

Trips AWheel: Where to Go and How to Get There

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Cycle Route No. 10 (1897-98 Series.)

Absecon, N.J. to Asbury Park

The course of the Time Wheelmen's Double Century, to be held on next Sunday, has been announced to run from this city to Absecon, N. J., from Absecon to Asbury Park, and thence home through Trenton, subject to an investigation of the roads by the committee.

The first portion of this itinerary is familiar to the thousands who, by this time, have used the new route to Atlantic City, published in these columns on May 2; the second portion I ran over on Wednesday last, and a lovely stretch of 82 miles it is, mostly within scent and at times within sight of the ocean, and on roads almost uninterruptedly good throughout. Whether for the purpose of a century run or not, it is a trip well worth taking.

WE START FROM ABSECON.

At Absecon, opposite the railroad station, instead of following our road in its southward curve over the bridge toward Pleasantville (as per Trip 3) we turn sharp L up a little rise and start our mileage from this fork, if you please.

The gravel is good, the country merely rolling; then 4 miles to Oceanville occupy only a few minutes. Run on past the railroad station; and on the top of the hill above it, three roads present themselves to you. The left one offers to take you to Port Republic direct (3 ½ m.); take my advice and decline the invitation; the turn R goes out of our way to Leeds Point (2 m.); we select the middle one, labeled "Smithville, 1 m.;" its material is of a mixed character, and its surface is no race course, but it is being improved and, waiting for the millennium, we have a good sidepath.

Not very enticing is that turn L to Egg Harbor City, at Smithville; pass it by and at the bifurcation bear L.

The comfort with which we reach Port Republic is best appreciated by those who have known other days.

Before you cross over the creek into the town, see that post at the convergence of a road from L with our own? I had hoped that some benefactor of making would have chopped it up for kindling ere this; instead of that, the wretched thing has lately received a new coat of paint; beware of it, should you ever reverse the trip we are now taking; it has misled may an innocent wayfarer into the shortest, but the most infamous road to Absecon.

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

Note the fork in the village with Adams' ice cream parlor in the angle (8 ½ m.) and the bear R (L to Pomona and Egg Harbor City).

From this point we have a “friend in need” in a narrow but good path.

11 ¼ mile from start we bear L, and face the worse part of our trip. Think of it, though, it’s only ¾ of a mile to that bridge yonder across the Mullica River; the bridge is called New Bridge; this waste is Chestnut Neck; the other side of the bridge a little oyster shell road (which is O K except in times of high tides) will take us through more swamps; and when we get on terra firma again (14 m.) half a mile’s spin will bring us to the Wading River and New Gretna road.

See that post standing in the middle of our road with its finger pointing the direction, we have come from? It was put there for our benefit when, in order to reach Atlantic City, we had to make the detour though this section, which I outlined “for auld lang syne” on the map of our Trip No. 3. “The new Atlantic City road has killed the restaurant business in New Gretna,” I am told by the landlord of the New Gretna House. We feel sorry for him, but mighty glad for ourselves!

Turn sharp right here; you will find the village with the said New Gretna House, opposite the postoffice, right ahead (15 ¼ m.).

IMPROVEMENTS EVERYWHERE.

It seems but yesterday when the six miles that separate us from Tuckerton were indeed toilsome; the first half of the distance is now in the chrysalis state and varies from bad to excellent (good path all through), the second half is all that could be desired.

At Tuckerton postoffice, with Everett House right opposite it, our cyclometers mark 21 ¾ m.

This little town is almost 200 years old; it was in 1899 it was first settled; it now has a population of some 2000 inhabitants, shipping interests amounting to some 8000 tons, and cycles galore. No wonder at the latter, when the highways are in such excellent condition.

A CHARMING RIDE.

Our ride now is indeed a pleasure. We fairly fly through Parkertown and its neighbor West Creek (24 ¾ m.) and Cedar Run and other pleasant-looking hamlets and on to Manahawkin – Manahoking it used to be (29 ¾ m.).

As your curve L into the village, don’t be tempted by that important-looking turn R round by the dry goods store with the sign “Hats trimmed free of charge;” it would lead you to the depot and to the bay; keep straight on past the National Hotel and away again.

Barneгат and its charming bay (fishing, gunning, yachting and what not) we reach all too soon, afraid as we are that this lovely ride is too good to last (34 ½ m.).

A hundred yards across from the Main street crossing, on L, is Clarence House, the only regular hotel in the locality.

The continuation of Main street on R goes to the bay 1 ½ mile distant.

We keep straight on, glide to pretty little Waretown. As we pass beyond the Centennial Hotel, see those masts right ahead of us; that's Barnegat Bay.

When you cycle through England don't forget Ware in Hertfordshire. You remember Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night." Said Sir Toby to Sir Andrew: "As many lies as will lie in thy sheet of paper, although the sheet were big enough for the bed of Ware in England, set them down!" No trifling task, seeing that the bed was (and is still) almost eleven feet square and "twelve people could like comfortably in it." There are other things worthy seeing in Hertfordshire; but we are not there now.

ON TO TOM'S RIVER.

As recently as last fall I described this part of the road as poor, indeed; the hand of improvement is plainly visible now, and it will not be long before we can put a big G down for it on our coupon. For the present the path leaves us no cause to lose patience.

Here is quaint little Forked River (41 m.), with a hotel rejoicing in the name of brave Lafayette.

