

INTERVIEW WITH  
Mrs. Nettie Stover Jackson  
by  
Dr. Maclyn Burg  
Oral Historian  
on  
May 5, 1972  
for  
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



Gift of Personal Statement

NETTIE STOVER JACKSON

to the

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

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Date: March 15, 1976

This interview is being taped on May 5, 1972, with Mrs. Nettie Stover Jackson in her home just outside Topeka, Kansas. The interviewer is Dr. Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff.

DR. BURG: Now, just for the benefit of the people who will use the interview, Mrs. Jackson, would you describe your relationship to the Eisenhower family?

MRS. JACKSON: My aunt, Aunt Ida Eisenhower, was the only sister of seven brothers; so I am her niece. She had seven sons but Paul died before he was a year old.

DR. BURG: I see. Now we know that Ida Eisenhower came out to Kansas about 1883 after several of the brothers were already out here.

MRS. JACKSON: Right.



DR. BURG: Now how about your mother?

MRS. JACKSON: My mother was born in Kansas in the year of the drought, 1860. Yes, she was a native Kansan.

DR. BURG: Mrs. Ida Eisenhower coming from Virginia.

MRS. JACKSON: Yes, Aunt Ida and all of the Stovers were in Virginia. There was one brother that didn't leave Virginia. Uncle Worth Stover never left Virginia to live. He visited us in 1912, the fall of 1912, he and his wife.

DR. BURG: How does he spell his name? Is it W-e-s-t? Is it Westover?

JACKSON: No, W-o-r-t-h J., I think that Raymond Link told me that his name was Joseph.

BURG: I see. Here is Mr. [Don] Wilson.

[Interruption]

BURG: You were born in Topeka then, Mrs. Jackson?

JACKSON: Right over here on this very farm.

BURG: On this farm?

JACKSON: Yes.



BURG: Now about how frequently would you see your aunt?

JACKSON: Not as often as I would have liked to because she was a marvelous woman. What few times I was with her, she impressed me so much with so many things, well, just wisdom. She was such a fine genteel woman that I wish so many times I could have seen her oftener.

BURG: Do you happen to remember *the first occasion* that you

saw her? Would it have been here at the farm or would it have been in Abilene?

JACKSON: I think it was in Abilene. That was where I got my impression of Dwight [Eisenhower] so much that I named my second son, Dwight, after him. Roy [Eisenhower] was nearer my age, and Paul was my age, but, of course, Paul died. But when I was out there, Roy, you didn't know he was around. In fact, Aunt Ida said that Roy could be home, and you would never know he was there. And Dwight, you'd hear him coming two blocks away, whistling and singing. So he was the one that gave me such a pleasant visit when we were there. He took me through the creamery and showed me--you know his father was the engineer at the creamery [Belle Springs]. And Dwight was going around checking the thermometers in the different rooms, and we came to one room that had a barrel of, I mean, like an old salt barrel full of frozen chickens. They weren't wrapped separately, and there they were just chickens, and Dwight said, "Feel them; they're hard." And that's the first frozen chickens I'd ever seen. And then another thing at the creamery that I remember was where they made the ice and how he used to, I think they called it, "pull the ice."

Oh, he just made things so interesting. I remember he



hitched up the horse one morning to the buggy and Aunt Ida said, "Where you going?"

He said, "Oh, I just thought I'd take Nettie and show her around the town--go out to Mud Creek" where they swam and I think they skated out there too. And then he wanted me to notice, he said, "Now watch this horse." We came to a gate and the horse sidled over to the gate and stopped--did that way a number of places. The horse had belonged to a grocery delivery's man. That was interesting.

BURG: It knew just what to do.



JACKSON: Well, it was a habit, you know. Oh, he was interesting.

BURG: How old were you at this time, Mrs. Jackson?

JACKSON: I was a mere kid, ten and a half.

BURG: That was on your first trip there?

JACKSON: That's the first one I remember. I possibly had been there before, but that's the one that impressed me, because, oh, he was so entertaining. I remember we were washing dishes. What they use for a dining room now was the kitchen at that time. And they ate at a great big table right in the middle of the kitchen. He was washing dishes, and I was drying.

