

Boys' Clubs

The boys' clubs have been active in painting, crayola work, and paper construction, as well as in making small toys (most Puerto Rican children have few, if any, toys), and padded wooden benches to add to their home furniture. Some hikes have been taken; and a truck trip outing to Guanica Bay with the girls' clubs for swimming, boating, playing in the sand, and eating tasty sandwiches was a highlight. Some inter-club games have been played, but now their interests lie in making puppets and in folk dancing in preparation for the coming "velada" (program) on November 30th. Through their club program the boys are also planning to develop the strain of rabbits and goats of this region as well as maintaining a vegetable garden.

Girls' Clubs

The girls' club program was reorganized with the opening of the school year. The girls were organized and classified according to age. Since there were few girls attending school, a visitation program was inaugurated to invite girls not in school so that all in the community would have equal opportunity to participate. There was much interest in our program, and the clubs have been well attended.

Activities of the clubs have varied with the interest of the different groups, and this interest was considered an important factor in determining the activity. Sewing has been the most popular of these activities with the teen-age girls, although they are also becoming accomplished at textile painting, embroidery of different types, and making puppets. The younger girls have been successful in such art work as paper construction, coloring and drawing, and display much interest in singing, rhythm bands, folk dances and games.

This has been a good year for outings. Many clubs have taken their lunches and gone on hikes through the hills. A trip to Guanica for picnicking was well-attended by the girls. Now they are anticipating an all-day hike to Salto de Guayo (Guayo River Falls) nearby. The object of this trip is to learn the arts of camping as a preliminary to a hoped-for summer camp for girls.

The Women's Embroidery Industry

The Women's Industry became active again on October 17th after being closed for 2½ months due to the lack of a market for materials on hand. There are 30 women doing embroidery work at the present time, and many more could work if there were a good market for the materials. The women embroider luncheon sets, tablecloths and napkins, handkerchiefs, guest towels, mat sets and dresser scarfs. Each design used for these articles is typically Puerto Rican, such as women washing clothes in the river, oxen pulling carts of sugar cane, lechon asado (roasting a pig on a pole over a charcoal fire), palm trees, native houses, men and women picking coffee, and other native scenes.

The Industry provides an opportunity to raise both the financial standard of the home, and the place of the woman in that family and the community. Since the work is done in the home it gives each woman a profitable way to spend her spare hours at home and at the same time makes it unnecessary for her to leave her children alone (as is often the case when the women pick coffee, for example).

The work done by these Puerto Rican women is both unique and fine. As yet, however, it has been impossible to find a sufficient market for large quantities of these goods. Consequently any orders from the States will be graciously accepted. Orders or requests for further information may be addressed to Miss Josephine Anderson, Martin G. Brumbaugh Reconstruction Unit, Castaner, Puerto Rico. Remember--Christmas is coming!!

Library in the Centro Comunal

The small, but growing, library for community use in the Community Center is now in use again. The reading room has been repainted, the furniture has been renovated, and some furniture added. The room is furnished with indirect lighting, two reading tables, two improvised sofas, chairs, a rack for newspaper, magazines, and two large cases of books. The Center's staff with much cooperation from frequent Center visitors did this work.

Since this is the only library available to the community, it is felt that this phase of the recreation program is quite important. Our most-used books are the fairy tales and adventure stories for children because in many families only the children are able to read. But novels, plays, poetry and biographies are also loaned frequently. The system of book-lending is similar to that of any other public library. We borrow many books from the Carnegie Library in San Juan on a long-term basis, and the rest have been purchased by the Brethren Service Committee or donated by interested persons. The set of reference books similar to the Book of Knowledge is one of the most worn of the entire library, and some teachers at the public school assign work to be done in this library.

Choir and Music Lessons

Choir activities have, so far, been limited to Unit members--both Puerto Rican and continental. A choir of approximately 20 members was organized and held many weekly rehearsals on Wednesday evenings. Last month, upon invitation, the choir gave a Sunday evening program at the Baptist Church in Adjuntas at its 46th anniversary service.

Music lessons have been given to any Unit member who has desired to take advantage of this opportunity to learn to play the piano. Usually the lessons were weekly for a half hour. Many Unit members have been seen and heard slaving away on "scales" as any inhabitant of the Casa Grande will testify.

It is hoped that in the near future a music appreciation group may be started, using the record albums of Unit members.

Halloween

On Thursday afternoon of October 31st about 300 children crowded through the doorways of the Center to don black hats and masks made from discarded X-ray wrapping paper and film. Game booths of throwing baseballs at targets, shadow portraits drawn "for free", rope ring toss, wooden disc toss, a magician's booth, table football game of blowing a ping-pong ball, and a fortune-teller's booth kept the children occupied during the time they weren't up to some other form of mischief. Ice-box cookies and orange juice were served to all to bring to a close the two hours of riotous play.

During the evening of the same day the members of the Brumbaugh Unit held their annual Halloween masquerade, with a horror chamber, games, relays, a pie-eating contest, and treasure hunt, which finally ended with an inside weiner roast over a two-burner camp stove.

