



# The Sower

THE AMERICAN FARM SCHOOL

THESSALONIKI, GREECE

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## THE FARM SCHOOL IS BOYS

by Alta Ann Parkins

Agorastios, Anastasios, Antonios, Cleanthis, Costas, Dimitrios, Elias, Fotios, Ioannis, Menelaos, Nicolaos, Panayotis, Soterios, Theodoros, Stelios, Vasilios, Zacharias — can you imagine what these boys are like, the villages from which they come? It's not easy without a visit to the School and even then you have only a hint of characters and personalities. Moving about the School from history class to carpentry shop, dairy barn to machine shed, the visitor catches a glimpse of the boys. And he may stay long enough to join in a dance and hear a song or two, but still he has not actually met the students.

Farm School boys come from villages ranging in size from 100 to 1500 families (the average is 330); very few of the boys come from large towns. Populations vary, but the list of buildings in the village is constant: church, school, community office, agricultural cooperative and agricultural-extension-work office, 50 or 60 houses, and a coffee house or two. One or two stores stock the village necessities; one graduate of the Farm School class of '68 (Dimitrios Karageorgis from Cassandra, Chalkidiki) helps his brother run such a store, a *pantapoleion* (sells all, a general store). He travels to Thessaloniki on the bus every other week to buy supplies and takes them back to the store in a shopping bag. If the village is of touristic interest there may be a restaurant or two, but always there is a coffee house where the men congregate. One near-by village boasts that it has *no* coffee houses. The villagers



are known to be extremely hard-working and the lack of a coffee house is their badge of industry. However, it is often at just such a community meeting place that a father reads a newspaper article about the American Farm School and decides that he wants his son to go there.

Sometimes word about the Farm School travels from very far — one boy (Elias Parasogolou from Campohori, Paionias, Macedonia) came to the School because his father, working in Germany, had made friends with a fellow worker whose sons attended the Farm School. At Christmas time, when the father returned to Greece, he visited the friend's sons at the School and right then decided to send his own son.

Most Farm School boys say that their home has two rooms, but as they talk they begin to think of other "rooms". There may be one room where the parents sleep and a second room for all the children. These rooms are not only for sleep; during the day the family lives and works in them. In a very small home, cooking may be done in the fireplace of one of the rooms, or the stove may be in a lean-to or even outdoors. After much thought the boys remember that there is a storeroom which holds dry produce, foods kept for use during the year, or feed for the animals. There may also be attached to the house a small barn for animals. One boy, after listing all the rooms and the barn said, "We also have a grape arbor." He was right too, to think of it as a room — they are beautiful, large outdoor rooms, usually between two sections of the house, open to allow for a breeze yet

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"Come to see us" say the signs and you can, in May on the Farm School charter flight — only \$275.





## THE FARM SCHOOL IS BOYS

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shaded from the sun by wide grape leaves . . . a perfect oasis on a hot afternoon in July.

If questioned about bathrooms in their homes, all the boys give the identical answer: a startled look of surprise, a quick intake of air, a gasp, and then, "No!". All of these percussive "noes" emphasize the usefulness of the practical training at the School. Work in the School plumbing department teaches the boys how to run pipe lines and water systems into their homes.

The average farm of most of these boys is six acres. Farm animals are few — perhaps a goat or one or two sheep, very occasionally mules or a horse, almost always a few chickens. Sometimes they may have one or two cows. Usually the land is planted in wheat, with barley a second crop. If the area is one devoted to tobacco, then that is the major crop; fruit trees and truck gardens may be the main source of income in some sections.

Machinery is rarely owned. It sometimes can be rented from the community or from a local farmer. In most cases the family does its own farm work, using a horse or a mule to help them with the heavy labor. One boy when asked if his family owned any farm machinery, thought for a moment and said, "We have a bicycle."

From the time a boy is 12 he begins to think of the problems he will face in earning a living; he begins the training that may later provide him with an income. Work is not easy to find and to make more than a subsistence living requires special and determined imagination. Beyond this, one boy had the goal of becoming a *politismenos* (a civilized one) — "He is a man who knows enough and who can do what he decides to do."

\* \* \*

While I have been writing, I have watched the boys working, a few of them, watering their winter-garden plots on this Saturday afternoon during their free time. A strong Vardari wind is blowing and they have struggled to keep the water spray directed in the proper direction. Gardening tools are locked away, but one small boy found a stick and seemed to be enlarging his plot, trying to cultivate the earth at the path edge of his "land". Occasionally he abandoned the stick and worked with his hands. From the window I could not tell exactly what he was doing or see whether he was playing with dirt, water and stick, or whether he had some constructive plan in mind. Play or work — such play teaches men their work.

Long before I finished writing, I looked again at the boy working outside the window. He had a clear working plan, all right, for he dammed the water around the water faucet and then dug irrigation ditches through his plot with stick and hands. He had found a way of combatting the strong wind which previously blew away the water. It was now flowing evenly through his plot in neat channels. He worked fast, like a burrowing animal, stopping once briefly to survey his engineering. Other boys came to tease him, turned off the water, splashed in it,

## FARM SCHOOL LOSES VALUED FRIENDS

ROBERT B. LEA died at the age of 77 at his summer home in Bellport, Long Island, N. Y. on Sept. 12. He had served the Farm School as Trustee from 1957 to 1966 and since 1966 as a member of the National Committee.

