8 Missing Link

The Case for Bicycle Transportation in the United States in the Early 20th Century

Paul Rubenson

Throughout most of the world, the early 20th century was an important turning point for cycling. As bicycle technology stabilized and bicycle prices fell, cycling transitioned smoothly from a bourgeois pastime into commonplace transportation. However, this did not happen in the United States, where production declined steadily after 1897, and never fully recovered.

In a paper given at the 2004 Conference in Vienna, Austria, I examined the technical characteristics of early American bicycles which may have hampered their adoption in the United States as practical transportation. I argued that single-tube tires and other American 'sporting' characteristics ultimately proved incompatible with everyday transportation needs. Well into the 20th century, American bicycles remained the embodiment of bourgeois sporting ideals—a contrast to the sturdy and comfortable roadsters that were popular elsewhere.

An underlying assumption of historians has been that more practical bicycles *could* have achieved a viable niche in the United States' transportation scheme. This idea counters much common wisdom and warrants investigation. There is ample evidence that Americans were open to the idea of practical cycling. Careful analysis also reveals that bicycles could have provided the same benefits to Americans that they did to cyclists around the world. Finally, comparing bicycle use in the United States to its closest neighbor, Canada, shows that the North American cycling environment posed no insurmountable barriers to bicycle transportation.

American Bicycles Compared to Standard Roadsters

Typical American bicycles were lightly built and bare of practical concessions. High gears, hard saddles, exposed wood rims, and single-tube tires dominated the market. Such machines had great visceral appeal, but proved ill-suited to mundane

tasks, and their day-to-day upkeep—especially of the tires—was beyond the means of working-class cyclists.

The American *Moto-cycle* bicycles that followed in the nineteen-teens and twenties, aimed mostly at children, were no improvement. Although possibly more comfortable, they were weighed down with useless gadgetry, and still kept the troublesome single-tube tires and difficult high gearing of their predecessors.

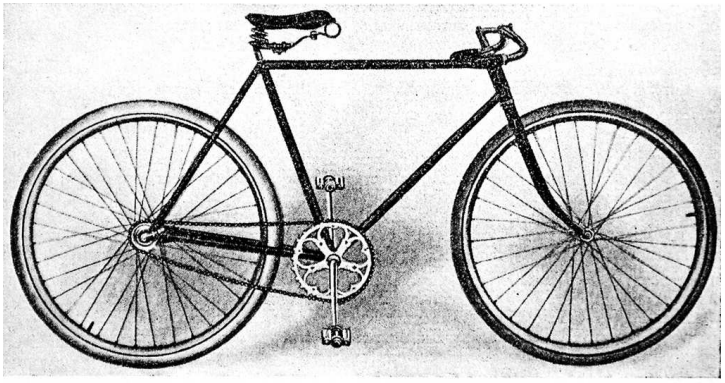
American Perceptions of Practical Cycling

Despite Americans' emphasis on leisure cycling, there *is* evidence that they recognized the bicycle's practical potential and attempted to implement cycle transportation. Some civil engineering projects were conceived on a grand scale, like the 250 miles of bicycle paths in Oneida County, New York, some paved with crushed limestone and up to 34 feet wide. Cycle paths connected the suburbs surrounding Minneapolis; they connected Sacramento to Stockton, fifty miles away, they stretched along the length of Long Island and the shores of Lake Erie, and they connected isolated villages to distant railway stations. In some locations, cycle bridges were built, including one over Lake Washington in Seattle, Washington. The nation's most ambitious project was arguably the construction in Pasadena, California of a nine-mile long, elevated and illuminated cycle-way to Los Angeles, a short-lived project with limited success.[1]

Locally, employers constructed structures to house workers' commuter bicycles. Manufacturing companies such as the Dayton Engineering Laboratories in Dayton, Ohio and the Electric Vehicle Co. in Hartford, Connecticut, built multi-leveled buildings to house hundreds of cycles and protect them from the weather.[2] The Cycle Trades of America, a national organization, promoted these efforts and published practical plans for bicycle racks and shelters.[3]

