

OH #492; Barbara T. Eisenhower
CLOSED; 152 pages

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of BARBARA T. EISENHOWER.

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, BARBARA T. EISENHOWER of Devon, Pennsylvania, hereinafter referred to as the donor, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of personal interviews conducted on August 9, 1982 and May 9, 1983 and prepared for deposit in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (1) The transcripts shall not be available for use by researchers for a period of 25 years from this date.
- (2) The tape recordings shall not be available for use by researchers during the donor's lifetime. After the donor's death, access to the tape recordings shall be for background use only, and researchers may not cite, paraphrase, or quote therefrom.
- (3) During the donor's lifetime the donor retains all copyright in the material given to the United States by the terms of this instrument. Thereafter the copyright in both the transcripts and tape recordings shall pass to the United States Government. During the donor's lifetime, researchers may publish brief "fair use" quotations from the transcripts (but not the tape recordings) without the donor's express consent in each case.
- (4) Copies of the open portions of the interview transcripts, but not the tape recordings, may be provided by the library to researchers upon request.
- (5) Copies of the interview transcripts, but not the tape recordings, may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library after the 25 year period of closure.



opened
MAY 2009

Barbara T. Eisenhower
Donor

2 May 1984
Date

William M. Starn
Archivist of the United States

May 22, 1984
Date

This interview is being conducted with Barbara Eisenhower at Devon, Pennsylvania on August 9, 1982. The interviewer is Dr. John Wickman.

DR. JOHN WICKMAN: Let's start with your early life, and move along chronologically. As I said in that letter, these are basically impressions probably more than facts because the facts are pretty well--

BARBARA EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Why don't we start with your parents and talk about them a little bit. Your father, was he a career officer?

EISENHOWER: Yes, he went to Purdue University and he graduated with a chemical engineering degree. And then he worked in that field for about six months but he'd been the honor ROTC graduate at Purdue so he was offered a commission.

WICKMAN; I see.

EISENHOWER: And he decided he wanted to go in the Army.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: And he loved it.

WICKMAN: He must have gone in, what, after the first World War?

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Probably right about then.

EISENHOWER: Early '20s.



WICKMAN: Yes. So then that means that you moved around as a child, alot.

EISENHOWER: Yes. We lived in Hawaii for a long time. We lived in practically every state of the Union, it seemed like.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: Did a lot of moving.

WICKMAN: I see. Great preparation for the future.

EISENHOWER: Yes. [Laughter]

WICKMAN: Okay. Now, were you an only child?

EISENHOWER: No, I was the oldest of four.

WICKMAN: The oldest of four.

EISENHOWER: I have a brother a year younger and I have a--then there's a gap of about seven years then I have another sister and brother.

WICKMAN: I see. That's something I didn't check when I was doing this kind of background, whether there were other brothers and sisters. So that's, yes, that's quite a house full to have to pack up here. What, uh--

EISENHOWER: Yes. It was unusually big for the times.

WICKMAN: Yes. What kind of impressions do you have of growing up in this kind of mobile family?



EISENHOWER: Well, you know, I think that that kind of a life is very family-cementing because you move to all these strange places and you're the stranger in a strange land. And we used to be very excited about moving and it only was difficult when we became teen-agers.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: I went to five high schools and I can remember dreading being the new girl in the school. They were usually civilian communities--

WICKMAN: Right.



EISENHOWER: --small communities (this was during World War II) If we moved to an army post then there were "army brats" that went to the same school and so you had ready made friends to help you get acquainted in the new school. I can remember that left out feeling so well, especially when we moved to Florida. The little town we moved to had sororities and fraternities.

WICKMAN: Oh, in the high school.

EISENHOWER: Yes. And my brother and I were really left out. We finally did get to know everybody but I can remember that as being a very painful part of growing up.

WICKMAN: Yes. I imagine it would be.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Well, your father's military service, the, up to the second World War is primarily in this country and in Hawaii.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: No place else. Okay.

EISENHOWER: In the olden days there were only a few overseas posts, the Philippines, Hawaii and Panama.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: And I think that was about it. Maybe, no, not Alaska.

WICKMAN: No.

EISENHOWER: You know Johnny's parents were stationed in the Philippines.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And I think an army officer was due for foreign service every ten years.

WICKMAN: Oh, I see.

EISENHOWER: There was some kind of regulations like that.

WICKMAN: Then where did you graduate from high school? Or where were you--

EISENHOWER: Lawton, Oklahoma.



WICKMAN: Lawton, Oklahoma. [Laughter]

EISENHOWER: Fort Sill.

WICKMAN: Fort Sill. Okay. And then what did you do after you graduated?

EISENHOWER: You see, this was in the middle of World War II.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: And my father had come home from the fighting for a year, to teach what he'd learned in North Africa at the artillery school, and so we were stationed at Ft. Sill. After a year he went back overseas with the 21st Corp I think. I'm not sure whether 21 Corp was Korea or World War II. But anyway, he went back over and I went to college, Purdue University in Indiana.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: And then, as soon as the war was over we joined him in Europe.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: He was in the army of occupation in Austria.

WICKMAN: You broke off your college at that point.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: How much did you have that you finished?



EISENHOWER: Year and a half.

WICKMAN: Year and a half. What were your majors? Did you have any?

EISENHOWER: Purdue is a school of science.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: I always said I was a round peg in a square hole--

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: --so I was going to transfer when I got home to a liberal arts college.

WICKMAN: You were just doing the basic liberal arts, then, probably.

EISENHOWER: No, there was no liberal arts as such at Purdue.

WICKMAN: No liberal arts.

EISENHOWER: I was in the school of science and engineering.

WICKMAN: Oh, okay.

EISENHOWER: Which was not for me. I can remember those chemistry courses were grim. I went to Europe and that's where I met Johnny, in Vienna, in 1946.

WICKMAN: Okay. Then did your whole family go to Vienna?

EISENHOWER: Yes.



WICKMAN: They all went.

EISENHOWER: We were the second group of "dependents" that were sent over after the war and--

WICKMAN: The only reason I bring this out is because its, nowadays, a more usual situation would be for the person, the child who was in college, to stay there --

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: - - leave them, you know, and you probably--

EISENHOWER: Well, actually, I didn't want to stay.

WICKMAN: You didn't want to. Okay.

EISENHOWER: I wanted to have the experience--of living in Europe.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: And it was quite an experience.

WICKMAN: Yes. Did you work over there or anything or just...

EISENHOWER: Well, you see, Vienna was surrounded by the Russian Zone--

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: --and four allied powers had divided up the city. And it was a very bad time. It was '46 and the country was really down and out. I really couldn't travel alone or even with a friend.



In those days young women didn't anyway. My father and mother couldn't get away, so when winter came I took a job in the fiscal office--

WICKMAN: I see.



EISENHOWER: --in USFA headquarters. And that was really the first job I'd ever had.

WICKMAN: Was your family living, as they say today, were they living on the economy in regular housing or did they have dependent housing or--

EISENHOWER: No, the American government, requisitioned, I guess you'd call it--

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: --the Austrian's houses.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: We had a very grand place.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: Everybody did.

WICKMAN: And your younger brothers and sisters were in school.

EISENHOWER: My oldest brother Joe was in West Point, the one that was a year younger than me. Of course he stayed there. And then my

younger brother Richard and my sister Mary were in the army dependent school in Vienna. It was interesting.

WICKMAN: Good. Yes, I imagine it was. I imagine it was a little, well, maybe a little too interesting sometimes.

EISENHOWER: Yes. I felt like it was--I really grew up.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

EISENHOWER: I began to see life so differently. I'd been in college and led a protected life. The Austrians were a defeated nation subsisting on about less than 1,000 calories a day. There were no cars on the streets. Everything was run by the Americans. It was a piece of history to live through. It was not like ordinary life at home.

WICKMAN: Right. I see. Okay. Well, then so--Now how long were you there in Vienna all together?

EISENHOWER: A year.



WICKMAN: Just a year.

EISENHOWER: The reason we all came home was because I'd met Johnny and we were going to be married.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: Daddy could have extended his tour but he didn't. He decided to come home.

WICKMAN: How did you meet John? What was the--

EISENHOWER: Well, I had friends that knew him and they arranged a blind date.

WICKMAN: Oh, I see. It wasn't anything connected with the fiscal office or anything.

EISENHOWER: No, no.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: But, you know, all the Americans knew each other.

WICKMAN: Yes, I'm sure.

EISENHOWER: It was a very small compound and so in the course of events, I just started dating him.

WICKMAN: Well, then, you came back. Did you come back and your father and mother stay in Vienna?

EISENHOWER: No, they all came home.

WICKMAN: Everyone came home at once.

EISENHOWER: They went to Fort Monroe, Virginia.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: Daddy was stationed there.



WICKMAN: When was the first time then that you met Ike and Mamie?

EISENHOWER: When I was engaged. On our return from Austria. We landed in New York. My mother and I immediately shopped for the wedding.

WICKMAN: Yes.



EISENHOWER: The wedding was planned for June and we arrived home in May. Ike's office helped with the invitations and wedding arrangements because it was very complicated for my parents.

WICKMAN: Yes. He [Eisenhower] was the Chief of Staff then.

EISENHOWER: Yes. Then we finished our shopping in New York and we visited them for a day or so at Ft. Meyer in Washington. My folks then went on to Fort Monroe and I stayed with them [Ike and Mamie] for about a week. To get to know them. The wedding was on June 10 at Fort Monroe.

WICKMAN: What were your impressions of them at that particular point in life?

EISENHOWER: Johnny's father was just wonderful. He was so nice to me. Johnny's grandmother Mrs. Doud was too but Mamie was a little tough--

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

EISENHOWER: --which I tell in my book about how I first met her.

WICKMAN: Tough in what way?

EISENHOWER: Well, I'll have to show you my manuscript. It's the first chapter in the book. I'll show it to you.

WICKMAN: Okay. I know but I've got to put it on tape.

EISENHOWER: You've got to put it on tape.

WICKMAN: Yes. Just give me a general impression of what there was about his grandmother that--

EISENHOWER: She was a very, very sweet person. And she was alot of fun. She played the harmonica. She just liked to have a good time, you know.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: She used to say, "I'm Swedish and I'm not very, good looking but I like to have a good time." This was said with a Swedish accent.

WICKMAN: I see.

[Laughter]

EISENHOWER: And she--

WICKMAN: You see that's something I don't think that--A lot of people don't know, Barbara, because that doesn't come out that she did have a slight Swedish accent, I mean, when she--



EISENHOWER: Yes, and she spoke Swedish.

WICKMAN: Yes, right. I think that's just a side of--

EISENHOWER: Mamie was so grand. She believed in staying in bed in the morning. She had her breakfast on a tray and conducted all business affairs from the bed. She usually had a luncheon date or something she had to go to, something official. Then she would get up and be dressed for the day. And you know she was such a perfectionist in everything. I remember the first day, the morning after my parents had left, John's father had invited me to go to the Pentagon with him and see his offices. He always arrived at the Pentagon at eight o'clock in the morning. So I leaped out of bed and got dressed and ran off with him. I wasn't particularly neat then.

WICKMAN: Okay.



EISENHOWER: When I came back I was summoned to Mamie's bedroom.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: I was given a lecture on being neat and I was given a lecture on how I would lose my man if I was a sloppy housekeeper.

WICKMAN: Now was this from John's grandmother?

EISENHOWER: No, from his mother.

WICKMAN: From his mother, okay. All right. From his mother.
All right.

EISENHOWER: She really scared me half to death.

WICKMAN: Okay. All right. We had started out on the grandmother,
that's why I got confused.

EISENHOWER: No. You see, the reason I have such fond memories of
John's grandmother is that she was totally uncritical.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

EISENHOWER: Mamie took it upon herself to teach me everything.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: And through the years I used to find this prickly but
I listened to her and I learned a lot from her. I loved her dearly.
And in the end when she didn't do that anymore I thought, I've either
made it or else she's lost interest.

[Laughter]

EISENHOWER: Given up in despair!

WICKMAN: Yes. Well, you were what, eighteen when you got married?

EISENHOWER: No, I was twenty.



WICKMAN: You were twenty. Yes, I can see how she would want to take you in hand probably--

EISENHOWER: She did.

WICKMAN: Okay. Let's go back to John's grandmother for a minute. Did you see her frequently in this period of time?

EISENHOWER: Yes. She visited, you know and "Poopah"--

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: --her husband-- (that was his nickname) would come and they would stay for a month at a time with Mamie and Ike. Mr. Doud was retired and they had visited everywhere Ike and Mamie had been stationed. They'd come for long visits. And they were always very much part of the group of Ike and Mamie's friends. They knew all of their friends.

WICKMAN: Yes.



EISENHOWER: This is borne out by the letters, Mrs. Doud's letters, that I have. Mamie's friends wrote to Mrs. Doud.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: She was just a wonderful person.

WICKMAN: Yes. Okay. So then you got married and, uh, what was the first, where was John assigned after you got married?

EISENHOWER: Fort Benning.

WICKMAN: Fort Benning.

EISENHOWER: He went to Cooks and Bakers School.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: And Motor School. This was just to fill time until he went to West Point to teach English.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: He had to make a stop first in New York to go to Columbia University to take courses in English.

WICKMAN: Right. Where were you living then?



EISENHOWER: Well, in Benning; we were just there for the summer. When we moved to New York to the Carlisle Hotel, a very elegant place. Because Dad knew the owner Mr. Oliphant, we were given an apartment for our rental allowance. (\$90.00 a month)

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: Captain's rental allowance.

WICKMAN: That's pretty nice. That's a nice address.

EISENHOWER: I think David was the only baby that had ever lived in that building. He was the only one there at the time and all the chamber maids would stop by to see him. Then we moved up to West Point.

WICKMAN: And in that period of time, of course, you were primarily just preoccupied with David, I'd imagine, that was--

EISENHOWER: Yes. He was born at West Point and then I came back to New York with him and we were there about, oh, about six more-- No, I know--then the folks arrived in town Dad was to be President of Columbia University.

WICKMAN: Your folks.

EISENHOWER: No, Johnny's folks.

WICKMAN: Johnny's folks. Okay.



EISENHOWER: And so we immediately moved over to their house.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: Because New York was really very expensive for us.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: It cost more to park our car in one of the city garages than to pay the rent.

WICKMAN: So did you move in with them then?

EISENHOWER: Yes. We moved in with them--

WICKMAN: Yes. Moved into the President's Mansion.

EISENHOWER: --for about two months.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: And then we went up to West Point.

WICKMAN: Okay. And you were at West Point for, what, three years. Is that right?

EISENHOWER: I think three or four, I'm not sure.

WICKMAN: Okay. And how was that? What was that like for you?

EISENHOWER: Oh, it was a lovely life.

WICKMAN: Was it?

EISENHOWER: It really was. Army post life is nice and that is the epitomy of army posts. There were a large number of Johnny's classmates there and all the wives were very friendly. We had little babies and we'd all go to the pool together. It was a nice communal life at a time when women in the suburbs of America complained of being lonely because they were isolated in their homes -- with small children. After World War II there was not much household help available.

WICKMAN: That's a good point.



EISENHOWER: We were all living in apartments at West Point and we had a wonderful time. It was a good life. We'd go into New York City to see all the shows and we'd stay with the folks.

WICKMAN: Sure.

EISENHOWER: It was really wonderful.

WICKMAN: Yes, that would be, after having been raised in this mobile situation, being almost anywhere for three or four years must have been quite a change for you.

EISENHOWER: We moved there too, inter-post moves. There was a drawing for houses every year and everybody would go to try to get a better house. Each year we improved our living conditions.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: So we kept moving. But it was all within the same community.

WICKMAN: Yes. Okay. Now we have General Eisenhower as the President of Columbia, and you indicated that you used to go down there to visit them while they were doing that. And then he left Columbia and went on to SHAPE.

EISENHOWER: Yes.



WICKMAN: At this point now what happened? Did John go too? Is that when you went to Fort Leavenworth?

EISENHOWER: No.

WICKMAN: No. Not yet.

EISENHOWER: We left West Point and went to Fort Knox, Kentucky.

WICKMAN: Fort Knox, Kentucky.

EISENHOWER: But in that summer before we went to Fort Knox we went to Paris and spent the summer.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: We spent the summer in the Trianon Palace in Versailles with the folks.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: That was a wonderful experience.

