



In 2010, *Bicycling* magazine named Minneapolis the top bike-friendly city in the U.S., displacing Portland, Oregon, for the first time. On June 10, the Nice Ride bike-sharing program debuted, and within 20 days, more than 10,000 trips had been taken on its 450 bikes-for-rent. Earlier in the year, bicyclists were allowed to resume weekday daytime use of the pedestrian-bus mall on Nicollet Avenue, a historically significant cycling location, after a 12-year hiatus. These accomplishments built on the 2008 silver-level Bicycle Friendly Community Award from the League of American Bicyclists and the 2009 estimate by cycling experts that the city operated about 120 miles of bike paths and lanes. Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Rybak traced this enthusiasm for the bicycle back to the 1970s when the first on-street bike lanes appeared. In fact, the city's love affair with the bicycle began much earlier.¹

Well after the end of the 1890s' "bicycle boom," Twin Citians continued to ride; Mrs. John P. Upham, about 1917.

BICYCLING IN MINNEAPOLIS



== IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY ==

ROSS D. PETTY

In 1916 the *Minneapolis Tribune* crowed that its hometown was once considered one of the greatest bicycle centers in the United States.² Minneapolis also has the apparently unique distinction of being the only city near the turn of the twentieth century to conduct traffic counts that included bicycles. Contrary to the common belief that the end of the “bicycle boom” of the 1890s meant a virtual end to cycling generally, these tallies indicate that significant bicycle use continued in Minneapolis into the early 1900s. But automobiles, perhaps with some assistance from expanded electric trolley service, would soon lead to a precipitous decline in cycling.

The first pedal bicycle, called a velocipede or boneshaker, took Paris by storm in 1867–68. It was a heavy, two-wheeled hobbyhorse propelled by pedals on cranks attached to the front wheel (like a modern tricycle) instead of the rider’s feet pushing on the ground. The *Minneapolis Tribune* first informed readers about this fad in September 1868 by reprinting a story from the *New York Times* noting that the new sporting machine might soon be expected in

“this city”—presumably New York. In early 1869 the *Tribune* predicted that even though no mechanics in Minneapolis were yet producing velocipedes, some dozen probably would be imported into the city by spring. Sure enough, by February a handful were being exhibited in Minneapolis (often for an admission fee), and the “scientific velocipedist,” Prof. Sexton, was giving demonstrations at the Opera House on his 50-pound machine. In April the *Tribune* reported that velocipedes were becoming quite common on the streets of Minneapolis, but riders were discovering that street cycling was more challenging than riding on sidewalks or in a hall. Some early enthusiasts were “now willing to sell their machines cheap.”³

After this early enthusiasm, the

velocipede seemed to fade from local interest, at least as reported in the *Tribune*. It appears that Minneapolitans were still using bicycles, however, because an 1873 ordinance banned sidewalk riding. The paper occasionally reported snippets of bicycle news from other locations; for example, in 1878 a velocipede raced against a horse and buggy in Sauk Rapids and won. This was probably a high-wheel, or “ordinary,” model. By 1880 bicycle races were reportedly occurring in Indianapolis and Milwaukee, and one was planned for Red Wing.⁴

A roller-skating fad gripped Minneapolitans beginning in 1877, but residents again became excited about bicycling in the early 1880s. An 1887 *Minneapolis Tribune* retrospective discussed a dozen pioneer wheelmen,

Ross Petty, professor of marketing law and holder of the Zwerling Family Term Chair at Babson College, Babson Park, Massachusetts, has written extensively on marketing law. His work has been recognized for excellence by the Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, the Journal of Product and Brand Management, and the Academy of Legal Studies in Business. An avid bicycle commuter, he developed and taught an undergraduate half-course on the social impact of the bicycle, has presented papers at seven Cycle History conferences, and published bicycle-related articles in academic journals and other outlets.

noting that some started cycling as early as 1881–82. In 1883 bicycling became a regular newspaper subject. Articles in that year document that bicycle races (along with horse races) occurred in front of crowds estimated at 20,000 spectators and that both Minneapolis and St. Paul had formed high-wheel bicycle clubs, which went on “runs” and paraded in uniform during “drills.”⁵ The ordinary bicycle had arrived!

The Twin Cities also hosted high-profile races and racers. At the end of 1885, William Woodside, the Irish Champion, set a record, riding 266 miles in 26 hours in St. Paul. In January 1886 he was beaten by Albert Schock in St. Paul for the “champion-

ship of America” in what appears to be the nation’s first Six-Day bicycle race. These grueling contests took place on monotonous indoor tracks and often included riding both day and night with what little sleep competitors felt they could manage. Schock again triumphed in March, then lost in May to John S. Prince in front of 3,000 to 4,000 spectators in Minneapolis, but was victorious in another Minneapolis Six-Day in December. Louise Armaindo, a well-known female high-wheel racer, appeared at some of these events, as well. Ten years later, “ladies” Six-Day races were being held in Minneapolis.⁶

By 1890 the pneumatic tire and the modern safety bicycle (with two

roughly equal-sized wheels and a chain drive) expanded bicycle popularity beyond athletic young people—mostly men—to include more men and women. With the exception of a few professionals, women generally did not ride ordinary bicycles; instead, they sometimes rode heavier, less wieldy tricycles. The safety bicycle was readily adapted for women with the “drop” frame that is still common today. By 1892 a visitor to Minneapolis reported that the city had more than 1,000 “wheel-

Men and women of the Flour City Bicycle Club posed on Park Avenue, Minneapolis, 1890s; one ordinary (far right) among the safety cycles.



