

THE HUNT



FAMILY TREE

WILDCATTER H.L. HUNT WAS JUST AS famous for his eccentric lifestyle as he was for his success in oil and gas development. H.L. thought he had a genius gene, or maybe he was just “girl-minded,” as he once put it. While he was still married to his first wife, Lyda, H.L. started another family in 1925 with a curvaceous beauty named Frania Tye.

Frania claimed to have married “Major Franklin Hunt” in the Cuban quarter of Tampa, Florida,

before discovering his true identity. H.L. allegedly tried to convert Frania to Mormonism so they could live together in “legal” polygamy. H.L. and Frania’s marriage license was never found (a page had been ripped out of the record book), but they had four children.

H.L.’s eldest child, Margaret, discovered the existence of her father’s (first) secret family in 1935, and asked him to create trust funds for her siblings. In 1943, H.L. fathered his first child

with a former Hunt Oil secretary named Ruth Ray, whom he later married, after Lyda’s death. Altogether, H.L.’s 14 living children (one died in infancy) were each granted trust funds and a piece of the Hunt patrimony. Those for the children of the “first family” are called, oddly enough, the “Loyalty trusts.” They would become the cornerstone of a family fortune that grew dramatically over the generations.

—G.C.K.

1938—Margaret wants to marry an auditor named Albert Hill, but her father worries he is a gold digger. Margaret gives her interest in the family drilling business to her siblings and marries penniless, aside from the trust fund she never taps. “It is an inconvenience having money,” she says, explaining her decision. “In fact, it is almost wrecking my life.”

1942—H.L. dumps Frania, giving her a lifetime monthly income in exchange for her signed statement saying they were never married. Frania later says she only denied their marriage to protect Lyda and her children from allegations that H.L. was a bigamist.

1946—H.L.’s eldest son and namesake, Hassie, is given a pre-frontal lobotomy after being diagnosed with severe schizophrenia. Hassie spends most of his adult life in psychiatric institutions, but H.L. never stops trying to cure him, with remedies including valium, electroshock therapy, and sex with buxom German women with high IQs.

1948—*Life* magazine says H.L. Hunt, having cashed in on what was then the largest oil discovery in the world, in East Texas, might be the richest man in America.

1955—Margaret Hunt Hill chips in \$30,000 from her trust to help fund Tom Hunt’s new project, Petrol Production, the company later renamed Hunt Petroleum Corp.

1957—H.L. marries Ruth Ray, two years after his first wife, Lyda, dies. H.L. adopts their four children.

1959—Lamar Hunt helps form the American Football League.

1961—Bunker Hunt, at 35, strikes it rich with an \$8 billion oil find in Libya, but the field is later nationalized by Moammar al-Qaddafi.

1963—H.L. and his sons Bunker and Lamar are questioned by the FBI in relation to the Kennedy assassination but are cleared of any involvement. Bunker helped pay for an anti-Kennedy attack ad that ran on the day the president was killed.

1974—H.L. dies, after spending his last years touting the health benefits of aloe vera, apricots, and an exercise he called “creeping,” which involved crawling around the floor on all fours.

1975—Frania, furious that H.L.’s two autobiographies written before his death don’t mention her and her children, sues his estate and eventually receives \$9.2 million.

1977—Bunker and Herbert are accused of trying to corner the soybean commodity market.

1980—The price of silver crashes after Bunker and Herbert try to corner that market, too.

1983—Margaret and Hassie disentangle their holdings from Bunker and Herbert in the wake of the silver debacle.

1990—Herbert and Bunker auction possessions to satisfy creditors after largest personal bankruptcies ever.

1992—Bunker sues the trustee of his family estate and tries to stop him from selling Placid Oil, but fails.

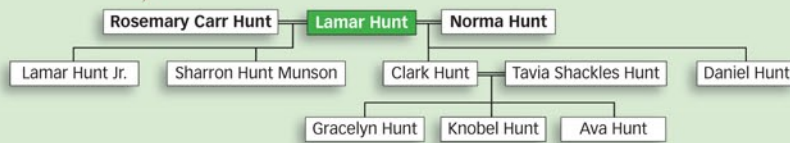
2002—Al Hill III, H.L.’s great-grandson, files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization for his tri-state chain of convenience stores, Food Fast.

2005—H.L.’s eldest son, Hassie, dies, leaving his Loyalty trust and share of Hunt Petroleum to the descendants of his best friend and big sister, Margaret.

