Giving up his store, and finally much of his veterinary activities, Dr. Abraham Eisenhower also left his comfortable home in Abilene in the 1890's, and with his wife took to the road in a Gospel wagon. The couple later settled near Thomas, Okla., where they made their home into an orphanage.

The Abraham Eisenhower home at Abilene, which was bought by David J. Eisenhower, became the boyhood home of young Dwight and his brothers.
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The Early Career of Abraham L. Eisenhower, Pioneer Preacher

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I. INTRODUCTION

It is well known that most of former Pres. Dwight Eisenhower’s adult years were spent outside organized religion. He was 63 before joining a church. His views on religion indicate, however, his preference for the informal church service. He likes vigorous singing and vigorous preaching. “I like to be enthusiastic in church,” he once said.¹ On another occasion he told a preacher, after a particularly forceful sermon, that he liked a man “who shoots from the hip.”²

Dwight D. Eisenhower’s paternal family had at least four clergymen—his great-grandfather, Frederick Eisenhower; his grandfather, Jacob F. Eisenhower; and two uncles, Abraham L. and Ira A. Eisenhower. The first two were prosperous Pennsylvania farmers who regarded the soil of men only a little less precious than the souls of men; Abraham was a veterinarian; Ira, a painter and paper hanger. River Brethren ministers were self-supporting; none received salaries. While the man of God preached the Word on Sunday, he plowed or plied a trade on Monday. The Eisenhower preachers represent a combined ministry of well over 100 years.

Jacob Eisenhower and his two sons, Abraham and Ira, were pioneer preachers in Kansas at a time when Texas cattle trails were still so hard-packed that wheat could not sprout in them, although

the turbulent days of gun-toting cowboys and marshals like "Wild Bill" Hickok were forever gone from Abilene.

Like the Jacob in Genesis, Jacob Eisenhower heard that the corn was good in another country and he led his household and some of his Pennsylvania-Dutch friends to prairie lands south of Abilene in the spring of 1878. Eisenhower’s vanguard constituted the first of several River Brethren contingents migrating to central Kansas, where their Dutch diligence was soon rewarded by bountiful harvests of the Mennonite wheat which was to make Kansas the breadbasket of the world.

The River Brethren were similar to the wheat-growing Mennonites in more ways than in their agrarian economy. Like the bonneted and bearded Mennonites, the Brethren were a “plain people.” Prayer veilings for their women and flowing beards for their men proved to the world that they were a separated people. They shunned “worldliness” like the plague, and their most worldly ambition was to make an honest living from the prairie soil. Only their great barns and well-filled corncribs and haymows hinted at prosperity, as their homes were virtually bare of the comforts of life. Even carpets were regarded as being “worldly.”

Jacob Eisenhower was the first River Brethren minister to reside in Kansas, and it appears that his home was the Brethren’s first regular meeting place in the state. Until their first church building was erected at Abilene in 1885, the Brethren worshipped every Lord’s day in the parlor of his farm home in the Belle Springs community. Here he preached God’s love to all mankind, the heinousness of war and of bearing arms and of taking oaths. He preached separation from the world—in spirit, in conduct, and in dress. He preached the ordinances of the church—baptism, the love feast, and feet washing.

In this parlor meetinghouse, Abraham Lincoln Eisenhower began his active religious life, which was to result in a ministerial career. Converted as a boy, Abe joined the church in his father’s house at the age of 14, after being baptized in the mode prescribed by the River Brethren. He was immersed three times forward by Bishop Jesse Engle, the first overseer of the Kansas colony, and later the first foreign missionary in the Brethren church. The shallowness of Kansas streams was no real deterrent to Brethren baptisms, since candidates knelt in the water to receive the ordinance.

II. DR. A. L. EISENHOWER

Except for occasional love feasts in neighboring barns\(^4\) and weekly marketing trips to the county seat, Abe's boyhood world was enclosed on all four sides by the endless hedge rows bounding the family's Belle Springs farm. The farm held a single attraction—animals, particularly horses. Five days between the plow handles could be endured if only on the sixth he could hitch his father's team of fast ponies to a light buggy and race over the unfenced prairie, to trade butter for a bushel of 50-cent potatoes and four-dollar flour.\(^5\)

It was the natural thing for Abe to gravitate from farm to animal doctoring, and soon after his marriage to Anna Long in 1885 he set up his veterinary office in a corner of his oldest brother Dave's general merchandise store at Hope, Kan. A photograph of the Eisenhower building of the period shows a small board sign on the store front reading, "A. L. Eisenhower, D. V. S."

