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Restore the Forest Cover  
Iowa State Planning Board

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# RESTORE THE FOREST COVER

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A Graphic Brochure Prepared By The  
Iowa State Planning Board  
- 1935 -

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## • foreword

Any adjustment program in order to be successful in the long run must recognize the economic importance of a proper correlation among lands suitable for cultivation, those most desirable for forage crops, and those which should be utilized for timber, recreation, game development and erosion control.

In Iowa---particularly in southern Iowa---a great need for land use adjustment in certain areas can and should be met by a program of reforestation. Only to a limited extent can such a program be undertaken by individual land owners and operators. Extreme economic pressure, resulting from low farm incomes and high cost of financing indebtedness, often forces the individual to cultivate marginal or submarginal land, while the lack of immediate economic return discourages him from returning to forest cover land unsuited to cultivation.

As a result of these conditions, over which the individual has no control, the responsibility for restoring the forest cover cannot be placed on the farm operator or land owner, but must be accepted as a public responsibility.

Because of this and because national forest developments are valuable demonstrations of proper land use, it is highly desirable that the National Forest program include the reforestation of parts of southern Iowa. Advantages such as recreational opportunity and wild life preservation, together with soil conservation and flood control, make such a program a sound public investment.

The actual effect of the reduction of the taxable land due to national forest acquisition is not commonly understood in Iowa or other states. The purchase of federal forest areas naturally does away with the possibility of taxing this land for state, county and local revenues; however, some years ago the U.S. Forest

Service worked out a plan to compensate the affected counties for their tax loss. The plan which has been effective for many years in all states where there are national forests, is to return each year to the county in which a national forest unit is located 25 percent of the gross revenue received from timber sales, grazing permits, recreational areas, etc., to be used by the county for school purposes. In a similar manner 10 percent of the gross revenue from the national forests in a county must be spent on roads in the county. In this way a total of 35 percent of gross revenue (not net revenue) is returned to the county.

In succeeding pages an attempt is made to show the need for reforestation in parts of Iowa. Although southern Iowa has the greatest need, it would be neither accurate nor fair to deny that there are thousands of acres of excellent farm land in southern Iowa counties. The point to be stressed is that a reforestation program will contribute materially to the economic and social rehabilitation of the parts of southern Iowa that have become unproductive for agricultural purposes. The same would be true also of other parts of the state, especially along the larger rivers and streams. Without forest cover, the realm of devastation will be projected farther into the heart of now fertile farm lands. With a reforestation program economic hardship will be alleviated in part, due to a broadening of work possibilities; land use maladjustments will be to a great extent corrected; and the balance of nature will be, in a large measure, restored.





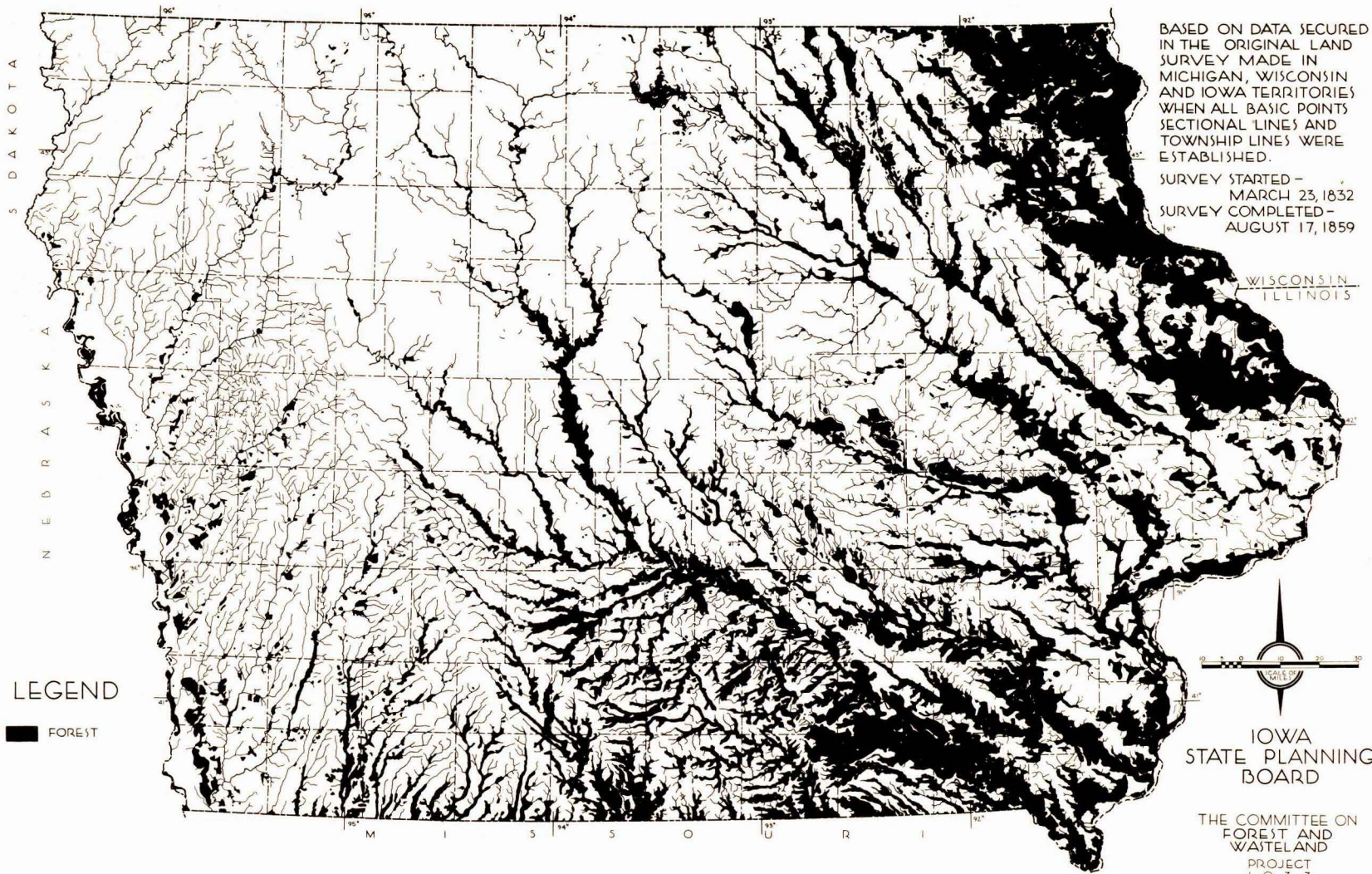
Depletion of the native forest cover... exploitation of the soil through cultivation of areas suited primarily to tree crops or grazing ... these are causes of tragedy for many southern Iowa farmers.





