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# Riding the Borderlands: The Negotiation of Social and Cultural Boundaries for Rio Grande Valley and Southwestern Motorcycling Groups, 1900-2000

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RIDING THE BORDERLANDS: THE NEGOTIATION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL  
BOUNDARIES FOR RIO GRANDE VALLEY AND SOUTHWESTERN MOTORCYCLING  
GROUPS, 1900-2000

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my son Dustin and to AnnaLisa.

RIDING THE BORDERLANDS: THE NEGOTIATION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL  
BOUNDARIES FOR RIO GRANDE VALLEY AND SOUTHWESTERN MOTORCYCLING  
GROUPS, 1900-2000

By

GARY L. KIEFFNER, M. A., B. A.

DISSERTATION

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## **ABSTRACT**

# **RIDING THE BORDERLANDS: THE NEGOTIATION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL BOUNDARIES FOR RIO GRANDE VALLEY AND SOUTHWESTERN MOTORCYCLING GROUPS, 1900-2000**

**GARY L. KIEFFNER**

This dissertation presents an analysis and interpretation of particular aspects of the social, cultural, and ideological history of motorcycling in the US-Mexican Borderlands from 1900 to 2000. It is based on interviews with historical correspondents, archival and other documents as well as thirty years of participant reflection during which the author was immersed in biker culture. The motorcycle served as a vehicle for personal and group identity, resistance, and liberation. Issues related to identity, gender, race, marginalization and resistance, imagery, and rhetoric become clearer when considering the perspective of riders. This study surveys interactive processes that occurred between historic motorcyclists, social, corporate and state structures. While distinct, long-lasting mores and norms emerged and crystallized into a riding culture, mass media and other centers of power constructed an imagined biker throughout the century. Meanwhile, the riding community interacted with larger ideological and social constructs and cultural practices. This dissertation highlights a hundred years of motorcycling history and its relevance.



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## **INTRODUCTION**

This doctoral dissertation will consist of an analysis and interpretation of the social, cultural and political history of motorcycling in particular areas of the US-Mexican Greater Borderlands from 1900 to 2003.

### **Purpose**

The goal is to examine issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and material culture through the lens of motorcycling. This study seeks to describe and explain long-term, interactive processes between historic biker cultural development and social, corporate, and state power structures in the United States and Mexican states that touch the border during the twentieth century. The dissertation will also deal with the gradual emergence of distinct, long-lasting mores and norms and their crystallization into a subculture in the early 1900s, how mass media portrayed the essential biker during the twentieth century, the changing ethnic, racial, and gendered characteristics of the motorcycling community, cultural practices and belief systems, some cultural meanings of place, and the development of organized rider social and political beliefs and formations. A hundred years of motorcycling history and its relevance are considered.

### **Borderlands Definitions**

I consider geographic areas from the San Diego-Tijuana Metroplex to the Big Bend region of the Río Grande, the Alta-California Coast from Mission Viejo north to the Bay Area,

from San Luis del Colorado to Dinéh-ta, from Ciudad Chihuahua to Santa Fe, and from the El Paso-Juárez Metroplex to Austin as these are the areas for which I have been able to find the best information. However, I will follow Oscar J. Martínez in drawing a distinction between two regions that I identify as the “border zone” and the “Greater Borderlands.”<sup>1</sup> I define the former as the areas immediately adjacent to the currently recognized international boundary line to include all of the lands and cities that are located in-between all of today’s U.S. border patrol and Mexican *aduana* checkpoints. In contrast, I identify the Greater Borderlands as all areas within all of the U.S. and Mexican states that actually touch that boundary. Thus, the width of the immediate border zone varies by location and is approximately thirty to a hundred miles wide and on both sides of the border, while the Greater Borderlands is a much greater area of land, indeed. The San Francisco Bay Area should be in this study because of paradigmatic shifting events in the world history of biker culture that have occurred there in addition to the area being within the Greater Borderlands as defined here. In this way, Hollister, Oakland, and San Francisco are of as much import to motorcycling history as are Stonewall and San Francisco to LGBT history. For this dissertation, I will focus primarily on the already-mentioned areas of the Greater Borderlands while also considering significant historic events in the immediate border zone, as defined here.

## **Research Questions**

My two principal questions reflecting the primary purpose of writing the dissertation are as follows: (1) How did categories and social constructions of race and gender affect Borderlands motorcycling culture and vice versa? (2) How did the presence of a major international boundary influence motorcycling community? How did it affect or alter

consciousness, identity, and the practical everyday translation of the two categories mentioned in question (1)? Motorcycling cultural history thus becomes a prism for viewing ethnicity, race, nationalism, trans-nationalism, and gender.

To formulate comprehensive answers to these two questions in furtherance of the purpose of this work, I follow the lead of motorcycle studies scholar Suzanne McDonald-Walker, author of the definitive work on British biker political sociology, asking the following topical questions: (3) How did riders in the US-Mexican Borderlands identify common interests and involve themselves collectively? How did bikers of different periods express themselves in social and political organizations? (4) What were these groups' relationships to, or within, the larger (non-motorcycling) sociopolitical spheres of their respective eras? What were the positions of motorcycle riders in relation to the rise and growth of major and minor social and political power structures?<sup>2</sup>

Other questions include: (5) How did motorcyclist rituals to memorialize the dead develop? What ritual practices were observed and why? (6) What was the relationship between motorcyclist realities, myths, and imagery in the twentieth century? (7) Which larger ideological trends were influential in the actions of riders in their social and political organizations? How were such ideological strands translated, modified, or applied? (8) In what ways were nature, space, and particular places important to motorcyclists? How did such relationships impact and interact with traditional Native American societies? When biker and Native significant or sacred sites were shared or adjacent to each other, was a standoff distance of respect observed? What was the nature of relationships between indigenous peoples and bikers?



## Hypothesis

Based upon the analysis of a portion of documents and data that I have already perused or collected, my hypothesis is that men invented these machines in the nineteenth century and fastened steam engines to them so that they would not have to pedal. The vehicles were a delight to ride. While early twentieth-century riders tended to be white and male, in the early twentieth century women also began to ride. The machine provided a peculiarly controlled and limited means of connectivity to outdoor spaces and places, a quality that varied according to the environmental and other elements of specific experiences.

However, persons who operated these machines inadvertently made a great deal of noise and frightened horses, people and other animals. To borrow a term from Edgar Allan Poe, their “quietude” was undermined. Motorcyclists believed that some of those non-riding people then employed methods to restrict, prohibit or marginalize use of the machines. Public opposition to motorcycling was thought to have existed periodically throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Non-riders thus denigrated bikers for various real and imagined reasons, attempting to marginalize the activity.

I hypothesize that both differences and commonalities existed between and among groups in various areas of the Greater Borderlands. For instance, non-riding centers of power in the United States constructed images of an essentially gay male biker that reflected larger societal fears of both bikers and LGBT groups. Such imagery, in turn, was adopted by LGBT communities as well as biker subcultures well beyond the Borderlands from Des Moines to *Distrito Federal*. Images served as the communications media to outsiders as mass culture and popular cultures interacted with each other. I believe that such processes were complicated by changes in the ethnic and racial makeup of motorcyclists as a group. While most bikers in the

border zone before the Mexican Revolution and World War I can probably be considered Anglo American, most riders from the 1950s to present were of Mexican or Mexican American ethnicities.

I also hypothesize that most conflict that could otherwise have occurred among riders was averted whenever motorcycling groups believed that they faced common threats from outside the riding community. Bikers responded to, or rebelled against, perceived societal alienation both individually and collectively. Bikers organized, politically and otherwise, at various times and places. Enthusiasts resisted their own marginalization by organizing into clubs and motorcyclist rights organizations (MROs) and opposing elitism, racism, or other forms of invidious discrimination believed to be directed at themselves. Over a period of several generations, MROs successively formed, grew in strength, affected some changes, declined, and were replaced by similar groups. While some interclub rivalries must have existed in the Greater Borderlands, the entire motorcycling world was often interrelated and in a state of strong solidarity when apparently threatened by anti-motorcycling power centers. In the border zone itself, there was a lack of interclub conflict. MROs and clubs collectively and actively opposed anti-motorcycling initiatives and trends. In a series of recurring cycles, both bikers and those who opposed them acted out their views again and again, often raising specific complaints or offering proposed remedies. An extended process of interaction has occurred between these elements.

### **Building upon the Body of Knowledge**

The study of bikers and motorcycling has attracted a great amount of interest in cognate disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and English literature, among others. In 1975,

Sammy Kent Brooks wrote “The Motorcycle in American Culture: From Conception to 1935,” a doctoral dissertation at George Washington University.<sup>3</sup> Psychologist Lisa Garber wrote her doctoral dissertation on the psyche of women motorcyclists.<sup>4</sup> Another dissertation by Ross Stuart Fuglsang on media imagery and the construction of identity is very informative.<sup>5</sup> Another academically trained scholar, Martin Jack Rosenblum, has written corporate histories for the Harley-Davidson Motor Company.<sup>6</sup> The work of Jerry Smith, who obtained an oral history interview describing a staged photo shoot during the 1947 Hollister, California rally, also informs my analysis.<sup>7</sup> These and other scholars have expressed various possible reasons for the social and legal marginalization of motorcyclists over the years. Most of them trace the phenomenon only as far back as the so-called “Hollister Riot” of 1947 and not earlier.<sup>8</sup>

The historical profession, however, has produced little scholarship dedicated to the understanding of this topic. Such deficiency in the body of knowledge is especially surprising when considering that the motor-driven cycle antedates the automobile by at least twenty years; that distinct, extant, two-wheeled riding cultural values had begun to form by the end of the 1880s (the same decade when the first steam-powered motorcycle appeared in the Borderlands); and that the US national myths of Harley-Davidson and the archetypical “biker” have now grown to iconic proportions. To the best of my knowledge, only one professional historian has published in this field while one other has a book in progress. Steve Koerner of the University of Victoria has written articles on British motorcycling history.<sup>9</sup> Randy D. McBee, Chair of the History Department at Texas Tech University informs me that the manuscript for his monograph on United States biker social history is supposed to be published this year. (McBee also has a graduate student who is, apparently, working on a micro-history of a Lubbock-area motorcycle club.)

McBee's work differs from mine in several respects. First, his periodization starts at 1947 while I trace motorized cycling to the 1810s and mark the beginning of my period of study as 1900. Secondly, McBee seems to be relying heavily on conventional newspapers and popular magazines that, of course, will reflect the pulse of mainstream America's attitudes toward bikers. While I may have perused some of the same sources, I have also examined underground newspapers, insider correspondence, and thirty-six audiotape interviews with longtime bikers in order to discover some other sides of the story. In this way, both his and my work—when considered together—should go a long way toward satisfying the historical profession's divergent valuing of both detachment and postmodern engagement in the relentless pursuit of objectivity and subjectivity, science and art.

Perhaps the most important difference between our two projects involves geography. McBee's US history does not include northern México or the Borderlands, as mine does. Thirdly, this geographic difference will likely result in two differing evaluations concerning ethnic, racial, cultural or other demographic elements. Through our conversations and from his conference presentations, I have reason to believe that his discussion of race during the 1960s, for example, may focus on whiteness and perceptions of the larger (non-riding) North American societal gaze, as they imagined bikers. In contrast, my tentative evaluation of race during that decade relates more closely to the social concerns of contemporary Borderlands bikers relating to each other and in relation to police officers and non-riders.

The Oscar J. Martínez text *Troublesome Border* describes a city in which it became desirable to violate official policies established by distant capitols in order to solve problems that are peculiar to a border zone.<sup>10</sup> Such historic phenomena leads one to look at the local and regional levels as bikers negotiated ways and means to cross over to, or deal with, *el otro lado*.

Raúl Homero Villa's book *Barrio Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture* provides a theoretical cornerstone for viewing ethnic Mexican motorcycling culture's development of a unique social world including the construction of biker-friendly spatial realities.<sup>11</sup> This text is applicable in México, as well. Biker-controlled urban properties in Ciudad Chihuahua, for example, would not only rock an entire barrio during their weekend parties but they also changed the entire ambiance, social environment and subculture of any neighborhood daily and perpetually. Riding culture crystallized; was seemingly confronted by anti-cycling sentiment, legislation, and other feeders of conflict; and resisted such perceived marginalization throughout the twentieth century.

*Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* by Walter D. Mignolo is another work that I draw upon for my chapter on biker ideology. According to Mignolo, the "subalternization of knowledge" or the ways in which subaltern border populations interpreted and appropriated imperialistic discourse for their own local purposes, empowered them and enabled more effective means of resistance.<sup>12</sup> This occurred among motorcyclists in the border zone and is evident as the dominant languages among many clubs were Spanglish and Borderlands Spanish. Ethnic Mexican cultures were celebrated and displayed on the patchwork that many clubs wore wherever they traveled. Systemic expressions of policies, positions, ideas and rhetoric that were relayed through, or emanated from, motorcyclist rights organizational offices in Austin, Washington or Europe were considered, translated and reworked to suit the local Borderlands chapters' own dispositions and preferences.

For the chapter on women in motorcycling, I cite Kamala Visweswaran's *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*, which problematizes ethnicity, gender, and identity while calling

attention to possibilities for the acquisition of in-between spaces.<sup>13</sup> I draw upon Thomas E. Sheridan's history of Tucson and David Montejano's third and fourth periods in his reconstruction of four class-racial social orders in Texas for my model of motorcycling ethnic and racial integration while also presenting new evidence suggesting that bikers tended to integrate prior to or contemporary to the larger society.<sup>14</sup> As I discuss the status of African American and other racialized motorcyclists in the Borderlands, I rely on an historiographic foundation of sound prior scholarship including *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* by Martha Menchaca, and Neil Foley's *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture*. Menchaca relies on the concept of racialization and the sociopolitical construction of racial hierarchies as she problematizes the history of Mexican American people while Foley uses the idea of whiteness as three essential groups engaged in socioeconomic struggles in the Texas hill country to obtain or retain the status of white.<sup>15</sup> Both of these texts may be applied to motorcycling culture in the Greater Borderlands as I complicate the category of race using these and other sources.

The dissertation considers the question of whether historical motorcycling cultural preferences could provide an example for Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*. Marx writes that Americans historically desired both to be present in an environment of pristine, pure beauty and to introduce the comfort and convenience of the machine into that same paradise. Plugging the motorcycle into the role of Marx's machine may or may not be an applicable use of his theory as twentieth-century motorcyclists were seeking not only a means of escape—from their heavily polluted cities out into the countryside—but also a way to experience nature in a more direct, unsheltered and unprotected, intimate and interactive, yet controlled way that

the enclosed automobile on a Sunday drive was incapable of providing to its encased occupants.<sup>16</sup>

Any mention of rider spirituality and relationship to environment that appears in the dissertation may possibly draw on the discourses of Thomas J. Lyon and Sigurd F. Olson. According to Olson, humans have within them an unexplainable urge that compels them to seek inner balance and solace in natural environments.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, Lyon writes that human wholeness comes only from genuine connectivity to nature and a radical inner change involving beauty, ecstasy and oneness as people experience what he calls “wildness” and connection to the “wild Earth.”<sup>18</sup> I include particular selected elements of biker spirituality and relationship to space and place in my chapter on biker funerals and death-related rituals. I write about the significance of particular places and destinations similar to the ways in which Daniel D. Arreola, James R. Curtis, Lawrence A. Herzog, and Raúl Homero Villa problematize Borderlands cities and sites within a growing body of scholarship on space and place.<sup>19</sup> I examine biker cultural connectivity to some specific sites, observe what these places represented, and describe death-related ritual practices.

While narrowing this focus to consider only funerary rituals and beliefs, my original plan to compare and contrast the significance of places in biker subculture with Keith Basso’s description of Apache relationships to sacred sites is not feasible.<sup>20</sup> After all, traditional Athapaskan and western Apache funerary rituals and relationships to the dead have little in common with those of old-school bikers. While other potential comparisons between biker relationships to places and Apache relationships to the land perhaps may have been of interest, funerary cultural differences were very divergent, indeed.

My description of Borderlands interpretations of 1950s North American mass cultural antiheroes is informed by José David Saldívar's discussion of Elvis Presley and El Vez as well as much of Eric Zolov's work on the Mexican counterculture.<sup>21</sup> These two texts necessarily influence my work since Presley and James Dean were bikers in real life while Marlon Brando was often thought of, at the time, as a biker (in México as well as the U.S). As *rebeldes sin causa*, their images affected biker cultural development, which further influenced subsequent myth.

As I problematize such elements of motorcycling history, I do so with the same concerns that John Fiske writes about in *Understanding Popular Culture* when he describes complex interactions between "mass culture" and "popular culture." In such a reading, mass culture was related to advertising and what the manufacturer wished for people to do with the product, while popular culture decided how the people actually interacted with the product, regardless of the producer's desires. Accordingly, mass culture and popular culture constantly influenced each other over time.<sup>22</sup>

This holds true for motorcycling history after 1910, for centers of power attempted to define and redefine riding culture using particular forms of imagery in their advertisements and by other means. Such mass cultural images and formations interacted with the actual popular riding culture for generations, which is supported by Fiske's thesis. Michel Foucault's discussions of issues related to marginality, centers of power and knowledge are equally important as a larger framework in this dynamic while they also complicate Fiske's model.<sup>23</sup> I apply Foucauldian sexuality-related theory to my discussion of bikers relating to society and include a brief examination of heteronormativity through the vehicle of motorcycling culture.<sup>24</sup>



## **Sources and Research Methods**

My dissertation seeks to fill a void in the body of literature, since little or no motorcycling social and cultural history has been written from the bottom-up about the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands. I have accessed pertinent sources to explore changing cultural formations in relation to social constructs. The principal primary sources consist of oral history interviews, government documents, articles from mainstream, underground and motorcycle newspapers, newsletters and magazines, correspondence, and films including László Benedek's *The Wild One*, Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising*, and others.<sup>25</sup> In addition to perusal of archival and secondary sources, my research methods include ethnographic participant observation, a collection of interviews with participants in motorcycling culture who I call "native consultants," and pre-university lifetime participant reflection as a biker.

## **Content**

Chapter One is about women motorcyclists and the category of gender. Motorcycling culture was a "masculine" construct within which women operated and moved. Exaggerated, ultra-patriarchal gender roles were the norm; however, exceptional women could expand beyond such inequity and sometimes even gender bend, due to biker cultural values such as nonconformity and individuality. Often, these women were accepted as members or respected associates of riding groups and clubs. Gender rebellion was ritually reinforced for some persons but not for others, depending on individual status. The chapter will consider the influence of gender role constructs upon motorcycling and vice versa.

Chapter Two is about the categories of race and ethnicity in relation to motorcycling in the Mexican-U.S. borderlands. It will consider the historical experiences of African American,

ethnic Mexican, and other riders and their motorcycles as a vehicle for demonstrating the importance of race in the Greater Borderlands during the century.<sup>26</sup> The chapter will survey societal racial and transportation-based discrimination against Black and other racialized riders as well as bikers' individual and collective resistance against such marginalization and recreation as practicing bikers. The question of conflict between motorcycle clubs will be addressed in this chapter. It will consider race, racism, extreme mobility, and relations among and between bikers and larger non-riding society.

Chapter Three on imagery and realities will problematize both changes within biker culture and larger societal constructions of an imagined "biker" over the past several generations. The chapter will demonstrate how the myths and realities of motorcycling interacted with each other over time, influencing and changing both fiction and actual riding culture in the Borderlands. Traces of this complex process of interaction between the imaginary and the real can be extrapolated from media images and projections and other sources. The chapter deals with how mass media has presented the essential biker, the gullibility of non-riders when viewing these images, the consequences of an emerging public fear of motorcyclists, and interactions between bikers, non-riders, and subsequent portrayals.

Chapter Four, a cultural and historical account of biker death-related ritual practices, surveys motorcyclist funerals, rituals related to roadside memorials and major and minor annual events such as the Barney Villa Memorial Ride and Run For the Wall in relation to historic influences, identity construction, the significance of place, the appropriation of Native American sacred sites, and other elements. Many bikers since the Mexican Revolution and World War I have been veterans and consequently a noticeable military influence existed in death memorial rites. Yet, the roots of popular biker death rituals can be traced to three other

main sources: the traditional Irish wake, 1960s countercultural practices related to protest and the appropriation and use of public space, and Native American or New Age-influenced beliefs and rituals. The chapter's approach is ethno-historical and examines various influences and changes to these rites and rituals in relation to larger societal elements.

The fifth chapter is about motorcyclist social and political thought more than behavior. It discusses ideological distinctions, commonalities, and interactions between motorcyclist rights organizations (MROs) and elements of non-riding society. It examines reasoning behind the actions of riders and non-riders, particularly the values or ideas that were held as expressed in rhetorical terms. The chapter begins with pre-twentieth-century expressions, continues through the 1990s, and includes a survey of transnational expressions of solidarity in the context of the México-U.S. Borderlands. While the motorcycle allowed easy border crossings during most of the century and aided bikers' desire to cross boundaries, some riders found it difficult to ride across at other times.

### **My Position in Relation to the Topic**

This doctoral dissertation contains anthropological historical information based on the reflexive anthropological methods of Jay Ruby who writes that reflexivity means that the researcher problematizes herself in her research. She overtly shares her epistemological preconceptions that determine how she constructs her research questions in a particular way, how she conducts her research, and the way in which she presents her resultant production.<sup>27</sup> I will, thus, present and problematize myself here and apply Ruby's reflexive method, especially in Chapter Three when considering films and other mass cultural products. Reflexive anthropology is part of what I do.

Writing this dissertation helps one to get through a university program that has its own areas of academic interest. For example, it addresses questions such as whether race and gender may have mattered historically in the motorcycling community. There is *riding*, and then there is *writing*. Two very different activities for two very different purposes, they hardly reflect each other. Yet, I must connect the two somehow.

Like anyone, I have had preconceived beliefs, values, mores, and life-ways while engaged in this project. It would be helpful here to mention that I am a motorcyclist. In fact, many of my family members, friends and acquaintances—if asked—would identify me as a “biker.” My Uncle Glen, like his uncle before him, was a biker and I have been one all of my adult life. I have been riding the roads and highways of the Mexican-US Borderlands since 1979. My interpretation of history is probably influenced partly by this perspective. I endeavor to offer an account that is balanced between the incongruent historiographic imperatives of objectivity and subjectivity. I try also to avoid presentism while expressing an appropriate amount of passionate understanding. Overall, I am writing an insider’s history.

### **My Theoretical Paradigm**

This is both a borderlands theoretical argument and one of marginalization. Looking from inside, the most noticeable or obvious long-term change that has been more or less steady, growing almost every generation, is an increase in the complexity, strength, and power of a Foucauldian power structure that I identify—modifying the term introduced by Dwight D. Eisenhower in his farewell address—as a “police industrial complex.” Today, political scientists would call this phenomenon an example of an “iron triangle.”<sup>28</sup> This particular structure has presented a challenge to the self-determination of not only bikers but all of the

people in the border zone. The bikers that I have known wanted me to write about this historically while my academic program requires a history of the “borderlands.” As these two considerations are not mutually exclusive, the dissertation is a history of bikers being marginalized and resisting in the Borderlands, based on applicable theoretical foundations.

### **The Project’s Merit**

Social and cultural history is currently of widespread interest in the profession and its relevance will probably continue, even as histories of the entire twentieth century begin to be written. A thorough historical account of motorcycling based on this dissertation and other previous and subsequent works may cast new light upon non-bike specific events, myths, trends, and phenomena including the Mexican Revolution, the Samson / Iron John archetype, consumer capitalism, trans-nationalism, and the larger context of America under the Patriot Act. I also consider the motorcycle to be a perfect vehicle for examining categories of race and gender in borderlands history. My research and the larger developing body of scholarship exemplified in the *International Journal of Motorcycle Studies* are significant in that they enhance our understanding of larger themes including the history of discrimination, power structures, and the role that twentieth-century symbols (in this dissertation, the motorcycle and the “scorcher”-“biker”) can play in the negotiation of social status. It also speaks to questions of inclusion and exclusion as a culturally unique community emerged and an alienated mode of transportation intersected with desire, ideology, collective empowerment, and sociopolitical relevance. Why, for instance, did a machine become an international icon in the way that Harley-Davidson did? Was it really an icon in México? If not, then why? What long-term chain of events led the Guggenheim Museum to mount a special exhibit of these machines

titled *The Art of the Motorcycle* and why did its director call the motorcycle the “perfect metaphor for the twentieth century?”<sup>29</sup>

The thing that makes Borderlands motorcycling history so extraordinary is that, in a unique place where a major world power was located next to an economically challenged nation, the culture associated with Harley-Davidson was very different from biker cultures in the U.S. or in Europe. This is because the Greater Borderlands appear to have been regions of interaction between two incongruent images of the motorcycle as symbol: nonconformity, rebellion, deviance and aggression, speed, freedom and self-reliance (as in Richard Slotkin’s North America<sup>30</sup>) versus foreign economic and cultural imperialism as well as individual or team technical riding skill (as in México). Here in the middle, it was neither of the two but, rather, something entirely different. The motorcycle seems to have been a vehicle that crossed, evaded, or minimized geopolitical and ideological borders with ease.

Rather than a mere new cultural history, this is a sociocultural and political transnational historical account that is relevant to everyone, not just bikers. I avoid the trend—found too often in the popular moto publications of Garri Garripoli, Melissa Holbrook Pierson, and so many others marketed to a mass audience—to celebrate the supposed triumphs of bikers as they somehow “conquered America” (to use the words of New Mexico Governor (and biker) Bill Richards’ 2008 presidential campaign press secretary Tom Reynolds).<sup>31</sup> Rather, I will endeavor to problematize all of the questions in order to tell a history that is universally significant.

This dissertation contributes to the Department of History and the University of Texas at El Paso in several ways. It contributes to the body of borderlands historical knowledge. Interview tapes and generated transcripts will enhance the collections of the campus Oral

History Institute. The opportunity to conduct this research has made me a better researcher. Finally, practice has improved my archival research and writing skills and kept my talents honed.

### **Nineteenth-Century Antecedents**

The motorcycle itself has been around for a long time, much longer than the automobile. The first coal-burning engine-driven bike was probably built in Germany and tested in Luxembourg Gardens, Paris on April 5, 1818. Other early bikes may have escaped from the historical record. Gottlieb Daimler adapted the internal combustion engine to propel a bicycle in 1885, before he formed a car company called Mercedes Benz. A company in Belgium then lightened and improved the performance of the gasoline engine, building first motorcycles and then trikes and cars in the late 1890s. Bikes served for generations in roles related to personal and professional transportation.<sup>32</sup>



Plate 1. The first coal-burning engine-driven motorcycle. Paris, France, April 5, 1818. Diagram courtesy of the Science Museum, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, England.

1868, 1881, 1884, and 1900 are vital moments in the history of motorcycling in the Greater Borderlands. These were the years in which the first motorcycles were constructed in Austin, Texas, in Phoenix, Arizona and in San Diego, California. The “Austin Velocipede” was a two-wheeled steam-powered vehicle constructed and tested in 1868. Lucius Copeland, inventor of the Arizona bike, charged admission for people to watch *him* ride around a horse-racing track and also took this steam-powered bike to the Maricopa County Fair in the early 1880s. By 1884, Copeland was building another motorcycle in California. Unlike these earlier bikes and five more machines built later on in the United States at the turn of the century, the other bike in 1900 San Diego ran dependably and could easily be mounted. No other motorized bikes are known to have been built or ridden in the Borderlands before 1901.<sup>33</sup>

Early motorcycles were hard to ride and harder to start. A rider had to be strong enough to either push-start or pedal-start the bike. The latter method entailed the pedaling of the stationary bike while it was still up on its center-stand with the engine engaged so that it fired. This archaic starting technology did not change until shortly after the turn of the twentieth century. Motorcycles in the late 1800s were little more than bicycles with coal-steam or petroleum-powered engines attached to the frame and operated without a clutch. The typical nineteenth-century motorized bicycle weighed more than non-motorized bikes and was awkward to keep balanced and upright. Motorcycles generally had no throttle controls, utilized directly-engaged transmissions, and carried power-plants dangerous enough to ignite Daimler’s son’s pant-leg on fire. Early machines were a significant challenge to operate.<sup>34</sup>

Even worse, early motorcycle frames often could not withstand the rigorous punishment dished out by the engine’s power or by the terrible roadways. The frames frequently broke, causing deaths and injuries. Improved twentieth-century motorcycles



continued to be subject to chronic fuel and ignition problems. Carburetors were little more than Campbell's Soup cans while gasoline was highly flammable. The publication of various calamities gave rise to a readily accepted, extant idea that motorcycling might be detrimental to life and limb. This mode of transportation was believed to be more precarious than horses and bicycles.<sup>35</sup>

Rider-friendly production bikes began to be manufactured between 1901 and 1916 as drive train, suspension, and other technological improvements were added to the latest models. Manufacturers added springs to the formerly rigid frames, greatly decreasing the jarring effect and making the ride more comfortable. Clutches were introduced so that an operator did not have to know when to shift gears. The bike's speed could now be easily regulated because throttle controls were moved to the handlebars where they were readily accessible. Battery-powered starting also made the ride accessible to more people.<sup>36</sup>

The continually improving convenience and reliability that result from research and development contributed to motorcycling's popularity, especially in places that had good roads. By 1916, an estimated 180,000 motorcycles were being ridden in the United States. In 1914, Californians registered 24,709 motorcycles, more than in any other state. A motorcycle run in the Los Angeles area could easily draw 1,600 bikes in 1911. New York, Ohio, and several Midwestern states trailed California closely in numbers of registrations. Colorado was the number fourteen state with 3,863 bikes registered. Young borderlands states such as Arizona and New Mexico as well as the northern Mexican states are difficult to account for, however, since bikes were not registered.<sup>37</sup>

While rutty roads of mud, *caliche*, clay, and sand during the first two decades of the twentieth century were problematic, the poor quality of roadways tended to impact negatively

the mobility of heavy cars much more than lighter two-wheelers.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, simple technology meant an inexpensive initial cost for the machine. Throughout the first half of the new century, prices of motorized bikes were usually much lower than those of cars. An article by L. H. Bill in the August 1902 edition of *Overland Monthly* reported, for example, “The first cost of a motor bicycle is \$175, a nominal sum.... [The] cost of running a motor bicycle is less than one-quarter cent per mile.... Within reach of the middle class as well as the rich.”<sup>39</sup>

Another article by Henry Norman, published in the July 1903 *World's Work*, cited motorcycling as “the simplest, the quickest, the cheapest independent locomotion that has ever been known.”<sup>40</sup> Motorcycles were thus promoted as an inexpensive alternative form of personal transportation. These machines were far more economical than four-wheeled automobiles and this economic reality remained until Henry Ford built his first assembly line.<sup>41</sup> The first chapter will now survey how gender came into play as these other changes took place.

## Notes:

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- <sup>2</sup> Suzanne McDonald-Walker, *Bikers: Culture, Politics, and Power* (New York: Berg, 2000), 1-9.
- <sup>3</sup> Sammy Kent Brooks, "The Motorcycle in American Culture: From Conception to 1935," (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1975). Ph.D. Dissertation. (American Civilization).
- <sup>4</sup> Lisa Garber, "Women Who Ride: The Psyche of the Female Motorcyclist," (Pacifica: Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2002). Ph.D. Dissertation. (Clinical Psychology).
- <sup>5</sup> Ross Stuart Fuglsang, "Motorcycle Menace: Media Genres and the Construction of a Deviant Culture," (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1997). Ph.D. Thesis. (Mass Communications).
- <sup>6</sup> Thomas Bolfert, Buzz Buzzelli, M. Bruce Chubbuck, and Martin Jack Rosenblum, eds., *Historical Overview: Harley-Davidson, Inc., 1903-1993* (Milwaukee, Wisc.: HM Graphics, 1994). Rosenblum, *Holy Ranger*. The Holy Ranger [Martin Jack Rosenblum], *Thievery Not Ethnomusicology (or No Freedom, Honey)* Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin: Wheel to Reel Sound, Datry Evopoetics, 2000. Compact disc.
- <sup>7</sup> Gus DeSerpa, Interview by Jerry Smith, as cited in Brock Yates, *Outlaw Machine: Harley-Davidson and the Search for the American Soul* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1999). *The International Journal of Motorcycle Studies*, an on-line peer-reviewed publication supported by Nova Southeastern University, provides an outlet for academics engaged in cultural studies related to motorcycling. The journal's address is <http://ijms.nova.edu>.
- <sup>8</sup> In addition to journal articles, examples of book-length scholarly works include Daniel R. Wolf, *The Rebels: A Brotherhood of Outlaw Bikers* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Barbara Joans, *Bike Lust: Harleys, Women, and American Society* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001); Raymond Michalowski and Jill Dubisch, *Run For the Wall: Remembering Vietnam on a Motorcycle Pilgrimage* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001); McDonald-Walker, *Bikers*; Ted Bishop, *Riding with Rilke: Reflections on Motorcycles and Books* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2005); and Steven E. Alford and Suzanne Ferriss, *Motorcycle* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).
- <sup>9</sup> Steve Koerner, "The British Motor-Cycle Industry During the 1930's," *The Journal of Transport History* 16-1 (1995), 55-76. Steve Koerner, "Women and Motor Cycling in Britain, 1919-1939," a paper presented at the Southwest / Texas Popular Culture Association Annual Convention, February 16, 2002, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- <sup>10</sup> Oscar J. Martínez, *Troublesome Border* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988).
- <sup>11</sup> Raúl Homero Villa, *Barrio Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000).
- <sup>12</sup> Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- <sup>13</sup> Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (1994; Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). See also Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- <sup>14</sup> David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987). Thomas E. Sheridan, *Los Tucsonenses: The Mexican Community in Tucson, 1854-1941* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986).
- <sup>15</sup> Martha Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001). Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
- <sup>16</sup> Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (1964; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- <sup>17</sup> Sigurd F. Olson, "Wilderness: A Human Need," in *Unmanaged Landscapes: Voices for Untamed Nature*. Ed. Bill Willers. (Washington: Island Press, 1999), 173-174.
- <sup>18</sup> Thomas J. Lyon, "The Saving Wildness," in *Ibid.*, 184-187.
- <sup>19</sup> Daniel D. Arreola and James R. Curtis, *The Mexican Border Cities: Landscape Anatomy and Place Personality* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993). Lawrence A. Herzog, *Where North Meets South: Cities, Space, and Politics on the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Austin: University of Texas, Center for Mexican-American Studies, 1990). Villa, *Barrio Logos*.

- <sup>20</sup> Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits In Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).
- <sup>21</sup> José David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
- <sup>22</sup> John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1975). Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (1976; New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1990).
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.
- <sup>25</sup> László Benedek, dir., *The Wild One*. Marlon Brando, Lee Remick, and Mary Murphy. Columbia, 1954. Videocassette. Kenneth Anger, dir., *Scorpio Rising*. Bruce Byron. Fantoma Films, 1964. Videocassette. Al Adamson, dir., *Satan's Sadists*. Russ Tamblyn, Regina Carrol, and Gary Kent. Super Video, 1969. Videocassette. Roger Corman, dir., *The Wild Angels*. Peter Fonda, Nancy Sinatra and Bruce Dern. Orion Home Video, 1966. Videocassette. Tom Laughlin, dir., *The Born Losers*. Tom Laughlin, Elizabeth James, and Jeremy Slate. Vestron Video, 1967. Videocassette. Lee Madden, dir., *Hell's Angels '69*. Sonny Barger, Danielle Corn, and Bud Ekins. Media Home Entertainment, 1969. Videocassette. William Asher, dir., *Beach Blanket Bingo*. Frankie Avalon, Annette Funicello, and Deborah Walley. American International Pictures, 1965. Film. Edward L. Cahn, dir., *Motorcycle Gang*. Steven Terrell, Anne Neyland, and John Ashley. American International Pictures, 1957. Film. Richard Chase, dir., *Hell's Angels Forever*. Willie Nelson, Jerry Garcia, Johnny Paycheck, Bo Diddley, and Kevin Keating. Media Home Entertainment, 1983. Videocassette. Dennis Hopper, dir., *Easy Rider*. Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper, Jack Nicholson. Columbia Tristar (Raybert Productions), 1969. Videocassette.
- <sup>26</sup> Finding primary and secondary sources on Black motorcyclists is challenging. Some of the most readily available and important may include Tobie Gene Levingston, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman, *Soul On Bikes: The East Bay Dragons MC and the Black Biker Set*. (St. Paul: MBI Publishing, 2003). Ralph "Sonny" Barger, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman, *Hell's Angel: The Life and Times of Sonny Barger and the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000). Ralph "Sonny" Barger, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman, *Ridin' High, Livin' Free: Hell-Raising Motorcycle Stories* (New York: William Morrow, Harper Collins, 2002), esp. 71-85.
- <sup>27</sup> Jay Ruby, "Exposing Yourself: Reflexivity, Anthropology, and Film," *Semiotica* 30-1, 30-2 (1980): 153-179.
- <sup>28</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Military-Industrial Complex Speech," 1961, in "Public Papers of the Presidents, 1960," 1035- 1040, reproduced in The Avalon Project, Yale University Law School "The Avalon Project, Military-Industrial Complex Speech, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1961," Internet. <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/speeches/eisenhower001.htm>. December 13, 2003. 1-6. Gordon Adams, *The Iron Triangle: The Politics of Defense Contracting* (New York: Council on Economic Priorities, 1981).
- <sup>29</sup> Thomas Krens, "Preface," in *Motorcycle Mania: The Art of the Motorcycle* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1998), 16.
- <sup>30</sup> Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1992).
- <sup>31</sup> Tom Reynolds, *Wild Ride: How Outlaw Motorcycle Myth Conquered America* (New York: TV Books, 2000). Garri Garripoli and Friends, *Tao of the Ride: Motorcycles and the Mechanics of the Soul* (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1999). Melissa Holbrook Pierson, *The Perfect Vehicle: What It Is About Motorcycles* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997). Brock Yates, *Outlaw Machine: Harley-Davidson and the Search for the American Soul* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1999).
- <sup>32</sup> Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 1, 3-4, 36-138. Richard Alexander Hough and L.J.K. Setright, *A History of the World's Motorcycles* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1973), 9-64. Pierson, *Perfect Vehicle*, 60-63. Trisha Yeager, *How to Be Sexy With Bugs in Your Teeth* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1978), 16-19. Two male pedestrians had to service the 1818 bike by running on foot behind it as re-fuelers, chasing it while feeding coal to the engine. The only evidence of its existence is an un-detailed pictogram. The bike itself has not been recovered by researchers and some doubt that it had ever existed.
- <sup>33</sup> "Single Motor Bicycles," *New York Sun* as reprinted in *Current Literature* 29-2 (August 1900), 233-235. *Motorcycle Illustrated* (June 1906,) 14 as cited in Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 63. Thomas C. Bolfert, *The Big Book of Harley-Davidson* (Osceola, Wisc.: Motorbooks International Publishers, 1991), 20. Sue Boulais, Dana Majors, and Orlando Museum of Art, "The Art of the Motorcycle: Teacher Resource Guide."

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<sup>35</sup> Hough, *History of the World's Motorcycles*. Louis, *Classic Motorcycles*. Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 51. For a later, twentieth-century example, see "Champion Motorcyclist Killed When He Hits Post," *Colorado Springs Gazette* 14,332 (July 26, 1915): 2. W. Ed. Edwards, "Ye Motorcycle Dictionary," *Motorcycling and Bicycling* (March 13, 1916): 17. Stephen Van Tassel, "The Motor Cycle," *Harper's Weekly Journal of Civilization* 43-2235 (October 21, 1899): 1063-1064. "Single Motor Bicycles," 233-235. Krarup, "The Field for Motorcycles," 207-212. The Veteran, "Tips and Topics," *Motorcycle Illustrated* 5-8 (May 1, 1910): 22-23. "Morning, Jo, Fixing Your Tire?" *Motorcycling* (May 19, 1910): 17. Paul Melot, "Curieuse evolution de l'automobile a deux roués...Naissance de la motocyclette et due scooter," *Mirror de l'histoire* 107 (1958): 555-561.

<sup>36</sup> "Motorcycle Has Many Automobile Features," *Illustrated World* 33 (April, 1920): 289. Witzel Gyvel-Young, "Women on Wheels," *Route 66 Magazine*, Spring 2000, 9. Louis, *Classic Motorcycles*. Hough, *History of the World's Motorcycles*. "Anybody Can Drive a Neracar: Syracuse Company to Manufacture Classy Motorcycle Built on Automobile Lines," *Motorcycle and Bicycle Illustrated* (October 27, 1921), 70-73. Vic Willoughby, *Classic Motorcycles* (New York: Dial Press, 1975). Eric E. Thompson, *Motor Cycles in Colour* (London: Blandford Press, 1976). Buzz Kanter, *Indian Motorcycles* (Osceola, Wisc.: Motorbooks International, 1993). Bolfert, *Historical Overview*. Bolfert, *Big Book*. Smith, *Harley-Davidson*.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Allen Munn, Pres., "The Rise of the Motorcycle," *Scientific American* 112-23 (June 5, 1915): 581-582. Dorothy G. Stewart, ed., *"Going Some" 1913: First "Coast to Coast" Trip by Motorcycle and Sidecar* (Bridgeport, California: D and D Enterprises, 1992), ii. Thaddeus S. Dayton, "The Motor-Cyclist's Vacation," *Harper's Weekly* 56 (August 3, 1912), 20. In 1912, none of the southwestern states (including California) required the registration of motorcycles.

<sup>38</sup> "Elsie Scott and Harry Amster on a 1914 Indian Motorcycle," Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-4, Jerome Historical Society Archives, Jerome, Arizona (hereinafter called "JHSA"). "Harry Amster on a 1914 Indian M/C. Scene is on a Muddy Jerome St.," Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-40, JHSA. "Harry Amster Sitting on a Very Muddy 1914 Indian Motorcycle," Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-6, JHSA. "Hazel, Kathlyn, Lewis Turner," Photograph, Photo ID number PB10, F4, #7, Sharlot Hall Museum Archives and Library, Prescott, Arizona (hereinafter called SHA). "Marie Curtis, a Picnic," Photograph, Photo ID number PB10, F4, #12, SHA. Unnamed Photograph, Photo ID number PB147, F6, #13, SHA. Unnamed Photograph, Photo ID number T-178, PD, SHA. Crewe, "What a Girl Can Do," 22-23. Serg. L. H. Guterman, "A Day in the Life of a Border Rider: Mud and Much of it Bothers the Boys with the Motor Battery of the 71<sup>st</sup> at McAllen, Texas, but Motors Give Good Service," *Motor Cycle Illustrated* (September 14, 1916), 13-15. John P. MacDonell, "One Law of Nature that's Never Yet Been Formulated in Professorial Gobbledygook: Scooter People Never Change." *Easyriders*. 5-28 (April 1975). 32-33, 70-77. Bradford Luckingham, *Phoenix: The History of a Southwestern Metropolis* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), 52-53. "Reports Say Roads East and West in Fair Shape," 5. Janet R. Balmforth, "'Good Roads Roberts' and the Fight for Utah Highways," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 49-1 (1981), 56-65. Kimmelman, "Luring the Tourist to Tucson," 135-154. Peter J. Hughill, "Good Roads and the Automobile in the United States, 1880-1929," *Geographical Review* 72-3 (1982): 327-349. Charles P. Kendall, "Planks Across the Dunes," *Journal of Arizona History* 21-4 (1980): 391-410. Charles P. Kendall, "Engineer's Nightmare: Bridging the Colorado at Yuma in 1915," *Journal of Arizona History* 19-3 (1978): 283-296. Alex J. Kimmelman, "Luring the Tourist to Tucson: Civic Promotion During the 1920's," *Journal of Arizona History* 28-2 (1987): 135-

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<sup>39</sup> L. H. Bill, "The Poor Man's Automobile," *Overland Monthly*. (August 1902), 197-198.

<sup>40</sup> Henry Norman, "What the Motor-Cycle Offers: The Cheapest Method of Transportation as Yet Discovered-the Coming Exchange of the Suburban Home for the Country Home," *World's Work* (July 1903), 3672.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 3670-3672. Bill, "Poor Man's Automobile," 197-198. Munn, "Rise of the Motorcycle," 233-235. Smith, *Harley-Davidson*. Stewart, "Going Some" ii. Dayton, "Motor-Cyclist's Vacation," 20.

## CHAPTER ONE

### WOMEN BIKERS, MARGINALIZATION, AND RESISTANCE

One of the most engaging books yet published on the subject of feminist analysis of cultural studies is the insightful autobiographically informative account by Kamala Visweswaran titled *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*. Presented as an ethnographic exploration of the within, Visweswaran problematizes the hyphen in the term Indian-American to demonstrate how traditional scholarly practice tends to divide subjects in a perpetual quest for power-knowledge. Accordingly, the hyphen separates both identity and people. “Indian” and “American” are typically thought of as essentialized identities. Meanwhile, assimilation is only a fantasy and the question of being American is typically repressed because it is assumed. The text also treats the hyphen as metaphor for divisions related to race, class, gender, and education.

As a response to normative participant observation that encourages hyphenated division, the author offers a corrective feminist practice that she calls “hyphenated ethnography.” Visweswaran advocates a deconstructive approach by which the accumulation of western knowledge about south Asian women is resisted, the use of language alters representations of the self and creates affinities, and the hyphen begins to aid in the negotiation and acquisition of space for shifting identities and alliances. Such redefinitions occur by creating new discourse, repositioning subjects as central rather than other, and publishing their experiences.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter produces some women’s experiences in the world of motorcycling in the Greater Borderlands during the twentieth century. If the hyphen, which Visweswaran

problematizes and appropriates, traditionally has divided people then it may also be applied historically—both in its original ethnic meaning and as metaphor—to women motorcyclists. Intersections between nationality and ethnicity, myth and realities, society and identity, gender and culture may be exposed and reviewed. I focus here on the latter two categories. The chapter suggests that the publicly perceived phenomenon of women riding motorcycles was contemporary to, or that it even preceded, the reformation of prescribed gender roles in the larger society of the Progressive Era and throughout the century.

### **Gender and the Machine**

Nonetheless, motorized cycle riding at the beginning of the twentieth century was a masculine realm, an activity imagined to have been reserved for men. To a great extent, the status of women in motorcycling reflected their marginalization in larger society. For even though a few women had operated motorcycles in the Greater Borderlands for most of the hundred year period, they more often rode as passengers behind men, on the tandem seat. Women motorcyclists were marginalized by non-bikers and by riders. Prejudice against females as bike operators is surveyed herein both as gender-related and in the context of discrimination against all riders.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of machinery as a masculine domain originated in late 1800s society and such ideas influenced the entire twentieth century. During the nineteenth century, the cult of “True Womanhood” had dictated that women were to be frail, beautiful creatures standing on a proverbial “pedestal.” Consequently, most men and many women at the turn of the century essentially believed that a proper “lady” was aloof from, or incapable of, practicing dangerous, exciting, or athletic activities.<sup>3</sup>



While women were expected to be “protected” from dangerous activities, motorcycling was considered one of those things they were to be insulated from.<sup>4</sup> Thus, when a woman operating a motorcycle in San Jose, California in 1906 was involved in a mishap in which the engine set her dress ablaze, such news was sensationalized and disseminated widely.<sup>5</sup> Since these new two-wheeled contraptions constantly broke apart and could set a woman’s clothing on fire, their riding of the machines was discouraged. Although more and more women rode from the 1910s through World War II, the masculinization of motorcycles in the public imaginary was perpetuated in the Greater Borderlands throughout the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

### **Some Early Women Motorcyclists**

Although many women motorcyclists in the early days remained passengers, a few women started to operate motorcycles in the United States beginning in the early twentieth century. By 1910, some men were teaching female acquaintances and family members how to ride. Male relatives or husbands sometimes gave or lent bikes to their wives or relatives. Other women managed to save enough money to buy their own.

How many women privately operated, or traveled on, these hard-to-manage machines on rutted, washed out, and soft trails and roads in those years is unknown. Likewise, the probably larger numbers of women who rode either behind men, in their sidecars or trailers, or in fore-carriages are also impossible to determine.<sup>7</sup> Sensational activities, rather than ordinary events, received photographic and media coverage. Thus, we know that Mrs. Harry Humphreys of England rode a motorcycle from San Francisco to New York City in 1913 on an around-the-world motorcycle trip. In 1915, Effie Hotchkiss took her mother on a ride in her Harley’s sidecar from New York to San Francisco and back again, for nine thousand miles over five

months. Such journeys were very strenuous, given the state of the non-existent road system and complete lack of trails in some areas.<sup>8</sup> Unusual events sold newspapers and women riding their own bikes were considered extraordinary.

Della Crewe received press coverage in 1915 when she took a motorcycle vacation from her home in Waco, Texas to the Northeastern Seaboard. Crewe departed her house with a male passenger and her dog “Trouble” in June 1915. She headed for the cycle races in Dodge City, Kansas. Paved roads in Texas and Oklahoma were still the exception, not the rule. Northbound, Crewe rode upon pavement only in Oklahoma City. She found it necessary to put chains on her tire and ride through mud and wheat fields to get there. After leaving her passenger in Kansas, she then rode with her dog through Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana and through the snow and mud of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. At the conclusion of this 5,378-mile run, Crewe wrote, “I had a glorious trip. I am in perfect health, and my desire is stronger than ever to keep going.” She then sailed away from snow country with her motorcycle and her dog to Jacksonville, Florida so that she could ride through southern states, Cuba, and South America.<sup>9</sup>

Crewe’s unusual financial independence is important to emphasize during those pre-war years because American corporations such as Hendee Manufacturing and Goodyear Tire Company sometimes sponsored women doing activities that had previously been assigned to the masculine gender. The novelty factor of such events, advertised free of charge in newspapers and through word of mouth, could promote a product line. It was common for motorcycle-related companies to sponsor women bikers and capitalize on seemingly sensational, gender rebel activities in those years. Even so, Crewe was not sponsored by the Harley-Davidson Motor Company or its dealers and visited the manufacturer during her run

only out of personal interest and because such visits were a customary contemporary practice.<sup>10</sup> The bike was hers and she received no funding from outside of her family. This female Texan motorcyclist was unusual since she appears to have been relatively financially independent.

In the early years of motorcycling, however, most motorcycling women typically rode bikes that were operated by men. Gertrude Snodgrass was the first female passenger on a North American, cross-continental motorcycle ride in 1913. Snodgrass rode in her husband LeRoy's Superior sidecar-equipped Henderson through the northern Greater Borderlands. They were members of the Los Angeles Motorcycle Club. Since dealerships and stores carrying required supplies were scarce, they arranged to have oil and heavy duty chains shipped ahead to strategically planned places along the route.<sup>11</sup>

Departing a Los Angeles beach on May 24, 1913, they visited briefly with members of their club and then rolled up Cajon Pass and out of the city. It took four days to get to Needles where they rested for four days waiting for the post office to open, since they had mailed clean clothes ahead of them. Although Route 66 was built years later over much of their route, in 1913 it did not yet exist and road conditions were poor. Taking a ferry across the Colorado River, the Snodgrass's continued onward to meet friends in Oatman, Arizona. After visiting for a day and night, these acquaintances lent the Snodgrass's a horse to help pull the bike up the steep hill east of town.<sup>12</sup> Gertrude Snodgrass wrote in her diary that the horse "was trained for lassoing steers and I'm sure he thought our outfit was the funniest looking steer he ever saw, by the look he gave us every time he turned around."<sup>13</sup>

Exoticism, the unknown "wilderness," and Native Americans as other are major elements throughout Snodgrass's diary. One night they camped near an Indian school in Valentine, east of Kingman. The next morning, the couple visited with Hualapai or other

Native American boys and continued towards Seligman. Finding nothing there except for a railroad station, they travelled on that afternoon and lost their way, having received some bad directions from three men in a carriage.

The ruggedness of the terrain, the road, the ride, and the vast distances of the southwestern landscape are often emphasized. The couple took a side trip from Williams to the south rim of the Grand Canyon, camping at the Grand View Hotel and walking down into the canyon.<sup>14</sup> She wrote that St. Johns, Arizona was sixty-nine miles from the nearest railroad and that automobile passengers had to get out of their cars and push them through the sand. Accordingly, “We had fun watching them all push, as it made us feel good to think we were not the only ones that had a bad time getting through sand.”<sup>15</sup> After so many days in the natural landscapes and small towns of the Greater Borderlands, she praised the urban glories of Albuquerque. Continuing northward to Colorado Springs, they caught, dressed, and ate small game and crossed several streams where bridges were washed out. The couple then continued to travel eastward to the Atlantic.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, Marie Curtis and two women named Hazel and Kathlyn (last names unknown) were among a few female motorcyclists living in the Greater Borderlands. Photographic evidence indicates that they lived in the Prescott, Arizona area sometime during or after 1912 and enjoyed riding and picnicking near the Granite Dells.



Plate 2. Hazel Kathlyn, and Lewis Turner riding by the Granite Dells near Prescott, Arizona. Photo courtesy of Sharlot Hall Museum and Archives, Prescott, Arizona.



Plate 3. Marie Curtis and an unidentified rider. Photo courtesy of Sharlot Hall Museum and Archives, Prescott, Arizona.

With the possible exceptions of Curtis, Hazel, and Kathlyn of Prescott along with Elsie Scott and Edith Whitacre of Jerome, Arizona, Snodgrass and Mrs. Harry Humphreys were the earliest women identified by name known to have ridden in the Greater Borderlands. The latter two were also the first women to ride on coast-to-coast motorcycle rides.<sup>17</sup> The only bikers in México at the time appear to have been revolutionaries and perhaps some straggling Porfirian elites, all male.<sup>18</sup> The historical record does not provide the names of many early twentieth-century women motorcycle enthusiasts who, like Snodgrass, may have been passengers.

### **Technical Improvements, Cultural Changes, and a Border Crossing**

The technical improvement of vehicles every few years tended to increase the motorcycle's appeal for many women and men who had not yet operated a bike. At the beginning of the twentieth century, bikes had inconvenient throttle controls and the ignition timing had to be manually adjusted during the ride itself. In a 1921 article titled "Why Not Give the Girls a Chance?" the ease of 1920s models' operation is contrasted with a 1909 Harley that had no clutch, no magneto, and pedal starting.<sup>19</sup>

Gender constructs within the world of motorcycling began to change at the beginning of the twentieth century, as evidenced in performative acts and competitive events. Alice Brady, "the Mile a Minute Girl" gained motordrome riding fame in the 1920s, for example. Motordromes were dangerous, splinter-ridden, banked, wooden tracks built for bike races. Racing females helped to set precedents for other women who started riding in their everyday lives. Women such as Brady defied gendered prescriptions and tended to be from the white middle class.<sup>20</sup> Few, if any, women of color rode motorcycles before the 1920s.

During and after the '20s, an emerging motorcycle “gypsying” subculture accommodated women who showed up on their own bikes. The events were called “gypsy runs” because bikers adapted previously pejorative expressions that non-riders had applied (such as “They look like a bunch of gypsies,”) and appropriated them, embracing a new mythic identity of the bike gypsy. Independent females were usually welcomed. Such respect by male bikers for female motorcyclists was probably due to the perception that the women were defying conventional behavior and were believed to possess a rider’s knowledge and skill.<sup>21</sup>

On occasions when independent women bikers were not welcomed, such inhospitality was invariably due not to any kind of rejection by male bikers. It was instead a result of the jealousy of their wives and other female companions who may have felt threatened by the possibilities of sexual competition for the attentions of men.<sup>22</sup> Most women who established themselves in motorcycling subcultures in the 1920s as well as from the 1950s through the 1980s did so through their dating or other intimate relationships with individual male bikers.<sup>23</sup>

Members of HOG chapters that formed in the late 1980s, who tended to be extremely loyal Harley-Davidson marquis-oriented enthusiasts, readily welcomed women who showed up at their runs on *any* brand of bike (while the same kind of reception for a *male* riding a non-Harley could hardly be expected). As long as she had enough character to ride, it did not matter whether it was a Harley. Men accepted women as companions in their interests and accepted independent female bikers, regardless of their motorcycles.<sup>24</sup>

Some women rode for reasons that were overtly political. When two sisters, Adeline and Augusta Van Buren made their cross-continental ride, they were on a mission to prove to President Wilson that females were capable of serving as dispatch riders in the Great War. The sisters were probably inspired by news accounts of an all-male, coast-to-coast, military

motorcycle run a year prior. Wilson had sent a message to the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco via dispatch riders in July 1915. The purpose of the men's relay run had been to demonstrate the efficacy of motorcycles for wartime communications. One hundred seven bikes had participated.<sup>25</sup> If men could ride from the Atlantic to the Pacific, why should women not be able to do similar tasks, especially at a time when the public was called to national readiness preparation for possible entry into the war?

The Van Burens proceeded to prove their point thus becoming the first female operators to complete successfully a North American, transcontinental run on two solo motorcycles. Teachers in their early twenties, they approached the management of two firms: Firestone Tire and Rubber Company and Hendee Manufacturing Company, maker of Indian Moto-Cycles.<sup>26</sup> The two companies decided to sponsor them. The Van Buren sisters rode two 61 cubic-inch Power Plus Indians, some of the fastest, most advanced machines of that time. Their departure was from a racetrack in Brooklyn on Independence Day, 1916.

The sisters received media attention in every big city they passed through. They rode westward on the new Lincoln Highway, which was not really a highway in today's sense of the word, sometimes through mud or deep sand.<sup>27</sup> When the Van Burens made this *non-relay*, cross-continental run, they had no tactical support system—unlike the men a year earlier—so they mailed necessary clothing and support ahead of them.<sup>28</sup> Augusta told a journalist:

Our aim in making this long cross-country run was to point out...that women can be of real efficient aid to our nation in case of need, if they will only devote a little of their time toward urging and schooling for National Preparedness.... and all goes to prove that woman "can if she will."<sup>29</sup>

The Van Burens arrived in Los Angeles in September, 1916. Movie stars met them and *Motor Cycle Illustrated* praised their stamina and daring, the women having ridden approximately 5,500 miles.<sup>30</sup> The story read:



Difficult as most of the gentler sex would consider the sport of motorcycling at any distance even under the most favorable of conditions, the ambitious program which the Van Buren girls laid out for themselves caused not a little speculation among the most seasoned motor veterans.... Washout roads, mountain slides, desert wastes, and every riding condition which constitutes a nightmare....<sup>31</sup>

The myth of female frailty was discredited as the sisters ended their run by crossing the border to visit Tijuana, Baja California. They draped “Tijuana” pendants on the front of their bikes and posed one last time for the camera. Apparently, no retinue followed them across the border; the street in the photograph appeared to be empty.<sup>32</sup>

### **Borderlands Women who Challenged and Resisted**

The Van Burens were usually complimented in the press and treated respectfully, but not always. For instance, the *Pacific Motorcyclist* presented their trip as a *challenge* to men. According to the magazine’s reporter, “If young girls of normal physique can make such a journey without difficulty and without any outside assistance, what possible excuse can any man have for hesitating over any ride he may wish to take on his machine?”<sup>33</sup> The writer apparently thought that men were able to match or exceed anything that these “girls” had accomplished.

Such an editorial view of the women as “challengers” can also be seen as a ploy by an industry-related media to prompt more consumer capitalist activity (especially retail consumption) by men. Adeline told the reporters, “We hope the boys will get added confidence in taking long trips when they realize what two girls are doing...unaided.”<sup>34</sup> The sale of motorcycle tires and other parts benefited businesses that advertised in these magazines, which tended to benefit the periodical. Her statement, which was perhaps intended as a challenge, would serve to goad males into riding more miles and spending more money for parts. The

tires that they would buy, for example, would more likely be Firestone, since the Van Burens had successfully run that brand all the way across the continent.

Similar gender-related psychological challenges were issued by the U.S. armed forces a generation later during the Second World War, using active squadrons of women pilots to encourage men to fly experimental aircraft that females had already flown. Because of prevailing notions of gender roles and male mechanical superiority during the first half of the century, the “dare” factor was thus delivered to men in a most profound way. In such a worldview, if women can do these amazing feats, then why should men not be able to perform at least as competently?<sup>35</sup>

In a 1915 magazine article, Della Crewe had presented her own autobiographical ride report that must have had a similar affect on male readers:

I wanted to “see the world”.... Train travel is...uninteresting, and it only hits the high places at best. Steamships are little better. They have the faculty of taking you around all points of interest and finally landing you on some forsaken dockery, to get out of the mystic maze as best you can. So I gave up the train and boat ideas and decided to run my own vehicle—to suit myself.

Accordingly I hiked away on June 24 last, after just ten days experience with my Harley-Davidson 1914 twin and Rogers sidecar.... When I left Waco, Tex., friends said I would get held up by tramps or kill myself on the motorcycle, but these remarks only made me more persistent.<sup>36</sup>

Women motorcyclists also tended to be socially or politically active in their Greater Borderlands cities or communities and many towns seem to have had at least one female motorcycle operator as a resident.



Plate 4: Edith Whitacre. Jerome, Arizona. Photo courtesy of the Jerome Historical Society Archives, Jerome, Arizona.

Edith Whitacre was one of two Jerome, Arizona motorcycling women and was a co-owner of the *Jerome Sun* newspaper during World War I. At the time, Jerome was a major metropolitan area with a population of thousands and many suburban centers. Whitacre's newspaper was pro-labor at a time when all of the other Jerome papers were anti-labor and were supported by the United Verde Mine Company that exploited the rich copper and other mineral deposits beneath the city's hills.<sup>37</sup>

The mine and the other newspapers blamed the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, the so-called "Wobblies") for a strike that occurred on May 25, 1917 and raised a nationalistic public frenzy in the city, culminating with a vigilante gang rounding up more than a hundred miners suspected of being IWW members. The state president of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (IUMMSW, the dominant accommodationist union) and other vigilantes loaded sixty-seven of these kidnapped workers onto United Verde cattle cars

and then illegally shipped them to Kingman. The mining companies controlled the IUMMSW and used their influence to force Whitacre's newspaper out of business. She was then figuratively "railroaded" out of town. Whitacre left the city and resettled in California. In its control of the conservative union, much of Jerome's economy, and most of its newspapers, the company wielded tremendous local influence both in the mines and in the city itself. She decided to move away under corporate elite political pressure.<sup>38</sup>

In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan identified the rebellious aspects of such high-publicity events as key to understanding some of the participants' motives. Writing in 1963, Friedan observed that early twentieth-century feminists were moved by a passion to leave their homes, to rebel, and to develop new identities and create "new trails for women."<sup>39</sup> Thus, in 1921 *Motorcycle and Bicycle Illustrated* published an article highlighting women motorcyclists that its anonymous author had interviewed. It included quotes from Evelyn Greenway, a Greater Borderlands biker. Greenway said:

It makes me disgusted with my sex when I see so many baby dolls lolling back in great clumsy limousines, dependent as a toy poodle on the ability of some "mere man" to get them there and back. For myself, I really pity them. Grace and I enjoy our machines. We both like swimming and fishing and the outdoors generally. We are planning some dandy winter trips. . . . To all red blooded girls I'll say "Do it with a motorcycle."<sup>40</sup>

### **Sexism, Gendered Games, and the Motor Maids**

Within motorcycling culture, resistance by women and a challenging of conventional gender roles occurred when females raced their own bikes, particularly in the 1910s and 1920s. At that time, enthusiasm for motorcycle races transcended gender and class lines and attracted even university and public school racing teams. Motorcycling events attracted large crowds from all occupations and gradually became festival events in the years before the stock market

crash of 1929. Female racing teams did not exist, even though individual women raced for years. Moreover, large numbers of women attended racing events and enjoyed them as much as men did.<sup>41</sup>

Federation of American Motorcyclists (FAM, established 1903) regulations prohibited women from engaging in FAM competitions. Likewise, the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) followed the example of its predecessor organization in prohibiting women from participating in sanctioned races when it formed in 1924.<sup>42</sup> By 1931, however, the AMA was actively promoting motorcycling for women, expressing an organizational belief that their presence would tend to keep events from becoming too rowdy.<sup>43</sup> The AMA changed its original position as the U.S. plunged into the Great Depression and began to accept women bikers.

While more motorcycling opportunities became available to women, the competitive games played at gypsy runs and events became more sexist after the 1920s and for the remainder of the century.<sup>44</sup> The “weenie bite” originated during the early 1920s or possibly the 1910s and is particularly interesting in terms of its gendered evolution. In the early years, it was played one-up (with the typical contestant being one male on each bike with no passenger). In such a challenging and difficult game of eye-mouth-hand-foot coordination and balance, the man would slowly ride his bike past a point where a hotdog was suspended overhead from a spring. As he rolled by slowly underneath the wiener, he would try to take a bite out of it without dropping the motorcycle or touching his foot on the ground. According to reporter C. E. B. Clement of *Motorcycle Illustrated* in 1921, “No one succeeded at this stunt.”<sup>45</sup> The weenie bite as it was played in the 1920s was a nearly impossible task not only

because the machine had to be simultaneously balanced with both hands and the body while craning the neck upwards, but also due to the spring causing the weenie to bounce out of reach.

In later decades, the objective of the game became easier because weenie bite rules at most events were modified. In the second half of the century, the game began to be played two-up so that the passenger was free from low-speed bike balancing tasks and could concentrate solely upon biting the hotdog, which was no longer attached to a bouncy spring but tied to a length of ordinary string. The essential motorcycle operator remained male while the weenie biter became typically female. As more contestants were able to accomplish the original objective of the game (to simply bite it), foot long hotdogs began to be widely utilized in order to determine how much length could be taken. When the wiener became a foot-long, it subtly became a phallic symbol as spectators had the opportunity to view women performing a task in which the champion would be the one who could get the most length down her throat during the fraction of a second available. Thus ironically, what some motorcyclists have in later years identified as a sexist, male-oriented game had originated generations earlier as an essentially male participatory game of skill. The efficacy of a traditional sexual act, fellatio, was subtly reinforced by later generational changes within the rules of a previously gender-neutral bike contest.<sup>46</sup>

During the 1990s, some women (and men) in the riding community protested against the weenie bite and similar games effectively enough to bring changes. Sometimes individuals responded to such complaints or innuendo by enacting a simple ritualized form of gender bending. (The usual weenie bite game was played, only with *him* riding on the back of *her* bike.) More often, the organizers responded with a campy form of equal opportunity: the

addition of a “taco-bite” game to the agenda, a contest in which *she* drove and *he* rode on the back while attempting to bite a food item that was loaded to resemble a vagina.

By the end of the century, many runs changed their game schedules in order to become what bikers termed a “politically correct” or “PC” rally and either absolutely refused to have the weenie bite or else included the taco bite game as an addition to the weenie bite competition.<sup>47</sup> Such “PC” changes tended to occur in localities of the Greater Borderlands that were well north of the border zone itself in places such as northern California, Flagstaff, and Albuquerque. Meanwhile, runs within the border zone but north of the international boundary line continued to include the weenie bite *without* a taco bite.

South of the border, organized bike games were not played at all. Instead, there were usually staged drinking competitions and individual (female or male) dance contests as well as *corrido* singing events. In the latter two games, the lively audience selected the winners by respective amounts of applause. In México, displays of riding skill were often spontaneous and freeform rather than structured as competitions. Sometimes, professional drill teams<sup>48</sup> were part of the show. In the interior of Greater Borderlands states such as Chihuahua and Sonora, the North American concept of “PC” did not even enter the equation. Instead, men at the events, each holding his own bottle of sotol or tequila, saluted each other offering hearty, shouted toasts such as “*¡Salud, cabrones!*” or “*¡Hijos de la Chingada!*” The relative presence, absence, or qualities of ritualized sexism or unconscious discrimination at organized events, throughout the century, depended on who the organizers, referees, and participants were as well as their location in relation to the border itself.<sup>49</sup>

Although the Great Depression of the 1930s was a time of little motorcycling activity, women in the north eventually formed their own clubs to ride together. In 1939, Linda Dugeau

compiled a list of female motorcyclists and, the following year, started the Motor Maids of America with fifty-one charter members as a private club. They wanted to “clean up the bikers’ image” to prove that riders can be clean, disciplined, and beyond reproach. The Motor Maids was the first women-only motorcycle club in the United States and eventually had members throughout the Greater Borderlands on the north side of the international boundary. Ivalene Tenney of Havasu City, Arizona (formerly of southern California) joined the Motor Maids in 1953.<sup>50</sup> Tenney described her first encounter with the club:

My first get-together with the Motor Maids was to go from Bellflower, California to go to Pomona, to a meeting. And I didn’t know about it; I thought it was going to be ‘a Sunday afternoon ride’ to follow ‘the girls,’ you know. So we met them out there on the side of the road and we all came together and started through the Carbon Canyon, which is a curvy mountain road. And I didn’t know where I was going because I hadn’t been to Pomona before, to anybody’s house or anything. So I...learned, real quick, it’s easier to keep up than to catch up. So I was just about riding over my head the first time out.... Anyway, it wasn’t such a “Sunday drive,” we found out....<sup>51</sup>

The Motor Maids held mandatory conventions to which they were required to ride their motorcycles and had a distinctive uniform that they wore and which evolved through time. Their colors were white and blue.<sup>52</sup>

Countless women rode motorcycles in the late 1930s and early ‘40s. By 1947, for example, “Tex” Taggart had been riding for more than a quarter of a century. During World War II, at least one Women’s Mountain Corps served in the stateside military as dispatch riders. Women working in wartime defense plants in Phoenix rode bikes, a legacy of the Depression when people could not afford much gasoline. Marvin Lesley, a citizen of Navajo Nation, said that his Navajo grandmother rode a Harley-Davidson when she worked at Camp Navajo army base west of Flagstaff, Arizona during the Second World War.<sup>53</sup>





Plate 5. Tex Taggart. Photo from *Life* magazine, August 11, 1947.

### **Post-World War II Motorcycling, Peggy Iris Thomas, and Texas Hospitality**

When veterans returned from the Second World War, the Motor Maids continued as a club.<sup>54</sup> Much of the post-war riding scene was very male-oriented, however. The most well known post-World War II motorcycling clubs formed in 1947 and 1948 by men who were war veterans in the Greater Borderlands were the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC), the Boozefighters, and the Pissed Off Bastards of Berdoo.<sup>55</sup>

Yet, many such clubs had members who were female. Even the HAMC (1948) included women as equal club members until the mid 1950s. For instance, Keata Zimmerman was a Berdoo Chapter member while Leila Sadilek was the Secretary of Frisco Chapter.<sup>56</sup>

Women continued to ride their own bikes in the 1950s. Ivalene Tenney had been riding her own bike for years before joining the Motor Maids in 1953 and she rode for the remainder of the century. Riders such as Tenney, Elaine Charvat Pristo, and Janie Peavey continued to ride around Southern California and the Arizona desert in the late 1940s and 1950s. Pristo was still on a Harley-Davidson Knucklehead in 2000 while Tenney preferred a blue Goldwing. Mechanically adept Peavey preferred British bikes and ran the BSA dealership in Mesa, Arizona beginning in 1950 for over thirty years. She knew her product and her clientele and treated them as if they were family. BSA Motorcycles went out of business in the 1960s, and the shop in Mesa was eventually razed to make room for a bridge after closing in January 1991. Peavey was eighty-one when she closed the business.<sup>57</sup> After World War II, British-born Theresa Wallach toured America for two and a half years and 32,000 miles. She worked her way around the United States, holding eighteen different jobs.

Another young English woman touring the U.S. in 1952, Peggy Iris Thomas, wrote a travel narrative. Thomas rode westward across Canada, south to San Diego, then across the Greater Borderlands through Tucson, El Paso, and South Texas before crossing the Río Grande on her way to Mexico City, taking eighteen months to tour these areas. Like Wallach, Thomas also worked her way around the continent, taking temporary jobs for a few weeks at a time.<sup>58</sup> Thomas's ride was a Bantam with a two-stroke engine. Bantams were manufactured by the British Small Arms Company (BSA).

Her non-biking friends and relatives back in England had tried to dissuade her from riding in America. Their arguments centered on the idea of a lack of "civilization" and betrayed their paranoia of relatively natural environments that were thought to have existed on the American side of "the pond" as well as doubt about her aptitude for performing mechanical

repairs. Before arriving in the Greater Borderlands, she had been warned about the potential for snakes and scorpions crawling into her sleeping bag, daytime heat that would fry her like fresh meat, and an imagined need for one to stop every mile to re-hydrate.<sup>59</sup>

Her autobiographical account displayed a motorcyclist's love of natural beauty and nature juxtaposed with narratives of encounters with people that she met along the way including non-riders' apprehension or aversion toward women bikers and all riders in general, with other non-riders as either friendly, curious, or sexually predatory.<sup>60</sup> Commenting on the southern Imperial Valley landscape, Thomas wrote:

I looked out across a wide, deep valley, away beyond to range after range of humped-back mountains; mountains which form the natural frontier between the United States and Mexico. They looked dry and arid and not a bit like the cool, majestic peaks of Washington. The change in scenery was so exciting, that I didn't miss the ocean as much as I expected.<sup>61</sup>

She was impressed with large expanses of open land and the length of freight trains in the Greater Borderlands. The author also "wanted to see something of Texas and enjoy more of its wide-open spaces."<sup>62</sup> She sought out and tremendously enjoyed Borderland environments.

Both Tenney and Thomas were women of means, for they possessed control of enough disposable income to afford a motorcycle and the time and resources necessary to operate it. Women motorcyclists tended to be from the elite and middle classes. Descriptions of Thomas's encounters with barefoot vendors and other local people may be problematized as border culture shock, orientalism, or essentialist perceptions of otherness. Attempts to practice her Spanish with gas station attendants on both sides of the border distracted them so that gas was spilled on her tank or her tires would be under-inflated. Thomas rode through New Mexico and was disappointed with the "Indian trading posts" west of El Paso. The author described residents near Monterrey, Nuevo León as "picturesque" and "quaint peasants" and

“caballeros.” She even slowed down while racing some male equestrians in order to “get a better look at my pursuers.” Thomas described the people of the Greater Borderlands in exotic tones.<sup>63</sup>

Thomas met some young, military bikers from the Yuma Air Base who were riding larger, more powerful machines. One of them rode with her all the way to Gila Bend that night. After suffering the blasts of sandstorms, they were caught in a summer monsoon thunderstorm as they rode eastward.<sup>64</sup> Seeing the town’s lights for miles before arrival and not seeming to draw nearer, Thomas became scared. The author wrote, “I began to think they were some frightful mirage, and that I was living a nightmare—the sort of nightmare which is unending.”<sup>65</sup> When they finally reached the edge of Gila Bend and ducked into a gas station, the attendants welcomed them as if they were close friends. An older cowboy in the café across the street bought coffee for them. The next morning Thomas rode her little BSA bike to Tucson while he returned to Yuma.