Although Abe did not attend a veterinary school until he began his Abilene practice, he gained quite a reputation in Hope, as a horse doctor,\(^6\) where he became known as the "genial veterinarian."\(^7\) The Hope Herald which carried his ads contains many news items about the young veterinarian.

In the early days Abe may have learned his practice from a local veterinarian, possibly J. D. Fike, a veterinary surgeon, of Lost Springs, whose name appeared in the local news of the Hope Herald;\(^8\) or perhaps J. D. Stroup, of Hope, whose card appeared in the Herald during 1885.\(^9\) But whatever Abe lacked in formal training at this time, he made up in ingenuity, an inventive cleverness which served to squeeze him through many a knothole in the years to come. His nephew, Bishop Ray Witter of Navarre, Kan., tells how in those early days before his practice was established, Abe would trot up and down the dusty roads in his two-wheeled gig in a most urgent manner, causing farmers to marvel at the industrious young veterinarian. Since he was that busy, he must be good and

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4. These two-day religious gatherings were usually conducted in barns, as early day brethren did not believe in worshipping God in a specially built meeting house. The love feast consisted of psalm-singing, testimonials, and sermons, and, on the evening of the second day, a simple meal eaten by candlelight, after which the ordinance of feet washing was observed.
6. Hope Herald, September 1, 1887.
7. Ibid., March 7, 1889.
8. Ibid., May 26, 1887.
9. See, e.g., the issue of July 4, 1885.
they began to employ his services for their ailing stock.\textsuperscript{10} And he
proved to be a good vet, his nephews, two of them still living
at Hope, agree.\textsuperscript{11}

In addition to his veterinary practice, Abe undertook to carry
on the general store with his brother Dave, Dwight Eisenhower’s
father. This was after the co-partner, Milt Good, described by the
Hope \textit{Dispatch} as “one of the best merchants that ever measured
off a piece of bacon or weighed a yard of calico,”\textsuperscript{12} had left Dave
and Hope with a lot of unpaid bills.\textsuperscript{13} Thereafter, the store was
known as Eisenhower Brothers,\textsuperscript{14} with Dave continuing to act in
the capacity of buyer in Kansas City while Abe stayed in Hope to
clerk and drive the delivery wagon.\textsuperscript{15}

A survey of the Eisenhower ads in both Hope newspapers makes
an interesting study, for it can be seen that from the first Dave’s
store catered to the “worldly” trade, showing he had broken with
Brethren principles of conservatism. Although he endeavorred to
attract the German people (both he and Milt Good were fluent in
the German language, \textit{i.e.}, Pennsylvania-Dutch),\textsuperscript{16} his shelves were
lined with stocks “inconsistent” with Brethren beliefs—laces, silk,
and velvet trimmings, carpets, and cigars. He went so far as to
allow a milliner, Miss T. Caldwell, to set up her millinery display
in the window, a row of the latest styles of ladies’ hats complete
with flowers and ornaments.\textsuperscript{17} This, according to a plain people,
would be sinning in a high-handed manner.

Although the establishment carried “elegant stock” equal to any
found in any general mercantile house, and the prices so low as
to “make your pocket-book laugh,”\textsuperscript{18} and the Eisenhower brothers’
honesty so apparent that the editor of the Hope \textit{Dispatch} wrote
that they were known to “deal squarely with a child as well as a
grown person,”\textsuperscript{19} the store venture failed. Dave went to Texas in
the fall of 1888, where he found employment in the Missouri-Kan-
sas-Texas railroad shops,\textsuperscript{20} leaving Abe to handle the store alone
until it could be sold early the next year.\textsuperscript{21}

Abe then moved to Abilene, the county seat, and located on a

\begin{footnotes}
11. Interview with John and Harry Haldeman, Hope.
15. \textit{Ibid.}, December 2, 1886.
17. \textit{Ibid.}, April 8, 1886.
\end{footnotes}
three-acre tract south of the tracks. After graduating from the veterinary college in Chicago, which he attended the winter and spring of 1889 and 1890, he continued to practice as a veterinary surgeon. At the pinnacle of his barn roof, a good 30 feet from the ground, Abe hung his shingle, a large square sign which read, "Dr. A. L. Eisenhower, Veterinarian." That immense barn, one of the largest in the community, housed stalls for many horses, and the hayloft could hold seven or eight tons of prairie hay. His house was a two-story white frame structure, with an attic for overflow household goods. A large back yard contained a smokehouse and a place for Anna's chickens and a nice-sized plot for her vegetable garden.