And I remember he told me a riddle, and it's silly to remember it yet, but I do. He said, "There were two boys running a race, eating crackers, and one of them ate ninety-nine and the other ate a hundred and won. How many did they eat together?" Well, of course, you can't write that out, but I don't think I caught on till he told me. But, oh, he was such fun to be around.

BURG: What year was that? Do you remember?



JACKSON: Have you seen the letter? This was February, 1905, that he wrote me, and I had been there before. But just think, he was a big boy, and, of course, I was big for my age when I was that age.

WILSON: He would have been fifteen.

JACKSON: Fourteen and a half. See, that was in February before his birthday in the fall. And then, it must have been before Christmas, because we were there. I'm sure my father took me out. I got to go with my dad. It must have been before Christmas because Edgar [Eisenhower] was working in a store, the way I got it, at the Christmas rush. And it was night. My land, we never went anywhere at night, but this was in town. So Dwight took us over to that store where

Edgar was working. And as I remember it was in a basement of the store where he worked. But anyhow, that was quite a thrill to me to go at night because here we never went anywhere at night.

BURG: You had gone out there by train from here?

JACKSON: Oh, yes.

BURG: And your father with you?

JACKSON: Yes, yes, dad took us out.



BURG: How did they house you in the Eisenhower house because it was so small?

JACKSON: I have wondered where I slept. I have no idea. I don't have any remembrance. I remember one other time, well, that was around '35, possibly. Father was dead, and mother and my sister and I drove out. And I remember I slept upstairs in that north room at the head of the stairs, the first room right there.

BURG: First room to the left at the head of the stairs.

JACKSON: She had a sort of a bookcase at the head of the stairs,

just at the head of the stairs. She had a lot of geographical magazines, and she said, "I don't know what to do with these. Would you like to have them?" I was thrilled to death to get them. And of course she didn't want to throw them away and she did want someone to have them that would enjoy them.

BURG: Now when you were there that first time in 1904, probably, Dwight was the one who stood out in your mind?



JACKSON: Yes. Roy, I don't even remember one thing about Roy. Not one thing. It was Dwight, that, well, he was just the outstanding one I guess. Of course, Aunt Ida, I loved her.

BURG: Now how long were you there on that trip?

JACKSON: I don't suppose more than three or four days. I don't remember. But I don't suppose it was any longer than that.

BURG: Now did you make any other trips there prior to Dwight's leaving for West Point?

JACKSON: I don't think I did. He was down here once when the goose got after him.

BURG: Who got after him?

JACKSON: A goose.

BURG: Oh, this is the story that he tells in AT EASE.

JACKSON: Yes, it's in there. But I think that was up at Uncle Simon Stover's because we didn't have geese. But I don't remember a thing about that. I think that must have been the time that one of Aunt Ida's half sisters--see, there were two marriages. Aunt Ida's mother died when she was what, five or six years old. And then grandfather married again. Anyhow, it was up at Uncle Simon's; I oughtn't to tell that. It doesn't matter; there's nothing to it, but grandfather had eight children, and later he married a widow with one daughter. And later Uncle Simon married this daughter. And that's where they had the geese I'm sure. Aunt Alice had been up to see Aunt Ida. Alice was a half sister, there was your family and my family and our family. Aunt Alice brought Dwight back to Topeka to visit. They were at our house. Mother had fried chicken, and Dwight ate a piece and asked for another piece and Aunt Alice said, "Well, you clean that bone up. You



know your mother'd make you clean it up before you ate another piece."

BURG: How old was Dwight at that time?

JACKSON: I don't know. Perhaps ten or eleven years. It's just a story that she told about, "You'd better not leave any meat on the bone."

BURG: Well, that's pre-West Point?

JACKSON: Oh, that was when he was just a--well, I don't even remember it.

BURG: After your visit perhaps?

JACKSON: No, it was before.

BURG: Was before your visit out there?

JACKSON: Yes. We moved when father built a new house in 1903, and we were still in the old house; so it was before that that they were there because I remember that it was in the old house. Dwight must have been about ten.

BURG: Now was he ever here in Topeka after your visit to Abilene?



JACKSON: I don't remember of it.

BURG: And any other visits that you recollect?

