

# Castaner Newsletter

BRUMBAUGH RECONSTRUCTION UNIT  
Vol. VI, No. 7 (#68)

Castaner, Puerto Rico

BRETHREN SERVICE COMMISSION  
March 1, 1948

## ECUADOR--CALDERON

For over four years the Church of the Brethren sponsored a Boys' Club in Quito, Ecuador. Hundreds of the poorest boys of the city found in Club Brethren fellowship with other boys and wholesome activities for their leisure time. Gradually the value of such a club was felt by the leaders of the city, and in March, 1947 the Minister of Education took over the sponsorship of the club.

With this work completed, the Church of the Brethren decided to start work of a somewhat different nature among the Indians of the Calderon area, which is about fifteen miles north of Quito.

The need among this group of Indians is so apparent--there is filth, poverty, illiteracy, sickness, and above all, there is need for some real Christian teaching to be done there.

It is hoped that a small school can be started soon. Thus far there is only one school of about thirty pupils in this immediate community that has several hundred school-age boys and girls. Since the development of an indigenous church is the primary purpose of the Mission, religious teaching will be emphasized in the school.

A public health clinic will be started, and as soon as a doctor joins the workers in the Mission Project, the medical work will be one of the most important phases of the entire Mission.

Already there is some experimental farming being done to help the Indians to develop their small tracts of land on which they live. All of the Calderon area is exceptionally dry, making farming very difficult.

Benton and Ruby Frantz Rhoades and their two small daughters are now in Calderon living among the Indians--the first Brethren missionaries in Ecuador.

Claude and June Wolfe, along with their daughter, Claudia, who was born in Quito, have decided to accept the call of the Commission on Missions to return to Ecuador to live near, and work with the Rhoades in this new Mission Project. They left Castaner on February 11th, returning to the States. By May 1st. they expect to be ready to leave for Ecuador. Having spent two years at Quito, Ecuador heading the work of Club Brethren, Claude and June have decided on mission work in Latin America for the Church of the Brethren as their life calling. Although we are sorry they have left Castaner, we know that it is best that they go where the need is so much greater.

THE HOSPITAL REPORTS

Take A Visit

So you want to know something about the hospital! Well, it's hard to know where to begin. But here come two men carrying a hammock on a bamboo pole, so let's go around to the OPD (out-patient department) and begin there..the nurse-aide has just wheeled the emergency cart onto the OPD porch, and is helping to transfer the patient from the hammock. She now wheels him into the waiting room through the hall past the OPD office and the emergency treatment room, and into the small consultant room. The patient will not have to wait long because the doctor is in the treatment room trying to explain to a mother why it is necessary to give her sick baby boiled water. Maria, the nurse-aide, is getting the history of the patient, meanwhile, so let's listen.

"Your name, please."

"Juan Ramos Gonzalez," his voice just above a whisper.

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-five," he groaned.

"And where do you live?"

"Here in Castaner," and with that he lets out a series of "Ay, ay, ay, ay!" which, when translated, means "Ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch!"

"And now, Senor, what happened?" asks Maria.

"When my horse stumbled this morning I fell, and landed on a rock. My left arm has much pain, and when I breathe, it hurts here", indicating his chest.

Maria shakes down a thermometer, and after plading it beneath the patient's tongue, takes the record to the doctor. A thorough examination by the doctor reveals a compound fracture of the left arm and a possible fracture of one rib. To be sure, the doctor has ordered a chest X-ray, and Maria wheels him across the hallway into the X-ray room. The doctor has ordered him admitted to the hospital, so while the preparations are being made for the X-ray, Maria fills out the admission papers. Some friend of the family is usually along to sign the papers, so there is little delay.

The X-ray has been taken, so Maria now wheels him from the X-ray room and the OPD along the ramp to the hospital. Down a long hall past small private and semi-private rooms, into a large men's ward, Juan Ramos is taken. The curtains around his bed are drawn, and a ward orderly helps him change from his work clothes into the hospital garb. He is made as comfortable as possible.

Here's the nurse to check the doctor's orders and begin treatment. The orderly is to prepare his left arm for surgery, and the nurse-aide is preparing his pre-operative hypo. Now it will be at least an hour before surgery is ready since the boiler which supplies us with steam for sterilizing is only fired at mealtimes, so will see what is going on in the OB (for obstetric) or maternity ward.

