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A description of a year as fifth grade teacher in the Army Overseas Dependents School in Paris, France.

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A DESCRIPTION OF A YEAR AS FIFTH GRADE TEACHER IN THE
ARMY OVERSEAS DEPENDENTS SCHOOL IN PARIS, FRANCE

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A DESCRIPTION OF A YEAR AS FIFTH GRADE TEACHER IN THE
ARMY OVERSEAS DEPENDENTS SCHOOL IN PARIS, FRANCE

By

Florence Dmytryk

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A problem presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of
Science Degree

University of Massachusetts

1958

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	11
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
Reasons for Interest in the Problem	2
Purpose of the Study.	3
Limitations of the Study	3
Sources of Data	4
CHAPTER II. PROBLEMS PECULIAR TO THE PARIS AMERICAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	5
School Organization	6
Opening of School	8
Transportation of Pupils	10
Lavatory Situation	14
Heating	17
Illness in School	18
Pupil Transfer.	19
Pupil Adjustment and Attitude	20
General Problems	21
Teaching Satisfactions	21
CHAPTER III. CORRELATION OF CURRICULA TO THE ENVIRONMENT . .	23
Arithmetic	24
Language Arts	25
Music	28
Art	30
Social Studies	32

CHAPTER IV.	THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM	34
	Purpose	35
	Teachers	37
	Procedures	39
	Teaching Problems	42
	Evaluation	43
CHAPTER V.	AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS IN OVERSEAS SCHOOLS	47
	Importance of Audio-Visual Aids	48
	Availability of Audio-Visual Aids	49
	Importance of the Field Trip	52
	Field Trip Procedure	53
	Summary	63
CHAPTER VI.	PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN PARIS	64
	Housing	65
	Language Barrier	67
	Currency Conversion	67
	Food Shopping	68
	Cards of Identity	68
	Travel Difficulties	69
	Visiting Tourists	70
	Other Adjustments	70
	Professional Advantages	70
	Travel Opportunities	71
	Summer Employment	72
	Attractions of Paris	72
	Summary	73

CHAPTER VII.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	75
	Summary	76
	Conclusion	77
APPENDIX A.	LETTER OF APPRECIATION	80
APPENDIX B.	SOCIAL STUDIES UNIT ON FRANCE	81
APPENDIX C.	FIELD TRIP DATA SHEET	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY	87

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Reasons for Interest in the Problem. Teaching, one of the most noble of professions, has frequently been shunned by young people because of the confining life commonly associated with it. Within the past decade or so, opportunities have arisen to make it one of the most attractive professions. For the qualified teacher, many doors have opened. No other popular career, except service in the Armed Forces, offers comparable opportunities to travel and live in other lands.

Positions are available, through various organizations, in many of the countries of the world. The Department of the Army is responsible for the majority of these positions. Over 1,500 teachers are employed by the United States Army in Europe which has established 107 American Dependents Schools in France and Germany, alone.¹

Few educators seem to have any idea of the vastness of this program and the opportunities available to them through it. There is little need for recruitment. It is safe to say that no school system can choose its applicants from as large a number as apply yearly to the Army for teaching positions. In the Army's welcoming letter distributed at Bremerhaven,

¹"USAREUR School Enrollment Report" (Karlsruhe, Germany: Headquarters, United States Army Dependents Education Group), pp. 3-4. (Mimeographed.)

Germany, the port of debarkation, the following comments are included:

"Through this port enter the finest school teachers of the world!" Each of you was selected as the best qualified of thousands who applied for a teaching position here in Europe.² You are fortunate. We are fortunate to get you.

However, many who would avail themselves of the opportunities of the program fail to hear of it or have too little knowledge of the set-up to be tempted to apply for a position.

Purpose of the Study. This paper, then, is an attempt to give a statement of the problems, basic opportunities, and challenges confronted by a teacher in these schools. It is hoped that this study will encourage interested educators to participate in the overseas teaching program.

Limitations of the Study. This is necessarily a limited study, based on the writer's experience as a fifth grade teacher in the American Dependents School in Paris, France. Much of the material is confined to the situation which existed in that school in the academic year, 1953-1954.

The purpose of the overseas schools is "to meet the needs of the American boys and girls enrolled and to provide educational opportunities which are comparable to those offered in the better schools in the United States."³ Contained within

²Personal Correspondence of the Author, letter from Lt. Col. Beryl Simpson, August 10, 1953.

³"Administrative Regulations for the Education of Dependents Program" (Karlsruhe, Germany: Headquarters, Dependents Education Group), p. 39. (Printed.)

this aim is one of the main objectives of education today: to prepare the child for participation in a world society.

Educating American children on foreign soil offers one of the most challenging opportunities for developing this objective. Therefore, it is mandatory that the child be enabled to make fullest use of his stay in a foreign country. In attempting to do this, teaching abroad differs from teaching at home, and it is on these differences that the stress is laid in this description.

France, in 1953, was a relatively new area for the overseas schools. The Army had had no opportunity to build any installations and was dependent upon whatever facilities the French made available to them for their schools and other quarters. The teachers were forced to live largely on the French economy. For these reasons, the teachers in Paris faced many problems, both in their classrooms and their personal living. The most unusual of these are described in detail.

Source of Data. Many of the incidents presented in this study were imprinted upon the author's memory or found in notes kept and letters sent home. The basic material regarding policies, curricula, and organization was obtained from literature issued by the United States Dependents Education Group located in Karlsruhe, Germany and from the Office of Civilian Personnel, Department of the Army in Washington, D. C. Where specific incidents and feelings have been mentioned, the data was verified by writing to co-workers and parents involved.

CHAPTER II

PROBLEMS PECULIAR TO THE PARIS AMERICAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

the grades were also scattered throughout the capital and members of the same family might each attend in a different building, it took weeks before the buses were running smoothly.

The forty buses covered a distance equal to that from New York to San Francisco daily.² Much of this mileage was through the labyrinth of Paris traffic, a much publicized and well earned distinction of that famous capital.

When the bus situation was finally smoothed out, a remarkably intricate but workable system was in order. In the morning, all children were deposited at Cimerosa. Those who did not attend the two buildings there boarded a bus for their destination.

Because of the long day, the first and second grades were dismissed an hour earlier than the rest of the school. Therefore, in the afternoon, an entirely different method was employed.

The children were dismissed in three separate groups. First, those who lived in SHAPE Village and would be taken directly home formed in line. They were followed by those who would transfer to different buses at Pont St. Cloud. The children who would change to other buses at Place Neuilly completed the line. Each afternoon the children left the room in response to "SHAPE", "St. Cloud", or "Neuilly." When all

²Personal Correspondence of the Author, letter from the Board of Education, Paris American School, February 2, 1958.

of the principal, school secretary, and transportation head were located here. The teachers were required to report to this building at some time during the day in order to transact any school business and to receive APO mail.

Across the street, at 4 Rue Cimarosa, in an old apartment building, were the second grades.

The three third grades, the three fourth grades, and two of the fifth grades were in what had once been the Bleriot Aircraft factory. It had been leased by the American Army for Army offices, the Post Exchange, the Commissary, enlisted men's quarters, the motor pool, and other Army facilities. The high school was also situated in one of the Pentagon-like corridors of this structure. This building was on the outskirts of Paris, about eight miles from the two schools on Rue Cimerosa.

About midway between these two buildings, at 53 Rue Faisanderie, in a small but once elegant chateau, were the other fifth grade and the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

The fifth part of the school was located at Orly Airport because of the large group of Air Force children living in that particular section. It had four elementary classrooms. The older children attended the schools in Paris. Since this school had its own principal, the staff of the related schools had little concern with it.

The schools were referred to as Cimerosa, Cimerosa 4, Bleriot, Faisanderie, and Orly respectively.

When the teachers arrived in Paris, during the last week in August, only the high school and the building at 3 Rue Cimetosa were available. Finally, Paisanderie and the other building at Rue Cimetosa were rented. On the Saturday before school started, the Army, finding it impossible to negotiate with the French for another building, decided to relocate a number of its offices so that some of those in two of the corridors at Bleriot could be used for school purposes.

French laborers were immediately set to work tearing down the walls between outer and inner offices in order to make rooms large enough to accommodate at least twenty-five children each, by Tuesday of the coming week.

Opening of School. The teachers assigned to Bleriot, meanwhile, realized it was necessary to make some effort to have the rooms look inviting to the children. Because the Army discloses one's place of assignment only when one reaches the port of debarkation, and because the grade assignment is given out upon arrival at the place of employment, few teachers carry much with them in the way of equipment. This group was no exception. A visit to the TWA Airlines Building provided the fifth grade teachers with splendid pictures, which would serve to orientate their first social studies unit.

On Labor Day, the staff hopefully went out to view their rooms. The walls had now been removed between most of the

offices. For some reason, the wall in one of the fourth grades was not torn down, and for over a month, the teacher had the pupils' desks in what had been the main office. Her desk, the bookcases, and all other furniture were in what had been the secretary's office. At this point, however, there was nothing in any of the rooms except a large desk suitable for the teacher, an ash tray, a bulletin board, and much debris. It seemed impossible that school could start on the next day. Nevertheless, the teachers adorned their walls, believing that the atmosphere of the first day set the stage for the entire year.

On the following morning, all the teachers met at Cimerosa to sort out the vast conglomeration of children. Teachers and children then boarded the various buses and proceeded, through the maze of Paris traffic, to their respective buildings. At Bleriot, as the children dismounted from the buses, they were re-sorted according to teachers.

