

# CASTANER

# NEWSLETTER

BRETHREN SERVICE PROJECT

BRETHREN SERVICE COMMISSION

Castaner, Puerto Rico

Vol. VII, No. 7 (#78)

February 1, 1949

## THE HOSPITAL (A COMMUNITY VIEW)

One of the reasons for accepting my work in the hills of Lares, was that there was a hospital near our home in Bartolo. This is the feeling of many people who live in or near Castaner. To have a hospital in a vicinity is rather a privilege. This indicates that our people in the hills near Castaner are happy; the hospital being one of the reasons.

If you ask of the past you will find out that many died without medical help. In the present only the impossible cases are taken care of outside of the hospital at Castaner. This hospital is reputed as an emergency unit, and it is so, but many owe their lives to the hospital. Now there are good roads to Lares and Adjuntas. In the past there were only very bad paths to the towns mentioned. To day in ten or fifteen minutes serious cases are brought into the hospital and receive proper attention. Even many cases not so called emergencies have been helped out, and long is the line of the grateful.

The hospital at Castaner has not received the full cooperation expected from the people, but this has not reduced the spirit of love and Christian Brotherhood which enlightens its workers. Considering how little the people receive from wages and other sources, it seems quite justifiable, this lack cooperation. The hospital being so valuable, it should be backed a little, if not a great deal more enthusiastically, both economically and in other ways by the community benefited.

In the past the hospital has meant salvation to many. In the present it is doing the task of serving with love and efficiency, the growing community. The hospital being in religious hands has the opportunity also to save souls of men and women who have never heard of the Gospel nor of its Christ. All religious groups are encouraged to participate in the spiritual assistance in connection with the hospital. An uneducated community in religious matters has not learned to call on pastors for spiritual help. "If there are any sick among you.....let him call on the elders.....and they shall anoint him in the name of the Lord". They have learned that this is to be done at the last moment, therefore it has become the expectation of death.

At present the hospital is a group of buildings of the rude type. The majority of the people find it comfortable, however; their homes being even "ruder". There is a great deal of need for a better and more comfortable physical plant,

not only for the patients but also for the personnel. I would not say too much comfort will bring better results in the care of the patients, but adequate operating rooms and equipment, kitchen, and rooms for the sick and all that goes with them will eventually force the bringing or more "angels of love" to Castaner. The patients would feel so comfortable in their sick beds. If the Castaner Hospital is going to grow in the hearts of the people, they must show it. They must call for Government participation in a larger scale. They have that right and obligation. The government forces must favor the hospital for the benefit of the people.

In the future the people of Castaner will see a better hospital but they also hope for more doctors. Some say, "I dare not go there because the doctor is too busy." The blessings of the past and present; let us pray for the multiplication of them.

Rev. Lauro Bauza

#### THE HOSPITAL

"In 1942 the Martin Brumbaugh Reconstruction Unit of the Brethren Service Committee was installed in Castaner. They established a Rural Hospital financed by the Brethren Church and the Insular Government. Besides the medical work this unit has done social and recreational work among the farmers and neighbors of the project."

The daily paper, DIARIO DE PUERTO RICO, last month printed a short article on the P.R.R.A. Project at Castaner. Mr. Ramon Moreno Navarro prepared the material for the report. The above short paragraph was translated from the article.

M. B.

#### OUT PATIENT DEPARTMENT

"Buenas dias"

"Buenas dias, Como esta hoy?"

Thus open the doors on another day in the O.P.D. -- with a "Good Morning" and "How are you today?"

Through these doors all day come the sick and the needy, an average of a thousand patients a month, presenting many varied ailments. They are treated by the doctor or nurse; the nurse taking care of all she is able and keeping for the doctor those who are most ill or need hospitalization.

This clinic is general, referring to, or receiving from other clinics such as Prenatal, Pediatric, Dental, Tuberculosis and Worm treatment.

A record is kept for every patient seen in the clinic. At the present there are about 5000 cases having records within the last year.

