

# **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BASES OF DELINQUENCY AND DEPENDENCY IN IOWA**

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**BOARD OF CONTROL  
OF STATE INSTITUTIONS  
DES MOINES, IOWA**

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of delinquency and dependen-  
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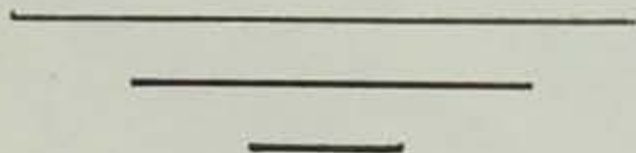
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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BASES  
OF  
DELINQUENCY AND DEPENDENCY  
IN IOWA

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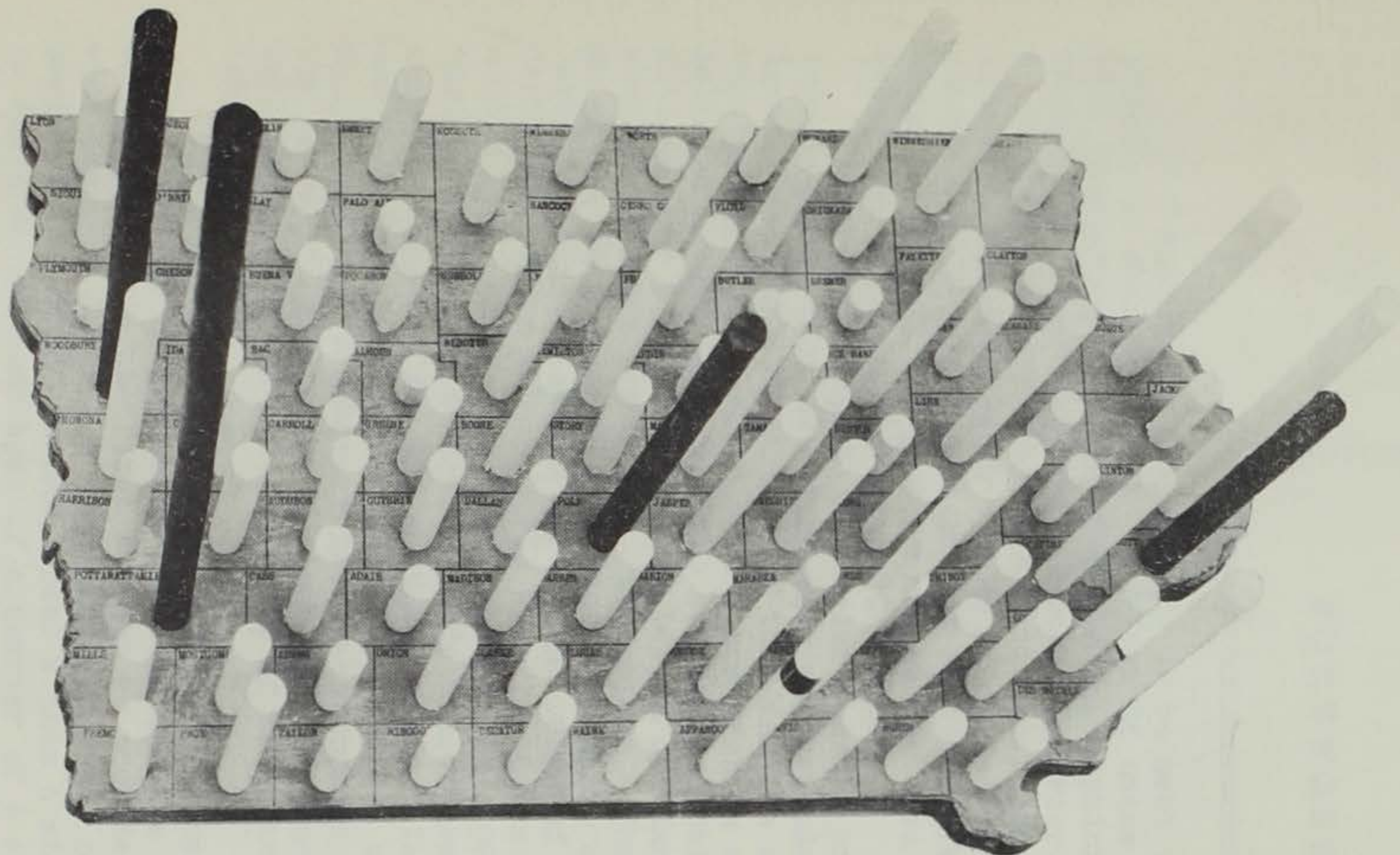
1952

BOARD OF CONTROL  
OF STATE INSTITUTIONS  
DES MOINES, IOWA

# DELINQUENCY IN IOWA

BOARD OF CONTROL  
OF STATE INSTITUTIONS  
DES MOINES, IOWA

1280



Distribution According to Counties.  
Rates per 100,000 Population, 1940 - 1950

(1 inch = 10 cases per 100,000)  
(See Black Band on White Dowel)

Black Dowels are Metropolitan Areas and  
White Dowels the Non-metropolitan Areas



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## FOREWORD

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If a society or a community is to meet the problem of delinquency in its midst it needs must have some scientific analyses and description of factors associated with anti-social behavior. When it is known that the amount and the character of delinquency and dependency varies as social conditions change over a period of time and within different areas in a state the problem may be isolated and separated according to known conditions.

The present report is a brief summary of a larger investigation made on delinquency and dependency in Iowa. The over-all purpose of this and the more extensive work has been to refine the problem of delinquency and dependency to specific social conditions over a relatively long period of time and within different areas of a given state. The analysis shows how delinquency and dependency cases, and related facts, have varied during the years of the Great Depression and of World War II. Certain phases of the study cover a quarter century from 1925 through 1950 whereas other more detailed investigations include the war and post-war years. In addition to this time analysis the problems of delinquency and dependency have been approached on the basis of certain socio-economic differences existing within the various areas of the state of Iowa.

Other studies have been made of delinquency in a state in terms of groups of counties but the present investigation is the first attempt to provide a state-wide approach to delinquency and dependency on the basis of the socio-economic areas within a state. In addition the time span of a quarter of a century constitutes a relatively long time analysis which takes into account the influences of the Great Depression of the Thirties and World War II and after.



In carrying out the present investigation the author has had the helpful cooperation of a number of persons, agencies and organizations within the state of Iowa. The Iowa State Department of Welfare has aided in making certain data available, especially for the years, 1946 to 1950. The members of the Iowa State Board of Control have assisted in furnishing certain reports covering the years of 1925 through 1950. Mr. Carl Parks, chief probation officer in Polk County, and Mr. Paul Covert, chief probation officer of Scott County have supplied information for their respective counties. Some of my students in Iowa State College have helped in the detailed statistical work. Miss Ellen Hoover tabulated the county data for the 11 years from 1940 to 1950. Mr. Wayne Hamman compiled the material for the two state training schools and Mr. Donald L. Sorensen recorded the information for the state juvenile homes in Iowa. In an overall sense Dean Harold V. Gaskill of the Science Division and Dr. W. G. Murray, Chariman of the Department of Economics and Sociology, have made possible certain resources through the Industrial Science Research Institute of Iowa State College under which the investigation has been done.

August 1952  
Iowa State College

Walter A. Lunden

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE PROBLEM

Each year as regular as the seasons come and go an average of 2,660 children under 18 years of age become involved in trouble serious enough to bring them to the attention of the courts in Iowa. In the eleven year period from 1940 to 1950 the various courts dealt with 29,268 children who were either delinquent or dependent and neglected children. Each of these cases centered about the life and the future of a young person who had been guaranteed "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" by the state. For a number of reasons these children were unable to realize the full extent of that "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" promised to each citizen.

This annual number of 2,660 children constitutes only those cases which were serious enough to bring complaints or actions in the courts of Iowa. Just how many less serious cases have come to the attention of the local police, the county sheriff or other public authorities is not known because no accurate record is kept of such cases. Estimates, however, have been made that for every case brought to court there are 10 other cases of less serious nature settled "unofficially" or by some other means.

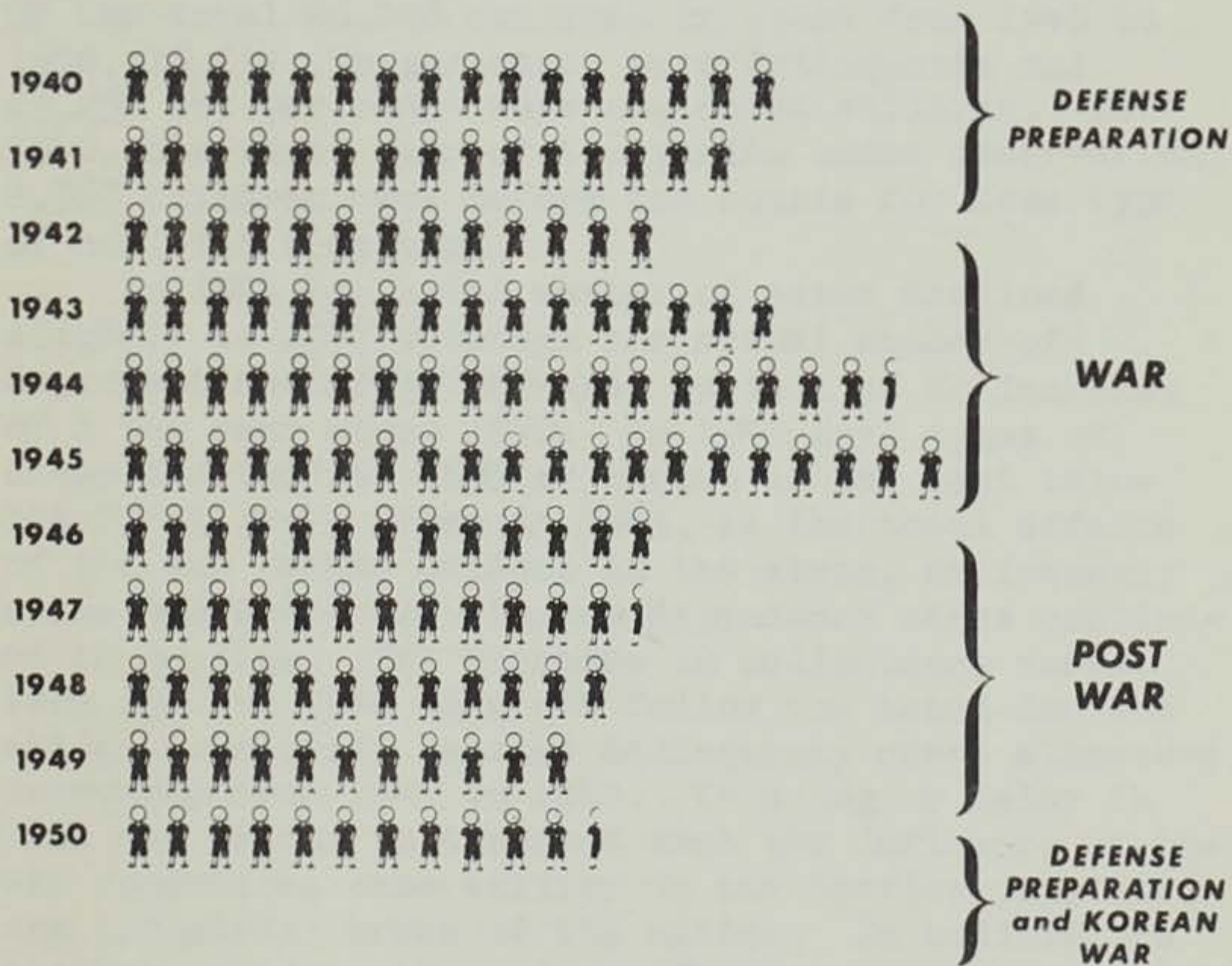
Out of these 2,660 cases in court, each year about 700 children are committed to the four state institutions for delinquent or dependent children. In the past quarter century the courts in Iowa have committed an average of 326 boys and girls to the Two State Training schools at Eldora or Mitchellville and an average of 373 children to the two state juvenile homes at Toledo or Davenport.

In spite of the fact that an annual average of 2,660 cases in court and 700 commitments to some type of institution may not constitute a large number, nevertheless, the lives of that many children are at stake each year in Iowa. Furthermore, the lives of these children are related to that many families living in the villages, towns and cities of Iowa. These delinquent and dependent children are a serious social cost to the people in Iowa.



# DELINQUENTS IN IOWA COURTS, 1940 TO 1950

## PRE-WAR, WAR AND POST-WAR YEARS



 EACH CHILD REPRESENTS 100 CHILDREN



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## CHAPTER 2

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### THE RECORD

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In the eleven year period of 1940 to 1950 the people in Iowa, with others in the nation, experienced five years of war, five years of post-war peace and one year of preparation for the struggles in Korea. As the social and economic conditions changed in these eleven years the amount and the character of delinquency and dependency within the state altered. Of the total 26,268 children in court from 1940 to 1950, 16,014 (55 per cent) were delinquents and 13,254 (45 per cent) were neglected children. In 1940, the first year of the period under observation, 2,989 children came before the courts for some type of official treatment.

