The evolution of a punctuation mark: the use and misuse of the apostrophe of possession

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The Evolution of a Punctuation Mark:
The Use and Misuse of the Apostrophe of Possession

by

Camela Lynn Rembe Hill

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Department: English
Major: English (Rhetoric, Composition, and Professional Communication)
Major Professor: John Hagge

Iowa State University
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Iowa State University

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of
Camela Lynn Rembe Hill
has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
DEDICATION

While my entire family, immediate and extended, has supported me while I wrote and completed this thesis and my degree, I would like to dedicate this work to a very special few:

*my parents, Sherry and Tom,*
who have always been behind me a 100% even when I wasn't and for all their help; I *never* would have done it if it weren't for them;

*my husband, Tom,*
for putting up with my long absences to complete this work and for his never-ending jokes and humor that kept me laughing through it all;

*and my two cats, Gray Baby and Jake,*
who supervised me from atop my computer and books every step of the way.

Your support, encouragement, and love are greatly appreciated. Thank you all.
PREFACE:
My Desire for the Continued Teaching of the Conventions of Standard Written English in the English Composition Classroom

When I was six years old and ready to begin first grade, my parents were both hired to teach school in the Seymour (Iowa) Community School District. We moved from Iowa City, where my parents, children of college professors, had been born and raised, to this small, rural town in extreme southern Iowa (the Missouri border being "a stone's throw" away).

Throughout my school years, I noticed that my friends and classmates spoke and wrote differently than I did and that my mother would constantly correct my language whenever I spoke or wrote as my peers did. As I progressed through school, I became increasingly aware of the differences between my friends' language and my own.

The groundwork for my personal crusade for "correctness"-- that is, following the maxims of Standard Written and Spoken English (the language that is used "in newscasts, in formal business transactions, in courtrooms, [and] in all sorts of public discourse" (Kolin 9)--began years, maybe even decades, before I was even born. My maternal grandmother had been a high school English and typing teacher in the 1940s with a passion for grammar, semantics, and poetry. She, my mother says, felt obligated to instill these loves in her elder daughter, like it or not. This daughter, my mother, in turn insisted on passing this penchant for at least the first two to me (we both seemed to miss somehow the proclivity for poetry). Thus, having loved grammar and "correctness" from an early age, I have experienced and continue to experience great delight in finding deviations from Standard Written English in spelling, grammar, and mechanics in "official" documents, books,
newspaper and magazine advertisements, on billboards and store fronts, in flyers, and on television.

It did not take me long in grade school and junior high, though, to realize that this love for "correctness" and following the conventions of Standard Written English was a love that was not popular. While my friends were fascinated by Saturday morning cartoons, I looked forward to *Schoolhouse Rock* and *Grammar Rock* (commercial-length cartoons that taught various school lessons ranging from how a bill becomes a law to the accepted use of adverbs and conjunctions) which were shown between them. In school, we only spent a few weeks every year studying the conventional forms of subject/verb agreement, comma and apostrophe uses, and the like. While my friends would moan and groan about the workbook and textbook exercises and the essays that followed, I laboriously poured over them, checking and rechecking for perfection. We rarely had the opportunity to diagram sentences, my personal "English" favorite. Diagramming to me was like doing long division and multiplication in math; the pictorial representation of the sentence (or math problem), when completed, showed where each and every part of the sentence (or every number) came from and how it functioned in relationship to other words (or numbers). I enjoyed the *structural system* of language and how it worked.

In high school, the study of the conventions of Standard Written English played an even smaller role in our college preparatory study. We spent half a year studying the conventions of Standard Written English my sophomore year. The rest of my high school English study entailed reading literature and writing essays about it, but even in my composition courses, adhering to the conventions was not stressed.
College, I had foolishly thought, would offer me more structure. Throughout undergraduate school, I waited patiently (well, impatiently, actually), to study the grammatical system of English. Most of my instructors rolled their eyes when I asked if we were going to study grammar and usage in class. I heard over and over from my instructors, "It has been demonstrated that the formal study of grammar does not show any improvement in students' writing." My professors and mentors would cite recursive process writing theorists such as Erika Lindemann, Peter Elbow, Linda Flower and John Hayes, arguing that their research showed that having students study the conventions of writing supposedly didn't help them write. In fact, everyone presumed that following the conventions inhibited the writing process. These instructors quoted from the popular statement Students' Rights to Their Own Language published by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in 1974, "If we can convince our students that spelling, punctuation, and usage are less important than content, we have removed a major obstacle in their developing the ability to write" (8). I would counter-argue that, yes, the initial composing phase might lend itself to no conventions, but the real world expected the conventions of Standard Written English to be followed to avoid ambiguities in meaning and therefore, we should study them. My arguments were similar to the ideas of John Hagge presented in an analysis of twelve style manuals used by academic, scientific, and technical writers:

"[a]lthough the importance of standard punctuation often is marginalized in mainstream, especially process-oriented, composition theory, the [professional style] manuals advocate its use for reader-centered reasons . . . 'When punctuation is incorrectly placed or omitted, the reader is given unclear or confusing signals or no signals at all.' . . . 'These marks must be used in the proper number, kind, and manner if the reader is to understand exactly the intended meaning'" ("Professional Style Manuals Evaluated" 436).
I needed a profession, I thought then, that did stress how well one adhered to the conventions of Standard Written English. Therefore, I chose, at first, the field of editing.

I would be lying to say I did not enjoy the proofreading portion of my editor position with a small, energetic design firm. My job was a personal dream come true. I was able to sit for hours upon hours (!) reading to find deviations from the norm in the copy that accompanied the projects we designed. Here, I read the text for major magazines, annual reports, cookbooks, a nationwide company's in-house newspaper, billboards, and much, much more. Usually, I had the final say about how something would be printed in the final draft concerning apostrophe and hyphen placement or current, accepted spellings of words. Constantly, I found deviations from the accepted conventions of Standard Written English in the copy we received. To me, these errors were at times comical and at others outrageous yet all the while, they seemed so simple to correct permanently. All the writers had to do was learn a rule here or there as they did when they learned to drive (i.e., the "rules of the road" or traffic laws). Learning to do so didn't seem very hard to me.

At the same time that I was thinking that writers just needed to learn a rule, I began to miss being in the classroom. I decided to return to school to earn a teaching certificate to supplement my English degree. (Secretly, I thought that I might be "required" to take some more grammar courses. ) Unfortunately for me, only one "grammar" class per se was required of us. This one class, though, was a delight.

For me, it was during one of my two teaching English methods courses that I realized just what little respect many academics in the field of English composition showed toward Standard Written English and correctness. For a course on the teaching of writing, for example, we were required to survey and to study articles on
current teaching philosophies, prepare and give practice lessons, and create a three-week unit plan. I, of course, chose a unit that would teach my imaginary students how to adhere to the conventions of written English that I had followed all my life and at my previous job: correct punctuation usage.

For this unit, I had my hypothetical junior high students create a "Junior High Spotlight" scrapbook modeled after the "Senior Spotlights" that my high school created for the graduating seniors every year. For the spotlight, every student interviewed another student to obtain specific information. Included in this information were the student's date and place of birth; sisters and brothers; interests; classes; favorites in terms of actors, music, and movies; parents; goals; and others. As each student composed and organized the spotlights, he or she learned how to correctly capitalize and punctuate dates, song, movie, and book titles, proper names, and the like for the scrapbook. We created this scrapbook for each student as a keepsake of his or her seventh grade year.

Although I received a very good grade on this project, my professor remarked that this "unit on correctness" did not conform with the current "trend" in the teaching of writing in the English curriculum and that many schools in Iowa today would not recommend a unit such as this. I agreed with him that teaching correctness was not the 1990s "trend," but that was how I viewed not teaching the conventions of written English, simply a "trend" in English. I argued then (and still do now) that unless students are taught the conventional rules of writing, they will not apply them in their own writing and, subsequently, will be looked negatively upon in the real world for their apparent ignorance of the conventions of the written word. Simply put, "'Ungrammatical writing and incorrect spelling [and punctuation] betray a lack of precise thinking'" (Gillman 20).
As I have stated, I liken learning the conventions of Standard Written English to the idea of learning in driver’s education what road signs mean: students need to be taught what the various signs are and mean as well as why they exist and why they should be followed. If, for instance, a student decided that stop signs meant one could stop when one felt like it, many accidents would undoubtedly occur because of this mistaken view.

I view following the conventions of Standard Written English in much the same way; there are rules that exist that should be followed that enable people to communicate clearly and correctly. If a writer does not follow them, his or her text may be ambiguous and could be misinterpreted. There are documented instances, in fact, when imprecise writing has resulted in lawsuits or millions of dollars having been lost. For example, Irving Wallace, David Wallechinsky, Amy Wallace, and Sylvia Wallace describe an omitted hyphen that cost the United States taxpayers 18.5 million dollars: "On July 22, 1962, Mariner I, an American rocket bound for Venus, had to be blasted apart when it began veering off course. A subsequent investigation revealed that the erratic behavior had been caused by the omission of a hyphen from the flight's computer program. The lack of this single piece of punctuation cost U.S. taxpayers $18.5 million" (486).

The writer, being removed from his or her audience (the reader), is not able to augment and clarify meaning through intonation, facial expressions, and gestures; therefore the conventions of Standard Written English are indispensable to the writer because they provide precise meanings which would otherwise be lacking due to the second-hand nature of writing. The conventions of Standard Written English provide writers with the tools to make writing concise and unambiguous. Thus, it is to the writer's advantage to follow these rules so confusion does not arise.
Following the conventions of Standard Written English is also comparable to following society's rules of "etiquette." When writing public discourse, a writer may be judged sloppy, disorganized, uneducated, and uncouth if he or she makes errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc. Because writing reflects directly on its author, garbled and unclear text that doesn't follow the expected conventions of Standard English will give the reader an undesirable impression of its writer; the reader may think that the writer is not credible. Society, it seems to me, expects certain things to occur in certain situations; while people should not belch at formal public functions, words should be spelled correctly in nationally-read magazines.

My desire for the continued practice of teaching the conventions of Standard Written English persisted when I entered graduate school as well. Yet again, though, I met intense opposition to my beliefs when I took courses on writing pedagogy. For instance, in one class geared towards teaching college freshmen composition, we studied the work of those widely-cited authors in composition theory that my undergraduate professor had insisted on quoting: Linda Flower, John R. Hayes, Peter Elbow, Sondra Perl, Nancy Sommers, as well as many others. What many of these process proponents believe is that stressing the use of the conventions of Standard Written English possibly inhibits students' ability to write. The process movement discourages formal language instruction and "often criticize[s] traditional devices of writing pedagogy such as outlining (Flower and Hayes 49; Pianko 20) and the use of grammatical terminology (Lindemann 112-115, 124, 185)" (Hagge, "Process Religion" 99). These authors rarely mention business, occupational, professional, technical, or scientific writing and their need for the standard conventions used in writing but focus instead on the writing done in college freshmen writing courses (Hagge). They neglect to explain when and
how their student writers will learn the conventions of Standard Written English so that they will be able to apply them correctly to their finished products.

However, textbook author Martha Kolln points out, in apparent contradiction to this idea, that knowing the conventions of Standard Written English actually gives writers the needed confidence to write: "An understanding of grammar should enhance the students' confidence in their own writing ability; it should give them control over their writing by illuminating all the choices that are available to them" (348).

In every facet of composition theory in graduate school, one is encouraged to abandon one's beliefs about the appropriateness of learning the conventions of Standard Written English and, instead, to embrace ideas about expressivist free writing, the writing of belletristic and expository essays. While I do believe that free writing and expressivist prose may help students create text initially, one needs to know the conventions of Standard Written English for use in the final product, especially when the final product is public discourse, such as business and technical writing where the focus is on the finished product. One may simply say, "Refer to a style guide" but a style guide is not a "carry with you everywhere" type of book; the basic conventions should be taught and learned.

Ironically, though, both the instructor for this course and graduate faculty as a whole ultimately grade their freshmen composition students on their ability to incorporate correctly the conventions of Standard Written English. Given out to each freshmen instructor and freshmen student is the department's writing standard: "The policy of the English Department is that a paper containing more than one major error for every hundred words does not meet the minimum requirement for correctness. You must meet this requirement for correctness to
pass English 104 and 105" (16). These "Ten Major Correctness Errors" are listed below (26):

1. Recognizing independent sentence boundaries
2. Fragmentary, incomplete thoughts
3. Placement of modifiers
4. Shifts within sentences
5. Use of verbs
6. Pronouns
7. Sentence structure
8. Word choice
9. Spelling
10. Punctuation

(It is also ironic that all the writing theorists and professors who claim that adhering to standard conventions would impede one's creativity and one's right to personal expression, had to, in fact, adhere to them to have these same claims published in the elite communication journals.)

I found myself in many graduate composition theory courses to be the only voice espousing "teachings of the old school." While my classmates embraced free writing, I struggled to find proof that in the professional and business "real world," correctness was both needed and valued. My experience as an editor gave me the personal knowledge and satisfaction, but I needed proof in academic journals as well.

Although articles indicating why certain conventions in written communication are needed were difficult to find, proof does exist. Using the conventions of Standard Written English is valuable in professional written discourse to eliminate ambiguity and make prose more reader-friendly. For
instance, in "The Value of Formal Conventions in Disciplinary Writing," Hagge points out that in his examination of "12 influential style manuals, which represent the institutional writing norms of important, broadly based professional associations that publish a myriad of real-world documents, . . . every manual devote[d] at least 50% of its contents to discussion of formal conventions for writing" (453). I can speculate then, if using the formal conventions of writing (in which the conventions of Standard Written English are included) in written discourse was not important, these style manuals would not exist, and they certainly would not devote 50% of their time discussing these conventions of written English.

Mina Shaughnessy, author of the highly-respected book Errors and Expectations, sums up what happens to a reader when deviations from the written norm occur: mechanical errors are "unprofitable intrusions upon the consciousness of the reader [which] . . . demand energy without giving any return in meaning" (12). A mathematics style guide indicates that "incorrect English is distracting to the serious reader and is likely to be unclear" (Gillman 20). Obviously, both Shaughnessy and Gillman are saying that when a word is spelled incorrectly, or when similar mechanical errors occur (such as a comma used where an apostrophe should be), these errors will confuse the reader and impede his or her reading comprehension. In most cases, the reader will eventually figure out the intended meaning from the context, but it should not be necessary to make readers do this sort of extra work.

Also, Hagge points out in "The Process Religion and Business Communication" that although "a writer of a novel or an expository essay does have considerable freedom in deciding what to say, business writers don't; they must respond to the exigencies of a certain situation in certain prescribed ways." (111; emphasis mine). Some may try to argue that not that much writing actually
goes on in business, but a study done by C. Gilbert Storms showed that "98% of the respondents to his survey wrote as part of their present jobs" (14). Eva Dukes, a technical writer and editor, argues that even if some rules (conventions of Written English) are "bent," one should care when "someone who doesn't know the rules makes no effort to master them before he sets out to write . . . or if he knows them but carelessly ignores them . . . and consequently, while butchering the language, fails to communicate clearly and appropriately" (138). Alberta Cox, while head of the publications branch of NASA in 1986, conducted a survey on breaking the conventions of Standard Written English. Subsequently, she quoted and agreed with a respondent to her survey who said, "I don't support departures from conventional usage when those departures do not improve the clarity of communication . . . or when departures obscure historical distinctions that lend precision to language" (142).

Correct use of written and spoken language has also been linked to success. According to W. Nelson Francis, "Control of Standard English does not, of course, guarantee professional, social or financial success. But it is an almost indispensable attribute of those who attain such success" (246). Consequently, these professional and business communities have shown, in essence, that by not following the conventions of Standard Written English, writers can make communication difficult, if not impossible. Hence learning and thereby adhering to the conventions of Standard Written English would only seem logical.

Having found a theoretical basis in English for the continued teaching of the conventions of Standard Written English, I was convinced that correctness had for at least the last 300 years had a substantial place in composition; therefore, I worked my belief and the documented proof that following the conventions in written communication is necessary into every course project or final paper I could.
I believe that since professional and business communities expect correctness in their writers' work, teaching the conventions of Standard Written English still has a place in the composition classroom. What I see everyday on store fronts and billboards, in advertisements, newspapers, and magazines, and on television shows me, though, that despite the value of correctness in the business and the professional world, deviations from the conventions of Standard Written English are made constantly.

Consequently, while taking linguistics courses in graduate school where I continued my desire for following the conventions, I was exposed to the idea that "[d]ifferent parts of the country, different levels of education, different ethnic backgrounds--all of these variations produce differences in language communities [and that] . . . [s]ometimes, the differences we hear sound like grammatical errors" (Kolln 8). I began to theorize that what I considered the "poor oral grammar" and writing of the people in my southern Iowa hometown was, in fact, their own particular vernacular or regionalism and certainly worth studying in depth. This vernacular included many "folksy" colloquialisms and numerous unconventional uses of Standard Written and Spoken English.

I originally intended to write this master's thesis on this southern Iowa way of speaking and writing. Consequently, I laboriously recorded both the "folksy" colloquial sayings and the deviations from Standard Written and Spoken English that I heard so that I would have a large stock of idiosyncrasies from which to choose and then developed a preliminary survey to determine their frequency.

Among these quaint colloquialisms that I recorded were such phrases as "The wind lays down of an evening" (meaning the wind usually dies down after the sun sets), "in a whip stitch" (meaning quickly), "holler at ya" (meaning I will call you soon), "stoved up" (meaning crippled), "steppin' out" (meaning having an affair),
and "out home" (meaning at home in the country as opposed to in town). Some of the common deviations from Standard Spoken and Written English that I documented were "I goes/gone to town," "I seen her," "I had gots the flu," "Couldn't hardly," and "Bring me home."

Unfortunately, this study of the Southern Iowa vernacular was not really within the realm of my graduate school specialization of rhetoric, composition, and professional communication, but rather the field of linguistics. Therefore, I chose instead to concentrate on my love, using the conventions of Standard Written English, since, as I have shown, using the conventions of Standard Written English correctly in business and professional writing is needed and expected to avoid any ambiguities in writing. More specifically, I chose to concentrate on just the deviations made from the conventions of Standard Written English as demonstrated by the townspeople of Seymour, in particular the students and staff of the Seymour school system.

While exploring these unconventional uses of Standard Written English in school newsletters and daily announcements as well as in a revised survey I developed, I became increasingly cognizant of the difficulties the Seymour student and staff survey respondent groups had with the use of the apostrophe in singular and plural possessive nouns and with possessive pronouns which contain no apostrophe. As I viewed the world with my apostrophe fixation, I began to realize it was not a problem existing solely in southern Iowa. Misuse of the apostrophe of possession was occurring everywhere I looked. Consequently, I began to wonder whether there was any kind of pattern for this misuse.

1 Linguistics is "the science of language, including phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics" and "the study of the structure, development, etc. of a particular language and its relationship to other languages" (Webster's New World Dictionary 823).
When I began teaching high school (grades 9-12) in a small rural town in north central Iowa, I refined my survey to help delineate any pattern in apostrophe abuse. I chose my students and colleagues as subjects not only for convenience but to see if they demonstrated the same unconventional use of apostrophes that I had observed earlier in my home town.

It will be my contention throughout this thesis that unless students and young writers are taught the conventions of Standard Written English that are expected and needed in the business and professional world, they will not master them and subsequently will be unable to recognize them in others' writing or to use them in their own writing. If writers are not taught the conventions of writing (as the expressivist, process theorists claim should be done) in school composition courses, where will they learn them? How will young writers know how to use them? How will they be able to edit their own work and others'? How will students be able to dialogue about improving their writing if they do not have the knowledge base to discuss what needs to be changed and why? It is my belief, then, that composition courses should continue to teach the conventions of Standard Written English such as the apostrophe so that students will know not only what the conventions are but also when and how to use them. With this, my thesis took shape.
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Although only my name appears as author of this work, its creation is a culmination of the efforts, patience, and hardwork of numerous other people. I would like to thank first the members of my committee, Brenda Daly and Beverly Kruempel for graciously serving on my committee, and especially the chair of my committee, John Hagge. His prompt responses and insightful comments not only improved the merit of this document but the overall quality of my research and studies at ISU.

