

Colonel Satterthwaite, Pioneer Pasoan, Is Dead

Man Who Bought Sunset Heights for \$700 Was Well Known Among Early Settlers Here.

By LLEW H. DAVIS

DEATH of Col. John Fisher Satterthwaite, pioneer El Pasoan, in San Diego, Dec. 30, recalls to many old-time residents how Sunset Heights, now one of the most valuable residential districts in the city, at one time changed hands for \$700—not enough to buy even one building site now. It was in 1878 that Colonel Satterthwaite came to El

Paso from New York on a visit. While here the administrator of the Hart estate asked him to loan \$700 on some property. He did and when the loan was not repaid he took over the land, later cutting it up into a residential section. It was then known as Satterthwaite Addition.

Colonel Satterthwaite's death was the indirect result of being struck by a hit and run driver in San Diego three years ago. He was thought killed at the time, but later recovered, although during the last year of his life he was unable to use his legs. He was 87 years old.

Satterthwaite, born in Nutley, N. J., was a member of one of the oldest and wealthiest colonial families. When 17 years of age, he located in New York City, entered various enterprises and joined the famous Seventh New York regiment at the outset of the Civil war.

At Bull Run.

Among the battles in which he participated were those of Bull Run. Once, while on a leave of absence, he was captured by Confederate scouts a few miles out of Washington, D. C. He made his escape at night and returned to his regiment.

Following the war, he made various investments in New York and was successful on the stock exchange, where he accumulated a large fortune.

Accepting an invitation to visit the Batopilas mines in western Chihuahua, then the richest silver property in the world, he made the trip there in 1878-9. He came by stage coach from the terminus of the Santa Fe railroad to El Paso, traveling "Jornada del Muerto," the perilous journey of death, dangerous as a result of constant attacks by Apaches.

It was while in El Paso enroute to Mexico that he made the transaction with the Hart estate.

By Stage.

Proceeding to Chihuahua by stage coach, he became a guest of Governor Luis Terrazas. From Chihuahua, he made the long journey, partly by stage and mostly by dangerous trails on mule-back, to Batopilas, where he was royally entertained by "Bosa" Shepard. While on his journey back, he was persuaded to take an option on a "rich" mine. He put up a forfeit of about \$1,000, agreeing to send the balance later. Learning from American mining men that the mine was valueless, he sent word to the

owner that he would not pay the remainder. This angered the Mexican officer who obtained a warrant for his arrest, and sent a squad of soldiers to capture him. Warned of this, he bought the fleetest horse in the city and rode night and day, closely pursued, to Chihuahua. Governor Terrazas kept him concealed in his mansion until nightfall. Furnished with fast horses, Satterthwaite and his son, Juan Terrazas, hurried north to catch a stage. They arrived in Paso del Norte safely, a few minutes ahead of the pursuers and forded the river to El Paso. Together, he and young Terrazas journeyed back to St. Louis. They became life-long friends.

Learning that the two transcontinental railroads were being constructed and would make El Paso terminal centers, he returned here in March, 1880 and laid plans to survey and plot his land.

He named the tract Satterthwaite Addition. It was one of the most barren and unpromising pieces of land in the southwest, nearly all igneous and sedimentary rocks with little soil. Among the streets he made are West Missouri, Upson, North Santa Fe and North Oregon streets. Returning the next winter, he began erecting cottages which he sold to new comers. Altogether, he built about 100 houses within a few years after the advent of the railroads. Many of them remain as landmarks, monuments to his enterprise. For a few years, there was a great deal of activity in real estate lasting to the early 90's, and followed by a panic and lull. During this dull period, he lost large sums in the stock market. He was compelled to borrow about \$25,000 from the Texas Land Bank Mortgage Company, giving the unsold parts of his addition as security. After making desperate efforts to raise money to redeem the land, he failed, and it was sold under foreclosure. The Texas Land Bank company tried for years to sell it. Finally, it was sold for less than they had loaned. Another real estate boom followed completion of the El Paso Southwestern railroad. The purchasers resurveyed the land, naming it the Sunset Heights Addition. The property lost by Satterthwaite now is by actual assessment valued at

more than two and a half million dollars.

Although Satterthwaite became financially ruined and lost all his El Paso holdings, yet he lived to see his dream and vision of the future realized. As remarked by Sam J. Freudenthal, one of his best liked pioneer friends "Satterthwaite was the most progressive citizen of whom El Paso could boast in those days and had a vision of the future city it has become."

Was Handsome.

An unusually handsome man, aristocratic and Chesterfieldian in manner, he was thoroughly democratic. His personal magnetism drew all classes to him. Famous gun men, such as Studenmire, the Mannings, and bankers, capitalists, gamblers, sporting people, and millionaires, like the late Senator George Hearst, Jay Gould, Senator Washburne, and others, were his guests here. Once, he was nominated for mayor, but declined in favor of Robert Lightbody. For years, he was street and park commissioner, serving without pay. He drilled the first hole in El Paso for artesian water near the old reservoir, on Sunset Heights. Cleveland Square, the City Library square, Providence Hospital, the Masonic Temple are landmarks on Satterthwaite Addition. He made the barren tract of San Jacinto plaza a spot of beauty, planting trees, making lawns and the fountain, in which he put the first alligators. This beautiful park should be his perpetual memorial. In a recent letter to the writer, he stated he had a nice letter from the Rev. Clarence H. Horner, rector of St. Clements church, reminding him that the church was thankful for his giving them the land to build the church on in early days.



In the upper picture, Col. John Fisher Satterthwaite, pioneer El Pasoan, is shown as he appeared in El Paso in the '90's. The lower picture shows Colonel Satterthwaite as he appeared in a wheel chair in San Diego, Cal., shortly before his death.