

“We Are No Longer Freaks”: The Cyclists’ Rights Movement in Montreal

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On the evening of January 26, 1898, Montreal lawyer, businessman, and provincial legislator Albert William Atwater stepped onto the stage of the Monument Nationale and, following a standing ovation, proclaimed loudly to the enthusiastic audience of 300 in front of him: “Gentlemen . . . the day has now arrived when we are no longer freaks.”¹ What drew this veteran middle-class Montrealer through darkened streets and snow banks to make this proclamation, and what led his audience to receive him so enthusiastically, was a technological revolution that began in the mid-1860s, that had recently gripped a segment of middle-class society in much of the western world, and that—unknown to Atwater or anyone in his audience—was about to disappear. I am referring here to the bicycle, and in particular to a movement that took shape around this machine in Montreal at the turn of the nineteenth century, just as the bicycle reached its peak of popularity, and just before that popularity fell so dramatically throughout North America.² Part of what supporters and the media referred to as the cyclists’ rights movement, this meeting addressed the concerns of a large and relatively diverse segment of middle-class Montreal—young and old; men and women; francophones and anglophones; amateurs and world-class athletes; Catholics, Protestants, and Jews—who had taken to the bicycle in growing numbers, and who were demanding infrastructure and institutional support for their new pursuit.³

The cyclists’ rights movement was an effort by Montreal cyclists to harness the recent wave of popular support for the bicycle and turn it into something tangible, namely, into a reworking of the legal and environmental contexts of cycling in and around their city. What follows is an exploration of this briefly lived movement in the context of the bicycle’s evolving place in the city, from its first appearance in the mid-1860s to its sudden crash into obscurity three decades later. In broad terms, Montreal’s experience is not much different from many other North American cities. Given that Montreal has recently emerged to become one of the most bicycle-friendly cities on the continent, however, it is a location worth drawing attention to. As this article shows, Montrealers first began grappling with these issues not in the 1970s through the work of groups like the imaginative, tenacious, and highly successful *Le Monde à Bicyclette* but fully one hundred years earlier.⁴ Briefly, this paper’s central argument runs as follows: during the thirty years that

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marked the bicycle's "first wave" in North America, cycling introduced new ways of experiencing and perceiving urban and rural environments. As a result, cyclists became increasingly aware of the limits that the built environment and legal restrictions imposed on their activities. As they did so, they sought, in growing numbers and eventually through political channels, to reshape conditions in their favor. In Montreal, these efforts took various forms during the 1870s and 1880s, and culminated during the late 1890s in a movement that positioned its objectives via a rights-based discourse aimed directly at the city's political sphere. Underpinning this argument are three broader objectives. First, I aim to situate Montreal in general terms relative to the history of cycling in North America and Europe during the nineteenth century. Second, I discuss the kinds of changes Montrealers experienced, anticipated, and in some cases demanded in regard to cycling conditions. Third, this project draws from the city's cyclists' rights movement an invitation to explore cycling as a social movement and ultimately as a political phenomenon. Tying all of this together is the recognition that when it comes to building an environment favorable to the bicycle, the politics of cycling is rooted firmly at the local level, in particular in municipal as opposed to provincial or federal politics.

The origins of the bicycle have been discussed often: what exactly counts as a "bicycle," who was the first to invent it, and when and where did this take place. On this note, Montreal offers some refreshing insight, for the city's initial encounter with this machine underscores how quickly it was taken up in cities around the world. General agreement has the rudimentary bicycle—two wheels joined by a frame, a steering device, a brake, and pedals, based on principles and technology established but not fully realized in the "draisine" of the 1810s—put together in 1867 by Paris blacksmith Pierre Michaux. Once available to the public, it did not take long for this new technology to spread. Together, the novelty of the bicycle, the thrills it offered, the sociability it inspired, and the possibilities it suggested in regard to the transformation of human mobility ensured that it would be a point of spectacle and performance, and would in turn become emblematic of modernity, liberalism, and freedom.⁵ This happened first in and around Paris in the spring of 1868. By the end of the year it had reached New York, and from there it spread quickly to Montreal and cities throughout North America, where it enjoyed a brief frenzy of attention.⁶ In Montreal this became apparent through a wide range of cycling-related institutions, materials, and events. As in other cities, cycling in Montreal began indoors. By the spring of 1869, Montrealers could choose from at least five rinks and riding schools. The largest was the Drill Hall Velocipede Rink and Riding School on Craig Street, which boasted a track of more than an eighth of a mile, and offered seven 70- × 40-foot rooms in which novices could learn. Close in size was the Crystal Palace Velocipede Rink and Riding School on Ste. Catherine Street; both charged a 25-cent admission fee. Those with only a dime to spare could ride at Gilman's Hall at the Mount Royal Hotel on St. Lawrence Street, at Nordheimer's Hall Velocipede Rink and Riding School above Dion Bros. Billiard Hall, or at the Velocipede Rink and Riding School above McVittie's Billiard Hall.

Through the rinks and riding schools, would-be cyclists could easily locate bicycle suppliers and local manufacturers. The proprietors of Nordheimer's had on hand samples of machines built in the city, and for \$30.00 took orders for local velocipedes "made of wrought iron . . . and equal for durability to any manufactured in the States." One could also buy locally manufactured bicycles "superior to any

DRILL HALL VELOCIPEDE

RINK AND RIDING SCHOOL.

Will open on

SATURDAY EVENING, 13th INSTANT.

The track, which is the finest in the city is over one-eighth of a mile in length.

Seven rooms, 70 feet by 40 feet, are appropriated for learners.

Exhibitions will be given at intervals.

Admission, 25 cents.

VELOCIPEDE RIDING AT

GILMAN'S HALL, Mount Royal Hotel, Fairbank Block, 91 St. Lawrence Main street. Open on Sundays.

49

NORDHEIMER'S HALL VEL-

OCIPEDE RINK and RIDING SCHOOL, (over Dion Bros' Billiard Room.)—We have the finest machine manufactured in New York. We are also prepared to take orders for Velocipedes manufactured in Montreal, of which we have samples at the hall. The Velocipedes manufactured in this city are made of wrought iron, and are equal for durability to any manufactured in the States. We can furnish the same for the small sum of \$50. Admission 10 cents.

45

F. W. BROWN,
MOSES RICKER.

VELOCIPEDE RINK

AND

RIDING SCHOOL,

Over McVittie's Billiard Hall,

No. 301 NOTRE DAME STREET.

Admission 10 cents. Ladies admitted free.

41

WALSH & DAVIS,
Proprietors.

CRYSTAL PALACE VELOCI-

PEDE RINK AND RIDING SCHOOL,

(Entrance ~~east~~ Catherine street),

UNDER DIRECTION OF

A M O S L. M I L L E T T,

Will open on TUESDAY EVENING, Feb. 23rd, at half-past 7 o'clock to the public, and day and evening thereafter until further notice.

Exhibitions of Velocipedes will be given every day and evening.

Good riders always attendance.

Admission 25c.

2-1m

Figure 1 — Interest in the velocipede exploded during the winter of 1868-69. As this set of advertisements shows, there quickly developed a range of institutions and manufacturers to cater to this short-lived demand. Source: *Montreal Evening Star*, 24 March 1869, 1.

others made in Canada or the United States” for between \$20.00 and \$45.00 from Gage & Craig via the Drill Hall Velocipede Rink, at 618 Ste. Catherine Street not far from the Crystal Palace Rink. Carriage and sleigh manufacturer Phrayne & Cote also built “two, three, or five wheeled machines [that] may be had . . . at moderate prices.”⁷ Accompanying the new bicycle market was a market for bicycle-related clothing fashions.⁸ All were put to use at local rinks and at events such as the city’s “Grand Velocipede Masquerade.” Held at the Drill Hall Rink in April 1869 to the tunes of the city’s 69th Regiment Band, the event comprised between forty and fifty riders. Among its highlights were a one-mile race, a demonstration of “fancy riding” by a number of expert riders, and an exhibition on two- and three-wheel machines by Boston rider Miss M. J. Frothingham.⁹

All of this demonstrates how the bicycle quickly became a site for spectacle and performance in the city during the late 1860s. Ironically, Montreal’s winter climate played into this context well. By the return of winter, a few cyclists had managed to turn their new outdoor pastime into a year-round activity. With the addition of metal studs to the front wheel and the substitution of the rear wheel for a pair of foot-like supports, riders took their new “Ice Velocipedes” to the city’s frozen St. Lawrence River waterfront. This is not surprising in itself: by the 1860s Montreal had a well-established winter sport and recreational culture that encompassed such as snowshoeing, skating, skiing, tobogganing, and curling. But the early adaptation of the velocipede for winter riding in Montreal underscores something else. Out on the frozen river, if the winds were low and the ice flat and clear of snow, riders enjoyed outdoor riding conditions unparalleled during any other time of year.¹⁰



Figure 2 — An early adaptation to Canada’s northern climate, the ice velocipede also offered riders hard, flat, dry surfaces on which to ride—conditions that were by no means guaranteed at other times of the year. Source: “The Ice Velocipede,” *The Canadian Illustrated News*, 19 February 1870, 244.

