The Unitarian Church and "Kanzas Territory,"
1854-1861*

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PART ONE, 1854-1855

PROMINENT individuals of the Unitarian faith frequently have been associated with the difficulties of the Kansas territorial period. Ministers of the denomination, writers, politicians, adventurers—sometimes a combination of all four in one person—had appeared within the boundaries of "bleeding Kansas" and/or in print and on platforms without visiting the prairies. The attitudes and activities of the Unitarian church per se, however, have seldom been examined. This preliminary study is intended to show the church's operations in the territory and the effect of the Kansas question on the church.

Current denominational statistics reveal the failure of Unitarianism in Kansas: one church in Wichita (1887), and fellowships in Topeka (1956), Manhattan (1957), Lawrence (1958), and Hays (1962), all of which are curiously located in towns with public institutions of higher learning.¹ Not one dates from territorial days. The Lawrence church which forms the basis of this study died in 1944. But during those years prior to statehood, Unitarians hoped for a citadel of "liberal Christianity" on the frontier to serve as an outpost for expected Western development.

Some of the leaders in the American Unitarian Association (founded 1825) considered expansion an important policy in the middle of the 19th century, an aim not emphasized today.² One of the major spokesmen for it was the Rev. Samuel Kirkland Lothrop ³ (1804-1886), onetime editor of the Christian Register,

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member and frequent officer of a host of educational and charitable
groups, and president of the A. U. A. from 1851 to 1858. On the
day Pres. Franklin Pierce (1804-1869) signed the Kansas-Nebraska
bill, May 30, 1854, Lothrop urged church extension before the 29th
meeting of the organization:

We hear of the Romish, of the Greek, of the Gallican, of the English
Church. There is yet to be an American Church,—a Church which, being
part of the true Catholic Church of Jesus Christ, shall be, at the same time, own
child of the American spirit, and a natural representative of the American
mind.4

Lothrop predicted a homogeneity of population in the United
States with "Anglo-Saxon blood" predominant. The religious insti-
tution needed in this new contexture would be a variation from
those of Europe, but not completely free from that tradition. "It is
impossible in such an atmosphere," he said, "to fetter the minds
of men to any old formulas of doctrine. . . ." On the other
hand,

There are certain central truths,—fixed points of religious faith,—which are
the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. In these there can, of course, be no
progress: but their application to life and duty, and their relations to other
truths, and their full development to their ultimate results, it is our part to
bring out, and so to advance.

The elimination of "errors, superstitions, metaphysical subtleties,
false doctrines, small and great" was to be accomplished with free
inquiry. "The whole atmosphere of our American society and our
American life," he said, "is one of individual and independent
thought, securing to each man (each man, I mean, of a white skin)
the largest freedom." "The spirit of the Savior's life, and the spirit
of his religion," Lothrop continued, "is a missionary spirit; and so
utterly opposed to the selfish, slothful, miserly spirit which locks up
its sympathies within the petty interests of its own home and its
own village."5 This racist freedom of investigation did not mean
that nonwhites were extracurricular to the denomination. Lothrop
encouraged missions in 1855 to the Chippewa Indians of Minnesota
territory and the Indians of Calcutta, India.

Generalizations about the essential nature of Unitarian belief,
especially of those who promoted the church in Kansas territory,
are difficult. One thing is certain: the prime movers of the Kansas
mission were not necessarily of the transcendental school. Lothrop
is remembered for his antagonism to both the Rev. Theodore Parker

4. The Quarterly Journal of the American Unitarian Association, Boston, v. 1 (July 1,
5. Ibid., pp. 351-353.
(1810-1860) and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). Albert Fearing (1798-1875), a lay member of the A. U. A. executive committee in the 1850’s who served with Lothrop in many charitable organizations, was another staunch Kansas mission advocate. “Mr. Fearing was a man of decided opinions,” according to a favorable obituary, “which he took no pains to conceal. With much of what is called modern progress, both in thought and action, he had very little sympathy. . . . With all his liking for some features of orthodoxy, and his distrust of certain phases of development in his own denomination, he was too honest to deny that to his mind the Scriptures taught Unitarian doctrines.” Unitarians have a tradition of scepticism toward creeds and dogmas which render any abbreviated statement of belief prima facie suspect. With these safeguards, a resumé of the 1853 “Declaration of Opinion” might serve as a guide to the prevailing notion of Unitarianism in the United States. This document proclaimed that the majority of Unitarians rejected the “triune nature of God” because this was “entirely destitute of proof from nature, reason, experience, or Scripture”; consequently, they did believe in the unity and in the paternal character and merciful government of God; in man’s natural capacity of virtue and liability to sin, and in the historic and actual mingled sinfulness and goodness of all human character; in the divinely ordained laws and orderly development of the natural world, admitting the facts of imperfection and the ravages of sin as incident to the scheme; in the supernatural appointment of Christ as a messenger from God; in the originally given and never wholly forfeited ability of man to secure his salvation by a right improvement of his faculties and opportunities, whether in Christian or in pagan lands. . . .

There was no question that man must follow an ethical code. “But we are distinguished, on the one extreme,” read the declaration, “from the sacerdotal and the Calvinistic churches, by our disbelief in the magically saving efficacy of sacramental forms or metaphysical dogmas.” Unitarians were not convinced, as were Universalists, that all mankind would be saved. This idea “is not revealed in the Scriptures” so the answer to the question of ultimate salvation “is left shrouded in impenetrable obscurity,” although a “large majority” did believe “in the final recovery of all souls. . . .”

7. The Christian Register, Boston, v. 54 (June 5, 1875), p. 2.
at Fitchburg, Mass., on October 24, 1855, at the annual convention in Providence, R. I., summarized this when he said that "our great and pressing duty, then, is to preach Christ and him crucified, Christ and him risen, as the power of God and the wisdom of God." 10 Tilden's remarks are significant as he referred to the three missions then established, one of which was in Kansas.

An organ of Boston Unitarianism, the Christian Register, founded, published, and frequently edited by the Rev. David Reed (1790-1870), 11 recognized possibilities of expansion with the Kansas-Nebraska bill before President Pierce signed it:

Some good may have come already out of the discussion of the Nebraska question; since it is said that the information spread abroad as to the character of the territory has led to preliminary steps in Eastern and Western States, such as the formation of companies, to send into its borders quite speedily a large emigration.— It may thus by preoccupation be secured to freedom, before anything can be done by Congress to fix upon it the evil of slavery. 12

Not always did the Christian Register condemn slavery in this manner. After the attempt on the life of William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879) on October 21, 1835, the newspaper urged its "anti-slavery friends" to "imitate the example of the Christians in the time of Trajan, they were accustomed to meet in private and sing their hymns of praise before the light of day began." Although the newspaper defended the right of free speech and rebuked the rioters for its abridgment, abolitionists should await changes in the law. 13 In March, 1850, the paper condemned the extension of slavery into that land recently acquired from Mexico, 14 but three months later it shunned an antislavery convention in Boston with the remark that "we have not space to give a condensed report this week, and perhaps most of our readers will not regret the omission." 15 But in 1854 the Christian Register described Kansas as "the most lovely country now open to the emigrant, perhaps the most attractive region in the world." 16 Its support of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company, and the later New England Emigrant Aid Company, began at this time and continued while the

12. Christian Register, April 15, 1854, p. 59.
13. Ibid., October 21, 1835, pp. 254, 255. At this time the paper was called the Christian Register and Boston Observer, with Sidney Willard (1780-1856) as editor and David Reed, publisher.
14. Ibid., March 2, 1850, p. 34.
15. Ibid., June 1, 1850, p. 87.
16. Ibid., May 20, 1854, p. 78. This, and similar articles, may have been written by Edward Everett Hale.—Samuel A. Johnson, The Battle Cry of Freedom, The New England Emigrant Aid Company in the Kansas Crusade (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 1954), p. 114.
company was active. _The Christian Examiner and Religious Miscellany_, another Unitarian periodical, also beat the drum for expansion, possibly with Kansas considered, in May, 1854. A book reviewer, perhaps the Rev. John Parkman (1813-1883), minister at New Brighton, N. Y., stated confidently that “orthodoxy” was losing its vitality in missionary activity. “Though Orthodoxy is far from having lost its efficiency, yet it keeps very much within its own intrenchments; and so gives us a fairer field than we have ever had before. God save us from being slothful husbandmen!”