WICKMAN: I guess I'd missed that somewhere along the way. I didn't realize that you had gone over while they were at SHAPE. Did you go over more than once?

EISENHOWER: No, just once.

WICKMAN: Just the one time.



EISENHOWER: The summer of 1951. We had David and Anne then and took them along.

WICKMAN: Was John on leave or how did he--

EISENHOWER: Yes. He was between assignments, you see. And then we went on to Fort Knox in the fall.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: And that's where Susie was born.

WICKMAN: At Fort Knox. So now you have two.

EISENHOWER: No. We had two and then Susie was born that fall.

WICKMAN: Oh, that's right. You had David and Anne. Okay. Now you have three. Now it's getting more complicated.

EISENHOWER: Yes. And we stayed at Knox one year.

WICKMAN: Just one year.

EISENHOWER: And then we moved again and I think we went to Benning. And we stayed there a year. We moved to a different house every year for ten years.

WICKMAN: Oh, my goodness.

EISENHOWER: First ten years we were married.

WICKMAN: Yes.



EISENHOWER: We went to Benning for Troop Duty. And then where'd we go from Benning?

WICKMAN: We can track it because that is all in print. There's no sense in you trying to remember. But anyway, that's your impression of this particular period of time, that you were moving alot.

EISENHOWER: We were moving all the time.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: Let's see, now, that was '51 when the folks were in Paris. And then in '52 you know Dad came home and ran for the Presidency.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And from Knox Johnny went to Korea.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And I moved back to New York, to Highland Falls, outside of West Point.

WICKMAN: Oh, I see. That's interesting.

EISENHOWER: Well, you know, I had three children. My parents wanted me to come home. They were living at Fort Sheridan, Illinois. And they had a big house and they wanted me to come home and take the top floor of the house--

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: But, you know, I had my own home and I didn't want to do that. So what I'd do while John was gone was visit his parents in the White House or I'd go out and spend a couple months at Fort Sheridan, but I had my own place in Highland Falls.

WICKMAN: And you picked Highland Falls simply because you knew it. Right.

EISENHOWER: That was the last place we'd lived and all my girlfriends went back there when their husbands went to Korea.



WICKMAN: Now this is especially interesting because--I don't know if you know this but during the Vietnam War over in Salina, Kansas, there was an operation called the Waiting Wives--

EISENHOWER: Yes, I remember that housing area.

WICKMAN: --which is an inner-service thing.

EISENHOWER: Well they didn't have anything that nice for us--

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: --but there were little houses to rent around Highland Falls and I'd say there were about six or seven wives and we were all very close friends, so we just stayed there.

WICKMAN: Well, one of the appeals of that particular set-up in Salina is the fact that there were so many young women who had children but they didn't want to go home. It's the same thing. It kind of took the army a long time to recognize that there was a need and they actually set that up.

EISENHOWER: Yes, that's nice. I saw that.

WICKMAN: Yes. That's just the same thing though. You're saying you don't want to go. You don't want to move back in with your parents with three children. You wanted--



EISENHOWER: Well, you know, since then I've tried to talk my children into moving home again when they have had crises in their lives and they don't want to.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: And then I remember it's no insult to the parents it's just that you've--

WICKMAN: No.



EISENHOWER: --grown out of that. I would go back for long visits but I wanted to have my own place.

WICKMAN: All right Barbara, we left off with John going off to Korea where he was for, what eighteen months, two years?

EISENHOWER: No, one year.

WICKMAN: One year. Just one year. He was there for one year then when he came back what happened? Did he go into the White House then?

EISENHOWER: No.

WICKMAN: No.

EISENHOWER: Let me think, where did he go from there? What year are we?

WICKMAN: Well we were probably in '53.

EISENHOWER: Korea.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

EISENHOWER: Leavenworth.

WICKMAN: Where?



EISENHOWER: Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

WICKMAN: Fort Leavenworth. Okay. Command and General Staff School.

EISENHOWER: Yes, that's right.

WICKMAN: Okay. He was there for probably a year.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: How did he like that, do you remember--

EISENHOWER: Oh, it was the same way. We all lived in housing or in apartments. They had various sections around the post, and it was a fun year. The men worked awfully hard and it was a sort of camping out year, but it was a lot of fun. Our contemporaries were attractive, interesting people and we're all in the same boat. The men are all in school. I liked Kansas.

WICKMAN: Well, good. And then after that, now what happens?

EISENHOWER: Then we went to Fort Belvoir. John was offered various jobs, and you know his dad was in the White House, so we decided it'd be fun to go to the Washington area. So he went to Belvoir to teach I believe.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: And we were there for a year and then we moved into Washington, D.C. and that's when he went to work in the White House. Oh no, he was in the Pentagon first.

WICKMAN: Okay.



EISENHOWER: He was in the Pentagon in Plans, War Plans, I think. Excuse me. We ought to check with him and make sure that's what he was actually doing.

WICKMAN: We do have a full biography with all the moves in there and everything-- So we'll check those.

EISENHOWER: And so then we moved into Washington, D.C. itself.

WICKMAN: Where did you live in Washington?

EISENHOWER: We lived in Alexandria. And in the meantime the folks had bought the farm and there was another house on the farm.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And we bought that and we'd go up on weekends.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: And frankly, the whole Washington scene got to be too much for me so I moved to our house on the farm.

WICKMAN: What didn't you like about it or what was--

EISENHOWER: It was just overwhelming and I didn't have enough help. I had a maid three days a week; I had four children.

WICKMAN: You had four children now, okay.

EISENHOWER: And well, I remember, I think the thing that sort of, the last straw, was one month--this doesn't sound like a reason to move, but one month I got sixty-four birthday invitations for my children.

WICKMAN: Oh.



EISENHOWER: I had no secretary. And I was just spending my life meeting obligations and in our family you didn't ignore things like that, you answered mail, regreted or accepted or did something.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: So many invitations flowed in and we were constantly being sought after because of our connections with the White House.

WICKMAN: Yes, the Eisenhowers. Right.

EISENHOWER: And I didn't have any staff or anybody to help me. And it just finally got to be too much. And so I moved up to the Farm.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: It was a good move. The children were out of Washington which was good; into this little rural community and we were pretty much taken for granted there.

WICKMAN: Now were they in public school there?

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: They had been in private school in Washington.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: But then they went to public school in Gettysburg.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: That was a good experience for them.

WICKMAN: So Gettysburg probably, for them, is probably their, that's probably home for them.

EISENHOWER: Certainly for David.

WICKMAN: Yeah. In terms of the length of time they spent in any one place.

EISENHOWER: We were there for five years I think. And that was a lovely little town. We had a lot of fun there.



WICKMAN: Okay. So you went up to Gettysburg and John is still working; he's probably working in the White House by this time.

EISENHOWER: And he was staying there and he'd come to Gettysburg on weekends.

WICKMAN: He was staying in the White House. Okay. Well that's interesting because I never really, I don't think I've ever seen a reason for why you left Washington. And you just did, you know.

EISENHOWER: I just couldn't cope with it anymore. Finally, one secretary in the East Wing helped me with my correspondence. I mean I'd get a hundred letters a day sometimes. Maybe not that much. A week. I don't remember but the whole thing was overwhelming. And gifts and things that had to be acknowledged. And you know when people send presents to celebrities now and they never get an answer I can understand that.

WICKMAN: Yes.



EISENHOWER: But we were so conscientious about acknowledging everything. Every now and then we attended State dinners.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: --and so I had to keep up a wardrobe and I had all little children and they were in schools and it was just too much.

WICKMAN: Yes. But now that you're at Gettysburg you still get the same thing and you have to come down don't you?

EISENHOWER: I didn't come down.

WICKMAN: You didn't come down?

EISENHOWER: No. I pretty much stayed up there. Unless it was something really interesting. And there were occasions and very grand occasions.

WICKMAN: I presume you came down for Christmas.

EISENHOWER: Well, or they came up.

WICKMAN: Oh, they came up to their house for Christmas.

EISENHOWER: You know their house was open then. But that was--we were there in '59 and that's when I went on that wonderful trip--

WICKMAN: To India.

EISENHOWER: --with Johnny and his father. Thirteen nation trip. And then also Dad got in the habit of bringing all these State visitors up to the Farm. They'd call up and they'd say "The President's coming and he's bringing Krushchev."

WICKMAN: And so we'd quickly clean up the house and he brought Krushchev over. No, he didn't bring him to our house, we went over to the Farm to meet him. And Krushchev was sitting on the porch. And he's charming the children. And they were charmed by him.



He looked like Santa Claus. He was so nice when he wanted to be, you know. And he gave them each a little red star to wear in their buttonholes. And so as soon as we got in the car to go home I said, "Give them to me." [Laughter] You know he was the one who said he was going to bury President Eisenhower's grandchildren.

WICKMAN: Yes.



EISENHOWER: And so, I didn't want them to be too charmed. And then he wanted the children to come to Russia we were planning a trip to Russia. You know, the President was. Krushchev wanted the children to come so badly that he sent the Russian ambassador around to the White House about once a week to talk to Dad about their coming.

WICKMAN: Oh my goodness.

EISENHOWER: Well Dad really had nothing to do with it. We didn't think they should go.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: We felt that they were going to be exploited and a State visit is no place for young children.

WICKMAN: Right. That's true. Sure.

EISENHOWER: And so we wouldn't let them go. And then along came the U-2 incident and that was the end of that. But Krushchev came to visit the United States and it was really interesting. We went down for that, there were two dinners. There was one at the

White House and one at the Russian Embassy. I will always remember the Russian women. They were dressed in clothes that were out of the '30s. You know they were very unstylish. And the Washington Post made great hay out of that which I thought was very tacky of them.

[Interruption]

WICKMAN: We reached the point where we were talking about the very social functions you got involved with because of your father-in-law being the President.

EISENHOWER: Oh, we were talking about bringing State visitors up to Gettysburg.

WICKMAN: Right.



EISENHOWER: Well, he'd come up during the week and bring them up to show them his farm. I was there but Johnny wasn't. Sometimes he'd come up with Dad. And I remember a visit from De Gaulle. Ike brought De Gaulle over to our house, I can see us still. We were all sitting on the porch and we were having a glass of iced tea. It was, I believe, summertime, and President De Gaulle spoke English. You know he never spoke English in public. But since we didn't speak French and neither did the children he spoke English. Mary, who was the youngest--looked at him and said, "Why do you wear such thick glasses?" David and Anne were red with embarrassment. How could she be so blunt. He said, "I have very bad eyes. Poor me."

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: And he sort of gave that "Gaullic" shrug.

WICKMAN: Shrug.

EISENHOWER: It was really cute.

WICKMAN: That's an interesting fact also that even though you were up in Gettysburg you really weren't out of it because they kept coming up to Gettysburg and bringing people in and out.

EISENHOWER: No, there was just enough. But we weren't bombarded by all the hostesses in town.

WICKMAN: I see.



EISENHOWER: We really kept that to a minimum. We just couldn't first of all we just couldn't reciprocate. We couldn't afford it.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: Johnny was a major in the army and we never went to Embassy parties because that would have been a whole circuit unto itself and we weren't in the diplomatic corps.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: But it still was a constant thing of refusing. One time we decided to indulge ourselves. Juan Carlos who is now the

king of Spain came over. He was a young man and Marjorie Merriweather Post was giving parties for him. And everybody was entertaining him. We went to all the parties and it was a lot of fun. But we were very selective because we just couldn't, we didn't have the time, the energy or the money to really get involved.

WICKMAN: During this period of time, because we're talking about eight years while the General was in the White House, did you go on vacations with them, you know, if they went away somewhere?

EISENHOWER: We went on a lot of vacations with them. We went to Puerto Rico with them a couple times. They'd always take wonderful vacations, you know. We went to Denver with them up until the time of--

WICKMAN: His heart attack. Right.



EISENHOWER: --Dad's heart attack.

WICKMAN: I see. You stayed with Axel Neilson probably or--

EISENHOWER: No, with Nana and Puhpa Doud

WICKMAN: --the other fellow up at Frazer.

EISENHOWER: Well we didn't go up to Frazer but--

WICKMAN: You didn't go up to Frazer.

EISENHOWER: --Dad went up there.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: We'd go up to visit--But it was usually a stag affair at Frazer.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: Way up in the mountains they'd have fishing and bridge--
[Laughter]

WICKMAN: Fishing and bridge. Okay.

EISENHOWER: Denver is where we took up golf. At the country club in Denver.

WICKMAN: In Denver.



EISENHOWER: Dad thought that everybody in the family ought to learn how to play golf and so he--

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: He was the patron.

WICKMAN: What did your girls think about that? Did they take it up too, at that time?

EISENHOWER: Well they were pretty little.

WICKMAN: Too little.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Okay. And when they went--He spent at least one of his vacations at Newport, Rhode Island, too.

EISENHOWER: We went there.

WICKMAN: You went up there.

EISENHOWER: I think we only went once. We visited them there one summer.

WICKMAN: Yes.



EISENHOWER: But we didn't stay the whole time they were there.

WICKMAN: Okay. Uh, what about Camp David? Did you spend alot of time up there?

EISENHOWER: Oh, we used to go to Camp David alot.

WICKMAN: Sure, that would be near Gettysburg. You could often--

EISENHOWER: That is the most wonderful place. It makes you feel--

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

WICKMAN: Well we left off on the point that when you were at Camp David you thought you'd died and gone to heaven.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: You want to elaborate on that.

EISENHOWER: Same way at Palm Desert when we went out there on a trip. Well, first of all it was beautiful. And remember now, I'm the

harried mother of four children.

WICKMAN: Right. I understand.

EISENHOWER: And with very little help.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And so we would go up there and it was just beautiful and there were little cabins surrounding the main house. The children would be in one or they'd be in the main house and we'd have our own little cabin and we'd wake up in the morning and there'd be a fire going. Someone had slipped into the living room and made a fire. And unseen hands would bring the newspapers and coffee and bowls of fresh fruit all unobtrusive. Down at the White House there were people everywhere.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: And you're always smiling and saying hello to everybody that takes away from a private feeling.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: At Camp David you would never see any one.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: And we'd have a movie every night and there were all kinds of things to do. There was a bowling alley and we'd bowl.



There was never anyone else in the alley and you'd just bowl as long as you wanted to and then there were hiking trails and we'd ski there too. It was very amatuer skiing but there was a hill and we had some skis.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: It seemed like they had every kind of equipment for anything. There was a beautiful swimming pool. And it was just heaven.

WICKMAN: Good. That is interesting. How many times do you think you were there, just offhand without--I can probably check it but--

EISENHOWER: Oh it'd been so many--

WICKMAN: Did you go alot or--

EISENHOWER: Yes, we went a lot. I can't even--

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: --imagine how many times.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: It was enough that it was a very familiar place.

WICKMAN: Aside from this business of being the harried mother of four children and being inundated when you were in Washington with



invitations, were there any other special impressions you have of difficulties connected with the fact that your father-in-law was the President? Was there anything else that complicated your life constantly with that situation or not?

EISENHOWER: Well--

WICKMAN: Or did you escape successfully to Gettysburg?

EISENHOWER: --you know, press and--Well, that helped.

WICKMAN: Yes. Press.

EISENHOWER: Well, press were a problem in that we worried about publicity and the children.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: It was unavoidable when we were around their grandparents.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: We tried to make them understand that when they were around the Eisenhowers-- all the attention that was something that happened and when they were home that was the real world.

WICKMAN: How did you bring that off?

EISENHOWER: Well because we were never bothered when we were by ourselves at home. We didn't give any interviews or encourage press in any way.



WICKMAN: And you had Secret Service protection didn't you, at Gettysburg?

EISENHOWER: Yes for eight years.

WICKMAN: For the whole eight years. Okay.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: So at Gettysburg--they were up there too.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: They were like members of the family practically. They were a fine group of men. At first when we moved every year the agents were all bachelors so they could move in a hurry. They always had a house on the army post across the street or near-by.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: They were so good with the children. Finally when we were more stable then many of them got married but they'd still be on the detail.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: We had the same people for years and years.



WICKMAN: Yes, I know that. You know Mrs. Eisenhower had some of the same people--

EISENHOWER: She had some of the ones that had been with us.

