

SOCIOLOGY OF CYCLING

3.2

KID STUFF: THE BICYCLE AND AMERICAN YOUTH

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On the 26 March, 1883, showman P.T. Barnum opened his circus's season in the original Madison Square Garden, a brick arena with 8,500 seats that Barnum had built from the shell of a de-commissioned railroad depot.¹ "The Garden was packed from the rings to the roof," the *New York Tribune* reported: "There was a wonderful array of elephants, giraffes and zebras, sacred cattle and some profane cattle.... Small children on bicycles performed marvelous antics on those peculiar machines."²

[Fig. 1]

The small children in question were "The Elliotts," five English siblings and their cousin, aged from five to sixteen.³ Dressed in tights and spangled costumes, the children astounded the crowd by circling the central stage⁴ on the high-tech, high-wheeled bikes of the day - scaled, of course, to their little legs.⁵ They rode on a raised platform, traced figure-of-eights with their wheels, toted parasols and whips. Then they ditched their bikes, clamped pizza-sized wheels onto each of their boots, and glided around on those. These boot wheels, called "unicycle skates," had been invented by the father of the five siblings,⁶ a Yorkshire-born⁷ mechanic and former bicycle racer

who styled himself as "Professor Elliott."⁸ [Fig. 2]

In the audience that afternoon was E. Fellowes Jenkins, the Superintendent of the nine-year-old New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.⁹ During the Progressive Era then underway, this private agency aggressively fought child abuse and neglect. It supported the first laws to limit children's working hours (to sixty hours a week) and to require that guardians feed, clothe, and supervise the children in their care.¹⁰ The SPCC's founder, Henry Bergh - who also founded the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - had tangled publicly with Barnum in the past, starting with an 1866 dispute over

EUROPE'S LATEST SENSATION.



at the rate of 500 revolutions per minute. As they appeared in all the principal establishments in Europe.

One of the Greatest, Prettiest and Most Sensational Acts now Before the Public

(vide press). Now on Summer tour with

**BARNUM, BAILEY & HUTCHINSON'S
GREAT SHOW.**

Fig. 1. Advertisement from the *New York Clipper*, 25 Aug., 1883, p.375. As a part of their act, the Elliott children rode in circles on a revolving table.

an exhibit at Barnum's New York museum in which live rabbits were fed to boa constrictors. ("It may be urged that these reptiles will not eat dead food," Bergh wrote in December of that year. "In reply to this I say, then let them starve." Barnum won that battle.)¹¹

At the circus on opening day in 1883, Bergh's representative Jenkins watched the Elliott children perform, and what he saw struck him as dangerous and exploitative. Kindergarteners teetering on big

THE ELLIOTT'S ON THEIR



Fig. 2. Catherine ("Kate"), Thomas, James, and Mary Rand ("Polly") Elliott, circa 1884, wearing patented "unicycle skates" patented by their father. This illustration, from p.36 of J. B. Elliott's monograph *Life and Career of the Celebrated Elliott Family*, is based on a cabinet card by photographer John Wood of New York. The card can be found on the website Picture History at picturehistory.com/product/id/40038.

wooden wheels for onlookers' amusement? It was inhumane, Jenkins believed. A fall from the cycle could result in a compound fracture or a hernia, and in any event, the strain was too much for the children's small limbs.¹²

The SPCC demanded that Barnum stop the Elliotts from performing, but after consulting his attorneys the showman defiantly continued the act. "A society claiming to prevent cruelty to children threatens cruelly to rob these children of their well-earned money and turn them into the streets to beg," he announced before the Elliotts' next performance.¹³

An agent for the SPCC then swore out a complaint of cruelty to children, and the showman was arrested, along with “Professor” James Elliott and Barnum’s circus managers, James L. Hutchinson and J. A. Bailey. All four men were charged with violating Section 292 of the New York State Penal Code by allowing the Elliott children to perform feats “that are calculated to injure them,” according to news reports.¹⁴

At the men’s trial on 4 April, 1883, Jenkins testified that he had seen ten-year-old Polly Elliott slip during her act,¹⁵ and that the other children had seemed out of breath.¹⁶ Clearly, he argued, the bicycle was no machine for a child.¹⁷

