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*Mid-cent. White House Conf. on Children and youth*  
*Iowa Commission*

*Report of Com. on Care and Rehabilitation of Delinquent  
Children in Iowa*

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Mid-cent. White House Conf. on  
Children & Youth. Iowa Commission.  
Report of com. on care & rehabili-  
tation of delinquent children in Iowa

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*delinquent*

**YOUTH  
IN IOWA**

*1950*

- REPORT OF COMMITTEE
- ON CARE AND
- REHABILITATION OF
- DELINQUENT CHILDREN
- IN IOWA

Governor's Commission  
On Children and Youth  
of

- MIDCENTURY WHITE HOUSE
- CONFERENCE, 1950

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IOWA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
OF THE  
MID-CENTURY WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

REPORT OF COMMITTEE  
ON CARE AND REHABILITATION OF DELINQUENT  
CHILDREN IN IOWA

SEPTEMBER 15, 1950

IOWA COMMITTEE ON CARE AND REHABILITATION OF DELINQUENTS

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Chief of Police Berg  
Fort Dodge, Iowa

Supt. Marie Carter  
State Training School for Girls  
Mitchellville, Iowa

Chief of Police Nelson  
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Supt. H. L. Miles  
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Mr. George Murray  
New Hampton, Iowa

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Probation Office Webster County  
Fort Dodge, Iowa

Judge F. W. Vincent  
Guthrie Center, Iowa



C O N T E N T S

	Page
Introduction . . . . .	3
The Problem of the Delinquent . . . . .	.5
The Extent of Delinquency in Iowa . . . . .	.5
Institutional Commitments . . . . .	.7
At What Age does Delinquency Begin in Iowa . . . . .	7
Commitments to Iowa Reformatory, Anamosa . . . . .	.10
Who are the Iowa Delinquents and from where Do they Come . .	.12
Care of Delinquents Pending Hearing . . . . .	16
Delinquents Held in County Jails . . . . .	.18
Commitments to State Industrial Schools . . . . .	19
How Iowa Courts Dispose of Juvenile Cases . . . . .	22
Juvenile Probation in Iowa . . . . .	.25
Unfavorable Conditions in Iowa and Delinquency . . . . .	.30
What the Youth of Iowa Say . . . . .	.32
Recent Improvements in Iowa . . . . .	36
Recommendations . . . . .	38



## INTRODUCTION

The IOWA COMMITTEE ON CARE AND REHABILITATION OF DELINQUENTS is one of the eight committees of the Iowa Commission on Youth which has been appointed to prepare certain information for the 1950 MIDCENTURY WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH and for other programs within the state of Iowa. The Committee on Care and Rehabilitation of Delinquents has dealt with two primary tasks relative to delinquent youth within the state; (1) What are the favorable and unfavorable conditions within the state of Iowa which are related to the care and treatment of delinquents, and (2) What changes can and should be made in Iowa communities, social agencies, courts and institutions which would improve the care and rehabilitation of delinquent children.

A preliminary report completed on May 20, 1950 has been examined and approved by the members of the committee. The present report contains the information in the earlier report and additional items suggested by the committee. The committee is of the opinion that the factual information and proposals in the present report should serve as the basis of certain suggestions to be placed before Iowa communities and the state officials concerned with the care and treatment of Iowa Youth.

The term "delinquent" used in this report applies to juveniles whose conduct has been serious enough to bring them to the attention of the police, sheriffs or the judicial authorities in the state. It, therefore, excludes the "problem children" who may or may not have committed certain anti-social acts which are not serious enough to involve law enforcement agencies of the state. The term "care" includes the attention given to a child by the police, the courts, probation officers and the treatment in the industrial schools of the state. The term "Rehabilitation" implies any treatment by police, courts or correctional institutions which in anyway tends to improve or reform the child in such a manner as to return the child to the communities as a law abiding and integrated personality.



The information in this report is a composite of certain basic material compiled from various sources within the state, opinions obtained from the four district conferences held within the state in the spring of 1950 and the considered judgments of the members of the committee.

Walter A. Lunden  
Chairman,  
Iowa Committee on Care  
and Rehabilitation of Delinquents



## The Problem of the Delinquent

Juvenile delinquency is an anti-social act which a child does. It is a method of behavior and something overt. Since it is a form of behavior it is a learned type of conduct. Essentially, what a child does is a reflection of what he has learned from other persons. Juvenile acts constitute a mirror in which a society may see the adult world in miniature.

## The Extent of Delinquency in Iowa

In a given year from 2,000 to 2,500 Iowa boys and girls come before the various courts in the state. In 1947 there were 2,223 juvenile court cases in the 99 counties of Iowa. Of these, 1,202 were delinquents, 890 were dependency and neglect cases and 131 were cases involving special proceedings. The age of the delinquent boys and girls ranged from 3 years to 18 years with most of them 15 and 16 years of age.

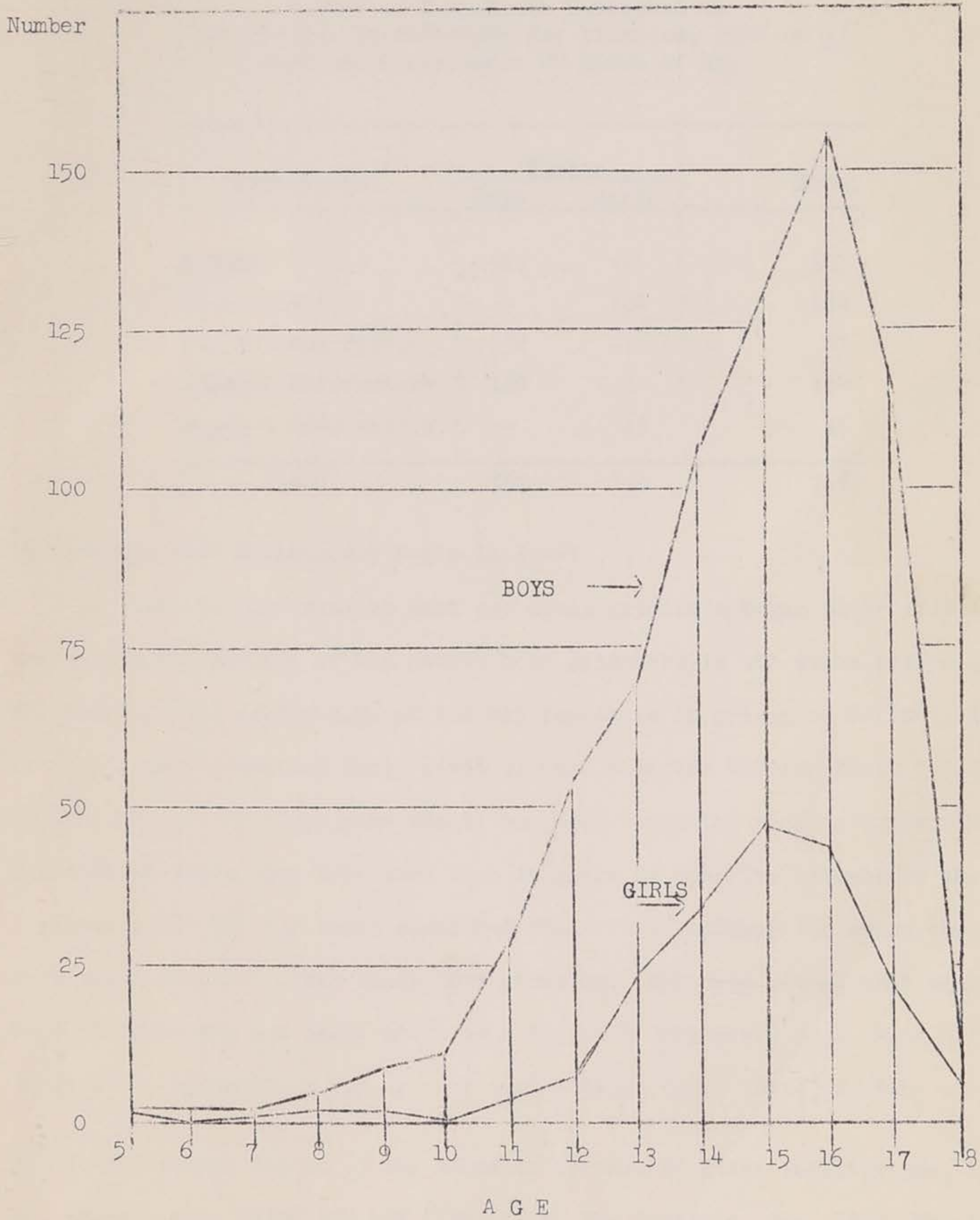
AGE OF DELINQUENT BOYS AND GIRLS IN COURTS IN IOWA, 1947 <sup>1/</sup>

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
Under 5	1	1	2
5	2	1	3
6	2	0	2
7	2	1	3
8	5	2	7
9	8	2	10
10	12	0	12
11	29	4	33
12	54	7	61
13	70	24	94
14	108	39	147
15	130	46	176
16	155	43	198
17	115	21	136
18 and over	7	6	13
Age not given	258	47	305
Total	958	244	1,202

<sup>1/</sup> Special Unpublished Report from Iowa Department of Welfare, 1947



AGE DISTRIBUTION OF DELINQUENT BOYS AND GIRLS IN IOWA COURTS, 1947





## Institutional Commitments

In a given year the 99 counties of Iowa commit approximately 350 to 400 youths to the correctional institutions of the state. In the biennium 1947-48, 766 youths under 20 years of age were committed to the five correctional institutions in Iowa.