WICKMAN: Who'd been in the White House. And with you too.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: That's a long long time to be a part of the family I guess.

EISENHOWER: Well they were not guarding Johnny or me.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: They were guarding the children.

WICKMAN: The children.

EISENHOWER: Johnny was in Korea when his father became President. When he came home they thought he should have Secret Service. He said, "Where were you when I could have used you!" He had been in a shooting war so why did he need Secret Service now. So he didn't have them.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: But it was a very nice situation.



WICKMAN: Well that's an interesting point too because I think most people have assumed that the Secret Service, you know, were there for you as well-- as for the children.

EISENHOWER: One time we decided to cut down on the number just arbitrarily--

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: --because there were quite a few. You know they have to have night and day shifts--

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: --and then they have to have relief men--



WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And this seemed like a terrible expense for the government. We were living on an army post so we felt reasonably secure. They cut the detail back to four men and those poor men worked so hard. So we said, "All right you all know how to do it. So you do it your way." And we never realized what they did for us until it was over and they left. Then we fended off one stranger after another coming to the house.

WICKMAN: Was this after the President was out of office?

EISENHOWER: Yes. At Gettysburg. And one time we said we were going to write a book on--

WICKMAN: The funny people.

EISENHOWER: --these weird people that would come up. And some of them were dangerous.

WICKMAN: Yes.



EISENHOWER: We realized then that the Secret Service had been quite a buffer. They just quietly took care of these people and didn't scare us by telling us about it.

WICKMAN: Now let me ask you this question since you've been through that experience, do you think this is still necessary that we provide this or--

EISENHOWER: I think it's worse than ever. I think it's much worse because when we really stop and think about it Dad was a beloved President--

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: --and he was not a person that brought about mixed emotions and so most of the people that came to see him were not coming to assassinate him they were just coming with a message but you never know what some of these people might do. They were coming to him because he was like the great White Father, you know. They

wanted something or they just thought he was going to solve all their problems. And I don't think they were particularly dangerous. But, some of them had bad records.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: But now, perhaps because of the press the president and his family are so visible.

WICKMAN: Yes.



EISENHOWER: It seems like disturbed people are increasing in number.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: Look at all the assassination attempts--

WICKMAN: I know.

EISENHOWER: After Kennedy was killed the Secret Service returned. But for awhile the folks didn't have any protection.

WICKMAN: When they were first out?

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Yeah, right. It was after the Kennedy assassination. --brought them back for the post-Presidents.

EISENHOWER: For them, but not for us.

WICKMAN: But not for you.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Okay. That's an important point too. So after the President was out of office they briefly didn't have Secret Service protection but--

EISENHOWER: Not until Kennedy was shot.

WICKMAN: --then after Kennedy was assassinated they did but that did not extend to the grandchildren.

EISENHOWER: No.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: Or to us.



WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And it really wasn't necessary except as I say I fended off about five or six real cranks.

WICKMAN: That's interesting.

EISENHOWER: They're sort of wild stories in themselves.

WICKMAN: They're what?

EISENHOWER: They're wild stories in themselves.

WICKMAN: Oh, uh-huh. The people were.

EISENHOWER: We had to call the Secret Service in Washington and ask them if they'd come up and get one man. And they did. They sent an agent up and he stayed with us for a week.

WICKMAN: Were you alone alot of the time when you--

EISENHOWER: Yes. Out on the farm.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: There was another man who used to walk down the Confederate Avenue; he was a black man from the Carolinas somewhere. And he had a message. He was really off the rails. How would anyone know whether he's dangerous or not?

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: He'd be talking to himself and he'd be walking down the road and all my friends in the little farmhouses along the way would call on the phone to say, "He's coming again."

WICKMAN: Oh.

EISENHOWER: So I'd call Johnny at the office and they'd get the police and they'd come down and get him. I'd get the children in the house. We didn't have a fence or anything.

WICKMAN: No, I know you didn't. And the house is removed really from the main house.



EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Quite a distance, yes.

EISENHOWER: One woman came one morning early after everybody had left for school and I was there by myself. It was pouring rain and she knocked on the door. I had worked with her in a volunteer capacity. She was a nurse and I was a Red Cross nurse's aid so she knew me. She had this dreadful look on her face and I invited her in and I said, "What is the matter?" And she said, "As soon as I leave here I'm going to commit suicide."

WICKMAN: Oh dear.



EISENHOWER: So we had a siege with her that lasted for quite a while.

Then there was one very dangerous man who'd been in the Navy. He had a 100% physic disability. And he was in a Navy hospital for two or three years collecting his salary. So he was rich by the time the hospital released him. He flew to Harrisburg and then took a taxi from Harrisburg to Gettysburg. He said, "He liked to go first class." He had written a book on how to solve all the worlds problems. And he wanted to tell this to the General but, you know, we were more accessible.

WICKMAN: I see. Yes.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Quite a distance, yes.

EISENHOWER: One woman came one morning early after everybody had left for school and I was there by myself. It was pouring rain and she knocked on the door. I had worked with her in a volunteer capacity. She was a nurse and I was a Red Cross nurse's aid so she knew me. She had this dreadful look on her face and I invited her in and I said, "What is the matter?" And she said, "As soon as I leave here I'm going to commit suicide."

WICKMAN: Oh dear.



EISENHOWER: So we had a siege with her that lasted for quite a while.

Then there was one very dangerous man who'd been in the Navy. He had a 100% physic disability. And he was in a Navy hospital for two or three years collecting his salary. So he was rich by the time the hospital released him. He flew to Harrisburg and then took a taxi from Harrisburg to Gettysburg. He said, "He liked to go first class." He had written a book on how to solve all the worlds problems. And he wanted to tell this to the General but, you know, we were more accessible.

WICKMAN: I see. Yes.

EISENHOWER: But he was really bad. He had a police record and that's when we called the Secret Service--

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: And asked them to come up and help us.

WICKMAN: Yes. And they did.

EISENHOWER: Yes. Later we had a man that found us here in Valley Forge.

WICKMAN: Oh, in this house.

EISENHOWER: Not in this house but in the house before this one.

WICKMAN: Oh. Okay. Over at Valley Forge.

EISENHOWER: Yes. And there were many more. But then I realized the value of the Secret Service.

WICKMAN: The value of the Secret Service. The necessity, really, of the Secret Service.

EISENHOWER: Yes.



WICKMAN: Let's go back for a minute, we've got to jump back in the late '50s, to the 11 nation tour-- What were your impressions of that?

EISENHOWER: That was an experience that just could never be equaled again.

WICKMAN: You went along--

EISENHOWER: We felt like we were on a flying magic carpet.

WICKMAN: Yes. Did you--Is this the trip where you went along and Mrs. Eisenhower couldn't go?

EISENHOWER: No. She didn't. It promised to be really too exhausting.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: It was 13 nations in something like three weeks.

WICKMAN: All right.

EISENHOWER: One day that we had that was really the most unbelievable, we left India at 6 o'clock in the morning, after a five day tour there--

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: --or a visit there. And we flew to Iran for lunch with the Shah and then we flew to Greece for dinner with the King and Queen of Greece. And then we got up the next morning and left and flew by helicopter to the USS Des Moines. The ship was in the Mediterranean. Part of the Sixth Fleet where we rested. But we were literally up twenty-four hours that day.



WICKMAN: Twenty-four hours. Where were your children at this time? Who was taking care of them?

EISENHOWER: Well, mother and daddy came up from Florida to our house in Gettysburg and the girl who had worked for me in Washington came up too.

WICKMAN: Your father was retired by this time probably.

EISENHOWER: --right at Christmas. Yes.

WICKMAN: So the children stayed at Gettysburg--

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: --and your parents came and took care of them. I see. All right. So your impression of this whole thing then is a kind of a blur. I mean, it's got constant motion on this tour.

EISENHOWER: No I wasn't.

WICKMAN: No?

EISENHOWER: I'll never forget any of it.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: It was fantastic.

WICKMAN: What the most interesting part of that trip?



EISENHOWER: India.

WICKMAN: India.

EISENHOWER: Well we were there the longest too which makes a difference. But it was so different from anything I'd ever seen before. This was before Indian culture became widely publicized here. On this trip I learned a lot about not only the culture but Eastern religions as well. Madame Gandhi was Nehru's hostess, she held no position in the government at that time.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: She was involved but she wasn't holding office.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: At every party she'd bring to meet me a personage. She'd say, "This is so-and-so. He's from the Punjab and this is his native costume." At all the events she would bring a representative from a province in India so I could see their native dress and get some idea of the flavor of the country. Then the last day when we were at the airport at 6 a.m. in the morning, it was cold and raining, and there stood this great, huge man. He was about six feet four and he was wrapped in a white garment that look like a diaper, no shirt, barefooted. He had a long beard and he was standing there grinning. And as we stood at the steps of the airplane she said, "Mrs. Eisenhower, this is a Yogi. He feels neither



heat nor cold nor pain." And with that we climbed the steps and the plane departed. [Laughter]

WICKMAN: When you were on this trip did you, did all of you go to everything as a group or--

EISENHOWER: Oh yes.

WICKMAN: Yes. Okay. So you and John and the General were pretty much in the same--

EISENHOWER: We were all together. And most of the party too. It wasn't a particularly huge group.

WICKMAN: Yeah.



EISENHOWER: And, then, we stayed in the Rastipatti Baven in India, which is the President's palace. And that was just an unbelievable place.

WICKMAN: In what way?

EISENHOWER: There were marble halls throughout and standing on guard every ten feet was a Sikh. You know what the Sikhs are?

WICKMAN: Yes. Uh-huh.

EISENHOWER: They had white turbans and red coats and they stood at attention with maybe a sword drawn or something everytime we

walked down the halls. This was in the days when a woman wore little thin heels that had a little spike inside to keep them from breaking off. When I'd walk down the marble halls I sounded like a football player with cleats. The men all had on rubber soles.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: I remember we were walking down the hall. I was walking with all the men in the group as we arrived. And I said to Johnny in a very soft voice, "I feel like a football player. I'm making so much noise." The next morning when I got up, every hall was covered with oriental rugs.

WICKMAN: Oh my goodness.

EISENHOWER: I said that was the last time my wish was anybody's command. [Laughter]

WICKMAN: That's interesting.

EISENHOWER: And the parties that they had and everything were just so magic, you know. Later when we were driven through the streets of Iran they were covered with oriental rugs. We were driving over them! And then in Pakistan at the evening parties there were tents strung with Christmas lights and oriental rugs covered the floors. For entertainment there were beautiful oriental dancers. During the



day we were entertained with tent pegging done from horseback. This was before people travelled as much as they do now.

WICKMAN: That was what, '59?

EISENHOWER: Yes, it was actually the first time I think a President had gone on a goodwill tour. Now they dash all around the world. But--

WICKMAN: Yes. During this period of time were there other trips anything like that?

EISENHOWER: Yes -- Another goodwill trip to the far east in 1960. And the President went to the Geneva summit meeting.

WICKMAN: Yes. Right. But you didn't go along on that.

EISENHOWER: No, but I would have gone to Russia if we'd gone to Russia but we didn't.

WICKMAN: Okay.



EISENHOWER: I don't think I went on any others but the 13 nation trip and the Far East goodwill tour.

WICKMAN: Well I think that was memorable enough.

EISENHOWER: It was unforgettable and it was unbelievable.

WICKMAN: Let's see, do you have any other general impressions of this period in the 1950s. So many things are happening to you it's just--

You didn't--Did you get involved in the '56 campaign at all?

EISENHOWER: We went to the convention.

WICKMAN: Went to the convention.



EISENHOWER: You know families didn't get involved so much then. We would go places and--wait a minute now. '52 I was more involved.

WICKMAN: You were involved in the campaign in '52.

EISENHOWER: And I can remember my main impression of that, I went on a whistlestop with them. And then I went on, I remember being in a big city and, I don't know where Mamie was. But I was sitting in an open car with Dad and we were in a motorcade. And then we speeded up and I had to hold onto his leg, he was sitting on the back of this convertible, to keep him from falling out of the car.

WICKMAN: Oh my goodness.

EISENHOWER: It was really wild. And I can remember many many big things that we went to, you know, where crowds of people all cheering and that kind of thing.

WICKMAN: David was about what, five years old at that time? Something like that.

EISENHOWER: I think this was '52--

WICKMAN: '52.

EISENHOWER: --and he was born in '48 so he was four.

WICKMAN: He was four. Okay.



EISENHOWER: And he was not involved in any way. We never allowed the children to participate in public events. We tried to keep their life as simple as possible.

WICKMAN: And obviously the General and Mrs. Eisenhower went along with this, the keeping it simple for them.

EISENHOWER: Yes. And of course as time went on it escalated a bit, but we managed to keep them out of the limelight.

WICKMAN: In the White House. Yes. Well I know I've seen articles that were done in things like Look and Life and so on, you know, about the children.

EISENHOWER: They'd come and take a picture at the White House and that would be it.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: You know the kids would never see the articles or anything.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: That was always done when we were visiting the Eisenhowers.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: No articles or news reports were done of our house or on our territory. We were trying to impress on them that what occurred at the White House was something that didn't happen ordinarily.

WICKMAN: How do you think that worked? Did it work?

EISENHOWER: I think it did. I think they're very sensible kids.

WICKMAN: The children really--

EISENHOWER: I think they've been able to adjust to the real world pretty well. You know to be in a situation like that and come down from it can be very hard on people.

WICKMAN: Yes.



EISENHOWER: To be the subject of so much adulation and interest. I think they've done very well.

WICKMAN: It sounds as though you were not looking forward to, I mean, to ever feeling that you were up here and then come down. Is that right? I --

EISENHOWER: I was looking forward to it.

WICKMAN: You were looking forward to coming down.

EISENHOWER: I was looking forward to having our own life.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: Because our life became less and less our life--as the years progressed through those White House years. Oh, we were really an adjunct, because Johnny was working there.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And I think a President needs his family more and more as time goes on. Because the job gets lonelier and lonelier. Although they had lots of friends--

WICKMAN: In what way, Barbara. Why is it lonely?



EISENHOWER: Well, you know, I'll tell you there's just an awful lot of people around all the time and, I think the President can only relax finally with his family and maybe one or two very very close friends. And so I think that it became very important to dad to see the children and have us around.

WICKMAN: Did you feel that when you all could get away together or you went down to visit them, did he really relax and be able to--

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: --really able to do that.

EISENHOWER: Yes. He did. He really enjoyed the children. I think he would loved to have had a big family. So we saw a lot of him. I was looking forward to the end when we could sort of live our own lives. Not stop seeing him or anything like that. I don't mean that.

WICKMAN: Sure, I understand.

EISENHOWER: But just--

WICKMAN: To get out from under the public--

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: --exposure all the time.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Okay. Well, other things will undoubtedly occur to both of us after we get this into a transcript and see what else is happening here. I'm just going to keep on moving along with it and, I think I've established pretty much what I wanted to cover for those White House years. We may go back into individual situations when I can look at the whole thing here. Well, eventually, of course, then the White House is over with and--

EISENHOWER: We were all living at Gettysburg.

WICKMAN: You were all living at Gettysburg. [Laughter] Right.

EISENHOWER: Johnny decided to resign from the army.



WICKMAN: Do you have any idea why he wanted to resign from the army?

EISENHOWER: I think that he never really enjoyed the army that much, although I think he had mixed emotions about it. There were lots of things about the army he did enjoy but he was helping his father write the White House Years.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And I think that was really his bent. He loves to write and so he decided to get out.

WICKMAN: And if he hadn't resigned he would have had to, he probably would have had to go back on active duty.

EISENHOWER: Yes, he was on leave without pay.



WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: Which is a very special circumstance. I think the last person that was on leave without pay was Robert E. Lee when he went home--

WICKMAN: Oh, is that right?

EISENHOWER: --to Arlington for a year to plant--

WICKMAN: Really. I didn't know that.

EISENHOWER: --and see that his family was doing all right.

WICKMAN: He was on leave without pay for how long?

EISENHOWER: Johnny was for a couple years.

WICKMAN: A couple years.

EISENHOWER: When he was at Gettysburg and then when he was to return to the army he had nineteen years service.

WICKMAN: Right.



EISENHOWER: So he only had to do one year to get his retirement.

WICKMAN: That's right.

