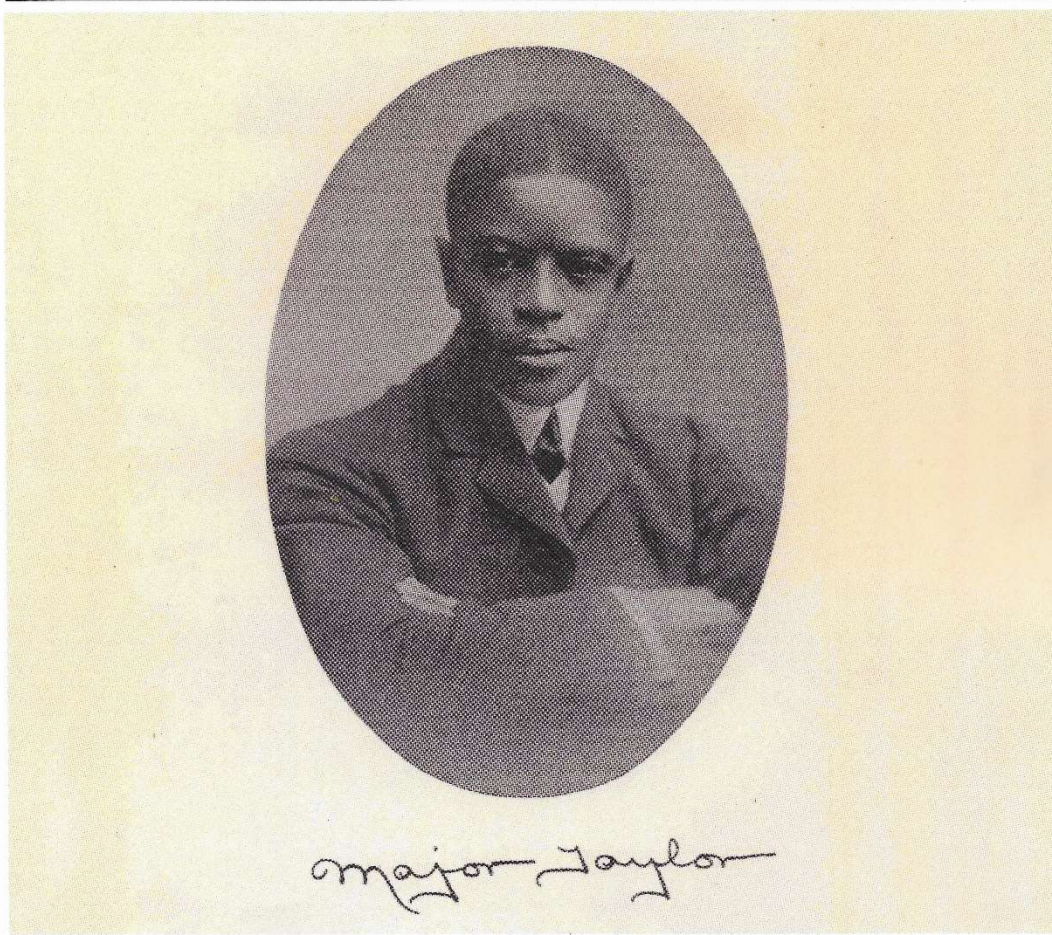

Cycle History 31



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Major Taylor's Letters to Ben Walker, 1897

By Lynne Tolman, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA

Superstar cyclist Marshall "Major" Taylor, at age 18, in his first full season as a professional bike racer, wrote letters to his friend Benjamin Walker in Worcester, Massachusetts, from his travels to bike races in several states. The existence of these letters was unknown to researchers until the American Antiquarian Society, a national research library in Worcester, announced the acquisition in December 2020. The five letters were sent in summer and fall 1897 from Providence, Rhode Island; Springfield, Massachusetts; Cleveland, Ohio; Buffalo, New York; and Indianapolis, Indiana. They reveal details about Taylor's home life and allude to difficulties he faced as the only African American racer competing on the pro cycling circuit during the Jim Crow era.