While the bicycle captured considerable attention, it was soon apparent that this new technology had limits. Among them were those posed by an environment with which it was largely incompatible. Montreal's initial experience of the bicycle may have begun while the city was still under snow, but it was not winter that encouraged the city's indoor riding phenomenon. Indoor riding was routine during the bicycle's early years, and for largely the same reasons that enthusiasts in Montreal took to the ice. In short, cyclists rode indoors and ventured onto frozen rivers and lakes because the drill halls, rinks, and ice offered hard, flat, dry, and relatively safe spaces to ride. As such, they were entirely uncharacteristic of city streets and country roads. Among those best positioned to explain the challenges of mid-nineteenth century streets were riders who come spring took their machines outdoors. There they encountered a chaotic world of vehicles and pedestrians; of animals live and dead; of dirt and mud; of water, sewage, and debris. Throughout the nineteenth century, Montreal's streetscape was under constant reconstruction as public authorities and others worked to transform the rapidly growing city into a modern industrial center. Paving, street widening, water drainage, sewage infrastructure, streetcar systems, and a growing regulatory context were all central to this process. By the late 1860s, however, these activities had not advanced far enough to accommodate this new machine, and in some cases they made the streetscape even less accommodating. Combined with the technological limits of the early velocipede, these conditions helped to ensure that "boneshaker" of the late 1860s remained a short-lived fad, rather than the potentially revolutionary machine that emerged later in the century.¹¹

By the early 1870s, interest in cycling waned in Montreal, as it did throughout North America. What really helped to establish cycling in the city was the formation of the Montreal Bicycle Club in December 1878 and its merger in June 1881 with the Montreal Snow Shoe Club and the Montreal Lacrosse Club to form the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (MAAA).¹² Together these moves helped to secure the city's reputation as the center of Canada's sporting culture.¹³ As the largest city in the new nation and its economic and industrial hub, Montreal was in a good position to assume this identity. Of particular note was the presence of an affluent middle-class anglophone Protestant community for whom sport translated into considerable social and cultural capital. By the end of the decade, the Montreal Bicycle Club and the MAAA were part of a dense network of sporting associations in the city, comprising everything from elite pastimes such as golf, yachting, and foxhunting to hockey and other popular activities. For its part, the Montreal Bicycle Club (MBC) did a lot to bring cycling culture to bear on the city and its environs. In the early 1880s, cyclists in other Canadian cities formed similar organizations, and the MBC worked with clubs across the country to establish the Canadian Wheelman's Association in 1883. A response to the successful League of American Wheelmen formed in 1880, the Canadian Wheelman's Association was an effort to create a similar national cycling community. Once established, it helped link Montreal, the MAAA, and the MBC to cities and cyclists across the continent.¹⁴

At this point, cyclists began to draw attention to the state of Montreal's built environment. In order to understand how they did so, it helps to understand the evolution of the bicycle and cycling culture during the 1880s. As with many other sports, time and distance became the markers against which riders tested their abilities. To this end, cyclists in Montreal followed the trend during the 1880s to ride

bicycles with large front wheels. Known as the highwheeler, or “pennyfarthing,” this machine was inspired by the principle that, with the pedals and crank attached directly to the bicycle’s front hub, a larger front wheel would take the rider further with every revolution of the pedals. This innovation quickly turned cycling into a dangerous activity (imagine doing a “header” over the handlebars of a bicycle that stands over five feet high!) best suited to relatively young athletic men, and in doing so confined the bicycle to a relatively narrow social spectrum. Informed by these and other factors, the club culture that developed around the pennyfarthing during the 1880s took on quasi-military characteristics, and cycling became a means of demonstrating a rugged form of masculinity measured by physical prowess and discipline. It also became a team activity. Inspired by their military counterparts, club members wore uniforms, they rode in formation, they participated in parades, and they practiced drill, including indoor drill practices on foot during the winter months aimed at maintaining club standards as well as social networks. Of all of Canada’s cycling clubs, the MBC seems to have been the most committed to this culture; in fact, marriage effectively ended a member’s participation in the club, to the point that, upon marrying, club members typically received a “farewell gift” from their colleagues.¹⁵ The MBC even had a club dog, Disraeli, who accompanied riders on club rides, in part to protect them from dogs that might otherwise offer chase.¹⁶

All of this activity demanded extended stretches of road suitable for riding. As a result, one of the MBC’s first objectives was to define local cycling routes. In addition to downtown parades and races held at sites like Bluebonnets, the horseracing track west of the city center, the members of the MBC frequented both city streets and the nearby countryside. During its third season in 1880, the MBC covered a total of 500 miles in the course of 43 meets, one of which was 36 miles in length, another 32 miles. In addition, some of the club’s more dedicated members clocked their mileage throughout the cycling season. “Several,” club minutes note, “rode daily to and from business, and in addition covered considerable ground apart from the club.”¹⁷ In 1880, at least two such members covered more than 1,000 miles.¹⁸ Within two years, the club was holding more rides, and was approaching double the total distance covered in 1880. In 1883 the club held its first century (100 mile) ride, and clocked a total distance of more than 900 miles.¹⁹ Popular circuits in the city included rides around Mount Royal and Westmount, and nearby Lachine and Valois became routine destinations.

The emphasis of the MBC and other clubs on distance was not unusual. For those who believed that the bicycle was the century’s answer to the demand for a new and effective means of individual transportation in the modern urban and industrial world, the capacity to travel long distances was proof of its potential. To this end, city-to-city races and the century ride soon became popular.²⁰ Montreal Bicycle Club riders were no different. During the 1880s, road races from Montreal to nearby villages became festive occasions in which nonracing members would ride ahead in order to be at the finish, while other spectators would follow by train, horse, or boat for an evening of dinner and dance.²¹

One might assume that all of this activity led cyclists to take an active interest in local road conditions. Yet for all the time these cyclists spent on the roads in and around Montreal, the MBC and the cycling culture it helped to establish arguably slowed the move toward better cycling conditions. Overall, credit given to cyclists during the 1880s in regard to their efforts to draw attention to road conditions

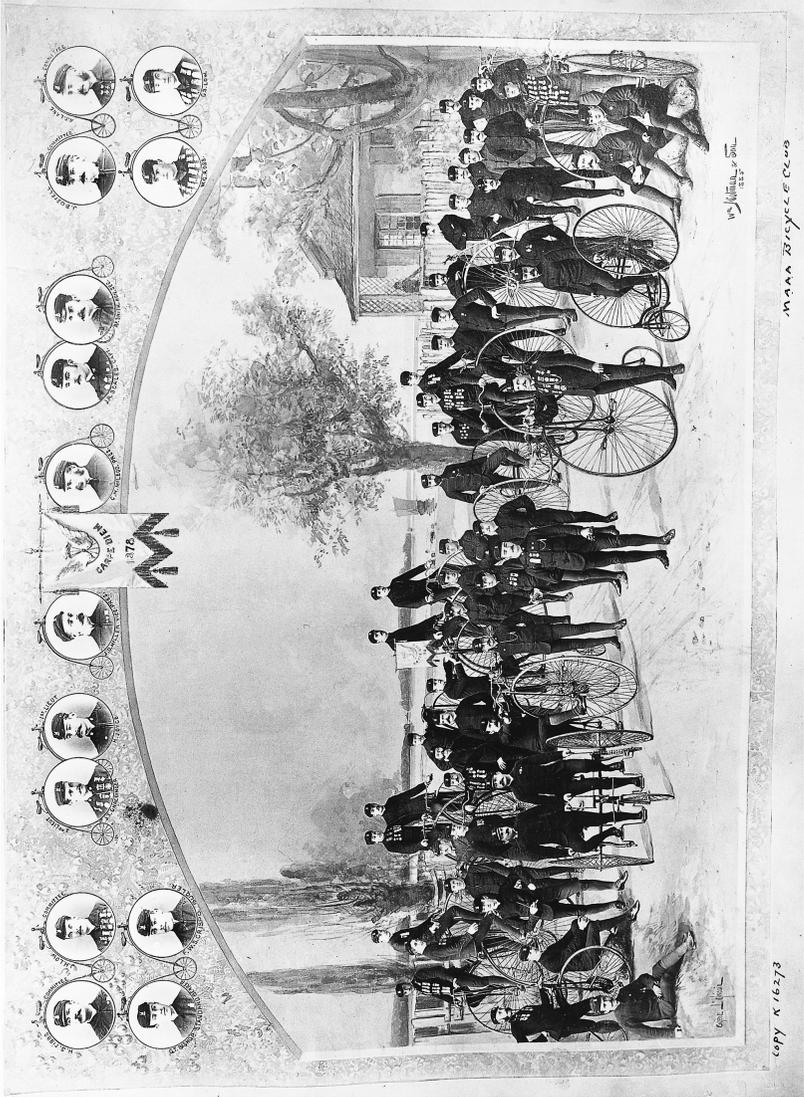


Figure 3 — “The Montreal Bicycle Club, 1885.” This composite photograph by Montreal photographer William Notman offers a sense of the militaristic nature of cycling during the era of the highwheeler, or “ordinary,” bicycle. Source: Montreal Bicycle Club, Montreal, QC, composite, 1885, McCord Museum, Notman Photographic Archives. McCord Museum V26273.

