



Chuck Haga

Henry Bernard inspected the city's bike paths Friday and pronounced them good, though there were a few spots where he had to hop off and walk his machine around mud from river eddies.

"You could see tracks through the mud where some of the kids had gone, but I thought I'd better walk around," he said.

Bernard, 80, is retired now and lives near Brownsville, Texas. He left Grand Forks in 1978, but he spent 50 years here and comes back occasionally to visit friends and relatives.

And to ride a bicycle.

"I call it a low-bar," he said, showing off the ancient red bike that a friend, Robert Lee, loaned him for the day. "You don't have to call it a lady's bike, you know."

Now that women wear pants and some of them work bikes hard, you don't see as many riding bicycles missing that seat-high bar. The high bar gives a frame more strength. It also used to make a bike a boy's bike.

"This is easier for an older person," Bernard said, demonstrating by swinging a leg low through the gap between his handlebars and seat. "When you get old, you can still kick — but maybe you can't kick too high."

He had his right pant's leg rolled up almost to his knee, exposing a bit of sock and bare leg.

"I don't have a chain guard," he said. "So I have to do this."

He looked down at his leg, at the bare part, then up again.

"And I don't care what people say."

He had been along the north end of the bike trail before he stopped at the newspaper to report his findings.

"Have you written on those bike ...?"

"Messir."

"Well, the people here ought to use them. And that riverbank — with a little work, that could be a good thing."

He kept a pen and a little notebook with him on his ride, and he recorded his observations. This was the latest entry: "Riverbank bike trail. Passable — May 29, 1987."

He had pages on other parts of the city, too, new sights and old haunts that he had walked or biked through since this five-day visit began Tuesday.

"I've made a good share of the town, and East Grand Forks, too," he said.

He flipped back a few pages, looking for a particular item.

"Do you know about the cedar blocks down at Belmont Road and Second Avenue South? I believe it's the original cedar. What's left over there is just a little piece, from the road up to the sidewalk. But if I recollect, Belmont was paved with those blocks ... because that's where all the bigshots lived then."

Henry Bernard was born in Grafton, N.D., and graduated from high school there. He came to Grand Forks in 1927 and worked at the Federal Bakery until he got his first teaching job, at the Allendale Township School southwest of town.

"I had 30 pupils in eight grades," he said. "We had 10-minute classes. You never sat down, all day."

He taught in other schools and kept at his own education, eventually earning a master's degree. He retired in 1970, partly because his eyes were failing.

He wears special glasses, though, and he had no trouble seeing from his bicycle how the town has changed since he first knew it.

"The public library is gone," he said. "The old street cars are gone. You can't go down Third Street like you used to. But there are lots of improvements."

And the Sorlie Bridge is still here.

"I remember the dedication of the Sorlie Bridge. You know, they took moving pictures that day, and then they showed them later at the Paramount Theater. Is that still ...? No? Well, most of us who got ourselves in the picture, we stayed through three, four showings."

Bernard was thinking about riding out to UND's Memorial Stadium to watch part of the state track meet and maybe catch a glimpse of John Bennett, the Grand Forks native who won a silver medal at the 1956 Olympics.

"I was at the dedication of the stadium, too," he said. "I think that was in 1927. And I boarded for a time with John Bennett's parents. Of course, he wouldn't remember me."

His pant's leg rolled up and a jacket handy in his handlebar basket, he was ready to get on with his tour. He listened to an observation that the river might have taken out part of the south-end trail, too.

"Well, I don't think I'll accept hearsay on that," he said. "I believe I'll check it out myself."

8-30-09

I found this going through "stuff" this afternoon.

This is vintage Dad. He kept the chip.

A few months later, <sup>8/87</sup> Flo + (perhaps) T J + Eric moved Dad to Our Lady of the Snows at Belleville IL for a "trial run".

He didn't go back to San Benito except for the final move-out the next summer, <sup>8/88</sup> when I went south with him.

All told he lived 10 years at Our Lady of the Snows.

R.I.P. Dad!  
Wick (Dad)  
Grandpa

Grand Forks (ND) Herald P. B.1 May 31, 1987