

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER



DREAMS OF A BAREFOOT BOY

1890--1911

The Eisenhower Foundation
Abilene, Kansas

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Acknowledgements

Dwight D. Eisenhower – the man, the hero, the leader of the free world – provided the inspiration and substance for this project. His many achievements epitomize the very fulfillment of our still-cherished American Dream. His depth of character and fine example reflect the highest attainment of our nation’s democratic and cultural ideals. As a native of Dwight D. Eisenhower’s beloved Abilene, it has been both a singular honor and a sobering undertaking to introduce him to a generation of young Americans who never knew him, but have much to learn from him.

This project became a reality due to the support and efforts of many. Through the generous financial support of the Annenberg Foundation and the State of Kansas, The Eisenhower Foundation developed and produced the posters and curriculum for “Dreams of a Barefoot Boy: 1890-1911,” the first in a series that examines, in depth, the life and times of Dwight D. Eisenhower, our 34th President.

How does one adequately recognize and thank all those who helped at every stage in the development of this project? They guided my research; located documents and photographs; retyped endless pages of oral histories; scanned a mountain of materials and assembled them onto the web site; edited and proofed the project; and prepared it for mailing to schools across Kansas and the United States. Here, I would like to express my profound appreciation for their dedication, labor, and warm collegiality. Certainly, without the expertise, professionalism, and goodwill of the Director, Assistant Director, staff and volunteers of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library and Museum (Center), “Dreams of a Barefoot Boy” would never have been completed. Another thank you goes to the Dickinson Country Heritage Center for its generous assistance with historical documents of early Abilene, Kansas.

“Dreams of a Barefoot Boy: 1890-1911” was created under the aegis and with the impetus of the Board of Directors, President, and Executive Director of The Eisenhower Foundation. Their faith in my ability, encouragement in my efforts, and trust in my judgments made my work a personal joy and a source of immense professional satisfaction. It is my sincerest wish that the impact of this project will be a worthy first step in the revitalization of the legacy of Dwight D. Eisenhower, an extraordinary American.

Kim E. Barbieri
Education Specialist
The Eisenhower Foundation

Title: “Dreams of a Barefoot Boy” comes from General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Homecoming Speech, delivered on June 22, 1945, in Abilene, KS. The sentence it is taken from reads: “Because no man is really a man who has lost out of himself all of the boy, I want to speak first of the dreams of a barefoot boy.”

Cover: Growing up, Dwight Eisenhower and his friends enjoyed camping trips along the Smoky Hill River and the streams of Dickinson County, Kansas. Dwight was often the organizer and chief cook for the group. This particular photograph was taken in 1907 along the Smoky Hill River.

Photograph courtesy Eisenhower Library

Contents

Teacher's Guide	1-2
Evaluate a Primary Source	3
Learning Activities	4
Home & Family	5-6
• Letter from Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1905	7-8
• Nettie Stover Jackson Oral History, 1972	9-10
• Dwight D. Eisenhower's birth record in the family Bible	11
• Diagram of the Eisenhower Yard, 1898	12
Church & Religion	13-14
• 1906 Souvenir Report, Brethren Sunday School	15-16
• John Long's letter, 1970	17-18
• Reverend Ray I. Witter Oral History, 1964	19
• Photograph #64-182, The Gospel Wagon, 1911	20
School & Education	21-22
• <i>The Second Reader, Appletons' School Readers</i> , pp. 10-11	23
• <i>The Third Reader, Appletons' School Readers</i> , inside back cover	24
• Lelia Grace Picking Oral History, 1965	25
• "Athletics" by Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1909 AHS yearbook	26
Work & Play	27-28
• Swede Hazlett's Letter, 1970	29-30
• Photograph #64-481, Belle Springs Creamery, 1902	31
• Photograph #70-255-11, Seelye Theater, circa 1905	32
• Photograph # 70-255-6, Mud Creek, circa 1905	33
• Abram Forney Oral History, 1964	34
Community	35-36
• <i>Abilene Weekly Reflector</i> , 6/22/1899, p. 1, "Abilene Residences"	37
• Ivan M. Fitzwater Oral History, 1970	38
• Map, Boyhood Environmental Area Home, 1900	39
• Photograph #70-2559, Third Street Looking West, Abilene, KS, circa 1905	40
Resources	41-42
Map of East Abilene, Kansas, 1901	43

Teacher's Guide

INTRODUCTION:

Dwight D. Eisenhower served two successful terms as President of the United States from 1953 to 1961, as popular when he left office as when he was elected. As Supreme Allied Commander of the European Theater of Operations in World War II, he became the greatest hero of his age. Today, more than a half century later, it is difficult to imagine the adulation and affection the American people—and much of the world—felt for Dwight D. Eisenhower. The story of his life is a fascinating one that begins in a small town in the heartland of nineteenth-century America. Here he matured into a bright, popular, handsome, and exceedingly ambitious young man, destined to become what Stephen E. Ambrose describes as “a great and good man.” The influences that shaped his upbringing were common enough in Midwestern America one hundred years ago: a profoundly religious family, the public school system, work and friendships, and the community of Abilene, Kansas, itself. To truly know Dwight D. Eisenhower, it is necessary to go back and recreate, as best as we can, his early years in Abilene, Kansas, through his own words, primary sources, and the memories of those who knew him then. It has been nearly a half century since “Ike” was overwhelmingly elected to the presidency—longer still since his name became a household word in World War II—and three decades since his death, but the lessons that an examination of his life reveals are timeless in their ability to teach us still. It is important that students continue to learn about Dwight D. Eisenhower, an American who dominated his times as few others have and emerged as one of the true giants of the twentieth century.

THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER SERIES:

Funding for this project was provided by the Annenberg Foundation and the State of Kansas. The materials included are intended only as a starting point to learn more about the extraordinary life and times of our 34th President, Dwight D. Eisenhower. “Dreams of a Barefoot Boy: 1890--1911” is the first in a series and focuses on the boyhood years in Abilene, Kansas. As students investigate the five social history themes of the unit (Home & Family, Church & Religion, School & Education, Work & Play, and Community), they will begin to uncover for themselves what it was like to grow up in a small, Midwestern town one hundred years ago. This curriculum unit contains two posters, background material for a general overview of small-town life in 1900, primary sources linked to each of the five themes, suggested readings from *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* by Dwight D. Eisenhower, learning activities, and additional resources. A much larger collection of primary sources may be accessed on the Eisenhower Center’s web site at <http://www.eisenhower.utexas.edu/>. The Eisenhower Foundation would like to hear about your teaching experiences using these materials.

TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES:

The use of primary sources as an engaging method for learning history is gaining converts with each year. For students, the inclusion of primary source materials in the curriculum is often their first opportunity to discover that history really *is* a fascinating subject! Experts insist that the introduction of primary source materials into the curriculum should begin early, in the elementary grades. Letters, diaries, photographs, oral histories, and artifacts are powerful catalysts for igniting student curiosity about the past. At each step along the way, they can’t help but begin to formulate the questions that propel them to search for answers which, in turn, lead to even more questions. Students themselves begin to piece together the puzzle of history. By actually “doing history,” they are drawn naturally into the process of inquiry, searching, observation, analysis, and interpretation. Primary sources have the power to transport us back in time, to make the people and events live again.

TEACHER PREPARATION:

1. Read as much as you can about the life of Dwight D. Eisenhower and the period of American history from the end of the Civil War until the outbreak of World War I.
2. Ask your school librarian and local historical society to help you put together a collection of resources for a “Learning Center” for this unit. Include nonfiction, reference materials, videos, slides, a vertical file, computer programs, posters, maps, documents, and artifacts.
3. Take the time to become familiar with the materials and try out the activities yourself before you use the unit with students. Consider introducing “Dreams of a Barefoot Boy: 1890-1911” by sharing your own experiences and discoveries with the materials.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify and explain the significance of the influences on Dwight D. Eisenhower’s boyhood years in Abilene, Kansas, one hundred years ago.
2. Describe the personality and character of Dwight D. Eisenhower as a boy and as a young man.
3. Compare life in a small, Midwestern town in 1900 with life today.
4. Explain that “what is history” is an ongoing, ever-changing process.
5. Appreciate the importance of primary sources in the study of history.
6. Demonstrate analytic and interpretative skills by using primary source materials to understand history.

NOTE TO TEACHERS OF YOUNGER STUDENTS:

For younger elementary students, it will be necessary for the teacher to read or summarize the background material and readings. A storytelling format is one idea for relating the suggested readings in *At Ease: Stories I Tell To Friends*. As the class works on the primary sources for the unit, consider transferring the documents and photographs to overhead transparencies. As a group activity, guide the class through the most basic of the questions on the Primary Source Evaluation Sheet. The Learning Activities can be adapted to younger learners and provide a starting place for the teacher’s own ideas. Younger students will be captivated by the stories in *At Ease: Stories I Tell To Friends*, the oral histories of Eisenhower’s boyhood, the photographs, and *Appleton’s Readers*.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY:

“Dreams of a Barefoot Boy: 1890–1911” addresses many of the National Standards for History and is linked to them. A copy may be obtained online at www.eisenhower.utexas.edu/ or by calling or writing the Education Specialist with The Eisenhower Foundation. Kansas teachers may obtain a copy of the unit’s links to The Kansas Curricular Standards for History through the same process.

THE EISENHOWER FOUNDATION:

The Eisenhower Foundation is a 501(c)3 public foundation established in 1946 to accept the Eisenhower family home on the death of Mrs. Ida Eisenhower. The Eisenhower Center, family home, and first museum was founded in 1952 by the Foundation prior to the establishment of the presidential library system in 1954. The mission of the Eisenhower Foundation is to honor Dwight D. Eisenhower, perpetuate his important legacy, encourage and support educational activities relating to citizenship, and support the non-federally funded operation of the Eisenhower Center.

THE EISENHOWER CENTER:

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Museum, Home, Place of Meditation, and Visitors Center make up the Eisenhower Center. The mission of the Eisenhower Center is to acquire, preserve, and disseminate the records and material culture relating to the history of Dwight D. Eisenhower and his times through research, exhibits, public programs, publications, and outreach.



EVALUATE A PRIMARY SOURCE

1. Which selection from "Dreams of a Barefoot Boy" did you just read? _____

2. What did you learn about life in a Midwestern town in 1900? _____

3. Write three questions about life in 1900 that were not answered in the reading selection.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
4. Look at the document you've been given. *What* type of primary source is it?

____ official record	____ photograph/film	____ cartoon
____ letter	____ map	____ poster
____ diary/journal	____ artwork	____ sound recording
____ reminiscence	____ advertisement	____ artifact
____ oral history	____ newspaper	____ book
5. Carefully examine the document and describe what you see (dates, stamps, names, notations, numbers, symbols, etc.). _____

6. *Who* created this document? _____
7. *Why* do you think this document was created? _____

8. For *whom* was this document intended? _____
9. List three things you learned about life at this time in history by studying this document.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
10. Write three new questions that you now have about the subject.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

* This worksheet was modified from the original developed by the Education Staff, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408.

