DATE: Oct. 21 - 1949
TO: Mieczyslaw Muzyczka
SUBJECT: Chapter One of History, labeled December 4, 1947 (Revision of)

Dear Mieczyslaw:

This is practically the same revision as the one I have, and doesn't need any further changes.

Sincerely,

Carl
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Carl
THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
A HISTORY
1867-1947

Advisory Committee
Theodore H. Novot, Chairman
Fred M. Brown
Harrison T. Cunningham
THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
A HISTORY
1867-1947

By
Carl Stephens
University historian

and

Charles W. Paape
Research assistant in history
University of Illinois

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Chapter One - The Turner Movement - "A University for the Industrial Classes"

Resolved, That we take immediate measures for the establishment of a University, in the State of Illinois, expressly to meet those felt want of each and all the industrial classes of our State....--Jonathan Baldwin Turner, A Plan for an Industrial University for the State of Illinois, 1851

There is a hoary tradition that the University of Illinois was an unwanted orphan. Those who tell the story say that community after community refused to shelter it. Jacksonville preferred schools for the blind and deaf; Lincoln, a colony for the feebleminded; Kankakee, a hospital for the insane; Joliet, a prison; Quincy, an old soldiers home; Normal, an orphans home.

Lacking fact, the legend offers to explain the extraordinary delay in establishing the University. Seventeen years lay between the first passionate call of its prophet, Jonathan Baldwin Turner, and its inception as the Illinois Industrial University in 1868. Moreover, sixty-seven years intervened between the first effort in its behalf, taken in the year of Illinois's statehood, and the time it became the University of Illinois. More than amply endowed as early as the year 1818, its first birthright was wasted;
Most vigorously championed, it was one of the latest state universities to be established.

Those who saw the University begin its work heard the auspicious prophecy "that this Institution shall prove the crowning achievement of this age..., that to the latest generation our young men shall have cause to bless the wise forethought of the men of this age, who have, amidst gigantic war, not only vindicated the free institutions and ideas of self-government, but also founded this splendid nursery of free men and enlightened patriotism." It moved, falteringly at first, later with the stride of a giant. It created and it borrowed. Adding to its own land-grant college conventions the best of an older European heritage, the University of Illinois became an early expression of the new distinctly American university tradition.

The attitude of the people of Illinois toward higher education singularly reflects the state's progress from a series of scattered, dispersed and turbulent frontier communities to a modern industrial and agricultural commonwealth. Like all states which passed from territorial status to statehood after the admission of Ohio in 1802, Illinois in 1818 received a grant of public lands for a seminary of learning as well as for the support of the common schools. But unlike other states, Illinois avoided the responsibility when it accepted the donation. The evasion of so honorable a duty scarcely admits justification, although the circumstances afford a partial explanation.
Chapter One -- The Turner Movement -- "Industrial Universities for the People"

...Knowledge alone is power, and our relief is as clearly obvious as our wants. We need the same thorough and practical application of knowledge to our pursuits that the learned professions enjoy in theirs through their universities and the literature, schools, and libraries that have grown out of them. -- Jonathan Baldwin Turner, Memorial to the Legislature, Fourth Industrial Convention, 1855.

Illinois was still a frontier state as late as the 1850's, even after thirty-seven years of statehood. The population was anything but homogeneous, with French and German speaking communities, a Mormon colony, some Illinois, and Utopia, some Indians, and two English-speaking elements—one streaming from the slave-holding border states and one from abolitionist New England. Two wars had broken the peace. The Black Hawk War in 1832 expelled the Indians living in the northwestern counties; the Mormon War of 1846, the fast growing and turbulent Mormon colony at Nauvoo. State politics had been tumultuous from the beginning. A costly internal improvements program and reckless financing had plunged the state into debt at a time when taxes sometimes failed to meet even ordinary government expenses. Farming, still hit or miss, often at barely subsistence level, occupied nine-tenths of the population, who found it costly, sometimes disappointing. There were no real cities until 1840, when the census noted three totaling a population of 9,607, a bare two per cent of all the state, but in ten years this had tripled. By 1850 the state had a total of 851,470 inhabitants.
Though school laws were often passed and revised, the educational system was the most backward in the middle west. Schooling was available to fewer than half the children of school age, with an average of thirty pupils for one teacher half of the year. Of the dozen colleges by 1850, all private, half were women’s seminaries. Few were more than preparatory boarding schools with collegiate departments designed to give the right principles and polish to future ministers, lawyers, and school teachers. Three or four stood out with broader aims; Illinois College at Jacksonville, founded in 1828 by a Presbyterian missionary group, the "Yale Band," supplied the most leadership. Another dozen were hopefully looking ahead to the day when their easily gained state charters would be energized by enough funds to open their doors.

The federal land grants gave each state tracts to be sold for educational and other purposes. This money came under the headings of the "seminary fund" and the "college and university fund." In Illinois the seminary fund was built up from the sales of two townships (seventy-two square miles). The University or college fund arose from a federal grant of five per cent of the state lands for roads (two-fifths) and for "the encouragement of learning" (three-fifths), the latter phrase including colleges and universities, which were to get one-sixth of the three-fifths.
These grants originated in the celebrated Ordinance of 1787, to which virtually all public colleges west of the Alleghenies owe their existence: "Religion, Morality, and Knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, Schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." By 1830, however, Illinois alone of all the mid-west states, had no seminary based on the grant. Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Missouri, and Wisconsin had sold or rented their townships and had set up universities, differing little to be sure from common denominational colleges, but state universities nevertheless.  Permit the Illinois legislature showed no disposition to see the endowment for the purpose intended.

At the very time when an educational awakening seemed to be at hand it sold almost all of the seventy-two annual grants of land (semiary fund) at what amounted to a forced sale at a price fraction of its worth (42,000 acres at $0.09 per acre) and borrowed the proceeds to meet current expenses. State auditors kept a record of the or $58,786 account in the books of Vandolah 3 money but the state being both creditor and debtor the transactions were merely ledger entries, once the funds were spent. Under pressure in 1839 the legislature did allow the interest to be used for the common schools, the only educational benefit received from the seminary fund before 1838; when it amounted to $26,322. Illinois was a common fate of all the federal seminary donations, but the Illinois fund has been held to be "fairly entitled to the distinction of having been the worst abused educational trust fund in the Northwest Territory." The birthright wasted, any move after the early thirties for a state university in Illinois was to raise a political specter.