JACKSON: No. Arthur stopped on his way to Kansas City. I remember that. And then Milton stopped another time, but I don't know where Milton was headed. But Aunt Ida would come. I think they'd come on the train; I don't remember ever of Uncle Dave coming. But she and my father were very congenial, and so she'd come. I meant to ask Milton when we were there, I'm sure that Aunt Ida drove to Virginia two times in her old Dodge touring car. I say old; it wasn't old then. Uncle Dave never learned to drive. Of course, he went along with her. Did you ever hear of her having driven back there?

WILSON: I hadn't heard of it till you told us last summer here, and I think you're right. I know that he didn't drive.

JACKSON: No he didn't drive, and yet he was an engineer. But she drove, and I remember that she said, "I got clear back and into the driveway," I think ready to drive in the garage, "and that was the first flat tire I had." And that was unusual. But think of the roads not being marked, and the way the roads weren't paved you know.

BURG: Would this have been in the 1920s?

WILSON: It was after the children were gone.

JACKSON: Yes, they were gone. I suppose it would have been. But I'm sure she drove to Virginia twice, and I rather think three times, but I could be--

BURG: We'll have to check that out because that's a very extraordinary feat.

JACKSON: For a woman those times to drive a car, and, yes, it was, with the condition of the roads. My sakes we wouldn't go ten miles, and if it looked it might rain we headed home.

BURG: When you think of all the fuss that was made over the army's transcontinental trip I think in 1919, Dwight himself--

JACKSON: Dwight went across.

BURG: --came clear across the country, yes. And that was considered to be quite an unusual accomplishment at the time that happened.

JACKSON: The old Model-Ts, a lot of those, weren't made to take the hour after hour driving. I remember reading not

long ago about how few miles they made. But it was quite a feat I think for them to have gotten across.

WILSON: She went back to see the old homestead, farm?

JACKSON: Yes. Have you ever been there?

WILSON: No, I haven't. I've been in the Virginia area. Where is that located?

JACKSON: Mt. Sidney, ten miles or so north from Staunton in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley--southwest from Washington, D.C.

WILSON: You were there not too long ago?

JACKSON: My, we left here the 29th of February. Oh, that Raymond Link he just took us everywhere, and he took us to the grave of the first Link that was born in America, who was our ancestor. The other Links in that same family had been born at Stuttgart, Germany. But the last child was born here in the states, and then I think they went into Pennsylvania. And then on, I'm not sure about Maryland, but on down to Mt. Sidney, and Raymond Link took us to the place where he was buried.

BURG: That was just this past February that you were back there?

JACKSON: Yes. We had to change planes at Washington and go down to the Shenandoah Airport, and it was only eight or ten miles from Mt. Sidney. It was really convenient because where my son was to make a speech was at a Mennonite Church at Harrisonburg, Virginia. So it was real convenient, and that way I didn't have to worry about changing planes or anything. Oh, I was thrilled. That country is beautiful. You've been there?

BURG: Yes.

JACKSON: No wonder my dad loved it.

BURG: Very, very soft and green.

JACKSON: They don't lock their doors.

BURG: They're fortunate.

JACKSON: Raymond Links didn't lock their doors. The homes back there are so well kept up. At Aunt Ida's--you took care of things.

BURG: Now you speak of her with great affection--



JACKSON: I think it was mutual. Of course my dad, he just thought that she was--and she was an unusual woman.

BURG: Can you describe some of the qualities about her that especially drew you?

JACKSON: I don't know. You know, between some people there's just a pull.

BURG: You spoke of her wisdom.

JACKSON: Oh, yes. What I would admire, she'd apply some passage in the Bible just as nonchalantly as any common, everyday occurrence. And I don't know; she was neat, and she was, well, she was just a wise woman and genteel. I remember she said, "I studied each of my boys to know how to deal with them," each different disposition you know. One will respond one way and another another, and she said, "I studied each of them." I've wondered since then if she told me some of these things for me to benefit by it in raising my family or whether it just came out. Another funny thing she told about. You find I'm quite a talker; I get started, I don't run down very quick. You can cut a lot of it out.



BURG: Oh, we won't cut any of it out.

