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A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE BICYCLE – 1819 TO 1892

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I was honored to do my Presentation at the 32nd ICHC, held in Cremona Italy.

It is both a challenge and a pleasure to present an abbreviated history of our beloved bicycle in but a few images. To do so leaves many gaps and that challenge needs to be overcome. The following are some thoughts which may help you understand that challenge.

Although the images were selected to follow a time line, they are not necessarily in

contemporary order. While many thousands of 'high wheel' photos were produced, it's likely that less than a handful of photos were generated for other types of machines. Representation by image can never be proportionate to vehicular production and is only relevant to the author's goals, interpretation and perspective.

The photos, using selected images, illustrate social history, sport, fashion, diversity and technical development. The photos follow a blended time frame of



Figure 1. A circa 1869 cabinet card of a welcoming cyclist standing on the saddle of his Michaux pattern Velocipede. The studio photo has a painted background capturing the Piazza del Duomo with the Tower of Pisa.



Figure 2. A FUN HOBBY Hobby Horse made in England. This style of vehicle was in general use between 1819 and 1823. The photo was taken much later and is from circa 1890. This type of cycle is commonly accepted as the first type of velocipede bicycle along with its older 'brother by another mother' the Draisienne as invented in Germany by Baron von Drais a few years earlier. There were no pedals or cranks. It had independent steering and similar sized wheels. It was a simple machine and worked broadly similar to a scooter. Cabinet Card albumen photograph. Photographer was Barry of Hull, England.

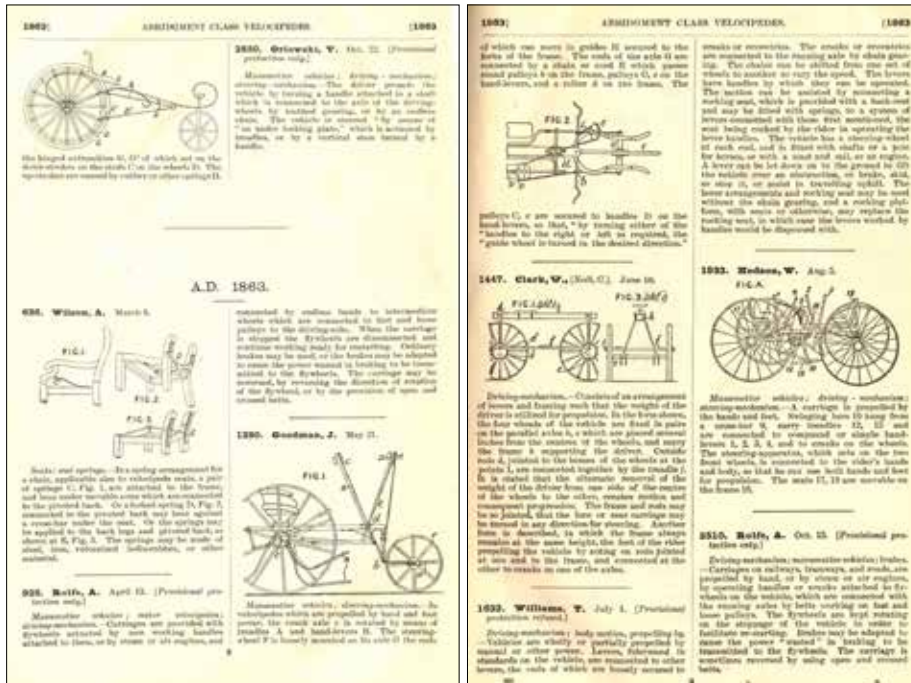
production and usage dates and the photo's date can be the actual or approximate date. Genre date is a type of cycle's usage date range for that style (i.e. the 'high wheel' as a genre being 1871 to ca 1890). This article has limited space and more than 70 images would be needed to present a more accurate basic coverage of the development of the bicycle. Certain types of machines are missing by design. If you feel some models and developments were missed, I can well understand your concern as it parallels mine.

