

B. F. HAMMETT EX-MAYOR, IS DEAD

Passes Away Suddenly in
Los Angeles, Where He
Had Gone for His Health.

MOURNED BY MANY FRIENDS

Benjamin F. Hammett, exmayor and one of the most prominent real estate owners and dealers of El Paso, is dead. With his passing is lost one of the men who made the Paso City. Death occurred most unexpectedly shortly before 7 o'clock last night at Los Angeles, where but a few days ago Mr. Hammett went in search of climatic change.

Word of the death, which arrived here shortly before midnight, has left the widow and family broken, and scores of friends among the most prominent persons of the city sorrow with unexpected grief. Mr. Hammett, or colonel or major Hammett, as he is called by many—died at the age of 68 years, having just rounded that year Monday of this week.

Until almost the time of his death, Mr. Hammett engaged in active business. A heart trouble had caused some fear, but he was greatly improved before leaving El Paso for a stay in the California city, having gained five



COL. B. F. HAMMETT.

pounds in weight. He was accompanied to Los Angeles by a daughter, Mrs. Carter White, of this city, Mrs. Hammett expecting to join him in a few days. Also a surviving son, Paul F. Hammett, junior partner of the firm of B. F. Hammett & Son,

Prominent in St. Louis.

Before Mr. Hammett came to El Paso he was a prominent business man of St. Louis, Mo., associated with the most forward men of that city. He was a member of Hammett, Anderson & Wald, leading real estate promoters, a firm which built the Planters hotel among other mammoth works. Mr. Hammett was associated closely, in a business and personal way, with exgovernor D. R. Francis, of the middle state, and was chairman of the St. Louis police commission for a time. He took an active interest in large railroad contracts in the south.

As head of the Campbell Real Estate company, of this city, a company which held much of the skyscraper and central residence property of the city, Mr. Hammett came to El Paso in 1894. He took active charge of the interests of the big concern and almost immediately became a leader in realty and civic promotion. Under his management the Campbell addition was graded, improved and sold out very rapidly. He stood for the erection of good buildings and was a street paving advocate. Incidentally he amassed a considerable fortune and at his death may be rated at much more than half a million. Among the well known properties owned by the wholesale real estate promoter are the Van Blarcom building, the Fraternal Brotherhood hall, and the Hotel D. R. Francis, the home of the family.

Elected Mayor in 1901.

In 1901 Mr. Hammett was elected mayor, running as a "non-political candidate." Until 1903 he conducted what was considered a business administration. He accomplished the first Sunday saloon closing law enforcement. His office expired in 1903 and he resumed his business activity. In 1905 he was made alderman of his ward on the Davis ticket.

B. F. Hammett, the man, is described by his many friends as being gentle in his dealings with men of all classes. He was especially interested in char-

ities and was one of the circle of men who were heavy donors to public institutions, giving more than his share at many times. Mr. Hammett was active in the Trinity Methodist church, serving as steward for many years.

Born in Missouri.

Born at Huntsville, Mo., Mr. Hammett came of a family of prominence in that state. He is survived by a brother, Dr. J. D. Hammett, of St. Louis.

The body will arrive in El Paso Saturday night. No funeral arrangements have been made.

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(Concordia)

COL. B. F. HAMMETT OF TYPE OF MEN WHO MAKE GREAT CITIES

El Paso's Growth Is Largely Due to the Efforts of the Former Mayor, Who Is Now Mourned as Dead.

To Col. B. F. Hammett's friends there is no need for an eulogy. But in the broader scope of Col. Hammett's activities in El Paso, his work as a civic builder, as a man who with a few other far seeing minds led this city out of the wilderness of mesquite and greasewood into an era of prosperous growth, Col. Hammett left a heritage to the newer generations of El Pasoans.

As the head of a company which promoted one of the first large townsite additions to El Paso, as alderman, mayor, private citizen and business man, Col. B. F. Hammett's name was always found among the progressives who were working against great odds to make a city. "He never pulled back," is the estimate of a man who knew him perhaps better than any other man knew him. "I have known Hammett since I came here, 22 years ago," A. P. Coles said last night. "He was always—Hammett—with a charming personality. Charitable, liberal donator to public enterprises, steward in the Trinity church, he was a man who was loved for his fine qualities, for himself."

When He First Came.