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

For the workers here at Castaner much stress is put on the learning of Spanish because only by speaking the language of the people are we able to make our most important contacts with those whom we are serving. One American when telling a Puerto Rican how much a certain article was worth meant to say in Spanish that it was worth two dollars. But instead he said it was worth two pains. The Spanish word for pain is "dolor", while the word for dollar is "dolar". Although such incidents as this, and they are not infrequent, may generally be amusing, it is important to understand what one says, and to say what one means in order to work effectively.

For several months we have had three Spanish classes in session. The beginners' class is taught by Miss Vicky Riera, one of our nurses from Ponce, and the intermediate class is taught by Bruce Reeves. These two classes meet five times a week immediately after breakfast. The advanced Spanish class meets every Thursday evening, and is taught by Mr. Otilio Rivera, who is timekeeper for the PRRA Project here.

STUDY GROUP IN PUERTO RICO

About two and a half months ago a study group formed with the Unit centering on the historical development and contemporary problems of Puerto Rico. Participation was based solely on individual interest with each one taking time to give a special report or lead a discussion each Tuesday evening. Attendance has been high for the most part; however, lately the meetings have been fewer and farther between. Some outside speakers have been brought in for some topics. Interesting charts, maps, graphs and other illustrations were made for clarification and were presented during the reports. Other reports are being assembled and prepared so that the study may go on until we are more thoroughly acquainted with the Island community in which we work.

PERSONNEL NEWS: Dr. and Mrs. Burke and Jeneba visited the La Plata Project from October 5th to 13th so that Dr. Burke as our new Medical Director might become acquainted with the medical staff at La Plata where Dr. Amstutz is at present the only full-time doctor, being assisted by two others on a part-time basis. The following week, Dr. and Mrs. Helfrick and Lizbeth also visited La Plata with the same purposes in view. Not only were the doctors able to exchange ideas and experiences, but during those two weeks our doctors were able to ease the load of the medical care which has been Dr. Amstutz' for a considerable time.

Tom Mathews received his CPS discharge on October 25th.

OCTOBER VISITORS: Miss Eva Vargas, a special duty nurse from Rio Piedras; Fred Kidder, former Unit member, now headmaster of Colegio de San Jose, an agricultural school for boys operated by the Episcopal Church near Ponce--Fred, accompanied by his sister, Anne, brought his entire school here for a day of sports with our boys' club members; Jean Alexander, of the El Guacío Project; Chuck Knapp of Toledo, Ohio, who was visiting at El Guacío; Sr. Gabriel Hernances, Chief of the Office of Agricultural Liquidation for the PRRA in San Juan; and Edmund Zehr who is briefly at La Plata waiting for travel difficulties to be cleared up so that he can proceed to the Gran Chaco region in Paraguay where he will be in charge of the laboratory of the hospital in a Mennonite community that has settled in that region.

A TOUR THROUGH THE COFFEE MILL

The Unit members here at Castaner expressed a desire to learn more of the details of processing coffee, especially since a coffee mill is located here on the Project. The coffee mill is one of the PRRA's two local industries, the other being the vanilla curing plant. This is the height of the coffee season, which lasts about six months, usually from September to January.

Mr. Ramon Moreno, chief agronomist of PRRA at Castaner, was our kind guide the morning of October 23rd. First he took us to the second floor of the coffee mill where the pickers bring their coffee beans for measuring; They are paid 25¢ per almud (5/8 bushel), and a good picker can pick four of these a day. However, many pickers work in family groups, and a group of 3 or 4 may pick 12 or more a day, making \$3.00 a day for the family. One of the larger families picks from 28 to 30 almudes a day. After the coffee is measured it is poured into a large funnel from which it goes into a machine which removes and separates the outer husk. (This outer husk is used for fertilizer here, but in some countries they let it ferment to make a wine.) The coffee bean is then soaked overnight in water to remove the next covering which is a sticky substance. After soaking it is placed out in the sun the next morning to dry on a concrete court known as the "glacias". Here it is left for 3 or 4 hours and is then gathered up and placed in large cylinders known as "bombos" which revolve as hot air is blown over the coffee. In many smaller mills where they lack this equipment, they complete the drying process outdoors which takes about five days. When there is enough coffee to operate the cylinders they usually start the drying process about 4 p.m. and operate all the night until about 9 o'clock the next morning. At this mill these cylinders are operated either by water power or by electricity.

When the coffee is finally dried it is graded and sent to the Coffee Growers' Cooperative in Ponce where the third and final husk is removed, and where it is roasted.

In picking the coffee the red berries are picked, but often some of the dark brown, riper berries are picked also. On these riper berries the husks are more difficult to remove, so they are completely dried with the husks on. Because they can't get enough of these to fill the cylinders at any one time, they are dried completely in the sun. After drying they are placed in a circular trough through which two large wooden wheels revolve and break off the husks. (This machine is also used to remove the third husk of the coffee beans for those who wish to buy their coffee here ready for roasting--as do residents of the PRRA Project and our Unit.) This coffee which is picked overly ripe is usually a third grade coffee.

The unhulled coffee is finally put in bags of 125 pounds each, which when finally processed, amounts to 100 pounds of hulled coffee.

Another group of Unit members went through the Coffee Mill on the afternoon of October 30th. This group saw the pickers bring in their coffee from the coffee plantations.