PROCEDURES USED TO DEVELOP CREATIVE WRITING IN THE SECOND
GRADE AT SABIN SCHOOL, DES MOINES, IOWA, 1956-1957

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

One of the most important social activities is concerned with communication of ideas. Ideas are conveyed to others by speaking or by writing, and ideas of others are received by hearing them speak or by reading what they have written. One of the important duties of the school is to teach the uses of language which will enable the child to communicate with others. He must be able to speak and write in order to tell his ideas. He must also be able to read in order to understand the ideas of others who have written. To meet these needs the elementary school has in its curriculum a group of subjects called the Language Arts. These subjects are spelling, language, writing and reading.

Creative writing is a part of the Language Arts program in the elementary school curriculum, but many times is not given its proper place, especially in the early elementary education of children.

There is a need for beginning creative writing at an early age. Creativeness is a quality of expression that appears early in the child's school life and grows, if given a chance and encouragement. Many students have a feeling that all writing for teachers must be proper, and idealistic and "what the teacher wants". Many children feel that unless they conform to the teacher's ideas
of what is right, they cannot get a grade. There is little chance for creative expression in many classrooms.\(^1\)

I. THE PROBLEM

**Statement of the problem.** It was the purpose of this study to: (1) determine the need and purpose of creative writing in the second grade curriculum; (2) determine the role of teachers in helping children to write creatively; and (3) determine the effect creative writing has upon children who are given the opportunity and encouragement to write in the second grade.

**Importance of the study.** Many teachers call any writing which a child does with a slight variance from the prescribed form, creative writing. Many others become so involved in teaching other activities in language arts, such as making reports, letter writing, making talks, and giving explanations, that they neglect one important part, creative writing. Others feel that they know too little about creative writing, and thus do not know how to help children to write creatively. Since teachers themselves are not sure of what creative writing is and its place in the curriculum, many children are not given an opportunity to write creatively.

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II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Language arts. The Language Arts program is the interrelationship of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which are all concerned with the use of words as symbols and with the exchange of ideas.

Creative writing. When a child writes creatively, he expresses his feelings or his reactions to some experience. Creative writing must come from within. A child must have more than words; he must have an idea. Creative writing is the expression of feelings and thoughts with imagination and originality.

Functional writing. Functional writing is more realistic or intellectual than creative writing, and it needs the correct mechanics to be socially acceptable. The material exists outside the writer, and the writing is not as much a part of the individual as creative writing.

III. CLARIFYING THE ISSUES INVOLVED

Much of the language program of the school involves getting and giving information. In this group would fall such oral and written communication activities as giving information, studying and research.

The creative writing activities--stories, poems, and plays--are not concerned with the giving of information, but with the
expression of thoughts and feelings. The difference is found partly in the ends served by the activities and partly in the content and the handling of different language elements. In creative expression, content is largely concerned with the expression of personal feelings and thoughts; imagination enters in, and originality is an important factor; that is, the child must express his own reactions, not simply report the thoughts and feelings of others.¹

Dawson and Miller suggest a broader concept of creative writing. They say:

The concept of creative writing should be broadened to include not only stories and verse, but also any type of writing in which the creative element, or elements of originality, predominates; for example, the friendly letter, the diary, the autobiography, the book review, the dialogue for a play, description, even an original notice or a legend for a picture. An important factor in good original writing is that children shall write about things with which they are familiar and in which they feel an interest.²

The difference between creative expression and functional writing is the absence of a utilitarian motive, such as is found in the business letter, the report and the announcement.³

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Several purposes are proposed for creative writing. In the first place, it seeks to give the child opportunity to express his own intimate thoughts and feelings concerning experiences with which he comes in contact. This self-expression of his personal and intimate reactions contributes to the development of a well-balanced, happy, and well-adjusted personality. Such purposes are obviously a rebellion against the old formal procedures which throttled the child's natural expression of his own ideas.¹

Children need to be encouraged to think and feel about things that happen to them, to recognize the importance of their experiences and to put their thoughts and feelings into words.

Creative expression is an essential part of all around growth and development. School children do not add to the literature of the world but they add to their own mental and emotional health. Expression has come to be recognized as a valuable form of therapy. Teachers, who are interested in studying the imaginative expression of children often find something that is highly revealing repeated over and over. One job of education is that of building strength in individuals to protect them from stress and to develop them to

the point of highest usefulness.¹

One of the many benefits of creative writing is the increased understanding of oneself and others. Knowing oneself is where mental health and good citizenship begins.²

A child who is creative is a child who does not think of life as requiring total conformity to patterns preferred by adults, but who looks on life as offering opportunities at many points to create his own patterns of behavior and response. Creativeness in children comes from within and is the product of a kind of living. A child who is developing wholesomely, and who lives with creative adults in an environment conducive to creativeness, will manifest a very natural desire to explore, to expand, to create. Creative activities are stimulated in the elementary school not for the sake of the activities but for the purpose of developing creative individuals, or more exactly, of helping each individual build a self that is creative. Thought needs to be given to some of the components of a healthy personality.³

Creative writing provides boys and girls with outlets to release their pressure. If something has happened to a child at


home which puzzles him, he can work off those problems in his mind by feeling free to write a story, and can gain inside peace without an emotional explosion. He can drop the story into the story box without the children noticing. The same purpose could be accomplished if he painted, or modeled with clay or drew a picture, but writing is so quiet that no one will notice what he is really thinking. Thinking things through with the fingers is better than brooding.¹

Creative writing is another way for teachers to get to know children. Children have so many questions, dreams and thoughts, and so few adult friends with whom they can share them. To help children, teachers must know children.²

Psychologists and psychiatrists are using opportunities for play with toys and work with plastic materials as means of studying the problems of disturbed and poorly adjusted children. They are finding that, through expression, children portray their inner conflicts and sometimes succeed in relieving them. Writing gives children the needed opportunity for expression.³

A second purpose of creative writing lies in the possibility of arousing and maintaining a sensitiveness to an interest in and an appreciation of good literature. There is some reason to think that

²Ibid.
the child who begins to write original material and is guided properly in the development of this talent also becomes more conscious of high literary values. He learns to like to read good writings. He becomes sensitive to the real qualities of literature and recognizes the artificial production.¹

An aim of creative writing is to promote clearer thinking on the part of the pupils, to make of them discriminating readers conscious of styles in reading materials and to broaden their choice and use of words.²

Creative writing, moreover, broadens the acquaintance with, and lays a foundation for the enjoyment of literature, which is perhaps its primary goal; it increases sensitivity to and capacity for the enjoyment of beauty in people and things and adds somewhat to the ability to express oneself, in clear, vigorous, descriptive, and entertaining language.³

The third purpose of creative writing, the stimulation of original writing in which the child learns to use his own language to express his own ideas, is undoubtedly more conducive to the development of language ability than are traditional procedures. The conventional attacks in which the pupil is asked to write on topics with which he is relatively unfamiliar and to do this in forms

³Tidyman and Butterfield, op. cit., p. 200.
of expression representing stilted scholastic attainments, are far removed from the conditions which should surround language training. The best hope for improvement in language lies in working with the child's natural expression of his own ideas.  

Creative writing helps children to discover their own capabilities. Children will find out that writing is fun--real fun.  

Educational research supports the practice of helping children develop a knowledge of words and skill in expression by providing contacts with the real world around them. Smith cited a study in which she took children from the slums on a series of excursions about Cincinnati, through which they learned to know concrete objects for which words stand. She found it provided a vocabulary as rich as that developed by an entire first-year course in reading.  

Baldridge concluded that three decades of language study point to the need for enriching children's living through firsthand, sensory experiences with the words learned and that language develops best as an intrinsic part of rich, happy, and varied home and school living.  

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1McKee, op. cit., p. 211.
2Applegate, op. cit., p. 3.
V. THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN HELPING CHILDREN WRITE CREATIVELY

There are steps in developing the ability to express one's thinking in written form. Some children will have many ideas but not know how to get them on paper, while others may be able to write with ease, and still others will be successful in the job if the teacher will help with spelling words.

In all these steps the emphasis is placed first on content and purpose. It is important that children begin any writing with interest and complete it with a feeling of satisfaction. Writing develops best in an atmosphere in which children feel free to express their real thoughts and feel assured of friendly and helpful interest. When a child is relaxed and himself, he is much more able to express his thoughts.

Since emphasis on content of expression and purpose must come before form, dictation is the first step in the written work.

Often much of the early dictation is of imaginative stories or personal experiences the children wish to record. Sometimes it is a matter of group composition.¹ Often it is individual stories and the teacher takes down what the child says just as he says it.

