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Iowa. Parks

# IOWA'S STATE PARKS AND PRESERVES

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
JUNE 1937



# What to Do at All State Parks and Preserves



Name of Park or Preserve	Resident Custodian	Non-Resident Custodian	Boating	Cabins—Rental fee	Camping two weeks	Camping overnight only	Camps—Group	Fishing—Pan Fish	Fishing—Game Fish	Golf—Green fee	Hiking	Historical Interest	Lodge—Rental fee for party	Lodge—Serving Meals	Nature Study—Birds	Nature Study—Botanical	Nature Study—Geological	Picnicking	Refreshments available	Scenic Views and Attractions	Shelters	Skating	Swimming—Supervised beach	Trails
Backbone.....	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Barkley.....						Almost inaccessible									•	•								
Beaver Meadows.....									Not open															
Beeds Lake.....	•																							
Bellevue.....	•																							
Bixby.....		•																						
Black Hawk Lake Areas.....	•																							
Arrowhead Preserve.....			•																					
Black Hawk Preserves.....																								
Brush Creek Canyon.....		•																						
Call, A. A.....	•																							
Clarke, Theo. F.....		•																						
Clear Lake.....	•		•																					
Cold Spring.....		•																						
Dolliver-Memorial.....	•																							
Eagle Lake.....		•																						
Echo Valley.....		•																						
Farmington & Big Duck Lake.....		•																						
Flint Hills.....	•																							
Fort Atkinson.....		•																						
Fort Defiance.....	•																							
Gitchie Manitou.....		•																						
Heery Woods.....																								
Lacey-Keosauqua.....	•																							
Lake Ahquabi.....	•		•						Not open															
Lake Keomah.....	•		•						Not open															
Lake Macbride.....	•		•						Not open															
Lake Manawa.....																								
Lake of Three Fires.....									Not open															
Lake Wapello.....	•		•																					
Ledges.....	•		•																					
Lepley.....		•																						
Lewis & Clark on Blue Lake.....		•	•																					
Lost Island.....		•																						
Maquoketa Caves.....	•																							
Mill Creek Area.....																								
Mini-Wakan on Spirit Lake.....		•	•																					

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IOWA'S PARKS  
IOWA LIBRARY COMMISSION  
Des Moines, Iowa

## IOWA'S STATE PARKS AND PRESERVES

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JUNE, 1937

STATE OF IOWA

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Governor

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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M. L. HUTTON

State Conservation Director

DIVISION OF LANDS AND WATERS

H. W. Groth, Chief



We

come now 'to a good land and a large' as the Bible says, 'a land flowing with milk and honey'. We come to Iowa \* \* \* \* \* Such is the empire to which we now invite you—a fruitful land, a land of sturdy, independent men and women, yes, and a land of beauty."

(Excerpt from "A Tribute To Iowa" by Bruce Barton.)

For recreation, social diversion, scientific interest, scenic beauty and historical reminder, the state parks, lakes and streams of Iowa almost defy classification. It would be impossible here to list the manifold attractions of Iowa's public domain in its setting of urban and rural activities.

The pioneers in promoting the movement for the public estate of Iowa were men of vision, "tall men, sun-crowned, who lived above the fog in public duty and private thinking."

The Honorable John F. Lacey, Thomas H. Macbride, L. H. Pammel, Bohumil Shimek and others some three or four decades ago began to sound the clarion call that awoke the interest of the citizens of Iowa in the natural heritage the state then possessed, but was in danger of losing.

Less than twenty years ago Iowa did not possess one state park, and only one decade earlier many beautiful lakes had been drained.

Since 1919 through the inspiration of those early leaders and the efforts of other public-spirited citizens the state has become "conservation conscious." Coming generations may say, concerning recent accomplishments, "See! This our fathers have done for us!"

✱ Iowa's state parks and preserves number seventy-two, and aggregate some 18,500 acres. These tracts range in size from a small park of a few acres, situated on a beautiful lake, to a tract of some 1,700 acres of wooded hills, verdant forest cover and majestic rocks. Combined with Iowa's sixty-five public lakes of over 40,000 acres of water, and her 15,000 miles of rivers and streams—800 miles of which are owned by the state—these recreation areas present a picture beautiful and enchanting, and offer something of interest to all.

A number of the parks have a historical or memorial association, aside from their scenic, scientific and recreational aspects, that recalls the pioneer days of exploration and settlement.

Other parks offer scenic views and enticing drives and trails to add to the charm of the natural outdoor museum.

Again, in certain areas the ice caves, the interesting plant life or the geological exposure especially capture the interest of the scientifically-minded visitor.

For those who are interested in that ancient game of Scotland, the golf courses of several parks offer a challenge and an invitation not to be denied.

Five times in geological history have great glaciers invaded this state, each one leaving its imprint for those who can to interpret. The last, known as the Wisconsin ice sheet, covered the north central portion of the state, and created most of the natural lakes. Spirit Lake is the largest of these, with 5,600 acres. There are many others of lesser size, among which are West Okoboji, Clear Lake and Storm Lake, each exceeding 3,000 acres.

Many of the state park areas are located on the shores of these gleaming lakes, and provide access to the public waters.

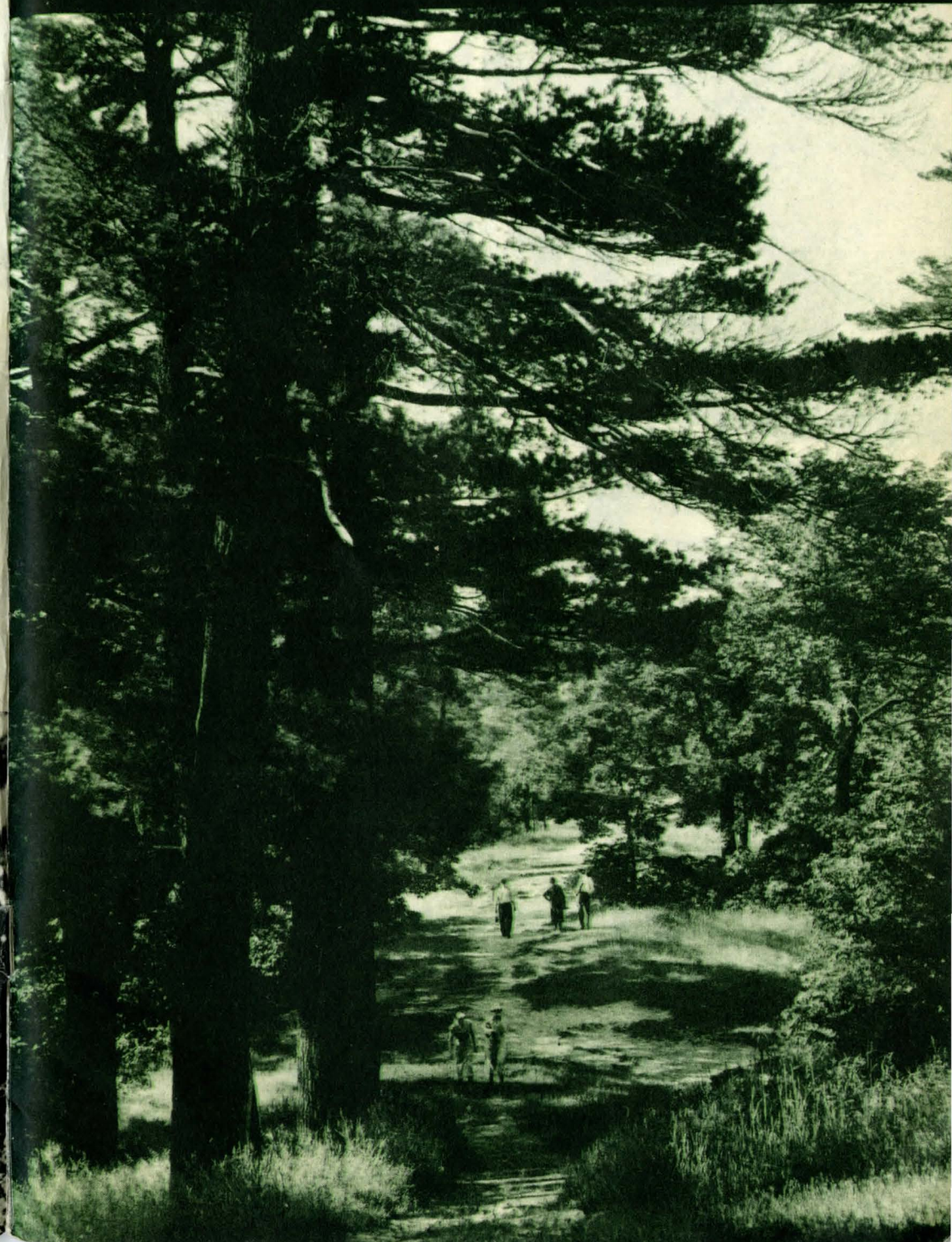
Recently acquired state forests of some 12,000 acres represent an advance in harmony with the conservation plan of the state for preserving its natural resources.

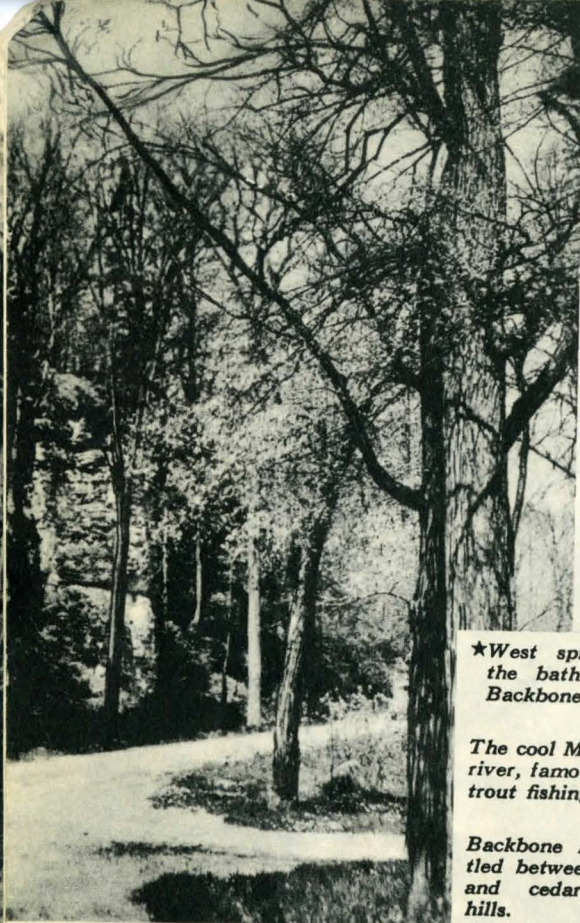
And as a fitting frame for all this, on the east the Mississippi—Fathers of Waters—and on the west the Missouri, on its way from the snow-clad Rocky Mountains, augmented by the interior rivulets, brooks and streams of the state there is created a natural mosaic that indeed renders true the definition of "Iowa" as "The Beautiful Land."



## STATE PARKS

*Areas of state-wide rather than local interest—most widely known and used for varied scientific study and recreation*

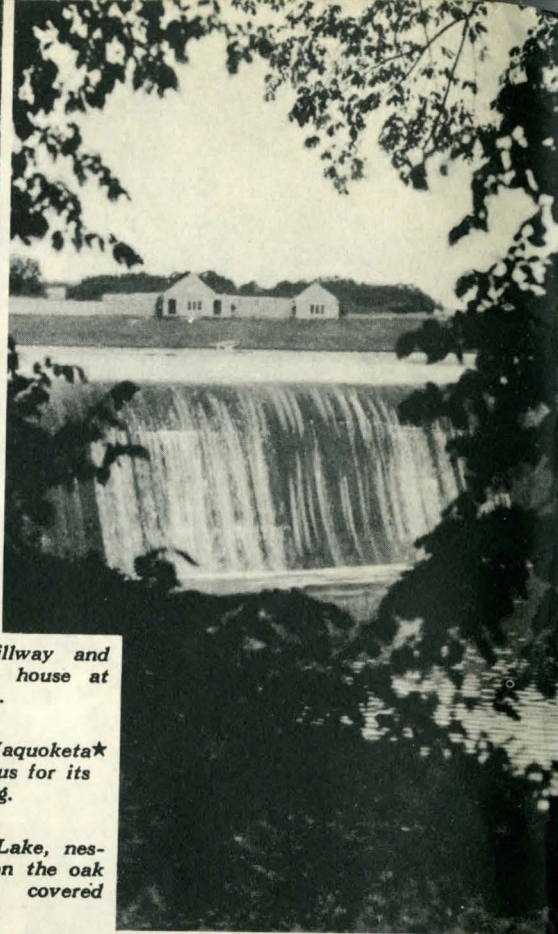




★West spillway and the bath house at Backbone.

The cool Maquoketa★ river, famous for its trout fishing.

Backbone Lake, nestled between the oak and cedar covered hills.



## Backbone State Park

● Delaware county, 1,398 acres, obtained in 1919. Located south of Strawberry Point on Primary Highway No. 19, off Primary Highway No. 13.

Visitors to the "Backbone" are surrounded by primeval forests where the thousand voices of nature sooth the senses and help to restore overtaxed nerves. At night one is lulled to sleep by the whisperings of the pine trees and in the morning he forgets his cares and worries while watching the long, high ridge curve its dark green back in the rising sun.

Rugged limestone bluffs, rising 90 to 140 feet above an ox-bow of the Maquoketa river, form the Backbone which gives this oldest and second largest state park area in Iowa its name. In addition to its natural and scenic beauty, the park is noted for its unique springs and plant life. Historic Richmond Springs, one of the largest springs in the state, feeds the large trout and bass hatchery in the northern part of the park. Tall, tapering white pines, some of the largest of their kind, contend with the more hardy elms, oaks, and maples along the ridge, and the entire area of the park is densely wooded. Many varieties of shrubs and flowers combine to make the area a favorite haunt for nature students.

In former years, a dam across the Maquoketa river provided power for a mill. Twelve years ago the dam washed out, but a large concrete dam has been erected on the same site, impounding the waters to form a beautiful little lake. This lake, located in the southern part of the park, provides aquatic sports throughout the summer and offers additional fishing areas to augment the famous trout fishing in the cold, clear waters of the Maquoketa river. On the shores of the lake are to be found a beautiful bathing beach, bath house, boat house, and ample parking and picnic areas. A number of cabins, for family or group use, overlook the lake.

Within the park are five miles of good roads, many trails, and well equipped picnic areas and camping grounds. An assembly building is available for large group meetings, and three open shelters face on the picnic areas and wooded



Balanced Rock, located in the northern part of the park, near the assembly building.



The Devil's Stairway, one of the unique geological formations to be seen in the park.





The memorial plaque, designed by the late Lorado Taft, honoring Senator Dolliver.



Inviting is the deep shade of the trees along the excellent roads through the park.



groves. Park stores and concession stands are located near all the intensively used areas.

In writing of this park area Samuel Calvin, author, said: "These weather-beaten cliffs, the difficult and lonely paths, the odorous pines in which the breezes make perpetual music, tend to refresh and reinvigorate both mind and body, provided only one is in sympathy with Nature unimproved by art, modestly picturesque."

## Dolliver Memorial

● Webster county, 538 acres, obtained in 1921. Located 2 miles north of Lehigh on Primary Highway No. 121, off Primary Highway No. 50.

"I like a man who is able not only to take care of himself, but to do something for the unfortunates who surround him in the world, and when you bury a citizen like that you do not call him a man, you call him a lover of mankind, and you build monuments to him," said Jonathan P. Dolliver, one of the most influential leaders Iowa ever sent to Congress, an ardent defender of wild life, a consistent protector of the forest and woodland, and a genuine lover and admirer of the great out-of-doors. Dolliver Memorial State Park is the 'monument' Iowa has erected to Senator Dolliver. In a grotto facing a beautiful pool is a large bas-relief of Senator Dolliver, designed by Lorado Taft.

This area is one of five large parks located on the Des Moines river. Extensive virgin timber and second growth forests denote the care that this region has received for a number of years. Deep ravines add interest and beauty to the wooded hills. The most intriguing of these ravines is "Boneyard Hollow," which is one-half mile long and has perpendicular walls that rise to a height of 75 feet in many places. Bones of elk, deer, and buffalo, mingled with implements of native copper, arrowheads, and other relics, have been found here, indicating that either historic or prehistoric Indians used the gorge as a game trap. Indian mounds are located along both sides of the Des Moines river in and near the park.

Unique geological formations, known as copperas beds, lying in the coal and sandstone bluffs



Assembly building at the group camp

bordering Prairie Creek, are among the many interesting and beautiful sights in the park.

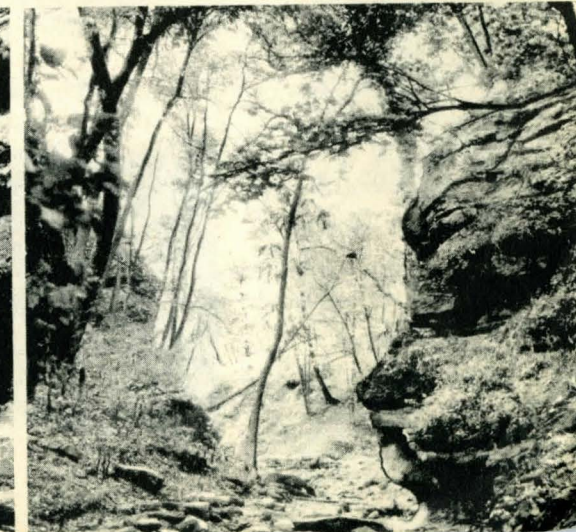
From the standpoint of plant life Dolliver is especially interesting. The hills are all heavily wooded and there are many kinds of plants found here which are fast becoming rare. Practically every type of fern that grows in Iowa may be seen, including the ostrich fern which is now found in only a few places in the state.

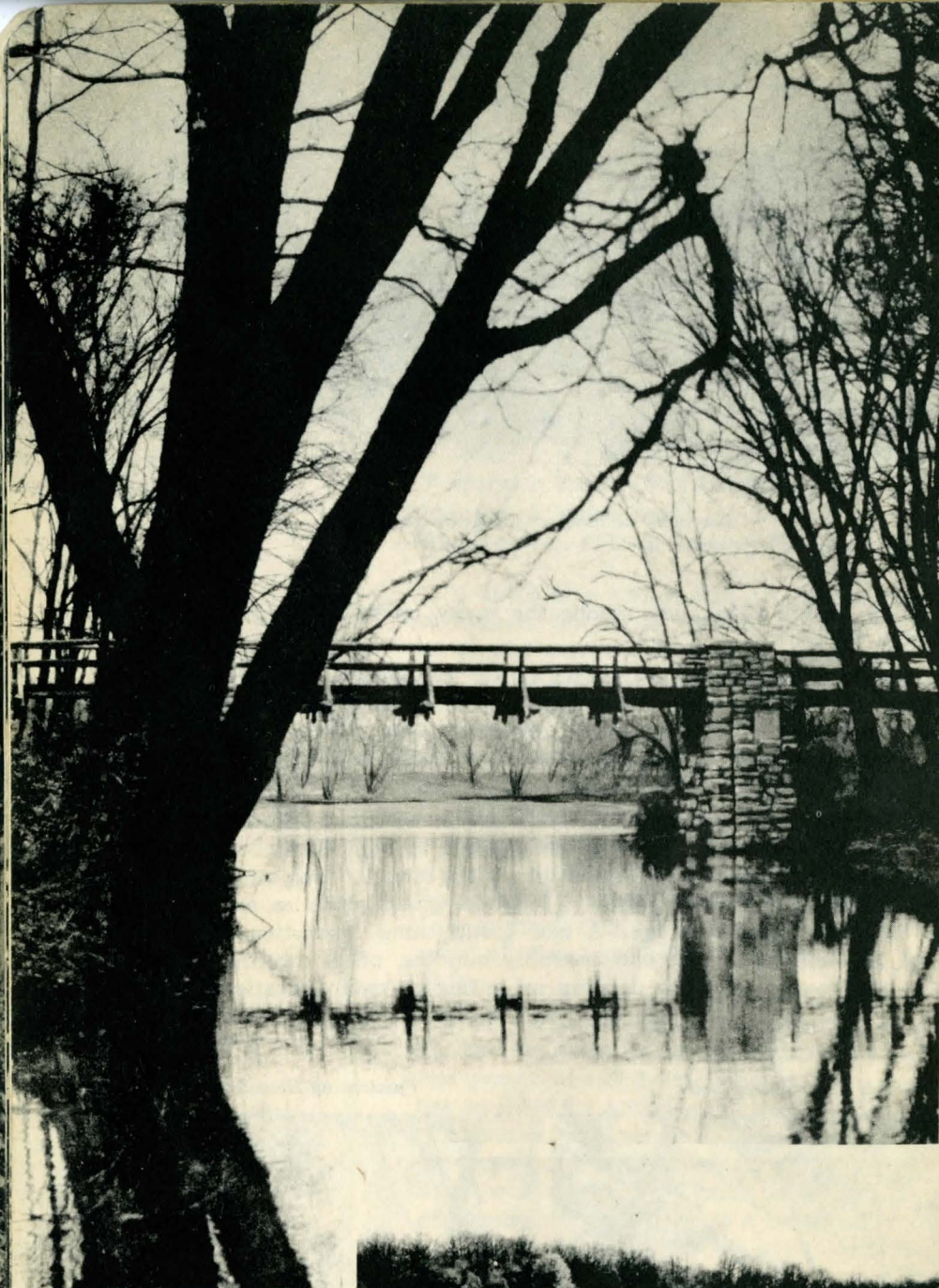
Scenic roads and excellent foot trails are to be found throughout the area. One of the most interesting trails leads to high Steamboat Bluff, where a lookout shelter provides a resting place after the long scenic climb. Extensive picnic and parking areas, a lodge for group activities, and cabins offer facilities for wide usage. A new group camp, consisting of seven cabins, showers, mess hall, and assembly building, offers exceptional opportunities to organizations desiring an outing or camp vacation.

The cliff of Copperas Beds



Fascinating Boneyard Hollow





Ely's Ford foot-bridge.



Lake Keosauqua, built through co-operation of National Park and U. S. Forest Service.

## Lacey-Keosauqua

● Van Buren county, 1,706 acres, obtained in 1920. Located across the Des Moines river, southwest of Keosauqua and off Primary Highway No. 1.

"If we, as a race, wish to go forward in the path of progress and keep pace with the highest and best development of this world's destiny, we must furnish to the generations to come the possibility and opportunity of coming into contact with the varied and almost miraculous manifestations of the life of the wood, of the water, and the plain," said E. D. Ball, noted conservationist. These 'varied and almost miraculous manifestations' are being preserved for future generations in Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, the largest park area in Iowa.

