



Photo by Troy Graham

**FRANZ ANTHOEFER** talks to reporters Thursday after Lewis County Circuit Court Judge Thomas H. Keadle ruled in favor of his petition to exhume the remains of Louis Craig. Anthoefer wants to have DNA tests done to establish that Craig was his father.

## Court Approves Exhumation For DNA Tests to Settle Paternity

By TROY GRAHAM

**WESTON** - About fifty people, several news agencies, and three television crews packed the Lewis County Circuit Court yesterday to get a first hand look at Franz Anthoefer, and to see his incredible saga come one step closer to its conclusion.

By now, most of northcentral West Virginia has heard of the German man and his quest to find his American father, whom he believes to be the late Louis Craig, a lawyer and former mayor of Weston. In 1972 a young Anthoefer gathered enough evidence to lead him to determine that Craig was his father. He came to Weston only to discover that Craig had died just five weeks previously. Over the next 25

years, Anthoefer continued to research his father's life, while establishing paternity in a German court. However, he failed to establish paternity in an American court, which he felt was like denying him his past. Then, with the development of DNA testing, Anthoefer found a new and apparently infallible avenue for establishing that Louis Craig was his father.

Yesterday's hearing, to determine if Anthoefer would be allowed to exhume the body of Louis Craig, obtain a DNA sample, and then bury the prominent Weston man's remains, drew the interest of the community, who were not disappointed by proceedings.

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## ...Court

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When Anthoefer was called to the stand, several people remarked how closely he resembled Craig, and then the audience listened intently as the man recounted his life's story. When his lawyer, Gale E. Carroll, asked him if Craig was living when he found him, Anthoefer answered "no" and buried his face in his hands, overcome with emotion.

Ms. Carroll also called M. William Adler, who interviewed Anthoefer upon his first visit to Weston in 1972, to the stand. Adler stated that he was skeptical of Anthoefer's story at first, but when he noticed Anthoefer's distinctive walk and stance he knew that the young man was telling the truth. Anthoefer suffers from a bone disorder that gives him a slight limp - the same limp and the same affliction that Craig had.

With all of the evidence and interest in this case, it would have been difficult for Judge Thomas H. Keadle to rule against the petition. Judge Keadle gave a fair ruling, stating that a pathologist, a licensed funeral director, and a minister must be on hand when Craig's remains are exhumed, to insure that it is done in a "dignified and reverent manner." He also required that Anthoefer file a \$5,000 bond to cover costs.

After the ruling, Anthoefer said, "I'm very relieved. I think tomorrow when I wake up I'll finally know it's not a dream. I want to get this done as soon as possible."

Over the next several weeks Anthoefer will be organizing the disinterment, and the taking of a three inch section of the femur which will be used for the DNA tests. It will then take about six weeks to get the results.

After the results come in, the story will continue as Anthoefer will attempt to get his long anticipated citizenship. If he succeeds, he has expressed an interest in the law and politics, in order to follow in his father's footsteps.