


1974

# A Summer's Learning Experience

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A SUMMER'S LEARNING EXPERIENCE

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"Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the School for  
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This report by Arlene Feskanich is accepted in its present form.

Date Feb. 27, 1974 Principal Advisor Janet Benig

Readers:

Margaret A. Winters

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"An Experimenter's Guide to Holland"	

## INTRODUCTION

Ever since the spring of 1970 when I went to Greece on an Experiment program, I thought of someday becoming an Experiment leader. My experience abroad with the Experiment had been a good one; and I, in turn, wanted to help other young people feel the excitement and joy that discovering a new country and culture can bring. My appointment to lead a group of high school girls to Holland for the summer, therefore, made me very happy; and I embarked upon the experience with as much excitement and anticipation as the girls in my group.

I knew what an Experiment program was like, because I had participated in two already. But, in both cases, I had been an Experimenter, and so I was familiar with the situation from a group member's viewpoint only. As a leader, I came to realize that there is a difference between how a group member sees the total experience and how a leader sees it. The perspective was a new one for me; and the added insight it gave me helped me to understand (and to appreciate) more fully the make-up and dynamics of an Experiment group in a foreign country.

I also discovered that a leader must be two things at once: a "leader" AND an Experimenter. Learning to adapt to new, and sometimes confusing, situations and surroundings is as important to the leader as it is to the individual group members. Everyone has a host family with whom

he lives while abroad, including the leader; and the family responsibilities and obligations which must be maintained and honored put the group members and leader on the same level. Yet, at the same time, a leader must provide guidance for the group, gain the confidence of both the group and the host nationals, and serve as a source of ideas and assistance whenever needed. And in an unfamiliar, foreign environment, that isn't always very easy to do.

So, in one sense, the summer outbound program was new for me, because leadership was a different side of the coin. On the other hand, my previous trips had taught me that living abroad could be one of the greatest learning experiences a person could ever have; and changing from an Experimenter to a leader did not alter this belief within me in the least. A great deal can be learned outside of our traditional classrooms, just by experiencing different things around us. To me, learning IS an experience: it's an active process of doing and seeing, of hypothesizing and experimenting, of observing and evaluating. It's not passive at all. It's real, it's alive -- it's life itself. That's why my Experiment experiences meant so much to me, and why this summer in Holland meant so much to the girls in my group. As one girl boldly put it, "This trip to Holland on the Experiment taught me more about myself and other people in six weeks than I have learned at home in seventeen years." That was quite a statement to make; but I'm sure that something real and rather exciting took place

within that girl to prompt her to make such a strong statement.

It was precisely this mysterious "thing" that happens in each Experimenter -- this feeling of excitement, this feeling of ecstasy: the process of Learning!-- that I wanted to tap and make the most of when I suggested that my group write some sort of a guide for future Experimenters to Holland. I knew their experiences had taught the girls something; and I wanted them to put their knowledge to use.

THE PROJECT: ITS PURPOSES . . .

My particular reasons for proposing that my group write an Experimenter's guide to Holland\* were threefold:

1) I wanted to instill in the girls a sense of community in learning. It's true that the ultimate responsibility for learning lies within each individual himself; no one can force a person to learn anything if that person is not willing to accept help or the worth of a certain concept. But if a person does not understand something at first or is having trouble grasping the situation at hand, we should take it upon ourselves to help that person, and to share our knowledge and insight with him.

Within the group I tried to emphasize this spirit of sharing rather than competition by encouraging the exchange of ideas and feelings between group members and by trying to help the members of the group become aware of one another as individuals and more sensitive to one another's needs. The idea of writing, as a group endeavor, a handbook to prepare next year's Experimenters for their trips abroad and to help them get the most out of their summer's experiences was, then, just an extension of this spirit of sharing and sense of community from the group level to a larger, more abstract realm.

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\* A copy of the finished guide is attached to the end of this report.



2) I also wanted to give Experimenters a chance to talk for themselves. Too often, as predeparture materials are prepared for future outbound students, the comments and stories of past Experimenters are omitted. Only second-hand accounts and viewpoints not necessarily of the Experimenter are included in much of the orientation material. Leaders, too, rarely are shown the summer from an Experimenter's viewpoint as they go through training in preparation for summer leadership. Pieces written by the students themselves could offer a fresh new perspective for everyone involved.