The curtain is drawn, which means there is a patient in labor, and the nurse-aide is preparing her for delivery. The other five beds seem to be full also. Let's take a peek at the babies. For a small hospital the arrangement is handy. This first room from the OB ward is the OB utility room, and the next is the nursery. The babies look pleased and contented, even if their beds are boxes. This covered box with a small light bulb inside is the incubator which is ready for the new baby which is due any minute now. It looks as though it will be a race between the delivery and the surgery.

This must just be one of those days when everything happens at the same time. With an average of one baby every three days we manage to keep busy.

Our pediatric ward looks like another nursery since the children are small for their age because of malnutrition. Even with our recent increase in the number of baby cribs we still have to use adult beds for children sometimes.

The doctor is ready now, and the orderly is carrying the patient into the operating room. The nurse-aide restrains the patient and a nurse begins dropping the ether while the nurse-aide prepares the operative area. The scrub nurse and the doctor are scrubbing, and the orderly is arranging the spotlight. This light can be used either with a battery or with electricity. During the operation the anesthetist checks the patient's pulse and respirations periodically. Perhaps a member of our unit will come into the operating room either to watch the operation or to take a snapshot, movie or colored slide of it to show the folks back home. When the operation is finished the doctor and the orderly will carry the patient back to his bed, and the orderly will sit with the patient until he is awake from the anesthetic.

The patient will remain here in the hospital approximately five days, then he will be referred to a special clinic where the doctor can follow his case. In this way we keep our beds available for the critically ill and for emergencies.

#### In The Lab

Here at Castaner the laboratory, as in any hospital in the States, is a vital department in the carrying on of a medical program such as we have here. Its work is of utmost importance in helping the doctors diagnose ailments. Perhaps our laboratory is not as large or as completely equipped as most labs are, but the work done here is essentially the same.

Our work day starts at 7:00 a.m. when our assistant, Arcelio Nunci, starts the daily cleaning of the lab and the OPD. During the morning, routine urine-analysis, stool-analysis and hematologies are done after which special examinations are completed. On Thursday of each week our serology tests for syphilis are made. Then, of course any day brings the possibility of blood donors for transfusions, blood chemistry analysis, deferred darkfield and other examinations.

Our equipment, although not the newest or the best, serves our purposes. The incubator was constructed by CPS men, we have a new centrifuge, a constant temperature water bath, a dry heat oven, a refrigerator, two Bausch and Lomb microscopes (one of which is very good), a deferred darkfield condenser, a small colorimeter and other smaller equipment essential in lab work.

#### MEDICAL DISPENSARY

There have been changes in the clinic programs in the Dispensary since the departure of Drs. Francis and Sylvia Helfrick and the return of Dr. Everett Myer. The clinic for school children has been changed from Tuesday morning, and is now included with Monday morning's general clinic for emergencies.

On Tuesday mornings now we have our Tuberculosis Clinic. It is rather disappointing and discouraging, though, because we know that it is the poverty of the people which is so greatly responsible for the slow progress in this work.

Dr. Everett Myer is in charge of our Pediatric Clinic. Sometimes there are as many as 60 children, including well babies in one day. By now there are 68 children receiving milk from the milk station, although the number recently reached 80, which is the highest ever. The equipment of the milk station is much better now, and consequently, better service is given. The milk (powdered) is prepared by the milk-aid, but the mothers learn to wash their hands, clean their bottles and lids with hot water before measuring the milk. Once in a while little talks are given before the distribution of the milk on the subjects of diet, common diseases of children, and how to prevent them.

Dr. Homer Burke now has the Eye Clinic on Friday mornings. Also on this morning the venereal disease clinic is held, and general cases also come in. Dr. Burke also holds Dental Clinic on Monday afternoons, as last year, and the work still consists mainly of extractions and cleaning. This is very important work since, of course, tooth decay is a cause of so much poor health, and any work done in dentistry can be considered as preventive medicine, thus reducing to some extent the work for the clinics and the hospital. Every Tuesday afternoon, as last year, Dr. Burke also holds a pre-natal clinic in which routine checks are made each week, and advice and instructions concerning their diet and clothing, exercise and rest are given them, along with pamphlet literature in Spanish. Dr. Burke is to be congratulated on his understanding of the Spanish language.