Learning Activities

1. Create a time line from 1890 to 1911. On one side, write in the main events in Dwight Eisenhower's boyhood. On the other side write in major historical events of your state, the United States, or the world.
2. Dwight D. Eisenhower was often praised for his fine character. Identify examples of core character traits demonstrated by Dwight D. Eisenhower from "Dreams of a Barefoot Boy."
3. Investigate the history of your own community about 1900. How does it compare to Abilene, Kansas, at that time? Make a comparative table that contrasts at least four different ideas.
4. Choose one of the five themes from "Dreams of a Barefoot Boy." For example, you might choose "School & Education." Compare school in 1900 with school today.
5. Interview a person who grew up in a generation before you. Use one or more of the five themes of "Dreams of a Barefoot Boy" as a guide to writing your interview questions.
6. Learn more about and practice Spencerian script. Online bookstores have a number of instructional books. Also, try this web site: www.spencerian.com.
7. Locate a copy of the poem, "The Barefoot Boy." Eisenhower referred to himself as a "barefoot boy." After reading the poem, explain why this expression appealed to him. (Rudyard Kipling's "If" was also a favorite poem of Dwight D. Eisenhower.)
8. List geographic locations mentioned in *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*. On outline maps of the United States and/or Kansas, locate and label these places.
9. Research and sing some of the popular songs of 1900. Visit this web site to begin: <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/sheetmusic/timeline.html>.
10. Find out more about the history of Kansas at this site: <http://www.cc.ukans.edu/carrie/kancoll/>.
11. Tour a historic home in your community that dates back to about 1900. Compare what you see with what you've learned about homes of this era. Investigate vintage clothing and microfilmed newspapers of this period in history.
12. Locate common household tools from 1900. Flea markets, estate sales, garage sales, and attics or basements are good places to begin. For each, record the name, date, and its purpose, and find out how it worked.
13. As you work on "Dreams of a Barefoot Boy," make a list of the features (streets, homes and buildings, railroad tracks, bridges, creeks, etc.) of Abilene. Use the 1901 map of Abilene to identify and label as many features as you can.
14. From the descriptions in a number of primary sources from this unit, make a diagram of the Eisenhower home. Make one of your own home. Compare the two diagrams.
15. Write a letter to young Dwight Eisenhower explaining a technology you use today. Explain how it works, and tell why it is an important part of your life in 1999. It's 1900 so use words he'll understand.
16. Research American architectural design about 1900. In your own community, take photographs of historic buildings that are examples of what you've learned. Create an exhibit, slide show, PowerPoint presentation, or a walking tour to display what you have learned.





Home & Family

“We Were a Cheerful and a Vital Family”

Mother and Father maintained a genuine partnership in raising their six sons. Father was the breadwinner, Supreme Court, and Lord High Executioner. Mother was tutor and manager of our household. Their partnership was ideal ... Before their children, they were not demonstrative in their love for each other, but a quiet, mutual devotion permeated our home. This had its lasting effect on all the boys.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

In the small, Midwestern town of 1900, the extended family was society’s primary unit. Its members were responsible for the welfare of all, and everyone could be counted on to help in difficult times. Whether it was misfortune, illness, or death, it was the family that responded first. For people of this era, to have sought charity outside the family would have been a disgrace. To be of “good” family—one that reflected the accepted values of the community—was a title worthy of respect in the town.

By today’s standards, families were nearly self-sufficient in providing the necessities of life. For many, hard cash was scarce; however, most people had adequate clothing, reasonably comfortable homes, and, in ordinary times, an abundance of homegrown food. Every backyard had a vegetable garden and chicken pen, a source of fresh food with plenty more to “put up” in the cellar. Anything extra could be sold for pocket money.

Boys grew up expecting that they would marry and support a wife and children. Girls were raised to view marriage and motherhood as their life’s goal. For a young woman, to fail to marry was to be doomed forever to be an “old maid,” the object of pity. It was common for extended family members—generally grandparents or unmarried aunts or uncles—to live with relatives. And, if an unfortunate husband or wife were widowed, a minimum of one

year of mourning was considered proper before remarriage. The well-being of the family unit was of far greater concern than the desires of any individual. For this reason, each family member had a role that he or she was expected to fulfill. For example, the husband was undisputed head of the family and chief wage earner. Men expected to work at least twelve hours a day, six days a week, at hard physical labor for very modest pay. Many wives supplemented the family income with “egg and butter” money.

Women were at the center of the family and home. Large families were the rule, demanding creativity and hard work from women. How well a wife and mother carried out her duties of housekeeping, cooking, and laundry was critical to her reputation in the community. Women kept a garden, cared for poultry, made butter, and preserved produce from the garden. All the family’s clothing and most of the bedding was sewn by women. Out of necessity, women were skilled practitioners of home medicinal remedies. Every housewife knew that a sore throat required a mixture of turpentine and lard rubbed onto the throat, which was then wrapped with a woolen cloth. To help with the never-ending household tasks, a “hired girl” often lived with the family at a reasonable cost of \$1.50-\$2.00 a week.

A Day for Everything

*Monday - washing
Tuesday - ironing
Wednesday - sewing
Thursday - gardening
Friday - cleaning
Saturday - baking
Sunday - go to church*

In 1900, the role of children in the family was different from today’s. This was an age when, above all else, unquestioned obedience to parents and authority figures was expected. Society supported the view

that children were to be “seen and not heard.” Mother was the disciplinarian of first resort, but father was the much feared force of reckoning. The philosophy of “spare the rod and spoil the child” was a universally-accepted belief.

The typical home in 1900 had two stories with high ceilings and a wide front porch. Homes reflected a preference for Victorian decoration and furnishings. Dark, rich colors covered the walls and windows with similarly colored rugs on polished, wood floors. Furniture and walls were covered with lace decoration and bric-a-brac. By this time, many homes in town had electricity, but unpredictable currents made lighting dim. Each home had a prized front parlor, furnished with the best the family could afford, but was rarely used. The focal point of the parlor was the family’s “what-not” cabinet which displayed special treasures and mementos. Kitchens had a large wood- or coal-burning stove, a sink, an ice-box, and a large kitchen table. Modern bathtubs in a bathroom were a luxury, and most children dreaded the weekly bathing ritual in a large tub on the kitchen floor. Stored in the cellar below the house were bins of apples, onions, and potatoes and shelves filled with canned fruits and vegetables. Even those who lived in town had a barn in the back for the family horse and carriage.

In 1900, the day began with a hearty breakfast of meat, eggs, and potatoes, all fried in lard or butter. Oatmeal with cream and toast or biscuits with homemade butter and jam, were served on the side. Dinner (the noon meal) and supper were also large meals. Roast beef, pork, or fried chicken were typical with potatoes and gravy and an assortment of vegetables. Homemade bread and freshly churned butter rounded out the meal; for dessert, pie or cake was served. Except for occasional hard candy, junk food was virtually unknown at the turn of the century.

Even by the standard of the day, the Eisenhower home on southeast Fourth Street in Abilene, Kansas, was small, modest, and—with six growing boys underfoot—crowded. Ida furnished it sparsely and decorated it with her own “fancy work.” Out back was the chicken coop and a large family garden with small plots for each of the boys. North of the house was a large barn for the horses and cows where Uncle Abraham Lincoln Eisenhower had set up his veterinary practice when he owned the home.

From their mother, Ida, Dwight and his brothers learned to cook, clean, iron, and sew. On Sunday, the boys were responsible for family meals entirely. David, their father, worked long hours as a refrigeration engineer at nearby Belle Springs Creamery. Still, there was never money enough. Ida recycled David’s old clothes for the boys. To his embarrassment, Dwight sometimes had to wear his mother’s old high-top, buttoned shoes to school or go barefoot. To earn money for extras, the Eisenhower boys grew and sold vegetables, door to door. For variety, they peddled hot tamales from their mother’s Texas recipe.

Ida was the enduring influence in their lives. She was a patient teacher and an openly loving parent who set strict standards and high expectations for her boys. To their constant delight, Ida was a cheerful parent who found fun and humor in life.

David was different. He was the distant and stern disciplinarian. A very formal man, even his work overalls and shirt remained clean and pressed throughout the day. In the evenings, David preferred to sit in the parlor alone, reading.

Despite differences in personality, Ida and David each instilled in their sons a belief that the world was theirs for the taking. All it took was lofty goals, a good education, and hard work.

Recommended Readings from *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*: 36-37, 39-43, 51-53, 68, 76-82.

Letter from Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1905
To cousin Nettie Stover

Abilene Kans

Feb. 27, 1905

Dear Cousin! -

You will see from the date on my letter that I am slow. I received your letter two or three days ago and ^{things you said in it} was under the eye. You know you said I must not get sick, well I've got the worst sore throat that I ever had or ever hope to see again. Milton asked for the picture you sent me and I let him have it and he said "This looks like Nettie, it's her." Milton is much better but very weak and cannot walk. His old paper hasn't any lines and I feel miserable. Three boys came down there to the Reform School from here for chicken dealing. I have not started to school yet. Withers intends to go to Kansas City in a few days. He is going to work at short hand. If Uncle Clarence and Aunt Alice don't go before March 9th I'll tell them to stop and visit here awhile because we will not be quarantined after March 9. I'll bet this writing would take a prize any where and

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

spelling to fo all of that. (or...)
I have baked pies three times and
a lady baked ^{some} for us an my
cousin baked 7 for us today well
write some ever if I don't do it myself
it is 3 weeks today since Millon
took sick from your cousin.

D. Dwight Eisenhower,
201 E. S. 4th st,
Abilene, Kansas.

P.S. That picture is aw
pretty nice.

Nettie Stover Jackson Oral History, 1972

Pages 36 -39:

BURG: Yes, the one [Eisenhower home] in Abilene, being preserved as it was.

JACKSON: Oh, yes. Yes, that west window in the, well, she had her piano in that room, but over in that west window she had a few flowers, but they had their reading material in that. And she had a, it seemed to me, a little rocker; I called it a sewing rocker, there by that west window. And then out this way from the house, northwest from the house, she had a bed of lilies. She didn't have a lot of other –

BURG: Are they calla lilies?

JACKSON: No, no, they're Madonna lilies. They get up so high, and they're very fragrant.

BURG: Wonder if those are still there, Don?

JACKSON: No, no, they're gone.

WILSON: Do you remember when you were there in 1904, the big barn? Was it still standing?

JACKSON: Yes, there was a barn there then. I'm sure there was because they had the horse there that had been –

WILSON: The veterinarian's.

JACKSON: Yes, Uncle Dave's brother.

WILSON: We've tried to track down when that was taken down, but you say that it was still there as late as 1904.

JACKSON: Oh, I know it was. I'm sure it was. I'm sure it was. Because they didn't build anything else. The barn was out there and the chicken house there, too.

WILSON: And then the garden was out directly east.

JACKSON: Yes, east.

BURG: Now when we talked with Milton in the home and he saw the piano, he laughed about it and said that he'd enjoyed playing it after dinner and couldn't understand for quite some time why his father would rise from his reading and come over and close the door. Then it occurred to him that, playing as loud as he was playing, he was disturbing his father's reading and study. Who was playing it when you were there? In that earlier period, was –

JACKSON: I don't remember of anyone playing it.

BURG: Ida presumably knew how to play it.

JACKSON: Oh, I think she knew but, oh, you get so busy with all the things that are involved, the things that have to be done. And possibly with us being there it made more of course.

BURG: Yes, that could be too. Mrs. Jackson says that for the life of her she cannot remember where she slept in that house, and it had to be crowded.

JACKSON: No, I can't remember when we were little; I haven't the least idea. Seems to me she said something about making pallets. Well, of course, in our old house when I was a

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

youngster, my mother made pallets on the floor. When we had company, why you didn't think about being crowded. It was kind of fun to sleep on the floor. And our house was always Grand Central Station for both sides of the house because my dad loved company, and my mother loved to cook. So our house was where everybody came, both sides. Uncle Worth and Aunt Laura came from Virginia in 1912, and, oh, Dad wanted them to stay longer, but they weren't going to travel on Sunday, weren't going to ride the train on Sunday.

