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I is for Iowa: An Alphabet Book about Iowa

Mary Ann Gensicke

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I is for Iowa:
An Alphabet Book about Iowa

A Graduate Research Project

Submitted to the

Division of Library Science

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Master of Arts

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by

Mary Ann Gensicke

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July 28, 1993
Date Approved

Leah Hiland
Graduate Faculty Reader

July 28, 1993
Date Approved

Barbara Safford
Graduate Faculty Reader

July 29, 1993
Date Approved

Peggy Ishler
Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

ABSTRACT

I is for Iowa is a historically based alphabet book written for the purpose of introducing young children to facts about the state of Iowa. Each alphabet letter presents a geographical feature or location, a past personality, an industry, a designated state symbol or a significant historical event. The text is written for the comprehension of six to ten year old children. The words and pictures work together to highlight historical facts which are representative of the state's diversity and heritage. The book is designed to stimulate language development and to help young children become interested in reading and in learning more about the state of Iowa.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Bradley Commission on History in Schools was created in 1987 as a response to widely expressed concern about the inadequacy, in both quality and quantity, of the history taught in American elementary and secondary classrooms. Since the findings of the Commission, there have been numerous books and studies published which have recommended that history be a substantial part of the elementary school experience. Freeland (1991) takes the position that "history should be taught to students as early as the primary grades" (p. 66). Seefeldt (1984) and Elkind (1981) stated this position even before the Commission and Freeland did.

The writers and historians who agree with these recommendations do not, however, have the final word on history in the schools. Setting the guidelines for classroom instruction in each state usually falls under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Education. In accordance with this, the state of Iowa mandated the following in Section 256.11, Annotated Code of Iowa (1988):

The following areas shall be taught in grades one through six:...social studies, including geography, history of the United States and Iowa, cultures of other peoples and nations, and American citizenship, including the study of national, state, and local government in the United States;... (p.16)

It is one thing for the state or any commission to make pronouncements about what should be taught in the classroom, but in truth what actually happens in the classroom is determined by the teacher who has to contend daily with often undermotivated students and an overly crowded curriculum. The fact still remains that the most important ingredient in any instructional situation is the individual teacher. Too little time and too many students make it challenging for any classroom teacher to convey the excitement, the complexity, and the relevance of the past. The teachers need support.

Buckingham (1988), when discussing the purpose of her bibliography stated that, "[d]eveloping understanding and appreciation of the history, the natural heritage, the tradition, the literature and the art of Iowa, should be one of the goals of schools and libraries in the state" (p. iii). She recognized that there is a need to support teachers by helping them locate curriculum material about the state, which will be age and grade level appropriate.

This seemingly simple task becomes difficult to do because when the Iowa section in many libraries is searched, the discovery is made that very few books are available which are appropriate to children enrolled in early childhood or primary education. Mayland (1991) surveyed the Iowa books in the University of Northern Iowa Library's Youth Collection,

only to discover that, "this section does not have many books, and the ones which are there, are not very attractive or current" (p. 2). In the introduction to Reading for Young People: The Midwest, Hinman and Zimmerman (1979) state that "[t]he number of books about Illinois, Missouri, and Ohio is adequate, but that for Iowa and Indiana is disappointingly low" (p. v). There is a definite shortage of books in print for young children, pertaining to the history of Iowa.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this research project was to write a historically based alphabet book about the state of Iowa and its people, targeted at an audience of six to ten year old children. Many times alphabet books are designed to encourage thinking about the shapes and sounds of alphabet letters and their sequence. In addition, the Iowa alphabet book places primary focus on introducing historical concepts. The writer hopes it will serve as an important tool to assist Iowa educators in developing their Iowa history units to meet the needs and interests of the children. The book will help any child who reads or hears it, or looks at its pictures, to understand that Iowa's past was different from today, yet people still had hopes and dreams, and fears and problems. It also implies that important decisions were made in the past that affect our lives now. This book will fill an

obvious gap in state historical literature written for young children.

