

Florida Historical Quarterly

Volume 73
Number 3 *Florida Historical Quarterly, Volume
73, Number 3*

Article 4

1994

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Recommended Citation

Foster, Jr., John T. (1994) "Aid Societies Were Not Alike: Northern Teachers in Post-Civil War Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 73: No. 3, Article 4.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol73/iss3/4>

AID SOCIETIES WERE NOT ALIKE: NORTHERN TEACHERS IN POST-CIVIL WAR FLORIDA

by JOHN T. FOSTER, JR., AND SARAH WHITMER FOSTER

Northern teachers in the South during the Civil War and Reconstruction have been the subject of various studies.¹ This literature emphasizes the origins and development of the aid societies that sponsored the teachers, and it focuses upon major figures who shaped educational policy. At the same time, little attention details the activities of early northern teachers in Florida within the context of developments in other places. Florida's experience varies from other parts of the South, and it offers, by contrast, a fresh perspective on the regional experience. Ansel Eddy Kinne's career provides an opportunity for understanding aid societies. From early 1864 to late 1866 he was superintendent of schools in Florida for one such organization, the National Freedmen's Relief Association of New York (NFRA).²

Ansel Kinne was born near Syracuse, at Dewitt, New York, on May 17, 1820. The youngest of Prentise Kinne's eleven children, he pursued a love of learning by completing all of the formal education available in the district. At the time, educational opportunities were limited, and he supplemented a common school

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1. Ronald E. Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862-1875* (Westport, CT, 1980); Robert F. Engs, *Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861-1890* (Philadelphia, 1979); Joe M. Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861-1890* (Athens, 1986). See also Samuel Proctor, "Yankee Schoolmarm in Post-War Florida," *Journal of Negro History* 44 (July 1959); Jerrell H. Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida In The Era of Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (Gainesville, 1974); Sarah W. Foster and John T. Foster, Jr., "Chloe Merrick Reed: Freedom's First Lady," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 71 (January 1993).
2. A. E. Kinne is listed as assistant superintendent and superintendent of schools in issues of the NFRA periodical, *The National Freedman*. See also Foster and Foster, "Chloe Merrick Reed, 279-99."



Ansel Eddy Kinne. *Photograph courtesy Onondaga Historical Association, Syracuse, New York.*

education by attending an academy. While there he decided to become an educator. Kinne obtained a teaching position in a log house in Dewitt. In the early 1840s he interspersed successful teaching with attendance at a seminary in nearby Cazenovia. These studies prepared him for college— a hope that failing

health ended in 1844.³ When his health improved he returned to the classroom in Dewitt and nearby villages. In 1848 he came back to his hometown, and at the age of thirty Kinne was elected superintendent of schools.⁴

In the late 1840s and early 1850s Kinne's life changed. He married twenty-year-old teacher Emma Merrick in October 1849 and moved into Syracuse. The Kinnes thereafter involved themselves with the Merrick family and the family's church. Emma's brothers, Montgomery and Charles, were abolitionists, and in 1843 they confronted the local Methodist Episcopal Church on this matter. When their efforts failed to change the church's policy on slavery, the Merricks helped to organize a chapel affiliated with a small breakaway denomination—the Wesleyan Connection of America. Besides rejecting both slavery and alcohol, Wesleyan chapels were places where controversial ideas were debated. The women's rights convention of July 1848, for example, was held in a Wesleyan Connection church in nearby Seneca Falls.⁵ Additional conventions followed in 1852, when Susan B. Anthony spoke at the Merricks' home church in Syracuse. "She ridiculed the idea that women owe any allegiance to men," demanding "for her sex all the rights enjoyed by men, even to the ballot box."⁶

When Ansel and Emma Kinne moved to Syracuse in 1849, local residents were engaged in a different controversy. Congress had passed a fugitive slave law that mandated the return of runaway slaves found in the North to their owners. Daniel Webster, who advocated the law, came to Syracuse to confront local abolitionists, declaring that the law would be enforced regardless of their wishes. The Wesleyan Methodists rejected his law as a product of Satan, "The Father of Lies."⁷

