



Bulletin # 20

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▣ Riding ❁ Collecting ❁ Restoring ❁ Research ❁ History ▣

## Bicycle Literature Collecting

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What better way do we have of viewing the lives and times of the early bicyclers than through the books, magazines, and catalogs that they wrote for themselves and saved for us? Fortunately, they wrote a great deal and many of the books can still be found. The magazines and catalogs were less durable, were valued less when they were new, and in many cases the last copy may have been destroyed.

This bulletin will discuss what to look for, where to look, how to preserve the literature found, and how to share it with others.

What to look for will depend on what interests you most. The most useful historical tools for the identification and accurate restoration of cycles are the early catalogs. The early catalogs are hard to find and are usually expensive. Used book dealers sometimes have them. Also check with people selling automobile literature at flea markets. You can advertise in magazines that are read by collectors and restorers such as *Hemmings Motor News*, *Antique Automobile*, *Cars and Parts*, and various antique advertising newspapers. While looking for catalogs, you should look in the same places for magazines and books. They are less expensive and more enjoyable to read if you are not trying to trace the origin and restore an early cycle. You might also find an advertisement in an early magazine or book that would provide helpful information.

You can find dealers and searchers for antiquarian books listed in the Yellow Pages of some telephone directories. You can also find them advertising books wanted and books for sale in the *AB Bookman's Weekly*, P.O. Box AB, Clifton, NJ 07015. For the cost of an annual subscription, you will have about 100 pages of fine print to scan each week. This is a book trade magazine and only dealers can advertise books for sale. You can, of course, contact a dealer and have him advertise and search for you. It is probably best to have only one dealer searching for you at one time. If you have more than one searching you may be competing against yourself and driving the price up. Many

dealers make a small charge for advertising and if they find what you want, the charge for the book will probably be higher than if they had the book in their stock.

Not all used book dealers will ever have early bicycle books nor will they even know there is such a thing. Dealers who are most helpful will usually deal in middle priced and high priced books of some kind and are likely to be located near a university. They are also likely to participate in antiquarian book fairs.

You should ask dealers about upcoming antiquarian book fairs and plan on attending two or three a year. Let dealers know the types of books you are looking for and get your name and address on their want lists. Have some hobby cards printed and give them to book dealers and antique vendors to help them remember you when they find something.

As your library increases in size the need for cataloging the contents arises. You can develop inventory sheets listing the makes of cycles included in each publication, particularly the cycle dealers' catalogs. Better still, you can develop a computerized inventory.

Old literature should be protected by keeping it dry and out of the light. A closed cabinet with shelves should be adequate for books, with the more fragile catalogs and magazines further protected in acid-free plastic or paper folders. Ordinary manila folders contain acid and will eventually damage paper stored in them. Paper should be stored in a room that is always dry and stays at a moderate temperature, never in an attic or a basement. If you have an important early book with a damaged binding, you

should have it repaired by a good bookbinder. Bookbinders are usually located in university towns. Attempting to repair a book with tape will cause more damage.

A good way of sharing literature that you acquire is by sending a copy of your inventory sheets to The Wheelmen Librarian. These sheets are not for publication, but a member asking for information about a particular cycle will be put in touch with someone who may have the information and who will make a photocopy and send it at

cost. The Wheelmen Librarian may ask for a photocopy of a catalog for the library so a copy can be made for someone who needs information.

Original copies of significant early books are difficult to find and are usually expensive when you find them. Some of the early books and catalogs have been reprinted and there are some fairly recent books that are good.

It would be worthwhile to start by looking for books identified with a bullet on the following list.

#### A Guide To Books On Bicycling. Prepared by Russell Mamone - 1994

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- Allen, J.H., *Wheel Magic*, 1909
- Alth, Max, *All About Bikes and Bicycling*, 1972
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- Blumenfield, R.D., *In the Days of Bicycles and Bustles*, 1913
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- Chandler, Alfred, *A Bicycle Tour in England & Wales*, 1881
- Clymer Publications, *Fix Your Bicycle*, 1972
- Crowley, T.E., *Discovering Old Bicycles*, 1973
- Crushton, *History of the Pickwick Bicycle Club*, 1905
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- Cuthbertson, Tom, *Bike Tripping*, 1972
- Dalton, *Lycra Bicyclica: Sixty Poets On The Wheel*, 1885
- Davies, Tom, *Merlyn & the Magician & the Pacific Coast Highway*, 1982

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- de Saunier, Dollfus, Geoffroy, *Histoire de la Locomotion Terrestre*, 1935
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- Duncan, H.O., *World on Wheels*, 1926, 2 Vols.
- Duncan, John, *Bikes and Trikes of Long Ago*, 1975
- Duker, Peter, *Coppi*, 1982
- Earl of Albemarle, *Cycling*, Badminton Library, 1896
- Evans, David, *The Ingenious Mr. Pedersen*, 1978
- Ewers, William, *Sincere's Bicycle Service Book*, 1971
- Fabre, Maurice, *History of Land Transportation*
- Fisk & Todd, *The Wright Brothers from Bicycle To Biplane*, 1990
- Foster, Conant, *Wheel Songs*, 1884
- Fraser, J.F., *Round the World on a Wheel*, 1899
- Garratt, A.A., *The Modern Safety Bicycle*, 1899
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- Hornung, Clarence, *Wheels Across America*, 1959
- Houston, Jack, *Wandering Wheels*, 1970
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- Iliffe & Son, *Romances of the Wheel*, 1880
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- Leek, Sybil & Stephen, *The Bicycle, That Curious Invention*, 1973
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- Leonard, I.A., *When Bikehood Was In Flower*, 1969
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  - Patterson, Frank, *The Frank Patterson Picture Book*, 1978
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