

Trips Awheel: Where to Go and How to Get There

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Our Cycle Route No. 14 (1897-98 Series.)

VINELAND TO CAPE MAY. (A Continuation of Trip No. 12.)

“Cool Cape May,” “Peerless Cape May,” these and other alluring headings are sure to have caught our eyes in the advertising columns of this paper during this sizzling weather. Let us finish the run that we left off the other day at Vineland. Isn’t it too hot to ride? Why, on the hottest day during the past week a delightfully cool breeze awaiting any cyclist who went out to woo it, just a stone’s throw away from our city bricks and mortar. Try it before the weatherman turns off that cooling draft.

A TYPICAL GRAVEL ROAD.

When after covering a little more than 31 miles we reach the crossing at which we turned L into the town of Vineland on our Trip No. 12, we now keep straight on. The writers of that sign-post may have thought that the wayfarer needs some little encouragement when Queen Humidity lavishes her favors upon him.

“And around him the Suggema,
The mosquito, sings his war-song.”

That must be why they told him that Millville lies 5 ½ miles away. That, I presume, is the distance from this point to the city limits, but we don’t usually get a meal or a bed on a town line; and I consider it kinder to tell you right away that it’s 7 miles into Millville and 7 ¼ miles to our hotel there.

Up the hill we run, past Oak Hill Cemetery on R. This is the kind of road that I find it difficult to describe accurately by the letter-signs of our route-coupon; in its normal condition and after moderate rain you might think that V G was none too good for it; in long-continued dry weather it might barely deserve the letter F; such things should be taken into consideration, of course, when consulting the appreciations on that coupon.

MILLVILLE.

As we enter the city of Millville (6 miles from Vineland Cross), keep straight ahead until we come to Columbia avenue; turn L into the latter, follow the trolley L into Broad street; then turn R into High street at the railroad depot; down the whole length of High street; and at its intersection with Main street (7 ¼ miles) the Weatherby House is on your left. If you have forgotten your route-coupon you’ll be sorry, that’s all.

Thirty years ago Millville was what was officially known as a post-village, and, although it already boasted of manufactories of glass, iron and cotton, it had just thirty eight hundred inhabitants; it now

has eleven thousand; has pulled through a severe temperance epidemic, and has down the throes of a severer fit of bicycle fever. It were hard to tell what will be the sequel of the former ailment; the latter has long reached the obdurate chronic state. Glass sand is plentiful in the neighborhood, and so are glass works as a consequence; yet you don't see as much broken glass on the public highways hereabouts in one mile as you would find in one square in certain sections of Camden city.

By the way, Union Lake, one of the largest artificial lakes in the United States, is well worth a visit, while you are here.

THE PORT ELIZABETH ROUTE.

Two roads are open to us from Millville to Dorchester, one on each side of the Maurice River. The westerly route, though a trifle longer, is now the better of the two.

Should business require your taking the easterly one through Port Elizabeth, etc., turn L into Main street at the corner of the hotel, follow the trolley track as it turns sharp R; keep on with it to the terminus of the line and then spin away straight ahead.

As far as Manantico Creek your course is perfectly clear; there a sudden change takes place – that creek must be some township boundary or another – you have to hug a narrow path by the edge of the proverbial sea of sand, for grim death; and right glad you are when you strike another creek, the Manumuskin, and get into Port Elizabeth (45 ½ m.).

On the off side of the bridge, bear R. The turning L goes to Tuckahoe (11 m. away). Go straight through the village, a favorite rendezvous with the elite of our Philadelphia gunners when the fall shooting is on.

A good path takes you to Bricksboro (47 ½ m.). Three-quarters of a mile beyond the station, a straight road L, which makes a bee-line for Eldora (or West Creek) on the map, looks far less enticing in the reality than it does on paper; don't attempt to touch it. You will find Dorchester just 50 miles from home, and there we shall meet you.

THE WEST BANK OF THE RIVER.

Being bent on using the better road, we turn R into Main street at Millville, down to the river and over the bridge, L into Middle avenue and L into Race street, where a sign-post directs you to "Mauricetown, 8 m."

I hope the compositor won't spell this "Morristown." Mauricetown was named after Maurice River, and the latter owes its name to a Dutch boat, the "Prince Maurice," that was burnt by the Indians on this river. Of Maurice, Prince of Orange and Count of Nassau, you have read in your histories, of course.

This road is certainly an improvement on the Port Elizabeth. The side of it, if not always the centre, is good, and we make Buckshutem (11 ¾ m.) in quick time. If the wind comes from that direction, your olfactory nerve will probably tell you that, here on your right, lies Buckshutem's well-known swamp.

About 3 miles farther, notice turn R to Haleyville. Are you fond of oysters? Another turn L, a short distance down that road would bring you to Port Norris.

And, by the way, should you every branch off here, in search of Dividing Creek, don't confound the railroad station of that name (half-way between Haleyville and Newport Station) with the village which lies about 3 miles south of it; there are cases when the longest way round is not the shortest way home.