JACKSON: Before my parents were married, my father's oldest brother, he had favorites you know, was Uncle Will the minister, the United Brethren minister, was his favorite brother. He'd do anything for him. In fact, you know, preachers those days didn't get paid very much, and father moved over here and batched. He was almost thirty-seven when he was married. And Uncle Will would be out preaching. Preacher didn't get paid, and he'd run out of money. He'd come home and live with father, he and his second wife after his first wife died. But they'd live with dad. Uncle Will was living at Lecompton, and Aunt Ida was staying there with them and going to Lane University. Uncle Dave was there; he was going to L.U. and it was ten o'clock, and Aunt Annie came out and said, "It's time all decent folks was home in bed." And Uncle Dave decided right then he'd fix it so nobody was telling him when he had to leave. So he decided right then he was going to fix it so he could see Aunt Ida when he pleased. Well, anyhow they were married.

BURG: She actually put the run on him.

JACKSON: Yes. I don't know, ten o'clock at night, goodness. Well, anyhow after they were married, they were fixing up the house and Aunt Ida was working on the window shade, and she couldn't fix it, and she said, "Dave, you'll have to fix this window shade up."

He said, "I don't have to do anything."

So she said, "Thinks I, the next time, I'll take a different tack." See the wisdom--instead of getting mad. So the next time she said, "Dave, I wonder if you could do this; I just can't seem to get it done." Well, Dave was right there trying to help. So I've wondered whether she was telling me that for me to know how to handle my husband; I don't know.

BURG: What year, do you remember about what time this was that she told you this story?

JACKSON: Well I was married. I was married in '12. Oh, it must have been--I think that she was here; I don't know. I was out there; it must have been around--I know when it was. If you know when Dwight went to Leavenworth, maybe you don't.

BURG: That would have been about '25 or '26.



JACKSON: Well, when he went to Leavenworth, I remember her telling me about Dwight's uniforms. His clothing cost him a thousand dollars a year. So I think that was when it was that she told me; so whenever that year was; I don't know.

BURG: Well, sometime in the mid-1920s?

JACKSON: I imagine.

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

JACKSON: Yes.

BURG: An interesting story. Now, at the same time, she told you about how she had looked at those boys, each one of them, and studied what would work best. Do you remember any of her comments by any chance? Remember any of her comments about Dwight or any of the boys? What kind of special approaches did she have to make?

JACKSON: No, I don't think I remember anything about that, only about the disposition of Roy. Now Roy, you see, was just two years, about, older than I was. But I don't remember



one thing about him, and it was Dwight that impressed me. But she did say that Roy could be around, and you wouldn't know he was there.

BURG: Milton of course--

JACKSON: He was younger you know.

BURG: --quite young.

JACKSON: Just little.

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

JACKSON: No, no.

BURG: And Edgar--

JACKSON: Edgar was older. But he was working, you know, in that store, at least that evening. I don't know whether he was working there--I think it just was during the Christmas rush, I think.

BURG: Was it a clothing store?

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



WILSON: Probably Sterl's.

JACKSON: It seemed to me that it was on the northwest corner of an intersection there, but I could be wrong. I could be wrong. The hotel was down that way, I think. And I think this was a corner store.

BURG: Well, just for the fun of it, we can check that out too. That won't be too difficult to do.

JACKSON: Now I could be mistaken because you know you can get turned around.

WILSON: Was Ida a very affectionate woman? Outwardly?



JACKSON: No, not outwardly, no. But you just had that feeling of, well, this Raymond and Leona Link, you just loved them when you saw them. He's a marvelous man. They took some pictures while I was back there, and she's just a lady if there ever was one, and the kindest. Aunt Ida had that kindly--I think she was kindly to everyone. I think she was. This is that Raymond, and, oh, he's a smart guy. He's like you said; he can just do anything, fix a pipe or a car or just anything.

BURG: Nice looking people.

JACKSON: Well, they're fine people, just fine people. They only have one son and he is a missionary in Africa, and they're expecting him home this fall.

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

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

WILSON: Very proud man.

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



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

JACKSON: Oh, yes. Now Aunt Ida was the power behind the throne. But she'd never let on. It was always Dave who was the head of the house, and Dave was the head of the house.

She gave you that feeling, but all the time you knew who was running things.

BURG: Now is it your recollection that, in that family, he did exert any real influence?

