

# Castañer Newsletter

BRUMBAUGH RECONSTRUCTION UNIT

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BRETHREN SERVICE COMMITTEE

August 1, September 1, 1946

## FOURTH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

On August 11th at 2:00 p.m. at Castaner Project, the Brumbaugh Reconstruction Unit held its Fourth Anniversary dinner on the founding of the work in Puerto Rico. The original group arrived on August 2, 1942. Of special significance at this anniversary dinner was the presence of Fred Kidder and George Furse, two of the original members of the Unit that came to Puerto Rico. George Furse is a special student in Social Work at the University of Puerto Rico at the present time, while Fred Kidder is continuing his work as Acting Principal of the Episcopal Vocational School near Ponce.

The dinner was presided over by Rufus B. King, Director of the Unit. The program was informal in nature with talks featured by Fred Kidder and Dr. Burko, the latter a recent arrival with his family. The Burkes were formerly missionaries to Nigeria, Africa for the Church of the Brethren and Dr. Burke has been practicing medicine at Bremen, Indiana since 1938. A number of guests were also present at this special occasion.

## HOUSING PROGRAM AT CASTANER

With the arrival on August 2nd of Walter Keiser, a member of the Church of the Brethren from northern Indiana who has volunteered to supervise a construction program of several homes for the Brethren Project at Castaner, a housing boom is in progress at this Brumbaugh Reconstruction Unit Project. Mr. Keiser has left his contractor work to donate six months toward this project in Puerto Rico.

At the present time the living quarters at Castaner are completely occupied, with not even a guest room available. Some months ago the Brethren Service Committee authorized the construction program. Two houses are definitely planned and have been started, and there is a prospect that a third will be built on the one-half acre plot that has been purchased from the PRRA.

This is a cooperative project and many contributions from various sources are helping to make the houses a reality. More than a hundred local Puerto Rican laborers have offered to donate a day's labor. Unit members are contributing off hours. Local business houses are giving reductions on materials and are making direct contributions to encourage this development which will serve a very great need, particularly for families of those who are now located with the Unit at Castaner.

The houses are to be constructed of concrete block. Some improvising has been necessary due to the scarcity of certain materials, particularly reinforcing steel and nails. The buildings were designed by Robert Pope, a former CPS member of the Brumbaugh Unit in Puerto Rico working for the Insular Government on a special project. Since his release, Bob has been in charge of the designing for the Puerto Rico Committee on Planning and Design, an Insular Government Agency. Bob has donated his services as architect.

It is hoped that this building program will be completed by the end of January.



PERSONNEL NEWS:--On July 25th the arrival of Dr. and Mrs. Homer L. Burke with their family of four--Royce, Lynn, Jeneba, and Wanda Brown, completed our medical staff, and our hospital and clinic programs are again being expanded. Royce is helping with the house construction and Wanda is working in the kitchen. Lynn is age twelve, and Jeneba is three. Early in September Wanda will begin her senior year of high school at Robinson School in Santurce, while Royce and Lynn will attend the Colegio Ponceno de Varones in Ponce, Royce being in his junior year of high school and Lynn in the eighth grade.

Walter Keiser arrived on August 2nd as construction foreman (see front page). Wanda King with Rufus, Jr. arrived on August 16th. She will be Casa Grande hostess, assisted by Mrs. Burke. Rufus, Jr. is about one year old. Josephine Anderson also arrived on August 16th and is now working in the Centro Comunal which is now completely staffed. Arriving on August 19th were Howard and Charlotte Wright, and Paul Snavely, CPS man from Wellston. Charlotte is a registered nurse and completes our nursing staff. Howard has been helping with the house construction but will work as cook when Wanda Brown leaves for school. Paul is working on the house construction.

But there have also been departures. Bill Johnson left on July 25th for the States, and will attend Bridgewater College in Virginia this fall. On August 5th Caleb Frantz began teaching English and music appreciation in the Second Unit School at Rabanos. Virgenmina Bobe of Cabo Rojo, P. R. returned on August 18th to Presbyterian Hospital in Santurce to complete her nurse's training, after training in our hospital this summer. She also instructed a beginner's Spanish class, and helped instruct a hospital orderly class while with us.