In the letters Taylor reported his race

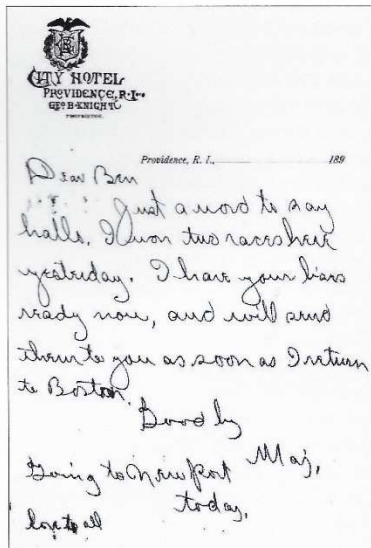


Figure 1. Letter from Major Taylor to Ben Walker from Providence, Rhode Island, post-marked July 25, 1897. "Dear Ben, Just a word to say hallo. I won two races here yesterday. I have your bars ready now, and will send them to you as soon as I return to Boston. Goodbye, Maj. Going to Newport today. Love to all!" American Antiquarian Society.

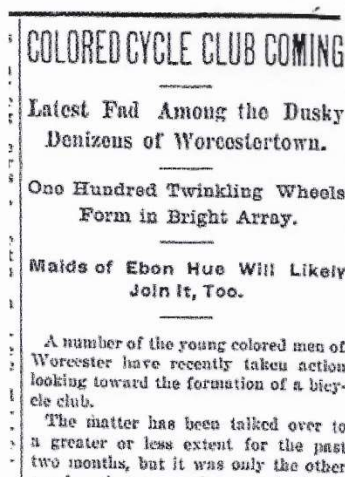


Figure 2. Worcester Telegram, June 9, 1895.

results to Walker, a fellow cyclist with whom he lived and entrusted with his errands, such as sending his suit and holding on to some of his prize money for him. Taylor, employed at a bicycle factory, also mentioned cycling equipment, such as handlebars and a tandem bike. [Figure 1]

Benjamin Walker was a charter member of the Albion Cycle Club, founded in Worcester by and for Black bicycle riders. He was one of 15 men and three women named in a local newspaper article about the club's formation in 1895. [Figure 2] That was the year that Major Taylor moved east from Indianapolis with his employer and mentor, Birdie Munger. Munger was a former high-wheel champion, and he established a bike factory in Worcester on a seven-acre site that had been the New England Steel Works. [Figure 3] Munger was attracted to Worcester as it was a manufacturing hub, and he also hoped the racial climate in the Northeast would be better for his young Black protégé.²

Taylor joined the Albions – it cost \$5 – and he was the club's up-and-coming star, although he wasn't permanently settled in Worcester yet. In 1896, Taylor stayed for a time in Middletown, Connecticut, where Munger had another bike factory, and in Brooklyn, New York, where he trained

with the South Brooklyn Wheelmen, prior to his professional debut that December in a six-day race at Madison Square Garden. Then for part of 1897, Major Taylor stayed in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and trained with other riders for a Boston vs. Philadelphia pursuit race in July. He tried out for the five-man Boston team and made the cut. This was one of the earliest racially integrated teams in professional sports. [Figure 4]

Major Taylor visited Worcester after the six-day race in New York, and the Albion Cycle Club honored him at a banquet.³ He stayed with Ben Walker, one of the club's officers. According to the U.S. Census and city directories, Walker was an upholsterer and carpet installer, about 13 years older than Taylor, who lived with his wife and children at 13 Parker Street in Worcester's Beaver Brook neighborhood. That part of the city had become home to many African Americans who migrated from the South.⁴

Major Taylor's living arrangement with the Walkers solidified, and Major Taylor wrote down 13 Parker Street as his home address in his pocket diaries for 1897, 1898, and 1899. These little black books were where he kept track of his travels and expenses. In the 1898 diary, B.F. Walker is listed as Taylor's emergency contact, at the same address, 13 Parker Street. [Figure 5]

Along with the letters was an invoice for two dollars, written out to the Albion Cycle Club. It reads, "engraving on Major Taylor Trophy." The order for the inscription was placed on June 1, 1896. [Figure 6] The trophy was a silver cup that was Major Taylor's prize for winning the Albion club's second annual road race in Worcester, on May 16, 1896.⁶ After that, the Albion riders were colloquially known as the Major Taylors. Their roster for the Telegram Road Race in 1898 included Benjamin Walker.⁶ By then Major Taylor

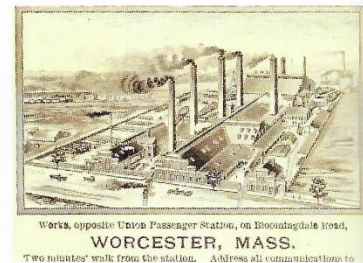


Figure 3. Worcester Steel Works advertisement. The Street Railway Journal, December 1897.

