

WIRELESS PICK-UPS

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HANS OHRT 1895-1960

• **Hans Ohrt**, prominent on the American cycling scene for close to 50 years, passed away December 15 at Santa Monica, California. A note from his wife, Ida, who also cycled extensively, best explains "My dear Hans passed away December 15. He had been a very sick man for more than two years. He was hospitalized most of the time, except when I had him at home with a male nurse. He had the dreaded Parkinson's disease for which there is no cure. His doctor said the disease was caused by a brain injury which could have happened when he was in World War I."

• **Hans Ohrt** was a bicycle man who surely practiced what he preached, having been an active cyclist, as well as one of the nation's outstanding bicycle dealers, most of his life. He was born in San Francisco, February 18, 1895, and his home was always in California when he was not away as a racing cyclist. He went East in 1915 to win the American Amateur Championship, turned professional in 1916, and competed in Europe with the world's best racing cyclists, as did his brother, Ernest Ohrt, who is a dealer in San Francisco.

• **Having known him** for over 30 years I would say that the significant one thing that he did for the art of cycling and the sale of bicycles was to give it

"class"—prestige that could well be a criterion for all in the bicycle industry. His place of business, described by Ohrt as a "bicycle salon" or "emporium" is just that—located in the heart of Beverly Hills, the area in which many Hollywood movie people have their homes. The interior appearance of this "bike store" radiated the atmosphere of "Marshall Field's" or "Saks Fifth Avenue" and this is the quality that carried through all of his cycling activity and promotion. He made the most of his close proximity to the motion picture industry.

• **Motion Pictures** depicting bicycle scenes were viewed by Ohrt with a keen eye and he quickly observed many faulty and awkward positions of some of the performers. This gave him the idea that he would teach movie folk how to ride a bicycle properly so that they would look graceful in pictures! In the process he absorbed the spirit of the motion picture industry and adopted some of their successful methods of obtaining publicity. A few of the many motion picture stars he tutored in cycling were Clark Gable, Tyrone Power, Robert Taylor, Bob Hope, Jerry Colonna, Rita Hayworth, Linda Darnell, Zachary Scott, Loretta Young and Greer Garson. He impressed on his customers the necessity for taking care of themselves while on the wheel as well as teaching them to ride the proper way. He was noted for the care he took to be sure that every bicycle he sold or rented suited the rider so as to *guarantee each ride being a healthful experience.*

• **Ohrt claimed** that American youngsters go for bicycles without any promotion, but that adults must be cultivated to cycling. This he thought could be best brought about by appealing with sincerity to their desire for good health and physical well being. He felt that this was easy for a dealer and particularly by the dealer who enjoys cycling himself. Hans Ohrt's

bicycle salon was noted for its many framed mottos the best of which was probably the one reading:

"The bicycle is the safest, most economical and healthiest form of transportation."

Visitors were always impressed by the bronze plaque which hung conspicuously over the outside main entrance at 9544 Santa Monica Boulevard, Beverly Hills, with his adage:

"MY NOTION IS THAT MANKIND WOULD BE BETTER MORTALS IF THEY ALL RODE BICYCLES

HANS OHRT"

• **Hans Ohrt continued** as an active cyclist all through the years after he gave up racing. He and Mrs. Ohrt were popular figures as they cycled around the Hollywood area and most always dressed in white: white cap, white shirt and white shorts. Their annual ride from their home in Beverly Hills to a summer place in Palm Springs, covering the 132 miles by tandem, always received a great deal of publicity.

If there are bicycles in the *beyond* Hans Ohrt will surely glorify them . . . in the meantime we in cycling have lost a most enthusiastic booster of the sport and the friendship of a "real bicycle riding gentleman."

• **Harry Berz, Chicago**, perennial Best All Rounder Chairman, has released the final standings in the 1960 Competition, showing Ted Smith of Buffalo, former national champion 3-times and 1948 Olympian, top point scorer with 69. Robert Tetzlaff of Hollywood, California, 1960 Olympian, is second with 60 points, and Arne Uhrlass, Bayside, N. Y., 58 points, third. The Junior B.A.R. crown was won by the national junior champion, Bobby Fenn of Flushing, N. Y., scoring 38 points. Bob Binetti of Somerville, N. J., was second with 35, and Ray Matthews, Washington, D. C. third with 23.

• **Tour of France** promoters have in mind running a second "Tour" for amateurs. This event would run for two weeks (as against the main Tour's four) thus starting two weeks later. Both contests would finish in Paris on July 16. The key condition of the amateur (independent) race will be that six of the eight riders (per team-country) must be under 25 years of age.