A Glance At Blackstone, Va.

Nottaway County, of which Blackstone, Va., is a part, offers a striking study in the Southern pattern of social and economic development.

Look at these 1950 statistics:

The population is over 15,000, with 7,934 whites and 7,622 colored.

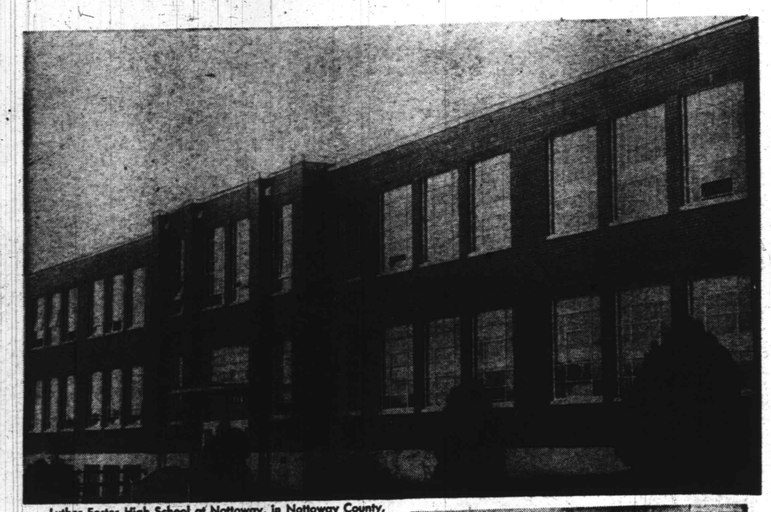
White residents own property valued at over $6 million while colored citizens in this area control property totaling $660,393. There were 2,676 white voters in 1950 and 502 colored.

The political and economic system is unevenly administered.

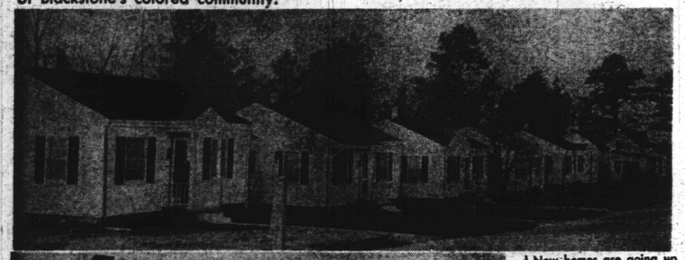
Colored citizens tend farms and find work in the few industries in the Crewe-Nottoway-Blackstone area. The Norfolk and Western Railroad shops at Crewe provide the most employment. Tobacco is the chief crop.

Massive Camp Pickett army reservation which covers 32 square miles of the county and with a population potential of 80,000, brings added revenue and jobs to Blackstone residents.

It is the activity at Pickett, to a great extent, which has spurred development of Blackstone's colored community.

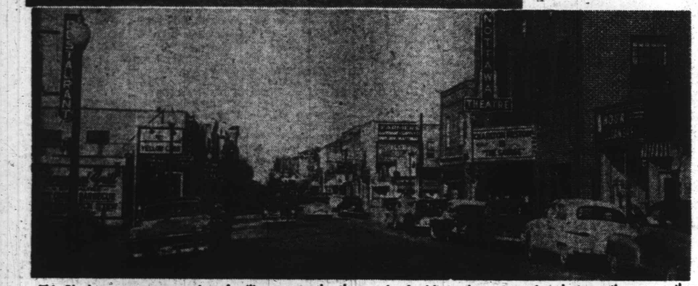


Luther Foster High School at Nottoway, in Nottoway County, is the only high school in the Blackstone area. The $700,000 structure was completed in 1950 and has 457 pupils. J. B. Woodson, principal, heads a staff of 23 teachers.

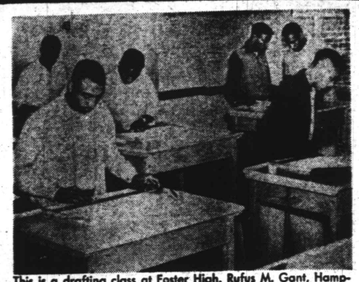


New homes are going up rapidly in Blackstone as Camp Pickett expands. This is a typical row of attractive bungalows recently erected.

