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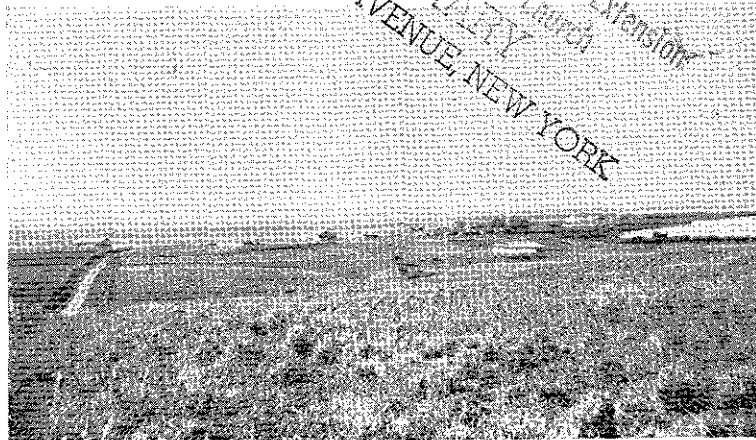
# Escuela Agrícola e Industrial

Preston, Oriente, Cuba

Motto:

*"We are co-laborers with God"*

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ESCUELA AGRICOLA é INDUSTRIAL

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RICHARD G. MILK } Missionary Personnel at the School

*The Frontispiece is a view of the campus from the Preston Road.*

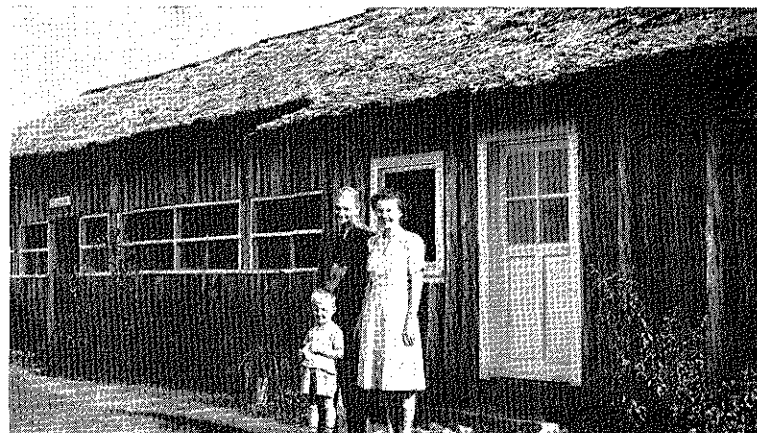
ESCUELA AGRICOLA é INDUSTRIAL

The "Granja" is a comparatively new institution of which more and more is being heard. Literally translated it means "the farm." But Escuela Agricola é Industrial is more than a demonstration farm—it is a boarding school for both boys and girls. Not following exactly the course of either a technical school or of a high school, it offers an education somewhat beyond what in the United States would be a junior high school education.

Situated at the side of the beautiful Nipe Bay the school property is within the boundaries of the property of the United Fruit Sugar Company on the North coast of the most eastern province (Oriente) in the beautiful Island of Cuba.

The school belongs to the Board of Missions of The Methodist Church. Already known in Cuba for the high educational standards of its schools in the principal cities—Candler College, Pinson College, Irene Toland, Eliza Bowman, and Buenavista—this missionary body is interested in making a contribution to the education of Rural Cuba comparable to the splendid effort they are already making in the cultural life of the Cuban urban centers.

Since the school receives many real benefits from the United Fruit Sugar Company and contributions from workers in the community as well as contributions channeled through the Board of Missions, the school is administered by a local board of directors representing not only the church, but also the community.



"Casa de Amistad"

## BRIEF HISTORY

For many years Cuban pastors as well as missionaries in the various Protestant churches have been aware of the great need for a Christian educational institution especially dedicated to rural youth. For centuries and until this very day the economic, spiritual, and educational advantages—such as exist—have been entirely concentrated in the cities, especially in the Capital. But in spite of the evident need there seemed to be no facilities or ways of beginning this essential work. It was indeed providential that a gift of land was made for this purpose.