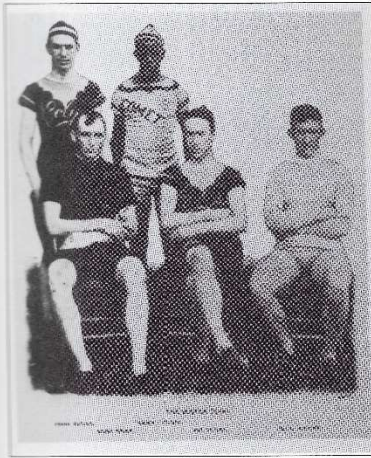


Figure 4. Boston pursuit team formed for a race against a Philadelphia team in July 1897. Standing, Frank Butler and Major Taylor. Seated, from left, Burns Pierce, Nat Butler, and Eddie McDuffee. Bearings, July 29, 1897.

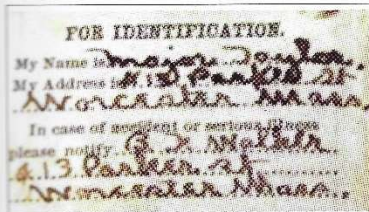


Figure 5. Major Taylor's address and emergency contact in his pocket diary for 1898. Indiana State Museum.

himself was on to bigger things. [Figure 7]

Constance Whitehead Hanks of Auburn, Massachusetts, donated these five letters and the engraving invoice to the American Antiquarian Society. How the documents surfaced is a story in itself. Hanks's grandfather, Ernest Parker Whitehead, had trucking, wrecking, construction and architectural companies in Worcester, and he also appraised buildings for fire insurance. His father, an immigrant from England, had started the business, E. Whitehead Inc., which developed about 90 acres on Salisbury Street in Worcester. The third generation, Connie's father, Richard D. Whitehead, liquidated the business in 1974 but saved boxes full of things that had been salvaged from buildings that the Whiteheads cleared out.⁷

The boxes went from their warehouse at 97 Webster St. in Worcester to the Whiteheads' home in neighboring Auburn, and Constance Hanks began going

through them after her parents died. When she first read the letters signed "Maj" and "Major," she didn't know who that was. But after she noticed the name Taylor on one of the papers and recalled driving on Major Taylor Boulevard in Worcester, she looked up Major Taylor and put it together.

That's when Hanks realized that these letters came from the famous Black cyclist who was trying to outrun racism and indeed reached his goal of being "The Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World," as he titled his autobiography. Major Taylor set numerous speed records, became the world sprint champion in 1899 and was the first African American athlete to become an international superstar. Hanks said that before she realized who the letter writer was, she had assumed that Major Taylor Boulevard was named for "just some military person." In the case of cyclist Marshall Walter Taylor, Major was a nickname, not a rank.

After writing from Providence in late July, Taylor was racking up successes on the national circuit. He was focused on vanquishing the reigning national sprint champion, Eddie "Cannon" Bald. On September 14, Major Taylor wrote from Springfield, Massachusetts:

Dear Ben,

This leaves me feeling all right with the exception of a slight cold. I am riding very fast and I qualified in all my heats but one yesterday, four out of five.

Today if I can only do so well I can talk "turkey" some, for I certainly did beat out Bald twice yesterday for fair. But those were only heats and don't count for much. It's the finals you know.

I am sending you a paper also, you can see for yourself.

Enclosed you will also please find \$40.00 which please lay up on the shelf

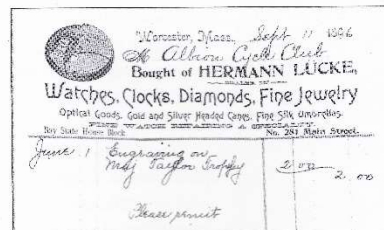


Figure 6. Invoice for \$2.00, written out to the Albion Cycle Club, for "Engraving on Major Taylor Trophy." The order for the inscription was placed on June 1, 1896. American Antiquarian Society.



