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Around the World on Two Wheels: Annie Londonderry's Extraordinary Ride

By Peter Zheutlin

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Dimensions: 6.8in. x 6.5in. x 1.0in. Until 1894 there were no female sport stars, no product endorsement deals, and no young mothers with the chutzpah to circle the globe on a bicycle. Annie Kopchovsky changed all of that. Annie was a Jewish immigrant and working mother of three living in a Boston tenement with her husband, a peddler. This was as close to the American dream as she was likely to get until she became part of what one newspaper called one of the most novel wagers ever made: a high-stakes bet between two wealthy merchants that a woman could not ride around the world on a bicycle, as Thomas Stevens had a few years before. Annie rose to the challenge, pledging to finish her fifteen-month trip with a staggering 5,000 earned by selling advertising space on her bike and her clothing, making personal appearances in stores and at bicycle races, and lecturing about her adventures along the way. When the Londonderry Lithia Springs Water Company of New Hampshire offered to become the first of her many sponsors, Annie Kopchovsky became Annie Londonderry, and a legend was born. So began one...



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