Barnum, in his own defense, presented a series of physicians who endorsed the children’s act. One of them, Dr. Louis A. Sayre, testified: “If all children took similar exercise, it would be better than doctors or drugs.”¹⁸ The three-judge panel must have agreed, because the four defendants were acquitted.¹⁹ The show could go on. When Barnum heard the judges’ ruling, he approached his accuser, Jenkins, to do a little gloating. “I’ll give you \$200 per week,” Barnum said, “if you’ll let me exhibit you about the country as the man who would prevent children from earning their livelihood.”²⁰

It seems crazy now to think that someone could be arrested for letting a kid ride a bicycle. In the United States for much of the twentieth century, children were practically the only people who *did* ride them. But, as Robert Turpin convincingly argues in his 2013 dissertation, *Our Best Bet Is the Boy*,²¹ the identification of cycling with childhood in the United States, and *only* in the United States, was in large part the result of a conscious and concerted effort by the bicycle industry to market to children after the bottom fell out of the adult bicycle market at the turn of the twentieth century.

This effort changed the history of cycling in this country and helped shape the nature of American childhood. As children moved from the periphery to the center of the middle-class family, the bicycle became an indispensable accessory for kids, an emblem of parental love. But the more important American children became to the family, the more problematic the bicycle came to seem. A machine that afforded kids unprecedented freedom in the 1950s and 1960s has grown, once again, to seem almost too dangerous to use.

When Barnum was arrested in 1883, the bicycle

was still a towering, costly machine, and cycling was “essentially a selfish sport for men,” as one business reporter described it.²² Not only women, but also teenage boys, were largely excluded from organized cycling; male leaders of elite clubs deemed them unsuited to membership. One exception was a club in Burlington, Vermont, whose organizers welcomed teens. In an 1884 letter to *Outing* magazine, an older member offered a feisty defense of his club’s unusual age policy: “We do not think here that [boy members] take anything away from the good standing of our club,” he wrote. “We are not ashamed of our boys.”²³ The prevailing snobbism of cycling started to erode in 1887, when the English-style safety bicycle swept the American market and brought the bike back down to earth. Suddenly women, older men, and children who *weren’t* professional acrobats could ride bicycles. The introduction of the pneumatic tire to the American market in the early 1890s made riding even easier.²⁴

But during the international cycling boom that followed, most bicycles were still built for adults. The cycle had been transformed from a luxury good into a vehicle of liberation for women and people who could not afford horses and carriages; it was not a child’s toy. While some manufacturers did market junior-sized safeties, these represented a small portion of the American bicycle market.²⁵

Childhood during this period was diverse, and its definition was rapidly changing. According to Steven Mintz, author of *Huck’s Raft: A History of American Childhood*,

“at no time in American history was children’s play experience more varied along lines of class, gender, and region” than during the nineteenth century. Some children toiled in the factories of the Industrial Revolution, with little time for play; others helped with farm work and then romped freely in the rural countryside. Still others attended school with peers in the first age-segregated classrooms. In congested cities, reformers created playgrounds and organized the first youth sports leagues. “These sports were seen as a way to cultivate virtues important to a modern society, such as teamwork, and to foster and channel competitiveness and aggressiveness.”

Mintz told the *American Journal of Play* in a 2010 interview.²⁶

By the early decades of the twentieth century, crusaders such as the SPCC had largely succeeded in shifting childhood from a time of labor to a time of education. Simultaneously, public health and safety efforts had reduced the infant mortality rate - which in turn inspired many parents to limit their childbearing. With fewer children born and a greater expectation that each child would survive to adulthood, American adults began, paradoxically, to see their kids as more precious and more fragile than had earlier generations, argues the social historian, Peter Stearns.²⁷ Rather than economic assets who would generate revenue for the household, kids had become a treasured cost center. They were no longer producers, they were consumers, and the more valuable they came to seem to their parents, the more products they seemed to need.

