

WM. ERNST, COOKS LAST BEEFSTEAK

CATERER KNOWN ALL OVER THE
STATE IS DEAD.

Man Celebrated for His Odd Ways
and Culinary Genius Reaches End
of Life—Last Survivor of Max-
imilian's Personal Staff.

William Ernst, Sr., famous all over Texas, for the toothsome steaks he served, and probably the last survivor of Emperor Maximilian's personal household staff, father of Mrs. Roy Cushman, of El Paso, died at his home, 411 South Presa street, San Antonio, Tuesday morning after an illness of two months. Mrs. Cushman, his El Paso daughter, is the wife of Roy Cushman, electrician at the smelter, and she and her husband were at the bedside of the old man when he died.

He was 74 years of age and had lived in San Antonio for 50 years. He submitted to an operation upon one of his toes on July 4 and blood poisoning ensued, causing death. He is survived by his widow and seven children, Mrs. H. F. Young, of Sanderson, Tex.; Mrs. Edgar Hill, San Francisco; Mrs. W. W. Campbell, Bay City, Tex.; Mrs. Roy Cushman, of El Paso, and William Ernst, Jr., Clara Ernst and Christine Ernst, of San Antonio.

William Ernst was born October 11, 1830, in Halle a d' Saalle Prussia, and came to San Antonio in 1856 and he had lived there continuously since that time with the exception of two years spent in Mexico during the war of the French intervention when Maximilian discovered his culinary talents and attached him to the imperial household.

His trade in Prussia had been that

of making knives, but when he arrived in San Antonio he evolved into a dancing master and was one of the first dancing masters of the Casino association, a club composed of the leading Germans of that city.

It was on his long trips to Fredericksburg through the Indian country as carrier of the United States mail that he began to achieve fame as a cook, and became in great demand with the wagon trains that went over the trail.

At Castroville during the civil war he joined a wagon train owned by Captain Norton and went with it to Eagle Pass and thence to Monterey.

In Monterey he took charge of the kitchen of a hotel and on the occasion of a supper given to Maximilian was called upon to provide the service. He captivated the emperor with his meats, and the unhappy Maximilian, fearing treachery on the part of his French cook, supplanted him with Ernst.

After the execution of the emperor of Mexico Ernst returned to San Antonio and opened a restaurant on Alamo plaza. This stand in those days was a formidable competitor of the old Menger hotel, and it is said that when the dinner bell would ring at the hotel the army officers and all other persons owning an appetite fled into Ernst's place. In 1890 Ernst moved into the old market house, where he reaped abundant fruits of his consummate culinary skill. Ernst was a true artist and he bought his meat with an artistic conscience. He purchased only a certain quantity of meat of a certain kind for he knew that on each steer there is but a limited number of steaks that are really worth while. When this meat was exhausted he closed up his shop and nothing could induce him to handle an inferior piece of meat. He would turn his best customer away first.

The old man served two kinds of steaks, sirloin and "Ope Real," also roast beef. Along with the meat the customer was served with boiled po-

tatoes, frijoles and a cup of coffee.

The secret of cooking a steak was something he shared only with his wife who was his confidential help, but when he fell sick in his last illness he closed the restaurant, not even trusting it to her.

His rare peculiarities and his ability to please the palate did much to lend attractiveness to the city. The place was at once sought out by tourists, who held that a trip to San Antonio was vain without a meal at Ernst's. A steak subjected to his process retained all its juices and its taste was beyond the imagination to conceive.