



Who was James Whitcomb Riley?

James Whitcomb Riley was born in the year 1849 and he died in 1916. He was and still is a famous author of *poetry*. He was born in the City of Greenfield in Hancock County, Indiana. As a young boy, Riley lived on Main Street in a two story white house that is still there today and is now a museum where you can visit to learn more about his life and career.

Tales that James Told Through Poetry

As James was growing up, he had many experiences in and around Greenfield that he later wrote about in his poems. James' poems became famous world-wide. He had many of his poems published in books. People still enjoy reading Riley's poetry, such as his poem, "Little Orphant Annie," which tells about a young girl who stayed at James' house and who would tell the younger kids ghost stories while sitting around the fire after supper.



Riley Home Museum



What is Poetry?

Poetry is a way of storytelling or expression. A *poet* is someone who writes poetry. When poets write poems, they often choose their words selectively to have a rhythm or rhyme.

Riley Festival Poetry Contest

Because of his fame, there are many places named after James Whitcomb Riley such as Riley Park in Greenfield, Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis, and the Riley Festival. The Riley Festival is held in downtown Greenfield each year in early October as a way to honor and remember Mr. Riley. This year's festival will be held October 6-9. The festival is a fun event for people of all ages. There is food, entertainment, shopping *and* contests that even kids can enter — photography, fine arts, pumpkin decorating, and *poetry*!

Would you like to try to write a poem and enter it into the Riley Festival 4th Grade Poetry Contest? Use the back side of this page to write your poem and have your teacher submit your entry. Poems entered will be on display at the H.J. Ricks Centre for the Arts during the festival. A prize will be awarded to the contest winner!



Riley Festival 4th Grade Poetry Contest

Name of Poet: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

School: _____

A large, empty white rectangular area intended for writing a poem. It is framed by a decorative border consisting of a thick yellow outer band with a repeating pattern of stylized leaves and scrolls, and a thin white inner border.