

John D. Rockefeller,  
The American Baptist Education Society,  
and the Growth of Baptist Higher Education in the Midwest

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As anyone who has graduated from or worked for one knows, colleges and universities are in constant need of money, and fund-raising for these institutions has become a growing industry in and of itself, as the creative titles for fund-raising positions advertised in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* attest. College and university administrators have always been scrambling for money, and the papers, pledge books, and office files of John D. Rockefeller document the fund-raising efforts of many school administrators in the late nineteenth century. Rockefeller, a devout Baptist, was interested in the educational work of his denomination, including the growth and maintenance of missions, academies, and colleges; and in the 1880s he was especially interested in the campaign by the denomination's leaders to create a great Baptist university.

The efforts to establish this great university in Chicago have been described in several histories of the University of Chicago and in biographies of Rockefeller. Indeed, the authors of one recent discussion of the Rockefeller family history chose to begin their discussion of the Rockefeller philanthropic legacy with Rockefeller's initial pledge of \$600,000 to the American Baptist Education Society for an endowment for the University of Chicago.<sup>1</sup> But discussions of Rockefeller's giving for the University of Chicago tend to overlook the fact that the new school in the Windy City was not the only project of the American Baptist Education Society. Founded by denominational leaders to promote and improve Baptist education throughout the country,

especially in the Midwest and in the South, the American Baptist Education Society became essentially a philanthropic arm of John D. Rockefeller in the process of fulfilling its purposes. The only large contributor to the Society, Rockefeller used it to channel a total of \$539,069.24 to thirty-four different schools during the 1890s, and between May 1, 1902, and May 1, 1914, the Society paid out another \$273,494 to various schools.<sup>2</sup>

Rockefeller's experience with the Society was his first effort at organized giving; that is, giving his money through a third party which in turn made appropriations according to his guidelines and approval. This was an important step in the evolution of his philanthropy, as he sought to organize his charity to make it more orderly, more deserving, more effective, and less burdensome. By focusing on his contributions to several Midwestern colleges, this essay explores both the changing nature of Rockefeller philanthropy and the limited success of the American Baptist Education Society.

From his earliest charitable gifts in late 1855, John D. Rockefeller tied his philanthropy closely to the religious tenets of the Baptist church, to the organizational and financial needs of the church, and to social needs as perceived by the leaders of that denomination. One needs only to read the list of donations dutifully recorded in his personal ledgers — long lists of giving to the poor, to local churches, to efforts to erect Baptist churches for various ethnic groups, to temperance organizations, and to local and state Baptist societies — to understand the role of the church in defining and widening the scope of his giving.<sup>3</sup> As his wealth grew from his business endeavors, so too did his charitable giving, not only resulting in larger gifts but in gifts to a wider range of activities and to individuals and institutions across a wider geographic area. Word of his wealth and his generosity spread, and the appeals for aid multiplied. “Be not surprised at receiving this letter,” wrote the chancellor of the University of Des Moines in 1884, “your charities are to[o] publicly known to escape my ears.”<sup>4</sup>

As Allan Nevins, Rockefeller's chief biographer, has noted, “it was inevitable that under church guidance his benefactions should extend more and more heavily into the college field.”<sup>5</sup> The guidance of the church in this is especially important, for until the early 1880s, the proportion of Rockefeller's contributions that went to educational institutions was small. His personal ledgers indicate that his first donation to a college was a \$5.00 gift to a “college at Gambier” on February 2, 1864.<sup>6</sup> Four years later he took out a \$500 “subscription to Denison

University,” a Baptist school in Granville, Ohio that had been established in 1832. This was his first sizeable gift to a Baptist college. Denison received two \$1,000 gifts from Rockefeller in 1878, but by then he was also contributing to other Baptist colleges that made appeals to him, giving \$500 to both the university at Chicago and to Shurtleff College in Alton, Illinois. Still, Denison received \$10,000 gifts in both 1881 and 1882, remaining his most favored Baptist school. Unfortunately, however, none of Rockefeller’s surviving correspondence reveals why he gave so early and so largely to Denison.<sup>7</sup>

By the early 1880s Rockefeller was deluged by all manner of requests for financial assistance, and gifts to education began to appear more frequently in his ledgers.<sup>8</sup> Baptist educational missionaries often visited Cleveland’s Baptist churches during their fund-raising tours, and here Rockefeller first heard A.C. Bacone, who sought support for a school for Native American Indians, and Sophia Packard and Harriet Giles, the founders of the Atlanta Female Seminary, dedicated to the education of black women. Both of these became early recipients of Rockefeller gifts, Bacone in 1881 and Packard and Giles in 1882.<sup>9</sup>

