

1972

## Description of Background for the Children's Book, Ice Cream Next Summer

Elaine Rose Govern  
*University of Northern Iowa*

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## Description of Background for the Children's Book, Ice Cream Next Summer

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### Abstract

Ice Cream Next Summer is not meant to be a trip in nostalgia, although it may well serve that purpose for a reader with first hand experience of ice houses, country stores and their period in American history. It is meant to be, as it was for the author, an investigation into a different time and mood of a slower rural Iowa, a discovery of an out-dated occupational task.

DESCRIPTION OF BACKGROUND FOR THE CHILDREN'S BOOK,

ICE CREAM NEXT SUMMER

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A Physical Product

Presented to

the Library Science Department

University of Northern Iowa

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Graduate Requirements

of the Library Science Department

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by

Elaine Rose Govern

January 1972

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## PROJECT'S PURPOSE

Ice Cream Next Summer is not meant to be a trip in nostalgia, although it may well serve that purpose for a reader with first hand experience of ice houses, country stores and their period in American history. It is meant to be, as it was for the author, an investigation into a different time and mood of a slower rural Iowa, a discovery of an out-dated occupational task.

This writer would like to think that a physical product was produced that would be acclaimed as a star children's book by adults and children. Realistically, one must note limitations of time, money, distance, and what Irene Hunt refers to as a "potentiality for writing"; a need for the genes to have "...jockeyed into place..." thirty-two years ago.<sup>1</sup>

Working under those four limitations just mentioned, the intent was to produce a physical product that

1. reflects the criteria that make up a good book selection policy;
2. reflects an understanding of the writer's and illustrator's role;
3. reflects an understanding of children and their interests;
4. reflects an understanding of educational goals;
5. reflects utilization of the librarian's skills as an administrator managing people, schedules, and finances;

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<sup>1</sup>Irene Hunt, "The Writer and His Craft," Evaluating Books for Children and Young People (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1968), p. 9.

6. reflects utilization of a reference librarian's skills needed for descriptive and historical research;
7. reflects an attempt to be historically accurate in every possible detail.

Whether the physical product reflects the above to any great extent will be up to the reader to judge. This writer is certain of a deepening of personal experience and skill in each of the items, whether it is apparent or not.

In addition, the following by-product benefits seem evident to the writer.

1. Personal knowledge of United States history of the turn of the century and Iowa history of 1850-1925.
2. Initial knowledge of photography and dark room procedures.
3. Public relations experience with people of varied ages, and educational and cultural backgrounds.
4. Initial knowledge of printing methods. Although printing was dropped in favor of the inexpensive typewriter, the contact with various printers and their capabilities was not without merit.

## CHOICE OF SUBJECT, ILLUSTRATION, DETAIL

A few summers back this writer's father was talking about how natural ice was kept in ice houses in the years before refrigeration was an ordinary part of daily life. Having toyed with the idea of writing a children's book for nearly a decade, the mind seized the topic. It was fascinating to think of storing ice for as long as three years in sawdust with no electrical gadgets. It was as Elizabeth Coatsworth describes, "Probably nine times out of ten the author has been delighted by something, perhaps quite trivial, but a spark has shone inside him like the turning on of a light. Instantly he wishes to share that pleasure."<sup>2</sup>

Since it is good advice to paint what is close and experienced; it seems the same is true with writing. What was not known about the time could be learned, not only through secondary sources, but from primary sources, living and inanimate. It is family history, a general storekeeper father and grandfather, which inspired the general store location. The grandfather, John J. Pitzenberger, operated a store at Alta Vista, Iowa in 1906; at Ionia, Iowa from 1907-1908. In 1909 he bought the established general store at Jackson Junction, Iowa for \$800.00. The writer's father took over the store in 1937-1941. Ice for the Jackson ice house was cut on the Little Turkey River four miles away. As many as six bobsleds would pull

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<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth Coatsworth, "Upon Writing for Children," The Horn Book Magazine, XXIV (September, 1948), 389.

into Jackson loaded with ice, ready to be packed away.

Since the author remembers none of this personally, it meant an investigation of the past. What delight to find a picture of oneself as a baby in the father's general store. It was an old fashioned remnant that remained in semi-isolated localities.<sup>3</sup>

The time 1908 was selected because it was the ending of an era and the beginning of a new age.<sup>4</sup> It was just before mass transportation would become a reality and the all-purpose store would become an outdated institution for goods, comfort and fellowship. "One might...chose almost any year between 1891 and 1921 as the critical year for the general store, and make out a good case for choice...A just date for closing one age and opening another might be 1909..."<sup>5</sup> It was a time before electricity would be used generally for refrigeration instead of ice boxes, so the ice cutting scenes fit. The December of 1908 did have a cold wave after Christmas with little snow during the month.<sup>6</sup> It is also plausible that a young man would run the store in the story. Dana states that in 1905-1915 men in all parts of the country were just starting their adult careers behind store counters.<sup>7</sup> The story is thus historically accurate in these respects.

