

# My Favorite Bike(s)



**1971 Rupp Roadster II (Bike #2)**

I was lucky enough to grow up on a large cattle farm in Indiana. I started driving tractors at 6 years old. My Dad had bought some wooded property and had it cleared by bulldozers to turn it into tillable farmland. Dad would sit me on the tractor, put it in first gear at idle, then jump off. I couldn't even touch the clutch and brake pedals. The tractor would be going very slow. I would pull a hay wagon in a field. Dad and his hired men would gather rocks and sticks to throw on the wagon to clean up fields. Dad told me where to turn. I just sat there and steered. When the tractor needed to stop, Dad would jump on and stop it. I grew up helping on the farm

when needed and running around playing when not needed. My playground was over 1,000 acres of farmland to include pastures and wooded areas. I learned to drive every piece of equipment that was used on the farm at quite a young age. At 12 years old, I was driving pickup trucks on the highway following my Dad in a tractor. He would need transportation once we got to where he was going. All of this to tell you, I was always outside working or playing. And, I got a lot of seat time! On everything! Hours and hours! Spending many hours alone driving, an important skill that will come into play many years later during Iron Butt rides! 😊

And, you know one of the best things about living on a farm, we always had gas. A 500-gallon fuel tank full of regular gas and 1,500 gallons of diesel! All the gas I needed! I never bought gas until I graduated from High School.

In 1969, when I was 10 years old. I bought my first mini-bike, a 3 ½ horse, double-tubular framed basic mini-bike for \$90. It was chain drive with a centrifical clutch. My Dad showed me how to pull start it with the choke one time. After that, I was pretty much on my own. I learned how to clean spark plugs when they got fouled, oil the chain, clean the air filter, etc.

**LITTLE GEN** by **manco**  
THE TOPS IN MINI-BIKE EXCITEMENT,  
POWER, STYLE, RUGGEDNESS!  
Check the  
LITTLE GEN'S...  
Die cast aluminum  
wheels. Ball Bearing  
steering. Heavy duty  
brake and throttle  
controls. Folding  
foot pegs. Kick  
stand. Metallic  
silver-blue paint.  
Available with hi/lo  
2 speed drive. Delux  
"spoiler" seat. Heavy  
gauge steel double  
loop frame. High rise  
"Stingray" handle  
bars.  
The Model 7 Delux (shown) sparkles with polished  
chrome fenders - up to 5 HP and 2 speed hi/lo  
transmission available.  
Write today for information on Models 77 Super and 227  
Standard and for the dealer nearest you.  
Manufactured by **MANCO PRODUCTS, INC.**  
3337 FREEMAN STREET, FORT WAYNE, INDIANA 46804  
OldMiniBikes.com

## My First Mini-Bike 1969

When I would get home from school, the first thing I did was look up Dad! He could be anywhere on the farm. Mom usually knew where he was, so she would tell me. I always had to check in with him to see if he needed me or if I was free

to play. Prior to the mini-bike, I would ride a bicycle to find him. That was work! On the mini-bike just getting there was fun! I would ride through cornfields, pastures, woods, streams, etc. It was FUN!

After a couple years, I outgrew that mini-bike. I got a new Rupp Roadster II. It was purple! Well, those were the days of Laugh-in and the hippie movement, so purple was cool!

This bike was fun too! It had a 4-horse Briggs & Stratton engine with a belt drive torque converter! I rode it everywhere, up and down hills, in the mud, I wrecked it numerous times. It was too fun! But, it wasn't like my friends Honda Mini-Trail! That little bike was cool! My bike was pull start, his was kick start! I believe my bike was faster though!

My next bike was a used Honda CB90. I'm sorry, I hated this bike!



**1973 Honda CB90**

Dad thought it was a good deal, so I bought it. But, it was the wrong bike for what I was doing. This is a little commuter bike for on the road, not a cornfield, mud road, pasture

riding, hill climbing bike! I hated it! But, I rode it anyway! A lot!

By the time I was 15, Dad became interested in getting a motorcycle. He bought a new Honda CB550!

This bike was identical to the Honda 750. Dad must have been color blind because this bike was purple too! It was awesome! When I would mention purple, he would tell me "No!" that bike is brown! The title even said brown! Like a lot of people, Dad never got interested in riding much. When my parents would leave the house for the evening, I would sneak it out and ride it. It was all I could do to push it out of the garage. The first time I rode it, I almost lost it in our gravel driveway! Whew!



**Dad's Honda CB550**

When I turned 16, Dad handed me the keys and let me ride it whenever I wanted! And, ride it I did! I loved this bike! I also had a couple accidents on it. Luckily, when Dad bought it, the salesman recommended a crash bar that attached to the frame in front of the

engine. That crash bar saved my legs a couple of time!

But, my junior year in High School, I wanted my own street machine. I wanted the original "crotch rocket"! The Kawasaki 500 triple!