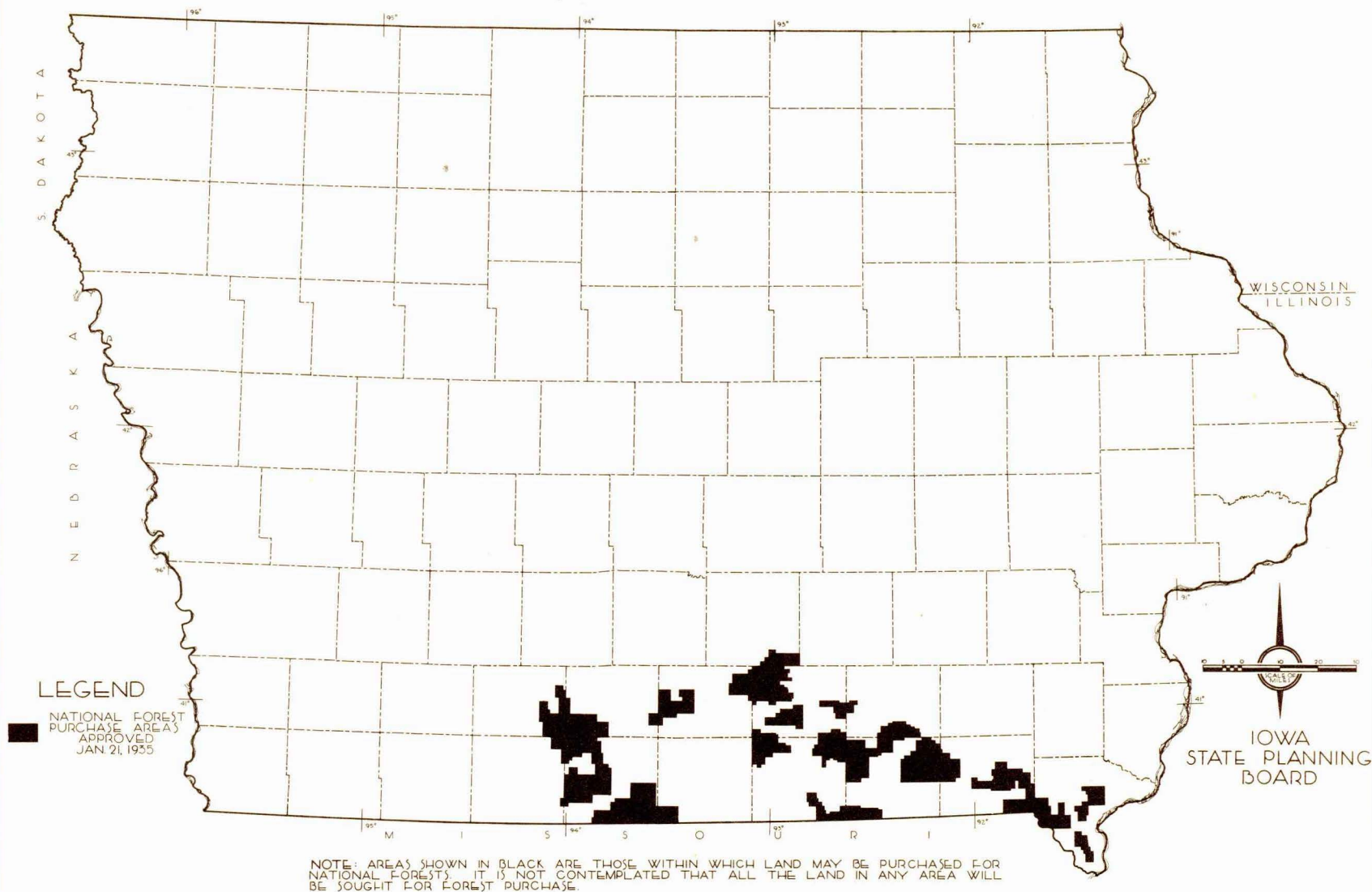
# IOWA STATE PLAN

# ORIGINAL FOREST COVER



# IOWA STATE PLAN

# FOREST PURCHASE AREAS





# Restore The Forest Cover



Here we see the result, in erosion, of improper land use and cropping methods. This land was once in trees.

Denuded of its protective forest cover, the steeply sloping soil has been prey to the forces of wind and rain and gravity. Soil which took thousands of years to produce has disappeared within the span of one man's memory.

# Restore The Forest Cover





## • timber depletion

According to the original land surveys, 1832 to 1859, about 7,200,000 acres, or 20 percent of the total area of Iowa, were covered with timber.

At the present time, probably not more than 1,000,000<sup>7</sup> acres of timber land remain in the state, some of which have been cut over. (This figure does not include wood lots)

The original forest has given way to cultivated crops.

