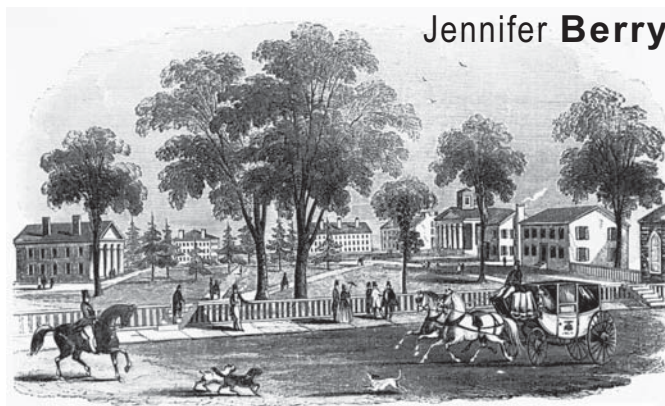


MORRILL IN ACTION

UGA

The University Of Georgia



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Franklin College.

When choosing a college, most students have an array of different reasons for wanting to attend this one over that one. For instance, a recent graduate who wants to study the fine art of ballet probably would not apply to MIT, and one wanting to become an atmospheric scientist would stay away from Juilliard.

When I was exploring graduate programs, I narrowed my search for a particular school pretty fast. First, I had to have a decent Entomology Department. Second, I refused to live in a big city again since I had just left Hollywood, CA. And, third, I didn't want to move to a state where I had already lived. These may have been pretty lame reasons, but I was older and knew a little more about what I wanted to do and where I wanted to live. Whether or not the school had a good football team was the least of my concerns. Once I narrowed the list, only two schools remained; this presented a difficult decision. Then, a professor friend of mine told me where he had received his PhD and how much he loved not only the school but the town and the people, as well. I was sold. So, I packed my bags, cats and dogs, loaded the truck, and headed to Athens, Georgia – home of the University of Georgia (UGA).

UGA is big news here in Georgia, not only because of the Bulldogs, a nationally-ranked football team (yes, even after their recent, horrific loss to South Carolina), but because UGA is, well, the University of "GEORGIA." UGA, with nearly 10,000 faculty and staff across the state, is one of the largest employers in Georgia. UGA owns 39,395 acres of property, consisting of six campuses across 30 counties, as well as numerous farms and research facilities. The annual budget to run the university this year is \$1.32 billion, 29% of which is provided by

the State of Georgia. The money provided by the state has been a recurring political issue since the economy went south. When the State of Georgia can't pay its bills, and, by corollary, the budget is out of balance, education always seems to be the first item on the chopping block. According to Georgia's constitution, the budget must be balanced. This is a good thing for the state in the long run. However, it is hard on those in education who have lost their jobs or gone without cost of living increases for over five years.

UGA houses numerous colleges offering 79 programs, including the colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (to which our lab belongs), Arts and Sciences, Business, Ecology, Education, Environment and Design, Family and Consumer Sciences, Forest Resources, Graduate School, Journalism and Mass Communication, Law, Pharmacy, Public Health, Public and International Affairs, Social Work, Veterinary Medicine, the GHSU/UGA Medical Partnership, and Engineering. This abundance is necessary to afford the 26,571 undergraduate and 8,194 graduate/professional students plenty of choices. That's a grand total of 34,765 students! And, I thought things were big only in Texas.

The students at UGA are also involved in extra curricular activities. UGA recognizes over 600 registered student organizations, which include 32 social fraternities and 26 social sororities.

An overwhelming number of high school students, particularly in Georgia, want to attend UGA – one of the largest schools in the South East. Lamentably, there are only so many openings each year, and acceptance into UGA has become extremely competitive. For example, last year, the average GPA score for the 4,685 entering freshmen was 3.8. That's a pretty high standard for a state school. And, among these new, bright-eyed students, 97 percent of the in-state freshmen have earned the HOPE Scholarship, which is funded entirely from revenue generated from the lottery. It is available to Georgia residents whose academic achievements are above par. The program basically pays for a student's educational costs while attending a HOPE eligible college in Georgia.

UGA also has quite a history. First, it's the country's first chartered public university. It was established on January 27, 1785 by the Georgia General Assembly and it is the oldest public institution of higher education in the United States. The University's first president was Abraham Baldwin. He held the radical position that higher education was "a public good, not a private privilege, and should not be exclusive to those of wealth."



