

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

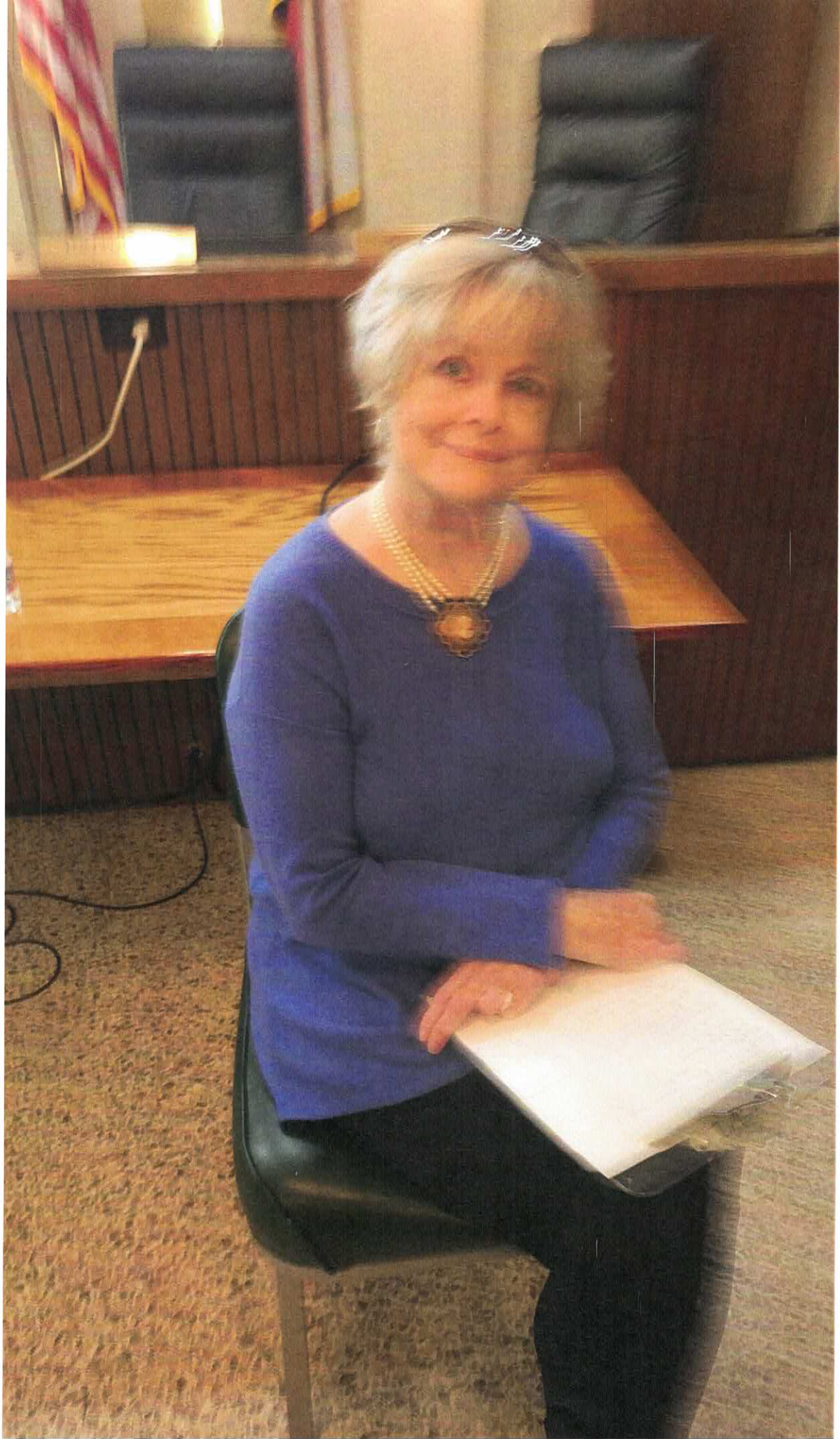
*The
Kerr County Historical Commission
presents*

An ORAL HISTORY

Of

*Beverly Peterson
Sullivan*

Kerrville, Texas 2018



Kerr County Historical Commission

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Beverly Peterson Sullivan

Interviewers: Francelle Robison Collins
Bonnie Pipes Flory

Date: December 11, 2018

Place: Kerr County Courthouse
Kerrville, Texas

*The Oral History Project is a project of
The Kerr County Historical Commission,
a volunteer organization. Oral History
Committee chair is Francelle Robison Collins.*

Transcribed and Edited by Rita Edington Odom

Kerr County Historical Commission

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Name: Beverly Peterson Sullivan

Date of Birth: November 26, 1939

Place of Birth: San Antonio, Texas

Education: Tivy High School
Southwest Texas College

Father: William Henry Beuershausen (biological)
Charles Peterson

Mother: Mabel Violet Neal Peterson

Spouse: John Sullivan

Children: John Michael Sullivan II
Bridget-Marie Sullivan Cindrich
Molly Quinn Sullivan Fischel

SUMMARY

Beverly Peterson was born in San Antonio, Texas and moved to Kerrville when she was 4 years old. She is a member of the prominent Peterson family who were responsible for building the Sid Peterson Hospital and establishing the Peterson Foundation. Beverly and her husband (deceased) have 3 children and Beverly has many wonderful memories of Kerrville growing up that have extended to this day. She is still making memories. Her memories of growing up in Kerrville and of her family are as delightful as she is, which makes this oral history a very special one.

