

This is an oral history interview with Mr. and Mrs. John Archibold, on August 4, 2008, at the Eisenhower Library. The interviewer is staff archivist Jim Leyerzapf.

JIM LEYERZAPF: Well, hello, we've already talked a little bit about your background, Mr. Manning. Can you give us a little background information—biographical information for the record—so we have that on the tape, as to where you were born...school and so forth.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, Jim just referred to me as Mr. Manning. We were just talking about a Mr. Manning, but I'm John Archibold—

LEYERZAPF: Oh, John Archibold—Oh dear...

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: [laughter]....That's alright. It was a good senior moment. I have them all the time. I was born in Denver, Colorado in 1933 and my house, or the house that my folks lived in, was at 700 Lafayette Street—which is just four houses from 750 Lafayette Street, where the Eisenhowers had their summer White House—and actually, it was really kind of a second home for them. And I grew up in Denver, and went through public schools for the first twelve years—the full twelve years. And then I went to Princeton University with five other men from my high school. Graduated in 1955 and then I spent two years in the Army. Two years—well, almost two years at that tour were at Ft. Riley, Kansas—right down the road from here. And then I went to the University of Denver Law School in Denver and graduated in 1959.

After that I went to Washington D.C. and worked for awhile in the Department of State and then, for almost six years, I worked in the Department of Justice, under three different Attorneys General. Not that I knew them personally, but they were: William Rogers and Robert Kennedy and Nicholas Katzenbach. And then, 1964, I married my wife, Molly, who is with me here today; and we were married in Pennsylvania and a year later we moved to Denver, where I've resided ever since.

While back in Denver I've been in both private practice and also in the practice of the law and most of that time I was Chief Counsel of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission. But, before that and after that, I was also in private law practice and I'm presently retired as of about 2000. I still reside in Denver, but I don't reside anymore at 700 Lafayette. In fact, my

folks moved from there in 1966 to an apartment and we took over the house and then ten years ago we moved to southeast Denver. We have four children and twenty grandchildren. My wife is originally from Pennsylvania and I met her when she was a Navy nurse at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Washington D.C. and I was working in the Department of Justice. So, that's a very brief sketch.

LEYERZAPF: It's a very cogent and very clear sketch. Gives us essential information and, for the record, I'm going to apologize on tape. I'm deeply embarrassed for having called Mr. Archibold, Mr. Manning—the subject of a conversation we had just before this started. Mrs. Archibold, would you share a little bit about your biography—your background, too, and history?

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: I grew up in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania and went to the University of Colorado to nursing school. Having graduated in 1962, from the University of Colorado, I moved to Washington D.C., as a Navy nurse and worked at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Met my husband there, John, and we were married in the church where I grew up in Pennsylvania. After a year, we moved back to Denver, to John's family home, and I practiced nursing off and on, but mostly spent time raising four children and I think John's sketch kind of covered the rest of it.

LEYERZAPF: Ok. Well, thank you very much. Thank you. I'm going to start off with a question as a follow-up on your biographical information. One thing you mentioned—I didn't get at all was, what year did you move into your parent's house at 700 Lafayette?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, I grew up there, of course, in 1933; and then when I moved back from Washington D.C. in 1966—that's when I moved back into the home that I grew up in.

LEYERZAPF: So, you moved into it in 1966 and you lived there until—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: 19—

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: —98

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: 1998

LEYERZAPF: Over thirty years. Yes. So, you knew the neighborhood well.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yes.

LEYERZAPF: Over a long period of time.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yes. Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: Well that's very interesting. One of the areas I will eventually get into, of course, the Doud family, your neighbors, as well as some of the other neighbors you had mentioned. Since your father and mother, Robert and Eileen, as I remember were contemporaries with Dwight and Mamie and lived on Lafayette Street. They must've known the Douds fairly well.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yes. I knew them well, as well.

LEYERZAPF: Yeah, I'm going to ask you about the Douds, but I thought I'd start with any memories you have of stories passed down from your parents about the Douds—incidents, descriptions of the personalities, things like that. Your memories of your parent's memories of the Douds, as it were.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, I don't remember too much, except that my mother grew up on Lafayette Street, as did Mamie Eisenhower. In fact, I think she was described by one newspaper reporter as Mamie's oldest friend in terms of longevity. The Douds—I don't recall mother ever saying too much about the Douds, as such, except that Mr. Doud, Mamie's father, retired rather early because he was successful in the meat-packing business and they had moved from Iowa to Colorado. He was a very jolly fellow with hair that like you'd see

on a symphony conductor with that hair flowing out and this big bald spot. You got the impression, to be honest with you, that Mrs. Doud was kind of the head of the family, in a sense.

LEYERZAPF: That's interesting.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Because, Mr. Doud was a little more passive. Friendly, but Mrs. Doud, she kind of ran the show and was kind of a tougher lady, in many respects. We used to go up there, of course, all the time. We had a couple of apple trees on the north side of our house at 700 Lafayette that just had tons of apples. I would pick them and they were much too many to use in our house, so I would take a big bag of apples up to the Douds and they would enjoy getting that. I'd sit on the porch with Mr. Doud and he'd tell stories about Iowa, but I can't remember what they were. You know, things about his childhood—he was a good storyteller—and I don't remember any of the details of the stories that he told, but he was comfortable to be around. As was Mrs. Doud; but you thought well, you better be a little bit more on your toes with Mrs. Doud.

LEYERZAPF: Interesting.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: Did your mother and father socialize with the Douds at all? Do you know?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Not extensively, no. I don't think they did. And, you know they—we were all neighbors, but, in terms of day-to-day social stuff, ongoing social stuff, I don't think really much outside of just being neighbors.

LEYERZAPF: I see. Since they were neighbors, can you give us a little information about your mother and father? Where they were born, education—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: My mother was born in Leadville, Colorado in 1899. She was three years younger than Mamie and her father—my grandfather—was an attorney in Leadville and my mother had some kind of heart problem. I'm not sure what it was. But they told him that he should really have his daughter—who was just very young; two, three, or four years old—at a lower altitude. Leadville is ten thousand feet. He bought this house in Denver, which was a year old at the time and uh, they moved to Denver in, I think, 1905, 1906. I don't know whether the Douds were there at that time or not. I think they were.

LEYERZAPF: I think so.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, I think they were already there in the middle of the block. Our house was on the corner. My mother met my father—he went to Columbia University in New York City—he's a native of New York City. And my mother attended Vassar College, which is, I think, in Poughkeepsie, New York. And somehow they met and they got married in Denver and they lived in New York City for four years. My brother was born in New York City. Then they moved to Denver in 1932 or 33—32, I think, because my grandfather was a widower. His wife died at the age of 47 of pneumonia in 1923. And so, they moved into the house in Denver, took care of my grandfather until he died.

LEYERZAPF: I see. You said your father was an attorney?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: No, my grandfather—

LEYERZAPF: Grandfather's an attorney.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: My father was in real estate and investment business. That's what he did in Denver. I'm the only attorney still left at the—

LEYERZAPF: [Laughs] You mentioned in your interview that—and we've talked about it a little bit more about your mother and Mamie and that relationship and, I wondered how early that started. It sounds as though it started at a very young age—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Very, very, young age.

