

f. Post
11-30-74 **Billionaire H.L. Hunt dies**

DALLAS (AP) — H.L. Hunt, who liked to picture himself as a one-time farm boy with a fifth-grade education, died Friday after a lifetime during which he accumulated one of the world's great fortunes.

He was 85 and had been in Baylor Hospital here since September. He entered the hospital because of a flu virus. The family did not immediately report the cause of his death.

Hunt once was known as a big-time gambler, particularly on sports events. But he stopped gambling, smoking and drinking in his later years. Lights in his home generally were out by 10 p.m.

Liberals considered him a symbol of the far right and of big business. Conservatives lauded him.

Hunt himself preferred to be known as a constructive, not a conservative. He said the money he spent was aimed at better government. He once told a national television audience on a talk show that the last really good president was Calvin Coolidge.

He sponsored such radio programs as Life Line and Facts Forum, wrote a

newspaper column with the help of a ghost writer, and published numerous books. One book was his own, called "Alpaca" about a mythical country for which he wrote what he considered the perfect constitution.

No one knew just how much he was worth. Hunt himself probably didn't even know although he kept close watch on the dollars. He once was quoted as saying that anyone who knew how rich he was wasn't very rich.

His fortune has been estimated at around \$2 billion, placing him in the financial atmosphere of such men as oilman J. Paul Getty and Howard Hughes.

Asked his secret for making money, Hunt would say, "You have to be lucky. You have to be of an acquisitive nature, aggressive and thrifty."

He was born Feb. 17, 1889, on a farm at Ramsey, Ill., youngest of eight children of a Confederate war veteran.

Hunt quit school in the fifth grade and roamed the country, working as a farm hand, lumberjack and cowboy.

His father died five years later and left him less than \$5,000. Hunt parlayed that into what Getty has called the largest independent oil fortune in the nation.

He bought a plantation in Arkansas mostly for taxes and debts but when oil was discovered in that state he headed for the oil fields.

By the end of 1920, he was reputed to be a millionaire but his big riches were still ahead.

These came from the East Texas oil field, greatest ever found to that time. He chugged along muddy, cut-up oil field roads in a Model T ford, buying and selling oil leases and watching over his drilling rigs.

Then like many East Texas oilmen, he moved to Dallas. He built an outsize copy of George Washington's Potomac home overlooking a lake within the city. He, too, named his home Mount Vernon.

Primarily an oilman, he later went into such businesses as pecans, asphalt, canned chickens, roses, a line of health foods — he became a faddist — and cosmetics.