Significance of Study

Many times teachers of the primary grades find an interest in or discover a need to share something about their state with students. Current research and writing about history for the elementary schools support the belief that, as James and Zarrillo (1989) state in their article:

Elementary children should have a sound knowledge of the past for two main reasons: This information provides a sort of cultural glue, offering a shared American heritage and national identity; and historical knowledge becomes an essential foundation upon which greater and deeper understandings can be built. (p.153)

Presently, little is available in print form to assist the early childhood or primary teacher with historical instruction about the state of Iowa. The alphabet book will provide a source of information about the state, exciting places, and extraordinary personalities. It will be a source of information for the educator who tackles the challenge of striving to help children understand the connection between the present and the past. This book will serve as a piece of literature that is historically accurate as well as currently relevant to young people who live in or pass through Iowa.

Assumptions

An alphabet book written about the state of Iowa will find a captive audience among primary, school-aged children in Iowa. It will expand and enrich the students' knowledge of and appreciation for their heritage. It is assumed that Iowa is a state of variety with persons of various characteristics and interests. It will be impossible to represent the entire state in words or pictures. It is important, however, to be as representative as possible of the total state's diversity and still maintain interesting and entertaining material.

Limitations

The Iowa alphabet book is written for the interest and comprehension level of the age group six to ten. This placed restrictions on the quantity of words associated with the pictures as well as on the difficulty of the subject being presented. Since it is written as an informational, non-fiction book, this limited the choice of words to accompany each alphabet letter.

When considering elements to include in the text, the writer was able to locate only a few books containing Iowa historical information written for primary grade students to assist in the preparation of the book.

Pictures were needed to illustrate the text. Some of

them were not readily accessible or suitable for inclusion in an alphabet book.

The final limitation was the reality of conscious selection, and the awareness of the fact that what the writer chose for inclusion in the book was influenced by the perspective of her own life and culture and society.

Definitions

For purposes of mutual understanding between the writer and the reader, the following terms are defined.

Alphabet book: a picture dictionary of a topic-related subject (Iowa history, events, places and people).

Iowa: the geographical area defined by state borders: located between Minnesota and Missouri to the north and south, and between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers to the east and west, respectively.

Verbal literacy: the ability to put coherent thoughts into words, words into sentences, and sentences into larger units (Stewig, 1978).

Visual literacy: the ability to decode the messages in pictures, and encode the findings in language (Stewig, 1988).

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

"History readiness is important for young children" (p.65), stated Freeland (1991) in his book entitled, Managing the Social Studies Curriculum. Hoge and Crump (1988) wrote that "the early years are fertile grounds for the seeds of history" (p. 17). Egan (1982) argued that "young children can learn history, that it is educationally desirable that they should, and that the reasons why they can and should imply an appropriate curriculum" (p. 441). Evidence to support these three statements is discussed in the following paragraphs. This literature review also contains thoughts about using literature to teach history. In conclusion, a brief history of the alphabet book is given, along with information about how ABC books can be used to increase literacy. In doing so, the alphabet book is presented as merely a frame within which to portray the chosen subject, a historical look at Iowa.

History, as a subject, has been included in our school curriculum since colonial days. The American Historical Association was formed in 1884, and it increased the stature of history among the other social sciences. More recently, however, there has been a widely expressed concern over the

inadequacy, both in quality and in quantity, of the history taught in American elementary and secondary classrooms. The Bradley Commission (1988) formed in 1987 to address this issue declared in its final report, "that history should occupy a large and vital place in the education of the private citizen" (p. 8). In agreement with the Commission, Diane Ravitch (1985), former Assistant Secretary of Education, a zealous advocate for the study of history wrote, "I believe in the importance and value of the study of history, and I would like to see it strengthened in the schools" (p. 113).

Critics of this movement may ask, "Why should a student study history and is it appropriate to do so at the elementary school level?". The answer to this question is two fold. Finn and Ravitch (1988) discussed the aim of formal education by stating that it is:

...to prepare students for much more than gainful employment. Schools help ready students to become competent citizens, informed voters, and responsible participants in community affairs. The study of history and literature contributes to these goals. Besides, knowledge of history and literature is immensely useful. Acquiring such knowledge sharpens students' intellectual skills and improves their ability to think rationally about causes and effects and about character and motivation. This kind of disciplined thinking may be the *most* useful part of every student's education, far more valuable

in the long run than training for a job. (p. 563)

Advocates of this viewpoint believe that the strands of American history and literature can be woven into a coherent pattern that all children, regardless of ancestry, ought reasonably to be expected to learn. American and state history are multicultural and pluralistic.

