



The L'Eroica

The L'Eroica Grand Junction to Glenwood Springs, Colorado, is a re-creation of a 16-year bicycle race that ended in 1915.

Race History

What makes a cyclist want to ride 100 miles on his road bike over rough terrain dressed like his great, great grandfather? Because he can. Over 110 years ago, this was the *big thing* in the Grand Valley and across the world. Granted, they didn't have today's modern asphalt but they had the gumption and road race fever.

When Grand Junction wheelman Harold Gesberg had his photo taken at the foot of the bridge on Colorado Avenue in Glenwood Springs, he looked the hero, ready for his plunge in the Hot Springs Pool. The year was 1915 and he and a dozen or so other contestants rode the Midland railroad to Glenwood Springs where they would train. The undefeated Champion, Rex Barber, had chosen Green River, Utah as his training ground.

The Glenwood Road race had its beginnings in 1898. It was a special day for Grand Valley and Roaring Fork citizens alike. A special excursion train was dispatched

to take spectators to the race site as they rode along the race route from Basalt to Glenwood to cheer the boys on to victory. A Grand Junction band would travel on the train with them, and at the finish of the race, a baseball game, first aid contests, an awards ceremony, and a dip in the pool would make for an exciting day. The Midland Special would leave for home at 9:30 p.m., taking spectators, the band, the boys and their bikes back home.

In 1902, John Beard won the race. The Fruits wheelmen took a team of fellows to compete for the title. Some say they didn't take the train — they rode all the way on the new Midland Trail Highway to train for the ride. Fact or fiction, this is where L'Eroica comes in.

A century-old tradition in Italy, riders compete to become "L'Eroica" or in English, The Heroic. (The point system is something Grand Junction added and is given for vintage bikes and clothes). Riders of L'Eroica take a 110-mile route on dirt.

The big thing this year will be to ride in the "L'Eroica Grand Junction," taking the historic Midland Road Race one step further and riding 102 miles from Grand Junction to Glenwood. Who will be the next Hero?



It's not a costume. It's an athletic uniform. Costumes are for theater. When a bear chases you down a mountain road, he is not looking for a popcorn refill.



(This statement serves also as a release of liability waiver for all who have read it.)

John Beard's medal, 1902 Fruits, Colorado

Past Gas

BY DARRIN FAHRRITWELL

The L'Eroica Grand Junction to Glenwood Springs, Colorado, is a re-creation of a 16-year bicycle race that ended in 1915.

The challenging ride provides not only a physical component on the 102-mile course but a mental one as well.

The thought of riding so far from security at the turn of the century must have been mind numbing for the participants.