With all this being generated on Beacon Hill, it is no surprise that the Rev. Edward Everett Hale (1822-1909) was in the thick of it. The surprising thing would be if he were not. Before Kansas territory was organized the Rev. William D’Arcy Haley (1828-1890), Unitarian minister at Alton, Ill., who started the society there in 1853, wrote probably to Hale on April 27, 1854, that he had “been at home about two weeks and have had time to think over a conversation I had with you respecting a colony of New England people for Kansas. . . .” Two months later Haley wrote Hale and praised “the organization of the ‘Emigrant’s Aid Society,’” adding that he was available to be a “free state” newspaper editor and/or a minister in Kansas. Hale apparently answered this somewhat favorably, for in the same month Haley referred to a letter of June 14. “If I can better serve the cause of Christ and Freedom (and I think I can) in Kansas than in Illinois,” Haley wrote, “I think I shall not hesitate to go there.” Hale also said he would emigrate and publish a newspaper himself, but he was “a poor son of Levi,—and if the Company decides against me, shall probably never see Kansas.” Apparently Hale about this time wrote to the Rev. Henry Adolphus Miles (1809-1895), secretary of the A. U. A., since Miles wrote Hale on July 12: “Thank you for your suggestion in regard to missionaries to Kansas, & I will lay the matter before our Committee. What a world of good your investment promises!”

Hale must have scotched Haley’s idea about Emigrant Aid Company support for a newspaper, for by July 27 Hale had abandoned the printer’s apron but still hoped for a clerical position in Kansas.

19. W. D. Haley to E. E. Hale, June 7, 1854.—_Ibid._
He offered to serve a two-month tour during the course of a year in the territory for $300.00.22 Possibly with Hale in mind, Hale wrote Miles that he knew "of two first rate men who will go as missionaries into Kansas. Will the Board be able to do anything to fund such men?" 23 Either this or some other Hale communication to Miles prompted the latter to write Hale on August 30 that the secretary was "by no means heedless of the suggestion you have made in regard to sending a missionary to Kansas." 24 In this same letter Miles mentioned a Rev. Hadley, of Portland, for the Kansas mission, probably the Rev. William Hobart Hadley (1804-1868), who then served in Portland, Maine. 25 The Rev. W. H. Hadley, wrote Miles, "is an earnest hard-working, & sagacious man deeply interested in his profession as a minister, sound in old fashioned evangelical Unitarianism, & wide awake in opposition to this Nebraska infamy." Miles wondered if Hale had someone in mind to "put our sile [sic] in to reap the promised harvest of union spread and permanent good fruits." He assured Hale he had discussed the matter with other committee members and had received "the advice of others. . . ."

The executive committee, with Lothrop presiding, did discuss the possibility of a Kansas mission. Lothrop's church, the Brattle Square Church in Boston, has been noted for lethargic support of missions.26 The minutes of this meeting, published in the Quarterly Journal, edited by Miles, reflected the committee's concern for a Kansas mission because of the new communities there, "the spiritual destitution of the new settlers . . . and the great good which suitable men would exert" by founding schools and preaching Unitarianism. However great may have been the potential, the chief obstacle was money. The committee hoped that "through the Christian generosity of our friends" the "golden opportunities of usefulness" would not slip by the denomination.27 Then on November 6 the committee directed Miles to "make further inquiries, and prepared matured arrangements for the subsequent action of

22. W. D. Hale to E. E. Hale, July 27, 1854.—Ibid. In all his letters cited above save that of June 7, Hale "boomed" Alton over St. Louis as an outpost for the Emigrant Aid Company, especially in that of July 27. "I protest against it as an unwise and impolitic movement" since there was "a wholesome Anti-Slavery sentiment in this city—and we do feel that the Friends of Freedom ought not thus to give the preference to a Slave holding aristocracy."


25. Information about Hadley and many other ministers from Mrs. Martha S. C. Wilson, librarian, Unitarian Historical Library, Boston.


the Board." 28 Before the year ended, Miles sent a package of books to the Lawrence Athenaeum in Kansas to fulfill a request from that group; the executive committee approved this on December 4, 1854.29

Denominational activity was not limited to either newspaper or committee discussion. The Rev. George Washington Hosmer (1803-1881), minister in Buffalo, N. Y., wrote Miles in September, 1854, with reference to the emigration to Kansas of the Rev. H. B. Burgess, who that year had graduated from the Meadville Theological School, then in Meadville, Pa.30 This was undoubtedly Henry Bennett Burgess (1824-1876), a minister of the Christian church which at this time co-operated with Unitarians and Universalists at Meadville.31 “I advised him,” Hosmer wrote of Burgess, “to apply to you for an appointment as Colporteur to Kansas— He wants hymn books[,] tracts &c to begin his work. . . .” Hosmer described Burgess as

a sensible good man accustomed to western border life and will do substantial service. I think he would be a faithful agent in any book business committed to him. He will write you soon. He will be a valuable man to the settlers. He has been connected with the Christians & is still of their communion but his sympathies are strongly with us—

About three weeks later Burgess wrote Miles for “a literature freighted with the spirit & life of the Savior, that shall probe deeply the sores of sin & a living present Jesus to heal & save, not a philosopher to palliate; & I will strive to circulate: Life & FREEDOM shall be given to Kansas.”32 Just when Burgess arrived in Kansas is unknown at this time, but The Kansas Herald of Freedom in May, 1855, mentioned a “Pic Nic Party” held in Topeka on May 17 which included Burgess as the toast master.33 Burgess wrote Miles in June, 1855, from Topeka that he had received some volumes damaged by water. “The Works & Memoirs of Channing are the only ones escaped & they not wholly [. ] Many of the others are readable & will fetch something [. ]” His political sentiments were

28. Ibid., p. 197.
29. Ibid. (April 1, 1855), pp. 317, 318.
clearly revealed when he concluded his letter: "The Administration if not wholly dead must act for once & stay by force of arms the rage of her child by bad birth.—Mo."  

No further correspondence between Burgess and Miles has been discovered. An undated letter from Burgess in Topeka to the Western Unitarian Conference (founded 1852) was published and which may have been written in June, 1855, as he mentioned the receipt of some water-damaged books. He said that 25 people regularly attended his meetings, "the largest part of these are young men of worth. . . . If we can have a house, this is the field of labor; if not, perhaps an itinerant system would be better, as all the ministers lodge about the towns." As was true of many frontier preachers, Burgess appealed for funds.  

One wonders if this lack of money was the primary reason for the delay of the Kansas mission. The danger of open entanglement in partisan politics may have been equally important and was probably related to any fund-raising. During congressional consideration of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, U. S. Sen. Edward Everett (1794-1865), Massachusetts Whig and former Unitarian minister, presented what he called "a memorial, remonstrating against the passage of the Nebraska bill." Senator Everett said the petition was signed by a great number of New England's ministers, "perhaps a large majority of the members of the clerical profession in those States. . . ." He promptly moved to table it, which was done.  

Sen. Stephen Arnold Douglas (1813-1861), Democrat from Illinois and "father" of the Nebraska bill, moved to have the memorial lifted from the table and read. He wanted "to submit a word or two of comment on it" because he thought it "not respectful to the Senate." Nor was it particularly respectful to his "offspring." The petition called the Kansas-Nebraska bill "a great moral wrong" and "a breach of faith eminently unjust to the moral principles of the community." To this, Douglas took an expected violent exception. "It is presented," began the Vermont-born but thoroughly

35. H. B. Burgess to Western conference, Quarterly Journal, v. 3 (October 1, 1855), pp. 129, 130. In the same issue, it was reported that the Western conference spent $100 for Burgess to May, 1855, Ibid., p. 154. In his letter to Miles on September 15, 1854, C. W. Hosmer said he would send Burgess that amount in the name of the conference.  
37. Ibid.
Western politician, by a denomination of men calling themselves preachers of the gospel.” Warming to his subject he continued:

Yet here we find that a large body of preachers, perhaps three thousand, following the lead of a circular, which was issued by the Abolitionist confederates in this body, have here come forward, with an atrocious falsehood and an atrocious calumny against this Senate, desecrated the pulpit, and prostituted the sacred desk to the miserable and corrupting influence of party politics. . . .

The only purpose of the memorial, said Douglas, was “to furnish capital for organizing a great sectional party, and trying to draw the whole religious community into their schemes of political aggrandizement.”

Sen. Stephen Adams (1807-1857), Democrat from Mississippi, took the baton from Douglas, as it were, and told the senate that ministers who “come down to mingle in the turbid pools of politics” should be given no special consideration. Sen. John Pettit (1807-1877), Democrat from Indiana and later (1859-1861) chief justice of the U. S. courts in Kansas territory, then chimed in. Adams had remarked that he respected the clergy until they came to politics “with the mud, and slime, and filth which he [Adams] would make you believe is to be found there. . . . So should I,” continued Pettit,

if I could be led to believe that the waters of the pool of politics were any more turbid or filthy than the waters which flow through their contradictory streams of theology. I do not believe it, sir. I hold, on the contrary, that the waters of the pools of politics are infinitely more pellucid, and pure, and cheering, and refreshing, than the pool which surrounds their stagnant waters of theology—no two of them agreeing on any proposition which can be presented.

