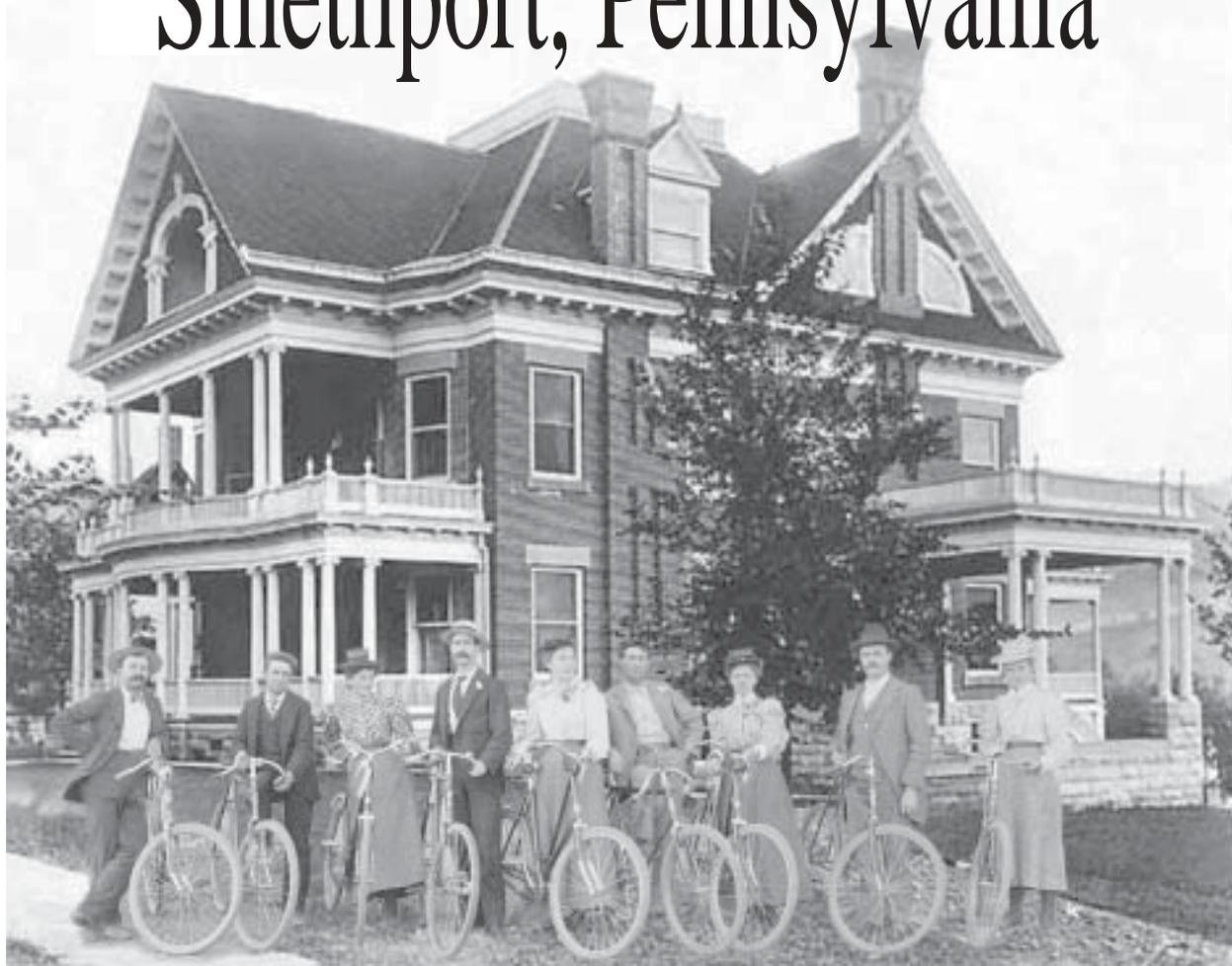




# Bicycling in & around Smethport, Pennsylvania



During the 1890s Smethport experienced a bicycling phenomenon. You too can experience the same excitement.

## Welcome to Famous Smethport, Pennsylvania

**W**elcome to fascinating Smethport, Pennsylvania. You are about to enter a voyage that will transport you back in time as you explore the rich, lavish 19th Century life-style of Smethport and its scenic region. Take your time on your journey. Smethport must be savored to be understood. Smethport was a town of pedestrians, horse transport and bicyclists a 100 years ago. Smethport must be slowly savored like an aged wine. Breath in deep and smell the fresh, mountain air, & explore it at the same speed as the pace of life when the mansions of Smethport were first carefully being constructed by some of the finest craftsmen in the country when the valley was thick with construction and industrial activities.

## Smethport's Topography Blesses the Bicyclist

**T**he natural lay of the paved roads surrounding Smethport, Pennsylvania makes wheeling the entire region delightful. The stunningly picturesque region is geographically blessed with some of the most advantageous bicycling routes in the nation. Several of the scenic valleys "hubbing" out of the McKean County seat have a marvelously gentle, rolling topography which seems to magically propel the cyclist through the area's vast natural beauty.

In only two directions does the cyclist encounter Smethport's majestically forested hills & these hills are both a challenge and an adventure to the wheelmen's experience. In addition, there is a vast network of back roads for the mountain biking enthusiast but the bicyclist must proceed with caution. Gradually the back country routes through the region will be explored and improved.

Early bicycling as a citizen past time, & serious bicycle racing as a popular sport had very early origins in Smethport, Pennsylvania. The natural environment, despite dirt, muddied roads, put Smethport bicyclists exploring and traveling, primarily for pleasure to Port Allegany, Kane, Eldred & other regions throughout Pennsylvania as well as Bolivar, Buffalo, Friendship, Portville, Rochester, New York and all parts in between. On long journeys sometimes the wheelman would ride to a destination & then return on one of the railroads serving Smethport.

## The Bicycling Phenomonon Sweep Smethport

**T**he cycling craze hit Smethport broadside. Everyone from student to 50 year old citizens who could afford one of the machines purchased a bicycle. Purchases were announced in the *McKean County Miner*. Cycling became a favored pastime of the community. Lady friends would wheel to Olean for shopping and take the train back to East Smethport, then ride home. Couples would join together and wheel to Eldred or Port Allegany for dinner. Groups would follow the Smethport baseball team by riding to Kane or even Coudersport to see the game.

During July 1895 Dr. Pierce rode his Rambler to Des Moines, Iowa in ten days. His trip was announced in the *Miner*. Mrs. Pierce, a wheeling fan herself, rode the train to Iowa and the two returned by train to Smethport.

Bicycle journeys and day trips were frequent topics in the Smethport newspapers. The Smethport biking phenomonon changed rapidly with the advent of the automobile. Because of the exceptional wealth of the community the horseless carriage was a hot bed of interest. Many of the wealthier families or young men purchased an automobile and the Smethport exuberance for the bicycle faded away into forgotten memory.

Explore Smethport & discover for yourself the magical pre-automobile era of the hidden, forested village in the Allegheny Highlands.