LEYERZAPF: They were a young age. And they were good buddies, as it would seem.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, they were neighborhood buddies. Even though there was a three year age difference, I guess they still did dolls and things like that. My mother told me—and I read this in some of the books that had been written and magazine articles—that the boys really liked Mamie and they would give her snakes or something like that, you know. ‘Cause she was kind of special and my grandmother Ewing—my mother’s mother made a lot of paper dolls and stuff like that. They did a lot of girl stuff.

LEYERZAPF: This is well before adolescence.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yeah Oh yeah. This began very, very early. And then, of course, Mamie went away to, San Antonio, I think. I think maybe they went to San Antonio for the summers—the Douds.

LEYERZAPF: It—it was over the Christmas season.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Is that what it was?

LEYERZAPF: An extended Christmas trip to San Antonio.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Then, of course, she’d met Mr. Eisenhower—Lieutenant Eisenhower—and they got married in Denver at the Doud house on July 1st. There is a plaque there that commemorates that, which my mother had something to do with much later in life.

LEYERZAPF: Did your mother have any stories about the two young girls? Say, into adolescence? Including adolescence?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I don't recall anything that she told me about the adolescent period. I think it was kind of the pre-adolescent period and the boys would like to tease Mamie because they thought she was pretty and kind of special and I guess my mother probably figured that, you know, she's just sort of a tagalong by comparison.

LERYERZAPF: And she's younger, too, so that would have been a factor.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yeah. But, I don't recall any of the adolescence stories. The one thing I do remember that my mother did say was that in 1938, after Ike and Mamie had been gone for a number of years, they were back in Denver on a visit to Mamie's folks. And they came down to our house—that's the first time I ever met the Eisenhowers. And I do remember my mother saying to me afterwards, when they had left, she turned to my dad and said uh, "What was their last name again?" She just hadn't seen them for so long and had forgotten what the name was. She said "Now, what was their name again?" And, of course, the time came when nobody would forget the name.

LEYERZAPF: [Laughs] We've been talking about the relationship between your mother and Mamie and we have in the archives many of the letters from your mother to Mamie and I've read many of them—as well as Mamie's letters—some of Mamie's letters back. And you can tell from their adult relationship—the letters were lengthy, and very personal, and very warm and affectionate. So, it seemed as though they kept that relationship going. I mean, obviously, they were close friends, at least in terms of the correspondence. A lot of Mamie's correspondence is arranged by alphabet. There's one file folder for A, there's one file—file folder for B. But, often, there's a separate Archibold file folder.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Really?

LEYERZAPF: There's that much correspondence, yes. I didn't have the time to read all of your mother's letters. But, she would write lengthy letters to Mamie, very interesting. Even without having read your memoir, it was obvious to me that they were pretty close.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yes.

LEYERZAPF: And certainly kept in touch on a regular basis.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yes.

LEYERZAPF: And there apparently were telephone calls, too. Frequent telephone calls. So, Mamie was a social person, but she put quite a bit of time into that relationship. You can tell that.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yes. Well, I guess I'll have to come back here sometime and read all the letters, 'cause I don't know what my mother wrote to Mamie. She might have said some things about me, you know. But yeah, they got into a lot of family stuff and—

LEYERZAPF: Yes! Exactly. They knew people in common, too.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yeah.

LEYERZAPF: They've mentioned people in Denver that they knew in common. They kept in touch that way. Another question I had: Mamie attended a school called Miss Wolcott's Finishing School.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: Did your mother also—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Yes.

LEYERZAPF: Okay! I've talked to our Museum Curator, who is quite a student of Mamie, and he had some questions and that was one of the questions he wanted me to ask, if your mother also attended.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: She did. She did attend Miss Wolcott's School. It was up on Fourteenth and Marion, I think. It's no longer there.

LEYERZAPF: In fact, in one of the letters I was reading, Mamie is talking about in the 50s—either 50s or 60s—, they had an alumni reunion of the girls from Miss Wolcott's Finishing School. I'm not sure whether one or both Mamie and your mother attended or not, but at least there was correspondence about that reunion. Do you remember anything about that?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: No, I don't recall anything about that. But, I knew they both went there.

LEYERZAPF: But that also gives you some idea of how they reminisced in these letters and talked about things they had in common and memories they had in common. Now, I want to establish the proximity. You were four doors away? Is that right? From the Doud house to your house?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, there were uh, let's see—one, two—there were three houses or four houses—

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Five—there were five doors away.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Five doors away. They were right in the middle of the block.

LEYERZAPF: So, when you walked up there with your bag of apples, you didn't have very far to go.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh no. No, it was probably about twice the distance of this room, maybe.

LEYERZAPF: The houses were fairly close set.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yeah. They're all pretty much square and line up the street.

LEYERZAPF: I read someplace where some historian—might be Susan Eisenhower—refers to the house having been built in the Denver Square Tradition.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Yeah. Oh yeah.

LEYERZAPF: Does that ring a bell?

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Yes.

LEYERZAPF: I hadn't heard of that.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, there are a lot of house in the Capitol Hill—the central part of Denver—that are just literally square, more or less. I mean, they're not spread out. They're just kind of like the squares you see on that—what's the street that has all the houses going back to the motel?

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Northwest Third.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, North Third.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Except they're brick. Denver Square is brick and craftsman style with large eaves.

LEYERZAPF: Okay. Alright.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: They're made out of brick because of the ordinance that they had somewhere back long ago that they couldn't build wooden houses in Denver—I guess they'd had a fire at some point in past history— that you had to build with brick.

LEYERZAPF: Oh. Okay.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: And so they're all pretty solid houses.

LEYERZAPF: Yeah, I've never had the pleasure—obviously—I've never had the pleasure of visiting that area. Do you remember a family called the Newtons?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yes! Oh yeah, Charlie and Lois Newton. They lived right across the street in the red house, which was lived in by Mary and Manley Mitchell—who was another good friend of my mother's—and I think Mamie as well. Mary and Manley Mitchell. And her father had been at some time in the past, dean of DU [University of Denver] Law School. There's a park named for him in Denver and we drive by it on Josephine Street. Manley Park. Lois and Charles Newton lived across the street and they had two children, Charles and Sidney, with the second one being female. Charles and Sidney Newton—called Chuck Newton—and they're just a little bit older than I was, pretty much about the same age.

LEYERZAPF: Okay—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: And I think the Newtons of course are all gone, but I don't know about Chuck and Sidney. I haven't heard from them for years—and then next door lived the Schrepfermans. Did that name ever pop up?

LEYERZAPF: It pops up in the letters from your mother and the name is more difficult than mine. [Laughs]

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Schrepferman. Don't ask me how to spell it. I'd have to it—

LEYERZAPF: It's about that long. [Laughs]

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: And Al and—what was her name—I can't think of it right now. My memory's going. I can't think of Mrs. Schrepferman's name, but her husband was Alvin Schrepferman and he had a brother who lived in the next block and he had a father who lived

in the next block and they all kind of lived very close together. They were good friends of the Eisenhowers.

LEYERZAPF: Okay, alright-

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: But they moved to California at some point.

LEYERZAPF: You said they were friends of the Eisenhowers or friends of the Douds?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Both.

