

Gus Momsen, Sr., E. P. Pioneer, Dies At Age Of 81

Made Home In City 60 Years

Gus Momsen, Sr., 81, who was in the foremost ranks of the early builders of El Paso, died at 1:20 p. m. Tuesday in his home at 1501 Magoffin Avenue.

He was known throughout the Southwest and in Mexico.

Mr. Momsen was ill about five years. He kept working until three years ago.

Baseball was his hobby. When games were being played here, Mr. Momsen would show up at his place of business with a handful of tickets and insist that his employes see the games. He would go only on Sundays, because they were not work days.

Mr. Momsen started working when he was 14.

He was a resident of El Paso for 61 years, coming here in 1881, on one of the first trains to run to the city. The railroads entered El Paso that year.

Mr. Momsen reached here without any money in his pockets, and often remarked that if he had had money he would have gone to Houston. But the railroads had built into El Paso, the town was booming and he wanted to look it over. He did and remained to become one of El Paso's outstanding and successful business men.

Survivors are three sons, Gus Momsen, Jr., Leo Momsen and Reuben Momsen, and five grandchildren, Miss Frances, Miss Margaret and Gus Momsen, III, children of Mr. and Mrs. Gus Momsen, Jr.; Leo Momsen, Jr. and Virginia Momsen, children of Mr. and Mrs. Leo Momsen.

Funeral arrangements were pending with Kaster and Maxon.



GUS MOMSEN, SR.

ADVICE WAS TO WORK HARD

Mr. Momsen's advice to those who asked for it was, "If you want to be successful, you will have to work."

Mr. Momsen said the best advice he ever received was from an uncle who sent him the money to come to this country. When he came to El Paso, this uncle told him if he ever needed help to write him. Mr. Momsen later wrote him for \$2000 with which to purchase an interest in a business and the uncle replied: "If you want that money, work and make it."

Mr. Momsen was born in Wky on the Island of Wkyfuhr, off the coast of Denmark. The island belonged to Denmark until 1864 when Germany took it over.

His uncle, whose name could not be recalled by relatives, left Wky to go to California, shortly before the gold rush days of '49. He joined the rush and prospected in the hills and mountains in the neighborhood of Sacramento.

CAME TO U. S.

WHEN 14

When Mr. Momsen was 14, his uncle sent him money for the passage to the United States. He reached California in 1875 and went to work for George H. Tay Company in San Francisco, a general merchandise and sheet metal store which is still in business.

Mr. Momsen was a sheet metal worker by trade, which he learned with the San Francisco company.

His first job in El Paso was with Henry Benecke, a general merchandise store in the 100 block on South Oregon Street.

Mr. Momsen's next job was with
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Fassett and Kelly, a retail hardware store.

Mr. Momsen remained with Fassett and Kelly until 1886, when he went into a retail hardware and sheet metal business for himself.

In 1895 Mr. Momsen formed a partnership with Richard K. Thorne, who came here from St. Louis and established the Evergreen Cemetery.

OPENED WHOLESALE BUSINESS IN 1902

The two started a wholesale business in the 800 block on Overland Street in 1902. Mr. Momsen bought out Mr. Thorne in 1905 and abandoned the retail business on Overland Street.

The first Overland Street build-

one-third the size of the present imposing reinforced concrete and steel fireproof structure, which was built in 1927.

Mr. Momsen was supplying the Southwest and Mexico, all the way to Mexico City, from the stocks in his store.

Momsen-Dunnegan-Ryan Company was organized in 1913 and Mr. Momsen was elected president, a position he held to the day of his death.

Mrs. Delia Lane, who operated a restaurant and rooming house on the present site of the First Mortgage Building, Sheldon and Oregon Streets, sent passage money to her cousin, Miss Katie Rowan, back in Ireland. Miss Rowan, then 17, came to El Paso to live with Mrs. Lane.

Mr. Momsen rented a room in Mrs. Lane's house, and he and Miss Rowan met and were married in 1892. Mrs. Momsen died in 1936.

WAS MEMBER OF MCGINTY BAND

Mr. Momsen played a flute in the old McGinty Band. He was a member of El Paso's Volunteer Fire Department and helped man the hose cart. Jim House, Mr. Momsen's bookkeeper, was chief of the department. Mr. Momsen was boss in the store, but whenever there was a fire, Mr. House commandeered the delivery wagon, which was drawn by one horse, and rattled off.

Mr. Momsen was president of El Paso Baseball Club about 10 years ago.