The United Fruit Sugar Company is one of the larger of some one hundred and fifty sugar mills—some owned by Cuban capital and some owned by foreign capital—operating in Cuba. The officials of this company have always shown a genuine concern in the welfare of their workers and realized something should be done educationally to aid the Cuban country people to be less utterly dependent upon the one crop economy. Consequently, they offered to the Board of Missions of The Methodist Church 300 acres of land in this beautiful setting. Accepting this gift in 1945 and with no other resources in hand but a great faith that this work was part of a divine plan and a vision of what must be done, Reverend John Stroud founded the school. Although already heavily loaded with several mission points besides his pastoral charges of Mayari and Preston, he devoted himself to the initiation of the school. Within two years the property had been fenced and seven buildings begun. He was able to challenge various persons to help with the work and secured hundreds of friends for the work among the people of the area—people who gave of time and of money to this new school.

## FACILITIES

“Nothing of great value in life exists without sacrifice,” is a phrase of considerable truth. We have had especial reason to sense the impact of that truism—our progress every step of the way has been due to the sacrifice and generosity of Christian friends. In listing the facilities now on school grounds, therefore, it is fitting that grateful acknowledgment be given to the faithful friends who have made these facilities available.

A *boy's dormitory* for twenty students with apartment for a teacher (No. 1 in map, pg. 10). This was the farmhouse on the property—remodeled and enlarged with funds donated by the Raleigh Court Methodist Church, Roanoke, Virginia.

“*La Casa de Amistad*” (see photo) was constructed by a group of students from Drew University at Madison, New Jersey who

spent the summer of 1946 dedicating themselves in a spirit of service. Funds for the materials purchased were provided by the Raleigh Court Methodist Church, of Roanoke. The apartment at left serves as the missionaries' home.

*Dining hall.* This was built for a student body of over one hundred and fifty. When there was no kitchen half of the building was used for a kitchen. At present the dining room part is the only place available for church services, student assemblies, and recreational meetings. The western part of the building is provisionally being used as laundry, canning room, and sewing room. This was built by funds from the Raleigh Court Methodist Church, of Roanoke.

*Swartz Hall.* This is our classroom building that also serves as general office and library—built by funds from Mr. and Mrs. Wm. P. Swartz, Christian lay leaders of Roanoke, Virginia.



*Swartz Hall*

*Casa de las señoritas* with rooms for twenty girls and a teacher's apartment—built with funds from the Raleigh Court Methodist Church, Roanoke.

It should be mentioned that these four buildings are all built somewhat similar to the country homes (“bohios”) on the island—except they are screened and have cement tile floors. The slabs of which they are built were donated to the school by the U.F.S. Co.

The *new kitchen* is of more modern design—plastered brick. Funds for its construction were donated by Mr. A. F. Churchwell



"La casa de las Señoritas"

of Waycross, Georgia and Mr. J. H. Churchwell of Jacksonville, Florida—Christian businessmen.

Mr. H. A. Van Hermann, noted horticulturist of Cuba, has given of time, talents, and money to the school—the front entrance and main walks were a birthday present from him to the school. He has built a lovely home for him and his wife here on the school grounds where he is employed as horticulturist half of the time (being director of landscaping for Bethlehem Steel Co. in a nearby village the other half time).

The new missionary residence, still in process of construction, is made of cement blocks which were made by the students. The foundation was built by funds from Mr. and Mrs. S. L. Forrest of Lubbock, Texas, the remainder from funds donated by Mr. A. F. Churchwell and Mr. J. H. Churchwell.

#### STAFF

We are fortunate to have a capable group of teachers at the school—although there is so much to be done and not any of the staff are able to give full time to teaching:

Our Dean of Women, Miss Elizabeth Earnest, missionary of the Woman's Division of the Board of Missions.

