

Primary School in Germany

By Inge Danaher, Wednesday, August 19, 2015

Actually I can't remember when I was allowed to use a pen. However I do remember my early days at school. In Germany kids used an A4 size blackboard and chalk pens. The blackboard had a foam sponge hanging off it on a long string and it sat in my satchel which was on my back and the sponge would hang on the outside of the bag. Photo below is from my first school day.



We were called "I-Krötchen" by the rest of the kids at school as on our first day we would learn to write the letter "i" on our little slate. We had to write it many many times and at home fill the entire slate with it as part of our homework. The word in English would mean something like "I-tadpole" translated literally. As Krötchen is a small frog. It was kind of a term of endearment if that makes sense. Not like camel which was an insult. If you were called a camel then you did something rather stupid lol. My Dad often used that term ☺

As we learnt more letters we would be given dictation when we first arrived at school. The teacher would then correct it on the slate, crossing out each wrong letter and scribbling underneath a very big number, the total number of mistakes. This had to be shown to your parents and one of them had to initial the number to show they had seen it.

Well, my Dad was my official policeman of homework and schoolwork and everything else. He didn't like me coming home with mistakes and I must have got into trouble a few times as my sister only remembers as an infant crawling up the staircase in the corridor to visit the neighbor upstairs and escape the wrath directed towards me should I come home with mistakes again. And ... up to 3 mistakes almost were forgivable but when I saw this angry looking 5 under my dictation one day I knew I would REALLY be in for it.

So I had a great idea. I convinced a friend to come with me after school and walk home through the gardens to find a secluded spot where I could work on my little slate without interruption and without being observed. I carefully took my little sponge and wiped out 2 of the mistakes, then corrected them and tried to smudge it all a bit so it would blend in with the rest of it. Then I had to carefully forge my teachers 5 and turn it into a 3. All of this took the best part of an hour but in the end I was fairly satisfied with the result. My friend agreed it would fool even the most eager eyes, those of my father.

So I walked home confidently having no idea of the storm awaiting me. Five mistakes may have been a disaster but coming home an hour late was a catastrophe. I think I was given a beating and the homework was totally forgotten. I am not even sure if my father initialed it or noticed anything funny with it but and I don't think the teacher saw the forgery. But I made sure never to be home late again ☺