

Winona to
Minnesota City

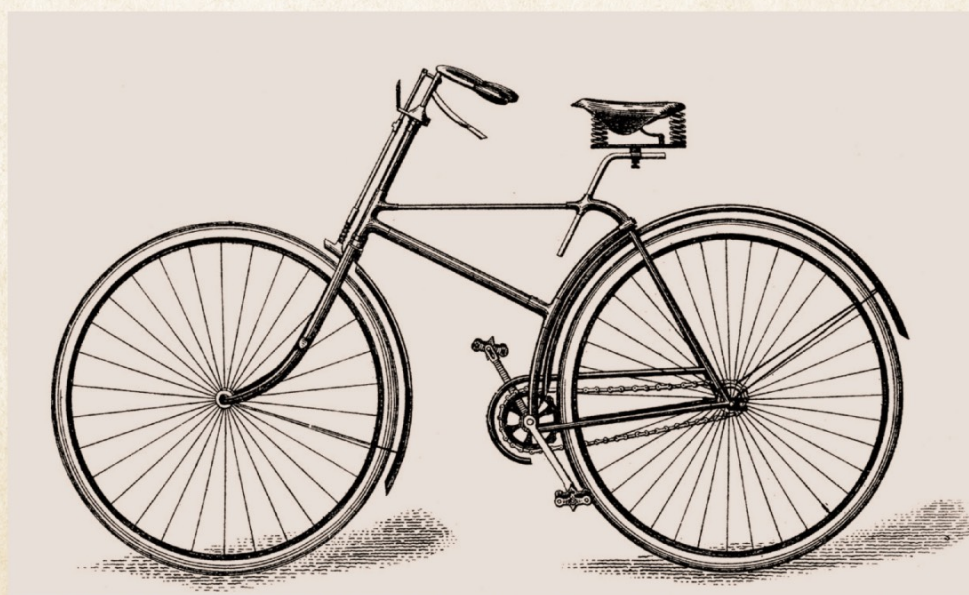
Bike
Path
1897

Presentation by Andrea Church
Minnesota City Historical Association





High Wheel Bicycle



Safety Bicycle

Introduction

The "Safety" Bicycle Craze (1890s): During the 1890s, the introduction of the modern "safety" bicycle (with two equal-sized wheels, a chain drive, and pneumatic tires) transformed cycling. Bicycles transitioned from expensive toys for the wealthy to accessible transportation for the masses, which spurred an enormous surge in local ridership.

The safety bicycle gave local women a brand new sense of independence and mobility. Despite restrictive Victorian-era clothing, women in Winona actively took to cycling as a way to enjoy the outdoors and travel independently.

Planning for Bike Path

"The first steps toward constructing a bicycle path between Minnesota City and Winona were taken today, when the official permission of the County Commissioners was asked and secured... The path proposed is to be four feet wide, and to extend along the south side of the highway between the Winona city limits and the village of Minnesota City. It will be constructed of rolled soil, with a rise of four inches in the center. Additions will be made to the bridges so as to give the bicyclists a crossing of their own..The estimated expense is between \$500 and \$600".