Sr. Francisco Mayo, teacher and school secretary.

Stra. Lybia Gomez Rodriguez, teacher of home economics and supervisor of dining hall.

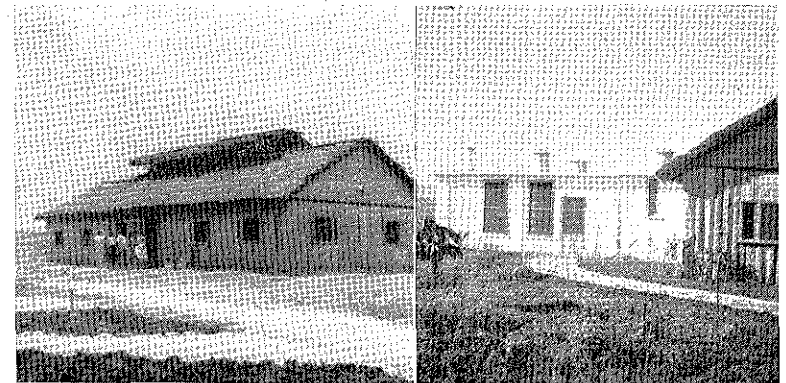
Mr. H. A. Van Hermann, noted horticulturist, whose part-time salary is given by a group of Christians who knew him in Nicaragua where he formerly worked.

Sr. Humberto Diaz deArce (M.S. from Auburn Polytechnic Institute), science teacher, half time devoted to application of chemistry to small industries.

Stra. Elva Santana, teacher of lower grades (half time with Cuban public schools).

Richard G. Milk and Juliet Chick Milk, with advanced training in agricultural economics and home economics education respectively. Mr. Milk is in charge of general administration; Mrs. Milk, registrar and head of home economics work. They are supported as agricultural missionaries by the Board of Foreign Missions of The Methodist Church.

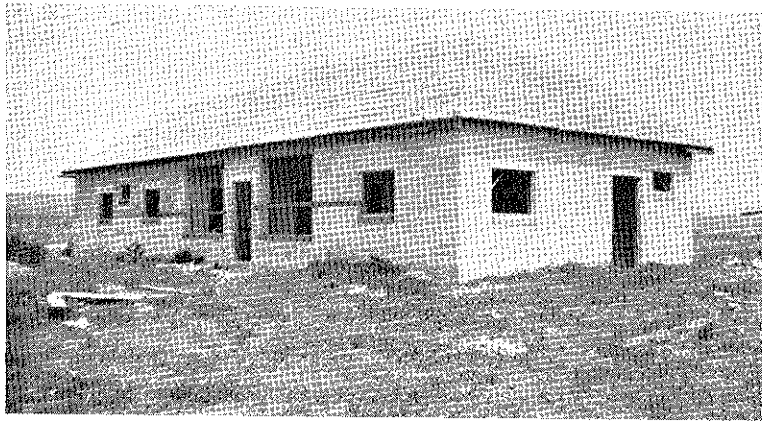
Considering the large amount of detail involved not only in teaching, but in operating a boarding school, a large demonstration farm, religious teaching for the school and some extension work also, and a building program with almost entirely part-time workers, it is obvious that to fulfill our responsibilities to the extent we feel necessary, means must be secured to augment the staff.



El "comedor" or Dining Hall

La Cocina or Kitchen

The Woman's Division has promised to support another woman missionary. We are looking for one trained in home economics—preferably with some musical training also.



*New Missionary Residence*

The Board of Foreign Missions has promised to support another missionary couple; we are looking for someone trained in manual arts education.

In addition, as soon as the size of student body is large enough (and this is dependent upon scholarships) we need other Cuban helpers.

#### THE STUDENTS

There were enrolled in February 1949, thirty-five students, fifteen girls and twenty boys. We have facilities for twenty girls and thirty-six boys, but are limited to the number of scholarships we have been able to secure.