JACKSON: He must have, but I don't know whether he knew how to smile. I mean that's the feeling I have now. And you know those boys, they don't say much about their father. He was a stable man. But, oh, he was dignified.

BURG: Do you recollect any conversations that you ever had with him?



JACKSON: Not one word. Oh, that makes me think of a funny thing Uncle Milton told me. We were out there, my husband and I, oh, two or three times out at Myrtle Point and--

BURG: This is in Oregon?

JACKSON: Yes. And Uncle Milton told me--

[Interruption]

JACKSON: Uncle Milton had visited Aunt Ida's, and this was when

the Eisenhower boys were little. You know, that, I'll call him grandfather Eisenhower although he isn't my grandfather; that's what they called him, was living with them. And there was an old aunt. Now possibly, it had to be Uncle Dave's sister.

BURG: That's news to me; I didn't know that.

JACKSON: Well, this was just told to me. I don't remember whether it was grandfather Eisenhower that asked the blessing before the meal, and then after the meal you didn't leave the table until this aunt had returned thanks. And I suppose you know what a stool is. It's a kitchen chair with the back that's been broken off of it or gone. Anyhow Dwight sat on one of those--they called them stools. And Dwight would be so anxious to get out, and it worried Aunt Ida because she said, "He'd never make sound. But he'd get turned around from the table, and the minute she said, 'Amen', he was off and gone like a shot."

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

JACKSON: He was all ready to go. When the last sound of the

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

BURG: The father was solemn--

JACKSON: Yes, there wasn't any friction there. She'd know enough not to have anything said, and the boys, they knew

enough to behave. All the fun that I remember about was telling you about that riddle that Dwight told me. That's the only one I remember.

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

JACKSON: Oh, yes, yes, yes. She had that happy appearance, and I was thinking this morning--I was looking at a picture that was taken of the boys when they were all up in Wisconsin, and Edgar had his head thrown back and laughing. And Milton, when we were there for breakfast 1st of March, I don't know what caused him to or what I had said or what, but, anyhow, he just laughed to beat the band. I doubt his father ever laughed out loud in his life. You can erase that.



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

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

WILSON: Yes.

BURG: I've never seen it.

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

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

WILSON: He always took everything very seriously.

JACKSON: Oh, yes.

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

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

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

JACKSON: Distant, just distant. No, there wasn't anything that was unkindly, no. But I don't remember ever having said



a word to him. He wasn't well the last time we were there, and my youngest boy, this must have been about 1940, and we had taken watermelons up, my mother and sister and I. She had a little boy, and I had a four year old. So we decided before dinner that we'd take those youngsters out on the back porch, you know, it's sort of enclosed, there where they have the dry sink, or did have it. Take them out there, and then they wouldn't have this watermelon all over. Anyhow, all I remember is he looked at us, feeding the children first, you know, and not having them come to the table. But we had to help them with their food, and so my sister and I decided we'd let them eat out on the porch first. And I remember we took the watermelon out there because that was the thought back there of taking them back on the back porch so they wouldn't--. But anyhow I can remember him looking and--we sure did something wrong by letting them eat first.

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

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



WILSON: That was about a year before he passed away.

JACKSON: I don't remember now.

BURG: '42, I think he died.

WILSON: Early '42.

JACKSON: I know Dwight didn't get to come to the funeral.

BURG: That's right. He couldn't.

JACKSON: No.

BURG: He was in Washington at that time so--

JACKSON: Yes, I remember--

BURG: Fairly early '42.

JACKSON: I don't know when this was. Aunt Ida said to me, "Why Dwight's so busy that he just can't leave his desk to go and eat. They'll just bring him a hamburger or a sandwich, and he just eats right at his desk. He doesn't get to leave his desk." Now that was wartime.



BURG: That sounds like that same general period because they were very, very busy in Washington.

JACKSON: I know that she said that he couldn't get away that he was so busy. And then, land sakes, when Aunt Ida died, is that when they had a straight line, I think, into the house whether it was from Washington or where? I think they had it out in that hall coming in from the south door. He went to the telephone I don't know how many times. What year did she die?

WILSON: '46.

JACKSON: Well, he'd still been awfully busy.

WILSON: Yes.

JACKSON: But he was at her funeral.