**An Oral History of
Beverly Peterson Sullivan**

My name is Francelle Robison Collins and I am with the Kerr County Historical Commission, Oral History Project. Today is December 11, 2018, and I am here at the Kerr County Courthouse in Kerrville, Texas, with Bonnie Pipes Floury. We are talking with Beverly Peterson Sullivan, who understands that we are making audio and video recordings of this interview and that a typewritten transcript of this interview will be provided so that changes can be made. The audio and video tapes, however, cannot be edited. This information along with copies of any family pictures and documents provided by you will then be turned over to the Kerr Regional History Center, Schreiner University, and the University of North Texas' Portals to Texas History, where they will be available to the public unless specific restrictions are placed on them by you. These restrictions will be noted in the Release form after you have had a chance to review your manuscript. Are you clear on what we are doing today?

BEVERLY: Yes, I am.

FRANCELLE: What is your given name?

BEVERLY: My name is Beverly Peterson Sullivan

FRANCELLE: When and where were you born?

BEVERLY: I was born in San Antonio on November 26, 1939.

FRANCELLE: In a hospital there?

BEVERLY: No. I was born at home.

FRANCELLE: So, your family was living there.

BEVERLY: Yes. That was with my biological father and my mother was Violet Neal Beuershausen Peterson and she married Charlie Peterson when I was about 4 and he became my much beloved father.

FRANCELLE: Do you have any siblings?

BEVERLY: No, I don't.

FRANCELLE: What was your father's name?

BEVERLY: My biological father was William Henry Beuershausen. But he didn't really have any part in my raising. It was Charlie

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

FRANCELLE: Where was he from?

BEVERLY: He was at that time, I think, from Sabinal.

FRANCELLE: What was his occupation?

BEVERLY: Photography.

FRANCELLE: And you like photography, too, don't you?

BEVERLY: Well, I dabbled at it.

FRANCELLE: What was your mother's name?

BEVERLY: It was actually Mabel Violet but she would just as soon have the Mabel forgotten. She was named after her grandmother, so her name was Mabel Violet Neal, but she always went by Violet.

FRANCELLE: Where was she born?

BEVERLY: She was born in Uvalde, I believe.

FRANCELLE: What can you tell us about your mother?

BEVERLY: She could charm the bark off of a tree. She was very talented. She could hear a song once and play it on the piano. She could sew anything. She was multi-talented. She was just very charming.

FRANCELLE: Did you know any of your grandparents?

BEVERLY: Yes, I did. Actually, my mother's mother lived, I guess I was almost forty when she died. Myrta Peterson died when I was in about the sixth grade. I didn't know Sid. He died before I was born.

FRANCELLE: Tell us about Charlie Peterson.

BEVERLY: Charlie Peterson was the second of 3 Peterson brothers from that branch of the Petersons. His parents were Sid Peterson and Myrta Peterson although for some reason in our family we called her Carrie but everyone else called her Aunt Myrt. The brothers, Charlie and Uncle Boss (Hal Peterson) built the hospital because their father had to go to San Antonio with all his heart problems and he died there. So, they built Sid Peterson Memorial Hospital, now Sid Peterson Regional Medical Center. So, they built the hospital to honor their father.

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

FRANCELLE: There were 2 brothers?

BEVERLY: There were 3 brothers. Uncle Boss (Hal) and Charlie were the 2 that were involved in everything together – all the business. Uncle Joe, he went off and did his own thing. But he was a jokester, funniest, funniest man. If he would hear that they were going to stop making a particular product that he liked, like Campbell's Tomato Soup, he would go buy out the store. His pantry was filled with whatever he thought they were going to stop making. And Uncle Boss was the businessman of the trio. Charlie was the very laid back, gentleman. Everybody loved Charlie. He was very gentle. He lived for family, fishing and hunting. His 3 big interests.

FRANCELLE: How did your mother meet him?

BEVERLY: Actually, she was working for his cousin, Carl Peterson. And he came in and that was it for both of them.

FRANCELLE: So, he hadn't been married before.

BEVERLY: Yes, he had, actually.

FRANCELLE: Do you have any step-siblings?

BEVERLY: No.

FRANCELLE: The hospital opened in '48, correct?

BEVERLY: I believe it was '49

FRANCELLE: It was very important in this community.

BEVERLY: Yes, it was. But more than just the hospital because the first floor was strictly businesses. It had a big open gas station. And the great thing about that gas station was – this was before cars had air conditioning – there was this huge hose that came down from the ceiling and they would put it in your car while you were getting your gas and it would cool the air. And other than that the only air conditioning you had for your car was you had canvas bags of water that you would hang on your window and if you were going west across the desert, that supposedly cooled the passengers.

FRANCELLE: I think you told me one time that if you ever had an illness, Charlie would bring you a doll.

BEVERLY: There was a drugstore in town called Pachecks. And Joe Pacheck had an enormous assortment of Madame Alexander dolls. Every time I was sick (and I don't know

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

how many times I just put on being sick so I could get a doll) but every time I was sick he would go down and get the latest Madame Alexander doll. So, I had just about every Madame Alexander doll that you could possibly have.

FRANCELLE: Tell us a little about the workings of the hospital, how they got it started.

BEVERLY: The brothers were so involved in it. And with the first floor being businesses – there was a beauty shop – but the main thing that all the kids in town loved was that downstairs they had a store, I think they called it the Goodyear Store and they sold ice boxes and appliances but the big thing was they had a big record store. You could go in and pick any record and play it to your heart's content and then leave. It was a great thing.

FRANCELLE: What age were you when Charlie passed away?

BEVERLY: I was fourteen.

FRANCELLE: Where did you start school?