She thought that no BSA dealer existed between San Diego and El Paso and probably never knew that Janie Peavey had opened her new shop just a little farther north in Mesa only two years earlier, in 1950.<sup>66</sup> Had she known, Thomas may possibly have made the detour to Phoenix, for she later wrote:

Now it is almost an unwritten law among motorcyclists who are on a trip, that they must stop at the dealers in the different cities, who carry their make of machine. So in El Paso I searched for the BSA dealer.... and finally located Raymond Rathbone. I found him and his teenage son.<sup>67</sup>

Rathbone and his wife dined with her before a group of bikes escorted her out to the edge of town that evening.

Other shops were not as friendly. In Alpine, Texas Thomas had a flat tire. She helped the gas station attendant “Billy Blue Jeans” pull the wheel off, but he would not help her

realign it after the tube was replaced. She was not able to line it up herself, and the gas station closed for the night, so the author slept on the concrete at the gas station. As she started to sleep, a motorist pulled up looking for fuel, saw her sleeping, and said to his passenger, “Jeez, look at that guy sleeping down there, sure looks rough.” His partner answered him with a New York accent, “They say they breed ‘em tough in the west.” A few minutes later, some intoxicated people stopped, searching for gas. One of them saw Thomas and ran back to their car, shouting, “One of them cayhotes [sic] from the hills got loose in town!” She otherwise encountered hospitality the rest of the way through Texas.<sup>68</sup>

### **Thomas’s Border Crossing and Gender Regression**

While crossing the border at Laredo into México, the author tried to imagine how incredible the image of a woman riding a motorcycle would appear to Mexican people. Halfway across the international bridge, her dog jumped off the bike to chase a cat back into the United States. When she turned around and retrieved him, the U.S. officials looked at her cross-eyed. The author finally made it to the Mexican side and then had to wait in a room with other tourists for over a half hour, sitting on hard, wooden benches. She haggled with an official over a twenty peso-bill that she had inadvertently left inside her passport. Of course, he had thought that she was presenting it as a tip. After winning the money back, they charged her the same amount for importing a dog into México.<sup>69</sup>

Mexican porters and other people at the *aduana* station openly laughed at Thomas and appear to have been rude. The locals gathered around her again as she was ready to leave. According to the author, “I looked back to see a bunch of hysterical porters dancing round...with a mixture of disbelief and mirth, and pointing fingers at our retreating figures.”

They made a commotion as Thomas rode away through the streets of Nuevo Laredo.<sup>70</sup> Like Mr. and Mrs. Snodgrass years before, Thomas had some of her luggage and all of her mail forwarded to several large cities she expected to pass through. Like some other women bikers of the first half of the century, the author was of a higher socio-economic class and was, by her own admission, not accustomed to physical work.

Thomas started out as a novice rider, admitting to a complete lack of mechanical experience, and learning to secure the load to her bike in a trial-by-error fashion.<sup>71</sup> She wrote, “I had chosen [the bike] for color because her paint job happened to go nicely with my corduroy jacket.”<sup>72</sup> Despite such initial lack of experience, the author became an adept enthusiast as she accumulated miles and performed major engine maintenance. Together with another female motorcyclist that she met, Thomas learned to rebuild her engine, utilizing an introductory book on motorcycles borrowed from a library. The author hoped to encourage other women to become mechanically adept as she wrote:

With any of the repairs I have since attempted I have run into endless difficulties because I am certainly not mechanically minded, but I do think half the fun of owning a machine is to mess around with it, and try to do your own repairs. There is one thing girls should remember though, if they want to buy and service their own motorcycles; their lily-white hands and moon-shaped nails will be things of the past.<sup>73</sup>

Many women quit riding their own motorcycles after World War II. Most female motorcyclists began to ride on the buddy seat behind their boyfriends, husbands, or other men. The fact that more women rode as passengers after the war ended compared to earlier periods when they operated their own bikes is supported by pictorial evidence, interviews with senior riders, and changes in the Harley-Davidson Motor Company’s advertisements that depict her riding alongside of him in 1941, but behind him on his “buddy seat” in the 1950s. So few women rode their own in 1952 that people in cars slowed down to take pictures of British

tourist Peggy Iris Thomas. During all of that time, she met only one other woman who rode her own bike.<sup>74</sup>

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to the existence of many women motorcycle operators in the 1950s, '60s and '70s has been the social reconstruction of post-war gender roles in accordance with older modes of domesticity. Young girls were continually dissuaded from experimentation with roles and lifestyles while boys were encouraged to be brave and ingenious in life. Sociologist Helena Znaniecki Lopata writes that women were more susceptible to societal criticism compared to men.<sup>75</sup>

Non-riders opposed their family members who wanted to ride. A female biker and author named Gail DeMarco claimed that her family failed to understand her passion for riding. Tanya Zimmeroff, a bookkeeper who wanted to ride since childhood but was deterred by her parents, had to leave her family. Genevieve Schmitt, a television show producer, said that when she started to ride, her mother glared at her and her father, an IBM employee, simply shook his head. When Pro Stock racer Angelle Seeling was a little girl, her mother worried about her becoming a "tomboy," so she started putting Angelle in beauty contests. Such events satisfied the girl's need to compete for a while, until she became an adult. Vicky Saracino, a law clerk in Southern California, liked Harleys since age thirteen and eventually learned to ride her first husband's 1953 Panhead. She posed a rhetorical question asking, "I'm tired of people saying, 'Why do you do it? It's such a dangerous thing.' Do you ask a skydiver or a policeman why they do what they do?..."<sup>76</sup>

Few women operated motorcycles during the 1960s and '70s.<sup>77</sup> According to Char Zack, Road Captain of Raw Thunder in southern and central Arizona:

I started riding in 1982. That's when I started, and I didn't encounter a single woman. I didn't even know that people rode in packs together. I just didn't realize that, yet. The

person who really turned me on to riding that way was Lonnie Newman. You know Lonnie, don't you? The blonde, the Shovelhead in Jerome? And that would have been about...six or seven years ago. So that would have been about '92 when I even met another woman who rode a motorcycle. And I've lived in this valley for about fifteen to eighteen years.<sup>78</sup>

### **Response One: Ol' Ladies, Sheep, and Chicks**

Eventually, women motorcyclists liberated themselves from mid-century gender role constructs. Although women broke out of their repressive molds in a variety of ways from the 1950s through the 1970s, I have observed two essential patterns emerging from available sources in relation to mobility and motorcycles. Both responses are related to degrees of women breaking out of domestic bondage and riding.

According to my typology, the first type of escapist response can be characterized as the essential woman escaping with the help of an outside male accomplice. In the 1960s and 1970s, women straddled the back seat of a bike, embraced the male bodies sitting in front, and rode away with them. They experienced various forms of companionship and a sense of freedom from conventional society.<sup>79</sup>

Paradoxically, after a woman saddled up onto the back seat she soon discovered that the ideal of extreme freedom could be complicated by the reality of structural classifications within riding culture, especially if her new biker boyfriend was a member of a patch-holding club. Daniel Wolf's *The Rebels: A Brotherhood of Outlaw Bikers* is an ethnography about the life of so-called "outlaw" motorcycle bikers in the 1980s, those "bad" riders who had been stereotyped by the AMA as the supposedly statistical "one-percent" of all motorcyclists. He concludes that these male-oriented motorcycle clubs established borders between themselves



and the host society in order to establish solid individual, group, and institutional identities separate from the rest of the world.

The core reason why a female ran away with a male biker was to transcend ordinary, mundane life and experience the power, sensuality, and excitement of motorcycling. Wolf's Rebels MC Chapter was somewhat representative of all one-percent clubs of that time and their lifestyle and many women ran with them on a temporary basis. However, individual male members' primary allegiance was expected to be that paid to the club itself. The club came first, followed by family, jobs, or girlfriends.<sup>80</sup>

Wolf offers a structuralist model to identify three essential social categories of women associated with the club that he studied: "broads," "ol' ladies," and "mamas." In my own research, I found that patterns resembling these three categories (under slightly different names) originated with West Coast biker subculture in the 1950s when male motorcyclists were reluctant to commit themselves to one woman. Wolf's category "broads," also called "chicks" in the western United States, resembled the non-community, temporarily available, transitory women who were typically encountered in a bar and who partied and stayed for a one-night stand with usually one, but sometimes more than one, male club member. "Chicks" were usually—but not always—young, single women. They took Wolf's clichéd "walk on the wild side." They were here tonight and gone back to their regular lives tomorrow.<sup>81</sup> There was nothing unusual about them (usually).

The term "ol' lady" referred to those women, married or otherwise, who were monogamous in an interpersonal relationship with a male biker. The ol' lady status directly corresponded to the institution of marriage in non-riding society, regardless of the presence or absence of any legal marriage license. As in the rest of society, the mutually sexually exclusive

social arrangement had its roots in ancient societies and was pretty much universal in the world's human cultures. The only difference in biker culture appears to be that the motorcycle's maintenance was typically prioritized higher than other aspects of the relationship. Additionally, some clubs (like a few employers in non-riding society) demanded first loyalty, even above family. In such cases, ol' ladies accepted the fact that the club was the most important thing in their ol' men's lives.

Collectively, the ol' ladies were the most powerful force in male-oriented motorcycle clubs and could readily manipulate men who were members.<sup>82</sup> Marilyn, a biker's ol' lady in the 1980s said:

[T]he women I know who live with bikers have a great deal of power; it's just that the men don't know it. Things like hints and sexual demands and playing on their egos, they all work as long as you don't make it obvious that you're telling them what to do.<sup>83</sup>

Ol' ladies held the real power within the club. They probably possessed such control over their men since the beginning of motorcycling. In fact, some men quit riding because of wives or other women.<sup>84</sup> In addition, when a new member prospected (became a probate member) for a club, that member's wife or significant other could also be said to have prospected, through a casual interrogation conducted by the ol' ladies.<sup>85</sup> In contrast to the already-mentioned chicks and the mamas (described below) who had little status, the ol' ladies had more status than all other females but less than some men. They closely resembled the married women of larger society; they were attached to one man only and enjoyed some privilege.

Regardless of who held the real power in a men's motorcycle club, it was still an exaggerated, stratified "man's world" in which a wide degree of difference between gender roles, and significant inequity between women and men existed, with few individual exceptions. As with women, the status of male bikers in most clubs, also, was well defined and

hierarchical. The rules and norms for men regarding other men's significant others depended on the status of the other man. Respect was rendered to couples in which the men were members of motorcycle clubs and to certain other men who rode. Independent male motorcyclists tended to respect each other and the clubs. However, the wives and female companions of non-riding men were often considered fair game. Here nearly all mores, norms, and individual roles were both ascribed by gender and achieved via activity, club or other status, and attitude.<sup>86</sup>

The last of Wolf's three essential categories of women, "mamas" (also known as "sheep" among Greater Borderlands club riders), was an integral part of some (but not all) Alta California one-percent clubs as well as some post-1980s Greater Borderlands clubs in México. In contrast, "sheep" did not exist in the U.S. interior Greater Borderlands motorcycling world, away from the ocean. (The applicability of critical race theory will be discussed in Chapter Two.)

In coastal and Mexican clubs, "sheep" was a status applicable to women who were not attached to any one individual male biker. However, they were not merely transitory "chicks" and enjoyed some benefits associated with their status. "Bike groupie" or "bike-ophile" would be an oversimplified, inadequate, and inept description of the sheep's role in the motorcycle club. All (male) members of clubs that had "sheep" among them were absolutely obligated to protect these women from any outside threats and to include them in the club's social activities. The sheep voluntarily made themselves available to all club members, sometimes sexually. Sheep lived such lives because they wanted to be part of the biker scene yet could not, or would not, form a monogamous relationship with one, individual club member.<sup>87</sup> Such status was explained to me on one occasion approximately a hundred miles south of the border

zone, at a rustic *posada* that was hosted by the main one-percent club of that region of northern México. An attractive woman—who Wolf would have classified as “mama” or “sheep”—told me (in English), “I get to ride with whomever I want.” One of her male biker friends then attempted to clarify her statement. He said, “She gets to ride whoever she wants.” She then laughed and told me, “Yes, I get to ride whoever I want.” The status of sheep / mama conveyed some level of individual autonomy.

### **Response Two: Gender Rebellion, Sisters, and Knucklehead Fred**

Even so, not all women wanted to ride with a man on his bike. The extraordinary love of personal freedom and individuality by women who obtained their own machines characterized the second motorcycle-related response to mundane life. The independent woman motorcycle operator phenomenon began to reemerge significantly during the countercultural revolution of the late 1960s and was symbolized by a famous Janis Joplin record album cover in which she sat on the front seat of a motorcycle that appears to have been hers.<sup>88</sup>

In his brief, three-year period as a participant observer “biker,” Wolf did not spend much time with women who were more independent or diverse than the three female gender role cultural constructs that he describes. He mentions independent female motorcycle operators briefly, only from a distance, and as being essentially outside of male-oriented biker culture.<sup>89</sup> They were not really separated, however. Before, during, and after his time in the field, unusual women were, through their own mechanical or other personal abilities and actions, breaking through gender barriers and achieving special status that approximated that of males, both within and outside of clubs or other groups, male-oriented and otherwise. The

Rattlers, a club in Los Angeles and San Francisco that rode with the HAMC, had both male and female members. As already mentioned, the HAMC itself started out as a club with some female members in Southern California.

Even after the protocol for membership in that club became gender restrictive in the 1950s, women who were socially considered “masculine” or who possessed certain personality traits, character, or skills could still ride and participate equitably with the club as its guests.<sup>90</sup>

According to Lisa Garber:

Demonized and reviled for decades, these men, many of whom had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from their war service, have carried the feelings about our collective hubris and acted out elements of this national shadow. They have borne the burden of the American collective disassociation from its anima.

Women who ride were born in this same shadow, at the crossroads. It is the projection these men have carried namely, the anima of the patriarchal order; but women who ride are a new generation.<sup>91</sup>

Independent women continually rode their own bikes with the HAMC through the end of the century.<sup>92</sup>

Women were building choppers in 1974 and probably even earlier. For example, “Knucklehead Fred,” a woman biker who lived in 1979 Phoenix, was also an expert mechanic who built her own motorcycles and whose attitudes, actions, and apartment furnishings resembled those of her brothers in the Dirty Dozen MC. Ownership of a Harley-Davidson Knucklehead engine (1936-1952) required the expert performance of constant maintenance and bikers’ nicknames sometimes reflected the particular models of engines that they owned and ran. Individuals possessing mechanical know-how, likewise, were typically deemed worthy of respect and honor in riding culture. Thus, members of the Dirty Dozen MC, who were exclusively men, had the utmost respect for Knucklehead Fred.<sup>93</sup> Any woman who rode and maintained her own bike at that time was thought to have possessed “class.” (See the

Glossary.) A male biker named “Flat Black” eventually became Knucklehead Fred’s significant other. Exceptional women could gender bend within biker culture and not only get away with it, but be accepted for who they were. These women did not ride in a vacuum; they were integral members of the motorcycling community and of a unique multigenerational culture.<sup>94</sup>

Moreover, similar interactions between female organizational bikers and male-oriented club riders were occurring as early as the 1950s, and probably earlier than that. Alice Wamsley, Director of the Southern California Motor Maids was also a member of the Norwalk Centaurs Motorcycle Club, sponsors of the Annual Yuma Prison Run. Betty J. Thomas, another Southern Californian Motor Maid had a husband who was also a Centaur. Another Motor Maid in Arizona, Ivalene Tenney was a member of the Gold Wing Road Riders Association.<sup>95</sup> Raw Thunder was a women’s alternative riding association formed in central Arizona in the late 1990s. An article in their formative documents strongly recommended that its members should also join A Brotherhood Aimed Toward Education (ABATE), a motorcyclist rights organization (MRO). Political and socio-cultural solidarity increased especially from the 1960s through the 1980s.<sup>96</sup>

Fierce camaraderie and loyalty to each other was the norm. Whitedog, Security for the all-women Sirens MC, mentioned the public’s lack of understanding of biker culture. She said:

People don’t understand that. They don’t get that it comes from here [the heart]. They don’t get that I would give my life for you, man, and I’m dead serious, I’m not just kidding. Some of the people I know, I would give my life for, I went to jail for.... I knew that they would [do the same] if the shit came down.... And it’s really much deeper than motorcycles, man. They used to call it “being good.” If you’re “good,” you’re going to make it, man. Otherwise, you’re going to get your frickin’ ass kicked, man. You’re either there or you’re not. There’s no in-between. You can act like you are; you can pretend like you are; you can look like you are. But when the shit *really comes down*, where is your soul and your heart? I like that. And I can’t live any other way.<sup>97</sup>

Personal dedication to the biker community was a total, unconditional bond, similar to the commitment that some people had to their god, their country, or their family. The motorcycling community was tight-knit in the 1960s and '70s and remained so for the rest of the century.<sup>98</sup>

Often, one's commitment to all other bikers manifested in material ways. Char Zack related a narrative similar to countless others, about how strangers on motorcycles helped each other, as if they were family members:

I decided to go through L.A. a different way, because I had some other plans. And it was very late on a Sunday night and I was in a really nasty, nasty place. And I busted my main tappet bearing and I had to shut down. And even the police were telling me to get the hell out of there. Well, I couldn't...start it up. And it was really stupid; I didn't have a credit card on me. Nothing. I don't know why.... I didn't have shit on me. I had maybe twenty bucks left. A motorcycle, a Harley motorcycle brother got me a U-Haul truck on his credit card for like six hundred dollars, okay. And a bunch of guys loaded my Harley in the truck and got my bike home. And that's brotherhood. That guy didn't know me from Jack Shit.<sup>99</sup>

“Good Samaritan” incidents occasionally happened to people in cars, but were obligatory and inevitable on a bike. Such mores and norms were known as “the Rules of the Road” and existed in the biker community for over a hundred years.

Here, Zack's term “brotherhood” was non-gendered; it included the concept of “sisterhood.” Her usage, in other contexts, of the word “sister” or “sisterhood” related more specifically to Raw Thunder, the women's motorcycle association that she helped to form in the late 1990s. All bikers, whether male or female, were considered brothers and sisters.<sup>100</sup>

Women who lived and operated in more than one club were well respected in the riding community. In the late 1980s and early '90s, Sherri Carr, Women in the Wind (WITW) Coordinator for Northern Arizona was simultaneously an ABATE officer as well as the ol' lady of a member of a male-oriented club. As an organizer, she was thus able to gain a large amount of participation during open events such as the Verde Valley Toy Run.<sup>101</sup> Self-esteem

in terms of manhood, womanhood, or gender rebellion was ritually reinforced for some individuals, depending upon the person's achieved status.

### **Women's Organizations and Lethal Gender Constructs**

After Harley-Davidson released its low-maintenance, electronic ignition Evolution engine in 1984, more men and women began to buy Harleys. In 1985, only two percent of the new customers buying a Harley were female. By 1991, that figure increased to five percent and by 1996 to nine percent, an overall change of 350 percent. By 1997, thirteen percent of all Harley riders were women and six percent of new Harleys sold were to women. Bigger bikes became more physiologically accessible for a wider range of people, regardless of inseam length. For example, in the late 1990s, the Fat Boy had a low seat height and was a perfect choice for women or men with short legs.<sup>102</sup>

Street-riding women became more organized in the final three decades of the century and many of them had chapters in the Greater Borderlands. Becky Brown founded WITW in 1979. The association grew into forty chapters and a total membership of approximately 750 over the following two decades. Two WITW chapters existed in Arizona briefly in the late 1980s and early '90s under the leadership of ABATE activists like Sherri Carr of Cottonwood. Another WITW chapter in Palm Springs was still active at the end of the century. Several other women's clubs and associations formed in the late 1970s and early '80s including Leather and Lace (Phoenix, coastal California, and some Texas towns) and Dykes on Bikes (San Francisco and Los Angeles). Lynell Corbett and Linda Campbell, wife of US Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, started the Hardly Angels Motorized Dance Troupe in 1994. The troupe consisted primarily of women from the Four Corners area. The Sirens MC of New Mexico was a patch-



holding, exclusively women's motorcycle club that was AMA-sanctioned. Maria Bautista founded the club in 1988 after riding in San Francisco with a patch-holding club called Leather and Blues. She served as Sirens MC President and "Keeper of all Knowledge of Sirens."<sup>103</sup>

A closer look at only one area, Southern Arizona, may be indicative of the status of women's motorcycling organizations in the Greater Borderlands during the 1990s. There were three active, exclusively female groups: the Desert Hearts, Women on Wheels (WOW), and Raw Thunder. Deb Latardo started the Desert Hearts, "a motorcycle club for women" in 1991. Judy Kochel of Sun City, a member of the Board of Trustees of WOW, had been riding since 1973. WOW chapters were strong in Glendale and Scottsdale under the leadership of Rose Whitney and Dianne Ables. The founder of Raw Thunder, Char Zack started riding when a friend gave her a Honda 125. She gradually worked her way up to a 350, then a 500 before getting her 1991 Springer Softail. The first coordinator for Raw Thunder was Pat Bunevich who rode a Harley Fat Boy. Raw Thunder's "Fat Boys Bisbee Run," an overnighter at Tombstone, Arizona, was named after her bike.<sup>104</sup>

Women became more aware of a perceived public opposition to them as bikers in the late 1970s and early '80s. As early as the 1920s, but especially in the early 1970s, car and truck operators running bikes off the road and causing rider injury or death was problematic. In a 1966 *Mademoiselle* magazine article, John H. Porter warned young women of the "unnatural and deplorable fact that... some motorists...are actually out to get you. They will play chicken with you, or actually try to run you off the road; and it isn't because they don't see you!"<sup>105</sup>

Writing in 1971, Robert Hughes informed readers of *Time* magazine that "on any long trip...the biker stands to encounter at least one car-swaddled Milquetoast with blood in his eye whose hope is to run him off the road."<sup>106</sup> Ray Gwyn Smith of Santa Cruz, California wrote an

article attesting the existence of such unprovoked road rage in 1984 titled “The Goddess Rides a Harley.” Smith interviewed several independent women motorcyclists in Santa Cruz County and found that they had been subject to various responses from non-riding males. Some of these responses had been negative, ranging from verbal protests to aggravated vehicular assault (physically forcing women bikers off of roads).<sup>107</sup>

In a separate interview, Dorothy McKnight recalled one such incident:

We were coming back from the races.... We were all riding in line, trying to ride with the traffic and come across and start up that hill. And the oncoming ramp, the guy tried to run us off the road, and I mean literally. We were shaken. We were definitely shaking in our boots when we realized how close we had been, being run down. And I don't remember how we avoided it, but I do remember that we had to make way. Even though we had the right-of-way, we had to make way.... And we were riding like we were supposed to be riding. No, it's a scary feeling. But you know that thing with four wheels can run you off, possibly kill you, simply because you're on two wheels. And no reason for it.<sup>108</sup>

Had it not been for their attentive and quickly evasive maneuvers, these riders could have been injured or killed.

Such seemingly senseless violence did not end in the 1980s. One of countless undocumented but similar close-call incidents occurred at the end of the century and was described by Delores Whitedog:

I pulled that guy over on Central, because he tried to kill me on my motorcycle. He tried to run me off the road. So, I told him, “Kiss my ass.” And he told me, “Kiss my ass.” And it was up and down the road. And like so, fine, I tell him to pull over. That's it. “Pull over, man.” He pulled over and then he realized I was a woman. And he apologized to me. And I told him, “I'm old enough to be your mother, you fucking punk.” And I said, “You want to kill me or what?” I said, “Go ahead and do it now.” And he apologized and said that he would never do that to anybody again.<sup>109</sup>

Regular citizens were not the only people interacting negatively with riders; governmental entities also scrutinized and attempted to regulate bikers.<sup>110</sup> The National Highway Safety Act of 1966, followed by the Federal Highway Funds Aid Act of 1968

“blackmailed” (to borrow a word from contemporary biker terminology) forty-nine states into passing mandatory helmet laws by threatening to withhold ten percent of their federal highway funds. Riders viewed the Department of Transportation (DOT) crossover requirement as a form of discrimination. Helmets had a reputation within the community as being unsafe, as they tended to diminish an operator’s hearing and sight capabilities on the road.<sup>111</sup> Simultaneously, police forces in the Greater Borderlands started to actively scrutinize the extended forks, handlebar heights, and other artistic elements of choppers, ostensibly for safety reasons.<sup>112</sup>

### **Women as Leaders in the Bikers’ Rights Movement**

As a result, an informal grassroots coalition led by the patch-holding clubs staged helmet protests at the California State Capitol in the late 1960s. Because of such opposition, California was the only state in the United States that did not bow to such federal pressure. The movement continued and began to be led by motorcyclist rights organizations (MROs) beginning with the MMA in 1971 and ABATE a year later. The acronym ABATE, which originally meant “A Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Enactments,” was the brainchild of a female secretarial employee at *Easyriders* magazine. Unfortunately, the woman’s name has been lost. At first, the magazine itself ran ABATE as a national MRO but started granting state charters in 1974, eventually surrendering all control of the acronym (and how its letters are interpreted) to autonomous regional and local groups of activists.<sup>113</sup>

The ABATE movement quickly expanded into every Greater Borderlands state north of the border. ABATE bikers were highly motivated, well organized, and extremely effective. Many motorcyclists in the U.S. under the age of thirty were card-carrying members of either ABATE or an equivalent MRO. When state helmet laws induced by the federal crossover

requirement failed to reduce numbers of motorcycle accidents, injuries, and deaths as the safety and medical establishment's lobbyists and experts had claimed, the ABATE riders and other organized riders wrote letters and staged demonstrations. They influenced congressional representatives to insert a provision, or a "Blackmail Repeal Bill" as bikers called it, into the Federal Highway Act of 1975 that was signed into law on May 5, 1976. Subsequently that same year, the ABATE of Arizona managed to overturn its state's helmet law.<sup>114</sup>

Similar helmet law repeals occurred in New Mexico, Texas and most of the other forty-six states that had enacted laws.<sup>115</sup> According to "K.T.," a female former deputy coordinator in ABATE of New Mexico:

[ABATE's] inception came about because of the helmet law.... I wasn't a member of ABATE at the time, but people jumped on the bandwagon to put an end to that. And I'm certainly glad they did because I believe that as a rider you do have a right to choose. And it's been an interesting organization. I do like the people that I know from the organization.<sup>116</sup>

As a direct result of continual motorcyclist activism through the rights movement, the final decades of the century were generally agreeable to riders.<sup>117</sup>

Many of the local MROs were either started, organized, or run by women from the 1970s through the 1990s. Female members of ABATE were lobbyists, strategists, chairs, treasurers, secretaries, and editors. Other women, who were not directly involved in their states as *leaders* of the movement, assisted their boyfriends or husbands who were organizational activists in the 1970s and 1980s. The first independent female biker that I ever met was C. C. Rogers, a member of my MMA district in Santa Cruz, California, around 1983 or '85. She rode a Harley-Davidson Sportster and was active in the district.<sup>118</sup>

People in the motorcycling community—both men and women—thought that women possessed inherent essential qualities that made them, in some ways, more effective lobbyists

and activists than men could be. Liz Espinoza Beltran, Deputy Coordinator for ABATE of New Mexico, described those imagined qualities:

[Women] have great organizational skills, we don't give a shit what you wear, we don't give a shit what you look like, and we don't care about how nice your ass is or how big your tits are. You are going to be doing a job in this organization the same as I am and I'm going to do a good job at it. And I'll give you respect.

So, over the last couple of years, it's happened. And our chapter has grown.... Our funds have really grown. We've done a lot of events, a lot of really good events. I really owe it to my chapter. And the members that I have in my chapter are very, very cooperative and very eager to help me with everything that I want to do. So all of our events have been very, very successful. Our toy run this year is our eighth annual. That was founded in 1992.... It's doubled every year.<sup>119</sup>

The amount of female leadership in the bikers' rights movement increased from the 1980s through the 1990s. Only fourteen percent of organizational officers in one MMA division were women during the mid-1980s. A decade later in 1996, when Audrey Goodwin was the ABATE of Arizona Chair of the Board of Directors, three of the ten state officers and two of the seven attending board members were female. Two years later, Bobbi J. Hartmann began to serve as ABATE of Arizona's first registered lobbyist. Meanwhile, Dian Sandlin (spelled without an "e") served ABATE of New Mexico as its newsletter editor and e-mail list server while Liz Espinoza Beltran was Coordinator of First Rio Rancho Chapter and one of four Directors of that state organization. Thirty percent of Flagstaff ABATE's chapter officers were women as were nearly half of Yavapai ABATE's chapter election candidates. In 1999, female riders comprised thirty percent of the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) Board of Directors and served as writers, editors, planners, and organizers throughout the motorcyclist rights movement.

As the century drew to a close, Patty Dallas provided guidance to ABATE of Arizona as Chair of the Board while other women served as directors, state officers, and chapter officers. By October of 2000, a proposal for a riders' civil rights documentary film by ABATE

of Arizona member Barbara Bustillos-Cogswell was awarded a grant funded by the “Women Make Movies” organization. Motorcyclists’ rights were protected by the MROs and some of the best officers and activists of those groups happened to be women. By the late decades of the century, women riders in such organizations mirrored the larger society of their local areas in matters of race and ethnicity and Black, Latino, and Native American women were members.<sup>120</sup> African American and Latino women’s clubs will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Even traditional male-oriented clubs that anthropologist Daniel Wolf had identified in the late 1980s seemed to have changed in the 1990s. During the 1996 Coalition of Coalitions (of motorcycle clubs) meeting, convened in the land of the sovereign Mouache-Capote (Southern Ute) Nation during the Four Corners Iron Horse Rally, the political importance of women was acknowledged. Subsequently, Deborah Butitta was elected to serve as the registered lobbyist for the Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs in July of 2000. Such confederations in Texas, Arizona, and elsewhere also started to enroll women’s and mixed gendered clubs.<sup>121</sup> Thus, it can be said that women played a very important role in the preservation of motorcycling.

### **Motorcycling as a Gendered Borderlands**

They also enjoyed riding in the Borderlands. Trisha Yeager, who in 1978 self-identified as a “wife, mother, artist, former high school teacher-and motorcyclist,” felt a deep appreciation and fondness for the Borderlands.<sup>122</sup> In her book *How to Be Sexy With Bugs in Your Teeth*, she described the Ride and how the land changes with the sun:

[A] brand new desert-flooded with red from the sinking sun, etched with distinct contrasts of value and texture, filled with Modigliani-like shadows. You feel united with the peace and grandeur of the vast sand panorama all around you.<sup>123</sup>

Yeager cited oneness with the environment, the enjoyment of a feeling of freedom, practicality, stress relief, sensual aspects of the machine, and the benefits of meditative concentration as reasons for riding. In contrast to the rhetoric of a rustic, rugged, physically challenging landscape that early twentieth-century riders utilized to describe the same places, later motorcyclists such as Yeager recreated by riding in the beauty of the Greater Borderlands.<sup>124</sup>

Rather than attempting to delve into intangible elements of one being in outdoor places, this moment in the dissertation may present a reasonable opportunity to complicate the earlier definition of “borderlands” that I gave in the Introduction. For Gloria Anzaldúa’s borderlands are more metaphoric and esoteric than those of Oscar J. Martínez. In *Borderlands: The New Mestiza*, Anzaldúa surveys several peripheral places including those that lie between Chicano and Anglo societies, women and male-oriented Chicano culture, and finally lesbians and hetero-normality. She describes linguistic borderlands, mystical spiritual space, and the in-between-ness of economics, language, and *autohistoria*. Anzaldúa tries to diminish the concept of “us and them,” privileging connections between people (rather than commonalities). Her metaphoric bridge seeks to empower everyone. She concludes that, in code switching between a multiplicity of identities, there is hope for community and for attaining goals.<sup>125</sup>

Beyond matters of space and place enjoyed by historical actors such as Yeager and defined geographically by historians like Martínez, Anzaldúa’s formations indicate a non-geographic, expanded, idealist, and esoteric concept of borderlands, ones that reveal degrees of ambiguity and relativity, a significant conceptual space between any two distinct but interconnected things. Throughout the twentieth century, motorcycling was, in essence, such a borderlands type of activity; locomotion in that area between what is socially acceptable by the mainstream and what is not. No matter what meanings riders attached to their operation of

motorcycles, these were socially ignored, re-imagined and rewritten by non-riders to enhance a stifling, marginalizing set of stereotypes, a boundary of sorts for purposes of exclusion. The next chapter surveys some boundaries of marginalization in relation to race, ethnicity, identity, and resistance. To examine the category of race, it considers racialized motorcyclists in the Borderlands including Black, ethnic Mexican, and Native American riders.



## Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (1994; Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Sammy Kent Brooks, "The Motorcycle in American Culture: From Conception to 1935," (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1975). Ph.D. Dissertation. (American Civilization), 103, 250, 256. Melissa Holbrook Pierson, *The Perfect Vehicle: What It Is about Motorcycles* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997), 29-30.

<sup>3</sup> Jo Freeman, ed., *Women: A Feminist Perspective* (Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield Publishing, 1995), 71, 483. Elizabeth Jameson, "Women as Workers, Women as Civilizers: True Womanhood in the American West," in *The Women's West*. Eds. Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 145-164. Harry Louis and Bob Currie, eds., *The Classic Motorcycles* (New York: Dutton, 1976), 1-11. Richard Alexander Hough and L.J.K. Setright, *A History of the World's Motorcycles* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1973), 1-24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Louis, *Classic Motorcycles*, 1-11. Freeman, *Women*, 71, 82, 483. Jameson, "Women as Workers, Women as Civilizers," 145-164. "Single Motor Bicycles," *New York Sun* as reprinted in *Current Literature* 29-2 (August 1900), 233-235. M.C. Krarup, "The Field for Motorcycles: Motorcycling vs. Motoring." *Outing* 37-2 (November, 1900), 207-212. Thomas C. Bolfert, *The Big Book of Harley-Davidson* (Osceola, Wisc.: Motorbooks International Publishers, 1991), 20-25. Hough, *History of the World's Motorcycles*, 1-25.

<sup>5</sup> *Motorcycle Illustrated* (June 1906), 14 as cited in Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 63.

<sup>6</sup> A. Russell Bond, "Practical Mechanics for Boys: What Every One Should Know About the Motor-Cycle," *St. Nicholas* 42 (September 1915), 998-1007. John Chapman Hilder, "Everybody's Motor-Cycle," *Harper's Weekly* 62 (February 5, 1916), 139. N.W. Matlock, "An Efficient Motorcycle Squad," *American City* 49 (June 1934), 81. Gary L. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2000.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Van Tassel, "The Motor Cycle," *Harper's Weekly Journal of Civilization*. 43-2235 (October 21, 1899): 1063-1064. L. H. Bill, "The Poor Man's Automobile," *Overland Monthly* (August 1902), 197-198. Henry Norman, "What the Motor-Cycle Offers: The Cheapest Method of Transportation as Yet Discovered-the Coming Exchange of the Suburban Home for the Country Home," *World's Work* (July 1903), 3670-3672. "Elsie Scott and Harry Amster on a 1914 Indian Motorcycle," Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-4, Jerome Historical Society Archives, Jerome, Arizona (hereinafter called "JHSA"). "Hazel, Kathlyn, Lewis Turner," Photograph, Photo ID number PB10, F4, #7, Sharlot Hall Archives, Prescott, Arizona (hereinafter called "SHA"). "Marie Curtis, a Picnic," Photograph, Photo ID number PB10, F4, #12, SHA. Louis, *Classic Motorcycles*, 10-13, 16, 40-42, 52-53. Hough, *History of the World's Motorcycles*, 24-25, 30, 36-37, 56. Bolfert, *Big Book*, 20-25, 40, 54, 62-70. Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 121. Motorcycle Publishing Company, "A Record Endurance Run: At Least in Point of Distance, With the Elimination Trials Included, Western District Contest Has No Precedent in America," *Motorcycle Illustrated*. 5-20 (October 15, 1910): 1, 4, 6, 9. "Why Not Give the Girls a Chance? Thousands of Them Would Enjoy and be a Credit to the Sport of Motorcycling if Someone would Set the Fashion," *Motorcycle Illustrated* (October 27, 1921), 44-46. R.F. Kelsey, ed., "Interesting Pictorial Incidents in the Recent F. A. M. National Tours." *Bicycling World and Motorcycle Review* (August 12, 1912). 1-25. "Miss Michel a Winner: Fair Rider Scores at Baltimore Despite F.A.M. Rules," *Motorcycle Illustrated* (July 13, 1911), 49. Krarup, "Field for Motorcycles," 207-212.

<sup>8</sup> Pierson, *Perfect Vehicle*, 149-150. Greer Harrison, "The Lincoln Logs: Reaching the End of the Original Transcontinental Highway," *American Motorcyclist*. 54-6 (June, 2000), 32-34, 36-40.

<sup>9</sup> Crewe, "What a Girl Can Do," 22-23. *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Tom Bolfert, Archivist, Harley-Davidson Motor Company. E-mail to author, 8 January 2001, 3:00 p.m.

<sup>11</sup> Dorothy G. Stewart, ed., *"Going Some" 1913: First "Coast to Coast" Trip by Motorcycle and Sidecar* (Bridgeport, California: D and D Enterprises, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 4-14.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-79.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 1, 27-79. They were not sponsored by any motorcycle companies or commercial corporations. Rather, they financed the trip by selling postcards depicting themselves with their machine.

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<sup>17</sup> “Hazel, Kathlyn, Lewis Turner,” Photograph. “Kenosha 1912,” Photograph, Photo ID number PB10, F4, #8, SHA. “Marie Curtis,” Photograph. Unnamed Photograph, Photo ID number PB147, F6, #13, SHA. Unnamed Photograph, Photo ID number T-178, PD, SHA. Stewart, *Going Some*.

<sup>18</sup> The dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz ended only when the Mexican Revolution became successful. For an example of new political philosophy published on the eve of the Revolution, see Justo Sierra, *The Political Evolution of the Mexican People*. Trans. Charles Ramsdale. (1900; Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1969). For cultural conflict in reference to bikes and riders, see William H. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987).

<sup>19</sup> “Why Not Give the Girls a Chance?” 44-47. “Anybody Can Drive a Neracar: Syracuse Company to Manufacture Classy Motorcycle Built on Automobile Lines,” *Motorcycle and Bicycle Illustrated* (October 27, 1921), 70-73.

<sup>20</sup> Hough, *History of the World’s Motorcycles*, 45. Bill Wood, ed., “Sisters of the Road,” *American Motorcyclist*. 50-6 (June 1996): 27.

<sup>21</sup> Francis M. Peeler, interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 31 January 2001. Ivalene Tenney, interview by author, Tape recording, Lake Havasu City, Arizona. 9 February 2001. Walt and Dorothy McKnight, interview by author, Tape recording, Oakland City, Indiana, 17 July 2000. Randi [pseud.], interview by author, Mesa, Arizona, 21 February 2001. Delores Whitedog and Heather, interview by author, Tape recording, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 14 October 2000. Whitedog was Security for the Sirens MC and Heather was a member. Michael J. McAlister, interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 24 January 2001. Bill Reilly, interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 25 January 2001. Bobbi J. Hartmann, interview by author, Tape recording, Phoenix, Arizona, 20 March 1999. Renegade [pseud.], “Far Out, Baby!” *Easyriders*, April 1975, 54-56.

<sup>22</sup> George Rees. “Some Famous Motorcycle Clubs and Why: The Fox River Aggregation Formerly Known as the Aurora, Ill., M. C.” *Motorcycling* (March 9, 1914), 35. Daniel Wolf, *The Rebels: A Brotherhood of Outlaw Bikers* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 155-156. Danny Lyon, *The Bikeriders* (Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 1997), 29-30. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1979-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* McKnight, interview. Tenney, interview. Whitedog, interview. Lisa Whitacre, interview by author, Typed e-mail responses to prepared questions, 7 January 2001. Whitacre was a former Yavapai County ABATE Political Action Coordinator. K.T. [pseud.] and Liz Espinoza-Beltran, interview by author, Tape recording, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 14 October 2000. Bonny K. Kraske, interview by author, Typed e-mail responses to prepared questions, 1 May 2001. Kraske was the Coconino County Treasurer. Demi Dorothy Bellows, interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 3 December 2000. Bellows was East Valley ABATE charter member number 4. East Valley formed one of the first ABATE of Arizona chapters. Sherrie Carr, interview by author, Tape recording, Cottonwood, Arizona, 6 February 2001. Carr was a former Women in the Wind Chapter President. Hartmann, interview. Peeler, interview. Reilly, interview. Nancy Miller [pseud.], interview by author, Tape recording, Phoenix, Arizona, 24 October 1998. McAlister, interview. George Noble [Cowboy], interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 16 February 2001. Wolf, *Rebels*, 132. Brooks, “Motorcycle in American Culture,” 158-167.

<sup>24</sup> McAlister, interview. Laura A. Moll, “‘She Let Him Drive, So that She Rode Bitch’: Discursive Construction of a Heterosexual Norm by Women Bikers,” a paper presented at the Southwest / Texas Popular Culture Association Annual Convention, March 9, 2001, Albuquerque, New Mexico. 15 pp. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1992-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>25</sup> “Motorcycle Relay is Carrying President’s Message to Exposition,” *Colorado Springs Gazette*. 42-14,327 (July 21, 1915), 2. “Motorcycle Squad Carries Message Across Continent,” *Colorado Springs Gazette*. 42-14,332 (July 26, 1915), 2. “Two Girls and ‘Preparedness,’” 78-80. Ruderman, “Adeline & Augusta Van Buren,” 11-15. Anne Tully Ruderman, “The Daring Escapade of 1916,” *Ms.* 6-8 (February, 1978), 54-55. Wood, “Sisters,” 26, 33.

<sup>26</sup> Hendee did not spell “motorcycles” with an “r” at that time.

<sup>27</sup> “Van Buren Girls Put ‘Finis’ on Trip: New York Misses Roll Into San Francisco on September 2, Completing 3,300-Mile Trip in Two Months Less Two Days-Are Enthusiastic Over the Journey and Their Mounts,” *Motor Cycle Illustrated* (September 7, 1916), 23. “Two Girls and ‘Preparedness,’” 78. Ruderman, “Adeline and Augusta Van Buren,” 11-14. Wood, “Sisters,” 26, 33. Buzz Kanter, *Indian Motorcycles* (Osceola, Wisconsin: Motorbooks International, 1993).

<sup>28</sup> “Two Girls and ‘Preparedness,’” 78.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 78-80. Wood, "Sisters," 26, 33. Ruderman, "Adeline and Augusta Van Buren," 11-14. "Van Buren Girls Put 'Finis' on Trip," 23.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> Ruderman, "Adeline & Augusta Van Buren," 11-15. Anne Tully Ruderman, "The Daring Escapade of 1916," *Ms.* 6-8 (February, 1978), 54-55. Wood, "Sisters," 26, 33.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid. Ruderman, "Adeline and Augusta Van Buren," 11-15.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid. Wood, "Sisters," 26, 33.
- <sup>35</sup> Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994)(1984), 460-461. Sara M. Evans, *Born For Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1997), 222-223. Molly Merryman, *Clipped Wings: The Rise and Fall of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) of World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 1998). Jean Hascall Cole, *Women Pilots of World War II* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992). Anne Noggle, *For God, Country, and the Thrill of It: Women Airforce Service Pilots in World War II* (College Station : Texas A&M University Press, 1990). Adela Riek Scharr, *Sisters in the Sky* (Gerald, Missouri: Patrice Press, 1986).
- <sup>36</sup> Della Crewe, "What a Girl Can Do With a Sidecar Outfit: She Need Not Fear Serious Trouble, Even When Traversing Fifty-Seven Varieties of Roads, if She Has a Reasonable Supply of Nerve and a Cheerful Puppy to Keep Her Company," *Motorcycle Illustrated*. (January 21, 1915), 22-23.
- <sup>37</sup> "Edith," Photograph of Edith Whitacre, Accession number P-90-297-30, JHSA. Alene Adler, "Women of the Mining Era," a book in progress, 7. "Elsie Scott and Harry Amster," Photograph. The other Jerome woman who rode was Elsie Scott, though little is known about her. Sheridan, *Arizona*, 183-186.
- <sup>38</sup> "Edith," Photograph. Adler, "Women of the Mining Era," 7. Thomas E. Sheridan, *Arizona: A History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), 183-186.
- <sup>39</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963; New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997), 80. Virginia Scharff, *Twenty Thousand Roads: Women, Movement, and the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
- <sup>40</sup> "Why Not Give the Girls a Chance?" 44. Also 43-48.
- <sup>41</sup> Motorcycle Publishing Company, "A Record Endurance Run," 1, 4, 6, 9. "Miss Michel a Winner," 49. Kelsey, "Interesting Pictorial Incidents," 1-25. Louis, *Classic Motorcycles*. Hough, *History of the World's Motorcycles*, 50-60. Steve Koerner, "The British Motor-Cycle Industry During the 1930's," *The Journal of Transport History*. 16-1 (1995), 64-66, 70.
- <sup>42</sup> Motorcycle Publishing Company, "A Record Endurance Run," 1, 4, 6, 9. "Miss Michel a Winner," 49. Kelsey, "Interesting Pictorial Incidents," 1-25. Louis, *Classic Motorcycles*. Hough, *History of the World's Motorcycles*, 50-60. Alice Stone, dir., *She Lives to Ride*. Dot Robinson and Becky Brown. New York: Women Make Movies, 1994. Videocassette. Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 244. E. C. Smith's tenure as president of the AMA began in 1928.
- <sup>43</sup> *New American Motorcyclist and Bicyclist* (April 1934), 40 as cited in Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 284-285.
- <sup>44</sup> McKnight, interview. Walter E. Burton, "Daring Riders Thrill Crowds with Polo on Motor Cycles," *Popular Science*. 127-1 (July 1935), 42-43, 95. Thomas, Betty J. "Motor Maids: Memories Delight Us." *Thunder Press*, June 1998, 109, 112. C. E. B. Clement, "Keeping the Club Members Interested: Some Stunts of the Rose City Club of Portland, Ore. That Might be Copied by Others," *Motorcycle Illustrated* (December 15, 1921), 12-13. "Plan that Gypsy Tour Now: June 18 and 19 are the Dates that Mean so Much to Motorcyclists of All Sections," *American Motorcyclist and Bicyclist* (May 1927), 11. Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 245, 248-249.
- <sup>45</sup> Clement, "Keeping the Club Members Interested," 12.
- <sup>46</sup> Char Zack, interview by author, Tape recording, Cottonwood, Arizona, 16 March 1999. Ding [pseud.], interview by author, Handwritten notes, Phoenix, Arizona, 11 April 2001. The source declined to be tape-recorded. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1979-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid. Drill teams consisted of profoundly talented performers on motorcycles who trained together and executed death-defying stunts while riding together in close formation. México has had a long tradition of drill team riding; the teams were usually special squads of motorcycle police from departments farther south. This strong tradition would probably explain why Mexican moto police tended to be far superior riders compared to their counterparts north of the border.
- <sup>49</sup> Kieffner, participant reflection, 1996-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

- <sup>50</sup> Motor Maids, Inc., "History," One-page report, revised 1981. Philip "Kamikaze Phil" Johnson, ed., "Motor Maids, Inc. Unites Women in Sport of Motorcycling," *Legends of Sturgis: An Historic Collectors Publication by the Meade County Times-Tribune* (August 1, 1995), 17. Henry Luce, ed., "Life Goes Motorcycling: Cult of Jarred Spine Likes its Uniforms Natty, its Formations Fancy, its Women on the Back Seat," *Life*. 23-6 (August 11, 1947): 7, 112-114, 117. Motor Maids, Inc., "Application Blank." The address on the form is Motor Maids, Inc., Ethel Voy, Secretary, 627 Ashland Avenue, Rockford, Ill. 61103. Motor Maids, Inc., "Constitution and Bylaws," Trifold. Revised 1990. Jan Barrett, President., "Motor Maids, Inc. Monthly Report," May 1, 1994, P.O. Box 1664, Englewood, Fla. 34295-1664. Bolfert, *Big Book*, 140. Richard Howland, "Grandmother Travels by Motorcycle: Says it's Better than Driving Car," *Press-Telegram* (Los Angeles) (August 28, 1985), C1, C5. Zack, interview. Tenney, interview. Jay Levine, "Ivalene Tenney Rolls Down the Highway with a Smile," *Today's Daily News* (July 29, 1993), 1. In 2001, Motor Maids Headquarters was in Florida.
- <sup>51</sup> Tenney, interview.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid. Johnson, "Motor Maids, Inc. Unites," 17. Motor Maids, Inc., "Constitution and Bylaws." Motor Maids, Inc., "History," 1. Motor Maids, Inc., "Constitution and Bylaws." Luce, "Life Goes Motorcycling," 7, 112-114, 117.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid. Clint Arion, interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 7 February 2001. McKnight, interview. Philip "Kamikazi Phil" Johnson, ed., "History of the Black Hills Classic," *Legends of Sturgis: An Historic Collectors Publication by the Meade County Times-Tribune* (August 1, 1995), 1. Johnson, "Motor Maids, Inc. Unites," 17. Marvin Lesley and Ed Kramer. Interview by author, February 27, 2001, Flagstaff, Arizona. Joel T. Smith, dir., *Harley-Davidson: The American Motorcycle*. James Caan, David Crosby, and Wynonna Judd. Los Angeles: Cabin Fever, 1993. Videocassette.
- <sup>54</sup> Tenney, interview. Motor Maids, Inc. "History." Raider, "Good Times with the Motor Maids: These Spunky Ladies Rode with Pride," *Easyriders*. 14-130 (April 1984), 40-41.
- <sup>55</sup> Louis, *Classic Motorcycles*. Hough, *History of the World's Motorcycles*. Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A-1, A-14. The History Channel, *In Search of History: Hell's Angels*. Sonny Barger, George Christie, Jerry Garcia, Donald Crosentino. (Triage Inc., prod., 1996), Videocassette. Hells Angels Motorcycle Club, San Fernando Valley, "HAMCSFV: Big Red Machine History," Internet. <http://www.hamcsfv.com/html/history.html>. Yves Lavigne, *Hell's Angels: Three Can Keep a Secret if Two Are Dead* (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1987), 24-27. Veterans of the U.S. Air Force 358<sup>th</sup> Hells Angels Squadron such as Arvin "Ollie" Olson kept the name active through the new club after the completion of the war.
- <sup>56</sup> Bolfert, *Big Book*, 169, 171. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 27-31, 103-105. Whitedog, interview.
- <sup>57</sup> Ethel Voy to Ivalene Tenney, 22 March 2001. Voy was Secretary of the Motor Maids. Levine, "Ivalene Tenney Rolls," 1-2. Tenney, interview. Nancy Paganelli, "17th Annual Antique and Classic Motorcycle Show: Old Bikes and Young Hearts, History Shines in Tempe," *Thunder Press* (June 2000). 66-67. Biby, interview. Roy Biby, "RE: Janie," E-mail to author, 25 April 2001. Roy Biby, "Janie's Article," E-mail to author, 1 May 2001. Pat Connor, "Not So Plain Janie: She's a Motorcycle Mechanic with a Heart of Gold," *Mesa Tribune*, 24 October 1982, 8-9.
- <sup>58</sup> Theresa Wallach, *Easy Motorcycle Riding* (New York: Sterling Publishing, 1978), 32-33. Peggy Iris Thomas, *Gasoline Gypsy* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1953), 1-23.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid., 4, 42, 71.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., 2-3, 5-7, 9, 13, 15, 19-20, 26-30, 31, 33, 40-41, 43-44, 48, 50-51, 58, 62, 64-69, 83, 89, 95, 97.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., 69.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid., 86.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid., 75, 85, 98, 101, 144.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid., 76-80.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid., 79.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid., 66, 80-86. Connor, "Not So Plain Janie," 8-9.
- <sup>67</sup> Thomas, *Gasoline Gypsy*, 85-86.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid., 86-89.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid., 93-96.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid., 95, 97.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid., 1-2, 4-5, 15, 17, 19-20, 31, 87. Stewart, *Going Some*, i-ii, 1-3.
- <sup>72</sup> Thomas, *Gasoline Gypsy*, 5.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid., 23, 31.

- <sup>74</sup> McKnight, interview. Luce, "Life Goes Motorcycling," 7, 112-114, 117. Bolfert, *Big Book*, 145, 171. Peeler, interview. Reilly, interview. Thomas Bolfert, Buzz Buzzelli, M. Bruce Chubbuck, and Martin Jack Rosenblum, eds., *Historical Overview: Harley-Davidson, Inc., 1903-1993* (Milwaukee, Wisc.: HM Graphics, 1994), 67. Thomas, *Gasoline Gypsy*, 1-23, 33, 67.
- <sup>75</sup> Friedan, *Feminine Mystique*. Helena Znaniecki Lopata, *Occupation Housewife* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 371. See also Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1968), 263.
- <sup>76</sup> Gail DeMarco, *Rebels With a Cause: We Ride the Harley* (Santa Rosa, California: Squarebooks, 1994), 6, 36, 100-101, 120. Rick Voegelin, "Lady in Leather: Angel on a Pro Stock Motorcycle," *Sport*. 88-3 (March 1997): 78-80.
- <sup>77</sup> DeMarco, *Rebels With a Cause*. Yeager, *How to be Sexy*. Whitacre, interview via e-mail. Lisa Whitacre, interview by author, Tape recording, Jerome, Arizona, 19 February 2001. Zack, interview. McDonald-Walker, *Bikers*, 58-70. Lyon, *Bikeriders*, 29.
- <sup>78</sup> Zack, interview.
- <sup>79</sup> Gary L. Kieffner, "Legend Unknown: A Cultural, Gendered History of Motorcyclists in the American Southwest," (Flagstaff: Northern Arizona University, 2003), Master's thesis (History), 148-155. Bill Bish, "A History of ABATE of California," attachment to a letter from Bill Bish to the author. May 24, 1999. National Coalition of Motorcyclists letterhead, 4 pp. Bill Bish, "Brief History of Biker's Rights in America," *Masterlink*. 8-7 (July 2000), 1. See the glossary for the definition of masterlink.
- <sup>80</sup> Wolf, *Rebels*, 4-5, 138, 339-349. Whitedog, interview. Randi, interview. Hartmann, interview. K.T., interview. Hunter S. Thompson contributed to this deployment of sexuality. See Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs: Losers and Outsiders," *Nation* 200, no. 20 (May 17, 1965): 524-525. Ralph "Sonny" Barger, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman. *Hell's Angel: The Life and Times of Sonny Barger and the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000). James F. Quinn, "Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs: A Sociological Analysis," Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami, 1983. Master's Thesis. Don H. Shamblin, "Brotherhood of Rebels: An Exploratory Analysis of a Motorcycle Outlaw Contraculture," (Buffalo: State University of New York at Buffalo, 1971), Ph.D. dissertation (Sociology).
- <sup>81</sup> Wolf, *Rebels*, 145. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1979-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid. Wolf, *Rebels*, 149-162.
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid., 155.
- <sup>84</sup> Rees. "Some Famous Motorcycle Clubs and Why," 35.
- <sup>85</sup> Wolf, *Rebels*, 138-142. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1982-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid. Wolf, *Rebels*, 138-149. See also Whitedog, interview. Randi, interview. Hartmann, interview. K.T., interview. Renegade, "Far Out, Baby!" 54-56. Barger, *Hell's Angel*.
- <sup>87</sup> Wolf, *Rebels*, 148-149. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1979-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.
- <sup>88</sup> Janis Joplin, *Janis Joplin's Greatest Hits*. Columbia Record Company, 1973. Record album.
- <sup>89</sup> Wolf, *Rebels*, 131-132.
- <sup>90</sup> Tenney, interview. K.T., interview. Randi, interview. Whitedog, interview. Carr, interview. Whitacre, interview via E-mail. Whitacre, interview with tape recording. Renegade, "Far Out, Baby!" 54-56. Carol, "No, I Can't Bake a Cake!" *Easyriders*. 4-21 (June, 1974), 40-42. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1982-1989, 1997-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001. Tobie Gene Levingston, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman, *Soul On Bikes: The East Bay Dragons MC and the Black Biker Set* (St. Paul: MBI Publishing, 2003), 79. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 27-31, 103-105.
- <sup>91</sup> Lisa Garber, "Women Who Ride: The Psyche of the Female Motorcyclist." Ph.D. diss. (Clinical Psychology), Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2002. 153.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid. Tenney, interview. K.T., interview. Randi, interview. Whitedog, interview. Carr, interview. Whitacre, interview via E-mail. Whitacre, interview with tape recording. Renegade, "Far Out, Baby!" 54-56. Carol, "No, I Can't Bake a Cake!" 40-42. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1982-1989, 1997-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001. Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*, 79. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 27-31, 103-105.
- <sup>93</sup> Randi, interview.
- <sup>94</sup> Renegade, "Far Out, Baby!" 54-56. "Why Not Give the Girls a Chance?" 44-47. Whitedog, interview. Randi, interview. Hartmann, interview. K.T., interview. Lyon, *Bikeriders*, 61. Wolf, *Rebels*. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1979-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.
- <sup>95</sup> Thomas, "Motor Maids," 1, 108-109. Tenney, interview.

<sup>96</sup> Zack, interview. State of Arizona, Department of State. "Certificate of Trade Name: Raw Thunder," Signed by Secretary of State Betsy Bayless, October 9, 1998. Char Zack, "Raw Thunder Newsletter." (June, 1998). Char Zack, ed., "Raw Thunder Newsletter." (October, 1998). Char Zack, ed., "Raw Thunder Newsletter." (November 1998). Char Zack, ed., "Raw Thunder Newsletter." (January 1999). Raw Thunder documents. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1982-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>97</sup> Whitedog, interview.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. Hartmann, interview. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1982-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008. DeMarco, *Rebels With a Cause*, 110. Brock Yates, *Outlaw Machine: Harley-Davidson and the Search for the American Soul* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1999), 133.

<sup>99</sup> Zack, interview.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. Renegade, "Far Out, Baby!" 54-56. "Why Not Give the Girls a Chance?" 44-47. Whitedog, interview. Randi, interview. Kraske, interview. Hartmann, interview. Bellows, interview. Whitacre, interview via E-mail. Whitacre, interview with tape recording. K.T., interview. Lyon, *Bikeriders*, 61. Wolf, *Rebels*. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1982-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>101</sup> Carr, interview.

<sup>102</sup> Yeager, *How to be Sexy*, 1-2, 5-6. Charlotta Koppanyi, "Harley-Davidson, Myth and Company in Change." Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet, Psykologiska Institutionen, 2000. B.S. Thesis, 4 Charlotta Koppanyi, "Harley-Davidson, Myth and Company in Change." Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet, Psykologiska Institutionen, 2000. B.S. Thesis. Smith, *Harley-Davidson*. Reg Kittrelle and Lora Kittrelle, eds., "Women Who Ride," *Thunder Press*. 5-5 (August 1996). 3. Reg Kittrelle, "2000 Surprises: Forget All You Know About Softails," *Thunder Press*. 8-5 (August 1999). 1.

<sup>103</sup> Kieffner, participant reflection, 1983-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008. Carr, interview. Whitedog, interview. Sabrina Smith [pseud.], E-mail to author, October 12, 2000. 9:01 a.m. Maria Bautista, "History of the Sirens," E-mail to author, October 15, 2000, 6:56 p.m. Women's International Motorcycle Association, "History of the Women's International Motorcycle Association." Internet.

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<http://209.239.48.201/openingpage.html>. 1999. 1-3.

<sup>104</sup> Sharon and Bobbi, interview by author, Phoenix, Arizona, 21 February 2001. Sharon and Bobbi were musicians for "Girls Gone South" rock band. Judy Kochel, E-mail to author. 16 March 1999, 9:18 a.m. Zack, interview. Zack, "Raw Thunder Newsletter," (October, 1998), 1-4. Zack, "Raw Thunder Newsletter," (June, 1998), 1-2. Zack, "Raw Thunder Newsletter," (January, 1999), 1-7. Nancy Paganelli, "The Lightning Behind... 'Raw Thunder'," *Thunder Press*. 7-12 (March 1999). 56. Nancy Paganelli, "Fat Boys Bisbee Run: Raw Thunder Rumbles Across Arizona," *Thunder Press*. 7-9 (December 1998). 62.

<sup>105</sup> John H. Porter, "The In Wheels," *Mademoiselle*. 62 (February, 1966), 160-161, 185-188. See also Robert Hughes, "Myth of the Motorcycle Hog," *Time*. 97-6 (February 8, 1971), 74. See also Reilly, interview. Ding, interview. Spider [pseud.], "Birmingham Biker Shot by Motorist," *Easyriders*. 4-20 (April, 1974), 4. Elliott Fried, "A Biker Forsees his Death," *Easyriders*. 4-20 (April, 1974), 21.. R. Orren, "Ride to Oblivion," *Easyriders*. 4-21 (June, 1974), 15. Weird Willie [pseud.], "Requiem for an Individualist," *Supercycle*. 3-5 (July, 1979), 26-28. Ray Gwyn Smith, "The Goddess Rides a Harley." *Santa Cruz Express*, 6 December 1984, 12. Roger T. Young, "Road," *American Motorcyclist*. 50-6 (June 1996): 48-49.

<sup>106</sup> Hughes, "Myth of the Motorcycle Hog," 74.

<sup>107</sup> Smith, "Goddess Rides a Harley," 12.

<sup>108</sup> McKnight, interview.

<sup>109</sup> Whitedog, interview.

<sup>110</sup> "Morning, Jo, Fixing Your Tire?" 117. *Bicycling World* (April 11, 1908), 88 and *Motorcycle Illustrated* (April 1908), 128 as cited in Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 63. Burton, "Most Unpopular Men on the Road," 130. Andrew R. Boone, "How They've Halted Delinquency on Wheels," *Popular Science*. 166-3 (March, 1955), 99-102, 258, esp. 100. Jerry Smith, "Mountains From Molehills," *American Rider*, November 1993, 46-50. Chris Bavasi, interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 30 October 1998. Bavasi was the Mayor of Flagstaff, Arizona and a former police officer of that town. Kraske, interview. Peeler, interview. Reilly, interview.

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<sup>111</sup> Jamal McGrath, interview by author, Tape recording, Gallup, New Mexico, 15 October 2000. Kraske, interview. Reilly, interview. Problem Child, interview. Whitacre, interview via e-mail. Whitacre, interview with tape-recording. Smith, interview. Cuz Cordova [pseud.], interview by author, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 14 October 2000. Cordova was President of the Bandidos MC, Albuquerque Charter. Paco Ortiz [pseud.], interview by author, Flagstaff, Arizona, 20 September 2000. Ortiz was an officer of the Hells Angels MC, Arizona Nomads. Ding, interview. Elliott, "Plight of the Cyclists," 88-89. Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "California Tells DOT Where to Get Off!" *Easyriders*. 4-24 (November, 1974), 54. Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders*. 8-19 (October 17, 1973). Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders*. 7-21 (November 13, 1972). Fred M. H. Gregory, "Washington Report: More MPG in the 1980s and a Rebuff for the DOT," *Motor Trend*. 28 (April, 1976), 16. Russ Brown, "A Few Helmet Facts." 1984. Flyer. Bish, "A History of ABATE of California."

<sup>112</sup> Reilly, interview. McGrath, interview. Miller, interview. Smith, interview. Bavasi, interview. Officer Smith [pseud.] and Deputy Jones [pseud.], interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 7 October 1998. Smith and Jones were Arizona GITEM officers. Problem Child, interview. Kraske, interview. Cordova, interview. Ortiz, interview. Ding, interview. Whitacre, interview via e-mail. Whitacre, interview with tape-recording. Yates, *Outlaw Machine*, 133. Gary L. Kieffner, Participant reflection, 1978-1988. Elliott, "Plight of the Cyclists," 88-89. Rich Taylor, "Big Brother: Are His Eyes and Ears Upon Us?" *Cycle*. 30 (December, 1979), 105-108, 113-115. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 119-169, 206-227. Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984).

<sup>113</sup> Jamal McGrath, interview by author, Tape recording, Gallup, New Mexico, 15 October 2000. Ibid. Kraske, interview. Reilly, interview. Problem Child, interview. Whitacre, interview via e-mail. Whitacre, interview with tape-recording. Smith, interview. Cuz Cordova [pseud.], interview by author, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 14 October 2000. Cordova was President of the Bandidos MC, Albuquerque Charter. Paco Ortiz [pseud.], interview by author, Flagstaff, Arizona, 20 September 2000. Ortiz was an officer of the Hells Angels MC, Arizona Nomads. Ding, interview. Elliott, "Plight of the Cyclists," 88-89. Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "California Tells DOT Where to Get Off!" *Easyriders*. 4-24 (November, 1974), 54. JSC. Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders*. 8-19 (October 17, 1973). JSC. Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders*. 7-21 (November 13, 1972). JSC. Fred M. H. Gregory, "Washington Report: More MPG in the 1980s and a Rebuff for the DOT," *Motor Trend*. 28 (April, 1976), 16. Russ Brown, "A Few Helmet Facts." 1984. Flyer. Bish, "A History of ABATE of California." Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders*. 4-20 (April, 1974), 54-56. JSC. Bish, "A History of ABATE of California." Bish, "Brief History of Biker's Rights in America," 1-2. Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "Street Legal Chopper Circa 1973?" *Easyriders*. (October, 1971) and Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "ABATE Membership in 44 States have Started Working Toward Our Freedom of the Road," *Easyriders*. (February, 1972) as reproduced in ABATE of Minnesota, "History of ABATE," Internet. <http://ic.owatonna.mn.us/~hjknip/abate%20History.htm>, 1998. 1-5. Yates, *Outlaw Machine*, 133.

<sup>114</sup> Bish, "A History of ABATE of California." Bellows, interview. Carr, interview. Kraske, interview. McAlister, interview. Miller, interview. Kimzey, "ABATE," (November 13, 1972). Marvin L. Stone, ed., "Make Motorcyclists Wear Helmets?" *U.S. News and World Report*. 83-3 (July 18, 1977), 39-40. Gregory, "Washington Report," 16. Arizona Revised Statute 28-964. ARS former 28-964: Laws 1973 Ch. 146, 46. Laws 1976 Ch. 57, 2. "Individual Liberty versus State Police Powers," *Law Review and Journal Commentaries* (Arizona) 18-207 (1976). See also *WESTLAW* Topic 48A. Also, *Warfel v. Cheney*, (App. 1988) 157 Ariz. 424, 758 P.2d 1326. Yeager, *How to Be Sexy*, 10-11.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. Cordova, interview. Ed Kramer, Interview by author, February 27, 2001, Flagstaff, Arizona. Tape recording. Kimzey, "ABATE," (October 17, 1973). Kimzey, "ABATE," (November 13, 1972). Brown, "A Few Helmet Facts." Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1989. Bish, "Brief History of Biker's Rights in America," 1-2. Gregory, "Washington Report," 16. By the late 1970s, California was the only state that had never had a mandatory helmet law while several states—including Texas and Colorado—had recently repealed theirs.

<sup>116</sup> K.T., interview.

<sup>117</sup> Although a similar federal helmet "blackmail" crossover requirement appeared in the early 1990s, it was again repealed in 1995 after massive lobbying. After this second federal repeal, Arkansas, Texas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Florida, and Pennsylvania joined the other states in restoring freedom of choice for adult riders. However, California, the only state that never had a helmet law, gave in to federal pressure and enacted a universally

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applicable helmet law in the early 1990s. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, "Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell Before the Surface Transportation Subcommittee US House of Representatives Tuesday, May 4, 1993," *Easyriders*. 244 (October, 1993), 34-37. Problem Child, interview. Barbara Chapman, personal assistant to former Texas Governor Ann Richards, Telephonic conversation with author, 13 October 2000, 9:30 a.m. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1982-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001. Bill Bish, "Arkansas & Texas Celebrate Helmet Freedom!" *Aid to Injured Motorcyclists / National Coalition of Motorcyclists Newsletter*. 98-1 (1998), 2. Bobbi Hartmann, "The Texas Story," *Masterlink*. 6-6 (June, 1998), 3. Billie Daman, ed., "Kentucky Enacts Modified Helmet Law," *Masterlink*. 6-3 (April, 1998), 1. Bill Bish, "Newsflash this just in...Kentucky Repeals Helmet Law!" *Aid to Injured Motorcyclists / National Coalition of Motorcyclists Newsletter*. 98-1 (1998), 2. Steve Zimmer, "TEA 21: It's Another Win," *MRF Reports*. 8-4 (July / August, 1998), 1, 4. Bill Bish, "Congress Approves Federal Highway Bill: Motorcyclists Win Again!" *National Coalition of Motorcyclists Newsletter*. (99-1) 1999., 2. Bob Illingworth, "Minnesota Approves Motorcyclist Anti-discrimination Legislation," *Masterlink*. 6-5 (May, 1998), 1. Jim Silk, ed., "Louisiana Modifies Helmet Law," *Masterlink*. 7-8 (August, 1999), 1. Bill Bish, "Louisiana Repeals Mandatory Helmet Law!" *Aid to Injured Motorcyclists / National Coalition of Motorcyclists Newsletter*. 00-1 (2000), 2. Jay Huber, "Kentucky Repeals Insurance Requirement," *MRF Reports*. 10-3 (May / June, 2000), 1-2. Teresa Hepker, ed., "Florida," *MRF Reports*. 10-3 (May / June, 2000), 2. Steve Piehl, "President Clinton Visits H-D Employees in York, Pa.," *Enthusiast* (Winter 2000), 8. Tony Brownsword, "Texas Motorcycle Rights Association Free Information Packet," Booklet, (2001). 3. (24 pp.) Rick Gray, "Rider Fatalities Plummet by 85% as Freedom Takes Effect," *MRF Reports*. 11-3 (May / June, 2001), 1, 3. Beth Kassab, Gary Taylor, Sean Mussenden, and Bill Gannon, "Fewer Motorcyclist Fatalities at Daytona After Repeal of Florida's Helmet Law," *MRF Reports*. 11-3 (May / June, 2001), 2. Bish, "Brief History of Biker's Rights in America," 1-2. Diann Sandlin, E-mail to author and other recipients. April 15, 2001, 6:54 p.m. Sandlin was the editor of the *ABATE of New Mexico Newsletter*. Smith, *Harley-Davidson*. Jane Dee Hull, "Office of the (Arizona) Governor Proclamation: Motorcycle Awareness Month," 20 April 1999. Marilyn R. Young, Mayor of Yuma, "Proclamation: Motorcycle Awareness Month," 15 April 1998. Arizona and New Mexico were two of the five states to repeal or liberally modify handlebar height laws at the turn of the twenty-first century. In 1998, the Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-first Century (TEA21) was enacted, including every provision that motorcyclist organizations had requested. In 1998, Minnesota made it illegal for businesses to discriminate against motorcyclists.

<sup>118</sup> Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1989. Lou [Barf] Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders* (May 1976), 57. Ann Ferrar, *Hear Me Roar: Women, Motorcycles, and the Rapture of the Road*. (New York: Crown Trade Paperbacks, 1996), 46-48, 50. Wolf, *Rebels*, 131.

<sup>119</sup> K.T., interview.

<sup>120</sup> Mike Sanford, ed., *Modified Motorcycle Association Newsletter* (1985). 1. "Beemer" George Canevit, Division Manager, *Bullshead* (May, 1988) Newsletter of MMA Division IV, 1. Barb Hughett, "ABATE of Arizona, Inc. 3rd Quarterly Meeting - Board of Directors - September 8, 1996," *Masterlink*. 4-10 (October 1996), 5. Bill Goodwin, ed., "ABATE of Arizona Local Chapters," *Masterlink*. 4-10 (October 1996), 20. Bobbi J. Hartmann, "Fw: Update on Court Case," E-mail to ABATE of Arizona List Server. 13 November 2000, 3:32 a.m. Bobbi J. Hartmann, "Discrimination Bill," E-mail to ABATE of Arizona List Server. 13 November 2000, 3:53 a.m. Bobbi J. Hartmann, "Legislator Luncheon," E-mail to ABATE of Arizona List Server. 26 February 2001, 6:08 p.m. Diann Sandlin, ed., "ABATE of New Mexico, Inc. State Officers," *ABATE of New Mexico, Inc. Newsletter* (October 2000), 12. Diann Sandlin, ed., "ABATE of New Mexico Chapter Coordinators," *ABATE of New Mexico, Inc. Newsletter* (October 2000), 12. Yavapai County ABATE, "Yavapai Chapter Ballot," 1996. Deborah Butitta, "TBFS," E-mail to ABATE of Arizona List Server. 19 July 2000, 4:56 p.m. Judy Silva, "Freedom Fighters Unite!" *Masterlink*. 9-2 (February 2001), 1. Lisa Whitacre, "Jerome Bike Jamboree Brings Thousand\$ into Community," *AriZona Rider*. 2-11 (November 2000), 1. Teresa Hepker, ed., "Motorcycle Riders Foundation," *MRF Reports*. 9-6 (November / December, 1999), 19. Modified Motorcycle Association of Arizona, Inc. (MMA-AZ), "MMA-AZ Motorcycle Rights Task Force Traffic Stop Report Form." Copies of documents filled out as the results of traffic stops returning homeward from the Arizona State Legislature, 21 January 2001. Bruce [Meltdown] Newkirk, "Introducing the Motorcycle Rights Task Force...Zero Tolerance Level," (*Modified Motorcycle Association of Arizona Motorcycle Patriot* (July 1998), 1, 3. Women Make Movies, "FWD: Welcome!" E-mail to Barbara Bustillos-Cogswell. Forwarded 12 October 2000, 8:27 a.m. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1982-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>121</sup> Hartmann, interview. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1996-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008. See also McDonald-Walker, *Bikers*, 66-70. Wolf, *Rebels*, 131-132.

<sup>122</sup> Trisha Yeager, *How to Be Sexy With Bugs in Your Teeth* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1978), 1, 3, 94.



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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 2-5, 94, 103. Gail DeMarco, *Rebels With a Cause: We Ride the Harley* (Santa Rosa, California: Squarebooks, 1994), 120, 129-131.