Children can begin to make copies of dictated material as soon as they have reached a level of muscular coordination and

eye-hand-mind coordination. Young children should not be expected to write often or very much. Many times it is one sentence about a picture they have drawn.

When the child is ready to try independent writing, he needs a great deal of help. The problem in the beginning stages of independent writing is to give the child the help he needs and when he needs it. A teacher must work with small groups or individual children until they develop some independence.

With many children enthusiasm for writing their own stories begins in the second grade. This is the age because of a knowledge of spelling and writing, when they are eager to write about things, and here is the place in the curriculum where it should be encouraged.

The first requirement for a creative writing program is a relaxed and happy teacher-child relationship and friendly relationships among children. Children are sensitive to the emotional and social climate of a classroom and cannot write their thoughts and feelings unless they feel sure of sympathetic response. Children need to know they will not be laughed at, or criticized by the teacher or other children.

Every classroom has a feeling tone which each person receives by direct empathy. If children are to release their inner thoughts,

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1 Ibid., p. 234.

they must emotionally believe that they are wanted as a member, that they have qualities which the others recognize, believe in and accept, that they are and can be different from others yet work with them mutually and cooperatively. This feeling tone has been described in such words as belongingness, wantedness, security and status.\(^1\)

To stimulate the children to want to write, it is necessary to create an atmosphere in which their minds can wander freely; an atmosphere in which they can project themselves beyond the classroom. Children should be stimulated to think about things they see, feel and hear from day to day—things they take for granted.\(^2\)

Creativeness flourishes in a creative environment where books, interest centers and teachers suggest opportunities and possibilities to boys and girls. Schoolrooms need to be workshops where there is opportunity for talking, listening and working alone and in a group. Alert, active, and interested children are creative children.\(^3\)

The second requirement for a creative writing program is flexibility and freedom from pressure.\(^4\) An environment which allows freedom of action and flexibility in the use of time and materials is

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more apt to receive original thinking than one which has a rigid schedule and course of study. When children feel adult pressure too strongly, they are likely to be afraid to express their own ideas. An air of permissiveness to express ideas should permeate the classroom. A teacher must allow time for getting well-acquainted and for establishing the confidence necessary for sharing one's personal thoughts and feelings. Building rapport is prerequisite to honest writing. ¹

Teachers need to go into written work gradually. The children should be ready before they try something too hard for them. Children should succeed in their efforts. Every year situations differ and so do children's interests. Each school year, the written language work must meet the needs of the group of children. Creative writing provides for individual differences in children. Children can learn from other children. One stimulating specific is that of reading aloud other children's stories. Stories done by others of the same age will stir action to some who want to write but are afraid. ²

The teacher's job is to help the child to release his feelings and to guide this power into channels that are satisfying and productive. The teacher need not be an expert at teaching creative writing.


²Herrick and Jacobs, op. cit., p. 227.
What she does need is to be able to bring out the talent that lies dormant within the children. This requires that she be understanding, receptive, patient, and appreciative of children's efforts. The adult who has the greatest success in releasing the creativity of children is the one whom, they feel they can trust with their innermost thoughts. The teacher has to prove her friendship and her sincerity. If teachers want children to write, they must take time out to enjoy the happenings of each day. A hurried, too business-like atmosphere is not conducive to creative writing.\(^1\)

The third requirement for a creative writing program is a wealth of experience.\(^2\) Children need the knowledge that comes from experiences both in and out of the classroom and lots of interests and materials. Children cannot create something out of nothing. If the children do not have a background of ideas and thoughts, the teacher must help create such a background. Children who lack confidence and lag behind in expression need help in enriching their experiences. Trips, books, conversations and encouragement of hobbies can add to the child's experience and help to build up the child's sense of personal worth.

Creativeness cannot be taught; it can only be guided. This is the job of the teacher—to release ideas and thoughts and develop

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\(^1\)Frances Elizabeth Baker, "Helping Children to Write Creatively," Elementary English, XXIX (February, 1952), 93-96.

\(^2\)Strickland, The Language Arts in the Elementary School, op. cit., p. 239.
the talents latent in all children. This does not take creative teachers trained in creative writing; it takes understanding teachers.¹

The only way for children to learn to write, is for them to write and write and write. Practice is as essential to the great writer as it is to the great violinist, and must be begun early in the child's school life.

Writing starts from ideas—and children are full of ideas. Creative ideas are those they believe in strongly and want to release. It does not matter whether the teacher assigns the writing or whether the child assigns it to himself; if he feels it, he can be guided to write it.

The biggest problem in creative writing is to get the non-literary child to make an effort to express himself. The problem is not solved by urging him to express himself, but by helping him find something to say and a motive for saying it.

If teachers really appreciate the writing children do, they will write more and better. Praise is important for growth. The teacher should praise the best parts of a poem or story of each child.

In evaluating children’s creative writing, teachers must look for the good. They must underline the good sentence or the

¹Applegate, op. cit., p. 1.
good phrase in the story or poem. Children love to look at their achievements; but do not like to look at their mistakes. Pride in one's work is an incentive to correct spelling and sentence structure. A teacher should compliment a child on anything good about his story before she begins to help him with his weak spot. If a child reads his story out loud, he may discover himself a sentence that was poor, or realize he left out a thought. If a teacher is truly interested in the writing of each child, she can see the difference between being critical and being helpful.

The fourth requirement for a creative writing program is experience with literature. Children would have little interest in writing stories unless they liked stories. Children must hear and enjoy stories and poems before they can create for themselves.

If teachers want children to write, they must take time to read to them. This will do more than any other thing to develop a taste for writing in children. A teacher must start early in the child's life and read and read.

When teachers read aloud to children, they should stop to read some portion again in which the author has painted a particularly colorful picture with words. The books read should be chosen very carefully; and should be a little above the reading level of the class. If the children listen to the reading of good books,
and then are encouraged to read good books to themselves, it helps bring about the desire to try some creative writing for themselves. Not only does reading inspire one to write, but writing also helps one to do a better job of reading.¹

VI. THE EFFECT CREATIVE WRITING HAS UPON CHILDREN

In its therapeutic function writing continues a service to personality which was begun in infancy by oral language. The release of tension through communicating one's feelings to interested humans begins as early as a baby's crying. In later years, a part of this function of achieving and maintaining tensional equilibrium can be taken over by the more precise instrument of writing. Writing best serves children by releasing strain, by gaining for them a responsive, satisfying audience, by empowering them to manipulate their characters with authority instead of being always the recipients of authority. One need only look at a few hundred stories of elementary age children to see how often conflict is the prime ingredient. The better teachers can learn to enhance children's successful communication, by that much will children be better able to meet the strains of family and school living and the necessary strains which are a part of growing in our culture.²

¹Baker, op. cit., p. 97.
The elementary school teacher of creative writing should be made increasingly aware of the psychological values children receive from free written expression of their own ideas. The child who freely expresses his feelings and thoughts in words gains the same kind of benefit as does the child who expresses his personality in painting and drawing. During the past few years teachers have become more and more conscious of the need for helping children to good emotional adjustment. One of the ways of doing this is to provide them with satisfactory outlets for strong feelings through creative artistic endeavor. The principle that emotional conflicts are often projected in creative expression lies behind the projective techniques used by psychologists, for the purpose of diagnosing emotional difficulties. The teacher will realize that creative writing as a medium of projection is valuable not only for the mal-adjusted or problem child but for all children. All children experience, in the process of socialization, frustration of the expression of aggressive impulses and, even at an early age, have fears and wishes which they are unable to express overtly.  

Two of the important educators who have made use of the emotional-outlet value of the art of creative writing are Natalie Cole and Dorothy Baruch. As a part of her creative writing program in the primary grades, Natalie Cole has encouraged children to write

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1 Jane Wilcox Cooper, "Creative Writing As An Emotional Outlet," *Elementary English*, XXVIII (January, 1951), 21.
realistic material about situations that bother them at home. The type of writing, in which children air their grievances to a sympathetic audience of teacher and classmates, has a great deal of therapeutic value. Dorothy Baruch has also demonstrated the interesting creative work which can result when children are released from taboos regarding their written expression. She points out that children should be allowed to write about things that are mean and "not nice."¹

In these days of child pressures—living in a yardless apartment, being a dangling part of a broken home, feeling oneself a member of a minority group—a child needs to use every possible chimney or valve to release his tensions. Creative writing is one easy means to this end.

