



INTERVIEW WITH

L. E. Garrison

BY

David Horrocks  
Oral Historian

On

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For

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This is an interview with Mr. L.E. Garrison at his home in Abilene, Kansas. This is David Horrocks of the Eisenhower Library, April 2, 1975.



MR. HORROCKS: Mr. Garrison, if you could give us some personal background as to how you came to join the Eisenhower Foundation.

MR. GARRISON: Well, just a group of men were asked to help with the organization. Actually Charlie Harger was probably the first organizer, gave it the first thoughts because of his friendship with the Eisenhowers and with Ike especially. And I had known Mr. Harger. Mr. [Sam] Heller worked for our organization. I was an amateur photographer for one thing and after they got started on this, I became, you might say the official photographer for the Eisenhower Foundation while it was being organized.

MR. HORROCKS: What was your job here in Abilene during that time?

MR. GARRISON: I was the traffic manager for the Duckwall Stores Company.

MR. HORROCKS: And by virtue of your photography hobby you

became involved with the foundation?



GARRISON: Yes, and willingness to work.

HORROCKS: What sort of work did you do with photography for the foundation?

GARRISON: Whenever there was a group here I would take pictures for the foundation as a record. After Ike did come here they started to accumulate pictures. I've got a group of pictures that perhaps you would like to see. I don't know--I'm sure they've got most of them down at the foundation.

HORROCKS: Had you known the Eisenhower family before?

GARRISON: No, no I hadn't. I was acquainted with Milton Eisenhower. I went to Kansas State University and I was on the board of directors of the alumni association--the national alumni association--when Milton Eisenhower was president of the college and that's when I became acquainted with him; I knew him quite well.

HORROCKS: Was he active in the founding of the foundation?

GARRISON: He gave a lot of help when he was asked, and helped as a liaison between foundation, the family and Ike. He was happy that we decided to go ahead and do something about it.

HORROCKS: What sort of help was he able to render?



GARRISON: Well, of course, he was probably closer to Ike than any of the brothers. When we wanted some information from Ike, why we could get it through Milton very easily because he was very close to Ike.

HORROCKS: When the idea for the foundation was first proposed by Mr. Harger, how did he first propose the idea to the community?

GARRISON: Well, it's kind of hard. Actually it's questionable whether Mr. Harger did have the first idea. I know, just sitting out here in front of my house one day Ivan Roberson who was the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce at that time, made a statement that we should do something about Eisenhower; we should do something for Abilene because we had an excellent opportunity. And I don't know if that would be the nucleus of



the thing or not. Mr. [Emmett] Graham lived right across the street and I know that Graham took hold of it and probably pushed it through. But because Mr. Harger was a good friend of Ike's, I think it probably simmered down to the fact that he'd had the idea per se--maybe he didn't after all--nobody really is willing to say that he did or he didn't. But I do know that this other I mentioned was discussed in front of my house in the car one evening when we came back from a meeting of some kind.

HORROCKS: Would this have been during the war, say, in about--

GARRISON: Yes, this was during the war.

HORROCKS:--1944, say.

GARRISON: Yes, somewhere right in there because we moved into this house in 1942.

HORROCKS: When you had this discussion, what did you envision the foundation to do or accomplish?

GARRISON: Of course, that would have been from a war angle, not from the presidential--

HORROCKS: Right.

GARRISON: Just be a museum of war mementos and things like that, but would attract a lot of visitors to Abilene.

HORROCKS: Did Mr. Harger first broach the idea with General Eisenhower about using his name for the foundation?

GARRISON: I believe so, yes.

HORROCKS: And what was his reaction?

GARRISON: Ike's?

HORROCKS: Right.

GARRISON: Well, I can't tell you exactly. Later on, I know after he was President, of course, and had accumulated so many medals and other items he was really very happy to have something done so that he could get rid of those from his estate, it would have ruined him had he died and had them thrown in his own estate.



HORROCKS: How did the idea of a citizenship education program as part of the foundation come about?



GARRISON: That was really Ike's idea, because he wanted it to be that way in an educational process. He was very much for that type of organization.

HORROCKS: Was this an opinion he expressed at the very outset?

GARRISON: Yes, his opinion.

HORROCKS: Did he take an active interest in trying to develop this sort of citizenship program?

GARRISON: He sure did. I don't remember all of the details of how, but I do know that he made various suggestions as to scholarships, how they were to be handled, etc.

HORROCKS: Could you outline the whole course of his suggestions about the program?

GARRISON: No, because I wasn't in that part. And I don't remember that it came out in a general meeting of the trustees.

