## Starke County No. 40 -- **VELOCIPEDE**

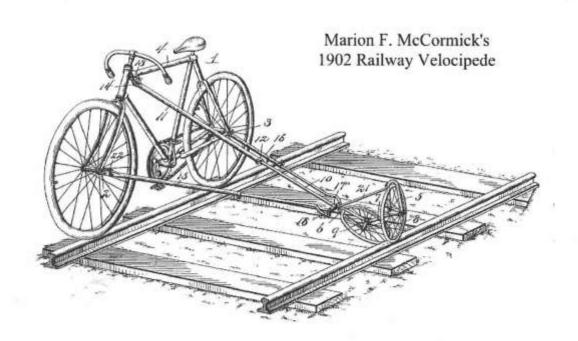
Whoa --- what is velocipede? Generally it was an old term for a bicycle or a vehicle on wheels propelled by a human being. It also describes a vehicle used by the railroad industry for rail inspectors - see attachment. It was a light enough vehicle that the operator could easily pull it off the tracks if a train approached him.

In his book, McCormick's Guide to Starke County (1902), Chester McCormick talks about the different factories in Starke County. North Judson had two pickle factories, an artificial stone factory, a wholesale frog and turtle industry, a cigar manufacturer. Knox also had two pickle factories, a handle factory, a lumber mill, two grain elevators, a tomb stone factory and a velocipede factory. His little book is online and you can read about some of these items on pages

## 18. <a href="http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/scpl">http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/scpl</a> files/pdf documents/1902 history/starke county past and prese nt mccormick 1902.pdf

A velocipede factory ????? You know factories and other businesses come and go. One sees this all of the time on the Radio, TV or in the newspaper. Well, apparently, Marion McCormick's Velocipede factory came and went, also. I can't find any reference to a velocipede factory in any of the the other history books. So, what does one do when looking for a velocipede factory in Starke County? You Google it, of course. And finally, there it was - the U.S. Government patent for Mr. McCormick's Velocipede. What he was making was a kit that you could put on your bicycle to be able to travel the railroads. Think about this. Some of the towns in the county had stone roads - some may have had brick streets in the downtown area. But most of the county didn't have solid roads - most country roads were still sand roads. Did you ever try to peddle a bicycle through loose sand? So, if you had Mr. McCormick's bicycle attachment and wanted to go from North Judson to Knox, you could hop on the railroad track and start peddling. Ah, a nice, smooth ride. But, watch out for trains!

In finding his patent, we also now have all of the other government patents in our files for Starke County. See **attachment** for the velocipede patent's front page.





Jim Shilling Starke County Historical Society

http://www.starkehistory.com http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/