



## PREFACE

Dwight Eisenhower wrote that he wanted an “escape from the concrete to the countryside.” His farm at Gettysburg was just that. He relished the challenge it gave him. He wrote, “The buildings had seen better days. So had the soil. It would take work and money to modernize it. But the view of the mountains to the west was good.”

This setting that became the Eisenhower National Historic Site is the only home that Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower ever owned. The Eisenhowers’ renovations to the house, barn and outbuildings and the choice of landscape design features reflect their interests and values. Their popularity as President and First Lady resulted in many gifts for their newly renovated home. In addition to gifts for their house, the Eisenhowers received trees, shrubs, flower bulbs, sets of lawn furniture, even locomotive bells. The Eisenhowers used these gifts to landscape their property, whether it was constructing a barbecue pit so typical of 1950s leisure entertaining or installing a putting green where the President could hone his golf game. They entertained family and friends at the farm or enjoyed quiet moments away from their public life. The buildings and landscape features of the Eisenhowers’ Gettysburg farm represent their idea of what a home should be.

The farm setting assumed a larger role during Eisenhower’s presidency. Once renovations were complete in March 1955, Eisenhower spent part or all of 365 days at the farm during his remaining six years as president. It served as a temporary White House as Eisenhower recuperated

from his first heart attack in the fall of 1955 and again as he recovered from ileitis surgery in the summer of 1956. President Eisenhower also used his home and farm as a place for presidential diplomacy. To ease Cold War tensions, Eisenhower brought Churchill, DeGaulle, Nehru, Khrushchev, Adenauer, Macmillan and others to Gettysburg for a tour of the grounds and his Angus cattle herd. The relaxing atmosphere of the farm provided Eisenhower with opportunities for one-to-one conversation with these world leaders.

Since the Eisenhowers lived at their farm only 35 years ago, the photographic documentation of the property and written records of donated gifts are extensive. Many of Eisenhower’s personal letters reveal the thoughts and values that influenced the development of the landscape. Oral history interviews with Eisenhower family members, friends and staff discuss the evolution of the landscape at the Gettysburg farm. Most of the original landscape features are still evident at the site today. The staff of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation surveyed this wealth of primary source materials to develop the Eisenhower Cultural Landscape Report. Tracy Stakely, Margie Coffin Brown, Jeffrey Killion, Shaun Eyring, and Lauren Laham organized the large volume of materials into this report. Their fine work has provided the Eisenhower staff with a detailed study of the evolution of the landscape and recommendations for its treatment. It will be used by future generations of National Park Service employees to maintain the Eisenhower National Historic Site landscape as the Eisenhowers intended.

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