

ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPTS  
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CURRICULUM MATERIALS

HOME & FAMILY:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Milton S. Eisenhower  
by  
Maclyn P. Burg  
on  
October 15, 1971  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

This is an interview being done with Dr. Milton Eisenhower. The interviewer is Dr. Maclyn Burg. The interview is taking place on October 15, 1971, 5:00 in the evening, outside and in the Eisenhower family home.

Pages 1-4:

DR. BURG: Now we are entering the house in the way you would have entered it—

DR. EISENHOWER: Yes.

DR. BURG: --as a young lad?

DR. EISENHOWER: Yes, ordinarily I came in this west door all the time.

DR. BURG: And right after school it'd be this door that you'd come through.

DR. EISENHOWER: Well, not only after school. Any time. We used the front door only when company was coming.

DR. BURG: I see.

DR. EISENHOWER: Originally this room we have entered was the kitchen. The stove sat right there. The pantry was out the north door of this room. And normally, when we had no company, we ate in the kitchen. But if Mother was doing something extra special we ate in the adjoining room – the dining room, which later became a second living room when this one was changed from a kitchen into a dining room.

BURG: I see.

EISENHOWER: I was the one – and let me see if I can remember when it was – I was the one who moved the kitchen – did a good deal of the work on the gas and other lines to move the kitchen to the much smaller room out here. I remember when we moved the kitchen I didn't – I couldn't – handle the water pipes, so I didn't move the sink. Sometime later someone came in and moved the sink.

BURG: This room back here.

EISENHOWER: That room, yes.

BURG: Let's step back in there, sir –

EISENHOWER: Yes.

BURG: --if we can.

EISENHOWER: When this room was a pantry, the bathroom was in the small room here to the east. When we made this room into a kitchen, the bathroom was moved to where it is now – next to what was our parents' bedroom. Grandfather Eisenhower had lived until his death in the bedroom that was changed into a bathroom.

BURG: I see. Now how old were you when you were done the moving?

EISENHOWER: Well, I must have been about 16 years old. Let's go back a bit. I remember when they dug the trenches that brought the city water and the city sewage lines to this house, so obviously I had to be old enough to remember it now. I can still remember the trenches. When I was quite young, my father wired the house for electricity.

BURG: I see.

EISENHOWER: Not an outside electrician; of course, he was something of an engineer.

BURG: Right.

EISENHOWER: I think I remember when the furnace was put in. It was a hot-air furnace. Pipes, large ones, carried the hot air only into rooms on the first floor. So the bedrooms upstairs were mighty cold in the winter. Father put an open metal register in the ceiling of one of the two living rooms, so some warmth thereafter drifted upstairs. Often when I got up in the morning I would stand on that register as I donned my clothes.

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Pages 16 – 21:

BURG: Yes, yes. Does it ever strike you - I suppose it must – that such an enormous amount of talent came from this very small house?

EISENHOWER: Well, I've thought about this a whole lot and wondered why. I think I know some of the reasons. We in Abilene were a rural society, very different from the urbanized society with 73 percent of the people living in great urban centers. I feel sorry for parents and young people in the large cities because something we learned here at home at an early age is difficult to teach children in an urban location. Responsibility to us was as much a part – the natural part – of life as eating and sleeping and going to school. I think that this early acceptance, in a perfectly natural way, of responsibility gave us an appropriate attitude toward education, toward our duties as citizens, toward our opportunities, and our obligations in whatever work we undertook. Then may I say that – here I'll have to speak for myself rather than for my brothers – the rule was that two things had to be done before I could play: one, I had to do my chores; second, I had to have every school lesson for the next day letter perfect.

BURG: These were really self-imposed rules or was only the latter self-imposed. Was it your mother who put the first —

EISENHOWER: Mother was the one who established the rules, but soon the regime of work, study, play was just as natural as anything else. I never went to bed with an unsolved problem for the next day's lessons.

BURG: I see.

EISENHOWER: I was expected to know. I remember one time my Latin teacher said, "Milton Eisenhower, I want you to stay after class." And I did. And she said, "You're using a 'pony.'" "Do you know what a "pony" is?"

BURG: Yes.

EISENHOWER: I said, "No, I don't have a pony." She said, "Your translations are too perfect, and I don't believe you can do that." I said, "Well, for the time being another teacher, Miss Annie Hopkins, is living at our house and she supervises my studies." While Miss Hopkins' subject was not Latin – but mathematics and other subjects – she was a Latin student. She would check my translations with me, so by the time I went to school the next day I was thoroughly prepared. Indeed, often I would translate passages from Virgil or Cicero that other students fumbled over.

BURG: Now, if I understand, the other brothers having gone and you the last one here. There was some space; and so you had a teacher living in the house

EISENHOWER: Yes. Keep in mind that Earl and I went through school together; there was only a year and nine months difference in our ages and, as I recall, Earl had been out of school one year because of a bad eye.

BURG: Right.

EISENHOWER: He has been blinded in one eye due to an accident with a knife. And he and I therefore went all through—

BURG: I see.

EISENHOWER: So essentially, everything I did, he did too. Only he was a good athlete, and I wasn't—so that our play-time and study activities were somewhat different.

BURG: Had your scarlet fever bout set you back –

EISENHOWER: I don't have –

BURG: --or anything in that regard?

EISENHOWER: any doubt that it did. You know I was unconscious for two weeks.

BURG: It sounded like a dreadful siege you had.

EISENHOWER: I remember that the doors to the two living rooms were sealed off. Earl and Mother were in there. Earl had been exposed and of course mother served as full-time nurse.

The rest of the family lived in the other part of the house. The food would be handed quickly through the door.

BURG: In this, in these two rooms?

EISENHOWER: In those two rooms in there – that's where three of us lived for – I think it was six weeks.

BURG: Six weeks?

EISENHOWER: Yes. For two weeks as I remember – I think my mother told me – I was unconscious. I have no doubt that the scarlet fever left a weakness. To this day my throat where those great swellings came – I guess they eventually burst – is tender. But the only physical problem I've ever had of any serious nature is bad eyes, I was born with those. As a matter of fact, this eye condition of nystagmus is congenital. It could be that scarlet fever made it worse. Incidentally, this is one of my favorite pictures over here. This is – see here – that's Earl and

here I am. We're feeding the chickens. That's the only picture I know of taken at that particular time. Those clothes tickle me to death – knickers- you see –

BURG: Yes.

EISENHOWER: --long black socks.

BURG: Yes.

EISENHOWER: And, of course, I wore all the hand-me-downs. Having six older brothers is devastating so far as the clothes you have to wear.

BURG: Yes, yes indeed. There again, we may add another reason for the kind of character that the entire group of you've shown throughout: that you simply took things in stride—this kind of thing. I've read books, of course, that discuss the family and discuss the fact that you had to fight in your own way. You had to fight for the things that you got—work for them hard.

EISENHOWER: Certainly we had to work, but you know I'm absolutely certain that we didn't feel that we were being imposed upon. I mean life was the way it was; it was natural. Of course most of the rest of Abilene people had to work too. Edgar is the only one who ever sensed some difference between the north and south sections of Abilene. You know this is suppose to be the wrong side of the tracks; Edgar was conscious of that. In a book he wrote he made a point of this.

BURG: Yes.

EISENHOWER: I want to say that Earl and I were utterly unconscious of any such thing. And I often talked to Ike about it; and he said, "It's just, I think, a figment of Ed's imagination."

But you know we grew so many vegetables and originally fruit that – the fruit orchard was eventually destroyed by a storm – we had things to sell – more than we could consume.

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Pages 22 - 24:

EISENHOWER: No, you see, this is – I think this is worth thinking about: How do you give a child in a city real responsibility that's honest? Children are terribly quick to sense the artificial. I mean if you make a child move a sand pile and then tell him to move it back, he knows it's phony.

BURG: Yes.

EISENHOWER: Here, since it was perfectly obvious that the work had to be done and we took it for granted that the lessons for school had to be mastered and all the rest, these things were, as I say, just as natural as sleeping and eating; and no one felt –

BURG: That horse was out there everyday –

EISENHOWER: Oh sure-

BURG: - and had to be fed.

EISENHOWER: That horse was my dearest friend, one of my dearest friends. Silver was her name. I was raised on her. And – no fooling – one of the older brothers – I think it was Ed – had teased her by blowing in her face through a pipe. She took a dislike to him and kicked him in the face one time. But Silver was my friend. I could ride her bareback; I could stand up on her back. That horse knew me, and she was mine.

BURG: Well, you and Roy then could pretty well share her –

EISENHOWER: Earl.

BURG: - Earl, rather –

EISENHOWER: Earl.

BURG: In the last –

EISENHOWER: Yes.

BURG: - years.

EISENHOWER: Oh, yes, sure.

HOME & FAMILY:

## ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with  
Reverend Ray I. Witter  
by  
Walter V. Barbash  
on  
August 28, 1964  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

This is an oral interview being done on August 28, 1964, with Reverend Ray I. Witter.

Pages 23 – 25:

MR. BARBASH: Rev. Witter, based on your weekend visits and the amount of time that you spent at the Eisenhower home, do you think you could give us a rough idea if what Ida Eisenhower was like, what sort of a woman she was?

REV. WITTER: Well, she was a woman to know her, you can see why the boys respect her as they do today. She had a talent of management in the home, the boys had their work assigned, while there were no sisters or daughters in the home, those boys had their share of the work, no matter what it was, whether it was baking or washing dishes or cleaning up floors. They had their work assigned to them, cleaning up and everything and they could do it. I remember one time the boys stated how they put the dishes away – one would stand at the dish pan, another at the cupboard and they would toss the dishes over like a ball, one to another, and they made fun out of play but Aunt Ida was a great cook and she was very able to manage the household and

command respect from her boys, from her family, and there was cooperation in the home

*Reverend Ray I. Witter Oral History* e. I'd never known them to disagree, at least, among others when I was

there, but she kept her house in good order and she controlled the boys as I would say in short.