3) Finally, I hoped to offer to the group a worthwhile, far-reaching project which could be used by the Experiment for orientation purposes. As far as I knew, there was in existence no student-written handbook like the one I was proposing; therefore, it would be a new -- and important -- approach to orienting future outbound students for an Experiment experience abroad. It would also provide much-needed country-specific material (in this case, for students going to Holland). The general information previously provided by the Experiment -- about the types of gifts to bring host nationals, what to pack, how long to wear dresses, etc. -- was either too general or simply not applicable to certain countries. Specific and up-to-date information about conditions in each country was sadly lacking and desperately needed. The summer Experimenters who didn't attend language camp before departing were also put at a

great disadvantage. While the language-learners saw films about their countries, listened to typical music, and discussed a variety of things pertaining to the country to which they were going, the non language-learners received very little, if anything, in way of preparation. So the proposed handbook would fill at least some of the information gap for those who did not participate in language training.

These, then, were the reasons for my suggesting to the girls in my group that they create "An Experimenter's Guide to Holland."

. . . AND ITS RESULTS

The project turned out to be a good one for the group. Being asked to write something forced the girls to sit down and review all that had happened during the summer. It made them evaluate many of the summer's experiences in preparation for deciding what they considered important enough to include in their suggestions for next year's Experimenters and what they thought unimportant. In many cases, the project also prompted some really deep soul-searching and self-evaluation as the girls tried to sort out their thoughts and feelings about the summer. So, as an evaluative device and as a means of pulling things together for each girl, the project proved itself to be very useful.

For the Experiment staff, too, the project was a worthwhile endeavor. Predeparture orientation material was in a state of grand revision, and the comments written by the girls were just the sort of thing the Experiment was looking for to round out its new handbook and bring it up-to-date. Unfortunately, there was not enough room to include all of what the girls wrote in the Experiment's booklet; but the suggestions and comments which were included were printed and will be mailed out to all of next year's accepted Experimenters to Holland.

Last, but not least, the finished project proved to be a very enlightening piece of writing to me, as a leader; and what I learned from reading it has significance for every

teacher.

1) To begin with, it revealed just how much the girls had learned during the course of the summer without any "formal" instruction. There were no traditional class sessions, no lecture periods, no note-taking, no tests -- even orientation was very informal and quite free. Yet, learning had taken place; and the girls didn't have to be reminded of that fact by the ringing of a bell or the closing of a semester. They just knew it, because it was all real to them and had become a part of them. Because they had lived with them and experienced them, by the end of the summer they began to understand a number of things more fully, including their tolerance of loneliness and frustration, their reactions to change, their ability to get along with other people, and their ability to appreciate what they have. The importance and intensity of experiential learning was heightened for me as a result of what these girls wrote. We should never overlook the everyday experience of living as a just and apt teacher, nor disregard its teachings as somehow being inferior to "proper" school instruction and formal book learning. Perhaps, if we, as teachers, could somehow introduce more activity -- physical and mental -- into our classrooms, we could effectively widen the range of what our students actually experience while at school and increase the possibilities for learning in our schools.

2) The project also helped convince me that leadership IS a teaching position. Experience alone, if left un-

directed and unexamined, can not reach optimal effectiveness as a teaching device. It must be guided and evaluated along the way; and that's where the abilities of a good leader are needed. To me, now, a 'teacher' should be more of this type of leader, guiding her (or his) students to understanding and knowledge. A leader should not be more of what is often thought of as a teacher (ie: a person who dictates facts and 'truths' to students and requires memorization and conformity).

3) The pieces which each girl wrote also reemphasized to me the individuality of each girl, and they made me appreciate each girl as a unique person. As a new leader, and a new teacher, I found it difficult at first to accept each group member as an individual in her own right. Allowing and encouraging individuality in a group can be very disconcerting for a novice teacher; I know it was for me at first. So, I tended to expect everyone to do everything together and to want to do the same things at the same time; and I became confused (and sometimes angry) when they didn't. But I now know that it is important for a teacher to recognize that each of her (or his) students is different and to accept the existence of individual needs within the larger structure and needs of the group. Once I got to know each of my group members better, I found it easier to accept them as people and I felt surprisingly closer to the girls, both as individuals and as members of the group.