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas D. Clark, "The Country Store in American Social History," Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, LX (1951), p. 143.

<sup>4</sup>Clark, p. 144.

<sup>5</sup>Gerald Carson, The Old Country Store (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 279.

<sup>6</sup>Iowa Department of Agriculture, Iowa Yearbook of Agriculture, IX (1908), 27.

<sup>7</sup>Margaret Dana, "Elegy of the Country Storekeeper," The Atlantic Monthly, CLIII (March, 1934), 290.



The means of illustration was selected for five reasons.

1. A detailed colorful picture of that time did not seem inconsistent with the text. Indeed, it was hoped to present to the modern color TV child the past in realistic immediacy.
2. The function of the photography is to make the story real; not to explain what is happening.<sup>8</sup>
3. The author's undergraduate training in dramatic costuming and staging could be utilized.
4. Family involvement as models would allow for time with the family instead of apart from it.
5. A brother's training as a photographer and a sister's training as a hairdresser were available.

Background reading and library science curriculum content influenced the choice of details, circumstances and characterization in the text. Arbuthnot's<sup>9</sup> criteria, Eakin's<sup>10</sup> developmental values, McGrew's<sup>11</sup> handout on reading interests and Burch's<sup>12</sup> responsibilities

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<sup>8</sup>John Szarkowski, The Photographer's Eye (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1966), p. 9.

<sup>9</sup>May Arbuthnot, Children and Books (3d ed.; Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1964), pp. 3-11.

<sup>10</sup>Mary K. Eakin, "Index to Developmental Values in Books," Developmental Values (University of Northern Iowa: Library Materials for Children Class, Library Science Department, Spring, 1971), pp. 2-3. (Mimeographed.)

<sup>11</sup>Mary Lou McGrew, Children's Reading Interests (University of Northern Iowa; Library Materials for Children Class, Library Science Department, Spring, 1971), pp. 1-4. (Mimeographed.)

<sup>12</sup>Robert Burch, "Obligations of a Children's Book Writer," Indiana University School Education Bulletin, XLV (November, 1969), 1-14.

of a children's writer had the most influence that this writer can self-indentify. Burch mentions three responsibilities.

1. A writer should write about what he believes and knows.
2. The story should grow out of the character development and the circumstances of time and place.
3. The writer should say something of importance to the reader. It should be something that will give him an understanding of himself and/or a perspective of the past.

## CHOICE OF LOCATIONS AND PROPERTIES

There are six locations for the scenes in this book. They were selected because they provided an accurate picture of the time, were close to sources of historical furnishings, or were furnished with these articles. Due to cost, time and the young age of two models, great distances were excluded. One location, the alternate site for the lake shots, was at Riceville, Minnesota. This was at a considerable distance. It was chosen to meet the deadline date; the ice would supposedly freeze in the North sooner and since the lake was on an uncle's farm, lodging would be no problem. This location was not used. The mild weather did not permit early freezing even in the North.

### Michael's Bedroom

Location: home of Mrs. Mazie Moss; Riceville, Iowa.

Furnished with spooled bed and authentic curtains from early 1900's.

Quilt made of colors and pattern of the right time period.

### Laura's Bedroom

Location: home of Mrs. Peg Gorman; New Hampton, Iowa.

Furnished with antique bed, quilt made in 1800's, braided rug, dresser,

washstand, handpainted wash basin and pitcher. Lace curtains from

early 1900's is property of the writer.

### Ice Cutting Scene

Location: Lake Hendricks; Riceville, Iowa.

This man-made lake now under the control of the Howard County Conservation Board is two and one half miles from the author's home. The close proximity was an asset for checking the depth of the ice and for shooting the pictures.

### General Store

The general store scenes were split between two locations.

It was decided not to use any of the stores set up by historical societies or the Waterloo Museum's Pioneer Room as these were more of the 1850-1900 flavor. They contain a blending of articles not consistent with an actual store; or in truth serve as storehouses for odds and ends of many periods.

Location A. The Forestville General Store; Forestville, Minnesota.