Besides releasing emotional strain in children, creative writing helps children gain in confidence and poise. The shy, retiring child often writes the most. Often when his story or poem is read to the class and he is given approval from his classmates, he obtains a sense of pride in himself.

When teachers accept a child's story, they are accepting him, fulfilling in part one of the primary goals of education. When teachers read his story to the group, they are giving him status, fostering good feelings among the listeners, and providing opportunities to learn respect for another's thoughts and ideas. The

¹Cooper, op. cit., p. 21.
writer himself builds confidence in himself as a worth-while person who can "do things." He experiences the satisfaction of seeing his thoughts and feelings transmitted into form. The writer is given one more avenue of communication with the people of his world through the magic and the power of words.¹

Pride in accomplishment, so often lost in our assembly-line scheme of things, is a natural by-product of creative writing. Time to read over the finished copy to the class will help a child develop individual style, ability to express ideas more clearly, and encourage him to write correctly so that others can enjoy his writing.

Creative writing gives practice in social imagination which is important to develop in children. Children will be entering a new era in which they must feel as the other person feels: when the man who sits in the office running the business must understand the feelings of the man who mines the coal; and the miner who does the actual work must learn the strain and the long hours of the man who runs the business. Our very life in the days to come depends on creative imagination.²

¹Helen E. Buckley, "Children Communicate Through Writing," Childhood Education, XXXIII (December, 1956), 164.

This report was set up with the idea of investigating what had been done with creative writing in other schools, and using a definite plan in helping a group of second grade children write creatively. The study was made during the school year 1956-1957 and the group consisted of thirty-four boys and girls. Of the thirty-four, eighteen were boys and sixteen were girls. Their chronological ages varied from six years and eight months to nine years, as of the first of October, 1956. The I. Q. scores of the group, according to the Otis Group Intelligence Test given in October, 1956, ranged from 75 I. Q. to 126 I. Q. Four of the children were repeating second grade. Of the group studied, one child had attended four different schools, two children had been in three, and seven had attended two schools.

Many of the children came from insecure homes and had emotional problems. In the group of thirty-four, two children lived in a foster home, three children were from broken homes and lived with their mothers, while three children were from broken homes and the mothers had remarried so the child had step-fathers. In many homes, both parents worked, and the children were left to care for themselves.

Sabin School is located at Fifth and College Streets in Des Moines, Iowa. It is close to a commercial area and many of the
families lived in apartment houses and moved often.

The room in which the creative writing activities were carried on was located on the first floor at the northeast corner of the building. The room was twenty-seven feet long and twenty-one feet wide with large windows along the east and north sides of the room.
CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written about the need of creative writing for elementary children, the role of teachers in helping children write creatively, and the effects creative writing has upon children who are given an opportunity to write at an early age. Many suggestions are also given to help teachers who are interested in helping boys and girls in their classrooms write creatively. Since Chapter One deals with the need and effects of creative writing, the purpose of this chapter is to summarize some of the work which has been done in classrooms.

Farris believes there are many techniques for motivating creative writing, but found three which he has used to be most effective in the classroom. He reports:

One way to motivate creative writing is to appeal to the child's interest in games. One of the simplest of these games is started by the teacher writing several descriptive phrases on the board—six to eight is best—and then asking the pupils of what they are reminded. If the phrases are perhaps: 'rugged lineman, broken-field runner, jump pass, quarterback, T-formation, opening kickoff,' the children will, of course, say 'football.' After this, the remainder of the technique is obvious; the teacher asks whether they could write a story about football using these phrases.

Another fine method of motivation consists of the teacher selecting a short story, reading all but the conclusion, and then asking the children if they can finish it. Often the results are amazing. The youngsters write vivid, imaginative endings, especially when absolutely free latitude is allowed.
them in their writing. They may want the ending sad, comic or happy. The teacher must not stifle or obstruct their wishes. Again, the children's enjoyment of games comes into play, for they may read aloud endings their classmates have written, with all the class trying to guess the author. At the end the instructor should read the conclusion of the story. A variation on this technique is the teacher-told story. Here the teacher simply tells part of a story, reaches a climax, and lets the youngsters finish it. It is easy to correlate the social studies unit with this process. Either a story can be found relating to the unit, or the teacher can construct one. Often the children will engage in research to complete a story. Learning is taking place along with the feeling of success in creation.

Finally, a full time, workable creative writing program can be set up in the classroom through the device of the Story Box. The organization of this program is quite simple. A cardboard box with a slit in the top, painted with tempera, and labeled Our Story Box is placed in the classroom. The teacher can explain that the box is there for anyone who wants to write a story or poem to put it in and read it in front of the class during Friday's story period. Youngsters love the mystery and suspense connected with the opening which always should be made an important event. They learn to appreciate the efforts of their peers, and to understand the hard work which goes into a piece of creative writing.1

Before children write, the teacher must set the stage for those first, new ideas. Creed suggests three specific approaches to creative writing immensely helpful in getting children started. First, she says all written communication, if it is to get its message across, depends on a sensitive and sharply perceptive oral discussion guided by the teacher, in order to stimulate and clarify ideas. Time to think and time to discuss, are the child's deepest

1 Herbert J. Farris, "Creative Writing Must Be Motivated," Elementary English, XXIX (October, 1952), 352.
needs when he begins to think in terms of the written word. The
wonder and beauty of words are prized by most children. And this
feeling for words begins with exploring the impact of thoughts and
of words. Help with definition may be needed briefly, but the child
can go right on from there choosing those words that appeal to him and
illuminate his state of feeling. Exploring word meaning in terms of
the child's own experience will produce some very sparkling and gifted
writing.

Cred suggests the second aid in creative writing should be
exploring the approaches to the topic. She says the avenue of
approach is for the teacher to decide, but the decision of what to
write about belongs to the children. For example; exciting kinds of
transportation—tugboats, trains, airplanes, or ships could be a
subject upon which to write. Or she says to let him examine familiar
states of feeling: how did he feel, what did he do on Christmas day
as he came into the room and saw the presents under the tree? What
is his favorite possession and why does he cherish it? Another
suggestion is to give him some words and let him write a story using
them, such as: shimmering moonlight on the black water; gleaming
sailboats, dirty streets, dark woods, cooking out, or fishing in a
rushing brook with the sunlight high up over your head. She has
found the best writing will be based on a remembrance of a simple
familiar experience in the child's life at home. But in the course
of discussion the teacher must help the student to keep this experience simple and familiar, for in that way he will enjoy writing it. When subjects are not familiar, they become confused, and the child doesn't enjoy the writing of it. Children write best about what they know best, or do best. For example, take a favorite subject which has come from the thinking of many children: "what I like best in my room at home and what kind of feelings I have when I think about it," or "what I like to do outdoors when it is dark and shadowy, and the feelings it gives me"; or "what I like to do first thing when I get up in the morning." The second grader's approach is very often through feeling. For example: "how I felt as I walked home in the rain and what pretty growing things I saw on the way"; or "how I felt as I looked out of my window on a cold, snowy winter day."

Creed's third approach to creative writing is to keep at it. Don't let it become either routine or an event. Creative writing is heavily predicated on serious creative thinking at any given moment in one's life. Train children to "write in their mind" about those things which have impact and meaning for them.

Schofield suggests nine motivating devices which can serve for adaptation to grade levels and individual differences.

1. The exchange of stories with another room builds interest.

2. Mounting everyone's stories in scrapbooks and adding such booklets to the room library puts everyone's story on display.

3. Allowing children to keep booklets of their own stories and exchanging them with each other for 'reading for fun' promotes interest.

4. Formation of a story club when pupils read their funniest, most exciting, or some special story that fits some special theme set up by the pupils for the meeting is helpful.

5. Mounting the Best Story of the Week on a bulletin board, provided the honor can be passed around, is very effective.

6. Working toward everyone contributing his best story for a Book of Stories which can be duplicated and distributed to all class members at the end of the term is an incentive.

7. When the whole class writes on one particular topic, as auto-biographies, mystery tales, tall tales, etc., they can be bound in booklet form and labeled Who's Who in Room so and so, or Best Tall Tales of the Year, etc.

8. If a teacher has samples of creative writing from former classes, they provide incentive and positive helps.

9. For those children who seem to have a flair for writing, acquainting them with the many children's magazines who will consider kindly any contributions from young-fry writers, has a tremendous influence on the contributors as well as the whole class.¹

Baker, in an article, "Helping Children to Write Creatively," lists some good ways to encourage children to write more:

1. Praise, well deserved of course, is a powerful incentive.

2. Any time during the day that a child comes up with a new idea, suggest to him that it would make a good poem or story.

