

DR. PEERS
AND THE
COLFAX SCHOOL
FOR THE
TUBERCULOUS

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Introduction

In 1899 a new doctor arrived in Colfax. His name was Robert Peers, fresh out of medical school and eager to begin the practice of medicine. Whether he knew it at the time, he was about to become a major player in the treatment of Tuberculosis and put Colfax on the map.

The year-round mild climate in Colfax was to prove very beneficial in the treatment of this debilitating disease. Dr. Peers appeared to be the right person for taking advantage of the clean Colfax air and combining it with a treatment philosophy that consisted of rest, a diet rich in milk and eggs, plenty of fresh air, and words of encouragement from former patients who had overcome the disease.

Less than ten years into his time at Colfax, Dr. Peers established a hospital in town for the treatment of TB. He soon increased the bed capacity by adding cottages on the hillside adjacent to the hospital. A short while later he expanded further by adding a group of cottages for patients in an area among the pine trees called The Colony a short distance from town.

By the 1920's there were numerous TB treatment facilities in the Colfax area. Dr. Peers was medical director of 6 such facilities, many of them established and operated by former patients of his. Several of these facilities were active in the treatment of TB into the 1930's. Gradually the number of patients decreased as alternative treatments became available. Some of the treatment facilities closed down completely, while others were redefined for other purposes such as senior care homes, recreational lodges, or apartments.

In 1938 F. Lynn Smith, a young doctor with local roots, joined Dr. Peers and Dr. Atkinson in their medical practice in Colfax. News articles and ads from the early 1940's indicate that Dr. Smith's focus was on general medical practice and surgery, not TB treatment. In the mid-1940's Dr. Smith had his home and emergency hospital on Grass Valley Street remodeled to become the Colfax Community Hospital, currently the office of Dr. Kurtis Fox. Dr. Lynn Smith would serve Colfax families until his health forced him to retire in 1964. But his is a story for another place and another time.

The narrative on the ensuing pages outlines Dr. Peers' involvement with and philosophy of TB treatment, the growth of his treatment facilities in and near Colfax, and the ultimate fate of the major buildings that had been created specifically to meet this medical need.

In addition to his contribution to medical treatment in Colfax, Dr. Peers served with the American Red Cross in Europe during the Great War (WWI), and held leadership positions in several professional societies. Closer to home, he was very involved in community affairs, serving on numerous boards and committees as well as mayor during his 50+ year career in Colfax. Some of his civic roles and honors are also included in this narrative.

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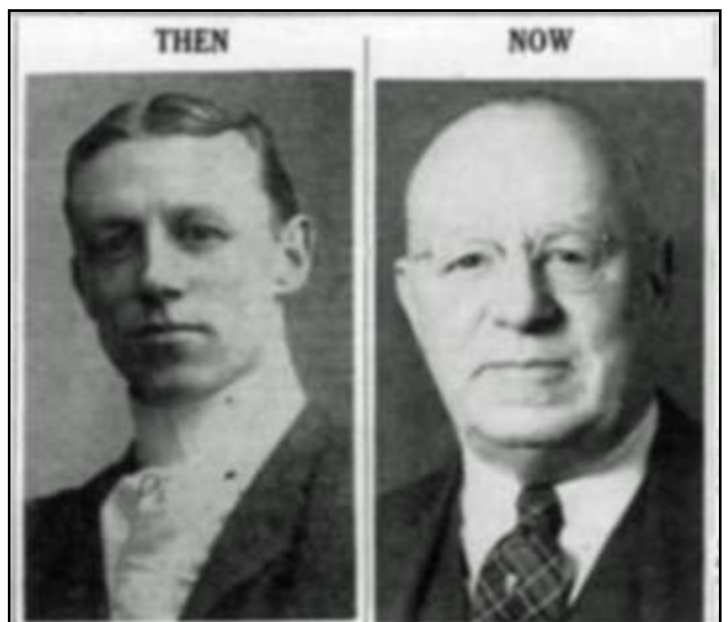
DR. PEERS

IN COLFAX

Dr. Robert Alway Peers had a major influence on Colfax and the medical world during the first half of the 1900's. Shortly after graduating from medical school in Canada, he came to Colfax in October, 1899 to visit his friend, Dr. Ware. By the next month he had assumed Dr. Ware's practice as the Colfax doctor. (*Colfax Sentinel*, Oct. 20 & Nov. 17, 1899). Less than ten years later he had purchased a private home, converted it to a hospital, and was treating patients for lung disorder, isolating them from the local population on a hillside behind town. (*Placer Herald*, Aug. 1, 1908). That early treatment facility would soon expand to five TB sanatoria with beds for 180 patients, at that time the largest private TB treatment group of sanatoria in the country. (*Colfax Record*, Sept. 2, 1921).

Those Colfax treatment facilities will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters of this report. First, though, let's look at the man, his treatment philosophy, and the contributions he made to the medical profession and his community. An excellent review of Dr. Peers' philosophy and career was published in the March 9, 1951 Colfax Record, on the occasion of putting his Colfax home on the market with the intent to retire to the Bay Area. Items in quotes that follow are taken from that 1951 news report.

Dr. Robert Peers when he arrived in Colfax at age 23, and after 50 years of service to the community. (Colfax Record, Oct. 21, 1949).



So what made him so successful in the treatment of tuberculosis? It starts with the clean air and mild climate in Colfax. The Sacramento Union extolled the virtues of the Colfax area for treating TB in its Nov. 7, 1910 issue, noting that the Colfax climate has proved to be the best cure and safeguard against TB in this part of the country. Couple this with his personal philosophy on TB treatment, developed early in his days as a doctor serving the Colfax area, as reported in the 1951 article.

“Dr. Peers likes to recall early days in Colfax. ‘I was in general practice,’ he said. ‘In those days, as now it was the custom to send tuberculosis patients to high elevations and into the pines. Not long after I arrived here, I purchased a set of medical books. One of the 21 volumes was devoted entirely to tuberculosis and I paid special attention to it. In those days tuberculosis patients were told to take long walks each day. Fortunately, the book I had just reviewed was based on studies in a new era of research and some of the theories conflicted with what until then had been accepted treatment.’”

“Fortified by new knowledge, Dr. Peers began his own treatments. Instead of exercising patients, he put them to bed. ‘In all the years since,’ he said, ‘I have found that the two most important things in treatment of tuberculosis are rest and time – under proper supervision.’”

“Dr. Peers’ unusual success with TB victims led to an ever-growing practice, and he soon found himself in demand for consultations and opinions. Tuberculosis patients flocked to the mountain town, forcing him to open one unit after another, with a final total capacity of 160 beds. His first institution, Colfax School for the Tuberculous was opened in 1907. By 1927 he was in charge of TB patients in the Colfax Hospital, Bushnell Sanatorium, Kathramon Sanatorium, Standard Oil Sanatorium and the Colony and Crestview Sanatoriums. At one time his patients included those of 24 nationalities.”

In 1915 Dr. Peers was appointed by Governor Hiram Johnson to the State Board of Health. (*Placer Herald*, Sep. 4, 1914) In 1918 he served in Europe during World War I, attached to the tuberculosis branch of the Red Cross. (*Placer Herald*, Mar. 19, 1918) He also served as medical advisor for nearby Weimar Joint Sanatorium, operated by a consortium of California counties. His professional reputation was further outlined in the 1951 article:

“Increasing recognition of his achievements in the treatment of tuberculosis led to many honors. His positions have included fellowships in the American College of Physicians, American College of Chest Physicians, American Academy of Tuberculosis Physicians and American Medical Association.”

“He is past president of the California Tuberculosis Association, Placer County Tuberculosis Association, California Medical Association, Placer County Medical Association, California Northern District Medical Society, California Academy of Medicine and was a director for the National Tuberculosis Association. He has memberships in the American Board of Internal Medicine, International Union Against Tuberculosis, American Academy of Political and Social Science, California Academy on Sciences, Western Regional Research Laboratories, and Alpha Kappa Kappa.”

“More locally, he is or has been a prominent Mason, a national delegate (twice) to the Republican national convention, member of the California Department of Public Health, member of the Board of Trustees for Placer County High School, member of the Placer and Colfax Defense Councils during World War II, and was mayor of Colfax from 1922 to 1945.”

“In 1901 he married Lucy F. Stewart of Toronto in the old Howard Street Methodist Church in San Francisco, which was destroyed by earthquake and fire in 1906.”

Another part of Dr. Peers’ legacy to the Colfax community is the landmark home that was built for him in 1920-21 and described in the 1951 article on its pending sale:

“Dr. Peers’ palatial home was 28 years old on Valentine’s Day. Its 14 rooms have become too much for the 75-year-old doctor and his wife. The building was constructed on two acres of wooded hillside under direction of Bernard Maybeck, who has gained national reputé as designer of the San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts, and Christian Science Church in Berkeley, among others. Most impressive of the home’s many features is a building-long room which, from end to end, includes space for billiards, dining room, and living room. Seven picture windows extend from floor to ceiling, including several in the spacious living room, which has a ceiling designed after those in a European castle – 18 feet above the floor.”

“ ‘I hate to leave my home,’ he said, ‘but it has been too empty since my sons left and since my retirement. The house (it includes six bedrooms, five baths & servant quarters) used to be full of doctors and friends most of the time. We had many medical meetings here, and Herbert Hoover, Governor Warren, Senator Knowland and many other prominent men liked to come here.’ ”



Artist rendering by George Mathis of Dr. Peers’ impressive 1922 Colfax home designed by prominent Bay Area architect Bernard Maybeck. The home is located on a tree-covered knoll at the north end of Main Street. (Colfax Heritage Museum)

In 1912 Dr. Peers accepted a partner fresh out of medical school, Dr. Chesley Bush, who became his assistant in the Colfax medical practice and TB treatment. (*Official Registry and Directory of CA Physicians, 1912*). Later Dr. Charles Durand and other professionals assisted Dr. Peers in the treatment of tuberculosis in the Colfax sanatoria. When Dr. Peers went to Europe during World War I to assist the Red Cross, Dr. Bush was placed in charge of the Colfax treatment program in Dr. Peers' absence, assisted by Dr. Durand. (*Placer Herald, Mar. 16, 1918*)

Dr. Peers remained active in Colfax tuberculosis treatment until he sold the Colfax Hospital in 1946. During the nearly 40 years since the hospital opened, between seven and eight thousand patients passed through the Colfax institutions under Dr. Peers' medical guidance. When he arrived in Colfax the death rate from TB in the US was about 200 per one hundred thousand per year. In 1946 the death rate was about 40, or 20 per cent of what it was when the doctor started practice. (*Colfax Record, Aug. 6, 1946*)

After selling their home in Colfax in 1951, Dr. Peers and his wife Lucy moved to Palo Alto where they made their home and he began his true retirement. The Feb. 12, 1970 issue of the Colfax Record reported the sad news that Dr. Robert Peers had died at the age of 94 at his Palo Alto home after a lengthy illness. His wife Lucy had died in 1960, and his sons, Dr. Robert Stewart Peers and Hamilton Peers also preceded him in death.

For half a century Dr. Robert Peers provided medical care and expertise to Colfax, the state and the world beyond. He was the consummate local citizen and civic leader. His name is etched in the history of our community and in the lives of the many people who were touched by his presence on this earth.

*Dr. Peers and his wife Lucy
(CAHS Archives)*



COLFAX HOSPITAL

Dr. Peers maintained an office on South Auburn Street in Colfax, but as he got more and more involved with tuberculosis patients he felt the need for a facility to treat people suffering from TB. In 1907 he purchased the John Kneeland house at the corner of Depot and Kneeland Streets, and converted it to a hospital specifically for treating TB patients. (*Colfax Record*, Apr. 24, 1909) Initially the facility contained 10 beds but as his reputation grew he added several cottages on the hillside above the hospital. This allowed less severe cases to be isolated from the community but under more friendly living conditions, and increased his patient capacity. (Peers, 1922 – see the References Section on page 61 for the complete document citation)

The main hospital building was intended for those patients who needed nursing care. The matron who oversaw the hospital staff for many years was Mrs. Lewis. Cottage patients were expected to provide their own support staff, and could have family members live in the cottage and assist the patient with housekeeping. Dr. Peers provided medical oversight for all patients.

As noted in the previous chapter, in 1912 a young doctor named Chesley Bush arrived in Colfax just out of medical school. He joined Dr. Peers in his practice on South Auburn Street, and began assisting in tuberculosis treatment. (*Official Registry and Directory of CA Physicians*, 1912) Dr. Bush would prove to be an able assistant to Dr. Peers for several years while establishing himself as a TB specialist, leading to his departure in 1919 to head a treatment facility in Livermore. He went on to have a successful career in the Livermore area.