Efforts to impose the law on Syracuse came to a head in October 1851 when a runaway slave was arrested, only to be freed by a group of men that included both of Emma's brothers and their father, Sylvanus. After United States marshals recaptured the slave, a

3. Emerson Kinne, *A Branch of the Family Kinne* (Syracuse, 1881), 60-61; Edward Smith, *A History of the Schools of Syracuse: From its Early Settlement to January 1, 1893* (Syracuse, 1893), 308-09; *Syracuse Daily Standard*, January 17, 1890.

4. Smith, *History of the Schools of Syracuse*, 308.

5. Miriam Gurko, *The Ladies of Seneca Falls: The Birth of the Women's Rights Movement* (New York, 1974), 100.

6. *Ibid.*; *Syracuse Daily Standard*, June 6, 1852.

7. Earl E. Sperry, *The Jerry Rescue, October 1, 1851*, ed. Franklin H. Chase (Syracuse, 1924), 22-28; *New York Tribune*, October 4, 6, 8, 1851; *New York True Wesleyan*, May 17, June 14, 1851.

group of men and women, including the Merricks, returned to the police station and released the slave yet again. He escaped to Canada. These events pleased Kinne, and he probably participated in them. As his convictions grew, he became more active in the family church. By 1856 Kinne had served as a trustee, a steward, and a superintendent of the Sunday school.⁸

Church participation reinforced Kinne's interest in the well-being of others. As an educator with limited formal education, he continued to expand his own knowledge through independent study and shared new ideas with his wife and her younger sister Chloe. They, in turn, shared knowledge with him. Kinne had a keen interest in the careers of his wife and her sister and in the welfare of his students. His sympathy for others also made him popular with students, many of whom still praised him in the 1920s, decades after his death. Kinne took seriously the biblical admonition to be concerned about one's neighbors whether they be African Americans, women, or wayward youth. With the latter he always sought "to reclaim the truant and disobedient."⁹ By 1855 he had become principal of a Syracuse elementary school. Emma periodically joined the staff between the births of her children Lucius in 1855 and Mary in 1860. A son, Charles Wesley, had been born earlier in 1850 and another daughter followed Mary in 1862.¹⁰

While the Kinne family was growing, events in the South occurred that would take Ansel and Emma to Florida. At the Civil War's beginning Federal troops held coastal fortifications at Hampton, Virginia, and quickly added other possessions along the coasts of both South Carolina and northern Florida. As these areas came under northern control, the prospects of freedom attracted thousands of escaped slaves. The influx brought military officers both opportunities and serious problems. Many African-American men were organized into army units, and their families needed clothing, food, and shelter. Since most had been denied any opportunity for an education, many sought literacy for themselves and schooling for their children.

Military leaders such as Brigadier General Rufus Saxton in northeast Florida asked Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton for assistance. Stanton appealed to abolitionists, including Samuel J.

8. *Syracuse Daily Journal City Directory for 1862-63* (Syracuse, 1862).

9. *Syracuse Herald*, November 19, 1922; Smith, *History of the Schools of Syracuse*, 309.

10. Kinne, *Branch of the Family Kinne*, 61.

May who was active in Syracuse. May quickly shared information about the plight of freedmen. By the fall of 1862 he had organized a local freedmen's aid society affiliated with the NFRA, collected funds to send several teachers south, and began recruiting. Two local women, Chloe Merrick and Cornelia Smith, volunteered to serve.¹¹