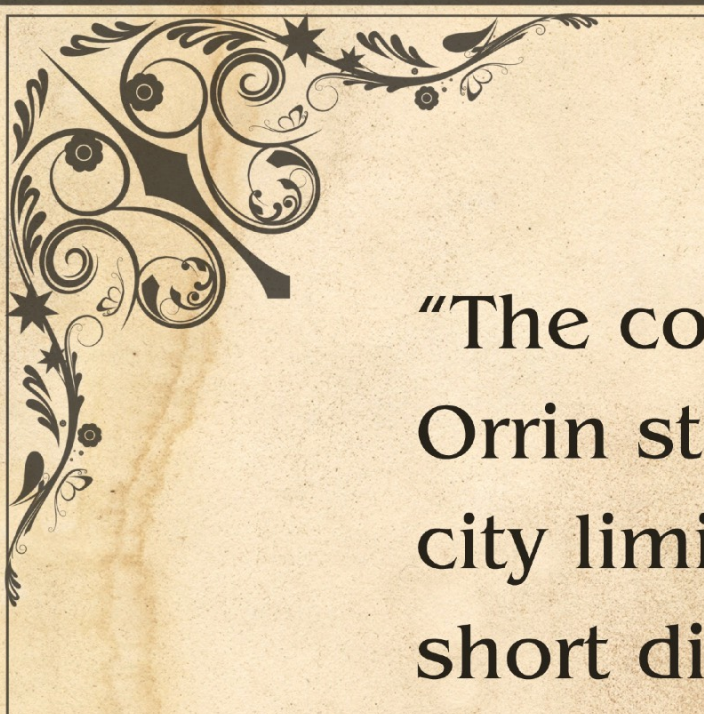
6/13/1896 Winona Daily Republican



Bike Path is Built 1897

“From Winona to Minnesota City, with two side loops, are the routes determined for the first cycle paths to be constructed by the Cycle Path Association...The conclusions designated below have taken into consideration: First: Directness of Route, with the greatest possibilities for extensions so as to form connecting links with our villages for business purposes as well as pleasure. Second: Absolute safety of riders of all grades of proficiency. Third: Economy of construction and maintenance. Fourth: Picturesqueness of route.”

6/2/1897 Winona Daily Republican



“The course of the path has been laid out as follows: Starting at Orrin street it will extend along the south side of Fifth street to the city limits and on the south side of the Minnesota City road for a short distance further. Then it will cross to the north side of the road and continue there till the railway crossing is reached. Beyond the crossing it will be on the south side until just before Mr. George Fifield’s place is reached, when it will again cross to the north side. On Mr. Fifield’s land it will leave the road, it not being deemed wise or safe to construct the path along the somewhat narrow elevated road at this place, and Mr. Fifield having granted permission to have the path run over his land. The Rollingsstone creek will be crossed on a low bridge built in connection with the path.

(continued next page)>





"The path will keep on the north side of the road until the Minnesota City hill is reached. The town authorities have recently decided to cut down this hill six feet, so that it will make the ascent much easier. At the top of the hill the path will cross to the south side and continue there until Mr. Calbick's place is reached. Then it will cross to the north side once more and keep on that side until Minnesota City is reached...In the portion of the path now being constructed only the natural soil is being used. It is being plowed up and graded so as to give good drainage and keep the path dry. It will be rolled with a two ton roller and then will be hard and in fine shape to use." 6/8/1897 *Winona Daily Republican*

"It is the intention to have a hard smooth path all the way out. Benches will be provided at stated distances along the route for the accommodation of the cyclists and it is quite likely a pump will be placed of the Duncan hill where the wheelers can quench their thirst"

6/17/1897 Winona Daily Republican

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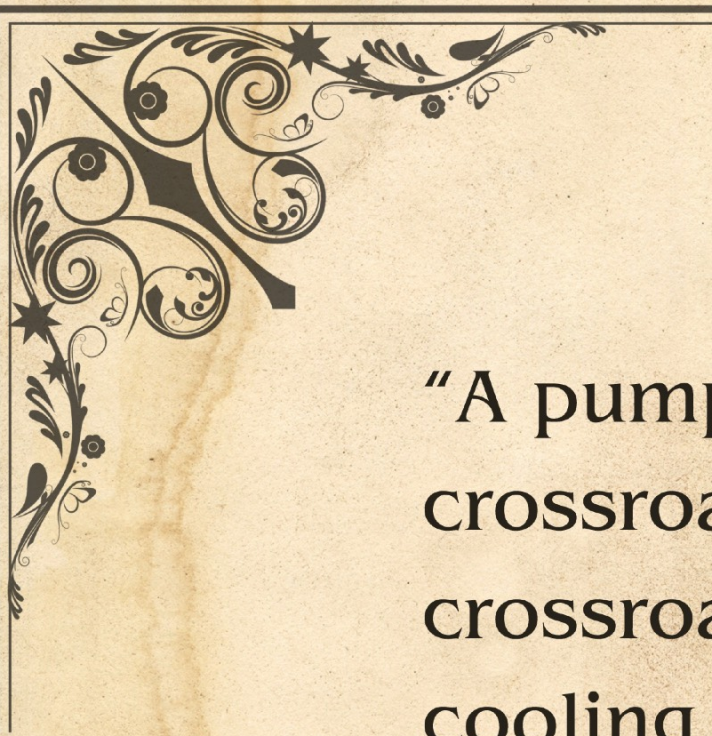
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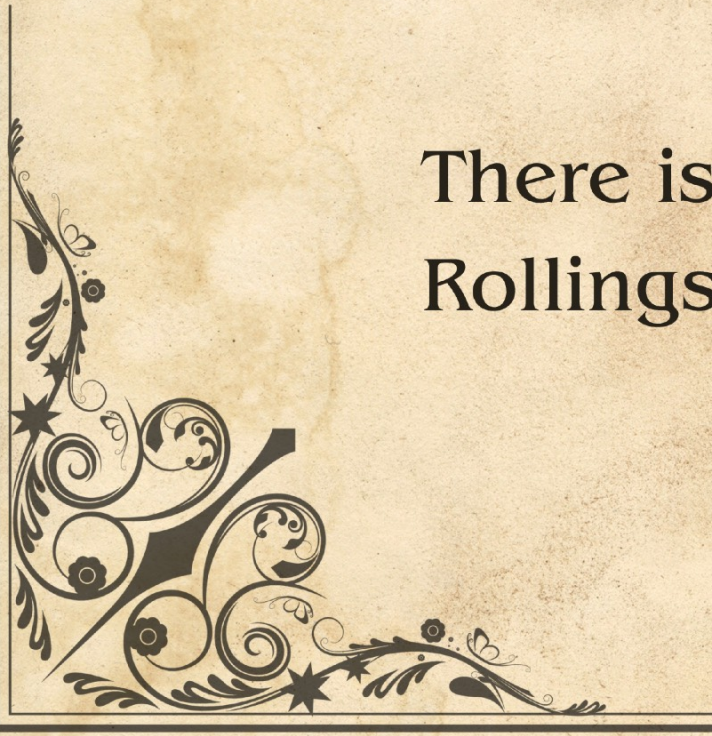
Agents for Minnesota, Western Wisconsin, South Dakota and part of Iowa.

