

Death Takes City Builder

H. T. Ponsford Dies At Age Of 75

Funeral arrangements are pending at the Barry Hagedorn Funeral Home for Henry Thomas Ponsford, El Paso contractor and pioneer civic leader.

Mr. Ponsford died last night in a hospital. He had been ill for several months. He was 75.

Mr. Ponsford's activities as a builder were not confined to brick, stone and lumber. He took his place in the young days of El Paso in civic responsibilities and applied his principles of honesty and fair dealing to the character building problems of the City. He served on numerous boards and was one of the organizers of the Y. M. C. A.

Mr. Ponsford came to El Paso with his wife and three children in March, 1897, from St. Thomas, Ont., Can., seeking a climate for relief from asthma. He was en route to Las Cruces, the town recommended by his doctor. He liked El Paso at once, stayed, and did not visit Las Cruces for a number of years afterward.

A Canadian citizen then, Mr. Ponsford immediately applied for American citizenship, when he decided El Paso would be his home. He was a member of a family of 15 children. His father was a contractor in Southampton, Eng. Mr. Ponsford had engaged in the building business in St. Thomas with three brothers. He began contract-

(Continued on Page 12, Col. 5)

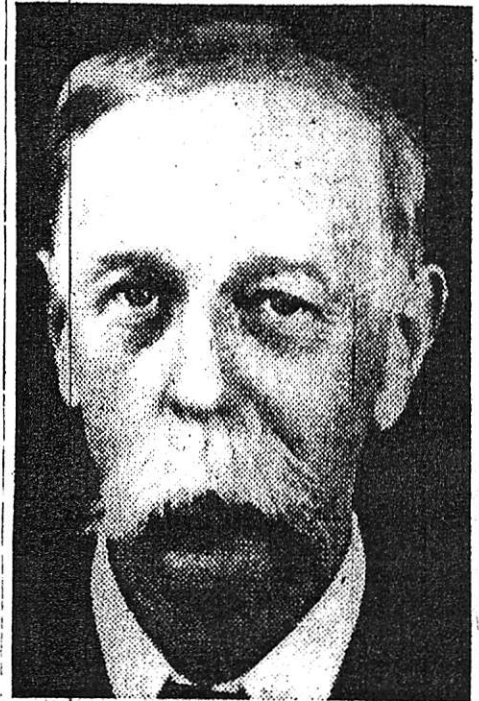
Death Takes City Builder

(Continued From Page One)

ing in El Paso in 1901. He organized H. T. Ponsford and Sons 15 years later.

First to Build Homes

Mr. Ponsford was the first man in El Paso to build houses for home buyers on the basis of monthly payments. It was his idea, based on



H. T. Ponsford

his personal belief in thrift. During his entire life he had encouraged thrift as the secret of proper and happy living.

Mr. Ponsford was a strong friend of union labor and was the only living member of the International Bricklayers Union holding a gold life membership card. The card was presented to him at a ceremony in the Hussmann Hotel with the mayor and leading El Paso citizens taking part.

Mr. Ponsford was a director in the International Brick Co., owned by the International Bricklayers Union, since it was organized.

He built the first apartment house in El Paso, the Brazos. Other buildings which he erected in former days include: the Y. M. C. A., the Milner and Linden hotels, the old First Baptist Church, now the Magoffin Avenue Baptist Church, the Lydia Patterson Institute, the old Trinity Methodist Church, the S. T. Turner home at 1301 Montana street, the former W. W. Turney home on Montana street, now home for Bundles for Britain; the Douglass School and additions to Beall, Alamo, Franklin and Aoy schools.

Some of His Activities

Mr. Ponsford was a past president of the Y. M. C. A., which he helped organize. He was honorary chairman of the Protestant Southwestern Children's Home board of directors. He had served on the board of the old El Paso Children's Home, Methodist orphanage and forerunner of Southwestern. The home was one of his pet interests. He took a personal interest in its affairs and the placement of the children and gave much of his time to advice and consultation in its operation.

Member of the Masonic Hospital board, he was its first president, serving from 1922 to 1935.

Mr. Ponsford was an honorary director of the Radford School for Girls and served previously as director when the school was the El Paso School for Girls. He was a director in the old City National and Rio Grande Valley Bank. He was a director in the First Federal Savings and Loan Assn., and was board chairman. He was that institution's past president and served as its president when it was the People's Building and Loan Assn.

Council Of Defense

During World War No. 1, Mr. Ponsford was a member of the executive committee of the Council of Defense. He served on all the Liberty Loan committees.

In Masonry, he was a member of Fraternity Lodge No. 1111, a Knight Commander of the Court of Honor in the Scottish Rite, a Knight Templar and a member of El Maida Temple of the Shrine. He was a member of the Odd Fellows Lodge.

Mr. Ponsford was a member of the board of stewards of the Trinity Methodist Church and had been a steward since 1916. He took a keen interest in the church's progress and gave it generous support.

His activities in El Paso charities were generous and carried on quietly.

His friends today spoke of Mr. Ponsford's "unswerving honesty" and "uncompromising devotion to principle."

"He was of unfaltering spirit and he knew the joy of living," said H. L. Birney, an old friend.

A genial man with a quiet sense of humor, Mr. Ponsford enjoyed bird hunting and in former days visited Southwest mesas. One of his hunting friends was the late Rev. Percy Knickerbocker, a pastor of the Methodist Church.

Mr. Ponsford's late wife, the former Miss Kate Jordan of St. Thomas, daughter of an English sea captain, was a native of Canterbury, Kent, Eng. Mrs. Ponsford died in March, 1933.

The couple's children are: Henry J. Ponsford, Walter T. Ponsford, Emanuel E. Ponsford, Albert E. Ponsford and George A. Ponsford; Dr. Pearl Ponsford, Mrs. B. W. Tapper, Mrs. Bennett M. Wilson and Mrs. Harold Tillman, all of El Paso.