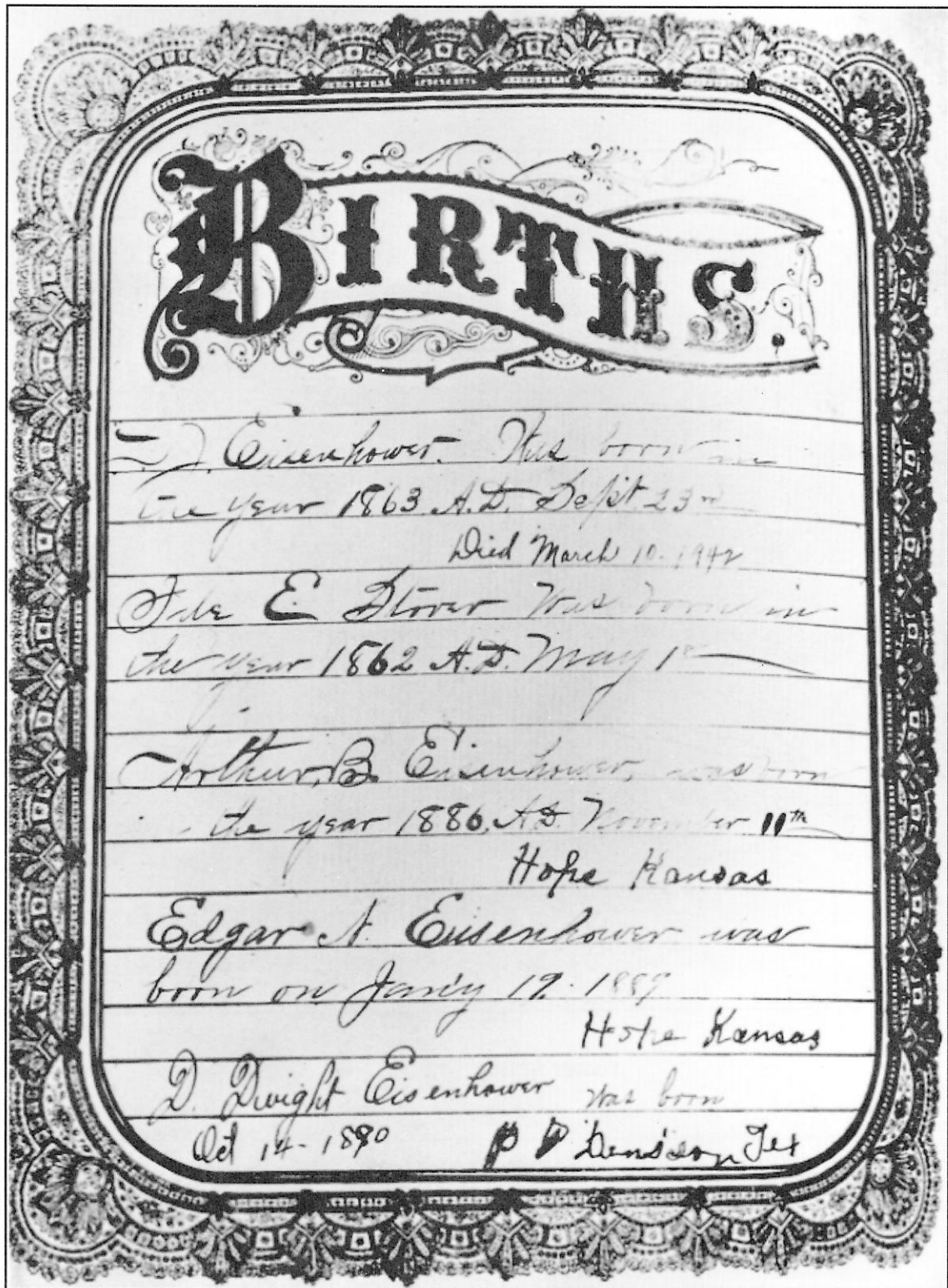
BURG: Mrs. Jackson, in that Eisenhower home with that many boys, life couldn't have been smooth all the time. Do you ever remember Ida discussing with you problems that she had or was she one more to keep it to herself?

JACKSON: I think she ironed out the problems right as she went along. Whatever came up, right then she took care of it.

BURG: It didn't hang on?

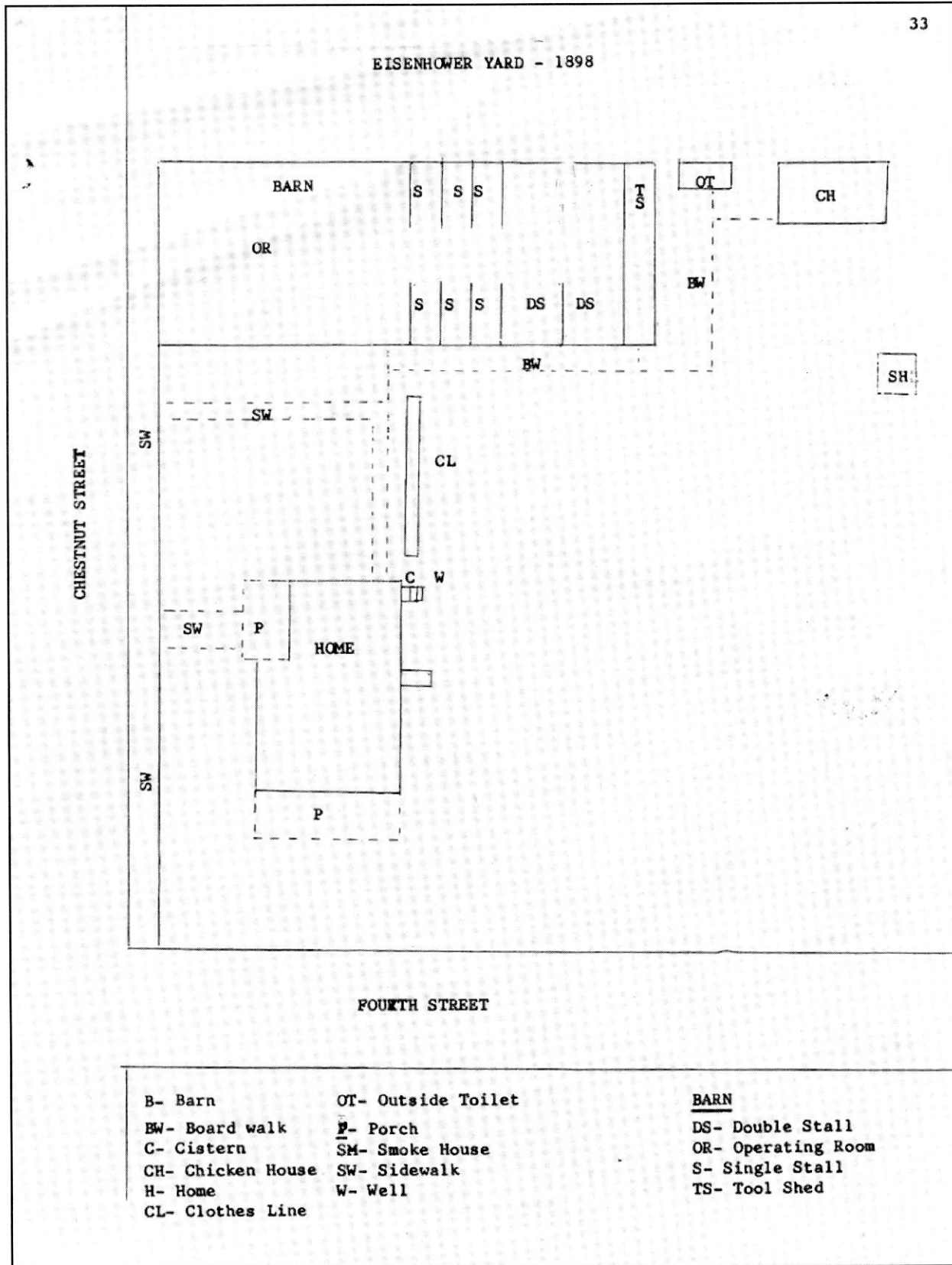
JACKSON: No, I don't think it did. She was an unusual woman. Of course part of that could be prejudice because I loved her so much.

Dwight D. Eisenhower's Birth Record
The Family Bible



Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

Diagram of the Eisenhower Yard, 1898



Document courtesy Eisenhower Library



Church & Religion: “Everybody I Knew Went to Church”

The schools were three in number; churches abounded. From memory alone I can identify seven and everybody I knew went to church. (The only exception were people we thought of as the toughs--poolroom sharks, we called them.) Social life was centered around the churches. Church picnics, usually held on the riverbank, were an opportunity to gorge on fried chicken, potato salad, and apple pie. The men pitched horseshoes, the women knitted and talked, the youngsters fished, and everyone recovered from the meal.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

Sunday morning, in the small, Midwestern town of 1900, echoed with the pealing of church bells--a reminder to go to worship. Sunday was devoted to church. Services began in the morning with Sunday School, followed by the regular service, and ended with an evening service. All dressed in their Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, and children were on their best behavior, even when the sermon was long and beyond their understanding. Hymns were a popular part of the service, and among the favorites were “Beulah Land,” “Shall We Gather at the River,” and “Sweet Bye and Bye.” Wednesday night was reserved for the midweek prayer meeting and special church group meetings. “Family worship” was stressed, and it was not uncommon to see babies sleeping in the back pews during evening services.

Sunday School began with teachers presenting a lesson from the Scriptures. Older children took turns reading verses from the Bible, and younger children enjoyed Bible picture cards and religious scenes on the walls. The Sunday School secretary moved from class to class to collect the offering. At the conclusion of Sunday School, the day’s attendance and the amount of the offering were announced. Adults attended their own Sunday School

classes where they studied maps of the Holy Land and verses from the Bible.

The vast majority of small-town Midwesterners were white, middle-class, and Protestant. Their religious beliefs dictated the prevailing standards of community morality. Gambling, card playing, dancing, smoking, and drinking liquor were prohibited. Profanity, immodest dress, and immoral behavior aroused strong public condemnation. The lower class--termed “ne’er-do-wells”--generally ignored the rules of a society they didn’t fit into, and the upper-middle class suffered no real consequences for breaking the code as long as it did not flaunt violations publicly. In word, at least, all “good” citizens condemned evil practices, and yet many towns had as many saloons as churches.

Newspapers printed articles that promoted proper conduct for boys and girls. Respectable young men were to practice personal cleanliness and get to bed early; avoid bad company, drinking, smoking, or chewing; attend church; and dress and act modestly. To do otherwise was to be a “fast young man.” Girls were to conduct themselves with modesty, seriousness, and thoughtfulness in preparation for marriage and motherhood. Nonetheless, many girls loved their stylish clothes and showed off using the latest, risky expressions such as “I thought I should die!” and “Now you’re real mean!” One small community was concerned about the “bicycle problem”--groups of young people riding bicycles to neighboring towns to visit on Sunday afternoons--a clear violation of the Sabbath.

Ministers enjoyed a position of dignity and respect in the community. Few had a formal education, and a minister’s salary was low and undependable. There was little or no social life outside church activities. Ministers sometimes performed up to six Sunday services in addition to the midweek prayer

meeting. They performed weddings, baptisms, and funerals and made calls to the bedsides of the sick and dying. Ministers were expected to preside over ice cream socials, W.C.T.U. (Women's Christian Temperance Union) meetings, and holidays such as July 4th celebrations and Decoration Day. Small fees were paid for funeral and wedding services, and some ministers substitute taught in the local schools.

In 1900, the churches were the center of social life for the community. Church was a proper place for boys to get to meet girls and walk them home after church. Church festivals presented entertainment programs to raise money; at Church fairs, women sold food and auctioned off donated items. Some churches even held lotteries, despite the anticipated complaints. Church picnics and ice cream socials were well-attended summer pastimes, and covered-dish or potluck dinners were held year round.

Summer time brought a wave of popular revival meetings. They were a much anticipated annual event for many parishioners. Visiting evangelists preached "fire-and-brimstone" sermons in tents set up on the outskirts of town. Members of the audience "testified" about their religious experiences and how they had been "saved." "Sinners" were encouraged to come forward to pray for their salvation.

By the 1920s and 30s, the central role of the churches in the community would undergo serious outside challenges. The moral code was weakening, and people were less inclined to follow the example of ministers and churches. Many blamed the aftermath of the Great War (World War I) for the decline in public morality. Whatever the reason, the churches now had competition for social activities, and, for good or bad, technological progress brought the rest of the world to the small Midwestern town.

Jacob and Rebecca Eisenhower and their children—including Dwight's father, David—came to Dickinson County, Kansas, from the Susquehanna Valley of Pennsylvania in 1879. They were members of a well-organized, prosperous, religious group called the Brethren in Christ. A sect of the Mennonites, they called themselves the "Plain People." In Dickinson County, they were more commonly known as the River Brethren. A devout, hard-working, self-sufficient group, they preferred to live in a close-knit community. They were respected throughout the county for their many fine qualities, but their distinctive clothing set them apart.