Meanwhile, the great 1890s bicycle boom had ended, and in the United States, middle-class adults had come to see cycling as embarrassingly downscale. The League of American Wheelmen staggered on, but its monthly journal began to fill with the obituaries of its aged members. "Our two oldest veterans have left us," reads one plangent notice in the June, 1917 issue of the *Official Bulletin and Scrap Book of the League of American Wheelmen*, "Who stands next in line?"²⁸ In August of that year, the *Bulletin* reported that the League's new senior member was Jarvis C. Howard of New Rochelle, then seventy-seven and a half years old.²⁹

Bikes hadn't vanished from adult life completely. Six-day bicycle races continued to draw crowds of 10,000 or more to velodromes around the country,³⁰ and racing stars such as sprinter Frank L. Kramer earned more than baseball greats like Ty Cobb.³¹ But for most American adults, biking for pleasure was off the agenda. And the bike's practicality for city commuting waned, too, as automobiles became more plentiful in the nineteen-teens. It wasn't just that people preferred the swifter and more modern motorized carriages; it was that if you persisted in cycling on streets clogged with cars and inexperienced drivers, you were taking your life in your hands.³²

Bicycle and parts manufacturers needed a new market, and they found it in the schoolyard. Industry trade groups urged bike merchants to target suburban children, who couldn't drive cars but should love a toy they could ride on the sidewalk or in quiet cul-de-sacs. "Play to the kid all the time," wrote W.P. Farrell of the J.W. Grady bicycle company in 1917,

"If you don't, you lose your best bet.... The bicycle is as much the expectation of every boy as an automobile is the expectation of every business man."³³ As Robert Turpin argues, though, this strategy was a sort of time bomb. By painting bicycle ownership as a youthful expectation, merchants reinforced the perception that grown-ups didn't ride. As one 1926 Iver Johnson bicycle advertisement in *The Youth's Companion* told readers: "The selection of a bicycle is as important to you as the selection of an automobile is to your father."³⁴ That a father might select a bike for himself was out of the question. [Fig. 3]

So that's why you want a Bicycle for Christmas?

DAD discovers the reason you've set your heart on a Bicycle—"It has the New Multiple Disc Clutch New Departure Brake."

He knows what this kind of a clutch means to the automobile and easily understands how much it adds to the safe control of bicycle riding—it's simply perfect.

Your desire to own and ride a bicycle means that such a gift will be a lasting joy—loads of fun and health-building exercise.

Talk it over with him now, before Christmas—and write for booklet with full description of the New Brake.

NEW DEPARTURE MFG. CO.
Bristol, Conn.

You can get the new Model C on any make of Bicycle, or your dealer can quickly place it in your old wheel. Ask him about it today.

NEW DEPARTURE
"Model C"
Improved
COASTER BRAKE

Fig. 3. Advertisement from *The Youth's Companion*, November 1927, p.719. Note that this father seems to belong to an infinite set of fathers pointing to their own ads.

Advertising touting car-like bicycle components such as the "New Multiple Disk Clutch New Departure Brake" prepared boys for the day when they could cast aside their ersatz cars and get real ones. "Dad discovers the reason you've set your heart on a bicycle," reads one 1927 New Departure advertisement, "He knows what this kind of a clutch means to the automobile."³⁵ As part of a broader cultural shift, kids were being groomed as good consumers: they

were learning to trade up.³⁶

By then, a bicycle wasn't anyone's idea of trading up. Small-town commuters and city delivery boys still routinely used bikes to get around, but for white-collar workers they had become ridiculous. In 1928, a *New York Times* reporter interviewed several businessmen riding stationary bicycles at gyms. "They tell me that they would like to go bicycling," he wrote, "but they imagine that they would be unpleasantly conspicuous." Girls tended to abandon riding as soon as they graduated from elementary school, the reporter added, and the typical teenage girl regarded the bike as "considerably beneath her dignity.... If a youth would invite her to ride a tandem with him, he would probably destroy the friendship then and there."³⁷ Grown women almost never cycled, though one 1925 writer thought it a shame, considering what the bicycle had done for their mothers thirty years earlier. "How they did blossom out on it!" he wrote, "How cleverly they did pedal out of that place of theirs so long said to be in the home!"³⁸

For children, though, biking became not only acceptable but desirable. Marketers encouraged parents to see the machine as a way to develop their children's bodies, and also their tender psyches. "Give him a bicycle that he will be proud of," counsels one 1916 advertisement from *McClure's* magazine, "If he has one of these bicycles, he will be the king of the neighborhood."³⁹ By publicizing the message that "boyhood without a bicycle is like a summer without flowers," to quote a 1922 advertisement in *Boys' Life* magazine,⁴⁰ the bicycle industry helped make their product an essential aspect of childhood. Earning the money for a bicycle was also a way to build character, as one financial journalist noted: "What normal boy wouldn't gladly work three hours a day, before and after school, to own a bicycle?" he asked. Any parent, he added, should be able to "look beyond the bicycle and behold what the boy gained in grit, persistence, self-confidence, and strength of character by his long-continued effort."⁴¹