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Lastly, I'd like to thank my parents, Sherry and Tom, for all their help typing up graphs, editing copy, offering me assistance, and for just being there when I needed them; my husband Tom, for his support and love; and, all those people who kept me inspired by saying, "What can you possibly say about the apostrophe?"
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It is my contention in this thesis that when the conventions of Standard Written English are not taught in the English composition classroom, the conventions will not be used, or will be used incorrectly, by the student writer, so that the subsequent writing may be unclear and ambiguous to the reader. Lacking formal training in the use of the conventions, young or inexperienced writers will look elsewhere for examples of these standards; however, what they will find, particularly in the case of the apostrophe, is inconsistent and misleading. These writers will choose as their punctuation and usage what "looks" or "sounds" good to them from what they are accustomed to seeing and hearing from their prior experience and in their surroundings. Unfortunately, with the apostrophe, there is a myriad of conflicting visual stimuli, and this, coupled with the continued orality of our culture, hampers the young or inexperienced writer’s knowledge of when, where, and how to use the possessive apostrophe.

As I have documented in the Preface, correctness (adhering to the conventions of Standard Written English) is still expected and required in the real-world writing of newspapers, magazines, proposals, reports, and such. With "98% of the [work force] writ[ing] as part of their present jobs," understanding and following the conventions of Standard Written English would seem essential (Storms 14). When writers do not adhere to standard conventions, their texts often become ambiguous, and deriving meaning from such texts may be next to impossible, especially since the writer is not there to explain his or her intended meaning. Again, many business writing manuals advocate standard punctuation use "for reader-centered reasons. . . 'When punctuation is incorrectly placed or omitted, the reader is given unclear or confusing signals or no signals at all.' . . .
"These marks must be used in the proper number, kind, and manner if the reader is to understand exactly the intended meaning" (American Medical Association Manual of Style 86).

Consider the following scenario: John and Bill Smith, two brothers, farm together in Southern Iowa. A land speculator is interested in purchasing 500 acres of land for development. The speculator receives an assessor’s report stating "Smiths farm land worth $2000 an acre." The speculator writes each brother a check in the amount of $500,000. As the developer begins work on the land, he is slapped with an injunction stating that he has been trespassing. How can this be? The statement "Smiths farm land worth $2000 an acre" is ambiguous. Although the speculator interpreted the assessor’s report to mean that the two brothers owned the land (Smiths'), they were in fact just farming it for a landlord, who was not paid at all for the land, or on the other hand, if only one of the Smiths owned the land (Smith's), he was only paid for half of it. The incorrect assumption by the developer that the possessive apostrophe was merely missing created the ambiguity and the loss of the developer’s money.

Currently in the English departments of America, two opposing theories of thought concerning the teaching of these conventions of Standard Written English in composition can be found. As demonstrated in the Preface and further developed in the Background and Literature Review, the English academic community has been split on this important issue. While the recursive, process-writing theorists have advocated that teaching the conventions of Standard Written English (such as the use of the apostrophe) will inhibit writers' ability to create prose, the business and technical writing community has given strong credence to the tenet that learning to use these conventions is essential in the real world. The process theorists' philosophy and research has been centered around only
belletristic writing and cannot be applied to real-world writing. These recursive writing theorists have also failed to address adequately where writers will learn the necessary conventions of Standard Written English for their finished product in the world outside of academia if they are not taught them in the classroom.

The question, then, that has been lost in this battle is whether or not writers need to know how to use the conventions of Standard Written English for their everyday business, technical, and professional writing. The professional community has responded with a resounding "Yes." How these writers create this business and technical prose is entirely up to them, but when completed, the product must adhere to the conventions of Standard Written English so that the prose is understandable and not ambiguous, and so that the writer is not deemed uneducated, illiterate, or sloppy.

Within these conventions of Standard Written English lies the possessive apostrophe. Although only a small hooked orthographic mark, the apostrophe is needed to differentiate ownership from plurality. In the Background and Literature Review, I will discuss the apostrophe's tumultuous history within the context of the rise of a correctness standard for the English language. I will go on in my Conclusions to express my fear for its existence in our ever-growing computerized age.

Additionally, my thesis will show that many from my sample survey groups could not distinguish between the conventional and unconventional uses of the apostrophe in the survey materials I administered. Consequently, it is my belief they would be equally unable to use them conventionally in their own writings.

Therefore in this thesis, I already have justified in my Preface why learning and using the conventions of Standard Written English is still important in the professional and business world. In Chapter 2: Background and Literature
Review, I will trace how the birth of conventions and standardization of spelling, punctuation, and usage within written English came about. I will additionally examine the introduction of the apostrophe in Early Modern English and its role in written communication. I will also reiterate the two opposing fields of thought concerning the teaching of these conventions of Standard Written English and the use and misuse of the apostrophe as a convention. Lastly in this chapter, I will document and explore the myriad of unconventional uses of the possessive apostrophe in today's mass media.

In Chapter 3: Methodology, I will explain my study on the use of the possessive apostrophe. More specifically, I will explain my belief that in a rural society such as Seymour, language is predominantly oral; therefore, the community's exposure to and practice of the conventions of Standard Written English is not an everyday experience. The conventional use of the possessive apostrophe is particularly difficult for an oral community because its placement has no sound. With the recent de-emphasis on the teaching of the accepted conventions of Standard Written English, an oral society must rely on visual examples from their environment for models. The environment, though, offers a myriad of examples, some conventional, some not, on how to use the possessive apostrophe. The result, I contend, is that the general public is unable to discriminate the accepted conventional use of the possessive apostrophe from the unconventional use.

I will explore this inability of the general public (as represented by the students and staff of two school districts within Iowa) to recognize the possessive apostrophe used in the accepted, conventional manner. I will also outline the development of my initial (Seymour) survey, describe the Seymour survey sample, discuss the additional sources of data (Seymour school announcements,
newsletters, and calendars) I incorporated, summarize the revisions made for the second survey, and describe my second survey sample. This chapter will outline exactly how I intend to investigate the survey respondents' recognition of the conventional and unconventional uses of the possessive apostrophe.

In Chapter 4: Data Results and Analysis, I will present and discuss my findings from my examination of the Seymour School announcements, newsletters, calendars, the Seymour survey, and the second survey. More specifically, I will evaluate a small portion of the Seymour School staff's informal written work as shown by the daily announcements and more formal work as show by the monthly newsletters and calendars to see if the staff was employing the use of the possessive apostrophe in the conventional manners. I will then examine the ability of the Seymour School's staff and students to recognize the conventional and unconventional uses of the apostrophe on the five items of the initial survey directly related to the use of the possessive form. Finally, I will analyze the responses to the items that dealt directly with the possessive form and the conventional and unconventional uses of the possessive apostrophe in my second survey.

By analyzing the percentage of occurrences of conventional and nonconventional possessive noun uses as well as attributive noun uses in the aforementioned sources, I will show that a majority of the time, the Seymour staff used the attributive noun form rather than the possessive form in the newsletters, calendars, and daily announcements. I will also demonstrate that the respondents of my two surveys had difficulty distinguishing between the conventional and unconventional possessive forms and attributive nouns forms.

Lastly in Chapter 5: Conclusions and Other Speculations, I will discuss trends I see in the use of the apostrophe and postulate why the use of nonconventional possessive nouns and attributive nouns may have occurred. I will
go on to suggest what further research could be done concerning the use and misuse of the possessive apostrophe that my research as well as observations by Elizabeth Sklar, Gretta Little, Harry Teitelbaum, and others may have prompted. Then, as an educator myself, I will describe how I teach the conventions of Standard Written English. I will make teaching suggestions about what should be taught concerning the use of the possessive apostrophe. I will also describe ways in which I teach the apostrophe. Lastly, I will speculate about the future of the apostrophe in our ever-changing computerized world.
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The Birth of Standard Conventions in Written English

Language and communication have existed since the beginning of civilization. As a form of communication, writing has existed for at least 5000 years (Pyles 9). The English language, though, whether written or oral, has had an even shorter life, for English is a relatively "new" language, dating back to only 450 A.D. (Millward 16). Although English is relatively "new," even from near its beginning, it was recorded through writing. In fact, the earliest Old English texts have been dated as early as the seventh century (Millward 17).

As in any language, English is extremely systematic and follows predictable patterns and rules for forming understandable sentences. Even as early as the Old English period, Written English has followed general rules that "govern pronunciation, word formation, and grammatical construction" (Akmajian 6). Old English, though, when compared with English today, was highly inflected, meaning that most words (nouns and verbs in particular) used different forms to indicate their grammatical function in a sentence, rather than employing syntactic position (word order), as English does today.

For example, in Figure 1 under the -a stem noun for boat, the Old English word bat (boat) represented both the nominative (subject) and accusative (object) cases (although other Old English words used different inflections to differentiate nominative from accusative) much like boat does in Present Day English. To form the genitive (possessive) case, one would have added an -es inflection to form bates just as Present Day English would add 's to form boat's. The inflection -e would form bate, the dative case which in Present Day English would remain boat but would generally follow a preposition such as to or for to become the dative.
OE Noun Declensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>-a stems (masc. and neut.)</th>
<th>-o stems (fem.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masc.</td>
<td>Neut. (Long)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sg.</td>
<td>bāt</td>
<td>bān</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td>bētas</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>bēta</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>bētum</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Consonantal or -an Declension (&quot;Weak&quot; Nouns)</th>
<th>Mutated Plurals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sg.</td>
<td>nama</td>
<td>eage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>naman</td>
<td>eage</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>namum</td>
<td>eagum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A long syllable has a long vowel or ends in a long consonant or consonant cluster. Thus bān is long because it has a long vowel, and scip is short because its vowel is short and it ends in a single consonant. Brycgm is a long syllable because cg counts as a long consonant.*

Figure 1. OE Noun Declensions. Reprinted from C.M. Millward, *A Biography of the English Language*. 2nd Ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1996), 97.
The same general rules applied to the plural forms of nouns as well. The main difference between Old English and Present Day English is that while Old English used inflectional endings to indicate grammatical function, the order in which the words appear, or their syntactical position, in Present Day English indicates grammatical function.

Although Old English was very systematic and thus consistent in forming sentences, spelling and punctuation within this system were not. Inconsistencies in spelling were due to the changes within the sound system of Old English that occurred throughout its 650 years. More important for my purposes, punctuation during the Old English period was "scanty," consisting mainly of a "raised point" or dot and in later Old English, marks that resembled a semi-colon and an inverted semi-colon known as the *punctus elevatus* (Millward 92). Also, the distinction between capital and lowercase letters did not exist at this time (Millward 92). For example, Figure 2 is a reproduction of the last five lines of the Old English poem *Judith*. The only punctuation shown is the raised point in the third line, and there appears to be no capital letters.

Although it would be convenient to say that these marks became today's period, their use more likely reflected "the need to breathe" or pause as was the case in the oral-aural tradition of classical rhetoric (Bolton 179; Millward 92). This would seem like a logical basis for punctuation use because many early Old English texts such as *Beowulf* were actually recorded by scribes from oral poems. Much of what punctuation today would show was already taken care of by the inflections of the Old English language. The genitive case ending, for example, showed possession much like the apostrophe does today.

Not many Middle English texts exist during the early Middle English period because French was the official language for a few hundred years and thus
recorded language was transcribed in French (Millward 146). Adding even more confusion to the transcribing of the language was the fact that the standard English that arose in this time period was based on the speech of London rather than the West Saxon speech from which Old English had descended (Millward 146). Once finally documented, though, Middle English showed many changes in the English language; among these changes were the loss of many of the inflections of Old English.

Here, as in Old English, punctuation and spelling were not consistent. This inconsistency was due in part to English not being the official language of Britain, so it, of course, was not standardized (Millward 158). As it became the official language during the latter part of the Middle English period, though, standardization in spelling began. Punctuation, however, lagged behind in terms of standardization; it was "sparse and limited" and again reflected places to breathe more than it reflected the uses one would see in modern English (Millward 161).

Until this time, the Roman Catholic Church and the upper class had controlled education, making the dominant scholarly language Latin. Fortunately for the standardization of English, at the same time that England found itself in a state of religious and social upheaval at the end of the Middle English period, William Caxton introduced the printing press to Europe in 1476, forever changing written communication.

With the introduction of the printing press, Caxton not only printed a plethora of texts and allowed for mass production and distribution of these texts at a low price (when compared to the painstakingly slow, expensive, individual scribal copies), but he also contributed to the rise of literacy throughout Europe by publishing English translations of classical Latin and Greek texts, thus making these texts available for the first time to the lower and middle classes. Additionally,
with this mass production of texts, Caxton helped to initiate standardization in spelling, punctuation, and usage as well as establishing the London English dialect as the standard dialect through the permanent nature of the printing matrix.

The ability to reproduce thousands of books, one exactly like another (unlike scribal copies which could differ from book to book) such as Lily's Grammar [which] sold up to 10,000 copies each year," was "a powerful force" in standardizing the written word (Baugh 196; Görlach 6). As printing houses were established, for example, they developed their own "house style." They would then mass produce commissioned texts using these styles, thereby contributing to consistency in spelling, punctuation, and usage by familiarizing readers with their conventions (Bolton 175). Authors were also encouraged to follow established house styles when creating new works, thus further standardizing the printed word.

On the heels of the expansion of literacy came the desire to standardize many areas of the English language. The focus turned first to spelling. Writers and schoolmasters created English-to-English dictionaries that helped to standardize the spelling of words and to record their definitions. The most notable dictionary of the Early Modern English period was Samuel Johnson's A Dictionary of the English Language, which was produced in 1755 and was the first of its kind to utilize "quotations to establish the meanings in context " (Millward 240).

Once specific spelling rules and books were established, the focus moved to fixing and stabilizing grammar and usage. As scholars struggled to stabilize the written English language, they paid less attention to the aspect of breathing (the oral-aural tradition) and more attention to syntax and prescriptive usage rules; it soon became apparent that additional punctuation marks were needed to employ these rules (Bolton 180).
As stated earlier, Old and Middle English used periods, semi-colons, and the *punctus elevatus* as punctuation marks, although their placement in sentences was certainly not regular. At the end of the Middle English period, Caxton, himself, employed these and the slash or vigule (/) (Bolton 179). Figure 3 is a reproduction of lines 15-52 of Caxton’s “Prologue to Eneydos” written in 1490 and shows his use of the period and vigule.

Although "the phases leading from rhetorical to logical punctuation and the reasons for this development are not quite clear," not long after Caxton’s death in 1491, the use of question marks, commas, apostrophes for elision, periods, colons, parentheses, hyphens, semi-colons, and apostrophes for possession in printed texts is documented and in only slightly different manners than which they are used today (Görlach 58; Bolton 180).

Unlike the other orthographic marks such as the period and colon, the apostrophe has led a short, rather volatile life. It made its debut in the late sixteenth century as a printer’s mark to indicate the omission or abbreviation of a word (Little 15). Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the apostrophe continued to play this supporting role of existing purely to show that other letters no longer did.

In 1693, for instance, Joseph Aickin defined the apostrophe as "a note Collision [which] showeth a Letter to be taken away" (*The English Grammar* 70). Similarly, in 1696 Edward Cocker defined the apostrophe as a "Note written just over the place of a Vowel . . . that is cut off" (*Accomplish’d School Master* 95). In 1755 John Smith defined the apostrophe as a mark that was "convenient to the Compositor, because he was at liberty to shorten and to lengthen all such words as would admit of either" (*The Printer’s Grammar* 108). At the same time, the apostrophe could also be found being used to form the plurals of nouns ending in
suche wyse that it was more lyke to dutche than englysshe
I coude not reduce ne brynge it to be vnderstonden/
And certaynly our langage now vsed varyeth ferre from
that, whiche was vsed and spoken when I was borne/
For we
englysshe men/ ben borne vnder the domynacyon of the mone.
whiche is neuer stedfaste/ but euer wauerynge/ wexynge
one season/ and waneth & dyscreaseth another season/ And
that comyn englysshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth
from another. In so moche that in my dayes happened that
certayn marchauntes were in a shippe in tamysse for to
haue sayled over the see into zelandel and for lacke of
wynde thei taryed atte forlond and wente to lande for to
refreshe them And one of theym named sheffelde a mercer
cam in to an hows and axed for mete, and specyally he axyd
after eggys And the goode wyf answerde. that she coude speke
no frenshe. And the marchaunt was angry. for he also
could speke no frenshe but wold haue hadde eggs/ and she
vnderstode hym not/ And thenne at laste a nother sayd that
he wolde haue eyren/ then the good wyf sayd that she vnder-
stod hym wel/ Loo what sholde a man in thyse dayes now
wryte. egges or eyren/ certaynly it is harde to playse
every man/ by cause of dyuersite & chaunge of langage. For
in these dayes every man that is in ony reputacyon in his
countre. wyll vtter his commynycacyon and matters in suche
maners & termes/ that fewe men shall vnderstondetheym/
And som honest and grete clerkes haue ben wyth me and de-
sired me to wryte the moste cyruous termes that I coude
fynde/ And thus bytwene playn rude/ & cyruous I stande
abasshed. but in my Iudgemente/ the comyn termes that be
dayli vsed ben lyghter to be vnderstond than the olde
and auncyent englysshe/ And for as moche as this present
booke is not for a rude vplondyssh man to laboure therin/
ne rede it/ but onely for a clerke & a noble gentylman
that feleth and vnderstondeth in faytes of armes in louse
& in noble chyualrye/ Therfor in a meane bytwene bothe I
haue reduced & translated this sayd booke in to our
englysshe...
sibilant sounds such as z, s, sh, and ch or words ending in vowels (Little 15).

Also during this time, the apostrophe began to creep into the written language in yet another more dominant role: in place of the "defunct genitive case affix" (Sklar 176). As stated earlier, Middle English differed greatly from Old English in that it had lost a majority of its inflections; these inflections, again, had marked grammatical relationships between words. Thus, now that the genitive case affix had disappeared, something was needed to show the possessive relationship. That "something" became the apostrophe.

How the apostrophe came to signify the possessive form has two popular possible origins. Some seventeenth century grammarians such as Joseph Priestly and Robert Lowth believed that the 's had arisen from the Old and Middle English genitive ending of -es and that the apostrophe was simply marking the place for the now absent vowel. These theorists believed that the apostrophe was taking the place of the omitted "e" from the Old and Middle English genitive singular affix -es (Sklar 178). For example, in the Old English sentence "pises godspelles geendung is swiđe ondœdenlic" (which translates into Present Day English as "this gospel's ending is very terrifying"), the -es affix of godspelles would have become godspell's and eventually our gospel's; in the Old English phrase "œet his hlafordes fotum sittan" ("at his lord's feet to sit"), the -es inflection on hlafordes would have become hlaford's and eventually lord's (Old English sentences from Millward 108).

Others prefer the idea that the 's evolved from the contraction for the his-genitive such as John his hat to John's hat. Robert Gorrell, for instance, demonstrated that the possessive or genitive form in Old English and Latin had been marked with the form -es and that the -es was pronounced as a syllable, but by Middle English, in some dialects the -es had become -is (127). Renaissance
scholars who later were trying to help stabilize the English language, Gorrell speculates, concluded, then, that the -is had probably deteriorated from the his-genitive of *John his hat* to *Johns* or *Johns hat*. Assuming that the *Johns hat* was a shortening of *John his hat*, these Early Modern English scholars began inserting the apostrophe where letters had been omitted (Gorrell 127). For example, in a translation of the *Book of Numbers* (dated about 1000 A.D.), one can find "We gesawon Enack his cynryn" (which would read today as "We saw Anak's kindred"); in the his-genitive theory, *Enack his cynryn* would have become *Enackis* or *Enacks* which the Early Modern scholars would have written as *Enack's*. Today, it would read *Anak's* (Old English sentence from Pyles 184).