It might have been in the executive committee or something like that. I don't remember all the details.



HOTTOCKS: What happened to the idea of this sort of citizenship program over the years? Did it ever actually develop? Was it ever put into action?

GARRISON: Yes, I thought it was put into action in some ways, but I don't know whether it developed that later on it went into his college, the university that was named after him or not. The whole idea might have. But as far as it being established here, there wasn't a great deal that ever came from it.

HORROCKS: His activities at Columbia University might have superseded that too.

GARRISON: Could have.

HORROCKS: Was the foundation itself enthusiastic about the idea of a citizenship program as well as the war memorial aspect?

GARRISON: Yes, after the library was a reality, they knew definitely that it would be used as an educational media.

HORROCKS: When did you first formally become a member of the foundation?

GARRISON: I thought that I was probably one of the first when the foundation was first organized. But I don't remember what year that was.

HORROCKS: But you had been there right from the beginning?

GARRISON: Yes, I am certain that I was one of the original trustees. I'm not a trustee at the present time; I'm a member and not a trustee.

HORROCKS: What is the distinction between a member and a trustee?

GARRISON: The trustees, of course, manage the foundation. And the members, we're organized as a membership. In other words, there are more members than trustees.



HORROCKS: When the idea of the foundation first came up, it appears that there was some interest by former Kansans who lived in New York, such as Albert Reed and others. What role did they play in the development of the foundation?

GARRISON: Well, of course, they were very helpful in the money angle. Mr. Reed came up here one or two times, I think. I don't recall him. I met him, I'm sure, but I don't remember him.

HORROCKS: I just wondered if the initial out-of-staters continued their interest in the foundation or whether their involvement disappeared rather quickly.

GARRISON: Well they didn't continue like of course people in the state, but there were a few of them. In Missouri for instance, Joyce Hall and Harry Darby, of course, were very, very much interested in the foundation and both of them were helpful with the collection of money. I know Joyce Hall loaned us \$40,000 and to my knowledge he has never



accepted re-payment for it. We have the money and ready to pay him, but he's never been willing to accept it; I guess he wants to donate it.

HORROCKS: How did Harry Darby and Joyce Hall become involved in the foundation's activities?

GARRISON: Well, of course, Mr. Darby was a politician and was a senator, and I would assume that's how he got interested first in the foundation.

HORROCKS: Was he a particularly close friend of anyone on the foundation at the time he joined?

GARRISON: That I'm not sure. He probably was acquainted with Mr. Heller, Mr. Harger, some others here in town. And I believe he has relation in town. I think that the Mort Smith family are related to the Darbys in some way, I'm not sure.

HORROCKS: Was Mr. Darby's initial involvement with the



foundation primarily providing financial assistance, or did he also participate in the management of the foundation?

GARRISON: He participated in the management too. He very seldom missed a meeting. He was very active. When Ike would come out here, he would probably be the general chairman of the whole organization and he would come out to get the committee organized as to what they were going to do, it was very helpful. It's real tough for a town this size to really entertain a President and all the people that come with him.



HORROCKS: Would Harry Darby have taken this active interest right from the very beginning, in the late '40s, or was it a developing thing?

GARRISON: I think it was in the late '40s that he was interested in it.

HORROCKS: Were there ever any problems in the foundation between local citizens of Abilene who started the foundation and people from outside--relations with, say, people from Kansas City, like Senator Darby or people from Wichita like

Earl Schaefer or friends of General Eisenhower from New York.

GARRISON: Do you mean jealousies or that type? As far as I know they got along very well and the people of Abilene appreciated all of the help that they could get from outside sources, both financial or otherwise. I think we did have one little difficulty with Wichita at one time, a fellow by the name of Colonel [A. E.] Howse, I think. And that was in regard to some fund raising, I believe.



HORROCKS: What was the specific problem with regard to Colonel Howse?

GARRISON: I'm not sure. But I do know that there was some difficulty with Colonel Howse in regard to fund raising.

HORROCKS: Do you remember how it was resolved?

GARRISON: I think they just dismissed him from the job.

HORROCKS: That's pretty quick.

GARRISON: I believe that was the way it was resolved. I'm not real sure because--he was never on the trustees. I think he was hired by the trustees to do a certain job and he didn't do it. So they just dismissed him as I remember it.

HORROCKS: As I understand, he was a friend of J. Earl Schaefer in Wichita who himself was a former classmate and friend of General Eisenhower's. [He was in Class of August, 1917]



GARRISON: I think that's probably right. I'm not sure of that myself.