In 1941 the total number of cases declined slightly to 2987 although the actual number of dependent children increased to 1471 or an increase of 6 per cent above 1940. In 1942 both types of cases declined to 2695 or almost 10 per cent below the first year. Then in 1943, as the total effects of the war became evident in the state, delinquency cases began to rise whereas dependency cases continued to decline. The decrease in delinquency cases from 1940 to 1942 does not follow the trend for the nation as a whole because delinquency cases elsewhere increased from 1941 to 1942. This lag or delay in Iowa may be due to the fact that the influence of the war conditions came earlier in the heavier populated and industrial areas of the nation. In addition to the lag in time, the volume of court cases in Iowa did not rise as high as in the other parts of the country. In 1946, the peak year, cases were 62 per cent above 1940 for the 76 courts representing the national situation whereas the increase in Iowa amounted to only 26 per cent for the same years. This difference is due very largely to the fact that the cases in the 76 courts were located in larger cities of more than 100,00 inhabitants, whereas the



state of Iowa has only one city with more than 100,000 population. Also a very large share of Iowa is rural by comparison to other parts of the nation.

After the peak year of 1945 in Iowa (2010 delinquents and 1298 dependents) the total number of cases declined reaching the lowest figure of 2072 in 1949. In 1950 both types of cases increased slightly with a more noticeable advance in dependency. Delinquency cases rose from 1108 in 1949 to 1115 in 1950 or less than one per cent whereas dependency cases increased from 964 to 1141 or 18.4 per cent. In 1950 the total number of cases amounted to 2255 or 24.5 per cent less than in 1940, the pre-war year, and 32 per cent under the peak year (1945) of World War II.

Of the total number of juveniles in the courts of Iowa for the 11 year period delinquents display the widest variations and reflect the general social disorganization in the country due very largely to conditions surrounding World War II. In spite of the small year by year changes in dependent and neglect cases the volume tended to decline throughout the period. The overall decline in dependency cases may be interpreted in three ways. The relatively high number in 1940 was due in part to the time lag coming at the end of the Great Depression of the Thirties, when dependency was high. After 1941 with the onset of the war, economic conditions within the country improved with a natural decline in dependency. In addition to these factors some of the decrease can be credited to the development and the extension of Aid to Dependent Children within the state.



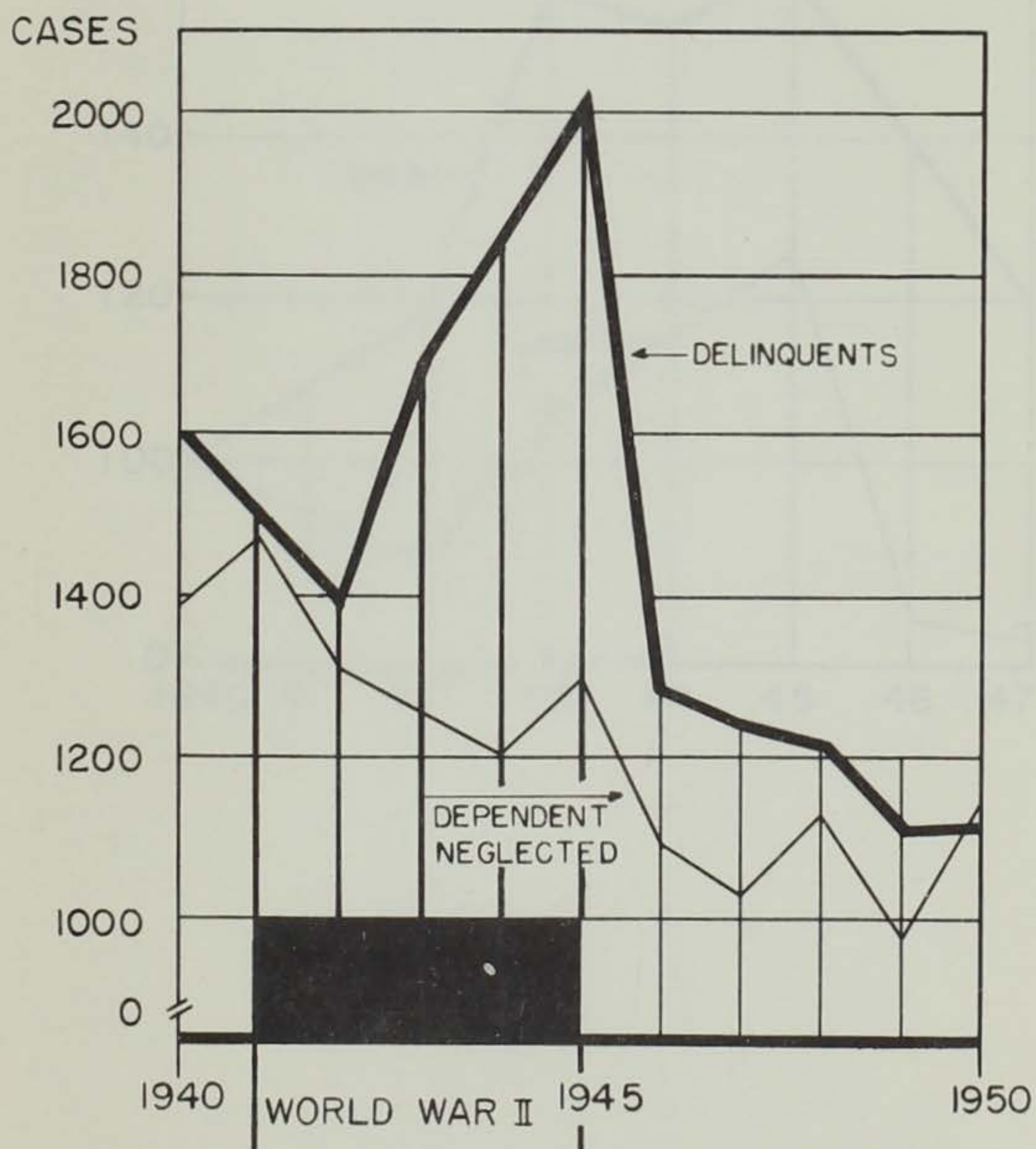
# Juvenile Court Cases in Iowa, 1940-1950

Year	Delinquents	Dependent and Neglect	Total
1940	1,604	1,385	2,989
1941	1,507	1,471	2,978
1942	1,394	1,301	2,695
1943	1,698	1,254	2,952
1944	1,835	1,201	3,036
1945	2,010	1,298	3,308
1946	1,289	1,089	2,378
1947	1,242	1,022	2,264
1948	1,212	1,128	2,340
1949	1,108	964	2,072
1950	1,115	1,115	2,256
Total	16,014	13,254	29,268
Average	1,455	1,205	2,660



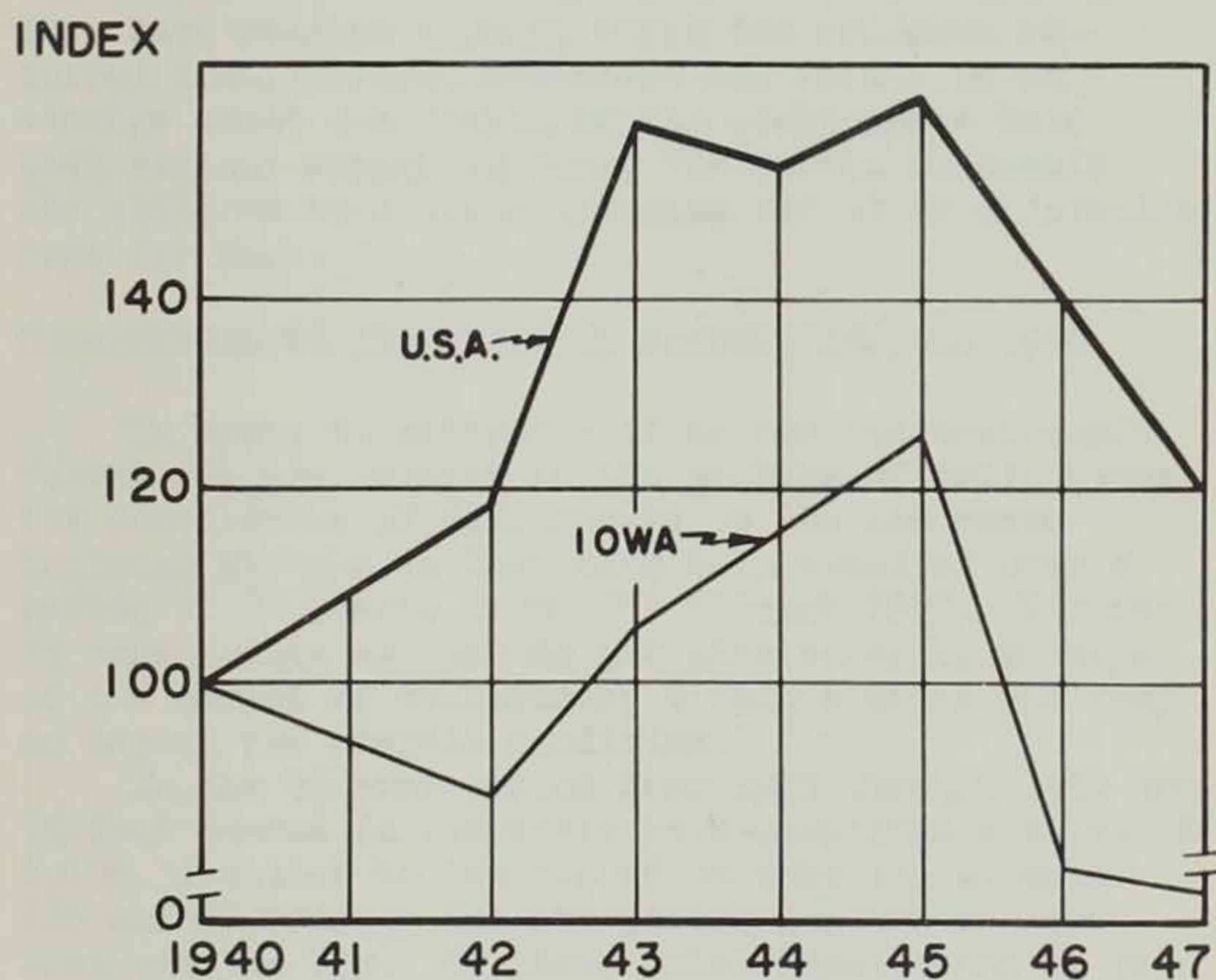
## JUVENILE COURT CASES IN IOWA, 1940-1950

Juvenile Delinquents and Dependent and Neglected Cases





Index Numbers of Juvenile Delinquency  
Cases in 76 Courts in U.S.A. and Iowa 1940-1947  
(1940 = 100)





Not all the cases coming before the courts in Iowa have reached a point where the children required institutional treatment and care. On an average about one-fourth of all court cases have been serious enough to force the courts to commit the children to a state training school or a juvenile home for care.

#### COMMITMENTS TO THE TRAINING SCHOOL, 1925 TO 1950

In order to determine if or how socio-economic conditions are related to the problem of delinquency the commitments of delinquents to the two state training schools in Iowa have been examined over a period of 26 years, from 1925 through 1950. Figures on commitments as such do not give an exact picture of the amount of delinquency within a state but they do depict the overall condition.

In the 26 year period from 1925 through 1950 the various courts in the state have committed a total of 8,496 juveniles to the two state training schools. The annual average for the period was 326 or less than one per day. Of these total commitments 75 per cent (6418) were boys and 25 per cent (2078) were girls. From 1925 to 1950 the annual number of first commitments ranged from the high of 443 in 1944 to the low of 186 in 1949. In the first three years (1925-27) commitments increased slightly but the yearly number was below the average for the period. In 1928, three years prior to the Great Depression when "times" were relatively good, commitments increased to 372 or 14.3 per cent above the average. From this year forward, except for 1933, first commitments remained above the average with a high point in 1938 of 368 or 20 per cent above the average. The next year commitments decreased to 323 and then to 307 in 1940.



From the information on first commitments it cannot be stated with certainty that the Great Depression had a marked effect on the number of commitments to the two training schools. There is no information available to determine just how often the various courts used "commitment" as a means of treatment rather than dismissal or probation. However, the number of cases in the depression years were considerably higher than the preceeding and following years.