Dr. Eisenhower did well in Abilene as a veterinarian. But in 1892 something happened to turn the horse doctor in a different direction. That spring, an itinerant evangelist came to Abilene, pitched a tent, and held a protracted meeting. It was at this time that Abe obtained what he termed "full salvation." Following this tent meeting, he felt the call to the ministry so strongly that he "left the oxen and ran after ...."

Before Abe could become detached from his practice, he had first to dispose of his Abilene property. This was not difficult to do, for his brother Dave's growing family was already bursting the seams of their little house on Second street and they needed more room. Dave had returned from Texas in 1891 (with Dwight, the baby), and had found employment as night watchman and mechanic in the Belle Springs Creamery. Abe rented the house to him with an option to buy which he did later.

Abe could not have known (he died in 1944) that the place he gave up in order to go into Gospel work would some day be a national shrine dedicated to the honor of his illustrious nephew. Beside the house stands the Eisenhower Museum, housing historical items valued at well over $2 million, including the famous Eisenhower family Bible in which Abe's own birth date is recorded.

And Abe's wife, Anna, perhaps could not have known altogether what it meant to "turn their backs upon the world." For in 1902 she could look back and write:

I never will forget what it meant to die out and say, "Yes," to all the will

22. Hope Dispatch, December 5, 1889.
24. Ibid., Abilene, April 1, 1892.
of God: to have husband give up his medical profession, which was so highly esteemed by the world, and go out and preach the Gospel without charge. I turned all we possessed over to the Lord. God asked me to give things away, to which my heart responded freely. He took us out of our home to a Gospel wagon. 27

III. The Highway and Hedge Call

The Gospel wagon was a covered wagon equipped for a small party of gospel workers to move rapidly about the country, preaching as they went. The call to this type of ministry was, as Anna Eisenhower aptly described it, a "highway and hedge call." That first season, 1896, Abe and Anna accompanied the Brethren preacher D. H. Brechbill, who had been on a previous Oklahoma mission. Only three years earlier, the Cherokee Outlet, Indian lands in present northwest Oklahoma, had been opened to white settlement and many a homesteader had rushed in to stake claim without capital, and with no religion other than a get-rich-quick philosophy.

The Eisenhower-Brechbill party left Abilene June 10, 1896. Crossing rivers torrential with flash floods and treacherous with quicksand, they arrived on the field of labor. A protracted meeting was started in a schoolhouse 13 miles northwest of Medford, Okla. House to house visitation—mostly dugouts—was carried on by day, while revival meetings were held by night. Oklahoma homesteaders were desperately poor, their poverty wringing the hearts of the workers, and desperately wicked as well. The Gospel team was in a much better position to help the homesteaders with their spiritual poverty than with their temporal impoverishment, so they preached, according to their own report, messages of "real death, resurrection and separation from the world." 28 Although the schoolhouse was packed nightly, the number of converts seems to have been surprisingly small.

Years later, Abe scored evangelists who expected "big collections" when the home minister suffered want. He reminded the Evangelical Visitor reading public that in the old days when he and Brother Brechbill labored in Oklahoma, they lived very economically, and upon returning to Kansas they turned over every penny of their small collections to Bishop Samuel Zook, keeping not one cent for themselves. 29

The next year, 1897, Abe, improving the weaknesses of the cumbersome covered wagon, designed his own Gospel wagon.

27. Sent of God, Tabor, Iowa, October 2, 1902.
29. Ibid., February 1, 1909.
The *Visitor* editor described it as a unique “house of pilgrimage.” Measuring 7 x 14 x 6½ feet and built at a cost of $50, the house, equipped for four workers, was furnished with chairs, tables, four cots, and a gasoline stove. Sliding curtains divided the wagon into two sleeping compartments, one for the men, the other for the women. On June 26, it was driven, sparkling new with glistening black paint, from Abilene the 13 miles to the Belle Springs church. The next day the wagon was properly dedicated, and the workers—Abe and Anna Eisenhower, J. H. Eshelman, and Barbara Hershey—shook hands all around in a gesture of farewell. Two of the first three Brethren preachers in Kansas—Jacob Eisenhower and Benjamin Gish—stood there in the church yard to give the young workers a hearty send off.

Friday, July 2, found the Gospel wagon tied to a hitching post in Herington. Here, the evangelists held a street meeting on a busy corner and had a good meeting “in spite of the opera only a stone’s cast away.”