Accepting the individuality of students, or group

members, also has a bearing upon just how much structure a teacher decides to impose upon students and how much freedom to allow them. Hitting upon the right balance between the two was a constant source of worry to me during the summer; and I suppose it is a source of difficulty for any new teacher. Should I have imposed a more rigid schedule during the travel period, or should I have been even more lenient than I was in accepting travel proposals? Wanting to allow for the fulfillment of individual preferences and needs, and trusting in the good sense and honesty of my individual group members, I tended to leave more room for individual decision-making rather than to impose a strict structure. Still, the decision was not easy, and perhaps it never is for the teacher.

4) The project did one final thing for me: it brought me to an awareness that young people today deserve a lot more credit and respect than people are sometimes willing to grant them, and it made my decision for greater freedom all the more justifiable to me. I admire these sixteen- and seventeen-year old girls for what they wrote; their work shows true sensitivity and maturity. I only hope more of today's teachers come to realize the worth and potential of today's youth, and that they see their students as the respectable, sensitive human beings that they are.

### EPILOGUE

I would recommend Experiment leadership to anyone who enjoys working with young people and is looking for a fresh and challenging experience in teaching. Leadership is, indeed, a rich experience; and I am willing to bet that it will influence one's teaching and philosophy towards teaching and learning for the rest of one's life.

APPENDIX



AN EXPERIMENTER'S GUIDE

TO

HOLLAND

Written by and for:

Experimenters to Holland

## PREFACE

Part of the beauty of any experience is being able to share it with someone. Your joys, your sorrows, your observations, your insights -- all take on additional meaning and importance when they are shared. Learning is very much an individual process of growth and change; but there is a lot we can learn from one another, and we all have the responsibility to help each other to see new things and to understand new concepts. In short, learning is a communal responsibility; and the experience of learning is very much the act of sharing.

For this reason, several members of a Summer '73 Experiment group to Holland wrote to you, the future American Experimenters to Holland, in an attempt to prepare you for the discovery of what they found to be a very wonderful and exciting place and people. In the following passages, some of the Experimenters speak about things which they wish they had been told before they embarked upon their Dutch experience. Other Experimenters attempt to describe their reactions to the Dutch and their efforts both to understand and to adapt to a new way of living. All were written with you in mind, though, in the hope of communicating to you -- of sharing with you -- an experience so rich that the words to express exactly what was felt and meant were often difficult to find.

As one Experimenter said, we hope that this booklet "is taken seriously," because that's the manner in which it was written. And if, perhaps, the meaning or importance of what these Experimenters are saying is now unclear to you, maybe, by the time you are ready to return to the States after your stay in Holland and are eager to tell people about your experiences, you will remember their words and think to yourself, "That Experimenter was right!"

Please keep in mind, as you read these passages, that their words express the feelings and opinions of the individual Experimenters; they are in no way meant to be read as "the final word" about Holland and Dutch life. Each person perceives and feels things differently. But it is our hope that by reading how past Experimenters felt about Holland, your own Dutch experience will be richer.

A.F.



## Tips to Future Experimenters to Holland

As you start to think about your up-coming trip, what do you dwell on? Naturally you wonder how to pack. It is sufficient to bring 2 pairs of pants, 1 dress, 1-2 shorts, 4-5 tops, undergarments, nightwear, ~~and~~ at least 1 heavy (warm) sweater.

But clothes are not as important as knowledge. What concepts do you hold of Holland? Lots of cheese, tulips, windmills and dairy products? Do you think of pastries? or perhaps an abundance of wooden shoes and land? These concepts are important enough to write down so you can compare -- before and after your trip.

What do you know of America? Can you sing the national anthem? What is the largest bridge in the U.S.? Where is Washington, D.C.? How much land do we have? What is the largest state? These are a few questions I was asked. Could you answer them?

I found because the Dutch do not have their own 'Dutch' programs they often watch programs in other languages, including English, with subtitles. One of the most popular shows is Peyton Place. Because of this fact I would suggest that you watch an episode or two. Is that how we live?

I think as far as traditions in Dutch life go there will not be much of a problem. But a few things to watch and restrain from are these:

In your Dutch home, you will try to become part of their family for six weeks. So pitch in and help around the house.

Be careful not to offend them. For example: avoid saying, "In the USA we do this," or "Ours are bigger and better."

Don't swear. There's never any need.