In 1941 commitments increased to 349, then declined in 1942, only to rise again reaching the highest point of 443 in 1944, the third year of World War II for the United States. The figure was 36 per cent above the 26 year average. This peak of commitments coincides with the high point of juvenile court cases in 1944 and 1945. The peak of commitments also reflects the general increase of delinquency within the state and the nation. In 1945 commitments declined slightly to 431 and then dropped very sharply to 241 in 1946 or 27 per cent below the annual average. From this year forward in the post-war years commitments declined until in 1950 when the number advanced slightly to 223.

The fluctuations in the number of commitments in the 26 year period elicit certain question. How may these variations be explained? Inspite of the relatively large number of commitments during the years of the Great Depression of the Thirties, when the nine year annual average was 355 (10 per cent above the 26 year average), no definite statement can be made that the depression increased commitments. There are no state-wide data available for years earlier than 1925. From other scattered county data delinquency court cases did increase in some parts of the state, especially in the larger cities. However, juvenile court cases in other parts of the United States decreased during the years of the depression.

The years which show very marked increase of commitments came in 1944 and 1945 at the end of World War II. Here there is no doubt that the conditions within the state were such that gave rise to delinq-



uency. This has been substantiated in the material on courts cases in Iowa and for the nation. The sudden drop in commitments in 1946 and after maybe due in part to the end of World War II but not entirely because other factors were involved. A serious riot occurred in the Boy's Training School in Eldora, Iowa, in the summer of 1945 which brought a change in the treatment of juveniles in the state. The riot occurred at the school after an employee had beaten one of the boys who later died. The incident brought a quick rebellion on the part of the boys in the school. Serious disorders took place for a number of days, 190 boys "ran away" from the school and the National Guard was called in to handle the situation. Later the superintendent was discharged and a new director appointed for the school. Subsequently most of the "run away boys" were returned either to Eldora or to the state reformatory at Anamosa where they were held for about 2 years.

The Eldora riot had a marked effect on commitments and institutional treatment of juveniles in the courts of Iowa. Because of the conditions revealed, as a result of the disorder, many judges in the state refrained from committing boys to the school. Some juveniles were placed on probation or were taken care of in some other way. This fact alone, the riot, is responsible for the sharp decline in commitments and not the conditions in the post-war years. It is true that juvenile court cases did decline in the state after 1945 but not as much as the decline in commitments.



Number of Juveniles Committed (First) to  
Iowa Training Schools 1925-50 (A)

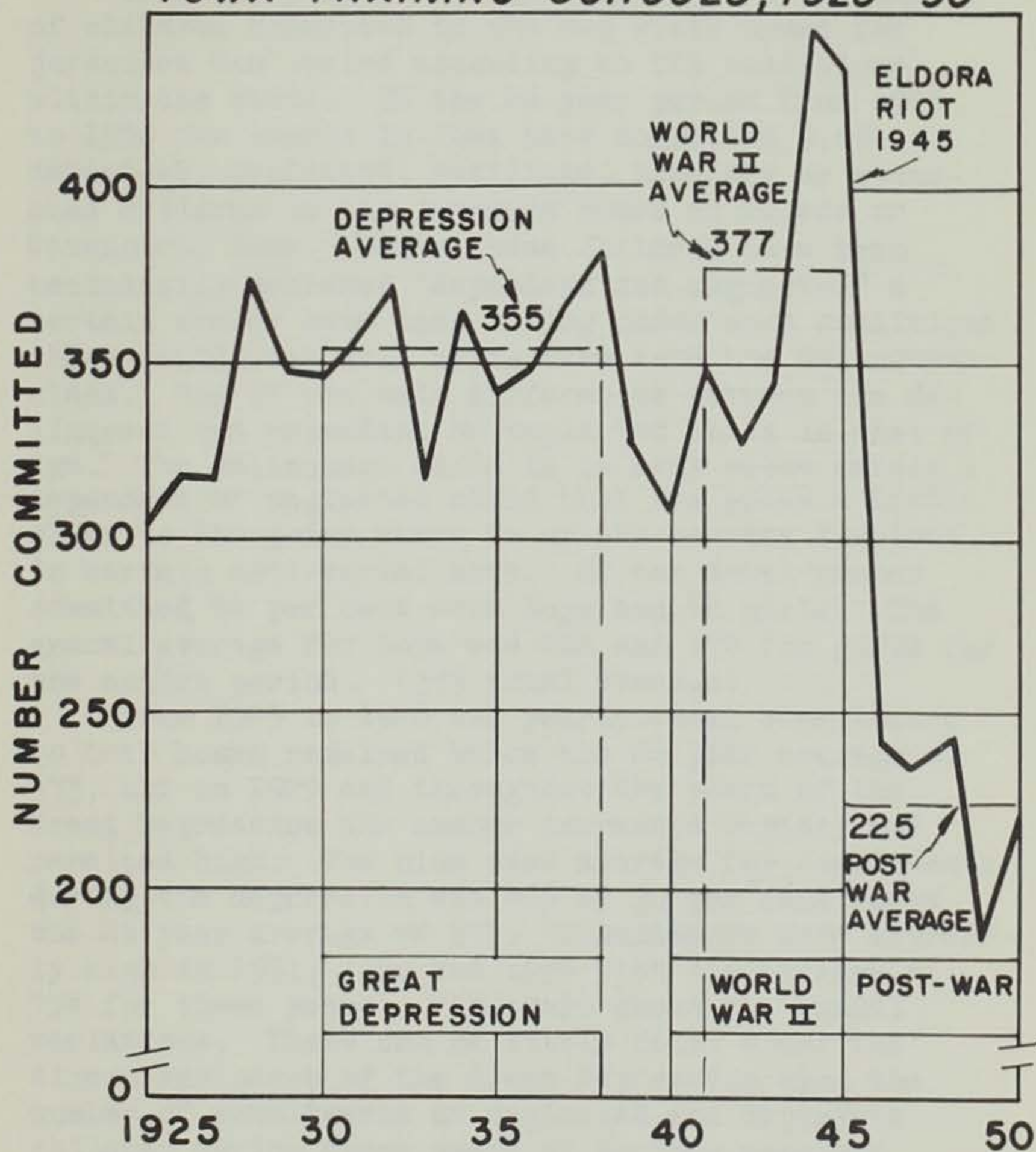
First Commitments to Eldora and Mitchellville

Year	Total	Year	Total
1925	305	1940	307
1926	319	1941	349
1927	318	1942	326
1928	372	1943	338
1929	348	1944	443
Total 1662		Total 1763	
1930	346	1945	431
1931	354	1946	241
1932	371	1947	235
1933	318	1948	241
1934	364	Total 1148	
Total 1753		1949	186
1935	341	1950	223
1936	348	Grand Total 8496	
1937	368		
1938	381		
1939	323		
Total 1761			

A Source: All commitment and other data are from Biennial Reports of Iowa State Board of Control for respective years.



# *JUVENILES COMMITTED TO TWO IOWA TRAINING SCHOOLS, 1925 - 50*





## COMMITMENTS TO STATE JUVENILE HOMES

Over the period of a quarter century the number of children committed to the two state homes for juveniles has varied according to the conditions within the state. In the 26 year period from 1925 to 1950 the courts in Iowa have committed 9,694 dependent, neglected, destitute, homeless or abandoned children to the juvenile homes at Toledo or Davenport, Iowa. While these children have been technically declared "dependent and neglected" a certain number have been living under such conditions which could very well bring them into the delinquent class. One of the main differences between the delinquent and dependent or neglected child is that of age. The delinquent child is in many cases merely a dependent or neglected child that has grown a little older to the point where he or she becomes involved in certain anti-social acts. Of the total number committed 54 per cent were boys and 46 girls. The annual average for boys was 202 and 170 for girls for the entire period. (373 total average)

From 1925 to 1928 the yearly total commitments to both homes remained below the 26 year average of 373, but in 1929 and throughout the years of the Great Depression the number increased rapidly and remained high. The nine year average for commitments during the depression was 469 or 30 per cent above the 26 year average of 373. Commitments were extremely high in 1931, 1932 and 1934 with the average at 554 for these years. The chart shows the annual variations. There can be little doubt about the direct influence of the Great Depression upon the number of commitments of neglected and dependent children during these years of serious economic disorder within Iowa when 10 to 12 per cent of all people in the state were receiving some kind of relief. In parts of the state, especially southern counties, where the drought was involved, the percentage on relief was much higher. Absolute or near destitution confronted families and there were many



cases of desertion. As a natural result children in these conditions were aided by relief agencies or the children were committed to state institutions for care. Also a certain number of children who might have been given care by private agencies were transferred to state institutions. In 1933, the most severe year during the Great Depression, 559 children were committed to the two state institutions. This figure was almost 50 per cent above the 26 year average (373). After the peak of 1933, commitments dropped to 342 in 1935 and then rose again to 472 in 1937. Subsequent to this the number declined and remained below the annual average, reaching the low figure of 271 in 1944 or 27 per cent below the average. In the post-war years the number increased slightly to 320 in 1948 and then declined again reaching the lowest number of 240 in 1950, or 25 less than in 1925.

In the 26 year period under analysis commitments of dependent and neglected children to state institutions have gone through a complete cycle with a low in the early Twenties, an extreme high in the early part of the depression and a final low in the post-war years. The decline in commitments after 1940 is no doubt due to the improved economic conditions, the general rise in employment and increase in wages during and after the war. In addition it is logical to maintain that as the Aid to Dependent Children program has been expanded within the state the number of legally dependent and neglected children coming into the courts has decreased. Exact comparison cannot be made but in 1939 there were only 1,714 children under state welfare supervision involving an expenditure of \$63,170. In 1951 the state of Iowa assisted 13,587 children by means of the Aid to Dependent Children Program. Payments for the year ending June 1951 for the care of these children amounted to \$510,081. This marked expansion in assistance to children in their own homes or other homes has been a primary factor in decreasing the number of commitments to the state institutions for dependent and neglected children.



In general the economic depression of the Thirties tended to increase commitments of children to the two juvenile homes whereas the improved conditions, employment and higher wages, during the war years decreased annual commitments. This conclusion becomes more evident when the data are reduced to specific years and to a rate per 100,000 for each time span.

Commitments to State Juvenile Homes in Iowa,  
1925-1950 By Specific Periods

Period	Years	Number	Annual Average	Rate Per 100,000
Prosperity 1925-29	5	1849	370	15.3
Depression 193-38	9	4136	460	18.7
World War III 1941-45	5	1601	320	12.6
Post-war 1946-50	5	1686	337	12.9

The rate for the depression years (18.7) was 22.3 per cent higher than for the prosperity years of 1925-29 (15.3 per 100,000) and 50 per cent higher than for the years of World War II (12.6).

