



Billie Mozelle Herring with John Knight

Billie “Granny” Mozelle Herring

By John William Knight

Mozelle Herring moved to Mills County in November of 1939. She married William Francis Knight in June of 1939, at age 18. Living on the farm "wasn't exactly the easy life, but it was fun," chuckled Granny. "Back then, I made all of our clothes. You know how busy I was making clothes for 10 children?!"

When asked about how the town was, she replied, "I don't remember that much because we never came in except to buy sugar or flour. Just to get to town, we had to go by horseback or wagon to get to Francis' parents' house and borrow the car."

Mozelle went on to talk about their land and house.

"We had our own mill to grind corn; we even butchered our own meat, milked a cow, and grew our own vegetables. We had to cook all of our food over a wood stove," said Granny.

When asked how they prepared their food, Granny said, "We just used everything we owned. We didn't even have water in our house until 1942."

Granny goes on to talk about the country around her house.

"The closest neighbors we had were over a mile away, until the Watsons moved in." Mozelle goes on to say that one of the things she always remembered doing was "making ice cream with Mrs. Watson."

In 1951, Francis got a job with the El Paso Gas in Jal, N.M., but ended up having to leave his family behind until they could get the farm set right. Mozelle moved out to Jal in 1952, after settling affairs with the livestock and the ranch. Granny said, "Before me and all the kids moved out to New Mexico, we bought our first car. It was a 1948 Chevy."

Mozelle and the kids moved back to Mills County after Francis passed away in 1962.

Mozelle had to work many hours outside the home to support her family. She worked at the nursing home and the blouse factory. All the children had jobs and helped each other.

In 1968, Mozelle married Mr. Gene Herring of Gatesville, Texas. As she put it, "I flat out told him I couldn't leave because of the kids, so he just came on down to our house." Gene and Mozelle threw newspaper for many years, and she said that's one thing she said she'd like to do again. She said, "In fact, I saw Mr. Grayson Wetzel in the restaurant the other day, and he said how much he missed Mrs. Herring throwing out the newspapers. Back then, they used to throw out the Dallas Morning News and the Abilene Reporter News. Now you can't get anybody to come this way," says Mozelle.

Gene passed away in 2001, due to cancer.

As anybody around here knows, Mozelle is a big supporter of our high school sports teams. When I asked about how long she's been going to football games here, she proudly says, "I've been going since 1968, and have had the same reserved seats since then. I might not be able to make it all the way to the top of the bleachers anymore, but people know that those are my seats."

Mozelle brags about having a grandson on every State Championship football team in Goldthwaite history.

When asked what her favorite memory was, she shook her head, saying, "There are too many good ones." Also, when asked about what she likes most now, she replied, "The best part is I can still do all I want now without getting in trouble ... at least all that I can still do."

As of today, she has 10 children, 20 grandchildren, and 23 great-grandchildren, with three more great-grandchildren on the way. Eight of her 10 children still reside in Mills County, where they are working and raising their children. She constantly said, "I love my family; each and every one of them."