BURG: Yes.

WILSON: When was the last time you saw Ida before she passed away?

JACKSON: I think it was possibly in '40. What year did she die?



WILSON: '46. But she would write. You corresponded with her quite regularly at that time.

JACKSON: Some. But the only letter I saved was one after her mind wasn't good because she called me Mrs. Jackson. I know that she wrote after Uncle Dave's funeral, I'm sure. Naomi Engle was there.

WILSON: That was after the funeral.

JACKSON: Yes. Arthur was sort of--well, he wasn't like Dwight. Dwight, you know, and Milton was more that way too. He used to associate with common people. But Arthur didn't like to do that. This Naomi Engle made a huge meat loaf, and it was delicious, and, Arthur, I think he thought he'd go down to the hotel and eat. He wasn't interested in that food, you know. For some reason he stayed. Now this is telling tales out of school, but he stayed, and he came back for the second helping of meat loaf, and he said, "Well, whoever made that knew how to do it." I think that's when someone had brought in some pudding meat from the country. Do you know what pudding meat is?

WILSON: Yes.



JACKSON: And I think it was Edgar. Edgar said about what he thought. He said, "Well, this is one time Arthur isn't going to get the most of it." He was going to see that they all got some. Edgar, when he was about fourteen, worked for Uncle Will's son, Frank, just up the road here a quarter of a mile. Edgar, he was more common too. My youngest boy went to Seattle, and then coming home he stopped in at Edgar's office without any appointment or anything. My son said, "Right in the middle of the afternoon, in prime time, I got into see him. He visited there with me for two hours." "Imagine! Well now Arthur wouldn't have done that.

WILSON: You couldn't imagine Arthur doing that.

JACKSON: No, Arthur was too much like his dad.

WILSON: That's what I was going to ask you. Do you think he was--

JACKSON: Yes.

WILSON: Personality was similar.

JACKSON: Yes. Edgar, I think, of course he has one daughter, but he doesn't have a lot of the relatives around him, and I



think that he just enjoyed my son visiting with him.

BURG: That could be. How long ago was that, Mrs. Jackson?

JACKSON: Oh, that's been about five or six years ago. My son is just like my dad. My dad just loved to visit with people. And this youngest son of mine, he likes to visit. He said he never said one word to Edgar about money. He was teaching at Kansas Wesleyan at Salina at that time. Wes was. And, oh, I don't know, a week or two after that here Edgar sent the school a check for a thousand dollars. And my son never mentioned money to Edgar.

BURG: That's interesting. Of the group of boys, would you say that Arthur was the only one who seemed to lack that ability to be at ease with people?



JACKSON: I didn't know Earl so well. Earl was a quieter sort but not like Arthur, not like Arthur.

BURG: Milton you feel was--

JACKSON: Yes, he's more like Dwight. I think Dwight and Milton were very congenial. I think they were. Milton told

us that he had worked under eight Presidents, and six of them he had worked intimately under.

BURG: That's right, he has.

JACKSON: He was very cordial too as my son called him and told him we were going to Virginia and wondered if he could talk to him. Of course he had a little something he wanted to talk to Milton about; I don't know what it was. But he thought perhaps Milton might help in some way about that. When Wes called him, he said, "Well I don't have very much time, but why don't you come to breakfast Friday morning?" So we were at his house for breakfast Friday morning.

WILSON: He's a very personable man. We've dealt with him out there, very friendly.

JACKSON: He's just a fine fellow. His housekeeper has been with him for twenty years. That speaks very well for him.

BURG: His mother evidently played no favorites?

JACKSON: No, no, you know that story, "Which son."

BURG: Yes, yes, that came to my mind.



JACKSON: She told me that story too. Said they came and asked her, "Aren't you proud," and I said, "Which son?" She had a marvelous mother too, though. Her mother when [General Philip] Sheridan, you know, burning everything--. One of the northern soldiers had his gun up to fire the barn, they was to burn it, and she pulled the gun down and the soldier went on. That would have taken a lot of courage. They put everything in barns. Well, in 1917 when my father took us back there that barn was still standing; it was over a hundred years old at that time. It's gone now.

BURG: Now did Ida tell you that story about her mother?

JACKSON: No, my father told me that.