In response to the "Why study history?" question, the Bradley Commission (1989) stated that:

History belongs in the school programs of all students, regardless of their academic standing and preparation, of their curricular track, or of their plans for the future. It is vital for all citizens in a democracy, because it provides the only avenue we have to reach an understanding of ourselves and of our society, in relation to the human condition over time, and of how some things change and others continue. (p. 11)

It seems then that the purposes of history in the elementary school are aimed at more immediate and attainable goals rather than focusing on building a definitive knowledge of history or mature historical reasoning ability. In their book Teaching History in the Elementary School, Hoge and Crump (1988) wrote:

For young elementary pupils, an important purpose of history instruction is to make the past seem real instead of remaining an untouchable abstraction held only in adult memories and hollow textbook passages. As history instruction casts the past in a more meaningful context, pupils achieve a second purpose of building insights into their present circumstances and contemporary

events. Beyond these purposes, history instruction in the elementary school must help pupils develop a love and respect for history learning and a realistic view of its inherent limitations. Finally, history instruction must help children recognize their own relationship to history, realizing with certainty that their actions and lives are a potential part of yet-to-be-written histories. (p. 14)

The second part of the question still unanswered deals with whether or not history is an appropriate curricular subject for children at the elementary level. In the book entitled, Historical Literacy The Case for History in American Education, Charlotte Crabtree (1989) in her chapter titled, "Returning History to the Elementary Schools" quoted Philip Phenix, philosopher, on the virtues of history for young children with its ability to provide "a sense of personal involvement in exemplary lives and significant events, and to supply an appreciation of values and vision of greatness, all this within the content of moving narrative and dramatic appeal" (p. 177). With the study of history in the elementary grades, students are helped to transcend their present moment, and allowed to understand that they are neither the first to confront problems nor are they alone in making the human journey.

As early as 1921, Margaret McMillan wrote that preschool children can gain knowledge of history, as long as the teacher approaches it from a point of view suggested not by "learned professors, but by the bright-eyed children

themselves" (p.235). Many historical concepts are already familiar to young children, and they have the capability of learning others that are presented in meaningful ways. As stated in Making Sense of Social Studies, by David Jenness (1990), there is widespread belief among historians and others today, "that children in the early primary grades could benefit from more exposure to history" (p. 260). In support of this statement, the Bradley Commission on History in Schools (1989) made the specific recommendation that history be a substantial part of the elementary school experience.

Children are innately interested in the past of people whom they know, and of the location in which they find themselves residing. Many times they will ask for a story about the olden days. Seefeldt (1984) noted that Dewey (1966) recognized this interest when he wrote,

Teaching history is not difficult because the child's interest in the way people lived, and how and why they lived as they did, what kinds of houses they had, what kinds of clothing they wore, and how they did business, that interest is endless and ceaseless. (p. 129)

To quote the Bradley Commission (1989) again, Young children are fascinated by heroes, amazing deeds, fantastic tales, and stories of extraordinary feats and locales. History offers a wide range of materials to delight and engage the young learner. Although the use of dates is inappropriate in the early grades, children can begin to develop a sense of time and place

("long, long ago, far away") as they are introduced to historical literature. (p. 22)

The study of history is important to young children, then, partially because it is of interest to them. They enjoy knowing about the past, in particular about their own past, because it does give them knowledge about themselves. James and Zarrillo (1989) commented regarding elementary education and their belief that "social science concepts placed within a historical setting can provide a unifying structure that is both developmentally appropriate and intellectually invigorating" (p. 154). In her article entitled "History and Community Resources: Teaching Children about our National Heritage", Cheryl Deaton (1990) quoted William Bennett as saying that "children can learn amazing things if presented in language they fathom and in ways that engage their lively minds and imagination" (p. 6).

