

Newsletter117

Keith's Corner/McGill News

August 13, 2021

Nevada Northern Trains

The great WWII was under way and the first group of White Pine County draftees was getting ready to depart. It was in March of 1942 and their sendoff was a little more subdued than what their counterparts received at the start of WWI. Folks all across the country were a lot more apprehensive in 1942, than in 1917.

Pearl Harbor had left quite an impact on them, along with the situation in Europe. There was more of a feeling that this war would be more costly and last a lot longer. That feeling was vindicated by the length and cost of human life and property over the next 4-5 years. Another big difference in embarkation, was that the men were to leave by bus and not on the Nevada Northern passenger train.

The passenger service had been stopped the previous summer. It was originally scheduled to end July 16, 1941, but that was extended to July 31. Nevada Northern had started a bus service, at that time, to take passengers to Wells, to catch the Southern Pacific trains.

I can remember the bus stopping in McGill, in front of the sheriff's office. That office served as a waiting room for the Wells bus and the Lewis Bros. bus, that went to Salt Lake.

My mother took my brother Paul and I on that bus one time. We boarded the train in Wells and the conductor brought us boys a post card that had a colored picture of a train crossing the Great Salt Lake, on, if I remember correctly, the Lucerne cutoff. . There was a tiny cloth bag of salt attached. I kept that card for many years, but alas, it is just a memory now.

The last passenger to buy a ticket on the train was N.W. Fay. It was for the short trip from the Ely station by the duck pond 'all the way' to the large depot in East Ely. The crew was composed of -Engineer-William Young; Fireman-L. Labate; Brakeman-Phil Bennet; Conductor-W.N Padden; and Mail Clerk-Val Walker. (Ely Record, April 4, July 18, August 1, 1941).

The locomotive was of course the beautiful and gracious old #40. It was built by the Baldwin Corp. in 1905. It was used to haul freight and passengers to and from Cobre. The driver wheels on #40 are a lot larger in diameter than those on #81 and #93, thus making it a long distance hauler.

As a young heathen, growing up in the "townsite" area of McGill, I remember when old #40 would come chugging up the hill with a long line of boxcars, oil tankers and many coal cars.

It usually backed up the hill from the McGill junction. We would run alongside of the engine and get Mr. Labate to blow the loud steam whistle, much like the kids of today and long haul trucks. If we got too close to the engine, Mr. Labate would shoot some steam out of somewhere to warn us off. He always had a huge smile on his face as though he really loved his job as engineer.

At night if there was no caboose, so a brakeman would sit on the end coal car with a red flare. He would light it just before the highway crossing. We could see it coming and knew that when he passed over the crossing at the bottom of Frow, he would toss the flare off into the dirt. We would all scramble for the flare and push it into the ground to put it out, so we could use it later for some nefarious project.

Those old steam engines were wonderful machines, with lots of character. The puff-puff sound of "ole" # 40, chugging up the grade into McGill will never be forgotten by us, older McGillites. I really miss them.

McGill News

Lots of speculation about what Rio Tinto and Kennecott are possibly planning to do in the Future.

Even more speculation on what this water project is just past the Gonder substation. Most folks think it is a back door water grab by Las Vegas.

The Sagebrush Quilters put on a terrific display of their beautiful hand made quilts at the WPHS gym last weekend. Hope to have some photos for you next week.

The Bristlecone Tribune is also doing a great job, bringing us lots of news and photos.

Oldies

1925—May 26—FO SALE—1922 Dodge Touring Car—Contact George Seward—
Rm #11 at the Staff House in McGill

1927—October 20th—FOR SALE—1926 Essex Coach--\$300. Contact L. F. Rhodes
at the McGill Staff house.

The Staff House was one of the houses on the Circle in McGill. It is the second one, a white house, from the General Office Building.

Old Photo



Foundry workers pouring molten metal into molds at Kennecott circa-1950s.