That many of Rockefeller’s educational contributions in the early 1880s went to schools for Indians and black women had as much to do with the missionary concerns of the Baptist church as with the traveling plans of a few missionary educators. Rockefeller was beginning to work more closely with the Reverend Henry L. Morehouse (1834-1917), the new corresponding secretary of the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS). The Mission Society, which had been supporting Baptist missions and promoting Baptist education since 1832, had three departments: one “to establish churches and Sunday schools”; another “to aid in the erection of church edifices”; and a third “to provide normal and theological schools for the Freedmen and Indians.”<sup>10</sup> Rockefeller provided support for the Society as early as June 4, 1879, the same year that Morehouse took over as the organization’s corresponding secretary.<sup>11</sup>

Henry Lyman Morehouse, a graduate of the University of Rochester (1858) and the Rochester Theological Seminary (1864), entered the ministry in 1864, serving as a pastor in East Saginaw, Michigan (1864-1873) and at the East Avenue Baptist Church in Rochester (1873-1879) before taking his post at the Home Mission Society. He was, according to a colleague, “a man of unusual foresight, executive ability, fearlessness, pertinacity, religious zeal, and public spirit. . . . In the development of denominational policies and in bringing them to

effectiveness he had no equal.”<sup>12</sup> It was Morehouse who eventually took the lead in forming the American Baptist Education Society, and who succeeded in interesting Rockefeller in major support for both Bacone College, the work of Packard and Giles, and in black education in general.

Morehouse and Rockefeller first corresponded in the spring of 1881 regarding a proposal to change the Society’s Church Edifice Fund from a loan program to an endowed fund that would make grants “to aid feeble churches in procuring suitable houses of worship.” Rockefeller, one of the original contributors to the fund, consented to the change.<sup>13</sup> By the summer of 1882, Morehouse was seeking a meeting with Rockefeller to discuss general denominational needs, but was unsuccessful. By mid-August of 1882, however, Rockefeller was beginning to realize that he could bring his denominational giving together through the Home Mission Society, and he wrote to Bacone asking about the Society’s attitude toward, and plans for helping, his Indian college. Morehouse replied to Rockefeller’s query and continued to request an interview, as well as asking Rockefeller to meet with other needy aid applicants.<sup>14</sup>

On Christmas Eve in 1883, Rockefeller sent Morehouse the kind of letter that Morehouse had been hoping to receive. It marked the beginning of a change in the wealthy Baptist’s procedure for making his charitable donations and started him on the road toward corporate philanthropy rather than individual charity.

Rockefeller was growing weary of the constant appeals that came to him, and before him sat a letter regarding the Scandinavian Church in Bridgeport. He decided to send it to Morehouse, whose organization was charged with building churches. But in his letter to Morehouse Rockefeller sought relief from these appeals as much as he sought advice. He told Morehouse that he wanted “to avoid having all these people from every part of the country calling on [him] and [was] considering whether it is not much better for the cause” for him to “give all through the Home Mission Society.” He then had a question for Morehouse: “If I were to pay into the Edifice Fund of the Home Mission Society five or ten hundred dollars would it seem to you best to give an additional sum to this or have you other more important calls?”<sup>15</sup>

For Morehouse this was an open invitation. He had been pressing Rockefeller for an interview, and now he had an invitation not only to call upon him for large contributions to the Mission Society for church building, but also an invitation to approach the wealthiest Baptist

with his “other, more important calls.” To Morehouse, this meant the education of African Americans and Native American Indians. Morehouse quickly arranged his first meeting with Rockefeller for January 5, 1884 at the Buckingham Hotel; five days later Morehouse received a \$5,000.00 check for the Edifice Fund, “as agreed.” Morehouse wasted no time in arranging another meeting for January 28, 1884. This meeting resulted in two significant pledges from Rockefeller. In reply to a desperate plea from Sophia Packard of the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary, Rockefeller made a “confidential” agreement with Morehouse “to give the balance required to pay off the debt of the Atlanta Seminary, some \$4950.00, in addition to [his] former pledge of \$2,500.” The school would be renamed Spelman Seminary, as Packard had suggested in her letter.<sup>16</sup> Rockefeller made another pledge that night, a \$25,000 pledge “for a Professorship or Chair in a Colored Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Virginia . . . provided another equal amount is raised.”<sup>17</sup> Morehouse clearly had interested Rockefeller in black education in a big way, and continued to press his case for donations to this cause. On February 7 he arranged a meeting between Rockefeller and the president of Shaw University, who left New York with Rockefeller’s \$250 check deposited in the school’s account with the Mission Society.<sup>18</sup>

This flurry of activity between Morehouse and Rockefeller in early 1884 before both left the city for extended trips illustrates Rockefeller’s realization that he needed organizational help in carrying out his charitable work, and his increasing trust in Morehouse and the Mission Society. Theirs became a closer working relationship during the next two years, and by March 20, 1885, Rockefeller felt sufficiently comfortable with their arrangement to send Morehouse an unusually long letter that marked still another change in their relationship.

