

8/1/10



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**RIVER RD.-SNEDEN'S LANDING-BRADLEY-TWEED-
TALLMAN-ROCKLEIGH-EISENHOWER**

MILE

61± MILES (Distances are approximate.)

Approx

http://newyorkbike.com/river_road.html (Be sure to enlarge the Google map)

This route is gorgeous, untrafficked, and challenging.

Begin at the Central Park Boathouse (73rd St. & East Side Drive)

- 1.5 Exit Park, left: 110th St. Don't turn at Morningside. (Why would you want to do even a small uphill so early?) Instead, pass within sight of the world's largest gothic cathedral, St. John's.
- 2.4 Right: Riverside.
- 5.4 Right: 165th St. It's uphill, so I'm off the back.
Left: Ft. Washington Ave., through the Columbia Presbyterian hospital complex.
Left: 177th St. *The re-surfacing of 177th St., which had been badly rippled, cratered, and potholed, and the curb cut onto the GWB was brought about by the insistent lobbying by one man. See what you can do if you involve yourself?*
- 7 Right: Cabrini. Up the curb cut at 178th onto the GWB. What a great idea it was to put a curb cut here. *See above.* Remember, take a picture on the bridge and you'll be subject to rendition and torture. No kidding. Photography prohibited. I think those signs are still up. (See Newyorkbike.com for all that is wretched about the GWB for cyclists.)
- 8.25 Off the Bridge: Left (south): Experience and rejoice at what government has done for the lowly cyclist: the nicely asphalted sidewalk/bike path down to the entrance to Palisades Interstate Park.
OPTION: If you go right (north) off the GWB, you're on Hudson Terrace and at the end of it (a T where the NJ Parkway dumps out), if you turn right, there is a wonderfully serpentine road that goes down to River Road—and it's even more wonderful coming up it. However, it is illegal to ride on it. Ask me and I'll tell you why it is now off limits to cyclists. Ask me and I'll tell you of my getting ticketed on it.
- 8.5 Enter River Road (Henry Hudson Drive). There may be a hot dog stand and cars parked on a diagonal where you turn into it. To my way of thinking, this is the most gorgeous road to ride in the U.S. this side of Hgwy. 1 through the Big Sur coast of California. Note the river, the cliff, the waterfalls, the wildflowers, the shading trees, and the absence of cars.
In the 8 mile length of River Road, two roads go down to the water. On occasion, we may take them and retrace the road back up to the roadway to add to the uphill experience of this ride. Otherwise stay left whenever you're presented with an opportunity to go right. There are three climbs in the road. The last one is .7 mi. long from the main road and 1.3 mi. if you first go down to the river, then up to the police station.
- 17 Re-assemble at police station, i.e. wait for me. Pass water/get water. Use the bike rack. Let flowers be flowers.
(Right from the police station) Left at the fork. (Do *not* go right. That will put you on the Parkway.) Note the stop sign. The police have been known to ticket cyclists who don't stop here.
- 17.25 Right on 9W. Let the pacelining begin...but only for a couple miles.
- 20 Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia Univ. sits atop State Line Hill. If you'd like, sprint for it. Stop at the turn-in at the top to re-group (i.e., wait for me) so we descend the hill somewhat together. (The Lamont name traces to the family of Corliss Lamont, a founder of the ACLU, and, currently, Ned Lamont, who beat wretched Joe Lieberman in the CT senate primary...only to have Lieberman (who ran for his senate seat in the same election he

21 ran as Gore's VP, manifesting a certain unbecoming self-promotion (which is far from the ugliest part of his unattractive persona) run as an independent. He won. The U.S. lost.

If you'd like, spin out until the next light which is at the end of a long downhill. If you're of a mind to, and the wind is favorable, you can get up to 42-43 MPH on this hill.

At the intersection at the bottom of the hill, where there is a light, look, but don't turn left. You will be going down that road, Oak Tree, in 13 miles.

OPTION: Right turn at the light into the enclave of Sneden's Landing. Those who have lived there include Mikhail Baryshnikov, Aaron Copland, the Isley Brothers, Bill Murray, Mary Steenbrugen and Malcolm McDowell, Al Pacino and Beverly D'Angelo, Diane Sawyer and Mike Nichols, Orson Welles, Harvey Keitel and Lorraine Bracco, John Steinbeck, and Uma Thurman and Ethan Hawke (who seriously thought their house was haunted). The composer, Virgil Thompson, named one of his compositions, "Sneden's Landing Variations." Neil Simon's "Rumors" is set there as was a James Thurber short story.