On Thursdays no clinics are held in the Dispensary nowadays. This allows Ermalinda Selpa, the Public Health Nurse for the Dispensary to go visiting along with Dean Rohrer, our new Medical-Social Worker who always makes visits on this day. In this way the nurse has a better understanding of the home backgrounds of the clinic cases which is very important in the management and care of the patients. She is also able to instruct others in the family as to their health besides those who are clinic patients. Sometimes she also takes patients back to the clinic from these visits, or invites them to attend on some particular clinic day to receive necessary treatments and examinations.

#### Meet the Workers

Dr. Homer L. Burke, our Medical Director, now divides his time between his medical duties and the duties of the Unit Director's office since the departure of Claude Wolfe. He has also been appointed to be the English Sunday School teacher, and serves as the only elder of our newly-formed church.

Dr. Everett B. Myer, returned to Castaner about five months ago and has settled into his old routine of seeing patients and speaking Spanish. Besides his medical duties he teaches a Spanish class (and also studies Spanish), and serves on the Education Committee and on the Committee for a High School here.

Norma Roesch, R. N., our Superintendent of Nurses and Operating Room Supervisor, is well liked by all. She is also in charge of the linen room in addition to her many other duties.

Edna Eller, R. N., in addition to her regular nursing duties, also has charge of the training classes for hospital workers, one some months ago for orderlies, and now one for ward aides.

Charlotte Wright, R. N., has recently started working part time because Stevie has required more attention. In this way she helps out in the hospital when the other girls have days off, and she can take care of her family as well.

Fern Kring in addition to her regular nursing duties is busy cramming for her state board nursing examinations which are coming up soon both in the States and in Puerto Rico. No complaint though, for she will be able to have a "vacation" in the States with her friends.

Ermalinda Selva, R. N., is the nurse in charge of Medical Dispensary in which most of the clinics are held. She is hired and paid by the Health Department, but her work is with our doctors and their clinics, and her kindness and cooperation is appreciated by patients and doctors alike.

Adolfo Ramos is the secretary for the Medical Dispensary of the Health Department, keeping all the records of all clinic patients in order.

Elly Rivera, R. N., is the nurse for the Fondo Del Seguro in our OPD. She not only takes care of all the Fondo emergency cases in the OPD but often assists with other cases when needed. She also has many records and forms to fill out.

Caryl Mathis is our hospital secretary, and handy to have around because all types of letters, birth and death certificates, and correspondence and hospital records are taken care of by her.

Luke Bachman is what all hospitals should have. Whenever he sees things which can be improved, or that some new thing should be made, he does it. This is in addition to his taking all X-rays and frequently assisting in surgery.

Dale Roesch--"Dolly" in Spanish--is doing a good piece of work in the lab with a book in one hand and struggling with the microscope with the other. He also gave a short course in lab technique to those who were interested in doing routine lab work and in taking call when he is away from the Project.

Arcelio Nunci is our lab assistant. He took the orderly training course, after which he was sent to the lab where he has learned the routine lab work.

Maria Ruiz began working in our OPD on February 23rd and is doing a good job in taking over the work of Rosa Claudio who has left us and will soon become Mrs. Alden Douglass. Maria was formerly a nurse aide and left for further training.

Providencia Paoli de Rivera sews for the hospital, making new uniforms, and repairing old ones, as well as all the hospital linens and kitchen aprons.

Julia Lamboy, our nurse aid in surgery, has developed skill in sterile technique, and puts up all the sterile supplies. She also assists in minor surgery.

Alejandrina Lamboy goes to clinics and works in the OPD. The remainder of her time she works in the hospital ward as a dependable nurse aid.

Carmen Troche is one of the all-around nurse aids, capable of working every place--clinics, OPD, surgery, delivery room, and is able to take charge of floor duty on the 3-11 shift or the night shift. Alfonso Troche is an excellent orderly. In his leisure time outside the hospital he takes part in all the sports of the Project, especially basketball and softball. Carmen and Alfonso live with their mother and two younger brothers. They have one married sister, and one sister who is a patient in the TB sanatorium in Ponce.

