

Dade Aviation Pioneer Chalk Dies

By **ROBERT LISS**
Herald Staff Writer.

Arthur Burns (Pappy) Chalk, the aviation pioneer who founded Chalk's — the world's oldest airline — died early Thursday at the age of 88.

A model of self-reliance who numbered Ernest Hemingway and the Wright Brothers among his acquaintances, Chalk was alert and active until a fall from a tree hospitalized him April 13.

"After he fell out of that goddamned tree he just kept getting worse," said Dean Franklin, Chalk's 31-year partner in the Watson Island-based airline. Chalk died at 3:30 a.m. in Cedars of Lebanon Hospital.

CHALK LEAVES as a legacy to Miami the 58-year-old airline he and Franklin purposely kept small. Chalk's International Airline Inc., the smallest entry port in the United States, was bought in 1974 by Resorts International; it retains the name of the man who watched and participated as Miami aviation grew from one plane and an umbrella stand to the city's second-largest industry.

Arthur Chalk, born on an Illinois farm in 1889, was a young victim of wanderlust. He left home at the age of 11 and went first to St. Louis, then to Paducah, Ky.

In Paducah he was operating a small garage when a French pilot touring the United States developed engine trouble and asked Chalk to repair his plane. It was 1911, and the beginning of Chalk's aviation career.

CHALK learned to fly from the pilot, daredevil flyer Tony Janus, in exchange for the repair job. He flew as an amateur for six years before coming to Miami in 1917.

"Pappy set up his flying service in 1919 with just an umbrella and a desk near the bottom of Flagler Street," Mary Grace Plumridge, Chalk's niece, said. "He just had one plane, giving flying lessons."

Chalk charged \$5 for a sightseeing tour of Miami and \$15 for an hour of flying lessons. In 1920 he moved the operation to Watson Island, where it is still located.

Chalk and his wife, Lillie Mae, who died in 1964, built the present office in 1936, with the

help of Franklin, who had moved to Miami with his own plane a year earlier.

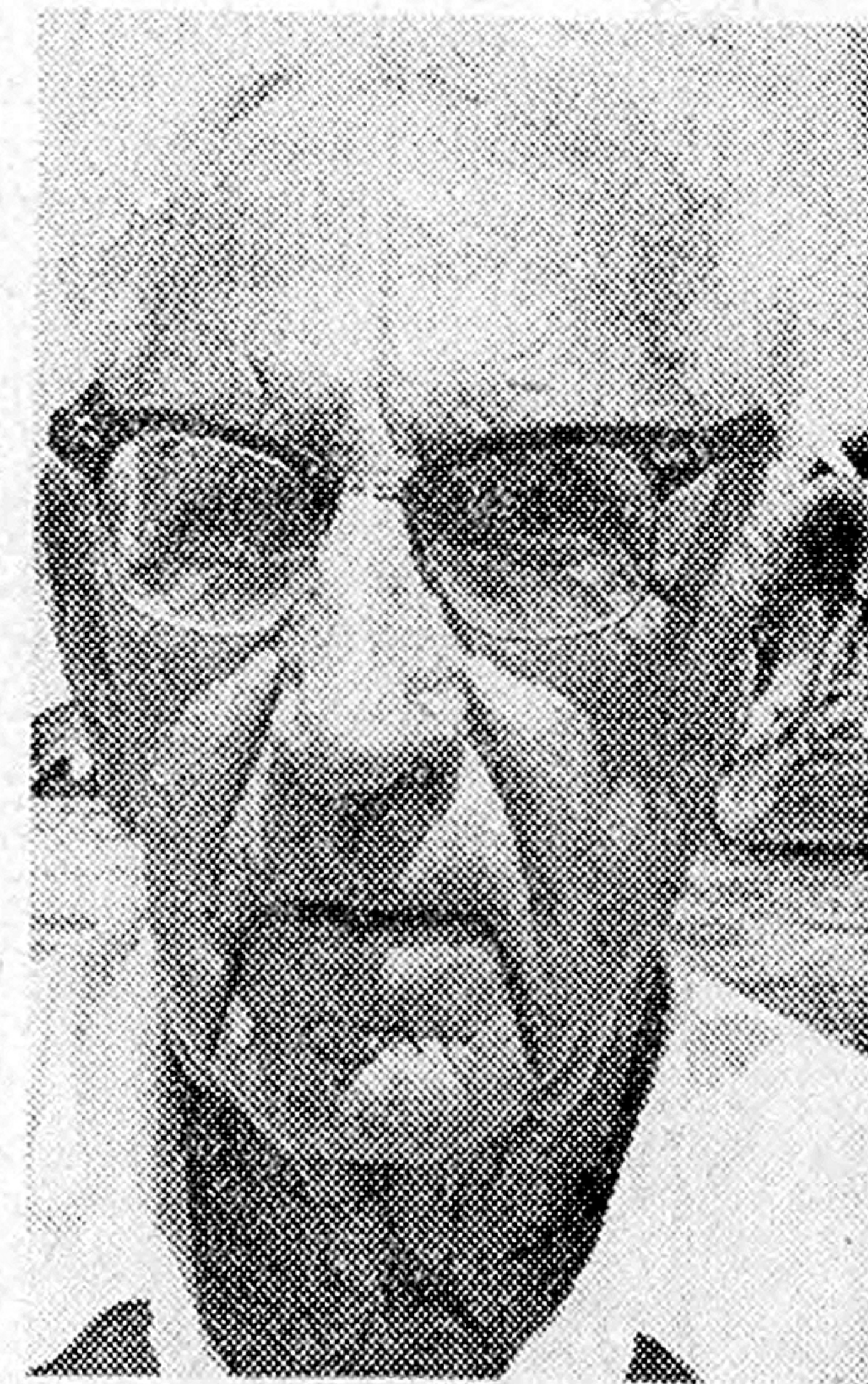
BY THEN, the airline was doing a good business, Franklin said: "We made a lot of money on both sides of the bootlegging business in those days. We didn't do any bootlegging, but we flew bootleggers to the Bahamas, and we flew revenue agents, too."

Gradually the business grew until there were six Grumman Gooses (Chalk never referred to them as "geese"), and there it stopped.

Chalk retired from the airline in 1966. He had 16,800 hours of flying in his log book and still had a valid commercial flying license at the age of 76.

Chalk is survived by his neice, Mary Plumridge, of Miami; a stepson, Richard Wells, also of Miami; a brother, Robert, of Little Rock, Ark.; and two nephews, Ralph and Richard Duggin, both of Miami.

Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at Bess Combs and Son Funeral Home, 10936 NE Sixth Ave. Entombment will be at Woodlawn Park Mausoleum, preceding the service.



Arthur B. Chalk
... kept firm small