

Cycle America Story

by Ethel Shelstad

On a very hot day, Friday, July 19, forty-two participants of Cycle America's Ride Across America group passed through Madison from their over-night stop at Watertown enroute to their destination for that day at Montevideo. The tour was arranged through Cycle America and was set up in 9 one-week trips with some of the participants pedaling all nine weeks from Seattle to Boston. The group receives an itinerary of each day's travels, informing them where to turn, how many miles on each particular road and their destination.

Some participants start out from their camping spots at 4:30 a.m. while the group I visited with usually start out as late as 7-7:30 a.m. earning them the name Team Sweep. A support party of 17 staff from Cycle America takes care of the meals, hauls the tents and suitcases, and follows behind the cyclers to make sure everyone is on the right path and are feeling all right. Some participants had to be treated for heat dehydration, but no one had dropped out yet, in spite of the extremely high temps. The group sets up their tents in a schoolyard in the town they are staying overnight in, and are permitted to sleep in the school's gymnasiums.

We are delighted to be in Minnesota and to see the green fields, one woman said after their long trip through South Dakota where it was so dry. The group had enjoyed a picnic lunch in Marietta on Friday, and some were enjoying an ice cream cone at the Pantry Cafe. They have one day off a week to rest and do laundry, to do some shopping, and to do intensive sightseeing in that town. Their next scheduled day off was to be spent in Northfield. In spite of the necessity of packing

bag balm for sore bottoms and the trials of not finding a tumbleweed tall enough to use for a pit stop, the group was very upbeat and appreciative of the perks of paying to ride a bike 75 miles a day in temperatures that occasionally ranged in the high 90s or low 100s.



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The group's ages ranged from 17 or 18 to 74 years and hailed from all parts of the United States and from Holland, England, Belgium and Germany. Some members were using the trip as a fundraiser. They were enjoying the variety of landscapes in the United States. One participant noted, this is a Ride Across America, but we are really Celebrating America seeing all the sights such as Madison's Lutefisk and the Skelly Station. We are seeing America at 15 mph from the seat of a bicycle.

After a photo, the group set off to their next destination of Dawson where cold water and perhaps an ice cream cone treat awaited them. Cycle America participants pass through Madison Friday, July 19

This is the story we published in the Western Guard newspaper at Madison, Minnesota about your trip. Let us know if it doesn't come through ok.

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