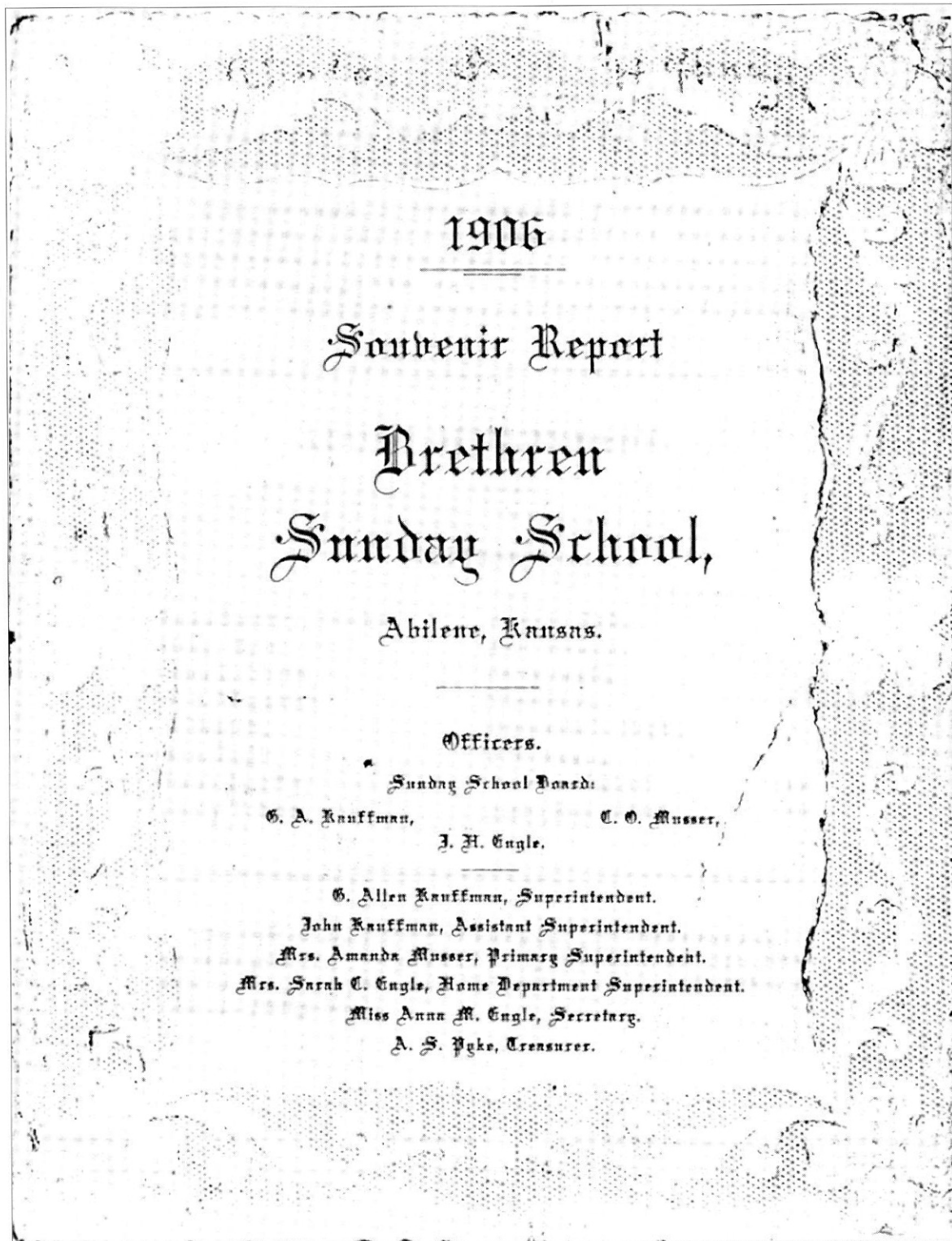
The men dressed in black and wore black felt hats. They grew heavy beards and wore their hair long and combed straight back. Women wore long black dresses, avoiding decoration of any kind. On their heads, women wore a covering called a "prayer veiling," and, when outside the home, they put on a large black bonnet with a long, gathered skirting along the bottom.

Growing up, Dwight and his brothers attended Sunday School at the Church of the Brethren in Christ in Abilene. Grandfather Jacob and two of David's brothers, Ira and Abe, were ministers. Ida had memorized countless Bible verses as a girl and used them to reinforce her lessons to her sons. Each meal began with a Bible lesson. In the evening after supper, the family gathered in the parlor for Bible reading. The boys took turns reading, reluctantly handing the Bible over to the next brother whenever a mistake was made. The River Brethren were stricter in the actual practice of their religious beliefs than some of the church-going citizens of Abilene; however, their beliefs were not inconsistent with those of the larger community at that time.

Although Dwight D. Eisenhower never joined the church of his youth, its influence was evident in his behavior and beliefs throughout his life.

Suggested Readings from *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*: 51-53, 60-63, 79, 86-88.

1906 Souvenir Report, Brethren Sunday School



Document courtesy Dickinson County Heritage Center

Showing Forth His Praise. *Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Eph. 5:19.*

Our faces ought to reflect back the sunshine of heaven, and the joyful tones of our voices to seem the echoes of its hallelujahs.—F. P. Cobbe.

INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT.

Class Number 5.

*Mrs. M. L. Hoffman, Teacher,	Carrie Leady,	
Florence Amess,	Anna Lenhert,	
*Florence Engle,	Jessie Williams,	
Rhoda Hoffman,	Winnie Williams, 12
*Hedwig Schmutz,	Dwight Eisenhower,	
Anna Engle,	Lillie Ross,	
Cora Engle,	John Dayhoff,	
*Katie Gish,	Mary Dayhoff,	
	Irvin Metz, 17

*Members International Bible Reading Association.

To live content with small means; to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy, not respectable; wealthy, not rich; to study hard, think quietly, talk gently, act frankly; to listen to stars and birds, to babes and sages, with open heart; to bear all cheerfully, bear all bravely; await occasions, hurry never. In a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common. This is to be my symphony.—Channing.



Letter from John Long, 1970
Childhood Friend

Rt 2 Box 440

Q

Hood River Ore

97031

March 6 1970

Dear Mr Endacott

I hear from Dr Ed Long that you would like to have more information about my life with General Eisenhower when I was going to school in the 5-6-7 and 8th grades at Abilene Kansas.

My mother and Dwigths mother were very close friends as the grandfather of Dwigths came from the same valley in Pennsylvania that my grandfather lived.

My grandfather home was only about 6 or 7 miles from Elizabethtown where the Eisenhower family came from. And as a boy my grandparents took me up to Elizabethtown many times to the camp meetings held there by the United Brethern Church. My mother was the first

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

- 2 -

woman of the River Brethern Church that took off the little white cap claiming that the church put too much faith in it instead of Christ

Mrs Eisenhower was the second woman that took off the little white cap.

Dwight's grandfather was more liberal in his faith and beliefs and the main church was

A lot of the prayer meetings were held at the Grandfather Eisenhowers home and I used to go with my mother to these prayer meetings and then I would go to Dwight's home until my mother was ready to go home.

We often planned & talked about going to Annapolis to get an education as we thought that was the only way to a college education as we both was to poor to get a college education

Reverend Ray I. Witter Oral History, 1964

Pages 1-3:

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, will you, please, identify yourself and tell us in what manner you are related to General Eisenhower?

REV. WITTER: My mother and his father were brother and sister.

MR. BARBASH: Rev. Witter, can you, please, tell us what were Wadesian and Piestic movements in Europe and what influence they had on the founding of the Brethren in Christ Church?

REV.WITTER: I would say that the influence being handed down was the greater influence from what I have been informed. Some of their methods and ways of worship and doctrine of beliefs and so on had its bearing and influence upon some of the early men that established or were instrumental in starting the Church.

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, would you, please, tell us how the Brethren in Christ Church was founded in the United States?

REV.WITTER: Yes, it was founded along the Susquehanna River there in Pennsylvania and started with two brothers. They were the first ones that, just about the same time that the United Brethren started, so as time went on in some of their beliefs which were separate than any that they could feel at home in any other churches. Speaking of these United Brethren who started theirs said "why don't you do like we did" and so they agreed they would, so these brothers baptized each other and never would tell which was the first member of the Church. But from, then on, as they continued in their services the additions were added to the Church and it grew.

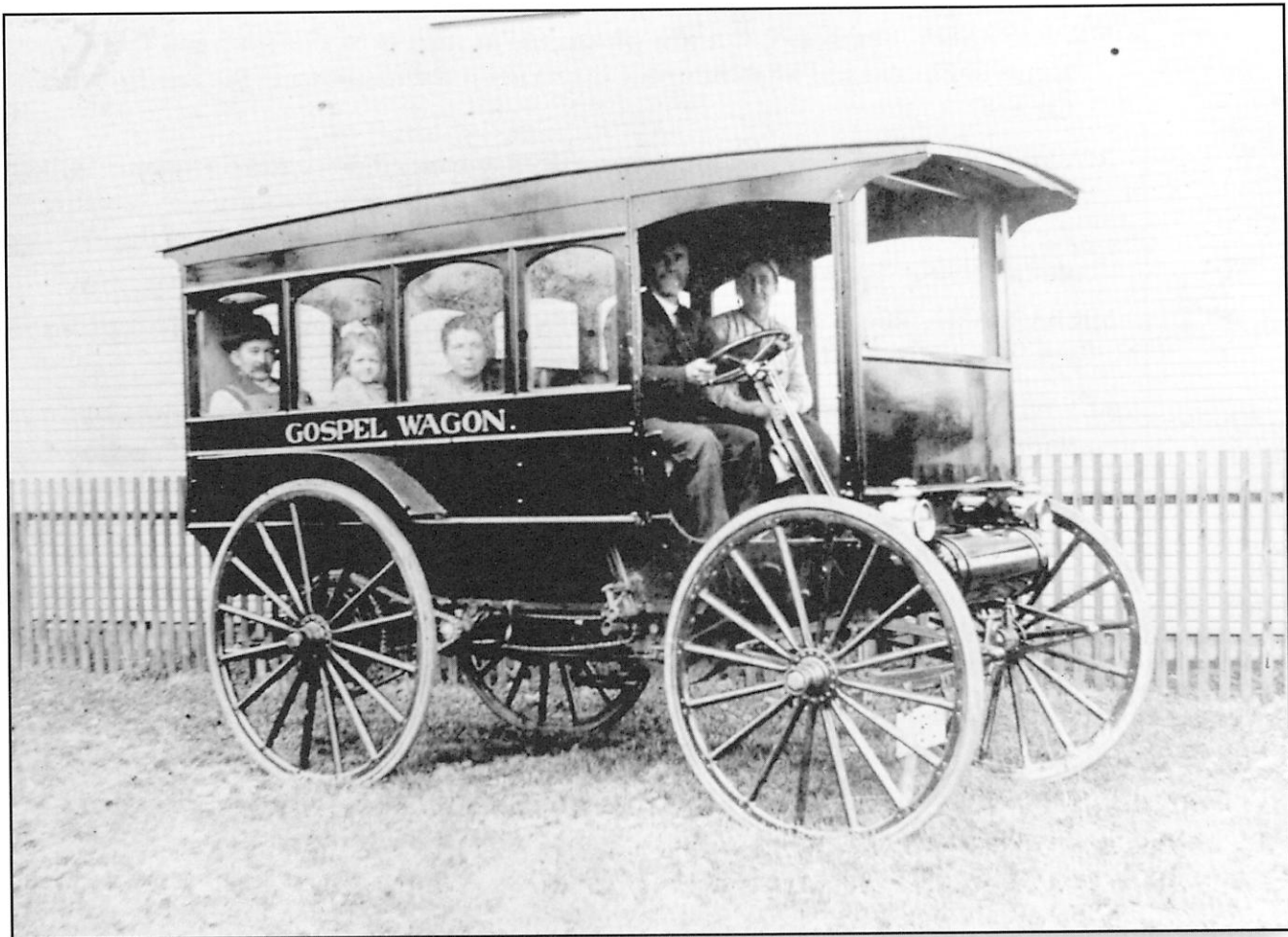
MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, what were the names of the brothers and what was the basic belief regarding baptism of the Church at this time?