LEYERZAPF: Both, okay, alright. I picked up some of these names in the letters going back and forth and wanted to run them by you—get a little more information about them. It gives us a little idea of what that neighborhood was like.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Unlike today it was very close knit. People knew each other as neighbors and they kept in touch with each other as neighbors.

LEYERZAPF: It's not like today's suburbs.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh no, no.

LEYERZAPF: I grew up in a small town which was like that. You knew everybody in the town and you knew all your neighbors.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, you know, just to give you an illustration of that, we moved from our seven hundred house in 1998 to a smaller house in southeast Denver. And so Molly thought it would be nice to put flyers out around the street and say we'd have a little open house to meet people and she went and bought all this food and pop and wine and everything and you know ten people would show up. Most of the neighborhood didn't show up. There just wasn't that feel, but in older Denver there was.

LEYERZAPF: Yeah, it was a different time and maybe a better time.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yeah. And if we move chronologically you'll probably ask me about when he came back as President and so forth down the road but we're not at that point yet.

LEYERZAPF: I kind of wanted to set the context a little bit. My next question — I think we've already probably answered this — I wanted to ask about if you have recollections of their meetings together, how often they met either in Washington D.C. or elsewhere or there on Lafayette Street. This is after they left, after they married and started families, let's say from 1930 forward.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well I don't recall any meetings from the late thirties except that first one where they came back from the Philippines. And then there was really nothing until after World War II.

LEYERZAPF: [Laughs] Yeah, he was a very busy man.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: He was a busy man and Mamie was in Washington, but then after that — I'm not sure when they came back on vacations during the summer. I know they were there in '48 and maybe '47, and in 1950 and I know they were there — I remember things about that. He went to Columbia University and then 1952 they were there of course, but during the war years I don't think my folks and they had any physical contact.

LEYERZAPF: They wouldn't have had an opportunity.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I do know that my mother and my brother visited either Mamie and Ike or just maybe Mamie — I can't remember because I wasn't with them — but he was Chief of Staff of the army and was living at Fort Myer, Virginia. They went and saw either one or both of them over at Fort Myer.

LEYERZAPF: Yeah, he was there from late 45 into early 48, I believe.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: Roughly, that time.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: ‘Cause I think it was around 1947 that they—my mother and brother—were back there.

LEYERZAPF: Later on in the early 50s—even through the presidency—through 55, when Eisenhower came to Denver, he also took a side trip up towards Fraser, Colorado and went trout fishing with his friends and so forth.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: That might’ve begun in the 40s. I’m not sure. Do you have a sense of when he started doing that. He did it in 53, 54, 55. I know that.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I don’t think he did in the 40s. I don’t recollect any of that; and, I think it happened in the 50s when his name was becoming more prominent—maybe he ought to be running for President—and there were businessmen that tried to urge that along and the only one that I’ve ever met that I can recall offhand—there were a lot of ‘em—it was Aksel Nielsen, who was a very prominent Denver businessman. And I think, as I understand it, Aksel Nielsen kind of gave financial advice to the General.

LEYERZAPF: That’s true—he did. It helped the General purchase real estate in the Denver area. For example, I remember seeing something in the files, I remember reading this when I was processing some of Eisenhower’s presidential papers. It sounds as though they had an interest in a new shopping center in Cherry Creek....perhaps?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yeah.

LEYERZAPF: It stuck in my mind that there was the development in Cherry Creek and Nielsen was involved in it and wanted to invest some of Eisenhower's money in that. It just stuck in my mind.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: It probably was a good investment. I didn't know what they had, but if it was Cherry Creek, it was a good decision. In fact, I just read not too long ago that among the tourist attractions of people coming to Denver for tourism, that the Cherry Creek shopping center is one of the top three of the places where tourists like to go. I'm not sure why, but I guess it's kind of upscale. I think they're a dime a dozen now. They're just so many shopping places now over in Denver, but Cherry Creek would've been a good investment.

LEYERZAPF: Nielsen also was an advisor. He was for just a short time either head or deputy director of the Office of Defense Mobilization under Eisenhower in the very early 50s. So he actually served in a formal role also. Getting back to those camping and fishing and eating expeditions into the mountains, do you ever recall Eisenhower coming back from it or sharing stories about those? Did he ever talk to you about them?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: He may have. I don't recall any particular stories, but I know the famous time in 1953—it was Labor Day and he'd been up there in the mountains and the Secret Service car came by our house and said if my mother and dad were available, Mamie and Ike would like to have them come up for the evening. I think he had just come back from a fishing trip. But I can't remember precisely any of the things they—one of the things I donated was a fishing hat and I can't remember whether that was when he was President or just a General—I just can't remember. But I remember I was up at the house on 750 and he was upstairs and he yelled down. He said, "Johnny, you want my hat."

I said, "Your—what hat?"

And he says, "Well, my fishing hat." He says, "I can't take it. I'm not going to be using it. I'm going to be going back."

And I says, "Oh sure!" So he slung the hat down the stairs and I took it and went home and said, "Look what I've got from General Eisenhower or President." I can't remember which it was.

And Mother said, "Well, why don't you go up and have him sign it for you?"

"Oh, okay." And so I went back and said, "Would you sign that", which he did.

LEYERZAPF: Well, we're glad he gave it to you and signed it and uh, you've just given the information our museum curator will need eventually to catalogue it. A little bit about its history. It'll be catalogued with the other artifacts over in the museum that have been signed.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: You know, it was just kind of a spontaneous thing. "Hey! Here's a young kid down the block. I might as well fling it off to him, you know." But my father wasn't ever a fisherman or anything. He never went on any of those trips.

LEYERZAPF: Okay.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I think he played golf maybe three times with the General or the President, because he did play golf. But, he never went fishing. My wife is telling me I'm not speaking loud enough. Is it coming across alright?

LEYERZAPF: I've got it turned up fairly high. I've got it pretty close to you. It's pretty sensitive, but I just asked about those camping trips. We don't have a whole lot of information on them, other than press conference notes. We have a lot of good photographs, though. Did you know that Eisenhower did all the cooking?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: He was a pretty good chef, I guess. And for him to enjoy it, it was pretty much a matter of "Get out of my kitchen. I'm working", you know. [laughing] And apparently served good meals. Okay, we've already talked about your mother and father and the Douds. I had "Did he have a business relationship?" Well, apparently not.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: It was not—

LEYERZAPF: —nothing like that. That visit in 1939, when you were six years old—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I think it was 38.

LEYERZAPF: If it's the Philippines, it would have been December or January of '39-'40.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Is that when it was?

LEYERZAPF: That's when he came back from the Philippines, was December '39. I'm sure of that.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I—I had thought it was '38.

LEYERZAPF: What it might be? In the summer of '38, he came back to the states on a procurement trip and brought Mamie with him and I think Mamie had to have surgery of some sort. Mamie stayed at the Doud house while Eisenhower and—who else? Some others of the party took a little vacation up through Colorado and Wyoming while Mamie was recovering at the Doud house. So that could be it.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: It could've but I'm pretty sure it was '38.

LEYERZAPF: It was August of '38, I believe. I had forgotten about that.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, I think it was in August because I remember him distinctly. I was five years old at the time, rather than six. Because the summer of '39, we went to New York in June to see my other grandparents. So, I think it was '38.