The Depression of the 1930s inspired many adults who could not afford cars or gasoline to return to riding, or to take it up for the first time. "Here comes back, freewheeling, the deposed, nigh-despised, almost forgotten bicycle," announced the *Wall Street Journal* in 1933.⁴² Bikes were cheaper to buy and operate than cars, obviously, and that fact sparked sales in the otherwise listless economy. Bicycle production

rose from 249,500 in 1932⁴³ to 1,250,000 in 1937, and by 1938, there were more than six million cycles on the streets, "far more than existed in the Gay Nineties," according to the *New York Times*.⁴⁴ [Fig. 4]

Now Pay a little each month!
—and you can have the

Aluminum Streamlined **SILVER KING**



Electric blast horn hidden in headlight, (7 in. long). Powerful beam light—red and green side reflectors.



Automobile-type theft-proof wheel lock concealed in head—locks wheel at any angle. Only in Silver Kings!



5 tons pressure can't pull apart Silver King joints! Imagine how much longer this stronger Bike lasts!



Streamlined chain guard and easy-action chain. Free-wheeling coaster brake. Rubber-cushion pedals.



Exclusive low-arch streamlined construction. Built lower, with longer wheel-base for riding comfort.



The Bike with Everything! Lighter! Faster! Stronger! Safer!

Here's the Bike of Bikes—all but running gear built of aluminum alloy—same as high speed trains and airplanes. 29% lighter, yet three times as strong as steel, weight for weight! Rustless! Running gear of chrome plate! Ball-bearing throughout! Bright silver or choice of colors.

Streamlined throughout—built low, with longer wheel base and fast-action chain for comfort and easy pedaling. And all sorts of exclusive accessories! Real blast horn and powerful headlight combined with red and green side reflectors—teardrop tail-light reflector—wheel lock—free-wheeling coaster brake—balloon tires. The lightest, strongest, snappiest Bike made!

Yet, this 1936 De Luxe Silver King costs no more than an ordinary Bike. And you can buy it on the Silver King Monthly-Payment Plan at thousands of Silver King dealers. See it now at your nearest dealer or department store. Or, send coupon for free catalog showing all boys, girls, and adult models.

MONARK SILVER KING, INC.
Dept. BL, 1240 N. Homan Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Please send your free catalog showing the different Silver King bicycles and your new Easy-Payment Plan.

Name

Address

City State

Name of your dealer

Fig. 4. Advertisement from *Boys' Life*, May 1936, p.49.

Nevertheless, child cyclists outnumbered adults in the United States, and children's bicycles grew ever more enticingly car-like in their streamlined, fat-tired designs. One 1936 boys' bike boasted an "electric blast horn hidden in headlight," and an "automobile-type theft-proof wheel lock."⁴⁵ In 1940, an advertisement for an aftermarket bicycle speedometer touted it as "the kind used on the finest cars!"⁴⁶

By late 1941, when the U.S. entered World War II, 85 per cent of the bicycles sold in the country were children's bikes. That changed abruptly in March, 1942, when the federal War Production Board prohibited the manufacture of all children's bikes and directed bicycle companies to ramp up production of drab, stripped-down adult machines instead. These so-called "Victory bicycles" were needed to help workers commute under wartime rationing of gas, tires, and cars.⁴⁷ In mid-August of

that year, though, with thousands of new adult bikes in circulation, the federal government ended most bicycle manufacturing for the duration of the war and directed bicycle factories to make machine-gun tripods, searchlights, and other war materials instead.⁴⁸ Throughout the war, the idea of the bicycle as a childhood necessity endured. In September 1945, one month after Japan's surrender, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that 97 percent of American children told pollsters they wanted their own bicycles. The postwar bike industry ramped up as quickly as possible to meet the demand for children's bikes.⁴⁹ American adults, on the other hand, aspired to own cars; they quickly returned to their pre-Depression disdain for two-wheeled transport.

