

An issue of the Los Angeles Herald newspaper from 9 September 1898 includes the headline "Wheemen Will Attend Riverside's Seventh Annual Race Meet on Their Celebrated Track".

Like the many permanent race facilities that came to be in Los Angeles, Riverside too had its own race venue. The newspaper story went on to note that "the Riverside Wheemen are renowned throughout the state for their sportsmanlike qualities and hospitality. Their seventh annual race meet, to be held today, promises to be fully up to the standard of their previous achievements. A big contingent of Los Angeles cyclists, including many of the veterans of the sport, will leave the Santa Fe depot at 8:45 this morning on a special car, to help the orange eaters celebrate as of yore." Finishing up the story, the Herald listed the race participants, their events, and the various officials and scorers. I don't know if the term "orange eaters" was an innocent reference to the many orange groves in the inland valleys, or if it was a gentle put-down from a Los Angeles partisan.

Much of the racing in Riverside centered upon the Wheelmen's Park, developed by the Riverside Wheemen, and located at what is today the intersection of Houghton and Pine Streets. The park included a one-third mile oval race track and, as seen in the above photo, a shaded wooden grandstand for spectators. Longer races were also run along the surrounding streets.

Numerous accounts of Riverside's fastmen have been written over the years including this one at the Riverside Press-Enterprise from one year ago. There is some good historical information there, much of it focusing on a young rider by the name of Carson Shoemaker who, in 2012, was inducted into the Riverside Sports Hall of Fame, Wall of Distinction. A story which ran in the Los Angeles Herald on 28 July 1899 notes that, like the previous year, the Riverside Wheemen were organizing and preparing for the big September meet. Various committee members are listed, along the numerous races to be contested. At least three teams were expected to compete in the main event, a twenty-five mile road race - teams from Riverside, Los Angeles, and Santa Ana. Representing the Riverside team were Carson Shoemaker, George H. Cox, and H. K. Scott, a strong team who won "the cup" some years previous. At this particular meet, however, it was the Santa Ana team who would be defending their possession of "the cup".