LEYERZAPF: I'll bet it was that other trip that he came—he came to the states to buy airplanes for the Philippine Air Force.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Really?

LEYERZAPF: Mm-hmm. And get other munitions, too, for the Philippine Army he and MacArthur were trying to build. Trying to get surplus weapons and so forth. So he was in several Army posts, including Washington D.C. and arsenals and then he took a brief vacation. I want to say that Mamie had major surgery in Denver and stayed and recovered in the hospital and at the house. Wasn't able to go on that side trip they took to Wyoming.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh.

LEYERZAPF: But in any event, more importantly, what are your memories of him at the age of five?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I just remembered they were sitting on a couch in the living room and I'm not sure I was there long, but I do remember seeing them, but I don't have any distinct memories of anything really beyond that. It could be that maybe Mamie and Ike and my parents were just visiting and they said, "John, come in here." Robert and John, my brother and maybe I just sort of met him. I don't have any very distinct impressions of that particular—

LEYERZAPF: We don't have very good memories at the age of five.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: No, that's still pretty young.

LEYERZAPF: I hope I don't seem to be skipping around too much here, but I took some—I took a lot of my questions from your memoir—going through it in the order in which you constructed it; and, mentioned John Eisenhower and at one point, in your memoir, you mentioned that the Douds stored a 'chug' for John someplace.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: What is a chug?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Kind of like these—what do you call those soapbox derby type of—

LEYERZAPF: Oh okay!

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: —things, you know.

LEYERZAPF: Soapbox derby carts or cars.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Something like that and they called it the chug. I think, I'm not positive of this, I think maybe Grandfather Doud had something to do with building that for his grandson. And they kept it up and he had it hanging up on the garage in the back there and that's where it stayed until he came to town. And it was kind of a fancy but it wasn't super fancy.

LEYERZAPF: It was hilly enough for it to roll—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah!

LEYERZAPF: —in that area of Denver.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Well, there from 7th Avenue to 6th Avenue is a pretty steep hill. Then, there's the hill from the driveway down to the street.

LEYERZAPF: Okay, well, I was curious. I owned a soapbox derby car as a child. My father and a friend of his built one, a very nice one, but I hadn't heard them called chugs. You've already told us a lot about your relationship with Mr. and Mrs. Doud and described them. Any other stories beyond where we've gone and where you've gone in your memoir that you want to share —particularly that say something about their personalities?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I can't think of anything other than what I've said. Mrs. Doud was a very formidable strong woman and her husband was—not meek, not a softy, I don't mean that—but just kind of laid back and jolly and friendly. You didn't see a lot of verve.

LEYERZAPF: But she had a lot of energy?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

LEYERZAPF: And you could tell that she was in charge of the domestic affairs.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. I think she ran the household.

LEYERZAPF: Interesting. You had so many timely visits with the Eisenhowers: inaugurations, Denver in '52. You mentioned the rally for Eisenhower up at the Denver Coliseum. Any other memories of that? You were there, were you not?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, at the Coliseum?

LEYERZAPF: Yeah, the Denver rally. Anything you wanted to share about that?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, it was very exciting. I can't remember what the General said. Everybody was there in the political world and I can't really remember anything in particular about it except—I don't know whether I said anything in here about it.

LEYERZAPF: There was a little bit about it in your memoir.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I did put in something here about how I would take the Eisenhowers presents that I had bought at Woolworth's with a coupon.

LEYERZAPF: That was interesting.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: They enjoyed that and I remember one time—probably couldn't do it today—but one time, when they were in the White House, I'd brought them a big Nestles candy bar and a can of chili and the President—

[Interruption]

LEYERZAPF: —are John and Molly Archibold. The date is August 4th, 2008. At one point in your memoir, you—I want to quote directly from you. You said “I got the impression from the Eisenhowers that the Eastern politicians had decided on Nixon's nomination—not that Eisenhower had personally.” Do you have anything else you wanted to say about that? Anything you heard that led you to believe that? Discussions?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: The only thing that I can specifically remember is that I remember Mamie at some point really close to that convention said “Well, I understand they've picked Nixon to be the VP.” So, just from that “they picked Nixon to be the VP.” So, it was almost as though that's what they decided.

LEYERZAPF: And it may be significant that she used that pronoun. Okay.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Because I never heard anything about Mamie saying “Well, the General has decided on this young senator from California or he's decided on—” It's “I understand they've picked Nixon.”

LEYERZAPF: I think that is the way it was done. He had to be cleared with Eisenhower, but I believe that it was kind of a small group of people who got together.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Who they were, I don't know but uh...

LEYERZAPF: Well, James Duff was one of them—from Pennsylvania—Pennsylvania senator, James Duff. Whom your mother mentions in some of her letters, he apparently was out in Denver once, he visited the house. It might have been around this time, I'm not sure.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. It was about that time and I met him too.

LEYERZAPF: Oh, okay. You met him.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I remember that's the time I went up there and I took a friend of mine, his name was Lynn Hoover and he was a year behind me in high school, and I said "Come on up with me." And we went up to 750 and I'm sure things like this would never happen now. You know, we just walked up the driveway and went up on the porch; and there was the General and he said, this is Senator Duff and this is John Archibold. And, I said, this is my friend, Lynn Hoover. He'd never met Lynn Hoover before.

The General said "Well, go on upstairs and see Mamie. She's upstairs in her bedroom"

So, we went upstairs and Mamie was in bed and I popped in and Lynn came in and Mamie was kind of taken aback, because she'd never seen Lynn Hoover and I said "Oh! Well, this is a friend of mine from high school—Lynn Hoover."

She said "I'm sorry I looked a little startled. I see John all the time. He's just kind of part of the family"

LEYERZAPF: Well...part of the family, yes.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Then, we went back downstairs. We were up there about only fifteen minutes visiting and we went back down and the General said "Well, it's good to see you, John; and sure nice to have met you, Lynn."

And, we were walking back to my house and Lynn Hoover was just gaga. He said "He remembered my name!" He was just floored that he used his name and he was just overcome and he said "He remembered my name"

LEYERZAPF: And he remembered that incident the rest of his life, I'm sure. Lynn Hoover.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh, I'm sure he did! Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: Made quite an impression on a young person. Some of the questions I'm going to ask are on things you said in your memoir. You describe going up to the Doud residence and the President was there and Mrs. Eisenhower, Mrs. Doud in this reference. And then you say, the President and I talked about Christianity, freedom, education, economic problems for an hour and a half. There were some other times when it seems you had more than a brief, but fairly extended conversations with the General. Do you recall anything about his philosophy, his politics? His political philosophies, his life philosophy? Anything that stuck with you from those conversations?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well not in any sectarian sense or formal philosophical sense. I think he just had kind of a solid presence with good values: being industrious, being honest. I know one time he said to me—in some ways, he was kind of like an uncle to me—he said, “Now, John, don't take yourself so seriously. Take your job seriously, not yourself.”

LEYERZAPF: A little bit of advice.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. I think he—he was basically a middle of the road-type of guy, you know. He wasn't a person who was enamored in a lot of extremes, but, just doing your job and doing it well.