Although there seems to be disagreement about how the apostrophe began being used to show possession, both theories show that the apostrophe was most likely showing the omission of letters. More important, though, the uses of the apostrophe in this way (to fill in for the omitted letters) were increased by grammarians trying to stabilize the language (Sklar 178).

In the eighteenth century came the problem of marking the plural form of a noun possessive. Even though grammarians could not agree on what was omitted from the singular in a possessive, there was general agreement that *something* was missing and, therefore, should be accounted for. This did not hold true, though, for the plural possessive. Nothing was missing. Sklar quoted Charles Mason as writing, "'It is an unmeaning process to put the apostrophe after the [possessive] plural s (as birds'), because no vowel has been dropped there'" (179). Even though no letters were being omitted, the apostrophe did mark the difference between the plural possessive and the plain plural.

Despite the fact that eighteenth century grammarians could not apply their rational, logical thinking to the use of the apostrophe in the plural possessive,
Joseph Priestly was able to state the first official "rule" for its use in both singular and plural nouns, "The Genitive case . . . is formed by adding [s] with an apostrophe before it to the nominative; as Solomon's wisdom . . . Venus's beauty; or the apostrophe only in the plural number, when the nominative ends in [s] as the Stationers' arms" (quoted in Sklar 179). By the nineteenth century, analogy and the "desire for consistency finally triumphed over historical and logical objection to use of the apostrophe in the plural." As Goold Brown wrote, "the apostrophe, whatever may have been its origin, is now the acknowledged distinctive mark of the possessive case of English nouns" (Sklar 179).

Unfortunately, in a step back in 1891, the United States Board of Geographic Names called for an end to the possessive form in place names such as Pike's Peak (Little 16). Pikes Peak and other possessive place names would forever be "apostrophe-less." Britain followed this trend as well by eliminating apostrophes in businesses between 1895 and 1902: Lloyd's Bank became Lloyds Bank (Little 16).

Despite this slight regression, by the last three decades of the nineteenth century "grammarians and printers seemed to have agreed upon the conventions that govern[ed] the use of the possessive apostrophe" (Little 16). Sklar also agrees that the rules that exist today concerning the apostrophe's use seemed to be established by the late nineteenth century (180).

The Rise of "Correctness"

As stated earlier, in addition to beginning the push for standardization of spelling and punctuation, Caxton's printing press gave the lower and middle classes wide access to printed material. However, because these classes could not afford the expensive education in Latin that the wealthy upper-class enjoyed, many great Latin and Greek works were translated into and, subsequently, printed
and mass produced in English, the language of the lower-classes. Despite being in the "less-refined" English language, these printed texts had helped accelerate literacy among the common people of Europe.

At this time as well, the Roman Catholic Church broke down due to the Protestant Reformation, thereby making the Church a less dominant force in education. Latin's scholarly influence and regular use began to decline sharply at this point. This decline can be linked to four factors: (1) the expanding grammar schools increasingly adopted the English language as a medium for education; (2) the "New Science" writers and philosophers looked more critically at classical and humanist concepts and their rhetorical forms while demanding a "plainer" language for their own vernaculars; (3) Puritan influence increased and the Puritans saw Latin as the language of the Roman Catholic Church; and (4) the Civil War disrupted the traditional school set-up (Görlach 39).

Consequently, Latin, the language of the Church, became obsolete as the official language in education, and English took its place. Furthermore, other groups within society besides the upper class and Church Fathers could now give input into what should be taught; therefore, schools by and for the common person opened. Consequently, more and more lower and middle class Englishmen were attending school and receiving an education in their native language. With such a vested interest in English, then, it would only seem logical that the middle class grammarians would delve wholeheartedly into the project of raising the prestige of their beloved English.

Furthermore, during the eighteenth century, when the period now known as the "Age of Reason" was in full swing, many scientists such as Isaac Newton had shown how things within the entire universe were organized around systematic rules. Many scientists then theorized that English, too, must also revolve around a
ruled, systematic structure (Millward 242). Hence, the scientific rationalist grammarians shifted their focus on English and its heritage to grammar and syntax.

Additionally, it was still believed that the Indo-European languages of Greek, Latin, and English were part of a divinely inspired "universal" grammar (Millward 242). All of the languages including Latin, Greek, and English were thought to have deteriorated and deviated from this universal grammar, English having decayed the farthest. At this time, all the known languages, except English, were still highly inflected, convincing grammarians that English had to have deteriorated more quickly and farther from the ideal than had either Latin or Greek because it had lost the majority of its inflections. Consequently, to refine and to standardize English by conforming it to a rule structure that resembled the still "scholarly" Latin and to prevent further deterioration and deviation of the English language as it then existed, the eighteenth century grammarians worked toward three main basic aims concerning English (Lindemann 108; Millward 243):

1. to ascertain (i.e. establish) rules governing correct English
2. to refine and purify the language, removing "deviant" constructions and introducing improvements," [and]
3. to fix and to stabilize the English language to prevent further deterioration and to publish the "rules."

By the early nineteenth century, literacy was widespread and English, rather than Latin, was the dominant language not only through all levels of society but through all levels of education as well. Thus, the final aim of the grammarians, fixing and stabilizing written and spoken English by publishing the sets of standard "rules," became a necessity.
Once spelling and punctuation had become regularized, the focus of the grammarians moved to "proper' and 'improper' usage' of the language (Millward 242). Here, the rationalist, scientific approach again prevailed. As stated earlier, the grammarians believed English should conform to certain rules to prevent any further deterioration. Thus, to prevent decay, the grammarians began writing and publishing prescriptive grammars that explained exactly how English should be written.

Everyone, especially those in the lower classes, had access to the mass production of literary and prescriptive texts and these undoubtedly influenced them to write and to speak in a specific style and manner, the style that reflected the works. With its new literacy gained through reading, its study of the prescriptive grammars, and its new-found wealth, the middle class desired to move up the social scale (Bolton). For the first time, the aspirations of the middle-class people looked attainable. They realized that to assure themselves of upward mobility, they needed to change one thing in particular--their use of the English language (Millward 226).

(In fact, changing one's use of the English language to change one's status was the premise for George Bernard Shaw's famous play Pygmalion. Shaw's main character, Professor Higgins, claimed he could alter charwoman Eliza Doolittle's social status simply by altering her speech pronunciation. In the play, Higgins succeeded. Eighteenth century English commoners thought they, too, could change their status and life as Eliza had.)

By the eighteenth century, then, "correctness," it would seem, mattered tremendously in both society and in print. Hence, the demands for grammar and usage books and the expectations of conformity to conventions and standards in written and spoken communication grew. From that time on, every literate person
throughout Europe was expected to follow the now universally prescribed and published "standards of correctness" in written and spoken English within Europe.

To demonstrate just how important conforming to the standards in written and spoken language was to the Europeans, there was a push for nearly 50 years to establish an English usage academy that would police English usage by "legislat[ing] standards of English, settl[ing] disputes about usage and spelling, [and] eradical[ing] unfortunate solecisms that ha[d] sneaked into the language," thus paralleling France's "Academic Fracaise," the "official arbitrator of usage in France" (Millward 241-242; Leech 174). This thrust found support from well-known authors like Robert Hooke, Daniel Defoe, Joseph Addison, and Jonathan Swift (Millward 241). Even Queen Anne was a patron of this proposal. Though never adopted, the move illuminated the citizens' desire for everyone to follow a set ideal in written and spoken English.

The fight to standardize and fix the English language and to follow prescribed conventions was not a fight bound strictly to English soil. In America, educators and grammarians also emphasized following standards in written communication after the seventeenth century. Ben Franklin, for instance, influenced the idea of adhering to the conventions of written language by calling for "the study of grammar, rhetoric, composition, oratory, and the study of standard English authors [to be established] as the main substance of education" (Gordon 259).

In 1874, Harvard University introduced "correctness" in writing and literature into its entrance examination: "Correct spelling, punctuation, and expression as well as legible handwriting, are expected of all applicants for admission; and failure in any of these particulars will be taken into account" (Kitzhaber 34). Later, in 1882, candidates of Harvard were "required to correct specimens of bad English given
At the time of the examination" (Kitzhaber 35). With Harvard and Ben Franklin leading the way, conforming to the standards of written communication was firmly established in America as well.

This push for correctness in written English, then, standardized spelling, established the popularity of prescriptive usage guides, and generated the use of punctuation to mark syntax rather than breath pauses. This increase of punctuation in turn, led to the use of the apostrophe not only to show omission of letters but also to distinguish between noun plurals and possession.

How Following the Conventions of Written English Is Viewed Today

How "correctness" in terms of Standard Written English is viewed in English academia, as I demonstrated throughout my Preface and Introduction, has changed since Harvard's 1882 entrance exam. In the past few decades the "correctness standard" call has become one that states that "correct, Standard Written English" is all a matter of "appropriateness."

This "doctrine of appropriateness" concept was first introduced to America by Philip Krapp and posits the idea that what is viewed as correct in communication is actually only linguistic etiquette--appropriateness for the occasion (Gorrell 21; Hartwell 166; Kolin 14). This doctrine goes on to postulate that there are "functional varieties" of appropriate, correct English (Gorrell 22). The belief then is that in its own social context, all communication, whether written or spoken, is "correct." In this new view, which usage one chooses to use is the one that most closely reflects the occasion. Although I agree with this "appropriateness" idea in theory (how one expresses him or herself in writing or speech to one's peers, parents, social groups, etc. should be entirely up to him or her), conventions of Standard English should be adhered to when the material in question is for formal
public viewing or listening such as newspapers, radio and television programming, signs, etc.

Randolph Quirk states that "appropriateness" is "an ideal, a mode of expression that [people] seek when [they] wish to communicate beyond [their] immediate community" [emphasis mine] (100). When one converses with people outside one's own social, economic, educational, etc. community, one should adhere to the conventions of Standard English to be understood correctly and to be deemed knowledgeable, literate, and respectable. Again I refer to W. Nelson Francis's statement: "Control of standard English does not, of course, guarantee professional, social or financial success. But it is an almost indispensable attribute of those who attain such success" (246). If one speaks or writes without heed to correctness, others may view the person's writing as an extension of the person's work in general, careless and undisciplined. For example, while watching the evening news, I once saw a story on a central Iowa news station's teacher of the year. While she was being interviewed, the cameraman panned across her elementary classroom. On the wall was her homemade calendar with February spelled "Febuary." My opinion of her as an educator dropped considerably despite her prestigious award.

With this emphasis of "appropriateness" in terms of Standard Written English came the support from the NCTE in 1974 that students might compose better when the standard conventions in terms of spelling, punctuation, and usage were not stressed, as I have discussed previously. Again, although I agree that this may be helpful in the composing phase of writing, students need to continue to incorporate the conventions of Standard English into their final products, both because following the conventions is expected by readers and will eliminate any misunderstandings or ambiguities in meaning.
Technical writer Eva Dukes points out in contradiction to the idea of appropriateness that while "dialects . . . help people communicate orally, within peer groups, . . . when we are addressing 'outsiders,' especially in writing, . . . Standard English will serve us best. Standard English enable[s] us to disseminate information more widely, or receive it from a far greater number of sources, than will any other form of the language." (139) Consequently, as an educator, I believe teachers have an obligation to teach these standards and the language of public discourse to their students.

Ambiguities in print because of misused punctuation, spelling, or misplaced modifiers in sentences are often well-documented, both for comic effect and for use as a teaching tool. Sometimes these ambiguities can cause unnecessary losses of thousands of dollars. For example, one government agency allegedly lost 2 million dollars before Congress could rectify the error when a typist inadvertently typed "All foreign fruit, plants are free from duty" (quoted Kolln 217). The typist should have used a hyphen instead of a comma; the hyphen would limit the rule to a particular plant type whereas the comma used broadened the spectrum to all plants, not specifically fruit-plants.

In another incident, a court battle nearly ensued between a school official and the United States Immigration Service over this directive: "This certificate may be signed and issued only by an authorized official in the United States after he has determined that the student is eligible." (quoted Kolln 172). The placement of the phrase in the United States made the rule ambiguous. Did the official have to be physically in the U.S. when he or she signed the immigration certificate or did the official just have to be authorized with the U.S.? As one can see, deviations for the expected conventions of Standard Written English can be highly detrimental to those involved when the deviations lead to ambiguity in meaning.
Prior Studies on Common Errors Made by Student Writers

Various studies have been done since the turn of the century analyzing the "errors" (i.e. the deviations from the conventions of written language) that writers, especially student writers, make when they write. I have chosen to include the most well-known of them strictly to demonstrate that the misuse of the possessive apostrophe has been documented for nearly a century. In 1917, for example, Roy Ivan Johnson compiled and analyzed errors found in writing samples of 132 high school freshmen and 66 junior-college freshmen (556). His list of the ten most common errors included the misuse of the apostrophe at number 7, but he ranked it at number 2 on his list of items he suggested should receive increased emphasis (578).

In 1930, John C. Hodges conducted the largest analysis of errors made in writing, but he never published his results. His "top ten list" can be found, though, in the Harbrace Handbook from 1941 on page iii. He, too, listed the apostrophe in its own category.

In 1979, Gary Sloan conducted another error analysis; he compared the number and types of errors he found in freshmen composition papers in the 1950s and the 1970s to determine if the increasing orality of our culture was having a detrimental effect on his freshmen students' writing (157-158). Although he did not give the apostrophe its own category, he mentioned that "haphazard punctuation, omissions of apostrophes in the possessive case . . . and kindred technical deviations, [are] inevitable by-products of inadequate exposure or attention to the printed page (159). Sloan also commented on the "dwindling vocabulary" of his student writers, claiming that since the 1950s, average vocabulary size had decreased dramatically (157). His evidence for the increase of errors in using the conventions coupled with the dwindling vocabulary appeared to support his
premise that the increasingly oral culture of today's youth was "caus[ing] a gradual decrease in student ability to handle written English in traditionally acceptable ways" (156).

More recently (1988), Robert Connors and Andrea Lunsford also looked at the deviations from the conventions of written language that college instructors found in their students' writing. Many of the errors in their list mirrored those found in the earlier studies. Again the misuse of the possessive apostrophe was included in its own category (403). The confusion between the possessive pronoun *its* and the contraction *it's* also warranted its own category.

As one can infer from these lists, many of the same errors appear again and again in students' writing. As Gary Sloan first proposed and Robert Connors and Andrea Lunsford later supported, the continuance of the problem is related to a continued oral culture, a more visual and less literary education, and a more visual and less literary culture as a whole. Many of the same apostrophe errors noted in these studies done on student writing over the past 100 years are cropping up in printed public discourse like billboards, magazines, signs, television newscasts, advertisements, and newspapers.

From all the possible deviations from Standard Written English that occurred consistently in these studies and from similar deviations that I see printed and displayed prominently in public discourse in society, I have chosen to look at the use (or more accurately, misuse) of the apostrophe. I have chosen this unique punctuation mark because it seems to me that it is the orthographic mark that is most prevalently misused in printed public discourse (especially in my hometown) and that has the most interesting history. In fact, there are journal articles dedicated solely to its "demise" such as "The Case of the Missing Apostrophe" by Harry Teitelbaum, "Pain and Suffering: Apostrophes and Academic Life" by Irvin
Hashimoto, "The Ambivalent Apostrophe" by Greta Little, and "The Possessive Apostrophe: the Development and Decline of a Crooked Mark" by Elizabeth Sklar as well a comic piece titled "Nailing down the uses of apostrophes" by syndicated columnist Dave Barry that jokes about the apostrophe's reason for living.

The Modern Apostrophe

Grammarians, instructors, and style guides today generally agree on when and how to use the possessive apostrophe. These standard uses mirror the same rules stated by Joseph Priestly and Goold Brown in their mid-nineteenth century guides. There are four accepted conventions for using the possessive apostrophe:

1. Add an 's after a singular noun regardless of what letter it ends in (boy's boot or boss's office)
2. Add an 's after a plural noun not ending in s (children's books)
3. Add just an apostrophe (') after a plural noun ending in s (boys' boots).
4. Do not use an apostrophe in possessive pronouns (its shoe)

All the exceptions to these rules are restricted to Rule 1 and it is also only here that any disagreement in recommendations occur. The 1993 Chicago Manual of Style states that there are a few exceptions to Rule 1 for common nouns. Tradition and euphony dictate that with words such as conscience and heaven combined with sake, just an apostrophe may be used (198-199). The guide goes on to say that "traditional exceptions [for proper nouns] . . . are the names Jesus and Moses [as well as] [m]any Greek and Hellenized names. For the same reasons of euphony, the possessive s is seldom added to such names" (201). In other words, these words and names form the possessive with just the apostrophe because it sounds better (Moses' boot). These two exceptions, I believe, are what
cause people to form the possessive of all singular nouns ending in -s incorrectly. This, combined with the peculiar appearance of -s's as in boss's, probably leads people to drop the final -s.

The rise of attributive noun use complicates matters even further. It seems that in recent years, the use of the apostrophe has begun being eliminated in phrases that in some circles are no longer regarded as possessive constructions. These phrases are known as attributive noun phrases.

Attributive nouns are nouns functioning in an adjectival role and modifying the following noun just as an adjective would. Just as black modifies cat in the noun phrase black cat, describing what kind of cat it is, city in city government describes what kind of government it is. An attributive noun, then, simply describes an attribute or characteristic of the noun (such as what kind) and does not show ownership.

The attributive use can be applied in plural nouns as well. For example, the attributive use of teachers in teachers college is more appropriate than the possessive teachers' because teachers describes the type of training offered at the college (it is a college that produces teachers) and not that teachers own it. The same can be said of farmers bank, which may or may not be owned by the farmers to whom it provides services.

Because attributive nouns describe a characteristic of the noun they modify, it would not seem correct to use proper nouns in an attributive manner. The attributive use of the name Snider in Snider Trenching does not describe the kind of trenching done but rather who owns the trenching business; therefore, the possessive Snider's would seem more appropriate.

Additionally, ambiguity can occur in such attributive phrases as parent organization when no punctuation is used. Parent organization could be
interpreted as an organization from which other organizations have sprung or an organization composed of or for parents.

The confusion caused by the attributive use coupled with the continued orality of our culture is, I believe, causing people to leave out apostrophes in non-attributive places. Obviously, one cannot "hear" the apostrophe; consequently, the difference between *carpenters union, teachers college, and women's shoes* becomes lost. To the human ear, especially that of a child or an inexperienced writer, these different uses sound the same. Thus, when these children and writers are required to use the apostrophe in their written work, they are unsure if one is needed and, if so, where to place it. To make matters worse, if they turn to their environment for examples, they will probably encounter signs that display conflicting forms. If writers read *Jake's Place* alongside *Ladies Shoes* and *Macy's* using a star as the apostrophe, they may decide the apostrophe either means nothing or is simply decoration (Little 17).

For example, while watching a newscast of results of the Girls' State Track Meet recently, I saw *Girls State Track Meet, Girl's State Track Meet, and Girls' State Track Meet* all in the same sportscast. I also have seen advertisements for *Blank Childrens Hospital* and *Dewey Ford: Des Moines' oldest auto dealership* as well as a public service announcement that stated "No overnight parking on Monday's in city parking lots." Some inexperienced writers may wrongly assume, then, from the inconsistent placement of these apostrophes that it really does not matter where one puts it, or if one uses it at all.

