



Rifle Heritage Center

RIFLE HERITAGE CENTER IS OPENING ON MAY 19

**HOURS
TUES-SAT
10AM-4PM**

**337 EAST AV
RIFLE**

625-4268

WWW.RIFLEHERITAGECENTER.COM OR FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

RHC Board

- Kathy Runia,president
- Kevin Runia,vice-president
- Betty Waldron,secretary
- Alan Lambert
- Shirley Lawson
- Lois Scriptor
- Myrna Hainer
- Casey Nispel
- Jan Day, alternate

RIFLE SANITARIUM

It been a year since our world changed due to the coronavirus, aka Covid or Covid 19 or coronavirus or SARS-CoV 2, or severe respiratory syndrome coronavirus. What every name you want it use, we all have had to dramatically change our lives due to droplet borne contagious disease. The old saying "history repeats itself "is true once again.

During the 1800s the White Plague or the White Death or consumption or TB or Tuberculosis was the airborne respiratory disease that was spreading worldwide. It was the leading cause of death in the United states and caused millions of deaths worldwide. That disease was spread by cough-

ing, spitting, speaking, or sneezing. Sound familiar? The symptoms of active TB are a chronic cough with blood in the mucus, fever, night sweats, and weight loss. Again, do fever & chronic cough sound familiar? Just like the current coronavirus we are dealing with, there were no



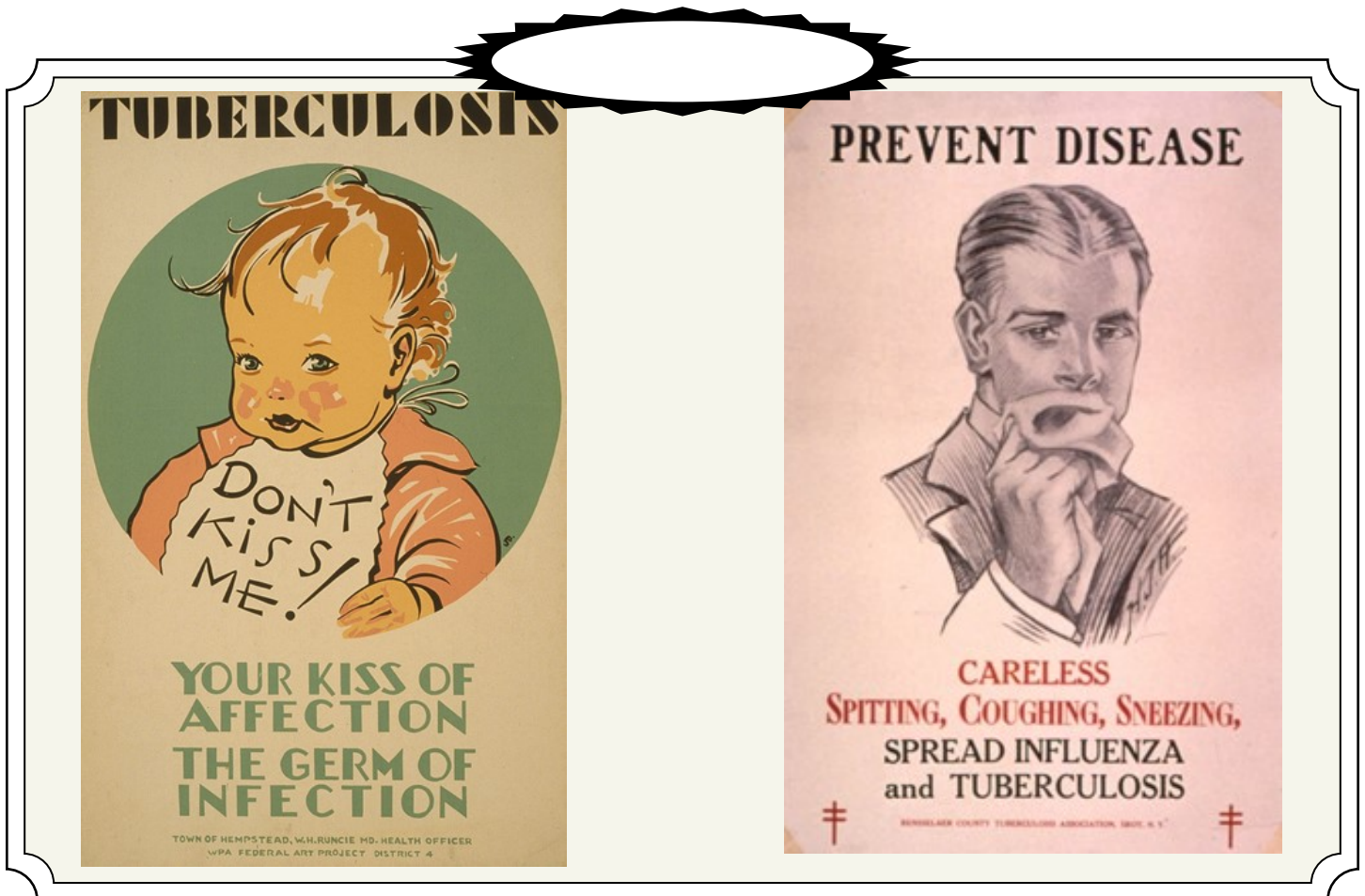
antibiotics, no vaccine, no definitive treatment, and therefore no cure. The only

