

# Keith's Corner/McGill News

## Keith's Corner

August 2, 2019

When I started writing about McGill, I never dreamed that it would lead me down many different paths. Some of them funny, some serious and of course some of tragedy/ The plane crash in 1935 was one of those events. I never knew about it as it happened the year I was born. The same with this story today. It happened before I was born. My purpose is to present all the information I can find that is from a source that can be traced.

### Car Crash in 1933

A very violent car crash occurred on the McGill/Ely highway on January 7, 1933. It is one of those events that should not have happened, but fate is a cruel master sometimes. The unrelated circumstances that led up to this event are hard to believe.

McGill had a groups of young men that loved basketball and formed a team, The Blues, to play the other towns in the area. They were all of high school age, but were not on the White Pine High School team. They were coached by Dick Jones and the team manager was, Gus Pappas.

There was a game scheduled with Ruth at Ruth the night of January 7. A problem arose in that the coach Jones could not make the game, so Papas called the game off. Several of the boys decided to go anyway and convinced Joe Montillione, to coach for them. Erling Linnell provided a car and so they left for Ruth.

Gus Pappas stayed home, since he called the game off. Jay Baker, another teammate, heard the game was called off and so he went to the game that was

being played at McGill, between the high School and the Community League. Fate spared these two boys.

The night seemed to get started on a bad note, as the Blues lost the game with the Ruth Independents, 24-12. They loaded up in Linnell's 1925 Dodge and headed for McGill. There were eight of them crammed into the vehicle.

About the same time, Jerry Mahoney, of Ely, was closing the Browning Store in McGill. He soon left McGill and was driving his 1932 Dodge Sedan, about 45 MPH, according to his testimony. He said the Linnell car did not have any light, but later recanted and said he did see a flickering light just before the crash. Linnell maintained that his car did have lights. The exact cause was never determined. It was a head on crash as evidenced by this photograph of the two vehicles.



*Figure 1—The Mahoney Dodge is on the left. The bottom of the picture reads--"looking South".*

The cars met on their respective right sides. It would seem that for that to happen they would both be on the wrong side of the middle line. The Mahoney car was consumed in flames.

The first people on the scene were Scott McKay, Tom Lucas and George Judas. They quickly started pulling the victims out of the wreck and with the help of more people rushed then to the Steptoe Valley Hospital. Two of the boys, Chris Collis and Charles Eberle were killed instantly. The Doctors at the hospital were Ririe, Smernoff, Bowdle and Frolich. They administered pain killers and worked to patch the boys up. Two of the injured boys, Joe Montillone and Robert Baker lost their fight to satay alive just before dawn.

Jerry Mahoney was transferred to the White Pine County Hospital by the duck pond. His injuries were not life threatening like the boys. He suffered a fractured left knee, cuts on right leg and shock.

The ones remaining at the Steptoe Hospital were, Nick Pintar (15) with a basal fracture, dislocated jaw, broken right leg. Sylvan Morley (14) with compound fracture of right thigh, skull fracture, severe lacerations. Charles Carr (16) with abdominal injuries and fractured left foot. He had the least injuries of the boys. The driver Erling Linnell had a fractured skull.

Three of the boys, Baker, Collis and Montillone were buried in Ely. Eberle was taken to Harrisburg, Pa for burial.

It was a very sad day for the entire community and one that should not have happened.

## McGill News

Friday July 26, 2019 at about 5 pm, McGill was treated to a complete half hour shower. It must have dropped 2-3 inches of rain. The streets were full of gravel and mud. I got a phone call at 6 asking me to check the Drug Store for damage. There was some water in the far back room or furnace room by the back door. I put a fan on the area. Hearing voices just outside the building, I went outside and found that Rick from the grocery store and another fellow were trying to divert some flood water from the store. It broke thru the wall and flooded the basement and the far back room. On the north side there was a small river coming in the large delivery door. The antique store got hit hard also, especially on the south portion. The big problem was that most of the drains in town were

plugged with debris and were useless. With KCC being gone the rain that fell above town came rushing over the freight yards and thru all the yards and alleys on first street and then thru yards and streets all the way to the tailings area. I live on 6<sup>th</sup> street and had a river on both sides of the house. All in all it was a mess and some folks got their basements and garages flooded. Who would ever think that McGill on the hill would get flooded.

Good ole person nature (PC form of Mother Nature.).