EISENHOWER: But he felt he couldn't do that. He decided to resign. He didn't feel it was fair that he'd accrued retirement. So then to make up that one year to get his twenty year retirement he went into the reserves.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And he spent about ten years in the reserves and now he's retired.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: This year.

WICKMAN: Okay. So now he settles in working with the General and Kevin McCann working on the The White House Years. During this period, now, who's he working for really?

EISENHOWER: He's working for Dad.

WICKMAN: Okay. And who in essence is working for Doubleday. I mean--

EISENHOWER: Yes, that's right. John was an--editor at Doubleday.

WICKMAN: He was listed as an editor. Okay. And he had an office in the General's office.

EISENHOWER: And he and Bill Ewald researched and wrote but you know, --they didn't write the book -- he wrote it but they helped.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: Don't misunderstand me.

WICKMAN: No. I understand. Yes. Well was Bill living out there too--

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: --at Gettysburg?

EISENHOWER: For awhile. He sort of--Yes, he was living up there all the time and then Mary would come up on weekends or--



WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: They had a home in Washington. She would come up and spend the summer.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: After the book was finished Johnny thought of working for Doubleday permanently. Bill Ewald was going to work for IBM--so Mary and I went on a big house hunting tour up in Westchester.

WICKMAN: Oh.

EISENHOWER: --and in the Connecticut area. Then Johnny decided he just didn't want to work in New York City. So instead he took the job at Freedom's Foundation.

WICKMAN: Right.



EISENHOWER: And we moved here.

WICKMAN: You're moving again. [Laughter]

EISENHOWER: We've been here ever since.

WICKMAN: In this area...

EISENHOWER: Since '64. It's almost twenty years we've been here. So to me this is home.

WICKMAN: I see. Okay.

EISENHOWER: I've never lived anyplace twenty years in my whole life--

WICKMAN: Right. Right.

EISENHOWER: Actually it's eighteen now.

WICKMAN: Okay. Let's see, the White House Years are finished. And John was at the Freedom's Foundation. He was there a year.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Right. And then, now what?

EISENHOWER: Well, then he decided--to write--

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: Full time. So he wrote The Bitter Woods.



WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: That was a best seller. And then, let's see now, this was about 1968-69. Have you ever seen psychological tests where stress is given a number between one and ten?

WICKMAN: Yes. I'm very familiar with them.

EISENHOWER: --you know, on a scale of one to ten.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: In 1969 these are the major things that happened to us in a period of six months.

WICKMAN: All right.

EISENHOWER: Johnny's book came out.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: He changed careers and became Ambassador to Belgium.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

EISENHOWER: We moved country, not just house. We had a son and a daughter get married. And Johnny's father died.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: In six months period.

WICKMAN: That's right.

EISENHOWER: Can you imagine!

WICKMAN: That's the top of the scale. [Laughter]

EISENHOWER: We were all due for a nervous breakdown.

WICKMAN: Yes. I would think so. Really.

EISENHOWER: Then we went to Belgium and it was very sad because we arrived there in May and it was memorial time twenty-five years after the war.



WICKMAN: Yes. It was the twenty-fifth anniversary of D-Day.

EISENHOWER: We'd go around to all the cemeteries and Johnny would make speeches. This was a month after his father died. It must have just taken him apart.

WICKMAN: Let's go back for just a minute before we get to Brussels. When you were up here and he was working on Bitter Woods and I remember that very well because that's when I--he was working on Bitter Woods the first time I came up to the house on White Horse Road. I remember that was '67, I guess. The General had sent me out.

EISENHOWER: The book came out in '68.

WICKMAN: Yes. So I guess I arrived here in '67.

EISENHOWER: Or did it come out in '69? I'm not sure.

WICKMAN: I think it came out in '69, actually. I think so.

EISENHOWER: Actually hit the--street so to speak.

WICKMAN: I think so. Yes. So you're up here and he's working on his book. Now how did he get into the ambassador business?

EISENHOWER: Well if you'll recall, Mr. Nixon became President.

WICKMAN: Yes. I remember.

EISENHOWER: And Johnny was the chairman in Pennsylvania for Citizens for Nixon I think it was.



WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: After the successful campaign he was offered the ambassadorship to Belgium. And he decided to do it.

WICKMAN: Okay. I wonder why--

EISENHOWER: So did I.

WICKMAN: --Brussels? Did anybody ever want to ask that question? I mean why not, something else?

EISENHOWER: I think he was offered several places and that was his choice.

WICKMAN: Oh he was offered several places.



EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Okay. That's what's missing there. See a lot of that kind of thing is not--nobody can get at that. That's not documented.

EISENHOWER: I'm not really sure, John--

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: --but I think he, I think there were several places that he was offered and that one appealed to him the most.

WICKMAN: Okay. So then, obviously, as you were saying, this year of 1968-69 had to be a very stressful time because the General had the first of those series of heart attacks in May of '68 and then was hospitalized.

EISENHOWER: He was in the hospital--

WICKMAN: Yes, almost a year.

EISENHOWER: Julie and David got married in December; Ann got married in November of '68 and she went in her wedding gown to Washington to the hospital cause he couldn't come to the wedding.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: She and Fernando went in his room and they had champagne.

WICKMAN: Yes. We have pictures of that.

EISENHOWER: Yes. And then when David and Julie got married he had closed circuit TV. NBC or somebody--set it up. And then the book came out and the ambassadorship was accepted and there were a lot of parties in connection with the book and promotion. And then Johnny went over to Belgium right after Dad died and Mimi went with him.

WICKMAN: Right.



EISENHOWER: And I stayed home to pack up the house.

WICKMAN: I remember that. Yes. I remember that very well.

[Laughter]

EISENHOWER: Did you come to my house the night the dog came home?

WICKMAN: Uh, yes.

EISENHOWER: Do you remember our beautiful German Shepherd?

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: He just couldn't go to Belgium because it was a townhouse in the middle of the city--

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: --and he wasn't a very friendly dog.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: And so we gave him to a farmer out in the country which about broke my heart. And I remember--I think it was you were there--

WICKMAN: Yes. I was.

EISENHOWER: And he --



WICKMAN: Came home.

EISENHOWER: He had run all the way home several miles.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: And I decided to let him spend the night before I took him back over to this farm.

WICKMAN: Yes. Huh. Yes, I remember that dog very well. He was a sizeable animal.

EISENHOWER: He was the scourge of the neighborhood, I'll tell you.

WICKMAN: Something just came to mind when we were talking about--
During the White House period did you see a lot of the Nixons?
He was Vice-President.

EISENHOWER: Well to me--I don't know how Johnny felt--the Nixon's
were more contemporaries of the Eisenhowers. He was the Vice-
President--John was an army officer--but we were friends.

WICKMAN: Sure. Right.

EISENHOWER: We weren't running around with them or anything like
that. And it was sort of almost like three generations. You know
there's Dad. And you think of Nixon as younger.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh. Right.

EISENHOWER: And then we were even younger yet.

WICKMAN: Right. Okay.

EISENHOWER: Julie and Tricia came to the White House a couple
times to play.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: And Mamie's grandchildren were there.

WICKMAN: Yes. Right.



EISENHOWER: Our children.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: So the children knew each other a little and we went out with the Eisenhowers several times to the Nixon's house for dinner--

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: --In the course of those years. I don't know whether we were in Washington or in Gettysburg and happened to be down for the weekend or what. But we were very friendly with them.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: And then David and Julie, you know, went to Amherst and Smith--

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: The colleges were right next door.



WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: And they met each other there. I guess you've heard that story.

WICKMAN: Yes. [Laughter] That's pretty well documented.

EISENHOWER: No, but I mean--David decided to go over and look up Julie and he took his friends along from his fraternity. Did you hear this?

WICKMAN: Go ahead. No.

EISENHOWER: When they found her they took her out to a place to get a soda or a hamburger.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

EISENHOWER: When the check came nobody had any money and Julie ended up paying.

[Laughter]

WICKMAN: I see. Okay. That's terrific. Obviously made an impression. We're going to jump back a bit. We're not going to press on Brussels here for the minute but let me go back a little bit. You spent some time out in Palm Springs, Palm Desert.

EISENHOWER: We went out there once.

WICKMAN: Only once.

EISENHOWER: No, maybe we went twice.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: We went twice.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: Once at Christmas. I guess both times at Christmas. I'm not sure.



WICKMAN: These were--then they were just, they were kind of family vacations.

EISENHOWER: They were. Yes. We took all the children. We went to Disneyland. We played golf. Oh we had a wonderful time.

WICKMAN: Great. Well that was a--the reason I brought that up, that obviously was a very special place for the General. He kept going back there.

EISENHOWER: That was another place where you felt like you'd died and gone to heaven.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: It was gorgeous.

WICKMAN: Now where did you stay when you were out there? Did you stay in the house?

EISENHOWER: No. There were beautiful houses all around the golf course.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And people would come from all over some lived there, they'd come in the season, so to speak, when it was the right temperature--

WICKMAN: Right. Winter time.



EISENHOWER: --because the desert gets very hot in the summer.

WICKMAN: Uh, we were talking about the fact that when you went out to the desert, at least these two occasions, you stayed in somebody's house that they lent you.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: And that was how that was worked out. Okay.

EISENHOWER: A friend would not be in residence and they would lend the Eisenhowers a house for us.

WICKMAN: Okay. As you remembered it was only these two times you were out there.

EISENHOWER: I think we went out there twice.



WICKMAN: This wasn't an annual thing or anything--

EISENHOWER: No.

WICKMAN: --the way it was with the General going out there. Okay. We're going to at some point, we're going to do more about his life in the desert in the Museum because it's a fascinating part of--

EISENHOWER: He loved the desert.

WICKMAN: That he did.

EISENHOWER: He loved it.

WICKMAN: Why did he love it do you think?

EISENHOWER: He liked the scenery and he liked the air.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: And he just felt good there.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh.

EISENHOWER: And I've heard a lot of other people that live there say that. It must be a, I think it's very unhumid heat.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: And it's cool at night and warm in the day. It's beautiful weather until it finally gets to be summer and then it's impossible.

WICKMAN: Yeah.

EISENHOWER: But there are big mountains and then there's the desert floor itself.

WICKMAN: Right. Yes.

EISENHOWER: The scenery is quite spectacular.

WICKMAN: It seemed like a rather unlikely contrast though to someplace like, oh, Georgia. You know he used to go down to Augusta--



EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: --quite a lot. And a having gone there for so many years it seems so unlikely that'd he wind up in the desert. I don't know.

EISENHOWER: Well it's--Have you ever spent any time out there?

WICKMAN: Oh yes. Yes, I've spent a lot of time--

EISENHOWER: Oh, so, you know what I'm talking about.

WICKMAN: Yes. Right.

EISENHOWER: The scenery and everything.



WICKMAN: Yes. I understand the scenery part I just, uh, I guess it was just kind of hard to see the General in that--unless, you know maybe it was reminiscent of North Africa. I don't know. Maybe that was--

EISENHOWER: Yes, well he said something to me once about the fact that Patton had come out there to practice desert warfare.

WICKMAN: Uh-huh. Right. 29th

EISENHOWER: And that when he first saw the desert he, Ike, had loved it.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: Both of them had sort of fallen in love with it.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: And he'd always wanted to go back.

WICKMAN: He liked the atmosphere. Well, okay. By the way, that brought up another thing. See one thing leads to another. Did you spend much time at Augusta?

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: Two or three, oh, more than two or three. A lovely sojourn.

WICKMAN: That was a vacation spot too.

EISENHOWER: You know that's another place like El Dorado in the desert. There were houses around and people weren't using their houses.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: And we'd all go down and stay.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: It was a real good time.

WICKMAN: That's good. Okay.

EISENHOWER: But we had a lot of fun at Augusta. That's a tough golf course.



WICKMAN: Yes. Well of course it's also--

EISENHOWER: For a woman. There's no ladies tees and that's a long course.

WICKMAN: Oh is that right. Long drive.

EISENHOWER: Yes.



WICKMAN: And of course that's close to Fort Gordon. So there would be--you'd probably run into--

EISENHOWER: When they went there the first time--someone invited them. They hadn't really ever been vacationers as such--and this was a big treat. And that's why they liked it so much. They just thought of that as the great escape to go down and play golf and bridge and rest.

WICKMAN: Yes, he obviously enjoyed it. Certainly.

EISENHOWER: The food was wonderful there and it was just a real nice place.

WICKMAN: Okay, let's--I'm not going to touch at all on the General's death and all that business. I know you came out to the funeral. Out to Abilene.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: That, undoubtedly, was an extremely trying event taking as long as it did on that train.

EISENHOWER: That was because Mamie didn't want to fly.

WICKMAN: Didn't want to fly. Yes.



EISENHOWER: She really got so she just wouldn't fly. And you know I think she was protecting her heart. She had a bad heart all those years and she never complained about it. But I think she had instincts about what she could and couldn't do. And the altitude in the plane and just the scariness of it, to her it was scary.

WICKMAN: Yes. I heard a very funny story about her one time from-- I can't remember who it was--but, you know, she went out to the dedication, I think it was, of the Eisenhower Medical Center in--

EISENHOWER: Yes. There's some pictures of that.

WICKMAN: --Palm Springs. Yes. And, they persuaded her to fly. She had driven down, she was going to drive all the way out but for some reason or other she got down to San Antonio, I think, and she couldn't. There wasn't time or something. And so she agreed to fly on Air Force One. I think the Nixon's were going out there too. She agreed to do this. And whoever was with her, you know, she kept saying, "How high up are we?" And this person kept saying, "Well Mrs. Eisenhower, you can just look down there. We can't be more than 2000 feet off the ground." [Laughter] Here they are at--twenty

thousand feet. Yes. But the air was so clear that you could see, you know, you could see the ground and the houses. This person said, "I knew she didn't believe me. I just knew that she was sitting there putting up with it."

EISENHOWER: But she wanted the reassurance anyway.

WICKMAN: Yes. She wanted to be reassured that it was okay. So after, almost immediately after the General's funeral, then, very shortly, you went to Brussels.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: What kind of an impression do you have of that?

EISENHOWER: Oh it was wonderful. It was terrific. I did a whole--

WICKMAN: You liked it a lot.

EISENHOWER: --speech on that.



WICKMAN: You have a speech on it?

EISENHOWER: Yes. It was like a living "Upstairs, Downstairs." Did you ever see the TV show?

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: It was like that. I mean, imagine going from doing all your own housework or, you know, having a cleaning woman, to having a ten servant staff. It was really fun. And it was interesting. And, you know, I tried to learn French. I just really loved it over there.

WICKMAN: Now the ambassador's residence is right behind the Embassy. Is that right?

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Okay. So that's a pretty close merger between work and home.

EISENHOWER: It was. You never needed to go outside. Johnny could walk--

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: --through the, we had a ballroom in our house and he could walk through a passageway right up to his office.

WICKMAN: Right up to the office.



EISENHOWER: You know it rains all the time.

WICKMAN: Yes. So your memories then of that are what? Primarily the social events that you had to put on and people to entertain?

EISENHOWER: Yes. That was quite a job. It was an actual job. It was like running a small hotel. And it was interesting and fun. And just about the time I got all my systems going we came home.

WICKMAN: Now you were there two years?

EISENHOWER: Two and a half years.

WICKMAN: Two and a half years. Okay. So you went--when did you come home? '71? '72? I'm trying to remember when--

EISENHOWER: '71, I guess in the Fall.

(Interruption)

WICKMAN: Well, all right, you come back from Brussels and then what do you come back to when you come back?

EISENHOWER: Back to White Horse Road.

WICKMAN: Back to White Horse Road.

EISENHOWER: And Johnny in the meantime had a contract to write the book that just came out--Allies.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: So he was going to finish that but instead he wrote Strictly Personal. And then he wrote, the Letters To Mamie. And that's what he's been doing over the last ten years.

WICKMAN: Okay. Well, this transition, now you come back from Brussels where you have ten, your staff of ten, back to White Horse Road.

EISENHOWER: Now that was a little rough.

WICKMAN: It was a little rough. Okay.



EISENHOWER: It took a little while to get back into the groove again.

WICKMAN: Did you have any children at home at that point?

EISENHOWER: Yes, we had Mary.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: And Susie had stayed over there. She'd married the British Consul's son who was a barrister in England.

