

ALL-RIGHT BIKE CLUB

Battle Ground, Washington to Washington D.C. on bicycles? "Ah, you're kidding me," people would say. "You'll never make it!" But this time they were wrong.

Our bicycle trip began on the morning of June 14th. It was hard to believe that this day had finally come. Many people had gathered to see us off, mostly family and friends. Last minute good-byes were quickly said and soon it was time to leave. We rode slowly out of Battle Ground, past Toby's, Mr. Swiss, and all the things we knew so well. It seemed as if we were pedaling off into the unknown.

The first few days passed by slowly, as we followed the Columbia River on the Oregon freeway. We tired easily then and were exhausted by the end of each day. The seat of a bicycle is not a very comfortable chair, as our aching back-sides reminded us every time we sat down. But with each passing day, we began to feel stronger, as our bodies adjusted to this unusual way of life.

Every day, we got up at about three or four a.m. Many times it would still be dark, when we started pedaling. One morning, Tani Conner got a flat tire about a half mile outside of Payette, Idaho. We all stood in a circle, holding our lights, so Larry Barr could see to fix it. A car was coming down the road, so Carl Garrison and Steve Dietel, wearing fluorescent orange safety vests, began jumping up and down in the road. The car stopped, hung a quick u-turn, and sped back towards town. A few minutes later two state patrol cars came flying down the road with their lights flashing. It seemed that the man in the car had reported seeing Martians up on the hill. That kept us laughing all day long.

As we got closer to the Rocky Mountains, the weather began to get colder. One morning, the temperature dropped to 20 degrees. Lon Allworth washed a dish towel in the creek and hung it up to dry. To his amazement it froze instead. That prompted us to put on all of our warm clothes for the day's ride. We pedaled uphill all morning, right into the heart of the Rocky Mountains. The scenery was so beautiful, I had a hard time keeping my eyes on the road. Finally, about noon we reached the top of Togwotee Pass, 10,867 feet above sea level. We practically had a celebration, because the rest was all downhill. We zoomed down the other side at speeds of 40 m.p.h. The pass that had taken us four hours to climb took us a half hour to descend.

We arrived in Denver, Colorado on the fourth of July. It was our first big city and it was quite an experience pedaling right through the downtown section. We bought Kentucky Fried Chicken and drove over to Washington Park to watch the fireworks. Much to our disappointment, all the big displays had been shot off the night before. Later, back at the church, Judy Muzzy discovered some fireworks in the sky close by. So we sat on the front lawn of the church in our pajamas and got to see some fireworks after all.

We entered Kansas next and found it to be one of the toughest states we passed through. Kansas is not flat as people are led to believe. It has many rolling hills and we ran into headwinds every day. The temperature was up around 105 degrees, which provided us with a dark tan, but made the pedaling uncomfortable.

On one of those hot Kansas afternoons, we were stopped on the side of the road because Syd Muzzy had a flat tire. In a nearby field, there was a pipe spouting clear, cold water into an irrigation ditch, which resembled a cement bath tub. We tore off our shoes and socks as quickly as possible and jumped in. We took turns sitting under the pipe and letting the water gush over our heads. It was unbelievable how good that water felt.



The Ozark Mountains rose up before us, the next obstacle in our path. These were different from the Rockies in that they were steeper with more ups and downs. We found that if we pedaled as fast as we could down the hill, we could pedal easily up the other side. It was here that we met some real live hillbillies. They had the twang in their voice, the full beard, and the clothes to match. It was so neat to have a chance to talk to those people, who have such a different way of life than we do.

We stayed for two nights in Cincinnati, Ohio, another big city on our route. Coming into the city, we were on a two lane road which suddenly opened into a four lane freeway, and left us stranded in the third lane. There were cars whizzing by all around us, and it took a while before we could cross over to the safety of the shoulder. That was a little scary, but the rest of our stay in Cincinnati was great! Luckily for us the Cincinnati Reds were in town. So we splurged and spent \$5.50 apiece on tickets. Pete Rose hit a home run, and, of course, the Reds won.

We were only four days out of Washington D.C. when we entered the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. The Appalachians were the hardest mountains we climbed, because they were very steep and seemed to go up forever. But they had some spectacular downhills, one being five miles long which made all the uphill seem worthwhile.

Finally, the day came that we were to arrive in Washington D.C. It seemed unbelievable that this was our last day of pedaling. We were really psyched up and we hit a much faster pace than usual for the first fifty miles. As we neared Washington D.C. the traffic was heavier, so we had to slow down. I heard a shout from behind, so I looked up and there was the Washington Monument towering above the city. A bit further we came to the "ENTERING WASHINGTON D.C." sign. There we stopped as we had many times before, to take a picture of the sign. As I stood looking out over the city, I felt some happiness... relief... but mostly a sadness that our trip was over.