



KANSAS LEGEND BIOGRAPHY

Walter P. Chrysler (1875-1940)

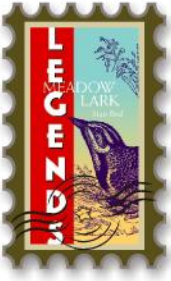
Walter P. Chrysler is a symbol of the American Dream. Born in Wamego, Kan., in 1875, Chrysler spent his childhood tinkering with locomotives and intrigued by the inner-workings of machinery. The Chrysler family soon moved to Ellis, where Chrysler spent time in Union Pacific Railroad repair shops, for his father was a Union Pacific engineer. Chrysler also held various odd jobs, including grocery delivery boy, milkman and door-to-door salesman.



Upon finishing high school, Chrysler wanted to follow in his older brother's footsteps and enter Union Pacific's machinist apprentice program. However, his father preferred he attend college. Chrysler defied his father's wishes and took a job sweeping the shop for Union Pacific. His diligence and hard work earned notice from the shop's master mechanic who convinced Chrysler's father to let him join the apprentice program.

Chrysler's eagerness to learn and aptitude for mechanics led him to work with Walter Darling, a master mechanic who taught Chrysler the difficult task of setting locomotive slide valves. Chrysler impressed those with whom he worked, and he became an avid reader of "Scientific American" in order to expand his knowledge. Chrysler left Ellis in 1897 at age 22 to pursue bigger endeavors.

Chrysler held a variety of railroad jobs in several different cities after leaving Ellis. He finally landed steady work for the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad in Salt Lake City in 1900. Due to his new employment status, Chrysler felt confident in asking his hometown sweetheart for her hand in marriage. Walter P. Chrysler married Della Forker in 1901 and had a daughter the following year. Chrysler's found himself more determined than ever to achieve great things with a family to support.



Due to his willingness to take on challenges of any nature, Chrysler quickly moved up the ranks in the railroad industry. He moved around frequently and held master mechanic positions for several different city railroads across the country. In 1908, while working in Chicago, Chrysler purchased his first car, the Locomobile. He shipped it home and, unable to drive it, disassembled it to learn the mechanics of the machine and practiced rebuilding it.

Chrysler left his job to work for the American Locomotive Company, where he met James J. Storrow, a director of ALCO and of the General Motors Company, who offered him the opportunity to work in the automobile industry. Chrysler took a large pay cut to follow his vision of creating a more streamlined, efficient operating system for Buick. He introduced basic cost accounting, a simplified assembly process, and turned a company producing 45 cars a day into a well-organized operation producing 600 cars a day.



After leaving Buick in 1919 with \$10 million, Chrysler spent a brief time with Willys-Overland to salvage the company. He soon moved on to the failing Maxwell Motor Company. In just seven years, the company went from several million dollars in debt to a multi-million dollar company. In 1925, Chrysler started his own automotive company and absorbed Maxwell Motors to become the third largest automaker in the world.

Chrysler served as president of Chrysler Corporation until 1935 and financed construction of the world's tallest building at the time, christened the Chrysler Building, in New York City. In 1928, "Time Magazine" named Chrysler Man of the Year. Chrysler died in 1940, forever remembered as an American automobile pioneer.