Most of the original timber occupied the poorer, thinner, soils of the state. Thousands of acres cleared of their timber had been cultivated only a few years when extensive erosion set in.

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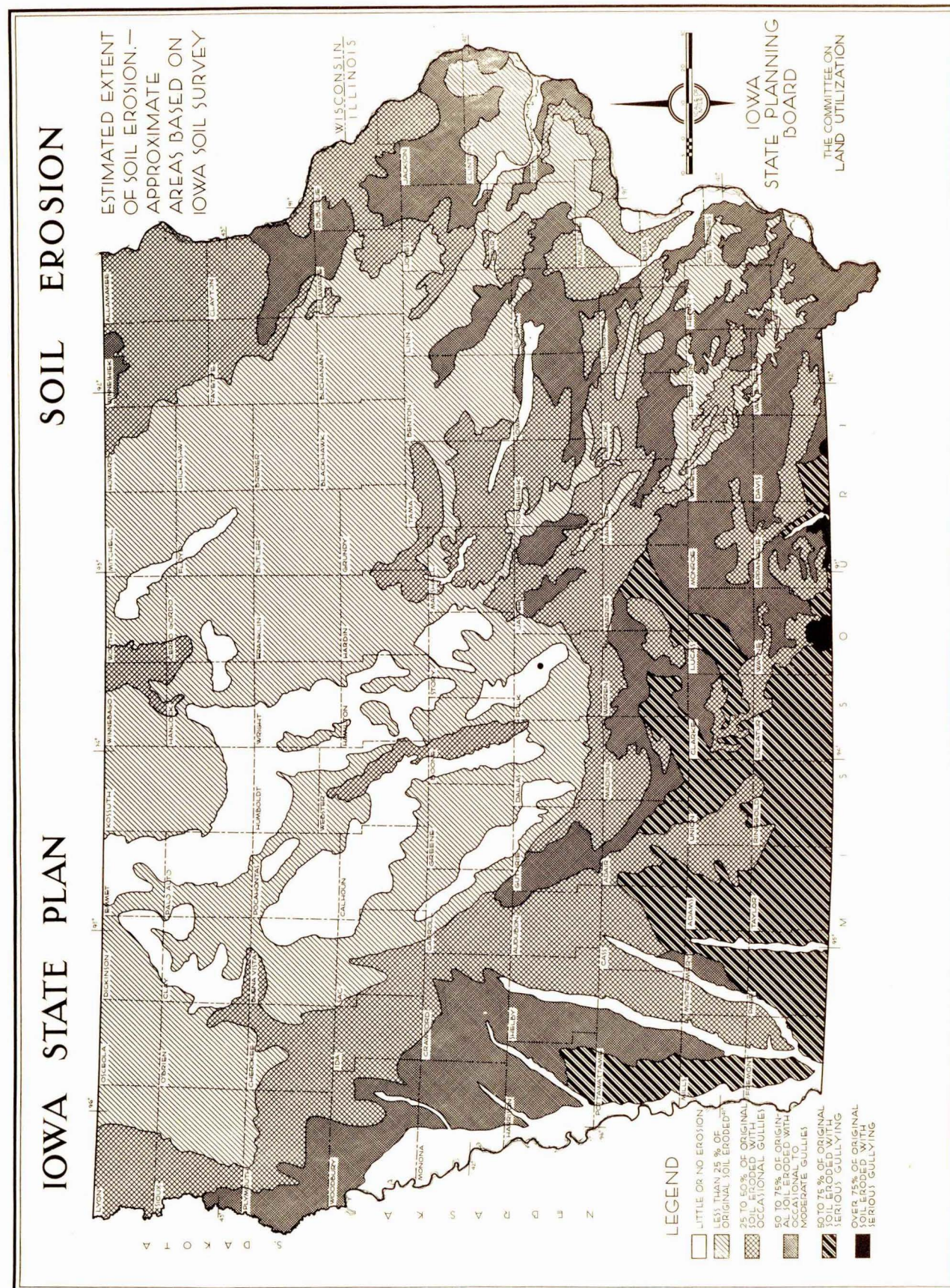
Since the sod and timber cover of Iowa was first disturbed, the state, according to estimates, has lost approximately 550,000 tons of good surface soil per square mile, or a total for the state of about 30,000,000,000 tons.

It is further estimated that approximately 40 percent of the area of the state has been eroded to such an extent as to show a loss of from 50 to 75 percent or more of the surface soil.

• • •

Borings taken in Iowa lakes show a heavy deposit of sediment which has accumulated during the past 60 or 70 years. If these lakes are to be preserved for recreational purposes, an elaborate dredging program will have to be instituted.

Better farming methods, the establishment of permanent pasture, and reforestation of steep slopes and poor soils will slow up this destructive process of siltation in our lakes.







