

CITY/REGION

1890s TB hut donated to museum

Bob Jackson/The Gazette

By Tanya Bell
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Jim and Shirley Day had a piece of history on their property for decades. But now they've given up that history for something more functional — a garage.

The Days had one of the original tuberculosis huts from Mont Calm, a tuberculosis sanatorium that existed in Manitou Springs in the 1890s.

"It's the last one in Manitou Springs, the only one left intact," Shirley Day said. She said other known huts in the area have since been connected to other structures and converted into small houses.

The Days used the hut as a storage shed for supplies while

they were restoring their home, built in 1885, to its original condition. When the couple got the building permit for the garage, they decided to donate the old TB hut to the Miramont Castle, across the street from their home.

"Since that's where it came from, we felt that it should go back to them," said Shirley Day, who's lived in the house with her family for 15 years.

So the hut was dragged intact to the castle two weeks ago. Day said she worried about how sturdy the old hut would be in the rough move. "We didn't really know what it was going to be like. (We wondered), is it really going to hold up?" she said.

Tuberculosis huts were used

in the late 1800s and early 1900s to house patients with the disease. The huts were designed so that air could flow freely through them. It was believed at the time that the dry, fresh mountain air would help cure the infectious disease. The huts also helped contain the spread of the disease by keeping infected people away from others.

A few years before construction of the Miramont Castle in 1895, the area served as a sanatorium and housed about a dozen TB huts up until 1923, when the huts were cleared away or hauled to neighbors' yards.

The management of Miramont Castle, which is a tourist attraction, hopes to completely refurbish

the two-man hut to its original state and use it as an exhibit, said executive director Bob Yager.

"We're trying to restore everything possible," Yager said.

He said they are looking for iron beds and sturdy cots that would bring back the hut's historical feel. Right now it sits in the castle's parking lot until a cemented area can be constructed. However, the hut can still be toured.

"Visitors can see it in the state it's in now," Yager said. He said it's difficult to say when the restoration of the hut will be complete.

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Shirley Day, left, watches Friday as the last remaining tuberculosis hut in Manitou Springs is moved from her Manitou Springs property to Miramont Castle across the street. The hut will be restored at the castle and put on public display.