



*History of the 3*Piece Patch*



In 1924 the AMA (American Motorcyclist Association), was founded, as a base to help organize Motorcycle Manufactures and mainly supported by the Motorcycle Manufactures to help promote motorcycle riding in America. They sanctioned groups of riders from the same area that rode together as motorcycle clubs. Some wore complete matching dress outfits with name of their motorcycle club stitched on the back of their shirts and jackets. At events, the AMA gave Awards for the best-dressed club so this was the start of motorcycle clubs patches.

During an event in 1947 in Hollister, CA when a member of the Booze Fighters Motorcycle Club made the headlines with an exaggerated news story that later would become a movie called the “Wild Ones”. The AMA wrote an article in their magazine, shortly after this stating, 99% of all their members are law-abiding citizens and only 1% is outlaw. This then, began what is today known as Outlaw Motorcycle clubs and one percenter clubs that were not sanctioned by the AMA and non-members of the AMA were banned from attending AMA events.

In order to designate themselves as an outlaw club to all other clubs, the 1% ‘s cut their club patches into three separate pieces. The top rocker was the name of the club, the center was the emblem of the club, and the bottom rocker was the local from which they came. These outlaw motorcycle clubs put on their own events and parties and did the opposite of what the AMA had been doing. They chopped down their bikes to go faster and look different, rode with no mufflers, and they would drink, and do other wild things.

Such is history.

The term colors are used in referring to a motorcycle club's patch set up. In the case of a 3 piece,.....One is placed over the top of the middle large graphic patch and one placed underneath it. The rockers are usually curved bars with the top bar designating the club name and the lower bar designating the location of the club. The two rockers are separated from the middle, larger graphic type patch, hence the term three-piece patch.

Motorcycle clubs differ from motor cycling organizations as they traditionally have prospecting time required before the club members decide whether the individuals will be accepted into the group and allowed to wear or fly the colors of the club. Most club colors will also have M/C printed on the rocker or a separate “cube” patch with MC on it to further clarify it is a club rather than an organization.

Many national organizations in the early 1980's set policy to unite their “rockers” with their patch to make it one piece to avoid any designation or confusion within the motorcycling club community, H.O.G. (Harleys Owners Group) and the Blue Knights (Police Office) are an example.

As Motorcycle, club patches are recognized today:

- A one-piece patch normally signifies a family club or social motorcycle when it is done with respect to the area clubs.
- A two-piece patch can have many different meanings as long as it is done with respect to the area clubs.
- A Three-piece patch normally means that the club is a traditional MC club with the top rocker being the club name, the middle being their Patch and the bottom being the territory they exist in. There are also a few 3pc patch clubs where the bottom rocker has something other than territory, such as a saying. The traditional MC is one that adheres to the protocols and traditions established. There are few exceptions, but, traditional clubs are approved by the local dominate. The traditional 3-pc patch club is not necessarily a 1% club or even the dominant club.
- The diamond patch with “1%” or “13” worn with the 3-pc back patch signifies the club is a 1% or 1% support club. While rare, they may not be the dominate club for the area but will be sanctioned by the local dominant. There are also a few areas where the dominate is not a 1% club, but those are few. When one is just hanging around, he has no part of the patch. Then when he is sponsored by a full member and approved by the club as a prospect, he may wear the lower rocker that only says “Prospect”. In some areas, the prospect wears the “Prospect” rocker at the top of the vest. Some clubs even allow the lower rocker-saying prospect and the upper rocker with the club name but not the main patch. Different clubs do things differently across the country. Different rocker combinations of what a prospect might wear differs depending on each club. If he is approved after, his prospect time has been determined to be over and the vote goes in his favor. He then is allowed to have the full colors and is considered a full member, having all three pieces if that club uses the 3-piece patch.

Nomad Rocker.....

Some MC's entitle a Member to wear a “Nomad” bottom rocker. This is only when that member continues to exhibit a lifestyle within the common definition of the word nomad.

1. A member of a group of people who have no fixed home and move according to the seasons from place to place in search of food, water and grazing land.
2. A person with no fixed residence who roams about, a wanderer. It is a valued distinction of lifestyle that only a few can truly live up to and as such, causes unfavorable notice when seen used by those most obviously not living up to the common meaning. By definition a “Nomad”, more often than not, will be traveling alone and needs an ability to represent, maintain & otherwise survive under circumstances unusual from the norm.