Major John F. Lacey, for whom the area was named, was the author of the 'Lacey Bird Protection Act'; he fathered the law which set aside Yellowstone National Park and drafted the rules for its government; he fostered legislation relative to Crater Lake in Oregon, Yosemite Park in California, and the petrified forests of Arizona.

✓ Lacey-Keosauqua park is located in the great horse-shoe bend of the Des Moines river in one of the earliest settled sections of the state. When the Mormons made their famous migration westward, they crossed the Des Moines river at historic Ely's Ford and sections of the original trail can still be seen. Near the ford is a flat meadow, now used as a camping ground, which is the site of an Indian village where pottery was made and stone and copper implements were manufactured. On the high bluffs along the river within the park are nineteen Indian burial mounds, the first of which was opened by white men in 1878.

No other area in the state has so many different species of oak as this well-timbered region. There are also a few pecan trees which are exceedingly rare in this state. Some of the oaks, sycamores, and poplars have attained an age of from a hundred and twenty-five to a hundred and seventy-five years. Shad bush, wild plum, and wild crab blossoms fill the air with perfume in the spring while bloodroot, anemone, and snow trillium help create a wonderland of color. In the prairie openings are blazing asters, gentians, goldenrods, and asters.



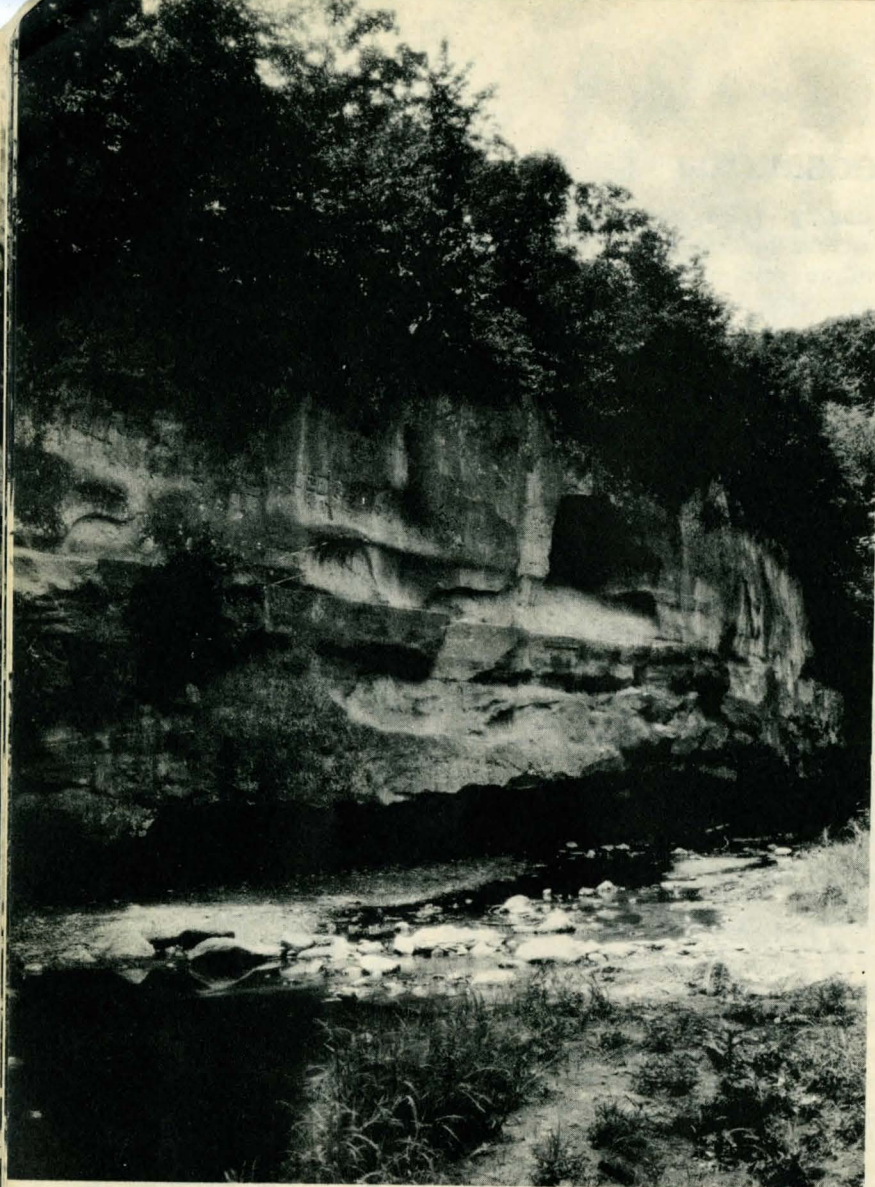
The lodge . . . social center of the park, excellent cuisine.



Custodian's house.

Indian Hill shelter on the Des Moines river.





The greater part of the park is devoted to a wild life sanctuary. Trails lead through the flower and shrub filled woods from the south entrance of the park to the lodge at the north end, more than three and a half miles away.

A beautiful little gem-like lake, covering thirty acres, has been created in the southern part of the area through the co-operation of the National Park Service. A nine hole golf course, open to the public, is serviced by a combination restaurant and lodge. Within the lodge is a small museum and the two main rooms of the building are available to groups. Two fine shelter houses, easily reached by the five miles of scenic roads within the park, overlook commanding views of the Des Moines river valley. Ample tables and fireplaces have been provided in the picnic areas to accommodate the large number of persons who visit the park each year.

## Ledges State Park

● Boone county, 778 acres, obtained in 1921. Located 6 miles south of Boone on Primary Highway No. 164. Also reached by gravel road from Primary Highway No. 60.

'To spend a day or an hour at the Ledges is a pleasure and leaves sweet memories—but to visit this restful place with the coming and going of the seasons, in sunshine and storm, to learn its secrets and find its hidden treasures, is to love it.'

Long before the first state park was dedicated, the region around the Ledges was a favorite haunt of geologists, botanists and zoologists, as well as of sightseers and picnickers. It is a great scientific laboratory and a truly delightful scenic area.

The 'Ledges' are sandstone walls, twenty-five to seventy-five feet high, bordering beautiful little Pease Creek, named in honor of John Pea, one of the prominent early settlers in Boone county. These rock outcroppings are located a half mile above the junction of the creek with the Des Moines river. Formation of the sandstone dates back to the Coal Age and the melting of the glaciers during the Ice Age carved out the cliffs.

This rough, broken country was once thickly covered with giant trees of types common to central Iowa and some of the largest elms, cottonwoods, green ash, and soft maples to be found in the Des Moines river valley stand within the park. One of the most magnificent elms in the state, with a diameter of nine feet, stands near one of the picnic areas.

The six hundred and eighty-four acres of park land embrace hills and valleys, dark ravines and sunny glens, massive rocks and spring-fed streams, trees, shrubbery, mosses, and flowers—an epitome of nature. Complete plant studies of the area have been made by botanists from Iowa State College and the University of Iowa. Remarkable specimens of northern plants are found here, such as pale vetch, juniper moss, and reindeer lichen, which covers immense areas in the Arctic but occurs in only a few places in Iowa. Marsh marigold



*The Greeting Lodge  
—surrounded by wild  
crab and shadblow.*



*The central picnic  
area, where 10,000  
visitors concentrate.*





*The Ledges along Pease Creek, easily seen from the foot trails.*



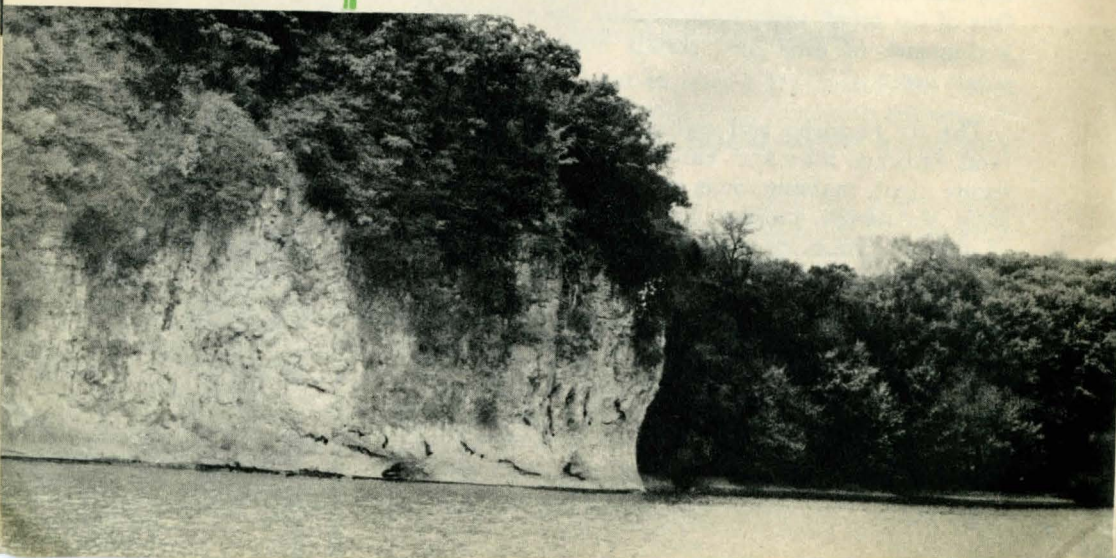
borders the Des Moines river and white bitter cress can be found in Pease, Bear, and Davis creeks. The many trails have points of scientific interest marked and the custodian of the park is available by appointment for nature study hikes.

Bird life at the Ledges is both varied and abundant. The variety of the topography and of vegetative life make this an attractive haven of refuge. The park custodian has observed and listed more than two hundred species of birds within the boundaries.

The central picnic area, located in the valley below the junction of Pease and Davis creeks, has a lodge, refreshment building, drinking fountains, huge parking areas, and extensive picnic grounds and equipment. Oak Grove picnic area, at the eastern entrance to the park, is equipped with a fine shelter. Cabins in the park may be rented by the day or week.

In addition to the other attractions, there is a large zoo in the park in which may be seen deer, raccoons, fox, badger, skunk, and most of the other native fur bearing animals of Iowa.

*The Palisades of the Cedar River*



## Palisades-Kepler

● Linn county, 734 acres, obtained in 1922. Located 6 miles west of Mount Vernon, off U. S. Highway No. 30 and Primary Highway No. 261.

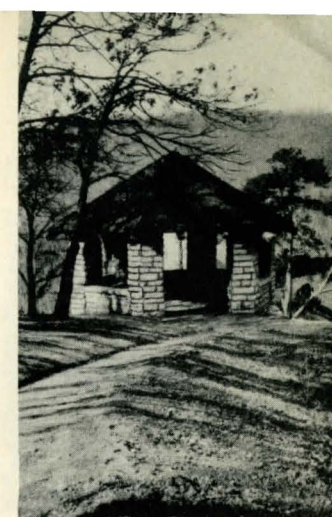
Palisades-Kepler State Park is more than a place for rest and recreation. It is one of Nature's rare gifts to those who 'see and hear with their brains and their hearts as well as with their eyes and their ears.'

While the palisades of the Cedar river in this park area may not equal in height the famous palisades of the Hudson river, for sheer beauty of surroundings, for a quiet resting place and refuge, they are unexcelled. Great limestone cliffs rise from 30 to 75 feet above the river, with deep gullies sloping toward the water. These cliffs consist of one massive layer of dolomite stone and are fringed with fine specimens of red cedar, some of them more than a foot in diameter. Down the northern faces of the cliffs, American yew or ground hemlock sprawls luxuriantly.

In 1922 the state acquired 140 acres of flood-plain, upland woods, and vertical cliffs in this region. Later the Louis Kepler Memorial tract, adjoining the Palisades, was received by gift and additional land has been obtained since. The whole area constitutes the Palisades-Kepler State Park.

The area has both historic and pre-historic interest. A molar tooth of a mammoth found here speaks of a far distant past and numerous Indian relics are reminders that this was a favored haunt of the red men before white settlers arrived. The foundations of an old mill for the crushing of rock may be seen in the northern section of the park.

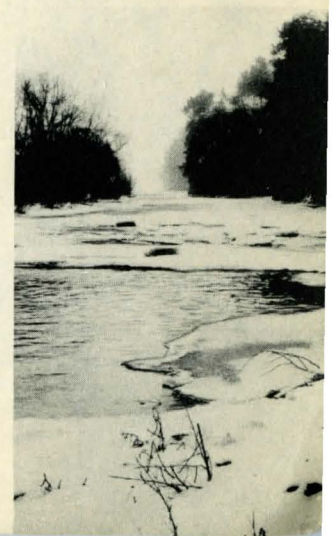
The park is divided by the Cedar river and the area west of the river has been set aside as a unique wild life preserve. The only means of access to this preserve is by boat and foot trail. Within its boundaries are found the walking fern, which grows more abundantly here than in any other part of the state, the rare ostrich fern, and all the more common varieties. More than 125 species of bird life have been seen in the preserve, including the very rare blue grosbeak.



*Trailside shelter at Lovers' Leap on one of the many nature trails winding along the wooded cliffs.*



*The Lower Palisades, an enchanting region equally interesting and beautiful in both winter and summer.*



The land on the east side of the river, most of which was bequeathed by Mr. Louis Kepler, is open to the public and offers numerous facilities for outdoor recreation. More than five miles of nature trails wind over the wooded slopes and along the brink of the palisades, giving unlimited fields for study to the nature lover. In some of the ravines, the cypripediums, the orchid spectabile, and the pogonia pendula are still to be seen by those who seek out beauty.

Seventy-five feet above the river on Lovers Leap stands a small lookout shelter. A low-head dam across the river maintains a suitable water level for boating and fishing, and there are ample picnic and parking areas within the park. Its scenic road is kept in excellent condition. A palatial lodge, located in the park, serves excellent meals and refreshments at all times and is available for parties, group gatherings and evening social functions. There are also four cottages available for private use. Two of these cottages will house from four to sixteen persons and the others will accommodate much larger groups. They may be reserved through the park custodian.

Palisades Lodge — serving excellent meals throughout the season, from May until November.

October Day in Springbrook

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## Springbrook State Park

● Guthrie county, 657 acres, obtained in 1926. Located 5 miles north of Guthrie Center on Primary Highway No. 25, and 2 miles northeast.

Springbrook State Park reminds the visitor that there are:

*"... tongues in the trees,  
Books in the running brooks,  
Sermon in stones  
And good in everything."*

Among the first white persons to notice the beauties of this region were those who took part in the gold rush to California in 1849. One of the gold rush trails, parts of which are still plainly visible, passes through the park area and many of the springs found here served as camp sites for the travelers. Long before the coming of the white men, however, Indians fought over these beautifully wooded hills and valleys. Evidence of these battles is seen in the numerous arrowheads and tomahawks that have been found within the park area.

The Raccoon river flows through the southern part of the park, cutting its way through the clay banks of the Wisconsin drift sheet. The unusual granite formations found here, together with the small gravel deposits, indicate that this was part of the terminal moraine of that glacier. Near one corner of the park and just off the main road is a large granite block weighing twelve tons, which apparently rode to its present resting place on an ancient glacier from Minnesota. The springs in the park come from coal measure sandstone underlaid with shale. At a depth of eighty to a hundred feet below the surface of the park lies a vein of coal from two to four feet thick.

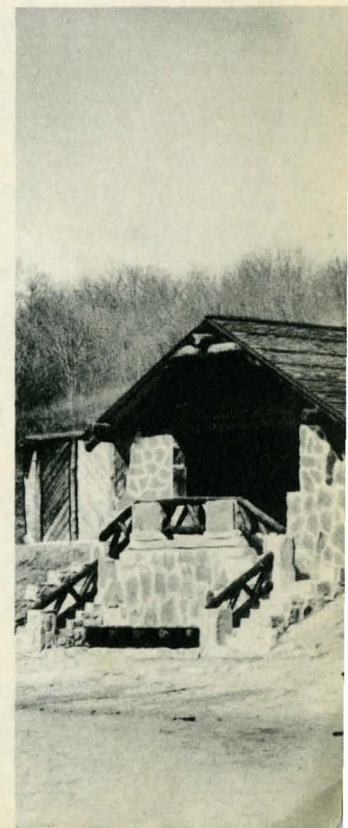
In the autumn the high ridges are covered with a blaze of bittersweet and hawthorne. Dwarf chestnut oak trees, from three to six feet tall, grow on the hogback ridges. Although most of the virgin timber had been removed before the state obtained possession of the land, a few bur oak trees approximately a hundred and fifty years old are still growing in the valleys. Eighty per cent of the total area of the park is wooded. There is also a wealth of wild flowers, such as Indian turnip,

[ 17 ]



Blue phlox — one of the many species of brilliantly colored flowers which carpet the park.

The Bath house, center of swimming and boating activities for visitors to Springbrook.



gentian, columbine, mandrake, and birdfoot violet.

Spring Brook, from which the area receives its name, has been dammed to create a beautiful lake covering twenty-seven acres. An excellent bathing beach and bath house have been constructed, and boats may be rented.

An attractive shelter and picnic area nestle among the trees on a high ridge above the lake while another large picnic area and playfield have been developed in the main valley below the dam. A number of beautiful trails lead from the picnic areas to the points of interest in the park.



*Picnic Shelter at Springbrook*



## FOREST PRESERVES AND PARKS

*Areas devoted to the preservation of native woodlands but adapted for public recreation and scientific study*





Snow pattern in one of the gullies at Ambrose A. Call.



## Ambrose A. Call

● Kossuth county, 134 acres, donated and purchased in 1926. Located 1 mile southwest of Algona on Primary Highway No. 274.

Ambrose A. Call registered the first claim in Kossuth county on one of the huge trees near the forest preserve which now bears his name. In the spring of 1854 Call, a native of Ohio, left Cincinnati to seek a new home in the west. When he reached Fort Dodge he was warned of Indians farther north, but he pressed on to a large walnut grove south of the present site of Algona. Here he blazed a huge tree and inscribed on it: "Ambrose A. Call claims this grove—July 10, 1854." He built his cabin near the location of the park.

These rolling, timbered hills which Call first claimed are still covered with many trees of the 'forest primeval,' such as black walnut, some of which are more than three feet in diameter, fine red and bur oak, and magnificent elms. A large combination lodge and museum has been erected in the park and is available for group parties. Picnic facilities, an abundant water supply, and fine roads also have been provided.

## Heery Woods

● Butler county, 380 acres, purchased in 1935. Located 1 mile south of Clarksville on Primary Highway No. 53

John Heery was the first land holder of record in Butler county. A native of Milton, Wisconsin, Heery decided to take up a claim farther west. On foot and alone he crossed the Mississippi river and penetrated more than 100 miles into the wilds of northeastern Iowa before finding a place that suited him. Selecting the area which now bears his name, Heery returned home and entered his claim, all within two weeks time.

In clearing his newly-claimed homestead Heery was careful about cutting out the timber, and as a result the preserve is practically all wooded today. On the bluffs above the Shell Rock river, which flows through the tract, is a dense growth of native oak and hickory. A low-head dam impounds sufficient water in the river to provide good fishing throughout the season and picnic areas have been constructed on both sides of the stream.

## Lepley State Park

● Hardin county, 9 acres, donated in 1920. Located 1½ miles north of Union on Primary Highway No. 215.

This tract of virgin timber was donated to the state by the heirs of Manuel Lepley, who first set it aside because of the beautiful trees and wild flowers which grew there. Lepley instructed his sons never to use the tract for pasture land nor to cut any trees that were 'healthy and straight.' The first Lepley settled in Pennsylvania about 1750 and witnessed the wasteful destruction of forests there. His son settled in Ohio and observed a similar waste. When the Lepley family, ten in all, came to Iowa as pioneers they purchased farms which were half timber and half tillable land and they used the timber sparingly. 'Save the good trees and cut the poor ones' was the family slogan.

Lepley park contains specimens of basswood, slippery and American elm, hackberry, green ash, white oak, bur oak, and red oak, and such wild flowers as the waterleaf, cranesbill, bellwort, Canadian lily, greater lobelia, bell flower, goldenrod, and aster. A bronze tablet has been erected commemorating the gift to the state, and excellent picnic facilities have been provided.

## Red Haw Hill

● Lucas county, 425 acres, obtained in 1936. Located 1 mile east of Chariton on U. S. Highway No. 34.

Red Haw Hill preserve received its name from the thousands of hawthorne trees that gaily color the hills of this large area. In addition to the hawthornes there are many large elms, oaks, and other trees and shrubs native to this part of Iowa. The area is essentially a wild life and forest preserve and is a haven for quail and small game.

Although the area is one of the latest acquired by Conservation Commission, an artificial lake has been constructed and picnic areas and facilities are being provided. The lake, which is located between two elm wooded slopes, has been stocked with game and pan fish and within a few years should provide excellent fishing.

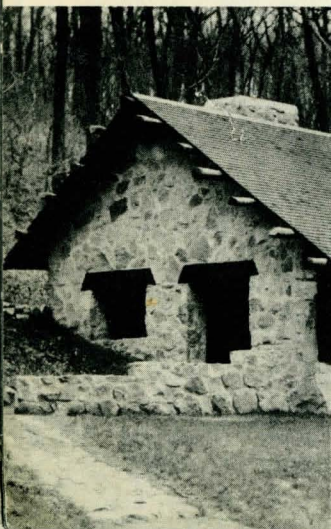
A beautiful scenic road winds over the haw covered hills and through the valleys to the picnic areas.



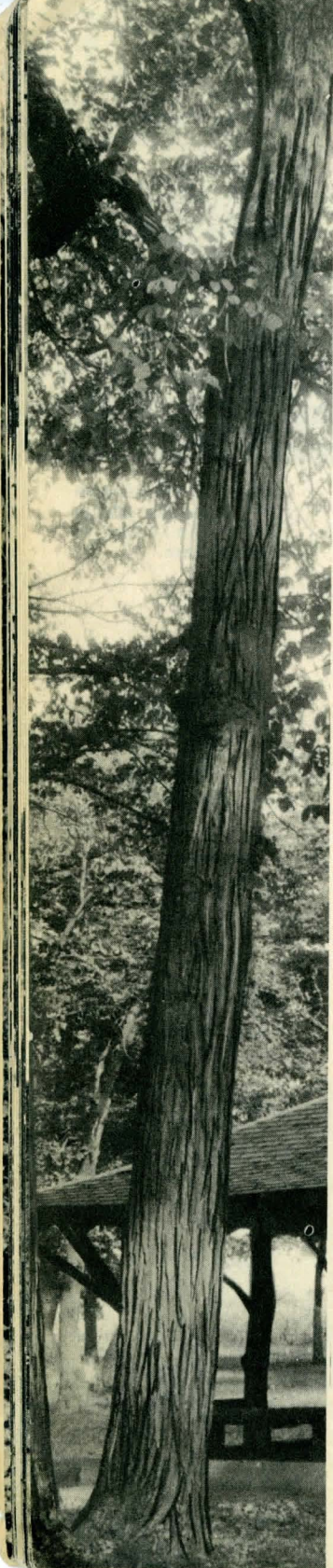
Square-hewn timbers of yesteryear distinguish this cabin in Lepley park.