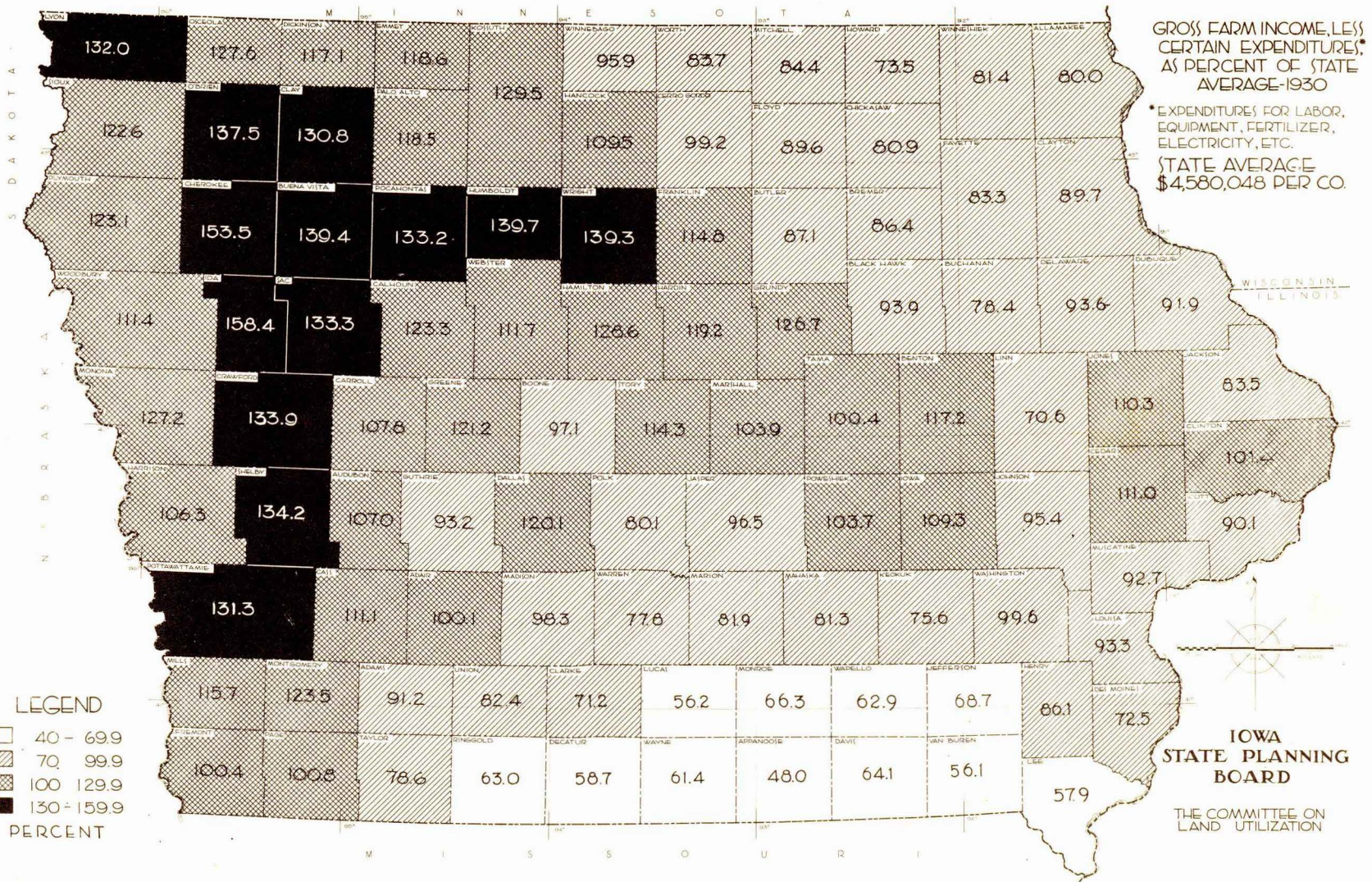
One of the values of forest cover is in moderating the effects of an unusually great (or small) amount of rainfall. Flood scenes like those above and at the right would be less common if the native forests had been allowed to stand. Retarding run-off, besides decreasing flood danger, aids in the retention of ground water.





