

Aviation Pioneer Chalk, 88, 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.



CHALK

of Lebanon Hospital.

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

Chalk leaves as a legacy to Miami the 58-year-old airline that he and Franklin purposely kept small. Chalk's International Airline Inc., the smallest entry port in the United States, was purchased 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.

Chalk is survived by Mary Plumridge! a stepson, Richard Wells, of the same address; 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 is at Woodlawn Park Mauseleum, preceding the service.