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AMERICAN FARM SCHOOL • THESSALONICA, GREECE

NEW YORK OFFICE: 17 EAST 42nd STREET, NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

News-Letter

July, 1950

IMAGINE THE EXCITEMENT OF A GREEK BOY, tending sheep on a communal pasture near his village, suddenly receiving a telegram saying: YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED AS AN EXCHANGE FARMER'S SON TO GO TO AMERICA FOR FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS TO WORK ON A FARM. TELEGRAPH IMMEDIATELY WHETHER YOU CAN ACCEPT THIS OPPORTUNITY.

(signed) CHARLES L. HOUSE

That is what happened one afternoon in June to Petros Toundjis, of Siderocastro near the Bulgarian-Yugoslav border, and before ten o'clock that night he appeared at the American Farm School! He had graduated in May, as had Achilleas Kakalis of Keramoti, who received a similar telegram.

And imagine the excitement of two American youths as they stood before a group of Greek lads taking the summer course in farm machinery at the American Farm School, told them about life in the United States and answered questions for more than an hour. That also happened in June - to Richard F. Taylor of Chagrin Falls, Ohio, a Senior in the Agricultural College of Ohio State University, and Edward H. Hill of Garland, Texas, a Junior in the A. and M. College of Texas. They will spend several weeks at the American Farm School.

These exchange visits have been arranged under the International Farm Youth Exchange Project of the Cooperative Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture. They are financed by 4-H Clubs, young farmers' clubs, and other voluntary groups in the U. S.

Petros and Achilleas will be assigned to agricultural colleges in this country, where the Extension Services will be in charge of their programs. They will live and work with farm families, and attend rural youth meetings. Fortunately they have studied English at the American Farm School.

GRADUATION DAY AND FOUNDER'S DAY were celebrated together on May 29, with a crowd of nearly 3,000 to join in the festivities. All day long, despite a high wind, carts kept arriving loaded with people, many bringing lunches with them, until the occasion took on the aspect of a county fair.

Highlight of the day was a pageant "The Graduate's Vision of his Future in his Village," dramatizing the rehabilitation and improvement of village life. A village cottage, chicken house and stables had been built in sections, to be put together before the audience, but the uncooperative wind took the roof of the cottage into the air. However, the "family" stuck to their jobs, managed to get the roof on, cared for the calf, milked the cow, brought the horse in from the field - but the stable was shaking so in the wind that the horse refused to enter.

At the close the "Spirit of Agriculture" (one of the girls from the Girls' School) was supposed to rise from the top of a big windmill, erected on a float; but as it was wheeled into place the wind carried off the sails and parts of the mill, and the gale was so overpowering that final scene and closing addresses were dispensed with. Instead the affair wound up with a village dance, amid the wild applause of those guests who had been brave enough to remain to the end.

Mrs. House wrote: "I think we had more compliments than ever before, for the youngsters were superb. We were so proud of them! They had worked so hard in preparation! But as Theo Litsas told them next morning at Prayers, the same sort of courage is needed in life. A farmer may work all season and a sudden hailstorm ruin his crop, but he must keep on, just the same, and try again, in courage and faith."

SOME OTHER RED LETTER DAYS THIS SPRING

March 25 - the Greek Independence Day. The "Farm School Players" put on a play portraying the inward struggle of the members of a peasant family in making a decision to fight the Turks for their freedom. The performance was repeated for the students of Anatolia College.

April 29 - Mountain Day. For the first time since the war it was safe to climb Mt. Hortiach. Following the old custom the Seniors went up the day before and spent the night at the Boy Scout Camp, and prepared the lunch for the others who left the School at 5 A.M. It was a jolly and hungry crowd of 150 which finally sat down to eat.

May 18 - Field Day, also celebrated for the first time since the war. There were races, stone throwing, javelin and discus throwing, high jump, broad jump, triple jump, potato race and obstacle race - and at the end the little children of the farm families had a race of their own. Suitable awards were presented to the winners in the evening, around a large Camp Fire. Although it was Ascension Day, a school holiday in Greece, at Mr. House's request the boys gave up part of their holiday to hoe the corn, and to his surprise and delight, they hoed the field of a neighbor as well!

RECENT AMERICAN VISITORS AT THE SCHOOL included:

John H. Davis, Exec. Sec. of the Nl. Council of Farmer Cooperatives
Allan B. Kline, President of the American Farm Bureau
James G. Patton, President of the National Farmers' Union
J. T. Sanders, Legislative Counsel of the National Grange

After the visit Mr. Patton wrote: "The strongest single 'lift' I got out of my tour of E.C.A. countries was the very short visit to the American Farm School. If we could multiply your kind of work in the world many times, I am sure there would be much more hope for a lasting peace." And another visitor, Hon. James Hugh Keeley, U. S. Minister to Syria, wrote: "I feel certain that if more of our public spirited citizens could have the privilege of seeing at first hand the excellent job the School is doing in character building and the practical contribution it is making to the advancement of Greek agriculture... the School would not long continue to lack adequate financial support. I hope that more and more of our citizens will have the privilege of participating in its commendable work."

If you know of any persons who might like this privilege, please send their names to the New York office.

To the American Farm School
17 East 42nd Street
New York 17, New York

Date

The following persons or groups might be interested to know about the American Farm School, and might like an opportunity to contribute to its work.

(may :)

You (may not) use my name in writing to them. (Please cross out one.)

Name

Name

Address

Address

(Signed)