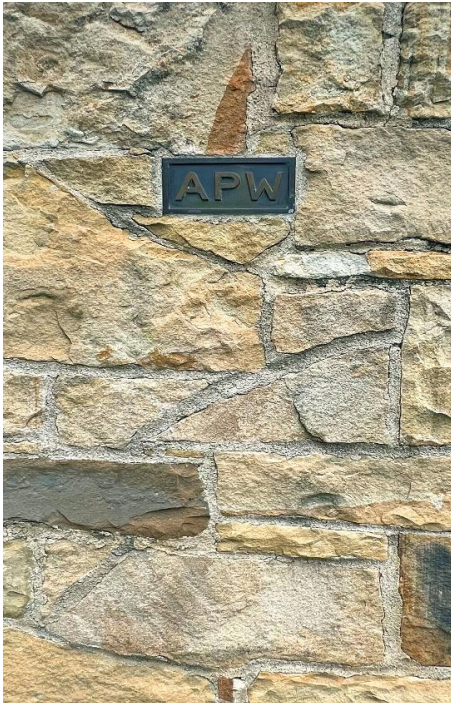


The Pillars of Krotona

Robert Ellwood



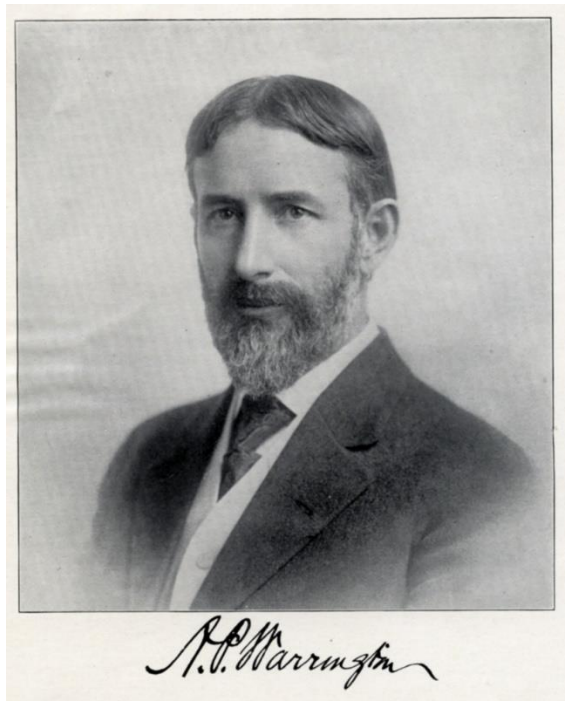
Visitors to Krotona are greeted by two pillars at the bottom of the hill, adorned with initials: APW and MP. Informed Theosophists and friends will know the letters stand for Albert Powell Warrington and Marie Poutz, two names that supremely stand out in the founding and history of Krotona.



AP Warrington (1866-1939), a native of Maryland, started in railroad work, then studied law and established a practice in Norfolk, Virginia. He joined the Theosophical Society (TS) in 1896. This commitment shaped the rest of his life; full of enthusiasm, he retired from the legal profession in 1911 to devote himself wholly to Theosophical work. One of his greatest achievements for the Society was his leading role in the 1912 founding of the first Krotona in Hollywood. He stayed on at Krotona to serve as its Resident Head, as editor of *The American Theosophist*, and as President of the American section of the TS from 1912-1920. Warrington resigned in the latter year to work at Adyar, the TS headquarters in India, in close association with Annie Besant, also engaging with her in world travel on behalf of the Society.



Warrington in early years



Warrington in 1911

Warrington returned to California in 1922 accompanied by Krishnamurti and his brother Nityananda. They came to the Ojai Valley with the intention of finding a permanent home for the two brothers and, as it turned out, also discovered a new home for Krotona. In 1924, with the consent of Mrs. Besant as International President of the TS, the Hollywood center was sold, and its work moved to the new location in Ojai.

With Los Angeles burgeoning into a great city and the movie industry making Hollywood its epicenter, a place of greater quiet and natural beauty seemed required for Krotona's inner work. It was Warrington who selected the site for Krotona because of its inspiring atmosphere and scenery. After returning to California, Warrington resumed leadership at the then-rustic Krotona, assisted by Maria Poutz as his secretary.



Marie Poutz, secretary to Warrington and later his successor as Resident Head of Krotona

In 1928 Warrington became International Vice President of the Society on the nomination of Annie Besant. He was required to move to Adyar in 1931 because of President Besant's illness, making it necessary for him to fulfill some of her duties. Upon her death in 1933, Mr. Warrington served as Acting President, until the installation of the next President, George Arundale, the following year. Warrington then returned to Krotona in Ojai, where he lived quietly and served as Resident Head until his death on June 16, 1939. His widow, Betty Warrington, whom he married in 1931 and who was known as a gracious hostess both at Adyar and Krotona, continued to live in Ojai until passing in 1986.

Marie Poutz (1860–1951), Warrington's secretary succeeded Warrington as Resident Head of Krotona from 1939 until her own passing in 1951. Her name is one that also will forever be deeply associated with Krotona.

Miss Poutz was born in New Orleans. Her family spoke French at home. During the Civil War, which broke out only a few months after her birth, the household moved to France to escape its ravages. Seven years later, however, the Poutz's had to return to Louisiana, with nearly all of their once-ample means having been lost in the internecine conflict. Despite this, Poutz was able to receive an excellent education, and as a young woman supported herself teaching music. She was an avid reader, deeply interested in philosophy and spiritual issues, less so in social life. Although she never married, when she was twenty-one a family friend died, leaving two small children who she adopted.



Poutz left her natal Roman Catholic church as a teenager, searched widely for a deeper philosophy, and joined in TS in 1898. In 1907, entering full-time Theosophical work, she became assistant to Warrington in his varied Theosophical responsibilities, first in Norfolk, VA, then Chicago, then Hollywood, and finally in 1924 at the new Krotona in Ojai. She was Warrington's co-worker for thirty years and, in his frequent absence, was an effective leader in the life of Krotona during the tumultuous years of the Great Depression, the Second World War, and the postwar era with its immense changes.

Poutz often expressed her appreciation of Krotona, sometimes calling it the perfect place, an antipode to the chaos of the outer world, a "place of peace" and renewal. She is remembered as being like a mother to countless pilgrims on their journeys of struggle and discovery, writing letters or holding conversations full of wisdom and compassionate support with seekers for over fifty years. It would be fair to say Marie Poutz represented Krotona at its best.