3. A poetry drawer or box is good. Writings may be dropped in unnoticed any time during the day. Names are not required.

¹Ruth E. Schofield, "Some Thoughts on Creative Writing," Elementary English, XXX (December, 1953), 509-510.
4. Don't pay too much attention to rhyme and meter if the thought is good in the poems children write.

5. A quiet hour each week during which each one, including the teacher, paints, draws, sews, models, or writes. Soft Victrola music sometimes helps. Of course there must be careful planning ahead of time so that each one will have everything he needs to work with, and no one will disturb anyone else.

6. Give a daily invitation to write.

7. Consider the individual child. Never assign one subject to all. Let them choose between writing poems or stories. Sometimes it may be best to have a third choice.

8. Prepare for the writing period by discussion or thought sharing. Vocabulary helps may be necessary, too.

9. Lead the children into writing. Never push unless you do it very gently.

10. Make poems and stories together as a class sometimes.

11. Mimeograph a booklet of the children's writings. See that each is given a copy.1

1 Edwards also thinks children need some motivation before they begin writing. She says one good technique for getting pupils to organize their ideas on a subject is to put the title of a topic, such as baseball, on a large paper or blackboard. Under this, the teacher writes all the words that come to the children's minds in connection with the topic at hand. Under "baseball," we may visualize a large vocabulary of words such as: mitt, inning, glove, out, home run, bat, and strikes. Having such a list placed before the class

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1 Frances Elizabeth Baker, "Helping Children to Write Creatively," Elementary English, XXIX (February, 1952), 96-97.
not only stimulates their thinking, but takes care of a great many spelling difficulties, once the writing begins. Teachers can also help boys and girls gain in vocabulary building in preparing them to write. For example, an oak tree in the school yard has suddenly taken on its Spring foliage. If children are given an opportunity to talk about picture words that describe the tree, they would suggest words as: velvety green, fresh Spring green, tender yellow-green shoots, leaves waving in Spring breezes, and lacy shadows of new green.

Edwards maintains that everyone must not be compelled to follow a set pattern. Some children like to use a starter sentence such as "I like Springtime because," or "Springtime reminds me of . . . .". Others may prefer to write letters to friends in distant places and tell of the season in their own locality. Experimentation with a simple song or with poetry is fun for certain imaginative children. Labeling pictures and writing reports is a type of creative activity that may easily be overlooked or thought of as being "non-creative." She feels teachers should accentuate the positive while evaluating the work with the children. Over-emphasis on trivia is most discouraging to young children.1

Applegate, in her book Helping Children Write, suggests ideas to help teachers in guiding children to write creatively. They are:

1. The Class Story Book. This book belongs to all the children. It contains the best stories of each child. A child may illustrate his story if he wishes.

2. A story as a result from a trip. This often results from a field trip in social studies. Instead of always drawing a picture of the trip, children like to write what they saw or what they learned.

3. Human interest stories. Children like to cut things from a newspaper. Often a picture with the article of interest to children will interest the class and suggest a story to them.

4. Stories suggested by another story. A child who enjoys stories read to him or likes to read will often get an idea for a story of his own.

5. Guessing stories from book covers. A book cover can give a child ideas of a story before he has read the book. Later when both the children's stories and the book are read, children will enjoy hearing the different ideas.

6. Poems or stories which result from the senses. 'I like the smell of ...' can be the start and the children can supply endings such as 'cookies baking in the oven', 'the grass after a rain', and 'flowers in a garden'.

7. A poem or story from a beginning line. The class creates a poem or story from the suggestion; often the beginning line can come from the class.

8. Stories that express wonder and fear. A teacher may be surprised when children write about their greatest fear, or wonder, or mystery.

9. Poems or stories for special days. Children like to write about holidays or events preceding or following special days.

10. Autobiographies make good stories. These are not only interesting to read and write but give the teacher much insight into the child's background of experience. Topics such as: My first day at school, My happiest day, When I was sick, The pet I love, My best friend, and My first trip, can be fun.
11. Writing endings to stories. Before the teacher reads the ending of an exciting story to the class, she can let each child write the ending the way he would like it to end.

12. Characters children create. Some child may create a character that is a real story personage. Other children might be interested in writing further stories about the character.

13. Real adventures make good stories. Many children who do not have much imagination can tell an exciting story of a real happening.

14. Stories just for fun. Children love to make believe and often write some real Fairy Tales.

15. Class development of a story from a story-telling picture. Reading the picture may include some or all of the following:

A. Guessing what is happening in the picture.
B. Characterizing the people and suggesting possible names for them.
C. Deciding what events might have led up to the present action.
D. Guessing at the various ways the story might turn out.
E. Finding words to express the feelings and actions at which the picture hints.
F. Finding words to describe the scenery or to express the background of the picture.
G. Suggesting a few appropriate titles.¹

CHAPTER III

THE MATERIALS USED AND THE PROCEDURES OF
THE SECOND GRADE STUDY

I. THE MATERIALS USED

The materials used in this study included pictures, book jackets and paper. Some paper was lined and some was unlined except for one or two wide lines at the bottom of the paper for the beginning writing so the children could write a sentence about a picture they had made.

Pictures used were from magazine covers or from calendars which would appeal to children. Pets, humorous scenes, or pictures of other children were liked best.

Many kinds of dictionaries were used. These included:

- **Young Readers Dictionary** by Margaret Bittner Parke, Wonder Books, New York, 1955; **My First Dictionary** by Laura Oftedal and Nina Jacob, University of Chicago, Grosset and Dunlap, New York, 1950;
by Lillian Moore, Illustrated by Beth and Joe Krush, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1954; and The Picture Dictionary for Children by Garnette Watters and Stuart A. Courtis, Illustrated by Doris and Marion Henderson and Barry Bart, Gosset and Dunlap, New York, 1939. Also a dictionary was made by the teacher and the children so each had a word book of his own. These were dittoed by the teacher and plenty of space was left for the children to add their own words which they found they needed as they were doing more writing.

A story box was made and created interest when placed on the creative writing table along with paper and dictionaries for the children to write stories during their free time. These stories were read to the class on Friday.

Book jackets from the books in the classroom library were used before the book had been read to the children. After their stories were written and read aloud, the teacher read the book to the children.

Many books were used. The teacher read a book each day for storytime. The teacher also borrowed books from the Des Moines Public Library. Books from authors such as Lois Lenski, Dr. Seuss and C. W. Anderson were read and discussed so the children learned to know and like many of their books. The children would also ask for books by their favorite authors when they went to the Public Library and would bring them to school to share with the others.
The children at Sabin School were fortunate to have library facilities in the school building. The school library was a pleasant basement room which had been used as a classroom. It had a tile floor, small primary tables and chairs and freshly painted walls. It also had bulletin boards which the children in different classrooms took turns using to illustrate books. The library was well stocked with one large bookcase of primary books. Other bookcases included shelves of science books, books about home and family, adventure stories, poetry and holiday stories. Each classroom in the building was given a forty-five minute period each week to visit the library and read. At the beginning of the school year, about twenty-five minutes was used for the children to choose their own books and read, and the other twenty minutes was used for a story time in which the teacher read to the group. Later thirty minutes was used for individual reading and the additional fifteen minutes was used for book reports. The children would tell the name of the book they read, the author and what the story was about.

Each Friday morning from 11:00 to 11:30 the group listened to stories which were read and told from Iowa State Teacher's College over station WOI. These included stories which were familiar to some of the children and others which were new. Miss Arey was especially adept at holding their interest as she told stories. These stories gave the children ideas for other stories or often they used the same characters and wrote of further adventures.
II. THE PROCEDURES

Before beginning the creative writing program with the group of second grade children at Sabin School, the writer was interested in knowing all she could about the group. It was necessary to know about their interests both inside and outside of school, their interest in books read to them and books which they enjoyed reading. It was also necessary to establish a good rapport with the children and to establish a room atmosphere in which they would feel free to express themselves creatively. The paint easel in which two children could paint at a time was available for children to express themselves creatively in art. Modeling clay, and a blackboard lined for children to write sentences, letters and stories were other centers of interest for creative free time activity. The children were encouraged to express themselves through all art activities. Time was spent in sharing art projects and evaluating things which were especially different and good. Much praise was used and children were encouraged to think and plan many activities themselves. From the beginning it was stressed that everyone's pictures would not be alike and that they were to use their own ideas.

