

NO 'BI,' NO 'CYCLE,' BUT STILL THEY CALL 'EM BIKES

Steinlauf Boys Have Quite a Way with 'Wheels'

BY RUTH LOGAN

(Pictures on page 1)

To build a bike that's different is both an ambition and a hobby for Joe Steinlauf, 3851 Ogden av. In it he's abetted by three brothers, Charles, 4854 Rice st.; Maurice, 614 S. Lawndale av., and Dave, 4252 Jackson blvd.

In fact, the Steinlauf families specialize in bicycles--building, collecting, riding, and discussing them--mostly the first, except for Fred, son of Joe, who's a unicycle expert. Fred rode a two wheeler at the age of 2, and 10 years ago at 15 was graduated to one wheel. With army special services he rode a 12 foot unicycle, built by his father, in numerous war bond rallies and other entertainments. He also taught other soldiers to ride and, in spare moments, as a "second story man" operating thru barracks windows, played a few practical jokes. "They got me on plenty of details," he grinned.

Uses Splkes Instead of Tires

Just an ordinary bike doesn't stand a chance with Joe who years ago built trick bicycles for show people in his Diversey pkwy. auto and bicycle repair shop. "I like to make 'em different, just to see if I can," he explained.

The Steinlaufs also build bicycles as the need arises. For example, there was the time Fred's brother, Cal, wanted to go ice skating but had no skates. Joe, who has a distaste for going anywhere he can't take a bike, whipped up a two wheeler, its rims equipped not with rubber tires but with heavy iron spikes. "Sure you can ride it on ice," insisted its builder indignantly. "The spikes dig in and give a grip."

On another day Joe and Dave took up the cudgels for cyclists and pedestrians against those pesky road hogs, autoists. In whimsical mood they built a two seated "sniper" bike and equipped it with 15 guns and pistols. As if this weren't different enough, they gave it an airplane type steering wheel instead of handlebars, and mounted seven of the guns to face the rear. The frame is made from airplane tubing, and the bike has gas and kerosene lamps, individual front and rear wheel brakes, two speed gear shift for use in climbing mountains, back rests made of tires, and four bayonets.

Really Tank--Not Bicycle

Even the motorist with the loudest horn would quail before this bristling vehicle, the brothers believe. "It's more a tank than a bicycle," said Joe. The weapons are from another of his hobbies--a collection of 250 firearms, part of which is on exhibit in the detective bureau's gun section, 1121 S. State st.

When the Dionne quintuplets were born in May, 1934, Joe felt an urge to celebrate. What to do? He built a bike for five, and gave it four wheels for good measure. But he never got around to sending it to Canada, and now the Steinlauf women like to ride it on Sunday afternoons.

On still another day--this was a long time ago, related Joe--a brass bedstead fell apart in the house. Joe and Charles were equal to the occasion. Joe took the foot and Charles the head, and both made bicycles, each equipping his share with two wheels, handlebars, and pedals.

"You see," laughed Joe, "no matter what happens, we make a bicycle of it!"

Three Hour Auto Shops

With such strong mechanical aptitudes, the brothers all have operated auto repair shops. Three still do. Maurice, however, returned from the army with a change of heart. "I decided to enter the candy business," he said, "and now I work for a former customer!"

Among Dave's feats is the building of a bicycle with square wheels. Understandably, he won a bet with it. "But I'm the one who suffered," observed Fred. "I rode the thing all around Soldier field in a police show once, and I kept right on riding for about an hour after I got

off. Thought I'd never quit bouncing!"

Charlie has built, among other conveyances, a bicycle and sewing machine combined. "We all can ride that at once, and the wife can sew while traveling. Saves time!" he commented. And when tires became a scarcity during the war, Charles equipped a two wheeler with wooden "feet" in boots, which moved forward as the pedals were manipulated.

Cycling Since 1913

Joe learned to ride bicycles about 1913 and began building them almost immediately. He's had a repair shop in Ogden av. since 1919. In addition to those of his own making, the west sider has a number of high wheelers, old time bikes of English make, and a wooden velocipede more than a century old which he purchased for \$5. He found it hanging in the window of a rural service station.

To Joe, however, his gun collection is close competition for his bicycles. A collection of auto license plates from 48 states and sev-

eral foreign countries trails a poor third.