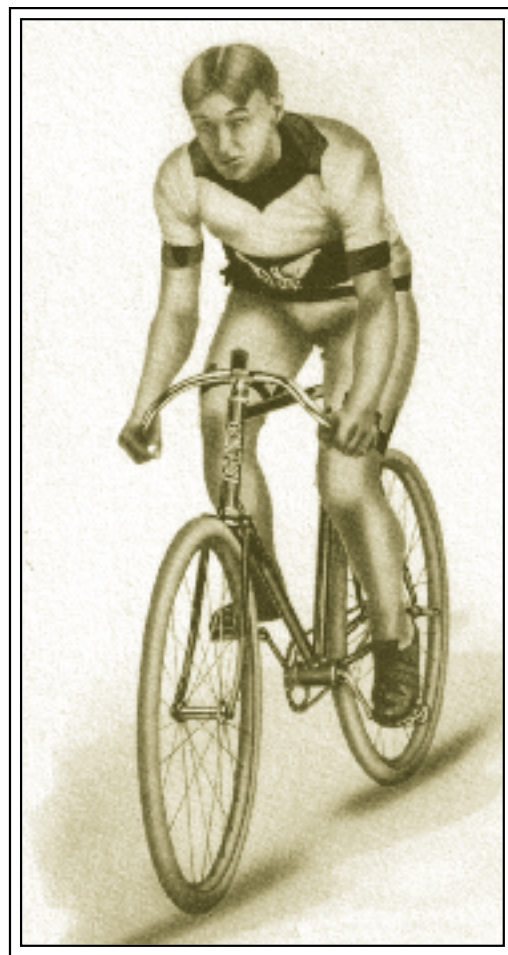
IN 1916 THE MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE CROWED THAT ITS HOMETOWN WAS ONCE CONSIDERED ONE OF THE GREATEST BICYCLE CENTERS IN THE UNITED STATES.

men,” including many female riders. The men had multiple clubs and the women had the Ladies League Club.⁷

Minneapolis’s interest in racing continued with the safety bicycle; a contest in May 1890 included separate heats for ordinaries and safeties. About this time, one of the most famous Minneapolis bicycle racers of the era, John S. Johnson, began his career. He and his family had moved to the city from Sweden in 1881 when he was ten years old. Enamored with both cycling and speed skating, he won the national championship ice-skating races in New Jersey in 1893. In August of that same year, he set a three-mile bicycle-track record in Minneapolis a little more than a week after being the first cyclist to beat the famed Arthur A. Zimmerman in a League of American Wheelmen-sanctioned five-mile race from scratch (no head start). This race reportedly inspired Ignaz Schwinn to pursue his dream of starting his own bicycle company and racing team. By 1896 “Johnny” Johnson had purchased a \$7,000 house in Minneapolis with his winnings and sailed to Europe to race with the Schwinn World Team. In France Johnson set French records for the half-mile and kilometer and a world record for the half-kilometer. In England he set a new European record for the quarter-mile and half-mile and a world record for the kilometer. Upon returning to the U.S., he set a record for the mile on a new track in

Chicago. Around this time two other Minneapolitans were making names for themselves: Amelia Sells became a professional bicycle racer, and A. A. Hanson a nationally known distance rider. In August 1894, he rode more than 376 miles in 24 hours and totaled 21,053 miles for the year—the best record in the country.⁸

In addition to these cycling celebrities, many Minneapolitans rode bicycles for local recreation, distance touring, and daily transportation. Between about 1895 and 1900 ridership mushroomed—as it did nationally—producing what has come to be called the bicycle boom of the 1890s. By 1896 at least one Minneapolis church was offering bicycle parking for attendees. While racing and touring were commonplace, the city excluded cyclists from its many parks, fearing for the safety of other park users. When a downtown portion of Nicollet Avenue was paved in asphalt in 1895, however, the *Tribune* reported that the street became a “solid mass of cyclists” enjoying the new surface every evening.⁹ Bicycle traffic became so intense that the first traffic-control police officer was assigned to the corner of Nicollet and Sixth Street in 1895 and 1896. The latter year also saw a petition, signed by business people who cycled, encouraging the police chief and mayor to enforce the city ordinance limiting the speed



