

# Death Claims First American Born in El Paso

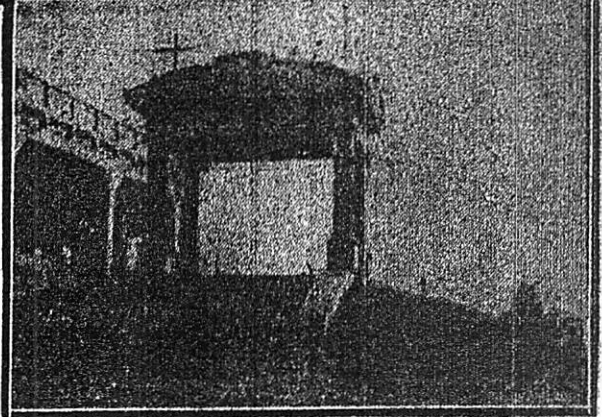
CAPTAIN JUAN S. HART.



AT LEFT—Captain Juan S. Hart, first American born in El Paso, who died yesterday at his ranch at Mountain Park.

AT RIGHT—Family tomb near Hart homestead here, where Captain Hart will be buried as requested before his death.

TOP—The Hart home, the oldest building in El Paso, and the famous Hart mill, which at one time ground grain for pioneers who came here from ranches many miles away. As it now stands, out near the smelter viaduct, it is one of the oldest landmarks in the Rio Grande valley. In early days it was the only mill within a radius of 100 miles. It was driven by water power.



## Captain Juan S. Hart Dies Suddenly at Ranch Home in New Mexico Mountains

Former Owner of Morning Times and for Nearly Half a Century One of Most Conspicuous Figures in Southwest Passes Away; Pioneer Friends Stunned by Sad News.

Captain Juan S. Hart, native of El Paso and for nearly half a century one of the most conspicuous figures of the southwest, died suddenly yesterday morning at 11 o'clock at his ranch near Mountain Park, in the Sacramento mountains of New Mexico, where he was spending the heated months in company with his brother-in-law, Brigadier General Thomas F. Davis, U. S. A., retired. News of Captain Hart's death reached El Paso yesterday shortly after noon in a telegram from General Davis to Eugene Donaldson, of the J. J. Watts Realty company. No details of his death were given in the brief telegram, and it is believed that death came suddenly, as he is known to have been enjoying the best of health less than a week ago.

**To Rest by Father.**  
Captain Hart will be buried in the family tomb on the Hart homestead, generally known as Hart's mill, at the north end of the Hart viaduct. The body will be prepared for burial at Mountain Park and brought to El Paso today or Wednesday. General Davis will accompany the body from Mountain Park.

General Davis yesterday wired to Maury Kemp, attorney for many years of the distinguished El Pasoan, asking that the necessary permit be secured from the city authorities for the burial of Captain Hart in the family tomb, stating that the aged man had many times expressed a desire to be laid to rest beside his father and mother and sisters and brothers who are buried there. This request was promptly complied with and all arrangements to carry out the wishes of the dead man were completed within a short time after news of his death had reached the city.

advantage afforded by the Sacred Heart academy in St. Louis, then, as now, one of the foremost girls' schools in the United States.

Captain Hart was active in charitable work, though his work was carried on in a quiet and unostentatious manner. It is said of him that no one ever went to him for assistance and was turned away if there was any merit to the appeal.

**Born in 1856.**  
The distinguished El Pasoan was connected with many of the most prominent families in Mexico through his mother, who was a daughter of Leonardo Siguros, at one time one of the leading figures in political and financial circles of the state of Chihuahua.

Captain Hart was born in El Paso on June 24, 1856. He first saw the light of day in the northwest room of the Hart homestead, now a landmark in the history of the southwest. He often expressed the wish that he might be permitted to die in the room where he was born. This, however, was denied him, but his body will lie in the family tomb, near the mill, beside those of his parents, sisters and brothers. This was his dying request and oft repeated wish.

**Was College Professor.**

At the age of 13 years young Hart entered the Christian Brothers college, and remained there until he had completed his education, receiving the degree in civil engineering. At the conclusion of his study he was given a position on the faculty of the college, and for a number of years held the chair of mathematics and Greek. While engaged in this work young Hart, in order to add to his meager salary as professor, devoted a great deal of his time to writing plays for class entertainments, at which he acquired considerable fame. It was while a professor at the college that he undertook the education of his four sisters in the Sacred Heart college.

In 1874 Captain Hart and his schoolmate, Professor G. C. Carrera, went to Leadville, Colorado, where the silver excitement at that camp was at its height and remained there for about three years. It was while there that young Hart was called back to El Paso by the death of his sister. There was no railroad in those days. The journey to El Paso meant a trip extending over a month across the desert and the mountains. The entire country was infested by hostile Indians. Nothing, however, daunted the young mining engineer. His heart was as strong as his young and powerful body. Buying a horse and buggy in Leadville, he set out alone on the long and perilous journey to his former home. He was on the road forty days.

**Went Into Mexico.**

Captain Hart's next enterprise was in Mexico. He obtained a contract for surveying several large haciendas in the state of Chihuahua, among which was the Carralito properties, among the largest land holdings in the entire republic of Mexico. He remained in Mexico until this work was completed and then again returned to El Paso. He later became manager of the big gold-mining property at Ocampo, Chihuahua, owned by the famous Senator Tabor of Leadville fame.

In 1882 Captain Hart, through patriotic motives, became interested in the El Paso Morning Times, then a source of constant loss to its owners. Captain Hart believed in El Paso, and in common with other faithful residents of the city felt the Times was necessary to the growth and development of the city. He gave his time and money freely to the enterprise, at intervals purchasing out other stockholders until he was able to bear up under the financial strain involved, finally becoming sole owner of the newspaper.

