

A. Courchesne, Pioneer Builder Of El Paso, Dies In His Upper Valley Home

Began His Career In Shuttle
Factory For Wages Of
25 Cents A Day.

Alfred Courchesne, 84, president of A. Courchesne, Inc., and one of the pioneer builders of El Paso, who died at his home in the upper valley yesterday, started his business career in a shuttle factory at Lowell, Mass., at the age of 11 years. For 11 hours' work a day he received the innumerable sum of 25 cents.

From his shuttle factory beginning, Courchesne lived to become one of the business leaders of the southwest and to see some of his dreams of civic improvements become realities.

Funeral services for Mr. Courchesne will be held Wednesday at 10 a. m. at Peak-Hagedorn chapel. Masonic bodies will be in charge. Burial will be in Masonic cemetery.

Born In Canada.

Mr. Courchesne was born in Canada in the district of Three Rivers, province of Quebec, on Nov. 15, 1848.

Of French-Norman descent, his maternal grandmother was a Cartier, a lineal descendant of Jacques Cartier, the French navigator who discovered the St. Lawrence river.

In 1859 his family moved to Lowell, Mass. After a year in the shuttle factory, Courchesne found a little better job in a cotton mill. He then worked a year on a farm for \$150, his board, room and clothes. His next job was in a dry goods store at Lowell. After working there for four years, he returned to Canada and attended a military school for a year. During the Civil war, at the age of 16, he joined the Massachusetts volunteers, but did not see active service during the war.

Came Here In 1887.

Mr. Courchesne went to Chicago in 1869 and was in the clothing business there until 1887, when he came to El Paso.

Shortly after he came to this city he obtained a contract with the American Smelting & Refining company to supply it with limestone flux. He opened a rock quarry shortly afterward. He also became interested in various mining activities in northern Mexico.

He was instrumental in obtaining outside capital for a cement plant, which is now the Southwestern Portland Cement company. He was a vice president of this concern at the time of his death. He was very active in the development of the Elephant Butte irrigation project, serving as the first chairman of the



A. Courchesne

El Paso Valley Water Users' association.

Among his other activities, was the organization of a railroad company, the San Diego, El Paso and St. Louis railroad, formed for the purpose of giving El Paso an outlet to the Pecos valley. The line was surveyed and the engineering work accomplished, but the road did not materialize because of the difficulty experienced in financing the project.

Elected Commissioner.

Nine years after Mr. Courchesne came to El Paso he was elected county commissioner, serving three terms. He also was president of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce in 1907. When a committee was formed to raise \$100,000 for the erection of a Y. M. C. A. building here, Mr. Courchesne was named chairman. He contributed liberally to the fund in addition to his active work with the committee.

He at one time was president of the El Paso Military Institute, from which grew the College of Mines. He was one of the organizers of the El Paso School for Girls, now the Radford School for Girls.

Mr. Courchesne early embraced the teachings of the Masonic fraternity. He was a member of Fraternity Lodge No. 1111, A. F. & A. M., a Knight Templar, a 33rd degree Scottish Rite Mason, and a Shriner.

He is survived by three sons, Thomas, John and William Courchesne, El Paso, and four daughters, Mrs. R. A. Smith, El Paso; Mrs. H. C. Howland, Pasadena, Calif.; Mrs. B. B. Morris, San Diego, Calif., and Mrs. R. L. Hubbert, San Francisco.