Rarely did Rockefeller write letters of more than two pages, but his March 20, 1885, letter to Morehouse stretched to four pages. He again asked for advice regarding a specific church-building proposal, this one in Wheeling. But now he went beyond merely asking advice and information regarding specific requests he received, and made three proposals of his own for which he solicited Morehouse’s opinions. One of these plans was a donation of \$20,000 toward a proposed \$70,000 church project on Sixth Street in Manhattan. He then solicited advice regarding ideas he had for new gifts to Spelman and to the Indian university. Morehouse was overjoyed with the letter and endorsed all of Rockefeller’s ideas for new gifts: “How

inexpressibly refreshing are such spontaneous suggestions and purposes to honor the Lord with one's substance, as contrasted with high-pressure, cork-screw methods to obtain benevolent contributions from some who hold on to every dollar as if they expected to take it to glory with them!"<sup>19</sup> Rockefeller's new trust in his opinions and advice intensified their relationship, and soon Morehouse hoped that Rockefeller would provide major support for his new educational initiative.<sup>20</sup>

By the late 1880s, Morehouse had become concerned about the denomination's inability to provide financial assistance to its schools. The Mission Society was only empowered to assist schools for Indians and blacks, and in 1887 Morehouse began advocating the creation of a national Baptist organization to assist Baptist academies and colleges across the country. He found ready support for such an organization among Baptists in the West and in the South, while Eastern leaders were less eager for such an organization. Despite the sharp divisions, Morehouse succeeded in establishing the American Baptist Education Society (ABES) in May 1888 to promote "Christian education under Baptist auspices in North America." As Frederick Gates recalled in his memoirs, the vote to establish the Education Society was "a popular victory for the moneyless and educationally destitute West and South, over the moneyed and educationally well-provided Eastern and New England states."<sup>21</sup>

As secretary of the new organization, Frederick Gates knew firsthand the problems that the promoters of Baptist education faced in the West. After his graduation from the University of Rochester (1877) and the Rochester Theological Seminary (1880), Gates spent eight years as pastor of a church in Minneapolis, and he had most recently completed a successful drive to raise \$50,000 for the endowment of a "feeble academy" in Owatonna, Minnesota, surpassing the goal by nearly \$10,000. Despite his sympathy and support for the idea of a national organization to raise funds for Baptist education, Gates still voted against the plan in May 1888, believing the timing inappropriate, given the sharp divisions within the denomination's leadership. But with a foot in each of the bitterly divided camps, Gates became a logical choice to mediate the differences and bring about a reconciliation, and Morehouse nominated him as the only candidate for executive secretary.<sup>22</sup>

Gates soon had an opportunity to show exactly how "educationally deprived" the Baptists in the West were. A major reason for the geographically based division among Baptist leaders

over the establishment of the Society was the on-going debate about whether to build a great Baptist university and where to locate it. The chief rivals were Augustus Strong of the Rochester Theological Seminary, who favored New York City as the site of the university, and Thomas W. Goodspeed of the Morgan Park Theological Seminary, who favored Chicago. In thinking about how best to promote Baptist education in the West, Gates decided that a major Baptist university located in Chicago would be the best stimulus to education. In October 1888 he prepared a report that argued for locating the university in Chicago; his report is generally credited by historians of the movement with persuading other leaders of the denomination, including John D. Rockefeller, in this direction.<sup>23</sup> Resembling the social surveys that would become major tools of Progressive social reformers after the turn of the century, Gates's report used statistics to compare Baptist educational efforts in the West with those of other denominations, and it offers valuable insight into how Baptist leaders judged their own work.

Gates offered a demographic portrait of Baptists in the West that illustrated the denomination's relatively poor educational work there. He defined the West as that part of the country north of the Ohio River, west of state of Ohio, and east of the Rockies, an area that held 373,000 Baptists. The region contained eleven Baptist schools offering at least some collegiate courses. Total enrollment at these schools was 1,257 students, only about a fourth of whom were taking college courses. These schools owned property valued at \$881,670. By comparison, the 145,000 Congregationalists in the West operated fewer colleges (eight) worth more money (\$1,743,000) and enrolling more students (1,639). The Presbyterians, with only 119,000 members in the West, had as many schools as the Baptists (eleven), but these were worth far more (\$2,437,000) and enrolled 1,874 pupils. The Methodists had twenty-one schools, worth \$5.3 million, and enrolling 5,652 students. Gates calculated that on a per member basis, the Congregationalists owned five times more educational property than the Baptists and enrolled four times as many students; the Presbyterians had nine times as much educational property and four times as many pupils; and the Methodists more than six times the educational property and five times the students.<sup>24</sup>

Gates then turned from his denominational comparison to actual conditions in the eleven Baptist schools. Each was located poorly, so that "the area of their attractive influence in their respective states" was small. Only about a fifth of the western Baptists lived "within the

effective attraction of our western colleges.” None of these small-town schools was significant enough to attract students from far away. The result was that many of “the ablest and most promising” Baptist youths were going to the schools of other denominations or, even worse, to state-supported schools, which Gates characterized as “the State Higher Schools of Irreligion.”<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the existing Baptist schools in the West were poorly financed: only six of the eleven had endowments, and the sum of these endowments was only \$409,000, less than the individual endowments of the denomination’s three leading eastern colleges. As a result, buildings on the campuses of these western colleges were “few, small[,] . . . cheap, inadequate and old,” Gates found, while western Baptist professors, on average, were paid about half the salaries of their eastern colleagues.<sup>26</sup>