Pettit jokingly moved to send the memorial to the senate chaplain. This farce finally closed when Sen. George Edmund Badger (1795-1866), Whig from North Carolina and former secretary of the navy under Presidents William Henry Harrison and John Tyler, successfully moved to table it. Then in May, 1854, another memorial against the bill was introduced to the senate, signed by 504 clergymen of the northwestern states. Senator Douglas, who presented

38. Myths have stubborn endurance, including that of Douglas being an “Easterner.” Along with this is the so-called stalemate of the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858 in which “the rapier thrusts of the intellectual [Douglas]” were “blunted by common country sense [Lincoln].” See the American Oil Co. advertisement in The Saturday Evening Post, Philadelphia, August 24, 51, 1863, pp. 73a, 73b.


40. Ibid., p. 619.

41. Ibid., p. 620.

42. Ibid., pp. 621, 623.
it, filled nearly eight pages of the *Congressional Globe Appendix* to denounce it.\(^{43}\)

This detour through congressional vituperation is necessary to understand not only possible Unitarian delay in missionary activity, but also of Unitarian propaganda used to support the Kansas church. In April the *Christian Register* reported that Kansas could easily become a slave state, an opinion based on the explorations of Capt. John Charles Fremont (1813-1890) and the idea that slavery would follow west along the Delaware-Missouri latitude.\(^{44}\) Two months later, this same newspaper published a poem entitled, “Song For the Coming Crisis, Inscribed to the three thousand and fifty New England Clergymen.” The third stanza tied this isometric concept to the memorial:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Hark! In the Horologue of Time} \\
\text{God strikes the awful hour!} \\
\text{Zion must now stand face to face} \\
\text{With Moloch’s threatening power;} \\
\text{The subtle web of Compromise} \\
\text{Her hand and tongue that bound,} \\
\text{Breaks clean away—and now her feet} \\
\text{Take hold on solid ground!} \quad ^{45}
\end{align*}
\]

The paper struck out in July at politicians who were “wont to rebuke clergymen for soiling themselves in the filthy puddle of politics.” The *Christian Register*’s remedy for the situation:

To restore the politics of the country to their true nobleness, second only to religion in intrinsic dignity and practical importance, it needs only that they be reinvigorated with those principles of liberty and righteousness which always do, and which alone can move the deepest springs of human action. . . \(^{46}\)

A month before, and less than a month after the Kansas-Nebraska bill became law, New England ministers “of all denominations” were unable to agree on a nondenominational antislavery convention.\(^{47}\)

E. E. Hale, meanwhile, worked for the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company,\(^{48}\) which he believed to be a “means of helping these Irish and German people west without suffering,” along with some


\(^{44}\) *Christian Register*, April 3, 1854, p. 54.


\(^{46}\) *Christian Register*, July 22, 1854, p. 113.

\(^{47}\) *Ibid.*, July 1, 1854, p. 102. The meeting was in Boston, June 26.

\(^{48}\) The Massachusetts legislature chartered the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Co. on April 20, 1854, then replaced it with the New England Emigrant Aid Co. on February 21, 1855.—*Johnson*, op. cit., pp. 11, 12, 17, 27.
Chinese, as well as one "in which business men, I think, will interest themselves." Hale's famous book *Kanzas and Nebraska*, published in August, 1854, proclaimed that the "free labor" of the world would unite with "the church of Christ" on the prairies, a situation which would be "a golden opportunity of advancing His Kingdom." The *Christian Register* favorably reviewed Hale's book and declared that emigration to Kansas "is likely to bring good out of the evil of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise," while the *Christian Examiner*, in its review, castigated New England's "intelligent, high-minded, and wealthy citizens" who relied more on politics for the salvation of Kansas than upon Eli Thayer's (1819-1899) "efficient" Emigrant Aid Company which "will deliver this land of beauty from the corroding desolation of slavery. . . ."

Hale sent a copy of his work to George Washington Brown (1820-1915), editor of the *Herald of Freedom*, in Lawrence, at this time an Aid Company mouthpiece, who reviewed it with guarded terms. The book would be "invaluable to the future historian of Kansas," but it contained "many inaccuracies of course, as is the case with all new publications of a similar character; but these will be readily corrected by the intelligent reader. . . ."

Eastern Unitarians who had never seen Kansas somehow knew opportunities there were "golden"; only those who had lived on the plains for a time would realize just how auriferous they were.

Kansas was not the only field of missionary activity. The A. U. A. sent the Rev. Charles Henry Appleton Dall (1818-1886) to India and supported a former Baptist, the Rev. James Tanner (1810-1885?), a half-breed Chippewa Indian, in his own tribe in Minnesota territory. Sometime after the association established a mission in Kansas, Calvin W. Clark, A. U. A. treasurer, reported the following:

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53. *Herald of Freedom*, April 21, 1855. Dolbee, loc. cit., p. 175, wrote that this was the most severe criticism she found in published form. A favorable review which also glorified emigration was in *The Universalist Quarterly and General Review*, Boston, v. 12 (January, 1855), pp. 102, 104.


expenditures for missionary activity at the 30th meeting of the
A. U. A. on May 29, 1855:

Kansas mission ........................................ $200.00
Chippewa mission ....................................... 759.26
India mission ............................................ 790.00

Before 1854 closed, the Christian Register featured "A CHURCH
FOR KANZAS" in October.\(^57\) On the same page, two other headlines
exhibited the expansion zeal: "MISSION SUNDAY SCHOOLS" and
"EMIGRANT AID COMPANY."

The minister of the Lawrence church was selected with some
care. Several men were suggested, some unknown at present.
Knowledge of those who were not picked would be helpful to
determine what the A. U. A. did not have in mind for its mission-
ary. The first A. U. A. minister to Kansas was the Rev. Ephraim
Nute, Jr. (1819-1897). This only known child of Ephraim Nute,
Sr. (1796-1873), and Mary Bancroft Nute,\(^58\) was born in Boston,
a direct descendant of James Nute, or Newt, who emigrated from
England to the Portsmouth, N. H., region in 1831. Little is known
about Ephraim, Sr., except that he was a distiller in Boston in the
1820's and served at one time as an appraiser for the Boston customs
house. Ephraim, Sr., "was a man of much intelligence, esteemed
by all who knew him," said the obituary in The New-England His-
torical & Genealogical Register and Antiquarian Journal, "and one
of the earliest subscribers to the REGISTER."\(^59\)

Ephraim, Jr., married Lucy Ann Fessenden on July 4, 1841, in
Boston.\(^60\) He graduated from the Harvard Divinity School on
July 18, 1845, and participated in the exercises by reading a paper
titled, "Asceticism in the Church."\(^61\) He was ordained a Unit-
arian minister on September 11, 1845, at Petersham, Mass., an
event reported in some detail in the Christian Register.\(^62\) Nute

\(^56\) Ibid. (July 1, 1855), p. 400.
\(^57\) Christian Register, October 14, 1854, p. 162. For Christian Register articles on the Tanner and Dall missions, see issues of February 17, 1855, p. 26; March 3, 1855, p. 34; and March 10, 1855, p. 38.
\(^58\) Vital statistics unknown.
\(^59\) "Ephraim Nute, 1819-1897." Heralds of a Liberal Faith, The Preacher, v. 3, pp. 275, 276; C. W. T., The New England Historical & Genealogical Register and Anti-
querian Journal, Boston, v. 27. (April, 1873), p. 225; Amy Ethel Emery, compiler, typed copy of "Family Records of the Immigrant James Nute, of Dover, N. H. (G N976)"
\(^60\) Emery, "Records of James Nute," p. 148. Also noted in Christian Register, July 17, 1841, p. 115. Because of this latter, it is presumed that Ephraim, Jr., was a Unitarian
at the time. It is not known if he was reared in the church. He married twice later; Adelia Mary Skinner (date unknown), and Catherine Anderson Coffin (September 25, 1881).—Emery, "Records of James Nute," p. 148; Percy E. Nute to this writer, August 22, 1962.
\(^61\) Christian Register, July 26, 1845, p. 118; C. Conrad Wright, registrar, Harvard Divinity School, to this writer, January 25, 1962.
\(^62\) Christian Register, October 25, 1845, p. 170.
served at Petersham until 1848, then at Scituate, Mass. (1848-1851),
and at Chicopee, Mass. (1851-1855). Before he left Scituate, Nute
taveled as a speaker in “the West.” During the late spring and
summer months of 1850, he probably preached in several places
although the only ones known at this time were in Cannelton, Ind.,
and Griggsville, Ill. Before his Kansas mission, Nute was not
overly prominent nor was he often mentioned in the Christian
Register. The various “yearbooks” of the A. U. A. listed him in
his pastorates and in regional denominational organizations, but
not as an officer at any time. At a Unitarian convention in Mon-
treal, Canada, in October, 1854, Nute served as one of two secre-
taries while S. K. Lothrop was elected president and Albert
Fearing one of three vice-presidents.

In the spring of 1854 the A. U. A. began a book-selling campaign
through its ministers. Nute’s letters to Secretary Miles in refer-
ce to this project were formal and businesslike. He sold books
both in Chicopee and Springfield, Mass., but in neither place were
sales remarkable. Nute sounded a discouraged note in January,
1855: “The constant changes going on in these small manufacturing
villages allows to our societies but an uncertain & at their best estate
but a feeble tenure.” He commented further that in the past two
years he had 20 fewer families in his charge. “But I am happy,”
he wrote, “in the confidence that the religious interest among us
has not waned but rather waxed.”

