

## PROFESSOR J. B. TURNER OF JACKSONVILLE

THE ACADEMIC YEAR, 1961-62, is being celebrated nationally as the Centennial of the Land Grant Act of 1862, the legislation under which the University of Illinois, and sixty-eight other colleges and universities have been founded. Dr. Newton Bateman, State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Illinois, speaking in Urbana on March 11, 1868, at the inauguration of John Milton Gregory as first Regent of the Illinois Industrial University, after reviewing the events leading up to the passage of the Land Grant Act of 1862, stated: "In the West, the man whose voice rang out the earliest, loudest, and clearest in this great movement—whose words pealed and thundered through the minds and hearts of the people . . . that man was *Jonathan Baldwin Turner*."

### TURNER ORIGINATED THE IDEA AND PLAN

The Land Grant Act of 1862 is often called the Morrill Bill, honoring Senator J. S. Morrill of Vermont. It is true that Mr. Morrill was perhaps the most active member of Congress in pushing the legislation, but the idea was not his, and the bill which was finally passed, actually was presented by Senator B. F. Wade of Ohio. Both bills presented the ideas which had originated with Jonathan Baldwin Turner. Here is a brief chronological record of Mr. Turner's activities:

1. He left Yale University in 1833 to become a teacher of English at Illinois College at Jacksonville.
2. Having been raised on a farm in Massachusetts and with a strong background of interest in agriculture, he was dissatisfied with the classical curriculum at Illinois College and began to think in terms of college level work for the practical realities of the midwestern farmers and industrial workers.
3. He resigned his professorship at Illinois College in 1848 and devoted himself to his farms and public affairs.
4. On May 13, 1850, he spoke to the Illinois Teachers' Institute at Griggsville, Illinois, presenting his plan for a state university for the industrial classes.
5. He reported this speech before the Buel Institute, an agricultural association, at Granville, Illinois, November 18, 1851.
6. Many people have called the Griggsville and Granville meetings the start of the Land Grant Movement, but at that time Mr. Turner was talking only about the State of Illinois. In March 1852, *The Prairie Farmer* magazine carried a letter from Mr. Turner in which he outlined a proposal for a national system of grants of public lands for the benefit of colleges and universities to teach agriculture and the mechanic arts. This letter was the first public proposal of the national plan.
7. From 1851 to the passage of the Land Grant Act in 1862, Turner devoted much of his time to furthering the idea. In 1853 he prepared resolutions which were adopted by the Illinois General Assembly, sent to Washington, and adopted by both Houses of Congress. Words and phrases used by Jonathan Baldwin Turner in his Griggsville and Granville speeches appear in *The Prairie Farmer* article, in the Illinois Legislative Resolutions, in their adoption by United States Congress, in the bills presented by Mr. Morrill, and Mr. Wade, and in the Land Grant Act as it stands on the books today after having been passed 100 years ago.

### J. B. TURNER AS AN AGRICULTURIST

In 1837, Illinois College had been unable to pay salaries for nearly two years and in lieu of salary gave Mr. Turner 17½

acres of college property on College Hill. This became the site of his home which was started in 1837, and the experimental plot on which he conducted his agricultural and horticultural experiments. He also had land holdings near the present village of Illiopolis.

He was, therefore, a farmer as well as a teacher, and from 1837 until his death on January 10, 1899, was active in many agricultural and horticultural movements and associations, not only in Illinois, but also nationally. One of his great contributions was the introduction of the osage orange as a practical solution for fencing the prairies. Most of the hedge fences which still exist in Illinois were grown from plants introduced by J. B. Turner.

The following is a description of his home and fruit yard which appears in the book "*The Life of Jonathan Baldwin Turner*" by his daughter, Mary Turner Carriel:

"He laid out the home place in hedge fields, vegetable and flower gardens, and orchards. A grass walk four feet wide extended from the house on College Avenue straight north to State Street. On either side were flower-beds of the same width, filled with every variety and color of crocus, tulips, hyacinths, crown imperials, jonquils, daffodils, and narcissus. Back of these were roses, spiraeas, and all kinds of shrubs; then, farther east and west, were the apple, peach, pear, and small-fruit orchards, and the vineyards. . . . To the west, . . . were the Osage orange hedge fields, the small plants with their glossy leaves, in rows as straight as a line, running the full length of the fields, were a pleasing sight, and they furnished work for many a boy with a three-cornered hoe in the summer, and in winter in counting the plants stored in the barn cellar. The beginning of more than one honored career was laid in the hedge-rows, and in the cellar of the old plant-house, of Professor Turner.

"Professor Turner was the originator of the Turner red raspberry, which is still the standard raspberry in other countries, as well as in the United States. He planted every tree that would grow in this climate. In 1862 he had a greater variety than could be found in the Smithsonian Gardens at Washington."

It should be noted that this book, long out of print, has just been re-published by the University of Illinois Press as one of its contributions to the Land Grant Act Centennial.

### THE TURNER HOME

Mr. J. B. Turner of Vandalia, Illinois, a grandson of Jonathan Baldwin Turner, loaned us a copy of a print showing "The residence and fruit yard of Professor J. B. Turner, No. 1114 College Av., Jacksonville, Morgan Co., Ills." This print appears to be a lithograph taken from what was probably an early county history. It is certainly the home described by Mrs. Carriel since the house was started in 1837, and the plantings came after that. The date of the print must have been in the early 1850's. A photograph of the house, made much later which appears in Mrs. Carriel's book, demonstrates how faithfully the lithographer did his earlier work. The house was razed some years ago, and only a grass grown stone now marks its location.

The Turner home is the 16th in our series, with the wood-block cutting and printing done as in the past.

FRED AND BETTY TURNER

*Christmas, 1961*  
Urbana, Illinois