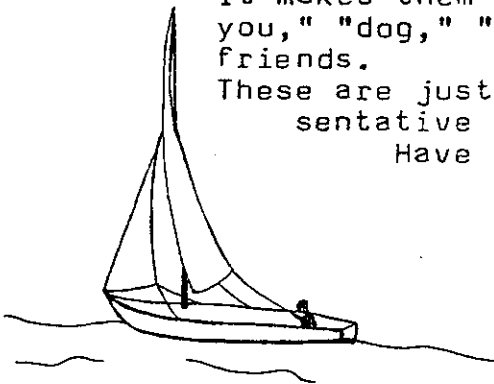
Don't raid the ice box anytime you want unless invited to do so.

But don't be polite all summer. It will make your relations strained. Crack a joke or two at times. Join in the fun and games. And do try to learn their language. It makes them pleased and proud when you can say "thank you," "dog," "tree," "apple," and other words to their friends.

These are just suggestions. Remember you are a representative of the U.S.

Have fun! I know you will.

Linda O.





This trip to Holland on the Experiment taught me more about myself and other people in six weeks than I have learned at home in seventeen years.

When I arrived here, in Holland, I had no idea what to expect. I was really scared but I went in with the attitude that whatever happens, Holland will be great. I began to compare myself with the other Americans that I had met on the plane. And as I look back upon our first meeting I notice that the ones who went into the Experiment with fears and doubts about their families had troubles adjusting to their new homes while the ones who went in thinking how lucky they were to be here fit right in without any problems. And where I went into this program feeling that the point of the Experiment is to learn about customs and attitudes of people from other countries and while doing this have a great time, some people took the objective of this program as receiving homes just to be used for eating, sleeping and expecting their families to wait on them and for the rest of the time to do as they please. For the people who feel that this is what the program is about, I strongly suggest a teen tour.

My family made me feel right at home -- never making me feel like a guest but always a part of the family. My Dutch "parents" were always attempting to speak English to me -- with me trying to speak Dutch to them and even this made me feel more at home. I learned to laugh at my mistakes instead of getting angry; and when I finally did speak something in Dutch correctly, it was important, because my family made it important.

After living here for a while I saw how easy it was to meet people. Everyone wants to make new friends. I found that I smiled more and laughed -- something I rarely did at home. Just by realizing how lucky I was to be here, a whole change occurred in me. And I found that I was the equal of everyone. That last statement is the most important thing I have learned here. I am no better or worse than anyone else. If I give people a chance, they will give me a chance. When I return to the US, what I have learned here will affect my life more than anything else ever has. It is really sad, though, that I had to cross the ocean to find out that people aren't as terrible as I thought them to be. When I came here I thought the people were fantastic -- not like in the US. Everyone is so friendly here. But after five weeks I really believe that when I go back to my real home, I will find that the people are the same as here. Everything was so new to me in Holland, including the people, that everything looked twice as good when I would compare it distastefully to "back home." But when I came here I really had changed myself into an enthusiastic, happy person, which I really was not at home. I still believe the people in Holland are fantastic -- and I always will; but I now believe that if I give the people in America a chance, they might be just as great. I might be

wrong, but then again I really might be right. I truly hope so.

As the time to leave draws closer -- less than a week away -- I leave with mixed emotions. I can not believe that most of the people I have met here, I will never see again. I feel I know more about Holland than I know about my own state of New Jersey. And even in the short time I have been here I have learned to love my Dutch family as my own and I think that leaving my Dutch sister will be one of the most difficult things I have or will ever have to do. I really love Holland and everything about it and I think that living in a family is the only way to learn about a country. I really hope that everyone got as much out of this trip as I did.

Lisa G.





When I first came to Holland I was full of prejudgments. One of the most important things is don't judge people the first day and make up your mind whether you like them and the country. Remember, if things aren't going smoothly, you're half the blame. It takes two sides!



Don't expect to be a guest. Offer to help or just help; they appreciate it.

Also about food and customs -- try everything. But if you only take a little bit, you don't have to eat so much.

Be open minded. Don't scorn at customs. Each one has a reason. Your customs seem as dumb as theirs do.

Do as much, see as much as possible. You have only a short time -- don't spend all of it sleeping. Take care of yourself, but be enthusiastic.

Your family will always be thinking, "Does he/she like it here?" They'll amuse you and try to keep you busy; so if you do get homesick, do something to get your mind off it.

This isn't a vacation!! Don't think you can lie in bed all day and have your family cater to your wishes.

FORGET ABOUT LIVING AS AN AMERICAN. Live as your family does -- it's more fun. You can explain the customs to them, but I found it great to live differently.

You'll be the center of attraction. So be yourself. Don't put on any airs.