Only sporadic single-handed attempts had kept the state university idea alive. In 1835 Peter Cartwright, the almost legendary circuit-riding preacher, politician and legislator, proposed a university, and a year later Governor Joseph Duncan, a resident of Jacksonville and neighbor of the leading school reform agitators, echoed this feeling but without support.
The loss is strikingly shown by E. B. Powell in his Semi-Centennial History (page 163); "The four and one half sections (2,000 acres), which were held until 1861 brought $39,000..." See further reference to Powell in footnote 4.

   General Laws of the State of Illinois Passed at the Seventeenth
   General Assembly (Springfield, 1851), Appendix, IV.

4. George W. Knight, "History and Management of Federal Land Grants for
   Education in the Northwest Territory," Papers, American Historical
   Association (New York, 1886), 1, 136. E. B. Powell, The Move-
   ment for Industrial Education and the Establishment of the Uni-
   versity, 1847-1870, Volume I of a projected four-volume Semi-Cen-
   tenary History of the University of Illinois (Urbana, 1918), devotes
   a chapter to the disposition of the seminary endowments, 156 ff.
   This volume, reprinting much source material, will be referred to
   as Powell. Another careful study of the origins of the University,
   Fred Harold Turner, The Illinois Industrial University (1831), a
   doctoral thesis, also traces the history of the fund. References
   to this thesis will appear as "F. H. Turner."

5. Journal of the House of Representatives of the Eighth General Assembly
   of the State of Illinois... (Vandalia, 1838), Feb. 14, 1838, 833.

At the constitutional convention of 1847 the disposition of the various school funds was debated, but no resolution was made against the argument that "the money is safe." [7]

The constitution of 1846, like that of 1818, did little for education, and four years later a pliant legislature, freely granting charters entailing no state responsibility, allowed a small Lutheran college at Hillsboro to relocate at Springfield, the new state capital, and to use the name Illinois State University.

There the matter might have rested but for the rise of a movement in 1851 for agricultural education, headed by Jonathan Baldwin Turner, one of the educational reformers of the 1830's. Like most of the leaders in the free school movement he was a New Englander, born in western Massachusetts in 1808. He was within a month of completing the familiar classics course at Yale in 1833 when his brother Amos, one of the Yale who had founded Illinois College, and was a minister prominent in early Presbyterian missionary work in the midwest, called him to Jacksonville to teach Greek. Young Turner arrived on horseback about the time the educational reform movement was getting under way, and was soon a leader in it. During his second summer here he toured the state, lecturing for better schools; a few years later he was heading the Illinois Teachers Association committee on textbooks and teaching methods. No mere academician, he became an ardent abolitionist in a town of slavery sympathies, was a newspaper editor, a licensed minister, and dabbled in land speculation. His temper was that of an Old Testament prophet and his appearance was in keeping with his rugged intellect. Typically it was his continued unorthodoxy which made it desirable, finally necessary, for him to leave Illinois College, which he did in 1848.

He turned to farming. His seventeen-acre homestead in Jacksonville became virtually an experiment station. By 1843 he was said to have more kinds of plants than had the Smithsonian Gardens at Washington. His earliest hobby was the orange orange which he grew and sold for fencing, claimed to be the only hedge that would keep out the droves of cattle and
10. The Illinois Statesman, which Turner began in April, 1843, could have established a fair claim of having set up the first wholly independent newspaper in Illinois. In an early issue it was announced, "this paper can be devoted to the interests of no party whatever, political, moral, social, or ecclesiastical." Later, under the heading "Crimes and Casualties," appeared the notice: "Our paper is small, and if our readers will for the present just have the goodness to imagine a certain due proportion of fires, tornadoes, murders, thefts, robberies and bully fights, from week to week, it will do just as well, for we can assure them they actually take place." It seems anti-climactic to say that the paper failed. Franklin W. Scott, Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois, 1814-1879, Volume 6, Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library (Springfield, 1910), lxxii-lxxiii.
hogs then driven over the roads to eastern markets. Similar experiments with other plants, and inventions of farm machinery, soon brought Turner a reputation as an outstanding agricultural scientist.

He tried to interest President Jonathan Blanchard of Knox College at Galesburg in an agricultural course built around the professors of botany and chemistry and a model farm, but to the less imaginative Blanchard the plan did not seem practical, even though perhaps self-supporting. Turner persisted and in an address before the Pike County teachers institute in 1850 seems to have given a new and broader plan, which he outlined again at Springfield the next year. Apparently the address was noticed by the Buel Institute, a group of farmers in Putnam County, for later in 1851 Turner was invited to speak and lead a discussion at the Institute's convention.

This Buel Institute and Agricultural Society, taking its name from Jesse Buel, the New York judge, farm paper editor and writer, was one of several farm improvement groups. Not for farmers alone, it reflected general community leadership. A plea for agricultural education could hardly have been novel to them. To some at least, Turner's speech must have been reminiscent of Buel's plans for a school in the 1820's and 1830's. Parts of it showed the inspiration of late issues of the Prairie Farmer, a midwest monthly of wide circulation. Textbooks and schools of agriculture had been talked about in farm papers over twenty years.

Whatever plans the Buel Institute may have had, they were put aside when Turner spoke on November 18, 1851, in a little Presbyterian church at Granville. He first reported a set of resolutions, the call to action:

...As the representatives of the industrial classes, including all cultivators of the soil, artisans, mechanics, and merchants, we desire the same privileges and advantages for ourselves, our fellow, and our posterity, in each of our several pursuits and callings, as our professional brethren enjoy in theirs....
11. See Lloyd Lewis, John S. Wright, Prophet of the Prairies (Chicago, 1941), Chapter XII, "The Poor Man's Fence."

