



**OBITUARY**  
**Claude E. Botkin**  
**1901-1982**

Claude Earl Botkin, an Honorary Life Member of The Potato Association of America (Mexico City, August 2, 1965) died April 27, 1982 in a Bakersfield, California convalescent hospital. He was buried in the Arvin District Cemetery on April 30, 1982.

Mr. Botkin was born on June 15, 1901, in Ellington, Missouri, a son, and one of seven children, of William Henry and Cynthia Elizabeth Carter Botkin. William Botkin was a native of Louisville, Kentucky, while his wife hailed from Carter County, Missouri. Both Carter County, Kentucky and

Carter County, Missouri were named for Claude's grandfather, Frank Carter.

In 1909, William and Cynthia moved to Arizona where Claude and the other children attended grade and high school in Tempe. In 1918, Claude moved to Superior, Arizona, working as a mechanic with an older brother. Later he operated a Ford Agency until 1923 when he moved to Los Angeles.

While in Los Angeles, he took advantage of his opportunity and attended extension classes at the University of Southern California. He was interested in mathematics, engineering, and economics. He secured work with an oil company and continued in that employment until the company went into receivership in 1932. He then took a position with an engineering firm and moved to Kern County, California.

He started farming in 1932 on the side, growing potatoes and cotton on leased land in the Poso Creek area. After four years with the Climax Engineering, Claude left the company, moved to Arvin, and started farming on a full time basis, again on leased land.

Mr. Botkin was always aware of the need to improve farming methods and he soon started to study and experiment on his own farm often in close association with professionals engaged in potato research, especially breeding of new varieties.

His keen interest in growing potatoes soon led to his becoming a member of The Potato Association of America and he was active for many years in the affairs of the group. He was a member of the Kern County Potato Association from its inception in 1944. He was elected the first president of this group having served as temporary president during the organizational period.

Mr. Botkin planted the first Kennebec seed crop in Tehachapi in 1950, and from then on supplied seed of this variety to seed growers and chip processors. He ran, over the years, many seed variety trials on land he owned in Arvin.

In the early 1950's he developed and built machinery to completely mechanize and handle, in bulk, his entire potato operation. Through the use of harvesters, pallet boxes, fork lifts, and conveyors, he enjoyed a completely mechanized operation.

As early as 1954, he built for chipping potatoes a 160-car potato storage with mechanically controlled temperature and humidity. He was always interested in developing information on proper handling and management of potato storages.

Mr. Botkin was associated with many organizations in whose work he was interested. These included the Kern County Potato Pro-Rate Committee, The Society of Automotive Engineers, The Commonwealth Club of California, The Save-the-Redwoods League, The Potato Chip Institute International, and the Advisory Committee of the USDA Research and Marketing Act for Potatoes. He was a 32nd degree Mason and a life member of

the Scottish Rite in the Los Angeles Consistory. He was a charter member of Arvin Lodge number 738.

In Superior, Arizona, on June 23, 1923, Mr. Botkin married the former Sabrey Louise Collins, at the time an Arizona schoolteacher, but a native of Briscoe County, Texas. She survives him in a Bakersfield convalescent hospital.

Mr. Botkin's passing leaves his many friends saddened, but they will always remember his enthusiasm for life and for whatever might advance the interests of all those who are associated with the potato industry.