

Letters from Here and There

Bicycle Vern Bikes as Far as Dawson Creek

7/23/72 Vernon L. Leifheit
5344 Talawanda Dr.
Fairfield, Ohio
45014

Howard Rock, Ed.
Tundra Times

Dear Alaska friends:

My bicycle ride terminated in Dawson Creek on July 6th after riding 2,409.7 miles in 19 days, and I quit there because I was too uncertain about the length of time it would take to ride the 1,135 miles of gravel. It was a real tough ride up to this point and the head winds I encountered across Canada were a real back breaker. I also tore some stomach muscles loose and I was

in bad pain all across Canada. The hills didn't mess me up. It was the hard winds on the flat praries that did it to me.

Like I said before the gravel of the Alaska Highway was the question mark of the entire, not so much because of the condition of the road but because of the time it might take to do it. I can ride any thing if I'm sure I have enough time.

So my plans are: —

Around July 1st, 1973 I will get my bicycle hauled to Dawson Creek and then when I do not have to be concerned with the amount of time it will take, I'll finish this damn ride if it kills me.

I will also ride a different kind of bicycle for the gravel. I will probably change to a 3-speed baloon tire bicycle for the trip from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks.

One other thing is the wind direction. I know now it would be far easier to ride from Fairbanks to Dawson Creek then the way I'll be coming due to the wind directions, but I'm too stubborn to do it any other way. In other words, I started the trip from this direction and I'll finish from this direction if it takes ten years or it kills me.

Well, Mr. Rock, you published my letters in your paper and I feel like I let the people of Alaska down, and this letter I hope explains things to them. So tell them I'll be back.

I'll subscribe to the Times for another year and I'll keep in touch with you and let you know around July 1st, 1973 my starting date from Dawson Creek, but I will be there.

It was suggested to me in Dawson Creek that I continue my trip to Fairbanks any way but I turned thumbs down on this idea.

When I get to Fairbanks, it will be on a bicycle; but not till next year.

Your reader friend from Ohio,
Bicycle Vern

know yours in the far north is better yet, and by bicycle you can get real close to wild life along the way. In Canada I was able to get within a few feet of wild ducks and at one point I was able to ride within 100 feet of the largest deer I ever saw in my lifetime. I'll be back because I will ride close to bears and moose too. I have a healthy respect for all wildlife and I do not get too close but close enough to see their eyes.

So, if you are disappointed about this ride; so am I, but like I say, I will be back.

Bicycle Vern

Nulato Salmon Run Good

Nulato, Alaska
July 15, 1972

Dear Editor:

Well the King Salmon is still running heavy. The best in years but the main Salmon run is less than 1/2 as much as last year.

Well I'm still fishing with net and fish wheel, even though I have no license.

Fred Stickman, Sr.

P.S. I seen some beautiful country up to Dawson Creek and I