

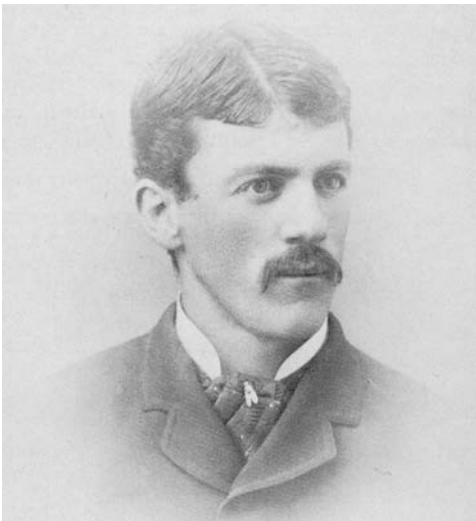
# FELIX PHILIP MEYSAN

By Elodie Meysan Drew

Felix Philip Meysan was the only son of the ten children of Charles Meysan and his wife, Madeline Gaudin Meysan. He was born in Columbia, Tuolumne County, California, on April 5, 1865.

When Felix was four years old his family moved from Columbia to Lone Pine, Inyo County, California. It was in the summer of 1869. His father bought property on the west side of Main Street in Lone Pine and established a general merchandise store in the front part of the adobe brick building. The Meysan Family occupied the back section of the house. At this time the Cerro Gordo Mines were booming and Meysan's store did a good business with the people of this area. He also bought barley, wheat, potatoes, bacon, ham, eggs, flour and other produce from the local ranchers in both Lone Pine and Independence.

When Felix was seven years old the Earthquake of 1872 destroyed the Meysan adobe brick home and killed his eleven year old sister, Alice. Felix's father rebuilt on the site, using all lumber since adobe bricks had been proven unsafe. The lumber was hauled in to Lone Pine by Remi Nadeau's teams. The Meysan building was the first to be built after the earthquake.



Felix Phillip Meysan

Felix attended the Lone Pine Grammar School along with his sisters, and in later years he went to Heald's Business College and Woodbury College, studying Bookkeeping and other business courses. This training was very helpful as Felix Meysan was Secretary of the first Lone Pine Water Company from 1902 to 1934, an office his father, Charles Meysan, had helped establish in 1881. Felix also had a service through the years that he called "for accommodation." It was writing letters for any one who needed help. His knowledge of both French and Spanish was a big help all his life.

When Felix was about twelve years old he was very good at throwing rocks. It is too bad there wasn't a Little League or Pony League in those days. Felix would have made a very good pitcher. On the third of July that year every one in Lone Pine was looking forward to the Fourth of July celebration the next day. Felix was not in sight, and his father, Charles Meysan, was relaxing in a chair on the porch in front of the store, and his mother had gone to her room to rest after a busy morning.

Suddenly, there was a noise. Bang! Bang! Bang! Meysan wondered what was going on. Then came his neighbor, Mr. Cohn, and he was very angry. He shouted, "Felix has been throwing rocks on my house!" Felix was summoned, and Mr. Cohn made such a fuss that Felix was sent upstairs to bed. He was told he would "miss the Fourth of July." Felix insisted he did not throw any rocks on Mr. Cohn's house. Bang! Bang! The rocks flew through the air hitting the roof of Mr. Cohn's house.

Felix had a little room in the attic that was reached by a ladder-like stair. He went up to bed, in the middle of the afternoon, knowing he was innocent. A plan formulated in his active mind, and he went to the window and saw his little sister, Mathilde, playing by herself in the back yard, and asked her to bring him a cigar box of rocks. She moved a light ladder nearby to the little window and carried the box of

rocks up the ladder. Felix took the box and Mathilde returned the ladder to its place. Felix climbed out the window and slithered on to the roof to a position facing Mr. Cohn's house. Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! The rocks flew through the air hitting the roof of Mr. Cohn's house. When the box was empty Felix quickly climbed down and went back into his room through the little window. Felix jumped into bed and covered up his head.