Figure 7. Major Taylor photo by George H. Van Norman, 1898. Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection, New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed January 6, 2015. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/21>

for me with the rest. I am riding hard every day and I don't care to be worrying about anything more than really is necessary. [Figure 8]

Major Taylor biographer Andrew Ritchie wrote that the rivalry between Taylor and Bald "was one of the hottest attractions of the season."⁸ The crowds loved Taylor and his tremendous bursts of speed, shocked though they might be at the novelty of a Black athlete going head-to-head with white men at a time of strict segregation. As Ritchie put it, "the struggle between Taylor and his white rivals ... was full of an unstated but obvious racial symbolism." Ritchie wrote that there was no suggestion that Bald himself had any racist animosity toward Taylor, but that many of the white riders, especially the ones Taylor kept defeating, had a hard time accepting his presence.⁹

Most of them were furious at being beaten by a man they regarded as their social inferior. And as the competition for the sprint rankings heated up, some began to react with physical hostility. For example, on August 31 in a race in Worcester, Taylor was crowded into the fence, and he crashed and was badly bruised. He lodged a protest against a rider named C.S. Wells for foul riding, and Wells was disqualified from any of the other races.¹⁰ But the referees didn't always side with Taylor. At a meet in Newark, New Jersey, other riders threatened Taylor after he won a race, and he wanted to withdraw from the next race. His trainer told a newspaper reporter that "the white riders were threatening to take

the Major's life if he went out again and he was scared pale." The referee demanded evidence, and in the end, Taylor rode the next race, but he hung back and didn't try to win.¹¹

After the Worcester crash, the New York Sun called for an investigation, [Figure 9] and Taylor himself told reporters that he felt he was in mortal danger. He was quoted September 20 in the Worcester Telegram: "I have a dread of injury every time I start in a race with the men who have been in the circuit this year. They have threatened to injure me and I expect that before the season is finished they will do so."

The hostility climaxed on September 23 at a meet in Taunton, Massachusetts, after Major Taylor outsprinted William Becker of Minneapolis for second place in the final of the one-mile event. Becker came up behind Taylor, hauled him off his bike, threw him to the ground, and choked him into unconsciousness. The police had to intervene. Major Taylor was out cold for about 15 minutes. [Figures 10 & 11]

So, the physical danger was very real; already it was more than a threat. Taylor had been the victim of violence more than once on the racetracks, and yet he kept putting himself out there.

The choking in Taunton was on Thursday, and Major Taylor got on a train to Cleveland on Thursday night or early Friday, and he raced on Saturday. That makes Major Taylor's Sunday morning letter from Cleveland stand out. Think of the courage it took for him just to get on the track in Cleveland. The letter reads:

Sunday 8:45 a.m. September 26th
Dear Ben —

I arrived here Saturday a.m. at 1:20 and was about 6 hours late owing to a freight train wreck on the road, which we had to wait until it was cleared off the track so we could pass. However, I raced in the p.m. and started in three events and won two of them, also won all of my heats. I created a big sensation here among the colored population by winning out yesterday, and among the whites as well.

I shall leave here tonight on the boat for Buffalo where I shall race Tuesday. I shall not go to Trenton as I expected to do, as the jump I think would be too much for me to make a good showing. I made \$150 out of this trip and I will send you \$100 of it by first mail in the a.m.

I guess I will go to Detroit from Buffalo but I don't remember the date. I am feeling much better than I expected to be, after the fall I had. Well, I will not say much just now as I haven't had any breakfast yet, and of course you know what that means, I don't want no fooling.

If my suit comes, take out the sweater and send the suit to me at Buffalo, in care of Buffalo Athletic Field, and I will get it all right.