The problems that Gates enumerated were not, he argued, the result of apathy or niggardliness on the part of western Baptists, who had shown “great self sacrifice and generosity.” Instead, Gates found that the “great and fatal difficulty” for Western Baptist education lay “in the unfortunate locations chosen for our institutions.” With the exception of the college in Des Moines, Baptist colleges were located in “small obscure towns . . . far removed from the centres of our western life and western means. . . . out of the sight and interest of our wealthy men.” The solution Gates put forward was “to found a great college, ultimately to be a university, in Chicago,” a well-endowed, exemplary university that would rival the best on the continent. “Chicago is the heart of the west,” Gates argued, “the fountain of western life,” and the city alone would “lift so far aloft a Baptist college as an intellectual and religious luminary, that its light would illumine every state and penetrate every home from Lake Erie to the Rocky Mountains.”<sup>27</sup> Gates’s report proved persuasive to the members of the Society and to John D. Rockefeller, who read it in November. Six months later Gates persuaded Rockefeller to pledge \$600,000 toward a one-million dollar endowment for the new university at Chicago.<sup>28</sup>

Prior to pledging his support for the University of Chicago, however, Rockefeller had agreed to support the broader work of the American Baptist Education Society, a decision prompted again by his growing trust in the man charged with running the operation. In the summer of 1888, as Gates and Morehouse set about creating the “financial constituency of the Society,” Morehouse asked Rockefeller to support the young Society, but Rockefeller knew little about its work and what he had heard came from acquaintances who were hostile to its



formation, a fact which he duly noted to Morehouse. “I am not prepared to make a pledge to the American Baptist Education Society,” he replied, “maybe in part because of a lack of sufficient information, but I do remember having some conversation at the time with those who did not regard it a necessity.”<sup>29</sup>

The burden of educating Rockefeller fell to Morehouse, Gates, and those who supported the plan for a university at Chicago. A series of correspondence and meetings in the ensuing months, aided by Gates’s report, succeeded, and in mid-January 1889, Rockefeller asked to see “a statement of the expenses . . . and the receipts” of the Society. He then asked Morehouse to bring Gates to a luncheon meeting, after which he invited Gates to accompany him on the train from New York to Cleveland. Sizing up Gates favorably, Rockefeller soon sent \$500 toward the expenses of the Society. A month later he pledged \$100,000 to its work on the condition that all of the Society’s appropriations from this gift be approved by him first: “I will contribute \$100,000 to the American Baptist Education Society, payable as required for its contributions to educational work in the United States; providing such contributions are not payable faster than \$10,000 during each month, beginning with March and ending with December next; and providing I am advised and endorse in advance the proposed contributions.”<sup>30</sup>

Rockefeller’s contribution at last allowed the Society to begin its major work. From the first, Rockefeller was the major financial backer of the Society itself. For example, the Society’s April 1892 financial statement reported that the Society had received “sundry contributions” from various donors of \$684, while payments from Rockefeller’s various pledges totaled more than \$165,000.<sup>31</sup> Rockefeller’s pledges to the Society were used in two ways. One was as conditional pledges, or challenge grants, to entice others to contribute toward the endowments of specific colleges. The other was to promote better financial management of these institutions by paying the salaries of financial agents. Of the thirty-eight appropriations made by the Society to twenty-seven institutions between May 20, 1889 and March 3, 1892, twenty-seven were for endowments and eight went toward the salaries of financial agents, and three were for other purposes. The first Midwestern institution to receive aid, Des Moines College in Iowa, received \$1,500 for the salary of a fiscal agent on May 22, 1889, and at the next meeting was appropriated \$12,500 toward an endowment of \$125,000 if it raised the remainder by June 15, 1891.<sup>32</sup>

As Gates sought contributions from other wealthy Baptists, he delineated the Society's policies and emphasized its interest in maximizing local support and promoting sound, efficient management. "The aim of the Society is not to seek from its treasury to endow our schools," he reported as part of one such solicitation in November 1889, "but to give such aid, at such time, in such amounts, and under such conditions as shall develop the largest possible *local* aid to institutions to which we give." Thus, the Society had used \$50,000 of Rockefeller's pledge as leverage to bring an additional \$290,000 to the coffers of various institutions. Moreover, he reported, "we discourage debt by refusing to assist institutions who incur debt to pay their debts, and by making local payment of any debts an *invariable* condition of any aid from us." One of the conditions on the endowment grant to Des Moines was that "all the legal debts of Des Moines College shall be paid in full or covered by good subscriptions available for this purpose by Jan[uary] 1st, 1891."<sup>33</sup>