There are no favorites or specific exclusions. These images are representative of many but not all of the most popular, iconic or important examples of cycles from 1819 to 1892. As this Conference is international in scope a variety of photos from different countries are used.



Figure 3. A PROPELLER BY ANY OTHER NAME IS A VELOCIPEDE In contemporary times, this vehicle was called a Propeller or Velocipede. The photo is dated 1850. This genre vehicle was in use from the late 1830s to the early 1860s. This manumotive tricycle was produced in the USA, and similar machines were found in Canada and England. The vehicle is driven by levers activating the rear axle causing the rear wheels to rotate. The velocipede was steered by the feet by putting pressure on pegs at the front wheel. The youth is identified as Frank Bakewell James of Cincinnati, Ohio. He eventually became a colonel in the Civil War. At this time, it is the earliest known dated photograph of a manumotive/pedomotive velocipede/cycle with provenance confirming the date. The photograph itself is a 1/2 plate Daguerreotype housed in a folding hinged case. Unknown American photographer.

Post 1850 was a time of rapid industrial development. Vehicles we perceive as 'strange' were not looked upon as such. Odd and different was worthy of a second glance; from a larger perspective,



Figures 4, 4a and 4 b. MY RANTOONE – GETTING THERE Rantoone tricycle made and used mainly in England. Circa 1863. Genre was in use for only a few years ca 1863 to 1868 and had very limited production. Modern? You can bet on that! As avant garde as it came about 160 years ago. Propelled with hand levers and foot treadles. Front wheel steering is by a hand lever. The rear wheels appear to have rubber blocks inserted around and between the rims for cushioning. There is a front candle lamp. Not sure about the speed and comfort, but controlled propulsion is evident. The vehicle was patented in England (#1280) by Joseph Goodman on May 21, 1863. Albumen Carte de visite photograph by an unidentified British photographer.

unusual was also the norm. This is a conundrum that I cannot escape. One of the most important things for me to convey is that all

these historic cycles led in one way or another to the design of the modern bicycle. Hopefully you enjoy this article.



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N.B.—Intending purchasers should send the length of leg and denote the number of machine wanted, and a Velocipede the proper height will be forwarded.

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Figures 5 and 5a. *IN THE COMPANY OF A PARISIENNE VELOCIPEDIST The Velocipede, made in France. Image circa 1869. This genre of vehicles were commonly used ca 1867–1873 throughout England, Europe and North America. This is both a photograph of the common pattern Michaux Velocipede as well as a catalogue and price list. The store was located in London England and is selling bicycles*

from Compagnie Parisienne of France, who were the successors to the original Michaux & Cie. The critical advance of having cranks with pedals, along with handlebars and front fork for controlling the direction of movement, are what facilitated the great boom in cycling. A Twist grip on the handlebar actuates the rear wheel friction brake. Carte de visite albumen photograph taken in a studio likely printed in England.



Figure 6. *A TRICYCLING WE WILL GO – UBER ANYONE? A Velocipede Tricycle likely made and used in England. Photo circa 1870. Genre circa 1869–1871. This highly unusual tricycle is both front pedal driven and independently lever driven at the rear. The conveyance is robustly built, notice the extra brace visible at the head tube area. Side-by-side Bucket style seating. The front rider appears to be of a lesser social stature than the ‘gentlemen’ behind. UBER anyone? Unidentified photographer. Albumen carte de visite.*



Figures 7 and 7a. A TRANSITIONAL TIME A Transitional High Wheel or Ordinary Bicycle made and mainly used within England and Europe. Photo circa 1873. Genre circa 1872 to 1875. A great example of an image showing the development away from the velocipede to the bicycle with the larger front and smaller rear wheels. The bicycle itself sports a mounting step on the rear fork, rear spoon brake, front tool bag, open head and Lallement style



Acorn drop velocipede pedals. The rider has a band around his pant leg. He is identified as Percy F. Shelley, better known as Sir Percy Florence Shelley, 3rd Baronet who was the son of the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. His mother, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, was a famous novelist and the author of the book Frankenstein. Photo mounted on paper disbound from an album. No photographer information.



