



It was during the last 2 1/2 decades of the previous century I had spent my weekends, and summer vacations, bicycling the back roads of this country. As I live in the North-Eastern part of this country most of those earlier tours were in, and among (and often times over) the Appalachian Mountains of the Eastern United States. These cycling vacations came to be known, by myself, as my “America on two wheels – two weeks at-a-time” tours.



My first cycling vacation was in 1976 during Bikecentennial’s (now [Adventure Cycling](#)) inaugural summer cycling event. In addition to the big rides, the trans Am self supported tours, Bikecentennial also offered supported “sag” vehicle trips along sections of the, then new, Trans America Trail of approximately two weeks in length. I chose the “Colonial Virginia” tour starting near Yorktown and ending near Waynsboro at the western end of the state. It would be during this tour I would choose the path of “Jedi” touring cyclist eschewing the “dark side” world of fast club / competitive cycling. A world of frail, stripped down bicycles with ultra thin tires, spandex and shaved legs. I would not meet my “Obi One” - John Rakowski until several years latter.

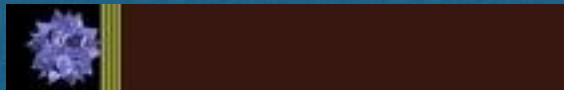


*I had injured my back in a crash several months prior to this trip and so did the entire trip wearing a back brace with foam padding. In addition, I had a relatively heavy, ill fitting, Motobecane **10 speed** bicycle. Ahhh ... the things one can do when you are in your 20’s ! I would not become a “parishioner” of “Our Lady Of The Holy Triple Chain-ring–Church Of The Perpetually Seated” until several years latter with the acquisition of my custom fitted, hand brazed, Columbus tubed, Jim Redcay **triple geared** touring bicycle.*

As with most of these tours there is a “hook” or an attraction to a particular area of the country by myself. In most cases this would be a bicycle rally – convention held at a local college. The concept of a local



*bicycle club hosting a bicycle rally at a local college over an extended weekend, using the dormitories for housing and the college's food service for the meals, was started by Fred DeLong of Pennsylvania. These rallies would be known as **Great Eastern America Rally** or **G.E.A.R.***



Fred DeLong, and John Rakowski are no longer with us, and sadly all the photos I had taken during those earlier tours, prior to 1985, are gone as well.