

May 19, 1982 – Today we celebrated Darrell's birthday at Grandmother's. Just Daddy, Mother, Grandmother, Darrell, Amy and me. Darrell told a little story about Retha's first visit with Bob and Eula Mae when she was about seven years old, and a little bit about when they lived at Kilgore. Daddy told about riding Retha on his bicycle at Mexia and another story about a bicycle race.

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THE BICYCLE RACE

When I was fifteen, I had a newspaper route at Mexia, carrying *The Fort Worth Star Telegram* and *The Mexia Daily News*.

I had two great big baskets mounted on my bicycle...two big old canvas cloth bags on two stick frames on each side of the rear wheels. They held *The Fort Worth Star Telegram*. The basket set in front and was fastened onto the handlebars. I would carry Retha with me and she was about two or three. I hauled her on top of *The Mexia Daily News* in the basket mounted on the handlebars.

We lived at the foot of a hill on Sumter Street. When it rained, it turned that old black dirt into sticky black mud. I would be going up that hill with Retha and my bicycle wheels would clog up. I would have to get off and take my fingers and reach up under the fenders and scrape off the mud. Then I would run to get started again and jump on my bike. Coming down the hill was easy. We just made the mud fly!

Sometimes I couldn't ride my bicycle to deliver my papers. When it rained, that mud got so thick my bike would get stuck. That gooey black mud built up so thick the wheels wouldn't even turn.

Mexia was where we were living when I won a watch in a bicycle race. (*This would have been 1924 since daddy was born October 10, 1909*).

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Well, they had a big contest on at *The Mexia Daily News* for the newspaper boys. The one that got the most new subscribers would get to enter a contest...a race...on their bicycles. First prize was a watch. And so I got to enter.

They had the race in the ballpark on Saturday. I think it was up in the springtime. Boy, it was hot and humid. They started that race and there was about seven or eight of us in it.

I had my bicycle really tuned up with grease. It was a Columbia and it was a good gone. It cost \$85.00. I had them to order it for me at the hardware store and I had to work to pay for it. I earned money by delivering telegrams, too. I worked every darn thing I could do to get any money. They had a big oil man there in Mexia named Hughes, kind of like Mr. Pirtle is over there in Tyler. And every time I carried a telegram to him with good news or something, he would give me fifty cents. Fifty cents in those days was half a days work!

I started to tell you about the race...an old boy was ahead of me on his bicycle - named Billy Hight (*he spelled this out*). His legs were longer than mine, and boy, I mean he could pedal. And sweat was pouring off of me, because we had done made about six or seven laps around the ball park, and I had on a shirt...and I finally just set up there and pedaled and steered...and pulled my shirt off and dropped it off, and when we liked about one lap...(*daddy is really chuckling in remembrance*)... I went to really giving it hell. And I was just gradually inching up on old Billy. And I finally got up even with him and he would just look at me out of the corner of his eye, and his legs was a flying...and I went across the line about one bicycle length ahead of him, and won that race! I couldn't hardly get my breath, I was so damned winded.

I finally sold that watch. It was a 17-jewel Elgin. A pocket watch. It had a white silver case...white gold, I mean. Not silver. White gold was popular. Boy, I thought it was pretty. But I got in hard shape and I sold it, and then I got me a dollar pocket watch. Cost a dollar for a little pocket watch. I don't know how many of them things I had. Put out by Big Ben. I believe they called it Little Ben, if I'm not mistaken. But that might have been their little alarm clock. I've forgotten. I believe it was. It was something else, I guess.

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(At a later time, Daddy told me that the person he sold his new watch to was his uncle, Everett Sandefur, (Auntie's husband, and Joye's father).