Many firearms are from 100 to 250 years old and of almost every make imaginable. In the group, to name a few at random, are a pair of 270 year old Arabian flintlocks, a pair of French dueling pistols, a 65 pound harpoon gun used for bagging whales, a still loaded Colt revolver taken--its owner said--from the hand of a dead soldier on Gettysburg battlefield, and a number of rifles used in early American wars.

Despite this hobby, it's Joe's proud boast he never has fired a gun in his life. "It's a record I intend to keep," he declared. "Hunting is not my hobby!"

A Bicycle Built for Two or Five Comes Naturally in Hobby of West Sider



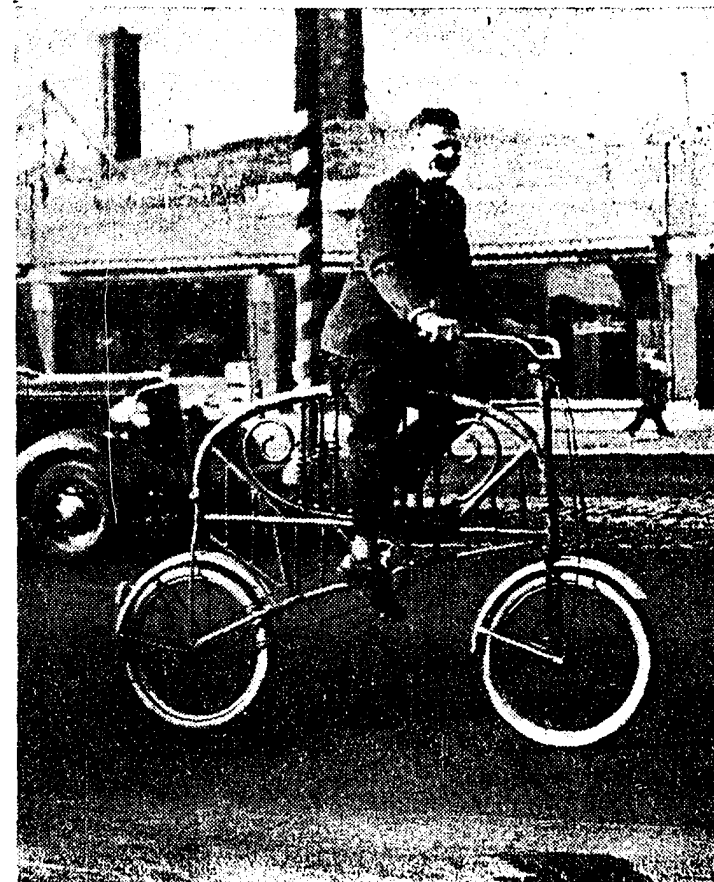
Ever hear of an ice bike? Cal Steinlauf, 3851 Ogden av., whose father, Joe, built this one, seems to be wishing for some thick ice to try it on. Stein-

lauf insists his handiwork will roll smoothly over the ice, that the heavy iron spikes give just the needed traction. [TRIBUNE Photos by Robert Kelgher]



Not Daisy on a bicycle built for two, but the Steinlaufs on a bike for five is what the neighbors see on fine afternoons. Joe, whose hobby is building trick bicycles in his Ogden av. auto and cycle repair shop, built this one soon after the Dionne quintuplets were born, but never got around to

sending it to Canada. His wife pilots the vehicle. In second row from left are Mrs. Dotty Bernstein, a visiting cousin; Mrs. Joyce Blonstein, 1517 S. Harding av., and Mrs. Fred Steinlauf, a daughter-in-law. Back seat driver is Mrs. Ida Kurtz, 3838 West End av. (Story on page 6)



Charles Steinlauf, 4854 Rice st., also a brother, takes a Sunday spin on another bike bearing the Steinlauf stamp. When a bedstead fell apart one day, Joe took the foot and gave it the necessary equipment. Says he: "No matter what happens, we make a bicycle of it!"



Maurice Steinlauf, 614 S. Lawndale av., the fourth brother, rides a bicycle not built by the family. This high wheeler was made in England about 70 years ago and is part of Joe's collection. Marvin, 8 year old son of Dave, rides a baby bike built by his uncle.