Figure 8. NO CHAIN ... NO ROOF ... NO WORRIES Duplex Excelsior D. D. (Double Drive) tandem tricycle made in England. Photograph circa 1883. Genre in the market for but a short time (circa 1881–1885). Open front, rear steering adult tricycle. Cog driven (chainless). Independent double driving. Built by Bayliss, Thomas & Co. of Coventry. Considered the first successful tandem tricycle. (Tricyclists' Indispensable Annual, 1883, Sturmev, pgs. 177–178). Captivating image taken at Stonehenge. For years one could wander throughout the site. Today it restricted to entry. Unknown English photographer. Albumen Cabinet card.

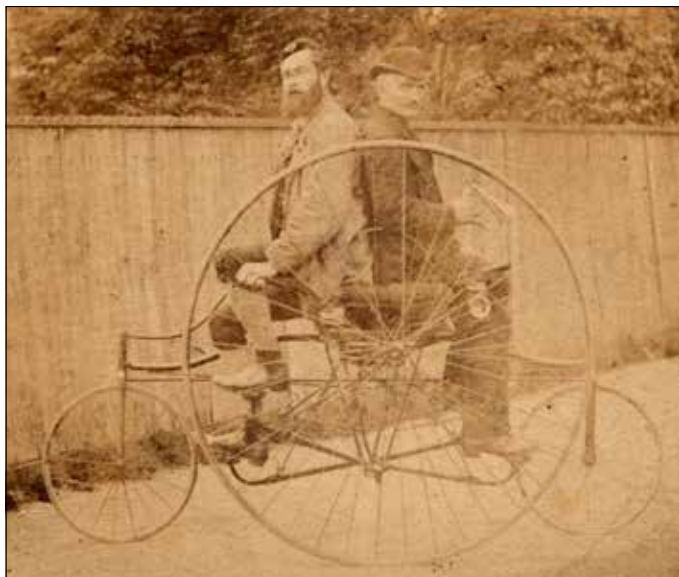


Figure 9. MY PUB IS CLOSER Coventry ‘Dos A Dos’ Tandem Tricycle made in England. Limited production would have this sold mainly in England. Produced ca 1881. Genre limited to ca 1880–1882. Produced at the Tangent and Coventry Tricycle Co’s – Ariel Works. From the catalogue when describing the rotary lever driven tricycle it reads: “...is made either single or double. In the latter case, the riders are placed back to back.” Note the side mount lamp and rear rider with a cyclist’s bugle. Left facing rider is Leopold Pierson (a prominent Essex cyclist) who also became a member of the L.A.W. in 1890. Photo is dated April 29, 1882. Photographer is Astley from Walthamstow in Essex. Carte de Visite albumen picture.

Figure 11. A COUPLE OF ORDINARY GUYS, Coming or going ... the High Wheel or Ordinary bicycle. Photo taken in Scotland. These iconic bicycles were seen and used virtually worldwide. This photo was taken circa 1881. These were on the market circa 1873 to 1890. The riders are clothed in perfect cycling attire of the times. Plus fours, a nice jacket and “caps” One bears a badge indicating club affiliation. The other gentleman has a cyclist’s whistle hanging on a lanyard. These bicycles were made for people of all ages (from 3 years +), heights (some front wheels over 62”), weights and depth of pocketbook. Many of the makers formed huge industrial complexes (i.e. Colonel A. A. Pope & his Columbia empire). Many were small shops doing one offs and were directly responsible for the development of drawn tubing. Society benefited because of the use and development of these bikes in Racing, Sports and



Figure 10. WHICH ROAD WOULD YOU CARE TO TAKE? Quadrant Tandem Tricycle, England. Sold in England, Europe and North America. Photo taken ca 1886. Genre ca 1884–1889. A box HTS lamp, Luggage carrier straps and bell adorn the tricycle. Quadrant tricycles were very popular and had a smooth ride in large part because of the front channeled wheel system. The ladies seem relaxed and enjoying their read of the map. Perfect hats to spotlight those of the era. Where to go next? A well composed image of a perfectly chosen mid-1880’s ladies cycling scene. No photographer’s identification. Albumen cabinet card.