Individual riders retrofitted bicycles with available accessories to facilitate practical use. The most glaring omissions on standard American bicycles were fenders and luggage racks. After-market suppliers such as Wald, American Wire Form Co., International Stamping Co., and the Forsyth Metal Goods Co. produced fenders, luggage racks, baskets, and cargo boxes for riders determined to take practical advantage of their machines.[4]

Bicycle manufacturers offered heavy-duty work bicycles for delivery and professional fleets. In 1909, the Excelsior Service Bicycle was designed for "the use of butchers, grocers, bakers and others who require a cheap and expeditious method of delivering goods."[5] Many suppliers produced such machines, even if relatively few found takers.[6]



AMERICA—COASTER BRAKE, DIAMOND FRAME

Fig. 8.1. Typical American bicycle, 1912. Source: "Representative American Bicycles for 1912," *Bicycling World and Motorcycle Review* 65 (April 27, 1912), p. 71.

FIG. 17

A ROADSTER SAFETY BICYCLE OF ORTHODOX PATTERN MADE BY RUDGE-WHITWORTH, LTD.

Fig. 8.2. British Roadster, 1921. Source: W. F. Grew. *The Cycle Industry: Its Origin, History and Latest Developments* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1921), p. 51.

Governmental Promotion of Cycle Transportation

Legislative struggles indicated that some Americans took bicycle transportation seriously. Competition between transportation modes caused conflicts over public resources and physical access to streets and thoroughfares. In 1909, the *Phoenix Democrat* wrote:

> There are 2,500 bicycle riders in Phoenix… Now, the just, fair and decent thing for the city to do is to set apart a portion of each street for a bicycle path, run the roller over it and compel the sprinkling wagons to keep off of it.[7]

Attempts shortly after the turn of the century in Oakland, California to place sidewalks off-limits to bicycles met with complaints from commuters. One aggrieved group wrote to city hall:

> We are business girls, and while the streets are in such poor condition, we think the city council should assist us to the extent of permitting us to ride on the sidewalks. We are not 'scorchers,' and only wish to use the sidewalks for legitimate purposes.[8]

Evidence of Practical Cycle Use

Americans were willing to try practical applications of the bicycle. Even well-paid professionals and managers attempted to cycle commute. A correspondent for *Bicycling World* commented:

> …the colored valet of a friend of ours candidly admitted that his master had spoiled several good suits of clothes riding to the factory.[9]

In addition to personal cycling, many public and private institutions tried putting their workers on wheels. At one point, up to 50,000 American policemen were said to patrol their beats by bicycle. Even clergymen made their country rounds awheel, while sacrificing "…no whit of their dignity in so doing."[10] Delivery services anticipated improved efficiency from bicycles. For a time, Western Union bought 5,000 bicycles a year from the Westfield Manufacturing Company.[11] Other manufacturers promoted their products to the U.S. Mail.[12]

Still, the evidence cannot refute the fact that America failed to effectively embrace practical cycling. By World War I, American bicycling was dying out on all fronts. But the evidence *does* suggest that Americans were open to the idea of the bicycle as transportation, and that there was no consensus that bicycles were unsuitable as vehicles.

Real and Perceived Barriers to Practical Cycling: Distance

If Americans were amenable to practical cycling, what might have hindered them? Conventional wisdom gives various suggestions.

One possible barrier might have been geography, especially *distance*. America is a country characterized by vast spaces. Research finds that "…the distance that can be traveled is commonly considered the most restrictive factor in bicycle transportation"[13] Modern Americans travel 30 miles every day—further in some parts of the country—and can cover 1,000 miles a day on interstate highways.[14] By contrast, a "reasonable" utilitarian bicycle trip is thought to be only 3 to 6 miles.[15] For

Fig. 8.3. American "Motorbike," 1917. Source: "Indian Bicycles" (advertisement), *Bicycle News: The Bicycle Trade Authority* 3 January 1917, inside cover.

most modern Americans, distance alone excludes the bicycle as a realistic transportation alternative.

But geography's effect on people's lives changes. In 1900, American lifestyles were very different. Towns and cities were smaller, and rural lives encompassed smaller areas than they do today. People neither expected nor needed to travel far.