Years later, as land became more valuable, the space-consuming hedges went out of style and most of them have been uprooted.


13. The meeting was called "for the purpose of adopting some measures to establish an agricultural school, or agricultural department in some school, in northern Illinois." Ralph Ware to Turner, Oct. 29, 1861, printed in Carriel Turner, 83–84.

Resolved, That, in our opinion, the institutions originally and primarily designed to meet the wants of the professional classes as such, cannot, in the nature of things, meet ours, no more than the institutions we desire to establish could meet theirs. Therefore,

Resolved, That we take immediate measures for the establishment of a University, in the state of Illinois, expressly to meet those felt wants of each and all the industrial classes of our state; that we recommend the foundation of high schools, lyceums, institutes, &c., in each of our counties, on similar principles, as soon as they may find it practicable to do so.

The resolutions were the preamble to a stirring address. Turner, always a pungent speaker, first drew a sharp and dramatic distinction between the lawyers, ministers and teachers of the professional class, and farmers, mechanics, and others in the industrial class. "Society has become wise enough to know," he said, "that its teachers need to be educated, but... not wise enough to know that its workers need education just as much."

What the latter needed was a "system of liberal education for their own class, and adapted to their own pursuits...to elevate them, their pursuits, and their posterity to that relative position in human society for which God designed them."

Turner's objective for the industrial university was the application of "existing knowledge directly and efficiently to all practical pursuits and professions in life, and to expand the boundaries of our present knowledge in all possible practical directions." He pictured fields, orchards, gardens and grounds illustrating all kinds of plants and animals, and museums of implements and of natural science. Professors and students alike would experiment. Physiologists and entomologists roving the state would analyze the soil and its products, and the insects and their control. Others would experiment in mining, merchandising, transportation, and whatever else interested the industrial class. No knowledge would be excluded, "unless, indeed, these specimens of 'organised ignorance' found in the creeds of party
A Plan for an Industrial University for the State of Illinois, submitted to the Farmer's Convention at Galesville, held November 15, 1861, by Prof. J. E. Turner (Ottawa, 1861), 5-6.
politicians and sectarian speciastic's should be mistaken by some
for a species of knowledge." Including Greek and Latin might depend
on contingencies, but otherwise the proposed instruction

...in all these studies and sciences, of whatever sort, which tend to throw light upon any art or employment which any student may desire to master; or upon any duty he may be called upon to perform; or which may tend to secure his moral, civil, social, and industrial perfection.

Age alone would admit the students; once in they could stay indefinitely. Those worthy would be rewarded annually on a gala day of exhibitions with medals, testimonials, and certificates.

The vision was to transcend state borders. Every state should have such a university, he said, each reaching down to county and community branches, and looking up to a national institute of science, presumably the newly-formed Smithsonian Institution. The financing was to be done by the state seminary and college and university funds, in charge of a self-perpetuating board of trustees, free from politics and responsible only to the people.

Turner's arguments and forceful delivery appealed to his audience. This distinctive plan of education for them was their answer, as well as Turner's, to the farmers' question of class exploitation by "parasitic" city elements. In this earliest stage of rural revolt the emphasis was on education. It was assumed that knowledge would raise soil production, reduce costs and back-breaking toil, and enable the farmer to defend himself against exploiters. The popular, even if strained, anecdote of the time had the poor farmer asking the good one what manners he used, the reply being "brains".

The convention enthusiastically arranged to publish Turner's paper and to send it to all state newspapers and to the nation's farm press; to send speakers into all Illinois counties; and to have
16. A Plan....

16. Powell, 23-29, 37-38. A. J. Downing, the "sainted" agricultural leader of the time, commented in his widely read New York Horticulturist, 7 (July, 1852), 306, "It is not often that the weak points of an ordinary collegiate education are so clearly exposed, and the necessity of workingmen's universities so plainly demonstrated."


18. Prairie Farmer, 12 (March, 1852), 114.


Governor Augustus C. French include the proposed industrial university in his call for a special legislative session. So plausible and convincing had been the presentation of the new plan that it seemed it would be adopted unanimously, once the people heard of it. And in general it was favored by the state press and by papers as far away as Philadelphia and New York; also by the farm press, excepting at first the Prairie Farmer, the publisher of which, John S. Wright, objected to using the seminary funds for a university instead of for his pet project, a normal school. Also objecting was the editor, Ambrose Wright, who saw in the plan an attack on organized religion. These differences were reconciled, however, by June, 1852, when the legislature met. But before this took place, Turner had thought of another possible source of income for the proposed university, probably to overcome the Prairie Farmer's objections. In the March, 1852, issue was published an article by him suggesting a federal land grant to each state for "a general system of popular Industrial Education." This suggestion had also appeared in Turner's correspondence of the month before, and is noted by one historian as the first mention of the land grant act he found. This new provision, marking the completion of the plan, became part of it at the Springfield convention of June 6, 1852. Had this convention met the hopes of those who gathered as lobbyists the legislature might have enacted the Turner proposal and put the university in the hands of the small group who, adjourning the convention for an afternoon, formed the Illinois State Agricultural Society. But matters took an unexpected turn; the convention was as disappointing as Granville had been promising. Open to all comers, the first sessions were packed by small college representatives who did their best to divert attention to their own schemes, and, failing in that, put plans of their own before the legislature. The disconcerted lobbyists succeeded only in drawing up a memorial for a needless legislature.
A third convention, at Chicago, November 24, 1852, was also slowed down, this time however by disputes among the faithful, the college men having been excluded, but more was really accomplished than at the second. All questions about the exact nature of the proposed university had to be put off to preserve harmony, but three important developments did emerge: (1) a teachers' department was necessary; (2) the legislature must be approached again, and with better organization; (3) a more permanent promotional agency, the Industrial League of Illinois, was formed.

A fourth convention, at Springfield, January 4, 1853, induced the legislature to appeal to Congress for a land grant.

