

# Castañer Newsletter

BRUMBAUGH RECONSTRUCTION UNIT

BRETHREN SERVICE COMMITTEE

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Castaner, Puerto Rico

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"I, BYRON, TAKE YOU, VELMA, . . ."

The Castaner, community gathered together at 11:00 o'clock on the Sunday morning of November 3, 1946 in front of the Community Center to witness the wedding of Velma Miller of Barnum, Minnesota and Byron Shearer of West Milton, Ohio.

The porch of the Community Center was decorated with green and red shrubs, with poinsettias lining the railing of the porch, and palm branches entwined with hibiscus forming an arch in the background.

Velma, dressed simply in white dotted swiss, and Byron, dressed in white shirt and brown slacks, stepped out to the decorated porch, faced each other, and exchanged the following vows: "I take you \_\_\_\_\_ to be my \_\_\_\_\_, to hold and to cherish as long as I shall live."

After exchanging their vows, Byron placed a thin gold ring on Velma's finger, and said, "I give you this to wear as a token of our love and devotbn." The ceremony was ended with a kiss.

Everyone present attended the reception afterwards in the Community Center. Congratulations were made, and all who were present signed a statement as witnesses to the ceremony.

In the center of a long table which was decorated with poinsettias and greenery was a four-tiered wedding cake. Byron and Velma, together, cut the first piece of this wedding cake. Peppermint ice cream and cake were served to all.

### ALLAN KNIGHT CHALMERS RE-VISITS PUERTO RICO

Dr. Allan Knight Chalmers, minister of the Broadway Tabernacle (Congregational) of New York City, visited Castaner on the afternoon and evening of November 11th. Dr. Chalmers is also a member of the Board of Directors of the American Civil Liberties Union, a member of the Executive Committee of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and a member of the Board of Trustees of Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. Last year he visited Puerto Rico and Castaner (in July) with John Nevin Sayre of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. This year Dr. Chalmers was the principal speaker of the Religious Emphasis Week at Polytechnic Institute at San German.

In the afternoon Dr. Chalmers met informally with F. O. R. members of our Unit, giving us a brief report of the current activities of both the national and International F. O. R. He expressed enthusiasm over the possibilities of an expanding F. O. R. in Puerto Rico and encouraged our support and interest in the organization's activities. He also spoke concerning his activities with the American Civil Liberties Union.

Dr. Chalmers addressed the entire Unit at an evening meeting which was followed by a rather brief question period as he had to go into San Juan yet the same evening for engagements of the next day.

### FAREWELL TO THE MYERS

On November 11th we waved a farewell to Doc, Miriam, Ralfito and Harold Lewis Myer. Their devoted work, as well as their cheerfulness and understanding, for over two years have been an invaluable medical and spiritual resource both to the Unit and to the community. All of us are grateful for their contribution of willing service and friendliness, and are hoping they will decide to return to Castaner in the Spring. At present they plan to go to Dr. Myer's home in Chowchilla, California, and later on, to Miriam's home in Portland, Oregon.

### WRITER VISITS CASTANER

With us on November 3rd and 4th was Miss Olive Holmes of New York City who is on the research staff of the Foreign Policy Association. Miss Holmes is assigned to the Latin American field in her research. While in Puerto Rico her assignment was the writing of an article for the Foreign Policy Bulletin on the political situation in Puerto Rico. While here she attempted to cover spots that might give some information that she might need. She honored us with two days of her assigned eight. She spoke to us about U. S. foreign policy towards the Latin American countries, and some of the reactions which the Latin Americans were showing toward this policy. She also pointed out some of the differences of the foreign policy of the War Department and of the State Department, and how it sometimes happens that some of the good-will built up in the Latin Americas by the State Department is broken down through the policy of the War Department. We were very happy to have such an important figure visit our Project.

## LA PLATA COMES FOR FIELD DAY

On November 9th Castaner was invaded by the present force of volunteer workers from the Mennonite La Plata Project. The five carloads arrived just in time to devour a healthy portion of the noon meal. Most of the visitors, being recent arrivals at La Plata, spent the next hour or so getting camera shots of the Project, the vanilla curing plant, the new houses, and of most anything that was considered typical of Castaner. At two o'clock male and female members of both units formed two softball teams and battled out an exhausting game. Time still permitted some exciting volleyball games between a Castaner Puerto Rican team and the La Plata boys, as well as a game or two of mixed volleyball. After a well-earned evening meal with its ever-present wise-cracks, the La Plata visitors settled themselves in their vehicles to make the three hour trip over the long, winding road to La Plata.

## HOSPITAL GRADUATION AND VELADA

Under the lights of our tennis court on the evening of November 30th the hospital graduated another class of hospital workers, before a large group of community folks. Six ward aides and one orderly terminated satisfactorily the thirteen-week course under the instruction of Edna Eller, R. N. and Victorina Riera, R. N.

Rufus King, Castaner director, addressed the class and the community concerning the relationship of the hospital to the community, the Church of the Brethren, and the Insular Government. In connection with the graduation service the Mayor of Adjuntas, Jose B. Barcelo, described the efforts of the Castaner Project, and initiated solicitations for the X-ray machine in this community.

When the graduation exercises were completed the Recreation Center continued with a "velada" or program of lovely folk dances and special musical numbers by the various clubs. Twenty little first and second grade girls adorned with light blue and pink crepe paper aprons presented two songs entitled "Arroz con leche" (Rice Pudding) and "El Coqui" (The Little Frog). Then eight girls from the fourth and sixth grade club, dressed with colorful crepe paper costumes designed from the native Czechoslovakian costume, interpreted the folk-dances "Skip to me, Lou, my darling", singing the accompanying song in Spanish. Next a graduating nurse-aid delivered a lengthy recitation. Two other nurse-aids, uniquely dressed, rendered a comical love song duet. To end the program four boys and four girls from the third grade clubs, also cleverly costumed with crepe paper suits and dresses designed from a German costume, interpreted the following folk-dances: Ach Ya, Chimes of Dunkirk, and Gustav's Toast, singing the accompanying rhymes in Spanish.

**VISITORS DURING NOVEMBER:** Besides the visitors mentioned elsewhere in the Newsletter, practically all of the members of the Presbyterian El Guacío Project visited us--Stanley and Jean Harbison, Jean Alexander, Rev. Donald Dodd, Paul Young and Roy Walsdorf (only Don Martinson remained at El Guacío.) Other visitors were Clarence Senior, Director of the Social Science Research Center at the University of Puerto Rico, in Rio Piedras; Bill and Wilma Ludlow of the City Zoning Program of the Insular Planning Board, Irene Jamieson, public health nurse of San Juan; Bob Bogue of the U. S. Public Health Service of San Juan; Botton Morris of Philadelphia, now at the Edith Coll Art School in Santurce; Dr. and Mrs. Philip Mergler, Anne and Carol, of the Polytechnic Institute at San German; Lela Weatherley, Alice L. Thompson, Frances Akerstrom, May Akerstrom, all of the Marina Neighborhood House at Mayaguez; Miss Constance M. Hallock of New York City; Miss Ann Goodman of Roselle, New Jersey and Miss Mary Lou Kimerling of Humboldt, Kansas, both now attending Polytechnic; and John Torok, Dean of St. Michael's Seminary in Santurce.