BEVERLY: I've always been in Kerrville schools. There was a little school on Clay Street. I think it was associated with First Christian Church and it was Ms. Rosalie Wright's Kindergarten. And most of the kids that I was in Kindergarten with I graduated with in 1958. That was one of the blessings of Kerrville, you just had your group. They didn't have public Kindergarten at that time. And then I started school at Tivy Elementary. And then, when I was in fourth grade they opened up Starkey Elementary. So, they split us up and that was hard because some friends went to school on one side of town and some on the other. But we all came back together for Jr. Hi.

FRANCELLE: Were you in the first group that went to Starkey?

BEVERLY: Yes. I was in fourth grade. At that time elementary was fourth, fifth and sixth.

FRANCELLE: Do you remember any of your teachers along the way?

BEVERLY: There was Ms. Forvilly, she was fourth grade, there was Ms. Gary, she was fifth grade. There were some wonderful teachers. Teachers back then were allowed to teach. They didn't have so many restrictions like they do now. So, we all have fond memories of most of our teachers from first grade on. Ms. Hahn was my first-grade teacher and she was much loved.

FRANCELLE: When you got to Tivy, what were you involved in there?

BEVERLY: Unfortunately, I had the reputation...my friend Elizabeth Holdsworth who started with me in Kindergarten says the main thing she remembers about me at Tivy is that I was never in class. I was always walking the hall, looking important with a sheaf full of papers in my arms. She's probably right. But at Tivy, I was editor of The Tatler. The Tivy Tatler was a big deal. That was the Tivy newspaper that printed all the gossip that was fit to be printed, all the parties and activities. I was in band. We had more fun than anybody else in the whole wide world. It was just such an innocent time. We had a great time. We all hung out at The Grove where River Hills (I think) is now. We all had to go to The Grove and have corny dogs. Of course, at that time you could get your driver's license when you were fourteen. I think there were either 4 or 5 written tests that you had to take, and I ended up having to take all of them because I never passed one until I took it a second time. But my friend, Cynthia Brehmer had a wreck when she took her driver's license test, so I didn't think I was so bad. She claims it was not her fault.

FRANCELLE: Mr. Zapalak was the driving tester; I remember his name.

BEVERLY: That's right. And another thing we had at Tivy; the girls had a little secret sorority. It was not really affiliated with the school, but it was – we were The Dirty Bad Girls of FAT. And I cannot remember what FAT stood for. But I remember The Dirty Bad Girls and the initiation was swallowing raw eggs. It was important. Sometimes we'd be taken out to what was Schreiner Institute and being thrown out of the car in our pajamas. We'd be lying down on the lawn at one of the boy's dorms – it was just boys then. It was great.

FRANCELLE: Did the boys see you out there?

BEVERLY: I hope so.

FRANCELLE: Did you have some other notes that you wanted to talk about?

BEVERLY: The forties, during the war years, of course were formative years for us. And the main thing I remember about that is always being told I had to eat the crust off of the bread because there were starving children in Armenia. It never occurred to me to ask how my eating the crust of the bread was going to help the children in Armenia. And there was no air conditioning in the cars or the houses, but you could buy a house, a really nice house for about twelve thousand dollars. You could buy a really nice car for about two thousand. I think gas was about twenty cents a gallon. So, a few changes like that. Oh, and we would have milk and dry cleaning delivered to their doorstep. Everything was so different. I mentioned Charlie bought me my first pet. He came in the door and he had a little bulge in his coat pocket and out came this little terrier dog named Woofus. And little Woofus participated at this very courthouse where we had pet parades when all the

children in town would bring their little pets and parade them around – rabbits, cats, dogs. That was really special. So, when I was walking up here today I was remembering walking my little Woofus around. And I remember something called “potted meat”. I remember standing in Schreiner’s grocery store and Mrs. Real, Irene Fisher Womack’s grandmother, and my mother talking about the wonder of “potted meat”. And the Cascade swimming pool, Torres’ Tortilla Factory – those were just so important. And then – our family was very family oriented. If we were not with one of the Peterson brothers, we were with the cousins which included some of the other Petersons, the Pattons, the Johnstons. Our Sunday activity was taking a long drive through the countryside. That was just our entertainment. Of course, because Charlie was a big hunter and fisherman, and he tried really, really hard to toughen me up. So, we would go out to the Peterson farm for hunting birds and deer and when they would shoot birds he would make me go pick up this little warm body and I would go sobbing back to the station wagon. Dash Peterson and I would be in the back of the station wagon, but I would have to pick up those little warm bodies. I also remember that Charlie could hunt with a slingshot. I remember him slinging that slingshot (it was the slinging kind) actually kill a deer with it. One thing I thought in later years about that was special – we had a gardener named Joe Pruneda and he had been a foot soldier in Pancho Villa’s army. I thought that was really, really something. And then, one special warm memory I have of Charlie was when he taught me to ride a bike – we were living at 506 Elm Street and there’s that big tree in the middle of Elm Street still – the route we would take was from our house to that tree and back with him running alongside of me when I was trying to learn to ride a bike. That’s a special memory for me. And then later when we lived in the big house on the hill I remember the year that it snowed so big, walking over to the Johnston’s house.

FRANCELLE: What was the big house on the hill. Where was that?