It was at Herington, according to one account, that Abe broke up a Fourth of July parade. A man with a megaphone was shouting directions to a parade of marching celebrators. Seizing the opportunity to end the pompous show (parades were “worldly”), Abe fell in step with the megaphone man and shouted at the top of his lungs, “This way to heaven!” A part of the confused crowd followed the wiry little preacher to an outside stairway attached to a two-story building. Halfway up the steps, he turned around to face the congregation he had siphoned from the parade, and, like Paul on the castle stairway, he preached to them the gospel of Christ.

The next stop east was the historic town of Council Grove. It was Saturday, the farmers’ market day. A curious crowd turned out to see what new thing by way of religion the bonneted and bearded Brethren had to offer. “We here met with opposition by some Sons of Belial,” one of the workers reported. Denied the privilege of preaching on the streets, they thankfully entered a hall proffered to them by a good man, and in this building three meetings were held. “We found a few souls in this place who are willing to take the death-route to heaven,” they jubilantly informed the readers of the *Visitor*.

Upon leaving Council Grove, they headed the wagon southeast...
to Americus where for seven nights they preached on the streets, "holding forth the Word of Life with no uncertain sound." 35

On they traveled, west to Reading, northeast to Osage City, where eight days among the coal miners produced results—"real penitence and godly aspirations were some of the fruits of our labors at this place." 36—and on to Scranton where they preached to a crowd of 100 persons. Drunkenness, lodge-joining, women tending bars and employing their own children to help mix and sell whisky—all this was too much for the good Brethren, and they prepared a banner boldly emblazoned with "Prepare to meet thy God" and hung it on the wagon for all to see the solemn warning. 37

At one of these towns Abe Eisenhower had great difficulty in drawing a street crowd. Never lacking for ways and means, he flopped down on his stomach, and propping his heels on the side of a building, stretched across the sidewalk. Keeping one eye on the open Bible before him, and the other on the curious passersby who paused to watch him read in this strange manner, he waited until a sizeable crowd had gathered, then bounding to his feet, began to preach to his startled audience with all the torrential fervor of an Old Testament prophet. 38

At about this time, Abe and Anna left the party and went to Topeka to lay plans for a sidewalk battle there. Earlier, the Salvation Army had been to the state capital and had been forbidden to go on Kansas avenue with their drums and tambourines and psalmsinging. By the time the Gospel wagon pulled into the city, however, permission had been granted for street services, and the Brethren, rejoicing over their good fortune, held the enemy at bay until midnight. 39

September found the team at Silver Lake, west of Topeka, with plans to make stopovers at Rossville, Wamego, and Manhattan. The workers urged Visitor readers and the Brethren at home to pray regularly every night from eight to nine, the zero hour when they made nightly raids on the enemy's territory. Pacifists one and all, the Brethren ended their Visitor correspondence with the words, "Yours in the war for souls. . . ." 40

The following winter Eisenhower itinerated new Kansas areas, becoming known as "Holiness Evangelist A. L. Eisenhower." 41 On
January 31, 1898, he and Anna were at Sabetha. For the first three days, Abe’s preaching “wonderfully stirred up” the people as he directed almost every message to church members. “Our brother,” wrote Peter Keim of Sabetha, “taught the ‘new birth’ very plainly and the second work of grace was made so plain that it caused those of us who had gone through the experience on the same line that our brother had taught, to shout, Hallelujah!” 42 Not all Sabethites by any means belong to this pious ejaculatory group, however, for certain ones found fault with Abe’s emphasis on “entire cleansing of the spirit, soul and body.” The meeting closed on February 15, after a “grand victory” the ninth night.43

In July Abe and Anna attended a camp meeting at Forest City, Mo., a Missouri river town 27 miles northwest of St. Joseph. This incident seems to mark the beginning of their rather loose affiliation with the Hephzibah Faith Missionary Association of Tabor, Iowa. (HFMA permitted one to belong to his own church and to the HFMA at one and the same time.) Some time earlier, the Eisenhowers had gone to Iowa, where they met Mother Wheaton of Tabor, home from her prison tours. The widowed Mother Wheaton, primarily known as a prison evangelist but equally at home preaching in logging camps, Southern stockades and sugar camps, coal mine prison camps, and railroad coaches,44 traveled from coast to coast, through the courtesy of railway officials, on free train passes. She had, moreover, the privilege of taking, free of charge, two workers with her wherever she went. She asked the Eisenhowers to accompany her to the Forest City camp meeting, which they gladly did.45