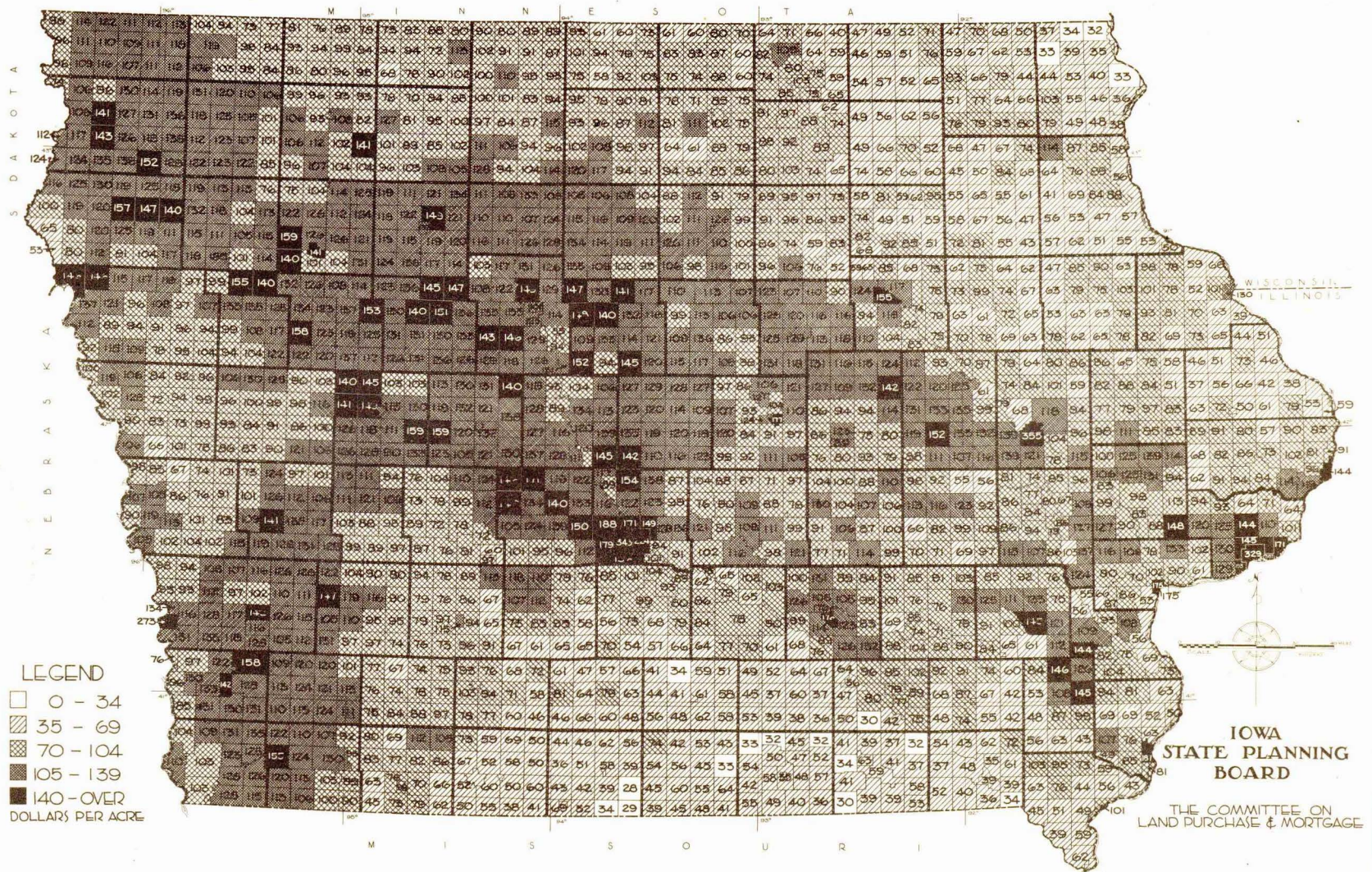
# IOWA STATE PLAN

# NET FARM INCOME

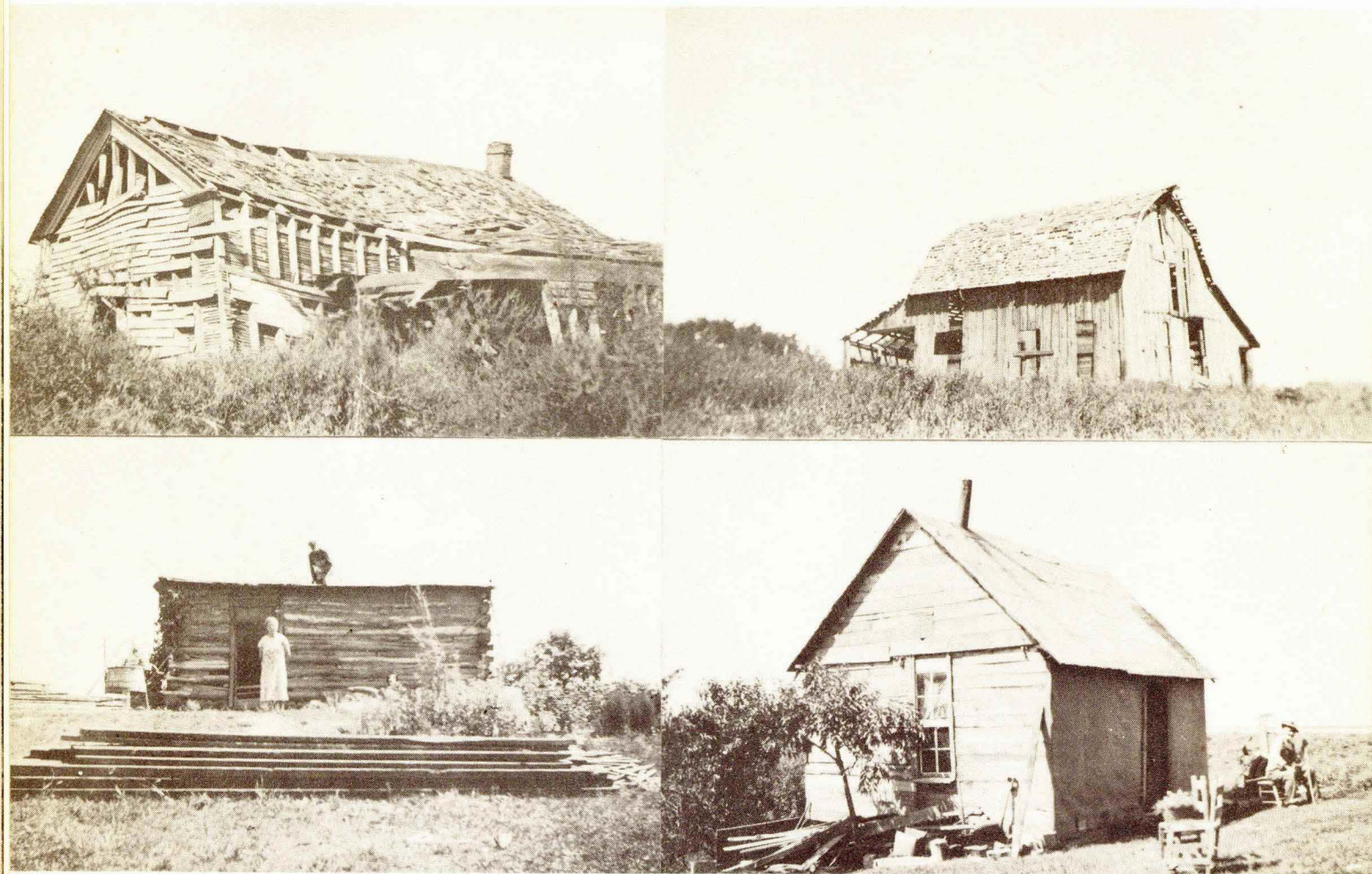


# IOWA STATE PLAN

# LAND VALUES







Iowa's native forest cover was most extensive, and is now most depleted, in the southern counties. Perhaps as a penalty for land misuse, these counties have the lowest net farm income and land values in the state. (See preceding pages.) Dilapidated and make-shift structures, like those pictured above and at the right, characterize the areas of most flagrant deforestation.

Many farm families have left these areas. Those who remain have comparatively few home conveniences, and their dwellings are valued among the lowest in the state. (See following pages.)