Treatments in the O.P.P. consist of medicines, ointments, dressings, and some minor surgery, with either local or general anesthetic. But in the case of emergencies we are ready for anything ---- Babies have a way of arriving anytime and anywhere.

Hospital and other medical records and statistics are kept in the O.P.D. also. At the end of 1948 we found that we had 12,068 patients that were treated through our medical work during the year. Treated also, are compensation and disability cases of both Insular and the United States government.

Most of our cases are children with malnutrition and instinal parasites, (worms). This week we admitted to the hospital two 8 month old babies, one weighing 6 pounds and the other 7½ pounds. It is almost impossible to believe a mother would wait so long before bringing in a starving little one. It is such a joy to see them improve that we are reluctant to see them go back to. we know not what. But we can do only so much and the people must be given a chance to help themselves.

Violet Harris, R.N.

#### LABORATORY

The work in the Laboratory here at Castaner Hospital is similar to the work in any other clinical lab. Most routine examinations of urine, feces, blood, sputum, etc. are done here in the lab. The work lags at times and then at other times we are quite busy depending upon the occupancy in the hospital and the number of persons attending the clinics. Patients from the clinics or O.P.D. who need work done are sent to the lab with a slip of paper indicating the type of examination to be done. Most exams are done daily, however a few are done weekly. The result of each examination is written on a slip of paper and given to the patient who returns to the clinic from which he came, where the Doctor interprets the findings and then diagnoses the case and then prescribes for the treatment. All our hospital patients' charts are checked for doctor's orders and lab slips are made out then brought to the lab. We collect the necessary equipment and go to take the specimen required for the specific examination ordered by the doctor. And so our work goes on day after day.

Dale Roesch

#### LINENS

The linen-sewing room here at Castaner is a small room between the O.P.D. and the dining room. We have an electric, Singer sewing machine. It is old but serves the purpose with a few necessary adjustments once in a while. We make our surgery and delivery room linens there, such as drapes, sheets, leggins, and towels from unbleached muslin. Regular towels, sheets, pillow cases, and other linens we buy or they are sometimes sent to us by frineds in the States. Patients' gowns and pajamas are made also when we do not receive them as gifts. The daily patching of hospital linens used to keep a Puerto Rican girl busy three hours a day, but since she is now concentrating her efforts on her new son the nurses have taken over this duty also on slow days.

Norma Roesch

### DIETS

Three times a day diets must be prepared in the kitchen for the hospital patients. They receive practically the same foods which we prepare for the dining hall except of course, with adjustments for the soft and liquid diets. Some of the patients' favorite foods are cooked cereal, eggs, rice and beans, "arroz con carne", fried platanos, corn on the cob and of course Puerto Rican coffee. When trays are ready they are carried across the ramp from the kitchen to the hospital on the diet cart which holds 18 trays.

Lila Peckover

### COMMUNITY NEWS

The little cement-block, Episcopal Chapel has suddenly come into view. The roof is on and in a very short time they expect to begin holding services in it.

Carmen Troche, one of our able nurse aides submitted to an appendectomy operation in the hospital on the 27th of January.

Comment from a neighbor project (Zalduonda) January 27, 1949.

"We have just read with interest your last newsletter. It's good to look at things in perspective once in a while to see what progress one is actually making. I think Castaner can count considerable progress in several areas and directions." signed --- The Greens.

M.B.

### MOVING NOTES

"Hello"

"Hello. This is Brethren Academy. Can you hear me?"

That was the good news that came over the wires the other day when we answered the ringing of the telephone in our house. The next day another point was added and Llinas House was connected. The telephones and wire have been donated by good friends of the unit in the States and John Kidwell has been giving time, thought, and energy and now we have our little party line which is really a "God Send" as we are scattered over our new BSC property.

The hospital is finally under roof at its new site. The petitions are in place. Several rooms are painted and one of the store rooms has its shelves stacked high with medical and hospital supplies.

