solicitation efforts. Numerous people and congregations had contributed a total of \$217.02—a meager amount that would not sustain the Dunlap mission.⁶⁰

Ironically, while Snodgrass was defending the mission against its critics and struggling to find financial support, Atchison was expressing renewed optimism: "The prospect for our school is better this year than ever before as to attendance and general interest among the Blacks."⁶¹ Perhaps his positive outlook was influenced by the appearance of *Sweet Chariot*, a newspaper that contained news almost exclusively about the academy's teachers, students, and curriculum. Although it was published only twice, in September and December 1887, this short-lived publication gave every indication that the academy was going strong, reporting that forty-five students were at-

tending in the fall of 1887. Pupils named in *Sweet Chariot* included Carrie Crutcher, Ida and Preston Mattox, Vina Jackson, Leanna Hale, Ella T. Moore, and Henry L. Pegg. Some students were identified with only initials or last names: A. McMillan, B. F. Mayo, B. B. Moore, "Bro. Burks," G. W. Johnson, and Brown. Advertisements in both issues encouraged students to attend and outlined the school's curriculum in detail.⁶²

By the spring of 1888 the academy had a solid enrollment of seventy-five students, yet it faced increasing difficulties. In April the editor of the *Associate Presbyterian* magazine reported about a plan to transfer control of the school "to a corporation of christian [*sic*] men in Kansas."⁶³ The editor recognized that some church members had opposed the school from the beginning, but he believed it should continue. He cited the perspective of those who had been involved in the work, particularly Atchison, who had contended that if the school were abandoned, the broader missionary work also would fail. The editor also again noted the lack of financial support: "We promise to pay the Principal of the Academy \$300, per annum, but the promise for two years remains unfulfilled. If we mistake not, the academy costs no more now than all the schools did six years ago. We certainly cannot plead financial inability." Like Snodgrass, he attributed the shortfall to the church's spiritual weakness. With strong words he urged continued giving to the Dunlap Academy, lest the church "incur the danger of opposing God's providence and of having his displeasure," thus bringing "a lasting stigma upon the Associate Church."⁶⁴

In May 1888 a former academy teacher finally revealed why some church members refused to give financial support. A. J. Harbison, who in 1883–1884 had taught in District 61 west of Dunlap, noted "various objections to Mr. Andrew Atchison." Although Harbison did not identify the objections, his comments suggest that some church members believed Atchison had mishandled money given to him for the academy. While acknowledging that Atchi-

58. *Ibid.* (March 15, 1887): 67–71; *ibid.* (April 15, 1887): 105–8; *ibid.* (May 15, 1887): 145–47.

59. *Ibid.* (May 15, 1887): 147–48.

60. *Ibid.* (October 1, 1887): 338–40.

61. *Ibid.* (September 15, 1887): outside back cover.

62. The second issue also included a supplement. The publisher was not identified, but a news item reprinted from another area newspaper, the *Marion Record*, said he was "a colored man." See *Sweet Chariot* (Dunlap), December 31, 1887.

63. *Associate Presbyterian* (May 15, 1888): 158; *ibid.* (April 15, 1888): 114. Two ministers, S. H. McNeel and S. B. Houston, served as editors of the magazine in April 1888.

64. *Ibid.* (April 1, 1888): 93–94, 95–96.

son had made mistakes, Harbison came to his defense: "Who of us could have done better? This we do know, that he has done more than most of us would have been willing to do. If we wish to enjoy the rose, we will have to put up with the thorns. This is true all along the path of life." On the other hand, Harbison was critical of the church leaders' failure to establish proper financial oversight of the school, as well as the church's lack of spiritual zeal: "If we have not enough missionary spirit to take care of a little mission school like this, we are not worthy of the name we claim, and ought to be stung out of the hive like drones." A few months later, an editorial in the church's magazine commented that the "popular objections" to contributing to the work involved the methods used in raising funds and "the want of a satisfactory account of the money paid."⁶⁵

At the May 1888 Synod meeting Atchison agreed to cease his duties as academy principal. According to the written record of the meeting, the church leaders wanted him to resume full-time study for the pastorate and then return to Dunlap to assume oversight of the mission work. The preceding comments, however, clearly suggest other reasons for Atchison's change in status. At this meeting the Synod also reappointed Snodgrass as missionary to Dunlap. Subsequent events were to suggest that the timing of Atchison's departure and Snodgrass's return was not a coincidence.⁶⁶

Shortly after stepping down as academy principal, Atchison wrote a letter to Charles Robinson, the former Kansas governor who was now superintendent of Haskell Institute, the government boarding school for Native Americans in Lawrence. Atchison inquired about teaching at the institute but did not explain the Dunlap situation, writing only: "I am relieved from the Freedmen's Academy for a time." Atchison's inquiry eventually led to a brief stint as principal of Haskell Institute in 1890.⁶⁷