Cycling maps from the turn of the century show rural Mid-western communities spaced five to ten miles apart along cycling routes.[16] This meant that most people could cycle from one small town to the next and, more importantly, virtually any farmer could have cycled to the nearest town. The small villages dotting the landscape may not have held much attraction by modern standards, but they provided most things rural Americans needed. And bicycle excursions to regional towns could have a profound effect on people's sense of mobility:

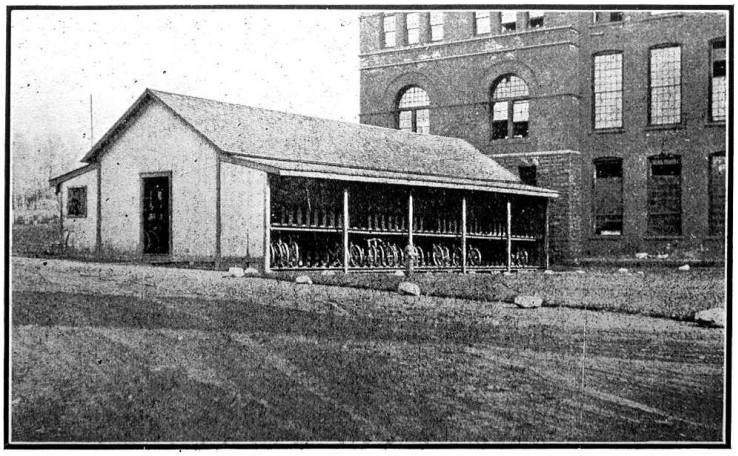
> Soon after I owned a bicycle, I rode with two other boys the sixteen miles from our Ohio town to Dayton… Our horizons were broadening.[17]

Surprisingly, the bicycle's penetration of America did not end in the settled heartland—bicycles were also popular in the West, where they appealed to the roving frontier mentality. In 1896, posters depicted bicycles taking the place of cowboys' horses.[18] Frederick Remington, the western illustrator, once published a poem depicting a match between a cyclist and a stagecoach.[19] In 1887, the League of American Wheelmen had members "…within practically every state and territory west of the Mississippi River."[20]

Indeed, in similar parts of the world, people relied heavily on bicycles to traverse vast surroundings. In the late 1890s, the bicycle was promoted in the Australian outback as the "machine of the bush, 'the ship of the desert'."[21] In the north country of Canada, the bicycle acquired legendary status as the preferred means of reaching the Klondike during the gold rush of 1896:

Bicycles were usable in the Yukon in winter on packed snow and on ice and in the summer when the ground dried out… Cold weather

Bicycles at an Automobile Factory.



Above: Fig. 8.4. Commuter bicycle shed, 1905. Source: "Bicycles at an Automobile Factory," *Bicycling World* 51, 20 May 1905, p. 225.

Right: Fig. 8.5. Promoting practical cycling, 1919. Source: Cycle Trades of America, *Cycle Trades Bulletin*, 1919.

notwithstanding, bicycles were a practical means of transport for much of the year.[22]

Of course, bicycles could not readily cross a continent 3000 miles wide. Travelers relied on trains to journey between distant cities and isolated parts of the country. But bicycles could make local connections at either end of a rail trip, much like today's airport rental cars. By 1894, American railroads were carrying over 430,000 bicycles as passenger baggage per year—one in eight pieces of luggage—and ten years later, the New York Central alone touted a similar figure.[23] One bicycle salesman noted that his customers, "lived in the suburbs and in the country, where they have to travel some distance to get to the trains for their journey to the city."[24]

In cities, the bicycle's effective range was doubly potent. In the late 1800s, the City of Baltimore covered an area of only 16 square miles, the greatest distance from any point to the center being little more than two miles.[25] An urban cyclist had virtual command of the city, and could easily escape it altogether into the countryside. Bicycles were especially useful around the outskirts, where they "contributed to the expansion… of suburbs."[26] Most good-sized towns had paved streets by the end of the century, especially downtown.[27] In Brooklyn, New York, "… a cyclist could go any place on an asphalted or macadamized road."[28]

Climate as a Possible Deterrent

North America presents a variety of challenging weather. Bitter northern winters, sweltering southern summers, and driving mid-western winds certainly discourage the modern cyclist. Studies show that such seasonal changes are an even greater deterrent to cycling than general weather severity.[29]

But earlier Americans were well acclimatized to the weather, especially in rural areas. There was no escaping the climate, whether one cycled or not. Staying home would mean a drafty farmhouse, while venturing out meant walking or travelling on an open wagon. Either way, rural folk bore the discomfort. And the farming culture's acute sensitivity to weather tempered much of the anxiety associated with unpredictable conditions.

