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74th YEAR

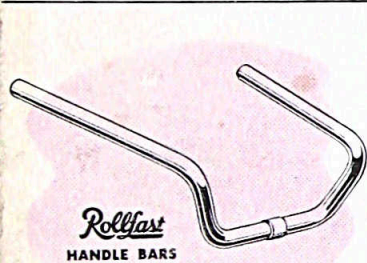
JUNE 1953

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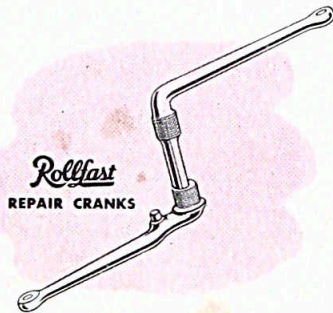
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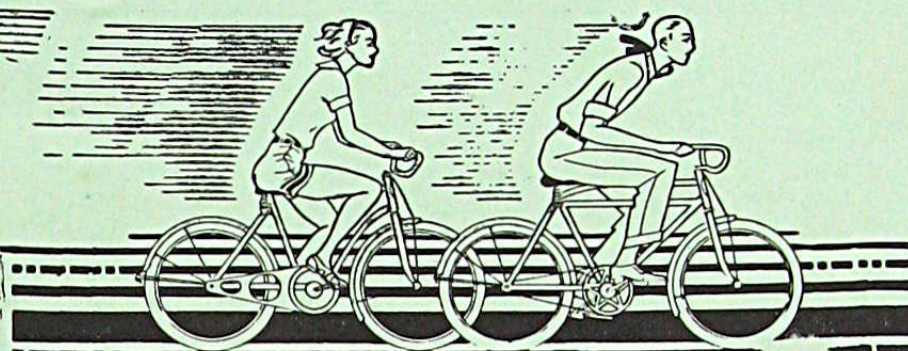
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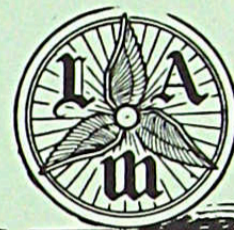


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League of AMERICAN WHEELMEN NEWS



A Monthly Section of L.A.W. Activities



A SOLO CYCLING VACATION On California's Old Stage Road

by Bill Utterback

LAST YEAR I took a trip along part of the Imperial Highway, the old route of the Butterfield Stage Lines in their transcontinental journey from Chicago to San Francisco by way of Yuma and Los Angeles.

In the June 1952 issue of *Desert Magazine* was an article telling of the completion of the last link of the new Imperial Highway. The last fifty miles wind through desolate desert land and are as yet unpaved, but that article so whetted my appetite that I determined to try it on the bike at the earliest opportunity during the cooler season. It's too far between water holes out there to attempt it in the hot months.

I had turned off at Scissors Crossing, where the pavement ends, on my previous trip and taken the road down San Felipe Creek, past Borrego Valley, and over to Route 99, but, with the prospect of a four-and-one-half day Christmas Holiday, I decided to try to conquer the entire Imperial Highway from El Segundo on the sea to Coyote Wells almost on the Mexican border, 90 miles inland from San Diego and thirty miles from El Centro in the Imperial Valley.

Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 1952, was murky and overcast at one P.M. when our holiday started, but the weather man had promised that the clouds were only the fog end of a weak little storm in the process of fizzling out so I loaded the bike and took off, this time including a light tarp for a ground cloth as a defense against moisture that had already fallen and as a possible emergency shelter against any that might start coming out of those clouds.

It was two by the time I was ready to leave Santa Monica, where my trailer is now parked, and nearly three by the time I had slipped down along the coast a few miles and picked up the start of the Imperial Highway in El Segundo.

Due east, past the Los Angeles International Airport and through Hawthorne, Inglewood, Lennox, and Lynwood runs the Imperial Highway. Darkness was upon me by the time I reached Norwalk, some thirty miles inland, where I had commenced my previous trip along this route. At Brea, an oil well center a few miles on, I got my evening meal, then set out for Santa Ana Canyon.

On a dark night in December of '49 the fourteen miles from Corona to the Imperial Highway turn-off had been filled with terror as I jounced along the ragged edge of an inadequate two-lane road jammed with strings of whizzing cars going both ways. I was winding up a double century at that time and was almost too fatigued to cope with such a situation. Now the Santa Ana Canyon road is a four-lane-divided super-highway with broad, smooth paved shoulders along which a cyclist may ramble in complete comfort and safety.

I was rambling, too, when out went my headlight. Too late, I remembered that I had intended to take a spare bulb along as the old one had become quite blackened. . . . In retrospect, I can see where this occurrence was sort of a disguised blessing. It restrained me from night riding on busy highways, and permitted a most unforgettable experience on the moonlit desert the following night.

I immediately started seeking a camp site and found a good one just three miles out of Corona, and I'm sure that this forced early retirement gave me extra pep for the arduous cycling that lay ahead the next day that more than compensated for the few miles I might have covered in the next hour or so, and that the fine warm breakfast I got in

the only cafe I could find open in Corona Christmas morning was far better than a cold saddle-bag snack I'd have otherwise eaten.