Teachers and children arrived at their rooms to find French workers carrying desks, books, and other supplies and equipment. The pupils pitched in to help. If ever children learned by doing, these children did. They learned that setting up a classroom is an arduous task and that love and a sense of pride and belonging go along with the hard work in preparing a schoolroom.

Finally, the classes found themselves settled in a somewhat disorderly fashion. It was now possible to check the

files for each grade. Many children were registered for the wrong grade. Extra files were assumed to represent those who had not yet arrived in Paris.

The reason for these difficulties are easily understood. Since France was not an occupied country, all personnel assigned there were forced to find their own housing on the French market. Because of this, the men arrived in France in advance of their families, sending for them when a suitable rent was found. In order to facilitate the school organization, the father was asked to register his children for school immediately upon his arrival. Apparently, men find it difficult to remember the grade level of their children. It was also because of this problem of early registration that some prospective pupils were not in France when school opened.

Since the children were to be dismissed at noon on that first day, there was no time for any sort of introduction to the year's work. Once it was ascertained that the children were in the proper rooms and grades, the remaining time was devoted to giving out morning and afternoon bus numbers and boarding directions.

Transportation of Pupils. The problem of getting the children to school was perhaps the greatest which the Paris American School had to face. The pupils were scattered throughout the large city and its suburbs, wherever their parents had been fortunate enough to obtain housing. Since

the grades were also scattered throughout the capital and members of the same family might each attend in a different building, it took weeks before the buses were running smoothly.

The forty buses covered a distance equal to that from New York to San Francisco daily.² Much of this mileage was through the labyrinth of Paris traffic, a much publicized and well earned distinction of that famous capital.

When the bus situation was finally smoothed out, a remarkably intricate but workable system was in order. In the morning, all children were deposited at Cimerosa. Those who did not attend the two buildings there boarded a bus for their destination.

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²Personal Correspondence of the Author, letter from the Board of Education, Paris American School, February 2, 1958.

the children were properly arranged, the teacher in charge of bus boarding for that week would lead the children through the long corridor, down a flight of stairs, across the Army motor pool, and into a waiting room.

The buses were usually ready and waiting. However, the children sometimes had long waits, on these buses, at Neuilly and St. Cloud. Here they met the buses from Faisanderie and awaited some of the buses on their return rounds from delivering the first and second graders. Because of the traffic problem, buses were often delayed, and it was not unusual for a child to arrive home as late as 7:00 P.M. These long bus rides had their effect on the children, and, during the first weeks of school, it was not uncommon to find a pupil beginning to doze during the last hour of the school day.

None of the four schools had any play area nor was there any in the near-by vicinity. The children carried their lunches which they ate in their rooms. Afterwards, if weather permitted, the children were taken to Paris' magnificent Bois de Boulogne for forty-five minutes of recreation. Two of the teachers accompanied the group to the park. Four buses were sufficient to transport the elementary classes at Bleriot. Rarely did any bus make the ride either to or from the Bois in the allotted twenty minutes. Usually the children were on the bus for at least an hour for the round trip. Here, at the park, they met their friends and brothers and sisters from Faisanderie. The little people from Cimerosa had been brought out and returned

Before the older contingent arrived.

The children were allowed to play any games with the exception of baseball. The flying balls might frighten the horses as bridle paths wound throughout the area. When some American soldiers had been caught innocently playing the game here, the French government took the Bois privilege away from the schools. It was over a week before the Army was able to straighten out the situation. During that period, the children had no outside activity.

The children spent a great deal of their day on the buses. This was especially true on their library day. For those at Bleriot, a library period scheduled for ten o'clock meant that the pupils were off the buses only long enough for opening exercises. At 9:15 they again boarded a bus for the long trip into the library at Cimerosa.

All librarians in the Overseas Dependents Schools were nationals who spoke English fluently. Mademoiselle always helped the children to select their books. This gave the teacher the thirty minutes to select a number of books for classroom use.

The group returned to the classroom with perhaps fifteen minutes of class time left. After a half hour for lunch, the children were on the buses again for the park. They usually returned at two o'clock which gave them an hour or so of school work before closing and the long trip home.

The buses were also used for the numerous field trips,

which often took a full day during which the classes rode many miles through and outside of Paris.

The short teaching day meant using every available opportunity to cover subject matter. The boys and girls loved to sing to while away the time spent on the buses. Many of their music lessons were given to them as they were being transported. Oral book reports on the way to the library aided the children in selecting their books for the new week. Much of the preparation and follow-up for field trips was accomplished during the long rides to and from the particular point of interest.

Lavatory Situation. Another big problem faced by those at Bleriot was the lavatory situation. At the beginning of the year, there were two available toilets, one for the girls and one for the boys. Because these were located in a wing of the building separated from that in which the children were taught, it was necessary to cross the Army motor pool in order to reach them. Crossing through this immense garage was extremely hazardous as military vehicles were constantly moving through the area. Because of the danger, the teachers felt obligated to take the class as a group to the lavatories. This meant at least three toilet periods each day -- after arrival each morning because of the long bus ride, before the lunch period so that the children could wash their hands and be ready for the Bois period, and before dismissal in preparation for

the trip home. Therefore, it was in the hallway, where the toilets were situated, that spelling matches and social studies quizzes were held and mental arithmetic problems were solved. Not only did this method save valuable school time but it also kept the pupils occupied as they awaited their turns.

It was, of course, natural that the children would also ask occasionally to be excused from the classroom. It soon became automatic for the teacher to grant permission with a solemn warning concerning the dangers involved in crossing the motor pool. Little third graders would often stop for an older fifth grader as a guide for the trip. When a child would be gone beyond what would be considered a reasonable length of time, the concern would be so great that the teacher would leave her classroom to search for the tardy one.

Fortunately, before any injury occurred, permission was granted to the school to share the two lavatory rooms used by the Army office staff. These were three corridors away but were much welcomed as it was possible to reach them without leaving the building. They also contained about eight toilets each so the toilet periods were very much shortened.

However, a new problem arose, which, although it had the complete sympathy of the teaching staff, was never completely resolved during the year. The fifth grade boys would constantly complain that the French cleaning women remained in the lavatory room while they used the urinals. Realizing

the embarrassment of ten year old boys, the teachers would ask the principal to remedy the matter. She, in turn, would appeal to the Dependents School Officer, who is assigned by the military commander of the post to act as liaison between the school and the local military command.³ From here, the subject would go through the long and devious routes of Army channels. The matter would eventually be straightened out for a period. However, as all visitors to France know, the French have no pretensions regarding bodily functions, and the teachers fought constantly to obtain what they considered one of the most basic of privacies for the boys.

The toilet problem was a constant one, especially on field trips. The boys found a happy solution by imitating their French counterparts and making use of available bushes and vospasiennes. For the girls, the solution was not so simple. With the necessary francs in hand, they would search for the now familiar "WC" sign. Too often, they would be confronted with what resembled a floor drain and would suddenly decide that the visit was unnecessary. Educationally, perhaps, the francs were a good investment, for the girls learned most pointedly the difference in plumbing standards between the United States and France.

³"Education of Dependents Program, EC-M 710-1" (Heidelberg, Germany: Headquarters, United States Army in Europe), p. 7. (Printed.)

Heating. For the first month of the school year, the classrooms at Bleriot were sandwiched in between the remaining offices in two of the corridors. Respecting the fact that people were working, the teachers were cautioned to carry on their teaching with a minimum amount of noise. This restricting condition was remedied as the cold weather approached.

Regardless of temperature, the French date for turning on heat in any building is October 15. During the early fall days the rooms were often quite cold, and those located in the north corridor of Bleriot were especially so. Therefore, the warmer corridor was turned over completely to the school.

Although it was difficult to teach against the noise of walls being torn down, the teachers welcomed the freedom which came with the new arrangement. Activities that had been curtailed because the noise might be distracting to the office workers could now be indulged. In addition, the extra rooms gave Bleriot a music room, an art room, a teachers' lounge, and a pupils' cloak room.

Until the anticipated date of October 15, all of the rooms were uncomfortable. Because the Army was a guest in a foreign land and did not wish to invite criticism, the dress of the children during school was regulated. Even on the coldest days, the girls were not allowed to wear slacks. The pupils wore much of their outside clothing in the classroom during these days. There were frequent absences due to colds and sore throats.

Illness in School. Pupils who became ill during school time presented such a grave problem that notices were constantly being sent home asking parents not to send any child to school who showed the slightest signs of not feeling well. Although an Army ambulance was always in readiness at the main school, Cimerosa, no child could be taken home during the school day until it was verified that an adult would be there to care for the child. This was difficult, and sometimes impossible, to do. Many homes were without phones since, if there were no phone in the residence when rented, the occupants would have to pay the full installation fee, which was equivalent to about twenty-five dollars in United States currency.

Only the school at Cimerosa had a telephone with an outside circuit. All the other schools were on a closed circuit which included only the American Army installations. When a pupil became ill at Bleriot, the teacher would call Cimerosa. The secretary would attempt to reach the home. If she were successful and learned that an adult was present, she would call back with the news that the ambulance was on the way to pick up the sick child. If the secretary could not contact the home, she would try to locate the child's father. This was often a long and time consuming process. Frequently, the father was not sure that the child's mother or a maid would be at the house. Sometimes a French neighbor would be reached who would assume responsibility for the ill child. If neither

parent nor any neighbor could be reached and it was felt that the child was too sick to take the long bus trip home, he would be sent to the American Hospital in Paris, and the information would be given to the father's superior officer who would become responsible for contacting the family.