Mr. Lea was a leader in the "People-to-People" program inaugurated in 1958 by President Eisenhower. Many educational institutions throughout the world have benefited from the technical journals and books sent to them by Mr. Lea's committee in this program. He was thoroughly dedicated to serving others and the Farm School was fortunate in being one of the beneficiaries of this service.

JOHN NUVEEN died August 8 in Chicago, Ill. Mr. Nuveen had been a member of the American Farm School National Committee since its establishment and before that a member of the Advisory Council. He became interested in the work of the Farm School in 1948 when he was Chief of the U.S. foreign aid mission to Greece.

but he worked steadily on, absolutely undeterred. He is in the first year class. If his work at the Farm School continues with the industry of these early days, his promising start will be fulfilled.

## SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THE BOYS

Most of the boys at the School are sponsored by "friends" in the United States who donate full or partial scholarships each year. These friends are individuals, churches, schools, or even whole communities, and their contributions range from \$300 to \$1,000. Mrs. Cuthbert Lamb of New York has been supporting boys since 1945 and each of "her" boys always writes to tell her of his progress, both as a student during his four years at the School and later as a graduate practising what he has learned at the School. Mrs. Lamb feels these relationships have enriched her life as much or more than they have the boys.

Hartford, Connecticut, too, has a boy. Individuals throughout the community contribute \$5 or \$25 or \$50 each — enough to total \$1,000 to support the "Hartford Boy" — Costas Genos, a third-class student from Panorama, a village of 300, high in the hills of Macedonia. He writes to his collective sponsors at least once a year and his grades are sent to the Hartford community at the end of each term. Costas is very proud to have been chosen as the "Hartford Boy" and is quick to tell you of this honor.

And there are many others: The Campus Chest at Cornell University, The Ladies' Benevolent Society of the Congregational Church in Old Lyme, Connecticut, the Meadow Lakes retirement village in Hightstown, New Jersey, Blair Academy in Blairstown, New Jersey: — But never enough.





## A DAY IN MAY

### Typical for Farm School Boys

*Note: This past spring your editor spent a day as a Farm School student—the following relates some of what filled that day.*

To me six o'clock was an uncivilized time to arise; anyway there they were — eight of them — singing outside my door "Good morning, Mr. Brinkley, good morning to you."

They waited while I dressed and took me in tow to the dining hall — my bread, jam and tea was taken at a long table with my eight "buddies" and other members of the third-year class. They all spoke some English, but communicating with any one of them would have been spotty. However, within the group I could always count on someone knowing the word I used and translating for the others.

The whole class was waiting for me outside the chapel when I arrived at two minutes after 7:00 a.m. It seems they were planning to surround me during the service to help me with the Greek singing. Chapel consisted of a scripture reading, several hymns, and a brief message for the day; all led by a senior student. I must admit the enthusiasm, yet reverence, with which these boys approached a religious service was very moving.

Since I had no books or study assignment, I was allowed to skip Study Hall at 7:15. But by 7:55 at least ten boys came searching for me. It was time for chemistry class.

Costa Boukouvalas, the teacher, proved to be a hard taskmaster: after two students stumbled in reciting formulae supposedly committed to memory several weeks earlier, he called for a written quiz. Ten questions were asked and, as I was later told, they were quite difficult. As the papers were handed in one boy leaned over and whispered to me that Mr. Boukouvalas was their best teacher — "he is hard but the boys all like him."

Ancient Greek was next. Somehow the boys seemed better prepared for this. The teacher, obviously a product of the "old school," required the students to stand when reciting or reading aloud from the text. We had verb conjugation drill, dictation, and pronunciation practice; all at a brisk clip — no hesitating or stammering allowed. Yet I noticed that when a jet passed overhead every face was turned to the window and every eye got a little brighter. They were still boys first, students second.

The English teacher, who came in at 10:30 was an American at the Farm School on a Fulbright grant. His class was taught in English — now I could understand what was going on. His questions on sentence structure, verb forms and vocabulary often taxed my memory. And when he called for recitation, he called on me too. The students may have been more nervous when they were called on, but I doubt it. Ten of us were asked to give a brief description of our "villages"; imagine calling New York City a village. At 11:15 when the class adjourned, the boys applauded — the teacher I think, but

maybe it was my recitation.

The next hour was modern Greek literature. This was a restless hour for us all, not because of the subject matter but because we were getting hungry.

Bean soup! Have you ever had the Greek version of bean soup? They call it *fasulada* — much better than the bean soup I used to have in the Navy. The boys liked it too; they did not even bother with the sardines served with it — just several bowls of soup and four or five slices of that good Greek bread.