HORROCKS: Did Mr. Schaefer continue actively in the foundation after Colonel Howse was dismissed?

GARRISON: Yes, I think he did. If he didn't, I didn't know about it.

HORROCKS: Earlier you mentioned a national fund-raising campaign which took place very early around 1946 or so.

GARRISON: We had a governor's campaign. Each state was organized.

HORROCKS: O.K., fine. I wonder if you could tell us about the fund-raising campaign of the Bromley House Company of Cleveland.

GARRISON: I can't tell you much about it except that it wasn't successful at all. There was some fellow, the head of that organization, whose father lived in Salina.

HORROCKS: In Salina.



GARRISON: Yes, Salina. And I'm trying to think of his name. He used to be here. His father was here, and as I remember, he worked for the Brown Companies at one time.

HORROCKS: What went wrong with the fund-raising campaign that they launched?

GARRISON: Well, it just wasn't successful. They didn't do their job as they had promised to do and very little money came out of it as far as the trustees were concerned. In fact, the only money that came out went back to the company

that was collecting the money. And I don't remember how much came out of it--it wasn't very much.

HORROCKS: Did General Eisenhower express any dissatisfaction--

GARRISON: Yes, I remember he did. We tried various methods of collection, and, of course, being such a large amount of money, we just couldn't. We started by sponsoring each soldier that was in the service out of Dickinson County to ten dollars a piece. Well, if we had all of them we wouldn't get very much. We had several hundred names. They were listed on the side of Hamburg's building, all boys who were in the service from Dickinson County, and as they would be sponsored by someone we'd put a star up there to indicate that they had been sponsored.



HORROCKS: And the receipts from this would go towards establishing a museum?

GARRISON: Yes. And I'm not sure whether that second thing was through this fund-raising thing from Cleveland.

HORROCKS: Why did General Eisenhower express dissatisfaction?

GARRISON: He just didn't want it to be a forceful deal on anybody. He was just that kind. He didn't want a lot of adverse publicity.

HORROCKS: The company had planned a nationwide high-pressure campaign and he--

GARRISON: Yes.



HORROCKS: During this time, which of Eisenhower's aides was the foundation in contact with on these types of things.

GARRISON: It would have been [James] Hagerty--he was the press secretary.

HORROCKS: He would have been press secretary later.

GARRISON: [Robert] Schulz--I believe it was Schulz.

HORROCKS: O.K. Was Kevin McCann involved particularly?

GARRISON: Kevin McCann? I don't know.

HORROCKS: Was it the understanding of the foundation, after the failure of this Cleveland company's fund-raising campaign, that thereafter all fund raising by the foundation, active fund raising, would be limited to the state of Kansas and not nationwide?

GARRISON: No, I don't think so because after that the governor's commission was organized and each state was organized from the governor's idea of collecting.

HORROCKS: How did the governor's commission come to be organized?

GARRISON: Well, it's through that fund raising--are we talking about the governor's commission of the state of Kansas now, that's organized as of today. I don't believe that this was the same thing. I think that this was an idea that was brought forth from Governor [Ed] Arn at the time. He felt that through the governor of each state that they could appoint a chairman in each state who would be a leader in a fund-raising activity. I think that was fairly successful.



I don't know how much money was collected, but through each state chairman, who was quite a responsible man in each state, I think we collected quite a lot.

HORROCKS: This would have been in the '50s, for the library, would it--or am I mistaken?

GARRISON: I would say yes, for the museum, I'm not positive.

HORROCKS: I'm not either.



GARRISON: I think it might have been for the library.

After it was completed, then it was turned over to the General Services.

HORROCKS: After the Cleveland fund-raising attempt, were there some more local fund-raising attempts in Dickinson County?

GARRISON: Well, not from Dickinson County especially; I think it was more of a state-wide organization through the

governor's appointees. I don't know who the chairman was either, but I know that Governor Arn had quite a bit to do with it.

HORROCKS: What could you tell us about the fund-raising attempt with the Jaycees in the late '40s.

GARRISON: I forget that fellow's name from Dodge City; I can't tell you much about it. I don't remember.



HORROCKS: It's kind of my understanding that it was tried over a period of two years and there was great internal division in the Jaycees and that it didn't work out.

GARRISON: I don't remember why it didn't work out, but they were not very successful at it.

HORROCKS: Was there any problem in the early work of the foundation on getting all of the Eisenhower brothers to agree on the purpose of the foundation?