Pupil Transfer. All teachers in the Overseas Dependent Schools had the problem of pupils continually transferring from school to school. This situation was more pronounced in Paris where the abilities and specialities of those parents assigned to SHAPE and NATO were such that frequent transfer from country to country was to be expected. A brief description from a survey made in the Paris American Elementary School in June of 1953 is included to give an idea of the number of rotations encountered. Of the twenty-six eighth grade graduates, all had attended at least six different schools on two continents; six had attended twelve schools on three continents, and two had attended sixteen schools on four continents.⁴

In addition, because of the difficulties of school transportation, a number of children attended French schools, but transferred to the American school as rotation time to the States neared.

⁴Taken from a survey made for Admiral B. W. Coe's address to the eighth grade commencement class at SHAPE headquarters, June 9, 1953.

The varied educational backgrounds of the pupils and their continual entrance all during the year imposed a further burden on the teacher.

Pupil Adjustment and Attitude. The children adjusted quickly to their new environment. The fathers had accepted changes of station as a necessary part of their military careers. Many of the Army wives, however, found it difficult to adjust to foreign living. In the occupied countries, on the large bases, the facilities provided by the Army enabled the families to retain, in large part, their American way of life. In Paris, the American homes were scattered among those of the French. In the interest of diplomacy, it was not possible to duplicate the installations' facilities permitted in other commands. In many cases, the women were reluctant to accept the challenge of participating in the French way of life. Sometimes there was great bitterness toward the French and their culture. This attitude was reflected in the children and made it difficult to carry out a basic part of the school program which was to teach French, and to encourage and develop an understanding and appreciation of the culture, customs, and living habits of the French in their everyday life activities.⁵

⁵Miller, Fred L. et al. Teachers' Guide for Elementary Schools. Karlsruhe, Germany: O. F. Müller, Buchdruckerei und Verlag, 1953. p. 132.

General Problems. There were, of course, many other problems encountered by the teachers in Paris that were, however, common to all the Overseas Dependents Schools. The language barrier, the tendency of military personnel to expect ordinary responsibilities such as medical care and museum entrance fees to be assumed by the Army, the reverence for and fear of superior rank all were to be found in any of the overseas schools. Pupil travel, when the opportunity presented itself, was always encouraged. It was felt that vacation trips through Europe might be more valuable educationally than the school time lost. The teachers were constantly assisting pupils to cover missed material. These general situations are mentioned only to give a more complete picture of the writer's teaching year.

Teaching Satisfaction. Although it is evident that the difficulties faced by the American teachers in Paris were many and varied, the rewards were equally so. Parents, military, and school administrators were fully cognizant of the situation and realized the efforts of the teachers to maintain high scholastic standards while overcoming rather unusual handicaps. Their understanding and appreciation of the work of the teacher (see Appendix A) helped to maintain a high staff morale.

The children had rich and full backgrounds. As a result, they had many interests and much to contribute to the daily school work. They were eager learners, and their wealth

of experiences enabled the teacher to cover with them material beyond that of the minimum requirements for the grade, in spite of the fact that teaching time was extremely limited.

There was an unusually close relationship between teachers and pupils who together shared the problems of the school day. School represented a certain security for many of the boys and girls. It was here that a large number of them found almost the only continual contact with familiar objects and routine in their lives. Moreover, school was the only place where a majority of the children had an opportunity to participate with their American peer groups. The children's open enjoyment of the school hours more than compensated the teacher for the many problems of the year.

CHAPTER III

CORRELATION OF CURRICULA TO THE ENVIRONMENT

CHAPTER III

CORRELATION OF CURRICULA TO THE ENVIRONMENT

The overseas schools were set up so that the child could get the greatest good out of his experience of living in a foreign country. Wherever possible, subject matter was correlated to the environment so that the pupil might participate more fully in the life of the community. Although many suggestions were given for integrating learning material with everyday life experiences, much of this work was left to the initiative of the teacher. This chapter is a summary of how the fifth grade teachers attempted to meet this challenge through the subject matter of the grade.

The children faced many of the same problems in adjusting to their new environment as did the teachers. Primary, of course, was the need to learn to speak the language of the country. Because the foreign language program played such a large part in the overseas schools, it is covered at length in a separate chapter.

Arithmetic. Much of the arithmetic was geared to the children's immediate needs. They learned to change francs into dollars and dollars into francs. It was important for them to understand the relative value of the two money systems.

France uses the metric system of measurement. Therefore, the pupils had to become familiar with two measurement

systems. They also developed the ability of changing English units to metric and metric to English units. A favorite pastime of the boys, while riding on buses, was to translate the number of kilometers on road signs into the equivalent mileage.

The armed services and many schedules conform to European time. The children had to be given practice so that they might be equally proficient in meeting demands expressed in either a twelve hour or twenty-four hour method of time measurement.

Many of the arithmetic problems were taken from concrete experiences. The children often brought in genuine arithmetic situations faced by themselves or their parents in their new environment. In this way, the students were given the opportunity to apply concepts learned at school to their own real problems, and arithmetic terms and processes were made more meaningful.

Language Arts. Since language was correlated with so many other subjects and was often taught as an outgrowth of other activities, much of it was related to the environment of the child. The pupils made oral and written reports of school field trips or family excursions to places of historical and cultural interest.

Children frequently made extended trips with their families during the school year. The educational value of

these trips was emphasized in the classroom, and the fifth grade children were required to keep diaries of their activities while traveling. They were encouraged to send cards to the school so that the entire class might share in the experience. A typical card received read:

Dear Miss Daytryk and Class,

We have traveled through northern France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy. We have seen many interesting things, including Rheims Cathedral, champagne cellars, the castles along the Rhine, the Passion Play Theater, Ludwig's Castle, the canals in Venice, Rome, and the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Today we are swimming in the Mediterranean Sea.

Sincerely,

¹
Barbie

The pupils often referred to encyclopedias for information on places visited or to be visited. A card, such as the one quoted, stimulated the children to look up data on the localities mentioned.

Many miles separated these children from their grandparents and other relatives. This situation presented an ideal opportunity to develop letter writing ability. Field trips were often followed up by writing letters to family members in the States. After Christmas, the children wrote many "thank you" notes for gifts received.

Because of these writing activities, the children were

¹Personal Correspondence of the Author, card from Barbara Schmidt, April, 1954.

taught to spell many words common to their surroundings. In their regular spelling lists, special attention was given to words derived from the French language. By capitalizing on the children's interest in these words, both their English and French vocabularies were developed.

The teachers found it necessary to present more than the usual amount of formal grammar instruction in the fifth grade. The foreign language teachers, unable to break away from the European system of much early grammar teaching, presented many rules of French language construction. The teachers found that the children understood the French grammar more easily if they first knew and understood the grammar of English.

The overseas children had a keen interest in the literature of all countries. Because of their rich backgrounds, they had many connections with the locale of numerous books and stories. The teachers took advantage of the situation and introduced many of the classics to their pupils.

Pupils who visited Copenhagen usually returned with copies of the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen to share with their classmates. A trip to England almost always included a visit to Stratford-on-Avon and attendance at one of William Shakespeare's plays. The children enjoyed the dramas but rarely understood them. Tales from Shakespeare by Charles and Mary Lamb made interesting reading for these children and

gave them an easy and pleasant introduction to the works of the great playwright. In England, the children usually were taken on a tour of Kensington Garden where the famous statue of Peter Pan is located. They were anxious to read or reread Peter Pan on their return.

Particular attention was given to the literature of and about France (see Appendix B). A few of the brightest children read Les Miserables and The Hunchback of Notre Dame.

These are but a few examples of the use of pupil interest to enrich the knowledge of literature; the teachers were quick to seize any similar opportunities which presented themselves. They were handicapped by the necessarily limited number of books in a school library and the absence of an American public library for children. Book orders, because of the distances involved, were slow in being filled. The children shared their personal copies of books, and they often requested books as gifts from relatives in the States.

Music. The rich and famous European musical environment influenced the nature of the music instruction given in the overseas schools. The usual length of attendance for children in the American schools in Europe was three years. Because of this short period, emphasis was placed on singing and listening to music, rather than upon theory. The aim of the music program was to stimulate in children a love for singing, a desire to sing well, and to develop a knowledge of and a love and

appreciation for good music.² The special music teacher, the classroom teacher, and the foreign language teacher worked together in using the cultural facilities offered by the environment in carrying out these objectives.

The French teacher taught the children some of the simple native songs. Pupils who had transferred from other countries often shared their knowledge of the songs of those countries with their classmates. The music teacher taught many of the well-known folk songs of European countries. The children loved to know the background of the pieces and to identify the nation of origin.

Group singing took on a new meaning in the overseas school in Paris. As previously mentioned, much of the traveling time on buses was whiled away by singing. Songs which lent themselves easily to this pastime were eagerly welcomed by the pupils. The children were taught the principles of harmonizing and were surprisingly successful in producing their own harmony for popular melodies.

