

## Keith's Corner/McGill News

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### School Starts—Drat It All

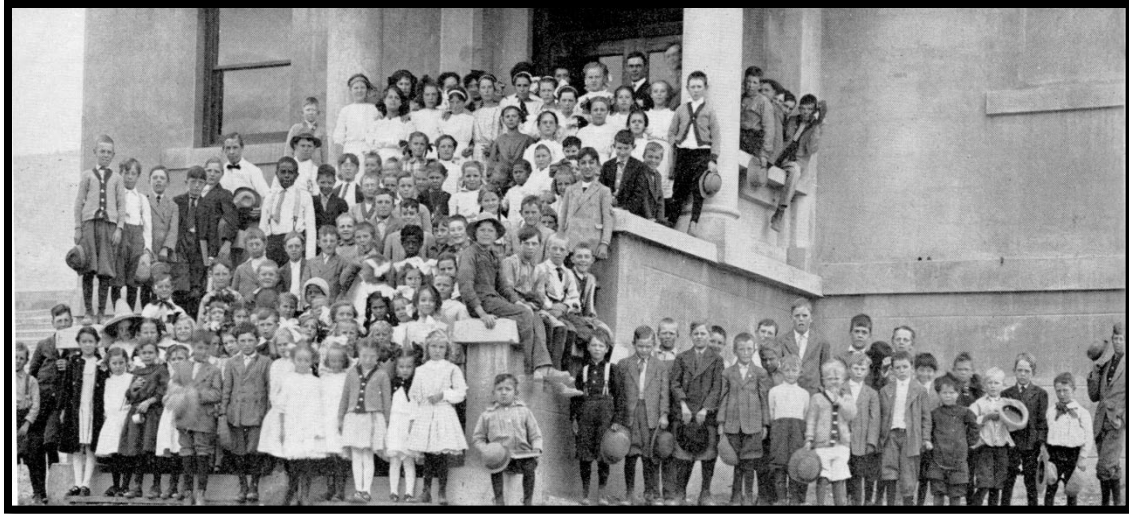
Time to go back to the institutional life for the next 9 months. The only thing good about it, is recess. These brief, few moments of freedom to get some fresh air and exercise are the only reason I was able to tolerate my first years of grade school.

Due to some great teachers , I eventually developed a yearning to learn more and actually like going to school.

The first few days of the school year are the worst. The new 'school shoes' are tight and you are afraid to scuff them. The new clothes are stiff and you are worried about getting them dirty or ripped. That was hard to do back in my day. During recess, we took to the 'tricky or monkey bars', which caused some shirt seams to rip. The 'strides' were tough on the shirts, but hardest the shoes. The strides was my favorite playground torture machine. It consisted of a tall pole. Much like a flagpole. There was a wheel at the top that four chains were attached. The chains hung down and had a device that had 4 crossbars for kids to hang onto. The 4 bars allowed different sized kids to use it. You grabbed the bar according to your height and then started running in a circle around the pole. With everyone running fast enough, you could pick up your feet and glide thru the air.

All the playground things were designed to give you a good workout.

The first day, while the clothes and shoes and new haircuts were still intact, we had to pose for a picture. Like these two. The first one was probably taken not much after the school was built in 1911. Maybe someone can set a date by the clothes.



The next one has a banner with the date 1927.



Some of the teachers have a number on them. It would be nice if someone had the key to those numbers. I did get an ID on Ezra Ward from his grandson. Ezra is standing just behind the banner's upper right corner. He is just to the left of the gal with the M on her blouse. And the little boy sitting below the banner on the right, with the striped socks is Ezra's son, Bill Ward.

These fancy, uncomfortable clothes and shoes were usually worn the first day. The clothes were put up in the closets at home and were then labeled, 'Sunday clothes'. This meant they were for dress up events, like church or some dumb wedding. After that, we had regular school clothes that were more comfortable. Like coveralls or Levis and a t-shirt. There were two things that us McGill heathens refused to wear and that was a tie and short pants. Only sissies would wear short pants in my day. And there were none of those around.

The shoes were either put away for dress up or to be worn only for school. I remember having to wear those ill fitting stupid oxfords to school. The minute I got home from school I changed into more comfortable so called 'work shoes'. Work shoes were similar to our dad's work shoes or work boots. They had ankle support, which the low cut oxfords didn't have. The work shoes didn't rub the back of your heel raw, wither. They had laces part way up the front and then metal hooks the rest of the way. We usually got rid of the laces that came with the shoes and used leather laces. There was a few years that we wore 'logger boots' and some had 'engineer boots that were calf high and no laces. Sometimes we had Mormir the shoemaker put metal taps on the toes and horseshoe shaped metal on the heels. They made lots of noise and the older folks hated us wearing them.

After we settled in at school for a few days, KCC sent a Doctor to give us all a physical. We also got an eye test and a hearing test. The dentist, Dr. Tawney looked at our teeth. Your parents were notified of any problems and these were corrected. It was a good thing to do, so that problems were detected early.

It took some time for us kids to adjust to the rules, but we managed. Amazingly, we survived and came out of it with a damn good education that actually prepared us for the outside world. I am so glad to have attended that school at that time.

## Old Photo



The original McGill Grade School, for those too young to have known it. I don't know what year it was replaced. It was a well built building and a shame to have lost it. I personally think it was a much better building than what we have now. The floors were all beautiful hardwood and kept in great shape by Coy Munson the janitor for many years.