The hawthorn at Red Haw Hill, white in spring, green in summer, and red in fall.



The shelter at Wadena, facing eastward to the Little Sioux river.



## Theodore F. Clark

● Tama county, 24 acres, donated in 1921. Located  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles northeast of Traer on U. S. Highway No. 63.

This little grove on the banks of Wolfe Creek was donated to the state by Mrs. May Clark McCornack in memory of her father, Theodore F. Clark, an early pioneer of Tama county. The entire tract is heavily wooded with a wide variety of trees, including basswood, slippery and American elms, red and bur oaks. The area is level and is carpeted with an abundance of bellwort, rue anemone, bluebells, blue and yellow violets, goldenrod, greater lobelia, and meadow rue. Picnic tables and a shelter house nestle beneath the protecting trees.

## Preparation Canyon

● Monona county, 187 acres, purchased in 1935. Located 6 miles southwest of Moorhead off Primary Highway No. 183.

Preparation Canyon was named by a band of Mormons, who settled at the mouth of the canyon in the early eighteen fifties and founded the now vanished town of Preparation. Early stories vary as to why the Mormons settled at this spot, some claiming they merely intended to stop here long enough to prepare for the long trek to Utah, others contending they meant to settle here permanently. The minds of the Mormons themselves appear to have been unsettled on this point, because dissension arose in the village and in 1855 the community broke up, and many of the members moved on to Utah. The supreme court divided the property among the remaining members, but later on they too moved west, abandoning the village.

The forest preserve which now bears the name of the original village consists of the area at the head of the canyon. High ridges on the north, west, and south sides of the canyon command magnificent views of the rolling loess bluffs, the valley of the Soldier river, and the flood plains of the Missouri river. Excellent picnic areas have been provided on the shaded south and west ridges and from them foot paths lead to the floor of the canyon below. The dense growth which covers the area is mainly hickory and oak, although many other kinds of trees may be seen, including the American linden, American and red elm, coffee tree, huckleberry, ash, Ironwood, and hawthorne.

## Wanata Preserve

● Clay county, 136 acres, obtained in 1934. Located on the southern edge of Peterson, on Primary Highway No. 10.

This area, which lies on a steep bluff overlooking the Little Sioux valley, is one of the finest forest preserves in the northwestern part of Iowa. The trees, mostly second growth, are fine specimens of American, slippery, and cork elms. Spring foliage is bright with pin cherry, wild plum, wild crab, choke cherry, and haws. An interesting shelter house and picnic area have been provided and pleasant trails lead to all parts of the preserve. The Little Sioux river affords good pan fishing.

## White Pine Hollow

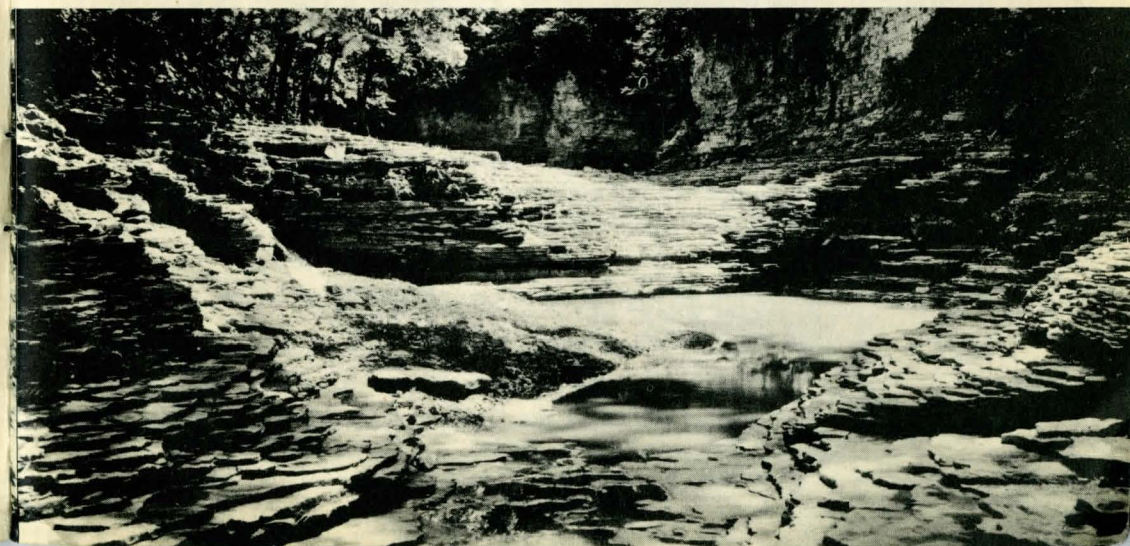
● Dubuque county, 610 acres, obtained in 1934. Located 1 mile north and 2 miles west of Luxemburg on Primary Highway No. 10.

This forest area contains the largest stand of white pine timber in the state, many of the trees being more than 200 years old. The dark forest, with its needle covered ground and the soft rustling of the foliage present a delightful contrast to the typical rolling plains of Iowa.

The 'Hollow', with its spring fed streams, limestone cliffs, and hillsides covered with Canadian yew, reminds the visitor of spots usually associated only with the far north. Among the many boreal plants to be found here are club mosses, the white violet, and birdfoot violet. Among the more important trees in the preserve, in addition to the white pine and Canadian yew, are the yellow birch, paper birch, quercitron, white, red, and bur oaks, black cherry, red cedar, sugar maple, red elm, and basswood. The northern slopes are covered with high bush cranberry, moosewood, bush honeysuckle, and dwarf buckthorn.

[ 23 ]

*Fairyland Gorge in White Pine Hollow*



## Forest Lands

*"Till, filled with other thought, I turn again*

*"To where the pathway enters in a realm*

*"Of lordly woodland, under sovereign reign*

*"Of towering oak and elm."*

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

Iowa may be a prairie state, yet one hundred years ago she had some five million acres of woodland. Since that time the inroads of civilization have reduced that amount by fifty per cent.

The fact that trees and forests are a very important factor in the proper and wise management of land and water has long been known. Even our forefathers, while using profligately the native timber, wisely planted groves and shelter belts around their homes. Too often, however, in the desire to put the very ultimate into crops, trees and forests that should have been left were removed, and the evil effects of this policy are now receiving general recognition.

It is now apparent that many acres once in timber are not suitable for cultivation. In many places the top soil is gone, large gullies have formed, the streams have become silted, and a biological, as well as agricultural, desert has resulted.

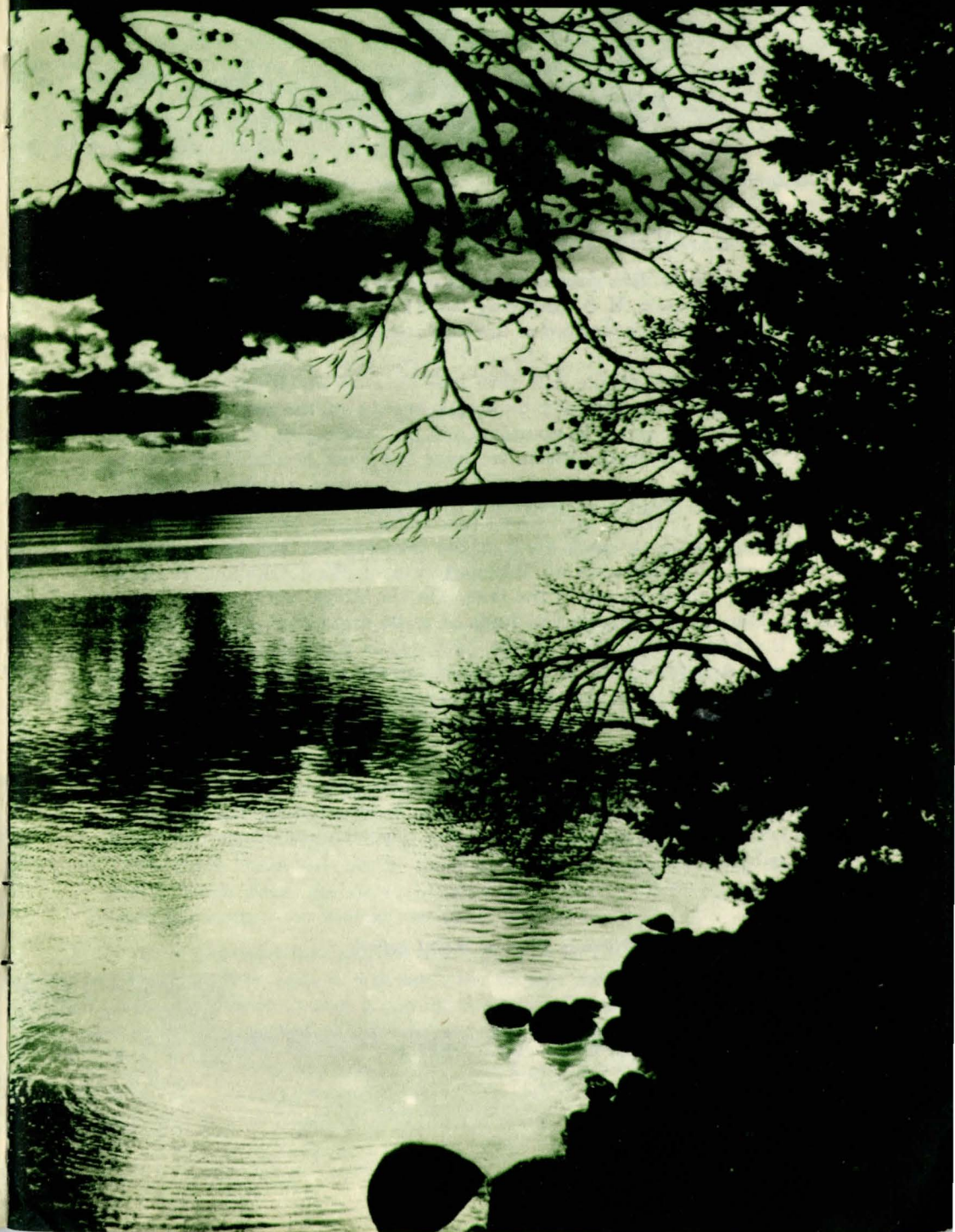
The forests are, therefore, of value economically in checking soil erosion; in helping maintain a biological balance for successful agriculture by harboring, for example, birds and animals which aid in keeping damaging insects under control; for use as wood; and for their effect on the conserving of water. They are also of value for recreational purposes, as a haven for desirable wildlife, as natural laboratories for scientific study, and as an element of great aesthetic value in the Iowa landscape.

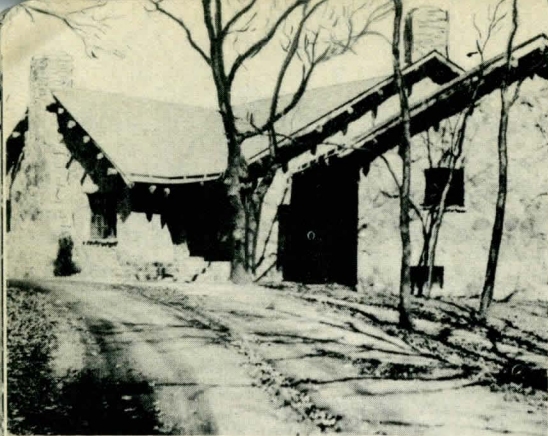
The state has proposed a program for both national and state forests in suitable locations. It has recently acquired some 12,000 acres of state forest land situated in five different general locations in southern, southeastern and northeastern Iowa. This acquirement represents a start in what it is anticipated will be a much greater program of forestry development and the conserving of natural resources inherent in or related thereto.

John Ruskin has said, "While I live, I trust I shall have my trees, my peaceful idyllic landscapes, my free country life—and while I possess so much, I shall own 100,000 shares in the Bank of Contentment."

## LAKES

*Iowa owns sixty-five natural lakes upon which are located some seventeen park areas, serving as recreation centers and as public access to the lake*





Gull Point Lodge



A Sunday regatta

## The Okoboji Region

● Dickinson county, five separate areas on the Okobojis and Spirit Lake, comprising 117 acres. U. S. Highway No. 71 and Primary Highway No. 9 are the main highways leading to the lake region.

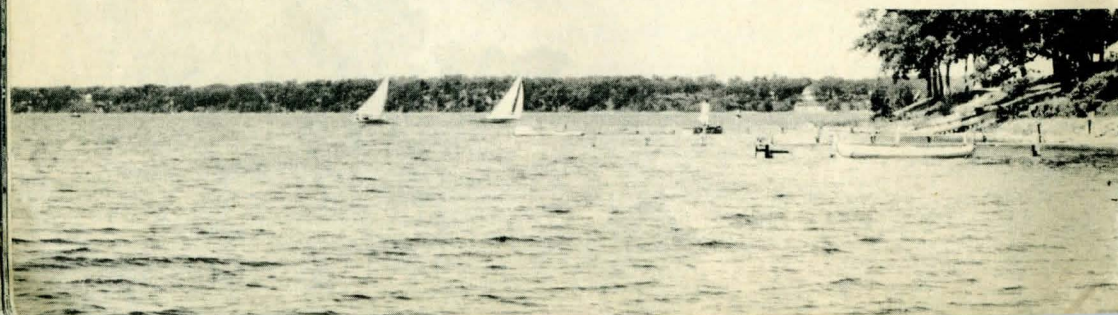
"The majority of people still have love for that which nature so freely bestows and find time to look upon the beauty of the world." Persons seeking beauty will find it in abundance in the lake region of Iowa. "Here, within the reach of every citizen, we have the most beautiful lakes to be found in America, the most splendid scenery within a thousand miles," declared Leslie E. Francis in describing this region.

Of the five separate park areas in the lake region, Gull Point attracts the most visitors. Located on the west side of West Okoboji, the area is the largest public access to the lake. On the stony point extending out into the lake from the area hundreds of gulls make their home, thereby giving the name Gull Point to the park. It is a regular stop for ferry boats from Arnolds Park. A lodge which serves excellent meals and refreshments is located in the park and is open to the public at all times. Picnic and parking areas capable of caring for large groups of persons have been provided.

Pikes Point is a small wooded picnic area and lake access on the north-east side of West Okoboji. Excellent fishing is found along the lake shore of this area and boats are available nearby. Beautiful agates can be found along the lake shore.

[ 26 ]

Pillsbury Point on West Okoboji



Pillsbury Point, located on the southeast side of West Okoboji, is a picnic area and observation point from which excellent views of the lake may be obtained. Regattas and other aquatic affairs, usually held each Sunday afternoon during the summer months, start from or are held in the immediate vicinity of Pillsbury Point.

Orleans, located at the head of East Okoboji, between the Okobojis and Spirit Lake, is the site of the largest pike hatchery in the state. Here seventy-two million five hundred thousand pike are produced annually for use in stocking the waters of the state. In addition to the hatchery and its fish ponds are twenty acres used for camping and picnicking. Orleans park is also the trap shooting area for the Spirit Lake Gun Club.

Mini-Wakan is a game refuge and fish spawning area at the north end of Spirit Lake. This park has a large shelter and bath house, and its oak covered picnic areas are enjoyed by hundreds of persons throughout the year. This area is one of the best places on the lake for bullhead fishing in the spring.

## Okamanpedan on Tuttle Lake

● Emmet county, 18 acres, obtained in 1923. Located 3 miles northeast of Dolliver on secondary road through Dolliver off Primary Highway No. 9.

*"He who knows what sweets and virtues are found in the ground, the waters, the plants, the heavens, and how to come at these enchantments is the rich and royal man."*—EMERSON.

Tuttle Lake offers all of the sweets and virtues to which Emerson referred. It is the southern-most of a chain of twenty lakes which extend up into Minnesota, and is the head-water for the east branch of the Des Moines river. This lake was originally called Okamanpedan by the Sioux Indians, meaning the nesting place of the herons.

The region around the lake appealed to the pioneers as well as to the Indians, and one of these early settlers, Calvin Tuttle, staked his claim along the lake shore in 1856. Other pioneers soon began associating his name with the body of water near which he lived and thus the name Tuttle Lake came into being. Because so many people's writing was illegible in those days, the name became corrupted to Turtle Lake and this name still appears on some of the early maps of the region.

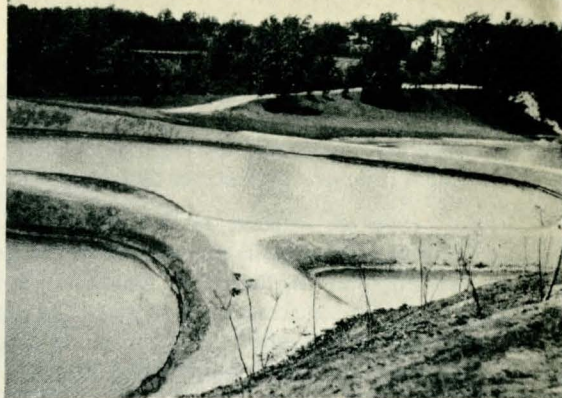
The first road through the northern part of the state passed along the shores of Tuttle Lake and through the present park area, which was named after the original Indian name for the lake. General William T. Sherman and his soldiers used this road on their march to the Indian wars.

The park area is a tract of woodland on the southeast side of the lake in which a fine stone bath house and small cabin have been erected. Excellent pan and Northern pike fishing is found in the lake.

[ 27 ]



*Overlook on Blackhawk Lake*



*Blackhawk fish nursery ponds*

## Black Hawk Areas

- Sac county, 337 acres, obtained in 1934. Located at Lakeview and around the shores of Blackhawk Lake on Primary Highway No. 35.

These areas consist of a number of preserves, the most important of which are the fish rearing units at Arrowhead Lake and the south preserve on the shores of Blackhawk Lake. The fish rearing units are the largest in the state, consisting of twenty-eight fish ponds located in abandoned gravel pits, in which pan fish such as bass, crappies, and sunfish are reared until of suitable size for stocking the inland waters of the state.

Excellent fishing may be found in Arrowhead Lake and boats may be obtained from a concessionaire. Shaded picnic areas and shelter have been provided. Picnic areas and shelters have also been provided in the south preserve and at Denison Point. A large statue of the famous Indian chief, Blackhawk, for whom the lake and areas were named, stands in Crescent Beach preserve overlooking the water.

## Clear Lake

- Cerro Gordo county, 27 acres, purchased in 1924. Located southwest of the town of Clear Lake on Primary Highway No. 106.

Clear Lake, whose waters flow from springs hidden deep in the bed of the lake, has long been noted for its excellent fishing, boating, and bathing. The clear cool waters are ideal for the propagation and growth of fish, and the clean white sand makes an attractive beach. The lake bed contains no dangerous reefs, hidden shoals, or shelving shore line to trap bathers. This lake is second only to the Okobojis as a popular summer resort in Iowa.

The park area on this lake has a nine hundred forty foot shoreline of the fine sand, and thus provides an excellent bathing beach. The park is well timbered and is equipped with picnic and parking facilities.

On the north shore of the lake the Conservation Commission maintains a pike hatchery which is the center of all fish stocking and rescuing activities for this region. At the west of the lake, south of Ventura, is a large spawning area where many thousand pike, bass, and crappies are raised to fingerling size. There is also a 20 acre rearing pond just north of the city of Clear Lake.

## Eagle Lake

IOWA LIBRARY COMMISSION  
Des Moines, Iowa

- Hancock county, 27 acres, obtained in 1924. Located 5 miles northeast of Britt, near Primary Highway No. 111 and U. S. Highway No. 18.

This park area, located on the west shore of Eagle Lake and extending back into the rolling wooded hills, is of special interest to ornithologists. The lake is very shallow and reeds, rushes, and wild rice grow in abundance. The shores, covered with wild crab, wild plum, and oak trees, offer secure and sheltered nesting places. Birds of all kinds come here in such great numbers that the pioneers were unable to classify them all so they named the lake for the king of birds, the eagle. The area includes a rustic shelter house, playfields, picnic grounds, and outdoor fireplaces.

## Lewis and Clarke on Blue Lake

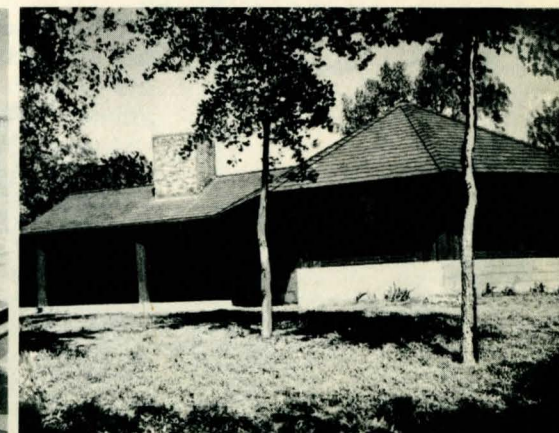
- Monona county, 315 acres, purchased in 1924. Located 4 miles west of Onawa on Primary Highway No. 165.

In August, 1804, when members of the Lewis and Clarke expedition first visited the area which now bears the name of their leaders Blue Lake was the channel of the Missouri river. The explorers spent several days camping in Wright Grove, which is opposite the present bathhouse and lodge, making observations on the geographic, botanic, and animal life of the vicinity. Clarke noted, in his peculiar spelling, that "Beaver is verry planety" and "great nos. of wild gees" were seen. Since that time the Missouri river has changed its course, thus forming the ox-bow Blue Lake.

Aquatic life is abundant and the lake offers good fishing. There is an excellent sandy beach, bath house, and lodge, shaded by huge cottonwood trees. The area is protected from the hot winds by jack pines, which were planted to control the sand bars and dunes that once covered the area. In 1930, more than 7,000 native deciduous trees were planted in the area as a memorial to Stephen Mather, former director of the National Park Service.

*On West Okoboji*

*Lewis and Clark Lodge*



## Lost Island

● Palo Alto county, 27 acres, acquired in 1924. Located 3 miles north of Ruthven on Primary Highway No. 341.

The lake on which this park is located received its name from an old Indian legend, which tells of a beautiful wooded island that was once located in the lake. The island was avoided by the Indians because they believed it to be inhabited by savages and desperadoes. One morning, according to the legend, they were amazed to find that the island had disappeared during the night, leaving a clear unbroken surface of water more than twelve hundred acres in extent.

This lake is the delight of fishermen and naturalists. Some of the finest bullhead fishing in the state is found here. The shore is fringed with bur oak and ash, and the upland is covered with New Jersey tea, wild indigo, and sumac. Along the shores of the lake iris, arrowhead, reed grass, and New England aster grow luxuriantly. A shelter house, picnic areas, and small bath houses have been erected in the shade of the huge trees along the lake shore.

## Storm Lake

● Buena Vista county, 18 acres, donated and purchased in 1926. Located on the east side of the lake, south of U. S. Highway No. 71.

