

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

pp. 73 – 74

“A large barn and acreage enabled us to keep animals. Now, each morning before school, there were new items on the agenda—milking cows, feeding chickens and horses, putting the stalls and chicken house shipshape. The legend spread in later years was that I was always the last from bed. This may be true but I doubt it. Extra winks would not reduce the amount of work to be done. Mother, and above all my brothers, would not tolerate such escape from full employment.

Some mornings were worse than others. On washdays, all white clothes were boiled to kill germs. While one of us turned the washing machine, the others brought in water for heating in the reservoir, a tank holding five gallons, built as an integral part of a cookstove. No burden weighs more than a bucket of water on a boy’s arm, unless he is carrying one in each hand. If he attempts to cut down the number of buckets by filling each to the brim, splashing and slopping mean mopping up floors. Nor does a bucket brigade, which we tried, in the manner of colonial fire departments, help much when it is made up of boys in a hurry. The vigor with which they swing buckets means empty containers at the end of the chain.”