The Colfax Hospital at the corner of Kneeland and Depot Streets, circa 1914. The tall building at right was the Kneeland home before being purchased by Dr. Peers and converted to a hospital. (Chesley Bush album - CAHS)

The cottages that were added to the Colfax Hospital were intentionally minimal construction and open to the healthy year-round air that was a Colfax hallmark in the early 1900's. The cabins had no windows that could be closed, only screens to keep out insects and canvas flaps that could be lowered over the windows during inclement weather. *(See John Rambottini's description of the cottages in the next chapter on The Colony)* The idea was to take maximum advantage of the good air in the treatment of this disease, and to encourage outside living along with light exercise and plenty of rest. *(Peers - 1922)*

As demand for TB treatment continued to grow, Dr. Peers saw the need for additional cottages in a more isolated setting. After several months of complications in closing the deal, Dr. Peers and Mr. Tade purchased Tokayano Rancho #3 off Tokayana Way where they began building more TB treatment cottages. *(Auburn Journal, Aug. 25, 1910)*

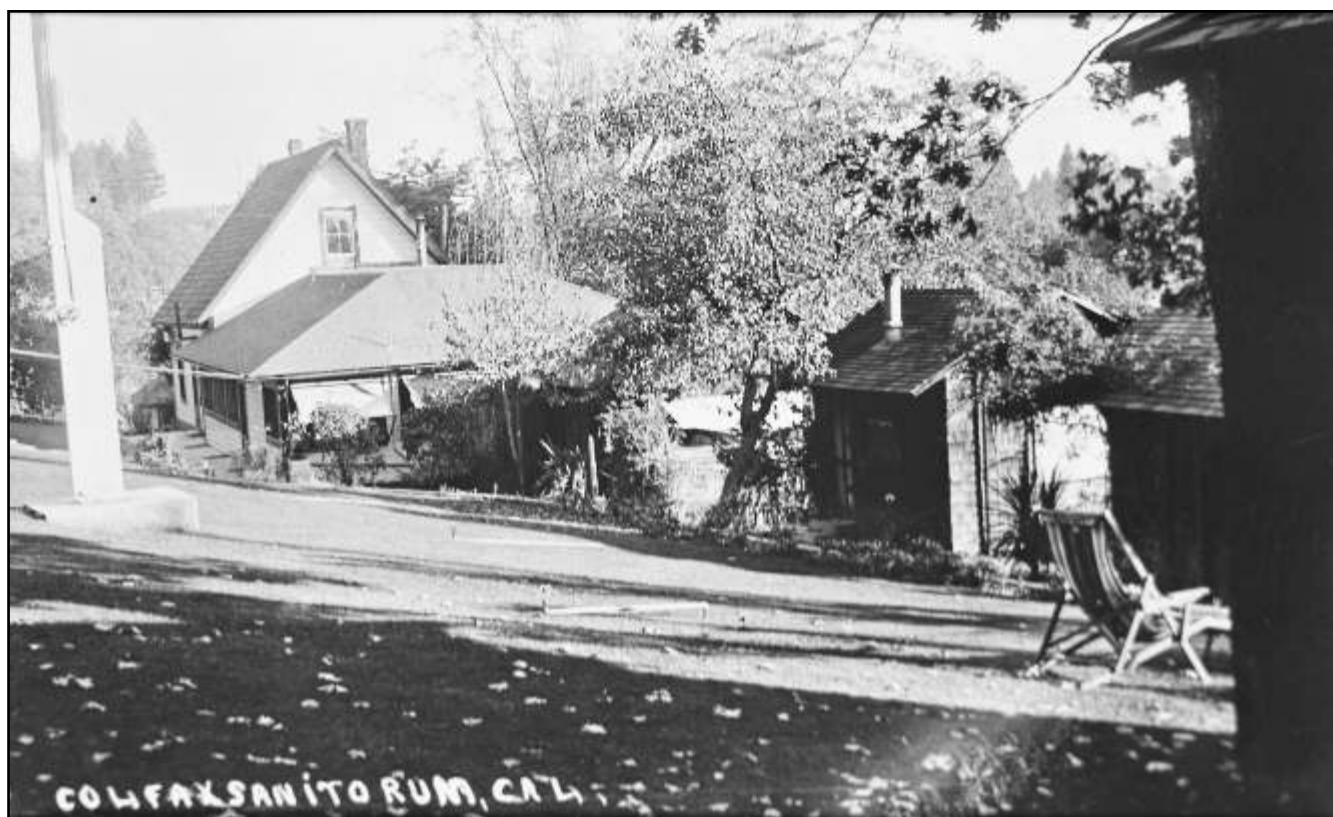
That facility was called the Colony, and will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The Colfax Hospital remained under Dr. Peers' supervision until 1946, when he sold it to Mrs. Elva Hafelfinger. In 1950 Dr. Vernon Padgett took over the hospital, still offering TB treatment part-time until at least 1955. *(Colfax Record, Aug. 16, 1946; Mar. 3, 1950; Jul. 1, 1955)*. According to Dick Wayland, the hospital building was deemed a public nuisance and had to be torn down. The hospital was gone by 1967 when a new Colfax Post Office was proposed for the empty lot *(Auburn Journal, May 11, 1967)*, but the project fell through.



The upper view shows the former Kneeland home on Kneeland St.. It was purchased by Dr. Peers and became the heart of his Colfax Hospital. (CAHS)

The lower photo shows the back side of the Colfax Hospital near Depot St., and one of the cottages. (Keck-Bowers Collection).





The upper photo shows the hospital from Grass Valley St. The cottage at left can still be seen today in a Grass Valley St. backyard (inset), but the main hospital building is gone. (CAHS Archives)

The lower photo shows the interior of the Colfax Hospital living room. (Chesley Bush Album).





The upper photo shows some of the housekeeping cottages next to the Colfax hospital that were available to TB patients being treated by Dr. Peers. (Chesley Bush album).

The image below shows one of the cottages in more detail including the open-air design. (CAHS)





Patients relax outside the hospital building in the Colfax fresh air and sunshine as an important part of their treatment. (Peers - 1922).

THE COLFAX HOSPITAL

Requests and Rules From The Physician-in-Charge To His Patients:

The following requests and rules are for the benefit of the patients and the management of the Hospital. It is hoped they will be cheerfully complied with and that the patients will be assured by the same desire for mutual benefit that has caused the management to issue them.

PATIENTS ARE REQUESTED:

- 1.—Not to throw papers about the yard.
- 2.—Not to leave the lights burning when not in use.
- 3.—Not to visit the rooms of other patients without permission of the Doctor or the Nurse in charge.
- 4.—Not to discuss their symptoms with anyone except the Doctor or the Nurse in charge.
- 5.—To consult the Doctor before taking any form of exercise not previously allowed. The word "exercise" includes walking.
- 6.—To turn out lights and turn off radios at 9 P. M., unless permission is granted for an extension of time. (All patients must be in bed at 9 P. M. unless permission has been granted to remain up later).
- 7.—To go to bed when the temperature reaches 99.4. This rule is for the guidance of any patient whose temperature has previously been low enough to allow some hours up.
- 8.—To ask the Nurse about baths.
- 9.—To report any inattention to the Doctor or to the Nurse in charge. It is the aim of the management to make patients happy and comfortable as well as to promote good health. Everyone connected in an official way with the management has been instructed to pay attention to each and every legitimate complaint with a view to remedying or removing the cause of such complaints.

RULES

PATIENTS MUST NOT

- 1.—Cough at any time without holding a handkerchief in front of the mouth.
- 2.—Expectorate in anything except a pocket cuspidor or sputum cup.
- 3.—Smoke or use alcoholic beverages.

GENERAL RULES

- 1.—Friends of patients who are visiting at the Hospital are expected to obey all rules as do the patients. Visitors are requested not to smoke in the buildings or about the premises. Expectoration about the grounds is forbidden to visitors or employees.
- 2.—Patients who are too ill to go to the bath-rooms or who are unable to wait upon themselves, must provide a special nurse.
- 3.—Employees must not visit the rooms of patients except during the performance of their duties. This rule will be strictly enforced.
- 4.—Charges for board and room payable each week IN ADVANCE.
- 5.—Charges for medical services payable the first of each calendar month.

ROBERT A. PEERS, M. D., Medical Director

Posted July 1914

Colfax Hospital Requests and Rules posted by Dr. Peers for his patients in July 1914 (CAHS)

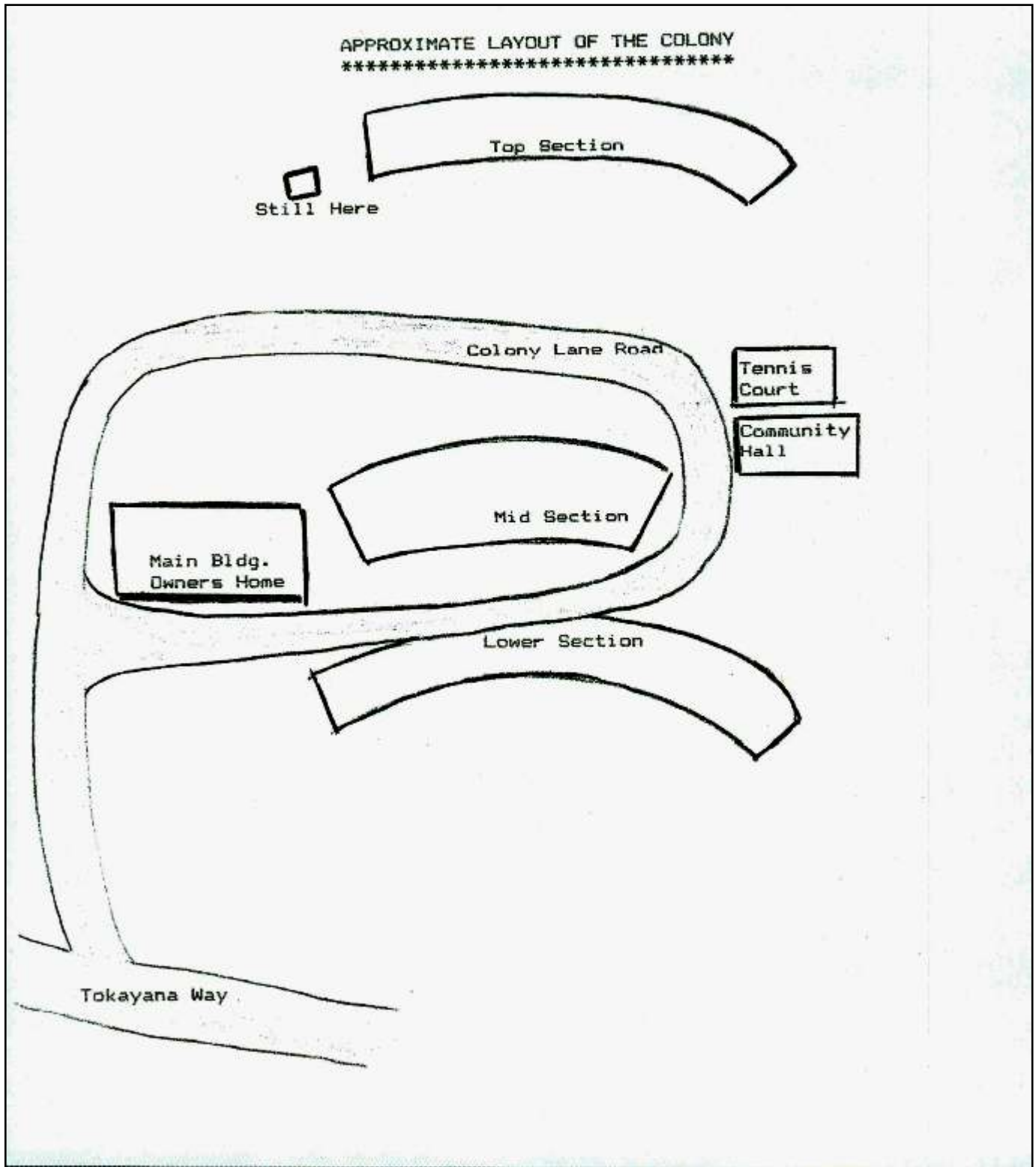
THE COLONY

In order to expand the capacity of his tuberculosis hospital in Colfax, Dr. Peers added cottages to the main hospital building at Depot and Kneeland Streets. However, space was limited in the vicinity of the hospital, and the patients were still close to the town residents. This made some Colfax citizens uneasy, having people with this scary disease near their homes and businesses.

When the Tokayano Ranchos were sold, Dr. Peers and Mr. Tade teamed up to purchase the 40 acre parcel known as Tokayano Rancho #3. The Auburn Journal of 25 August 1910 announced that work would commence on the facility as soon as the deed to the property was delivered. *“The first thing will be the improving of the dwelling house at that place for the occupancy of J.E. Tade, who will have charge of the building. Frank Tade and George Lozer are both busy on the initial work.”* A total of 20 new cottages were to be built. In the future some cottages would be moved from the area near the hospital to the new location.

This new facility would be known as The Colony and was situated off Tokayana Way about a mile from town. On 19 November 1910 the Sacramento Daily Union announced that two of the 20 cottages at the Tokayano colony were nearly complete and lumber was on the ground for the remaining cottages, with anticipated completion in about two months. Three large water tanks had been installed and the pipeline from the Boardman canal was completed. On 20 May 1911 the Placer Herald reported that *“The new tuberculosis colony of Dr. Robert A. Peers has been completed, the twenty cottages, having every modern convenience, being situated in a large pine grove.”*

Long-time Colfax resident John Rambottini worked at The Colony as a young man. In the 1980's John granted an oral interview with the Colfax Area Historical Society. He provided a hand-drawn map of The Colony, along with a description of the layout, his job, and some of the people he met.



John Rambottini's hand-drawn map of The Colony, a part of Dr. Peers' TB treatment facilities that operated in and around Colfax in the 1920's and '30's. The area labeled "Top Section" is shown in more detail on page 20.

CAHS volunteer Verne Wilt captured the details from John Rambottini's interview on Sept. 8, 1988. Verne's text is repeated below.