Despite the aid of the Society and its concern for efficient fiscal management, institutions continued to face financial difficulties and often placed themselves in more difficult situations in attempts to escape the burden of debt. In 1901 the new president of Shurtleff College in Illinois asked for a modification of an earlier ABES appropriation because he had not fully realized the conditions regarding the institution's previous debts and the degree to which this hampered fund-raising. To begin to pay off the school's debts, the trustees in 1897 had agreed to an eight-page "iron clad arrangement" that bonded the entire property of the college and the income of its endowment funds and appointed a special treasurer to control the trust funds and systematically retire the \$26,000 debt over the next fifteen years. Founded in 1827, Shurtleff College was one of the oldest Baptist colleges in the Midwest, yet its financial footing was still slippery after 70 years.<sup>34</sup>

Des Moines College offers a similar example. As one of the few Midwestern Baptist colleges located in a city of substantial size, the school was one to which Gates and the ABES devoted considerable time and energy to maintain and improve. They sought to make it, rather than rival schools at Pella and Burlington, the favored institution of the state's Baptists, but this proved difficult. The Des Moines school was founded as the University of Des Moines and incorporated in November 1864 by the Rev. Luther Stone, Rev. J.F. Childs, and the Rev. J.A. Nash. It opened with a single department for women, under the direction of Josephine A. Cutter,

in 1865, but soon became coeducational. Its work was mostly that of a preparatory school until 1874, when it began to offer college classes. During the 1875-76 school year, the university pledged to raise a \$250,000 endowment and to spend \$100,000 for a new building as part of the denomination's Centennial Education Movement, but this campaign met with little success. In 1885 the Prospect Park Land Company lured the school to a new location, promising that if the school operated as a "College of standard grade' for a period of years" it would receive title to the campus and several outlying lots. But the land speculators soon decided that the school was not up to standard and claimed that it had forfeited its option on the campus and lots. The college sued and in the Iowa Supreme Court won title to both the campus and lots. But by 1896 the school was finding it difficult to meet its budget and to maintain its standing as an affiliate college of the University of Chicago. Gates was concerned about its future. Acknowledging that the school was not up to college work, he offered Rockefeller little reason for hope. "I know of only one reason why you should take up Des Moines in an exceptional way," Gates reported to Rockefeller, "and that is that of all these colleges there are none so well attended and at the same time so inadequately endowed, and with so little promise of local funds and final permanence."<sup>35</sup>

By 1900 the school was \$30,000 in debt, and that spring Morehouse reported to Rockefeller that "the crisis in our Educational history in Iowa has been reached. Unless Des Moines College can have speedy relief the indications are that it will be obliged to suspend, and its property pass into the hands of its creditors." The rivalry between the schools at Pella and Des Moines for the role as *the* Baptist college in Iowa remained intense, and the denominational leaders had arranged a compromise by which a pledge from the Education Society would go to the state educational society and be split between both schools. This was an unusual request, one which Rockefeller refused. He preferred to have all of his support concentrated on the Des Moines school, following the ABES tenet of promoting one strong college in each state; and he pledged \$25,000 conditioned upon the college raising an additional \$50,750 by January 1, 1902, which they did.<sup>36</sup>

Des Moines College received more than \$28,000 from Rockefeller in the 1890s and an additional \$24,250 between 1902 and 1914, the second largest sum received by any school during this period. Still, the college's problems persisted, and the school apparently went out of business on the eve of the depression in 1929.<sup>37</sup> Its failure was certainly ironic: according to

Gates's reasoning in 1888, the well-situated college should have flourished under the influence and light spread by the development of the University of Chicago; instead, it failed, while other Baptist schools in smaller towns — Shurtleff College, for example — continued. Moreover, it received more from the ABES than almost any other college — Chicago and Spelman being special cases — but it could not overcome the split allegiances of Iowa Baptists and establish itself as the most significant Baptist college in the state.

The ultimate effectiveness of the American Baptist Education Society, then, was limited. Clearly it helped put some schools on more secure footing, but this may have been as much the result of its assistance with fiscal administration and effective planning than with its actual payments. Indeed, there are signs that the Society was not as effective as Rockefeller had hoped. “When I told him the other day the amount of cash on his pledges we had actually called for, by fulfillment of terms,” Gates reported to one ABES board member in March 1891, “he was astonished at the smallness of the sum.”<sup>38</sup> The size of Rockefeller's gifts alone was not sufficient to sustain any particular institution, except in the special cases of Chicago and Spelman, to which he devoted large sums.

If the results of the Society's work were not entirely successful for specific schools, its impact on Rockefeller's philanthropy was clear and significant. Through the ABES Rockefeller met and came to trust Frederick Gates, and in March of 1891 he asked Gates to move to New York to help him gain control over the flood of charitable requests and organize his philanthropy to make it more efficient. Moreover, the ABES example gave both Rockefeller and Gates experience with large-scale educational philanthropy, and the lessons they learned there proved important with their next big enterprise in this area, the General Education Board. The ABES had been built on faith — faith that Rockefeller money would attract more money and naturally help the institution grow; the General Education Board was built on analysis and investigation. With more money, a larger staff of professionals, and a more clearly defined mission, the General Education Board provided grants to promising institutions deemed worthy of support.<sup>39</sup> The GEB kept in much closer contact with specific institutions and kept particularly close watch on finances. The ability to investigate conditions, analyze problems, and recommend and fund specific solutions set the GEB apart from the ABES, and distinguished all subsequent philanthropic corporations established by Rockefeller.

