

RIDE REPORT: SEVEN SPRINGS 2018

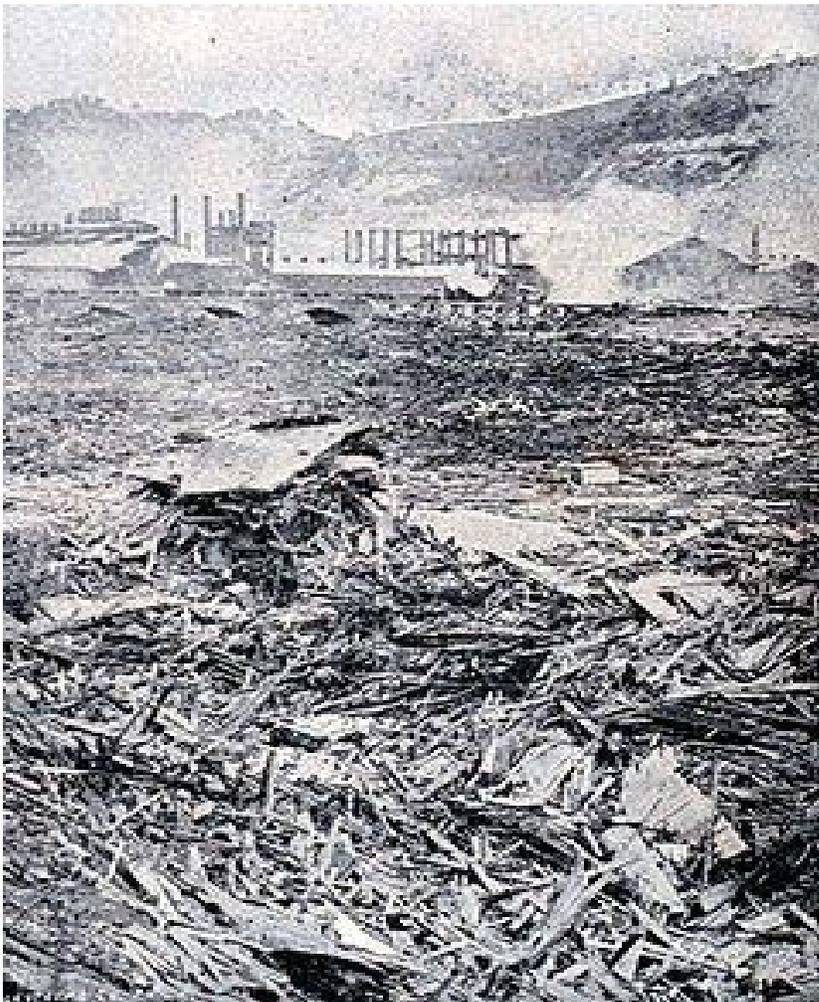
It's Tuesday night, and I am just catching up to my life. We left on Thursday morning and returned home Sunday evening. It has taken two days to unpack and re-organize everything. This is the third year of the event and of RetroTours' participation. It's organized by Motorcycle Classics Magazine and called the ***"RIDE 'EM DON'T HIDE 'EM GETAWAY"***.

The first two years I had riders sign up to do the ride from here—Pennsylvania's 'East Coast'—to Seven Springs Resort, on PA's 'West Coast'. It's 250 miles each way, and some pretty fantastic riding. This year no one signed up for the ride across, but I still had seven riders that wanted bikes trailered out for their use over the weekend. I regret not doing the ride out and back, as the roads are just phenomenal, even including a swim in a mountain lake if it's hot. You can see just what I mean by checking out the ride reports from previous years. I am not a big fan of trailering bikes around, but if someone will pay me to do it, I'll do it.

Since I was making one trip instead of three (trailer bikes out the week before, return home, ride out and back, then fetch the bikes the week after) I decided to ask my wife Lynn to come along. We also took our 11-year-old grandson Gabe. On the Tuesday before, I rounded up the truck and trailer. I spent all day Wednesday preparing them and loading. Loading was made complicated by the very hot, humid weather and a serious downpour during the day. The wooden slat floor of the trailer was as slick as snot: tires slid where they wanted to, not where I pointed them. I loaded 8 bikes, using about 40 straps: fitting 3 bikes in the pickup truck bed required partial disassembly, and 5 bikes fit on the flat-bed trailer.