In this stage the movement was all head, with very little body. It ran on enthusiasm. Few of the enthusiasts saw the idea clearly, and depended on Turner. Most of them thought of a "farm school," and overlooked the industries and the liberal aim. It appears that Turner's idea also had a sizable following in the state educational societies, who perhaps understood it better than did the farmers, who in general showed almost no interest. The ones taking part in the movement were civic leaders, with farming as only one of several other interests with which they could just as easily be identified. From these men came the leadership for the purely promotional Industrial League.

The league was the idea of Bronson Murray, of Ottawa, a wealthy civil engineer and land owner, and one of the founders of the State Teachers Association (1853). With him as directors of the league were William A. Pennell, a leader of the Bel Institute; J. T. Little, L. S. Pennington, and John Gage; Turner was made principal director. John A. Kennicott, the "old doctor" of Northfield, whose interests matched Turner's and who was as widely known, was not an official but a stalwart supporter and counselor. Dues were ten cents a year (also ten cents for initiation).

The first act of the Industrial League was to enlarge the pamphlet plan
W. H. Turner, 161 et seq.

Mr. The "state" teachers' institute at Peoria, Dec. 26, 1854, for example, resolved "that we also agree with him (E. W. Edwards, the state superintendent of public instruction) in the opinion, that the course of instruction, in the Normal School, must be materially modified by the predominance of agricultural, mechanical, and commercial interests in the State, in order to be adapted to the circumstances and wants of our people." W. P. N. Army, in whose article "Educational Conventions" in The Illinois Teacher, 1 (November, 1855), the above resolution appears, wrote on the assumption that the normal school and industrial university movements were virtually identical.

William H. Powell, commenting on "Industrial Schools --Higher Education" in his Report for 1857-1858, speaks of Turner as the originator of the "new educational era" (p. 49), but it was Newton Bateman, state superintendent between 1858 and 1862 and for a decade after 1864, who most clearly saw that the industrial university would be the state's "people's university." He wrote in his Report for 1864-1865, "We feel that this is the long-anticipated and golden opportunity to lay the foundations of an institution which shall round out and perfect the free-school system of Illinois...." (p. 180).

The close relation between the "schoolmen" and the industrial university movement can also be demonstrated by the overlapping personnel. Turner, Bronson Murray, Jesse Fold, G. W. Minier, E. G. "Father" Coats, C. B. Demlo, and twenty or more others held prominent positions in both groups.

to national scope and give it a new title Industrial Universities for the people. "Every agricultural society and every mechanics' institute, every state and every neighborhood" should petition Congress for grants of land equal to $500,000 per state. With the pamphlet as a text, promotion was begun at once. Local leaders arranged for speakers and other representatives at educational and farmers' meetings and county fairs. Dr. Reuben G. Rutherford, an energetic orator, a brusque, humorous itinerant "professor" of physiology and hygiene, was hired as a lecturer and salesman of literature and memberships. By all accounts except financial he was prodigiously successful. He and Turner lectured for a week in Chicago school buildings in January, 1854, attracting so much attention that Mayer Gray called a public mass meeting at which he presided, and he joined in passing resolutions which were sent to Congress. Similar successes were reported in other large cities of the state. In rural areas speeches were made from wagon tailboards. Optimism seemed everywhere.

From 1854 to 1863 the campaign for a state university changed from state to national. Experience with the Illinois legislature had shown that the main reliance must be on Congress and on the united effort of all state groups with similar ambitions. The pamphlet and letters were sent into every state and territory, and the responses were gratifying. President Tappan of the University of Michigan said he was ready to join in a united approach to Congress whenever Turner would lead it, and later brought him to Detroit to meet Michigan farm leaders. In late 1854 Turner was invited to speak at Farmers' College, near Cincinnati, but his health had broken and he sent Murray, who read a message dictated by the overworked Turner, a "Discourse on American Education."

The plan attracted nation-wide attention was due not only to its aggressive author and his associates but to its highly provocative wording


25. Powell, 77-78. The manuscript is among the Turner papers at the University.
of rising educational convictions. People were concerned about the
growth of the democratic educational system promised in most state con-
stitutions. Most legislatures had niggardly side-stepped by shifting
the burden to local districts. The result was too often a new kind of
private school, leaving the ideal of free public education to organized
charity. The difference between the ideal and the actual was even more
marked in higher education and more appreciated. De Witt Clinton
had said as early as 1809, "While magnificent colleges and universities
are erected and endowed and dedicated to literature, we behold few liberal
appropriations for diffusing the blessings of knowledge among all descrip-
tions of people." Not many years later the New York Workingmen's Party
deplored the "exclusive privilege for one portion of the community to have
the means of education in colleges," resolving that "our voice, therefore,
shall be raised in favor of a system which shall be equally open to all, as
in a real republic it should be." In Illinois was a serious distrust
of denominational colleges, and even alarm when their number grew rapidly
in the 'fifties. Collegiate education was virtually a vested interest of
them or of special corporations and their wealthy supporters. Entrenched
behind charters held inviolable by the Dartmouth College case, the colleges
usually resisted change unless forced by necessity of enrollment or benefaction.
The state universities, neglected by their friends, were enough similar
to be included in the popular criticism that they were monopolies of the
rich and paid no attention to what really mattered. The complaints were
not without justice, for there was evidence on every hand that the colleges
in general were perpetuating biases, economic as well as religious, but most
of all an authoritarian philosophy of abstract absolute truths and absurdly
antiquated teaching methods, out of step with the practical outlook of the
period.

Some of these colleges made a few concessions. Their manual labor
systems in the 1820's and 1830's offered to let the students "learn while laboring," but it was soon evident that people wanted more than mere accessibility of collegiate education, and the labor systems declined. Nor was the answer to be found in genteel science classes in botany, chemistry, geology, etc., which had come into the colleges' general course.