BEVERLY: That was Virginia Drive. That was when Starkey was just being developed. When we were building the house, they were building Starkey Elementary at the same time and people would stop by because they thought our house was the school, it was so rambling. That was in the forties. And then, as we moved into the teenage years in the fifties, things got more interesting. But it was a simple time. The fifties were a great time to be a teenager. And we could not wait to leave when we were eighteen. And then as we began to have our own families, most of us have come back now so we have this wonderful group from the class of 1958, many of whom we started out together in Kindergarten. Activities at Tivy High School, as I said, the newspaper. Schreiner boys, they were a really big thing too because at that time they had a high school and junior college at Schreiner Institute. And there was something about those uniforms that really captured our attention. We enjoyed the Schreiner boys. It could have been rather traumatic or, in retrospect, just funny. The JC’s every year sponsored a rodeo. And you had your JC Court. The year that I was

a princess, I had my own horse. I don't know why I wasn't riding her, she was a palomino, but they brought in a horse from the Peterson farm for me to ride in the parade and all went well, no problem. That night, in Antler Stadium, we all lined up on our horses and my escort was Karl Ransleben and he was riding on a borrowed horse and these horses had behaved perfectly but when it was Karl's and my turn to enter the field apparently we were right under the loud speaker and both of our horses went absolutely berserk. They just ran around and around and around that field and Karl remembers this, I don't remember this, that everybody in the stands were roaring with laughter. We just made fools of ourselves. Karl still has his hat that he wore that time. I was proud of myself for hanging on. The other thing was, during the year of the centennial, I was representing Kerrville on the float, Fiesta Flambeau, and that was a big deal because that was the biggest night parade in the country, and it was going to be televised. Friends and people were watching and kept waiting for Kerrville's float to appear on the TV screen and it never did because just before we got to the TV cameras the float broke down. They had to haul it off to a side street. Now, I was on this float with 4 or 5 little bitty boys that were representing hunters and fishermen and things like that. And they were all dressed in their outfits, but they were little boys and I was a teenage girl and I had no money for a cab and I was stranded on a backstreet in San Antonio in charge of these little kids. Finally, I found a cab driver that would take us to the Menger Hotel.

FRANCELLE: Didn't you have on a big dress?

BEVERLY: Oh, a huge dress with the hoop skirt, the whole thing. And, of course, it was just my moment to shine on TV and I never made it to the cameras. So, the cab took us to the Menger Hotel and this was long before the days of cell phones. Our parents had no idea where we were. The police were out. Everybody was looking for these little boys. They weren't concerned about me but their little boys.

FRANCELLE: Were the boys from Kerrville?

BEVERLY: Yes. It was Jon Wolfmueller, Scotty Mosty, Scott Parker, all just little. So, I remember sitting in the lobby of the Menger Hotel in this huge dress with these little urchins. The deb ball was going on in the ballroom and all these handsome tuxedoed young men would stop and ask me to join them at the party and I couldn't do it because I had these little boys.

FRANCELLE: How did you get home?

BEVERLY: They finally found us. I don't think I got any ribbons for taking care of those little boys. I wanted to mention that the fifties were the days of the poodle skirts, crinolines, penny loafers, we weren't allowed to wear pants to school except I think, maybe, we were allowed to on Friday.

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

FRANCELLE: Was it just during football season?

BEVERLY: I know it had to be a special deal to wear pants. And when the boys moved an outhouse to the Tivy campus and set off a cherry bomb in the boy's bathroom – all of these things, they would be in juvenile detention today. Another fashion statement was to wear your cardigan sweater backward. There were just special things associated with the fifties. I just think of it as an innocent time – maybe I was just innocent.

FRANCELLE: At a slumber party we may have had 1 cigarette and passed it around.

BEVERLY: Absolutely. In my case, we would have slumber parties at my house, our group called ourselves the Kookaburras and we would go up and down the street doing the Kookaburra cry out the window. We just thought we were ever so clever. It was the trill of the Kookaburra bird. So, we would have slumber parties at my house which was up on a hill with a driveway going down and bushes all along the edge and we hid our cigarettes under the nineteenth bush. All the Kookaburras to this day remember the nineteenth bush.

FRANCELLE: Did you smoke them out there or in the house?

BEVERLY: We went to the nineteenth bush.

FRANCELLE: You mentioned the Peterson farm. Can you tell us what that was?

BEVERLY: The Peterson farm is out on Peterson Road across from Our Lady of the Hills High School. Where the high school is now, they used to keep some exotics out there. They had horses and a big stable but mainly what we used it for, there was a camp house way, way back in the middle of it and that was where we would always go as a family during hunting season. It was just a great big one room with a kitchen and a bathroom and there would be many, many family members sleeping on cots in one great big room with a fireplace going. We had a wonderful old black man named Bunk. During hunting season he would just appear like magic. I don't know his full name or where he came from, but he would always appear at that time. He would take my cousin Dash and me out into the bushes and carve us minute little figures from little limbs and little pieces of wood and I think if I had those little animals now what a treasure that would be. He would do all the cooking.

FRANCELLE: Was he from Kerrville?

BEVERLY: I really don't know. We'd go to the farm for hunting and we'd go to Camp Eagle for fishing. That was Charlie's other big love was to go to Camp Eagle and fish.

FRANCELLE: And that was owned by the Petersons also?

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

BEVERLY: Yes. It's now a Christian camp. I was able to take my whole family out there a few years ago and see part of my childhood.

FRANCELLE: Is the Peterson farm still in the Peterson family?

BEVERLY: It's not in the Peterson family anymore. It's been through several different hands. It's where I kept my little Shetland pony, Patches, and my palomino, Honey Gal. So, it was a big part of our family.

FRANCELLE: Tell us about the Peterson Foundation.

