

Keith's Corner/McGill News

November 10, 2023

Leaching Plant

There are not too many McGillites left, that remember the old leaching plant below McGill. It was a fairly large structure and stood out in the 'sands'. I don't know when it was built, but I remember it was there during WWII.

There were some ponds of blue copper sulfate water near the building. Some of us McGill heathens had heard about a winter game called ice hockey that was played in the colder states like Wisconsin and in Canada. Well, we figured that McGill got just as cold as those areas, so we decided to bring hockey to McGill. We made our own hockey sticks and using the heel off a boot for a puck, we would sneak down to those frozen blue ponds and play hockey. That is until a KCC guard or Hockshaw the Deputy would chase us off the pond. Now, we of course knew nothing about the game other than hitting the puck around the ice and crashing into each other. Since no one knew any rules, we made our own. I don't think we ever approached any resemblance of a hockey game, but we didn't care. It was our hockey game and that was all that mattered.

The NHL is very large and attracts a lot of fans, however, I think the NHL would be even bigger if they had adopted our rules. Also, our blue ice was much prettier than the NHL ice of today.

I don't know what the purpose of the leaching plant was before WWII, but during the war it was used all the time.

I remember sneaking into the place with some other rascals one time. It was made of large timbers and on the top there were long troughs. The blue and green water was circulated thru the troughs constantly. Thin strips of iron was put in the troughs. The copper ions in the blue water slowly replaced the iron ions and so, after some time the troughs were full of pure copper.

During WWII, we McGillites helped the war effort by processing our tin cans so that they can be put in the troughs at the leaching plant. The process was—remove the paper label and put it in the paper drive box, rinse the can, cut out the bottom lid, place both lids in the can and then smash it flat. Then the flattened can was put in a box to be picked up by KCC and delivered to the leaching plant. What a novel idea—put some tin cans in some blue water and soon you have pure copper. Maybe these eco nerds should try that instead of building an expensive recycling plant.

What we McGill geniuses never figured out was, who benefitted from our efforts—the war effort or KCC. It didn't matter as it helped the US win the war.

During a hot summer day, we would sneak down there and get underneath the plant. The water in the troughs leaked a lot and in the winter would form large humongous ice formations that would last into the summer months. We heathens took advantage of everything.

Several years after my generation left for other parts of the country, some kids were hiding under the leaching plant and smoking cigars. The soon had the whole plant in flames and it was destroyed. I can never figure out jus how the hell did they catch all those huge beams on fire. One of them is still around and I have asked him, but he can't remember the details.

Does anyone out there in hinter land have a photo that shows the leaching plant????

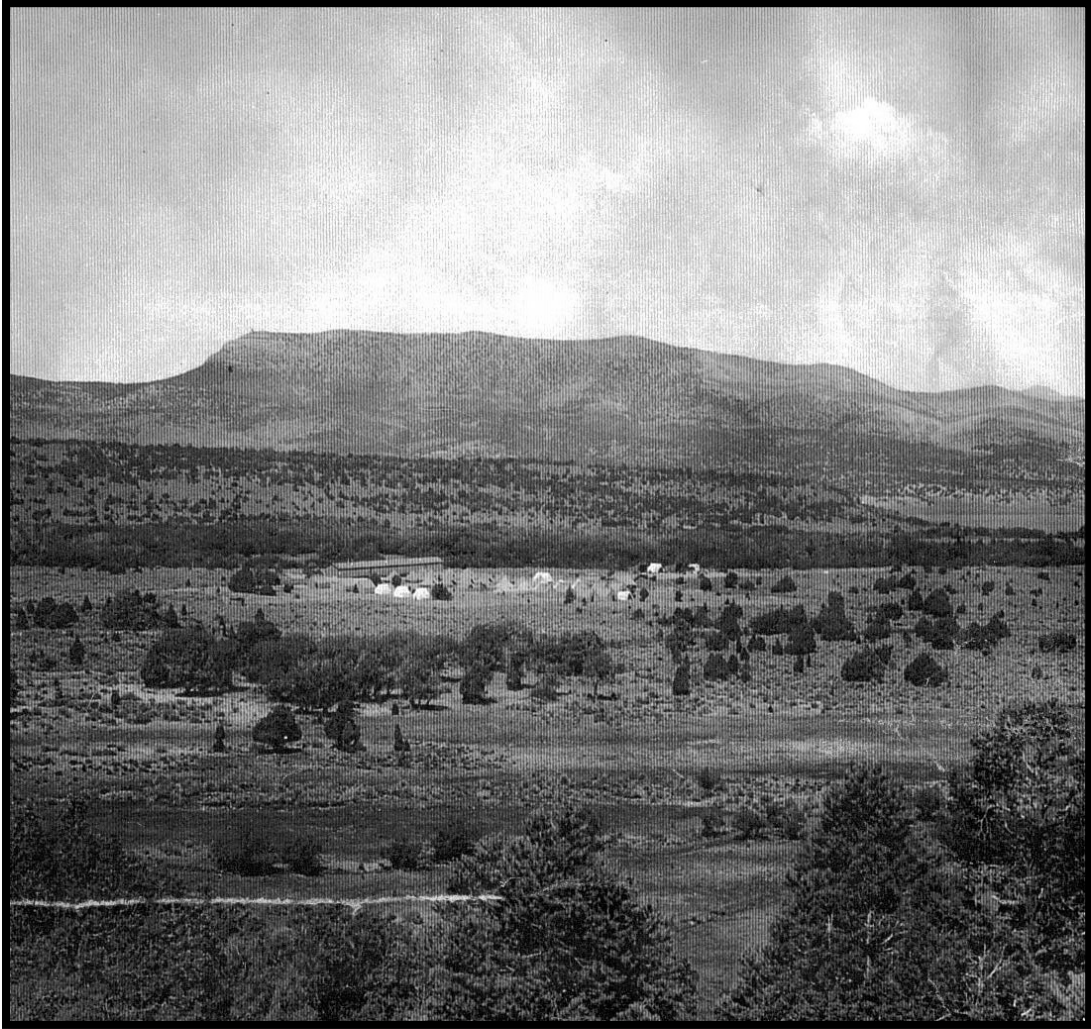
McGill News

I want to thank a fellow McGill heathen from the old 1940s/50s, for the article he wrote in the November 2, 2023 issue of the Bristlecone Tribune. He mentioned me and said some nice things in that regard. So thanks very much, James. Now for some kind words about him. He writes articles for the Tribune under the name, 'Slag Ditch', about McGill. He also wrote a brilliant, book about a prison break in the old days. It is titled-'The Fatal Affair in Convict Canyon'. Very well researched and interesting. You won't put it down until finished.

This is a photo of the heat pump at the drugstore. The heating and cooling tubes and the power cords were hanging down without a cover. The snow coming off the roof would push down on the cords and we almost had a problem. That is when Larry Manning came to the rescue. He doesn't ride a four legged white horse , but he does drive a white four wheeled one. He fixed up a device to keep the snow off the cords and pipes. Thanks Larry.



Old Photo



1930s CCC-Civilian Conservation Corp-camp in Duck Creek. They built roads, trails and picnic areas.