GARRISON: Not that I know of. I think there was one brother

and I forget which one--possibly Edgar--he was the one in Seattle [Tacoma] wasn't he?

HORROCKS: Edgar, right.

GARRISON: I think they had a little disagreement with or he disagreed with them. I don't know enough about it really to say what it was.



HORROCKS: It seems that in some sense the foundation was in an awkward position in that it was formed really just for one of the brothers--Dwight--and in the end, of course, it ended up working on behalf of the Eisenhower family running the Eisenhower home as a site and that there was a kind of conflict of purpose.

GARRISON: There was a little conflict of purpose there. Of course, things of this kind developed into a real live Topsy, you might say. Ike's mother of course was very much against war, you know, so she wasn't too much for anything that might

promote or make you think of army.



HORROCKS: So really, Mrs. Ida Eisenhower was rather against the idea of a memorial to the war and the veterans--

GARRISON: Well--

HORROCKS: --just because it was connected with war.

GARRISON: It was a religious thinking of hers. That was her belief. Of course she had a son that was a general and she had to do what he wanted to do too. But he was very nice to her. He would come by to see her at any opportunity he had. As far as I know, the trustees never had any words at all with Mrs. Eisenhower. She might have said something to some of them, but as far as I know, nothing.

HORROCKS: So really she wasn't particularly pleased about it, but didn't have that much to do with it one way or the other.

GARRISON: I think that's probably right. She was at the age

where she probably knew that she probably wouldn't be here when it did happen if it was ever a reality.

HORROCKS: Your activity started out with photography work for the foundation.

GARRISON: Yes, also Thorton Scott and I were co-chairmen of the county for subscriptions for each veteran.

HORROCKS: Subscription--ten dollars?



GARRISON: Subscriptions--ten or \$20 dollars for Abilene and Dickinson County. I know we made a lot of trips around the county and visited with a lot of people, and I know that we were responsible for getting Loraine Long interested in the foundation. I remember when we first talked to him, we went up together to talk to him, he didn't want anything to do with it. I don't know why. Later on he was very much for it, and did a lot of work for it.

HORROCKS: Was there much other initial resentment or problem in Dickinson County about--

GARRISON: Oh, I think there were a lot of people who thought that it was an impossibility to collect enough money to do

the job. And of course, we tried to get money from everybody, not just the affluent and the businesses. We tried to get it from the individual also.

HORROCKS: Were there any problems in this period or later with any people in Abilene who thought that the foundation was an exclusive set?

GARRISON: There perhaps were some, but actually--you know, I think the city itself did a marvelous job because whenever Ike would come to town we'd have these lunches for him. Well, there could only be so many go; you couldn't open it up for everybody because we didn't have facilities, I suppose there was some resentment from some people that thought that they should be included but were not included on some of the activities. I know that the foundation, the trustees and the members, would try to, make up our committees for help on this. We would try to get as many outsiders that were not trustees or not members to help decorate, be in charge of transportation and things like that. We got more people involved, in other words.



HORROCKS: So the foundation did make an attempt to cast as broad a net as possible--

GARRISON: Yes, that's right.

HORROCKS: --for community involvement.



GARRISON: That's right. We didn't really want to have hard feelings.

HORROCKS: What was the criteria for making a person a trustee of the foundation?

GARRISON: I really don't know. I don't know. I think that maybe people felt would work and be a credit to the organization.

HORROCKS: Was there ever an occasion where someone was desirous of being a member of the board of trustees and was denied that?

GARRISON: Not to my knowledge. There were some, well, like myself--I was on the trustees for a long time and then I was taken off for a while and then I was put back on. I don't know what the occasion was at all as to why that

happened except, perhaps they had somebody else they wanted to put on. It didn't matter to me.

HORROCKS: What were your active activities in the foundation through the '50s. Did you continue as the foundation's photographer or indulge in other activities?

GARRISON: Oh, mainly photography, however whenever Ike would come my wife and I were in charge of the luncheon. Organizing the luncheon, setting up the menu and seeing that the decorations were correct--we organized the table decorating committee and all that.



HORROCKS: Were you involved at all in the 1952 Homecoming that kicked off his election campaign?

GARRISON: Oh, yes. In the luncheon part of it we were involved there quite a bit.

HORROCKS: So did you meet the General on that occasion?

GARRISON: Yes. I remember we had a gathering at Sam Heller's house--that's where he made his announcement that he was going to run, and we were all out there.

HORROCKS: Then were you at Eisenhower Park when he made the speech?

GARRISON: Yes.



HORROCKS: What were the conditions there at that time--I guess it was really terrible.