On August 10th Bruce Reeves received his CPS discharge, but . . . .

#### ON AUGUST 18, 1946

At the dewy hour of 5:00 a.m. the sleepy inhabitants of Castaner stumbled up the muddy road past the Paoli farm. For twenty minutes the procession moved upward until it reached the summit of the mountain which overlooks Don Bartolo Ozono's finca. There blankets were spread and the group sat facing the east from which a new day was to begin. Silence, filled with deep thought, prayer and meditation, covered all.

A faint light appeared over the easternmost mountain, and Rufus King broke the silence with a sincere, heart-to-heart talk on the reverence, adventure and meaning of marriage. At exactly 6:05, while the sun in all its colors rose to cover Puerto Rico with a splendor yet to be equalled, Bruce Reeves and Margie Platt rose, clasped hands, and looking into each other's radiant face, repeated these words, each to the other--"In the presence of God and before these witnesses I take thee \_\_\_\_\_ to be my \_\_\_\_\_, promising with divine assistance to be unto thee a faithful and loving \_\_\_\_\_ until death do us part." In the hush of the greatest moment in their lives, they sealed these vows with a kiss.

Rufus rose, unrolled a large scroll, and after Bruce and Margie signed their names to the document, he read the written testimony of the marriage. After the ceremony the Unit members present, and the Mayor of Adjuntas and his wife, had the privilege of signing the scroll, kissing the bride, and wishing both all the best wishes of the group.

Breakfast was served that morning at 9:00 and ham and eggs was a treat to be remembered. Of course a wedding is not complete unless some mischief is conceived, and Castaner took it upon itself to use pain and paper to give them a real sendoff. There was even a pen of real live rabbits in the dining hall that morning.

The sun rose that morning not only on a new and beautiful day, but on a new and beautiful marriage which, through the guidance of the Master in whose name we strive to serve, will be made into another Christian home. Thus was started another Castaner couple on the road of married life.



### TOWARD A COOPERATIVE

We have been and are continuing to explore the possibility of organizing cooperatives in this area. We feel that this will be an important step in solving the people's problems. To give some idea of the need here for a consumer's and a producer's cooperative, the margin between prices here and in San Juan is so great that bananas which the farmer sells here to truckers at 35¢ a bunch are retailed in San Juan for \$2 or \$3 a bunch, although San Juan is only a four-hour drive from here. The same thing happens with products that are shipped from San Juan to be retailed here. We feel that a system of producer and consumer cooperatives here can do away with economic evil. It will also introduce a constructive philosophy among the people in helping them to help themselves, rather than for them to keep expecting nearly everything to be done solely by government or charity organizations.

As a first step toward a cooperative, Knight and Dorothy Webster attended the cooperative conference held in San Juan from July 1-4. They also visited several successful co-ops in the San Juan area. Further, they contacted leaders from the Extension Service of the University of Puerto Rico. Three of these leaders recently met with our Unit one evening to explain to us the best ways and means of introducing co-ops in this area. They also met with a committee selected by those in the community who are interested in cooperatives.

We are now in the process of organizing a study group on co-ops for the Unit members so that first of all we are certain that we understand the principles of cooperation well before we try to introduce them into the community. In working in the community with the people it will probably take months, or even more than a year, to educate these people in the philosophy and management of cooperatives. Then we will help them organize the actual co-op.

The first cooperative will probably be organized from our present needle-work industry. Dorothy Webster has already begun some educational work among these women. Following this we hope to start a consumer's co-op, a producer's co-op, and a credit union. One of the great needs is to train the people to budget their small incomes. Far in the future perhaps such things as a community nursery, laundry, and bakery can be established, but as yet these are only far-away dreams.