But it was as a plan for agricultural education that Turner's attracted the greatest interest. The new philosophy had reached an advanced stage in the agricultural societies, mainly among the educated leaders who saw that scientific knowledge was obscured by a vast accumulation of lore. They had encouraged a professional attitude toward farming—an extension of their own attitude toward other professions in which they often happened to be active. In the 'twenties and 'thirties several early schools of agriculture were just successful enough to demonstrate that it could be done. An academy called the Gardiner Lyceum, founded in 1823 at Gardiner, Maine, ran for a decade before failing financially. Of wide influence and in many ways the antetype of the land grant colleges was the Rensselaer Institute at Troy, New York, where for some years after 1824 Amos Eaton included agriculture in "the application of science to the common purposes of life." The general idea was widely championed in the agricultural press, and scattered plans appeared, some of which reached the legislatures and Congress. Selden Robinson of Indiana suggested in 1838 a national school like West Point; others, state or local schools. European influences were strong, especially after Sir Humphrey Davy's Elements of Agricultural Chemistry appeared, and Jean Baptiste Bussingault showed the relation of physiological chemistry to crops. Yet in 1849 Daniel Lee, editor of the Southern Cultivator, said that no new agricultural school was in sight.

True, *op. cit.*, 47, passim.

Almost as if in answer to this, leaders rose on many fronts in the early 1850's. The Massachusetts legislature decided to look into European agricultural schools with a view to opening one of its own. In New York a People's College Association, led by Harrison Howard and supported by Horace Greeley and other reformers, was founded in 1851 to forward ambitions like Turner's. A dozen state agricultural societies sprang up which resulted in the founding of schools in Pennsylvania and Michigan before the decade was out. Farmers' College, with the ambition if not the qualities suggested by its name, was opened in Ohio in 1846 by Freeman Grant Cary and became an important center of agitation. In Indiana a new professorship in the state university was authorized but no funds were included. Indeed there were few states in which the idea did not take root, and though the various projects were local in outlook the Turner plan appealed to all, especially the common approach to Congress for a grant. The petitions and memorials which began to pour in on Congress usually specified a state agricultural college; only Illinois seems to have asked for a national system.

For several years Congress characteristically ignored the unsupported petitions and buried them in committees. A growing reluctance to dispose of the public domain was plain, and it was known that President Pierce was ready to use his veto power, as he had in the grant to an asylum proposed by Dorothy Dix. Turner nevertheless drew up a model bill at the suggestion of his Jacksonville neighbor, Richard Yates, but there was no opportunity to use it.

Confident of final success, Turner and the Industrial League were determined that the Illinois legislature make some real showing to justify their petitions. They were allied in 1855 with the state teachers' associations to promote a university with normal, agricultural, and mechanical departments, and two years later the same alliance
50. J. A. Woodburn, *History of Indiana University*, Volume 1, 1820-1903 (Indiana University, 1940), 177-179, 225. For a general discussion, see Hess, Democracy's College, Chapter II, "The Industrial Movement in State and Nation."

51. Powell, 439.


secured the passage of the Illinois State Normal University bill.
Though it had scant provisions for technical education, Bronson Murray explained that this new teacher training school was really the industrial university in disguise. "We have concluded to support the Normal University and it is now ... agreed ... that that institution is to be developed into a University and its nature shall be Normal which will insure its being Industrial in its character." 34

Haunted by this seeming success, the Industrial League once more turned toward Washington. The correspondence with Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois indicates some of the obstacles. He discerned

... an opposition springing up against any further grants of land in the States, but perhaps it was confined to those made to new States, and your project contemplating a grant to all the States might meet with more favor....
If some of the old States would take hold of the matter, I think it not unlikely that a grant of lands might be obtained.... 35 36

Turner, who received this information, apparently did not act on the advice, but less than two months later Justin S. Morrill, neophyte Vermont representative, introduced a bill much like the one that was to be approved in 1862. It should be said that Morrill's first public utterance concerning such a bill was for a national agricultural school modeled after West Point. Nothing was said in his original proposal about any national society of land grant colleges. It is impossible to establish more than an indirect relation between Turner and Morrill in the October-December period of 1857, when the latter introduced his bill.
Morrill always claimed that this was the result of his own unaided thinking. But his memory and Turner's from which years later emerged a reminiscence that he had sent Morrill the information—was no measure of his intellectual stature, for it was vague beyond belief. Still, Morrill had attended United States Agricultural Society meetings in 1856-1857 at which the
35. Murray to Pennell, Jan. 12, 1888, quoted in Fawell, 87.
Turner plan was discussed, and there were similarities of language pointing to inspiration from the professor.

Morrill's bill was passed after much maneuvering and debate in both houses, only to be vetoed by President Buchanan. Lobbyists in New York, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and other states lent their aid but had no influence on the president. The reintroduction of the bill in the next Congress was a foregone conclusion, and if the memory of Turner is to be trusted he secured in advance, promises of support from both candidates for president in 1860, Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, with both of whom he was acquainted.

The outbreak of the Civil War prevented the introduction of any bills, but early in 1861-1862 they were put before the House by Morrill and before the Senate by Benjamin Wade of Ohio. The opposition was less, largely due to the absence of states-rights minded Southern delegates. Lobbyists included Kennicott of Illinois. It was the Senate version, proposed by Senator Wade, practically the same as the one in the House, which was passed thirty-two to seven, and a few days later ninety to twenty-five in the House. Such opposition as came up was against the withholding of large tracts of land from early development in western states which were encouraging rapid settlement. On July 2, 1862, the Senate was notified that President Lincoln had signed the bill, making it a law.

That this act was some day to be classed with the nation's highest statesmanship was not apparent at the time. Gloomy military news crowded the newspapers; even the agricultural press gave the new law little space, although the Prairie Farmer printed and commended it.

The Act gave each state thirty thousand acres of land for each senator and representative—land within the state if possible, but if not, then elsewhere against which "scrip" was issued. Thus New York, the most populous state, received scrip for 220,000 acres; Illinois,
A "Merrill-Turner controversy" has engaged attention ever since the land grant colleges achieved their reputation. The most striking statement is President E. J. James's The Origin of the Land Grant Act of 1862, in which James set about in the scientific manner of German historians to prove the "thesis... that Jonathan B. Turner... was the real father of the so-called Merrill Act." The evidence has been dispassionately reviewed by Earle D. Ross, in "The 'Father' of the Land-Grant College," Agricultural History, 12 (April, 1938), 161-166, and in his Democacy's College, 43-54, resulting in the conclusion that the inadequate and to some extent contradictory sources permit no conclusive determination.