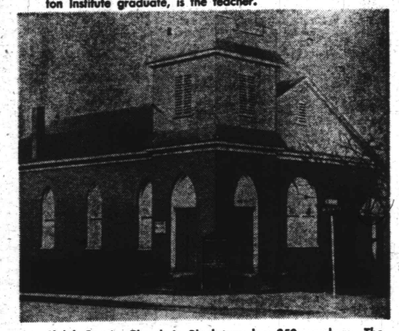
Dillard St. USO Club is a home away from home for soldiers at Camp Pickett. It has complete social facilities, including snack bar, club room, lounges. Thomas M. Boyd of Louisville, Ky., is director.



This Blackstone street scene is a familiar one to the thousands of soldiers who were stationed at one time or another at Camp Pickett. It is still a meeting center for GIs at Pickett.



This is a drafting class at Foster High. Rufus M. Gant, Hampton Institute graduate, is the teacher.



Shiloh Baptist Church in Blackstone has 350 members. The Rev. Joseph R. Person is pastor.

This attractive home in Blackstone is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Emmett Williams. He is a silk mill employee.

GI Wives In Germany

Soldiers' wives find man-hungry Frauleins a big headache. Living conditions are below standard and some marriages tear apart at the seams.

By Mabel Alston

MANNHEIM-FEUDENHEIM Germany — What is German Occupation like?

I don't think that the early pioneering women had a thing on Army wives facing conditions in Europe today. It is true there are no Indians waiting to scalp one but believe me there are just as many other dangers.

The danger most feared is the 'home wrecker' better known as the 'female bandit.' Then there is the unpredictable climate.

Ancient methods of housecleaning will certainly torture milady whether she has a maid or not.

Sometimes occupation wives can hardly speak at the end of the day, because they have used both energy and breath trying to explain to the maid what to do. This goes on and on.

No Plush Living

The biggest myth existing about the German occupation is the one about "plush living," that one reads so much about in the newspapers, Congressional and Senate investigations.

Recently there appeared an article entitled "Solons Sharpen Ax for Costs in Zone."

It stated: "Senators aimed an ax today at so called plush living quarters, free servants, special trains, and other luxuries for U.S. military personnel in overseas posts."

I can only say that I wouldn't exchange my humble dwelling and way of life in America for a 100-room castle with a servant for each room, any place in Europe.

Mrs. Anna M. Rosenberg, assistant Secretary of Defense, who visited Europe recently hit the jackpot when she stated at a press conference:

"The living conditions in Europe are generally "adequate" but not "plush."

It is true that some Americans have been living in chateaus. But have you ever been inside of some of those chateaus? Americans were forced to put in heating, plumbing, and to clean them up to make them liveable.

Housewife Talks

I think that the best description of "plush living," is given by a mother of two children, and the wife of an Army officer with two years of EUCOM living to her credit.

"Plush living is not the question," she said. "It is a different kind of living, and there are certain expense corners which can be cut by the thrifty wife, but it is my feeling, and our bankbook bears this out, that we are spending more money here than we did in the States.

"Don't forget, to bring a family to Europe means to sever ties with friends and relatives who can be counted upon to lend and help out in things like baby-sitting."

The following are some of the hidden, and open expenses and irritants which this wife felt made charges of "plush" living rather ludicrous:

A. Car repairs, expensive, and seldom accomplished on the first trip.

B. Greater damage to clothing through laundry and cleaning.

C. Damage to electrical equipment through use of faulty transformers, bad wiring.

She also cited these factors:

1. Lack of special and correct shoe and clothing sizes, frustrations of mail-order shopping, and expense of mailing and ordering.

2. Time and money consumed in shopping in stores located in widely separated areas.

3. Time spent standing in lines (at the commissary and cleaners etc.); lack of facilities with service outlook, usual attitude is "take it or leave it."

4. Language difficulties and barriers.

5. Moral temptations such as the black market, vice, etc.

6. The omnipresent feeling of fighting to keep a normal family life in a possible danger zone.

"It is hard to put your feelings on a dollar and cents basis, said the dependent wife. "But it seems to me that what we wives try to do is build and keep a home on standards prevelant at home.

"We wives accept overseas assignments as a part of our duty. But we don't accept second-class conditions as a part of that assignment."