**Recalled Volunteers.**

At the outbreak of the Spanish-American war, Mr. Hart applied for and received authority to recruit a company of volunteers and was commissioned captain. Although the company did not get any further than El Paso, Captain Hart was detached from his command and detailed to special duty to Cuba on account of his familiarity with the Spanish language. He acted as an interpreter for General Shafter at the surrender of Santiago. Later he was detailed to the post of Major General Fitzhugh Lee, and received the commission which placed him in the Cuba group of officers of the Cuban army which was in the island when finally captured.

After the war he returned to El Paso and resumed his duties as editor of the Times in 1895 when it was the only newspaper in the city.

**Many Eyes Are Wet.**

The news of Captain Hart's death came as a distinct shock to his scores of friends in El Paso and many eyes that had not for years round rolled in tears were dimmed as the story of his sudden demise passed quietly from lip to lip. This was especially true of members of the El Paso Pioneer association of which Captain Hart was permanent vice president, many of whom had been intimately associated with him throughout his entire life.

Judge Joseph Magoffin, his long friend of the captain and his constant companion for many years, appeared utterly dazed by news of the death of his friend, as was Prof. J. C. Carrera, former schoolmate and business associate of the dead man.

"The ties of love and affection of Damon and Pythias could not have equaled the bond of comradeship and friendship that has grown up between Captain Hart and myself through long and intimate association," said Professor Carrera, when informed of the captain's death. "We were more than brothers. I am stupified. Even the death of my beloved mother was no greater blow to me than the loss of my friend." Professor Carrera spoke from the bottom of his heart. His voice trembled so he could hardly make himself understood and the tears streamed down his face as he spoke of his affection for Captain Hart.

**Stunned by News.**

Thomas O'Keefe, boyhood friend of the dead man, likewise was stunned by the news, as was practically every one else in El Paso.

These were among the first to hear of Captain Hart's death.

Captain Hart, perhaps, enjoyed a wider acquaintance throughout the southwest than any other man who ever lived in this section. Being aggressive, and possessing an endless store of energy, he was identified with every forward movement in El Paso and surrounding country ever since he became old enough to take an interest in business and civic affairs. He was known from the City of Mexico to New York through his connection with mining in Mexico, Colorado, and the southwest. He was a power largely in politics, though himself was only a candidate for public office on one occasion, when about 22 years ago he entered the race for congress at the instant pleading of his friends.

**Self-Made Man.**

Captain Hart was in every sense a self-made man. His father, Simon Hart, at one time one of the wealthiest men in the southwest, and founder of Hart's mill, which for years ground all the wheat raised within a radius of 150 miles of El Paso, gave his entire fortune to the cause of the Confederacy. Young Hart, after graduating himself in the Christian Brothers college, St. Louis, attended the law of his four sisters, through the efforts they were given every educational

# OLD HART HOME IS SHROUDED IN SOLENN MAJESTY

Friends Quietly Await Coming of Man Who Will Be Buried Beside Father.

Dry-eyed, but grief-stricken, they await his coming out there by the river. Quietly they steal by the Hart place, and as they pass cast a glance now and then at the great house and the family tomb nearby. It is all out of place. The oldest house in the city, where the first American was born in El Paso, lies almost within the shadow of the tall buildings of progress. Street cars go clanging by not many feet away. And the roar of the city dwarfs other noises. But it is all out of place.

Juan Hart is coming home, to the home that is a part of a great city he helped to build, but, nevertheless, lies without the city in a quiet little niche of its own. And his friends along the river, men and women of Spanish blood, who knew him as a great and good man, are sadly waiting to say good-by.

**Impressive Structure.**

Lifelong friends of the deceased were awed yesterday afternoon as they entered the doors of Juan Hart's home. The great adobe building with its massive walls and Spanish style of architecture had been closed for several months while its owner was at his ranch, and when friends entered the dark rooms where Juan Hart had, as had his father and mother before him, they felt a solemn majesty about the place which the gloomy interior was seemingly not altogether the cause.

The house had been closed tightly and a thin coat of dust had gathered over the furnishings in the interior, but this went unnoticed as friends reverently touched the desk where Hart used to sit, the table where his meals were served and the favorite rocking chair.

In the study where the captain transacted a great deal of business, his desk and bookcases and papers were all as he had left them, never to return. Just above a small rack, standing next to the big roll-top desk, rested the captain's commission, which he won when he volunteered to join the Spanish-American war, and not only did this, but raised an entire company. Under the commission was the splendidly engraved sword.

**Where He Was Born.**

Entering the front room on the right side of the hall, the friends came into the chamber where the Texan was born. They viewed the four walls where Hart's father had died and his mother as well. Hung about the different walls of the house were pictures, some of which bore the print of a modern date, while others were made many years ago. They showed some of the greatest men of the southwest. Men who knew the captain well spoke of pictures of relatives of Hart 300 years old which were in some hidden place, safely stored away.

The house is built in the old Spanish style, but instead of a patio in the center is a great game room, where a massive pool table and all kinds of lounging tables and a great fireplace in one end invite the visitor to while an idle hour.

The house is one of the oldest in the

city, but remains one of the most dignified in appearance. It was a fitting residence for the first El Pasoan.

Outside is the grass and trees of the country, making the great, wide front porch a cool, shady spot.

From the rear, the river and Mexico may be seen well and "amigos" of the old man remembered the days when swiftly traveling revolutionary parties could be seen charging towards Juarez or sneaking slowly towards the city, taking advantage of every bit of cover that the arid Mexican soil allowed to spring up.