MR. BARBASH: Rev. Witter, in line of Ida Eisenhower's beliefs, even though she was not a formal member of the Brethren in Christ Church, several authors have stated that Ida was a pacifist and as a result of this she did not let the boys play war games, do you remember this to be true?

REV. WITTER: No, because I played with the boys. In around the time of the Spanish American War, I remember when us boys built our forts, we had imaginary battles against the Spaniards and we played some war games the same as you find boys doing yet today, at least, when we was out to the farm and I don't doubt, but, what she, of course, kept it down to more of a minimum than some places but we played along that line, I well remember.

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Pages 29:

MR. BARBASH: Rev. Witter, moving on to another aspect of the family, it , also, has been stated that it was Chris Musser who provided the funds to bring David Eisenhower and Ida up from Texas after he had gone down there following the failure of his general store in Hope, and that David went to work at the creamery at the request of Chris Musser and the rest of the River Brethren and that he, by working at the creamery, paid off this loan, so to speak, do you know anything about this or have you heard anything about it in the family history?

REV. WITTER: No, I haven't heard much about this – about all I know of, they failed down there, things were not as bright as they expected and got in bad circumstances and I can easily see why Chris Musser helped him because Chris was a man there in the creamery for many,

many years and actually I can see where his influence brought David into the creamery as a source of livelihood.

HOME & FAMILY:

### ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with  
Mr. L.J. Asper  
by  
Walter V. Barbash  
on  
March 20, 1964  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

Pages 2 - 3:

MR. BARBASH: Mr. Asper, can you describe the layout of the Eisenhower family home, that is, the house, the barn, and the garden and so on?

MR. ASPER: Well, the house was about an eight room house, a big square house, the barn set right north of it and it was originally built for a doctor, veterinary doctor, and it had a lot of stalls and had a room where he worked on horses and stuff like that. It belonged to an Eisenhower that was related to Dwight – I think it was Dwight's uncle and all of their ground lived right – laid right east of the farm home and they used to farm garden , alfalfa, and stuff like that and kept cows and chickens and everything – just a small farm.

MR. BARBASH: Mr. Asper, do you remember the incident of Dwight and Edgar climbing to the barn roof and going to the edge and balancing there?

MR. ASPER: No, I don't believe I remember anything like that, I imagine this could have happened all right they was always daring each other.

Asper, do you recall being at the Eisenhower home on Sunday's when the boys had to cook?

MR. ASPER: Yeah, I remember all right. The folks had Church there at the house all the time and the kids wanted anything to eat a lot of times they'd do the cooking themselves and a lot of times we'd go camping and do cooking, too.

MR. BARBASH: Would you consider the boys good cooks?

MR. ASPER: Oh, yeah, I think they were – fine cooks.

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Pages 16 – 17:

MR. BARBASH: Mr. Asper, you knew Mr. And Mrs. Eisenhower pretty well, could you tell us what sort of people they were?

MR. ASPER: Oh, they were just wonderful people. I worked for Mr. Eisenhower for three or four years up at the creamery – he was the head engineer and one thing I liked about him – he was always for you all the time. Anytime that you had any trouble or he thought you was in trouble, why, he'd sure go to bat for you.

MR. BARBASH: Mr. Asper, do you remember any incidents where Dwight Eisenhower's father did stick up for you in a work situation?

MR. ASPER: Oh, one time we got into trouble with the boss about something or other and he came over there and took our part – told us not to do what he wanted us to do because we wasn't supposed to do that. It wasn't long after that, why, he left the creamery and went to working for the gas company.

MR. BARBASH: Mr. Asper, do you know why Mr. Eisenhower left the creamery?

MR. ASPER: No, I don't know for sure cause I was gone from there then, but, I think the place

*L.J. Asper Oral History*

1 down and needed a lot of repairs and they was blaming a lot of the accidents onto him and I think he just walked out and left her set.

MR. BARBASH: Mr. Asper, do you remember what Mrs. Eisenhower was like – what sort of a woman she was like and so on?

MR. ASPER: Oh, she was a beautiful lady, I don't know – awful religious and stuff like that, but, she sure took care of all us kids all right. She treated one of us just like she did the rest of us. She was around there playing, why, you was just like one of her boys – if they got cookies or cake or anything, why, you did too. That was the way she was all the time.

HOME & FAMILY:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with  
Nettie Stover Jackson  
by  
Dr. Maclyn Burg  
on  
May 5, 1972  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

Pages 17 – 18:

BURG: She [Ida Eisenhower] was talking with you about how she learned to handle people without getting them all riled up.

JACKSON: No, I don't think I remember anything about that, only about the disposition of Roy. Now Roy, you see, was just two years, about, older than I was. But I don't remember one thing about him, and it was Dwight that impressed me. But she did say that Roy could be around, and you wouldn't know he was there.

BURG: Milton of course ---

JACKSON: He was younger you know.

BURG: --quite young.

JACKSON: Just little.

BURG: So you hadn't paid too much attention to him?

JACKSON: No, no.

BURG: And Edgar—

JACKSON: Edgar was older. But he was working, you know, in that store, at least that evening.

*Nettie Stover Jackson Oral History*                      s working there – I think it was during the Christmas rush, I think.

BURG: Was it a clothing store?

JACKSON: This was in the basement, and I think it was a department store, I don't know.

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Page 20:

BURG: We've not asked you how you felt about David Eisenhower?

JACKSON: He was very dignified, solemn man, very dignified.

WILSON: Very proud man

JACKSON: Evidently. I was looking at a picture the other day. It was taken outdoors, and he had his sleeves rolled back and his collar unbuttoned. Why I was just amazed that he would have a picture taken like that. I think it was taken at that little house before they moved over to the two-story house.

BURG: It still made an impression on you to see him actually in that kind of an undignified dress.

JACKSON: Oh, yes. Now Aunt Ida was the power behind the throne. But she'd never let on.

It was always Dave who was the head of the house, and Dave was the head of the house.

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Pages 22 – 26:

JACKSON: Well, this was just told to me. I don't remember whether it was Grandfather Eisenhower that asked the blessing before the meal, and then after the meal you didn't leave the table until this aunt had returned thanks. And I suppose you know what a stool is. It's a kitchen

chair with the back that's been broken off of it or gone. Anyhow Dwight sat on one of those –  
*Nettie Stover Jackson Oral History*

wey came them stools. And Dwight would be so anxious to get out, and it worried Aunt Ida

because she said, "He'd never make a sound. But he'd get turned around from the table, and the minute she said 'Amen', he was off and gone like a shot."

BURG: While everyone's head was down, he was making the swing already.

JACKSON: He was all ready to go. When the last sound of the amen was out, he was gone.

And Uncle Milton said that that worried Aunt Ida. She was just afraid that he wouldn't turn out very well.

BURG: The anyone who wasn't willing to stay there and render thanks.

Well, he did. He stayed! You stayed! You stayed all right.

BURG: But his back was to the table by the time it was over.

JACKSON: No one left the table till – Now I don't know. It might have been the other way around that she asked the blessing and Grandfather returned thanks.

BURG: Of course, when you saw the house, you were a young girl. Do you remember, was it pretty much a happy house?

JACKSON: Oh, yes, there wasn't friction there.

BURG: The father was solemn –

JACKSON: Yes, there wasn't any friction there. She'd know enough not to have anything said, and the boys, they knew enough to behave. All the fun that I remember about was telling you about that riddle that Dwight told me. That's the only one I remember.

BURG: But you recollect it as being a pretty happy house to be in.

JACKSON: Oh, yes, yes, yes. She had that happy appearance, and I was thinking this morning—I was looking a a picture that was taken of the boys when they were all up in

Wisconsin, and Edgar had his head thrown back and laughing. And Milton, when we were there  
*Nettie Stover Jackson Oral History*

101 DICEKIASI 1 01 MARCH, I DON'T know what caused him to or what I had said or what, but,  
anyhow, he just laughed to beat the band. I doubt his father ever laughed out loud in his life.  
You can erase that.

BURG: In other words, a religious household that was not solemn and grim in any way.

JACKSON: No. Did you ever see that drawing of the pyramids that Uncle Dave made?

WILSON: Yes.

BURG: I've never seen it.

WILSON: I'm, familiar with it. I can't remember seeing it, but I know what you are talking  
about.

JACKSON: I wish I had studied it more. But he was a studious man. I can see why he didn't  
want to be a farmer. He impressed you as never being dirty and always clean – well a farmer  
can't be always clean. But he always, you know, he just kept a distance. But he was a scholar.

WILSON: He always took everything very seriously.

JACKSON: Oh, yes.

WILSON: When he studied the Bible, I understand that he just really devoted a great amount of  
time to it.

JACKSON: He studied it. Now Aunt Ida studied it for the good she'd get out of it, but I think  
he was interested in the, well, like the dimensions in the pyramid and so on.

BURG: He was always kindly to you in your relationship, distant but –

JACKSON: Distant, just distant. No, there wasn't anything that was unkindly, no. But I don't  
remember ever having said a word to him. He wasn't well the last time we were there, and my  
youngest boy, this must have been about 1940, and we tad taken some watermelons up, my

mother and sister and I. She had a little boy, and I had a four-year-old. So we decided before dinner that we'd take those youngsters out on the back porch, you know, it's sort of enclosed, there where they have the dry sink, or did have it. Take them out there, and then they wouldn't have this watermelon all over. Anyhow, all I remember is he looked at us, feeding the children first, you know, and not having them come to the table. But we had to help them with their food, and so my sister and I decided we'd let them eat out on the porch first. And I remember we took the watermelon out there because that was the thought back there of taking them back on the porch so they wouldn't --. But anyhow I can remember him looking and -- we sure did something wrong by letting them eat first.

