

# LEW GASSER DIES IN CESS POOL; TRIED TO RESCUE A MEXICAN

**Former Chief Engineer at Waterworks Plant Dies the  
Death of Hero When Lowers Self Into Pool With  
Gas and is Overcome; Dave Justis Also Over-  
come But Revived; Lynchville Tragedy.**

**L**EW GASSER, former chief engineer at the city waterworks plant on the mesa, was overcome by gas and drowned in a cess pool in the rear of his home at Lynchville, near Ft. Bliss, Monday morning.

He was attempting to rescue Vicente Sotya, a laborer, who was also overcome by the gas and drowned. The Mexican was working in a new cess pool 30 feet below the surface of the ground when the gas and water leaked from an old cess pool and overcame him, the water from the cess pool drowning him before Gasser could reach him. Gasser was killed in the same manner.

Dave Justis, who attempted to rescue Gasser by going down into the pit, was also overcome by gas, and rendered unconscious for several minutes after reaching the surface.

#### **Went To Rescue.**

According to the statement of Juan Molina, the only witness of the tragedy, Sotoya was digging in the pool, when water suddenly rushed into the pit from another cess pool several yards away. The Mexican was immediately overcome by gas and Molina called Gasser who ran to the cable and, lopping it through his arm, descended into the pit in an attempt to rescue Sotoya. When he reached the bottom of the pit Gasser found that the weight of the Mexican dragged him down and he attempted to pull back up the cable when he was overcome by gas, and fell into the pool.

#### **Justis Overcome.**

Running to the brink of the pool, Justis then lowered himself and attempted to rescue the two bodies. He was also overcome. Soldiers, who were attracted by the shouts of Molina, then ran to the pool and, using large hooks, dragged the two bodies to the surface, Sotoya being drawn first from the water, which was over 15 feet deep when the rescue occurred.

Every effort was made to save the life of Gasser by police chief B. J. Zabriskie, Capt. Lee Hall, Capt. J. E. Stowe and judge James M. Deaver, the city pulmotor being used for over an hour.

#### **Was Aviator.**

Gasser is survived by a widow. He had resided in El Paso for over 22 years and was well known throughout the southwest. He resigned from the position of engineer at the water works several weeks ago, and was occupied in making improvements on his home in Lynchville when the accident occurred. At different times he was a boxer, an aviator and was known as one of the best automobile mechanics in the south-

west. The body of Gasser was taken to Peak's undertaking parlors and Sotya to McBean, Simmons and Hartford.

# GASSER FUNERAL TO BE THURSDAY

## Body of Man Who Died Trying to Save Mexican Held For Father's Arrival.

Funeral services for Lew Gasser, formerly chief engineer of the city waterworks have not yet been arranged pending the arrival of his father from Richmond, Va.

The services will probably be held sometime next Thursday, as word was received from Mr. Gasser that he left Richmond Monday night for El Paso and would arrive Thursday morning in this city.

### Drowned in Cess Pool.

Gasser was drowned Monday morning in the rear of his home in Lynchville when he attempted to rescue Vicente Socoya, a Mexican laborer who was digging a cess pool in the rear of Gasser's home. The gas and water from an old cess pool leaked into the new one, overcoming the Mexican. Gasser went to his rescue and was overcome and drowned in the pool which had filled with water from the old pool. Mayor Lea, chief Zabriskie, Capt. J. L. Hall and others worked for more than an hour with the police department pulmotor trying to revive Gasser and the Mexican but were unsuccessful.

### Was Tough Rider.

Lew Gasser was a Rough Rider with former governor George Curry's troop from New Mexico, going to Tampa, Fla. with troop H but never getting to Cuba. He was a close personal friend of Billie Smith who was a member of G troop with Maj. W. H. H. Llewellyn. Gasser and Smith put on many exhibition boxing bouts in El Paso in the old days of the McGinty club. Gasser was a fighter at Newark, N. J. where he won considerable fame.

Gasser was one of the posse which liberated John Selman, Jr. from the Jaurez jail many years ago.

pictures. "The Spreewald near Berlin." will also be shown. There will be no advance in prices.—Advertisement.