GARRISON: Oh, it was terrible, rain, muddy and a mess.

HORROCKS: And then afterwards I guess there was a meeting at Charlie Case's house.

GARRISON: Yes. I didn't go to that.

HORROCKS: How did General Eisenhower impress you during the day. Was he anxious or--

GARRISON: Oh, you mean at the Homecoming. Well, he impressed me very much because I kind of idolized the man. I thought he handled himself very well. His speech was to a common person and down to the grass roots. I remember that weather

was terrible that day.

HORROCKS: It must have really fouled up, made plans difficult.

GARRISON: It surely did. The people from the press, radio, and TV were really having their troubles that day. It just poured rain. Water out in the park was just like a lake.

HORROCKS: I've heard that it was terribly muddy at the park and that--was Mamie there too?

GARRISON: Seems to me like she was; I'm not too positive of that. I believe she was there, yes she was.

HORROCKS: Because I had heard that at some point in all that mud at the park the General had to pick up Mamie and carry her over some of it.

GARRISON: Well, I'm sure that she was there. I've got a picture some place of them out there on the platform and the both of them in slickers.

HORROCKS: Did you continue making luncheon arrangements and



this kind of work on through the '60s after he retired as President.

GARRISON: Yes, along with several other people.



HORROCKS: Did you notice any visible change in his health--

GARRISON: Yes.

HORROCKS: --in the '60s?

GARRISON: Yes, yes, quite a bit. He slowed down after he had a heart attack. He wasn't as rugged an individual as he was when he first came back from the war.

HORROCKS: Is there a time, a date, at which you could say that marks a truly visible deterioration of his health, for instance a particular visit in the 1960s where it struck you?

GARRISON: Well, I don't recall that you could chop it off right at a certain spot, but you could tell a difference in his health when he came back in the late '60s.

HORROCKS: I wonder if we could go through and if you could

give me some thumb-nail sketches of some different people that were involved in the foundation. Well, I could ask you first, who do you feel were the guiding lights in the foundation?

GARRISON: Well, of course, there will be a lot of different opinions on this I'm sure. But I do know one of the early men who did a lot of work and put in a lot of his own money and his own time, and it practically ruined his business was Emmett Graham. He did a lot of work for the foundation. But Sam Heller and, of course, Charlie Harger, they actually didn't do too much work, but a lot of guiding.

HORROCKS: Pretty elderly?



GARRISON: Yes, quite. And of course Mr. [C. A.] Scupin in later years.

HORROCKS: How did Scupin become involved with the foundation?

GARRISON: Well, he became quite a friend of Harry Darby's and, being in the position that he was--president of Tele-

communications now--and it was located here in Abilene--  
and was his headquarters. He had worked on the project before  
and he was naturally interested in the whole setup. He was  
a great help with the finances.

HORROCKS: Was he active in the foundation from the beginning,  
even before Harry Darby was active?

GARRISON: I'm not sure. I think he might have been. I  
don't know whether it was before Harry Darby or not, but  
I know he was in there when Harry was--I think he was in  
there practically all the time of the early forming years  
of the museum.

HORROCKS: Did he work very closely with Harry Darby?

GARRISON: Yes. I think he did. He worked very much with  
Harry.

HORROCKS: His prime activities on behalf of the foundation  
were largely financial and fund raising, would that be fair?

GARRISON: Yes. But that was later. It wasn't just all financial.



There was a great deal more to it than finances.

[Interruption]

HORROCKS: I believe we were just talking about Mr. Scupin's work with the foundation. He was active then in the foundation virtually from the beginning.



GARRISON: Yes, I think pretty much from the beginning.

HORROCKS: Did he come to enjoy a close personal relationship with General Eisenhower?

GARRISON: Well, not as close as some, but I think he was fairly close. Of course, he didn't know him before. He came from Junction City.

HORROCKS: Of course, Mr. Harger had the closest personal relationship actually.

GARRISON: And Mr. Case. There were some others that had rather close relationships. But they used to play poker

together and of course his old football team. He would come back once in a while and have a poker game. I was never in on it, but I've heard that they did.

HORROCKS: He was a good poker player.

GARRISON: Yes.



HORROCKS: Were there any foundation members in the '50s and in the '60s who picked up and developed a close personal relationship with the General or were most of the relationships pretty cordial, business relationships?

GARRISON: Well, I think most of them were cordial, business relations. I think Mr. Heller became quite well acquainted with the President. But I think mainly, it was just the hometown people. I know he invited all of the trustees to a luncheon at the White House when he was President, at the time [Konrad] Adenauer; was there.

