

Newsletter124

Keith's Corner/McGill News

September 24, 2021

Sports In Mc Gill Grade School-1947

September 1947, back there in the Dark Ages of history, was an exciting time for some of us McGill heathens, still wet behind the ears. We were finally out of that two story building that housed those wretched children in the K-5 grades and were now in the "new building", for grades 6,7 and 8. We had endured 6 years of physical conditioning on various exercise setups on the playground. There were the "tricky bars", "slippery slide", swings and the brutal "gliders". The gliders were metal hand grips that were suspended on a chain attached to the top of a tall pipe pole. Each grip had three handles spaced about 6 inches above each other. The bottom one was for the shortest kids. One grabbed ahold and then ran around the pole. At the desired speed you could lift your feet and "glide" around the pole like a twirling slingshot. If your hand slipped you crashed into the dirt and rocks. The entire playground was constructed on dirt and rocks to condition us to cuts and abrasions, usually on a daily basis.

With such superb conditioning we felt ready for football. However, that was short lived as we were rudely introduced to the "new building" version of free for all football.

There was a huge level cement pad in front of the school, with a large sloping dirt and rock area stretching down toward the ball park.



Figure 1---Gravel area below the "New Building. Our early training spot.

The object of the game was to have someone kick or throw a football from the pad to a crowd of heathens. There was a vicious scramble for the ball, resulting in several cuts and loss of skin. The bigger and older thugs showed no mercy on us innocent newcomers.

The magic moment finally arrived when some of our names were posted on a bulletin board list. We were told to report to the basement of the wood working shop, that was just below the "new building" to get our uniforms. The shop is now a garage for the school buses.

The uniform consisted of a thin leather "helmet" with broken chin strap, tan colored heavy canvas pants with pockets in the front of the thighs to slide a fiberglass curved pad. The pants only reached to the knees. The rest of the leg was bare down to the shoes and socks we normally wore. Most of us didn't get football shoes with cleats until the 8th grade.

The bare shins were an ideal place to cushion your fall, on the rocks, when blocked or tackled. Any severe bleeding was cured with a handful of dirt. Probably not the thing to do now days.

There were some soft hip pads sewn into the pants. The shoulder pads were not much help. The shirts were tewn. The whole get up, was, in my opinion, used, by a much earlier McGill team in 1914.

