

Youth Free Time in Friedenstal, Bessarabia

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[Begin Translation/Transcription]

O.B. Liebl
Friedenstal

Tarutino, 22 October, 1940
Fin.

How Friedenstal Youth Make Use Of Their Free Time

There being no youth society in Friedenstal, it is not very easy for the youth to keep themselves occupied during their free time. This holds especially true during the winter time when farm work pretty much comes to a complete standstill, with nothing to do other than feed the barnyard animals. The long winter evenings are very boring for many of them. It is too cold to do anything outside. One finds both males and females gathered together in small groups in a warm living room, where they, on Sunday evenings and Sunday afternoons, while away their time by playing various party games, singing beautiful songs, playing musical instruments and dancing.

Among the young fellows, during the Christmas season, the nut game (*Nüssespiel*) is especially well liked. On a long straight board, between 5-6 meters long, each player places a nut at one end spaced apart by 10-20 cm. One by one, the young fellows roll an iron bearing (*Kugel*), the size of an hen's egg, down the board toward the nuts. One on their team is standing at the other end of the board and directs the bearing to glide on a straight path toward the positioned nuts. All nuts which are knocked off the board by the hard knock of the bearing then belong to the ones rolling the bearing. If a person does not hit any nuts, he must place another nut on the board. The game goes on like that until all decide they have had enough. There is another familiar version of the nut game which can be played indoors: an object (like match sticks) is placed on the floor. All players take their turn tossing toward the object. Whoever hits it has the right to take all the nuts lying on the floor.

On the evenings during the work-week, the young gals are gathered together in groups for stocking knitting or other needlework. The young fellows accompany them in the social gathering.

A sport much loved by the young fellows is riding, especially on young horses. The horses are decorated with brightly colored ribbons on their reins. In this manner, the young fellows ride through the village during the winter afternoons. They take great pride in their beautifully cared for horses.

Spring, Summer and Fall time provide occasions when the young people can gather together in their free time. There is the organized egg game (*Eierspiel* or *Eierlesen*). At a time when the farmer is not yet overwhelmed with work, (Spring and Fall) the young fellows and young gals come to the farmyard in the evenings to sit on the benches. One plays the harmonica, the others dance. For a change, many beautiful songs are sung. At the height of the work season, the young people are certainly in no need of amusement. Most of the time, when evening comes around, they are exhausted from the strenuous work, so that they would rather forego such activities in favor of just going to bed so that they can approach the work of the next day with renewed vigor and strength.

The one time in which the young people do come together is on Sunday. On the morning of this day, the young fellows and young gals usually gather together for joint gymnastics and sports while the afternoon is devoted to free time activities. Since there are no woods or any other suitable place, the youth gather in groups in the gardens on the slope of the hill in the shade of some trees or else in the village. Someone plays the harmonica or the accordion (*Schifferklavier*) and the others listen or enthusiastically dance a beautiful folk dance to the beat of the music. Alternatively, they sing a song and play a party game. And so a beautiful Sunday afternoon comes to an end all too fast. In the evening, everyone goes home in a good mood, ready to begin the work on his farm the next morning with renewed strength.

{signed: Liebl}

[End Translation/Transcription]