

POST SCRIPTS

CHAS F. DAVIS

"BUGHOUSE ON THE HILL"

At last Sunday's home-coming party of "alumni" of the Pottenger sanatorium, held in the sanatorium gardens below the main buildings, W. J. Bailey, founder of the Day & Night Manufacturing company, told some interesting stories of Dr. Pottenger and the institution he had started in 1903. Mr. Bailey came to the sanatorium shortly after it was opened, and stayed a year and a half. He recalled that in those early days opinion as to the value of the sanatorium was divided among the townsfolk and one weekly newspaper editor went so far as to call the sanatorium "the bughouse on the hill." However the value of Dr. Pottenger's institute soon became apparent to the great majority of Monrovia and the name of Dr. Pottenger spread far and wide.

The sanatorium founder came to Monrovia in 1895 because of the illness from tuberculosis of a member of his family. He became a general practitioner at a time when young Monrovia, barely nine years old, was trying to struggle through the grim decade that followed the bursting of the great realty boom of the late eighties. In addition to lack of money and business, Monrovia faced an exceedingly dry period when the mountain springs and streams, the little city's only water supply, almost disappeared. "I came at a time when baths were almost taboo," says Dr. Pottenger in recalling those early times, "and if a growing boy wished to wash his hands real clean there was hardly enough water left for the rest of the family and for mother to do the cooking."

Monrovia at that time had a population of about 600. There were no paved streets, which were dusty and weed-covered except for wagon trails. Young Dr. Pottenger was drafted and served on the city council. He recalls there was but one electric street light. It shone bravely in front of the city hall.

Dr. Pottenger soon recognized the dry, bracing air of the little city in the foothills as excellent for sufferers from tuberculosis, and he became more and more interested in sufferers from that disease. Soon his practice dealt predominantly with tuberculosis. He began to put his patients out on screened porches and made rest a large part of his treatment. But patients, herded in little hotels and boarding houses, were not ideally located. The young specialist dreamed of a sanatorium where he would have his patients under his eye all the time. This dream materialized in 1903 when the Pottenger sanatorium, with a bed capacity of 13, was opened. Soon Dr. Pottenger found he was running a hotel, which he knew nothing about, as well as a sanatorium. Headache followed headache and to complicate life a little more a group of his bright young men, patients supposedly under his orders, organized themselves into the "Nonsense Club" and sometimes thoroughly upset the institute routine. A penalty for infraction of the "Nonsense Club" rules was having a member's head shaved; soon most of the membership looked like plucked goslings. "However I learned about this time," says Dr. Pottenger, "that we don't have to face quite all our troubles at once, and a good many difficulties will right themselves without any effort on your part if you are not too impatient."

Certain it was that Dr. Pottenger believed in Monrovia and in his sanatorium. Ton after ton of literature was sent out, until every nearby physician in the country knew where Monrovia was. It has been said that the Pottenger sanatorium did more than any other single agency to advertise the city.

Today is Dr. Pottenger's seventy-seventh birthday, and he is still most active in the direction of his sanatorium, fame of which has, in the 40 and more years since it was established, spread over the world. Many thousand loyal graduates of his school of health are alive today and sing his praises. Physicians and educators from many lands have loaded him with honors. We, his fellow citizens like to think of him as a friend, a strong, cheerful personality who in pioneer days was not only interested in the health of his patients but in town problems: who found time to sit on the city council to be a board member of

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