



Faye Stoner looks at several slides taken in Germany. A German cookbook has also provided a number of special meals.

Youth learns new culture as German IFYE

By SALLY BAIR
Farm Feature Writer

While worldwide acts of violence make daily newspaper headlines, there are literally thousands of young people whose work at promoting better understanding among peoples goes along quietly and effectively, but largely unnoticed.

Faye Stoner, 1051 Eden Road, Lancaster, had the unique opportunity of living and working with seven farm families in the Federal Republic of Germany as a delegate in the International Farm Youth Exchange (IFYE) program. The IFYE Program is sponsored by the National 4-H Foundation in Washington, D.C., and part of the cost of the exchange was provided locally by clubs, civic organizations, businesses and individuals.

Fay is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. Raymond Stoner and will resume her studies this month at Millersville State College where she is a senior majoring in psychology. She returned to this country in early December.

Fay is modest in talking about any great implications her visit to Germany may have had, but she spoke with enthusiasm and humor about her experiences.

Fay's seven host families were in seven different West German states, so she really had an opportunity to see a lot of the country. One family lived in West Berlin, which she explained, is not just a city, but a county as well with parks, farms and open space.

The German countryside was not too different from thickly populated eastern Pennsylvania. The families, too, were like families in this country in many ways, but Fay found some distinct and interesting differences and customs.

In international living there is one common area of interest to which everyone can relate: food. German food, according to Fay was quite good.

Her German host families ate four meals a day, and in one family there was even a fifth eating time, a second breakfast. Despite all this eating, Fay seemed to have remained slender.

Breakfast was a simple meal, Fay said, usually consisting of white, hard rolls, unsalted butter, jelly and coffee. Occasionally there would be a variety of wurst (luncheon meat) and on poultry farms there would sometimes be hard cooked eggs. When asked if the men fared alright on this seemingly meager breakfast, Fay explained, "The men just ate more."

She added, "The rolls for breakfast were usually fresh, and sometimes I had to bicycle to the village bakery to get them."

The largest meal of the day was eaten between eleven and twelve, according to Fay. She said her host mothers always used a tablecloth and set a nice table. The meal began with soup, either a hot broth of cold fruit soup, sometimes served with a roll. If there was meat it was probably pork, Fay said, and there were almost always potatoes boiled in salt water. There were vegetables such as string beans or spinach and fruit such as apples. Occasionally there would be a salad with a homemade dressing of vinegar and cream.

For desserts there might be pudding, but never a cake-like dessert, said Fay. "The heavy desserts were reserved for the afternoon."

In summer there was iced tea, usually served lukewarm and on dairy farms there might be milk. But, Fay said normally there was nothing to drink. "They didn't think water was healthy."

Every family took a break about 3:30 or 4:00 p.m. for coffee time. The men came in from the fields and everyone made a real effort to relax and enjoy themselves, Fay said. At this time there was coffee, of course, and often a fresh fruit cake served with mounds of whipped cream. Fay said, "I always thought coffee was coffee, but theirs was really different." It was drip coffee, and perhaps that made the difference, she said.

The evening meal was light, Fay said. There would be several different kinds of bread and wursts and several kinds of cheese. Occasionally there would be hot wursts, which resemble our hot dogs, and sometimes there would be soft cooked eggs served in egg cups and eaten with a spoon. There would be iced or hot tea, depending upon the weather, Fay said or flavor- or unflavored tonic water.

Fay said it was her observation that her German hosts had more household appliances than families here. Each home had an automatic dishwasher and automatic washing machines. There were also coffee grinders, blenders, mixers, and no home is without a bread slicer since all bread is purchased unsliced. Fay said, "They had machines to do everything."

Despite this, she observed, "The cooking was all done from scratch." Her host families were rather familiar with the foods we eat and were very curious about the use of prepared foods here. Fay said, "They wondered what women do with all the time they must have."

Fay made some American favorites for them, including apple pie, which they all enjoyed, she said. But she added, "None of them understood about pie crusts." she tried pumpkin pie twice, but had two failures.

