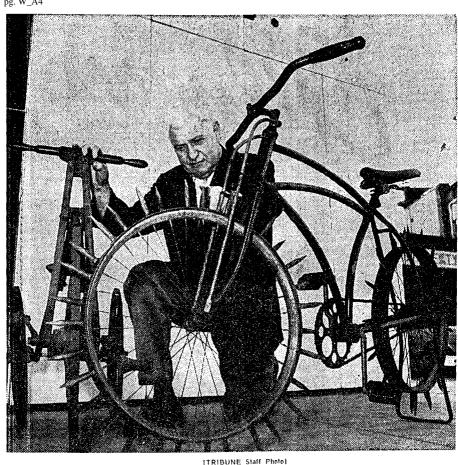
Bike Dealer Spins Tale of Risky Business WILLIAM MULLEN *Chicago Tribune (1963-Current file);* Nov 19, 1967; ProQuest Historical Newspapers Chicago Tribune (1890 - 1976) pg. W_A4



SPIKED BIKE--Tire salesman Joe Steinlauf tests the spikes on his icecycle that he built in 1925. The all wood tricycle was made in the 1860s. Steinlauf has about a dozen antique bicycles at his tire store, 3851 Ogden av.

Bike Dealer Spins Tale of Risky Business

BY WILLIAM MULLEN

Once Joe Steinlauf nearly drowned on a bicycle. Another time, he was nearly killed falling from a bicycle into a nearly killed junk wagon.

junk wagon.
Seventy-year oid, Austrianborn Joe got his start in
business with bicycles, and has
made a handsome and happy
life out of them. Tho he went
out of the bicycle business two
years ago, he still keeps about
a dozen antique and freak bikes
sitting around his tire store at
3851 Orden av.

3851 Ogden av.
"I came here from Austria in 1912," silver-haired and hand-"I came here from Austria in 1912," silver-haired and handsome Joe will tell you in his accent-tinted voice. "I got my start in business by spotting bikes in the back of junk wagons, I used to jump on my bike and follow them. Usually I could pick up a bike for two or three dollars, fix it up and sell it for 8 or 10 dollars."

Followed too Close
Once he followed a junk wagon too closely and the wagon's horse stopped suddenly. Joe jammed on his brakes and was jack-knifed head first into the back of the wagon.

"I really hit it hard," Joe the bikes back to Chicago at chuckled, "and I thought I their own expense. killed myself. The driver turned around and looked at me like nothing strange had here.

Began to Get Creative In the 1920s. Joe began to get.

turned around and looked at me
like nothing strange had happened and kept right on going."
Joe started his first bicycle
shop in 1919, selling his own
manufactured line [Joe's 50
Year Flyers] and his refurbished used bikes. He also
rented out bicycles for 25 cents
an hour.

Took A Beating

"It look me a few years "It took me a few years to get wise to the ways of the city," he said. "I made people leave a deposit with me when they rented a bike, like a watch or their coat or someting. They used to take off with the bikes anyway, and I would find out their deposits were practically worthless. I took a beating in those days."

Once six men came shop and rented all s n came into his d all six of his He ended up rental bikes. He ended up chasing them to Milwaukee on his motorcycle, where he evenhis motorcycle, where he even-tually caught them trying to sell the bikes. men ended up shipping

In the 1920s, Joe began to get creative in his bike making, "One night I was sleeping in

one night I was sleeping in my big brass bed and I dreamed I was peddling it down the street," he claims. "So I decided when I woke up I would build a bike out of the bed."

bed."

And he did. Two bikes as a matter of fact, one bike from each end of the bed. One of the bikes, made out of the headstand, had everything from a hot water bottle to a folding bed on it.

"So many persons admired the bedcycle, that it eventually made 'Ripley's Believe it Or Not'!"

Built Spike Wider Particularly close to Joe's eart is the ''icecycle'' he built heart is the "icecycle" he built ir. 1923. It's a bike equipped with 6-inch spike wheels to give it traction on ice. It, almost proved to be too effective. "I was riding around on Lake

proved to be too et.ective.
"I was riding around on Lake
Michigan one day when the
front wheel split the ice," he
said. "I hung on to the handle
bars and smashed my knuckles
on the ice as the front end
sank"

sank. Luckily, the back end didn't sink and Joe was able to jump off to save himself and the

bike.

Joe also has kept his eyes open for antique bikes thru the years, and has collected two and three wheelers that date back to the 1850's. He has an all wood bike built in 1897, and an all wood tricycle built in Abraham Lincoln's presidential Abraham Lincoln's presidential

days.

Bikes aren't the only things Joe collects. A couple of years ago, Joe sold his collection of 300 antique guns. Altho he has never fired a gun in his life, Joe started the gun collection when he found an old revolver in his father's coal bin.