Children are intensely interested in both the immediate and the distant past. When helping them explore and understand the past, this does not mean that a person must teach them a true historic sense of time. When guiding them in gaining a concept of the past, Wann, Dorn, and Liddle (1962) stated that,

Adults must shuttle back and forth with children from the present to the past as they react to the ever present urge to understand what has gone

before. This dipping into the past without concern for a logical development of chronology from the past to the present does not violate basic principals of learning. To wait until they can handle true chronology is to deprive children of the most important learnings of early childhood. (p. 58)

Even though the past is somewhat untouchable and far away, experiences with the past are possible for young children. Many resources are available to help young children understand the past. Among the most important sources of information are people, realia, and certainly literature, which incorporates both the printed word and pictures to aid in the comprehension of the subject matter. In his article entitled "History and Library Books" Zarrillo (1989) wrote,

Teachers have been encouraged to expand the role of children's literature in their classrooms. At the same time there has been an increased emphasis on bringing history to the center of the elementary social studies curriculum. One way to accomplish both goals is for teachers to develop units of study that teach history with children's literature. (p. 17)

According to research conducted by Levstik and Pappas (1987) at the University of Kentucky,

Elementary children as young as second grade know something about time and history. It seems that the context in which history is presented, examined, and discussed may be the crucial factor that will decide whether elementary children come to understand and engage in history. (p. 14)

They then recommended that elementary school-aged

children could profit from increased exposure to history, particularly in the form of historical fiction. In agreement with this belief, Ravitch and Finn (1987), in their book What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know? made the following recommendation:

Require all schools to teach a solid core curriculum of history and literature to all students at every grade level, and require individual students at appropriate points in their school careers to demonstrate satisfactory attainment of substantial amounts of historical and literary knowledge, concepts, and skills before moving on. (p. 224)

Their second recommendation was:

Purchase first-rate history books and supplementary materials and a diverse array of good literature, so that teachers at all grade levels have suitable instructional materials at hand. Improve school libraries. (p. 226)

Suggestions for meeting outcomes usually accompany such recommendations. Ravitch (1985) stated libraries could be improved by the addition of biographies:

Young children are fascinated and challenged by the incredible but true stories of human history. Biographies offer a fertile ground for involving children in the lives and stories and historical context of remarkable individuals, the men and women who overcame personal obstacles to change the world in some important way. (p. 78)

Other types of literature serve very well as a link between the young child and history. Ravitch stated that, "[h]istory provides the framework within which the elementary teacher

can use myths, legends, and fairy tales" (p. 79).

Regardless of the genre, books are a familiar format to most primary-aged children. Whether they are shared with a caring adult, or read independently, they are tools which have proven themselves over and over again to be sources of knowledge for a child.

In colonial times, the school curriculum revolved around teaching children to read and understand the Bible. In their article, Camp and Tompkins (1990) stated that "[b]y the end of the 19th century, the abecedarius, or alphabet book, began to reflect America's changing attitudes toward education and a more lighthearted attitude toward life in general" (p. 298). According to their research, alphabet books had been used to teach acceptable moral values to children, however, they were beginning to change. To support this thesis they presented the following examples:

The Shaker Abecedarius (1882, redesigned by Alice and Martin Provensen in 1978), which was used to teach Shaker children to read, included rhyme and rhythm to make reading instruction more enjoyable. Edward Lear's ABC (1965, 1871) replaced moralistic dogma with humorous limericks for each letter; and Kate Greenaway's illustration (1886) of the familiar rhyme "A Apple Pie" (first referenced in 1671) marked the transition from moralistic, diadactic alphabet books to enjoyable, brightly colored books that made the ABCs fun to learn. (p. 299)

The popularity of alphabet books has continued to grow

in the 20th century. Once used only with the very young child, they are now being introduced at nearly every grade level to spark and motivate new interests in our language. As Bodmer (1989) stated, "the alphabet book has always reflected the time and culture from which it springs" (p. 115). In agreement with this thought, Steinfurst (1976) remarked that "the alphabet reflects every great trend in children's literature which in turn mirrors the society of which it is a part" (p.354). Steinfurst said, "[a]s in previous periods, the twentieth century alphabet book reflects the current theories on childhood (Piaget) on education (Montessori, "progressive education," and now the open classroom) and trends in children's literature ("relevant" and realistic; humorous and fantastic)" (p. 353).