One encounters the same type of haphazardness in printed material. For instance, while *Time Magazine* chose to speak of *boss's office* in an article about Janet Reno speaking with President Clinton, it used "*Ames' visits to the Russian embassy*" and an agent found a receipt for fertilizer in the *Nichols' house* in articles
about FBI cases in the same issue. The conventional -s's construction appeared to be acceptable for the common noun *boss* but unacceptable for proper nouns. *The Des Moines Register* wrote of Tennessee Williams’ later classics in one issue and quoted Hillary Clinton as saying *young peoples’ lives* in another.

Confusion concerning the use of the apostrophe in printed material appears even within a single news story. For example, in an AP article titled "Cubs drop historic game," these various possessive forms appeared throughout: *Milwaukee's Mark Loretta* and *Milwaukee's Matt Mieske*, but *Milwaukee Manager* and *Cubs pitcher*. While there was the *Cubs games*, it was a *Brewers’ 4-2 victory*. Lastly, people could be *Cubs' or Brewers' fans* but later just *Brewers fans*. The AP writer was not consistent. (See Appendix E for this article excluding the box score.)

Furthermore, one can purchase automobiles from these central Iowa auto dealerships: *Bill Jensen's Crescent Chevrolet* or *Chuck Fletcher's* but also *Watters and Stivers*, not to mention *Charles Gabus Ford* (where "It's Charles Gabus' 79th Birthday!"), *Karl Chevrolet, Dewey Ford* (where one can save thousands of $'s), and a *Stew Hanson Dodge* from *Stew Hanson's Dodge* or *Laredo's* from *Bud Mulcahy's* according to their advertisements in *The Des Moines Register*. (See Appendix F for these examples.)

A publication printed and distributed by the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards read *Iowa Association of County Conservation Board's Outdoor Adventure Guide* on the cover and *Iowa's Association of County Conservation Board - Outdoor Adventure Guide* throughout the rest of the guide, except in the paragraph that allowed one to order additional copies of the publication; then the form was written *Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards*. 
Similar inconsistencies occur weekly in *The Seymour Herald*. My hometown newspaper. On the same two-page spread one can find advertisements for *Charlie's Sports Shop, Deb and Pat's Country Catering, and Janet's Childcare* juxtaposed with *Jennings Construction, Blyzo Fish Farm, and Stone Tax Service*. One can buy crafts from *Shelda's* or carpets from *Randolph's* but hardware from *Lockridge*, and if a person called *McGill's Electrical Service*, he/she could reach father or son. (See Appendix G for many of these examples. I realize that "Electrical" is spelled incorrectly due to a typographical error but the apostrophe variances occur too frequently for this to be the case there, also.)

Greta Little documented similar inconsistencies along the road on signs and billboards. She noted *Chelsea Mans Shop* and two neighboring signs that read *Vella's Deli and The Style Center Ladies and Mens Hair Styling* (16-17). Even at an American university, Little demonstrated, people were not consistent in their use of the possessive apostrophe.

"In 30% of the signs the apostrophe was used in the expected way. 24% had ambiguous forms . . . Museums Publications . . . Misplaced apostrophes showed up in 8% of the signs ('Girl's Practice Tonight') and 35% were clearly possessives without apostrophes ('Physical Education Majors Lockers Room')" (16).

In "The Case of the Missing Apostrophe," Harry Teitelbaum noted similar variations in the use of apostrophes on signs; there were signs that read *Filene's Basement* in Lake Grove, New York; *Michaels* in Encino, California; and *MOMS PIES* in Julian, California (23-24). Based on these numerous observations, apostrophes, apparently, can either appear or not appear in the possessive case.

Replacing the apostrophe with a decorative icon is another trend. Numerous businesses have incorporated their logo into their name in the apostrophe's place: a crown in *King's Furniture*, a diamond in *Ginsberg's*
Jewelers, a star in Place's and Macy's department stores, and a jalapeño pepper in Chili's Bar & Grille. Little herself documented others: "Kelly's with a shamrock 'apostrophe', Mama's Restaurant with a heart, and [the ultimate in decorative use] Patricia's Toy Closet where the apostrophe is a claw on the paw of a tiger that stretched out atop the sign" (17).

With all this conflicting visual stimuli and the continued orality of the language (as shown in Gary Sloan's 1979 study and supported by Andrea Lunsford and Robert Conners's study), it is no wonder that the common person is unsure when, where, and how to use the possessive apostrophe. Little summarizes this idea well:

"The more often we see forms without apostrophes or with apostrophes in unconventional places, the more we become accustomed to them. Writers, proofreaders, and editors thus find it more difficult to spot errors in their texts, and the examples of unconventional usage will proliferate [compounding the problem]."

(17)

I fall into this category myself. I have always prided myself on my adherence to the conventions of Standard Written English but even I find myself, at times, sticking an apostrophe in where it shouldn't be or I forget it altogether.

Imagine, finally, the frustration a child must have with this mark. Since children spend the majority of their young lives hearing language, they do not hear the apostrophe, just the "possessive sound." When they do begin to read then, they are bombarded with a myriad of ways to use (or misuse) the apostrophe. How then, without instruction, can we expect writers to know when and where the use of the apostrophe is correct and how to use it consistently and correctly themselves?

As indicated throughout this chapter, Standard Written English and the conventions it employs such as spelling, punctuation, and usage have a long history. Today, using the conventions of Standard Written English correctly is still
expected in business and professional writing to avoid any ambiguities in meaning. Additionally, incorrect use reflects unfavorably on the writer; sloppy and inaccurate written work could be seen as indicative of its author. Textbook author C. W. Millward joked tongue-in-cheek that "Proper spelling has become so culturally important that 'Thou shalt not spell incorrectly' has almost the status of an eleventh commandment" (315). Unfortunately, with the recent trend in English composition classrooms being on de-emphasizing the teaching of these conventions to allow students more freedom in their belletristic essay writing, business- and professionally-bound writers are not learning when and how to use the accepted conventions of Standard Written English for their final products. These writers are then forced to use their environment as examples, and what they see, especially in the case of the apostrophe, may or may not be the conventional form. The result is that having not been taught the difference, they are unable to distinguish the conventional forms from the unconventional forms and will therefore rely on what looks "good" for their own writing.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Study

Statement of the Problem

My belief is that in a rural community like Seymour, language use is predominantly oral. Friends call friends; town citizens talk to store owners; school announcements are read to students; people listen to television and radios for news and entertainment; and much of the learning within the school occurs through lecture. Although the students and townspeople do no doubt read magazines, books, and newspapers from time to time, most of the interaction between people in a rural community is done orally and much of the town's entertainment is acquired visually and orally, through school-sponsored events such as basketball games and musical programs or town-sponsored events such as an Old Settlers' Days type of celebration (although in Seymour it's Old Settler's Days) or mass media. Exposure to or practice of the conventions of formal written communication, for most, is not an everyday experience.

The conventional use of the apostrophe of possession is particularly difficult for those in this oral community because the apostrophe has no sound. The preponderance of deviations from the conventional use of the apostrophe that are so prominently displayed on store fronts, signs, billboards, and in magazine and newspaper advertisements further confuses people because they constantly see conflicting forms, often juxtaposed to each other. With so many forms available for viewing in public and with the "trend" in composition classrooms throughout the United States being on de-emphasizing the teaching of the accepted conventions of Standard Written English, many, especially children and young adults who are still learning to write, are likely to become confused about when and how they should use the possessive apostrophe. How then, can I, as a teacher, expect a
writer in my composition classroom to know what is the correct form to use with apostrophes when signs and advertisements, often adjacent signs and advertisements, show multiple forms? Consequently, I feel that the problem is that the general public is unsure what the conventional use of the apostrophe actually is.

As I have mentioned, with a weekly newspaper that displays advertisements for Larrys Powder Keg, Jennings Construction, and McGill's (father and son) Electrical Service alongside Shelda's, Debbie's Mints, and Charlie's Sport Shop; school newsletters that read "Girl's State Track Winners" and "What's Needed in Mr. Rembes Science Classes"; student compositions that more often than not may state "peoples opinions" or "I went to the Johnston's last week"; and a 125th anniversary brochure that boasts "a thriving community of 2,500 at it's peak" and "cheerleader's routine," I am lead to believe that many of Seymour's residents are unsure of the difference between a possessive and a simple plural, or whether an apostrophe is really needed to form the possessive noun. And those that finally decide that an apostrophe is indeed required are then uncertain where to place this "mysterious flying comma."

**Statement of Objective**

My original objective in this research project was only (1) to study and to document the deviations in the use of the apostrophe that the staff (teachers, administration, and secretaries) of the Seymour School made in school announcements and monthly newsletters and (2) to determine if the same staff, as well as the students of the school district, could identify the conventional and unconventional use of the possessive apostrophe in sentences modeled after their
daily school announcements, articles from the town's weekly newspaper, and in sentences from the 125th anniversary celebration brochure.

But based on my preliminary Seymour findings, I decided to expand both my objectives and my research population to include another school district in a second rural community. I also refined and focused my survey to concentrate on just the conventional and unconventional use of apostrophes and eliminated all references to "rural-ese."

Supported by the results of these two surveys and the prior research done on the misuse of the apostrophe, I will show that my findings can be extended to American society as a whole, not just rural Iowa.

In a study inspired by both Sloan's 1970's study "The Subversive Effects of an Oral Culture on Student Writing" and Lunsford and Connors's follow-up study "Frequency of Formal Errors in Current College Writing, or Ma and Pa Kettle Do Research" on orality of a culture and writing, I intended to research the effects that both the predominantly oral language of two rural communities and the prominence of the conflicting uses of the apostrophe in visual and print media are having on the written language of these same communities. I intended to document and discuss what kinds of apostrophe errors the staff and students of both the school districts made and how often. I, then, planned to theorize further why these errors may have been occurring.

To add more validity to my theory that our culture's continued orality coupled with the prevalence of conflicting forms in visual and print media is resulting in the inability to recognize the conventional and unconventional possessive apostrophe uses, I narrowed my initial survey after administering it to the Seymour sample. I chose to concentrate on the following categories of possessive nouns: singular possessive not ending in -s (boy's), singular possessive ending in -s (boss's),
plural possessives not ending in -s (children's), plural possessives ending in -s (boys'), plural possessives ending in -es (churches'), and pronoun possessives (its). I then administered this revised survey to the staff (teachers, administration, and secretaries) and high school students of my second population sample, the small, north-central, rural school district where I taught. (From my year as a 9th-12th grade English instructor there, I have concluded that this school district was comparable in student body and staff size.) In doing so, I wanted to see if this population, like the Seymour sample, could distinguish between the conventional and nonconventional uses of the apostrophe. I felt that this confusion about the use of the apostrophe was, in fact, a confusion that reached beyond the confines of just Seymour. That is, considering the research and documentation done by Greta Little and Harry Teitelbaum in this area, this is a confusion that can be extrapolated to society as a whole.

**Development Process of the Seymour Sample**

To narrow the overall focus of my survey (and the focus of my eventual thesis), I decided I needed to look at writing that was being created on a day-to-day basis to see what kinds of rural-flavored phrases and deviations from Standard English were being made. Therefore, I began by perusing Seymour students' formal and informal writing in both the English and science courses because students were (and are) required to take these courses to graduate. Using work from these two departments, then, gave me the opportunity to see both a range of abilities and writing tasks.

Most of the deviations from the conventions of Standard Written English could be broken down into seven main areas (listed in no particular order):
Once I had compiled this list of common variances from the conventions of written English, my next step was to interview the instructors at the Seymour School to see what variances they usually saw in their own students' work. Following is a list of the ten most prevalent variances they saw (also in no particular order):

1. Spelling
2. Capitalization
3. Punctuation (mostly commas)
4. Confusion of homophones and similar-sounding words
5. Run-on sentences
6. Words run together (such as alot)
7. Sentence fragments
8. Subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement errors
9. Apostrophe
10. Missing or repeated words

Not only did their list of variances confirm what I had seen in my preliminary look through the students' work, but these variances were comparable to many of
the lists cited in earlier studies done (Johnson; Hodges; Sloan; and Connors and Lunsford) on errors in student writing.

Consequently, as I refined my preliminary survey, I decided to concentrate on the deviations from conventions of written English that occurred, but I went ahead and left some of the "rural" phrases on the survey for variety and to camouflage its true purpose. I also included questions about reading habits and the length of time one's family had lived in the Seymour area, thinking that these variables might be correlated to the number of variances.

Even with a seemingly short list of the ten major problem areas, to try to analyze and theorize why so many variances occurred in my survey was a daunting task that could require years of work. Therefore, from this list of problems, I chose to analyze the five questions on the survey that involved the use of the apostrophe. (For an example of this survey, see Appendix A.)

**Additional Research Data Sources**

I also decided to include work done by the staff of Seymour's school district in my study. My belief was that the same factors that affected the townspeople's and students' use of the apostrophe would affect the staff's use as well. Also, I would be including a sample composed of the college-educated. Therefore, I decided to look at documents produced for and by the school district in addition to the surveys.

Thus, I also studied the apostrophe use in the monthly newsletters and calendars and daily announcements produced by the school system. To analyze a small portion of the school staff's written work, I chose to look at one year of the newsletters and one year of daily announcements, which are both compilations of staff submissions. The calendars and newsletters are produced as a formal
communication by the school and are mailed to all families and employees of the school district. (For an example of these calendars and newsletters, see Appendix I.) The daily announcements, on the other hand, are more informal and are created to be read to the students. Many teachers, though, merely post them, so that they do not have to repeat them throughout the day. (For an example of these announcements, see Appendix J.)

**Seymour Survey Sample Population**

Each student in the high school received a survey in either an English or a science class. Each junior high student received a survey in only an English class. From the 200 students in the junior high and high school who completed the survey, 100 surveys were chosen at random to evaluate. To choose a survey at random I simply stacked all 200 together and closed my eyes. While my eyes were closed, I pulled individual surveys out of the stack until I reached 100. At 50, I reshuffled the pile so that the first and last surveys would have an equal opportunity to be selected.

From these 100, three had to be eliminated: two for not following the directions and one because it was mistakenly taken by a substitute teacher. Students were instructed not to write their names on the survey so that they would remain anonymous to me and thus free from possible bias.

For the staff members of Seymour, I simply marked an "X" on each survey and placed the surveys in their mailboxes. I marked the staff's with an "X" so that they would not be confused with the students' surveys. Of the 42 surveys handed out to this group, I received 37 completed surveys for a return rate of 88%. Of these, 21 were selected at random in the same manner as before. At 10, I
reshuffled the stack to allow the first and last surveys equal opportunity to be selected.

**Development of the Second Survey**

After looking at the results of the preliminary survey given to the Seymour sample (I will cover the results in the next chapter), I concluded revisions were necessary in order for the survey to give me a clearer understanding of respondents' unconventional uses of the apostrophe.

I left the general information in Section 1 the same except I changed the "Seymour area" to "this area" in question 1. In this way, I still received some background information about the respondents, his or her family, and reading habits. Section 2 was eliminated entirely because I was no longer interested in the frequency of "folksy" phrase use. Section 3 was expanded and a Section 4 was added.

Specifically, Section 3 was increased from 19 questions to 29 questions, reducing the number of nonconventional sentence structure questions (such as "Bring me home after the game") and concentrating more on the use of the apostrophe in general. The first survey asked the Seymour respondents only to answer "yes" or "no" to whether they would change the sentences or phrases in each item if they saw them in print. The second survey asked its respondents to first indicate "yes" or "no" to whether they would change the sentences or phrases in each item if they saw them in print; for questions marked "yes," respondents were instructed to circle the portion of the sentence or phrase they believed needed to be changed and then to make the necessary changes in the margin.

In Section 4, respondents were asked to complete the sentences by choosing the answer they thought looked "more correct" than the others. My goal
here was to see if they could distinguish the conventional form of possessives and plurals from the unconventional forms. Additionally, their choices might indicate a pattern in their nonconventional responses. (For an example of this revised survey, see Appendix B.)

**Second Survey Sample Population**

Out of 100 students in the high school, I administered the survey to the 95 students I had in my English courses. I received 85 surveys back for a return rate of 89% and used all of them in my evaluation. Students were instructed to put their grade level only, not their names, on the survey so that they would remain anonymous.

For the staff members of my second sample, I again marked an "X" on each survey and placed the surveys in their mailboxes. Again, I marked these with an "X" so that they would not be confused with the students' surveys. Of the 31 surveys handed out to this group, I received 17 completed surveys for a return rate of 55%. Of these, 2 were eliminated for not following the directions.
CHAPTER 4: DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Compiling My Data

To analyze a small portion of the Seymour staff's written work, I chose to look at (1) the school's monthly newsletters and calendars as well as (2) daily announcements. For both of these documents, I chose a different year at random from the 1990s by drawing the year out of a hat. For the daily announcements, I chose to look at only Wednesdays from the 1993-1994 school year. I felt that Wednesdays might be "low error" days because the faculty would not be suffering from the "Monday Blues" or the "It is almost the weekend" hysteria. In either case, I thought Mondays and Fridays would be "high error" days; conversely, Wednesday was a "safe," middle-of-the-week announcement day.

To look at more formal writing produced by the staff at Seymour's school, I chose to include the 1995-1996 school year of the Seymour School's newsletters and calendars as well. Again, these documents are produced by the school and mailed to all the parents and employees of the school district. These documents explain various school-related activities such as class trips, sporting events, music programs, awards, honor rolls, monthly school calendars, school menus for both breakfast and lunch, and so on.

As explained in the Background, the four accepted conventions for using the possessive apostrophe are as follows:

1. Add an 's after a singular noun regardless of what letter it ends in (boy's boot or boss's office)
2. Add an 's after a plural noun not ending in s (children's books)
3. Add just an apostrophe (') after a plural noun ending in s (boys' boots).
4. Do not use an apostrophe in possessive pronouns (its shoe)
Also, *The Chicago Manual of Style* explains that the traditional exceptions occur with Rule 1 with such words as *conscience* and *heaven* when combined with *sake*, and "the names Jesus and Moses [as well as] many Greek and Hellenized names. For . . . reasons of euphony, the possessive s is seldom added to such [words and] names" (198-201).

**Analysis of Seymour School Announcements**

For the 1993-1994 Wednesday announcements, I defined a word as letters surrounded by white space and excluded numerals being used unless the numerals were being used in the plural or intended plural form. A possessive form could have been used in 132 instances. See Table 1.