LEYERZAPF: Kind of a pragmatist about things.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Not in a devious sense of trying to get ahead or anything like that, but one of the things that I thought—I would sure love to talk to him now, I'm sure he would be appalled. I just have this very strong sense that he would be appalled because of—this is set forth in that letter he wrote to my mother in 1951 where he said, “I don't think

politics and soldiering mix.” I think he’d be appalled at the way the our military people today are really getting away from that.

LEYERZAPF: Getting involved in politics?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, writing articles for newspapers and being interviewed and second-guessing—I think he would just be very disturbed with that.

LEYERZAPF: Blowing off their reservation and talking about policy.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. He worked well with people in both political parties. He wasn’t a severe partisan as I saw it.

LEYERZAPF: Interesting. I’m glad you made that observation. A lot of historians have often looked at it at that way, too.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, I think that’s accurate. I think he felt at that time and probably that the country would just get in a little bit off the track and Democrats had been in too long and it was time for a little bit of movement back more toward the center.

LEYERZAPF: The “center” is the word he used quite often. I’ve seen it in his letters to friends. Well, you were rather privileged to have kind of sat at his knee, as it were, and listened to him talk about not just light things but serious thoughts. Very serious things.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Right.

LEYERZAPF: One thing that struck me, you mentioned in your memoir that Eisenhower confided in you that he was leaning towards appointing Robert Jackson [as] Chief Justice and it didn’t work out that way. Did he give any reasons why he was leaning towards Jackson? Did he talk about Jackson or elaborate on that at all?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Not in any extensive way. If I had to pick out a particular historical moment that I interfaced with, that would be the moment because it was on the day that Chief Justice Vinson died.

LEYERZAPF: Oh! Okay.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: It was that day and, I'm probably the only person alive who ever heard that statement because all the rest of them are gone. Mr. Doud, of course, had been gone and Mrs. Doud is gone and my mother and dad are gone and I think those were the only people that were there—maybe General Schulz, his aide, was there.

LEYERZAPF: Quite possible.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: But he said “Yeah, I’m going to be flying back to the funeral,” and I said to him, “Mr. President, why don’t you appoint me as Chief Justice.” And, he looked over and—and I was sitting right next to him and he slapped me on the knee and said, “John, you’ve just taken a big load off of my mind!”

LEYERZAPF: Oh! What a great story! “John, you’ve just taken a big load off my mind”

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah! “You’ve just taken—“

LEYERZAPF: [laughing] Sense of humor!

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah! Then, he said, “But, seriously I think I’ll move Bob Jackson up to Chief.” Those were his words—“I think I’ll move Bob Jackson up to Chief.”

LEYERZAPF: That’s interesting. It’s not a story I’ve been familiar with from the written history.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: No. No, I have never seen it. And I was talking at an Eisenhower dinner a few years ago—maybe ten years ago—and I said, I know who he was going to appoint, but I'm not going to tell you tonight. I had them all in suspense, but I haven't told many people.

LEYERZAPF: Mm-hmm. It's a great story and it's an important story for the record.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I think it was probably because of his prosecution—I'm just guessing. I think it was probably because of his prosecution at the Nazi war crimes.

LEYERZAPF: That would be a logical basis for it, yes.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: He must've been impressed by that.

LEYERZAPF: I wouldn't be surprised that that would've been a factor.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: But, he didn't say that, that's just my own guess.

LEYERZAPF: Not a bad guess.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: But I can distinctly remember those words—"I think I'll move Bob Jackson up to Chief." He didn't say "Robert Jackson." He said, "I think I'll move Bob Jackson up to Chief."

LEYERZAPF: It's an important part of the story. You talk about Eisenhower's endorsement of you when you were running for that Colorado State House. Was that right?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

LEYERZAPF: Tell us a little bit more of that in this oral history, too. What year was that?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: That was 1958.

LEYERZAPF: And you mention that the President gave you a personal endorsement.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: He was in Denver at the time for a very short time, I think he was there about two or three days. Maybe two days. He said, "Do you have any cards or literature?"

And I said, "Well, we've got some cards at home." You know, those little cards that we just hand out?

And he said, "Well, bring me up some." And so, he handed them to James Hagerty, his press secretary. He said, "I'm going to give some to Jim Hagerty and have him pass them out to the press."

LEYERZAPF: Okay. Pass them out to the press.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. And that's what he apparently did. And, so I think he did, because Haggerty was having a kind of a press conference right there at the bottom of the driveway at 750. And then it appeared in the papers. Actually, I think some people were kind of miffed, because it said this was the only endorsement he made of any candidacy while he was in Colorado. He didn't endorse any other people running in that election in Colorado.

LEYERZAPF: But, it was written up in the newspapers, so—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, it was written up.

LEYERZAPF: —and got circulation.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. And the fact that this was the only endorsement was also written up in the newspaper.

LEYERZAPF: Oh, they made the point of it.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: It says, “It was the only endorsement he made while he was in Colorado.”

LEYERZAPF: And, this was in the general election. Not the primary.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: We all lost.

LEYERZAPF: Oh.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: All seventeen candidates. They ran at large in Denver at that time, people in Denver voted for seventeen state representatives. They do it by district now, but in that time they didn’t—

LEYERZAPF: Everybody was at large.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: —at large. And they all lost. 1958 was a kind of a bad year for the Republicans.

LEYERZAPF: The recession and Congress back in Washington, too, became more heavily Democratic.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: But, he wrote me a letter a few months later and said, “Well, sorry you didn’t make it. It was a tough year for Republicans all over the nation.”

LEYERZAPF: It was. It was a tough year. It sounds as though that 1953 flight in the Columbine was that a pretty exciting moment for you.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yes.

LEYERZAPF: To have that opportunity to ride back in the presidential aircraft.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, that was at the same all this Chief Justice thing was going on. Because it was on Labor Day when we had that conversation and then I was walking back from 750 to our house; and, I said to my folks, “Ya know, he’s going back there to the Chief Justice Vinson’s funeral but, he’s coming back right after the funeral. So, he’s not going to be back there long. He’s coming right back to Colorado. So, he won’t be taking anybody, they’ll have plenty of room on the plane. Why don’t I just go back with him?”

And, my mother said, “You can’t do that.”

And I said, “Well, why not?”

She said “Well, you just don’t do things like that.”

And, I said “It makes sense! I’m going to leave on that Friday.” And I said, “You know, it would work out perfectly. And, then I just go back up to Princeton.” And I just kind of badgered to my mother.

She says, “Oh, for Pete’s sake.”

And I say, “Why don’t you just call Mamie and see what she says.”

“Oh, alright.” So, she got on the phone and called Mamie and then she got off the phone said, “Yeah, Mamie said she asked Ike, and Ike says ‘Sure, that’s fine!’ and so I guess you can go.”

LEYERZAPF: Yeah. If you don’t ask, it won’t happen!

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: If you don’t ask, it won’t happen. And that’s the kind of guy he was. “Sure, I’ve got room. Yeah, it’s fine. It’s fine with me.” My mother thought it was a little bit gauche to do something like that. And I don’t think Mamie minded.