HORROCKS: That must have been around '59.

GARRISON: It was right in there someplace. I know I went

and really enjoyed it; it was an experience that I'll never forget.

HORROCKS: During the '50s, who carried on the liaison between the foundation and the President?

GARRISON: Mainly I think it was probably through [Earl] Endacott and those in the foundation went through Mr. Heller and Harry Darby.



HORROCKS: Who in the White House would have handled the affairs?

GARRISON: Well, the press secretary, I think, didn't he? That would be Hagerty, wouldn't it? I knew we had a very good relationship with Hagerty--I didn't personally--but I know the foundation did--they got a lot of correspondence from him.

HORROCKS: What kind of things would you be corresponding about with Hagerty? What were some of the problems?

GARRISON: Well, for instance, the White House would be making a shipment of merchandise here that Eisenhower was turning over to the museum, we would have to make arrangements. We

didn't have space for it, then later we got the arrangements for it at the museum. We'd have to make arrangements for it, and so we would have to know quickly how many items, the size, value etc. that was being shipped.

HORROCKS: Wouldn't Robert Schulz have handled a lot of those things?

GARRISON: Yes, he did handle some of this. I expect he would handle more of it than Hagerty.



HORROCKS: We've talked about Mr. Endacott. How did he become involved and what were his major contributions to the foundation's activities?

GARRISON: He was just naturally interested in history. He had been a history teacher in high school and it was just kind of a natural for him. He just loved it and took the bull by the horns, then after the museum was going--he had researched all the things that he wanted displayed and how they were to be displayed.

HORROCKS: You said earlier when the tape was off that he was your history teacher in high school.

GARRISON: Yes, he was my history teacher. I think he came here right after World War I. I was in high school here in '26, 7 and 8. His brother, Paul Endacott was at one time president of Phillips Petroleum--

HORROCKS: Gosh--I don't know--that's--



GARRISON: In fund-raising Boots Adams was interested in the Eisenhower Foundation--

HORROCKS: Boots Adams, did you say? Who was he?

GARRISON: He was chairman of the board of Phillips Petroleum.

HORROCKS: Oh, right.

GARRISON: He died just last week. There is a picture in the library that he gave, a painting of "Ike."

HORROCKS: Oh. So the Phillips Petroleum people became involved via Earl Endacott's brother.

GARRISON: Yes, I believe that was probably one reason. J.E. Endacott and Paul both went to the Kansas University, and I'm

not sure, but I believe was president of Phillips Petroleum.

HORROCKS: Was that in any way a consideration in his becoming museum curator?

GARRISON: No, I doubt it, no I would say, nothing to do with it.

HORROCKS: I understand that he was largely retired, and his work was just a tremendous amount of volunteer work.

GARRISON: He had very little remunerations for work, of ever.



HORROCKS: Labor of love--

GARRISON: Yes.

HORROCKS: --that sort of thing.

GARRISON: He was in World War I and World War II I believe as a Seabee.

HORROCKS: Were there any particular friends of President Eisenhower who became angels of the foundation as far as

providing financial backing who would really stand out? I'm thinking perhaps of people like Douglas Dillon or Edward Bermingham.



GARRISON: Well, I assume that there were some. As to naming them, I'm not in a position to do that. I don't remember them for sure. I don't know how much money they might have given, or if they were responsible for giving. But I know people like General Foods and Pillsbury and companies worked and gave contributions. Presidents and the managers of several large corporations were here on occasion to attend the festivities and were very friendly to Ike. I know I saw the president of Pillsbury in Washington, D. C., at the Mayflower Hotel when we were back there at the luncheon. And another fellow from the Litchfield Paper Company back in Massachusetts I believe it was, a fellow by the name of Wallace. And I have no idea how much money he might have given or been responsible for, but I know that he was quite interested in the development of the foundation--museum and library.

HORROCKS: Did you have any idea that the museum would become nearly as large as it did? Did it keep growing like Topsy?

GARRISON: Oh, yes, it just kept growing. I've got some pictures here of the original, and, of course, we just had so many items from the White House and we really didn't know what to do with them. We had it stored in every vault in town or fire-proof place that we could locate.



HORROCKS: When you were being crowded for storage space like this with gifts from the White House, they must have seen you needed more money to build a bigger plant to house it all. Did they take an active role in helping you get funds to the foundation, bring you and say some of these businessmen together?

GARRISON: When you say, "they" who do you mean?

HORROCKS: Aides in the White House.