As one can see, an unconventional use of the possessive form occurred 22 times in the 132 instances for a percentage of 17%. These unconventional forms were employed in various ways:

- Junior high football team meet in Coach *Kruziches* room today after school (September 22)
- Congratulations to the junior varsity and varsity volleyball team's on their victories over Murray last night (September 29)
- Meeting of any teachers who want to teach summer school in Mrs. *Phillips' room on Wednesday* (October 19)
- Homecoming royalty pictures will be taken at *Browns* Photography on Wednesday at 4:00 (October 19)
- Please note Sherry *Jones* new phone number is . . . (October 27)
- The 9-12 *students* body is being allowed to participate only because the adults may need some players to complete their teams . . . (November 24)
Table 1. Frequencies of Possessive and Attributive Noun Forms
Found in 1993-1994 Daily Announcements

<table>
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<th>Month and dates</th>
<th># of Unconventional occurrences</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th># of Conventional occurrences</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th># of Attributive occurrences</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>Total # of occurrences</th>
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</table>

Year's Totals 22 17 38 29 72 55 132
• Seventh grade list [exploratory classes] posted in Mr. Jacobs room . . . (January 19)

• FHA Father's night out is February 7 (February 2)

• Remember to pay $2 in office for parent's flower (February 9)

• The heading of the teachers' section read Teacher's announcements (February 16 through May 25)

In 29%, or 38 of the 132 instances, the conventional forms were employed. Some of these conventional forms are illustrated by the following announcements:

• Junior class meeting Friday morning in Miss Ohlen's room (September 22)

• All volleyball players should met in Mr. Kruzich's room next Wednesday (October 19)

• A watch has been turned in to the Principal's office (October 19)

• Donna DeLong (8th grade-Mr. Choponis's homeroom) here today (October 19)

• There has been an increase in the amount of graffiti on the scorer's table lately (November 24)

• [E]ighth grade list [exploratory classes] posted in Mr. Choponis's room (January 19)

• Girls' district competition will continue Saturday (February 16)

The attributive form, rather than a possessive form, was used in 72 of the 132 occurrences, or 55% of the time. The attributive form, as I stated earlier, is a noun functioning in the adjectival role, as ham does in ham sandwich. This form is demonstrated in the some of the following announcements:

• Flowers for parents night Friday night are $2 (October 27)
- Pick up information on *Fathers Night Out* in the home ec room today (January 26)
- *Boys and girls* track at Lamoni today (March 29)
- *Coaches* meeting Thursday morning in Mr. Kruzich's room (April 6)
- The heading of the teachers' section read *Teachers* announcements (August 18 through February 9)

Of particular interest here were the announcements for October 19, January 19, February 9, and February 16. The use of the possessive apostrophe varied within a single document and at times even within a single sentence. For instance, on October 19, the announcements showed the following possessive forms: *Principal's office*, *Mr. Kruzich's room*, *Teachers Announcements*, *Mr. Choponis's room*, and *Mrs. Phillips' room*. It can be inferred then that particular confusion arose when a proper noun ending in -s was made possessive as in "Mr. Choponis's room" and "Mrs. Phillips' room." On January 19, two different forms were used within a single sentence, "Seventh grade list [exploratory classes] posted in Mr. Jacobs room and eighth grade list posted in Mr. Choponis's room."

On February 9, similar inconsistencies also occurred. These two different possessive forms, *Parents Night* and *parent's flower*, appeared in two sentences within one announcement, "*Parents* night is Friday night. Remember to pay $2 in office for *parent's flower." Another similar example of this type of confusion can be seen in the February 16 announcements: "*Girls*' district competition will continue," but "*Girls* basketball practice right after school." Again, these data show that both the transcribers and/or submitters of the announcement materials were unsure about where to place the possessive apostrophe.

It would be unfair to the school district not to say again that the announcements were written to be read to the students (despite the fact that many
instructors prefer to tack them up by the door, so that they are not being constantly asked to reread them). Because they are intended to be presented orally, one may assume that adhering to the conventions of Standard Written English was not of the utmost importance. Also, it should be noted that the caption of Teacher's announcements probably continued to read this way for several weeks because the announcements are written from a master announcement template that allows one to revise by adding and deleting specific announcements as needed while preserving the main subject headings of Announcements, Lunch Menu, etc.

Analysis of School Newsletters and Calendars

For the newsletters, I chose to analyze a year other than the one I had used for the school announcements so that my research would include a wide range of faculty submissions and information. Here, I also defined a word as letters surrounded by white space and excluded numbers others than those in the plural or intended plural form.

Table 2 charts my findings from the 1995-1996 school year for both the newsletters and the monthly school calendars. The final numbers and percentages appear on one table because the calendars and newsletters are usually mailed together bimonthly. As one can see from the combined totals in this table, an unconventional use of the possessive form occurred 44 times in the 179 instances for a percentage of 25%. In 32% of the possessive occurrences, or 58 of the 179 instances, the conventional forms were employed. The attributive form, rather than a possessive form, was used in 77 of the 179 occurrences, or 43% of the time. Each of these will be described more fully with examples in the newsletter portion and the calendar portion, respectively, below.
Table 2. Frequency of Possessive and Attributive Noun Forms Found in 1995-1996 Newsletters and Calendars

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th># of Unconventional occurrences</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th># of Conventional occurrences</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th># of Attributive occurrences</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>Total # of occurrences</th>
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Analysis of the Newsletters

Within the Newsletter portion itself, an unconventional use of the possessive form occurred 11 times in the 79 instances for a percentage of 14%. For example, some of these unconventional forms were employed in these various ways:

- Concern about sportsmanship is not a some time thing--its a constant concern (August-September Newsletter)

- Parent's/guardians considering the use of the open-enrollment should be aware of the following dates. (August-September Newsletter)

- A resignation from Bruce Lange for girl's assistant Basketball coach was approved. (October Newsletter)

- The boy's basketball rules were amended. (February-March Newsletter)

- Mrs. Snider's class is reading . . . with language skill reinforcement in Mr. Rogers' class. (February-March Newsletter)

- Both Mrs. Heesch's and Mrs. Jones' 1st grades are going to read . . ." (February-March Newsletter)

- Many thanks to the American Legion and it's members for the use of the building for the cribbage tournament. (April-May Newsletter)

- "Cook's Choice" appears on the lunch menu although they employ 4 cooks (April-May Newsletter)

In 72%, or 57 of the 79 instances, the conventional forms for the use of the apostrophe were employed. Some of these conventional forms were illustrated by the following:

- The Seymour Community School's Mission Statement . . . (December-January Newsletter)

- The following facts shall be considered in . . . the Board's determination of . . . (February-March Newsletter)

- After the play, [students] ate a Spanish style meat at Garcia's (February-March Newsletter)
• [The students] put in hours... on December 2 for a full day’s rehearsal (February-March Newsletter)

• This year’s speech club... participated in the individual district speech contest in Fairfield (April-May Newsletter)

• Later in this publication is a calendar showing each week’s topic (April-May Newsletter)

The attributive form, rather than a possessive form, was used in 11 of the 79 occurrences, or 14% of the time. This form was demonstrated in the some of the following statements:

• Among those under the After-Prom Thank-you section were Sidles Mr. Automotive and Miles Law Firm. (August-September Newsletter)

• Meet the Seymour Steppers Competition Team (February-March Newsletter)

• Senior awards assembly will be held at 8:30 a.m. (April-May Newsletter)

**Analysis of the Calendars**

Within the Calendar portion the number of unconventional uses of the possessive form of the apostrophe occurred 33 times in the 100 instances for a percentage rate of 33%. This form was demonstrated in the some of the following phrases:

• Teacher’s In-Service (August)

• Veterans Day (November)

• Jr. Varsity Boy’s Basketball with Lineville at 4:00 (January)

• Boy’s Track Meet at Melcher (April)

• Girl’s Track Meet at Bussey (April)

• Lion’s Club Meeting (April)
The conventional form was employed only 1 time in 100 instances for a percentage of 1%. The instance appeared in the February calendar: Valentine's Day.

The attributive form, rather than a possessive form, was used in 66 of the 100 occurrences, or 66% of the time. This form was demonstrated in some of the following phrases:

- Seymour Lions Meeting (October)
- Blue Grass Conference Boys/Girls Basketball Tournament (January)
- Girls basketball district tournament (February)
- Legion Auxiliary Meeting (February)
- Lions Meeting (May)
- Winter Sports Athletic Awards Night at 6:30 (May)

These calendars are likely to be reviewed more often than the Newsletters and are probably prominently displayed in most students' homes because they outline every school-related activity from field trips and sporting events to vocal, band, and elementary musical programs (I know it was in my home). Therefore, the possessive forms used here would be the ones most likely to be imprinted into someone's mind. Over half the time (66%), consequently, a reader would see the attributive form of the possessive being used. Hence, seeing the attributive form used the majority of the time may lead to the inability to distinguish the attributive form from the true possessive. Only once would a reader have seen the traditional use of the apostrophe: Valentine's Day.

In the calendars, the unconventional forms occurred one-third of the time. All of the instances involved a plural possessive form such as girls' basketball
written as the singular, *girl's basketball*, implying that only one very tired hoopster played. The only other unconventional form used was *Veterans Day* which I counted as unconventional and not attributive because it did not appear in this form in four commercially-produced calendars.

**Analysis of the Seymour Survey**

Because I narrowed my focus in this thesis to look at only the possessive use of the apostrophe, I only analyzed the 5 items in part 3 of the survey given to the Seymour sample that were directly related to the use of the possessive form. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage. I will identify these examples by number as well as by writing and bold-facing the entire item with the possessive portion underlined (it should be noted that the possessive portion was not underlined for the respondents). The survey in its entirety appears in Appendix A.

Item #4 read *Seymour Boys basketball practice at 5:30 Thursday.* Seventy-four percent of the students but only 37% of the staff viewed this phrase with the attributive form as acceptable. Item #8 read *Parents' Night for football is Friday, October 29.* Interestingly, while 85% of the student respondents viewed this conventional form of the possessive plural as acceptable, a lower percentage of the staff (at 63%) did. Item #10 read *Girl's basketball bus leaves at 7:00 a.m. Saturday.* This unconventional plural possessive form (again, the one girl plays basketball) was viewed as acceptable by 75% of the students, but only 30% of the staff. Item #13 read *All-Bluegrass Conference Coaches meeting May 29.* Sixty percent of the students viewed this attributive form as acceptable, while only 30% of the staff did. Lastly, item #14 "At it's peak,
Seymour's population was 2500" was viewed by two-thirds (75%) of the students and 38% of the staff as acceptable.

With the exception of item #8 (Parents' Night), less than 40% of the staff indicated that any of the items was acceptable to them. This survey merely asked the respondents to indicate, by a "yes" or "no" answer, whether they would change the sentence if they saw it in print. It did not ask them to indicate what was unacceptable or to change it to be acceptable, so I cannot be sure if the staff did not accept the item as written because of the possessive form or for other reasons (such as the items being "phrases" rather than complete thoughts). The fact that Item #8 was the only example written as a complete sentence and also used a conventional possessive form and was accepted by over half of the staff adds credence to this assertion.

Another very noticeable occurrence was that the students appeared to see no difference between what they would view as acceptable concerning the attributive form boys basketball or the unconventional plural form girl's basketball; 74% accepted boys and 75% accepted girl's, even though the forms were conflicting. Additionally, only a slightly higher percentage (85%) viewed the conventional plural form Parents' Night as acceptable. It would seem, then, that the students do not really see the possessive marker or its absence, but merely count on the context of the phrase for meaning. From the context, the boys knew their practice was at 5:30, and the girls knew their bus was going to leave at 7:00. Similarly, anyone involved in football would have know that whether he or she brought one or both parent(s), the night was Friday, October 29.

Lastly, I found it curious that over one-third (38%) of the staff (predominantly the college-educated) accepted item #14 "At It's peak, Seymour . . . " as it was written. My belief is that they simply do not understand the difference between the
possessive *its* and the contraction *it's*, because the example appeared conventional in all other ways; the item was a complete sentence and there were no spelling or usage errors in it. The fact that 75% of the students also saw this example as acceptable adds support to my second assertion that the students do not really see the apostrophe but instead grasp the meaning of the sentence from the context.

**Analysis of Second Survey**

As I stated in the Methodology, I tried to correct some of the shortcomings of the initial survey I administered to the Seymour sample by expanding my second survey to concentrate more extensively on the conventional and unconventional uses of the apostrophe. First, I asked the respondents to indicate, with a "yes" or "no" answer, whether they would accept the following sentences and phrases if they saw them in print. Secondly, I asked them to circle the portion of the sentence they viewed as unacceptable. Third, I asked them to indicate possible corrections to the side. By having them complete these three steps, I would be better able to analyze data reflecting their acceptance or rejection of the possessive forms specifically. Lastly, I added a section where the respondents needed to complete a sentence by choosing from the possible endings I provided.

In this survey, I also only examined the items that dealt specifically with possessive form and the conventional and unconventional uses of the possessive apostrophe; I chose not to consider any items that used the apostrophe in a contraction.

As before, I will identify each example by number as well as by writing and bold-facing the entire item with the possessive portion underlined (again, the possessive portion was not underlined for the respondents). I will divide my
analysis into categories with the same headings and in the same order as those that appear in Tables 3 and 4. See these tables for summaries of student and staff responses for selected survey items. To view this survey in its entirety, see Appendix B.

**Plain Plurals**

For item #13a "**Juniors'** need to turn in money to their presidents by Monday," 40% of the students and 80% of the staff changed the unconventional form to the conventional plural form of **Juniors**. Over one-half (51%) of the students, though, saw nothing wrong with this unconventional form of **Juniors'** for plurality, while only 20% of the staff accepted it. The remaining 9% of the students identified the unconventional form but did not change it to the conventional plural form of **Juniors**.

For item #18a "**We visited the Smith’s over the weekend,**" only about one-quarter (26%) of the students but over one-half (53%) of the staff changed it to read the conventional plural **Smiths**. The majority of the students (66%) and 40% of the staff believed **Smith's** as it was written was the conventional form. Eight percent of the students and 7% of the staff identified **Smith's** as unconventional but did not change it to the conventional form.

On item #24a "**No parking Monday's 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.**," over one-half of the students (53%) and all but one of the staff respondents (93%) changed it to read the conventional form of **Mondays**. Forty-one percent of the students and only one staff member chose to leave it in the unconventional form of **Monday's**. The remaining 7% of the students identified the unconventional form but did not change it.
Table 3. Percentages\(^2\) of Student Responses to Selected Survey Items

Part A

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* Singular possessive not ending in -s, plural possessive not ending in -s.
+ Denotes proper noun

Part B

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*Correct possessive **Attributive ***Correct plural

\(^2\) All percentages rounded to the nearest whole.
Table 4. Percentages\(^3\) of Staff Responses to Selected Survey Items

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* Singular possessive not ending in -s, plural possessive not ending in -s.
+ Denotes proper noun

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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60*</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correct possessive  ** Attributive  *** Correct plural

\(^3\) All percentages rounded to the nearest whole.
Lastly, on example #3b "The card was from the ____" with choices Johnston's/Johnstons/Johnstons'/Johnstons's, 59% of the students and 87% of the staff chose the conventional plural form of Johnstons, while only one-fourth (25%) of the student respondents and 1 staff respondent (7%) opted for the unconventional form Johnston's.

It would appear here that although the staff easily recognized the difference between a plain plural form and an ownership form, the students were not as sure. Again, students appear to use the context, not the apostrophe, to acquire meaning.

**Pronouns**

I examined the two possessive pronoun examples next. Item #1a read "Jill said the shoes were her's." Only 48% of the students but 73% of the staff corrected it to read hers. The same percentage of students (48%) viewed this as the conventional form while only 27% of the staff did. The remaining 4% of the students identified the unconventional form but did not correct it.

On item #16a "At it's peak, Seymour's population was 2500," only one-third of both the students and the staff respondents (35% and 33%, respectively) corrected it to read the conventional possessive its. A majority of both groups chose to leave it as the contraction it's (65% of the students and 60% of the staff). One staff member (7%) identified the unconventional form but did not change it.

Although I expected about one-half of the students to think hers was supposed to be her's from my experiences as their writing teacher, I was dismayed to see that a majority of both respondent groups accepted the it's as the possessive form its. It's, when read as it is, is obviously a contraction and "At it is peak" definitely does not make sense. Both groups of respondents seemingly believe
that since the *its* shows possession, it should have an apostrophe. However, the other possessive pronouns all form their possessive case without apostrophes: theirs, hers, ours, his, and yours, so *its* would logically follow this pattern.

**Place Names**

The next category I analyzed was place names. For item #14a *We're going to Pikes Peak in Colorado this summer,* a majority of both the students (88%) and the staff (87%) accepted this standard form as indeed acceptable. Only a small percentage, 12% of the students and 13% of the staff, changed it to the unconventional form of *Pike's Peak* (although this was conventional until 1891).

On item #22a *Have you ever been to Lee's Summit?* though, only 13% of the students and 27% of the staff changed it to the conventional form of *Lees Summit* (which would match the *Pikes* many chose earlier) while most of the respondents, 80% of the students and 60% of the staff, accepted the unconventional *Lee's Summit*. The remaining 7% of the students and 13% of the staff identified the unconventional form but did not change it.

**Singular Possessive Ending In -s**

Next, I examined the items pertaining to singular nouns ending in -s. Item #3a read *Mrs. Harris's birthday party will be Monday after school.* This conventional form was viewed as acceptable by 76% of the students, but only by 47% of the staff. Twenty-four percent of the student respondents and 53% of the staff respondents believed the conventional form to be *Harris'.* No one chose to change *Harris's* to read the attributive form *Harris birthday.*
Item #19a read "She was called into the boss's office." Fifty-eight percent of the students viewed this similar conventional form as acceptable and 53% of the staff did. Thirty-one percent of the students and 40% of the staff changed the possessive to read boss'. Eleven percent of the students and 7% of the teachers changed it to read the attributive form bosses office, thus also changing the number from singular (1 boss) to plural (many bosses).

Example #25a stated "Des Moines' population is expanding outward." Only 4% (3) of the students and 1 (7%) teacher changed this form to read Des Moines's, the conventional form. Seventy percent of the students and 87% of the staff agreed with this unconventional form. Fifteen percent of the students and 1 teacher (7%) changed the example to reflect the attributive Des Moines population; however, none of them added the so it would read "The Des Moines population . . ."

For item #1b, respondents could have chosen to complete "We found ____" with "James/James'/James's/Jame's hat." Forty-five percent of the students, but only 27% of the staff chose the conventional James's. Nearly the same number of students (43%) but over twice the number of staff (67%) chose the unconventional form of James'. Five percent of the students but none of the staff chose the unconventional form of James hat. The remaining 7% of the students chose the very unconventional form of Jame's.

It would appear that for a singular possessive ending in -s, the respondents preferred the unconventional form of -s' rather than the traditional form of -s's in most cases. The students, overall, were more accepting of any form, again supporting my assertion that they do not really see the apostrophe.

Although preferring the conventional form outlined in Rule 1 (-s's), style guides such as The Chicago Manual of Style will accept Des Moines's population
as Des Moines’ population if it is followed consistently throughout the manuscript. However, with this particular example, the -s is silent because Des Moines comes from the French. The only way to truly get the extra syllable with the /z/ possessive sound is to add -s. If one does not add the -s after the apostrophe, the extra syllable with the /z/ possessive sound would have to come from the apostrophe itself, which really has no sound.

Plural Possessive Ending in -s

Next, I examined the plural possessive ending in -s. Item #5a read "Boys basketball practice at 5:30 Thursday." A very small percentage (8%) of the students but 47% of the staff changed it to read the conventional possessive form of boys'. The majority of the students (84%) and staff (53%) accepted the attributive form of boys. Of the remaining 8% of the students, 6% changed boys to the singular possessive form of boy's, and 2% of the students identified the unconventional form but did not change it.

In example #8a "No school Friday, teacher's in-service," only 14% of the students but 46% of the staff changed it to read the conventional plural (all the teachers must attend) possessive form teachers'. Sixty-seven percent of the students and but only 27% of the staff accepted it as teacher's and 18% of the students and again, 27% of the staff changed it to read the attributive form of just teacher or teachers. The remaining 1% of the students identified the unconventional form but did not change it.

Item #10a read "Parents' Night for football is Friday, October 29." A majority of both respondent groups, 69% of the students and 80% of the faculty, left the form as Parents', the conventional plural possessive form. Only 18% of the students and 20% of the staff opted for the attributive form of Parents.
percent of the students but only 13% of the staff chose the unconventional forms of either the singular Parent or Parent's. One percent of the students identified the unconventional form but did not change it.

Lastly, on example #4b "He was a member of the ____ Club" with alternatives Parent/Parent's/Parents'/Parents, 23% of the students and 40% of the staff chose the conventional plural possessive form Parents'. An almost equal percentage of students and staff, 41% and 47% respectively, opted for the attributive form Parents. Over one-third (36%) of the students, but only 13% of the teachers chose the unconventional singular Parent or Parent's.

In general again, the staff respondent group seemed more aware of the apostrophe and the idea of ownership of singular and plural while the students were more apt to accept the form given rather than change it.