She also baked chocolate chip cookies, working with block chocolate which she cut up, and without baking soda. "They were edible," she said with a laugh.

Sweet corn, especially corn on the cob, is not well known in Germany, but is available in some markets. So Fay purchased some and prepared it for two of her families, both of whom liked it.

Markets were common in every town or city, and often they were outside, Fay said. She explained that there was clothing, spices, fresh vegetables and flowers and just about everything available at these markets.

Homestead Notes

Grocery shopping for the families, Fay said, was done at supermarkets. A marked difference, however, is that the German Housewife provides her own container in which to carry home her purchases, and she does her own packing of the groceries. Also, Fay said, they often went to the store several times a week.

Every farm home had a garden, according to Fay, and she often helped her host mother with the garden work. She said, "There gardens are amazingly neat and everything is so precise it is incredible." She said she almost had the impression that everyone used the same blueprint for the garden because all the vegetables seemed to be in the same place at each home.

Fay, whose American father grows lots of strawberries, said the strawberries in Germany were "very tasty." She explained, "Because of the latitude it took a very long time to ripen and they became very sweet."

In Germany, Fay noted, there is "much emphasis on the family." She said Sundays are very important days for the family - everyone dressed nicely and they did things together.

She had expressed an interest in seeing retirement homes there and said she found "some private and fancy and some simply adequate." But in many cases, she said, the German families "felt the responsibility to keep older members of the family at home."

She said she felt this had some advantages to everyone. "Younger people can see how older people live. But it was a strain sometimes." Frequently two generations lived under one roof. She said only one of her host families didn't have a grandmother living with them, and in some cases there were other relatives.

In one home the grandmother had her own fully

equipped apartment, and simply came by once a day to say hello to the family. This, Fay said, worked out well for both generations.

Fay said that in most cases she was received more as a guest in the home than as a member of the family. But she said, "I tried to help with little things around the home." She explained that with two generations in a home, and often a young apprentice who was there to learn homemaking skills, there really was not too much to be done. Most of the women spent their days cooking and cleaning, she said. The farms on which she lived were also highly mechanized, and so the women did not need to work outside the home.

Farm women would not consider a career outside the home, Fay said, "They seemed fulfilled as a provider in the home. They felt they had a lot to do."

But, she said, "For those who chose a professional career they were looked at as equals. The professional women with whom I came into contact had an awful lot of responsibility."

Fay characterized the clothing as being "nice clothing, well-made." She said the German women were stylishly dressed, with up to date clothing. She said, "They seemed to follow fashions closely. But they wear the same thing over and over, and usually have plain, conservative colors."

Dirndls, the German dress with jumper, blouse and apron, are reserved mostly for church and weddings. Fay brought home an appropriate blouse and is now busily sewing herself a jumper and apron which she will don when she gives presentations on her trip.

In her opinion, the children with whom she lived were not very well disciplined. She said, "They were treated as though they had the right to have their own will and opinion. Little boys seemed to get away with more than little girls."

With a laugh she said that the German IFYEs who had lived in the United States had the opinion that American children were not very well disciplined.

One real enjoyment for Fay was "the fact that there was so much emphasis on exercise - bicycling, walking and getting fresh air. The Germans are very health conscious." Often she said they will take their vacations at a health resort.

Another good factor is that "their transportation is very efficient. Even the smallest towns are connected by railroad or bus, and you can travel to any remote area by bus," Fay said.

One large difference in the architecture was that in each case, the house and barn were connected. Fay said, "It is convenient and saves space. You had to go outside the home to get into the barn." There were no problems she said, but sometimes "I could hear the pigs."

Not surprisingly, Fay said there was much emphasis on antiques in Germany. Most pieces had been handed down over many generations. Fay said many of the farm houses in which she lived were quite old, as much as 400 to 500 years old. She said it was a funny feeling to live in homes which were built before the United States was developed.

History was always present in Germany. Every family, Fay said, talked about the war. She said, "They wanted to tell me about it, how it was for them. The young people didn't understand the impact it had on their parents' lives."

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Reporter wanted

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