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AMERICAN FARM SCHOOL • THESSALONICA, GREECE

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

News-Letter

Fall - 1948

IT WAS GOOD NEWS when the Greek Ministry of Agriculture decided that courses sponsored by the American Mission for Aid to Greece, should be given at the School. In order to provide space for special students and their teachers, funds were allocated to complete the restoration of James Hall. This building, you will remember, was partially destroyed by the Germans when they left.

This new program was superimposed upon the regular work of our small staff. While we cheerfully accepted the added responsibilities, they mean that the School needs your support in even greater degree. This new development demonstrates how unlimited are the School's prospects for helping Greek farmers - if only the means were available!

"The course in the operation of farm machinery started with 30 refugee boys, between the ages of 14 and 18," Mrs. House writes. "They are called 'bandit-stricken boys' - that is, they are all boys who have been driven with their families from their villages. Hundreds of them are living in refugee quarters in Salonica, with nothing to do. About 100 came out for examinations. We felt so sorry for them, for it isn't their fault when they can't read or write. One was so stage-struck with fear that he managed to read only when the head of the Ministry of Agriculture for Macedonia suggested that he go off by himself and finally, in a corner, facing the wall, he suddenly began to read.

"The group has class work in the mornings and in the afternoons actually operates various farm machines. The boys are so serious and so thrilled with the experience. I wish you could see the difference in them, after only ten days here and three or four baths, good food, clean clothes and interesting things to do. They have been cooped up in the city for months, often three or four families in a single room, and now, to

have only four boys in a room with fresh beds, pretty bed-spreads and curtains, flowers on their dining tables, and plenty of good food, and friendliness - they are quite different boys."

WATER IS desperately needed to increase agricultural production in Greece, so a course in deep-well drilling has been given at the School. This has produced four new wells on our property. Only one of them has proved to be a flowing well, i.e., does not require pumping, but even so, a great addition has been made to the School's water supply.

"We have put in a water trough at a fork in the road, and when some trees are planted it will be a lovely spot. A farmer, passing along, stopped to watch the fountain of water flowing through the ditches in the field, and said: 'If I were rich, this is what I would like to do - dig wells along the roadsides of Greece for the men and animals passing by.' Almost every evening we walk down to the 'babbling brook' and stop to listen to the running water and rejoice in the sound and all that it means in this dry and thirsty land."

THE FIRST AND ONLY certified TB-free herd of purebred cattle in Greece, is now the proud possession of the School. We have accepted the obligation of giving to individuals or institutions designated by the Ministry of Agriculture, offspring of these animals equal in number to the original herd.

"They are beautiful animals: 11 Jersey and 12 Guernsey cows and 1 Jersey and 1 Guernsey bull. The cows were pretty wild when they were being led from the trucks to their stanchions - they had been in their stalls on board ship for 30 days with no exercise - and were frisky. This morning they were all peacefully chewing, very much at home, while the little first-year boys rather gingerly brushed and curried them.

THE HARVEST was good. "We've never had more gleaners than this year, even during the war - crowds of ragged women and children, following along behind the combine. A little boy with a pair of such ragged pants that only a few ribbons covered him, came to the door. He was all wet and shining from a good scrub at the fountain, and said: 'Somebody told me, lady, that if I came to you I could get some clothes'. Charlie asked him how he had come - 'Just by myself', he said, 'to eat your mulberries'. Our trees are full of them so I hope he had a good meal. Fortunately I could fit him out with shirt and pants."

FALL PLOWING is done, and things are ahead of schedule on the farm. The new flowing well has made it possible to plan for five or ten acres of alfalfa for next year. With alfalfa, one of the basic problems of keeping livestock at the School will have been solved.

OPENING OF SCHOOL. Registration is not yet complete (mid-October) as it has become more and more difficult to travel through the country because of increased activity by the guerrillas, and more mined roads. Also, the families of our boys are finding great difficulty in meeting the required payments for board.

TRAGEDY BROUGHT CLOSE. "We have one of four brothers. One is in the Greek Army, fighting in the mountains; the second was captured by the guerrillas, escaped, was recaptured and condemned to death; the

third was ordered to drive his flock of sheep through mined fields, in front of Army forces, and was badly injured by a mine."

TRUSTEES. The Board had first-hand reports of the School at its October meeting. Charles Morgan had visited it in August and found it in good shape, and very active in preparation for the expected larger enrollment in the fall.

Our new trustee, Herbert P. Lansdale, Jr., is an old friend of the School. He has just returned from a year in Greece where he was Director, Division of Relief and Welfare of the American Mission for Aid to Greece. He had visited the School several times during his stay in Greece, and gave an interesting report of conditions at the present time.

GIRLS' SCHOOL. You will be glad to hear that the British Friends' Service Council has decided to continue its operation of the Girls' School until June, 1950. Started in 1945 in quarters left by the Germans on our land, its work parallels ours and there is close cooperation between the two Schools.

MORE LAND is greatly needed by the School. Through the years it has been about two-thirds self-supporting, the remaining third being supplied by contributions. If it is to maintain this ratio, we must have more land in order to support the larger School population.

With the eyes of people all over the world being opened to the necessity of conserving the resources of the land, you will be interested in parts of the Farmer's Creed, read each year in Greek and in English at Founder's Day Exercises:

I BELIEVE in a permanent agriculture, a soil that shall grow richer rather than poorer from year to year.
I BELIEVE in living not for self but for others, so that future generations may not suffer on account of my farming methods.
I BELIEVE that tillers of the soil are stewards of the land and will be held accountable for the faithful performance of their trust.
I AM PROUD to be a farmer and I will try to be worthy of the name.

THROUGH YOUR HELP, in spite of danger and uncertainty, the School goes on; a haven from present fear and a hope for the future.

Elizabeth Alsop Shepard

Mrs. Lawrence H. Shepard
Executive Secretary