BURG: But he never said it. He just looked at you but he never --

JACKSON: He never said a word but, boy, you could just see that look. Course he wasn't well

*Nettie Stover Jackson Oral History*

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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.

*Nettie Stover Jackson Oral History*                      rden 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 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  
*Nettie Stover Jackson Oral History*                      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.

CHURCH & RELIGION:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Rev. Ray I. Witter  
on  
August 28, 1964  
by  
WALTER V. BARBASH  
Oral Historian  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

This is an oral interview on August 28, 1964, with Rev. Ray I. Witter.

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 then 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.

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Page 7:

From the start of the Church—was one of the things that has always been taught against and also in many forms of entertainment—such as dancing and shows, wrong kind of shows, and exciting places. They lived rather reserved separate life from all these things. They strongly emphasized to abstain from all the appearance of evil and that light and darkness can not mix and the Christian life is a separate life, a clean life, that there is many things that don’t go along with real Christian living according to Bible teaching. So, they taught separation from many things which are going on around about, tobacco and liquor were out, drinking, and gambling and all those things, worldly gatherings and customs were out. They believed in more of a simple life, dedicated life and they found their entertainment, enjoyment, largely, in the Church alone—was very pronounced in the early Church.

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Pages 9-11:

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, would you explain the ordinance of the love feast?

REV.WITTER: The love feast was a great annual occasion. We used to get some of the biggest crowd's right here in the county. As a boy, I well remember when we'd have such overflow crowds that we had extra preaching outside in the yards, they couldn't get in the Church—usually came together in Saturday morning—preparation was made and meals were served, a simple meal in the church in the basement, and daytime was a time of examination, the morning was an inspirational service, in the afternoon there were two scriptures used—the Fourth of Ephesians and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians the 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter in reference to the prayer veiling, for the sisters and these messages were along the line of clean living and proper relationship between the members, no unforgiveness, and there was frequently quite a time if anyone cried unforgiveness before they came to the Communion table in the evening that was cleared up, straightened up, teaching was that it should be, before the Communion service and was often carried out. So there was, also a time of testimony which often times was quite an inspirational part of the service where different ones testified to their real experiences and blessing which they had attained and were enjoying.

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, could you, now, tell us a little bit about the veiling of the sisters, what is the belief based on and what form of veiling do the sisters wear?

REV.WITTER: This is centered upon Corinthians, which has already been cited, and we noticed in the scripture there Jesus or where the apostle, Paul, rather makes it clear that man's head should be uncovered, inasmuch as he is the Glory of God, and women, being created for man—man is her head and we look upon it like this—Christ is our Head and then man and then woman and this sign of authority by the prayer veiling gives her the right to pray or prophecy in service,

public assemblies, the same as anyone else. We call it a prayer veiling but the same word says that a woman's head should be covered, or a revised version veiled in her approach in recognition of her head and as her being subordinate. The prayer veilings were usually of a white material and made conveniently to be worn on the head in public worship and there are those that felt to wear it more to the extent that whenever they prayed they felt that they should have their head veiled.

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, could you describe the two different types of veiling that the women wear?

REV. WITTER: Yes, there is the prayer veiling—this prayer veiling required something different to fit and be practical so women wore a bonnet which was placed over the prayer veiling as a matter of convenience and as a matter of their own making and the two go together really from a practical standpoint.

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Pages 21-23:

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, I wondered if you could remember enough to describe an average weekend that you spent at the Eisenhower Home.

REV. WITTER: Yes, along with our playing, there was strict discipline in the home, but not unreasonable and Aunt Ida was a great cook, knew how to prepare a great table, and discipline was such that when "yes" was said it was obeyed and when "no" was said it was obeyed and the word was law, respected, highly respected. I remember the first thing in the morning when breakfast was ready, was the family worship, Uncle Dave, the father, always read the Bible and we all bowed together around this circle in prayer. That was in the beginning of the day, prayer was often given at every meal three times a day and that was expected. I remember on Sunday

they had Bible study in the home and the adults they gathered together—the children were not included in that but the boys were sent to the Brethren in Christ Sunday school here on 7<sup>th</sup> and Buckeye and there is where they attended Sunday school.

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, I believe you attended Sunday school with Dwight Eisenhower, what kind of a Sunday school student was he?

REV. WITTER: Well, I think Dwight, it could be said was about as common as any that particular age when the teacher wonders, sometimes, whether they are getting anything across because the boy's interest often times are varied—many times, quite far away. But I can't remember Dwight as being a great debater or strong inquirer, he wasn't outspoken, but polite, as all of the boys were raised to be but that is as far as I remember of their conduct. They knew what it was to behave in Church—they had that orders and they were, also, reverent in church when they went to services.

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, did the Eisenhower boys and, particularly Dwight, attend the Brethren in Christ Church regularly or did they attend other Churches in town and did Dwight ever become a member of the Brethren in Christ Church?

REV. WITTER: No, Dwight never became a member and they never attended other Churches of any degree, otherwise, to my knowledge.

MR: BARBASH: Rev. Witter, was Mrs. Eisenhower a member of the Brethren in Christ Church?

REV. WITTER: I had this question on my mind and more recent year when Aunt Amanda Musser was still living and her mind was clear, because of different views being taken around by different ones and I asked her “Did Aunt Ida ever belong to the Church?” and Aunt Amanda

said, “No, she did not”, but she worked along, helped along, and came along for a number of years and cooperated.

MR. BARBASH: Rev. Witter, was David Eisenhower, Dwight’s Father, a member of the Brethren in Christ Church?

REV. WITTER: No, I understand he, neither, belonged to the Church as much as he had, for a while there, supported it and went right along, but I couldn’t find out, even Aunt Amanda that I’d asked, she didn’t have knowledge of his ever being a member.

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Pages 28-29:

MR. BARBASH: Rev. Witter, I’d like to get into a little bit of the family history now, there has been quite a bit of writing and talking about Ida Eisenhower’s connection with the Jehovah’s Witnesses Church, I wonder if you could give us any background or if you can tell us anything that you remember from family talk about this.

REV. WITTER: I remember this, I didn’t know what it was in the early years—they generally referred to that Sunday Afternoon meeting as a Bible Class but as that continued on and on, why, I discovered it was Jehovah’s Witness meeting which they, the parents, attended. It was held at their home occasionally, later on it was held at other places and while they didn’t have ordained ministers—they had their form of doctrine and interpretation of the Bible that they followed.

MR. BARBASH: Do you know how Ida Eisenhower became interested in the Church and how she was brought into the Church?

REV. WITTER: I’m not able to say who interested her but there was a time and period of her life, this was what my aunt told me, when she was seeking satisfaction of her own experience, she run across this doctrine and got started reading and finally absorbed it and took up with it.

But father, in later years, of course, gave it up—he couldn't go on through with it. I visited him before he died and had the satisfaction that he dropped out from that belief—from that doctrine.

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Pages 38-41:

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, could you tell us, now, what a service is like in the River Brethren in Christ Church as it is, as it exists today, [1964] just to give us an idea of the difference between the early Church and the present Church?

REV. WITTER: Yes, there is quite a difference today, in this age in which we live. Our services today we have music in the Church, nearly every Church has an organ and, occasionally other instruments are used. There is special singing—solos, duets, and quartets, choruses and choirs and the Sunday Schools are well organized and the services are, usually, given out by bulletins, you know ahead when you come to Church Sunday morning what's expected, and the ministers now are supported pastorates and only one man at a place, he may have a lay minister or call on somebody else in case of emergency but, services copy quite closely along with other Churches today on various lines.

MR.BARBASH: Is the Church still pacifist in its belief toward war?

REV. WITTER: Yes, we still maintain a pacifist view and our young men are taking, 1W service, alternate service, in various institutions which are recommended by the government and are serving other places—some of the men have for a number of years served those two or three years without any compensation even from the government—done something that was helpful, something that was a ministry to suffering humanity. As many of our boys feel that the soldier boys make a sacrifice, they, too, ought to be willing to make a sacrifice—some have even given themselves as guinea pigs to experiment on the different vaccines, medicines, and they have

gone into all kinds of labor in mental hospitals and what have you, so many things that way, the government has recommended for the boys to engage in to spend their several years of time and receive an honorable discharge.

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, I noticed that you are wearing clerical dress, could you, please, tell us how long this has been part of the tradition of the Brethren in Christ Church?

REV. WITTER: As far back as I remember, our ministry has always maintained a clerical garb. It's being lost sight of today this is quite general, in years gone by because I remember Methodist, Baptists, and various churches wore the Prince Albert coat or military collar or had a clerical vest and we believe the ministry should be identified, let you know who he is when you meet him and quite a lot of our men yet today wear the clergy and some are leaving it off perhaps it may be lost sight of in the course of years.

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, do the male members of your Church still wear beards and cut their hair in a special way and wear very plain clothes?

REV. WITTER: No, very little, some of the older ones do but beards had been discarded. It's very rare thing to find anyone any more, naturally, in the years gone by that didn't even mean as much. If you follow up the army records, you will find that it was a case of "have to" back in the Civil War back in through three, it was considered as a case of dignity and it didn't mean as much back in those years but it's rapidly being lost sight of, you may go quite a while now until you find one that does any more and the Church is changing on this line.

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, I think that concludes our interview and unless you have anything to add, anything that you have thought of, since the interview began that you think would be worth leaving to the historians who will use this interview I would like to end this interview and express to you the most heartfelt thanks of the staff of the Eisenhower Library for giving them

the opportunity to interview you and giving us the opportunity, let us say, of interviewing you and giving the historians a little piece of something to work with.

