

10 Oldest Bike Shops in Canada

BY DAN DAKIN

Canada's cycling industry is rich and deep, dating back to the late 1800s when bicycles were the only alternative to walking or horse and buggies for transportation. Today, there are approximately 1,000 bike shops across Canada. Nearly every city in the country has a bike shop of some sort serving everything from the youngest newcomers to the sport to elite racers. But what many don't realize is Canada is also home to some of the oldest bike shops in North America. Some shops have been operating for nearly a full century — one even longer than that — which is a remarkable achievement in this day and age. After significant research, we've put together what we hope is a complete list of the 10 oldest bike shops in Canada with a brief history of their beginnings.



1. Savage's Bicycle Centre
Fredericton, N.B., 1897

Opened in 1897, Savage's is second only to Kopp's Cycle Shop (1891) of New Jersey as the oldest bike shop in North America. The business has stayed in the family for its entire existence and today is owned and operated by Matt Savage, an avid biker. The store has been located in numerous locations over the years, but has always been located within a one-block radius of the original store. Savage's is currently getting ready to move into a former 1914 firehouse. "I'm most proud of our ability to adapt," Matt Savage says. "There are companies with 25 years under their belt who speak of being around 'forever'. Most people can't fathom being around for this long."



2. Western Cycle
Regina, Sask., 1912

Serving Saskatchewan for 94 years, Western Cycle is the province's biggest bike shop. Current owner Brian Stennes bought the business about 30 years ago and now runs it out of a three-story building in Regina. Though it has always been a bicycle and sporting goods store, cycling has always been one of the store's main focuses.



3. Duke's Cycle
Toronto, Ont., 1914

If you're a cyclist in Toronto, chances are you've visited Duke's on Queen. The popular store for both commuters and competitive cyclists was opened in 1914 by Alexander Duke as a general sporting-goods store. After World War II, Alexander's son Henry took over, and by the end of the 1960s, the store had shifted its focus primarily to bicycles. Today, it still operates at 625 Queen Street, though now it occupies 623 Queen as well. Alexander Duke's grandson Gary runs the store, but his father and mother still help out a few days a week. As for the future, Gary figures his two daughters aren't interested in taking over the shop, so he has his fingers crossed one of his grandchildren will take his place down the road.



4. Stephen Licence Ltd
Belleville, Ont., 1918

Stephen Charles Licence and his brothers ran a store in Toronto in the early 1900s before he went to Belleville and opened his bicycle shop in 1918. It was run exclusively as a bike shop for the first 15 years before adding general sports equipment. The shop was purchased by employee Alex McGlashan in 1952 when Licence died, but he offered it back to the Licence family five years later and it was bought by the founder's son and daughter-in-law. Today Licence's grandson Kevin Bongard owns and operates the store in a 6,000-square-foot location in downtown Belleville. The shop deals in bicycles during the dry months and focuses on hobby supplies in the winter.