Briefly stated, Illinois and western participants in the movement took for granted Turner's leadership and seem to have assumed that the act was a direct consequence of his activities. When the responsibility for the act appeared to be at issue in later years, Merrill claimed full authorship, even for the idea itself, and was supported by friends who justly wished to honor him. The chief difference between the plan and the act lay in the apportionment of the grants: Turner had in mind an equal grant worth $500,000 to each state; Merrill based his grant on the proportion of representation in Congress. See also True, Hist. Ag. Ed., 97-99.

57. Carrill, Turner, 159-160.

58. Ross, Democracy's College, 61-64.

59. In a paper, "Misconceptions Concerning the Early History of the University of Illinois," Transactions for the Year 1932, Illinois State Historical Society (Springfield, 1933), Fred H. Turner establishes the date of Lincoln's signing as July 1, 1862, and emphasizes that it was Wade's Senate bill that was enacted (pp. 72-73).
fourth largest, 480,000. Michigan, Iowa, and Wisconsin got the
largest actual grants in land, 240,000 acres each. Both the scrip and
land were in each case for a college to be built within five years.
(The time was later extended.) The often quoted passage on the purposes
of the colleges reads,

...the leading object shall be, without excluding other
scientific and classical studies, and including military
tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are re-
lated to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such man-
ner as the legislatures of the states may respectively
prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical
education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits
and professions in life.

The clause on military training, not in the earlier form of the bill,
reflected the national crisis, and was generally approved. 25 H

The Illinois Legislature, meeting in January, 1863, unanimously accepted
the land grant act and appointed a committee on the disposition of the
donation. claimants were ready on all sides. Several of the struggling
colleges wanted to use it for agricultural instruction. It seems incred-
ible now, but Turner and his associates had no further plans and were
taken unaware by the rapid progress of events. The Industrial League had
been abandoned, Murray had retired in Connecticut, Kennicott was at the
point of death, and Turner was occupied with a wound in his pen. Finally shaken
from his preoccupation he was still at sea when he wrote to Kennicott

"What is to be done now?" and wondered if the labor was lost. "I am almost
afraid it has come ten years before we are ready for it; or else I do not
know how well to interpret this silence and seeming apathy to it."

Time was gained by a fortuitous legislative recess during which a hastily
summoned group of leaders of the state agricultural society met at Spring-
field to ask the legislature and a friendly governor--the same Richard
Yates who had offered to introduce Turner's bill in Congress in 1854--to
42. Prairie Farmer, 27 (Feb. 7, 1865), 61.
postpone action.

Next year Turner was joined by John P. Reynolds and George W. Minier of the state agricultural and horticultural societies, in an effort to rally the industrial university forces once more, but the old fire was gone, and much time was spent in disputes and criticism. Little was done until 1864 when a committee of five from the state agricultural society began to get ready for the next meeting of the legislature: Turner, William H. Van Epps, John P. Reynolds, A. B. McConnell, and E. G. Root. Their bill called for the "Illinois Industrial University," to be controlled by trustees named by the governor, and for a commission to select the location. The committee was irked by amendment maneuvers, however, resulting in Urbana being the choice for location, with branches for mechanical arts at Chicago and for agriculture somewhere in southern Illinois. Champaign County had offered $150,000, including a building and a farm, and another offer, $150,000, came from Tazewell County, which through an obliging act was authorized to borrow money and issue bonds for the purpose. A bill was also brought in, proposing three colleges—one in northern, one in central, and one in southern Illinois. Champaign County later joined with friends of the Chicago Polytechnic School in an attempt to secure the location. In mingled surprise and resentment the committee castigated the authors of the amendments and demanded the election of better disciplined legislators.

Conditions in Illinois had changed radically since the early days of the industrial university movement. Not only had the population swelled to nearly two million—it had doubled in 1850-1860—but the character of the state had changed. Agriculture had passed out of its first trying experimental stage, and the General Assembly was occupied with matters about cities and general business. Railroads had been built up and down and across the state, linking agriculture with the rising industries of the nation. A state-wide public school system had been provided, and
agricultural education was already represented. In 1850 the Northwestern Agricultural Society announced it would open a college, and a year later that it would be connected with Chicago University, with Turner, Van Epps, Reynolds, and Matthias L. Dunlap on the board of direction. The "Illinois Agricultural College" at Irvington, Washington County, was launched the same year, sponsored by B. G. Hots and Thomas Quick, both of them Turner's associates and ambitious to get the federal grant. Though the college never succeeded, it enjoyed an implied public status by securing a remnant of the state's seminary lands. "Agricultural scholarships" graced the rosters of some of the newer colleges, but none of them seem to have been of the character implied by the title.

The Urbana and Champaign Institute, a seminary enterprise that never admitted a student, differed from all others. In 1859 the Rev. Johnathan C. Stoughton appeared in Urbana and West Urbana (the latter known as Champaign after 1860) in behalf of a company of real estate promoters trying to interest the community in a college. The arguments were familiar—it would bring cultural advantages and prestige, would raise property values, etc. But it soon became apparent too that it might attract the industrial university to Urbana. Thus in June, 1860, for the "Urbana and Champaign Institute had been even before any contracts were signed, Urbana representatives offered a hundred thousand dollar building to a convention of industrial university leaders in Bloomington, and in 1861 the petition for incorporation included the suggestion that the buildings be turned over to the proposed university. But financial troubles came up, and work on the building stopped. None of the local promoters thought of opening the Institute on its own merits.

When it became plain that the legislature of 1855 might act in the matter, Stoughton's company was induced to convey their equity in the building and grounds for a promise of payment when Urbana should be selected for the location. On this slender basis, Dr. John W. Scroggs,
43. Catalogues described the course over a period of six years, but apparently no students registered.

44. *Turner, 371-375.* The *Prairie Farmer* and the agricultural societies gave no support to this institution, considering it a fraud and a misrepresentation.