BEVERLY: The Peterson Foundation, for years, was flying under the wire because they didn't want any publicity at all. The Petersons were real adamant about not having publicity. And Mrs. Salter, who had the Mountain Sun, published anything that was going on. She was informed by Uncle Boss that she would regret ever publishing anything about the Peterson family. So, there is not so much history as with other families around town. You just don't see much written about them back then. My favorite Mrs. Salter story, as an aside, is that she had very interesting phrases. And y'all probably remember her sitting in the window of the Mountain Sun with her little green visor on. My favorite phrase that she ever used was she referred to a jackass as a desert nightingale. And I just think that sums up Mrs. Salter's verbiage. So, the Foundation for many, many years did not receive any publicity but in order to keep things going, contributions and so forth, they did begin. But they still do not publicize much of what they do, very little of it.

FRANCELLE: So, people can come there to get help?

BEVERLY: It's an application process. They don't do individual help. But all the surrounding area they grant money more than the other organizations in town. They just don't publicize it. The hospital and the Foundation are not connected. They used to be, but they are separate now.

FRANCELLE: Did the area where the hospital was built, did that belong to the Petersons?

BEVERLY: Do you mean the new hospital?

FRANCELLE: No. The old hospital.

BEVERLY: I don't really know. I was just a little girl then and paid no attention to it. The opening didn't mean anything to me at all. There's a wonderful picture though, I'll see if I can unearth it. I wasn't even at the opening because I was at Camp Mystic at that time. But there's a wonderful picture where my grandmother, Myrta Peterson, my mother and Charlie are coming forward, I guess to be recognized, and

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

my grandmother is looking very carefully at my mother's shoes to see if she was appropriately attired. It just speaks volumes.

FRANCELLE: You mentioned camp. Tell us about going to camp.

BEVERLY: Camp Mystic, that was a big, big part of my life. I went there for many years. My cousin, Nora Jo Peterson, had gone there before me. That was back when Frank and Inez Harrison were involved with it. They were wonderful friends. And then, I was so happy that years later my own 2 daughters went to Mystic and more recently 2 of my granddaughters are Camp Mystic girls. We all have very special feelings for Camp Mystic.

FRANCELLE: And that's up in the Hunt area.

BEVERLY: Yes. With the Eastland family.

FRANCELLE: What year did you graduate from Tivy?

BEVERLY: 1958 by the skin of my teeth.

FRANCELLE: I don't believe that. Then what did you do?

BEVERLY: I went off to school at Southwest Texas primarily because it was only twenty or thirty miles down the highway from where my future husband was going to school, John Sullivan. I did not make academia my career. We got married in 1960 and, of course, as I said, we couldn't wait to leave Kerrville. I don't know if kids still feel that way or not, but we could not wait to get out of town. We did not move back here until 1993. When my husband retired we moved back here.

FRANCELLE: I thought you went to the University of Texas.

BEVERLY: No. Southwest Texas. He went to school at St. Edwards in Austin.

FRANCELLE: How did you meet John?

BEVERLY: Actually, on a blind date. I had a friend who lived here, the Edwards granddaughter, Sarah Lee Conklin. She moved to Austin in about our junior year and she was hanging out at a bar and met these St. Edwards guys and it would be great if I would come over and have a date – never mind that I was going steady at the time, but that didn't matter. So, I went over to Austin. She sent me a picture of John first and it was the first boy I had ever dated that had a button-down oxford shirt, crew neck sweater, ID bracelet, desert boots, khaki pants. There was no Tivy boy that dressed like that. He had this wonderful crew cut, not a burr. He was from

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

Yankeeland, from Ohio and he just really caught my fancy because he was so different, even from the Schreiner boys.

FRANCELLE: What brought him to St. Edwards from Ohio?

BEVERLY: He had also gone to Notre Dame in the same Order of Brothers, the Holy Cross Brothers, also ran St. Edwards. So, that's why he came.

FRANCELLE: You said you got married in 1960.

BEVERLY: 1960 in the old Notre Dame Catholic Church, a wonderful charming church. Not the big, impersonal, cold church that they have now.

FRANCELLE: I got married there too. In the old one.

BEVERLY: I loved that church.

FRANCELLE: Where did you and John start your life together?

BEVERLY: We started in the grand metropolis of Texas City, Texas, where the sky was sulfur colored every day. If you wanted to eat outside you had to eat on the driveway or the mosquitoes would eat you alive. On Friday we would sit on the driveway and eat lobster tails. We lived there for about 5 years. Then we moved to Seguin, he was in retail. We lived in McQueeney, actually, and that was a nice interlude. From there we went to Harlingen, then to Laredo, another hot spot, then Beaumont, Austin, and Kerrville.

FRANCELLE: Did you work too?

BEVERLY: After my children were grown I did work for the school system for a while. I did have a little job when I was in Laredo. I was a promotions manager for the TV station there. That was a fun job.

FRANCELLE: So, what brought you back to Kerrville?

BEVERLY: He retired and he got a part-time retirement job at Schreiner's Department Store and he just loved it. He ended up knowing more people in town than I did. And Jon Wolfmueller was on the opposite corner of the street at Pampells. And between those 2 guys there was nothing that went on in town that they did not know about. He would come home and tell me these things that I did not have an idea about. He and Jon were quite a pair.

FRANCELLE: Tell us about your children.