Of course, as an object, the bike offered children the same sort of liberation it had offered adults in the days before automobiles. No longer dependent upon grown-ups for transportation in the ever-expanding postwar suburbs, a child with a bike in the 1950s and 1960s could range around his or her neighborhood looking for adventure. Encouraging this exploration was a new philosophy of child-rearing, espoused by experts such as Dr. Benjamin Spock, that instructed parents to allow children to take risks, lest they develop neuroses due to overprotective parenting. Counseled U.S.-educated Canadian expert William Blatz, it was "much better that they suffer for a month of inconvenience of a broken limb than that they suffer for life from undeveloped physical powers and immature personalities."⁵⁰

But just as children could use their bike to gain independence, they could also use it to go looking for trouble. The 1950s saw a juvenile delinquency panic⁵¹ that offered bicycles as both one possible trigger - since bike theft fueled by envy was a standard starter crime⁵² - and a potential deterrent. Along with scout troops and other organized activities, concerned adults formed bicycle touring clubs to occupy children and render them too tired to transgress. "Keep a healthy boy busy and happy, and he stays out of trouble," said Wayman LaRue, the founder of Philadelphia's Safety Riders bicycle club, in 1959. The retired police officer had formed the fifteen-member group three years earlier as a means of "doing something about delinquency," he told the *Philadelphia Tribune*.⁵³

By the 1960s, the specter of the slick-haired, leather-jacketed juvenile delinquent had been re-

placed by a new fearsome teenage minority: the hippie, whose hallucinogens, campus activism, psychedelic music, and improvisational hygiene threatened to destroy the social order. Critics blamed the generation's wildness on parental overindulgence, such as handing out bikes to children without requiring work in exchange. "We have given our children a free ride since the day they were born, and now we can't understand why they demand so much," opined California philanthropist, Mrs. George Buccola, in 1967, "We gave them that bicycle."⁵⁴ Parents' desire to protect and develop their offspring, in other words, seemed to have gone a step too far. [Fig 5.]

J-38

STING-RAY
The fun bike with the sports car look.



Schwinn QUALITY FEATURES

FRAME	Schwinn Cantilever frame - sturdy, compact 20" frame size for extra strength.
SADDLE	Sole Ride - with truck seats, foam cushioned - heavy, comfortable.
HANDLEBARS	Butterfly style - chrome plated.
TIRES	Studded rear tire - high traction for quick response on starts, standard middleweight front tire.
RIMS	Schwinn tubular rims - shock absorbent - wear resistant.
FORK	Drop forged - stronger - handier - longer lasting.

NO.	SIZE	DESCRIPTION	NET WEIGHT	SHPG. WEIGHT	ZONE 1 PRICE
J38-6	20"	Sting-Ray, American-made Coaster Brake	35½	42½	*\$49.95
COLORS: Flamboyant Lime, Radiant Coppertone, Sky Blue, or Terra Cotta *Year trade retail price in Fair Trade States. Suggested price in all other states. Prices and specifications subject to change without notice.					

Fig. 5. Product description from the 1964 Arnold, Schwinn & Co. bicycle catalog, p.39.

Children's cycles at the time had undergone a drastic change in form. In the early 1960s, youngsters in California began customizing their bikes with high-rise handlebars that formed a two- or even three-foot⁵⁵ chrome U-shape at the front of the cycle. This modification originally allowed newspaper delivery boys to sling bags of papers between the bars, within easy reach.⁵⁶ But with the addition of long "banana" seats borrowed from bicycle polo, the

reconfigured bikes caught on as a youthful imitation of chopper-style motorcycles. Manufacturers soon copied the trend, releasing the Huffy Dragster and the Schwinn Sting-Ray in 1963.⁵⁷ The style, called a “wheelie” bike due to its facility for one-wheel riding, invaded the market within a few years. Wrote one befuddled visitor to a New England bike shop in 1965, the looming handlebars “rose up so fantastically tall they suggested the antennas of giant Martian insects.”⁵⁸ By 1972, the high-riser was by far the best-selling style of children’s bike.⁵⁹