Number of Iowa Youth Committed to  
Correctional Institutions for Biennium, 1947-48 1/  
Boys and Girls under 20 years of age

Institution	Number		Total
	Boys	Girls	
Eldora	351	--	351
Mitchellville	--	184	184
Ft. Madison Prison	52	--	52
Anamosa Reformatory	164	--	164
Women's Reformatory	--	15	15
Total	567	199	766

## At What Age Does Delinquency Begin in Iowa?

In order to determine at what age adult criminals began their criminal activities the records of 415 native born prisoners in the state prison at Ft. Madison were examined.<sup>2/</sup> Of the 415 repeaters in prison as of 1947, 191 or 46 per cent committed their first offense sometime between their 10th and 19th birthday. Of these same men 81 had been committed to some correctional institution while they were less than 16 years of age. The balance of the repeaters, 224 (54 per cent) committed their first offense for which they received a sentence after their 20th birthday. The data reveal that almost half of these men got their start in crime at a very early age. Most criminals, in general, begin their career some time between their 16th and 25th birthday.

<sup>1/</sup> 26th Biennial Report of the Board of Control of State Institutions, Iowa.

<sup>2/</sup> Lunden, W.A. CRIME AND THE LIFE CYCLE, The Presidio, Jan. 1949, No. 11, Vol. XV.



These ten years are the most important years in a person's life when he beings to "paddle his own canoe" up or down the stream of life.

Age at Which 415 Iowa Repeaters  
Committed Their First Offense .  
Prisoners in State Prison as of  
1947

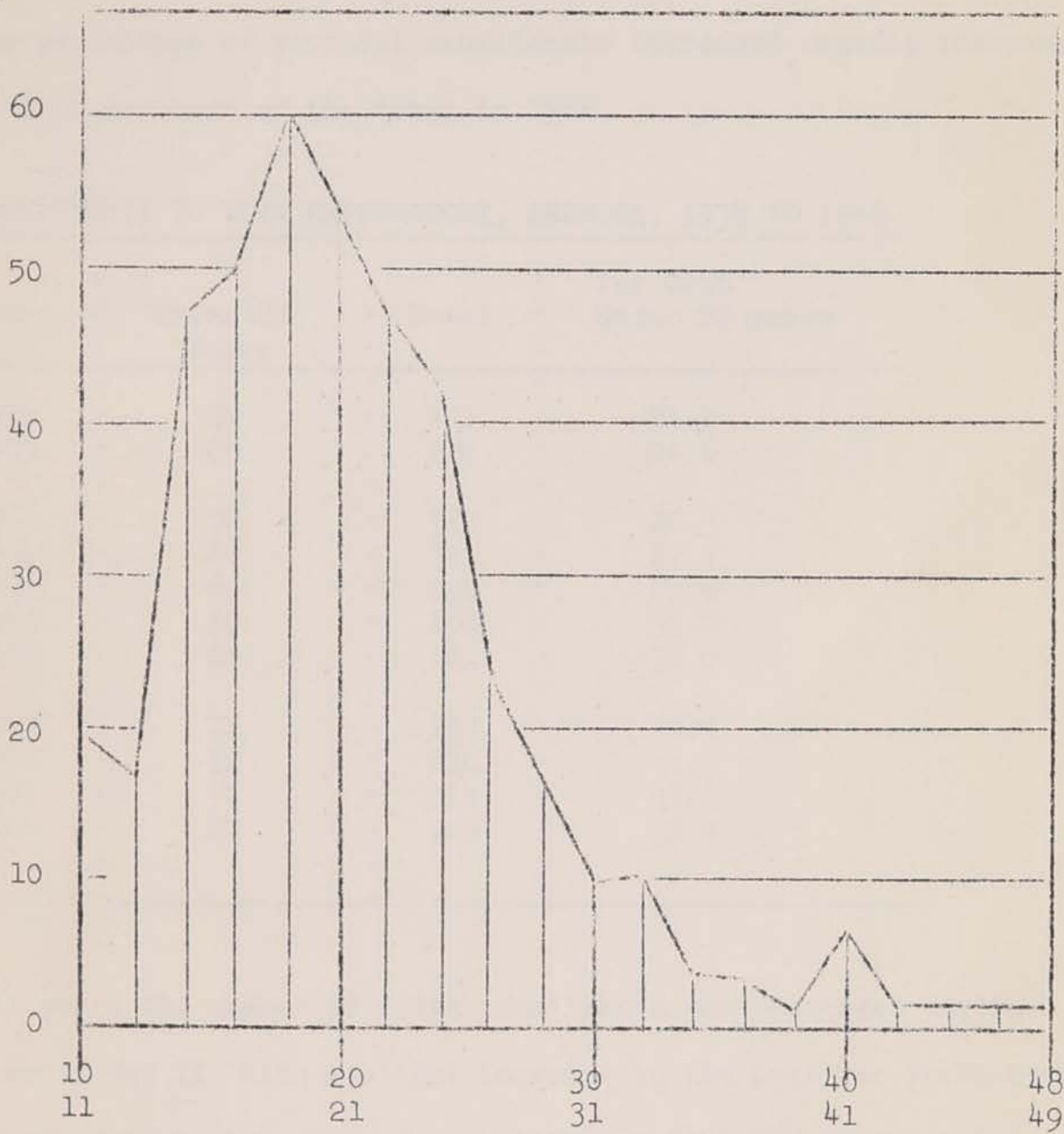
Age	Number
10-11 . . . . .	18
12-13 . . . . .	16
14-15 . . . . .	47
16-17 . . . . .	50
18-19 . . . . .	60
	191
20-21 . . . . .	54
22-23 . . . . .	47
24-25 . . . . .	42
26-27 . . . . .	23
28-29 . . . . .	17
	183
30-31 . . . . .	10
32-33 . . . . .	11
34-35 . . . . .	4
36-37 . . . . .	3
38-39 . . . . .	1
	29
40-41 . . . . .	6
42-43 . . . . .	1
44-45 . . . . .	1
46-47 . . . . .	1
48-49 . . . . .	1
	10
56-57 . . . . .	1
68-69 . . . . .	1
	2
Total . . . . .	415

Average Age--21.1 years



AGE AT FIRST OFFENSE OF 415 IOWA REPEATERS, 1947

Number



A G E



## COMMITMENTS TO IOWA REFORMATORY, ANAMOSA

One of the significant changes in the commitments to the Iowa Reformatory at Anamosa is the increasing number of men under 20 years of age who have been committed in the past 5 years. Prior to World War II only 21.2 per cent of the total number committed to the reformatory were under 20 years of age. After 1942 the percentage of youthful commitments increased rapidly reaching a high point of 40 per cent of the total in 1946.