Again came Mr. Cohn. He complained loudly, "Felix has been throwing rocks on my house!" Meysan answered angrily, "Felix is upstairs in bed!" Through the door into the store went Meysan, across the living room, into the bedroom and up the ladder-stair. He called, "Felix, Felix. (It was pronounced like Fell-lee) Are you there?" Felix uncovered his head and answered his father in a slow, sleepy-sounding voice, "What do you want Pa-Pa?" His father said to him, "You can come down now, and you can go to the Fourth of July." Meysan retraced his steps back to the front porch, and with no mincing of words expressed his feeling to Mr. Cohn in both English and French.

Years later when Meysan had gone to his Eternal Rest, and Felix had a family of his own, Felix's mother, Madeline Meysan, came for a summer visit. Felix told her the true facts of this incident. She remembered it very well, because of the commotion it had caused. Madeline Meysan laughed, shaking her head and saying, "Oh! If only Papa could have known!"

When they were young Felix and his sisters, used to perform in the home talent shows at Lone Pine, and many of these programs were given in the old Lone Pine Town Hall. One time Felix and his older sister, Zelia, were in a skit that was called, "The Flower of the Family." A large sign was placed on the side of the stage with the words, "Flower of the Family" painted on it. The curtain was opened and on the stage strolled a lovely young lady, (Zelia) with shiny black curls and wearing a frilly dress. She carried a parasol and looked very charming - she was the Flower of the Family. Then the curtain was drawn and opened again. On the stage was a large flour barrel, and out of the barrel jumped Felix in Jack-in-the-Box fashion. He was covered with flour and full of antics - he was the "Flour" of the Family. Felix brought down the house!

Lone Pine was an interesting place to live in those days as there were many interesting people residing there. When Camp Independence was occupied by the soldiers in the 1860's and 1870's, there was a Glee Club at Lone Pine. Local talent shows were given to earn money to buy a piano for the Glee Club. In time enough money was acquired to purchase a second-hand piano in San Francisco, and it was hauled by freight teams to Lone Pine. The cost of the freighting was almost as much as the price of the piano. This piano was a square grand, Frederick Zech, and was said to have come around the Horn. Shares were given to each member of the Glee Club and the piano was housed in the Meysan residence in back of the store. All the Meysan



Felix Meysan Family in 1905  
Ellen Meysan holding Charles  
with Elodie on right and Zelia on left

children had good singing voices, and Blanche, Marie, Zelia and Felix sang in the Glee Club. It took a dozen men to carry the piano to the Town Hall for dances and entertainments, and to return it to the Meysan home. Eventually Felix acquired all the shares, and when he married in 1901 the piano was moved to his home.

When Felix was young his father taught him the carpenter trade and plumbing. He played the piano and other instruments and played for old time dances for many years. In about 1915 Lone Pine had a band and Felix played the bass drum and cymbals. The uniforms were navy blue with black braid trim. The band played at many celebrations for several years, mainly the Fourth of July and the Sixteenth of September.

In the summer Felix loved to roam through the Sierra Nevadas on horseback or back packing, and he became familiar with different areas of the mountains. He loved trees and hated to see one cut down. In his exploring through the mountains in the Mt. Whitney region, he came across several lakes. These lakes in later years became "Meysan Lakes", named for Felix Meysan. Felix had a dream of stocking them with fish. This dream came true in the 1920's when, with the assistance of his sister and brother-in-law, Eugenie Meysan Dunn and her husband, Owen F. Dunn, they stocked the lakes with fish. It was an old friend, Pioneer Packer, Carmen Olivas, whose horses carried the cans of trout to Meysan Lakes.

Felix Meysan was married on September 15, 1901, to Martha Ellen Hancock. She had come to live in Lone Pine in 1893. There were seven children born to this union, three who died in infancy. They were: Zelia Adeline Meysan Marten, Elodie Mary Meysan Drew, Charles H. Meysan, Vincent Meysan, Philip Felix, Lavine Helen Meysan Harned and Patty Ellen Meysan.

#### **From the Old "Inyo Register"**

Plump girls are coming into fashion again and Chesterfield says, "It is never pardonable to be out of fashion; the man who is engaged to a thin girl should break his engagement even if he gets sued for breach of promise".



First building built after the earthquake of 1872  
Meysan Store, Lone Pine, California – (Present location of La Florista)