

1816 Draissine

The draissine, first built in Germany in 1816, was less a serious mode of transportation than the folly of a wealthy nobleman. Still, it remains one in a long line of inventions that led to the true bicycle.



1869 Dexter

William van Anden, Poughkeepsie, New York van Anden's patented velocipede included several improvements over previous models. One was the first free-wheeling drive, precursor of the coaster hub, with a ratchet-like device that allowed the cranks to remain motionless while the bicycle continued to roll. The brakes in van Anden's velocipede were particularly elegant- twisting the handlebars actuated a linkage with a friction plate against the rear wheel. Leather straps and springy iron frame also put the suspension of this boneshaker, however primitive, well ahead of its time.



1870s Shire Boneshaker

The Shire was among the most advanced of boneshakers, though still a difficult machine for the purpose of common transportation. A large front wheel and a low saddle meant that a fast ride was possible, if only the rider could overcome the difficulties in pushing forward on the pedals while leaning back at a severe angle.



1883 Columbia Expert

www.columbiamfginc.com

Pope Mfg. Co. Boston, Mass.

This 58" wheeled machine is nickel-plated. Nickel plating was more expensive, but it didn't chip like paint. The larger the wheel, the faster the bike... so, the taller the rider, the faster he went! This 1883 Columbia is one of the machines Paul Grimshaw, a Michigan Wheelman, rode in the Commemorative 1984 Thomas Stevens Ride Across America.



Thomas Stevens history: Stevens was born in England in 1854. Although his parents were of small means, he managed to achieve a solid education. A nephew described him as having been a "voracious reader of travel literature, energetic and a realist." At eighteen, Tom suddenly announced his intention of going to America. When he produced the money he'd squirreled away for his passage, his father said, "Go! Young as you are, you are well able to take care of yourself." In the United States over the next eleven years, Tom held assorted jobs. In the winter of 1883-84, he was working as a miner in Colorado. America was in the midst of its first bicycle boom, and "wheeling" was the rage. The high-wheel, invented by Englishman James Starley, had been introduced to Americans at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. In just a few years, the contraption bowled along every city's streets. Before ever having ridden one himself, Stevens determined that he would be the first man to pedal across America and set out to acquire the proper machine. On the morning of April 22, 1884, he rolled his black-enameled Columbia along the Oakland Pier. He sprinted, jumped the mounting step, and hoisted himself onto the hogskin saddle. Gripping the rubber knobs at the ends of the handlebar, he pedaled toward San Pablo. How he managed to purchase the bike is a mystery. At ninety dollars, it was an expensive item. But Stevens was known for making sacrifices whatever was necessary to attain his goals. The Columbia, with a reputation for durability, was a good choice. Stevens picked the Standard model, one of the most popular bicycles of the day. On July 16, 1884, Thomas Stevens bicycled eastward across the Indiana-Ohio border. In early August, Tom Stevens would complete the first transcontinental bicycle ride. He would then continue on, circling the globe. Stevens's Standard Columbia bicycle, built by the Pope Manufacturing Company, was a substantial and durable machine made of tubular steel. The Pope Company preserved Stevens's bicycle until a World War II scrap drive took precedence.

1887 American Safety

Gormully & Jeffery Mfg. Co.

Chicago, IL

This high-wheeler was called a "safety," seemingly oblivious to the development of the true safety bicycle that would be developed by big and small companies on both sides of the Atlantic in the next few years. G & J's American Safety did perfect a treadle-lever device that improved efficiency and kept the weight back to reduce the risk of headers. Drive wheels, which were between 42 and 46 inches, were smaller



than other high-wheelers, another change to promote safety. This bicycle was priced at \$76 (\$15 additional for ball bearing both front and back) and might have captured a significant share of the market, except that the true safety was on the way and the high-wheeler was about one year away from obsolescence.

1890 Fowler

Hill & Moffat

Chicago, Illinois

Ignaz Schwinn, founder of Arnold, Schwinn & Company, worked for a short time for the Hill & Moffat firm, makers of the Fowler bicycle and later designed the bicycles and planned and installed the bicycle factory of the International Manufacturing Company. The International Company was not managed to his liking, and in 1894 he severed his connection. In 1895, together with Adolph Arnold, he incorporated Arnold, Schwinn & Company.



1891 Victor Spring Fork

Overman Wheel Co.

Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts

Americans were quick to develop the safety bicycle based on the English Rover model. Overman's version was one of the best. Its catalogue description noted that the machine "rendered a backward or forward fall impossible." The Victor also advanced the art with a spring front fork and adjustable saddle, cranks, and handlebars.



1892 Victor

Overman Wheel Co.

Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts

This cushion-tire Victor, 52" ordinary, came with tangential spoking on the wheel, and featured interchangeable parts, an adjustable ball bearing, and hollow rims. Victor had a swing saddle and the rider could easily remove the leather from the springs and take it with him to discourage a thief from hopping on his bicycle and taking off with it. The price of this machine was \$130.00 in 1892!



1893 Columbia Century

Pope Mfg. Co.

Hartford, Connecticut

Wheelmen and wheelwomen were enthusiastically trying to ride ``centuries," or 100 miles in a day, at this time. For customers who were this serious about cycling, Pope introduced the Century with pneumatic tires and an "elliptical sprocket." This was designed for greatest power when the rider's leg was at its most advantageous point. This innovation did not catch on widely at the time, but by the 1980s Shimano was doing the same thing with its "Biopace" chain ring.



1895 Ladies' Schwinn New World

Arnold, Schwinn & Co.

Chicago, Illinois

Arnold, Schwinn & Company was founded in 1895 in Chicago, just as the ``bicycle boom" of the Gay 90s was at its peak. This 1895 ladies' model is the oldest known Schwinn bicycle to exist.



<http://www.bicyclemuseum.com/Html/bike1.html>