2013 100th Anniversary Review

On August 3, 2013 a celebration was held at the American Legion in Cresson, Pa. commemorating the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Cresson TB sanatorium in 1913. The days events featured a tour of Grace Chapel and Children's House at the old san grounds, a dinner at the American Legion with guest speakers and displays of san memorabilia.

Newspaper Articles

Two articles were published in the Cresson Mainliner newspaper giving a complete description of the days events at the Grace Chapel tour and the evening Dinner Program.

47. Cresson Sanatorium commemorated during 100th anniversary 08 Aug 2013 (Cresson Mainliner)

48. Grace Chapel a cornerstone of county history Aug 2013 (Cresson Mainliner)

Dinner Program Folder

Front Cover
The Pennsylvania State Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Cresson

The Pennsylvania State Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Cresson, commonly known as the “Cresson San,” represents Pennsylvania’s unprecedented response to the medical, social, and moral adversities related to the epidemic status of tuberculosis—the leading cause of death in the United States during the early 1900s. The Pennsylvania Department of Health, the largest state system in the United States for the care of tuberculosis patients, was developed between 1907 and 1919 under the extraordinary leadership of Dr. Samuel Darrow, its first commissioner. One of three state sanatoria, the Cresson San was racially integrated, incorporated the concepts of prevention from its start, established the first sanatorium elementary school, and was first of the three to organize a school for nurses, specific to the care of tuberculosis patients.

Built atop the Allegheny Mountains on nearly 500 acres of land donated to the Commonwealth by famed philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, the Cresson San abounded with therapeutic fresh air and sunshine. Approximately 40,000 adults and children were treated during its fifty-one-year operation. Recognition of the Cresson San is testimony to the leadership and influential role the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania played in the national and world-wide anti-tuberculosis campaign, as seen at the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition and in the League of Nations Health Department’s visit of 1922. It pays tribute to patients, families, staff, health care providers, community, government, educators, scientists, craftsmen, and researchers who were part of the humanitarian effort providing hope while easing the suffering and hardship of tuberculosis. Its closing is a celebration of perseverance and life.

 Provisional approval for a roadside marker for the Cresson San has been received from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Final determination is expected in September 2013.

Cresson San Remembered Marker Committee—Dave Huber, Dot DeAngelo, Etta Albright

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Program of Events

~ Greetings ~
~ Opening Remarks ~
~ Words of Thanks ~
~ Dinner ~
~ Introduction of Speakers ~
Dr. Ann Office, Department of Infections Diseases & Microbiology, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health
Dave Huber, President Cambria County Historical Society
Assisted by Justin Iger and Theresa McConnell
~ Acknowledgements ~
~ Closing Remarks ~
~ Fellowship and Departure ~

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Special Recognition

Special recognition for outstanding contribution toward preservation of the history of the Cresson San is extended to:

Chuck Felt
for creating the website
www.feltodesignanddata.com/cressonsanatoriumremembered

David Solomon
for creating the 2012 Emmy-winning documentary Cresson Remembering Life at The San

Fred Connacher and daughter Theresa McConnell
for creating the model of the Cresson San exhibited at Mount Aloysius College

Fred Connacher and son Michael Connacher
for creating the Cross Chapel model

Commander Scott Eberhart, Cresson American Legion
for providing secure housing and a means for displaying Cresson San memorabilia

Mount Aloysius College, for providing a permanent display space for the model of the Cresson San.
2013 Memorabilia Photos

The memorabilia consists of photos, artifacts, booklets and documents which were arranged on the display tables.
10. The above card was made available to those who were interested in learning more about Cresson San.
Building The Grace Chapel Model

Below are a description and photos of the building of the Grace Chapel Model, designed and constructed by Fred Connacher and his son Michael Connacher, pictured below.

![Fred Connacher and the Grace Chapel Model](image1)

Click the following link to read an interview with Fred Connacher about the building of the model.

Fred Connacher Interview

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Building the Grace Chapel Model

Late in December, 2012, in an email correspondence with Chuck Felton, my daughter Theresa mentioned a Christmas gift she had given me to keep me busy through the winter months. She also mentioned that I had completed the project in one afternoon. Chuck replied with a suggestion that I might need something a little more challenging such as building a model of Grace Chapel, which is still standing pretty much as it was originally built in 1916, at the site of the old PA State Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Cresson. With the 100th Anniversary of the opening of that facility being celebrated in August, I thought it would be a nice addition to the displays for that event.

It seemed like an interesting project but since the ground on which the sanatorium once operated was at this time a state prison facility, I wondered how I was going to get the information I would need to build an accurate replica since the chapel was enclosed behind a razor wire fence.

All that I had available were a few black and white photos taken over the years. From my previous work designing a model of the sanatorium complex, I knew of no architectural drawings available, which of course would have made the job a lot easier. The only thing I had going for me was the fact that my son-in-law, Mark McConnell, (Theresa’s husband) was a Physician Assistant at the prison. When Mark learned that...
I was considering building a model of the chapel, he talked to Superintendent of the prison, Ken Cameron, about getting permission for me to visit the chapel to take measurements and photos.

I was granted permission and one cold, windy day early in 2013, Mark and I were met at the gatehouse to the prison facility by Becky Reifer, assistant to Superintendent Cameron. Becky accompanied us to the chapel where Mark took many photos of the exterior while Becky showed me the interior and helped with the measurements. This visit was very necessary in order to proceed with the scale drawing and detail work needed before starting to build the actual model. I am very appreciative of the kindness and help of Ken and Becky and to son-in-law Mark for arranging the visit “inside the fence.”