Blanca Martinez is another nurse-aid whom we depend upon to take charge of the evening or night shifts alone at times. She lives with her sister in Castaner because her parents moved away not long after she began working here.

Angelita Santiago, although she has not branched out into all the divisions of the work, is another dependable nurseaid who frequently has the responsibility of the evening or the night shift.

Eudelia Cordero is a full time worker who spends most of her time in the clinics, but is quite willing and capable of working in the hospital ward when needed. Since her home is too far from the Project to come early every morning she lives with her brother.

Elena Torres is a part time worker who keeps busy five days a week going to school, and working evenings and week-ends in the hospital. She is interested in recreational therapy for the patients.

Jaime Alvarez has been a full-time orderly for three years. He is a short boy with a cheerful smile. He is an active worker in the Baptist Church, and is also a member of the Credit Union, as are some others of our workers.

Luis Fernandini is another "old-timer", having also been an orderly for three years. He is secretary of the Credit Union, and also a member of the Vanilla Growers Cooperative. Even though he lives with his parents and sisters we are afraid he will be a little lonesome as his girl friend will be going to the States soon.

Isabelita Soto is our Cinderella. In the few months she has been working in the Hospital her eagerness and willingness to learn have made her an outstanding nurse-aid.

Erohilda Cardona has been working both in the clinics and the hospital. Right now she works three days a week in the Public Health Dispensary assisting the doctors with the clinics.

Carmen and Felix Lizasuain are both newcomers in the hospital ward, and are working part time. Carmen just graduated from a nurse-aid class with high standing, while Felix graduated last spring with the orderly class.

Fermain Rios has been shy and slow in becoming acquainted with the Unit workers, but does good work and is developing into a good orderly. He is also on part time.

Juanita Ramos has just graduated from a recent ward-aid class, and has done well in her work. She is unique in our staff in being our only blonde.

Margarita Maldonado has been doing the daily cleaning of the hospital (for which we are all grateful) since her mother, who had been doing this work, has been ill.

### In Summary

The Castaner General Hospital tries to meet the acute medical needs of this large mountain community. There are the little ones sick with pneumonia, diphtheria, and ascaris and hookworm infestations, besides those who are weak and pale and undersized from lack of proper food. There are expectant mothers who come for a safer place to have their babies. There are those who suffer from the usual infections so common in tropical countries. All are seeking a renewal of physical life. Out from the Hospital is carried on a program of education, immunization and parasite eradication. The building-up of health is necessary for the proper enjoyment of physical and spiritual life.

### FOR THE BOOK SHELF

INDIANS OF THE HIGH ANDES, by the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America. Published by the Sowers Printing Company, Lebanon, Pennsylvania, 1946. \$3.00. 320 pages. This book is the report of the Commission which was appointed by the above-named Committee to study the Indians of the Andean Highland, with a view to establishing Christian enterprise. It is about the seven million Indians who live in the Andes Mountains in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. The members of the Commission were: Dr. W. Stanley Rycroft, a former missionary in Peru, and Secretary of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, who reports on Government and Education, and the Evangelical Church; Dr. Walter J. K. Clothier, Presbyterian medical missionary to West Africa, who reports on Health; Dr. John T. Dale, anthropologist and missionary under the Mexican Indian Mission, who reports on Anthropology and Culture; Dr. J. Merle Davis, formerly a missionary in Japan, and director of the Department of Social and Economic Research and Counsel, of the International Missionary Council, who reports on the Economic and Social Setting; and Dr. Ira W. Moomaw, rural missions specialist under the Church of the Brethren in India, who reports on Agriculture. Dr. Rycroft and Dr. Davis are widely known for their reliable knowledge about Latin America.

