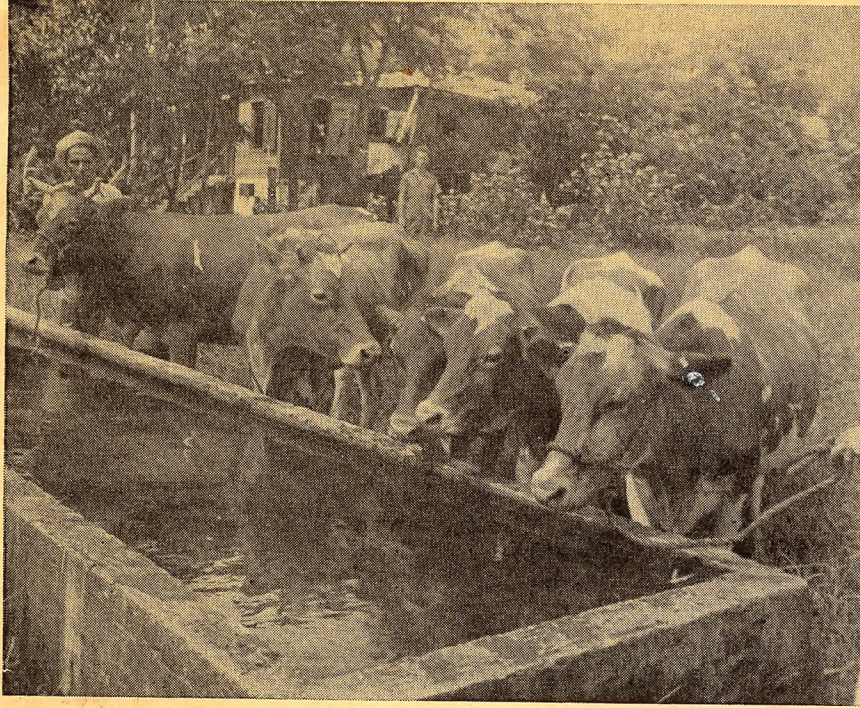


Brethren Service



Among the heifers pictured here is Faith, who was delivered to Meliton Lind Lopez, a Puerto Rican farmer with a family of twelve children. In the background is Wayne Hostetter, the Brethren representative.

Brethren Heifers to Puerto Rico

Wayne Hostetter

Almost everyone at Pier C South, Alabama State Docks, Mobile, Alabama, was on hand to witness the loading of the seventeen relief heifers on the liberty ship, William D. Bloxham, the morning of July 13, 1944. It was unusual to witness the loading of cattle at Mobile because these heifers were the first shipment of cattle from this port in fifteen years.

While on the voyage the heifers had their home on deck in two shed-shaped barns, one on each side of No. 4 hatch. A thirteen-day feed supply of alfalfa and Johnson grass hay and grain was carried on the hatch between the two barns. The feed was covered with a tarpaulin at all times to protect it from the sea and rain. The heifers were fed and watered and the stables were cleaned three times a day. On Sunday, July 16, part of the ship's crew witnessed the birth of the first calf born during the trip. There were three births on our eight-day sea voyage.

At the naval base, Tanamo Bay, our ship made a stop and waited a day and a half for a convoy to be

made up. The convoy was made up of eight merchant ships and four navy escorts. We traveled half of the voyage in convoy.

The ship's crew was made up of thirty navy men and thirty-five merchant seamen. These men, who were from all parts of the United States, proved to be very interesting. Some of the farmer boys who were now seamen said that it did their hearts good to smell and chew hay and see cows again.

We had almost ideal sailing weather. The sea was very smooth the first five days but became quite rough the last three days. The ship tossed considerably with waves coming over the side and bow.

We arrived at San Juan, Puerto Rico, at 5:00 a. m., July 22, amid a heavy down-pour of rain. The heifers were unloaded one at a time. They were put into a large crate, then lifted by a crane to the dock. That evening by 5:30 o'clock

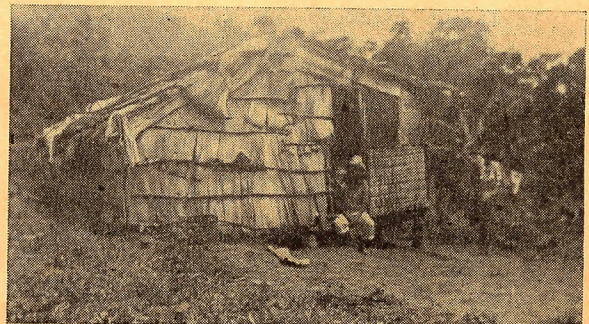
the heifers had been inspected and unloaded on five trucks in which they were distributed into four counties of the island.

All the work of distributing and locating the heifers to needy families was in charge of the Farm Security Administration of Puerto Rico. Ralph Will and his staff of agriculture advisers did an excellent job in the selection of capable farm men. The heifers went to poor resettlers who owned no dairy cattle and could provide plenty of good grazing for the heifers' feed. Pastures similar to Sudan grass were flourishing when I was there.

The families were usually large and were very grateful for the gift of heifers. For instance, "Faith" (B. S. C. 1), is to supply milk for a family of twelve children who have never tasted milk. When we visited some of these homes we noticed that these farmers did almost everything they knew how to make the heifers comfortable. At one home they had the baby calf in their one-room house and carried it to nurse its mother four or five times a day. They were building a barn for their heifer which consisted mainly of a roof.

