

Gettysburg College

Hidden in Plain Sight:

Eisenhower Statue

History 300

Historical Methods

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By

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Every day thousands of students walk across the Gettysburg College campus. They are distracted by thinking about class, or homework, or the latest happenings in their social lives. Whether or not they think about it daily the students are aware of the historical place in which they are present, the battlefields which surround the campus and the Civil War re-enactors who are reminders of the historical significance of this area. But what is much less obvious to the students is that on their walks to and from classes and to meals or to check their mail they pass what is referred to as “hidden history.” This history is hidden in plain sight, photographs or paintings, plaques, and statues, all of these objects help to tell the story of Gettysburg College. The people in the past and the events that took place on campus, have helped to shape the college of today. That is why these people and events have been commemorated in some form on campus, but the majority of these objects are seen in passing, but never really observed by students. Once a statue or painting is researched the story behind it unfolds, and a little more about the campus is revealed. The story of when, why, and what it has meant to the campus community is important when researching the history in plain sight. An example of “hidden history” on the campus is the Eisenhower statue adjacent to the Dwight D. Eisenhower House, at 300 Carlisle Street.

Dwight D. Eisenhower has been known and remembered for many things. Better known as Ike, Eisenhower was the thirty-fourth president of the United States, serving from 1953-1961. He was also the victorious, Supreme Commander of Allied forces in Europe during World War II. These along with the long list of his other accomplishments have led to Eisenhower’s memory being commemorated throughout the years, across the nation. But what is often forgotten or ignored when giving a biography

of Eisenhower is his long association with Gettysburg College and the surrounding area. The first association with Gettysburg came in 1918, during World War I, when he served as commanding officer of the Tank Corps Training Center at Camp Colt. With help from the college the Eisenhowers were able to obtain residency in, what at that point would later become the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity house, on North Washington Street. The Eisenhowers would also live on Spring Avenue during these years.<sup>1</sup> While living in Gettysburg and working at Camp Colt Eisenhower trained about ten thousand men how to handle difficult terrain while operating a machine gun. Without actual tanks for a long while Ike improvised using trucks and driving them over the rocky terrain of the battlefields, with machine guns in their flatbeds. When the Spanish influenza broke out, Ike moved quickly to isolate the illness and prevent his entire corps from being decimated by the disease. For his quick thinking and action, he would be awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.<sup>2</sup>

Years later, in 1944, Gettysburg students found it appropriate to acknowledge Eisenhower's achievements in World War I and II by dedicating the 1944 edition of the Spectrum, the Gettysburg College year book to Ike. The dedication read as follows:

As our book goes to press, the black thunderclouds of the war gods still roll heavily over the earth. It is only fitting that we pause within these pages to pay homage to a man who, as a youthful lieutenant colonel, won the Distinguished Service Medal during the World War I, while commanding officer of the Tank Corps Training Center at Camp Colt, located just outside the college campus. It is

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<sup>1</sup> "Eisenhower Speaks At Graduation U.S. Chief of Staff Sends Hanson Letter of Acceptance for May 27 Commencement," *The Gettysburgian*, January 10, 1946, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Perret, *Eisenhower* (New York: Random House, 1999), 67-68.

to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, now brilliant Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces in Africa, that we dedicate this 1944 Spectrum....<sup>3</sup>

On May 27, 1946 Eisenhower was the featured speaker at the “Welcome Home” commencement ceremonies. At this ceremony he was also given an honorary Doctor of Laws Degree by Gettysburg College.<sup>4</sup>

The Eisenhowers became more closely connected with Gettysburg and Gettysburg College in December 1950 when they bought a farm house in Cumberland township during his candidacy for the Presidency. Mamie Eisenhower began remodeling the farm house in 1953 finally completing it in 1955, the farm house contained fifteen rooms and eight baths. Late into his presidency Ike would buy a 19<sup>th</sup> century schoolhouse nearby in Gettysburg, to turn into a home for his son John, and his family.<sup>5</sup> Four years earlier on September 24, 1955 Eisenhower had a heart attack and was taken to an army hospital in Denver for a seven weeks stay. On November 14 Eisenhower returned to his farm in Gettysburg and conducted meetings, and addressed the nation on several occasions from the college president’s office in Glatfelter Hall.<sup>6</sup> During this time, “their farmhouse became ‘The White House, Gettysburg’ and for 37 days Gettysburg was the capital of the United States.”<sup>7</sup> While Eisenhower was still in office the Cold War and tensions with Russia were a constant thought for the President. In 1959, Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev embarked on a journey to the United States and

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<sup>3</sup> *Spectrum* (Gettysburg: Gettysburg College, 1944) 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> “Eisenhower Statue is Unveiled by ‘Mamie’,” *The Gettysburgian*, October 16, 1970, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Perret, *Eisenhower*, 601-602.