Nute was in the mood for a change. His trips to Springfield undoubt-
dedly brought him into close contact with the Unitarian min-
ister there, the Rev. Francis Tiffany (1827-1908), who apparently
suggested Nute for a mission to Kansas. This news of Nute’s
availability reached E. E. Hale on March 1, 1855. “I learn today,”
Hale wrote Miles, “that Mr. Nute of Chicopee proposes to go to
Kanzas,—and so excellent a piece of news encourages me to write
at once the long deferred letter as to what I think we can do there.”
Hale had “waited & waited” for the association “to suggest a decent

63. See appropriate years from 1845 to 1855 in The Unitarian Annual Register and
The Unitarian Congregational Register.
64. Christian Register, May 25, 1850, p. 82.
65. Ibid., July 13, 1850, p. 111; E. Nute to H. A. Miles, May 28, 1855, Quarterly
66. Christian Register, October 21, 1854, p. 165.
67. In the same year, the A. U. A. gave birth to the Beacon Press.—Madeleine B.
Stern, Imprints on History, Book Publishers and American Frontiers (Bloomington, Indiana
68. E. Nute to H. A. Miles, November 13, 1854; December 11, 1854.—“A. U. A. Let-
ters,” July-December, 1854.
70. F. Tiffany to H. A. Miles(?), February 22, 1855.—Ibid.
man. And I think he is a man providentially well fitted for the duty—.” He presented three reasons for a Kansas mission, but curiously not necessarily to the Emigrant Aid Company town of Lawrence. First, those emigrating to Kansas were young people,—who go to better their fortune,—too poor therefore to belong to an [sic] right and respectable body here;—and so wide awake and so keenly alive in human rights that they will not stand any form of Ecclesiastical Oppression.

But radical levelling was not characteristic of the emigration:
I have already observed, however, the most curious instances, where the necessities of their position give even to rank Come-Outers from New England the stability in Kanzas which they had not here— as the change of Providence Plantations made of Roger William a conservative.

Secondly, “hundreds of Educated men” desired to emigrate “on any sort of business agency” so Nute would not lack a congregation. Thirdly, a surplus of ministers in Lawrence limited missionary work there, but the Emigrant Aid Company planned to promote new towns elsewhere where Nute’s “location” would, within five years, “be worth to him thousands of dollars.” If Hale himself were the missionary, “I would start the first day I could,—with the distinct selfish purpose of being early in the choice of land.” Nute’s lengthy letter to Miles on March 5, in which he spoke for himself, contained five reasons why he desired the frontier post: knowledge of the West; ability of “extemporaneous preaching”; emigration of some of his parishioners and other, known Unitarians; promised support from the Springfield, Mass., society; and “many other considerations of a more personal nature. . . .”

Did Nute seek the position or did the association seek the man? It seems to have been a bit of both. Unfortunately, Secretary Miles did not keep, or the association did not preserve, copies of out-going letters which would help to answer more precisely this question. Whatever the case, Miles completed the “prepared matured arrangements” directed by the executive committee, which met March 12, 1855, and recommended to the missions committee

71. E. E. Hale to H. A. Miles, March 1, 1855.—“A. U. A. Letters,” January-June, 1855. Hale’s comments on the conservative influences of the frontier alone do not prove the inverse of the “Turner thesis.” The theological outlook of early-day Kansas Unitarians has not been established. One suspects the great emigrator, a month short of 33, was more hopeful with his evaluation of the emigrant mentality than descriptive. All those favorable reviews of Kansas and Nebraska, except that of G. W. Brown, may have made heady reading for the Worcester minister and turned him into an “expert.” This letter was probably unsolicited; at least, Miles apparently did not request Hale’s judgments.

72. E. Note to H. A. Miles, March 5, 1855.—“A. U. A. Letters,” January-June, 1855.

73. The Rev. Charles Graves attempted to discover Nute’s motives in a two-part article, “Why Ephraim Nute Went West . . . .” The Christian Register, A Journal of Free Churches, v. 3 (April 14, 1852, pp. 247; April 28, 1852, pp. 248, 260). Graves quoted excerpts from Nute’s published letters, but without footnotes. This letter of March 1 to Miles was apparently unused as was the case for other “A. U. A. Letters.”
that Nute be accepted. This was superfluous action as Miles wrote E. E. Hale the next day that "the Association have voted" to pay Nute $800 "as its missionary to Kanzas" for one year. "We feel much obliged to you for the suggestions of your letters," continued Miles, "& we hope we may have material aid, now much needed as our missionary operations are enlarged," a polite way of saying that splendid sentiments must be supported with money, and would the Rev. Mr. Hale care to help raise same? The missions committee, moreover, reported its approval of Nute to the executive committee six days after Nute was installed as a missionary. Two days after the executive committee "recommended" him, Nute wrote his acceptance from Chicopee. The new missionary, meanwhile, was busy with packing, making transportation arrangements, and disposing of the association's unsold books. Nute thought Dr. Lothrop to be "just the man for the charge" at his missionary installation services, but if this were not possible he told Miles that he would do.

Nute was installed on April 3 at the Chicopee church. The Christian Register carried not only the story, but the charge itself, delivered by Henry A. Miles. This speech deserves some consideration as it was a prelude to Nute's activities in Kansas. "My brother," Miles proclaimed, you go to carry there the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not the dogmas of a party, not the controversies of a sect, not the articles of a humanly devised creed, not the speculations of philosophy, not the intuitions or judgments of your mind; but the Gospel, in the comprehensive and authoritative sense of that word.

Miles left no doubt as to the question of slavery—in the territory of course. He told Nute to preach "that man as the possessor of a rational and immortal soul cannot rightfully be held as a chattel, that a human being, of any race, of any color, is a brother, for whom Christ died. . . ." The secretary also released a thinly veiled advertisement that Nute would be writing letters which "through the pages of our Journal [edited by Miles] your friends at the East may every quarter learn of your movements, plans, trials, hopes, and wishes." Earlier in the charge, Miles mentioned "the

78. E. Nute to H. A. Miles, March 21, 1855.—Ibid.
79. E. Nute to H. A. Miles, March 29, 1855 (two letters with same date).—Ibid.
80. Christian Register, April 14, 1855, p. 58. The charge was reprinted in the Herald of Freedom, September 1, 1855, with the comment that it "is a pleasant document, and contrasts forcibly with the 'blood and thunder' times in which we live."
struggle between liberty and slavery which is at this moment going on in that new Territory," a probable reference to the election campaign for the territorial legislature which resulted in the "bogus legislature." Bearing in mind the association's funding activities and the declared need for missionary monies, Nute's mission at the time of the "struggle," the invitation for Nute to declare his "wishes" in frequent letters for the Quarterly Journal, and as it turned out, also for the Christian Register and other papers, it may be that the A. U. A. sent not only a missionary to Kansas, but also a war correspondent whose purpose it was to boost the "anti-slavery cause" and to raise money for the association's missions. It would be interesting to learn what Miles meant when he said in the charge that "other points must be left to a conference in private interviews. . . ."

How did the Chicopee congregation take its loss? The Christian Register reprinted four resolutions passed by the congregation which praised Nute's ministry. One of them mentioned Nute's fidelity to the church there "under circumstances not always the most encouraging or inspiring." 81 One parishioner wrote Miles that the A. U. A. had "robbed us of so good a man" and that "Mr. Nute is very much beloved by his people." 82 Later in the year, the Chicopee congregation presented Miles with an $80 check for Nute's mission along with a promise of from $10 to $12 for books. 83 The uninspiring situation, however, devoted the people, was undoubtedly one with which ministers were sometimes confronted.

