

"The Bicycle Season in 1897"

Carroll county Times Article for 21 September 1997

By Jay A. Graybeal

The approach of cooler fall weather opened the bicycle season for local residents of a century ago. Cycling had become a favorite pastime for men and women alike by the 1890s and local clubs, such as the Cycling Ramblers organized outings for their members. The September 4, 1897 issue of the Westminster American Sentinel newspaper carried an article about local activities:

"The bicycle season is at its height. The weather is perfect and the roads in splendid condition. Everybody has taken to the wheel, and the cool weather has made long distance riding quite the vogue. Incidentally some records have been broken by some of our local men. Wm. F. Long, paced by Wm. A. Stultz and Wm. Null, lowered the records between here and Reisterstown from 42 to 35 minutes on Sunday. Miss Mary Davis, the celebrated lady centurion of Baltimore, is visiting the Misses Oursler, of Cranberry.

Mr. W. Y. Barth, of Baltimore, visited Mr. and Mrs. Krichton, and accompanied by Miss Emma Wheeler and Mr. and Mrs. Krichton on their tandem, visited friends in Hanover.

Mr. Elmer C. Davis, the holder of the world's 24-hour road record, visited Miss Ada Oursler, at Cranberry last Sunday, and on his return in the evening to Baltimore, incidentally broke the unpaced records from Westminster to Baltimore, making the ride in one hour, thirty-two minutes and three-fifth seconds. He was checked and timed by competent persons at both ends.

Mr. Geo. M. Parke and Mr. Buck Waters visited Hanover, Pa., on their wheels on Sunday.

Messrs. A. H. Wentz and Jos. D. Witter visited Mr. Wentz's parents in Hanover on Sunday last. They rode up on their wheels.

Bucky Moore and F. Haines Cassell visited the battlefield of Gettysburg last Sunday in search of dead bicycle heroes connected with the "late war," but failed to find any and returned to Littlestown and held memorial services at Hotel De Yantis.

Miss Kitty Sheeler paid a visit to some unknown region last Sunday, but has returned seemingly well pleased with her trip.

Among the wheelmen who visited Emory Grove camp Sunday were: Messrs. Charles E. Cootes, Wm. Null, W. A. Stultz, Wm. F. Long, Frank Yingling, Charles Brown and others.

We are informed on good authority that the largest century run ever starting from this county will shortly be called. The route will be from Westminster to Wrightsville Pa. on the banks of the Susquehanna, and return, a distance of 104 miles. As this is an easy century, it ought to be patronized by a great many ladies as well as gentlemen. There will be souvenirs for all who finish on time.

What is the matter with the Cycling Ramblers? A club as old as this, with a record that is a part of history, ought not to be let to die out.

Dr. Baughman says when he gets his new adjustable handlebars for his Pea Green Hunter, Dr. Hering won't be in it with his Royal Blue Rambler.

We note that a great many factories have reduced their prices on many of the standard makes of bicycles. This should be an inducement to many contemplating riders to purchase their mounts now, as there are many months of fine riding yet this season.

A race meet to be held on our one-half mile track is in contemplation. If the assistance of our people can be secured, a day of enjoyment awaits many. Prizes should be attractive to induce the cream of cycle races to come."

Next week's column will contain the details of the Cycling Ramblers' Century Ride to Wrightsville, Pa.

Photo caption: William A. Shriver posed with his high wheel bicycle in the mid 1880s. By 1897, many riders had switched to low wheel models with tires of the same size. Historical Society of Carroll County Collection.