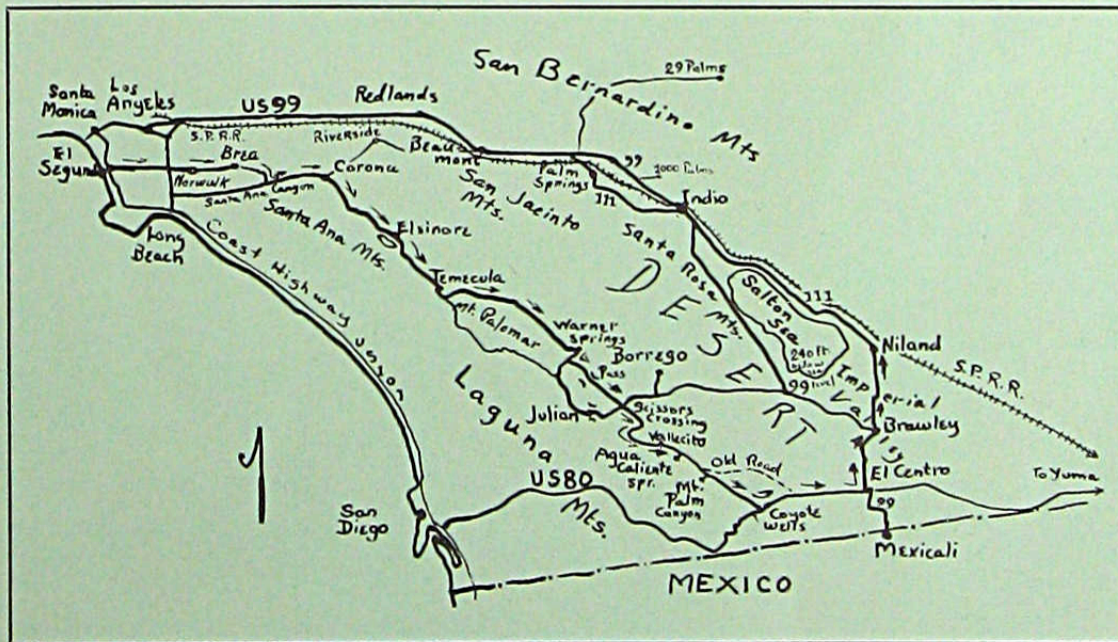
Just for the record, Lake Elsinore is now restored completely. Last winter was wet and this one is starting off wetter. Its shimmering waters are now dotted with ducks, coots, speed-boats, and sailboats, as of yore. After one season as a dried-up mud flat California's largest fresh-water lake is back in business again.

It was a glorious sight as I reached the summit of the long Alberhill grade to see its glass-smooth waters reflecting the cloudless blue of the skies, for during a rather frosty night all the overcast had vanished.

The rest of the morning I rolled through valleys fresh and green from the winter rains. Streams were flowing and grain was sprouting in the fields. At Temecula I got dinner. Not just lunch, but the two dollar Christmas special: home-raised, home-baked turkey; home-baked punkin' pie; and all the associated ingredients from barley soup to a seegar (if I wanted it) and matches on the house. Friends, when you visit Temecula don't miss the B-bar-H Cafe.

For the next one hundred miles there are no towns and few refreshment stops along the Imperial Highway. From Temecula to Warner Valley I counted fourteen major summits—numbers four and ten are really dillies, too! It was my fourth ride this way and each time I swear will be my last.

There was a generous coating of snow upon the crest of Palomar Mountain. Down in the Temecula Valley it was quite warm but as I



Description of Photos
CHICAGO COUNCIL
BICYCLE TRAIN

TOP LEFT PHOTO: Taking bikes off the train on arrival at Woodstock, Ill.

TOP RIGHT PHOTO: Group of riders at Woodstock assembling for start on a 12-mile trip—the first half of the day's ride.

MIDDLE LEFT PHOTO: The riders line up ready to start.

MIDDLE RIGHT PHOTO: Riders en-route from Woodstock to Crystal Lake.

BOTTOM LEFT PHOTO: A group of the faster riders halt on the road waiting for those who fell behind to catch up.

BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTO: Children who accompanied their parents on the cycle train. . . . They all made the 24-mile distance, even the little girl with the balloon tired bike.

All photos by L.A.W. Member Harry Knipp, Jr., Berwyn, Illinois.

Our thanks to Jack Hansen of Chicago Cycle Supply Co. for supplying the photos.

Address Changes

PLEASE mail all changes of addresses immediately to the National Secretary, Miss Natalie Paynter, 1930 South 1st Ave., Maywood, Illinois, and she will in turn send all changes to the bulletin mailing committee so that you may continue receiving your Bulletins regularly.

**National Century Run,
 October 5th, 1952**

At the last National Convention (1951) a move was made to change the "National Century Run Date" to sometime in the Fall. It was also suggested that the winner be decided on a percentage of club membership finishing the run.

After some discussion it was decided to take the matter back to the local clubs and let them decide. On October 16, 1951, a letter was sent to all clubs explaining the situation and a postal card was enclosed, so that each club's preference could be recorded.

The results of this poll indicated a definite desire among the clubs to have a Fall Century

and that the winner be determined on a percentage basis of membership.

Following this decision through, October 5, 1952 will be the date. More information will be sent to the clubs at a later date.

ROBERT K. LA COSSE
National Century Chairman,
 3724 Fullerton Ave., Chicago 47, Illinois

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