Meet the German People

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Recommended Citation
Cruickshank, Sandra (1958) "Meet the German People," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 38 : No. 6 , Article 8.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol38/iss6/8

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Meet the GE as Farmers

by Sandra Cruickshank

Sports are important to youngsters both in and out of school. Here my ten year old brother leaps a homemade hurdle, one of a set of three he has put together for fun and practice on nice afternoons.

GERMANY . . . America . . . so alike and yet so different. For two months this summer I lived with a family in Germany under the Experiment in International Living, a program based on the conviction that personal relationships between people are the foundation for international understanding.

I lived as the daughter of a German family, learning how to think and act as they do, growing to appreciate their values and their way of life. Housekeeping and marketing were done each morning. Dairy products, vegetables, and bakery goods are bought in different shops. Each family has a vegetable garden, some fruit, and flowers.

Much of what we ate came from our garden. Other foods we could buy cheaply from relatives in the country. The only refrigerator we had was the pantry. In preparing a meal, everything was placed on the table on serving plates. These are put back in the pantry after each meal, and when the supply runs low, more are added.

For each meal, we had three different kinds of bread with tomatoes, two kinds of sausage, cheese, and bacon strips. The bread was spread with butter and the topping added. This open face style is eaten with a fork. At breakfast we had homemade jam. Lunch was usually the hot meal of the day with cooked vegetables or soup and meat which could be veal or any one of a variety of wursts. At supper we had hard boiled eggs. My
People and Friends

family bought 72 eggs every two weeks from a small egg farm in the country. At meals it was quite proper to let the hand and wrist of your left hand rest on the table. In fact, the hostess may think you don’t appreciate her meal if you don’t have both hands on the table!

Cleaning house was as simple as fixing a meal. The entire process of dusting, sweeping the floor, airing and making the beds, and cleaning the bathroom took about one hour each Thursday morning. Friday the kitchen was scrubbed and the shelves cleaned and straightened. Saturday the living and dining rooms were swept and dusted.

Because of the rains this summer, most of the crops in our area had to be harvested by hand. Some of the grass crops had been hit so badly that they were down and not worth much. Most of the smaller villages own farm machinery on a cooperative basis.

The farms are made up of plots five to seven acres. The farmer will own several unconnected plots. The reason for this is that through the years, the land is passed on to children and grandchildren who split it up and pass it on to their children. The land is a part of the family and the people would rather work land their ancestors had farmed than to divide the land proportionately.

Because of the low and level topography of the country in the north running into the Alps in the south, there is a difference in agriculture. Most evident to the traveler

These agricultural pictures are similar to American rural scenes except for the hand work. Often there is a Holstein cow hitched to the wagon instead of a horse and hand tools are used instead of motor-driven machines.
is the fact that the farmer in the north has Holstein cows while the one in the south has Brown Swiss. The cows compare on a high level to our average farm herd. However, the Brown Swiss are a little different in conformation. They have more of the beef characteristics than our good dairy cows do. The majority of the bull calves are sold as vealers while the heifers are kept in the family herd.

Northern Germany lists potatoes, and sugar beets as important products while southern Germany specializes in vineyards. The grass crops of rye, wheat, barley, oats, and hay are important all over the country.

Germany has many hogs, but few sheep. Poultry products are largely imported.

Many of the families I talked to have lost faith in politics. Because their parents were promised so much by Hitler and all they got was a war-ravaged country, the young Germans are determined not to have the same thing happen to them. Of the 11 young people whom I knew only I would bring up the subject of politics. Only half of the others knew enough for a discussion.

The first week I was there we discussed integration, education, music, and the comparative economic systems. Visiting in the schools, I discussed American sports, TVA, gangsters, and why I was in Germany.

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