REV. WITTER: I think I could say this with all due respect to any other groups—that the group that came out here from Pennsylvania and the elderly people will substantiate my statement, were very progressive people and they were industrious and were great farmers and they made contributions to the country that are, I think I can say, are enjoying the impact of it yet today. We have had a very good heritage from those that come out from the east and settle up this country and I think some of the cooperation and some of the commonness that gave service to all men under, some times, sacrifice could be renewed but I appreciate my heritage and I'm glad for my background.

MR.BARBASH: Rev. Witter, I'd like to thank you very, very much.

SCHOOL & EDUCATION:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Orin Snider  
on  
October 6, 1964  
by  
Walter V. Barbash  
Oral Historian  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

This is an oral history interview with Orin Snider on October 6, 1964.

Pages1-4:

MR.BARBASH: How did you first meet him? [Dwight D. Eisenhower] Did you live near him?

MR.SNIDER: Oh, yes

MR.ENDACOTT: He lived right across over here in this house—

MR.SNIDER: I lived about a half-mile southeast of here.

MR.ENDACOTT: He was raised right there along side of him.

MR.BARBASH: You grew up with him and Red Asper, then, didn't you?

MR.SNIDER: Well, I was older

MR.BARBASH: Oh, I see. Did you play with him when you were a youngster or were you still too old to do that?

MR.SNIDER: Well, I was a little old for him and more with Ed.

MR.BARBASH: Did you ever go on any of their vegetable selling expeditions?

MR.SNIDER: No, I was too busy on the farm.

MR.BARBASH: How about high school—you coached him in just his graduate year—right?

MR.SNIDER: Postgraduate.

MR.BARBASH: Postgraduate?

MR.SNIDER: Yeah. They didn't have any rules against postgraduate—those days.

MR.ENDACOTT: What kind of a team did they have that year? —Pretty good?

MR.SNIDER: Well, that was a pretty fair team, they won a little over half of their games, I don't know, I don't think in those days—we didn't try to teach the fundamentals too much—didn't go in for hard football—just more fun.

MR.ENDACOTT: Did they have a regular schedule that the schools they played between the schools just like they do now?

MR.SNIDER: Yeah.

MR.ENDACOTT: Who set those things up? The coaches?

MR.SNIDER: Oh, coaches and the principals.

MR.BARBASH: How come you were picked to be the coach?

MR.SNIDER: Well, they didn't have any money to hire a coach then—I was one of the poor man's coaches.

MR.ENDACOTT: Didn't they pay you any salary?

MR.SNIDER: No, I farmed during the day and when it was corn shucking time I'd shuck corn till about a half hour before school was out and go in and hitch the horse and buggy and go in and coach them—I'd go in about three times a week—then I did all the refereeing—didn't have the money to hire a referee.

MR.BARBASH: What was your practice like—did you have any set routine in practice or did you just get the boys together and show them a few plays or what?

MR.SNIDER: Well, of course, we had to have our signals figured out and give them their plays.

MR.ENDACOTT: What position did Ike play there—half back?

MR.SNIDER: No. Left Tackle.

MR.ENDACOTT: Left tackle?

MR.BARBASH: If you could call it a system—what kind of a system did you use?

MR.SNIDER: Well, there wasn't much system to it—but get in there and give them a few fake plays and try to teach them who to hit and when to hit them.

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Page 6:

MR.BARBASH: What sort of uniforms did you have for the team?

MR.SNIDER: Anything they could pick up.

MR.BARBASH: Where did they get them—who paid for them—the school?

MR.SNIDER: They did.

MR.BARBASH: They paid for their own?

MR.SNIDER: Uh-huh. We bought one football—beginning of the year and we saved that—we had an old one left over from the year before and we saved the new one for the games and the next year why we used that for practice and they just had to pick up their own uniforms.

MR.BARBASH: I see.

MR.ENDACOTT: There wasn't any color arrangement or anything else on it then, was there?

MR.SNIDER: No colors or sweaters.

MR.ENDACOTT: How could you tell the other side then?

MR.SNIDER: Well, you just had to take your chance.

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Pages 23-25:

MR.BARBASH: How about pulling guards—did you use pulling guards?

MR.SNIDER: No.

MR.BARBASH: How about the forward pass—did you use the forward pass often in those days?

MR.SNIDER: Yeah, but Bud Hoffman did all of that—he was really good.

MR.BARBASH: It was legal then, huh? The forward pass?

MR.SNIDER: Oh, yes, the last year I played—1906—went to high school—1906—is when they started it.

MR.BARBASH: How about the shape of the football—it was more round in those days?

MR.SNIDER: It was larger.

MR.BARBASH: I see.

MR.SNIDER: You couldn't—it was harder to pass than the football now, you couldn't—Bud could throw a spiral but he was the only one that I ever saw that could do it.

MR.BARBASH: Who was your drop kicker then—wasn't the drop kick pretty good those days with the almost round ball?

MR.SNIDER: No, we didn't try much of that—we went for touchdown.

MR.BARBASH: How about the extra point?

MR.SNIDER: Well, Bud kicked those, but if I remember—I know when I was playing a few years before that why, they only count one point—touchdown 5 and point after touchdown was 1 point.

MR.BARBASH: How many players did you have on the team in those days?

MR.SNIDER: Eleven

MR.BARBASH: Eleven?

MR.SNIDER: Carried two substitutes.

MR.BARBASH: That's all?

MR.SNIDER: Yeah. Two substitutes and always carried our own official.

MR.ENDACOTT: How did you get from one town to the other—by train?

MR.SNIDER: Train.

MR.BARBASH: Did the boys pay their own fare?

MR.SNIDER: No, the school they played would send them generally 14 or 15 tickets.

MR.BARBASH: I see.

MR.SNIDER: On the train.

MR.BARBASH: How about this story of them jumping the freight, do you remember that one—when they had to—didn't have money to get to the next town?

MR.SNIDER: I don't think there's anything to that.

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Pages 28-29:

MR.BARBASH: Wes Merrifield was in town about six months ago and he claims that Ike didn't win that fight with him—that Wes really won—do you know what the true story on that is?

MR.SNIDER: No, the way I always heard was a kind of a draw that Ike met him once when he was back and asked him if he had any ambitions to try it again and he said that he was the most unambitious man in Abilene—Ike grew and he didn't. Well, we always had trouble when these South side kids had to go up to North side to take that 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade and they always tried to hang it on to us. My brother got in a fight with a Negro and two of them jumped on to him and he said "Where is the kid?" and I dropped my old dinner box and plowed in, one Negro whirled and hit me and he knocked me about 15 feet, I was sit down against a big elm tree, teacher came a running down and she grabbed them and he had knocked me so far she didn't even know I was in the pack.

MR.ENDACOTT: They don't seem to have that trouble any more though, do they?

MR.SNIDER: No. They've got—I don't know the farmer kids had learned a little bit and the—they just kinda respect them a little more than they used to.

MR.ENDACOTT: We don't have that trouble between the south side and the north side any more.

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Pages 33-36:

MR.ENDACOTT: Well, where did you practice football here—where was your football field?

MR.SNIDER: Let's see—when Ike was playing it was at the fair grounds.

MR.ENDACOTT: Out at the old fair grounds or the ones where we are now?

MR.SNIDER: The ones where we are now but before that why we were at the old fair grounds.

MR.BARBASH: Where were the old fair grounds located?

MR.ENDACOTT: That's over where the city dump is now—that used to be the circus grounds and the fair grounds and I don't know how they ever happened to move over here but they bought this ground over here and put the fair grounds over there. I don't know what year—it's been there ever since I can remember.

MR.BARBASH: How about—you practiced and played your games at the fair ground or just practiced?

MR.SNIDER: Well, no, we used to practice over at the Garfield—we didn't have any play ground. That was where the City Auditorium is now and we'd go up there and practice—too far to go out to the fair grounds. This was in 1906.

MR.ENDACOTT: You played your games out there, though?

MR.SNIDER: Yeah, I think the best game we ever had—in the time that I was playing was [S]14.10.

MR.BARBASH: You mean they charged admission?

MR.SNIDER: Yeah.

MR.BARBASH: Do you remember what the admission charge was?

MR.SNIDER: A quarter.

MR.BARBASH: A quarter?

MR.ENDACOTT: You didn't get very many customers then if you only got fourteen dollars in.

MR.BARBASH: Where did the money go—what was it used for?

MR.SNIDER: Car fare and expenses and they claim that Ike's athletic association was the first one ever had—we had one when I was in school there—we had everybody—pretty near

everybody signed up and we'd have a two bit assessment whenever we'd run out of money, we just made an assessment—but we didn't begin to break even.

MR.ENDACOTT: Gosh, no, you couldn't—I bet you had more people sneak in than you got paid, though, didn't you?

MR.SNIDER: Yeah, they sneaked in on us and come across the creek and come in from the west side.

MR.ENDACOTT: There was no fence around it or anything was there?

MR.SNIDER: Huh?

MR.ENDACOTT: No fence around the ball field?

MR.SNIDER: No.

MR.BARBASH: How about the referees—you say that you refereed yourself—there were no paid referees in this area at that time?

MR.SNIDER: No. Oh, I worked with some paid referees—Chapman had one out there one time. I had to carry a rulebook to prove my points to him once in a while.

MR.BARBASH: How about the—I think of the authors mentioned a baseball game against Kansas State that Ike played in, did you ever remember that? Six was pitching and Ike was playing right field—the story goes that Ike muffed a fly or something and lost the game for Six.

MR.SNIDER: Well, you can prove that very easily by looking at that post card—who that was against—I think it was against Junction City.

MR.BARBASH: Junction City, Huh?

MR.ENDACOTT: Yeah, it says Junction City right on that card—it wasn't against Kansas State.

MR.SNIDER: Chapman's the only one that I know of that played Kansas State one year—  
Kansas State beat them pretty bad.

