

# The Whole Story: An epic tale of two motorcycle trips 50 years apart

A Book Review by Marcia McGuire #206424

I HAD FIRST HEARD A WISP OF Keith Thye's story from one of the service guys at my local shop, South Sound Motorcycles, of which Keith is president and his wife Ann is the owner. "Make sure someone important knows where you are. Have you heard Keith Thye's story? He and his friend went down to South America before adventure motorcycling really took off. They checked in at the embassies. That saved them—they got thrown into jail because the police thought they were drug smugglers..." I was intrigued. So when someone suggested I check out Keith's story through his books and his presentation, I did.

That friend who joined Keith was Dave Yaden. They had gone to high school together, and though other friends were interested in Keith's wild idea to ride down to South America, Dave was the only friend who was willing to commit. They both put a pause on college to work and plan for a year before launching south from where they grew up in Lake Oswego, Oregon, in January of 1963. They rode a pair of BMW R-50s, and with \$1200 each, they had the destination of their hometown's new sister city: Pucón, Chile.

*Moto Raid* ("Motorcycle Ride") recounts the tales of that journey, and


*Ride On: Moto Raid II* tells the story of their retracing of their original journey fifty years later and contrasts the two experiences.

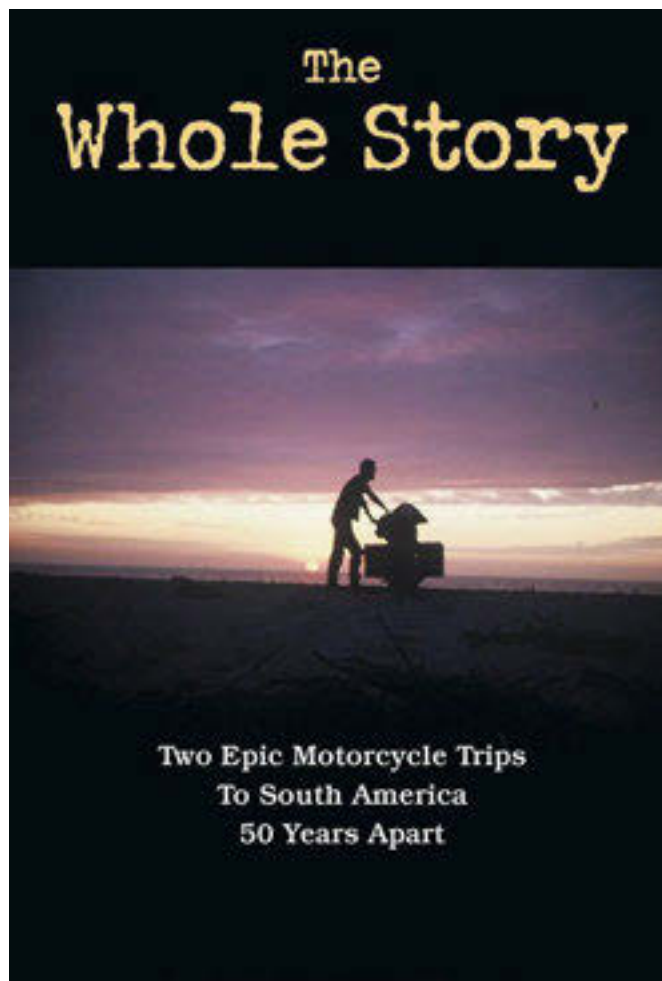
Adventure weaves through both journeys but is especially raw in the first. They wanted panniers but had to design their

what they gathered right in front of them, in towns, or in the letters from family and friends that they collected from the embassies along the way. Going as minimalist and cheap as possible yielded perhaps tales they at times would have rather not collected, but also an array of interpersonal and cultural interactions that provided a different perspective of the world.

Throughout the second book is a nostalgia, but also a fresh awe. Keith reflects on the changes, especially technological, that facilitated the greater ease and comfort of the second trip: BMW GSs, GPS units to dictate directions, credit cards, and wifi that allowed face-to-face conversations with loved ones back home. Memories of the past trip make Keith and Dave pause. They revisit a rural town they passed through at the beginning of the fateful day that led to their being thrown in jail, and a man tells them his elderly mother through the years had told the story of two motorcyclists who had ridden through the village when she was a child. The man, realizing Keith and Dave were those two riders from fifty years earlier, brings his mother over, and she, Dave and Keith all take a photo together.

*The Whole Story* contains both books, *Moto Raid*, 224 pages, and *Ride On: Moto Raid II*, 160 pages, from Classic Day Publishing. Available from [www.keithsrides.com](http://www.keithsrides.com).

com, the set is \$24.95, or \$14.95 for each. If you want to hear Keith's story in person, his upcoming presentations around the USA are listed at [www.keithsrides.com/events](http://www.keithsrides.com/events) 



own and get them made. They had to write to different agencies to collect maps and information on weather and customs. The only live feed on the status of the world was