Mr. John Rambottini first came to Colfax in 1920 and was employed by Dr. Robert A. Peers at the Colfax Hospital. John provided general transportation and delivery service for the hospital for just two weeks. Dr. Peers wished John to live on the hospital grounds; John declined to do so.

He then was employed by James Scarborough at the Colfax Trading Company for two to three months.

John worked until the late spring of 1923 at Fruge and Tiffereau's Colfax Garage as a mechanic. John left Colfax for Tacoma, Washington and later Santa Rosa, California. He returned to Colfax and employment at the Colony in 1924.

John worked at the Colony until October of 1926, a period of approximately two years. He did all the shopping and laundry delivery, banking, postal pickup, Colfax Drug Store prescription delivery and acted as taxi and school bus service for the Colony people. His was a utility wagon service called the "Candy Wagon."

People charged their groceries at the local market. However, the drug store prescriptions had to be paid for at purchase time, so John was paid a small fee by the druggist for this service.

He used a one-ton Ford Model "T" truck with side curtains for general delivery and freight. He had the use of a Chalmers automobile for passenger and school children transportation.

John's salary was \$35.00 per month including room and board, with his laundry, and he had use of the vehicles.

The Colony was located at the end of Colony Lane off Tokayana Way. There were thirty-one cottages, an impressive owners' home, a workshop, and a large Community Building for cards, checkers, and movies one or two times a month. The Community Building was just one large room, no fireplace, but it did have bathroom facilities. No other convalescent home, hospital, or sanatorium was ever called or referred to as the Colony.

The cottages were frame with shingle roofs on tall (4 ft.) foundation piers of wood with no skirting. They were one bedroom, kitchen, living-utility room, and bathroom. Heat and cooking was by wood stove which had coils to heat the water. They had running water and electricity. There was no window glass, just screens and roll up canvas flaps to cover the openings. Each kitchen had an ice box but no refrigerator. Floors were wood, with linoleum in the kitchen and bathrooms.

The Colony was always fully occupied, [with] a long waiting list.

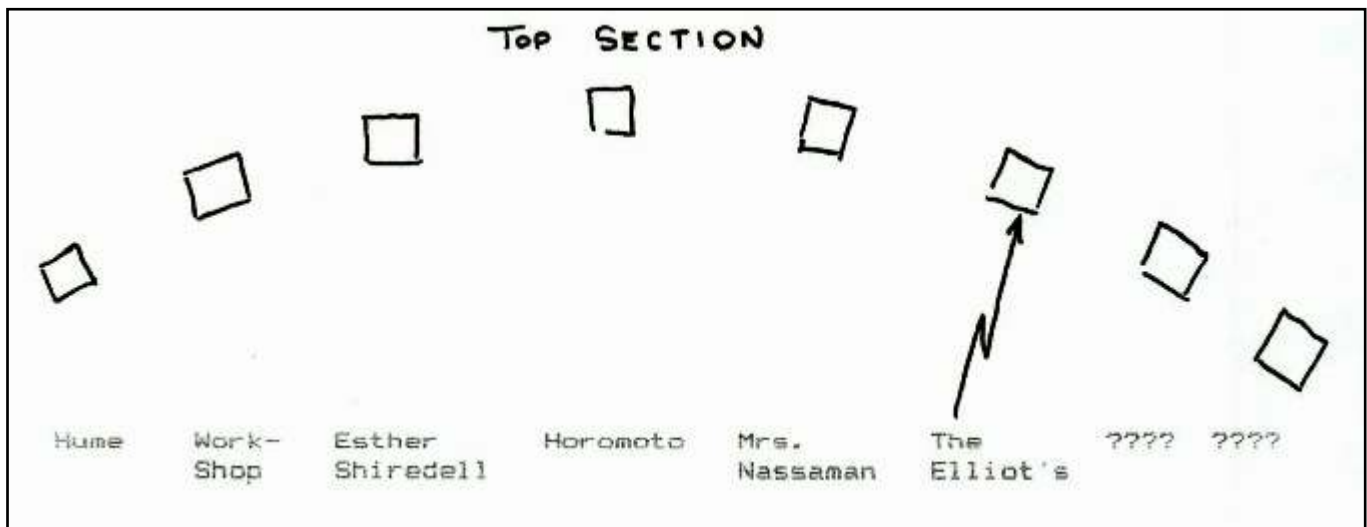
The main building was the owners' home where John had his room. There were six to eight employees including the operators, Frank and Eva Roscelli. Besides Mrs. Roscelli, Mrs. Canolish and Mrs. Airola helped with the cooking chores since two of the cottages were for convalescing patients that required full time care. Their meals were served on tray or, if the patients were able, they went to the kitchen to eat.

There were two handymen, Nate Klinkenbeard and his brother Bill. They did all maintenance and upkeep and plumbing repair.

A doctor was on the premises during the day: Dr. Pierce, a single gentleman, and later Dr. Donnivitz, who was married with one daughter. They lived in a separate house on the hill adjacent to the Colony. Dr. Peers was the head physician in charge of the patients.

People of note living at the Colony were "Miss Woods," a prima donna actress who had a housekeeper named Mrs. Shepard. She was visited on several occasions by the famous director Adolph Zucker. Also, Mrs. Nausman, a writer, and a priest, Father Vaughn, who had TB and lived in cottage #28.

A writer, Mr. Elliot, Esq., his wife and daughter lived at the Colony all during Mr. Rambottini's employment. Mr. Elliot was from the Bay Area, tall and well built, of light complexion, a very quiet person, and approximately 45 years of age. The Elliott cottage was located in the "Top Section" of the Colony.



Detail for the top section of The Colony as sketched by John Rambottini (see page 18)

The Colfax Record noted in its Sept. 2, 1921 issue, that the housekeeping plan of treatment implemented by Dr. Peers was the first of its kind for the treatment of TB. *"The Colony housekeeping plan was the first of its kind ever constructed. The plan of having patients bring members of their families to keep house for them and live with them in a colony devoted exclusively to the care of tuberculosis patients was not only first instituted in Colfax but has proved to be one of the most successful methods of caring for tuberculosis patients."*

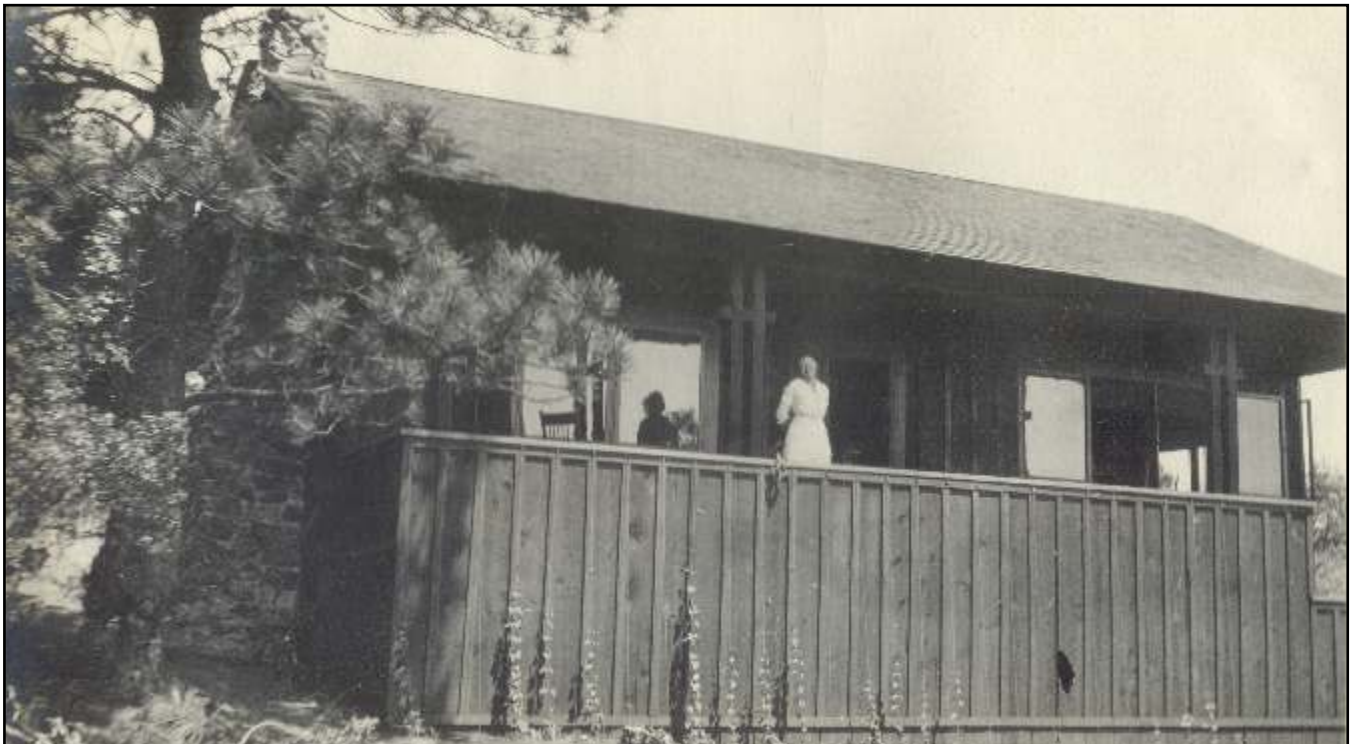
From 1912-1918 Dr. Peers was assisted by Dr. Chesley Bush in overseeing the hospital and The Colony. When Dr. Peers went to France in March 1918 as a tuberculosis expert with the Red Cross to help with the war effort and treatment of TB in Europe, he placed his assistant Dr. Chesley Bush in charge of the Colfax Hospital and Colony, assisted by Dr. Charles Durand. (*Auburn Journal*, Mar. 5, 1918).

Dr. Charles Durand came to Colfax in 1914 as a patient, suffering from TB. Over the next two years he experienced what was termed a remarkable recovery, and he decided to stay in Colfax and assist Dr. Peers. He remained in Colfax until his untimely death in 1932, from a blood clot while undergoing routine surgery. Prior to his death Dr. Durand provided numerous free TB screening clinics sponsored by local TB associations in Marysville/Yuba City, Stockton and Fresno. He also provided health screening for high school students in Placer and Nevada counties. (*Colfax Record* - July 8, 1932)

In December 1918 Dr. Chesley Bush was appointed to the Medical Director's position at Arroyo Sanatorium in Livermore, CA. (*SF Chronicle* - Dec. 24, 1918). Dr.. Bush went on to provide nearly 60 years of medical care, mostly in the Livermore area.

Several people managed the Colony facilities through the years, including Mr. & Mrs. Jack Davis and Mr. & Mrs. Frank Roscelli. (*Colfax Record*, Aug. 16, 1946) For a time in the 1920's the Colony was managed by the Davis & Roscelli partnership, but that partnership was dissolved through legal action in 1924. (*Colfax Record*, May 16, 1924)

The Colony continued to provide medical treatment for TB patients through the 1930's. Today Old Colony Lane can still be found off Tokayana Way, but the cottages have been replaced by private homes.



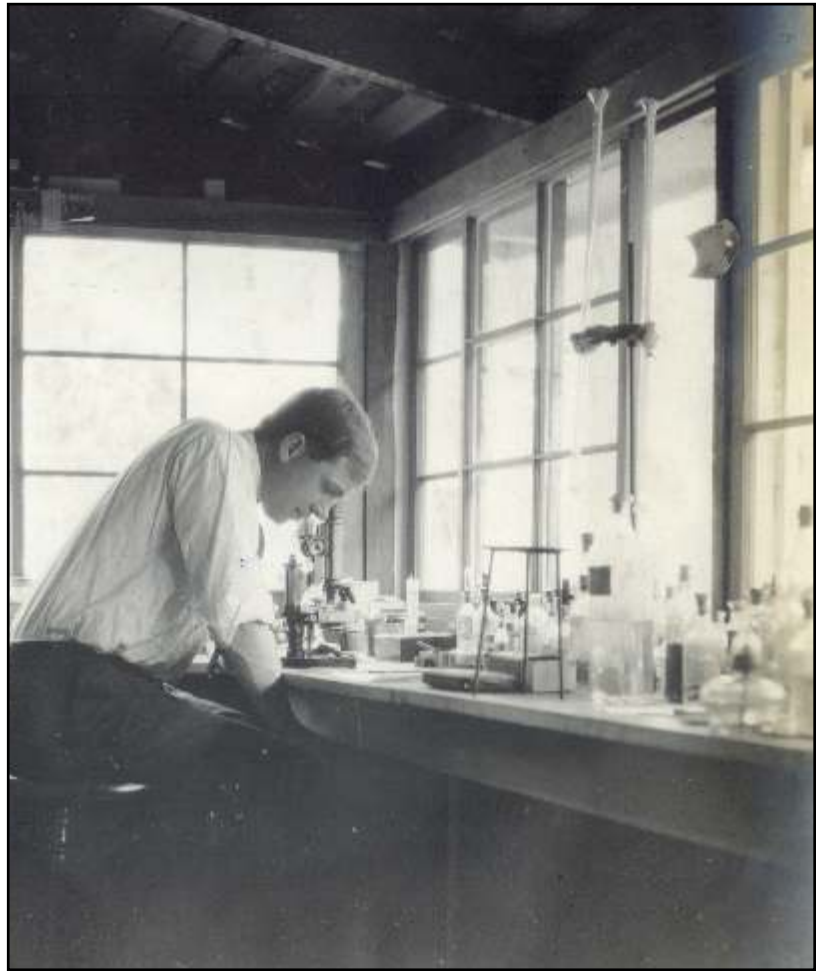
*Sierra Lodge, home to Dr. & Mrs. Chesley Bush at the Colony. (Chesley Bush Album)
It was constructed for Dr. Bush and his wife in 1913, shortly after he joined Dr. Peers
in Colfax. (Colfax Record, Sept. 26, 1913) This is likely the house John Rambottini
mentioned at the top of the previous page, a house on the hill adjacent to the Colony
where subsequent doctors lived.*



Two Views of The Colony housekeeping cottages off Tokayana Way 1+ miles from Colfax. The top view is from the personal album of Dr. Chesley Bush (CAHS Collection). The lower image is from the Keck-Bowers Collection (CAHS). The cottages were designed to maximize exposure to the healing air of the Colfax foothills while providing comfortable surroundings for patients undergoing treatment and their families.