Champion racer John S. Johnson of Minneapolis

of riders to ten miles per hour. In July 1897 the city council agreed to extend the asphalt paving on Nicollet from Tenth to Thirteenth streets because the cedar-block paving there was the worst in the city and a “bete noir” to every cyclist.¹⁰

Bicyclists had to contend not only with horse-drawn vehicles of varying sizes but also with trolley cars and tracks. Like other U.S. cities, Minneapolis began experimenting with horse-drawn trolleys in the 1870s. The trolley system then tried cable cars, steam-locomotive cars, and, by December 1889, electric cars. While electric cars were faster and smoother than horse-drawn vehicles, many in Minneapolis wondered what might happen in the first big snow or electrical storm. Nevertheless, by fall 1892 the entire system had been electrified.¹¹

A bicyclist visitor that year described the city as having “perfectly level, large wide streets with lines of electric railways running in all directions.” By 1894 the *Minneapolis Tribune* commented that the way cyclists zipped along the narrow but level path between trolley tracks, their handlebars almost grazing the side of the car, would make one’s hair stand erect like the “quills of the fretful porcupine.” Indeed, that December a cyclist collided with an electric trolley and broke several bones in his right hand. This accident was sufficiently newsworthy to be reported in the *New York Times*.¹²

In December 1895, the Minneapolis city engineer decided to conduct traffic counts in downtown locations: Nicollet Avenue at Fifth Street (December 16 through December 22), Hennepin Avenue at Third Street (December 7 through December 13), and Bridge Square (December 17 through December 23). Civil engineers across the nation had begun taking traffic counts about ten years earlier to judge the strain that the weight of vehicles exerted on roadways and also to keep track of accidents (including falling horses).¹³ Given the interest in traffic weight, it is more surprising that bicycles were included in the Minneapolis counts than that they were omitted elsewhere. Since Nicollet Avenue, the busiest location, would be the site of future traffic counts, it offers the best available glimpse of urban cycling in Minneapolis over time.

The 1895 Nicollet traffic counts occurred between 6 A.M. and 7 P.M. and, therefore, should have avoided most, if not all, of the evening bicycling frenzy—if it continued into December. In 1891 a privately sponsored

count of horse-drawn vehicles on Nicollet had found the busiest times to be between 10 A.M. and noon and again from 5 to 6 P.M.¹⁴ The 1895 count did not report data by time of day, but it seems likely there were

IN 1895, THE CITY ASSESSOR ESTIMATED THAT THERE WERE 25,000 BICYCLES IN MINNEAPOLIS.

similar morning and evening peaks in bicycle usage with a lull during working hours.

At Nicollet and Fifth, observations averaged 1,063 bicycle riders per day, ranging from a high of 1,475 on the warm and dry Friday, December 20, to a low of 536 on Sunday, December 22 (the Sabbath). Monday, December 16, had the fewest cyclists of the work week—675—perhaps because of that day’s rain. While these numbers appear large on their own, they are even more significant in context of the entire traffic count: bicycles were roughly one-quarter of all road vehicles.

The 1895 traffic count tallied bicycle use in winter only. Not until 1907 were counts taken one or two days each month, allowing later historians to estimate seasonal fluctuations. At that time, it was not unusual for summer months to have ten times the number of cyclists in January and February. This data, applied to 1895, suggests that summertime bicycle use may have been as much as five times the December count, and the average over the full year may have been three-to-four times as large. If so, the average bicycle count on Nicollet Avenue in 1895 might have been around 4,000 per day—close to half of all traffic, assuming the number of horse-drawn vehicles

remained roughly constant regardless of weather.

At Bridge Square and Hennepin Avenue, the 1895 counts included electric trolleys, both motor cars and the trailer cars attached to about 25

percent of them—but not the number of passengers on each. The average daily bicycle count at Bridge Square (426) was about two-thirds that of all streetcars (638); on Hennepin Avenue, the average bicycle count (447) was only one-third of streetcars (1,352). Given that trolleys usually carried multiple passengers, they were clearly a more popular mode of transportation than the bicycle, even at the onset of the bicycle boom.

In retrospect, the 1895 traffic count was timely because it provides a snapshot of urban transportation at the beginning of the bicycle boom. Although there were no traffic counts from 1896 to 1905, other sources yield a general view of cycling in those years. In 1895, the city assessor estimated that there were 25,000 bicycles in Minneapolis, most of them owned by individuals. The following year, the *Tribune* reported that the “generally popular estimate” was 30,000. It further noted that about 2,000 of these belonged to students and teachers: one out of eight pupils in the upper-elementary grades through high school and 30 percent of their teachers rode bicycles. And then there was the “big battalion of riders at the State University.”¹⁵

Cyclists aplenty on Nicollet Avenue, looking north from Seventh Street, about 1895