REV.WITTER: Well, these two Engle brothers were the first--the instigators of the Church and the records state this very clearly, but they held their first meetings in the houses and, then, the matter of baptism, they baptized by immersion--trine immersion, which means three times forward in the name of the Trinity. While we don't teach that baptism washes away sins or has any conversion to it, but we believe it is for believers and for those who have received Christ. Their having baptized in the river is where the nickname came--they were called River Brethren at first because of two things--some traditions say it was because they baptized in the river that was a convenient place, where the Church started is right along the river and other traditions is that it was because they lived along the river and as the Church grew, some of those brethren at a distance, it was not common for them to say "let's go down by the river and see how our brethren are getting along", hence, the name River Brethren got started as a nick name, only.

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

The Gospel Wagon, 1911

Photograph # 64-182



Reverend Abraham Lincoln and Anna Eisenhower

Photograph courtesy Eisenhower Library



School & Education:

“Education in the Small-Town View”

In the fall of 1896, I entered the Lincoln school, little aware that I was starting on a road in formal education which would not terminate until 1929 when I finished courses at the Army’s War College in Washington, D.C. What I learned at the start would not remain static. In the third of a century between my first and last school was compressed a series of revolutions—political and economic, social and scientific—which were to transform the human environment of the entire globe.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

Going to school in a small Midwestern town one hundred years ago was, in some respects, very different from today; in others, little has changed. The goal of public education was not to prepare young people for a career, as it is today. Rather, students labored to perfect their Spencerian penmanship and struggled to master the basics of spelling, reading, and “ciphering” (arithmetic)—what we term the “three R’s” today. Most members of the community agreed that common sense and hard work rounded out a “good” common-school education.

Religious education was well integrated into the public school curriculum. The school day generally began with the teacher’s reading a Bible verse to the class. *McGuffey’s Readers*, a popular textbook series of the time, were filled with stories and poems that taught religious and moral lessons. Another common theme was “civic virtue,” what we call good citizenship today. It was considered the parents’ duty to insure a “proper” education for their children, and, in turn, obedience and devotion to parents were important values that were emphasized in school. Classes began at 9:00 in the morning; however, before-school chores began much earlier than that—before daylight. Deane Malott, an

Abilene boy born to a prosperous “north side” family in 1898, recalls cleaning the “clinkers” from the furnace; building a fire in the kitchen stove; feeding and currying the horses; feeding the chickens and gathering eggs; cleaning the barn and the hen house; feeding the dog; hitching up the horse; and practicing the piano—all before leaving for school in the morning! The first bell of the day rang at 8:30. A second bell, at 9:00, prompted students to line up in front of the school doors and march silently, single file, to their classes.

Classrooms were often dark and dreary places that buzzed with the steady hum of student recitations. The competitive spirit of a spelling bee helped to break the monotony of lessons, and a discipline problem for the teacher became lively entertainment for the class. Because school kitchens did not exist yet, students walked home for lunch and returned for the afternoon session. At that time it wasn’t considered proper for boys and girls to play on the same playground at recess.

In general, Kansans of 1900 were a literate population; however, relatively few completed a four-year high school education. In the early years of the twentieth century, an eighth-grade education was considered adequate, and it was certainly no disgrace to leave school after the fifth or sixth grade. High school was largely a female domain. Girls enrolled in the “normal” training program to prepare them to teach in the county’s one-room schools. For boys, it was far more practical to get a job and begin to earn a living. Farm boys rarely attended high school because their labor was needed at home. Boys who expected to become professionals, such as lawyers or doctors, finished high school and went on to college. For the majority of young people, however, high school was, quite simply, an impractical luxury.

A typical daily schedule of classes in 1900 included Latin or German, English, algebra, and geography. The teachers, and occasionally the school superintendent, took turns leading Bible devotions in a classroom called the “chapel.” From time to time, the superintendent visited classrooms as a highly visible deterrent to bad behavior.

High school students of this era participated in many of the same activities as high school students today. They wrote and acted in plays and musicals; worked on the yearbook; played an instrument; belonged to a variety of clubs; enrolled in debate; and competed in sports like baseball and football. Basketball was a new sport that was popular with the girls. Neither the school nor citizens took much interest in school athletics. Students who wanted to play a sport bought their own uniforms and personal equipment. Money for other sport-related expenses was raised through small membership dues and gate receipts.

Teaching wasn’t considered a real profession nor did teachers make much money. A college education and professional training were not requirements for common-school teaching, although high school teachers generally had a college degree. In addition to a basic proficiency in the three R’s, a teacher was expected to “. . . whip the bullies into submission . . . and hold his own against the district’s champion in ciphering and spelling matches.”¹ Teachers were expected to be upstanding role models in their communities--demonstrated by regular church attendance and a strict avoidance of card playing, dancing, or using profanity. Not surprisingly, in many communities, the turnover rate for teachers was very high.

Dwight Eisenhower was an intelligent boy who sometimes found school to be dull. He didn’t take school as seriously as he should have, but he managed to earn respectable grades without trying very hard. In the Eisenhower home, getting a good education was a family priority. All six boys, from an early age, were encouraged to go on to college which was highly unusual for the time. The Eisenhower boys knew that their parents wouldn’t be able to afford to send them to college, and they began to plan accordingly.

At Lincoln Elementary School, Dwight’s favorite subject was spelling, followed closely by arithmetic. His worst subject was penmanship, and throughout his life he was famous for his indecipherable scrawl. During high school, he excelled at plane geometry, so much so that his teacher allowed him to develop his own propositions and solve the problems in his own way. Dwight’s real passion was reserved for reading history, especially ancient history and biographies of famous military men. As a boy, he needed no encouragement to read. In fact, his mother Ida finally resorted to locking his history books in a cabinet--which he unlocked at his pleasure once he found the key--because he neglected his chores.

Dwight loved sports and excelled at them, especially football and baseball. When he was a freshman, he fell and scraped his knee. The small wound quickly developed into a medical crisis that threatened his life. Dr. Tracy Conklin declared that the leg would have to be amputated, but Dwight refused. He would rather have died than be unable to play his sports. Miraculously, he recovered and repeated his freshman year because he had missed so much school. He graduated in 1909 from AHS.

Dwight’s burning ambition for a college education led him, eventually, to apply for and receive an appointment to West Point. With it, the direction of his life was changed forever.

¹Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (Bloomington, IN: University Press, 1954), p. 25.

Suggested Readings from *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*: 51-53, 60-63, 79, 86-88.

The Second Reader

Appleton's School Readers, ©1886

10 *SECOND READER.*

LESSON III.

â

dâred	dârt'-ed	sâû'-cy	wrën
a-wâx'	gâr'-den	mûs'-lin	tî'-ny

THE WREN.

The wren is a tiny bird, but it is a bold one. And it is so busy and so merry!


Once a lady sat in her garden, with a book in her hand. She had on a muslin dress with gay spots upon it.


A wren came hopping about her. It wanted to find out what those spots were, so it dared to come very close to the lady.

The lady kept still, and soon the saucy bird gave a peck at one of the spots, and then it darted away.

—————

Copy these sentences, and put words in place of the pictures:

A bird can make a pretty  .

The  is a tiny bird.

SECOND READER. 11

LESSON IV.

Words to be spelled by sound and by letter.

ä

fär	äre	ärm	därk
eär	stär	yärn	lärge
jär	härđ	färm	märked

â

bäre	âir	teär	eäre
späre	fâir	beär	pâir
stäre	stâir	weär	peär

a

<i>call</i>	<i>ball</i>	<i>fault</i>
<i>straw</i>	<i>salt</i>	<i>wi-ter</i>
<i>want</i>	<i>talk</i>	<i>drawn</i>

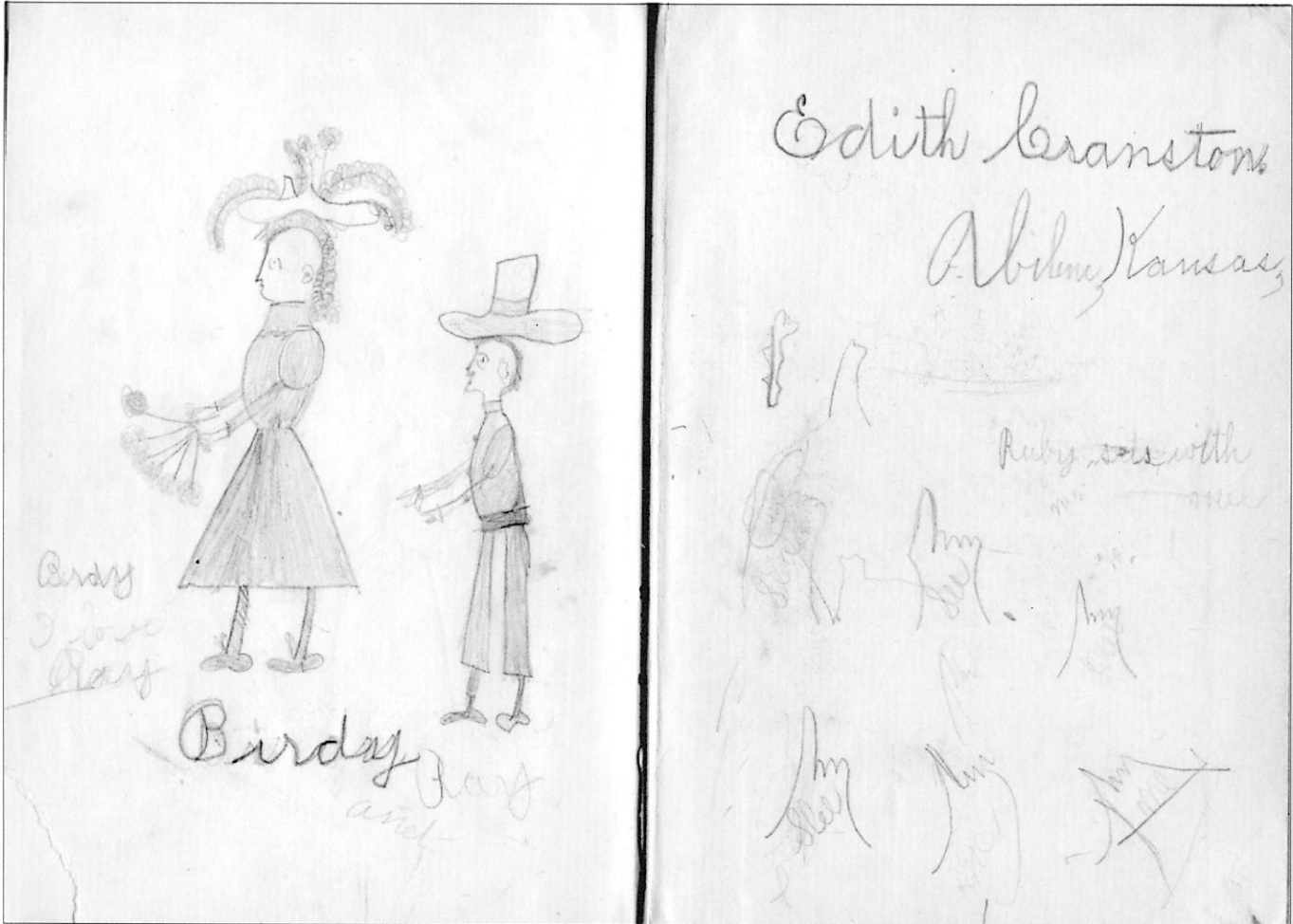
—————

Copy these words, and mark the vowels and silent letters:

hâir	haul	harm	dare
bern	chair	hawk	bear
l	cart	warm	part

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

The Third Reader
Appleton's School Readers, ©1877



Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

Lelia Grace Picking Oral History, 1965

MISS PICKING: The city building stood at the site of the present Municipal building at the corner of 5th and Broadway Streets in the town of Abilene, which in later years was to become famous as the home of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Dwight's class was large in numbers but not great in morale, as we knew we would be dubbed "greenies" by the upper classmen. The accommodations the building afforded were not the best but we managed. There was a large room on the east on the second floor used as a recitation room and study hall combined. In it we met for Chapel. On the southwest was a recitation room and another on the northwest. In this room from a cupola housing the fire bell the boys of A.H.S., Dwight among them, responded immediately by skipping classes to help man the old two wheeled hose cart--a far cry from our present truck with its snorkel. If Dwight didn't get to the hose cart he was among those who sprinted to the store to buy treats for the girls. On the first floor one room was used by History classes. Here Miss Pauline Sleeth taught Dwight. The city Marshall's family occupied the east half of the first floor. In the basement were the jail cells. One morning on arriving at school we found a prisoner had tried to dynamite his way out, the damage was not great enough to warrant a holiday. Dr. F. S. Blayney who often substituted as a teacher remarked that we received our education midst the howling of the dogs, the wailing of the prisoners and the odor of the onions being cooked for the Marshall's dinner. Dwight was a boy who worked and had a little time for parties and social gatherings, at least, during the Freshman and Sophomore years. He spent two years in the old city hall and two years in the new high school, erected in 1907. This building, facing the south on 7th street at the end of Spruce has since been torn down. In Junior and Senior years, Dwight took a lively interest in athletics. The Yearbook of 1909, *The Helianthus*, gives the statement "D. Eisenhower sticks around the left and center gardens. He works to keep the team together and in good spirits." This characteristic as a youth followed into his military career. He was an individual of action. He was ever mindful of the welfare of his soldiers. His D-Day was the outgrowth of his early idea of cooperation. Another statement in the yearbook says "Dwight is our best historian and mathematician. His interest in History is one of his outstanding traits as a scholar." Mrs. C. D. Wetzel, a classmate, who was Winifred Williams, makes this remark: "I remember that whenever the teachers called on Dwight he could always recite. I never heard him say 'I don't know'." My most vivid memory is of his reciting in Miss Dickinson's English Class.