through the “good roads movement” has been overstated. Both in Canada and the United States, interest in improved transportation conditions stretched well beyond cyclists, be it in regards to farmers’ demands for better routes to market or to urban and industrial demands that saw cities like Montreal confront issues ranging from the improvement of intersections, water drainage, and paving to the establishment of horse and later electric tramway systems.²² One of the reasons behind cyclists’ lack of engagement during the 1880s related to how the highwheeler, or pennyfarthing, turned cycling into a disciplined, athletic, and somewhat dangerous sport. The relatively young male riders who typified the cycling community during this decade tended to interpret as challenges things that might otherwise have been seen as obstacles or impediments to cycling. Thus, while road conditions were often the cause of grumbling, difficult conditions were also sought out and even celebrated as a means of testing riders’ mettle. Notably, poor road conditions served as the stuff around which competitions were organized. The best example of this was the club’s hill climbing contest. A popular event during the late 1880s, it saw participants attempt to climb from downtown to Mount Royal via Côte de Niegues road, a ride reputed among cyclists both for its steepness and the poor state of the road itself.²³ Success at this and similar contests became marks of pride and accomplishment among riders, and served both as a test of their machines and a means of separating the best riders from the pack. Other races couched poor road conditions in similar form, as in the case of the club run to from Montreal to Valois, which made for “a very creditable race” during the 1880s precisely because it was on the whole “very arduous and uneven.”²⁴ In fact, the club’s most tangible complaint throughout the 1880s concerned “that objectionable figure the ‘clerk of the weather,’” mainly because weather conditions were frequently cause to cancel events.²⁵ Had the highly disciplined amateur and professional male riders of the 1880s not narrowed cycling to the relatively dangerous pennyfarthing and its sporting contexts, the bicycle may have been embraced by a broader segment of society. While the cost of the machine would likely have kept it within an upper- and middle-class milieu, that milieu would nevertheless have been less inclined to view treacherous conditions as challenges. Had this happened, this larger and older group would arguably have incorporated the bicycle into a vibrant urban associational culture via the formation of leisure clubs, and would have been far more likely to turn their frustration with cycling conditions into something more tangible. As it was, participants in the MBC tended, at least where the bicycle was concerned, not to be politically active during the 1880s, inasmuch as they seldom saw their interest in road conditions or their associational identity as things that could be brought to bear on the built environment or cycling conditions in general. On those rare occasions when they did, they were usually unsuccessful.²⁶ Overall, their response to the built environment was not much different from their response to such “natural” factors as weather or climate. Grumble, complain, or alternately celebrate those who overcame the challenges these conditions presented, certainly. In terms of agency, however, they expressed little sense that they could exert their influence in order to bring change.

As it was, it took the development of the “safety” bicycle in the late 1880s to break the hold of the sporting community on cycling culture, to position the bicycle as a middle-class recreational activity, and to lay the groundwork for a more direct response to the cycling environment. In some ways, the safety bicycle marked a

return to the basics. Instead of the pennyfarthing's large front wheel, riders straddled two wheels of equal size, much like the early velocipedes of the 1860s and 1870s. What made the safety different was the addition of a chain drive that saw the pedals situated immediately below the rider and attached to the rear hub.²⁷ With the development of the diamond-shaped frame and the replacement of solid rubber with pneumatic tires by John Dunlop in Britain in 1888 and Edouard Michelin in France in 1891, the basics of the bicycle as it exists today were established.²⁸ It did not take long for most cyclists to see the advantage of the new machine, as it soon proved superior in regards to speed as well as safety. With these developments, the pennyfarthing, or "ordinary," quickly disappeared. Stalwarts clung to the ordinary for a few years, and, during the transition to the safety, the MBC held numerous races that pitted the safety against the ordinary. By the early 1890s, though, the members of the MBC had embraced the safety wholeheartedly.²⁹

With the introduction of the safety bicycle, cycling became more accessible, and bicycle ownership in Montreal skyrocketed. The best indication of this comes from licensing. The City of Montreal began requiring bicycle licenses in 1896. That year it issued 2682 licenses. The following year those numbers jumped to 4508, and by 1898—the year that the Cyclist's Rights Association came into existence—that number had climbed to 7973.³⁰ Club culture also grew during this period: by the end of the century, the city boasted roughly a dozen cycling clubs. All of this meant not only more cyclists in and around Montreal, but also more cyclists who did not possess the skills, stamina, or discipline of the previous decade's club riders. Male and female, young and old, these people were not out to compete in races, to endure inclement weather, or to test themselves against environmental obstacles. They were out to enjoy themselves and the company of others as they took on the modern, independent identity that was associated with the bicycle during the 1890s. Accordingly, they began to venture via this new machine through city streets and into the countryside, free of ship, train, carriage schedules, and other impediments.

A considerable amount of detailed bicycle literature complemented these developments. In Canada, the networks that had taken shape during the 1880s became important means of communication. Local groups charted everything from distances, routes, and road conditions to the location of bicycle-friendly hotels and restaurants. By the mid-1890s, cyclists in Quebec and Ontario had mapped routes throughout their provinces' more populated regions and made this information available in numerous guidebooks.

One of these was the 1897 *Montreal Suburban Cycling and Sporting Guide*, which offered cycling enthusiasts a range of routes in and around the city. Among "wheelmen's favored routes" were popular runs in and around the city—the twenty-two mile loop from Montreal to the Lachine Locks; the twelve-mile route around Mount Royal and Westmount; and the thirty-mile return runs to St. Rose and Terrebonne. More intrepid riders could consider the eighty-five mile ride around the Island of Montreal along with routes to more distant communities: Montreal to Sorel (48 miles), to Granby (52.5 miles), to Newport, Vermont (127.5 miles), to Coaticook (144.5 miles), to St. Albans (67 miles), to Knowlton (63 miles), to Rouse's Point (52 miles), to Ottawa (128.5 miles), and to Kingston (186 miles). As they pulled this information together, publishers inevitably drew attention to road conditions. In some cases the news was good. In regards to the loop from Montreal to the Lachine Locks, for example, the *Montreal Suburban Cycling*

