After over 20 years of constant effort on the part of a comparatively small group of soil workers, the making of soil maps has reached a high degree of accuracy. Soil surveys were started in the United States by Prof. Milton Whitney and the Bureau of Soils stands today as evidence of a constructive idea put into practical application. The soil survey may be considered one of the most essential and basic factors in the higher development of a permanent agriculture. Soil surveying, however, may still be considered a new science and in its short period of development many difficulties have been met with and overcome.

The many and varied uses which are being made of soil maps suggests that this line of work has still greater possibilities. Aside from the uses for which the maps were originally designed there are coming to be many other fields into which these maps are being introduced. Some of these were doubtless anticipated by the early soil workers, but many of them were not.

The chief use of soil surveys at present is by the Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations who are guided by these maps in advising farmers as to the needs of the soil in particular localities, and how these soils should be treated. Without soil maps a soil advisory service would be of very inferior value. Other users are County Agents, teachers of agriculture, extension workers, land commissioners, immigration agents, colonization companies, land buyers, road and drainage engineers, tax commissioners, and bankers. Many industrial concerns also find uses for the maps. Many other uses could be enumerated. Is it true, however, that in none of these special fields, nor in the field for which soil maps were designed is their use as common as we could wish, nor as extensive as their accuracy would warrant. The fact that soil maps are used in so many widely different activities, even in a limited way, indicates that there are very great possibilities for the more extensive use of our product. We believe that one reason why there is not a more extensive use made of our maps in these many fields is that the maps, in their present form, are not well suited to such varied uses.

If we will go back for an instant to the first soil maps which were made and examine into the field methods used we will find that they differ very widely from the methods now in use, and especially in regard to the accuracy of the maps made. Many of the early surveys were made simply by traversing the roads and examining the soil adjacent to the highways. Whereas at the present time the land is often traversed at intervals of one-fourth mile and sometimes even closer and all variations of from 5 to 10 acres are shown, whether these variations are along the road or in the center of tracts some distance from roads. This closeness of traverse insures accuracy of detail mapping.