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

"Athletics" by Dwight D. Eisenhower

1909 AHS Yearbook, *The Helianthus*

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library



(19) Art. - Fox-Dawson

Athletics

By Dwight Eisenhower



LEARLY in the fall of 1908, the High School boys organized an Athletic Association for the year. After electing Dwight Eisenhower president, Harry Makins vice-president and Herbert Sommers secretary and treasurer, we proceeded to do business.

Deciding not to play any base ball in the fall, we started on football at once. Bruce Hurd was elected captain, and soon a large number of candidates for the squad were out working. After two weeks of hard work, Captain Hurd decided on the following team:

- Left end..... Huffman
- Left tackle..... Ingersoll
- Left guard..... Pattin
- Center..... Funk
- Right guard..... Weckle
- Right tackle..... Hurd
- Right end..... D. Eisenhower
- Quarter..... Merrifield
- Left half..... Makins
- Right half..... Sommers
- Full back..... E. Eisenhower

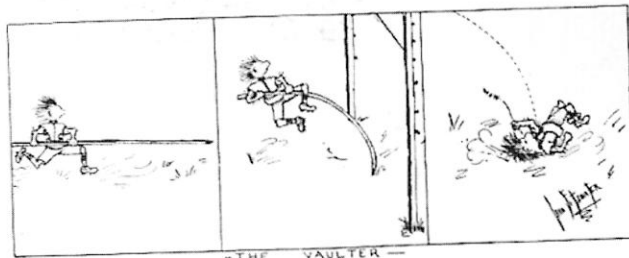
We were deprived of our coach, but nevertheless, turned out a very creditable team. Unfortunately, however, only four games were played during the season, not giving the team a chance to prove its ability. But for the games that were played, the students supported the team loyally, and time and again the boys surmounted great difficulties, cheered on by the fierce enthusiasm displayed by our rooters.

After the football season closed, we had to spend the winter dreaming of past victories and future glories, for A. H. S. boasts of no indoor gymnasium, and basket ball was never played here. But we improved the condition of the Association itself, by drawing up a constitution, which makes the organization a permanent one, and each year it will be simply a question of electing new officers.

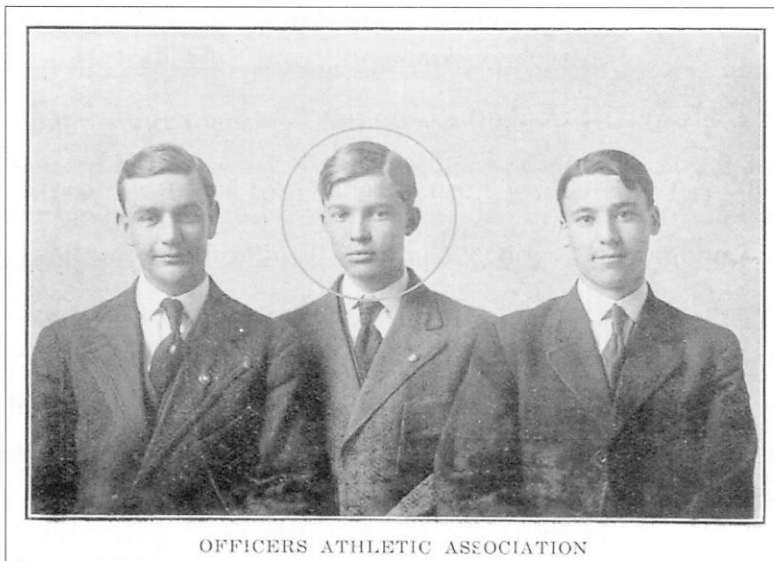
Thanking the citizens of the town who have taken such an interest in the High School Athletics, and also our fellow classmates for their loyalty to us, we are yours for future victories on the gridiron by teams of dear old A. H. S.

FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

- Abilene vs. Junction City at Junction City.
- Abilene vs. Junction City at Abilene.
- Abilene vs. Chapman at Abilene.
- Abilene vs. Agricultural College at Abilene.



— THE VAULTER —



OFFICERS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Officers: Abilene High School Athletic Association



Work & Play: *“To Get Our Hands On Every Cent We Could Possibly Earn”*

In the furnace room there were three large fire-tube boilers. We used slack (almost powdered) coal, and clinkers formed. With a slice bar, twelve feet or so in length, I would push the burning coal to one side, loosen the clinkers from the grates, then haul them out with a hoelike tool while another man turned a stream of water on the clinker. In this small inferno, life lost its charm but the job led to another promotion.

—*Dwight D. Eisenhower*

Children and young people in the early years of the twentieth century worked and played much the same as they do today. Early in life, children learned the value of work firsthand. “These were the days when children had real chores to do and did them as a matter of course.”¹ Parents taught them how to cook, wash and dry dishes, and clean. They helped to wash, hang, and iron laundry as soon as they were old enough to be taught.

Out-of-doors, children were responsible for the care of pets and livestock. Stalls and pens were cleaned, the garden was hoed and weeded, and the cow milked twice a day. Local farmers or small business owners hired older boys to work in the summer. Many jobs required long hours of physical toil for very modest pay.

During the school year, some students had after-school jobs in downtown businesses or local industries. Many had summer jobs that required hard physical labor. When they were in their early teens, some girls worked as “hired girls,” doing household chores for another family in exchange for room, board, and a small wage.

Life for children in 1900 wasn’t all work. After chores and schoolwork were finished, children enjoyed playing and having fun. Most little girls had a rag doll and perhaps a “penny” doll, a miniature china doll. “Nickel” dolls were larger and nicer. One popular brand of oatmeal contained a pattern for a cloth doll that mothers sewed and stuffed for their daughters. Every little girl dreamed of receiving a life-sized doll with a porcelain head, real hair and lashes, and moveable eyes. Little boys preferred a cloth bag of prized marbles which they carried around in their pockets. On the first warm day of spring, they gathered outside, testing their skill and luck with their friends. Older boys were allowed to carry jackknives and competed at a game called “Mumblety-peg” in which they took turns flipping the knife blades into the ground.

Outside games were as popular as they are today. Children organized themselves to play “hide-and-seek,” “ring-around-a-rosy,” “drop-the-handkerchief,” and “follow-the-leader.” Baseball was not considered a proper game for girls; however, it was a favorite sport for boys, along with football, boxing, wrestling, and foot races. The hayloft in the barn out back was the perfect place to practice gymnastics and put on amateur shows and circuses.

This was a time when children freely explored the countryside. In summer, the local creek became the community swimming hole and, in winter, an ice-skating rink. Homemade kites flew in the summer sky, and many Sunday-afternoon, horse-and-buggy rides ended with a river-side picnic. The river was a perfect setting for fishing, boating, and camping. Hikes and hayrides were other typical outdoor activities in pleasant weather. When there was enough snow in the winter, children hitched their sleds behind a wagon or horse and thrilled to a slippery ride down country roads.

¹Deane Malott, *Growing Up In Abilene, Kansas: 1898-1916* (Abilene, KS: Dickinson County Historical Society, 1992), p. 14.

As early as 1890, every town had at least one drugstore with a soda fountain or ice cream parlor. Young people met their friends “downtown” for sodas, sundaes, and malted milks, already American favorites. Another popular activity for young people was to go to one another’s homes in the evenings. All gathered around the piano or organ in the parlor for a sing-along to the musical hits of the day. “Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight,” “Whippoorwill Song,” and “Over the Garden Wall” were among the most requested.

Every town had at least one band; most had several. By far, this was the most popular of all local music entertainment. Dazzling uniforms, the flash of silver instruments, and snappy high-stepping young men were a reflection of the town’s own spirit and pride. Girls who wanted to play had to organize their own bands.

Every “progressive” town boasted an Opera House where traveling troupes performed plays, musicals, and light opera. By the early 1900s, opera houses were being converted to movie theaters at a rapid pace. It was the age of the three-reel, silent picture. Regular admission was 15 to 40 cents, but most fans waited for the Saturday ten-cent matinee to view popular films such as *Trip to the Moon* and *The Great Train Robbery*.

County fairs and carnivals featured exhibits, horse races, pulling contests, hot-air balloon rides, and games of chance. The occasional medicine show that pulled into town was a magnet for a curious, and sometimes gullible, crowd. Summer Chautauqua shows entertained the community with a week of lectures, speeches, and musical performances. Nothing, however, compared with the glamour of the circus. For Midwesterners, who had limited contact with the outside world, exotic animals, death-defying acts, and chariots made the day the circus came to town a major event in small town life.

When Dwight Eisenhower was growing up in Abilene, Kansas, the greater part of the ordinary person’s day was spent working. Life was no different for the Eisenhowers. As soon as her sons were able to help, Ida devised a weekly schedule of rotating chores. That way, each boy learned every job in the busy household. Because there were no Eisenhower daughters, even what were traditionally “girls” chores such as cooking and sewing were mastered by the six sons. After school and in the summers, Dwight and his brothers worked at a variety of jobs including farm and factory work. With his earnings he bought treats and athletic equipment and took dates to the “picture show” at the Seeyle Theater.

After high school graduation, Dwight began working fulltime at the Belle Springs Creamery. He and his brother Edgar devised a plan to put each other through college. Dwight would remain in Abilene to work and pay for his brother’s education. After a couple of years, Ed would drop out to work for a time so Dwight could attend college. Dwight’s appointment to West Point changed all that.

Like young people today, Dwight enjoyed himself when he had the time. He thrilled at pistol-shooting contests down at Mud Creek by men who actually knew Wild Bill Hickok. Now and then, they allowed him to practice. Baseball and football were his passion, and he enjoyed boxing and working out in a make-shift gym at the back of a print shop downtown. He and his friends swam and skated at nearby Mud Creek. With Bob Davis, as guide and teacher, Dwight fished, flat-boat paddled, camped, and learned how to win at poker on the Smoky Hill River. W.C. Parker’s Amusement Company was only a few blocks from his home, but the people and activity of downtown Abilene were often entertainment enough for a small-town boy growing up at the turn of the century.

Recommended Reading from *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*: 73-75, 68-71, 83-86, 88-92, 94-95, 97-98, 102-104.

Swede Hazlett's Letter, 1970

Childhood Friend

I am pleased that you are undertaking this story of Ike - and will proceed to unburden myself of more material than you contracted for. After all these years I may be a bit hazy as to details, but I'll do the best I can. Where Ike is concerned I think my memory is pretty good, for, ever since I've known him intimately, I've admired him tremendously and have always known he was headed for the top - none of his many honors has surprised me in the least. This stuff about a prophet being without honor in his own home town is the bunk!

