

# Keith's Corner/McGill News

June 19, 2020

## School Is Out (1940s)

The McGill Grade School is out for the summer. However, many of us McGill, upstanding young citizens, liked to refer to it as the end of a nine month long, mandatory confinement. We now had 3 short months of freedom from sitting still in a classroom and taking silly tests about unimportant stuff. Now we could engage in the pursuit of more important and intelligent matters.

One of the first, was to get some fireworks ordered for the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations. We were at the age of wanting to experiment with different things and fireworks fit nicely into our plans. We had to determine what was the best angle to hold Roman candles to get the best distance. About 45 degrees was tops. Was it possible to attach some fireworks to a kite, to get them high in the sky. No that didn't work. Our homemade fuses burned too fast. It also burned the kite string. Shooting firecrackers with a bow and arrow was a little risky and was soon abandoned.

After the fireworks were all used up, we turned to more advanced technical matters such as, trapping gophers and ground squirrels. You would think that these critters would be happy to get out of a hole in the ground and into a nice cage, but they didn't appreciate our help at all. Several of them were mad enough to bite. They weren't the only ones mad. Our parents hit the roof and in the end we had to take the critters back and release them .

It was obvious we needed a safer intellectual course of action. So, we turned to catching polywogs, frogs and lizards. These were great to scare the girls with.

Most of our experiments with natural entities were safe, but a lot were not. Most of us usually sported one or more band aids and some even had plaster casts on arms or legs. It was a dangerous world, but we were fearless. Slight bleeding was corrected with some dirt. Most minor cuts were dabbed with iodine, merthiolate or mercurochrome. They all stung, so that meant they worked. Curing things in

those days always involved pain. Any kind of internal illness was treated with cod liver oil and/or Ivory soap enema. We learned by an early age not to complain of being sick. It was best not to say anything, just endure. The most painful hurts were the loss of patches of skin from crashing a bike or cart and being body slammed to the pavement of rocky alley. There was never any soft, rock free dirt in the McGill area. Also, no matter where you went, it was always uphill.

As the summer waned and September was nearing, we had the dreaded trip to the clothing store to get some "school clothes". We had been wearing our comfortable attire of white t-shirt and Big Mac bib overalls and comfortable ankle high shoes, every day and now it was time to restrict our growing bodies with stupid school clothes and oxford shoes. What the heck had we done to get punished like that??

Our summer of freedom and scientific breakthroughs for all mankind was ending. I have never, to this day, ever figured out who or what in Person Nature(PC always) speeds up time in the summer and slows it during the school year. It is diabolical and needs to be investigated and someone punished.

So, the day finally arrives when we have to show up at the confinement center in our stupid clothes and tight oxfords. We have to line up like regular prisoners do and file into the building to face our new task master. We try to end up in a seat behind any girl that has pigtails. They pigtails are fair game to be dunked in our desk ink wells. Some things about school are OK. Lessons and tests are not. Recess is OK.

The transition from free thinking scientific wizards, pushing the frontiers of science into the future, is starting and soon we will be nothing but regimented blobs dreaming of next summer. So, before that happens we must develop a new way to make bean shooters out of clothespins, wooden match rockets and other small, portable weapons to protect ourselves from the evil monsters that roam our planet.

We can see the birds soaring in the sky thru the windows and wish we were one of them. How come they aren't locked in some school?? They seem to learn enough by themselves. Look at ducks and geese. They have a much smaller brain and yet are smart enough to go south to a warmer place every winter.

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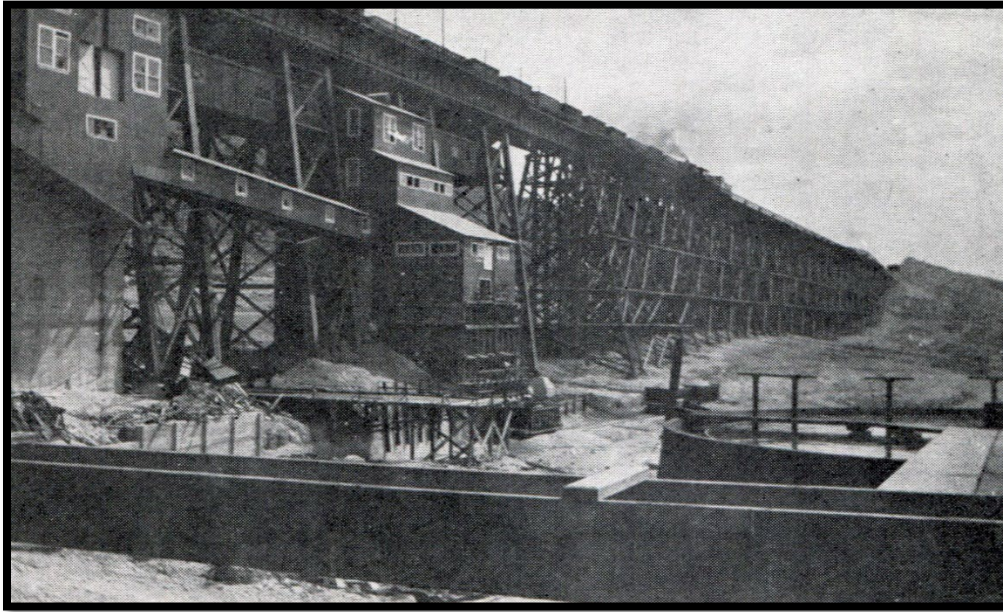
There is some activity at the ball park.



New paint and soon new aluminum seats. New chain link fencing.



## Old Photos



Trestle at the mill. Top photo about 1916. Bottom -under construction about 1907. It was torn down after the 1022 mill fire. I've never seen a photo of it burning. Lot of good timbers.