WILSON: How much older was your father than Ida?



JACKSON: He was born in January of '55, and she was born in May '62, seven years.

WILSON: And they had come out here before Ida came to school?

JACKSON: Yes. I think Uncle Will, the preacher, came first. He was the oldest. And then, I don't know, Will and John,

John was shot when he was sixteen, accidentally. And Jake is the one that went to Seattle; he came here for a while. I think Uncle Will came, and then I think papa came next. Papa came in January of '77.

BURG: '77?

JACKSON: '77. He was twenty-one years old the day he landed, and the next day he was twenty-two, his birthday. He was twenty-two. He had three hundred dollars in his pocket. I wonder if that's how much Aunt Ida had. But he had that much money, and he thought he would put it in a bank. Then he thought, oh, I'll be buying a team of horses, and they won't know whether my check's good or not; so he kept the money in his pocket, and the next day the bank was closed.

BURG: One of the panics.

JACKSON: I don't know whether it was or whether--

WILSON: In '77, yes.

BURG: I think so.

WILSON: Depression, panic, a lot of banks closed down, particularly in Kansas. There were a great many.



JACKSON: Well, I just thought that, you know, carrying three hundred dollars around with you in those days.

BURG: Pretty risky.

JACKSON: Yes.

BURG: You ever remember your father saying anything about Ida coming out, how he viewed that? Did he think that--

JACKSON: Oh, I think he was glad to have her come. I think he was glad to have her come. I have tried to find the Aunt Mary Ann who was his mother's sister. Ida went to live with her grandparents and Mary Ann when her mother died. This Aunt Mary Ann was, oh, she was fifty, about, when she came out here. And I have tried to find where she was buried, but I've never been able to. Some of this I'd just as soon wasn't on--. You know she came out here and was married and lived less than a year after she came here. The Link book says she was buried here, but I don't know. Papa was--I guess I'm getting childish when I say "papa." That's what we called him when we were little. Then we called him "dad," and now when I'm talking to my children I say "father" because if I say "dad" they think



I'm talking about their dad. Often during war time when he went in the house he would find his mother on her knees in prayer. My father told me that his mother, when she'd be weaving upstairs, she'd take her shoes off to save her shoes.

BURG: There's frugality for you. Well, it must have interested you, Mrs. Jackson, to see the Eisenhower house that you'd been in numerous times--

JACKSON: Out here?

BURG: Yes, the one in Abilene, being preserved as it was.

JACKSON: Oh, yes. Yes that west window in the, well, she had her piano in that room, but over in that west window she had a few flowers, but they had their reading material in that. And she had a, it seemed to me, a little rocker; I called it a sewing rocker, there by that west window. And then out this way from the house, northwest from the house, she had a bed of lilies. That's one thing I'm like her--I love lilies. She had this bed of lilies. She didn't have a lot of other--

BURG: Are they calla lilies?

JACKSON: No, no, they're Madonna lilies. They get up so high, and they're very fragrant.

BURG: Wonder if those are still there, Don?

JACKSON: No, no, they're gone.

WILSON: Do you remember when you were there in 1904, the big barn? Was it still standing?

JACKSON: Yes, there was a barn there then. I'm sure there was because they had the horse there that had been--

WILSON: The veterinarian's.

JACKSON: Yes, Uncle Dave's brother.

WILSON: We've tried to track down when that was taken down, but you say it was still there as late as 1904.

JACKSON: Oh, I know it was. I'm sure it was. I'm sure it was. Because they didn't build anything else. The barn was out there and the chicken house there, too.

WILSON: And then the garden was out directly east.

JACKSON: Yes, east.

BURG: Now when we talked with Milton in the home and he saw



the piano, he laughed about it and said that he'd enjoyed playing it after dinner and couldn't understand for quite some time why his father would rise from his reading and come over and close the door. Then it occurred to him that, playing as loud as he was playing, he was disturbing his father's reading and study. Who was playing it when you were there? In that earlier period, was--

JACKSON: I don't remember of anyone playing it.

BURG: Ida presumably knew how to play it.

JACKSON: Oh, I think she knew how but, oh, you get so busy with all the things that are involved, the things that have to be done. And possibly with us being there it made more of course.