## COMMITMENTS TO IOWA REFORMATORY, ANAMOSA, 1938 TO 1948

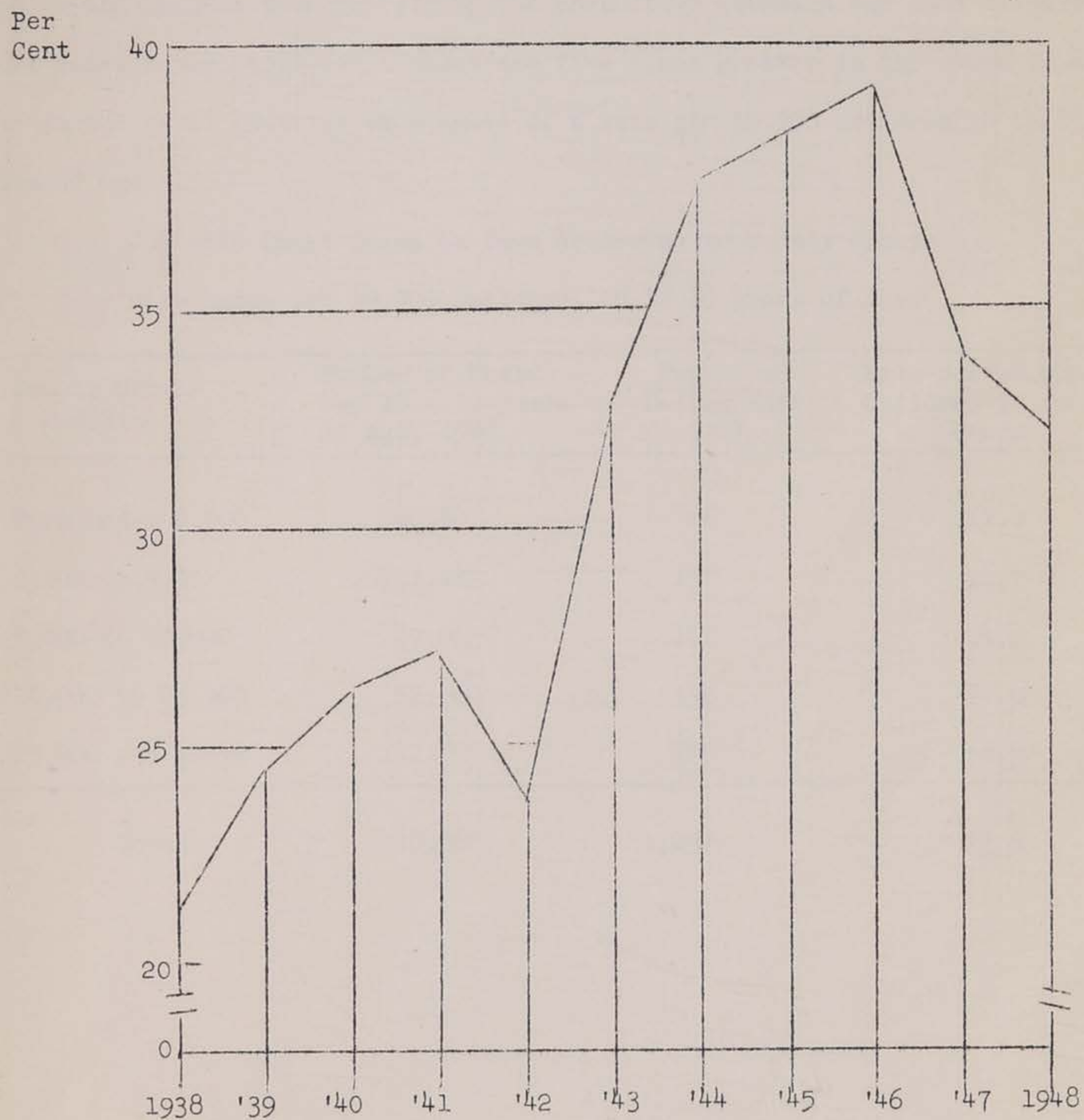
Year	Under 20 Years	Total	Per Cent Under 20 years
1938	89	421	21.2
1939	89	362	24.6
1940	98	372	26.3
1941	87	321	27.1
1942	60	252	23.8
1943	62	188	33.0
1944	69	181	38.0
1945	77	197	39.0
1946	92	226	40.0
1947	77	224	34.3
1948	87	269	32.4

In the 11 years the number of total commitments has decreased during the years of World War II with a slight increase in the post-war years whereas the number of younger men has changed very little. In terms of the total distribution of the commitments the percentage of youthful commitments has increased noticeably. This change is due to two factors within the state; (1) The tendency of judges in Iowa to commit youths to the reformatory rather than to the Training School at Eldora, and (2) The presence of more youthful offenders in Iowa during these same years which required reformatory treatment.



## COMMITMENTS OF MEN TO IOWA REFORMATORY, ANAMOSA, 1938 TO 1948

Per Cent of Men under 20 years of Age of Total Number Committed





Who are the Iowa delinquents and from where do they come?

For every girl in the courts in Iowa in 1947 there were 4 boys or a ratio of about one to four. In that year there were 958 boys and 244 girls in the various courts in the State.

As in most states the Iowa delinquents come from the larger urban centers within the state. When the 99 counties in Iowa are divided according to the size of the largest town or city in the respective counties the data of juvenile court cases reveal that court cases are five times greater in the urban counties than in the rural counties on a basis of a rate per 10,000 children 10 to 19 years of age. <sup>1/</sup>

Juvenile Court Cases in Iowa According to County Groups  
with Rates per 10,000 Children, 10 to 19 years of Age.

County Group and Size	Number of Child- ren 10 - 19 years of Age, 1940	Number of Delinquents 1947	Rate per 10,000 Children 10 to 19 Years
I Farm-under 2,500	60,807	66	11.0
II 2,500 to 5,00	113,287	137	12.7
III 5,000 to 10,000	79,013	117	14.8
IV 10,000 to 25,000	52,860	132	24.9
V 25,000 and above	142,895	785	54.9
Total	448,862	1,237	27.8

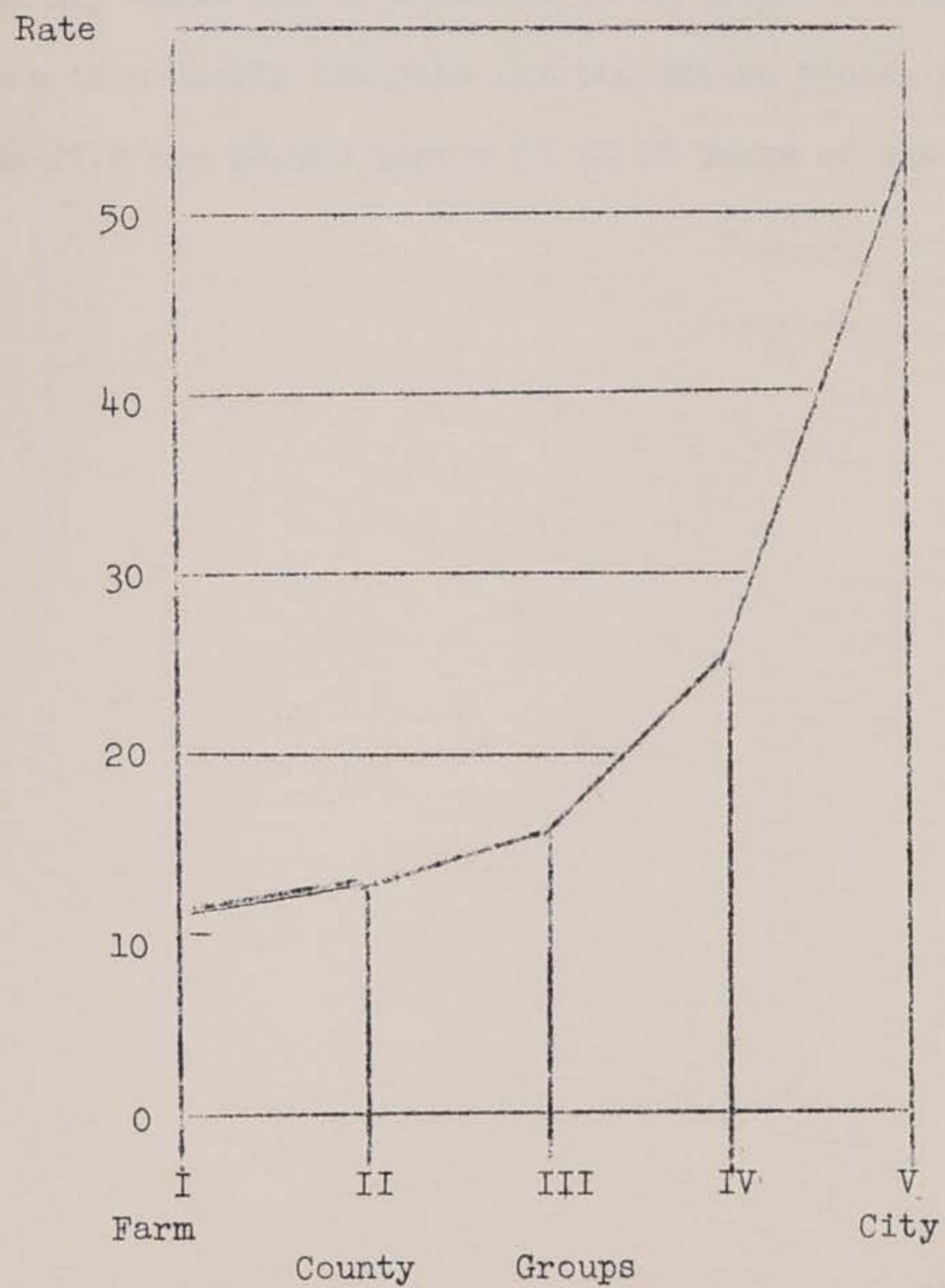
<sup>1/</sup> Lunden, W. A., Basic Social Problems in Iowa, Chapter 8.  
Wm. Brown Company, Dubuque, Iowa, 1950.