The same process that occurred in Syracuse was repeated in other places, and different types of aid societies came into being. Some were affiliated with religious denominations, and others were secular. At Hampton, Virginia, both types of organizations competed with each other and with the denominational groups that were becoming more important. In Florida, on the other hand, the predominant aid society—the NFRA—dropped its religious affiliation.¹² By December 1862 both secular and religious societies had become closely aligned. They viewed blacks from a perspective described as “romantic racialism.” The term implied that blacks were inferior but that their condition was the product of the “shackles” or deprivations of slavery. Slavery's harmful effects were not permanent and were believed to be subject to amelioration. Education offered both a means of compensating them for their suffering and a way of giving them skills to use in a “new” future. Schooling would be preparation for the time when African Americans would participate as equal citizens, voting and holding public offices. Southern schools with this purpose would replicate the northern common school. Such schools, supported with taxes, would provide an educational program for all students—black and white. There would be integration of the races.¹³

After 1863 some workers in denominational societies began discarding romantic racialism. When Presbyterian teachers and missionaries first arrived in Hampton, Virginia, they were optimistic, but they soon began to believe that their work had failed. As this happened, communal living and eating among blacks and whites declined. Familiarity with freedmen became less common due to a rapid turnover among missionaries. “Few of them continued the practice of addressing Christian blacks as ‘brother’ and ‘sister,’ in part, because they were no longer convinced that Afri-

11. Syracuse *Daily Standard*, December 23, 1862.

12. Butchart, *Northern Schools*, 81-82.

13. *Ibid.*, 49.



Emma Merrick Kinne. Photograph courtesy Onondaga Historical Association, Syracuse, New York.

can-Americans really were Christians."¹⁴ For some, romantic racialism gave way to biological racism. By 1865 some missionaries believed that "many freedmen [were] ignorant, vicious and de-

14. Northern Methodists followed a different pattern from Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists. Methodist Episcopal Church leaders in Jacksonville, Florida, held views after the Civil War that varied from those of either the American Missionary Association or Samuel Chapman Armstrong. See John T. Foster, Jr., and Sarah W. Foster, "The Last Shall Be First: Northern Methodists in Reconstruction Jacksonville," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 70 (January 1992); Engs, *Freedom's First Generation*, 60; Butchart, *Northern Schools*, 49.

grading." These traits, they thought, were inherent black traits. Hampton Institute founder Samuel Chapman Armstrong announced that blacks possessed vices: "They had low ideas of honor and morality, and a general lack of directive energy, judgment and foresight."¹⁵

By adopting these views, missionaries like Armstrong became less concerned about education for liberation and more worried about the threat 4,000,000 freed blacks posed to society. Armstrong wrote: "The plastic character of the race put them completely under the control of their leaders. A most unfortunate result of this blind leading the blind is already seen in the belief that political rights are better obtained by political warfare."¹⁶ Education became a tool for keeping blacks on the land they traditionally had worked. Education could mold African Americans into a docile, stable work force while teaching them to accept their place at the bottom of southern society. As a partial consequence of this view, denominational groups sought an educational curricula designed especially for blacks. Major themes included piety, temperance, and character building. Hampton Institute became a prototype of institutions such as Tuskegee—little worlds "which assiduously cultivated morality, diligence and thrift rather than academics."¹⁷

While some members of denominational societies abandoned romantic racialism, secular ones often did not. Secular workers were less concerned about blacks adopting the religious practices of particular denominations. The Kinnes, for instance, probably had little expectation that blacks would become Wesleyan Methodists. Their church's position on slavery became less important as the Civil War continued. In time, they joined other Methodist groups themselves.¹⁸

Ansel Kinne's opportunity to serve in the South came in December 1863. Secretary of War Stanton and General Saxton offered him a position as a superintendent of freedmen's schools in Florida. The appointment may have come at the urging of Chloe Merrick who already had obtained approval to open an orphanage in Fernandina.¹⁹ Ansel accepted the job, a decision that reflected

15. Engs, *Freedom's First Generation*, 143.

16. *Ibid.*, 144.

17. *Ibid.*, 145.

18. *Syracuse Daily Standard*, January 20, 1890; *Jacksonville Journal*, September 23, 1976.