Thomas Meighen operated a general store in this semi-isolated valley from 1872-1910. A relative had purchased the land in 1853 and established the store. In 1910 the door was locked and the remaining items sat in a building which was inhabited only by creatures of the wild. Meighen's family sold it to the state of Minnesota. It opened after considerable cleaning in the summer of 1971. The summer of 1972 will be its grand opening. It is presently unspoiled. When the door opens, the smell of years past surrounds you. Since it fit the year of the text's store, it was a diamond of a find.

The stove from which Michael removes the ashes is like the one described in the Sears Catalog.

This big, handsome self feeding, automatic self adjusting, self operating magazine, nickel dome, nickel top, nickel base, nickel ornamented, extra large, high double heating, hard coal base burner, shown in this illustration and offered to you at from \$23.95 to \$30.68, is our new 1908 model Acme Sunburst Base Burner, a base burner which combines every high grade, up to date feature of every other high grade

base burner, with the defects of none.<sup>13</sup>

A simple Round Oak stove which had been purchased was not used. The above was a more attractive choice, especially since the date of the Round Oak just mentioned could not be ascertained.

Location B. H. Cook's Groceries and Lunch Room: New Hampton, Iowa.

Henry Cook died in 1913. The combination store and residence was operated after his death by the children until the 1960's. It began initial operation in 1875. Located near the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul railroad it often gave a meal to weary travelers, railroad men, farmers and tramps. It was also a boarding house for railroad men. The lunch room closed in 1942. The generalized nature of operation became more and more specialized with the elderly Cooks finally selling a few selected groceries and candy. The author was the fourth generation of children to run with anticipation to Cook's store for candy.

After Henry Cook's last child's death, the relatives took what they wished from the structure. The writer's father, Lawrence B. Pitzenberger, purchased the land, building and its remaining contents in May, 1969. A sale in the summer of 1970 dispersed most of the contents. The shelving, counters and light fixtures were not sold. This meant all the articles in the store pictures were obtained from private collections, historical societies or purchased, and then transported to the location. Some of the articles, such as the cheese safe, string holder, etc., actually were part

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<sup>13</sup>Joseph J. Schroeder (ed.), Sears Roebuck and Co. 1908 Catalogue, No. 117 (Chicago: The Sun Digest Co., 1969), p. 650.

of the author's father's general store but are now part of the Jacksonville Historical Society's collection. The rounded candy case was purchased for the pictures.

The location and control of a setting where lighting could be arranged, and selected articles placed, was a factor in the selection. Arrangement for shooting time was more flexible here than for the bedroom scenes or Forestville. This building is to be destroyed in the next year.

### Kitchen Scene

This room is directly behind the store described above. The walls had been repainted so appropriate wallpaper similar to the patterns found in pictures of the time, was found. It was attached with tape so that it would not be permanent. The clock shelf was purchased, as were some of the dishes on the table. Table and chairs were originally from the Henry Cook home. The puppy was on loan for two days from the Waterloo Humane Society.

### Ice House

Location: Harper's Ferry, Iowa. Along the Mississippi River. This ice house is the only one the writer could find in an eight month search of northeast Iowa and southeast Minnesota. This ice house is the last of twenty-two in the Lansing, McGregor, Harper's Ferry, Iowa area along the Mississippi. Most of the last ice houses disappeared about twenty or thirty years ago. Other than the usual uses, the ice was used for preserving fish. The trains also would stop to load ice into their refrigerator cars. The one at Spillville, Iowa was torn down as little as three years ago. It had not been used for many years. To find a functioning ice house in the 1970's is rare. Most are gone, perhaps to a forgotten

junk yard as the one at Boone, Iowa.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Des Moines Sunday Register, December 26, 1971, Sec. B, p. 5, col. 1.

## COSTUMES

Costumes were made according to the specifications of the costume books cited, the Sears Catalog, or pictures of the period. Others were adaptations of modern dress or were obtained from the costume department of the UNI Drama Department, The Waterloo Museum of History and Science, and the Jacksonville Historical Society. The laprobe was from the Mitchell County Historical Society which is housed in the old Cedar Valley Seminary where Hamlin Garland attended school.

It is interesting to note in the costume books a lack of record of what the common man wore. The historical societies tend to keep Sunday best clothing. Men's coats, pants were used for rags. Rags were traded; even in early days to the peddler man.<sup>15</sup> Women stuffed rags into their pots and kettles to mend a hole. No wonder old clothes were not kept. Children's clothes were difficult to find, children's shoes non-existent. The pair used in Laura's bedroom scene belong to Margery Anonson who operates a dry goods store at Riceville, Iowa. The pair was salvaged from stock a long time ago and have never been worn. The other black button shoes that were actually worn in the photographs were made of black vinyl and antique shoe buttons. Buffalo mittens were donated for driving the horses.