*We descend to the river because it's a real **climb up from the river** (so shift down for the return trip as you feel the river coming up. Wait for me at 9W. I'll be way behind you. This detour adds c. 1.4 miles to the ride. You'll be c. Mile 22.5.*

Continue north on 9W.

IF WE DO ASH....

RIGHT TURN into Tallman State Park, a winding, fast (dark, due to overhead foliage) downhill. Be mindful of a turn at speed in it. It ends at the canal road into Piermont.

Right into Piermont. Turn right and immediately stop to re-group at the "driveway" into the shopping center that is opposite the fire station (Ash St.)

*We go up Ash one at a time, allowing 50 or more yards between bikes. This is a challenging (12-13%) **uphill** that ends at 9W. There is a 90° right turn, a left hairpin, and a 90° right turn in it before you reach 9W. Don't turn right, but keep to the right at the junction onto 9W.*

*Left on 9W. Right at the first turn which is Tweed (Rte. 5). The first twenty yards are **very steep** (16%) and there is a 90° turn in the middle of them. Go north on Tweed to the intersection with Clausland. (Later you'll go the reverse direction on this road.) A grey Humvee is always parked in the driveway of the house at the highest point on this road.*

22 *Left down Clausland (1.5 mile downhill) to the first intersection. Right at the intersection (Greenbush). The last 100 yards before the turn are steep and you'll be going into the turn fast.*

On 9W, turn LEFT into the (private) IBM grounds. Go around the gate and make your way west and downhill through this car-free acreage to 340. It's a helluva lot safer than turning in front of cars possibly speeding across that bridge over the canal and suddenly appearing from around a blind curve as you descend 9W into Sparkill. There is a gate as you exit, too. Both gates will open as they are governed by some solenoid switch or motion sensor. IF the gate opens for someone ahead of you, be watchful that it doesn't come down on you. Also, be watchful of deer crossing the road.

Right on 340. for 1 mile. Continue straight at the 3-way intersection, past the fire station, Valentine. **DO NOT turn at the canal road** (Ferndon) that takes you into Piermont. Instead, continue straight, past two churches. The road ends at a T (Piermont Ave.)

Left: at the T, which is Route 340, aka Piermont Ave., aka Orangeburg Rd..

25 Right: at the third intersection. The first is Highland, a short uphill. The second is small, small Bauer. The third, where we turn is Hickey, but you won't see a sign on our side of the road. Stay on it for scant seconds. Do not go uphill on it.

26.25 Left: at the first turn. This is Kings Highway. It is not a highway. It's a wonderful, very lightly trafficked 1.6 miles under terrific shading trees. You'll pass Rockland County Cemetary, St. Agnes Convent, then St. Thomas Aquinas College. Stop to re-group at the big intersection, which is Hgwy. 303. What does the logo image on that Provident Bank sign suggest to you. If you think anything other than coitus, you're sexually starved. How could the bank let the designer get away with that? Didn't they notice it? Bankers are sexually starved.

Right: Hgwy 303 for only 45 secs. Stay on the shoulder.

Right at the first light: Greenbush, aka Rte. #11. Follow it to the first intersection which is Clausland.

OPTION: To add another steep—but very short, no more than fifty yards—up pitch, take a right up Clausland but only as far as the first driveway (on the left). Turn around and come back to the intersection where you just were and proceed as though you had continued straight all along on Greenbush. Sometimes we'll continue up Clausland to where it intersects Tweed. We ordinarily don't take it because it's not quite as long, difficult, or free of cars, nor quite as pretty as what we do take (Bradley).

27 *If we go up Ash and go up (north) Tweed and down Clausland, this is the intersection where we turn off Clausland and meet the standard route.*

29 Continue straight on Greenbush.

29.25 Right: #303

31 First right (you're on 303 for perhaps twenty seconds). This is a continuation of Greenbush and there is a sign on Hgwy #303 that says Greenbush. This really begins the day's grand climb. It is Bradley Hill Rd. (Rte. #5). It forks at Schuyler (Rte #38). Do NOT take Schuyler (unless you're looking for an easy way into Nyack. We don't go there.) Stay right at the fork. In fact, from here until the intersection of Clausland and Bradley Hill (that's at a stop sign), whenever you come to a fork in the road, always keep right: in other words, always go uphill. Note: Bradley Hill has a false summit before intersecting with Clausland.

Shift down before you stop for the stop sign (and wait for me) at the corner of Clausland and Tweed (Rte. #5) because you'll want a low gear when you get going again. (If you now want to go into Nyack, turn left here. I don't; I don't do Runcible Spoon; I'd rather ride.)