Those that spend the morning in classes must spend the afternoon in the shops or in the fields. My group went to the field, some to gardening plots and some to field crops. Four of us were assigned a tractor and an instructor and sent into the northeast fields to plow. Each of the boys knew more about tractors and plows than I. At least they could run the tractor without jerking it when they released the clutch and they could plow a straight furrow or a contour one when they wanted to. The instructor rode with each of us making corrections or suggestions as necessary. And when not driving we watched, profiting from the other's mistakes.

We were sure that the John Deere tractor was not also equipped to irrigate the fields. But water was pouring from the block right into the plowed track. When the instructor noticed he called time out for a lesson in tractor repair. Off came the hood; out came the hoses; on went the gaskets. But we still watered the fields. The afternoon was only half over and the field only partially plowed, but this tractor had to go back to the shop for more extensive repairs. The boys asked if they could take out the new Ford. It was much bigger and had attachments

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### JOICE LOCH, TOWER DWELLER—WORLD TRAVELER!



Friends of the American Farm School know Joice Nankivell Loch for her book, *A LIFE FOR THE BALKANS*, the biography of the School's founder, Dr. John Henry House. Or, they may know of her weaving program at the Girls School where rugs made to her intricate designs are woven under the skilled

direction of a teacher trained in a workshop originally organized by Mrs. Loch. They may even know that she came to Greece and the American Farm School in the early 1920s when she and her husband, Sydney Loch, worked with a Quaker relief team relocating Greek refugees from Turkey and Asia Minor during the exchange of populations. Some may, during a visit to the Farm School, have made the journey across the Chalkidiki Peninsula to Ouranopolis where Mrs. Loch lives in a Byzantine tower. But by reading her newly published autobiography, *A FRINGE OF BLUE*, published in November by William Morrow & Company (\$5.95), they may find themselves even better acquainted.



## NEWS FROM GREECE

### Dairy Project Brings Hadjis to U.S.

Demeter Hadjis, Director of Instruction at the Farm School, recently made a trip to the U.S. to observe modern dairy farming in the U.S. Utilizing his new-found knowledge, he will soon be constructing plans for a new dairy project at the School to show Greek farmers how a small dairy herd can be maintained adequately by one man and can produce "clean milk."

### Record-Breaking Registration

More boys, and girls too, applied for entrance at the Farm School this year than ever before. Many had to be turned away but the School did take in more than its normally acknowledged capacity. For the first few days there were not even enough beds for the students.

### Lack of Spring Rain Ruins Grain Crop

February, March, April and most of May — no rain. The result was an almost totally ruined grain crop. This grain crop normally brings some \$20,000 into the School each year which is used to offset operating and scholarship costs. This loss is requiring us to cut back on staff and reduce some of the programs at the School.

### NEW BOOK ANALYZES GREEK POLITICS

A bloodless military coup in the early hours of April 21, 1967, brought parliamentary constitutional government in Greece to an end. Why did it happen?

Jane Perry Clark Carey and Andrew Galbraith Carey (Farm School Trustee) analyze some of the causes in *THE WEB OF MODERN GREEK POLITICS*, published in November by Columbia University Press (\$6.95). They discuss the history and geography of the country, the character and attitudes of the people, the political process and such personalities as Georgios and Andreas Papandreou.

"During the centuries of foreign occupation Greece had little opportunity to develop effective local self government" and "no practice in local voluntary organizations . . .," the authors say.

Among the stumbling blocks to stable democratic government, Mr. and Mrs. Carey show, are the unresolved questions of monarchy versus republic and the powers of the king versus the powers of the prime minister.

## A DAY IN MAY

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that plowed twice as much area in one passing. None of the boys had used it before but I would never have guessed it. After a brief moment of orientation, they were quite at home in the driver's seat.

It was approaching six o'clock when we rode back in triumph through the School gates, the envy of all the first- and second-year boys who had spent their afternoon in some lesser pursuits.

I had already asked the cook; there was no bean soup for supper. And I didn't have to go to classes tomorrow so didn't have to spend two hours in Study Hall with history, mathematics, geography, Greek and English books. As I limped off to my room I could hear, "Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye! — Goodbye Mr. Brinkley, goodbye."

### SPECIAL NOTE TO OUR MANY FRIENDS

In terms of quantity and quality of students, the Farm School has begun its most successful year. Some qualified and deserving boys had to be turned away. Those enrolled have had better preparation and exhibit more potential than any entering class of recent years. This is one of the indications of the increasing understanding and appreciation by the Greek people of what the Farm School is doing for Greece and its boys and girls.

In trying to meet this increasing need, the School is going through difficult times financially. The School's Trustees and staff are making operating adjustments in an effort to keep the budget in balance, but not too many economies can be made without seriously cutting into our basic program.

As you can see, it is now more than ever important that the School enlarge its circle of friends and supporters. Perhaps you know of someone who would be interested in hearing about the School. If so, send his name to us at the New York office. Or maybe you would like to show our color movie on the School to your friends, or church or club? Write to us about it.

# The Sower

FROM

## The American Farm School

Thessaloniki, Greece

ΑΜΕΡΙΚΑΝΙΚΗ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ

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