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<sup>15</sup>Lawrence A. Johnson, Over the Counter and on the Shelf (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1961), p. 46.



It is also interesting to note a lack of pictures of people in work clothes for this period, especially winter work scenes. Picture-taking appears to have been a formal dress-up occasion.

An ad (Appendix D) was run in three newspapers requesting clothing or pictures of this period. It was a good lesson in management and human nature. There was no response.

## DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

The difficulties dealt with variables that one has little or limited control over: weather, time, distance and people.

### Weather and Time

The weather proved to be the most formidable obstacle. Color photography needs brightness for the colors to saturate. December of 1971 unlike December of 1908 had little sun.<sup>16</sup> Most of the month was mild and the ice would not freeze to the right thickness for cutting or for supporting the bobsled. Snow needed to pull the bobsled or for beauty in the pictures did not fall. It fell the day after the final pictures were taken. Time, money, and the bobsled owner's time were too short to retake the pictures. The approaching deadline forced the pictures to be taken despite the outcome.

### Distance

Despite an attempt to confine the area involved, distance was still a factor. The sun might break through for an hour or two of shooting in the day but the photographer was one long distance call and one hour and a half away. The photographer is also a full time student and part time photographer. Schedules did not always mesh.

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<sup>16</sup>Iowa Department of Agriculture, p. 33.

## People

Over the years people have changed their marketing habits. Therefore, certain items needed for costuming could no longer be purchased. Although most boys of that time slept in their underwear, Michael wears a nightshirt over long **drawers** in the story. A union suit for a small boy could not be found.

It is hard to believe there are people who still do not have a telephone, but then a person who has a team of horses and a bobsled is a breed other than modernized man. Contact with the bobsled's owner was easiest through the man's sister who would confer with him on a visit. This was simpler and less costly than making the fourteen mile trip. However, it led to difficulties.

One of the horses of the team died in November. Another team and bobsled were located fifteen miles from the lake. The owner's personal obligations forced him to cancel out the night before the shooting date. With luck, another team was located that night so that the shooting was on schedule.

It is difficult to make other people understand the exactitude of a scholarly attempt. It is also tiring to make them put forth the same commitment to discipline one demands of oneself.

A photographer may not always see the subject from the same vantage point or angle as the author. Constant communication is needed to bring about the desired product. It is easy to fall short of the image in the mind's eye.

The holiday schedule of professional processing laboratories delayed the finished product or caused poorer processing.

Materials

The Speed Graphic used on some of the outside shots was mechanically at fault. Some of these shots are out of focus. The first bobsled shot has little depth of field. The color on some of the cutting shots is bad. There was no time or money to redo the shots.

By printing Economy Prints as opposed to Standard Prints or Commercial Prints, the cost was held down, but so was the quality. The brilliance is gone that was present in the proof. The large picture of Tag was printed Standard.

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Institutional Exhibits That Provided Background Understanding

Jacksonville Historical Society  
Chickasaw County Conservation Commission  
Five Corners on the old Military Road to Fort Atkinson, Iowa

The Forestville Store Museum  
Minnesota State Park Department  
Forestville, Minnesota

Museum of History and Science  
Waterloo, Iowa

Bremer County Historical Society  
Waverly, Iowa

Chickasaw County Historical Society  
Nasuha, Iowa

Floyd County Historical Society  
Charles City, Iowa

Howard County Historical Society  
Cresco, Iowa

Mitchell County Historical Society  
Osage, Iowa

## APPENDIX A: CONTRACT

The concerned parties being of sound mind agree to the following regarding the Master's Degree Library Science Project of Elaine R. Govern. The first party is identified as Elaine R. Govern and/or Peter J. Govern. The second party is identified as Lawrence J. Pitzemberger.

1. The first party shall pay the second party \$2.00 per hour for actual shooting time and camera and light set up for said project.
2. First party is to pay for all expendable materials such as developer, film, processing costs etc. used for this project.
3. First party shall pay for all fees, rentals, or contributions to museums, societies, individuals, and Lohnes Color Lab for use of services or physical items connected with said project.
4. First party will provide the administrative decisions, idea, direction, background research, script, models, people contacts; money, as described above; legwork and graphics skills for said project.
5. Second party is hired to do shooting and supervise processing of the film with his photographic equipment and/or Lohnes Color Lab.
6. First party grants second party permission for second party's name to appear on said project.
7. The first party will pay the second party mileage at the rate of ten cents per mile to shooting site if he drives his vehicle with the exception of the first day of shooting, November 21, 1971.
8. Negatives will be the joint property of the first and second party. The prime negatives (those used for the final project) will be divided in half by alternate selection by the two parties. The remainder will be divided in half. Both parties are responsible for the safe keeping of the negatives in their care. Possession does not signify sole ownership. Permission is herein granted to second party to make 20 pictures in 1971 for use on his studio walls. These are not to be sold.