WICKMAN: Okay.



EISENHOWER: I would go over and visit her in England. Ann was in Bogota. So I had a lot of interesting places to visit.

WICKMAN: Yes. This is one of the strange things about your children, that they wind up all over the world.

EISENHOWER: I always went when a baby was born. I also spent a great deal of time trying to fix the house. We had had renters there for two and a half years.

WICKMAN: That's right. You went back to the same house you'd had before.

EISENHOWER: It was in bad shape, so we did a lot of decorating. And then I started going to college. After Mary got out of school.

WICKMAN: Why did you do that?

EISENHOWER: Mary disliked school all of her life. And I wanted her to go to college so badly. I'd take her around and show her colleges. And finally it became evident that she didn't want to go to college. I wanted her to go so badly I decided maybe I was the one that ought to go. So I started school in about '74.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: And I graduated in '79.

WICKMAN: Yes. What did you major in?



EISENHOWER: English.

WICKMAN: Okay. Just a couple of hours a semester probably, is what you're doing.

EISENHOWER: Well I took two and three courses at a time. At first I only took one course. I didn't plan to matriculate but I finally did.

WICKMAN: Right. That's a very interesting story. Really, I mean--

EISENHOWER: It was fun. Well you know my father did that. Maybe that's what--

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: --inspired me. He went to law school after he retired from the army.

WICKMAN: Oh.

EISENHOWER: And he was about the age I was when he graduated from law school. And then he practiced law in Gainesville, Florida for years.

WICKMAN: I guess I didn't know that.

EISENHOWER: So he really had three careers. He was briefly a chemical engineer--

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: --and then an army officer and then a lawyer.

WICKMAN: When did he retire from the army? Do you remember?

EISENHOWER: In the late '50s, mid '50s.

WICKMAN: Okay. What was his rank by that time?



EISENHOWER: He was full colonel.

WICKMAN: He was a full colonel. He retired a full colonel.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Then went to law school and then practiced down in Florida. Yes, that would be a good reason why you'd want to do it. What do you intend to do with this career?

EISENHOWER: Well, as you know I started writing a book. That was one reason I went back to college.

WICKMAN: I see. Okay.

EISENHOWER: And I wanted to take English literature. And I did. And it helped an awful lot. I could never have written what I have written now without the courses I took. When people ask me what I was going to do with my education. I said, well, first I'm going to write my book. And then--I'm going to be the club champion at golf at Waynesboro Country Club.

WICKMAN: Okay.



EISENHOWER: You know, in other words I didn't intend to have any career or anything. But I did. I ended up doing this other which is actually a career.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: Rosemont has sent me conventions and courses and now I'm the Director of Planned Giving at the College.

WICKMAN: Well good. You keep mentioning golf. That's interesting. Did you play before you got involved with the Eisenhower's?

EISENHOWER: No. But remember I was involved with the Eisenhower's from the age of 20 on.

WICKMAN: Right. Right.

EISENHOWER: The other day I was thinking, these little kids playing golf -- Isn't it nifty they're going to have so much ability by the time they grow up. And then I thought, you know I wasn't such much more than a kid myself when I took it up.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: I loved it.

WICKMAN: Why did you take it up originally? Just to--

EISENHOWER: Oh, Dad urged us all take it up.

WICKMAN: Okay. All right. That's what I--

EISENHOWER: He provided the wherewithal and the beautiful golf courses and the time and all that.

WICKMAN: I see. Okay. That was another family thing then, really.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: That was something that--

EISENHOWER: David's an excellent golfer.

WICKMAN: Yes, I know.

EISENHOWER: He had lessons from Ed Dudley from the year one. And we used to bribe him, "Now when you break 100, Grandad will take you to the World's Series, or Daddy will take you to the World's Series."



He'd lost interest in it when he got to the age where baseball football and team sports become important.

WICKMAN: Oh, I see.

EISENHOWER: But he played long enough to get a really good swing.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: He's an excellent golfer today.



WICKMAN: It's interesting that he eventually lost interest in it but uh--

EISENHOWER: Well when kids hit their teens they are not interested in golf on the whole. They often get more interested in team sports.

WICKMAN: I guess in my experience it's been the other way around. They--in our part of the world, they get interested in team sports and then the older they get the more interested they become in things like golf and tennis. I don't know why that's the case except that golf and tennis aren't that well organized out there I guess is part of it. And the team sports are.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Okay. Well I think maybe we are, ready for, you know, for the overview business. --Oh, one thing about Brussels I was going to ask you, what was the, from your perspective, what was the worst part about the ambassador's job? Was there a worst part?

Maybe there wasn't. Maybe it was--

EISENHOWER: Well when we got there a whole lot of things, a series of things happened that made it a little difficult. One was the butler had quit before we got there. Now that sounds odd to the lay person that the butler had quit but the butler runs the house. And a good butler is invaluable. And the social secretary had retired so I had no social secretary. And, the heart of the job was social.

WICKMAN: Right.



EISENHOWER: --you know. And then, some other key people were missing. And so I had to train new people and I didn't really know how to train people. I learned and they finally all got trained. But it took awhile.

WICKMAN: Was the--

EISENHOWER: That would have been the hardest thing I would say.

WICKMAN: Was the residence in good shape physically? Or was it one of these tales of--

EISENHOWER: Well, it had to be refurbished a bit. And the government let me spend some money on it. It looked beautiful when we finished. But it was basically beautiful. It had been bought and furnished right after World War II when French antiques were--

WICKMAN: Gold.

EISENHOWER: --going for a song. And there were really good Louis Fourteenth furniture in that place. You know signed pieces. The curtains seemed to have held up pretty well. And it had been done up beautifully by a French interior designer at the time it was built. Now this was, well let's see, late '40s, late '50s, late '60s, this was twenty years later but the furniture was all good and we added things that we had to.

WICKMAN: I thought it was also interesting that when you were over there, uh,--let's see, was General Goodpaster at NATO then? The same time you were there?

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: That's a rather unusual thing that John was in the White House and Andy was in the White House--

EISENHOWER: Yes.



WICKMAN: --you both wound up in Brussels.

EISENHOWER: We saw him a lot.

WICKMAN: Yeah, I was always fascinated by that, the coincidence of everybody coming together in--

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: --what were two basically appointed jobs, you know. It isn't as though they both had the same tour of duty.

EISENHOWER: No.

WICKMAN: Well--

EISENHOWER: And it was so much fun too-- We were right in the heart of Europe and, we could go down to Africa, North Africa for a vacation and--pop over to Spain. We could get on a train at seven o'clock in the morning just like I get on the Paola train that goes to New York, and be in Paris by nine-thirty and then shop.
[Laughter]

WICKMAN: Didn't you also--



EISENHOWER: Or just enjoy it.

WICKMAN: Didn't you also go for vacations to someplace in the Ardennes?

EISENHOWER: Yes, we rented a house in the Ardennes. John does not like town life and the Embassy was a townhouse. It was noisy; it bothered him. We had a little cottage in the Ardennes and we'd go up there on weekends.

WICKMAN: Many weekends?

EISENHOWER: You know the diplomatic schedule is different from the normal suburban schedule. All the parties are considered part of the work.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: And they're all held during the week. The week-ends are your own. And you usually leave town. Everybody leaves town. And then they start in again on Monday.

WICKMAN: That's a very important fact which I'm not familiar with and I doubt very many people are that you--

EISENHOWER: Well the whole diplomatic corp in Washington sort of runs that way too. And they have, oh I'm not saying that you can't get involved on weekends but--

WICKMAN: Sure.



EISENHOWER: And then dinner parties would start at eight o'clock. The host would have one tray with some champagne or orange juice on it passed and then the guests sat down for a three hour dinner of many courses of food and wine. It was very different. Promptly at eleven o'clock the party was over and everybody went home.

WICKMAN: At eleven o'clock.

EISENHOWER: Eleven o'clock.

WICKMAN: Isn't that interesting.

EISENHOWER: We had to dip heavily into our own money.

WICKMAN: So there was no, in other words, whatever allowances there were simply didn't cover.

EISENHOWER: No. And we thought 2 1/2, years that was enough.

WICKMAN: Sure.

EISENHOWER: --we really couldn't afford to go on with it.

WICKMAN: So you came back to White Horse Road and then you eventually moved out of there and moved up--

EISENHOWER: On Valley Forge mountain.

WICKMAN: --on the mountain.

EISENHOWER: And that didn't work, and we moved here two years ago.

WICKMAN: It was pretty isolated. Right.

EISENHOWER: It wasn't so isolated. No, that's quite a little community up there.

WICKMAN: Did you leave White Horse Road just because the size of the house, the fact that there's just the two of you? They were all gone by that time.

EISENHOWER: Yes we had some idea that we were going to move to a smaller place--and be freer to travel and do things like that.



WICKMAN: Over all these years that you knew the General and Mrs. Eisenhower how would you characterize them? That's a question that I've been asked because I knew them for awhile. Were these people who had two diametrically different sides to them? From your point of view.

EISENHOWER: You mean --

WICKMAN: There's the public person and the private person.

EISENHOWER: No. I always said, you know there was a book written called the Dark Side of Lyndon Johnson or something like that.

WICKMAN: Yes.



EISENHOWER: There was no dark side to the Eisenhowers

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: What you saw, is what they were. They were wonderful people. They were wonderful people and you know nowadays when you read all these books about the dark side of people--that people so enjoy writing. Nobody can write a book like that about them.

WICKMAN: What do you think that General Eisenhower's greatest strengths were?

EISENHOWER: I always said that I thought he was a most mature man. He fit the definition of maturity. He could take disappointment and not lose control--He was just a mature person.

WICKMAN: Did you ever see any examples of the famous Eisenhower temper that he supposedly had?

EISENHOWER: Not in the office. I mean I wasn't ever in the office.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: He had a temper.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: I saw him angry because he couldn't find a paint brush or something but not -- no, I never saw that.

WICKMAN: That apparently was reserved for --

EISENHOWER: It was strictly in --

WICKMAN: His business life.

EISENHOWER: -- in his business.



WICKMAN: I think we've discussed the fact that Mrs. Eisenhower was pretty straightforward, pretty candid.

EISENHOWER: She was. She was just one of these ladies of this generation that was tough on the small things and wonderful on the big things. Any big crisis she was right in there, totally uncritical, helpful, sweet, loving, supportive and everything. And all the little things she was - - [Laughter]

WICKMAN: I wonder why.

EISENHOWER: Well that's just a type of person, you know.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: She'd be thrown by little things but she could take anything big and important in her stride.

WICKMAN: I was always, I've remarked to her at the time we did her oral history interview that, I always found it so interesting how she coped with moving because she was not, you know, the life that she had before she married the General was not one of constant movement. They went on vacations and this kind of thing but you didn't -- she wasn't



responsible for packing up the whole house you know and moving it. And yet when they got in the army she was, and did, and she--

EISENHOWER: She took great pride in home-making. And she made a business of it. You know this girl I was telling you about that became an organizing consultant?

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: Mamie had her house organized like that all the time. Well I didn't know her, of course, before the General was famous--

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: --but, when he was famous, she ran a big house and she really ran it and it was well run. It was perfectly run. That is a credit to her. It's a hard job.

WICKMAN: See, I think that's--

EISENHOWER: And I found out how hard it was when I went to Brussels.

WICKMAN: Brussels. Right.

EISENHOWER: You know, there's so many facets to it you can't imagine and not the least of which is economics, making sure you're not getting taken at the grocery store in foreign countries and, that you're able to live within the allowances you're given for entertaining and just making sure that things are done right. It's a huge job.



WICKMAN: When they were at Columbia, how big is the president's house at Columbia?

EISENHOWER: I'd say that house at Columbia was more or less like the residency in Brussels. Very similar. It had a kitchen in the basement, a big commercial kitchen.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: And then drawing rooms on--no, a library on the first floor and a dining room, and it was a townhouse. These are big rooms I'm talking about.

WICKMAN: Yes.



EISENHOWER: And then there was a sort of a mezzanine, you might say, with a couple drawing rooms on it, and then there were, there was a, on the third floor there were all bedrooms and a living room and a small kitchen where Dad could cook if he wanted to.

WICKMAN: I see.

EISENHOWER: And then the fourth floor was more bedrooms and then the fifth floor was the Penthouse--where we gathered in the evening. There is an elevator in the house.

WICKMAN: And the Penthouse was kind of a--

EISENHOWER: There was an elevator in the Embassy too.

WICKMAN: But I mean the Penthouse was kind of like a big family room. Is that the way you'd characterize it?

EISENHOWER: Yes. You could walk out on the roof but New York was so dirty at the time you didn't go out on the roof much.

WICKMAN: You didn't go out on the roof. [Laughter] I see. Well, that's, you know, that's an insight also. That's another one of those very good insights because I'm sure most people don't, I'm sure most historians don't ever think of Mrs. Eisenhower as actually running, the house.

EISENHOWER: Oh, she did. She was really good at it. And, you know, she planned all the menus and they rarely ate out. They went out to peoples homes and things like that but they didn't-- You know nowadays people eat out alot. They didn't do that. There were beautiful breakfasts, lunches, dinners, every day served on time by well-clad servants and on beautiful dishes and done well. Always fresh flowers. She had a touch.

WICKMAN: And you saw her--That summer you were in Paris you saw her do the same thing at SHAPE too.

EISENHOWER: No, I didn't--



WICKMAN: No you didn't.

EISENHOWER: --because they were not in their house. They were living in the Trianon Palace Hotel. Their house wasn't finished.

WICKMAN: Oh, okay. So that--

EISENHOWER: The French architects were staking their reputation on the fact that the house would be finished by a certain time. And it got put back and put back. It was supposed to be done before we came; then done before we left and then finally it was done around Christmas.

WICKMAN: So in the hotel she just ordered, I mean, she was--

EISENHOWER: Oh yes, she's having a little vacation really.

WICKMAN: Yes, I see. Okay.

EISENHOWER: There was nothing that had to be done so she went over to the house in Marne La Coquette every day and supervised its reconstruction. She had to pick out the furniture for it. The French government opened their warehouses. And she was able to choose beautiful furniture. It took a lot of doing. And she always had her correspondence and her mail that she did herself. I always see her sitting in that bed writing letters endlessly. And she did that from year one. So she had a very busy, active life.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: When you say just a housewife that does not apply in that case.

WICKMAN: Oh no. No, no. It doesn't, but I think that, you know people, if people just know that she really worked at this thing, this organizing business--



EISENHOWER: Oh yes.

WICKMAN: --you know, that was--

EISENHOWER: Well she used to drive people in the White House crazy because--Well, I don't know what Bess Truman did, but Eleanor Roosevelt never darkened the door of the kitchen or worried about anything.

WICKMAN: Oh!

EISENHOWER: I could sympathize with Eleanor Roosevelt because I felt that way in Brussels. I had a lot I had to do but I thought I'm not going to go shopping for the next two years. I mean grocery shopping. I enjoyed the fact that I didn't have to cook. Well Eleanor Roosevelt never was involved in the running of the White House. She left it to the housekeeper.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: But Mamie had to know what happened to everything. She ran that place. Even to telling the cook to use the leftovers from the night before if there were just the two of them and make hash out of it. She knew where every penny was spent. You know she didn't get to redo the White House when she moved in.

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: Or even the living quarters because it had just been done.



WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: There was about a thousand dollars in the budget, and Ike said he would not go to Congress for an appropriation because, the house had just been done. She'd just have to make do. She wanted some curtains for the second floor so she went over to Fort Meyer and went to the place where they sold parachute silk, the condemned parachute silk. It cost ten cents a yard. All the army wives bought this stuff and make curtains out of it.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: She brought the silk back to the White House and had Lillian make curtains up in the sewing room. Remember Lillian who wrote the book Backstairs at the White House?

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: She obviously didn't like my mother-in-law very well. It was kind of a diggy, nasty book. And it was because she made her do things like make curtains.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: I mean that's my theory.

WICKMAN: Okay.



EISENHOWER: Because actually Lillian saw very little of Mamie. She was working in a different part of the house. That place is so vast and she wasn't a personal maid. She was a sewing lady. Lillian sat up on the 3rd floor and made all these glass curtains for the bedrooms on the third floor. And that's all the decorating Mamie did. That's all she could do.

