

John Long's letter about his boyhood and friendship with Dwight [Eisenhower]  
Dated April 14, 1966

Historical note: John Long was likely 13 years old in the summer of 1903.

“I did a lot of work for Mrs. Tobias that summer [1902] and also the summer of 1903.

The 7<sup>th</sup> grade was preparing to put on a play for the end of the school year [1903] and it was to be shown at the opera house [by this time the Seeyle Theatre] in Abilene and we had several rehearsals [sic] in the Opera house but I do not remember if the final play was ever put on as the big flood disrupted everything.

A short time before the flood the storm started while we were in school and the lightning and thunder was the greatest I have ever seen and most of the girls went to the cloak room or hall and covered their heads with their coats.

A girl by the name of Maud Fair was the girls who the storm effected [sic] the most as she would scream everytime [sic] the lightning struck.

The electric storm soon died down but the rain did not and the rain kept falling for days until Mud Creek went over its banks started going down the streets of Abilene.

Mrs. Tobias started to prepare for high water and I worked there all the time. She moved everything out of the two down stairs south rooms and we moved the laying hens in the S.E. room and the small chicks in the S.W. room.

By evening the water was coming down the road and some coming across the fields.

Mrs. Tobias was a good manager and she had me jumping from one job to another. The feed that sat on the ground was taken care of first and other things seemed to be just in time and she started to worry as it was getting dark and not half of the work was done. The horse grain was moved up in the hay loft and then I started moving chickens to the house and before I got

all the hens moved I had to move the little pigs. I put the pigs in sacks and put them on the high ground around the brick house.

About the same time that it got dark the sky became lighted up by a large fire up town. The lumber yard up town was burning.

I later found out that the water got up into the lime bins and the heating of the lime set the building on fire.

The light from the burning lumber yard gave me light so I could work as if it was day.

The water was getting higher because the Smoky Hill River was rising fast and backing up to where we were working.

I now had all moved but the two big sows. They were on their hind feet with their front feet up on the fence. The water was steadily getting deeper and in making a trip to the house the water was between my knees and my hips.

The sows were last and I took one at a time. I held the sow by the ear and she swam like she was a water animal. She sure was glad to get to her little pigs as I had moved them long before. The second sow came along as well as the first sow.

I sure was glad when I had all animals and birds taken to safety.

The horse was left in the stall and got along fine.

The high water did not go over the high ground around the house. The ground I hauled and put around the brick house the year before paid off big as it gave a dry place for the two sows and the little pigs and it might have save the house as the brick building that held the Business College collapsed that same night.”