

Mesilla's El Patio owner dies at 86

Arthur Jennings Fountain of Mesilla, a member of a historic New Mexico family and owner of El Patio Bar and Restaurant, died Sunday (Sept. 14, 1997). He was 86.

He and his wife Celia, opened El Patio, a popular bar on the Mesilla plaza, in 1952. They ran it until retiring in 1980.

Fountain's father, grandfather and great-grandfather played prominent roles in the development of far West Texas and southern New Mexico. His father was Mesilla's first mayor, and his grandfather was president of the Texas Senate and opened the Fountain Theater. His great-grandfather was Col. Albert Jennings Fountain, a pioneer lawyer, judge, legislator and newspaper publisher whose 1896 disappearance and presumed slaying is one of the enduring mysteries of the region.

Visitation will be from 3 to 7 p.m. Wednesday in Graham Mortuary, with rosary at 7:30 p.m. Funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Thursday in San Albino Catholic Church. Burial will be in San Albino Cemetery.

Survivors include his sons, Albert Fountain, Artie Fountain and Robert Fountain; his daughters, Dr. Celia Fountain, Lucille Valentine and Barbara Johnson; a brother; 13 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.