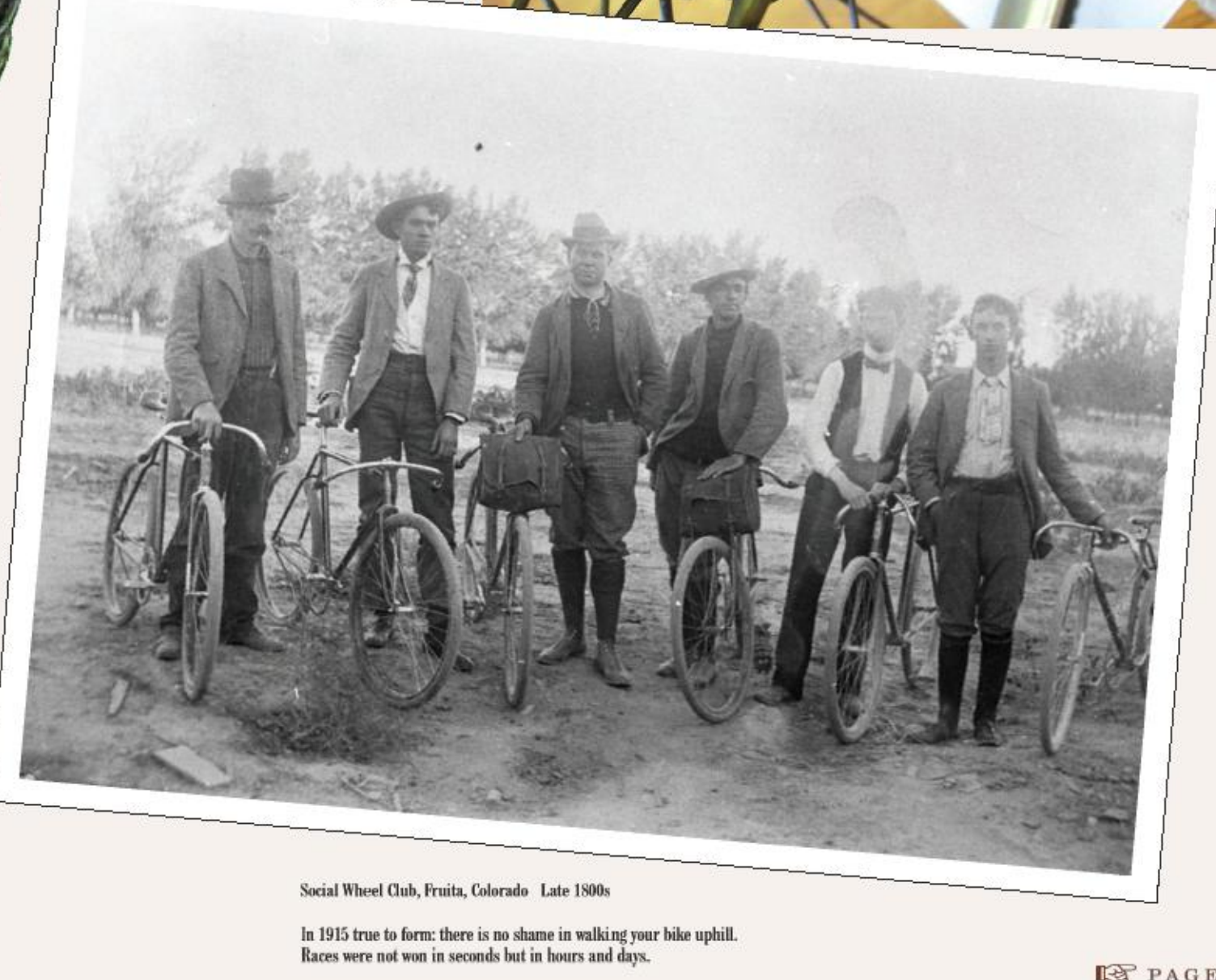
The lack of water, wild animals, the scorching sun, great expenses without any human contact, and clipping along on a new-fangled machine with little recourse should mechanical failure occur are all

concerns that slap hard against our modern comfort and security.

The new social stigmas are played open and lie exposed for the 'new day' riders. Wearing no bicycle helmets, bringing no cell phones or methods of communication should an emergency occur, and stopping to ease one's mind at the top of the hill with a cigarette are all challenges to the modern day thoughts of health, common sense, and longevity. But this race is not about safety, security, or longevity. If that were the case, the participants might just as well stay home. This race is about exposure to a 'bicycle-gone' era. This race is about transporting yourself back in time and pedaling in the shoes of those who laid the foundations of the buildings we work in and the streets we drive. It's as close as we are going to get to flying down a mountainside with our ancestral kinship or inhale the very

That's really funny. I know some riders but it's not about finishing in first place necessarily, it's about the style. So, I'll look for style riders I already have my bike picked out. It was an easy choice, my old faithful twinie: Nate Wilson.

air they breathed — the same air that has been waiting atop that slope for a century — waiting for us to re-cycle the precious oxygen and propel ourselves a foot closer to the summit. It is at this time, during the climb, that a moment reaches out and touches your moist, palpitating skin. It is at this time you realize you are breathing 'past gas.' You are taking into your hollows that very mixture of the past ethos while at the same time leaving it for those who are yet to ride.