Goodbye, Love to

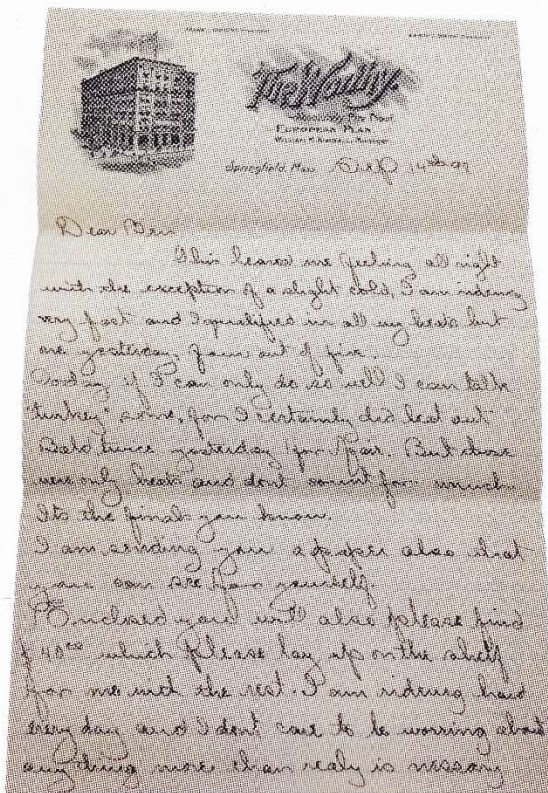


Figure 8. Letter from Major Taylor to Ben Walker from Springfield, Massachusetts, dated September 14, 1897. American Antiquarian Society.

MAJOR TAYLOR'S LIFE IN DANGER.

New York Paper Says There is
a Combination Against Him.

CONDUCT OF RACING MEN
SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED.

Subjected to Constant Threats of
Injury.

(Special Dispatch to The Telegram)
NEW YORK, Sept. 17.—The Sun tomorrow will say: The conduct of the professional racing men who follow the circuit, and by threats and dangerous riding on the track, imperil the safety of Major Taylor, the colored rider, in open competition, should call forth an investigation by the L. A. W. racing board. The attention was called some time ago in the Sun to the fact that Taylor rides in all his big races in deadly fear of his racing companions. Taylor was recently thrown at Worcester and badly bruised in a race, and it was charged that the accident was the result of a conspiracy.

Figure 9. Worcester Telegram, September 18, 1897.

all, Maj. [Figure 12]

In his letter Major Taylor seemed most pleased at what his winning in Cleveland meant to Black people there. The cycling publication "Bearings" said there were about 2,000 spectators, no more than 50 of them Black. The report said Major Taylor was the "bright, particular star of the meet" hosted by the Quill Club and he got a "storm of applause" when he appeared on the track.¹² He won a 1-mile race and a 2-mile race.

Different newspapers used variations of a wire report that said Taylor would have won all three of his events in Cleveland if it weren't for "a blunder in starting." "Bearings" explained that the race started in the twilight and most of the racers were caught unaware when the starting gun went off, and Taylor lost at least 10 seconds there. "The Atlanta Constitution" ran just two sentences of the story, a week

CHOKED TAYLOR.
Police Had to Interfere
at Taunton.
Becker Pulled the Major From
His Bicycle.
Colored Man Was Second in
the Race.

Figure 10. Boston Globe, September 24, 1897.

WORC

ASSAULT
ON TAYLOR!
He Is Knocked Out
at Taunton Races.
COWARDLY WORK BY
WHEELMAN BECKER.
Is Beaten by Worcester
Man in Mile Open.
RUNS INTO TAYLOR AFTER
TAPE IS PASSED.
Jumps On Him When Down and
Chokes Him.

Figure 11. Worcester Telegram, September 24, 1897.

later, in an item headlined "What the Negro is Doing -- Matters of Interest Among the Colored People," and the newspaper added a parenthetical note about the Quill Club: "white." [Figure 13]

Taylor raced in Cleveland on Saturday, and wrote home about it on Sunday, before the punishment for the Taunton choking was meted out. Over the weekend there was speculation in the press that the League of American Wheelmen, headed by Albert Mott, would suspend the Taunton assailant from racing for a long time, or even permanently. [Figure 14] But in the end, Becker was fined a paltry \$50. Other white riders were glad to chip in to pay it. The payment was made on Monday at the meet in Trenton, New Jersey, that Taylor had decided over the weekend not to attend. With that, Becker's suspension was lifted after just three days. [Figure 15]

Major Taylor took a ferry across Lake Erie on Sunday night from Cleveland and he was in Buffalo, a day ahead of Tuesday's racing there, by the time he learned of Becker's reinstatement. His letter from Buffalo was postmarked Monday, September 27.

Dear Ben,

Enclosed you will please find the sum of \$50.00, please put it away for me in case I may need a little ready money. Did you get my last letter and the paper?

