



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## The Berlin Wall Falls

By Sharon Fabian

If you visit Germany, you can stroll through the capital city of Berlin. You will see shops, restaurants, museums, government buildings, and homes. You will also see an unusual landmark - a double row of paving stones that draws a line down the middle of the city.



This line marks the place where the Berlin Wall once stood. It was built in 1961, and for 28 years it prevented people from crossing between East Berlin and West Berlin. To many people it represented the dividing line between the whole communist East and the whole democratic West.

What happened to the wall? It was torn down in an event that turned out to be maybe the biggest street party ever!

It started in 1989. Communism had begun to collapse, and East Germans were already beginning to leave their country by way of Hungary, which was no longer controlled by communists. East Germany was beginning to change too, and it had new government leaders.

One day in November 1989, the leaders held a press conference. During the press conference, they mentioned that travel restrictions from East Berlin were being lifted. Someone asked exactly when the restrictions would end. The reply: "Well, as far as I can see . . . immediately." Just like that, it was over. After 28 years, East and West Germans could travel to the opposite side.

By midnight, the streets of Berlin were filling with people. People were singing and cheering. There were flags and fireworks. People sat on top of buildings and in trees to get a better view. Someone waved at a guard in his watchtower. And the guard waved back!

Soon a shout began. "Open the gate! Open the gate!"

Other people didn't wait for the gate to open. They brought hammers, chisels, and drills, and went to work on the wall. Openings in the wall gave people a view that they hadn't seen in 28 years. For many people, this was a view that they hadn't seen in their entire lifetime!

Now people were climbing through the wall and even over the wall!

East Berliners arrived on the West side to cheers and hugs and often a glass of beer or champagne. Since their East German money was no good there, many were offered money so that they could celebrate!

The celebration continued for days. Tourists from other European countries poured in to take a look. Subways were jammed. Shops stayed open late. News reporters were everywhere with their TV cameras, antennas, and satellite dishes.

A big part of the festivities involved the wall itself. Everyone wanted to take a swing at it, and everyone wanted to take a little piece of the wall home in his pocket.

So what happened to the wall? It disappeared. Some large parts of the wall were salvaged for display in museums and other places. Here in the United States, you can see pieces of the wall at the Newseum, the CIA Headquarters, and in several presidential libraries. Most of the wall just went away - crumbly little pieces of concrete in the pockets of people who were so glad to see the wall finally come down.

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## Questions

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Berlin Wall divided \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. East Berlin, Europe
  - B. East Berlin, West Berlin
  - C. West Berlin, the Soviet Union
  - D. East Germany, West Germany,