Journalism. An encyclopedia could not cover their effects on society and urbanization. Sadly, this single paragraph won’t accomplish much while trying to cover the benefits and questions relative to the High Wheel bicycle. This albumen cabinet card photograph was taken by John Morrow of Dingwall in Scotland.



Figures 12 and 12a. LET'S GO SHOPPING – 1878 Goy's shop was in London, England. Although this was an upscale shop it was by no means unique. Virtually all countries in the world that enjoyed advanced cycle sales had bike shops, hardware or sporting goods stores servicing the needs of the cycling public. Photo published May 18th, 1878 for use in *The Bicycling Times*. Goy's was a full service sporting goods store catering to many other sports. There is a nice array of cycles

positioned outside the store for taking the photo. Some of the popular brands sold were Humber, Eclipse, Excelsior, & Premier. They sold a full range of cyclist's clothing, parts and accessories. Goy's were known for their mail order business, money back guarantee and staggered payment plan. The photograph was called a Woodburytype and is 4-1/2" x 3-1/2". Photographer unknown.



Figure 13. SOCIABLE STARS AND MORE Stopping for a photo-op. American from Washington, DC area. Really, could have been anywhere cycling was in vogue. Other groups including women on trikes while socializing with men started forming near the last quarter of the 1870s and carried on to the end of the 1880s. This photo is circa 1885. Shown here are 4 members of the Capitol Bicycle Club from Washington, DC. The men are all wearing matched socks, pants, jackets, shirts and club caps. The lady's cap is matching as well. She has a 'key' pin at her neck button area and a sprig of flowers on her chest. The cycles are (from L to R) riding an (American) Star, (English) Sociable and Ordinary. Interestingly there are no accessories with any of the cycles. The cyanotype photograph is 5" x 7". No photographer is identified.



Figure 14. ALL HEIL A CYCLING CLUB A club for all to see. A German club. Groups of cycling folk with similar ideology and purpose were formed globally within the industrialized and colonized world. Cycling clubs have existed from ca 1869 to the present day. This, the Sangerhausen Radfahrer-Club was located in Sangerhausen and formed Nov. 18, 1888. It is about 210 km west of Dresden. The style of bikes, regalia and signage indicate this photo may have been taken at the

club's formation ceremonies. Of particular interest are the men's uniforms and ladies attire which changed once the safety bike became more common in the early 1890s. Aside from the two Ordinaries and the late model tricycle, there are lots of medals, signage and people to make this an enjoyable image worth sharing. Large format (about 16" × 11") albumen image taken by H. Ohm.



Figure 15. AN EXTRAORDINARY XTRAORDINARY BICYCLE This Xtraordinary bike has an Extra Ordinary rider. Photo is from England. These had remarkable market penetration and would have been sold throughout England, Europe, North America and the British Colonies. This model of bike was one of the first high wheel safeties. The vehicle was patented in 1879 and built by Singer. The bike was on the market from about 1879 to ca 1887 when other more modern safeties took over. It was designed for safety rather than speed. Simply, the saddle was placed far back on the backbone with the front forks raked forward altering the center line of gravity (below the steering head). It then became physically more difficult to be propelled over the handlebars (aka take a 'header') and hence much safer than riding on an Ordinary. An aspect I most enjoy is the reverend quite proudly displaying both his dog and the bike. Carte de visite albumen photo. Studio was in Walsall.



