



A Bike Ride on the Little Miami Scenic Trail

Mason to Springfield, Ohio

March 13-14, 2012

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I left home on Tuesday just on 11 am after loading the hybrid bike with one pannier and a saddle bag. It was a cloudy morning but the forecast was for sunny skies and a temperature in the low seventies, with Wednesday even hotter.

I went via the Jack Nicklaus complex to King's Mills Rd and then to Columbia. After dropping down the hill and turning left, I soon joined the Lebanon Countryside Trail connector. Unfortunately this was closed as it passed under the expressway (I had seen the sign last week but had forgotten that this was the week for work to start). I back-tracked a little and followed the roads to South Lebanon where I picked up the Little Miami Scenic Trail, Ohio Bike Route 1/3.

I stopped for a couple of minutes in Morrow (about 15 miles) but didn't take my first lengthy stop until I reached Waynesville. Here I had a McDonalds lunch, sitting outside, and probably was stopped for about 30 minutes. I had covered 30 miles by this time and the trail sign indicated about another 30 to go. It was warm enough to take off my top fleece layer and ride on in a sleeveless cycle shirt.



My next stop was at Xenia Station (40 miles) where I forced myself to rest for about 20 minutes in the now very warm afternoon sun. It is here where several trails meet but I was to stick with the Little Miami Trail, Route 3. I had another 15 minute stop in Yellow Springs and then began the final 10 miles to Springfield.

My instructions for leaving the Trail in Springfield and heading to the Fairfield Inn seemed comprehensive when I had set off but somehow I went wrong. I think perhaps that more of the trail has been extended through town so I missed my first turning. This caused perhaps a two mile detour and frequent stops to look at my map and the directions in an attempt to find out exactly where I was. With these and a bit of "dead reckoning" and luck, I eventually identified my location and was then able to get to the Fairfield with no

further problems.

It was about 6pm when my bike and I finally got settled in the room. I called home (as I had twice en route) to claim success and then had a pleasant shower and got ready for dinner. I had a decent meal at Applebee's, just across the parking lot from the hotel and then turned in about 9:30.

It had been a relatively easy ride here under almost perfect conditions. The wind had been mostly from the west at 5-10 mph so it was generally a help, but not as effective as a direct tail wind. The return tomorrow may be a little more challenging as I fear I shall predominantly be headed into the wind. We'll see!

I was up about 7:30 and walk to a local Bob Evans for breakfast. By 9am I had filled the water bottles, put all my stuff back in the bike panniers and was ready for off. It was quite cool as I set off back towards downtown Springfield so I was glad of the fleece and extra layer of the leggings. It was by now very sunny, however, so I was hopeful of the higher temperatures that were forecast.



The Little Miami Scenic Trail and the town of Yellow Springs

The ride back to the Trail was much easier than the route I had taken yesterday and it took only about 20 minutes to be back on the quiet route. At this time of day I had the trail pretty much to myself and there was

little wind, so I felt like I was making good progress. In about an hour I was in Yellow Springs for my first rest stop and a check in with Molly. Then it was on to Xenia (another 10 miles or so) for my next stop.

I had hoped to find a coffee shop in the town but didn't see anything so I settled for a rest only at Xenia Station. In another hour I was in Waynesville and stopped at the McDonalds here once again - this time for coffee and cherry pie.



By now it was very warm and I was able to sit outside with my snack and I removed the fleece before re-joining the trail. There was a little wind directly from the south (my direction) so the going seemed a little slower than earlier. Perhaps this was also a little tiredness setting in?



The Little Miami River as seen from The Trail

In Morrow (less than 15 miles to home now) I ate a banana and had my final rest stop. I had stopped briefly near Fort Ancient to remove my leggings as the temperature was now about 80F.



Long straight stretches and trestle bridge—signs that the Trail was once a railroad bed.

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From Morrow it was another six miles on the trail to South Lebanon (brief stop) and then via roads for the remainder of the journey. These were the first hills I had encountered since leaving Springfield as I had to climb from the river valley. I must admit that my legs were complaining significantly but I was almost home.

I completed the last four miles through local sub-divisions at a very slow pace and I was feeling sore in several spots (!) but I made it home shortly after 3:30. Once inside and resting I was able to feel a sense of achievement at the 130 miles round trip - by far the most cycling I had done in two days since my Across Britain journey almost 20 years ago.

On the return journey I took the time to stop and take a few photographs with my iPod and captured some of the scenery and, I hope, some of the feeling of the journey.