About this time the church's Kansas Presbytery instructed Atchison to attend its spring 1889 meeting to be examined for licensure, a step in the process required to become a pastor. At this meeting, Snodgrass renewed some unspecified and previously unpublicized charges

against Atchison. After reviewing the situation, the Presbytery concluded that too much time had elapsed since Snodgrass had made the original charges; moreover, his allegations could not be proved. Thus Snodgrass was warned against stirring up old issues.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, Atchison refused to attend the meeting and instead sent a paper asking to be released from the Presbytery's supervision. In the paper Atchison explained: "The spirit of a majority of our Synod is for the deadness of the letter, the iron jacket of Phariseism, and against the heavenly spirit of life and progress in mission work." Because of this harsh criticism of the church's (and Snodgrass's?) approach to missionary activity, Atchison was dismissed from the study of theology, with the Presbytery declaring his statements to be "reprehensible."⁶⁹

Thus in 1890 Atchison came to serve as principal of Haskell Institute. He was familiar with the school, having visited it and spoken at a chapel service in September 1887. He admired the work done there, although his viewpoint—common during that time—would not be acceptable today. In a letter published in the church's magazine, he praised the work of Superintendent Robinson, concluding that "the success at Haskell is due largely to its good surroundings and its distance from Indian society. Haskell is the key to the Indian problem. Tell everyone and thank the Lord." A few months later a similar letter was published, without Atchison's signature, in *Sweet Chariot*. This time the last sentence read, "How long we have been in conquering the native of America!"⁷⁰

Despite his support of Haskell Institute, Atchison soon was abruptly dismissed by Charles Meserve, who recently had replaced Robinson as superintendent. According to one newspaper report, Meserve preferred easterners to Kansans. The newspaper added, without explanation, that Meserve then wrote a letter of recommendation for Atchison, who soon moved to New Mexico, where he became superintendent of the Mescalero Agency, another government boarding school for Native Americans. Sometime

68. *Associate Presbyterian* (May 1, 1889): 148.

69. *Ibid.*

70. *Ibid.* (October 15, 1887): 357; *Sweet Chariot Supplement*, December 31, 1887. In the nineteenth century removing Native American children from their homes for educational purposes was an accepted approach by those seeking to reform Indian education. See Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, vol. 2 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 689–90.

65. *Ibid.* (May 15, 1888): 157–59; *ibid.* (August 15, 1888): 278.

66. *Ibid.* (June–July 1888): 218; *ibid.* (June 1, 1888): 178; *ibid.* (January 1, 1889): 445.

67. Andrew Atchison to Charles Robinson, June 7, 1888, Robinson correspondence, Governor's Records; *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 16, 1890.

later he went as a missionary to Central America, where he died at his home in Panama City in November 1933.⁷¹

After Atchison ceased being principal of the Dunlap Academy in May 1888, the school continued only two more years. The Reverend William Porter served as principal for six months in 1888–1889, and the Reverend Robert Boyd filled that role during the final term in 1889–1890. During Porter’s brief tenure, enrollment reached eighty students, but Boyd’s brief stint saw a precipitous decline to an average attendance of only thirty pupils. Boyd later noted a possible reason for this drastic drop. In 1888 the Dunlap school board hired a white teacher for the public school. As a result, according to Boyd, the refugees “took offense and sent nearly all their children to the Academy,” where Georgia Smith, the African American woman who had taught there periodically since 1884, was conducting classes. But the next year the school board employed a black teacher, and most of the black residents then sent their children to the public school. Another possible factor contributing to reduced attendance was noted by Snodgrass: in search of more secure jobs, about half the black population had moved away from Dunlap.⁷²

As the Dunlap Academy neared its end, three church members reflected on the causes of its failure. In addition to Boyd and Snodgrass, an anonymous author using the pseudonym “Aliquis” addressed this topic in the church’s magazine. Their opinions differed somewhat, but all agreed with Snodgrass’s conclusion: “We have lost our golden opportunity.”⁷³

Interestingly, the trio did not mention the presence of a black public schoolteacher or the reduced black population. Instead, they focused first on the

71. *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 16, 1890; Andrew Atchison, June 14, 1893, “Biographical Circulars,” Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society; *Associate Presbyterian* (January 1934): 238.

72. *Associate Presbyterian* (September 1890): 297; *ibid.* (January 1, 1889): 447. Hickey, “‘Pap’ Singleton’s Dunlap Colony,” 31, also notes the continuing decline in Dunlap’s black population. He describes the economic downturn in the region that began with the “cattle bust” of 1887, followed by a “severe economic depression” in 1889. See also George E. Ham and Robin Higham eds., *The Rise of the Wheat State: A History of Kansas Agriculture, 1861–1986* (Manhattan, Kans.: Sunflower University Press, 1987), 174–75. The Synod of the Associate Presbyterian Church officially closed the school in 1891. See *Associate Presbyterian* (June 1891): 193–94; see also *Dunlap Courier*, May 2, 1890.