In Mauricetown (16 m.) turn L across the river (R to Haleyville). A fair gravel road brings us through the meadows; that solitary station without a name (at the present date), a mile out of the village, is Mauricetown Station; ½ a mile farther we strike the Port Elizabeth road ("pike," I beg your pardon) and turning R into it we soon reach Dorchester (19 m.).

Here, keep straight on at the cross road. Turning L goes to Belle Plain, 6 ½ miles distant.

A pleasant breeze greets us at this stage; it is not the sweet breath of the sea yet; it comes from Delaware Bay right in front of us; we shall get the "genuine article" after a while.

A splendid path to Leesburg, about a mile away.

ZIGZAGGING RIGHT AND LEFT.

Here avoid this first turning L to Belk Plain; but at the next T-shaped crossing in the village, turn L, and about half a mile out of the village take the left fork for Ewing's Neck at the bifurcation; the R goes to Helslerville (2 ½ m.).

I am surprised to see those signboards still speaking of "Ewing's Neck," for that locality has been officially rechristened Delmont for a considerable time. Thus far we have frequently been able to choose either the roadway or the sidepath; from this point to Delmont (whence another branch L would bring us to Belle Plain if it were cyclable) and on to Eldora (27 m.) we must be satisfied with the path and a very narrow one at times.

At this Eldora (formerly West Creek) turn sharp R. That road from L is the one to which I drew your attention outside Bricksboro.

Our riding is now better; we run swiftly through East Creek; and now about 4 miles farther, after passing a couple of conspicuous ponds on L, watch for a post on R bearing the inscription "Cape Island, 20 m." You might easily pass it by, unnoticed, and be well on your way to Petersburg and Tuckahoe before you were aware of it.

DOWN THE CAPE.

Wheel sharp R at this post. This is Dennisville, and as you ride down the street, notice on L for possible use, the Gatzmer House (32 ¾ m.), which should not be judged altogether perhaps from its external appearance. I have heard of travelers being refused board and even lodging at certain West Jersey hotels because they dropped in after the regular supper hour. I once knocked at this unpretentious

Gatzmer House, considerably too late for supper, and (much to my surprise in so small a town) I was treated to ice cream for my dessert. A straw will show how the wind blows.

This little creek is Dennis Creek, after which Dennisville was named.

In south Dennis, one mile away, a turning L is worth our notice. It goes to Seaville Station, whence you may reach Ocean View and Sea Isle City; or you may go on to Beesley's Point Postoffice (and thence to Ocean City) or keep on to Beesley's Point and Atlantic City.

Needless to say we leave that turn on our left, and take good care at this next fork not to heed a detestable sign on L with "Court House, 6 m." (if it is still in existence when you come here); bear R away from it until you get to Goshen (37 m.).

BE CAREFUL.

Here at the crossroad with a store in the angle on R, turn L. Many a one has lost his way here and repented it. Straight on, you would go to Dias Creek, whence you might join us again at Cape May Court House, but you would be sadder, as well as wiser, by that time.

Thus forewarned, we make for L; shun, of course this branching L to Swain Station, and that one, R, to Dias Creek again, and we merrily spin along a path varying from F to V G, straight on to Cape May Court House (42 m.).

Keep straight along the principal street in Cape May Court House until the telegraph posts make a sudden turn R; follow them around Hereford House and straight on for the remainder of your journey.

A WORD OF THANKS.

The Bicycle Road Improvement Association of this county deserve great credit for the path they have provided for us cyclists; and their efforts are best appreciated by those who, like myself, were painfully acquainted with the "status quo ante," as bookish people say. As to that, a look at the roadway by the side of our path will even now enable the veriest stranger to realize the difficulties they must have encountered.

TO THE OCEAN.

Thanks to them we now journey comfortable long through Mayville, Gravelly Run, Burleigh (47 m.), long, straggling Rio Grande, the two Bennett stations on their respective lines (the last being at Erma Postoffice (50 m.), and Cold Springs Postoffice.

Don't be misled by that sign on L, "Cape May City 2 m.;" keep straight on, and when your cyclometer registers 54 ¼ miles or thereabouts, you will be at the corner of Broadway and First avenue in Cape May City. Beach avenue is straight before you; the city lies on your left and Cape May Point on R.

One work before we part. While enjoying yourself in the city and on the beach, bear in mind that the steamer landing is somewhat more than two miles away, and that "time and tide" have got a habit of waiting for nobody.

A.E.

PS. – On and after to-morrow, Monday, the various branches of the Cycling Department will be placed in the same hands. Correspondents, therefore, need no longer discriminate in the matter of general cycling news, road information, etc.; let them address their mail simply to the "Cycling Editor." Road information will no longer, either, be restricted to Friday; inquires will be answered in the order in which they reach this office, and as soon after receipt as the requirements of the paper will allow.

A.E.