19. *Syracuse Journal*, December 16, 1863.

commitment to the cause and his considerable knowledge of the Florida situation. He had received information from Chloe in the summer of 1863, which supplemented a series of previous letters describing the schools, the progress of students, and conditions in Fernandina. Although both Kinnes were enthusiastic to join Chloe and her work, Emma waited in Syracuse until early 1865 so that arrangements could be made for her and the children.²⁰

After his February 1864 arrival at Fernandina, Kinne served as both superintendent of schools and superintendent of the "colored" people.²¹ These positions gave him responsibilities for the welfare of African Americans beyond education. In fulfilling these duties, he sought the active participation of black Floridians in public affairs— a goal that also was sought by the chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, Salmon P. Chase. As a result, the paths of Kinne and Chase crossed in Florida soon after the war's end.

Salmon Chase had two abiding interests: furthering the cause of racial equality and his own political career. His involvement with African Americans grew out of his law practice where he had gained renown for defending blacks. He attacked slavery in the courts and through an examination of the intentions of the Constitution's framers. Chase felt that the Constitution was not written to protect slavery and that it was improper to use it for that purpose.²² He also sought to further black's rights and his own political ambitions through memberships in parties— Liberty, Free Soil, Democratic, and Republican. His pursuit of high political office brought him to the United States Senate from Ohio in 1849, twice to the governorship of that state, and to the Senate again in 1860. Appointed by Lincoln as secretary of the treasury, Chase earned distinction by leading efforts to finance the war.²³ When Chief Justice Roger B. Taney died in the fall of 1864, Lincoln nominated Chase to fill the vacancy. The Senate confirmed him, believing that the court would no longer obstruct the war effort or Lincoln's emancipation policy.²⁴ The confidence given to Chase on these matters was

20. Ibid., August 9, 1866; Kinne, *Branch of the Family Kinne*, 60.

21. Kinne, *Branch of the Family Kinne*, 61; *The National Freedman* (February 1866), 68.

22. Brooks D. Simpson, LeRoy P. Graf, and John Muldowny, eds., *Advice After Appomattox: Letters to Andrew Johnson, 1865-1866* (Knoxville, 1987), 3; William H. Rehnquist, *Grand Inquests: The Historic Impeachments of Justice Samuel Chase and President Andrew Johnson* (New York, 1992), 174, 183.

23. Rehnquist, *Grand Inquests*, 183.

24. Simpson, *Advice After Appomattox*, 4.

well placed. In spite of his almost insatiable ambition, he never gave up his lifelong desire to better the slaves' condition.²⁵

Early in 1865 Chase devised a program for Reconstruction based upon the enfranchisement of freedmen. African Americans were loyal citizens of the federal government and had earned their rights on the battlefield. "Simple justice" demanded that the ballot be extended to them. Through their enfranchisement and that of southern Unionists, control over their own political futures would be possible. To further this goal Chase planned a tour of southern coastal areas. Fernandina probably was selected as a place to visit since it was home to Lyman D. Stickney— a Chase supporter and United States tax commissioner— and to Adolphus Mot, the former French tutor of Chase's children.²⁶

Kinne's subsequent behavior suggests that Justice Chase's goals for the freedmen already had been communicated to him. Kinne was sympathetic to black suffrage and was willing to provide evidence that Chase's program would work. Accordingly, in April 1865 he supervised efforts to establish a municipal government in Fernandina. After the fall of Richmond and the surrender of Lee's army, a committee was appointed which agreed to a plan of action. The only unresolved issue was whether or not the vote should be extended to black men. At first the committee voted against this proposal, but the issue was eventually put to the entire group— some fifty whites and two or three times that number of blacks. Kinne wrote: "Of the fifty, nearly forty were residents of the town, and nearly all of the colored persons might be considered [to be residents]. The first vote went . . . one hundred and twenty-three to twenty-seven." Seeing the inevitable, twenty-five white Southerners left the meeting. A final vote followed, giving unanimous support to black suffrage.²⁷

An election was scheduled for May 1, 1865, to elect a mayor, a city clerk, a marshal, and eight councilmen. Kinne believed that "it

25. Rehnquist, *Grand Inquests*, 183. According to Ovid Futch, "Chase was no unprincipled politician who would make appointments with consideration only for personal gain. He was practical enough to look for appointees who would, he hoped, competently and faithfully perform their public duties." See Ovid Futch, "Salmon P. Chase and Civil War Politics in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 32 (April 1954), 163.