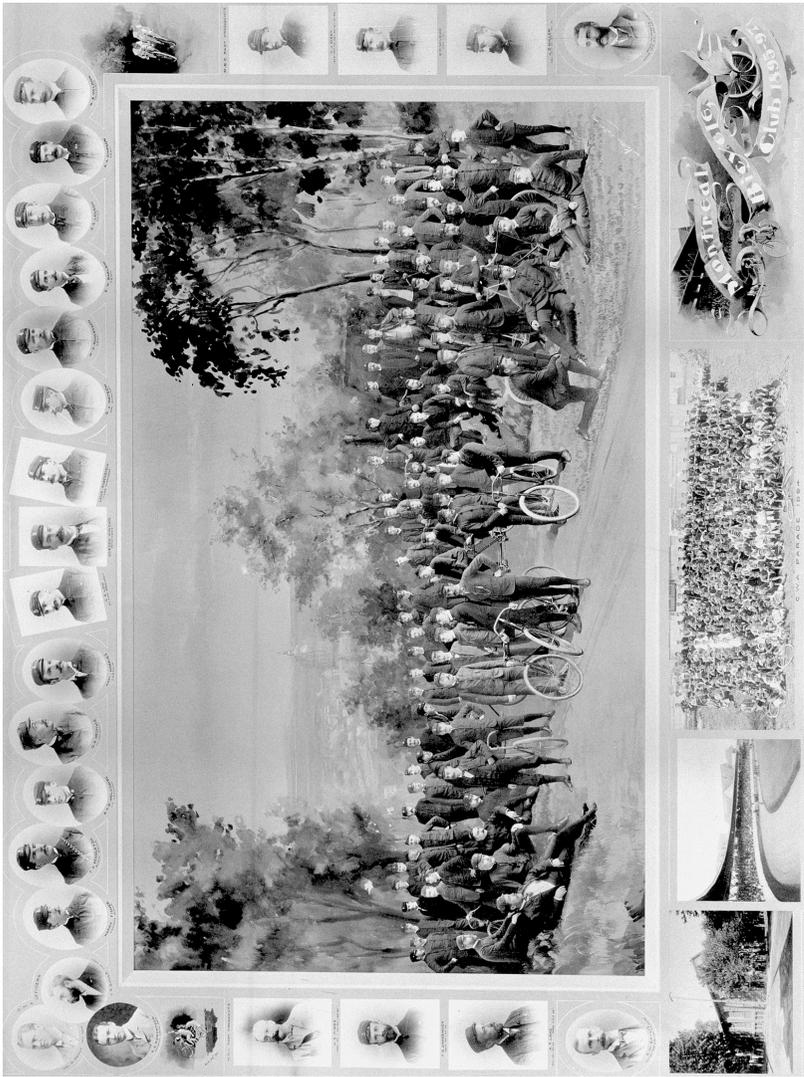


Figure 4 — “Montreal Bicycle Club, 1897.” By the early 1890s, cyclists had embraced the new safety bicycle, and the highwheeler had all but disappeared. In addition to influencing the Montreal Bicycle Club, this shift opened cycling to a much broader segment of middle-class society, and led to the wave of enthusiasm that peaked around the time this photo was taken. Source: Montreal Bicycle Club, Montreal, QC, 1897, McCord Museum, Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum N-0000.80.



Don't make a monkey of yourself and ride a high wheel
BUT GET A
RUDGE + SAFETY.
THE BEST WHEEL IN THE MARKET. FROM
\$65.00 UPWARDS.
SOLE AGENT FOR MONTREAL:
LOUIS RUBENSTEIN, 537 Craig Street.

Figure 5 — Proponents of the new safety bicycle in the late 1880s and early 1890s were quick to contrast it with the soon-to-be-abandoned highwheeler. Advertisement: Louis Rubenstein advertisement for Rudge Safety wheel, ca. 1891-93. Source: Library and Archives Canada/ Montreal Amateur Athletic Association Fonds/ MG 28, I351, Vol. 10, File 3, Montreal Bicycle Club, 1891-1894 Minute Book.

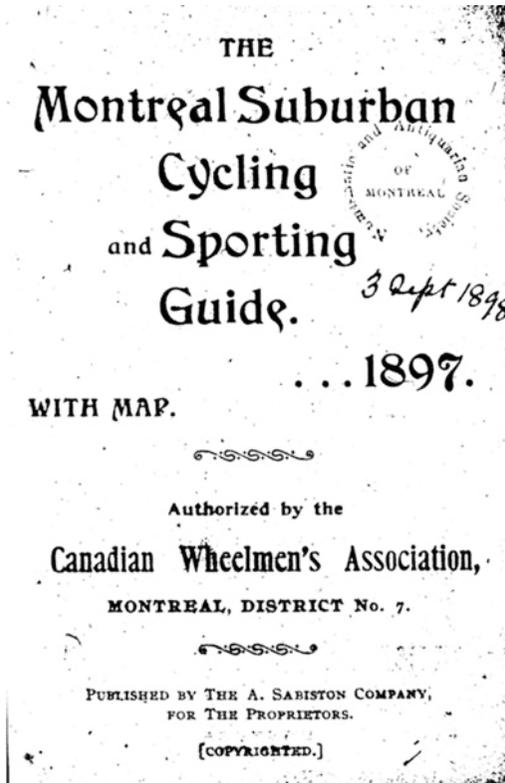


Figure 6 — By the mid-1890s, Canadian cyclists could choose from a number of guide-books that mapped out cycling routes, hotels, restaurants, and other facilities. Source: *The Montreal Suburban Cycling and Sporting Guide* (Montreal: The A. Sabiston Company, 1897).

THE MONTREAL SUBURBAN

828 Dorchester Street,
OPPOSITE ST. JAMES CLUB,

BICYCLE LIVERY

AND

Messenger Service,

OPEN DAY & NIGHT.

CITY AGENT FOR:

Centaur, King of Scorchers - - \$100.00
 Centaur, Queen " - - - 100.00

The Best Coventry, England, Manufacture:

Speed King - - - - - \$65.00
 Speed Queen - - - - - 65.00

Second-Hand Wheels always on Hand.

BELL TELEPHONE 5033
 MERCHTS " 31.

H. D. CAMPBELL.

CYCLING AND SPORTING GUIDE, 1897.

WHEELMEN'S FAVORED ROUTES.

Shown in Red on Map.

Montreal to Lachine Locks,

returning by the lower road, 22 miles.—A very enjoyable ride for a summer evening is to go by the upper road via Blue Bonnets to Lachine Locks, crossing the canal and returning by the lower or river road, following the St. Lawrence all the way home. The scenery is magnificent and the roads are very good.

Around the Two Mountains,

About 12 Miles.

Another fine evening ride, up Bleury St past the Exhibition grounds and through the village of Cote de Neiges, returning by the Cote St. Luc road. The road is splendid all the way, and just enough grades to make the ride pleasant.

Montreal to St. Rose,

15 Miles.

Montreal.....	0
Sault au Recollet.....	7
St. Rose.....	15

Leave Montreal by St. Lawrence St. to Sault au Recollet, crossing the Back River by the bridge (fare 5c), thence west to the village of St. Rose; good roads all the way, with the exception of the last two miles, which are stony and rough.

Around the Island of Montreal.

85 Miles.

Montreal.....	0
Henrieville.....	37
Longue Pointe.....	6
Pointe aux Trembles.....	10 1/2
Port de l'Isle.....	4
Sault au Recollet.....	15 1/2
Pointe St. Charles.....	3 1/2
Pointe St. Pierre.....	4

FAMILY WASHING OUR SPECIALTY

LAUNDRY DEPT. THE MONTREAL TOILET SUPPLY CO. LTD.
 569 Dorchester St. Phone 18.07

Figure 7 — The pages of *The Montreal Suburban Cycling and Sporting Guide* offered extensive information on cycling in Montreal and beyond. Source: *The Montreal Suburban Cycling and Sporting Guide* (Montreal: The A. Sabiston Company, 1897).

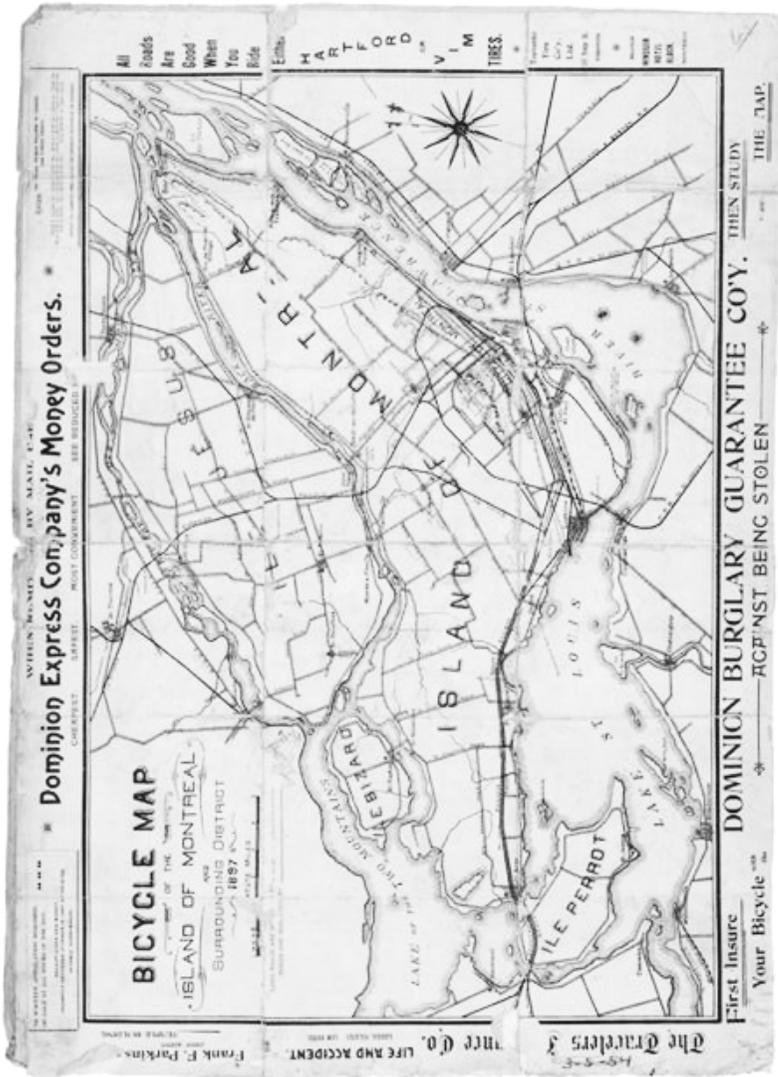


Figure 8 — This 1897 map indicates the extent to which Montreal and the surrounding countryside had been integrated into the cycling world. Source: “Bicycle Map of the Island of Montreal and Surrounding District,” in *The Montreal Suburban Cycling and Sporting Guide* (Montreal: The A. Sabiston Company, 1897).