73. *Associate Presbyterian* (May 1891): 128.

church’s internal struggles and then on perceived shortcomings in the African American community. Initially, they debated about whether the school or the direct mission work should have been given priority. Aliquis and Boyd repeated the previously accepted view that the schoolwork was more important, whereas Snodgrass—

COLORED ACADEMY,
DUNLAP, MORRIS COUNTY, KANSAS.

1. TERMS OF ADMISSION.

Candidates for admission to the first class of the course must pass a creditable examination in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic to Percentage, Elements of Language, and Elements of Geography.

Those who possess more extensive qualifications may enter higher classes.

2. COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.

1. Literary and Normal Course.
2. Business Course.

The First Course comprises the work of three years, and is intended to lead students to the grade required for entrance to the Freshman Class of the State University. In this course thorough Normal instruction will be given to such as desire to qualify themselves for teaching. To aid in this department of training, our students will have an immense advantage in a Practice School of over one hundred pupils, in which all the principles and methods of primary instruction will be verified before their eyes.

The Second Course of instruction comprises the work of two years, and is intended to fit students, both male and female, for making the most of

themselves through the means of the different occupations of life. It will qualify young men and women for commercial clerkships and drill them in the principles and practice of economy. Students taking this course will be carefully instructed in Business Law, both Moral and Civil.

3. SCHOOL CALENDER.

The school year commences on the second Monday of September. The year is divided into three terms, of twelve weeks each. Short vacations about January 1st and April 1st.

4. INCENTIVES TO ATTEND.

The school is organized in the spirit of patriotism and character.

2. The school is free. A contingent fee of Two Dollars a term is the entire charge to students.

3. We will endeavor to secure for our graduates paying positions as teachers or clerks. Business prepares education.

4. Vocal culture, both for oratory and music, a specialty. A first-class instructor in Vocal Music.

5. An excellent new building, with comfortable rooms for students. Good boarding, Two Dollars and Fifty Cents per week, under care of teachers. Students board selves at much lower rates.

ANDREW ATCHISON,
Principal.

The academy’s course of study and virtues, outlined by Andrew Atchison, as it appeared in an unidentified newspaper.

who had once agreed with this perspective—now thought that the emphasis should have been on spreading the gospel. Aliquis and Boyd cited Atchison to support their argument and again defended him against blame for the school’s failure.⁷⁴

74. *Ibid.* (May 1890): 151–52; *ibid.* (September 1890): 292–93.

Snodgrass agreed that the school had been important as an initial point of contact with the refugees and the local white community, but he now believed that the direct mission work should have taken precedence. It would have been less expensive, and thus it would have been easier to sustain the support of the church's members, who expect-



Ida Mattox, a student of Dunlap Academy in 1887, taught there during the spring of 1889.

ed denominational growth. (Interestingly, Snodgrass's new perspective answered the two key objections long raised by skeptical church members.) In addition, Snodgrass expressed a none too subtle criticism of Atchison, contending that students had been "rushed too rapidly through the common school course into the academic" so that "their knowledge of the common branches was too superficial." As a result, Snodgrass wrote, no students were trained as teachers for the academy.⁷⁵ In this conclusion, Snodgrass was not completely accurate. He himself acknowledged that two academy students had been teachers, although he did not mention Carrie Crutcher and Ida Mattox by name. These two African American young

women taught in the academy during the spring 1889 school term.⁷⁶

Then Boyd and Snodgrass pointed out some factors among some of the black settlers that, in their view, complicated their mission efforts. While recognizing that the refugees had a long history of "abuse they have received from the white man," he charged the black Dunlap ministers with racial prejudice, which led them to "exert themselves in every way to hinder our religious work." Boyd also faulted the settlers for failure to honor the sanctity of marriage. Snodgrass added to Boyd's criticisms by pointing out the contrast between the formal worship practices of the Associate Presbyterian Church and the informality of the African American settlers.⁷⁷ These criticisms, of course, reflect the social and religious perspective of the white mission workers.

