



Deer Hunters: *Oscar Strohacker, (r) Betty Strohacker's father-in-law and Hubert Heinen (l) (Oscar's brother-in-law) show off the deer they killed on the Strohacker Ranch on Bushwhack Road in Kerr County (date unknown).*

MEG McKAIN GRIER
with a Foreword by Barbara Bush

Grassroots Women

*A.
Memoir
of the Texas
Republican
Party*

2734

Contents

*To the thousands of Texas women
who with their commitment and tenacity
made Texas a two-party state
and in the process gave us a model
for grassroots action*

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did all of that and our politics. We were volunteering instead of working in an office.

Patriotism

BILLIE PICKARD, RAYMONDVILLE

We had a number of people move to Raymondville after World War II. Those involved were very dedicated. Part of that was the aftermath of World War II—patriotism, recognition of love of country and of what needed to be done in the country. After being through the war, they saw what could happen in other countries. I think it was also a generation where you had been taught to serve your community and your country. Our families and the schools instilled patriotism. I think television is a factor. We used to get out and visit with people more. With television, we turned inward. We stay inside where it is comfortable now.

Government was becoming more of a factor in people's lives, doing what used to be done by charities. We saw needs and the community as a whole did something about them. That has been diminished by government taking on so much of it. Everything now emanates from Washington or the state. We used to look more to ourselves locally.

Perhaps we were not as self-indulgent. "Things" were not that important. I can look back at the end of World War II. Houses hadn't been built. People coming back from the war were getting married and looking for a place to live. We had an army surplus trailer that we set up and lived in for a while. Friends in town were happy finding a garage that they could make into a room. Our energies were a little bit more down to earth and owning things was not important. There was still a dedication to the community and church.

BETTY STROHACKER, KERRVILLE

I've never discussed this with anybody. We asked our boys to go off and be in the draft and go into World War II. I thought if we

are going to ask our boys to go into the service, the least I can do is to do what I can at home for our country. That is the thing that always kept me going. I had to do that. It wasn't very much. Everyone has to contribute.

ANNE BERGMAN, WEATHERFORD

The men who had served our country came back and joined the Rotary club and the Lions club. They worked on every fund drive. They did everything. I think we were an idealistic generation.

ZUBIE WALTERS, YOAKUM

The people united to win the war. We had more women go to work. Education had a big part in that, too, because more women had gone to college. Once they had been to college, they wanted to use their education. A lot of women continued working. When they started working out in the public, they liked it and the additional money that they earned.

Born a Democrat

POLLY SOWELL, McALLEN & AUSTIN

I had been involved in Democratic politics in the 1950s. It is very hard for people to even imagine what it was like to be a Republican in the '50s in Texas. To give a clue, when Dwight Eisenhower was running for president in 1952, the Democrats were so worried that there would be a great Republican sweep that they changed the election code so that everybody could run in both parties. Everybody from the governor on down ran as both a Republican and a Democrat. The Democrats effectively kept the Republican Party from growing during the '50s when Eisenhower was elected. It was all very cleverly done.

RITA PALM, FORT WORTH

My great-great-grandfather was a member of the first Continental Congress. Down through the years members of my family

the Republicans in the county. I looked at the vulnerable seats. That's why I visited all of the different offices. Even though I didn't know all there was to know about county government, you can learn pretty fast. You can see who is weak and who is strong. Then I would pick the vulnerable spots.

Jack Carter was our county chairman. He and I would go and visit people. Of course, we tried to talk two or three people into running for county judge back in those days, and they didn't want to do that. They just couldn't let their name be out there on the Republican ticket. Finally, we had two people who wanted to run for justice of the peace. We won those races. We ran George Smith for sheriff. We won that race. That gave us a constable, two J. P.'s, and a sheriff. That was our start.

Holding an Election

Finding a Location

BETTY STROHACKER, KERRVILLE

We got more people to participate in the Republican Party, and actually it was hard to find a place to have a primary election. The only type of building in the whole area of seventy-six square miles was a little one-room schoolhouse. It was after World War II, probably 1952.

We started having the primary in our living room. An election inspector came out one time. I went out and met him and his wife out on the road. I talked to him about what we were doing and the election. He came in, and he approved us and went on his way.

RUTH SCHIERMEYER, LUBBOCK

Early on, the Democrat primary voters entered the front of the schools and the Republicans were somewhere around the back of the building if you could find them. We had our sign on the door. I thought this was ridiculous. The first year I was in charge of the elections, I went to the school system and talked to the man in charge of all of the facilities. I asked, "How do you determine

Hill County Hunting Guide - 1988

A HUNTING TALE...

Henry and Oscar A-hunting Go

The following hunting story was printed in the February 17, 1944 edition of The Comfort NEWS. It was submitted by former subscriber, Henry Cowan, of Fredericksburg.