and *Sporting Guide* noted that “the scenery is magnificent and the roads are very good”; similarly, the routes around Mount Royal and Westmount were presented as “splendid all the way, and just enough grades to make the ride pleasant.” By contrast, riders were not encouraged by reports of the “rather poor roads to Sault au Recollet”; the many routes it described as “stony and rough”; or the clay roads on the routes to Sorel and Granby that quickly turned to mud when wet, and could only be ridden in dry conditions.³¹

As cycling grew in popularity, municipal authorities became keen to find means to regulate cyclists. Among the key motives for the City were bicycle-related accidents and cyclists travelling at excessive speeds. For its part, Montreal’s cycling community was nervous of any actions on the part of the City that might prove detrimental to its interests, and was well aware that other North American cities were already experiencing a backlash against cyclists. As early as 1892, an article appearing in a local Montreal paper advised the city’s cyclists “to be thankful that their liberties are comparatively uncurtailed as regard the use of the pavements.” In Philadelphia, it noted, cyclists had organized to oppose a series of proposed bylaws aimed at regulating what one local councilor described as an “unmitigated nuisance” on his city’s streets.³² One of the immediate responses of Montreal cyclists was to encourage regulation within the cycling community itself. Their most obvious target was “scorchers,” those riders who travelled city streets at dangerous speeds. By the spring of 1893, reports of cycling-related accidents led the club to speak out against the “fast riding done on the City streets.”³³ Among the MBC’s responses was a letter to the *Montreal Star* that condemned riding at excessive speeds and drew cyclists’ attention to municipal bylaws that prohibited this behavior.³⁴ Problems continued, however, and the growing popularity of the bicycle indicated that this was not about to change. Following an accident in which a Montreal cyclist hit a young girl, the MBC spoke again on the subject, urging members to travel at moderate speeds and to take care at corners and intersections in particular. It also cautioned that, should members not regulate their behavior on their own, they would not only experience “unnecessary friction with the public,” but also “an attempt . . . to take away our rights of the road.”³⁵

And this is exactly what happened. In 1895 the City initiated a series of bylaws aimed at regulating cyclists. Complementing longstanding prohibitions regarding cycling on sidewalks and in city parks, including Mount Royal Park, the new bylaws included mandatory use of a bell and light, a six-mph speed limit, and further speed limits at street intersections (no faster “than a horse walk”).³⁶ Information solicited by Montreal’s Superintendent of Police from his counterpart in Philadelphia gave Montreal authorities even more strategies to consider, in particular that city’s approach to speed and the recent decision in the Pennsylvania’s Supreme Court defining the bicycle as a vehicle and thus subjecting it to all laws covering vehicles.³⁷

Few of Montreal’s respectable cyclists saw the new bylaws as problematic in themselves. The real issue for them lay in the principle, inasmuch as the institution of municipal bylaws set in place an antagonistic relationship between the City and the local cycling community. Likewise the fact that cyclists faced fines under these bylaws did not go over well. But the real blow for cyclists—the one that galvanized the cycling community, that turned many within that community into cycling activists, and that fed directly into the cyclists’ rights movement—was the City’s decision to institute mandatory bicycle licenses. For years, Montreal cyclists

had grumbled about the state of city streets and country roads. As shown above, however, their grumbling seldom amounted to anything more. Taxation changed this overnight. The introduction of money into the equation affected immediately how cyclists interpreted their relationship to the built environment and their legal contexts in general. As they perceived it, taxation established a contract between cyclists and the City, the object of which was improved cycling conditions.

The MBC played a leading role in the movement that emerged. At the top of its list of complaints was the City's ban on cycling in municipal parks, in particular Mount Royal Park. The club had approached the city over this issue once already, not long after cyclists in New York failed to secure access to Central Park in the early 1880s, and had been largely unsuccessful.³⁸ Taxation, however, emboldened club officers. In May 1896, just after the City received permission from the provincial legislature to initiate its \$2.00 annual license, MBC president Louis Rubenstein indicated to members that the timing was right "to make another effort to have our right as wheelmen to use Mount Royal Park when open to the public recognized by the Park Commissioners." After all, he continued, the new tax "should convey the right to the use of all highways open to the public."³⁹ Within a week of sending a letter of protest to municipal authorities, the club had its answer: from now on, cyclists would have access to Mount Royal and other parks in the city.⁴⁰

While negotiating access rights to City parks, MBC members put forward a series of other demands. To the City's Road Committee they sent a letter requesting that it clean up city streets that had long been littered with nails and other debris that damaged cyclist's tires and compromised riding conditions. In the spirit of the moment, they also contacted the Canadian Wheelman's Association to request that it pursue cyclists' anger over excess baggage regulations recently adopted by the railways, which according to the club amounted to "injustice and hardship to wheelmen."⁴¹ Subsequent meetings throughout the summer of 1896 saw members continue to pursue these and other issues, and to routinely employ the language of rights as they did so. In a gesture of goodwill, the club contacted the city in early June to thank it for reestablishing cyclists' access to City parks, and in a carefully worded statement to "pledge their assistance to the Commissioners in enforcing as reasonable regulations having in view the exercise of this right without abuse." In support of City bylaws, members also expressed their "condemnation of the dangerous and ungentlemanly practice of 'scorching' along the public highways and declare their intention to use their influence in discouraging the practice wherever found."⁴² Within two weeks, however, the MBC decided "to stir matters up" again with the City. Once again, the City's new bicycle license fee was front and center. "In view of the tax," the club argued, it "was entitled to enter a strong protest with the Road Committee," this time over "the dangerous state of many of our paved streets through holes and other defects in the Asphalt."⁴³ During the months that followed, members kept the club secretary busy as he drafted letters of protest to the Mayor ("regarding the condition of our paved streets, which were a source of danger to the specially taxed cyclist"); to the City's Road Committee ("regarding nails, glass, and other tire-destroying obstructions on our streets"); and to the Canadian Wheelman's Association, federal and provincial politicians, and other local cycling clubs (over the railways' excess baggage rates charged on bicycles).⁴⁴

The members of the MBC were not alone. During the summer of 1896 there exploded in cities across North America a frenzy of activity around the bicycle.

For many cycling enthusiasts, this summer marked the point at which the bicycle seemed to have emerged to occupy a permanent position in society. As one of the writers in an 1896 special edition of the *Montreal Daily Star* devoted to the bicycle put it, "Wheeling is no longer called a fad or a craze. If it is a craze, then who shall be called upon to act as the custodians of the crazy people?"⁴⁵ While the majority of these new cyclists were not members of the MBC, they too were subject to the new City bylaws, including the \$2.00 municipal license. In fact, similar taxation issues were taking shape in cities across North America as municipalities sought ways to regulate cycling, and one of the results was a growing sense among newly taxed cyclists of their right to better conditions. South of the Canadian border, the *New York Telegram* noted that "the question of bicycle taxation is rampant throughout pretty much all of the west." It also emphasized the reasonable nature of those concerned: "As previously and often stated," it argued, "wheelmen would give the tax no great thought were they satisfied the proceeds would go to the improvement of roads or the building of bicycle paths."⁴⁶ An article in the *Chicago Times-Herald* quoted by a local Montreal paper was more cynical in regards to cyclists' intentions. "It is true that the wheelmen want the earth. It is also true that they want it nicely boulevarded and paved. The earth is of no use to them unless its wrinkled front can be ironed out with the steam roller and covered with macadam."⁴⁷ In Toronto, where the bicycle was being embraced even more than in Montreal, cyclists were working with the Mayor and local councilors to find ways of improving road conditions. Among the options being discussed were a voluntary subscription from cyclists and a mandatory \$1.00 tax on cyclists, with which the City would "lay out some street according to the latest and most approved system for accommodating pedestrian, vehicular and bicycle traffic as it exists today." Such a street, advocates anticipated, would serve not only as an improved route for cyclists, but as a model for future improvements.⁴⁸