Poor Roads as a Possible Barrier

Poor infrastructure might also have been a problem—American roads were bad. But the inconvenience was hardly unique to cyclists. In fact, bicycles developed according to existing conditions and handled them reasonably well. John Woodforde observed that the high-wheeler's oversized wheel: "… coped with surfaces that were rough or waterlogged."[30] Pneumatic tires performed similarly for safety bicycles. And American cyclists' preference for narrow tires suggest that roads were not a debilitating problem, and wider and softer tires were always available.[31]

In England, where the bicycle had "taken up its role in an integrated transportation system," roads were as bad if not worse.[32] In 1898, one Englishman complained to American readers about "the soiled pavements of central London when they reek with mud, [and] the rocky macadam, worn out wood, and villainous tram-lines of the suburbs."[33] English rural roads were even shoddier:

Many local roads in 1900 were much as they had been in 1800. Country postmen, expected to cover twenty-five miles or more each day on a

Fig. 8.6. Cyclist disembarking from train, 1899. Source: Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal. MP076/77 (96), Roper donation.

heavy tricycle, needed resolution and physical strength to get their machines across the stones and pot-holes.[34]

Examples of bicycle use on poor roads can be found today throughout the Third World. In Asia and Africa, where secondary roads remain unpaved, bicycles nonetheless provide vital transportation. If the roads become impassable, cyclists are no more stranded than are motorists. Horses and camels remain in currency, but are rare because of upkeep and land requirements.[35] During the colonial period, employees at isolated agricultural stations received stipends to maintain their bicycles, and traveled considerable distances:

> I would take my bicycle and ride on it all the way from Kitale to Cheptulu in Kaimosi, a distance of about 100 miles.[36]

Dark Roads as a Possible Barrier

Even the nighttime darkness of American highways posed no real obstacle. Powerful headlamps were common, even though costly. Contemporary reports describe their effectiveness.

Acetylene, when burning, gives a flame of intense brilliancy…The light produced by acetylene is of a pure white color, soft and agreeable in tone. It resembles sunlight more closely than any other known luminant.[37]

Acetylene lamps gave rural cyclist confidence, and can outshine even modern electric headlights. One rider mused:

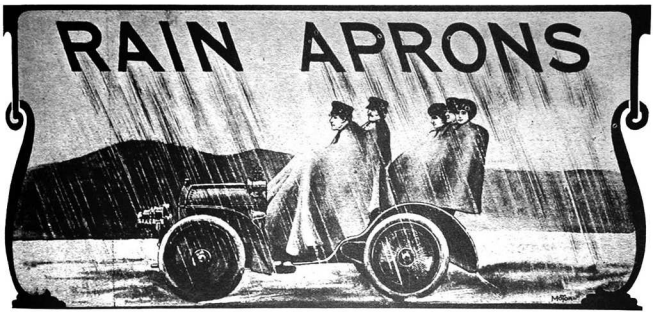
> … most of all I used to enjoy the runs on the path at night… skimming through the patches of moonlight, dipping down the inky hollows, scurrying up the other side with a rush—and all the time I'd be purring along at a fifteen [mph] clip. [38]

Transportation Alternatives: The Horse

Americans had many transportation choices. In rural settings, the bicycle's most direct competitor was the horse, often in combination with a wagon or buggy. Like bicycles, horses were a private and personal form of transportation—public modes could not reach isolated destinations in the rural countryside.[39] But the cost of horses rose during the 1890s at the same time as bicycle prices fell.[40] A horse could cost $150 without a buggy, and another $25 monthly for upkeep. By 1900, a bicycle could be had for about a tenth of the price of a good horse.[41] Moreover, the cyclist could travel slightly faster and farther than a "slow and tedious carrier's cart."[42]

Most farms already had a horse for farm work, providing occasional transportation at no

Left: Fig. 8. 7. Cyclists overtaking a horse and cart. Source: Culver Pictures, published in: Robert A. Smith. *A Social History of the Bicycle* (New York: American Heritage Press, 1972), p. 44.