*Dr. Chesley Bush in the lab
cottage at The Colony.
(Chesley Bush album - CAHS)*



Interior of one of the cottages at The Colony. (Chesley Bush album)



Colfax School for the Tuberculous

THE COLONY

OPERATED ON THE COTTAGE PLAN

Situated on a Warm, Sunny, Southern slope, one and one-half miles southwest of Colfax, surrounded by seventy acres of virgin pine and spruce grove.

HOUSEKEEPING COTTAGES

Cottages rented to those who wish to bring their own attendants and keep house. Free semi-daily delivery of mail, express, groceries, meats, etc., direct to your door. All cottages equipped with toilet and bath, and electric lights on individual meters. Rent: \$25.00 per month.

COLONY BOARDING DEPARTMENT

Special cottages reserved to accommodate patients who desire board and room instead of keeping house. Each cottage equipped with bath, toilet, etc., and arranged to accommodate from one to three patients each.

Strictly Home Cooking, with special attention paid to individual requirements. Rates: With board, \$17.50 per week and up, depending on number of patients in cottage.

The above prices are exclusive of medical charges.

Resident Doctor and Nurse on the premises.

WRITE FOR BOOKLET

DR. ROBERT A. PEERS,
Medical Director.

FRANK ROSCELLI,
Manager.

COLFAX, CALIF.

"ABOVE THE FOG AND BELOW THE SNOW"

This ad for The Colony in the Tea Bee magazine published by the Colfax School for the Tuberculous describes the Housekeeping Cottages and the Cottage Plan of TB Treatment. (CAHS Archives)

COLFAX SCHOOL FOR THE TUBERCULOUS

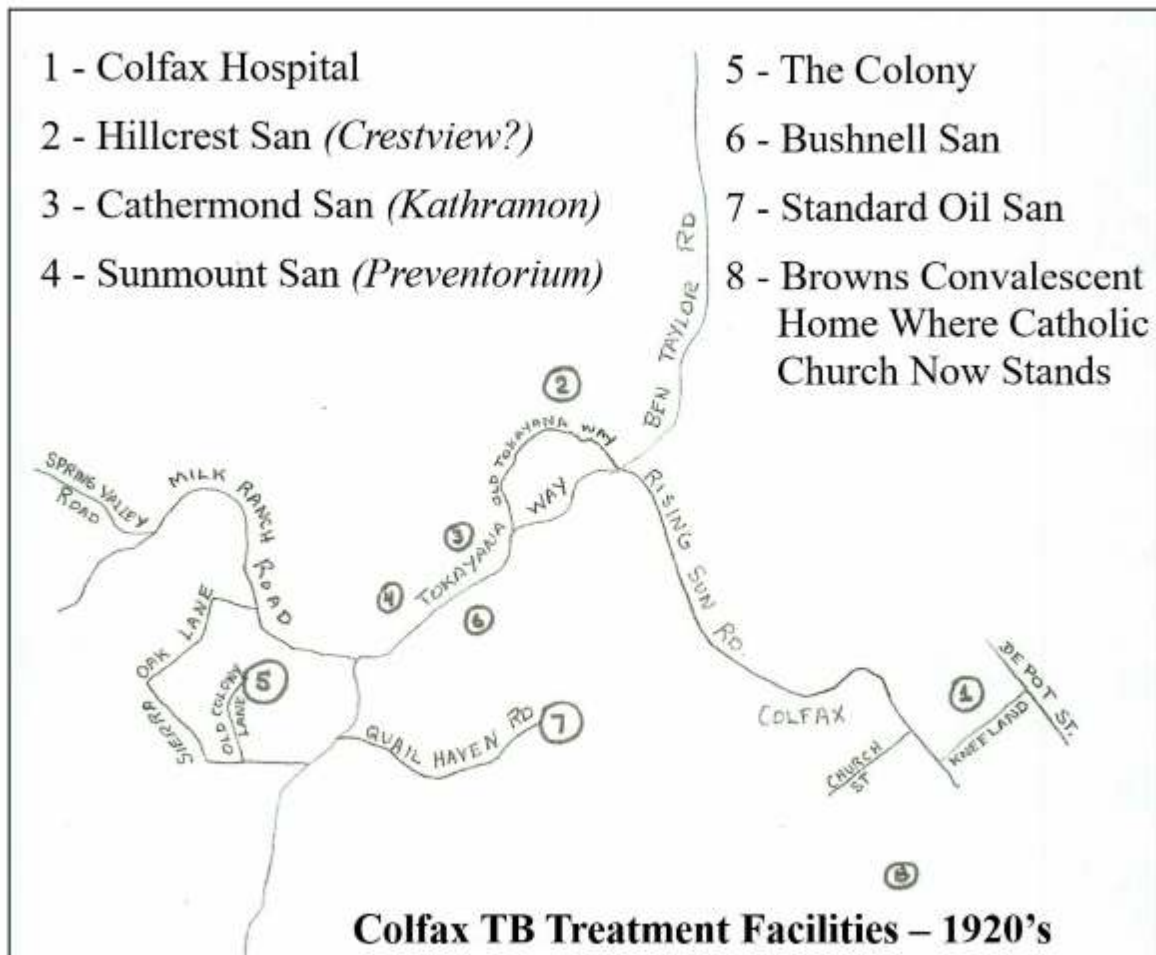
In the 1920's Dr. Peers expanded the tuberculosis treatment options in the Colfax area. Several of his former patients chose to stay in the area and contribute to the treatment options, creating other treatment facilities with Dr. Peers as medical director.

In 1922 Dr. Peers wrote a booklet on the treatment philosophy and options he offered to potential tuberculosis patients. He titled his pamphlet, "Colfax Hospitals for TB Patients," and he named his overall treatment program the "Colfax School for the Tuberculous."

His philosophy of TB treatment outlined in his booklet was multi-pronged. The treatment program centered around fresh mountain air, a prominent nearly year-round feature of the Colfax area. He took on curable patients or patients with a good prognosis for recovery. The treatment program emphasized good diet and rest under proper medical supervision in a fresh-air environment. Additional clinics were built by cured former patients who wanted to give back to future sufferers. Many of the support staff had been cured themselves and could provide positive support for patients to help them get through the difficult days.

By the mid-1920's there were six treatment facilities operating in the Colfax area under Dr. Peers' medical supervision and part of the Colfax School for the Tuberculous. These were the Colfax Hospital, The Colony, Kathramon Sanatorium (San), Bushnell San, Standard Oil San, and Crestview San (*from 1923-1927*). One additional facility, the Brown Convalescent Home, offered a home-style environment for former patients who wanted to stay in the area near Dr. Peers and his treatment program.

John Rambottini, mentioned in the earlier chapter on The Colony, provided a hand-drawn map of the TB treatment facilities he recalled from his years working at the Colony. While there are some errors noted on his map, and corrections annotated in italics in the legend, his map provides a good starting point for locating the major treatment facilities. The Colfax town center is at lower right on the map.

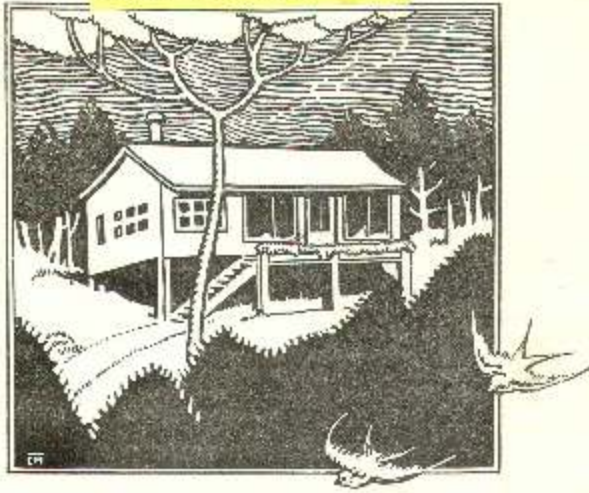


Hand-drawn Map - John Rambottini Interview - CAHS

Each of these facilities will be discussed individually in succeeding chapters of this report. Note that 8 locations are listed on the map, and that location #4, Sunmount, is corrected to be listed as a Preventorium, not a Sanatorium as Rambottini indicated. Sunmount was not included in Dr. Peers' Colfax School for the Tuberculous. It operated under a different philosophy and will be treated separately in its own chapter. However, its function was complementary to the Colfax School for the Tuberculous and Dr. Peers served as advisor; thus it is included in this report.

The Colfax School for the Tuberculous published a monthly news pamphlet through the latter half of the 1910's into the 1930's. It included articles on TB research and treatments and served as an information source for patients and families, providing news updates on the various treatment facilities and their patients. Each cottage or treatment building had its own reporter and the items varied from who's new to general gossip. The publication also included ads for the various treatment facilities. Some of those ads are featured within the chapter pages that follow.

Korman, Dr.
Academy of Sciences
Golden Gate Park.



The TEA BEE

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 5

JUNE, 1925



Cover and sample pages from the Tea Bee issue of June 1925, published by the Colfax School for the Tuberculous. (CAHS Archives)

THE TEA BEE

TEN CENTS A COPY - ONE DOLLAR A YEAR.

Vol. 13

Colfax, Calif., June, 1925.

No. 5

WHY DO PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM TUBERCULOSIS GO TO SANATORIA?

By Charles J. Dornant, M. D., Colfax, California.

Were that question put to a thousand patients, it is safe to say that at least nine hundred ninety would answer: "I'm recovered." And the answer is about one hundred per cent correct. I can transfer a few of the numerous advantages of sanatoria life as an aid in the fight against tuberculosis with ultimate cure the definite goal.

Despite the fact that almost every physician says for tuberculous patients to stay in their homes, it is a recognized fact that the majority of physicians advise such patients to go to sanatoria. Why? Because from experience they know it is difficult to cure in the home. Let it be noted for the patient to realize his health is sanatorium atmosphere and know that the ultimate patient will be benefited by removing himself from his usual haunts.

In this age, when the layman is more and more enlightened concerning the symptoms of various diseases, many a man has made his own diagnosis as tuberculous before seeking medical advice, but nevertheless has hoped against hope that the doctor he consults will contradict him. It is no unusual thing for a man to realize that he is tuberculous and it is not an unpleasant surprise for a doctor to pronounce to a patient that he is suffering from tuberculosis. The patient, if he is not strong-willed and resolute, may refuse to care for himself, leaving the task straight ahead of him, and the doctor sensing this, knowing the temperament of the patient as well as the numerous temptations which surround a man recently taken from active life, is told to lead a life as inactive as that necessary to overcome tubercle.

THE TEA BEE

15

Bendy All Round— Is it true, doctor," asked the quaking young lady, "that you're a holy-kicker?"

"Madam," replied the doctor, "I make no distinction between the sexes." —The Continent (Chicago).

The Tea Bee

A Magazine Published Monthly by the Resident Citizens of the Colfax School for the Tuberculous.

EDITOR AND BUSINESS MAN:
Norma Elliot.

Correspondents—J. Early, Mrs. F. W. Burgrave, P. Stuechy, M. Fowler, J. Jaeger, E. A. Bonham.

Subscription, one copy 10 cts.
Subscription, per year \$1.00
Payable in advance.

Advertising rates upon application.
Entered as second class matter, March 10, 1914 at the postoffice at Colfax, California, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

NOTE:—The management of the Colfax School for the Tuberculous is not responsible for the matter appearing in the columns of this magazine.

THE EDITOR.

BURD'S BARBER SHOP

MRS. G. BURD, Prop.

SHAMPOOING MASSAGING
Ladies and Childrens Hair Bolding
a Specialty
Near Colfax Bakery Colfax

HIGHWAY SERVICE STATION

E. FENDERGATE, Prop.

GASOLINE OILS
CHUNK CASE SERVICE
On Highway Colfax

LUDEN'S Menthol COUGH DROPS

Makes Breathing Easier

THE famous LUDEN'S Menthol Formulations give quick relief to the Trouble Zone—your nose and throat.

Ask Elliott about the
HANDY LITTLE WHEEL
for personal stationery, \$1.25. Color
Copenhagen blue. Just the thing for
your correspondence while taking the
cure.

300 sheets, 100 envelopes bound
paper, printed with your name and
address, \$1.25.

**BOEDKER LEATHER PAIRING
QUITS**

2039 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, Calif.

CLOSE-TO-NATURE CANVAS HOUSES

FOR EVERY OUT-DOOR PURPOSE

They're recommended for
10,000 jobs. Gardens, lawns,
and all ways should. Here and
there out doors. Thousands
in use in America. Inexpensive,
portable, and perfect homes.
Sold and delivered in com-
pact box with canvas walls
attached to framework.
Easily and quickly erected
or taken down. Handsome.
Close-To-Nature Company,
441 Lyon St., Colfax, Iowa.