LEYERZAPF: Well! You were a member of the family. They said that.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah! So I guess they give out a list to the papers of who’s going or something. “Who’s this John Archibold?” The papers said he would be accompanied by Dr. Snyder, his personal physician and John Archibold, a friend. “Well, who’s that?” Well, I guess they started nosing around they found out about who, it was this twenty year-old kid

going back to college in New Jersey. “Well, we want to come out and get a story on it”. I said “Well, there’s no story. I’m just going to go on—” “Well, yeah but we—” They badgered me.

LEYERZAPF: Oh, with the press? It’s a human interest story.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: And I said, “Well, okay. Come on out tomorrow. We’re leaving Wednesday.” So they came out and took a few pictures and asked me what I was doing and how I’d known the Eisenhowers and I told them and then the next day was Wednesday. At night, I had dinner with my folks and the phone rang and they said, “Okay, the General—or the President’s ready to leave. Come on up.” So I just walked up the street and there were three cars and I got in the car with the President. It was really kind of embarrassing in a way, because you know what happened, the President sat on the right side, which I later learned is the protocol side. I didn’t know anything about that.

LEYERZAPF: I’ve never heard that either!

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: It was a big Cadillac and there was a car in front and a car in back. The President sat on the right side and I sat right next to him on the left side. General Schulz said “You sit there.” He had a little jump seat, so here was this General sitting on a jump seat with this twenty year-old kid sitting next to the President in the back seat. And I thought I should sit in the jump seat. “No, you sit there.”

LEYERZAPF: Schulz?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, Schulz said that.

LEYERZAPF: Well!

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: So we drove out to Lowry Air Force Base, no police escorts, just those three cars. Go through the gate at Lowry and these airmen, they snapped to a salute as we

went through the gates and get onto Columbine and they said, “Well, your seat is here.” They made it into a berth to sleep. The President went to his stateroom. I talked with some of the people who were on the plane. I don’t know who they were or what they did.

LEYERZAPF: Some of the Presidential staff, I suppose.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: No, I don’t think they were presidential staff, as such. I think they were kind of the plane staff that.

LEYERZAPF: Oh, okay! Crew!

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Crew. Crew-type people. And they said, “Well, here’s your berth, it’s made up.” Took about six or seven hours to get from Denver to Washington. We left about 9 or 9:30 and then we got in at Washington D.C. about 6:30 the next morning—National Airport. The President got off and I said, “Thank you for the ride, Mr. President.”

And he said, “Well, you have a good year at college, John and we’ll see you all later.”

And, he was whisked off to his limousine and then this man with a black hat or a chauffeur’s cap came up and said, “Are you Mr. Archibold?”

I was kind of taken aback, being referred to as ‘Mr. Archibold’. And I said, “Yes.”

And, he said, “Well, your car is over here.”

LEYERZAPF: He thought you were on your own.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah! He said, “Is there a place you want to be taken to?” And, I said “Well, yeah. I’m going to Richard Gill’s house and this is the address.” He was Mamie’s nephew. I’ve known him for a long time. So, that was the story of that. And, then, I guess it appeared on the front page of the paper the next day.

LEYERZAPF: You know, you might even do some research to look through some of your mother’s letters. We probably ought to have you look at the records of the Air Force aide, Colonel Draper. Because, we have all the passenger manifests—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Really?!

LEYERZAPF: —all the little details of every presidential plane flight. So, there's probably something there on your ride.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Really?! How do you look this stuff up?

LEYERZAPF: We have what we call Finding Aids for cataloguing data we use to kind of get a handle on each collection of records—the Draper records. We have Schulz's records too. Often it's only file folder titles, but it might be a file folder title for Presidential trips during the month of say, August 1953, and there'd be a case file for every trip in there.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Really?

LEYERZAPF: I'll run it down fairly quickly.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Wow!

LEYERZAPF: We archivists, we document everything we can.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: You document it.

LEYERZAPF: Okay. That would've been very memorable. You mentioned Richard Gill, Richard and Susan, in the interview too. Apparently, you knew them as socially. Can you tell us a little bit about your relationship with Mamie's nephew?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, Mamie's sister, Mike—?

LEYERZAPF: Mike Moore.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: They called her Mike, but I can't remember her actual name.

LEYERZAPF: I can't either, because I've gotten in the habit of calling her Mike.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: She had two sons by a previous marriage with Mr. Gill, whom I never met. The older Mr. Gill. Michael and Richard would come out to visit their grandparents, because they're also grandchildren of the Douds. Richard is, I think, about a year older than I am and Michael—he's dead now—he was about two years younger. But they would come out from 1946 on. We got to know each other, because I was about their same age. We did things together when they came out and one year—

LEYERZAPF: They came out to visit 750 Lafayette.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, they came out to visit the Douds, the grandparents.

LEYERZAPF: By themselves or with Mike?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Both, I think.

LEYERZAPF: Both. Okay. So, you buddied up with them, since they were neighbors during those trips.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

LEYERZAPF: I see!

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: And then one year—I don't know whether if Michael was with us on that or not, —Richard had a friend and he and I and the friend and maybe Michael—I can't remember whether he was with us or not—we went down to Albuquerque on a trip.

The last time I saw Richard—I haven't seen for many years—last time he was out in Denver with some of his kids. We went up to see 750, because they had put a pool in it—in

the backyard. I can't remember when that was. It was about ten years ago or longer than that.

But, Mamie used to always write me these letters about how she was kind of antsy about the people who had purchased the house and had not moved in or maybe it was the second owner. I don't remember, but there was some owner who was kind of delaying moving into the house. She was very interested in the neighborhood and at one point, she wrote in a letter which, I'm sure was in the stuff that was donated. She said, "You know, you're my only contact with the neighborhood now to keep me up on what's going on."

LEYERZAPF: She cared about it a lot. That's interesting.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: She was proud of that neighborhood—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yeah! Yeah!

LEYERZAPF: —and the roots there.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: She said, that was her home and then the General and the President—they really considered it until Gettysburg, that was kind of the place they liked to go.

LEYERZAPF: Yeah, that was where they went.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: One of the most exciting days was in August of '53, just before this trip that I took. He was just President in this first year, but he came back to Denver in August and that was just a fantastic. There were 75,000 people that came out to see the President arrive back in Denver.

LEYERZAPF: You mean, at Lowry?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, along a route, because he went by motorcade from Lowry down to 700 [Lafayette]. I've got some of those clippings somewhere. I'm sure you've got in the Denver Post. You've probably—

LEYERZAPF: Maybe not. We might not. I'm not sure of that.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I don't know whether I brought them. I think I did. [Fumbles around looking for something.] Oh! Yes, I did!

LEYERZAPF: Wire stories. So you have the papers. It says August 9, 1953. 'Denver becomes U.S. Summer Capitol'. Well, actually, we probably would like to have this.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Really??

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Then there's that with your mother.

LEYERZAPF: Well, it's a local story. Wire-service stories we have pretty well-documented, but a local newspaper—the local stories—that's a little different. I think we WOULD like to have this. If you're willing to part with it.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, well, this'll give you some of the flavor.

LEYERZAPF: Oh, lots of photographs. Whose writing is it at the bottom of the—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I think that's—

LEYERZAPF: —page.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: —that's my writing.

LEYERZAPF: That's your writing.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. And see, you can see all the crowds. They're packed in there. This is Lois Newton.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: That's her house.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: And that's—

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: That's across the street.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: —that's in front of her house.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: At 750.