BURG: Yes, that could be too. Mrs. Jackson says that for the life of her she can not remember where she slept in that house, and it had to be crowded.

JACKSON: No, I can't remember when we were little; I haven't the least idea. Seems to me she said something about making pallets. Well, of course, in our old house when I was a



youngster, my mother made pallets on the floor. When we had company, why you didn't think about being crowded. It was kind of fun to sleep on the floor. And our house was always Grand Central Station for both sides of the house because my dad loved company, and my mother loved to cook. So our house was where everybody came, both sides. Uncle Worth and Aunt Laura came from Virginia in 1912, and, oh, dad wanted them to stay longer, just wanted them to stay longer, but they weren't going to travel on Sunday, weren't going to ride the train on Sunday.

BURG: Mrs. Jackson, in that Eisenhower home with that many boys, life couldn't have been smooth all the time. Do you ever remember Ida discussing with you problems that she had or was she one more to keep it to herself?

JACKSON: I think she ironed out the problems right as she went along. Whatever came up, right then she took care of it.

BURG: It didn't hang on?

JACKSON: No, I don't think it did. She was an unusual woman. Of course part of that could be prejudice because I loved her so much.

BURG: Well, let's ask about that. Have you encountered anyone in your life that you would rate higher as a human being than Ida?

JACKSON: Not in all ways. I have had two or three women who I've admired very much. But none with more genuine common sense and kindness--I don't have the words that I'd like to use--but that had the ability to do the things that she did. When thinking of Dwight that quotation from Kipling's "If." "If you can walk with kings nor lose the common touch", often comes to mind. And he didn't lose "the common touch". One of my friends had a grandson who waited on Dwight when he was so sick. He felt very privileged to do the most menial things for Dwight. I think he admired and loved Dwight too.

BURG: Can you give me some examples of the things that she did that impressed you--the ability to run that house as she did?

JACKSON: I think she gave them their job to do and expected them to do it, and, because she expected them to do it, they knew they'd better.

BURG: Now I asked her son, "Even after you were president of Kansas State University you told me you kept coming back to the house." I asked him, did he still find his parents as



enjoyable to be with when he was a young man as he had when he was a boy? He thought about it for a minute and grinned, and he said that no one had asked him that. Yes, he thought of them as being just thoroughly good company later. Would that coincide with your feelings about--

JACKSON: Aunt Ida, yes.

BURG: --about Aunt Ida? An intelligent woman.

JACKSON: Oh, yes. She put first things first. I don't know, maybe it's just because I'm a woman, but there are people, there's a pull when you first know them. And why, I don't know. Now Uncle Will, papa's brother who was a minister, he died in July before I was five in August. He died of TB, and he lived half a mile from the home, and he had walked down and sat in the rocker by the dining room window. We didn't have a living room. There were two rockers, and he'd sit by the window, and I'd climb on his lap and stroke his beard. I don't remember of any other affection that I showed, but all through the years I've loved that man. Papa did too. He died when he was--well, let's see--he was born in '49, and he died in '99. He wasn't quite fifty years old. But now why that pull of a little child toward



people like that, and that's the same way with Aunt Ida. Now my mother's sisters and brothers, I never had any of that with them. Why?

BURG: It's intriguing, very intriguing. And it's good to have someone who will tell us about this kind of feeling for Mrs. Eisenhower. Clearly, she raised a most unusual family.

JACKSON: Didn't she though?

BURG: I spoke of that to Milton too, the enormous amount of talent that came from that one small house. It would be your view that a good bit of that was due more to the mother than-- it's hard to put, isn't it, what one can say comes more from the mother than it does from the father.

JACKSON: Well, of course, he was a fine man and came from a fine family. Uncle Dave had two brothers who were preachers, and I heard one of them, Uncle Irie. I don't know who the other one was; I never saw him that I know of, but they weren't very proud of him. Uncle Irie was, well really, I'd say he was a fanatic about religion. And he was one of these dramatic type preachers, and I heard him once in a mission, down here in town, preach. But he didn't appeal to me. He didn't have the



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stability that Uncle Dave did. Uncle Dave was a fine man, but he was just not outgoing; he just wasn't. Aunt Ida though, she was, well to have a mother that would do what she did. There was a lot of courage there too.