<sup>6</sup> Charles H. Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence: Gettysburg College, vol. 2, 1832-1985* (Gettysburg, Pa: Gettysburg College, 1987), 998.

<sup>7</sup> “Dedication of Ike Statue Planned for October 14,” *The Gettysburgian*, October 9, 1970, 1.

one of his stops was that to the Gettysburg Farm following three days of talks at Camp David. Khrushchev met Ike's family and "expressed admiration for Ike's Black Angus cattle,"<sup>8</sup> which Ike raised in Gettysburg.

Following the end of his term as President in January of 1961, Eisenhower returned to Gettysburg and began using 300 Carlisle Street, as his office. He would arrive to his office most mornings at eight. He worked on the first volume of his memoirs, *Mandate for Change* from 1961 to 1962 followed by the second volume, *Waging Peace*. Next he worked on a book about his early years in Kansas, titled *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*, which was published in 1967 and became a best-seller. While in his office he also dictated letters, magazine articles. Generally Ike would take breaks during the day but often would not leave the office for good until five o' clock.<sup>9</sup>

In 1965, Eisenhower became more invested in the college when he accepted the position of Honorary Chairman of the Board of Associates and became a trustee.<sup>10</sup> Also in September of 1965, Eisenhower participated in the dedication of Musselman Stadium. In front of a crowd of 6,000 people Ike would throw out the game ball. Following the dedication ceremony of the \$250,000 stadium, Eisenhower, "accepted the game ball from athletic director Henry Bream, and threw an accurate short pass to Gettysburg cheerleaders Cheryl Keim and Linda Riccobono."<sup>11</sup> In October of 1966, Eisenhower addressed the Region IV convention of the Association of Student Unions. He discussed the finest generation, and stressed the qualities of a good leader. He cited General

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<sup>8</sup> Steve Neal, *The Eisenhowers* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1984), 408.

<sup>9</sup> Perret, *Eisenhower*, 602-603.

<sup>10</sup> Glatfelter, *Gettysburg College*, 2:998.

<sup>11</sup> "General Eisenhower, Other Guests Preside At Stadium Dedication Ceremonies Saturday," *The Gettysburgian*, October 1, 1965, 1.

George Patton and General George Marshall as examples. The address to the Region IV ACU Convention is the first speech he has given to a college campus group.<sup>12</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower kept active on Gettysburg Campus, participating in several events through the years. He used a college house as his offices from 1961 to 1967. On the day of the dedication of the statue, in front of Eisenhower House Dr. C. Arnold Hanson, president of the college said, “these environs were indeed special for General Eisenhower. This was his home, his place of work, his town, and the rendezvous for the countless many.”<sup>13</sup> According to Michaela S. Pyle of *The Gettysburg Times*, “Life in Gettysburg was different for Gen. Eisenhower and he had the time to enjoy it.”<sup>14</sup> For all of his contributions and connection to the college, and surrounding area in October of 1969 following the President’s death in March of that year, the Gettysburg College Board of Trustees officially designated 300 Carlisle Street “The Dwight David Eisenhower House.”

Along with dedicating the house the trustees decided that a statue “should be commissioned and erected on land contiguous to the House.”<sup>15</sup> The actual creation of the statue was, “made possible through the generosity of Mr. And Mrs. Joseph T. Simpson of Harrisburg.”<sup>16</sup> The Simpsons then participated in the unveiling ceremony on October 14, 1970. The sculptor of the “Eisenhower at Gettysburg,” which is the official title of the

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<sup>12</sup> “Gen. Eisenhower Addresses Region IV ACU Convention,” *The Gettysburgian*, October 21, 1966, 1.

<sup>13</sup> “Mrs. Mamie Doud Eisenhower, Noticeably Moved, Maintains her Composure When Bronze Statue of Her Late Husband is Unveiled at Impressive Ceremony at College on Wednesday” *The Gettysburg Times*, October 15, 1970, 1, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Michaela S. Pyle, “Eisenhower Had Enjoyed Living Here,” *The Gettysburg Times*, March 31, 1969, 9.

<sup>15</sup> Glatfelter, *Gettysburg College*, 2:997-1001.

<sup>16</sup> “Dedication of Ike Statue,” *The Gettysburgian*, 1.

statue, was the art professor Mr. Norman Annis. Mr. Annis born and educated in Iowa worked as an art professor at Gettysburg from 1960 to 1978, and then again from 1989 until 1999. The Eisenhower Statue was not his first sculpture. From December 6, 1967 until January 5, 1968 twenty-three pieces of his bronze sculptures were exhibited in Washington, D.C.<sup>17</sup> His work had also been exhibited in the St. Paul Gallery; the Central college of Pella, Iowa; the Bernstein Foundation, and the Corat the Mickelson gallery of coran Gallery, both in Washington, D.C. Professor Annis began work in January 1970 on the bronze statue, during his sabbatical and finished it one year later. He created the likeness to Eisenhower through photographs and helpful memories of the General's friends and associates.<sup>18</sup> The work on the statue was done in the art department of Gettysburg College and also the studio that Mr. Annis owned on York Street in Gettysburg.<sup>19</sup>