We recommend this book, not only for its reliable information, but also for its timely interest to you and us in helping our understanding of another region where Castaner alumni will be working (see page 1). Not only the Wolfes in Quito, Ecuador, but also the Groels who have been in La Paz, Bolivia for the past two years make up the roll of Castaner alumni who have worked in the high Andes. This book was reviewed briefly in the Gospel Messenger of June 21, 1947

## VIVA LA CANDELARIA

The evening of February 2nd, Day of the Purification, (40 days after Christmas), is the occasion for celebration by bonfires. Here in the mountains they can be seen plainly, dotting the hillsides with their spears of flame and smoke. They seem to challenge and answer each other as first one and then another lights up. The people, especially the children, enhance the fun by shouting "Viva la Candelaria" or "Long live the bonfire". They follow this by short shouts and sometimes by a blast on a horn. For several days each family has collected scrap wood and grass and weeds for this big event, and in their enthusiasm, some build fires the night before also. We hope these friendly fires continue to light up over the mountainsides every February 2nd--to keep such a custom alive in its spirit of tradition and neighborliness.

## LA MASA CORAL

You can talk about operas, playhouses and the like all you wish, but we mountaineers will settle anytime for a concert of rich music such as "The Heavens Proclaim", by Beethoven, and "Listen to the Lambs", by Dett; and gayer numbers such as "Three Blind Mice" and "Comin' Through the Rye", as arranged by Waring.

Mr. Robert Carlson (better known as Bob), director of the Masa Coral (the a cappella choir) of the Polytechnic Institute of San German, called the roll of his thirty singers on February 14th, and packed them into three guaguas (station-wagons) for the long and winding trip from the Poly Hills to the mountain valley of Castaner.

At seven o'clock that evening the chorus filed out onto to the tennis court led by the señoritas attired in long, flowing, white satin dresses with fuchsia accessories. It was a pretty scene, but best of all was the lovely music as it floated to us over the cool currents of night air.

The concert made history because it was the first of its kind ever to be presented in this area, and as a consequence the great majority of the audience had never before had the opportunity of listening to a formal concert. The Unit and the community alike are appreciative of the Masa Coral's kindness in making the long trip and in singing out-of-doors that we might hear their excellent music.

## HISTORY HAS REPEATED ITSELF

Bridgewater, Virginia

Dear Editor:

I notice in the Newsletter dated February 1 that the recent Brethren Love Feast was the first complete one in the history of the Unit. I beg to advise that this is incorrect. A previous complete Love Feast was conducted in July, 1945 with M. R. Zigler officiating, assisted by Rufus B. King, Bruce Reeves and others. This was reported in Vol. III, No 11, dated August 1, 1945.

Very sincerely yours,  
Rufus B. King

Thank you, Rufus. Following is a reprint of the former article. (top page 8).

On Sunday, July 1, 1945 the first Brethren Love Feast ever held in Puerto Rico was observed in the "upper room" of the Casa Grande, Castaner. The Rev. M. R. Zigler officiated. For many members of the unit it was the first Love Feast that they had had a chance to attend in over three years, and for some non-Brethren unit members it was the first time that they had participated in such a service. Preceding the Love Feast and Communion, Mr. Zigler gave an excellent sermon on the meaning and significance of the Love Feast. Visitors from San Juan and the Virgin Islands participated with us. The service was deeply inspiring and proved to be the high point of our summer religious program.

#### CASTANER CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Those Unit members who are interested in beginning to definite form of religious service for the community met in the Casa Grande living room on February 25th to discuss the possibilities. On the recommendation of the Religious Life Committee it was decided to begin a Church of the Brethren at Castaner as a community organization.

With the appointment of Dr. Burke as Elder, the other church officers were elected. Dean Rohrer will serve as Church Clerk, Alys Haag as Treasurer, Paul Snavely and Chester Peckover as Ushers. Andy Mathis was previously appointed Sunday School Superintendent. There are twenty charter members from Unit personnel.

We are very humble in these beginnings and ask your prayers as to God's blessing upon this adventure for Him.

#### LEAP YEAR

"The way to get a man", says Thelma, "is to make up your mind before leap year, and then work!" "Leap year does not worry me", replies Don. "Just ask the girl before she gets the chance."

They may have arbitrated, who knows, but at any rate, on February 10, 1948, Thelma Strite of Hagerstown, Maryland and Don Sollenberger of Curryville, Pennsylvania announced their engagement to us. Thelma plans to join Don at Manchester College in North Manchester, Indiana after finishing her term of service here at Castaner.