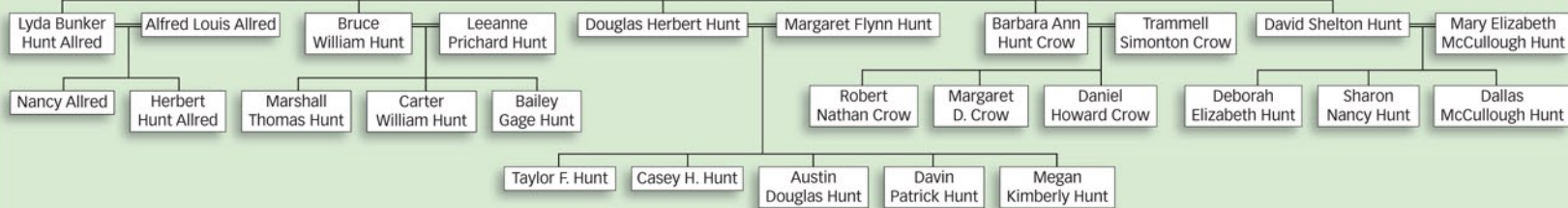
2007—Margaret Hunt Hill dies at age 91.

2007—Ray, head of Hunt Oil, is the only Hunt left on the Forbes 400, with estimated net worth of \$4 billion.

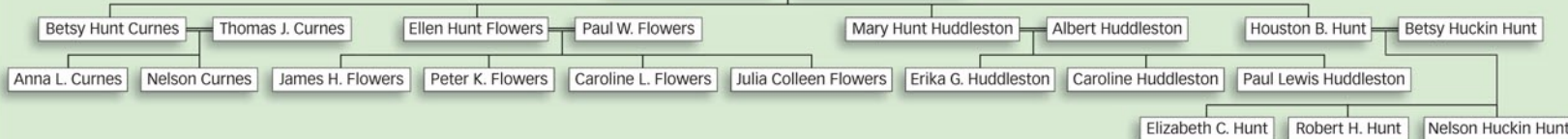
Lyda Bunker Hunt



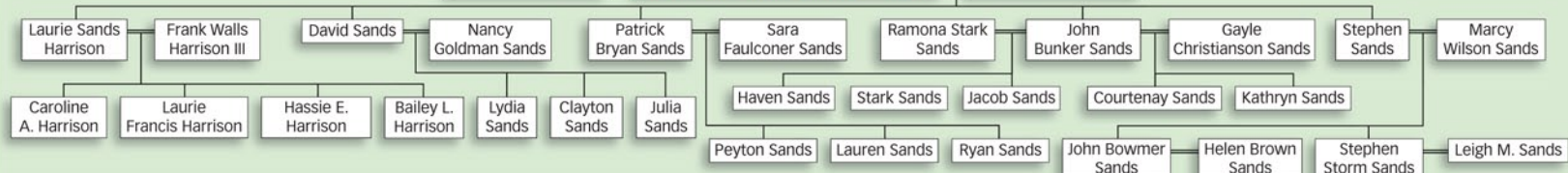
William Herbert Hunt



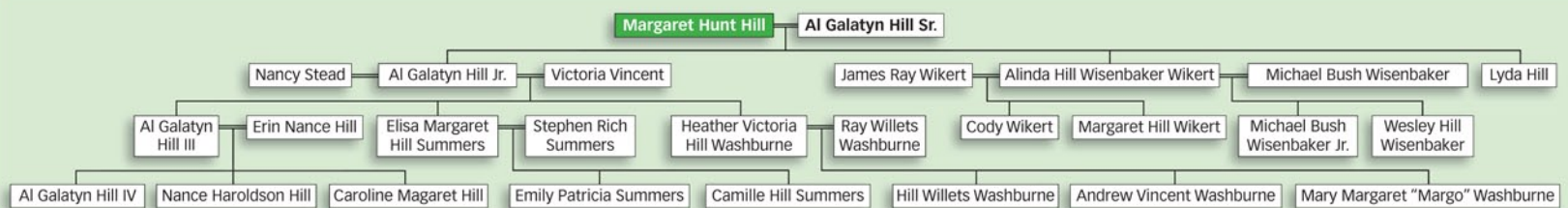
Nelson Bunker Hunt



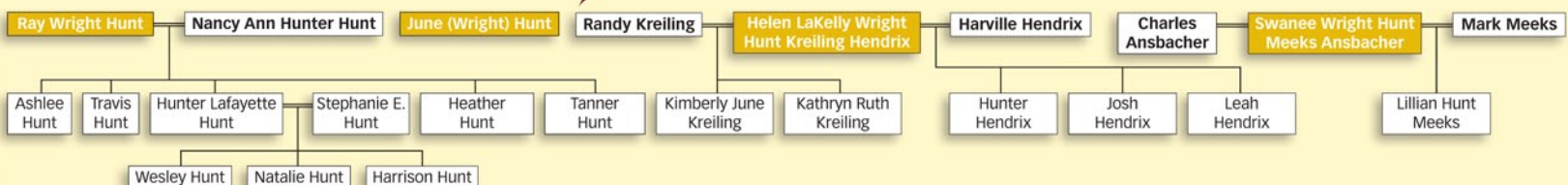
Buddy Schoellkopf



Haroldson Lafayette "Hassie" Hunt Jr.



Ruth Ray Wright Hunt



Frania Tye Hunt Lee