Ike was somewhat more than a year older than I, and lived in a different part of town, so went to a different grammar school. Accordingly, although I knew him and liked him, I never knew him intimately until we landed in the same high school. Here he was not only an excellent student but, what was more important in my eyes, the star halfback of the football team - what would be known as the "triple-threat" nowadays. But I liked him most for his sterling qualities - he was calm, frank, laconic and sensible, and not in the least affected by being the school hero.

I spent only one year in high school, then went away for 3 years at a military school in Wisconsin. Living near a cavalry post (Fort Riley) and having been brought up astride a pony, I early set my goal as West Point and had corresponded with my Congressman since I was 12, seeking an appointment that never materialized. My father, I believe, felt that military school might cure my ambition. It didn't. In the late spring of 1910 my Congressman offered me an appointment to Annapolis and I, with some misgivings about the sea, accepted it. I left school and arrived in Annapolis in early May to prep at a cram school for the June exams. But the time was too short - I failed in mathematics. My Congressman, probably because no one else from Kansas was interested in the Navy in those days, kindly reappointed me. For I had seen just enough of Annapolis to be tremendously enthusiastic about it, and to know that there was nothing I wanted quite as much as to be a naval officer. (Incidentally, in spite of a tough break in health that keeps me out of the fighting, I still feel the same way about it.) All thoughts of West Point were gone.

I went back to Abilene and got a job managing the office of a very small manufacturing concern - studying for next year whenever the demands of the job permitted. Ike had graduated from high school in 1909 and, because of lack of funds, had taken a job in the local Belle Springs Creamery. This was a fairly large concern, employing probably 40 people and serving most of east-central Kansas. Eventually Ike expected to go to Kansas University (I have no idea what he intended to take up) but he felt it necessary to build up a nest egg first. He did very well in the creamery and in the summer of 1910 was made the night foreman, having entire charge from 6 pm to 6 am. True, he had only a couple of men under him, to keep the boilers and refrigerating plant running and to guard the plant, but it was considered a quite responsible job for a youngster only 19 years old.

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

I had been seeing more and more of Ike, during vacations, as the years went on, and this summer I spent many of my evenings at the creamery, helping him to while away the hours. We played a bit of penny-ante poker - giving him the start that ended in his reputation as the best stud player in the Army, still being kids, more or less, we also weren't above raiding the company's refrigerating room occasionally - for ice cream, and for cold storage eggs and chickens which were cooked on a well-scrubbed shovel in the boiler room.

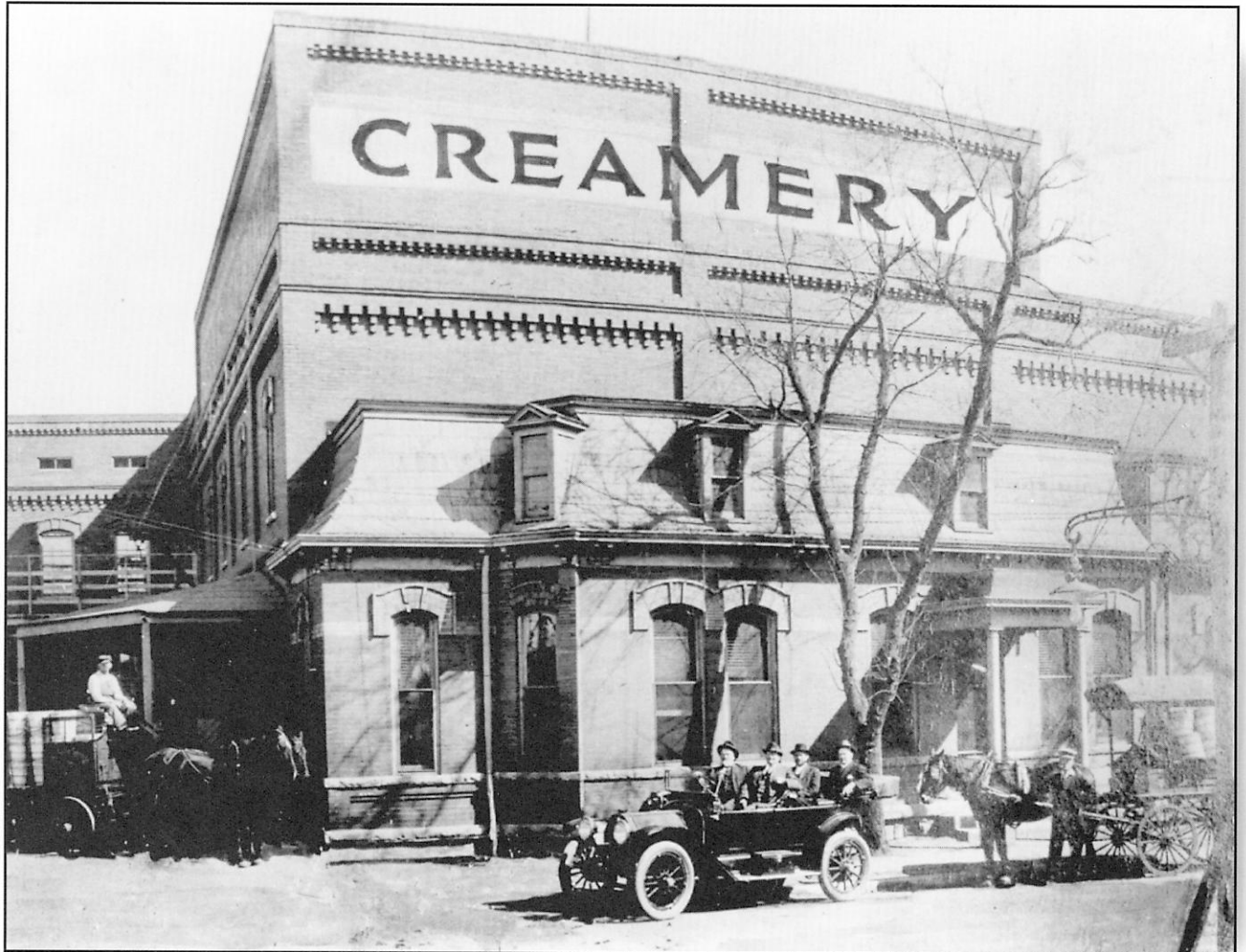
During this period our friendship grew very close. There was something fine about him that drew me to him - as it is drawing so many today. He had qualities of leadership of the best sort, combined with the most likeable human traits, - candor, honesty, horse-sense and a keen sense of humor. Naturally I talked a good deal about the Naval Academy, and gradually he became interested. At last it dawned on me that nothing could please me more than to have him go to the Academy with me. So I proposed to him that he try for an appointment, too. He was intrigued with the idea, but not very sanguine.

"What chance have I got?" he asked. "You already have the only vacancy from this district."

I suggested that he might try the Senators, and he was interested enough to write them both. One had no vacancies, but the other (I believe it was Senator Bristow) wrote that he had vacancies both for Annapolis and West Point. As was very unusual in those days when most appointments were political cunshaw, he was holding competitive exams for them, and he authorized Ike to appear in Topeka in November to compete. It was already September, so he had but little time to prepare. Here was where I came in - again. I had been studying for the same type of exams all summer, and was well up in the methods and shortcuts of the cram school, so we started working together. Every afternoon at about two Ike would come to my office and we would work until about five. During these 3-hour periods I managed to sandwich in enough office work to keep my job, but not much more. Ike's God-given brains sped him along and soon he was way ahead of his self-appointed teacher. In November he journeyed to Topeka and competed with about 20 other applicants. He returned, confident he had done his best, but none too confident of the outcome. That's another trait of his - he always puts forth his best efforts, but never underrates the opposition.

One afternoon he came into the office, grinning that wide, heart-warming grin of his, and waving a letter. The Senator wrote that he had stood first in the exam. But there was a catch in it. He also

Belle Springs Creamery, 1902
Photograph # 64-481



Photograph courtesy Eisenhower Library

Seelye Theater, circa 1905

Photograph # 70-255-11



Photograph courtesy Eisenhower Library

Mud Creek, circa 1905

Photograph # 70-255-6



Photograph courtesy Eisenhower Library

Abram Forney Oral History, 1964

Pages 8-9:

BARBASH: Mr. Forney, could you, please, tell us when you worked the creamery with Dwight Eisenhower and could you tell us any interesting incidents that took place while you worked there with him?

FORNEY: I remember an incident during school vacation when I was employed on the second floor of the building and nailing together butter boxes. I happened to come down through the engine room to the wash room which was on the ground floor. On returning to the second floor I had stopped on the first floor to talk to D. J. Eisenhower --a little conversation--and as we parted he went through the door into the boiler room and I started to return to the second floor. As I stood at the landing going up to the second floor there was this terrific noise. The governor belt on an engine which operated all the churns and the power elevators in the building broke and, of course, there was the engine just "running away" with such velocity that the fly wheel which was about 6 feet in diameter exploded. Portions of that flywheel had broken a steam line, and also, hit one of the ammonia pipes which turned the ammonia pipes loose. I remember very well, standing on that landing, that the first thing I saw was Mr. Eisenhower coming back in and cutting off the steam. This engine was still running, although all it was, was the shaft. He cut off the steam from that ran over and cut off the ammonia from the ammonia tank. Fortunately, if this had happened approximately 10 seconds sooner and where I was standing right in front of this engine talking to Mr. Eisenhower I don't think I would be here today to tell this story.

BARBASH: Mr. Forney, do you remember what kind of work Dwight did at the Creamery and did you ever have an opportunity to work with him?

FORNEY: Well, there was one summer during school vacation that both operated what they called the "ice tank", by taking out 300 pound blocks of ice and dumping and setting them through a chute into the ice room and Dwight had the night shift at that time. I had day shift. His salary was 32.50 and I was given 35.00 a month on the day shift. I had considerably more work to do serving the delivery trucks and the people from outer communities who came in here to purchase ice.

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library



Community: *“Never Has This Town Been Outside My Heart and Memory”*

In the days of the independent farm and the horse and buggy, where each family was almost self-sustaining, certainly the community was self-sustaining. We grew our corn and we grew our meat, we grew our vegetables, and the local mills ground the flour and we didn't have much connection with the outside world.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

The town-building boom in the American Midwest in the last half of the nineteenth century can be traced directly to events thirty-five years earlier. At the end of the Civil War, a great migration was set in motion that would continue unabated for the next quarter century. It would not subside until 1890, when the United States government declared the frontier officially closed.

The furious pace of settlement was spurred on by a variety of factors. Farmland in the East was increasingly scarce and very expensive. In 1862, the Homestead Act, which granted 160 acres to anyone who would settle it for at least five years, was a powerful lure to settlement. The railroads, earlier granted public lands by the government as an incentive to lay track, now cashed in on their windfall. In highly-inflated language, pamphlets touting a frontier paradise that was “. . . healthy, fertile, well-watered, well-wooded, and rapidly growing”¹ flooded the East and Europe. Wealthy land speculators waged a fierce competition to populate their freshly platted towns. Their offers to subsidize new businesses and donate lots attracted necessary goods and services. Each town waged a vigorous campaign to become the county seat or state capital in an effort to survive. In response, the people of the Midwestern plains existed in a state of constant

upheaval—pulling up stakes, moving on, and starting over, ever optimistic about the future. Along rail lines all across the Midwest, new towns were constructed on the same model. The business district emerged beside the railroad tracks, and building lots were priced based on their proximity to the train station. As the population grew, the downtown's shabby one-story wooden buildings were replaced by more substantial two- or three-story, red-brick structures. Still, downtown lacked pavement and curbs, traffic lights, and street signs. Rickety wooden sidewalks reflected a height convenient for customers stepping out of a horse-drawn wagon. At either end of the block were steps that led down to street level. Heavy spring rains transformed dusty streets into a muddy morass, but by late summer, sprinkler wagons were necessary to bring temporary relief to a dust-choked downtown.

This was the age of the horse. Horses and evidence of horses were everywhere: hitching posts, watering troughs, livery stables, wagon ruts, and, of course, the inevitable droppings in the streets. Each town hired a man whose job it was to patrol the streets, armed with a shovel, broom, and wheel barrow, in a nearly futile effort to keep the streets clean. It would be 1910 or so before streets were paved and curbing installed, street signs and house numbers appeared, and the automobile eventually replaced the horse.