The next four chapters feature details on each of the treatment facilities that were part of Dr. Peers' School for the Tuberculous. The remaining chapters provide details on facilities such as Weimar Joint Sanatorium (where Dr. Peers served as medical consultant) and other Sanatoriums and Preventoriums that operated in the Colfax area and augmented the care provided by Dr. Peers.

First up in our look at further Colfax treatment facilities is Kathramon.

KATHRAMON/ OPENSHAW SANATORIUM

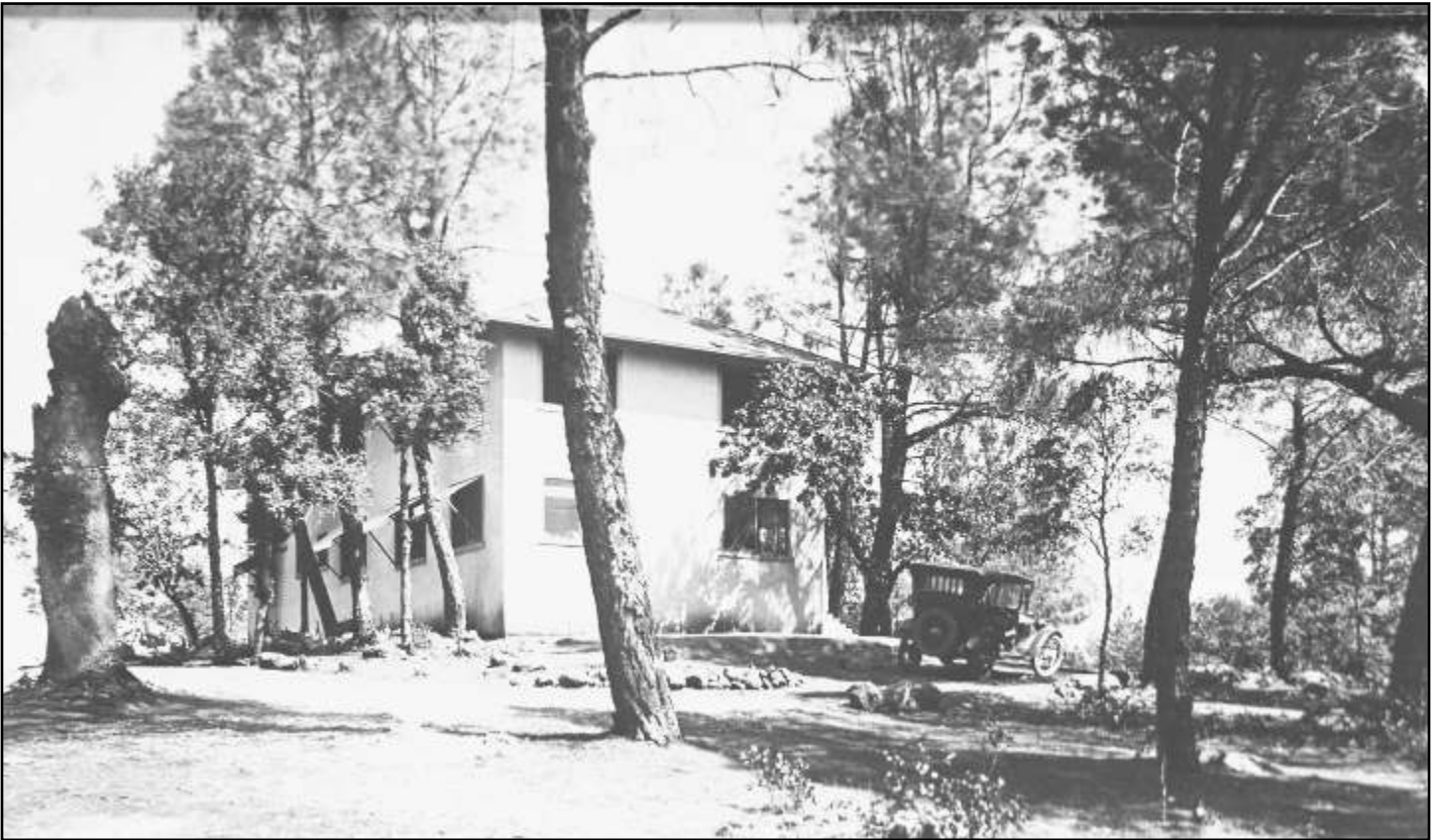
According to his obituary, Raymond Openshaw came to Colfax in 1913. (*Colfax Record*, Nov. 27, 1953). He was apparently a tuberculosis patient for a time and decided to stay in the area after being cured. In 1918 he purchased 6.5 acres of land along Tokayana Way, a hill-top plot of land just southwest of Pinecroft Road. The Feb. 21, 1919 Colfax Record reported that Raymond Openshaw was building a new TB sanatorium. He would be manager of the facility and his mother, Katherine Openshaw would be its proprietor. The sanatorium would be called Kathramon, an apparent play on their first names, with Dr. Peers its medical director.

A special article on Colfax sanatoriums in the Sept. 2, 1921 Colfax Record, noted that “*The Kathramon Hospital, owned and managed by Katherine Openshaw and Raymond Openshaw, was opened for patients on August 1, 1919, and has been successful from the start. It is a very homelike place. They specialize on home cooking and home service.*” Photos showed an imposing two-story building located on top of a knoll with panorama views of the rural countryside. The building’s location was likely the hilltop property now seen on the right side of Tokayana Way when heading westbound just after passing Pinecroft Road. A newer single-story home now sits at that location.

The Openshaws continued to operate Kathramon into the 1930’s, but demand for TB treatment was beginning to wane. In 1935 Kathramon was leased by Dr. Wheeler after his surgery located on the Colfax-Grass Valley Road was destroyed by fire. (*See the chapter on Wolfsen Sanatorium for more information about Dr. Wheeler*). His use was short-lived, however. In 1936 Mrs. George Anderson announced that she had taken over Kathramon, completely renovated the place, and renamed it Lone Mountain Guest Ranch (*Colfax Record*, Apr. 10, 1936). She planned to rent rooms by the day, week or month. Her ad stated that no sick people would be accepted.

Kathramon experienced several more changes in its use over the next decade. The March 22, 1940 Colfax Record announced that Mildred Grasmoe who last winter operated the Snow Line Lodge at the former Kathramon site was opening a new ski lodge called Shangri-La at the adjacent Sunmount site. In 1943 Mr. & Mrs. R.J. McDougal of Sacramento announced that they had taken over Kathramon and would operate it as a nursing home. They brought 18 patients with them from Sacramento County to the facility now known as Mountain View Sanatorium (*sic*). (*Colfax Record*, Sept. 17, 1943). A 1945 ad noted the facility was a home for aged and semi-invalids, offering special care for bed patients, tray service and barber service. However, a 1947 article about a roof fire at Mountain View Sanatorium indicated that Raymond Openshaw was the owner of the former Kathramon building.

The building survived at least into the 1960's. A brief article in the Apr. 20, 1951 Colfax Record mentioned that Charles Wegman had returned to Colfax to again operate the Haven of Rest, formerly known as Kathramon. Finally the chapter on Ranchito Vista that appears later in this document makes a case that this facility operated out of the old Kathramon building in the early 1960's.



The Kathramon/Openshaw Sanatorium building at its hilltop location off Tokayana Way. The old car dates the photo to the early 1920's. (Keck-Bowers Collection - CAHS).



Above – A front view of the Kathramon Sanatorium building. (Peers – 1922).

At right – An ad for Kathramon Sanatorium from an issue of the Tea Bee published by the Colfax School for the Tuberculous. (CAHS Archives)



*Ad from Colfax Record,
Apr. 10, 1936*

**LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN
GUEST RANCH**

Clean, quiet rooms with hot and
cold running water.

Transients, weekly or monthly
rates. Ideal location for vacation.

No Sick People Accepted

$\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from Colfax on
back road.

P. O. BOX 344 COLFAX

Ad from Colfax Record, Nov. 12, 1943

MOUNTAIN VIEW SANATORIUM
FORMERLY **KATHRAMON**

Home for Aged and Semi-Invalids

Bed Patients Given Special Care

TRAY SERVICE BARBER SERVICE

Reasonable Rates—Phone 10R11

Under Management of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. McDougall

BUSHNELL

SANATORIUM

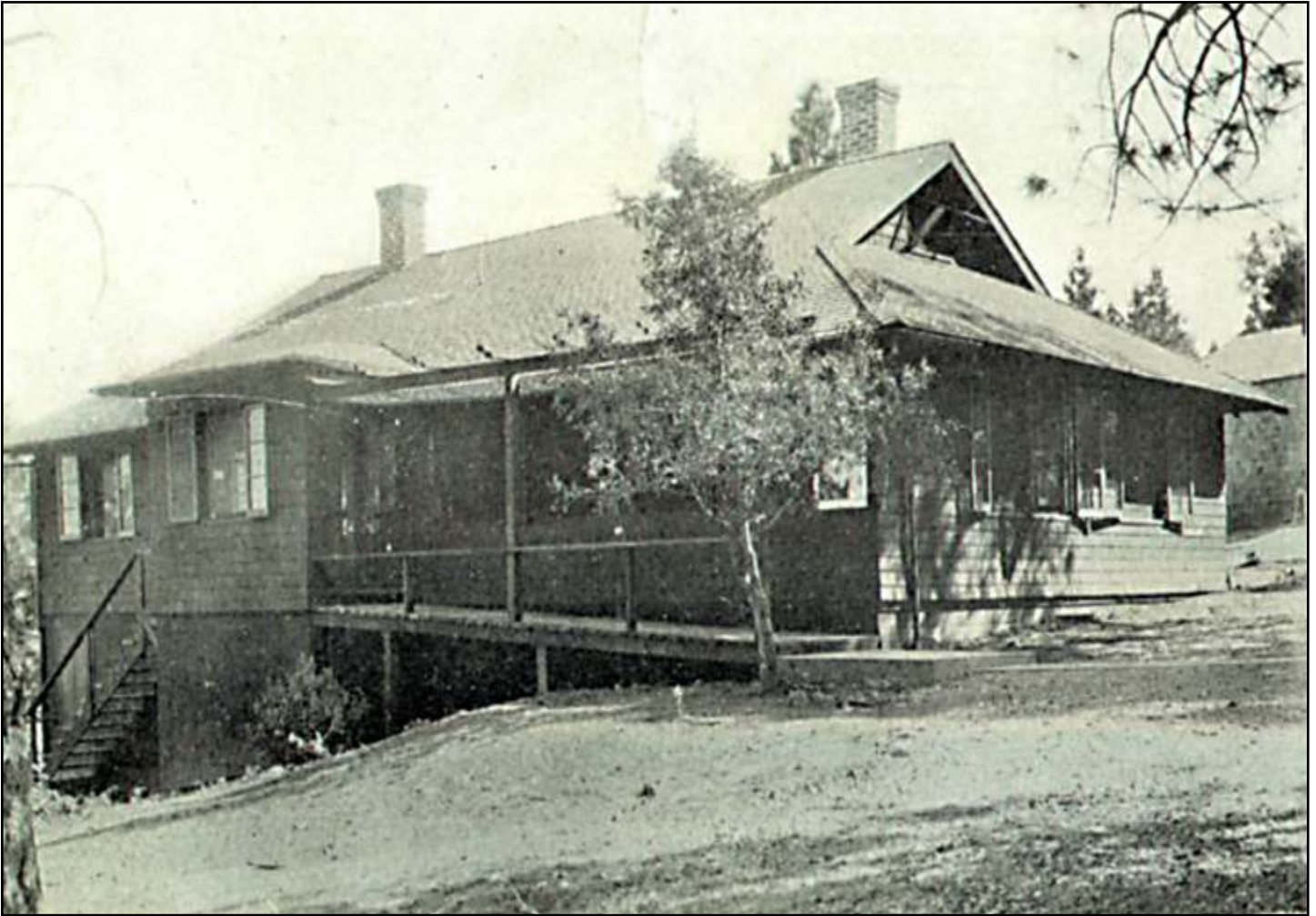
On January 24, 1921 Raymond Openshaw, manager of Kathramon, bought 23 acres on the east side of Tokayana Way from C.H. and Jessie Albright. (*Note: At this time Tokayana Way followed the old route, now Old Tokayana Way which ran more to the west as it reached its intersection with Rising Sun.*) The parcel was a blunt triangle. It was widest along its southern boundary, which met Tokayana Way about 100 yards below Pinecroft Road, and narrowed going north as Tokayana Way angled closer to the parcel's east boundary. Its north line was essentially Rising Sun.

On January 25, 1921 Openshaw sold the southernmost 10 of the 23 acres to Mary Bushnell. The northern line of these ten acres intersected Tokayana Way 150-200 feet above Pinecroft Road. Mary Bushnell and her husband H.G. Bushnell would open Bushnell Sanatorium on this parcel.

On March 4, 1921 the Colfax Record announced that H.G. Bushnell and J. Weber would erect a new San on land purchased from Raymond Openshaw. Mr. Bushnell had been a resident of The Colony for the past year and a half. The location of the new San would be across Tokayana Way from Kathramon, and built on the cottage plan. Three buildings were planned, an administration building near the road for deliveries, and two cottages on the hillside below, each housing eight patients, a sitting room, bath with hot and cold running water, sitting porch, and outside rooms offering plenty of fresh air and sunshine. The cottages were to be located down the hillside a distance from the road to minimize dust in the air. The admin building would house the Bushnells and staff, along with a kitchen and dining area for patients. The new sanatorium would be under the medical direction of Dr. Robert Peers, assisted by a resident nurse.

