

At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends
by Dwight D. Eisenhower

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“The town itself was located a mile or two to the north of the Smoky Hill River and lay largely east of a stream which meandered its way through the flat alluvial plain. On a real estate developer’s map, the little water way is entitled ‘Serpentine Creek’; we, who knew its true character, called it Mud Creek. Slow-moving streams were always muddy. Boys searching for fishing holes had to be content with a mud cat or an occasional channel cat, the latter always a prize. Almost as a reaction to the violent earlier days, the town usually seemed extraordinarily peaceful and quiet. To be sure, there were, southwest of the Union Pacific depot, two or three surviving establishments where liquor was sold illegally. (Kansas was a dry state in more than one respect.)

At a place north of town called ‘The Herd,’ non-churchgoers gathered of a Sunday, having sent to Kansas City for a keg of beer, and drank it dry as they shot craps for an afternoon’s sports. We stayed away from there, naturally, by parental directive, and this sharpened our wonder at what wild things might be going on at The Herd.”