way to prevent the spread of the epidemic was social separation, masks, and quarantine. No kissing, spitting, or talking to people up close. Infected persons were cared for at home or in a hospital, often one that was specific for patients with consumption. They either survived or they died. If they survived, they often had latent tuberculosis. Once in this state of the disease, the only recommendation to the "lungers" was to move to a high, dry climate.

As you can guess, one state with plenty of high dry climate is Colorado. Thousandof the afflicted came to Colorado and this put the state on the map. It is estimated that during the

the 1880's and 1890's one out of every three persons in Colorado had tuberculosis. Sanitariums or sanitoriums were established in many towns, including Rifle. These facilities were established to care for patients that had been infected but had what was called latent tuberculosis. In the latent state of the disease the person is ill, but no longer spreads the bacterium

In 1898 Dr. Dymenberg moved to Rifle Colorado. He had been born and had his early education in Austria. He immigrated to the United States and studied medicine at the University of St. Paul in St. Paul, Minnesota. He did his graduate work in medicine at the Chicago Poly Clinic Hospital in Chicago, Illinois. After his education was complete, he established his practice in Rifle where he became a highly active member of the community. He was president of the Rifle Board of Education and soon saw a need for a hospital in Rifle. After a fire in 1902 destroyed much of the downtown, many lots were vacant along third street. In 1907, he purchased lots and proceeded to build a two story 5000 sq. ft. hospital. Before the building was



completed, he sold the building to Dr. J.T. Beall.

Dr. Beall completed the building, and the resulting facility contained a ten-bed hospital, large operating room, two baths, a sleeping porch, a hot water plant, and an adjoining garage. Dr. Beale named the facility the Rifle Sanitarium. The hospital and sanitarium treated hundreds of patients until, in 1917, Dr. Beall sold the building to Mr. A.D. Raynard who converted the building to the Midland Hotel.

The tuberculosis epidemic was far from over for until the 1940's and the discovery of antibiotics, the disease remained untreatable. Even today it is estimated that one person in every one hundred thousand persons in the United States has the disease. There is a tuberculosis vaccine however, the vaccine is not generally recommended for use in the United States because of the low risk of infection with tuberculosis and the variable effectiveness of the vaccine against adult pulmonary TB. The vaccine is used in many countries with a high prevalence of TB to prevent childhood tuberculous meningitis as this disease is still a killer.

I hope you enjoyed this brief historical episode. There is much more history of the Rifle area that can be found in the book, Rifle Shots. The book is available at the Rifle Heritage Center Museum (along with many other books) or it can be ordered on the museum's website.

The current coronavirus pandemic has many similarities to pandemics that have occurred in the past. Since it is a virus and not a bacterium, it is not treatable with antibiotics so it remains to be seen how it will be contained. Social distancing, masks, hand hygiene, and quarantine when appropriate which are the mainstays of prevention and supportive medical treatment if the disease is contracted will be with us a while longer.

Scavenger Hunt Fun

Take a walk through the downtown area and find the building that was built as the sanatorium.
Take a picture and bring it to the museum opening day for a free piece of chocolate!