Enroute to Tabor, Abe held meetings on the way. After leaving Tabor he went to Bellevue, Neb., where he was “deeply impressed” by a mourner’s bench, 30 feet in length.46 In the Brethren church, while it was considered consistent “for ministers to invite seekers to come forward,” a ruling was made in 1882 that “no special bench shall be set out for the seekers.” 47

IV. “MR. JABBOK”

The year 1899 ushered in a phase in Abe’s ministry. It soon found them in a Brethren settlement in Oklahoma territory, living

42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Good Tidings, Tabor, Iowa, August 16, 1923.
45. Evangelical Visitor, October 15, 1898.
46. Ibid.
47. General Conference Index, Article 5, 1882, p. 96.
in a dugout gouged from the side of a hill. Their objective was to prove that their homestead was something more than 160 acres of unimproved land, situated between the wide sandy bed of the South Canadian river and the new railroad 18 miles away. They had dedicated themselves to making it a home, with bed and board and love, for as many orphans as they could possibly accommodate, plus the one more they could never turn away. Thus, by a childless couple, the Jabbok orphanage, was begun. In the 10 years during which they operated the home, they took in 35 of these unwanted and homeless waifs. This is an area which was as tough and colorful as the blanket Indians that still roamed it. Among them were palefaces, poverty-stricken. And the Eisenhowers themselves, despite their Dutch labor and frugality, suffered many privations.

Some time in 1901, some Kansas friends of the Eisenhowers, the J. M. Zooks, came to Thomas, a tiny village near Abe’s farm. Seeing great possibilities in Jabbok, they, with the Eisenhowers, filed at Guthrie, the capital of Oklahoma territory, the following charter:

To All to Whom These Presents Shall Come, Greeting:

Whereas, A. L. Eisenhower, J. M. Zook, Anna B. Eisenhower and Mary E. Zook, all of Thomas, O. T., have filed in the office of the Secretary of the Territory of Oklahoma certain articles of organization with a view of forming a corporation to be known as Jabbok Faith Missionary Home and Orphanage, for the purposes as follows:—The preaching of the Gospel in every land and to maintain a Missionary Home for training and Bible School for the training of Missionary Workers, for Home and Foreign Mission Work.

Also to maintain an Orphans' Home; a Holiness school and also to maintain the publication of Christian Religious Literature. And those desiring to cooperate with the association can be received as Missionary Evangelists and other Gospel Workers, provided they are deemed worthy. All monies and property donated shall be used expressly for the purpose designated by the donor. With the principal place of business at Thomas, O. T. To exist perpetually.

And having complied with the provisions of the Statutes in such cases made and provided.

Therefore, the Territory of Oklahoma hereby grants unto the above named persons and their associates, successors and assigns, full authority by and under the said name of Jabbok FAith Training Home and Orphanage, to exercise the powers and privileges of a corporation, for the purposes stated and in accordance with their said articles of organization and the laws of this territory.

In Witness Whereof, These presents have been attested with the Great

48. Interview with Mrs. Frank Miller, Herington, an orphan raised by the Eisenhowers.
49. General Conference Index, Article 12, 1910, p. 77.
Seal, and signed by the Secretary of the Territory of Oklahoma, at Guthrie, the Twenty-sixth day of August in the year One Thousand Nine Hundred and One.

Signed: WILLIAM CRIMES
Secretary of Oklahoma Territory.51

From the beginning the work outgrew the limited physical plant. As many as five little girls were cared for at one time in the unfinished four-room cottage (two rooms were not yet plastered), and when two more applied for admission the children pleaded their cause. “Mamma,” they begged (the children at Jabbok called Abe and Anna Papa and Mamma), “take them, we will make room for them somehow.”62 Perhaps because of its smallness, the Zooks did not remain with Jabbok long. After traveling through the Territory in a Gospel wagon, evangelizing Negroes and Indians63 and pastoring in Beaver county, they returned to Tabor, Iowa, where for the next 30 years J. M. Zook ably served the educational and missionary interests of the HFMA.64

For the Eisenhowers, Jabbok was ever a “distributing” center, rather than a permanent home for orphans. They would have liked to fill their house several times a year if they could have found proper homes readily enough.65 “It is very hard these days to find homes fit for children,” Abe wrote, “so I make a plea to the church as we feel we would rather put children into homes among the Brethren than any other place.”66 In addition to being Christian and preferably Brethren, the family wishing to adopt a Jabbok child should be of “fair financial ability” and able to “conquer and train children.”67