It is time for me to go to the track and train. I race here tomorrow; didn't go to Trenton, the jump was too much.

Love to all and kiss the baby for me.

Send mail to me at 4938 Dearborn St., Chicago. I will be there on the 29th or 30th.

Goodbye, as ever,
 Major

Writing home on Sunday morning, before the \$50 penalty was announced, Taylor had chosen his words carefully. He wrote to Walker that he felt better than expected "after the fall I had" and went on to say, in essence, not to get him started on that topic. "Fall" seems like a mild word for the way he was hurled to the ground in Taunton and then choked, or the way the August 31 crash in Worcester happened. The Worcester incident was deemed a foul -- in other words, not purely an accident -- and in Taunton it was an outright assault.

Apparently Major Taylor knew that everyone at Taunton had seen what happened and that he was already getting sympathy



Figure 12. Letter from Major Taylor to Ben Walker from Cleveland, dated September 26, 1897. American Antiquarian Society.

in the press, so he didn't want or need to express indignation, even in a private letter. He may have figured that complaining or lashing out could be interpreted as whining or protesting too much and could turn the officials against him.

Keeping tight-lipped also reflected Taylor's general demeanor of not expressing anger or resentment, of just letting his legs do the talking. The famous quote from his autobiography, published about 30 years later, is "Life is too short for a man to hold bitterness in his heart." Given the racial climate, declining to speak out plainly against injustice was also a political choice and a survival tactic. To be seen as "uppity" would only heighten the danger.

There's one more letter in this set, more than a month later, from Indianapolis.

November 1st

Dear Ben,

I hope you will pardon me for not answering your letter before this, I have been pretty busy for the past few days,

WHAT THE NEGRO IS DOING.

Matters of Interest Among the Colored People.

The sermons delivered by Dr J S Flipper and Rev William Flagg, Jr at Big Bethel church last Sunday were very able indeed. The members pastor and friends of the church made a noble effort to pay off some of the debts of the church on last Sunday. Now that the church has been condemned again, it throws another heavy burden upon that patient and hard working people, yet they will pull through. We are told that if at first we do not succeed try again. Hence the pastor and members and friends of that congregation should not let these disadvantages with which they are coming in contact cause them to falter from doing their duty.

On September 26th, at the Quill Club (white) races, in Cleveland, O., in the presence of fully 2,000 people, Major Taylor, colored of Cambridgeport, Mass., won the races and would have taken the third had it not been for a blunder in the start.

Figure 13. Atlanta Constitution, October 3, 1897.

and then I expected to start Friday but I had to straighten up a little business just at the last moment; and I was detained longer I expected to, however I shall start Wed. A.M. sure unless prevented by sickness or business of great importance. I am going to stop over at Cleveland, Ohio, for a few days and I will be home by Saturday sure, if not before.

It is very rainy and bad here just now. I was at church most all day yesterday.

Say Ben, I just received another letter from the factory saying that they had not got the tandem yet. I am very much worried about it but maybe I can find it when I come.

By the way, Ben I hope that I have not put you out in any respect by not coming on the 30th. If I have I will just have to let you beat it out of me when I do get back home. Well, I don't know what to say, or rather I don't care to write too much or I won't have much to talk about when I do get back. You can tell the boys that they had better begin to walk mighty straight, and you can kiss the baby for me.

Well Ben, please excuse this short letter and look for me this week sure. Tell Annie I'll write her when I get to Cleveland.

Again hoping to see you and all of the folks Saturday.

I beg to remain
your sincere friend,
Major

The letter is not on hotel stationery like the others. In Indianapolis, Major Taylor may have stayed with family or friends. Taylor's pocket diaries show that the Chicago address he gave for where he could be reached at the end of September belonged to his sister Gertrude.

Major Taylor wrote "Kiss the baby for me" in the Buffalo and Indianapolis letters, apparently referring to the Walkers' youngest child at that time, Alice.

MOTT WILL ACT WITHOUT DELAY.

Will Probably Permanently Suspend Major Taylor's Assailant.

BOSTON RACING MEN DISGUSTED AT BECKER'S WORK.

Speedy Rider Has Recovered From Assault.

