

Eisenhower Farm welcomes thousands

BY SHEILA MILLER

GETTYSBURG — This past summer over 80,000 visitors toured the farm of the former United States President and General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Officially opened on June 14 this past Summer, the 495 acre Adams County homestead offers the public a warm and personal insight into the World War II hero's life.

According to Louise Arnold, Park Technician for the National Park Service, administrators of the Eisenhower National Historic Site, Dwight and Mamie began looking for a farm during the late 1940's. Ike had always wanted to own a piece of land.

She related the story of how on a train ride between New York and Washington D.C., Ike bumped into his friend George Allen, one of three District Commissioners for the nation's capital at the time. Allen told Ike about a farm he had purchased recently in the Gettysburg area and suggested he look for real estate there.

Coming to Pennsylvania to look for a farm was like coming home for Eisenhower. His family tree had branched out from the Susquehanna River Valley in the Keystone State, and with Ike's grandfather Jacob, started its spread towards Texas where Ike was born in 1890.

After a childhood in the midwestern state of Kansas, a formal education at West Point, and marriage, Ike moved to Pennsylvania in 1918. He took his first command at Camp Colt, a training center for infant Tank Corps located in Gettysburg not far from grandfather Jacob's first farm.

Following his retirement from the Army in 1948, General Eisenhower and Mamie were ready to settle down. When "in 1950" they purchased the Allen Redding farm which lies on the edge of the famous fields where Pickett led his fatal charge during the Civil War, the Eisenhowers had fulfilled one of Ike's childhood dreams.

But, as Arnold explained, the Eisenhowers didn't get to enjoy their retirement very long. At the request of President Truman, Ike became the commander of the armed forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and was later elected as President from 1952 to 1960.

During the ten years that slipped by after they purchased the farm, the house was remodeled. Very little of the original house was kept, while additional wings were added.

When the Eisenhowers returned to their Gettysburg farm in 1961, their long-awaited home was ready and waiting for them.

When the Eisenhowers first purchased the Redding farm, it was actively being operated as a dairy farm. Around 20 head of Holstein cows contentedly chewed their cud and produced for the farm. And in an attached

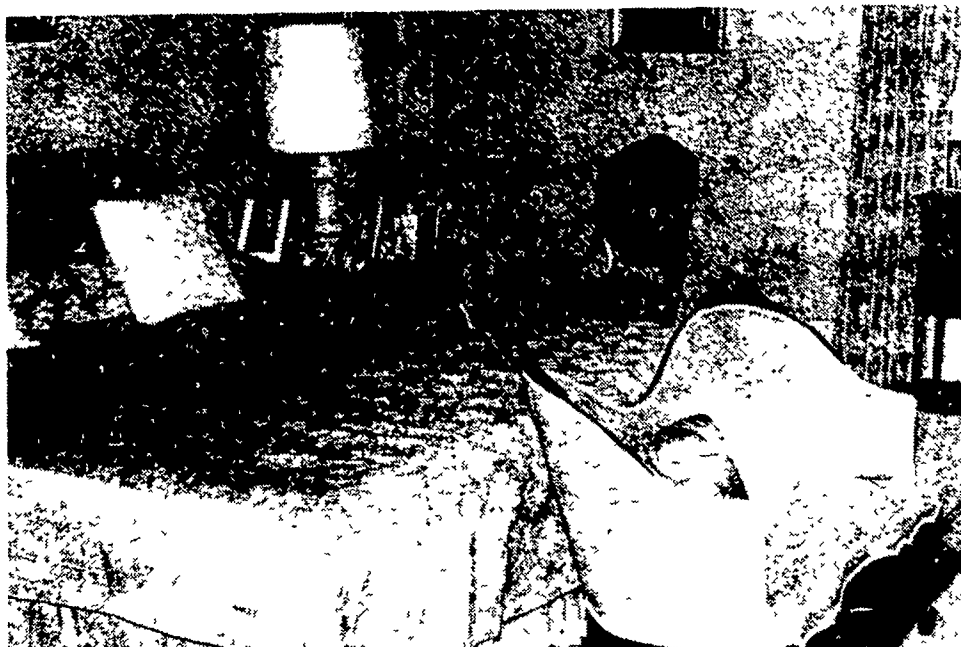
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The only remaining portion of the original Redding house is the small section which contains the kitchen. It is sandwiched between two new wings, the stone section to the right with den and guest rooms and the larger section to the left of the original chimney.



The sun porch was the Eisenhowers' favorite room. Here they relaxed and watched television, ate their meals, and read. Ike enjoyed oil painting and he spent many hours at this easel.



Mamie's favorite color, pink, abounds in the bedroom, from settee to satin bed spreads and matching drapes.



Mamie's dressing room mirrors the former first ladies' personality bottles of perfumes lined in a stately fashion, pearls cushioned with care, and the love of her life smiling a top a vividly pink dressing table.

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