The Eisenhowers believed that the private home was decidedly superior to the best orphanage and afforded advantages which the institution could not. Knowing that such institutions existed of necessity, however, they entertained decided opinions as to how the orphanage should best be operated. In the first place, the institution should be rural rather than urban to discourage the-world-owes-me-a-living attitude accruing from doled out charity. On a farm a child could share in producing his own food and clothing, thus showing his economic importance, and gain thereby that feeling which the moderns call “belongingness.” In the second place, the larger institution should consist of several small homes,

51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., March 15, 1905.
53. Sent of God, February 19, 1903.
54. Good Tidings . . . . June 1, 1944.
56. Ibid., September 10, 1906.
57. Ibid., December 15, 1906.
each housing about ten children, and manned by proper personnel, preferably a husband and wife team, with a superintendent in charge of the whole. Thirdly, orphans should be adopted as young as possible. Some of the applicants for admission to Jabbok were as young as three days old.\(^58\) Abe and Anna personally placed the children, bearing all the expenses of railway transportation to and from the place of their adoption.\(^59\)

In the course of time, so many little children came to the Eisenhower's cottage that Abe was soon convinced that there were more orphans in Oklahoma than in any other state, and so informed the *Evangelical Visitor*. In the article "Orphans in Oklahoma," he informs the subscribers why he believed this to be so:

Our state is a place of great immigration of poor and rich. . . . widows leave other places and come here with large families and sharpers rob them and they are left in destitute circumstances. . . . men who were addicted to drink come to this place and of course here it flows free and breaks up homes. Wife and sister were out visiting and they found several women with families of little children in filth and rags who with tears told how husband got away and had not seen or heard of him for six months or two years. . . .\(^60\)

Abe often received letters addressed to "Mr. Jabbok," appealing for aid. A typical example of his correspondence at this time was a letter received from a destitute widow at Caldwell, Kan. En route to Oklahoma, her consumptive husband died near the Kansas boundary line, leaving her with eight children, the oldest only 14. After disposing of her team and wagon and the wagonload of furniture to pay for the coffin and burial plot, the widow was penniless. "Please let me know by return mail whether you could take several of my children and I will try and support the rest," she wrote "Mr. Jabbok."\(^61\)

Most of Jabbok's orphans came from broken homes, particularly homes wrecked by whisky, and from unmarried girls who freely abandoned their offspring.\(^62\)

Little Eva, a baby with a spinal "condition," had to be held most of the time. This constant care was "wearing Anna down," and Abe appealed through the pages of the Visitor for a woman helper, as his wife had not had one good night's rest in 20 months, and they were expecting, moreover, a blind girl to arrive in a few days. They

\(^{58}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{59}\) *Ibid., September 1, 1906.*  
\(^{60}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{61}\) *Ibid., September 16, 1907.*  
also needed a man to help care for the children while they were out-of-doors. Abe promised them nothing but equality. He wrote:

"Pray in faith"—that was the keynote of Jabbok policy—prayer for the sick, the stock, and the home. When one of the babies took sick, the Eisenhower sent word to the brethren that a certain hour they should unite with the home in prayer for her recovery. Fever rebuked, the child was restored to them, they felt, through the power of prayer. Likewise, prayers were made over ailing livestock, when Abe’s veterinary skills failed. A poor farmer could ill afford to lose a valuable Jersey cow if he had a dozen mouths needing the milk and butter.

A wagon rated a high place on their prayer list. The need for a larger and covered conveyance to taxi the children to church became a real must. The nearest Brethren church was at Bethany, three and a quarter miles across country, and the only way the home had of going was via a two-seated open spring wagon. Never could all 11 of them go to church at the same time. Crowded conditions were bad enough, but rain, coming only occasionally but still too frequently for a topless carriage, pouring down on their blanket-covered heads was just too much.

The purchase of a suitable wagon was finally made possible through many donations. When it arrived, Abe set to work increasing the vehicle’s passenger capacity by putting the back seats along the sides. On a spring day the wonderful wagon halted in front of the home, and although Anna was elbow-deep in a wash tub of laundry suds, children, mamma, papa, and all piled in and took a merry jaunt across the prairie.

If Abe Eisenhower was president of Jabbok, its founder and organizer, his wife Anna was its secretary, keeping careful books and conscientiously informing the Visitor reading public of its current financial standing. Giving credit where credit was due, she often itemized gift and giver. Thus it can be seen that Brethren in Brown county, Kansas, were the donors of a box of bedding, clothing, and dried fruit; one man donated a barrel of apple vinegar; 

64. *Evangelical Visitor*, March 15, 1905.
65. Interview with Mrs. Frank Miller.
67. Ibid., May 1, 1908.
68. Ibid., January 15, 1908.
Ben Kraybill quit playing pool and gave one dollar toward the orphanage wagon; and a class of Sunday school boys in Upland, Cal., chose to do without Christmas presents for themselves and sent $29.19 to Jabbok for gifts for the “friendless waifs.”