Above: Fig. 8.8. Discomfort of early motoring, c. 1905. Source: *Motor News*, c.1905, Reprinted in: Philip Van Doren Stern. *A Pictorial History of the Automobile* (New York: The Viking Press, 1953), p. 103.

additional cost. Still, it was inconvenient to take a horse away from its task. In 1903, one bicycle salesman explained that his customers:

> ...have been accustomed to travel... behind their family nags, and their wives and daughters have used the same animals for their daily drives and in making their social calls... The result is that the old-time bicycle rider is returning to the use of the wheel, with a new kind of interest in it.[43]

And of course, not all country residents had access to a workhorse. Doctors, ministers, hired hands, and itinerant workers of all trades could all look to the bicycle for transportation.[44]

Streetcars and Trolleys as an Alternative

In cities, personal transportation was less pressing—one could always walk. Still, by the end of the 19th century, American cities were growing beyond a comfortable pedestrian scale. Poorer residents moved to the outskirts, and some wealthier residents moved out to suburban developments. New transportation choices were welcome. The bicycle was an obvious possibility, but new public streetcars posed strong competition. By the 1890s, cities such as Baltimore had trolleys connecting to their outer perimeters which cost ten cents per ride.[45] At that rate, however, a worker could buy a bicycle with a year's carfare.[46] In New Orleans, Ida Barrow, a teacher, rode a bicycle to school for that very reason.[47] At the turn of the century, Harrisburg residents maintained their preference for bicycles to streetcars by a healthy 12.5% margin, while most smaller American towns had no trolleys at all.[48]

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TORONTO, CANADA,
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57 HOLBORN VIADUCT, LONDON,
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PRICE LIST
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Gent's Model No. 59A—22, 24, and 26 in. Frame, Dunlop Tyres...	£12 12 0
Lady's Model No. 59B—20, 22, and 24 in. Frame, Dunlop Tyres...	12 12 0
Gent's Model No. 56A—22, 24, and 26 in. Frame, Dunlop Tyres...	11 0 0
Lady's Model No. 56B—20, 22, and 24 in. Frame, Dunlop Tyres...	11 0 0

If fitted with Warwick Tyres, 10/- less.

If fitted with Morrow Free Wheel and Back Pedalling Brake, 38/- extra.

Lady's Machine, fitted with Dover Gear Case, 24/- extra; or with Revod Chain Cover, 10/6 extra.

The Daycycle.

Model No. 20, Gents'—22 and 24-in. frames, flush joints, one-piece crank hangers, Dunlop tires, $25.00.

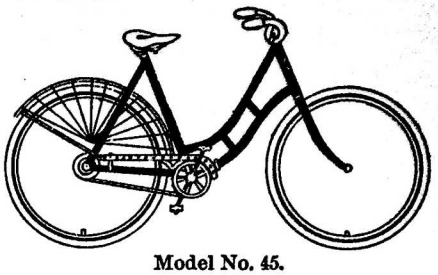
Model No. 25, Ladies'—20, 22 and 24-in. frames, gracefully curved, one-piece crank hanger, Dunlop tires, $25.00.

Model No. 40, Gents'—22 and 24-in. frames, flush joints, Morse roller chain, one-piece crank hanger, adjustable bars, reversible cones, caged bearings, Dunlop tires, $35.00.

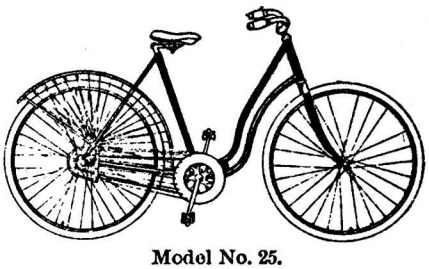
Model No. 45, Ladies'—22 and 24-in. frames, flush joints, one-piece crank hangers, reversible cones, caged bearings, Dunlop tires, Morse roller chain, $35.00.

Dunlop Tires on all Bicycles.

For specifications see our Summer Goods Catalogue.