**Plural Possessive Ending in -es**

Next, I analyzed the plural possessive ending in -es. For item #9a "We're all going to Bankses' house after the game," 40% of the students but only 27% of the staff accepted this in the conventional plural possessive form as Bankses'. A majority of both groups, 60% of the students and 66% of the staff, changed it to read Banks'. None of the students but 1 teacher (7%) did change the example to the attributive form of Banks.

For example #15a "The all-conference coach'es meeting will be May 29," only 7% of the students but 40% of the staff changed it to the conventional plural possessive form of coaches'. Forty-three percent of the students and 40% of the staff opted for the attributive form coaches, and nearly the same percentage of the students (42%) but only 20% of the staff changed it to the
singular possessive coach's. The remaining 8% of the students accepted this very unconventional form.

Example #17a read "The ladies' flower club will meet tomorrow." A majority of both respondent groups (64% of the students and 73% of the staff) accepted the conventional plural possessive form of ladies'. Nearly one-fourth (24%) of the students but only 1 staff respondent (7%) changed it to read the attributive form of ladies. Strangely, 12% of the students and 20% of the staff chose the very unconventional form of ladie's.

For item #23a "Many butterflys' wings are beautiful," only 9% of the student respondents and 33% of the staff respondents changed it to read the conventional form of butterflies'. Thirty-one percent of the students and 27% of the staff accepted the unconventional form of butterflys' as it was written. Twenty-eight percent of the student respondents and 33% of the staff respondents changed it to the attributive butterfly or butterflies. While nearly a third of the students (32%) changed it to read the singular possessive form of butterfly's, only 1 teacher (7%) did.

For example #2b "We visited the ____ house" with alternatives Knox/Knoxes/Knox's/Knoxes'/Knox'es, 20% of the students and 33% of the staff selected the conventional plural possessive of Knoxes'. A majority of the respondents (66% of the students and 60% of the staff) selected the singular possessive form of Knox's. Only 4% of the students and none of the staff chose the attributive Knoxes. Of the remaining 10% of the students, 7% chose Knoxes and 3% chose Knox'es.

Lastly, for item #5b "She bought 2 pairs of ____ shoes" with alternatives lady's/ladies/ladie's/ladies', 79% of the student respondents and 80% of the staff respondents chose the attributive form ladies. Only 8% of the
students and 13% of the staff selected the conventional plural possessive form of \textit{ladies}'. Of the remaining 13% of the students, 9% chose the singular possessive of \textit{ladie's} and 4% chose the unconventional form \textit{ladie's}.

For the plural possessive ending in -s, the majority of the respondents appeared to simplify the names \textit{Bankses'} to \textit{Banks'} and \textit{Knoxes'} to \textit{Knoxs'} so that it looked like some of the changes they had made to the singular possessive ending in -s of \textit{Harris'} and \textit{boss'} and their acceptance of \textit{Des Moines'}. When the possessive form was not a surname, the attributive form (coaches, ladies (shoes), and butterflies) prevailed. The construction \textit{ladies' flower clubs} in item #17a "looks" fine; again, respondents may have been reluctant to change items that appeared satisfactory to begin with.

\textbf{Other Possessives}

Next, I analyzed the one item denoting a singular possessive not ending in -s. For item #4a \textit{"Freshmen dismissed at 11:00 for Friday Initiation,"} a majority of the students and staff (81% and 80%, respectively) accepted this unconventional form. Only 7% of the students and 13% of the staff changed it to 'read the conventional form of \textit{Friday's}. Nine percent of the students and 1 staff member (7%) changed the wording to read \textit{Friday for initiation}. The remaining 1% of the students identified the unconventional form but did not change it. I am able to understand why so many respondents thought \textit{Friday initiation} was attributive when one considers \textit{Monday Night Football} and \textit{Saturday Night Live}. However, using Friday in this manner seems ambiguous because the freshmen are not being initiated to Friday. They are being initiated to high school on Friday, and only 16% of the students and 20% of the staff changed the wording to \textit{Friday's} or \textit{Friday for initiation} to reflect this meaning.
I examined the one example containing a plural possessive not ending in -s next. For item #29a "We go to the childrens library on Fridays," only 37% of the student respondents but 60% of the staff changed it to the conventional possessive children's. Nearly one-half (48%) of the students and 27% of the staff respondents felt that the unconventional childrens was acceptable as it was written. Fifteen percent of the students and 13% of the staff changed it to children's.

It seems here that the students were again utilizing the /z/ possessive sound and were not concerned about the apostrophe or its placement. Because the library is for children and does not belong to the children like teachers college, the possessive apostrophe could be deemed by the students as not applicable in this case; hence, their use of the attributive form. However, there is no such word as childrens because children is already plural. To be truly attributive like boys basketball, the phrase would have to read children library. Children library does not sound correct though (it is like saying women shoes instead of ladies shoes); it only sounds "right" with the /z/ possessive sound at the end. The only way to correctly get that /z/ sound on these plurals is with the -'s.

Finally, I examined one compound possessive. Item #6b read "His grandsons were his ____ kids" with possible choices of daughters'-In-laws'/daughter's-in-laws/daughters'-In-laws/daughters-in-law's/daughters-in-laws. Forty percent of the student respondents and 60% of the staff respondents selected the conventional form of daughters-in-law's. Twenty-two percent of the students and 13% of the staff chose the unconventional daughters-in-laws (probably mistakenly thinking it was the attributive form). Twenty-three percent of the students chose daughter's-in-laws and 2% chose daughters'-in-laws'. The remaining 1% of the students chose daughters-in-laws'. Of the remaining 21% of the staff, 20% chose daughters-in-
laws and 7% chose daughters-in-laws'. Noting the wide variety of responses, it could be inferred that there were too many choices for this item.

**General Conclusions**

In general, my data showed that the students in both surveys were unconcerned with the placement or absence of the apostrophe and seemed to be less aware than the staff of the distinctions between singularity and plurality. They seemed to rely on context for meaning and the sound of words. Because they could not hear the apostrophe, they were more accepting of the existence or absence of an apostrophe, altogether. The students in the second survey, for instance, did not discriminate between boys basketball in item #5a, teacher’s in-service in item #8a, Parents’ Night in item #10a, and childrens library in item #29a. They also seemed less likely to change the form given originally. More often than not, they accepted the form as it appeared on the survey. Both student groups tested poorly on possessive pronouns; they wanted to include an apostrophe in its, and the students in the second survey wanted to include an apostrophe in hers as well.

The staffs seemed to be more aware of the differences between singular and plural possessives, in general, and more likely to change plural possessives ending in -s to the unconventional form of singulars ending in -s. All nouns ending in -s were simplified to -s' regardless of the number involved originally: Mrs. Harris’ birthday in item #3a, the boss’ office in item #19a, Des Moines’ population in item #25a, and the Banks’ house in item #9a. Again, the exceptions to Rule 1 which allows certain words like conscience when paired with sake, names like Moses, and many Greek and Hellenized names to form the possessive by adding just the apostrophe (Moses’) rather than the traditional -s’s (Moses’s) because of euphony
seems to be applied to all cases of nouns ending in -s. Additionally, neither staff clearly recognized the differences between possessive *its* and the contractions *it’s* when confronted with *At it’s peak* in item #16a.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND ADDITIONAL SPECULATIONS

From my data analysis and other observations, I am able to speculate on trends that have appeared in the use of the apostrophe and suggest further research on the apostrophe. I will then explain how I, as an educator, will teach the conventions of Standard Written English and the possessive apostrophe and the possessive pronouns. Lastly, I will ponder the future of the apostrophe as a mark of possession.

Trends in the Use of the Apostrophe

When faced with the apostrophe, I believe most people would prefer to rely on what "sounds" correct, what "looks" correct concerning the appearance of the noun or proper noun, and the context of the sentence rather than to follow standard punctuation conventions.

Although my findings may seem to contradict my premise that being "correct" in writing is needed and expected to avoid ambiguity, deriving meaning from the context of these short, simple sentences was fairly easy. It should be noted, though, that more complex sentences require correctness in both language and punctuation for meaning to be obtained correctly. This is especially true of any document that could be considered legally binding.

If It "Sounds" Right, It Doesn't Matter What It "Looks" Like

Many of the student respondents in both surveys did not distinguish between the singular possessive, plural possessive, and attributive forms in phrases. They appeared to rely mainly on what sounds correct, looks acceptable, and the context of the sentence. In the Seymour survey for example, 74% of the students viewed the
attributive boys basketball practice (#4) as acceptable, 85% viewed the conventional form of Parents' Night (#8) as acceptable, and 75% viewed the unconventional singular form of girl's basketball bus (#10) as acceptable. Similarly, in the second survey, 84% accepted the attributive form boys basketball (#5a), 67% accepted the unconventional singular form of teacher's in-service (#8a), and 69% accepted the conventional form of Parents' Night (#10a). Despite the conflicting forms on each survey, the majority of the students in both surveys viewed each one as acceptable in the context of the phrase.

The same acceptance of conflicting forms occurred in the place name examples in the second survey for both students and staff. The conventional Pikes Peak (#14a) was accepted by 87% of the student respondents and the unconventional Lee's Summit (#22a) was viewed by 80% of them as acceptable. A majority of the staff respondents as well (87%) viewed Pikes Peak as acceptable and 60% of the staff chose Lee's Summit as the conventional form. Again, they sound the same and they each look acceptable.

Additionally, in the second survey, nearly one-half of the students (48%) accepted the unconventional form of childrens library in #29a. The student respondents may have been relying strictly on the /z/ sound and context because, as explained earlier, childrens is not really a word since children is already the plural of child.

All of these items "sound" the same, but look different. The placement or complete absence of the apostrophe did not appear to affect the respondents', especially the student respondents', comprehension of the item in either survey; they appeared to acquire the meaning from the context of the sentence. Adding support to this assertion was a comment made by one of the Seymour staff respondents, "It
really doesn't matter if the sentence reads 'girls basketball practice' or 'girl's basketball practice'--the girls show up to practice on time."

Also, the student respondents in the second survey accepted Parents' Night in #10a but then for #4b chose Parents Club. From this, I inferred that as long as the word "looked" acceptable as it appeared in print and "sounded" possessive, the apostrophe really did not matter to the student respondents.

**If It "Looks" Right, They Will Make It "Sound" Right**

In general, the items that seemed to give all the respondents the most problems were those nouns that ended in a sibilant sound. A sibilant sound is an /s/ or /z/ sound usually spelled with s, z, sh, or ch as in boss, fuzz, bush, or church. One must add a syllable to pronounce the plural and possessive forms of these words (Kolln 279). This type of singular noun in the second survey ending in -s gave the respondents the most difficulty because they did not want to add -'s to a noun that already ended in -s to obtain that extra syllable. They preferred to pronounce the extra syllable while using the apostrophe alone.

The staff respondent groups seemed more likely to apply the rule for forming plural possessive nouns ending in -s (horses') to singular possessive nouns ending in -s (boss's) to form the less conventional boss'. For example, many of the staff respondents simplified all nouns ending in -s to -s' rather than -s's, regardless of the number involved originally: Harris', Des Moines', boss', and Banks'. To many of the staff respondents, it seemed, the -s' looked more acceptable than the redundancy of -s's. Many writers also choose this form although they still pronounce the extra /z/ possessive sound formed with the -s's even though it is not actually written. According to *The Chicago Manual of Style* as well, forming the possessives of nouns ending with the -s or -z probably cause writers more problems "than any other
orthographic matter open to disagreement" (201). It would seem that my staff responses are, then, indicative of writers in general.

I am also led to believe that what looked "pleasing to the eye" is what many staff respondents deemed conventional. No doubt to many the Cox's (meaning Mr. and Mrs. Cox) looks better in print (like a newspaper article) than does the Coxes. In the second survey, Banks' looked "better" than Bankses' (#9a), Des Moines' looked "better" than Des Moines's (#25a) and Vera Harris' Open House looked "more pleasing" than Mrs. Harris's Open House (#3a). Perhaps this can be likened to seeing had had in a sentence like "She had had a bad day"; it just looks "odd" to the eye. Regardless of what the possessive noun "looks" like (boss' or boss's), though, people still pronounce the extra /l/ sound.

In the case of Des Moines again, the terminal -s is silent, if pronounced properly, because Des Moines is French. Merely adding an apostrophe after the -s will not produce the /l/ sound. To obtain the /l/ sound of possession, one must add -'s to this terminal silent -s noun (Des Moines's). Many of the staff respondents (87%) and student respondents (70%) in the second survey, though, chose to accept the possessive as Des Moines' and just pronounce it as Des Moines's.

Also, people probably do not want to be accused, especially in a small town, of spelling someone's name incorrectly, so again, many respondents in the second survey chose to form the possessives of plural names ending in -s (Bankses') as singular nouns ending in -s (Banks'). For example, in The Seymour Herald, Mr. and Mrs. Roberts would become the Roberts' to form the plural rather than Robertses, something belonging to Mr. Roberts would be Mr. Roberts' not Roberts's, and something belonging to both Mr. and Mrs. Roberts also remains Roberts' rather than the conventional Robertses' because Robertses/Roberts's/Robertses' might look like the writer could not spell the surname of Roberts correctly.
Additionally, perhaps when it appears that a possessive is being used incorrectly for a plural (Sabino's or Roberts'), the possessed noun is being assumed instead of written or spoken as in "We ate dinner at Sabino's (Restaurant)" or "Al had dinner at the Roberts' (house)"

From the second survey item #9a Bankses' house, a majority of the respondents (60% of the students and 66% of the staff) changed the plural possessive form to read Banks' because it already looks plural in this form, and they will make it sound plural. In item #2b Knoxes' house, the majority of the respondents (again 66% of the students and 60% of the staff), chose Knox's as the plural possessive. Perhaps these respondents did not want to alter the spelling of the family surname or were not sure of the surname.

The same theory that one might not want to spell someone's name incorrectly seemed to hold true for forming the plurals of names by adding an -'s (which may then have carried over into the plurals of other nouns such as Mondays with an apostrophe). When one tries to make the plurals of some names, nothing appears to look "right" when the actual plural formation rules are applied. For example, Cox becomes Coxes, which is somewhat acceptable. But would Rupalo become Rupalos or Rupaloes? Many would probably just rather write the plural of Rupalo as Rupalo's and maintain the appearance of the name and acquire the plural meaning, again, from the context.

If "Its" a Possessive, It Needs an Apostrophe

A majority of the student respondents in the Seymour survey and both the student and staff respondents in the second survey appear to think that if its is used, an apostrophe must be used to form the possessive. In the Seymour survey, 75% of the students accepted item #14 At it's peak which used the contraction it's for the
possessive *its*. In the second survey, 65% of the students and 60% of the staff accepted the contraction as the possessive form on this item. Although the Seymour staff performed better than these other respondent groups on this item, over a third of this college-educated group (38%) also accepted *it's* for *its*.

Nearly one-half of the student respondents of the second survey also had difficulty with *hers* in item #1a. Jill said the shoes were her's. Forty-eight percent of them accepted the possessive form with an apostrophe even though *hers* as well as all other possessive pronouns contains no apostrophe, a concept many students apparently have missed. The students' acceptance of both possessive pronouns with an apostrophe gives credence to the idea that students believe if a word is possessive, it needs an apostrophe. I can surmise that more faculty did not accept *her's* because it just "looks" peculiar, whereas the unconventional possessive *it's* "looks" fine because of the existence of the contracted form.

Further Research

If I were to continue to study the public's use of the possessive apostrophe and possessive pronouns, I would broaden by survey sample to include urban districts, other geographical areas, and more age levels. I would, for instance, be curious to see if older people (like my grandparents' age) are more conventional in their apostrophe use and if people in more urbanized areas are more or less conventional in their apostrophe use.

I would also investigate how the textbooks and teachers in the elementary and middle schools of different districts are teaching the possessive apostrophe and possessive pronouns. I would like to know if students at these grade levels (1) have learned the conventional uses and then merely "forgotten" them having been
influenced by the various forms available in visual and printed media or (2) have never actually learned them.

I would administer a further refined survey (See Appendix H) that had the portion of the sentence I wanted them to analyze underlined and a blank provided for corrections. For this future survey I eliminated the question about the daughters-in-law's kids (item #6b) because it was too confusing to both my student and staff respondents and added two simpler compound examples (items #6a and #23a). I also eliminated the questions that pertained to apostrophe use in contractions like 4-H'ers (item #21a) and FHA'ers (item #11a). Again, these dealt with the apostrophe of contraction and not the apostrophe of possession, which I was studying. I also eliminated these questions because they did not contain an apostrophe and were not considered in this study: #2a, #6a, #7a, #20a, #26a, #27a, and #28a. For part b, I included a brief explanation for each fill-in-the-blank item. The explanations were provided to eliminate any possible ambiguities in meaning.

How I Will Teach the Conventions of Writing, Including the Apostrophe

I will begin teaching the conventions used in Standard Written English to my 9th-12th grades by introducing to my students why using the conventions of writing is important. I will explain how being "correct" is expected in the business world and in other disciplines such as mathematics and science. I plan to show how errors such as a misplaced decimal point in a bank transaction or ambiguous language could have disastrous effects on the people involved. I will hand out some of the documented examples I included earlier of how misused punctuation or language has resulted in lawsuits and and the losses of millions of dollars.

I will stress to all my students that knowing and using the conventions of writing is important to all of them regardless of their future employment. Being able
to write clear directions for closing up a service station is just as important as writing an understandable scientific report. I will stress that being able to write clear, understandable, non-ambiguous prose is necessary in all occupations and stations in life.

I plan to discuss the different levels of audience. I will show how situations and purposes in writing like speech call for different levels of formality. I will explain how one writes or speaks to one's friends is noticeably different than how one writes or speaks to teachers, administrators, or bosses. I would show how the formality of the writing and the use of the conventions depends on the situation and the purpose of the writing. I will explain how an increase in formality calls for the need to be more conventional in one's use of language and punctuation.

I will also touch on the ramifications that the computer-age has brought to written communication. With the option to carbon copy all e-mail, a writer must consider the formality of the communication one has with others. Once one's prose is out on the Internet, it can be read by anyone: other students, relatives, teachers, administrators, supervisors, and so on.

I plan to teach a brief history of the English language. I will cover the origins of English and its evolution from Old English to Present Day English. I will begin by explaining how Old English was highly-inflected and what effect the inflections had on communication. I plan to explain how the evolution to the more syntactic structures of Middle and Early Modern English and the evolution from the oral tradition to writing resulted in the need for punctuation. By utilizing Old, Middle, and Early Modern English texts and charts, students will be able to see both the evolution of the English language more clearly and how and when certain features of Present Day English entered the language and other features such as inflections
dropped out. I will also explain how printing led to standardization. I plan to outline how "correctness" was born and how it is viewed today.

*In my composition classes, I will utilize peer editing as a teaching tool. To teach specific conventions, I plan to use examples from the students own written work to illustrate the lessons on the conventions of Standard Written English. I will also incorporate sentences from articles from magazines and newspapers.*

*As a result of my research on the apostrophe specifically, I will continue to teach the four basic rules I cited earlier, while ignoring the many confusing exceptions:*

1. add an 's after a singular noun regardless of what letter it ends in (boy's boot or boss's office)
2. add an 's after a plural noun not ending in s (children's books)
3. add just an apostrophe ('') after a plural ending in s (boys' boots).
4. do not use an apostrophe in possessive pronouns (its boot).

I feel that these four rules are relatively straightforward and easy to remember; if followed, they should cover a vast majority of the possessive apostrophe and possessive pronoun occurrences. I believe that these four rules should be taught beginning in the upper elementary grades of fourth or fifth grade where they should be introduced and then stressed throughout the English curriculum.

