

AMERICAN FARM SCHOOL

THESSALONICA, GREECE

NEW YORK OFFICE

17 EAST 42nd STREET

NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

NEWS LETTER.

FEBRUARY 1497

On January 28th, Mr. and Mrs. House arrived at Salonica after being in this country since October. Their time here was very full. They saw many old friends of the School, made new ones, talked to many groups and worked out plans for the future of the School with the trustees. Everyone who came in contact with them was filled with renewed enthusiasm for the work which is being done and gained a fresh realization of its importance in the future of Greece.

While Mr. House was still trying to get return passage to Greece, a letter came from the British Society of Friends, asking him to come to London to discuss the future of the Girls' School which, as you know, is sponsored and administered by them. Mr. and Mrs. House, therefore, returned via London and had very interesting talks with the Friends. The operation of the Girls' School has been carried on by the Friends' Relief Committee, whose work is now coming to a close. It is almost certain, however, as a result of Mr. House's visit, that the operation of the Girls' School will be taken over by the Friends' Service Council for another year.

On arriving at the School, Mr. and Mrs. House found everything in good shape and Mr. House was greatly pleased with the work which had been done during his absence. Mrs. House writes: "To make room for this year's new boys, partitions have been knocked out in single rooms along the front of Princeton Hall which were formerly used by unmarried teachers, and thus two dormitories have been added; the old trunk room makes a third, so we are managing for this year, but before next September, somehow or other, I think James Hall will have to be rebuilt and used again for classrooms which are now occupying former dormitory space in Princeton Hall.

"We visited the power plant, the flour mill, the blacksmith and machine repair and plumbing and carpenter shops - everywhere the little first year boys in their overalls, some already too tight for them, were hard at work. In the plumbing shop they were cutting threads on pipes, in the machine shop overhauling the school truck; as I shook their grimy hands and looked into their eyes, I wished hard that each one of you could see them too. You would feel that all the effort and sacrifices made to keep them here are tremendously worth while.

"Elsalita and Elsadora, the famed air-borne Jerseys, are now the biggest of the calves - beautiful animals. The Borden Company and the Duke Farms from which they came should be exceedingly proud of them. Elmerit, the bull calf, has now grown so frisky that he must be separated from the others. He is a magnificent animal, his back as straight as a ruler. He should make a big difference in the livestock of Greece in time.

"We spent the afternoon at the Girls' School. Some of them had just finished white-washing the kitchen and scrubbing the floor; others were washing the spinach from their own gardens for supper; two were chasing a pig which was stubbornly refusing to get into his pen. The girls have their own chickens as well as pigs and rabbits, they have raised practically all the vegetables they have needed

this fall, and they are now bringing up their third orphan baby. The other two were so chubby and blooming that they have been adopted by childless couples. The girls have grown so that many of them were in their sewing room, lengthening and letting out last year's dresses. They are such a happy family. One of the new girls was asked how she liked the School. She replied: 'I have found peace here. I can sleep with my windows open and not be afraid.' Her father is in hiding in the mountains somewhere.

"Many visitors have been at the School to welcome us. Among them was an architect from Athens. He went about the Farm with Mr. House, and his final comment was: 'You have two things here which are lacking in many of our villages - love and beauty.'"

Here at the office in New York, we have a new awareness of the School as a whole community in itself from the wide variety of supplies which have been purchased for the School. Mr. House took advantage of War Assets Administration sales to buy various pieces of machinery for the School, getting a discount as a non-profit organization. Hatching eggs, seeds, cots and mattresses, veterinary supplies and many other things have been obtained from other sources.

The generosity of our friends in the last few months has filled twenty-one packing cases with articles for the School. These are now ready for shipment. Mrs. House is looking forward eagerly to receiving them and sends a collective 'thank you' now to all who gave so much time and effort to collecting, wrapping, and sending these much-needed things.

Many of you contributed to the memorial fund for Ethel House Bliss and will want to know how it has been used. The House family and the trustees believed that Mrs. Bliss would have wanted it to be used for the most pressing need of the School and that was reconstruction. The school plant had to be put in shape so that boys could be housed and fed, classrooms made ready for them, farm and shops put in order. So the fund has been used for these purposes. As a permanent memorial, the recreation field, which was also restored, has been designated the Ethel House Bliss Memorial Field, so that each generation of students will associate her name with the high points of school life which are celebrated there.

It is heartening to know that your contributions, both of things and of money, reach the School and are used as you want them to be used; that the dissensions in Greece have not interfered with the activities of the School and that there is a community, in that troubled land, where people trust each other and build together for the future.

Much remains to be done to restore the school plant to its pre-war condition and to enable it to take in more of the boys who are clamoring for entrance. Won't you use the enclosed folder to interest some of your friends in the School?

Elizabeth Albee Shepard

Mrs. Lawrence H. Shepard
Executive Secretary