BEVERLY: I have 3 wonderful children. Our son is the oldest. He is John Michael II and he and his wife Judy Adams live in Boerne. They have 2 children, Kelsey Quinn who is now thirty-one. I can't believe I have a thirty-one-year-old granddaughter. She has 2 children, Hudson, who is 7 and Porter who is 2. Their other daughter is Tate. Tate Sullivan married Dillon Scott. They live in Brownwood and are getting ready to move to Iowa. So, I think they are in for a big shock when they move to Iowa. My oldest daughter is Bridget Marie. She married Philip Cindrach of Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. Philip is the 3rd generation of his family to have a manufacturing business that he has never been able to make me understand. They manufacture antennae type things that are on top of places like the World Trade Center. I never have understood it. He finally said, "Just call it electrical plumbing, Mopsie." Mopsie is what my grandchildren call me and they called my husband Popsie. And we got a lot of comments that our grandchild was Flopsie. They have 3 children. They have an eighteen-year-old, Madeleine, a seventeen-year-old, Cormac, and a fifteen-year-old, Wren. They are a very busy family. My youngest daughter, who swore she would never leave Texas, lives outside of Chicago in North Barrington, Illinois. She and her husband, Jon Fischel, he works with stocks, another thing I don't understand, they have 3 children. They have Mia Rose, who is fourteen, Jack, who is twelve and Gannon who is nine. All of these grandchildren have family names. Gannon and Quinn and Rose, those are all family names.

FRANCELLE: How often do you get to see them?

BEVERLY: It's gotten a little harder now that the kids are all so busy. So, now it's down to like once a year. It used to be 2 or 3 times a year.

FRANCELLE: Do the boys go to camp here too?

BEVERLY: No. Our grandson Cormac is a big ice hockey player. So, he always goes to ice hockey camp which, needless to say, is not in Texas. He always goes up to Lake Placid for that. It's just the girls that go to camp here.

FRANCELLE: Tell us about John. I know you lost him a couple of years ago.

BEVERLY: John died February 8, 2017. He had been in retail all of his life. People that I went to school with (I was real shy) and they told me in later years.....I remember Spencer Brown telling me, "Beverly, you just never talked this much in high school." And I told him, "Spencer, if I hadn't started talking my children would be mute." Because John was a man of few words. When he said something he meant it. He was the funniest one-liner person in the world. But he was just not a conversationalist. So, I had to start talking and I haven't stopped.

FRANCELLE: Do you have any hobbies to keep you busy?

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

BEVERLY: Oh, yes. I love to sew. I love to quilt. I love to create. I used to folk art paint but I kind of have dropped that now. I love to read. Our library deserves kudos beyond measure. I am there sometimes twice a week. I usually have about ten books on my nightstand.

FRANCELLE: You read them all at once?

BEVERLY: Yes, and it makes it a little hard because sometimes I have to avoid having overdue fines. But they will just get you anything you want. They are very good.

FRANCELLE: Doesn't your class get together? The class of '58.

BEVERLY: We have a group from our class. We're not exclusionary by any chance but it just happens to be the group that we all came back here for our fortieth reunion. Since that time we have always been the group that plans the reunions every ten years. So, we have just stayed together. We get together once a month. Sometimes, just the girls – a ladies lunch – and sometimes we include the fellows. There's a total of about twenty or so of us. We have lost several of the members or their spouses since our fortieth reunion. We just had our sixtieth reunion last spring and it was a great turnout. But we noticed a lot that we had lost between the fiftieth and the sixtieth. Time is taking its toll. Those of us who are still around consider ourselves very lucky.

FRANCELLE: What do you think is the greatest thing about coming back to Kerrville?

BEVERLY: Definitely friends and family. I could, frankly, do with a lesser population of Kerrville. I could do with more of the old stores that we used to have, like Schreiner's and The Vogue. But it's been friends and family. That's been wonderful. On the family end of it, every Thanksgiving, it's really the Fawcett branch of the family, get together.

FRANCELLE: Tell us how the Fawcett's are connected.

BEVERLY: Big Mama Fawcett was the sister of Sid Peterson, Cap Peterson. At one time my grandmother, Myrta, lived at the top of the hill of Main Street in the house on the left and Big Mamma and her family lived in the house on the right. My cousin, Bill Womack, and I use to say that we were going to move back here, and we were each going to buy those houses, close off the street and put a swimming pool in the middle. That didn't happen. So, the families have always been real close. That was our social life when we were growing up. The Fawcetts, Big Mama and her family had started with all of their children, Christmas you could do what you wanted but Thanksgiving was sacrosanct. And it went down to their children,

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

Josephine Johnston and Cornelia Fawcett and Jr. and Ethel Fawcett. And then they all started having children and now every year there's a new crop of babies. I'm very lucky they include me because the Peterson branch had almost died out. So, the Fawcetts bring me in as sort of a shirt-tail relative. And I'm really grateful for that. But it's about forty or fifty people. We're kind of getting down into the younger generation now

FRANCELLE: Do they have it at people's homes?

BEVERLY: Oh, yeah. They could never have it at my house because I have a little cottage. But a couple of them have big places. This year we went down into the next generation from my generation, so the baton has been passed. I'm sure the ones like Betsy and Alton Rhoden and Mary Claire and Bud Fawcett were always the ones before, I'm sure they are grateful that Amy Womack took it over this year. And there are always new babies. So many now that you don't know who belongs to who. When one of those kids gets married it's almost written into the nuptials that Thanksgiving we will be at the Fawcett Family Thanksgiving.

FRANCELLE: Everybody brings something?

BEVERLY: Oh, yes. Everybody brings something. We all have our specialties. When Norma Fawcett died I inherited her specialty, pimento cheese celery. So, that's one of the things I have to bring every year, which I would never eat. But cousin Jim Stehling has to have his pimento cheese celery. And Alton Rhoden, he makes the most wonderful cornbread dressing, so everybody expects Alton Rhoden's cornbread dressing.

FRANCELLE: How many turkeys do you have?

BEVERLY: Oh, who can count? Turkeys and ham. There's always way too much food. Alton, he knows I'm crazy about his dressing, he always gives me a little container of dressing to take home. It's great fun.