*In an attempt to raise the students' apostrophe awareness, I would encourage games that ask students to find unconventional uses of the apostrophe in the mass media. For class, students would need to bring to class various forms of print media such as books, magazines, newspapers, advertisements, etc. In small groups, they would find all the instances in which a possessive form could be used and document the forms presented. They would then distinguish between the conventional use*
and the unconventional uses. I will also bring examples of printed material into the
classroom. I would have them look at materials such as announcements from
anonymous school districts to find conventional and unconventional uses of the
apostrophe. I would also declare an official "Apostrophe Day" on which all students' 
writing must contain at least one conventionally-used apostrophe illustrating each 
rule.

After completing this thesis and after having spent a year teaching writing to 
high school students, I have changed my view on correctness slightly. As stated, I 
still believe in teaching the conventions of Standard Written English so that my
students will know how to use the conventions and when they are appropriate. What
I view as "correct," in work handed in to me though, has become more situationally
appropriate. Although I continue to uphold my stringent belief that adhering to the
conventions of Standard Written English is necessary and needed in all public
writing, whether it be a television or newspaper advertisement, a billboard or sign, or
simply final drafts or projects for my classes, I am more forgiving of journal writings,
vocabulary tests, and in-class assignments and essay tests.

From the first day of class, I make sure my students know that in-class
assignments are more informal than projects and papers that are done outside of
class. My "rule of thumb" is that if the assignment can leave my room, it becomes a
formal assignment; therefore it must adhere to the conventions of Standard Written
English. In my ninth and tenth grade classes, I am more apt to mark their
unconventional uses of the apostrophe and explain the conventional form to them
but not count their unconventional uses against them. In my upper-level 11th and
12th grade English courses, I expect students to do more formal writing and to
adhere more closely to the conventions of Standard English.
The Future of the Apostrophe

I fear, as do many others, for the future of the apostrophe. Sklar calls it "an antique" and likens it to "the flatiron, the washboard, and the footwarmer as a relic of times past" (183). Hashimoto speaks of "a world where apostrophes are not so important, where life goes on with or without punctuation" (97).

The apostrophe, being silent, has never been a part of spoken English or oral language. Aurally-orally, the concept of possession comes with the /z/ possessive sound, context, voice intonation, facial expression, and gestures. My research shows, additionally, that in informal written language for many, the context of the sentence and the possessive sound that accompanied the presence of a terminal -s was enough information for the readers to understand the idea of possession. The presence or absence of the apostrophe did not appear to affect the respondents', especially the student respondents', comprehension of each item's meaning. Because these items were all patterned after the announcements and media both groups see everyday and because of the myriad of conflicting possessive forms they view in their day-to-day environment, it was no surprise that they did not find the items questionable or ambiguous. However, this does not negate the need for the conventional uses of punctuation, especially the apostrophe, in formal writing where obtaining meaning from complex sentences is more difficult.

My research demonstrates that in many cases, my respondents were unsure of the difference between possession and attribution. The student respondents, in particular, saw no difference between the singular possessive, plural possessive, and the attributive noun forms; they were all equally correct and understandable. When given the choice in part b of the second survey, the students, and especially the staff, were more likely to choose the attributive form. I can surmise that both
groups chose the attributive because it looked acceptable, sounded acceptable, and eliminated the possibility of putting the apostrophe in the wrong place.

Additionally, perhaps people have been taught too narrow a view of the possessive case. For example, if a person were to go to a shoe store to buy ladies shoes, he or she would be buying shoes designed for ladies, as opposed to shoes designed for strictly men (larger) and children (smaller). No one "owns" these shoes as of yet, but they are ladies shoes by description. On the other hand, if this person were to go to a garage sale and buy shoes from two old ladies, she would also be buying ladies shoes, shoes (probably) designed for women but, also shoes already owned previously by two ladies, hence ladies' shoes. I think that perhaps the difficulty between attributive and possession comes in to play here. Attributive describes what kind of noun something is. Ladies shoes would be shoes for ladies just as a teachers college is a college for teachers while Kate's dog is a dog belonging to Kate.

Viewing the possessive case with this strictly "ownership" idea leaves out many of the other traditional uses for the possessive case. Possessive nouns, as Kollin points out, can be used in gerund phrases (-ing form of a verb functioning as a noun) as in The teacher's being here surprised us, as a description as in today's news and bachelor's degree, as a measure of value or time as in a dollar's worth and a week's visit, or it can denote origin as in Van Gogh's painting and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (105; 281). I can speculate that it is this narrow ownership view of the possessive case and the uncertainty of the proper placement of the apostrophe that contributes to the affinity for the attributive noun form.

Lastly, I showed that possessive singular nouns ending in a sibilant were the items that caused my respondents the most difficulty. So many people are opposed to adding the additional -s after the apostrophe (-s's) to form the possessive that
confusing alternative procedures have been proposed for forming this type of possessive noun. For example, Kolln suggests adding only the apostrophe when the pronunciation does not change when the noun is made possessive (280). Others advise adding the apostrophe only to words ending in the /z/ sound and the -'s to words ending with the /ls/ sound (The Chicago Manual of Style 201). Finally, there is the group that believes all singular possessive nouns ending in a sibilant should be treated as a plural possessive where just the apostrophe is added. I, as a teacher, still prefer and teach Rule 1: add an -'s after a singular noun regardless of what letter it ends in. It is a simple and easy rule to remember, and it reflects the sounds being pronounced.

With the advent of computers, the apostrophe, as well as all punctuation marks other than those used as terminal markers, is in jeopardy. With typesetters being paid by the keystroke (Arden 63), the standard uses of the period and the comma appear to be declining. The fewer characters a typesetter must type means faster output at a lower cost. For that reason I suspect, the period often does not appear after abbreviations or initials. One may see the following forms:

- *Mr and Mrs* rather than *Mr. and Mrs.*
- *IA* instead of *la.*
- *FL* rather than *Fla.*
- *Dr R L Scott* for *Dr. R.L. Scott*

The once stable initials for *M.D.*, *a.m.*, *Ph.D.*, and *M.A.* may appear as *MD*, *am*, *PhD*, or *MA*. Commas have succumbed to a similar fate in many traditionally-used locations:

- in titles of people—Martin Luther King, Jr. is now Martin Luther King Jr
- in addresses—Seymour, Iowa 52590 is now Seymour IA 52590
- in dates January 1, 1996, is now 1 January 1996
I believe the apostrophe is headed down the same road. My computer does not recognize any words containing an apostrophe as correctly spelled in my Spellcheck program, and even though the University of Chicago Press prefers the four rules I cited earlier, "it is willing . . . to accept other ways of handling these situations [possession] if they are consistently followed throughout a manuscript" (201). This leads me to believe that I could submit a manuscript without any apostrophes in the possessive noun form as long as I left them out throughout the manuscript's entirety.

Therefore, I fear for the life of the mysterious flying comma in everyday, informal writing. Like the earlier his-genitive and the inflectional -e from Old English, the apostrophe may be an anachronism that has outlived its usefulness. I don't think, though, that it should give up without a fight. I may be in the minority in thinking this but I am used to that because I have been in the minority about "correctness" all my life. As I proved earlier, in formal business and professional writing there is a need for all punctuation, including the apostrophe, and correctness in general for clear and concise communication. What my research has shown, however, is that many of today's students and educators are unable to distinguish between the conventional and unconventional uses of the apostrophe, perhaps because of the myriad of conflicting models available for viewing in their everyday life and the overall orality of our culture coupled with the de-emphasis in English composition classes of teaching the conventions of Standard Written English. If writers, though, are going to be able to use the apostrophe in the conventional manner for their formal business and professional writing, they must be taught it.
APPENDIX A. SURVEY OF DIALECTIC VERNACULAR IN SEYMOUR

General Information.

#1 Approximately how long have you and your family lived in the Seymour area? How many
generations of your family have lived in this area?

#2 Were you born in this area? If not, at approximately what age did you move here? From where (city
and state) did you move?

#3 What sorts of reading material do you read (newspapers such as The Seymour Herald, The Iowegian,
The Des Moines Register; magazines such as Time, Newsweek, Sports Illustrated, etc.; books such as romance
novels, mysteries, non-fiction; etc.) Please indicate what you read and approximately how much and how often
you read per week (1 hour per week, 1 hour a day, etc.).

For this part of the survey, please circle the number that best describes approximately how often you or your
family uses the underlined expression in your/their casual speech when conversing with friends and/or relatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Quite Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>I goes to town</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>chore (as a verb: I chore at 5 a.m.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>I reckon.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>It ain't gonna happen.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>Bring me to (baseball practice.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>illustrate (as in He illustrated me.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>I could/should of done that.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>She has went there before.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>I seen her earlier.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>She had got it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11</td>
<td>He felt bad.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12</td>
<td>We did it real quick.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#13</td>
<td>It was raining so hard, he couldn't hardly see the road.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#14</td>
<td>Do you play ball anymore?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#15</td>
<td>It just don't fit right.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#16</td>
<td>Time's a wastin'.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#17</td>
<td>The noon meal is called &quot;dinner.&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#18</td>
<td>He did good today, don't you think?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#19</td>
<td>goin', sleepin', puttin', talkin', gettin', etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#20</td>
<td>roasin' ears</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#21</td>
<td>Here's your keys.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#22</td>
<td>I could/should have went with you!</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#23</td>
<td>you all</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this part of the survey, please indicate if you would change the following sentences if you saw them in print. Circle the word or words you think need to be corrected.

#1 | Bring me home after the game. | Y | N |
#2 | High school volleyball game tomorrow, bus at 4:00. | Y | N |
#3 | Seymour freshmen dismissed at 11:00 for Friday initiation. | Y | N |
#4 | Seymour Boys basketball practice at 5:30 Thursday. | Y | N |
#5 | She should have went with you. | Y | N |
#6 | In order to balance our budget, we need a contribution from everyone. | Y | N |
#7 | No school Friday in Corydon, teachers in-service. | Y | N |
#8 | Parents' Night for football is Friday, October 29. | Y | N |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>FHAers decorate Care Center Wednesday December 1, at 3:00.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Girl's basketball bus leaves at 7:00 a.m. Saturday.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Juniors need to turn in money to their president by Monday.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>She was frustrated by the horse.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>All-Bluegrass Conference Coaches meeting May 29.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>At its peak, Seymour's population was 2500.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The team would have won the meet, but one member didn't feel good that day.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>For the county fair, the allot of 4Hers have to shampoo the calves.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Any high school student may purchase their yearbook on Monday.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Here's your keys on the kitchen table.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Their parents said that they're going to ground us.</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B. THESIS SURVEY (VERSION 2)

General Information

#1 Approximately how long have you and your family lived in this area? How many generations of your family have lived in this area?

#2 Were you born in this area? If not, approximately at what age did you move here? From where (city and state) did you move?

#3 What sorts of reading material do you read (newspapers such as The Des Moines Register; magazines such as Time, Newsweek, Sport Illustrated, etc; books such as romance novels, mysteries, non-fiction; etc.) Please indicate what you read and approximately how much and how often you read per week (1 hour per week, 1 hour a day, etc.)

For this part of the survey, please indicate if you would change the following sentences and phrases if you saw them in print. For the ones you mark “yes,” please circle the portion of the sentence you believe is incorrect and make the necessary corrections at the right margin.

1. Jill said the shoes were her’s. Y N
2. High school volleyball game tomorrow, bus at 4:00. Y N
3. Mrs. Harris’s birthday party will be Monday after school. Y N
4. Freshmen dismissed at 11:00 for Friday initiation. Y N
5. Boys basketball practice at 5:30 Thursday. Y N
6. She should have went with you. Y N
7. In order to balance our budget, we need a contribution from everyone. Y N
8. No school Friday, teacher’s in-service. Y N
9. We’re all going to Bankses’ house after the game. Y N
10. Parents’ Night for football is Friday, October 29. Y N
11. FHAers will decorate the care center Wednesday, December 1, at 3:00. Y N
12. Girl’s basketball bus leaves at 7:00 a.m. Saturday. Y N
13. Juniors’ need to turn in money to their president by Monday.   Y   N
14. We’re going to Pikes Peak in Colorado this summer.   Y   N
15. The all-conference coach’es meeting will be May 29.   Y   N
16. At it’s peak, Seymour’s population was 2500.   Y   N
17. The ladies’ flower club will meet tomorrow.   Y   N
18. We visited the Smith’s over the weekend.   Y   N
19. She was called into the boss’s office.   Y   N
20. The team would have won the meet, but one member didn’t feel good.   Y   N
21. For the county fair, alot of 4Hers have to shampoo their calves.   Y   N
22. Have you ever been to Lee’s Summit, Missouri?   Y   N
23. Many butterflys’ wings are beautiful.   Y   N
24. No parking Monday’s 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.   Y   N
25. Des Moines’ population is expanding outward.   Y   N
26. Any high school student may purchase their yearbook on Monday.   Y   N
27. Here’s your keys on the kitchen table.   Y   N
28. Their parents said that there going to ground us.   Y   N
29. We go to the childrens library on Fridays.   Y   N

For this part of the survey, please complete the sentence by circling the form of the examples that looks more correct than the others.

1. We found __________.  James hat  4. He was a member of the _______.  Parent Club
       James’ hat       Parent’s Club
       James’s hat      Parents’ Club
       Jame’s hat       Parents Club
2. We visited in the _______.  Knoxs house  5. She bought 2 pairs of _______.  lady’s shoes
Knoxes house  ladies shoes
Knox’s house  ladie’s shoes
Knoxes’ house  ladies’ shoes
Knox’es house

3. The card was from the _____.  Johnston’s  6. His grandsons were his _______.
Johnstons  daughters-in-laws’ kids  daughters-in-laws’ kids
Johnstons’  daughter’s-in-laws kids  daughters-in-law’s kids
Johnstons’s  daughters’-in-laws kids  daughters-in-laws kids
APPENDIX C. SEYMOUR SURVEY RELEASE LETTER

Dear Parents,

Hi. My name is Camie Rembe Hill and I'm Mr. Rembe's (the high school science teacher) daughter.

I am working on a research thesis on the Seymour students' and staff's use of the English language for my Master's degree in English at Iowa State University. For my research I would like your child to complete a survey.

I have asked all the students in the junior high and high school to participate. I have informed them that it is his/her own choice and that his/her grade will not be affected in any way if he/she chooses to participate or not to participate.

Your child's name will not appear on the survey. His/her identity, then, will remain private and unknown to me.

If you do not wish for your child to take the survey, please send a note to his/her English or science teacher and he/she will not participate in my research. Not having your child answer the survey will in no way affect your child's grade.

This project is my own and is not affiliated with the Seymour Community School's grading in any way. Superintendent Glee Guess and his teachers are aware of my research and have okayed it.

I appreciate your willingness to allow your child to participate in my research.

Thank you.

Camie Rembe Hill
APPENDIX D. SECOND SURVEY RELEASE LETTER

Dear Parents,

I am working on a research thesis on the conventional and unconventional uses of the apostrophe for my Master's degree in English at Iowa State University. For my research I would like your child to complete a survey.

I have asked all the students in my high school courses to participate. I have informed them that it is his/her own choice and that his/her grade will not be affected in any way if he/she chooses to participate or not to participate.

Your child's name will not appear on the survey. His/her identity, then, will remain private and unknown to me.

If you do not wish for your child to take the survey, please send a note to me and he/she will not participate in my research. Not having your child answer the survey will in no way affect your child's grade.

This project is my own and is not affiliated with the school's grading in any way.

I appreciate your willingness to allow your child to participate in my research.

Thank you.

Camie Rembe Hill
APPENDIX E. NEWSPAPER SPORTS ARTICLE

**First Interleague Game in N.L. Park**

**Cubs drop historic game**

For the first time since 1945 Wrigley Field hosts an A.L. team in a game that counts.

Chicago, Ill. (AP) — The Chicago Cubs finally got to play an American League team in a game that counted. Of course, it wasn't in the World Series.

With an A.L. opponent at Wrigley in a real game for the first time since 1945, Jose Valentin drove in three runs to lead Milwaukee past Chicago, 4-2, Friday.

"This is a thrill for sure," said Milwaukee's Mark Loretta, who attended Cubs games as a student at Northwestern. "There was a buzz in the clubhouse before the game. This was not a run-of-the-mill game for us. Everybody was excited to come to this shrine of baseball."

Milwaukee is only a 1-hour 30-minute drive away, and the crowd of 36,107, the third largest at Wrigley this year, was a fairly even mix of Cubbies and Brewers' fans. It was tough at times for anyone to see through a thick fog that rolled in from Lake Michigan. The sun came back in the eighth inning.

"If they weren't Brewers fans, I think we won them over," Milwaukee Manager Phil Garner said. It was the first interleague game at a National League ballpark, coming a day after interleague play began with the four N.L. West teams at the A.L. West Chicago, which hasn't won the World Series since 1908, last played a real game against the A.L. on Oct. 10, 1945, in the World Series against Detroit.

Friday, Jeff D'Amico gave up five hits in eight innings, struck out five and walked one.

With no designated hitter at N.L. ballparks, D'Amico was forced to bat for the first time since high school. He struck out in all three at-bats.

Cubs pitcher Kerry Wood (5-6) got a single and a sacrifice. The pitcher was batting, so it was pretty routine game for us," Cubs Manager Jim Riggleman said. "The wind was blowing in, so it was a typical Wrigley Field game."

---

**INTERLEAGUE FRIDAY'S GAMES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milwaukee 4, Chicago Cubs 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRIDAY'S GAMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee at New York Yankees at Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Cubs 2 at Chicago White Sox at Cincinnati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago at Detroit at Montreal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago at Kansas City at Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago at Toronto at Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago at Boston at Baltimore of Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago at New York Mets at New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago at St. Louis at Chicago Cubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago at Minnesota at Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago at San Francisco at Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago at Colorado at Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago at San Diego at Anaheim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago at Los Angeles at Cincinnati</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Reprinted from The Des Moines Register. 14 June 1997: 1S.**
APPENDIX F. AUTO DEALER ADVERTISEMENTS

STEW HANSEN

STEW HANSEN'S
Dodge City

'96 Jeep Grand Cherokee
Laredo's & Limited's
29 in stock - 1-owner trades & lease returns
Great selection of colors & equipment, All WtH Warranty

Only at

charles gabus ford

STIVERS
Downtown Lincoln-Mercury
1717 Ingersoll
247-8300

IT'S CHARLES GABUS' 79TH BIRTHDAY!

DEWEY DEMO SALE
Save Thousands of $'s!

Reprinted from The Des Moines Sunday Register. 8 June 1997: 1H-4H.
APPENDIX G: BUSINESS CARD ADVERTISEMENTS

**Capitol Carpet**
Corydon 872-1410
Seymour 898-7578
Vinyl Floor Covering

**Lockridge Lumber, Hardware, Clothing & Farm Supply**
Promise City, IA. 515/874-6402
Unionville, MO. 816/947-2483
Fax 515/874-8713 Fax 816/947-2113

**Randolph's**

**Jennings Construction**
Gerald Jenning
Corydon, Iowa 50060 Phone (515) 872-1877

**McGill's Electrical Service**
COMMERCIAL * RESIDENTIAL * FARM NEW & REPAIR
DAVID & JAMES MCGILL
TEL: (515) 658-2784 ROUTE 1, BOX 163
CINCINNATI, IA. 52549

**Janet's Child Care**
Licensed, Janet Enright
Route 2 Box 81 Corydon, Iowa 50060 (515) 873-4130

**Stone Tax Service**
316 W. Jefferson Corydon, Iowa 50060

**Blyzo Fish Farm**
MIKE (BLYZO) BLZEK
PHONE OR FAX: 515-874-5907
RR 1, PROMISE CITY, IOWA 52583
STOCKING OF LAKES & PONDS

**Deb and Pat's Country Catering**
Deb Sebolt Pat Mason
898-7385 872-1745
(leave a message)
Catering Meals - Baked Goods

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*Reprinted from The Seymour Herald. 5 June 1997: 6-7.*
APPENDIX H. FUTURE SURVEY (VERSION 3)

General Information

#1  Approximately how long have you and your family lived in this area? How many generations of your family have lived in this area?