Donations did not always come in so freely, however. One of Anna’s reports in 1909 shows that the total offerings received between May 21 and August 23 was $15 in cash and some fresh meat. In good years, of course, the farm produced most of their own foodstuff.

Thirty-five children in 10 years—that many waifs lived in Anna’s home and learned to call her mama. Although her womb was barren, the fecundity of her heart fructified a hundredfold. Foundlings found in her an asylum after desertion; orphans, suercase after death; waifs, home after homelessness. When the physical body protested after endless rounds of diapering, darning, and dusting, washing dirty clothes and dirty faces, to say nothing of caring for chickens and cream, and minor cuts sustained in children’s foolhardy play, love took over. When the physical said, “You cannot take in another child,” love said, “By God’s grace I will.”

Christian workers came in occasionally to lift the load. But when they went on their way, pondering the avalanches of grit and grace needed for orphanage work, Anna carried on with fortitude between the four walls. Meanwhile, Abe farmed the quarter section and cared for the Jersey herd which supplied their tables and the town of Thomas with milk, and supplemented their uncertain income by performing veterinary services.

One Christian sister, Mrs. Amanda Dohner by name, visited the home early in 1908. After a restful night, she accompanied Mrs. Eisenhower to town the next morning, and kept the team while her hostess delivered butter, milk, cream, and eggs to Thomas residents. Not all the butter and cream and eggs were sold, she noted, for the home table was amply supplied with both. With the money received from her dairy and poultry products, Anna then went to a dry goods store and purchased some warm clothing for the children. Mrs. Dohner was mightily reminded that day of the words of Jesus: “I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me. . . .” Her conclusion to the whole matter was:

I am very much pleased with the Jabbok Home. Brother Abraham and Sister Eisenhower manifest as much loving interest in the children as I see

69. Ibid., March 16, 1908.
70. Ibid., February 1, 1909.
anywhere by parents, and, I think, is worthy of a word of praise and a helping hand by the church. They now have a comfortable house, but not yet well furnished. They move along strictly on the line of economy, and teach their children industry and economy, next to obedience to God and parents, and love and kindness and order among each other.\textsuperscript{71}

Jabbok orphanage was an Eisenhower venture, unrelated to any church affiliation or organization until late in 1906. But in December of that year it became a recognized institution of the Brethren in Christ Church (River Brethren) and continues to remain so.\textsuperscript{72}

By that time Abe's health, always somewhat frail, began a rapid decline, and he wished to dispose of his responsibilities. The Brethren, in their general conference of 1909, meeting at Abilene, accepted Jabbok from the Eisenhowers, with the provision that a certain sum of money be paid annually to them as long as they lived. Sections of Article 43 of that conference read as follows:

\textbf{ARTICLE 43.} An Act of Conference considered and accepted an offer from Oklahoma District Council of the Brethren in Christ, Feb. 25-26, 1909.

\textit{Whereas}, Brother and Sister Eisenhower [sic] do not feel able to carry on the Orphanage and Missionary Training Home under present conditions; therefore,

\textbf{Sec. 1. Resolved,} That we do heartily recommend their proposition to General Conference for acceptance, and if necessary, we do hereby obligate ourselves to assume at least $300 per annum. . . .

\textbf{Sec. 2.} An Act of Conference considered the above resolution, and the two wills made by Brother and Sister A. L. Eisenhower, of Thomas, Oklahoma, in which they willed and conveyed a plot of ground consisting of 150 acres near Thomas, Oklahoma, together with farm implements and livestock and deeded a plot of ground consisting of ten acres, wherein is presented is the Jabbok Faith Orphanage, with good buildings, together with a complete outfit of farm implements and livestock for the consideration of one dollar on condition that the ten acre plot, together with the personal property can be sold and the proceeds applied wherever the Church sees proper with the further condition that the plot of 150 acres, together with the proceeds of the Church, shall be used for the support of the aforesaid Orphanage. . . .