LEYERZAPF: Well, thank you very much. We will file that in the archives to document that trip. I doubt very much that we have the Denver Post already. We might.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh! Is there a way you can make a copy of that and send it to me?

LEYERZAPF: I don't know if we can make one without splicing. I don't know that we've got a Xerox that big. We might have a scan that big. We'll just do the best we can! Give it a shot!

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Alright!

LEYERZAPF: [writing it down] I'll 'make a scan of the post.' I'll talk to our computer expert who runs this sort of thing and, see how much of it we can get.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Let me see if there's something on the back side there too.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: This is all on there too.

LEYERZAPF: Gosh. Yeah, it's really written up. Okay! If you want to give it up. I didn't mean to be too forward about it.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, it should belong here if you don't have it.

LEYERZAPF: Well, we can do a search and see if we have it. And if not we can return it to you. That's always a possibility.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Let my kids fight over it. They may throw it away.

LEYERZAPF: [laughing] Okay. Alright. Moving along, you had New Year's dinner with the Eisenhowers in 1961.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yes.

LEYERZAPF: Can you tell us a little bit more about that? I was particularly intrigued by that one comment: You said he seemed preoccupied with Vietnam. Anything else he might have had to say about winding down the presidency and turning over the reins to somebody else?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, I think he was kind of glad to be getting out of it. I just sensed—I mean, he didn't say these things. He did say one remark about: "I've got to go do something." We had dinner, it was just the family and me and then they said, "Well we have a movie up there." And we went up to the movie and he stayed for awhile. Then, he said "Well, I've got to go deal with this damn Vietnam thing," or something like that.

LEYERZAPF: Oh. Interesting.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: He said, "Nice you could be with us tonight, John." And he went off. I think he was concerned about it. He never said this, but I just sensed that he thought, 'Well,

I don't know what's going to happen with this new guy coming in'. I just sort of had that feeling. Nothing he said, but little uneasy about it, though—

LEYERZAPF: Well, there—there's documentation around that he was a little bit uneasy. He was concerned. Very much concerned.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: But he was still doing the job, even up at the last minute. He said, "I've got to go deal with this darn Vietnam—"

LEYERZAPF: This is a long shot, but if he went off to meet with some staff or the National Security Advisor to meet about Vietnam, anybody else who was involved in it—there very well may be notes to that meeting. Just curious. I'll—I'll check that out sometime.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, this was probably about 9:30 at night on New Year's Day.

LEYERZAPF: Oh okay. Well, he was worried. He didn't usually work late. He was worried if he was working on it at 9:30 at night. That's interesting.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, he left the movie and before the movie was over.

LEYERZAPF: Gettysburg Forum. I'm not certain how many times you were there.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh, probably three or four, I thought. We were there—

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: I was there twice.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, you were there twice. Can't remember. They moved up there in '61. They had it before '61. I might've been—

LEYERZAPF: And they'd spend weekends up there as President, sometimes, he would motor to the farm for the weekend—many weekends.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I remember one time I went up there—I don't think you [Molly] was there—and Mamie gave the full tour of the house and was pointing out various gifts that had been sent by this ruler or that ruler or Chiang Kai Chek—I can't remember them. But, they—ya know, swords and plates, crystal.

LEYERZAPF: All of those were presidential gifts, a lot of which are in our museum now. Many of them are in the museum.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: So, I think three or four times.

LEYERZAPF: Any particular trip that stands out in your mind? The side trip when you went to get your marriage license—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: —that would probably be memorable.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yeah! That was memorable.

LEYERZAPF: An important day!

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: When did Nixon resign? I think we were up there in seventy—

LEYERZAPF: August of '74.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: We were up there in June of '74. That's when David Eisenhower came down.

LEYERZAPF: Okay.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Mamie said “You and David have lunch on the porch”—which we did—the sun porch. I can’t remember what David said, he made some kind of remark that. I didn’t know David that well and he probably didn’t remember me from the past. The first time I saw him, he was 4 years old, in ’52 he was out in Denver and then I saw him at New Year’s dinner when he was twelve.

LEYERZAPF: Yeah, he would’ve been twelve.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I remember he was watching football on TV and he was telling his grandfather, “Well, he should’ve taken the ball and done this,” or, “I would’ve gone this way with the ball.” He was very interested in sports.

LEYERZAPF: Yeah, he loved sports.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: But, he [David] made some allusion to Watergate. I can’t remember what it was, but I sensed that something was going on and he knew about it. But I can’t remember what it was. And then in 1974, the day that Nixon resigned or the day before that, I was on Army summer duty at Charlottesville, Virginia. I had with me Mamie’s phone number; and, I thought, “I’m going to call Mamie.” And I got her on the phone. We talked for about maybe five minutes and I said, “Well, I guess this is kind of a hard time for you.” She said, “Well, we’ll have to see what the President says tonight.” From that remark I don’t know to this day whether she knew what was going to happen or whether she was just saying that as a kind of a general statement—that she did know, but she didn’t want to even tell me. I couldn’t really sense it, but she said, “It will be interesting to see what the President says tonight”. I don’t know. How would you read that?

LEYERZAPF: Yeah, it’s hard to know. Maybe she didn’t know.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Maybe she really didn’t know. I could not believe it. And, of course, I never did ask her after that. I just didn’t want to bring it up.

LEYERZAPF: Anything else you want to say about your Gettysburg visits and Mamie at Gettysburg?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, I think she enjoyed being up there. I mean, it was her home. She'd never had her home. She brought that thing from Denver and she liked it up there.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: She had those curtains made that had images of their life.

LEYERZAPF: Oh really?

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. There was at the Columbia University and—do you remember those? Because, we had the same curtains hanging in one of the rooms of our house that your mother got from Mamie.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh really?

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Yes.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I didn't know that. I'm learning things.

LEYERZAPF: Were they photographs that had been made into prints for the—

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: It was made into prints.

LEYERZAPF: —for the curtains.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: Like all the residences—

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. All the—

LEYERZAPF: —many of the residences that she had lived in?

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Yeah!

LEYERZAPF: That's interesting.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: And then we were there for lunch that time. When we were invited for lunch, she showed us the curtains that were at Gettysburg.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, I think she really enjoyed being there.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: They were dark pink, of course.

LEYERZAPF: Of course. [both men laughing]

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I'm trying to think to think of something else about Gettysburg. That's where I took these pictures.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: The picture window from the sunroom you could look out on the battlefield.

LEYERZAPF: Oh this! With the flag, you mean?

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Yes. The sunroom in the back was just glass and you looked out the glass to the battlefield.

LEYERZAPF: That's certainly what the General would have wanted because he studied that. He was quite the Civil War buff.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I got a photograph at home, maybe it was the same time that I took this, and I said, “Well, Mamie, would you take a picture of Molly and me and the General here?” So I’ve got a picture—it’s really kind of faded now. I don’t know, can you unfade a picture?

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Well, sort of. In Paintshop Pro or Photoshop.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: That’s the one that we had with you and you said that you didn’t look very good in that dress. But, Mamie took that picture with my camera. So we’ve got a picture of the three of us that was taken by Mamie.

