

"The Cycling Ramblers' Century Ride"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

In last week's column, I noted that the Cycling Ramblers, a local bicycling club, had organized a "Century Run" for September 1897. To complete this "century" riders had to travel 106 miles round trip to Wrightsville, Pa., in sixteen hours or less. The September 25, 1897 issue of the Westminster American Sentinel newspaper carried a complete story of the outing:

"From a wheelman's standpoint the century run, under the auspices of the Cycling Ramblers of this city, on Sunday last, was a decided success in most of its features. The number of entries was not fully up to expectation, having been only fifty-five, but about ninety-one per cent., or, to be exact, fifty of those who entered were back at the starting point within the time limited- sixteen hours. The run was to Wrightsville, Pa., fifty-three miles and return, so that the distance actually covered was one hundred and six miles. Numbers of those who entered from this county had never attempted a century run before and some of them had little previous training to fit them for the strain of such prolonged effort, but only one of them failed to make the run on time.

In starting the wheelmen did not leave in a body, but were widely scattered, the first getting away at 5:30 A. M., and the last two hours later. Twenty-two Baltimore cyclers entered, of whom fifteen are members of the Myrtle Wheelmen. Fourteen of these fifteen returned on time, the fifteenth, Mr. Wm. E. Krebs, a lithographer in the employ of the Friedenwald Company, having met with a serious accident on Pigeon Hill, between Hanover and Abbottstown, where the fork of his wheel broke and he was thrown on his face and badly cut and scarred. He was taken back to Hanover, in a unconscious condition from the loss of blood, but subsequently revived and is now well on the road to recovery, but will carry the scars caused by the accident through life.

Of the five who failed to return on time four were Baltimore wheelmen, namely, W. E. Krebs, James Corrigan, H. P. Wise, J. A. Biehl. The fifth was E. C. Bowersox, of Dennings.

The starters were checked by Dr. Geo. E. Baughman, of his city, at the junction of West Main street and Pennsylvania avenue. Messrs. Wm. A. Stultz, Jr., William Utz and William F. Long, of this city, were the pacemakers. Messrs. Joseph H. Krichton, Allen H. Wentz and George Mather comprised the committee of the Cycling Ramblers, under whose auspices the run was made.

The survivors were: Capt. C. H. Pertner, Messrs. Philip Feick, J. L. Jones, Wm. H. Cullimore, Jr., John S. Lipscomb, Charles K. Conway, Julius Hamburger, Harry B. Akers, E. T. Lewis, Wm. J. Dixon, G. E. Sproul, Frank G. Conway, Reese Conner, John Myers, of the Myrtle Wheelmen, Baltimore; T. Cecil Downes, A. Lauterbach, David Boyd, J. C. Miller, of Baltimore; Dohnea C. Nygren, Joseph Bowman, Tannery; Joseph Little, J. T. Warehime, Elmer Starner, Corbin C. Markle, Union Mills; H. C. Danner, Medford; C. H. Yeiser, Hanover, Pa.; Harvey Frizzell, Bloom; Wm. H. Owings, John W. Owings, Warfieldsburg; Edward Schrade, Sykesville; Ellsworth Long, Carrollton; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Krichton, Wm. N. Keefer, Wm. Utz, Frank Diffendal, Wm. F. Long, Edward Manning, Chas. E. Eckenrode, Erastus J. Gorsuch, Eugene W. H. Lamotte, M. John Lynch, Joseph B. Taylor, George R. Babylon, Wm. A. Stultz, Jr. Jesse Stultz, Paul Case, John Case, Wm. B. Nelson, George M. Parke, of Westminster.

Dr. Baughman checked each rider upon the return and took up his ticket. Mr. and Mrs. Krichton made the entire run on a tandem and were among the first to reach the starting point on the return run. Some of the cyclers paused long enough at Hanover and York to attend religious services. The day was an ideal one for wheelmen and most of the participants enjoyed the event intensely. Each of the survivors will receive a handsome medal, suitably inscribed, to commemorate the occasion."

Bicycle excursions remained popular well into the twentieth century, however, the coming of the automobile provided far greater possibilities for outings.

Photo caption: Westminster cyclist John H. Cunningham posed for a Baltimore photographer in 1886. Cunningham was well known for making century rides but was notably absent from the September 1897 ride to Wrightsville, Pa. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.