Notices of scheduled concerts, operas, and performances of professional artists were sent home to encourage pupil attendance at the events. In preparation for these and future musical experiences, much time was given to developing the

²Miller, Fred L. et al. Teachers' Guide for Elementary Schools. Karlsruhe, Germany: C. D. Müller, Buchdruckerei und Verlag, 1953. p. 139.

child's power to listen intelligently. The children were taught to focus their attention upon those features of the music which were readily meaningful and satisfying to them. They were helped to identify themselves with the music to which they listened by being invited to express their feelings in reaction to the recording being played. Preparation also involved active listening to passages from musical works to be presented in the Paris theaters and summaries of the stories of forthcoming operas. Time was given to pupil interpretation of musicals attended. Through directed questions on the teacher's part, a fuller awareness of the power and beauty of the music was achieved.

Interest in composers was stimulated by enjoyable listening experiences, both in the classroom and the theater. Many of the children had visited the birthplaces of famous European composers and contributed information gathered on these tours. Pupils who had lived or vacationed in Austria were especially able to contribute recordings and lore gathered during their stay.

In summary, a well-planned program in music appreciation was conducted in the Paris American School so that the children could benefit from the cultural music activities of Europe during their years abroad.

Art. Appreciation was also an important phase of the art program. The school at Paris had the unusual privilege

of having at its doorstep some of the world's most famous works of art. Mandatory field trips were undertaken for the study of pictures, sculptures, architecture, crafts, and interior and fashion design. Touring parents and children visited many art museums and galleries throughout Europe.

The schools' philosophy was that appreciation is a continuing process through life and that it comes as a result of a growing awareness of the qualities in natural and man-made things.³ Since such a process leads to a richer daily life, it was vital that the advantages offered by the Louvre and other museums be used to the fullest.

The pictures for study were selected within the range of the child's interest and understanding. The school headquarters sent out a suggested graded list of pictures, artists, nationalities, and location. Further appropriate lists were found in books on art education in the school library. Many fine picture prints were purchased at French book and art shops.

Although special emphasis was placed on the art treasures found in Paris, paintings and sculptures to be seen in leading museums of other cities also received attention. The children traveled widely, and it was felt that this background would further their interest in viewing original works of art.

³Ibid., p. 157.

Social Studies. The overseas schools believed that social studies are learning areas concerned with the world of human beings in their relation to one another and to the physical environment in which they live.⁴ The present day world, with its most remote corners within easy reach, has made it more imperative than ever that understanding of people of all nations be achieved. The American schools in Europe felt an added responsibility in attempting to fulfill this charge because of their advantageous location.

The teaching of French and well-planned field trips, covered in Chapters IV and V respectively,⁵ was an important part of this program. A knowledge of the history, geography, and culture of France was necessary so that the children might better understand the French people. Emphasis was placed on how the environment affected their manner of living, their food, clothing, shelter, and their economic life and government.

The social studies major experience area for the fifth grade was the history and geography of the United States. The teachers found that by bringing out the similarities and differences between the two countries, they were able to give the children an understanding and appreciation of the relative roles of the United States and France in the world of today.

⁴Ibid., p. 71.

⁵See pages 35 and 48.

It was felt that when the children traveled outside of France they would continue to observe the similarities and contrasts between the people of other countries and their own. In seeking for the reasons underlying these observations, the boys and girls would develop a deeper understanding of and more positive attitudes toward people of other lands.

Much attention was given to the individual differences in pupil background in the social studies program. Many of the children had lived in several countries; a few could not remember their years in the United States. Attitudes previously formed towards people of other nationalities varied. Sharing of experiences became an important part of the program. All available textbooks, reference books, community resources, and audio-visual aids were used to the fullest in achieving the goals of the social studies program.

In actuality, the children and teachers in the Paris American School were part of a vast social studies experiment carried on by the very existence of American schools in a foreign environment. It called for successful, cooperative living among the people of France and careful preservation of the child's American heritage and democratic viewpoints.

Almost every phase of the school program was related to carrying out this goal. It entailed continual correlation of subject matter to the environment. In addition to the major areas of integration covered in this chapter, others are included in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER IV

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

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Foreign language instruction is provided in the Overseas Dependents Schools for all children from the first through the twelfth grades. Since the teaching of a foreign language in the environment of that language is a unique feature of these schools, a general picture is presented so that the reader may have a clear idea of the program in its entirety. A personal evaluation of the program is included with the hope that educators will see the value of even a necessarily limited study of a second language by elementary school children.

The study of a foreign language was started in the first overseas schools in Germany in 1946. The experiment proved extremely successful and was felt to be responsible, in great measure, for the development of good will between the German and American schools. As overseas schools were opened in other countries, the practice of teaching the language of the country throughout the grades was continued.

Purpose. Three basic objectives were set up for this program: (1) to impart in a short time the rudiments of a speaking and listening knowledge of the foreign language, (2) to improve and expand the speaking and listening knowledge of the foreign language acquired previously, and (3) to deepen and expand the child's understanding and appreciation of the culture

and civilization of other countries of the world so that he may participate in and contribute to the life of the foreign community.¹

The immediate purpose of these three objectives was to enable the child to get the greatest good from his experience of living in a foreign country.

However, the ultimate purpose of the program was concerned with one of the basic aims of the overseas schools: to prepare the child, through participation in native cultures, to accept a place in world society.²

It was constantly stressed that the school be concerned with the development of all people for peaceful living in one world.³ The learning of a second language led the children into experiences and discoveries of the life and behavior of other peoples through which they received a broader and more sympathetic understanding of the social, economic, and political world of today. It was hoped that the attitudes developed through the program would be lasting and would result in greater mutual respect and understanding between our citizens

¹Beerbaum, Alfred W. "Textbooks and the Curriculum for Foreign Language Classes" (Karlsruhe, Germany: Dependents School Division, August, 1949), p. 12. (Printed.)

²"History of Education of Dependents Program" (Washington: Department of the Army, June, 1953), p. 3. (Printed.)

³"Administrative Regulations for the Education of Dependents Program" (Karlsruhe, Germany: Headquarters, Dependents Education Group, January, 1954), p. 39. (Printed.)

and other peoples.

Teachers. Language instruction in all overseas schools is performed by native language teachers. In France, the French government set up regulations concerning the hiring of French personnel by Americans. The French, when possible, required the native citizen to have the same background as an American taking the job would have. Teachers were required to have a Bachelors degree, one year's training in an English speaking university, and teaching experience. The Army was in accord with these stipulations, but it also laid much stress upon the candidate's fluency in English and flexibility in adjusting to American teaching aims. In the elementary schools, it was highly desirable that the French teacher's experience had included work with young children. The Army summarized its non-academic requirements as follows:

The German and French personnel employed in the USAREUR elementary schools must possess a pleasing personality and a friendly spirit of cooperation with teachers and parents. They must be tactful, considerate, and patient with children in all grade levels, be able to meet both American and German or French school visitors, and be reasonably well informed in their own country's customs and traditions. They must be able to speak the English language correctly and fluently and be able to make proper translations and interpretations of printed matters in both English and their own language. They must be free from pronounced dialects and colloquialisms and use only the pure language of their country in talking with American children. 4

¹Müller, Fred L. et al. Teachers' Guide for Elementary Schools. Karlsruhe, Germany: C. F. Müller, Buchdruckerei und Verlag, 1953. p. 124.

The French teachers had many conferences during the school year in order to become more familiar with American teaching philosophies. American-type workshops were held in Paris during the summer so that the teachers might prepare and evaluate teaching materials. Many of the upper grade lessons and most of the simple lower grade texts were worked out and mimeographed by the French teachers in the workshop. The lack of proper materials imposed a great burden upon these teachers. The American teachers had access to a great many texts, workbooks, and graded study units properly prepared for the learning level range of the children. The French teachers were in the process of preparing and selecting their guides and texts.

Since the program involved emphasis upon the culture of the country as well as fluency in the language, much stress was laid upon integration of the foreign language with other subjects and projects. This involved the development of resource units during the summer workshop period, in addition to the preparation of basic language teaching materials.

Although the French teachers were not required to adopt American teaching methods, they were expected to be in sympathy with our educational philosophies. Children were to be regarded as individuals with separate learning problems and backgrounds. Encouragement and emphasis upon individual success were to be used as motivation for learning rather than

fear of failure and punishment.

It was hoped that the French teacher would recognize the fact that learning takes place more quickly when it is made interesting and also, especially for the very young children, enjoyable. In this connection, it should be stated that the writer's experience was that the language teachers were quick to imitate, and add to, the American teacher's devices for learning, although there was no pressure on them to do so. For example, the flannelboard was filled with cut-out animals and other objects to teach French names and colors to the children. Local holiday celebrations were dramatized, and puppets were used to demonstrate a custom or introduce an idiomatic phrase.

Procedures. At the beginning of the school year, much attention was paid to the children's immediate language needs. The very first lesson was devoted to the child's learning the correct pronunciation of his street and house number. Greetings and conversation exercises with familiar expressions were introduced during the early lessons so that the child would be encouraged to use the new language immediately with neighborhood children.

Soon after the beginning of the language classes, after the children had learned a number of words, sentences, and phrases in the new language, only the language being taught

was spoken in the classroom. Exceptions were made whenever it was obvious that explanations were not being understood or that too much time was lost in getting the child's response.

Pronunciation was the all important factor in the speaking of the language. The flexibility of the young child's speech mechanism is such that he is able to master the sounds and inflections of a language accurately. It would have been extremely foolish not to capitalize on this ability. Therefore, as mentioned previously, only teachers who themselves are masters of the pure French were employed, and correct pronunciation was stressed throughout the entire program.

Vocabulary lists and idioms were prepared by the language teachers with American children specifically in mind. These lists were flexible and were altered to fit the needs of the children as these needs became known. The teachers encouraged every effort of the child to use the language in and out of school so that he would expand his word knowledge.