26. Simpson, *Advice After Appomattox*, 4-5, 36. Chase's views on black suffrage appear in the *New York Tribune*, May 22, 25, 1865.

27. *Syracuse Journal*, June 8, 1865.

was one of the quietest, most unanimous and purest elections I ever attended. Of the one hundred and sixty-nine votes cast, only nine were those of white citizens, the twenty-five seceders from the primary choosing not to vote." Rather than accepting these results, nonvoting residents tried to keep Federal military authorities from recognizing them. This effort failed when Chase came to Fernandina on May 18, 1865. When he discovered that the winners, including Mayor-Elect Adolphus Mot, had not been sworn in, Chase solved the problem by administering the oath of office himself. Regional military commander Major General John Gilmore responded to Chase's actions by congratulating the new mayor, adding, "I shall issue an order fully recognizing the municipal government of Fernandina."²⁸

Participants understood the significance of these words. Chase was excited about whites and blacks voting together and wrote Charles Sumner about his actions. "Was not that an event?" he asked Sumner. The chief justice commented to Kinne "that he had only administered oaths of office twice before, and then to presidents of the United States." Sharing Chase's enthusiasm, Kinne informed the people of Syracuse that Mot was "the first mayor ever elected in the South upon the broad platform of universal suffrage."²⁹

While in Fernandina, Chase visited the NFRA's schools as Kinne's guest. Kinne took delight in showing the accomplishments of his students and teachers. They toured the school of Mrs. Loveridge and Miss Abbie Burch, at which time Kinne related: "It was my privilege to introduce the General [Gilmore] and Chief Justice to the pupils. I told [them] that they were looking upon the face of one who held the highest judicial position in this or in any country in the world— that meriting this high position he had been placed there by President Lincoln. In response, Mr. Chase said some plain, simple and impressive things. Admitting his high position, he said that when he was a boy he studied hard, with less advantages than they enjoyed, that had he not been studious he could never have been in his present position, more than intimating that his example might be followed. As I sat listening to his simple, wise words . . . I thought,

28. Ibid.

29. J. W. Schuckers, *The Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase; United States Senator and Governor of Ohio, Secretary of the Treasury and Chief-Justice of the United States* (New York, 1874), 523; *Syracuse Journal*, June 8, 1865.

'How great are the revolutions which we witness!'" These events visibly moved the students. "No school of white children could have given better attention," Kinne concluded.³⁰

The chief justice's response was positive. "They are composed of scholars of all ages and colors," he recorded. "Many of the colored soldiers attend, and are striving very diligently after knowledge. The teachers are of that army of women to whom the country owes more than it can ever pay, and more I fear than it ever will be conscious of. The world has never seen such self-denying and generous zeal . . . as shown by our American women."³¹ In spite of these events in Fernandina, Chase's hopes for his journey to the South went unfulfilled. During the first half of his trip he wrote a series of letters to President Andrew Johnson seeking to influence policies on Reconstruction. In June, when Chase reached Mobile, he learned that Johnson had chosen to pardon Confederate veterans but not to enfranchise blacks. These policies led Adolphus Mot to write Chase: "The proclamation of the President on State reconstruction stands, in the path of future history, like a sphinx at the gate of Thebes, offering problems to be solved, enigmas and secrets to be derived. It is proclaimed that States shall be provided with a republican form of government by the votes of loyal citizens. What form? . . . Is the freedman a citizen? Shall he vote? Will oath and testimony make Southern men loyal? Should reconstruction be left at the hands of prejudiced Southern men, what form of government can be expected, but the CSA pattern, that is of Oligarchical republics?"³²