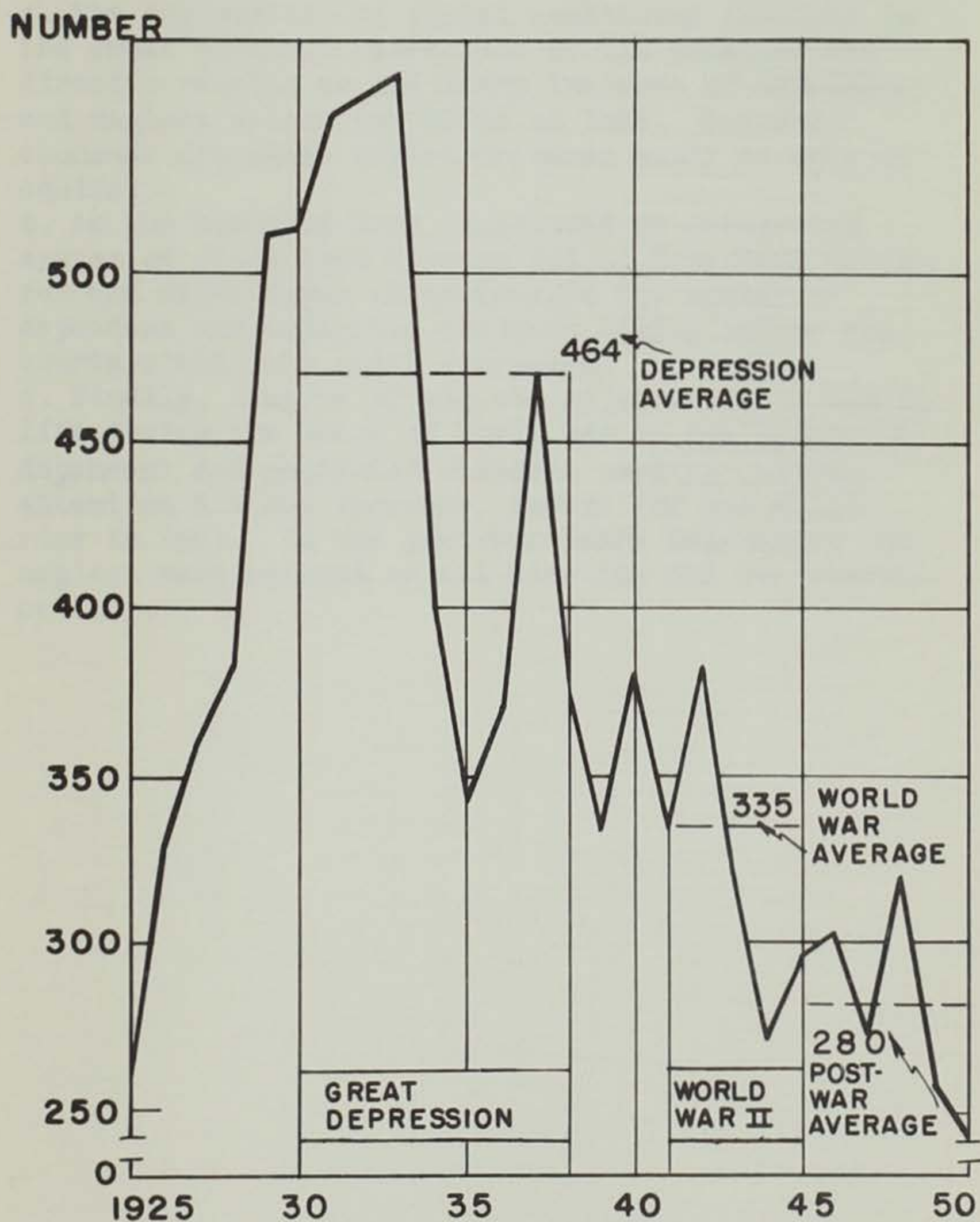


# Commitments to Juvenile Homes in Iowa, 1925-1950

Years	Total	Years	Total
1925	265	1940	384
1926	330	1941	331
1927	360	1942	383
1928	382	1943	321
1929	512	1944	271
1930	513	1945	295
1931	548	1946	301
1932	556	1947	272
1933	559	1948	320
1934	404	1949	258
1935	342	1950	240
1936	370		
1937	472	Totals	9694
1938	372		
1939	333	Annual Average	372.



# Commitments of Juveniles To State Homes in Iowa, 1925 - 1950





From the forgoing analysis of dependency and neglected children during the past quarter century certain factors stand out in clear outline.

a. The dislocation of social conditions involved in the Great Economic Depression of the Thirties was directly related to the sharp increase of dependency and neglect within the state of Iowa. Serious economic disorders effect children quite as much as adults.

b. As the state of Iowa instituted an integrated system of child care through Aid to Dependent Children and other types of assistance the number of dependent and neglected children coming before the courts within the state decreased.

c. Finally, inspite of all the adjustments of family life during the years of World War II the number of dependent and neglected children needing judicial attention did not increase, except for the slight rise in 1941. In the post-war years dependency and neglect have reached an all time low for the quarter century.



## CHAPTER 4

### BY AREAS

#### DELINQUENCY AND DEPENDENCY IN IOWA ACCORDING TO AREAS.

Just as the amount of delinquency and dependency has varied in time according to known social conditions in like manner the amount has varied by districts within Iowa. There are certain areas in Iowa where delinquency and dependency are relatively high and others where both are relatively low. In general, delinquency has been low in the rural and farm areas of Iowa and higher in the urban and densely populated sections of the state. When the 99 counties in Iowa are divided according to the size of the largest community within the respective counties delinquency cases in court increase directly with the size of the population in the counties. This general condition is not peculiar to Iowa.

#### Urban And Rural Distribution of Delinquency And Dependency In Iowa

Prior to the present investigation various attempts have been made to determine the amount of delinquency and dependency in Iowa in terms of the urban and rural character of the counties in the state. (a) The 99 counties in the state were classified into five groups according to the size of the largest community or city within the respective counties. According to this method there were 23 counties in which the largest community was less than 2,500 inhabitants. These counties were known, therefore, as the Rural Farm Counties and placed in County Group I. There were 33 counties in which the largest town was between 2500 and 4,999 inhabitants. These were called the Small Town Counties and placed in Group II. There were 22 counties in which the largest town was between 5,000 and 9,999 population. Therefore, these counties were placed in Group III and designated as the Large Town Counties. There (a) Lunden, W. A., Basic Social Problems, 1950. pp 431-



were 9 counties in which largest city ranged between 10,000 and 24,999 inhabitants which were indicated as the Small City Counties or Group IV. The last was Group V of which there were 11 counties where the largest city was above 25,000 population. Data concerning each are shown in the following table.

With these five groups of counties as a basis, data relative to juvenile courts cases, 1940-50, commitments to State Training School, 1925-50 and Commitments to State Juvenile Homes, 1925-50, were tabulated and totals made for each group together with the corresponding rates for each group. These totals and rates have been placed in the same table, together with the population figures and the density of population per square mile.

Juvenile court cases increased as the size of the country group. Group I had a rate of 41, Group II 29, Group III 62, Group IV, 77 and Group V, 181 per 100,000 population. Commitments of delinquents to the two state training schools increased as the size of the population and the density advanced from the low of 6.2 per 100,000 in Group I to the high of 19.7 for Group V counties. Likewise commitments to the two state juvenile homes advanced with the size of each county group from the low of 24.3 per 100,000 for Group I to the high of 53.2 per 100,000 for Group V counties. The charts displays how the figures vary for each set of data.

The number and rates of juvenile court cases, the commitments to the training school and the juvenile homes varied directly with the density and the size of the county group. The coefficient of correlation between population density and commitments to the two state training schools was .98 which means that about 96 per cent of the variations in rates may be accounted for by variations in the density of the population. In otherwords delinquency and dependency increases as the character of the population changes from rural to urban within the state. Rates are lowest in the rural-farm counties and highest in the urban large city counties. Rates for juvenile courts

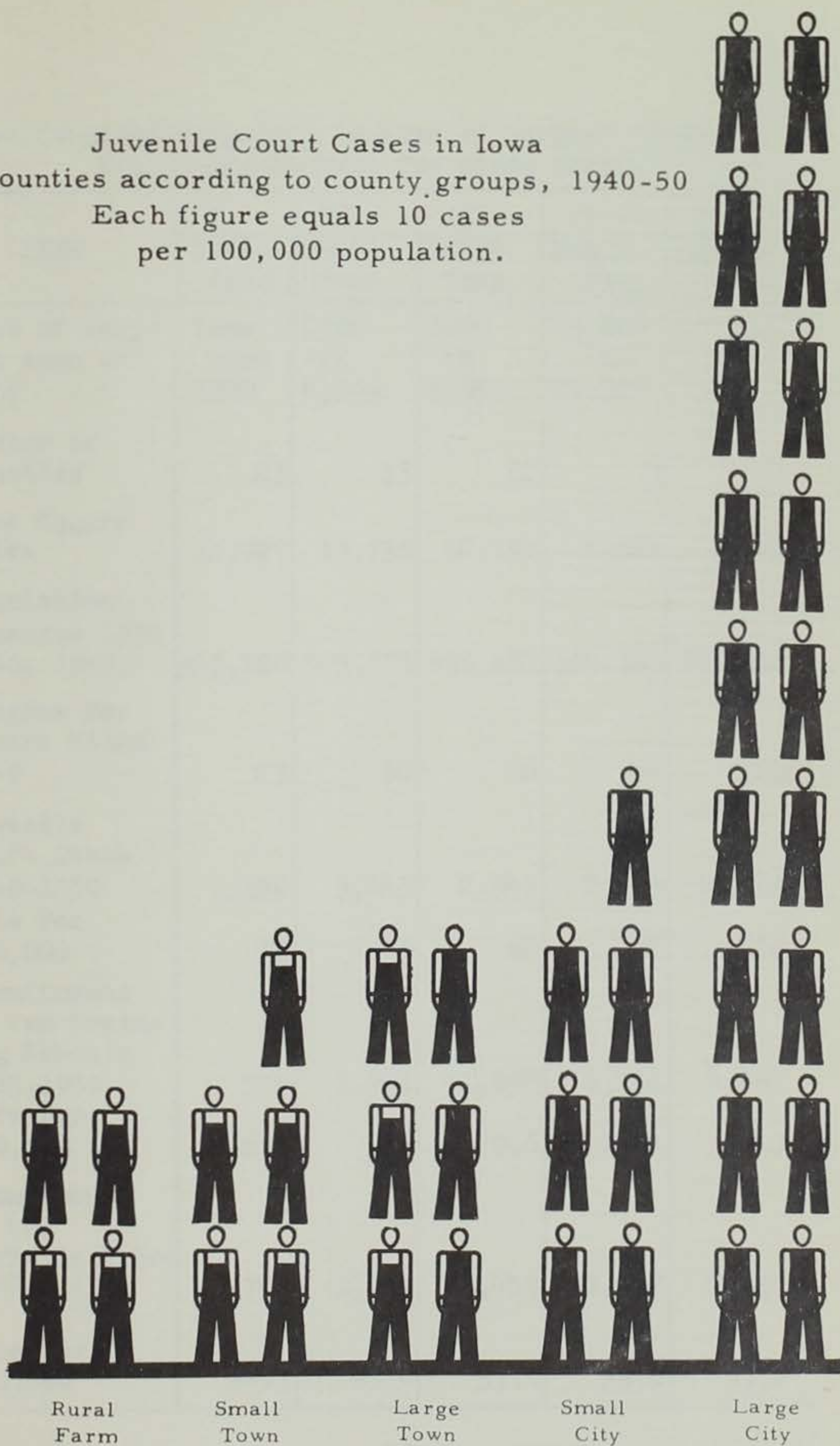


are almost five times higher in Group V counties than in Group I counties. Commitments to state training schools are more than three times higher in Group V counties than in Group I and rates for commitments to state juvenile homes are more than double for the same groups. All of these data substantiate the hypothesis that delinquency and dependency varies directly with the density of the population within the state of Iowa.

The county group method, just explained, of analysing delinquency and dependency within a given state has certain advantages but it does possess definite limitations. The counties in each group are scattered in various parts of the state with no degree of homogeneity or proximity geographically. This makes it impossible to analyse the data beyond the individual county level. In addition the urban and rural distinctions between the various counties are not clearly defined in some cases because a class I county may be next to a class V county. These conditions, together with others, makes it difficult to examine the problem of delinquency and dependency on an area basis or according to certain more or less well defined similar districts in the state. In the next part of this study a more recent procedure will be examined.



Juvenile Court Cases in Iowa  
by counties according to county groups, 1940-50  
Each figure equals 10 cases  
per 100,000 population.





Iowa Counties According to Size of Largest Community  
With Selected Data for Given Years

ITEM	I	II	III	IV	V
	Rural Farm	Small Town	Large Town	Small City	Large City
Size of largest town or city	Less than 2500	2500 to 4,999	5000 to 9,999	10,000 to 24,999	25,000 & over
Number of Counties	23	33	22	9	11
Area Square Miles	11,927	19,736	12,137	5,322	6,844
Population (average 1930 1940, 1950)	323,168	595,875	439,483	309,193	871,997
Persons Per Square Miles 1940	27	30	36	56	128
Juvenile Court Cases 1940-1950	1,359	3,143	2,943	2,763	19,060
Rate Per 100,000	41	49	62	77	181
Commitments to Two Training Schools 1925-1950	522	1,251	1,098	1,154	4,455
Rate Per 100,000	6.2	8.1	9.6	14.4	19.7
Commitments to Two Juvenile Homes 1925 - 1950	783	1,495	1,453	1,247	4,637
Rate per 100,000	24.3	25.4	33.1	39.8	53.2



## DELINQUENCY AND DEPENDENCY IN IOWA BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC AREAS, 1940 TO 1950

In 1950 the Bureau of Census developed a procedure for studying social conditions within a given state based on the classification of the counties of a state into two general groups (1) Metropolitan and (2) non-metropolitan areas according to certain characteristics. Each area is a more or less homogenous group of counties with a number of common social and economic elements.

