THE DOCTOR IS IN:
EARLY MEDICINE IN
FRESNO COUNTY

SANITARIUMS TO HOSPITALS
When surgical cases were needed, the early physicians in Fresno County did what they could in their medical offices or in the homes of patients. It was in 1888 that Moses J. Church, an early Fresno pioneer known as “Fresno’s Father of Irrigation” for his development of irrigation canals and water systems, established the first private sanitarium in Fresno. Church opened the Fresno Sanitarium on M Street with the assistance of Dr. Merritt G. Kellogg, a prominent Seventh Day Adventist who was known for his hydrotherapy and nutrition treatment methods for smallpox. When an epidemic of smallpox broke out in 1870, Dr. Kellogg used this sanitarium to treat patients afflicted by the virus using water treatments and diet. Dr. Kellogg lost only one patient, an infant, out of 11 cases. Another doctor using drugs lost four out of five. Dr. Kellogg moved on to do missionary and medical work in the South Pacific and Australia before moving back to California to open another sanitarium in Healdsburg.
Fresno Community Hospital Fresno physicians J. D. Davidson, J. L. Maupin, W. T. Maupin, George Aiken, and Dwight H. Trowbridge, Sr. joined forces with boarding house proprietor Celia Burnett to form a private hospital at the corner of Fulton and Calaveras streets in 1897. The 30-room hospital was called the Burnett Sanitarium, the name that it retained until it was sold to a non-profit corporation in 1945 when the directors changed the name to the Fresno Community Hospital.
1897: Burnett Sanitarium is established.
1905: Three-story building at corner of Fresno and S streets opens.
1916: Five-story Burnett Annex is built.
1945: Burnett Sanitarium is sold to nonprofit corporation, named Fresno Community Hospital.
1959: Fresno Community Hospital opens 204-bed, five-story building.
1963: Fifth floor of Fresno Community Hospital is completed; adds 69 beds for total 299 beds.
1965: Dedication ceremonies for new Clovis Memorial Hospital.
1972: Fresno Community Hospital's 10-story tower is added.
1979: Fresno Community Hospital becomes Fresno Community Hospital and Medical Center; merges with Clovis Memorial Hospital, renamed Clovis Community Hospital.
1982: Fresno Community Hospital and Medical Center and Sierra Hospital Foundation incorporate; form Community Hospitals of Central California.
1988: Clovis Community Hospital opens with 120 beds.
Burnett Sanitarium Makes Remarkable Record for Year

Of 990 Patients, Only 21 Deaths Result — $20,000 Addition to Main Building Now Completed

A record unexcelled perhaps by any other hospital or sanitarium in the state, has been made by the Burnett Sanitarium of this city. During the period of one year there have been nine hundred and ninety patients at the Burnett for treatment, operation, etc. The thirty beds and rooms of the present building have been found inadequate, and therefore an addition of three hundred and ninety new rooms and beds have been added to the main building.

This is a record of which any sanitarium should be proud, and no doubt the services of the institution will be sought with great pride upon the completion of the new building.

The Sanitarium is an example of the latest methods of operating and caring for the sick. A twenty-thousand-dollar addition to the main building has been completed. A department for colored patients has been added, with the installation of a new light examination room, equipped with all the latest appliances. A complete telephone system has also been installed throughout the entire building, as well as the installation of a complete electric-light system. The Sanitarium is considered by many to be the finest in the state.

Under these conditions, the Burnett Sanitarium is truly one of the finest and most modern of any in the state of California.
In 1903 the institution had grown to the extent that the doctors felt justified in buying land at the corner of S and Fresno streets. A new three-story building was erected facing Fresno Street. In 1916 the institution spent $100,000 to erect an additional five-story structure on S Street, accommodating 120 patients, which became the main part of the hospital. Year after year, expansion occurred to better meet the needs of patients and physicians.
Major growth occurred in 1959 with the opening of a new 204-bed, five-story hospital at the corner of Fresno and R streets. The original five-story addition (1916) became the "Burnett Annex" at the east wing of the new building. In 1972 a new ten-story tower was built, increasing the capacity of Fresno Community Hospital to 464 beds. This new tower became known as the hospital's West wing. Also, in 1972, the hospital opened Fresno's third full-scale emergency room for around-the-clock coverage. By the early 1980s, Fresno Community Hospital also housed a critical care center, large hemodialysis unit, a fifty one-bed mental health unit, large laboratory facilities, and the Leon S. Peters Rehabilitation Center, which opened an outpatient component on Fresno and Bullard streets in 1989.
Fresno County Hospital

~1910
In 1927, Dr. Walter Trudeau had designed a healing process for tuberculosis patients, which involved TB sanitariums in mountainous regions where the air was clean and fresh, extended bed rest, sunbathing, and a gradual return to taking meals and walking. Many counties in the U.S. followed the Trudeau method and built special sanitariums in the mountains. In Fresno County, this was the Wish-I-Ah Sanitarium in the foothills of the Sierra. The sanitarium held less than 100 patients, including both adults and children.