During the month of September, the teacher spent extra time in getting to know each child and his interests, abilities, and home life. During discussions and reading class, as well as story time, the children were encouraged to express their feelings about a story, a character in the story or experiences of their own.
The teacher encouraged children to plan and tell stories of their own. A chart was posted on the News Bulletin Board with the title "I am ready to tell a story" under which were lines for the children to sign their name when they were ready. Pictures were often made by the children to illustrate the story they were telling. The teacher also posted pictures cut from magazines to give ideas for telling stories, with the caption, "Can you tell a story about this?" or "How would this make you feel?".

Much time was spent in spelling and writing class in correcting writing errors and working with individual children. Since spelling was new to the children this year, it was introduced in context and written in context so the children would learn sentence structure along with spelling. Capital letters and punctuation were also emphasized.

Because some of the children were reading at a low first grade level, their spelling consisted of words taken from their reading vocabulary which were words needed in writing and reading and which they could learn without difficulty.

The only writing the children did on their own during this month was one sentence under a picture they had drawn, in which their spelling words were used.

During the month of October, emphasis was still on telling stories, listening to stories, and discussing their reaction to the characters and the authors. Books by Dr. Seuss were introduced and
read and proved to be favorites because of the imagination of the author. Paper which was plain except for three or four lines, one and one-half inches wide at the bottom of the paper was made by the teacher so stories could be written about the pictures the children drew. Many autumn ideas were good for beginning their own writing. After a walk around the neighborhood, stories and pictures of the walk, and of the leaves falling and changing colors were easy and fun to do. The teacher was free to help the children with any words which they needed to spell and to encourage some children who seemed to have difficulty.

After the stories were written, the children read them aloud to the group. Even children who had difficulty, felt proud to read their own story to the others. The children were successful and happy in their first experience and were eager to write more.

Halloween gave many ideas for creative writing. One day the teacher wrote the words: black cat, witch, jack-o-lantern and ghost, on the blackboard and the children wrote stories using these words. Halloween parties and their experiences on tricks or treat night were fun and easy for the children, so again their feeling was one of success.

During storytime the teacher would often talk about descriptive words the author used. Instead of starting a story "one day" the children talked of descriptive words, such as "one sunny day" or "one crisp, winter day". Time was also spent in thinking about
the beginning of the story, and following through the sequence of events in the story.

In November, stories were written on regular lined paper. The first story was motivated by a picture of a girl and a pony. This gave ideas for stories about "Flicka", "Fury" and "The Pet I Would Like to Have". Before the actual writing on their own, plans were made with the children. Words they thought they would need were placed on the blackboard and others they were not sure about could be looked up in their own dictionaries or one of the many picture dictionaries. One child was also named as a helper for the spelling words while the teacher was busy with reading groups. Later in the morning the teacher was able to help individual children. Concern was not so much on each word spelled correctly as it was with the content and thought of the story. Praise was used even if the story was short and words were misspelled. The teacher again took time during the day to have the children read their own stories to the group. Again much praise was given and children were instilled with the idea that they could write stories and that writing stories was fun.

One day the children wrote about "Things I Am Thankful For". This writing gave an insight to the teacher on things which are important to the children and the values of the home and family.

Another story was written about a turkey around Thanksgiving Day that ran away and his experiences away from the farm.
In December much individual help was given. Since emphasis had been entirely on content and making writing successful, now more emphasis was put on letting children write according to their ability and interest. Children who were not ready to write on lined paper were given paper to draw a picture and write a sentence or two about their picture. Others were encouraged to write about things which required more thinking and feeling.

Stories were written about Santa and his elves at the North Pole getting toys ready to bring on Christmas Eve. Another day the children wrote about how Santa must feel as he was busy making others happy.

One day the children wrote on "How I feel when I think about Christmas". Stories such as: "I feel excited because of the toys I get on Christmas", "I feel glad because it is Jesus' Birthday", and "I feel happy because I can make others happy on Christmas", made many children have a deeper meaning about Christmas.

Another day the children wrote stories suggested by a picture of a cocker spaniel waiting in someone's Christmas stocking. This picture besides suggesting a story, helped to get feeling into the story because of the expression on the face of the puppy. It suggested how the child would feel who was to receive the dog.

After Christmas vacation, the children wanted to write about their vacations. Some wrote about "Christmas Surprises" and some about "Things they did during vacation".
During January, winter stories seemed to predominate. The class wrote stories about "Birds and Animals in Winter" and "How I help to feed winter birds". One child used the characters Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail and adapted them to life in the wintertime.

Another day, stories about "What I like to do when it's snowing" and "How I feel when it's snowing and cold outside and I look out and watch the snowfall" were good suggestions and many good stories were written with feelings.

A social studies unit on "firemen" gave an opportunity for the children to write a story as a result of a trip. After a trip to the fire station, many good stories were written about the trucks, the work at the station and about the fireman who slid down the pole. Thank you letters to the firemen also gave creative opportunity after the trip.

In February, much growth took place. Because of the praise and encouragement all along from the teacher, and because of the feeling of success the children experienced, they were always eager to write. By now their vocabularies had grown through their wide reading on their own and listening to stories and also through spelling and the use of dictionaries, most of the class were now able to write more independently.

An activity which proved very creative was for the children to write an ending to a story. Ending the story, "One day when I walked home from school I saw. . . ." gave many imaginative stories.
Also, the children enjoyed writing about "My Happiest Day", which included everything from a day at Riverview Park, to a birthday party, to a trip to the airport.

"Things I like to do on a rainy day" gave the teacher more ideas as to the children's interests outside of school. Some included making cookies, helping mother clean house, drawing pictures and watching television.

Another creative activity which the children enjoyed was guessing stories from book covers. The teacher showed book jackets from "When It Rained Cats and Dogs" and "A Camel Who Took A Walk" and let the children decide which one they would like to write a story about. Later both the children's stories and the books were read to the group, and they enjoyed hearing the different ideas. Both of these book covers because of their color and titles were motivating to the children.

One day the teacher showed three illustrations for a story and the children wrote the story that the pictures suggested to them. Although they wrote well, this did not lend itself as well to creative writing as the pictures almost told the story.

Valentine stories were fun and especially good for the slower children as this was an activity which was correlated with art and the stories were not as long as most of the others. The teacher helped the slower group plan stories before they wrote on their own.
A picture of an elephant standing by a zoo gave some ideas for make-believe stories. Many wild and exciting experiences came from this picture.

In March, the story box was made and a creative writing corner was established in the room. Paper, dictionaries and crayons were available. A folder filled with pictures was also placed at the corner with the suggestion to "Choose a picture and then write a story about it". The first week five children wrote a story and put it in the box; the second week seven stories were written and the third week eleven children wrote stories. On Friday, those children asked to read their story to the group. If for any reason a child preferred not to read his story himself, he often asked the teacher to read the story aloud to the group. Sometimes it was a story he wanted only the teacher to read and was not to be shared with the others.

One day the children wrote stories on "If I had three wishes..." These were varied and included such things as some small wishes for pets, bicycles and dolls, to a ride on an airplane, a trip to Disneyland and a million dollars.

Another activity which was good was writing an ending to a book. The teacher read the first half of "Burlap" and stopped at an exciting place where Burlap, the dog, and Billy met a bear while walking through the woods. The children wrote varied endings and enjoyed hearing both their endings and the book ending.
The suggestion to write on "What I like best in my room at home and what kind of feelings I have when I think about it" was a topic all the children were able to write on and one which was very creative.

After reading several books and stories about "Snipp, Snapp and Snurr" the children decided they would like to write stories about them. Using the same three boys in their stories, the children enjoyed imagining other experiences which they might have had.

During the month of April, the children wrote constantly. Now that they enjoyed writing stories many of the children wrote stories at home and brought them to school for the teacher or to share with the class. Much of the freetime of the children at school during the day was used to write a story on the blackboard or a story for the story box. Enthusiasm for storytime on Friday afternoon when the stories were read from the story box mounted each week. The children often wrote about other children in the room or named an animal in their story after one of the children.

The first writing the children did in April was the result of a trip. During a social studies unit on trains, the class went on a train trip from Des Moines to Cambridge, Iowa, April 3. Following the trip, they were asked to write about the trip. The words they thought they would need were written on the blackboard before they began. They consisted of Rock Island Station, capitol, Cambridge, switching, conductor and picture. Instead of reading
them to the class that afternoon, the teacher dittoed a copy of the stories so each child could have them to put in their transportation books. The children were surprised and happy to see their story in print and enjoyed reading the stories written by the others.