FRANCELLE: Any other memories you want to share?

BEVERLY: I remember, it just popped into my head. Do you remember the poppies they use to sell? Was that for.....

FRANCELLE: Veteran's Day.

BEVERLY: I guess it was. It was a big deal downtown. And, of course, the parades. The pep rallies. We started from what was then the high school over on Tivy Street and we marched all that way

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

FRANCELLE: Was Mr. Armstrong your band director?

BEVERLY: Yes. Mr. Armstrong was the band director first and then he was the principal and then Mr. Priezner was the band director. And he came to our fiftieth class reunion, he flew in, and he died shortly after that. We were real thrilled that he came to that, driving up in his convertible.

FRANCELLE: And it is special because teachers do come to the reunions.

BEVERLY: Yes. Several of ours. And we still have a few living too. I know Louis Burton was one. He played tennis well into his eighties.

FRANCELLE: And Mr. Billnitzer is still living. I know of those 2.

BEVERLY: We thought of them as so old, but they were what? Twenty-two or twenty-four? And we respected them. My children have moved around so much that they don't have those fond connections. I'm sorry they missed out on that.

FRANCELLE: And seeing the rodeo shoots right out there and playing football right in front of them.

BEVERLY: That reminds me. Bob Hope came to Kerrville one time. I remember he had a performance out at Antler Stadium, and we had chairs out on the field. I don't remember anything he said. Eleanor Roosevelt drove through town one time.

FRANCELLE: Is that right?

BEVERLY: So, we had our celebrities. John Wayne had a wife that lived up in Hunt.

FRANCELLE: Clark Gable's wife lived up there.

BEVERLY: It was Clark Gable's wife, not John Wayne's.

FRANCELLE: She came to the beauty shop in town. Brenda and Linda's mother worked there.

BEVERLY: Relda Jones. We all went to Relda Jones. Linda still looks just like she did in high school. Linda was in my class and she is part of this reunion group that gets together. In fact, we're getting together tonight for a Christmas party and we're all so psyched about it. All us old fools will be home in bed by nine.

FRANCELLE: You're just so excited that you're still alive.

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

BEVERLY: Right. Karl Ransleben, we now have several widows in the bunch, so he comes over and picks up all the widows and we call it the "widow's wagon". And Karl takes us to our gatherings.

FRANCELLE: He's a nice guy, too. He's done a lot for his community.

BEVERLY: Karl is a wonderful person. His father, Harvey, and Jr. Fawcett, my mother always said they were the only 2 men that could make her blush. They were great teasers. And with Karl, the apple hasn't fallen very far from the tree.

FRANCELLE: My mother could speak German and so could Harvey and when we would meet up them they would speak German and I would just sit there.

BEVERLY: Do you regret that you didn't learn it?

FRANCELLE: Absolutely.

BEVERLY: I'm sorry I didn't learn it from my German side of the family, too. I'll remind Karl of that.

FRANCELLE: I remember expressions my grandmother used all the time but I couldn't carry on a conversation with anyone.

BEVERLY: I can remember my German grandmother, she had come to this country when she was twelve, and she and her brother would talk in front of us cousins in German so we wouldn't know what they were talking about. I'm sorry we never got their stories like you are getting these stories, that is just so invaluable. They just didn't think about those things. I think maybe some of them had hard lives and didn't want to remember them and now, those things are just lost. And now you are making up for it with these oral histories.

FRANCELLE: Two of the people we did last year we lost even before we finished the transcriptions. It is important. But we got their story.

BEVERLY: Did you get Clara Belle's?

FRANCELLE: Yes. But Louis Romero. He just put his heels down and said nobody wanted to listen to his story, but we were really lucky because we stayed on him and got his.

BEVERLY: Every time I would see Louis Romero he would remind me that we would come to Torres every single week. Everybody did. I guess I was a brat when I was a little girl because he would remind me that, he was a teenager then, and we would come

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

in and I would not eat Mexican food. They would fix me a plain white chicken sandwich. And every time I would see Louis over the years he would remind me of that. Of course, now, I can't go a week without Mexican food. The Golden Ox, the Bluebonnet Coffee Shop, Five Points Chatterbox and the Grove. Oh, and Del Norte. I remember we used to go out to the Del Norte and have fried rabbit. And apparently, I did not realize it was really rabbit because I would never have eaten Fluffy. I don't know how I managed to do that. I never cry when a person dies but when an animal dies I fall apart. I was eating the bunnies!

FRANCELLE: Well, thank you. We appreciate you coming and talking to us. You have some great memories.

BEVERLY: Well, you know, they just come out. Sometimes the littlest thing will remind me of something. I should write it all down and I don't think about it. But I think what y'all are doing is such a good service. I like to think that even though many of my grandchildren are Yankees now, someday they will be interested in coming back to Kerrville, Texas, and find out what life was like.

FRANCELLE: And you know what the people are doing today....they are playing dodge ball. All these Yuppies and people play it at night with a lighted ball

BEVERLY: Dodge ball? Like we played?

FRANCELLE: That was one of the big things we did at recess. I don't remember doing anything else.

BEVERLY: I don't remember playing dodge ball. Cynthia and I would hide behind the steps when it was time for us to go out and play softball because neither of us were athletes. And we would play horses. We would go out on the playground and stamp our feet and snort. We were so stupid.

FRANCELLE: We would catch those little horny toads and tie a string around them.

BEVERLY: And we would train the chameleons and tie them on our shoulders with a little gold chain. I remember when mine got away from me on Virginia Drive. I like to think his ancestors are roaming around there. I had a little graveyard on Virginia Drive with canaries and little dogs. You have a lot of my memories and I'll go away and think of a lot I forgot. Thank y'all for doing this.