Seeing in The Comfort News that you are publishing some hunting and fishing stories, I want to tell you about an experience and the excitement I had at the Oscar Strohacker ranch, when invited for a deer hunt during the hunting season, at a place called Bush Whack!

Bush Whack! — I really do not know what that means; must be something that grows under those cedars, and which he feeds to his friends.

Well, anyhow, arriving at Oscar's early in the morning, found Oscar all set, ready to go, and after tying all the hounds — thirteen of them — so they would not interfere with our hunting, he took me to his hunting lodge, six miles up through the woods and cliffs, some of the latter 100 feet high, along an Indian trail, in some places we had to get out and push to make the grade, which we finally did.

The lodge was fully equipped with stove, beds, ice box and what not. It was built on stilts ten feet high boxed in on three sides. The reason he did this, he said, was to catch flies, which he really did, as there were millions of them.

Well, after carrying in some wood, in case a norther should blow up, Oscar took me up to a place called Lookout Mountain. Lookout Mountain — I did not get the meaning of that, if it was to look out for deer, I did not see any there; some rattlesnake dens was all I could see, and as I do not like rattlesnakes I was ready to depart for some other place. Certainly, I, being an invited guest, wanted to show my appreciation and be pleasant and not grumble.

Oscar then pointed way down the country, about 15 miles off — must have been close to the Rio Grande River — saying there is where the big bucks are roaming in bunches and we would cross the canyon in front of us. He told me he used to bring wild hogs out of the canyon; he did

not explain whether they were what is called the Peccary or some of his neighbors' hogs, and I didn't ask.

Well, everything looked very promising except the canyon, which was about 2,000 feet deep. I was wondering how we would make it, but by sliding, jumping fifteen to twenty feet at a time, and wearing the seats of our trousers out, we got down alright. But going up was a horse of a different color; every time we ascended ten feet we would slide back twelve, and finally, by holding on to each other and tying a rope to trees, we made it to the top, scratched and bruised. But I, being an invited guest, did not want to grumble.

Now I figured that the distance through the canyon, going down and up and counting the distance we slid back in going up, was at least three miles that we had traveled; but the distance straight across the canyon, I am sure, was not more than 100 yards; so you can imagine that it took some of my ambition for hunting out of me. My feet began to get sore, and I thought of the nice rocking chair and good warm stove I had at my home in Fredericksburg, but certainly, I was an invited guest and did not want to grumble.

So we headed toward the place where Oscar said the big bucks roam. By that time it began to drizzle, and nothing looked good to me any more. My feet began to hurt and I wished I had stayed at home, but being an invited guest, I certainly did not want to grumble.

Well, we walked all through the cedars, where the big bucks were supposed to be, but could find nary hair nor hide; close to the border of Mexico and no deer yet! — had not even seen one. Now Oscar pointed to some hills about 4 miles away, saying that there was some open country, and he was sure we would locate some bucks there.

By now I didn't care whether I ever would see any deer or not. My feet were swollen and I was sure I had cracked one of the bones in my left leg; but still, I did not want to complain, being an invited guest.

So I limped after Oscar as well as I could, thinking of my comfortable home I had in Fredericksburg. By walking (I don't know how many miles) Oscar said 'now go slow and be on the look out; as soon as we get to the edge of the cedars we can see out over the open country.'

Now I was expecting to see hundreds of acres of open country; the open country

turned out to be about three acres — well it does not matter. Anyway when we glimpsed an open space beyond the cedars, I at first couldn't believe my eyes. There, in front of us, stood a big buck — at least a 12-pointer — taking in the scenery, or whatever it was.

Oscar, very much excited, pointed to the buck and said, 'Didn't I tell you?' Well, being an invited guest, I was supposed to do the shooting, which I did, promptly. On the report of my gun, the buck fell like it had been struck by lightning; and Oscar up and yelling like an Indian, 'You got him! You got him!' and ran up to the deer.

Oscar is a whole lot younger than I am — at least by two years. He jumped on the deer, straddled him like you would a horse, took hold of the horns and hollered to me to hurry and cut its throat.

Well, as I know how good a shot I am, I was in no hurry and stumbled over those rocks and stumps and what not, as fast as I could, forgetting all about my sore feet and cracked bones in my leg. When I got within about twenty feet of the deer and Oscar, the buck began to wiggle around, and staggered to its feet, with Oscar yelling for me to cut its throat. All I could do was to stand and gasp, while the deer with Oscar astride, made his way in a blue streak down through the cedars and ravines. I thought 'What now?' If Oscar were killed or crippled what could I do? How could I get him home, and where was home?

Well, I followed broken limbs and signs where Oscar and the buck had gone, and by walking several hundred yards, I could hear Oscar swearing like a sea pirate, which made me feel better, knowing that anyone who could use such language was very much alive.