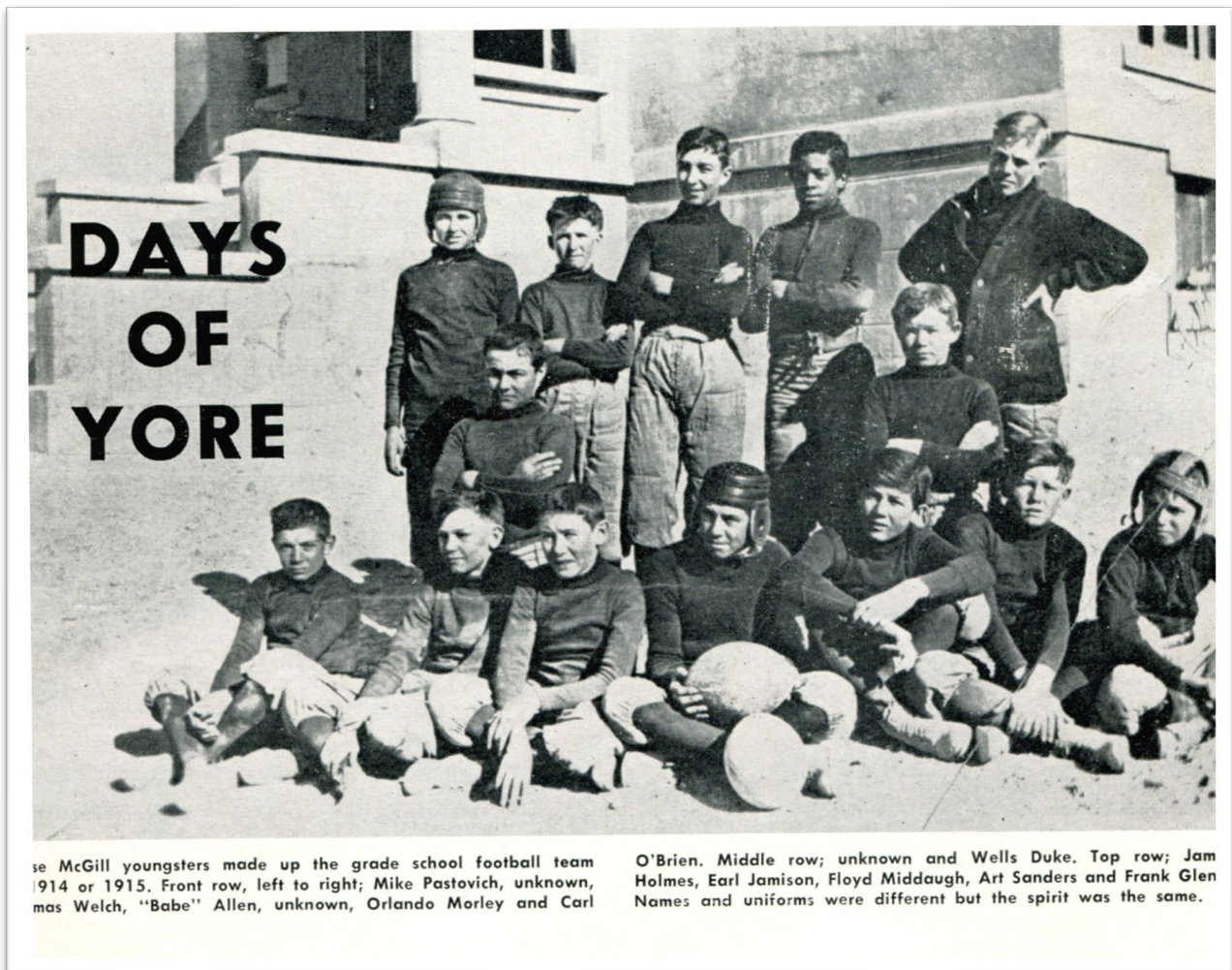


Figure 2-McGill Grade School-1914.

We had to play on the old dirt and rock ball field below the school. The new park with grass was not put in until the spring of 1950. My 1950 graduating class was the last one to play on that dirt field. Somehow, for some unknown reason, we were overlooked by the National Football Hall of Fame, for our heroic and painful efforts to advance the great game of football.

Basketball was another sport I liked. We used the gym at the Clubhouse. The gym by the school was built after I graduated. We rode our bikes from the school to the gym after school was out.

The backboards were on the wall and so you had to be very careful doing a layup or crash into the wall. The side boundary line was about one foot from the wall, so not much room there either. The large windows were protected by heavy screen wire.

The track team wore their basketball uniforms.



The 1949, McGill Grade School, World Class Olympic track team. Kneeling, l-r, Doug Roberts, Dick Cooper, Ed Harris. Standing, l-r, Kaye Brown, Bill Williams, Keith Gibson and Coach, Don Hayden.

There were only 6 of us. Each one had to do at least 3 events. I had the pole vault, low hurdles, shot put and broad jump. Being the nice guy that I am, even back then, I held back in each event to let my teammates garner the ribbons. I came in fourth in each event.

We had a pole vault area south of the school. It had a wooden box for the pole to slide into. The vaulting pole was a bamboo one from the Cononelos furniture store. It was used to roll up carpet with. They had a habit of breaking in the middle, causing a quick trip to the hard ground. The bar was another such pole. We landed in a small amount of sawdust furnished by KCC. It was softer than landing on the dirt, but not by very much. High jumpers used the same setup.

We weren't the greatest athletes, but at least we knew the rules and how to play and had 3 years of experience to offer the WPHS athletic department when we entered there as freshmen.

McGill News

Our McGill streets got a fresh coat of asphalt slurry this week.



This is K Ave.

Oldies

1909—May---The Bradley Bros. Construction are almost done excavating for the new Nye Bros. store in McGill

1909—September 25---Miss Carr opens a new line of millinery at the Leader Store.

Old Photo



I was asked if I had a photo of the McGill Meat Market. This is inside. I will look for an outside photo.