

## **THE BEGINNINGS OF EMPIRE CITY MOTORCYCLE CLUB**

It all started in September, 1964, when a group of bike riders from New York decided to ride down to Washington, D.C. for the Labor Day weekend to visit some of their fellow riders in that city.

On the way back to New York, one of the riders got a bright idea - why not form a club! Early in October, the first meeting was held to develop this idea further. With Bob Rothstein as the first president, the group was for the first few months somewhat informally organized. Our first big project was the choosing of a name. Among the suggestions were Pegasus M.C., New York City M.C. and the Harbor M.C.. the latter taken from the most popular watering spot at that time. Finally, In February, 1965 the name Empire City M.C. was voted on, and there we were. At the same time, our famous patch was designed, and we finally got off the ground as the first all bike owner/rider club of its type on the east coast.

There were approximately twelve of us in those early days. Without competition, it was not difficult to corral most of the bike riders of our persuasion in New York City, and by 1967 we had grown to 38 members.

Our first big event was the Laconia weekend In June, 1965. Almost the whole club, which at that time consisted of fifteen members, took off for Laconia in different groups that Friday. We rented an entire motel, and cooked our own food. That was the weekend of the famous Laconia riots, during which some of us narrowly missed being rounded up by the National Guard for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The only mishap was a broken foot suffered by one of our members. It was a freak accident - a coke bottle throw at one of the National Guard's Jeeps missed its mark and landed on Gary's foot, as he was standing with the rest of us in front of the motel watching the excitement. But we survived. For several years thereafter, Laconia became a yearly thing.

In September of 1965, we again went to Washington during Labor Day weekend, and combined our trip with a visit to Marlboro, Maryland, to watch the scrambles there. Out of this event, the "Autumn Scrambles" held each year by the S.M.C.-L.A. was born, the oldest annual event still in existence. Former members Didi and Richard, now of the Cycle MC, were with us, as fellow members of Empire City M.C.. The famous Marathon of the Spartan M.C. also developed out of our annual summer get-togethers.

Our first Christmas party was a private affair, hold in December, 1964 at the home of one of our members. In 1966 we started to collect toys for children. Since 1969, the recipient of these toys has been the Graham House for Children, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. Over 200 guests attended our last Christmas party.

1967 saw the resignation of about half of our members, who left to form the "Commanders" and "Apollos". But we survived, and we are now 14. We hope to Increase this with our "teach-ins", held during the riding season, during which we teach bike riding to prospective riders and/or members.

In 1969 we began our annual picnic held the first Saturday in May. This event is free of charge, and is open to any bike rider who presents himself and his bike at our meeting place in New York City. Our destination is usually kept secret until the last moment, but we have held this event at various places such as Tallman State Park, Palisades Park, and High Point State Park In New Jersey.