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SIBU, SARAWAK--In 1935, a Nebraska ~~at~~ Methodist missionary and his wife arrived in this remotely primitive country to act as minister and to supervise ~~Christian~~ Christian primary schools.

The Rev. and Mrs. Gerald V. Summers, both graduates of Nebraska Wesleyan, had a sizable job in this small city, the commercial center of Sarawak, situated upstream on the tempermental Rejang River. In this British Crown Colony, situated on the northwestern tip of Borneo island, the tropical jungle prevents an efficient communication system and the marked advance of civilization.

The Nebraska missionary and Chinese residents in the area hoped to build the first high school in the country. Although the Methodists had established a primary school system, students had to go to China or Singapore for advanced work.

As plans were being laid for the high school, Rev. Summers went to Singapore in December, 1941, to attend the annual Methodist Conference.

War ~~broke~~ broke out; he was interned by the Japanese for three and a half years in Changi prison, a ^{MEDIEVAL} medieval fort-like structure situated near one of Singapore's lovely seashores. His wife and children fled to India.

He worked in the prison's ~~cabin~~ cobbler shop during the Occupation as each ~~camp~~ captive was assigned a specific duty. On September 5, 1952 1945, news arrived that Singapore had been liberated by the British. But several hours later, Rev. Summers died, a victim of beri-beri.

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Rev. Summers is still remembered in Sarawak. His dream has been attained. The Methodist High School, housed in the Summers Memorial Building, was started five years after his death with the generous funds of Nebraska Methodists.

The annual Nebraska Conference of the Methodist Church pledged U. S. \$100,000 for the buying of land and the building of a high school, which started by teaching Chinese, the predominant race in the ~~towns~~ towns of Sarawak. In 1951, the school graduated ^{the} ~~he~~ first Chinese high school class in the country. Several years later, an English department was added, the first in the Rejang River area, where this town of 30,000 population lies.

After contributing to the high ~~school~~ school, Nebraska ~~Methodists~~ Methodists did not stop their efforts. Three other significant contributions have grafted a bit of Nebraska to this country two-thirds the size of the Cornhusker State.

In 1947, ~~the~~ Bishop Watts (now deceased) of ~~the~~ the Nebraska Area, made a tour of Sarawak. He was so impressed with the Summers high school that he recommended Nebraska Methodists raise ~~ex~~ U. S. \$45,000 for a block of science classrooms and equipment. In 1959, the Bishop H. Bascom Watts Science Hall was opened with four fully-equipped ^{laboratories} ~~laboratories~~ for home economics, biology, chemistry and physics, plus additional classrooms.

Another graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan, Miss Sandra McCaig, came to Sarawak on a three-year teaching assignment. The short-haired Cornhusker is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Sidney L. McCaig, of 2640 No. 48th Street, Lincoln. Dr. McCaig is program director of the Nebraska Conference. Miss ~~m~~ McCaig is now on home leave.

The third Nebraska project was assisting a graduate of the Summers High School to attend Nebraska Wesleyan. Miss Lee Chew has been studying there for several years.

This reporter made a ~~tour~~ tour of the school with the Rev. D. P. Coole, field treasurer of the Methodist Church in Sarawak and former principal of the school from 1952 to 1957.

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A native of Kansas, Rev. Coole can be claimed by Nebraska as a frequent visitor. He toured the Cornhusker State in 1958 on assignments from the Conference, crisscrossing the state from Omaha to ScottsBluff, from Hebron to the northern border, ^{Stopping} ~~sepping~~ in Chadron to visit his sister and brother-in-law, the Rev. and Mrs. ~~x~~ Leland W. Mann ~~#~~ of the Congregational Church. The missionary, who admitted his liking for bright-colored sport shirts, attended the June, 1961, Nebraska Methodist annual conference in Omaha and learned that the last portion of the \$45,000 ~~had been raised~~ for the science hall had been raised.

Rev. Coole spoke of some of the problems of operating the Christian school.

"I remember when the Iban school boys from upriver brought their parangs to Sibul," ~~But~~ he recalled, pointing out that Ibans had once used their long-knifed weapons to be ~~be~~ reputed as the most ^Eferocious headhunters in Asia.

"The Ibans thought the parangs would be useful to cut the school yard grass," he explained. "But the Chinese school boys thought they would be used for ~~in~~ lopping off some heads. To maintain calm in the school, I had to confiscate the parangs until Christmas vacation when the Ibans took ~~back~~ them home."

Earlier, Mrs. Coole, a native of Creston, Iowa, served cinnamon ~~rocks~~ robls--a rare treat here--and ~~safer~~ coffee. She said a serious problem facing missionary teachers was the Iban custom of "ngayap," in ~~in~~ which unwed teenage girls are allowed "trial marriages" before selecting a husband.

