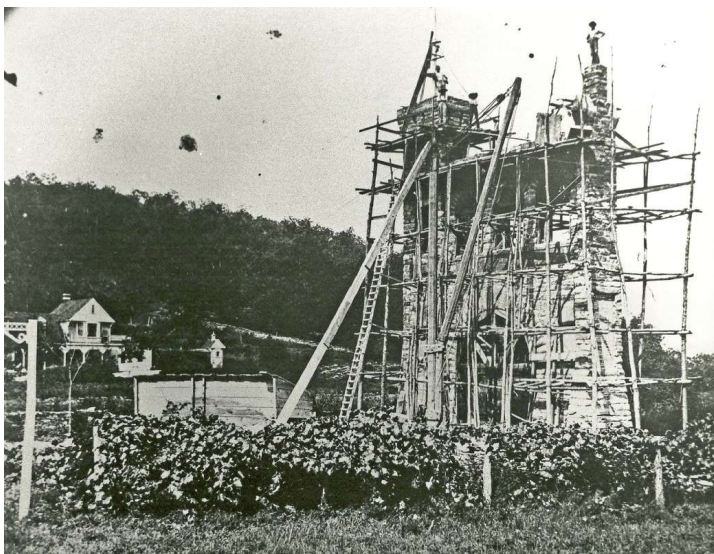


**RIDE REPORT: RED NECK GYRO #14 August 17, 18, 19, 2024**

There were heavy tropical rains on and off 10 days prior to this ride, with more predicted over the weekend. Rain gear was a must for this one. Enduring whatever Mother Nature has to offer is part of motorcycling, right? We did ride through 50 miles of rain, some serious, but the weather was moving northeastwards while we were riding southwestwards. We popped out from under the rain clouds and enjoyed glorious conditions, with only a few lingering light sprinkles; rain suits stayed tucked away.

Father and son Keith and Peter Munson are from Michigan. They took a relaxing train ride to Wilmington, DE where I picked them up Friday evening. They would spend the night here, so we had plenty of time to get acquainted and prepared for the three day ride. I thought travelling that distance by train was a bit unusual, but I soon learned that Keith was a train enthusiast, which would come into play later in the weekend. Fred would show up Saturday morning at breakfast, making us a group of 4. Five bikes had been prepared, one as a back-up, and riders were free to choose, first come first served. Keith would start out on the Moto Morini 500, Fred on the Honda CX500, Peter on the Moto Guzzi 850T3, and I on the Yamaha RD400. As usual, we would switch bikes every 75 miles or so throughout the weekend.

The ride to West Virginia took us through north central Maryland with a brief stop at Gapland State Park. A monument to Civil War correspondents was built here in 1896. It still stands, alongside the ruins of several stone structures, once glorious grand houses.



**ABOVE: The arch nears completion in 1896.**

**RIGHT: As things stand today.**









From Gapland we meander through the rest of Maryland then cross the Potomac River into Shepherdstown, where we park at the Bavarian Inn for an outdoor lunch with a view of the river below.



After lunch we cross through historic Civil War battlegrounds, then cross a high ridge via the Shanghai Gap and Tuscarora Pike which offer outstanding views, then descend, crossing a corner of Virginia on the way to Unger's Store. The road becomes seriously small now, turning to dirt for a bit, before exiting the forest canopy and ending abruptly at Route 522.







Following 522 we pass through Berkeley Springs, stop for provisions, then pick up Route 9 West which brings us past a castle and a famous 4 state overlook just before we turn off to our weekend cabin.







That's not our cabin, it's the shed. Our cabin has air conditioning and a lovely deck and charcoal grill. Pete takes over as chef and we enjoy a fine dinner and relax while enjoying the quiet country setting.



*RIGHT: Chef Pete.*

*LEFT: Fred helps with dinner preparations.*





Sunday is an open day: we can stay in and rest, pick a destination, or just meander. We decide to explore on our bikes; it has been said that there are no bad roads in West Virginia. I am leading and banging turns at will, eventually winding up on a dirt road aptly named 'Detour Rd' which leads to the even more appropriately named "Seldom Seen Rd". The surface turns into 6 miles of steep loose gravel and winds up and down a mountain. It is challenging to say the least. Everyone does amazingly well, considering that they are on unfamiliar bikes; there are no drops. Eventually, I pull over and we have a bit of a chuckle: no one has any idea at all where we are. PERFECT! We whip out the cell phones and some of us have no connectivity. OK, we basically make a wild-ass guess and continue. I often say, "every road leads somewhere" but in this case I am not so sure. Eventually though, we do regain the pavement and orient ourselves. Such is adventure.

We pass through tiny Paw Paw, and cross the Potomac into Maryland, picking up scenic, relaxing Route 52, paralleling the Maryland-West Virginia line into Old Town. Here, I seek out and find the primitive low water bridge that crosses back into WV. Still meandering, and not quite certain of our bearings, we are heading south and happen to come across an antique train ride. Knowing that Keith is a rail enthusiast, I pull in and we check out what is available. It turns out that a 2 hour round trip ride will depart soon and it costs \$60. We discuss plans, but the Michiganders have already had a train ride from Michigan to PA. They came here to ride motorcycles, not more trains, so we decide to keep riding.





*The bucolic Cacapon River is not far from our cabin.*



Just past mid-afternoon we find ourselves in Berkeley Springs where we catch a light lunch and then take swim in the public pool next to “George Washington’s Bathtub”. The hot springs are said to have recuperative powers, and Old George is known to have taken the plunge. We swim and relax and begin to plot dinner plans. We could cook in again, or eat right here in town, but no, this group has come to ride, so we decide to make a 66 mile round trip back to the Bavarian Inn in Shepherdstown for dinner, returning to our cabin a bit after sundown.





For the return ride on Monday we head north on 522, crossing the narrow part of Maryland into Pennsylvania. At Burnt Cabins we switch to twisty bumpy two-lane roads that cross over the Appalachian Ridge then level out into PA apple grove country. A stop in Biglerville at the Apple Bin Grille nets us a hearty lunch with famous apple pie for dessert. Wending our way through Seven Valleys, a stop in Railroad, PA is an absolute must for Keith. Finally, we end day three with a fabulous meal prepared by my wife Lynn. Food, beer, and Motrin, and Gyro #14 is in the bag.