GARRISON: Oh, I don't really know. I don't think that they-- I suppose in some private meetings Ike might have given them names of people that he might have done favors for or something like that who could be tapped for a little money.

HORROCKS: Is that pure supposition?

GARRISON: Yes.

HORROCKS: I've seen plans for the foundation very early when it was founded for a large tourist complex and golf course by the lake--thinking along those lines.

GARRISON: Here?



HORROCKS: Yes, here in Abilene. Were these really just hopes and daydreams or was there any effort to really develop that large a complex?

GARRISON: No, as far as I know there wasn't any effort to develop a complex like that, I know that Joyce Hall in Kansas City had his architect from Los Angeles, California. He was the architect for the museum and for the moat. It didn't turn out so good as far as I was concerned. The moat was always full of trash in this windy country, also dust and the tree leaves. It was quite a concern to keep it looking halfway decent. I know he was a wonderful architect. Probably Joyce Hall did foot the bill--I don't know.

HORROCKS: Was the foundation during this entire time essentially run by an executive committee?

GARRISON: Right.



HORROCKS: So that really the trustee's function was perhaps a yearly meeting--it would ratify activities--

GARRISON: There was an annual meeting and we usually okayed what the executive committee had done. I was not on the executive committee, and that's why a lot of the things you've asked about, I knew nothing about what transpired or how it became a reality.

HORROCKS: So really an average trustee's work, basically some volunteer work and fund raising and spade work for the foundation, but not really policy matters.

GARRISON: Right.

HORROCKS: Was there any problem with transferring the foundation's museum and home to the government after Eisenhower left office? Was there any reluctance to surrender these properties?

GARRISON: I think not. I know that we felt it was not self-sufficient and not able to keep it going on what it made. And we knew that we had to have some outside help on it to keep it going and we wanted it to advance and continue to get better and better, so that the only way we could reach that goal would be to transfer it to the General Services.



HORROCKS: So there really wasn't any reluctance in the sense that, gee, we've worked so hard to get this into a going concern and now the federal government is going to take it over from us. There was no problem with that?

GARRISON: As far as I know. I think they thought it was a godsend.

HORROCKS: What about the foundation's activities once it was all established and turned over to the government?

GARRISON: We had very little. I'm not a trustee now--I'm a member. We have an annual meeting and there is very little business that transpires anymore. We still have a little

money left, so we turn over a little of it to [John] Wickman [Director, Eisenhower Library] now and then for special things that he wants to do and is not in his budget to do. He feels, and I'm sure it is, advantageous to the library and to the museum, and to the community.

HORROCKS: So really the foundation's activities largely ceased with deeding over the properties.

GARRISON: Right, right.



HORROCKS: Could we nail down the dates of your involvement with the foundation, the period of years in which you were a trustee?

GARRISON: I can't--I've just been involved either as a trustee or member ever since organizing. I don't know--I can't separate them. I don't know as far as the membership and the trustee, I've never been able to figure out just exactly what the duties of membership are since the organization. The trustees do operate the foundation.

HORROCKS: Oh, one thing I was thinking of as I looked at the

organization of the foundation. What was the role of the vice presidents, of which there were many.

GARRISON: The vice presidents of the--



HORROCKS: --of the foundation. Was that largely an honorary device for outsiders?

GARRISON: Largely, yes. I would say it was more or less honorary. Occasionally, of course, the time when Mr. Heller was president and Mr. [Paul] Royer was vice president there was a period of time when Mr. Heller was ill or had a heart attack and Mr. Royer took over. Mr. Harger was actually, I'd say the chairman of the board of the foundation and did very little for it except to use his name.

HORROCKS: I'm thinking back now, going back to fund raising about Mr. Darby and Mr. Scupin's continuous active involvement in the foundation. Was that true also of Joyce Hall, or did he kind of phase himself out?

GARRISON: Well, I think Joyce Hall kind of phased himself

out. Donald Hall, his son, was active and Mr. Hall, very seldom came to a meeting. I know that I sat next to Don Hall at the luncheon in Washington and they are a wonderful family. I think that Joyce more or less phased out of the active side. We needed money for some activity and Joyce Hall loaned us, no interest, \$40,000.

HORROCKS: From Joyce Hall?



GARRISON: Yes, from Joyce Hall. A loan that he never accepted back to my knowledge.

HORROCKS: Well, offhand I can't think of any other areas particularly to cover. Is there anything you would like to add to the record?