<sup>125</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999), 19-113, 121-225.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BIKERS, ETHNICITY, AND RACIAL CONSTRUCTS IN THE BORDERLANDS

This present chapter is about race, ethnicity, and motorcycling in the Mexican-U.S. borderlands with an emphasis on Black bikers. I intend to present a chronological, inclusive narration of bikes and some individuals who rode them. Secondly, I demonstrate that a widespread societal discrimination against persons of color was compounded by their individual transportation choices and that such motorcyclists were negatively impacted by a larger marginalization of riders as a social group, which occurred over the course of the twentieth century. Categories of race and extreme mobility, in tension with middle- and upper-class, non-riding society from the 1910s through the 1980s, inform such marginalization. The chapter looks at societal racial and transportation-based discrimination against bikers. Third, it examines African American and other motorcyclists' resistance against such marginalization. This is a survey of racism, extreme mobility, resistance, and social interaction from the 1920s to the end of the century. The chapter deals mostly with racial relations and riders who rode in the Greater Borderlands on the United States side of the border, while barely considering the border zone in México due to current source limitations.

Quintard Taylor's 1998 monograph *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* demonstrates how people of African descent have continually lived, resisted, struggled, survived, and cooperated with other peoples in the U.S. / Mexican Borderlands for centuries. Esteban de Dorantes traveled and visited the Río Grande Valley in 1539, and for hundreds of years, many Blacks worked there as conquistadors,

*soldados*, “Buffalo Soldiers,” and guards as well as in non-military occupations including *vaqueros* and slaves.<sup>1</sup> According to Taylor, racism and de-facto segregation existed in the West; however, Black people believed that equality, opportunities, and prosperity was available and possible in Western regions.<sup>2</sup>

### **Baker Washington, Francis Peeler, and Bessie Stringfield**

Booker T. “Baker” Washington, Jr., born in 1885 the eldest son of the famous educator and reformer, was possibly the first person with African ancestry to have ridden motorcycles in the United States or México. Letters in the archival collections of his father’s papers indicate that Baker not only rode at least one motorcycle that Booker Sr. bought for him, but that he was not at all like his father. Baker eventually married and settled down, yet it is unclear whether he gave up the bike.<sup>3</sup>

The Washingtons and the world that they lived in were far to the east, however. The arid portion of the border zone and other regions of the Greater Borderlands were much different and have a different history from that of the eastern United States. Francis Peeler, who was a soldier stationed at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, was the earliest known African American motorcyclist in the Borderlands, riding there from the early 1920s until 1936. Huachuca’s legacy at the time was primarily related to the Buffalo Soldiers, for that was where African American horse cavalry units had been stationed.<sup>4</sup> Even so, when the military officers discovered that Peeler knew how to use a typewriter, they assigned him to an administrative position in a headquarters on the main part of post.

Such a privileged station within the military—compared to that of most African American troops—decreased Peeler’s isolation from the outside world and made it easier for

him to have a privately-owned vehicle on, or near, the installation. Peeler rode various motorcycles, including an Excelsior, an Indian Scout, and an Indian Chief with sidecar throughout Arizona and to and from places like Albuquerque and El Paso for twelve years, until 1936. If those dozen years were contiguous, then he started to ride around 1924. However, it is possible that he may have started riding as early as 1919 when military surplus motorcycles first became plentiful and inexpensive.<sup>5</sup>



Plate 6. Francis Peeler and his family. Photo courtesy of Francis Peeler.

While riding in and around El Paso, Peeler was a regular target for police attention. More of a small town than the big city that it later became, the city had a small police force in the 1920s. The few officers in town played an on-going game of cat-and-mouse with fast-paced, street-scorching motorcycle riders.<sup>6</sup> Trying to avoid further detainment, he came up with a plan. As Peeler explained, years later:

In El Paso, this old captain used to catch me all the time. And I left El Paso going up to Albuquerque and I challenged him to a race. [The road out of town followed present-day Mesa Street, more or less.] And I said, "Look, I'm gonna give you a chance to catch me. I'm giving you two miles." That last straight stretch coming out, the Texas Line and New Mexico. I knew it was if I went down to New Mexico, they wouldn't bother me, coming across. And I told him that. And I said, "I'm gonna give you a challenge. I'll give you one mile to catch me. You get past me a good mile. Now when you see me coming around that curve, I come in around like I head up that straightaway, [you] stop. And you got two miles from where you start. I'll try," I said, "and I want you to catch me."

Shoot. I saw him when he pulled out, and when I pulled out, before he got the first mile, and he said when he got up there to the state line, he stopped and he told them guys, and he told the New Mexico cops up there and some of them El Paso cops up there, too. They went up there. And he said, "When that thing passed by me, it sounded like somebody dropped a load of lumber. Whap!" Just like somebody dropped a whole load of lumber right there. Whap! Just like that to you. Whap! Run right by him. Whew! That thing was vanished! He said, "How fast was that thing running?" I said, "About a hundred and twenty." I said, "The damned thing was guaranteed to do a hundred and fifty 'til you hold it on the ground." But you couldn't hold it down. A hundred and twenty-five is the best I ever got out of it.<sup>7</sup>

Peeler mentioned that there were fewer than five other African American riders in all of Arizona who rode during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>8</sup> Bessie Stringfield, an African American contemporary of Peeler, rode a motorcycle along some of the same roadways during those same years, though no one knows if they ever met. Born in Jamaica, she was raised by an Irish American woman in Boston. Bessie Stringfield may have been inspired by stories about Bessie *Coleman*, an early civil rights activist who was not only the first internationally licensed Black aviator but also the first female African American to fly an airplane and whose life mission was to influence and train African Americans to become pilots. Coleman died in an aircraft accident in 1926.

One year later, sixteen-year old Bessie *Stringfield* started riding motorcycles. The first bike she owned was a 1928 Indian Scout and she hit the open road at age nineteen on her first of twenty-seven Harley-Davidsons, crisscrossing the US eight times. The question of whether Coleman inspired Stringfield to take up motorcycling is inconclusive. No scholars or other

writers have discussed these two individuals in relation to each other, even though they had the same first name and were contemporaries. As a teenager, Stringfield must have known about the famous Black female aviator who performed in air shows all over the country. Stringfield was less than one generation younger than Coleman. Aircraft were far more expensive than motorcycles and the option of a two wheeler may have been a viable second-best choice for a young girl. On the other hand, many people rode bikes not to make a statement in response to racial and gendered norms but simply because they liked to ride. Therefore, it is equally plausible that Stringfield started riding just to have fun. Neither of these two possible explanations of her intent can be proven and one cannot assume that Coleman provided the inspiration.<sup>9</sup>

Stringfield typically decided on a riding destination by tossing a penny onto a large map of the United States. She called the coin-flipping exercise taking “a penny tour.” She usually toured the continent alone. When riding in the old South—the former Confederacy—and stopping for the night, she would first locate the “colored” section of town. Whenever there were no beds available, she slept on her bike in gas station parking lots. When asked later whether she had been concerned about her safety, Stringfield answered, “I never was afraid. I don’t know why. Never was. Oh boy, I was something! What I did was fun and I loved it!”<sup>10</sup>

She also did a four-year hitch as a civilian dispatch rider in the army during World War II, delivering messages and documents between military bases in the U.S. Stringfield was not assigned to an all-female motorcycle dispatch unit; instead, she was the only female in her unit due to a policy of racial segregation in the military. After the war, she moved to Miami, started the Iron Horse Motorcycle Club (Iron Horse MC), and kept on riding all over the continent. Stringfield’s club accepted men and women of any ethnic or racial background.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps further discussion of Stringfield is somewhat inapplicable, for even though she rode in U.S. southwestern states, Miami was still a long way from Texas and not much is known about her penny tour journeys. Earlier clubs such as the Hounds MC of El Paso, made up of riders who were of Anglo and Mexican ethnic backgrounds, were integrated in the Borderlands from at least the 1920s and possibly earlier.<sup>12</sup> However, after World War II it was African American bikers who founded or made up much of the membership of several new clubs and associations that formed in the Greater Borderlands.

### **Race, Ethnicity, Transportation, and the FAM**

The marginalization of racialized riders should be considered within the contexts of both the centuries-old racialization and subordination of people of color and the general marginalization of bicyclists and motorcyclists that had occurred since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> For example, when the US Army's "Colored" 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry (commanded by two white officers) rode as a unit of bicyclists, field testing Spalding Bicycles for two thousand miles from Missoula to St. Louis in 1897, they encountered notable adverse racial prejudice when they reached Missouri. When they stopped there to camp one night, a farmer asked them—more than thirty years after the Civil War had ended—whether they were Union or Confederate. Receiving the answer, "Union, I suppose," the farmer then grudgingly told them that they could set up camp over by the pigsty.<sup>14</sup>

Booker T. Washington, Sr. was concerned about his motorcycle-racing son "Baker" arousing too much jealousy or discontent from the white public or the police. His bike had a powerful motor and he rode it fast. The elder Booker T. did not want his son to appear rebellious or to stir up any negative publicity.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, Baker Washington was not alone. In the early twentieth century, it was not unusual for bikers to operate their machines as fast as they could go. Much more than in the latter half of the century, motorcyclists in the early 1900s were drawn to makes and models that were currently winning at the races.<sup>16</sup> Francis Peeler encountered opposition from police during the 1920s and 1930s that was probably because of “race” as well as for *riding* his bikes. Peeler did not explicitly attribute the causes for his many police stops to the fact that he rode on two wheels (nor to racial factors), even though at least one other source indicates that officers in El Paso detested motorcycle riders in general during those years.<sup>17</sup>



Plate 7. Francisco “Pancho” Villa, Ciudad Juárez. Photo courtesy of the Otis Aultman Collection, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas.



The El Paso officers may have been influenced by a formerly circulated photograph of Pancho Villa mounting a motorcycle.<sup>18</sup> Police targeting of motorcyclists occurred in the Greater Borderlands on the U.S. side beginning shortly after World War I and was a problem for riders for the remaining eight decades of the century. Some El Paso police in the early 1920s obtained motorcycles and started riding so that they would have a better chance of catching the “scorchers” racing their bikes through the city streets. During Prohibition they suspected the bikers of being bootleggers bringing whiskey north from formerly U.S. distillers that had relocated to México.<sup>19</sup>

Before there were many two-wheelers in the borderlands, bicycle and motorcycle riders in the U.S. had responded to various local laws enacted against them and police practices perceived as questionable by organizing politically. The League of American Wheelmen (formed in 1880), followed by the Associated American Motorcyclists (1900) and the Federation of American Motorcyclists (FAM, 1903) opposed municipal bans, the “flying billie,” mandatory equipment and other regulations while promoting the improvement of streets and roadways. The successes of such organizations benefited not only riders but also all road users and people in the US for several years by contributing significantly within the Good Roads Movement and helping to establish reform measures.<sup>20</sup>

Although many riders organized politically through the FAM, the organization unfortunately failed to include African American bikers as members. People of color were certainly interested in motorcycling and some acquired bikes that they learned to ride. However, when they tried to join the FAM, they encountered resistance from some white motorcycle riders. In early 1914 “Mr. Estabrook,” Chairman of the FAM proposed the expansion of membership to include all motorcyclists regardless of race, thus increasing the

movement's potential membership base, political power, and effectiveness. The ugly reactionary response to his initiative, however, reflected the racist attitudes of some motorcyclists of that time, particularly ones who lived in southeastern states. On February 2nd, a derogatory rebuttal appeared in *Motorcycling* magazine. Titled "Sambo and the F. A. M.," it included a drawing in the style of the "Sambo" stereotype: dehumanized caricatures of African Americans, in this article depicted as a Black male-female couple. Their bike was parked a short distance away, as the male approached a white couple mounted on a finer bike. The "Sambo" male, wearing the winged FAM insignia, invited the white couple to come over and meet his wife as they recoiled from his invitation. The article derided Estabrook, claiming that he lived too far away from African American people to know what they were really like and that minorities were free to organize their own, separate and segregated, motorcycle organizations.<sup>21</sup>

Two weeks later, the February 16<sup>th</sup> edition included letters from riders responding to the proposal and rebuttal including two that used the inhumane, infamous "N" word. One of the two was a motorcycle dealer from Knoxville, Tennessee who continued his racial rant claiming that if Harley-Davidsons are sold to African Americans then "white people wouldn't buy the same machine, or any other machine, for that matter, at all." Another white Southern rider from Tampa, Florida echoed the rebuttal. He wrote, "When the F. A. M. refuses to enforce the 'Jim Crow' law, it will lose every member in the South." Yet another respondent, also from a Southern state, wrote that he would discontinue FAM membership if African Americans were admitted.<sup>22</sup>

The remarkable thing about the series of articles and letters in the context of Borderlands motorcycling history is that the FAM was a national MRO, yet all of the

question's communicants were from east of the Mississippi River. All condemnatory letters except for one (from the Northeast) were also from motorcyclists who lived in the formerly Confederate states. There was no response whatsoever from any FAM members or other bikers living in the Greater Borderlands or the West (at a time when thousands of riders lived in California and one Los Angeles club had recently drawn more than 1,000 bikes to an event).<sup>23</sup>

### **The AMA, México, and Social Exclusion**

Although the FAM was succeeded by another Northeastern-based organization, the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) in 1924, the AMA continued the exclusion of African American bikers. It also barred "outlaw" riders and sought to separate bikers that it perceived to be less than desirable from the "good" motorcyclists. The AMA was elitist in its pretensions to preside over all sporting and social motorcycling events as the only sanctioning body.<sup>24</sup> Many riders did not agree with such an organizational stance. In explaining why so many racers and other riders were not members, the AMA President, E.C. Smith said, "No matter what sport, there is bound to be some 'outlaw' doings. Some would rather break the rules and [by-] laws than obey them."<sup>25</sup> The AMA had made artificial distinctions between "good" and "outlaw" motorcyclists (as in acceptable members versus non-members), dividing the community and its own power base. The newly constructed division between the clean-cut and the perceived uncouth bikers eventually acquired a geographical dimension in which the divide between "good" and "outlaw" corresponded mostly to East versus West.<sup>26</sup>

Racial prejudice existed everywhere, even among Borderlands motorcyclists, but society's Jim Crow color line was created among the general non-riding population and it may have infected the developing proto-sport of stock car racing more than older Borderlands

cultural groups such as bikers and aviators. For example, at Love Field just outside of Dallas, Texas, African American Louis Manning had been one of the aircraft mechanics in the 1920s when Bessie Coleman bought an airplane there. One of the white airmen said that whenever white outsiders visited the airfield and stared at Manning, one of the group members usually yelled out, “We’re all black people here!”<sup>27</sup>

A significant amount of discrimination—against Black flyers or Black riders—came from non-aviators and non-bikers. Once when the 74s of El Paso, a multi-ethnic motorcycle club, made a restaurant lunch stop during the late 1940s, the proprietor refused to serve their African American member. Therefore, instead of dining inside, the club members carried their hamburgers outside and ate with their brother in the parking lot. (The place was not designed for outside dining.)<sup>28</sup>

In a similar incident in Southern California, a Black club known as the East Bay Dragons MC stopped—on their way to Los Angeles—at a gas station / hamburger stand to refuel their bikes and themselves. They ordered their burgers to go in an attempt to avoid any problems. Nonetheless, a gang of vigilantes and highway patrol units quickly confronted them. Nearly everyone on both sides was armed. Before conditions deteriorated into a shootout, the California patrolmen offered the Dragons a clear, hassle-free route all the way to the top of the Grapevine under the condition that they line up and ride at high speed without stopping.<sup>29</sup>

The México side of the border was often worse, however. In contrast to North American history and myth, in which rebellion was often interpreted as a virtue and archetypal figures such as Robin Hood, Billy the Kid, Bonny and Clyde, and the mythical Marlon Brando biker characters were antiheroes; Mexicans had no tradition of romanticizing “outlaws.” In

Porfirian México, the motorcycle in popular culture represented not a romantic image of rebellion but *yanqui* economic imperialism.<sup>30</sup>

Those who admired Francisco “Pancho” Villa, a general in the Mexican Revolution who may have also been a motorcyclist, considered him a legitimate leader and hero, not a rebel. In addition to the *yanqui* soldiers who invaded the country to terrorize and hunt him, General Villa and one of his military brigades apparently rode motorcycles, or at least that is the legend. The Mexican Revolution was subsequently seen by many as a successful endeavor that created profound social and political change. Therefore, the bike as symbol (to the extent that it was identified with Villa as well as the *yanquis*) was not able to crystallize into another form in northern México until generations later in the 1960s when it became associated with the counterculture. (See Chapter Three.)<sup>31</sup>

If the motorbike meant anything during the early Revolutionary Era, it meant noise. Indigenous people in the Sierra Nevada Occidentals and around Cañon Cobre may have complained that it made a terrible sound that frightened the animals and could be heard for miles around. Meanwhile, *campesinos* set their garbage out in a row across the roads to dissuade motorcyclists from riding there. Such improvised speed-bump construction tactics failed to dissuade riders from riding but may have resulted in unnecessary injuries, deaths, or property damage as some bikes crashed. The motorcycle represented different things to different peoples.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, the motorcycle in México did not symbolize masculine virility as in the US but effeminate weakness instead, as evident in the emergence and use of the feminine Spanish linguistic form for the word as *una motocicleta*. By the late 1940s in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, the Mexican border town opposite El Paso, serious police harassment could be

averted only if the rider carried a certain well-known local attorney's business card in his wallet. Non-acquaintance with this particular Mexican lawyer precluded most motorcyclists from riding in that city, let alone venturing into the interior of México.<sup>33</sup>

Once in the 1970s when a large pack of (predominantly African American) East Bay Dragons MC, Chosen Few MC, and Defiant Ones tried to ride south from Alta California into Mexicali, a line of Mexican police blocked the border crossing and would not let them enter. Therefore, the pack rolled east into Arizona and then south across the San Luis crossing. The riders drank tequila, partied, and had a good time.<sup>34</sup> Mexican towns were by no means consistent in their responses to Black bikers and other riders, nor were the Mexican Republic's border authorities.

### **Mexican Bikers and Marginalization North of the Border**

Economically, México was not as wealthy as the U.S. and the average worker there could not often afford an expensive motorcycle unlike workers in the north. Even in the 1990s when bikers were considered "cool" or part of *la onda* in México, Mexican motorcyclists, far more than their northern counterparts, had to fabricate replacement parts from scrap and recondition old used parts to be reused.

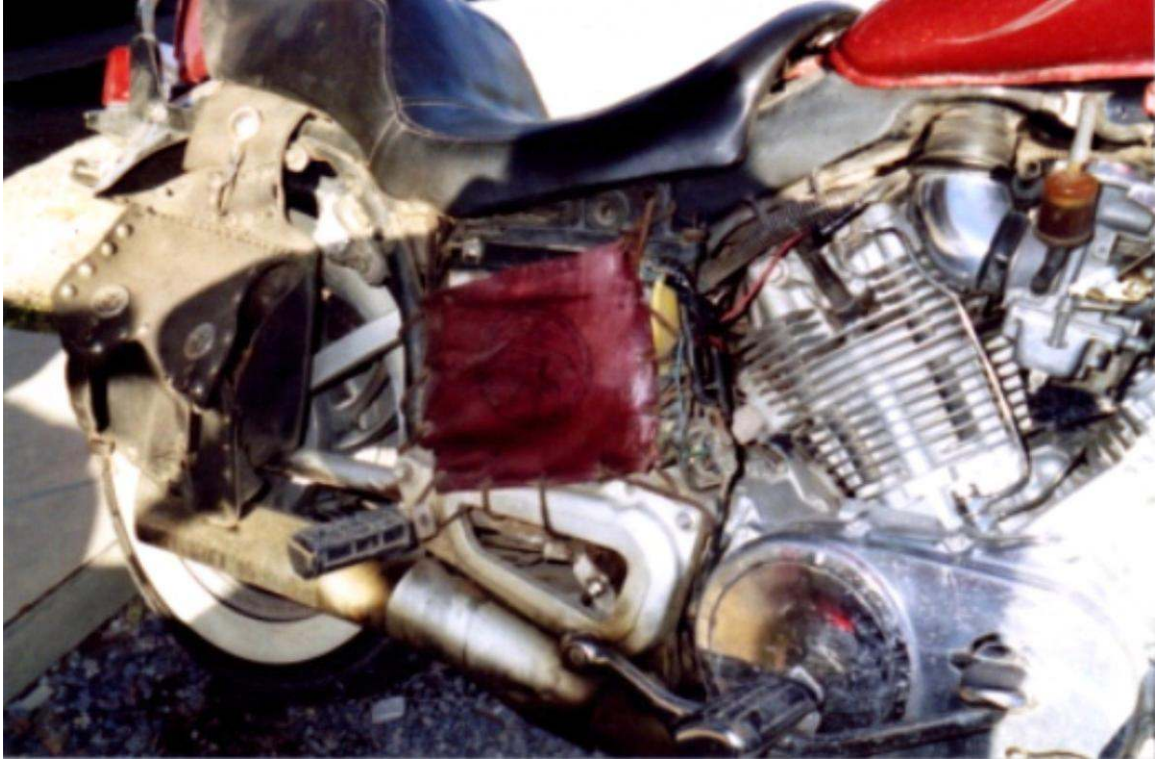


Plate 8. Typical motorcycle, Ciudad Chihuahua, 2007. Notice the fabricated fuel lines, breather tubes, and side cover. Photo by the author.



Plate 9. Another customized motorcycle from Ciudad Chihuahua. Like earlier Alta California choppers in the 1960's, this late twentieth-century chopper utilized a Japanese engine. Photo by the author.

Riders in México took the concept of ingenuity, so often claimed as an exclusively North American virtue, to an entirely new level.<sup>35</sup>

According to native consultants Florentino A. “Lico” Subia (an El Paso biker who lived in Chihuahuita Barrio and rode from 1946 until his death in 2006) and “Guerrero” (the counselor and former president of a major motorcycle club in northern México), clubs in his nation were a very recent phenomenon. With the exception of police *moto* drill teams that originated in the 1950s and races in Chamizal International Park in the 1960s, little long-term sub-cultural formation, over several generations, into any sort of riders’ culture comparative to that of North America and Western Europe occurred in northern México.<sup>36</sup> The Mexican motorcycling culture that emerged in the 1990s, however, developed in a more traditional way that resembled previous 1960s-era U.S. biker communalism rather than the “yuppie”-influenced commercial imitation of biker culture that emerged in the north after release of the low-maintenance Harley Evolution engine in 1984.<sup>37</sup>

While some Mexican riders must have been of African ancestry, it is unknown whether they self-identified as such.<sup>38</sup> Being indigenous is perhaps another matter. Popular cultural wisdom among many North Americans is such that it is believed that Mexican people openly acknowledged that they had indigenous ancestry but that they did not romanticize it. In such a view of their identity they may have said, “Yes, we do. So what?” In Mexican riding culture, however, some clubs embraced and openly proclaimed their Native-ness. They sometimes celebrated it within the artistic designs of their club back-patch.<sup>39</sup> If an indigenous Mexican male biker recognized a stranger from the north as indigenous, he walked up, presented himself, and sometimes gave away a pin from his vest that he now expected the recipient to



wear as a token of brotherhood. He would say, “*Yo soy yaqui*” or “*Soy tarahumara*” or that he was of another indigenous nationality. Indigenous motorcyclists in the Greater Borderlands of México were very proud of who they were and did not withhold their identity.<sup>40</sup>

Mexican bikers did not believe that they had problems with the police as their brothers in the north did. When asked why Mexican police did not harass Mexican bikers, they answered either, “*Las compramos*” or something to that effect. The perception by bikers that they were being harassed existed almost entirely among motorcyclists from the U.S. and primarily on the north side of the border. For example, in the 1940s, an officer on the El Paso Police force, who was reportedly tall with a dark complexion, wrote tickets simply because he did not like bikers. Whenever he saw a bike, he stopped the operator and said, “I’ll tell you why I give you a ticket. I don’t like Harley riders.”<sup>41</sup> From the 1950s through the 1960s and ‘70s, police in El Paso apparently stopped bikers and wrote citations for loud pipes, or sissy bars that were too high with ornaments at the top, or “ape hanger” handlebars. If custom handlebars were more than fifteen inches above the height of the seat, they wrote the ticket.<sup>42</sup>

Unlike much of the United States, police interaction with motorcycle riders in the border zone was usually limited to the occasional traffic fine. However, one El Paso officer, a new hire from Tennessee, investigated and found a Mexican American man who was suspected of breaking into a jewelry store one night and leaving on a motorcycle with some stolen goods. The motorcyclist, who was living in Barrio Chihuahuita at the house of his father Florentino “Lico” Subia, apparently sold the jewelry and then went home. At his father’s home, allegedly without issuing a warning, the officer shot the young man on his father’s driveway, in the back of the head, as the biker was entering the dwelling.

He died instantly. Since the dead man was a veteran, his family requested a plot in the national cemetery in El Paso. The administrators at first refused. After seven days of protest and collective indignation, however, the management relented and provided the entitled benefit.<sup>43</sup>

The Subia case is similar to another Texas incident years earlier in which the family of Félix Longoria was unable to obtain appropriate funerary services due to racism. Longoria had been killed in action during World War II and his body was recovered soon after the war ended. The funeral home in his home town at Three Rivers refused to service his corpse because it serviced “white” customers exclusively and the director did not consider Longoria as being white. Senator Lyndon B. Johnson solved the conflict by obtaining a plot in Arlington Cemetery in Washington, DC. Thus, unlike the earlier Longoria case in eastern Texas, the Scubas in El Paso secured a proper local burial. However, a few days later the grand jury in El Paso refused to indict the officer who shot the young biker.<sup>44</sup>

It is possible that racism and invidious racial discrimination was a factor in the Subia incident. The two historical figures were a police officer who had recently moved from a state that was once a bastion of white supremacy and a Mexican American motorcyclist living in a south El Paso barrio. Racism affected all of North America throughout the twentieth century. Moreover, similar fatal incidents involving bikers occurred during the 1960s and 1970s in other areas of North America.<sup>45</sup> El Paso was not the only Western city to recruit police officers from formerly Confederate states east of Texas. The City of Oakland, California placed recruitment ads in Georgia and Mississippi in order to hire white Southerners to patrol California neighborhoods.<sup>46</sup> A particular form of Deep Southern culture may have been inculcated within police departments in the West and the borderlands.

## **“Mixed” Clubs, the Black Panthers, and the People’s Police**

In his 1967 text *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, Harold Cruse recommended that the new advocates of Black Power of his day develop leadership based on lessons from the history of African American freedom movements. He also wrote that they should promote and appropriate (and base their actions on the foundation of) Black culture and the ethnic African arts. Cruse concluded that group culture and identity was the base that needed to be built upon: “the residual stratum of Negro ethnic group consciousness.”<sup>47</sup>

Applying the Cruse thesis to the biker community, cultural leadership and cultural nurturing may need to be practiced so that the larger power structure does not crush civil rights. Without genuine culture, neither motorcyclists nor African Americans would have had a leg to stand upon. Accordingly, integration (whether of Black with White or of riders with citizens) may have been an illusive and inadequate substitute. Cruse wrote:

The greatest [American] myth is that of democratic capitalism, which has never existed for all groups in America. Minorities could not have won their way into different levels of economic status if it were not through some form of group economics—either capitalistic or cooperative.<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps all of the motorcyclists who have advocated “bikers helping bikers” over the past twenty years by establishing and maintaining economic islands (preferring to shop at listed rider-owned businesses and services over those owned by non-riders) have been advocating a healthy plan.

Cruse’s vision was not the only one. Three years before Tobie Gene Levingston and the Zimmermans published *Soul On Bikes: The East Bay Dragons MC and the Black Biker Set* (Levingston’s autobiographical account of the East Bay Dragons MC), photojournalist Barbara Bustillos-Cogswell videotaped some interviews with Levingston, James “Heavy” Evans, and

Melvin “Shad” Shadrick. As readers of the popular Levingston work know, he, Shadrick, and Evans were members of the Dragons and he made a case for interracial harmony in the history of his club and the Hells Angels MC riding in the same city—Oakland, California. However, the book does not tell us that before Evans joined the club he had been the founding member of the Soul Brothers MC, a racially “mixed” club. The autobiography was actually a more refined, edited production of a theme that the three had lived by for years, a theme that the trio had first articulated thoroughly while live in front of Bustillos-Cogswell’s camera in May, 2000.<sup>49</sup> That theme is the unity of bikers regardless of race.

The Bustillos-Cogswell interviews took place at a National Coalition of Motorcyclists / International Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM / ICOM) convention in San Francisco, an annual event that typically drew thousands of riders of every ethnic and racial background representing dozens of confederations and coalitions of (hundreds of) clubs in the US and around the world. Explaining why some members of the East Bay Dragons MC were there, Levingston said:

We want to be part of this organization, you know. We want to know about all the laws that they have going against the bikers, you know. That’s what we’re here for, representing [our club].... Because we want to know about these different states, [so] that when we ride through [we] cross it. That’s what we want.<sup>50</sup>

These leaders in Black motorcycling illuminated what is known about race and ethnicity in Greater Borderlands motorcycling from the 1950s through the end of the century. They also highlighted problems that motorcyclists of color had both inside and outside of California, internal club safety regulations, Levingston’s relationships with musician Carlos Santana and Ralph “Sonny” Barger of the Hells Angels MC (HAMC), and how much volunteer work the Dragons did for the larger community. According to *Soul On Bikes*, the Black Panthers provided food and services for children and people in Oakland. The earlier,

more spontaneous interviews, however, show that the Dragons continued the charitable work after the Panthers' untimely decline.<sup>51</sup>

The interviewed leaders indicated that race was irrelevant *within* their regional motorcycling community from the 1950s through the end of the 1990s and that bikers had to stick together regardless of race, ethnicity, or club membership, due to tremendous institutional and societal discrimination against them. In the words of Heavy Evans, "At that time, we were having such a hard time riding, until we all had to band together."<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, clubs formed informal coalitions with each other *as motorcyclists*, in the face of perceived adverse power centers such as the police or the prison industrial complex. Throughout the Borderlands and Alta California, it was customary for thirteen or fifteen bikers to ride together in groups to deter or protect the group from perceived harassment.<sup>53</sup>

Even so, some clubs including the East Bay Dragons MC and the Iron Horses of El Paso, among others, did not experience any difficulties with the police while riding in their *home* cities because the club organized so many events that raised funding for causes and groups that the larger community deemed worthy.<sup>54</sup> Underground newspapers of the period, the Levingston book, and other sources show that countercultural and progressive activists and groups during the late 1960s and early 1970s attempted the building of political coalitions with both racialized groups and riders. Hippies also interacted closely with motorcyclists and appropriated biker language, hairstyles, and clothing, while various groups and Vietnam anti-war activists like Allen Ginsberg tried to draw motorcycle clubs into the counterculture. The HAMC Frisco Chapter's work as "the People's Police" in Golden Gate Park is legendary.<sup>55</sup>

Tobie Gene Levingston claimed that the Black Panther Party wanted the East Bay Dragons MC, the Rattlers, and the HAMC as political allies and Elaine Brown's autobiography

*A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* seems to support the idea that the Party sought interracial coalition. Brown writes that when she ran as a candidate for the Oakland City Council, she received the endorsements of all major unions representing all racial groups, for example.<sup>56</sup> While extant evidence of an inter-subcultural or interethnic social trend may be specific to cities such as Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles or Austin, one suspects that similar affinities existed in other large Greater Borderlands cities that had significant young progressive populations.<sup>57</sup>

### **Constructions of Division, Big D Watson, and ABATE**

Even while activists were attempting to draw motorcyclists into the youth cultural and anti-war movements, others were circulating rumors that bikers were working with police in opposition to African Americans. An article in a 1965 Democratic Party newsletter interpreted by the *Berkeley Barb* told a story about Black Oakland students protesting cafeteria conditions and how city police suppressed the protest. Accordingly, the officers did not bother to question a group of Oakland Chapter HAMC members milling around close by. It stated that some Hells Angels had recently cut two African Americans in a barroom fight and a member had run down a dog with his motorcycle, but that the police had done nothing about the incidents. The article also reported that the HAMC clubhouse had recently burned down, subtly suggesting that extralegal forms of justice had occurred.<sup>58</sup> Tobie Gene Levingston of the East Bay Dragons MC, Sonny Barger, and other authors, however, wrote that such stories were falsifications manufactured for political reasons.<sup>59</sup>

The imagined potential for friction between African Americans and riders in the late 1960s was reflected in the cinematography of the period. Black individuals fight against white

“biker gangs” in *Shanty Tramp* and in *Savages From Hell*, two films directed by Joseph G. Prieto in 1968. Two motorcycle gangs, one white and the other black, fight each other in Anthony M. Lanza’s *The Glory Stompers* released in 1967, *The Black Angels* directed by Laurence Merrick in 1970, and again in 1974 when Matt Cimber directed *The Black Six*.<sup>60</sup> In *Easy Rider*, the now classic 1969 film produced by Peter Fonda and Terry Southern, an African American man appears in the streets of New Orleans during Mardi Gras. The biker character Billy and the Black man accidentally bump into each other on a crowded sidewalk as they are walking in opposite directions. They stop and look at each other apprehensively for a couple of seconds, then continue on their respective trajectories. Although the scene was very brief, *Easy Rider* is worth mentioning because, at the time this Cannes award-winning film was released, it played in theaters for over a year and was influential both within motorcycling culture and in its representation of “bikers” for dominant society.<sup>61</sup>

By the early 1970s commercial and other special interests in forty-nine states were able to enact mandatory helmet laws, much to the chagrin of motorcyclists. In response to the enforcement of these new state laws and what was believed to be increasing levels of police brutality and other forms of harassment, the younger bikers became politicized. By the early 1980s, if not earlier, riders of color were involved in the struggle for bikers’ rights through the ABATE organizations and other regional motorcyclist rights organizations (MROs). For example, when I became involved as a member of the movement in 1982 in Santa Cruz, California, motorcyclists of several ethnicities were politically active in my Modified Motorcycle Association (MMA) district including African American riders. (The MMA was similar to ABATE with the same goals but more hierarchical and was organized according to legislative districts instead of “chapters.”)



Plate 10. Dennis “Big D” Watson. Photo courtesy of ABATE of New Mexico.

ABATE of New Mexico’s Political Action Coordinator was an African American biker named Dennis “Big D” Watson. Under the leadership of Watson, New Mexican riders were able to not only repeal the state helmet law but also prevent or repeal several local helmet ordinances, abolish the state handlebar height law, revise the Sunland Park Helmet Ordinance to align with state law and an age restriction (with assistance from the New Mexico Motorcyclist Rights Organization and the Texas Motorcycle Rights Association), and change the Albuquerque Noise Ordinance. In the 1990s, Watson also became an activist in the New Mexico Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs, one of the new confederations that made up a



growing coalition whose primary purpose was to struggle for motorcyclists' rights in the court systems of America and the world.

In the Lone Star State, the chair of the Texas Motorcycle Rights Association from the time it formed in 1994 through today was Sputnik (formerly, Herald Strain), a Cherokee Indian originally from Oklahoma (whose name was legally changed). From the 1970s through the '90s, bikers of many ethnicities and races became politically active out of a collectively perceived necessity. They sought to defend their right to ride in an unencumbered manner.<sup>62</sup>

However, most new African American motorcyclists after the helmet laws were overturned were apathetic and apolitical in relation to riders' rights. Although welcome in the post-countercultural bikers' rights movement, Black motorcyclists in some regions tended to not join. Whether a perception of racism existed within, or in relation to, the MROs cannot be determined without perusal of more sources, particularly more interviews with senior motorcyclists of color who are willing to serve as native consultants. If any apathy by riders of color concerning their rights existed, it could certainly be viewed in the context of a larger lack of concern among the more recent casual recreational motorcyclists as a demographic group. Membership after the 1970s declined and, by the end of the century, only thirteen percent of America's ten million riders were involved in an MRO.<sup>63</sup>

Some African American patch-holding, male-oriented, clubs that fit the AMA's stereotype of the "outlaw" element stayed out of both the AMA (which excluded them) and the new ABATE organizations (which welcomed them<sup>64</sup>). Although One Percenters and patch-holding club members and their leaders agreed with the ABATE political agenda and realized that they were benefiting from such victories, in some states and localities they felt that the ABATEs and other non-club MROs would be more effective if they—as patch holding club

members—stay away. The chief concern within the clubs at the time was that larger societal denigration of patch-holding clubs was so prevalent that their mere presence among the independent MRO motorcyclists would negatively influence their political effectiveness.<sup>65</sup> Thus, club bikers located prejudice not within the community of motorcyclists but within larger society and among the non-riding politicians that the ABATEs were forced to deal with.

### **Productions of Power-knowledge and Control**

Governmental agencies noticed such apparent divisions within the world of motorcycling as the clubs and the MROs sometimes tended to stay away from each other. Some of the agencies failed to understand such cleavages but wrote and published documents about differences among groups of motorcyclists. Peace officers, state officials, and federal agents of the 1960s through the '80s wrote articles, pamphlets, or other documents.<sup>66</sup> After passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, many of these new discourses appear to have deployed the category of race in the interests of power-knowledge and control over riders.

California Attorney General Thomas Lynch's March 15, 1965 report on the "Hell's Angels Motorcycle Clubs" used the category of race selectively in order to portray a few racially integrated, but predominantly white motorcycle clubs as not only criminals but racists. Twenty-six specific, petty criminal incidents were briefly described, including two that apparently involved African American people as victims. One of the two incidents did not appear to be racially motivated. Accordingly, five assumedly white bikers ran into a liquor store to steal some beer and wine, and an African American customer was in their pathway as they sprinted out. The report stated that one of the runners punched the customer in the face when he had gotten into their way, before they ran out with the beverages.<sup>67</sup> Analyzing the

report, it seems that the runner would have punched out any man that stood in his way, regardless of race. After all, the apparent object was to quickly and successfully steal the booze.

The other incident, however, most definitely involved questions of race, ethnicity, and identity. A large group of motorcyclists rode into a gas station parking lot. One male rider, having assumed that a young African American female sitting in a car was Hispanic, tried to talk to her in Spanish. The driver of the car, along with the woman passenger, drove away from the gas station. The bikers apparently chased the car down and damaged it while one attempted to pull the woman out of the car. Some citizens arrested two of the riders who were subsequently convicted.<sup>68</sup>

Governmental agency reports released from the early 1970s through the 1980s seem to have conflicted with other evidence in reference to patch-holding club racial and ethnic characteristics. A 1973 California Department of Justice profile claimed that the Hessians MC and the HAMC were both essentially white. “The Hessians appear to recruit only white members, while the Hells Angels apparently admit small numbers of Mexican-Americans.”<sup>69</sup> Although the author qualified the statement with phrases such as “appear to” and “apparently,” it seems strange and misleading to overlook the HAMC’s Chinese American and Jewish members.<sup>70</sup> In contrast, a 1986 article by Agent Phillip McGuire, which appeared in *The National Sheriff Magazine* and was subsequently republished by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, claimed that all patch-holding clubs were exclusively white, except for the Black clubs. Accordingly, “O[utaw] M[otorcycle] G[ang]’s [sic] allow only white male membership, which is in keeping with their strong white supremacy philosophy. There does exist, however, all black OMG’s. Although small in number, they are equally as violent and

involved in criminal activity as their white counterparts.” McGuire wrote that *all* patch-holding clubs were exclusively white, except for the Black clubs.<sup>71</sup>

Such a claim for organizational racial exclusivity raises more questions concerning race. One may wonder what happened to HAMC’s Mexican American members that I had observed so many times previous to the report’s publication (not to mention its other racial and ethnic minority members that were previously ignored). Such unresolved differences in descriptions of racial demographics between the California Justice Department and ATF reports existed that one wonders which one is correct. Nonetheless, all of the *government* reports issued after passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act were consistent in that whenever they mentioned race they portrayed motorcycle clubs as racist organizations while marginalizing and criminalizing motorcyclists as a social group.

The McGuire report also conflicted with a 1983 anthropological study by Columbus B. Hopper and Johnny “Big John” Moore when considering the question of whether racial philosophies existed within such clubs. The scholarly work stated that they *did not* while the ATF one claimed *otherwise*.<sup>72</sup> According to Hopper and Moore, the patch-holding clubs (inappropriately called “gangs” in the article) were racially segregated but culturally identical. “There are black gangs, white gangs, and Mexican and other Spanish-speaking gangs. Although race does not appear to be important as a creed or philosophical orientation to them, virtually all of the clubs are racially unmixed.” The article went on to describe the various motorcycle clubs throughout the United States including the Dirty Dozen MC of Arizona, the Bandidos MC of Texas, and the Mongols MC of Southern California. Mores, norms, rituals, and other anthropological aspects of clothing, motorcycles, symbolism, and linguistics were

described. They concluded that the subculture combined rebel and separatist values and lifeways.<sup>73</sup>

While the Hopper and Moore article is insightful and accurate in some respects, the claims concerning race perhaps should have been more completely researched. They made a case for segregation within some clubs where it did not exist. These clubs, at the time of their study, had in fact been racially integrated for many years previously, from the HAMC (since the mid-1950s) to the Bandidos MC (1966, immediately when J. W. Rock cofounded it) and the Mongols MC. The MCs reflected the racial demographics of motorcyclists riding in their respective areas. Most Bandidos MC members in the border zone were from *tejano* or *mexicano* families while few members were of other ethnic backgrounds. Of these three clubs in particular, it is likely that only the Mongols MC had African American members at that time, however. A high proportion of African Americans in the general population of Los Angeles resulted in a high number of Black bikers in Southern California and representation in the Mongols MC and other clubs.<sup>74</sup>

The McGuire report went even further than previous documents of the criminal justice genre by advocating a prescribed plan of action to destroy organizations of motorcyclists. He wrote that motorcycle clubs “should be judged on the basis of their membership” and advocated the eradication of the clubs via “the attack on the organization,” “perfected [i.e.: constructed] violations of...statutes,” and the establishment of multi-agency gang task forces.<sup>75</sup> The article’s tone was designed to incite a specific range of responses from the (police professional or bureaucratic) reader. One reads that “American motorcyclists...will never conform to the laws and morals of society.... They have a total disregard for human dignity and the rights of others.” The author urged the cooperation and deployment of “law

enforcement” teams made up of a combination of state, local, and federal personnel.

McGuire’s article contradicted previous governmental policy and publications as well as non-governmental sources.<sup>76</sup>

### **Ethnic and Racial Complexity**

In contrast to deficient government reports and Hollywood B-grade movies, which were based on the brief observations or vivid imaginations of outsiders, the realities of race in Borderlands clubs were much more complex. In El Paso between the 1940s and the twenty-first century, where fewer than five percent of the residents were African American, one of the members of the 74s was Black as were two members of the predominantly Mexican American, multi-ethnic El Paso chapter of the Iron Horses, formed in 1978. The three men were soldiers stationed at Fort Bliss who owned motorcycles.<sup>77</sup>

More African American bikers lived in Southern California than in El Paso. They were members and founders of clubs such as Brothers of the Sun, the Chosen Few MC, Divided Times, the Deuces, LA Rattlers, the Rare Breed, and the Rising Sons. While most of these were exclusively male, at least one—the Rattlers—accepted women as members. By 1957, the top four Black Los Angeles clubs were the Buffalo Riders, the L.A. Devils, the Eagles, and Star Riders.<sup>78</sup>

Along the Coast, new clubs of the late 1940s and 1950s formed into several different racially significant patterns. Some, like the East Bay Dragons MC (established in 1959), were all Black. Others, like the Devils (1957, changing its name to the Defiant Ones in 1959), were what society called a “mixed” club; they were integrated. Some so-called “Black” clubs like the Chosen Few MC (founded by Lionel Ricks in 1959) were actually “mixed” and composed

of various chapters, each of which was either all-Black, all-White, or integrated. The Chosen Few MC also had members that were of Asian and Hispanic ethnicities and sometimes boasted nearly 2,000 members with fifteen chapters throughout the Borderlands. Most of them were Californian with two chapters in Texas, one in Arizona, and a few members in other areas.<sup>79</sup> Other “White” clubs included non-white members.

It is difficult to quantify racial demographics because members and leaders of most groups—including all-female “Black” clubs such as Emotions, Men’s Choice, Most Wanted, Pure Honeys, and Pure Passion—tended to resist being questioned or studied.<sup>80</sup> No racial demographic statistics for motorcyclists appeared in the U.S. Census records or any other governmental or research documents. Moreover, bikers were not “subject” to academic research until very recently.

If I may rely solely on anecdotal and other non-quantitative data as well as my interpretation and application of the sources perused, I would venture to make two statements regarding the racial or ethnic makeup of riders in the Greater Borderlands. First, it is probably safe to say that most, if not all, motorcyclists here before the Mexican Revolution and World War I were individuals that could be called “white” or “Anglo.” The reality of exclusively white bikers changed during or after the military conflicts of the 1910s and is symbolized by the well-known photo of Francisco Villa appearing to mount an Indian Moto Cycle as well as urban legends in México concerning General Villa’s motorcycle brigade.<sup>81</sup>

Secondly, after World War II when bikes became cheaper the class, ethnic and racial makeup of club and non-affiliated riders in the Borderlands seems to have reflected the demographic realities of their respective cities and larger communities as bikes became more affordable. It is, therefore, probably accurate to say that, for much of the century, the class and

racial diversity of clubs and chapters reflected the class, racial and ethnic makeup of their respective non-riding cities and communities where they lived and worked. Inevitably, groups drew their members from the larger populace that they were part of.<sup>82</sup>

Friendships and brotherhood between individuals were both interclub and interracial. Although few testimonials addressing race relations between the clubs exist, the ones that are available indicate the existence of solidarity primarily based on a brotherhood of motorcycling rather than of ethnicity or race. Heavy Evans, founding member of the Soul Brothers MC, said that he:

Started riding in East Bay in 1955. Started riding with Frisco Angels as a friend in 1955; Frank Sadilek was the President, and we was all out of the Rattlers then. Road Captain of Rattlers, so you know I've been a street racer.... I love drag racing in the streets.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, groups of riders were able to ignore or overcome any differences of race or ethnicity that would have bedeviled non-riders. According to Evans:

I started the Soul Brothers in 1967 as a mixed club. I know it wasn't the color of the skin; it's what's in the heart. And I got eight chapters. And we all down for fun, you know. Everybody knows me throughout the Bay Area, Los Angeles. I'm a California boy; everybody knows me throughout Phoenix, yeah....<sup>84</sup>

Such trans-ethnic, trans-racial relationships are perhaps best represented by that of Tobie Gene Levingston, President of the East Bay Dragons MC and Ralph "Sonny" Barger, former President of the HAMC Oakland Chapter, who have been friends since the early 1950s and have promised each other, since they have been around for so long, to serve as a pall bearer to whichever one of the two shall die first. According to Levingston:

I've been in relation with Sonny Barger since, I guess, before he even joined the Angels and we used to drink coffee sometimes, back there on 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Oakland. And we sort of kept that relationship going on for years. And like I told him, one time at our twenty-fifth anniversary, that if I happen to pass before he does, I want him to be a pallbearer at my funeral. And he said, "Well Tobie, I want to do the same thing. Well like if I pass before you, I want you to be one of mine, because we have been around



for too long, you know.” And I said yeah.... We have a lot of good relationships with the Angels. You know, we get along real good with each other in Oakland and everywhere else we go....”<sup>85</sup>

Barger subsequently wrote the foreword for Levingston’s book. They both emphasized that race made no difference within the motorcycling community and that the urban legends about racism among bikers were lies.<sup>86</sup>

It appears that clubs were intimately related to each other—regardless of race—also through mutual support of each other’s dances, parties, or events and a complex bartering system for motorcycle repair parts. Members of different clubs and racial groups committed bold acts of political solidarity with each other such as the time when Barger, fourteen other Hells Angels, and three of their wives were tried and acquitted of federal RICO charges. One day during the nine-month trial, the judge advised Barger to start acting like a defendant. Barger answered that he would start acting like a defendant when the judge starts acting like a judge and the district attorney starts acting like a district attorney. “Until then, fuck you.” The sound of someone in the audience clapping was heard, upon which the judge demanded to know who clapped. A member of the East Bay Dragons MC, who was an amputee with one arm, raised his only hand.<sup>87</sup>

More recently, in the early twenty-first century the Ruff Ryders, a mostly Black sport bike riding association sponsored by a commercial corporation, continued this tradition of solidarity. They hosted high-speed poker runs out of the San Fernando Valley near Los Angeles and joined the El Paso Coalition of Motorcyclists and the West Texas Confederation of Clubs. The Ruff Ryders were one of three predominantly African American clubs in those two social and political organizations. Organized Chaos, another sport bike club and the Buffalo Soldiers MC, a Black veterans club, also became involved. The people who created

such history and were part of the riding culture largely rejected non-biker societal racial notions, demonstrating a sharp contrast to governmental and other discourses. Non-governmental, non-Hollywood sources and participant observations provide little basis for the concept that motorcycle riders were racists.<sup>88</sup>

### **Racism and the Question of Whiteness Theory**

In her 2001 book *Bike Lust: Harleys, Women, and American Society*, anthropologist Barbara Joans emphasizes that each woman who rides must forge her own identity and her own definition of femininity.<sup>89</sup> Joans also points out that many definitions of “racism” exist.<sup>90</sup> She quotes Bradley, an African American motorcyclist who said:

Race tells you where you can and cannot go in this country. When I ride, there are a lot of places as a black man I do not want to go.... But even when we travel together, we are treated differently [by non-riders].<sup>91</sup>

Joans defines racism in terms of exclusion, separation, and the distrust and prejudice that results from being separate. However, Joans also claims that racism was present in the (Bay Area) motorcycling community (the place where she conducted most of her field research) to the same extent that it existed in larger society.<sup>92</sup>

*Bike Lust* is a recent publication based on the anthropological method of participant observation in which the researcher immerses herself within the subject culture for a certain amount of time. Ethnology and cultural anthropology employ effective methods of study that are tremendously valuable in the quest for knowledge about cultures and lifeways. In combination with traditional historical methodology, including the critical examination, study, and problematization of archival, governmental and other documents, much may be learned about race and marginalization. The degree of racism in the Bay Area and in other parts of

California, as well as government agency race-related documents in their historic contexts, may also be reconstructed and analyzed using information gleaned from these records. Old documents are outside the normal scope of anthropology and ethnological or anthropological works have not traditionally included them in their methodologies. Moreover, anthropology often tends to focus on the present while the documents of historical researchers are often found in dusty old places that tell us a biased interpretation of past worlds that no longer exist. There is no right or wrong there; there are only differences among disciplines that may help to illuminate a topic better.

In his 1994 text *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*, Robin D. G. Kelley concludes that politics needs to be redefined according to the ways in which ordinary poor people did things in everyday life, rather than why a few other people were involved in movements, elections, or other such processes. Borrowing from the theories of W. E. B. Du Bois and David Roediger, Kelley defines racism in terms of white blue-collar workers who had a psychological need to feel superior to others.<sup>93</sup> One may add that it was a bizarre and unhealthy psychological need that was satisfied through the embrace and (ab)use of invidious discriminatory practices. Power structures and regimes may have been both institutionally and individually racist if they were directed or operated by individuals, policies, or operating procedures that practiced invidious discrimination.

In further consideration of categories of race, ethnicity, identities, and degrees of integration in the world of motorcycling, the question of whether “white” bikers as a group lost some of the privileges of whiteness the moment when they first threw a leg over the saddle should be considered. In his classic 1957 article “The White Negro (Superficial Reflections on the Hipster),” Norman Mailer concluded that some young white men adopted what they

believed to be the culture, language, and music of African America in their quest to be “cool” and “hip.”<sup>94</sup> Mailer was a journalist who became famous for his unconventional critical views of American society. Forty years later, Neil Foley published *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture*, an academic work in the school of historical whiteness studies founded by David Roediger. Foley describes how South-central Texas from the turn of the twentieth century until the 1930s was an ethnic, racial, and gendered borderlands between the U.S. Southern states, the U.S. Southwest, and México. Racial constructs were malleable and complex.

Foley’s conclusion is that white was not seen as privileged; rather, it was viewed as normative. Whiteness conveyed and provided privilege. He argues that while African American and Mexican field workers in the Texas hill country sought socially recognized whiteness, poor white field workers were in danger of losing the same in the eyes of white elites. According to the author, ethnically Mexican people had long since been racialized as “nonwhites.” Further Mexican immigration rendered the traditional black-white dichotomy inadequate. Foley writes that people who self-identified as “pure blood” white people viewed “Mexican” as a mongrelized breed polluted by Indian blood. Meanwhile, the whiteness of downwardly mobile Anglo tenants was questioned while Mexican and Mexican American individuals attempted to claim whiteness in the pursuit of upward mobility. Elite white landholders called the whiteness of tenant farmers into question denigrating, dismissing and marginalizing them as “white road trash” or the white “scourge.” They constructed that marginal whiteness as a “scourge.”<sup>95</sup>

Similarly, residents of Namiquipa, Chihuahua had earlier attained whiteness in the eyes of Mexican society by hunting Apache people for scalps, according to Ana María Alonso’s

1995 text *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier*. During the Porfirian period, however, they lost recognition of that whiteness when capitalist interests displaced them. Alonso's main thesis is that the Porfirian state created a particular set of gendered identities and thus created community problems related to violence and unjust gender relations. The state restricted personal autonomy in the northern frontier areas of México and, by producing so many revolutionaries that were compelled to avenge their sisters and mothers, created the Mexican Revolution. The author argues that this unjust gendered distinction was unique to the northern areas of the country.<sup>96</sup>

Other scholars that describe unique aspects of the border zone's differences include David E. Lorey, author of *The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century: A History of Economic and Social Transformation*. His conclusion is that the economics of the border zone, in which an industrialized nation interacted with a developing country, and its rich culture, which was neither Mexican nor North American, were unique in the world and entirely new. In reference to race and ethnicity, Lorey writes, "The border society that has emerged over time as a result of massive population relocations is distinct from that of either the United States or Mexico; it is both an amalgam of the two and something entirely different from either."<sup>97</sup>

In consideration of whether whiteness theory is applicable to motorcycling in the Greater Borderlands, it seems unlikely that bikers socially lost any whiteness by riding a motorcycle. The proposition that non-riders viewed bikers as being less white as a result of their riding of motorcycles cannot be proven. A more plausible argument may be that they lost their human-ness in the eyes of non-riders during the times when they mounted the machine thus becoming somewhat unrecognizable in terms of phenotypic distinctions or even human resemblance. The donning of riding goggles, riding gear, and (especially) helmets caused riders

to appear almost insect-like and perhaps made it easy to dehumanize and disrespect them out on the road. Such riding gear was somewhat similar to that of snow skiers, whitewater rafters, or other outdoors enthusiasts. Perhaps the only significant difference between these groups is that motorcyclists practiced their sport in heavily populated public spaces that were dominated by significant numbers of non-riders that were forced to see the bikers in front of them. Riders may not have lost whiteness; rather, they gained marginality. Biker culture was a marginalized subculture.

Road riding gear blurred color boundaries because of not only its tendency to obscure identity but the reality of the riding community's diverse membership. Although post-war biker culture was racially and ethnically integrated in the Borderlands and closely connected to that of "hipsters" and beats and then the West Coast counterculture of the 1960s, they did not socially lose whiteness. By operating motorcycles (whether in a pack or solo), motorcyclists of all backgrounds were dismissed as "scorchers" or "scooter trash" whether they rode in Austin, Yuma, or Oakland. Racial constructs in northern México were even more complex and additional research should be completed before attempting to describe them historically, though one may expect that riding a motorcycle probably did not affect racial or ethnic identities.

### **State Gang Statutes, Race, Transportation, and Resistance**

Governmental documents making claims about rider racial demographics and activities were flawed and did not reflect historical reality very accurately. The malignant legacy of racism, combined with an increasingly complex Foucauldian power structural proliferation of power-knowledge (mentioned further in the conclusion of this dissertation), meant that Black

and other marginalized bikers would face more socio-legal challenges. For example, the State of Arizona enacted perhaps the strongest anti-gang law in the United States in 1994. The legislation had become politically feasible because of Phoenix's proximity to Los Angeles on the I-10 corridor and an imagined threat to its public safety.<sup>98</sup>

The state's new statute was written in such a subjective manner that practically any person within the geographical boundaries of Arizona could theoretically be identified as a gang member. According to the code:

“Criminal Street Gang Member” means an individual to whom two of the following seven criteria that indicate street gang membership apply: (a) Self-proclamation. (b) Witness testimony or official statement. (c) Written or electronic correspondence. (d) Paraphernalia or photographs. (e) Tattoos. (f) Clothing or colors. (g) Any other indicia of street gang membership.<sup>99</sup>

Legal and other professionals knew that most of these seven criteria consisted of undefined, ambiguous words. In addition to the fact that many people had tattoos during the 1990s, criteria (c), (d) and (f), also, were meaningless enough to implicate most people. Moreover, criterion (g) was a “catch all” phrase potentially applicable to anyone.

The Arizona statute was subsequently applied to Mexican American low riders, bikers, and other groups. It allowed the state to apply for large federal block grants that transformed the streets of Arizona. Officers assigned to the newly-formed Gang Intelligence Tactical Enforcement Mission (GITEM) in Flagstaff referred to it as “*The Statute*” and kept copies of it readily available for reference. All the officer in the field needed was two out of seven criteria to apply the gang law.<sup>100</sup>

California also had gang squads.<sup>101</sup> As Tobie Gene Levingston, President of the East Bay Dragons MC, mentioned:

We used to go up in the hills.... way up in the hills and have a picnic. And all of a sudden, our bikers, they'd say, “But Tobie, why in the heck do we go up in there and

hassle with the police and go up in there in rich people's neighborhood, have all kinds of helicopters and police and flying over us.... Let's just do it down here in ["Y-Town"]. So last year we went to ["Y-Town"]. And this year we're going back there and it's going to be a hell of a picnic....<sup>102</sup>

The East Bay Dragons MC moved their annual event to an area where the residents were predominantly ethnic and racial minorities. Thus, gang task forces affected the venues of African American bikers.

While such institutional marginalization does not account for the existence of a separate Black biker culture, riders of many racial and ethnic identities in the 1990s responded to such trends by forming into larger political and legal coalitions that became international in scope. Such groups met together annually at conventions in various cities. "Heavy" Evans, attending the NCOM / ICOM convention, summed up the feeling of many riders:

This is something that's great. I've always wanted, and but never thought I'd ever live to see, something like this.... So I think this is the first step of success of motorcycle riders.... This is something they never thought would ever happen; that we would do this. Because that was the same when they said a mixed club would never work. And I made it work, 'cause I had the biggest mixed club in Northern California. And it's not the color of a person's skin; it's what's in the heart. Everybody's somebody, you know. And that we do. We don't give none; we don't take none, you know. So I don't know no other way that could make me feel any better, than to see all these patch-holders.... to see all bikers together.<sup>103</sup>

Impressions of interracial solidarity, empowerment, and support as expressed by Evans and other Black bikers seem somewhat romanticized. Race and ethnicity in the motorcycling community was certainly more complex than idealistic hopes based on any practice of color blindness. Even so, bikers attending a major MRO convention and interacting with other motorcyclists from around the world would have probably experienced a strong sense of transnational community, if nothing else.

In the 1990s, bikers' rights conventions convened in Phoenix, Prescott, Albuquerque, Houston, Los Angeles, and other Greater Borderlands cities. Local groups such as the West



Texas Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs participated in such events by sending local interclub delegations to NCOM / ICOM annually while other groups such as ABATE sent delegations consisting of its members who had volunteered to attend. While some attended one or two years only, others such as Dennis “Big D” Watson were regular participants and Watson was eventually elected to the NCOM board of directors. Of course, one needed to be free from occupational obligations and tremendous personal financial difficulties in order to attend a convention in a distant city for four days and many who desired to do so were not able to go.

African Americans rode motorcycles throughout the Greater Borderlands for most of the twentieth century. In the context of race and ethnicity, there were far more bikers of color riding in the final decade of the century, compared to the period before the Great Depression. Yet, for most of the century, the interracial and interethnic makeup of riders in many areas of the West reflected the racial diversity of their respective communities. For example, some of the people I have ridden with since becoming a rider in the 1970s were American Indian from various places while many more were of other ethnic backgrounds. Since moving to the border zone, however, most of my fellow travelers in the wind here have been ethnic Mexican bikers. Motorcycling in the Borderlands seems to have been more racially and ethnically integrated than was non-riding society. Borderlands motorcyclists integrated easily based on a common set of values and pursuits. That does not mean that riding culture in the border zone was some kind of colorblind utopia (or that such a world is even desirable) or that racism was absent and a problem specific to other regions. Nonetheless, racism was perhaps more significant within non-riding, outside society and power structures.<sup>104</sup>

Racialized riders were harassed by people and institutions from outside the biking community for the entire time of study and to varying degrees. Such discrimination was

perceived by riders to have been a manifestation of not only racism but also part of a larger, systemic or institutional harassment of motorcyclists as a group. What the history of African American people and of bikers in the Borderlands have in common is discrimination from society. Whether riders of color were subject to a kind of double jeopardy, marginalized by race and by their chosen mode of transportation, remains a matter of conjecture. More comparative and quantitative research needs to be completed. Nonetheless, governmental agencies engaged in discourses that constructed a particular view of Black and other motorcyclists.

African American and other riders resisted a collectively perceived oppression levied against themselves by riding in larger groups, joining MROs to engage political processes, and forming coalitions with each other and with non-riding groups. Bikers failed to publish in order to contest perceived misinformation, however. The size of riding groups and a collective identity and sense of unity tended to become greater over the course of the twentieth century.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, most borderlands bikers with more than a few thousand miles under their belts believed that harassment, profiling, and invidious discrimination existed. Increasingly complex formations of power-knowledge within and among power centers were imagined to have potentially dire consequences for everyone living north of the border. In the next chapter, let us look at examples of Foucauldian deployments of sexuality and the accumulation of power-knowledge in relation to interactions between motorcycling culture and mass cultural imagery as they influence each other over time.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998). See also Carroll L. Riley, "Blacks in the Early Southwest," *Ethnohistory* 19-3 (1972), 247-260. Phillip Thomas Tucker, "Above and Beyond: African-American Missourians of Colonel Alexander Doniphan's Expedition," *Password* 35-1 (Spring, 1990), 133-137. William H. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1967). Kevin Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahuila, and Texas* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*.

<sup>3</sup> Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock, eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers, Volume 6: 1901-2*. assist. ed. Barbara S. Kraft (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 19-20, 61-62, 418, 559-560. Samuel R. Spencer, Jr., *Booker T. Washington and the Negro's Place in American Life*. ed. Oscar Handlin (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), 189. Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 113-116, 120-122. Alan Schroeder, *Booker T. Washington*. ed. Nathan Irvin Huggins (New York: Chelsea House, 1992), 140.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 134, 264. Francis M. Peeler, interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 31 January 2001. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers*. Thomas E. Sheridan, *Arizona: A History* (1995; Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 243.

<sup>5</sup> Peeler, interview.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* John P. MacDonell, "One Law of Nature that's Never Yet Been Formulated in Professorial Gobbledygook: Scooter People Never Change." *Easyriders*. 5-28 (April 1975). 32-33, 70-77. Jim Silk Collection, Mesa, Arizona (hereinafter called "JSC"). This autobiographical account was written by a member of the Hounds Motorcycle Club (Hounds MC) who had died fourteen years before it was published. The magazine editors titled the article and printed it.

<sup>7</sup> Peeler, interview.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Doris L. Rich, *Queen Bess: Daredevil Aviator* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993). Bill Wood, ed., "Sisters of the Road," *American Motorcyclist* 50-6 (June 1996): 31. Alice Stone, dir., *She Lives to Ride*. Dot Robinson, Bessie Stringfield, and Becky Brown. (New York: Women Make Movies, 1994). Videocassette. Laramie Chapter, Harley Owners Group, "Bessie Stringfield," Internet. <http://www.laramiehog.org/DotRobinson.htm> 2006. 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* Wood, "Sisters of the Road," 31. Stone, *She Lives to Ride*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* Wood, "Sisters of the Road," 31. Laramie Chapter, Harley Owners Group, "Bessie Stringfield."

<sup>12</sup> MacDonell, "One Law of Nature," 32-33, 70-77. Peeler, interview.

<sup>13</sup> Martha Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001). Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1981). Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (1995; New York: Hill and Wang, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996). Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*. Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (1997; Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1999). Maceo C. Dailey, Jr. and Kristine Navarro, eds., *Wheresoever My People Chance to Dwell: Oral interviews with African American Women of El Paso* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2000). Robert A. Smith, *A Social History of the Bicycle: Its Early Life and Times in America* (New York: American Heritage Press, McGraw-Hill, 1972). Wendy Moon, "The Biker's Debt to Bicyclists, Scorching the Trail: Two-wheeled Culture's Roots are Showing," *Thunder Press*, South Edition, April 2004, 26-28. "Morning, Jo, Fixing Your Tire?" *Motorcycling* (May 19, 1910), 117. *Bicycling World* (April 11, 1908), 88 and *Motorcycle Illustrated* (April 1908), 128 as cited in Sammy Kent Brooks, "The Motorcycle in American Culture: From Conception to 1935." Ann Arbor, Mich.: U.M.I. Dissertation Services, 1999. Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 63. Also, 5-82, 106. Hal Burton, "Most Unpopular Men on the Road," *Saturday Evening Post* 227-13 (September 25, 1954), 32-33, 128, 130. Andrew R. Boone, "How They've Halted Delinquency on Wheels," *Popular Science*. 166-3 (March, 1955), 99-102, 258, esp. 100. Jerry Smith, "Mountains From Molehills," *American Rider*, November 1993, 46-50. T.J. Sullivan, ed., "News of the Week." *Motorcycling*. (February 16, 1914). Chris Bavasi, interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 30 October 1998. Bavasi was the Mayor of Flagstaff, Arizona and a former police officer of that town. Bonny K. Kraske, interview by author,

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Typed e-mail responses to prepared questions, 1 May 2001. Peeler, interview. Bill Reilly, interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 25 January 2001. Problem Child [pseud.], interview by author, Tape recording, Prescott, Arizona, 26 February 2001. Brian Smith, interview by author, Informal, Flagstaff, Arizona, 21 February 2001. Osborn Elliott, ed., "Plight of the Cyclists," *Newsweek* (27 March 1967), 88-89. John H. Porter, "The In Wheels," *Mademoiselle*. 62 (February, 1966), 160-161, 185-188. Robert Hughes, "Myth of the Motorcycle Hog," *Time* 97-6 (February 8, 1971), 74. Spider, "Birmingham Biker Shot by Motorist," *Easyriders*, April 1974, 4. JSC.

<sup>14</sup> Gus Chambers, prod., *The Bicycle Corps: America's Black Army on Wheels* (University of Montana: PBS Home Video, 2000). Videocassette. 59 min.

<sup>15</sup> Harlan, *Washington Papers*, 19-20, 61-62, 418, 559-560. Spencer, *Washington and the Negro's Place*, 189. Harlan, *Booker T., Wizard*, 113-116, 120-121. Schroeder, *Booker T. Washington*, 140.

<sup>16</sup> Steven E. Alford and Suzanne Ferriss, *Motorcycle* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), 33-34. Thomas C. Bolfert, *The Big Book of Harley-Davidson* (Osceola, Wisc.: Motorbooks International, Wirth Press, 1991), 22-23, 37, 48.

<sup>17</sup> Peeler, interview. MacDonell, "One Law of Nature," 32-33, 70-77.

<sup>18</sup> "Pancho Villa and an Indian Motorcycle," Photograph. Otis Aultman Collection, photograph number 1840, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas. Alford, *Motorcycle*. An urban legend exists in El Paso, Ciudad Juárez, Ciudad Chihuahua, northern Sonora and northern Baja California to the effect that Francisco "Pancho" Villa loved technological innovations and that he purchased an Indian motorcycle in El Paso and rode it in the Greater Borderlands. A variation of the story is that he deployed an entire motorcycle brigade with his army. The only extant artifact connected to any of these legends that I have been able to find is the photograph of him apparently mounting one of the bikes.

<sup>19</sup> MacDonell, "One Law of Nature," 32-33, 70-77. See also "San Diego Motorcycle Patrolman Freshour on Excelsior, circa 1915." Photograph. SDHS number 12514, San Diego Historical Society Archives, San Diego, California (hereinafter called "SDHSA"). "San Diego Police Department 'Knuckle-Heads'." Photograph. SDHS number 81-9508, SDHSA. "San Diego Police, circa 1915. L. J. Dempsey at Left Rear." Photograph. SDHS number 80-4214, SDHSA. "State Police in Balboa Park, Otto Langer at Right, on Indian Motorcycles, 1926." Photograph. SDHS number 2510-1, SDHSA. Oscar J. Martínez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juárez since 1848* (1975; Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1978), 57-58. Smith, *Social History of the Bicycle*. Moon, "The Biker's Debt to Bicyclists," 26-28.

<sup>20</sup> The "flying billie" was a practice of some peace officers who threw their night sticks through the wheel spokes of passing motorcycles in order to wreck them. "Morning, Jo, Fixing Your Tire?" Sullivan, "News of the Week." Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 5-82. Smith, *Social History of the Bicycle*, 12.

<sup>21</sup> T.J. Sullivan, ed., "Sambo and the F.A.M.," *Motorcycling*. (February 2, 1914).

<sup>22</sup> T.J. Sullivan, ed., "Sundry Comments on 'Sambo and the F.A.M.,'" *Motorcycling*. (February 16, 1914).

<sup>23</sup> Dorothy G. Stewart, ed., *"Going Some" 1913: First "Coast to Coast" Trip by Motorcycle and Sidecar* (Bridgeport, California: D and D Enterprises, 1992).

<sup>24</sup> Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 242-243, 253, 288.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel R. Wolf, *The Rebels: A Brotherhood of Outlaw Bikers* (1991; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 32-33. Barbara Joans, *Bike Lust: Harleys, Women, and American Society* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 13. Raymond Michalowski and Jill Dubisch, *Run for the Wall: Remembering Vietnam on a Motorcycle Pilgrimage* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 108-111. Gary L. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>27</sup> Rich, *Queen Bess*, 91-94. See also Leonard W. Miller, *Silent Thunder: Breaking Through Cultural, Racial, and Class Barriers in Motorsports* (Trenton, N.J. and Asmara, Eritrea: Red Sea Press, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> Florentino A. [Lico] Subia, interview by author, Tape recording, El Paso, Texas, January 17, 2002.

<sup>29</sup> Tobie Gene Levingston, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman, *Soul On Bikes: The East Bay Dragons MC and the Black Biker Set* (St. Paul: MBI Publishing, 2003), 134-139.

<sup>30</sup> William H. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987). Robert Bly, *Iron John: A Book about Men* (1990; New York: Perseus, 2004). Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1992). Justo Sierra, *The Political Evolution of the Mexican People*. trans. Charles Ramsdale (1900; Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1969).

<sup>31</sup> "Pancho Villa and an Indian Motorcycle." Alford, *Motorcycle*. "Uncle Sam Takes Five More Harley-Davidsons," *Motor Cycle Illustrated* (April 20, 1916), 12. Serg. L. H. Guterman, "A Day in the Life of a Border

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<sup>32</sup> Subia, interview. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1981-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>33</sup> Subia, interview.

<sup>34</sup> Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*, 187-188.

<sup>35</sup> Martínez, *Border Boom Town*, 50-51, 154-156. Mario T. García, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 29, 33-35. Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, *The People of Sonora and Yankee Capitalists* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988). Zolov, *Refried Elvis*, 28, 37-40, 50, 75. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1981-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>36</sup> Subia, interview. Guerrero [pseud.], interview by author, Handwritten notes, Ciudad Chihuahua, Chihuahua, 16 December 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Kieffner, participant reflection, 1996-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>38</sup> For the significance of African ancestry in Mexican history, see Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race*.

<sup>39</sup> For example, the Bills MC of southern Chihuahua. Kieffner, participant observation, 2001-2008.

<sup>40</sup> Kieffner, participant reflection, 1981-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. Subia, interview.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1979-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>43</sup> Subia, interview.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. Manuel González, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 184.

<sup>45</sup> Sheila Atkinson, State of Wisconsin, County of Milwaukee, Proceedings of the Inquest into the Matter of the Death of Roger Lyons, 3 November 1977, 3-297. Tony SanFelipo Collections, Beloit, Wisconsin (hereinafter called “TSC”). Chesley P. Erwin, Office of the Medical Examiner, Milwaukee County, Autopsy protocol of Roger F. Lyons, deceased, Case 1949/77, 8 October 1977, TSC. Robert D. Eberhardt, Office of the Medical Examiner, Milwaukee County, Toxicology report of Roger F. Lyons, deceased, Case 1949/77, 11 November 1977, TSC. Sandra K. Lyons to Harold A. Breier, 6 January 1978, TSC. [Pan], “Inside an Outlaw Death,” *Choppers* 11-12 (December, 1978), 17-19. TSC. Billy Tinney, “Huge Biker Funeral,” *Easyriders* (February 1978), 16-21. TSC. “Outlaw Dies After Arrest,” *Milwaukee Journal* (1 October 1977), 1. “Death of ‘Outlaw’ Probed,” *Milwaukee Journal* (2 October 1977), 2. Similar incidents occurred in California, Arizona and elsewhere. Larry W. “Rabbit” Cole, “To My Brother, With Love,” *Easyriders*, April 1974, 4, 20-21. JSC. “Weird” Willie, “Requiem for an Individualist,” *Supercycle*, July 1979, 26-28. JSC. R. Orren, “Ride to Oblivion,” *Easyriders*, June 1974, 15. JSC. Bavasi, interview. Nancy Miller [pseud.], interview by author, Tape recording, Phoenix, Arizona, 24 October 1998. Ding [pseud.], interview by author, Handwritten notes, Phoenix, Arizona, 11 April 2001. The source declined to be tape-recorded. George Rivera [Clayman], interview by author, Tape recording, Pine, Arizona, 20 January 2001. Problem Child, interview. Brian Smith, interview by author, Flagstaff, Arizona, 21 February 2001. Benjamin Baughman, interview by author, Williams, Arizona, 20 February 2001. ABATE of Arizona List server, “Killed by the cops,” E-mail to Waldo, 15 March 2001. Spider, “Birmingham Biker Shot by Motorist,” 4. JSC. Kieffner, Participant reflection, 1978-1988.

<sup>46</sup> Subia, interview. Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*, 126.

<sup>47</sup> Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1967), 10.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 315.

<sup>49</sup> Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*, 126. James [Heavy] Evans, Interview by Barbara Bustillos-Cogswell, Videocassette, San Francisco, California, May 2000. Melvin [Shad] Shadrack and Tobie Gene Levingston, Interview by Barbara Bustillos-Cogswell, Videocassette, San Francisco, California, May 2000.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. Evans, interview. Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*, 119-130.