After acquiring this needed information, I decided to build the model to a scale of ¼² to-the-foot. This would result in a model 1:48 of the full-size structure. I was now ready to go to the drawing board and begin a full-sized drawing to scale of the plan, elevation and end-views of the building along with all the other detail drawings that were necessary to start construction.

The entire model is made of bass wood, plywood, paper and clear plastic. While I began building the framework of the chapel, my son, Mike, gave me a hand by using the paint application on his computer to create the shingles I would need and printed off sheets of stone for the building façade, all of this to the correct scale. Using photos of the windows and doors taken by Mark during my visit to the chapel, Mike enlarged and shrank these images to scale and made printed sheets of the correct scale windows and doors for the model. It took a lot of 8½² by 11² paper and a lot of ink to make the prints I needed and I really appreciated Mike’s abilities with the computer and time spent in making these necessary prints. Later in the model building process, I cut and placed all the windows and doors where they belonged as well as cutting and fitting the shingles on the chapel roof, bell tower and chaplains’ office addition. The stonework was added in the same manner, cutting and fitting as needed.

By using the detailed layout I had finished earlier, I transferred the windows, other openings and also the outside dimensions of the sides, ends, towers, etc., so I could begin the scroll cutting of these parts.

A base made from ½² x 18¾² x 28¾² plywood was built. Mitered shelf molding was applied to its edges for trim and also to hold the Plexi-glass cover I planned to use to protect the finished model. An inner frame was made to stiffen the model and support the 3/32² roof sheets. The cut and sanded scroll-cut pieces were secured with glue at their proper location on the base.

The bell tower with its many small parts and details required a lot of tedious work for a 90 year old. The steeple was made with a light wooden frame and cardboard. At this stage of the construction, I began cutting and applying the printed stone sheets to the exterior which was time consuming. This done, I began placing the windows Mike had made on the computer. These were then covered with clear plastic to give a glossy, glass-like appearance.

The wooden roof sheets were then added to the framework and covered with the printed sheets of shingles Mike had made using the paint application on his computer. As mentioned, the shingles had to be cut and fitted to the various roof components such as the bell tower, and later the chaplains’ office addition. After the roof on the main part of the chapel was finished, all of the concrete details, pilasters, tower trim, roof trim, etc., were hand-made and applied.

Using my lathe, I fashioned a bell from a piece of wood, sanded and painted it then placed it in the bell tower, complete with rope pulley. A “corner stone” was also made and placed in its proper location.
The structure at the rear of the chapel was made in its entirety after the main structure of the chapel was completed, just as the original addition was later constructed to make office space for the sanatorium’s chaplains in 1959-60.

The sidewalks, entrance slabs, stairs, railings, entrance lights, etc., were made of cardboard, wood and wire, then painted and placed to add those details to the structure. Next, using a mixture of sand and glue, I added the grass detail to the model base and painted it. The shrubs were made from pieces of sponge which were painted and applied.

To complete the model, a dedication plaque needed to be added. Once again, as I had done for the sanatorium model built in 2011, I turned to Chuck Felton. Chuck drafted the inscription which was then engraved by Servinsky Jewelers of Cresson. This was the last detail added to the model after about 400 hours of work. This old man is a slow worker.

Many photos were taken of the model during construction which Chuck offered to display on his website. Thanks, Chuck, and thanks to all who helped me in my efforts to build this model of Grace Chapel.

Fred R. Connacher

2013

Below are photos of the building process of the Grace Chapel Model, designed and constructed by Fred Connacher and his son Michael Connacher. The first 5 are actual photos of Grace Chapel, still located on the old San grounds, which were used as a guide in designing the model details.
Fred taking measurements inside
Grace Chapel
This model of Grace Chapel, located at Cresson TB State Sanatorium and opened in 1917, is dedicated to the following people:

- The many people who donated funds to make the building of Grace Chapel possible, with special thanks to Mrs. Mary Copley Thaw for her generous contribution.

- The patients, their family members and sanatorium staff who attended interdenominational service at the chapel and found comfort and renewed strength to battle the deadly disease of tuberculosis.

Designed and constructed by Fred and Michael Connacher
Grace Chapel Tour Photos

A group photo of all who took the tour standing by the communion rail in Grace Chapel. (Photo by Justin Eger)

Meeting at the Legion to caravan cars to the old san grounds.
Driving up the main entrance.
Gathering at the prison entrance.
Children's House
Photos at the American Legion

1. A slideshow of Cresson San photos was show prior to the start of the evenings program.

2. Seating arrangement.

3. Seating arrangement.

4. Dave Huber, Etta Albright and Dot DeAngelo started the program.
5. Dave Huber, Justin Eger and Theresa McConnell gave a historical and personal perspective of the san through newspaper articles and letters written by patients describing their experiences.

6. Dave Huber on the left with Fred Connacher on the right talking about how he and his son Michael designed and built the scale model of Grace Chapel which was prominently on display during the evening.

7. Chuck Felton, Harvey Docchio and Thomas Domin.

8. Dr. Denise Damico of Saint Francis University, Harvey and Pat Docchio.
9. David Solomon, Chuck Felton (holding the Emmy David received for the san video) and Peggy Felton. David gratefully thanked all who contributed to the Emmy Award winning program.

10. Pat Docchio and David Solomon.

11. David Solomon and Guest Speaker Dr. Anil Ojha from the University of Pittsburgh.

12. Side view of Fred Connacher's Grace Chapel model.
13. Front view of Fred Connacher's Grace Chapel model.

14. The model plaque inscription.
15. David Solomon presenting a plaque to Chuck Felton given by the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for his contribution to the WQED Emmy Award winning program "Cresson: Remembering Life at the San".