



# TO THE KANCAMAGUS HIGHWAY AND THEN BEYOND!

**The New Hampshire Must Do Ride**

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**O**n the way to Laonia last month I had a great opportunity to just take my time and do some riding. Just out of Albany, New York I picked up route nine and rode it through Vermont and New Hampshire. This is a great part of the country and no better way to see it than on the beautiful winding two lane blacktop of route nine.

Listed as one of the best rides in the country by the new Rand McNally motorcycle atlas, this New England throughway takes riders past some of the oldest Colonial towns in the North East. Many of them still stand as they looked for more than a hundred years, with the prominent white provincial houses and their black shutters and picket fences

lining the streets of town. Cemeteries, which passers by can visit, contain headstones dating back to the Colonial wars, where whole families are buried under a single tall marker headlining the family name. Below, smaller stones denoting father, mother, sister, and brother, outline the family plot.

Also along this route are great mom and pop restaurants and quaint little bed and breakfasts. Of course, I immediately took advantage of this action and was promptly introduced to a delicacy called the Vermont scrambler. I'm sure the scientific name would be something more like "Plateus Heartattackus" but it was a meal comprised of sausage, bacon, home fries, aged Vermont cheddar, all held together with scrambled eggs. I swear I didn't

think I'd be able to stand once I got it in my belly. After breakfast and a smoke break, I continued through Vermont towards Laonia, where I passed quite a few colonial towns like Bennington.

Bennington is Vermont's third largest city. The only tall building that would

suggest it is a city is the famed Bennington Monument, commemorating the Battle for Bennington on August 16, 1777. At 306' high it provides a view of three states and three mountain ranges. This area is so full of our country's history that whether you're a history buff



or not, you'll enjoy the time there. After I crossed the New Hampshire state line, there were still plenty of great sites, but route 93 came on me fast and I was back in the fast lane. I made Laconia (see every other story printed anywhere on this event) and couldn't wait until my duties were done and I could travel beyond. Surprised to hear that? Well, if you have ever heard anything about the country side just north of Laconia, referred to in song and story as the White Mountain Range, you wouldn't be. This is the location of another one of Rand McNally's must ride roads for motorcyclists, route 112, or as it is more commonly known, The Kancamagus Highway.

Covering thirty four miles in distance, this scenic bi-way travels through some of the most scenic mountain terrain in our great land, listed as one of the top ten mountain ranges, actually. Turning on to this route, which is named after the mountain whose flank it wraps around, you are around 1000 feet in elevation and you'll climb to nearly 3000 by the time you reach the apex of it. The roadway and the mountain are in reality named after the legendary Indian, Kancamagus, or as it translates into their native tongue, "The Fearless One." Running along the Swift River, there are many, many ornate New England covered bridges to scope out. Near the end there's a fantastic spot for cooling off called the lower falls. It was a million degrees when I passed by, but I had more than swimming on my mind, so I skipped the chance to take a dip.

Hopping on route 16, I was headed for another one of New Hampshire's biggest natural attractions, Mt. Washington. Now called

the Auto Road, Mount Washington's Carriage Road was deemed as the first man-made attraction in the United States. Built in the early 1860's, it offered visitors a safer way to explore New England's highest peak through the comfort of a carriage ride. The eight mile road climbs over 6,000 feet as it winds its way up the northeast side of the mountain, that's almost a mile high. With an average grade of 12%, the road is paved for about two thirds of the distance. From there

motorcyclists have to take their chances on the hard packed dirt/ gravel mix to get to the summit. And believe me, this is taking a chance, since there are no guard rails. Looking over the edge of the narrow roadway, you get a glimpse of a sheer cliff that would be certain death to go over. As you get closer to the peak, the vegetation starts to thin out until there is nothing but rocks and snow caps.

Known as the "Home Of The World's Worst



Weather," the summit at Mount Washington is a true wonder of nature. With a temperature difference of thirty, forty, or even fifty degrees from the top to the bottom, it's not uncommon to need extra clothing on a hot summer day. Over 100 people have died on the mountains, which has weather that is comparable to Antarctica at times. Wind chills have been known to reach 120 degrees below zero. They get an average of 256 inches of snow a year, and it was at the summit where the world's highest wind speed was recorded, at 231 miles per hour. The day I was there however, it was just a little chilly at the top. Every four or five minutes, a passing cloud would swallow us up. You could literally lose your bike if you were not sitting on it when the clouds rolled in. I sat there and enjoyed the cold temperature and thought how glad I was that I didn't stop to swim. After all, this was the best of both worlds; I got to cool off and I had a great ride getting to the peak.

The rest of the day I spent just tooling around the roads of the White Mountain Range and even snuck into Maine for the only northeastern magnet missing from my refrigerator. Even though I had three more days in Laconia, my mind was left in the White Mountains the rest of that trip. Thoughts of the twisties on Route 112, and riding into the clouds on Mount Washington gave me a reason to smile during the heavy traffic back at the Weirs. The whole trip was one of my favorites. I enjoyed it so much, that I went home the same way just to get in a little extra before I headed out of the New England landscape. **CHRYSLER SOURCE**