WICKMAN: You've obviously read, you read a great deal on, you know, first ladies in the White House. How do you feel about the characterization of Mrs. Eisenhower in J.B. West's book? Have you read that?

EISENHOWER: Very good.

WICKMAN: You think that's pretty accurate?

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: That seems to be one of the better books really on the whole.

EISENHOWER: Yes, I think it's excellent.

WICKMAN: Okay.

EISENHOWER: He was a nice man.

WICKMAN: Did you see him frequently?

EISENHOWER: Oh yes. He was the head usher I believe.



WICKMAN: Right. Yes.

EISENHOWER: He was good--

WICKMAN: Rex Scouten...

EISENHOWER: --at his work.

WICKMAN: Yes. Rex was there too but he was the assistant usher or some such thing.

EISENHOWER: I thought he did a marvelous job of portraying all those First Ladies and really making them the personality that they were. He obviously admired and liked them all. His good will comes through.

WICKMAN: He came to the--they had the twenty-fifth reunion at the time of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Eisenhower's inauguration. You didn't make that because you were snowbound up on the hill up there. You don't remember that, but I do.

EISENHOWER: I do remember it now.

WICKMAN: Because I was sitting in Washington.

EISENHOWER: Yes, I remember that.

WICKMAN: But I went to it and, it was interesting talking to West because his book had just come out.



This interview is being conducted with Barbara Eisenhower at Devon, Pennsylvania on May 9, 1983. The interviewer is Dr. John Wickman.

DR. JOHN WICKMAN: I just approached this interview by writing down some names and you may not have any particular thoughts about these people or their relation with the President or you or anything else.

BARBARA EISENHOWER: No.

WICKMAN: But, Cliff Roberts was one of the people who seemed to be involved in so much with the President that I just wondered, what, how...

EISENHOWER: He used to be around all the time.



WICKMAN: What were your memories of him?

EISENHOWER: Well, he's a very taciturn sort of person. He was around a lot playing bridge, golf, Augusta and things like that. I just felt very kindly toward him. For some reason, he reminded me of my brother. [Laugh] He was on the crusty side, you know, but he was always very nice to me. I didn't know him too well.

WICKMAN: At this meeting that we had at the Kennedy Library, somebody said that Cliff Roberts, and there were several other people who were close to General Eisenhower, really went out of their way to kind of help him relax. You know, would arrange parties, trips and all that kind of thing.

EISENHOWER: Oh yes, Pete Jones was one of them. Well, Pete was just the opposite from the other man. He was very, very expansive. Remember when he died in that airplane crash? And remember the big scandal about the fact that he had so much money on his person? Do you remember what the sum was?

WICKMAN: \$10,000.

EISENHOWER: Is that all? [Laugh] I thought it was like \$100,000.

WICKMAN: Well, maybe it was, maybe you're right. Maybe I thought it was \$10,000 in cash.

EISENHOWER: Did you ever hear the story about it? What it was or why? Well, it was unfair. You know they speculated that he was taking this out to Nixon in California. But the truth of the matter was that he was a poor boy, then he had risen to be head of City Service Oil and he carried large sums of money with him at all times. He always paid cash for everything. He liked to have a lot of money with him because he would walk into an art gallery and buy a painting and pay cash for it. That was the only reason he had all that money - this was just habitual for him. Whenever he would come to the farm the kids would do something that he liked (he was very grandfatherly in a way). He'd hand them all hundred dollar bills and I'd go around behind him and collect the hundred dollar bills and I'd give them back to him and he'd say "No, you have to keep them." So then I'd put them in a bank



account for the kids because I didn't want them to be spoiled that way. But he and Cliff Roberts and the group would fly over to Scotland, for instance, if Dad was going to be there and they'd have their bridge games and try to think of things that would relax and amuse him and Pete would go down to the airport and buy twenty cashmere sweaters, come back and give them to all the secretaries and everybody. He was just a big spender in a very sweet way, so he always carried a lot of cash with him.

WICKMAN: I don't think anybody's ever really said that much about him to know that.

EISENHOWER: No, a very, very nice man and this was a very innocent thing. He just always had that much cash with him; but there was a lot of speculation in the newspapers as to why he was carrying all this cash and I'm sure it was way in excess of \$10,000. But he could literally have had \$50,000 or \$100,000 on his person. Why he wasn't mugged I don't know.

WICKMAN: Yes, that's what I was going to say, you would think that he wouldn't want to carry that much money around.

EISENHOWER: Well, he did and he didn't carry a gun to protect himself-he just carried that much money around.

WICKMAN: Cliff Roberts comes into General Eisenhower's life in the campaign, I guess.



EISENHOWER: I'm not sure when he comes in, just seemed like he was there forever. And he was a very good friend. He was very helpful to Dad when he, you know, Dad made a lot of money on his book Crusade in Europe, and Cliff was a financier and he helped him set up trusts and manage this unexpected windfall. It was pretty easy to manage a Colonel's pay, but [Laugh] he needed a little extra help. So Cliff was involved in that. I think, was he with Price Water House?

WICKMAN: Yes, I think so.



EISENHOWER: So Price Waterhouse became Dad's accountants. Cliff also ran Augusta and he was always trying to think of things that dad would enjoy and would be relaxing for him.

WICKMAN: It was interesting that there were a large number of friends the General had who did do that. Aksel Nielson used to try to do that in Colorado when they would go out there too. Give them a place to go. Did you get to know Aksel Nielson?

EISENHOWER: Yes, I knew him pretty well. We went to Denver until Dad had his heart attack, we'd go in the summer. And then we didn't go after that. Aksel was often at the White House when we would be there. I haven't seen him terribly much in recent years. But he was a really old, old friend of the family.

WICKMAN: Yes, he was Mamie's father's financial, whatever, coordinator, whatever he was - that was how they met.

EISENHOWER: He was evidently a mortgage salesman.

WICKMAN: He was into mortgages and bonds...



EISENHOWER: And he structured her father's finances that way and was very good at it. During the depression Mr. Doud didn't lose any money.

WICKMAN: He goes back, I think Aksel told me that he first met General Eisenhower at the end of the twenties sometime, at Mamie's parent's home. What about Ellis Slater?

EISENHOWER: Oh yes, well, he was one of the boys from Augusta. They were a very pleasant group and you know, Dad was criticized often in the press for his business cronies. The implication was that these were cheap businessmen of some kind. But that wasn't the way they were. They were very sophisticated, interesting, well-informed people. He enjoyed their company and they were very good friends.

WICKMAN: I ran across a project that Slater was involved with. I don't know if you got involved in this or not, or if you can remember, but in 1961 he wanted to set up a memorial at Gettysburg, on the farm? Remember that?

EISENHOWER: No.

WICKMAN: Well, Slater's published privately published diaries that he kept.

EISENHOWER: Yes, I have it.

WICKMAN: And he mentions this in there and how he brought the idea up with the General and with Mamie and he kept pushing it. But eventually I don't remember who he attributes saying 'no' to the idea, but they finally said 'no' they didn't want to do that.

EISENHOWER: What kind of memorial was it going to be?



WICKMAN: Well, it was sort of a museum, from what I can get out of the diaries. We have no reference to it.

EISENHOWER: The only thing that it might be, and I'm not sure whether it was or not, but, you know, Dad wanted Johnny to inherit the house and they wanted to be buried there. And it may have had some connection with that.

WICKMAN: I think it did.

EISENHOWER: Johnny did not want to inherit the house and so it was given to the government.

WICKMAN: Why didn't he want to inherit the house?

EISENHOWER: I think he just didn't want to live there, and he and I thought it would be too big, which, as you know, as you get older your perspective changes-it's not that big a house. So he just said "No, do what you want with it." So dad gave it to the Park Service.

WICKMAN: I see, well I think that's probably all tied up in there. Slater explains it one way in the diaries.

EISENHOWER: Yes, that's the only thing I can think that it was.

WICKMAN: That's probably what it was. Earlier we were talking about Freeman Gosden. What kind of memories do you have of Freeman?



EISENHOWER: He was sort of like George Allen. He was just a lot of fun to be around and Dad got a tremendous kick out of him and he was very relaxing. Of course, he was a comedian by profession.

WICKMAN: Yes, a very good one.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: Where did the General meet Freeman, do you know?

EISENHOWER: You know, I really don't know.

WICKMAN: Well, I don't know either, except I was thinking possibly out at the El Dorado, but that was how he met Freeman and some of the other people.

EISENHOWER: I wonder how he happened to go to El Dorado in the first place? Just sort of happened.

WICKMAN: He was invited out there. Yes, we can track that pretty well in the Library. He was invited to come out and vacation out there. He went and then they got into the business of talking of having a house out there.

EISENHOWER: Well, Freeman used to arrange all of his golf games, and [laugh] they just became good friends. Remember, they took the children; the Gosden children - one at least, Craig - and the folks took David and Anne and they all went to Europe one summer. Went on the Queen Elizabeth, I think, or maybe it was the Queen Mary.

WICKMAN: They went to Culzean too.

EISENHOWER: They were very close friends.



WICKMAN: Oh, let's see.

EISENHOWER: Did we talk about any of the world leaders?

WICKMAN: The only one we talked about last time was Khrushchev.

EISENHOWER: One time he brought DeGaulle up to the farm too.

Did I tell you about that?

WICKMAN: Yes, we covered that too. Do you remember Montgomery's trip?

EISENHOWER: Yes. You know, he was a strange one. He used to come to the United States and he'd stay at the White House. Then he'd come up to the farm and stay at the farm. He was a house guest often. Then Johnny and I went over to England, Johnny wanted to interview him for his book, The Bitter Woods. John had an appointment with him for an hour and we went down to his home. The first thing he said was, "You know, I'm having people in at 5:00." We assured him we were not going to stay. In fact, I went off to the Village to see what the village looked like. He was so worried that we were going to stay for more than an hour that it was just funny. And then when he realized that we weren't, he got rather nice. But he was a strange man. He lived in a beautiful house. He was quite upset, well not upset, struck, when he asked us what our plans for that evening, now that he knew we had some. We said we were going to dinner with his son, and we actually were. He and his son evidently were on the outs a bit at the time so he didn't like that very much.

WICKMAN: Another interesting relationship of Generals and sons...

[muffled]

EISENHOWER: Did you know his son?

WICKMAN: I didn't know him, but I know about him. I know a lot of people who do.

EISENHOWER: Evidently he divorced his wife and...



WICKMAN: Made Montgomery very angry.

EISENHOWER: Yes, Montgomery really loved his daughter-in-law. He didn't like the idea we were going to dinner with him. [Laugh]

WICKMAN: It's interesting that you're recalling that he did come frequently...

EISENHOWER: I don't know how often it was, but it was several times.

WICKMAN: Several times. And that's interesting because of course the, a lot of military historians have made out a kind of disagreement between Eisenhower and Montgomery during the war at various points. But they seemed in later years, they certainly seemed very friendly.

EISENHOWER: Yes.



WICKMAN: What other world leaders, do you remember any in particular? I know Nehru came to the farm.

EISENHOWER: I didn't realize that. I guess I wasn't around at that point.

WICKMAN: I think he did. I think we have a picture of him at Gettysburg. Well, let's see.

EISENHOWER: I wonder what he thought of it. It certainly is different from India. Maybe it's sort of English in a way.

WICKMAN: What about Churchill?

EISENHOWER: Well, I remember when he came to the - no the first time I met him was in '51 and we were visiting the folks in Paris. We went over to the dedication of St. Paul's cathedral - the dedication of the American chapel. We also went to the English Speaking Union dinner. I met him for the first time. Then the second time he came to the White House, but by then he was very old and he couldn't hear at all. In fact, Dad stood up in front of him in that west hall and said to me, "Barbara, I wish you could have met him in his prime." Said that right in front of him. He didn't hear it. He had an aide, Montague Browne that traveled with him. You had to admire him for trying to sort of keep in the fight even though he was a little beyond. I don't think he was in the least bit senile, he was just as deaf as could be and he had a lot of physical problems.

WICKMAN: Well, lets see. We'll try a little different tack on this. If we take out world leaders; of all the people you met while you were in and out of the White House, who were the ones that really stick out the most? Is there anybody?

EISENHOWER: Well, one that comes right to mind is Bill Robinson. Remember him?

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: He was so nice. To him we weren't just the kids. He became a friend of ours too. He took us out in New York a lot. He was one of that group that always played bridge with Dad.



WICKMAN: Bridge, golf, all the rest...

EISENHOWER: Yes. I should have read that transcript...

WICKMAN: That's alright.

EISENHOWER: I skipped, I'm having trouble.

WICKMAN: We'll just go along and you can read it.

EISENHOWER: Well, I mean I'm having trouble remembering, well not remembering, just getting really specific...

WICKMAN: Getting with it. We probably shouldn't have talked for as long as we did before all this [laughter]. Did you have, I know in the earlier transcript, we talked about the publicity, we talked about trying to keep the children from being completely undone by all the publicity. Was that one of your major dislikes or did you, could you ride with the publicity?

EISENHOWER: Well, that didn't bother me particularly. I just felt it was very bad for them. And it probably was.

WICKMAN: Were you aware of any kind of management of the kind of publicity that came out of the White House?

EISENHOWER: How do you mean?



WICKMAN: Well, now later administration's, the press secretary stays on top of practically every interview that's done with any members of the family.

EISENHOWER: No, it was much looser then. And there was no advice given or image making kind of things. We were much freer just to do what we wanted to do. It was up to us to use our own judgement and taste on how we handled it all.

WICKMAN: See, things like that are what are interesting because people forget just exactly how - as time has gone on - how various administrations have handled things like that. In the Carter administration, they practically orchestrated every time Amy went to school.

EISENHOWER: I know. There wasn't as much interest in families. Interest was in the man more. I think that all that super publicity really kind of started with Dad's administration in some ways, but the Kennedys were the ones that really got family things going. All the family was campaigning for Jack. I can remember being invited on one campaign trip with Ike, it was a whistle stop. I wasn't along to be shown as part of the family, I was just along to see a whistle stop campaign. It was an interesting thing to observe. It never occurred to anybody that I had anything to do with it, or the children. We didn't suffer from overexposure. But it got a little worse as time went on. There was more of an interest in us.



WICKMAN: You met President Kennedy?

EISENHOWER: Yes. Did I tell you about that coffee party?

WICKMAN: No, you didn't.

EISENHOWER: Well, on the day of his inauguration, my father-in-law suddenly got this idea to have the Kennedys, the Johnsons, and the Nixons for coffee before the Inaugural ceremony. Assembled in the red room was Eisenhower, Nixon, Johnson and Kennedy and their wives. Four presidents, it was rather historic in a way. They've done that once since, you know recently when Nixon...

WICKMAN: Yes, Sadat's funeral.



EISENHOWER: Yes. This previous coffee party received no publicity whatsoever, it was just something Dad decided to do. From there they all went to the Capitol.

WICKMAN: Did you ever see Kennedy when he was President?

EISENHOWER: Never. They never invited us to the White House. The Johnsons did. In fact, President Johnson, President and Mrs. Johnson invited us to dinner for Princess Margaret. David was in Exeter at the time and if you recall there was some Exeter incident. It was all part of demonstrating about Vietnam. The student body of Exeter, now why anybody was listening to the student body of Exeter is anybody's guess. I mean, this is a

high school [laughter] but they were listening. Oh, it was said in the paper that everybody in the school was against Johnson's policies in Vietnam. So David wrote him a letter and said the incident was highly exaggerated, that he and his group really stood behind the President. This was a nice thing for David to do. President Johnson had that letter in his pocket at that dinner and he pulled it out and showed it to us and I thought "Well, there's a real politician." But that really warmed my heart toward President Johnson.

WICKMAN: Did just you and John go to the dinner, the General didn't go? When was this at...I'm trying to get the time frame, early in Johnson...

EISENHOWER: It must have been after Dad's death.

WICKMAN: Well, no, because Nixon was President then.

EISENHOWER: That's right. No, just Johnny and I went.

WICKMAN: O.K. It would have to be between roughly '64 and '68.

EISENHOWER: Yes, it was about '65. David graduated from Exeter in '66, so probably '65. It was a lovely party. It was fun to be invited. They had us there several times.

WICKMAN: Of course, when the Nixons were in the White House...



