

Keith's Corner/McGill News

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McGill Scouts

I was recently asked by some young boys, what it was like in the Boy Scouts inn the, as they called it, "the olden days". It took me by surprise as I assumed scouting was the same as always.

Scouting was a big thing in my youth. I was so thrilled on my 9th birthday to be able to join the Cub Scouts and wear the blue uniform and if I remember correctly, a yellow neckerchief. I don't recall the cub pack # for my area. Ift was a lot of fun, but we also had to learn lots of interesting things. Mostly about taking care of ourselves and camping. With lots of studying and hard work one could advance thru different levels, such as fox, bear etc.



There are some McGill Cub Scouts in front of the boarding house. I don't know what year, but guess it is the early 50s. I only know the Grant, Draper and Assuras kids.

Then the big moment came on one's 12th birthday when you could join the Boy Scouts. The uniform was a light tan and a red neckerchief. I belonged to Troop 64. Our meeting place was the American Legion Hall. There was another Troop numbered 63 that met at the LDS Church.

In order to advance one had to study and pass tests for various merit badges. There was an over the shoulder sash that the badges went on and it became quite a thrill to put many badges on that sash. The first lever was Star with 5 badges and on up to I believe 36 for an Eagle. There were merit badges for just about everything one could imagine.

We did a lot of overnight hiking in the Duck Creek area. One time we hiked from the KCC dam up to a camping spot on Bird Creek. We carried back packs with all our food, sleeping bag, tent, toiletries and changes of clothing. We also had a belt laden with a hunting knife, hatchet, first aid kit, canteen and a mess kit. These kinds of experiences were very helpful later on in life, especially in military boot camps.



Here we are at our camp on Bird Creek about 1948. The scouts l-r are Charlie Knight, Roger Patterson, Ed Brewer, Paul Gibson, Stinkey, Keith Gibson. The tents are 2 man mountaineer army surplus. Right after WWII was over the military

allowed the scouts to buy stuff really cheap. The tents were \$5. Of course \$5 then would be like \$100 now.

At camp, we had to build a cooking fire without using matches. Different methods were used, such as flint and punk. The flint was struck by a knife and the sparks aimed at the punk. With lots of lung power and face full of smoke a fire would get started, sometimes. Another method was with boot lace, branch, twirling stick and some cedar bark. I still prefer matches.

We did some winter camping in the snow. During the bad winter of 48-49 we were to camp in the snow at Bird Creek, but because of the deep snow the road was closed to Bird Creek. We headed back to town, but stopped in the gap and camped on the north side of the road near the small cliffs. It was cold, but our surplus army mummy bags filled with down kept us warm. It was a great experience. During the night we had some coyotes visit. We had had chili for dinner and there was some still in a pot by our tent and a coyote woke us up as he tried to eat the frozen chili.

The next day we had a large herd of deer come near our camp and then ran up the hill behind us.

We had fun snowshoeing, snowball fighting and getting wet. Our pant legs froze solid and it was hard to walk. We learned how to cope with the cold and the snow, to stay dry above all.

Being a Boy Scout in those days was such a great adventure and left us with many fond memories.

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Work is going nicely at the IOOF hall. The water, sewer and fire suppression systems are all buried underground and ready to go. They have been taking the eaves off and replacing with a different eave system. The windows in the front are being replaced with new ones. The middle window will be replaced with a door, so folks can dine out on the terrace above the front entrance.



Old Photos



This is an aerial photo, but has no date. Looking at different things in the photo I would date this sometime between 1923, because the new mill is there and the trestle is not. Old mill burned in 1922. It was before 1949 because the old grandstand is there. Here is an enlargement of the ball field and the old school. The trees on the circle would indicated about 1929, as they were planted in 1925.