### BRUMBAUGH BOYS' CAMP--1946

The third annual Brumbaugh Boys' Camp was held July 6th to the 13th in the YMCA camp site on the Mameyes River near the El Yunque Recreational Park. Forty-five boys selected from the Castaner, La Plata and Zalduondo Projects were afforded a full week of directed activities by personnel from the three projects. The daily schedule included: calisthenics, breakfast, cabin clean-up, chapel period, work project, craft instruction, swimming, lunch, rest period, directed hiking or swimming, supper, free period, campfire with outside speakers, and finally to bed at nine o'clock. Most of the boys from Castaner worked for part of the money in order to attend the camp. Generous contributions from interested friends on the Island as well as from others in the States afforded many of the boys the opportunity to enjoy this experience. Twenty boys from Castaner, twenty-two boys from La Plata, and three boys from Zalduondo made up the entire group of youngsters that were able to leave their homes for a week of fellowship and new experience with boys of other communities.



### CENTRO COMUNAL TAKES A RETREAT

"The kitchen staff slaves while the rec hall staff plays" was a refrain from a song sung at the anniversary banquet here recently. In part, perhaps, it was true, for on August 8th the entire Comunal staff, including our Puerto Rican helper and his wife, climbed into the black ambulance and set out for San Sebastian. From there the group proceeded to the Boy Scout Camp "Guajataca" to look over the possibilities of having a Boys' Camp there. From the camp they went to the ocean to a beautiful bay near Quebradillas where they had lunch and a swim. They returned that afternoon to El Guacio Project for supper, after which Jean and Stan Harbison, managers of the Project showed them what had been done there, and what they still hope to do.

Early the next morning they left for Aguadilla and Borinquen Field, and with the kind assistance and able guidance of Chaplain Major Ormonde S. Brown, they were able to see all the points of interest at this huge field. The group was also treated to "a wonderful lunch" at the Officer's Club. Chaplain Brown, who has visited our Project had prior to this made mention of our rehabilitation project here and its being on a volunteer basis, and he and others of this Army Post made a sizable contribution towards the work of our Project.

The group continued on its journey, having another swim at the crash boat landing near Borinquen Field, and supper at Mayaguez, port on the western end of the Island and the third largest and one of the most beautiful cities. From Mayaguez they returned directly to Castaner, riding through a beautiful tropical moonlight night. The Center's staff profited from the trip in numerous ways, but perhaps most from the joy of playing together after having worked together for so long.

### HOSPITAL ORDERLY GRADUATION

On Thursday, August 22, the Hospital graduated another class of four Puerto Rican orderlies--Arcelio Nunci, Alfonso Troche, Antonio Rivera and Minin Paoli. The parents and many friends attended the all-Spanish service. Dr. Myer, medical director, Rufus King, project director, Ramon Moreno, chief agronomist for the PRRA Project, and Ernesto Casta, house construction superintendent for PRRA, participated, with Edna Eller, our new instructress, presenting the diplomas. Carmen and Alfonso Troche rendered special selections, as also did Royce Burke with his trumpet.

We have begun a new class of ward aides and orderlies consisting of sixteen Puerto Rican young folks. Eliminating examinations will be given and eight will be chosen for the fourteen weeks course.

### RECENT VISITORS AT CASTANER

During the past two months the following people have been among our visitors: Chaplain Ormonde S. Brown of the Army Post at Borinquen Field near Aguadilla, Rev. Santiago-Cabrera, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Aguadilla, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Cordner of the Federal Housing Program in San Juan; Miss York, a YWCA organizer in Puerto Rico, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Bogue of the United States Public Health Service, Mr. Aaron Schmidt, former CPS man now teaching agronomy at the College of Agriculture at Mayagues; Miss Mary Beth Loshbaugh, Brethren girl and recent McPherson College graduate, now on the teaching staff of the Robinson School in Santurce; Bob Pope, Insular architect, and Isabelle Mount, architect and friend of Bob Pope; Rev. H. Bonsell of the Presbyterian El Guacio Project, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Miller of the Baptist Academy at Barranquitas, Bill and Wilma Ludlow of the City Zoning Program of the Insular Planning Board, and Bill Vickery, ex-CPS man who is now a tax consultant for the Insular Government; and Miss Garcia, supervisor of milk stations for the Lares area.