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Pages 44-46:

MR.BARBASH: What kind of helmets did you have?

MR.SNIDER: Well, we'd get a women's stocking and cut it off and tie a knot around that and roll it and put it over our heads.

MR.BARBASH: How about padding—did you have shoulder pads?

MR.SNIDER: Yeah. The farmer boys would bring in sweat pads from the horses and they would cut that in chunks about that big a square and pass them around and they would sew them in their sweaters for shoulder pads.

MR.BARBASH: How about—did you use hip pads?

MR.SNIDER: No.

MR.BARBASH: How about thigh pads?

MR.SNIDER: About what?

MR.BARBASH: Thigh pads?

MR.SNIDER: Oh, some of them had rattan strips and some had quilted—about that thick—  
about like and—

MR.BARBASH: What kind of material were the pants made of?

MR.SNIDER: Oh, duck and mine—my dad wouldn't buy me any so Frank Parent was coaching then and gave me a pair of football pants—mine was that white cotton cloth and a little bit of quilting on it.

MR.BARBASH: How about you—the shoes—did they have football shoes?

MR.SNIDER: Well, we took a pair of kinda worn out dress shoes and we'd nail one cleat that way—well, that's all the cleat we had that there V-shape and we'd do it ourselves.

SCHOOL & EDUCATION:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
John F. "SIX" McDonnell  
by  
J. Earl Endacott  
on  
February 26, 1970  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

Pages 8-11:

McDONNELL: That's right. Well, anyway, I didn't care much about football, but I did play quarterback for three years I think, the last three years. But there I was thinking about making that baseball club; I was a baseball player.

ENDACOTT: That was always what you liked.

McDONNELL: Yes, and I was pretty good at it. And here come these two big guys across the playgrounds, you know, Dwight and Ed. Well, they was the big shots in our school you know, campus, whatever you call it, and hollering at me, “Hey, Six come here.” And I wondered what the heck they wanted with me so I went over there and I swagger, “What do you want?”

“Well,” they says, “I’m President of the Athletic Association and we’re going to start baseball pretty soon now, middle of February”, I think he said, “and have you been considering going out for the ball club?” And I said, “Yes, I have. I think I can make your ball club, as an outfielder.” And they says, “We got news for you, you’re going to be the pitcher.” Yeah, just like that. And I said “Pitcher, I’m no pitcher, I’m an infielder.” I’d played kid ball in the infield, second base. I was left-handed and that’s no good either you know, but I didn’t know anything different then. I could field and I could throw but I said, “I’m no pitcher.” They said, “Oh, we think you are. Anyway our big pitcher has moved to Colorado.” That was a fellow named Gene Eddy, remember him?

ENDACOTT: I didn’t even know him.

McDONNELL: He was the big football star and a pitcher too, and their family moved to Colorado. So he says, “We haven’t got any pitcher and you’re going to be the pitcher.” I said again, “Why, I don’t know anything about pitching.” “Well, we’ve been watching you play out here on the playgrounds and everywhere and you have a great arm and you got the best arm in school and you’re going to be the pitcher.” “O.K. I’ll give it a try.” So I was the pitcher and I didn’t know—

ENDACOTT: And you were a good one too, according to the—

McDONNELL: Well, I won five and lost five, that wasn’t very good.

ENDACOTT: Well, that was 500 per cent, that's pretty good.

McDONNELL: Yes, but you know in the next three years, I wasn't beaten by a high school team.

ENDACOTT: Yes, you played even the KU [Kansas University] freshman team once.

McDONNELL: Yes, I lost that game.

ENDACOTT: You lost that game.

McDONNELL: Dwight lost it for me; he claimed he did anyway.

ENDACOTT: Yes, he told me that one time. He said, "You know that damn Six, I lost the ball game for him."

McDONNELL: Well, he really didn't, but he really worried about that. That was when I started to realize what a fine character he had. Well, the way it was, I think the game was 1 to 0 in our favor, or 2 to 0, I forget which, about the seventh inning. KU had a left-handed pitcher by the name of Doyle who was on the freshman team, of course. The next three years he was on the KU varsity and was a real good pitcher, but I had him beat, I think it was 1 to 0.

SCHOOL & EDUCATION:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Lelia Grace Picking  
on  
January 27, 1965  
by  
Walter V. Barbash  
Oral Historian  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

MISS PICKING: The city building stood at the site of the present Municipal building at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

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Pages 7-10:

PICKING: I do not recall the time of this injury but there is a record in the high school annual that Dwight was listed in the class that would have graduated in 1908. On account of this injury he was not allowed to go back to school and therefore started in the same year that we did so he was graduated in 1909. I wrote to Dwight, personally, concerning this and he said that he thinks that this is the correct history as far as he is able to remember.

BARBASH: Miss Picking, do you recall when you first met Dwight Eisenhower and what your impression was?

PICKING: Well, I haven’t a very clear picture of Dwight in the first year. I have a better picture of Edgar, because Edgar was in my Latin class and coming from the country, Latin was most difficult for me and I know that Edgar thought it was quite funny when one would get a zero or a “goose-egg” each time and each day of recitation but in a few months I could make circles all around him so I remember Edgar, but I remember Dwight in the classes and particularly in our Junior and Seniors histories, and also, the physics class but, particularly, in the history classes.

BARBASH: Miss Picking, can you give us the location of the old high school that you and Dwight first attended and then the location of the new one, just for our records?

PICKING: The old high school was the city hall—it was a brick building with quite a dome on it—this housed the fire bell. It was at the corner of Broadway and 5<sup>th</sup> Street where the municipal building now stands. The new high school stood at the north end of Spruce Street. It faced the

south and was just about a half a block off the Buckeye on Seventh Street between Buckeye and the Garfield School.

BARBASH: Miss Picking, you mentioned the fact that the boys in town were sort of a volunteer fire department so that when the firemen rang the bell they all left school and if the fire wasn't of any great importance they would spend the time to purchase candy for the girls—did Dwight—was Dwight part of the volunteer fire department and did he participate in these candy buying expeditions?

PICKING: Well, I don't know as I could recall a specific incident where Dwight helped to man this hose cart, but it was a rule that the boys were allowed to do this, and he probably was among them because he, as I stated, was a boy of action. Usually, the upper classmen had the first place.

BARBASH: Miss Picking, you mentioned earlier in your talk the fact that you had a daily Bible session in one of the rooms of the school. I wonder if you'd care to comment on this in light of the recent Supreme Court decision, that is, were all children of all religious faiths allowed to attend and what was the Bible that was used—was it a Bible of a particular religious group?

PICKING: I stated in my talk on Dwight that we had our chapel in the east room of the old city hall building and everyone was allowed to attend. The King James Bible was used a few, not too many comments on it. We, often, had a speaker who would give us a talk and then we, also, each time we had chapel repeated the Lord's Prayer. All religious faiths were included in this. They, at least, were there, if they were not allowed to take part that was quite all right and in the new high school we had a stage and I remember the teachers sat upon the stage and I, also, remember Mr. Stacey many times giving excellent talks based on the Bible and we learned to

know the favorite scripture passage of each one of the teachers because they took turns in leading the devotions in chapel.

BARBASH: Miss Picking, there has been quite a bit of comment and reporting on the antagonism between the north side children and the children from the south side—I wonder if you could tell us at least, when you were in high school and a classmate of Dwight’s whether or not you ran across this feeling and whether it made itself evident in any form.

PICKING: I feel that this has been quite a build-up for in our attending school we did not know a great deal or hear a great deal that Dwight lived south of the tracks and others lived north. Of course, I lived in the country—this may be the reason why I did not get the drift of that too often, but I have felt during the years that in those days south of the tracks and north of the tracks did not spell a great difference.

BARBASH: Miss Picking, you say you lived in the country when you went to school with Dwight. Did you have to, so to speak, commute to school every day or did you live in town during the school year?

PICKING: We certainly commuted every day. We would get up at 5:00 o’clock every morning, milk cows and get in the buggy and ride those four miles to school and go home again and do our chores and do our studying. My sister was valedictorian so you may know we put in good days. We used to sing our high school anthems and repeat our memory work going to and from school. We drove an old sorrel horse. He went to school for 10 years. We called him the “educated horse.”

WORK, PLAY & ENTERTAINMENT:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Orin Snider  
on  
October 6, 1964  
by  
Walter V. Barbash  
Oral Historian  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

This is an oral history interview with Orin Snider on October 6, 1964.

Pages 38-40:

MR.BARBASH: Did they call Ike “big Ike” or “little Ike” then—

MR.SNIDER: Yeah.

BARBASH: “Little Ike?”

SNIDER: “Little Ike.”

ENDACOTT: Wonder where that name “Ike” came from?

SNIDER: I don’t know how that ever started.

ENDACOTT: That was stuck on them from the very beginning and nobody seems to be able to tell where that came from.

SNIDER: I don’t know—might have started at the creamery.

ENDACOTT: Could have.

BARBASH: You didn’t work at the creamery with him, did you?

SNIDER: No.

BARBASH: Did you ever go up there and hang around like some of the other guys did?

SNIDER: I did when Ed was there—we used to go down and buy ice cream—buy a gallon and go over in the engine room and eat it.

BARBASH: What kind of work did Ike do there?

SNIDER: Pulled ice. Let’s see—one of them did some firing.

ENDACOTT: That was Ike.

SNIDER: Was it?

BARBASH: Yeah, later on he did some.

ENDACOTT: He fired the boilers at night over there.

SNIDER: Yeah?

BARBASH: He, also, pressed butter, too, according to Mrs. Long.

SNIDER: He might have.

ENDACOTT: That “pulling ice” is hard work isn’t it?

SNIDER: Oh, yeah, of course, they had those chain hoists to pull them up.

ENDACOTT: Yeah, but you had to pull on that chain, don’t you?