Go straight through the intersection, toward the river. This is Tweed. In the first 300 yards there are two-and-a-half upgrades. Don't be intimidated by the appearance of the third one: your inertia will carry you up most of it. Damn the houses that block the stunning views of the river. The highest point on this is the cross-street named Nike, so named because a Nike missile base was up the slight hill, to the right.

The last twenty yards of Tweed are an irresponsibly engineered, steep (17%) downgrade around a 90° turn—and there's no adequate sign announcing it.. GO SLOW. BE CAREFUL. Hands hard on your brakes. Welcome back to Rte. 9W. (See http://newyorkbike.com/river_road.html)

32.75 Look for cars before starting across 9W, and cross 9W very carefully.

Left on 9W for twenty yards.

33.75 Right turn down the exceedingly steep Ash. CAREFUL! There is an exceedingly tight, 180° tight hairpin (think of

34

the GWB ramp) which will put you into the lane of oncoming cars coming up from Piermont._

Left turn down Ash into Piermont. Buy lunch at Community Market, carry it to the gazebo in the park.

34.75 Across the park is the Piermont Bike Connection, a great shop. Use toilet and refill bottles at the shop. (Thank Glenn, the shop owner, for maintaining a spotless bathroom and permitting us to use it even though few riders buy there, at least on our rides.)

36

Following lunch, exit Piermont along south side of canal road.

Turn left **into Tallman park**. Yes, this is an uphill immediately after lunch. Ugh! The road ends at 9W. Even though you'll be going left, stay right as you exit onto 9W.

Left on 9W. You're headed back to the city.

38

Right at first traffic light, Oak Tree Rd. This is the light where we turned down to the river at the bottom of State Line hill if we went into Sneden's Landing, but now we're going the other way at that intersection. Just before the intersection, across 9W, is the Palisades Market. Good eats, pleasant people who provide water and a clean toilet, It may be faster to use their toilet than the one at the bike shop.

First left from Oak Tree: Closter Rd. (becomes) Rockleigh Rd., a beautiful, wonderfully shaded, federal historic district, made more beautiful by its being a very lightly trafficked downhill.. It ends at 501. Stop and re-group.

43.5

Left on 501 aka Piermont Rd. aka County Rd. Continue on 501 past the duck pond in Demerest. Bear left around the curve, staying on the main road. Here is where we have the first traffic of the day. Right at the T. Pot hole alert.

Left at Union / Hillside. This is a big intersection with a gas station and a bank on opposite corners. Hillside curves to the left in a slight upgrade. You're on it for only one long block. Follow it around the left hand bend.

OPTION: If you need a bike repair/toilet/drink/powerbar/new bike, continue on 501 another 3/4 mile to Bicycle Workshop in Tenafly. The store is at the 42.5 mile mark.

If you're going to Bicycle Workshop, stay on Piermont Rd. (straight after the duck pond rather than bearing left with the road (501/County Rd.) . L. at Mahan. R at 501. The bikeshop has a high wheeler in front of it.

After the bike shop, continue south through the busy 3-way intersection..Jog left for a half-block (Clinton) but keep right and turn right, in front of the Clinton Inn. The road splits here. 501 (aka Huyler) goes left and uphill. Stay right and flat. That's Dean St. Continue on Dean to the first traffic light. It's at a gas station.

Left on E. Hudson, (traffic light / gas station). Cross Engle, a major street (light). E. Hudson ends at a T, Elkwood. Right on Elkwood.

*[A nasty uphill we will occasionally take at this point is **Speer**, as in Albert Speer, Hitler's architect and director of defense industries.]*

*First left : Lydecker, a short uphill. Continue (R) on Lydecker which briefly changes its name to Next Day Hill, but changes back to Lydecker at Glenwood, the first cross street. Stay on Lydecker. (That's a very slight left at Glenwood and an immediate and slight right.) Continue on Lydecker across Booth (a stop sign). (**Booth** is a good uphill and will take you toward the bridge. Another neat uphill towards the bridge is **Speer**.)*

*Third left after Booth at **Walnut**. It's a 2 ½ block uphill. Continue to the top where it ends at Woodland (It's a T).*

Left at T (Woodland) for ½ block.

First right (Pershing). Stay on Pershing (cross—don't take—Summit) to Floyd.

Right on Floyd.

Left on Palisade. Cross 9W (Sylvan).