Not all moving notes can be called progress --- as we are extra conscious of at the present time. While inspecting the painting of the ceiling in one of the rooms, we stepped into the "dumb waiter" opening in the floor and the cement floor below was an extremely uncomfortable place to light upon. We continue to move but much more slowly than before.

M.B.

## CHURCH NEWS

A special council meeting was called on Sunday night, January 16, 1949, after church to decide the hours for Sunday School, preaching and club work. We are continuing to have English Sunday School at 8:00 A.M. each Sunday, and Spanish church services at 9:00 A.M. every other Sunday. We are now planning to have English services at 9:00 A.M. on alternate Sundays with our Spanish service. The council accepted the recommendation of the unit social service committee to hold on Sunday morning at 10:00 A.M. all the children's clubs, which have been meeting on Saturday at various hours. These clubs have had a strong religious emphasis and have been carried on as a session of Vacation Bible School. In changing the time to Sunday it will more closely tie up with our church program. This time also gives various unit members, employed otherwise during the week, a chance to help in Sunday School club work.

It was decided to take a church offering each Sunday morning. It has been our custom to take an offering in our Sunday morning Spanish services. This decision means that we will also take an offering in our English services held on alternate Sundays.

A motion was made and passed that we send \$100.00 to Elgin for the Brotherhood Fund Achievement offering.

Ruth Ebey

## GOVERNOR MUNOZ MARIN

January 2nd was a day of great importance in the life of Puerto Rico. It was the inauguration of the first elected governor of the Island. The elaborate plans for both the inauguration and the reception were carried out in great splendor. The day was grand, and before 8:00 A.M. already folks were standing along the roped-off area waiting to see the parade. It is estimated that 125,000 attended the four hour long parade that passed by the grand stand, temporarily erected in front of the Capitol Building, prior to the two and one half hour speeches that followed.

The band music started at 9:45 and at 10:25 after a call to silence the Governor took his oath of office. Then the usual salutes of the guns and the band marched away playing "The Star Spangled Banner". Then the parade proper began. The police, the military, on foot, horseback and wheels went by by the hundreds. Then came schools, organizations, industries, departments --- every thing imaginable and some besides --- passing by with floats and every conceivable means of demonstration. About 2:00 P.M. the speeches began and lasted until 4:30.

The reception at "La Fortaleza" was scheduled to begin at 9:00 P.M. and although it was exactly 9:00 when we passed through the door and were directed to the surrounding gardens, there were already several hundred guests walking, sitting and standing around. Waiters with large trays of sandwiches and others with drinks were everywhere. There were probably a dozen tables set up in various places and piled high with refreshments. A large band played music and the choir from the University of Puerto Rico sang. One group of their selections was Christmas Carols. The entire gardens and the first and second floors of

"La Fortaleza" were all open and the crowds of friends wandered about at their pleasure. It was a Cosmopolitan group, with those at either end of the ladder and all stages between. It had been one of the Governor's requests that several "jibaroes" from each area be present in their usual dress with shoes. One interesting feature was the big cake (largest ever made in Puerto Rico) made in the shape of the Island. It covered a table six feet wide and some sixteen feet long. It weighed  $873\frac{1}{2}$  pounds and contained 22 different ingredients including 2100 eggs and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  quarts of vanilla. It was in relief and the edge representing the ocean was probably 4 inches high. The mountain ranges and peaks were 3 or 4 times that high. The coconut frosting colored blue represented the ocean. A green color represented the Island. On the Island at the sites of larger towns there was plain icing in rectangular shape and the names written on in chocolate. A two-story house probably 5 x 7 inches, with lighted windows was located at Barrinquitas (the Governor's birthplace). The seven light houses that surround the Island were represented in their proper places. They stood about a foot high and their electric lights flashed on and off true to life fashion.

At midnight some of the guests were still arriving and others were beginning to leave. The mountains of sandwiches (20,000) were still everywhere in evidence, as well as the cold drinks. At 1:40 A. M. the administratrix of the Capitol cut and served the cake, but many of the guests and even the Governor and Mrs. Martin had retired previously.

