

## Hopeful heirs of oil tycoon search for proof of lineage

Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Hundreds of would-be heirs to a Texas oil baron's supposedly unclaimed fortune are besieging county offices across southern West Virginia, searching for records they hope will make them instant millionaires.

It was enough Tuesday to prompt Summers County deputy clerk Rachel Adkins to wish that reclusive tycoon James Meadows had never been born.

"Right now, I do, I really do," Adkins said. "It's really been a circus here. Our vaults are packed with people looking through documents. There's been 50 to 60 people here a day, asking for birth certificates and land records."

Adkins said her office has sold more than \$3,000 worth of birth and death certificate copies so far this month.

The fortune-seekers recount tales of Meadows dying forgotten and alone in a mental hospital in Texas

in 1939, leaving behind an unclaimed estate worth billions. He also left behind a vague family tree that includes some of the largest clans in West Virginia and Kentucky.

But Richard Ferris, a lawyer

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handling a suit for about 160 purported heirs, said Tuesday that Meadows died in 1939 in Pittsburgh.

A growing number of would-be heirs are claiming a share of the take in federal court in Beaumont, Texas. Officials there are skeptical.

The oil developer's estate reportedly included a one-eighth interest in the Spindletop oil field, and the promise of instant wealth has spread like wildfire through West Virginia's unemployment-plagued hills.

Ferris said the first step in any claim is to establish that Meadows indeed owned a share in the oil field, something that has yet to be accepted by a court. He said no one knows how much the man was really worth.

Adkins said county document books are falling apart from overuse, and her office has had to hire an additional worker to do nothing but make out duplicate birth certificates.

Determining ancestry is complicated because the tycoon's forebears alternately spelled their name Meador, Meadors, Meadow and Meadows, and some also married into the Lilly clan, one of southern West Virginia's biggest families.

## LBJ's birthday commemorated

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Lyndon B. Johnson's 77th birthday was commemorated Tuesday during a brief disk ceremony at the LBJ Monument beside the Potomac River.

Johnson, the 38th president, died in 1973.

"When activism is wanted again, as one day it will be, the tremendous example of Lyndon Johnson will be its reference point," said former White House assistant Harry McPherson in a speech. "When government is seen once more not as the problem but as society's instrument of doing good for the greatest number, LBJ, the consummate man of government, will be remembered

with gratitude and admiration. So I believe."

About 70 people, including former U.S. Senator from Kentucky John Sherman Cooper, former Missouri Congressman James Symington and several officials in the Johnson administration watched as a red, white and blue flower wreath was laid at the base of the pink slab of Texas granite that stands in tribute to Johnson.

The monument is in the LBJ Memorial Grove in Lady Bird Johnson Park, across the Potomac from the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials.

After the wreath-laying and McPherson's speech, American Indian singer Pale Moon Rose sang "Amazing Grace." Then the group retired to drink punch and exchange stories as recorded cowboy music played and jets taking off from National Airport in nearby Virginia roared overhead.

McPherson said the event, sponsored by the Texas State Society in Washington, is held every year, but it was the first time he had taken part.

"I suppose it's to think on him and kind of share our thoughts on him as somebody who was really an enormous force in all our lives," said McPherson, "and who did quite a lot of good for the country in the view of most of the people around here."

## NBC, CBS tie up in Nielsen ratings

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — With the summer season of reruns and short-run shows closing, NBC and CBS came to a draw in the Nielsen ratings for the week ended Aug. 25, stopping NBC's domination that began in June.

CBS actually came out ahead in terms of percentage of viewers, according to figures released Tuesday by the A.C. Nielsen Co.

In overall rating averages for the week, CBS had 12.6, or 10.6 million households, which NBC matched. But CBS polled a 23 average share, or percentage of viewers, while NBC drew 22. ABC had an 11.8 rating, or

10 million households, and a 21 share.

NBC had five of the Top 10 shows last week, CBS had four and ABC had one.

NBC, which depended on reruns of hit programs such as "The Cosby Show," "Family Ties," and "Miami Vice," had led the ratings race all summer long.

The Top 10 shows for the week ended Aug. 25:

"The Cosby Show," NBC, first; "Family Ties," NBC, second; "Kate & Allie," CBS, third; "Newhart," CBS, fourth; "Miami Vice," NBC, fifth; "Cheers," NBC, sixth; "60 Minutes," CBS, seventh; "Night

Court," NBC, eighth; "Magruder and Loud," ABC, ninth; "Circus of the Stars," CBS, tenth.

In the network news race, "NBC Nightly News" was in third place for the eighth consecutive week. The "CBS Evening News" was first place with a 10.3 rating, ABC's "World News Tonight" was second with 9.1 and "Nightly News" was third with 8.5.

The bottom five shows were ABC's "Rock 'n' Roll Summer Action" at 56th; "Our Time," NBC, 57th; "ABC Thursday Night Movie — Meteor," 58th; "Punky Brewster," NBC, 59th; and "Ripley's Believe It Or Not," ABC, at 60th.

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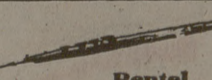
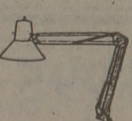
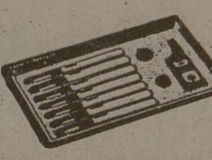



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