The Colfax Record announced on July 15, 1921 that the new Bushnell-Weber sanatorium opened that week across from Kathramon, and was known as the Bushnell San. Although H.G. Bushnell died around 1925, his wife Mary continued to operate the sanatorium with help from her daughter Mrs. J.F. Lange until 1942, when Mary sold Bushnell and she and her daughter relocated to Oakland. (*Colfax Record, Oct. 9, 1942*)

By the early 1950's the Bushnell San had been converted to the Mountain Apartments, owned by Joyce and Stanley Davies. In 1951 fire from an overheated oil stove destroyed one of the apartment buildings. (*Colfax Record*, Mar. 9, 1951). In 1954 a second Mountain Apartment building was destroyed by fire, leaving only one of the original Bushnell San buildings still standing. (*Colfax Record*, Dec. 10, 1954). That surviving Bushnell building, one of the patient cottages, still exists as a private home off Gentry Lane.



Above - The Bushnell San Administration Building, located just off Tokayana Way. (Peers - 1922)

Right - Ad for Bushnell Sanatorium in a Tea Bee issue published by the Colfax School for the Tuberculous. Note Mary Bushnell as Manager. (CAHS Archives)

BUSHNELL SANATORIUM

BUSHNELL-WEBER CO.

DR. ROBERT A. PEERS, Medical Director

A modern, home-like institution for the care of tuberculous patients located one-half mile west of Colfax in natural pine forest.

Special attention to individual dietary needs.

Rates, with board, \$21.00 to \$25.00 per week, exclusive of medical attention.

All single rooms and suites with private toilet or bath.

M. B. BUSHNELL, Manager COLFAX, CALIFORNIA

STANDARD OIL SANATORIUM

The Standard Oil San was unique among the Colfax TB treatment facilities in that it was built by a private company, Standard Oil, with Dr. Peers providing its medical oversight. The San had 24 beds, and was for company employees only. (*Dr. Peers – 1922*). Standard Oil employees were scattered throughout the west coast receiving treatment for TB. Around 1920 the company began a search for a location to build a central treatment facility for its employees. The clean air, mild climate and nearness to Dr. Peers and his reputation for successful TB treatment convinced the company to locate near Colfax. In fact, Dr. Peers was instrumental in helping the company secure the land for its facility. (*Sacramento Union, Dec. 4, 1920*)

The Feb. 4, 1921 Colfax Record announced that Standard Oil would begin building its new TB sanatorium within two weeks. It would contain 25 beds as well as room for staff and personnel, and “*is to be the most modern institution of its kind in the West.*” The 60 acres were situated near the back road overlooking Colfax. The property was purchased from Mrs. Maria Kuenzly. The new San would be under the medical direction of Dr. Robert Peers.

On Sept. 2, 1921, the Colfax Record announced the completion of the Standard Oil San with a front-page banner headline and story complete with photos of the facility that could accommodate 24 patients. The large, 2-story building was described as being “*just like a home*” with a large living room and fireplace providing a homelike atmosphere. Panoramic views of the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range could be seen from the three large porches on the main building and from an observation tower on the site. The East and West wings housed three wards and four private rooms. The kitchen contained a modern electric range and large refrigerators. The building was heated by steam, and a large water tank stored water drawn from the nearby Boardman canal after it had been purified on-site.



Company's new sanatorium near Colfax, California. The elevation at this point is 2500 feet

Promotional photo from the company's Standard Oil Bulletin, Sept. 1921 (CAHS)



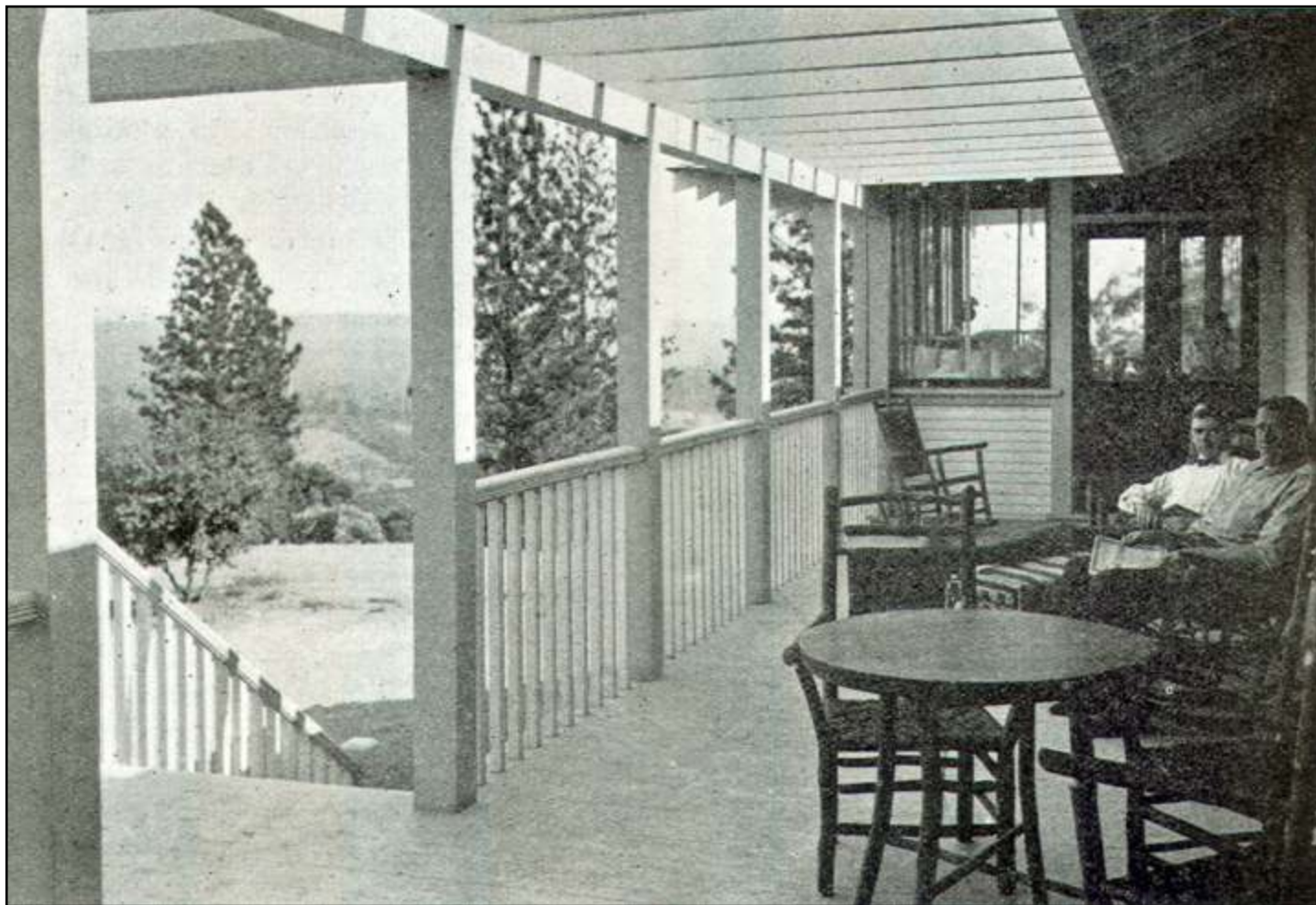
*View of the Standard Oil Sanatorium shortly after its completion in 1921.
(Keck-Bowers Collection)*

That same issue of the Colfax Record noted that with the opening of the Standard Oil Sanatorium, the local Colfax School for the Tuberculous was the largest private group in America, consisting of five sanatoria with 180-bed capacity, all under the medical supervision and direction of Dr. Robert Peers.



*Views of the living room and dining room
(Standard Oil Bulletin)*





One of the sun porches where patients could enjoy the view while absorbing the fresh mountain air and sunshine or shade. (Standard Oil Bulletin)

Visitors were encouraged at the Standard Oil San. The dining room became a popular place for meetings of Colfax groups, with numerous news articles reporting on one luncheon or another at the facility during the mid-1920's. But demand for the beds from company employees began to drop off. The May 28, 1928 Colfax Record announced that the Standard Oil San was closing indefinitely on June 1, citing the large overhead to operate their own facility. With the decreasing number of company TB patients, it was more cost effective to distribute their employees to other treatment facilities in the Colfax area. A caretaker was to be put in charge of the building once the remaining patients were relocated.

The August 30, 1935 Colfax Record announced that the Standard Oil San had been sold to Mrs. Grace Newhall who planned to open it as a rest home. An ad was found in the July 3, 1939 Sacramento Bee for Sah-Kah-Tay Lodge (Where The Sun Shines Down), 1-½ miles from Colfax, with dining room open to the public. *"Tis here the charmed land offers a new and different setting for those who love nature and the great outdoors."* A postcard image found in the CAHS archives that was labeled Sah-Kah-Tay lodge clearly shows the Standard Oil San building.



Postcard image of Grace Newhall's Sah-Kah-Tay Lodge (CAHS Archives)

Placer County

SAH KAH TAY LODGE

(Where the sun shines down)

Dining Room Open to the Public
'Tis here the charmed land offers a new and different setting for those who love nature and the great outdoors.
Rates \$3.50 and up.

1 1/2 Miles from Colfax, California
Telephone: Colfax 62, Berkeley 8671 or write W. G. Fulton, Manager, Box 56 Colfax

Ad from Sacramento Bee, July 3, 1939

Grace Newhall sold her lodge (the former Standard Oil San) in 1942, although the buyer died shortly after the purchase was completed. (*Colfax Record*, Nov. 6, 1942; Dec. 4, 1942). In its Jan. 17, 1947 issue the Colfax Record reported that Mr. & Mrs. Frank Humphrey recently purchased the former Standard Oil San, completely renovated the place, and will rent rooms that are steam heated.

The Standard Oil San building still exists today providing private residences at the end of a side road off Tokayana Way.



Keck-Bowers Collection

CREST VIEW SANATORIUM

The April 18, 1921 Colfax Record reported that another San was to be built in Colfax by A.L. Meherin. It was to be located just outside the City near other Sans. The new San would care for 15 patients in a one-story bungalow. The article went on to say that *“Mr. Meherin has purchased a 13-acre tract from Raymond Openshaw which lies along the Colony Road near the PG&E sub-station and just a few yards outside the city limits. The property adjoins that recently sold by Mr. Openshaw to Messrs. Bushnell and Weber, who are also building a sanatorium.”* Meherin was a former patient of Dr. Peers, having taken the cure at the local hospital. The article went on to say the new San would be under the medical supervision and direction of Dr. Peers.

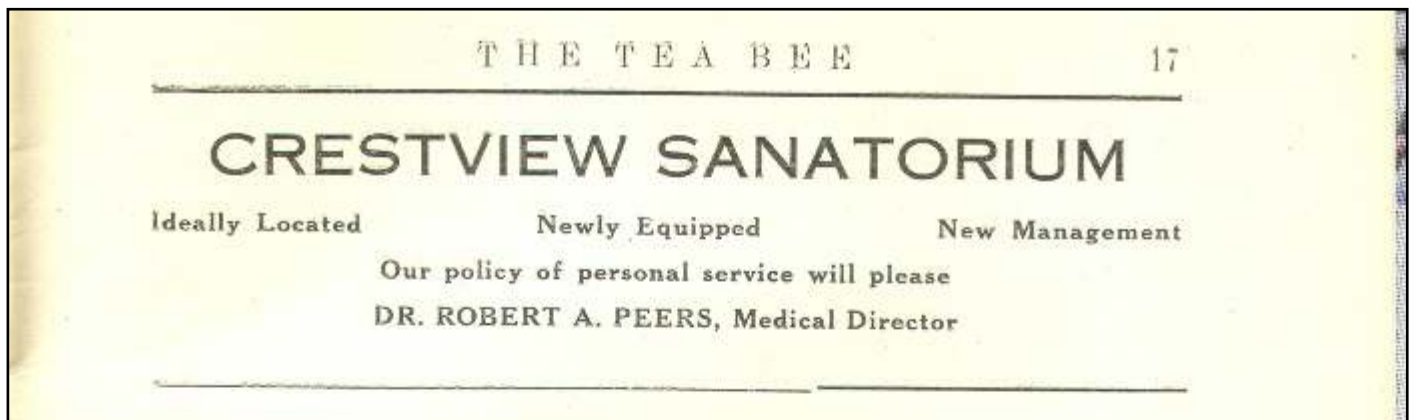
The deed for Meherin’s purchase from Openshaw describes a parcel that was east of Tokayana Way, which at that time ran slightly west of today’s Tokayana Way near Rising Sun (the present-day loop called Old Tokayana that starts at Rising Sun). Thus the location of the new San was likely inside the loop formed by Old Tokayana and Tokayana Way, a shift from the location shown in John Rambottini’s hand-drawn map that appeared on page 26 of this report.

The new San opened in September under the name Crestview, but something changed in those early days. An article in the June 9, 1922 Sacramento Bee stated that effective July 1 Dr. E.B. Laughlin of Burlingame will take charge of the Crest-View tubercular sanatorium at Colfax, and the owner A.L. Meherin contemplates remodeling and increasing the capacity of the facility. *“Meherin will have charge of the operation of the sanatorium, while Dr. Laughlin will supervise the medical end of the institution.”* Thus at this point in time the Crestview was not under Dr. Peers’ supervision.

