

**Biography of
Francis Marion Pottenger, Jr.**

FUTURA

Francis Marion Pottenger, Sr., a native of Ohio, moved to Monrovia, California in 1895 with his wife who was suffering from tuberculosis. He entered into the practice of medicine, but when his wife's health failed to improve, he took her back to Ohio where she died in November of 1898. Returning to Monrovia, he and his two brothers, Milton and Joseph, opened the Pottenger Sanatorium and Clinic for Diseases of the Chest with emphasis on the treatment of tuberculosis in 1903. Convinced that good nutrition formed the basis for the successful treatment of disease, Francis senior placed a priority on the quality of food he served at the Sanatorium. Most of the food was grown on the premises, and to insure the best quality milk and milk products, he worked with the United States Department of Agriculture to form the first government accredited (free of tuberculosis) Holstein herd in California. The Sanatorium soon became recognized internationally for its successful treatment of tuberculosis and maintained an impeccable reputation until it closed in 1956. Francis wrote well over 200 books and articles on the treatment of chest diseases, many of which were used in medical schools throughout the country.

Francis senior married his second wife, Adelaide Gertrude Babbit (Kitty), on August 29, 1900. Kitty was a native of Keysville, New York, and at the time of their courtship was the vice principal and the teacher of Latin and Greek in the Monrovia High School. The Babbit family was known for its inventors. One Babbit ancestor invented Babbit metal, an alloy used in the production of bearings. The metal was developed for the New Haven Railroad in order to circumvent the British monopoly on replacement parts for their locomotives. Another Babbit invention was Babbo, a popular household cleaning agent and the predecessor of today's Ajax.

Three children were born of the union between Francis and Kitty: Francis Marion, Jr., on May 29, 1901; Robert Thomas in 1904; and Adelaide Marie in 1907. The family home, called The Oaks, was built by W. N. Monroe, the founder of Monrovia. The Oaks was also a working farm and provided both farming experience for the children and fresh food for the family table.

Francis Marion Pottenger, Jr., began his schooling at the Wild Rose Elementary School in Monrovia. Here he made many permanent friends. One was Thomas Myron Hotchkiss who wrote a biography of Francis in which he describes Francis's early inventive talent. "When we were boys, 'Meccano' sets were all the rage and Francis had a rather elaborate set. With it he made a working model of a rock crusher such as were found in the Azusa-Duarte area where the gravel resources of the San Gabriel River were being exploited by rock companies. He set his model up in the foyer of the old Wild Rose School where it was enviously eyed by many of his companions. Later, with the same set he constructed a working model of a bascule bridge complete with motor drive. Both models displayed considerable ingenuity in design and construction."

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PALATINO

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TIMES

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