The drive out went as planned; we arrived around 5 on Thursday and I was lucky enough to get lots of help unloading from Ogden Publications personnel. Five of the bikes were for magazine people, one for Don, last year's free tour winner, and one for Adam, a local rider who helps lay out the group rides. The last one was for me. Requested bikes included the Honda GL1000, the Moto Guzzi 850T3, the BSA 650, the Norton Commando, the Benelli 650, the Suzuki T500, the Harley Davidson XLCR, and the TX750. While the organizers spent Friday pre-running the routes, Lynn, Gabe, and I did some sightseeing. We visited the impressive and sobering Flight 93 Memorial, about 25 miles from the resort, and also Falling Waters, Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece. On Saturday, about 60 bikes and riders braved the threat of rain and rode antique motorcycles on a 130-mile loop which included a very fun and interesting lunch stop in Johnstown, PA. We ate in a restaurant perched on the edge of a sheer drop off, with incredible views of the city below, and the rivers and railways that run all around it. A speaker from the local historical society educated us about the town and the infamous flood of 1889 which killed 2200 people. The town was rebuilt, and a funicular, or inclined railway, was added which enabled many of the residents to relocate far above the flood plain and use the railway to access the city. We all got a chance to ride down and up and it was all very quirky, fun, and interesting; what a great lunch stop destination! We lucked out big time with the weather, just missing some rain; our rain suits stayed packed away.

The Johnstown flood of 1889: debris litters and completely covers the ground above a Pennsylvania Railroad bridge. A small bridge and several mills and smokestacks are viewable in the distance.



The ride pace was very relaxed. There were zero crashes and only 2 mechanical issues. Ironically, one of those was on a BMW K75, a bike borrowed and ridden by Brian Slark of the Barber Motorcycle Museum. No one is immune! That evening we all met in a function room for a delicious banquet dinner highlighted by Alan Cathcart, a renowned racer and moto-journalist who entertained us with some very amusing anecdotes gleaned from his long career. He truly is a delightful person; a proper British gentleman. I had to wonder why he chose to ride the TX750, perhaps one of Yamaha's most disastrous efforts at producing a motorcycle. His reason? They were never imported to England. In the end, I think he may have actually liked it! After dinner, many of us hung around 'Freedom Hall,' where our precious antiques were sequestered for the night. We wrenched, we lied about how fast we were, we watched motorcycle films on the flat screen, we drank a beer

and soaked up the atmosphere created by 60+ classy classic motorcycles and their proud owner/riders. It occurred to me that the room resembled a kindergarten, only here the boys and girls at play with their toys were slightly older.

On Sunday, a slightly smaller group did a 60-mile loop before people began to head out. I was so grateful for the assistance loading: I'm not getting any younger! The drive home was uneventful, and when I asked little Gabe if he wanted to return next year, he was all in. And why not? Over the course of the weekend he enjoyed mini-golf, the indoor and outdoor pools, bowling, the Alpine slide, bungee jumping, and tubing on the flume, not to mention the food (and the desserts!). For an eleven-year old it doesn't get much better than that; all the boys and girls—young and old-- had so much fun, and of course it was also great to see friends again from the previous 2 years' events. To be honest, by the time I finished loading the first time (by myself, in the rain, with no ramp) I had decided that this might be my last time at this event. But by the end of the weekend I was already planning next year's return.



9

FREEDOM HALL



RIGHT: Mary-Alice & her very clean
CB400F, up from Florida.



From the top looking down: Johnstown is in the valley below and the other car is at the bottom coming up as we head down.

When one car goes up, the other comes down: they counterweigh each other. A 400 HP electric motor gives things a push/pull when needed.



From the bottom looking up: It's even steeper than it appears.

Are we having fun yet, Gabe?