After discussing baby animals and birds born in the spring-time, the children wrote stories from a picture of a boy and girl watching some baby chickens. Some wrote about visiting a hatchery; some imagined they were on a farm, and some pretended they were going to the pet store to buy some chickens of their own.

The children especially liked to write animal stories. One day they were asked to write about one of their favorite animals. Most of the stories were about horses, while some were about elephants, rabbits, dogs and ducks.

Before Easter the children wrote stories about an Easter bunny. These included "The Funny Easter Bunny," "The Easter Bunny That Forgot," and "The Runaway Easter Egg".

One beautiful spring day, the children wrote on "I like springtime because...". This was very creative and was especially good at getting descriptive words.

During the month of May the children wrote more and more make-believe stories. Many were about animals and some were about experiences of boys and girls.

After a walk to the park one morning, the children wrote about things they saw and heard along the way. The children were
surprised at the different things they saw that day that they had not noticed before.

One day the children wrote autobiographies. These were interesting especially to the teacher as it gave knowledge as to where the children had lived and about their families.

Stories about "My first picnic this year," "Helping to Plant a Garden," and "My plans for the summer" were other suggestions about which the students wrote.

For two weeks the children enjoyed writing news for a newspaper. A large bulletin board was arranged and labeled for sports news, society, school news, weather, and comics. The children wrote news and gave to the editor of the week who was responsible for arranging it on the bulletin board.

Another activity during this month included book reports. Since the children had read many varied books during the year, they were asked to write on one of their favorite books.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted with a group of second grade children to: (1) determine the need and purpose of creative writing in the second grade curriculum, (2) determine the role of teachers in helping children to write creatively, and (3) determine the effect creative writing has upon children who are given the opportunity and encouragement to write in the second grade. From this study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Children develop an interest in and an appreciation for good literature.

2. Creative writing helps to develop language ability by working with the child's natural expression of his own ideas.

3. Emotional conflicts are often projected in creative writing, which gives the teacher an opportunity to know and help children with emotional difficulties.

4. Creative writing helps children gain in confidence and obtain a sense of pride in themselves.

5. Second grade children enjoy writing stories and reading them to the group.

6. Varied ideas for writing help to keep the children interested in writing.
7. Creative writing allows for individual differences in children. It especially challenges the gifted children.

8. Children increase their vocabularies and learn to spell many more words when they write creatively.

9. Children need experiences with literature and telling stories before they are ready to write stories themselves.

10. Children need some motivation and suggestions for writing stories.

11. An observer cannot determine the total effect the writing has had on each individual child, but can only note improvement in personality and behavior.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

After reaching the conclusions given above, the writer would recommend that:

1. All children be given an opportunity to express themselves creatively during the second grade in school.

2. The methods of presenting suggestions for writing should be varied and of interest to the writer.

3. Experiences with creative writing should be pleasant. Children should not be forced to write on something they know nothing about.

4. Children should be encouraged to write often. Creative writing needs to be a regular part of the language program. Children need to write at least once a week to keep them interested.
5. The teacher must be enthusiastic and praise each child if she is to encourage him to write more and better.

6. Children should be given choices of things to write about.

7. All children should not be expected to write at the same time—there is a readiness for creative writing. Some children need additional time for telling stories before they write them.

8. Children need to feel they can write what they want.

9. Classroom time devoted to experiences with creative writing may be considered well spent. This study proved to be of value to both the writer and the children in the classroom.
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APPENDIX

In my early experiences with farm life, there were many memorable moments. One in particular stands out. I remember a day when I was helping to feed the farm animals. I was a little girl around ten years old, and I was given the task of feeding the horses. The horses were fed hay, grain, and other treats.

I was instructed to give each horse its own share, and to make sure they were eating well. I was quite excited to be helping out and felt proud of my ability to handle the task. The horses were quitefeeding well, and I was glad that I had been given the opportunity to help.

I continued to feed the horses each day, and it became a routine task. It was a joy to see them eating and enjoying their food. I felt a sense of accomplishment and pride in being able to take care of them.

I remember that day as one of the highlights of my early farm life. It taught me the importance of taking care of others, and the satisfaction that comes from doing a good job.

End of story.
APPENDIX A

STORIES WRITTEN BY THE CHILDREN

Following is a sampling of the creative writing done by the second grade group from November 1956 through May 1957.

November

Stories written which were motivated by a picture of a girl and a pony:

Flicka is my pony. He is good to me. He gets hungry. Sometimes I ride Flicka. He likes to go out for a ride.

Vicki

One day when I went outside I had the biggest surprise. In my back yard for my birthday I got a little white and brown pony. Six weeks after I got the pony I could ride him. I named the pony Fury.

Kenny

Once I knew someone who had three horses. One of them was named Star because he had a star on his forehead. One was named Silver because he was a silver stallion. The other one was named Black Beauty because he was a shiny black. Their owner was a little girl named Nancy Ann. She took very good care of the horses. The horses liked Nancy Ann because she gave them hay and oats.

Bobby

December

Stories written about "How I feel when I think about Christmas":

I feel glad at Christmas because I help other people. I feel excited because Santa Claus is going to come. I feel happy from the inside out. I feel glad on Christmas because it is Jesus birthday. I feel excited because I get presents. I am happy because I have a Church to go to on Christmas. I am glad that on the first Christmas the Shepherds came to see Baby Jesus. I am glad that today we have a church to worship him.

Sandra

Christmas is coming. Christmas makes me excited and happy. Christmas makes me glad. But I like to make others happy too, so I give them presents on Christmas.

Carolyn
I feel good at Christmas. I am glad that Christmas is coming because it is Jesus Birthday. On Christmas I am happy. On Christmas I am excited. On Christmas I am glad. Others are happy on Christmas because we give them presents.

Linda

Stories written suggested from a picture of a Cocker Spaniel waiting in someone's Christmas stocking:

It was Christmas morning and I went down stairs and I saw lots of presents. I opened one of mine. The paper was pretty and the ribbon was big and red but what was in it was better than that. There was a cute little puppy inside. It was the cutest little puppy I have ever seen. I named him Blondie.

Gene

One Christmas day by the Christmas tree was a puppy. He had a big pink bow around his neck with a card on it. The card said Merry Christmas. The dog will belong to Tom, Betty and Susan. It is a very pretty dog. Tom, Betty and Susan love their dog very much.

Sherry

On January

Stories written about "Birds and Animals in Winter":

Once upon a time there were three little rabbits named Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail. Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail were very good little rabbits. They even saw Santa Claus and he said they were good and that they could have what they wanted for Christmas. And the things they wanted most were cabbages and carrots. At last Christmas eve came and Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail hung up their stockings and went to bed. In the morning they went to see their stockings. They had cabbage and carrots in them and they had a happy Christmas.

Ronnie

One day a little bunny was going from house to house because he wanted someone to play with. He went far away trying to get someone to play with him but he could not find anyone so he went back home. When he got home he was so surprised. He did not know that it was his birthday and his mother had a surprise party for him. He got everything he wanted. When the party was over he played with his toys. He played with his toy horse and his toy car too. But most of all he played with the little toy dog that his mother gave him.

Kathleen
Stories about "Things we like to do when it's snowing":

Once there were five children on Pleasant Street. Their names were David, Gene, Sherry, Kathy and Ronnie. They went outside to play. It was snowing in soft little flakes. Then it began snowing harder than ever. Then it stopped all at once. The ground and the trees were covered with snow. And then the children had an idea. They all said the same thing at the same time, "Let's build a snowman". So they rolled up a big ball of snow. Then they rolled up a middle sized ball of snow. Then they rolled a little ball of snow. They put some coal for its eyes and a carrot for its nose. They put some coal for buttons for their snowman. Then their snowman was finished. They had fun playing in the snow.

Barry

One day I went outside and four other children came with me. Suddenly it began to snow tiny snowflakes. They began to get bigger and bigger. Then the sky was full of snowflakes. The children began to laugh and play in the snow. Look at the big snowflakes said Sandra. Look said Gene the world is white. See all the snow in the woods. Just look at the pretty trees. Let's make a snowman said Steve. Then all the children went to help Steve make a snowman.

Robert

February

Stories written about "My Happiest Day":

My Happiest Day was when I went to Disneyland. First I went on the Train ride and I went on an old time Fire Engine. Then I rode on the Snow White Ride and the Mad Tea Party Ride. Then we went to Look Out Falls and to Fort Wilderness and I saw a Cabin burning up from an Indian raid. We watched some Indians dancing. The man said that there were eighteen tribes there. We went to Adventureland and Mother got me a compass. This was my happiest day.

