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N E W S L E T T E R

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The most recent news from the American Farm School is a message from Mr. House dated November 17th:

"We hope," he said, "to celebrate Thanksgiving next Thursday when probably 200 persons will sit down to Thanksgiving dinner after a Thanksgiving service in our chapel. We have many things to be thankful for, and not the least is that all thirty-six of our staff mobilized a year ago, most of whom served in the front line during the war, returned safe and sound."

A letter from Mrs. House dated October 16th gives us further assurance of the safety of the staff and school property:

"To walk about the place," she writes, "you would think that school surely was in session, for everything except the classes in James Hall is moving along, and we still have several of our boys who are orphans working in the various departments."

We began our October News Letter with the word that Mr. and Mrs. House had returned to the School on August 7th after the closing of the American Red Cross offices in Athens. We know little about the next three weeks but by September 1st we learn that the question of water as well as food had become a very great and worrisome problem. Mr. House proceeded to carry out his plans for raising as much food as possible, and getting fuel or power of some kind that would insure adequate water supply for the farm families, farm crops, and farm animals. All this has been a big undertaking, requiring the ingenuity and energies of everyone on the place. How they are meeting these problems are best described in Mrs. House's own words. On September 1st she writes:

"I had a gift of two bags of potatoes, instead of chocolates. I've had them sunning in the yard for three days because a number of them are soft. It rained heavily in the night and my first thought was potatoes, so I slipped out of bed and dragged the blanket with the potatoes close to the house. I knocked against the tray table which I have on the porch and it made such a clatter I feared I would arouse the guard on duty because of the thieving going on. The other night we didn't have enough water for the cows, which would mean less milk, and Charles had to arrange for pumping until two in the morning, but he told the soldier on duty the circumstances so that the boy could get to his room when he had finished pumping.

"Charles is working feverishly with a gang of workmen changing the water pipes for he is very concerned about the water; it has been a very dry summer and the wells are low. Yesterday we drove over to a nearby village to see if we could buy a windmill. We will have to make one if we can't buy it. Two of our graduates live in this village and they spent most of the day with us. We had fish

for lunch which was a great treat. Demeter Kamallakis, one of the Society of Friends scholarship boys, has developed a good business there; he has a fish net factory and this year, because of the transportation problem, he is salting fish in barrels. He told us that he wrote to Mother House for her 90th birthday, and her reply came while he was in the hospital with frozen feet. Fortunately, they did not have to amputate and he can walk all right now. He is a handsome fine boy.

"This week," she continues, "we are trying to make sugarless jam, by cooking apples, pears and plums, then adding a double amount of cooked strained currants and letting it stand in the sun a few days. It is a little like apple butter in flavor and now that we have no table butter it is especially good for breakfast. Charles was able to buy a ham for 2,700 drachmas (about 12 dollars) which is not bad as prices are today."

On September 3rd Mrs. House writes:

"A new boy came to school with his mother in hopes that the school would be opening soon. He lives in a village beyond Olympus so had quite a distance to come and was very disappointed we couldn't help him.

"We sold the Ford Sedan today for more than it cost six years ago. It is a great relief for we needed the money for our wells and water system alteration. We still have our 1929 station wagon for urgent necessity but we walk mostly to town (three miles each way).

"It is so warm and sunny today I am writing out of doors. The old Russian gardner is now putting out sweetpeas, narcissus, and other spring flowers as I write. I called on Mr. and Mrs. Doolas recently, (Mr. Doolas was science teacher at the School). They are very homesick for the Farm but Mr. Doolas has interesting work. He is with the Institute of Plant Breeding and is collecting seed from the villages. He sees many of our boys as he travels about which, of course, means a great deal to him.

"What a joyous feast we had yesterday. A friend from Athens brought nine home letters. We took turns eating lunch, Charles reading while I ate, and then I read while he finished his.

On September 22nd she writes that with other women of the staff they had cut out 92 baby shirts for the sewing group, and that it was so warm and sunny they did their sewing out of doors. "I gave the children scraps of flannel and they snipped them into tiny pieces which we can use for the stuffing of a quilt for some baby."

She comes back once again to the matter of the water system and says that Mr. House hoped to get the main connections finished by the last of the week:

"Although Charles hasn't been able to locate a windmill for sale, he is making progress with the water system. The soldiers living in James Hall must leap across two ditches to get to the front door because he is putting in a new water line. There will still be a lot to do before the whole thing is completed, but the part that must be done in dry weather in the ditches is almost completed. We had one day of heavy rain but the rest of the time has been perfect for the work and now the ground is just right for the ploughing too. Charles spends much time in the evening making a model of a windmill that we expect to make in the shops. The mechanics of the tail is complicated to explain and he has made a

model that works in the same way as the big wheel so that he can explain to the men how to make it."

Two items of general interest came in a letter dated September 28th. The first was that it had been possible to open three more baby centers, and second, that arrangements were being made for shipments of food from Turkey. Mrs. House writes that conditions in Athens and even in Salonica were growing more desperate daily, but from the headquarters of the Greek War Relief Association we learn that at least four ship loads of food had arrived by December, with hopes of more to follow.

"It is cold and rainy today," she continues, "but we have a nice wood fire in the fireplace in the living room where I am typing, and Bonika, the seamstress, is working on a lovely suit made from silk, which was a touching gift to Charles from the people of one village. We've had just enough rain to soften the ground for ploughing and the fields look fine. The men are working on the road back of the playground, dormitory and James Hall, leveling and grading and getting the land between the road and the buildings and athletic field ready for the Finley Memorial grove. It already looks very different and will be ready for the planting at the proper time in November or December. It is surprising what a difference the grading makes in the attractiveness of that part of the Farm."

On November 6th she writes:

"Our flour mill is working beautifully and the bread delicious. Also all four wells are working, the first time in many years so I guess our water problem is over for the time being if we can continue to get fuel oil for the engine. If the officers quartered in our home get too cold we may even have oil for the furnace here in the house, although if that is not possible we have the stoves up and plenty of wood for the winter.

"The School has rented the ammunition dump property for a period of two years so that we will have more fields for wheat and the seeding is being done as fast as the weather permits. Our love and thankfulness for our blessings."

In our October News Letter we made the statement that a \$10,000 obligation has been incurred by the School for necessary indemnities required by law in connection with the discontinuance of the Academic Department due to war conditions. As a result of the necessary discontinuance of the academic work and the reorganization of the Farm School as a practical farming enterprise, it is hoped that it will be a self-sustaining institution for the duration of the war or until its normal functions may again be resumed. The \$10,000 debt remains, however, and its liquidation calls for the sustained cooperation of us all. Mr. and Mrs. House have remained in order to keep alive the spirit of the institution, to hold together a very valuable group of teachers, and to do all in their power to help the Greek people. They have remained voluntarily and gladly, and with great faith in the future. Busy as they are with immediate and pressing problems, they are, in their own words, "full of plans for the future". We believe the friends of the School will do their part here.

Ethel H. Bliss