Some of these same criticisms had been directed at former slaves during the Port Royal experiment two and a half decades earlier. The missionaries and teachers, as well as black religious leaders among the former slaves, complained about the "transient unions and easy partings" of enslaved couples. Although the missionaries, both at Port Royal and at Dunlap, acknowledged the devastating impact of slavery's legacy, they did not seem to fully appreciate that slaves were "not considered as persons but as things." Thus marriage between slaves had no legal standing. In addition, the Northern missionaries and teachers, both white and black, expressed uneasiness about the worship practices of the freed slaves.⁷⁸

Recognizing the imminent end of the Dunlap mission, Boyd suggested another means of educating the black children. Renewed efforts were being made to establish an or-

76. Ibid. (June 1, 1889): 187; *ibid.* (July 15, 1889): 226; *Sweet Chariot*, September 1, 1887. In the 1880 census, Crutcher's age was listed as fifteen, while in the 1885 census it was given as seventeen. In either case, by 1889 she would have been in her early twenties. Ida Mattox was not found in the census records for either 1880 or 1885, but she probably was about the same age. Mattox's grandson, James Henry Williamson, of Meriden, Kansas, provided the photograph of her (above) and still owns a school bell that originally belonged to the Dunlap Academy. See James Henry Williamson, interview by author, September 29, 1998; see also *Americus Weekly Herald*, December 29, 1881.

77. *Associate Presbyterian* (September 1890): 294-96; *ibid.* (May 1891): 126-27.

78. Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 88-89, 92-93, 113-14, 138. Herbert Gutman's extensive research, however, challenges the perception that the black family was severely weakened as a result of slavery. See Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

75. *Ibid.* (April 1891): 93-94.


phanage, which would involve keeping orphaned children “under our immediate training until their principles and habits have been formed.” This approach, Boyd noted, was similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church with homeless children, as well as to the federal government’s policy for working with Native Americans.⁷⁹ Boyd, like Atchison, undoubtedly was familiar with Haskell Institute. However, there is no evidence that the church succeeded in establishing an orphanage, and after a decade of activity its missionary work among the exodusters came to an end.

It is clear from this brief sketch that John Snodgrass and Andrew Atchison were the driving forces behind the development of the Dunlap Academy. Some contemporary observers recognized their influence and spoke favorably of their work. Atchison’s efforts were applauded by Daniel Votaw, a Quaker who had assisted the KFRA in the early 1880s in relocating African American immigrants to southeastern Kansas. After the KFRA disbanded, Votaw continued the relief effort and published a newspaper to report on the work. Writing in October 1892 in the final issue of the *Refugees’ Lone Star*, Votaw commented: “Among the best helpers of men . . . [was] Andrew Atchison, of Dunlap.” As for Snodgrass, the *Dunlap Courier* of May 9, 1891, reported that with the close of the Dunlap work Snodgrass and his family had gone to Chetopa, in Labette County in southeastern Kansas, to continue mission work among African American settlers. The *Courier* writer concluded with a note of commendation: “Mr. Snodgrass has been a diligent and faithful worker in the missionary field and has done what he could for the Colored people. We feel that his work has not been all in vain.”⁸⁰

From the perspective of more than a century, one can still say that Snodgrass, Atchison, and their fellow laborers engaged in a good work on behalf of the formerly enslaved

African Americans. Indeed, the Dunlap mission workers and their supporters in the Associate Presbyterian Church sustained and expanded an extensive educational program for a decade when organizations such as the KFRA and the Quaker-initiated Agricultural and Industrial Institute, both of which had larger constituencies and resources, had closed down. In some ways, the vision of Snodgrass and Atchison for black education and land ownership was far ahead of its time.

This is not to say that the Dunlap workers were without fault. It is regrettable, for example, that near the end of the work Atchison and Boyd revealed attitudes that, while not surprising in their time, today are considered paternalistic toward Native Americans and African Americans. Nevertheless, in spite of their shortcomings the Dunlap mission workers understood the great moral debt owed by the American nation to the exodusters for their suffering in the bondage of slavery. The workers were therefore right in offering the immigrants an education and in attempting to help them obtain land, both of which were essential if they were to fully overcome slavery’s effects.

Despite their efforts, however, the Dunlap workers faced numerous obstacles that combined to thwart the fulfillment of their vision. Circumstances beyond the church’s control certainly played a role. The movement of black students into the public schools reduced the academy’s enrollment. Lack of jobs and inadequate land holdings caused a significant segment of the black population to move elsewhere. Circumstances within the church had an even greater impact. The falling out between Snodgrass and Atchison—never fully explained—and Atchison’s subsequent exit from the church were major blows. The church’s financial support of the work, never very substantial, gradually dwindled as some members grew increasingly skeptical of Atchison’s handling of funds. Given the small size of the denomination, this factor in itself probably would have been enough to eventually close down the academy. But when the workers also failed to increase church membership, it was only a matter of time before the Dunlap mission work, including the academy, came to an end. 

79. *Associate Presbyterian* (September 1890): 298.

80. Athearn, *In Search of Canaan*, 269; *Refugees’ Lone Star* (Independence), October 1892; *Dunlap Courier*, May 9, 1891. Snodgrass died on January 16, 1899, and was buried at Pleasant Divide, Iowa. See *Associate Presbyterian* (May 1899): 156.