Dr. Morris was the chief physician in charge of tuberculosis patients who came to the Fresno County Clinic for care. He made the decision as to which patients had the will to live under his rigid routine. Dr. Morris and his wife had a house on the grounds of Wish-I-Ah and he was involved in the progress of each patient. If one did not live up to the rules of care Dr. Morris set, it was goodbye to Wish-I-Ah Sanitarium and hello Fresno County Hospital. The WPA got involved in February 1936 by hiring a “graduate nurse from relief roll to assist Supt. and Medical Director of Wish-i-ah Sanitorium, to assemble data and keep records pertaining to tuberculin as a diagnostic measure.” The facility closed in 1955 and later reopened privately as a nursing and rest home.
Wish-I-Ah Tuberculosis Sanitarium
Fresno County Hospital: Doing Double Duty

Where Mountain Air Will Help County Fight Disease

Mountain air and unlimited sunshine will abet medical science in fighting disease at the new Fresno County Tuberculosis sanitarium north of Auberry. This is an airy pavilion for patients, one of six buildings included in the “Wish-Ah” sanitarium. County officials and civic organizations will join in dedication ceremonies of the sanitarium on the afternoon of June 1. —Photo by Lloyd Craig. The Republican columnist.
A NEED FOR JAPANESE SANITARIUMS

The Japanese immigrants, and native-born in California, faced a campaign of discrimination. Many Japanese immigrants had difficulty obtaining medical care because of high levels of discrimination against Asian immigrants. The American-born Nisei medical school graduates were often excluded from internships at hospitals. Fresno had two Japanese-American hospitals soon after the end of the Spanish Influenza epidemic. The first was called the Okonogi Sanitarium after its physician, Dr. B. Okonogi, and was reportedly the first Japanese hospital in the State of California. Dr. Hashiba started a second sanitarium in 1922.

Dr. Hashiba in Fresno ran his first facility with eight beds in his converted residence from 1922-25, then rented an 18-bed capacity building (in his son’s name to circumvent the alien land law then in effect) from 1925-37. In 1937 he closed down his facility for financial reasons, although he continued to practice until his death in 1976.
A NEED FOR JAPANESE SANITARIUMS

Dr. Bunkuro Okonogi, a native of Japan, came to Fresno in the 1890s to serve the Japanese community. Dr. Okonogi moved his facility to different sites in Fresno’s Japantown. Starting with a small room in the basement, he eventually ran a 20-bed hospital. He started his first hospital in 1901 in a frame building at 736 E. Street. Twenty-five years later he built a thirty-eight room, full service brick hospital at 708 E. Street on the corner of Mono Street that was known as the Okonogi Sanitarium and operated until the onset of World War II. Once WWII began, Dr. Okonogi was sent to Pinedale Assembly Center, a detention center for the Japanese population, with his daughter Ena and son Dr. Hugo Okonogi where he served as a doctor. He was then sent to an internment camp with his daughter in Poston, Arizona where he was the camp physician. Once the war ended, he returned to Fresno and began practicing medicine again. It was then operated as a convalescent home for a short time. Finally, the Danish creamery bought the property and converted the site into a parking lot.
On August 5, 1929, at the request of the local bishop, the Rt. Rev. John B. McGinley, of the Catholic Diocese of Monterey-Fresno, nine Sisters of the Holy Cross established the original, 75-bed Saint Agnes Hospital in downtown Fresno at Roeding and Floradora avenues as a Catholic hospital.
THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS BEGAN WORK IN FRESNO IN 1894, WITH THE OPENING OF A BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS. THE ORDER THEN CONDUCTED HOSPITALS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES. THE SUPERIOR OF THE FRESNO HOSPITAL, SISTER MARY VIRGINIA, CAME DIRECTLY FROM THE HOLY CROSS HOSPITAL IN SALT LAKE CITY, WHERE SHE HAD SERVED AS SUPERIOR FOR SIX YEARS. THE STAFF OF SISTERS WAS TO BE ASSISTED BY A CORPS OF GRADUATE NURSES.
St. Agnes was open for practice to “all physicians and surgeons who were full graduates of medicine, in good standing, legally licensed to practice and worthy in character and in matters of professional ethics.”