At the time of Chase's visit to Fernandina the NFRA was becoming more secular. Some of its denominational leaders had lost a power struggle and had begun to accept positions in religious aid societies. The ascendancy of secular leaders and their views were reflected in the NFRA's willingness to coordinate its efforts with other secular aid societies. Consequently, the NFRA approved the foundation of national coordinating groups—the American Freedmen's Aid Commission and the American Freedmen's Union Commission (AFUC).³³

30. Schuckers, *Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase*, 523; *Syracuse Journal*, June 8, 1865.

31. Schuckers, *Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase*, 524.

32. Simpson, *Advice After Appomattox*, 16; A. Mot to S. P. Chase, June 30, 1865, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress, Washington.

33. *The National Freedman* (December 1865), 372-73.

Kinne, who sought the meaningful participation of African Americans in political life, endorsed secular efforts to combine romantic racialism, common schools, and integration. The *National Freedman* and AFUC's *The American Freedman* published letters from his teachers who held similar views— ideas that largely disappeared in places like Hampton, Virginia. Kinne routinely found black students to be talented learners. A teacher noted, "Many of the pupils learned to read, to write, and to be able to study geography and arithmetic with intelligence and great perseverance." These children showed "great capability for improvement," proving like all creatures of "divine origin" that they could "quicken into new life." A teacher in Gainesville noted student progress. "[They] advance gradually, and whatever knowledge they acquire is by hard study. I can boast of some very smart, ambitious scholars, with good heads and good hearts, too. I am free to say that I am proud of them."³⁴

The teachers emphasized geography, arithmetic, spelling, and reading. In Gainesville Catherine Bent taught the first three of these subjects in "general exercises every day." In addition to her "primary department pupils," she had an advanced student in grammar. There was a desire for uniform textbooks. Kinne observed that "schools, to succeed well, must be graded and classified; this requires a uniformity of books." He urged the NFRA to adopt textbooks for entire states, and the NFRA agreed that the subject had "much importance."³⁵

With the establishment of common schools there were efforts at integration. The Fernandina orphanage was integrated and also its school. Kinne's teachers helped to establish integrated schools in several locations, including Jacksonville, and they also participated in mixed social gatherings. "Last night we were invited to a tea party where two or three of our scholars lived. As we had never been there, we were wondering what sort of a place we should find, as some of their cabins are not very desirable places to eat one's supper in, but we were ushered into quite a neat house, and were entertained mostly by a tall, stately black woman, until tea, when we sat around the table which was full of good things, with them, they expressing much gratitude that they enjoyed this privilege, saying, 'A few years ago, we should not have dared to do this.' We valued

34. Ibid. (April 1866), 114-15; *The American Freedman* (April 1868), 392.

35. *The American Freedman* (April 1868), 293; *The National Freedman* (April 1866), 116.

the attention as an index of their appreciation of our labors. Thanksgiving Day we were invited into the country, and ate our dinner under the trees, with quite a party of our sable brethren and sisters."³⁶

Whites in Fernandina and Gainesville responded with hostility to such behavior. Kinne's teachers were verbally insulted, and in Gainesville and Lake City they had difficulty finding lodgings. From more isolated places came reports of violence, often directed at freed blacks rather than at white teachers. "The teachers are mostly a tabooed class," reported H. H. Moore of the Freedmen's Bureau. They are shown "intended contempt."³⁷ Kinne visited the schools as often as possible to encourage the teachers. In the first half of 1866 he visited in Jacksonville on eight different occasions, often in transit to other places. On the first of these journeys he traveled with northern Methodist minister John S. Swaim, to Gainesville, Micanopy, Ocala, Silver Springs, Sumterville, and Palatka.³⁸ In May 1866 Kinne travelled to Lake City, Gainesville, and Tallahassee—to which he returned a second time in June. These trips permitted Kinne to write an extensive report for the Freedmen's Bureau about conditions in the state. The economic prospects of many people seemed dismal to him, and the attitudes of many Southerners were harsh. "Public opinion," he wrote, "is set against any and all efforts on the part of northern individuals and associations, to ameliorate and reconstruct."³⁹ While people in Virginia such as Samuel Chapman Armstrong sought to accommodate southern opposition, Kinne was very apprehensive about doing so in Florida.

