

FRANK CHRYSLER

As told to C. Uhlmeyer



Frank Chrysler, son of Henry Chrysler about 1950. "Sturdy Westerner and pack train owner."

Frank Chrysler was the oldest child of Henry and Guadelupe Chrysler. He was born in Kern County and was quite young when his parents moved to the mining towns of Ballarat and Darwin. As soon as he was old enough to handle a span of horses he began to drive the stage between Lone Pine and Darwin. Frank had three sisters and one brother. The latter died in his teens. His mother had had a previous marriage so there were some half sisters. The Chrysler girls married in the Owens Valley and lived most of their lives there. Frank never left the Lone Pine area.

When the tram was built over the mountains into Saline Valley, Frank was one of the Workmen. He worked in the mines of the various camps and worked on the Skinner plant on Owens Lake, when it was constructed. Finally he went into the packing business with Ted Cook. The name of Chrysler and Cook became well known throughout Southern California. Frank married a widow, Lola Diaz, who had one son, but the union did not last. Frank never had children of his own.

A friendly, genial man - a typical westerner - Frank made many lasting friends among the people he packed into the Mt. Whitney country. The same people would come back, year after year, and bring new people. At one time he even made a trip to New York to visit some of the people he had packed into the mountains. He was a wonderful camp cook, a good fisherman and made his guests genuinely comfortable and at home in the camps he set up. At night he would build a huge campfire and spin tales of the west - some of which were true.

After selling his pack outfit to Ike Livermore, he continued to spend his summers in the mountains at Little Whitney Meadows, as range rider for some of the cattlemen. At the same time he took care of a number of boys whose parents wanted to get them out of town for the summers. He made them do their share of the work around camp and taught them to ride and rope. He also disciplined them for their short-comings, as an old-time school teacher would have done.



Neva Chrysler Jenkins, oldest daughter of Henry Chrysler, age 18.

For many years, he was a trustee of the town property which included the town hall, the baseball fields, and was behind the yearly "Stampede."

During his life, he had accumulated enough money and property so that he could live comfortably in his old age. When he felt that his life was drawing to a close, he gave each of his nieces and nephews,

and his stepson, with whom he had always kept in touch, a generous amount of money. Frank's old, blue camper was a familiar sight on the streets of Lone Pine, usually heading north and turning in at the Lubken tract, where his good friends, the Loder brothers, lived. He died in 1974, and his sister, Neva Jenkins, the last survivor of the children of Henry and Lupe Chrysler, died in 1976. She had lived a quiet life near her daughters, in Lone Pine, for the past forty years.