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☛ Riding ☛ Collecting ☛ Restoring ☛ Research ☛ History ☛

Follow up Sample Feature Story for Release Approximately One Week before Event

For Immediate Release

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Included among riders in the Saturday, June 5, Wheelmen parade, scheduled to pass through downtown Defiance on Clinton Street at 11:00 AM, will be some of the most skilled high wheel bicycle riders in the nation.

These masters of the spidery machine of the 1880s have appeared in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, The Philadelphia Mummers' Parade, and the Milwaukee Circus Parade. But only once have they appeared in as great a number as for the Defiance parade and that was at the Greenfield Village Antique Auto Festival last September when 45 rode through Dearborn, the same number that are registered for the Defiance parade Saturday.

Escorted by Defiance police and County Sheriffs and members of the area antique car club who will lead the tour with 15 of their automobiles, The Wheelmen will descend the Clinton Street hill with feet off pedals--there is no freewheeling on most high wheelers--and will proceed through town led by Robert Menker, Ohio Captain. A white sash across his uniform jacket will signify his special status in the tour. An appointed rider will bring up the end of the tour and will make certain that no one is left behind. Stop, turn and mount signals will be given by bugle in the tradition of the 1880s clubs.

Spectators will note that riders are required to handle their machines in ways different from the modern bicycle. Because one is riding directly over the front wheel, it is not possible to turn the wheel many degrees; therefore turns are accomplished by a combination of leaning and turning the handlebar.

Viewers will also note that riders control their forward balance and leverage by sitting far back on the saddle descending hills and forward going up hills. This technique has a surprising effect upon the machine and enables riders to ascend hills with relative ease.

Parade spectators will also see uniforms of varying colors, but similar style. Each state has its own color, as with the clubs of the 1880s, and the knickers, ribbon ties, long stockings, and caps are likewise similar to those of nearly a century ago.

The Ohio uniform specifies seal brown for knickers, white shirt, black stockings, shoes and cap, and red tie.

More than a parade, the tour through downtown Defiance is one of several official tours administered throughout the country by The Wheelmen each year to provide members with the chance to gain full membership in the organization by riding a sanctioned route of no less than ten miles.

With the exception of a brief stop to tighten bolts, the tour out to Independence Park and back to the College gym will be uninterrupted by stops.

More than half the bicycles at the meet will not be seen in the parade, but will be on free public exhibit on the lawn in front of the College gym starting at 3:00 Saturday and continuing Sunday at the College athletic field.