## JUVENILE COURT CASES IN IOWA

BY COUNTY GROUPS FOR 1947

(Rates per 10,000 Youth 10 to 19 years.)



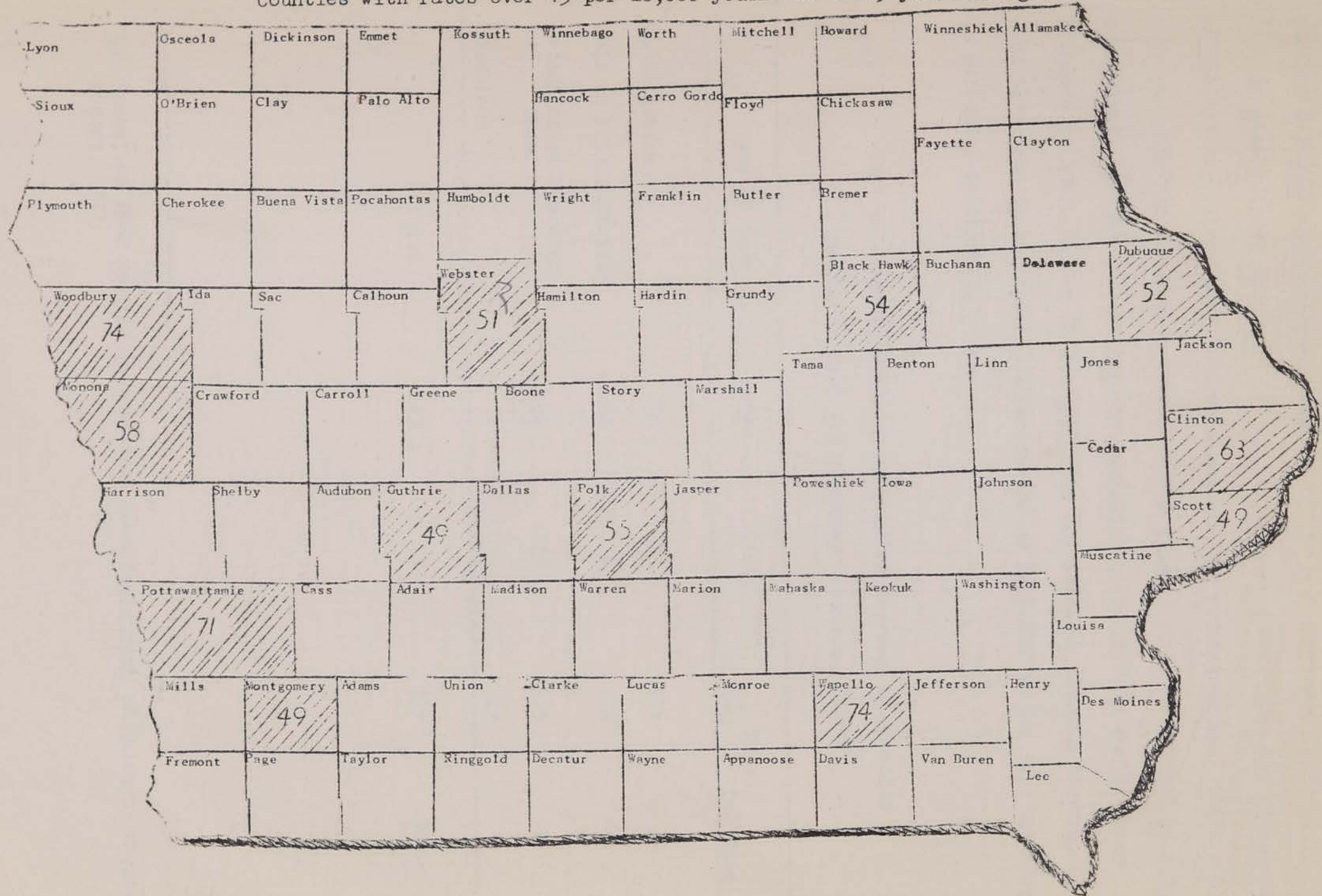


In the rural counties of Group I there were 11.0 delinquents in court for each 10,000 children 10 to 19 years of age in the same counties. In Group II counties the rate was 12.7, in Group III, 14.8 and Group IV it was 24.9 per 10,000 children. The highest rates appeared in the large urban counties of Group V with 54.9 cases per 10,000 children 10 to 19 years of age. These data are typical of most states in the nation. In all instances delinquency tends to increase with the number of people in the respective counties in Iowa.

The map shows the 12 counties in the state in which court cases were more than double the rate for the entire state. The state rate was 27.8 per 10,000 youths 10 to 19 years of age in 1947.



Juvenile Court Cases in Iowa, 1947  
 Counties with rates over 45 per 10,000 youths 10 to 19 years of age.



Rate for State: 27.8 per 10,000 youths.



## Care of Delinquents pending Hearing.

In general less than one-half of all juveniles coming to the attention of authorities in the state are detained pending court hearing. There are no complete data for the entire state but two studies afford a partial picture of conditions. Of 314 children in the juvenile courts in Polk and Woodbury Counties in 1947, 111 or 35 per cent were not detained pending hearing, 24 per cent were held in the local police station or jail and 37 per cent were kept in detention or boarding homes.

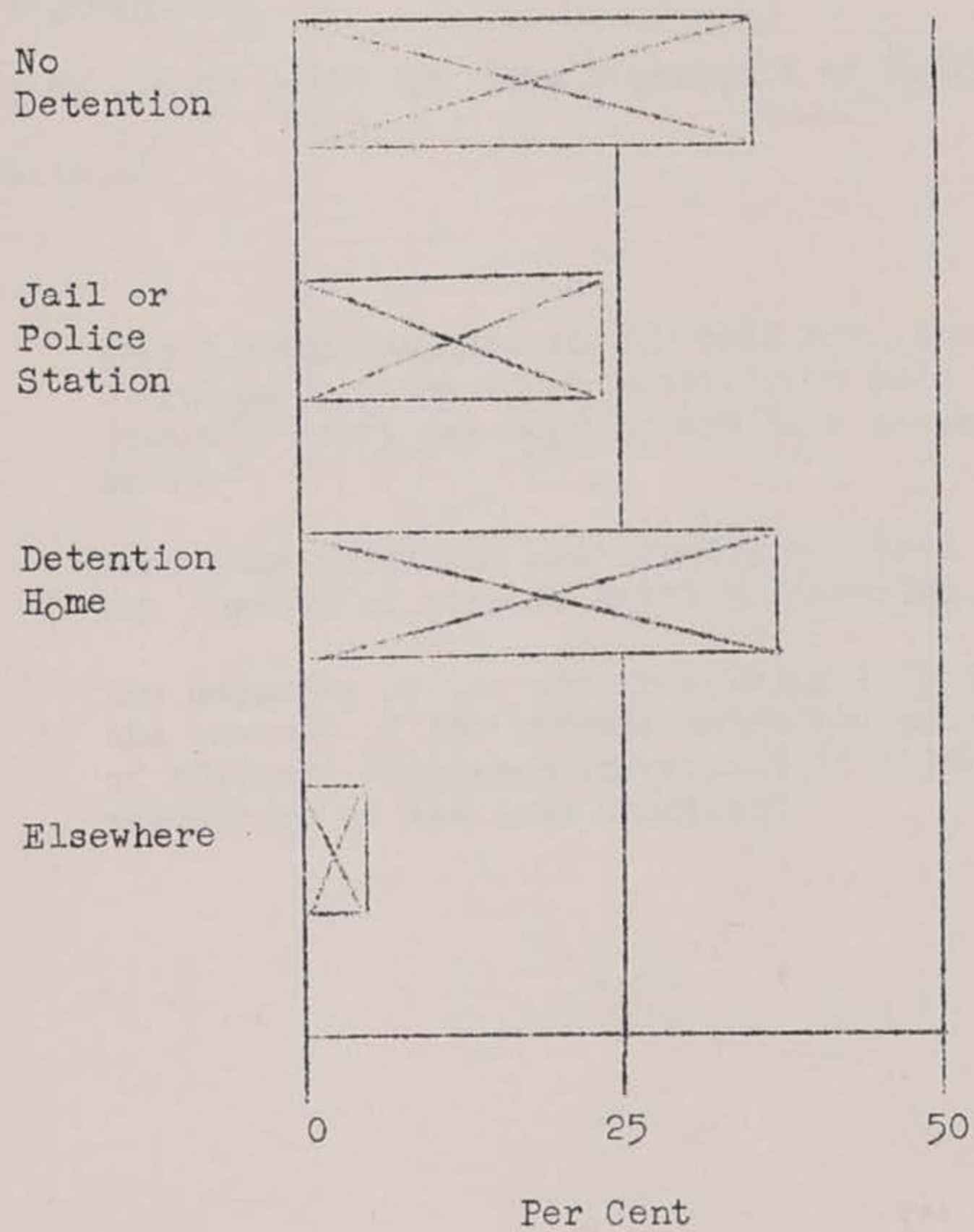
Care of Juvenile Delinquents Pending Hearing in Juvenile  
Courts in Polk and Woodbury Counties, 1947<sup>1/</sup>

Type of Care	Boys	Girls	Total	
			Number	Per Cent
No Detention	86	25	111	35
Jail or Police Station	69	6	75	24
Detention or Boarding Home	87	28	115	37
Elsewhere	1	12	13	4
Total	243	71	314	100

<sup>1/</sup> (compiled from special information) Iowa Department of Welfare, unpublished report, 1947.