<sup>52</sup> Evans, interview. See also Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*, 119-130. Subia, interview.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Evans, interview. Shadrick and Levingston, interview. Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*. Ralph [Sonny] Barger, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman, *Hell's Angel: The Life and Times of Sonny Barger and the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000). Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977). Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (New York: Verso, 1999). Donald Black, *The Behavior of Law* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1980). Tara Herivel, *Prison Nation: The Warehousing of America's Poor* (New York: Routledge, 2003). Joel Dyer, *The Perpetual Prisoner Machine: How America Profits from Crime* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999).

<sup>54</sup> Subia, interview. Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*.

<sup>55</sup> Chester Anderson, "Freedom Now," *Provo* (Los Angeles) 3-8 (July 1-15, 1967), 7. Dennis Levitt, "Blacks Sue Police," *Los Angeles Free Press* 7-20 (May 15, 1970), 3, 8. Charles R. Garry, "Letter on Lawyer's Guild," *Los Angeles Free Press* 7-20 (May 15, 1970), 8. John Winning, "Six Hell's Angels vs. Three Clean Cut Cops," *Berkeley Barb* 1-11 (October 22, 1965), 1. Allen Ginsberg, "To the Angels," *Berkeley Barb* 1-15 (November 19, 1965), 1-2. Delivered as a speech at San Jose State University, November 15, 1965. [Big Daddy] Roth, "Harley, the Bike that Made Milwaukee Famous," *Rat Subterranean News* 2-4 (April 4, 1969), 12. Mary Reinholz, "Teen Fair: Fair Hype," *Los Angeles Free Press* 6-246 (April 4-10, 1969), 1, 11. John Carpenter, "Peter Fonda... the Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 6-260 (July 11, 1969), 32, 51. Paul Glushanok, "'Easy Rider,'" *Rat Subterranean News* 2-15 (Late July, 1969), 20. Peter Fonda, "Easy Rappin'," *Rat Subterranean News* 2-15 (Late July, 1969), 20-21. Eric Blaushild, "Movie Review: Easy Rider," *The Big U.S.* 2-10 (September 11, 1969), 8-9. "Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 6-264 (August 8, 1969), 43. "Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 7-33 (August 14, 1970), 15. "Up Against the Chimney With Yo' Bad Self," *The Kudzu* (Jackson, Mississippi) 3-4 (December, 1970), Cover. Paul D. Bond, "Fuck Society Fuck All of Them Assholes: An Interview with the Galloping Goose Motorcycle Club," *NOLA Express* (New Orleans) 67 (October 30-November 12, 1970), Cover, 11-14. Judy Brown, "Neal Cassidy + Charles Plymell 1963," *NOLA Express* 52 (April 3-16, 1970), 2. "Our Time is Coming," *NOLA Express* 56, Cover. According to George "Clayman" Rivera, who grew up in the 1950s Los Angeles motorcycle scene, hippies of the 1960s adopted their language, hairstyles, and clothing from 1950s and early '60s bikers. Rivera, interview. Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968). "Ride the Highways to the Skyways," *Rat Subterranean News* 2-4 (April 4, 1969), 3. Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984). Joan Morrison and Robert K. Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State: The Sixties Experience in the Words of Those Who Lived It* (New York: Time Books, 1987), 198-199. Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*, 102-115, 127, 132, 158-169.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 127. Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* (New York: Anchor Books, Random House, 1992), 371-376.

<sup>57</sup> This short list is based on localities in the Greater Borderlands where I know that underground newspapers were published.

<sup>58</sup> "Hells Angels Rumor Bugs the Ghetto," *Berkeley Barb* 1-15 (November 19, 1965), 1.

<sup>59</sup> Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*, 158-169. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 133-134, 142. Hunter S. Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs: Losers and Outsiders," *Nation* 200-20 (May 17, 1965), 522-526. William Murray, "Hell's Angels," *The Saturday Evening Post* 238-23 (November 20, 1965): 32-39.

<sup>60</sup> T. C. Frank, dir., *Billy Jack*. Tom Laughlin, Delores Taylor, and Clark Howat. (Warner Brothers, 1971). Digital videodisk. Joseph G. Prieto, dir., *Shanty Tramp*. Lee Holland, Bill Rogers, and Lawrence Tobin. (Sinister Cinema, 1967), Videocassette. Anthony M. Lanza, dir., *The Glory Stompers*. Tony Acone, Ed Cook, and Lindsay Crosby. (MGM / UA Home Entertainment, 1968). Videocassette. Laurence Merrick, dir., *The Black Angels*. Frank Donato, John Donovan, and Beverly Gardner. (Something Weird Video, 1970). Videocassette. Joseph G. Prieto, dir., *Savages From Hell*. Bobbie Byers, William P. Kelley, and Viola Lloyd. (Sinister Cinema, 1968). Videocassette. Matt Cimber, dir., *The Black Six*. Robert Howard, Gene Washington, and Cynthia Daly. (Unicorn Video, 1974). Videocassette.

<sup>61</sup> Dennis Hopper, dir., *Easy Rider*. Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper, Jack Nicholson. Columbia Tristar, Raybert Productions, 1969. Videocassette. Carpenter, "Peter Fonda... the Easy Rider," 32, 51. Glushanok, "'Easy Rider,'" 20. Fonda, "Easy Rappin'," 20-21. Blaushild, "Movie Review," 8-9. "Easy Rider," (August 8, 1969), 43. "Easy Rider," (August 14, 1970), 15. David Burner, *Making Peace with the 60s* (1996; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), plate 29. For a dissenting view, see Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 132-133.

<sup>62</sup> Bobbi J. Hartmann, interview by author, Tape recording, South Phoenix, Arizona, 20 March 1999. K.T. [pseud.] and Liz Espinoza-Beltran, interview by author, Tape recording, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 14 October 2000. Evans, interview. Rivera, interview. Shadrick and Levingston, interview. H. W. Strain [Sputnik], interview

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by author, Tape recording, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 15 February 2002. Subia, interview. Modified Motorcycle Association of California, "Helmet Facts." Flyer, circa. 1983. Lou [Barf] Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders*, 13 November 1972. JSC. Lou [Barf] Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders*, 17 October 1973. JSC. Lou [Barf] Kimzey, ed., "Street Legal Chopper Circa 1973?" *Easyriders*, October 1971. Lou [Barf] Kimzey, ed., "ABATE Membership in 44 States have Started Working Toward Our Freedom of the Road," *Easyriders*, February 1972, as reproduced in ABATE of Minnesota, "History of ABATE," Internet.

<http://ic.owatonna.mn.us/~hjknip/abate%20History.htm>. 1998. 1-5. Lou [Barf] Kimzey, ed., "California Tells DOT Where to Get Off!" *Easyriders*, November 1974, 54. JSC. Fred M. H. Gregory, "Washington Report: More MPG in the 1980s and a Rebuff for the DOT," *Motor Trend*, April 1976, 16. Lou [Barf] Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders*, May 1976, 57. JSC. Hughes, "Myth of the Motorcycle Hog," 74. Elliott, "Plight of the Cyclists," 88-89. Bill Bish, "A History of ABATE of California," attachment to a letter from Bill Bish to the author. 24 May 1999. National Coalition of Motorcyclists letterhead, 4 pp. Bill Bish, "Brief History of Biker's Rights in America." *Masterlink*, July 2000, 1-2. Kieffner, Participant reflection, 1979-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>63</sup> Author's calculations, including actual and estimated figures to quantify AMA, MRF, ABATE, and other MRO memberships. The ten million figure results from adding six million owners (as cited by the Motorcycle Industry Council) to an estimate of the number of their passengers.

<sup>64</sup> With the exception of ABATE of New Mexico, which did not allow any motorcycle club members to serve as ABATE officers.

<sup>65</sup> Kieffner, Participant reflection, 1982-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2002.

<sup>66</sup> California Attorney General's Office, Department of Justice. "Hell's Angels Motorcycle Clubs." March 15, 1965. 20 Pp. with taped leaf amendments. Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, California. California Department of Justice, Division of Law Enforcement, Bureau of Criminal Statistics, "Profile of Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Membership." Research Report No. 9. June 2, 1973. 6 Pp. Government Publications Section, California State Library, Sacramento, California. Roger H. Davis, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Outlaw Motorcyclists: A Problem For Police," Reprint from the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, October / November, 1982. 9 Pp. Ron Bertothy, "State Police Plead for Federal Help With Biker Gangs," *Organized Crime Digest* 4-2 (1983), 6-9.

<sup>67</sup> California Attorney General's Office, "Hell's Angels Motorcycle Clubs."

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. It is unlikely that any of these riders were members of the HAMC because the rest of the members, had they been Angels, would have remained at the scene as a matter of procedure in order to free the two from capture, or would have been arrested themselves. See Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 27, 67, 144-145.

<sup>69</sup> California Department of Justice, "Profile of Outlaw."

<sup>70</sup> Michael McClure and Frank Reynolds, *Freewheelin' Frank: Secretary of the Angels* (New York: Grove Press, 1967). Richard Chase, dir., *Hell's Angels Forever*. Willie Nelson, Jerry Garcia, Johnny Paycheck, Bo Diddley, and Kevin Keating. (Media Home Entertainment, 1983). Videocassette.

<sup>71</sup> Phillip McGuire, U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, "Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs: Organized Crime on Two Wheels," Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, 1987. 4.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* Columbus B. Hopper and Johnny "Big John" Moore, "Hell on Wheels: The Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs," *Journal of American Culture* 6-2 (1983).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 32. McClure, *Freewheelin' Frank*. Gail DeMarco, *Rebels With a Cause: We Ride the Harley* (Santa Rosa, California: Squarebooks, 1994), 66. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1983. McGuire, "Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs," 4.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-12, 14. *Ames v. Vavreck*. 356 F. Supp. 931.

<sup>76</sup> McGuire, "Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs," 14. California Department of Justice, "Profile of Outlaw." Hopper and Moore, "Hell on Wheels." Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 32. McClure, *Freewheelin' Frank*. Chase, *Hell's Angels Forever*. Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*. Barger, *Hell's Angel*. Hartmann, interview. "K.T." and Espinoza-Beltran, interview. Rivera, interview. Jamal McGrath, interview by author, Tape recording, Gallup, New Mexico, 15 October 2000. Lisa Whitacre, interview by author, Typed e-mail responses to prepared questions, 7 January 2001. Whitacre was a former Yavapai County ABATE Political Action Coordinator. Lisa Whitacre, interview by author, Tape recording, Jerome, Arizona, 19 February 2001. Reilly, interview. Smith, interview. Baughman, interview. Parenti, *Lockdown America*. Herivel, *Prison Nation*. Dyer, *Perpetual Prisoner Machine*. Kieffner, Participant reflection, 1978-1998.

- <sup>77</sup> Their names could not be recovered. Subia, interview. Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528-1971* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing, Pemberton Press, 1973), 187. Kieffner, Participant observation, 2001-2008. After the California Attorney General's report was published, subsequent development of the anti-biker genre was virtually dominated by Hunter S. Thompson, the original "gonzo journalist" whose inestimable *Hell's Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga* sold millions of copies and became the foundation of the canon for police academy anti-biker training. It provided the myths and embellishments upon which subsequent police authors based their writings. See Hunter S. Thompson, *Hell's Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga* (1966; New York: Modern Library, 1999).
- <sup>78</sup> Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*, 78-79, 192-196.
- <sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 111. McClure, *Freewheelin' Frank*. Chase, *Hell's Angels Forever*. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.
- <sup>81</sup> *Hudspeth's City Directory*. El Paso, Texas, 1919-1923. UTEP. The motorcycle advertisements in the city directory appear to have been directed toward El Paso's Anglo population. Peeler, interview. MacDonell, "One Law of Nature," 32-33, 70-77. "Pancho Villa and an Indian Motorcycle," Photograph. Alford, *Motorcycle*.
- <sup>82</sup> Bolfert, *Big Book of Harley-Davidson*. Alford, *Motorcycle*. Harry Louis and Bob Currie, eds., *The Classic Motorcycles* (New York: Dutton, 1976). Richard Alexander Hough and L.J.K. Setright, *A History of the World's Motorcycles* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1973). Michalowski, *Run for the Wall*. Subia, interview. Guerrero, interview. Rivera, interview. Strain, interview. Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*. Barger, *Hell's Angel*. Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs," 522-526.
- <sup>83</sup> Evans, interview.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>85</sup> Shadrack and Levingston, interview.
- <sup>86</sup> Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*, 1-2.
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2, 132, 158, 160-162, 192-203, 252-253. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 219. *U.S. v. Ralph Barger, Jr., et al.* (1980).
- <sup>88</sup> Shadrack and Levingston, interview. Levingston, *Soul On Bikes*, *Ibid.*. Barger, *Hell's Angel*. Kieffner, participant observation, 2001-2008.
- <sup>89</sup> Joans, *Bike Lust*, 190-191.
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 241-256.
- <sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 241-256.
- <sup>93</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 20-31. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935). W. E. B. Du Bois and Augustus Granville Dill, eds., *Morals and Manners among Negro Americans* (Atlanta: Atlanta University Publications, Number 18, Atlanta University Press, 1914). David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1999).
- <sup>94</sup> Norman Mailer, "The White Negro (Superficial Reflections on the Hipster)," *Dissent* 4-3 (Summer 1957), 276-293. For a more biased description a decade earlier, see Anatole Broyard, "A Portrait of the Hipster," *Partisan Review* 15-6 (June, 1948), 721-727.
- <sup>95</sup> Foley, *The White Scourge*, esp. 204, 213. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*.
- <sup>96</sup> Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico's Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995).
- <sup>97</sup> David E. Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century: A History of Economic and Social Transformation* (Wilmington: SR Books, Scholarly Resources, 1999), 2-11. See also Lisbeth Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown, eds., *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America* (1985; St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001).
- <sup>98</sup> Ariz. Rev. Stat. Ann. sec. 13-105, par. 8. Hartmann, interview. Char Zack, interview by author, Tape recording, Cottonwood, Arizona, 16 March 1999. Rivera, interview. McGrath, interview. Whitacre, interview, Typed e-mail responses to prepared questions. Whitacre, interview, Tape recording. Reilly, interview. Problem Child, interview. Smith, interview. Baughman, interview. Randi [pseud.], interview by author, Tape recording, Mesa, Arizona, 21 February 2001. Ding, interview. McGuire, "Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs." Kelley, *Race Rebels*, 183-185, 193, 197, 202-206. For comparison to similar events in Canada, see Davis Sheremata, "Hog Wild about Bike Gangs: Cash-



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Strapped Police are Creating a Scare to Get More Money, Says a Hells Angels Expert,” *Alberta Report / Western Report*, 28 July 1997, 24-28.

<sup>99</sup> Ariz. Rev. Stat. Ann. sec. 13-105, par. 8.

<sup>100</sup> Officer Smith and Deputy Jones [pseuds.], interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 7 October 1998. “Smith” and “Jones” were Arizona GITEM officers at the time of this interview. Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs. “READ THIS about GANGS,” E-mail to the Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs List Server. July 14, 2000, 9:33 a.m. The message starts with the words, “ACMC News. More proof they are using 13-105-7&8 ARS.” “Gang Squad Takes Bikers For a Ride,” *Tiempo Times* (March 14, 2001). Internet.

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Parenti, *Lockdown America*. Kelley, *Race Rebels*, 184, 193. See also California Attorney General’s Office, “Hell’s Angels Motorcycle Clubs.” California Department of Justice, “Profile of Outlaw.” Davis, “Outlaw Motorcyclists.” Bertothy, “State Police Plead,” 6-9. Sheremata, “Hog Wild,” 24-28. For examples of high-tech police equipment coveted by departments in the late twentieth century, see Police Plaza, “Police Plaza,” Internet.

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<sup>101</sup> Kelley, *Race Rebels*, 184, 193, 202-203. Shadrack and Levingston, interview.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Evans, interview.

<sup>104</sup> See Annie S. Barnes, *Everyday Racism: A Book for All Americans* (Naperville, Ill.: Sourcebooks, 2000).

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## CHAPTER THREE

### INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MYTHS AND REALITIES

In *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*, José David Saldívar describes a two thousand-mile zone in which cultures are both separated and united. After deconstructing the music, literature, and other mass cultural media productions existing in such places in terms of power relations, he concludes that all elements of America's multiple borderland traditions need to be considered. He urges a corrective to the Turnerian discourse that guided American cultural discourse along an east / west axis throughout the twentieth century by reorienting it north by south and pointing to what he calls "material hybridity."<sup>1</sup>

This chapter looks at the historic development of Borderlands motorcycling culture interacting with mythical representations over time. While Chapter One treated the category of gender, this present chapter examines sexuality, sexual imagery, and processes of influence between myth and realities. I seek to demonstrate how myths and realities of motorcycling influenced and changed both fictive representations and actual riding culture, eventually culminating in the crystallization of today's definitive biker world. I do not simply present fictitious portrayals of motorcyclists and expose that the biker mystique was primarily sexually oriented and based upon negative images of male and female bikers. I do, however, seek to establish that the mythic construct originated from two sets of historic realities, particularly psycho-visual aspects of motorcycle design beginning at the turn of the twentieth century and the sensual or therapeutic feel of the Harley-Davidson V-twin powered machine itself.

A complex process took place, especially during the 1950's and '60's, involving the acquisition of power-knowledge via news stories, entertainment media and other productions in a larger context of a McCarthyist Red Scare as biker imagery was reconstructed as something resembling an alien Other. The chapter surveys the historic development of actual motorcycling culture interacting with mythical representations and societal interaction during the twentieth century emphasizing the half-century after a 1947 event known as the Hollister Riot. The chapter deals with how mass media and other centers of power constructed images of the essential biker as what Ross Fuglsang calls “the not-a-citizen, regularly presented as symbols of sexual, social and criminal deviance.”<sup>2</sup> It also looks at the gullibility of non-riders when viewing these images, rider cultural adaptation of such imagery, some results of an emerging public fear of motorcyclists, and interactions between bikers, non-riders, and subsequent printed, cinematic and other portrayals.

### **Hollister, Biker Myth, Elemental Sexuality, and Mystique**

On Friday, July 4, 1947, Eddy Davenport, a non-motorcyclist, staggered out of Johnny's Bar in Hollister, California. A newspaper photographer standing nearby on the street spotted him and said, “Here's just the guy we need; hey, how about you sitting on there so we can take your picture?” As a reporter from the *San Francisco Chronicle* helped Davenport—who was still holding a beer—up into the saddle of a large V-twin motorcycle, the photographer handed him another bottle. “Here, have a beer. I'm Barney Peterson from the *San Francisco Chronicle* and you, sir, have won first prize in our press competition: these brand new, genuine engineer boots! Here, let me help you try them on.”

As the reporter held the inebriated “winner” steadily in the saddle, Peterson slipped the used, oversized boots onto Davenport’s feet. With their photogenic subject perched precariously on the bike and a pile of empty beer bottles already scooped up under the wheels to create the desired effect, the photographer said, “Yessir! Let’s take some publicity pictures.” Several photos were taken, and an ordinary drunk became immortalized as the archetypal, bad-ass biker, definitively promoting a negative image that would influence print and film media, as well as popular culture and societal constructs, for the next fifty years through today.<sup>3</sup>

Processes of interaction between mythical representations of imagined bikers and actual motorcyclists did not start in Hollister, however. One may first consider the development of what came to be called the “Harley mystique” in relation to theoretical models and then look at some other historic examples. Although the 1990s colloquial term “biker mystique” signified a decades-old, socio-sexual construction of essential “bikers” and “cycle chicks” that will be outlined in this chapter, the concept needs to be explained. “Mystique” is the same word that appears in the title of Betty Friedan’s seminal 1963 work *The Feminine Mystique*. As mentioned in Chapter One, gender roles in motorcycling had been socially reconstructed after the world wars and—in some respects—they resembled earlier, Gilded Age modes of domesticity. *Feminine Mystique* described an undesirable side effect of a social conformity enforcement process that pervaded society in the 1950s. The word “mystique” appeared in the title only, while the book explained it. Thus, the term was employed to define an oppressive, denigrating state of non-living.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast, a 1993 promotional video by the Harley-Davidson Motor Company employed well-known actors and musicians to narrate the history of its products in relation to

popular culture. Actor James Caan mentioned a Harley “mystique” as he slowly mounted a late model big V-twin Harley-Davidson and talked about visual features of the V-twin engine. He also mentioned sensual elements—“how great it feels to ride.”<sup>5</sup>

Caution is prudent when dealing with sources such as the commercial Harley film. The ultimate purpose of the video was to sell vehicles and other products and, to that end, attractive concepts are expected to be attributed to Harleys. Even so, socio-cultural history is constructed by cultural *documents* such as the video, so they too must be examined. In *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*, José David Saldívar shows how popular culture was influenced by music, billboards, poetry, novels, children’s picture books, television serials, commercials, and other media. Often, such productions both effected and were influenced by, popular culture.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the Motor Company’s version of mass culture was a reflection of the actual popular culture that evolved around riding, independent of whatever the company had originally wanted its customers to do with their bikes. John Fiske, an anthropologist writes about such phenomena in *Understanding Popular Culture*. Accordingly, interactive exchange occurred between corporate-produced sets of cultural elements and popular cultural codifications of a product’s actual meaning after it was purchased, a version that was beyond the producer’s control. He calls the official, commercially produced version “mass culture,” and draws a distinction between it and “popular culture.” Fiske concludes that the two continuously interacted with each other, forming new synthetic cultural formations.<sup>7</sup>

Fiske’s theory is useful in an explanation of motorcycling’s development over the course of the twentieth century, particularly when considering post-World War II interactions between Harley-Davidson and its customers. The video as a cultural production is therefore

valuable to the extent that it indicated the existence of such a myth, that the mystique originated decades ago, and that it included sexual elements. Insofar as his theory informs the Harley-Davidson Motor Company's version of biker mystique, and to the extent that Caan's corporate-sponsored, choreographed explanation matches up with other sources of information about riders or rider imagery, that mystique must be taken seriously.<sup>8</sup>

In this chapter, one of my concerns is to demonstrate the historical existence of a changing popular, non-riding societal myth about motorcycles and the people who rode them. Examples of early non-sexual images of motorcycling may include 1930s and '40s radio sketches written by Robert Hughes, who featured a fictitious female police motor sergeant as his protagonist. There is no evidence that the sketches ever aired. Perhaps they were not "sexy" enough.<sup>9</sup>

Years later, gender roles were reconstructed and revised. By the late twentieth century, sexuality was ascribed to the machine itself. In *Outlaw Machine: Harley-Davidson and the Search for the American Soul*, Brock Yates described the mystique most adeptly and in a way that most closely matched the realities of being a male biker riding a Harley. Accordingly, Harley-Davidsons were ultimate nonconformist vehicles, "thumping beasts [that seemed] menacing." Psychosexual attributes were related to the vehicle itself. "Did they embody elemental sexuality? Of course they did, although before the appearance of *Easyriders* magazine no one had dared to admit it in print."<sup>10</sup> According to Yates, the "subterranean sound" of the machine personally empowered yet marginalized the owner, changing a person's life even while many non-riders feared it and assigned imagined qualities to the biker. Moreover, during the 1950's and '60's non-riding people thought that cycle clubs were cults

that practice sexual initiation rituals. He wrote that non-bikers believed that biker parties and rallies included sex orgies.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the century, biker and non-biker oriented publications, media productions, and other imagery reinforced myths of sexual potency and camp. An article on the comedy page of *Thunder Press* at the end of the twentieth century parodied one of these recurring stereotypes: the “biker chick” as a wicked but desirable sexual object. This particularly sexist article raised the question of the origin of women motorcyclists. “[Y]ou begin to wonder where do they come from. They’re not exactly being turned out by East Coast finishing schools.” An accompanying, posed picture of a menacingly pale and gothic, bleached blonde-haired woman wearing black leather chaps, boots, a tube top, and dark sunglasses illustrated the theme. Sexual elements of the stereotype were reinforced through descriptions of stylized, sordid encounters “in bars, and in the back of VW vans” removing “leather bras,” and the application of “various oils and butters.”<sup>12</sup>

### **The V-twin and Sensuality, Motor Police, and “Delinquency”**

Vehicle styling changes during the first two decades of the century were an important factor in the popularity of motorized bikes. The prevalent structural engineering of most twentieth-century motorcycles, beginning with a French design in 1901, became subtly phallic or mammaric in appearance. Of course, the phallus or mammary protuberance was the gas tank, which was moved to its present location: between the thighs and forward of either the operator’s pelvis or chest, depending on riding posture. In addition, the style of the V-shaped cylinders on most post-1907 Harley-Davidson engines vaguely resembled legs (or even bloomers-clad legs), with the feet up in the air. Depending on the visual receptive coordination

of other design features, the two cylinder heads at the top of the engine may have also evoked the image of either breasts or buttocks. Famous manufacturers subsequently copied the Harley V-twin engine for several decades, from Indian in the early twentieth century through 1990s Kawasaki designs.<sup>13</sup>

The location and appearance of two cylinders in proportion to both the operator and the gas tank may have visually or subconsciously signified or symbolized missionary-style sexual intercourse or similar physical activity. Because of these aesthetic designs, the casual sight of a male or female motorcyclist riding a bike could have evoked and awakened desire or other erotic or anti-erotic emotions. The reaction of different people to such momentary sightings probably varies and would be an interesting research topic in the field of psychology or psychohistory, should one pursue it. If a “biker mystique” existed during most of the twentieth century as Yates and other suggested, then it originated in 1908 with that particular design.

There was a second element to the relation of the ride to the sensual. The very act of mounting a motorcycle could be sexual; one leg was thrown over to the other side of the seat, so that a huge device was between one’s legs. If the bike was of a certain make and model (i.e., most Harley-Davidsons built between 1908 and 1999), then the offset, *dual-fire* ignition system vibrated in a unique way directly against the crotch. It did that for over ninety years. The sensation was a by-product and legacy of early, pre-1910 technology: V-twins designed with the two longitudinally-aligned cylinders separated by a forty-five degree angle. Meanwhile, each sparkplug in this particular four stroke-cycle engine fired not once but *twice* per cycle. Depending on the individual rider’s physiology and tactile responsiveness (whether as operator or passenger) as well as the shape of the seat, number of engine rpm's, speed, road quality, the power-plant and machine characteristics, the ride could have been a very



stimulating, arousing or—in some cases—seemingly addicting experience.<sup>14</sup> Even after years of research and development enabled the possibility for more smooth and efficient powerplants, Harley-Davidson Motor Company kept the older design in practically all of their engines until the end of the century. All other manufacturers had abandoned such old technology decades before in favor of smoother-running, single-fire ignitions, but Harley held onto it and even attempted to patent the vibration itself in the 1990's.<sup>15</sup>

One woman, who operated motorcycles in the New Mexican borderlands since 1984, provided an indication of her old Harley's sensual power:

I tell you, it's the most reliable thing that I've had in my life for the past sixteen years, certainly more reliable than any man I've ever known. You know, my motorcycle does not let me down. I'll tell you.... I love that motorcycle. And I don't say that about a whole lot of inanimate objects in my life. But it's one of the few things that I really do love.<sup>16</sup>

A description from another female New Mexican motorcycle operator was more precise. Accordingly, “[Women] want to have, they want to feel that power between their legs. And they want to be able to be in control of the power that is between their legs.”<sup>17</sup>

Other descriptions of the sensual power aspect of the ride were equally graphic. In 1978, Trisha Yeager of southern Alta California wrote, “It's challenging, liberating, exciting. Above all, it's a sensuous turn on!”<sup>18</sup>

More recently, Vicky Saracino, another Southern Californian, said, “The first time I rode on my own I was tickled, scared, exuberated, happy, overwhelmed. I loved it. It was an orgasm.”<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, the Harley-Davidson's vibration was sexually enjoyed by only a minority of Harley enthusiasts—to varying degrees—and was dependent upon the already-mentioned variables as well as individual temporal mood, riding posture, weather, and other elements.<sup>20</sup>

In the 1920s and '30s, non-riding society ignored bikers and recast the motorcycle as a police or military vehicle. While researching the early days of motorcycling, I found that the archival records of El Paso and San Diego, the two border zone towns most closely researched, seem to have privileged motorcyclists who were police officers. Regular bikers were largely neglected. For instance, the El Paso City Directory did not list the name of a known post-World War I Hounds Club member, but included the traffic officer who arrested him. Early twentieth century photographs in San Diego archives predominantly featured police officers mounted on bikes rather than other riders. The police bike and military cycle weighed heavily in cultural artifact production and preservation from the 1920s through World War II.<sup>21</sup>

The mass cultural marginalization of motorcyclists in the 1950s and '60s can be contextualized as part of what scholar James Gilbert, author of *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent of the 1950s*, calls an “episodic notion,” a term defined as “broadly held ideas whose history reveals several characteristics.”<sup>22</sup> Episodic notions in Gilbert's thesis consisted of collective adult worries about the negative influences of mass culture upon youth.

He examines aspects of mid-century society and organized efforts to oppose, control, and guide both mass media and younger generations, showing how a prevailing tension existed between two main schools of thought about the meanings of, and the best ways to deal with, generational difference. These competing interpretations—punitive versus social and psychological—were represented in the text by J. Edgar Hoover's F.B.I. and the Children's Bureau, respectively. Other players, including the Catholic Church, the Frankfurt School, and the Marxist Left, added complexity to the debate until such organized efforts largely fizzled in the early 1960's. Gilbert concludes that there was no significant problem in the '50's compared

to earlier periods, that the federal government created turmoil by whipping up public frenzy, and that the resultant public outcry led to comic book publishers voluntarily reforming in accordance with the mainstream's wishes while Hollywood refused to do so.<sup>23</sup> A discussion of whether the media actually changed society, a question this chapter will address shortly, may be related to reasons why adults in the Gilbert study lost interest in persecuting youth culture in the 1960's.

After 1910, motorcycles were increasingly considered a form of recreation rather than practical vehicles. By World War II, motorcycling was nearly synonymous with racing, daredevil stunt riding, and "gypsying" (an escapist weekend touring diversion that permanently influenced biker culture). Although motorcycle races and gypsying were suspended during the war, the activities recovered afterward with unprecedented prosperity.<sup>24</sup>

### **Hot Shoe Boys and the "Battle of Hollister"**

Postwar riders and spectators categorized motorcycle racers into three essential stereotypes: "hot shoe boys," "wait-and-hopers," and "glamour guys." The latter, like the "rich urban biker" (RUB) demographic that emerged again forty years later, were those attracted to motorcycling for what it might do for their individual image. Bikes had, for decades, been widely considered rugged, "manly" machines. As in the 1990s, glamour guys' bikes in the late 1940s frequently had custom saddlebags and fancy paintjobs. Instead of overdoing their bikes with chrome like many new riders of the '90s, however, earlier glamour guys customized their rides with foxtails, multiple headlights, and extra horns that played popular bebop melodies. Though excelling in style, glamour guys' skills and confidence were usually deficient. Whenever they raced, many of them tended to lose their nerve in the curves and did not win.<sup>25</sup>

Unlike the essential glamour guys, “wait-and-hopers” were a little more confident and they tended to be racers who had wives and children at home. Like the glamour guys, they also did not want to break any bones or return with a case of road rash or without all their teeth. Their machines were more serious, however, and—as racers—they were more skillful and competent than the new riders. Yet, they rode as safely as they could and were satisfied if they could win a sixth-place prize to spend on their families.

“Hot shoe boys” were the racers that people came to see. They earned their reputations—and their auspicious group identity—by depending on their feet for balance in the corners, using contact between the sole of the boot and the track surface as a sort of kinetic tripod. Coming up on the curves, they kept their throttles wide open until the competitor next to them backed down. (They then, of course, accelerated through the corner to maintain centrifugal balance.) They did not seem to care about the potential for crashes; they were focused on only one thing: being out in front and crossing the finish line first.<sup>26</sup>

Hot shoe boys tended to be the bikers with the most lively and dynamic personalities, and *vice versa*. On one occasion when “Wino” Willie Forkner—cofounder of the Boozefighters MC that “invaded” Hollister, California later on in 1947—was attending a race in southern California, he became extremely disappointed in the perceived mediocrity of the contestants as he watched them meandering around the track. He could not believe what he was seeing and decided to do something about the incredulous, lackluster scene. So, he busted open a gate and rode his own bike out onto the track to show them a thing or two. (“Busted” is also the anticlimactic word here, since he was promptly thrown into jail for that ride.)<sup>27</sup>

Forkner’s fellow club members in Los Angeles were racers and trick riders, as well. What attracted the Boozefighters MC, the Pissed Off Bastards of Berdoo (POBOBs), and 4,000

other bikers to Hollister, Alta California on Independence Day weekend in 1947 was the annual American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) Gypsy Tour that included a competitive field meet. The official event was held at a site just outside of town. In order to compete at the track, all of the contestants and clubs were required to be members of the AMA. The Boozefighters MC had applied for AMA membership but was declined because of the club's unusual name. In those days, individuals and clubs who were not AMA sanctioned were denigrated by AMA officials who called them "outlaws" for purposes of social marginalization. "If you're not like us, then you're bad," is the operative maxim here. From the beginning of the AMA in the 1920s, through 1947 and into the '50s, the term "outlaw biker" meant all non-AMA members.<sup>28</sup> The "law" in "outlaw" bikers, therefore, traditionally referred to the question of adherence or non-adherence to the AMA *By-Laws*.

Since so many "outlaws" were not allowed on the track in Hollister, an alternative meet was held downtown on San Benito Street, with the full blessing of the town. The Hollister Police Department barricaded a section of the street in order to provide a suitable track for non-AMA competitions. Since the competitors in town tended to be the extreme hot shoe boys (more competent than riders at the track), the crowd eventually moved away from the AMA area and congregated in town. The shift of people away from the track and toward the downtown area made local merchants happy because they could easily sell food, beverages, and other wares. The townspeople were delighted.

AMA officials and vendors were not. They were losing money and attendance as the crowds began to spend more time enjoying the marginally organized sensations in town. In addition, the small police department downtown soon became overworked and stressed as they continually arrested drunken fans. Eventually, Police Lieutenant Roy McPhail requested

security augmentees from the California Highway Patrol because of the sheer numbers of people in town. Most resultant arrests were for public intoxication and tended to be local and regional non-motorcyclists.<sup>29</sup>

Some bikers were also locked up. One member of the Boozefighters, not wishing to urinate on the street of a town where restroom lines were long, climbed up onto his club's panel truck, opened the radiator cap, and relieved himself into the cooling system. He was promptly arrested for indecent exposure. Forkner and some other bikers placed another man, who had passed out, into a wheelchair and, tying it to the back bumper of a pickup truck, towed him around in the streets until he fell out. Amazingly, he was uninjured. However, other vehicle accidents resulted in injuries including lacerations and broken bones. The town jail filled up with inebriated individuals who slept it off. The street-based event itself was under control.<sup>30</sup>

In contrast to the relatively civil, locally quasi-sanctioned and organized reality of the Hollister Rally, the nation's print news media—no longer fed by World War II stories and hurting for some interesting news—imagined and rhetorically invented a “Battle of Hollister.” Thus, reporters conveniently overlooked the fact that police barricades were provided for entertainment safety purposes and not martial law as they falsely reported.<sup>31</sup> Reporters, photographers such as Barney Peterson, and editors like *Life* magazine's Henry R. Luce employed, and unwittingly promoted and popularized, an older, previously vague but pejorative image of motorcyclists by portraying a “gang” of 4,000 hooligans “terrorizing” a small town. *Life* published Peterson's staged picture as a full-page blow-up, aggravating and repelling conservative readers nationwide.<sup>32</sup>

## **Flying Saucers, the Red Scare, and the Construction of Late-Century Biker Myth**

Moreover, the widely reported 1947 “battle” took place at the same time as the well-publicized Roswell, New Mexico flying saucer stories and one wonders whether a mass consciousness and subsequent collective memory associated the two unrelated phenomena together as threats to society. The captioned *Life* picture of Eddy Davenport as “biker” inspired fiction writer Frank Rooney who published a surreal short story in the January, 1951 edition of *Harper’s Magazine*. The piece appeared immediately after a hyperbolic Cold War article titled “Stalin’s Target For Tomorrow.” The motorcycles in the Rooney story were all painted red (a color popularly associated with communism) and their riders wore identical military uniforms and never removed their oversized goggles, perhaps dehumanizing their image in the eyes of the reader. The article dehumanized motorcyclists as totalitarian shock troops that went berserk after drinking a few beers. They attacked a small town, killing a teenage girl.<sup>33</sup>

In *The Culture of the Cold War*, Stephen J. Whitfield demonstrates how newspapers, popular magazines, and television in the U.S. squelched dissent and became instruments of Cold War McCarthyist anticommunism after the end of World War II. Whitfield writes that Luce featured cold warrior Billy Graham on the cover of *Life* magazine four times and Chinese anticommunist nationalist leader Chiang Kai Chek on the cover of *Time* more often than anyone else.<sup>34</sup> As Luce helped to perpetuate the longest lasting derogatory mass cultural image of the mythic biker, one that would influence popular culture for the next fifty years, such imagery and its successor productions can be posited within the larger context of the Cold War as an imagined sinister alien two-wheeled barbarian, a threat to the American hegemonic capitalist system.

Frank Rooney's fictive portrayal of totalitarian biker shock troops in his *Harper's Magazine* story, inspired by the earlier Luce imagery, subsequently influenced Stanley Kramer who produced *The Wild One*, a 1953 film that presented motorcyclists as an ominous threat to American society. Whitfield writes that Kramer films such as *High Noon* (1952), *The Caine Mutiny* (1954), and *The Defiant Ones* (1958) were critiques of the House Un-American Activities Committee.<sup>35</sup> Kramer and director László Benedek had intended *The Wild One* to be a subtle critique of American capitalist society, but the Motion Picture Association of America (an organization that enforced anticommunist censorship standards for all films produced in the U.S.) edited the film heavily to remove the critical scenes and ensure that the bikers would be the unequivocal bad guys. The filmmakers borrowed character names, the name of the café, and other elements from Rooney's story. Two rival "gangs" were depicted in *The Wild One*: the Black Rebels MC led by Marlon Brando's character "Johnny Strabler" versus the Beetles under the leadership of "Chino" (played by Lee Marvin). Johnny rode a Triumph and wore spiffy Hollywood leather and a cap, while the Beetles rode big V-twins and resembled the actual motorcyclists of that era.<sup>36</sup> The plot of the story reflected the reality of the 1947 Hollister rally only to the extent that two clubs (both resembling the fictive Beetles) had stood out from the rest at the actual event: the POBOBs and the Boozefighters MC.<sup>37</sup>

The theme of the biker as Other began to permeate national consciousness more thoroughly and dozens of subsequent media productions fed a mass cultural process that painted the essential biker as the bad guy. An early television episode of *The Twilight Zone* even depicted three black leather-clad bikers as extraterrestrial infiltrators. The othering of bikers also reflected the long-term anti-communist Red Scare that was occurring in America.<sup>38</sup>



It has been said that Ralph “Sonny” Barger, who later became president of the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC) Oakland Chapter in 1958, obtained the actual long-sleeved red and white striped shirt worn by Marvin in *The Wild One*. This particular style of male biker attire, originally designed for safety purposes to increase the level of motorcycle racer visibility, can be traced to European racers of the 1920s.<sup>39</sup> The appearance of the shirt in the 1953 movie, worn by an actor who played the part of a biker, may have influenced selection of the two primary colors of the HAMC back patch in California and Arizona, red and white. Although the HAMC can possibly be traced back to 1930s Detroit as a motorcycle club (and to World War II, if not World War I, as the name of military aviation units that veteran bikers had served in), the club’s late-century uniform (inspired by Second World War American Hell’s Angels and other aviation unit “blood chit” back-patches sewn on military regulation leather jackets) did not begin to evolve into today’s style, cut, and form until the 1950s.<sup>40</sup>

Such World War II-era material and other cultural artifact realities influenced *The Wild One*. The fictional Black Rebels MC, probably a scriptwriting permutation of the name of the Marine Corps’ nonconformist Black Sheep Squadron (VMA-214), had its club’s acronym stenciled on the back of members’ leather bomber jackets in the movie. In the case of back-patch identification and other attire (such as other designs of leather jackets that had been popular among nineteenth-century Borderlanders before World War I pilots adopted them), mythic representations were borrowed from earlier reality and then the material utilized in the representation was, in turn, adopted by actual riders in subsequent generations.<sup>41</sup> The borrowing of distinct material elements between mass cultural imagery and actual biker culture was a prevailing pattern in evolving biker culture.

In her 2000 thesis “Harley-Davidson, Myth and Company in Change,” Charlotta Koppányi psychologically analyzes the “Johnny” character played by Brando in *The Wild One*. Accordingly, he was melancholic and listless, disillusioned with societal conditions, yet vulnerable and lonely. In his newfound relationship with a young local woman (played by Mary Murphy), a sense of self-inferiority is ascribed to him when she did not succumb to his desires. “His inferiority complex seizes him when his needs are not immediately met. At the end, an unadulterated smile concedes a fearless union.”<sup>42</sup>

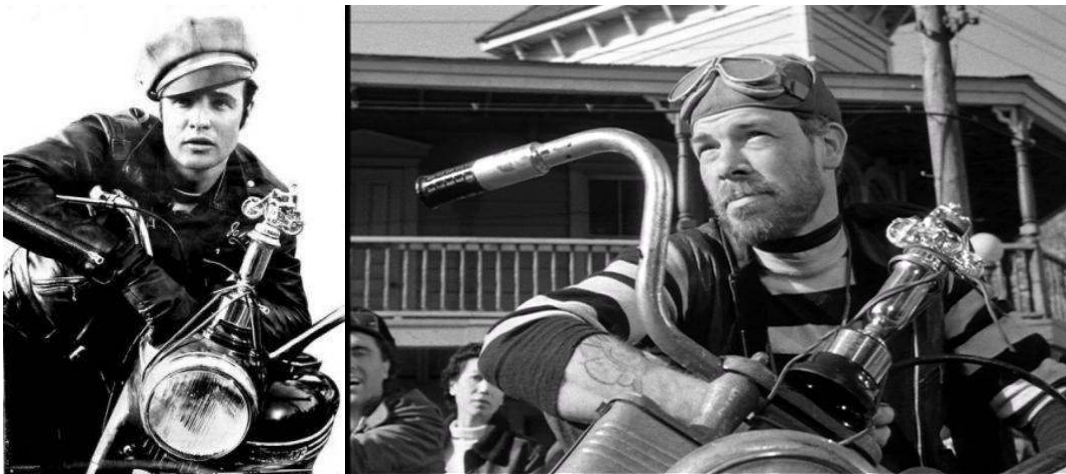


Plate 11, Marlon Brando, left, as Johnny Strabler and Plate 12, Lee Marvin, right, as Chino in *The Wild One*. Photo of Brando courtesy of motorcycleviews.com. Photo of Marvin courtesy of the Boozefighters MC.

While the ascription of self-inferiority here is highly questionable and alternative readings of the characters’ indeterminate emotions may be equally valid, a more significant consideration for this present chapter’s purview is that the film presented a contrast between Johnny and Chino, developing and reifying the essential glamour guy at the expense of the “real” biker. Motorcyclists who saw the flick were furious, just as they had been half a decade earlier when *Life* had published the picture of the fake Hollister rider. In 1954, longtime bikers of the older generation viewed the Johnny character as a gay guy dressed in tight-fitting leather riding his little Triumph. His body language apparently seemed pretentious and effeminate,

contrasting sharply with Chino who was viewed as more rowdy and authentic. Because of the way he looked and acted in the film, some homophobic viewers dismissed Johnny as a “fag” and many bikers of the early 1950s identified with Lee Marvin rather than Marlon Brando.<sup>43</sup> Subsequent generations of new riders, however, saw Brando’s Johnny in the old movie (which had previously been banned in some places but was now available for showing) as the archetypal badass biker and wanted to be “cool” and “hip” like him. The Johnny image influenced later realities as new bikers in the late 1950s and 60s started imitating what they saw on the movie screen.<sup>44</sup>

### **The Imagining of Machismo, Joteria, and *Rebeldes sin causa* in the Borderlands**

In addition to changes in actual biker cultural preferences, queer male biker mythic constructs can also be traced to *The Wild One*. After 1953, the image of Brando as Johnny was fetishized by gay male culture for the remainder of the century. This can be seen in gay art, film, and clothing styles. The potentially gay dimension of the Johnny character inspired later artists to emphasize the theme of queer riders. In 1964, Kenneth Anger released a film called *Scorpio Rising*. The movie was a mostly impressionistic collage of images with a popular music soundtrack but without much of a plot. At the beginning of the film, the main character (played by Bruce Byron) was in his small bedroom preparing to take a motorcycle ride. Brando imagery from *The Wild One* posters hanging on the wall of his room served as iconography as he began to don his leathers. He rode his bike V-twin. The surreal film juxtaposed images of Christ at the Last Supper with bikers symbolically desecrating a courtroom. One biker danced on the bench. After the all-male pack rode away from there and arrived at a clubhouse party, they began to dance homoerotically.

After the film's dramatic conclusion, the viewer was informed that a legal challenge to a governmental confiscation of the film had been successful in the US Supreme Court resulting in a relaxing of cinematic censorship.<sup>45</sup> Few people saw *Scorpio Rising*, so its impact upon biker cultural development and societal opinion about motorcyclists was minimal.<sup>46</sup> Neither the mainstream nor minority media mentioned it. Its little-known primary importance relates to changes in American cinematic production and censorship that occurred in the mid 1960s, affecting all of society and not only biker culture.

Obviously, *Scorpio Rising* was not as influential as *The Wild One*. Since Johnny was initially viewed by straight bikers as a gay male character, *The Wild One* can be seen as a queering of motorcycle imagery and culture by media. The anti-hero did not resemble the motorcyclists of the period but, rather, influenced subsequent motorcycle fashion as well as queer desire.<sup>47</sup>

In the ethnic Mexican Borderlands, however, Johnny's machismo was accepted as realistic and authentic. Meanwhile, it may be likely that Marvin as "Chino" was rejected outright in Greater México as the racist-derived, popular colloquial Spanish word *cochino* signified poor personal hygiene. As Eric Zolov writes in *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture*, Brando, James Dean, and Elvis Presley were imagined as *rebeldes sin causa*, "rebels without a cause." Presley, however, fell from grace as a cultural hero after an anti-rock'n'roll Mexican DJ fabricated an anti-Presley report that caused young people in México and the border zone to dismiss the star as gay. As an imagined *joto*, Presley was henceforth considered effeminate in a culture that valued machismo. Zolov concludes that the counterculture in México eventually privileged Mexican musicians and icons but that it subsequently fell into decline similar to the way it declined in other countries.<sup>48</sup>

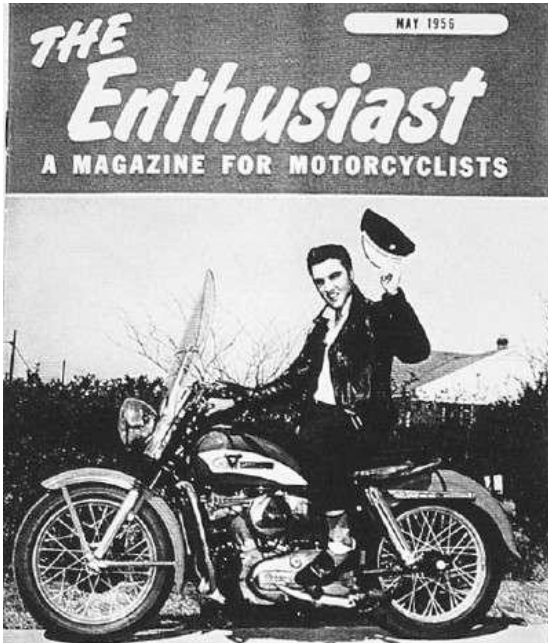


Plate 13. Elvis Presley on his Harley-Davidson, left, featured on the May, 1956 cover of *Enthusiast* magazine. Plate 14. El Vez (Robert López), right. Publicity photo. Courtesy of prolefeedstudios.com.

Ironically, the image of Elvis Presley was later resurrected by El Vez (Robert López), the musically prolific and successful “Mexican Elvis” in the 1990s. Through the performance of alternative versions of Presley’s classic hits, El Vez criticized U.S. immigration policy and other social problems. El Vez was popular among Chicano/a and socially conscious music audiences in Southern California and other areas of the Greater Borderlands north of the border.<sup>49</sup>



Plate 15. Dean Gassenheimer, “Speed Bound.” Drawing on canvas. A fantasy image of James Dean and Marilyn Monroe. Courtesy of enjoyart.com.

Presley and Dean had been actual real-life bikers, while Brando had played the role of a motorcyclist and was more widely imagined as biker. Their individual status as popular cultural figures could be called into question by various groups in different areas of the Greater Borderlands. While queer male biker imagery—along with much of the public fear of motorcyclists—could historically be traced to *The Wild One*, many non-riders feared both gays and bikers. Meanwhile, some riders also used homophobic language. Applying Foucault’s theories, the gay fetishized image of Johnny that eventually became a dominant straight biker image—and, thus, a queering of motorcycle imagery—was produced and deployed by Hollywood, a major media power structure. Definitions of straight masculine imagery in the border zone and Greater Borderlands were under contestation since at least 1953, if not earlier.

Regardless of whether Elvis Presley, James Dean, or Marlon Brando were considered macho, *joto*, effeminate or queer, or were accepted into various iconic pantheons of popular cultural heroes, the three of them collectively as imaginary constructs within the already-problematized larger Cold War context may also represent a deployment of sexuality by the film industry for the ultimate purpose of defining more precisely the essential biker image.

### **Cold War Media Sensationalism, *The Wild One*, and *Scorpio Rising***

Print media sensationalized bikers even before the 1947 Hollister rally but such coverage was, nonetheless, contemporary to the dawn of the Cold War. Earlier that year, an article in *Collier's* magazine described the prelude to a similar scheduled event in military terminology, mentioning that local police were preparing “to man their battle stations” for the motorcyclists’ arrival. Non-riding public fear was alluded to as the town “rolls up the sidewalks and digs in. Citizens scuttle warily across the streets, little children are fastened securely in their playpens.” The author wrote that the city “sounds like an English air field on D-Day morning. Motorcycles boom into town.”<sup>50</sup>

Here martial imagery, at a time when people were tired of war, tended to alienate motorcycle enthusiasts from the largely non-riding readership of *Collier's*. Although biker marginalization started before Hollister took place, the Hollister rally’s significance lies in how ubiquitous the myth became as a result of mass cultural representations of that particular event. Nationwide media coverage of the episode, in addition to its larger contemporary journalistic context and that of the later Frank Rooney piece, led directly to *The Wild One* and other subsequent fictional and purportedly factual accounts in print and in film.<sup>51</sup>

In contrast to the singular Collier's article, the subsequent July Hollister rally immediately generated a series of articles in the local newspaper as well as a derogatory piece in the *San Francisco Chronicle* written by C. J. Doughty, Jr. titled "Havoc in Hollister: Motorcyclists Take Over Town; Many Injured" and a *New York Times* article declaring that "Motorcyclists Put Town in Uproar." *Life* magazine, edited by Cold War McCarthyist Henry R. Luce, published a full-page photo of the already-mentioned inebriated Eddie Davenport. The caption read, "Cyclist's Holiday: He and Friends Terrorize a Town." In response, a motorcyclist named Paul Brokaw—who would someday become a noted news anchor—complained about the photo shoot in a letter to the editor. A similar letter was written by Keenan Wynn, who would someday be targeted by the House Un-American Activities Activity.<sup>52</sup>

Subsequent articles included Hal Burton's "Most Unpopular Men on the Road" in the September 25, 1954 *Saturday Evening Post*, "How They've Halted Delinquency on Wheels" by Andrew R. Boone, whose 1955 piece appeared in *Popular Science*, and "The Wilder Ones" in the March 26, 1965 issue of *Time*. Luce was the editor also of *Time* magazine in 1957 when an article titled "The Wild Ones" appeared. The Hollister rally itself inspired Frank Rooney to write a work of fiction titled "Cyclists' Raid" for the January, 1951 edition of *Harper's Magazine*. The Rooney story appeared immediately after an alarmist Cold War article by Romney Wheeler, "Stalin's Target For Tomorrow," subtly juxtaposing bikers with communists as two serious threats to American society.<sup>53</sup>

The Rooney piece, in turn, inspired Stanley Kramer and László Benedek to film *The Wild One*, released in 1953. *The Wild One* in the context of the Cold War established a legacy of public fear and discrimination that affected the everyday lives of all subsequent generations



of motorcyclists. At the beginning of the film, the credits ended with a statement that this is a true story and that it should not have occurred, but that it happened. It challenged the viewer to ensure that the depicted type of small town invasion never takes place again.<sup>54</sup> Bikers were presented as a challenge and a threat to society.

Nonetheless, the film highlighted one of them in an exotic, alien way. Perhaps it was the glamour of the main character Johnny, and what that attractiveness may have meant in the imaginations of actual, non-riding men, that most adversely effected real-life bikers' lives for the following decades. The essential public feared and loathed motorcyclists for the next thirty years.<sup>55</sup>

*The Wild One* was influential enough to spawn an entire genre of Hollywood-produced biker flicks in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s starting with Edward L. Cahn's *Motorcycle Gang* in 1957. Other productions in this genre included *Beach Blanket Bingo* (1965), *Scorpio Rising* (1963), *The Wild Angels* (1966), *The Born Losers* (1967), *Satan's Sadists* (1969), *Girl on a Motorcycle* (1970), *Chrome and Hot Leather* (1971), *The Hard Ride* (1971), *Hell's Angels '69* (1969), *The Wild Ride* (1960), *Hell's Angels on Wheels* (1967), and *The Hellcats* (1968).<sup>56</sup> These B-grade films consistently portrayed male bikers as predatory barbarians that killed, stole, raped, and otherwise threatened American civilization.

"Black Leather Jacket," an episode of the popular 1950s and '60s *Twilight Zone* television series, portrayed bikers as space aliens who infiltrate a quiet small town, thus reinforcing and solidifying the mass cultural image of bikers as threats to American civilization. The year before Hunter S. Thompson published *Hell's Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga*, the book that launched his career as a "gonzo" journalist, he wrote a more factual account for *Nation* in 1965 titled "The Motorcycle Gangs: Losers and Outsiders." Male

motorcyclists were thus constantly stereotyped by print media and B-grade movies for a quarter of a century following World War II.<sup>57</sup>

Women bikers were also marginalized as motorcyclists as the media and entertainment industry perpetuated a clearly-defined, stereotypical “biker babe.” Cinematic representations of this mythical female, invented by Hollywood and developed from the 1910s through the 1970s, eventually led to actual riders (and even non-riders) adopting elements of her attitude, her fictional lifestyle, and her costume as their wardrobe. Various films portrayed sexual elements of the imagined biker chick. As early as 1917, *Maggie's First False Step* showed actor Louise Fazenda riding a motorcycle through a brick wall, a shattered barrier that may be said to have signified gender role constructs.<sup>58</sup> Years later in László Benedek’s *The Wild One*, Mary Murphy as Kathie Bleeker was a complete airhead from a small town who accepted a ride with Johnny to escape from the other bikers and soon discovered that she loved to ride. Once in the forest, she gently stroked his Triumph motorcycle’s front forks as she ineffectively tried to describe how the ride felt, but later on decided to remain in her mundane citizen life. In contrast, most of the other women in the film were depicted as fun-loving passengers that rode into the town and partied with their biker men.<sup>59</sup>

By 1966, female characters in *Teenage Gang Debs* were creating sexual chaos in a love triangle, convincing one man to kill another, and enacting lesbian sexuality. The female rider was depicted as a crazed, dangerous bisexual.<sup>60</sup> Other movies such as Jack Cardiff’s *The Girl on a Motorcycle* (1968) catered to straight male-centered fantasies such as sadomasochism, predation, and unbridled sexuality. The entire movie consisted of actress Marianne Faithful’s character Rebecca leaving her non-riding husband and traveling on her Harley to meet her lover. She stopped and got drunk at a roadhouse, then continued onward. She rode along on her

saddle, intoxicated, and started to become aroused. As her body writhed and moved, she addressed the bike. “My black devil, you make love beautifully.... Take me to him, my black pimp!”<sup>61</sup> (Although the motorcycle’s paint was in fact solid gloss black, the term also referred to the “African-American, street-level, sex broker” racial stereotype.) She became so aroused that she nearly crashed.

*The Girl on a Motorcycle* is only one example of how B-grade biker flicks marginalized women riders in the public imagination. Dozens of motorcycle movies sexualized the female biker image as an irresponsible, brainless nymphomaniac. None of the more than forty biker movies released between 1966 and 1972 portrayed women motorcyclists in a favorable light.<sup>62</sup>

While films objectified women, at least one of these productions might be described as empowering during the 1960s, a time of gendered inequality and resistance. The 1968 Hershell Gordon Lewis movie *She-Devils on Wheels* was a landmark biker film in terms of the fictive portrayal of gender role *inversion*. The all-female gang members regularly raced each other to find out who got first choice of the passive, hang-around males for the night.<sup>63</sup> The movie differed from the other forty-some odd biker flicks released between 1966 and 1972 in its reversal of gender role constructs.

### **Technologies of Power, the Concept of Law, and the Lynch Report**

Yet, virtually all of the biker films made during the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s included sexual content that made them integral to deployments of sexuality. Such portrayed images, along with other formations of Foucauldian discourse, historically led to legal restrictions. According to Michel Foucault:

The law would be secure, even in the new mechanics of power. For this is the paradox of a society which . . . has created so many technologies of power that are foreign to the concept of law: it fears the effects and proliferation of those technologies and attempts to recode them in forms of law.<sup>64</sup>

Anthropologist Barbara Joans discusses such socio-legal, non-rider backlash against motorcyclists, observing that because the predominant “masculine” biker image was one of danger, courage and a lifestyle of liberty, the public targeted them for elimination. She cites some of the attitudes, behaviors, and legislation against motorcyclists in the context of a marginalization of riders.<sup>65</sup> From a Foucauldian perspective, the legal and legislative power centers feared bikes and biker sexuality and cracked down on motorcyclists as an entire community by enacting and enforcing new laws.

In this way, the essential bad biker myth resulting from film and media imagery had its consequences. It could also be viewed in terms of class-based marginalization. Motorcycling (an imagined “masculine” site) was the realm of the working class from the Depression years (when vehicle gas mileage became a significant consideration) until the 1980’s (when the purchase price of a new Harley increased beyond the reach of most people).<sup>66</sup> After World War II, the essential capitalist-oriented society sought to control laborers as a social class. Anti-motorcyclist discrimination during the Cold War era may, therefore, be related to differences in class interests as well as a generally intolerant environment influenced by the Red Scare and aggravated by media and entertainment-sponsored sensationalism.

State-produced representations also affected motorcycling cultural development during the late 1960s and throughout the ‘70s and beyond. The first of these state descriptions of bikers, California Attorney General Thomas Lynch’s 1965 report, has already been mentioned in Chapter Two. Its Foucauldian dimensions, however, seem to be more important for the present chapter on imagery and realities.

One of Michel Foucault's major theoretical concepts is that of power-knowledge. According to Foucault, a center of power typically collects information, peruses it, shares it with other centers as they collectively develop into a power structure, catalogs it and maintains it as part of a basis for the development and assembly of future research or collections. The data and other information is published, distributed, studied, and relished. Over time, power-knowledge is enhanced, subjugation and control of marginalized individuals and populations is increased, and their identification and exploitation for the acquisition of further knowledge and profit is assured.<sup>67</sup>

The Foucauldian concept of power-knowledge is applicable to historical power centers, including those associated with "law enforcement," in at least three ways. First, the very term "law *enforcement*" may be viewed as a deployment by the power structure of which the police were a component, a phrase designed to legitimize the expanding powers of the police using the voices of the public as they repeated and perpetuated it. For much of U.S. history, such personnel were called "peace officers" or sometimes "police officers." The occupation was invented and allowed to exist in order to provide a legitimate service and their job was to keep the peace. The idea of *enforcement*, on the other hand, was considered alien and un-American. The bill creating the FBI, for example, was enacted only after Congress was assured that the agents would be unarmed and allowed *only* to conduct investigations to be written up and handed over to the proper state, local, or federal officials. The entire concept of a federal police force that could go anywhere without respecting state borders was anathema to the beliefs of many Americans.<sup>68</sup>

Secondly, as the Cold War heated up in the 1950s, the character of journalism changed to the extent that reporters now became more inclined toward agreement with the perspectives

of the police. Today's historians are able to go back, examine the rhetoric of many late 1940s, '50s and '60s articles about bikers, and detect levels of collaboration between the press and the police that appear to have been designed for their mutual benefit. For example, one vague implication was that motorcyclists were part of the "Red Menace."<sup>69</sup>

According to Stephen J. Whitfield, various media, including news magazines, newspapers and television, embraced McCarthyism and effectively became agents of the FBI during the post-World War II Red Scare. Virtually all of the historical actors and mass cultural producers that I have found influential in mid-century motorcycling history, and which are also mentioned by Whitfield or by James Gilbert, fall into one of two ideological camps. Each of them were either progressive social democratic or McCarthyist anticommunist, according to the scholarship. These actors include Stanley Kramer, Keenan Wynn, Henry R. Luce, and J. Edgar Hoover. Significantly, all the pro-capitalist cold warriors also perpetuated derogatory images of motorcyclists while all of the progressives defended bikers and criticized the anti-motorcycle imagery.<sup>70</sup>

The 1965 Lynch report was a compilation of various alleged incidents in diverse Alta California locations involving members of the HAMC and other clubs. Significantly, it was the first document to officially criminalize motorcyclists as a social class. The report (along with its episodic structure) eventually became a pretext and institutional power-knowledge foundation for the profiling of bikers (and its compilation of personal data) that proliferated within major power structures for the remainder of the century. The initial plan, however, was for local centers of police power within California to share information about what Lynch called "hoodlum activities" committed by "disreputable" motorcyclists. However, the pattern and networks of power-knowledge expanded well beyond the State of California in the Greater

Borderlands north of the border and throughout the United States. As Foucault writes, such power centers perpetually expanded their power-knowledge base in a quest for greater data about, and control over, marginalized groups.<sup>71</sup>

Much of the Lynch report was preposterous and erroneous. The supposed facts were shrouded in implications that the HAMC was integral to some massive conspiratorial secret society. Accordingly, the club was part of “an elite group termed ‘One Percenters’, which met monthly at various places.” The myth of group-sex *initiation rites* was also perpetuated by the report. Sexual practices were described in a tone evoking semi-solemn ceremony and were labeled “heterosexual perversions.”<sup>72</sup>

Specific incidents and court cases were described in a “Hoodlum Activities” section of the report. The allegations consisted mostly of “suspicious circumstances, disturbing the peace,” barroom brawls, and rapes. As some of the listed cases subsequently developed, short amendments were then scotch-taped directly onto the pages of the report.<sup>73</sup>

In one such described incident, a member of the club allegedly poured motor oil onto the street while he was being pursued by a police motor officer causing the officer to wreck his bike, a seemingly impossible stunt. A reader familiar with motorcyclists can readily infer that some of the descriptions of attempted “abductions” were false, that many of the alleged “assaults” must have been physical responses by bikers reacting to citizen attacks committed against them, and that at least one incident involved imposters pretending to be Hells Angels. Other sections of the report concerned drugs, motorcycle theft, or other petty crimes.<sup>74</sup>

## **Bikers, Hippies, “the People’s Police,” and Media Representations of Cleavage**

In *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963*, Gerald Horne demonstrates how divisions arose within the ranks of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as a result of larger societal changes during the Cold War. Eventually the Black community shifted to the right and became more anti-communist. Governmental agencies and other centers of power actively scrutinized such changes.<sup>75</sup>

Similarly, cleavages and divisions may have existed within the motorcycling community. When biker activities—real or imagined—were picked up by the media and published in the local or national press, bikers’ collective notoriety tended to increase. Even so, in the worldview of a few non-riders, such reports sometimes enhanced the status of bikers. For example, after the Oakland HAMC Chapter broke up a Vietnam Day Committee (VDC) protest at the city boundary between Berkeley and Oakland in 1965, the club experienced a greater level of social acceptance in some circles. Barger wrote, “Little kids came up to us and wanted to touch us, pensioners wanted to shake our hands, and a lot more women wanted to fuck us.”<sup>76</sup>

The Oakland Charter was not representative of the HAMC as a whole. Other charters such as Frisco were against the Vietnam War.<sup>77</sup> Thus, Vietnam divided not only American society, but also biker culture.

Nonetheless, further explanation concerning the relationship between hippie and biker cultural manifestations is necessary in terms of images and imagery. In the late 1960s, hippies adopted some of the language, fashions, and attitudes of 1950s biker club culture. The countercultural linguistic meaning of the word “bummer,” for example, came from 1950s biker



slang and originally signified a motorcycle crash. As motorcycle parts were expensive and most bikers were from working-class backgrounds, a serious mishap could likely leave a rider without wheels, hence a “bum.” The physical personal appearance of many 1960s and ‘70s hippies was similar to that of earlier 1950s and ‘60s bikers.<sup>78</sup> As the 1965 Attorney General’s report on the California HAMC pointed out, “Many affect beards and their hair is unusually long and unkempt. Some wear a single earring in a pierced ear lobe.”<sup>79</sup> Other male bikers wore earrings by 1965 and probably earlier. Bikers in Alta California wore very long hair as early as 1957.<sup>80</sup> According to Barger:

We hung out on Haight Street, and many of the Hell’s Angels had long hair before many of the hippies did. Before he was killed in 1962, Bobby Zimmerman, president of the Berdoo chapter, had hair down to his waist. Terry the Tramp had real long hair in the early days, and his dressing style linked the look between the 1950s motorcycle leather guy and the 1960 psychedelized Harley rider. This was the look that a lot of the hippies and rock ‘n’ roll bands took on.... The hippies loved Chocolate George Hendricks. He looked like a hippie but he was all Hell’s Angel all of the time. He had just gotten out of prison during the middle of the Flower Power days. He couldn’t believe what he found on Haight Street. There’s a famous poster of Chocolate George with a hippie girl standing up on the back of his bike leading a parade.<sup>81</sup>

Among the hippie population of 1960s San Francisco, HAMC was known as “The People’s Police.” Hippies (like bikers) could hardly rely on any reasonable level of service from actual public police agencies. Such a perceived lack of service and the need for protection from petty criminals is perhaps why Jerry García, lead singer of the Grateful Dead rock band, said in an interview that HAMC members “are good in all of the violent spaces.”<sup>82</sup> Bikers were integrated with the counterculture in Alta California and were influential in the development of hippie lifestyles, clothing fashions, and language.

Hippies and bikers probably shared similar views about the press, as well. In the eyes of motorcyclists of the latter half of the twentieth-century, newspapers and television news were recognized as significant anti-motorcycling instruments. At the beginning of that century,

however, little media bias against riders occurred. The journalistic literature about non-military, non-police motorcycle riders during the first half of the century was sparse and addressed either technical considerations or particular professional applications.<sup>83</sup> In contrast, media embellishments of motorcycle culture and subculture often served to marginalize motorcyclists in the latter half of the century, perpetuating the mid-century Hollister stereotype in which all bikers were lawless, crazy, dangerous, and sleazy public enemies.<sup>84</sup>

Bikers of the 1950s and '60s received bad press. Unlike the 1950s, however, some articles in the '60s projected a binary divide between "bad bikers" and "good motorcyclists." The latter were described as fine, upstanding citizens who rode quieter, smaller bikes. A 1966 article by John H. Porter published in *Mademoiselle* drew a distinction between "Black Jackets" and "young ladies whipping from class to class...with a pile of books on the luggage carrier."<sup>85</sup> A 1967 article by Harris Edward Dark in *Today's Health* perhaps best exemplified the constructed divide between the good and the bad:

In stark contrast with the offensive picture of the leather-jacketed motor-mobs of yesteryear, increasingly today's motorcyclists belong to our 'better' families with good backgrounds and sufficient means to provide a toy worth several hundred dollars. The typical teen cyclist of today is intelligent, good looking, and a well-liked "mixer"—potentially one of tomorrow's leading citizens.<sup>86</sup>

In the original articles such as this one, value judgments concerning the characteristics of intelligence, beauty, and goodness seemed dubious to bikers. (Whenever bikers wrote letters to the editor protesting such portrayals, however, they usually remained unpublished.<sup>87</sup>) Dark denigrated the wearing of practical riding attire as criminal and was misinformed about the cost of larger V-twin machines that were much more expensive than the "toy" bikes he mentioned (even before the biker spent more money on the customization of a stock cycle).

Perhaps more importantly, such a clear division between two “types” of motorcyclists did not exist. Bikes came in various and graduated sizes. Less expensive Japanese motorcycles were sometimes converted into custom choppers during the 1960s. Moreover, motorcyclists went to the same parties, cantinas, and events no matter what they rode, especially in most areas of the Greater Borderlands where riding communities consisted of few riders. Individuals did not ride in a vacuum. Motorcyclists of all persuasions were in frequent contact with each other and the “motorcycling community” was not a mere cliché.<sup>88</sup>

Perceived media bias continued into the new millennium. By the late twentieth century, whenever riders organized charity runs (or performed other good deeds in the community), such efforts were often ignored and unreported. However, if one individual or small group of riders committed a crime, the journalists were on top of it.<sup>89</sup> By the late 1990s, such bias could easily be quantified thanks to Internet search engines. From a sampling of one hundred of the 505 motorcycle-related articles published in 1999 by the *Arizona Republic*, for example, only one described motorcyclists favorably. A similar search for the first four months of 2000 uncovered 122 motorcycle-related articles, none of which were positive. Furthermore, the *Republic* may have been representative of most mainstream Greater Borderlands newspapers in respect to bikers.<sup>90</sup>

### ***Easy Rider, Captain America, Easy Wolf, and Easyriders***

Historically, the belief in a contrast between inaccurate mass cultural images of motorcyclists and relatively benign bikers matters little. More important were public perceptions and beliefs concerning imagined wild barbarians. For whatever reason, the

essential public believed that biased news articles and sensationalized biker movies reflected the reality of motorcycling.

At some level, the non-riding public was probably right. The key word here is “right” as opposed to “left” for, after the movie *Easy Rider* was released in 1969, motorcyclists were more easily viewed by non-riders as lefties. Peter Fonda, who was a biker in real life, had been fed up with the ways in which B-grade biker movies of the late 1960s were portraying motorcyclists. So, he collaborated with Dennis Hopper, Terry Southern, and Jack Nicholson to do something about it. The resultant *Easy Rider* was a movie about two young men who start out earning some money riding dirt bikes across the Mexican-U.S. border to import some cocaine from México, and who then spend their earnings riding choppers across the Greater Borderlands from Los Angeles to Mardi Gras in New Orleans. According to one of the advertising posters for the film when it was released, the two protagonists searched for something called “America, but could not find it.” In the film, they met many people, including communal hippies followed by some other Greater Borderlands men who cared little for longhaired men on motorcycles.<sup>91</sup>

*Easy Rider* won the Cannes Film Festival award for the best entry by a new director. Although the film portrayed the two riders and their American Civil Liberties Union lawyer friend as the “good guys,” reversing a longstanding cinematic and journalistic tradition of denigrating motorcyclists, audiences throughout the Southern states nonetheless applauded the tragic end. (The two protagonists were murdered by two Southern rednecks in a pickup-truck toting a shotgun.)<sup>92</sup>

The film played at theatres and drive-ins for more than a year when it first appeared (a time long before the existence of multiple cable channels, VCRs, or personal choice

concerning which movie one watches. In most communities, “going to the movie” meant that one watched the same film that everyone else did).<sup>93</sup> *Easy Rider* may have attracted repeat viewers who were shocked by, or uncertain about, the conclusion in which the protagonists did not win, a screenwriting device that may have been unprecedented in cinematography. It was an important film because it was so different for its time, it played in theaters for so long, and so many people saw it.

While *Easy Rider* may have been significant as an influence to the perceptions of non-motorcyclists, many of whom viewed it through the lens of old expectations, notions or stereotypes, the film also meant something to actual motorcyclists who saw it. According to psychologist Lisa Garber:

The movie depicts a search for the ethos of America and the father (Uncle Sam). In the film, the old right and the conservative middle resist the shift which is afoot in the country. They know their father, the victorious warrior who kills for power and in the name of freedom, but they are not willing to see beyond this blood bond. The surviving duo is eventually murdered, suggesting that for a new father or uncle to be found, psychic death is inevitable.<sup>94</sup>

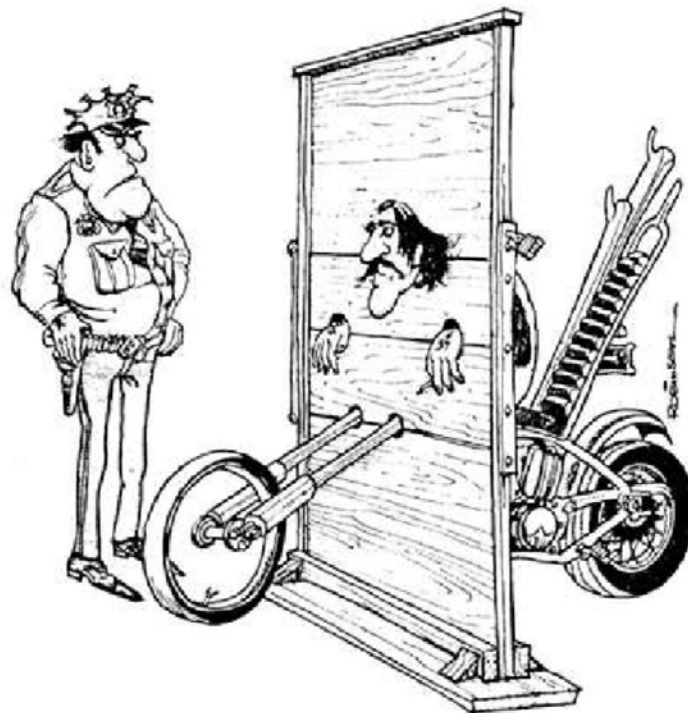
The film facilitated a paradigmatic shift in the development of biker culture in the Greater Borderlands where it was filmed. The bikers portrayed on screen were the heroes, for a change. In addition, the movie reified what riding a motorcycle is really all about: the ride itself. Perhaps most significantly, riders all over the Greater Borderlands and the world subsequently adopted the easy-going, Zen-like attitude of Fonda’s character “Wyatt” (a.k.a. “Captain America”).<sup>95</sup>



Plate 16. “Smiley” Tom with the author. Tom’s bike was manufactured by the California Motorcycle Company, which started building reproductions of the 1969 *Easy Rider* “Captain America” bike in the late 1990s. The photo setting is the same cabin-style motel near Flagstaff, Arizona where Peter Fonda (as Captain America) and Dennis Hopper (as Billy) are refused room accommodations in the film. Photo by Nina McGraw.