But, it wasn't until 1799 when the university actually began. During a meeting of the *Senatus Academicus* (a joint assembly of the Board of Visitors and the Board of Trustees, both presided over by the Georgia Senate), 633 acres of land was set aside in order for the university to be built. The land was located along the banks of the Oconee River, in the heart of Athens, Georgia. Two years later the first class was held in a clearing which is now the historic section of UGA's North Campus. The first class graduated on May 31, 1804. It wasn't until 1806 that the first brick building was constructed on campus. It was named Franklin College in honor of Benjamin Franklin. It is still in use today, housing administrative offices and classrooms. The Board of Trustees, which replaced the *Senatus Academicus* in 1859, has been in service ever since. While great hopes were raised when Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act in July, 1862, portending federal support for state institutions of higher learning, there was a slight obstacle that got in the way for Georgia: War!

On January 18, 1861 Georgia seceded from the union and, by February 5th, was the fifth state to join the Confederacy (Confederate States of America). On April 12th, 1861, Civil War hostilities began when the Confederate forces attacked Fort Sumter – a U.S. military installation in South Carolina. It marked the beginning of the “War Between the States” with battles raging for years, primarily in the south, and resulting in the deadliest war ever in American history with over 750,000 soldier and civilian casualties. It finally came to an end on April 16, 1865, which was four months after Sherman's famous “march to the sea” and the capture of Savannah.

Before the long march ended, Sherman had seized and burned most of Atlanta to the ground. Remember that famous scene in *Gone With the Wind* when Rhett so gallantly saves Scarlett, Melanie and Prissy? He whisked them away through the streets while railroad cars exploded and criminals tried to take their horse and buggy. Well, that was the old Atlanta.

Once he was satisfied that Atlanta would not stand again for some time, Sherman stripped his army of all non-essentials and proceeded to march southeast through Georgia. The result was that parts of Georgia lay completely in ruins. Farms were raided and destroyed. Tens of thousands of livestock were slaughtered or seized. Homes were burned. Millions of pounds of corn and fodder were confiscated. Hundreds of miles of railroad, bridges, and telegraph lines were demolished. Cotton gins and mills were burned to the ground. And, the psychological dam-

One of the University of Georgia beeyards.



age as a result of Sherman's destructive swath affected Georgians from the mountains to the southern border for years to come. Thousands of civilians were either killed or arrested as traitors, including women and children.

Georgia was the last of the Confederate States to re-enter the Union in June 15, 1870. Its infrastructure and economy were in shambles. As a result, Georgia remained poor and didn't recover until well into the 20th century. However, there was a small glimmer of hope when the State Assembly gave \$300 to the injured soldiers who served in the war. And, there was another flicker of light that would soon shine as well.

During the war, Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act of 1862 which granted federal land to the states for the establishment and funding of educational institutions. It also provided for the education of people from all social classes in agriculture, mechanical and other applied fields.

Understandably, the states that had seceded from the Union were not eligible for the benefits of the Morrill Act right away. UGA had to close its doors for a little over two years during the war. Soon afterwards, the enrollment peaked at 78 students. Eventually, the Morrill Act helped with the creation of the UGA College of Agriculture and Mechanical Art, opening May 1, 1872.

Michael Adams, current president of UGA, wrote, “the

Morrill Act, too, sees higher education as a public good, a means not only to educate young people but to be of broader benefit to all the people of the state. We take this charge seriously at the University of Georgia. The spirit and the letter of the Morrill Act are alive and well at UGA, and I am proud of the good work that we are doing.”

Like the president wrote, UGA is not here just to educate, but also to help connect UGA’s resources and expertise to the needs of the people and communities throughout the state. UGA’s Cooperative Extension and Outreach Programs are good examples of UGA’s commitment to solving some of Georgia’s most daunting challenges. Extension agents and specialists across the state provide vital information to producers and consumers of Georgia’s agricultural products. All citizens in Georgia including homeowners, farmers, and business people benefit from these programs. For example, there is expert advice and information available about poultry, horses, beef and dairy cattle, swine, sheep, goats and aquaculture. There are resources and best management practices for field crops such as canola, cotton, grains, peanuts, soybeans, tobacco, as well as for forestry. There are guidelines for growing apples, beans, blackber-

ries, blueberries, citrus, corn, grapes, greens, onions, peaches, pecans, potatoes, squash, strawberries, and tomatoes. There’s information available about pests and diseases on all the above. And, finally, there are “how to” programs on organic agriculture, running your own business, sustainable agriculture and urban agriculture.

Please join me in wishing a Happy Birthday to the Morrill Act of 1862 and in offering many thanks to Jonathan Baldwin Turner, Justin Smith Morrill and those who had such a bright vision for the future! **BC**

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