Early childhood educators use alphabet books for several purposes. Most alphabet books can be used to teach letter sequence, letter form, letter-style, and sound symbol correspondence. In addition, Stewig (1978), in his article entitled, "Alphabet Books: A Neglected Genre" discussed the fact that,

The alphabet book is a useful tool for developing children's visual literacy, the ability to look clearly and analytically at a visual stimulus and interpret it. Verbal literacy, the ability to talk clearly and

concisely about one's observations, and reactions, can also be developed. (p. 6)

In their article titled, "The Power of Visuals", authors Debes and Williams (1974) indicated that pictures can be used to "teach children of average ability as well as the gifted, the slow, even the seriously handicapped" (p. 31). They expressed their feeling that teaching with the use of visuals can enhance a child's self expression, build feelings of self-worth, clarify values, and also teach the whole range of specific subjects from reading and social studies to science and physical education. This is essentially the purpose pictures serve when presented with the ABC book, that is as a frame within which to portray any chosen subject.

Stewig (1978) suggested that,

Instead of using the books only to encourage thinking about shapes of letters and their sequence, the teacher uses the books to increase visual and verbal fluency. Much of what we do with developing visual and verbal skills can be done through books. (p. 8)

When further discussing verbal literacy, Stewig expressed his thought that "[i]nstead of leading children away from pictures and toward the printed word, we can consider using visual materials to develop their ability to see, and to talk with greater fluency. One kind of material we can use is the alphabet book" (p. 7).

Camp and Tompkins (1990) said that "[t]he abecedarius,

created by creative teachers, becomes the soldier in the battle to acquire universal modern literacy" (p. 300).

They explained that modern literacy requires competency in several areas:

1. Textual literacy. The ability to distinguish upper and lower case letters; knowledge of the direction of print in English; concept of word, sentence and paragraph; knowledge of the appropriate use of punctuation and capitalization.
2. Format literacy. Knowledge of the organizational patterns of text and arrangement of text and illustrations on a page.
3. Visual literacy. Ability to comprehend and evaluate illustrations, charts, maps, and the medium used by the artist.
4. Content literacy. Body of knowledge common to a culture that is a part of the shared understanding of educated persons in that culture.
5. Verbal literacy. Ability to talk about text and illustrations in a meaningful manner and to explain succinctly the reasons for personal preferences.

To develop mature literacy, students need guided practice as they examine, listen to, read, describe and discuss a wide variety of written materials. Alphabet books provide teachers with a plentiful supply of excellent materials for this purpose. (p. 300)

Although there is some informational value in all alphabet books, when looking at them as a genre, one must draw the line somewhere between the primary picture book, and the "ABC's" that are a selective picture dictionary of a subject. The alphabet was used as a framework to

display the topical theme of Iowa history.

As Bodmer (1989), expressed, "[o]ne of the most rigid forms of children's literature, the alphabet book is ripe for innovation and exploration. The alphabet book looks like a teaching tool for children, but its entertainment value has always lain in the stretching of its border" (p. 115).

In summary, children do have a sense of the past and are interested in studying their personal history. From these beginnings, the concepts of history can be fostered through activities that are as concrete as possible and vitally relevant to the child. History readiness seems to be an appropriate term for this approach. Readiness suggests preparation, and by focusing on the key concepts of time, change, the continuity of life, and the past, children can begin to develop an understanding of history. Egan (1982) agreed by saying that, "historical concepts do not 'develop' magically; both their development and their adequacy are largely determined by the learning of prerequisites" (p. 441).

The alphabet book has been an important part of America's quest for literacy since colonial times. Despite its age, the genre shows no sign of dying out. The past 300 years have seen an expansion and broadening of this literary form - from alphabet books designed to introduce

young children to the ABC's to specialized alphabet books written on many different levels for a wider audience and a variety of purposes. The concept of the ABC book is one that can be used in every area of study. It makes a strong contribution to teaching in all curricular areas, and specifically, to the presentation of historical facts about the state of Iowa. It is the conclusion of this writer, that the definition of this genre and its audience is blurring, a limitation, like the 26 letters, to be played with and stretched in the teaching of history to young children.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Alphabet books can be appropriate for all ages of people, and can be used by educators for many purposes. I is for Iowa was written to be used specifically, but not exclusively, with six to ten year old children. The intent of the text and pictures is to present factual information about the state of Iowa, past events, unique places, and vivid personalities. The completed book may be used to augment school curriculum by teaching state historical concepts through the format of the ABC's. This book should have the same standards of appeal, quality, and effectiveness required of all good children's books.