Ten days after the installation, Nute, Miles, Hale, the Rev. Arthur Buckminster Fuller (1822-1862), minister at the Massachusetts North Church, Boston, and others spoke at a meeting in the Bedford Street Church, Boston. Hale, according to the Christian Register, drew a parallel between the Kansas emigration and "other great migrations in the world's history, and threw over it the beauty of his rich historical allusion." Nute's speech "touched all hearts," according to the same source, "and made them offer silent prayers for a blessing from on high to attend him in his distant and laborious services." 84 The meeting, reported a Boston paper, "was well at-


83. John Wells to H. A. Miles, November 12, 1855.—Ibid., July-December, 1855.

84. Christian Register, April 21, 1855, p. 63. A. B. Fuller became chaplain for the 16th regiment, Massachusetts volunteers, and died December 11, 1862, at Fredericksburg, Va.
tended." 85 Six days later, April 19, 1855, Nute left Boston for Kansas. 86

During the trip west, Nute not only preached at Griggsville, Ill., where he had been in 1850, but on three different river boats. He suggested to the executive committee that this aspect of missionary work could be "one of the most fruitful fields for permanent usefulness. . . ." 87 Between Westport [Kansas City] and Lawrence, he preached aboard a Kansas river steamboat on May 17 while a Christianized Shawnee Indian, named Tooley, delivered prayer for the service in his native tongue. 88 "I had a pleasant interview with him," Nute wrote concerning the Indian, "and was refreshed by the confession which he bore to his belief in a doctrine eminently rational and practical, and with a spirit of childlike humility and sincerity." While on this boat, the Emma Harmon, Nute performed the last rites for an emigrant from Ohio who died "with plain indications of Asiatic cholera in its most malignant form." 89

The Emma Harmon landed at Lawrence on May 20, the first steamboat to reach that city. 90 A common practice with the settlers was to pass resolutions complimenting the captain for their passage and this was no exception. The passengers praised Capt. J. M. Wing for the fine trip, after which Nute remarked "that he had not heard an oath or a hard word from any one connected with the boat." 91 It must have been a rather quiet voyage. Frontier conditions at Lawrence shocked the missionary. Family life in a sod cabin with an earthen floor, he wrote, "may seem very romantic" although "the enchantment of such a view requires a magnificent distance, and gains nothing on acquaintance." 92 He and several others attempted to sail up the Kansas river to Topeka, finally arrived after being delayed by a thunderstorm, but Nute returned to Lawrence the next day. 93

85. Boston Evening Transcript, April 14, 1855, p. 2.
86. Quarterly Journal, v. 2 (July 1, 1855), p. 419.
87. E. Nute to H. A. Miles, May 28, 1855.—Ibid., p. 498. There is no record that either the executive committee or the A. U. A. acted on Nute's suggestion.
88. John Speer, "Patriotism and Education in the Methodist Church," Kansas Historical Collections, v. 7 (1901-1902), p. 495. Speer (1817-1906) was aboard the Emma Harmon at the time. "Tooley" may have been Charles Toley.
89. E. Nute to Register, June 27, 1855.—Christian Register, July 21, 1855, p. 114.
91. The Kansas Tribune, Lawrence, May 23, 1855.
92. Walden; Or Life in the Woods by Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), had appeared before Nute left Boston and was reviewed by the Christian Register, August 26, 1854, p. 194. Was Nute critical of Thoreau with these remarks?
Nute’s opportunity to preach on solid ground in Kansas came a week after he arrived in Lawrence, when early on Sunday, May 27, he heard “an old-fashioned gloomy funeral sermon, calculated to depress the minds of the people. . . .” Several settlers requested him to preach at sunset from atop Mt. Oread, near the site of the present University of Kansas. With about 150 in his outdoor congregation he read some passages from the Sermon on the Mount and from the 17th chapter of *The Acts.* His text was “The Unknown God, him I declare unto you &c.” from the same chapter.

Mrs. Sara Tappan Doolittle Robinson (1827-1911), wife of Charles Robinson (1818-1894), who was to be the state’s first governor, wrote that at this service, “Earth had never spread out a fairer picture than this lying before us,” adding that the scene reminded many of their “old homes among the eastern hills” but still there was “the hope which actuates one and all of seeing the same institutions flourish here, which make life desirable there.” In its tardy report of this gathering, the *Herald of Freedom* described Nute as “a gentleman of classical education, a very pleasant speaker, and withal, we believe a very worthy man.”

G. W. Brown at one time was a member of the Unitarian society in Lawrence. After a formal society had been formed in 1856, the *Herald of Freedom* mentioned under the headline, “Practical Christianity,” a $514 contribution for Kansas relief from The Church of the Disciples, in Boston, whose pastor was the Rev. James Freeman Clarke (1818-1888). “What makes this act more remarkable is the fact that this church belongs to the despised sect of Unitarians. ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.'” The newspaper in 1855 carried an article on slavery by the Unitarian minister, William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), and the next month the *Christian Register* boosted the *Herald*:

Yet there is a racy tang of the wilderness about the sheet,—which does not desert it even in the mail bags. "A raw Indian, looking in at the window,

94. “Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.”—*The Acts*, 17:22.
98. Brown served as a temporary chairman of the first formal meeting on February 3, 1856, and signed the society’s constitution.—“Minutes of meetings, Unitarian society, Lawrence,” Book I, Unitarian Historical Library, Boston. Cited hereafter as “Minutes of Meetings, Lawrence Church.”
furnishes this item." That single remark savors of an office different from our second story, book-lined new carpeted sanctum, into which no Indian comes, unless Eleazer Williams, to make some suggestions about his distant people,—or friend Tanner collecting ploughs and pitchforks for his.101

Not all Eastern Unitarians were so taken with that "racy tang." Edward Everett wrote his nephew, E. E. Hale, and complained of G. W. Brown's reprints of anti-Everett articles from the New York Tribune, edited by Horace Greeley (1811-1872). "You understand that I am a subscriber to the 'Herald of Freedom' by request," Everett wrote. "It is Kanzas civility perhaps to ask a man to subscribe to your paper, & then pelt him."102 Everett also referred to his presentation of the 3,050 memorial and to a speech he delivered in the United States senate in February, 1854, wherein he violated the anti-Nebraska position on Kansas' geography and expressed a moderate view of slavery.103

Two days after Nute preached from the Mt. Oread pulpit, the A. U. A. convened for its 30th annual meeting on May 29, 1855. The executive committee reported the progress of its missionary work in Minnesota, India, and Kansas, the latter station "bearing upon the great question which marks the middle of this nineteenth century,—the strife between freedom and slavery. . . ." The committee quickly added that the work in Kansas did not commit the association to any political party, nor did they seek to widen the already deep sectional crevice, but they "would be false to all the convictions of their minds" if the transplanted sons and daughters of New England failed to have with them "some one who should be a fit representative of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as we understand it. . . ."104 That evening E. E. Hale spoke before the assembly on the "urgent need of immediate Christian influences" in Kansas.105

The executive committee, whose members were re-elected at the meeting, met June 9 and heard an account of events in Kansas from "a gentleman lately returned from that Territory, who bore strong testimony to the great interest there awakened by Mr. Nute's preaching. . . ."106 Why, one might inquire, the secrecy?

101. Christian Register, April 14, 1855, p. 58.
102. Edward Everett to E. E. Hale, July 16, 1855.—"Aid Co. Corr." 1854-1856. An example of such a reprint may have been a Tribune article, dated April 15, 1855, in the Herald of Freedom, May 19, 1855.
104. Quarterly Journal, v. 2 (July 1, 1855), pp. 418, 419.
106. Quarterly Journal, v. 3 (October 1, 1855), p. 54. Probably this was not E. B. Whitman. The aid company secretary reported receipt of a letter, dated May 22, 1855, from Whitman in Lawrence, on June 9, 1855. Then on June 16, 1855, the secretary again noted receipt of an undated Whitman letter apparently written in Kansas.—Emigrant Aid Company trustee records, v. 1, pp. 149, 151.
This unnamed person may have been Samuel Clarke Pomeroy (1816-1891), an agent of uncertain efficiency for the New England Emigrant Aid Company, later a U. S. senator from Kansas, who had returned from Kansas at this time to raise money for the company. In the territory, Pomeroy bought real estate and mills; sometimes he raised money in New England.\textsuperscript{107} On the day the executive committee met, the \textit{Christian Register} mentioned the lectures of “that wonderful man, Gen. Pomeroy, the Emigrant Company’s Financial Agent in Kanzas.”\textsuperscript{108} The A. U. A. leadership may have preferred discretion to alignment at this time. This anonymous witness urged the committee to take action on the construction of a permanent church building at Lawrence, an objective hardly detrimental to the company. The committee made no public decision, but directed Secretary Miles to write Nute on this matter to obtain facts “bearing upon the practicableness, expediency, and probable cost of accomplishing this object.” They continued to appeal to “the friends of a free and pure Gospel in Kanzas” for financial aid to provide “proper church accommodations” in Lawrence.\textsuperscript{109}

Letters from Nute to the East reflected his hardships on the prairie, that “golden opportunity.” For a while he and 12 others had lived in Lawrence crowded in a cabin 16 feet square. This was “commodious and pleasant compared with some of the turf-huts, without door, window, or chimney.”\textsuperscript{110} Nute and an unnamed “friend and companion of the voyage” staked a claim some two miles from Lawrence where they lived in a tent. The two men suffered the whims of the elements as well as a monotony of diet. “Our fare is simple,” he wrote, “the variety being chiefly of the genus bread. We enjoy our manner of living very much but hope, before the charm of its novelty is worn off, to have more of the comforts of civilization.”\textsuperscript{111} He preached on Sunday, June 3, again on top of Mt. Oread, but a cloudburst interrupted his service.\textsuperscript{112} The next Sunday he tried again from the same place, but the hot Kansas sun decimated the attendance.\textsuperscript{113} With services either washed out

\textsuperscript{107} Johnson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 57, 113, 114.
\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Christian Register}, June 9, 1855, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Quarterly Journal}, v. 3 (October 1, 1855), p. 54.
\textsuperscript{110} E. Nute to H. A. Miles(?), June 4, 1855, \textit{ibid.}, p. 67; original in “A. U. A. Letters,” January-June, 1855. The original mentioned that this person had taken a claim near that of Nute’s.
\textsuperscript{111} \textit{ibid.}, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{113} E. Nute to H. A. Miles(?), June 11, 1855, “A. U. A. Letters,” January-June, 1855. “Rev. Mr. Nute gave a very pleasant religious discourse on Oread Mount last Sabbath evening to a goodly number,” and another meeting was announced for June 17.---\textit{Herald of Freedom}, June 16, 1855.
or burnt out, Nute seemed rather anxious when he wrote that “we ought to have the first church, i.e. meetinghouse, in Lawrence, and that right early.” 114 The “charm” of outdoor living and preaching wore thin quickly.