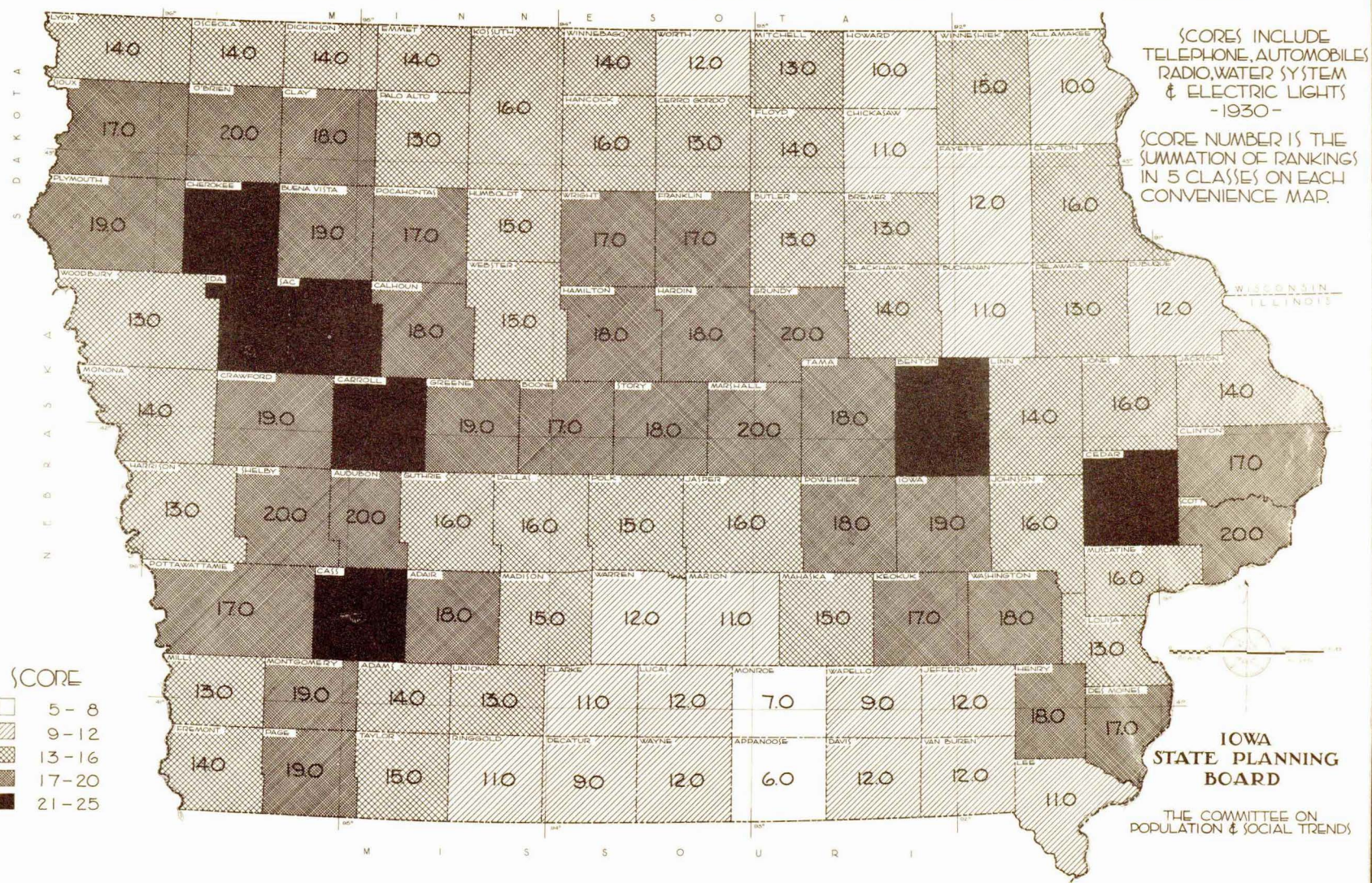
Farm homes, like the forests themselves, grow out of and are nourished by the soil. When the soil is rich and properly utilized, it will support healthful, attractive homes. When soil is thin and badly used, the tragedy is reflected in the poor crops, the poor homes, and the poor people who struggle to maintain themselves.