To begin the creative process, the author made a comprehensive list of many types of alphabet books which are currently available. These books were obtained from three main sources, the Youth Collection at the University of Northern Iowa Library, the children's department at the Cedar Rapids Public Library, and the Curriculum Lab collection at the University of Iowa. Each of the 350 books were studied in order to determine the ways in which the authors and illustrators presented their subjects, and how they dealt with the representation of the sound-letter relationship.

The knowledge gained from this study was then used to assist in deciding the final approach to use when preparing the text of the Iowa alphabet book.

After this investigation was completed, the next step was to gather Iowa historical facts that could be used in conjunction with the 26 letters of the alphabet. Corresponding lists of the 26 letters and historical facts beginning with each letter were devised. From these lists, the author made the final decision that the number of concepts introduced with each alphabet letter would not exceed two and in a few cases would be limited to one. Whether the concepts selected gave a historically balanced view of Iowa was considered. While involved in this process, the writer attempted to keep in mind that within the book there needs to be a balance between the known and the unknown. According to Stewig (1988), "[e]very alphabet book should strike a balance between words (and pictures) children will know and others that will extend their world" (p. 110). He also said that a major opportunity for concept and language learning is lost if words reflect only what a child already knows. The ideal, then, is for the child to encounter the familiar as well as the content which will cause him to wonder about the unfamiliar.

The historical concepts, which were paired with their

beginning alphabet letters, were chosen from pertinent print sources located at the following libraries: Donald O. Rod (University of Northern Iowa), University of Northern Iowa Curriculum Lab, Price Laboratory School (Cedar Falls, Iowa), University of Iowa, Coe College, Mt. Mercy College, Kirkwood College, the Marion Public, Cedar Rapids Public, Iowa City Public, Grant Wood Area Education Agency and the State Historical Society in Iowa City. Very little was available in the way of non-print material to use as a source of Iowa information. In addition to conducting a search in these libraries, the Cedar Rapids Community School District, and the Iowa State Department of Education, were consulted in order to determine what basic texts are currently being used in the state to teach Iowa history. The text Iowa Past to Present: the People and the Prairie by Schwieder, Morain and Nielsen (1991) is used state wide in elementary schools. It was previewed as a source of information used in preparation of the book.

Once the list of possible items was established and limited to no more than two concepts for each letter, photographs or pictures to accompany the text were identified. Some of this selection process occurred concurrently with the item search. For some entries, rather extensive research was completed in order to locate just the

right picture to highlight the text. The pictures are a mixture of line drawings and actual photographs. They are black and white and shades of grey. All of the pictures are of good quality or the best quality that could be obtained and they complement and support the text. In general, the quality of the photographs is doubly important in this specialized alphabet book, because the verbal content is minimal. The book will have genuine eye appeal to young children only if the majority of pictures are in color. When the book is accepted for publication, a majority of the pictures should be reproduced in color.

Once the lists of state historical concepts and the accompanying pictures were identified, the text was written so that there would be a good match between the visuals and the content references. Due to the subject matter of the Iowa ABC book, the author determined that the specific method of presentation for it should be from a sharing aspect between an adult and a child or a group of children. Therefore, it is not of great importance if the words are appropriate at a readable level for the age group of children for which the book is intended. Rather, it is of greater importance that the pictures illuminate the text, making the words understandable.

After the rough draft of the text was completed, attention was given to the book's size and page layout. Page

design and lay-out must be effective in presenting the information. These two elements should work together to make the book as appealing as possible to any person who should choose to look at it.

Typography is related closely to book design. Pitz (1963) stated that "[t]he illustrator or designer who lays out a book knows that its pictures can suffer greatly or be enhanced by the way surrounding type areas are handled" (p. 151). When choosing type appropriate for the alphabet letters, as well as for the text of the book, the writer carefully considered the following qualities of type: its characteristics, its sizes, the leading (the distance in points between lines of type), the way type is set up or composed, and how it actually looks when it is printed. The world of type has a vocabulary of its own, as well as its own system of measurement. The book designer needs to have knowledge of this information.