45. *Turner, 395-397.* Among the local men behind the plan were B. F. Harris, Joseph W. Sim, Jr., William Park, William H. Remine, James S. Wright, Carter F. Columbia, and John E. Thomas, some of whose names are the source of street names in the University district. Dr. C. A. Hunt, a physician who died in service in the Civil War, is reputedly the author of the suggestion to devote the project to the industrial university.

46. *Powell, 204-205.*

local physician, and newspaper man and farmer sympathizer, was chosen in late 1864 to make the county's advances to Turner's bill-drafting committee. He got scant attention, but as soon as the General Assembly met, Champaign County legislators were ready with a bill identical to Turner's except that the location was given as Urbana. Meanwhile Seregg was busy with a hastily-contrived coalition with the Chicago delegation which was trying to get the mechanics arts division of the university for their city. As a result of the unexpected foray, other cities were aroused, and it was easy to see that the next legislature would have applications from several of them.

In view of the unexpected turn of events, Turner and his associates could only express disapproval and disappointment when they met in a convention at Bloomington in December, 1865. The principles of a single institution and location by commission were reaffirmed, and state voters were told to repudiate any legislative candidate unfavorable to these views. But Turner had hardly more than returned to his home in Jacksonville when rumors arose that that city would try to get the university. Turner's professed disinterestedness soon was undermined by his activity in local plans; he was gradually, though unwillingly, forced into the attitude that the university would go to the highest bidder, so he urged that each of the interested cities, including Jacksonville, get to work and statements of inducements. He mentioned "added endowments" after the manner of Ezra Cornell in New York.

In contrast with Jacksonville's stress on natural and cultural advantages, the Urbana and Champaign Institute coterie made a political approach. Working hand in hand with the county board of supervisors, the local committee here laid their plans so that the legislature rather than the commission would decide the issue. The greatest care was taken to elect assemblymen who would lead an able campaign in the House and Senate.


49. F. H. Turner, 529-534.
In addition the supervisors called a special election for a hundred thousand dollar bond issue camouflaged in the phrases "For Agricultural College," and "Against Agricultural College." Most of the voters, many perhaps not knowing what they were voting for, reacted favorably. By the time the Legislature met in January, 1867, the Urbana offer included the institute building and grounds, 970 acres of farm land, $100,000 in county bonds, $2,000 in shrubbery, trees, and other nursery stock from the Dunlap Nursery, and $50,000 free freight on the Illinois Central Railroad.

But the success of Champaign County's bid rested less on its cash value, variously given out as $250,000 to $500,000, than on the political skill of Clark Robinson Griggs, the agent of the Urbana committee and the district's assemblyman-elect. He had once been a member of the Massachusetts legislature, and during the Civil War was a sutler in the Union Army. Griggs was a relative newcomer to Urbana but his native shrewdness and pleasant personality, as well as his prompt assumption of civic responsibility, quickly gained for him a respected place in the community. He was a hotel keeper and farmer, with interests in a proposed railroad from Danville through Urbana and on to Bloomington and Pekin. Griggs traveled throughout the state, avoiding only the cities having pretensions to the university, to learn what other community projects were in the air. He heard that a new statehouse was planned and that Peoria was out to unseat Springfield as the capital. Chicago wanted to develop its park system and to deepen the Chicago River. Southern Illinois eyed a proposed penitentiary.

In all, Griggs saw about half of the eighty-six legislators of his house and claimed the undoubted support of fifteen, besides that of Richard J. Oglesby, governor-elect, and the Lieutenant-governor William "Decon" Bross. Both party state chairmen, according to Griggs' unvarnished
reminiscences, became "paid servants" of his committee.

Overlooking nothing, the committee also sent instructed delegates to agricultural meetings where the university might be discussed, including the state horticultural society which was brought to Urbana in December, 1866. Newspaper publicity in general was so successful that by the time the legislature met, the county's victory was conceded.

What attracted most attention, however, in early January, 1867, was the lavish headquarters of the Champaign "ring" in the Leland Hotel, the best in Springfield. Oyster suppers, quail dinners, and champagne for the legislators were reported in the papers, and seemed to be effective. Some legislators were said to be ready to vote with Griggs and his group "because they worked so hard." Such promotion cost the county a little over $50,000, and some private spending doubtless increased the amount.

Other entrants in the contest were less successful. Morgan County (Jacksonville) expected to offer county bonds but was rebuffed by the voters. McLean County, proposing a site near the state normal university at Normal, assembled a tardy bid of $470,000 consisting of city and county bonds, real estate, and freight on the Alton and Lincoln in Logan County, made a similar one of $385,000. That the private colleges still had eyes on the fund was evident at a Chicago meeting in October, 1866, at which it was naively suggested that the donation was large enough to satisfy all. "Two thousand dollars a year, fifteen hundred for the professor, and five hundred for his books and tools, would respectfully support an agricultural department in a college," they reported, and then warned that there could be only danger in a state university. If it excluded Christianity, it must be atheist or pagan; if it admitted religion it must admit sectarian wrangling.

The pontifical deliberation aroused controversy but no sympathy.

With these and other rivals in the field, the General Assembly
49. "Clark Robinson Griggs and the Location of the University," Powell, 515-517.

50. Ibid., 518. Fewell was able to account for $13,636 of the $32,168.39 expended from public funds (pp. 269-270).

The recollections, unsubstantiated and incorrect in other details, have it that he traded votes on the speakership for the chairmanship of the Committee on Agriculture and the right to name a majority of its members (Powell, 513). Tanner, sitting his first term in the Senate, had been the sponsor of Turner's bill in the House of Representatives in 1865.

Chicago Tribune, Feb. 13, 1867. A good source for background material.

Journal of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth General Assembly... (Springfield, 1867), Feb. 18, 1867, pp. 355-370.