When I reached him, he was sitting on a rock, his hat gone and he told me plenty, blaming me for everything; saying I was too slow for anything, (which I am not); saying I had to buy him a new hat, which I refused to do (the old hat was full of holes anyhow, and I am sure he had worn it to the funeral of his grandfather, years ago).

The last I saw of the deer, he was over in the Real pasture, making at least ninety, headed for the Frio Canyons, and I am sure Oscar will never be bothered with this particular buck any more.

Oscar is mad at me, lost his hat, and I did not get my buck. It's just a heck of a life! Sometimes I wish I had never been born.

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The Family of
William A. and Mabel Conrad Sullivan

William A. (Bill) Sullivan was born in Austin, Minnesota on October 20, 1883, the son of Cornelius and Anna Thomas Sullivan and the second of nine children. Cornelius was a brick masonry contractor and his brother owned the local brickyard. All of the boys learned the building and masonry business as they grew up.

Mabel Cooper Conrad was born in Humphrey, Nebraska on November 25, 1893, the daughter of George Washington and Sarah Ella Cooper Conrad. Mabel graduated from Woodriver High School in 1910 and began teaching soon thereafter. She would work to earn enough money--then go to school. She attended Kearney Normal School and the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

Bill met Mabel in Roundup, Montana, where she was teaching and he was building the new school--they stayed in the same boarding house. On September 4, 1919, Bill and Mabel were married in Roundup. They made their home in Winnett, Montana.

According to Army custom of that time, Bill's three brothers had been sent cross-country to Camp Logan at Houston during World War I. One brother went into masonry construction there in partnership with T. C. Jensen. Later, the other two returned to join the firm, while Bill came down in 1924.

By 1931, the Houston Climate had proved to be too hard on this northern couple, and after Bill's third heat stroke, they felt they must leave. T. C. Jensen had a summer home on Arcadia Loop out of Kerrville, and he persuaded the Sullivans to move here. So, in June, 1931, the Sullivans arrived--Bill, Mabel and 5 children in the car, followed by a big truck with all of their possessions, to take up residence in the Jensen garage while Bill built a house on the Jensen property to move in to.

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The Family of
William A. and Mabel Conrad Sullivan

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After a short time, school transportation became a real problem--so the family moved in to Kerrville. Mr. Jensen and Bill had the contract to build the Presbyterian manse--but after that work was hard to find in those depression days. Bill spent a lot of time working in Houston, driving home for the week-ends. He was very good in math and did a great deal of his "figuring" in his head. For many years, he was the only contractor in the Kerrville area who did not have to hire "estimators". Gradually he became a well-known contractor here, retiring after the age of 75.

There were five children in the Sullivan family:

Betty (Anna Elisabeth), (b. 6-15-20), m. Louis George Strohacker, lives on their ranch near Kerrville.

Patty (Margaret Patricia), (b. 2-7-22), attended Schreiner Institute and Rice University, graduating from Duke Medical School. She served her internship at Duke University Hospital and Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. Since working with the Atomic Energy Commission in Japan, she has been on the staff of M. D. Anderson Hospital, becoming well-known in her field.

William A. Jr., (b.8-12-25), attended Schreiner Institute and the University of Texas. He served in the Navy during World War II and the Korean becoming a Lt. (j.g.) on the Carrier Oriskany. He is now a Vice-President of MCI Communications, with his headquarters in Richardson, where he and his wife, Nancy, live. They have four children.

Cornelia, (b. 3-10-28), attended Schreiner Institute, Sul Ross and Victoria Colleges, getting her degree in accounting. m. Harry Lester Garrison. They

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The Family of William A. and Mabel Conrad Sullivan

have four children. Cornelia now lives in Victoria.

Sarah Louise (b. 8-14-30), attended Schreiner Institute and the University of Texas. She and her husband, Murph Thorp, Jr., live in Iraan, where he owns and operates the Corner Drug Store. She teaches Home Economics in the Iraan Schools. They have 3 children.

Two others have joined the Sullivan family during their years in Kerrville. Mabel's aunt, Mrs. Sue Derby, formerly of Cherry Creek, South Dakota, made her home with them from 1954 until her death in August, 1957.

Bill's sister, Alice Gertrude (known to the family as Babe and to her friends as Sully), a registered nurse, came to Sunnyside Sanatorium to work as head nurse for Dr. W. R. Fickessen for about 10 years. Then after Mrs. Lola Gatz took over the Sanatorium about a year later, Babe returned from Houston to help her for 3 or 4 years. Babe is the only remaining member of Bill's siblings. She now resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Mabel was busy during all those years caring for her active family, belonging to the Library and P.T.A. Boards and the First Presbyterian Church. She died on January 22, 1973, and Bill followed her in death May 17, 1974.