## ENDNOTES

1. John Ensor Harr and Peter J. Johnson, *The Rockefeller Century* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), p. 13. On the history of the University of Chicago, see Thomas W. Goodspeed, *A History of the University of Chicago*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1916) and Richard J. Storr, *Harper's University: The Beginnings* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966). For an in depth biography of John D. Rockefeller, see Allan Nevins, *Study in Power: John D. Rockefeller, Industrialist and Philanthropist*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953).
2. See the Rockefeller Family Archives, John D. Rockefeller Papers, Financial Material, Charities Index, box 1, cards for the American Baptist Education Society, at the Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York. (The John D. Rockefeller Papers will hereafter be designated as JDR Papers.) For the 1902-1914 payments, see the letter to Frank W. Padelford, May 14, 1914, and the attached list, in the Rockefeller Family Archives, Office of the Messrs Rockefeller, Religious Interests, box 4, folder 24. (This portion of the family archives hereafter will be cited as OMR, with series, box, and folder.) Schools that received assistance from Rockefeller's pledges in the 1890s were Baylor, Bucknell (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania), California College (Oakland, California), Carson-Newman College (Mossy Creek, Tennessee), Cedar Valley Seminary (Osage, Iowa), the University of Chicago, Clinton College (Clinton, Kentucky), Colby, Connecticut Literary and Scientific Institute (Suffield, Connecticut), Cook Academy (Havana, New York), Des Moines College (Des Moines, Iowa), Franklin College (Franklin, Indiana), Furman University (Greenville, South Carolina), Grace Seminary, Grand Island College, Hall Institute (Sharon, Pennsylvania), William Jewell College (Liberty, Missouri), Kalamazoo College (Kalamazoo, Michigan), Keystone Academy (Factoryville, Pennsylvania), McMinnessville Tennessee College, Mercer University (Macon, Georgia), Mississippi College (Clinton, Mississippi), Ottawa University (Ottawa, Kansas), Seattle University (Seattle, Washington), Shurtleff College (Upper Alton, Illinois), South Jersey Institute (Bridgeton New Jersey), Southwestern Baptist University (Jackson, Tennessee), Spelman Seminary (Atlanta), J.B. Stetson University, Walla Walla College, Wayland Academy (Beaver Dam, Wisconsin), Western Pennsylvania Literary and Scientific Institute (Mt. Pleasant, Pa.), Williamsburg Institute (Williamsburg, Kentucky), and Worcester Academy (Worcester, Massachusetts). See these individual cards in the ABES cards, JDR Papers, Financial Material, Charities Index.
3. See especially his first three ledgers, A, B, and C, in the JDR Papers at the Rockefeller Archive Center. The ledgers enable the researcher to trace easily Rockefeller's giving from about 1855 until 1871 (see, for example, Ledger B, pp. 91-93, and 130-131). In 1871 his list of donations become fragmented and more difficult to follow, as his donation list came to include cross references to his office ledger, to "Mrs. Rockefeller's House Account," and "Expense Book at Home" (see Ledger B, pp. 201-202). By 1878 it is again fairly easy to follow his donations. While these ledgers and, beginning in late 1882, the pledge books offer researchers a chronological view of the growth and

expansion of Rockefeller's charitable giving, the Charities Index cards in the JDR Papers, Financial Material series, provide a record of Rockefeller contributions to specific individuals and institutions from approximately 1879 into the early 1900s, listing dates, amounts, and the person through whom institutional gifts were given. These cards also serve as a valuable index to his philanthropic correspondence for three years.