Finally a male soloist rendered a part of the opera, "La Bohemia", as the last of the 5000 guests departed.

M. B.

#### NEW WORKERS

Lorna Mac Sellers Miller, 22 years ago, came to bless the Brethren farmer home of Willard Sellers near Bourbon, Indiana. She is a graduate of the Bourbon High School class of '44. She spent the following year at Manchester College and then entered nurses training at Memorial Hospital in South Bend, Indiana, graduating from there in September '48. On October 3rd she became the wife of John Miller. She is interested in handwork and music besides her chosen field of nursing at which she spends most of her time.

John Miller, 30 years of age, was born to Amish parents in Plain City, Ohio. His father, Dan J. Miller resides with his only sister. He lived in Kansas several years. For  $3\frac{1}{2}$  months he was in a C.P.S. camp at Sidling Hill, Penna. He spent one term in Bible school at Goshen College. Following that he made two trips on Cattle boats and on the second one he stayed 5 months in Poland helping to distribute relief supplies. He has been Carpenter and Maintenance man at Camp Mack for the past three years. The Millers arrived at Castaner on January 13th. John finds plenty to do on the construction of the buildings on our new site.

Delbert and Verda Buss, life long residents of Walkerton, Indiana (Pine Creek Congregation) and parents of Mrs. Walter Keiser (now in San German), are spending the winter in Puerto Rico. They are dividing their time between friendly visits with children and grandchildren, enjoying Puerto Rico beauties and lending able and energetic hands to the very busy moving program at Castaner. Delbert, handy with hammer and saw, works on new buildings. Verda sometimes plies a needle with Grandma Burke, making new mattresses for the Hospital, and at other times she is using a paint brush making clean and fresh the Hospital walls, and again it is unpacking and arranging supplies.

### PERSONNEL

Dr. Homer Burke, the only doctor in the community, is the busiest person at Castaner. Besides his regular duties of seeing patients in the O.P.D. and the Public Health Clinic, making hospital rounds, doing surgery, caring for emergencies at any hour of the day or night; he has the responsibility of both medical and unit director. Also he is carrying a very active part in the construction of the new hospital at Llinas. As I said, he is a very busy man.

Fern Kring, R. N. who has recently become our superintendent of nurses, is especially interested in Public Health work. She has taken over the duties of the Public Health nurse in the various clinics at the Medical Dispensario across the street and makes regular visits to the clinic at Rio Prieto.

Wilma Stern, R. N. is one of the newer nurses at the unit. She divides her time between the 3-11 and the 11-7 shifts and spends her spare time struggling with the language and hiking over the hills or racing for the Castaner basketball team.

Lois Neiderhiser, R. N. is also one of the newer nurses. Like Wilma she divides her time between the 3-11 and the 11-7 shifts and spends her spare time trying to learn the language.

Lorna Miller, the newest member of the Castaner family arrived just a month ago. She is learning the ropes by working day duty with Fern and relieving the 3-11 nurse on her days off. Her off duty time is spent caring for her husband, John and learning to speak Spanish.

Martha Rupel, R. N. can be found visiting schools to give immunizations, apply patch tests for T.B. or giving pruganties (worm treatments). Or she may be found climbing the hills to visit a home in which there is a tuberculosis patient. She urges the proper care of the patient and immediate X-Rays for the rest of the family.

Violst Harris, R. N. is very efficiently heading our O.P.D. She does much to relieve Dr. Burke by seeing and treating patients with minor ailments and doing the routine dressings. She keeps records for the hospital as well as the O.P.D. Off duty she is kept busy as a member of several unit committees and as pianist of nearly all gatherings.

Norma Roesch, R. N. has recently resigned her duties at the Hospital until after she presents Dale with an heir. She has been working part time in the sewing room.