Grammar plays an important part in the European schools, and the children were expected to master the rules of construction of the foreign language early in the program.

Memory work is also considered most important in foreign schools. As a result, the American children memorized many French songs, poems, and prose selections.

Reading and writing of French was secondary to speaking

the language. It was found that children with sufficient vocabulary were anxious to read the new language and progressed rapidly. Writing was kept to a minimum until the fifth grade.

Homework plays such an important part in the European schools that it seemed impossible for the language teachers to carry out their work without it. The American teachers felt this to be the biggest problem in the foreign language program. Parents often complained about the amount of French homework assigned. Because of the time spent traveling on school buses, it was absolutely necessary to limit the amount of work given for outside study. No more homework than could be completed by the average student in thirty minutes was allowed in the fifth grade. However, the French and American teachers differed in their interpretation of the time necessary to complete various assignments, and, as a result, the classroom teachers refrained from giving the pupils any outside work even as extensions of learning experiences developed in school.

Much attention was given to French culture and customs. The children were introduced, early in the year, to the native people's social mannerisms so that they might feel at home with their French friends. They compared mutual holiday celebrations and took part in the celebration of the national holidays of France. As a result of a study of the food habits of the French, the children prepared and served a meal of French courses. Playlets were written which dramatized the lives of heroes of France.

Whenever possible, foreign relations activities were integrated with other subjects. To illustrate this, a specific unit entitled, "A Social Studies Unit on France," is included as Appendix B.⁵

The field trip was an indispensable aid in enriching the foreign language program, correlating the work of the language class with other studies and interests of the children, and encouraging French-American relations. Many of the excursions were taken as a result of suggestions and arrangements made by the French teachers.

Teaching Problems. From the viewpoint of the foreign language teacher, the two most difficult problems encountered in the American schools were: (1) disciplining American children and (2) taking care of transfers who had no instruction in the language of the country.

The overseas schools believed in a more relaxed type of atmosphere than that found in most European schools. Child participation and democratic methods of developing standards were encouraged. It was difficult for the French teacher to adjust to so free a situation even though she might be in complete accord with its merits. Although the French personnel

⁵Prepared in workshop of French language teachers under Mlle. Monique Lhomelais, Paris, France, July, 1951.

were expected to be able to handle the classes alone and to take care of their own discipline, the regular classroom teacher often remained in the room until the language teacher had adjusted to the less formal teaching situation.

Occasionally, the discipline problem was aggravated by parents who did not realize the value of the program. In these cases, they did not consider the mark in French important either because of their own attitude toward the country, or because, in all likelihood, the study would not be continued in the States, and the child would soon forget what French he had learned.

Constant transfers were a problem to all teachers in the overseas schools. New pupils presented a greater difficulty for the foreign language teacher because, unless they transferred from another section of France, they had had no previous instruction in the French language. Interested parents often paid for special tutoring. The language teachers devised various methods for helping these new arrivals while meeting the needs of the regular pupils.

Evaluation. In evaluating this program, it would seem that personal observation of actual situations where the use of the French language was necessary would be of more value than any formal testing program. Using such criteria, the results were extremely gratifying.

On field trips where only French speaking guides were available, the third year students of French were able to provide immediate translation of the guide's explanations. They were also able to translate, without hesitation, the questions of the teacher and of the less advanced French pupils.

On long field trips, the bus drivers often found it necessary to have a child obtain road directions from a gendarme or a passer-by.

The teachers were extremely dependent upon the children for delivering messages to the French building employees. The children would explain, each afternoon, to the cleaning woman which boards were to be washed and which were to be left untouched.

Although the reading of French was not particularly emphasized in the fifth grade, it was found that the third year students of the language frequently selected French story books from the library.

Many parents reported that they found their children's French speaking ability invaluable in everyday living situations. Often the entire business transaction between the French landlord and American tenant was conducted by the child. The children were also called upon to do any local marketing.

To the American teachers, it seemed that the young people absorbed the language by osmosis. Many of the children

transferred from other countries, and French was their third or fourth language. They acquired it as easily as they acquired their new friends.

The teachers, also anxious to learn French, attempted to participate in the children's classes. They soon found that they were unable to keep the pace set by the children. They were also forced to accept the fact that the time had passed for them to master a new language without an American accent.

It is, of course, too early to draw any conclusions as to the realization of the ultimate purpose of the program: the development of attitudes and understandings for successful international living.

It is known that many children developed lasting friendships with foreign children. They continue to correspond frequently. Several have managed to have their foreign friends visit them in the United States. The children were usually responsible for their parents becoming acquainted with French neighbors, and the adults were surprised to find that they had many common hopes and aspirations.

The two groups of the teaching staff developed a wonderful comradeship and a fine feeling of mutual respect. It was through the French personnel that the American teachers learned many of the intricacies of living in a new land. Both groups eagerly used the opportunity to search out reasons

for the problems that exist between the two countries and to compare the differences in school systems.

There are at present (January 1, 1958) 45,053 children in the Army Overseas Dependents Schools located in France and Germany. Approximately 100,000 children, grades one through twelve, have participated in the foreign language program in these two countries in the eleven years of the schools' operation.⁶ It is sincerely hoped that the training which these children have had in international living may be instrumental in producing a better world for all mankind.

⁶ Personal correspondence of Author, letter from Fred L. Miller, February 11, 1958.

CHAPTER V

AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS IN OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

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AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS IN OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

Audio-visual aids played an important role in the Overseas Dependents Schools. Since great emphasis was placed on the field trip, this chapter will be mainly concerned with that phase of the audio-visual program.

Importance of Audio-Visual Aids. The use of audio-visual aids and the conducting of excursions to points of interest were specified as major duties in the sheet, "Job Descriptions", for teachers of the elementary level in the overseas schools.¹ A large part of the "Professional Efficiency Evaluation Sheet" employed for teacher rating was devoted to her usage of these aids. One of the principal's responsibilities was to see that these instructional devices were properly utilized in every classroom.

The following were included as the most common audio-visual media: blackboards, bulletin boards, flannelboards, charts, films, filmstrips, slides, record players, tape recorders, graphs, maps, globes, models, posters, dramatics, radio, television, still pictures, and field trips. Their purpose was to produce better learning, a greater retention of

¹"Job Descriptions" (Washington: Department of the Army, September, 1952), p. 1 (Mimeographed.)

facts, and an increased interest in the subject being studied. They were, therefore, to be used to motivate learning, and to clarify, establish, and correlate concepts, interpretations, and appreciations.²

Within the school year, two PTA meetings were devoted to a demonstration and explanation of the purposes of the more recently perfected audio-visual aids and one of the oldest, the field trip. Parental education in this line was perhaps less needed in the overseas schools than in any other group of schools since the men had much experience with the Army's successful usage of these devices in its training program. However, it was hoped that such meetings would not only promote a better understanding of the program but would also encourage home emphasis on the educational nature of these aids and family trips to spots of historical and cultural interest.

Availability of Audio-Visual Aids. The school at Paris was supplied with 16mm. sound projectors, combination film-strip and slide projectors, a tape recorder, and a library of filmstrips. Each section of the school had access to a room with black-out curtains. It is interesting to note that although other important facilities were lacking at Bleriot a black-out room, even if in another corridor, was made almost

²Miller, Fred L. et al. Teachers' Guide for Elementary Schools. Karlsruhe, Germany: C. F. Müller, Buchdruckerei und Verlag, 1953. p. 146.

immediately available to the elementary classes. A phonograph and a supply of grade level recordings were furnished to every grade level group. The elementary library contained a cataloged supply of recordings and commercially produced still pictures. The teachers often interchanged personally owned slides.

Films and a more complete selection of filmstrips were kept at the headquarters of the French and German sectors of the overseas schools in Karlsruhe, Germany. Shipments were spaced at monthly intervals. Long range planning was, therefore, necessary on the part of the classroom teacher so that the reels requested would coincide with the subject matter being taught. It was possible, in special cases, to request a desired film by telephone. All shipments were received and returned through the school officer for accountability reasons.

Teachers were trained in the operation of sound projectors by the Signal Corps. All films and filmstrips were previewed by the teachers before showing them to their classes.

Arrangements were made with TWA (Trans World Airlines) officials for the classes to view any special television program in the auditorium of the TWA building. During the previous school year, the entire school watched the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on television through the cooperation of the airlines.

The TWA officials also kept the school informed of the

motion pictures which it had available. These films received greater usage by the Paris American Elementary School than those owned by the Army. The teachers adhered rather closely to the order of presentation of learning material as outlined in the courses of study so that transferring children would lose as little subject matter as possible. This meant a number of similar film requests each month, and it was often not possible for teachers to obtain from the Army a particular reel when desired. It was also a simpler matter to arrange for a TWA showing than to go through the channels necessitated by such a widespread school system.

The pupils, who came from all parts of the United States, proved a marvelous source for obtaining visual aids. Relatives in the United States were happy to send samples of native articles to help the children in their studies. For example, a cotton boll was received during the preparation for the study of the southern states, a box of maple sugar and a sample of wood pulp for the New England states unit.

Items regarded as commonplace in this country became extremely important visual aids while teaching American children in France. An example of this is United States currency. The children grew quite familiar with the French Franc and its value but frequently had no experience with real American money. The overseas Army used only Military Payment Certificates, commonly referred to as military scrip. It may best be

described as resembling play money. United States coins were also produced in certificate form. Army personnel and employees were forbidden to have paper money in their possession. Thus, smuggled American dollars and American coins were invaluable in giving the pupils an adequate understanding of their own money system.