#2  Were you born in this area? If not, approximately at what age did you move here? From where (city and state) did you move?

#3  What sorts of reading material do you read (newspapers such as The Des Moines Register; magazines such as Time, Newsweek, Sport Illustrated, etc; books such as romance novels, mysteries, non-fiction; etc.) Please indicate what you read and approximately how much and how often you read per week (1 hour per week, 1 hour a day, etc.)

For this part of the survey, please indicate if you would change the underlined portion of the following sentences and phrases if you saw them in print. For the ones you mark “yes,” please make the necessary corrections on the blank at the right.

1. Jill said the shoes were her's. Y N ________________

2. There will be an hour’s delay due to bad weather. Y N ________________

3. Mrs. Harris’s birthday party will be Monday after school. Y N ________________

4. Freshmen dismissed at 11:00 for Friday initiation. Y N ________________

5. Boys basketball practice at 5:30 Thursday. Y N ________________

6. The sophomores will meet at Bill's and Mary's houses. Y N ________________

7. No school Friday, teacher's in-service. Y N ________________

8. We're all going to Bankses' house after the game. Y N ________________

9. Parents' Night for football is Friday, October 29. Y N ________________

10. Girl's basketball bus leaves at 7:00 a.m. Saturday. Y N ________________

11. Juniors' need to turn in money to their president by Monday. Y N ________________

12. We're going to Pikes Peak, Colorado, this summer. Y N ________________
13. The all-conference coach's meeting will be May 29.

14. At its peak, Seymour's population was 2500.

15. The ladies' flower club will meet tomorrow.

16. We visited the Smith's over the weekend.

17. She was called into the boss's office.

18. Have you ever been to Lee's Summit, Missouri?

19. Many butterfly's wings are beautiful.

20. No parking Monday's 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.

21. Des Moines' population is expanding outward.

22. Few teachers have Ph.D.'s in our community.

23. We are going to my aunt's and uncle's house after school.

24. We go to the children's library on Fridays.

For this part of the survey, please complete the sentence by circling the form of the examples that looks more correct than the others.

1. We found ____________.
   James hat   3. The card was from ________.
   (A hat belonging to James.) James' hat   The Johnston's
   James's hat   (A family named Johnston.) The Johnstons'
   Jame's hat   The Johnstons
   The Johnstonses

2. We visited in the ________.
   Knox house   5. She bought 2 pairs of ________.
   (A house belonging to the Knox family.) Knoxes house   lady's shoes
   Knox's house   (Shoes made for women.) ladies shoes
   Knoxes' house   ladie's shoes
   ladies' shoes
## APPENDIX I. SAMPLE OF NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seymour Community School</th>
<th>Non-Profit Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seymour, Iowa 52590</td>
<td>U. S. Postage Paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Permit No. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seymour, Iowa 52590</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volume 16</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>October 1, 1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

**SCHOOL BOARD NEWS:**

- Open-enrollment applications were approved.

- School handbooks, policies, evaluation internments, rules, etc. were approved.

- A resignation from Mark Kruzich for Softball coach was approved.

- A resignation from Bruce Lange for girl's assistant Basketball coach was approved.

- A contract for Jerry Meinarts to coach Jr. High Volleyball was approved.

- Approved extending Beth Steinfeldt's contract from four days to five days per week.

- Approved a contract for Paula Hindley to serve as an aide for one of our students at Centerville.

- The 2B0.12 Committee was reappointed.

- The curriculum revision cycle was approved.

- Level I and II investigators for child abuse by school employees were appointed.

- The Phase III final report for the 1994-95 year was approved.

- Sue Bally was appointed to the Appanoose County Conference Board.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jr. High Football with Moravia at Home 4:30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Varsity Volleyball game with Russell at Home at 6:00</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jr. High Football with Wayne at home at 6:00, Jr Varsity Football with Moravia at 6:00</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Volleyball with Murray/Adams at home at 6:00</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Jr. High Football at Mormon Trail at 6:30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Seymour Legion Auxiliary Meeting</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Jr. Varsity Football at Schuyler County Mo. at 6:00</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Seymour Legion Meeting</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**October 1995**
Approved a revised board policy #502.8 (Dangerous Weapons) and approved a new policy #712.10 (Use of Video Cameras on School Buses Regulation).

GYM AND FIBER-OPTICS CLASSROOM PROPOSAL:

Action on a petition to build a new gym and fiber-optics classroom was taken at the September School Board Meeting.

When a legal and properly signed petition is presented to the Board President, he has ten days to take action on the petition. The petition was presented on August 21, 1995 and the President notified the Board within ten days that he was calling a meeting for September 18, 1995 to act on the petition and set an election date.

The election date has been set for November 21, 1995. Information will be communicated through the local newspaper, the school newsletter, and meetings as news received.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION:

Marilyn Coates and Phillip Noble won the two open seats on the school board, which had been held by Jimmy Levis and Bob McMurry. Bob did not seek re-election to the board.

Congratulations Marilyn and Phillip!

TUTTLE AND BAILEY ELECTED AS THE 1995-96 OFFICERS:

Dennis Tuttle was elected President of the newly-organized Seymour Community School Board for the 1995-96 school year.

Sue Baily was chosen to serve as the Vice President.

Congratulations Dennis and Sue!

MULTI-CULTURAL NON-SEXIST CURRICULUM:

It is the policy of the Seymour Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, creed, age, marital status or physical disability in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title VI and VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments and Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

It is also the policy of this district that the curriculum content and instructional material utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity
present in the United States and variety of careers, roles and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objects of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion and physical disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a multi-cultural non-sexist society.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX or Title VI may be directed to Richard Collins, Guidance Counselor, Seymour Community School; or the Director of Region VII, Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Kansas City, Missouri.

NOTICE TO PARENTS, TEACHER AND EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS:

Pursuant to the requirements of the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, a copy of the Asbestos Management Plan for each school building is available for review in each respective facility. A complete set of Management Plans is available for review in the District Administrative Office.

ATTENDANCE RECORDS:

Students needing to go home during the school day because of illness may come to the High School Office and have one of the secretaries call home.

All students will use the following times for attendance records:

- Up to 10:00 A.M. Tardy
- After 10:00 A.M. to Noon 1/2 day absent
- A student leaving after 2:00 P.M. will not be counted absent for the day.

ARRIVAL TIMES FOR SCHOOL:

Some of our students have been arriving at school by 7:30 A.M.

Several of our staff arrive between 7:00 A.M. and 7:30 A.M. to prepare lessons — it is rather difficult to prepare lessons and baby-sit at the same time. Since teachers are not required to be at work before 8:00 A.M., they may start doing their lesson planning at home and not come to school until 8:00 A.M.
Some of the kids are telling us that their parents are making them leave home early and they have no other place to go but to school.

Following are some timelines that we are asking you to follow:

8:00 to 8:25 A.M. breakfast is served -- there is absolutely no need to be here before 8:00 A.M., unless you are out for Junior High Volleyball or Football.

If your kids do not eat breakfast here, please keep them home late enough that they do not arrive here before 8:00 A.M.

Your cooperation will surely be appreciated.

None of the concerns pertain to students who ride the buses.

**ACTIVITY PASSES:**

We have possibly misled some of you on the use of activity passes. Due to some misunderstanding, I will explain the policy:

1. Each member of the family above first grade must have his/her own activity pass unless he/she pays at each individual game.

2. You are **not** to pass an activity ticket around to different members of the family. It is good only FOR THE INDIVIDUAL whose name is on the ticket.

If you need further explanation, give us a call at 898-2291.

The above does not pertain to Conference Passes or Complimentary Passes.

**SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:**

- The United Methodist Women for preparing a wonderful lunch during the teacher's workshop. The food was great!

- Fowler Elevator (John Flood) for spreading fertilizer on the ball fields and spraying for pest control.

- Jimmy Levis and Bob McMurry for donating so many years of their lives serving on the School Board.
According to the Mayor of Seymour (Tom Rembe), "Beggar's Night" will be on October 31, 1995.

The National TTT Society has made plans to serve refreshments at the fire station at 8:00 p.m.; after the children have been out trick or treating. The children will sign up and names will be drawn and phone calls made half an hour after the party. If the children, whose name were drawn, are home; they will receive a monetary prize.

NEWS RELEASE:

(Hot line helps students solve tough homework problems) Cooler weather isn't keeping the Iowa Homework Hot line from heating up this fall as students across the state call requesting help with their homework. Any student in kindergarten through twelfth grade can call the toll-free number for help in any subject area.

Certified teachers answer the hot line, which is located at Grant Wood Area Education Agency in Cedar Rapids. In its sixth year, the hotline provides a positive learning experience in helping students work through their tough homework problems. It is sponsored in our Area 15 by Southern Prairie Area Education Agency.

THE HOT LINE IS OPEN FROM 5:00 - 7:30 p.m. MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY. THE TOLL-FREE NUMBER IS 1-800-728-6450.

When calling the hot line, students should:
* Be prepared by having their paper, pencil and textbooks ready.
* Tell the hot line teacher their school, grade, and the help they need.
* Allow plenty of time for their homework by starting it before 7:30.

NOTICE:

The Seymour Community School District Board of Education has authorized the use of video cameras on school district buses. The video cameras will be used to monitor student behavior to maintain order on the school buses to promote and maintain a safe environment. Students and parents should be aware that the content of the videotapes may be used in a student disciplinary proceeding. The content of the videotapes are
confidential student records and will be retained with other student records. Videotapes will only be retained if necessary for use in a student disciplinary proceeding or other matter as determined necessary by the administration.

WAYCO ARTS SPONSORS YOUTH WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP:

A youth watercolor workshop, taught by Phyllis McClain Nelson, for all county youth will be held Saturday, October 21, 1995 for students ten years old or older. There will be two sessions, one at 10:30 a.m. and the other at 1:00 p.m. with lunch break on their own. Each session is $10.00. WAYCO Arts will pay $5.00 for one session for each participant. The classes are held at Wayne Elementary multi-purpose room. A minimum of eight and maximum of twelve students are needed for each session to be held. Pre-register by October 10 by calling Wayne Jackson at 872-2140 or Al Kucera at 873-4709. Supplies will be available for purchasing that day. Participants should wear old clothes or bring their own cover-up for painting.

A.C.T. TESTING

The next college placement test (A.C.T.) will be October 28, 1995 at Indian Hills Community College. Registrations must be mailed in by September 29, 1995. The next test will be given on February 3, 1996. It is important that all seniors, who want to take or retake this test do so as soon as possible. Juniors may also take this next test.

NOTICES FROM GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE:

Iowa Tests of Educational Development will be given to Sophomores in early November. Seniors will also have an opportunity to take this also.

Our Red Ribbon (Drug Free) week will be held October 23 thru October 31, 1995. Marti Elgin, from Sedie, will assist Richard Collins, Guidance Counselor, with this special week’s activities.

Student Council Officers and Representatives are:
Megan Flood, President
Jennifer Steinfeldt, Secretary
Emily McIntire, Reporter
Matt Hornaday, Vice-President
Dustin White, Treasurer
Other homeroom representatives are: Jeff Tuttle, Katie Adams, Maggie Wells, and Patrick Kent.
Several college representatives from Indian Hills Community College and Simpson College have visited with students during September. The following college representatives will be in the guidance counselor's office during October:
- Iowa Wesleyan on October 9, 1995
- Graceland on October 17, 1995
- Northwest Mo. on November 6, 1995

The foreign exchange students and Mr. Collins, guidance Counselor, will attend the Area 15 international meeting at the AEA office in Ottumwa on October 24, 1995.

The Homecoming parade and dance will be held on Friday, October 6, 1995.

Richard Collins
Guidance Counselor
OCT. 2 THRU OCT. 6

BREAKFAST
MON. Egg/Toast, Juice, Milk
TUE. Cereal, Juice, Milk
WED. Danish, Juice, Milk
THU. Fruit Bites, Juice, Milk
FRI. Cereal, Juice, Milk

LUNCH
MON. # Sleepy Joe/Bun, #French Fries, Pickles & Onions Offered, #Pear Half, *Choice of Milk
TUE. #Fish Nuggets/Tarter Sauce, #Bread & Butter, #Buttered Corn, #Misty Applesauce, *Choice of Milk
WED. #Scalloped Potatoes/Ham, #Peanut Butter Sandwich, #Green Beans, #Fruit Cocktail, *Choice of Milk
THU. #Chicken Patty, #Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, #Bread & Butter, #Sweetened Cherries, *Choice of Milk
FRI. #Lunch Meat Sandwich, Cottage Cheese, #Three Bean Salad, #Pear half, *Choice of Milk

OCT. 9 THRU OCT. 13

BREAKFAST
MON. Crispy/Butter & Jelly, Juice, Milk
TUE. Eggs/Toast, Juice, Milk
WED. Sausage Gravy, Biscuit, Juice, Milk
THU. Bltmark, Juice, Milk
FRI. Cereal, Juice, Milk

LUNCH
MON. #Ham/Cheese, #Hot Rolls/Butter, #Buttered Carrots, #Apricots, *Choice of Milk
TUE. #Coney Dog/Bun, #Crisp Cut Fries, Pickles & Onions offered, #Sliced Pineapple, *Choice of Milk
WED. #Chicken & Noodles, #Mashed Potatoes, #Bread & Butter, #Peach Crisp, *Choice of Milk
THU. #Tuna Salad/Bun, #Mixed Vegetables, Cheese Offered, Spinach Offered, Peanut Butter Bar, *Choice of Milk
FRI. #Pizza, #Lettuce Salad, #Pear, Bread & Butter Offered Chocolate cake, *Choice of Milk

OCT. 15 THRU OCT. 19

BREAKFAST
MON. Donut, Juice, Milk
TUE. Eggs/Toast, Juice, Milk
WED. Cereal, Juice, Milk
THU. Eggs/Toast, Juice, 1/2 Milk

LUNCH
MON. #Goulash, #Hot Rolls/Butter, #Buttered Corn, #Sliced Peaches, *Choice of Milk
TUE. #Beef Fingers, #Cold Slaw, #Hot Bread/Butter, #Pear Slices, *Choice of Milk
WED. #BBQ Meatballs, #Bread & Butter Sandwich, #Vegetable Medley, #Applesauce, *Choice of Milk
THU. #Burrito, #Salad, #Pickled Beets, #Brownie, *Choice of Milk
FRI. Fruit Bites, Juice, Milk

OCT. 23 THRU OCT. 27

BREAKFAST
MON. Sausage/Pancake Bites, Juice, Milk
TUE. Cornstarch/Butter/Jelly, Juice, Milk
WED. Eggs/Toast, Juice, Milk
THU. Cereal, Juice, Milk
FRI. Fruit Bites, Juice, Milk

LUNCH
MON. #Fish Square/Bun, #Tater Tots/Cheese Sauce, #Pineapple Upside Down Cake, *Choice of Milk
TUE. #Lettuce/Cheese, #Buttered Green Beans, #Jell-O/fruit, *Choice of Milk
WED. #Egg/Taco/Corn Chips, #Salad/Cheese, #Butter & Bread, *Choice of Milk
THU. #Esthage, #French Bread & Butter, #Buttered Corn, #Pear Half, *Choice of Milk
FRI. #Chicken Nuggets, #Potato Tossers, Bread & Butter Offered Mini Banana, *Choice of Milk

OCT. 30 THRU OCT. 31

BREAKFAST
MON. Cereal, Juice, Milk
TUE. Sausage Patty, Toast/Butter & Jelly Juice, Milk

LUNCH
MON. #Mr. Rib, #Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, #Bread & Butter, #Pear half, *Choice of Milk
TUE. #Beef Stew, #Biscuit/Butter, #Pear in Jello, *Choice of Milk

COLD CEREAL IS OFFERED EACH DAY FOR BREAKFAST 1/2 PINT WHITE MILK SERVED WITH BREAKFAST CHOICE OF 1/2 PINT MILK SERVED WITH LUNCH
APPENDIX J. SAMPLE OF DAILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

January 19, 1994

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lunch menu for today: chicken patty/bun, pickles/onions offered. potato rounds, jello/fruit, choice of milk.

CONGRATULATIONS to the JV basketball boys and their coaches on their victory here Monday afternoon over Lineville.

PK-8 assembly today in the gym at 1:40.

A reminder to the pep band that there is a game Friday night, be here at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Malett

Junior high exploratory classes will switch today. Seventh grade list posted in Mr. Jacobs room and eighth grade list posted in Mr. Chopon's room.

Effective today, high school students will be allowed in the lower hallway, cafeteria, and or vocal music room after lunch.

Seniors who have early release this semester, remember to check out in office beginning today.

Academic bowl that was originally scheduled for today has been rescheduled for next Wednesday, January 26.

Any high school student interested in speech contest meet in Mrs. Durbin's room Thursday, January 20, at 3:30 for a meeting.

Basketball game with Logan that was scheduled for last night has been rescheduled for February 12.

Students going to IHCC college day tomorrow leave at 8:20.

JV basketball tomorrow at Moravia, bus 4:45.

Financial aid meeting in the high school library tomorrow at 7:00.

DARE graduation in the cafeteria tomorrow at 6:30.

JV basketball game at Mormon Trail on February 7 has been canceled and will not be rescheduled.

Girls elementary basketball practice Saturday, January 22, at 11:30 a.m.

Yearbooks are on sale for $20.00.
TEACHERS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jon Kent - leave 1:00
Patrick Kent - leave 1:00
Lisa Lee - ill
Christi Carpenter - ill
Chantell McDaniels - absent
Kim Crawford - absent
Angie Templeton - absent
Clyde McDaniels - absent

Cafeteria supervision for this week is Mr. Lange.

Detention supervision for this week is Mr. Rembe.

No 7-12 staff meeting; rescheduled for Wednesday next week.

Bastian Breuer (11th grade foreign exchange student from Germany) here today
(1) Econ (2) English I (3) Spanish I (4) SH (5) Adv. Math (6) U S History 
(7) Gen. Business (8) SH/PE.

Schedule changes:

Heidi Brown - Drop Foods 5th, add SH
Drop Gen Math I 6th, add Vocal (T, Th & F) SH(M&W)
Drop Pre-Algebra 8th, add Basic Science

PK-8 grade assembly today at 1:40 in the gym; elementary teachers dismiss at 
1:30 for assembly.

Seniors attending IHCC college day tomorrow are: Brian Clark, Jeremy Walker, 
Nick Sulser, Judd Brown, Ron DeVore, Justin Keller, Shad Archer, Jerry 
Smith, Candita Furlin, Stacey Blazak.
APPENDIX K. PERMISSION FORM FOR USING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Last Name of Principal Investigator _____________________________
Rembe _____________________________

Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. □ Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #s), how they will be used, and when they will be
      removed (see item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
   d) if applicable, location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. □ Consent form (if applicable) modified

14. □ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. □ Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:
    First Contact
    Last Contact
    March 18, 1996
    June 10, 1996
    Month / Day / Year
    Month / Day / Year

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual
    tapes will be erased:

    Month / Day / Year

18. Signature of Investigative Officer
    Date
    Department or Administrative Unit

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:
    Project Approved
    Project Not Approved
    Required
WORKS CITED


"Auto Dealer Advertisements." The Des Moines Sunday Register. 8 June 1997: 1H-4H.

Barry, Dave. "Nailing down the uses of apostrophes." The Des Moines Register. 28 April 1997: 7A.


"Cubs drop historic game." The Des Moines Register. 14 June 1997: 1S.


Horning, Jody. "Redgrave finds a gem of a play." The Des Moines Register. 11 June 1997: 4T.