But whether on the car-styled clunkers of the 1950s or the chopper bikes of the 1960s, middle-class suburban children rolled free. In fact, this brief mid-century moment - the only time in American history when large numbers of children had such freedom from daytime obligations and such freedom of movement - has become childhood’s lost paradise. Since then, a steady increase in two-worker and single-parent households has limited the number of American children who can go straight home or out to the park after school.⁶⁰ Indeed, today a parent can get arrested for sending a child to the local park alone.⁶¹ A rapid-fire national media amplifies horrifying but rare crimes against children such as abduction by strangers, raising parental and governmental anxiety. Cell phones make it not only possible, but seemingly compulsory, for parents to know their children’s whereabouts at all times. American children, without the adventure of unscheduled roaming, retreat to online role-playing games and house-to-house texting with friends. Meanwhile, among America’s sedentary kids and teenagers, the obesity rate soars.⁶² The number of children who ride bikes decreased by more than twenty percent between 2000 and 2010, even as the number of adults who ride bikes increased.⁶³

It seems that the heightened protectiveness and esteem that parents began to express for their children in the 1920s has now, four generations later, intensified into a form of restrictive parenting that even its practitioners bemoan. In April 2014, after one mother wrote a blog post about her “terrifying” experience allowing her five-year-old to ride his bike around the block by himself (without incident), a self-confessed “helicopter mom” responded that she was struggling with allowing her child the same privilege. “I realized that when I was his age, I lived in a worse neighborhood and played outside by myself all the time,” she confessed. “I think about how many hours passed

when my Mom had no idea where I was, when I was just a little bit older than him, and I start to hyperventilate.”⁶⁴

Today, the bicycle is seeing yet another resurgence in popularity, particularly among urban adults. How strange that the loving impulse that once made the bike a necessary part of childhood may now have helped make solo biking seem too risky for a parent to even contemplate. It’s a shame, because cycling remains “a healthy and delightful” exercise that gives “children as much real pleasure as it does all who behold it.” To quote P. T. Barnum.⁶⁵

ENDNOTES

- 1 In constructing his “Roman Hippodrome” at the former Harlem and New Haven railroad depot in 1874, Barnum tore down most of the original building and erected a brick parallelogram. See “The Record of the Place,” *New York Times*, 22 April, 1880, p.1. The arena’s seating capacity was reported in “At Barnum’s Circus,” *New York Times*, 27 March, 1883, p.5.
- 2 “Barnum Excelling Former Exploits,” *New-York Tribune*, 27 March, 1883, p.5.
- 3 The five siblings, in descending order of age, were Catherine (Kate), Thomas, James, Mary Rand (Polly), and Matthew Albert (Mattie, aka “Little Dot”). Their cousin was Dorothy Ann, aka “Little Annie.” See Viona Elliott Lane, Randall Merris, and Chris Algar, “Tommy Elliott and the Musical Elliotts,” in *Papers of the International Concertina Association, Volume 5* (New York: Center for the Study of Free-Reed Instruments, 2008), p.19.
- 4 Rather than three rings, the 1883 Barnum circus had only two, which flanked a stage for “bicycle-riding, dancing, roller-skating, feats of strength, and a droll act by the clown elephant Dan, and the elephantine clown, William Conrad,” according to “At Barnum’s Circus,” *New York Times*, 27 March, 1883, p.5.
- 5 “Little Ones on Bicycles,” *New York Times*, 31 March, 1883, p.2.
- 6 “The Elliott Children,” *New York Herald*, 5 April, 1883, p.11;
- 7 “Mr Barnum Arrested,” *New York Tribune*, 3 April, 1883, p.2.
- 8 Barnum wrote at the time that he had “brought the Elliott family from Portugal” (“Children on the Bicycle,” *New York Times*, 30 March, 1883, p.8), but their father’s true origin was in Middlesbrough, Yorkshire. The Elliott family had moved to London by the mid-1870s and were touring Europe as performers by 1878 (“*Tommy Elliott and the Musical Elliotts*,” pp.41–43).
- 9 See, for example, “The Elliott’s on Their Patent Unicycles,” *The New York Clipper*, 25 Aug., 1883, p.375.
- 10 “The Elliott Children,” *New York Herald*, 5 April, 1883, p.11. The New York SPCC was founded in 1874, according to its website, nyspcc.org/about/history/ (Accessed Sept. 14, 2014).
- 11 NYSPCC website
- 12 Letter from Henry Bergh to the Managers of Barnum’s Museum, published in “Cruelty to Animals,” *Chicago Tribune*, 23 March, 1867, p.2. During the controversy, Barnum had the boas taken to neighboring New Jersey - outside of Bergh’s domain - to be fed, but Bergh eventually stood down after Barnum’s zoological expert noted that oysters, too, are eaten alive. Despite their public spats, Barnum and Bergh eventually became allies in the humane movement. A. H. Saxon, P. T. Barnum: *The Legend and the Man* (New