"In the establishment of State economic areas, factors in addition to industrial and commercial activities were taken into account. Demographic, climatic, physiographic, and cultural factors, as well as factors pertaining more directly to the production and exchange of agricultural and non-agricultural goods, were considered. The name (State economic areas) has been given to this grouping of counties in order to convey the implication that each State has been divided into its principal units and that within each unit a distinctive economy prevails, insofar as it is possible to do this using county units. The term "economy" is used here in its broadest sense; it refers to the total adjustment which the population of an area has made to a particular combination of natural resources and other environmental factors."(a)

According to the Economic Area plan the state of Iowa has been divided into 6 non-metropolitan and 4 metropolitan areas, (See map) Each non-metropolitan area has a more or less distinctive character within the state as indicated by the name given to each. In addition three of the non-metropolitan areas have been subdivided into sub-areas. This has been done because of the large number of counties and the differences existing within the areas. The metropolitan areas, as shown, are located within the non-metropolitan areas but each is considered separately as a distinct area. As an example Areas A and B are within Area I

(a) U.S. Bureau of Census, State Economic Areas, by D.J. Bogue, U.S.G.P.O., Washington D.C. 1951, pp.1-4



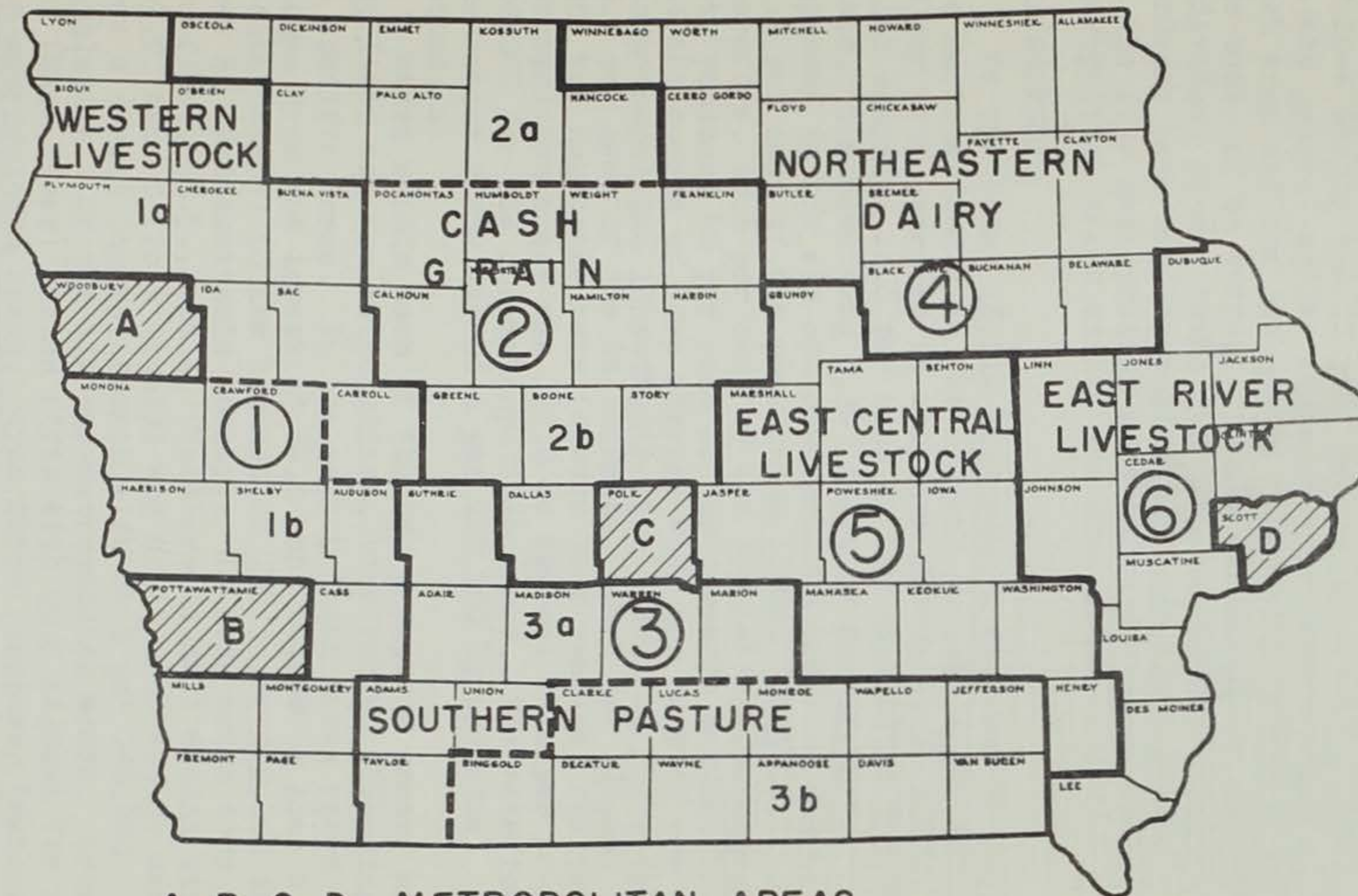
but are treated as distinct units. Each metropolitan area includes the entire county in which a larger city is located. The 6 non-metropolitan areas with minor exceptions follow the general agricultural and occupational divisions within the state of Iowa. Each has been designated by a name which is characteristic of the area.

Area 1 (19 counties) has been designated as the Western Live Stock Area, Area 2 (19 counties) as the Cash Grain Area, Area 3 (19 counties) as the Southern Pasture Area, Area 4 (16 counties) as the Northeastern Dairy Area, Area 5 (11 counties) as the East Central Live Stock Area, Area 6 (19 counties) as the East River Live Stock Area. The metropolitan areas are indicated by letters from A to D together with the county name. The next part of the analyses examines delinquency and dependency in the metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas within Iowa.



# SOCIO - ECONOMIC AREAS IN IOWA

--- SUB AREAS      — AREAS



A, B, C, D - METROPOLITAN AREAS

①-⑥ NON-METROPOLITAN AREAS



Delinquency and dependency cases in the courts of Iowa during the 11 year period have varied according to the general social and economic characteristics of each area and the changes of conditions in time. On the basis of an average for the entire period and for individual years, rates for both delinquency and dependency have been approximately four times higher in the four metropolitan areas than in the six non-metropolitan areas within the state.

### Delinquency

Of the total 16,014 delinquents who came before the various courts in the 11 year period, 6,377 or 40 per cent appeared in the four metropolitan areas which comprise 18.8 per cent of the population in the state. The remaining 9,367 cases or 60 per cent appeared in the six non-metropolitan areas in which 81.2 per cent of the population lives. Roughly, therefore, 18.8 per cent of the population (metropolitan) have produced 40 per cent of the juvenile delinquents in the courts of Iowa whereas 81.2 per cent of the non-metropolitan inhabitants have accounted for only 60.1 per cent of the delinquents. On a per 100,000 rate the aggregate rate (eleven year average) for the metropolitan areas was 123.0 as against 41.6 per 100,000 for the non-metropolitan areas. The rate for the entire state was 56.1 per 100,000 by the same method.(a)

Rates within each of the two groups of areas, metropolitan and non-metropolitan, have varied according to specific areas. In the metropolitan areas rates range from the lowest of 84.0 per 100,000 in Area D (Scott County) to the highest of 196.5 per 100,000 in Area B, (Pottawattamie County). In rank order Area B was first, 196.5, Area A, (Woodbury County) second with 143.0, Area C (Polk County) was third with 103.5, and Area D (Scott County) fourth with 84.0 per 100,000 population. Of the six non-metropolitan areas, Area Six (East River) ranked fifth with 60.5 highest for the non-metropolitan areas. Area Three (Southern Pasture)

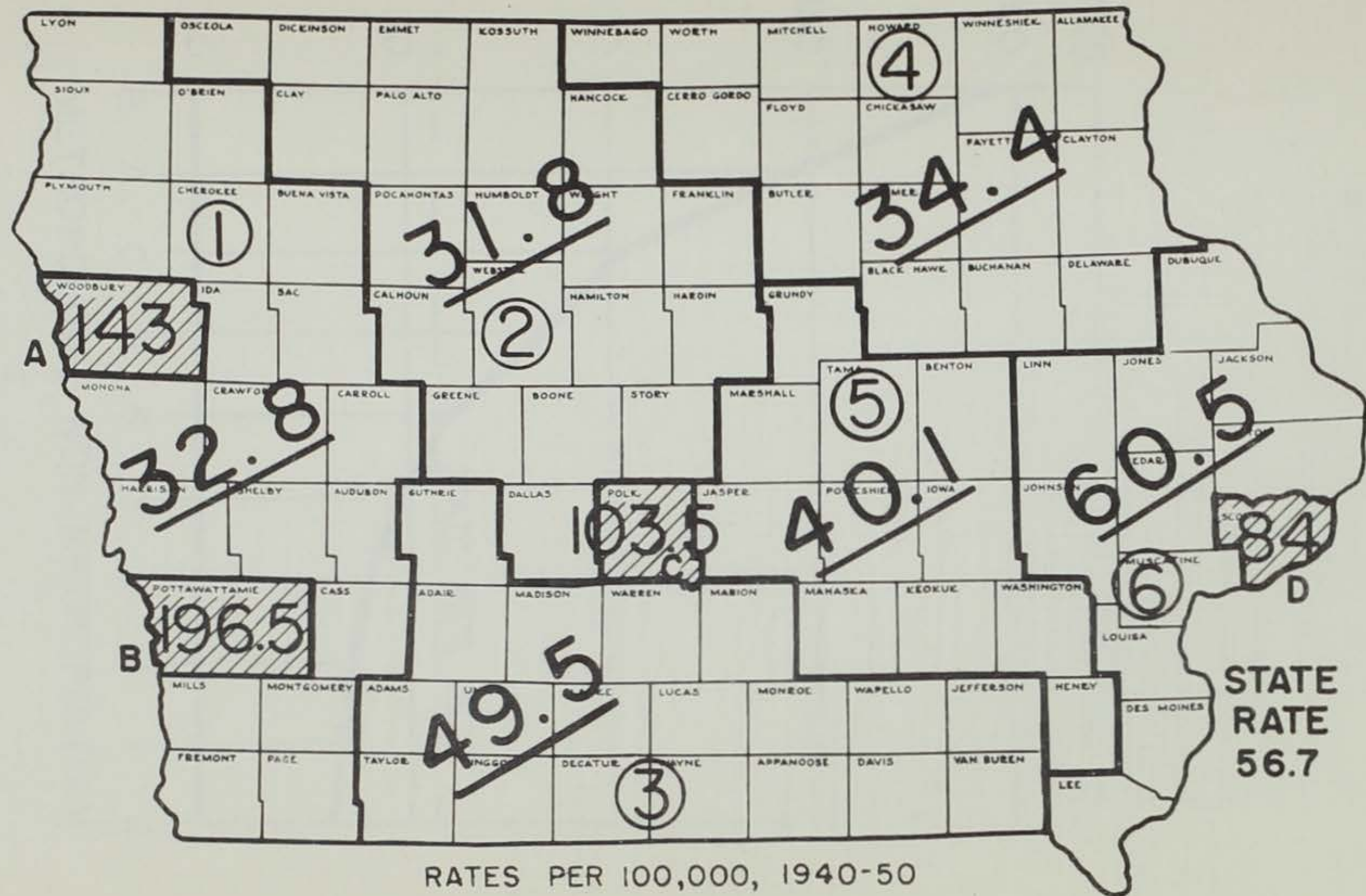
(a) All rates have been computed on population figures corrected for 1940 and 1950 census data using the average number of cases for the 11 year period of 1940 to 1950



ranked sixth with 49.5, Area Five, (East-Central Live Stock) seventh with 40.0, Area Four (Northeast Dairy), eighth with 34.4, Area One (Wester Live Stock), 33.4 was ninth and Area Two (Cash Grain) was tenth with 31.3 per 100,000. The data for each area are give in the table and shown on the graph.