Things soon changed again when the Feb. 9, 1923 Colfax Record announced that *“A new company has been incorporated the past week to take over the Crestview sanatorium, which is situated just west of the city limits near the P.G. and E. substation. Those interested in the new company are H.G. Bushnell, A.C. Van Pelt, and Al Meherin.”* The Sacramento Bee announced on February 12 that with a new company formed to take over the Crestview San, the facility would now come under the Peers group of sanatoria in Colfax, making the sixth such facility to fall under the medical supervision and direction of Dr. Robert Peers. The new owners planned to enlarge the property by adding an administration building, and later adding private cottages.

Ads for the Crestview began appearing in the Tea Bee magazine published by Dr. Peers’ Colfax School for the Tuberculous. But wait – one of the partners H.G. Bushnell passed away in 1925, apparently throwing the operation of Crestview into question. On Nov. 26, 1927 a notice appeared in the Placer Herald that the Crestview sanatorium at Colfax would be sold at public auction on Nov. 28. All the property, real and personal, would be sold to the highest bidder. The Dec. 12 Colfax Record noted that Crestview had been sold to Mrs. Falconer for \$2750. The fate of the Crestview buildings after that date has not been determined.

No photos have been found of the Crestview Sanatorium.



Ad for the Crestview in the June 1925 issue of Tea Bee

BROWN CONVALESCENT HOME

While not a sanatorium as such, another facility in Colfax played a companion role to Dr. Peers' TB treatment sanatoria. The Colfax Record announced in its Feb. 23, 1923 issue that J.V. Brown was turning the Butler home on Oak St. into a care facility. It was located where the Catholic Church now stands near the corner of Oak St. and South Auburn. The March 23 issue reported that the Brown Care Home had been completed.

A running ad in the Tea Bee magazine described how the Brown Convalescent Home provided an extended "cure" for those leaving the Sans. It allowed them to stay in the area and keep in touch with Dr. Peers and the support staff, while having the comforts of home life. The ad listed J.V. Brown as manager and Mrs. J.V. Brown as Matron.

Colfax resident John Rambottini, mentioned in the chapter on The Colony, wrote a retrospective in 1987 titled "Walk Through Colfax in the Early '20's". It contained his memories from walks he took as a young man through downtown Colfax, stopping to visit with the various business owners and friends along the way. His account included a stop at the Brown Convalescent Home. *"On the corner was the little convalescent home. Two-three cottages were over there, TB recovering people would stay. There was Lillian Brown. She was tall, slim, beautiful brunette, freckle-face.... Anyway, I'd stop and have a word or two with her, have a peck on the cheek. 'Well, see you later, Lillian.'"*

The April 27, 1927 Colfax Record reported the Browns had become manager and matron of the Colfax Hospital, replacing Eleanor Lewis, daughter of Mrs. M.J. Lewis, the original manager of the hospital. The Browns managed the hospital for several years.

—THE—
BROWN CONVALESCENT HOME

To those who are able to leave the hospital or san near Colfax, and who desire to continue the "cure" in this climate and environment and keep in touch with Dr. Peers, we offer the comforts of home life and the conveniences of a Sanatorium. We also give Alpine Lamp treatments.

Rates Reasonable

J. V. BROWN, Manager

MRS. J. V. BROWN, Matron

Recurring ad for Brown Convalescent Home that appeared in Tea Bee magazine. (CAHS Archives)

GREYSTONE LODGE/ SUNMOUNT PREVENTORIUM

The May 28, 1915 Colfax Record announced that the first patient had been admitted to a new Sanatorium called Greystone Lodge. This TB treatment facility was not under Dr. Peers' supervision – rather it was being completed by Dr. H. D. Miner and his brother Ed, about a mile from Colfax on the fruit farm of Ed Miner. The administration building was practically finished, including kitchen, dining room, reception area and three rooms for patients in one wing. A pavilion and other wings would be added as necessary. Water was piped from a nearby natural spring, and electricity and telephone were conveniences on the way.

The reporter went on to say the lodge was situated to take advantage of sunlight and breezes, and the view will “help make one forget his ills.” It overlooked the Rising Sun Mine, with views toward Chicago Park and the verdant foothills and orchards. “... *blended with the rare atmosphere of the mountains, the pines respond in musical whispers that is restful and restorative to mind and body, and Greystone Lodge is destined to change the nightmare of many a nerve-racked patient into pleasant dreams.*”

The Auburn Journal reported on Nov. 3, 1915, that the Greystone Lodge sanitarium (*sic*) at Colfax “*is becoming very well known as a place for the treatment of cases in which climate is of prime importance. The Colfax climate is unexcelled for those afflicted with pulmonary diseases.*”

But Greystone Lodge soon found a new calling, as reported in the Nov. 21, 1919 Sacramento Union. For the past two seasons the Sacramento County Tuberculosis Association sent over one hundred children to a three-week summer camp at Greystone Lodge. The concept was to give undernourished city children a respite in the fresh air of the foothills, and strengthen them with good food and outdoor activities to help prevent the spread of TB. Money for transportation, food and lodging was raised through the sale of Christmas Seals.

In fact, the very next year the Sacramento TB Association announced that they had purchased Greystone Lodge and were making it into a summer camp for city children. Money had been appropriated for the purchase of the lodge, 10 acres of land, and improvements including a new building and furnishings. A contract was already awarded for the building. The association planned to take four groups of children, 50 in each group, for a 20 day vacation to the camp that summer. (*Sacramento Union, May 15, 1920*)

Greystone Lodge would get a name change with the change of ownership. The Colfax Record reported on June 3, 1921 that 26 children, 13 boys and 13 girls, had arrived in Colfax on the evening local from Sacramento for a three-weeks vacation at Sun Mount, the summer camp of the Sacramento County TB Society, located at the old Greystone Lodge near Kathramon.

A Colfax Record report later that year stated that during the 1921 summer 275 undernourished and underweight Sacramento County children enjoyed a three-week vacation at Sun Mount Camp. A 16x20 foot swimming pool constructed that spring was greatly enjoyed by the children. The camp did not allow any child afflicted with TB or even a cough due to a cold to attend the camp. Screening was done prior to their visit.

The children were fed nourishing meals with plenty of milk and eggs. After lunch each afternoon was a two hour nap period. "*Hikes, shower baths, basket and raffa (sic) work, lessons in embroidering, story hours and base ball are among the amusements the children have enjoyed this summer*" in addition to swimming. While Sun Mount was not a regular TB treatment facility, Dr. Peers served as its medical director. (*Colfax Record, Sept. 2, 1921*)



PLAYGROUNDS SCENE—SUN MOUNT CAMP

SUN MOUNT CAMP

COLFAX

Maintained by funds Secured from City and County Government and proceeds from the Annual Christmas Seal Sale.

It is for the under-weight Sacramento City and County School Children between ages of 5 and 15 years.

No children with any infectious disease taken.

During June, July and August 1921—200 children have been cared for.

UNDER AUSPICES OF THE
SACRAMENTO TUBERCULOSIS ASSOCIATION
MASONIC HALL 6TH AND K STREETS, SACRAMENTO

A Colfax Record article on June 2, 1922 about Sun Mount preparing to open for the season began to use the term prevention in referring to the camp, and mentioned the growing waiting list of children wishing to be screened for eligibility so they could attend the camp.

The term Preventorium appeared in a May, 7, 1926 Colfax Record article on work underway at the camp. The old building had been razed and a new Preventorium building was under construction, with targeted completion that fall. The new building would allow the camp to become a year-round health camp for underweight Sacramento children. It would be run along the same lines as the Sun Mount summer camp.

The Oct. 15, 1926 Colfax Record announced that the new Sun Mount Preventorium building would be dedicated that Sunday. Fifteen girls would be brought to the Preventorium in November to build up their health and prevent them from becoming tubercular. Sun Mount Preventorium was now a year-around camp for underweight children conducted by the Sacramento Tuberculosis Association.

A photo of the new Sun Mount Preventorium building appeared in the Apr. 22, 1927 Colfax Record. That photo is shown on the next page.



But times soon became difficult for facilities such as Sun Mount. The Sacramento TB Association depended on donations and sales of Christmas Seals to fund its TB prevention activities, and to operate Sun Mount. As the country entered the depression, funding became hard to get, and the operation of Sun Mount Preventorium suffered along with the country. In 1935 the board of directors of the Sacramento TB Association appealed to the board of the Weimar Joint Sanatorium to take over the Sun Mount plant, subject to its indebtedness. The Weimar board rejected the offer from the Sacramento TB association, asserting that "*it is not expedient for the Sanatorium to take over the management of the Preventorium at this time.*" The Weimar board added that they could not place children afflicted with tuberculosis in the same institution as those not afflicted. (*Auburn Journal*, July 11, 1935)

Thus the fate of Sun Mount Preventorium was sealed, and it was only a matter of time before the announcement was made that a new sports lodge and restaurant called Shangri-La was to open in the former Sun Mount facility. The lodge was redecorated and furnished to provide a swimming pool, ski-waxing room, dance floor and rumpus room. In winter it would cater to skiers, and in summer would feature hiking, riding, swimming and other sports. (*Auburn Journal*, Mar. 14, 1940)

That was followed by the 1944 announcement that L.L. Larrabee recently purchased Sunmount Camp and would open an all-year resort called Sunmount Lodge, catering to people who desire a summer or winter home. (*Colfax Record*, May 19, 1944)

But we're not done yet. In 1947 two Oakland men leased the Colfax Hotel and purchased the Sunmount Lodge from L.L. Larrabee. Their plan was to add to the improvements already made by Larrabee at Sunmount and operate the two facilities jointly. (*Colfax Record*, Mar. 7, 1947) In 1948 the Colfax Hotel lease and Sunmount ownership transferred once more to Ralph and Burness Mitchell from Marysville. (*Colfax Record*, Mar. 26, 1948)



Sunmount Lodge in the 1940's when it was paired with the Colfax Hotel to accommodate visitors to the foothills in either a city or rural setting.. (CAHS)

As the years went by, Sunmount continued to exist under various names including the Sunmount Trailer Park and a rest home. Some of the buildings are still there on the property off Tokayana Way between Pinecroft Road and Milk Ranch Road.

An earlier image of Sunmount can be found on the next page.



Another view of the main Sunmount building. (CAHS Archives)

WEIMAR JOINT SANATORIUM

While communities such as Colfax found themselves with tuberculosis treatment facilities being established in their area, many California counties did not have the money or the means to establish their own TB sanatorium where county residents who didn't have the means to afford TB care could receive treatment. Yet the need was there, and state and county officials began looking for alternate ways to provide TB treatment for their low-income residents. In Northern California the idea of a joint sanatorium was proposed that would serve multiple counties, and the search was on for a suitable location. In 1918 Placer County Supervisor Chas. Geisendorfer and his brothers offered land they owned near Weimar. It of course didn't hurt that the site was near Dr. Peers in Colfax who had established his reputation for TB treatment, and could serve as medical advisor for the new facility. (*Colfax Record*, Apr. 12, 1918)

The Nov. 21, 1919 Colfax Record announced that the Weimar Joint Sanatorium had officially opened. Thus started a long and successful though sometimes tumultuous run for the government-run facility that provided subsidized TB care for 13+ Northern California counties, along with care for patients from other areas for a fee.

The Weimar Joint Sanatorium consisted of dorms and private cottages or tents. A layout and description of Weimar buildings can be found in Alyssa Scott's 2021 doctoral thesis (*copy at CAHS Archives*). Dorms for men and women were in separate parts of the campus. The Weimar buildings emphasized exposure to fresh air with window screens and no glass. Use of several small buildings instead of one large one increased sun exposure for the patients, and grounds separating the buildings were well landscaped to encourage time spent in the sun and fresh air. Warmth on chilly days was provided by ceramic hot-water bottles (*Yonash - 2015*).



Postcard Image of the Entry Gate at Weimar Joint Sanatorium. The caption on the postcard reads, "This well-staffed, 550-bed tubercular sanatorium, located on Highway 40 near Auburn, accommodates cases in all stages for fifteen Northern California counties." (CAHS)

As new medicines including penicillin proved effective in treating TB, Weimar's role was adjusted to general pulmonary care and it was renamed Weimar Chest Center in 1957. From 1960 until it closed in 1972 it was known as Weimar Medical Center. After changing ownership a couple of times the site became Hope Village in 1975, serving as a relocation center for Vietnamese refugees. Many Vietnamese women received training at Hope Village as nail salon technicians. In 1977 the Weimar campus was purchased by Seventh Day Adventists who opened Weimar Institute in 1978, currently Weimar University. (Scott - 2021)

It is not the intent in this document to provide a complete history of the Weimar Joint Sanatorium. This brief glimpse is included since Dr. Peers had an advisory role in its operation. For details on the evolving role the Weimar facility played in TB and other medical treatment, interested readers are referred to Robin Yonash's book "History of the Weimar Joint Sanatorium & Cemetery", copies available for sale at the Colfax Heritage Museum, or Alyssa Scott's Doctoral Thesis, available for review at the CAHS Archives.