With the bicycle boom came the cycle-path movement, which worked to establish riding lanes, most of them along suburban thoroughfares with little traffic. Such paths not only allowed city dwellers to cycle to popular recreational destinations but probably also allowed suburbanites to commute to downtown. Given the proximity of Minneapolis to St. Paul, one of the cyclists' first projects was the construction of paths from each city that connected in the middle, creating the first intercity bicycle path.¹⁶

In 1896, thanks to members of the privately organized and funded Minneapolis Cycle Path Association (MCPA), the first two bikeways were created to provide access to Lake Harriet and Lake Minnetonka. By 1898, the *Report of the City Engineer* noted that Minneapolis had made progress on constructing paths, with about 13 miles within the city limits and 9 miles to Lake Minnetonka. Most of these paths were about seven

feet wide. By the following year, as the national bike boom was ending, there were 28 miles of bike paths within city limits, and "during the season," at least 25,000 bicycles were in daily use. In addition, cyclists were given permission to ride on sidewalks in wet weather in North Minneapolis where the road quality was poor. In 1900, when the city took over most functions of the MCPA, the bicycle inspector noted there were about 35 miles of paths, and the MCPA was selling bicycle tags as part of its one-dollar membership dues to raise funds for future path construction.¹⁷

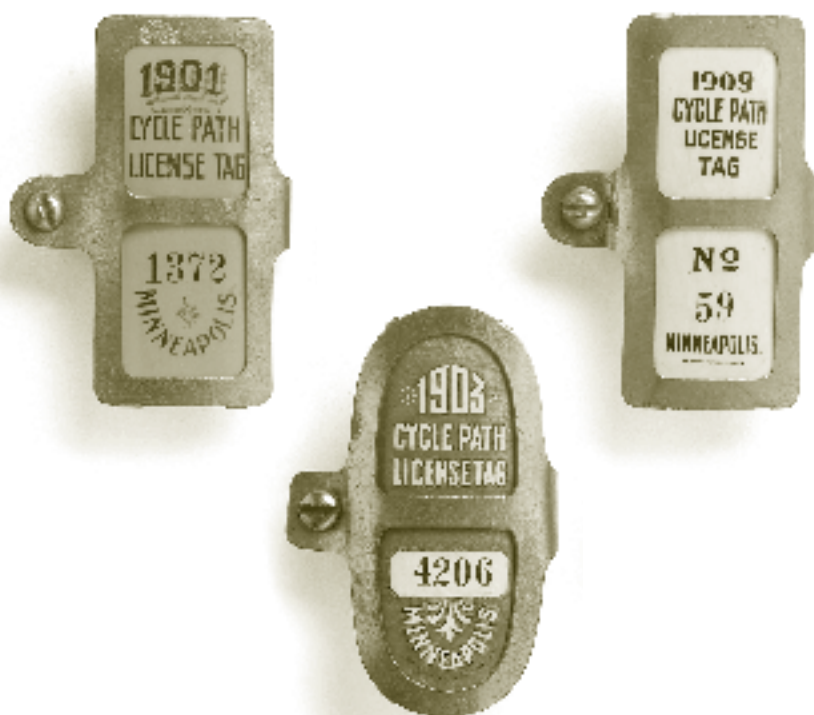
By the summer of 1900, tags were mandatory for cyclists using these paths. Riders found on them without a current tag would be ticketed by police and fined one dollar. Officials believed that most of the estimated 40,000-plus bicyclists in Minneapolis would purchase a 50-cent tag, but by June 15 only 16,000 to 17,000 had been sold. A street count indicated

that about one in five bicycles displayed a tag. This finding suggests that many utilitarian cyclists did not obtain tags or use the paths. In the end, only 26,000 were sold that year (about 15 percent of the city population). The number rose to 30,300 in 1901.¹⁸

From the peak in 1901, tag sales declined significantly: slightly more than 24,000 in 1902; just below 20,000 in 1903, when cyclists protested allowing motorcycles to use paths; and then down to 5,376 in 1905, when riders objected to plans to tear out the Blaisdell Avenue path. By 1909 only 701 tags were sold.¹⁹ It seems likely that there were more cyclists than bicycle-tag owners in the later years. Cyclists were, perhaps, more interested in transportation

Bridge Square, about 1895: Horse-drawn vehicles outnumber the trolleys and lone cyclist (far right), but two banners advertise a "Ladies Cycle Race."





ABOVE: Tags, probably displayed on a cycle's front fork

RIGHT: Postcard, about 1905, of the bucolic Minnehaha Creek cycle path



than recreation and less interested in riding on deteriorating bicycle paths, while authorities were less interested in enforcing the bicycle-tag law.

