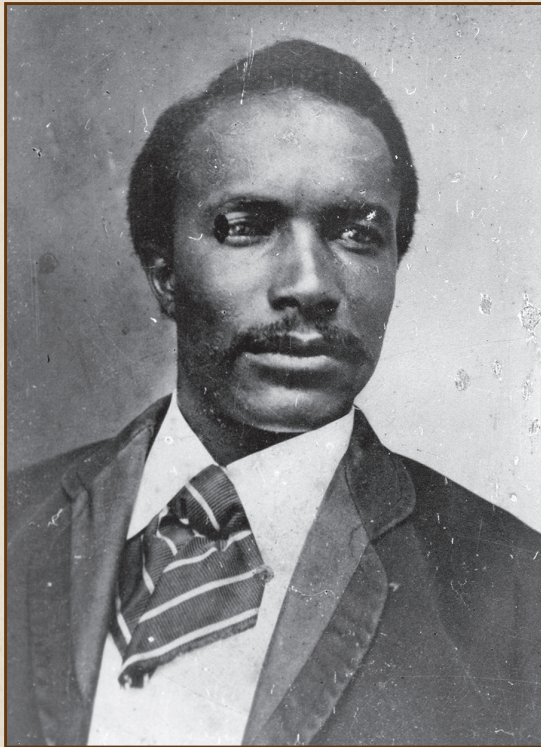


## ANDREW WATKINS



Mr. Andrew Watkins

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*“The schools for colored children in Kansas were better than the ones in Missouri. Left Watkins home for Fort Scott, Kansas, with a family who were moving out there.”*

— George Washington Carver

Andrew Watkins was born into slavery around 1842 in the state of Virginia. He remembered being sold on an auction block many times. He also told stories of how he escaped from his master in Texas. Not much is known about Andrew Watkins, but his influence on George Washington Carver was important.

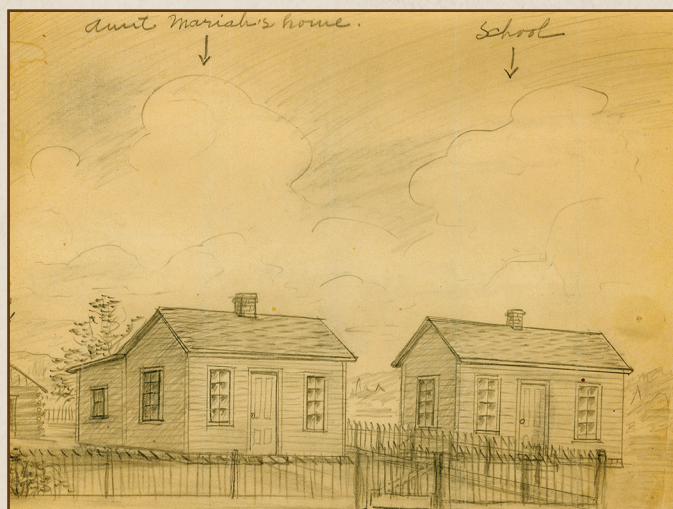
After slavery ended, Andrew married Mariah Scales in St. Louis. By 1877, the couple had moved to Neosho, Missouri. Andrew, known by many people as Uncle Andy, was a farmer and also worked at other odd jobs.

It was unusual for African Americans to own property at the time. According to the **census**, only one black family in Neosho Township owned real estate in 1870. In April 1874 Andrew and Mariah Watkins bought a small three-room house on a corner lot next to the newly opened black school in Neosho. They had no children of their own but sometimes took in young children who needed a home. In 1877 when George walked the eight miles to Neosho in order to attend school, he ended up sleeping in a barn that belonged to Andrew and Mariah Watkins.

George moved in with them and worked for his room and board so he could go to school. He chopped wood, tended the garden, and helped with laundry. During school recess he ran to their house to do chores and to study his lessons.



## ANDREW WATKINS



*Carver's Sketch of Watkins Home and School,  
Neosho, MO*

Mr. and Mrs. Watkins were like parents to him. He later wrote in 1927, "...indeed Mr. and Mrs. Watkins took me in just as one of the family." They taught him to believe in himself, building up his self-esteem. They urged him to try to help the other people in the black community, especially once he received his education.

George stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Watkins for about a year. Then he felt he had learned everything he could from that school. So he moved west to Kansas, where he could continue his education. George later said that Andrew and Mariah Watkins, especially Mrs. Watkins, had a tremendous influence on his life.

### GLOSSARY

**Census** - The official count of the population.

### TIME LINE • GAINING AN EDUCATION: 1876 – 1896