Remember, if you love your family and think of their feelings, you'll be loved back.

The group outings are terrific!! The great thing about the Experiment is that you meet Americans at the same time you meet Dutch people.

If you speak the language a little -- speak it! Don't feel embarrassed -- they love it when you make the effort. And don't get down when you're corrected; they're helping you.

You can make this the most beautiful experience in your life -- or you can make it the worst.

You're going to be faced with decisions, and there won't be your parents to turn to. It's you!! And with a little practice, you can remember your morals.

Your family is as scared as you.

Meet your group members and as many people as possible. A lot of friendships are made. -- The people are the best part of a country.

The tour is great, but ask your leader for advice on what to see. It really helped!

In having two families, it was doubly hard to leave. But don't psyche yourself into thinking your second family isn't going to be as good, or bad. WAIT! It all turns out for the best.

Be prepared for decisions. This is a way of getting ready for life after high school. There's no one telling you that you have to do it. You have to remind yourself to do things.

You're meeting great people. Appreciate their characters, because you may never see them again -- but try to!! I know all the girls in my group were making indefinite plans to see their "families" again. Because that's what you are -- one family.

There are a lot of different kinds of people you meet. But I can't think of one that I didn't like. They all are great -- so FRIENDLY.

Everyone always says that it's an "experience you'll never forget"; and it IS!!

The leaders are great; they can really relate to the kids. They're great friends, but they have the leadership quality in them too -- a great combination.

I could sit and write tons of things -- the program is great, you learn about yourself, and another country -- but it's all something you have to experience. The great thing is that you can relate your experiences to everyone -- and it gives them a little inspiration toward international friendship.

There are times when I was crabby, or quiet, or giddy, or sad, or Happy! But my families had to be told that nothing was wrong -- it's just my character.

The main thing is to talk. Talk with your host family, your leader, your group -- EVERYONE.

Don't keep feelings or ideas bottled up inside you -- share. It's beautiful.

Ask questions. (--- everything.) If your family doesn't know the answer, they'll love to get it for you.

Oh, I can't really say to do this or I felt this. It's all so beautiful. The whole thing is great: PEOPLE, COUNTRY, LANGUAGE, CUSTOMS. They were all great. All you have to do is WANT TO KNOW. You don't need to have a case history on Holland. Just ask when you get there. It was all so great that it was a vacation. But the best thing is that while you are having fun, you're learning. It's just like cleaning is more fun in someone else's home.

You're learning, and living, and LOVING IT ALL!!

Nena C.



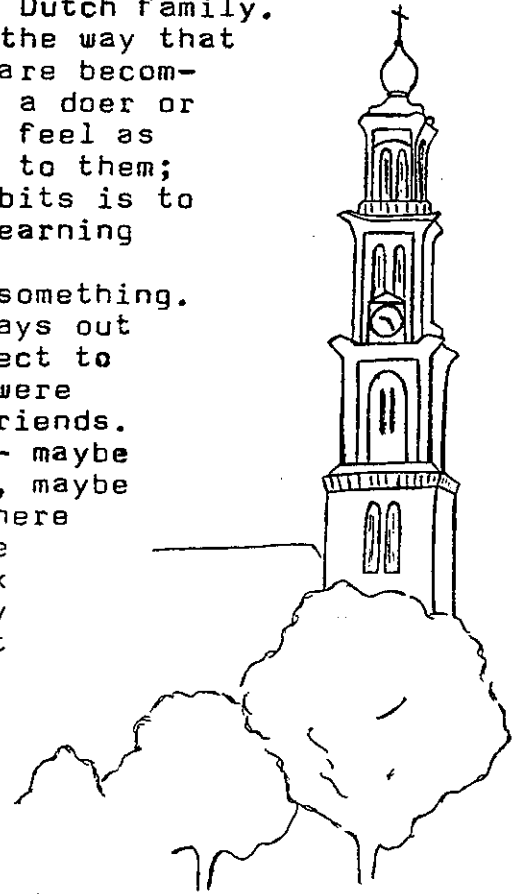
My first impression, and I think that it still holds true for me, of the Dutch people is that they are all very open people. They are very friendly and they want to get to know you. One day I was sitting on a bench across from a pond where there were some ducks. There was an old woman sitting there too. I said "dag" when I sat down, and I kind of smiled at her. I must have been sitting there for about twenty minutes. We didn't talk to each other, but I think that we communicated through looking and smiling at each other and the things around us. When I left, I felt as though I had made a friend.

