



No. **4901**

The first Bikecentennial tour that Robin led was a *Chieftan Trail* that left Reedsport, Oregon, on June 8 and ended in Missoula three weeks later.



Robin's third trip was a *Colonial Virginia* that left Radford, Virginia, on July 22, and ended two weeks later in Williamsburg, Virginia.



Robin's second tour was an *Ozarks* that left Newton, Kansas, on July 4 and ended two weeks later in Carbondale, Illinois.



Robin's fourth tour was another *Colonial Virginia* that left Williamsburg, Virginia, on August 4 and ended two weeks later in Radford, Virginia.

4 Trips, 40 Years & 40,000 Miles

PHOTOGRAPH BY GREG SIPLE STORY BY GAGE POORE

→ HAVING RETIRED FROM TEACHING at the age of 64 in May of 2016, Robin Shields decided to ride from Council Bluffs, Iowa, to the Montana Bicycle Celebration in Missoula, Montana, for Adventure Cycling's 40th anniversary. Planning to ride the 2,000 miles at 50 miles per day, for 40 days, along the Lewis & Clark Trail, he wrote, "Headwinds, heat, and hills proved our calculations wrong. We ran into 90+ degree days, without shade or places for breaks all day. We ran into headwinds, lowering our speed to 5 MPH for days. We slept near a tornado and 70 MPH winds blew me and my tent over before I could get out." Realizing he wouldn't make it to Missoula in time for the celebration, he drove from Bismarck, North Dakota to Bozeman, Montana, where he finished out the ride.

The year also marked the 40th anniversary of Robin's participation in the 1976 Bikecentennial event as a leader of four different groups. "I could not afford to pay to ride across the country, so I signed up for a leadership course," he wrote. Unfortunately, having passed the course, there were no groups for him initially and, ready to ride home, he learned there was a group large enough to split in two and he could lead one. On the first trip, the other leader's group had a participant break their arm and another that required an emergency appendectomy on the same day. On the second trip, a group of seven Mexican participants showed up with racing bikes and no gear and the town's bike shop owner missed riding in the 4th of July parade to open the store so they could buy gear for the tour. Six of the seven were studying to become priests. After finishing the third trip, Robin rode with then-Executive Director Dan Burden in the Shimano van when Dan took the iconic pictures of the Sprocket Rockets finishing their TransAm journey. The next day, he left with his final group, which included 14 women and three men. He wrote, "My mom said that this was the only time all summer that I did not call home on a regular basis."

Robin was chased from group to group during that summer by the Bikecentennial helmet (pictured left) he had purchased as a leader exclusive. It finally reached him in Redford, Virginia, after all his trips were finished, but just in time for his ride home. The Brooks saddle he rode that summer also made it back to Missoula with him for the 40th anniversary — a saddle that has supported him for over 40,000 miles.

From Adventure Cycling's National Bicycle Touring Portrait Collection. © 2016 Adventure Cycling Association.

BIKECENTENNIAL TOUR PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBIN SHIELDS

Bicycle Eclectic
Adventure Cycling's traveling exhibition of photos from the National Bicycle Touring Collection can be seen at the Pedal Station, 527 S. Tejon St., Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903, December 3 through 30, Tue.-Fri. 12:00-6:00PM and Sat. 10:00AM-6:00PM.



When Robin came to the 40th anniversary celebration in Missoula he brought with him his 1976 "leader helmet" (one of the special edition helmets that was offered to Bikecentennial leaders at a discount by Bell Helmets) and donated it to the organization's archives.