Importance of the Field Trip. Particular stress was laid upon the field trip as an educational tool. The reasons for this, in addition to those recognized by all modern schools, were: (1) the belief that every child be given the opportunity to make his overseas experience as rewarding as possible, (2) recognition of the ability of children to participate in a program of cultural, linguistic, and idea exchange more rapidly than adults, and (3) recognition of the fact that preparation for life in the world of today involves a background of understandings for international living, and that the overseas schools are in an unique position to provide that background.³

The fifth and sixth grades in the Paris Elementary School averaged about two field trips per month. Unlike the high school classes which sometimes spent a few days in a neighboring country, the elementary grades confined their excursions to those which would not exceed the length of the school day.

³Ibid., p. 72.

Field Trip Procedure. The teachers were required to observe the following seven practices in carrying out the field trip: (1) careful selection of the place to visit, (2) teacher planning, (3) pupil orientation and preparation, (4) the actual visit, (5) discussion and recall, (6) pupil testing, and (7) completion of "Field Trip Data Sheet."⁴

Selection of a place to visit involved much more than choosing a spot highly recommended in a tourist's guide book. Selection meant correlation with at least one phase of subject matter.

In the fifth grade, where the pupils studied the history and geography of the United States, many opportunities were found to reinforce their knowledge of American history by showing the relationship between the history of France and that of the United States. On a trip to Versailles, for instance, the children learned that it was here that our Benjamin Franklin appealed to Louis XVI for aid to the colonies during the Revolutionary War. They visited the room in which the Treaty of Versailles which ended World War I was signed. They saw the hidden staircase by means of which the same Marquis de Lafayette who gave his services to our country protected Marie Antoinette from the revolutionary mobs which stormed the palace.

⁴"The Field Trip" (Karlsruhe, Germany: Headquarters, Dependents Education Organization), pp. 1-2. (Mimeographed.)

The children's interest in France's revolution, which followed our own so closely, grew. With the cooperation of the French teacher, they received a rich understanding of France's history and its connection with the history of our country. This involved visits to the Conciergerie, where Marie Antoinette was imprisoned until her execution; the Arc de Triomphe, built to commemorate the victories of Napoleon; Malmaison, the home of Josephine, Napoleon's first wife; Fontainbleau, where Napoleon lived for a period; and Les Invalides, where one must bow in order to view the tomb of Napoleon.

During their study of manufacturing, the children were taken to the Gobelins Tapestry Works and the Meunier Chocolate Factory. Here they were allowed to taste the chocolate in its various stages of processing and were given comic books and chocolate bars.

In connection with the art program, the class visited Notre Dame and the cathedral at Chartres. On these trips, they were able to learn of the love and labor which built these magnificent edifices. While studying famous paintings, the children were taken to the Louvre to visit these same works of art. During the Christmas season, they visited an exhibition of stained glass windows at the Cluny Museum. The boys and girls were also given an opportunity to join the ranks of artists in Paris and spent a happy hour painting on the Left Bank.

The science program included excursions to the Museum of Man, the Pasteur Institute, and the Zoo of Vincennes, the most complete zoo in all of Europe. Upon invitation of the French government, all the classes were taken to see the body of a whale which had been washed up on the shore of Normandy.

During the children's study of French numbers, a correlated arithmetic and French activity was a shopping trip to three of the large department stores. The excursion was planned during the Christmas season, and each child had the opportunity to purchase at least one gift. The French teacher also combined a trip to Sacre Coeur, an example of modern church architecture, with a French lesson in ordering food. Following visitation of the church, which was reached by climbing many stairs, the boys and girls each ordered a soft drink at an outdoor cafe.

A French lesson on famous national writers led to a journey to the Pantheon where, among other great men, Voltaire and Hugo are buried.

Although the teachers were urged to make previous visits to proposed field trip points, this was not always possible. However, it was found that the enthusiasm displayed by the teacher in visiting an unfamiliar spot of interest was contagious, and both pupils and teachers looked forward eagerly to the new learning situation. Nevertheless, the teachers were expected to have a clear picture of the objectives to be

derived from the trips. Since each teacher was required to complete a data sheet on every excursion undertaken, a record of possible trips and a summary of the experiences of the teachers who had made the trips was available. These records proved valuable aids to the new teachers in planning and selecting their trips.

Planning an excursion in a foreign country was a most complicated affair. It included the following steps: permission of the military post through the principal, securing transportation, attention to safety, sufficient supervision, permission from the institution to be visited, attention to the language difference, collection of fees, knowledge of holidays and closing days, establishing an acceptable standard of behavior, and a careful check on the time factor.⁵

Permission for trips was automatically granted except during periods of political unrest and around or on May Day. Nevertheless, it was always necessary for the teacher to check with the principal for military permission so that she might be relieved of responsibility in case any unfriendly incidents should occur.

The school transportation sergeant was responsible for dispatching buses and planning field trip routes. Because of the number of field trips each day, it was necessary for the

⁵ibid., p. 2.

teacher to schedule her trip at least one week in advance so that the sergeant might have sufficient time to arrange his bus schedule and discover the best road directions.

Safety precautions were of extreme importance. The children had many lessons concerning the dangers of crossing streets in Paris traffic. Various trips often presented other hazards, and it was urgent that the teacher foresee the dangers and prepare the children accordingly. For example, the trip to Notre Dame included a visit to the bell tower where the legendary Quasimodo rang the church bell and to the balcony outside the tower where a superb view of the entire city of Paris was obtained. A safety lesson had to be planned to point out the possibilities of accidents, unless unusual care were taken, on the dark, steep stairway and the unprotected, high balcony.

Safety aboard the buses was controlled by the Army Command. The school officer established the standards of behavior upon the buses, and non-compliance with the rules meant serious consequences for the child and his father. Drivers were exceptionally competent, and a guard was provided each bus to insure order and a second driver, if necessary.

The nature of the trip sometimes made it advisable to have parents accompany the group to give additional supervision. Usually, the driver and guard participated in the visit and assisted the teacher in seeing that each child was

able to observe all phases of demonstrations and points of interest.

Obtaining permission to visit the museums and factories was an intricate affair. Much interchange of telephone calls and letters is a matter of course for the French for all matters. The teachers were relieved of much of this burden when a French count, of apparently sufficient economic means, offered his services to the school in exchange for the opportunity to learn English by working with Americans. He became responsible for contacting the desired party, obtaining the required permission, and making arrangements to suit both the teacher and the place of visitation.

It was not always possible to carry out a desired field trip. No visitors were allowed in the perfumeries of France. A fifth grade request to see the Sevres Porcelain Works was granted and, at the last minute, rescinded. Permission to visit a motion picture company involved government approval and grew so complicated that the project was eventually dropped.

The teacher always had to take the language difference into consideration. Sometimes, the places visited had bilingual guides. At other times, the French teacher arranged her schedule so that she could accompany the group. On occasion, the school provided an interpreter familiar with the historic spots. Third year French students were capable of acting as interpreters and were often called upon to do so. At any rate, the language problem had to be resolved for each trip so that it

would be worth the time and effort involved.

The French extended the same courtesies in regard to entrance fees to the American school children as they did to their own school children. Usually, therefore, no fee was involved. It was customary, however, to tip the guide, and the children were required to bring money for this purpose. This sometimes presented a problem for the teacher as the parents frequently sent military scrip rather than French francs with the child. Since the use of scrip was confined to the Army installations, the teacher had to have sufficient francs to substitute for the Army money brought in by the children.

Because many of the museums were closed on one weekday and the French national holidays differed from those of the United States, the teacher needed to pay attention to the special observances of the French in making her plans for trips.

Behavior on field trips was a matter of some concern to the staff. Children were allowed to question the guides, to walk along in groups or alone, and to carry on soft discussions with their friends. This freedom was in great contrast to the paired, silent rows of French children who were often met on excursions. Although it was felt that the French public might misinterpret the controlled freedom of the American children as laxity on the part of the teacher, it was also felt that our philosophies should not be sacrificed for

the sake of appearance. Actually, on several occasions, French teachers complimented the American teachers on their group's adult behavior and confessed that if the same freedom were allowed the regimented French pupils, an uncontrollable situation would result.

Because of the complicated school transportation problem, all field trips had to be arranged so that the buses would be back in time to be used in delivering children to their homes, and the children would be in time to board the proper bus for their homes.

The children participated, whenever possible, in making the above plans. Standards of behavior were set up within the classroom. The majority of children had learned to regard the field trip as a regular learning situation. Occasionally, a new child, transferring from a school where class excursions were rare occurrences, looked upon the journey as a holiday. An explanation of the fact that field trips, although enjoyable, were simply classes moved to another setting and the example of the other students usually proved sufficient in obtaining cooperation.

Teacher and pupils worked together in listing the main objectives of the trip. These might be set up as questions, in outline form, or as a map with directions.

Various methods were used to encourage interest and improve pupil observation. Among these were listening to

reports by children who had previously visited the proposed place, referring to guide books or tourists' pamphlets, collecting posters, coordinating with the French program and other subjects, and listing interesting items to be seen along the way.

The fourth stop of the field trip was the actual visit to the place which was being studied. Many times, because of the short teaching day and the tediousness of the many bus rides, the teachers saved a portion of the orientation to present on the bus. This may have been a story pertaining to the place of interest or a report by someone who had become familiar with the spot.

