

1978

A Place for Education

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Recommended Citation

Champagne, Roger J., "A Place for Education" (1978). *Illinois State University History Books*. 1.
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A PLACE OF EDUCATION:

Illinois State University, 1967-1977

Roger J. Champagne

Illinois State University Foundation
Normal, Illinois
1978

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Library of Congress Card
Number 78-31547

Manufactured in the United States of America
at Printing Services, Illinois State University,
Normal, Illinois 61761

To John A. Kinneman, teacher, scholar, and friend. Sometime head of the Department of Social Sciences and Professor of Sociology, 1927-62, Illinois State University.

It is a great point then to enlarge the range of studies which a university professes, even for the sake of the students and, though they cannot pursue every subject which is open to them, they will be the gainers by living among those and under those who represent the whole circle. This I conceive to be the advantage of a seat of a universal learning, considered as a place of education.

John Henry Cardinal Newman,
The Idea of a University

PREFACE

This is a history of Illinois State University's twelfth decade of development. Founded in 1857 as the first tax-supported institution of higher learning in the State of Illinois, Illinois State University had remained a "normal" school for over a century, devoting its resources exclusively to the academic and professional preparation of teachers. Throughout its long history, the University's development came slowly. Fifty years passed before the first four-year baccalaureate degree was awarded, and another 38 years before the first graduate degree, but perhaps the most important change came 109 years after its founding. In 1966, Illinois State University ended its exclusive concentration on teacher education—"the grandest of enterprises"—and assumed a new identity, that of a multipurpose institution. It was, of course, easier said than done, if only because the change came in a period of extraordinary growth and student unrest, followed by retrenchment and public criticism of higher education. This short history traces Illinois State University's effort to realize its broader scope and mission.

I was impressed at the outset that writing the University's recent history, some of it controversial, was a risky undertaking, posing several problems. Could I, for example, as an observer-participant be able to rise to an acceptable level of objectivity? Would my analysis and interpretation correspond to those of my colleagues, some old and some new? One trial balloon, a short presentation to a group of friends, persuaded me that the questions could not be satisfactorily answered, that indeed the questions just might be irrelevant. More importantly, the reactions of my colleagues became for me a live encounter with the wisdom contained in Carl Lotus Becker's classic essay, "Everyman His Own Historian." In the end, then, I have contented myself with the knowledge that I have to the best of my ability practiced the historical craft as I understand it.

A word about the absence of those marks of scholarship—footnotes and bibliography—customarily found in history monographs. I quickly discovered that the archives of the University's recent past are not in a strict sense archives at all, but rather the working files of various offices scattered over the campus. In some instances, when I could not locate an item in the original that seemed important to consult, I had to rely on the personal files of individuals. Because of the dispersed and unorganized nature of the recent documentary record, therefore, it did not seem to me that the usual citations and references to sources would be a meaningful exercise. I can only say that I read as much as possible, considering the brevity of this volume, that no office was closed to me, and that no one refused to give me assistance when asked. Along the way I also read the *Vidette* and *The Daily Pantagraph* for the period and more covered in this history.

Assistance came from many directions and persons. Scores from top to bottom in the University willingly answered my questions and furnished materials, and I am grateful for their interest and help. I especially appreciate the support and encouragement of James M. Horner, Provost of the University, and Gerlof Homan, head of the Department of History. I am grateful for the time that former presidents Robert G. Bone, Samuel E. Braden, and Gene A. Budig gave me; I gained a deeper understanding of the University as a result of long conversations with them. A special acknowledgement is due Arlan Helgeson, sometime administrator, colleague, and friend who shared with me his long experience in the University and helped out in many ways. The manuscript was read by Francis B. Belshe, Stanley G. Rives, Charles A. White, Joseph Goleash, Mark Plummer, and Edward Schapsmeier, while Fred Kohlmeyer went over the manuscript for style and wore out several pencils in the process. They all saved me from a number of slips, but I alone bear the responsibility for the finished product. The manuscript was typed with matchless skill by Rosemary Bauer. Finally, I owe much to Arlene Johnson and Lynda Lawyer, secretaries and keepers of things in the Office of the President; day after day for several months they supplied me with coffee and documents without which the project would have been impossible.

September, 1978

Roger J. Champagne