



Morrill Act 100 Years Old

Land-Grant Act of '62 Revolutionizes Education

By DAVE BOLBACH

Slightly less than 100 years ago on July 2, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill which revolutionized the entire system of higher education in the United States and, perhaps, the world.

The exact legislative number of this act has long been forgotten and today it is known simply as the Morrill Land-Grant Act. Its name honors its author and main backer, Sen. Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont.

The act gave each state 30,000 acres located in the state or script for land located in the Mississippi Valley for each Congressman representing that state.

The proceeds from the sale of the land or script was used to set up a permanent endowment for a college or colleges to be established in that state.

The act states that the objective of these colleges was "... to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts" but was not to exclude other scientific and classical studies and military tactics.

With the federal endowment, each state chartered such an institution "... in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life."

Today the income from these endowments is a minute part of the budgets of these colleges and universities. (The University, as Pennsylvania's Land-Grant school, receives \$30,000 annually from this endowment.)

The two phrases of the act stated above, however, still guide the present 68 Land-Grant institutions in the United States and its territories.

Resident instruction is the main function of these colleges and universities. They enroll approximately 20 per cent of the country's college population; grant 40 per cent of the doctoral degrees in the United States; and train about half of the regular and reserve officers of the armed forces.

While continuing to serve their main function of teaching agriculture and mechanic arts, the Land-Grant schools today include colleges of liberal arts. Students in these colleges, together with those enrolled in the sciences, comprise 40 per cent of the total student enrollment in Land-Grant colleges.

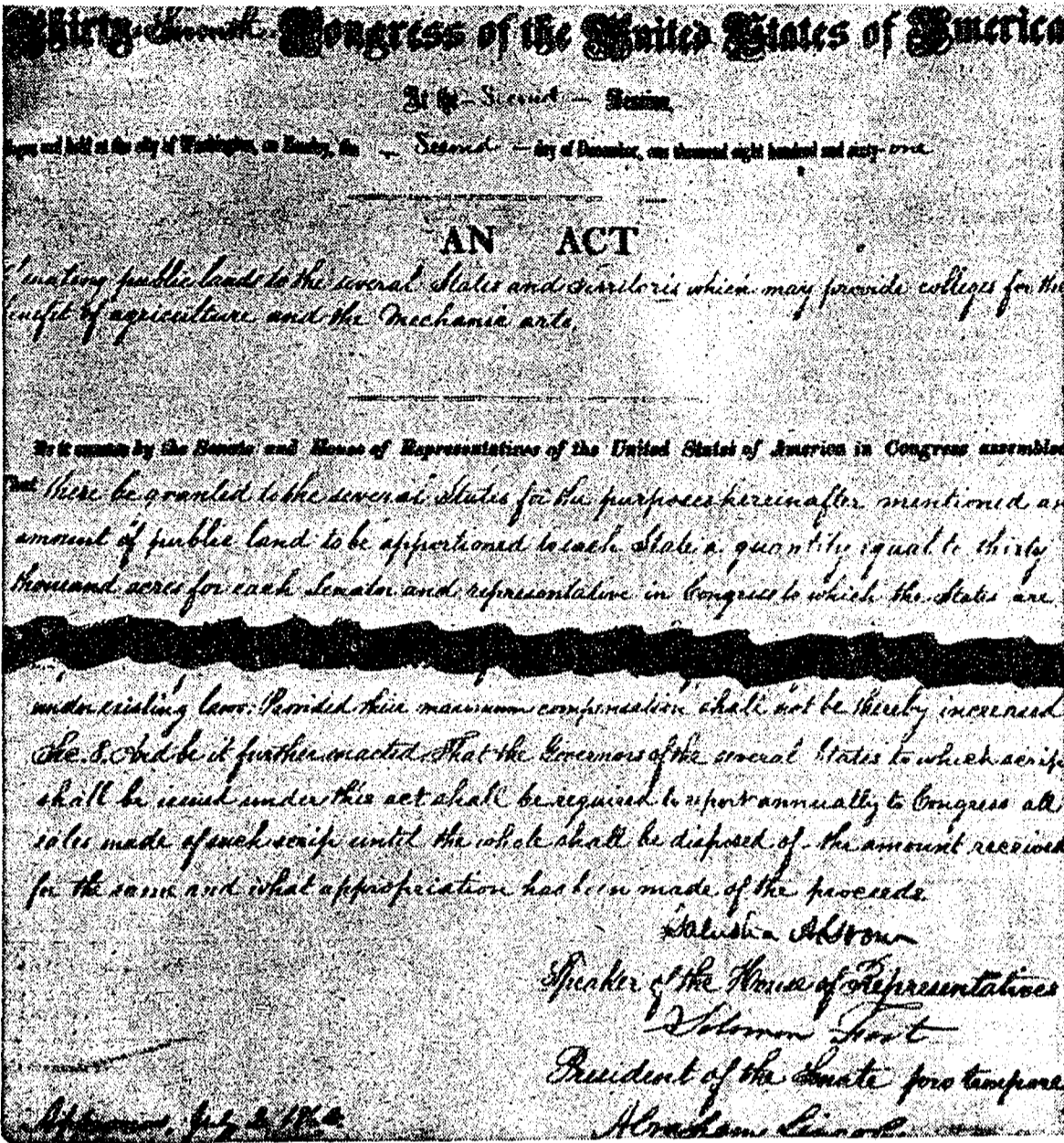
Basic and applied research is the second function of the Land-Grant colleges and universities. Federal funds have aided in making research a vital part of the educational setup in these schools.

