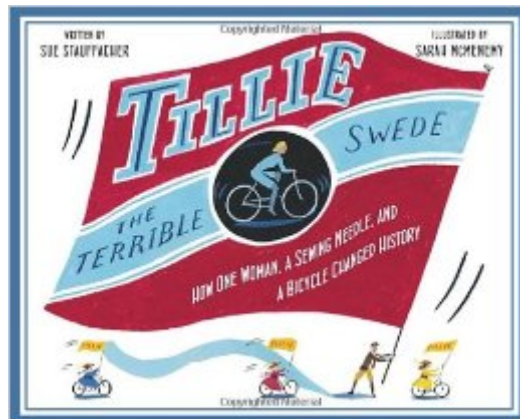


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# Tillie The Terrible Swede: How One Woman, A Sewing Needle, And A Bicycle Changed History



## Synopsis

When Tillie Anderson came to America, all she had was a needle. So she got herself a job in a tailor shop and waited for a dream to find her. One day, a man sped by on a bicycle. She was told "bicycles aren't for ladies," but from then on, Tillie dreamed of riding "not graceful figure eights, but speedy, scorching, racy riding! And she knew that couldn't be done in a fancy lady's dress. . . . With arduous training and her (shocking!) new clothes, Tillie became the women's bicycle-riding champion of the world. Sue Stauffacher's lively text and Sarah McMenemy's charming illustrations capture the energy of America's bicycle craze and tell the story of one woman who wouldn't let society's expectations stop her from achieving her dream.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 760L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Knopf Books for Young Readers (January 25, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375844422

ISBN-13: 978-0375844423

Product Dimensions: 10.3 x 0.3 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (10 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,076,991 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 in [Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Cycling](#) #572 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Women](#) #582 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Sports & Recreation](#)

Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

## Customer Reviews

Tillie Anderson appeared to be a typical hard-working immigrant girl, laboring in a tailor shop. But when a man on a bicycle rides by the shop, she begins saving up her money to buy one of the new-fangled contraptions, despite warnings from her mother that bicycles aren't for ladies. Tillie wasn't interested in riding gracefully around a maypole, like other girls; she started training to get strong enough to ride fast, really fast. But there was a problem--her 19th century dresses. Soon Tillie designed herself a more aerodynamic bicycle outfit, one that scandalized the whole neighborhood. But Tillie didn't care if her friends and family thought she was "wicked"; she soon was

entering her first cycling races, breaking women's records left and right and becoming the women's bicycle-racing champion of the world. She became famous, with poets writing her odes, bicycle companies looking for endorsements, and reporters wanting to interview her. Some male cyclists thought Tillie was "unwomanly," and doctors even examined her to see what the effects of all that hard exercise would be on a woman's body. They found her, not surprisingly, to be a "mass of muscle," and put a picture of her leg in the newspaper! Imagine how shocking in those days, when a mere glimpse of a woman's ankle was viewed as something sexy and forbidden. The reader can't help but be inspired by the story of this remarkable woman, a celebrity in the era before female athletes were accepted. Sarah McMenemy's bright and colorful gouache and collage illustrations are simply charming, and add immeasurably to the appeal of this tale.

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