My first few days I was quite impressed with the use of the word "dag." It means more than hello or goodbye. It is more like a smile, and you just can't translate it.

I think that you'll find that everyone here wants to meet you, especially the first few days. They will make the first step towards getting to know you, but you have to put something in too. Try to be friendly and open. Answer their questions, even though you may have already done it 100 times, as best you can.

You have probably already heard this, but don't always be comparing things in Holland to things in the States. Each person has his own reason for going on the Experiment; my main reason was to become a part of a Dutch family. If you are always explaining to them the way that you do something "at home," then you are becoming an observer of Dutch customs, not a doer or Experimenter in Dutch customs. Don't feel as though you have to explain the States to them; the best way for them to learn our habits is to come and see us. Besides, they are learning just by watching you.

Don't expect to be always doing something. When you are at home, you are not always out doing something special, so don't expect to here. For me my happiest times here were when I was with my "sister" and her friends. Usually on the weekends we went out -- maybe to a movie, maybe to a birthday party, maybe to visit some people -- as a group (there were six of us). When we came back we would sit around and talk; and I think that is when I felt the happiest. (My "sister" had explained to me that that is what they always did after they went out; and I felt good being a part of it.) It didn't matter to me that they were speaking too fast for me to understand. It was just that I was there with them, and I felt like a part of them. Be willing to do whatever your sister or





brother does. Your family will probably ask you what you would like to see of Holland, but don't come here with a list of things that you want to see and do in Holland. Most likely those are things that anyone can do. You have a Dutch family for six weeks -- so do family things. You can always visit a museum when you are alone in a country, but it's not very often that you can get to know and to become so close to another family. Appreciate it!!

It is also important to meet the other Americans in your group, but don't make that more important than meeting the Dutch. Stay with your brother or sister. When your group gets together it is inevitable that you will divide up into cliques, but don't make it Americans here and Dutch there.

Don't expect to be doing the same type of things for entertainment as you do at home. If you want to spend all of your time visiting bars and having parties, then perhaps you had better not come to Holland. Getting to know people is more important here.

Your family will probably try to make you feel at home at first by trying to do everything for you; but don't let them do too much. You want to be a member of the family, not a guest. If you are always asking your brother or sister to do things that you want, they'll soon get tired of it, and that is definitely not a good way to start a relationship.

Don't try to learn all of the facts about Holland while you are here. There may be one area -- the politics, history, art, dress, cooking, etc. -- which is very interesting to you. Fine, go ahead and ask your family and friends about that. But don't ask questions about a lot of other things. Prepare ahead of time by reading books, and then when you come here you can see how these things affect the people. You can see how much of their daily life is influenced by them. I never really asked, and I was never really explained, Dutch politics. But I learned a lot just by having one person say to me that he would explain the politics. He never did, but each time he mentioned it I learned a little more about how the politics affects the people.

Most people in Holland speak English; but when they are at home they don't want to, and when your brother or sister is with friends they will probably forget and speak Dutch. But don't ask them to speak English for you. If they have something to ask you or say to you, they'll ask in English; but don't make them feel uncomfortable by having them speak another language in their own home. Don't let it depress you, though, when this happens. Just try to enjoy yourself by being with them.

The Dutch people aren't always doing things. A lot of the time they spend sitting around talking with each other while they drink something or smoke. They don't need any special reason to visit friends; and you'll find that people are always visiting each other in the evenings.

There is so much more that I can say about Holland and the people. But I don't want to say too much, because for each per-

son it is different. It depends on your brother or your sister, on your family, the others in the group -- but most importantly it depends on you. You make it a good summer or bad one. You're going to have some bad times, but you'll have to handle them the best way that you can. For me, writing my feelings and analyzing them helped; for someone else drawing might help. Talking with others is always good, but remember there may not always be someone there. Don't expect to be happy all of the time. I had a wonderful family and three great sisters; so the only times that I felt really unhappy were when I said goodbye. But try to prepare yourself, anyway; and, perhaps, like me, you will be able to avoid being unhappy. It is in your hands whether or not you have a good summer -- you are responsible and no one else. You are the one who has to make the adjustment in Holland; so don't expect anyone else to.

Elizabeth F.



My stay in Holland has been an experience I'll never forget. I have learned so much and experienced what few people ever will. I've learned about the Dutch customs and way of life. I now realize that the American way of living is not the only way to live.