The children listened to the guides, observed the operations or subjects displayed, asked questions, took notes, and made sketches. If cameras could be used, the children were encouraged to take their own pictures. Dependent upon the type of place being visited, the children might purchase post-cards and souvenirs.

Much of the follow-up of the field trip took place on the ride back to school. The children were eager to discuss what they had seen. They exchanged reactions and ideas, and shared their various observations. Special attention was given to the main objectives of the trips.

Various means were used to test the knowledge gained. When the children visited the display of stained glass windows

from all over France, they each sketched a window. In art class, they made large stained glass window patterns using their sketches as guides. As a result of the visit to the Meunier Chocolate Factory, the pupils made a large mural showing the various processes involved in making chocolate.

A common method of reporting was writing letters to grandparents or other relatives in the United States. The trip to Versailles gave the children the opportunity to see the hotel where President Eisenhower had his headquarters while in command of SHAPE, the Grande Trianon which Louis XIV built as a retreat from the large palace, the Petit Trianon used as a retreat by Marie Antoinette, the farm village where Marie Antoinette and her ladies played at being poor, as well as the main chateau. This made an interesting letter and, no doubt, a welcome one.

Various parts of the trips were related to other subjects. These relationships were brought out and the children were responsible for this knowledge in formal tests. The trip became part of the background of the child and the learnings gained were used throughout the year.

The final phase of the trip was the filling out of the data sheet so that the experience would be of value to other teachers and classes. A suggested field trip data sheet developed in a summer workshop at Karlsruhe, Germany and used by the school at Paris is included as Appendix C.

Summary. Well planned utilization of a variety of audio-visual aids was a requirement of overseas teaching. The complicated set-up of the Paris American School curtailed teaching time to a considerable degree. The teachers found audio-visual devices indispensable in covering the required material adequately during the school year.

The field trip received the greatest emphasis because of the unusual opportunity presented by the foreign environment for visiting places of interest and for developing international understandings. The Louvre and Versailles, rather than remaining mere words or pictures in a text, became actual experiences. It would seem that learning at first hand of the problems, customs, and inherited life standards of the French would have a lasting effect on the attitudes of the children towards people of other nations.

In the fifth grade, the field trip was used to point out the similarities and contrasts between the geography and history of France and that of the United States. In this way, it was felt, the child developed a greater appreciation for his American heritage and way of living and broadened his outlook to include an understanding of the interdependence of at least two nations.

CHAPTER VI

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN PARIS

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In addition to the problems of the classroom, the teachers had to adjust to living in a new land with all its attendant problems. The situation was aggravated by the fact that neither the city nor the country in which the teacher was to be stationed was divulged until her arrival in Europe. It was impossible, therefore, for her to prepare in advance for her year of foreign living. Nevertheless, the attractions of Paris and Europe far outweighed the inconveniences encountered, and the teacher soon found herself in the midst of a full, rich year of her life. This chapter tells of the more common personal problems of the Overseas Dependents Schools teacher in Paris and of the varied opportunities open to overseas teachers in general.

Housing. The first, and greatest, problem of the new teacher was to find a place to live in a city of housing shortages and inflationary prices. Lack of central heating, refrigerators, running hot water, and comfortable furnishings made the search a difficult one. The matter was further complicated by her inability to speak the language of the country.

When the fortunate teacher found an apartment that met to some degree the standards to which she was accustomed, she then became a party to intrigue, which, according to her

moral beliefs, might well be termed dishonesty. Rent ceilings had been established in France for a number of years. However, the price which the landlord charged had no connection whatever with what he was supposed to charge. Against all her scruples, the teacher signed a document swearing she paid only the amount established for the apartment so that the landlord could file the paper with the police. Actually, the rest of the rent was paid to the landlord without the benefit of receipts. The practice was a common one throughout the city. The Army recognized it and made allowances for it on the quarters' reimbursement application forms.

The rent payment might be a formal and time consuming affair. This proved true for the writer and her roommate. Each month, the visit to the landlady was made on the date and at the time which she set. It consisted of a tortuous hour of attempted French conversation concerning one's family and position and refreshments of wine and small cakes. Eventually, the obvious pause would come and the thousands of francs would change hands. Madame would, of course, count it carefully, acknowledge it, and then return to the pleasantries exchanged with guests.

Utility payments differed from apartment to apartment. The customary charge for central heating was fifty-seven francs per radiator per day. Rents were often supplied with several types of stoves, and the tenants would have to purchase

two or three different kinds of fuel throughout the cold months. Electricity bills, supposedly furnished every three months, were spaced at longer intervals. The writer's first charge arrived in April and covered seven months. Since the apartment included an electric stove, refrigerator, radio, and water heater the amount was immense.

Language Barrier. Inability to speak the French language was an extreme handicap. High school French was found to have almost no practical value. Almost all the teachers enrolled in a language course soon after arrival so that they might be able to carry on the ordinary exchanges involved in everyday living. The afternoon classes began at four o'clock, and the teachers had to arrange their work so that they might leave school in time to participate in these courses.

Currency Conversion. Cashing checks and obtaining French currency was an intricate process. Teachers were paid by checks negotiable only into military scrip. These could be cashed at only two locations, the American Express Company and the Army Finance Office. The teacher had to determine the amount of scrip needed for purchases to be made at the Army installations. This amount was retained and the remaining scrip was changed into travelers checks, which could be changed into local currency.

However, the teacher was now faced with the problem of

obtaining the best exchange of francs for her travelers checks. There was usually a vast difference between the legal rate of exchange and the "unofficial" rate, actually the "Black Market" rate. This was quoted in the papers as the "unofficial dollar exchange." Living allowances were geared to the unofficial rate, as were French rentals to Americans. The teacher, therefore, had to make contact with a reliable and frequent traveler to Switzerland in order to obtain the best and safest exchange of francs for travelers checks. Since the rates fluctuated widely throughout the months, the Americans devoted much time to determining the most advantageous periods to obtain francs.

Food Shopping. Food shopping was usually done at the Army commissary as the prices were about one-third the French prices. The commissary opened at nine and closed at three. It was located in the same area as the school at Bleriot. Teachers at Bleriot were able to do their shopping during the noon hour, but the teachers at the other buildings found it difficult to take advantage of this facility.

Cards of Identity. Cards of identity were required by the French government of all residents of France. These cards established the owner as a legal resident of France and made him subject to the taxes of the country. Taxes were levied upon common American appliances and other personal possessions. The alternative to becoming a French resident was to leave the

country at least once every three months with the passport stamp as proof. The teachers paid careful attention to this regulation as neither tax payments nor involvement with the French police were desired.

Travel Difficulties. Taking advantage of the chance to see Europe and carrying on one's job to the best of one's ability was sometimes difficult. However, the school administrators did everything possible to see that the teachers were able to make full use of the opportunities available.

Weekends were often used by the teachers for extensive trips. Usually overnight travel was involved, and the trains arrived in Paris just in time for the teacher to rush from the station to school. The principal saw to it that transportation to the school was available so that the teacher might take full advantage of her free days.

Travel outside of France involved passport amendments. Trips to Russian occupied zones were permitted only with the issuance of special "grey" passes and Army-obtained billeting. Letters of authorization for the above were secured from the principal who not only was in charge of the schools but also was the liaison between the teachers and the Army.

Previous to any trips outside of France and Germany in excess of five days, Army employees had to turn in any military scrip in their possession in the event of a currency

conversion. Conversions were made without warning, and old scrip became worthless after the five day period.

Visiting Tourists. The teachers in Paris faced a problem common to all Americans who have resided in Paris. This was the number of tourists who expected to be accommodated in one's apartment during their sojourn in the French capital. At first, the visitors were fed and escorted to the more famous spots in the city. Soon, it was discovered that one could well devote the whole year to entertaining friends and friends of friends. The teachers remedied the situation to some degree by leaving the apartment key and continuing with their own plans for evenings and weekends.

Other Adjustments. Living in France meant learning entirely new systems of measures. Road distances were measured in kilometers; gas was purchased in liters; and time was told by the number of hours since midnight.

The teachers soon grew acquainted with the transportation and telephone system, the post office hours, church services, shops for various needs, and other necessary facilities.

Working for the Army involved the continual filling out of many forms. Throughout the year, the teachers were besieged with these papers and found the procedure extremely tedious.

Professional Advantages. The majority of teachers who

accepted positions in Europe expected to encounter conditions very different from those at home. They adapted readily and quickly turned their attention to making fullest use of their year abroad.

Many of the teachers who specialized in specific fields took advantage of the European facilities to continue their studies in art, music, or language. Others, looking forward to their elementary teaching in the States, added to their knowledge of European history and culture through trips, museums, attendance at lectures, and an awakened interest in reading about European events and places. Photography was a common hobby, and the teachers added many valuable slides to their teaching equipment.

Teaching in Europe also gave the school personnel an ideal opportunity to live in one community long enough to know the people, their way of life, and the atmosphere of the country. Most of the teachers developed friendships with the French and have warm memories of their hospitality and various kindnesses.

Travel Opportunities. Financially, the teachers found themselves well able to indulge in activities which comparably would be out of their reach in the United States. Thus, it was not unusual for a teacher to fly to London for a few days shopping, to spend a weekend skiing in the Alps, or to motor

to the Riviera for a couple of days in the sun.

Travel during Christmas and Easter vacations was more widespread, many going as far as the Holy Land or North Africa. The Army allowed terminating teachers to remain in Europe for thirty days following the close of school before being provided transportation home. Most of the teachers used this month to complete their touring.