# DELINQUENCY IN IOWA BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC AREAS

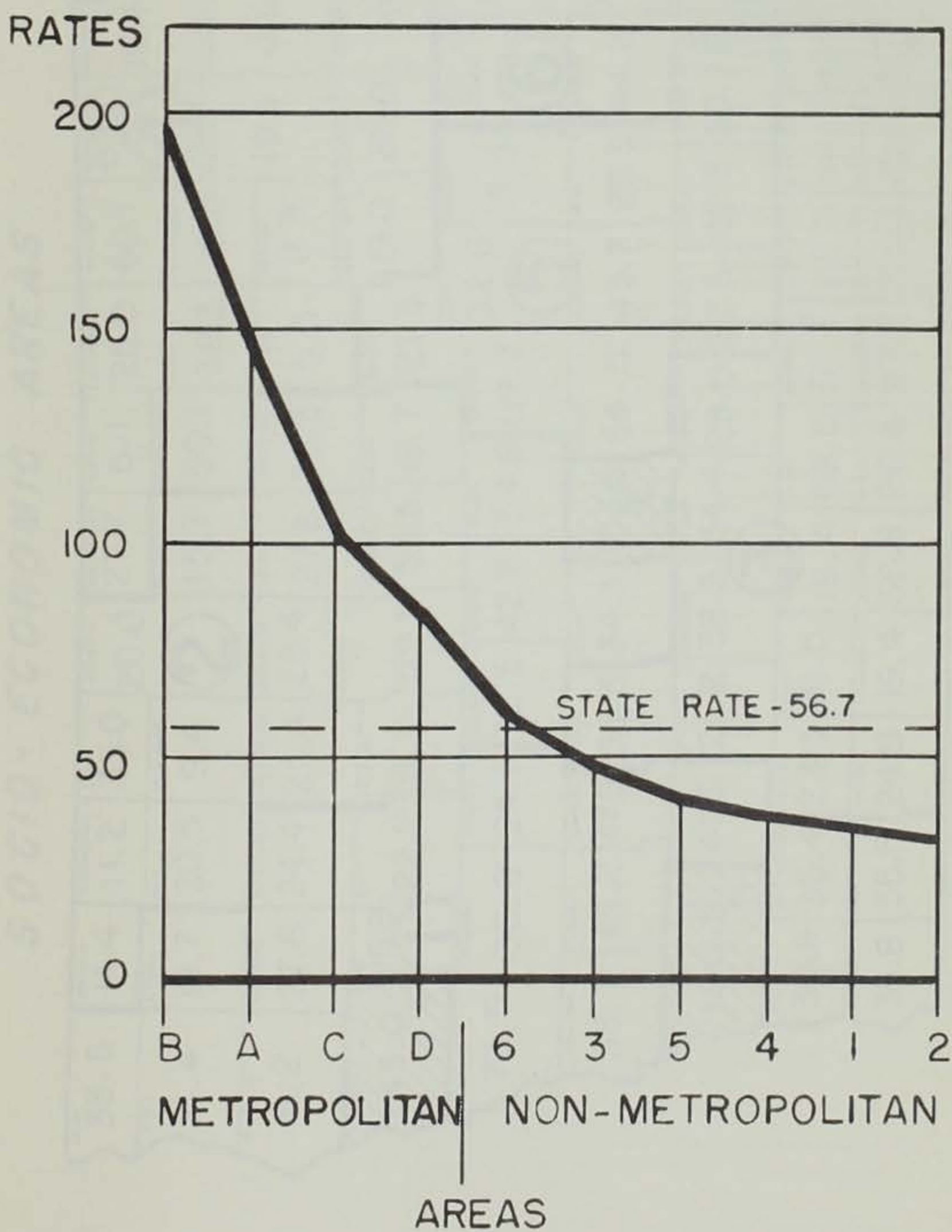




# Delinquency Rates in Socio-Economic

Areas in Iowa 1940 - 1950

(Rates per 100-000)





**RATES PER 100,000, 1940-50**

County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate								
Lyon	33.5	Osceola	14.4	Diceinson	11.2	Emmett	35.0	Kossuth	20.0	Winnebago	27.7	Worth	6.1	Mitchell	25.0	Howard	60.1	Winneshek	53.0	Allamoree	15.6		
Sioux	21.4	O'Brien	19.7	Clay	20.5	Palo Alto	9.4	Hancock	15.7	Cerro Gordo	50.1	Floyd	38.3	Chickasaw	19.0	Fayette	19.5	Clayton	6.0				
Plymouth	8.2	Cherokee	27.8	Buena Vista	24.4	Pocahontas	25.4	Humboldt	25.4	Weight	27.8	Franklin	36.3	Butler	5.0	Bremmer	9.3						
Woodbury	143.0	Ida	16.8	Sac	22.2	Calhoun	8.7	Webster	59.5	Hamilton	59.5	Hardin	19.7	Grundy	21.3	Black Hawk	61.0	Buchanan	28.0	Delaware	7.8	Dubuque	77.7
Monona	73.5	Commodore	36.8	Carroll	24.1	Greene	32.5	Boone	42.7	Story	34.8	Marshall	69.7	Tama	32.6	Benton	14.5	Linn	65.7	Jones	14.8	Jackson	22.3
Harrison	36.1	Shelby	44.2	Audubon	47.5	Guthrie	38.3	Dallas	34.3	Polk	103.5	Jasper	64.5	Power	43.7	Iowa	29.9	Johnson	44.2	Cedar	20.8	Clinton	100.4
Pottawattamie	196.5	Cass	41.5	Anair	21.2	Madison	38.5	Warren	34.4	Marion	23.5	Mahaska	27.5	Keokuk	22.7	Washington	30.7			Scott	84.0		
Mills	30.4	Montgomery	36.4	Adams	23.3	Union	31.5	Clark	19.4	Lucas	68.5	Monege	51.1	Wapello	110.3	Jefferson	44.7	Henry	43.8				
Fremont	35.8	Page	55.5	Taylor	24.9	Ringgold	19.4	Decatur	36.8	Wayne	26.4	Appanoose	97.5	Davis	33.2	Van Buren	29.5						
																	Lee	28.0					

**STATE RATE 56.7**

RATES PER 100,000, 1940-50



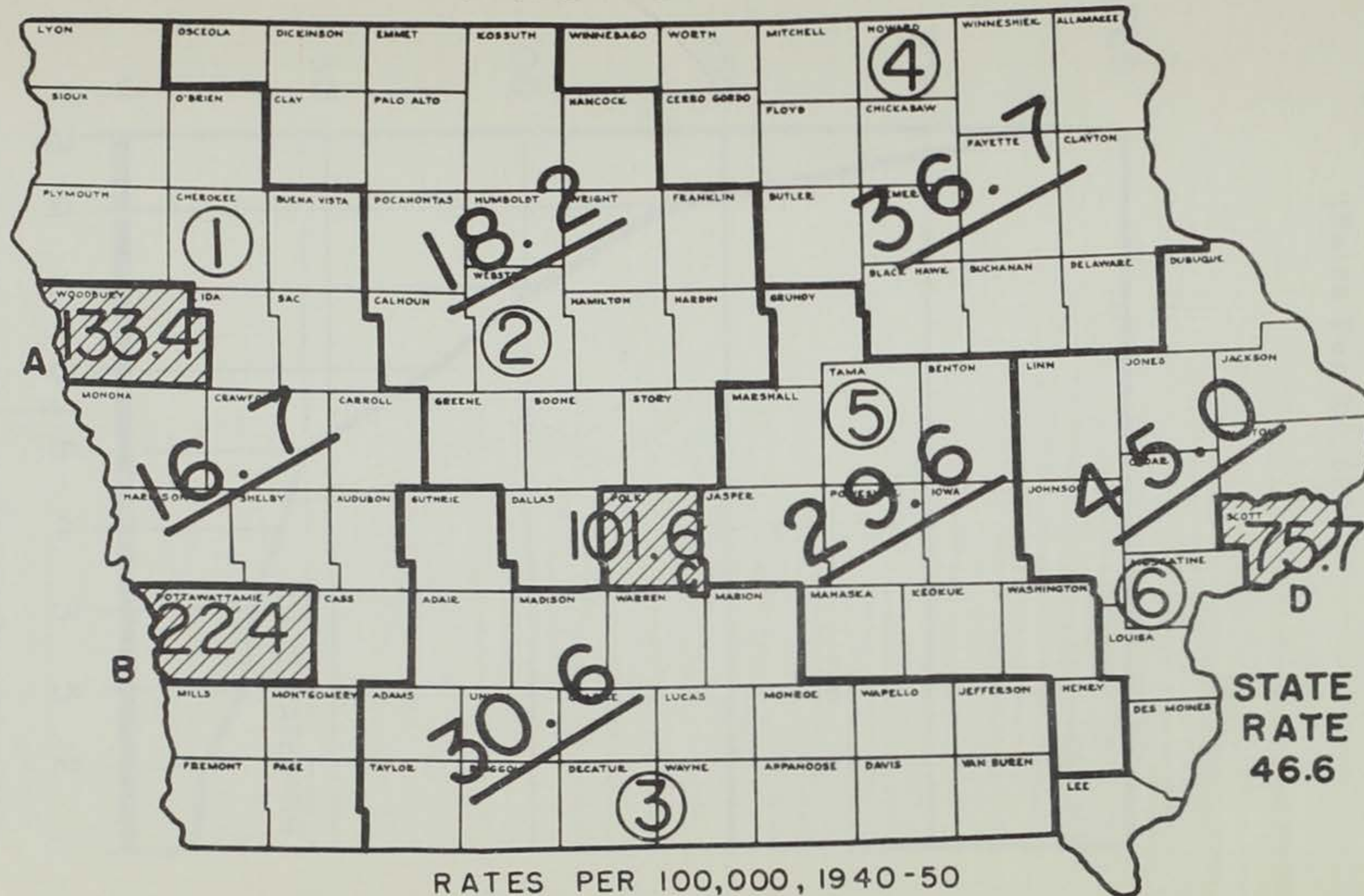
### Dependency and Neglect

Of the total 13,254 dependency and neglect cases appearing in Iowa for the 11 year period, 6,234 or 47 per cent arose in the four metropolitan areas and 6,930 or 53 per cent in the six non-metropolitan areas. The aggregate rate for the metropolitan areas was 121.5, about four times higher than in the non-metropolitan areas, 30.1 per 100,000 population. In terms of rank order by areas Area B with 224.0 per 100,000 was first, Area A with 133.4 was second, Area C with 101.0, third, and Area D was fourth with 75.7 per 100,000 population. Of the non-metropolitan areas, Area Six ranked fifth, of all areas, with 45.0, Area Four was sixth with 36.7, Area Three was seventh with 30.6, Area Five was eighth with 29.6, Area Two was ninth with 18.3 and Area One was tenth with 16.7 per 100,000 population.

The rates in the metropolitan areas ranged from 75.7 to 224. and from 16.7 to 45.0 per 100,000 in the non-metropolitan areas.



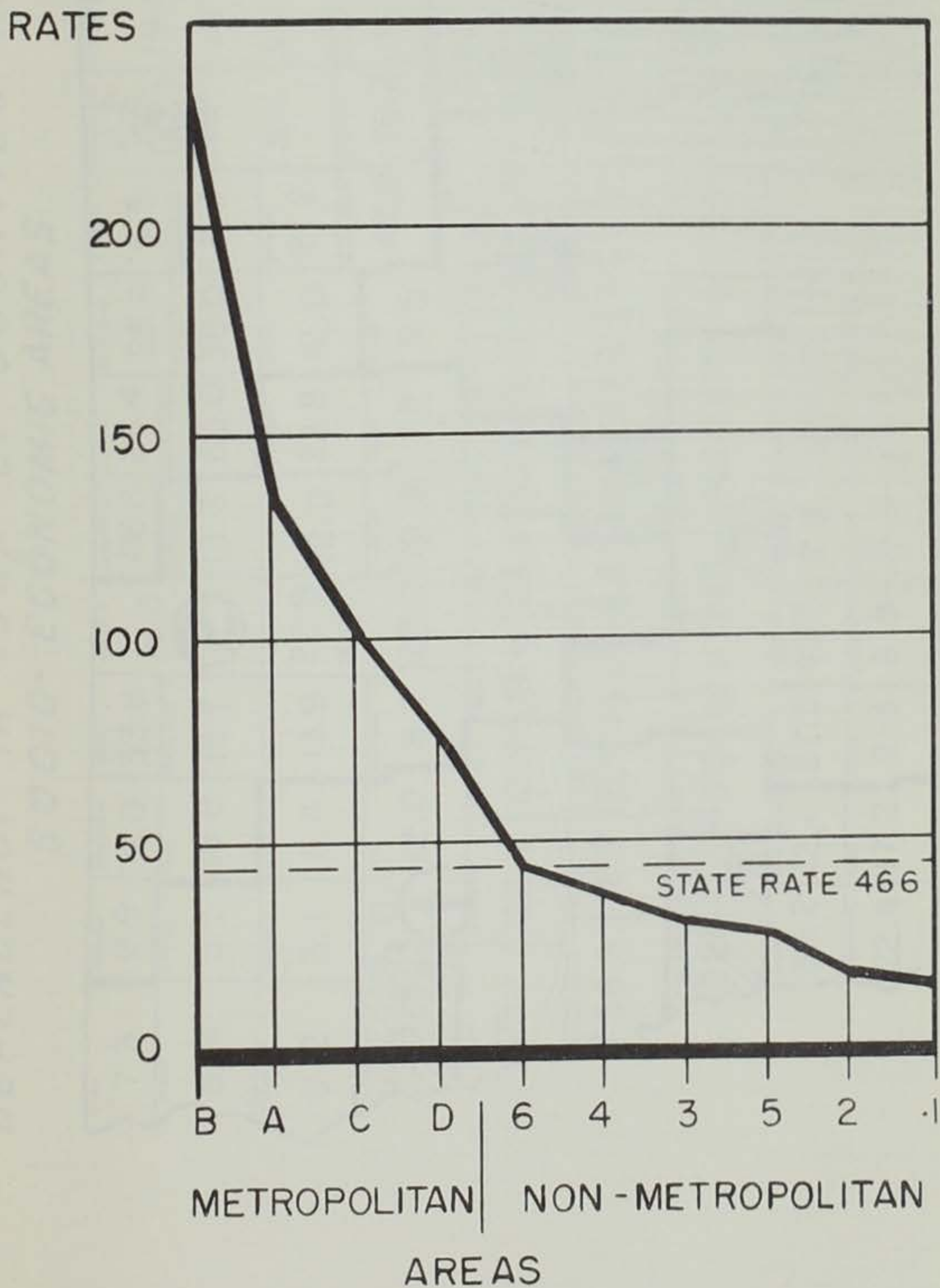
# DEPENDENCY IN IOWA BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC AREAS





## Dependency and Neglect Rates

According to Socio-Economic Areas in Iowa, 1940-'50  
(Rates Per 100,000)





[illegible]

RATES PER 100,000, 1940-50



As the problem of delinquency has arisen at various times and in different places a number of reasons have been advanced to explain the anti-social behavior of youth. The reasons have ranged from a lack of certain kinds of food to the lack of recreational facilities and a number of other conditions in the life of the child and the community. Each reason has a given amount of validity but none actually explain the WHY. Not long ago two boys grew up in two large cities under very much the same social conditions. One became Al. Smith the governor of New York State and the other became Al. Capone the Number One gangster of the Twenties and the Thirties. Both Als. were from similar American cities but their life-patterns were built upon different molds.