LEYERZAPF: Okay. Did she have a—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Just used my camera and Molly’s camera.

[Interruption]

LEYERZAPF: We’re resuming the interview with Mr. John Archibold of Denver, Colorado. Again, it’s August 4, 2008. When the other tape finished, we were talking about Mamie at Gettysburg and your impressions of her at Gettysburg. If you have some more to say about that?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, I can’t really think of anything in addition. I know she had a number of visitors there. I think she liked having visitors there. One time we were there, she had the President of Eisenhower College. I think his name was Rosenkrans or something like that.

LEYERZAPF: You’re right! [John] Rosenkrans.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: He had come and she invited us to stay. We’d been there for lunch. “Do you want to stay for dinner?”

And I said, “No, I don’t think we’ll do that.” We left ‘cause I didn’t think it was appropriate to horn in on her having dinner with Doctor Rosenkrans. So, she had visitors there and I think she enjoyed that.

LEYERZAPF: She liked people.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh yeah! Yeah!

LEYERZAPF: That’s for sure. She certainly did.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, I was just telling someone yesterday, who I don’t think was aware of our situation with the Eisenhowers; and we told them that we were stopping off in Abilene. “Why are you doing that?” They didn’t know we knew the Eisenhowers. She’s younger than we are. But, I said the one word that describes Mamie is, ‘delightful’. I said, “There’s never been a First Lady like her since that time.” I think that she was the last of that era because she was just very delightful. She didn’t try to establish her own public identity in any special way. She was just who she was and always had been.

LEYERZAPF: Very natural.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Very natural!

LEYERZAPF: And comfortable with herself and in her role.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I think Nancy, this friend of ours, said “Well, what did you all talk about?” And I said, “Well, I think most of the time, we just sat around listening to Mamie tell jokes.” She mostly told jokes.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: She had a wonderful sense of humor.

LEYERZAPF: She was a joke-teller?

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Well, and she coined phrases that described things in a very funny way.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah, the one that I can remember—I don't know why I remember—she said, “That was as black as Egypt.”

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Is she the one who said that it's colder than a brass toilet seat in the Yukon?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: No, that's Charlie Williams.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Okay.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Can't ascribe that to Mamie.

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: Okay. Sorry.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: But 'black as Egypt'.

LEYERZAPF: I remember one. A year and a half ago our museum curator and I interviewed Barbara Eisenhower, John's former wife. A lot of our conversation was about Mamie. Mamie was very careful with money, extremely careful with money, and, when they went into the White House, she made very clear about what was a personal account and what was public money. She made it very clear to everybody, “You be very careful. Do not purchase anything that can be construed as personal for Ike and I on a public account.” It's almost as though she knew of some cases where that had happened perhaps in the past. She was very attentive to it. But she had a phrase for not doing that. She would say “Don't run it on the eagle,” meaning, “Don't run it on the United States government.” It's a personal expense. One of the stories I remember with her. So I see what you mean about coining phrases. In

your memoir, you mention two citizens of Abilene: Orville Robson and George Easter. How did you get to know two fellows from Abilene?

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, that's kind of an interesting story. I went to Fort Harrison when I entered the Army and that's another kind of an interesting story. But I won't get into the preliminaries. But I was at Fort Ben Harris in Indiana and I attended this church on Sunday and this young gal there said, "Well, I know someone who's out at Fort Riley, Kansas and his name is Toby Bocker." That's where I was going to be assigned for my two year stint after being at Fort Harrison for preliminary training at the Adjutant General school. I came out to Fort Riley. Well, to make a long story short, I made three attempts to contact this Toby Bocker and they were unsuccessful. I said "Well, I'll give him one more shot", because then I'd have done my best to contact this person I don't know. That one was successful. We got together and we went to this Christian Fellowship in Abilene. It was run by Plymouth Brethren or something, I think it was. He knew some people in Abilene and one of them was Orville Robson who was a farmer and another guy and that's how I got to know them, through my friend, Toby Bocker, who I still keep in contact with.

LEYERZAPF: Oh, you do.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. He lives in Indianapolis and he's not even Catholic and he's got twenty-five grandkids. We're Catholic and we have twenty. He's Protestant and he's got twenty-five. So, he's ahead of us. But uh, we got to know Orville. I don't think he's alive now. He was a farmer in the Abilene area.

LEYERZAPF: We can find out. Local people would know. I was just curious, his name popped up and I was wondering.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: And George Easter—I remember the name but I can't remember whether he was related to the Robsons or not.

LEYERZAPF: I know some people in this building who would know.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Really?

LEYERZAPF: A lot of local people they really know all the local connections. Very much so. I just wanted to check through here to see if there was anything that I had missed. [Flips through notes] Okay. Anything else you want to add to the record before we conclude the interview? Anything I haven't covered that I—

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I'm sure there's a lot that could be said that I can't even remember right offhand. Can you think of anything?

MOLLY ARCHIBOLD: No.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, there's two things that I remember. This isn't particularly germane to Eisenhower, as such, but one is and, I've never seen any historian mention this, but I came up with a little formula about who would be politically, in terms of electoral politics, the most successful person in the 20th and 21st Century. And here's the formula: There's only person that has served at least 8 years as President, never lost an election, never lost a nomination, and was elected by a majority of electoral votes and popular votes both times—and that was Eisenhower.

LEYERZAPF: Okay. Interesting.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: And people said, "Well, what about Clinton? Wasn't he in office 8 years?"

And I said "Yeah. He lost an election for Governor."

"What about Franklin Roosevelt? He was in for more than 8 years."

"He lost an election for Vice-President."

"What about Reagan? He was in for 8 years. He never lost an election."

"True, but he lost a nomination to Jerry Ford in 1976."

“What about Woodrow Wilson? He was elected twice.” But one time less than fifty percent of the popular vote. I’ve never seen anybody come up with that.

LEYERZAPF: No, I haven’t heard that. I study the presidency a lot, obviously, working here. But, I’ve not heard anybody make that observation. Very interesting.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: So, you could say in terms of electoral politics—regardless of what his policies were, but just being elected with all of those criteria he’s the—

LEYERZAPF: —the only one. Interesting.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Well, I miss them both and get a little teary-eyed when I think about it.

LEYERZAPF: Well, you spent a lot of time with them. You were very fortunate to have been a friend of the family and a member of the family, as they said. Very much so.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Oh, there is another interesting remark, probably most people don’t know this. I remember that after Adlai Stevenson was nominated for President by the Democrats in 1952, this was back in Denver, Mamie said to me uh, “Well, it looks they’re going to—looks like Adlai Stevenson is going to be the Democrat nominee for President. He’s a good man.”

LEYERZAPF: Mamie said that. Very gracious. She was a very gracious person.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: Very gracious person. Thank you for sharing that story too.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I just don’t think that happens much anymore.

LEYERZAPF: Probably not.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: I'm not opposed to vigorous politics, but it's just become a disaster, in my opinion.

LEYERZAPF: The graciousness that Mamie showed in that instance, it's hard to find today.

JOHN ARCHIBOLD: Yeah. Yeah.

LEYERZAPF: Yeah. Well, it's been a pleasure interviewing you, Mr. Archibold. And you too, Molly. And we'll conclude the interview then.

[End of recording]