The movie was also influential enough for a new underground comic book character to subsequently appear in a new series titled *Easy Wolf and the Celestial Outhouse*. Easy Wolf was depicted as an ordinary wolf that became transformed into a super hero riding a chopper, whenever needed, which he accomplished instantaneously inside a celestial outhouse. Meanwhile, Paisano Publications launched a new magazine named *Easyriders*. The publication centered on, and began to redefine, a loosely structured biker lifestyle that revolved around Harley-Davidson chopper-style motorcycles and values from the movie as well as the older biker culture. It facilitated a worldwide crystallization of a coherently reconstructed motorcycling community: individual-oriented but communal and highly politicized in opposition to a collectively perceived general oppression against riders. The premier edition of *Easyriders* was published a few months after the film appeared. The magazine can be seen as

an attempt to unify all motorcyclists both culturally and politically to oppose an imagined police harassment of bikers, discrimination, and helmet laws. Its editorial was, during its formative years and throughout the 1970s, overtly activist oriented in contrast to the more subtle countercultural messages of underground comics such as *Easy Wolf*.<sup>96</sup>



**"Maybe now you'll think twice about riding without a helmet."**

Plate 17. An anti-helmet law comic from *Easyriders* magazine, circa early 1970's. Image courtesy of Cyril Huze.

Biker magazines also affected changes in riding culture to the extent that they catered also to a large non-biker “wannabe” audience, many of whom later became bikers. Some of *Easyriders*' readers either did not yet own a bike or were riding smaller Japanese “entry” motorcycles, hoping to someday own a Harley. Moreover, *Easyriders* and subsequent similar

magazines did not accurately depict biker lifestyle as it existed at that time. Rather, they introduced or enhanced mythic dimensions concerning the imagined sacredness of Harley-Davidson as idol and iconic holy machine and as a way of life, sexuality-related norms, brotherhood, mores, hardcore motorcycle politics and the romanticization of death, elements that further interacted with ever-evolving biker culture as “new-bees” and subsequent generations became involved in the 1970s and ‘80s. Such representations and cultural formations continued to influence each other for the rest of the century.<sup>97</sup>

### **Helmets, Androgyny, and Dehumanization**

In 1971 when *Easyriders* was still a new publication, Robert Hughes wrote an article addressed to a non-riding audience, a one-page item quite unlike others published at that time. Contrary to other contemporary pieces published in *Newsweek*, *Time*, and such publications, he attempted to break the power of marginalization that riders believed was socially and violently victimizing riders. Hughes refuted the myth and stereotype of the outlaw biker rampaging through America to pillage and rape John Q. Citizen’s wife or daughter in the alley “behind the white clapboard bank: swastikas, burnt rubber, crab lice and filthy denim.” He described how, at that time, highway police commonly targeted motorcyclists, people thought bikers irresponsible, and car drivers frequently tried to wreck riders. “On any long trip...the biker stands to encounter at least one car-swaddled Milquetoast with blood in his eye whose hope is to run him off the road.”

Seeking to dispel the badass myth while describing reasons why real riders operated motorcycles, he mentioned gas economy, ease of parking, and—especially—that unique feeling of freedom that kept motorcyclists rolling just for the sake of the ride itself. In



comparison to cars, Hughes cited higher mobility, less vulnerability to traffic congestion, and heightened sensual awareness. Escapist and solitary elements of the ride were equated with individuality and non-conformist expression rather than anti-social behavior.<sup>98</sup>

One may want the Hughes article to tell the twenty-first century more about how society perceived and interacted with its motorcyclists at the end of the 1960s and what that might say about the previous ten or twenty years. But it does not. Although it accurately portrayed differences between 1971 myth and reality, it did not reveal much about how such conditions came to be. The value of the article is in its snapshot-like depiction of the contrast between myth and reality as well as its description of abhorrent street conditions that threatened riders' daily lives—especially in southern Alta California where Hughes himself rode bikes—and a steady stream of discrimination sustained by bikers a year before they began to seriously organize politically. Apparently, American roadways, courts, and society of the early 1970s were not yet biker-friendly.<sup>99</sup>

1971 was also a year when mandatory helmet laws existed in forty-nine states while California remained free. Because the unisex fashions trend during the early 1970s coincided with the few short years when helmets were nearly universally mandatory north of the border, androgyny of public appearance should be considered here. One may describe the motorcycle helmet, in reference to the historic public imaginary and individual realities, as an item of clothing related to gender because of its tendency to publicly obscure or androgynize the individual wearer within her own self-identity as well as in the societal gaze.

In *Bikers: Culture, Politics, and Power*, Suzanne McDonald-Walker analyzes motorcycling culture, politics, and gender in terms of sociological theory concluding that the motorcyclist rights movement was a “sectional social movement,” that individual riders joined

and became politically involved in the legislative process at such time when they perceived a threat to their cultural autonomy and free expression, and that the movement differed from previous social movements in that the goals of the biker organizations tended to be non-material and related to intangible values such as individual freedom, justice and ethical standards.<sup>100</sup>

The McDonald-Walker study also includes a paragraph about the ambiguous sexual identification of individuals. Since the essential helmeted rider was of an unknown sex, some women motorcyclists developed a “third sex” consciousness in which they were neither this gender nor that gender but something in between the two.<sup>101</sup> Somewhat similarly, in *God Rides a Yamaha: Musings on Pain, Poetry, and Pop Culture* Kathy Shaidle wrote, “I wear a red helmet, a leather jacket, gloves and boots, and become the tough broad I just pretend, unconvincingly, to be the rest of the time.”<sup>102</sup> However, Shaidle’s description was not really comparable. For the anonymity or androgyny provided by the helmet allowed some riders to explore alternative gender or sexual identities.

Although “third sex” consciousness was probably significant in places and at times for which clothing and gear rendered an androgynous appearance and wherever helmets were mandatory for all riders regardless of age (such as the early 1970s in most of the United States), it could not have been significant in the arid Greater Borderlands both before and after those few years. Appropriate clothing and gear were defined partially along the lines of gender both prior to and after the countercultural revolution and identification of a rider’s sex was usually very obvious due to the style and cut of clothing including tailoring that revealed an individual’s physical body shapes or characteristics. In arid lands where heavy, hot clothing and helmets were often impractical and where riders had a choice of attire (independent of the

state) for most of the century, they tended to not sheath their heads in plastic and styrofoam helmets while riding and their sex was usually readily ascertained by facial features or the length of hair. Anonymity, likewise, was limited until one dons leather clothing and the three-quarter or full-face helmet with face shield that was mandatory in many states during the late 1960s and early '70s. In the Greater Borderlands and for most of the century, even the most casual observer was usually able to tell when a rider was female.<sup>103</sup>

The helmet was not just an item of clothing that obscures one's sex, however. As indicated in Chapter Two, it was probably a cause of motorcyclist marginalization in the minds of four-wheeled car operators. When a rider's head was encased within a glossy helmet, her appearance was transformed to become not only more androgynous or anonymous, but also more insect-like rather than human. After all, bugs have round, shiny heads that resemble plastic motorcycle helmets. Moreover, people sometimes smashed bugs deliberately with neither hesitation nor remorse; such was their individual or even collective animosity toward particular insects and much of the unfamiliar natural world. It may not be a coincidence that this era of mandatory helmets coincided with the most troublesome period of four-wheeled driver violence against motorcyclists.<sup>104</sup> Such a sense of androgyny and dehumanization may have made it easier, in the minds of some drivers, to operate their cars more carelessly or aggressively.

### **Deployments of Sexuality**

In addition to such complexity related to helmet laws, gender, identity and public appearances, other perceived changes took place in relation to government. As already noted, bikers were targeted by governmental agencies in the United States beginning in 1965 and for

the remainder of the century. (Mexican bikers did not encounter many such problems in the Greater Borderlands of northern México, however.) Since many Arizona bikers believed that they were being targeted and victimized in the 1990s, moto-journalists (while working for ABATE or other MRO magazines and newsletters) began tape recording and videotaping police gang squads in the late 1990's. Copies of these tapes were then handed over to certain judges in Arizona who, in turn, affected some changes—within the centers of police power—that motorcyclists deemed favorable. Officers generally became more cautious in their behavior in the field.<sup>105</sup>

Other police encounters were more subtle. Lisa Whitacre was a petite blonde-haired woman who rode a Harley Sportster in the Mingus Mountains and Verde Valley of Arizona during the 1980's and '90's. When asked if her more than forty police traffic stops had anything to do with gender or sex, she said:

[Patrol officers] see a person—a single, small, female person—that seems non-threatening. And they're bored or else, I think, a lot of them are intimidated by bunches of people riding or groups of guys. So they pull *me* over. And what they really want to do is look at the bike. And a lot of them are bored; a lot of them are in rural areas, and a lot of them around here, too. I think they just get a hard-on for bikers and since, you know, they can't pull everybody over [in a group] and give them a hard time, they could pull me over and give *me* a hard time.... Then end up writing me a warning.... I don't want to mess with it. I get tired of it. Well, it's, "Your handlebars are too high," or, "You can't ride in this lane on a freeway...." Stuff like that when there was no one around.... But you know, I never got any tickets.... I would request that they write me for something if they're going to stop me and detain me for this amount of time. But a lot of time, that's what it was. And I remember one time I was going to the ABATE meeting and, as soon as I pulled in, there was a DPS [Department of Public Safety patrol officer] on my tail. And I'm like, "Tssk, what is it now?" So we go through whatever it was and he goes on his way. No ticket, no anything. Just a, tssk, another stop and detain, oh, okay.... I walked up to [Buck, a biker at the meeting who was six foot, six inches tall] and said, "Buck, do you get pulled over a lot on your bike?" And he looked down at me and goes, "Fuck no." And I looked at him. Like, I wouldn't pull this guy over either; he's got a gun on, he's huge! Riding a bike, you know. I looked at me and I go, "Well, if I wanted to pull a biker over, who would I pull over?" So I think that's what a lot of it was, really.<sup>106</sup>

While Whitacre denied that her repeated harassment had anything to do with gender, she may not have fully recognized how the male gaze affected her day-to-day life. Nonetheless, socio-sexual, gendered elements were linguistically evident in her description. Words such as “non-threatening” and “intimidated” related not only to numbers of people that an officer may have engaged. Although she suggested that officers stopped solo individuals because they believed them to be weaker than large groups of motorcyclists, such a concept is also violence-informative.

Threats and timidity related, in the case of Whitacre, to not just a willingness of public servants to monopolize power for particular purposes. More applicable to categories of gender and sexuality are the implicit indications that no police-*women* pulled her over. It may have been a gendered power dynamic also because “there was no one [else] around” and the male’s state-sanctioned authority far outweighed the woman’s. That these were also subtle encounters that may have been essentially sexual was evident from her adoption and employment of particular linguistic terminology including the officers getting “a hard-on for bikers,” being “on my tail,” and “giv[ing] me a hard time.” It was subtle, but it may also have been considered sexual or even sexually violent.

The common colloquial expression that someone “has a hard-on for” any objectified group originated in late twentieth-century military subculture and signified that he had a hatred for, or an extreme prejudice against, whatever (imagined “male”) group or minority. The other synonymous corresponding colloquialism was that he was going “to fuck” the hated (masculine) subject. Subject destroys object. Although the particular native consultant who granted this interview was certainly not homophobic, the prevalent 1990s linguistic pattern subtly influenced a person’s word choices. The term that someone has such a metaphoric

“hard-on” was historically derogatory insofar that, at one time, it conveyed homoerotic implications.

Although the plausibility of LGBT sexual orientations may have been considered in regards to the police or any other population group, officers were usually heterosexual individuals. The fact that bikers, while describing the imagined proclivities of police officers to harass riders, traditionally applied the term “hard-on” indicates that the linguistic patterns employed by bikers were influenced by larger society. After World War II, the hard-on colloquialism became a slightly pejorative linguistic device customarily employed in reference to a given individual’s sexuality, a somewhat homophobic questioning of a person’s masculinity based on his irrational or disproportional interest in someone else, in this case male motorcycle riders.<sup>107</sup> This narrative exemplified the collective privileging of “masculine” linguistic patterns.

Perhaps the language itself was unsalvageable. Hence, motorcyclists went for another ride together. Due to the constant, rhythmic, mantric sound of the wind mingled with the engines while riding in the pack, it was nearly impossible—if not undesirable—to carry on a conversation. No one tried. Lack of verbal opportunities had its advantages, indeed. The shifting historical relationships among actual motorcyclists, imagined bikers, and non-riders can reveal much about the larger picture within which such phenomena took place.

Some of the ideas of Michel Foucault may help us further contextualize how particular public images of bikers that slowly developed became sexual stereotypes, a few ways in which such myths interacted with real riders and non-riders, and why such processes were important to not only bikers but everyone.<sup>108</sup> Larger social forces may have sought to control and eventually dominate riders and other groups of people through specific sexual explanations and

images of motorcyclists. The “deployment of sexuality,” one of Foucault’s key concepts, refers to the ways in which power centers caused sexuality to be talked about, published, displayed, thought about, or imagined.<sup>109</sup>

In Greater Borderlands motorcycling history, an example of a deployment of biker sexuality might be the California Attorney General’s 1965 report stating that bikers commit “sex perversion” and the subsequent *Newsweek* article that mistakenly reported that the Attorney General “accused” the male bikers in question of being gay.<sup>110</sup> Such governmental and media-generated sexuality deployments conveyed information and disinformation concerning sex and bikers for specific purposes. Examples of Foucauldian power centers discussed in other contexts in this dissertation may include the medical profession, the movie industry, the print media, the Harley-Davidson Motor Company, and police agencies. All of these exerted various kinds of control over motorcyclists.

Applying Foucault’s consideration of the psychiatric/psychological professions’ role as a power center, biker sexuality discourse may be exemplified by a December 7, 1970 *Time* magazine article titled “The Motorcycle Syndrome.” The psychiatric profession and the weekly news press attempted to medicalize the desire to ride motorcycles as a mental illness. According to the anonymous *Time* author, describing the work of a Harvard Medical School psychiatrist, enthusiasm for motorcycle riding was “a hitherto unrecognized emotional ailment” and the psychiatrist “found the same basic symptoms in all his sick cyclists.” Such supposed symptoms included promiscuity, impotency, and being “always worried about discovering that they were homosexuals.” The article claimed that riders “used their motorcycles to compensate for feelings of effeminacy and weakness”<sup>111</sup>

Mainstream medical professionals took such ideas seriously. In fact, the doctor's theories about motorcyclists were published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* and he was also cited in *Dun's Review*.<sup>112</sup> Such acceptance and dissemination of his research may represent a significant deployment of sexuality by one power center, the psychiatric profession—as part of a larger structure of power, the medical profession in collusion with the press—against motorcyclists. Benefits for the power structure at hand—the medical profession—included individual and collective prestige and power enhancement as well as increased subjugation and control of a subaltern group. By identifying and exploiting motorcyclists, the power structure gained knowledge and profit for itself while simultaneously marginalizing riders.

### **Media and HOG Deployments of Sexuality**

Sexuality deployments took other forms including the objectification of women who ride motorcycles. While Adeline and Augusta Van Buren rode across North America and crossed the Mexican-U.S. border into Tijuana in 1916 (see Chapter One), they wore military-style leggings and riding breeches made of red leather for the entire journey. However, the Foucauldian discourse generated by their visit to Denver, Colorado, is mean-spirited. The *Denver Post* printed a derogatory article about the riders that read, “The [national] preparedness issue was serving as an excellent excuse for women to stay away from home, to display physical prowess in various fields of masculine superiority, and to display their feminine contours in nifty khaki and leather uniforms.”<sup>113</sup>

Due to non-motorcyclist reactions to these “feminine contours,” local police officers sometimes incarcerated the Van Buren sisters in small towns along their route. They were



accused of infractions such as “wearing men’s clothing.” Each time they were arrested, the authorities—after detaining them for a while—released them, advising them to leave town immediately.<sup>114</sup>

One may wonder whether the women’s corporate sponsorships (by Firestone Tires and Indian Moto-Cycles) were influential or instrumental in their relatively quick releases and immediate expulsions. Their release from jail could possibly have been a case of Foucauldian collusion between two power centers—the town leadership and the transportation industry—within one power structure. First, there were arrests in order to restrain and control women within established gender roles, serving as a warning to local females not to try what those two city women were doing. Then, a quick release of the sisters occurred under the condition that they leave immediately, ensuring that few other women in town would see them. In addition, the sooner they would have arrived in Alta California, the faster Indian and Firestone could sell more products. This example resembles the theoretical dynamics of a deployment of sexuality in Foucauldian discourse.



Plate 18. A woman on an Excelsior motorcycle. Picture postcard, circa 1920's. Courtesy Sharlot Hall Museum and Archives, Prescott, Arizona.

The *Denver Post* article certainly betrayed its author's sexual objectification of women, if nothing else. By the 1920s in southern and central Arizona, photo postcards depicting women posing provocatively, mounted on bikes in a style that would later become typical of an *Easyriders* centerfold, were already in circulation.<sup>115</sup> According to Foucault, "The deployment of sexuality has its reason for being in proliferating, innovating, annexing, creating, and penetrating bodies in an increasingly detailed way, and in controlling populations in an increasingly comprehensive way."<sup>116</sup> The emerging exploitation of an imagined biker sexuality was gradually increased and intensified in the second half of the century by the media, another

power structure cited by Foucault. Thus, it should not be surprising that by the end of the twentieth century, Teah Chadderdon of Northern Arizona University statistically demonstrated extensive sexploitation of women in motorcycle magazines. After compiling statistics using 2,653 images of females in twenty-two contemporary publications, she found that 46.1 percent of the subjects were either nude, wearing swimming suits, or barely dressed.<sup>117</sup>

Pictorial images of scantily-clad or apparently lewd women were obviously misogynous and, thus, problematic, although it is worth mentioning another aspect beyond Chadderdon's field of analysis: the idea that the images may have represented the exploitation of "motorcyclists"—moreover, women who were *supposedly* motorcyclists—*by the media*, a Foucauldian power structure. Since 1970s and '80s magazines such as *Easyriders*, *Iron Horse* and *Biker*, which supposedly depicted the post-countercultural motorcycle lifestyle, sold far more copies than the small population of hardcore bikers could have purchased, it may be worth repeating that the readership of these biker publications included non-bikers. Non-riding men may have relished such imagery. Late in the century, mainstream advertising campaigns expanded such sexual discourse by featuring models dressed as "biker chicks" posing in ways that evoke themes like sado-masochism, bondage and domination, and lesbianism.<sup>118</sup> The press promoted an objectification and erotic imagining of women motorcyclists for profit through the deployment of biker sexual stereotypes.

Another print media-based deployment of sexuality stems from certain literary descriptions of how the ride feels. As mentioned earlier, Harley-Davidson typically utilized an antiquated, dual-fire ignition system with a 45-degree V-twin configuration for its engines during most of the century until 1999, one that vibrated *very nicely*. It was overtly sensual or sexual. After an unsuccessful bid to patent this mechanical source of the Harley "mystique"

(i.e., the older technology that produced the engine's vibration), the Harley-Davidson Motor Company took a 180-degree turn and abandoned it completely in 1999.<sup>119</sup> Rich urban bikers, many of whom had never ridden the older bikes, subsequently purchased new, smooth-running, post-millennial machines while traditional bikers kept their older, pre-'99 motorcycles in running order.

How intensely a small subgroup of Harley enthusiasts may have enjoyed its unique vibration in extraordinary ways is irrelevant. What is important in a discussion of Foucauldian discourse is that authors who wrote about this little-known phenomenon may have sensationalized, confessed a description of their own sensuality, or interviewed women to solicit confession of their sensual and sexual experiences. These personal moments were published, distributed, studied, and relished. The authors disseminated information, perpetuating a myth or mystique and setting up motorcyclists as sexual objects to be exploited and controlled. (One may argue that I am the most culpable researcher in the entire power structure for researching the question of the Harley mystique. I disagree. Rather, by explicitly identifying and exposing its specific mechanical source in the ignition system and overall configuration, I may be performing a valuable service for riders and for everyone.)

After all, the mystique was appropriated by the Harley-Davidson Motor Company itself. Its 1993 corporate video named it, referred to visual and sensual elements of the V-twin, and used the word "erotic" to connect mystique to the product itself. It mentioned sexual elements, showed that they originated early in the century, and portrayed them as something desirable.<sup>120</sup> The production deployed sexuality to increase company control of a target market and population through sales, followed by automatic membership in the Harley Owners Group (HOG), another power center that channeled the social energies of its members (mostly new

motorcyclists) toward frivolous cult-like corporate venues that were almost completely separated from genuine biker culture. (Even so, HOG members interacted with traditional bikers over time, slowly changing both riding culture and that particular organization.) The purpose of the film and of HOG was to increase the power-knowledge-pleasure of a Foucauldian power structure.

### **The “Scooter Tramp” and the “Biker Chick”**

Thus, commercial power centers such as the Motor Company, HOG, the media, and the psychiatric profession as well as segments of non-riding society and motorcyclists interacted with each other leading to the development and redevelopment of customs, norms, rules, and stereotypes. Considering the popular, non-riding societal myth about bikers that slowly changed from the 1950s through the rest of the century, biker sexual imagery may be considered as increasingly defined social constructions for the purpose of alienation, marginalization, and domination. The power structures may have attempted to control bikers by placing them at a social distance away from everyone else via the tactic of developing *the* definition of “biker” more precisely.

By the 1980s, for example, the main biker male stereotype became that of the “scooter tramp.” Examples of some historical scooter tramp archetypical figures included Captain America and Billy in the film *Easy Rider* (1969) as well as the 1970s underground comic book character Easy Wolf, early legendary versions of Sonny Barger and of Spider published in *Easyriders* magazine, Gar in Peter Bogdanovich’s *Mask* (1985), and Harley from *Harley-Davidson and the Marlboro Man* (1991). Because he was imagined as a “tramp,” a social

distance was automatically created separating “scooter” people from everyone else. Once separated, a group may have been more easily controlled.

Of course, not all bikers were male. Barbara Joans describes two other mythic gender constructs that emerged during the late twentieth century in her 1997 essay “Women Who Ride: The Bitch in the Back is Dead.” According to Joans, if the woman rode on the backseat, she was stereotyped by the public as a “sexual outlaw”: promiscuous, insatiable, and possibly bisexual. If she operated her own bike, she was also labeled a “gender traitor” who transgressed gendered norms by taking control of a “masculine” machine. Homophobia figures largely here, for the “gender traitor’s” imagined ambiguous sexuality made her scary to non-riders.<sup>121</sup> Thus, female motorcycle operators were relegated to the margins of society. In a non-rider’s worldview, the public display of a woman’s body, clothed but fully visible at eye level (from the visual perspective of automobile occupants), on a motorcycle—whether on the back or the front seat but especially as operator—was a symbol of excessive mobility, especially after the end of World War II when gender roles were redefined and car seat heights lowered. From such a misogynous, homophobic standpoint, the “girl” on a motorcycle had placed a phallus between her legs and had no legitimate business on that bike.

Not everyone rides a motorcycle. Yet, the topic of interaction between myths and realities of riding, with its apparent relation to marginalization and resistance, impacts virtually all of society. These were significant episodes in twentieth-century history that emphasize the role that symbols (such as the bike and the essential biker) played in the negotiation of social and cultural differences. It also speaks to questions of inclusion and exclusion, as the idea of marginalization intersected with a larger sociopolitical world and a culturally unique community emerged and evolved. The next chapter will look more closely at a specialized set

of ritual practices and injunctions by which bikers found a certain sense of unity, group identity, and community.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> José David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1-197.

<sup>2</sup> Ross Stuart Fuglsang, "Motorcycle Menace: Media Genres and the Construction of a Deviant Culture." Ph.D. thesis (Mass Communications), University of Iowa, 1997. 219.

<sup>3</sup> Henry R. Luce, ed., "Cyclist's Holiday: He and Friends Terrorize a Town," *Life* 23-3 (July 21, 1947), 31. The full-page photograph by Barney Peterson is reprinted from the *Chronicle* account. According to Paul Brokaw, "Letters to the Editor," *Life* 23-6 (August 11, 1947), 7; "It was very obviously arranged and posed by an enterprising and unscrupulous photographer." Keenan Wynn, "Letters to the Editor," *Life* 23-6 (August 11, 1947), 7. C. J. Doughty, Jr., "Havoc in Hollister: Motorcyclists Take Over Town; Many Injured," *San Francisco Chronicle* 164-172 (July 6, 1947), 1, 11. "Two S.F. Newsmen Flown Here to Cover 'Battle,'" *Hollister Free Lance* (July 7, 1947), 1. "Motorcyclists Put Town in Uproar," *New York Times* 96-32,671 (July 7, 1947), 19. Gus DeSerpa, Interview by Jerry Smith, as cited in Brock Yates, *Outlaw Machine: Harley-Davidson and the Search for the American Soul* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1999). Jerry Smith, "Mountains From Molehills," *American Rider* 1-1 (November, 1993), 46-50. Michael Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked Bikers' Wild Image into High Gear," *Los Angeles Times*. 115 (May 2, 1996), A1, A14.

<sup>4</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997), 5, 9, 15-16, 57, 73-75, 79, 124-133, 171-174, 182-185, 240-241, 251, 255, 308. For an alternative analysis, see Joanne Meyerowitz, *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Joel T. Smith, dir., *Harley-Davidson: The American Motorcycle*. James Caan, David Crosby, and Wynonna Judd. Los Angeles: Cabin Fever, 1993. Videocassette.

<sup>6</sup> Saldívar, *Border Matters*.

<sup>7</sup> John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-21. Smith, *Harley-Davidson*.

<sup>9</sup> "What Next for Women?" *Saturday Home Magazine*. September, 1946. Robert Hughes Inventory, Collection 173, Articles Box 15, University of Southern California Special Collections, Los Angeles, California (hereinafter "USC"). Robert Hughes, "Policewoman, Sgt. Mary Keegan." Manuscript. Robert Hughes Inventory, Collection 173, Scripts Box 12, Folder 1, USC. Robert Hughes, "Policewoman, Sgt. Mary Keegan." Radio Manuscript. Robert Hughes Inventory, Collection 173, Scripts Box 12, Folder 2, USC. Robert Hughes, "Policewoman, Sgt. Mary Keegan." Radio Adaptation. Robert Hughes Inventory, Collection 173, Scripts Box 12, Folder 40, USC.

<sup>10</sup> Yates, *Outlaw Machine*, 133.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 7-8, 12-15, 21, 28-29, 35, 100, 131-132, 143, 146, 153, 175, 182-183, 200.

<sup>12</sup> Reg Kittrelle, ed. "The Dark Roots of the Matter." *Thunder Press*. (November 2000). 3.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Alexander Hough and L.J.K. Setright, *A History of the World's Motorcycles* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1973), 30-37. Vic Willoughby, *Classic Motorcycles* (New York: Dial Press, 1975). Eric E. Thompson, *Motor Cycles in Colour* (London: Blandford Press, 1976). Harry Louis and Bob Currie, eds., *The Classic Motorcycles* (New York: Dutton, 1976). Thomas C. Bolfert, *The Big Book of Harley-Davidson* (Osceola, Wisconsin: Motorbooks International Publishers, 1991), 37-39, 53, 57. Buzz Kanter, *Indian Motorcycles* (Osceola, Wisconsin: Motorbooks International, 1993). Peter Henshaw and Ian Kerr, *The Encyclopedia of the Harley-Davidson* (Edison, New Jersey: Chartwell Books, Book Sales, 2003), 12-13. Charlotta Koppányi, Charlene Etkind, and other conference panelists, Informal conversation with author, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 9 March 2001. Gary L. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>14</sup> Reg Kittrelle, "88 C.I. Twin Cam," *Thunder Press* 7-4 (July 1998), 1, 29. Hugh Aldersey-Williams, "Two Wheel Drift," *New Statesman* 11-519 (August 28, 1998): 38-39. Kip Woodring, "Motorhead Memo," *Thunder Press* 7-4 (July 1998), 28. In contrast, the new 1999 twin cam 88 engine featured single fire ignition identified as "sequential, non-waste spark" with either "MAP-N" or "Alpha-N" controls. K. T. [pseud.] and Liz Espinoza Beltrán, Interview by author, October 14, 2000, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Melissa Holbrook Pierson, *The Perfect Vehicle: What It Is about Motorcycles* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997), 21.

<sup>15</sup> Kittrelle, "88 C.I. Twin Cam," 1, 29. Aldersey-Williams, "Two Wheel," 38-39. Woodring, "Motorhead Memo," 28.

<sup>16</sup> K.T. and Espinoza Beltrán, Interview.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Trisha Yeager, *How to Be Sexy With Bugs in Your Teeth* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1978), 2-3.



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<sup>19</sup> DeMarco, *Rebels With a Cause*, 120.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. K.T. and Espinoza Beltrán, Interview. Wendy Moon, "Riding Half-Naked (Or: the conversion of a Safety Nazi)," draft article, October 1, 2003. 8 Pp. Yeager, *How to Be Sexy*, 2-3. Holbrook Pierson, *Perfect Vehicle*, 21. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1993-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2005.

<sup>21</sup> John P. MacDonell, "One Law of Nature that's Never Yet Been Formulated in Professorial Gobbledygook: Scooter People Never Change." *Easyriders*. 5-28 (April 1975). 32-33, 70-77. Jim Silk Collection (hereinafter called "JSC"), Mesa, Arizona. This autobiographical account was written by a member of an El Paso, Texas motorcycle club who had died fourteen years before it was published. American Telephone and Telegraph Company (hereinafter called "AT&T"), *El Paso Telephone Directory*. Winter 1921. C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department, University of Texas at El Paso Library, El Paso, Texas (hereinafter called "UTEP"). AT&T, *El Paso Telephone Directory*. Winter 1922. UTEP. AT&T, *El Paso Telephone Directory*. Winter 1923. UTEP. *El Paso Business Men's Directory*. July, 1923. UTEP. *Hudspeth's City Directory*. El Paso, Texas, 1919. UTEP. *Hudspeth's City Directory*. El Paso, Texas, 1920. UTEP. *Hudspeth's City Directory*. El Paso, Texas, 1921. UTEP. *Hudspeth's City Directory*. El Paso, Texas, 1922. UTEP. *Hudspeth's City Directory*. El Paso, Texas, 1923. UTEP. "San Diego Motorcycle Patrolman Freshour on Excelsior, circa 1915." Photograph. SDHS number 12514, San Diego Historical Society Archives, San Diego, California (hereinafter called "SDHS"). "San Diego Police, circa 1915. L. J. Dempsey at Left Rear." Photograph. SDHS number 80-4214, SDHS. "San Diego Police Department 'Knuckle-Heads'." Photograph. SDHS number 81-9508, SDHS. "State Police in Balboa Park, Otto Langer at Right, on Indian Motorcycles, 1926." Photograph. SDHS number 2510-1, SDHS. "Pancho Villa and an Indian Motorcycle," Photograph. Otis Aultman Collection, photograph number 1840, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas. "Uncle Sam Takes Five More Harley-Davidsons," *Motor Cycle Illustrated* (April 20, 1916), 12. Serg. L. H. Guterman, "A Day in the Life of a Border Rider: Mud and Much of it Bothers the Boys with the Motor Battery of the 71<sup>st</sup> at McAllen, Texas, but Motors Give Good Service," *Motor Cycle Illustrated* (September 14, 1916), 13-15. Orson D. Munn, ed. "Motorcycles Go to War: In France They are Developing This Vehicle into an Efficient Battle Steed," *Scientific American* 138-4 (April 1928): 345. Paul J. Vanderwood and Frank N. Samponaro, *Border Fury: A Picture Postcard Record of Mexico's Revolution and U.S. War Preparedness, 1910-1917* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988). Clarence C. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border: The United States Army and the Mexican Irregulars* (London: MacMillan Company, 1969), 326. Manuel A. Machado, Jr., *Centaur of the North: Francisco Villa, the Mexican Revolution, and Northern Mexico* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1988), 202. Bradford Luckingham, *Phoenix: The History of a Southwestern Metropolis* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), 52. "Spectacular Manoeuvres of Motorcycle Volunteers Thrill Thousands: State and Army Officials are Surprised by Work of Power Two-Wheelers in National Guard Program at Van Cortlandt Park, New York; Governor Whitman Compliments Riders, More than 100 of Whom Participate in Drills," *Motor Cycle Illustrated* (September 30, 1915), 1-3. N.W. Matlock, "An Efficient Motorcycle Squad," *American City* 49 (June 1934), 81. Winston Churchill, *The Great War* (London: G. Newnes Ltd., 1934), 1113. John E. Mack, *A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T.E. Lawrence* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1975), 131-132. Walter Lord, *Day of Infamy* (New York: Bantam Books, 1978). Lieutenant Will Charles, "Hell on Wheels," *Collier's*. 108-22 (November 29, 1941), 20-21, 73. Charles McLendon, ed., "Motorcycles for Combat," *Popular Science Monthly* 141-3 (September, 1942), 118-121, 212, 214. See also Goodman, "Opportunity for Young Men," 65. Holbrook Pierson, *Perfect Vehicle*, 83. Irwin Scofield Guernsey, *A Reference History of the War*, (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1920), p. 44. Louis, *Classic Motorcycles* 10-13, 40-42. Hough, *History of the World's*, 24-25, 56.

<sup>22</sup> James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent of the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press. 1986), 4; see also vi, 258.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 1-8, 14.

<sup>24</sup> The Veteran, "Tips and Topics," 23. Joseph Goodman, president, "Opportunity for Young Men," *Bicycling World and Motorcycle Review* (April 1, 1911), 65. *Bicycling World* (February 25, 1913), 11-12 as cited in Sammy Kent Brooks, "The Motorcycle in American Culture: From Conception to 1935," (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1975). Ph.D. Dissertation. (American Civilization), 166; also, 125-294. George Rees. "Some Famous Motorcycle Clubs and Why: The Fox River Aggregation Formerly Known as the Aurora, Ill., M. C." *Motorcycling* (March 9, 1914), 35. Frank L. Harvey, "Handle-Bar Derby," *Collier's* 119 (February 22, 1947), 40. Hough, *History of the World's*, 27-162. Holbrook Pierson, *Perfect Vehicle*, 63-74. Bolfert, *Big Book*.

<sup>25</sup> Harvey, "Handle-Bar Derby," 14-15, 40, 42.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 14-15, 40, 42. Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Bruce Hewston, "boozefighters-1.txt," E-mail to the Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs List Server. August 1, 2000, 2:26 p.m. Transcript in the custody of the author.

<sup>28</sup> "Merchants Divided on Closing Their Businesses Saturday," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 1, 1947), 1. "Motorcycle Races will Draw Riders From Four States," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 2, 1947), 1. "Three-Day Motorcycle Meet will Begin Tomorrow With Hill Climb," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 3, 1947), 1. "Officers Added for Motorcycle Meet," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 3, 1947), 1. "County Jail Jammed with Law-Breakers; Night Court Held," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 5, 1947), 1. "Thousands Thrilled by Flat-Track Motorcycle Races at Vets Park," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 7, 1947), 1. Ruth Reynolds, "Letters to the Editor," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 9, 1947). Horace Underwood, "Letters to the Editor," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 9, 1947). Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Hells Angels Motorcycle Club, San Fernando Valley, "HAMCSFV: Big Red Machine History." Internet. <http://www.hamcsfv.com/html/history.html>. 1999. Smith, "Mountains From Molehills," 46-50. Hewston, "boozefighters-1.txt." For similar phenomena in earlier generations, see R. F. Kelsey, ed., "A Much Needed F. A. M. Inventory," *Bicycling World and Motorcycle Review* (June 22, 1912), 1-19. Rees, "Some Famous Motorcycle Clubs and Why," 35.

<sup>29</sup> "Merchants Divided," 1. "Motorcycle Races will Draw Riders," 1. "Three-Day Motorcycle Meet," 1. "County Jail Jammed," 1. Reynolds, "Letters to Editor." Underwood, "Letters to Editor." "Officers Added," 1. "Visiting Cyclists Hurt in Accidents," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 5, 1947), 1. "Battle of Hollister' Ends as Wild, Celebrating Motorcyclists Leave City," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 7, 1947), 1. "Cyclists Face Bar of Justice During Three-Day Meeting," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 7, 1947), 1. R. E. Stevenson, "Letters to the Editor," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 7, 1947). Charles A. Addams, "Letters to the Editor," *Life* 23-6 (August 11, 1947), 7. Wynn, "Letters to Editor," 7. Brokaw, "Letters to Editor," 7. Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Hewston, "boozefighters-1.txt." Smith, "Mountains From Molehills," 46-50.

<sup>30</sup> Smith, "Mountains From Molehills," 46-50. Ibid. "Officers Added," 1. "Visiting Cyclists Hurt," 1. "County Jail Jammed," 1. "Battle of Hollister' Ends," 1. "Cyclists Face Bar of Justice," 1. Stevenson, "Letters to Editor." Reynolds, "Letters to Editor." Underwood, "Letters to Editor." Addams, "Letters to Editor," 7. Wynn, "Letters to Editor," 7. Brokaw, "Letters to Editor," 7. Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Hewston, "boozefighters-1.txt."

<sup>31</sup> "Battle of Hollister' Ends," 1. Doughty, "Havoc in Hollister," 1,11. Luce, "Cyclist's Holiday," 31. Brokaw, "Letters to Editor," 7. Wynn, "Letters to Editor," 7. "Motorcyclists Put Town in Uproar," 19. DeSerpa, Interview. Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14.

<sup>32</sup> Doughty, "Havoc in Hollister," 1,11. Luce, "Cyclist's Holiday," 31.

<sup>33</sup> Frank Rooney, "Cyclists' Raid," *Harper's Magazine* 202-1208 (January, 1951), 34-44. Romney Wheeler, "Stalin's Target For Tomorrow," *Harper's Magazine* 202-1208 (January, 1951), 28-33.

<sup>34</sup> Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 78, 160.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 62-63, 146-147, 150.

<sup>36</sup> László Benedek, dir., *The Wild One*. Marlon Brando, Lee Marvin, and Mary Murphy. Columbia, 1953.

Videocassette. Rooney, "Cyclists' Raid," 34-44. Gilbert, *Cycle of Outrage*, 64, 182-183.

<sup>37</sup> Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Hewston, "boozefighters-1.txt." Hells Angels Motorcycle Club, "HAMCSFV." Ralph "Sonny" Barger, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman. *Hell's Angel: The Life and Times of Sonny Barger and the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> "Black Leather Jacket," an episode of *The Twilight Zone*. 1950s-60s, Television serial. Doughty, "Havoc in Hollister," 1,11. "Motorcyclists Put Town in Uproar," 19. Luce, "Cyclist's Holiday," 31. Hal Burton, "Most Unpopular Men on the Road," *Saturday Evening Post* 227-13 (September 25, 1954), 32-33, 128, 130. Andrew R. Boone, "How They've Halted Delinquency on Wheels," *Popular Science* 166-3 (March, 1955), 99-102, 258. Benedek, *The Wild One*. Edward L. Cahn, dir., *Motorcycle Gang*. Steven Terrell, Anne Neyland, and John Ashley. American International Pictures, 1957. Film. William Asher, dir., *Beach Blanket Bingo*. Frankie Avalon, Annette Funicello, and Deborah Walley. American International Pictures, 1965. Film. Hunter S. Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs: Losers and Outsiders," *Nation* 200-20 (May 17, 1965), 522-526. Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Kenneth Anger, dir., *Scorpio Rising*. Bruce Byron, Johnny Sapienza, and Frank Carifi. Mystic Fire Video, 1986 (1963). Videocassette. Roger Corman, dir., *The Wild Angels*. Peter Fonda, Nancy Sinatra and Bruce Dern. (Orion Home Video, 1966), Film. Tom Laughlin, dir., *The Born Losers*. Tom Laughlin, Elizabeth James, and Jeremy Slate. Vestron Video, 1967. Film. Al Adamson, dir., *Satan's Sadists*. Russ Tamblyn, Regina Carrol, and Gary Kent. 1969. Film. Jack Cardiff, dir., *The Girl on a Motorcycle*. Marianne Faithful, Alain Delon, and Roger Mutton, (British Lion, 1970): Film. Lee Frost, dir., *Chrome and Hot Leather*. William Smith, Tony

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Young, and Peter Brown. Los Angeles: Orion, 1971. Film. Burt Topper, dir., *The Hard Ride*. Robert Fuller, Marshall Reed, and Sherry Bain. Los Angeles: Orion, 1971. Film. Lee Madden, dir., *Hell's Angels '69*. Sonny Barger, Danielle Corn, and Bud Ekins. Media Home Entertainment, 1969. Videocassette. Harvey Berman, dir., *The Wild Ride* Jack Nicholson, Georgianna Carter, and Robert Bean. (Sinister Cinema, 1960), Film. Richard Rush, dir., *Hell's Angels on Wheels* Jack Nicholson and Adam Roarke. (Vidmark Entertainment, 1967), Film. Bob Slatzer, dir., *The Hellcats*. Ross Hagen, Dee Duffy, and Sharyn Kinzie. (Academy Entertainment, 1968), Film. Henry R. Luce, ed., "The Wild Ones," *Time*. 69-24 (June 17, 1957), 22. Gilbert, *Cycle of Outrage*.

<sup>39</sup> Hough, *History of the World's*, 133.

<sup>40</sup> The large, WW II-era, aviation back patch sewn onto regulation flight jackets was known as the "blood chit." Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 27-31. Yves Lavigne, *Hell's Angels: Three Can Keep a Secret if Two Are Dead* (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1987), 23-27. Although some may problematize the Lavigne account as flawed in some respects, its background history from the world wars is well researched.

<sup>41</sup> Benedek, *The Wild One*. Lavigne, *Hell's Angels*. Steele, *Fetish*, 154. Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, the father of VMA-214, had originally served in the Flying Tigers (see the glossary). After the war, the Black Sheep Squadron was stationed at the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, not far from Hollywood.

<sup>42</sup> Charlotta Koppanyi, "Harley-Davidson, Myth and Company in Change." Stockholm: Stockholms Universitet, Psykologiska Institutionen, 2000. B.S. Thesis, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Benedek, *The Wild One*. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 26. Luce, "Cyclist's Holiday, 31. Hewston, "boozefighters-1.txt." Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14.

<sup>44</sup> Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Ibid. Hewston, "boozefighters-1.txt." Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs," 522-526. Lucy Howard and Sarah Van Boven, "Return of the 'Wild Ones'", *Newsweek*, 129-26 (June 30, 1967), 8. Luce, "The Wild Ones," 22. Hedley Donovan, ed. "The Wilder Ones," *Time* 85-13 (March 26, 1965), 23B. See also Hedley Donovan, ed., "Requiem for an Angel," *Time*. 87-3 (January 21, 1966), 57. Smith, "Mountains From Molehills," 46-50. Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 301.

<sup>45</sup> Anger, *Scorpio Rising*.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Izzy Mora, ed., "The Briar Patch," *T Magazine* (El Paso), (September, 2001), 8. Advertisement. Anger, *Scorpio Rising*. Steele, *Fetish*. Hewston, "boozefighters-1.txt." Yates, *Outlaw Machine*. Smith, "Mountains From Molehills," 46-50. Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Smith, *Harley-Davidson*. Robert Hughes, "Myth of the Motorcycle Hog," *Time*. 97-6 (February 8, 1971), 74. Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs," 522-526. Frank Rickabaugh Arnold, "Ordinary Motorcycle Thrills: The Circulation of Motorcycle Meanings in American Film and Popular Culture" (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, May, 1997). Ph.D. Dissertation (Cinema), 252-253, 264-265, 274, 362-363, 373. Burton, "Most Unpopular Men on the Road," 32-33, 128, 130. Boone, "How They've Halted Delinquency on Wheels," 99-102, 258.

<sup>48</sup> Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>49</sup> El Vez [Robert López], *Graciasland*. Hollywood: Sympathy for the Record Industry, 1994. Compact disc. Saldívar, *Border Matters*, 191-197.

<sup>50</sup> Harvey, "Handle-Bar Derby," 14.

<sup>51</sup> Doughty, "Havoc in Hollister," 1,11. "Motorcyclists Put Town in Uproar," 19. Luce, "Cyclist's Holiday," 31. Wheeler, "Stalin's Target For Tomorrow," 28-33. Rooney, "Cyclists' Raid," 34-44. Benedek, *The Wild One*. "Black Leather Jacket." Burton, "Most Unpopular Men on the Road," 32-33, 128, 130. Boone, "How They've Halted Delinquency on Wheels," 99-102, 258. Cahn, *Motorcycle Gang*. Asher, *Beach Blanket Bingo*. Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs," 522-526. Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Adamson, *Satan's Sadists*. Cardiff, *Girl on a Motorcycle*. Frost, *Chrome and Hot Leather*. Topper, *Hard Ride*. Corman, *Wild Angels*. Madden, *Hell's Angels '69*. Luce, "The Wild Ones," 22. Laughlin, *Born Losers*. Gilbert, *Cycle of Outrage*. "Two S.F. Newsmen Flown Here," 1. Brokaw, "Letters to Editor," 7. Wynn, "Letters to Editor," 7. Anger, *Scorpio Rising*.

<sup>52</sup> Doughty, "Havoc in Hollister," 1,11. "Motorcyclists Put Town in Uproar," 19. Luce, "Cyclist's Holiday," 31. Gilbert, *Cycle of Outrage*. "Two S.F. Newsmen Flown Here," 1. Brokaw, "Letters to Editor," 7. Wynn, "Letters to Editor," 7. Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 62-63, 72-73, 78, 127-178, 222-223.

<sup>53</sup> Wheeler, "Stalin's Target For Tomorrow," 28-33. Rooney, "Cyclists' Raid," 34-44. Burton, "Most Unpopular Men on the Road," 32-33, 128, 130. Boone, "How They've Halted Delinquency on Wheels," 99-102, 258.

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Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs," 522-526. Luce, "The Wild Ones," 22. Donovan, "The Wilder Ones," 23B. Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Gilbert, *Cycle of Outrage*.

<sup>54</sup> Benedek, *The Wild One*.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Koppanyi, "Harley-Davidson, Myth." Bill Reilly, Interview by author, January 25, 2001, Flagstaff, Arizona. Tape recording. Ding [pseud.], Interview by author, April 11, 2001, Phoenix, Arizona. The native consultant declined to be tape-recorded. Daniel Wolf, *The Rebels: A Brotherhood of Outlaw Bikers* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 144-148. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 98-99. Yates, *Outlaw Machine*. Smith, "Mountains From Molehills," 46-50. Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Smith, *Harley-Davidson*. Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs," 522-526. Burton, "Most Unpopular Men on the Road," 32-33, 128, 130. Boone, "How They've Halted Delinquency on Wheels," 99-102, 258. Hughes, "Myth of the Motorcycle Hog," 74. Luce, "The Wild Ones," 22. Howard, "Return of the 'Wild Ones,'" 8. Donovan, "The Wilder Ones," 23B. Donovan, "Requiem for an Angel," 57.

<sup>56</sup> Benedek, *The Wild One*. Anger, *Scorpio Rising*. Cahn, *Motorcycle Gang*. Asher, *Beach Blanket Bingo*. Laughlin, *Born Losers*. Adamson, *Satan's Sadists*. Cardiff, *Girl on a Motorcycle*. Frost, *Chrome and Hot Leather*. Topper, *Hard Ride*. Corman, *Wild Angels*. Madden, *Hell's Angels '69*. Berman, *The Wild Ride*. Rush, *Hell's Angels on Wheels*. Slatzer, *The Hellcats*. Arnold, "Ordinary Motorcycle Thrills."

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 252-253, 264-265, 274, 362-363, 373. Benedek, *The Wild One*. Anger, *Scorpio Rising*. Cahn, *Motorcycle Gang*. Asher, *Beach Blanket Bingo*. Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs," 522-526. Krikorian, "The Day that Kicked," A1, A14. Laughlin, *Born Losers*. Adamson, *Satan's Sadists*. Cardiff, *Girl on a Motorcycle*. Frost, *Chrome and Hot Leather*. Topper, *Hard Ride*. Corman, *Wild Angels*. Madden, *Hell's Angels '69*. Burton, "Most Unpopular Men on the Road," 32-33, 128, 130. Luce, "The Wild Ones," 22. Smith, *Harley-Davidson*.

<sup>58</sup> Frank Griffith and Mack Sennett, dirs., *Maggie's First False Step*. Wallace Beery, Harry Booker, and Alice Davenport (Keystone Film Company, 1917), film.

<sup>59</sup> Benedek, *The Wild One*.

<sup>60</sup> Sande N. Johnsen, dir., *Teenage Gang Debs*. Diane Conti, Linda Gale, and Eileen Scott. Jude Productions, 1966. Film.

<sup>61</sup> Cardiff, *Girl on a Motorcycle*.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. Johnsen, *Teenage Gang Debs*. Hershell Gordon Lewis, dir., *She-Devils on Wheels*. Betty Connell, Nancy Lee Noble, and Christie Wagner (Mayflower Pictures/ Western World Video, 1968), videocassette. Maury Dexter, dir., *Hell's Belles*. Jerry Brutsche, Dick Bullock, and Ronnie Dayton. American International Pictures: 1968. Film. Laughlin, *Born Losers*. Adamson, *Satan's Sadists*. Frost, *Chrome and Hot Leather*. Topper, *Hard Ride*. Benedek, *The Wild One*. Corman, *Wild Angels*. Madden, *Hell's Angels '69*. Mark Walker, *Vietnam Veteran Films* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1991), 16.

<sup>63</sup> Lewis, *She-Devils on Wheels*.

<sup>64</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* (1978. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1990), 109.

<sup>65</sup> Barbara Joans, "Dykes on Bikes Meet Ladies of Harley," in *Beyond the Lavender Lexicon: Authenticity, Imagination, and Appropriation in Lesbian and Gay Languages*. ed. William L. Leap (Luxembourg: Gordon and Breach, 1996), 87-106.

<sup>66</sup> Smith, *Harley-Davidson*. Yates, *Outlaw Machine*, 6, 8, 12, 15, 21-24, 35, 131, 162, 173-174, 184, 192-193. Wealthy and upper-middle class professionals started buying bikes and helping their local dealerships to organize Harley Owners Group (HOG) Chapters during the late 1980's and early '90's. For HOG, see the glossary.

<sup>67</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977). Foucault, *History of Sexuality*. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1972).

<sup>68</sup> Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (New York: Verso, 1999).

Donald Black, *The Behavior of Law* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1980). Tara Herivel, *Prison Nation: The Warehousing of America's Poor* (New York: Routledge, 2003). Joel Dyer, *The Perpetual Prisoner Machine: How America Profits from Crime* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999). Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 86. David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963* (New York: John MacRae / Owl, Henry Holt and Company, 2000), 5-7, 68, 72, 74, 81, 94, 470, 527, 531, 539-540, 555, 567.

<sup>69</sup> Doughty, "Havoc in Hollister," 1,11. "Motorcyclists Put Town in Uproar," 19. Luce, "Cyclist's Holiday," 31. Brokaw, "Letters to the Editor," 7. Wynn, "Letters to the Editor," 7. Burton, "Most Unpopular Men on the Road,"

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32-33, 128, 130. Boone, "How They've Halted Delinquency on Wheels," 99-102, 258. Donovan, "The Wilder Ones," 23B.

<sup>70</sup> Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 62-63, 72-73, 78, 127-178, 222-223. Gilbert, *Cycle of Outrage*.

<sup>71</sup> California Attorney General's Office, Department of Justice, "Hell's Angels Motorcycle Clubs." March 15, 1965. 20 Pp. with taped leaf amendments. Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, California. California Department of Justice, Division of Law Enforcement, Bureau of Criminal Statistics, "Profile of Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Membership." Research Report No. 9. June 2, 1973. 6 Pp. Government Publications Section, California State Library, Sacramento, California. Roger H. Davis, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Outlaw Motorcyclists: A Problem For Police," Reprint from the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, October / November, 1982. 9 Pp. Phillip McGuire, U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, "Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs: Organized Crime on Two Wheels," Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, 1987. Ron Bertothy, "State Police Plead for Federal Help With Biker Gangs," *Organized Crime Digest* 4-2 (1983), 6-9. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*. Parenti, *Lockdown America*. Herivel, *Prison Nation*. Dyer, *Perpetual Prisoner Machine*. Kelley, *Race Rebels*.

<sup>72</sup> California Attorney General's Office, "Hell's Angels Motorcycle Clubs," 3-4. Wolf, *Rebels*, 144-148. See also Hedley Donovan, ed., "The Free-Sex Movement," *Time*. 87-10 (March 11, 1966), 66.

<sup>73</sup> California Attorney General's Office, "Hell's Angels Motorcycle Clubs," 6-10.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-12.

<sup>75</sup> Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986).

<sup>76</sup> Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 123; see also, 98, 119-123. John Winning, "Six Hell's Angels vs. Three Clean Cut Cops," *Berkeley Barb*. 1-11 (October 22, 1965), 1. Allen Ginsberg, "To the Angels," *Berkeley Barb*. 1-15 (November 19, 1965), 1-2. Delivered as a speech at San Jose State University, November 15, 1965. Hunter S. Thompson, *Hell's Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1967), 54-55, 253-254.

<sup>77</sup> Frank Reynolds and Michael McClure. *Freewheelin Frank: Secretary of the Angels* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 130-133. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 98, 119-123.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 34, 48, 73, 118, 130. [Clayman] George Rivera, Interview by author, January 20, 2001, Pine, Arizona. Audiocassette tape recording. California Attorney General's Office, "Hell's Angels Motorcycle Clubs," 5. Reynolds, *Freewheelin Frank*. Danny Lyon, *The Bikeriders* (Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 1997), (1968), 1, 3, 5, 10, 16, 29, 32, 35-36, 41-46.

<sup>79</sup> California Attorney General's Office, "Hell's Angels Motorcycle Clubs," 5.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* Rivera, Interview. Elliott, "California: The Wild Ones," 25. Lyon, *Bikeriders*, 44. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 24, 34, 48, 73, 118, 130-131.

<sup>81</sup> Barger, *Hell's Angel*, *Ibid.*, 130-131. I interviewed Delores Whitedog, the "hippie girl" that was on his bike that day. She now lives and rides her own bike in New Mexico. Delores Whitedog and Heather, Interview by author, October 14, 2000, Albuquerque, New Mexico. For more on Chocolate George Hendricks, see "A Garland for Chocolate George," *Berkeley Barb*. 5-9-107 (Sept. 1-7, 1967), 3. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, 301.

<sup>82</sup> Richard Chase, dir., *Hell's Angels Forever*. Willie Nelson, Jerry Garcia, Johnny Paycheck, Bo Diddley, and Kevin Keating. Media Home Entertainment, 1983. Videocassette. See also Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, 301. Joan Morrison and Robert K. Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State: The Sixties Experience in the Words of Those Who Lived It* (New York: Time Books, 1987), 198-199.

<sup>83</sup> Stephen Van Tassel, "The Motor Cycle," *Harper's Weekly Journal of Civilization*. 43-2235 (October 21, 1899): 1063-1064. L. H. Bill, "The Poor Man's Automobile," *Overland Monthly* (August 1902), 197-198. Henry Norman, "What the Motor-Cycle Offers: The Cheapest Method of Transportation as Yet Discovered—the Coming Exchange of the Suburban Home for the Country Home," *World's Work* (July 1903), 3670-3672. R. G. Betts, "Motor Bicycling," *Collier's Weekly* (January 17, 1903), 33; and *Bicycling World* (May 16, 1903), 229 as cited in Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 99. *Motorcycle Illustrated* (June 1906), 14 as cited in Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 63. A. Russell Bond, "Practical Mechanics for Boys: What Every One Should Know About the Motor-Cycle," *St. Nicholas* 42 (September 1915), 998-1007. John Chapman Hilder, "Everybody's Motor-Cycle," *Harper's Weekly* 62 (February 5, 1916), 139. Matlock, "An Efficient Motorcycle Squad," 81.

<sup>84</sup> Benedek, *The Wild One*. Laughlin, *Born Losers*. Adamson, *Satan's Sadists*. Cardiff, *Girl on a Motorcycle*. Frost, *Chrome and Hot Leather*. Topper, *Hard Ride*. Arnold, "Ordinary Motorcycle Thrills," 252-253, 264-265, 274, 362-363, 373. Smith, *Harley-Davidson*. Burton, "Most Unpopular Men on the Road," 32-33, 128, 130.

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Boone, "How They've Halted Delinquency on Wheels," 99-102, 258. Osborn Elliott, ed., "Plight of the Cyclists," *Newsweek*. 69-13 (March 27, 1967), 88-89. Hughes, "Myth of the Motorcycle Hog," 74. Lyon, *Bikeriders*, 60-61. Chris Kallfelz, "Two-Wheeled Refuge: Shut Off from his Own Home, Herb Romm Fights Back," *American Motorcyclist*. 52-7 (July, 1998). Rich Sutton, "Hollister Dissent: Welcome to Hollister—Pull Over," *Thunder Press*. 7-6 (September 1998), 85-87. Doc Dolan, "Hen Roast Harassment: Overreaction Equals Subtraction of Shelter Funds," *Thunder Press*. 8-8 (November 1999), 61-62. Don H. Shamblin, "Brotherhood of Rebels: An Exploratory Analysis of a Motorcycle Outlaw Contraculture," (Buffalo: State University of New York at Buffalo, 1971), Ph.D. dissertation (Sociology). 50-53. Shamblin shows how one small marijuana arrest in 1965 spawned more than twenty articles in local newspapers and a *Newsweek* blurb, because the accused were members of a motorcycle club. Howard, "Return of the 'Wild Ones'," 8. Luce, "The Wild Ones," 22. Donovan, "The Wilder Ones," 23B. See also Donovan, "Requiem for an Angel," 57. Smith, "Mountains From Molehills," 46-50. Krikorian, "The Day That Kicked," A1, A14. William Murray, "Hell's Angels," *Saturday Evening Post*. 238-23 (November 20, 1965), 32-39. Hedley Donovan, ed., "Mayhem on Motorcycles," *Time*. 88-5 (July 29, 1966), 33. Donovan, "Requiem for an Angel," 57. Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs," 522-526.

<sup>85</sup> John H. Porter, "The In Wheels," *Mademoiselle*. 62 (February, 1966), 160-161, 185-188.

<sup>86</sup> Harris Edward Dark, "Your Youngster and the Motorcycle," *Today's Health* 45-5 (May, 1967), Cover, 20-24. See also, Elliott V. Bell, ed., "Wooing the 'Mild Ones'," *Business Week* 1752 (March 30, 1963), 26-27. Elliott V. Bell, ed., "Mild Ones Roar Off With a Market," *Business Week* 1941 (November 12, 1966), 49, 138-140.

<sup>87</sup> The few objections that were actually published include Brokaw, "Letters to the Editor," 7; Wynn, "Letters to the Editor," 7. Hughes, "Myth of the Motorcycle Hog," 74. In a rare instance of such objections receiving television airtime, a 1985 Alta California KTTV television editorial in favor of a universal mandatory helmet law in California was subsequently rebutted by a biker. See Mike Sanford, ed., "Editorial...", *Modified Motorcycle Association*. Circa early 1985, 7-8. Lisa Whitacre, interview by author, Typed e-mail responses to prepared questions, 7 January 2001. Lisa Whitacre, interview by author, Tape recording, Jerome, Arizona, 19 February 2001. K.T. and Espinoza Beltrán, Interview. Reilly, Interview. Ding, Interview. Rivera, Interview. Bobbi J. Hartmann, interview by author, Tape recording, Phoenix, Arizona, 20 March 1999. Jamal McGrath, interview by author, Tape recording, Gallup, New Mexico, 15 October 2000. Paul D. Bond, "Fuck Society Fuck All of Them Assholes: An Interview with the Galloping Goose Motorcycle Club," *NOLA Express* (New Orleans) 67 (October 30-November 12, 1970), Cover, 11-14.

<sup>88</sup> This is especially true for the Greater Borderlands where there were so few motorcyclists that everyone knew each other and attended each other's events. According to Hunter S. Thompson, "Motorcycles were comparatively rare in the early 1950s, and people who rode them were happy to find company." Thompson, *Hell's Angels*, 59. According to Hal Burton, two motorcyclists who met each other became friends instantly. Burton, "Most Unpopular Men on the Road," 32-33, 128, 130. See also Bell, "Wooing the 'Mild Ones'," 26-27. Bell, "Mild Ones Roar Off," 49, 138-140. Porter, "The In Wheels," 160-161, 185-188. Kanter, *Indian Motorcycles*. Hough, *History of the World's*. Willoughby, *Classic Motorcycles*. Louis, *Classic Motorcycles*. Bolfert, *Big Book*. Mark "Tiger" Edmonds, *Longrider: A Million Miles on Motorcycles and the Story that Goes With Them* (University of West Alabama, Livingston: Livingston Press, 1998). Tobie Gene Levingston, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman, *Soul On Bikes: The East Bay Dragons MC and the Black Biker Set* (St. Paul: MBI Publishing, 2003). Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 168. Hewston, "boozefighters-1.txt."

<sup>89</sup> Greater Borderlands news stories with anti-motorcycling bias were numerous. The few articles that cast bikers in a favorable light were typically buried further back in the paper or printed on the back page. Most recently, see Minerva Zapién Simental, ed., "GRACIAS al apoyo de los duendes chihuahuenses, el Santa del Moto Club Renegado AC logró reunir cientos de juguetes para los niños de escasos recursos, quienes tendrán una feliz Navidad," *El Heraldo de Chihuahua*. 80-28710 (December 17, 2007): 20B. Although such biker charity parade and other events were larger than this small captioned photograph on the back page indicates, the paper printed no article. The other paper, *El Diario Lealtad a Chihuahua*, did not even cover the event. Low levels of media coverage for a large or significant event was typical throughout the years and throughout the Greater Borderlands on both sides of the border. Similarly in the late 1990s, the Flagstaff *Arizona Daily Sun* deliberately ignored thousands of dollars in proceeds given to local charities annually by the Flagstaff ABATE chapter while other, non-riding, organizations (that donated lesser amounts) were honored in newsprint. In another 1998 example from Flagstaff, ABATE sponsored its political candidates' forum in October. Although the bikers' event attracted more people than any other political function in Flagstaff that year, no mention of it appeared in the paper. All of the local media had previously been informed of the event, which featured U.S. senatorial and state legislative candidates. In contrast, a smaller Flagstaff candidates' forum that same week, with a lower public turnout,

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appeared on the front page. See G.E. Roybal, "What, Me Worry? A Confident McCain Debates Opponents in Flagstaff," *Arizona Daily Sun*, Vol. 53., No. 25 (October 28, 1998), 1, 5. For another example of negative press coverage, see Tom Gorman, "32 Arrested in Motorcycle Fraud Scheme," *Los Angeles Times*, Vol. 115 (May 21, 1996), A-3, A-18. For an analytically detailed example from an earlier period, see Shamblin, "Brotherhood of Rebels." Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2007.

<sup>90</sup> Spider [pseud.], "Arizona Republic part 2." E-mail to the Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs List server, April 20, 2000, 2:52 p.m.

<sup>91</sup> Peter Fonda, "Easy Rappin'," *Rat Subterranean News* 2-15 (Late July, 1969), 20-21. John Carpenter, "Peter Fonda... the Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 6-260 (July 11, 1969), 32, 51. Dennis Hopper, dir., *Easy Rider*. Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper, Jack Nicholson. Columbia Tristar (Raybert Productions), 1969. Videocassette. Paul Glushanok, "'Easy Rider,'" *Rat Subterranean News* 2-15 (Late July, 1969), 20. "Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 6-264 (August 8, 1969), 43. "Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 7-33 (August 14, 1970), 15. Eric Blaushild, "Movie Review: Easy Rider," *The Big U.S.* 2-10 (September 11, 1969), 8-9. For examples of films they were rebelling against, see Berman, *The Wild Ride*. Corman, *Wild Angels*. Rush, *Hell's Angels on Wheels*. Laughlin, *Born Losers*. Slatzer, *The Hellcats*. Adamson, *Satan's Sadists*. Madden, *Hell's Angels '69*. Martin Rubin, "Make Love Make War: Cultural Confusion and the Biker Film Cycle," *Film History*. 6-3 (1994), 355-356, 375.

<sup>92</sup> Peter Rollins, Moderator for the Popular Culture Association / American Culture Association H-Net List server, Telephonic conversation with the author, 2002. For a typical contemporary response to such applause, see Bond, "Fuck Society Fuck All of Them Assholes," Cover, 11-14. Hopper, *Easy Rider*. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1985.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 1969-1970. "Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 6-264 (August 8, 1969): 43. "Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 7-33 (August 14, 1970): 15.

<sup>94</sup> Lisa Garber, "Women Who Ride: The Psyche of the Female Motorcyclist." Ph.D. diss. (Clinical Psychology), Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2002. 8.

<sup>95</sup> Hopper, *Easy Rider*. Yates, *Outlaw Machine*. Erik Fredelius, "Amerikanska Hell's Angels - Filmer och Svenska Motorcyklister," *RIG* 61 (1978), 11. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1998.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 1969-1996. Fredelius, "Amerikanska Hell's Angels," 11. Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders* 7-21 (November 13, 1972). Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders* 8-19 (October 17, 1973). Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "Street Legal Chopper Circa 1973?" *Easyriders* (October, 1971) and Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "ABATE Membership in 44 States have Started Working Toward Our Freedom of the Road," *Easyriders* (February, 1972) as reproduced in ABATE of Minnesota, "History of ABATE," Internet. <http://ic.owatonna.mn.us/~hjknp/abate%20History.htm> 1998. 1-5.

<sup>97</sup> Kimzey, "ABATE." (November 13, 1972). Kimzey, "ABATE," (October 17, 1973). Spider [pseud.], "Birmingham Biker Shot by Motorist," *Easyriders* 4-20 (April, 1974), 4. Larry W. "Rabbit" Cole, "To My Brother, With Love," *Easyriders* 4-20 (April, 1974), 4, 20-21. Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "Dirty Chauvinist Trick," *Easyriders* 4-20 (April, 1974), 28-29. Paul Carney, "The Ancient Hawg Rider," *Easyriders* 4-21 (June, 1974), 18-19. Carol, "No, I Can't Bake a Cake!" *Easyriders* 4-21 (June, 1974), 40-42. Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "California Tells DOT Where to Get Off!" *Easyriders* 4-24 (November 1974), 54. Renegade [pseud.], "Far Out, Baby!" *Easyriders* 5-28 (April, 1975), 54-56. Lou "Barf" Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders* 6-36 (May, 1976), 57. "Sarge," "A Tribute to Brothers Lost," *Easyriders* 14-130 (April, 1984), 81. Raider [pseud.], "Good Times with the Motor Maids: These Spunky Ladies Rode with Pride," *Easyriders*. 14-130 (April 1984). Keith R. Ball, ed., "Hall O' Fame," *Easyriders* 244 (October, 1993), 32. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, "Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell Before the Surface Transportation Subcommittee US House of Representatives Tuesday, May 4, 1993," *Easyriders* 244 (October, 1993), 34-37. ed. Keith R. Ball.

<sup>98</sup> Hughes, "Myth of the Motorcycle Hog," 74.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* See also Elliott, "Plight of the Cyclists," 88-89. Porter, "The In Wheels," 160-161, 185-188. Barger, *Hell's Angel*. Edmonds, *Longrider*, 68-74.

<sup>100</sup> Suzanne McDonald-Walker, *Bikers: Culture, Politics, and Power* (New York: Berg, 2000).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 60, 197-199. For contemporary 1960s and '70s fashions in leather, see Steele, *Fetish*, 35, 36, 39.

<sup>102</sup> Kathy Shaidle, *God Rides a Yamaha: Musings on Pain, Poetry, and Pop Culture* (Kelowna, British Columbia: Northstone Publishing, Wood Lake Books, 1998), 140.

<sup>103</sup> Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>104</sup> According to Thompson, "the temptation for many a motorist was to swing hard left, with no warning, and crush these arrogant scorpions." Thompson, *Hell's Angels*, 11.

- <sup>105</sup> California Attorney General's Office, "Hell's Angels Motorcycle Clubs." California Department of Justice, "Profile of Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Membership." Davis, "Outlaw Motorcyclists," McGuire, "Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs." Bertothy, "State Police Plead," 6-9. *Ariz. Rev. Stat. Ann. sec. 13-105*, par. 8. Hartmann, interview. McGrath, interview. Reilly, interview. Char Zack, interview by author, Tape recording, Cottonwood, Arizona, 16 March 1999. Bill Pierce [Mule], interview by author, Typed e-mail responses to prepared questions, 26 March 2001. Ding, Interview. Problem Child [pseud.], interview by author, Tape recording, Prescott, Arizona, 26 February 2001. Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs," 522-526. Donovan, "Requiem for an Angel," 57. Thompson, *Hell's Angels*. Luce, "The Wild Ones," 22. Howard, "Return of the 'Wild Ones'," 8. Donovan, "The Wilder Ones," 23B. Chris Kallfelz, "Appealing Decision: Appellate Court Upholds Spartanburg Ruling", *American Motorcyclist*, Vol. 52., No. 8 (August, 1998), 16. Bobbi J. Hartmann, "Fw: Update on Court Case," E-mail to ABATE of Arizona List Server. 13 November 2000, 3:32 a.m. Bruce [Meltdown] Newkirk, "Introducing the Motorcycle Rights Task Force...Zero Tolerance Level," (*Modified Motorcycle Association of Arizona Motorcycle Patriot* (July 1998), 1, 3. Modified Motorcycle Association of Arizona, Inc. (MMA-AZ), "MMA-AZ Motorcycle Rights Task Force Traffic Stop Report Form." Copies of documents filled out as the results of traffic stops returning homeward from the Arizona State Legislature, 21 January 2001. "GITEM Gangs Up: Gang Squad Takes Bikers for a Ride," *Tiempo Times* (March 14, 2001). Internet. <http://www.tiempotimes.com/gitemsection.htm>, 1-2. Bobbi Hartmann, "Arizona Drug and Gang Policy Council's Sunset Review," *Masterlink*. 7-11 (November, 1999), 1, 6. Barger, *Hell's Angel* 99-101, 127. Yates, *Outlaw Machine*, 39. Hewston, "boozefighters-1.txt." Smith, "Mountains From Molehills," 46-50. Krikorian, "The Day That Kicked," A1, A14. Davis Sheremata, "Hog Wild about Bike Gangs: Cash-Strapped Police are Creating a Scare to Get More Money, Says a Hells Angels Expert," *Alberta Report / Western Report*, 28 July 1997, 24-28. Zack, interview. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1982-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.
- <sup>106</sup> Whitacre, interview via tape recording.
- <sup>107</sup> George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Perseus Books, 1994).
- <sup>108</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1963; New York: Pantheon, 1973).
- <sup>109</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 106-107, 128, 130, 150, 152, 155-156.
- <sup>110</sup> California Attorney General's Office, "Hell's Angels Motorcycle Clubs." Elliott, "California: The Wild Ones," 25. See also Donovan, "The Wilder Ones," 23B. "Accused" is actually the term used by Hunter S. Thompson in his own published contribution to this deployment of sexuality. See Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs," 522-26, esp. 523.
- <sup>111</sup> "The Motorcycle Syndrome," *Time*. (December 7, 1970), 65.
- <sup>112</sup> *Dun's Review* (January 1972), 44.
- <sup>113</sup> Anne Tully Ruderman, "The Daring Escapade of 1916," *Ms*. 6-8 (February, 1978): 54-55. Anne "Tulle" Ruderman and Jo Giovannoni, "Adeline & Augusta Van Buren . . . Pioneers in Women in Motorcycling," *Asphalt Angels* 74 (September / October, 1998): 11-15. Women did not start to wear denim jeans until around 1920. See William L. O'Neill, *Everyone Was Brave: The Rise and Fall of Feminism in America* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 185. Bolfert, *Big Book*, 53.
- <sup>114</sup> Ruderman, "Adeline & Augusta Van Buren," 11-15. Ruderman, "Daring Escapade," 54-55.
- <sup>115</sup> Untitled. Photograph. Photo ID number PB135, F6, Item 6, Sharlot Hall Museum Archives and Library, Prescott, Arizona.
- <sup>116</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 107.
- <sup>117</sup> Teah Chadderdon, "Marketing Gender: Bodies or Bikes?" A paper delivered at the Southwest / Texas Popular Culture Association Annual Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 9, 2001: 33.
- <sup>118</sup> "Jayne Mansfield, posed as motorcycle cop 'Miss Traffic Stopper,' ticketing male driver," Photograph. Photo ID number NYWTS - SUBJ/GEOG--Beauty Contests--General <item> [P&P], Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. 1962. Gail DeMarco, *Rebels With a Cause: We Ride the Harley* (Santa Rosa, California: Squarebooks, 1994), 76. Yates, *Outlaw Machine*, 133. Gary L. Kieffner, Participant reflection, 1978-1996. Valerie Steele, *Fetish: Fashion, Sex and Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- <sup>119</sup> DeMarco, *Rebels with a Cause*, 120; Yates, *Outlaw Machine*, 133. Trisha Yeager, *How to Be Sexy With Bugs in Your Teeth* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1978), 2-3. K.T. and Espinoza Beltrán, Interview. Reg Kittrelle, "88 C.I. Twin Cam," *Thunder Press* 7-4 (July 1998), 1, 29. Aldersey-Williams, "Two Wheel Drift," 38-39. Woodring, "Motorhead Memo," 28. Smith, *Harley-Davidson*.
- <sup>120</sup> Ibid.



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<sup>121</sup> Barbara Joans, "Women Who Ride: The Bitch in the Back is Dead," in *Athletic Intruders: Ethnographic Research on Women, Culture, and Exercise*. ed. Anne Bolin and Jane Granskog (1997; Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A CULTURAL HISTORY OF BIKER DEATH-RELATED RITUALS

In the past twenty years, many books about the motorcycling community have appeared, nearly all of them non-academic productions marketed to a mass audience. Bikers wrote some of them while others were written by either enthusiasts or individuals with chips on their shoulders who wanted to criticize bikers. Collectively, popular cultural genres of motorcycling literature have contributed to the set of mythological images that was mentioned in Chapter Three and that made up the imagined biker lifestyle and culture.