In the final stages of the book writing process, the structure of the book was considered. To quote Pitz (1963), from his book titled Illustrating Children's Books, "[b]ooks have an anatomy of their own, of which the intelligent designer or illustrator must have a grasp" (p. 135). Many photos were studied in an attempt to choose the most colorful and appropriate one for the cover of the book. The final

selection was taken from a 1982 photo tabloid in the Des Moines Register. Careful consideration was also given to the end papers, the front matter, and the body of the book. Other elements of book making such as the quality of the page paper, the binding material, and the book jacket and casing, were not considered at this time because the knowledge of the possibilities for these aspects will be obtained from a publisher who accepts the manuscript for publication.

It is the intent of this author that when the manuscript has been approved by the University, a publishing company will be contacted. There is a need for some expediency, so that a publisher, upon accepting the manuscript, will have time to print the book and have it ready for distribution by the time the state of Iowa celebrates its sesquicentennial in 1995.

Chapter 4

Conclusions and Summary

I is for Iowa is a compilation of pictures and text designed to introduce historical concepts about the state of Iowa. It was created for young, elementary students with the intent that it would increase their knowledge about the state, and incite inquiries about topics presented or stimulate interest in further research.

The letters of the alphabet were used as a framework to display the historical concepts and were represented on the pages in both their capital and lowercase form. Due to the abundance of possible items for some of the letters, fifteen letters had two entries, while the remaining eleven letters were each represented by only one concept.

Every item was examined carefully before being placed in the manuscript. It had to fit with an alphabet letter and represent either an older historical event or personality or a concept which is currently relevant to children today. Of the forty-one items included, twelve were early Iowa history, while fourteen of the concepts such as Mesquakie, Ringling Brothers, and Wild Rose transcended time and provided the balance between the two previously mentioned categories. The remaining fifteen entries including Apple, Flag, and Des Moines either represented geographical locations which are in existence today or objects relevant to the lives of most six to ten

year old children. The concepts covered included geographical features and locations, past personalities, industry, designated state symbols, and significant historical events.

Words used in the text were chosen carefully. The author speculated about what would be familiar and unfamiliar to the children in order to make the majority of words ones which would be understood by most young students. Certain words would be more meaningful to older children and in some entries the words needed to introduce the item such as immigrants, incline, and burial mounds, would be unfamiliar to all age groups.

Pictures selected to accompany the text were scrutinized. They had to depict as clearly as possible the subject of the alphabet entry. If the concept was from long ago, the picture was borrowed from historical literature. If the item was presently relevant to children the accompanying picture displayed a symbol or sign which would be familiar today. The visual image worked to make even the less familiar words understandable.

Page layout was a major item in preparation of the manuscript. Standard 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper was used and a thin border framed each page. Pictures to accompany the words were positioned on the left side of the book, while the alphabet letter with its accompanying phrase and text occupied the right side.

The total book structure was considered. A cover

photo was selected and an end paper design was created. Two half title pages, a dedication page, a list of illustration acknowledgments and an afterword were added to the book. Other elements of book making such as the book jacket and casing, and the quality of the page paper were not considered at this time.

In conclusion, several aspects of the book making process provided a challenge. For some alphabet letters there were numerous historical facts which could have been used, while possibilities for certain other letters were few. The concepts selected for inclusion were representative of the state of Iowa and its people, but were not in any way all inclusive. Omissions included famous sports and movie star personalities and any references to the three state universities.

Careful consideration was given to placement of people in the book. The part of their name, either first or last, by which they were usually referred to designated the alphabet letter to which they were assigned.

The age of the children for which this book was written necessitated careful planning in use of words. The text needed to be factual but still understandable to young children.

Pictures to complement the text were not readily available. A number of them lost their original clarity when their size was altered to accommodate the amount of

page space available. When color photographs were reproduced in black and white, many of them lost eye appeal.

To summarize, the method used to acquire historical items proved satisfactory. Terms and pictures were obtained for each entry. In the final product there was a direct tie between the alphabet letter and the historical concept presented on each page, with the alphabet letter serving as the vehicle through which the term was conveyed. The letter concept association was written to aid young students in their comprehension of some aspects of Iowa history through the presentation of the reading and history connection at a level of familiarity to them.

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