

## **KÖSTER STORY**

## The Company

The story of the toys factory Köster has been got by three reports on the Meinerzhagen Zeitung of the journalist Stefanie Schildchen (12 and 13 of February and 3 of April 2010). The journalist meet two old employers of the factory Fritz Ortmann and Esther Albus and she

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tmann and Esther Albus and she found many memories of the very short life of Köster trains.

Gustav Köster was the founder of a shop for stationery and office supplies in Meinerzhagen in November 1918; famous were the Praktikus book bindings.

The house of Köster family was in Lindenstraße 12 in Meinerzhagen.

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After the second world war the store was closed but the Praktikus production significantly

expanded and in 1946 Mr. Köster decide to develop a new business in construction toys. At that moment the main German toys factories such as Märklin were not again on the German market, so the demand of model trains was unfulfilled.

The production of Köster Construction Sets starts in 1946 and ceased in 1949.

The railway kits were mainly sold at the toy trade. When arrived on the market similar toys less expensive and when appeared some dysfunctions with the electric motor, the successful story of the model railway construction sets stopped.



At the beginning of 1949 the company Gustav Köster had financial difficulties and went bankrupt; so the Köster-Konstruktion-Kasten had only three years of life.

On the contrary the company Praktikus followed to produce office supplies under the direction of the son and grandson of Gustav.



Probably some sets were sold till the beginning of the 50's, while in 1950 appears the set Gloria consisting of the basic parts (strips, corner, rods..) of Köster sets. Most of the metal parts of the toy were done outside of the Köster factory so probably the maker Hermidag followed to produce and sell these simple sets.

j.k.





The parts are identical as shown in the picture; red and black the Köster parts, nickeled the Gloria ones.





## The sets

The production was addressed only on construction, in kit form, of a train with electromotive and with its tracks.

The parts are very basic (plates, strips and angular substantially), and then the final result is more similar to those of a train made with the normal boxes of construction (Meccano, Märklin) than that of Dux train for example. The production included three Outfits 80, 81 and 82, which allowed, respectively, the construction of the train, the tracks and the engine of the locomotive. There were also some accessory boxes type the 80.6 that allowed the construction of a freight car. The gauge is 0, and the pitch of the stripes is 6 mm, with 3mm holes (+0.1) and axis 3 mm. They are fully interchangeable with Mignon, even if the screws are of lower quality as well as the finishing and colors. The factory produced for a limited period, perhaps only 2 or 3 years, and the pieces are characterized by very good strength (the plates are practically not bending), but from poor resistance of the coating. The engine is very rough and heavy, the power is alternating current at 20V with shoe and then the tracks have the middle rail, as well as DUX.



In the picture above the three sets 80, 81 and 82



The convoy is made with the set 80 first series (nickel) and a second set 80 (color)

21/618
23/678
24/715