Many wives come to Germany to join their husbands and remain approximately a month or two. The Army will return dependents to the States after they have spent a year overseas.

Became Nervous Wrecks

I know of two women who recently returned to America at their own expense because they just couldn't take it.

One from the Lone Star state claimed that she was becoming a nervous wreck because of the sensation she created when she walked down the street or into the German stores to shop.

"Why," she asked, "do they stare so hard and continuously? By now the German people must be used to seeing colored people.

"Where," she inquired "is the plush and glamorous living that one hears so much about overseas?

"I think I will go mad if I have to stay here any longer," said the young woman from Texas. She packed her bag and in less than a month she was enroute home by air. There are many others like her but thanks to the good old pioneering spirit many of us tough it out.

Heartbreak Tour

The occupation for many wives could be referred to as "the heartbreak or broken home tour."

Two consecutive evenings, I sat and listened until past midnight to the pathetic stories from wives whose husbands had succumbed to the wiles of the frauleins.

Both asked the same question; What are we to do? We just can't pick up and go home and face our families and friends.

They lamented: "We were so happy at home and looked forward to a happier life in Europe, but what has happened to my husband? He acts as if he is completely mad.

"He talks about my color, hair, and says I am ugly and am not a good housekeeper, although he was perfectly satisfied with our home life in America.

"I guess I will just have to try and stand it a little longer as our rotation date will be up soon. But I just must talk to someone or go mad.

"Maybe when we return to the States, he will come back down to earth."

3 Million Extra Girls

Latest figures place the population of Western Germany at 48,195,000 of which 22,601,900 are men and 25,593,100 women. This surplus of roughly 3,000,000 are women.

I would think soldiers' wives would be sensible to hold their marriages together until they return to the U.S. The percentage of women is not so great or the competition so keen.

Air-raid practice is a necessary nuisance. About midnight, phone rings, it is a practice alert.

By the time your husband is dressed you are wide awake.

You know it is just one of the frequent practice alerts but still it is impossible to go to sleep, and you lie there thinking just what would you do if that call had been the real McCoy.

The next day you are up to start the routine to the Post Exchange, Commissary, cleaners, bakery shop and so on.

The One Bright Spot

You try and budget your time so that you will make it back for the one bright spot on the radio, the news broadcast. If you miss your schedule, you can't switch to the next station and pick it up.

Your next station is probably one with some foreign language, or tom tom music or even Russian propaganda.

Tours to the various countries are tempting. But when you are fortunate enough to take one and return home you are usually rather bitter.

Why? Because as soon as a foreigner finds out that you are an American, the prices sky rocket.

Maybe the answer to this can be found in excerpts from a talk given by the late Sen. Brien McMahon, (Dem., Conn.).

Speaking to a recent joint meeting of congressmen and European delegates to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, he asked the Europeans not to judge Americans by the movies or tourists.

He stated:

"Remember, we Americans go to these movies, too, to escape reality for awhile, and remember that these tourists are on holiday and act accordingly.

"Many are stenographers, who work and save for three or four years to make a trip to Europe. Then they go back and work five years more so they can return again.

"We are a hard working people. We have 61,000,000 workers and our country has plenty of sweat and toil."

Anti-U.S. Sentiment

On the other hand, many of the foreigners may feel like William B. Stanford, a professor of classics at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. The Irishman urged a one-day strike against American tourists as a protest against U.S. haste and impatience.

He made the proposal on the floor of the European Consultative Assembly recently while discussing a previous meeting with U.S. Congressmen.

"We should close all our great cultural institutions to Americans for one day to demonstrate our distrust of American values," said Stanford, dismissing Americans as uncultured persons who bring only dollars to Europe.

I think the following is a good example of the way most Army wives feel about the occupation in Germany today.

No Bed Of Roses

We are not here because we like Germany but because we want to be with our husbands. We have taken plenty. Lots of our homes are being broken up, but we try to make a go of our marriage and have our children brought up with their fathers.

Some of the women became afraid and go home, but most of us stay.

If it takes fighting to get what you want and to hold homes together, then we will do just that.

Take it from me there is no "plush" living here in Germany and life is not a bed of roses. After living in Germany and traveling throughout Europe I shall always pray for God to bless America.

German occupation is no bed of roses for U. S. soldiers' wives.