During these early months Nute was dogged with financial difficulty. He wrote Miles on July 8 that he had been “nearly 3 months from Boston & no letter from anybody yet. I have been much straitened yes actually distressed for the want of funds.” He had written to acquaintances in Boston seven weeks previously “to have some property of mine sold for whatever it would bring & the proceeds sent immediately, but no word yet—.” He had written to someone else for money but no reply. He planned a trip to St. Louis on July 22 and would Miles “send me $100, or even $50, or even 25, yea or peradventure 10 to that place in the form of a certificate of deposit at the Suffolk bank payable to my order if the amount be one of the first named or in bank bills if the latter.” His books and papers water-soaked, an unfinished 15 feet square house already costing $300, and constant rains and wind, Nute told Miles that “our situation is anything but pleasant.” Portions of this letter saw print, with punctuation added, numerals spelled out, and Nute’s “free state” politics deleted.115 Nute’s letter of August 24, however, evidently sanctioned this when he wrote “perhaps you can cull something from this” in reference to Quarterly Journal publishing.116

In that letter of August 24, Nute replied, it seems, to the questions concerning church construction which the executive committee had raised. “The time has fully come, & but past come, for erecting a church.” His audiences were large enough for Unitarian preaching and Lawrence was the place at which to build. The city appeared to be “safe” from an investment standpoint. The only difficulty would be their “neighbors in Missouri,” but Nute had “little fear that Kanzas will be a slave State.” He had spoken with some 72 settlers originally from slave states who did not want that institution in Kansas. “If this shall be a free State,” he wrote, “Lawrence will be one of the largest cities, and real estate will


116. E. Nute to H. A. Miles, August 24, 1855.—Ibid. The letters of June 4, June 11, July 8, and August 24 were published in part in the Quarterly Journal, v. 3 (October 1, 1855), pp. 60–72. In the reference to the July 8 letter, the Quarterly Journal apparently erred when it dated it “near the close of July” for the published excerpts matched the one discovered in “A. U. A. Letters.” The published version of the August 24 letter did have a slip at the “national administration.”
increase in value very rapidly.” He did not recommend a “large” or “expensive” church, but he did desire one which would seat from three to four hundred people. This could be built from native stone at a cost of three to four thousand dollars. The woodwork might be slightly higher than that in Massachusetts, but black walnut was abundant “and as cheap as the best pine with you.” As to his pastoral duties, “I have enjoyed the work both of preaching and of pastoral labor as I never did before . . . so much so, that it has seemed to come from a source entirely above myself, and I have taken it as a seal of Divine favor on my work.”

Before receiving any definite word from Boston, Nute proceeded to raise as much money as possible in Lawrence. At the end of services on Sunday, August 26, Nute asked the congregation to consider a church building. A few met to discuss this, called to order by Charles Robinson. The group elected a Mr. Wilder, “an old Unitarian from Bolton,” probably Abraham Wilder, as chairman of a five-man committee to report the next week. Apparently the committee decided in favor of a permanent structure, for on the next Sunday, September 2, a “subscription” was begun among the settlers which years later Nute said “met with general, and considering the circumstances, a generous response.”

The next week he wrote Miles that a young man of “the Christian Connection in Ohio” would help build the church, and that a self-confessed non-religious carpenter who had given 50 dollars to the building fund also promised his labor. Prospects for Kansans erecting their church with their own resources must have seemed mighty slim. Undoubtedly because of this, in part, the executive committee decided on September 17 that “the interests of Christianity and civilization in Kanzas” forced them to spend up to $3,500 for construction of a church at Lawrence. The A. U. A. would retain title to this property. Certain unnamed “responsible parties” would supervise the construction.

At this same meeting the committee heard Edmund Burke Whitman (1812-1883), “a gentleman well known to some members of the Board.” E. B. Whitman, a nephew of Bernard Whitman

117. E. Nute to H. A. Miles, August 24, 1855.—Ibid.
118. E. Nute to H. A. Miles, August 27, 1855.—Ibid. Robinson was a member of the Unitarian society in Lawrence, one of his biographers notwithstanding.—Frank W. Blackmar, The Life of Charles Robinson, The First Governor of Kansas (Topeka, Crane & Company, 1902), pp. 31, 567.
122. Ibid.
(1796-1834) and Jason Whitman (1799-1848), both Unitarian ministers, was born in East Bridgewater, Mass. He graduated from Harvard College in 1838 and went from there to become master of the Hopkins Classical School in Cambridge, Mass., until 1854 "when ill health compelled him to give up his school." 123 The Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company hired him in September, 1854, as a stock subscription agent and prepared a circular specially for him. He traveled throughout New England speaking and selling stock for the Company. 124 Dr. Thomas Hopkins Webb (1801-1866), secretary of both the Massachusetts and the New England Emigrant Aid Companies, noted on March 10, 1855, that Whitman’s effort “thus far has not been so flattering as was anticipated,” 125 while on April 14 Webb recorded the observation of Amos Adams Lawrence (1814-1886), the company’s treasurer, that Whitman had sold $7,639 worth of stock, had collected $703 in donations, but had received $818 for salary and expenses. 126 Apparently in the same month, the company released Whitman. Dr. Samuel Cabot, a member of the company’s executive committee, interviewed Whitman in July. Cabot told the company’s officers on July 7 that Whitman, who had been to Kansas that spring and who had since returned east, “grudgingly and guardedly” admitted “that he had obtained a free pass over the whole route” which “might have been given him [Whitman] under the impression that he was the Agent of the N. E. Em. Aid Co.” Whitman had purchased some land in Kansas, apparently at some advantage to himself, under the same “impression.” Whitman’s answers to Cabot’s questions, it should be noted, were “as near as I [Cabot] can recollect.” The company’s executive committee, after hearing this, promptly voted not to re-employ him. 127

But on September 17, 1855, the executive committee of the American Unitarian Association hired the former aid company agent and agreed to pay his “travelling expenses while engaged in making collections” for the Lawrence church. 128 It is quite improbable that A. U. A. officials did not know of this affair. Was Whitman really guilty of something serious? Was his imposture the actual

125. Ibid., pp. 79, 80.
126. Ibid., p. 105.
127. Ibid., pp. 109, 110, 150-162.
reason for his dismissal, or did the company use this incident as an excuse to conceal something more serious, thus allowing Whitman to save face? Or did they release him because of his sheer incompetence? Amos A. Lawrence wrote Thomas H. Webb in March, 1855, that Whitman's subscriptions were so unproductive that "his salary and expenses would make a very large percentage of all; but he has worked faithfully, though unsuccessfully. Perhaps he has not the qualifications required; or perhaps no one could have been successful." On the same day, Lawrence wrote John M. S. Williams, who, like Lawrence, provided much capital for the company, with this comment: "Mr. Whitman fails to accomplish anything; and we must make a new contract, being as liberal with him as possible." Lawrence may have tried to be easy on Whitman since he was instrumental in securing him in the first place. Then came the July 7 report. But three days later, Lawrence wrote Charles Robinson the following about Whitman:

I learn that Mr. Whitman received an interest in the town of Lawrence at the expense of the company: probably there has been a misunderstanding in regard to him. He was an unsuccessful teacher of a public school in Cambridge, and was not a successful collecting agent for the Emigrant Aid Company. But though dull, he is believed to be honest, and received an honorable discharge from both; though not at his own request. (Please consider this as confidential.)

All of the available evidence about this episode comes from those directly engaged with the company. The motives of both the A. U. A. and the aid company in this matter could throw important light on the nature of both organizations. Whittman and Albert


130. Amos A. Lawrence to [J. M. S.] Williams, March 17, 1855, ibid., p. 68; Johnson, op. cit., pp. 15, 16. Johnson, citing this and the letter to Webb, wrote that Whitman collected "only about enough to pay his own expenses," ibid., p. 113.

131. Emigrant Aid Company trustee records, v. 1, p. 27. Lawrence, like Whitman, was a Harvard man (1855), Dictionary of American Biography, v. 11, p. 47.

132. Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, July 10, 1855.—"Copies of Letters of Amos A. Lawrence," pp. 90, 91. This letter was not cited in Battle Cry with reference to Whitman's release.

133. Some of the material used in this paper was cited in Johnson, op. cit., p. 113. Here Johnson wrote that Whitman "caused trouble by fraudulently posing as an agent of the Emigrant Aid Company" in Kansas, after his release in April. His alleged pose occurred definitely before the company's executive committee voted against rehiring him, a decision made on July 7, 1855. According to the records, on June 16, 1855, "The Secretary was requested to ascertain from Mr. E. B. Whitman on what terms he will act as a Stock subscription Agent," Emigrant Aid Company trustee records, v. 1, p. 191. The company's executive committee acknowledged on June 30, 1855, the receipt of a letter from Whitman regarding his terms, ibid., p. 195. Later in Battle Cry, p. 171, Johnson wrote of Whitman as "the former subscription agent" trying to interest the aid company in some sawmills. Johnson's documentation for this is the trustee records, v. 1, pp. 93, 94, which, when examined by this writer, referred to a meeting held March 31, 1855, of the executive committee. How could Whitman be a "former" agent before he was freed? Furthermore, because of E. E. Hale's position with both the aid company and the A. U. A., and the delay of 72 days between Whitman's rejection by the former and his employment by the latter (apparently unknown to Johnson), Hale, or anyone else had ample opportunity to communicate with either Miles or Lothrop about the "fraudulently" acting Whitman. No such correspondence was found in "A. U. A. Letters." Knowing who might have "tipped off" aid company officials of Whitman's Kansas movements would be interesting.
Dwight Searl (1831-1902) opened an "Emigrant's Intelligence Office" at Lawrence in June, 1856, so Whitman might have been working in competition with the Aid Company and/or with some of its agents in 1855. Raising money for the A. U. A. on an expense account would have fitted neatly with some land speculation. When Whitman announced the opening of his service in 1856, the Christian Register glowingly commented: "Our long acquaintance with Mr. Whitman, enables us to say confidently, that whatever business may be committed to him, will be performed with strict honor and faithfulness." It is not known how effective was this endorsement, nor the effect of it on the officers of the aid company.

The A. U. A. executive committee directed Whitman to emphasize that the A. U. A. would own the Kansas church property and that Kansans would pay rent on the building "according to their ability" until such time they could purchase it. This money would be used for "a perpetual building fund, to aid other societies at the West in a similar manner." With Whitman leading the drive, the association stepped up its campaign. Whitman proposed through the Christian Register that Unitarian children in the East contribute toward a Sunday School library through their church school leaders. "Should more be received than is required for the library at Lawrence," he wrote, "the balance will be appropriated for the same object in other towns in Kanzas where there is Unitarian preaching." Nute had spoken at three places, including Lawrence, while Burgess was still in Topeka. Whitman also spoke at several Eastern churches, with help from Albert Fearing, James Freeman Clarke, Dr. Lothrop, and others. Whitman delivered "a brief, modest, but able speech" at the autumnal convention in October after which the assembled Unitarian clergy and laity there "unanimously passed" a resolution which "earnestly recommend" that the churches contribute to the construction of the Lawrence church. The Christian Register in November, 1855, announced that the association would conduct Sunday evening missionary meetings throughout the coming winter and "heartily wish it all success."

136 Christian Register, June 28, 1856, p. 103.
138 Ibid., p. 215; Christian Register, October 12, 1855, p. 163; October 20, 1855, p. 167; October 27, 1855, p. 171; November 3, 1855, p. 173.
139 Christian Register, November 3, 1855, p. 175.
Church, Boston, on November 11, with Lothrop as chairman. Interestingly enough, one of the speakers was the Rev. William D. Haley, the Alton, Ill., minister who sought the Kansas post in 1854, and who now spoke "with great earnestness of our need of more united and zealous action in behalf of missions." His address continued the racist strain set forth by Lothrop on May 30, 1854:

In his wisdom, God has not permitted the Spaniard or the Frenchman to possess the Continent, but made it a riddle to them, and upon its bleakest coast and most sterile soil, he nourished a colony of the Anglo-Saxon race, that they might send their impulses of religion and liberty across its broad expanse.140

But all was not frictionless. Not all ministers, nor all laymen, approved the leadership's mission activities without qualification. The Rev. Charles Henry Brigham (1820-1879), minister at Taunton, Mass., who at the preceding autumnal convention had urged support for the Kansas church and had introduced E. B. Whitman there, wrote in September about an offer made to him to help raise funds for the association. He agreed to help the A. U. A. in his own church, but he refused to go to those of others, that being "the business of the Secretary himself." "Moral force in that direction, too, is very much lost," he continued,

when eminent and opulent men, members, too, of the Church of the President of the American Unitarian Association, and proposed as models of all that is good, noble, and pious, give their thousands of dollars to propagate orthodoxy, and nothing for the views which they profess to hold. If the dignitaries of the Association cannot make their friends most pious and honorable sensible of its claims, how shall we poor country ministers do it? 141

From Keene, N. H., the Rev. William Orne White (1821-1911) was unable to stir up much interest among his flock in giving to the Kansas church because "some of them are more crippled [sic] than usual in consequence of still new pecuniary embarrassments."142 The Rev. Samuel Osgood (1812-1880) wrote Whitman from New York that "it does not seem to me well to press the Kansas claim in public before our congregation, as their habit, are little in favor of having appeals for money made on Sunday," although he might see any of the men of the parish privately.143 The executive committee was forced to admit publicly on November 12

142. William O. White to E. B. Whitman, November 7, 1855.—Ibid.
143. Samuel Osgood to E. B. Whitman, November 12, 1855.—Ibid.
that some unnamed parties had expressed “a want of sympathy” toward Western missions.\textsuperscript{144}

Construction of the Lawrence church began late in October with the purchase of some lumber and the excavation for a basement. “The perplexity and labor of getting up such a building is too much for your missionary to undertake,” Nute confessed. “Everybody is head and ears in business of their own, and there is a general scramble for building materials, workmen, &c.” He said he was happy that Whitman would soon arrive to superintend the construction, a decision made by the executive committee.\textsuperscript{145} In a letter to the \textit{Christian Register} in November, Nute shifted to an optimistic tone, praised the Emigrant Aid Company, and boosted Lawrence with all the fervor of a Chamber of Commerce president. Nute himself, now with his wife Lucy, lived outside town in his 15\textperthousand-foot square cabin. “Perhaps, indeed, we should indulge in the effeminate luxury of a thick rug carpet to cover the cracks in our floor if such an article were within reach; but rough boards are a great improvement on the bare ground, and a tight roof on a covering of cotton canvas, and it not morally wholesome to go too rapidly in this direction.”\textsuperscript{146}

Construction of the church stopped in December because of what Nute described as “the prospect of immediate civil war.” He wrote the committee on December 2 that “our men are under arms, and have been for the last three days and nights, giving our village quite a warlike appearance. . . .”\textsuperscript{147} This was the beginning of the almost bloodless “Wakarusa War” in which several hundred Missourians gathered at the Wakarusa river south of Lawrence in order to level the “free state” town. Nute took his “repeating rifle” into town on December 3 and promised \textit{Quarterly Journal} readers that he would “use my utmost efforts to prevent bloodshed. But if it comes to a fight, in which we shall be forced to defend our homes and lives against the assault of these border savages (and by the way the Indians are being enlisted on both sides), I shall do my best to keep them off.”\textsuperscript{148} He wrote five days later that the body

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Quarterly Journal} Quarterly Journal, v. 3 (January 1, 1855), p. 264.
\bibitem{E. Nute to an unknown person, November 4, 1855, \textit{ibid.}, p. 284; \textit{ibid.}, (April 1, 1856), p. 430.} Although the executive committee approved publicly Whitman’s appointment on December 10, 1855, Nute, in an unpublished letter more than a month earlier, expressed surprise at the appointment. —E. Nute to H. A. Miles, October 27, 1855, “A. U. A. Letters,” July-December, 1855.
\bibitem{E. Nute to Register, November 19, 1855—\textit{Christian Register}, December 8, 1855, p. 194.} E. Nute to \textit{Register}, November 19, 1855—\textit{Christian Register}, December 8, 1855, p. 194.
\bibitem{ibid., same letter with added note dated December 3, 1855.} \textit{ibid.}, same letter with added note dated December 3, 1855.
\end{thebibliography}
of a "free state" man, murdered by the "nuffians," had been brought to Lawrence and displayed at the aid company's Free-State hotel. "It was the most exciting and the most distressing scene that I ever witnessed," he declared, although "no blood of retribution stains our hands." Furthermore, he had enrolled in the cavalry, though I have not yet appeared in the ranks, but should there be an attack, I shall be there. I have had some hesitation about the propriety of this course; but some one has said, "In questions of duty, the first thought is generally the right one." On that principle I find strong justification. I could feel no self-respect until I had offered my services. Some of the timber earmarked for the church was utilized in the fortification of Lawrence. The unfinished basement itself was used as one of five such forts. When the "war" ended Nute wrote that "for a time it seemed probable that the foundation-stones for the church would be wet by the blood of the martyrs for liberty." At present it is unknown when these letters reached Boston. At a "missionary conference" at the Hollis Street church on December 21 with Miles as chairman, "reference was make [sic] to the state of things in Kanzas, and to the recent disturbances there, and to the delay necessarily occasioned thereby, in the erection of the contemplated place of worship in Lawrence." The next day the Christian Register judged that the latest news from Kansas indicated "considerable probability of a collision between the Missouri marauders and the people of Lawrence." By this time in the territory, the "war" was over, but no one on Beacon Hill seems to have known it. The paper hoped for no violence and it felt that the policy of Territorial Gov. Wilson Shannon (1802-1877), former governor of Ohio, now Democratic appointee of President Pierce, would prevent it. Shannon, according to the Christian Register, appeared to recognize this threat "and he is now calling on President Pierce to aid him with U. S. troops to ward off dangers from the soul spirits his own haste and folly have invoked." In February, 1856, the newspaper referred to an Emigrant Aid Company meeting at which both S. C. Pomeroy and Eli Thayer had urged shipments of Sharps rifles to Kansas, a proposal which provoked the following:

151. Ibid., same letter with added note dated December 9, 1855.
152. Christian Register, December 29, 1855, p. 206.
153. Ibid., December 22, 1855, p. 203.
154. A cold spell slammed into Kansas December 9, "and for nearly three weeks 10° to 30° below, with much high wind and heavy fall of snow."—E. Nute, "The Unitarian Church," loc. cit.
No reasonable person can doubt, that the efficient measures of defence, during the late troubles in Kansas, were the principal means of preventing bloodshed. In the absence of the proper protection which the government should give to these settlers, they are thrown on their own natural resources, precisely as they would be against Indian incursions, or the ravages of wild beasts, and unquestionably are to be justified before God and in the judgment of all civilized men, in seeking aid from all who sympathise with the oppressed. 156

And again, in the next month, this newspaper declared that although it usually favored a policy of peace, "we do not believe that all evil should always go unresisted with actual, deadly conflict. When and how, and by whom it shall be resisted, is often a question of expediency. . . . [T]here is a moral necessity, we hold, as the world is, that evil should sometimes be resisted with force, and whoever does it with a just, generous, and considerate spirit, and for just cause, humors our common human nature, asserts our common sacred human right." 157

Not unrelated to all this were the fund-raising activities for the church building. At some time in November, E. B. Whitman left Boston. 158 By November 30 he was in St. Louis with material for the church which he claimed would cost not less than $80 per ton to freight to Lawrence, while during the previous summer it might have cost as little as $16 per ton. He acknowledged the $3,500 for the building but felt $500 more would be needed. He also declared that the rumors of the destruction of Lawrence were probably false. 159 Eleven days after he wrote from St. Louis, he was in Boonville, Mo., having traveled overland since river traffic had stopped. 160 By December 24 he had reached Lawrence and had examined work on the church and reported that an additional $1,000 would be needed if a basement were built. 161 He also wrote the A. U. A. treasurer that "Mr. Nute insists upon the basement and says he can raise the requisite funds by writing to some of his friends, but I fancy he is a little too sanguine." 162 In the same letter he cast doubt on the title to the land on which the church was being constructed. This land, held as "squatter" property, might be illegally occupied. He mentioned that the church's "lo-

156. Ibid., February 16, 1856, p. 27.
157. Ibid., March 1, 1856, p. 94.
160. E. B. Whitman to H. A. Miles, December 13, 1855.—Ibid. Although the letter is unsigned, the handwriting is unmistakably Whitman's.
162. E. B. Whitman to C. W. Clark, December 30, 1855. "A. U. A. Letters," July-December, 1856. The letter was misfiled for the date is clearly 1855 and the content pertains to activity in that year.
cation is now adjoining Mr Nutes [sic] lots and very convenient for him, but it is no more so to the inhabitants than many others. I shall consider the squatter title good and leave the location to be settled by the trustees.” Whitman knew of two tracts near the church which might be alternative sites, but one was undesirable, “and the other is one in which I am personally interested. Were is not for this latter fact I should urge a change of location.”

The A. U. A. executive committee assented to these suggestions of both Nute and Whitman when on January 14, 1856, it agreed to complete the basement, raised the debt ceiling to $5,000 and authorized Whitman a power of attorney, the last of which probably had been discussed before Whitman left for Kansas. The increased allocations may have been influenced in part by Nute’s statement that a basement could be rented and thus help repay the association. Another factor may have been Unitarian response to Whitman’s autumn appeals which by January, 1856, totaled $1,628 in cash along with books, Bible, hymnals, a communion service, and even the plans for the church building. The A. U. A. received a land warrant for 160 acres from Charles Baker, of Portland (Maine?). Warrants had been issued to United States military veterans by congress in 1855 and Baker had been a corporal in the War of 1812. He insisted that this warrant be sent either to Nute or to someone in Lawrence who would use it to secure the most desirable land.

But other reasons for approval may have been political and military in nature. The association agreed to pay Nute $800 for one year. It raised Whitman’s salary from $200 to $300 on April 14, 1856. A month earlier, Nute wrote “that a considerable portion” of his 1856 salary would come from pew rents if the church were completed by September 1, 1856. The total salaries of these two men, excluding expenses which were not published completely, was $1,000 by January, 1856, although Whitman had raised for construction only a little more than $1,600. The executive committee, contrary to its public declaration to avoid partisan involvement,

164. E. Nute to an unknown person, December 23, 1856, Quarterly Journal, v. 3 (April 1, 1856), pp. 488, 499.
rewarded Nute and Whitman either in spite of, or, more likely, because of their open political activity. In Nute’s case this included his letters and speeches at “free state” meetings in the territory while Whitman was well-known in New England. The sums raised thus far for the Lawrence church hardly covered total expenses, and in the years following a large deficit grew. James C. Malin suggested that the Free-State hotel, constructed by the aid company, may have been designed to serve as a fort.168

After the hotel’s completion, according to Nute in August, 1855, the same workmen were to build the Unitarian church, a stone structure.169 Although there is no known direct evidence to prove the military motive, the church was used as a fort not only in December, 1855, but also in September, 1856. “Those basement walls, with the openings, had much the appearance of a fort wall located for the defense of the town,” Nute wrote in 1890. “For this purpose it was occupied on the night of September 15th [1856].” 170 Charles Robinson had written Eli Thayer and E. E. Hale early in April, 1855, shortly after the “bogus legislature” election, and had asked for Sharps rifles and two artillery pieces for “military companies” in Lawrence.171 One report has it that some 100 Sharps rifles arrived in Lawrence with the Emma Harmon on May 20, the boat carrying the Unitarian missionary.172 Early in July, 1855, when Nute had told Miles about the expulsion of the “free state” men from the territorial legislature, he predicted: “There will be some fighting soon.”173

Some of the A. U. A. officialdom could not be said to have been uninformed of “free state” military designs long before the “Wakarusa War.” Were those in Lawrence, and in Boston, who appeared so anxious for a church building interested in spreading the Unitarian gospel, or “defense,” or were these two matters considered complementary in the minds of some Unitarian leaders? Nute, it will be recalled, admitted ignorance of construction matters. It is not known who selected the site for the church; Whitman most certainly did not. But if Charles Robinson did modify the Free-

171. Johnson, op. cit., p. 124. On this same page, Johnson wrote that George Washington Deitzler (1826-1884) went to Boston as “a personal envoy” of Charles Robinson to secure some arms; he was a charter member of the Lawrence Unitarian Society in 1856.
The Rev. John S. Brown
(1806-1902)

A native of New Hampshire, and a Unitarian minister there and in Massachusetts, Brown came to Kansas in 1857. He was minister of the Unitarian church in Lawrence through the Civil War.

Edmund B. Whitman
(1812-1883)

One-time stock subscription agent of the Massachusetts and New England Emigrant Aid companies who was employed in 1855 to make collections for the Lawrence Unitarian church.
The Rev. Ephraim Nute
(1819-1897)
First Unitarian minister in Kansas.

The Lawrence Unitarian church. This building was razed in 1893 after it was damaged by a storm which destroyed the tower.
State hotel for "defense," as has been suspected, it would not be unreasonable to suppose he or others planned auxiliary positions. The way Nute wrote at the time about "the blood of martyrs for liberty" spattered on the "foundation-stones" carry a connotation of something exciting and heroic. The "golden opportunity" for converting heathen settlers, in any case, was not as important as the timely deliverance provided by the "Wakarusa War." Any troublesome questions raised about the association's possible collaboration in military preparations, whether officially or as "individuals," could be swept aside after December. The Christian Register left no doubt as to its position: the grottoes of Trajan's time had been abandoned for "expediency" on the open prairie where

Zion must now stand face to face
With Moloch's threatening power.


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