

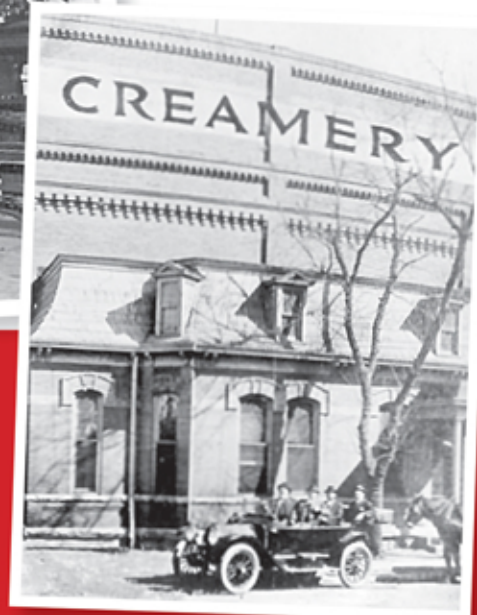
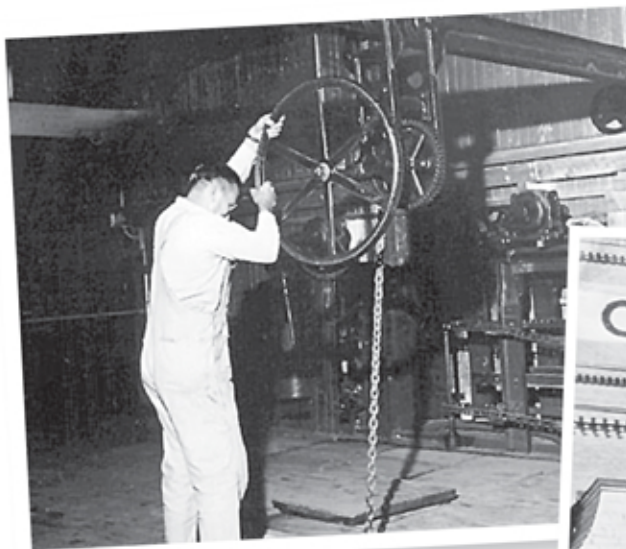
The 16-part "Dreams of a Barefoot Boy" originally appeared in the 2017 Kansas Newspapers in Education. Have fun reading stories, answering questions, and completing activities while learning about Dwight Eisenhower's childhood.



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"Dreams of a Barefoot Boy"

Chapter 7: A STRONG WORK ETHIC



"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... Because today that dream of mine of 45 years or more ago has been realized beyond the wildest stretches of my own imagination, I come here, first, to thank you, to say the proudest thing I can claim is that I am from Abilene."

Dwight D. Eisenhower June 22, 1945

Dwight Eisenhower's name is synonymous with hard work and patriotism. Both of these traits were instilled in him from a young age by his parents and the examples set by his ancestors. Even his name reflects physical work. Translated roughly from the German, Eisenhower means "iron hewer," someone who shaped metal into armor, weapons, and other useful tools. The Eisenhower family came to America in 1741, settling in Pennsylvania, where Dwight's great-great-great-grandfather began farming. Two of his sons fought for freedom during the Revolutionary War, showing their patriotism for their adopted country.

Peter, the eldest son, became a farmer like his father. He also worked as a blacksmith, a gunsmith, a merchant, and a town constable to provide for his family of seventeen children. Peter's youngest son, Frederick, was Dwight's great-grandfather. Frederick's primary work was farming, although he also became skilled at weaving. Frederick lived on the Eisenhower farm in Pennsylvania for most of his life. He married and had children, including Jacob Frederick Eisenhower, who would become Dwight's grandfather. In 1878, when Jacob was 52, he sold his property in Pennsylvania, and moved with his father Frederick, his wife and children, and other members of the

River Brethren church to lands in Kansas. Land was cheaper in Kansas; \$7.50 an acre compared to the \$175 an acre they received for their Pennsylvania land. Starting over wasn't easy; tilling soil that has never been planted before requires backbreaking work. Jacob also had a dairy herd and poultry. According to agricultural census records, only one year after moving to Abilene Jacob sold 1,000 pounds of butter, 300 dozen eggs, 800 bushels of corn and 170 bushels of wheat.

Jacob's son David (Dwight's father) was fifteen when he moved to Abilene. Rather than farm like his father, David invested his life savings in a partnership to open a general store in Hope, Kansas. Like today, farmers needed credit to buy their seed and supplies. When drought and grasshoppers ruined the crops, they couldn't repay the store, forcing David into bankruptcy. From then on, David had what Dwight called an "obsession against ever owing anyone a nickel." Each of the Eisenhower boys were taught from an early age that if they didn't have the cash to buy something, it wasn't purchased. Dwight and his brothers grew up learning that self-reliance and hard work were part of being a responsible citizen. Success and fame came to Dwight

in large part because he worked hard at every job he had. Later in life, Eisenhower's message to students was to do the same: set high goals and then work hard to accomplish them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does the name Eisenhower mean?
2. List the different jobs Dwight's ancestors had in Pennsylvania and Kansas.
3. What challenges did farmers face in the late 1800s?
4. Compare those to challenges farmers face today.
5. Write one goal you have for yourself. List what you need to do to achieve that goal.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Find out how much Jacob's crops, butter and eggs were worth in 1879 and what they would be worth today.
2. Create a family tree for Dwight based on the information in the article. Extension: Use other articles to fill in more information about Dwight's family.