Don't call it "Fork'd River" above all; say "For-ked," if you please, just as you do when reading poetry sometimes.

A mile and a half beyond Forked River lies a hamlet whose name I had never known until I passed through here last year, and I then sought information from a fair passer-by. "Good luck, sir," she answered with a smile.

"Gluckliche Reise!" they called out to me as I wheeled out of the last gasthof I stayed at in the Vaterland years ago. The friendly wish now seemed somehow to ring in my ear once again, and I am not sure but my voice quivered slightly when I said: "Thank you; but will you please tell me the name of this place?" "The name of this place, sir, is Good Luck," was the reply, and with a muffled "Thank ye" I pedaled away a wiser but disillusioned man, and was at Cedar Creek in a moment.

Good gravel to Bayville and Barnegat Park and on past Tom's River tollgate (where you don't pay anything). As we round towards the picturesque village (where is your kodak?) notice that road on L from Dover; just beyond the bridge we register 51 miles.

You must not run away with the idea that the designation of this old settlement is connected with the proverbial "Tom, Dick and Harry" tribe, either. Indeed, the worthy old Swedish settler after whom this section was christened was not Tom at all, but "Tomm," a man of account in his day and at one time clerk of the court at Upland, now Chester, Pa., (see our Trip No. 4).

A LITTLE HILLY FOR A CHANGE.

Beware of that turn L, round Riverside House (the very first house at the bridge); it would take you to Manchester; the turn R leads to Island Heights; go straight through and away; yet don't let the charms of this easy ride cause you to neglect your landmarks.

At the cemetery, 1 m. from the river, bear L (R to White Oak Bottom, 4 m.); but there is a sign-post at present; but posts are perishable things. And 1 m. further bear R (L to Ridgeway). For the first time this trip we meet hills right here, but they are not likely to tax you.

This hamlet (55 m.) is Claytonville. Three and a half miles ahead, that dark-red painted house on L stands on the site of the Seven Stars Inn of Washington's time. That turn L goes to Casino Park.

FASHIONABLE LAKEWOOD.

And 2/12 m. further still we glide to Lack Carosaljoe, at what used to be "Bricksburg," before it was given the more "tony" designation of "Lakewood" (61 m).

"Carosaljoe" looks "kind of unusual," doesn't it? Yet, like Columbus' egg, it's "dead easy" when you know it.

You see, old Mr. Brick, the founder of "Brick's burg," had three daughters, Carolina, Sally and Josephine; and out of the first portion of each of their names he make up the word "Caro-sal-joe," and dedicated it to his lake; that's all.

Bear L after crossing the bridge, and if you do not propose to make a survey of the place (when you have time; it deserves more than a passing glance), take the first wide road R, labeled "Burrsville, 5 ½ m." It is Main street. A few doors down on R is Carr's Temperance Hotel, at your service.

_____BACK TO THE SHORE.

Our going out of Lakewood can only be described in the same glowing terms as our coming in.

About 4 miles out our fine roadway suddenly merges into the old-style New Jersey abomination, but a commodious path awaits us, and if we take care to turn sharp L at Burrsville (R to Cedar Bridge; straight on to Parker's Neck, we reach West Point Pleasant, 70 m.), and after a possible stay here, in the cool shade of the woods, we spin merrily on to Point Pleasant itself.

One mile from West Point Pleasant Hotel, mark Main street on R., with the postoffice in sight, and on L, O. B. Van Camp's store. The next road L beyond this store is River avenue; turn sharp into it, direct for Manasquan River.

Take the right turn after crossing this fine river (the left goes to our destination also, but it is not so good, I am told), and follow the road in its winding first L and then R, where an L. A. W. fingerboard points to "Asbury Park, 8 ¾ m."

Half a mile farther another fingerboard points us L into Manasquan (74 m.).

Here, if you keep on by the Osborne House (where "Jimmy's" proud father exhibits quite a collection of his son's picture), you are bound for Farmingdale and Freehold; turn sharp R round Squan House, and your course is clear and easy.

1 ½ m. ahead at Glendale House X the turn R goes to Spring Lake; L to Allaire.

Just beyond it is Villa Park Postoffice. Then comes pretty Lake Como and the village of same name, where we bear L.

Through West Belmar and Belmar (78 ¼ m.) our wheels take us too swiftly. Here we bear L round the railroad depot, then R and immediately L again.

The Shark River, Avon-by-the-Sea and Bradley Beach are crossed in quick succession, and we strike the twin towns of Ocean Grove and Asbury Park, a little over 81 miles from start.

Almost opposite the depot, on R, is a Cookwan avenue, and a few doors from the corner is Weir's Hotel.

The remainder of the Time Wheelmen's possible itinerary between Asbury Park and Trenton will be published in Trips Awheel, No. 11, next Thursday, June 24.

A.E.

P.S. – Over the Alleghenies to Pittsburgh. -- I have been asked whether I would accept the company of a few of my readers, ladies and gentlemen, on the trip I take very fall over the mountains. I should have much pleasure in doing so on the distinct understanding that I ride for enjoyment, not for record-breaking, that the little party should proceed in such a way as to secure the greatest amount of pleasure for every member thereof, and should be joined only by those who can really enjoy the charms and the drawbacks of such a journey. At an average of 46 miles per day the distance can be covered with comfort in eight days, the return home being made in one night by train by those who, like myself, cannot afford more time; the average hotel expenses might be put down at \$2 per day, with a little reserve fund for the unforeseen.