(Special Dispatch to The Telegram.)
BOSTON, Sept. 24.—W. E. Becker, the California racer, who choked Major Taylor on the track at the Taunton fair grounds yesterday, will have but a short shift at the hands of the L. A. W. officials. The probability is that he will be permanently suspended and barred from L. A. W. races. President Mott of the racing board interested himself in the case at once, has started a rigid inquiry and will act without delay. All the local racing men are intensely disgusted at Becker's performance. Taylor has recovered from the assault, but riders are reminding one another

Figure 14. Worcester Telegram, September 25, 1897.

The 1900 U.S. Census shows the Walkers with four children, including 3-year-old Alice, born in February 1897. "Tell Annie" in the Indianapolis letter may be referring to Ben Walker's wife, who is listed in the census as Annie. And "tell the boys" likely refers to the Walkers' other children in 1897: Richard, who was 7 at that time, Albert, age 6, and Raymond, age 4. [Figure 16] Raymond Walker wasn't listed in the 1900 census because he had died in February 1898, at age 5 years, 2 months, and 8 days. The cause is listed as acute hydrocephalus, or fluid on the brain. [Figure 17] A few months later the Walkers had another baby girl, Beryl; the 1900 census said she was

born in May 1898.

By the time of the 1900 Census, the Walkers had moved around the corner from Parker Street onto Mason Court, about one-tenth of a mile away, and Major Taylor had won his world championship and had bought his own house in another neighborhood (to the alarm of white neighbors). The Walkers would have another son, Benjamin, in 1901. The home

BECKER'S LIGHT PENALTY.

Excites Indignation on the Part of Bicycle Men.

(Special Dispatch to The Telegram.)
NEW YORK, Sept. 23.—The action of the racing board of the L. A. W. in imposing a fine of \$50 on W. E. Becker, the professional rider, for assaulting Major Taylor at Taunton last week, is considered a very mild reprimand. Becker, when called upon to explain the assault, submitted a statement that Taylor deliberately fouled him on coming into the home stretch. This excuse the board accepted, but, believing that the assault was unwarranted, decided to fine Becker for his pugilistic display. The letter was suspended on Saturday and notified that until he paid up he would be debarred from riding on L. A. W. tracks. Becker settled at Taunton on Monday, and is accordingly again in good racing standing. The racing board was severely criticized today by riders and riding patrons for imposing such a light penalty upon Becker. It is well known that intense rivalry exists among the leading professional riders, and some of the men, it is believed, would gladly sacrifice \$50 in order to get in a chance blow at some rival.

Figure 15. Worcester Telegram, September 29, 1897.

at 13 Parker Street has been replaced by a warehouse built in 1920; it most recently housed a used car business that was dissolved in 2021.

Major Taylor wrote in the Indianapolis letter that he was "at church most all day" Sunday. This is consistent with a promise he had made to his mother before she died earlier that year, to live an upright Christian life. His religious faith definitely shaped his identity and impacted his career. He was a steadfast member of the John Street Baptist Church in Worcester. As a devout Christian, Major Taylor refused for many years to race on Sundays. He turned down lucrative offers to race in Europe, where Sunday racing was customary -- until he was able, by virtue of his superstar status, to negotiate the provision "no racing on Sundays" in his contract for Europe in 1901.

In the same letter, Taylor said he had been occupied with business. It was a

Mason	6	Walker Benjamin	Head	B. W. Feb 14 1895
		- Annie E.	Wife	B. E. Nov 18 1869 30
		- Richard H.	Son	B. W. Jan 1898 10
		- Albert M.	Son	B. W. Feb 1897 9
		- Alice M.	Daughter	B. F. Feb 1897 3
		- Beryl J.	Daughter	B. F. May 1898 2

Figure 16. 1900 U.S. Census entries for Mason Court, Worcester, Massachusetts, District 1773, Sheet 12. National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com.

Raymond Walker	M	5	2	8	Acute hydrocephalus	Worcester
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Figure 17. Record of Raymond Walker's death in Worcester on February 23, 1898. Massachusetts Death Records, 1841-1915, via Ancestry.com.

fraught time for Birdie Munger's enterprise, the Worcester Cycle Manufacturing Co. The company had gone into receivership that summer, victim of a shakeout in the bike industry.¹³

As for racing, Major Taylor, by the time of the Indianapolis letter in November, was out of the running for the national championship. After the

Cleveland meet in September, the national circuit was extended into the South. But in town after town, including Indianapolis and New Albany, Indiana; Louisville, Kentucky, and St. Louis, Taylor was shut out of competition. Either racist promoters refused his entry, or the white riders refused to race against him.¹⁴ [Figure 17] In mid-October, "discouraged at his chances in this country," Taylor quit the circuit and headed home, telling reporters he would go to France at once (although he



Figure 19. Eddie Bald. Spalding's Official Bicycle Guide, 1897.