OTHER SANATORIA

-THE PINES-

Reference searches reveal there were at least two other TB sanatoriums that operated in Colfax in 1910-1930 but were not part of Dr. Peers' Colfax School for the Tuberculous. The first of these was known as "The Pines". The Colfax Record reported on May 28, 1915 that Dr. E. Northcott has taken over the lease and options for "the Pines" property, consisting of 3 acres west of the Southern Pacific tracks and a half mile from the Colfax post office. Included on the parcel were an administration building and seven cottages, five two-room and two single cottages. This seems to imply that a treatment facility had operated on the property prior to 1915 but no records have been found to substantiate that claim. The property was wired for electric lighting and piped for water including plumbing for hot and cold water baths.

The property was further described as on an eminence between the SP tracks and the Auburn highway. This appears to contradict the earlier statement that it was located west of the tracks. The second description of its location is more likely accurate since it would have been easy to mistakenly say west instead of east of the tracks. The buildings were scattered among pine trees and manzanita, with views of orchards and gardens against a background of Sierra wilderness. This description puts the likely location of The Pines as the vicinity of present-day Sierra Market and Whitcomb Avenue.

This ad for The Pines and Dr. Northcott's treatment of diseases of the throat and lungs appeared in the Sacramento Union on June 18, 1915.

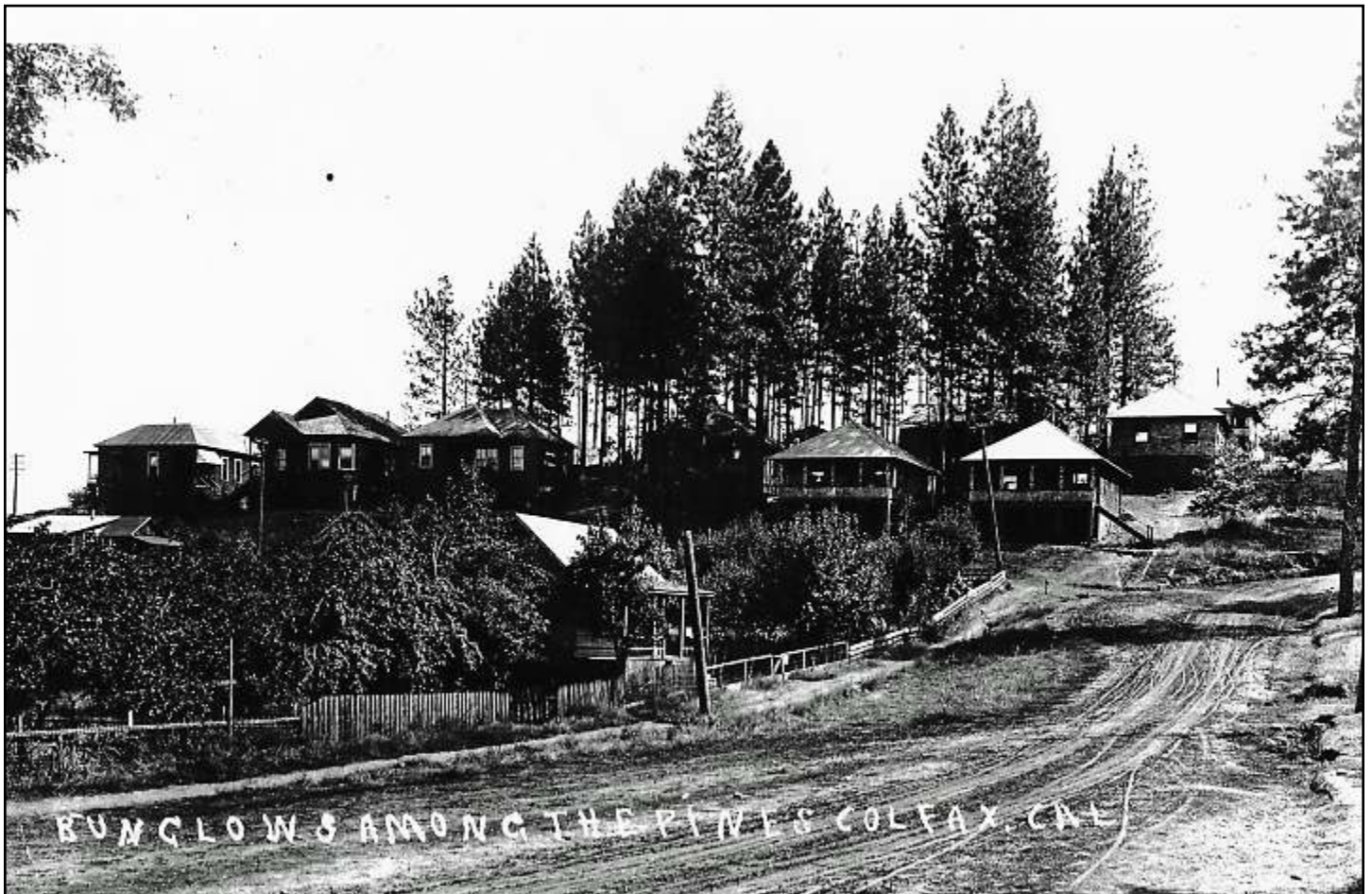


Dr. Northcott's operation of The Pines didn't last long, though. On Mar. 23, 1917 the Auburn Journal announced that Mrs. Minnie Wilson had purchased The Pines sanatorium property with plans to make improvements and convert it into a first-class tuberculosis resort, with Frank Gearhart of Colfax serving as General Manager.

The fate of The Pines after Mrs. Wilson's purchase is not clear, but two news items spoke of early trouble for the enterprise. On Jan. 18, 1918 the Grass Valley Union reported that 24-year-old Frank Gearhart of Colfax had died from a heart condition. This is likely the same Frank Gearhart who was Mrs. Wilson's general manager. More trouble was told in the Grass Valley Union on July 10, 1918 when a bereaved husband sued Minnie Wilson, owner of a sanatorium in Colfax, Western Union, and Undertaker P.W. Crider for non-notification of his wife's death at the institution.

The results of the lawsuit have not been discovered, but the 1920 census shows Mrs. Minnie Wilson, widow, occupation farmer living on a rented farm on the Lincoln Highway just outside Colfax. Voter registration records showed her as a matron one year, and later a farmer.

Further searches have failed to locate any additional records of The Pines, except for the photo below from the CAHS archives. One can infer but not be sure that the wording Bungalows in The Pines refers to The Pines Sanatorium. The scene does fit the description of being on an eminence among the pines, consistent with the description of the property Dr. Northcott had opened as The Pines in 1915.



OTHER SANATORIA

-WOLFSEN SANATORIUM-

The Auburn Journal of July 5, 1923 reported that Harvey Wolfesen had been given a permit to build a new sanatorium near Colfax. This had added significance because Placer County had just enacted an ordinance restricting the building of new TB sanatoria without going through a permitting process. The sentiment was that too many such facilities were being established in Placer County riding on the success of Dr. Peers and his group of TB treatment facilities. Harvey Wolfesen had already begun work on his San before the ordinance was passed, and there was no objection to his being granted a permit to accept patients. This was the first such permit to be issued for a new sanatorium after the county ordinance went into effect.

The Colfax Historical Society's March 2018 Cobblestones newsletter ran an article about two young Colfax women who rode a motorcycle to the Chicago World's Fair in 1934. The women were Mary McIntyre and Edith Wolfesen. In a later oral interview, Mary McIntyre mentioned that Edith Wolfesen's family ran a TB hospital on Highway 174 (*then the Colfax - Grass Valley Rd.*) Mary recalled it being located on the same property as the later Mitchell mansion.

In 1933 Lois Wheeler, daughter of Dr. Ira Wheeler leased the Wolfesen San, announcing it would be known as Wheeler's Medical and Surgical Home. Dr. Wheeler would continue to be the Medical Director, implying that he had been medical director for the Wolfesen San. (*Colfax Record, August 18 and September 3, 1933*)

In 1935 fire destroyed Dr. Wheeler's surgery on the Colfax-Grass Valley Rd. Eight patients were removed to safety during the fire. (*Grass Valley Union, July 28, 1935*) Dr. Wheeler did not rebuild but instead leased Kathramon from the Openshaws. (*Colfax Record, Aug. 9, 1935*)

In 1936 Auburn stonemason Lester Hammond built a rock home on the Wolfesen site for Garvin Mitchell (*Auburn Journal, Sep. 3, 1936*), the present-day Graestone just off Highway 174.



Postcard Photo of Wolfsen San (Courtesy of Placer County Museums)

Were there other Sanatoria in the Colfax area? Perhaps, but they didn't bubble up as major facilities in an extensive search of newspaper reports from 1910-1930. There are verbal reports though of cottages springing up on other properties in town to take advantage of the influx of patients seeking treatment from Dr. Peers. One specific site for TB-related cottages has been mentioned to the author, but authentication references have not been found for it. It is listed here for completeness of this report.

Oak Street Cottages

RANCHITO VISTA

While not a sanatorium per se, one other facility found in the CAHS archives is worth mentioning in this report because it appears to involve one of the San buildings that was part of the Colfax School for the Tuberculous. Let's explore the story of another facility with apparent ties to area Sans, and the confusion that had to be overcome to clarify the connection.

Several years ago a photo album was donated to the Colfax Area Historical Society, and the paperwork submitted with it identified it as linked to the Sun Mount preventorium on Tokayana Way. The album contains several photos of a distinctive two-story building and a flyer promoting the Ranchito Vista alcohol treatment facility just outside Colfax. The brochure listed George Molineux as point of contact, and written in marker pen on the album cover is Mary Molineux.

Conversations with Colfax residents verified that Mary Molineux had indeed been a resident of Colfax, and was very active in the Colfax Garden Club and the Methodist Church, but much of this information was about her life after the 1960's, with no mention of Ranchito Vista in any conversations about her.

Further research turned up a 1960 newspaper ad for an alcohol resort offering recovery under expert care, with instructions to call or write Ranchito Vista, Rt. 1, Colfax. (*Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 12, 1960) But in 1964 another ad appeared, offering for lease or sale a boarding house with 16 bedrooms plus a 5 room modern home on 7 landscaped acres. The contact was Geo. Molineux, Ranchita (*sic*) Vista, at the same Rt. 1 address in Colfax. (*Sacramento Bee*, Apr. 25, 1964).

So what was going on here and where was this Ranchito Vista? Placer County Recorder records show a lot of deed activity for George and Mary Molineux in the early 1960's including a default judgement against George. A 1962 notice of delinquent taxes showed George and Mary owing unpaid taxes of some \$700. (*Placer Herald*, Jun. 7, 1962)

So where was Ranchito Vista? While the information submitted with the donation of Mary Molineux's photo album referenced Sun Mount, the building in the photos looks very much like

the old Kathramon San. Compare the photos below, the upper one from Mary's album, the lower one of Kathramon from Dr. Peers' booklet about the Colfax School for the Tuberculous. Note in particular the tapered columns supporting the second story cover over the open-air porch.



*Ranchito Vista, circa 1960,
from Mary Molineux's photo
album. (CAHS)*

*Kathramon San
managed and
operated by the
Openshaws
(Peers, 1922)*



Armed with the apparent tie between Molineux's Ranchito Vista and Openshaw's Kathramon, fellow researcher Peter Strom located Placer County deed 788/148, in which Blanche Openshaw conveyed part of the Kathramon site to Mary and George Molineux on February 9, 1959.

Thus Kathramon had one more incarnation in the 1960's before its ultimate demise.

EPILOGUE

The inspiration for this document grew out of the work being performed by several volunteers who were cataloging and organizing the Colfax Area Historical Society Archives and photo collections. As bits and pieces about tuberculosis treatment in Colfax were uncovered, it became clear that there was a bigger story begging to be told of this remarkable time in Colfax history.

Further research revealed numerous anecdotes and information that together provide a more detailed glimpse of Dr. Robert Peers and the TB sanatoria he managed from early 1900 into the 1940's. Also apparent was the regional and world-wide respect earned by Dr. Peers, the doctors and staff who assisted him, and their local TB treatment facilities.

As with any such project, several individuals helped put this narrative and visuals together. Nancy Hagman has written several newspaper articles on aspects of the Colfax TB treatment facilities. Her contributions and review of the draft manuscripts were invaluable. Peter Strom assisted in identifying parcels where the sanatoria were located, and also provided comments on the drafts. Kelsey Monahan of the Placer County Archives assisted in locating additional photos and information on the treatment sanatoria. Joann Geist provided excellent review of the scope and wording in each section of the document. Finally, our thanks to Dewey Livingston and the Jack Mason Museum in Inverness, CA for donating Dr. Chesley Bush's photo album to the Colfax Area Historical Society. Several of Dr. Bush's photos appear in and add to this document.

We hope you have enjoyed this brief but detailed look back at this important time and series of events in Colfax history.

REFERENCES

Numerous newspapers and other documents were reviewed for information contained in this report. Where appropriate the reference document and date are noted in the corresponding narrative. Reference documents were found in the CAHS Archives and Placer County Archives, or by on-line searches using Newspapers.com, Ancestry.com and other search media.

Abbreviated Citations:

(Peers - 1922) – “The Colfax Hospitals for Tuberculous Patients,” A pamphlet Dr. Peers created around 1922 in which he describes his treatment philosophy and the treatment centers operating under his medical guidance. A copy of this document is in the CAHS Archives.

(Scott - 2021) – “Archaeologies of Tuberculosis Sanatoria in California,” by Alyssa Scott; PhD. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, Spring 2021. A copy is in the CAHS Archives.

(Yonash - 2015) - “History of the Weimar Joint Sanatorium & Cemetery,” by Robin Yonash, Colfax Area Historical Society, 2015. Her book is for sale at the Colfax Heritage Museum.