Storm Lake is located almost exactly on the divide which separates the watersheds of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers and, contrary to its name, is not normally stormy and rough. The normal outlet of the lake is to the southeast, into the Raccoon river and thence into the Mississippi, but floodwaters have been known to flow southwestward from the lake into the Boyer river and on to the Missouri. For this reason the lake was first called Boyer lake. In 1855 a party of United States surveyors camped on the lake and learned that it was not the source of the Boyer river. They decided the lake should be renamed but were at a loss for an appropriate name. That night a furious storm blew down the tents in which some of the party were sleeping and an old trapper who had joined them suggested Storm Lake as a suitable name.

The lake has an area of 3,000 acres and varies in depth from 7 to 9 feet. A beautifully wooded tract of 18 acres has been set aside on the east shore of the lake as Storm Lake park and has been developed into an ideal picnic spot. The state operates a large rearing pond on the west side of the lake for pan fish.

Rice Lake

Storm Lake



## Rush Lake

● Palo Alto county, 62 acres, obtained in 1931. Located 8 miles north of Laurens on secondary road from Primary Highway No. 10.

Rush Lake was once on the verge of going the way nearly half of the lakes in Iowa have gone in the past 30 or 40 years. Dredging operations which would have drained this beautiful little body of water were within a thousand feet of the lake a few years ago before the operations were stopped. A dam, installed at the outlet into Lizard creek, has deepened the lake and fireplaces, picnic tables, and benches have been constructed along the shores. Many kinds of trees are found in the park, and a wide variety of water plants grow in the shallow places in the lake.

## Silver Lake

● Delaware county, 15 acres, donated in 1924. Located on the southeast side of Delhi on Primary Highway No. 113.

Silver Lake is geologically and geographically unique. It lies in the Iowan glacial deposit beyond the eastern edge of the Wisconsin drift and is, therefore, much older than any other lake in the state. It is the only glacial lake in northeastern Iowa.

A large variety of song birds make this region their home and migrating water fowl use it as a haven of rest. Picnic tables, fireplaces, and parking areas in the park, on the northwest side of the lake, nestle under the oak, basswood, and elm trees.

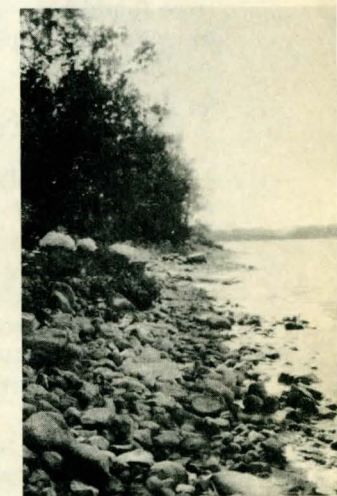
## Trappers Bay

● Dickinson county, 56 acres, obtained in 1933. Located on the west side of Lake Park on Primary Highway No. 219.

Silver Lake was a favorite camping spot for trappers who explored the lake region of Iowa and Minnesota long before white settlers came to the territory, according to records left by R. A. Smith, an early settler and a member of the relief expedition of 1857, formed after the Spirit Lake massacre. The park area of Trappers Bay, which extends along the north side of the lake, is the site of these old camp grounds. Excellent pan fishing is found near the picnic areas and shelter house in the park.



Spring showers from the east approaching Rush Lake.



Lost Island Lake famed for bullhead fishing. Rock "walled" shore.



## Rice Lake

● Winnebago county, 50 acres, donated and purchased in 1924. Located 4 miles southeast of Lake Mills, on U. S. Highway No. 69.

Prior to 1903 Rice Lake was of magnificent proportions and vied with Clear Lake for beauty. In that year, however, an unsuccessful and costly attempt was made to drain the lake which reduced its area to approximately 200 acres of water and marsh. The waters of the lake surrounded a number of wooded islands, lifted several feet above the normal water level. The basin occupied by the lake embraces an area much larger than that actually inundated and this area is overspread with a heavy accumulation of peat in which rushes, wild rice, and other water plants abound. It was because of the luxuriant growth of wild rice around its marshy borders that the pioneers adopted the name Rice Lake.

Trees grow in abundance in the park area on the shore of the lake where picnic areas and a shelter house have been provided. Among the trees found here are fine black maple, basswood, black walnut, green ash, American ash, slippery elm, and crab-apple.

## Twin Lakes

● Calhoun county, 15 acres, obtained in 1923. Located 5½ miles north of Rockwell City on Primary Highway No. 124.

The two closely associated bodies of water in Calhoun county commonly referred to as Twin Lakes are separated by a narrow strip of land ranging from five hundred to one thousand feet in width. Both bodies of water are comparatively shallow, having a normal depth of from five to six feet. The south lake has become partly filled with reeds and water grasses which furnish an excellent feeding and nesting place for all kinds of water fowl.

A number of native oak, maple, green ash, and cottonwood trees grow in and near the park area on the north lake. Shrubs and vines such as wild rose, wild indigo, sumac, wild grape, lead plant, Virginia creeper, and snowberry are numerous.

The lake has been well stocked with fish and migratory birds are abundant. A shelter house and picnic area have been provided for visitors to the park.

[ 32 ]

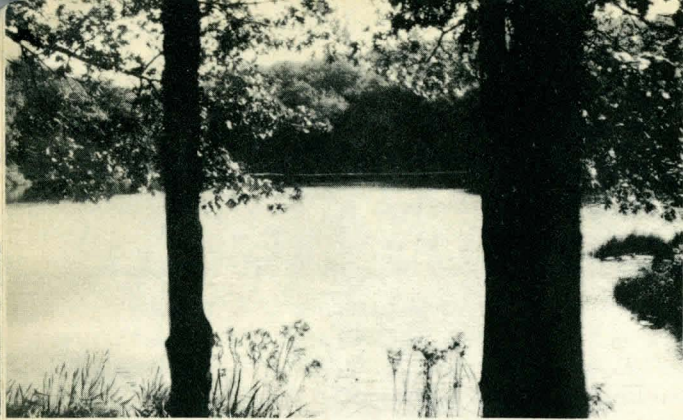
On West Okoboji



## SCENIC PARKS AND PRESERVES

*Here are found some of the loveliest and most unusual views in all the middle west*

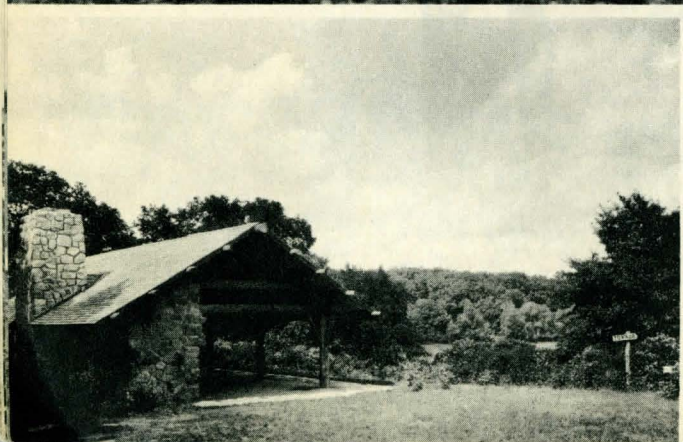




*Dead Man's Lake, beloved home of the lonely Indian.*



*The amphitheatre at Pilot Knob, used by many groups for lectures, plays, and concerts.*



*Shelter facing on Dead Man's Lake in one of the excellent picnic areas.*

## Pilot Knob

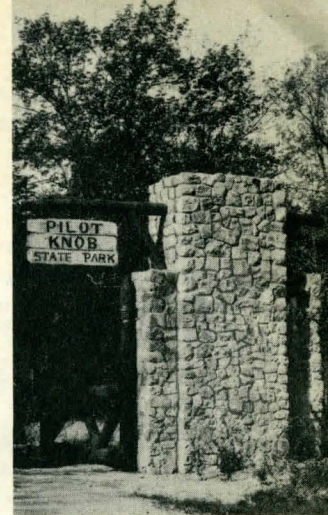
● Hancock county, 375 acres, obtained in 1922. Located 4 miles east and 1 mile south of Forest City, south of Primary Highway No. 9.

Pilot Knob is interesting not only because it spent a million years in the distant north, but also because it was moved southward by glaciers to become the real "pilot" which directed the course of many a weary pioneer as he traveled across a trail-less, trackless western prairie. The Knob is a glacial formation, part of the Altamont moraine of the Wisconsin drift, which rises to an altitude of 1,450 feet and is one of the highest points in the state. To the pioneer the wide prairies, endless meadows of dark grasses driven in waves before the wind, seem to have given the impression of a boundless sea. Any natural object high and visible to the traveler became a veritable "pilot"—hence the name Pilot Knob.

The region around this wonderfully picturesque promontory was once a favorite Indian resort and many fascinating stories have been handed down to the white men. Near the knob, nestling high up in the hills, is a tiny little spring-fed lake. Cool and clear, in summer it is decked by water lilies and many other forms of northern aquatic vegetation. When the white settlers came to this region and the Indians moved on, a solitary Indian refused to follow his tribesmen and remained to live alone in his tiny cabin beside the lake. From that time on, he was known to his fellow Indians as the "dead man" and the lake became known as Dead Man's Lake.

Pilot Knob was not only a favorite Indian resort and place of interest to the pioneer, but it has also a significant present-day appeal. From the top of the Knob spectators may behold a most charming and extensive landscape — "a perfect Garden of Eden lying at their feet and extending for 40 miles in every direction as far as the vision extends, showing to the astonished beholder one of the richest and best improved farming sections to be found anywhere."

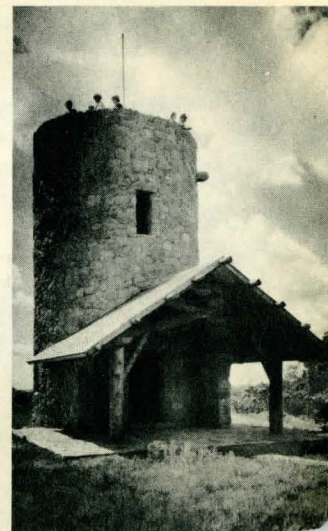
The wooded tract surrounding Pilot Knob contains white oak, red, pin, and bur oak, basswood, pig-nut, hickory, black walnut, slippery elm,



*This imposing gateway is open to the public throughout the year.*



*From this tower, one of the highest elevations in the state, one views the surrounding terrain for thirty-five miles.*



American elm, and wild crab-apple trees. It has always been a favorite resort for birds and wild game and is located in the heart of the pheasant country.

An interesting scenic road winds through the area and connects the various points of beauty and interest. An open shelter faces Dead Man's Lake and there are numerous picnic and parking areas along the road. A large open air amphitheatre has been constructed in a bowl in the eastern section of the park and is widely used for lectures, musicales, and open air meetings of all kinds.

## Bellevue

● Jackson county, 148 acres, obtained in 1925. Located south of Bellevue on Primary Highway No. 62.

Bellevue park with its picturesque setting and beautiful surroundings has a history and character all its own. Situated on a beautiful plateau the high bluffs in the area afford a superb view of the Mississippi river, its wooded islands, the nearby sand dunes, and the rugged woodlands on both sides of the Father of Waters. White settlers began to arrive in this region in 1833 and a few years later the town of Bellevue was incorporated. During the early years of its history this region was infested with thieves and desperadoes who continued to operate until they were driven out in 1840 by the Bellevue War.

A winding, mountainous road leads to the top of the high hill where a large log lodge, with generous verandas, is located, together with ample picnic grounds. The area also includes a nine-hole golf course and a federal fish rescue station.

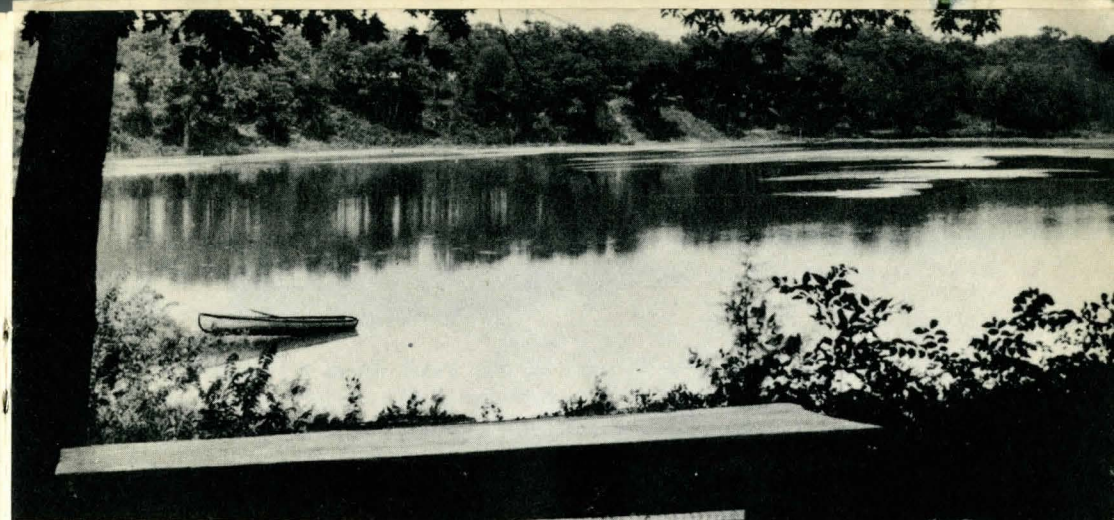
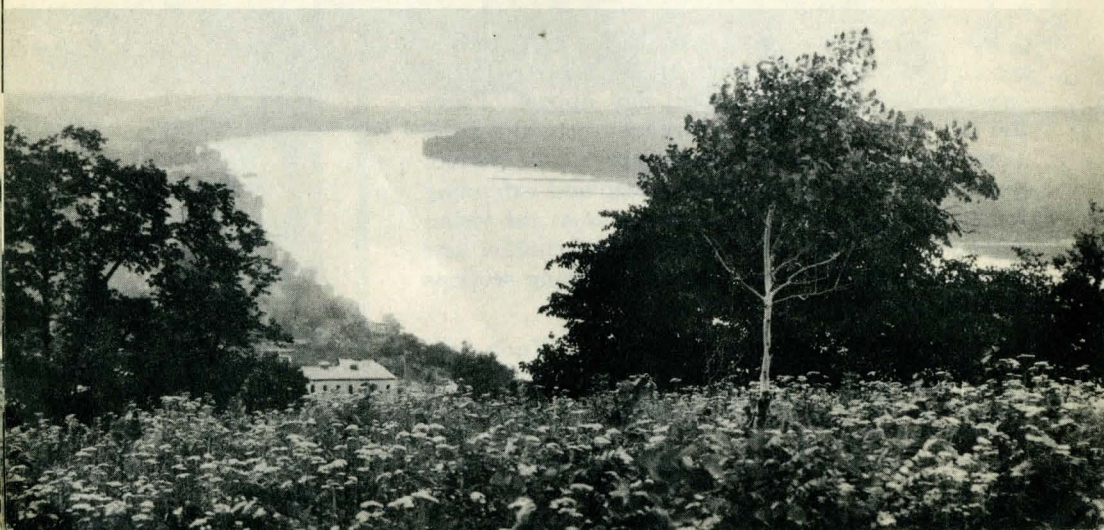
## Farmington and Big Duck Lake

● Van Buren county, 109 acres, donated in 1920. Located 1/2 mile east of Farmington and just south of Primary Highway No. 3.

The present lake was known as Big Duck Marsh until the Conservation Commission took over the area and dammed the outlet in 1920. Be-

[ 36 ]

*Overlooking the town of Bellevue from the park lodge*



*Big Duck Lake in Farmington State Park*

fore the bayou was dammed to form the existing lake there was a great bed of lotus, long known in India, Japan, and Egypt as the emblem of purity. A few of these lovely water lilies can still be seen on Big Duck Lake.

The area is part of the territory involved in the Missouri Boundary War of 1836. This rugged and picturesque region was known as the Half Breed tract and Missouri claimed it was within the borders of that state. Farmington, a half mile from the present park, was the point of assembly for the militia in the fight against the Missourians.

Since the time when the lake was created it has been heavily stocked with bullheads, bluegills, and crappie. A charming rustic trail leads around the lake and to points of interest in the park. Picnic grounds, shelters, and a lodge overlook the bright body of water.

## Echo Valley

● Fayette county, 107 acres, water area 12 acres, purchased in 1934. Located 1 mile southeast of West Union on Primary Highway No. 56.

Honeysuckle-covered cliffs, between which a sound echoes and re-echoes three times, loom above a beautiful little cedar-fringed lake in this unusual valley. Glover's creek, along which many lime kilns once operated, wends its way through the valley and empties into the lake. The chimney and foundations of one of the largest of these kilns, the Little Elephant, are still standing within the park and some of the oldest residents of this region, who remember when this kiln was in operation, are able to point out the location of the cellars in which the lime was buried to produce slacked lime.

Steep, winding foot trails lead from the lake to the top of the flowered and forested cliffs which rise in the form of a "backbone" along the east shore of the lake. All of the park area east of the backbone is devoted to a wild life preserve. The main road, picnic areas, parking areas, and play field are located on the west shore of the lake, which has been stocked with small mouth bass, cat fish, and crappies.

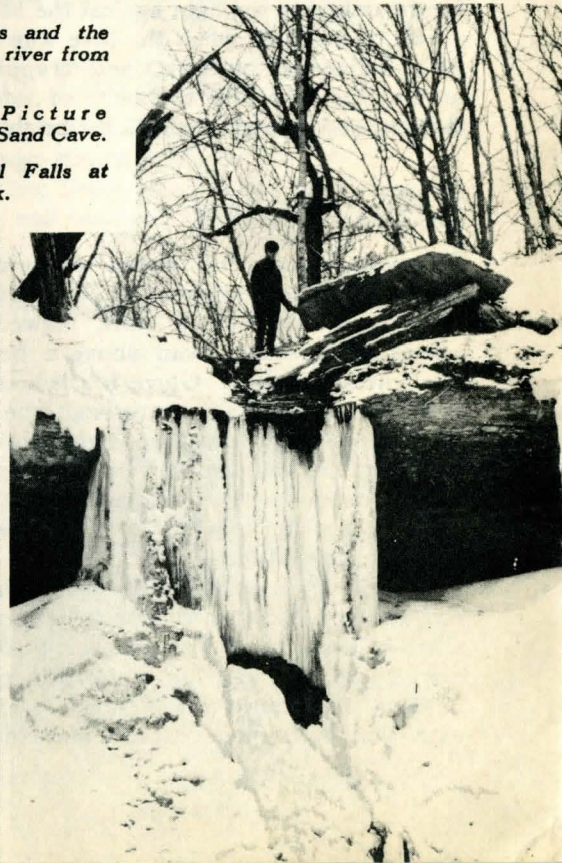
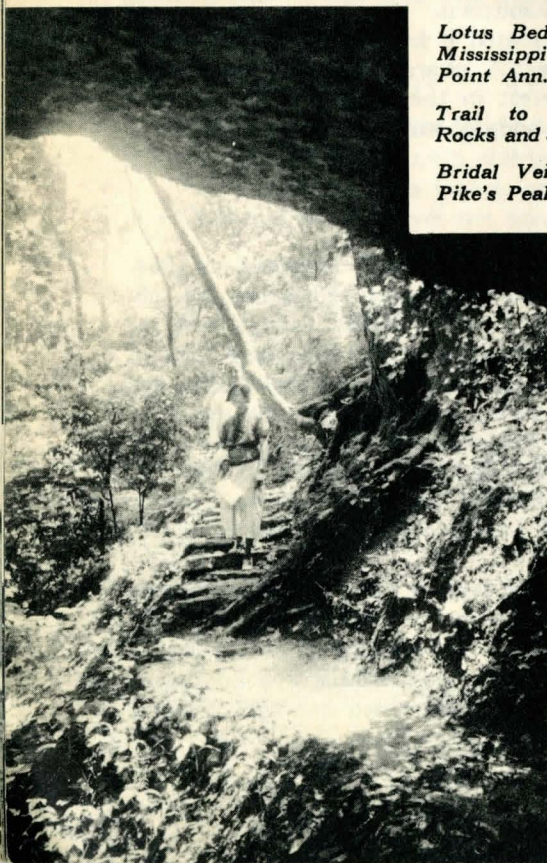
[ 37 ]



*Lotus Beds and the Mississippi river from Point Ann.*

*Trail to Picture Rocks and Sand Cave.*

*Bridal Veil Falls at Pike's Peak.*



## McGregor Areas

● Clayton county, total acreage of the component parts 544 acres, a gift of Mrs. Martha Buell Mann to the Federal Government and turned over to the State of Iowa by Congress in 1936. Located in and near the town of McGregor, off Primary Highway No. 13.

Nowhere else in all Iowa can be seen such magnificent scenery as in the McGregor region. So interesting and attractive is this section of the state that it is widely known as the "Little Switzerland of Iowa."

Located in the unglaciated area of Iowa, these preserves, with their high peaks overlooking the Father of Waters, their wooded ravines, caves, rocks, and picturesque views, offer superb surroundings for the nature lover. One of the most beautiful scenes in the region is the tremendous lotus bed in the Mississippi river bayous. Excursion boats make frequent trips to this unusual spot when the flowers are in bloom.