Eddie

My happiest day was when I went to Riverview. First I rode on an airplane. Then I rode on a ferris wheel. You could push on the handle and it would go upside down. Then I rode on the roller coaster. When I went down I flew up in the air like a bird.

Gene
Stories which were the ending to "One day when I walked home from school I saw . . . ":

One day when I was walking home from school I saw something funny. It was a ziz-a-g-gunny, a kind of an animal that just can be found in a place called nut-a-try-land. And then, Oh, what do you think I saw? I saw a fiddle-de-widdle bird. It is 200 feet high and it is the fastest thing you ever will see and it weighs just 1 ounce. When I got home and I told my mother she said it just can't be!

Sharron

One day I was walking home from school when something blew my nice red hat off. It is only the wind, said my friend. The wind blew your hat off. The wind, I said, the wind sure is strong today. It sure is, said my friend. And then we saw the funniest thing I ever saw. It had ten legs and four ears. Then a man came and took this animal back to the circus.

Patty

Stories written from guessing the story from seeing the Book Covers, "When it Rained Cats and Dogs" and "A Camel Who Took a Walk":

This is a story about a camel. One day the zoo keeper had a big surprise because the camel was gone. He did not know that the camel was in the city. The camel had gone to the City Hall. The mayor of course, is in the City Hall. The camel went to the top floor to visit the mayor but it just so happened that the mayor was out of town. Just then the zoo keeper came and took the camel back to the zoo.

David

One day it was raining. But in such a funny way. It was raining cats and dogs. It was very funny. The cats were chasing the dogs instead of the dogs chasing the cats. The funniest part about it was that the cats were chasing the dogs in thin air. And the dogs and cats had wings so they could fly. One cat was white and orange. One dog was black and white. And another cat was black with orange spots on its back. But then all of them bumped into a tree and they all lost their wings. Then they came tumbling down on top of my house. There were so many that they piled up over the top of my house. And that was the last of the cats and dogs.

Sandra

March

Stories about "What I like best in my room at home":

...
One day when the sun was shining a package came in the mail. I opened it and there was a toy elephant. I said to myself, this is the best toy I’ve ever gotten. Days and years passed and I got other toys, but I still think that the toy elephant from my x-daddy is the best toy I have.

Patty

My favorite thing in my room at home is my gun. I like my gun most of all. I got the gun for my birthday. I got other toys too but I like my gun most of all. Every day I go outside to play cowboys.

Kenneth

Stories from the beginning, "If I had three wishes":

If I had three wishes I would wish for a million dollars so I could buy the world. My second wish would be to have a big private car with my own driver to drive it for me. Finally I would wish for a great, great, big yacht. One night when I went to bed I dreamed that my three wishes came true. I dreamed that I had a private car with my very own driver to drive it for me. And finally I dreamed that I had a great, great, big yacht. But as you know I was just dreaming so my wishes could never come true. But if by some wonderful miracle, some wonderful, wonderful miracle, maybe my wishes would come true. If I did have my three wishes I would not keep them to myself. I would let lots of people ride on my great, great, big yacht and I would let lots of people ride in my car. And I would give away thousands of dollars to poor people.

Ronnie

One day it was raining, and I could not go outside so I went to sleep. I dreamed I had three wishes that came true. I wished first of all for a new bicycle. Then I wished I had a little white house that flew way up in the sky. The third wish I wished was for a little airplane that could go as high as the sun without burning. Then I woke up and realized that I was just dreaming. It was not raining anymore so I went outside to play.

Barry

Stories about "Snipp, Snapp and Snurr":

Snipp, Snapp and Snurr were three little boys. They wanted a red cap but one cap was not enough for three boys. So the three little boys went out to earn money to buy some caps. Snipp saw a man who was making a big boat so he helped him and earned some money. Snapp and Snurr went on and Snapp saw a man who was painting a house. May I help you, asked Snapp? Yes, said the man
so Snapp stayed to help the man paint. Snurr went on until he came to a farm. A man asked, Little boy will you help me? Yes I will, said Snurr. So he took the feed to the cows and horses and hens and pigs. Soon all the boys were finished with their work. They went to the store and bought their caps. They were very happy. They even had some money left so they bought a box of candy for their mother.

Kathleen

One sunny day Snipp, Snapp and Snurr decided to take a walk in the country. They met a squirrel. The squirrel's name was Baxter. Soon they came to a narrow bend in the road. There they heard a Hee-ee. And there they saw a beautiful black colt. Snipp said, "He hurt his foot. Let's take him home and fix his foot and take care of him." And they did. Soon the colt's foot was well again and he could walk and trot again. Now he was nearly grown up. Snipp, Snapp and Snurr loved the colt and wanted to keep him but as soon as he was well, they turned him loose back to the country where his mother was waiting for him.

Lee

One Spring day Sally Day said to her mother and her little brother David, "Let's go to visit the pet store and see the baby chicks. Sally put on her blue coat and blue hat and white gloves. David put on his dark blue coat and hat. When they got there, Sally and David ran through the pet store. Then David looked back and Sally was gone. But then he saw her looking at the baby chicks. They were yellow and very small. The chickens went, peep peep as if to say take me. Their mother bought two baby chickens and the children took them home and fixed a box for them and fed them.

Sherry

Once there were two children. Their names were Sandy and Joan. One day their mother took them down town. When Joan and Sandy got to the Dime Store, what do you think they saw in the window? They saw a lot of little baby chicks. Joan and Sandy asked their mother if they could have one for a pet. Mother said, "Yes". So Sandy and Joan and Mother went into the Dime Store and bought one of the chicks. When they got home they made a little bed out of grass and leaves. The
months went very fast and before Joan and Sandy knew it they had an old mother hen. Soon the mother had baby chickens. They saw one little chick cracking its shell. One part of its shell would not come off. It was the part that was at the top of the egg. They thought the chick looked like he had a hat on. So Joan and Sandy helped the little chick. When the chickens were a few weeks old they took them to a farm to live, and I am happy to say they lived happily ever after.

Carolyn

Stories about the Easter Bunny:

One day the Easter rabbit had a big surprise. An Easter egg ran away. The egg had webbed feet. There was a creek ahead of the egg. The rabbit said, "That will stop him". But the egg went on. It swam across the creek. When it got across it cracked open and there was a baby duck. The rabbit was so very surprised and laughed when he saw what had happened.

George

Once there was a bunny named Timothy. Timothy was chosen the Easter bunny of the year. Easter eve Timothy went to bed early. And Timothy forgot all about the Easter basket. Finally Timothy woke up. Then Timothy looked at the clock, it said 3:00 o'clock. Timothy said, "Yipe" it's Easter". Oh, oh, now all the boys and girls will be sad. I'll run and take the gifts right now." Timothy ran to all the houses in two hours. And Timothy wasn't forgetful any more.

Linda

Stories written from the Train trip to Cambridge:

A trip on a Train

Once we took a ride on a train. My dad and Mrs. Worden and Mrs. Silk and Mrs. Strome took us to the train station. And then my Dad took three pictures of us. We went into the station and bought our own ticket at the ticket box and a man showed us around the station. We rode in a coach and it was fun. When we were on the train I saw a windmill and a silo on a farm. We went over a creek and it scared me. Before long we came to Cambridge and got on the bus. We came back to school and then went home and ate lunch.

Danny
When we went to Cambridge I saw the Capitol. I saw a
crow too. The conductor came to get our tickets. Then after
awhile we got to Cambridge. The school bus was there. So
then we got off the train and got on the bus. On the way
back I saw some birds. Then I saw some more birds. And then
we saw the school. The bus stopped in front of the school.
Everyone got out and we went in the room and told about things
we saw. Then it was time to go home for lunch. I told my
mother about the trip and when my brother got home I told him
about it.

Kathleen

The Train Ride

I saw the station and the Capitol. Then I saw farms and
some cows and horses and pigs. And then I came to Cambridge.
Then I got on the school bus and came back to school.

Cynthia

Things I saw on the Train Trip

I saw a truck or two. But I don't know maybe it was three
trucks. It looked very difficult to me because I was so little
I didn't understand. I saw a cow and some pigs and a rabbit
too. And I saw a scare crow. Then I took a nap.

Randy

Our Rooms Train Trip to Cambridge

Wednesday we went for a train ride. Davida Mother and
Sherrys Mother and Mary Ellens Mother and Dannys Father took
us to the Depot. I got to ride with David. When we got
there Dannys father took pictures of us. Then we got on the
train. Soon it started. I sat by David. First we went over
a bridge. Then we went under a bridge. Then we came to a
Freight yard. We saw a Freight Train. It had tractors and
other things. Then we reached Cambridge. There the school
bus picked us up and took us back to school.