14

ALTERNATIVE CLIMBS BACK UP THE PALISADES: [Churchill](#), Booth, Speer, Walnut. (Or take 9W all the way back)

14.25

First right after the curve, Kennedy. All the streets here are named for presidents (and may I tastelessly note Kennedy ends at a dead end?). The first left is Wilson, a failed idealist. This route is historically accurate in that we take mostly right turns.

14

Second left: Eisenhower. (Read his prescient farewell address.) The climb is in two parts with a plateau between them. The first part is ca..14 mi at 11-12-13%. The second is the steepest climb of the day (unless we go UP Ash), ca. .18 mi. at 13-14%. Stop and re-group at top. Said another way: wait for me. Don't admire the fact I climb this without recourse to my inner-triple ring. Don't admire that I do this in my 70s. Admire that I can keep a bike upright and somewhat in motion at 4 MPH.

14.5

14.75

Left at top: Truman

15

First right: Jackson. It's a swooping, off-camber, semi-fast downhill that bends left as you turn right, which is too bad because you turn right in the middle of it: have your hands firmly on your bars and modulate your speed.

15.5

First right: Hemlock (no street sign). Each of these homes is a shrine to Excess and an altar to Tastelessness. "The Sopranos" referred to this area. That seems about right.

16

First right: Rio Vista. Follow around left curve. It ends at 9W.

19

Right on 9W. Now you know where you are. When you ride north on 9W, you see an sign leading into where we come out: Rio Vista/Esplanade.

19.3

Right at Sage which is the traffic light right after the sign tells you you are entering Englewood Cliffs. We divert to go parallel to 9W to avoid the speeding cars.

50

50.15

First left: Johnson. (It's a T)

First left: Van Waggoner.

51.5

First right: Floyd. It's at a T. It's flat, smooth, and your last chance for an all-out, sustained burst of speed. Continue to Palisades.

51.7

Left on Palisades. Cross 9W (aka here: Sylvan).

53

Right: Hudson Terrace.

54

Left onto GWB.

50

R. on Cabrini (Manhattan)

Ft. Washington > 165th St. > Riverside Dr. > 90th St. (tThere's a bike lane directly into Central Park) > Boathouse.

Toilets, Bike Shops, Food & Water

You can get water (and can pass water) at the PIPC police station in Alpine, at the end of River Road - 17 miles.

Piermont Bicycles (33 mile) as we come off Tweed towards lunch, has a clean toilet and, of course, is a place to buy tubes, pump tires, have instant repairs, get water, and buy energy bars. Palisades Market, 9W, just N. of Oak Tree has good nibbles, water, and a clean bathroom.

Bicycle Workshop on County Road in Tenafly (41 mile via Walnut) is a short distance off our route if we climb Eisenhower but it, too, has a toilet, sells energy bars, and does minor instant repairs.

Doing this ride without a meal stop is very do-able and, being a fundamentally anti-social personality, that's my preference; however, I yield to you on this—we do stop. In pleasant weather we will buy a sandwich at Canzona's (ca. mile 32) along the canal leading from Piermont, and have a 15-20 min. picnic along the canal.

Rosenthal's Rules of Conversation

Meet someone on this ride. Names are good things. Learn them, use them. Talk politics. Talk show biz. Talk books. Talk science. Talk culture. Talk economics. Talk professional well-being (or lack thereof). Talk vacation plans. Talk relationships (or lack thereof). Just, I beg you, spare me boring bike talk—and just about all of it is. It's just about all cant. The distinctions between products is pretty much merely perception. It is fostered by that most odious, that lowest of life forms, the ad man. I know. I am one. I create that crap.

Rosenthal's Rules of the Road

I'm not here to impede you from having just the workout you want. If you find you want a more vigorous ride than I can provide, go for it! *However*, don't power off the front/wait for us/power off the front/wait for us/power off the front/wait...you get the idea. Just power off the front and go; leave the ride.

There's very little pacelining on this ride: 9W, Greenbush, County Road (505): that's pretty much it. Everything else is either uphill or down hill. If you're pulling the group, DO NOT pull faster than the least of us can maintain (so long as the least of us is maintaining the advertised speed on flats). And don't bitch and attempt to lead an insurrection if you want the group to ride faster than the least of us can ride so long as the least of us is riding the advertised speed.

I'll be really pissed off if any driver or pedestrian transgresses your right-of-way. I'll be just as pissed off if you transgress the right-of-way of any driver or, far, far worse, any pedestrian—which you do when you come to a stop blocking crosswalk or plunge through a red light while a pedestrian waits for you before crossing. Don't. Don't even make them apprehensive. Stop for all dogs. All dogs are better than many people.