Model No. 45.



Model No. 25.

Left: Fig. 8.9. Canadian Eaton's bicycles featured only Dunlop detachable tires, 1901. Source: The Eaton Co., Ltd. Catalogue 46, Spring/Summer 1901 (Toronto, 1901), 3rd part of cover.

Above: Fig. 8.10. C.C.M. Brantford bicycles, all supplied with detachable tires, 1901. Source: Canada Cycle and Motor Co., Ltd., Brantford Bicycles (Toronto: 1901), p. 12.

Competition with the Automobile

The most common missperception is that automobiles displaced bicycles—a natural assumption now that modern cars embody comfort and ease. From a contemporary viewpoint, the bicycle's subjugation beneath America's automotive culture seems inevitable—the image of regular folk traveling under their own power, fully exposed to the elements, seems unlikely to pampered modern sensibilities.[49]

But the facts of history reveal the fallacy of the common-sense view. American bicycle production collapsed in 1897 and reached it lowest level by 1910. Automobiles would not match bicycle production until 1920.[50] In the meantime, a generation of middle-class Americans did without any personal transportation at all.

There are many reasons why automobiles could not immediately take the bicycle's place. First, they were prohibitively expensive. "The automobile was a thoroughly aristocratic vehicle in its infancy, a rich man's toy."[51] While primitive automobiles appeared by the turn of the century, the first truly affordable American cars were not available for another twenty years. In 1908, even the new Model T Ford cost $800, ten times the cost of supplying a family of five with individual bicycles. When its price reached $300 in 1925, this was still the same as the cost of ten bicycles.[52] And like horses, early automobiles came with significant housing and upkeep costs.

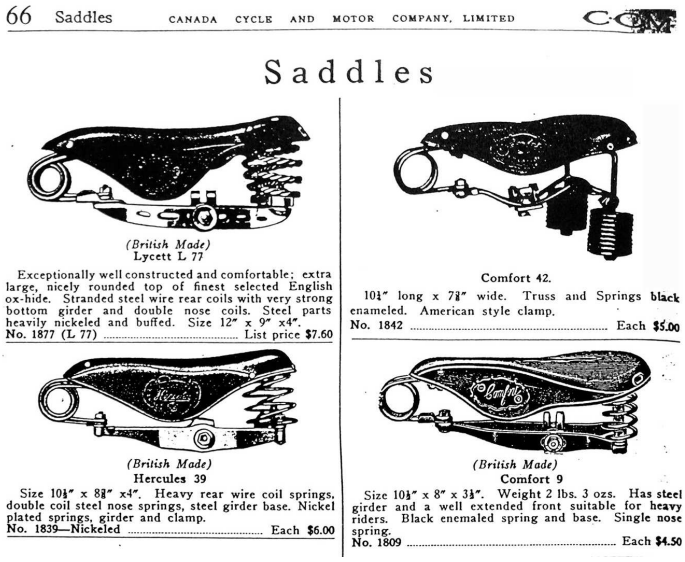
Second, early automobiles were not reliable enough to serve effectively as transportation—Edwardian motoring was an absolute adventure.[53] The British journal, *Punch*, mused:

> *If you desire to travel fast,*
> *A motor car is unsurpassed;*
> *Should you desire to travel far,*
> *Trust not too much a motor car.*[54]

Last, the idea that early motorcars were more comfortable than bicycles is simply false. A cyclist's discomfort from the elements was at least limited by his moderate speed. In a fast-moving car on the other hand:

> It was painfully cold… the wind howled around the sides of the windshield and came up through the cracks between the floor boards… Water collected in the sagging canvas [roof], and you always got some of it down your neck.[55]

Even fair-weather drivers were subject to blinding dust, the "heat of the sun, and the cold air of early spring or late autumn." At a time when cars had "no roofs, no windshields, no heaters, and often did not even have fenders," motorists needed gear bicyclists could hardly imagine—not just nostalgic goggles and gloves, but driving masks, all-enveloping mufflers, gauntlets, driving coats, foot muffs, and waders.[56] Motoring enthusiasm owed far more to the automobile's visceral allure than to its utility.


