

Newsletter190

Keith's Corner/McGill News

December 30, 2022

Christmas/New Years--1952

A lot of younger people ask me what we McGill heathens did for Christmas and New Years when we were on 2 week parole from the local, forced attendance, institution.

McGill, was a wonderful placed to enjoy the Christmas holiday. We were blessed with a variety of cultures and traditions. The people in those varied groups had their own family versions of traditions. Some families put up their tree on Christmas Eve, others around or after Thanksgiving.

My family liked to go up in the mountains and cut our own tree. Mom had the final say on what tree we would get. Sometimes we went with other families. One year, Dale Cottrell went with us. He didn't carry a saw like we did. He took his 12 gauge shotgun and would cut the tree trunk with a single blast of bbs. He would usually bag a few pine hens for the family table.

Some families would have a large dinner on Christmas Eve and others would have it on Christmas Day.

Mom always fixed us a nice turkey dinner with all the trimmings on Christmas Eve.

We liked to open all the presents on Christmas morning. Some folks favored Christmas Eve. Some families did one present Christmas Eve and the rest the next morning.

Christmas Day in our house started early. After the presents were all accounted for, we had a big breakfast. Dad would begin mixing his famous Tom and Jerry batter from scratch. He always used hot milk and Meyer's dark rum and some nutmeg on top. It was a tradition for many years. Mom would spread her great divinity and fudge out on the kitchen table, along with slices of turkey. She made super good potato dinner rolls and they made a great sandwich. My brother, Paul, liked to make a turkey and cranberry sandwich with the rolls. I liked turkey and dressing. To each his own.

Around noon, we heathens would head for our friends house to see what Santa brought them and sample the homemade goodies.

The adults would go to their friends houses for some toddies and snacks.

It was an exhausting, but wonderful day and lots of great memories were made, that will last a lifetime. day. By nightfall we were ready for bed. The kids that had gotten a new Flexible Flyer were over on the different sleigh riding streets KCC provided. They always had a nice fire at the top of the hill.

The days between Christmas and New Years, was spent sleigh riding, snowball fighting and playing with new toys. The kids that got guns were out in the boonies hunting and target practicing and learning new skills.

My brother and I liked to go snowshoeing. We each had a pair that we got from WWII surplus through the Boy Scouts. I still have mine. We had to make our own harness out of an old leather shoe and some

leather thongs. With a lot of practice we could move fairly fast over the snow and could even do some running. Seems everything we did back then included a lot of exercise. We were always exhausted by bed time. We tried to get in as much fun and exercise as possible before our short parole was over.

In 1952 I was 17 years old and had a 1941 Chevy Club Coupe, but no steady girlfriend, so I picked up a buddy and headed for Ely. We drove around a bit and spent some time at the annual Fireman's Ball at the high school gym and then cruised back to McGill. The McGill Club and Cyprus Hall were crowded and also the IOOF Hall. The Stray Antler Club had a crowd. there were lots of house parties all over town.

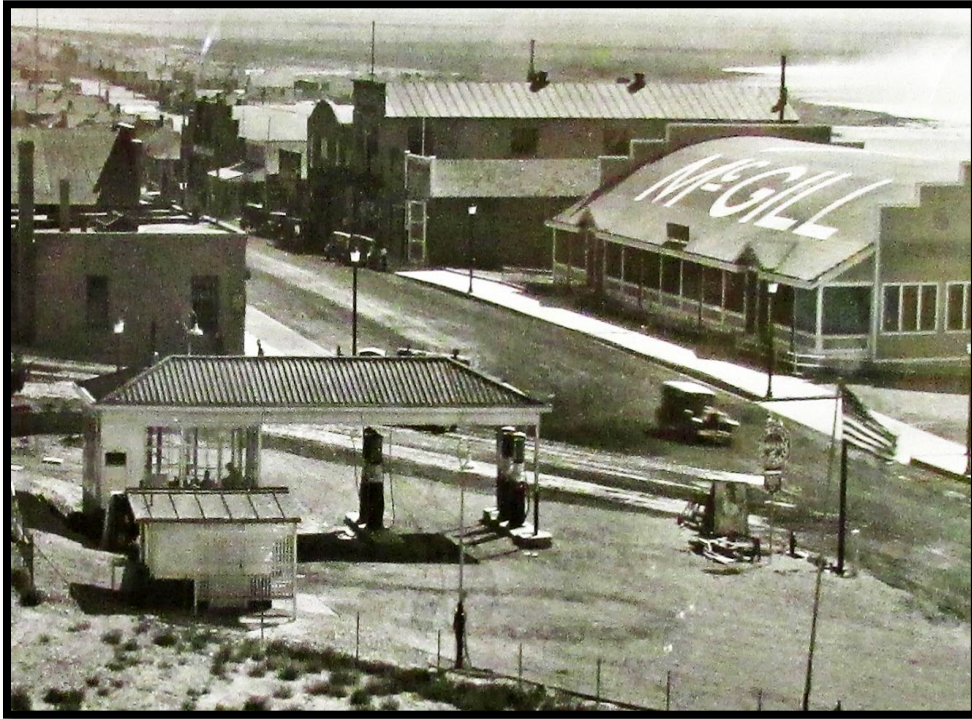
The big event for us heathens was when KCC blew the loud shift whistle at midnight. We were all outside our houses with our guns. When the whistle blew, McGill sounded like a war zone for about 10 minutes. My Dad, brother Paul and I usually shot several 30.06 rounds aimed at Heuser Mtn. Then we got under the eave of the house and let go with our 12 gauge shotguns.

McGill was a fun place to live back then. We were truly blessed.

Happy New Year to all of you !!

Have a great time and drive safely so you can have a fun time next New Years!!

Old Photo



What was on the big empty lot by the post office? I get asked this a lot.

Here is the Boarding House and Commissary.

Now my question to everyone—what other building had McGill, painted on the roof??