CARE OF JUVENILE DELINQUENTS PENDING  
HEARING IN COURTS IN POLK AND WOODBURY COUNTIES 1947  
(Per Cent Distribution)





## Delinquents Held in County Jails

In a special study of Iowa County Jails made for the Iowa Sheriffs Association in 1947, juveniles comprised but 4.3 per cent of the total jail population. This same survey showed that county jails were never occupied to more than 50 per cent of total capacity when the maximum number of persons were detained in the jails. Of these, at maximum number, 971 were men, 43 were women and 45 were juveniles.<sup>1/</sup>

Because of this small number of juveniles the problem of segregation is not serious in Iowa. In the larger county jails, such as Polk County, juveniles are separated from adults. In the Pottawatomie County Jail there are no special facilities for segregation.

In a report on county jails the Iowa Department of Welfare points out the following facts.<sup>1/</sup>

"They (juveniles) are rarely held more than overnight because it is possible to hold juvenile court any morning and hear their cases."

"They (the children) are usually returned to the custody of parents until the hearing."

"The majority of the children being left in the custody of the parents makes the problem of adequate detention infrequent in a large percentage of the Iowa Counties!"

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<sup>1/</sup> Lunden, W. A., SURVEY OF COUNTY JAILS OF IOWA, 1910 to 1947, Unpublished Report for Iowa Sheriff's Association, 1948.

<sup>2/</sup> Iowa Department of Welfare, Unpublished Report, 1947.



## How Many Juveniles Are Committed to the State Industrial Schools in Iowa?

In the past two decades the various counties of Iowa have committed an average of 350 boys and girls to the two industrial schools each year. During the years of the Great Depression of the 1930's the annual average varied from 332 in 1930-34 to 350 in 1935-39. During World War II commitments increased rapidly with an average of 377 during the 5 years of the war.

In the post-war years of 1946 to 1948 commitments decreased sharply to an average of 239 for the three year period. This decrease has not been caused by an actual decrease in delinquency in the state but by changes in dispositions by the various courts in the state. The Eldora Riot of 1945 caused the citizens of Iowa to be seriously concerned about the administration of the State Industrial School at Eldora. As a result judges hesitated to commit boys to the school until conditions in the training school had shown signs of improvement. In addition, judges in Iowa have been more prone to use probation instead of commitment in disposing of juvenile cases in court. Apart from this the community services of social workers in the various counties have been extended so that at present there are more persons available to assist the courts in caring for juveniles requiring attention. During the years in which juvenile commitments have decreased at Eldora, the number of youths in the younger age groups has increased at the State Reformatory in Anamosa. In the biennium of 1947-48, 164 of the total 493 men committed to the Reformatory were under 20 years of age. This is about 33 per cent of the total number.



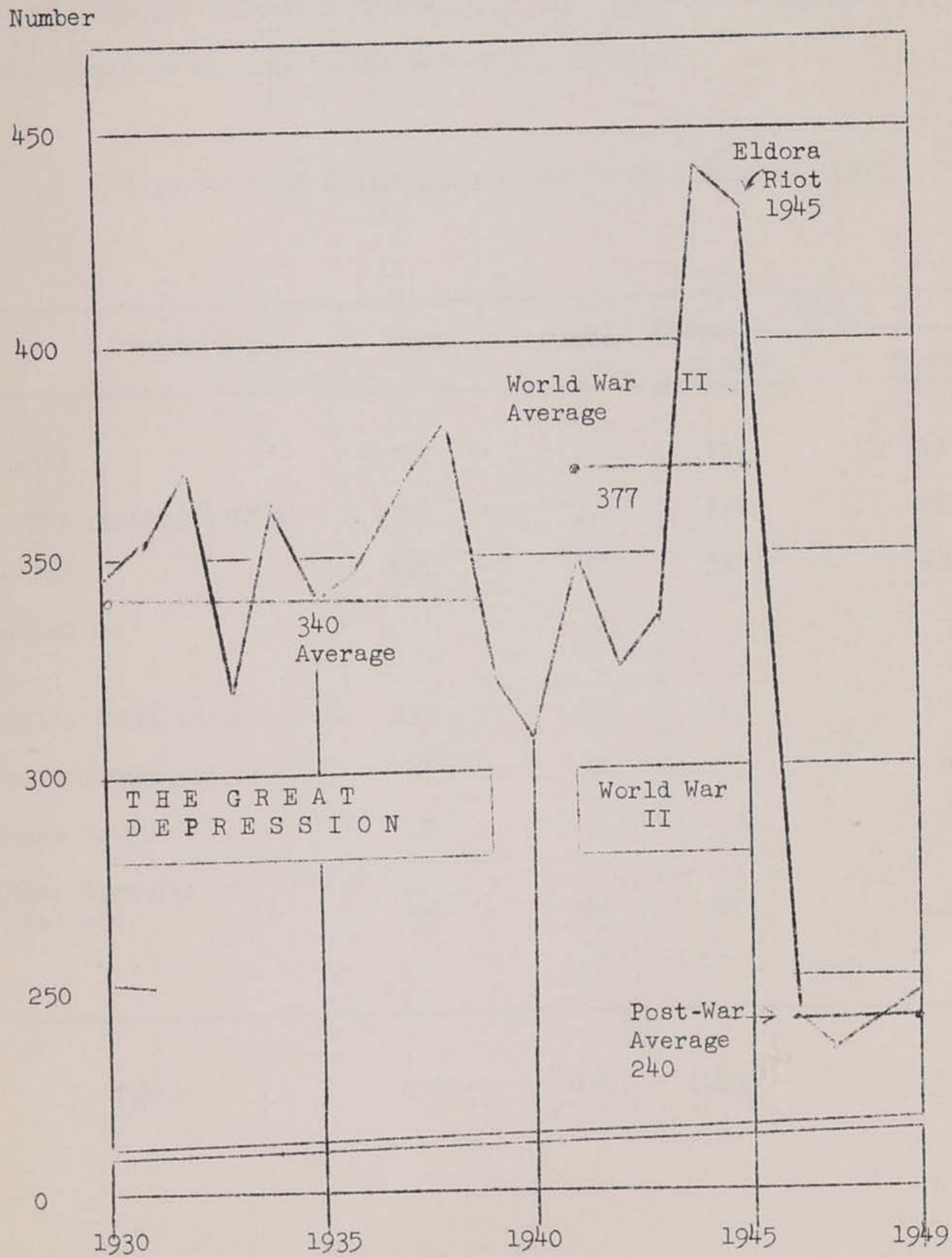
TOTAL COMMITMENTS TO IOWA INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS, 1930 to 1949 1/

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1930	246	100	346
1931	273	81	354
1932	277	94	371
1933	241	77	318
1934	273	91	364
1935	274	67	341
1936	257	91	348
1937	270	98	368
1938	292	89	381
1939	251	72	323
1940	247	60	307
1941	284	65	349
1942	256	70	326
1943	263	75	338
1944	336	107	443
1945	343	88	431
1946	181	60	241
1947	179	56	235
1948	172	69	241
1949	196	50	246
Total	5,111	1,560	6,671
Average	255	78	333

1/ Compiled from Biennial Reports of State Board of Control of Iowa Institutions for respective years.