The heads of the animal husbandry and forestry departments had a government car, and we toured the island with them, visiting the homes of eight of the heifers on a two-day trip. The heifers were so scattered over the island that it would probably have taken about a week and a half to visit all the homes. One afternoon we drove as far as we could by car and then walked three and one-half miles one way over trails and creeks to a farmer's mountain home. When we visited these homes, neighbors came in to see us take pictures and also to see the animals. It reminded one of a well-attended county fair. Most of the

Home of one of the farmers receiving a heifer from the shipment to Puerto Rico.



rural homes are small—one-room—and usually made of rough lumber and banana leaves.

Puerto Rico is one of the most overcrowded islands in the world, with 2,000,000 persons living in an area one hundred miles long and thirty-five miles wide. There are approximately 80,000 births every year. At least 200,000 children never set foot in a school; almost one third of the people can neither read nor write.

They have no manufacturing plants and most of the people make their living from the land. Sixty per cent of the land has a slope of forty per cent or more and their roads are very narrow and crooked. By car you can usually make around fifteen miles in an hour of travel. Their major crop is cane sugar. They also raise coffee, pineapples, tobacco, citrus fruits, and bananas.

Puerto Rico is cursed with absentee land owners from the United States who own and operate the sugar industry and plantations. The Puerto Rican people are at their mercy. Fifty per cent of the population depend directly or indirectly upon the sugar crop for support, at an average wage of about \$300 per year for cane cutters. They usually support a large family on that wage.

The main diet of the people is rice, beans and black coffee.

All the people speak Spanish and

B.S. C. Tag No.

Donor

Receiver

1	Virgil Mock, New Paris, Ind.
93	Perry Eby, Hollansburg, Ohio
158	Brookville, Ohio, Church of the Brethren and V. S. Dull
1313	Bremen, Ind., church
1314	Middlebury, Ind., church
1315	Heber Haynes, Garrett, Ind.
1316	V. B. Browning and son, Warren, Ind.
1317	Walnut Street church, North Manchester, Ind.
1318	West Manchester church, North Manchester, Ind.
1319	H. M. Friedley and son, Huntington, Ind.
1325	West Goshen, Ind., church
1326	Henry Ebersole, Goshen, Ind.
1327	Religious education classes, Decatur public school system, Decatur, Ill.
1328	Elkhart City and Elkhart Valley churches
1346	Rock Run church, Goshen, Ind.
1347	Detroit, Mich., church
1349	Elkhart City and Elkhart Valley churches
1350	Fellowship Bible class, Elgin, Ill., church

Meliton Lind Lopez
Isidoro Vazquez
Beuto Rodriguez Gomez
Nicolas Santaella
Manuel Alvarez Negron
Pedro Vazquez Vazquez
Quintina Rivera
Cleofe Rodriguez Pagan
Marcelino Diaz
Alejandro Rohena
Antonio Reyes Rosario
Died en route
Encarnacion de Leon
Remained in Alabama because of sickness
Santiago Reyes Matos
Emilio Matos
Francisco Inchantegui
Eloy Colon

Other donors contributing to the shipment were: O. W. Stine and son, Goshen, Ind., Leland Schrock, Middlebury, Ind., North Winona church, Ind., Salamonie church, Huntington, Ind.

only about one third of them can speak English.

While in Puerto Rico, I made my home with Rufus King and Paul Weaver at Rio Piedras. Rufus is the director and Paul the secretary of the Brumbaugh reconstruction unit, in which seventy Civilian Public Service men are carrying on a program of social and medical rehabilitation in seven different locations. Rufus was on hand to help unload the cattle and was also on the trip when we visited the homes.

The heifers will help supply a great need to the resettlers of Puerto Rico.

Also contributing to the shipment were Dr. W. A. Mackenzie of Napanee, Ind., and Dr. Maurice Weldy of Wakarusa, Ind., who offered their services as veterinarians and Rev. and Mrs. G. W. Petcher of Citronelle, Alabama, in whose home the B.S.C. representatives made their headquarters while in Mobile.

And From the Report of Rufus B. King

"The cattle were distributed on the following conditions:

"1. The farmer receiving a heifer must have no other dairy cow at the time.

"2. He could not be able to pay the full purchase price of a cow on the market.

"3. It was reasonably assured that he had enough land to support a cow.

"4. He could not receive more than one animal.

"5. Families with children or in neighborhoods where there were undernourished children were given preference.

"6. The total cost of each animal to the farmer was set up in a loan to the farmer by the Farm Security Administration. This was based on transportation and other items from the time the heifers left Mobile, Ala., and amounted to about \$75 each.

"7. The Farm Security supervisor through previous loans or knowledge of the farmer must be reasonably assured of the farmer's ability and desire to repay the loan on the low cost of the animal.

"There was a great deal of favorable comment about the cattle. A number of people inquired about the availability of some of these heifers, even on the Virgin Islands when I was there."

Brethren in the Pacific Coast region are rapidly organizing in support of the heifer project. Pictured is the first calf to be tagged in this western region, a donation of Richard V. Keim and son Robert. Standing behind the animal is the local heifer project committee of the Nampa church, Earl Flory, Richard Keim, Floyd Lowber and LaVerne Martin.