GARRISON: Oh I think not. You know it's funny how things slip from you mind after these activities are over. You just kind of drop them. I thought as soon as I retired I would go through all of the Eisenhower pictures and memorabilia I have and get them organized; I guess I'll have to get Denny [Dennis H.J. Medina] to do that for me sometime.

HORROCKS: For the record, could you tell us a personal biography--when you were born and how long you have lived in Abilene?



GARRISON: Well I was born April 5, 1909, in Chase County, Kansas. It was Strong City, Kansas. My father was with the Santa Fe Railroad in Strong City. At the age of two, our family moved to the little town of Manchester which is eighteen miles north of Abilene, and we lived there until dad retired and I think he retired in--oh, early '50s and moved to Abilene. However, I went through grade school and one year of high school in Manchester and came to Abilene for my sophomore, junior, and senior year in high school. Then I went to Kansas State University and graduated from Kansas State in 1933. I then went to work for Duckwall Stores Company in November of 1933.

HORROCKS: So basically you've been virtually a lifetime Abilene resident--Abilene area?

GARRISON: Yes, Abilene area, in Dickinson County since I was about two or three years old.

HORROCKS: Was that fairly true of most of the founders of the foundation?

GARRISON: Well I think most of them. I believe most of them were originally from Dickinson County--they were born and raised right in this area.

HORROCKS: Did they have particularly close ties with the Eisenhower family or was this undertaken mostly out of a sense of opportunity for the community of Abilene?

GARRISON: Well, I think a good deal of it was opportunity for Abilene, but there were a few that had grown up with Ike as a boy and some went to high school with him. There were some around here that were not on the foundation of course that had gone through high school with him. Howard Funk was one of them; he and Ike were good friends, played football together.

HORROCKS: Why didn't he become a member?

GARRISON: I really don't know if he was approached or whether he was too involved in farming at the time. I



think he had quite a farming operation out west of town. It's hard to tell. I don't know why he did not.

HORROCKS: Let's see, you remember Ida Eisenhower then briefly from her reluctance to participate in the war memorial aspect.

GARRISON: Well, yes that's some--



HORROCKS: Did you know her in any other way?

GARRISON: No, no, I didn't.

HORROCKS: Were any of the other brothers other than--

GARRISON: Well, of course I got acquainted with Edgar. I had met the brother in Junction City that died--

HORROCKS: That's Roy.

GARRISON: Roy, yes. I had met him years before. I didn't even connect him at the time. He was in a drug store I believe in Junction City. And then of course Milton, I knew him quite well.

HORROCKS: In what way did you meet Roy at this time?

GARRISON: I really don't remember. In a way, I think I was just in Junction City one time from school at Manhattan and met him there. And oh, I know--[George] Etherington here, seems to me I was with Etherington one time in Junction City and he went in to see Roy because they were related.

HORROCKS: Was Milton at K-State at the same time Roy was in Junction City? Or was Milton--

GARRISON: No.



HORROCKS: I guess Milton would have come afterwards.

GARRISON: No, no I believe he would come after. I believe Roy was dead.

HORROCKS: Roy died in '42.

GARRISON: '42, yes. I think Milton was after that--I'm sure he was.

HORROCKS: What sort of things did you work with Milton on at K-State?

GARRISON: Well, I was president of the Kansas State Alumni Association and just through business of the Association we would have things to do with the president of the college. Correction, I was just a member of the board of directors. At the time I went in as president--the year that [James] McCain came as president, which was in 1950. One thing we had to do with Milton was regarding a basketball coach. We had a little difficulty between the coach and athletic director, the coach went around the director to the president and caused a little trouble.

HORROCKS: Was Milton generally regarded as a quite effective president for Kansas State or--

GARRISON: Some didn't like him. He was quite dictatorial.

HORROCKS: So you ran into problems because some people thought he was dictatorial?

GARRISON: Yes. I wouldn't want to be quoted on that. I know that there were some people in Manhattan especially that thought he was quite dictatorial.



HORROCKS: Would these be faculty or other administrators?

GARRISON: Faculty and business people.

HORROCKS: Business people. Would that have been a factor in his decision to leave?

GARRISON: I think probably it was. However he had a better opportunity.

HORROCKS: Did you ever have occasion to hear him comment or discuss his brother's decision to go to Columbia at the time?

GARRISON: No, no. Was he at Johns Hopkins at the time?

HORROCKS: No, let's see, Dwight went to Columbia in '48, and I don't think--

GARRISON: Milton was in Manhattan then when he--

HORROCKS: Right, right. Well, I think that just about concludes our interview.

GARRISON: I've enjoyed it.