The school, nestled among jungle-like trees consisted of a windowless, two-story structure suitable for ~~the~~ the equatorial climate. The top floor of a T-shaped wing houses a large assembly hall seating 800 students with a large stage, making it one of the best school halls in the country.

Downstairs in the building is the school library and classrooms. A girls' hostel, accommodating 80 students, stands nearby. ~~Plans~~ Plans are being made to build a boys' hostel to house 100 to 150 students from the up-river areas.

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The school had changed a great deal from the early post-war temporary structures of grass-roofed sheds built among the jungle clearings, Rev. Coole said.

A relatively quiet atmosphere prevailed around the school during the tour for the students were taking their final exams, sent out and corrected by Cambridge University in England. The students have three terms, one of which begins in mid-January after a five-week vacation.

Rev. Coole explained that the Summers high school was actually two schools in one. The Chinese junior and senior high school, with 440 students this year, is a six-year ~~year~~ course in which classes are taught in Chinese, with English as one of the subjects.

The English department, with 325 students, consists of a five-year junior and senior high school. Instruction is in English with Chinese as one of the classes.

Rev. Coole introduced the Rev. Keith Wiltshire, ~~the~~ the ~~young~~ school principal who graduated from Oxford University. His office was cluttered with black robes and bowls of fruit ~~had~~ had collected for the students' ~~an~~ art examination. He said the English junior and ~~senior~~ senior high school, based on the British system of education, consists of grades seven through eleven, but covers the work accredited to a U. S. twelve-year course. The English department has eight classes ~~the~~ averaging 40 students each.

The Methodist primary and secondary school system educates 1,500 students each year, Rev. Coole said.

The elderly missionary explained that Methodist mission work started in Sarawak at ~~the~~ the turn of the century when a Chinese Methodist businessman visited this small jungle country. He found the government, headed by a private English family, called the "White Rajahs," ~~a~~ welcomed Chinese immigrants to help develop the country.

Shiplads of Chinese ^{CHRISTIANS} arrived in Sarawak. They chopped down the jungle ~~and~~ along the Rejang River, planted vegetables and later started small estates of ~~in~~ rubber, now one of the substantial items in Sarawak's economy. Living on small ~~a~~ acreages, they established their own primary schools.

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The Methodist Church then sent over~~y~~ the Rev. and Mrs. James Hoover in 1903 to work with the ~~the~~ Chinese Christian primary schools. Each school was headed by a minister, who utilized one of the classrooms on Sunday for church services. Rev. Hoover died in 1935, when Rev. ~~ad~~ and Mrs. Summers were sent to replace him.

But the Nebraska missionary was left the task of building a Barawak high school, for which he hoped and planned, but never saw.

Rev. Summers' sister, Mrs. Edwin ~~Mr~~ Murphy, is the wife of a Methodist minister in Lexington, Nebr. His wife, a teacher in a California high school, lives at 1436 Mira Monte, Redlands, Calif.

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CAPTIONS

Pix 1: The Rev. Gerald V. Summers.

Pix 2: Students grab a quick snack during recess at ^{the} ~~the~~ "tiffin" (luncheon) shed.

Pix 3: Methodist ~~giri~~ high school students help in cleaning a classroom.

Pix 4: ~~A~~ A special program is being held in the large assembly hall for the entire high school student body numbering about 760.

Pix 5: The faculty of the Summers Memorial High School in Sibü. Miss Sandra McCaig, a Nebraska Wesleyan graduate from Lincoln, stands in the center. The 12 teachers in the English department form an international group with three Americans, two Englishmen, three Indians, three Chinese and one Filipino.

Pix 6: Students gather on the campus of the Methodist high school.

~~Explanatory~~ (Pix 1-6 were given to me by Rev. Coole of the Methodist Church in Sibü. No negatives. The following photos were taken by me--submitted with negatives.)

Pix 7: Rev. Coole and the school principal stand in front of the Summers high school building in Sibü. Rev. Coole has one of two small busses in Sibü; the airlines company owns the other.

Pix 8: Rev. Coole points on a bronze plaque to the U. S. \$100,000 raised by the Nebraska Conference of Methodists. The other donations were made by residents in Sarawak. The school principal is on the left.

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CAPTIONS--2

Pix 9: Rev. Coole and a Chinese high school student investigate an historical exhibit displayed in the library.

Pix 10: During a recess from their final exams, students gathered in the Summers High School Library.

Pix 11: An English class in general knowledge discusses the United Nations. The eighth grade department in English has one Iban student, one Batak from Sumatra, one Indian, Malays and many Chinese.

Pix 12: This eighth grade class is instructed in English by a teacher who left Communist China to join his wife in Sarawak. The Sarawak government, suspicious of Communists, ~~it~~ allows him to stay only on a year-to-year basis.

Pix 13: A student walks across the badminton court in the school courtyard. To the far left is the Bishop H. Bascom Watts Science Hall.