Applicants for entry might be said to fall into three categories:

1. Country boys and girls who have no chance for further education beyond fifth grade or who have had *no* opportunity to study.
2. Village boys and girls whose parents wish for them to study in Christian environment but who do not wish a pre-university course of study.
3. Young people whose families are well able to pay for an education but who especially wish a practical training in agriculture or in home economics.

Of the thirty-five enrolled February 1949, 19 would fall in the first category, 14 in the second and only two in the last.

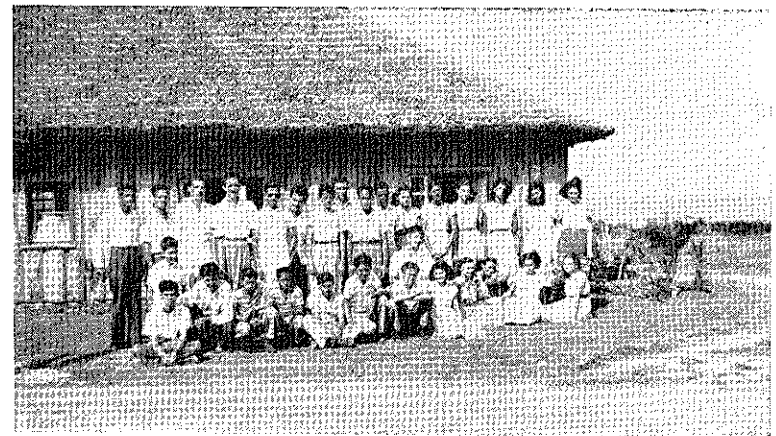
The educational task would be far simpler if all fell within the last category—but there are not many prospective students in this group.

Our staff needs and educational program are greatly complicated by the fact that in the first category (where in a special way we have a great responsibility) there are so many who have never had the opportunity of public schooling—before we can offer a course of study, they must be brought up to a minimum level in “the three R’s.”

The doors of the school are open to boys and girls from anywhere on the Island of Cuba between the ages of fourteen and twenty. Preference is given in making selections to those of higher intelligence, from Christian environment, and of some evidence of leadership ability. Naturally we receive more inquiries from places closer at hand; of the thirty-five enrolled, 22 are from the municipio (comparable to county) of Mayari, in which the school is located.

#### AN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVE— “BALANCED AGRICULTURE”

The Island of Cuba lives from her exports, principally sugar. Although only 8% of the land area is devoted to sugar cane—sugar gives employment to over a third of the entire population. The majority of these workers in the sugar industry only work three or four months out of the year. Over a third of the value of all imports are for foodstuffs—rice, lard, flour, etc. A farmer living in the country on rich soil was asked why he did not have



*Student body—December 1948*

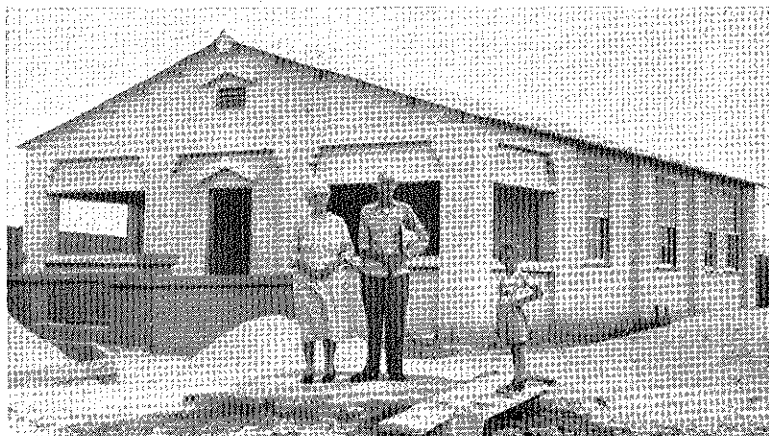
vegetables to eat replied "I live too far from the city to go in and buy them!" With prolonged serious drouths every year and more serious ones periodically, the livestock and dairy industry are precariously limited to the production and capacity of the driest months—for lack of feed supplies.

