

Bill's Custom Cycles

Bill's Custom Cycles as told to Patchwork by William Morris

Interviewed by Michael Pollock & Michael Fausgnht in the spring of 2003

BILLPATCHWORK: What got you interested in vintage motorcycles?

MORRIS: I use to work on my old motorcycles back in the 60ís and 50ís and then I found out by buying old junkers, I have parts to keep mine running and then I turned it into a business, everyone started coming to me for parts to help get theirs running and so it kind of became into a business.

PATCHWORK: How did you start Bill's Custom Cycles?

MORRIS: Well 1970 was like the days of the choppers and I started building choppers and I started up here across from Zhyper Dinner in 1970. I was there in 1970 and 71í, and then in 1972 I bought this place down here the big building and been here since then since 72í.

PATCHWORK: What does 'custom' in your name mean?

MORRIS: Bikes they way the people wanted them, instead of the production bikes were.

PATCHWORK: What do you do at the shop?

MORRIS: Keep everybody else busy, oversee, and I buy, and I do the purchasing and just run the place. I don't build anymore I'm just too busy to build anymore after doing this, besides the shop I do this.

PATCHWORK: About how many motorcycles have you collected over the years?

MORRIS: I've got about a hundred in here right now, thousands really, but have sold an off a lot now we got about a hundred here.

PATCHWORK: What were motorcycles like when your shop first opened?

MORRIS: My concern was they were better, easier, simpler. Today they're getting more complicated and electronics and its turning into be more expensive that the average person can't even afford them anymore, we use to buy a motorcycle for 50 or 100 dollars, now none of these guys today every part they buy for motorcycles is five times more for when I paid for my motorcycle, its sad.

PATCHWORK: What was the image of the early bike riders?

MORRIS: Well there weren't very many of us. In the old days there was a very select group of people that rode which was like two percent of people in the area or one percent

probably, now today its like ninety-five percent, if you don't have a motorcycle your not fashionable today.

PATCHWORK: What is the one cycle you would love to own but you don't own it now? Why?

MORRIS: It would be a four-cylinder Indian, I don't have any of those.

PATCHWORK: Which motorcycle that you have is the oldest, most unique, and is you favorite

MORRIS: The oldest one I have is a 1913, that is very unique there weren't very many of those built and far as my favorite motorcycle is my old 30í that I ride, out there the green one with the side car, I ride that all over and put thirty thousand miles on that in the last eight years.

PATCHWORK: Do you plan to keep collecting motorcycles?

MORRIS: Hope to.

PATCHWORK: How did you become interested in carousel horses?

MORRIS: Well I was born in 39í, I like to collect fair 39í fair things and 39í fair is kind of carnival and carousel and circus and that kind of thing, so I started collecting some circus stuff along time ago and then last year I was involved in and a had a chance to get into the carrousel stuff.

PATCHWORK: What is the most unique carousel animal you own?

MORRIS: Probably the ostridges, I have some ostruges that are pretty rare, Ill show you those.