

*Earning the Right to do Fancywork: An Informal Biography of Ida Eisenhower, 1957*

By Kunigunde Duncan

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“Sewing by hand had ended with the purchase of a sewing machine, which was ‘such a help—think of making a garment in a day!’ She [Ida Eisenhower] still sewed. Sewing had been a part of her entire life, learned early and meticulously as a child. I received a clear picture of a heartsore little Ida, climbing the steep stairs alone in the quilting room of her relatives, there to do her allotted daily stint-and pull it out and put it in over, out and over, as many times as commanded and in silence. At ten she had been expert at darning, patching, hemming; and she had been an expert seamstress when, as a member of a Mennonite caravan, she had come West, to Kansas.

And who else than their mother would make the tucked and ruffled long and short dresses for seven babies; the boy-dresses and kilts for seven toddlers; the dozens of summer and winter suits for growing boys; and all their underwear, sleeping togs, over-coats, and even caps?”