

# Castaner Newsletter

BRUMBAUGH RECONSTRUCTION UNIT  
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BRETHREN SERVICE COMMISSION  
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## "DOUG" AND ROSA

Under an arch of the beautiful "Rain of Orchids" vine in the home of her mother in Yahuecas, Rosa Claudio became the wife of Alden Douglass. Gowned in pale pink marquisette and lace, a finger-tip veil and a sequin-studded peplum, Rosa was without exception the most beautiful bride in Puerto Rico on the evening of March 6, 1948.

The slender cradle moon and aroma of fragrant flowers gave the wedding a truly tropical setting, while "I Love You Truly", "O Promise Me" and "Because" lent a continental atmosphere to the occasion.

The ceremony was performed in English and Spanish by Dr. Homer L. Burke for there were many people present. Rosa was accompanied by her bridesmaid, Miss Ana Blanco, one of her friends from Presbyterian Hospital in Santurce, while the groom was assisted by Caleb Frantz. A three-tiered wedding cake was placed on the table after the wedding ceremony, and Rosa and Alden cut the first piece amid a series of flashes from Castaner's amateur photographers. Rosa's pet cat helped to celebrate the occasion by lapping at spilled ice cream.

Rosa met Alden shortly after he came to Castaner in August 1942 as one of the original eleven members of the Project. He is a native of San Francisco. Since that time Rosa has become a registered nurse, graduating at the head of her class at Presbyterian Hospital; and Alden has received his degree in physical therapy. Alden returned to Puerto Rico from his medical study in California after an absence of two years.

Their wedding trip included a week at Quebradillas on the northwest coast and a few days at El Yunque. Mr. and Mrs. Douglass are now living at Ponce de Leon and 321 Culto, Apartment 3, in Santurce. Alden is now practicing physical therapy with the Fondo del Seguro in San Juan.

## THE NEW MOVIE PROJECTOR

The members of this rural mountain community and we, the members of the Unit, wish to express our gratitude to all who have contributed towards making it possible for us to have the use of a 16 mm. sound movie projector. Since the month of January we have given seven movies for educational and entertainment purposes to this community. Also we have traveled to two other neighboring communities, showing special movies on health. We have found some Spanish-language sound films with Walt Disney characters that present some of the vital health problems of these people in a simple but excellent manner. We hope to purchase some of these films to enable us to put on a strong health education program in this and other nearby communities. Audio-visual education is an asset wherever one is, but is especially so where many of the people are illiterate. We are grateful that these people are able to receive the benefits of this teaching aid.

The Community Center provides general recreational facilities for the community at large for sports and for indoor table games. There is a playground by the side of the Center (rec hall, we call it), and a concrete court upon which tennis, volleyball and basketball are played, and where many outdoor programs and movies are presented to the public as there are long concrete steps by the side of the court which serve as bleachers. In the building itself movies are frequently held for the community, and sometimes classes from the school meet here for special educational movies. Various groups use the Center for a meeting place when their meetings are non-political. The program of the Center also includes interest groups and club work for different age groups, as well as the general recreational program outlined above.

### The Program for Women and Girls

During the two-month summer vacation from school the organized club work is at a minimum, but in August or September it is begun for the duration of the ten-month school year. The work with women and girls has been conducted on an interest group basis this year, rather than on the club basis as previously, and has proven successful. In this way each one comes just for the projects in which she is interested rather than for all the activities of a club for in a club some of the activities may not interest some members. The attendance under this method is quite constant, but each person is encouraged to attend only those activities which interest her. The women and older girls meet for their activities from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. and the girls of school age meet from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

One of the women's group activities is working with maguery, which is a hemp-like fiber from which doiles, sandals, belts and other such articles can be woven. This material is dyed in many colors and the work often has beautiful patterns. The women also make other practical and useful articles for their homes from such materials as are readily available, such as making ladles and small bowls from coconut shells, make small ovens from tin flour and sugar containers, carpet warp mats, and bamboo salt and pepper shakers. Many of the women are also learning to sew, both by hand and with the sewing machine, of which the Center has three. They learn to cut patterns and make many of the clothes for the family, which is a considerable economy so that the family either has more clothes, or can spare money for shoes. In the sewing group embroidery is also learned, and the women made pot holders which they embroidered.

The school girls make articles from small sea shells, and crepe paper. They also make cloth dolls. Some of them do coloring with crayons and water colors, others are interested in clay modelling, rhythm bands, and story reading. There are also folk games and songs. Sometimes these groups present some of these in velades (programs). The principal sport interest for the girls is volleyball, although some interest is shown in basketball. The girls also had a ping-pong tournament.

The women's and girls' activities have been conducted by Dorothy Webster and Lois Click. Dorothy returned to the States in February, but was replaced at that time by Josephine Wolf who has transferred from social work to the Community Center where she will work until mid-May. Lois Click will return to the States about the first of July. Santiago Gonzalez now works part time in the girls club work.