The National Freedmen's Relief Association had only a brief presence in Florida. After 1866 the freedmen's aid society declined as a result of conditions outside the state. Differences of opinion among societies had grown into a bitter ideological struggle. During this conflict, denominational societies directly opposed secular

36. *The National Freedman* (December 1865), 346; *The American Freedman* (January 1868), 350.

37. H. H. Moore to T. W. Osborn, February 25, 1866, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Florida, National Archives, Washington (hereinafter, BRFAL).

38. Diary of John S. Swaim, in possession of the authors. Swaim's account of his trip with Kinne appears in the *Newark Daily Advertiser*, March 2, 21, 1866. Also see Joe M. Richardson, "A Northerner Reports on Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 40 (April 1962), 381-90.

39. Richardson, "A Northerner Reports," 389.

societies, including the NFRA and the AFUC. The results rapidly became clear. Secular associations were forced out of black education, in large measure because of declining public and financial support.⁴⁰

As a result of the conflict there was a reduction in contributions to secular aid societies. As this occurred, the sizable NFRA operation in Florida declined. In June 1866 its network included thirteen schools, one orphanage, twenty-seven teachers, and 1,663 students. The *American Freedman* in the spring of 1869 listed only five NFRA teachers. Shortages of funds in October 1868 led the NFRA to conserve its resources and to appoint only those teachers that it could support. As a response to these financial difficulties, the NFRA and the Freedmen's Bureau began transferring the operating cost of the schools to black communities, despite their limited ability to support such efforts. "The freed people themselves are doing more and more for the support of their schools," an *American Freedman* correspondent wrote. In Jacksonville, "we pay only the salaries of the teachers— and these are small— while the people provide for their board and supply the fuel for the schools."⁴¹

These money-saving measures did not stop the NFRA's decline. After the middle of 1868 a small group of trustees managed its assets and teachers. The trustees, comprised of six of the NFRA's most dedicated workers, could only continue the society's elementary and normal schools until January 1870.⁴² Financial difficulties and job insecurity added to the pressures of teaching during the organization's last years. In the best of times, the AFUC paid its teachers twenty dollars plus room and board each month. If its teachers had remained in the North, their wages may have been 50-100 percent higher. Although teacher motivation did not stem from meager financial compensation, the rapid decline of the NFRA threatened the support that existed and added many frustrations.⁴³

Serious problems also developed with the Freedmen's Bureau. At the urging of President Johnson, the agency placed an early priority on the return of property that had been abandoned during the war. The policy stripped aid societies of buildings they were us-

40. Butchart, *Northern Schools*, 94.

41. *The American Freedman* (April 1869), 4, 5, 11

42. Butchart, *Northern Schools*, 94.

43. *Ibid.*

ing, usually before these facilities could be replaced. In January 1866 the bureau's Florida superintendent of education, H. H. Moore, noted that in Jacksonville "the building assigned to us by the military has been given up to its former owner; we have been ordered to leave [the places] where our schools are held."⁴⁴ Kinne actively opposed this policy. He reacted quickly when the Fernandina Episcopal priest sought the return of his sanctuary. Years earlier the cleric had endorsed the Confederacy and fled the community. General Saxton gave the abandoned building to the NFRA, and Cornelia Smith and Chloe Merrick used it for their school. As other teachers followed in their place, Kinne maintained the operations of the church. Writing Thomas W. Osborn, local head of the Freedmen's Bureau, Kinne pleaded for relief from the priest's request. "I hope you will not be in great haste to return the church. If it could be [kept] for its present purpose . . . [it will] do much good." He further argued that his use of the property was better than anything done by "all of the disloyal preachers in the country."⁴⁵