ANNUAL COMMITMENTS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENTS  
TO INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS IN IOWA, 1930 TO 1949





## How Iowa Courts Dispose of Juvenile Cases

The courts of Iowa tend to use probation in a large share of the juvenile cases coming before the various courts. Of 1,202 cases of delinquents in the courts in the state in 1947, 22.5 per cent were committed to either a private or a public institution whereas 43 per cent were placed on probation to some one in the county. Almost 12 per cent of the cases were dismissed with or without a word of warning at the end of the hearing.

### Disposition of Delinquency Cases in Iowa Courts. 1947

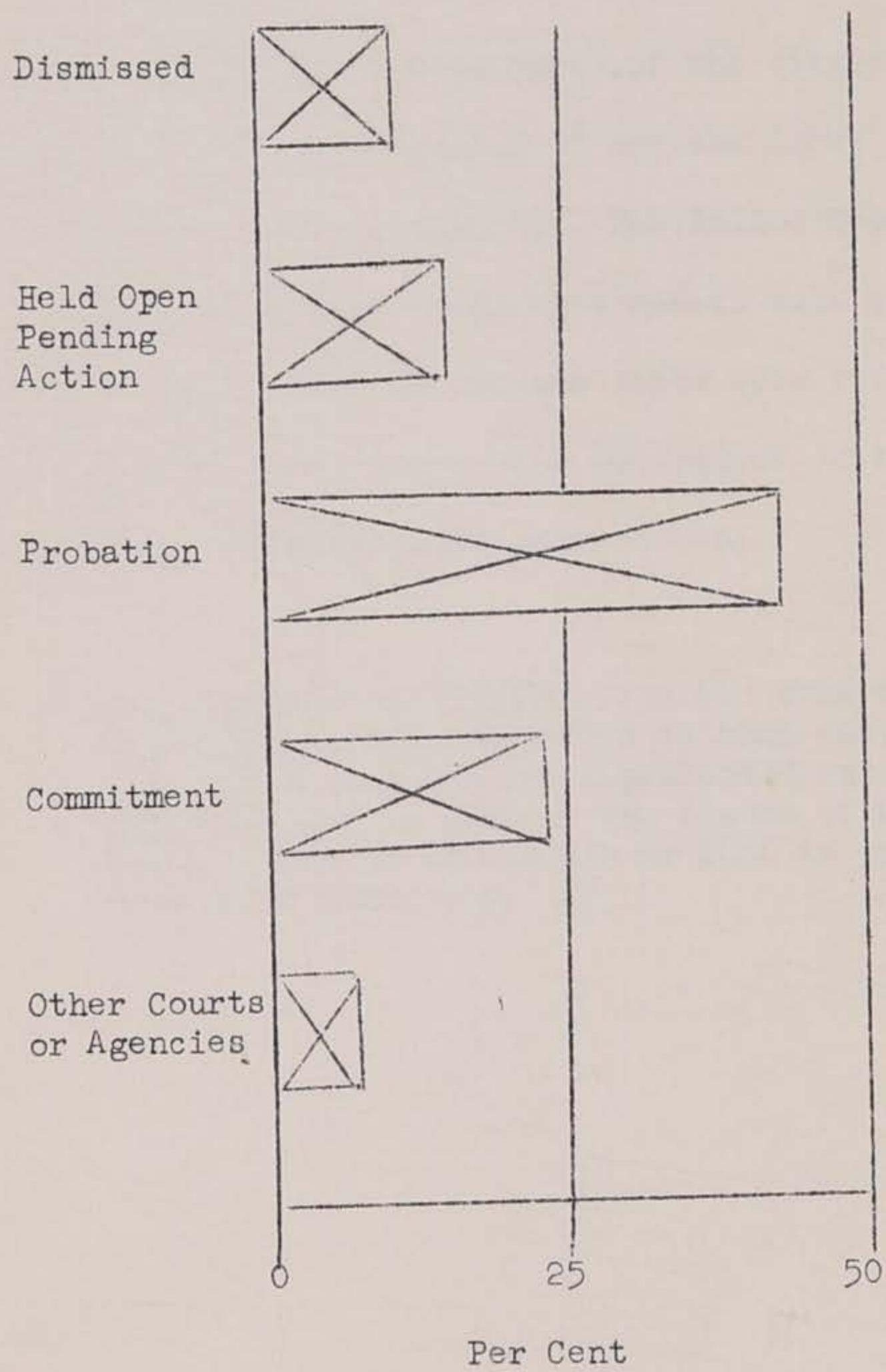
Disposition	Boys	Girls	Total	
			Number	Per Cent
Dismissed	117	20	137	11.4
Held open pending action	145	31	176	14.5
Probation	425	88	513	43.0
Committed to				
Public Institution	153	52	205	17.0
Private Institution	47	31	78	6.5
Other Courts	5	1	6	0.4
Other Agencies or Methods	66	21	87	7.2
Total	958	244	1,202	100.0



## DISPOSITION OF DELINQUENCY CASES

IN IOWA COURTS, 1947

(Per Cent Distribution)





Apart from court cases a large number of juveniles coming to the attention of public authorities are treated by the local police or the county sheriff. No record is kept of these cases but it has been estimated by some sheriffs and chiefs of police that for one case in court 10 cases are settled by the police or sheriff either by adjusting the problem or settling the issues between persons concerned by an informal talk.

The Juvenile Bureau in the Police Department of the city of Des Moines which was organized in 1944 is a good example of how the local police authorities treat minor cases in the community. The Police Department instituted the Juvenile Bureau to handle complaints and to make preliminary settlement of the minor cases. The more serious cases were referred to the Polk County Juvenile Court for attention. When delinquent acts have occurred within the state, police and sheriffs alike have agreed,

"That their first thought from the time the delinquent act was reported to them until the time the delinquent was apprehended and given a hearing was to protect the rights of the juvenile and to shield him as much as possible from undue publicity." 1/

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1/ From summary of conference held in Atlantic, Iowa, March 16, 1950



## JUVENILE PROBATION IN IOWA

To date the state of Iowa does not have a state-wide system of probation for the care of delinquent offenders in the various counties. Each judicial district or county in 1950 appoints probation officers according to the number of people in the respective counties as set forth in the Iowa Code.

As of August 25, 1950, 29 counties in Iowa had full-time probation officers, 14 had part-time officers and 56 counties had no probation officers. In some counties, reporting full-time officers, one person served most or all of the counties in the respective judicial district. In the 13th judicial district one probation officer served all 6 counties in the district. In 1947 these counties had a population of 128,315 persons. In the 21st judicial district one officer served 4 (73,683 inhabitants) of the 6 counties in the district. In some counties reporting part-time officers, the individuals are attorneys, sheriffs or welfare workers in the county. The table and map shown here reveal the counties with the various types of full-time, part-time or no probation personnel according to judicial districts within the state.

The Iowa Probation and Parole Association has been keenly aware of the short comings and limitations of the present probation system in the respective counties. From time to time the association has advocated a state-wide system or a joint-county program in the respective judicial districts. In addition they have given considerable time and attention in trying to improve the standards and effectiveness of probation work in the state under the present system.

It is the judgment of the Probation and Parole Association that Iowa needs the following innovations in order to give adequate care for the children who come into the respective courts of the state:

1. State-wide probation system integrated into a uniform program.
2. Adequate program for the recruiting and training of probation officers within the state.



3. Adequate salaries in order to attract trained persons.
4. Better coordination between the probation officers and other agencies within the respective counties.
5. Establishment of detention homes in the various counties in such a manner as to make the services available to a given area or judicial district.
6. The Iowa Code should be modified in order to allow for a state-wide probation system which should be organized according to the general distribution of the population within the state.



TYPES OF PROBATION SERVICE FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

IN COUNTIES OF IOWA, 1950 1/

I. (29) COUNTIES WITH FULL TIME PROBATION OFFICERS

Blackhawk	Henry	Pottawattomie
Cerro Gordo	Johnson	Scott
Clinton	Linn	Wapello
Dubuque	Marshall	Webster
Grundy	Muscatine	Woodbury
Hamilton	Polk	

Counties with Multiple-County Program

- a - One probation officer serves: 4 counties in 21st judicial district: Lyon, Osceola, O'Brien, and Sioux Counties. (1947 Population, 73,683)
- b - One probation officer serves 6 counties in 13th judicial district: Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek Counties. (Population 128,315)
- c - One probation officer serves 3 counties in the 20th judicial district: Henry, Des Moines and Louisa Counties. (Population in 1947, 65,301 persons.)

II. (14) COUNTIES WITH PART-TIME PROBATION OFFICERS

Adams (S)	Floyd (\$)	Plymouth
Appanoose	Fremont (S)	Story (W)
Boone (A)	Iowa (W)	Taylor (S)
Cass (S)	Jefferson (\$)	Union (S)
Cherokee (\$)	Page (\$)	

(A) Attorney, (S) Sheriff or Deputy Sheriff, (W) County Welfare Worker, (\$) Employed on hourly or daily basis.

