

Auction Action In Copake, N.Y.

Global Buying Steers Copake's Bicycle, Automobilia Auction To Strong Results

COPAKE, N.Y. — Niche auctions tend to bring out a strong and dedicated following from their core base, and there are per-

haps few truer examples than Copake Auction's annual bicycle and automobilia auction, the 34th edition of which was Octo-

ber 10.

Nearly 1,000 lots crossed the block with something for everyone, whether they were a beginning collector, someone just wanting parts for an old bike or serious

collectors willing to spend almost \$20,000 on a bicycle. Bicycles were in all manner and size, from children's tricycles selling for around \$60 to rare high-wheel and futuristic bicycles selling

upwards of \$10,000. Auctioneers Mike Fallon (a former racer himself, whose cherry-red Ducati is on permanent display in the auction gallery) and Seth Fallon have earned a reputation for these annual auctions that attract buyers as well as consignments from top collections across the country. This sale, one of their strongest offerings in years, featured more than 25 high wheels, a large collection of hard-tire and pneumatic safety bicycles, including rare variants in each category, as well as two scarce wood pneumatics, four boneshakers and two Bowden Spacelanders. Rounding out the offerings were spare parts, cycling ephemera and rare license plates.

One would think that the Fallons have seen it all by now, and several key lots in this auction had previously been auctioned by them, but there are always new discoveries to be made.

"After all these years, we still get bicycles and bicycle material that we have never seen and has never gone to auction," Seth Fallon said. "There were so many bicycle manufacturers, especially in the circa 1890-1915 range. With over 3,000 makers, there are a lot of different makers and lots of different configurations of the builds which make them stand out as well as lots or really neat 'one-off' inventions. That's



The top lot of the auction was this 1893 Hickory pneumatic safety that attained \$18,300. Made by the Hickory Wheel Company in South Framingham, Mass., this men's bike had a large, 27-inch frame and an unusual curved top tube (\$4/5,000).



This rare Roadmaster Skylark prototype bicycle in cast aluminum, said to be one of three known, made its Copake auction debut. It tripled its estimate to bring \$10,980 (\$2/3,000).



From the David Metz Museum, this unusual clown bicycle with boots for a back wheel went out at \$3,294 (\$1,5/2,500).



Copake Auction welcomed bicycle collectors and riders, aka "wheelmen," to its annual fall event.



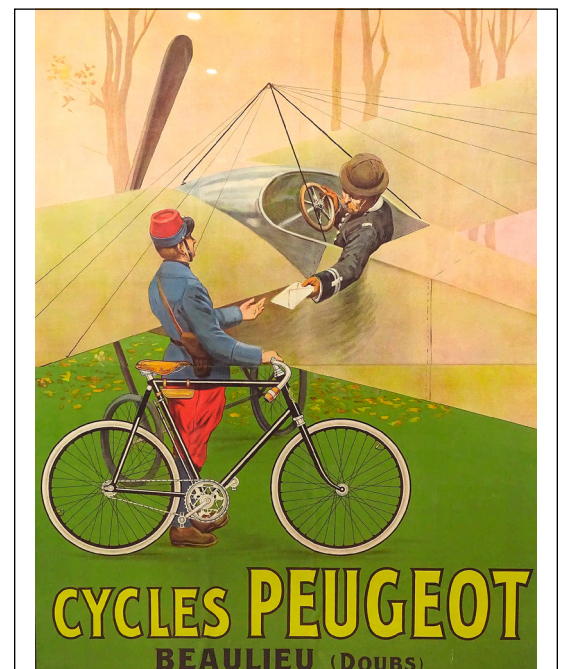
Review & Onsite Photos by
Andrea Valluzzo, Editor
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Hank Blumenkrantz, Fort Lee, N.J. (left) was selling bicycles and parts, as well as men's blazers and sweaters. He posed for a photo with Harry Schwartzman (center) who runs the New York Bike Jumble in Brooklyn, and Chris Crowley (right), who was shopping the meet.



This Plymouth Road Runner heavy card-stock cut-out earned \$12,200 (\$200-\$400).

In unrestored original condition, this circa 1898 Comet wooden pneumatic safety bicycle for women, made by the Comet Cycle Company in Toronto, Canada, earned for \$8,235 (\$4/5,000).



This large Nineteenth Century French Cycles Peugeot poster sold for \$3,294 (\$1/1,500).

what gets buyers interested.”

The auction performed well and was Copake's second-highest grossing bicycle auction ever, realizing \$830,000. “The auction was amazing. We had thousands of bidders from all over the world and even had buyers in house from the Netherlands, Milan, Italy, England, British Columbia and 30 different states.”

In this day and age, online buying is so prevalent that in-person attendance at many auctions has shrunk. This auction is one of the happy exceptions, and Copake makes it a weekend affair. The sale is preceded by its Bicycle Swap Meet the day before, starting at 7 am, in the field behind the auction gallery. The event saw more than a dozen dealers offering tires, owner's manuals and cycling books, right up to complete bicycles.