### The Program for Men and Boys

The work with men and boys has been conducted on the club group basis as before. The Second Grade Boys Club has 18 members with an average attendance of twelve. They made boomerangs, paper airplanes, push cars (stick with axle and two wheels), whirly-gigs or airplane propellers on sticks, and do crayola work. They learn to play such games as softball, relays, steal the bacon, pup-pum-pullaway and annie over. At Christmas the club had a party at which they exchanged gifts which they purchased for a small fee.

The Rabbit Club has a membership of 15. This means that 15 have received a pair of rabbits. To get them, they are to cut ten sacks of grass for the club stock. After having raised young ones they are to return a pair of them, after which the original pair and the remaining young ones belong to the member. So far, seven boys have returned their share to the club stock. The club owns a pure-bred New Zealand White male.

The Boys Sunday School Class has an enrollment of eleven boys. It began in December and meets every two weeks. It is progressing with good enthusiasm.

The Aspirante Club is patterned after the Boy Scout program. Membership requirements include learning the Oath, the Laws, and knot typing. Second Class and First Class requirements follow quite closely the Scouting program. This club began in December and six boys are members, and four others have completed part of their membership requirements.

There is also an interest group for wood-working and leather-working. The Community Center also cooperates with the local Second Unit School in providing physical education classes for the 7th and 8th grade boys four days each week--two days to each grade.

The older boys and young men of the community are organized into athletic teams. Their special sports interests are in basketball, volleyball, and softball. Games are arranged both locally and with teams from Adjuntas, Lares, Ponce, Rincon, Yauco and Polytechnic Institute of San German.

The biggest event of the year for the boys' groups is the annual boys' camp (see Newsletters of May and August, 1947 about last year's camp). Another is being planned this year for the first week in June. The work with boys and with men's athletics has been under the supervision of Andy Mathis, director of the Community Center, with the help of Knight Webster. Knight also included in his work for the Community Center the organization of a consumer's co-op for the community, and helped organize a Credit Union also. These activities required a great deal of cooperative educational work among the people. For these activities, see the Newsletter of August 1947, page 4. About six members of the Unit also took correspondence courses in cooperatives. Knight Webster left the Unit for the States in February, and for a while some of his rec hall activities were taken over by Bob Stanley; however, Bob left for the States at the end of March (see Personnel). Juan Grillasca is still a willing assistant in the Center, but in mid-June this year Andy Mathis will also be returning to the States.

Other activities of the Community Center include a Three Kings' Day Party for all the children of the community (see January 1948 Newsletter) and a May Queen Festival (see August 1947 Newsletter). The Center occasionally sponsors a Field Day (see August 1947) with teams in various minor sports from other towns and also local track events (see also December 1947). Family Nights were frequent events last fall (see August 1947).

## A TOP TOURNAMENT

The spinning of tops for several months before Easter has come to be a fixed custom among the mountain peoples in various sections of Puerto Rico. They have developed unusual skill in making their own tops with the use of a machete. They generally make them from orange wood and use a nail for the point. By winding a good string around them and throwing them very hard they can make these tops spin for a several minutes.

The boys have their own games which they play with tops which adds to the interest of the top season. After Easter most of them put their tops away until the following year. This has tended to stabilize top spinning as an annual affair. Little boys from six year of age on up to the older men have their tops and enjoy this sport.

On March 20th (the last Saturday in this year's top-spinning season) the Community Center sponsored a top-spinning tournament for all who were interested in participating. It consisted of the following six events:

1. The top that would spin the longest on a hard surface.
2. The top that would spin the longest in your hand after picking the spinning top up from the ground.
3. The top that would spin the longest in your hand, when the top was thrown and caught in the hand without the top touching the ground.
4. The top that could be thrown into a small circle the most times out of three trials---the top had to spin.
5. The top that would spin the longest on the thumb nail.
6. Racing to a given goal by first spinning the top and carrying the spinning top in the hand while running.

A ribbon for first, second and third places in each event was given. Also for each first place a small commercial top and string was awarded. It was interesting to note that the home-made tops won most all of the prizes--the factory-made ones not doing so well. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the tournament and we hope that it can be continued in future years.

## CONCENTRATED TRAINING PROGRAM FOR WARD AIDES

The Nursing Staff decided to alter the training program for ward aides by concentrating the program and assigning a full time instructor. The outlined program calls for 13 weeks of training. By doubling up the course so that two hours of class was given daily and twice the usual amount of practice work in the hospital wards was done, the course was completed satisfactorily in six weeks. The class was instructed by Edna Eller, occasionally assisted by others.