4. F.W. Corliss to John D. Rockefeller, April 28, 1884, in the JDR Papers, Office Correspondence, box 8, folder 62.
5. Nevins, *Study in Power*, p. 157.
6. See Ledger B, p. 92
7. See Ledger B, p. 131; Ledger C, p. 97; Ledger D, p. 157; the charities index card for "Dennison university," in the JDR Papers, Financial Material, Charities Index, box 2; and Ziba Crawford to John D. Rockefeller, April 20, 1882, and July 30, 1882, JDR Papers, Office Correspondence, box 10, folder 74. The latter acknowledges receipt of his final \$10,000 payment toward his conditional pledge to the college, paid by a check drawn on the Standard Oil Company's account.
8. See Ledger D, pp. 155, 157, 163, 164, 165, 168, 169, 198, 199.
9. On Rockefeller's relationship with Bacone and his Indian university, see the Charities Index cards for "A.C. Bacone" and for "Talequah Ind. University"; Ledger D, pp. 163-165, 198; John D. Rockefeller's Pledge Book, 1882-1887, pp. 11, 38, 50; and the file of correspondence from Bacone in the JDR Papers, Office Correspondence, box 2, folder 5. On October 6, 1880, Bacone thanked Rockefeller "for the privilege afforded me of telling your Sunday School about our work in this Territory, and for the interest that was manifest in it." Packard and Giles visited Cleveland and met Rockefeller in June 1882; with substantial gifts from Rockefeller, their school eventually became Spelman College. See Florence Matilda Read, *The Story of Spelman College* (Atlanta: Spelman College, 1961), and the archival sources cited in Kenneth W. Rose and Darwin H. Stapleton in, "Toward a 'Universal Heritage': Education and the Development of Rockefeller Philanthropy, 1884-1913," *Teachers College Record* 93:3 (Spring 1992), pp. 536-555.
10. These departments were described on the letterhead of the ABHMS in the 1880s; see also Read, *Spelman College*, p. 31, for a brief discussion of the history of the ABHMS.
11. See Ledger C, p. 169. Because of the confusing nature of Rockefeller's ledgers in the early and mid 1870s, it is not clear whether this \$1,000 gift in 1879 was his first gift to the ABHMS, but it is the first gift noted on the ABHMS Charities index cards (JDR Papers, Financial Material, Charities Index, box 1).
12. Thomas W. Goodspeed offers this description of Morehouse in his *History of University of Chicago*, p. 40. For the basic biographical information on Morehouse, see *Who Was Who in America*, volume 1, 1897-1942, p. 864.

13. Morehouse to Rockefeller, March 9, 1881, JDR Papers, Office Correspondence, box 28, folder 215; and George D. Rogers to Morehouse, March 16, 1881, JDR letterbooks, vol. 2, p. 56.
14. See Morehouse to Rockefeller, August 16, 1882, and other letters for 1882-1883 in JDR Papers, Office correspondence, box 28, folder 215.
15. Rockefeller to Morehouse, December 24, 1883, JDR Letterbooks, vol. 6, p. 112; Morehouse to Rockefeller, December 27, 1883, JDR Papers, box 28, folder 215.
16. See JDR Pledge book, 1882-1887, p. 26; Packard to Rockefeller, December 29, 1883, in JDR Papers, Office Correspondence, box 30, folder 233.
17. JDR Pledge Book, 1882-1887, p. 25.
18. Morehouse to Rockefeller, February 7, 1884, JDR Papers, Office correspondence, box 28, folder 215; and Rockefeller to Morehouse, February 7, 1884, JDR Letterbooks, vol. 6, p. 230. Although Rockefeller made these early and significant pledges toward black education, and would continue to do so, he seems not to have been entirely confident or comfortable in the field. His charity in this area was one to which he gave considerable thought in the years to come. In the fall of 1888, for example, Morehouse was planning a special meeting of the ABHMS to commemorate its twenty-five years of work among blacks. He asked Rockefeller to attend the meeting, or, if he was unable, to send a message. "We have a great problem in their education," Rockefeller replied. "I am thankful to have had some little part in it and want to further pursue the study of the question with a view to understand better my responsibility in the case. Kindly assure the colored people of my sympathy for, and interest in them and tell them, I hope they will in addition to securing knowledge from books, strive to learn to do all kinds of work, and better than any other class of men." In 1891 he asked his new philanthropic advisor, Frederick Gates, to consider the problem of black education. "I am 'smoking my pipe' right along on this colored education matter," Gates reported, "but thus far only with this result, that before making any suggestions regarding either Richmond Theo[logical] Sem[inary] or the general colored work I must ask plenty of time. These questions have I find a good many side[s], not all of them easily come at." See Morehouse to Rockefeller, August 18, 1888, JDR Papers, Office Correspondence, box 28, folder 216; Rockefeller to Morehouse, August 25, 1888, JDR Letterbooks, vol. 17, p. 128; and Gates to Rockefeller, May 30, 1891, in the copies of Gates correspondence as secretary of the American Baptist Education Society, Frederick T. Gates Papers, box 4, folder 80, Rockefeller Archive Center. As is implicit in James D. Anderson's study, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), Rockefeller's philanthropy for black education spanned both its religious missionary phase and its industrial education phase. The whole question of Rockefeller's attitude toward black education deserves further study, especially in the decades of the 1880s and the 1890s, as does his changing relationship with Henry Morehouse. This preliminary evidence suggests that Morehouse played a crucial role in channeling Rockefeller's giving in this direction, but that while Rockefeller may have understood the

religious rationale, he was troubled by its social implications and was himself an early proponent of industrial education. Indeed, Morehouse and his approach to black education gradually lost favor with Rockefeller as the influence of Gates and other advisors increased. James Anderson describes Morehouse as one of “the missionary vanguard” in black education, “a powerful vanguard that stood clearly and unwaveringly for black higher education and for the development of advanced technical schools to prepare blacks for executive and administrative posts.” The Atlanta Baptist College was later renamed Morehouse College in his honor. Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, p. 68.