One of the things in Holland that made an impression on me is the land itself; it is completely flat. Another thing is that everyone rides bicycles all the time. I mean everyone, including old men and old ladies. I've also seen up to three people on one bicycle. One other thing, that does not have to do with the people, is the way the trains and buses always run according to schedule. One can find his way around Holland without knowing the people or the language.

One of the things that very few people do in America and just about everyone in Holland does is, before and after every meal, to bow his head and say a prayer. Also, when the Dutch eat they don't use napkins, and they eat with both fork and spoon.

I believe that the Dutch people are very honest. For example, if the bus driver is not on the bus when everyone gets on, when he does arrive everyone gets out of his seat and pays him then. I know that in America people would not bother paying at all.

The weather is something else that shocks me. One day it will be sunny and beautiful and then without warning it will rain "Old wives and wooden shoes" (cats and dogs).

I've only been in Holland six weeks, but they are six weeks that I'll never forget. I know that my personality has changed and so has my point of view. I now look at everything with another perspective. When I go back to America I know I will be a different person, with new outlooks and goals.

I urge everyone that comes to this great land not to expect anything. As the Experiment tells everyone, "Expect the unexpected."

No matter how long I will stay in America I will never forget these six weeks. They have made an impression in my brain that can never be erased. I urge everyone who comes to the so-called land of windmills and Dutch shoes to come with an open mind and you'll love it.

Linda U.





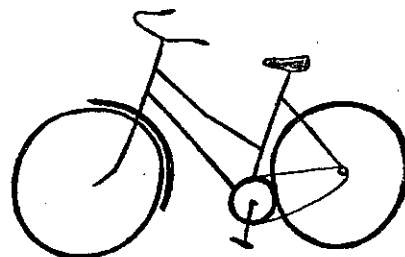
Some helpful tips:

1. Expect a lot of meat that's been boiled in gravy (not baked, fried, etc.).
2. Be game to try all new food.
3. Don't worry about your weight in Europe! You can always lose it when you return home!
4. Offer to make one or two American meals for your "family," but don't go overboard unless they really keep pressing you to make more.
5. Women are generally overweight.
6. Men look younger than they are and generally cut good figures.
7. Most people are very willing to give you something if you express admiration for it (even if you didn't want it in the first place!).
8. Don't chew your gum with an open mouth or pop it!
9. Don't stare at anyone! Considered very impolite!
10. Short skirts and bikinis are worn by women of all ages. Tight pants and blue jeans are considered the style. However, leave the tattered and faded jeans and jackets at home!
11. Many people smoke cigarettes.
12. Always stand up and shake hands when meeting someone.
13. There is no generation gap!
14. The families always gather together for coffee and cake at night. The families are definitely closer!
15. Beautiful gardens; the insides of all the houses are basically the same.
16. No women shave!
17. Don't bring an extensive wardrobe. Many people wear the same clothes everyday.
18. In one family I was in, we sat around and drank first coffee then beer for about three hours.
19. Suggestions for presents include: popcorn; maple syrup; all-hit records; a nice picture book of your state and/or of America; a simple-worded cookbook.
20. Don't live on the fact that you're American! Don't keep saying, "Well, in America ...". Don't say "I hate it!" if someone shows or hands you something you don't like.
21. Don't immediately form a clique with the other American Experimenters and try to see them continually! Continue

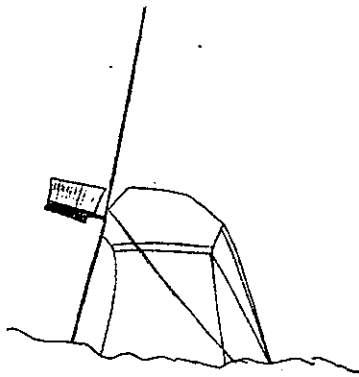
- your friendship in America; don't make it something in Holland where you must see each other 3 or 4 times a week.
22. Don't live to hear from home.
  23. Take everything in your stride. Don't lose your temper with someone! I think this is very important. If necessary, say you're going to your room, then sit there and let your anger cool down for a while.
  24. Learn some Dutch before you leave! It'll be more than one hundred times that you're curious about what the conversation is that's taking place; and if you know a few words and phrases here and there, you'll get the main gist -- and you won't have to sit and listen to babble around you!
  25. Don't make the only reason over here -- Dutch boys! It might get unpleasant for you with your family.
  26. If you are curious if something is too expensive, ask the sister or whatever member of the family you have as a counterpart or friend.
  27. Don't show you're homesick. Your family will think you're not happy with them and the whole family will become quiet and unhappy along with you.