On Saturday evening, March 20th, the graduation exercises were held on the tennis court for this class of seven ward-aides. The program was opened with a movie on First Aid which Andy Mathis showed for the benefit of the large audience. Then followed a song by all seven girls of the graduating class. Carmen Vera of the class gave a discussion of the class work, and Carmen Lizasuain gave a reading. This was followed by a vocal solo by Carmen Arroyo. At last the diplomas were presented by Dr. Burke, Medical Director and Norma Roesch, Superintendent of Nurses to the class of seven girls: Carmen Arroyo, Angelita Garcia de Arroyo, Santiaga Gonzalez, Carmen Lizasuain, Felicita Quiles, Juanita Ramos and Carmen Vera. Dr. Myer gave a short speech. Andy Mathis showed some kodachrome slides of local Puerto Rican community activities.

## THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN PUERTO RICO

This year, like their fellow citizens in the States, Puerto Ricans will go to the polls in November to choose mayors, legislators, the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico in Washington, D. C., and for the first time, their Governor.

Puerto Rico, including the smaller islands of Culebra and Vieques, is divided into seventy-seven municipalities, each of which is governed by a mayor. The Legislature is patterned after that of the United States, having a House of Representatives and a Senate. The House is composed of thirty-nine members, one being elected from each of the thirty-five electoral districts, and four at large. The Senate is composed of nineteen members, two from each of the seven senatorial districts, and five at large.

The Resident Commissioner (at present, Dr. Antonio Fernos Isern) is Puerto Rico's representative in Washington, and is a non-voting member of the United States House of Representatives. Puerto Rico's Governor is Jesus T. Pinero, who is the first native to hold that position. Until this year this position along with other important offices has been filled by Presidential appointees, and even yet a few will continue to be appointed from Washington, with the approval of the United States Senate.

At present there are about seven political parties in Puerto Rico, although not all of them will have candidates on the ballot in the coming elections. The two smallest are the Nationalists and the Communists. Former Governor Rexford G. Tugwell hints that these two have been allied for the common purpose of causing disorder. The Nationalists are headed by Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos, who, it is said, became so bitter against the United States because of racial discrimination against him while he was a student at Harvard Law School. He gets his following from young intellectuals, especially in the University at Rio Piedras, where they sometimes cause disturbances. They are for independence at any cost and advocate the violent overthrow of the Americans who "occupied the island by force and annexed it without the consent of its people and governed it by remote control". The Communists have only about one thousand members, mostly in the San Juan area, and, according to one source, are chiefly continental Americans.

The Independent Party claims about ten thousand members and is also for independence, although through peaceful means. The Liberal Party polled more than thirty-eight thousand votes in the 1944 election, although it is not as strong as the three larger parties.

The Socialist Party under the leadership of Bolivar Pagan has drifted far from the ideals of its founder, Santiago Iglesias Pantin, who favored Americanization, statehood, and practical reforms in favor of the workers. The Free Federation of Puerto Rican Workers, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, still retains its unofficial connection with the Socialist Party. Another party favoring statehood is the Republican Party, but it differs from the Socialists Party in that it is controlled by bankers and corporation lawyers. In 1932 they formed a coalition with the Socialists and were thus able to gain control of the government which they kept until 1940. It is probable that they will form a coalition again this year in an effort to oust the party in power at present.

The Popular-Democratic Party which has been in power since 1940 was formed by Luis Munoz Marin, son of Luis Munoz Rivera, who was head of the Autonomist, and later, Union Parties, and is still cherished by Puerto Ricans for the distinction of his service to his people. Munoz Marin is President of the Senate and can have any position in the island's politics for the asking. The Popular Party made its greatest campaign appeal to the peasants and also gained some support from the middle class. In making his appeal to the peasants Munoz Marin has selected as his symbol, the "pava" (the straw hat of the peasant), and as his slogan, the phrase "pan, tierra, libertad" (bread, land, liberty). His newspaper is called "El Batey", a word meaning the padded, bare patch of ground in front of the peasant's humble home, around which much of the peasant's life centers. His platform was economic rather than political, and for the first time in Puerto Rico's political history a party was put into power on issues other than political status. Munoz Marin stands for a plebiscite which would give the people at large a chance to choose between statehood, commonwealth status, and independence, although he realizes that each of these must be accompanied by financial aid from the United States in the form of preferential treatment for imports and by subsidies.

Puerto Rico has made gains during the two terms the Popular-Democrats have been in power. For the first time since it became law under the Organic Act of 1900, the 500-acre law which limits ownership of land to 500 acres was put into effect, and is enforced through the Land Authority. The Industrial Development Company has made strides toward industrialization which is one of the "musts" for Puerto Rico. They have made attractive offers to firms from the States by lending them money and giving them exemption from income and property taxes until June 30, 1959. The populars have raised income taxes in the larger brackets and have exempted the poor from all taxes much to the discomfiture of the wealthy, who have long been protected by the Republican Party. Another law showing their social justice was that permitting illegitimate children to share their father's wealth. The Puerto Rico Planning, Urbanizing and Zoning Board is planning the program of economic reconstruction for Puerto Rico. This board recently received honorable mention and a diploma for its exhibit at the Sixth Pan American Congress of Architects at Lima and Cuzco, Peru.