The statue titled, "Eisenhower at Gettysburg" is a life size, full length, bronze statue depicting Eisenhower leaning against a stone fence on the Gettysburg battlefield. The statue represents the Eisenhower that the Gettysburg community knew, an older Ike not in an army uniform but a suit. The actual casting of the statue was done near Rome, Italy and was shipped back by air two weeks before the unveiling ceremony and office dedication.<sup>20</sup> On October 14, 1970 the impressive ceremony was held as the college building was dedicated and the statue was unveiled. The program was held around the theme of community participation and in attendance were the Simpsons, Mrs.

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<sup>17</sup> "Eisenhower Unveiling Ceremony to highlight Office Dedication," *The Gettysburgian*, September 25, 1970, 1.

<sup>18</sup> "Mrs. Mamie Doud Eisenhower," *The Gettysburg Times*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Mr. Norman Annis, telephone interview, February 22, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> "Mrs. Mamie Doud Eisenhower," *The Gettysburg Times*, 1.

Eisenhower, and many other dignitaries of the Gettysburg area, and from Eisenhower's past.<sup>21</sup> Present at the ceremony, "a crowd of estimated between 1,500 and 2,000 circled the statue. Many of them were students and some climbed trees for a better view or watched from the roof of a fraternity house across the street."<sup>22</sup> Dr. C. Arnold Hanson, president of the college presided over the ceremony and was responsible for introducing Mr. Annis, the Simpsons, and thanking various people for their help with the "Eisenhower at Gettysburg" project. Reverend Dr. Robert MacAskill of the Presbyterian Church at Gettysburg, pastor to the Eisenhowers, offered the invocation and Chairman of the Board of Trustees Mr. Paul H. Rhoads dedicated the statue and the college building during the ceremony. Following the ceremonies at a luncheon Mrs. Eisenhower said, "It has been a very emotional time for me. It goes very deep and I know Ike would have loved it."<sup>23</sup> Following her husband's death, Mrs. Eisenhower took his place as honorary member of the board of associates and trustee. In later years she was asked of her favorite monument in Gettysburg she said that it, "was the statue of Ike outside his old office on the Gettysburg College campus, 'I always speak to him when I pass it during the winter I don't like to see the snow covering his head.'"<sup>24</sup>

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Society was created in October 14 of 1969. For many years each October, the Eisenhower Society sponsored a commemoration in the ball room at Gettysburg College. The commemoration ceremonies over the years included speeches from, Henry M. Scharf, president of the society, President Gerald Ford, and David Eisenhower. The ceremonies concluded with a laying of a wreath in front of the

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<sup>21</sup> "Eisenhower unveiling ceremony," *The Gettysburgian*, 1.

<sup>22</sup> "Mrs. Mamie Doud Eisenhower," *The Gettysburg Times*, 1.

<sup>23</sup> "Mrs. Mamie Doud Eisenhower," *The Gettysburg Times*, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Neal, *The Eisenhowers*, 464.

Eisenhower statue. The purpose of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Society is, “to promote knowledge and understanding of the accomplishments of the 34<sup>th</sup> President of the United States and General of the Army; the code by which he lived; and the signal qualities that made him in his time the world’s most trusted figure.”<sup>25</sup> In 1985, the Eisenhower Society created the Dwight D. Eisenhower Endowment Fund.

The statue that was unveiled in 1970 is not the same statue that stands outside the Eisenhower House today. In 1984 the original statue was severely damaged in a storm, when a large maple tree was uprooted and blown on top of the statue. The new statue was placed slightly to the west of where the old statue stood, but that is not the only difference. While teaching at a different college, and also working as department chairman, Mr. Annis was asked to create another statue. The damaged statue was delivered and, “the entire head was smashed in.”<sup>26</sup> Professor Annis took molds of the parts that were still intact, but overall it is a very different statue. “The second statue was very rushed and not nearly as good as the first it was not as well cast as the first one either.”<sup>27</sup>

The story of Eisenhower is deep in the history of Gettysburg College and the surrounding area. Ike and his achievements and contributions have been commemorated all over campus from the Eisenhower House, the statue, to even one of the restaurants. Pictures of Ike can be seen throughout the buildings all over campus. The hidden history across Gettysburg, if researched, tells the story of Eisenhower at Gettysburg. Eisenhower meant a great deal to the college, and everyday as students go about their daily business

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<sup>25</sup> Glatfelter, *Gettysburg College*, 2, 1000.

<sup>26</sup> Annis, telephone interview, February 22, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Annis, telephone interview, February 22, 2006.

they pass the Eisenhower Statue, and it's obvious that his presence will always be felt at the college.