Bicycling generally fell out of fashion in the U.S. about 1899 and seemed to all but disappear within a few years. Nationally, membership in the League of American Wheelmen dropped from a peak of 103,000 in 1898 to 50,000 in 1900 and 3,000 in 1905. In Minneapolis, the 1897 introduction of the large-wheeled “bicycle” skate foreshadowed another roller-skating boom. So named because its wheels extended in front and back of each foot—it looked like the feet were riding miniature bicycles—the skate was, ultimately, not successful because it was more difficult to

master than the standard model. Experimental use, however, seemed sufficient to interest many Minneapolisans in skating. By fall 1898 the *Tribune* accurately predicted the coming revival.²⁰ High society would skate for recreation, abandoning the bicycle to the middle and lower classes.

Anecdotal evidence confirms that fashionable pleasure riding was declining but utilitarian cycling continued. In his 1901 report, the city engineer of neighboring St. Paul noted: “While the bicycle as a fad and vehicle for pleasure riding only, has passed by, it has come to be the means of transportation to and from business for thousands to whom the saving of time and carfare are important items.” The Minneapolis city engineer, in his 1904 report, agreed: “Bicycling in Minneapolis has

ceased to be counted as one of the pastimes. . . . Many of the outlying bicycle paths . . . have grown up with weeds.”²¹ Those Minneapolis cyclists who remained were still somewhat active. Indeed, in 1905 the *Tribune* noted:

Just because bicycle riding as a craze died out long ago it does not follow that there are not thousands of riders still in Minneapolis and many of them enthusiastic ones. . . . Thousands of laboring men now use their wheels as a means of getting to and from their work and this class of people is growing every year.²²

Traffic counts from 1906 to 1911 also show a steady decline in cycling—at least on Nicollet Avenue. In 1906 counts were taken there

twice a month from August through December. Horse-drawn vehicles accounted for nearly 75 percent of all traffic (daily average: 2,722), while bicycles made up more than 20 percent (785). Automobiles were the remaining 5 percent (183). By 1911, when traffic counts occurred once a month throughout the entire year, horse-drawn vehicles had decreased slightly to nearly 70 percent (2,320), but automobiles, at almost 25 percent (800), had overtaken bicycles for second place.²³

The average daily bicycle count peaked in 1907 at 823 and then declined into the 600s in 1909 and 1910, when cycles accounted for 17

and then 16 percent of all traffic. In those two years, the automobile's share increased from 15 to 20 percent. In fact, the automobile count roughly doubled from 1906 to 1908 and almost doubled again from 1908 to 1910, the year it reached second place. This expanding interest in automobiles was foreshadowed in 1902, when former distance-cycling record holder A. A. Hanson became the world record holder for distance covered on a motorcycle in 24 hours—634.75 miles.²⁴

Of greater interest to bicycle history, however, is the precipitous decline of bicycling from 1910 to 1911: in one year, the average daily

count dropped from 670 to 250, or a modest 7 percent of all traffic.²⁵ The fact that bicycles were not counted in 1912 suggests that this drop-off was perceived as permanent. Bicycles were no longer a significant factor in downtown Minneapolis traffic.

The ascendancy of automobiles appears to have resulted more from increased use than increased vehicles. Minneapolis had 533 registered automobiles in 1907. While registrations grew by 30 percent from 1908 to 1910, car travel on Nicollet Avenue

Automobiles and trolleys on bustling Hennepin Avenue near Sixth Street, about 1913



mushroomed by 95 percent during those three years. At the same time, the number of bicycles probably did not decline as dramatically as either the sales of cycle-path tags or the drop in cycle traffic on Nicollet Avenue between 1910 and 1911 suggest. There were an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 bicycles in the city in 1895–96, at the beginning of the boom, and about 40,000 in 1900–01 at its end. By 1919, according to local industry estimates, there were almost 10,000 bicycles—a substantial drop, but still a sizable number.²⁶

Since the bicycle boom began after the transit system was electrified in 1892, it seems that trolley riding was not a substitute for cycling. Bicycles were primarily used for recreation at that time, and streetcars for transportation. Indeed, in 1897 the Minneapolis trolley system was highly rated compared to service in 22 other cities, both because of the distance passengers could travel on the nickel fare and its low per-mile transportation cost.²⁷ In the first decade of the 1900s, however, bicycling appeared to become more oriented to transportation, and so it is worth asking whether transit improvements played a role in the decline in bicycle use.

Unfortunately, there are no counts of daily trolley passenger trips or ridership during this period, but data from Twin Cities Rapid Transit Company's annual reports can be used to arrive at estimates. Passenger trips increased from a humble 1.3 million in 1878 to more than 56 million in 1900 and over 185 million in 1915. Since annual growth was a steady 5 percent from 1908 through 1912, trolley riding does not appear to account for the precipitous drop in bicycle use in 1911. Passengers did



increase more than 8 percent from 1912 to 1913 but then only 4.8 percent from 1913 to 1914.²⁸ These fluctuations do not seem to coincide with changed bicycle use and are probably explained by transit-related events, such as the opening of new lines.

As the system expanded to new locations, trolleys became more convenient. At the same time, automobiles

ing class. Given the sharper increase in automobile trips, it seems that, in Minneapolis, the car played a greater role than the electric trolley in replacing the bicycle in the 1910s.