Bike Path Completed 1897

"The middle of next week will see the bicycle path to Minnesota City completed. Good progress has been made the past week, and the workmen have now reached the railway depot at Minnesota City. The path will be completed a short distance beyond there into the village proper....The benches that are to be placed along the path for the use of cyclists that desire to rest on the journey are made and painted and will be set out next week. Last week Engineer Heuston, Attorney Finkelinburg and a plumber went out and located the pump, which will be used by cyclists in quenching their thirst. The pump was placed today, and beyond doubt, if the day is fine, many wheelmen will sample the water tomorrow. The pump is of the oscillating pattern and was ordered specially for the path." 6/26/1897 *Winona Daily Republican*



“A pump has been placed in the bicycle park on the south end of the crossroad. A favorite ride is to go out on the Minnesota City path to this crossroad, then south to the park, where a rest under the trees and a cooling drink can be enjoyed...Seats have recently been placed at convenient places on the Minnesota City path. They are notched at the ends so that bicycles can be conveniently held there while the owners are resting. The Minnesota City path is used every fine evening by hundreds of cyclists.” 7/27/1897 *Winona Daily Republican*



There is some talk of extending the Minnesota City bicycle path to Rollingstone.” 4/16/1898 *Winona Daily Republican*



Vandalism Strikes



“It is disgusting to what depths of vandalism some people can descend. The fact that some people had placed tacks on the Minnesota City path has heretofore been noted. Not content with this the process has been begun of smashing the pump at the foot of Duncan’s hill. On several evenings recently bicyclists going out there have found the pump out of order. Each time it has been repaired only to be broken again. This is done maliciously as evidenced by the fact that large stones have been used. There is some talk of employing a man to watch the pump and catch the offender in his act of devilment. If he is ever brought before the courts it is bound to go hard with him and deservedly.” 7/9/1897

Winona Daily Republican



More Bike Path Challenges

“Practically no attention has been paid to the bicycle paths in and about the city during the summer, and as a rule they are not in the best of condition. This is especially true of the path out to Minnesota City, which is being used to a considerable extent. In many places the path has become washed by the rains and other portions are covered with sand and gravel. Unless some attention is paid to it the path will be of little use in another season”. 8/10/1900
Winona Daily Republican

“The paths leading out to Minnesota City and over in the bicycle park have been ruined by teams being driven over them during the early spring when the ground is soft. If the wheelmen desire to have these paths repaired action should be taken at once”.

4/24/1901 *Winona Daily Republican*



Interest Fades by 1902

"The carrying forward of this permanent road improvement work reveals one thing very plainly, and that is that there is no longer any demand for the Minnesota City bicycle path that a few years ago was so popular with cyclists."



"It has been falling into disuse for the past two years, but up to the commencement of this work was in such shape that it could still be used for cycling as far out as the railway crossing halfway to Minnesota City...That those bicycle paths have been destroyed the wheelmen have only themselves to blame. Had any interest been shown in the paths and their use continued care would have been taken to have them preserved but as all interest in cycling outings have apparently been withdrawn there was no object in keeping the paths in condition nor was any money available for this purpose."

11/24/1902 Winona Daily Republican



“When the path is completed Minnesota City will be the Mecca of wheelmen on pleasant summer evenings.”

6/8/1897 Winona Daily Republican