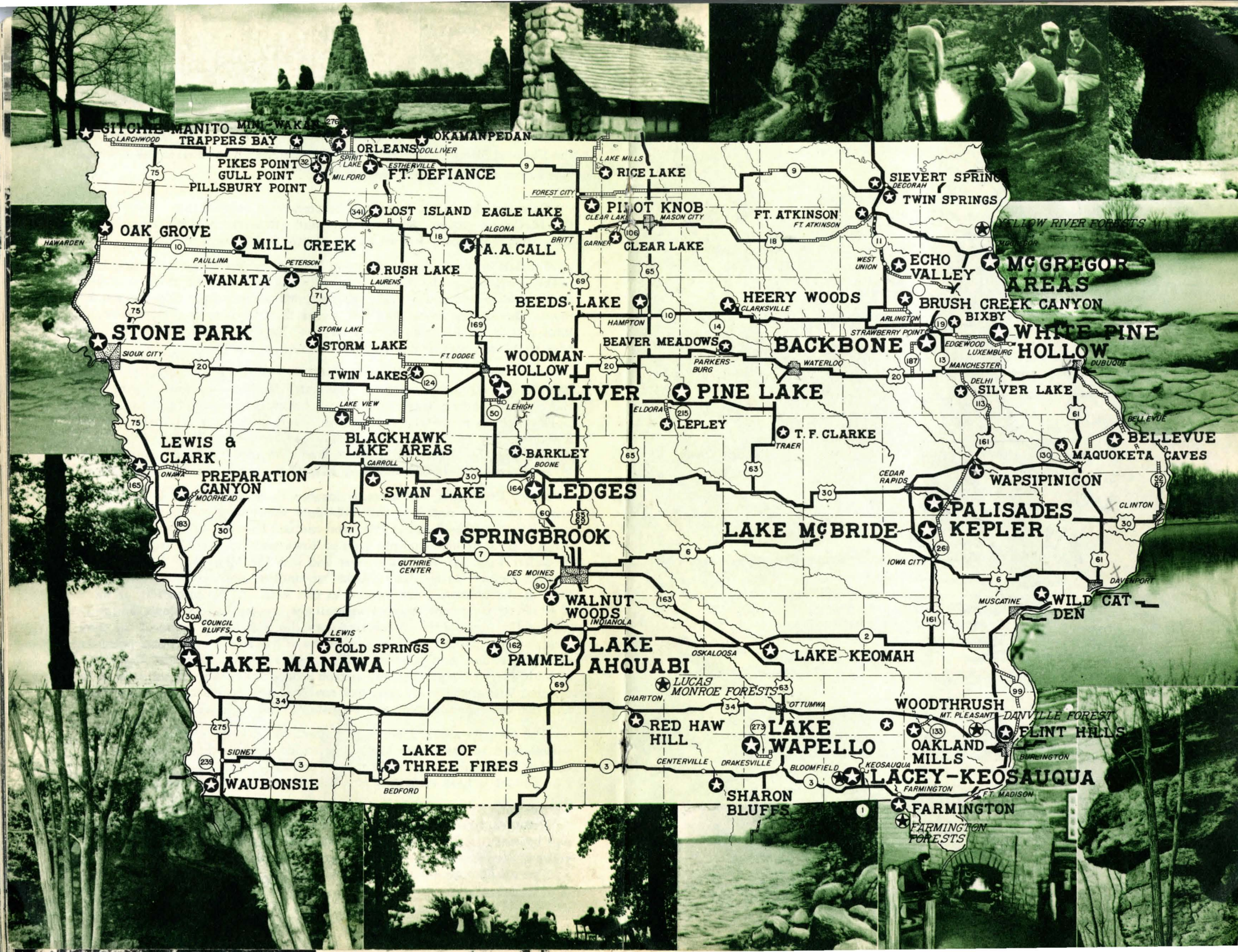
More Indian mounds, both of the effigy and burial types, are found here than in any other section of the state. Built by a primitive people in the crudest manner, these mounds are believed to be the most important work left by a prehistoric race on the American continent. Their creation antedates the existence of the Indians who regarded them as the work of Manitou, the Great Spirit. More than a hundred of these mounds may be seen on the bluffs between Sny Magill creek and the Turkey river.

Pike's Peak area, 140 acres, is located three miles south of McGregor and is the most noted of the individual areas in the group. It was so named by Captain Zebulon Pike who camped here on his historical exploration trip. It is also the first part of Iowa seen by Pere Marquette when he sailed down the Wisconsin river and into the Mississippi in 1673. The famous Picture Rocks, described as "an unusual phenomenon, even in this land of the unusual," are located in this area. "A hundred feet or more of St. Peter sandstone, stained with all the browns, reds, yellows, and purples of the iron oxides, in contrast with the translucent white of the pure sand, form cliffs and grottoes and nooks of marvelous colors and patterns, set off by groves and lanes of shady tree." Here, too, is Bridal Veil Falls, of which legend says that any person who drinks from its waters will be married within the year. The oak-covered area overlooks the Mississippi and the views of the river and of distant Wisconsin are superb.

The Heights area, 72 acres, just north of McGregor, is the only state-owned land in the entire McGregor region upon which camping is permitted. The point of the Heights is privately owned and here the Wild Life School is held each August. The park area surrounds the privately owned land.

Point Ann area, 152 acres, on the south side of McGregor, is a rough and wooded bluff of unusual interest to hikers. From its crest wonderful views of the Mississippi river valley are obtained.

The other state areas in the McGregor region are forest preserves.



SITCHIL MANITO MIN WAKAR  
LARCHWOOD TRAPPERS BAY  
OKAMAN PEDAN

PIKES POINT  
GULL POINT  
PILLSBURY POINT  
ORLEANS  
DOLLIVER  
ESTHERVILLE  
FT. DEFIANCE  
MILFORD  
SPIRIT LAKE

LAKE MILLS  
RICE LAKE  
PILOT KNOB  
CLEAR LAKE  
MASON CITY

SIEVERT SPRING  
TWIN SPRINGS  
DECORAH

OAK GROVE  
MILL CREEK  
WANATA  
PAULLINA  
PETERSON

LOST ISLAND  
EAGLE LAKE  
A.A. CALL  
BRITT  
ALGONA  
GARNER  
CLEAR LAKE

FT. ATKINSON  
FT. ATKINSON  
WEST UNION  
ECHO VALLEY  
BRUSH CREEK CANYON

YELLOW RIVER FORESTS  
MCGREGOR AREAS  
BIXBY

STONE PARK  
SIoux CITY

STORM LAKE  
TWIN LAKES  
LAKE VIEW

WOODMAN HOLLOW  
DOLLIVER  
BEAVER MEADOWS  
HAMPTON  
PARKERSBURG

BACKBONE  
WATERLOO

WHITE PINE HOLLOW  
EDGEWOOD  
LUXEMBURG  
MANCHESTER  
DUBUQUE

LEWIS & CLARK  
ONAWA  
PREPARATION CANYON  
MOORHEAD

BLACKHAWK LAKE AREAS  
CARROLL

SWAN LAKE  
LEDGES  
BOONE

BARKLEY  
LEPLEY  
ELDORA

T.F. CLARKE  
TRAER

WAPSIPINICON  
CLINTON

BELLEVUE  
MAQUOKETA CAVES

SPRINGBROOK  
GUTHRIE CENTER  
DES MOINES

LAKE MCBRIDE

PALISADES  
KEPLER  
IOWA CITY

LAKE MANAWA  
COUNCIL BLUFFS

COLD SPRINGS  
LEWIS

WALNUT WOODS  
INDIANOLA  
PAMEL  
LAKE AHQUABI  
OSKALOOSA

LAKE KEOMAH

WILD CAT DEN  
MUSCATINE

LUCAS MONROE FORESTS  
CHARITON

RED HAW HILL  
CENTERVILLE  
DRAKESVILLE

LAKE WAPELLO  
BLOOMFIELD

WOODTHRUSH  
MT. PLEASANT  
DANVILLE FOREST

FLINT HILLS  
BURLINGTON

WAUBONSIE  
SIDNEY

LAKE OF THREE FIRES  
BEDFORD

SHARON BLUFFS

LACEY-KEOSAUQUA  
FARMINGTON  
FT. MADISON

FARMINGTON  
FARMINGTON FORESTS

*The old mill race,  
built by the Harmons,  
now the only highway  
tunnel in Iowa.*

## Pammel

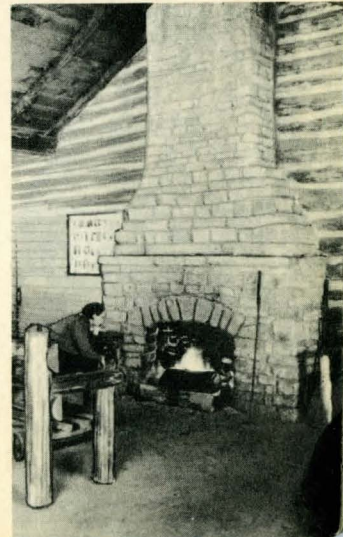
● Madison county, 284 acres, obtained in 1923. Located 5 miles southwest of Winterset on Primary Highway No. 162.

The main topographical feature of Pammel park is a branch of the Middle river, a sparkling little stream which fights its way through timbered limestone hills. It twists and winds and turns along steep rocky bluffs for two miles over limestone beds and rocky ripples, until it comes almost back into itself, stopped by a narrow vertical backbone of rock barely a hundred feet wide at its base. Then it sweeps along and resumes its ordinary peaceful course across the Iowa prairies. Originally known as Devil's Backbone Park because of the unusual limestone ridge, the name of the area was changed in June, 1930, to honor Dr. Louis H. Pammel, former head of the Botany department of Iowa State College, for many years an active conservationist, and for eight years president and chairman of the Board of Conservation.

Pammel park has the only highway tunnel in the state. In 1856, an early pioneer named Tilman G. Harmon discovered that by tunneling a mill-race through the shale stratum of the narrowest part of the backbone he could divert a stream of water from the higher level of the river on the west side of the ridge to the lower level on the east side. The tunnel was dug, a dam was built, and a flour and saw-mill constructed. The water flowing through the tunnel fell onto the mill-wheel and thus supplied the power for the mill. The old mill went out of operation in 1902, but the tunnel has been enlarged to accommodate the roadway which winds through the park.

Within the area are numerous and varied prairie flora — flowers, shrubs and trees, a veritable botanical garden. The conifers and birches are numerous. It is also a favorite wild life preserve. Groundhogs, raccoons, minks, opossums, squirrels, foxes, and other wild animals, as well as a great variety of birds, are found here. An interesting nature trail winds down the steep limestone bluff on the backbone from the picnic area and shelter on top to the tunnel below. On the west side of the park, across a large meadow from the backbone, is a lodge sheltered by a shady grove which is very popular as a picnic area. There are also picnic grounds and a shelter at the southern end of the backbone.

*Park lodge at Pammel*



## Flint Hills

● Des Moines county, 110 acres, obtained in 1925. Located 1 mile north of Burlington and 1/2 mile west of Primary Highway No. 99.

The natural beauty of the region near the mouth of the Flint river probably accounts for much of the historic interest which is connected with the area. Long before the first white men had crossed the Mississippi river the Indians called the area 'Shoquoquon', meaning 'flint hills'. In 1808, the American Fur Company established a trading post near the present park area and carried on a thriving business with the Indians. Twenty-four years later white settlers began to arrive and a town soon sprang up. It was first named Shoquoquon but the name was later changed to Burlington.

The park is a heavily wooded tract rising from the north bank of the Flint river. It contains a wide variety of plants and trees and an abundance of excellent spring water. The central portion is a high plateau occupied by a public golf course, and surrounded by wooded hills and ravines. A short distance to the east is the level flood plain of the Mississippi river. Parking areas and picnic grounds lie along the edge of the bluff overlooking the creek and a charming old farm house has been remodeled for the custodian's home.

## Oak Grove

● Sioux county, 101 acres, obtained in 1924. Located 4 miles northeast of Hawarden on Primary Highway No. 12.

This area, located on the bank of the Big Sioux river, is of rough topography with small and narrow valleys, fine springs, and exposed clay or shale slopes which are part of the loess bluffs of western Iowa. It is partly devoid of vegetation and somewhat resembles the Bad Lands of the Dakotas. In the wooded portions are found sumac, basswood, elm, soft maple, green ash, and especially the bur oak, which is rare in northwest Iowa and from which the area receives its name. Picnic and parking areas, playfields, and a shelter house have been provided in the park.

## Sharon Bluffs

● Appanoose county, 142 acres, purchased in 1931. Located 3 miles east of Centerville, 1 1/2 miles south of Primary Highway No. 3.

"Man has always turned to nature for relief from toil and strife" and Sharon Bluffs is one of the many park areas which provide that relief. The bluffs are the beautiful steep clay and shale outcroppings on the east shore of the Chariton river which flows through the preserve. The highland above the bluffs is covered with oak trees and the blossoms of gaily colored wild flowers, and the plain across the river is sheltered by fine specimens of hickory and basswood trees.

The name Sharon was brought to Appanoose county by the Mormons more than ninety years ago. A village and township were named for that biblical region by them because of the resemblance of the country to the coast plain west of ancient Palestine. In this vicinity, the Mormons recruited their battalion for the Mexican War.

Picnic areas, parking space, and a shelter house are located on top of the bluffs from which point excellent views may be obtained of the Chariton river valley.

## Walnut Woods

● Polk county, 261 acres, obtained in 1925. Located southeast of Commerce, 8 miles southwest of Des Moines, off Primary Highway No. 90.

Walnut Woods would have delighted the heart of John Ruskin who said: "While I live I trust I shall have my trees, my peaceful idyllic landscapes, my free country life—and while I possess so much, I shall own 100,000 shares in the Bank of Contentment." This beautiful area, which breathes contentment, is covered with large walnut, giant red elm, and sycamore trees and is located within a great bend of the Raccoon river.

A twelve acre lagoon, which was reclaimed from an old channel of the river, has been deepened to form a beautiful little lake, now used for a fish-rearing pond.

The entire area is level and heavily shaded and is devoted almost entirely to picnic grounds and playfields. An extensive lodge is located near the entrance and fireplaces, outdoor tables, and shelters are scattered over the area.



Early fall.



Winter.



Summer.



Spring.





Amid forests primeval.



Horse-thieves' Cave.

## Wapsipinicon

● Jones county, 220 acres, obtained in 1921. Located at the southern edge of Anamosa on U. S. Highway No. 161.

*The fertile valley of the Nile  
Is famed in story told;  
And the Yukon's turbid waters  
Rush across their sands of gold;  
But for beauty, find the valley  
Where the 'Wapsie' winds its way  
Or the lazy Boone flows idly by  
In good old Iowa.*

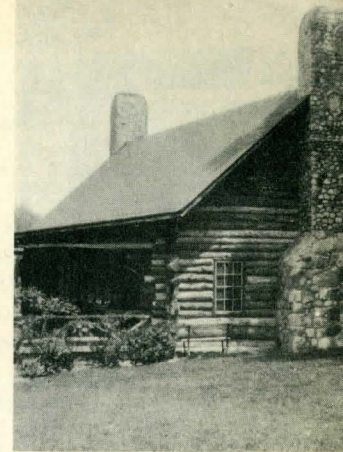
—J. A. SWISHER.

And one of the most beautiful spots in the valley of the 'Wapsie' is this park area which lies along the west banks of the Wapsipinicon river. Here the 'Big Woods' which were referred to in pioneer days as a 'realm of Paradise', have been conserved and the 'superb, unequaled, near-to-nature delights and experiences' which the pioneers extolled may still be enjoyed.

High rocky cliffs, some of which rise a hundred feet above the river, open meadow, timbered hills, and a spring fed creek are some of the natural beauties found in the area. There are also caves, ledges, and dens to explore. In one of these interesting openings in the limestone rock, Horsethief Cave, many skulls and other bones of wild animals have been found, and the cave was long used by horse thieves as a cache for stolen animals.

More than three miles of winding, surfaced roads cross Duchess creek over two attractive stone arch bridges and dip through a paved ford to picnic areas and the park golf course. A large lodge has been erected on the bluffs overlooking the Wapsipinicon river.

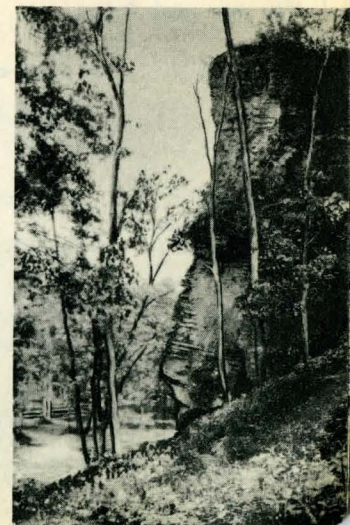
Another interesting feature of the park is the great horned owl, believed to be the only one in Iowa that has lived in one place for thirty years.

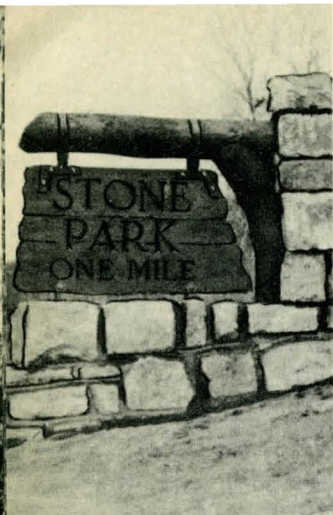


The park lodge, overlooking the beautiful valley of the "Wapsi."



Flower and fern covered cliffs delight the visitors to this park.





Marker directing visitors to east entrance.



The new park lodge.

## Stone Park

● Woodbury county, 820 acres, leased in 1935. Located in the northwest corner of Sioux City on Primary Highway No. 12.

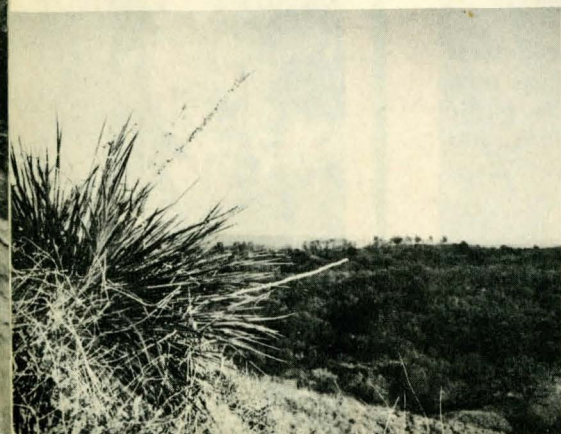
Many, many years have been added to the multitude of buried ages since an inland sea covered the greater part of the middle west. The loess bluffs which comprise Stone Park were once the eastern boundaries of that sea. After the ocean receded the glaciers came and covered the land. Erosion caused by the melting glaciers, followed by huge dust storms, built dunes of fine dust and dirt to create the rugged hills and deep valleys now found in this area. The park was named for Edgar Stone, original owner of the land, rather than for the rugged character of the area.

From the barren reaches above the luxurious oak-timbered valleys, a magnificent view stretches across the Big Sioux river to the flat plains of South Dakota and the far hills of Nebraska. The narrow wooded valleys are used as picnic areas, and the high ridges, such as Dakota Point, Mount Lookout, and Elk Point, serve as scenic drives and overlooks. These yucca covered hills were once a favorite gathering place for the Indians. Many artifacts of their former occupancy of the region have been found in two mounds a few miles north of the park.

The area has long been used as a recreational center by Sioux City and since becoming a state park it is being developed with the aid of the National Park Service.

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The yucca-covered loess bluffs rise high above wooded valleys.



## Waubonsie

● Fremont county, 200 acres, obtained in 1926. Located midway between Hamburg and Sidney on Primary Highway No. 239.

The high ridges of Waubonsie park have often resounded to the tomtoms and war whoops of the Pottawattamie Indians who once held this area as a sacred council ground. The Indians did not dwell here permanently, but time and again they "came in large bodies, chief riding proudly in front, war feathers gay, and paints of many hues smeared over brown bodies." Here under the leadership of their principal chief Waubonsie they attended tribal councils, danced war dances, smoked the pipe of peace, or formally buried the hatchet.

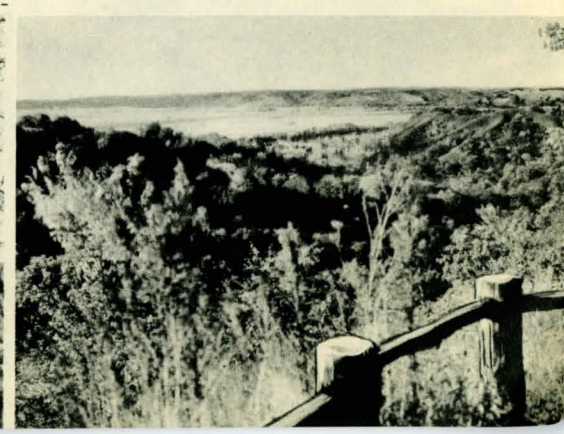
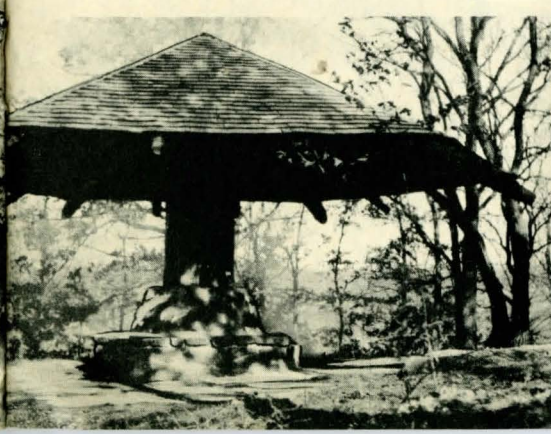
At a later date, pioneer settlers in this region found themselves involved in boundary disputes and they were not always sure whether they lived in Missouri or Iowa. One Stephen Cooper, a resident of Fremont county, once represented Holt county, Missouri, in the Missouri legislature.

It is possible to stand on the high ridges on Waubonsie park and view the landscape of four commonwealths — Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, and Kansas, with the flood plains of the Missouri river stretching far to the north, south, and west. The loess bluffs of the park abound in typical plant ecology of the sandy southwest, including cactus, yucca, and prairie plants such as the stemless-loco weed, blue aster, white and silky asters, Missouri golden rod, flat-topped golden rod, and yellow paint brush. On the wooded valley and slopes on the north and east sides of the bluffs are found wild flowers common to Iowa, such as blood root, Jack in the pulpit, hepatica, and rue-anemone.

An open pavilion and refreshment stand located on the bluffs commands excellent views of the surrounding territory. Picnic areas are located in wooded Militia Hollow, from which place trails lead to the various other points of interest in the park.