Summer Employment. Those who decided to spend another year teaching in Europe were able, if they desired, to remain on pay status during the summer months. The Army gave the teachers several employment choices in line with their capacities and their training. Summer opportunity schools were held for both elementary and high school students. These summer sessions were held to give additional instruction or remedial work so that the children who needed it might be strengthened for the coming year's work. Positions were also open in recreation work at summer camps. Teachers could also attend workshops, where, under regular salary, they reviewed the curricula, prepared brochures and bulletins for the use of teachers, and wrote courses of study for both elementary and high schools.

Attractions of Paris. Other opportunities varied with one's place of station. The teachers assigned to Paris felt extremely fortunate to be in so exciting a city. Here they

were able to see the most recent movies, often before they reached their home towns. Leading ballet companies, famous operatic singers, actors and actresses, and world known bands and orchestras appeared in the theaters. The women members of the teaching staff spent hours visiting fashion houses and showings. Several American films were made during the year in and around Paris, and the teachers joined the group of spectators. Many well-known people visit the French capital and it was not unusual to find oneself dining at the same restaurant with movie stars or leading statesmen.

The writer can remember most vividly her surprise at the beginning of the school year at the French who read the morning issue of Le Monde on their bus ride to work, ignoring all the wonderful sights around them. However, in time, the new teachers became nonchalant about their surroundings and were somewhat amazed to find themselves more eager to glance through the Paris edition of the Herald Tribune than to gaze out of the bus window at famous personages or world famous buildings.

Summary. Living in Paris proved challenging but exciting. The teaching staff found that facing the various problems with a sense of humor minimized them and turned them into interesting adventures.

Certainly, the teachers gained much from their experience

of living and teaching in a foreign land. As of October, 1957, there were 1,651 American teachers and principals employed in the Army operated schools in France and Germany.¹ Many of these will be returning this summer to teach in the United States. They will bring with them a wealth of background, an appreciation of other cultures, and a more mature set of attitudes and values to share with their students.

¹"USAREUR School Enrollment Report" (Karlsruhe, Germany: Headquarters, United States Army Dependents Education Group, October, 1957), pp. 3-4. (Mimeographed.)

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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Summary. The purpose of this paper was to give to interested educators an analysis of the problems, challenges, and basic opportunities confronted by a teacher in the Army Dependents Schools overseas.

The school in France was separated into five different locations in buildings not suitable for classrooms and presented many unusual problems. A number of these were solved during the year; the teachers and pupils adjusted to the others as best they could.

In preparing children to live successfully in an ever-changing world, the teacher's first task is to assist the child in his adjustment to his environment. A new and strange environment, such as France, required much adaptation of learning material to the immediate needs of the children.

Preparation for life in the world of today involves preparation for international living. Educating American children on foreign soil presented a real life situation for developing attitudes and understandings for successful, peaceful relations with other countries while upholding American ideals. To do this meant full utilization of all educational aids and the cultural and educational facilities of Paris and its environs. The foreign language program laid the groundwork

for this phase of the school program. Through the work of the native language teachers, the children learned to speak excellent French and to broaden their vision of France and its peoples.

Audio-visual aids were required tools of teaching and learning. Proper use of these aids was vital for adequate accomplishment of the goals of the schools. Well executed field trips played an especially important role in the total teaching program.

In spite of the many adjustments required, the teachers found compensation because life in France was full and exciting. Through participation in cultural and travel opportunities and through living in a foreign land long enough to know the people, the educators enhanced their own backgrounds and, in that respect, became more valuable assets to their profession on their return to the United States.

Conclusion. Scholastically, the overseas children compared most favorably with peer groups in the United States as measured by standardized tests. It is estimated that eighty-five per cent of the overseas high school graduates continue their education, many in foreign universities.¹ All twenty-one 1953 graduates of the Paris American High School went on

¹Personal correspondence of the Author, letter from Fred L. Miller, February 11, 1958.

to college, two to the Sorbonne and three to universities² in Munich, Germany. It is too early and far more difficult to measure the outcomes of the experiment in developing lasting, wholesome international relations. A continuity study of the more promising students of the Army schools in foreign lands would be a valuable contribution to education.

²Reynolds, Ray, "Paris Yank School Enrollment Jumps," The Stars and Stripes, November 27, 1953, p. 8.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

PARIS AMERICAN SCHOOL
SEINE AREA COMMAND, COMM-Z
APO 163, US ARMY

9, June 1954

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation

TO : Miss Florence Dmytryk
Paris American Elementary School
Seine Area Command

1. The School Board, in its final meeting of the 1953-1954 academic year unanimously agreed to send you this letter of appreciation for the manner in which you have performed professional functions in rather trying circumstances.

2. The Board is acutely aware of the difficulties you have met and surmounted as a member of the Paris School Faculty. The scattered locations of the five schools and the transportation problems permitted only the shortest academic day with minimum opportunities for non-academic school activities. The Installation Commander had to establish your school in buildings neither designed for nor easily adapted as a school plant. This resulted in noise interferences, internal traffic problems, and the continuing hazard of supervising children in the vicinity of military maintenance facilities or heavy traffic conditions. Athletic, social and recreational facilities have been minimal and in most cases remote from the school buildings.

3. It is clear that you are owed a debt of gratitude by the military organization, the children, the parents, and the School Board which we are happy to acknowledge by this letter. The School Board is most appreciative for the efforts you have made to establish and maintain highly creditable academic standards in discharging your responsibilities.

4. We are happy to confirm that the faculties next year will have the advantages of the especially designed and constructed school plant which the Installation Commander has provided.

CLARK L. HOSMER
Colonel, USAF
Chairman

C O P Y

APPENDIX B

SOCIAL STUDIES UNIT ON FRANCE

American children living in France will receive more from their school and home environment if they are given the opportunity to learn about French people, something of the history and geography of their country, of their traditions and occupations, and of their social and family customs. In learning to speak the French language under the instruction of an experienced French teacher, children will be stimulated to become more interested in France and its people as well as becoming more interested in learning to speak the French language.

The unit outline for study of France is constructed to aid both French and American teachers in broadening their children's interests and making the most of their educational opportunities in France. Any part of this unit may be used in connection with daily language instruction. A designated work period in a school day may also be set aside once a week for this purpose. This unit may be correlated with part of the regular social studies period in any grade.

OBJECTIVES

To create interest in learning to speak the French language by learning about the French people and their country.

To gain a knowledge of the various geographical regions of France and to understand how climate and surface affect the life of the people of each region.

To develop a feeling of friendliness toward the French people.

To become better acquainted with some of the historical background and present importance of several of the cities of France, with special emphasis on Paris as the largest city.

To learn how the location of France on the European continent has been important in the history of its national development.

APPENDIX B (Continued)

ACTIVITIES

1. Collect travel folders, souvenirs, and pictures of France.
2. Read and make reports on the following famous French men and women who have influenced history: William the Conqueror, Richard the Lion-Hearted, Clovis, Charlemagne, Joan of Arc, Napoleon.
3. Visit the famous chateaux of the school area. Display pictures of the Chateaux of Chinon, Loches, Amboise, Chambord, Chenonceaux, Azay-le-Rideau.
4. Visit the great Gothic churches and display pictures of those at Amiens, Chartres, Le Mans, Rheims, Paris.
5. Make a map of the agricultural regions of France. Indicate the kind of industries and products produced in each one.
6. Find important historical events connected with the following cities: Metz, Verdun, Campigny, Poitiers, Robert d'Espagne, Bar-le-Duc, Orleans, Bordeaux, Paris, La Rochelle, Rochefort, Toulon, Chateauroux, Lyon.
7. Read the fables of La Fontaine
8. Tell the story of Roland.
9. Learn part of the "Marseillaise," "Sur le Pont d'Avignon," and other French songs.
10. Why is the Saar important today? What is unusual about its government?
11. Make a report on the following beautiful things made in France during the reigns of Louis IV and Louis XV: wallpaper, Gobelin tapestries, furniture, Sevres porcelain.
12. Compare the French elementary and secondary schools with the American schools in France and Germany, and in the United States.

APPENDIX B (Continued)

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- Cothren -- Picture of France by Her Children (3-6)
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- Hall -- No Ducks for Dinner
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APPENDIX B (Continued)

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Stein -- Gabriel and the Hour Book

Tappan -- When Knights Were Bold (6-9)

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French -- The Red Keep

Prepared in workshop of French Language Teachers under Mlle.
Monique Lhormelais, Paris, France, 1951.

APPENDIX C

FIELD TRIP DATA SHEET

Place to be visited Address

Age level of subject Time necessary to complete visit . .

Best season of display Best day of week Best hours
of day

Facilities to accomodate persons. Distance . . . miles/klms

Fees (entrance, souvenirs, etc.)

Type of guide necessary

Best mode of transportation

Transportation arranged through office

Arrangements made by: Name

Title

Address

Telephone number

Items of interest to be seen in transit and at objective of field
trip:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

APPENDIX C (Continued)

FIELD TRIP DATA SHEET (Cont.)

Sources of information for "lead up" study.

Evaluation and Appraisal.

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B. PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE OF THE AUTHOR

- Letter from the Board of Education, Paris American School, February 2, 1958.
- Letter from Fred L. Miller, February 11, 1958
- Card from Barbara Schmidt, April, 1954.
- Letter from Lt. Col. Beryl Simpson, August 10, 1953.

Approved:

Date Accepted: _____