If we are to understand the WHY of delinquency the problem must be considered in the light of a number of known social conditions and relationships. These can be summarized briefly as follows.

1. The Mirror Concept. The child is but a mirror which reflects the character of the society where the child lives. The character of the adult society can be seen in the actions of the child.

2. When the behavior of adults is discordant and disordered the behavior of the child is likewise disordered and anti-social.

3. The personality of the child has as many "sides" as the child has contacts with other people and groups. The child has a playground self and a family self. The behavior of a boy in the movies on a Saturday afternoon in the midst of a Wild West Show is entirely different for the same boy in Sunday School the next day. Each situation brings out a different kind of behavior from the same boy.

4. Every child has given biological needs which are to be satisfied in one way or another. The urge for play is but one evidence of this. If the child attempts to satisfy its needs in a manner not approved



by society the behavior becomes "wrong" and the child may become delinquent. The urge to play, if allowed certain conditions, may become improper. Petty thieving may be as much of a game as "Cops and Robbers". Both activities have a certain common element of physical exertion and adventure.

5. A child learns what is "right" and what is "wrong" from the collective experience with people. If adults or groups condone or approve the "wrong" kind of acts the child soon adopts those improper patterns of behavior. Likewise, if the group approves "good" conduct the child soon takes on "good" behavior. The child, as the adult, desires the approval of a group. If he can gain that approval by doing the "wrong" he will do that just as he will do the "right" when the group approves.

6. The child acquires his standards of right and wrong from the images of other persons he sees around him. If the child sees unsound behavior in his father, mother or other persons close to him most likely he will follow that pattern. On the other hand a good father or mother pattern usually results in good child behavior. These "pictures" which a child "carries around in his mind" of how other people act play an important part in how he acts.

7. As long as a child matures in a sound and "right" social condition which is consistent with the "good" the child's behavior will be "good". One of the first shocks to the growing child arises when he encounters dishonesty or deceit in the behavior of others. "The simple faith of a child" becomes shattered when he sees others violating the "good" things in life. In time this shattered faith develops a certain degree of relativity. Things become relatively "good" or relatively "bad" and there is no one or proper standard of conduct to follow. Under such conditions it is impossible for a child to be imbued with a universal standard or norm to control his actions. In other words, ethical moorings are absent.

8. The degree to which the child behaves "badly" or "good" depends on how fixed the "good" has become



integrated into the whole personality of the child. A child may learn what is "right" in a certain superficial sense and yet do the "wrong" because the idea of right has been acquired as a veneer and not as a basic part of his personality. Good conduct is the result of "goodness" which has reached the deeper and more basic recesses of the child's personality. Bending "the Twig" therefore is something more than superficial training in the right ideas. It must enter the emotional, moral, ethical and religious nature of the child if the "bending" is to become actual and real.

9. The degree to which a child becomes "good" or "bad" depends on how well he can meet life situations with the set of standards he possesses. If the "good" is deeply imbedded in the child's total personality and the "force" of the "goodness" over-comes the "bad" elements he experiences the conduct will be good. In a real sense the child needs to know what is "good" and to do that which is good. If the child has experienced the knowing and the doing of the good his knowing and doing will be good. In this sense ideals and actions cannot be separated. On the other hand if rewards and success go to the selfish and unscrupulous he will follow their actions.

10. In spite of good ideals and actions a child, as an adult, has a certain "breaking point" at which bad conduct may arise even though goodness may have played a large part in his life. If the social conditions surrounding the growing child are such that wrong influences are stronger than good conduct, improper actions may follow. Not all people can say in reality "Get thee Behind me". At this point it becomes the duty and the obligation of the community and the whole society to make it possible for the child to say "No" when he might say "Yes" to the "wrong". If it appears to the child that there are more opportunities and more rewards for delinquent acts there will naturally be more delinquency. In this sense delinquency or non-delinquency is very largely a matter of alternatives in a difficult



situation. That is why a certain great religious leader once said "There but for the grace of God go I" when he saw a man paying the price for certain anti-social acts.

In the end it should be made clear that a delinquent act is something which a child does. The "Badness" of the act is in the action itself which is judged according to the standards of the place where the child lives. That which society condemns, is the act.

When it is understood that a delinquent act is a matter of conduct then the next question arises, "What causes the child to act in an anti-social manner?" One of the basic answers to this question rests in the fact that a child learns how to conduct himself from the behavior of others. Imitation plays an important part in the life of the growing child. He imitates because he wants to know how things are done and because he gains a certain amount of recognition by acting in a manner approved by others. Actions, therefore, are learned. Each child is born with certain physical equipment but whether he uses his hand to strike or to caress depends on whether others around him strike or caress under the same conditions.

The second basic element in determining the child's conduct is related to the emotional make-up of the child or his emotional condition at a given time. A child who has had the warmth and affection of a good family is of necessity going to act differently than a boy who has never known these things. Undesirable family life or group experiences, therefore, determine how a child acts in a given situation. The past emotional experiences of a child carry over into the future. If those experiences have been disturbing and unstable the child cannot face new experiences with assurance any more than an adult.

Another element in the field of emotions centers around the emotional condition of child at the time it is confronted with a given situation. An emotionally disturbed child cannot make sound judgements any



more than a disturbed adult. A child who sense the fact that he is insecure, unwanted or disliked will do any number of things which he would not do if he were secure, loved and wanted. This is especially true for the child because he lives more by his emotions and the way he feels than the adult.

One of the better methods of understanding why a child acts as he does under given conditions is to appreciate how the world looks to the child through the child's eyes and how he feels about what he sees. Individuals may not understand why a child "runaway" or becomes "Incorrigible" but if adults could see the child's view point the action may be understood. For this reason it should be made clear that the child's world is entirely different than the adult's world. What may be unimportant to the adult often is very important to the child.

In order to appreciate how the world appears to the delinquent child a large number of cases records of boys and girls committed to the Trainings Schools in the state have been examined. From these records it has been possible to draft a composite of social conditions surrounding the youth.(See schematic picture.) This shows the boys family background, his native make up, the surroundings in which he lives and the relationships with groups and organizations in his environment. This composite delinquent is born into an urban family in which there were al-ready one or more delinquent or defective persons. The boy lives in a city where the difference between play and delinquency is not always clearly defined. He has developed no or "poor" work habits. In fact, nobody has ever taught him how to work or to work at tasks for boys of his age. He has a "lot of free time" on his hands which he usually "kills" in the company of other boys. The organized groups in his community or city seldom reach him or if they do only for brief periods. Unless somebody encourages the boy to take part in Y programs or Scouting activities he seldom does. These groups are available but make no appeal to him. In addition the same boy has not been a part of a church program

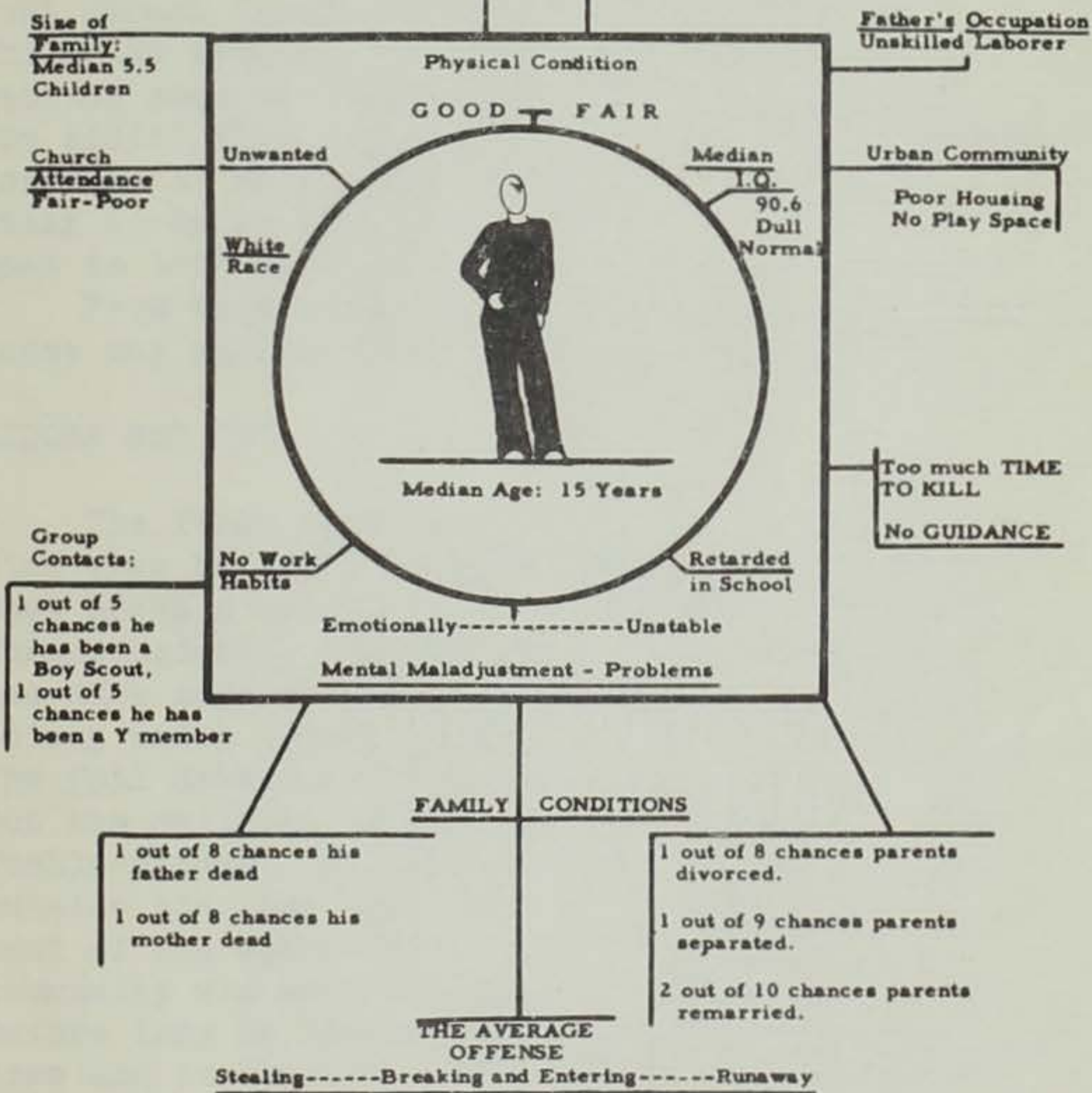


# THE AVERAGE IOWA DELINQUENT BOY

## Defective-delinquent Relatives in Immediate Family

1 out of 2 chances delinquent relatives

1 out of 4 chances defective members in family





for any length of time or with any seriousness. It may be that the church has not been interested enough to reach out beyond its own members to attract this average boy. Almost without exception the boy has some emotional problems which may be the result of home trouble or unfortunate experience with those outside the home. Most of the boys feel that "you just cannot trust any boy -- not even your own father". While the average boy is of low mentality not all are, because some of them display above average intelligence. The social world of this average boy is distorted and confused by many elements not of his own making. In other words he has "Two strikes against him before he goes to bat" with life.