The actual value of the property, when contracts were transmitted in the spring of 1867, was $207,210 exclusive of the railroad's contribution of $60,000. Of this amount the $100,000 in bonds bulked largest; the building and its eight-acre grounds were purchased for $40,000 from the syndicate; the farm lands totaling 965 acres, $65,210; and $2,000 was presented in the form of trees and shrubbery from M. L. Dunlap's nursery. Powell, 355-270.
met early in January, 1867. Griggs of Urbana won for himself the
coveted chairmanship of the House committee on agriculture, and John
L. Timcher, for the Champaign County and Danville senatorial district,
won the corresponding place in the Senate. To these committees went
most of the university bills. A Senate bill to give Chicago half the
grant for a polytechnical school was soon tabled. Debate first centered
on the enabling act necessary to legalize the counties’ bond issues.
After this was passed, the bids were introduced to the accompaniment of
charges of dishonesty, corruption, and conspiracy, with Champaign bear-
ing the brunt of the attacks. The spoils argument was injected, only
to be turned on McLean County’s possession already of the normal un-
iversity, and Morgan County’s three public institutions. Incidents
called “bombsbells” by the papers sometimes occurred, as when Jack-
senville let it be known that most of the facilities of Illinois
College would be added to the county offer.

The upshot was the appointment of a joint committee of investi-
gation and appraisal which made junkets to four proposed sites. Urbana
invited not only the committee but also all the legislators and attend-
ant press writers, the latter helping themselves to the free-flowing
liquor and coming up with such nuggets as “Champaign was believed to
have the inside track before the excursion, but there can be no doubt
of it now.” Jacksonville did almost as much but failed to arouse
enthusiasm. But the committee was not taken in. They judged that
McLean County’s offer was worth $470,000, Logan County’s $385,000,
Morgan County’s $315,000, and, county Illinois College, $176,000 more;
and Champaign County’s only $285,000. There were of course the ex-
pected outcries that Champaign’s bid had been under-appraised—but
Griggs was not greatly concerned.

Griggs was now ready to bring to debate in the House his own bill
placing the university at Urbana. Some amendments were admitted, the
main ones being to raise by legislative fiat the valuation of the
Champaign County offer to $450,000 and to allow the trustees to estab-
lish branches but not to divide the endowment. The Morgan County
delegate's amendment naming Jacksonville as the seat of the university
was quickly defeated, as were amendments naming the McLean and Logan
County sites, by the simple expedient of allowing the contestants to
cast votes each other. With none but Urbana's offer left, Griggs' bill
was passed, sixty-seven to ten in the House and eighteen to seventeen
in the Senate.

Although Turner and the other pioneers of the industrial uni-
versity were not standing idly by, their efforts were hopelessly
ineffective. Turner, Reynolds, and McConnell were among the most
active for Jacksonville, and Jesse Fell and W. A. Fennell for McLean
County. Their bitter jibes at the "corruption, hypocrisy, drunkenness,
and debauchery" of the Champaign "ring" won them few friends, though
all opposition did seem directed at Champaign. In what he said was
the official attitude of the state agricultural society Turner growled
that "all the money in Christendom" could not build a university in
Champaign. His only hope was in awakening the next legislature's
sense of responsibility and in rescinding the action.

The "Act to provide for the Organization and Maintenance of the
Illinois Industrial University" was about the same as Turner's bill of
1865. It assigned the federal donation to the trustees with the stipu-
lation that it must be applied to the institution at Urbana, thus assur-
ing the "single institution" principle, though the way was left open for
branches. The number of trustees was raised to thirty-two, and Senate
confirmation was not required. As in the earlier proposal, the president
was to be called "regent." The office of corresponding secretary was

57. Journal of the Senate of the Twenty-fifth General Assembly (Springfield, 1867), 1050-1052.

58. "Report of Committee on Location of Industrial University," Jacksonville Journal, Mar. 16 and 18, 1867, reprinted in Powell, 492-505. A supplemental act made provision for relocation if Champaign County could not make good its bid (Public Laws..., 1867, 150), but Turner was ready to repeal the original.
an idea borrowed from the agricultural societies. No degrees were to be granted, and English was to be used so far as possible in all documents and scientific description. Students must be at least age fifteen and know common school subjects. Classes in "such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, and military tactics, without excluding other scientific and classical studies" were to be in the six winter months. Reference was made to a model farm and possibly other departments. On maintenance—of the use of the word in the act's title referred to financial support by the state—the act was ominously silent.

The wisdom of locating the university at Urbana, in the least developed section of the state, was doubtful, at least at the time. It was difficult of access, even though it was on the main north and south railroad, the Illinois Central, linking the fast-growing metropolis of Chicago with southern Illinois. The "Danville, Urbana, Bloomington and Pekin" Railroad, to run east and west, had not yet been built. That the soil was too poor for agricultural college experimentation, was suspected but the doubters were soon reassured. An advantage not noticed at the time was that the location was about on the dividing line between upstate and downstate, thus enabling the university to reflect the character of both.

Urbana, in which most of the university site lay, had been settled in the 1830's. Its name, as did that of the county, came from Ohio communities which had been the homes of early settlers. Champaign, first known as West Urbana, was a development brought on by the building of the Illinois Central Railroad in the middle 'fifties. The institute building, an unfinished mass, stood in the middle of a muddy field one and a half miles wide separating the two towns. In 1867 Champaign was already the larger city, but the population of both did not exceed five thousand. Even taken as one, they formed the smallest of the communities competing for the location of the industrial university.
95. Public Laws...... 1867... 125-129.
But they were booming towns; in the early post-war period as many as 250 houses were built in one year in Champaign, and about half as many in Urbana. Public improvements such as paved streets, lights, gas and water did not come until the later 'sixties and early 'seventies. At half-hour intervals a slow moving horse-drawn streetcar rattled back and forth between the two towns, passing a few blocks south of the half-completed university building and the piles of rubbish left around it by the workmen. Passengers must often have wondered what good would come of it all.

With the University finally established, and located at Urbana, the first era of its history can be brought to a close. Here now stood one of the "Industrial universities for the people," as Turner loved to call them — and Turner, more than any other one man, was responsible. Years ahead of his time, he combined the qualities of an educational dreamer and practical man of affairs in a way that few could equal. He was the "gentleman unafraid" in early Illinois and indeed national higher education for the common man.