These are only a few salient facts relative to the one-crop psychology and inertia which make a comprehensive "live-at-home program" of **vital importance to improving rural conditions and the whole national economy**—and such an objective is a keystone of our whole educational program.

Furthermore, although technology of modern agriculture and home making is needed, it is always essential to adapt them to the limited resources available in the communities from which the students come. Although it is true that there are many large holdings (of the 159,958 farms reported in 1946 there were 894 of more than 2500 acres each, accounting for over 36% of the land in farms) the vast majority are small holdings—70% of the total number of farms had less than 50 acres per farm, and over 38% less than 25 acres per farm.

#### THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

The students who have not had the opportunity to study before, must of course have a basic training. One young man (who unfortunately dropped out and got married instead of finishing his course) of nineteen had never been in school, but in four months learned enough to pass fourth grade work.



Mr. and Mrs. Van Hermann in front of their new home

Beyond the fifth grade level the students have a three-year course of study, partial list of the courses is as follows:

#### General Courses

Arithmetic	Civics	Bookkeeping
Language	Hygiene	Social Science
History	Music	Physics
Geography	Spiritual life	Chemistry
English	Natural Science	Drawing
Algebra	Economics	

#### for the girls

sewing  
dietetics  
home management  
personal appearance  
manual arts—crafts  
food preservation  
child care  
care of sick at home  
the rural home  
consumer buying  
quantity cooking  
prenatal care  
poultry raising  
gardening  
nutrition

#### for the boys

dairy cattle  
general livestock  
farm shop work  
farm mechanics  
animal nutrition  
animal husbandry  
poultry care  
gardening  
fruit culture  
soil science  
"lesser" crops  
plant enemies  
rural buildings  
operating a farm  
carpentry work

As soon as personnel is available for doing so, it is planned to offer more work in manual arts and in teacher training.

#### WHAT WILL BE THE FUTURE OF THESE STUDENTS?

Education may be said to fall into two classes—general and technical. The first prepares for good citizenship and enlightened members of society—the second prepares only for some limited skill or technique. This school's objectives fit much more within the idea of general education, although it is our objective to include practical aspects of life along with the general education.

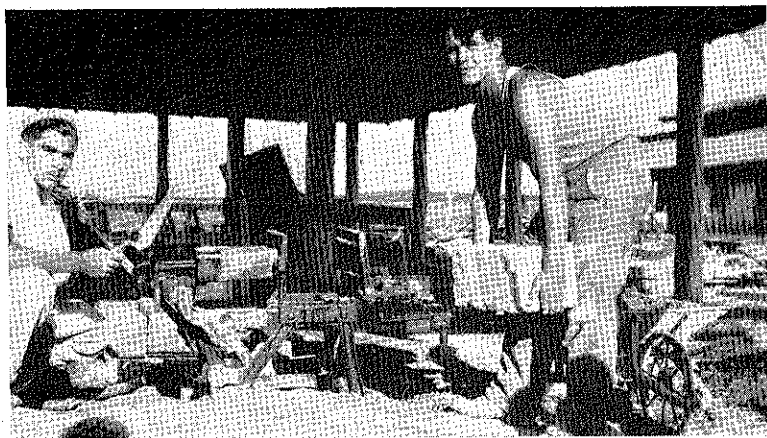
Some few of the school's graduates will pass on for further schooling. Many of the young men will find opportunities on their fathers' farms—others will find employment by corporate or individual landowners—practically trained young men are almost non-existent. Many of the young women will make homes of their own—others can find opportunity teaching in places where public

schools have never gone. It is hoped that in time graduates can qualify for openings in the rural public schools.

In a very real sense every student exposed to the school philosophy of a Christian Rural Life will be a new focal point for bringing the influence of Christ's teachings to others.