EISENHOWER: Then we went down quite a bit.

WICKMAN: Part of that time you were overseas, but then when you came back...

EISENHOWER: We spent the first Christmas there when we returned permanently from Belgium. They invited the whole family and everybody went. Mamie and all of the children and John and me and the Coxs, and all their children. It was really fun. You know, the strangest thing happened. I took pictures with my instamatic camera all during the holidays. Then I took them to a drug store in Phoenixville to be developed and three weeks later they all appeared in the Washington Post. They said that in the article in the Washington Post, that the pictures had been found in a chair in a living room in Georgetown. Now I ask you, where did these prints come from? I had three copies made. I gave one to the Nixons, one to the Eisenhowers, and kept one copy for myself.



WICKMAN: They may have come from the lab that processed the film.

EISENHOWER: It had to have come from the lab. But I certainly felt like a terrible house guest. I've never taken...

WICKMAN: Did they attribute you as the photographer?

EISENHOWER: No, I don't think they did, but everybody knew they were my pictures, and I was embarrassed.

WICKMAN: That might be another subject we could take up, of incidents that stick out in your mind...

end of side 1



EISENHOWER: I never felt like I ever had to be anything but myself around the press. As I say, there wasn't any image making. They were always friendly and they always seemed to try to produce. One incident that always endeared the press to me was when Johnny went to Korea. He left from Chicago and I was with my parents and I was going to spend a couple of months with them before I went back to Highland Falls, New York. I went with him to the airport, O'Hare. All the press was there which really threw me - I didn't expect it and I was going to be very brave, you know. But somehow just their presence taking pictures as he was about to get on the airplane made me dissolve into tears and then I was horrified that these pictures would be in the paper. So I went up and asked them if they would please not print them and they didn't. And later some reporter sent me the whole batch from his "morgue" and they were really very sad pictures. I was very grateful to them that they didn't publish them. That's the way they operated. They were very kind to us. We'd say 'don't mention that' or 'this is off the record' - it was off the record. I don't know, I think times have changed a bit.

WICKMAN: Now they seem to be looking for more things.

EISENHOWER: These are the kind of things that are going to make good play in People or some other publication.

WICKMAN: Yeah, or the Enquirer [laughter].

EISENHOWER: Yes, except there's no scandal attached. They were always very kind to me.

WICKMAN: Yes, the scandal always comes out of the caption more than anything else.

EISENHOWER: The only time the press did anything that really irritated me was - remember Dorothy Kilgallen? Well, when we were in Paris in 1951 my mother-in-law decided I should have a Paris gown. We went to all the courturier places and a beautiful gown was made for me by Jacque Griffe. A year later I wore it to the inaugural ball and Dorothy Kilgallen described my dress as an "orange dress." You know, no name, no beautiful description. It was really melon colored and it was just a georgous ball-gown. After that, everytime I'd go to a party in Washington the reporters would say "What is your gown?" Who made it? And it was always "off the rack". But at the inauguration when the dress was a haute coutour, she described it as an orange dress [laughter]. So I was always sort of irritated with her. She made it sound pretty ticky-tacky and it was beautiful.

WICKMAN: Yes, well, that's a very interesting sidelight too.

EISENHOWER: She wasn't a very friendly reporter.

WICKMAN: She was a columnist really.



EISENHOWER: A columnist, yes.

WICKMAN: That's the way they view their job I guess. Let's see. I was trying to think of some other, of the White House staff of, or people who were really closely associated with General Eisenhower.

EISENHOWER: Wasn't there a Secretary Gray?

WICKMAN: Yes, Robert Keith Gray.

EISENHOWER: I didn't, no not Gray, Anderson...

WICKMAN: Gordon Gray? Robert Anderson?

EISENHOWER: Robert Anderson. Wasn't he from the Carolina's, he was southern?

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: I remember meeting him and I didn't know him, but I remember John was so impressed with him. He said he was a real, true gentleman, a very honest, wonderful statesman. Thought a great deal of him. But I remember my father-in-law saying one time he wished that someone like Anderson could run for President and get elected because he would make a wonderful president. But nobody knew him - he wasn't a politician.

WICKMAN: Right, that's the problem. You have to be more public, a more public person. That seems to be the case with a lot of the



General's advisors. They were not really public people, they were very intelligent and very, in many cases, very influential in business. But...

EISENHOWER: I always thought of them as statesmen, they were an impressive bunch, and they, very patriotic. They had already made their money and so they had no interest in making money, you know, feathering their own nest. They just administered their departments the best they could and they did very well. Made for a very stable government. That was my view of it.

WICKMAN: One of the people I have in here; you can answer this or not as the case may be; but one of the things that I have noticed, when I reviewed General Eisenhower's life, especially after he got out of the Philippines. He always had somebody working for him who was very good at management. These were various...

EISENHOWER: Like Pete Carroll and Andy Goodpaster...



WICKMAN: Yes, but I was thinking of even more closer than that. I was thinking of people like Schulz, people who took a lot of the burdens of just managing everyday things off of him. I was just wondering what your impression was of that.

EISENHOWER: Well, this is the army way. I think when a man becomes a General in the army, at least in the olden days, he had aides and he had strikers and all of the periphery of life was taken care of for him. All the little things like taking clothes to the cleaners, balancing bank statements, were lifted off the man's

shoulders so he could concentrate on more important things. He always had people around to manage those things.

WICKMAN: No, I guess that's true, you know, when he became president I guess none of us really thought that he would continue that, but he did. In other words, he had Schulz around when he was out of the army. Even before the Presidency. Schulz was around at Columbia and had been reassigned up to New York. He was just there all the time.

EISENHOWER: He arranged all the trips and he managed a lot of the financial things. He was not an accountant or anything like that, but he handled it for Dad and was good at it. In fact I think Dad couldn't get along without him.

WICKMAN: I think that's probably true.

EISENHOWER: And he was very loyal.

WICKMAN: And before Bob, there was, I can't think...



EISENHOWER: Craig Cannon?

WICKMAN: Before Craig, that's how I got onto this. We did an interview of this man, oh, he lived out in Tacoma, Washington.

EISENHOWER: Oh wait - Stack.

WICKMAN: Yes, Jim Stack, and Jim Stack, that's literally what he did. He signed on with the General. When the General was up in Ft. Lewis. And he did almost the same thing, he did everything that you could possible do for...

EISENHOWER: In the army, they used to talk about house aides, too, and the house aide helped the woman of the house to run the parties and things like that. That's been done away with pretty much.

WICKMAN: Yes, Stack was a facinating person actually. I wish we had more information on everything he did during the war, but we don't, we just have some things and we have the oral history interview we did with him, which we never got to complete before he died. But he was for...

EISENHOWER: I never knew him at all.



WICKMAN: Well, no, you wouldn't. That was before you were married. You wouldn't have had an occasion to meet him except probably socially after you were. But he was one of the closest...

EISENHOWER: He was always out on the West Coast.

WICKMAN: Yes. He was one of the closest aides General Eisenhower had before he got Bob Schulz at Columbia and the White House. Stack had an enormous ability. In fact, during the second World War, we pieced together just this one fact that I thought you might be

interested in. Stack was actually sent as a messenger between General Marshall and General Eisenhower. And he made seventeen trips across the Atlantic and nobody ever knew it.

EISENHOWER: Isn't that something?



WICKMAN: That was for the sake of secrecy, Marshall did not want to transmit certain things, so he sent Stack. And he knew Stack because he had been with Marshall out at Tacoma and Fort Lewis also.

EISENHOWER: Are you aware of that letter that General Eisenhower wrote to Marshall? Remember there was a letter that Truman said Ike wrote saying that he was going to divorce Mamie which Truman said he burned up and there's no evidence of it anywhere. There's another letter written in the same time frame to General Marshall from Ike, which we have a copy of. Dad asked General Marshall if he could bring Mamie to Europe in advance of the other wives because he needed her at his side which really belies the whole Truman letter.

WICKMAN: Yes, I know. [Laughter]

EISENHOWER: Isn't that amazing? Why didn't our letter get more publicity?

WICKMAN: I don't know. It's just that way, let me try this one out on you too. It's another one of those questions that you can answer or not answer-it doesn't make any difference. But why does, why did that rumor persist, you know, about the General and Kay Summersby? I mean, everything points in the opposite direction and yet it keeps persisting...

EISENHOWER: I think the reason it persists is because that is what our country is oriented towards at the moment. Look at these magazines, the Enquirer, People; they want to find something about every person in public life, they want to find an Achilles heel or a little scandal or something to make them seem more what they call human, I guess.

WICKMAN: It started years ago. It started when the second World War was even on and I was, I wrestled with this thing quite a lot trying to figure out if it was just the fact that Eisenhower was promoted over so many other General Officers when he was sent to Europe. That could be one reason - that there was a lot of jealousy, a lot of unhappiness about that and people were just looking for anything to, they could construct out of that.

EISENHOWER: Yes, you know that rumor about Mamie being a drinker, which was absolutely untrue. I knew that woman for 35 years, or 33 years, and I never saw her drink too much in that entire time. I never saw her take more than 2 drinks at a sitting. She just didn't drink that much. Someone told me that was started in a political campaign.

WICKMAN: I see, well it's possible, very possible.

EISENHOWER: I never saw any evidence of people being jealous, but then of course, everybody that's around is trying to be nice, but I think there was jealousy.



WICKMAN: That's the only thing that I can attribute it to because we've gone back and we've found that, in, oh as early as 1944-45, just the little innuendo's in various published stories, because General Eisenhower had a woman driver. That was played up. It keeps, but it kept going on, there's no way. And yet, there isn't any evidence of it as fact.

EISENHOWER: No, Johnny went over there and lived with him for a couple of months and he said she was like "Mary Tyler Moore" of the office. And that's about where she stood.

WICKMAN: Well, that was the, Jimmy Gault. Jimmy Gault became so angry with all of that more recent business that a couple of years before he died, he wrote a very long letter to the London Times. And it said, you know, that he was so tired of seeing this in print. He, too, had lived with General Eisenhower in England and saw him everyday and said, you know, if anything like this was true, then he certainly would have seen it. But he didn't see it.

EISENHOWER: I know. It's just...



WICKMAN: Well, there's no way to unravel it, it's just one of those recurring themes, though. Did you, you met Jimmy Gault.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: What impressions did you have of him?

EISENHOWER: I didn't know him well. I thought he was very nice. I always liked British accents [laughter]. I liked his wife, but they got divorced.

WICKMAN: He really was very, very close to the General and felt very deeply about what an important person he was. There again, I wish we would have had more time with him. Would have had more occasion to do long interviews with him.

EISENHOWER: You know, another thing they used to say about my father-in-law, they still say it, they talk about his syntax and press conferences and everything. I've heard him get up and talk many, many times without notes, without anything, or give a toast and he was masterful. He spoke beautifully, so articulate. And I don't know what they're talking about except, you know, I guess he was that way somewhat in a press conference. But he said one time he had so many "top secrets" in his head that [laughter] he was afraid to even talk. He wanted to have the press conferences, because the reporters wanted to have them, but he had to be very, very careful. So he just wasn't going to make a mistake in a hurry and say the wrong thing.

WICKMAN: I think Fred Greenstein's new book is, might be...

EISENHOWER: Yes, I have that.



WICKMAN: ...a good one for you to look at and see how you feel about it. He pretty well has proven that this was simply not true. The General wrote and spoke very well. But in the press conferences he didn't want to tell everything and he would frequently revise as he went. And when you do that, of course, you then run the risk of sounding as though, the thing is pretty...

EISENHOWER: Sounding a little on the...

WICKMAN: You're jumping around a lot and its not quite hanging together and people are saying "what is this?"

EISENHOWER: Well, not only that, but he wasn't giving them all the answers they wanted too so they were making nasty remarks [laugh].



WICKMAN: Right. That's the other side of it. One of the things I was always struck with, and you were closer to this than I was. In the post-presidency, post-presidential period, General Eisenhower was, he seemed to be almost as busy as when he was president.

EISENHOWER: Yes.

WICKMAN: And that seemed like a very unusual thing to be that involved.

EISENHOWER: I know, it was. One thing that struck me was they never seemed to have had a comedown feeling because life just went on pretty much the way it had been going and Ike stayed very involved writing books, giving speeches and really advising the then presidents, including Kennedy. His life didn't really change that much.

WICKMAN: What, from your association with the president, what do you think his greatest disappointment was when he was in the White House? Were you aware of anything that really deeply affected him?

EISENHOWER: I think that the U-2 Incident was a disappointment.

WICKMAN: Why?



EISENHOWER: Well, because we weren't going to be able to go to Russia and I think he felt like he was developing a really good relationship with Khrushchev that something constructive could have come out of the whole thing. It would be a help and insure peace and then it just all went "poof", and it seems to me, I can't remember exactly when it struck me how well he handled disappointment. That was when it was. I was so taken. I mean he just said, "Well, that's the way it is." Adjusted to it.

I must have dreamed this because I can't seem to pin down when it happened, but I remember when Dulles was telling him about the U-2 surveillance. Ike thought the overflight should be stopped until after the trip to Russia.

WICKMAN: The President did or Dulles did? Which?

EISENHOWER: The President. Long enough for this conference in Russia to happen, so that nothing would go wrong and Dulles assured him that no way could that plane be brought down and if it was the pilot would - the pilot was paid to commit suicide.

WICKMAN: I know.

EISENHOWER: Well, you and I both know that he was probably not going to do it. [Laughter] We don't raise kamakazies in the United States.

WICKMAN: Part of the contract...[laughter].



EISENHOWER: But he was paid something like \$60,000 a year because of the danger and we thought, that was a tremendous salary. You know, this is back in the 50s. The idea was he was never going to be taken alive. Dulles assured Ike that nothing could happen. I'm sure I heard him say that. Except that I can't imagine myself being around in a situation near Top-Secret - those were Top Secrets. So I don't know where I, but I remember thinking later "Dulles should have lost his job after the Bay of Pigs." I mean that was twice he goofed! [laugh] Really goofed.

WICKMAN: Were you around Secretary Dulles socially much?

EISENHOWER: You mean - I'm not, I'm talking about the one that's the head of the CIA.

WICKMAN: Oh, Allen Dulles, Allen Dulles.

EISENHOWER: Yes. I was around Foster Dulles from time to time.

WICKMAN: How did he strike you?

EISENHOWER: Well, he was a very studious sort of type, you know, he wasn't, I mean I can see how Dad liked his bridge playing but this man was a very...noncommunicative. I'm sure he communicated with Dad. But you know all that business about how he was running the foreign policy was not true. I mean, he was in conference with Dad all the time.

WICKMAN: Yes, well a lot of people forget that the president is responsible, is truly under the constitution responsible for foreign policy, the Secretary of State does not make foreign policy.

EISENHOWER: No, he doesn't.

WICKMAN: He's there to run the State Department.



EISENHOWER: Well, you got the impression from the papers that Dad would just barely check on him and that he was really setting it all up himself. I could never understand why they thought that.

WICKMAN: You've seen the diplomatic thing from a couple of sides since you were over at Brussels as the wife of the Ambassador. Do you have any comment on how we do this? Do you think we need to do something different with our Ambassadors?

EISENHOWER: Well Johnny used to say he thought that eventually they'd all live in hotels or in apartments [laughter].

WICKMAN: Well, they wouldn't stay in the residence.

EISENHOWER: He thought the residence was a great extravagance. Now that there are such good communication, ambassadors aren't needed like they were. When something comes up, the President flies over. Now the ambassador only represents the president in a foreign country he doesn't act for him. John didn't have that much respect for the job. I guess I shouldn't quote him. He just felt like it was almost all social. In Ben Franklin's day, I think Franklin negotiated treaties. That's where plenipotentiary comes in. It's quite a title you know. Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary. Johnny said it always sounded like, what was that play in New York? "Emperor Jones" [laugh]. He used to say, "I is extraordinary and plenty potential." [Laughter] But that's what that meant, that an Ambassador could sign for the president, and he was almost more than representative in that country. They aren't used that way now. But it certainly is extra hazardous duty.



WICKMAN: Well, some people suggested...

EISENHOWER: John may have diminished the importance of Ambassador nowadays. I think he felt the job was not substantive. But I think it is a little more than he thought.