The two parties will decide upon complimentary copies of photographs to involved models or people connected with the project. These will be given before March 1972.

9. Both parties agree that neither will use this project or any part thereof, script, photographs, negatives, idea etc., for any other reason than for this project or its publication. If there should be a need later, written permission from one party by the requesting party is possible. If that happens, that agreement should be attached to this form.

10. Should death occur for either party their spouse is to assume the rights and responsibilities agreed to herein.
11. Expenses of said project at its completion are to be attached to this form and signed by both parties to show the point of agreement.
12. If said project is ever published, the expense amount agreed to as described in Number 11, is to be divided in half. Revenue from publication will go to first party until it equals one half of the initial expense. After this point the monies will be divided into the percentage agreed by both parties with the publisher.

\_\_\_\_\_ and/or \_\_\_\_\_  
(First Party)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Second Party)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Second Party's Spouse)

## APPENDIX B: PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT

### Cameras

Koni Omega 120  
Kodak Retinette IA  
Linhof 4 x 5 Viewcamera  
Speed Graphic 120

### Lights

Honeywell 770 strobe  
Heiland strobe 71A  
  
MB2 flashbulbs  
  
Ascor lights 500 watts

### Miscellaneous

Gossen Lunapro light meter  
Sekonic Studio Deluxe L28 light meter  
Wein flash meter  
  
Light stands  
Tripod  
Kodak photo flat  
  
Usual darkroom equipment



General Store at Jackson Junction, Iowa 1939



The Forestville Store

AMERICAN B. NEWSPAPER CO.

H. Cook Groceries and Lunch Room



# MODEL RELEASE

## APPENDIX D: NEWSPAPER AD

**WANTED. Graduate student working on research interested in pictures 1895-1920 of ice houses, cutting ice, bobsleds loaded with ice. Pictures to be photocopied, no harm to them. Also need men's winter work clothes and small boy's clothes for 1908 time period for picture taking. Will be returned. Phone 985-2485.**

# MODEL RELEASE

For and in consideration of my engagement as a model by \_\_\_\_\_, hereafter referred to as the photographer, on terms or fee hereinafter stated, I hereby give the photographer, his legal representatives and assigns, those for whom the photographer is acting, and those acting with his permission, or his employees, the right and permission to copyright and/or use, reuse and/or publish, and republish photographic pictures or portraits of me, or in which I may be distorted in character, or form, in conjunction with my own or a fictitious name, on reproductions thereof in color, or black and white made through any media by the photographer at his studio or elsewhere, for any purpose whatsoever; including the use of any printed matter in conjunction therewith.

I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve the finished photograph or advertising copy or printed matter that may be used in conjunction therewith or to the eventual use that it might be applied.

I hereby release, discharge and agree to save harmless the photographer, his representatives, assigns, employees or any person or persons, corporation or corporations, acting under his permission or authority, or any person, persons, corporation or corporations, for whom he might be acting, including any firm publishing and/or distributing the finished product, in whole or in part, from and against any liability as a result of any distortion, blurring, or alteration, optical illusion, or use in composite form, either intentionally or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the taking, processing or reproduction of the finished product, its publication or distribution of the same, even should the same subject me to ridicule, scandal, reproach, scorn or indignity.

I hereby warrant that I am under over twenty one years of age, and competent to contract in my own name in so far as the above is concerned.

I am to be compensated as follows:

I have read the foregoing release, authorization and agreement, before affixing my signature below, and warrant that I fully understand the contents thereof.

_____	_____ L.S.
DATED	NAME
_____ L.S.	_____
WITNESS	ADDRESS
_____	
ADDRESS	

I hereby certify that I am the parent and/or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ an infant under the age of twenty one years, and in consideration of value received, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, I hereby consent that any photographs which has been, or are about to be taken by the photographer, may be used by him for the purposes set forth in original release hereinabove, signed by the infant model, with the same force and effect as if executed by me.

_____ L.S.
PARENT OR GUARDIAN
_____
ADDRESS

- Photographer: 1 - Fill in terms of employment.  
 2 - Strike out words that do not apply.