However, rider death-related rituals have received little attention. Neither the popular genres of literature nor the few scholarly motorcycle studies published to date have addressed motorcyclist funerals, death rituals, or the ways in which riders viewed the afterlife. The present chapter is, for the most part, cultural anthropological history, a survey of biker funerals, rites, rituals and memorials in relation to military and other influences. It presents an ethnographic historical interpretation of motorcycling funerary and death-related practices as they evolved from the 1930s to the end of the century. For although much of biker culture originated at the dawn of the twentieth century, it appears that unique riders' death rites and rituals did not develop until much later.

I have participated in a countless number of motorcyclist funerals from 1983 through last year, way too many. Several of them were for my closest friends. Most of the riders had been killed by reckless car drivers violating the bikers' right-of-way. Yet, I have been trained to become an historian. Overall, one might say that I am very close to the topic of biker history

and death ritual practices but not too close to present it in an analytical manner. To that end, the organization of the chapter includes first some historical background. It identifies three influences that shaped the development of these rituals: the Irish wake, 1960s countercultural values and practices, and military death rites. Then, several sections follow that examine what the rituals may have looked like from outside biker culture followed by descriptions of rider meanings and beliefs.

The case studies in this chapter include one that was provided by my ABATE colleague Art Murray, who made it possible by losing traction on a slippery mountain road near the land of the sovereign Mouache-Capote (Southern Ute) Nation, crashing his Harley, and dying because New Mexico highway engineers had banked that one curve the wrong way. Thus, even this dissertation can be said to be an example of a motorcycling cultural death-related memorial as one remembers Art. I will draw no distinctions between the terms “biker,” “rider,” or “motorcyclist” until that particular section. Rather, they will be used interchangeably due to the historical interrelatedness of the entire riding community for most of the century up to that decade (the 1990s). For there were as many definitions of the word “biker” as there were people who rode bikes.

### **The Irish Wake and the Counterculture as Influences**

The boisterous, festive nature of today’s after-funeral biker receptions can be traced to a pre-motorcycle tradition, the Irish wake. An ancient Gaelic celebration of the life of the deceased, the wake typically occurred after the burial and included the consumption of copious amounts of alcoholic beverages and other activities. Traditional wakes honored the memory of the deceased by celebrating life. An event of renewal and rebirth required extraordinary

degrees of celebration. It was regarded as a party for, and a remembrance of, the deceased.<sup>1</sup> Countless motorcyclists in the southwestern U.S. and northern México had Irish surnames and ancestry, so it should be of little wonder if elements of an ancient Gaelic tradition continued for generations without abatement and if they influenced riding culture in the Greater Borderlands. Unlike the essential Irish wake, however, biker wakes after the mid-1960s were celebrated at the end of a large group run and they often included quality rock bands or spontaneous, sometimes brutal, fistfights.<sup>2</sup>

The contribution of the Irish wake to the development of riders' death rituals was supplemented by other more recent influences. Countercultural values and lifeways became popular along the Alta California coast, in Austin, Texas, and in some other Greater Borderlands communities among young people during the 1960s and younger motorcyclists were very much involved in these social changes. The counterculture, like the wake, was a lively phenomenon that influenced biker funerals and death rituals.<sup>3</sup>

Motorcyclists' death memorials can be traced back in time to at least 1937 when one funeral featured a motorcycle wheel decorated with flowers, placed on the casket. Yet, nothing else differentiated that particular ceremony from ordinary non-rider funerals.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the wheel was consciously or subconsciously placed on the casket as a subtle warning to the mourners not to ride such "dangerous" machines. However, the possibility exists that the flower-bearing esthetic touch—a "profane" object in an otherwise "sacred" setting—was rather intended as a kind of proto-countercultural statement that was thirty years too early, a deliberate intrusion in the midst of the holy church.

Bikers of the 1940s, '50s, and early '60s certainly attended the funerals of deceased riders. However, their funerals were not significantly different from those of the non-riding

Borderlanders of their time. Motorcyclist funeral practices were relatively conventional and their only distinction from those of larger society must have been the large numbers of motorcycles in the parking lots and their riders in attendance.<sup>5</sup>

The earliest known printed references to culturally distinct biker funerals are reports about those of “Chocolate George” Hendricks, and James “Mother” Miles, two Alta California, San Francisco Bay Area Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC) members who died in separate crashes in the mid 1960s. Both funerals included a procession of motorcycles that was loosely structured and several bikes wide in some places. Miles, a Sacramento Hells Angel had approximately three hundred riders at his January 1966 funeral including members of the Mofos, the Marauders, Gladiators, Crossmen, Thunderbirds, Hangmen, and the Falcons. Hendricks’s 1967 Cypress Lawn funeral preceded a wake in Golden Gate Park complete with food, beer, a shaved ice fight, and at least two famous rock bands: the Grateful Dead as well as Big Brother and the Holding Company. A huge crowd of hippies mingled with bikers from clubs such as Satan’s Slaves MC, the Gypsy Jokers, the Vagabonds, Saints Executioners, the Cossacks, and the Misfits. After his funeral, the *Berkeley Barb* printed an obituary with a stylized sketched portrait of Hendricks that suggested a halo around his head. These events were considerably larger than the average non-motorcyclist funeral.<sup>6</sup>

A rider’s funeral reported by *Life* magazine became the inspiration for the first of a series of preposterous, inaccurate “outlaw biker” movies from 1967 to the early ‘70s, films that were considered in Chapter Three. Filmmaker Roger Corman had taken notice of the magazine account and used it as a basis for a B-grade biker flick in which a highly dramatized “funeral” serves as the climax. The films may have influenced actual motorcyclists who watched them, leading to more changes in subsequent ceremonies far away from the Bay Area.<sup>7</sup>

Aspects of the new funerals may plausibly be viewed socially as responses to conventional non-rider funeral customs that existed at the time. Their emergence in history was contemporary to that of the youth counterculture and significant social movements and changes. Moreover, both sets of developments first occurred along the coast of Alta California during those years. Characteristics of mid-1960s Bay Area riders' funerals seem to signify that motorcyclists had an affinity with that societal development. For instance, the shaved ice fights at Hendricks' funeral wake should be considered to have been recreational and countercultural rather than part of a Gaelic tradition.<sup>8</sup>

Such commonalities between bikers, hippies, and other people under the age of thirty may be perfectly understandable when one considers that many motorcyclists in the latter half of the twentieth century had never served in the armed forces. Although no polls are known to have been taken, one gets the impression from the contents of productions such as popular books, magazines, record album covers and underground newspapers that, by the late 1960s, 70s and even into the early '80s, jingoistic, nationalistic militarism was anathema to many riders (even those who were veterans). Furthermore, the HAMC, essentialized by some authors to have been patriotic during those years, should not be portrayed in that way. Its extensively publicized Oakland Chapter certainly wanted the U.S. to win the Vietnam War. They backed up the Oakland Police to halt antiwar protesters and even wrote a letter and staged a press conference volunteering for mercenary service. Nonetheless, members of other HAMC chapters did not agree with Oakland Chapter's political stance.<sup>9</sup> Describing such differences, a former secretary of Frisco Chapter, "Freewheelin Frank" Reynolds said:

Somehow the Oakland Chapter got on this unexplained red-white-and-blue patriotic trip of smashing the picket lines.... The Viet Nam war trip is to me like a high school graduate trip in running a bulldozer in smashing and blowing up machinery.

Destruction in metal so that these phony's back home can keep their Du Pont production lines rolling. Every now and then they do sacrifice a few lives to make it look real.<sup>10</sup>

Such tensions between chapters of that club sometimes resulted in internecine fistfights.<sup>11</sup> Even the by-then obligatory funeral procession of motorcycles was more loosely conducted in the 1960s and '70s, sometimes monopolizing the entire roadway for both directions, compared to today's orderly, two-by-two formations. They appeared to be unorganized, unstructured events. Such a chaotic quality indicates a countercultural reification of individual rider prerogative as well as group desire to temporarily establish control of large areas of public space during the funeral. Ironically, motorcycle clubs that participated in such events were highly organized and rituals of solidarity and difference were central to such groups.<sup>12</sup>

The police escort of motorcycles in the funeral procession became customary by the early 1970s. The author of one narrative account wrote, "the fuzz escorted us through one light after another..."<sup>13</sup> The term "fuzz" as signifier for the police also betrays the affinity and extensive cultural relatedness that existed between bikers and the counterculture; after all, a "square" would not have used this word.

### **The Military Influence and Veteran Bikers**

An orderly dual-file, side-by-side regimentation developed years later in the early 1980s. By then, virtually every motorcyclist in the procession rode side-by-side with one other bike in one long pack riding in one lane only. Precision riding in formation was highly valued and admired by the end of the century. Only after 1988 did the pack become so tight and neat that a "missing man formation" became customary in some places and among a few groups. Accordingly, in the countless rows of two motorcycles each, the second row actually had only

one bike with the other space “open” for the one deceased member who could no longer ride in the pack.

Yet, the custom of the missing man formation did not originate with the counterculture or the practice of civil disobedience with its temporary full, maximal appropriation of public space. Rather, it was borrowed from a similar military tradition in which a squadron of aircraft would fly in formation with one plane missing in honor of the deceased pilot. Thus, the “missing man” motorcycle formation was a slight modification of countercultural practices, one almost imperceptible element in an otherwise remarkably large public phenomenon.<sup>14</sup>

Countercultural 1960s biker funerals were brought to the non-riding public’s attention at about the time when military funerals from the Vietnam War were becoming frequent. One may imagine a dissonant contrast having existed between these two sets of ritual practices. The counterculture was essentially freeform while the military was regimented. Even so, military symbolism, death rites, and practices (in addition to the missing man formation) have influenced motorcycling culture and riders’ funeral rituals.<sup>15</sup>

Indicators of changes in biker culturally-influenced collective attitudes toward military and patriotic themes can be recovered from biker magazines that typically reflected the values of their readerships. Virtually no advertisements, pictures, or articles with military and nationalistic themes appeared in these publications until the late 1970s. Symbols of nationalism or military pride, both commercial and individual, were first published in the months immediately prior to the U.S. bicentennial in 1976; they then disappeared only to recur frequently from the late 1970s through the ‘80s, and then prevalently in the 1990s. By 1984, biker magazines started to include columns addressing veterans’ issues.<sup>16</sup>



While few motorcyclists were doctors or lawyers, countless military veterans encountered the joys of motorcycling for the first time in their lives during the two world wars. A distinct riders' culture already existed at the end of World War I and many veterans were bikers. In 1919 El Paso, the Hounds included members who were former members of the military. As mentioned in Chapter One, members of the first women's motorcycle club, the Motor Maids of America organized just before U.S. involvement in World War II, served in the military during that conflict. Several clubs past and present can be traced to military origins and new ones were formed after the end of each war from World War I through the founding of the Desert Storm Riders. Motorcyclists wearing the "Blue Goose" back-patch in the 1940s were the first of many clubs to actually have the word "Veterans" on their backs. The HAMC had impressive but little-known military origins. The Marines MC, the Buffalo Soldiers MC, and the Legion Riders of the American Legion have been late manifestations of such a military personnel-turned-biker phenomenon.<sup>17</sup>

In México, the Dorados de Villa traced their legacy back to General Francisco Villa's unit known by that name. The names of other motorcycle clubs from Delicias Pueblo and Ciudad Chihuahua to the Central Valley of Alta California similarly reflected a *Villista* heritage. Some, including the Centauros de Juárez, the Valley Boys MC of east El Paso, and one other club in central Chihuahua, incorporated such mythical elements associated with Villa in the names of their clubs and in their back-patch artwork that included bandoliers, sombreros, handlebar moustaches, and the Mexican national flag. Another club in the San Joaquín Valley called itself the Pancho Villa MC. The Revolution of the 1910s and '20s, especially the legacy of Villa, remained an important source of *norteño* pride and conveyed a great amount of cultural capital in the Greater Borderlands both north and south of the border.<sup>18</sup>

In Alta California and Arizona, military culture was very influential in many (but certainly not all) of the HAMC chapters. An article and individual memorial published in a 1990s southern Arizona motorcycle-oriented newspaper provides us with a narrative account of the funeral of Antonio “Emo” S. Duran, a member of that club. The author, familiar with HAMC jargon, wrote that Duran “took the ‘Big Ride’ on the ‘Big Red Machine’.” Members from two countries, as well as other clubs, independent riders and family members, attended the rosary convened in a crowded mortuary chapel with a Roman Catholic priest presiding. The casket was then placed in a hearse. Motorcycles escorted the hearse to the burial site in the cemetery adjacent to the chapel in a regimented, orderly manner, while most of the other riders walked to the grave. After the gravesite service, a party—complete with music by the Belanger Brothers Band and food including hamburgers, chicken, hotdogs, chili, chips, and potato salad—was celebrated at their clubhouse. The published memorial featured four pictures and a poem that included the military-derived popular cultural term “captain of my soul.” The article described the progression of funeral events, complimented the service and party, expressed condolences, and included a message to the deceased. “Emo, ‘RIP’, (Ride in Peace), watch over all of us, and we will all see you when our time comes! Hells Angels Forever!”<sup>19</sup>

The same journalist wrote another published memorial in honor of “Warrior Iron” Wheeler Allen Davis, a biker preacher who had served as a Christian chaplain in prisons and jails. The article included a picture of the deceased riding his Sportster, the ministry’s logo, a description of his ministry and his funeral, a reprint of a “Call to Repentance” that the deceased had used in his ministry, and a poem written by his biker friend Jim Williams. The last stanza of the poem, which was about the Christian ministry of the deceased, read, “Now the warrior is gone, Homeward bound was his last ride, On his steel horse of faithfulness, With WARRIOR

IRON on its side.” Like many other motorcyclist funerals, Davis’s was held in a church and was well attended.<sup>20</sup>

As the last two examples indicate, values and symbolism adapted from military cultural origins had some effect on biker death memorials. One article was steeped in militant Christian language in honor of a “Christian warrior,” while the other memorial honored a member of a club that traced its foundation back to elite, nonconformist U.S. military aviation units. Although differences in belief systems may have existed, many riders either shared a common military experience or were influenced by the significant amount of time they spent in the company of veteran motorcyclists.<sup>21</sup>

In the latter half of the twentieth century, if not earlier, many active-duty military personnel self-identified as bikers that were living temporarily in an oppressive regimental bureaucracy (the army or another armed service). Hated regulations, which eventually included the mandatory wearing of ankle-covering boots, long sleeve pants and shirts, psycho-glow Velcro vests, full-fingered gloves, and helmets (with all of the gear compulsory regardless of the ambient air temperature in the desert Borderlands) often made the rider grossly uncomfortable while riding but did not hinder his or her embrace of motorcycle culture.<sup>22</sup> Thus, a published death memorial from a U.S. marine base could read, “You died on 10/25/83 in Lebanon keeping peace. Your life was taken cheaply by some communist pig in a suicide cage....” (From the 1960s through the end of the century, many riders used the word “cage” to refer to any car. For like a cage, the car enclosed and encased its occupants.)<sup>23</sup> Sometimes enthusiasm by armed forces personnel for motorcycling resulted in the submission of their death memorials to the biker magazines. In addition, the overall influence of military life, rhetoric, and death was obvious in the memorials.

In the Borderlands, many military veterans rode with the clubs while others roamed in the larger, non-affiliated riding population. Since military veterans at various times during the twentieth century may have disproportionately become motorcyclists and joined clubs, their influence upon the ways in which death memorials, funerals, and related rites were conducted should not be surprising. Thus, military origins greatly influenced the alternative ritual practices and perceptions of life and death that emerged in biker culture, particularly in funerary rites.

### **Run For the Wall**

In addition to symbols, funerals, and published articles, annual memorial runs organized for purposes that included remembering and paying tribute to the dead took place in the Greater Borderlands. Perhaps the greatest among these events was Run For the Wall (RFTW), which has rolled across the Greater Borderlands and the continent every May since 1989. In the early years of RFTW, its purpose was not yet articulated in the form of a “mission statement” and it had not yet begun to be conducted in a more aggressively militant manner as in recent years. The purpose was to simply travel to Washington, D.C. in order to participate in Rolling Thunder (RT), a new annual parade of motorcycles demonstrating in favor of veterans’ issues, which was staged from the Pentagon to the Vietnam Memorial Wall and scheduled on the day before Memorial Day.<sup>24</sup>

The fact that RT’s bike parade occurred exactly one day before a national holiday designated for honoring the nation’s deceased veterans was significant. For RFTW and RT included military-influenced ritual practices and elements designed to remember the dead, “to honor the memory of those Killed in Action (KIA).”<sup>25</sup> To expand public awareness of veterans’

issues, RFTW used ceremonies, spokespersons, and the mass media all the way across the country in areas that it passed through. Yet, RFTW and its rituals conducted for so many days every May cannot be simply essentialized as death memorials, since the increasingly widespread belief among participants was that live prisoners still existed overseas and that their comrades were still being held in captivity in Southeast Asia.<sup>26</sup> Social and political agendas related to RFTW and veterans' issues transformed the rituals far beyond a simple series of memorials to the dead.

Southern California ABATE members like "Gunny" James Gregory first organized RFTW. It initially went from Los Angeles through Las Vegas on its way to D.C.; therefore, many of the riders lost their travel funds in slot machines that rendered them financially unable to continue the run. Only fifteen of the 115 riders that started in California made it all the way to D.C. In those early years, the RFTW organizers eventually decided to stay away from Vegas and to reroute the run through Flagstaff, Albuquerque, and then from Angel Fire Memorial across *Apacheria* north and east through Cimarron, New Mexico, Colorado and Kansas.<sup>27</sup>

In 1993, I started riding with them every year and still do. The beginnings of a mission statement appeared shortly after I joined them, as its purpose was now to not only memorialize those who died while serving in the military but "to create a groundswell of support for all **American Prisoners of War and Missing in Action**" (emphasis in the original document). Billing itself as a "pilgrimage," the run's two mottos at the time were "They Fought For Your Freedom, Now Fight For Theirs" and "Bring them home or send us back!!"<sup>28</sup>

When Skipper (Wind and Fire MC, former U.S. Marine Corps) was assigned to become permanent road captain after the 1997 run, he took the creation of "a groundswell of support" (as organizational purpose) to heart and, along with his wife Red Light, expertly created a

massive media relations campaign that drew a great deal of attention to the run in every area it passed through. They organized outstanding ceremonies conducted by local military and veterans' organizations everywhere along the route. The lasting relationship that the pair established between RFTW, Navajo Nation, the until-then U.S.-classified Code Talkers (usually Diné and former USMC), and Tségháhoodzáni (Window Rock) was probably unprecedented in the history of international relations between indigenous and non-indigenous countries. RFTW was the first non-Native group that the Navajos ever invited to participate in Enemyway ceremonies in that sacred place.<sup>29</sup>

The significance of place and space should be mentioned here. Both before and after RFTW's first encounter with Diné medicine men, non-Indian motorcyclists often failed to maintain any geographical distancing of themselves from traditional indigenous holy places. It happened at the Paha Sapa near the Sturgis Rally every year since the 1930s and at several sacred places in the Greater Borderlands that I hesitate to name here. They simply trespassed on the sacred land whether knowingly or in ignorance. Such irreverent trespassing was resented by Native peoples who had wanted only to be left alone. On other occasions in other places, such as RFTW at Tségháhoodzáni, the American Indian nations and peoples invited certain groups of non-Native bikers into their most sacred places and a few of the group members to participate in the ancient rites (particularly those riders who remained visiting with the people long after the secular ceremonies were complete).<sup>30</sup>

The results of the "groundswell" that Skipper, Red Light, and RFTW created were subsequently most apparent in the border zone whenever people crossed the international boundary heading north, looked up at the U.S. flag, and saw the black "P.O.W. / M.I.A., You are Not Forgotten" flag flying directly below it. A couple of the riders from Phoenix were

jealous of Skipper's and Red Light's leadership abilities and organizational skills, however, and caused them to be deposed the following year. The board of directors decided that a road captain would no longer be allowed to serve in that position for two or more years in a row. Skipper and Red Light were too competent at their jobs and RFTW was unwilling to uphold such high standards of individual and collective self-discipline, group-riding coalescence, post-military bearing, or impeccable professional coordination. Many of the regular annual participants said that the whiners in south central Arizona won while everyone else lost.<sup>31</sup>

### **RFTW After Sunset and the Temporary Seizure of Public Space**

In *Run For the Wall: Remembering Vietnam on a Motorcycle Pilgrimage*, Raymond Michalowski and Jill Dubisch present us with a day-to-day cultural anthropological account and analysis of the run during those later years, emphasizing how its healing qualities, rituals, and ideological dimensions operated. After thorough analysis, they conclude that the best path to attain collective healing is to remember all dimensions of Vietnam from all perspectives as a great tragedy that may help humankind prevent similar mistakes in the present and future. These scholars problematize processes of individual and collective memory as well as the Vietnam War as tragedy. *Run For the Wall* is an excellent social scientific source for more information about RFTW in the 1990s.<sup>32</sup>

Michalowski and Dubisch emphasize what RFTW looked like *during the day*. However, most every evening half of the pack camped for free in donated campgrounds while the other half (including my two scholarly colleagues and friends) stayed in hotel rooms. Significantly, the run's rules for participation included a statement that no drugs or alcohol would be consumed during the day before they camped and there was a good reason for

placing such a stipulation predominantly on the run flyer itself. Run For the Wall nights were remarkably different, so much so that they resembled party runs that were completely unlike the daytime RFTW. On certain evenings, the local ABATE, another MRO, or veterans' organizations donated several kegs of beer, a rock and roll dance party band, a bonfire, or other appropriate elements (in addition to the fuel stops and toll road payments that the MROs donated during the days), which tended to encourage a party atmosphere. Many were the nights when riders barely crawled into their tents after drinking until 3:00 a.m. Women from the local areas often came to the campground or the adjacent lounge at night to dance and to party with the veterans and the possibilities resulting from such encounters were seemingly unlimited. The Michalowski and Dubisch text is an expert, professional social scientific account of the portion of RFTW that occurred during the day, but not the night.<sup>33</sup>

Soon after *Run For the Wall* was published, the character of the (daytime) run coincidentally changed. In 2001, an additional annual southern route RFTW was launched that went from Los Angeles through Phoenix, Tucson and one section of the border zone through El Paso, then Van Horn, Dallas, and across the Southern states. The additional route was seen as a disaster from day one, however, as one of its new daily organizers "broke rank" from RFTW's roots in ABATE and attempted to enforce his own pseudo-regulation that everyone must wear a helmet. Using a cliché from RFTW rhetoric, bikers said that he had "an attitude." Many veterans ignored him, however, and rode wearing what they wished according to their own proclivities.

Meanwhile farther north, the roadguards on the original RFTW route became more militant after 2001. Instead of politely talking to motorists in gas stations to persuade them to leave soon at the risk of being parked-in for thirty minutes, as they had done in previous years,



now they actually began to rudely *order* non-riders to vacate the premises as though the civilian car drivers were army soldiers or the station was an area of military operations. They thus commandeered a gas station every hundred miles or so. The roadguards started bullying gas station employees, the general public, and members of the press resulting in the emergence of lukewarm publicity and general public animosity toward the run and toward motorcyclists in general.<sup>34</sup>

While not a club, RFTW and similar narrow-issue riding organizations sold club-like back patches to anyone wishing to purchase one, rode together in a large pack as they tried to tighten it up to resemble that of a real club, and its riders called each other “brother” and engaged in ritual practices that had previously evolved for generations. To an outsider who may not have known much about biker culture, RFTW looked like a large club and acted like a club. After the turn of the twenty-first century, however, the gradually increasing level of aggressiveness on the part of its advance roadguards, as they quickly took charge of entire multi-island gas stations and threw their weight around, exceeded any offense that the Bandidos MC or the HAMC had ever been imagined to have committed in the previous fifty years.<sup>35</sup>

To a longtime rider, RFTW appeared to be just another manifestation of the general exploitation of motorcycling culture for external purposes that did not help the riding community or the rights of riders. The organization that RFTW evolved into existed primarily for outside political and social reasons and used motorcycles to promote an agenda that became more clearly defined over time and was designed for the sole benefit of veterans. Similarly, other riding organizations and pseudo-clubs appeared in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries whose interests and constituencies consisted of border patrol agents, commercial

concerns, police officers, or other special groups and their supporters. Since they and their organizational purposes did not inure to the benefit of the motorcycling community, one may say that they robbed biker culture of its greatest resource—its people—and exploited them for other purposes.

Many military veteran riders throughout the Greater Borderlands did not ride on RFTW's cross-country runs. For example, on Memorial Day 1998 the Flagstaff, Arizona Veterans Memorial in Citizens' Cemetery was dedicated by five chapters of the Vietnam Veterans MC and other veterans' organizations. The rituals included a parade through town with U.S. flags flying on the motorcycles, speeches by politicians, music, cannon fire, and a twenty-one-gun salute in honor of deceased veterans.<sup>36</sup>

### **Post-Counterculture Outward Appearances**

While hippie and countercultural forms waned or were appropriated commercially in the 1970s, biker culture continued to develop along a divergent path and crystallized in its own distinct ways. Unlike many ex-hippies who were said to have “sold out” to “the Man,” many motorcyclists of the 1970s refused to cut their hair short and continued to reject mainstream cultural norms while embracing other distinct symbols, clothing styles, and behavior. The post-revolution riding culture increasingly valued separatism while retaining the counterculture's values and ideals related to moral relativity, free love, and individuality.<sup>37</sup>

In Alta California and throughout the Greater Borderlands, a different outlook toward death also developed, a somber fatalism that at least one mass cultural production characterized as a collective flirtation with the Grim Reaper. For many riders of that era, death became a way of life in an impulse that reflected the contemporary style and sensibilities popularized by Ozzy

Osbourne and Black Sabbath among that proto-heavy metal band's non-riding fans. Sabbath's song "War Pigs" on their multi-platinum album *Paranoid* (Warner Brothers, 1971), a critique of the generals, the military industrial complex and mutually assured destruction, was an anthem of sorts among both bikers and youthful rock and roll enthusiasts. Before the kids started to dress up like bikers, they had already developed a style of doom and gloom while actual motorcyclists—many of whom were by now slightly older than them—embraced symbols of death in their words and in their bikes' paint jobs.<sup>38</sup>

Much of the influential artwork (both gas-tank and published works) in early 1970s biker magazines featured a motif of morbidity. One out of seven t-shirts sold in these early editions portrayed stylized images of death. Even the centerfolds in some of these publications depicted not a nude woman, as might be expected, but were instead the sites of personal or collective death memorials.<sup>39</sup> One such published memorial included an eerie *haiku*-style poem in which Elliott Fried predicted his own death:

I dreamt I died by truck....  
The impact. Flung  
Like seed, entering earth....<sup>40</sup>

Another published memorial featured surreal artwork including a barely recognizable, stylized image of Big Sur (between Monterey and San Luis Obispo, Alta California), an expressionistic highway ribbon winding above ground level, meandering through a skull. The art on the two pages included human half-skulls. Of the eight poems on those pages, two addressed rider afterlife spirituality, two were individual death memorials, two graphically described fatal crashes, and five were related to death in some way.<sup>41</sup>

After the mid-1960s, patch-holding clubs and other groups held more motorcycle runs in honor of deceased members either in conjunction with the funeral or at a separate time.

Some annual memorial runs were for an individual while others were in honor of many riders. During most of these runs, the motorcyclists took a ride to the location of death where a ceremony reflecting the beliefs of the organizers was observed. The deceased biker's favorite beer or alcohol was usually poured onto the ground; sometimes flowers or tobacco were utilized or placed there. If tobacco was used, then the ceremony was usually syncretic and influenced by New Age elements rather than traditional Native American.<sup>42</sup>

Occasionally, such ritual practices were observed after a funeral service or during the procession. The riders rode in formation (sometimes including the location of death in the procession's route), attended the funeral, traveled to the cemetery, then went to the clubhouse or another location for a wake or party, if it was not celebrated at the grave itself. During funerals, the motorcyclists rode together in one large pack with the hearse (sometimes in front of it, other times behind) and always in front of the cars or other vehicles. (Some bikers owned hearses—that were either painted in psychedelic colors or preserved in their original paint schemes—but they used them as chase vehicles hauling beer and other supplies for regular runs only.) During actual funerals, the bikes departed the service in formation and left the cemetery in the same manner. If a surviving brother in the 1970s had owed or had promised any motorcycle parts to the deceased, then the survivor polished, painted, or otherwise decorated these parts and placed them in the casket before it was closed.<sup>43</sup>

Present-day rider mores, including the custom of wearing whatever run pin or similar accoutrement a brother may have given, can be traced to those years (if not earlier). Items included not only ornamental pins but also other jewelry, war trophies, or similar personal gifts that the deceased may have bestowed upon individuals.<sup>44</sup> Such death rituals were described in early issues of biker magazines that first appeared in the 1970s. In one published 1974 death

memorial, the surviving brother wore an earring that his dead brother had given him. He wore it in remembrance of the deceased. “[J]ust as I always have that earring, so too, I will always have my brother.”<sup>45</sup>

The description of his brother’s funeral revealed a wealth of information about the cultural system including expected ritual actions and aesthetic preferences. The author indicated that the riders must have expended considerable amounts of effort while polishing their rides for the funeral, working “long into the night.” The several back-patches of the different clubs were described as “multi-colored.” Even “the grease and oil” on the patchwork was “unforgettable.” A variety of clubs and other motorcyclists along with a great number of bikes participating were desirable, regardless of whether the deceased was actually known by the participant. Such preference for a multitude of motorcycles from a large number of clubs at such funerals was indicated by the phrase, “lined up for a block and more, the long, sleek front ends stabbing forward.”<sup>46</sup>

Attendance at funerals was mandatory for all patch-holding club members. If the club was responsible for funeral arrangements, then the deceased received proper and respectful funerary rites. These included the arranging of traffic control and the organizing of a wake. The club worked with the funeral home director, police, and other necessary parties. Members were buried either while wearing their vests or the same were placed on top of the caskets (depending on club protocol). The other clubs attended to show respect to the bereaved club.<sup>47</sup> According to a description of one motorcyclist’s funeral, “parts of the motorcycle were put in the grave with him. That night the club had a party.... he was in a place where the citizens and cops would not bother him.”<sup>48</sup>

Although a post-funeral party in honor of the deceased member's life was certainly customary by 1974, one description from that year lacked a definitive reference to it. Instead, the biker author wrote, "Yes, there was almost a party attitude. But not quite. One glance at the face of any man on any one of the bikes was a warning...." The surviving brother apparently went for a high-speed ride, alone. As he later described his run, "Santana played his song in my head. No tension. No hate. No fear. Just me and my scoot and peace."<sup>49</sup>

### **Memorial Formations and Practices**

In addition to funerals, annual runs, rituals at roadside monuments, symbols and imagery of death, and published articles, other rider death memorials included the distribution of "In Memory of...." patches. These small, embroidered cloth items, designed to be sewn onto the front or side of the riders' leather or denim vest, were sometimes sold to raise funds for the family of the deceased or for the club. Other times, they were sold at-cost with no beneficiary motive. Beginning in the 1990s, mourners who had been closest to the deceased sometimes wore black armbands on their left side, an item that may have had its antecedents in various military uniforms or traditions.<sup>50</sup>

The annual El Paso Toy Run, benefiting thousands of underprivileged children in El Paso and Sunland Park, New Mexico, was dedicated to the memory of Frank Root, one of its two cofounders in 1983.<sup>51</sup> More recently, El Paso bikers started the Carlos Briseño Memorial Foundation to help injured riders and survivors of motorcyclists that died on the city's streets. Briseño, who had died during the Marine Corps Toys for Tots Run, was a victim of road rage. In Las Cruces, New Mexico, the annual Barney Villa Memorial Run took place in late summer during the weekend of the Hillsboro Apple Festival. The motorcyclists met at a Las Cruces

restaurant for a specially prepared breakfast burrito brunch, then rode in a pack to the exact curve location along the isolated desert road where Villa had mysteriously crashed and died in the late 1990s. After observing a Christian-flavored freeform ceremony at his roadside cross memorial, the riders then remounted and rode together into Hillsboro where the biker party in the cantina overflowed onto the street. Many bikers rode on that memorial run and reveled in the small Sierra County town. Within the first couple of years of the first Barney Villa run, there was talk in Hillsboro about discontinuing the Apple Festival.<sup>52</sup>

Somewhat similarly, members of the SunRiders MC in Gallup, New Mexico hosted an annual memorial run to remember and honor their deceased brothers and sisters. In 1998, it started at a restaurant for breakfast and included a poker run / observation run, bike games, a 50/50 raffle, two bands, and a prize for the largest (other) club in attendance. The proceeds went into a toy run fund to benefit children at Christmas. The purpose of the memorial run was to “preserve the memories of fellow riders who are no longer with us.”<sup>53</sup> Such runs were not influenced much by military ritual forms.

Another form of honoring deceased riders at the end of the millennium was through the staging of runs that raised money for medical research to find effective medicine to treat the cause of death. Virtually every HOG chapter in the Greater Borderlands had an annual benefit run for the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). Dealerships and women’s motorcycle accessories shops organized breast cancer runs. Various clubs organized an annual run for one medical association or another.<sup>54</sup>

Published memorials usually accented desirable traits the deceased was said to have possessed. Often a memorial write-up served to provide examples of preferred character traits for readers to live by in their own lives. For example, a 1993 *Easyriders* “Hall O’ Fame”

column included a description of Paul “P.K.” Klein, a bartender biker who had died while protecting his customers from gunfire. “[T]he courage of a bro whose heroics won’t be forgotten” is cited.<sup>55</sup> Such memorials reified proper character and behavior, denounced incorrect or inept driving habits, or sometimes called the reader to become involved in relevant social or political activities.

When Jerry Ross “Yozemite” Blair, ABATE of Arizona’s newly elected state coordinator died in 1997, the organization’s state newsletter featured a full-page memorial. The story of how he had died appeared on page two. The memorial itself was on page five, farther forward and larger than most others published in such a newsletter from the 1970s through the ‘90s. His widow Susie Blair wrote most of it. Her article included expressions of gratitude, a short biography, an account of how she had met him, a description of how he had believed in the work of ABATE with all his heart, and how much he had liked to ride. “When Jerry rode he was in 7<sup>th</sup> heaven.... Left this world doing what he loved to do, RIDING IN THE WIND.” The memorial page also featured a poem and a haunting double-exposed picture of the deceased.<sup>56</sup>

Some individual death memorials could be found in unexpected places. Unique forms of biker death memorials included club or association sponsorships in various “Adopt a Highway” programs (preferably along the section of road where the rider had died) and the erection and periodic observance of ceremonies at roadside death memorial stones or crosses. Many cantinas in the Greater Borderlands had memorials on their walls in honor of prominent deceased bikers. These usually consisted of framed or unframed photographs or photographic posters with captions. Some material cultural dedications were even more prominent. The vest of Florentino “Lico” Subia, President of the Iron Horses of El Paso from 1978 until he passed



away in 2006, was not buried with him. Instead, his brothers and sisters encased it in a glass display frame complete with an “In Memory of...” plaque that was mounted on the wall of Mulligan’s North Bar and Grill in El Paso. Often, a rider’s political or social stature in life was reflected in death by the size or nature of such artifacts.<sup>57</sup>

### **Rodney Dukes and Participant Observations**

The first real “biker funeral” that I ever attended convened in Santa Cruz, California in 1983 or ‘84. As most riders at such an event may not have ever met the deceased, so it was for me, this first time. I did not even know his name, much less remember it. While most funerals resulted from a motorcyclist “doing what he liked to do” (i.e., riding the bike), this biker’s death was unusual because he had died while being “hassled by the Man.” He had been shot by a police officer while standing on a sidewalk in front of a business office at a strip mall. The police later claimed to have had reason to believe that he was armed, but they had searched the body and found that he had no firearms or other weapons.

A few days later, we all met in a parking lot on the west side of the city and rode together in one big, long pack through the downtown area and out to the strip mall at the corner of Soquel Drive and Capitola Road where he had died. Each stoplight and intersection was blocked by either a police officer or one of the bikers (spontaneously serving as a roadguard) so that the pack could safely and efficiently ride on through. Each motorcycle stopped momentarily at the place where the deceased had fallen, while the women on the back seats of the bikes threw roses and other flowers onto the precise spot on the sidewalk. The bikes then rode in formation through the Live Oak section and on to the funeral home. Thousands of riders attended and it took a long time to file past the casket. The two things that I remember

the most about his body (and many others since then) were his youth and the fact that he was wearing dark sunglasses and leather riding gear. There were also some engine parts in his casket. After the service, the riders followed the hearse in procession to the cemetery, after which they rolled to a saloon where there was a huge party. I do not recall going home that night.

I also do not know what the gravestone looked like. In the latter half of the century, such markers sometimes indicated road names or the fact that the deceased had ridden a motorcycle. They usually did not, however; for sometimes non-riding family members—while directing specific components of funerary ritual—obscured his or her identity and status as a biker in the riding community. Other times, biker status was more obvious. The engraving on one 1975 biker gravestone included the name of the deceased, his road name, birth and death dates, and an engraved motorcycle with a sissy bar. An open bible bas-relief capped the stone.<sup>58</sup>

In contrast to many headstones that ignored a person's biker identity, roadside markers and monuments marking the places where riders had died invariably included information such as the road name of the deceased as well as the name of the club or an acronym that may be interpreted by insiders. The roadside marker on a southern Arizona desert mountain highway dedicated to Rodney Dukes (November 11, 1972 - April 12, 1998), for example, did not include these birth and death dates. Rather, his two-to-three feet high granite stone was engraved with "Wild Child" (his road name) and "DTFFDT" (Desert Thunder Forever, Forever Desert Thunder) since he was a member of the Desert Thunder MC. I was there when his club installed the marker.<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, I had been present at the same place one year earlier when Dukes had died. On Easter Sunday, 1998 he was riding with Thumper, president of his club, on separate bikes as they were returning home from a large weekend rally. While going around a curve up on that mountain, a car traveling in the opposite direction crossed the center line and violated their right of way. The car driver struck Dukes head-on, killing him and broadsided Thumper as well. My pack was about five minutes behind the two motorcyclists. When we arrived at the scene, I helped some other riders administer last rites to Dukes, who was Catholic. He died there lying on the ground at the side of the road. We MEDEVACed Thumper via helicopter and assisted with crash scene management. Then the Department of Public Safety (DPS) officers arrived. The car driver was not cited.<sup>60</sup>

One year later on Easter Sunday, a pack of Desert Thunder MC members planted the monument stone at the place where the crash had occurred, only a few feet farther away from the road at the exact place on the shoulder where Dukes had landed on the ground. I was the only non-member of the club present, having been invited because I had helped to administer last rites the year prior. The present syncretic ceremony included elements of Roman Catholic, Gnostic, and Wiccan ritual combined with a song from Haudenosaunee (the six sovereign Iroquois nations). After we smoked the pipe, some sacred tobacco was ritually encased within the concrete of the stone's foundation.<sup>61</sup> Each member was afforded an opportunity to either address Wild Child or to speak about him. As we drank beer, we shared it with the deceased by pouring some on the ground near the stone.

**Roger Lyons, Lane Lolley, the Police, and Salvation through Integration**

Perhaps the most recent trend in the history of biker funerary developments during the twentieth century consisted of the sudden appearance of inordinate amounts of police presence that extended well beyond the usual need for officers assigned to traffic duty. Although overwhelming police presence at funerals became significant in the Greater Borderlands only late in the century, a similar incident occurred far from the border as early as 1977. That autumn in Milwaukee, a group of ten or fifteen city police handcuffed Outlaws MC member Roger "Rocker" Lyons, and then beat him to death with billie-clubs and boots and threw his lifeless body into a paddy wagon. (I have heard stories about similar incidents that took place in other places, including Phoenix, but this time it was noticed and extensively documented. Having perused all available grand jury and other available documents, I outline the rest of this incident here.) Days later during the funeral, the police kept driving their patrol cars alongside the procession and swerving at the bikes. They wrecked at least one motorcycle.

Meanwhile, the club members had to serve as the procession's roadguards, blocking all traffic lights and intersections themselves. Attorney Tony SanFelipo, who was present, said that the club was so outraged that when the roadguard members went up the onramp to block the right hand lane of the expressway, they did not even turn their heads to look at the traffic. They just came up, stopped their bikes in the lane, and thus protected the pack without self-regard, seemingly demanding respect, submission and compliance because of the perceived wrongs that had been committed against them and their brother.<sup>62</sup>

When the funeral arrived at the cemetery, the recently formed SWAT team already had officers with a machinegun stationed on the roof of a nearby building. Some police were lined up on the grass on one side of the graveyard while other officers apparently harassed a few of the mourners. Since Lyons had been a veteran, an army national guard detail was present to

render a twenty-one-gun salute, to play Taps, and to fold and present to his widow a U.S. flag that was draping his casket. Before the national guard troops were able to perform their ceremonial duties, however, the city police interrogated them as well, demanding that they show identification cards and making them submit to pat-down searches.<sup>63</sup>

As the biker pallbearers carried Lyons's casket across the grass, the line of police began to close in. Noticing their approach, the riders then temporarily set the casket down on the ground, donned their motorcycle helmets and rushed the advancing police, running toward them carrying bike chains and whatever else was readily available. The police unit saw the motorcyclists running toward them so the officers stopped, turned around, and ran away. Meanwhile, the SWAT officers on the roof did not open fire, but only watched.

After the police retreated, they stayed farther away from the funeral. No other unusual events occurred that day. Perhaps since that particular police department and the Lyons death was thoroughly investigated and later featured on the *60 Minutes* television show, no similar incidents are known to have occurred for the next two decades.<sup>64</sup>

It sometimes seems as though no institutional memory existed, however. Although in subsequent years it was customary for the police to provide escort service for biker funeral processions, in the late 1990s police departments in the Greater Borderlands north of the border—especially in southern and central Arizona—have misconstrued the desire for such service as an invitation to send in specialized units such as gang task forces or intelligence gatherers. Overwhelming police presence at funerals, sometimes consisting of what one biker called “two cops for every man,” was believed by motorcyclists to have become problematic and, by the end of the century, included police videotaping of mourners and taskforce disregard

for the norms and mores associated with common decency, respect for the dead, or the feelings of survivors.<sup>65</sup>

The Prescott (Arizona) Area Narcotics Task Force attended the funeral of “Two Dogs” Lane Lolley, a member of the Loners MC on January 30, 1999, setting up video cameras along the funeral route and at a house across the street from Memory Chapel Mortuary on Grove Avenue where the funeral convened. The police most likely videotaped the rituals in order to identify riders in the procession or to gather a tally of various club memberships. All riders and non-motorcyclists who were present viewed the videotaping very sternly, however, as did others who learned about it. The general reactions were of disgust, anger, or indignation over a police activity that was interpreted as an “un-American violation of [civil and religious] rights.”<sup>66</sup>

As with other funerary rites around the world, the principal meaning of twentieth-century biker funerals, memorials, and rituals was to bring closure to survivors, to reinforce belief in the worthiness of both the deceased and the group, and to remember and celebrate the person’s life. To help a rider on his final ride by serving as pallbearer or riding in the procession was to enact the ideal of “brotherhood” and to translate one’s faith into practice. The rituals often served to reify the club, motorcycling culture and lifestyle, or a political agenda.

Patch-holding clubs were often spiritually cohesive subcultural formations that resembled a combination of the extended family, the religious congregation, and the organization oriented toward a favorite pastime. These societies were based on a profound love for each other, a rejection of the larger society, and a specific way of life. Moreover, some clubs had a member who was its chaplain and such an individual was often familiar with holy

scriptures, personal counseling, and religious rituals. The individual's road name—"Preacher" or "Preach" or something similar—sometimes reflected such status.<sup>67</sup>

Spiritual beliefs partly determined the elements and sequence of motorcycle funerary rituals. If the body was not present for a memorial ceremony, the club rode to the location of death in order to seek the spirit of the deceased. On the other hand, the riders escorted the biker's spirit whenever they rode with the hearse. They left the service riding in formation in order to release the spirit of the deceased. In some clubs, such rituals for separation of the spirit from the body were also observed in order to maintain the strength of the club in terms of cohesion and power.<sup>68</sup>

The value of wholeness, in terms of oneness between the rider and the ride, also recurred as a sub-theme in funerals and death memorials. In a comprehensive review of three books that includes Robert M. Pirsig's best-selling *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Nancy Corson Carter calls it a belief in "salvation through integration." In his autobiographical epic, Pirsig searched for the manifestation of Quality. He had concluded that Quality was attainable or recoverable only when form and substance became reintegrated. Pirsig's *Zen* is Carter's main source for exploring holistic beliefs and practices in motorcycling. Carter takes motorcycle culture into consideration but does not specifically address funerary practices. Pirsig's autobiographical account, meanwhile, was only marginally influential in actual biker culture. However, both Pirsig's descriptions of relationships between human and machine and Carter's reading of his *Zen* are adept and applicable. Carter rightfully reifies the oneness that came to exist between the biker and the bike, a quality of life value and goal within the culture that was most important throughout the history of motorcycling. Taking her concept one step further to apply it to historical metaphysical ideology for this present

dissertation chapter, the human and the machine were seen as one in the afterlife. Such celestial union, along with value signifiers such as riding balance and unmolested peace, reinforced the worldly value of safe and edifying riding practices here on earth.<sup>69</sup>

### **Beliefs concerning the Afterlife**

To describe what such a metaphysical existence was imagined to look like, I will now resort to the outlining of a popular joke that was told and retold during the 1980s around the campfires of countless motorcycle runs. For even tales told in jest sometimes included elements of group belief systems. According to the story, three bros die and have to report to Saint Peter at the Pearly Gates of Heaven. The venerated guardian finds the first dead biker's name in the Book of Life and then reminds the deceased that, while alive, he had treated his employees poorly, had cheated on his ol' lady, and had lived a less-than-virtuous life. For being such a notorious sinner, he now has to ride a Suzuki GS 550 in heaven for the rest of eternity. He starts up his little bike and rides through the gates into heaven.

Saint Peter then finds the name of the second biker and informs him that he had lived an average life, that he had done more good than evil deeds, and reminds him that he had cheated on his ol' lady, but only once. For living a mediocre life, he is issued a 1971 Harley-Davidson Sportster. He would be able to ride a Harley in paradise but would have to perform a great deal of maintenance. The deceased mounts his medium-sized bike and rides into heaven.

The third brother, according to Saint Peter's Book, had lived an exemplary life and was "totally righteous." He had been generous to his club bros, always had a great amount of "class," and never cheated on his ol' lady. His reward for such conduct, a brand new deluxe Harley-Davidson Softail with the latest Evolution engine dressed completely in chrome, would



reflect the light of the Almighty mightily. With great mirth and “a big wide grin,” he proudly fires up the new bike and enters the Gates.

One week later, the ultimate biker rally convenes in the kingdom of heaven and the three see each other once again, have a drink together, and check out each other’s rides. The righteous one with the best motorcycle, however, is “really bummed out” and crying profusely. When the other two ask him why he is sobbing, he replies, “Last week I saw my ol’ lady riding a moped.”<sup>70</sup>

Other jokes indicative of biker culture existed; however, this was the only one I recall that related to the afterlife. This old joke was certainly misogynous to the extent that it objectified women and their sexuality. It could easily fit into Chapter One and a discussion of gender relations. Even so, I argue that it also reveals elements of the collective metaphysical belief system within hardcore biker culture. It was more than just a sexist campfire story designed to elicit laughter. For in circumstances and forums that were more serious, imagery of the afterlife resembled certain elements of the joke. In their hearts and minds, many riders believed that heaven would be a place for motorcyclists only (especially at a time when bikers were routinely barred from so many restaurants, bars, and hotels here on earth) and that they would be able to ride celestial scooters after dying and arriving there.

Belief that the deceased continued to ride after death pervaded practically all subcultures of motorcyclists, from one-percent clubs to HOG members. Where the spirit of the deceased was believed to be riding varied. Sometimes the afterlife riding route was visualized as traveling through the underworld or hell or, more frequently, here among us in the spirit realm of earth.<sup>71</sup> One 1974 after-funeral ride description, for example, included the implied belief that the deceased rode here among us:

I smiled to myself. I know I was alone on that run. Yet...I was not alone. From the corner of my eye I saw another scooter. I heard the sound of its engine. I saw the color of its paint. I felt its presence beside me. And I knew its rider even before I turned my head. My smile reflected my inner feelings a thousand times over. For there, beside me, riding tall and laughing, was my brother.<sup>72</sup>

More commonly, motorcyclists believed that the after-death run was in the sky between clouds, in “Harley Heaven,” or in heaven where God rode a motorcycle.<sup>73</sup> In a 1974 memorial poem, a biker named “Carney” wrote, “He rideth now in the azure sky upon a golden Harley.... He rideth free, he rideth far, Draped in a golden shroud...in Heaven from cloud to cloud.”<sup>74</sup> Years later, messages in balloons were launched into the sky during a biker preacher’s funeral. According to a reporter that attended the rite, “[T]hey were seeking its newest member of heaven.” The reporter also described the deceased as riding home on his motorcycle.<sup>75</sup>

Most published individual memorials in the late twentieth century that I surveyed referred to some sort of afterlife including some kind of reference to riding a bike there. A few mentioned a heaven or a “Harley Heaven.” A roughly equal number of the printed memorials referred not to heaven but to named clubs. Half of these were patch-holding clubs. The total number of magazine-published memorials for one representative month was eighteen, written by fourteen men and four women. Thirteen of the memorials referred to an afterlife, including some references to riding in that afterlife. Four of them mentioned heaven or “Harley Heaven.” Four referenced specifically named clubs. Two of the four were patch-holding clubs. One memorial asked the deceased, “P.S.: Does God ride a Harley?”<sup>76</sup> In southern Arizona, a Raw Thunder women’s riding association newsletter, in which a memorial dedication to a deceased member named Darchelle appeared, also mentioned ritual activities that were based upon the belief that she still rode with her sisters here on earth.<sup>77</sup>

### **Art Murray, Pam Meck, and Tension between Biker and Non-biker Rituals**

Art Murray's 1999 funeral in Flagstaff, Arizona illustrated the growth and manifestation, especially during the 1990s and after, of a cultural conflict that had developed between traditional bikers and non-riders, one that became more complex when the latter group allied itself with new motorcyclists. These new riders had surfaced as a demographic subgroup after 1984, when the Harley-Davidson Evolution engine made it possible for individuals who lacked mechanical aptitude to become owners and operators of Harleys. Many longtime bikers dismissed these new motorcyclists as "yuppies" or "RUBs" (rich urban "bikers") while other old-school riders saw some hope for the new motorcyclists, welcoming them to runs, events, and meetings.<sup>78</sup>

Murray was no RUB, however. A Vietnam veteran and pensioner, he had been an ABATE member, activist, and biker for almost all of his adult life. In his heart and in his deeds, Murray was "ABATE Forever," to use the words of late twentieth century riders.

Even so, his funeral was much different from those of most bikers over the previous thirty years. His surviving family members, especially his widow Annie Murray, were not motorcycle enthusiasts like him and were unknown in the riding community, yet she and her family excluded those friends who were closest to him from the ritual planning phase. Subsequently, most bikers attending his funeral—having traveled from around Arizona, Southern California, and many other places—viewed the rites as somewhat inept, dissonant, or pathetic. (Most attendees were Art Murray's fellow ABATE members.) I attended the funeral in a downtown storefront church, an uncommon venue for a biker death rite. Unlike virtually all other funerals and in spite of Murray's eyes being blackened from his crash, his body was

not wearing sunglasses. In addition, Murray's ABATE brothers were dissuaded from placing motorcycle parts or other objects in the casket.

The fact that Murray's funeral service was in a bible-thumping fundamentalist church significantly highlights the conflict that had emerged: a cultural struggle between traditional bikers like Murray who were, by no means, "religious" and organized evangelical groups that used family members to control the lifeless bodies of riders for their own agendas. Since his widow was a right-wing religious devotee, she apparently had decided to use her husband's death as a way to condemn the biker culture that he had loved so much. She and her family chose a novice motorcyclist that few people knew very well as a token "biker" speaker during the funeral rite, one who Art Murray had taken under his wing during the final few months of his life. Standing on the stage wearing brand-new leathers and high-water blue jeans with very few miles on them, up in front of a room full of real bikers and firefighters, the novice himself said it all when he stated, "...Art was my best friend. But to Art, everybody was his best friend." In life, the deceased had included a new rider and this particular motorcyclist felt honored to have met Murray (as he should have). The other two speakers during the service were Murray's former Burbank (California) Fire Department Captain and the anti-motorcycling preacher of the church. Most shocking to the bikers present, the preacher proceeded to deliver a canned "repent or perish" lecture "because Art would have wanted it that way."

It soon became obvious that many in the captive audience—Murray's dearest friends who had known him much better—were deeply hurt and offended by what they believed to be a verbal assault. A barely audible level of seemingly agitated talking arose throughout the audience. After the funeral service, the bikers and riders went outside and had their traditional

loud pipe salute, then followed the hearse to Citizens' Cemetery where the American Legion conducted military graveside rites. In subsequent days, it became apparent to me that the bikers' collective displeasure with the funeral service and graveside rites was even greater than had previously been realized. Apparently, the service insulted the community because of the family's choice of a "yuppie" speaker, the length and abusive nature of the preacher's sermon, his utter failure to adequately address Art Murray's life, and even the quality of the graveside rites. The Legionnaires were criticized for their sloppy appearance, their tape-recorded "Taps," their unfamiliarity with and confusion about whom to present the flag to, and the fact that the loosely folded flag fell apart as it was handed to Annie Murray.<sup>79</sup>

A subsequently printed memorial published in the local HOG newsletter attempted to address some of the complaints and discussed them in the context of a particular sort of "Christian" discourse. The author expressed his pleasure that Murray was Christian, and thus "saved," but also appropriated an element of rider spiritual beliefs by referring to the survivors being able to ride with Art again sometime in the future. The article started philosophically, segued into fundamentalist theological dogma, and then honored Annie Murray for having a "Christian" funeral.<sup>80</sup>

That same edition of the HOG newsletter included another memorial written by the same novice rider that had spoken at Murray's funeral. His article began by thanking everyone for attending, stated that Annie and her family liked the procession, and encouraged the reader to visit her. The author then included a sales pitch for inordinately overpriced "In Memory of Art Murry" patches in the published memorial, misspelling Art's last name. They subsequently sold very few; instead, everyone bought the four-dollar "In Memory of Art Murray" patches from Murray's ABATE chapter.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to the Murray funeral fracas, similar conflicts between the riding community and non-riding individuals who were next-of-kin occurred during those years in the death rites of Pam Meck and of several other bikers throughout the Greater Borderlands. In the case of Meck, her reclusive widower quickly cremated her remains and had his own secret funeral at an unrevealed place and time. Thus, no closure was made available to Pam Meck's closest friends, all of them motorcyclists.<sup>82</sup>

Discrimination against riders was believed to be a powerful force, even as late as the 1990s. Regardless of the motives of family members or organizations that marginalized, excluded, or hurt grieving bikers who had lost loved ones, motorcyclist funerary rites and rituals evolved and survived the twentieth century. Their origins were richly diverse and reflected larger historical and cultural trends, formations, and societies that riders themselves had been a part of. Biker ritual forms evolved largely from the 1960s and sometimes clashed with the customs of conventional funerals and memorials observed by non-riding society. It seems that unique cultures could emerge in the midst of society, yet remain unperceived by outsiders for a long time. The next chapter examines political dimensions of motorcycling culture over the course of the twentieth century, particularly biker ideology in the Greater Borderlands.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Eileen O'Connell [Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonail], *A Lament for Art O'Leary*. eds. Frank O'Connor, and Jack Butler Yates (1773; Dublin: Cuala Press, 1940). John Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark: Finnegans Wake* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986). Anthony Burgess, *Here Comes Everybody: An Introduction to James Joyce for the Ordinary Reader* (1965; London: Hamlyn Paperbacks, 1982).

<sup>2</sup> Michael Hogan, *Irish Soldiers of Mexico* (Guadalajara: Fondo Editorial Universitario, 1998). Manuel G. Gonzáles, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 86-87. "A Garland for Chocolate George," *Berkeley Barb*. 5-9-107 (Sept. 1-7, 1967), 3. Roy Alexander, ed., "Requiem for an Angel," *Time* 87-3 (January 21, 1966), 57. Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960's* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 301. Gary L. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1982-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>3</sup> O'Connell, *Lament for Art O'Leary*. Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark*. Burgess, *Here Comes Everybody*. "A Garland for Chocolate George," 3. Joan Morrison and Robert K. Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State: The Sixties Experience in the Words of Those Who Lived It* (New York: Times Books, 1987), 198. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, 301. Paul E. Willis, *Profane Culture* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). Terry H. Anderson, *The Sixties* (New York: Longman, Addison Wesley Longman, 1999). Hedley Donovan, ed., "The Free Sex Movement," *Time* 87-10 (March 11, 1966), 66. Judy Brown, "Neal Cassidy + Charles Plymell 1963," *NOLA Express* 52 (Apr. 3-16, 1970): 2. "Ride the Highways to the Skyways," *Rat Subterranean News* (Austin, Texas and New York) 2-4 (April 4, 1969), 3. [Big Daddy] Roth, "Harley, the Bike that Made Milwaukee Famous," *Rat Subterranean News* (Austin, Texas and New York). 2-4 (Apr. 4, 1969): 12. Mary Reinholz, "Teen Fair: Fair Hype," *Los Angeles Free Press* 6-246 (Apr. 4-10, 1969): 1, 11. John Carpenter, "Peter Fonda... the Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 6-260 (July 11, 1969): 32, 51. Paul Glushanok, "'Easy Rider,'" *Rat Subterranean News* 2-15 (Late July 1969): 20. Peter Fonda, "Easy Rappin'," *Rat Subterranean News* 2-15 (Late July 1969): 20-21. Eric Blaushild, "Movie Review: Easy Rider," *The Big U.S.* 2-10 (Sep. 11, 1969): 8-9. "Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 6-264 (Aug. 8, 1969): 43. "Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 7-33 (Aug. 14, 1970): 15. Paul D. Bond, "Fuck Society Fuck All of Them Assholes: An Interview with the Galloping Goose Motorcycle Club," *NOLA Express* (New Orleans) 67 (Oct. 30-Nov. 12, 1970): Cover, 11-14. "Our Time is Coming," *NOLA Express* 56 (May 25, 1970): Cover. "Cycles & Stuff," *NOLA Express*. 59 (July 10-23, 1970), 27. "Up Against the Chimney With Yo' Bad Self," *The Kudzu* (Jackson, Mississippi) 3-4 (Dec. 1970): Cover. Friends of Tom Bell's, "A Memorial Statement," *The Buffalo Insider*. 5 (Nov. 20, 1967), 8. "(Written by friends of Tom Bell's - Subterranean Press-as a statement of respect and resolution.)" Mike Aldrich, "Collage for Tom Bell," *The Buffalo Insider*. 5 (Nov. 20, 1967), 9. Tom Bell, "The Legal Murder of Charles Pfall," *The Buffalo Insider*. 5 (Nov. 20, 1967), 9. "RVMC," *The Buffalo Insider*. 5 (Nov. 20, 1967), 10. Janis Joplin, *Janis Joplin's Greatest Hits*. Columbia Record Company, 1973. Record album. Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968). Danny Lyon, *The Bikeriders* (1968; Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 1997), 21, 47-48, 87-89. David Burner, *Making Peace With the 60s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), Plate 29. Raymond Michalowski and Jill Dubisch, *Run for the Wall: Remembering Vietnam on a Motorcycle Pilgrimage* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 111-112. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (1968; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> Eva Critchfield, interview by author, Birdseye, Indiana, 31 May 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Lyon, *Bikeriders*, 21, 47-48, 87-89.

<sup>6</sup> *Chocolate George's Funeral*, Photographic poster, 1967. This poster, displayed on the south wall of the auditorium in the HAMC Cave Creek Chapter Clubhouse in Phoenix from 1998 to at least 2001, shows a frontal view of the funeral procession. "A Garland for Chocolate George," 3. Hendricks's body was apparently buried wearing the "big Russian hat" mentioned by Delores Whitehead in Chapter One. Martin Rubin, "Make Love Make War: Cultural Confusion and the Biker Film Cycle," *Film History*. 6-3 (1994), 355-356. Alexander, "Requiem for an Angel," 57. George P. Hunt, "A Roaring Tribute for 'Mother' Miles," *Life*. 60-4 (January 28, 1966), 28B. Ralph [Sonny] Barger, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman, *Hell's Angel: The Life and Times of Sonny Barger and the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Hunt, "A Roaring Tribute for 'Mother' Miles," 28B. Alexander, "Requiem for an Angel," 57. Roger Corman, dir., *The Wild Angels* Peter Fonda, Nancy Sinatra and Bruce Dern. (Orion Home Video, 1966), Film. Roger Corman and Jim Jerome, *How I Made a Hundred Movies in Hollywood and Never Lost a Dime* (New York: Random House, 1990), 130-145, 153. Ed Naha, *The Films of Roger Corman: Brilliance on a Budget* (New York:

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Arco Publishing, 1982), 60-65. Mark Thomas McGee, *Roger Corman: The Best of the Cheap Acts* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland and Company, 1988), 55-57, 193-195, 210-211. Rubin, "Make Love," 355-356. Larry W. "Rabbit" Cole, "To My Brother, With Love," *Easyriders* 4-20 (April, 1974), 4, 20-21. Renegade [pseud.], "A Brother Lost," *Easyriders* 4-21 (June, 1974,) 18-19. Weird Willie [pseud.], "Requiem for an Individualist," *Supercycle* 3-5 (July, 1979), 26-28. Keith R. Ball, ed., "Hall O' Fame," *Easyriders* 244 (October, 1993,) 32. Frank Rickabaugh Arnold, "Ordinary Motorcycle Thrills: The Circulation of Motorcycle Meanings in American Film and Popular Culture," (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, May, 1997), Ph.D. Dissertation, 302.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. "A Garland for Chocolate George," 3. Friends of Tom Bell's, "A Memorial Statement," 8. Aldrich, "Collage for Tom Bell," 9. Bell, "The Legal Murder of Charles Pfall," 9. "RVMC," 10. Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State*, 198. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, 301. Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*, 111-112. Carpenter, "Peter Fonda," 32, 51. Fonda, "Easy Rappin'," 20-21. Bond, "Fuck Society Fuck All of Them Assholes," Cover, 11-14. Brown, "Neal Cassidy + Charles Plymell 1963," 2. "Our Time is Coming," Cover. Wolfe, *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. Lyon, *Bikeriders*, 21. Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture*.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Frank Reynolds and Michael McClure, *Freewheelin' Frank: Secretary of the Angels* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 130-133. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 118-125. See also "A Garland for Chocolate George," 3. Reinholz, "Teen Fair: Fair Hype," 1, 11. Carpenter, "Peter Fonda," 32, 51. Glushanok, "'Easy Rider,'" 20. Fonda, "Easy Rappin'," 20-21. Blaushild, "Movie Review," 8-9. "Easy Rider," (Aug. 8, 1969), 43. "Easy Rider," (Aug. 14, 1970), 15. Bond, "Fuck Society Fuck All of Them Assholes," Cover, 11-14. Brown, "Neal Cassidy + Charles Plymell 1963," 2. "Our Time is Coming," Cover. "Cycles & Stuff," 27. Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State*, 198. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, 301. Joplin, *Janis Joplin's Greatest Hits*. Lyon, *Bikeriders*, 21. Burner, *Making Peace With the 60s*, Plate 29. Lou "barf" Kimsey, ed., *Easyriders* 4-24 (November 1974), 27. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1989.

<sup>10</sup> Reynolds, *Freewheelin' Frank*, 130-133, esp. 131-132.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 130-133. Barger, *Hell's Angel*, 118-125.

<sup>12</sup> *Chocolate George's Funeral*, poster. Alexander, "Requiem for an Angel," 57. Cole, "To My Brother," 20. William Murray, "Hell's Angels," *The Saturday Evening Post* 238-23 (November 20, 1965), 34.

<sup>13</sup> Cole, "To My Brother," 20.

<sup>14</sup> Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*, 27, 111-112. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1983-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., participant reflection, 1978-1981, 1996-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001. Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*, Ibid., 148-149. Rubin, "Make Love," 362. Anderson, *The Sixties*. Burner, *Making Peace With the 60s*. Sarge, "Vet Voice," *Easyriders* 14-130 (April 1984), 82, 102-103. Bud, "Payback: It was After Vietnam that It Took its Toll," *Easyriders* 21-213 (March 1991), 92-98. Professor, "Operation Rolling Thunder, Memorial Day 1988," *Supercycle* 82 (December 1988), 33-38. Frank Kaisler, ed., *Easyriders* 21-213 (March 1991), 3, 22, 73-80, 84, 87-88, 92-98. Lou "barf" Kimsey, ed., *Easyriders* 5-27 (February 1975), 60-61. Lou "barf" Kimsey, ed., *Easyriders* 6-36 (May 1976), 35, 49. Lou "barf" Kimsey, ed., *Easyriders* 6-37 (June 1976), 34. Larry Kumferman, ed., "Cream Dream," *Supercycle* 3-5 (July 1979), 29-33. Frank Kaisler, ed., *Easyriders* 14-130 (April 1984), 99, 121. Raider [pseud.], "Good Times with the Motor Maids: These Spunky Ladies Rode with Pride," *Easyriders* 14-130 (April 1984), 40-41.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Daniel R. Wolf, *The Rebels: A Brotherhood of Outlaw Bikers* (1991; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 339-340. Wolf mentions that biker lifestyle magazines decisively defined and coalesced what is known as "the outlaw biker lifestyle" both in North America and worldwide. For example, Kimsey, (February 1975), 60-61. Kimsey, (May 1976), 35, 49. Kimsey, (June 1976), 34. Kumferman, "Cream Dream," 29-33. Kaisler, (April 1984), 99, 121. Sarge, "Vet Voice," 82, 102-103. Kaisler, (March 1991), 3, 22, 73-80, 84, 87-88, 92-98. For example, the Harley-Davidson Motor Company published a two-page, military-celebratory advertisement in 1975, complete with World War II-era pictures and an American bald eagle. The rhetoric of the ad ("Enlisted in Freedom's Fight...") reflects its customers' collective interests in riders' rights issues during the mid '70s. Some of the nationalist symbolism is unusual, however, and signifies distinct political meanings. For example, the upside-down U.S. flag, an international distress signal, is coupled with a firearm.

<sup>17</sup> John P. MacDonell, "One Law of Nature that's Never Yet Been Formulated in Professorial Gobbledygook: Scooter People Never Change," *Easyriders* 5-28 (April 1975), 32-33, 70-77. The narrator and author of this article was a World War I Army Air Corps veteran living in El Paso who was a member of the Hounds (Motorcycle Club). His first person, autobiographical account was recovered and published fourteen years after his death. The narrative highlights particular events in his immediate post-war life. For a description of the Hounds, see the



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glossary. Richard Alexander Hough, *A History of the World's Motorcycles* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973), 65, 86. John E. Mack, *A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T.E. Lawrence* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1975), 131-132. Winston Churchill, *The Great War* (London: G. Newnes Ltd., 1934), 1113. Thomas C. Bolfert, *The Big Book of Harley-Davidson* (Milwaukee: Wirth Press, 1991), 64-67. Walter Lord, *Day of Infamy* (New York: Bantam Books, 1978). Raider, "Good Times with the Motor Maids," 40-41. Yves Lavigne, *Hell's Angels: Three Can Keep a Secret if Two Are Dead* (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1987), 25-26, 33. Richard Chase, dir., *Hell's Angels Forever* Willie Nelson, Jerry Garcia, Johnny Paycheck, Bo Diddley, and Kevin Keating. (Media Home Entertainment, 1983), Film. For the Flying Tigers, see the glossary. As late as 1965, Sonny Barger claimed that ninety percent of the membership of the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC) consisted of military veterans. See Hunter S. Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs: Losers and Outsiders," *Nation* 200-20 (May 17, 1965), 522-526. William Murray, "Hell's Angels," *Saturday Evening Post*. 238-23 (November 20, 1965), 32-39. Hunter S. Thompson, *Hell's Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1967), 54-55, 253-254. Barger, *Hell's Angel*. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2007.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., participant reflection, 1981-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>19</sup> Dann, "In Memory of 'Emo'," *The Banner Gazette* (July 1998), 7. The poem reads, "Out of the night that covers me, Black as the pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever Gods may be, For my unconquerable soul. In the fell clutch of circumstance, I have not winced or cried aloud, Under the bludgeons of chance, My head is bloodied but unbowed. Out of this place of wrath and tears, Looms, but the horror of the shade, And yet the menace of the years, Finds and shall find me unafraid. It matters not how straight the gate, How charged the punishment the scroll, I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul. AFFA."

<sup>20</sup> Dann, "'Warrior Iron' (Wheeler Allen Davis)," *The Banner Gazette* (October 1998), 3.

<sup>21</sup> Bud, "Payback," 92-98. Sarge, "Vet Voice," 82, 102-103. Professor, "Operation Rolling Thunder," 33-38. Kaisler, *Easyriders* (March 1991), 3, 22, 73-80, 84, 87-88, 92-98. Kimsey, *Easyriders* (February 1975), 60-61. Kimsey, *Easyriders* (May 1976), 35, 49. Kimsey, *Easyriders* (June 1976), 34. Kumferman, "Cream Dream," 29-33. Kaisler, *Easyriders* (April 1984), 99, 121. Raider, "Good Times with the Motor Maids," 40-41. Thompson, "The Motorcycle Gangs," 522-526. Murray, "Hell's Angels," 32-39. Thompson, *Hell's Angels*, 54-55, 253-254. Barger, *Hell's Angel*.

<sup>22</sup> Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1981, 1988-1996.

<sup>23</sup> Frank Kaisler, ed., "A Tribute to Brothers Lost," *Easyriders* 14-130 (April 1984), 81.

<sup>24</sup> Professor, "Operation Rolling Thunder," 33-38. The first Rolling Thunder Parade was organized by the DC Chapter of Vietnam Veterans MC, Ray Manzo, his friends, and Mad Dog's Farm. James "Gunny" Gregory, "History of Run for the Wall," in "Run for the Wall: POW – MIA, Prisoners Of War – Missing In Action," the RFTW 2007 printed program for registrants, ed. Frank "Tadpole" Perry, 10 Pp. John Anderson and Linda Anderson, eds., "The Run for the Wall Newsletter" (August 1994). "Run for the Wall VII," Run flyer (event flyer), 1995. John Anderson and Linda Anderson, eds., "The Run for the Wall Newsletter" (July 1995), 11Pp. John Anderson and Linda Anderson, eds., "The Run for the Wall Newsletter" (March 1996), 6 Pp. John Anderson and Linda Anderson, eds., "Welcome to 1996 Run for the Wall," the RFTW printed program for registrants, 10 Pp. Mountain Man [pseud.], ed., "The Run for the Wall Newsletter" (Sept. 1997), 8 Pp. Skipper [pseud.], ed., "Welcome to the 1998 Run For the Wall," Printed program for registrants, 1998, 8 Pp. "Run for the Wall XI," Run flyer (event flyer), 1999. According to this flyer, "RFTW XI is dedicated to the memory of RFTW Family Members who died this year: Lee Venable, Jr. .... 8/21/98." Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*, 10-11. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1993-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>25</sup> "Run for the Wall VII."

<sup>26</sup> Billy D. Whitcomb, "Rolling Thunder Across America," E-mail to the Run for the Wall (RFTW) Listserv, January 15, 1999. Phil Wright, "News Release: RFTW Southern Route," *Run For The Wall Newsletter* (October 1999), 1-2, 6, 9. Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*, 14, 93-95. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1993-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2000. Task Force Omega document file, 1998, in the collections of the author.

<sup>27</sup> Gregory, "History of Run for the Wall," 4-5. Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*, 10-12, 58-59, 185-186, 230-232.

<sup>28</sup> Anderson, "Welcome to 1996 Run For the Wall," 5. Bold type from the original. See also Anderson, "Run for the Wall Newsletter" (August 1994). "Run for the Wall VII." Anderson, "Run for the Wall Newsletter," (July 1995). Anderson, "Run for the Wall Newsletter," (March 1996). Perry, RFTW 2007 printed program for registrants, 4-5. Mountain Man, "Run for the Wall Newsletter," (Sept. 1997). Skipper, "Welcome to the 1998 Run For the Wall." "Run for the Wall XI." Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*, 7, 14, 65, 163-169, 185. For

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the nature of RFTW's pilgrimage sites, see *Ibid.*, 268, n. 43. Conrad Cherry, "Two American Sacred Ceremonies: Their Implications for the Study of Religion in America," *American Quarterly* 21-4 (Winter 1969), 739-754.

<sup>29</sup> Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*, 27-62. Mountain Man, "Run for the Wall Newsletter," (Sept. 1997). Skipper, "Welcome to the 1998 Run For the Wall." Navajo Nation, "Seal of the Navajo Nation," Pin presented by President Thomas Atcitty to me, 1998. Ken Ginther, dir., *FNG on the Run for the Wall*. Norman Rivkees, Skipper, and Mountain Man. Albuquerque: Snake-Byte Production Company, 1998. Videocassette. For an example of the (non-televised) small-town press coverage they generated, see Christina Redekopp, "Bikers en route to Vietnam wall," *Herald Dispatch* (Huntington, West Virginia), (May 27, 1999), 1A-2A. Chris Adams, "Run to Remember," *Clarion News* (southern Indiana), Style section: 1, date and page numbers unknown. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, participant reflection, 1978-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008. Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*. Skipper, "Welcome to the 1998 Run For the Wall." Navajo Nation, "Seal of the Navajo Nation." Ginther, *FNG on the Run for the Wall*. Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996). Carlton L. Bonilla, "A South Dakota Rendezvous: The Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and Races," *South Dakota History* 28-3 (Fall 1998): 123-143.

<sup>31</sup> Kieffner, participant reflection, 1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008. Series of emails on the RFTW Listserv, 1998-1999. Hard copies in the collections of the author. Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*, 243-245, 250-254.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 201-202. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1993-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2007. For several consecutive years, the bikers of "F" Troop were the most lively "party animals," until they eventually mellowed.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, participant observation, 2001-2007. Gregory, "History of Run for the Wall." Wright, "News Release." Karen Boehler, "Revving Up for Summer Fun," *Enchantment* (May 2006). This article, and other like it, were editorially controlled in order to portray RFTW in a positive light despite the reporters' overall observations, however.