MAJOR TAYLOR IS TO GO TO FRANCE.

Says He Will Take His Departure For That Country at Once.

LEFT NATIONAL CIRCUIT FOR NEW YORK LAST NIGHT.

Cooper Breaks Record at Louisville Meet.

Figure 18. Worcester Telegram, October 13, 1897.

Major Taylor "the Surprise of the Year." [Figure 20] His career trajectory bore that out. His struggles and successes in 1897 laid the foundation for his crowning achievements: numerous speed records in 1898, the world title in 1899,

PRACTICAL END OF NATIONAL CIRCUIT.

Eddie Bald the Best All-Round Man in Competition Events.

EARL KISER MAKES A REMARKABLE SHOWING.

Major Taylor the Surprise of the Year.

(Special Dispatch to The Telegram.)
NEW YORK, Oct. 4.—The outdoor track racing season has practically closed in the East and West, and the leading riders are now preparing to compete on a southern circuit. Considering the work of all the professionals, it is conceded that E. C. Bald of Buffalo should receive the credit of being the best all-round man in competition events.

Figure 20. Worcester Telegram, October 5, 1897. Spalding's Official Bicycle Guide, 1897.

didn't go to Europe until 1901). [Figure 18] Ultimately, Eddie Bald was declared the national champion again. [Figure 19]

Despite the racism from white riders, 1897 was a remarkably successful season for Major Taylor. Biographer Andrew Ritchie summed it up: Major Taylor beat Bald in several races and pushed him to tight finishes in others. In most of his races with the highest-ranked professionals, Major Taylor finished in the top four. He won thousands of dollars, became a fan favorite, and found managers and promoters eager to back him.¹⁵

A "Worcester Telegram" headline that fall declared



Figure 21. Publicity photo of Major Taylor by Elmer Chickering of Boston at the peak of Taylor's American success in 1900. The Wheel, July 5, 1900. Library of Congress.

and triumphant tours in Europe and Australia. The letters that Major Taylor wrote home during his first pro season of bike racing give us a glimpse of his ambition and his focus, and the making of a champion. [Figure 21] ●

- 1 "Second Meeting of Albions," Worcester (MA) Telegram, 13 August 1895, p. 5.
- 2 Ritchie, Andrew. Major Taylor: The Extraordinary Career of a Champion Bicycle Racer. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, pp.47-48. Original edition 1988 (Bicycle Books; San Francisco, CA).
- 3 "Major Taylor on Worcester Visit," Worcester (MA) Sunday Telegram, 17 January 1897, p. 5.
- 4 Burns, Nancy Kathryn, and Janette Thomas Greenwood. Rediscovers an American Community of Color: The Photographs of William Bullard, 1897-1917. Worcester, MA: Worcester Art Museum, 2017, pp. 21-26.
- 5 "Cup Is His for Keeps," Worcester (MA) Sunday Telegram, 17 May 1896, p. 1.
- 6 "Forty-Eight Men Will Get Word," Worcester (MA) Telegram, 21 May 1896, p. 5.
- 7 Constance Whitehead Hanks, telephone interview by author, 19 May 2021.
- 8 Ritchie, p. 72.
- 9 Ritchie, pp. 73-74.
- 10 "Bald Is the Hero!" Worcester (MA) Telegram, 1 September 1897, p. 2, p. 4.
- 11 Unidentified newspaper clippings, Marshall W. "Major" Taylor Scrapbooks, Volume 1, University of Pittsburgh Library System Digital Collections, <https://digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt%3A31735066265772#page/1/mode/2up>, accessed January 6, 2015. (Original held at Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, IN.)
- 12 "Major at Cleveland," Bearings, 30 September 1897, pp. 759-760.
- 13 "Bicycle Firm's Big Debts," New York Times, 13 July 1897, p. 12.
- 14 Ritchie, p. 81.
- 15 Ritchie, p. 82.