Figure 16. YOU ARE A STAR Star racer with his starter or trainer. American. Mainly used in the USA but also in Canada, the UK, France and many other industrialized countries. The photo is circa 1885. The genre of the high wheel Star bicycle spanned from 1880, when the Star bicycle was invented by G. W. Pressey, to circa 1888. The bicycles were produced by the H. B. Smith Manufacturing Co. of Smithville, NJ. The rider could have both pedals up or one up with the other down when propelling the cycle. It was much safer to ride than the Ordinary and consequently proved very popular. Here we have a classic pose at the start of a race. Could well have been taken for the Springfield Bicycle Meet held annually in Sept. It was a grand event and was one of the most important cycle racing venues in America. Geo. Hendee of Indian Bicycle and Motorcycle fame was a key rider at the event when he became the Amateur Bicycle Champion of America (sadly this photo is not he). A. A. Zimmerman is also known to have ridden on a Star as a professional. This is an albumen Cabinet Card taken by Hardy in Springfield, Mass.



Figure 17. AN EAGLE RISES ABOVE ALL OTHERS An Eagle Soars. Most common in the USA, Eagles were around from about 1887 thru 1891. They were produced by the Eagle Bicycle Mfg. Co. of Stamford, Conn. Photo taken in Canada is of Dr. W. N. Robertson after he won the 1 Mile Championship at Detroit on Sept. 29, 1889. With the small front wheel it is considered a 'high wheel safety'. They had a reasonable acceptance and presented an alternative to the Star bicycles of Smithfield, N.J. The UK had a similar model called the "Jupiter Gearless Safety" produced by the Jupiter Cycle Co., Ltd. An albumen cabinet card photo by Shannon in Stratford Ontario.



Figure 18. A VERY EASY RIDE – C'est FACILE A lever driven Facile Bicycle Invented 1878 in England. Photo from England ca 1882. Common usage circa 1878 to 1886. This was another of the early cycles created to replace the Ordinary. It is categorized as a "dwarf safety". It had the seat further back on the backbone and the front wheel was so much smaller it was far safer to ride than its older big brother the Ordinary. The bike sports a bell and a tool bag. The picture itself has the rider with his business or school bag on his back. A nice outside photo. The clothing of everyone in the photo is interesting. Two have canes while the three other than the rider have bowler style hats and are wearing the clothing of the 'gentry' class. Albumen c.d.v. identified as Astley, Photographer... Walthamstow. From England.

Figure 19. A MUCH SAFER RIDE The Lawson Safety made in England. Photo dated 1878. Likely only on the market ca 1876–1879. Known as the first bicycle to be called a Safety. Patented 1876 No. 2649. Produced for the inventor & patentee Harry John Lawson by Singer & Co. of Coventry England. Lever driven to the rear wheel. This weighed over 60 lbs. Also see the important 1879 image of Lawson's Bicyclette included herein. Photos bearing this type of text and information were often used at trade shows, sent directly to potential clients and by sales representatives. An example of an albumen cabinet card used as an advertiser. No photographer's identification but has personal script on the back: 57 & 58 Narrow St., Peterborough...1878.



Figure 20. OH SO CLOSE Lawson's Bicyclette, English 1879 (Patent #3924). Likely sold mainly in England from 1879–1880. When Lawson brought out his chain drive safety, it was made and sold by Rudge. The Bicyclette was the first to have a chain line with a straight backbone instead of the 'ordinary' curved backbone style. The drive mechanism is from the down tube's bottom bracket to the rear wheel. We still commonly make our bicycles like this today.



The photo is published by Iliffe & Sons Ltd of London & Coventry. '1879' in script on the obverse. Likely used for publication purposes. Cabinet card. Some stain to the right side which, because of its rarity, is very acceptable and almost a badge of honor. Iliffe was an important journal and magazine publisher. They likely had their own photographic department. England.