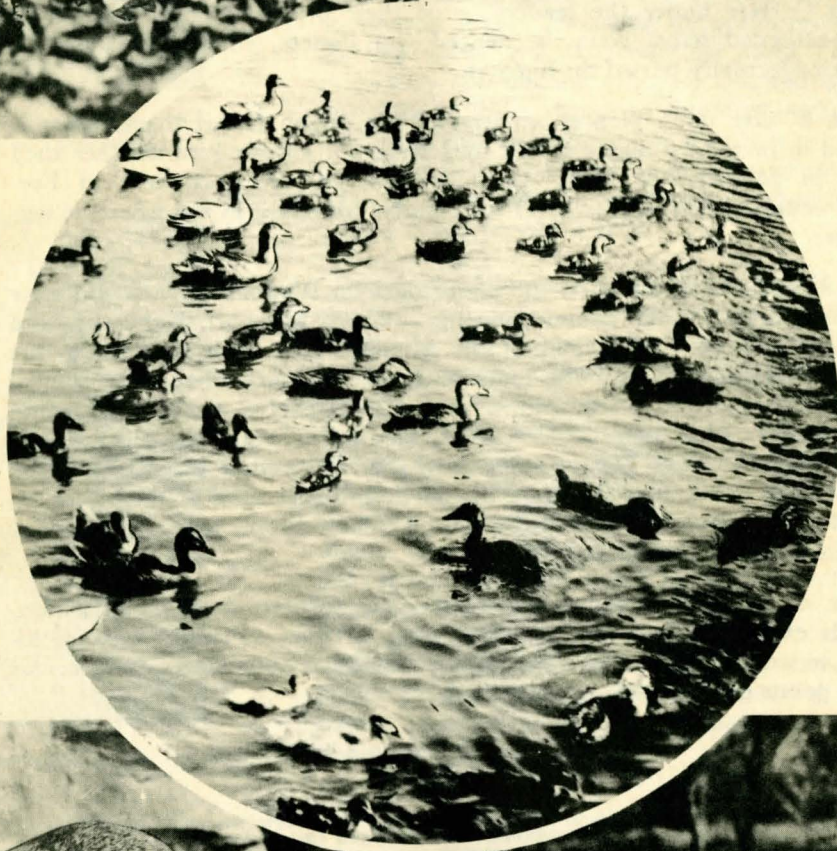
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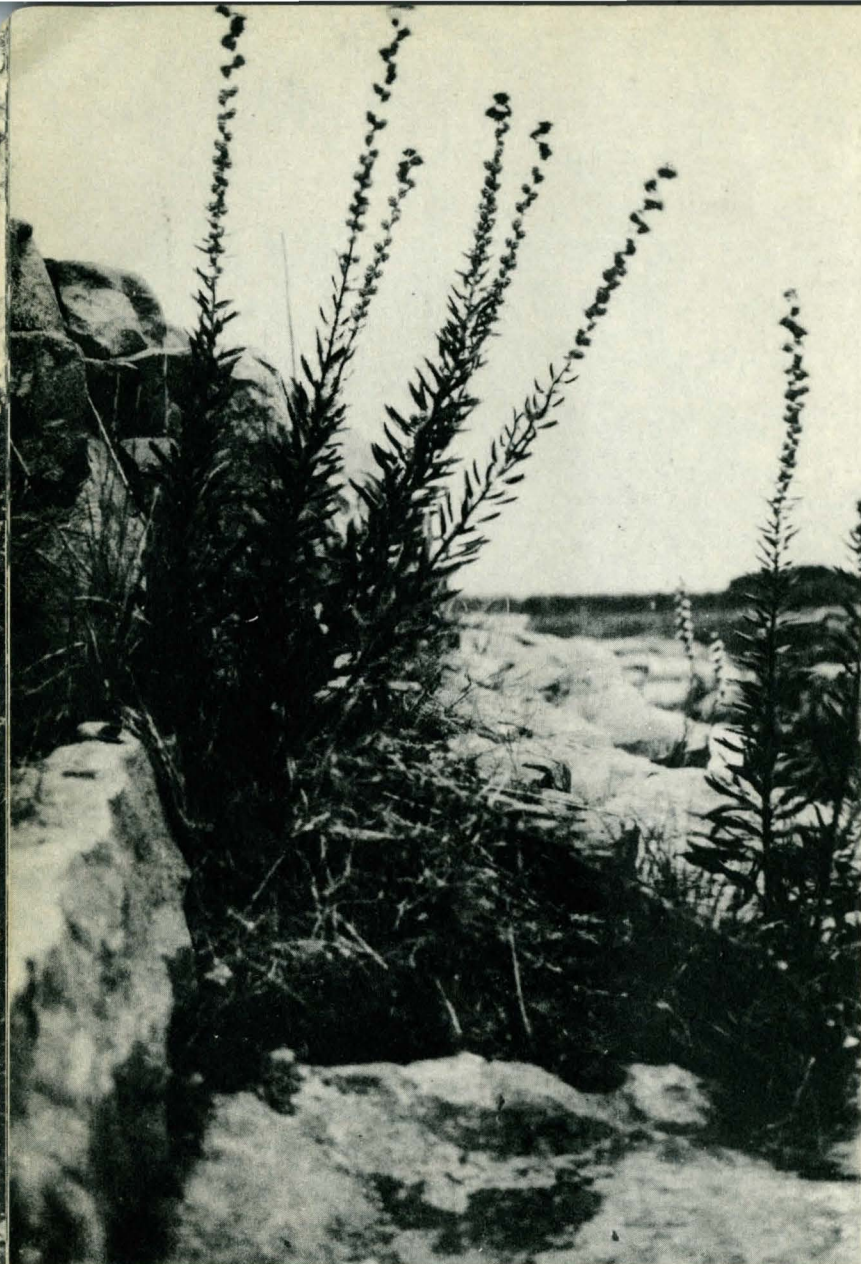
This "umbrella" shelter faces this view.



# SCIENTIFIC PRESERVES AND PARKS

*These areas are concerned with the protection and propagation of all forms of biological and botanical life and with the preservation of geologic features*





Brilliant Blazing Star  
in a crevice of wind-  
polished Sioux  
Quartzite.

Beautiful Jasper Pool  
at Gitchie Manitou.



## Gitchie Manitou

● Lyon county, 143 acres, obtained in 1926. Located in the northwest corner of Iowa, 10 miles northwest of Larchwood near Primary Highway No. 9.

Nature "here reveals and part conceals" the story of her past. Nowhere in Iowa is there to be found a more picturesque, unexpected, or curiously wrought piece of nature's work than at this point where Iowa and South Dakota meet. As one enters the park area the monotony of the surrounding level prairie instantly disappears and in its place are found buffalo grass, cactus, mesquite, and flame flowers, ancient outcroppings of Sioux quartzite, and the mystic Jasper Pool, famed for the unusual color of its water.

A ridge crossing the park area, where the red rocks come to the surface, rises approximately 20 feet above the surrounding plain. It is apparently solid red quartzite rock, covered in places by a thin coating of soil, in which a few patches of trees have taken root. Near the entrance to the park, on the left, low bluffs of rock may be seen, all that remains of great mountains and lofty volcanoes.

The original prairie grass, the blue stem and the buffalo grass that once carpeted the great plains when the Indians and buffaloes held undisputed sway are still undisturbed in some places in the area. To this neutral spot came many Indians from all parts of the country for the area is on the Big Sioux river, a part of the ancient Indian all-water route from the Gulf of Mexico to Hudson Bay.

A shelter house for visitors to the area nestles into one of the quartzite outcroppings and parking areas are convenient.

## Woodthrush Preserve

● Jefferson county, 26 acres, donated in 1928. Located 6 miles east of Fairfield on U. S. Highway No. 34.

Woodthrush Preserve, a memorial to Hiram Heaton, who once lived here among the birds and flowers he loved so well, is being preserved in as near a natural state as possible. No artificial recreational facilities are furnished, but the attractions provided by nature more than compensate for the omission.



Storm approaching  
Gitchie Manitou from  
far out in South Da-  
kota.



Spring Beauty, one of  
the most abundant of  
the April flowers.



## Barkley

● Boone county, 40 acres, donated in 1929. Located 8 miles north of Boone on Primary Highway No. 329.

Nature holds undisputed dominion in this almost inaccessible area in the Des Moines river valley. It is a heavily wooded tract which was donated to the state by Mrs. Barkley in honor of her husband, Alonzo J. Barkley. It has been set aside as a refuge for wildlife, for the preservation of native flora and for scientific research. The area is typical of the flora of the Des Moines river valley and is used extensively by naturalists and bird lovers who have found it to be an ideal spot for nature study.

## Beaver Meadows

● Butler county, 74 acres, donated in 1935. Located just north of Parkersburg on U. S. Highway No. 20.

This undeveloped area, one of the latest acquired by the state, marks the spot where early settlers of Butler county once gathered in the brush-covered bed of Beaver creek to hide and protect themselves from 300 hostile Indians who were reported to be killing white settlers in the vicinity. At that time deer, elk, and buffalo in abundance roamed over the surrounding prairie. A dam has been built in Beaver creek to provide deeper water for pan fish, and the surrounding area is being reforested for use as a wild life sanctuary.

## Swan Lake

● Carroll county, 229 acres, purchased in 1933. Located 3 miles southeast of Carroll on U. S. Highway No. 30.

Swan Lake was originally known as Lake Pashepaho, named for an Indian chieftain of the Sac tribes. It was within this area, in 1823, that Chief Pashepaho with Blackhawk as second in command, led his tribes to victory over the Iowa Indians in a terrific battle. An old Indian trail, from southern Iowa to the lakes region, winds through the park. The lake is now used as a wild life refuge for waterfowl. A fine shelter and road make the large grove on the south side of the lake an enjoyable picnic spot.

## Bixby

● Clayton county, 69 acres, purchased and donated in 1926. Located 2 miles north of Primary Highway No. 10 at Edgewood.

The most peculiar phenomenon of this area is the Ice Cave, one of the few scientific wonders of its kind found in the middle west. The temperature in this cave varies but a few degrees from the freezing point in the hottest of summer or the coldest of winter. Numerous flowing springs, a charming waterfall, a profusion of wild flowers and native trees, as well as the Canadian yew, and a wide and varied distribution of wild life makes this region one of the most charming in the state.

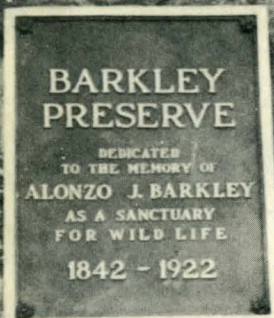
The entire area is in an unusual location. After winding through cornfields and pastures the road suddenly drops into a little valley filled with wild and majestic scenery. It was here that Ransom J. Bixby, son of an early pioneer, built a cabin and opened the area to the public as a free park. Since being acquired by the Conservation Commission a new road, parking areas, and a shelter have been built. A picnic area is located at the bottom of the gorge and the open shelter nestles at the foot of a high bluff.

## Brush Creek Canyon

● Fayette county, 130 acres, donated by citizens of Arlington in 1936. Located 1 mile north of Arlington on Primary Highway No. 154.

Brush Creek Canyon, as the name suggests, is a rugged cedar-dotted gorge with precipitous limestone walls and a brush covered valley. Early maps of Fayette county show a heavily wooded tract, named Brush Creek, in the approximate location of the present town of Arlington. A historian of that period related that this area was opened for settlement upon ratification of the Blackhawk Purchase in 1833. At that time the land to the north was in possession of the Winnebago Indians, for whose protection Fort Atkinson was established 30 miles to the northwest. Brush Creek, according to this same historian, was a town of five hundred inhabitants in 1875.

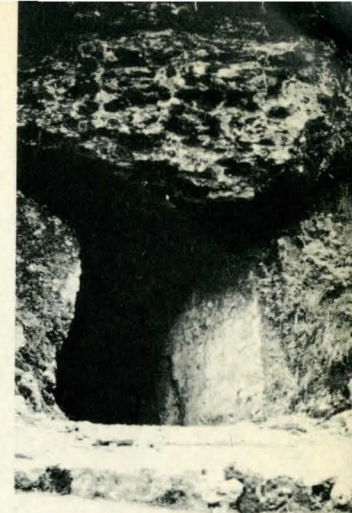
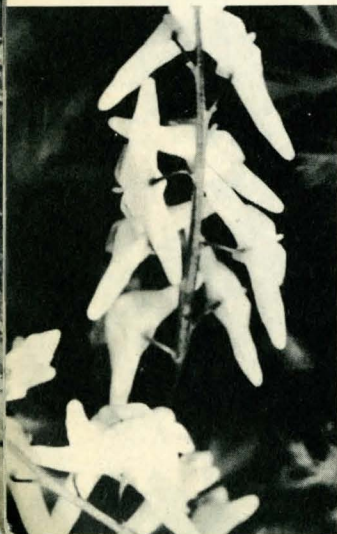
This area is one of the most recently acquired preserves and no facilities have yet been provided for public use. Plans are being worked out to convert the spot into a picnic area and nature study park for persons interested in birds, botany, and geology.



The Barkley memorial bronze mounted on large boulder.



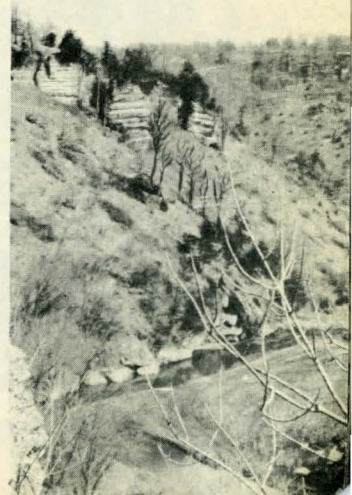
The Dutchman's Breeches abundant in Iowa's State Parks.

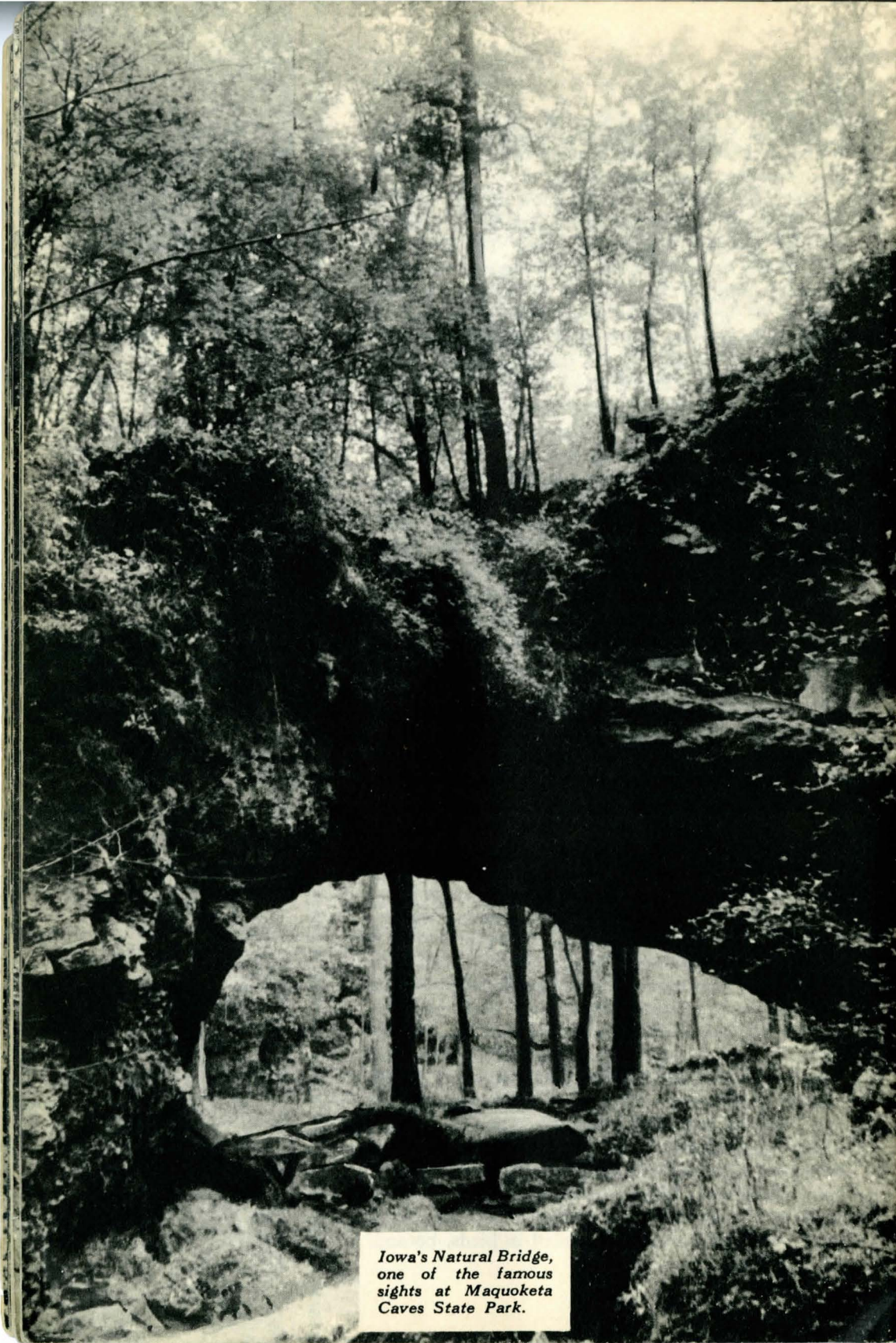


Bixby Ice Cave, one of the curiosities of northeastern Iowa.



The cliffs and valley of Brush Creek Canyon.





Iowa's Natural Bridge,  
one of the famous  
sights at Maquoketa  
Caves State Park.

## Maquoketa Caves

● Jackson county, 85 acres, obtained in 1921. Located 8 miles northwest of Maquoketa on Primary Highway No. 130.

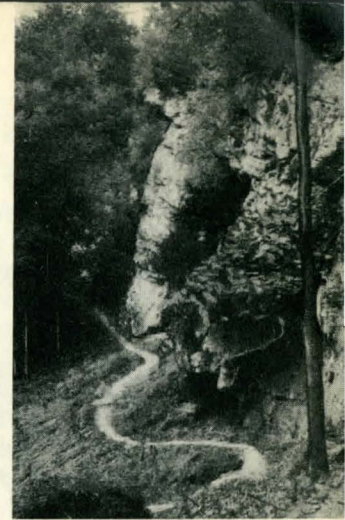
*The natural bridge of Old Virginia  
Has been the theme of prose and song,  
The Mammoth Caves of Blue Grass Kentucky  
Have their visitors in numerous throngs,  
But the caves and trails of Iowa's Maquoketa  
Are worth a journey just as long.*

The great limestone caves are only one of the many interesting things to be seen in the Maquoketa Caves area. In this delightful park are found the beautiful natural bridge with its arch rising 40 or 50 feet above the floor of the valley, a seventeen ton balanced rock, and three lofty lookout shelters with winding foot trails leading to them. The whole area is carpeted with hepaticas in early spring, and in the autumn the many hard maples and small evergreens give gorgeous color contrasts.

That the great limestone caves were once the home of prehistoric men is evidenced by the many artifacts of bone, flint, and stone which have been found in them. The caves were discovered more than a hundred years ago by Joshua Bear and David Scott, two settlers in Jackson county, who were hunting deer after a heavy snowstorm. In a ravine leading from the Maquoketa river they struck the trail of ten or more deer. The bluffs on either side of the ravine were too steep for the deer to ascend and ahead of them appeared to be a great wall of rock. The hunters were delighted, thinking they had trapped the entire herd. To their surprise, however, when they reached the end of the canyon the deer had disappeared as completely as if the ground had opened up and swallowed them. The hunters investigated further and found that the deer had taken refuge in a great limestone cave.

When first discovered, the ceilings of the various caves in the region were hung with beautiful milk-white stalactites, with corresponding stalagmites rising from the floor. Souvenir hunters have robbed the caves of their rarest beauty, yet much of the unique, attractive, and fascinating formation still remains.

A large picnic ground, parking area, and a concession stand are located on top of the caves, with winding trails leading from them to all the points of interest in the area.



Winding trails reveal  
the interesting geo-  
logic formations at  
Maquoketa Caves.



Rue anenome common  
to all State Parks.



## Oakland Mills

● Henry county, 111 acres, donated in 1920. Located 4 miles southwest of Mount Pleasant on Primary Highway No. 133.

Near the site of the now almost deserted village of Oakland Mills, where the Skunk river flows swiftly toward the Mississippi, the surrounding picturesque hills once resounded to the noise of water-wheels. In the 1860's a woolen mill furnished labor for many factory hands and a flour mill ground out the farmer's grist. These old mills with their stories of pioneer days have long since passed and a modern hydro-electric plant now occupies the site on which they once stood. The dam for the electric plant has formed an artificial lake which has been well stocked with pan fish.

The park area is broken by steep gulches and limestone outcroppings, is densely forested, and provides a delightful recreational center as well as a valued botanical and zoological laboratory. Large picnic areas are located on the west side of the river under the maple trees which once furnished sugar to the pioneers.

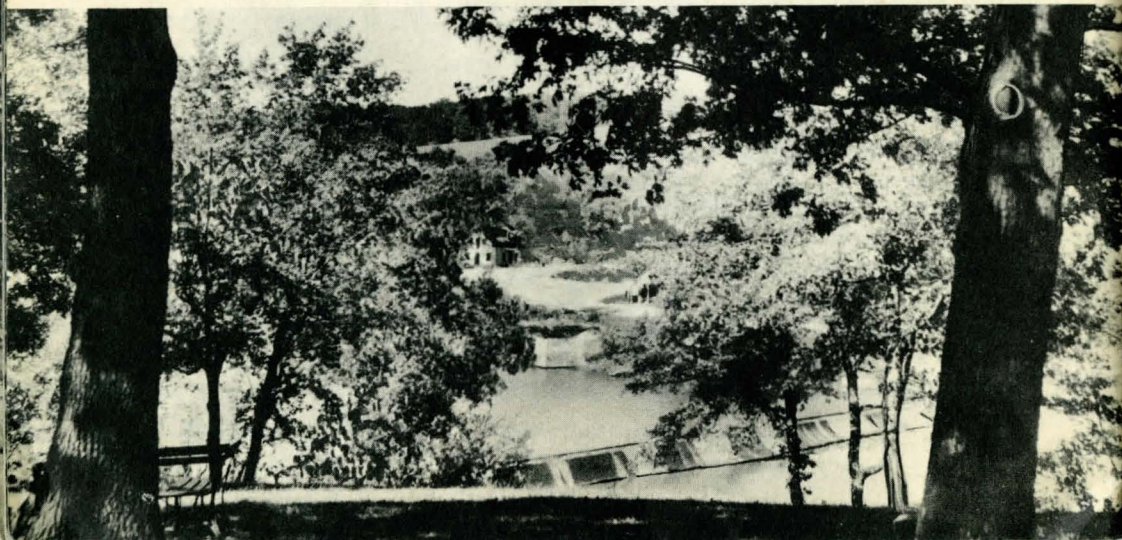
## Twin Springs Fish Station

● Winneshiek county, 6 acres, donated in 1933. Located just south of Decorah, off U. S. Highway No. 52 and Primary Highway No. 9.

Nestling between two high bluffs in this "Little Switzerland of America" are two large fish holding ponds, supplied with water by the two springs from which the area receives its name. Winding trails lead from the picnic grounds near the springs to a white pine grove on one of the surrounding hills.

[ 58 ]

*The Skunk river from Oakland Mills picnic area*



*The service buildings and bass ponds at Sievert Springs*

## Sievert Springs Hatchery

● Winneshiek county, 23 acres, purchased in 1933. Located southeast of Decorah, just off Primary Highway No. 9.

This fish hatchery, located in the shade of a steep limestone bluff, is the most beautiful unit of its kind in the country. Sievert's Spring, one of the largest springs in Iowa, supplies the water for six large rearing ponds and three bass spawning pools. The spring has been dammed and the water is carried to the fish ponds through a large flume. A small picnic area is located near the roaring spring and interesting foot trails lead to the top of the large limestone cliff.

## Woodman Hollow

● Webster county, 62 acres, obtained in 1928. Located 1/2 miles northeast of Otho, just off U. S. Highway No. 169.

The half-mile long valley which constitutes Woodman Hollow is a spot Eugene Field might have been describing when he wrote:

*"Not real stillness, but just the trees  
Low whispering, or the hum of bees,  
Or brook's faint babbling over stones  
In strangely soft, tangled tones."*

A sparkling spring-fed stream flows through this beauty spot which is a haven for birds and other forms of wild life. Along the banks of the stream are found outcroppings of carboniferous sandstone, as well as a wide variety of native flora.