SNIDER: Oh, yeah, you got plenty of exercise.

BARBASH: How about the story I heard recently that he fell in one of those ice cream buckets one time—did you ever hear about that?

SNIDER: Well, they fixed that trap up for Harry Rumbarger—Oh, Ike did fall in.

WORK, PLAY & ENTERTAINMENT:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Ivan M. Fitzwater  
by  
John E. Wickman and Maclyn P. Burg  
on  
February 1970 and May 28, 1976  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

Pages 6-13:

WICKMAN: No, I meant where did you live? I mean where physically in the town did you live?

FITZWATER: We lived with my grandmother, of course, as I mentioned before, just off of Buckeye on East Seventh Street. The house was the second house from what was alley behind Cleason Brown's home. My grandmother's house was the second house on the East Seventh Street east of Buckeye on the south side of the street. Now I can't remember the street number; isn't that something? It was a flat roof topped house (no inside plumbing).

WICKMAN: Well, is it the one that, the house A.L. Duckwall lives in now?

FITZWATER: Oh, no. No, it's not that one. It was on the other side of Buckeye Street from Uncle Lease Duckwall's home.

WICKMAN: East of Buckeye.

FITZWATER: Yes. At that time Cleason Brown lived on the corner of Seventh and Buckeye; high school's there now, I believe.

WICKMAN: No, junior high school.

FITZWATER: Junior high. And so that's where we lived from 1905 to 1909. And, oh, it was just a nice neighborhood bunch of young fellows to play around with. We had a great time, like

I mentioned. Playing shinny on Sundays, etc., and these kids weren't any angels, I wasn't either, but when we were out playing that way, really I never did see any smoking and no liquor, nothing of that kind. There might have been among some of them at other times, but not on those occasions. And we kids had a swimming hole up northwest of Abilene on Mud Creek.

[Interruption]

FITZWATER: Well, now, let's see, we were up at the swimming hole.

WICKMAN: We were talking about Abilene.

FITZWATER: About the swimming hole. That was quite a thing in the summertime there.

WICKMAN: Was that on Mud Creek?

FITZWATER: On Mud Creek. It seems to me it was up, oh, pretty well up there not too far from where the cemetery is, you know, that far up. And the creek was just right for we kids you know, depth and all. And I went out there one Saturday and I spent the whole day putting up a springing board for we kids. And the very next day I went out there and, before I got up to the swimming hole, I could see a bunch of people there, (no kids). And come to find out some fellow, I don't remember his name—he'd been drinking, it was brought out later—and he was going to show the boys how to make a dive. And he made a dive off of this springboard and he hit his head on the bottom of the pond and paralyzed him and he died within twenty-four hours. He was unconscious when I got there. And so I tore the springboard down, never used after that; spoiled it for us, you know. We kids could dive off of it and no trouble at all, and this fellow, if he hadn't been drinking, he probably would have been all right. But that was pretty sad. In the wintertime we kids did a lot of skating on Mud Creek. We'd skate, some of us, starting north of town, go clear down to the Smokey Hill River, many times, with our skates. And we'd build fires along the way, occasionally you know, to thaw out our feet and so on. And, oh, we had

another swimming hole later when we were a little older, down on the Smokey Hill River. That was west of the power plant, Brown's power plant, Brown's power plant or mill they called it, anyway it was west of that, not very far. It was across the road from a family by the name of Ross. They had two boys; Ernie was the younger one, Harley I believe his name was, the older one. By that time I was night operator in the Bell Telephone long distance telephone office so my summer days were free, plenty of time for swimming.

WICKMAN: Now how old were you when you got that job?

FITZWATER: Well, I started in there in 1908, so I was sixteen. So in the daytime I didn't have to work at all; so I spent a lot of time in the swimming hole along with some of the others. Now this might be of interest to some of the folks there. This Bell Telephone office was upstairs over what was then Charley Townsend's drugstore; the location was 3<sup>rd</sup> and Broadway, where, I believe is [was], the Abilene National Bank, isn't it or one of the bank, is there, now.

WICKMAN: Yes, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Broadway.

FITZWATER: Well, it was on the corner. And there was an outside iron stairway to get up to this office, (telephone office). At that time, the local telephones and the long distance telephones are entirely separate—they weren't even connected, there was no way to connect them. If we got a call from someone in Abilene, we had to send a messenger out, if that person had a phone it wasn't even connected up, you see. It might interest some to know that long distance calls were limited to a distance of about 200 miles, after that, voices would just fade out. (That's the way it was at that time.)

WICKMAN: I see, did he have to come in?

FITZWATER: Yes. If a long distance call would come into Abilene for someone in Abilene, we'd have to get a messenger and send out and get them, see. Of course, I was on duty all night

seven nights a week—had a folding cot, army type cot, you see. Sometimes I could sleep pretty near through the night, without interruption, and many times I'd be up maybe half dozen times during the night, you know, to answer calls and so on. I also had to relieve the day operator between twelve noon there and one p.m. every day and then Sundays. I had to work Sunday afternoons, as I remember to relieve the say operator. And let's see, what else--. While I was on night duty there, there was a livery stable that burned, which was on Buckeye between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> on the west side of the street, and I could look right out the window and see that, and that thing burned clear down one night and some horses were burned in that fire. I didn't know a thing about it till the next morning; I evidently hadn't been waked up during that night, you see.

WICKMAN: When did you first become aware of the Eisenhower family in Abilene.

FITZWATER: The first I remember of the Eisenhower boys, they were just—Eisenhowers, just another family in town, that's all. And the fact that they went to Lincoln School on the south side—I went to Garfield on the north side—we seldom came in contact with each other. So the first time I remember of the Eisenhower boys was when I'd go down and watch them practice football on this athletic field which was then in the block where the fire station is, or was, may be still that way. (I believe the Library is there now.)

WICKMAN: In age you were actually between what, the General and Milton? You're older than Milton but younger than the General?

FITZWATER: Well, the other boys, I didn't know any of them except Earl. Earl is the younger one, wasn't it Earl?

WICKMAN: No, Milton is the youngest.

FITZWATER: No, what was the one in the picture there that let his hair grow? Roy. I'm sort of mixed up as to Eisenhower boys, other than Big "Ike", Edgar, and little "Ike", Dwight.

WICKMAN: Roy, yes, he went to Junction City.

FITZWATER: Now Roy, of course he was quite a bit younger, younger than I, you see. But the other boys I didn't even know them, no. And somehow or other I just admired those Eisenhower boys; they were such wonderful athletes, Edgar and Dwight, they were good in their playing; they showed good sportsmanship always you know; just plain type of fellows. And they weren't the only outstanding athletes in the high school at that time—of course, Herb Sommers was another one; he was catcher for the baseball team most of the time while he was in high school—probably one of the best that Abilene High ever had. So there were others that were outstanding too but something about these Eisenhower fellows that just, there was an attraction there somewhere. Well, Dwight, Little Ike they called him, he laughed a good deal, seemed to be a happy sort of fellow. I can remember that so well; about every time I'd see him, you know, he'd be laughing, kidding with the fellows and all.

WICKMAN: So then you really didn't know them until they got to high school, and you were all in high school at the same time, 1908 and 1909.

FITZWATER: No, I really didn't; I really didn't. Now in high school I was what you might say an athletic type, but I didn't go in for football. It got too rough for me. I was afraid that I might have an injury of some kind that might bother me the rest of my days; so I decided it wasn't worth it; so I didn't go in for football in high school.

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Pages 38-44:

WICKMAN: Let's go back to Abilene for a minute. You want to tell me your badger story again; I think we ought to save that; I think that's one of the great stories.

FITZWATER: Well, now first of all I want you to know that this is absolutely true because (I was there).

WICKMAN: We can probably find it; I'm sure we can find it in the newspapers, you know.

FITZWATER: This is not hearsay. Oh, no, I was there, and I'm not making any of it up, this is absolutely true.

WICKMAN: About what was the date now?

FITZWATER: Well, of course to kids, dates didn't mean too much—

WICKMAN: Was it during the first time when you were in Abilene?

FITZWATER: Oh, the first time—

WICKMAN: The first time, O.K. You were somewhere between thirteen and sixteen?

FITZWATER: Oh, no, wait a minute. It had to be—it was before I went to work in the telephone office, and I worked there nights from 1908 on; so it was between 1905 and 1908; it had to be.

So it was, I'd say, roughly guessing, about '05 or '06, along in there, because I wasn't too big a

kid then. Well, this was to play a joke on the mayor, Abilene mayor. And to my recollection I think the mayor was Harry Litts at that time; I believe he was mayor. Now I wouldn't be

positive, but I kind of think it was Harry Litts. Someone had a badger he'd captured, a wild

badger, and they had a pen built in back of what was then the old Central Hotel, the back of it

was on, oh, I don't know what street that is but anyway—I believe it was Spruce Street.

WICKMAN: Second and Broadway, didn't we say or—

FITZWATER: No, what you say, mention the hotel that's there now.

WICKMAN: The Forster Hotel.

FITZWATER: Well it was in that location, I'm sure. Well, anyway, the back of this hotel, the old Central hotel, the way it was then—

WICKMAN: That's Spruce, I guess.

FITZWATER: Yes, facing the street, the back of it, you see. So they had this pen built for the badger and had a chain on him and a doghouse affair built for him with, I kind of remember, old burlap or rag or cloth or something hanging down over the door so he could go in and out you know at will. And so it was publicized all over town—people talked about it you know. They were going to have a dog fight the badger—somebody was going to furnish the dog and they were going to get in there on a certain day and they were going to have the dog fight this badger, and it was going to be quite an event. As I remember, this went on for a couple weeks beforehand. And I even think, I'm quite sure the Reflector, (who was it ran the Reflector?) was in on this badger dog fight.

WICKMAN: Charley Harger.