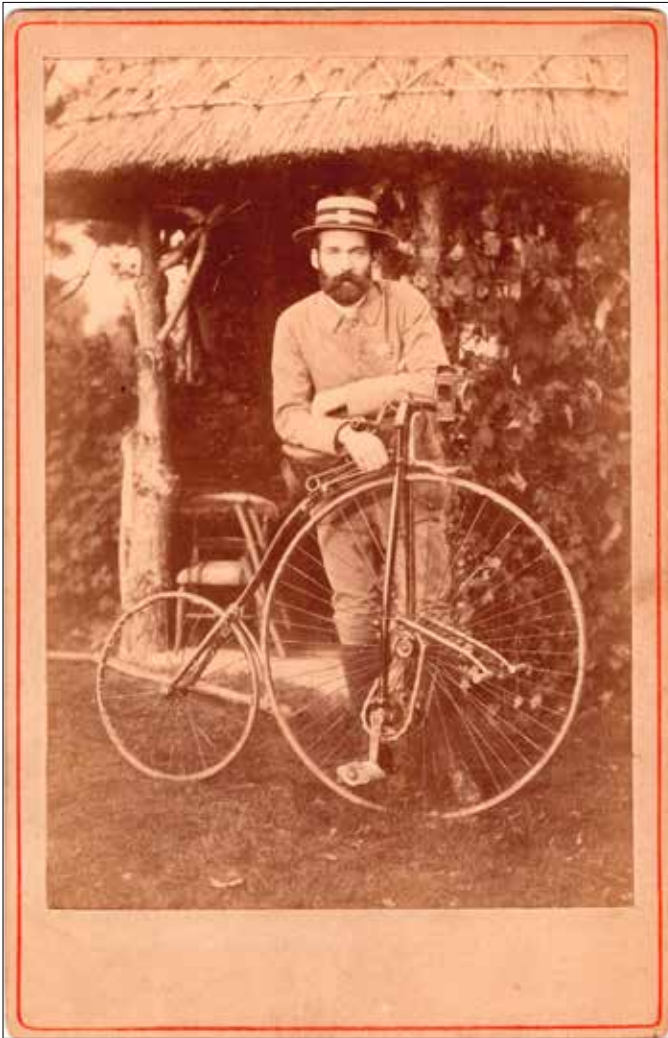


Figure 21. *DOWN UNDER Kangaroo*. Photo circa 1885. Commonly used between 1884 and 1887. Referred to as a 'Dwarf Safety'. Commonly used in England but exported around the world. Produced by Hillman, Herbert & Cooper Co. of Coventry. It was geared up to cover the distance as a high wheel bike by one revolution of the cranks. It was a very popular model and was copied by various other manufacturers. Note that the Rider has his boater cap with club head badge. The bike sports a box style oil lamp at the head. Made with double chainwheels which always revolved when moving. Hence the extended foot rests for coasting. From the noted bicycle maker, Tom Timberlake's personal photograph album. Albumen cabinet card with no photographer or other identification. England.

Figure 22. *THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD* The Rover safety. A hearty welcome to John Kemp Starley's Rover. Photo circa 1887. On the market circa 1885-1890. Exported worldwide. This rear wheel drive cycle with two similar sized wheels on a 'diamond frame' dramatically enhanced the stability and ease of riding. It "set the pattern to the world". The factory, "Starley & Sutton" created the name Rover, which was first used on tricycles in 1883. This was not the first pattern Rover safety bicycle, but the 3rd generation. It had developed very rapidly to the diamond frame. In contemporary script on the reverse it identifies the rider as: Joseph Burton Stubbs, High St, Congleton. The Capitol Cycle Co. in Washington DC was their American distributors. No photographer identified. England