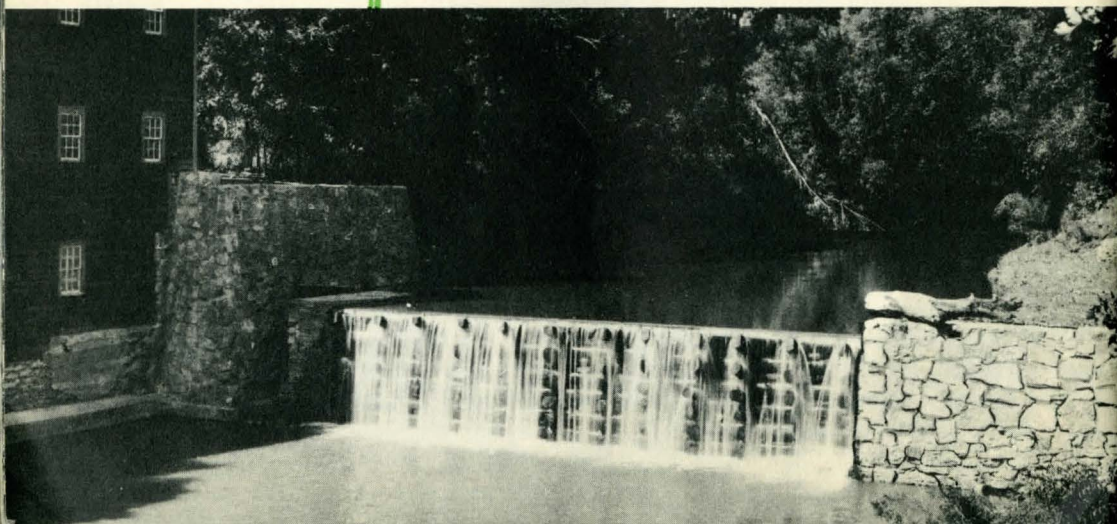
[ 59 ]



*Fat Man's Agony, one of the unusual geologic formations at Wild Cat Den.*



*The old mill house and dam*



## Wild Cat Den

● Muscatine county, 290 acres, donated in 1926 by the Brandt sisters. Located between Muscatine and Davenport on Primary Highway No. 160, off U. S. Highway No. 61 near Fairport.

*"And a mem'ry o'er my mind  
As a spell is cast,  
The mill will never, never grind  
With the water that is past."*

Much water has passed the old grist mill and dam in Wild Cat Den park since it was built in 1848 by Benjamin Nye, Muscatine county's first settler, and the old mill will never grind again. It still stands, however, in this picturesque spot, one of the most widely known areas in Iowa.

For a number of years this area was kept closed to the public by its owners, the Brandt sisters, because of the destruction wrought by persons who had been permitted to visit its many points of interest. When the older sister died she donated 70 acres of the tract to the state to be used as a park, and after the other sister died the state acquired additional land formerly a part of the Brandt property. A commemorating plaque to the sisters has been placed at the den from which the area received its name.

Among the novel attractions, all easily accessible from the picnic areas, are the numerous cave-like formations, Steamboat Rock, the Devil's Punch-bowl, and Balanced Rock. A wide variety of wild flowers is found here, including trilliums, mocassin flowers, juniper moss, blue cohosh, asters, and cranes bill. For many years this region was used as a field laboratory for botany classes from the University of Chicago.

[ 60 ]

## HISTORIC PARKS

*Iowa's history is a matter of personalities, events, and localities, and hence all parks have some historic qualities. However, these parks designated as historic are concerned with early Iowa military history*





*Through the valley of Fort Defiance winds this stream, one of the sources of the Des Moines river.*

## Fort Defiance

● Emmet county, 185 acres, obtained in 1931. Located just southwest of Estherville on Primary Highway No. 245.

Fort Defiance was constructed during the period of the Civil War on an area which later became a part of the city of Estherville. The old fort, for which the park was named, was erected in 1862 to protect the early settlers from Sioux Indians under the leadership of Chief Little Crow. The Indians had committed depredations in southern Minnesota and were laying siege to the village of New Ulm. Knowing many white men were away serving in the Union Army it was feared that the Indians would attempt to drive the settlers out of Minnesota and Iowa. So during the administration of Iowa's Civil War governor, Samuel Kirkwood, and under the leadership of Captain W. H. Ingram, a cavalry troop was hastily organized and an enclosure 126 feet square was erected where the city of Estherville now stands. Ingram's cavalry had enlisted for 30 days, but it was 15 months before they were finally mustered out and the fort abandoned.

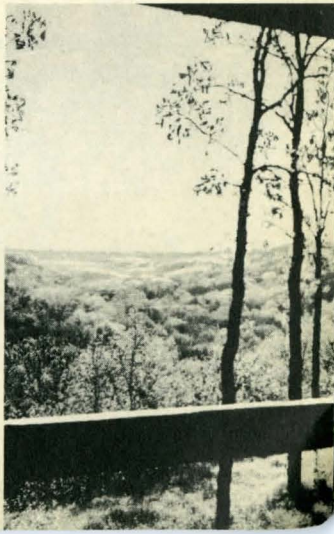
For a number of years, Fort Defiance served as a temporary refuge for families seeking homesteads in the northwest. Piece by piece every board in the buildings and every plank in the stockade disappeared to be used as firewood or in the construction of some settler's cabin. Today, the deep ravines and wooded hills of the park area are much as they were when the original fort was built nearby. In keeping with the spirit of the area, the park lodge and entrance gate carry out the block house motif.

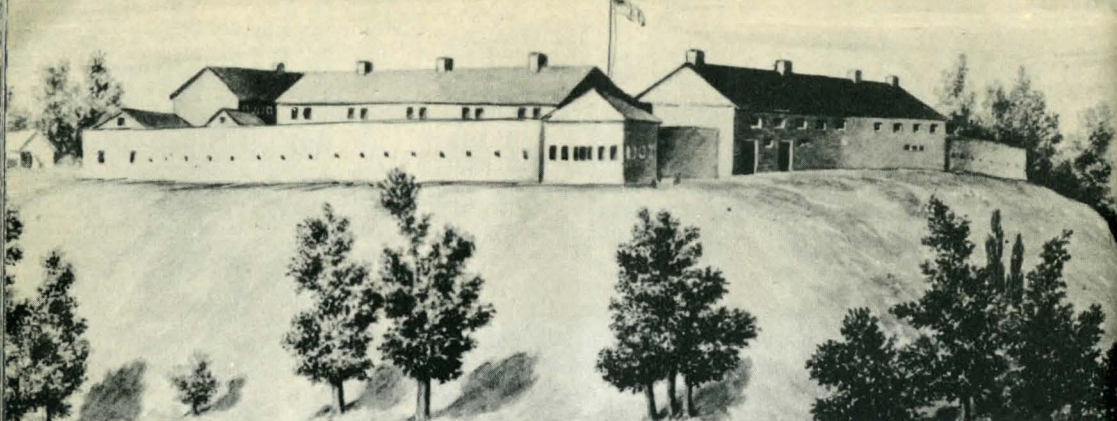


*The park lodge, constructed in the style of the original block houses.*



*The rising sun lights the wooded valleys of Fort Defiance.*





*Fort Atkinson as it appeared in 1842*

## Fort Atkinson

● Winneshiek county, 5 acres, purchased in 1921. Located in north-eastern part of town of Fort Atkinson on Primary Highway No. 24.

Fort Atkinson, a military fort built not to wage war but to preserve peace, is the only federal fort in Iowa. In 1837 white settlers in Wisconsin began urging the chiefs of the Winnebago Indians there to move their tribes west of the Mississippi river. The Winnebagos were willing to move but were afraid of the Sac, Fox, and Sioux which roamed this territory. After three years of negotiation, General Henry Atkinson escorted the Indians to the Turkey river valley in northeastern Iowa and started construction of a fort to protect them from their enemies. Troops were maintained at the fort for seven years but were withdrawn when the Winnebagos moved north into Minnesota. Parts of a two-story barracks, three block houses, and the powder magazine house of the original fort are still standing at this historic spot.

Picnic facilities are located in the shade of the huge elm trees that adorn this remnant of a federal military post of pioneer days.

[ 64 ]

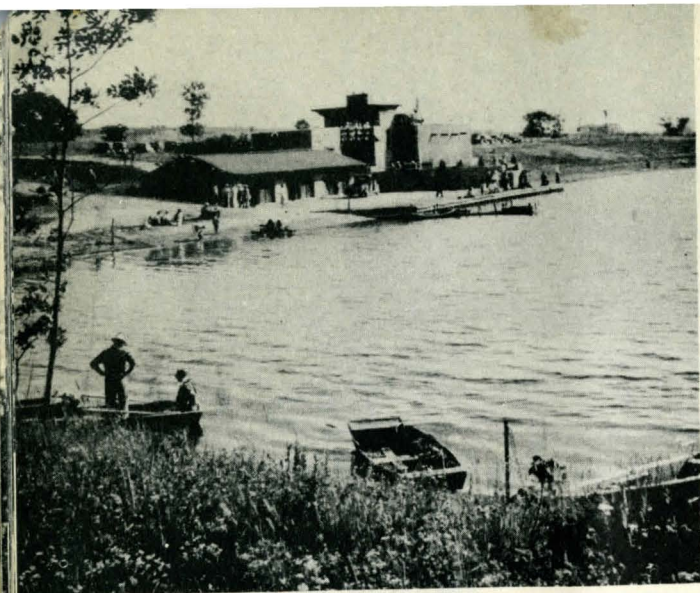
*Fort Atkinson as it appears today—officers' quarters, left; block house, right*



## RECREATIONAL PARKS AND PRESERVES

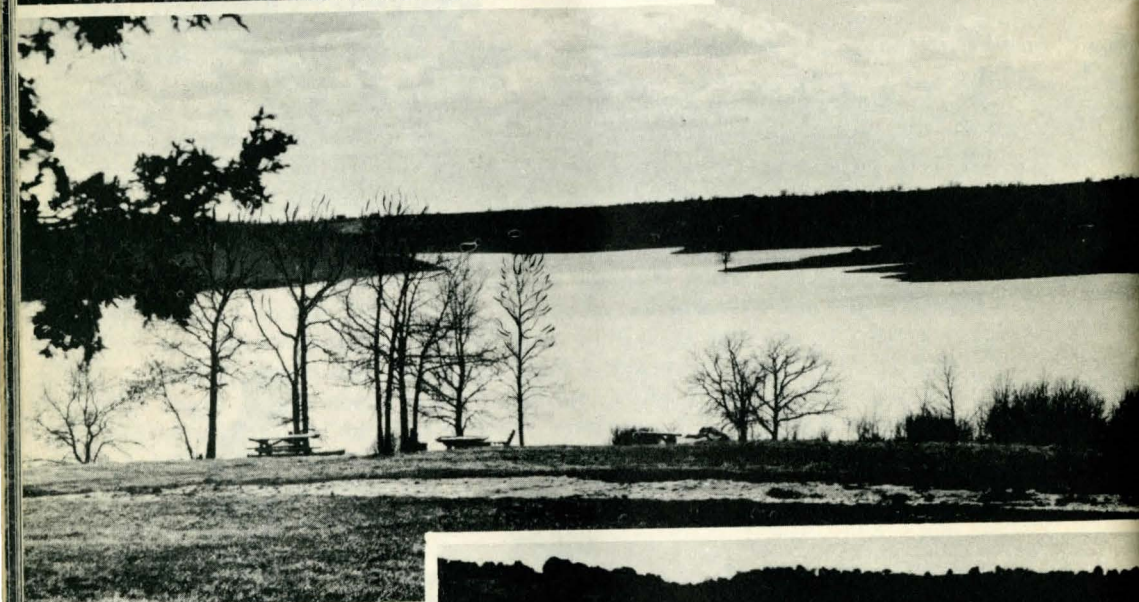
*These areas consist of artificial lakes utilizing forest, soil and water conservation. Their importance as parks is in the field of active recreation*





*The beach from which all fishermen's boats embark.*

*The Panorama of this 250 acre lake from the picnic area, Smith Knoll.*



*From this terrace on the boat house may be viewed the swimming beach, boat beach, and the Boone Memorial.*



## Lake Wapello

● Davis county, 1075 acres, lake area 287 acres, obtained in 1931. Located 6 miles northwest of Drakesville, 13 miles west of U. S. Highway No. 63 on Primary Highway No. 273.

In the heart of the blue grass country and amid rolling, tree-clad hills and meadows is situated Lake Wapello, the largest artificial lake in Iowa. It receives its name from Chief Wapello of the Ioway tribes of Indians, who roamed the territory in the vicinity of the lake uplands until about 100 years ago. Just south of the park is one of the trails the Mormons followed on their long trek to Utah.

In planning the building of the lake every effort was made to create the finest fishing lake in the country. Deep holes, bars, fish shelters, spawning grounds, aquatic planting, and everything else known to pisciculturists as beneficial have been carefully developed with the one idea of providing proper conditions for fish reproduction and growth. Upon completion of the dam which forms the lake in 1933 by the former Fish and Game Commission and the impounding of the water the following year the lake was carefully stocked with fish, accurate records being kept of the numbers and kinds stocked. Since 1936, when the lake was first opened to the public for fishing a "creel census" has been constantly maintained for various experimental and scientific records and as a guide for restocking the lake.

Scientific game study preserves, which are not open for public use, take up a large part of the park area surrounding the lake. Here various plantings have been made in order to experiment with different kinds of cover for upland birds.

Dr. W. C. Boone of Ottumwa, ardent sportsman and life-long conservationist, has been honored by having the extensively used area along the lake shore named for him. In this area is located an unusual combination bath house, shelter, boat house, and refreshment concession building. Nearby is the fisherman's village where several cabins have been built for use of visitors. More cabins will be constructed as the demand for them increases and as funds permit.

At Smith Knoll, on the opposite side of the lake, the main picnic area is located. Here under

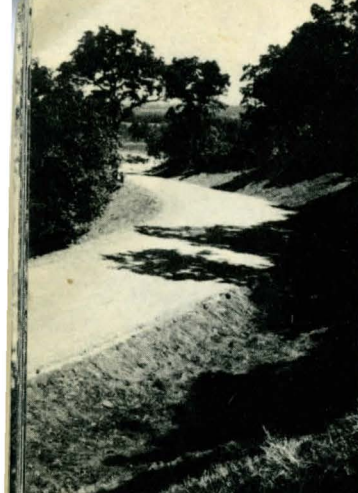


*Detail of the palatial bath and boat house at Lake Wapello.*



*These cabins constitute the nucleus of the fishermen's village. Reservations may be made through the park custodian.*





This enchanting road leads past the fish ponds and the dam to Smith Knoll.



The wild crab—one of most charming sights in the Iowa parks during the spring.



the huge oak trees are fire places and picnic tables facing long views of the lake, which remind one of the words of James Whitcomb Riley:

*"I pause a moment here to bend and muse,  
With dreamy eyes, on my reflection, where  
A boat-backed bug drifts on a helpless cruise,  
Or wildly oars the air."*

Nine large fish-rearing ponds, covering approximately 18 acres, are located near the entrance to the park area. These ponds are used for spawning, hatching, and rearing bass, crappies, and blue gills until they are of sufficient size for stocking the waters of this and other lakes within the state.

## Beeds Lake

● Franklin county, 267 acres, lake area 130 acres, obtained in 1934. Located 2 miles northwest of Hampton near intersection of Primary Highways No. 10 and No. 65.

Beeds Lake was formed in 1857 by F. K. Hansberry, a Campbellite preacher, who constructed a dike to impound the water of a small stream which flows through the region, for the purpose of operating a grist mill. William Beed, a merchant of Hampton, for whom the area is named, purchased the mill and the water rights to it in 1864. Beed increased the size of the lake, deepened the mill-race, and remodeled the mill which he operated and kept in good repair until his death in 1903. Ten years later, the dike washed out and for twenty-one years no attempt was made to repair it. When the state took over the property in 1934 arrangements were made with the National Park Service to construct a large dam and thus create a lake double the size of the original one. This lake has been stocked with various kinds of game fish.

A beautiful picnic area is located on the north shore, and a large bath house and lodge have been built on the south shore of the lake. A large experimental arboretum of evergreen trees is now nearing completion within the park area, and several extensive fish rearing ponds are constructed below the dam.

## Cold Springs

● Cass county, 60 acres, donated in 1935. Located 1 mile south of Lewis.

So definitely was this area associated with the traditions of the early settlers and so closely was it connected with the customs of the people of Cass county that they presented it to the state in order that it might be preserved. A large spring of cold water which rises from the base of a soft sandstone bluff probably christened the first post office in Cass county as Cold Spring. The crystal clear water also gave its name to the large bathing pool which later confined the waters of the spring and which is now known as Crystal Lake.

Here the pioneers came with their families for a day of social relaxation, to fish in the Nishnabotna, to pick wild flowers, or to attend camp meetings. Gone is the river that once flowed just to the west of Cold Springs—the hand of man has changed the course of the stream and it now flows far to the west. Gone is the ford and the ferry across the river, gone is the old grist mill which once stood nearby, but their memories remain.

## Mill Creek

● O'Brien county, 157 acres, donated by the local community in 1935. Located 1 mile east of Paulina on Primary Highway No. 10.

Many water power mills sprang up during the early 30's and 40's when white settlers poured across this country from the east. For obvious reasons the pioneers settled along rivers and streams, and there seem to have been large numbers of mechanics, especially millwrights, among them. Many of these old mills operated for a few years and then vanished, leaving scarcely a line of record as to their location or significance.

The old mill in Mill Creek park has disappeared with the others but the name of the little spring-fed stream which flows through this area, a name bestowed upon it by the early pioneers, has been passed on to the park. Construction of a dam, near the site of the original mill dam, which will create a lake of approximately twenty-five acres within the park is now under way.

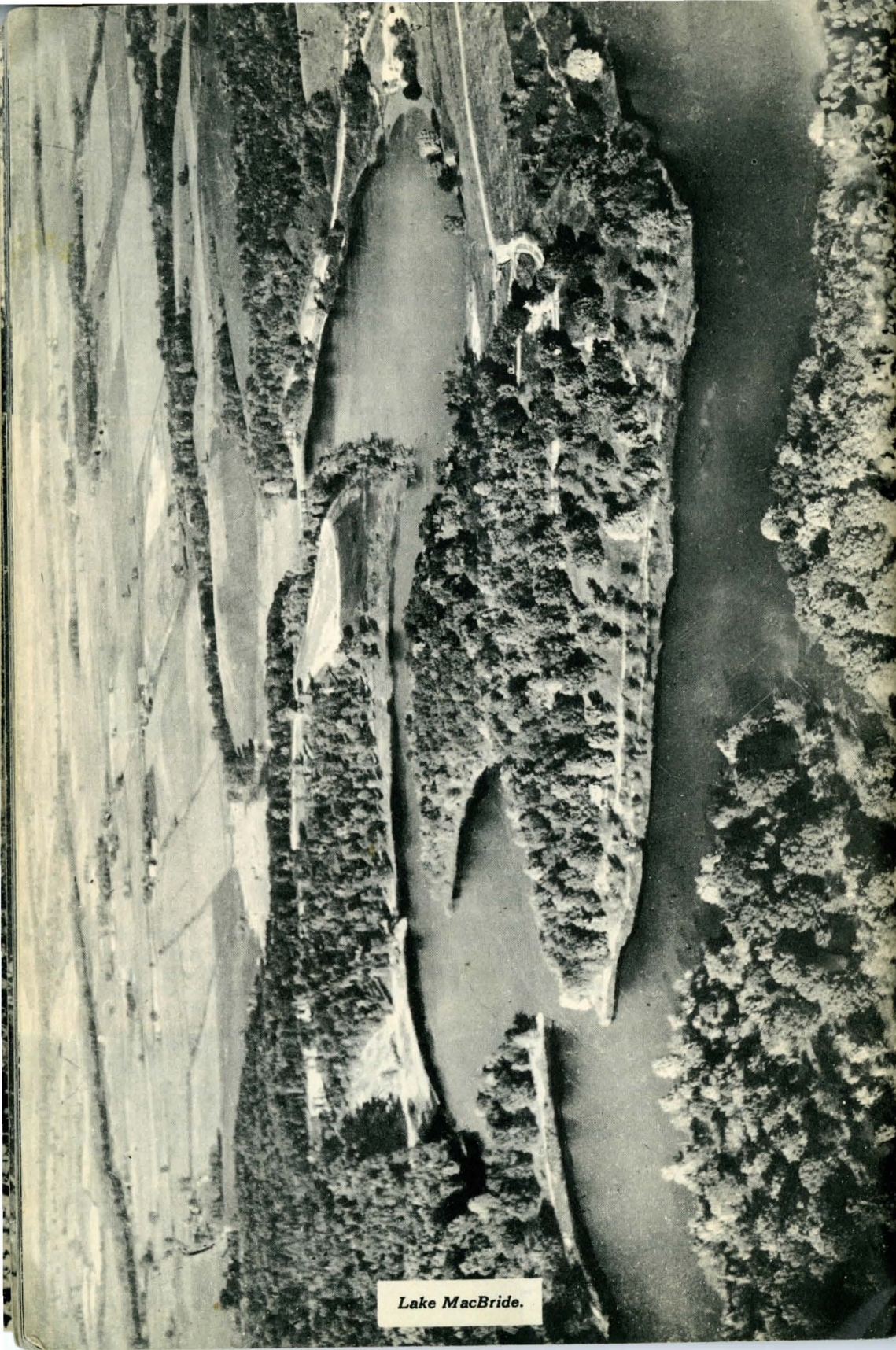


Snow trillium, Harbinger of Spring, the earliest wild flower.



A high school group enjoying facilities provided in all of Iowa's parks.





Lake MacBride.

## Lake McBride

● Johnson county, 870 acres, lake area 250 acres, obtained in 1933. Located 4 miles northwest of North Liberty between Primary Highways No. 161 and No. 162.

Lake MacBride, one of the most enchanting of the park areas, was named in honor of Professor Thomas H. MacBride, President Emeritus of Iowa State University, one of the fathers of the Iowa State Parks program.

The 250 acre lake in the area was formed by damming Mill Creek 600 feet above its junction with the Iowa river. On the north arm of this lake are located picnic grounds, parking areas, a beautiful bathing house, and a large artificial bathing beach. The picnic areas are well shaded with large red, white, and bur oak trees, and in the vicinity of the dam are many sycamore, walnut, butternut, and a few blue beech trees.

The lake has been well stocked with bass, crappie, blue gills, and bull heads and in the near future should become one of the favorite angling spots in this part of the state.

## Lake Manawa

● Pottawattamie county, 691 acres, obtained in 1927. Located 4 miles south of Council Bluffs on Primary Highway No. 192.