ROSTER OF THE CASTANER PROJECT

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AFFILIATION</u>	<u>HOME ADDRESS</u>	<u>ARRIVAL DATE</u>
1. Josephine Anderson	Methodist	Nashville, Tenn.	Aug. 15, 1946
XC2. Luke Bachman	Brethren	Lebanon, Pa.	May 23, 1946
3. Martha Bachman	Brethren	Lebanon, Pa.	May 23, 1946
4. Wanda Brown	Brethren	Bremen, Ind.	July 25, 1946
5. Homer L. Burke	Brethren	Bremen, Ind.	July 25, 1946
6. Marguerite Burke	Brethren	Bremen, Ind.	July 25, 1946
7. Royce Burke	Brethren	Bremen, Ind.	July 25, 1946
C 8. Maurice Click	Brethren	Bridgewater, Va.	Feb. 2, 1946
9. Edna Eller	Brethren	Salem, Va.	May 31, 1946
XC10. Walter Haag	Brethren	Whittier, Calif.	Feb. 2, 1946
11. Francis Helfrick	Friends	Allensville, Pa.	May 5, 1946
12. Sylvia Helfrick	Friends	Allensville, Pa.	May 5, 1946
13. Kathryn Hertzler	Brethren	East Petersburg, Pa.	June 11, 1946
14. Ruth Idleman	Brethren	Marianna, Pa.	March 22, 1946
15. Walter Keiser	Brethren	Lakeville, Ind.	Aug. 2, 1946
16. Betty Kimmel	Brethren	McLouth, Kansas	June 11, 1946
XC17. Rufus King	Brethren	Rockville, Md.	June 28, 1946
18. Wanda King	Brethren	Plattsburg, Mo.	Aug. 15, 1946
19. Alys Lickel	Brethren	Altoona, Pa.	Dec. 26, 1945
C20. Howard Long	Brethren	Baltimore, Md.	March 22, 1946
C21. Thomas Mathews	Congregational	Conneaut, Ohio	March 15, 1946
22. Gladden Mathis	Brethren	North Manchester, Ind.	June 21, 1946
23. Caryl Mathis	Brethren	New Lebanon, Ohio	June 21, 1946
24. Velma Miller	Brethren	Barnum, Minn.	May 3, 1946
25. Everett Myer	Brethren	LaVerne, Calif.	Oct. 9, 1944
26. Miriam Myer	7th Day. Advent.	Portland, Ore.	Oct. 9, 1944
XC27. Bruce Reeves	Brethren	Tacoma, Wash.	May 29, 1945
28. Margie Platt Reeves	Methodist	West Palm Beach, Fla.	June 30, 1946
29. Elizabeth Roop	Brethren	Linwood, Md.	Sept. 10, 1946
C30. Byron Shearer	Friends	West Milton, Ohio	March 29, 1946
C31. Paul Snavely	Brethren	Waterloo, Iowa	Aug. 19, 1946
XC32. Don Sollenberger	Brethren	Curryville, Pa.	Feb. 2, 1946
C33. Robert Stanley	Friends	Salem, Ohio	March 29, 1946
34. Knight Webster	Baptist	Madison, Wisc.	Feb. 11, 1946
35. Dorothy Webster	Baptist	Madison, Wisc.	Feb. 11, 1946
C36. Cecil Wickline	Methodist	Warrenton, Ore.	April 12, 1946
C37. Howard Wolf	Methodist	Erie, Pa.	Jan. 24, 1946
38. Josephine Wolf	Methodist	Erie, Pa.	Jan. 24, 1946
XC39. Howard Wright	Methodist	Clarksburg, Ohio	Aug. 19, 1946
40. Charlotte Wright	Presbyterian	Clarksburg, Ohio	Aug. 19, 1946

Now that the climax of arrivals and departures is past we present our roster of personnel, as it will be quite stable from now on. Aside from the Helfricks and the Kings who are with us for a second time (their arrival date given here is the 2nd) only the Myers, and Bruce Reeves, Velma Miller and Alys Lickel came before the current year. At present there are eight CPS men (marked "C") and six former CPS men (marked "XC").

There are also five children--Lynn Burke, age 12; Jeneba Burke, age 3; Ralph Myer, age 2½; Rufus King, Jr., age 1; and Lizabeth Helfrick, age 9 months.