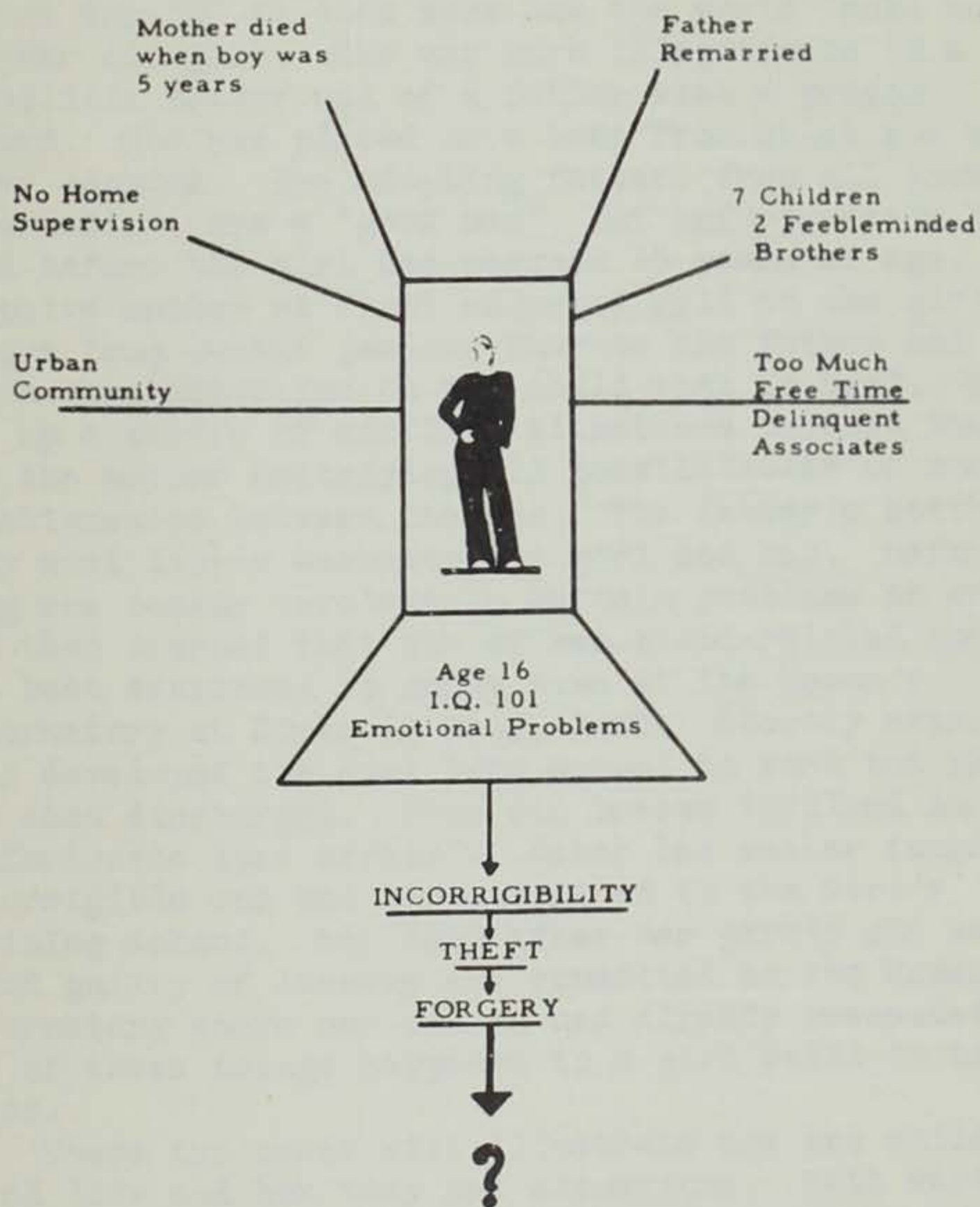
From this composite picture a few illustrative cases may further clarify the child's problems.

#### ELDORA BOY "B"

The first case is Eldora Boy "B". His mother died when he was 5 years of age, at a time when a boy most needs a mother. Then his father remarried. Chronologically the boy was 16 years but actual he was much more mature. He had an I.Q. score of 106 points which placed him in the above average group. The full details of the boy's home life are not known but two children born after his father remarried were feeble-minded. For certain reasons conditions outside his home were more interesting where he spent most of his spare time. He found some friends in the community who were already involved in delinquent acts. Before long he became "incorrigible", stayed away from home and in the end took to petty thieving and finally to forgery. What will happen in the years that lie ahead cannot be known but this is the manner in which the boy reacted to the experience he had to face at age 16 years.



ELDORA BOY "B"





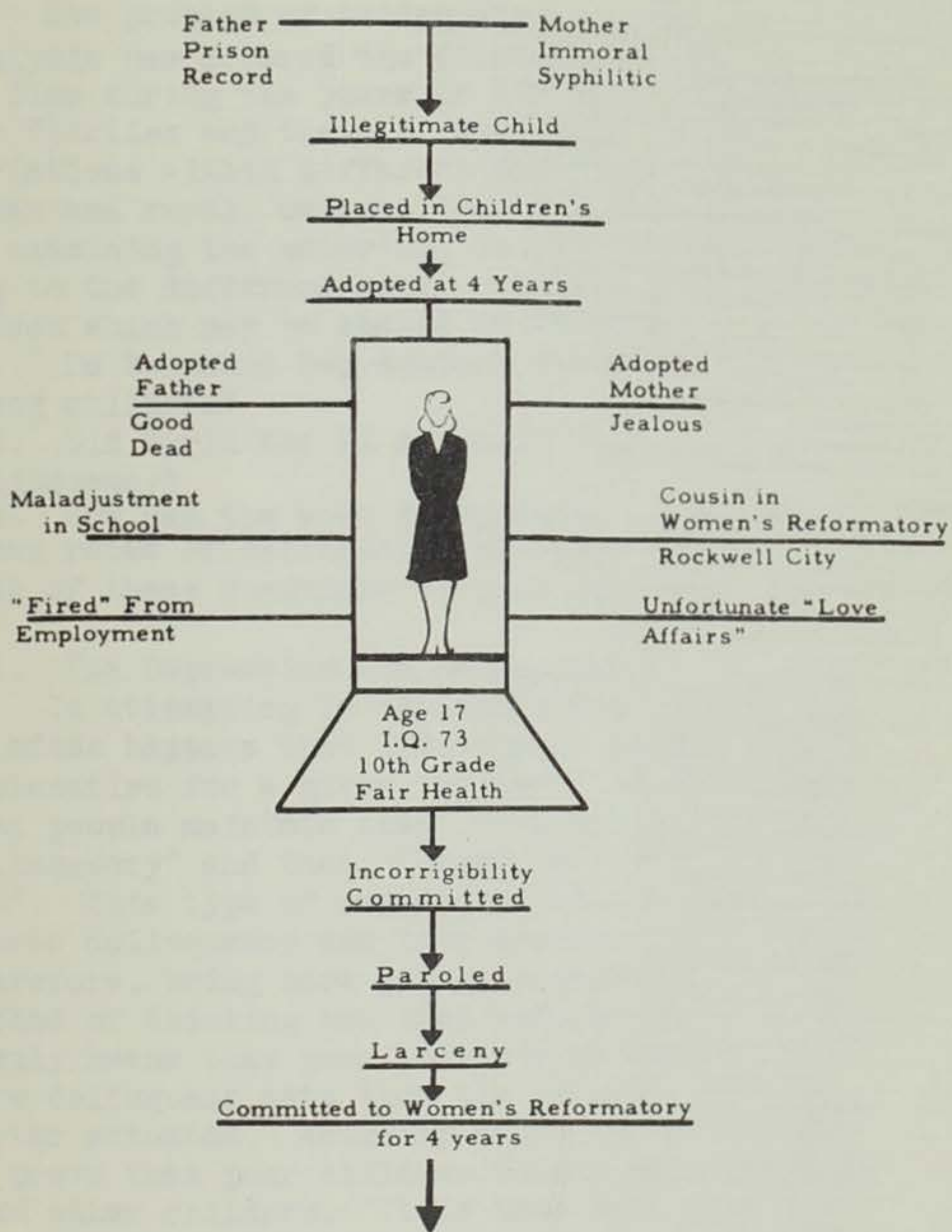
## THE CASE OF THE GIRL WITH A JEALOUS MOTHER

While this case may not be as typical as that of Eldora Boy "B" it does show how the world looks to a 17 year old girl. She was born illegitimate to a syphilitic mother and of a father with a prison record. She was placed in a home from which she was later adopted. The adopting father, from all known information, was a "good man", but unfortunately he died before the girl had reached 15 years of age. The adoptive mother at first adjusted well to the girl but before long became jealous because the father had "paid more attention to the child than to her". This set up a series of conflict situations between the girl and the mother destroying all possibilities of normal relationships between the two. The father's death took away what little security the girl had had. Before long she became involved in certain problems at school and then learned that one of her blood-related cousins had been sentenced to serve time at the Women's Reformatory at Rockwell City, Iowa. Shortly after this developed the girl left school to work but she was soon discharged. Then she became involved in an "unfortunate love affair". Later her mother found her incorrigible and had her committed to the Girl's Training School. Not long after her parole she was found guilty of larceny and committed to the Women's Reformatory where her cousin had already preceeded her. All of these things happened to a girl still in her teens.

These two cases will illustrate how two children faced life and how they met situations. Both were forced to meet life with a number of social handicaps. Had conditions been more fortunate for them they most likely would have been quite different. Not all delinquent child have such a background but many do.



CASE "A"  
The Girl With a Jealous Mother





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## SUMMARY

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The problem of delinquency in Iowa in this brief analysis has covered the fluctuations of delinquency in time during the years of the Great Depression of the Thirties and those of World War II as well as the variations within different districts of the state, urban and rural, metropolitan and non-metropolitan. In examining the material, in time as well as according to the different areas, certain questions have arisen which may be stated as follows:

1. Do Economic Depressions increase delinquency among children?
  2. Did World War II actually cause an increase in delinquency?
  3. How can the wide differences in the rural and urban rates of delinquency be explained?
- Each of these questions will be discussed very briefly.

### 1. The Depression and Delinquency.

In attempting to explain social conditions it often happens that individuals seek a simple explanation for a given problem. As an example most people maintain that "Poverty is the mother of delinquency" and that "Hunger is a Bad Counselor". This type of reasoning implies that poverty causes delinquency and that economic depressions, therefore, bring more juvenile problems. When this method of thinking has been reduced still further it simply means that poor people's children commit more delinquent acts than the children of people better situated. Actually there is no evidence to prove that poor children commit more offenses than other children. It is true that more poor children do come before the courts and do enter the training schools in the country, but it should not be over looked that children from better homes may have parents who have other means of taking care of their children, either to keep them out of



trouble or to help them when they do become involved. Another point which has become apparent in the past few years is that a larger proportion of boys causing trouble in local communities are no longer the children of poor parents but in some cases from families which cannot be classified as "poor".

Prior to the Great Depression of the Thirties it had been assumed that depressions always increase delinquency. Careful investigations during the years of 1930 through 1938 have shown that delinquency did not increase during the "hard times" of the Great Depression. Actually in some areas the amount of delinquency among young children decreased. It is true that petty crimes among boys 17 and 18 years of age did increase but not for all children. A recent investigation made by S.S. and E.E. Glueck on the careers of 500 delinquent and 500 non-delinquent boys (Unravelling Juvenile Delinquency, 1951) showed that the main differences between the two groups was not that there was a difference in the economic standings of boys but that their home life differed significantly. All of this leads to the conclusion that poor surroundings may be a part of the social background of a boy but it cannot be said with any certainty that poverty is the cause of delinquency.

## 2. World War II and Delinquency

All available evidence points definitely to that fact that juvenile delinquency increased during the years of World War II in every country involved in the war. Military activities and industrial mobilization of the nations dislocated large numbers of people for a relatively long period of time. War in itself may not be the cause for the rise in delinquency but the social circumstances brought about by the war did bring an increase in juvenile offenses. Almost without exception every large city and many smaller communities found that they had a juvenile problem on hand during the years of 1941 through 1945. In most instances the people in these areas became so aware of the conditions that many of them set up youth programs to deal with the problem. Delinquency became a real



and genuine problem during the war.

### 3. Rural and Urban Delinquency

All known evidence in the United State reveals that delinquency has been and still is higher in urban than in rural areas. Some people have maintained that the low rates in rural areas are due to the fact that delinquent acts are not reported as they are in urban areas. However, there are as many unreported cases in the city as there are in the country sections. It is not a matter of reporting or more attention by the police. Again, some persons have assumed that the high rates in the cities may be due to that fact that cities are more prone to make all or most delinquent acts "official" where as rural areas may have the same problems but the cases are treated "unofficially", or out of court. Here again there is no evidence to support this contention. City courts do hear unofficial cases and in many instances the local authorities handle a large number of delinquent acts which never come to the attention of the court because some understanding policeman has had the wisdom to handle the situation on his "beat" without referring the matter to the court. Therefore, the difference cannot be explained in terms of "good or bad" reporting. The basic reasons for the low rural rates is due to a number of known social differences which exist between the life patterns of rural and urban peoples.

1. Rural families as families are much more closely bound together than urban families.
2. The division of work on a farm requires that the children share in the work of the family whereas the city child seldom has much work that is home centered. If he works he most likely works outside the home. This tends to separate family life and work patterns.
3. The recreational habits of city children take them out of the home into more non-family recreational centers. In the rural areas recreation is a family concern. It is true that in recent years the rural youth have been going outside their family and own community for



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