Cyclists in Montreal, the *Montreal Daily Star* argued, sought a similar balance between the taxes they paid and the streets they rode on:

If our own bicycle tax could be devoted in some way to the improvement of the streets, it would be paid less grudgingly. Smooth streets and good roads are questions of live politics to all wheelmen. At present, there are parts of the country, picturesque, interesting, ideal places for a holiday run—absolutely closed against cyclists by the bad roads which must be encountered to reach and traverse them. Other delightful districts are not impossible, but there enjoyment is made very arduous by the wretched roads with which they are supplied.⁴⁹

These sentiments were echoed by "A Practical Wheelman," who pointed out that while the Montreal region boasted a few fine stretches of road, the overall situation was not good. "In this matter of country roads," the anonymous writer argued, "Montreal wheelmen are perhaps not so fortunate as many of their western brethren for on the whole the number of really excellent wheeling roads on the island are not many."⁵⁰

During the fall of 1896, interest in cycling predictably waned. For its part, the MBC turned attention to its annual round of winter activities. The following spring, however, members returned to their new political agenda. In April 1897 the club again wrote to City Council, "pointing out the poor condition of the streets, and asking that in view of the tax imposed something should be done to put them

in order.” And in an effort to draw more of the city’s cycling community into the protest, it called on the city’s other cycling clubs to register their complaints with municipal authorities. This was a critical move, for by this time the MBC was but one of many cycling clubs active in the city. In addition to those clubs that were extensions of existing institutions—the YMCA Bicycle Club, the Point St. Charles Amateur Athletic Association Bicycling Club, and the Victoria Rifles Bicycle Club—there were a number of French and English clubs: the Primrose Bicycle Club; the Voltigeurs Bicycle Club; the Montagnard Bicycle Club; the Wanderers Bicycle Club; and, for boys not yet old enough to join the MBC, the Junior Montreal Bicycle Club.⁵¹ Thus, while the MBC continued to press the issue in its own right, by the spring of 1897 it was also uniting the city’s broader cycling community in opposition to municipal authorities.⁵²

At this point, Montreal cyclists discovered that they were facing the possibility of yet another tax on their activities. This time, the threat came from the Montreal Turnpike Trust, which wanted to charge cyclists tolls on their use of certain proposed routes in and around the city.⁵³ Initially, Rubenstein suggested that the MBC not act officially on the issue until a new set of reviewers for the Trust was elected. “Should they then do anything detrimental to the Wheelmen’s interest,” Rubenstein assured his fellow members, “the CWA [the Canadian Wheelman’s Association] would take the matter up, and if necessary fight it.”⁵⁴ His assurances failed to quell cyclists’ fears, however. Discussions among the members of the MBC continued into the fall, with the club taking no formal action.⁵⁵ By the end of the year, though, growing discontent saw the city’s cycling community step beyond the MBC and other cycling clubs in order to form a new organization.

The result was the Cyclists’ Rights Association. An advocacy group that claimed to represent the interests of Montreal’s cycling community, it had the support of all of the city’s bicycle clubs as well as “unattached riders.”⁵⁶ It also had as its president Louis Rubenstein, who in addition to being the current president of the MBC, was one of the most respected figures in Canadian sporting circles. Born in 1861 to a family of Jewish Montreal merchants, Rubenstein came to the forefront during the 1880s as a figure skater of international renown, holding numerous national and international titles, including his victory in the 1890 World Skating Championship in St. Petersburg, Russia. After retiring from figure skating in 1892, Rubenstein became a key figure in Canadian sports administration and later municipal politics. In addition to his work as MBC president and later as president of the Canadian Wheelman’s Association for eighteen years, he devoted considerable time to other sports. Following his skating career, he was perhaps best known as the honorary secretary of the Amateur Skating Association of Canada. As such, Rubenstein brought to the Cyclists’ Rights Association a considerable degree of prominence.⁵⁷

In December 1897, Rubenstein and the other members of the Association circulated to the newspapers, local politicians, and cycling clubs throughout the city a platform that they intended to employ as leverage in Montreal’s upcoming municipal elections. It consisted of three demands and a pledge. First, that the City reduce its “wheel tax” from \$2.00 to fifty cents; second, that the City restrict the watering of paved streets (which it did for cleaning) to the period between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.; third, that it enforce existing bylaws regarding the throwing of debris (“nails, tacks, glass, etc.,”) on city streets; and finally, that the Association would

support passage of a bylaw restricting cyclists' speed to ten mph in order to improve their standing with the public.⁵⁸ To rally the city's cycling community around this platform, the Association organized a mass meeting for the end of January 1898, to which it invited a number of provincial politicians, local aldermen, and candidates in the upcoming municipal election.

The meeting was held on 26 January, and it proved a raucous affair. In all, some 300 cycling advocates came out to support the Cyclists' Rights Association and to consider the pledges of local and provincial politicians. While the meeting remained on the edge of degenerating into a mud-slinging match between political contenders, organizers managed for the most part to keep the discussion focused on the concerns that the association brought forward. In addition to the groups' immediate list of demands, cyclists spent a good deal of time discussing the Turnpike Trust's recently failed effort to run a bill through the provincial legislature that would have allowed it to charge cyclists tolls before building its proposed cycling paths. For his part, Rubenstein argued that "if the Turnpike Trust would put down these cinder paths first, riders would then be prepared to pay whatever taxes were necessary, but to charge them for nothing was a manifestly unjust procedure." In this, Rubenstein underestimated the sentiments of many cyclists present. The widespread condemnation of the Turnpike Trust's proposed cinder paths reflected more than anger over its attempt to tax cyclists. During the late nineteenth century, many cyclists saw the construction of dedicated cycling lanes as a form of marginalization. At the center of what they identified as a growing and progressive movement in human transportation, these riders did not want the right to paths—they wanted the roads themselves. The MBC was no different. It argued in 1898 that "cycle paths on the Island of Montreal are unnecessary" and represented the "thin edge of the wedge" that would see cyclists pushed off city streets altogether.⁵⁹ Albert William Atwater agreed, and having established a reputation in the provincial legislature as a vigorous defender of cyclists' interests, he was able at the meeting to ride a wave of popular support. "If better roads could not be had," he argued—turning popular sentiment into a statement of principle that met with resounding approval—"no tax or tolls should be asked for."⁶⁰

All of this activity might lead one to believe that the cyclist's rights movement was on a roll. Indeed, it is unlikely that anyone at the meeting of the Cyclists' Rights Association that January would have predicted that the movement would soon lose steam, or that the bicycle itself would fade into relative obscurity. After all, the movement seemed to be progressing rapidly. With relatively little effort, cyclists had already persuaded the City to remove its ban prohibiting cyclists from riding in Mount Royal and other city parks. Now they had built an advocacy group to argue directly on their behalf. In the months that followed, they saw their complaints regarding the railway baggage bill meet with success; they persuaded the City to address the littering of city streets with debris; and at the end of April, just before the start of the new cycling season, they achieved their biggest victory when the City cut its bicycle license fee in half.⁶¹ Nevertheless, within little over a year, the movement ground to a halt. The sudden collapse of the bicycle's popularity undoubtedly contributed to the movement's abrupt demise, but another local factor also played an important role. As 1898 unfolded, cyclists in Montreal were more confident of their capacity to turn their city and the adjacent countryside into a cycling-friendly environment than

they had ever been. So confident were they that, just following the January meeting of the Cyclists' Rights Movement, the MBC initiated discussions to bring the World's Bicycle Meet to Montreal in 1899.

This was no meager undertaking. Organized in 1892 by the newly formed International Cycling Association, it was the cycling world's biggest event. The United States had hosted the Meet in the past, but its center of gravity was clearly European, and the case for holding it again in North America had to be strong.⁶² In this regard, it was not at all clear why Montreal should take precedence over other prominent North American cities such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, or even Toronto, which also had a strong cycling community. Still, the MBC knew that securing the 1899 World's Bicycle Meet would bring the attention of the international cycling community to bear on Montreal, and would in turn bring all Montrealers' attention to the bicycle. As such, proponents rightly saw the Meet's potential to secure the kinds of material changes they sought. In general this made sense, inasmuch as the Meet would put cyclists in a strong position relative to the City. The results, however, were not so straightforward. Efforts to bring the World's Bicycle Meet to Montreal transformed the aggressive, antagonistic strategy of cyclists into something much more positive, diplomatic, and conciliatory. They also consumed much of the energy that cycling proponents formerly aimed at the City. Most important of all, these efforts took away the city's most popular proponent of cyclists' rights. Soon after agreeing that it would pursue the Meet, the MBC selected Louis Rubenstein to lead the project. Given that he had just succeeded in bringing the World Speed Skating Championship to Montreal in 1897, Rubenstein was an excellent choice. Nevertheless, he was taking on a daunting task, and pursuing it through local, national, and international networks left him little time to tend to the Cyclists' Rights Association. Thus, although in the end Rubenstein succeeded in bringing the World Meet to Montreal, his absence also helped put the cyclists' rights movement on hold.