Suggestions for girl's clothing list:

- 1 coat
- 2 bras
- 4 undies
- 1 pr. walking shoes
- 1 pr. sandals
- 1 pr. good/normal shoes
- 2 prs. socks
- 1 dress
- 1 skirt
- 1 pr. jeans
- 2 prs. normal/ good slacks
- 1 pr. shorts
- 1 sweater
- 1 bathing suit
- 4 long sleeved shirts
- 2 short sleeved shirts



Carolyn v. V.



Before I went to Holland I was all excited; but as the date for departure grew near, I started to get the last minute jitters. I didn't know what I had gotten myself into. When I got to the airport I was a nervous wreck. I didn't know anyone. How could I ever become friendly with a group of people that I had never known before in such a short time? But at once we all became close. Because alone we were frightened, but together we were strong. Seeing that we were not alone in our fears made us strong.

Once we got to our orientation center I deeply regretted not taking the language course. Although everyone in the Netherlands is friendly and quite willing to help you, I didn't like being totally dependent upon others. Never knowing what was said I felt lost. I learned, though, never to be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help and never to let my lack of knowledge of Dutch to hold me back from going out and meeting people.

After a short adjustment period, orientation was great. Then a new situation arose which we had to adjust to: our homestays. Would our families be nice? Would we get along well with them? Could we fit in? Once again we had to seek strength in each other.

My family was fantastic! I felt at home almost at once. My family realized that assimilating in such a situation could be quite difficult. So they did their best to make the adjustment from one culture to another as easy and as natural as possible.

In my family the oldest child was twelve and the youngest was three; so I didn't have the advantage of having a sister. This was both good and bad. Although it made adjusting more difficult, it also made me more independent. Since my family only spoke a little bit of English, I learned to understand Dutch faster than those who had everything translated for them. Living far away from the rest of the members of my group, I was almost always with my family. This made us even closer. I was never treated as a guest but always as a member of the family. This meant that although all of my needs were taken care of, I had certain responsibilities just like everyone else.

I had the most difficulty becoming close to my "mother." She hardly spoke any English. At first she wasn't sure how to treat me, but within a few days we became very close. Even though neither of us spoke the other one's language fluently, we never stopped trying to communicate.

When I had an ear infection I had to wear four centimeters of cotton in my ear with this orange medicine on it.

As my ear began to heal it would itch. Everytime I went to scratch it my "parents" would yell at me and tell me I wasn't allowed to touch my ear. So I used to sit on the floor by the coffee table and when my ear itched I would pretend to look under the table for something and when my head was out of sight I would scratch my ear.

During my stay in the Netherlands, I learned not to panic no matter what happens. There is always a solution. Once another American girl and myself went to another town alone by bus. On the way home she fell asleep and when she awoke she thought it was where she was supposed to get off. She got off the bus. It was the wrong town. As I was waiting for the bus to pull out I noticed her running around the town. So I sat watching her not able to understand what she was doing. As the bus began to pull out she ran up to my window and shouted, "This isn't Barneveld!" I shouted, "Stop!" Within a few minutes the bus stopped and I got off. I saw her and started to walk towards her. When I was approximately halfway there, I looked up and she was nowhere to be seen! Well, the two of us made it home safely, but separately. It never kept us from going out and doing things on our own again.

Before we left the States to go on the Experiment I felt that six weeks was such a long time. But the weeks flew by and before I knew it I was preparing to go home.

This summer has been an experience that I will never forget. It has taught me so many things: about both myself and others; how to laugh at myself and be totally uninhibited; to accept people the way they are without wanting to change them. People are really not difficult to meet and become close to. I especially learned that no one person is greater or worse than the rest of us. We are all equal and should be treated so. I learned never to hold back your strong feelings. If there is something which you feel very strongly about, let it out and share it. Don't keep it to yourself. People will like you more for it and become closer to you faster and more easily.

I love the Netherlands and I hope I can return there again someday. Both the people and the country are great!

I hope everyone gets the opportunity to experience this. Because this is something which can never be fully appreciated until you live through it. I also hope that everyone has as great a summer as I have had, or better -- if that is possible.

Pam B.



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