

The 16-part "Dreams of a Barefoot Boy" originally appeared in the 2017 Kansas Newspapers in Education. Have fun reading stories, answering questions, and completing activities while learning about Dwight Eisenhower's childhood.



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# "Dreams of a Barefoot Boy"

Chapter 6:

## THE EISENHOWER BOYS



*"Because no man is really a man who has lost out of himself all of the boy, I want to speak first of the dreams of a barefoot boy... Because today that dream of mine of 45 years or more ago has been realized beyond the wildest stretches of my own imagination, I come here, first, to thank you, to say the proudest thing I can claim is that I am from Abilene."*

Dwight D. Eisenhower June 22, 1945

When Ida Eisenhower received the Kansas "Mother of the Year" award in 1946, a reporter asked if she was proud of her famous son. She replied, "Of course," then quickly asked, "Which one?" In her view, all six of her sons who had lived to adulthood had accomplished great things and she was proud of each one.

Arthur, the oldest, was born in Hope, Kansas, in 1886. At 19, he began working for a bank. He eventually became Executive Vice President and Director of Commerce Trust in Kansas City after it bought out the bank. He was considered an expert on grain marketing finance. He died in 1958.

Edgar was also born in Hope, in 1889. He went to law school at the University of Michigan and moved to Tacoma, Washington, where he set up his own law firm. He died in 1971.

Roy was born in Abilene in 1892. He worked in drug stores in Abilene and Ellsworth, Kansas, and then attended pharmacy school in Wichita to become the youngest registered pharmacist in the state. In 1919 he purchased a drug store in Junction City that he operated for 20 years. He died in 1942.

Paul, the fifth son, was born in Abilene in 1894. He

died from diphtheria when he was only one year old.

Earl was born in 1898 in Abilene. He earned an electrical engineering degree from the University of Washington and then worked for the West Penn Power Company in Pennsylvania, eventually achieving a high position in the utility field. He also operated two radio stations. He died in 1968.

The youngest, Milton, was born in 1899 in Abilene and attended Kansas State Agricultural College, graduating in 1924. He held several positions with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, before becoming president of Kansas State College (now Kansas State University). He later became president of Penn State and then Johns Hopkins University. He also served as an advisor to five different presidents, including his own brother, Dwight. Milton died in 1985.

Dwight, the third son, born in 1890, in Denison, Texas, is the one the reporter asked Ida about in 1946. He became a five star General of the Army as a result of his leadership during World War II, and then became President of the United States from 1953 until 1961. Dwight died on March 28, 1969. So what was it about these six boys who grew

up on the "wrong side of the tracks" where most people in Abilene did not expect them to amount to much of anything? According to Dwight, it was that his parents had high expectations of all of the boys and that they were taught values of responsibility, concern for others, ambition without arrogance, and self-reliance.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How many of the Eisenhower boys were born in Abilene, Kansas?
2. Which brother lived and worked in Kansas as an adult? What did he do?
3. Which brother became president of three different universities?
4. What values did the boys learn that helped them become successful as adults?

### ACTIVITIES

1. Add each of the boy's birth and death dates to the timeline of Dwight Eisenhower's history.
2. Do the math: figure out how old each of the Eisenhower boys were when they died. Who lived the longest?