



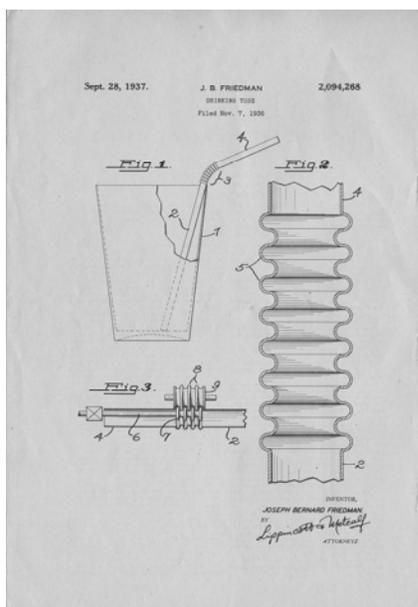
### **Inventor's Profile: Joseph B. Friedman**

In 1914, when he was just 14 years old, Joseph Friedman came up with the idea for his first invention. It was a lighted pencil called the "Pencilite." Friedman invented many things throughout his life, but the "Drinking Tube" was his most successful invention.

While sitting in the Varsity Sweet Shop in San Francisco, Friedman watched his young daughter Judith struggling to drink out of a straight straw. He thought that if the straw could bend, it would be much easier for her to drink from the glass. Back then, straws were not made from plastic like they are today. They were made out of thick paper and coated with wax. Friedman inserted a screw into a paper straw and wrapped dental floss around the screw. This created grooves in the straw, and the straw could bend!

On September 28, 1937, Friedman was issued a patent for the Drinking Tube (U.S. patent 2,094,268). He later called his invention the FlexStraw. In 1939, he created the FlexStraw Corporation and began to market his invention. With help from his family, he first sold the straws to doctors and later to families.

In 1969, Friedman sold his patent for the FlexStraw to the Maryland Cup Corporation and closed his company. Joseph Friedman died on June 21, 1982.



**The FlexStraw**