III. (56) COUNTIES WITH NO PROBATION OFFICERS

Adair	Davis	Jasper	Palo Alto (S)
Audubon	Decatur	Jones	Pocahontas
Benton	Delaware	Keokuk	Poweshiek
Bremer	Dickinson (W)	Kossuth	Ringgold (S)
Buchanan (S or P)	Emmet	Lee	Sac
Buena Vista (W)	Franklin	Lucas (S)	Shelby (\$)
Butler	Greene	Madison	Tama (W)
Calhoun	Guthrie	Mahaska	Van Buren
Carrol	Hancock (S)	Marion	Warren
Cedar	Hardin	Mills	Washington
Clarke (S)	Marrison	Mitchell	Wayne
Clay (S)	Humboldt	Monona (S)	Winnebago
Crawford	Ida	Monroe (SorJ.P.)	Worth (S)
Dallas	Jackson	Montgomery	Wright



In these counties local citizens are appointed if need arises as shown.  
(S) Sheriff, (P) Over-Seer of the Poor, (W) County Welfare Worker,  
(J.P.) Justice of the Peace, (\$) Hourly or daily basis.

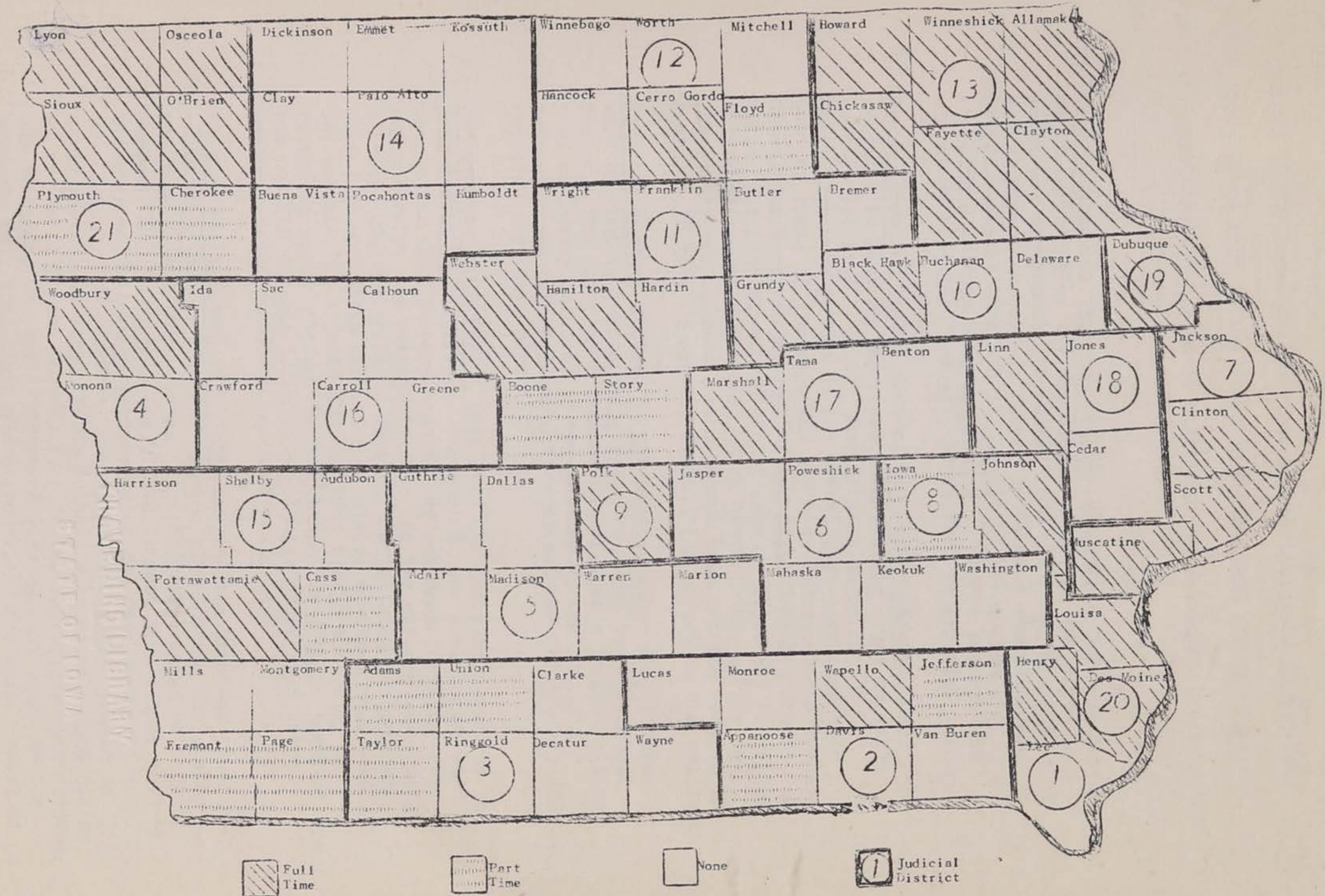
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1/ This information compiled from information from each county supplied by ©  
George Kramer, Chief Probation Officer, Webster County. Jasper and  
Poweshiek counties were making plans for a probation officer in August, 1950.



TYPES OF JUVENILE PROBATION SERVICE IN THE COUNTIES OF IOWA

ACCORDING TO JUDICIAL DISTRICTS AS OF 1950





What unfavorable conditions in Iowa contribute to delinquency in Iowa?

A summary of the ideas presented by the participants in the four district conferences held in the state in March, 1950 afford a cross-section of conditions which tend to contribute to delinquency within the state.

- a. Poor housing was the first factor considered, but was rated as of secondary or low importance as far as the state as a whole was concerned. Delegates from the rural areas felt it was an almost negligible factor in farming communities. Representatives from the larger cities recognized poor housing as being a problem closely related to abject poverty and migratory families, and was intensified in big city living.
- b. Broken Homes or better defined poor environmental homes were conceded to play an important contributing cause to delinquency, but still was not considered a major factor. Statistics were quoted to the effect that less than half (40 per cent) of the boys and girls at Eldora, State Training School for Boys and Mitchellville, State Training School for Girls, are from so-called broken homes. There was agreement to the statement that homes where quarrelling, strife and insecurity were present, even though both parents were in the home, could have an equally devastating effect on the children.
- c. Parental Neglect defined as not knowing where the children were or what they were doing was considered as a prominent factor. The Chief of Police of one of Iowa's largest cities told of having children in the custody of the police for several hours before parents ever missed the children or even realized they were missed.
- d. The Overindulgent Parent came into the discussion and was condemned with equal fervor. One social case worker expressed the belief that parents should love children intelligently and maturely, and not merely cater to the child's every whim. A school official related that in disciplining children at school it was often necessary to revert to the method used by the parents, as a child who had been taught to listen to reasoning would continue to respond to intelligent instructions, but a child who had known no discipline other than stern measures would recognize no other authority.
- e. Lack of recreational facilities outside the home was finally ruled to be only a secondary factor although the discussion was lengthy and quite fervent regarding the rating of this factor. Delegates from one of the largest Iowa cities told of the planned Hallowe'en parties which had been used effectively to eliminate the greatest portion of destructive pranks in their particular city. Youth centers were given consideration as to why they have succeeded or failed in various communities. All delegates who had experienced working with youth center projects felt that there was a great need for more consistent



interest on the part of the people who supervise the projects as too often there is a great deal of enthusiasm the first few weeks when everyone wants to help and later no one seems to be willing to expend the time and energy needed to continue the project. It was significant to note that one judge condemned the youth center because he felt he had had more cases of delinquency reported from youth centers than from almost any other place of recreation. A police officer was quick to give the rebuttal argument that this was actually a good indication as the people who were supervising the center were alert to the situation and reported the delinquency rather than to let the offender feel that he had "gotten by".

- f. Poor quality movies, cheap literature, and sensuous radio programs were considered undesirable, but of not too great importance. It was noted that all youngsters are more or less exposed to these types of entertainment and unless some other stronger influence entered in, the youngster was not too apt to become a delinquent.
- g. Schools poorly equipped or entirely inadequate to care for the needs of the sub-normal child of low intelligence were considered as an underlying cause of some cases of delinquency. Rural areas were said to have almost no specially trained personnel to handle low mentality cases. The largest cities have some trained personnel and partially adequate facilities.
- h. Lack of law enforcement on the part of the police department was considered an invitation to delinquency. A delegate from a large city told of young minor boys being allowed to shoot pool, drink beer and do other things in places where only adults were supposed to be permitted. Some of the police representatives were quick to remonstrate that the policeman merely represents the conscience of the community and only in exceptional cases the police enforce the law to the limit of what public opinion will tolerate.