PERSONNEL NEWS: Dale and Norma Roesch visited at Ryder Memorial Hospital in Humacao on January 28-30, and also at the School of Tropical Medicine in San Juan for the next two days in order to learn more about the operation of other hospitals and laboratories. On February 11th Don Sollenberger left Castaner, completing two years of service here, for his home in Curryville Pennsylvania prior to his entering Manchester College in North Manchester (see also item above). On February 12th Claude and June Wolfe and their daughter, Claudia, left Castaner for Bunker Hill, Indiana. (See page 1). On February 15th Knight and Dorothy Webster left for Madison, Wisconsin. On February 22nd George Furse, former Unit member--one of the original eleven--left Puerto Rico to return to the States. Walter Keiser, former Unit member, returned to Puerto Rico on February 16th with his wife, Agnes, and their three children, Ronald, Norma Jean and Elaine. They visited the Project for a day before going to Polytechnic Institute in San German where he has accepted the position of Director of Maintenance.

CASTANER VISITORS FOR FEBRUARY:--Jean Alexander, Roy Walsdorf, Rev. and Mrs. Don D. Dods of El Guacio Project; George Furse, before his return to the States; and Pablo Vasquez of Caguas, Puerto Rico who is working on his doctor's thesis about the Castaner Community. He is a former classmate of Knight Webster at the University of Wisconsin.



On Sunday, July 1, 1945 the first Brethren love feast ever held in Puerto Rico was observed in the "upper room" of the Good Graces, Guayanilla. The Rev. M. N. Elyer officiated. For many members of the church it was the first love feast that they had had a chance to attend in over three years, and for some non-Brethren with members it was the first time that they had participated in such a service. Following the love feast and Communion, Mr. Elyer gave an excellent sermon on the meaning and significance of the love feast. The service was a landmark participated with us. The service was to be the high point of our summer.

Sec. 562, P.L.&R.  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Elyer, Illinois  
Permit No. 2

Brethren Service Commission  
GENERAL BROTHERHOOD BOARD  
Church of the Brethren  
22 South State Street  
Elyer, Illinois.  
Return Postage Guaranteed

With the appointment of Dr. Burns as Elder, the other church officers were elected. Dean Burns will serve as Brethren Clerk. Also as Treasurer, Paul Elyer and Chester Peterson as Elders. Andy Wadsworth was previously appointed Sunday School Superintendent. There are twenty charter members from the personnel.

We are very happy to have you here and ask your prayers as to God's blessing upon this endeavor for Him.

LEAF YEAR

"The way to God's grace," says Thomas, "is to make up your mind before last year, and God works." "Last year does not worry me," replies Don. "What are the first letters she gets the chance."

They may have anticipated who knows, but at any rate, on February 10, 1945, Thomas and Don of Lancaster, Maryland and Don Gollinger of Garyville, Louisiana announced their engagement to us. Thomas plans to join Don at Lancaster College in North Lancaster, Indiana after finishing his term of service here at Guayanilla.

PERSONNEL NEWS: John and Norma Roach visited at Ryder Memorial Hospital in Honesdale on January 30-31, and also at the School of Tropical Medicine in San Juan for the next two days in order to learn more about the operation of other hospitals and laboratories. On February 1st Don Gollinger left Guayanilla, completing two years of service here, for his home in Garyville, Louisiana prior to his entry into the Marine Corps in North Lancaster (see also item above). On February 12th Gladys and Joe Wolfe and their daughter, Gladys, left Guayanilla for Buckner Hill, Indiana. (See page 1). On February 15th Knight and Dorothy Webster left for Madison, Wisconsin. On February 22nd George Turner, former staff member of the original eleven-left Puerto Rico to return to the States. Walter Kolacz, former staff member, returned to Puerto Rico on February 15th with his wife, Anne, and their three children, Ronald, James Jean and Elaine. They visited the project for a day before going to Polytechnic Institute in San German where he has accepted the position of Director of Maintenance.

EASTERN VISITORS FOR FEBRUARY:--Jean Alexander, Roy Walsford, Rev. and Mrs. Don E. Bede of St. Francis Hospital, George Elyer, before his return to the States, and Paul Elyer of Guayanilla, Puerto Rico who is working on his doctor's thesis about the Guayanilla Community. He is a former classmate of Knight Webster at the University of Wisconsin.