WICKMAN: It's been suggested that all of our Ambassadors should be career-foreign service officers as opposed to people who are appointed from outside and I don't know, do you have any thought on that? Think that's a good idea or not?

EISENHOWER: I think that when they are appointed from outside, which I think is perfectly all right, in fact, it's probably good - breaks up the bureaucracy a bit. But, I think sometimes they might make better selections. I mean, just to pay off a campaign debt is not a particularly good reason and the person might really have no understanding...

WICKMAN: ...or skills in that area.

EISENHOWER: Right. The State Department is set up pretty well. The DCM, the Deputy Chief of Missions, it always old line state department. And they would love to be promoted to be Ambassador, and these political appointees come in and take their jobs, it limits how many DCM can be made Ambassador. The DCM keep a non-career Ambassador from making mistakes and they really know the lay of the land. They're sort of a back-up.



WICKMAN: When John was appointed Ambassador, did you have briefings in the State Department? Did you get into all of this?

EISENHOWER: Yes, that's the only time I was briefed on anything.

[2nd cassette - 1st side]

WICKMAN: ...the State Department does for the Ambassador's wife. You said it was protocol...

EISENHOWER: Well, at the briefings you were given some idea of what was going on in the country, topics to avoid and roughly what your job was going to consist of. It was a big social job, you know as I told you on the other tape, running the embassy residence and...

WICKMAN: Is there anything...practical...do they try to give you anything practical at that standpoint? ...on running the residence?

EISENHOWER: No, they just assumed that you would know how to do that and they also sort of assume that you already know the language and that can be a little tough. Fortunately, in Brussels, most of the people we dealt with spoke good English. But I think it is essential. I wish I could do it over and have known the language better when I got there.

WICKMAN: If you could do it over, that's what you would do.

EISENHOWER: Yes. I would spend a year or two studying the language so that I really knew it when I went over.



WICKMAN: If I remember correctly, there was, in your particular case, there was a relatively short time from the time he was appointed to the time he went.

EISENHOWER: Very short time - about 4 months. I started taking Berlitz courses in French immediately, and I had studied it in school, many years ago.

WICKMAN: Of course, Belgium is also tough because you have two languages.

EISENHOWER: Yes, but you only speak one. You only speak French in Brussels. But to be able to speak the language, that's how you really get to be friends with people. Of course, as I say, most of them spoke English, but it would have just been better if I had known more French. I could communicate, but I couldn't really talk to people that intimately in French. The running of the house is sort of...it's presupposed the staff will be there when you get there and they already know how to do everything. We had a lot of upheaval in our staff because the Ambassador had been gone about three months so some of the key people had drifted off. We got new people and I had to train them. The way I did it is I had the Vogue book of etiquette How to Run A Big House. They still have a section in there in the enlarged edition and I just read it! [laughter]



WICKMAN: An interesting fact. "How to run a big house."

EISENHOWER: And I had also seen how the White House operated at close hand.

WICKMAN: Did you get any help from Mamie on that subject, did she...

EISENHOWER: She came over with Johnny for the first couple of months while I was packing up at home. Typical army fashion, I was left behind [laugh] to put it all together although Johnny came home in the end for a little while to help me get back over there. But yes, she had a lot of ideas. But there are lots of people to help. Really the biggest help of all to me in what I was supposed to do was the Deputy Chief of Mission's wife. She would say, "I'm the best in the business," and she considered it her career. The State Department got two for one. The wives were wonderful. Susan Manfull, the DCM's wife had been there two years before I got there, she knew everybody in town. She knew who the good people were and who were hangers-on. She just knew everything. I talked to her daily and when I apologized for bothering her and she said "No, this is my job," and then later after the women's liberation gained momentum there was a lot of complaint about the demands on the wife among the State Department wives and actually when...

WICKMAN: That they shouldn't be expected to do that?



EISENHOWER: Yes. When the inspectors would come over to inspect the post, they never inspect the Ambassador, but they did write efficiency reports on everybody else. Part of the inspection was to go to dinner at each officer's house to see how their wives entertain.

WICKMAN: I guess I didn't know that.

EISENHOWER: And their wives were rated too. It really was unfair in a way you would hear people say, "He'd make a good DCM but not a good Ambassador-his wife will never be a good Ambassador's wife... It's true. [Laughter]

WICKMAN: Isn't there kind of a counterpoint to that with General Officer's wives in the army?

EISENHOWER: But they were never rated.

WICKMAN: They weren't rated, no, that's true.

EISENHOWER: I mean State Department wives were actually rated.

WICKMAN: I see, but I was thinking informally they are rated actually.

EISENHOWER: It doesn't seem to affect things much, because I know a lot of General's wives that had a lot of problems. I mean there were a lot of Generals that got where they were without the help of a super wife.



WICKMAN: But you would think that an ambassador, especially a career ambassador, wasn't going to get somewhere without a wife that was well organized.

EISENHOWER: Well, I think maybe he could have, yes, I mean I hate to think a husband's whole career hangs on what kind of wife he has and I don't think it is necessarily true. I mean, I don't think you can keep a good man down. It might help a mediocre one. I never liked that idea, but I think an ambassador is much more dependent on his wife because there is so much socialness to the job and the wife is very much a hostess. But some Ambassador's wives aren't at the post half the time and the Ambassador gets along just fine. Some Ambassadors are even bachelors. But a good wife is a real asset.

WICKMAN: The staff, of course the staff is very important - the consistency of having a good staff is very important over time too, I would think. If you really got...

EISENHOWER: I really admire the whole State Department. Everybody that was in Belgium. I thought they did a super job. They were very much there to represent the government, they were very aware that they were representing the government, they made friends for the United States...they were wonderful people. I was very impressed with them.



WICKMAN: Well, let's - we can move off diplomacy. I'll have to think a minute. I'm not quite as...talk about Kevin McCann because Kevin comes in to this in many places really. He was in and out of the White House when the President was there and then he settled up in Gettysburg, so you knew him for quite a long time.

EISENHOWER: I did. I never - for some reason I wasn't that impressed with him and I never could figure out what he was doing around. I don't know what his job was, do you?

WICKMAN: Well, yes. What he was doing, he was a kind of editorial assistant and a very good one. He gathered information and he rough drafted a lot of things for the President, the General. He then would take over and rework it, and work it over again to get it into final form. He also...

EISENHOWER: I didn't realize he did all of that.

WICKMAN: He seemed to be somebody that the General liked to have around to bounce ideas off of. We've got a lot of evidence of that. We have the McCann Papers and a lot of this is now emerging in many ways, how important Kevin was. But there were...

EISENHOWER: He was at Columbia.

WICKMAN: Yes, and Kevin has his counterparts too. There are other people who the General did the same thing with that he, people that he particularly liked to work with and he would discuss ideas with



before they appeared as an article or a speech or whatever. Well, this man from Pennsylvania, Ben Hibb's and Ben would come in and out of the General's life, same thing. Part of it was his job because he was editor of the Saturday Evening Post, but part of it also was the fact that they did work well together. And then Kevin and Ruth eventually settled down in your house.

EISENHOWER: Yes, they did. They lived there for a long time and he was always urging me to write the book too, and he would say "Hurry up, hurry up, get something down. I'd like to look at it." I guess he felt he wasn't going to live forever and...

WICKMAN: Right.

EISENHOWER: But you know,...first of all, I didn't think I could write the book. I told you on the other tape that I went back to college and then I gained a certain confidence because of all the papers I had to write in school but then Johnny wasn't much help along that line - he kept telling me what a poor writer I was. [Laughter]...Kevin kept telling me he'd help me but then it just never did work out. He just wasn't close by enough.

WICKMAN: But you were pointing out that Kevin really felt that a book on Mamie was a valuable thing.



EISENHOWER: Oh yes, he thought she was very important to Ike. Just representing the softer side of life, you know. She was a wonderful hostess and people loved to come to their house. Actually, they were both very much superstars in a way. She had her friends and all the women liked her or appeared to.

WICKMAN: That's an interesting thing too. Why, and I've run into that talking to various people at various times, why do you think other women liked her?

EISENHOWER: She was a very forthright person. You know, she was fun to talk to. She wanted everybody to enjoy what she was enjoying. She was fun to confide in - she had very good sense. She'd get right to the heart of a problem. She was a very loyal person, she wasn't gossipy. Now when she got older she was cross, and she was kind of tough on some of her friends.

WICKMAN: Yes, but one of the things I do know for a fact, because it happened while I was at Gettsburg several times, but she did have women friends who would call her from clear across the country.

EISENHOWER: Every Sunday.

WICKMAN: Yes.

EISENHOWER: She'd hold court in bed on the telephone.



WICKMAN: That's the fascinating thing. They really thought that much about her consistently. They would call her and she would call them.

EISENHOWER: Yes, she had a whole group like that. And she was a very thoughtful sort of person to her friends. She remembered everybody's birthdays...

WICKMAN: And anniversaries.

EISENHOWER: And everybody's kid's birthdays and anniversaries. This was almost a business with her. I have inherited a bunch of wrapping paper and ribbons. It's really a lifetime supply (laughter) and boxes and boxes of cards on every subject, from a 25th wedding anniversary to congratulations on a new baby. And she just had stacks of all those things and she never forgot anybody. And this thoughtfulness went down to every secret serviceman's child and all the servants in the White House. This is why I could never understand Lillian's book. Lillian has sort of tempered her criticism of Mamie. I saw her interviewed the other day on the TV and they said "Which first lady did you like least? And she said, I don't know, it wasn't quite the way the question was put, anyway, her answer was, well she guessed Mamie. But then she said some nice things about her. But the reason she didn't like Mamie was that she was the pet of the Roosevelt Administration, and probably the Truman's too, being crippled. Then when the new President came in fresh, they were unaware of who the pets were. Lillian was up in the sewing



room all the time and Mamie didn't, just didn't have much contact with her and she gave her a lot of work to do and evidently resentment entered.

WICKMAN: Built up you mean.

EISENHOWER: Well, she was not a lady's maid to Mamie like she'd been to some first ladies. She was a seamstress, one of the 60 or so servants in the White House, who wrote a book and whose nose was out of joint a little bit.

WICKMAN: Well, that happens though, with any staff as large as the White House staff-it's bound to happen. Times change and people change.

EISENHOWER: Yes, and they pick up with other people. I mean, you know, somebody else suits their personality more. It's too bad. She got a lot of publicity and gave an off impression. J.B. West's book is the best.

WICKMAN: I think so too. That also leads to something else that we touched on in the last interview. I was interested in this because we were both up to West Point dedication of the statue up there. Throughout this whole period of, let's say, when the General became President and moving on to the Post-Presidency. Your friends were mostly, were they mostly army?

EISENHOWER: Yes, our army friends and civilian contemporaries in town and of course, Mimi and Dad's friends were our friends too.



WICKMAN: Sure, I understand.

EISENHOWER: Like Bill Robinson and Mildred Hilson, I consider Mildred a friend of mine as well as theirs.

WICKMAN: What about the Cannons, were they very close?

EISENHOWER: Well, they left very early on and they moved to Florida so I really literally haven't seen them in years. And I don't think he comes to any of these events. But they would have been our friends. But you know for the first couple of years, the 50s administration we were out in Kansas and Knox and places like that, and then we moved to Alexandria and Johnny was still in the army and we were very close to a group of army friends. In fact, one time Mamie said "Now before we leave, we want you to have a party in the White House. It will be a dinner dance and you can invite who you want." So we invited all our army friends and just one or two people in the government, some of the people that Johnny worked with in the White House and [laugh] we invited Wiley Buchanan, the Chief of Protocol, and his wife and then we invited Evelyn and George Horkan who were very much in the young set in Washington, which we were not. At the party Evelyn Horkan was overheard to say to Mrs. Buchanan in the ladies room "Who are all these people?" [laughter] They were all the people that we knew, not Washington celebrities. We just didn't run around with the Washington set.



WICKMAN: I think that was very nice of Mamie to suggest that, having that party.

EISENHOWER: Yes, it was a beautiful party. We had the Marine band and everything. It was just a lovely party. And we brought a lot of friends down from Gettysburg, where we were living at the time but they were not famous people around Washington or Senators or Congressmen or people like that. They were just friends of ours. And actually a lot of them became Generals later. They were all majors at the time [laugh].

WICKMAN: Is there anything that when the General was in the White House, is there anything that you wish you could have done that you could have done that you didn't do or didn't think of or...

EISENHOWER: No, I don't think so, I can't think of anything off hand.

WICKMAN: Just pretty well took it as it came...



EISENHOWER: Yes. I mean something exciting would come up and every now and then I remember when the King, the present King of Spain, came. He was, I guess he was being groomed by Franco to become King and he came to the United States and Johnny said, "Well, we haven't done anything exciting for a while. Let's accept all the invitations to the parties for him. That'd be fun." So we went to Marjorie Merriweather Post's big dinner, then we went to the one in the Spanish Embassy, then we went to - there were

lots of parties. We just went to everything. Afterward we retired again back to our other life. We really led a double life. In fact, I had evening gowns that I kept at the White House. I didn't keep them at home. I just kept them up there because everything we went to formally was there. I remember one time I came rushing in from shopping. Dad was there by himself and Mamie was away and I don't know where she was. And he said. "Go up and put on a dress and go with me to the Belgium Embassy. King Baudouin is here." And I had everything but shoes and I had to wear street shoes underneath my ball gown. And off we went. You know, I never dreamed that we'd someday be in Brussels.

WICKMAN: Well, it's really such a contrast though if you really start thinking about it, some of the recent presidential administration where the family of the President, not all of them, but some of them have just moved into the White House. I was thinking of the Carters.

EISENHOWER: You know, I met the Carter's daughter-in-law who was divorced later and she was expecting a baby at the inauguration of Carter. I sat right behind her and we got to chatting about the baby and I asked her if it were going to be born in the White House - Mamie had wanted Mary to be born in the White House for historic reasons. She just thought this would be great for the baby but my doctor and I didn't agree. The Carter girl told me she and her husband were going to move into the White House.



And I remember thinking, "That's not going to work." and it didn't. They were divorced within a year.

WICKMAN: What you should be doing - you should be writing a book of advice to relatives of the President you know, [laughter].

EISENHOWER: We were much better off the further we were away from it. You know, when we really got up close to it, we got really swept into it, and it was difficult, at the same time children of the presidents move into the White House, they are also getting a lot of support from the White House. We had no support. We received tons of mail, and I told you that we were expected to take care of it and it wasn't until I screamed like a banshee, "I can't do this" that a little help was forthcoming.

WICKMAN: Well, if I remember right the social office and the White House when the General was in the White House probably didn't amount to more than 4 or 5 people at the most.

EISENHOWER: That's right, they didn't have the help to help me.

WICKMAN: There was, Mary Jane was there, the...

EISENHOWER: Ann Parsons.



WICKMAN: Ann Parsons.

EISENHOWER: A couple of other people. Two or three others, very few.

WICKMAN: Now, it's almost a part - it's a part of the White House now, it's, I think I forget how many people are on Mrs. Reagan's staff. But it's substantial.

EISENHOWER: You know, I don't think, when dad was in the White House, there were ever even any White House Offices over in that building next door. The old State-War-Navy Building. That is the White House Adjunct. I don't think there was anybody over there. They were all in the White House. In that east wing or the west wing. I'm not sure which wing it was.

WICKMAN: West wing.

EISENHOWER: West wing. And well, look at the town. Shirley Highway has nine lanes. When we lived there it was two, no it was four you know, two each way. The whole government blossomed out into this enormous bureaucracy after dad left.

WICKMAN: Yes, but I think it's important for us to remember, you know, that, how it was because really now the family is almost an integral part of the presidency.

EISENHOWER: You know, that all started with the Kennedy's. Really started with the Kennedy's. The press was getting more interested in families. But before, you know, in the beginning, there wasn't as much interest. I think it's just terribly hard on everybody involved and I keep thinking of little Amy. I imagine she's had a tough time.



WICKMAN: I'm sure she's had a tough time adjusting too, getting out of the White House.

EISENHOWER: Yes. The people in the White House, the servants, and everyone treat the children so deferentially, that it's really very bad for their future. If we had a kingdom here and the children would remain princes and princess's it would be one thing, but they don't [laugh]. And they can be sort of marked forever by great expectations.

WICKMAN: Well, I have run out of questions.