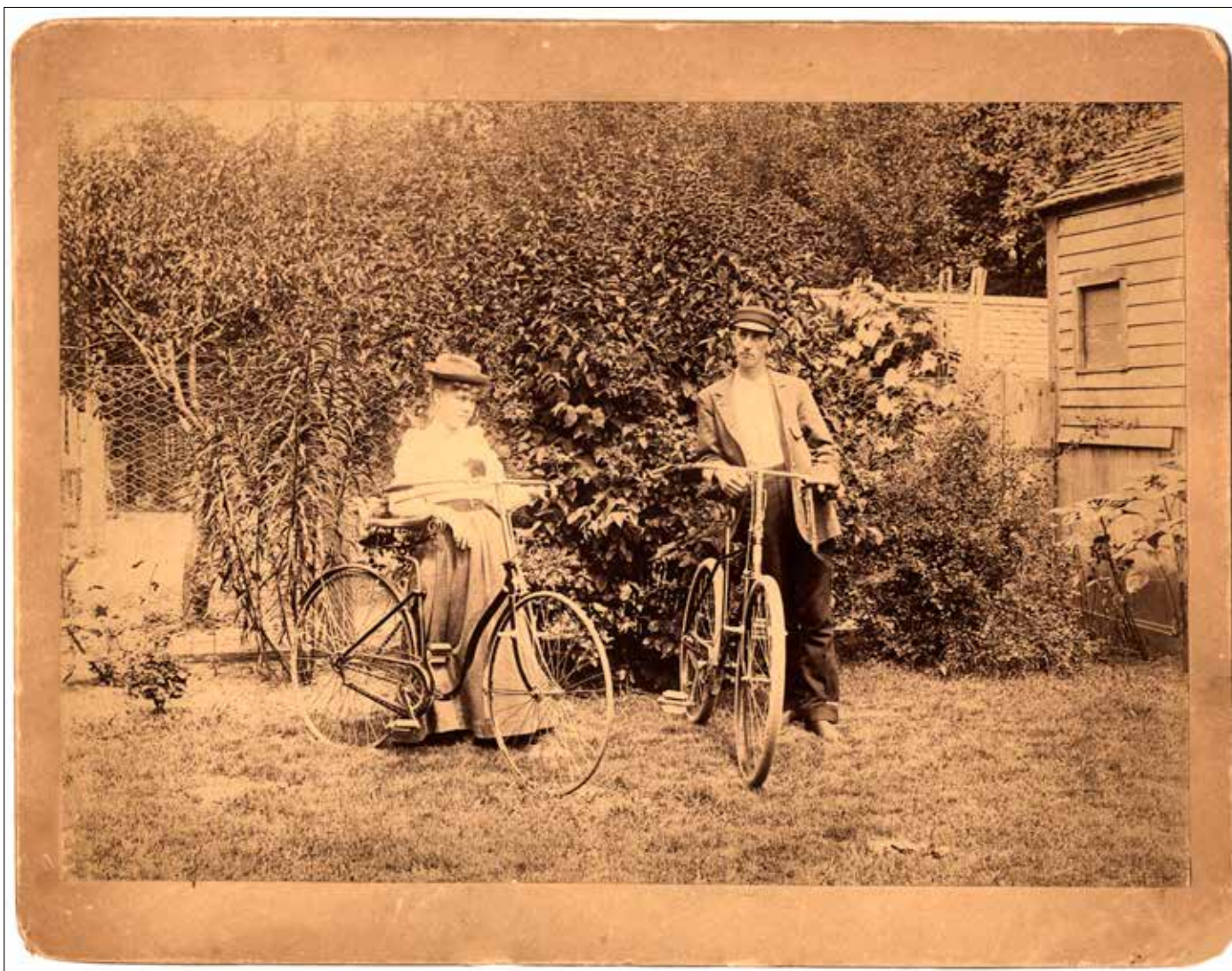


Figure 23. A HAPPY ENDING... Hard and Pneumatic tired cycles. Circa 1892. American. Unidentifiable location. After the reinvention of the Pneumatic tire in 1888 it did not take long until Pneumatic tired cycles were rolling around the globe. (Sidebar ~ Dunlop's Pneumatic tire patent was voided as it was the Scotsman, Robert W. Thompson who

in 1845 was the actual inventor). The era of the Pneumatic started circa 1890 onward and is still with us today. These bikes are both fixed wheel Columbias with front fork pegs. The ladies bike has a skirt guard and tool pouch. The man's has an straight horn and front mount lamp bracket. The photograph is an albumen cabinet card. No photographer's identification.

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