

Ride Report

July 14, 2002

My original plan for the day was to ride two loops. The first loop would circle east and south from New Baden IL and pass through the towns of Okawville, Nashville, Pinckneyville, Sparta, Coulterville, back through Okawville and finally back to New Baden. This would be our morning loop and would cover just over 100 miles. The afternoon loop would be approximately 53 miles to the north. Jeff had already told me he needed to be home in the afternoon and would only ride the first 100 miles with Anna and me.

Anna Kleinsorge, Jeff Weible and I met at the New Baden city park a little after 6:00 AM. For Anna, that is somewhere between the middle of the night and "you want me to get up when?". The weather forecast was for a rare beautiful day in July. The morning temperature was in the low to mid 60's and the high temperatures for the day were to only be in the upper 80's. What a nice change of pace from the two previous weeks of mid 90's with matching humidity.

A local police officer pulled in and rolled his window down and asked where we were heading. I outlined our route. He simply said, "have a nice ride", then rolled up the windows and drove off.

I had wanted to keep the pace reasonable (14.5 – 15 mph) so I would have enough energy left to do the afternoon loop, but nobody listened to me. The three of us headed out of the park shortly after 6:30 AM and headed south along route 160 toward Okawville in the cool morning air. I can't remember the last time I rode in such cool weather. With me in the lead, I took it easy setting the pace around 15 mph. After making a left hand turn four miles down the road, Jeff took over at the front and picked the pace up to 17 mph. That's not much of an increase and it felt so good to be out. So I said nothing.

At Okawville, we turned south through town, then took a jog to the east to Nashville at the 25 mile mark. None of us needed to stop, after all we had just been riding a little over an hour or so, we kept going. This time it would be a long 18 miles due south to Pinckneyville.

Route 127 out of Nashville has a nice wide paved shoulder, unfortunately, it is not smooth. It was like riding on cobblestones, getting beaten up for four miles or so. As soon as a car would pass, I would jump back onto the main road which was smooth. The road was straight and had gently rolling hills that you would accelerate over if you stand. For whatever reason, the pace continued to slowly climb, even on the hills.

After drinking two complete water bottles and a portion of my camelback, we reached Pinckneyville at mile 44. It was time for a much needed bathroom break and a food break. Jeff knew there was a McDonald's restaurant in the town square. After a "Breakfast Burrito", an orange juice and a bathroom break we headed out the door. Anna and I checked our computers, we had an overall riding average speed of 18.2 mph at this point. Interesting, very interesting!

We reached the 50 mile mark in the middle of "Nowhere-In-Particular" Illinois and saw we were on a record setting pace if we could keep this up. So much for that 14.5 to 15 mph stuff. We were on a mission, but not fully committed to it yet.

The winds up to this point had been nonexistent or gently out of the north and thus at our backs. Near Sparta IL, we turned north and had to face the wind for the first time. It was time to pay the price for riding so fast. Between the wind and the high pace, we took turns in a close paceline. The benefit of sharing the load was great, we managed to keep the pace to around 16 mph as we headed north.

We took our second break in Coulterville at a corner convenience store. What luck, we got to watch a parade of sorts. The local high school must have won something as several pickup trucks with cheerleaders hooping it up and an old fire truck leading the way circled the little town two or three times. No one had really gathered to watch the parade, but there was still a parade.

Sitting outside of the quickie mart eating, we talked with a motorcyclist who was taking a break. After about fifteen minutes, Jeff, Anna and I pointed our bikes north and headed up highway 153 towards Lively Grove, Okawville and finally New Baden. Don't you just love the names of these little towns?

After arriving back in the New Baden city park, we looked at the final stats, 100.08 miles in 5 hours 41 minutes (plus breaks). This was a new personal record for a century. Our average speed for this ride was 17.6 mph.

We all took our water bottles and headed under a pavilion. After lying down and closing my eyes, I heard Jeff say "So, you are still planning on riding the other 50 mile loop, right?" Silence.

"No, Jeff" I replied, "This was enough for one day." I think Anna was very happy with that decision.