Like the auction, the swap meet had items for all budgets. Near the top end was a Colombia high-wheel racing bicycle, built exclusively for the track, not the open road. It had a 55-inch wheel and was one of only two known, according to Glenn Eames of Western New York, who brought it to the event, where it immediately drew attention as people gathered around to inspect it. “Not many survived because the tire was very thin, only about a quarter-inch thick,” Eames said. What made this example more notable was its provenance and its history. He reported that this was the very bicycle that William A. “W.A.” Rowe set a one-hour track record on in 1886, cycling 22 miles in exactly one hour at the Hampden Park race track in Springfield, Mass. That record stood unbroken until 2019.

The next morning, the auction kicked off with a BSA Paratrooper folding bicycle that performed well at \$3,172 (\$400/600), but within a half hour the \$10,000 mark had been broken with a circa 1890 hard-tire men's safety bicycle that more than doubled its high estimate to bring \$13,420. Having a lugged split frame and rear levered spring suspension, this bike by an unknown maker was sold by Copake a decade earlier, in April 2016.

In all, six bicycles sold for five-figure sums, led by the auction's overall top lot, an 1893-94 Hickory pneumatic men's safety bicycle that attained \$18,300, more than tripling its high estimate. The large-frame bicycle had an unusual curved top tube, a 27-inch frame and was made by the Hickory Wheel Company in South Framingham, Mass. A major collector was the underbidder in a battle for it, Seth Fallon said, but the winner was a museum. “It's a prototype and apparently the only one ever to come to market.”

A handful of other prototype bicycles also crossed the block, including two by Roadmaster. The best seller among these was a Roadmaster prototype from 1956 made of mechanical lugged aluminum and reportedly was the only one known. Attaining \$17,690, well over its \$2/3,000 estimate the 19-inch frame bicycle had never been offered by Copake Auction; it came out of the Mark Mattei collection. Mattei, who died in March, had owned Cycle Smithy in Chicago from 1973 to 2022. A recumbent bicycle he built by hand also sold in this sale.

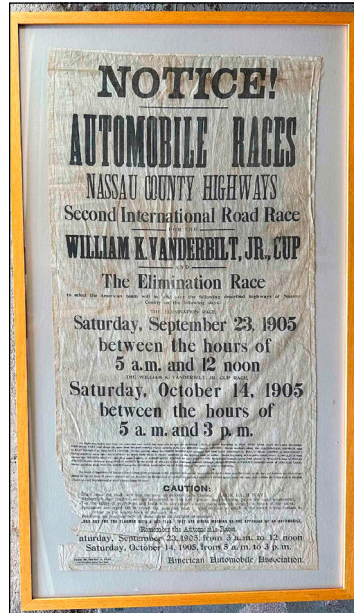
Leading the selection of automobile-themed material at \$12,200 was a single-sided 1969 Plymouth Road Runner cut-out. The original factory issued heavy card stock sign measured 26 by 34 inches.

“A very rare group of ephemera was put into groups that interested buyers. We were really happy with the response to the

auto material, with lots of bidding and very active participation,” Seth Fallon said. “Car collectors are very passionate, and the Road Runner piece is a perfect era for collectors and also a rare piece.”

Prices quoted include the buyer's premium as reported by the auction house. Copake Auction's next sale will be a two-day estate auction November 13-14.

For information, www.copake-auction.com or 518-641-1935.



This Vanderbilt Cup Broadside from September Sept 23, 1905 for the Second International Road Race for the William K. Vanderbilt Jr Cup, printed on linen, fetched \$6,405 (\$1/1,500).



Seth (left) and Mike (right) Fallon pose before the auction with Roadmaster 1956 prototype bicycle between them. It went on to be one of the top lots, selling above its \$2/3,000 estimate for \$17,690. Behind Seth one can see a circa 1949 Shelby Donald Duck balloon-tire bicycle, which made \$4,575 (\$1,5/2,000).



This circa 1890s Butler Adams men's safety bicycle was made in Chicago by Adams and Westlake Company, for distribution by the Butler Brothers Company. Retaining its original green paint, it had striking features, like octagonal handlebars, and realized \$11,895 (\$4/5,000).



This circa 1890 hard-tire safety men's bicycle with 31-inch wheels, a lugged split frame and rear levered spring suspension sold at Copake ten years ago. This time around, it brought \$13,420 (\$4/5,000).



This boneshaker/velocipede made by the A.T. Demarest Company in New York City in 1869, ex Gary Sanderson collection, rode off the block for \$7,930 (\$3/5,000).



This Bowden Spaceland bicycle in Outer Space Blue, made by Bomard Industries, may have been a flop when it first sold, offered only for one year, but its futuristic post-war design by Benjamin Bowden entices contemporary collectors. Estimated at \$4/5,000, this example sold for \$11,895.



This Cleveland ice bicycle, patented in February 1890, ex David Metz Museum, went for \$8,540 (\$3/4,000).



This embroidered cloth banner for the Automobile Club in Nice, France, dated 1905 and including the club logo, realized \$5,490 (\$4/5,000).