For many years this lake was second only to the Iowa great lakes region and Clear Lake in recreational popularity, but with the passing of the years the Missouri river flooded the area a number of times and the lake became almost entirely filled with silt. In 1930 the lake area was approximately 400 acres, but by 1934 it had dwindled to a small puddle.

Dredging operations are rapidly restoring this once beautiful spot and at present there are places where the water is twelve feet deep. The old lake bed is now a water fowl refuge and the deepened waters are rapidly being stocked with all kinds of game and pan fish. The rich soil that is being taken from the lake in the dredging operations is being used to build up low places in the area.

The lake was originally a part of the Missouri river bed and paddle-wheel boats coming up the river as late as 1856 landed near the present site of Manawa village in the Lake Manawa area. During the floods of 1881 the Missouri changed its course, cutting off a huge loop of the river and creating the lake.

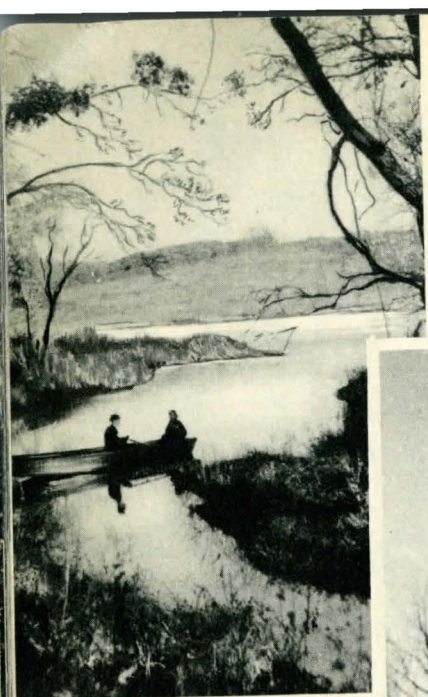


*A common sight any evening in the state parks and preserves.*

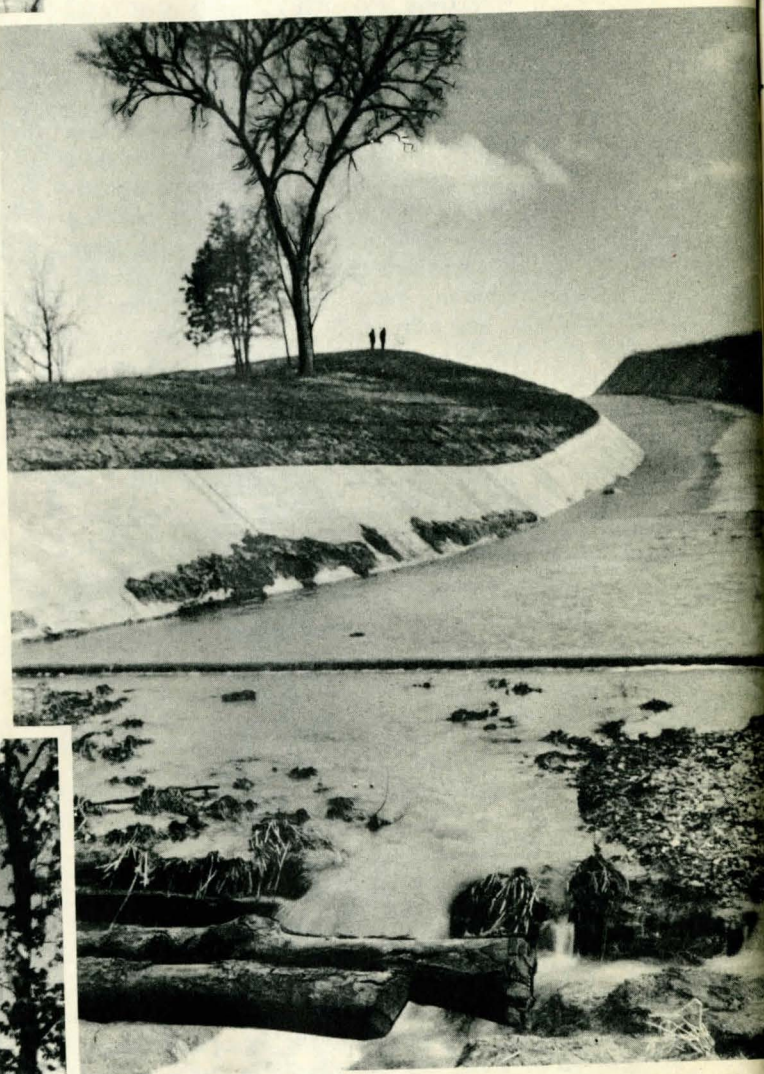


*18,000 people may be seated at one time at the tables provided in the state parks.*

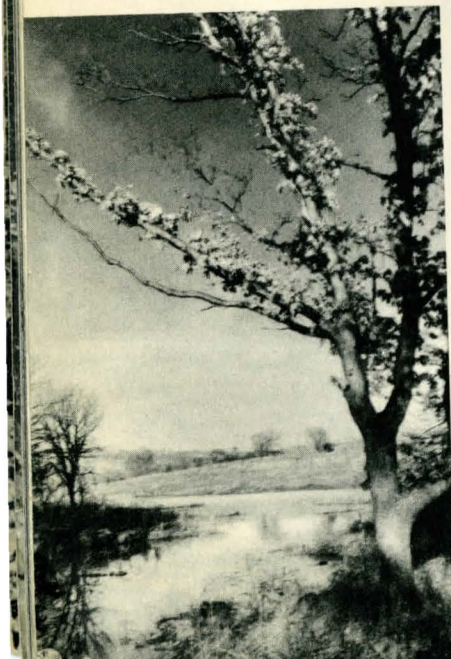




Delaware Bay at  
Lake Ahquabi State  
Park.



The concrete spillway.



Wood's Hole, one of  
the interesting bays  
and fingers of Ah-  
quabi.

## Lake Ahquabi

● Warren county, 560 acres, lake area 130 acres, donated by the city of Indianola in 1934. Located 5 miles south of Indianola in U. S. Highways No. 65 and 69, and 1 mile west.

*"Through the woodland, through the meadow,  
As in silence oft I walk,  
Softly whispering on the breezes  
Seems to come the Red man's talk."*

Ahquabi is an Indian word meaning "place of rest," and this beautiful lake area in south central Iowa is truly a place of rest as well as a place for recreation. Although one of the newest parks in the state, it provides complete facilities for relaxation. The area was developed with the idea of furnishing a recreational lake, picnic ground, and spot for other outdoor activities in one of the most densely populated sections of Iowa.

More than 50 acres of the park are timber and in the fall brilliant hawthornes cover the hills with color. Picnic areas have commanding views of the surrounding territory nestling in a large grove of second growth timber north of the park entrance. There is an impressive shelter house opening on the picnic area which is available at all times. Many small "outdoor spots" each with a stove near at hand open from the large group area and plenty of parking space is available nearby.

The lake, just west of the picnic groves, has an excellent bathing beach and a large bath house and concession stand.

A large organized group camp, consisting of nine cabins, a large kitchen, dining and assembly hall, and shower house, has been built on a point between the east and south fingers of the lake. Each of the cabins is capable of housing eight persons. This camp is designed primarily for group use, but when not so occupied the cabins are available to families by the night or week.

On a knoll high above the east shore of the lake and south of the bathing beach a large lodge has been constructed, which offers shelter from summer rains and a warming place for skating parties during the winter months.

In addition to the other attractions the area has a number of trails through the wooded parts and along the lake shore which make the park an attractive spot for individuals interested in hiking.



One of the sleeping  
cabins in the organ-  
ized group camp.



Facing onto the large  
picnic area, this shel-  
ter is much used in  
spring and fall.



Swimming and other aquatic sports are the main attractions at Lake Keomah.

## Lake Keomah

● Mahaska county, 358 acres, lake area 80 acres, obtained in 1933. Located  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles west and 1 mile south of Oskaloosa on Primary Highway No. 2.

Lake Keomah derives its name from the first syllables of the two counties, Keokuk and Mahaska. Although located in Mahaska county it is only a few miles from the Keokuk county line.

The dam impounding the water which forms the lake in the park was completed in 1934 through the co-operation of the Forest Service, and other improvements have been made by the National Park Service. Dearth of other natural facilities in this region led to the developing of the area which is purely a recreational center designed primarily for aquatic sports. A lodge, combined park store and shelter house on the most prominent point of the lake has facilities for and is available to large groups. The open shelter on the east end of this lodge gives an excellent view of the nearby bathing beach and bath house. Other accommodations in the park include large shaded picnic grounds and convenient parking areas.

## Lake of Three Fires

● Taylor county, 384 acres, lake area 125 acres, donated in 1934 by the citizens of Bedford. Located 2 miles north of Bedford on Primary Highway No. 148 and 2 miles east.

Where once lush prairies, the primeval forest, and winding streams constituted the landscape an enticing lake of some 125 acres nestles among the hills and meadows. This area was named for three tribes of Indians, the Pottawattamies, Ottawas, and Chippewas, who banded together for their own protection against more savage tribes to the north and west. They were known collectively as the Three Fires, and the area which now bears their name was their favorite gathering place.

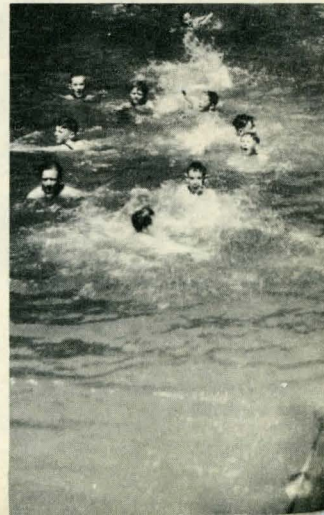
In 1936 the dam which impounds the lake was completed, and also a large combination bath house and shelter which faces one of the largest artificial bathing beaches in the state. Timbered woods surrounding the lake furnish ample picnic areas for the thousands of visitors who are attracted to this oasis. Ponds have been constructed for propagation of all kinds of pan fish.



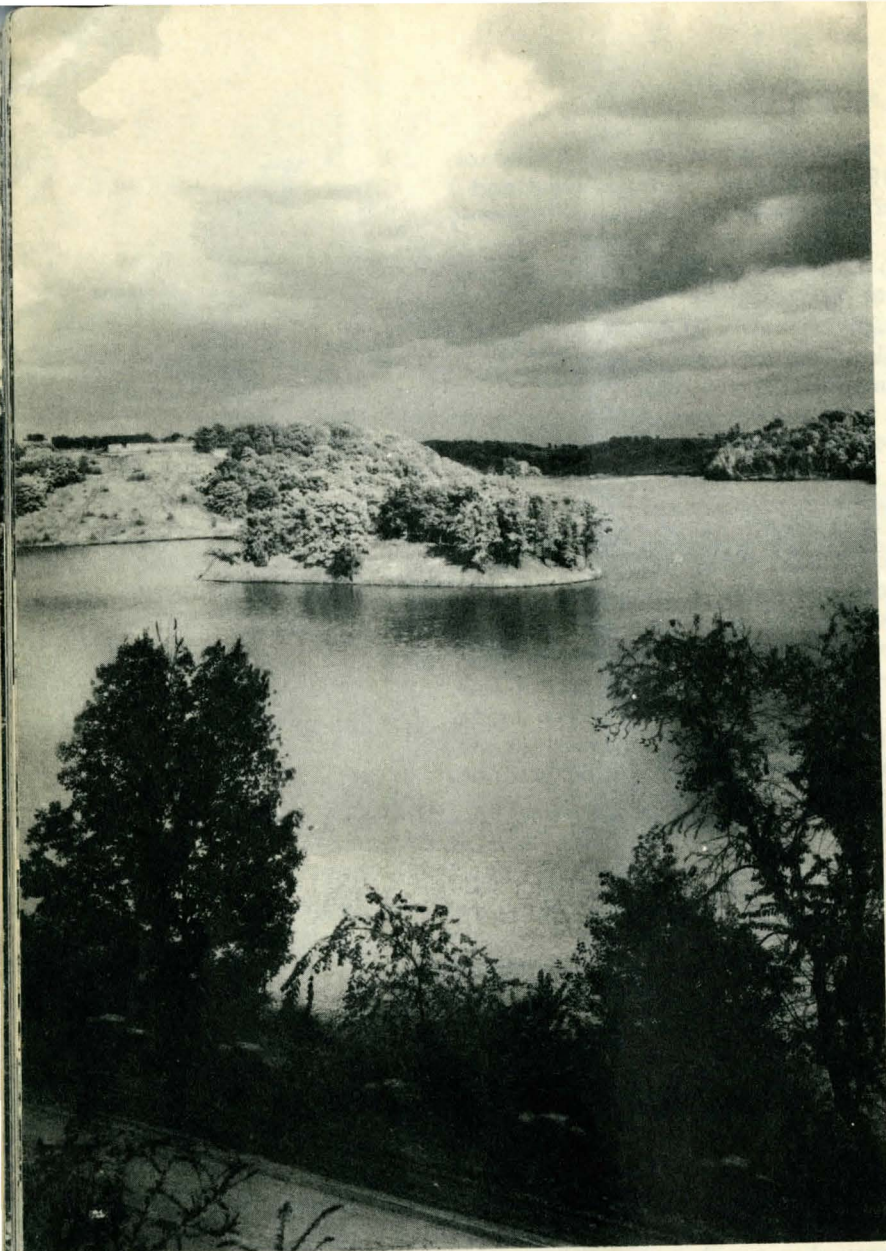
A hickory bud about to burst, one of the interesting sights of spring.



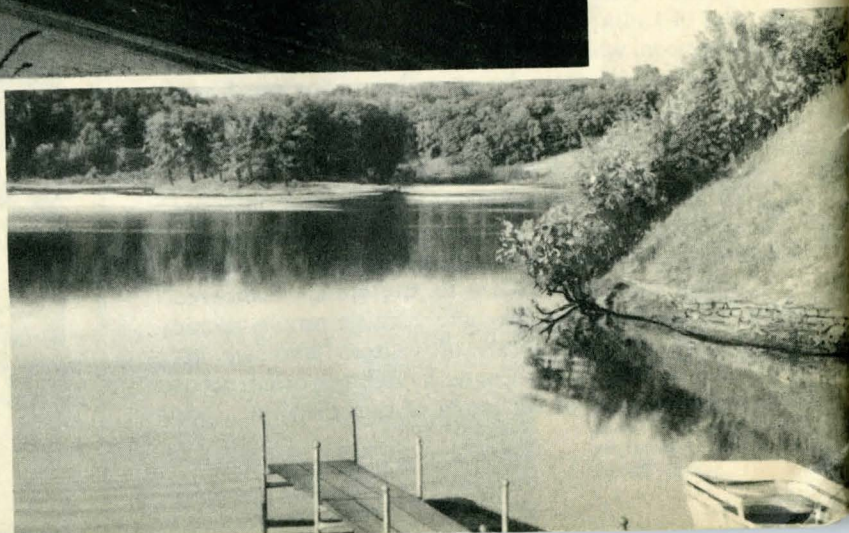
Boys swimming at the beach in Lake of Three Fires.



The lodge at Keomah—cafe and lounge are open to the public at all times.



*The island in Lower Pine Lake.*



*View from the fisherman's wharf.*

## Pine Lake

● Hardin county, 533 acres, lake area 140 acres, obtained in 1920. Located on the east bank of the Iowa river at Eldora, on Primary Highway No. 118, just north of Primary Highway No. 57.

Picturesque Pine Lake, the first artificial recreational lake area in the state, is one of the most beautiful preserves in central Iowa. Tree covered hills and slopes surround the two man-made lakes with white birch trees gleaming against a dark background of evergreens.

Pine creek was dammed to create the original lake and the region was known as Eldora Pine Creek State Park. In 1934 a new dam at the upper end of the lake was completed, creating a second lake about seventy acres in extent. The name of the entire area, which now covers 533 acres, was shortened to Pine Lake.

White pine trees more than 250 years old grow on a small gem-like island in the center of the lower lake. The park marks the southwest boundary of the territory in which a number of boreal plants are found, including the white pine, white birch, and many ferns and mosses. The only place in the state where marginal fern may be found is along the Iowa river within the park.

Two distinct groups of Indian mounds are located in the area, one along the main picnic grounds on the west side of the lower lake, and the other back of the lodge along the golf course. Many Indian arrow heads and other relics have been found in this vicinity.

One of the main points of interest and the center of activities in the park is the bathing beach and bath house. This well equipped beach, nestling among the trees far below the surrounding hills, is one of the most popular spots in this section of the state and furnishes aquatic sports for thousands of persons. Adjacent to the beach is a fisherman's wharf and boat house where boats are available.

Three large fish rearing ponds, in which fish are raised to "fingerling" size before being placed in the lakes, are maintained in the park. Picnic and parking areas are scattered throughout the preserve and cabins are available for the public. The only constructed toboggan slide in the state, together with skating, furnishes winter sports. A sandstone lodge, built from stone quarried within the park, is the center of these activities.

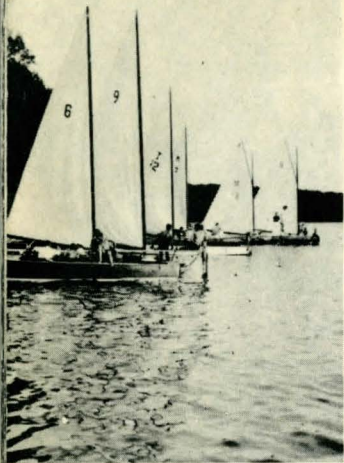


*The toboggan slide and lodge at Pine Lake.*



*The beach and bath house, where 200,000 people congregate each summer.*





Boats on West Okoboji before a regatta.



Winter sports at Ambrose A. Call Park.



## CAMPING

Camping is permitted in certain parks for a fee of 50c per night of \$2.50 a week per unit. Campers provide their own tents and outfits. A time limit of two weeks is maintained, and in some parks only overnight camping is permitted. For further information, see park list.

## SWIMMING

Swimming is provided at 12 supervised beaches, and the State Conservation Commission is proud to announce that no drownings have ever occurred at any of the supervised state park beaches. The small fee charged defrays the cost of life guards, cleaning the beach, and keeping the dressing rooms sanitary. Suits and towels may be rented and checking service is provided at all bath houses. Refreshments may be obtained.

## BOATS

Boats are available for rent in many State Parks, and on most of the state recreational lakes. Sailboating is popular on all the larger lakes. Motor boats and outboards are strictly prohibited on the artificial lakes.

## CABINS

Cabins, located in 7 State Parks, may be rented for a period of from one day to two weeks. Many cabins have running water and toilets, and most of them have fireplaces so that they may be used throughout the year. Reservations should be obtained in advance by writing the custodian of the park.

## GROUP CAMPS

Group camps, consisting of cabins, each accommodating eight, central mess hall, showers, and leaders' cabins, are available at Dolliver and Ahquabi State Parks. These can accommodate up to 50 campers. Smaller groups can be accommodated at Backbone and Palisades State Parks. Reservations for group camps and further information may be obtained from the Conservation Commission, Des Moines.

## PARK RULES

**WE REQUEST THAT YOU AS ONE OF  
2,500,000 VISITORS IN THE IOWA  
STATE PARKS ANNUALLY  
OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING RULES:**

**SPEED LIMIT:** The maximum speed limit of all vehicles on state park and preserve drives, roads and highways shall be fifteen (15) miles per hour. All driving shall be confined to designated roadways.

**VEHICLE LOADING:** Excessively loaded vehicles shall not operate over state park or preserve drives, roads or highways.

**PARKING:** All vehicles shall be parked in designated parking areas.

**FIRES:** No fire shall be built, except in a place provided therefor, and such fire shall be extinguished when site is vacated unless it is immediately used by some other party.

**TREES AND SHRUBS:** No person shall, in any manner, remove, destroy, injure or deface any tree, shrub, plant or flower, or the fruit thereof or disturb or injure any structure or natural attraction.

**FIREARMS:** The use by the public of firearms, explosives and weapons of all kinds is prohibited in all state parks and preserves.

**REFUSE:** No person shall place any waste, refuse, litter or foreign substance in any area or receptacle except those provided for that purpose.

**POSTED AREAS:** No person shall enter upon portions of any state park or preserve in disregard of official signs forbidding same.

**ANIMALS:** No privately owned animal shall be allowed to run at large in any state park or preserve or upon lands or in waters owned by or under the jurisdiction of the Commission except by permission of the Commission.

**CLOSING HOUR:** Except by arrangement or permission granted by the Park Custodian, all persons shall vacate state parks and preserves before ten-thirty o'clock P. M. (10:30 P. M.)

**CAMPING:** No person shall camp in any portion of a state park or preserve except in portions described or designated by the Commission.



The Iowa wild crab, *malus ioensis*, perfumes the air in May.



Conservation officers assigned to parks represent your host.



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## Acknowledgement

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This booklet prepared under the supervision of Herbert Brackney, Jr., Landscape Architect.

# What to Do at All State Parks and Preserves



Name of Park or Preserve	Resident Custodian	Non-Resident Custodian	Boating	Cabins—Rental fee	Camping two weeks	Camping overnight only	Camps—Group	Fishing—Pan Fish	Fishing—Game Fish	Golf—Green fee	Hiking	Historical Interest	Lodge—Rental fee for party	Lodge—Serving Meals	Nature Study—Birds	Nature Study—Botanical	Nature Study—Geological	Picnicking	Refreshments available	Scenic Views and Attractions	Shelters	Skating	Swimming—Supervised beach	Trails
McGregor Areas .....		•																						
Pike's Peak .....																								
Point Ann .....						Not developed																		
Other Areas .....						Not developed																		
Oak Grove .....	•																							
Oakland Mills .....	•																							
Okamanpedan on Tuttle Lake .....		•	•																					
Okoboji Region .....		•																						
Gull Point .....	•																							
Orleans Hatchery .....		•																						
Pike's Point .....		•	•																					
Pillsbury Point .....		•																						
Palisades Kepler .....	•			•	•		•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pammel .....	•											•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pilot Knob .....	•											•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pine Lake .....	•	•	•																					
Preparation Canyon .....		•																						
Red Haw Hill .....						Not Developed																		
Rice Lake .....		•								•					•						•			
Rush Lake .....		•																						
Sharon Bluffs .....		•														•				•	•			•
Sievert Springs .....	•																							•
Silver Lake .....		•																						
Springbrook .....	•		•																					
Stone Park .....	•												•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Storm Lake .....		•	•																					
Swan Lake .....		•														•	•				•			
Trappers Bay on Silver Lake .....		•						•													•			
Twin Lakes .....		•	•																		•			
Twin Springs .....		•																						•
Walnut Woods .....	•																							•
Wanata Preserve .....		•	•																		•			
Wapsipinicon .....		•		•	•				•	•			•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Waubonsie .....	•																							•
White Pine Hollow .....																								•
Wild Cat Den .....	•																							•
Wood Thrush Preserve .....																								•
Woodman Hollow .....		•																						•

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