19. Rockefeller to Morehouse, March 20, 1885, JDR Letterbooks, vol. 8, p. 5; Morehouse to Rockefeller, March 21, 1885, JDR Papers, Office correspondence, box 28, folder 215.
20. See Morehouse to Rockefeller, October 3, 1888, JDR Papers, Office Correspondence, box 28, folder 216.
21. Frederick T. Gates, *Chapters in My Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p. 91; Goodspeed, *History of the University of Chicago*, pp. 40-41; Constitution of the American Baptist Education Society reprinted in the *Fourth Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Education Society, Held at Philadelphia, May 28, 1892* (New York: Winthrop and Hallenbeck, 1892).
22. Gates, *Chapters in My Life* pp. 84, 86-88, 91-93; Goodspeed, *History of the University of Chicago*, pp. 40-42.
23. Nevins, *Study in Power*, pp. 156-178; Gates, *Chapters in My Life*, p. 96; Goodspeed, *History of University of Chicago*, pp. 41-43.
24. Gates, “The Need for a Baptist University in Chicago, as Illustrated by a Study of Baptist Collegiate Education in the west,” paper presented at the Baptist Minister’s Conference, October 15, 1888 and to the Executive Board of the American Baptist Education Society, December 4, 1888, in the OMR, Educational Interests series, box 102, folder entitled, “University of Chicago — Mr. Gates — 1886-1888.”
25. “The frequently fatal influence of the State universities on the religious life of their pupils, is acknowledged by all Christians who are well informed,” Gates argued. “They are certainly raising up a race of infidels to become the leaders of our western life.” Gates, “Need for a Baptist University in Chicago.”
26. Gates, “Need for a Baptist University in Chicago.”
27. Gates, “Need for a Baptist University in Chicago.”
28. Nevins, *Study in Power*, pp. 168-170; see also Gates, *Chapters in My Life*, pp. 96-108, and Goodspeed, *History of the University of Chicago*.



29. Rockefeller to Morehouse, August 6, 1888, JDR Letterbooks, vol. 17, p. 99. The financial constituency quote is from Gates to the Rev. I.L. Cairns, September 16, 1888, in the copies of select Gates's ABES letters, in the Gates papers, box 4 folder 80, at the RAC.
30. Rockefeller to Morehouse, January 14, 1889; January 15, 1889; and January 24, 1889, in JDR Letterbooks, vol. 18, pp. 284, 293, 324; and Rockefeller to Gates, February 20, 1889, JDR Letterbooks, vol. 18, p. 462; Nevins, *Study in Power*, pp. 175-177; Gates, *Chapters in My Life*, pp. 106-108. See also Rockefeller's pledge book for October 6, 1887-December 31, 1889, p. 112. On the attempts to educate Rockefeller about the needs of the Society, see, for example, Morehouse to Rockefeller, October 3, 1888.
31. "Treasurer's Report," in *Fourth Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Education Society* (1892), p. 26.
32. "List of Appropriations of the American Baptist Education Society," in *Fourth Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Education Society* (1892), pp. 24-25.
33. Gates to J. Warren Merrill, November 6, 1889, in the copies of the Gates ABES letters, Gates Papers, box 4, folder 80, RAC; for the Des Moines College conditions, see the signed appropriation to Des Moines College, attached to Gates to Rockefeller, October 22, 1889, in OMR, Education Interests, box 100, folder entitled "University of Chicago -- Early History — Gates files 1886-1890."
34. Morehouse to Rockefeller, June 5, 1900, in OMR Religious Interests, box 3, folder 23, and Morehouse to Rockefeller, OMR Religious Interests, box 4, folder 24.
35. Gates to Rockefeller, August 11, 1895, and Morehouse to Rockefeller, April 3, 1900, JDR Papers, Philanthropy Related Materials, box 1, folder 5. On the general history of the school, see *The University of Chicago Weekly*, Decennial Souvenir edition, 1892-1902 (1902), p. 97.
36. Morehouse to Rockefeller, April 3, 1900, JDR Papers, Philanthropy Related Materials, box 1, folder 5; Morehouse to Gates, April 21, 1900; William Atchison to Morehouse, April 27, 1900; Morehouse to Gates, April 27, 1900; and the signed ABES pledge, dated June 4, 1900, all in OMR, Religious Interests, box 3, folder 23; and the exchange between Gates and Atchison, June 10, 1903 and June 12, 1903, in OMR, Religious Interests, box 4, folder 24.
37. Evidence on the demise of the college in 1929 comes from a letter to the Rockefeller family office from a Mrs. Reed Morgan in November 1929 asking for aid lest the school be sold. The request was denied, and the letter destroyed. See the card in the correspondence index, "Colleges-Iowa-Des Moines, Des Moines College." For the 1902-1914 total given to the school, see the list attached to the May 14, 1914 letter to Padelford, Religious Interests, box 4, folder 24.
38. Gates to Kingsley, March 21, 1891, in the Gates copies of his ABES correspondence, Gates Papers, box 4, folder 80.

39. For the history of the General Education Board, see Raymond B. Fosdick, *Adventures in Giving: The Story of the General Education Board* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), and the General Education Board Archives at the Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York.