

WEB MADDOX
301 EAST MAGNOLIA AVENUE
FORT WORTH, TEXAS

EISENHOWER BIRTHPLACE FOUNDATION, INCORPORATED
PROGRESS REPORT FEBRUARY 14, 1954

Effective tomorrow the sum of \$10,000 is being borrowed from the Fort Worth National Bank for 90 days. Mr. Raymond C. Gee who is making the loan states that if repaid within that time the Bank will charge no interest. Since it seemed unlikely that we could borrow at a better rate, his offer was accepted.

A check for \$5,000 is being sent to The Denison Herald which advanced this amount for use of the Foundation and a check for same amount is being sent to Mr. Fred J. Conn, Trustee to carry out additional purchases. Title to property is being taken in the name of Fred J. Conn, Trustee and although the Foundation has no formal document providing for such trusteeship, it is felt that this is not necessary--unless other directors think it necessary. Most of the property involved is or was owned by negroes and in many cases they are willing to deed their property to the Foundation, provided a similar lot is provided elsewhere and their houses moved. This involves considerable detail and is good reason for giving Mr. Conn considerable latitude in making and carrying out these transactions. No real estate commissions have been paid. Nor have any attorney's fees been paid..but probably at some time a reasonable fee should be paid for these services by the lawyers.

The accompanying map shows the present and projected status of the land. Green represents land already acquired; red represents additional tracts desired and in each case negotiations are under way. H indicates that a house is or was on the lot. The large X marks the Eisenhower Birthplace. Some time ago, largely through Mr. Conn's efforts, \$3,600 was raised in Denison to buy, clean and repaint the house. Title at present is in the City of Denison and Mr. Conn assures me that at the appropriate time the City will convey this property to the Foundation and also close streets and alleys in order to make the tract a unit. The two tracts colored purple are owned by the M.K. & T. Railroad. Mr. Conn states that he knows the railroad will make a 99-year lease to the Foundation. But probably Mr. Carter and Mr. Richardson can prevail upon the President of the M.K. and T. to convey these small tracts to the Foundation, provided there are no legal barriers. It is not a simple matter to acquire these lots and a few of the owners are asking what we consider exorbitant prices : \$3,500 each in three cases. But it is thought that all will eventually--and soon--accept what is considered a reasonable price. And of course we want the good will of all concerned. In our present status we cannot acquire any property by condemnation proceedings. In several cases the legal ownership is uncertain or obscure.

Mr. Harry Weeks has generously contributed his valuable services in matters pertaining to corporate organization, charter amendment, application for formal ruling on income tax deductibility, etc; and I have personally paid various filing fees, certified copy costs and incidentals.

On the following page is a report by Mr. Conn of expenditures as of January 27, 1954.

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" Mrs. Sudie Allen, to purchase note on J.L. McCollum place	\$ 1,018.39
Mrs. Sudie Allen, to purchase note on Geo.L. Molden place	492.23
Gullett & Gullett, money for escrow agreement on lot for W.C. Woods (Total cost to be \$1,300, location 131 E. Munson)	200.00
Munson Realty Company, for Quitclaim deed to Lot 6, Block 7, Dumas Addition	125.00
Mrs. Errie Jordan, to close agreement on moving house and to cover expense from Cleveland, Ohio	125.00
City of Denison, Tax settlement of \$471 on lot located at 1001 W. Munson for Mrs. Jordan's house	200.00
Pink Bell, for clearing above lot at 1001 W. Munson	15.00
S.V. Earnest, Dist. Clerk. Deposit for court costs on suit to clear title at 1001 W. Munson	50.00
Wilson Walters, Attorney, as settlement of J.L. McCollum property	250.00
Munson Realty Co. Purchase lots 400-406 Day to move M.L. McCollom's two houses on	700.00
B.W. Baldwin for lots 7 & 8, Block 7, Dumas Add.	550.00
Grayson County Abstract Co. for bringing up to date abstract on Baldwin lots. This was paid because his price of \$550 (above) represented exactly what he had in them	21.00

Total spent	\$ 3,746.62
Balance	1,253.38
	\$ 5,000.00

And, in addition to the \$1,253.38 balance we have a balance of some sixty odd dollars that we had previous to \$5,000 loan.....
..... Fred "

The Eisenhower house is in very good condition, everything considered. But several thousand dollars probably will have to be spent on it to provide for the wear and tear that the expected many visitors will inflict on it. Mr. Conn estimates that approximately \$25,000 will be necessary to acquire all real estate shown as desired.

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Fire-prevention experts have been consulted and all practical measures to guard against fire have been taken. Probably a sprinkler system should be installed as soon as possible as fire hazard is ever present. We should like to restore this house to its approximate arrangement when the President was born and, with this in mind, I am writing to the President's older brother, asking him if he remembers anything about it. Gold Star Mothers have filled it with a lot of old junk with a fond belief that it is now about the way it looked sixty-odd years ago. We do not want to hurt their feelings but we must clear out most of the "furniture." From the size of the house and its location, I would judge that the Eisenhowers were in moderately comfortable circumstances. A City Directory of the time lists Father Eisenhower as an "engine wiper." This seems to have been the general term used to designate any one working in the railroad shops.

The property indicated is the minimum amount necessary for the creation of a beautiful but simple park. Whether or not more should be acquired, how it should be laid out and planted and related matters are beyond my knowledge.

After a recent brief conversation with the Governor I have written to him asking if there is any one in the State Park Department capable of doing this, providing colored sketches, etc; and, if so, could such services be obtained. Other topics or questions were if any funds were available for grading, planting; if, in case the Foundation should dedicate the property as a public park, the State could maintain and operate it. Of course the decisions on these matters must be made by the Directors of the Foundation and I am only trying to get information on various subjects prior to such decisions. If operated by the Foundation, an Endowment of approximately \$150,000 or more would be necessary, the income from which would go to operation and maintenance. A caretaker would be necessary and some sort of living arrangements on the property be provided. Mr. Conn says that Lake Texhoma brings hundreds of thousands of visitors to this vicinity each year and he thinks many would visit the Eisenhower Birthplace if it were properly advertised. He thinks a substantial sum could be realized from the sale of souvenirs but I am inclined to discount this. Nor do I think it would be practical to charge any sort of admission fee in the immediate future.

I have not been able to set any certain date for the completion of the project although I have hoped that it would be very nearly done by the time of the President's next Birthday. Probably, though, this is entirely too optimistic.

Additional funds will be required at an early date.

Web Maddox, Treasurer.