

The Little River Canyon Ride
The Fisher Report
By Greg (Bulldog) Fisher

The ride was the mastermind of Larry Pierson. An epic ride of unheard of proportion. An unusual ride in the sense you ride the road on a mountain bike. These roads had slag that would make Green county roads look like a pool table surface. We left Tuscaloosa at 7:00 A.M on route to the Gadsden, Fort Payne area. Larry, Jack Nicholson (not the actor) and I met Gary Falls and the always-Lovely Tricia at Little River Canyon Mouth Park about 9:30 A.M. We got our gear on and loaded on to the Bikes. We then started up a Hill on Cannon Rim Road that Gary described as a hill that he didn't see how the pavement stayed on it. Steep doesn't even begin to describe this hill. It has at least a 30 % grade. It winds and turns and is unrelentingly steep. It was so steep that no one but Larry was able to climb Gut check hill.

Yes, the rest of us walked up the hill most of the way. So sue us, brand us and band up from cycling. Break our sword. We don't care.

It was heck just walking up the hill. The hill was so steep that your front wheel was coming off the ground. If there are hills from Hell, then this is one of them. This hill was almost a mile up. We all got up the hill and went on the through the canyon. Up and down and up and down and up and down. This was like a scenic roller coaster. We stopped at all the designated look out points to take photos and take care of our bladders. The scenery was breath taking and so were the hills. The next hill we encountered was almost vertical. This hill was concrete and heavily textured .You could have shucked corn on it. Again we attempted to climb this 40-degree incline. We gave it the college try, sucked it up, and pulled up our bootstraps, dug down deep. But alas we were unsuccessful.

Only Larry was up to the task. Only Larry was worthy of Greatness this day on the great incline.

At one point we went down a very steep incline down to a bridge that crossed a creek. I remember my tires sliding and the back wheel coming off the ground. When I get to the bottom, I see Larry taking my picture in full horror. We left the creek and went on to the next stop. At Eberhart point Gary had a flat on the back tire .We figured we needed to fix it. We couldn't shoot the bike and leave it and there was certainly no double riding. After fixing the flat and listening to Gary wine about the new tube it had just put in the tire the night before. Heck I would have wine too.

We continued through the canyon on Canyon Rim road and on to State 35 and then down long, long, long steep Shinbone Ridge, which wound up, at our only store stop at mile 23 in the community of Blanche. This store is like other stores I have been in on rides, in the fact every store has something unique about it. In This store, above the cashier were at least 200 pictures of hunters with dead deer. Larry noticed one obscure picture on the board of group of riders doing a Nashville to Sandrocks ride. Larry asked the cashier if many Cyclist come through these parts and she no. You had to be there. We are now finally back on smooth pavement on State 273 in Shinbone Valley and all wanted our Mountain goats to turn into road bikes. Jack Nicholson (not the actor) was in back of the pack most of the day. At one point on the valley road we didn't see him. Finally I saw a yellow speck, that was Jack in his rain suite. We rode into a good head

wind the remaining 9 miles back to Little River Canyon Mouth Park to our cars and comfort and dry clothes. We got out of our cycling gear and put on street clothes. After stopping to eat dinner at restaurant (that will remain unnamed) we headed back to Tuscaloosa. Arriving a couple of hours later than previously estimated. This was due partly in the fact that Larry had get some cold beverages and we had to ride to another county to get said cold beverages. The other would be the restaurant, which will remain, unnamed was really busy and a little slow but the food was great. A word about riding with another cycling legion, Jack Nicholson (not the actor). Jack is one the reasons I enjoy the sport of cycling.

A very gracious, kind and patience man. A man who doesn't mind being in the back of the pack. A man who enjoys people as much as cycling. I enjoyed very much riding up and back with jack and eating dinner with him at a restaurant (that will remain unnamed). A word about Gary and Patricia. Gary is a great guy and a lot of fun and loves the sport. He knows what it takes to do this sport right .He is kind and generous. Tricia is the perfect companion. I never hear her complain. Cycling is hard and she is right there with us. She keeps Gary straight also. Larry, what can I said about Larry. He is the master route maker. A genius, a visionary. Why he could win the noble peace price. Excuse me, my pen runneth over. This was a great ride about 35 miles. We had good weather. Mountain bikes only please, unless your road bike is disposable. This ride is rough and challenges the bladder as well as the leg muscle stuff. We hope to the ride again next year. So make plans to go. Just send check or money order for \$3.15 to Larry Pierson Tours inc.