Col. Hammett's real estate and development activity was not confined to El Paso. Before he moved here he was as active in the affairs of St. Louis in a larger way than he was in El Paso later, Mr. Coles said. He came here to make his home about 1893 or '94, being president of the Campbell Real Estate company, of St. Louis, which owned the district known as the Campbell addition, extending from the river on the south to the intersection of Olive and San Antonio streets on the east, northward to include an irregular line east and south of the Mills and Sattenthwaite additions and the Santa Fe yard reservation.

This property was acquired by the St. Louis company in an interesting way. Robert Campbell, from whom the company and the addition took its name, was a wholesale merchant of St. Louis. Near the little town of Franklin, Texas, now El Paso, there were two brothers, John and Henry Gillette, who owned a goat ranch which was a part of the town of Franklin. The Gillette brothers failed, according to A. P. Coles's version of the early history of the town. In part payment of his indebtedness to Robert Campbell, John Gillette, who was the active member of the family partnership, turned over the goat ranch.

Selling Off a Goat Ranch.

W. S. Hills was sent out from St. Louis to manage the ranch and arrange for disposing of it. This he did in a very competent way for a number of years, until the Campbell addition, as it was then called, was taken over by a St. Louis syndicate, composed of Col. B. F. Hammett, J. C. Van Blarcom, president of the Bank of Commerce, in St. Louis; David R. Francis, ex-governor of Missouri, and afterwards president of the St. Louis exposition; Gen. Noble, Gen. Boffinger, Thomas Rankin and others. Gen. Noble was president of the syndicate which took the name of the Campbell Real Estate company and had the title of president of the company. The Campbell addition was sold prior to this time Col. Hammett

had been making trips to El Paso for many years before, brought a party of prominent capitalists here to inspect the field offered in the then little town for investments. After the organization of the real estate company, Col. Hammett moved to El Paso to make his home. This was in either 1893 or '94; Mr. Coles says, and since that time he and Mrs. Hammett have made this their home, taking an active part in the social and business affairs of the community.

B. F. Hammett, jr., who was known to everyone as "Forest," was also associated with his father in the active real estate campaign for disposing of the Campbell company's holdings. After "Forest's" death, Paul Hammett came out from St. Louis and joined his father in the realty business. Associated with Col. Hammett in the upbuilding of El Paso were four men, each strong types, and to whom is due much of the credit of the Greater El Paso of today. These men were H. L. Newman, A. M. Loomis, Felix Martinez and A. P. Coles. While not directly associated in business, these four men, with Col. Hammett, worked elbow to elbow for the growth of El Paso, the results of their efforts being apparent in every corner of the present city of El Paso.

Railroad Building.

Before Col. Hammett moved to El Paso, A. P. Coles was in charge of both the Campbell addition and the Franklin Heights addition. But finding the work of placing these properties on the market too hard, Mr. Coles relinquished the Campbell addition to Col. Hammett and confined his efforts to the Franklin Heights addition. Although they did not come here together, Col. Hammett, who was also a railroad promoter and builder, became associated with H. L. Newman in the promotion of the old White Oaks line, now the El Paso & Southwestern line, east. It was a strenuous campaign, and Col. Hammett, imbued with the St. Louis ideas, waged for a greater city of the southwest at the gateway. He built the Van Blarcom block on Texas street and Mesa avenue, which was named after his close friend, J. C. Van Blarcom, of St. Louis. He also built the D. R. Francis hotel on St. Louis street, which was also named after his very dear friend, the former governor of Missouri. The Hammett building, where the Fraternal Brotherhood hall is located, on South Oregon street, was only recently remodeled by Col. and Mrs. Hammett. In addition to these holdings, Col. Hammett acquired a large quantity of city and valley property, his estimated wealth in realty holdings being placed at \$500,000 at the time of his death.

Retires From Business.

After disposing of the property in the Campbell addition, Col. Hammett in association with his son, did a general real estate business until about two years ago, when he decided to retire from active business life and devote his time to his private interests. During his administration as mayor, the antiquated water works were replaced by electric street cars, Col. Hammett being an active worker. In the cause of better transportation facilities during his term as mayor from 1901 to 1902. Later, as alderman, he helped inaugurate the street paving era for El Paso.

Deceased was a member of the El Paso lodge, and with Mrs. Hammett was one of the leading forces in starting the annual children's games and sports in the playground of the city, which has since become a permanent institution.