

The Freedom Ride
“Let freedom ring and the sweat pour”
The Fisher report
By Greg Bulldog Fisher

This would be the seventh ride in the scorpion series. A ride to express our inalienable right to ride our bikes on highways and the byways. On Friday the Fourth of July at 6:00 A.M. would find Larry Pierson, Phil Hardee, Mike Ham, two other fellows and yours truly at the Texaco on Highway 43 to do a 13 mile warm up in order to get a century ride.

Missing from the group was Dave Casebeer, who was out of town.

The weather was very humid and warm and a little cloudy. It was so humid you could have washed your bike, except if you are Larry. Larry doesn't wash his bike.

As we finished our ride at 7:00 A.M., there would be at least 30 other riders who had shown up to do the other mileage options. We huddled up and gave out maps and then we were off to the dreaded “Bone Camp hill” or the “Mound of Misery” as I so lovingly refer to it.

We begin to ascend the great hill and the Bulldog says I will go up yon hill quickly. I pass some folks, but this is something I am not used to. I then find myself with the lead pack. David Patterson, Mike Ham, Maaike and Carrie, two girls from GC Cycling, Miles Eddins, Paul Weaver, Pat Ferguson and myself are now the lead pack.

We ride on Boncamp, across 171 to Jackson Trace then onto Upper Columbus road. The group splits, short ride to the left and the long to the right. The group was now Maaike and Carrie, Mike Ham, Miles and myself. We hammer along pretty good to Echola, but don't stop because the store was closed, something about a holiday. We rode on down Upper Columbus and then made a left on the way to Highway 82. We stopped at the store outside of Gordo to refresh and relieve and were soon joined by Larry, Miles, which had dropped back some, Dodie Morris and Steve Hodges on a recumbent. After we rested a little we were off. Mike, Larry, Dodie, and the Maaike and Carrie and myself went down Benevola road. Miles and the Steve would take an alternate route.

As we are going down Benevola, the bulldog hits some head wind. Head wind to me is like the stuff that renders Superman powerless. I start to lose the group and fade about a half a mile. I dug down and pedaled like Godzilla was after me. The problem was so were they. After a while I started sweating! , Every pedal stroke I was sweating. I thought my helmet had a water leak. I was finally caught up with them on Romulus road. I told Larry I speeded up to catch up, he said they slowed down so I could. Sometimes you can't win.

We proceed down Jackhammer Road (Romulus Road Greene County) on the way to Jena. We stop in Jena at the Church to fill our water jugs and cool off. We then ride on down Romulus to the blessed surface that would be in Tuscaloosa County. We ride till we come up on Sipse Valley road North. We turn left on route to Boothtown Road.

This is where Mike Ham would make a wrong turn and we lose him for a while.

The heat, humidity, and the hammering were starting to take it's toll on the bulldog.

When we hit what I call Boothtown Valley, this when two large hills converge. I was wiped out, exhausted, spent, woo out and dehydrated and a little tired. I was fixing to go down the first big hill and I passed Phil Hardee eating a sandwich. The image struck like that of a general preparing to go into battle, but first a sandwich.

It was all I could to get up that hill. I think someone tied a concrete block to the bike.

When we get to Romulus road, I tell Larry that I am out of water. Phil told me there was Church that had water. I stop and see a water hose, a very old, nasty, yucky hose. I turn the water on and fill a bottle. I take a drink and almost gag. This stuff tasted like it had pickle juice in it. One thing about it, I wasn't thirsty anymore. We went on down Romulus into Coker and stopped at Bama grocery. We take a good break and next thing we know Dodie Morris shows up. He said he got a ways back and took a few short cuts to catch up. I don't recommend this if don't the area you are riding in. You could get lost or worst have to walk to someone home in those silly A—s clothes and ask for help. We start back down Lower Columbus going toward Sam Sutton, then Mount Olive road, Rue road, and Bone Camp and then back to Texaco. I am riding on Rue with Larry and comment that I was having chills and some Nausea. I figured it was a little Dehydration. This soon passed and just I then felt crappy instead of lousy. We are almost back and Mike Ham shows up after making a nice recovery from the missed turn. Larry then tells me we are going to be short. This means we had to ride another mile and a quarter. Phil who was ahead of us figured it out and rode the extra mileage. We finished at 1 P.M., good time on a hot muggy day. We were fortunate that sun didn't come till 11:30 A.M. Those completing the 100 were Phil Hardee, Larry Pierson, Mike Ham and Bulldog. A special Ad a Girl to Tricia Falls who climbed Bone Camp and did over 30 miles after recently had both Big toe nails removed. Doing the 85 Miler were Peggy Deci, Paul Deci, John Millard, Lance Young (from Huntsville), and Pixie Hicks. This is a tough ride on tough roads. Take plenty of water and money to buy sports drinks or a Grandma's cookie or two.