Minneapolisians did not wholly abandon the bicycle after 1911. Six-Day races continued there through at least the 1930s. The police chief first wanted to put officers on bicycles in

INCREASED TROLLEY AND AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC MADE CYCLING RELATIVELY LESS CONVENIENT, PLEASANT, AND SAFE.

could take a traveler to a precise destination with little effort. Increased trolley and automobile traffic made cycling relatively less convenient, pleasant, and safe. Cycling's loss of status as recreational high fashion in the early 1900s, however, likely did not contribute to an increase in trolley riders. The trolley never became high fashion; it was used by the work-

1899 and probably did so, at least experimentally. Newspaper reports confirm that police were riding by 1906, and cycles were still in active service in 1912. We do not know how long this trend continued in Minneapolis, but most cities disbanded their bicycle-police units in the 1920s and 1930s. In addition, other services in Minneapolis continued to rely on

bicycle transportation in the early twentieth century, including mail and telegram delivery, as period photographs show.²⁹

City residents also continued to enjoy the bicycle for everyday use, as the 1919 estimate of almost 10,000 bicycles indicates. In 1922 some 500 people, including “old time” racers Johnny Johnson and A. A. Hanson, participated in a bicycle pageant and parade on Nicollet Avenue. By this time, however, Minneapolis was well on its way to becoming a city whose transportation system was dominated by automobiles. The 1917 city plan was designed to encourage automobile commuting from suburbs, leaving inner-city housing for workmen who could not afford cars.³⁰

Minneapolis came back to the bicycle. The city’s Public Works Department resumed surveying modes of travel in the downtown area in 1961 when cycling was essentially 0 percent of such trips. Its share rose to .2 percent in 1974 and .5 percent in 1975, peaked at .8 percent in 1981, and has fluctuated between this and .9 percent since 1987. The Minneapolis police resumed bicycle patrols in the early 1990s. A 2005 U.S. census survey of major cities showed that the percentage of trips made by bicycle in Minneapolis continued to increase; it had the nation’s second-highest percentage of commutes to work by bicycle—2.4 percent—exceeded only by Portland, Oregon, at 3.5 percent.³¹

As we celebrate these bicycle-related accomplishments, we should also remember Minneapolis’s place in history. Its detailed records provide important insight not only into the end of the bicycle boom of the 1890s but also the continuing interest in cycle paths and riding bicycles in the early twentieth century. As in other U.S. cities, this interest was eventually stymied by automobile use, streetcar expansion, and automobile-centric city planning. However, Minneapolis also shows that with proper enthusiasm and leadership, a bicycle revival is possible in the twenty-first century. Once again, Minneapolis is setting a high standard of bicycle use for other cities to follow. □

Notes

The author thanks Thomas Burr, Diana Petty, staff at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, library, and the Babson College interlibrary loan office for research assistance.

1. *Star Tribune*, Mar. 19, 2010, p. B4; www.wired.com/autopia/2010/04/bicycling-magazine-50-bike-friendliest-cities and www.niceridemn.org (accessed July 19, 2010); Dylan Thomas, “Minneapolis’ Pedal Power,” *Southwest Journal* (Minneapolis, May 4, 2009), www.swjournal.com/index.php?publication=southwest&page=152&story=13652 (accessed June 23, 2010).

2. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Feb. 27, 1916, p. C8.

3. David V. Herlihy, *Bicycle: The History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 93–100; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Sept. 9, 1868, p. 2, Feb. 13, 17, 18, 19, and Apr. 13—all 1869, p. 4.

4. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Apr. 30, 1873, p. 3, Oct. 2, 1878, p. 3, June 8, Aug. 15, and Sept. 25—all 1880, p. 2.

5. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Apr. 16, 1877, p. 1, Apr. 19, 1877, p. 1, Oct. 2, 1887, p. 11, May 22, 1883, p. 4, July 21, 1883, p. 6, Aug. 7, 1883, p. 6, Aug. 31, 1883, p. 7.

6. *New York Times*, Jan. 1, 1886, p. 1, Mar. 14, 1886, p. 7, May 13, 1886, p. 2, and *Minneapolis Tribune*, Jan. 21, 1886, p. 3, Jan. 31, 1886, p. 4, Dec. 26, 1886, p. 6 (Woodside and Schock); *Minneapolis*

Tribune, Jan. 16, 1886, p. 5, Jan. 25, 1886, p. 3, and *New York Times*, Dec. 25, 1886, p. 3 (Armaindo); *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 18, 1896, p. 7 (“ladies” races). Peter Nye, *The Six-Day Bicycle Races* (San Francisco: Van der Plas Publications/Cycle Publishing 2006), 24, also credits Minneapolis with the first such race that included both day and night cycling, but he dates it to summer 1887.