FITZWATER: Harger, I always thought that Harger was in on that too and my Uncle Lease Duckwall, I'd bank that he was in on it. But they must have been pretty good at keeping secrets, whoever arranged this, because it didn't leak out and I would have heard about it if it had. But it absolutely came as a surprise. Well anyway, the thing of it was they were going to honor someone by having him pull this badger out of his house when it came time for the fight, that was going to be quite an honor, whoever would do that. So they decided they mayor was the one to do that. So it came time for the badger fight, dog fighting the badger and, oh, gosh, drew quite a crowd—that street was just full of people—people sticking their heads out of the windows of the hotel and across the street you know, big deal for Abilene. And I was right up in front so I got to see it firsthand. So it came time to pull the badger out of the house, doghouse affair. And they told the mayor, "Now you're going to have to pull pretty hard because he's kind of stubborn, might have a little trouble getting him out of the." So Harry Litts, (I'm quite sure it

was Harry Litts), anyway the mayor, he gets a hold of the chain and gives it a real hard yank and here came, one of these old thunder mugs hooked on the end of the chain, came bouncing out you know, it was one of these old stoneware chambers with a side handle on it, the kind that people usually kept under the bed, they were sometimes referred to as thunder mugs.

WICKMAN: Chamber pots.

FITZWATER: Well, chamber, one story high but a wide one. It was made of old stoneware, glazed stoneware, one with a handle on the side. And that was hooked on the end of the chain and the badger was gone. Now those businessmen, some of them, went to all that trouble just to play a joke on the mayor.

WICKMAN: Was this sort of thing very common in Abilene then, where people would play practical jokes on each other?

FITZWATER: Well, a bunch of businessmen, at that time business pressure wasn't anything like it is today, you know; they had time for a little fun once in a while. And my Uncle Lease, he had a sense of humor, he never lost that even when he was the busiest, you know. So I'd be willing to bet that he was in on that' I bet that he was in on that; I bet that he furnished the thunder mug.

WICKMAN: You talked earlier about a skating rink, Parker's skating rink.

FITZWATER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Where was that located?

FITZWATER: Well, it was located on the second floor of one of the Parker Merry Go Round factory buildings; it was on the

**[INSERT PAGE 43 HERE WHEN KIM GETS A COPY]**

WICKMAN: Smoked the cigar while you were skating?

FITZWATER: No, I wasn't smoking, just chewing it. And I didn't feel so good so, oh, gosh, I couldn't figure out what was wrong. And it finally dawned on me it must be that cigar. So I got rid of it, but it was too late—I waited too long. And so this being on the second floor, you see, people were coming in, I couldn't get anybody to take my skates off, oh, I had to get out of there in a hurry and so I clunk, clunkety, clunk, I rolled all the way down the stairs to get out in the open. By then it was too late, I was really sick boy; I was really sick for several hours. That was my first experience with a cigar, didn't smoke it at all.

WORK, PLAY & ENTERTAINMENT:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with  
Mr. L.J. Asper  
by  
Walter V. Barbash  
on  
March 20, 1964  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

Page 1:

BARBASH: Mr. Asper, please identify yourself and tell us what your relationship to Dwight Eisenhower is.

ASPER: My name is Asper and I was just a good friend of Eisenhower's and a neighbor. I lived about five blocks from his place. I chummed around with him quite a bit—fished and hunted, played ball and different things like that.

BARBASH: Mr. Asper, where was your house located in relation to the Eisenhower family home?

ASPER: It was south about three blocks and east about two blocks.

BARBASH: Mr. Asper, can you remember when you first became acquainted with Dwight Eisenhower?

ASPER: I believe it was in 1903, the year of the big flood. We used to go fishing together quite a bit—left a lot of water in some of these old riverbeds. They were full of carp and different things and we used to do a lot of fishing together and I believe that was the first I remember of being around Dwight.

BARBASH: Did you go to grammar school with Dwight Eisenhower and do you remember anything about those years?

ASPER: I went to grammar school the same time he did on the south side but I don't particularly remember anything about him. He was two years older than I was—I didn't hang around with the big bunch very much.

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Page 15:

BARBASH: What position did he play in football and how well did he play it?

ASPER: Well, I'm not sure but it seems to me like it was guard or tackle that he played but, Ed, I think played in the back field. I'm pretty sure that Ike played in the line some place. Oh, he was a pretty good football player—about like the average.

BARBASH: Mr. Asper, you said once that when you were a younger boy here in town that you used to spend some time at the Eisenhower home over night or weekends. In that matter, do you remember any interesting incidents at that time or what the occasion was that you spent at the Eisenhower home?

ASPER: Oh, I don't remember particularly what the incident was, but kids used to once in a while stay overnight with each other. I had a tent down at my place and they used to come down there and stay all night with me—sleep out in the tent and we used to steal cherries and stuff like that out of the cellar—canned cherries, and we'd have something like out at our camp and we'd cook our own meals and stuff like that. I remember one time the Eisenhower boys brought a can of cherries down there and they had never been pitted and we got to eating cherries and spitting the pits out all over the ground and next day my mother was out there around camp and seen all these cherries seeds—she got kinda suspicious wondering where they come from. I guess she went and talked to Mrs. Eisenhower about it, but, oh we never got too much about it.

WORK, PLAY & ENTERTAINMENT:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
John H. Long  
on  
January 14, 1966  
by  
J. Earl Endacott  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

This is an interview taken on January 14, 1966, at the Eisenhower Museum. The interview is made by Mr. John H. Long, of Hood River, Oregon, who was in Lincoln School for two years and two years in Garfield School with General Eisenhower.

Pages 6-7:

ENDACOTT: How did Ike get along with his teachers over here at Lincoln—all right?

LONG: Got along fine. In the eight grade I sat, we sat in the northeast corner. Ulysses S.

Brown, a colored boy, sat behind me and I sat next and Dwight sat in front of me and that

colored boy behind there was smarter then either one of us. He was a Sunday school teacher and he usually would get Dwight and me to come down and do the hard work. He was the State Sunday School secretary—

ENDACOTT: That's right, my sister-in-law worked for him.

LONG: And he was only home on Sunday's, weekends, and he taught my Sunday School class so we would go down there, Saturday's, lots of times and do his work. Well we had these potatoes to pick and were out there picking potatoes and it got kinda late and Mud Creek come along and I told Earl that the ice was off every six or eight feet off each side, you know, so there was a good place there and Ike dared me to jump in to take a swim and I looked at Dwight and he was taking off his clothes and so was I.

ENDACOTT: You both went in?

LONG: We both went in, broke the ice and went in but we didn't stay long and I got out and went home.

ENDACOTT: I bet you had goose pimples for a week, didn't you?

LONG: He took my dare.

ENDACOTT: He always did that, didn't he? He was quite a fighter—you give him a dare and he generally took it.

LONG: He liked to take a dare.

WORK, PLAY & ENTERTAINMENT:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with  
Reverend Ray I. Witter  
by  
Walter V. Barbash  
on  
August 28, 1964  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

BARBASH: Rev. Witter, now we would like to go into your connection with the Church in this area and particularly, of course, with Dwight Eisenhower, could you tell us when you first became acquainted with Dwight Eisenhower and how?

WITTER: Well, I could tell—I can't tell the year, but it's just like cousins get acquainted nowadays. Our folks contacting one another, he lived here in Abilene and I lived on the farm

southeast 10 miles, and when my folks came to town, I'd meet the boys and played with them, then, they came out to the farm every chance they got. It was one of the highpoints of their joy in boyhood days to come out to the farm and enjoy farm life so this runs back as far as I can remember when we were just young boys.

BARBASH: Rev. Witter, when you came to town to visit with the Eisenhowers, did you spend any time at the home and what sort of things as young boys did you do?

WITTER: Well, I, occasionally, spent a weekend there, a few days at the longest, and times were not dull, we were boys—we had live times. We played everything from baseball, hide and go seek, and dare base and all those games of the past and I remember one time when we—when the older boys made some candy, we got sick of the candy and all those common games—common to boys and girls were—done everything from pouring water to snowballing if it was that season of the year and anything in general that was common to youth—we engaged in it.

BARBASH: Rev. Witter, you say you remember playing ball with Dwight Eisenhower—was this in the younger years or was this when you were in high school and if it was high school. Can you remember what kind of ball player he was?

WITTER: No, this was out boyhood years, we used to play down there on the Lincoln School ground and I wasn't in high school up here but he was a common ball player like the rest of us.

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Pages 25-27:

BARBASH: Rev. Witter, what was a visit like that Dwight and his family made down to your folk's farm, what were some of the things that were done and some of the incidents that took place?

WITTER: Well, I don't remember the whole family ever being there, for several reasons, they just had a road wagon and old bay horse called "Dick" so usually, it was the boys who would come or a parent occasionally but usually the boys would come. There wasn't a getting together by families, I think, due to the conveyance possible, largely, and those were always great days when we got together on the farm or I could get up here to Abilene seems as though those boys delighted in getting on the farm, enjoying nature, enjoying the livestock and the methods of farming and all those environments, hunting—they loved to hunt, so these were some of their common interests.

BARBASH: Rev. Witter, do you remember any amusing or interesting incidents that took place when the Eisenhower boys visited you at the farm?