Lee

The Trip to Cambridge

When I got to the station I got to look around. Then I
got to buy my own ticket and then we all got on the train.
I sat in the coach for a long time. Then it finally started
to move. At first it went slow and then it went faster and
before I knew it we were going past the Capitol. After awhile
we were out of Des Moines. We kept switching tracts. The
Conductor came around and picked up the tickets and then we got to Cambridge and then we went back on the bus.

Gene

The Train Trip

Today we went on a train trip. I saw the Capitol and on a train there were some box cars. A train passed us. Eddie found out that we went 54 miles. We saw a switch engine. When we came back we had to go home to eat lunch.

Barry

I went on a train and I saw a Brakeman. A train was switching around. Our room went on the Train number 16. I saw some snow on a car and then the snow fell down off the car. And then I saw a dog and the dog was black and white.

Kenneth

Today at school our class went for a train ride on the Rock Island. Miss Schwien, our teacher said that the train we were going on would not be very big. She didn't want one boy who had been on a big train to be disappointed. But the boy was not disappointed because he knew that it still would be fun to ride on one more train.

Sherry

I liked the trip very much because I saw many things on the way back from the trip. I saw a cow and some pigs. It was very fun. When we left the train the Conductor said, "Goodbye" and I said, "Thank you for the ride to Cambridge". Then we went back on a bus and then we went home to eat lunch.

Vicki

When we got on the school bus most of the children were tired from the long trip. When we were in the train we were looking out of the window and we saw the Capitol. We saw a lot of things.

Connie

Today I went on a train trip. It was fun. My teacher went too. I saw a farm. It had a windmill. I saw fields and fields of grain. The trains number was 15. We had a lot of fun. The conductor took our tickets. He was fun. The tracks were smooth. Then we went back to school.

Mary Ellen

This was my first train ride. I had a wonderful time at the station. I saw another train go by.

Linda
I liked the seats on the train. The conductor took up our tickets. The conductor said, "Is this your first train ride?" and I said "Yes". When I got off the bus I was sleepy.

Marilyn

We had a nice trip on the train. Then we went on a bus back to school. We rested and talked about the trip and then went home to eat.

Linda

I saw the Conductor and I saw the Engineer and I saw four other men working on the train. I took my coat off and then I looked out of my window and saw lots of things.

Karin

Today the children in my room went to the Rock Island train station. When we got there a man took us through the station.

Sharron

It all began when we went to the Rock Island station. We sat in the train a long time. Soon we started going. We saw the Capitol.

Steve

One day I went to the train station. I bought my ticket. Then we went for our ride.

Floyd

The Train Ride

Today we went on a train ride. At the Rock Island Station the Conductor showed us the lockers that the people put their suitcases in. We sat in the coach. The conductor took the tickets. The thing I liked most was the train switched tracks all the time. On the way we saw fields and cows. We rode back on a school bus. I liked it too. Patty and Sherry and Karin and Sharron and Eddie and Robert and I went to sleep. When we got back to school we went home.

Sandra

My First Train Trip

I think the most exciting thing I ever rode on was a train. When we got out into the country, that was when the trip was the best of all. Robert showed me where he used to live. When we came out of the station after the Station Master showed us
around I saw a kind of a little train of cars. The cars made so much racket when Mr. Seiberling and Mrs. Silk were taking our pictures. Now getting back out to the country. Well the train kept switching from the main track over to the side track. When we got just out of the station there was a little creek. Robert and I kept trying to keep track of the creek. Back in the station I saw box cars, tank cars and every other kind of car that you would ever see on a train. When we finally got to Cambridge I thought there would be a depot but to my surprise there wasn't a depot. Well we got on the school bus and came back to Sabin.

Ronald

I saw a windmill and the Capitol and some farms on the train trip. We went on a Rock Island train. We went on train number 16 on track 3. The tickets cost 36¢. The train kept switching.

Eddie

My Trip to Cambridge

One snowy spring day I went in a car to the train depot. I got on a train there. It took a long time to get there. The rest of the class went too. We had fun going there. Then we came to Cambridge after awhile. The conductor called "Cambridge." And then we all got out and got onto a bus. It took a long time too. When we got to the school we talked about how in one morning we had used three ways of travelling.

Patty

I saw a barn and in it was a cow. I had fun on the train trip to Cambridge. I was happy Miss Schwien let us go on the trip. We saw lots of things.

Nicky

The Train Ride

Wednesday the room and I went for a train ride. Lee sat with me. We saw a train yard. Then we switched on a different rail. The conductor came and took Lee's ticket and mine. Then we saw the Capitol. When we got to Cambridge a bus was waiting for us.

David

One day I went to the Rock Island Depot with all the school children in Room 26. Some of the children's mothers took us there. Then one of the mothers and one of the fathers took a
picture of us. Then we went inside and found the man who was going to show us around. He showed us around the station and then our train came. We got on and sat down and waited for the train to go. After awhile the train began to go. It did not go very fast because we were in town. Soon it went faster. When we got off the train the bus took us back to the school house.

Kenny

Our class went on a trip to Cambridge. We bought our own tickets and then we got on the train and waited. We waited and we waited for a long time. Then we started to move. We started slow. Then we started to go faster and faster. On the way I saw a windmill and a barn and a silo. We went on top of a bridge and we went through a tunnel. Then the train stopped and Miss Schwien said it was time to go home. When I got home I told my mother all about it and my father and my sister and my brother.

George

One Wednesday morning our room went on a train trip and when we got off the train we got on a bus. We went back to school and talked about the train trip.

Quynton

My Trip to Cambridge

On the way to Cambridge we saw the Capitol with its gold top. What I liked the best of all was that the train kept switching tracks. I thought that we were going off of the track but we didn't go off.

Bobby

May

Stories written about "Helping to Plant a Garden" and "My First Picnic this year":

Helping to Plant a Garden

Last Monday when my mother was peeling potatoes she asked my sister and I if we would like to plant the eyes of the potatoes. We said yes, so my sister and I went out and Mother told us how to plant them. She said to dig a hole and put the eye in it and then fill it with water and cover it up and wait for it to grow.

Bonnie
Our First Picnic This Summer

Just Saturday our family and some friends went for a picnic. We went to a park and we got to help fix the lunch. We had sandwiches, pork and beans, potato salad and Kool-aid. We ate our lunch, then we played baseball. My brother made a home run and I caught a fly. Then when I went up to bat, I hit a fly. Then Mother said, It's getting dark, let's go home and get some ice cream.

Bobby

Autobiographies written by the children:

The Story of My Life

I was born where I live now. I was born in Des Moines. Later my Mother had another baby and she was my sister. I grew and grew and so did my sister. One day my mother's girl friend came over and that was the day I started to school for the very first time. I went to Madison School. Then I moved to Sabin School. When I first came to Sabin, I didn't know any of the boys and girls. I had fun at Sabin. But now Sabin is more fun than before and I like it better than Madison School. My life was a happy one.

Connie

The True Story of My Life

I was born March 4 and I lived on Grove Street in Ferry, Iowa. I was born in the Ferry Hospital. When I was little Mother took me out doors and then she went back in the house. A dog came up and bit me right between the eyes. When I was 5 years old I went to Kindergarten. Then I became smarter and I grew up to be a fine boy.

Kenny

A Poem written by the Class for their Mothers Day Cards:

Because it's Mother's Day,
I'm sending this card to say
I love you in every way
Happy Mother's Day.

Book Reports written by the children:

Little Wild Horse

Story and Pictures by Hetty Burlingame Beatty

I liked this book because at the end of this book the boy
gets a horse of his own. This book is about a boy who moved from the city to the country. He tamed a wild horse by giving apples to it and the horse was his for ever more.

George

Billy Finds the Trail

By C. W. Anderson

This story was about a boy named Billy and a horse named Blaze. The boy loved his horse. Everyday Billy would tell Blaze he was the finest horse in the world. One day the boy and Blaze were going to explore an old road that no one used anymore. Later Billy looked up and saw storm clouds. He said "Come on Blaze, we'll have to hurry". They went fast and they got back before the storm.

Sherry

Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel

By Virginia Lee Burton

This is a story about a man and his steam shovel. This steam shovel could dig faster than any other. One day Mike saw in the paper that they were going to build a new Town Hall in the City of Popperville. So Mike went and dug the Town Hall. After they had dug the basement they could not get the Steam shovel out so they turned the steam shovel into the furnace for the new Town Hall.

Danny