7. Herlihy, *Bicycle*, 224; Frank G. Lenz, “Around the World with Wheel and Camera,” *Outing*, Nov. 2, 1892, p. 149.

8. *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 4, 1890, p. 16, Mar. 14, 1896, p. 4; *New York Times*, Feb. 17, 1893, p. 3, Aug. 10, 1893, p. 3, Aug. 19, 1893, p. 3, Aug. 11, 1894, p. 6, Feb. 4, 1895, p. 6, 9, and May 10, 1896, p. 13; Jay Pridmore and Jim Hurd, *Schwinn Bicycles* (Osceola, WI: Motorbooks International, 1996), 19, 28–30; Frank W. Schwinn, *Fifty Years of Schwinn-Built Bicycles: The Story of the Bicycle and Its Contributions to Our Way of Life* (Chicago: Arnold, Schwinn & Co., 1989) 47–48.

9. *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 2, 1896, p. 9, May 11, 1895, quoted in Robert A. Smith, *A Social History of the Bicycle: Its Early Life and Times in America* (New York: American Heritage Press, 1972), 184. Smith, 212, relates that the “solid mass” lasted from 8 p.m. to midnight; a year later, the May 2 *Tribune* article reported heavy use from 7:30 to 10 p.m. Apparently, this

was not unusual behavior during the bicycle boom. A summer evening traffic count in Toronto noted 395 cyclists passing an intersection between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m.; Christopher Armstrong and H. V. Nelles, *The Revenge of the Methodist Bicycle Company, Sunday Streetcars and Municipal Reform in Toronto* (Toronto: Peter Martin, 1977), 169.

10. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Apr. 22, 1896, p. 2, July 10, 1897, p. 7, Feb. 22, 1916, p. C8.

11. Russell L. Olson, *The Electric Railways of Minnesota* (Hopkins, MN: Minnesota Transportation Museum, 1976), 18.

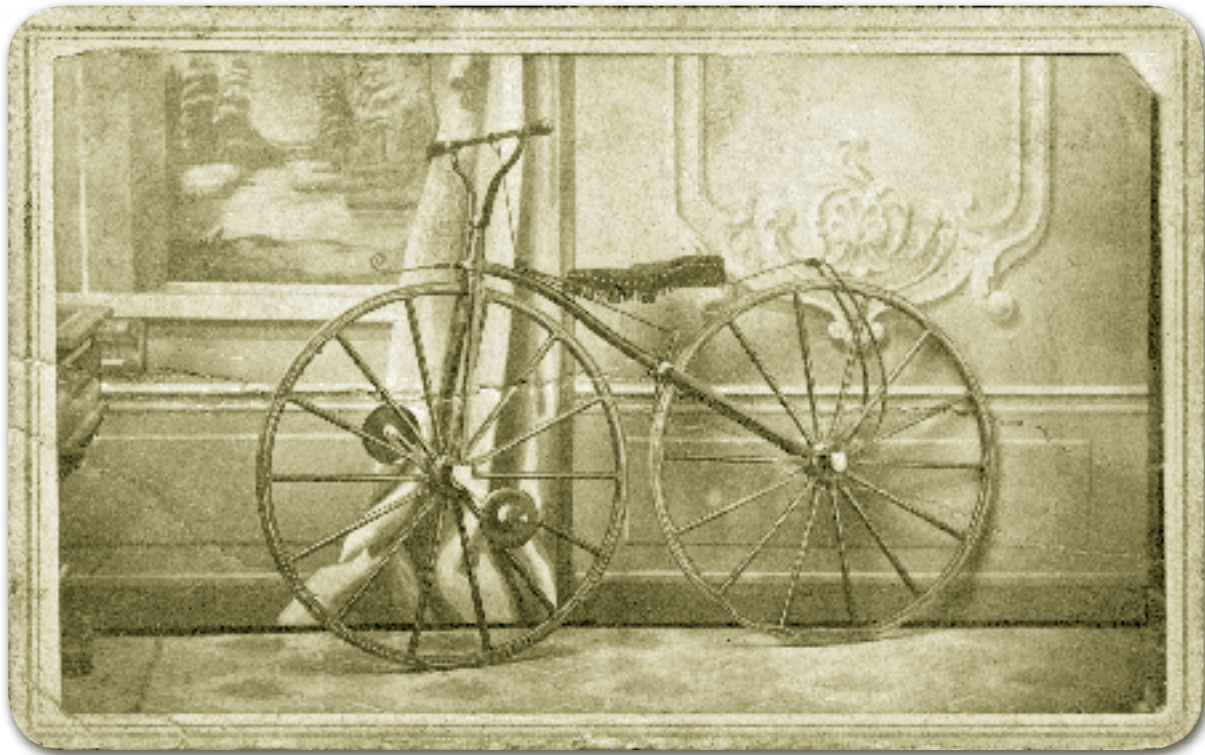
12. Lenz, “Around the World with Wheel and Camera,” 149; *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 3, 1894, quoted in Smith, *Social History of the Bicycle*, 197; *New York Times*, Dec. 3, 1894, p. 7.

