

High Wheel Brings Big Price At Copake's Bicycle Auction

Review And Onsite Photos By Andrea Valluzzo

Catalog Photos Courtesy Copake Auction

COPAKE, N.Y. — Copake Auction's bicycle swap meet and auction April 17–18 is as much a part of spring as daffodils, and this annual favorite attracts collectors from all over the world.

The top lot of the sale was this circa 1888 "Pony" star high wheel safety, patented by George Pressey of Hammonton, N.J., in untouched condition, that more than doubled its high estimate to achieve \$16,380. Shown on the wall is a rare circa 1890s French poster depicting A.A. "Jimmy" Zimmerman, America's first world champion cyclist, that fetched \$5,850.





Auctioneers Seth and Mike Fallon show off the 1886 Singer "The Traveller Tandem," made in Coventry, England ("Humbers Patent"). Singer had a license from Humber and the bike's front part is quickly detachable leaving a Humber-type single machine when desired. The bicycle sold for a reasonable \$10,237.

With 1,479 bids from people in 23 countries, including Russia, China and Australia, this specialized sale, which takes a year to put together, achieved more than \$400,000 and boasted a fine in-house crowd of more than 300 bidders hailing from nearby locales to the Midwest, the South and even the West Coast. Saturday's auction was preceded by a bicycle swap meet Friday that ran from dawn to dusk.

Despite the rain, 68 vendors set up and more than 300 people attended, including visitors from Europe. "Items offered at the swap meet ranged from early exotic high wheels and safety bikes to BMX, lightweights, Krate Bikes, balloon bicycles, and vendors reported brisk sales," said auctioneer Seth Fallon. Carlton Reid



▼ *The circa 1960s Bowden prototype, which the auctioneers say is the only known example, was made by Bomard Industries in Grand Haven, Mich., designed by Benjamin Bowden, a British industrial designer known for his work with cars and bicycles. It topped its high estimate to bring \$5,850.*



▲ *A circa 1979–84 P.K. Ripper loop tail “SE Racing” aluminum frame bicycle more than doubled its high estimate to bring \$2,574.*

gave a well-attended talk on his book, *Roads Were Not Built for Cars*, and the annual 10-mile bike ride went off at 3

pm without a hitch and many participants rode early machines. Copake Auction has a reputation for

high wheels so it was no surprise that the top lot of the auction was a circa 1888 “Pony” star high wheel safety. Patented by George Pressey of Hammonton, N.J., and produced by H.B. Smith Machine Co. of Smithville, N.J., this original example

in untouched condition nearly doubled its high estimate to attain \$16,380 from a museum representative bidding from the auction floor.

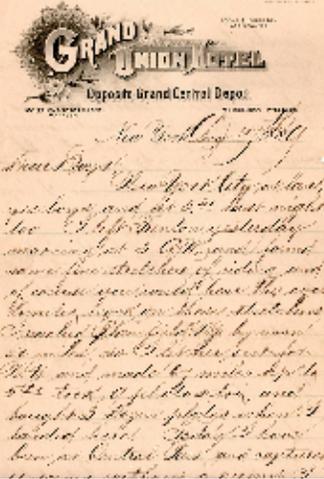
Another top lot was the 1886 Singer “The Traveller Tandem” adult tricycle made in Coventry, England that sold



◀ A rare Nineteenth Century child's high wheel bicycle, maker unknown, ex Gary Woodward collection, boasts fine paint and pinstriping. It sold for \$1,872.

Leaving the swap meet ▶ Friday, these two men discussed this new acquisition before it was loaded up on the truck.





▲ Known as the “Lost Cyclist,” Frank George Lenz (1867–1894), avid cyclist and photographer, became famous for trying to circumnavigate the world. He was killed near Erzurum, Turkey, by local tribesmen in May 1894, nearly two years after his departure. This archive contains many unpublished letters and notes from him during his trip. It performed very well at \$6,435.

for a reasonable \$10,237 to a British Columbia collector.

Coming out of a Hollywood, Calif., collection was a grouping of futuristic

▼ A little morning rain did not deter buyers during Friday’s bicycle swap meet.



Bowden bicycles that sold from \$3,800 to \$7,000. Selling above estimate at \$7,020, a standout was the circa 1960s Bowden

“Spacelander” bicycle in charcoal black that retained the rear rack, which is usually missing. Benjamin George Bowden was an English industrial designer noted for his work

on early Chevrolet Corvettes and the Ford Thunderbird in addition to bicycles. ([Continued on page 22 inside the E-edition](#))

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