Due to the reluctance of private capital a large part of the public utilities has been taken over by the government. The Water Resources Authority supplies all the power used; the Transportation Authority owns and operates the principal bus line in San Juan, and is planning an international airport for San Juan; and the Communications Authority controls the telegraph and telephone systems.

Much has been done since 1940 in education, in health, in housing, and in sanitation, and if the Popular-Democratic Party and the Planning Board can carry out their Six Year Plan (1945-51) there should be considerable improvement in the life of the Puerto Rican. But there is still the problem that seems to defy all solution, that of over-population.

#### THE EXPECTED NEW-COMERS

On the evening of March 3rd after a short business meeting of the Unit in the Casa Grande everyone went to the rec hall for a "get acquainted party" given in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Titus Schrock of New Paris, Indiana. Mr. Schrock is a brother of Mrs. Homer L. Burke. A good get-acquainted game was played, then the center of attention was turned to the other coming guests of the Unit. And without a doubt both mothers-to-be, Mrs. Click and Mrs. Haag, were much surprised. Competitive games were played with such prizes as safety pins, baby oil and soap. The two fathers-to-be, simultaneously fed each other cereal blindfolded. We pity the babies if the same methods are used on them. Gifts, two of a kind, were presented to them. Refreshments of graham crackers and orange juice were served--sounds like baby food.

## SHOP ACTIVITIES

Recently the fellows in the maintenance department have constructed a belt sander and a wood lathe. These supplement the face plate which had been made several years ago for woodworking. These three items will be permanent equipment that will be useful for many years to come, and were constructed from odds and ends of material about the shop for a small fraction of the cost of similar factory-made equipment. Also under construction are a hospital cart, a sort of stretcher on wheels for bringing patients to and from the operating or delivery rooms, and a power mower for cutting the grass of the athletic fields.

March 31st was a red-letter day for the maintenance department, for on that day the new 1948 Chevrolet pickup (3/4 ton size) arrived, taking the place of the famous carry-all, the black ambulance that was driven from Camp Lagro to Tampa, Florida full of supplies for the hospital at the beginnings of the Castaner Project in the summer of 1942. The maintenance crew has fitted the new pickup with a pipe and wire fence, with doors and a sheet metal roof, so that goods can be locked inside when it is used on shopping trips to the cities.

## FOR THE BOOK SHELF

THE STRICKEN LAND, by Rexford Guy Tugwell. Doubleday, \$4.50. Copyright, 1946. In September 1946, after five years as the last continental governor of Puerto Rico, the author returned to the professorship of political science at the University of Chicago, and also wrote this book as his record of his administration. It is a long book (704 pages), sometimes rambling, but scholarly. He develops his main theme clearly and realistically, and with many interesting side remarks, keeps the readers' attention on the place of Puerto Rico in American and world affairs as seen through the eyes of its wartime administrator. This book is a frank and honest record of the difficulties involved in attempting to solve Puerto Rico's problems, and this very feature makes the book particularly commendable. Lest any would-be liberal or reformer think that a few simple changes by mere fiat will solve these problems, let him first read this record of the involved nature of the problems involved with continental United States interests, local Puerto Rican interests and politics, depleted land, lack of mineral resources, overpopulation, colonialism in general in the Caribbean, the extraordinary difficulties of an island in wartime, lack of local cooperation due to political differences, and the further complication of the Governor being at the same time responsible to the President of the United States while doing his work through a division of the Department of the Interior, and of being dependent upon the Insular Legislature while under the inspection of Congressional committees whose members are often allied with interests in opposition to the solution of Puerto Rico's problems. Under Tugwell's guidance, authorities were set up for the extension of control of land, water and power resources, transport, housing, industry. He achieved the cooperation of the political party in power which has the confidence of the lower classes while Tugwell himself had the confidence of the middle classes. Together they have set up the Agricultural Development Company. The academic standards of the University of Puerto Rico have also been improved. This book not only presents the problems to be solved, but shows the difficulty of effecting a workable solution in the practical world of world trade, politics, war and peace. This book is not only full of valuable information, but also of an understanding of the problems and their solutions.

PERSONNEL. On March 29th Robert Stanley left for his home in the States after two years of service. He was one of our cooks until he transferred to the rec hall in February after Knight Webster's departure. Bob now lives at Salem, Ohio, and plans to enter William Penn College at Oskaloosa, Iowa this fall.