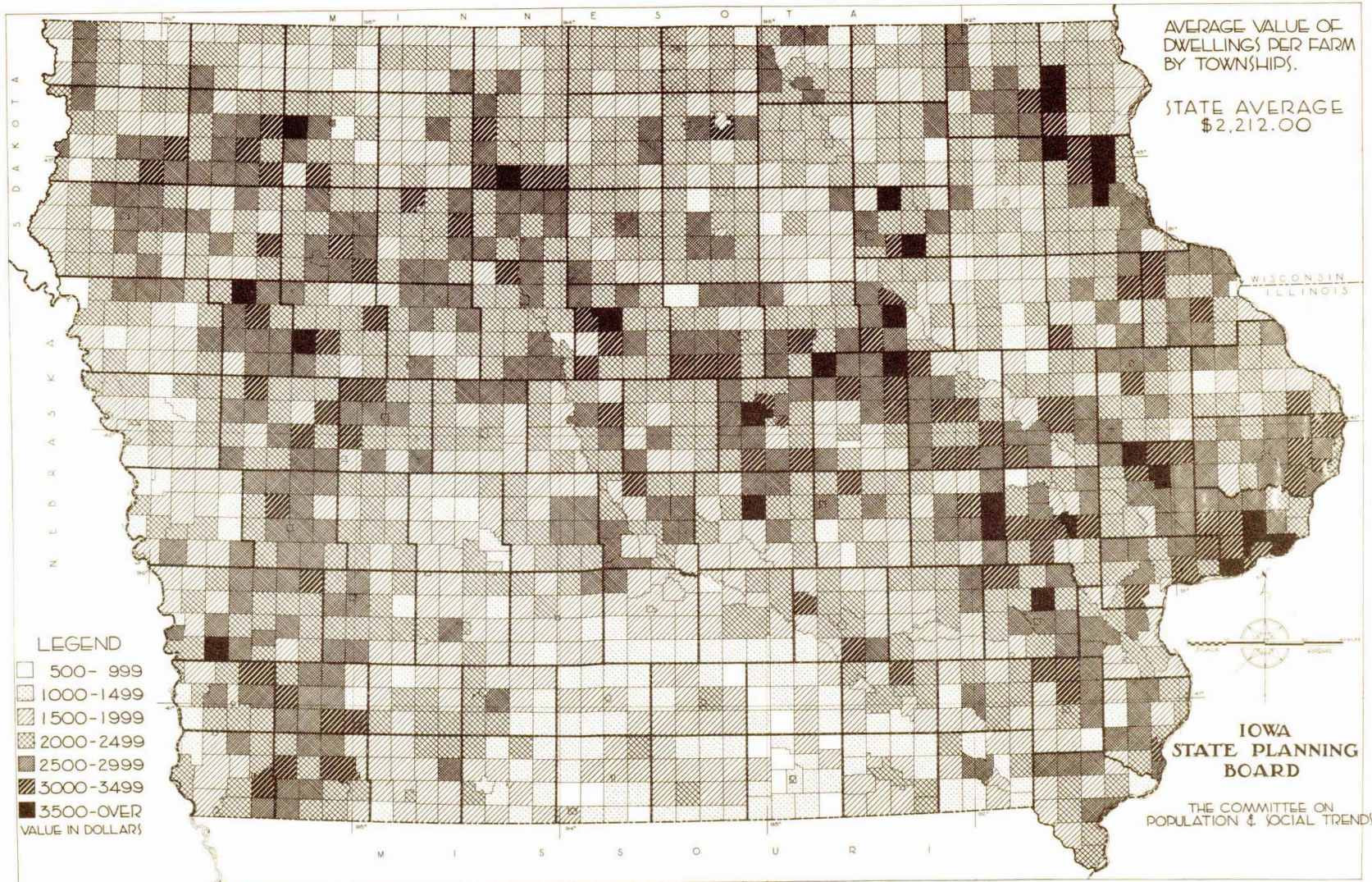
# IOWA STATE PLAN

# FARM HOME CONVENIENCES

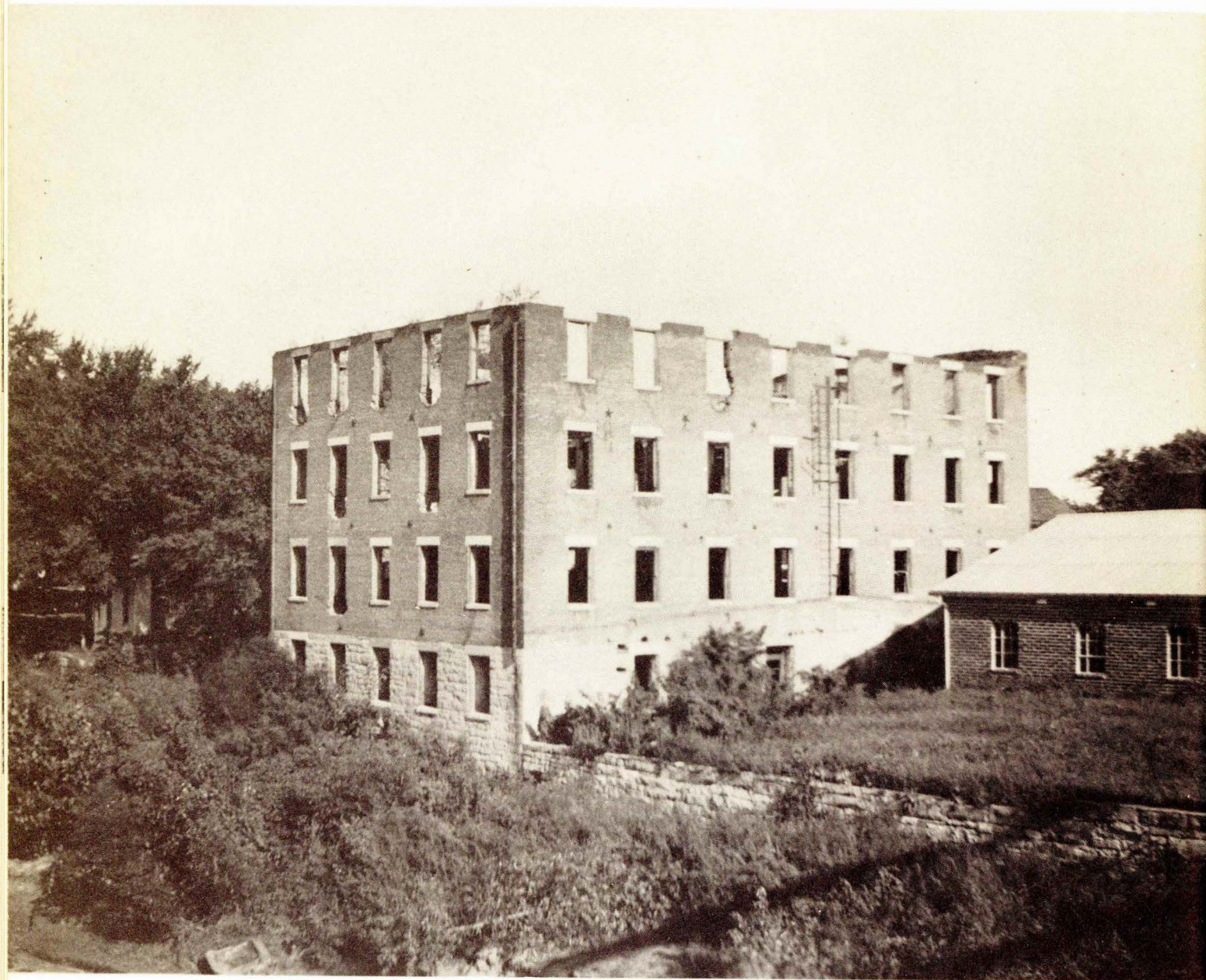


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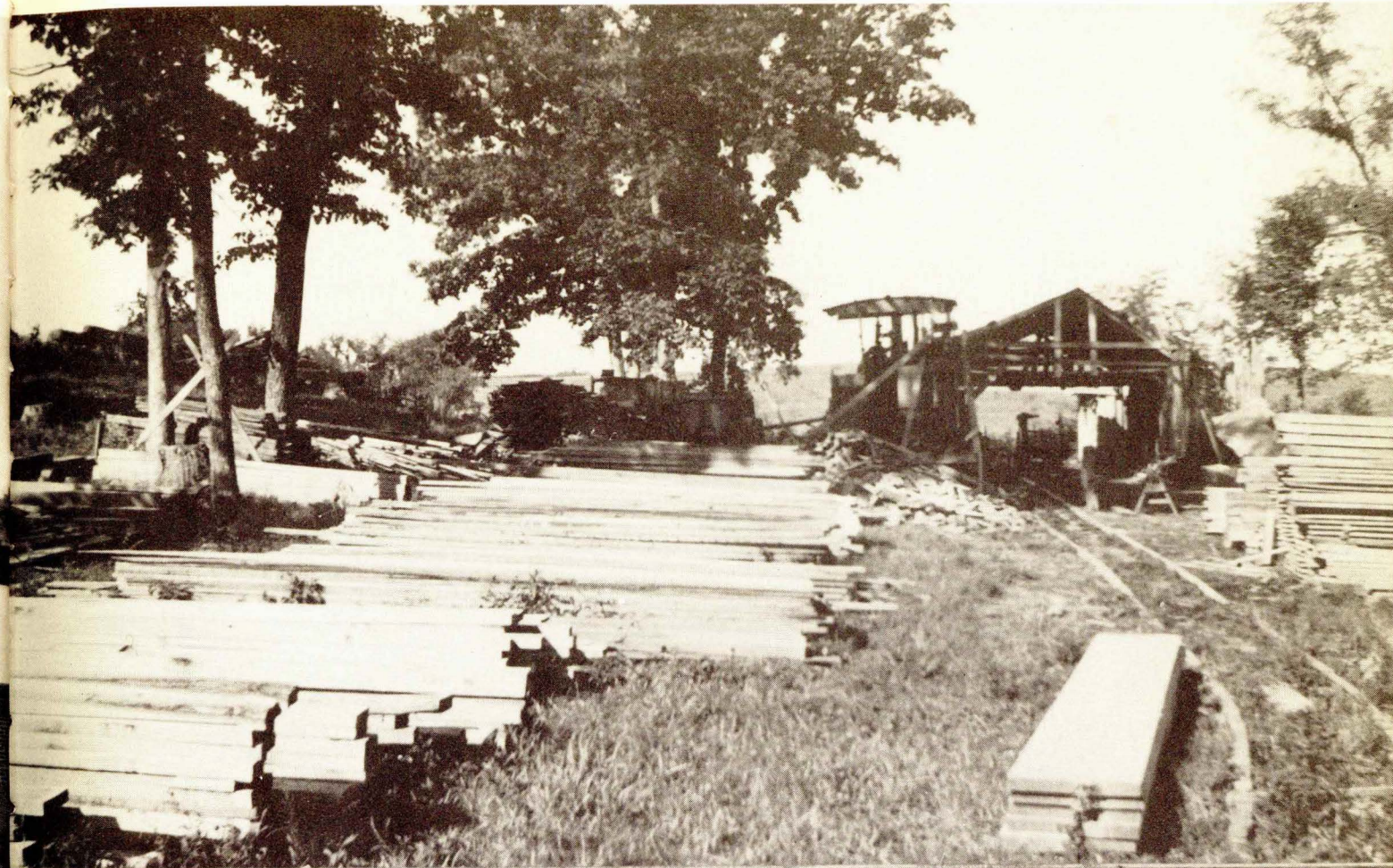
# VALUE OF FARM DWELLINGS-1930







The food of industry is the raw produce of the land. When the land fails, industries close down and rust away in idleness. The ruin above was once a southern Iowa woollen mill which employed a large group of workers.







The picture above shows men removing fish from a drying lake which formerly extended to the trees in the background. Reforestation will help to conserve and stabilize the water supply and reduce siltation. Preservation of wild life (see pictures at right) is greatly furthered by national forest development.







Under a protective covering of trees, the ugly wounds of erosion are hidden from sight and gradually are healed over. Barren waste is transformed into a wooded nook, a home for game, a productive wood lot, a grazing area, a pleasant forest where people may spend a quiet holiday.





## • conclusions

### Iowa Needs National Forests:

To prevent further devastation of fertile farm lands by gully erosion and to aid in the restoration of areas already depleted . . . . .

To contribute to social and economic rehabilitation . . . .

To increase the effectiveness of flood control . . . . .

To reduce the rate of siltation which now threatens to destroy many of Iowa's lakes, ponds, and reservoirs . . . .

To aid in the retention of ground waters . . . . .

To supply timber and raw materials for industrial use . . . . .

To protect and restore wild life resources . . . . .

To provide increased recreational facilities and opportunities . . . . .

National forests will do these things and at the same time demonstrate the feasibility of a proper land use program.

## • acknowledgments

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