Social Wheel Club, Fruits, Colorado. Late 1890s

In 1915 true to form: there is no shame in walking your bike uphill. Races were not won in seconds but in hours and days.

Miles

W N E

S

Vega Res. Mesa County

Don't lose sight of the irony that at the time, they were employing the most current technology available. You are going back in time to re-create a historic event employing the latest technology available. So really, you are not like them at all. In fact, they would probably tell you you're an idiot for not using what is readily available to you, or at least test you that message.

L'Eroica 2011 Points Card

Riders must complete 100 miles to receive points and qualify for 'Legend Status.'

CATEGORY	POINTS VALUE
Bike Technology	
Fishie - Speed PW	8
3-8 Speed Coaster Brake	4
Standard 4-30 Speeds	2
BIKE AGE	
1955 or Older	6
1956-1970	2
1971-Present	0
MISCELLANEOUS	
Wooden Rim	8
Minutche Handlebars	4
Brooks Leather Saddle	2
Flat pedals or Toe Clips	2
Attire	
Vintage Woman's Dress	40
Full Get Up	22
Bun Hair like Seymour	8
Knickers	4
Sunday-go-to-Meeting Shoes	4
Riding Cap	2
Goggles	2
Miscellaneous Point Grabbers	
Loss of limb by self amputation due to unforeseen anatomic circumstances with book and movie deal	20
Sleep overnight in an animal carcass or repair	16
Weld broken frame at farmhouse or repair bike with broken broom handle	14
Cuddle cute bear cuba, discover mama bear	12
Wild story points as determined by group	10
No cell phone, no ipod, no technology	8
100% self-supported; no sag (Carry all items for the weekend)	6
Authentic time period nutrition (Wopser-less sustenance)	4
Finishing Times	
1st Place	60
2nd Place	50
3rd Place	40
4th Place	30

Upon completion of the ride, sign in at front desk of Hotel Colorado to record finishing time.

As I rode home from the train station with my cap, goggles, and knickers I sensed something was different. Although I was gone only two days, I felt that somehow the town had changed. It seems to have gotten smaller. I turned down Main Street and noticed buildings and colors and lines I hadn't seen before. I don't know if it was pride or accomplishment or the lenses on the goggles, but after spending 100 miles with 'The Hero' something was different.

1st place: Nate Wilson, 98 points
 2nd place: Chris Brown, 84 points
 3rd place: Tad Saunders & Thomas Hayes, 68 points each
 4th place: Mary Pfalzgraff, 44 points

"Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checked by failure... than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in a gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."

— Theodore Roosevelt

Dear Glenwood boys,

"Since this shin-dig ends your town, how's about a bunch of you ride the train down to GJ and race back home with us the next day?"

We would refer to your gang as "The Glenwood Contingency." I have various newspaper articles from the turn of the century describing the bike racers from Glenwood as 'cheats' and 'liars.' I would hate to have to start publishing them — again. Seeing as we usually mop the dance floor with you guys at the Hoan Cliff Chaos every year, maybe this would be a chance to earn some of your dignity back.

We would like to turn this into an annual event. Perhaps the next year we can "train" up to you and ride this-way. (The route subject to change from year to year)

The \$8 rate is subject to change for you guys depending on accommodations. Awards banquet at the Hotel Colorado.

Let us know how yellow you all are.

Chris Brown
 Brown Cycles Bike Shop (The other really cool bike shop on the Western Slope)
 Grand Junction, CO

Chris,

Count us in!! Maybe you weren't at the last two years Ronn Cliff races we actually won on our single speed!! You can also refer to us as the 'Stomparilaz,' as that is the name we race, play bike polo with, and generally mash stuff up. Sounds like an incredible time and we're psyched you guys are getting this 'rolling' again!! As we've been saying to each other lately, "bring, bring, bring (think bike bell) bring it!!"

Cheers to you guys!!

Darin Binion and the Stomparilaz Crew!!
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