#### IS THIS A "SELF-HELP" SCHOOL?

No one who has not visited rural Cuba can comprehend the utter poverty under which many families live. We have to offer the



*Two students making blocks*

opportunity to earn their expenses while at school to nearly all of the students who come. In a land where manual labor is looked down upon, it is tried to instill a pride in work and all students work a half day and study a half day.

The work also serves as a valuable learning medium—some learn more from their work than from their classes.

#### RELIGIOUS LIFE

Even greater than the educational and economic needs of rural Cuba is the spiritual hunger—the great need for Christian homes. By means of daily devotions, church activities, classes in Bible and Spiritual Life, and an active student committee on spiritual life, the students are offered the opportunity to deeply enrich their personal spiritual lives.



*An open-air worship service*

#### THE FARM

The word "granja" carries a connotation of a modern demonstration farm. We have lived up to that name in only a limited extent.

After many years of growing sugar cane up and down steep slopes all of the topsoil is gone from part of the property (as much as twenty-four inches of topsoil in some places). There is much to be done in demonstrating soil conservation—all of the row crops are grown on the contour and the boys learn how to lay off contour lines.

With limited resources as we have, the farm has to contribute to the school rather than the school having resources to contribute to developing the farm. Many thousands of dollars worth of machinery is needed to utilize the land resources to the best advantage and ways must be found to build housing for livestock.

With the exception of simple cultivators, a mowing machine, and a corn planter, there is no machinery at the school; the land is plowed at a cost basis by tractors of U.F.S. Co. and the oxen and mules with which to cultivate and harvest crops are loaned also by the sugar company.

A small school garden contributes much to the dining hall—as soon as more adequate water is available gardening can be expanded. The principal sales from the farm are from corn, dry beans, and fresh milk. The U.F.S. Co. made possible the purchase of twelve grade Holstein heifers as a foundation milk herd and the



Four students with calves from sire loaned by Minister of Agriculture

Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Cuba has loaned an imported registered Holstein sire to the school.

Improved White Rock chickens from one of the best breeders in the world, improved Puerto Rican sweet potatoes, corn cultivation, and grain sorghums are a few of the "introductions" made so far.

The boys do much of the farm work, but the majority of such work is carried on by employees (four) whose wages must be paid from farm receipts.

#### SCHOOL FINANCES

Parents of students are encouraged to pay a part of the costs if they are able; many are able to pay nothing. Consequently we are dependent upon gifts from friends and scholarships raised here in Cuba and in the U.S.A. to aid with the operational costs. Aside from the food grown on the school, it costs \$100 a year just to provide a student with food in the dining hall—and then there are the teachers' salaries and costs of books and other supplies. These costs all amount to \$300 a year or \$25 per month per student. Such scholarships are *Approved Specials* under *The Advance*.

#### FUTURE PLANS

Plans have been made for a school to take care of about two hundred students. It is felt necessary to secure capital to develop the farm and small industries for three reasons:

1. To secure a more adequate financial base for school oper-

ations; to make each aspect of the operations earn something for the school.

2. To furnish a better teaching basis for the student in school.
3. To attract always the better class of rural youth.

On the opposite page is a list of the proposed buildings and a map of them is shown on the following pages. Individuals and churches who make possible some part of this plan will make a worthy investment in a genuine "Good Neighbor" policy, to help lift the educational and economic as well as the spiritual life of Cuba.

All correspondence concerning costs of different items needed should be addressed to Mr. Richard G. Milk, Director Escuela Agrícola é Industrial, Preston, Oriente, Cuba.

Gifts of equipment are especially welcome—the needs are many!

Gifts of cash may be deducted on income tax returns. Methodist churches may receive credit as a "special" in the "Advance" for some of these items.

#### ALL CASH GIFTS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE

Board of Foreign Missions

The Methodist Church

150 Fifth Avenue,

New York 11, New York.



