



Bicycle: The History

David V. Herlihy

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During the nineteenth century, the bicycle evoked an exciting new world in which even a poor person could travel afar and at will. But was the “mechanical horse” truly destined to usher in a new era of road travel or would it remain merely a plaything for dandies and schoolboys? In *Bicycle: The History* (named by *Outside* magazine as the #1 book on bicycles), David Herlihy recounts the saga of this far-reaching invention and the passions it aroused. The pioneer racer James Moore insisted the bicycle would become “as common as umbrellas.” Mark Twain was more skeptical, enjoining his readers to “get a bicycle. You will not regret it—if you live.”

Because we live in an age of cross-country bicycle racing and high-tech mountain bikes, we may overlook the decades of development and ingenuity that transformed the basic concept of human-powered transportation into a marvel of engineering. This lively and engrossing history retraces the extraordinary story of the bicycle—a history of disputed patents, brilliant inventions, and missed opportunities. Herlihy shows us why the bicycle captured the public’s imagination and the myriad ways in which it reshaped our world.

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