**1975 Kawasaki 500**

It was hard to keep the front end down on this bike! It was a screaming two-stroke! Why Dad let me buy that bike I'll never know! I did have fun on it though! I rode that bike until the end of my senior year in High School when I ran out of money! No money, no insurance, no riding!

I eventually sold it and bought a 1977 Yamaha DT-175. This was a street/trail bike (mostly street).



**Yamaha DT175**



A year later, I was in the Army. I married my high school sweetheart, Karen! Our first major purchase together was a 1979 Yamaha 650 Special. It was awesome! Unfortunately, I wrecked it before we made our first payment! I went too fast around a curve on a country road and lost control. I woke up in the ambulance with Karen there! I remember well, laying in the Army hospital with PFC Hornberger scrubbing the gravel out of my forearms with orange soap and a plastic bristled brush! Nothing was administered to relieve the pain since I had been unconscious! The doctor inserted a catheter to check for internal bleeding! I had stitches in my chin and a splint bandaged to my ankle. The Army doctor thought my foot was broken but wasn't sure since the X-ray was hard to read.



**1979 Yamaha 650 Special**

(Karen and I/ her Parents/her twin sister and husband)

Well, the Army had no mercy on me! I had the accident after work on a Friday. Monday morning, I was in formation! No days off for this! Suck it up, Buttercup! We got helicopters to work on! We can use

you in the office. I was sore for weeks!

Since the Yamaha was new, the dealer had problems getting parts. The dealer finally got the bike back together in time for me to leave Ft Hood and head to Korea. The bike sat in storage for a year and half until the end of my enlistment and discharge from the Army.

We returned to the family farm and eventually sold the Yamaha 650 Special and bought a Yamaha 175 DT. It was awesome for around the farm! A year after our son was born, the motorcycle was sold.



**Yamaha IT175**

We didn't own a motorcycle for another 15 years! This is when we learned about Honda Gold Wings!



**1997 GL1500**

Karen came home from work one day and said "Hey, a co-worker and his wife are taking a 3-week trip to

Canada on their MOTORCYCLE!" How cool is that!

Wow! Let's get one! Let's get a touring bike to do those type of trips! Ah, but what if we really don't use it? That's a lot of money! We started looking around and found a two-year-old used GL1500 with only 1,200 miles on it. It was like brand new! We thought we could at least get our money back if we decided we didn't like it.

We immediately joined GWRRA! The best thing about GWRRA is that it's couples based. It wasn't a bike club that was mostly guys. GWRRA was all about couples! GWRRA GA-P out of Fayetteville, GA was great! They taught us all about the Gold Wing and safe riding! Our first ride with them on a typical summer day in the north Georgia mountains, it started raining! Pouring down rain! There were 8 or 10 bikes. The group just stopped and put on rain gear like nothing happened. No stopping under bridges or gas station awnings until it subsided, they just donned their gear and continued riding. It didn't bother them one bit and no one complained. Well, we only had our bike a week. We didn't have any rain gear! I was almost scared to ride in the rain! We got drenched! But, we had rain gear for the next ride! And, have ridden in thousands of miles of rain since then!

We had some great times on that GL1500. We rode on several long trips too! But, then came the

GL1800! This bike was totally different! It was a corvette compared to a Cadillac (GL1800 vs GL1500)! During the first test ride, it felt like a better balanced, more powerful machine compared to the GL1500. After only two and a half years, the GL1500 was sold and replaced with the new GL1800.



**2005 GL1800**



**2001 GL1800**

Since then, we have owned four GL1800s. And, I enjoy riding the GL1800 today as much as I did when we bought our first one in 2002! The GL1800 is definitely my favorite bike. Any of the four! This bike has taken Karen and I around the United States several times over! We enjoyed rallies, camping, Iron Butt rides, etc. We've done it all on this bike! And, it never gets old! We have more memories on the Gold Wing than any other bike! Those memories are priceless!

I really hate that Mother Honda went to a smaller bike starting in 2018. I like the big touring bike for two-up riding. I don't want an ST1300 with more horsepower. To me, the new 1800 is a solo bike! But, that's just me!



**2009 Suzuki V-Strom**

We owned a Suzuki V-Strom as a second bike for a few years. I rode this bike to Alaska. Another great bike for what it's designed. An 80/20 (80% street/20% off-road) adventure bike.



**2012 GL1800**

We did try a Harley for a couple years. No complaints here! We loved that bike too! But, it just wasn't a GL1800.



**2014 Harley Ultra Limited**

The Gold Wing is a great reliable motorcycle! I don't think you can beat it for two-up touring! You just can't! The GL1800 has plenty of power, well balanced and comfortable for both rider and passenger.



**2016 GL1800**

But, if we were talking solo adventure riding I might be talking a different story altogether! 😊



**2019 BMW R1250GSA**

The BMW R1250GSA is proving to be a great bike too!