What do Iowa youth say about conditions within the State?

In March of 1950, 100 college and university men and women from Iowa met for a conference in the Des Moines YMCA. Each of these youths was asked to write a brief account of what their community needed to deal with delinquency. These needs are summarized into three groups.

1. Lack of recreation.
  - a. Summer programs to take care of leisure time.
  - b. Wholesome activities and amusement places for leisure time in evenings and weekends all year around.
2. Lack of activities for post-high school youth.
  - a. Tap rooms, street corners and similar places are frequented by many.
  - b. Lack of supervision for many who move to other town or cities.
  - c. Evidence of parental laxity.
3. Inability of organized groups to attract youth.
  - a. Youth who need help often are the most difficult to attract.
  - b. Organized groups or agencies fail to adequately serve the youth of the community because of poor leadership or lack of finances.

What the Youth of Iowa say.

A community near Creston, Iowa

"Most all the young people drive from 15 to 60 miles for recreation. The whole community does not attend the school and the church functions as they should. There are no youth agencies operating."

Oskaloosa, Iowa

"I feel that the high school young people are rather well taken care of. Perhaps more should be done with young people of junior high age. As long as the young people are in school they have lots of activities to keep them busy. After they graduate from high school there is little entertainment for them to turn to. They seem to have little to do."



There is a good youth center for those of high school age. The high school program is also well planned, as are church programs and the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. There are many groups such as the Scout groups. In the summer there is organized play at each of the playgrounds.

"Probably the most conflict arises between the parent and the child. The town as a whole seems to be doing its share."

#### Fairfield, Iowa

"Summer activities are very much needed and this is being started now. A swimming pool (which has been a major gripe ever since the one which was there was closed) is now being started and supposedly is to be finished this summer. This I think will help the summer problem very much for the feeling will not be that they must go out of town to find entertainment."

#### Monroe, Iowa

"4-H clubs doing most. Churches aren't doing anything but standing in the way of establishing a youth center, as they disapprove of dancing, bingo, cards and so many things."

"Need someone or some group to get something in our own community so kids don't have to run to Des Moines, etc. for something to do."

#### Fort Madison, Iowa

"There is no Y.M. or Y.W. The only recreation facilities are movies or swimming in the summer. The children need a place where they can get the recreational outlet they need. There is a negro district and a Mexican district. These children have less than the others as they are restricted from certain activities. There is one student youth center for three high schools. This place is crowded and a little inclined to limit their activities to the more well to do people. It is more or less a hotbed of many bad situations.

"I feel that it (the community) needs a youth club in which the younger set can put their talents, energy and enthusiasm in constructive activities-- physically and mentally. For a town of its size, it lacks a great deal----"

#### Dayton, Iowa

"A large number of boys in my community didn't finish high school. Drinking and smoking is begun at early age by these boys who quit school -- usually they are ones who have failed several grades and of low mentality. These boys get low-paying labor jobs in community and keep running around with some good-for-nothing gang.



"Within the last year 2 girls in the same class of about 15 girls in high school have become unwed mothers and others in that same class are known to be promiscuous.

Need for facilities

"Outside of a bowling alley, theater and basement in which kids occasionally dance there are no other entertainment for youth. The Boy Scouts are quite active but don't reach boys who need it. No school dances are permitted but there are 2 or 3 basketball games a week in winter. They need more good entertainment - maybe a youth center."

Ogden, Iowa

"As far as I know this town has no youth agencies but is badly in need of one, because of the delinquents arising from supposedly fine homes.

"It needs more capable leaders who are interested in youth. The churches seem to give little attention to youth, evidently the school doesn't knock itself out either."

Clemons, Iowa

"The most evident problem beside lack of hometown entertainment is lack of wholesome education of boy-girl relationships. In a rural community sex is seen everyday on the animal level but the transfer to human sex relations is generally left up to chance and hard experience. There should be an attempt made to make sex something more than animal excitation.

"The agencies in our community are all from county level and work mostly with relief."

Scranton, Iowa

"Young folks have to drop out of school to work on the farm, then lose interest when they come back to school. Cause discipline problems.

"The youth is restless even though there are groups functioning. There is too much deadwood in the teen agers organizations."

Dubuque, Iowa

"Dubuque has a recreational program - but it cannot be adequate, as evidenced by the number of young people in pool halls, taverns and on street corners. There is insufficient variety in the recreational program in Dubuque.

"Such agencies as the Y.W., Y.M., Boy's Club, etc. have done a fine job - in a limited sense. I cannot exactly explain what it is that is needed, but the program must reach more individuals than it now does to be really effective."



Mason City, Iowa

"I feel as though we have enough agencies and facilities, but we fail to get the desired participation in some of these areas. There is a tendency for the youth group (15-18) to stray from outlined recreation and enter realms of activities that aren't advisable for the growth of a good citizen."



## RECENT IMPROVEMENTS IN IOWA

1. Since 1945 there has been a more general community concern about the care and treatment of delinquents in the state of Iowa. This change has been due to the general increase in delinquency and related problems during the years of World War II, the expansion of the welfare services in the state and counties, and the unfavorable conditions which became known throughout the state as a result of the riot in 1945 at the State Industrial School for Boys at Eldora.
2. The Aid to Dependent Children program has improved conditions and alleviated poverty as a problem in delinquency to some degree in certain areas.
3. In many cases county boards of supervisors have been more generous in payments for foster home care of delinquent and dependent children not eligible for help under the Aid to Dependent Children Program.
4. The improvements in the physical plants and new buildings at both Training Schools at Mitchellville and Eldora have made for better physical care of the youth in these institutions.
5. The expansion of psychological testing and counselling services of the state department of social welfare and the state educational institutions has improved the care and the treatment of juveniles in courts and institutions within the state.
6. The new mental Health Clinics in Burlington, Davenport and Cedar Rapids have expanded community services for children.

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH COULD IMPROVE THE CARE AND TREATMENT  
OF DELINQUENT CHILDREN IN THE STATE OF IOWA

1. The creation of a county-wide committee in each of the several counties to examine local problems, assess resources and provide for better care and treatment of delinquent and problem children.



2. The establishment of a Standard Juvenile Court Act for incorporation into the Iowa Statute.
3. A state-wide study be made of recent trends in the care and treatment of delinquents such as the model YOUTH AUTHORITY ACT now operating in California, Minnesota and Wisconsin.
4. The creation of an IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM for present probation and parole officers now employed in the various county offices and state institutions.
5. The addition of social workers, sociologists and psychologists to the staffs of the state TRAINING SCHOOLS at Mitchellville and Eldora and at the STATE REFORMATORY at Anamosa.
6. Raise the salaries and standards for probation officers and staff members now employed within the counties and the state industrial schools.
7. The creation of a state-wide probation system to operate within the various judicial districts or county groups within the state. In the event that this cannot be done the creation of a statute enabling two or more counties in the same judicial district to have a common probation officer to serve them, dividing the expenses of salary and traveling among the counties on a fair basis.

Because:

- a. Most smaller counties need a probation officer but do not have enough work to keep one busy. Few part-time probation officers are trained or can give freely of their time.
- b. The attorney general has ruled that the statutes do not now provide authority for counties to join in this manner.
- c. Many counties fear to make expenditures in this way in the face of warning that it is unauthorized.
- d. All counties are entitled to have such facilities and to join with others in a lawful and accepted way with a uniform method of handling this work in all places.
- e. In many parts of the state one probation officer could handle the juvenile cases for a whole judicial district and perhaps some adult parolees as well.



- f. The increasing tendency of Iowa's juvenile courts to use probation in their cases makes such a project more necessary.
8. The establishment of detention facilities within the several judicial districts in order to provide better care and treatment of cases pending disposition.
9. The expansion of non-commercial recreation facilities in the various counties of the state. This to be done within the larger communities and in the rural areas on a county-wide program.

"Results of other surveys made for the Midcentury Conference by the Youth Committee of the Iowa Commission, and by the State Federation of Women's Clubs, support the opinions and conclusions stated above.

"Committees of the Commission report that they consider spiritual values and religious practices in family life to be essential to wholesome adjustment of the young person. If this need is not met, it can be a contributing factor in delinquency. Youth opinion as expressed in the Youth Opinionnaire showed a contrast between the significance of religion in the lives of well-adjusted youth and of delinquent youth. One boy who has been in trouble stated that the greatest educational lack in his community was "spiritual guidance", and yet he reported going to church regularly (but not with his family)."



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