Dale Roesch is the laboratory technician and X-Ray technician. Like most of the fellows, he spends a great deal of time now helping get the new hospital ready. Many of his spare moments are spent developing pictures and playing basketball.

John Kidwell can and does fill several jobs. He is in charge of the drug room, is able to do lab work and take X-Rays. Right now he is chief truck driver for the work at Llinas. He is a member of the basketball team and an ardent admirer of the opposite sex.

Eudelia Cordero is Violet's right hand girl in O.P.D. and fills the position very capably. She is small and has a very pleasing personality.

Alejandria Lamboy is one of our part-time workers. She goes to school during the day and works evenings. We understand she does as good a job at her studeies as she does in the hospital.

Julia Lamboy, Leje's sister is the very capable person who keeps us supplied with sterile equipment. She helps with minor surgery and does good work during any type of surgery.

Elena Torres is another part-time worker who attends the ninth grade. She works at the hospital evenings and week-ends. Her spare time is spent crocheting and learning to knit.

Carmen Troche is an all around good aide, being able to fit into any shift or job where she is needed. She helps Fern at the Rio Prieto Clinic. She attends the Brethren Academy. Her fluent English is a great help to us who know so little Spanish.

Alfonso Troche, Carmen's brother, is a good orderly and is working full-time. He is a member of the basket-ball team and referees the games between the Unit boys and Puerto Rican workers. He is a popular fellow around the community.

Carmen Lizusuain is a little girl with an every ready giggle that often over flows and infects all those about her. She is a full-time worker and very dependable.

Felix Lizusuain, Carmen's brother, is a handsome chap and is a full-time orderly. He can be heard singing at the top of his voice or sitting quietly in a corner taking something apart to see how it works. He recently became engaged to one of our aides.

Isabelita Soto is an aide who can take the responsibility of either evening or night duty. Her cheerful disposition never seems to become ruffed. We'll be loosing her one of these days to Felix.

Juanita Ramos is our only blonde; a quiet girl and a good aide, especially with children.

"Chaga" Gonzalez divides her time at least three ways. She attends the tenth grade, helps with the girls clubs, and works some at the hospital.

Jaime Alvarez also attends the Brethren Academy, working mornings and week-ends in the hospital. He speaks excellent English; his favorite word is "sure".

Isabel Gracia works part time in O.P.D. helping with the records and attends school in the ninth garde. She is the artist of the group and is to make the signs for the hospital.

Angelita Santiago is a short girl with very long wavy hair. She is a full-time worker. Off duty she can usually be found with Juanita. She too plans to be married soon.



Adolfo Ramos, although not connected directly with the unit, is a great help at the Medical Dispensario where he works as clerk, keeping records.

Elly Rivera, R. N. is another person who is great help although not directly connected with the unit. She is the nurse from the Fondo del Seguro and works through our O.P.D. She has helped Violet through many hard places by her willingness to act as translator and by helping care for the patients on the busy days.

Justiana Ponce is a middle-aged widow who helps by cleaning the hospital each morning. She is conscientious and does a good job.

Lois Neiderheiser, R. N.

#### VISITORS

January 2 and 15 the Walter Keiser family were here at the project, the first time bringing Mrs. Keiser's parents to help with the moving program.

January 15 Justice Holsinger, director of the La Plata Mennonite Project, brought eight of their members and their visitors. Included in the group were Mr. and Mrs. Ward Shank, Sterling, Ill., Mr and Mrs. William E. Landis also of Sterling, Orle Miller, Cornelias Dyck and Luke Birkey.

January 25 Rev. Lester Hershey, his wife Alta, and children, Janice Jo, Sherilyn, and Eugene were here from La Plata. With them were his parents Rev. T. K. and Mae Hershey, who have been missionaries to Argentina for 30 years.

January 30 the Myers family from Adjuntas spent the day here at the unit visiting with the older members and learning to know the newer ones.

Also seen about the project on numerous occasions is our friend, Jose Barselo, mayor of Adjuntas. He is a Friend in need -- very literally many times these days.

M.B.