FRANCELLE: I have to add this. I have all my Nancy Drew books and my daughter is a reading teacher in junior high school and when she came home one time we used to go to garage sales to get books that she keeps in her classroom. I told her to get one of my Nancy Drew books to read and told her she would just love it. So, she took one

Beverly Peterson Sullivan

of them to bed and the next morning I thought she would ask for the rest of them because she loved it. I asked her if she loved it and she said, "Mother, that's really lame."

BEVERLY: And before Nancy Drew you had the Bobbsey Twins and the Hardy Boys and especially, Raggedy Ann and Andy. I'm convinced to this day that the toys really do come alive after midnight. And I saved all those books too and passed them on to my children. Thank you so much for having me.

FRANCELLE: Thank you. And you have a Merry Christmas!

BEVERLY: A cold and Merry Christmas!

END



VIOLET & CHARLIE WITH MYRTA
PETERSON BOOKING ON



VIOLET, BEVERLY & CHARLIE 1940'S



MYRTA & SID "CAP" PETERSON



JIMMY GENTRY
KILGORE

Miss Beverly Peterson
Kerrville



Schreiner Institute Favourite 1956

HIGH
SCHOOL



YEARS

BEVERLY AND SUE DALE SIMMONDS 1957



BEVERLY, MILTON GIBSON, BARBARA MATTHEWS, ROBERT GATES

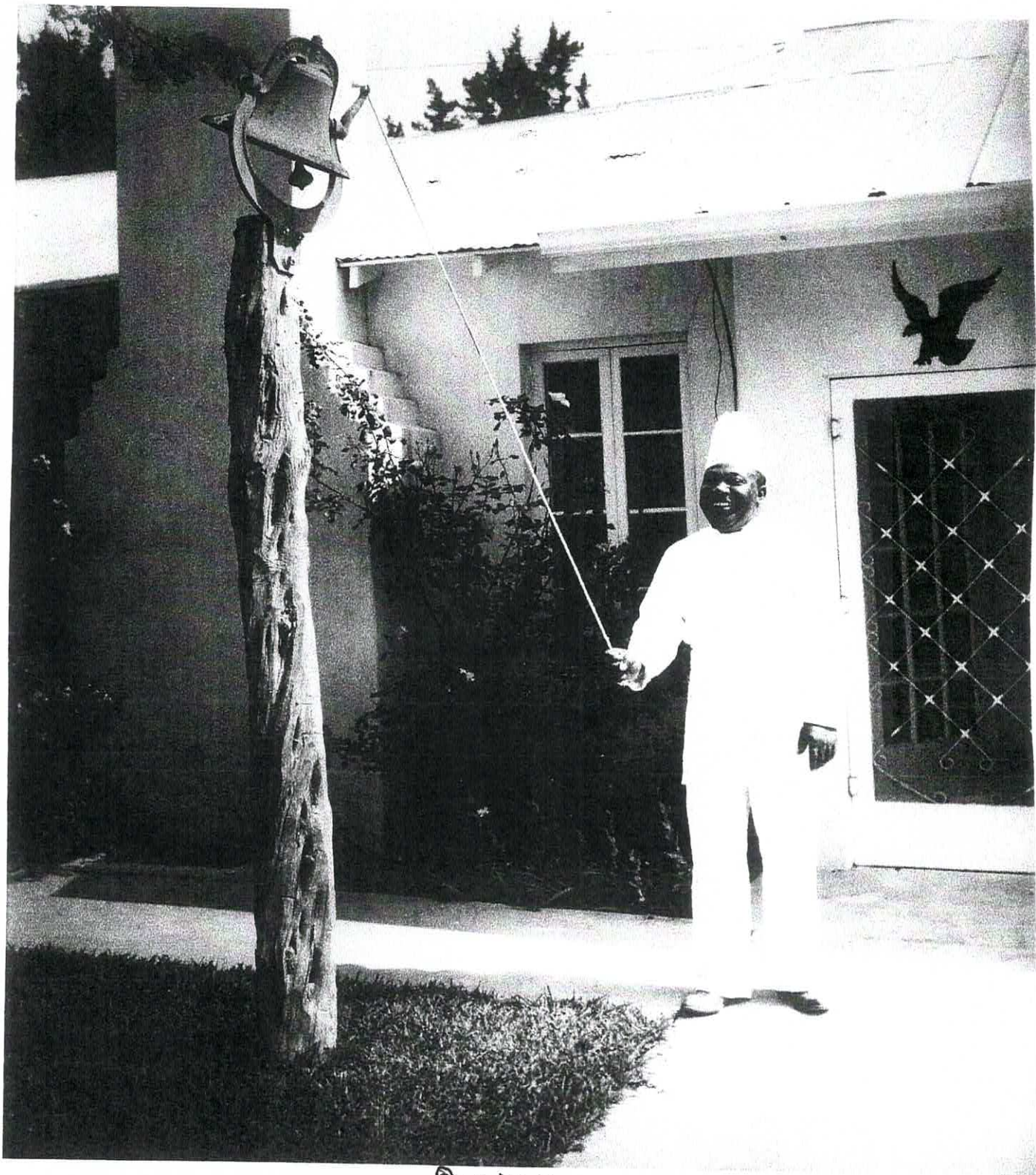
WEDDING



JOHN & BEVERLY SULLIVAN JUNE 11, 1960



SULLIVAN FAMILY 2016



Rastus

Ringing the dinner bell at Camp Eagle,
Peterson Ranch in Rocksprings, Texas

SID PETERSON

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