Osborn proved more interested in building political relationships with Southerners than in helping the NFRA. He ignored its needs and Kinne's request. Osborn's actions, in turn, encouraged former Confederate General Joseph Finegan to seek the return of his house in Fernandina—the location of Merrick's orphanage. Since his earlier efforts had not worked with Osborn, Kinne recommended that the NFRA circumvent the bureau's office. Following this course of action, NFRA president Francis G. Shaw appealed directly to the bureau head, General O. O. Howard. Howard did not delay Osborn, and on July 6, 1866, the Freedmen's Bureau ordered the orphanage moved south of Jacksonville.⁴⁶

Even before Osborn's decision to move the orphanage, a schism had formed between him and the NFRA. On April 10, 1866, the aid society ordered all of its teachers and staff in Florida to report to Kinne. The action meant that they were to ignore both Osborn and Moore. As a consequence, neither man knew details of school operations.⁴⁷

44. Moore to C. Mundee, January 13, 1866, BRFAL.

45. A. E. Kinne to T. W. Osborn, January 2, 1866, BRFAL.

46. F. G. Shaw to O. O. Howard, April 18, 1866; Howard to C. Merrick, July 6, 1866, BRFAL.

47. Osborn to Moore, April 19, 1866; Moore to Osborn, April 23, 1866, BRFAL.

Realizing that Moore's unpopularity had become a burden, Osborn fired him and also set out to eliminate Kinne. He proposed that Moore's position with the Freedmen's Bureau and Kinne's job with the NFRA be combined into a single post-state superintendent of education for Florida. Seeking the NFRA's cooperation, Osborn offered the job to Kinne. He did this assuming that Kinne would refuse the position and resign. The effort was unnecessary because Kinne and his wife, Emma, already had made a decision to leave Florida at the end of 1866. The conflict over the orphanage had made a profound impact upon them. Kinne had struggled to save the Merrick facility where his wife worked as a teacher and matron. Moving the orphanage disrupted the close personal and professional relationship between Emma and her sister, Chloe. While this happened, Kinne's travels in Florida convinced him that the future of African Americans was not encouraging. Freedmen had plenty of "capacity," but government policy undercut their "prospects."⁴⁸

Perhaps to the Kinnes' surprise, their negative feelings passed. One source of frustration, Florida politics under Presidential Reconstruction was terminated by Congress. Before they left Florida they also were encouraged by Chloe's health. She began recovering from a major illness, which brought the Kinnes great joy. Once back in Syracuse they renewed their social and professional contacts. Kinne obtained reappointment as a principal, and Emma's reappointment as a teacher only awaited the birth of her last child.⁴⁹ Genuine pleasure came to the Kinnes from other sources as well. An acquaintance from Fernandina, Harrison Reed, became governor of Florida. Reed appointed their son Charles as his personal secretary and proposed marriage to Chloe Merrick. The couple came to Syracuse and were married in the garden of the Kinne home. As first lady of Florida, Chloe would help shape social policy and expand the state's public school system.⁵⁰

Emma and Ansel Kinne continued their leadership in the Syracuse school system. At the time of their deaths on August 26, 1886, and January 16, 1890, they had served as meaningful forces in the

48. *The American Freedman* (August 1866), 73; Moore to Osborn, April 23, 1866. See also Smith, *History of the Schools of Syracuse*, 309.

49. *Syracuse Journal*, October 1, 1866; Smith, *History of the Schools of Syracuse*, 309.

50. Foster and Foster, "Chloe Merrick Reed," 295-96.

lives of generations of students. In honor of their efforts, former pupils placed a bronze plaque in Madison High School on February 18, 1925.⁵¹

51. Ansel Kinne was the first principal of Madison High School, Syracuse, and served in that capacity from its opening until his death. See *Syracuse Herald*, November 19, 1922, February 18, 1925. On Emma Kinne's death in 1886 see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, August 28, 1886.