In consideration of the generous spirit manifested in the donation of Brother and Sister A. L. Eisenhower,

\textbf{Sec. 5. Resolved,} That this Conference expresses their appreciation of the spirit of consecration in the act of donating the aforesaid properties, together with the appurtenances belonging thereto; and,

\textbf{Sec. 6. Resolved,} That the expression of Conference is that a noble work has been done in the Orphanage effort and that it should be continued.\textsuperscript{73}

With these sentiments, and a promise to pay the donors a sum of $500 per annum ($300 with the obligation of the Oklahoma church with the balance being paid, as per agreement, by the gen-

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Ibid.}, January 15, 1908.

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Ibid.}, December 15, 1908.

\textsuperscript{73} \textbf{General Conference Index,} Article 43, 1909.
eral church), Abe and Anna Eisenhower turned Jabbok over to the church.

In 1924, because of social welfare agencies and home finding societies, who thought nothing of placing Jabbok children in non-Christian homes, the orphanage phase was discontinued. The next year the conference laid plans for a Bible School and Missionary Training School which had been provided for in the Eisenhower-Zook charter of 1901. Missionaries going out from Jabbok school included Sadie Book Brechbill to Africa, Harvey C. Lady to Portuguese East Africa, and Mary Lenhart Eshleman to Rhodesia.74

By 1937 Jabbok had become an important dairy enterprise. Abe’s Jersey herd, which supplied milk for Thomas, had become capable of supplying 4,000-5,000 quarts of milk per month.75 This little community of 1,300 could not soon forget the couple, who, childless themselves, had made a home for the Oklahoma orphan. In the decade he worked the homestead, Abe had set out acres of orchards and put whole fields into berries. Though the Eisenhowers left before the orchard began to bear, long after they had moved to California, Thomas residents would come out in the spring to view pink acres of peach blossoms and the white blooms of a hundred pear and apple trees. And they knew that when the fruit that Jabbok students picked would be dried, crated, and shipped to mission fields across the sea.76

V. CONCLUSION

For six years after the Eisenhowers left Jabbok they did home missionary work in Ohio and Iowa. In the summer of 1915 they moved to Upland, Cal., where an early Brethren colony from Kansas had transformed the desert foothills into citrus groves and vineyards. Here, Abe and Anna met old Kansas friends, and here among the Brethren they lived a while, and performed, as they said, “what we can in a quiet way.” 77 Later, when the altitude seemed to affect Abe’s frail health, they moved down on the coast to Long Beach,78 and then to Pasadena, where they remained many years. Both worked to supplement the $500 annual stipend they got from Jabbok. They took care of Pasadena homes when their owners were away.79 They operated a home laundry, doing both

75. Evangelical Visitor, August 28-29, 1937, p. 58.
76. Interview with Mrs. Frank Miller.
77. Evangelical Visitor, May 17, 1915.
78. Ibid., May 15, 1916.
79. Ibid., September 24, 1917.
washing and ironing. Abe was adept at salvaging old and worn Bibles, binding them with the skill of a craftsman. Though their active church work was over, they felt they reached many in their “secret life of prayer.”

Abe rarely felt at home in any church. He no more belonged to Los Angeles than Daniel Boone would have belonged to Philadelphia. It was to him a religious no-man’s-land, and for this reason he floated from place to place, endlessly looking for the old landmarks of yesteryear. It is told how, wherever he went to church during the war years of the 1940’s, Abe had one special request: “Remember the General in prayer.” One California pastor recalls that “during the war, while Dwight was yet a general in the army, Abe often stood up and requested prayer for him; he was burdened for his salvation, safety and usefulness.” After the conquest of North Africa, prayers and letters from Abe and Anna followed their nephew. Besides corresponding regularly with Dwight, Abe kept a wall map in his room on which he recorded the progress of the Allied forces with colored pins.

Abe did not live to follow the last campaign. Old and ailing, he was taken back to Upland, to the home of Elder and Mrs. E. J. Broyles, where he spent his few remaining days. From his death bed, he looked up at the picture of his nephew, and said, “God has his hand on this boy. You will live to see him President of the United States.” On December 13, 1944, the Evangelical Visitor reported, “God saw fit to answer his prayer ‘to open the skies and let me through.’”

Anna lived in the Broyles home for eight years. When she died there, October 13, 1952, the tribute from the Brethren read: “Precious will be the memories of this outstanding life.” Three weeks later, Abe’s prophecy of eight years before was fulfilled, when Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected President of the United States.

80. Ibid., June 11, 1939.
82. Pasadena (Cal.) Independent, December 15, 1944.
83. Interview with the Rev. Mrs. Jemima Walker Mitchell, June 1, 1958.
84. Evangelical Visitor, January 15, 1945.
85. Ibid., October 27, 1952.