That August, cyclists from around the world gathered in Montreal for a week of races and related events, many of which took place at the City's newly constructed Queen's Park Track in Verdun.⁶³ Even though complaints regarding the "disgraceful condition" of city streets continued to surface, the overall mood was festive, and the excitement of Montreal cyclists overshadowed efforts to use the Meet as an opportunity for politics.⁶⁴ Describing it as "one of the greatest sporting attractions the continent of America has ever seen," the *Montreal Daily Star* focused extensively on the races, and offered little indication that there might be tensions between the City and the cycling community.⁶⁵ Ironically, the event also obscured for Montrealers the fact that by 1899 the city's cycling boom was already waning. By this point it had all but crashed in other North American cities, the victim of an overextended bicycle industry, the absence of recent technological innovations that might have kept the middle class purchasing new machines, and the slow realization of material changes to the built environment. In a portent of what was to come, one of the Meet's most popular events was the automobile race.⁶⁶ As for cycling in Montreal, it crashed soon after the Meet. A good indication of this can be found in the number of bicycle licenses issued by the City. Whereas Montrealers purchased 7973 licenses in 1898, by 1902 the number of licenses sold in the city had dropped to 2307.⁶⁷ The MBC followed the same pattern. In 1898 it held one of its best seasons, bringing in records for total club mileage and individual club mileage

(1340 and 1288 miles respectively); the greatest number of club rides (65) since 1885; and a respectable total turnout of 626 participants. Yet within two years, the club was struggling. In 1901, it managed to hold only 20 rides totaling 229 miles. Of these, its greatest single muster was 8, compared to 45 in 1898. Average and total attendance (4 and 74 participants) were likewise at all-time lows.⁶⁸ As the club itself observed in its annual report for 1901-1902, "public interest in riding and racing has in a great measure died out."⁶⁹

In retrospect, and in light of the complexity involved in reshaping North America's expansive, automobile-dominated cities to accommodate the bicycle today, the rise and fall of the cyclists' rights movement in Montreal is perhaps best understood as a story of missed opportunities. To a considerable degree, those missed opportunities were the result of timing and context. If the middle-class cycling craze did not collapse, if the safety bicycle came sooner, if the automobile came later, things might have been different. Still, it is difficult to take lessons from could-have-beens, and there remains much within the cyclists' rights movement and late-nineteenth-century cycling culture that we can look to in order to understand its successes and its shortcomings. First, the establishment of the Cyclists' Rights Association itself must be credited as a success. Though short-lived, the Association nevertheless managed to grab the attention both of cyclists and municipal authorities, and within a few months saw many of its objectives materialize. Indeed, it is amazing that the movement accomplished as much as it did. In this regard, we can also credit the capacity of cyclists in the 1890s to network and to institutionalize, both key components of any successful movement. Finally, one cannot lose sight of the rights-based discourse that Montreal's cycling proponents adopted, and through which they shaped an argument based on general principles—in this case, the contract established via taxation between cyclists and the City of Montreal, and by extension the responsibility of any institution that took money from cyclists to provide appropriate services to them. In this regard in particular, the movement was ahead of its time.

But the cyclists' rights movement also suffered from a number of shortfalls of its own making. For one, given that so many of the cycling community's basic complaints were familiar throughout the 1890s and even the 1880s, the fact that it took taxation to move the MBC, the Canadian Wheelman's Association, and others to action speaks to a lack of political imagination on the part of cyclists. In addition, once they became politically active and the bicycle boom was in full swing, cycling proponents tended to overestimate the place of the bicycle in society. In their eagerness to take over the streets and their condemnation of anything short of this claim, cyclists missed an opportunity to establish bicycle lanes that separated cyclists from other vehicular traffic. In hindsight, this is one of the movement's greatest failures. For in addition to addressing concerns over speed limits, street debris, and road conditions in general, the establishment of separate lanes would have put in place the kind of cycling infrastructure that cities throughout North America are struggling to incorporate today, and that cycling proponents in Montreal have been advocating for since the 1970s. Caught up in the boom of the late 1890s, Montreal's cycling community like so many others failed to see that the urban expansion of the last half of the nineteenth century would continue into the twentieth, and that this would have considerable implications in regards to transportation. Nor, of course, were they able to take into

account the rise of the automobile, which was predicted by the turn of the century and would soon transform North America's cities into decidedly unfriendly cycling environments.

In hindsight, the greatest shortcoming of the cyclists' rights movement was the recreational mindset of middle-class cyclists. Not that cyclists did not use their machines as practical means of transportation; as noted above, by the early 1880s some Montrealers were using their bicycles to travel to and from work. But most middle-class cyclists saw the bicycle as a recreational machine, and this limited their understanding of its utility as a general transportation device. As Phillip Gordon MacIntosh and Glen Norcliffe argue in their work on bicycle "flaneurs," this kind of cycling was very much a form of spectacle: for many participants, cycling was about being seen to be on the cusp of modernity.⁷⁰ On this note, we can see just how wrong Atwater was when he proclaimed in 1898 that he and other cyclists were "no longer freaks." In fact, cyclists during the late nineteenth century traded on freakdom. Not the kind found in the era's circuses and opera houses, certainly, but a comfortable, middle-class version that employed the bicycle, its novelty, and its association with progress and modernity as a means of identification. In this sense, it is not surprising that the cycling craze died out at the very point it seemed to be going mainstream, and was about to lose its freakish identity. Once gone, it would be more than seven decades before a cyclists' rights movement would again take shape in the city. When it did, it surfaced in the context of a new wave of cycling advocacy. Informed by the counterculture and the social movements of the period, Montreal's new generation of cycling proponents relied in their own ways on spectacle and performance as strategies, all the while unaware of the movement that preceded them.

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Notes

1. "Cyclists and Their Rights," *Montreal Daily Star*, 26 January 1898, 1.
2. An excellent survey of the history of the bicycle is David V. Herlihy, *Bicycle: the History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004). For an introduction to the bicycle in its Canadian context, see Glen Norcliffe, *The Ride to Modernity: the Bicycle in Canada, 1869-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Sharon Anne Babaian, *The Most Benevolent Machine: a Historical Assessment of Cycles in Canada* (Ottawa: Canada Science and Technology Museum, 1998). The journal *Cycle History: Proceedings of the International Cycling History Conferences* is devoted to the history of bicycles and cycling. On the development of public and leisure spaces in Montreal, see Michèle Dagenais, *Faire et fuir la ville. Espaces publics de culture et de loisirs à Montréal aux XIXe et XXe siècles* (Sainte-Foy, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2006).
3. "Cyclists' Rights Movement," *Montreal Gazette*, 25 January 1898, 2.