66 Saddles CANADA CYCLE AND MOTOR COMPANY, LIMITED

Saddles

(British Made)
Lycett L 77

Exceptionally well constructed and comfortable; extra large, nicely rounded top of finest selected English ox-hide. Stranded steel wire rear coils with very strong bottom girder and double nose coils. Steel parts heavily nickeled and buffed. Size 12" x 9" x4".
No. 1877 (L 77) ..... List price $7.60

Comfort 42.

10½" long x 7⅞" wide. Truss and Springs black enameled. American style clamp.
No. 1842 ..... Each $5.00

(British Made)
Hercules 39

Size 10½" x 8⅞" x4". Heavy rear wire coil springs, double coil steel nose springs, steel girder base. Nickel plated springs, girder and clamp.
No. 1839—Nickeled ..... Each $6.00

(British Made)
Comfort 9

Size 10½" x 8" x 3½". Weight 2 lbs. 3 ozs. Has steel girder and a well extended front suitable for heavy riders. Black enemaled spring and base. Single nose spring.
No. 1809 ..... Each $4.50

Fig. 8.11. British saddles available from Canadian CCM, 1922. Source: Canada Cycle and Motor Co., Ltd., Catalogue (Toronto: 1922), p. 66.

Perceptions of Traffic Safety as a Possible Deterrent

Modern cyclists perceive competition with motor traffic as one of their greatest aggravations, and current non-cyclists cite traffic as the most significant reason not to cycle.[57] In the early 20th century, traffic safety was probably not a significant factor in rural areas, and even in cities probably had little effect until the nineteen-teens.[58] The

relationship of cars to bicycles was significantly different than it is today. For one, most early motorists "came from the ranks of well-to-do cyclists," and probably shared a sense of camaraderie.[59] To a great extent, the definitions of motorized and other vehicles were still blurred; motorcycles, or rather motor-bicycles, were still legally indistinct from their pedaled counterparts.[60]

Attitudes Toward Physical Activity

It is easy to enumerate the economic and functional advantages of the bicycle, but from the modern perspective one factor seems absent: exertion. Modern Americans, willing to exercise less than twenty minutes a day, view cycling as a rigorous activity.[61] This aversion to physical effort is a significant disincentive to practical cycling today. Twenty minutes' cycling won't get many people one-and-a-half miles from home and back, so even modest destinations are often unrealistic.

In contrast, earlier Americans had a different frame of reference to exertion, resulting from the fact that most activities were essentially manual.[62] This was evident in how they defined cycling for themselves. In their words, cycling was not vigorous exercise. Few early cyclists noted the physical prowess implicit in their cycling, but rather emphasized how easy it was. Riders attributed their new empowerment entirely to the machine—cycling embodied "…not pushing the pedals, but flying."[63] In 1905, one reporter remarked:

> It is really wonderful how far and how fast *it will carry you*… [italics mine] I rode something over fifty miles that day, and I have felt like a new sort of being every day since.[64]

Doctors prescribed cycling to women to get them outdoors without taxing their strength. Those seeking a workout were disappointed. "I've got no use for [a bicycle] … I want the exercise, and couldn't get it on one of those machines."[65] Put in context, cycling was less demanding than a long day in the saddle, or enduring the jostling and discomfort of a buggy. Compared to walking, cycling took less effort.

Comparison to Practical Cycling in Canada

Canada and the United States are uniquely parallel societies, and present a valuable opportunity for historical comparison. The two countries largely share a common North American geography, and also a unique mix of cultural and political origins. It is therefore interesting that practical cycling took a very different path in Canada in the early 20th century than it did in the United States. Canadian bicycles transitioned to transportation much more successfully than those in the United States. In Canada, bicycle use evolved similarly to that of cycling elsewhere in the world. American bicycle use did not.

