

Remembrances

Dave Bucher looks back at some little gems of experience from his 45 years of riding and writing.

Mayor for a Night

Back in the early Spring of 1991, I took what was probably one of the most adventurous motorcycle rides of my life through the wilds of West Virginia. My lodgings throughout this trip were being provided by the West Virginia Tourism folks and had been setup in advance. So I was wandering from point to point with no real plan and no idea of the time it might take to get to where I needed to be each night.

Thus it was that I found the still-short daylight waning and realized that I was going to be late in arriving in Cass, home of the Cass Scenic Railroad. By some miracle I found a pay phone and called ahead.

The tourism folks told me that they would be gone from their office in the old RR station before I arrived, but that a key and a note would be in a box near the door.

They also told me to pick up something to eat as nothing would be open in Cass when I arrived.

Darkness was descending as I got to the little town and found my way to the station. Cass seemed deserted. This old lumbering center was not



much of town to begin with, but this night it was absolutely dead. No cars, no people, no nuthin'. The note with the key directed me to a house on a nearby street and I parked the bike in front and took my stuff in. Incredible. I had a whole, two-story house to myself.

The state, which operated the town as a tourist attraction, had refurbished all the company houses and provided them as rental "cabins." But the tourist season had yet to begin. With nothing else to do, I took a little walk around the darkened town and did find a few souls closing up their shops...and

preparing to leave Cass for their own homes elsewhere. My fears were confirmed: not only was I to have a whole house to myself, I was to have a whole town. "Ya'll have a good night, hear!"

It was a spooky walk back "home," with dark mountains looming in every direction and the absolute absence of human presence, save for the scuffing of my feet on the pavement. I don't remember how I spent the rest of the evening. Surely I gobbled the sandwich I'd secured en route. But with no radio or TV in the place, I must have turned in early. A day of riding does help you sleep.

During the night, however, there was a tremendous bump that jolted me awake. It must have been that old wood house settling, but it really unsettled me. Despite absolutely everyone I had met on this trip being as pleasant as pie, I'd heard stories about West Virginia. And that bump was very much like all the ones in the B-movie scenes, right before the really horrible ax-murder. "Ya'll have a good night, hear!"