

Newsletter122

## Keith's Corner/McGill News

September 10,2021

### Getting Our Ears Lowered

Growing up as a boy in McGill during the 1940s was a whole lot different than the present. Simple things were the rule of the day. There were no TV , R & R or I-phones, to corrupt our pristine, inquiring brains. Everything was new and exciting. Each new day, after we were rudely awakened from our slumber by our parents, we still looked forward to seeing and experiencing new stuff. Maybe it was the hope, that we all had, that the dreaded school might be closed for some reason. It never happened that way. Even during the terrible winters of 48, 49 and 50, with all the snow and cold, the schools never thought of closing. Nothing, not even Person Nature, could stop the onslaught of school.

So, out the door , into the cold we headed for the local education camp. The only thing lacking at our school was a large chain link fence and guard towers. Guess it wasn't necessary out here in the middle of nowhere.

After school we felt better because we could now go sledding, have snow ball battles etc. We felt much warmer out there in the below zero cold, than we did sitting still on a hard wooden chair in school.

However, there was always the one day that something else stifled our fun. That was the dreaded haircut day. It happened once a month.

We were given the proper change for the barber, (25 cents) and sent on our way with the warning, that the haircut would be checked, when we got back home. Most of us went down to Johnny the Barber's place on main street. It was a few steps down from the sidewalk. There were two large barber chairs. They were beautiful pieces of art, with the leather seats and chrome foot rest.



*Barber's chair, with child seat in place.*

There was a child seat put across the arms of the chair for the smaller tykes. The head rest had a roll of some kind of tissue paper. I think it was used to wipe

shaving lather off the long sharp straight edged razor blade, that Johnny used. He used the long leather razor strop hanging on the chair to hone the razor. He would hold it deftly with his little finger sticking up. Probably for balance. At the side of the chair was a lever, that Johnny would use to raise or lower the chair.

It was fun to watch a father bring his young son in for his first haircut. He put the little tyke on the child seat and then stepped back to let Johnny get started. Sometimes the kid would start whimpering, but most were thrilled to be getting a haircut.

Johnny was very professional . He would start by placing a large white cloth over you to keep the cut hair off your clothes. Then he would pump the chair up or down. When the haircut was done, he would splash some red or green smelly stuff on our head.

Usually on paydays there was quite a crowd at the shop, so Fay Brunson or Mitch Zakula would do haircuts at the other barber chair.

A lot of folks cut their own hair. Keith Murphy had a set of scissors and clippers and would cut hair in his basement. I sometimes would give his boy, Alan, a trumpet lesson in exchange for a haircut. Keith charged 25 cents. There was another barber shop next to the McGill Club. I remember Mitch and Fay being there in later years.

In the early 20s George O'Boyle and his wife Perle, had a barber shop and salon there. I remember waiting for my Mother to get a perm. The stuff that was used had a terrible smell to it.

Years later, I remember A. E. Preston, the banker, selling insurance there. When he died, his wife ran it for a short time. Later, Charlie Francisco took over the business.

Getting a haircut back then was a chore, but I look back on it now in a different light. It was actually quite pleasant and I remember how manly we felt sitting there waiting for our turn. We could hardly wait until we were older so we could get the barber to shave us. We watched in awe as Johnny shaved someone with the hot lather from a special machine on the back shelf. I remember the sound of the razor as it cut the stout whiskers of the man in the chair. Then he wrapped

a hot white towel around the man's face. It was quite a ritual. I have never had that done. I don't know if it is done anymore.

Such pleasant memories are so special to us old fogies. I suppose each generation has them, I certainly hope so.

Oh, yes, our parents did check the haircut, when we got back home. One of the reasons they did, was that one kid came home with a "Mohawk" haircut. The other reason, was to make sure we got the haircut and didn't spend the 25 cents on something more worthwhile, like funny (comic) books or candy.

## McGill News

The annual McGill picnic was another good one. I had to work at the drug store and wasn't able to get any photos or attend any of the functions, but I heard it was well attended. I did get to see the fantastic fireworks. There were some great new ones. Hats off to the MRA for all the work done in doing this event each year.

Here is a photo of the dormitory across the street from the Club House. Tim and Micki have been working on it for some time. The picket railing looks nice and the new windows also. Lots of good things can happen with some good ole hard work.

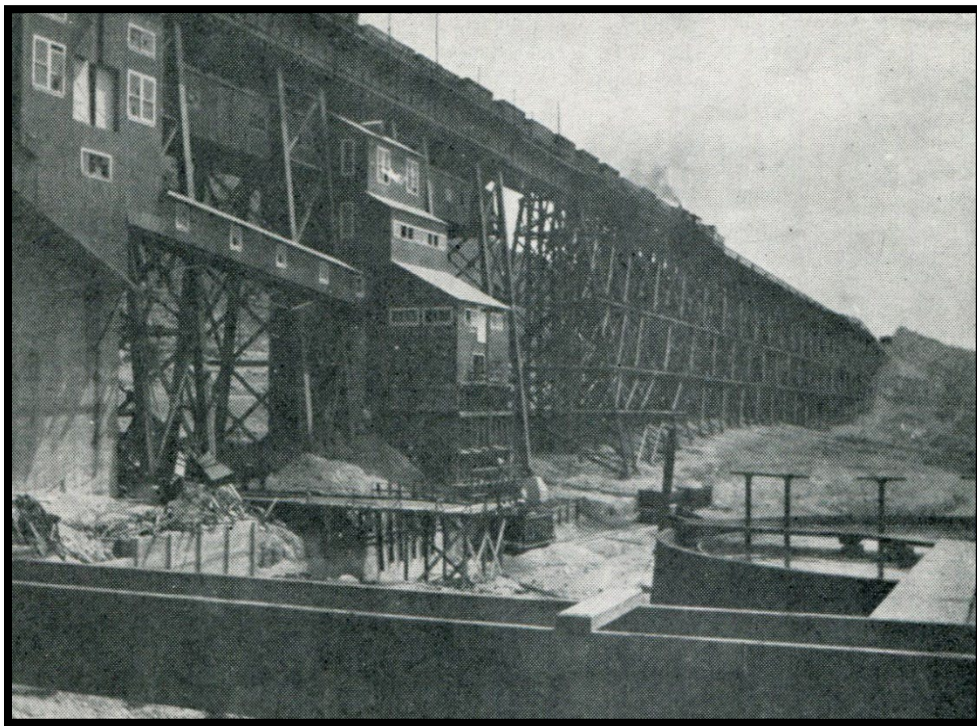


## Oldies

1922—February—The McGill Meat Market buys a new 1923 Ford Coupe.

1922—April—The McGill Emergency Hospital is moved to its present location. ( I'm trying to find out where it was moved from).

## Old Photo



The north end of the trestle as it enters the mill. Circa 1916. It was reported to be the longest and highest 2 track trestle known at that time.