

Rev. Robert Atkinson

Robert Atkinson, a Baptist minister of Scottish decent, was a general missionary of the Baptist Home Mission Society. The Home Mission Society sent Atkinson to Ottawa University to examine school affairs during the Kalloch presidency and look after the local, educational and denominational interests of Ottawa University. The school was to be established as one for “mixed races”, both Indian and White youth, securing \$27,000 from Baptist churches toward this project. When he arrived in Ottawa, Atkinson served as an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees, with voting power to furnish additional supervision to the school.

In 1862 his findings were that five thousand of the 20,000 acres of Ottawa land given to the school, which was sold by John Young and Isaac Kalloch Atkinson, were sold at a fair price. In 1866, CC Hutchinson became secretary-treasurer of the Ottawa University Board, but by 1867 deficiencies in his management were apparent. In 1867, Kalloch sold without permission, 2872 acres of land, while CC Hutchinson had collected payment for it but had not recorded the payments. Atkinson was appointed president of the Ottawa Board of Trustees in 1868 and secretary-treasurer until his resignation in 1883. In 1870, he visited the Ottawa Indian territory and brought back 20 female Ottawa students to the school. They were taught in the Indian School.

Atkinson determined that Ottawa University needed \$13,000 to finish their building project and \$17,000 to cover their debts; and thus began to raise money by visiting churches and individuals in the East, collecting \$30,440.75 by 1872 to aid this causes As a result, Taub Jones Hall was completed in 1869. In 1872, Congress passed a bill which caused Ottawa University to forfeit the Indian lands that had been given. Because of the fraud, the Indian Commissioner requested that the Ottawa Trustees complete an accounting of the school’s finances regarding lands sold and turn over the property to them. Atkinson did not turn over the property to Indian Affairs, but he did complete a lengthy report for the Indian Commissioner, who then turned the matter over to the Attorney General, who investigated the matter. Atkinson went to the East to secure senatorial help for the College. In 1873, the law was repealed and settlements were made, so that the original 20,000 acres, 640 was returned to the college site and 1280 acres was given to the Baptist Home Mission Society to settle their claim of \$35,000 in contributions, salary and agent expenses, 10,000 acres was returned to the Indians but Indian institutional control of the school and their educational privileges and claims were relinquished.

American Baptist Home Mission Society. (1883). *Baptist Home Missions in North America 1832-1882*. New York: Baptist Home Mission Rooms. Retrieved from https://books.google.com/books?id=0dBJAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA507&lpg=PA507&dq=rev+robert+atkinson+home+mission&source=bl&ots=lpPeXW81uP&sig=acRBXsJ2i4RKlYr8D_wVvda0qHk&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjlmKW7-K3cAhUKVK0KHb9pBKM0Q6AEIMjAD#v=onepage&q=rev%20robert%20atkinson%20home%20mission&f=false

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