**PLAYA MANTECA, ORIENTE, CUBA**

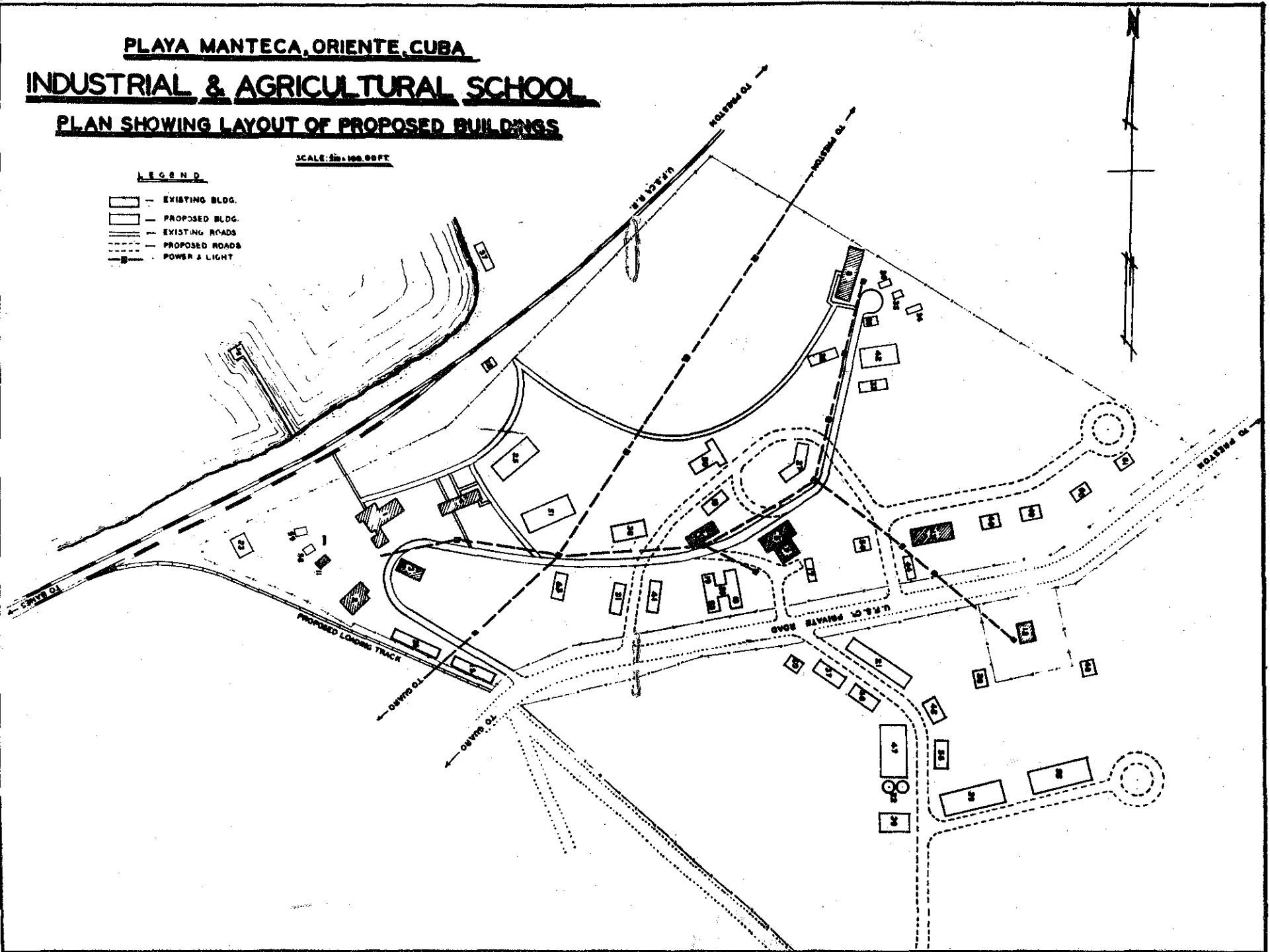
**INDUSTRIAL & AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL**