4. On the history of cycling activism and politics in Montreal during the twentieth century see Claire Morissette, *Deux roués, un avenir: Le vélo en ville* (Montréal: Les Éditions Écosociété, 1994). On *Le Monde à Bicyclette* see also the group's website: <http://www.lemab.ca>.
5. Phillip Gordon Mackintosh and Glen Norcliffe, "Men, Women and the Bicycle: Gender and Social Geography of Cycling in the Late Nineteenth Century," in eds. Dave Horton, Paul Rosen and Peter Cox, *Cycling and Society* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2007): 153-77; Phillip Gordon MacIntosh and Glen Norcliffe, "Flaneurie on Bicycles: Public Acquiescence to Women in Public in the 1890s," *Canadian Geographer*, 50, 1 (2006): 17-37.
6. For an outline of these developments see Herlihy, 15-126.
7. For information on rinks, riding schools, and manufacturers see the advertisements in the *Montreal Evening Star*, 15 March 1869, 1; 24 March 1869, 1; 15 April 1869, 1. *Montreal Directory for 1868-69* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1868), 286.
8. "Velocipede! Velocipede!" *Montreal Evening Star*, 3 August 1869, 4.
9. "A Grand Velocipede Masquerade," *Montreal Evening Star*, 3 April 1869, 3.
10. "The Ice Velocipede—From a Sketch by our Artist," *The Canadian Illustrated News* 19 February 1870, 244. On similar developments in other parts of Canada, see Norcliffe, *The Ride to Modernity*, 83-87.
11. On the challenges associated with reshaping Montreal into a modern urban and industrial center during the nineteenth century, see the recent collection of articles in Stéphane Castonguay and Michèle Dagenais, eds, *Metropolitan Natures: Urban Environmental Histories of Montreal* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011); see also Jason Gilliland, "The Creative Destruction of Montreal: Street Widening and Urban (Re)Development in the Nineteenth Century," *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine* 31 1 (2002): 37-63.
12. For a history of the MBA and the MAAA see Don Morrow, *A Sporting Evolution: The Montreal Amateur Athletic Association 1881-1981* (Montreal: The Montreal Amateur Athletic Association, 1981).
13. On the evolution of sporting culture in Montreal, see Gillian Poulter, *Becoming Native in a Foreign Land: Sport, Visual Culture, and Identity in Montreal, 1840-85* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009); see also Gerald Redmond, "Some Aspects of Organized Sport and Leisure in the Nineteenth Century," *Loisir et société / Society and Leisure* 2, 1 (April 1979): 73-100.
14. Glen Norcliffe offers a detailed discussion of the MBC as an expression of "technological citizenship" during the highwheeler era of the 1880s in Glen Norcliffe, "Associations, Modernity and the Insider-citizens of a Victorian Highwheel Bicycle Club," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 19 2 (2006), 121-50. See also Norcliffe, *The Ride to Modernity*, 193-95 on cycling clubs in Canada; on the League of American Wheelmen see Herlihy, 204.
15. Norcliffe, *The Ride to Modernity*, 197.
16. LAC, Montreal Amateur Athletic Association Fonds, MG 28, Vol. 10, File 1, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book, 1878-1882*, Report of the Committee to the Third Annual Meeting of the Montreal Bicycle Club.
17. LAC, Montreal Amateur Athletic Association Fonds, MG 28, Vol. 10, File 1, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book, 1878-1882*, Report of the Committee to the Third Annual Meeting of the Montreal Bicycle Club.
18. LAC, Montreal Amateur Athletic Association Fonds, MG 28, Vol. 10, File 1, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book, 1878-1882*, Report of the Committee to the Third Annual Meeting of the Montreal Bicycle Club.
19. LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, vol. 10, file 4, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book 1895-1911*, Annual Report of the Montreal Bicycle Club, Season 1901-02, p. 75.
20. Herlihy, 178-81, 141-43.

21. LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, Vol. 10, File 2, *MBC Minute Book 1885-91*, "The Wheel," news clipping, c. July 1886, p. 42.
22. On the good roads movement see Norcliffe, 149-57; Herlihy, 204-05.
23. LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, Vol. 10, File 2, *MBC Minute Book 1885-91*, "Sport," news clipping, c. 16 June 1887; "Another Lane Gets Up," news clipping, c. 28 July 1887.
24. LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, Vol. 10, File 2, *MBC Minute Book 1885-91*, "The Wheel," news clipping, c. July 1886, p. 42.
25. LAC, Montreal Amateur Athletic Association Fonds, MG 28, Vol. 10, File 1, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book, 1878-1882*, Report of the Committee to the Third Annual Meeting of the Montreal Bicycle Club.
26. Norcliffe recounts four initiatives during the fourteen years between 1880 and 1893 in which the MBC confronted political or legal issues. Of these, two letters to federal ministers in 1880 and 1882 regarding bicycle tariffs were unsuccessful; an 1881 attempt to have the ban on cycling in Mount Royal Park lifted resulted in a partial and temporary reprieve (the city initially opened the park to cyclists until 10 a.m., then later reinstated the ban); an effort to discourage the City from applying a new bicycle tax in 1893 failed to prevent it from moving in this direction; and the club's discussion in 1885 of defending two members who faced a potential claim for damages came to an end before formal charges were laid. See Glen Norcliffe, "Associations, Modernity and the Insider-citizens of a Victorian Highwheel Bicycle Club," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 19 2 (2006): 121-50: 141, 145-46.
27. On the development of the safety bicycle see Herlihy 232-40.
28. Herlihy 246, 252.
29. For an early example of these competitions see LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, Vol. 10, File 3, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book, 1891-94*, "Road Race Between Safeties and Ordinaries," news clipping, c. 26 September 1891.
30. City of Montreal, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Police for the Year 1896* (Montreal: The Montreal Printing and Publishing Company, 1897); City of Montreal, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Police for the Year 1897* (Montreal: The Montreal Printing and Publishing Company, 1898); City of Montreal, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Police for the Year 1898* (Montreal: The Montreal Printing and Publishing Company, 1899).
31. *The Montreal Suburban Cycling and Sporting Guide* (Montreal: The A. Sebastian Company, 1897): 3-7.
32. LAC, Montreal Amateur Athletic Association Fonds, MG 28, I 351, Vol. 10, File 3, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book, 1891-1894*, "We Ought to be Happy Here," news clipping, c. May 1892.
33. LAC, Montreal Amateur Athletic Association Fonds, MG 28, I 351, Vol. 10, File 3, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book, 1891-1894*, 11 May 1893, p. 109.
34. LAC, Montreal Amateur Athletic Association Fonds, MG 28, I 351, Vol. 10, File 3, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book, 1891-1894*, 11 May 1893, p. 109.
35. LAC, Montreal Amateur Athletic Association, MG 28, I, 351, Vol. 10, File 3, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book, 1891-1894*, 21 April 1892, p. 30.
36. "Of Interest to Wheelmen," *Montreal Gazette* 5 July 1895, 8.
37. "Of Interest to Wheelmen," *Montreal Gazette* 5 July 1895, 8.
38. Herlihy, 205. On Mount Royal Park, see note 26.
39. LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, I 351, Vol. 10, File 4, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book 1895-1911*, 21 May 1896, p. 24-25.
40. LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, I 351, Vol. 10, File 4, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book 1895-1911*, 28 May 1896, p. 26-27.

41. LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, I 351, Vol. 10, File 4, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book 1895-1911*, 21 May 1896, p. 24–25.
42. LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, I 351, Vol. 10, File 4, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book 1895-1911*, 4 June 1896, p. 30. In separate studies, Norcliffe and Mackintosh describe this kind of conciliatory behavior as one of the means by which respectable riders sought to establish a middle-class sense of social order. See Phillip Gordon Mackintosh, "A Bourgeois Geography of Domestic Bicycling: Using Public Space Responsibly in Toronto and Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1890-1900," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 20 1/2 (2007): 126–57; Glen Norcliffe, "Associations, Modernity and the Insider-citizens of a Victorian Highwheel Bicycle Club," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 19 2 (2006), 121–50: 143.
43. LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, I 351, Vol. 10, File 4, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book 1895-1911*, 16 July 1896, p. 45.
44. *Annual Report of the Montreal Bicycle Club, Season 1896*, n.p., 1897, 95.
45. "The Season of the Cycle," *Montreal Daily Star*, 2 May 1896, 2.
46. "Bicycle Taxation," *Montreal Daily Star*, 2 May 1896, 15.
47. Quoted in "The Rights of the Wheel," *Montreal Daily Star*, 2 May 1896, 8. Macadam refers to a method of road construction popularized during the nineteenth century.
48. "The Rights of the Wheel," *Montreal Daily Star*, 2 May 1896, 8.
49. "Wheelmen and Government Roads," *Montreal Daily Star*, 2 May 1896, 8.
50. "Our Nearby Country Roads," *Montreal Daily Star*, 2 May 1896, 10.
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54. LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, I 351, Vol. 10, File 4, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book 1895-1911*, 20 May 1897, p. 99.
55. LAC, MAAA Fonds, MG 28, I 351, Vol. 10, File 4, Montreal Bicycle Club, *Minute Book 1895-1911*, 23 September 1897, p. 127.
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57. "Cyclists and Their Rights," *Montreal Daily Star*, 26 January 1898, 1. For a brief biography of Rubenstein see the Canada's Sports Hall of Fame: <http://www.sportshall.ca/honoured-members/27580/louis-rubenstein>.
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62. "Wheelmen of Four Continents Gather in Montreal for the World's Bicycle Meet," *Montreal Daily Star*, 5 August 1899, 16.
63. On the Verdun track see "End of the World's Bicycle Meet," *Montreal Daily Star* 14 August 1899, 1; *Annual Report of the Montreal Bicycle Club, Season 1898-99* (n.p., 1900), 79. The *Montreal Daily Star* and other local newspapers offered thorough coverage of events during the week.

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