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- York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp.235–8.
- 12 The Society's concerns about fracture, hernia, and strain were expressed by Jenkins' superior, SPCC president Elbridge T. Gerry, to a reporter for the New York Tribune in "The Child-Performers," 29 March, 1883, p.1.
 - 13 J. B. Elliott, *Life and Career of the Celebrated Elliott Family*, undated monograph, pp.46–47. The author gratefully acknowledges the help of Randall Merris of the International Concertina Association, who provided this monograph along with other information and ephemera related to the Elliotts.
 - 14 "P. T. Barnum Under Arrest," *Washington Post*, 3 April, 1883, p.1.
 - 15 "The Elliott Children," *New York Herald*, 5 April, 1883, p.11.
 - 16 J. B. Elliott, *Life and Career of the Celebrated Elliott Family*, undated monograph, p.50.
 - 17 While some members of the SPCC stated during this controversy that ordinary bicycle riding was fine for children - just not circus riding - Jenkins felt otherwise. At the trial he also stated that he would not allow his own children to roller skate because of the danger. J. B. Elliott, *Life and Career of the Celebrated Elliott Family*, undated monograph, p.50.
 - 18 "The Elliott Children," *New York Herald*, 5 April, 1883, p.11.
 - 19 *Court of Special Sessions for New York City Docket Book*, 4 April, 1883, p.8. Provided by New York City Municipal Archives.
 - 20 "The Elephants' Fight," *New Haven Register*, 5 April, 1883, p.3.
 - 21 Robert J. Turpin, "Our Best Bet Is the Boy": *A Cultural History of Bicycle Marketing and Consumption in the United States, 1880–1960* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 2013). Turpin presented some of his findings at the 22nd International Cycling History Conference. See Robert J. Turpin, "Our Best Bet Is the Boy: Bicycle Marketing Schemes and American Culture After World War" in *Cycle History 22: Proceedings of the 22nd International Cycling History Conference*, ed. Andrew Ritchie and Gary Sanderson (Cheltenham, England: Cycling History (Publishing) Ltd., 2012), pp.159–170.
 - 22 "Cycling Trade History," *New York Times*, 5 Jan., 1896, p.27.
 - 23 Edmund Boviere, "In Behalf of the Boys," *Outing*, Aug., 1884, p.383.
 - 24 David Herlihy, *Bicycle: The History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp.243–50.
 - 25 Children's use of the bicycle rose during the 1890s as the price of bicycles dropped, but kids remained a minority of riders even after the end of the decade-long boom. In 1903, for example, one Indianapolis bicycle dealer reported that there were about 20,000 registered bicycles in his city and another 10,000 owned either by adults who failed to register or by children under fifteen (who were not required to register). See "How to Stop the 'Knocking,'" *The Bicycling World and Motorcycle Review*, 12 March, 1903, p.70.
 - 26 "Play and the History of American Childhood: An Interview with Steven Mintz," *American Journal of Play*, Fall 2010, pp.149–50.
 - 27 Peter N. Stearns, "Analyzing the Role of Culture in Shaping American Childhood: A Twentieth-Century Case," *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 2009, pp.37–39.
 - 28 *Official Bulletin and Scrap Book of the League of American Wheelmen*, June, 1917, p.84.
 - 29 "Our Oldest Members," *Official Bulletin and Scrap Book of the League of American Wheelmen*, Aug., 1917, p.120.
 - 30 Lou Dzierzak, *The Evolution of American Bicycle Racing* (Guilford, Connecticut: Globe Pequot Press, 2007), pp.18–22.
 - 31 Herlihy, *Bicycle*, p.381.
 - 32 Thomas Burr, "Markets as Producers and Consumers: *The French and U.S. National Bicycle Markets, 1875–1910*," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Davis, 2005, p.336.
 - 33 Turpin dissertation, p.119. Citing T.J. Sullivan, "Get After the Boy' Says Farrell" *MotorCycling and Bicycling*, 3 Sept., 1917, p.35.
 - 34 Iver Johnson's Arms & Cycle Works, "Personal - for Boys Only," *The Youth's Companion*, 9 Dec., 1926, p.977.
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