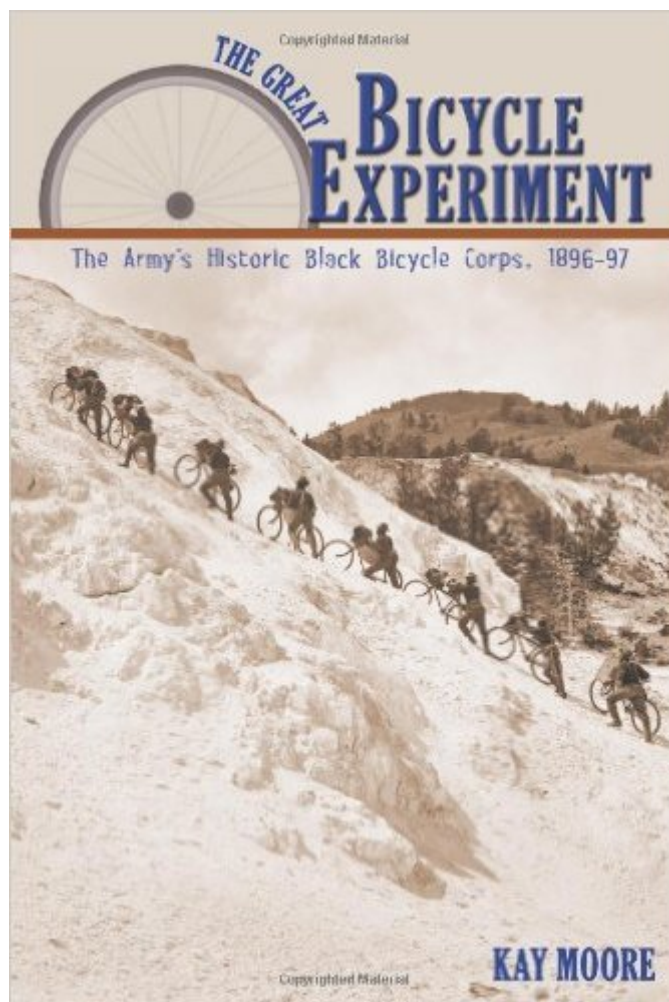


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# The Great Bicycle Experiment



## Synopsis

In 1896 Lt. James Moss, second lieutenant at Fort Missoula, Montana, had a revolutionary idea: that bicycles, a relatively new innovation, could be employed by the military to replace cavalry horses for certain operations. Bikes did not need food, water, or rest; they would not die; they would never disobey their rider; and they were nearly noiseless. The eager young lieutenant set out to test this idea and prove the worth of the bicycle in army campaigns. Stationed at Fort Missoula at the time was the 25th Infantry, and all-black regiment. From these African American troops, Lt. Moss chose an elite group to form the Bicycle Corps and attempt a historic 2,000-mile journey to St. Louis. In *The Great Bicycle Experiment*, Kay Moore chronicles this challenging journey, highlighting the hardships and triumphs of these stalwart soldiers as they pedaled and pushed their way across the mountains and plains into history. Perfect for school or home, *The Great Bicycle Experiment* is both a valuable historical resource and an entertaining adventure story for readers young and old.

## Book Information

Paperback: 72 pages

Publisher: Mountain Press Publishing Company (August 20, 2012)

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Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.3 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #61,299 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #44 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

Well written account the Army's historic black Bicycle Corps. There are many pictures of black solders riding 1000's miles to Yellowstone park and around the Mammoth hot springs. This is an amazing historical record. The story is told in 10 chapters:(1) The Buffalo soldier: pride and prejudice(2) Fort Missoula, circa 1895: life at a frontier army post(3) Why bicycles? A transportation experiment(4) Getting it together: organizing and training(5) Gearing up: trial run to Lake

McDonald(6) Second trial: expedition to Yellowstone(7) The big idea: two thousand miles on two wheels(8) And they're off! St. Louis or bust(9) The End of the experiment: success or failure(10) Legacy: honoring the Bicycle CorpsI highly recommend for an insight into black history. It is also of interest to cross country bicyclists.

Moore, Kay. 2012. The Great Bicycle Experiment: The Army's Historic Black Bicycle Corps, 1896-97. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company. This book tells the story of the Army's experiment with bicycles in the late 1890s. The bicycle unit was based in Missoula, Montana. Most people run across this story in Yellowstone, where the bicyclists traveled on one of their test rides. The unit is also a part of African-American history because the cyclists were "Buffalo Soldiers," African-American cavalry on the frontier. The book is intended for young readers. I'd say that advanced grade school kids could read the text but that middle schoolers can better appreciate the context - discrimination against African-Americans, the closing of the frontier, the workings of an Army. A grade-school child who likes to read about the "Wild West" or about African-American history would find this book very accessible. This adult also enjoyed the book - a quick overview of a little slice of history. The historic photos are also fun.

I had no idea that the military experimented with bicycles as a replacement for horses. An extremely intriguing story. I could fully visualize the hardships that these brave men experienced. I would highly recommend this true story of perseverance - a definite "must" read!

Enjoyed reading this short book while traveling. Very interesting piece of history that I suspect very few of us know about.

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