The Midwestern towns founded in the late nineteenth century were populated by middle-class Americans with a fervent faith in the values of democracy, equality, and the American dream for the common man. Small-town inhabitants felt a shared sense of belonging to the community and experienced the benefits of togetherness. People spoke to one another in passing, and news of a

¹ Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1954), p. 5.

stranger in town spread quickly. Whenever there was hardship or tragedy, the community responded swiftly and generously.

Over time, the collective memory of places, stories, and unique characters became the town's beloved folklore.

There was another side to small-town life, however. These were communities that were predominately Protestant, middle class, and white. Consequently, their customs and values became the norm. Obedience to community standards was expected, and deviations were punished. A fine sense of togetherness could deteriorate rapidly into "nosiness" and neighborly concern into the aggravation of unwelcomed scrutiny. Gossip of "uppity" behavior, poor judgment, and scandal spread as quickly as other community news. In most instances, the public's disapproval or, worse, ostracism served as a swift and certain justice.

The Midwestern small town was, at least in theory, based on the American ideal of the classless society. The reality was that class lines did exist; however, they were flexible barriers that could be penetrated by ambition and hard work. The equality of Midwestern culture was based far more on an equality of opportunity than on equality of condition. Regardless of class, the town's citizens tended to mingle freely. Ambitious and capable families moved up quickly. To cross class lines in a generation or less was not unusual; however, anyone who then "put on airs" was the object of criticism. The expression "living across the tracks" was a common reference to explaining social class distinctions in Midwestern towns. Doctors, bankers, lawyers, and businessmen did well financially and socially and lived on the "right" side of the railroad tracks. Teachers, ministers, and laborers made less money and didn't enjoy the same social status as the town's professional and moneyed elite.

Dicki[n]son County is something deep within me. If I ever lose it, I shall be someone completely different from what I am or want to be.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

Named "David Dwight" at the time of his birth, Eisenhower was born in Denison, Texas, on October 14, 1890. He was the third of seven sons and the only one born outside of Kansas. When Dwight, as he was called, was a year and a half old, the family returned to Abilene.

The Abilene Dwight knew had a population of less than 4000. Founded in 1857, it boomed a decade later as a cattle town at the terminus of the Chisholm Trail. Abilene was but one generation removed from its rough and tumble frontier days as Dwight grew up. Tales of Tom Smith's bravery and the flamboyant style of Wild Bill Hickok captivated him, and any reference to "the war" was understood to mean the Civil War.

Abilene was a typical Midwestern town. Her citizenry considered themselves progressive, boasting six newspapers, a creamery, a telephone company, two business colleges, cigar, organ, and carriage factories, and, most exciting to a young Dwight, the C.W. Parker Amusement Company which made merry-go-rounds and had a circus and skating rink. In 1902, a sanitary sewer system was constructed, and Abilene's streets were paved in 1910. A flood and fire in 1903 damaged much of the town.

Dwight D. Eisenhower's formative years in Abilene shaped and guided him. Throughout his life, he would retain a deep affection for his hometown and the people, events, and scenes of his boyhood. Dwight and most of his childhood friends lived south of the Union Pacific tracks, the "wrong" side. Although aware of the social and economic shortcomings of his south-side status, Dwight embraced life with an engaging grin, optimism, and great ambition for his future.

After World War II, Dwight D. Eisenhower would return home, the most admired and loved man in the world, to declare: ". . . the proudest thing I can claim is that I am from Abilene."

Suggested Readings from *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*: 64-69, 74-75, 80-81.

In the Matter of Real Estate,

ABBE & ELLISON

ARE THE LEADERS.

Look over the following list of town properties and farms we have for sale. Call or write for further information.

ABILENE RESIDENCES.

\$6,000—Finest residence in Abilene. Modern improvements. Beautifully located.	business center.
\$2,500—Seven room house on Buckeye avenue. Handsome lawn, good barn, large garden spot, very desirable.	\$300—Good four room house, three blocks from business center.
\$1,750—Eight room house, with good barn, on East Sixth street. Location the best.	\$1,300—Good corner residence with barn and other out-buildings.
\$50—Very desirable building lot on Buckeye avenue. Northwest corner. Barn on rear of lot. 120 feet front, 200 feet deep.	\$400—Four room house, two blocks to business center. Good speculation.
\$1,525—Six room, two story house. Good barn, good location.	\$600—Nice four room house, some fruit, good barn, neat property.
\$1,200—Nine room house in good condition. Good out buildings and fruit. East Sixth street. A bargain.	\$850—Good eight room house in first class repair, close to business center.
\$500—Four room house; good brick barn. Three blocks from the business center of the town.	—Offer wanted for the Carpenter property on the South side.
\$500—Six room house on West Seventh St. Good speculation.	\$900—Good nine room house, rooms large and pleasant. A good investment. South side.
\$500—Good five room house on Olive St. Another bargain.	\$500—Neat cottage of five rooms; freshly painted, fruit, barn, good location.
\$500—Good five room house on West Fourth, good barn.	\$1,100—Seven room house; West side, shade trees and some fruit.
\$1,700—Good seven room house with barn, apples and small fruit, and three acres of ground. A desirable property for person wanting large garden.	\$1,250—Eight room house, good barn, West side, recent improvements.
\$500—Five room house, one block to	\$1,000—A very nice six room house, West side, no other buildings.
	\$3,200—Modern nine room house with fine barn, beautifully located, one of the most desirable residences in Abilene.
	\$200—Seven acres of ground within the city limits, no buildings.
	\$1,000—Ten acres of ground on the out-skirts of town. Investigate.

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

Ivan M. Fitzwater Oral History, 1970

Pages 4-5:

WICKMAN: When you first went to Abilene, since you were thirteen years old, you may have some memories of first arriving in town, what kind of town was it?

FITZWATER: Abilene, well just one of the nicest places that I ever lived in; it was then. I can tell you, it was just, just a nice place to live.

WICKMAN: Busy town?

FITZWATER: Oh, yes--

WICKMAN: With commercial activities?

FITZWATER: Yes, and so many nice people, oh, we didn't have any slum area. There were several colored families in town, but we never had any trouble with them, as I remember.

WICKMAN: Which side of town did they live in?

FITZWATER: Well, sir, can't tell for sure, maybe if I would drive around I could tell; it was kind of the northwest part of town; it wasn't in the south side, no, no. It seemed to me it was the northwest part of town where most of them lived. And they seemed to like to be among their own kind, and I never heard of one of them ever being in jail. And, by the way, I don't know if Abilene had a jail or not, they must have had. Oh, they must have had one but I can't remember for sure.

Pages 44-45:

WICKMAN: I was wondering, do you remember, surely on your way down to the Smokey Hill or somewhere you must have had a general area around Lincoln School. What was that area like besides--I mean, the Eisenhower home was behind the school, the school was on the school grounds--but what was the general area like down there? Was it homes, or stores, or--

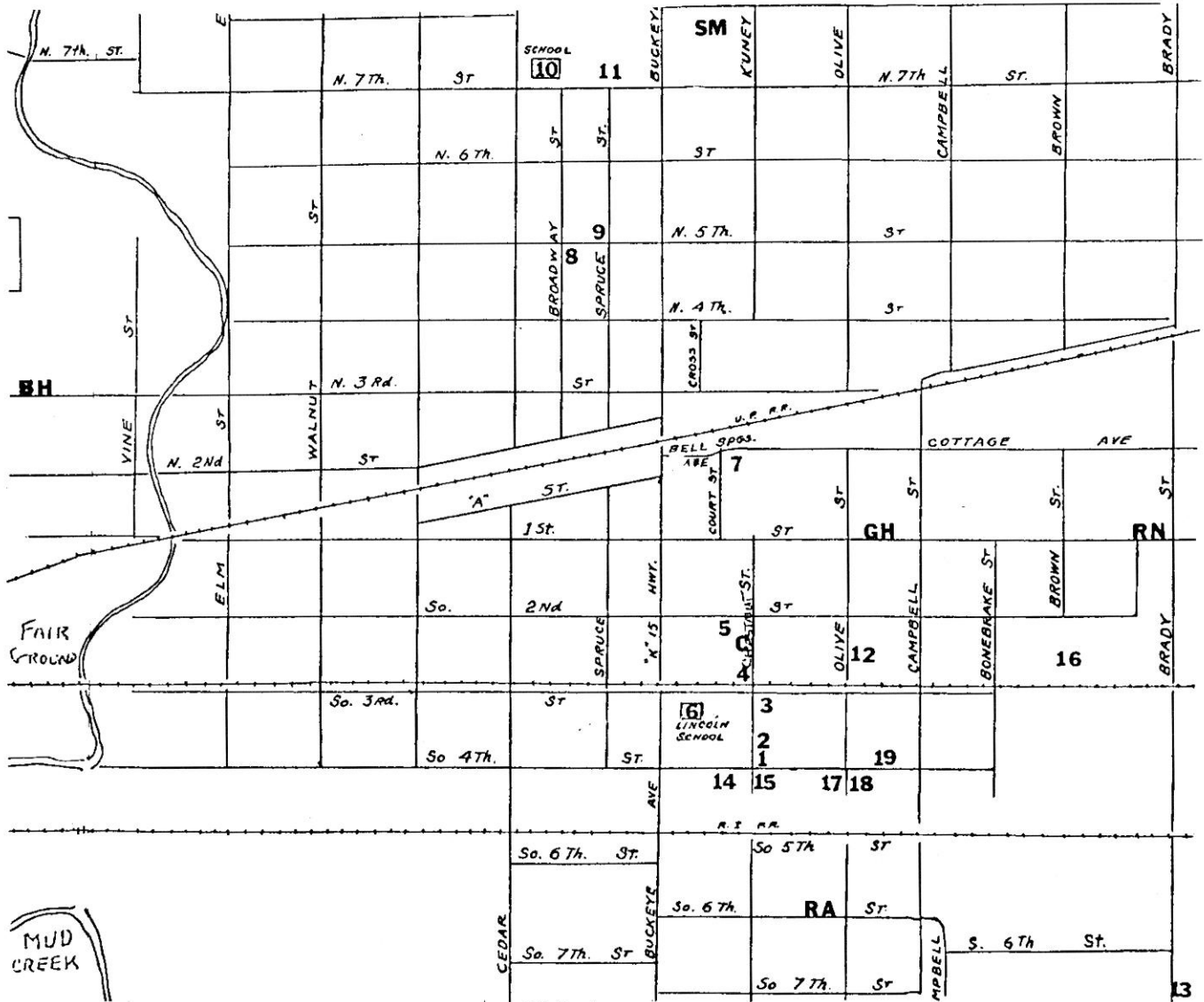
FITZWATER: Oh, most homes.

WICKMAN: Homes along there.

FITZWATER: Yes, I think that must have been some of the older part of Abilene, maybe not necessarily so. But they were not shacks, no, it wasn't that way at all, no. In fact Abilene didn't have any real, you know, shantytown or area; we didn't have it. There were some poor families here and there, but respectable. No, Abilene south of the tracks, well, just as nice people lived down, as the ones who lived on the north side it seemed to me, as I remember.

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

Map, Boyhood Environmental Area Home, 1900



- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Eisenhower Home | 10. Garfield School | Red Asper-----RA |
| 2. Eisenhower Barn | 11. New High School | Curry's-----C |
| 3. Romberger House | 12. Parker Winter Quarters | Bud Huffman ---BH |
| 4. Jacob Eisenhower Home | 13. Orin Snider House | Gladys Harding GH |
| 5. First Home David | 14. Miermaster House * | Ruby Norman----RN |
| 6. Lincoln School | 15. Hiram Higgins Home* | Six McDonnell--SM |
| 7. Belle Springs Creamery | 16. Carnival grounds | |
| 8. City Hall-First High School | 17. A. A. Baxter Home * | |
| 9. Dwight-Merrifield Fight | 18. Brigitte McGroove Home* | |
| | 19. D. C. Davis * | |

* Dickinson County Title Company

Document courtesy Eisenhower Library

Third Street Looking West, Abilene, KS, circa 1905
Photograph # 70-2559



Photograph courtesy Eisenhower Library