13. City of Minneapolis, *Annual Report of the City Engineer for year ending Dec. 31, 1895* (Minneapolis, 1896), 22–25 (all subsequent references to 1895 data are from this report); Francis V. Greene, “An Account of Some Observations of Street Traffic,” *American Society of Civil Engineers* 15 (Feb. 1886): 123–38.

14. An asphalt company conducted this tally; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 1, 1891, p. 6.

15. *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 19, 1895, p. 8, May 31, 1896, p. 9.

16. *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 12, 1896, p. 1; Evan Friss, “The Path Not Taken: The Rise of America’s Cycle Paths and the Fall of Urban Cycling,” *Cycle History* 20: *Proceed-*



Velocipede, or "boneshaker," about 1865: a novelty warranting a studio photograph by William H. Jacoby.

ings of the 20th International Cycle History Conference (Derbyshire: John Pinkerton Memorial Publishing Fund, 2010), 67–72.

17. City of Minneapolis, *Annual Report of the City Engineer . . . 1898* (Minneapolis, 1899), 67, and *Annual Report . . . 1899* (Minneapolis, 1900), 27; *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 17, 1899, p. 9, Jan. 14, 1900, p. A10.

18. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Feb. 20, 1900, p. 6, June 15, 1900, p. 5; Isaac Houlgate, *Guide to Minneapolis Bike Paths* (Minneapolis: Byron & Willard, 1902). *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 22, 1903, p. 4, states that 30,300 tags were sold in 1901; a similar story, Mar. 31, 1910, p. 10, reports the total as 35,000.

19. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 22, 1903, p. 4, Apr. 15, 1906, p. 19, Mar. 31, 1910, p. 10.

20. Frank J. Berto, "The Electric Streetcar and the End of the First American Bicycle Boom," *Cycle History 17: Proceedings of the 17th International Cycling History Conference* (San Francisco: Van der Plas, 2007), 91–100; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 11, 1897, p. 3, Oct. 17, 1898, p. 3.

21. City of St. Paul, *Report of the City Engineer for 1901* (St. Paul, 1902), 29; Thomas Burr, "French Expansion, American Collapse, 1890–1910," *Cycle History 16: Proceedings of the 16th International Cycling History Conference* (San Francisco: Van der Plas, 2006), 130.

22. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Apr. 26, 1903, p. A9, Oct. 26, 1905, p. 9 (quote).

23. Figures here and one paragraph below are from Thomas Burr to Ross Petty, Oct. 14, 2005, e-mail with attached notes from Minneapolis traffic counts.

24. On Hanson, see *New York Times*, Aug. 31, 1902, p. 9.

25. Calculations based on Burr to Petty, Oct. 14, 2005, and Minneapolis, *Annual Report of the City Engineer . . . 1910* (Minneapolis, 1911), 11e–14e, 1911 (Minneapolis, 1912), 12e–15e. Average daily counts of automobiles were 568 in 1909 and 806 in 1910.

26. Eric Monkkonen, *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities and Towns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 174–75; *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 4, 1919, p. C7.

27. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Apr. 11, 1897, p. 39.

28. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Feb. 27, 1906, p. 7, Feb. 1, 1912, p. 8, Jan. 28, 1916, p. 10—all figures derived from Twin City Rapid Transit Company's annual reports; Ira L.

Swett et al., *Electric Railways of Minneapolis & St. Paul*, Interurbans Special 14 (Dec. 1953): 17.

29. *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 25, 1931, p. 30, Nov. 22, 1932, p. 29, May 21, 1899, p. 7, Aug. 27, 1899, p. 7, Feb. 22, 1906, p. 6, Jan. 3, 1909, p. 10, Sept. 30, 1912, p. 1; Ross D. Petty, *The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of Bicycle Police* (2006), www.ipmba.org/newsletters/ABriefHistoryofPoliceCycling.pdf (accessed June 23, 2010). For a national analysis, see Ross D. Petty, "The Bicycle as a Communications Medium: A Comparison of Bicycle Use by the U.S. Postal Service and Western Union Telegraph Company," *Cycle History 16* (2006), 147–59.

30. *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 4, 1919, p. C7, July 14, 1922, p. 4; July 16, 1922, p. A1; Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path: The Automobile and the American City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 226.

31. City of Minneapolis Dept. of Public Works, *Report on Bicycle & Pedestrian Counts* (Minneapolis, Oct. 22, 2007), 12–13; *Star Tribune*, June 12, 1992, p. 1B.

The photo on p. 87 (and contents page) is from Frank W. Schwinn's Fifty Years of Schwinn-Built Bicycles. All other images and the cycle-path tags, photographed by Eric Mortenson/MHS, are in MHS collections.



Copyright of **Minnesota History** is the property of the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, or email articles, however, for individual use.

To request permission for educational or commercial use, [contact us](#).