WITTER: Yes, these will always be remembered with me, I, well, remember one time when the corn was being laid by the last cultivation when it was up there—tall, and Dwight and I were to watch the horses while my father went in to get a drink, we were close to the house, it was threatening showers and clap of thunder came—father always had spirited horses, so this team started off down the row and I had the lines and Dwight had the shovels, it was a walking cultivator, he had the shovel handles, but he couldn't keep the plow out of the corn, we hoed off straight and clean. Then again I well remember, when they were out there and our other cousin, Beulah Musser, was there and we got into a water fight, there was so many on each side, we'd grab buckets of water and douse each other—one side had the water tank and didn't need to pump their water but the other side only had the well on their side and they had to pump that water but it was cold and when you'd catch one out to a side why you'd run up and give them a bucket of water right, in the face or all over them, we were wet and the ground was wet, we had quite a great time that day. I remember Beulah Musser one of the opposite group—met her

coming around the corner of the building there with a whole bucket full of cold water and they let it go right in her face—she had to gasp for breath for a little—but those were high times. One of the high points of interest was we used to have a pond and we boys would play in the water there—we had no bathing suits, just nature’s cloths, and one day it was hot and we were in and out and in and out and we sunburned ourselves we blistered our backs so bad that the skin peeled off and that next day we were laying in on the dining room on the floor moaning, and groaning and rolling in our misery. I remember the time I visited Dwight at the White House, I asked him whether he remembered that time—he said “I’ll never forget that”. He hadn’t forgotten that blistered back and I never have either.

BARBASH: Rev. Witter, as Dwight Eisenhower and the rest of the Eisenhower boys grew older and went on to high school, did you attend high school here in Abilene with them?

WITTER: No, I didn’t attend. They wanted me to come so I could be on the ball team but father needed me on the farm so I couldn’t come in and join them here in high school.

WORK, PLAY & ENTERTAINMENT:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Abram Forney  
on  
May 13, 1964  
by  
Walter V. Barbash  
Oral Historian  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

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.

COMMUNITY:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Ivan M. Fitzwater  
by  
John E. Wickman and Maclyn P. Burg  
on  
February 1970 and May 28, 1976  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

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.

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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.

COMMUNITY:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Orin Snider  
on  
October 6, 1964  
by  
Walter V. Barbash  
Oral Historian  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

This is an oral history interview with Orin Snider on October 6, 1964.

Page 15:

ENDACOTT: Ike didn't date Gladys Brooks as much as Edgar did, did he?

SNIDER: I didn't think either one of them because Gladys Brooks was kinda one class above them—that is, socially.

ENDACOTT: Yes, she came from the north side.

SNIDER: No, she wasn't north of the Union Pacific tracks.

ENDACOTT: That's right she wasn't—she lived down here.

SNIDER: But—she was top class and Ike was kinda middle class.

ENDACOTT: Dave Wilkie told me one time that as far as he knew Ike never did have a date with her.

SNIDER: I wouldn't know. I heard that she went back east, some kind of a doings when he was in West Point—she went to some kind of social affair.

ENDACOTT: I didn't know that.

SNIDER: I think it was just before she married Brooks—she was on this—not vaudeville—

ENDACOTT: Chautauqua?

SNIDER: Yeah.

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Pages 17-19:

BARBASH: How about the other places in town that Ike worked?

SNIDER: I never knew of him working.

ENDACOTT: I don't know that Ike worked too many places.

BARBASH: Well, there's a story goes around that he worked in a grocery store here in the south end some place.

SNIDER: If he did, I didn't know anything about it.

ENDACOTT: Well, where was there a grocery store down in here?

SNIDER: Theodore Nusz.

ENDACOTT: Well, that's clear up there by the tracks.

SNIDER: Yeah, that's about three or four blocks.

ENDACOTT: That's the only grocery store that they had—I had a fellow in this morning over there tried to tell me that there was confectionery store and ice cream store over here where the school was and I told him he was crazy.

SNIDER: Where?

ENDACOTT: Where the Lincoln School is—was there ever a confectionery store anywhere around there?

SNIDER: Well, there wasn't anything after 1890. I tell you where there was a store, is over here where that machine place is.

ENDACOTT: Over here?

SNIDER: Yeah. Just south of it—just south of the track about 100 feet and next to buckeye.

There was an ice cream parlor and later a grocery at Southwest 4<sup>th</sup> and Cedar. Joe Abith had the ice cream parlor and Cecil Baker the grocery.

ENDACOTT: Was that a grocery store?

SNIDER: Yeah, a little grocery store. I know—cousin and I went in one time and tried to rob it—stuck our fingers out to a man and says, “your candy or your life.”

ENDACOTT: And he gave you candy?

SNIDER: No—he grabbed us by the collars and threw us out. My uncle said that we were the “James boys.”

COMMUNITY:

ORAL HISTORY REVIEW  
with  
John F. "SIX" McDonnell  
by  
J. Earl Endacott  
on  
February 26, 1970  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

This is an interview with Six McDonnell by J. Earl Endacott, February 26, 1970.

Pages 20-22:

McDONNELL: Yes. He [Joe Howe] was a wonderful man. You know I lost my father early and—

ENDACOTT: Yes, you were a youngster when your father died.

McDONNELL: Yes. I was playing in a vacant lot there next to our place, you know, and Mr.

[A.L.] Duckwall, Lease Duckwall—

ENDACOTT: Lease, yes.

McDONNELL: --and Joe would always walk home together. They walked in those days; nobody had a car—maybe one or two—but they would walk home. They were both businessmen, and they would walk quite a ways. It was ten or twelve blocks up there to their home really. I think they lived on seventh and from their business it was about a mile.

ENDACOTT: Well, let's see, Lease he lived up at seventh.

McDONNELL: Yes.

ENDACOTT: Yes.

McDONNELL: And Joe lived along there somewhere eighth or seventh. They lived close by, that" one reason they walked home together, I guess. But anyway, we'd be out there playing ball practically every night, and they'd stop and look at us for five minutes or so. And Joe called me over and he says, "You're a pretty good ball player, what's your name?" And I told him what my name was and he says, "Well, we like to watch you play. And I said, "Well, thank you." And he says, "Would you like a job?" I said "A job, yes, I sure would, have you a job for me?" And he said, "Well, I run a newspaper. You come down to my place tomorrow morning and we'll see what we can do." I think I was in the seventh or eighth grade. And so I went down and he hired me to sweep out, open up in the mornings, build the fires—had two or three stoves, big bellied stoves, no furnace—nothing but a basement. The big press was in the basement. And I put little gasoline lamps of some kind under all the little job presses, to heat up the presses, to get the ink warm enough so it would be fluid, you know, light a little lamp down there and sweep out. And then it would be about time for the regulars to come, so I'd have to go to school see. He would pay me by the line and he was cheating himself all the time and I knew it, because during school, I'd make about five dollars a week. I'd set that legal stuff, the real fine type, by hand and I got so I was real at it, you know. Just pick it up like that and stick it in. And he'd

figure up what I earned, just galley proofs you know, and he'd pay me \$4.80, 4.86, 4.94, always pretty close to \$5.00. The journeymen printers were only getting \$12.00. And heck, I was only working you know, an hour, an hour and a half a night, and a little bit in the morning. And I was making almost half as much as those guys who were working 48 hours. So he was being a little partial to me and it was a big help, you know. Especially when my mother died and well, no she didn't die, she went to Nebraska and lived with her daughter, and then I was all alone.

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Page 52-55:

ENDACOTT: Where did the Hardings [Gladys Harding] live; did they live up on the north side?

McDONNELL: No, they lived on Enterprise Street, Enterprise Avenue they called it.

ENDACOTT: Yes.

McDONNELL: They lived, oh, about five blocks east of Buckeye.

ENDACOTT: East of Buckeye on Enterprise.

McDONNELL: It was down on Enterprise, yes, past the old court house about five blocks on east.

ENDACOTT: Didn't Ruby Norman live down—

McDONNELL: She lived a little farther, yes.

ENDACOTT: She lived further down.

McDONNELL: Yes, that's right.

ENDACOTT: I'm glad to know that; I can't find out where the Harding's lived.

McDONNELL: Well, the Harding home was just north, by the way the crow flies, from C.W. Parker's layout down there. It was down south a ways. The rink—I can remember it, I can see it—from Enterprise Avenue. The Callahan girls, do you remember them?

ENDACOTT: Yes.

McDONNELL: Well, they lived right across the street from Hardings' they lived on the north side of the street.

ENDACOTT: What did Ruby Norman's father do?

McDONNELL: He dealt in livestock.

ENDACOTT: That's what I thought; he bought and sold horses and cows.

McDONNELL: That's right.

ENDACOTT: Yes. Now she married Ralph Lucier.

McDONNELL: That's right.

ENDACOTT: And she gave me a picture here several years ago of Ike, that she took in Chicago, when he was on his way to West Point. She was kind of stuck on Ike and she was out with the Chautauqua [Lecture Series or boat?].

McDONNELL: Well, so was Gladys Harding.

ENDACOTT: Yes.

McDONNELL: Gladys Harding and Ruby were close friends.

ENDACOTT: Yes, but—

McDONNELL: But Ruby was stuck on Ike too, huh?

ENDACOTT: Yes, oh, yes, he has a lot of dates with her. When we went to the inauguration, Ralph Lucier and his wife were walking down the street, and we went to the inauguration with them. And she was telling me how she and Ike used to date all the time. She was a good looking girl, I guess.

McDONNELL: Ruby?

ENDACOTT: Yes.

McDONNELL: They were both good looking.

COMMUNITY:

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Abram Forney  
on  
May 13, 1964  
by  
Walter V. Barbash  
Oral Historian  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library  
Abilene, Kansas

Page 6:

BARBASH: Mr. Forney, when you were growing up in Abilene, did you have very much contact with Dwight Eisenhower?

FORNEY: There was a situation in Abilene, which divided the town very much socially. The people who lived on the south side of the tracks were a group that stayed pretty close together and the same thing applied to the people that lived on the north side of the track. To finish the grade school Dwight went to the Garfield School—7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades—and finished his grade

school on the north side of the track and, of course, the social gatherings were mainly classroom-wise. Each class had it's own activities and, having been two years older, I happened to be two classes ahead of Dwight in school, so I can't say very much as to further association with Dwight.

