

A. hwahnee.



979.481

Madera County

History

of the

Ahwahnee Sanatorium School.

The information in this
booklet is furnished by
Mrs. Lola A. Cease
who for many years was
superintendent of the Sanatorium
and
Mrs. George Crooks
from whose parents the Sanatorium
property was purchased
and
compiled by
Gertrude Kingston

1938

About 1852 or shortly after the Yosemite Valley was found, the Yosemite Indians were started on their way to a reservation near Fresno. When they arrived at the place where the Sanatorium is now located the Indians escaped and an attempt to recapture them and take them on was never made.

The Sanatorium is located on what used to be the main road to Yosemite. Mail and passenger horse-drawn stages made regular trips to the valley. The horses were changed every eight miles through the steeper part of the mountains. The building which was used as the administration building, kitchen and dining rooms until 1937 when it burned was the old hotel where passengers ate and sometimes stayed overnight on their way into the valley.

This hotel was owned by Mr. Sell who, after disposing of this property, engaged in cattle ranching until his death. A number of distinguished persons visited the hotel. Among them were

Albert, King of Belgium, who was attended by a military attaché, American attaché and a physician. Albert was Crown Prince at the time he visited.

President Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir, an American naturalist and author of "The Yosemite", were on a trip together. The president expressed a desire to see the Yosemite in quiet.

Benjamin Ide Wheeler visited while he was President of the University of California.

Susan B. Anthony, the distinguished leader of woman suffrage

The Maharaja and Maharanee of Baroda were attended by a party of twelve to fifteen persons.

The Maharanee replied, "We have no one," when the number of attendants was mentioned. When at home, she explained, they traveled with hundreds. The Maharanee was in native dress. The eye of a peacock was tatoed on her forehead.

Andrew Carnegie
John D. Rockefeller
Governor Pardee
Galen Clark
Nicholas Murray Butler
Rube Goldberg
H. F. Norcroff
George Fiske
Major Edward J. Bowes

Mrs. George Crooks of Ahwahnee, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sell, has the register containing the signatures of these and many other persons.

In 1918 the sanatorium property was purchased and in 1919 building operations were started. The old hotel was used for the kitchen and dining room for employees and one room was remodeled to be used as an office. Rooms were built over the office for the nurses and superintendent. A ward, into which the first patients were admitted, was built. Later, when the nurses home was built, these rooms served as sleeping quarters for the men employees. Under the supervision of Mrs. Lola A. Cease, who was the first superintendent and served in that capacity until the fall of 1936, the sanatorium grew from a two building plant to one having a hospital, three units, two wards, a nurses home, recreation hall, two doctors homes, children's building, school, laundry, many

barns and shops, and several cottages for employees. The number of doctors has increased from one to three and the number of nurses has increased from two to thirteen. There are about twenty-five men employed. These include orderlies, cooks, waiters, engineers, carpenter, farmer, milker, boiler room man, janitor, gardener, and many helpers. The sanatorium has a registered herd of milk cows which furnishes all of the milk and cream used for drinking and cooking. The patients number over one hundred at present.

In the fall of 1928 the first classroom instruction was held on the porch of the Children's Building except when it was raining or snowing. During unfavorable weather classes were held in the living room. School under these conditions was conducted with

Rec. 1

a number of difficulties. The children sat at long tables which had to be carried away when the school day was over. The blackboards also were portable. Miss Beatrice Marris was the teacher.

Mr. William Walton took the cure at the sanatorium and when he was apparently an arrested case he returned to his work as principal of the High School in Los Banos. His brother, a wealthy Turlock pioneer, died and left a bequest to be used for the education of handicapped children. Mr. William Walton had kept Ahwahnee children in his mind, so he and his sister, Mrs. Frances Wells of Turlock, decided to give \$4,500 of their brother's estate toward founding a school. About \$1,600 was added to this in order to build the school room now being used.

In honor of the donors memory and at the request of Mr. William Walton a granite tablet, donated by Mr. Fritz Krohn of Knowles, bears the inscription

J. D. Walton Memorial
Erected July 1930.

In 1930 plans and specifications were made by Mr. Will Bedesen, engineer of Merced, and contract for the school building was let to Neil and Wirtner, contractors of Turlock. With the completion of this school a much needed building was added to the sanatorium. It is a modern one room regulation structure with two lavatories and several other anterooms. September 17, 1930 representatives of the three counties - Merced, Madera, and Stanislaus, participated in dedicatory services with Supervisor Vaukhon Whitmore presiding.

There are desks for twenty-one children. These desks can be

adjusted, when necessary, for children of any size. The school is adjoining the Preventorium with a runway constructed from the childrens infirmary to the school building, making it possible for those who are not able to walk to continue their education as their beds can be rolled directly into the school room. There have been as many as four beds in the school room at one time.

The school day begins at 8:15 in the morning and ends at 4:30 in the afternoon with an intermission from 10:30 to 3:15. During this interval the children have their nourishment, play hour, dinner, and rest hour. The teacher goes to the hospital and wards to give instruction to adults between the hours of 10:40 and 11:40. Many of these are High School students who continue with one

or more subjects while they are taking the cure. Some are adults who are learning to read and write English.

In 1929 the school came under the supervision and support of the County School system. Formerly the school was supported by the Sanatorium. The present educational plan is based on a method of individual instruction in order to prevent the omission or repetition of work by children coming from different schools and entering at different times. The school has an average daily attendance of about fifteen although at one time there were twenty-six enrolled.



This shows the entrance to the school with the children who were attending May 1938.



The building at the left is the hospital. The next two are units and at the right is the ward. The children's building and school are to the left of the buildings shown and the administration building and dining rooms are to the right.