<sup>35</sup> Kieffner, participant reflection, 1993-1998, participant observation, 1999-2007. Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*, 111-112.

<sup>36</sup> Dann, "Memorial Day Dedication," *The Banner Gazette* (June 1998), 14. The author wrote, "They may be gone, but they are not forgotten."

<sup>37</sup> Cole, "To My Brother," 4, 20-21. Renegade, "A Brother Lost," 18-19. Paul Carney, "The Ancient Hawg Rider," *Easyriders* 4-21 (June 1974), 18-19. Wally Greer, "A Biker Agnostic," *Easyriders* 4-21 (June 1974), 18. Darrell Kitchell, "Sexual Cycle," *Easyriders* 4-21 (June 1974), 18. Packrat, "The Biker's Creed," *Easyriders* 4-21 (June 1974), 19. Cissy, "Death and Brotherhood," *Easyriders* 4-21 (June 1974), 19. Pat "The Mooch" LeDoux, "Hi Side," *Easyriders* 4-21 (June 1974), 19. Cissy, "The Big Biker," *Easyriders* 4-21 (June 1974), 19. Weird Willie, "Requiem for an Individualist," 26-28. Willis, *Profane Culture*, 170-182. Barger, *Hell's Angel*. Tobie Gene Livingston, Keith Zimmerman, and Kent Zimmerman, *Soul On Bikes: The East Bay Dragons MC and the Black Biker Set* (St. Paul: MBI Publishing, 2003). Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (2001; Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, Perseus Books, 2002). Joel T. Smith, dir., *Harley-Davidson: The American Motorcycle*, James Caan, David Crosby, and Wynonna Judd. (Cabin Fever, 1993). Videocassette.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* Cissy, "Death and Brotherhood," 19. Lou "barf" Kimsey, ed., *Easyriders* 4-21 (June 1974), 36-37. Cole, "To My Brother," 4, 20-21. Renegade "A Brother Lost," 18-19. Carney, "The Ancient Hawg Rider," 18-19. Kimsey, (November 1974), 9. Greer, "A Biker Agnostic," 18. Kitchell, "Sexual Cycle," 18. Packrat, "The Biker's Creed," 19. LeDoux, "Hi Side," 19. Cissy, "The Big Biker," 19. R. Orren, "Ride to Oblivion," *Easyriders* 4-21 (June 1974), 15. Weird Willie, "Requiem for an Individualist," 26-28. Ball, "Hall O' Fame," 32. Dann Mohr, ed., "Skully Day Isn't It!!!!" *The Banner Gazette* (April 1999), 14. Willis, *Profane Culture*, 170-182. Will Straw, "Characterizing Rock Music Culture: The Case of Heavy Metal," in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, Second Edition. ed. Simon During (1993; London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 451-461. Dick Hebdige, "The Function of Subculture," in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, Second Edition. ed. Simon During (1993; London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 441-450. Schulman, *The Seventies*. Michael Schaller, *Reckoning with Reagan: America and Its President in the 1980s* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). Black Sabbath, *Paranoid*. Warner Brothers, 1971. Record album.

<sup>39</sup> For example, see Lou "barf" Kimsey, ed., *Easyriders* 4-21 (June 1974), 36-37. This is a memorial to Charles U. Eldred, Jr., who apparently died in a motorcycle accident at age 20. The centerfold includes a *Kansas City Times* obituary, a remote, lonesome highway accident scene, a full moon, distant lightning, ghosts, human tears, an

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armadillo crossing the road, birds watching from the phone lines, and at a skull reading “666.” This individual death memorial also includes a political innuendo (against inattentive or reckless car drivers) in the form of an image of accident statistics. Kimsey, (November 1974), 9. Orren, “Ride to Oblivion,” 15. The drawing accompanying “Ride to Oblivion.” is of a clothed skeleton riding a motorcycle with a topless woman riding on the back seat, wearing a crown.

<sup>40</sup> Elliott Fried, “To My Brother With Love: A Biker Foresees His Death,” *Easyriders* 4-20 (April 1974), 21. Submitted by Larry W. “Rabbit” Cole.

<sup>41</sup> Lou “barf” Kimsey, ed., *Easyriders* 4-21 (June 1974), 18-19. Carney, “The Ancient Hawg Rider,” 18-19. Renegade, “A Brother Lost,” 18. Greer, “A Biker Agnostic,” 18. Kitchell, “Sexual Cycle,” 18. Packrat, “The Biker’s Creed,” 19. Cissy, “Death and Brotherhood,” 19. LeDoux, “Hi Side,” 19. Cissy, “The Big Biker,” 19. In “The Ancient Hawg Rider,” Carney writes, “He is an ancient hawg rider, He rideth his V-twin. . . . The hawg that crushed his head was heavy. . . . He rideth now in the azure sky, Upon a golden harley, Tripping on the ultimate high, Induced by hops and barley[.] He rideth free; he rideth far, Draped in a golden shroud, On earth from bar to bar, In Heaven from cloud to cloud.” On the same page, Cissy’s “Death and Brotherhood” mention’s her patch-holding man’s life as being “[t]otally. . . concerned with Death.” She describes the intense pride, trust, and brotherhood that exist among club members.

<sup>42</sup> Cole, “To My Brother,” 4, 20-21. Renegade, “A Brother Lost,” 18-19. Weird Willie, “Requiem for an Individualist,” 26-28. Lyon, *Bikeriders*, 21. Dann, “Sunriders 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Memorial Run,” *The Banner Gazette* (June 1998), 5. J.F. Wear, “SOS Thank Bikers for Support of Fallen Brothers Run,” *Southwest Scooter News* 4-3 (July 1998), 1, 12. Char Zack, ed., “Raw Thunder Newsletter,” November 1998. The attached flyer. Dann, “‘Warrior Iron’ (Wheeler Allen Davis),” *The Banner Gazette* (October 1998), 3. Dann, “In Memory of ‘Emo’,” *The Banner Gazette* (July 1998), 7.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. Dann, “Memorial Day Dedication,” *The Banner Gazette* (June 1998), 14. Cole, “To My Brother,” 4, 20-21. Renegade, “A Brother Lost,” 18-19. Weird Willie, “Requiem for an Individualist,” 26-28. Ball, “Hall O’ Fame,” 32. Lyon, *Bikeriders*, 21. Dann, “Sunriders 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Memorial Run,” 5. Wear, “SOS Thank Bikers,” 1, 12. Zack, “Raw Thunder Newsletter.” Dann, “‘Warrior Iron’,” 3. For example, the late moto-journalist Waldo Stuart of Phoenix, Arizona sometimes drove his hearse to support RFTW or other runs instead of his sidecar-equipped Harley.

<sup>44</sup> Cole, “To My Brother,” 20. Reynolds, *Freewheelin Frank*. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2007.

<sup>45</sup> Cole, “To My Brother,” 20. The presence of Nazi symbolism among some clubs during the 1960s and ‘70s was unrelated to Nazi organizations or ideology. Rather, the war trophies that the older bikers had taken from the enemy during World War II were sometimes given to their younger biker brothers. These younger bikers then began to wear the trophies in order to frighten non-riders who, it was hoped, would then give the bikers a wide berth of social space, wider margins of vehicular space and greater opportunity for safety on the roadways. (See “class” in the Glossary.) HAMC ceased to allow its members to wear such trophies when it began to include chapters from Germany in the 1980s. Since the primary reason for the wearing of such gifts was to honor or remember the brother who had given them, the original symbolic meanings of the items when they had been manufactured mattered little. See Barger, *Hell’s Angel*.

<sup>46</sup> Cole, “To My Brother,” 20.

<sup>47</sup> Lavigne, *Hell’s Angels: Three*, 174-178. For example, the Pagans MC By-Laws stated, “1. If a member dies in a chapter, it is mandatory for all members in his chapter to attend the funeral. 2. Chapter is in charge of taking care of all funeral arrangements, parties, police procession, etc.” Kieffner, participant reflection, 1987-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>48</sup> Columbus B. Hopper and Johnny “Big John” Moore, “Hell on Wheels: The Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs,” *Journal of American Culture* 6-2 (1983), 62.

<sup>49</sup> Cole, “To My Brother,” 20.

<sup>50</sup> Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1979-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, participant observation, 2001-2003. The other co-founder was Mando Parra.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Dann, “Sunriders 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Memorial Run,” 5.

<sup>54</sup> Debbie MacDonald, “Raising Breast Cancer Awareness: All Women’s Ride, All Good Causes Should be This Fun,” *Thunder Press*. (June 2000). 12. Reg Kittrelle, ed., “Motorcyclists Mobilize: Race Against Breast Cancer, Riders to Converge on Peoria,” *Thunder Press*. (June 2000). 54. Women’s Motorcyclist Foundation, Inc.

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“History.” Internet. <http://home.earthlink.net/~lace1/read.html>. 1999. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1983-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2007. Numerous run flyers (event flyers), 1983-2008, in the author’s collections.

<sup>55</sup> Clay Dog [pseud.], “Hall O’ Fame,” *Easyriders* 244 (October 1993), 32. The deceased was described as “a true veteran of the road and known to never turn his back on trouble....” The memorial included information about his weight, height, and the progression of events that led to his death.

<sup>56</sup> Billie Daman, “From the Coordinator,” *Masterlink* 5-13 (January 1998), 2. Susie Blair, “Jerry Ross Blair (Yozemite): March 26, 1946 – December 2, 1997,” *Masterlink* 5-13 (January 1998), 5. Billie Daman, ed., “A Poem for Jerry,” *Masterlink* 5-13 (January 1998), 5.

<sup>57</sup> Ebony Queens Motorcycle Club, “Queens Domain – EQMC Home Page,” Internet.

<http://m1ss15.cl.msu.edu/~bambam/eqmc/eqmc2.html>. 2000. 1-2. “Wicked” Wanda Lynn Pellot was born on Dec. 30, 1964 and died on Dec. 1, 1995. “...So as you stand upon a shore gazing at a beautiful sea --, As you look upon a flower and admire its simplicity --, Remember me. Remember me in your heart. Your thoughts, and your memories. Of the times we loved, The times we cried, The times we fought, The times we laughed. For if you always think of me, I will never have gone.” Kieffner, participant reflection, 1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001. Bill Kresnak, “Dishonoring the Memory,” *American Motorcyclist* 53-7 (July 1999), 19-20.

<sup>58</sup> Kimsey, (June 1976), 34. The stone read, “Donald Pittsley ‘Pappy,’ June 17, 1923 - May 18, 1975.” Kieffner, participant reflection, 1983-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, participant observation, 1999.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 1998.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, participant reflection, 1998; and participant observation, 1999. This was, by far, the most dissonant element of the ritual practices that I observed that day. It still makes me feel short of breath whenever it comes to mind.

<sup>62</sup> Sheila Atkinson, State of Wisconsin, County of Milwaukee, Proceedings of the Inquest into the Matter of the Death of Roger Lyons, 3 November 1977, 3-297. Tony SanFelipo Collections, Beloit, Wisconsin (hereinafter called “TSC”). Chesley P. Erwin, Office of the Medical Examiner, Milwaukee County, Autopsy protocol of Roger F. Lyons, deceased, Case 1949/77, 8 October 1977, TSC. Robert D. Eberhardt, Office of the Medical Examiner, Milwaukee County, Toxicology report of Roger F. Lyons, deceased, Case 1949/77, 11 November 1977, TSC. Sandra K. Lyons to Harold A. Breier, 6 January 1978, TSC. Tony SanFelipo, interview by author, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 25 May 2002. Pan [pseud.], “Inside an Outlaw Death,” *Choppers* 11-12 (December, 1978), 17-19. TSC. Billy Tinney, “Huge Biker Funeral,” *Easyriders* (February 1978), 16-21. TSC. “Outlaw Dies After Arrest,” *Milwaukee Journal* (1 October 1977), 1. “Death of ‘Outlaw’ Probed,” *Milwaukee Journal* (2 October 1977), 2. The Holy Ranger [Martin Jack Rosenblum], “I Just Blame Everybody,” in *Thievery Not Ethnomusicology (or No Freedom, Honey)*. Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin: Wheel to Reel Sound, Datry Evopoetics, 2000. Compact disc.

<sup>63</sup> The Holy Ranger [Martin Jack Rosenblum], “I Just Blame Everybody,” in *Thievery Not Ethnomusicology (or No Freedom, Honey)*. Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin: Wheel to Reel Sound, Datry Evopoetics, 2000. Compact disc. *Ibid.* Lyons to Breier. SanFelipo, interview. Pan, “Inside an Outlaw Death,” 17-19. Tinney, “Huge Biker Funeral,” 16-21. “Outlaw Dies After Arrest,” 1. “Death of ‘Outlaw’ Probed,” 2.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* Lyons to Breier. SanFelipo, interview. Pan, “Inside an Outlaw Death,” 17-19. Tinney, “Huge Biker Funeral,” 16-21. “Outlaw Dies After Arrest,” 1. Holy Ranger, “I Just Blame Everybody.” Atkinson, Proceedings of the Inquest, 3-297. Erwin, Autopsy protocol. Eberhardt, Toxicology report. Lyons to Breier. SanFelipo, interview.

<sup>65</sup> Problem Child, interview. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1987-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, participant observation, 1999. Waldo Stuart, “Lane...follow up,” Email to the author and forty-four other recipients. 27 January 1999, 6:06 p.m. Hard copy in the author’s collections.

<sup>67</sup> James [Heavy] Evans, Interview by Barbara Bustillos-Cogswell, Videocassette, San Francisco, California, May 2000. Melvin [Shad] Shadrick and Tobie Gene Levingston, Interview by Barbara Bustillos-Cogswell, Videocassette, San Francisco, California, May 2000. Hopper and Moore, “Hell on Wheels,” 62. Barger, *Hell’s Angel*. Wolf, *The Rebels*. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1987-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* Nancy Cairns, “Vet in a Can: G.I. Joe on the Go,” *Run For the Wall: The Road to Rolling Thunder XI* A supplement to *Biker* 166 (January 1999), 23.

<sup>69</sup> Nancy Corson Carter, “1970 Images of the Machine and the Garden: Kosinski, Crews, and Pirsig,” *Soundings* 61-1 (1978), 107, 116-121. Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974; New York: Bantam Books, 1981), 304-313.

<sup>70</sup> Kieffner, participant reflection, 1981-1988.

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<sup>71</sup> Orren, "Ride to Oblivion," 15. Orren writes, "Hit the brake. Here I go. Hope they have a nice warm bed for me in hell.... I'm free now. Free forever. Come on, baby, let's ride. Ride to – and in – oblivion." Zack, "Raw Thunder Newsletter," November 1998, 1, 4-6. The newsletter read, "Darchelle brought us all a bit closer today... We all made new friends, had opportunities for new beginnings, and glimpsed realizations we can break patterns and change our own personal lives... Today left me with the feeling that we should openly Celebrate Our Lives every chance we get... She definitely rode with us freely in the winds today..." In a description of a "wild, woman" dance during a stop at Jerome's Spirit Room, a ritual circle was formed in memory of the deceased. "[We] embraced on the dance floor to "Amazing Grace" filling our hearts with love as we thought of Darchelle and her lovely spirit flying over us." Chook, "Good Bye Old Friend / Adios Amigo: Boss Hogs Soapbox," *HOG Stop*. 3-8 (Fall 1999), 1, 3. Cole, "To My Brother With Love," 4, 20-21. Sarge, "A Tribute to Brothers Lost," *Easyriders* 14-130 (April, 1984), 81. Carney, "The Ancient Hawg Rider," 18-19. Cairns, "Vet in a Can," 23.

<sup>72</sup> Cole, "To My Brother With Love," 21. This was part of the larger memorial to Elliott Fried.

<sup>73</sup> Carney, "The Ancient Hawg Rider," 18. Chook, "Good Bye Old Friend / Adios Amigo," 1, 3. "God rides a Harley." Graffiti, on various bathroom and outdoor walls between the Greater Borderlands and Indiana along the I-40 / I-44 corridor from 1978 through the 1980s. "God rides a Harley with ape hangers a mile high." Graffiti, on a sidewalk of the Pacific Garden Mall, Santa Cruz, California, 1983. The idea of God riding a Harley was so prevalent in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s that it became a cliché. See also Kathy Shaidle, *God Rides a Yamaha: Musings on Pain, Poetry, and Pop Culture* (Kelowna, British Columbia: Northstone Publishing, Wood Lake Books, 1998).

<sup>74</sup> Carney, "The Ancient Hawg Rider," 18-19.

<sup>75</sup> Dann, "'Warrior Iron'," 3.

<sup>76</sup> Kaisler, "A Tribute to Brothers Lost," 81.

<sup>77</sup> Char [Zack], ed., *Raw Thunder Newsletter* (November 1998), Cover, 1, 4-6.

<sup>78</sup> Michalowski and Dubisch, *Run for the Wall*, 137-138. Suzanne McDonald-Walker, *Bikers: Culture, Politics and Power* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), 59, 187-192, 198-199. Steven E. Alford and Suzanne Ferriss, *Motorcycle* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), 115. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1984-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, participant observation, 1999.

<sup>80</sup> Chook, "Good Bye Old Friend / Adios Amigo," 1, 3. Chook writes, "[I]f they were offended, maybe we hit a soft spot that needs looking into. I loved it. I know that the family wanted every one in attendance to hear the words that were spoken and even though we will miss Art, his death served a greater purpose, to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who may not know Him. Thank you Annie Murray for your courage in the difficult times you are experiencing."

<sup>81</sup> The Chrome Guy [pseud.], "THE BASIC ARTicle," *HOG Stop* 3-8 (Fall 1999), 9. They were overpriced by more than three dollars each, totaling \$7.50. According to the Chrome Guy's article, "That covers Bob's cost of having them made up." To contrast the actual cost of these patches with a reasonable cost, Murray's ABATE chapter's "In memory of..." patches were four dollars each and the manufacturer required no minimum quantity. Kieffner, participant observation, 1999.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, participant observation, 1999-2001.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### IDEOLOGY AND RIDERS' ORGANIZATIONS

This final chapter is a discussion of ideological, rhetorical and discursive distinctions, commonalities, and interactions between motorcycling organizations and elements of non-riding society. It considers some reasons behind the actions of bikers and non-bikers including values or ideas held as expressed in sociopolitical terms. The discussion will deal primarily with four phenomena of riders' organizational political expression and some related interactions with non-rider values and ideological trends. First, Progressivism as rhetorical, linguistic, and ritual expression by members of riding organizations from around 1890 through and beyond the Progressive Era of the 1890s and first two decades of the twentieth century and beyond 1920 should be considered as a reflection of, and latent retention of, dominant trends in American society.

Second, some motorcycle organizational leaders, if not many members, embraced some popular cultural strands during the 1930s that today would be recognized as fascist. Their generational trend and its associated remnant organization are then contrasted with later non-partisan, inclusionary, rights-oriented organizations and their associated discourse that occurred from the 1970s through the end of the millennium. The latter can be viewed as a liberal populist libertarian rhetoric engaging in a debate with some non-rider sociopolitical elements that spoke a reactionary language of safety, modernity, and conformity that contrasted with the values of bikers.

Finally, late twentieth century ideological developments within the Borderlands biker community may be considered as responses to increasingly hardened geopolitical boundaries. Such ideas diminished the border's significance while placing riders in the center rather than on the peripheries. The chapter examines early twentieth-century riders' organizational rhetoric compared to that of the post-countercultural and then places motorcyclist idealism in the context of transnational motorcyclist rights organization (MRO) expressions of solidarity in the México-U.S. Borderlands.

By studying biker organizational rhetoric and idealism, one may learn that it changed generationally and was related, whether directly or inversely, to the values of larger society. I hope that I will be forgiven for my omission of a phenomenal dialog that developed between US and European Union MROs operating as a collective response to non-rider power structures. While recognizing the significance of major American and European MROs possessing NGO status in the United Nations and participating as key players at the tables of Geneva and other places, I would like to instead complete this chapter with a focus on transnational aspects in the context of the México-US Greater Borderlands. There are other limitations. This is neither a history of the riders' rights movement and its successive manifestations as the League of American Wheelmen (LAW), the Federation of American Motorcyclists (FAM), the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), the ABATE movement and its development into state, national and other forums; nor of the dynamics of legislative or social activities of the various associations; nor of their sociopolitical successes or failures. It is not about several generations of anti-motorcycling measures or marginalization—legal or extralegal—that would explain why bikers (who had originally wanted only to be left alone to enjoy the ride) would have to organize into MROs and actively engage dominant society and

power structures in the first place. Such articles, dissertations, or books have not yet been written.

### **Bicyclists, Motorcyclists, the LAW, Prison Labor, and Race**

Twentieth- and twenty-first-century MRO ideals and rhetoric can be traced to those of the League of American Wheelmen (LAW), a *bicyclist* rights organization formed in 1880. In those days, the cultural lines between bicycling, motorcycling, and motorized bicycling had not yet developed. In her outstanding 2004 article “The Biker’s Debt to Bicyclists: Scorching the Trail,” Wendy Moon shows how late twentieth-century motorcycling culture was directly descendant from a late *nineteenth*-century bicycling subculture and how hostile interactions between early non-riding society and bicyclists were remarkably similar to those of motorcycle riders and non-bikers today. Moon includes examples of bicyclist linguistic patterns and discourse with non-riders including a police officer. In contrast to late 1990s biker culture, however, she also demonstrates how late nineteenth-century bicyclists adopted a peculiarly military vocabulary and ritual pattern. The riders saluted their road captain, they were formally called to attention, and they all mounted their bikes at the exact same second with all of the precision of a close order drill ceremony. They also referred to themselves as a battalion.<sup>1</sup>

Other sources confirm the prevalence of military elements in early two-wheeled clubs. In his 1975 dissertation on early motorcycle culture, Sammy Kent Brooks mentions that, in 1902, the first motorcycle club with its own uniform prescribed military leggings, a coat, a leather cap, and a “cavalry yellow” insignia on the right shoulder.<sup>2</sup> Militaristic identities in motorcycling were reflected in newspapers, the popular press and scientific journals in the following years, which often emphasized the military potential or wartime significance of



bikes. In my initial research for the dissertation, I counted at least eleven such magazine and newspaper articles of published between 1910 and 1947.<sup>3</sup>

Such military identity within a developing riding culture could be posited as part of the ubiquitous set of developments in late nineteenth and early twentieth century North America called the Progressive movements, even though militaristic identification persisted through World War II. The Progressive movements were so pervasive that they influenced religion, U.S. and Mexican political parties, industrial practices, society, interethnic and interracial relations, and laws. Muckraking journalism, trust-busting, regulation of banks and of the food and drug industries, social justice, labor regulations, settlement houses and the social gospel, the temperance movement, immigration controls, the building of well-regulated secondary railroads and other modern infrastructure servicing the mineral extraction industries both north of the border and directly south into Chihuahua and other Mexican states, U.S. primary elections, the secret ballot, initiative, referendum and recall in Arizona and California, and direct election of senators were all (in part) expressions of the Progressive movements. The Progressive movements were conceived from a perceived societal need to “progress” forward and to fix problems associated with a new industrial economy, to affect reforms, to correct Gilded Age corruption, and to improve efficiency. In such an environment, it was necessary to rationalize motorcycling as a public good. As a public “good,” it was presented as essentially white, technologically advanced, quick, forceful, and powerful.<sup>4</sup> The most widely imagined site that it fit into, at that time, was the military niche.

The motorcycle was regarded as a critically important martial and police-related vehicle from the Boer War of 1898 through World War II. Likewise, much of the early history of riding in the Greater Borderlands is a military and police history. Police officers in Phoenix

began to ride motorcycles in 1910. U.S. soldiers under General John Joseph Pershing patrolled the border zone in heavy Harley-Davidson equipped motor-machinegun units even while General Francisco “Pancho” Villa’s bike was a lighter, more versatile Indian. In 1935 during the depth of the Great Depression, Phoenix Police Chief Matlock had seven motor officers (in a division separate from the police department) who had received riot training and operated as not only crime interceptors but also as a performing acrobatic motorized drill team. This tradition of police department moto drill teams was adopted throughout México and is still popular and vibrant there today. Apparently, every moto officer in northern México took special pride in his technical riding skills.<sup>5</sup>

While the motorcycle was considered a technologically progressive military tool, LAW rhetoric and ideology can also be considered Progressive. Like most North Americans, League members subscribed to Progressive values such as social efficiency and utility. For instance, in the 1890s members of the organization suggested that prisoners be put to work as road construction crews. Some non-riders opposed the idea, however, saying that it degraded the convict. Today, one may recognize such a prison system forced-labor practice in a larger historical context as a modified, regionally racialized and regressive form of slavery and point to its emerging prevalence in late nineteenth-century U.S. Southern states after the peculiar institution was abolished. A contemporary bicycling journalist named “Prowler” criticized such prisoners’ rights advocates, however, writing, “If honest labor in God’s pure air is degrading then I support that the gentlemen are correct.”<sup>6</sup> Here issues of labor and race were ignored in a rhetoric of preventative health benefits supposedly gained while working in such a system.

## **The Good Roads Movement, the LAW, and Keeping Tabs on the Law**

While prison chain gangs were sometimes employed as road construction crews, the LAW's main Progressive organizational interests were more directly related to a specific range of transportation issues, however. In 1895, this bicyclist rights organization took toll road owners to court, arguing that bikes should have been admitted free of charge because bicycle tread packed the roadway evenly and did not destroy the road or create a need for repairs. The court did not buy the argument, however. Decisions in various other court cases involving safety, liability or road conditions indicate that two-wheelers were sometimes, but not always, recognized as a vehicle rather than a machine.<sup>7</sup>

The League was most active and perhaps most effective in its good roads agenda, so a look at earlier roadway quality is worthwhile. The LAW was a highly influential advocate of the larger Progressive Era Good Roads Movement at a time when the conditions of most so-called "roads" were atrocious. Riding was difficult in many areas of the Greater Borderlands due to poor road conditions. Although the light curb weight of bicycles and motorcycles enabled them to travel where no motorcars could go, roads in the Chihuahuan and Sonoran deserts were not biker-friendly. Tires sank in the fine sand around Yuma, Gila Bend, and in other areas. Before the success of the Good Roads Movement in the first two decades of the twentieth century, a motorcycle rider was sometimes at the mercy of weather conditions even while away from the deserts.<sup>8</sup> Road reports were so crucial to travel that they were published in U.S. newspapers.<sup>9</sup> Rainy weather, mud, dry ruts, and overflowing streams were all detrimental particularly to the operation of motor vehicles. Away from the towns, caliche clay took its toll and the horse remained the most reliable means of transportation. It is no coincidence that the first known motorcycles in Arizona appeared in towns like Phoenix, Jerome, and Prescott

where the streets were relatively even and well-maintained and where repair facilities, parts, and gasoline could be obtained.



Plate 19. The Jerome Motorcycle Club in Camp Verde, Arizona, 1914. Photo courtesy of the Jerome Historical Society Archives, Jerome, Arizona.

In the Greater Borderlands, the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts were the worst places to be a biker. Bicycle, motorcycle, and car tires sank in the loosely-packed sand of the border zone in California and Arizona. In many areas of southern New Mexico and northern Chihuahua, mesquite, cacti and other vegetation punctured tires. Rainfall produced mud or caliche clay in southwestern Texas, the New Mexican border zone, Jerome, Arizona and elsewhere that clogged fenders or otherwise prevented movement in both the cities and the deserts.<sup>10</sup>

In 1884 Charles Bates, president of the LAW addressed farmers (who were the majority of the population at that time) in *The Outing* magazine. Bates pointed out that farmers could increase their profits by electing politicians that actively supported the improvement of roadways. The League published first a handbook, and then a pamphlet entitled “The Gospel of Good Roads,” adapting the rhetorical devices of the social gospel popular at the time. In 1891, the LAW unveiled *Good Roads Magazine* to educate the public about the benefits of improved roadways. Prizes were offered for “photographs...showing the common spectacle of the farmer’s team and wagon on rough and muddy roads in their worse condition,” which they called “stuck-in-the-mud” pictures.<sup>11</sup>

The bicyclist rights movement lobbied to “boulevard” Jackson Street in Chicago, using the word as a verb meaning to improve it and to exclude trucks and wagons. After displaying yellow ribbons throughout the city announcing, “Jackson Street Must Be Boulevardeed!” the city council passed a law known as the “Yellow Ribbon Ordinance” to create the conditions the cyclists called for. In 1897 throughout the Greater Borderlands and the U.S., the League of American Wheelmen’s “Good Roads Leagues” adopted the motto, “We want GOOD streets: do you?” in a massive advocacy of graveled and paved roads. The organization also advocated roadway beautification, including the use of ornamental vegetation, several decades before such projects were seriously considered.<sup>12</sup>

Most borderlands roads remained in such unimproved status until after the Federal Highway Act was passed in 1921. This piece of legislation created the national highway system including Route 66 and many other highways. For the first time, federal funds would be available to pave and improve designated roadways.

As enthusiasts of two-wheeled transportation advocated the improvement of roadways running through deserts and other natural areas of low human population densities, the question of whether such advocacy may be posited as a desire for the bringing of a machine into the garden may be asked. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* by Leo Marx described a tension between the human love for “pastoral” nature and an imagined need to tame or “civilize” the land. According to Marx, it was imagined that the world would eventually be set straight through a combination of the two, a “complex pastoralism.” The author concluded that this old myth is bankrupt, no longer attainable, that the machine’s intrusion into the garden is now a political (and environmental) problem, and that we need new vision, “new symbols of possibility.”<sup>13</sup>

*The Machine in the Garden* may not easily apply to the Greater Borderlands. While the expansive horizon went on forever, the deserts did not resemble the kind of green spaces of quietude where one may repose peacefully as described by Marx. When riding a motorcycle out of town onto an isolated desert road for several hours, it was easy to appreciate the natural environments that one immersed herself in. One had escaped from all of the subtle mud and oppression of everyday life, to find herself in nature, whether deliberately or only subconsciously. There were no telegrams or telephones to deal with out there. No crowds, barking dogs, steam engines, or other obnoxious noises occurred on the open road. The sooty smokestacks of ASARCO and other industries were left behind in the cities, however temporarily. The essential rider was able to commune with her powerful engine, the road, the sound and feel of the wind, and sensual perceptions associated with immersion in various natural environments. These were the sounds and other sensations that many riders found attractive.

If the motorcycle is the machine, and if it was ridden for the purpose of enjoying the outdoors, it might be suggested that the environment directly experienced during the ride represents an ideal “wilderness” rather than Marx’s “pastoral.” The difference lies in comparative levels of involvement and immediate familiarity. Although riders believed that they needed improved roadways in order to fully appreciate the outdoors, they did not simply watch the saguaros go by through a glass, television-like window in an enclosed car. Rather than passively observing the countryside, the exposed and interactive activity of motorcycling manifested an involvement within that very state of nature including full immersion into the wide variety of sights, smells, sensations, moistures, and temperatures of the outdoors. The bugs that flew into one’s grinning mouth were often tasty, as well. Good roads facilitated this interaction with the imagined wilderness.

In addition to advocating improved roads, the LAW also took issue with the behavior of police officers. In 1898 the League sued two police officers for “refus[ing] to arrest a driver for running down a wheelman. The blue-coats were fined three days’ pay and given to understand that city ordinances for the safety of cyclists and pedestrians were made to be enforced. Another point scored.”<sup>14</sup> Of course, the elimination of any favoritism and corruption was a Progressive ideal. However, the account also included the derogatory term “blue-coats” and, by employing the metaphor of a scoreboard, attempted to heighten interest in an incident by rhetorically constructing it as a sporting event—a team-oriented competitive game.

The police may also have been keeping score but they had others on their side and the bikers, therefore, had a comparatively smaller team. Members of the non-riding public disliked two wheelers and especially opposed “scorching,” the racing or riding of bikes at high speeds. Thus, some riders offended non-rider sensibilities.

In response to such adverse public opinion, *The Outing* magazine and the League condemned scorching and encouraged law-abiding bicyclists to help the police stop the practice.<sup>15</sup> Realizing that a group that does not police itself may end up being legislated against, the LAW chapter in Riverside, California drafted a commendation of the city government, its police, and its citizens for “bearing with our faults and mistakes.” It denounced scorchers and supported the idea of precise speed laws.<sup>16</sup> Other indicators of the organization’s accommodationist approach to the securing of rights and privileges in the 1890s included its subscribing to the intent of society’s “blue laws” by declaring bicycle racing on Sundays to be a violation of League regulations. The LAW subsequently turned racing over to another association in 1900, however.<sup>17</sup>

### **The FAM as a New Voice and the Issue of Sound**

By the early twentieth century, many motorcyclists believed that they had their own unique transportation issues. A perceived need for an organization for the protection of motorized cyclists arose, so the Federation of American Motorcyclists (FAM) formed in 1903. Introducing itself as “the national association of motorcycle riders,” the FAM’s stated purpose was “the control of the sport of motorcycle racing and other forms of motorcycle competition; the promotion of good fellowship, mutual aid and protection; the encouragement of use of motorcycles; to ascertain, defend and protect the rights of motorcyclists; to facilitate touring and to assist the good roads movement.”<sup>18</sup> The FAM also kept an eye on economic concerns. For instance, it provided an interesting comment on one legislative bill that would have taxed bikers \$25 per year and motorcycle dealers \$250 per year. The FAM “News of the Week” column read, “This bill is so ridiculous that it will probably defeat itself.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, the FAM’s



purposes and concerns were many and the new organization needed the cooperation of many riders to be effective.

Concern for motorcycle safety was a frequent subject of the FAM as expressed in terms that remained remarkably constant in motorcyclist rights organizations (MROs) for the next hundred years. In 1909 Earle Ovington, the FAM president, wrote that the essential motorcyclist was a more alert motorist than that of the four-wheeled vehicle because the car was slower and heavier and its driver was less likely to be injured.<sup>20</sup> Virtually enclosed in a cage, the four-wheeler became lethargic and more careless while driving. Such an argument—implicating drivers of cars who violated the right-of-way and were thus the usual cause of motorcycle crashes—persisted throughout the century and was so often repeated that, by the 1990s, bikers sometimes assumed (incorrectly) that it was an axiom even in larger society's body of common knowledge.

Public animosity toward motorcycles stemmed from not only the riders' high speeds—a seemingly enjoyable tactile activity and tradition inherited from bicyclists—but also the additional sounds produced by their engines. In the early twentieth century, many bikes were manufactured with a muffler bypass lever, a “cutout” system that could be switched on or off while riding. In the open position, the motor was usually more powerful and performed better but the pipes were much louder.<sup>21</sup> Concerned that citizen complaints about loud exhaust systems could possibly counteract their effectiveness as a lobbying organization, the FAM posted a flyer at bike shops and clubhouses in 1907. It read, “Pass the word along the line. If you desire to avoid accidents, Arrests, and Law Suits, and do not wish to make enemies for motorcyclists, or do not wish to provoke the passage of onerous laws. KEEP YOUR MUFFLERS CLOSED!” Most FAM officers denounced the running of open mufflers.

According to its president F. I. Willis, sound was “the greatest hindrance to the general popularity of motorcycling.”<sup>22</sup>

However, another FAM officer named J.P. Thornley said that even though loud pipes should not be run in residential areas, a safe warning of the rider’s approach in heavily congested places may be given by momentarily opening and closing the muffler. He also noted that the engine ran better open during periods of hot weather.<sup>23</sup> Here officers of the MRO framed their various comments in terms of larger sociopolitical accommodation, safety, and machine efficiency.

On the other hand, some non-riding members of the public assumedly felt a need to try to explain why bikers might want to ride loudly. In 1907, one writer claimed that the purpose of loud pipes was “to attract attention: they wish to give people the impression that they are the only motorcyclists in town.”<sup>24</sup> Others simply dismissed motorcyclists as offenders of public decency. Such ideas among non-riders about sound persisted throughout the years, as seen in psychiatrist Armand Nicholai’s 1970 attempt to medicalize motorcycling. Nicholai coined the term “Motorcycle Syndrome” in the medical profession and the news media, promoting the idea that motorcycle riding was an activity practiced by mentally ill individuals. He had clinically treated several motorcyclists. According to Nicholai, “The patients speak freely of their need for attention. Megaphones replace mufflers, the loud noise being a means of assuring attention.”<sup>25</sup> The bikers-want-attention hypothesis of open pipes was, therefore, not confined to the early twentieth century, but remained.

The sound issue did not completely disappear. I found no evidence of sound having been an issue in El Paso, Los Angeles, Austin, or any other place during the late 1960s and

'70s. However, non-rider objections to sound reemerged in the 1990s in some Greater Borderlands cities and towns including Jerome and Cave Creek, Arizona.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile in the motorcycling community, the safety dimension of sound (noted by Thornley much earlier in the century) resulted in a popular slogan: “Loud pipes save lives.” Now hundreds of thousands of riders—many of whom had experienced the loss of loved ones who had been victims of what bikers called “brain-dead cage jockeys” operating “SAVs” (“suburban assault vehicles,” or SUVs) or other “squirrels” recklessly killing and maiming motorcyclists with their “cages”—equipped their bikes with expensive and loud exhaust systems in the hope that car drivers might be able to hear them and become more attentive. In the Greater Borderlands, “Loud pipes save lives” became such a cliché among riders that it resulted in a change to linguistic patterns as bikers would mount their motorcycles while jokingly telling their friends, “I’m going to go save some lives now.” After the slogan appeared on countless small embroidered patches sewn onto leather or denim vests, other motorcycling groups countered with their own alteration of the expression: “Loud pipes *risk rights*.”<sup>27</sup>

### **The AMA, Blue Shirts, and Non-Members as Bolsheviks and Outlaws**

As mentioned in Chapters One and Two, the FAM declined during World War I and folded by 1920. No new MRO immediately formed to replace it. However, there is little evidence of police or systemic harassment of motorcyclists during the 1920s and, therefore, such a rights-oriented organization may have been unneeded. In 1918, the commercial motorcycle industry formed the Motorcycle and Allied Trades Association (MATA) and in 1924 this new group started the AMA as an auxiliary to organize and run racing and competition events.<sup>28</sup>

MATA appointed E. C. Smith as secretary of the AMA. (His background is unknown but may possibly be researched at the AMA's Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum in Ohio.) Although neither MATA nor its AMA was a particularly ideological or philosophical association, Smith had a very forceful personality. In January 1929, explaining why the AMA had printed rules for every motorcycle event, he stated, "We all realize there must be a single governing body, for without the Constitution of the United States we would all be Bolsheviks; without rules and regulations on competition the motorcycle riders would be outlaws, endangering life and limb and doing the game or themselves no good."<sup>29</sup>

By 1932, the AMA annual membership renewal rate was only around forty-two percent, not only because of the Great Depression but also due to widespread rider dissatisfaction with the organization. Smith had a different explanation, however, writing, "No matter what the Sport there is bound to be some 'outlaw' doings. Some would rather break the rules and [by-]laws than obey them."<sup>30</sup>

The ideas of Progressivism had been mainstreamed and overshadowed by the time the Stock Market crashed in 1929 and now other sociopolitical philosophies became popular during the 1930s. While some people imagined social democratic or socialist solutions to solve the economic disaster, others leaned toward the right. Father Charles Coughlin, the famous "radio priest" who broadcasted anti-Semitic and pro-German sermons to an audience of millions, was quite popular. Italy and Germany had its Brown Shirts and Black Shirts; meanwhile, North American fascist movements included the Silver Shirts of William Dudley Pelley whose anti-Semitic religious movement became a political party and inspired Sinclair Lewis to write his anti-fascist 1935 novel *It Can't Happen Here*.<sup>31</sup>

Analyzing such movements in his 1998 essay “The Five Stages of Fascism,” sociologist Robert O. Paxton points out that—unlike other sociopolitical –isms such as socialism, capitalism or communism that were closely associated with distinct philosophies and ideologies—fascism possessed no idealistic trappings. It was instead anti-intellectual, anti-theoretical and non-humanistic, casually adopting and discarding whatever systems happened to empower fascist leadership at the moment.<sup>32</sup> He writes that fascists “despise thought and reason, abandon intellectual positions casually, and cast aside many intellectual fellow travelers.” According to Paxton, the flaunting of fascist symbols and pageantry did not necessarily mean that a group was fascist. Rather, they were meaningless and their display was meant to either intimidate, establish standards of conformity, or maintain social space. He writes, “Disparate in their symbols, décor, and even in their political tactics, fascist movements resemble each other mainly in their functions.”<sup>33</sup>

In the world of motorcycling organizations, AMA’s secretary E.C. Smith continued to exclude African American and other riders that he labeled “outlaws” as well as women motorcyclists. Tightly controlled by corporate and commercial motorcycle-related industries through its parent organization MATA, the AMA was a mere puppet. Even so, fascist currents in non-riding society may have been at work in 1933 when MATA decided to sponsor a group of motorcycle riders called the Blue Shirts. According to an article in *New American Motorcyclist and Bicyclist* magazine:

The Blue Shirts of America, an organization that will further America First, plans a trip with 500 motorcyclists to leave New York about July 1 on a tour of the country. They will be the Paul Reveres of Motorcycling. They leave New York, then go to Washington to be reviewed by the President, then swing around the country on a 30-day jaunt.<sup>34</sup>

Given the social democratic dimensions of President's Roosevelt's New Deal (including ideas he later borrowed from Huey Long's Share Our Wealth Society) as well as his desire to silence Father Coughlin (not to mention the labeling of the president as a communist by many of his corporate critics), it would be interesting to find out what kind of reception the Blue Shirts received in DC or what eventually became of them.<sup>35</sup>

One may reasonably assume that the MATA's political expressions reflected an image of motorcycling that was partly generated in the larger public arena by the press. Whether the Blue Shirts or even MATA were fascist organizations influenced by Goodyear Tire Company (as that corporation had earlier influenced the FAM<sup>36</sup>) and regardless of whether high tech or technocratic efficiency could properly be identified as an element of fascism, mass media of the 1930s portrayed motorcycling firmly within the language of good public order and efficient utility. In addition to articles touting the virtues of motorcycle police and military squadrons, a piece titled "Sanitation Mounties" appeared in the June 1939 issue of *The American City*. Author Loren G. Kurtz described, both qualitatively and quantitatively, how sanitation inspection officers mounted on three-wheeled Indian Tow-Cars had improved the coordination of garbage collection in New York City. According to Kurtz:

[T]hese tricycles have made it possible for sanitation officials to relieve the tension on the inspectors in the outlying districts and allow one man to cover the territory previously traversed by four men. Seventy-seven extra foremen affected by this change have been transferred into more thickly populated territory. The efficiency of collection work has been greatly enhanced in the sections which they now supervise.

Even the accompanying photo, a head-on pose of the fully fared trike with an inspector's capped head barely visible behind the windshield, projected an authoritarian, Gestapo-like image.<sup>37</sup>

## **Big Brother, Anti-Orwellian, and Anti-totalitarian Rhetoric**

Such imagery, along with MATA, became irrelevant soon after the Second World War ended. The AMA survived and was the only major motorcycle organization in North America during the 1950s. By the late-1960s, however, the AMA had failed to reach out to the younger generation of new bikers and was no longer effective as an organization. Linguistic expressions shared between riders and hippies—including condemnations of “the System,” “the Man,” “storm troopers,” and “the Gestapo”—reflected a sharing of certain values indicating a definitive sense that they rejected authoritarian power structural forms and organizational styles.<sup>38</sup>

Young bikers believed that they had been criminalized by entirely new statutes in the 1950s and after. After all, curfews, minor drinking laws, and driver-licensing statutes had been virtually non-existent at the beginning of the twentieth century. The maxim that every new law criminalizes the activities of greater numbers of people, thus creating new criminals, is operative here. The actions of riders hardly changed over time; what changed was the invention of more repressive statutes.<sup>39</sup>

Such sentiments, combined with a collective perception of new bikers’ rights issues, led to the formation of an early 1970s grass roots motorcyclist rights movement calling itself A Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Enactments (ABATE), a name indicating a strong-willed communal opposition to perceived fascist formations. The original mission statement read, “Our mission is positive. We want to educate the lawmakers, to give them our side of the story, before laws are enacted, and we are devoted to working aggressively toward the abatement of all unfair, unjustified, arbitrary anti-bike laws—everywhere.” The statement concluded, “Our insignia is a no-nonsense, uptight eagle (see above) who represents our firm, no-bullshit

resolve to get the job done. Now, not tomorrow. We all know what our problems are, so let's get it on, rather than merely sitting around on our asses, complaining about them.”<sup>40</sup>



**ABATE Membership in 44 States Have Started Working Toward Our Freedom of the Road**

Plate 20. The original ABATE “No nonsense, uptight eagle who represents our firm, no-bullshit resolve to get the job done,” circa early 1970’s. Symbol and rhetoric from *Easyriders* magazine.

Post-counterculture MROs such as ABATE and the Modified Motorcycle Association (MMA)—which formed around the same time and became active in California and Arizona—opposed perceived totalitarian formations and oppressive legislation, speaking a language of freedom, inclusion, unity, and diversity. For example, a 1980s edition of an MMA newsletter displayed its motto “Let Those Who Ride Decide” in conjunction with several logos including BMW, Kawasaki, Harley-Davidson, Norton, Indian, Triumph, Yamaha, BSA, Moto Guzzi, Honda, and Suzuki. The caption read, “The organization that speaks for ALL MOTORCYCLISTS.”<sup>41</sup> Page two provided a more detailed explanation. “Established in 1973, the MMA is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting motorcycle safety and awareness and protecting the rights and freedoms of all motorcyclists.”<sup>42</sup>



The MMA's rhetoric was remarkably similar to the early twentieth-century FAM mission statement insofar as it included the words safety, protection, and rights. However and in contrast to the earlier period, gone was the desire to control racing or touring. The post-counterculture rights movement was not interested in control.<sup>43</sup> On page four of the same issue, in a run flyer advertising an upcoming hog roast where a Harley-Davidson Heritage Softail was scheduled to be raffled off, the organizational motto was embedded in an explanation for the drawing. It read, "The proceeds will go to benefit the fight against the helmet law so that those who ride can decide!"<sup>44</sup> While there was no helmet law for adults in California (a "free state" in rider parlance), the MMA, like the ABATE, was prepared to successfully oppose any such bill in the legislature.

Mike Sanford, editor of an MMA newsletter, promoted the ideals of inclusion and unity in relation to rights, political strength and the Big Brother theme of the George Orwell classic novel *1984* (first published in 1948).<sup>45</sup> Sanford wrote:

[A]ny person who rides a motorcycle, whether American or foreign-made, has the right to freedom of choice. We at the MMA have joined together to fight the unfair laws or make automobile people pay attention. Whatever your reason for joining the MMA—it was *your* choice.... Before we know it, our way of life could be in jeopardy and "1984" by Orwell isn't impossible. A person's choice of machinery is his constitutional right and whenever the politicians decide to pass a bill which isn't to a motorcycle person's benefit, well I hope that American or foreign, that bike rider is in the association so he or she can vote along with the association. I hope that my point gets across, because we all have to stick together or we'll fall.<sup>46</sup>

Opposition to Orwellian government was a recurring concept in MRO thought during the 1970s and early '80s and was perhaps best exemplified by a 1979 Rich Taylor article in *Cycle* magazine, titled "Big Brother: Are His Eyes and Ears Upon Us?" An MMA flyer from the early 1980s, addressed to "Motorcycle Riders" began with the exclamatory statement, "Unfair legislation may force all of us to hang up riding our scooters!" As I recall, in the 1970s

ABATE activists warned non-riders, “If the government can make us wear helmets, then they’ll someday make you wear seatbelts in your cars. We should work together.” Although the people thus addressed almost always thought that such predictions were mistaken or grossly exaggerated, bikers were apparently correct and retained an uncanny ability to astutely predict changes in governance and society for the rest of the century and beyond. Perhaps more importantly, motorcyclists actively opposed what they perceived to be increasing governmental power and privacy invasion that had been predicted by George Orwell in 1948.<sup>47</sup>

### **Freedom of Choice, Individual Autonomy, and Tactical Polyvalence of Discourses**

In the 1970s and ‘80s, some non-riders had given up their countercultural lifestyles to buy into the imagined American Dream and had few or no concerns about Big Brother or governmental control over minority populations (or, over bikers). So, it is little wonder why a 1985 Alta California KTTV television editorial in favor of a universal mandatory helmet law in California had no problem framing its argument in terms of comparisons and the supposed virtue of conformity. The speaker placed California in a larger national context in which thirty-nine states had mandatory helmet laws. A comparison was made with construction workers, baseball and football players that were said to usually wear helmets. He said, “When a motorcyclist is involved in an automobile accident, forget who’s to blame; the motorcycle rider is going to lose.” The essential car driver was reconstructed as a kind of psychological victim using the rhetorical question, “Why should the automobile driver have to live with the memory of having been involved in an accident that injured or killed someone.... a memory that may last a lifetime?” The editorial went on to oppose lane splitting, as well.<sup>48</sup>

Like many television editorials, this one lacked a sense of regional history or technical knowledge. California had once been the birthplace of the counterculture and the only state in the U.S. that had always remained what motorcyclists call a “free state” (free from mandatory helmets). Riders’ values such as personal responsibility for one’s own behavior or collective resistance to perceived reactionary “Harry Hardhat” cultural conformity were ignored in the editorial. In reference to lane splitting, the speaker had also neglected to recognize the requirements of air-cooled bikes that necessarily had to continually move through space in order to keep their engines from seizing or blowing up, as most motorcycles of that time could not be allowed to become stuck in traffic.

Thus, it is fortunate for bikers that the TV station subsequently aired a rebuttal by “Wolf,” an MMA member sitting on his motorcycle (without a helmet). In Wolf’s response, the problem of car drivers operating their vehicles irresponsibly was not addressed but was alluded to only very briefly. Rather than debating the supposed relationships to professional sports or the alleged efficacy of no-fault no-responsibility “ideology,” Wolf guided the argument into a different direction. He informed the viewer, “there is no documented proof that helmets live up to their expectations,” citing studies that suggested helmet non-efficacy and mentioning that “each death in the repeal states is balanced against 691 additional accidents in mandatory helmet states.” To show how the MMA was dedicated to safety, he described a safety bill that the organization had lobbied through the legislature only to be vetoed by the governor. Wolf’s final argument advocated freedom and individual autonomy. He said:

California’s motorcyclists also believe in freedom of choice. We demand the choice of whether or not to wear this article of clothing. We feel that mandatory helmet legislation is treating a symptom and not the problem. Only education can do that. Please keep the issue of helmets voluntary and “Let those who ride decide.”<sup>49</sup>

Wolf's rebuttal, like that of many MRO activists, was skillfully conveyed to address particular issues. In addition, phrases such as "freedom of choice" and "treating a symptom and not the problem" would have been familiar and comfortable to the viewing audience. MROs continued to appropriate language used by the power centers. Michel Foucault calls such linguistic borrowing the "rule of the tactical polyvalence of discourses." Accordingly:

discourses can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also . . . a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. . . . often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories. . . ."<sup>50</sup>

Employing such discourse in a resistance against the perceived power structure, MRO publications in the U.S. began to quote national heroes, especially dead presidents and revolutionary-era figures. One of the 1985 California MMA newsletters quoted Theodore Roosevelt who had advocated membership in trade unions; his speech was now reprinted in order to promote membership in the MMA. The title of the piece, "If I Were a Motorcycle Rider..." was followed by Roosevelt's words:

If I were a wage earner, I would undoubtedly join an organization of my trade. If I disapproved of its policy, I would join in order to fight that policy; if the organization leaders were dishonest, I would join in order to put them out. I believe in organizations and I believe that all men who are benefited by organizations are morally bound to help to the extent of their powers in the common interest advanced by the organization.<sup>51</sup>

The practice of quoting famous people continued in the 1990s. MRO newsletters quoted John Adams, Abigail Adams, Justice John Marshall Harlan, J. William Fulbright, Alexis de Tocqueville and Harry S. Truman who said, "I have little patience with people who take the Bill of Rights for granted. The Bill of Rights, contained in the first ten amendments to the Constitution, is every American's guarantee of freedom."<sup>52</sup> Another newsletter quoted Justice Hugo L. Black who in 1960 had said, "The Framers knew that free speech is the friend

of change and revolution. But they also knew that it is always the deadliest enemy of tyranny.”<sup>53</sup>

A 1985 article by MRO activist Rob Razor (of the AMA, which was by now attempting to become more politically active and relevant in response to the popularity of younger organizations such as ABATE and the MMA) titled “Unequal Protection” exposed various contemporary incidents of inequitable treatment of motorcyclists. Razor quoted a biker who mentioned Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The riders had once again been thwarted in their efforts to gain admission to city park parking lots. The motorcyclist said, “I’m beginning to get the feeling that Martin Luther King had when he went to Montgomery, Alabama. I feel like I’m dealing with a lot of prejudiced people and I’m getting damned tired of it.”<sup>54</sup> The plight of a biker was thus linked to that of African Americans in the Deep South. It would certainly not be the last time that MRO activists invoke the name of Dr. King. More often, they borrowed his more empowering quotes as in 2000 when James “Doc” Reichenbach, president for ABATE of Florida, having heard that the governor had just signed the helmet law repeal bill, exclaimed, “Free at last, free at last, thank God Florida is free at last!”<sup>55</sup>

### **Antidiscrimination, Antifascism, Privacy, and the Jerome Jamboree**

Razor’s article on unequal protection concluded with a two-paragraph discussion of how the US Constitution and its twenty-seven Amendments may seem like a simple document but how its practical application was best left to the attorneys. A new Amendment was called for in the final sentence:

It is now unconstitutional to discriminate in housing, voting, in the work, place, in public and in some private places. The prohibition against discrimination covers race, creed, color, sex and national origin. Maybe what we need now is a guarantee against discrimination because of one’s choice of transportation.<sup>56</sup>

While most of the statutes alluded to were technically not in the Constitution, another decade would pass before Rasor's idea would be taken up by the MROs, if only at the state legislative level. So it is no coincidence that when Minnesota enacted such a law in 1998 making it illegal for businesses to discriminate against bikers, lobbyist Bob Illingworth declared, "Although this is a great win for all motorcyclists in Minnesota and throughout the country, it is indeed sad that we have to have a law passed to guarantee that those who ride motorcycles have the same rights as any other citizen."<sup>57</sup>

Rasor and all of the MROs opposed employee health insurance discrimination in the halls of Congress and in the insurance underwriter company offices. Rasor declined to comment for a 1995 article, however, perhaps because it was to be published in *National Underwriter* rather than in a motorcycle magazine. His response read, "We prefer to engage in a dialogue with insurers rather than enter some sort of adversarial debate with them."

Insurance agents, on the other hand, did contribute to the article. One of them stated, "We do sell policies to people who ride motorcycles.... But if underwriters determine an applicant's activities present an increased risk, they may exclude those activities from coverage." The MROs continued to work the insurance issue (networking with skiing, rafting, equestrian, bicycling, and other organizations) for the rest of the century.<sup>58</sup>

Post-counterculture MRO rhetoric continued to convey an anti-fascist tone and criticized imagined power structural practices such as profiling and the electronic collection of information about bikers and motorcycling groups. The following excerpt was included in a late 1990s Phoenix, Arizona ride report:

The "Man" tried their best to rain on our parade but quick thinking and the level heads of MMA's Security folks prevailed. Objections to our parking arrangements (we had overflowed onto the bridge and across the road) were met with compromise—we

posted James as a flagman at the far end of the bridge, which was agreeable to Sheriff Fred. But by that time Herr Joe's boys had turned Roadrunner's parking lot into a clusterf\*\*k which kept departing riders waiting for nearly an hour before it was sorted out. While trying to take pictures of our license plates one Maricopa County Sheriff was confronted by new MMA State Rep Dan Kelley, ABATE PAC Revvv, and MRF Rep Deb Butitta—each armed with knowledge of how to assert our rights to privacy.... He never had a chance. Not sure of his position, the dimly lit bulb faded on down the road toting Herr Joe's video cam.... Okay, enough of the confrontational cuz the other cops there, especially the half plainclothes one named Tom also of Joe's Reich, were fairly decent, positive communicators."<sup>59</sup>

The passage indicated a collective disdain for perceived unreasonable intrusion by peace officers and employed anti-fascist phraseology such as "Joe's Reich" and "Herr Joe" (referring to Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio) as well as countercultural terminology referring to "the Man."

The imagined fascist police state arrived late in the century in the little town of Jerome, Arizona. The mountainside community had long been considered a biker town, complete with its own dealership and the Jerome Motorcycle Club, as early as 1909. It was a popular motorcycling stop throughout the century, due to its relative geographic isolation and its location along one of the most scenic roadways of the Greater Borderlands.<sup>60</sup>

Jerome was the city from which corporate mining interests had driven pro-labor editor and motorcyclist Edith Whitacre earlier in the century. By the 1980s, however, mining had long since disappeared and the ghost town was resettled by a new generation of hippies, motorcyclists, and artisans who were amiable enough to get along well with each other in a mellow atmosphere. Lisa Whitacre (no relation to Edith), a resident involved with local organizations as well as Greenpeace and the American Civil Liberties Union who also happened to be a biker, was a typical resident of 1980s and 1990s Jerome. Collaborating with her neighbors, some private charities, and the municipal government, she organized the first annual Jerome Jamboree (a motorcycle rally at Gold King Mine) as a charity event in 1999.

As the event's scheduled weekend began, the state gang task force, its metropolitan units (Gang Intelligence Tactical Enforcement Mission, or GITEM), and other uniformed agencies entered town en masse. Some observers claimed that these previously unknown agencies transformed the appearance of the town into that of a war zone, frightening hundreds of tourists as well as scores of riders. Jay Kinsella, Mayor of Jerome, ordered the GITEM and SWAT team to leave town, but they refused to obey and remained in the streets all weekend.<sup>61</sup>

Whitacre stated that she had previously conducted all appropriate event pre-planning steps, had coordinated with governmental agencies, and had obtained all proper permits. After all of the preparation, pre-organizing, and work during the actual event weekend, she wrote a report about what had transpired:

The event started 10-1-99 and late afternoon I was advised of militia-appearing personnel in town.... We [went to town and] saw what seemed to be dozens of.... G.I.T.E.M. State Gang Task Force, S.W.A.T. Team, and Sheriff's Officers.... Bill Bailey from the Sheriff's Office seemed to be the spokesperson and said that they were called by our Police Chief. I [objected to the presence of] the Gang Task Force and SWAT Team which was written all over their uniforms. The guns and vests further accentuated the feeling of intimidation. The [discussion] continued about "outlaw motorcycle gangs." When I asked further questions about motorcycle gangs the response was that they saw "them" ride in this morning.... Bailey and a group of law enforcement came out to the event about twenty minutes later.... On Saturday, 10-2-99.... The law enforcement presence was concentrated in town. They did come out to the Gold King Mine [event site] a few times. In my experience, Jerome P.D. was warmly received and the Sheriff's Officers were treated cordially. I did witness an officer with a video camera filming individuals and license plates. He was blatant with this activity. I felt violated and deeply offended.... the comments were similar from everyone about being violated and feeling as though we were overcome by "Gestapo."... The town was full of law enforcement. Many of the merchants were upset due to the loss of business and intimidating presence. Many tourists were scared off and many of our event participants chose to leave.... Uptown Jerome is a small area and 30 uniformed officers fill it up.... The black, militia-type clothing, guns and vests is overwhelmingly intimidating. We don't have gangs here. I also question the expenditure of this unnecessary show of force, I'm a long term taxpayer. The chronic civil rights violation will be difficult to forget for those of us who were in town.... Our event raised over \$5,000.00 to donate. ONE speeding ticket was issued to a motorcyclist the entire weekend.... Why didn't they film us at the Boys and Girls Club? The kids were thrilled to see us....



I'm encouraging everyone affected to document their experiences. The Motorcycle Rights Organizations are fully aware of what's happened in Jerome and are helping to facilitate resolution at the state level.... We can not take this police presence lightly. Although we proved ourselves to be responsible and lawful, such action by law enforcement should not happen again.<sup>62</sup>

Whitacre had previously served as the Yavapai ABATE Political Action Coordinator (a few years before the special police had come to Arizona) and was subsequently able to muster a response in the Governor's Office, preventing a repeat of what bikers and non-riding locals called the GITEM "occupation" or "Jerome Police Gang Invasion" during the following year's rally. It was eventually discovered that Sherriff's Deputy Bailey had lied to Whitacre about the Jerome Police Chief requesting outside agency support. In fact, no one from Jerome had asked them to come to town.

Unlike many urban ABATE officers in Phoenix and Tucson chapters, Whitacre was previously unaware that any kind of hostile environment concerning new police agencies even existed. The so-called "Police Gang Invasion" was widely considered an unfortunate incident for the Cottonwood Boys and Girls Club and other area event beneficiaries that may have otherwise received more proceeds. The intervention by the Governor's Office, however, encouraged other mayors around the state to effectively ban the police units from entering their city limits during motorcycle events.<sup>63</sup>

Even after all of the documentable motorcycling history that has taken place in and around Jerome for most of the twentieth century, one should not consider it a community of great import in the history of motorcycling in the entire Greater Borderlands. It was a large city and the home of active motorcyclists like Edith Whitacre and Harry Amster, and the Jerome Motorcycle Club as well as an Indian dealership early in the century. A favorite locality for riding throughout the century, it was also the place where the above-mentioned 1999 conflict

took place. However, Jerome is not a location where any kind of paradigmatic shift in biker imagery occurred comparable to Hollister, California in 1947. Nor is it a place where major motorcycle clubs defined ritual and cultural elements for the rest of the world's bikers such as Oakland and San Francisco were in the 1960s and '70s. Jerome's historical importance is most significant for Arizona only, a testing ground of sorts for the establishment of political limitations for special police units in that Greater Borderlands state as they negotiated with a diverse and challenging colony of artists, hippies, bikers, and others.

### **Sputnik, Hyphenated Americans, and the Texas Legislature as “Our House”**

Events such as the “Jerome Police Gang Invasion” differed from street dynamics of the early twentieth century and even from the interaction between police and bikers that occurred in Hollister in 1947. Moreover, motorcyclists and MROs themselves changed over the course of the century. If the exclusionist, racist, misogynous motorcycling organizations of the Progressive Era in some way reflected or fed a fascist movement that developed later in the 1930s on the fringe of American society, then the inclusionary regional and state MROs of the younger generation emerging in the early 1970s may be seen as a rejection of those fascist elements. The rhetoric of ABATE and the other new MROs was that of an inclusionary embrace of diversity, civil rights, and constitutional rights. In such a “biker civics” worldview, many bikers have said that our *public servants* deserve our measured kindness and assistance but the few servants who cross over to the “wrong” side of professional or ethical lines, especially the line of corruption or unresponsiveness to the will of the people, become public enemy. Riders or citizens must then reposition these confused individuals to another place, either in front of a judge or superior for corrective purposes or the unemployment line.

North of the border, a particular Greater Borderlands motorcyclist collective view of legislators and government employees as public servants of the people cannot be overemphasized. MRO leadership certainly believed in such a perspective of governance. By the end of the millennium, Sputnik (Tsalagi, formerly named Herald Strain but now with a legal two-syllable name change), a charismatic, visionary political leader of the riding community, had become a primary spokesperson for motorcycling rights issues in not only the State of Texas but throughout the American Southwest. As a widely known, well-regarded and respected leader, much of what he said was influential in biker culture and national and transnational motorcycling politics; so his ideas are historically relevant to any discussion of MRO political ideology. Therefore, his advice in a public address to eight hundred members of Black motorcycle clubs at the August, 2000 National Bikers Roundup in Rosenberg, Texas was remembered:

That hyphen ["African-American"] was given to you by the government in order to divide people. And it's working. It makes them seem like they are less than American. [While gesturing:] If that man cuts his finger and I cut my finger, our blood falls on *American* soil. That blood is *red* and nobody can tell the difference between his blood and mine....

They put you all in corners; they tuck you away neatly like that and you are separate. I can see it if we were different kinds of *buttons* in different *drawers*. But we are *people*! So we don't *need* to be separated into little drawers....<sup>64</sup>

As usual, he received a spirited standing ovation. Here Sputnik, like Kamala Visweswaran, problematized the hyphen and stated that it serves to separate people. Sputnik advocated a political unity that may be construed as a privileging of motorcyclists as a social class while minimizing any racial divisions. It also bore the marks of a nationalist discourse.

Sputnik had his own regular TV show called *Texas Politics Biker Style* and many of the state government politicians were viewers. He led bikers to gain a significant amount of caucus power in the Texas Democratic Party from 1996 through the remainder of the century and to

acquire a significant amount of clout in the Texas Republican Party, as well. Therefore, the Texas Motorcycle Rights Association (TMRA2) that he chaired was able to achieve the insertion of its own planks in both state party platforms at the turn of the twenty-first century.

At the beginning of each legislative session, Sputnik and TMRA2 members handed each state senator and representative lists of bills to be supported or to vote against. If they were newly elected and confused, he candidly told them, “This is OUR house [i.e., the people’s house] and you may remain in office for as long as you support us. If you ever lie to us or fail to support our issues, then we will replace you with a biker come next election.” Any time the riders deemed someone unfit to be a public servant, they organized within the two parties a year later and were often able to get a motorcyclist or another candidate elected. Thus, the politicians often respected motorcyclists’ declared issues.

During each session, Sputnik and other riders sat up in the balcony in the Texas Capitol and kept watch. Whenever a senator or representative had the floor and was not sure about what tens of thousands of motorcyclists might think about a bill or legislative matter, s/he announced, “I want to know where Sputnik stands on this question.” Everyone then looked up overhead and he gave either a thumb-up or a thumb-down. Such is the way in which motorcyclists practiced politics in Texas. After successfully lobbying to enact laws to get veterans’ license plates for motorcycles and HOV lanes posted open to bikes, Texas MROs affected an alteration of the universal helmet law to allow freedom of choice for responsible riders over the age of twenty-one. After further encouragement by the TMRA2 and other MROs, the legislature and governor passed more laws including one requiring every police officer in Texas to take annual sensitivity training, so that they would hopefully quit profiling

motorcyclists and racial minorities. At the state capitol in Austin, bikers affected the passage or tabling of bills in both houses easily.<sup>65</sup>

### **Transnational Unity, the Border, the Bridge, and the Run Calendar**

If MRO rhetoric rejected totalitarian developments and sometimes seemed rights-based or nationalistic, it also sought to embrace all motorcyclists regardless of where they lived on the planet. The language of inclusiveness for all riders became transnational. Archival mention of a trans-Atlantic MRO agenda appears in FAM literature at least once during the early twentieth century,<sup>66</sup> but related patterns did not fully redevelop until the late 1990s, demonstrating solidarity with MROs and clubs in other countries including both sides of the México-US border and speaking a language of unity as bikers. Thus, it should not be surprising if the linguistic devices of motorcycling activists in the Borderlands differed slightly from those farther north where issues were addressed in a more legalistic way. MROs and riders in extreme southern U.S. border areas and along the northern frontier of México addressed issues more directly.<sup>67</sup>

As part of her documentary film project on bikers' rights, photojournalist Barbara Bustillos-Cogswell interviewed Teacher (a member of the Solo Ángeles MC in Baja California and an MRO activist) who held ABATE of California membership card number 1. Teacher had been involved in the motorcyclist rights movement for quite some time. In the unedited video footage, he said that whenever they go into a place in the United States that has a "sign that says, 'No Colors,' we ignore it or ask them to take it down because it's illegal.... If California motorcyclists got together we could elect the president of the United States...." Teacher's statement represented a more direct expression for the attainment of riders' rights compared to

the typically slow North American MRO procedure of documenting incidents of discrimination for potential class-action lawsuits and simultaneously lobbying for more specific anti-discrimination laws. Teacher said, “Anytime you ride a motorcycle, you’re already on a list. You might as well fight back...”<sup>68</sup>

As for conditions in *la frontera*, the border zone inside México, he described a scene that resembled a kind of sociopolitical inversion of conditions north of the border. To begin with, Teacher said that motorcycle clubs in northern México not only operated as the equivalent of North American MROs but that they also were a respected sector of society.

Accordingly:

We associate with a lot of clubs in Mexicali.... And Mexico City.... In Tijuana, we are the kings...we are so well thought of.... We take care of about sixty kids a year.... Now we have a Harley dealership in Chula Vista that helps us out.... Police departments in...México.... We wear this patch and we have no problems....<sup>69</sup>

Like San Diego with Tijuana, El Paso, Texas was directly across the international boundary line from Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua and close to Sunland Park, New Mexico. It was one big metropolis, a place where people routinely crossed the interstate and international boundaries in their daily commutes while working, shopping, or riding. Such integrated geographic mobility became far more inconvenient and difficult after September 11, 2001 and the passage of the US Patriot Act a few weeks later. It disrupted the lives of millions of people.

Increased difficulties in the daily travels of residents in the El Paso / Juárez Metroplex may be comparable to a theoretical scenario in which a heavily guarded chain-link fence is erected along the north bank of the Potomac River. Meanwhile, most bridges across it are destroyed and then bureaucratic Maryland and D.C. Entrance Stations are established on the remaining bridges as people coming from Virginia wait in line for hours to cross the river. My Potomac River hypothetical model is for illustrative purposes only and is not likely to take

place in the future of Virginia, although it is precisely comparable to what happened here in the border zone.

Having said that, the words of Timothy J. Dunn may also be applicable. He writes:

Special endeavors should be made to avoid sacrificing the rights and well-being of subordinated minority groups for the real or supposed benefit of the majority or more privileged groups, because to do otherwise is not only fundamentally unjust, it is also ultimately a menace to the rights and well-being of us all.<sup>70</sup>

Transnational Borderlands idealism may be viewed as a call for justice, equal treatment, and dignity.

After September 11, 2001, the MROs and motorcyclists of the El Paso-Juárez Metroplex became not less unified but more so. Approximately a dozen new motorcycle clubs formed in Juárez after that date and the newly formed *Coalición de Motociclistas* resulted in more metropolitan and transnational coordination than ever before. Compared to the cars waiting in much longer lines at the U.S. border crossings for one to three hours, the bikes were able to split lanes on the bridge (similar to the way they did on freeways throughout California) and take only fifteen or twenty minutes to get to the front of the line near the U.S. immigration *casitas*. (Car drivers at the border zone crossings somehow seemed to know about air-cooled engines, for they almost always moved over in order to accommodate lane-splitting bikers.) Moreover, there was more solidarity and fellowship between riders in the border zone on both sides of the international border, as well as between Texan and New Mexican organizations, compared to what had existed previously.<sup>71</sup>

The resultant organizational networking was reflected in the international run calendar for the Juárez-El Paso Metroplex region, which was now better coordinated than in former times. On the cover of the calendar, the heading read, “2 Countries, 3 States United for One Common Cause: UNITY Between Bikers, Patch Holders and Independents.” A map featuring

the outlined profiles of New Mexico, Chihuahua, and Texas appeared in the center of the page under which the name “El Paso Motorcycle Coalition Meeting” appeared along with the monthly meeting place, time, and day listed with a contact phone number. The major groups involved in the local transnational effort included the Texas Motorcycle Rights Association, the Ciudad Juárez Coalición de Motociclistas, the West Texas Confederation of Clubs, the New Mexico Confederation of Clubs, and ABATE of New Mexico. The most significant feature of the map on the cover of the calendar was that the border drawn between Chihuahua and the United States was of the same thickness as the border drawn between Texas and New Mexico.<sup>72</sup>

The map also appeared on a run flyer, that of the annual International Border Run, a three-day event consisting of parties Friday night, a poker run, rodeo, and concert on Saturday, and the Frank Root Memorial Toy Run on Sunday.<sup>73</sup> The rally was successful and promised to grow each year. Such artifacts and developments may be seen as responses to the hardening of geopolitical borders, reaffirming a diminishment of their significance while representing the idea of three equal partners in a sociopolitical coalition of coalitions. They also placed motorcyclists (and the border zone) at the center rather than on the peripheries.

### **The Border Run Story and Larger Questions**

By the 1990s, motorcycling was made “acceptable” to larger society in the borderlands by associating it with upper and middle class society. Covering the Border Run, the *El Paso Times* followed a new journalistic pattern that had emerged in the 1990s in which the old stereotype of the lowlife sleazy biker was shattered. David Peregrino, the reporter, began his story with, “The leather-clad Harley rider of today is more likely to wield a stethoscope or



annotated volume of tort law than a gun or bone-snapping lead pipe....” Although the article appeared in a regular newspaper, the tangible and intangible benefits of motorcycling were lauded including improved gas mileage and a sensory description of the ride. “Motorcycles squeeze many miles out [of] every gallon of gasoline at a time when people who drive gas guzzlers are complaining about high gas prices.” Peregrino interviewed a biker named Charles Schuetz who said that the feeling of motorcycling was “the greatest thing...it’s the closest thing you can get to flying.”<sup>74</sup> The story represented an isolated instance of flattering news coverage by a non-rider oriented publication, an example of positive public media coverage.

Public representation changed over time, as did MRO ideology. Yet, more research needs to be conducted, since this chapter creates more questions than answers. One may inquire about other ways in which late nineteenth and early twentieth-century motorcycle organizations were similar to, and differed from, those that emerged after the 1960s. To what extent were the earlier ones too exclusionary for the effective advancement of motorcycling? How influential were elements of American fascism during the 1930s, both within and without riding culture? What can motorcycle culture and MROs tell us about the emergence and success of grass roots political movements that confronted power structures in American and Borderlands history? To what extent did MROs and bikers curtail or postpone the growth of authoritarian power structures in the Borderlands, in México, and in the U.S.? The importance of values and concepts such as personal freedom, *libertad*, mobility, equality, *carnalismo*, honor, privacy, individuality, and *justicia* require further study in juxtaposition to biker-perceived anti-motorcycle ideas related to safety, hierarchy, conformity, meticulous presentation, and discipline. Motorcycling social history and MRO political history may tell us

a great deal about larger issues such as the marginalization of populations, the history of violence, and the attainment of tolerance in a multicultural world.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Wendy Moon, "The Biker's Debt to Bicyclists: Scorching the Trail: Two-wheeled Culture's Roots are Showing," *Thunder Press*. South edition (April 2004), 26-28. See also Robert A. Smith, *A Social History of the Bicycle: Its Early Life and Times in America* (New York: American Heritage Press, McGraw-Hill, 1972), 12-13, 31, 53, 55, 59-60, 70-71, 76, 94, 104, 115-116, 132, 137, 145, 150-155, 157-158, 162-163. Sammy Kent Brooks, "The Motorcycle in American Culture: From Conception to 1935," (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1975). Ph.D. Dissertation. (American Civilization), 6. A. Russell Bond, "Practical Mechanics for Boys: What Every One Should Know About the Motor-Cycle," *St. Nicholas* 42 (September 1915), 998-1007, esp. 998-1000. Thomas C. Bolfert, *The Big Book of Harley-Davidson* (Osceola, Wisconsin: Motorbooks International Publishers, 1991), 20-25. Richard Alexander Hough and L.J.K. Setright, *A History of the World's Motorcycles* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1973), 24, 31, 37, 40, 44-45. Vic Willoughby, *Classic Motorcycles* (New York: Dial Press, 1975), 23, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 54.