Among the research projects at Land-Grant schools which have resulted from this function are the development of the drug streptomycin, the first cyclotron and, at this University, the first calorimeter.

A third function of the colleges and universities is the dissemination of new ideas throughout the population. Continuing education departments in all of these institutions carry out this mission of the Land-Grant schools.

These three functions of Land-Grant institutions—resident education, research and continuing education—have been described as a "trilogy of American ingenuity."

They have changed the higher educational system in the United States from strictly a study of the classics for the wealthy to a study of the practical and the classics by a large number of young men and women regardless of financial position.



THE MORRILL LAND-GRANT ACT which was passed by the second session of Congress Dec. 2, 1861 donates public lands to the "several States and Territories which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the

mechanic arts. The black line running through the center of the photograph represents the text of the act eliminated in the picture. The script above and below the line is the first and last parts of the act.

Idea for Land-Grant Started in 1850's

A century ago, higher education in this country was regarded as a privilege of birth, social status or wealth, Mrs. Margaret T. Riley, research assistant in the Penn State Room at Pattee Library, said recently.

Like classical British and continental education, it served primarily to prepare men for the professions, Mrs. Riley said, and little thought was given to the availability or practicality of a higher education for the common citizen.

"A movement then started to change this situation," she said, "because men realized that there was a need to have more people better trained for more things."

Just as increased industrialization is creating more demands for higher education today, she added, so it was doing in the 1850s.

"The idea for the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, which gave a state accepting its terms land which it could sell and use the funds to establish a college, was not new," she continued. "It just made a reality of an idea that had for years been lying around without direction."

Justin S. Morrill of Vermont became legislative spokesman for the bill which was eventually passed by Congress and signed by President Lincoln on July 2, 1862, Mrs. Riley said.

Under the bill, each state accepting its terms was given an allotment of 30,000 acres for each of its senators and representatives in Congress. Funds from the sale of the land were to be invested by the state, and could only be used to establish an institution, she said.

"The founders of the Univers-

ity were among those who worked for the passage of the act," Mrs. Riley said, "and this institution, chartered in 1855 as Farmers' High School, shares honors with Michigan State for the successful pioneering in education of new theories which resulted after the Morrill Act's recognition and support of them."

When Andrew G. Curtin signed the Acceptance Act of Pennsylvania in 1863, the University was designated as the state's land-grant college, she said.

"The land-grant schools were called agriculture colleges then because agriculture was still the main occupation in America, despite the movement toward industry," Mrs. Riley observed.

Under the provisions of the Morrill Act, the colleges were required to offer courses in

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Signatures Cut for TIM

The number of signatures required for the nominating petitions of town independent men was cut in half yesterday.

Residents of this area will need only 50 signatures rather than 100 as previously required.

Petitions are due between 2 and 3 p.m. tomorrow in 203 Hetzel Union building.

Bowl Tickets

A special student sale of Gator Bowl tickets will be held from 8 to 5 p.m. Wednesday at the ticket office at Recreation Hall.

On the following day the tickets will be available to the general public.

There will be one admission price of \$6 for all the tickets. The tickets are for a section of seats on the east side of the stadium from the 40-yard line to the endzone.

29 Promote Association

Slightly more than 90 years ago, 29 representatives of various land-grant colleges met to discuss mutual problems. That was the beginning of the Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, which today include 68 member land-grant colleges and universities.

Since that first meeting, various members of the University faculty and administration have played a prominent role in the formation and development of the association.

One of the first University administrators to figure in the formation of the association was Frederick Watts, who also was in the forefront of the fight to win legislative approval of the land-grant concept.

Watts was president of the Board of Trustees when, as United

States Commissioner of Agriculture, he called a national conference in 1872 which eventually paved the way for the formal organization of the association.

In 1887 the first annual convention was held and the name of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations was adopted. At this convention, George W. Atherton, one of the founders of the University, was elected president of the association.

Atherton, who was re-elected the following year, also was influential in the passage of the Hatch Act of 1887 by which Congress established state agricultural stations.

Henry Prentiss Armsby, who came to the University in 1887 as the first director of the newly-established agricultural experiment station, served as president of the association in 1899. Armsby also was influential in the establishment of the association.

Another University faculty

member who played an important role in the development of the association, particularly in the field of agricultural extension education, was John Hamilton.

Hamilton, an alumnus of the University and professor of agriculture, served as chairman of the extension education committee of the association and was in the forefront of the movement to win Congressional support of extension legislation.

Dr. Ralph Dorn Hetzel, president of the University from 1926 to 1947, was elected president of the association for 1947. However, he died before the convention of that year was held. In addition to serving as president, Hetzel served 12 years on the executive committee of the association.

Milton Eisenhower, president of the University from 1950 to 1956, is the most recent University official to hold the office of president. Eisenhower served in that capacity in 1952.