

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

*Reflections of R. Bradley (Dr. Spoke) on the early years of the MTCC**



The week after completing one of the toughest TOSRV's (Tour of the Scioto River Valley – Columbus, OH to Portsmouth, Oh – 110 miles Saturday & Sunday) on record, - cool temps and 35 mph headwinds both days, I was invited to the wedding reception of Barber Harper, my barber at the time.

I eagerly attended, as in those days I was always looking for a party. As fate would have it, I met George, Dickey and John Fuller. I knew of Dickey from the neighborhood; South High standout and Buffalo Bills running back – he had street rep. As the evening progressed we talked about cycling and George shared his tale of woe with respect to riding TOSRV. He and John had a rough 1st time ride to Portsmouth. On the other hand Michael Henderson and I had ridden it 4 or 5 times by then. I remember Mike and I were in the infamous Swick Lounge getting our party on after 8 p.m. when 2 cyclist appeared at bar's door seeking directions, it was George & John. I remember thinking those guys are in trouble.

We continued talking about cycling, Fuller espousing his beliefs and limited expertise. I shared that I had just replaced my Schwinn Continental with a Trek for \$450.00. They invited me to accompany them on a 70 mile ride to Mt. Vernon, OH and back the following morning. I agreed and the infamous ride to Mt. Vernon was on. I kinda took it as a challenge. They had no idea they were dealing with “The Mad Dasher” (many stories have been told regarding this nick name).

The next morning I met up with George, John Fuller and Dickey. I noticed George was carrying a back pack. I questioned him about it and he told me that they had all agreed to share carrying it. I said I'd help and took the 1st leg. I put my stuff in and off we were.... Very Big Mistake... After carrying it 15 miles and up the only climb on the ride (the top of Smothers Rd. hill). I took my stuff out of the pack and gave it back to George. At this point I realized these guys were novices. However, we made it to Mt. Vernon without incident.

On the return ride from Mt. Vernon a challenge was issued to me by John Fuller. It had something to do with coasting down hills vs. hammering down and which was faster. Fuller was a Physicist, among other things, and he and I had a lively point counter point discussion. We had been at it all day regarding who knew what about cycling. The only thing left was to take it on the road. The terrain was nice rollers.... The gauntlet was thrown.... I simply road away from John. Did not even bother to look back (much like Jed does now). Off the front and out of sight.... Rollin. Until I realized I did not know the way home... Where was I?? I turned around and waited for the crew. No more discussion was needed on the subject. However, to this day the word is "Don't follow Brad".

Following this epic ride to Mt. Vernon we continued to ride together along with Mike Henderson, Bill Willis, Jr., Dr. E.J. Hopkins, John Tolbert and Danny Cunningham. George, Bill and John T were designated officers. George made a hook-up with the brothers from Cleveland, the "Easy Riders". We were really impressed with these guys. The boys rode Italian and were Campagnolo only. Kenny Harper (the Holy Man), Joe Bay, Raymond, Levi and Whisper. We learned a lot from these guys and developed a more than 20 year relationship. The Cleveland connection still exists but the Easy Rider club is gone.



We agreed to name the club in honor of Marshal W. Taylor – Major Taylor because of his accomplishments in cycling and his overall character. World Champion Cyclist.

The following TOSRV '79 were a club the Major Taylor Cycling Club. George went to our local discount store, Schottenstein and bought our first jerseys. We were becoming serious cyclist. We road the weekend tour rides and chased FBCI... We were all the buzz. Oh, the Major Taylors. It felt good.

In 1980 I moved to New York City after accepting a fellowship to Columbia University. I went to Central Park and fell in love with the Boathouse. That is where the cyclist hung. That is where I would sit for hours and listen to all the bike talk. Italian was the Holy Grail. The Boat House is where I met Steve Smoke, current President of the New York Majors (Iron Riders). Steve took me under his wing and to the infamous 9W. Smoke convinced me that I could ride with the boys in Central Park the "Century Road Club". I joined and loved it. I was so impressed with Steve's friendship and cycling knowledge that I gave him my copy of Major Taylor, Fastest cyclist ...

Joe Straughter was in Brooklyn during this time. I would ride the bike and meet Joe at the Jazz Mobile each week at various spots throughout the City. Joe was just getting into cycling. My friend Richard and I took Joe on his 1st roll up 9W... He was hooked.... Joe got Stan hooked. The NY connection was forged – Mel Corbett, Gene Bailey & Miles all came to ride TOSRV. Then Joe's brother Stu got interested, resulting in the "Beasty Boys" (Stewart George, Walter Manning, Carl Henry and Bryon Henry).

I bought a Gios Torino – Campy Record, from Roy's Sheepshead Bay (Joe still has great rapport with shop), and returned to Columbus. Unknowingly this purchase would change the direction of the MTCC...Thereafter, it had to be Italian; it had to be Campagnolo.... The rest is history.



TOSRV was the magnet, the highlight of our year. John T got his nephew Ken Ashton hooked on TOSRV, resulting in the D.C. connection. Next came Gary Johnson, from Houston and Dwayne Summers from Chicago and George called in Kerry from Colorado.

During the early years MTCC was embraced by Mike Gates, owner of Cross County Ski & Cycling. Mike often donated jerseys and other stuff to our club. It was at his shop that we met and developed relationships with a bunch of guys, some of which we still roll with today. Among them Bob Luce and our very own VP Jed Rumor (he was a young kid in college with a full head of hair).

Back then (late 70's early 80's) FBCI (Franklin Bike Club Inc.) was the local racing bike club (they had the knowledge). They laughed at us. Initially, rightfully so. We were learning the ropes... the how to of cycling. We learned fast. Soon were riding with them on their weekly rides. They knew tactics We watched and learned...Now FBCI no longer exists; we on the other hand are in our 35th year... Long live MTCC~!

** This account has not been fact-checked by any authoritative body; however the events and individuals described herein are true to the best of the author's ability to remember.*