**PLAN SHOWING LAYOUT OF PROPOSED BUILDINGS**

SCALE: 1" = 100.00 FT

**LEGEND**

- EXISTING BLDG.
- PROPOSED BLDG.
- EXISTING ROADS
- PROPOSED ROADS
- POWER & LIGHT



## LIST OF BUILDINGS AND NOTES CONCERNING SAME

- 1--Original house on property--used for boys' dormitory
- 2--Originally a stable--used 1949 for carpenter shop
- 3--Simple sheet metal building used for garage and lumber storage
- 4--Casa de Amistad
- 5--Dining hall
- 6--Sheet metal granery and livestock building
- 7--Animal shelters
- 8--Girls' dormitory
- 9--New kitchen
- 10--Classroom building
- 11--Rabbit shelter
- 12--Van Herman residence
- 13--Missionary residence
- 14--Fishing platform and pier
- 15--Shelter for cement block and rock crushing machinery (20' x 50') yarey roof without sides or floor
- 16--Rancho for recreation and assemblies--bohio roof without sides 24' x 50'
- 17--Laundry building 20' x 40'--cement floor, block walls to 3'--shutter window and slabs above --with asbestos sheet roofing--sheet metal 10' x 10' hot water heater room
- 18--Cannery room--buttressed partition block construction--20' x 80'
- 19--Meat cutting room 20' x 20'--and curing room--cement block
- 20--Frozen food tunnels and storage 24' x 30'--cement block, cork and tile lined
- 21--Shed for all power tools--truck and tractors, etc. Bohio roof, slab sides and back, steel door front, no floor
- 22--Silos 10' x 25'--cast in place cement
- 23--Shed for shark industry--bohio roof, slab sides, gravel floor 20' x 30'
- 24--Garden tool house--bohio slab side, 12' x 24'
- 25--Boys' dormitory--84' x 30' two story cement block construction--monolithic roof for 64 boys.
- 26--Grain, drying, storage, and mixing--all metal 27' x 32', two story
- 27--Administration building--cement block, two wings first floor 50' x 24'; second floor in center only 24' x 24'
- 28--Girls' practice house cottage--24' x 36'--partition block, cement tile floor
- 29--Fryer plant 30' x 100' two story
- 30--Oil and gas storage--cement block--10' x 12'
- 31--Agriculture classroom--bohio, slab sides, cement tile floor
- 32--Girls workroom--sewing, crafts, weaving--bohio, slab sides, cement tile floor
- 33--Classroom home economics--bohio, slab sides, cement tile floor
- 34, 35, 36--Rabbits, poultry and goats--bohio roofs
- 37--Garage and machine shop--all metal
- 38--Missionary residence--cement block 24' x 50'
- 39--Hog barn--bohio roof, sides of boiler tube set in cement, cement floor
- 40--Guest houses--mamoposteria
- 41--Work foremans cottage--cement block
- 42--Girls' dormitory--same as boys'
- 43--Broom making, fibre work, and other manual arts for boys, bohio, cement tile floor
- 44--Garage--campus cars--all metal
- 45--Milking barn--cement barn
- 46--Horse and mule stables--24' x 50' bohio roof
- 47--Hay and straw storage--40' x 80' bohio roof, steep pitch, high center, flooring placed 10' from ground
- 48--Pump house--cement block
- 49--Guest house--mamoposteria
- 50--Chapel--auditorium 60' x 24', two Sunday School rooms
- 51--Boys' dormitory--same as other
- 52--Guest house
- 53--Creamery--cement block
- 54--Teachers' cottage
- 55--Poultry laying house 30' x 100'--two story, cement block
- 56--Calf shed
- 57--Shed for beach
- 58--Goat house--boys' side
- 59--Poultry house--boys' side
- 60--Guest house
- 61--Gas car Waiting shed