A number of Canadian historians have recently examined the early bicycle age in their country, and the 9th International Cycle History Conference was held in Ottawa in 1998. Recent studies found that the bicycle was used extensively even in remote parts of Canada like Winnipeg, which "… in the 1890s was the gateway to the then sparsely settled Canadian west."[66] While bicycle sales plummeted in the United States at the turn of the century and bicycle use thereafter generally declined, Winnipeg's bicycle registrations climbed steadily from around five thousand in 1900, to twelve thousand in 1920, and finally to over twenty-four thousand in 1942. Registrations peaked in the summer, but the substantial number

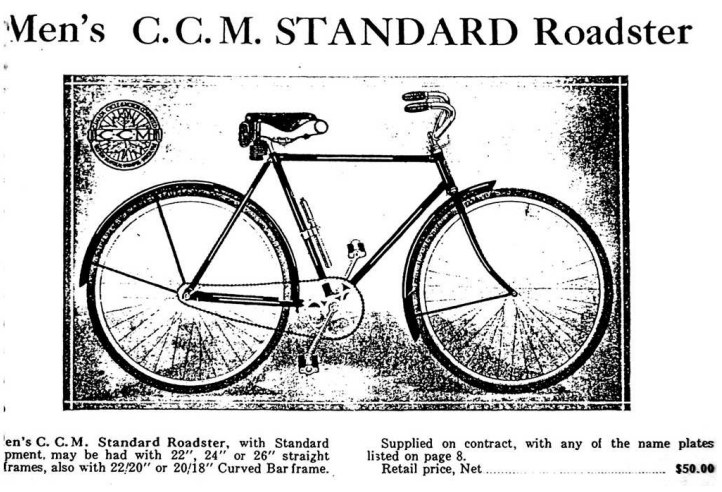


Fig. 8.12. Canadian roadster, 1923. Source: Canada Cycle and Motor Co., Ltd., Catalogue (Toronto: 1923), p. 9.

that occurred throughout the year indicate a high level of utilitarian cycling.[67] Drs. John Lehr and John Selwood, professors of geography at the University of Winnipeg, recently summarized the utility of bicycles in early Winnipeg:

> In Winnipeg's working class North End, bicycles were not bought for recreation but for work. James Grey in his autobiographical memoir recalls the bicycle being used by construction workers to commute to their work sites at the St. Boniface stockyards. The CPR telegraph service in Winnipeg, as elsewhere in Canada, employed messengers on bicycles for telegram deliveries year-round. Railway companies also relied heavily on bicycle messengers, known as "call boys," to summon train crews to work when required… Barney Kohm recalled working as a teenage bicycle delivery boy for Saphron's Drug Store and, during the Christmas season, for Oretsky's Department Store, helping out their full-time bicycle delivery boy.[68]

There was only one underlying difference between practical cycling's lot in Winnipeg and in the American cities only a few hundred miles to the south. Because Canada belonged to the British Commonwealth, Winnipeg cyclists had access to imported English bicycles, and their own Canadian-made cycles adhered to common international specifications.[69]

Photographs of bicycle troops lined up at nearby Fort Garry show full roadsters replete with fenders, chain-guards, and luggage racks. All Canadian CCM bicycles, and all bicycles sold through the Canadian Eaton's catalogs, were routinely equipped with detachable tires.[70] While Canadian leisure riders could also buy lightweight American and Canadian models, the availability of sturdy roadsters with detachable tires was critical in Winnipeg's growing suburbs, where "… the bicycle was the only available form of conveyance for the majority who moved there."[71]

Conclusions

While more practical bicycles could hardly have held off the coming motor age, practical cycling could have faired better in America. If cycle transportation had gained an early foothold in the United States as it did elsewhere, American bicycles might now be part of a more diverse and integrated transportation scheme.

Endnotes

1 "New York's Side Paths," *Bicycling World* 51 (April 8, 1905), p. 39; "Can Still Use Cycle Paths," *Bicycling World* 47 (July 11, 1903), p. 477; "Dodge City Path Tax," *Bicycling World* 47 (August 15, 1903), p. 594; "The Benefit of Cycle Paths," Bicycling World 47 (May 9, 1903), p. 200; "The Deadness of Cycling," *Bicycling World and Motorcycle Review* 47 (1903), p.289; Robert A. Smith, *A Social History of the Bicycle* (New York: American Heritage Press, 1972), pp. 215–219.

2 "Sell Wheel Racks and the Bicycles Sell Themselves', *Cycle Trades Bulletin* (March, 1919), p. 7: "Bicycles at an Automobile factory," *Bicycling World* 51 (May 20, 1905), p. 225.

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