<sup>3</sup> The Veteran, "Tips and Topics," *Motorcycle Illustrated*. 5-8 (May 1, 1910), 23. Frank Richardson Pierce, "Kennedy Wins Out: The Story of a Map, a Motorcycle, a Gold Mine and a Girl," *Motorcycle and Bicycle Illustrated* (March 4, 1920), 15-17. Serg. L. H. Guterman, "A Day in the Life of a Border Rider: Mud and Much of it Bothers the Boys with the Motor Battery of the 71<sup>st</sup> at McAllen, Texas, but Motors Give Good Service," *Motor Cycle Illustrated* (September 14, 1916), 13-15. "Spectacular Manoeuvres of Motorcycle Volunteers Thrill Thousands: State and Army Officials are Surprised by Work of Power Two-Wheelers in National Guard Program at Van Cortlandt Park, New York; Governor Whitman Compliments Riders, More than 100 of Whom Participate in Drills," *Motor Cycle Illustrated* (September 30, 1915), 1-3. Bond, "Practical Mechanics for Boys," 998-1007. "Uncle Sam Takes Five More Harley-Davidsons," *Motor Cycle Illustrated* (April 20, 1916), 12. Orson D. Munn, ed. "Motorcycles Go to War: In France They are Developing This Vehicle into an Efficient Battle Steed," *Scientific American* 138-4 (April 1928): 345. N.W. Matlock, "An Efficient Motorcycle Squad," *American City* 49 (June 1934), 81. Lieutenant Will Charles, "Hell on Wheels," *Collier's*. 108-22 (November 29, 1941), 20-21, 73. Charles McLendon, ed., "Motorcycles for Combat," *Popular Science Monthly* 141-3 (September, 1942), 118-121, 212, 214. "'Battle of Hollister' Ends as Wild, Celebrating Motorcyclists Leave City," *Hollister Free Lance* (July 7, 1947), 1. Harley-Davidson Motor Company, "'Put us down for Harley-Davidsons when we get back!'" *Popular Science Monthly* (October, 1945), 225. See also Winston Churchill, *The Great War* (London: G. Newnes Ltd., 1934), 1113. Paul J. Vanderwood and Frank N. Samponaro, *Border Fury: A Picture Postcard Record of Mexico's Revolution and U.S. War Preparedness, 1910-1917* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988). Clarence C. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border: The United States Army and the Mexican Irregulars* (London: MacMillan Company, 1969), 326. Manuel A. Machado, Jr., *Centaur of the North: Francisco Villa, the Mexican Revolution, and Northern Mexico* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1988). Walter Lord, *Day of Infamy* (New York: Bantam Books, 1978). John E. Mack, *A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T.E. Lawrence* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1975), 131-132.

<sup>4</sup> Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration," in *Classics of Public Administration*. ed. Jay M. Shafritz and Albert C. Hyde (1978; Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing, 1992), 11-24. Frederick W. Taylor, "Scientific Management," in *Classics of Public Administration*. ed. Jay M. Shafritz and Albert C. Hyde (1978; Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing, 1992), 29-32. William H. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987). Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer, *In the Shadow of the Mexican Revolution: Contemporary Mexican History, 1910-1989*. trans. Luis Alberto Fierro (1993; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 1-35. Lorenzo Meyer, *Mexico and the United States in the Oil Controversy, 1917-1942*. trans. Muriel Vasconcellos (1972; Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1977), 3-74. Zachary A. Smith, *Politics and Public Policy in Arizona* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996). Mario T. García, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 54.

<sup>5</sup> "Single Motor Bicycles," *New York Sun* as reprinted in *Current Literature* 29-2 (August 1900), 233-235. M.C. Krarup, "The Field for Motorcycles: Motorcycling vs. Motoring," *Outing* 37-2 (November, 1900), 207-212. Hough, *History of the World's Motorcycles*, 24-25, 56, 66-70. Harry Louis and Bob Currie, eds., *The Classic Motorcycles* (New York: Dutton, 1976), 10-13, 16, 40-42, 52-53, 66-70. "Spectacular Manoeuvres of Motorcycle Volunteers," 1-3. "Uncle Sam Takes Five More Harley-Davidsons," 12. Guterman, "A Day in the Life of a Border

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Rider,” 13-15. Munn, “Motorcycles Go to War,” 345. Charles, “Hell on Wheels,” 20-21, 73. McLendon, “Motorcycles for Combat,” 118-121, 212, 214. H. H. Windsor, Jr., ed., “Motorcycle has 2-Wheel Drive,” *Science Digest* 22-2 (August, 1947), 94. Irwin Scofield Guernsey, *A Reference History of the War*, (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1920), p. 44. Cyril Bentham Falls, *History of the Great War: Military Operations – Egypt and Palestine from June 1917 to the End of the War* (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1930), 686-688. Joseph Goodman, president, “Opportunity for Young Men,” *Bicycling World and Motorcycle Review* (April 1, 1911), 65. Machado, *Centaur of the North*, 202. Melissa Holbrook Pierson, *The Perfect Vehicle: What It Is about Motorcycles* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997), 83. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border*, 326. Bolfert, *Big Book*, 40, 54, 62-70. Bradford Luckingham, *Phoenix: The History of a Southwestern Metropolis* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), 52. Buzz Kanter, *Indian Motorcycles* (Osceola, Wisconsin: Motorbooks International, 1993). Matlock, “An Efficient Motorcycle Squad,” 81. Gary L. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1996-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>6</sup> Smith, *A Social History of the Bicycle*, 213. See also Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528-1971* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing, Pemberton Press, 1973). Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Smith, *A Social History of the Bicycle*, 224. Brooks, “Motorcycle in American Culture,” 13.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 79, 140. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border*, 326. Pierce, “Kennedy Wins Out,” 15-17. Guterman, “A Day in the Life of a Border Rider,” 13-15. Charles P. Kendall, “Planks Across the Dunes,” *Journal of Arizona History* 21-4 (1980): 391-410. Charles P. Kendall, “Engineer’s Nightmare: Bridging the Colorado at Yuma in 1915,” *Journal of Arizona History* 19-3 (1978): 283-296. Alex J. Kimmelman, “Luring the Tourist to Tucson: Civic Promotion During the 1920’s,” *Journal of Arizona History* 28-2 (1987): 135-154. Peter J. Hughill, “Good Roads and the Automobile in the United States, 1880-1929,” *Geographical Review* 72-3 (1982): 327-349. See also “Harry Amster on a 1914 Indian M/C. Scene is on a Muddy Jerome St.,” Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-40, Jerome Historical Society Archives, Jerome, Arizona (hereinafter called “JHSA”). “Harry Amster Sitting on a Very Muddy 1914 Indian Motorcycle,” Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-6, JHSA. In fact, one of the stated purposes of the Federation of American Motorcyclists in 1904 was “to assist the good roads movement.”

<sup>9</sup> For example, see “Reports say Roads East and West in Fair Shape,” *Colorado Springs Gazette* 14,327 (July 21, 1915): 5.

<sup>10</sup> “Harry Amster on a 1914 Indian M/C.” “Harry Amster Sitting on a Very Muddy 1914 Indian Motorcycle.” Kendall, “Planks Across the Dunes,” 391-410. Kendall, “Engineer’s Nightmare,” 283-296. Kimmelman, “Luring the Tourist to Tucson,” 135-154. Hughill, “Good Roads and the Automobile,” 327-349.

<sup>11</sup> Smith, *A Social History of the Bicycle*, 206-207.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 212, 214.

<sup>13</sup> Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

<sup>14</sup> Brooks, “Motorcycle in American Culture,” 12-13.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, *Social History of the Bicycle*, 192-193.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 199; also 192-199.

<sup>17</sup> Brooks, “Motorcycle in American Culture,” 24.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 79. See also Tim Nelson, Lee McCubbin, and Vinny Neuman, “Brief History of Bikers’ Rights and the MRF.” Internet. [http://www.ncrider.com/MRF-Brief%20History%20of%20the%20MRF\\_WORD-FORMAT.htm](http://www.ncrider.com/MRF-Brief%20History%20of%20the%20MRF_WORD-FORMAT.htm). 2004. 1-3.

<sup>19</sup> T.J. Sullivan, ed., “News of the Week,” *Motorcycling* (Feb. 16, 1914), 33.

<sup>20</sup> Brooks, “Motorcycle in American Culture,” 104.

<sup>21</sup> Bolfert, *Big Book*, 32. Hough, *History of the World’s Motorcycles*. Willoughby, *Classic Motorcycles*. Eric E. Thompson, *Motor Cycles in Colour* (London: Blandford Press, 1976). Louis, *Classic Motorcycles*. Kanter, *Indian Motorcycles*.

<sup>22</sup> Brooks, “Motorcycle in American Culture,” 58, 183.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>25</sup> “The Motorcycle Syndrome,” *Time*. (December 7, 1970), 65. See also Brooks, “Motorcycle in American Culture,” 60-61.

<sup>26</sup> Jerome Town Council Minutes; June 11, 1996; July 9, 1996; July 31, 1996; August 13, 1996; September 4, 1996; October 15, 1996; February 18, 1997; April 8, 1997; August 4, 1997; August 12, 1997; February 10, 1998 (ordinance proposed); March 10, 1998 (ordinance signed); June 23, 1998; October 8, 1998; November 10, 1998;

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 179, 242-245.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 246; also 179, 242-246.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 287-288.

<sup>31</sup> Sinclair Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here* (1935; New York: Penguin, 2005). John Werly, "The Millenarian Right: William Dudley Pelley and the Silver Legion of America," Syracuse University, 1972. Ph.D. diss. Philip Jenkins, *Hoods and Shirts: The Extreme Right in Pennsylvania, 1925-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). Philip Jenkins, *A History of the United States* (New York: Palgrave, 2003). James L. Roark, Michael P. Johnson, Patricia Cline Cohen, Sarah Stage, Alan Lawson, and Susan M. Hartmann, *The American Promise: A History of the United States*. Vol. 2 (Boston and New York: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2005), 871, 873-874, 886-890, 894-895, 897.

<sup>32</sup> Robert O. Paxton, "The Five Stages of Fascism," *Journal of Modern History* 70 (March, 1998): 3-5.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>34</sup> Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 277.

<sup>35</sup> MATA endorsed the America First Committee at the beginning of World War II. For the antiwar movement's fascist influences and dimensions, see David Gordon, "America First: The Anti-War Movement, Charles Lindbergh and the Second World War, 1940-1941," a paper presented at a joint meeting of the Historical Society and the New York Military Affairs Symposium, September 26, 2003. Available at New York Military Affairs Symposium, Internet. <http://libraryautomation.com/nymas/americafirst.html>. 2008. 1-43.

<sup>36</sup> Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 179.

<sup>37</sup> Loren G. Kurtz, "Sanitation Mounties," *American City* (June, 1939): 86.

<sup>38</sup> Hunter S. Thompson, *Hell's Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga* (1966; New York: Modern Library, Random House, 1999), 72-74, 155-157. Joan Morrison and Robert K. Morrison, *From Camelot to Kent State: The Sixties Experience in the Words of Those Who Lived It* (New York: Times Books, 1987), 198. Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 301. "Ride the Highways to the Skyways," *Rat Subterranean News* (Austin, Texas and New York) 2-4 (April 4, 1969), 3. Mary Reinholz, "Teen Fair: Fair Hype," *Los Angeles Free Press* 6-246 (Apr. 4-10, 1969): 1, 11. John Carpenter, "Peter Fonda... the Easy Rider," *Los Angeles Free Press* 6-260 (July 11, 1969): 32, 51. Paul Glushanok, "'Easy Rider,'" *Rat Subterranean News* 2-15 (Late July 1969): 20. Peter Fonda, "Easy Rappin'," *Rat Subterranean News*

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<sup>39</sup> James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent of the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>40</sup> Lou [Barf] Kimzey, ed., "ABATE Membership in 44 States have Started Working Toward Our Freedom of the Road," *Easyriders*. (February, 1972) as reproduced in ABATE of Minnesota, "History of ABATE." Internet. <http://ic.owatonna.mn.us/~hjknip/abate%20History.htm>. 1998. 1-5.

<sup>41</sup> [Beemer] George Canevit, "The Organization that Speaks for ALL MOTORCYCLISTS," *Bullsheat*. (May 1988), 1. See also Lou [Barf] Kimzey, ed., "ABATE Membership in 44 States have Started Working Toward Our Freedom of the Road," *Easyriders*. (February, 1972) as reproduced in ABATE of Minnesota, "History of ABATE." Internet. <http://ic.owatonna.mn.us/~hjknip/abate%20History.htm>. 1998. 1-5. Lou [Barf] Kimzey, ed., "A Repeal Bill that Affects Every State," *Easyriders*. 5-30 (July, 1975), 58-59. Jim Silk Collection, Tempe, Arizona (hereinafter called "JSC"). Lou [Barf] Kimzey, ed., "ABATE," *Easyriders*. 6-36 (May, 1976), 28-29. JSC. "Modified Motorcycle Association," Informational flyer, circa. 1982. Mike Sanford, ed., "Editorial..." *Modified Motorcycle Association*. Circa early 1985, 7-8. [Beemer] George Canevit, "Has Your Membership Expired??" *Bullsheat*. (May 1988), 2.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. Brooks, "Motorcycle in American Culture," 79. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (1968; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). Terry H. Anderson, *The Sixties* (New York: Longman, Addison Wesley Longman, 1999). David Burner, *Making Peace With the 60s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), Plate 29. David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War, The Sexual Revolution: An Unfettered History* (2000; New York: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>44</sup> "Hog Roast," *Bullsheat* (May 1988), 4.

<sup>45</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948; New York: Plume, Penguin, 2003).

<sup>46</sup> Sanford, "Editorial..." 7.

<sup>47</sup> Rich Taylor, "Big Brother: Are His Eyes and Ears Upon Us?" *Cycle*. 30 (December 1979), 105-109. MMA, flyer. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1978-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>48</sup> Sanford, "Editorial..." 7-8. See also Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, Perseus Books, 2002), 144-150, 191-204, 241-246, 256-257. Michael Schaller, *Reckoning with Reagan: America and Its President in the 1980s* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 71-76.

<sup>49</sup> Sanford, "Editorial..." 7-8.

<sup>50</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* (1978. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1990), 100-101.

<sup>51</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, "If I Were a Motorcycle Rider..." *Modified Motorcycle Association*. Circa early 1985, 9.

<sup>52</sup> Priest, Meltdown, and Fallout [pseuds.], eds., "We the People," *Motorcycle Patriot*. 9-10 (January 1998), 3. See also Priest, Meltdown, and Fallout [pseuds.], eds., *Motorcycle Patriot*. 9-13 (April 1998), 3. Priest, Meltdown, and Fallout [pseuds.], eds., "We the People," *Motorcycle Patriot*. 9-17 (August 1998), 3.

<sup>53</sup> Priest, Meltdown, and Fallout (April 1998), 3.

<sup>54</sup> Rob Razor, "Unequal Protection," *Modified Motorcycle Association*. Circa early 1985, 10.

<sup>55</sup> Bill Bish, "Florida Repeals Mandatory Helmet Law!" *Aid to Injured Motorcyclists / National Coalition of Motorcyclists*, 1-1 (2000), 2.

<sup>56</sup> Razor, "Unequal Protection," 10.

<sup>57</sup> Priest, Meltdown, and Fallout [pseuds.], eds., "Minnesota Approves First-Ever Motorcyclist Anti-Discrimination Legislation," *Motorcycle Patriot*. 9-14 (May, 1998), 1.

<sup>58</sup> Diane West, "Bikers Seek to Outlaw Health Insurance Discrimination," *National Underwriter / Life and Health Financial Services*. 99-23 (June 5, 1995).

<sup>59</sup> Priest [pseud.], "New River Beach Party '99," *Motorcycle Patriot*. 9-25 (April 1999), 9.

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<sup>60</sup> “Jerome Motorcycle Club,” Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-7, Jerome Historical Society Archives, Jerome, Arizona (hereinafter called “JHSA”). The photo is of twelve people sitting on motorcycles in front of Valley Hotel in Camp Verde in 1914, taken during a regular Sunday ride to the hotel where a chicken dinner could be had for twenty-five cents. “Harry Amster Motorcycle Shop in Jerome in 1914,” Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-11, JHSA. The photo is of a small wood frame building with a sign “Indian Motorcycles” above the door. Three men and a motorcycle are in front of the building. “Elsie Scott and Harry Amster on a 1914 Indian Motorcycle,” Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-4, JHSA. “Harry Amster on a 1912 Indian Motorcycle Near the Present Verde River Bridge at Bridgefort,” Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-3, JHSA. “Reese & Amster Garage,” Photograph. Accession number J-90-277-1, JHSA. “UVX Townsite on Hampshire Ave.,” Photograph. Accession number P-90-264-1, JHSA. “Edith,” Photograph of Edith Whitacre, Accession number P-90-297-30, JHSA. “Harry Amster and 2 Passengers on a 1912 Indian Motorcycle in Clarkdale,” Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-1, JHSA. “View of the Front of Reese & Amster Garage in Jerome prior to Unveiling of New Chrysler 6 on March 28,” Photograph. Accession number J-75-6-9, JHSA. “Harry Amster on a 1914 Indian M/C.” “Harry Amster Sitting on a Very Muddy 1914 Indian Motorcycle.” Bill Cram, “The Harry Amster Story,” *Jerome Chronicle* (Spring 1970), 1-3. Mona Lange McCroskey, “Driving and Dentistry in Jerome: The Photographs of Lee and Myron Hawkins, 1893-1932,” *Journal of Arizona History*. 38-3 (1997), 283-294. Jerome Historical Society, “History of the Old Jerome Fire Station,” 2001. JHSA. Harry Amster, Speech delivered at the Verde Valley Transit Authority Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, October 9, 1983. 1-4. Transcript courtesy of JHSA. Harry Amster, Presentation and slide show given at the Verde Valley Transit Authority Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, October 9, 1983. 1-7. Presentation outline courtesy of JHSA. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1996-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. Sherrie Carr, interview by author, Tape recording, Cottonwood, Arizona, 6 February 2001. Deb Butitta, “And in Jerome...,” *Masterlink*. 7-11 (November, 1999), 7. Lisa Whitacre, interview by author, Typed e-mail responses to prepared questions, 7 January 2001. Lisa Whitacre, interview by author, Tape recording, Jerome, Arizona, 19 February 2001. Lisa Whitacre, untitled draft article for motorcyclist rights organization newsletters, October 10, 1999.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. Carr, interview. Butitta, “And in Jerome...,” 7. Whitacre, interview via e-mail. Whitacre, interview with tape-recording. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1996-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001. See also Bobbi Hartmann, “Arizona Drug and Gang Policy Council’s Sunset Review,” *Masterlink*. 7-11 (November, 1999), 1, 6. Ding [pseud.], Interview by author, April 11, 2001, Phoenix, Arizona. “[The mayor of Springerville] told them [the police gang task force] to get the fuck out.” They obeyed and lingered just outside the city limits. This represents a change in operating procedures since the time when the police gang taskforce disobeyed Jerome Mayor Jay Kinsella’s order to depart town.

<sup>64</sup> [Sputnik] Herald Strain, Speech at the National Bikers Roundup, Rosenberg, Texas, August 5, 2000. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1982-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2000.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., participant reflection, 1996-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2000.

<sup>66</sup> R. F. Kelsey, ed., “May Resurrect International Federation,” *Bicycling World and Motorcycle Review*. (June 22, 1912).

<sup>67</sup> For example, see Robert Filla, “Bikers Without Borders: A Spicy Weekend of Riding,” *Thunder Press*, South Edition (June 2008): 1, 14-15. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1996-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2008.

<sup>68</sup> Barbara Bustillos-Cogswell, prod., Outtakes from *Bikers...Talk About Freedom*, a film presented at the Southwest / Texas Popular Culture Association Annual Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 7, 2001. See also Barbara Guadalupe Bustillos Cogswell, prod., *Motorcycle Memoirs: A Family Point of View*. 2 Bikers and a Writer Productions, Bustillos and Company Media Productions, 2006. Film.

<sup>69</sup> Bustillos-Cogswell, Outtakes.

<sup>70</sup> Timothy J. Dunn, *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978-1992: Low-Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home* (Austin: Center for Mexican-American Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1996), 170-171.

<sup>71</sup> Sanford, “Editorial...,” 7-8. Kieffner, participant observation, 2001-2008. For the larger context, see Lawrence A. Herzog, *Where North Meets South: Cities, Space, and Politics on the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Austin: University of Texas, Center for Mexican-American Studies, 1990).

<sup>72</sup> Mando, ed., “2 Countries, 3 States United for One Common Cause: Unity Between Bikers, Patch Holders and Independents.” 2005 Calendar, 2004. 13 pp.

<sup>73</sup> Mando, “1st International Border Run.” Run flyer, 2004. 1 p.

<sup>74</sup> David Peregrino, “Motorcyclists Make a Run for the Border,” *El Paso Times*. (May 4, 2002).

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in these five chapters on gender, race, imagery, death rituals, and ideology, motorcycling culture had a long history of marginalization, resistance, and interaction with larger societal and ideological forces as it developed unique social and cultural formations. Chapters One and Two show how degrees of marginalization of racialized and gendered motorcyclists, as well as resistance and activism, varied over the course of the twentieth century. Motorcycling was a “masculine” world within which women operated and moved. While exaggerated, male-oriented gender roles were the norm, exceptional women could nonetheless overcome and expand beyond such inequity due to biker subcultural values such as nonconformity and individuality. Gender rebellion was ritually reinforced for some persons but not for others, depending on individual status.

The phenomenon of women as motorcycle operators—fully engaged in a high profile, very visible and public mobility—preceded the relaxing and revision of socially prescribed gender roles twice in the course of the century. A few women started to ride around 1910 and, again, around 1965. Their numbers seem to have increased during the 1910s and ‘20s and, then again, in the 1970s and ‘80s. Female bikers were relatively organized or influential after 1915, 1940, and 1972. The overall history of women motorcyclists in the US seems to have been cyclical with the 1950s as the mid-century, low tide mark.



Perhaps it is no coincidence that women in larger, non-riding society gained sociopolitical status after 1920 (with the Nineteenth Amendment), after 1973 (when the *Roe v. Wade* decision ensured the right to have an abortion), and in the 1990s when their political participation, ability to collect child support, and power increased. The radically different actions of women bikers such as Edith Whitacre, Della Crewe, the Van Burens, and others during the 1910s served to complement and enhance the activism of the labor and women's movements and helped to usher in the social liberalism of the 1920s in which gendered proscriptions became more relaxed. When the major and minor newspapers and moto magazines of North America printed articles by or about women motorcyclists, they forced men and women to begin to rethink established gender role constructs. Riding women were performing activities that were outside of their culturally assigned stations in life three to ten years before women gained the right to vote at the federal level. Highly publicized and readily visible public phenomena such as Crewe's and the Van Burens' rides as well as everyday, unavoidable street scenes that included women as motorcycle operators tended to legitimize these activities in Progressive-Era America. It was only after the Van Burens' run that the Women's Party of Alice Paul and Lucy Stone began to picket the White House. In such a larger contemporary social and political context, the Van Burens' transcontinental run, other coast-to-coast rides, and local area activism by strong, independent women bikers helped to legitimize alternative gender constructs and smooth the way for eventual ratification of the Women's Suffrage Amendment in 1920.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Black and other racialized bikers were marginalized by racial constructs and probably because they were riders, yet they resisted and enjoyed the ride. Degrees of racial integration or separation within the motorcycling world were more complex than the facile

terms “Black club,” “White club,” Mexican club,” or “mixed club” would have one imagine. The Jim Crow color line was significant in riding culture as it was in larger society.

The topics of women, Black, and other marginalized motorcyclists in the Borderlands relate to issues of gender, race and transportation as resistance. Riding the public streets and roadways was a very high profile, noticeable, public activity that has been occurring in the world now for nearly two centuries. Similar to gender-related historic events, the presence of racialized people on bikes during the twentieth century was a very public phenomenon and may have affected significant changes to societal attitudes concerning the alteration of racial constructs and the legitimization and actualization of rights for people in general. Various individual motorcyclists and groups of riders were influential in the course of history. The stories of bikers such as Francis Peeler, Bessie Stringfield, Tobie Gene Levingston and Heavy Evans as well as the present-day participation of African American clubs such as Organized Chaos, the Ruff Ryders, and the Buffalo Soldiers MC in larger forums such as the El Paso Coalition of Motorcyclists and the West Texas Confederation of Clubs tell us that racial discrimination was problematic but that riders were able to adapt, unify, and overcome perceived opposition to their willingness to enjoy the ride. Their highly visible public activities preceded changes in ethnic, racial, and gendered arenas. The extent to which an individual could challenge conventional gender roll constructs or racism or to achieve significant levels of privilege depended partly on her character, personality, the way she carried herself, and her acquired status within various groups. Such marginalization, rebellion, and negotiation preceded the Women’s Suffrage Amendment and the achievements of the Women’s Liberation Movement by at least five to ten years and were contemporary to the Civil Rights Movement and the countercultural revolution of the late 1960s and early ‘70s. It is likely that various

riders, conducting a high-profile public activity that was loud and seemingly difficult to ignore, helped to legitimize and enable larger societal changes.

Chapter Three on myths and realities shows how particular images of the essential motorcyclist slowly developed from the first decade of the twentieth century, how they crystallized into specific stereotypes after the Hollister rally of 1947, and ways in which these mythic constructs subsequently interacted with actual riders and non-riders. The activity of motorcycling since the 1920s, and especially from the Second World War through the 1980s, was depicted as a dangerous, threatening, uninhibited world with no rules. Although such depictions did not accurately represent motorcyclists or motorcycling culture, elements of reality influenced such biker mythology while the images themselves produced changes in actual biker culture.

Myths and realities interacted for generations throughout the remainder of the century, resulting in a marginalization of, and resistance by, riders as an imagined deviant social class. Thus, mythic elements were partially derived from factual, phenomenal aspects of the ride. Yet, exaggerated news stories, articles, cinematic and other productions served to place bikers at a social distance away from non-riders. The mass cultural, medical, and governmental accumulation and production of data, information, and interpretation about and of bikers and of motorcycling culture exemplifies Foucauldian conceptualization including sexuality deployment, power-knowledge exchange between power centers in a larger power structure, and tactical polyvalence of discourse as resistance. Interactions between motorcyclists, the media, mass cultural productions, popular culture, and the state also contributed to the development and redevelopment of biker culture throughout the twentieth century. For example, the world wars' production of disillusioned combat veterans and hyperbolic media

productions spawned by the “Hollister Riot” ensured the alienation of motorcyclists from society. Years later, *Easy Rider* led to a redefining of a culture that subsequently resisted an imagined marginalization, leading to eventual changes in the world of motorcycling.

After the mid-1980’s, this essential biker public imaginary attracted the attentions of new motorcyclists from elite and wealthier classes who sought to become part of the excitement. The new riders, who traditional bikers identified by the pejorative terms rich urban bikers (RUBs) or “Yuppies,” sought to self-actualize the biker myth. However, the beginning of the end of the biker “mystique” occurred in 1999 when a critical component of the Harley-Davidson machine itself was redesigned and the new machines no longer vibrated like a traditional Harley.

As Chapter Four on death-related rituals demonstrates, biker culture was influenced over the years by non-rider cultural traditions and phenomena. Many riders since the time of the Mexican Revolution and World War I were veterans and a noticeable military influence existed in death memorial rites by the end of the Vietnam War. Yet, the roots of popular biker death rituals can be traced to three additional sets of main sources: the Irish wake as celebrated in the nineteenth century, 1960s countercultural practices related to protest and the appropriation and use of public space, and Native American- or New Age-influenced beliefs and rituals.

The use of indigenous sacred places by non-Native bikers was problematic for much of the century in the Greater Borderlands and elsewhere. Riders trespassed, used, and sometimes abused Native American space. On some occasions, however, groups were invited in and a few members of a group received further invitations to celebrate particular ceremonies. Bikers also had their own special places that were related to death ritual practices. Both space and place

were important to indigenous peoples and to motorcyclists in the twentieth-century. Another meaning of space related to the ability of a distinctive community to grow. Social and other spaces may have given motorcyclists the ability to appropriate and utilize strands of popular culture to promote community agendas.

As Chapters Three and Four indicate, the temporary monopolization of public spaces and places was empowering in biker culture, whether one considers the San Benito Street bike games at the 1947 Hollister Rally, Chocolate George Hendrick's funeral wake in 1967 Golden Gate Park, the Renegado MC Toy Run in 1997 Ciudad Juárez, or the Barney Villa Run in Hillsboro, New Mexico. In her essay "The Construction of the Patriotic Festival in Tecamachalco, Puebla, 1900-1946," Mary Kay Vaughan writes that public spectacle or activity possessed a popular, inclusionary, democratic nature that contributed to definitions of identity, loyalty, legitimacy, and potential or accomplished action.<sup>2</sup> William E. French and other scholars show how the streets in México and the United States were contested terrain where rituals were employed to legitimize and strengthen cultural and sub-cultural status. Historical examples of such phenomena included the development of politicized Independence Day rituals in eighteenth-century Philadelphia, episodic elements of the so-called "Zoot Suit Riots" of World War II Los Angeles, San Benito Street in Hollister, and the countless large motorcycle parades and funerals that occurred since then.<sup>3</sup>

Applying Vaughan's interpretation to motorcycling in the latter half of the twentieth-century in the Greater Borderlands, the spectacle itself became what she calls a "productive paradigm" contributing, through repeated practice of (annual or other) visually similar events, to the increasing legitimization and normalization of an activity that may have been squelched in previous decades. As Flagstaff, Arizona mayor and former motor officer Chris Bavasi said,

in contrast to later years, 1960s police officers confronted any biker entering that small town in a way he described as “not just subtle but on top of you.”<sup>4</sup> Such an incident may have been skillfully reenacted in the 1969 film *Easy Rider*, but such levels of harassment, in general, no longer existed by the late 1980s and ‘90s. Obviously, times changed when motorcycling gradually became more normalized and acceptable in the minds of authority figures and other non-bikers.

The results of long-term interaction between actual riding culture and mass cultural biker myths, imagery and productions such as *Easy Rider*, continually producing new mythic formations and novel images, may have marginalized riders but it also provided a separate social space in which a unique and empowered culture was able to develop. Motorcyclists believed that they experienced a stifling, negative set of stereotypes and attempts to alienate riders. Bikers, in turn, individually and collectively responded to such stereotypes in a variety of ways. Sometimes the new syncretic images were rejected while other times they were appropriated. Most recently, the Lost Souls MC of El Paso, a predominantly Mexican American club, changed their back patch by borrowing the image of “Sam Crow,” the grim reaper-like back patch of *Sons of Anarchy*, which was a new TNT television miniseries (depicting a fictitious club named Sons of Anarchy MC) airing weekly during the fall of 2008.

Chapter Five shows how the riders’ rights organizations that formed to politically protect the activity of motorcycling at first spoke a rhetoric of Progressivism and efficiency but were later displaced by younger MROs that presented a discourse championing rights, unity, and later trans-nationalism. While Marx’s *The Machine in the Garden* is problematic and not completely applicable in terms of the biker imaginary and the ways in which riders viewed natural areas, their collective advocacy as part of the Good Roads Movement may be viewed as

integral to the larger Progressive Era social environment. Years later, late twentieth-century MROs may be seen as a populist democratic response to the fascism or quasi-fascist tendencies of earlier groups such as MATA, the Blue Shirts, and the AMA during its early years. Historic resistance by motorcyclists seems to have been a generationally responsive phenomenon. Riders, as a group, sometimes tended to believe that they had issues or were discriminated against during the course of the century, to varying degrees, and they resisted such imagined discrimination to resolve issues.

If the motorcycle symbolizes anything in popular culture, perhaps Thomas Krens, director of the Guggenheim Foundation is most succinct and articulate in its meaning. According to Krens, “The motorcycle is a perfect metaphor for the twentieth century. Invented at the beginning of the Industrial Age, its evolution tracks the main currents of modernity. The object and its history present the themes of technology, engineering, innovation, design, mobility, speed, rebellion, desire, freedom, love, sex and death.”<sup>5</sup> This dissertation has been an initial effort to define motorcycling in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, biker and non-biker imagery, ritual practices, and ideological currents in the context of the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands. Perhaps further research in motorcycle cultural studies may help to define the greater significance of the biker and the bike in history.

## Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> Jo Freeman, ed., *Women: A Feminist Perspective* (Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield Publishing, 1995), 567-568. Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959), 276-324. Sara M. Evans, *Born For Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1997), 165-181. See also Sandra L. Myers, *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 221-222. For a similar pattern in aviation, see Brooke Kroeger, *Nellie Bly: Daredevil, Reporter, Feminist* (New York: Times Books, 1994). Emily Hahn, *Around the World with Nellie Bly* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959). Iris Noble, *Nellie Bly: First Woman Reporter, 1867-1922* (New York: Julian Messner, 1956). Mignon Rittenhouse, *The Amazing Nellie Bly* (New York: Dutton, 1956). Zachary A. Smith, ed., *Politics and Public Policy in Arizona* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1996), 114. Women in the Greater Borderlands could vote years earlier than their eastern counterparts. In 1912, the Arizona Constitution was amended by initiative to give women the right to vote. In 1915, Rachael Berry of St. Johns was elected to the state House of Representatives. Increasing numbers of women served in the Arizona Senate in the late 1960s and '70s.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Kay Vaughan, "The Construction of the Patriotic Festival in Tecamachalco, Puebla, 1900-1946," in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico*. ed. William H. Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1994), 213-245.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. William E. French, "Progreso Forzado: Workers and the Inculcation of the Capitalist Work Ethic in the Parral Mining District," in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico*. ed. William H. Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1994), 191-212. Christine Stansell, "Women, Children, and the Uses of the Streets: Class and Gender Conflict in New York City, 1850-1860," in *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*. ed. Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 129-142. Simon Peter Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Brock Yates, *Outlaw Machine: Harley-Davidson and the Search for the American Soul* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Vaughan, "Construction of the Patriotic Festival," 233. Chris Bavasi, interview by author, Tape recording, Flagstaff, Arizona, 30 October 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Krens, ed., *The Art of the Motorcycle* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1998).



## **EPILOGUE: NATIVE AMERICANS, OBEYANCE, AND TAHLEQUAH AS BORDERLANDS**

As with generational changes in motorcycling culture and gender roles, racial constructs were also malleable and changeable. Race and a sense of the existence of racism remained problematic throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. By the time El Paso hosted the Texas Democratic Party Convention in June 2002, the Motorcyclist Rights Caucus was the largest one in the party and Sputnik was its undisputed leader. Although I was not a resident of Texas at the time, I was able to obtain a convention floor pass and observe the most important occurrences closely. The Tigua Nation offered its Wellness Center in Socorro, Texas and the surrounding land as a place for the riders to set up camp. There was a ceremony on Thursday in which “Grandpa” (Tigua elder) welcomed Sputnik and the motorcyclists. The Wellness Center also served as a place to stage the bikers’ daily parade up the old Ysleta Socorro Road and along the Río Grande via César Chávez Border Highway and on into the El Paso Convention Center parking garage. The Tigua police officers escorted the parade safely into downtown El Paso each day of the convention to its covered parking area that was reserved for hundreds of bikes ridden by party delegates, politicians, and officials.

On the final morning of the convention, however, at the end of the procession near the convention center, something unexpectedly happened. As usual, the Tigua officers were blocking the last stoplight for the pack to ride on through, a longstanding, universal police standard operating procedure designed to ensure the safety of riders and of the general public. However, on this occasion, some *El Paso* police officers that were standing nearby interfered, gruffly

telling the Tigua officers that they have no jurisdiction in the City of El Paso and ordered them to cease traffic control measures. Then, when the Tigua police went over to the curb to get reprimanded by the El Paso officers, some regular motorcyclists from the pack itself pulled out and stopped their bikes in the intersection to substitute for the now-distracted Tigua police, blocking the light and directing traffic themselves. In this way, the biker delegates arrived inside the parking garage safely and without further incident. Some state government officials subsequently registered some complaints about the El Paso officers' conduct but nothing was ever done about it. Later on, many riders opined that the El Paso police had become insubordinate and unresponsive to proper civil authority. Some of the Native American and other riders and motorcycling delegates also said that, had the Tigua officers not been Native American, the El Paso police would not have jacked them up so unprofessionally. I remember that the collective perception at that time was that ugly racism existed in the El Paso Police Department.

Inside the Democratic Party Convention itself, the Motorcycling Rights Caucus made, seconded, voted on and carried a motion to help Tigua Nation reopen Speaking Rock, its recently closed casino. (Perhaps significantly, the vote to assist them actually took place *before* the El Paso PD incident with the Tigua Police officers.) It was said that proceeds from their once popular casino had previously paid for a significant portion of Tigua educational, housing, and health care needs but that now the Texas governor's administration had effectively caused it to be closed. The Tigua people had once again been reduced to poverty and social programs. So now in the caucus meeting, Sputnik vowed that bikers would work to restore Speaking Rock. State Representative Norma Chávez, the MROs, and other groups in the coalition are still trying

to restore protection for Native American national gaming. Nonetheless, it is widely recognized that the governor of Texas will have to be replaced before that may happen.

### **“Outlaws,” Crips, Bloods, and the Building of Power Structures**

Of course, opposition to Native American casinos did not start in 2002. Therefore, the Democratic bikers of Texas supporting indigenous rights was only one more episode in a longstanding struggle for sovereignty, dignity, autonomy, and freedom. Members of the Democratic Party Motorcycling Caucus had its own issues to tend to, as well.

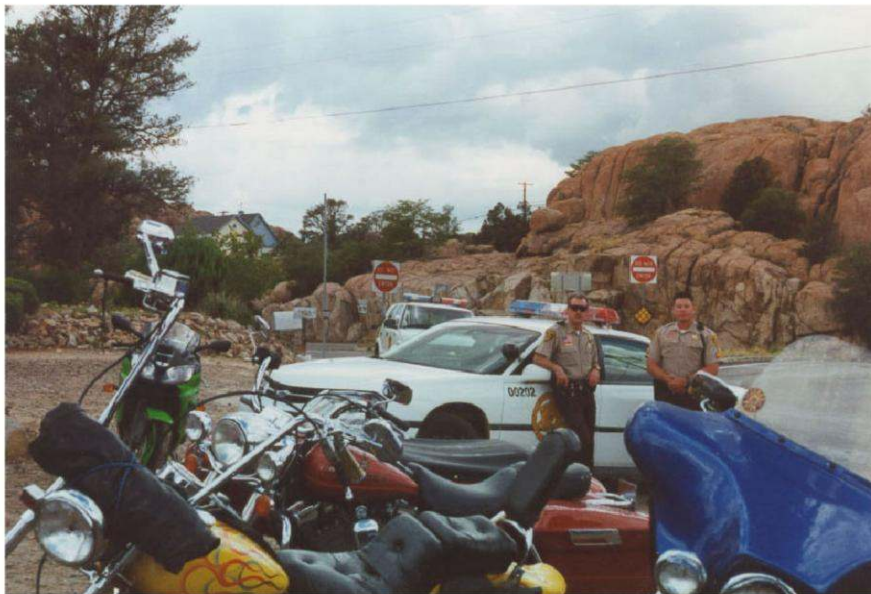


Plate 21. Two Yavapai County sheriff's deputies participating in a inter-agency operation to monitor a political organizational meeting. Yavapai County, Arizona, late 1990's. Photo by the author.

As noted in Chapter Two's discussion of race, Arizona eventually enacted a statute that may have tended to criminalize socially or ethnically marginal behavior. After passage of its

1994 anti-gang bill—one written in such a way that almost any resident may be arbitrarily identified in the field as a gang member—the state applied for federal block grants and built up its new state gang task force power structure. Arizona motorcyclists believed that the new agencies first used the new statute to investigate ethnic Mexican low riders and other youth subcultures in Phoenix and Tucson. After that, they were said to have targeted motorcycle clubs for profiling and systematic harassment, by land and by helicopter, followed by the targeting of ordinary Harley riders beginning in 1998 and all other Arizona motorcyclists after 2000.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Arizona Gauntlet**

While many stories and urban legends existed about unpleasant episodes in the lives of post-1994 Arizona bikers, one particular incident stands out as both representative of many experiences at a particular large annual rally and unusual in terms of on-site comments that were made. Char Zack, the Road Captain of Raw Thunder, experienced and retold the incident. She went to the Laughlin River Run event once—and only once—in the mid-1990s. For like every other motorcyclist that weekend riding on the desert highway that crossed the Arizona-Nevada border, she was required to go through what bikers called “the gauntlet,” a roadblock consisting of a line of uniformed Arizona police gang officers.

All bikes were pulled over hour after hour, yet cars were exempt and could just drive on by. The officers were required to stand out in the desert heat and scrutinize motorcyclists for potential detention or citation. Zack had been riding that day in an all-male group of riders and was packing another woman on her back seat, a friend who had never been to a run before. As they slowly edged their way through the gauntlet, one of the officers asked an unusual question. In Zack’s words:

You know...how we have to pull over to get inspected. And, that first year, they had, like, officer after officer after officer you had to pass, going in.... And we're the only two women in the group, and our group was about ten or twelve. And I pulled up. And an officer looked at me and said, "Oh, what do we have *here*, a couple of *lesbians*?" That was spoken to me at Laughlin.... My friend was just mortified. It was just ridiculous. It was so rude. But whatever. You know, harassment comes in all forms. That whole thing was terribly rude. The helicopters: what a waste of taxpayers' money!... And it's Arizona doing it, you know.... [Arizona, not Bullhead.] Bullhead City was doing their game: when you got stuck and it took hours to get back out, and they blocked the streets. That was their game.<sup>2</sup>

Foucault tells us that the accuracy of sexual descriptions is irrelevant. He would instead call attention to the power centers that built bodies of gendered and sexual power-knowledge and their strategies. He would ask which companies, corporations, governmental, medical, and other power structures were involved in the construction and perpetuation of labels such as scorchers, outlaw, hoodlum activities, sexual perversion, motorcycle syndrome, criminal street gang, lesbians, African-American, or mystique. Who benefited from the acceptance of these labels as categories of identity or analysis? Who was it that felt a need to control bikers, LGBT people, persons of color, women, or other marginalized groups? Tactical discourses, MRO activists, motorcycle clubs, and others may be historically construed as critical active responses to perceived marginalization or alienation, in opposition to or within a power structural dynamic, on behalf of everyone that the power centers sought to dominate.

### **Obeyance, the Navajo Helmet Law, and Sunland Park, New Mexico**

For much of the twentieth century, media and other power centers portrayed motorcycling as a deviant group that should be controlled. Foucault points out that these definitions were continually contested. He writes, "Confronted by a power that is law, the subject who...is 'subjected'...is he who obeys."<sup>3</sup>

So, what about those who refused to obey? Resistance and the music of Harley engines may have helped to extend the limits of tolerance as alternative discourses continued to engage the interplay between riders, mass cultural productions, activists, authorities, ritual practices, and structures of conformity. In 1998, the Narbonas MC (Dinéh) lobbied the Navajo Nation Council and thus overturned the Navajo national helmet law that they believed had been selectively enforced against Indians. Before that repeal, Navajo bikers had thought that they were harassed by tribal police for riding without helmets while non-Native bikers could ride freely and unencumbered in Navajo Nation, choosing individually whether to wear one. To American Indian bikers, such a dynamic of arbitrary enforcement of the helmet law—a regulation imposed by the non-Native governmental system—was a form of discrimination against Indians. Ultimately, the decision by the Council to repeal the helmet law was unanimous.<sup>4</sup>

Events like the Narbonas activism really light the fire. So, when I first moved to the border zone in 2001 and found out that the City of Sunland Park had a universal helmet ordinance applicable to all motorcyclists regardless of adult status and that they had annexed the property I lived on, I proceeded immediately to city hall and talked to Mayor Jesús Segura who explained to me that the city had enacted the ordinance a few years earlier in order to obtain a federal block grant. The grant enabled the city to afford one extra police officer for one year. Subsequently, the funding was no longer available and the city was now stuck with the ordinance. In response to this explanation, I immediately made the ordinance an agenda item for the city council's next public meeting. I then called Mando (Dinéh) of the Texas Motorcycle Rights Association as well as Johnny of the New Mexico Motorcycle Rights Organization.

They informed people on their respective membership lists and filled up the city council meeting hall, standing room only, with concerned bikers and motorcyclists who all wanted the

law repealed. Everyone had the right to address the council and many riders chose to do so. Mando, who had helped to organize the Frank Root Toy Run, the largest annual Christmas benefit for children in the region, publicly informed the council that if they would not do the right thing, then he—in turn—would *not* guarantee that next year’s toy run would distribute toys in Sunland Park. Due to such a tremendously active response by motorcyclists, the city council voted to alter the ordinance to allow adult freedom of choice.<sup>5</sup>

Each day as I saddled up and rode out to the end of my Sunland Park driveway for my commute to the University of Texas at El Paso, I had a choice of two very distinct and different routes. On most days I took the quick way, turning right and riding across the state line between New Mexico and Texas. One day I decided to turn left, however, to avoid the heat, the interstate and most of the Texas route. I rode south to pass through Sunland Park on the way to Texas farther down the river. They used to have that big ugly sign where the city limits extended to both sides of the road. It told us, “Wear a helmet; it’s the law.” Conspiracy theorists in the biker community may have interpreted this border marker as saying, “We don’t welcome bikers in this town.” One seldom saw a motorcycle over there; most riders used to avoid that city. I often ignored the sign, however, and did not wear that item of clothing while riding there.

Riding on past the place where the helmet sign once stood, I remember how the people took back their government that night and liberalized the helmet ordinance in favor of personal freedom. I look again and I see the pre-city land as it existed a hundred years ago. All the buildings are gone; the river is huge. This area was once called the edge of the “badlands” of New Mexico. In actuality, “badlands” are a type of borderlands. The sacred land is “bad” for only those who seek to subjugate it, to change it, to tame it, and to destroy it. Human control of the land sometimes includes agricultural irrigation. However, digging and irrigating land when it

is so high above the river is difficult. Riding through Sunland Park, I look down respectfully at the Río Grande, the morning sun reflecting on the shimmering waters. The curving river is like a mouth on the face of the earth. It bows upward like a smiling face. The sacred land smiles in the badlands and tells me that it is *good* to be bad.

The road gradually curves eastward into the morning sun, the path and direction of youth. Far to the east are the traditional lands of Cherokee Nation, so far away. The sun dims the vision as it reflects off the handlebars and speedometer. Many of today's roadways and highways, including this one, were constructed directly on top of the traditional trails of First Peoples. The so-called "pioneers" mentioned in old history books did not really "blaze" any trails; they simply hired an Indian guide to show them which of the already-existing routes to take. Over the years, Native trails were gradually appropriated by invaders who then paved them with asphalt.

Some invaders had money. Although the word "biker" should not be self-descriptive whenever a new rider with a wad of dead presidents at a dealership tries to purchase membership into a culture, one may consciously claim to be a biker after hearing so many people refer to one's self as such. To an authentic long-time rider, his motorcycle is a member of the family like his riding brothers and sisters are; it is not a mere icon of status to be displayed in a garage or occasionally tied down onto a trailer for yuppie runs only to be traded in for a boat or snowmobile next year. A biker lives, thinks, dreams, and breathes motorcycles with every single breath for an entire lifetime. It is a complete way of life, not a hobby. This is what happens when one rides too much.



## **Tahlequah as an Old Border Town and the Trail of Tears Run**

Then, there is ethnicity and blood. My sister who was raised by Grandma told us her-stories. She said that alongside the Trail of Tears, in every place where a person fell out, at every spot where a drop of Cherokee sweat or blood dripped down, at every location where a Tsalagi child died, wherever a mother's tears fell to the ground, a white rose grows there and marks those spots along the trail. The rose has seven pedals, one for each of the seven clans who were forced to walk. If one looks closely, the innermost center of the rose is gold, like the gold buried in the hills of our ancestral land that was coveted, overrun, usurped, and mined.

Part of my family was deliberately relocated to a previously constructed Borderland between the U.S. and México, a place that is now called Oklahoma. More recently, the annual Trail of Tears Motorcycle Run has started at Chattanooga and has ridden to Tahlequah, Western Cherokee Nation. It is probably the largest cross-country motorcycle event in the United States or México in terms of numbers of participants. The run follows the pavement built upon the original Trail of Tears and happens every September. Ninety thousand bikes participated in 2001 and by 2005 that number was up to 200,000. The Trail of Tears Run provides at least \$12,500 for three Native American scholarships annually. As on the original Cherokee Trail of Tears so many years ago, many travelers on today's annual run participate on the first leg only with fewer going further to Oklahoma.<sup>6</sup>

Grandma said that there is a reason why the United States located Indian Territory where it did. The original concept was for the people to serve as a buffer between Mexican Texas and the United States. We were supposed to become that borderland. If one wishes to imagine what the El Paso-Juárez Metroplex may someday look like after the border is erased, perhaps the only thing s/he needs to do is to travel to Tahlequah and vacation there.

One remembers and honors the people who died on the original Trail of Tears, one of the most sordid and brutal state-sponsored tragedies in North American history. Prevention of similar mistakes should be ensured by remembering the past. Historical amnesia would be a terrible thing. Perhaps if history has any utility at all in today's society, it may be to effectively serve in a preventative role by recalling and condemning inept historic episodes that are now recognized as unjust errors.

## Notes:

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- <sup>1</sup> Rev. Stat. Ann. sec. 13-105, par. 8. State of Arizona, Department of Public Safety, "Fiscal Year 1996-97: To Improve Community Safety through Cooperative Tactical Enforcement Programs," Internet. <http://www.dps.state.az.us/fy96-97/fy96-gl.htm>. 1998. "GITEM Gangs Up: Gang Squad Takes Bikers for a Ride," *Tiempo Times* (March 14, 2001). Internet. <http://www.tiempotimes.com/gitemsection.htm>, 1-2. "GITEM Gangs Up: Yuma Task Force Leader Defends Tactics," *Tiempo Times*, 14 March 2001. Internet. <http://www.tiempotimes.com/gitemsection.htm>. 2001. 1-2. City of Scottsdale, Police Department, "Gang Activity in Scottsdale." Internet. <http://www.goodnet.com/~spdgang/gangsin.htm>. 1998. Bobbi J. Hartmann, "Civil Injunctions and Gang Members," E-mail to Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs Mail List, 21 October 1999. Bobbi J. Hartmann, "Civil Injunction Hearing," E-mail to Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs Mail List, 22 November 1999. Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs, "READ THIS about GANGS," E-mail to the Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs List Server, 14 July 2000. Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 183-227. Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (New York: Verso, 1999). Ron Bertoth, "State Police Plead for Federal Help With Biker Gangs," *Organized Crime Digest* 4-2 (1983), 6-9. Davis Sheremata, "Hog Wild about Bike Gangs: Cash-Strapped Police are Creating a Scare to Get More Money, Says a Hells Angels Expert," *Alberta Report / Western Report*, 28 July 1997, 24-28. See also *Edmonton Journal* (September 8, 1981), A2 as cited in Daniel R. Wolf, *The Rebels: A Brotherhood of Outlaw Bikers* (1991; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 243-244. Gary L. Kieffner, participant reflection, 1996-1998; and participant observation, 1999-2001.
- <sup>2</sup> Char Zack, interview by author, Tape recording, Cottonwood, Arizona, 16 March 1999.
- <sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* (1978. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1990), 85.
- <sup>4</sup> Kieffner, participant reflection, 1996-1998.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, participant observation, 2002. In the late 1970s, New Mexico had changed from a universal mandatory helmet law, to a new one that encumbered only persons under the age of nineteen. Sunland Park's alteration of its universal mandatory ordinance established an age of twenty-one for personal choice making it similar, but not identical, to state law. By 2002, Sunland Park had been the last city or state in the U.S. Southwest to have a universal, mandatory helmet statute.
- <sup>6</sup> Wilma Mankiller and Michael Wallis, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1993), 45-63. Circe Sturm, *Blood Politics: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 61-64. Dianna Everett, *The Texas Cherokees: A People Between Two Fires, 1819-1840* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990). Norman Finkelstein, "History's Verdict: The Cherokee Case," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24-4 (Summer, 1995), 36-41. AL-TN Trail of Tears Corridor Association, "Trail of Tears 2001." Trail of Tears Remembrance Association, Inc., "2001 Ride Attendance and Facts." Internet. <http://www.trailoftears-remembrance.org/numbers.htm>, 2008, 1-3. Trail of Tears Remembrance Association, Inc., "TOTRAI Scholarships." Internet. [http://www.trailoftears-remembrance.org/Scholarships/General\\_SCHOLARSHIPS\\_2006.htm](http://www.trailoftears-remembrance.org/Scholarships/General_SCHOLARSHIPS_2006.htm), 2008, 1-5.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**ABATE:** A motorcyclist rights organization. This acronym originated in 1972 as it was applied to the grass roots bikers' rights movement. Its original meaning was "A Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Enactments." However, most ABATE organizations today call themselves "American Bikers Aimed Toward Education" or some similar name.

**AFFA:** Angels Forever, Forever Angels.

**AMA:** American Motorcyclist Association (Founded 1924). Originally a racing organizational and sanctioning group formed by Motorcycle Allied Trades Association and the motorcycle industry, the AMA eventually became an independent national motorcyclist rights organization and is now in the process of getting out of the competition organizational business.

**America First Committee:** An antiwar organization that was active prior to US entry into World War II. The organization may have had strong fascist leanings. America First was also endorsed by MATA.

**Back patch:** A large piece of embroidered cloth sewed onto the back of a rider's vest. It usually identifies the rider as part of a larger club or group and is often considered sacred. To ask the wearer questions or to make comments about the patch is not recommended.

**Bandidos MC:** The number one club in Texas and New Mexico.

**BFFB:** Bandidos Forever, Forever Bandidos.

**Blue Shirts of America:** A pre-World War II group of motorcyclists sponsored by the AMA.

**Bro:** A brother, whether biological or otherwise.

**Bummer:** Mid-twentieth century colloquialism meaning an unfortunate occurrence or unfavorable circumstance. Bikers in the 1950s originally used this word to signify a motorcycle crash.

**Cabrones:** Trans. Bad motherfuckers. Bikers in México who know each other use this word to toast the health of their companions.

**Cage:** (n.) A generic, sometimes pejorative term meaning any four-wheeled car.

**Citizen:** (n. or adj.) 1960s-1990s colloq. A non-biker. Synonymous to "civilian" or "straight."

**Civilian:** (n. or adj.) 1980s-present colloq. A non-biker. Synonymous to "citizen" or "straight."

Class: (n. or dir. obj.) Mid-twentieth century colloquialism meaning a sub-culturally radical style or quality, especially a style or quality that is able to evoke shock, concern, or disgust among non-riders. Both individuals and motorcycles were capable of possessing class. The object was to be different, to stand out as an individual from run-of-the-mill conformists. Social status in motorcycling culture was partly determined by how much “class” the person possessed and class was accumulated through the riding of unordinary choppers and the commission of unconventional acts. Displays of “class” served a utilitarian function benefiting motorcyclists on the street by creating, establishing or maintaining a greater amount of social space for bikers, keeping non-riders at bay enough that they would not pose any physical threats to riders, whether on the road or in person.

DTFFDT: Desert Thunder Forever, Forever Desert Thunder. (Desert Thunder MC.)

Endurance run: Early twentieth century. A competitive long-distance event in which the object was to arrive at each station at a particular time. It was designed to test both the rider’s skill and the machine’s reliability.

FAM: Federation of American Motorcyclists (1903-1919).

Fat Boy: A late-twentieth century Harley-Davidson model known for its size, power, and low center of gravity.

Flying Tigers: The covert American volunteer group attached to the Chinese air force a year before the US officially entered World War II. The Flying Tigers 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, the Hell’s Angels, was a mercenary air transport unit in 1941 Burma. After the war, at least one of its members, Arvid Olsen, rode with other veteran bikers who formed the HAMC.

FNG: Fucking New Guy. A first-year Run For the Wall participant. Borrowed from earlier American military subcultural usage popular in Vietnam when the term was used to identify new personnel.

Good: (adj.) A mid-twentieth century colloquialism. Also called “being good.” Its meaning was to be loyal to the biker community and to adhere to its norms, mores, customs, and values.

Gypsy run: An early twentieth century organized social event that included group riding in a pack.

HAMC: Hells Angels Motorcycle Club. (The number one club in California and Arizona).

HAMCUS: Hells Angels Motorcycle Club of the United States.

*Hijos de la Chingada*: Trans. “Sons of the Bitch.” Bikers in México toasted each other using this misogynous term, which referred to the myth of *la Malinche* (originally based on a sixteenth-century reimagining of the significance of Malintzin, translator for Hernán Cortez).

HOG: Harley Owners Group. A pseudo-club or marquis organization operated and sponsored by the Harley-Davidson Motor Company. As each new Harley sold in the late 1980s and 1990s came with a free HOG membership, it may be viewed as a kind of biker boot camp. See “RUB.” Before 1984, however, “hog” was a generic term meaning any custom motorcycle regardless of whether its engine was American, Japanese, or European.

Hounds: A post-World War I motorcycle club in El Paso, Texas. It existed as early as 1919 and was started by war veterans and other men, both Anglo- and Mexican-American. Some of them rode army surplus motorcycles. They raced in the streets, evaded the traffic officers, and rode on the switchback roads of the Franklin Mountains. Their usual meeting place was a downtown German restaurant.

HOV: High Occupancy Vehicle (or “carpool”) lanes. After 1998, federal law mandated that HOV lanes must be open to motorcycles, which were thus recognized as an environmentally friendly traffic-reducing form of transportation. In Arizona, Texas, and some other states, HOV lanes were subsequently posted open to motorcycles due to the efforts of ABATE and the TMRA2.

*Las compramos*: Trans. “We buy them.”

LAW: League of American Wheelmen (founded 1880).

Masterlink: A motorcycle part that is no longer included on many post-1980s bikes. The masterlink was the link of the secondary drive chain that connected the two ends of the chain so that it may drive the rear wheel. This masterlink was typically the weakest link on the chain and it sometimes broke and left one disabled on the side of the road. Most seasoned riders at that time had carried extra masterlinks on the road so that they could repair (their own or other) broken chains. More recently, newer bikes used belts or shafts for their secondary drive instead of chains with masterlinks. *Masterlink* is now the title of the ABATE of Arizona newsletter. The selection of such a name for a periodical publication implies that it was indispensable, like the old masterlinks.

MATA: Motorcycle Allied Trades Association (founded 1918). An industrial consortium. MATA founded the AMA as a racing organizational and sanctioning group in 1924.

MC: A motorcycle club that has the status of a traditional club.

MMA: Modified Motorcycle Association (California and Arizona).

Mother: A popular nickname for young North American males in the 1960s and ‘70s. For example, James “Mother” Miles was a 1960s member of the Hells Angels MC. Many young men in both the counterculture and biker culture were nicknamed “Mother” (including one of my high school friends, “Mother” Paul Mendel). This title of endearment was a shortened form of the term “mother-fucker.” “Mother” was honorific rather than pejorative and the name was eventually commodified in the form of “Mother’s Mag Wheel Polish” in the early 1970s. In the ‘60s, the personal name functioned as an etymological equivalent to the late twentieth-century

salutary “*cabrones*” or “*hijos de la Chingada*” in northern Mexican biker culture. The significance of the name of the Alta California “Mofos” motorcycle club (mid-1960s) was similar.

**Motordrome:** Early twentieth century motorcycle race track. The track surface was constructed of wooden planks and the curves were banked. Perhaps the most familiar comparison to the banked curves would be those of today’s skateboard park, although the vertical angles (and not the speeds) of the latter can be considered more extreme.

**MRO:** Motorcyclist rights organization.

**Ms. Harley:** Winner of the annual Ms. Harley Pageant sponsored by the Harley-Davidson Motor Company. Whether the honorific “Ms.” is really significant here, and whether the titleholder is an ambassador for the company or simply a beauty contest winner, is a matter of conjecture. More research on how the winners are selected should probably be conducted.

**NGO:** Any non-governmental organization that is a member of the United Nations.

**Norteño:** A person from northern México. The culture and subcultural formations of the north are distinctively different from those of most of México.

**One Percenter:** A member of a particular kind of patch-holding club in which all of the members are hardcore bikers. The number one clubs of any given area are One Percent clubs.

**Outlaw:** A term that originally appeared in 1912 in an editorial in *Bicycling World and Motorcycle Review* in reference to the petty political infighting within the FAM. In 1929, the AMA’s Secretary E. C. Smith applied the word “outlaw” to riders who were not dues-paying members of his organization. A 1930s club called itself the McCook Outlaws, indicating that they were non-AMA racers, but disbanded when its members joined the police force. After the club reformed under the name Outlaws MC, the word stuck and became a generic description for any group of scary-looking men on bikes. More recently, the term has been applied by various groups and power centers to mean the same as One Percenters.

**Patch-holding club:** A motorcycle club in which the members wear a large back-patch that includes the letters “MC” (Motorcycle Club). Some police officers targeted these clubs for profiling and harassment.

**Rat pack:** (v.) A sub-cultural norm among motorcycle clubs in which an entire group of riders engage in a combative physical altercation with an outsider.

**Renegado MC:** The number one club in Chihuahua.

**RFTW:** Run For the Wall (est. 1989). An annual transcontinental event designed to safely transport large numbers of bikers to Rolling Thunder. See RT.



Roadguards: Members of a motorcycle pack who systematically control traffic at intersections for safety reasons, allowing the entire pack to roll through as a unit without permitting the introduction of unpredictable hazards (such as stray cars in between the rows of bikes).

RT: Rolling Thunder (est. 1988). An annual parade in Washington DC to demonstrate for veterans' issues. The name for this motorcycle run was appropriated from that of a military operation executed during the U.S.-Vietnam Conflict.

RUB: Rich urban "biker."

*Salud*: Trans. Health. To toast the health of one's companions.

Sirens MC: The number one women's club in New Mexico.

Scooter: A motorcycle. Many riders consider it to be sacred or as a member of the family. To touch a scooter without its owner's permission is not recommended.

Solo Ángeles MC: The number one club in Baja California.

Springer Softail: A late-twentieth century Harley-Davidson model known for its power, classic chrome front suspension, smooth riding rear suspension, and low center of gravity.

SRRA: Sierra Road Riders Association (California).

Straight: (n. or adj.) 1960s-1990s colloq. A non-biker. Synonymous to "citizen" or "civilian."

TEA21: The Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-first Century (TEA21), a federal highway bill enacted in 1998. It including every provision that motorcyclist rights organizations had requested.

TMRA: Texas Motorcycle Roadriders Association (TMRA 1).

TMRA2: Texas Motorcycle Rights Association.

Weenie bite: One of the competitive bike games played at various events for most of the twentieth century.

Yuppie: See "RUB."

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A:

**Tobie Gene Levingston, President of the East Bay Dragons Motorcycle Club and Melvin “Shad” Shadrick, Business Manager of the East Bay Dragons MC, Oakland Chapter. Excerpt from an interview by Barbara Bustillos-Cogswell, May 2000, at the National Coalition of Motorcyclists Annual Convention in San Francisco, California. Videocassette.**

Tobie Gene Levingston: We all rode with helmets before there was a law. Now they cite us for having the wrong helmets, after passing a law.

(Casual talk about the red light on the video equipment.)

Melvin “Shad” Shadrick: I represent East Bay Dragons Motorcycle Riding Club and, in our club, we ride Harley-Davidson motorcycles. I say we *promote* Harley-Davidson motorcycles by riding them. I’m Business Manager and somewhat of a senior advisor for the board of directors in our club.

T.L.: We want to be part of this [National Coalition of Motorcyclists] organization, you know. We want to know about all the laws that they have going against the bikers, you know. That's what we're here for, representing [our club].

M.S.: To follow the laws that are being passed. A lot of laws are coming, and with different states. Different states have different laws. And to learn about what those laws are, is important to us, as those who obey the law. And we cross different states riding motorcycles. And this sort of convention points out the things we need to know about riding through different states.

T.L.: That's why we're here. We want to find out and get all the literature and everything.... We have a National Roundup back South, and this year they had something like 42,000 black riders in South Carolina.... I went to the Roundup in '84, back East. And they have a National Roundup and it's all black. And it's been going on for damn near twenty-five years, and they're still going on and it's getting stronger. And this year, it's in Texas. And so that's why we're here. Because we want to know about these different states, (so) that when we ride through [we] cross it. That's what we want.

M.S.: We ride with helmets. We have our own by-law that we wear a helmet. Yet...we are in violation, or can be cited because, I think, California law is that it has to be DOT-approved helmets. And actually, I don't think the state has guaranteed, like they guarantee safety belts, to save lives: that a DOT helmet approved could save lives.

And it's interesting to be in this convention to learn about the different issues.... Every year, we [the club] have bike inspections the second week in March.

T.L.: Our road captain is to write a ticket for brakes, turn signals, etc.

M.S.: There's a fine that a member would have to pay. See, we ride in a group and, sometimes, it's a fairly large group; so that we want to know that safety comes first when you ride in such a group.... The road captain ensures a bike's safety. If a member opposes a ticket, he can go before a board and challenge it.

T.L.: We're sort of like the United States. We run with the United States laws and we stay within the United States, if the United States says this is what you have to do. So we, sort of like, our club is built on something like the United States. And the government can say what you have to do; that's what our club says, what you have to do. And when we put these laws out, we just don't put them out to have fun with them; we put them out in our rules. These are fines that we have set aside for each member to have to pay. So we work sort of like the government. The government says you've got to pay tax, you've got to pay tax. So this [is] the way we run our club. Sort of like based on the same way America runs, and run like the United States. So that's all the laws....

I've been in relation with Sonny Barger since, I guess, before he even joined the Angels and we used to drink coffee sometimes, back there on 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Oakland. And we sort of kept that relationship going on for years. And like I told him, one time at our twenty-fifth

anniversary, that if I happen to pass before he does, I want him to be a pall bearer at my funeral. And he said, “Well Tobie, I want to do the same thing. Well like if I pass before you, I want you to be one of mine, because we have been around for too long, you know.” And I said yeah.

Well, regardless of what we say, we want to get that out in writing. And my Vice-President said, “Tobie,” the last time [before] he got killed—it’s this last November coming back from Reno—and he said, “Tobie, you’d better get that in writing, because some of them old boys, they won’t understand. (Laughter.) So we laughed about it. But we have a lot of good relationships with the Angels. You know, we get along real good with each other in Oakland and everywhere else we go....

M.S.: They had a thing where Carlos [Santana] was going to shoot his new video. Carlos Santana has a thing with Everlast. Everlast and Carlos decided, I guess Carlos wanted to shoot a music video at the East Bay Dragons Club, actually 88 International Boulevard, and it was a great experience to have his whole staff come in and use our facilities to do his music video. We enjoyed having him.... They came in and they set props and they changed around what shots they want to shoot.... So they changed the whole [clubhouse].... Carlos had a great shoot. I think he probably will be very successful in his new video with Everlast.

T.L.: They did a job, man, and we started at 8:30. started to shoot something like at 9:30 one morning and they didn’t stop ‘til about two o’clock that night. They said, well, you know a lot of people were running there with cameras and things, they were saying, “Well, as long as

you don't have no flash, you know you don't have no flash." They were just loose, man; it was just like you were having a party.

M.S.: They allowed us to take pictures.

T.L.: I was proud of him, because he goes way back, you know: those Janet Jackson and all them mother- , all them old boys and Sly Stone and Jimi Hendrix. And I was just proud to see him make it, 'cause we, I used to go to his shows, you know, when he was just starting out. You know, back in the '60s, you know, I was, it made me feel good for him, to see him make it. And he came from the neighborhood, too. That was another thing, too, that made me feel proud, too. Because it's a lot of Chicanos living in the neighborhood, dig it.

M.S.: I have snapshots of him signing autographs with kids in the neighborhood. And that was pretty impressive to see him take the time to be in the hood, so that we call it "the hood," and to see San Carlos [sic] just, I mean we got to work along with his security. We were like Carlos's security's security. And he walked around as if he was part of the bike set. And I was pretty impressed with that. He looked very relaxed and I like seeing that, you know, when a person could walk in your neighborhood and feel safe and be himself. You know, it was great.

T.L.: And I enjoyed it. I checked him: the way he was, who he was. You know, he was just ordinary. He wasn't trying to put on nothing. He didn't have no fancy clothes or carrying on. He was a part of the neighborhood, where we were looking at it, you know. And in my mind, I think, was, "I'll be damned, man; you're still here! And you have the success, you know." And I

was looking at it.... We've been here for working on forty-one years as an organization of the East Bay Dragons, and we've done come from many places. And, all of a sudden, we don't have no, we gotta.... And we have never reached that goal yet. And in my thing is the way I looked at colors. I said, "Man, that's a lot of inspiration to me, to feel in my heart, to see you make it like that. Then I know it's a place for us and one up, that we've got something to do up further up the road." So that's what I feel. I feel real proud to see him, to come in our clubhouse and shoot a video. So I felt so good, I'm telling ya. I'll be talking about it yet today, make myself feel good, you know.

You know, in our neighborhood, it's a big old community, see, and a church around the corner here, a big church. What's the name of the church? Allen Temple. We've got a little rev. He comes down there every year. Like, we have our block party. He comes down there every year and prays over our block party, for it to be a success. And we have a lot of respect in the neighborhood, because every year we play Santa Claus. We been down this here for years; we're Santa for the kids. We're Santa Claus.

M.S.: Christmas, we set out dinners to needy people. It's an active community organization that does things for the community. We have Easter egg hunts. We do dinners for families that are underprivileged, that like, Christmas, Thanksgiving, you know. We feed people free.

T.L.: Like our picnic. We've got a picnic, right, this year that's been going on for forty-one years. That's the first thing the East Bay Dragons ever gave, was a picnic that, this year, is

forty-one years. And that's the first thing we ever did. Now we have [it], as Melvin would call it, "in the hood," right?

We used to go up in the hills up there at, uh, way up in the hills and have a picnic. And all of a sudden, our bikers, they'd say, "But Tobie, why in the heck do we go up in there and hassle with the police and go up in there in rich people's neighborhood, have all kinds of helicopters and police and flying over us and then.... Let's just do it down here in Brookfield. So last year we went to Brookfield. And this year we're going back there and it's going to be a hell of a picnic, and all that's sweet. And Evans and Jones cooks out the barbeque. And all we do is go there and heat it up and warm it up and then cook.



**Appendix B:**

**James “Heavy” Evans, founding member of the Soul Brothers Motorcycle Club.  
Excerpt from an interview by Barbara Bustillos-Cogswell, May 2000, at the National  
Coalition of Motorcyclists Annual Convention in San Francisco, California. Videocassette.**

(The Soul Brothers MC has eight chapters. James “Heavy” Evans has been riding Harley-Davidsons for fifty years including one, named “Miss Lizzy,” for forty-two years and a Sportster for thirty-six years. He has been riding in the Bay Area since 1955. He met Sky Rider in 1957 at Jesus on 14<sup>th</sup> Street in Oakland when he was prospecting for the HAMC.)

James “Heavy” Evans: I was riding with the Frisco Rattlers; he [Sky Rider] was a street racer. I started the Soul Brothers in 1967 as a mixed club. I know it wasn’t the color of the skin; it’s what’s in the heart. And I got eight chapters. And we all down for fun, you know. Everybody knows me throughout the Bay Area, Los Angeles. I’m a California boy; everybody knows me throughout Phoenix, yeah....

[In the 1960s] at that time, we were having such a hard time riding, until we all had to band together. It was all the way up into the early ‘70s, when they start falling apart, you know. People start having money, you know, and started, you know, where they was not doin’. I don’t know. It’s my life; being around motorcycles [has] been very great, very great, and I don’t know how much I can say....

Started riding in East Bay in 1955. Started riding with Frisco Angels as a friend in 1955; Frank Sadilek was the President, and we was all out of the Rattlers then. Road Captain of Rattlers, so you know I've been street racer. Everybody knows me because I love drag racing in the streets.

I really do think this [National Coalition of Motorcyclists Convention] is something that's great. I've always wanted, and but never thought I'd ever live to see, something like this: all outlaws together as One, you know. So I think this is the first step of success of motorcycle riders.

(In response to the next question, he answers that he has trained many women how to ride.)

This is something they never thought would ever happen; that we would do this. Because that was the same when they said a mixed club would never work. And I made it work, 'cause I had the biggest mixed club in Northern California. And it's not the color of a person's skin; it's what's in the heart. Everybody's somebody, you know. And that's [what] we do. We don't give none; we don't take none, you know. So I don't know no other way that could make me feel any better, than to see all these patch-holders.... You walk by. Whether you speak, you know he's here.... You don't have to be wondering who is this or where he come from and all. You know we're all brothers.

I'm glad to be able, after riding motorcycles fifty years, is to be able to see all patch-holders together as One, you know, in the same building. You know, that's been my dream to see bikers together. And I don't know anything else that would make me feel any better, is to see all bikers together.

## CURRICULUM VITA

Gary Kieffner received his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in history with honors at Northern Arizona University. The recipient of several awards, he is a doctoral candidate in the Borderlands History Ph.D. Program at the University of Texas at El Paso. His fields of research are in borderlands, the United States, and a specialized field in cultural, social and intellectual history. Kieffner's publications include "The Wild One, She-Devils on Wheels, and 'Motorcycle Syndrome': Foucault and Biker Images" in *Harley-Davidson and Philosophy: Full-Throttle Aristotle*, a volume of Open Court's Popular Culture and Philosophy series. He has taught undergraduate history courses since 2005. Kieffner serves the academic community as an editorial board member of the on-line *International Journal of Motorcycle Studies* with a readership of 3,000 and has organized multiple panels and events annually at Popular Culture Association conferences since 2001.

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