

Newsletter212

Keith's Corner/McGill News

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Memorial Day-The Honored/Forgotten

Memorial Day is the day we Americans honor our military and family members that have passed. The graves of the honored military folks are marked with a small US Flag and flowers, put there by various groups of American Patriots. The graves of our family members and friends are decorated with flowers and messages that portray our missing them greatly.

This Holiday every year is a time for us to reflect on our memories of our lost ones and to punish ourselves for not spending more time with them. We always have so many questions we should have asked them.

My Great Grandfather, Bill Hayes, was born in 1865 and died in 1855. I remember visiting him at his small home in Central Ely. He still had a 2 holer outhouse in the backyard. He also had a hand dug well for his water supply.

My brother Paul and I liked to use the hand pump at the well to bring up some sold drinking water. The pump was outside by the well. Grandpa had no running water in the house. Inside the back door of the kitchen there were 2 metal buckets sitting on a small bench, with a long handled dipper scoop to get a drink out of one of the buckets.

There wasn't a sink in the kitchen to wash dishes. He heated water on the stove, like one does while out camping. There was no bathroom in the house. There wasn't a washer or dryer.

I think he washed his clothes in a tub and hung them on a clothesline in the back yard. He cut his own wood for the cook stove in the kitchen and that also heated his house.

It is hard for the young folks of today to imagine living like that. They would be lost without TV and cell phones and video games, let alone having to do something to survive.

I will always wish that I should have asked him about more details of his younger life. He was 35 years old when cars and planes were invented and over 70 before he saw a TV set. He could sit and tell me stories about some things in great detail.. I asked him one time how he could remember such details, like dates and times. He replied, "we didn't mess up our memory with a bunch of garbage like TV and movies.". He was right of course.

I wish I had asked my parents more questions about their childhood and what the town of McGill was like in the 1920s. I didn't and so I have to search to get answers that they could have told me in seconds.

No. I haven't forgotten the forgotten half of the title of this NL. Those are the Americans that are of course remembered as a person, but are forgotten for what they did in WWII. Too many young people know nothing about them. I am talking about the women who replaced a lot of working men, so the men join the military. My Mom was one of those women. She took a job at the large Standard Service Station, which used to be on the corner where the fire dept. is now. Now, working in a service station back then, meant pumping gas, greasing cars, changing tires with tire irons and changing oil and filters. Ift

wasn't easy. Then she had her housewife duties on top of that. My Aunts that lived in California worked at an airplane factory as 'Rosie the riveters'.

So when you are at a cemetery and see all the US Flags, just remember that a lot of those military folks were able to go abroad and fight for America because of the women that them here at home.

And don't forget all the older men and young kids that couldn't get in the military. They did many things to help the war effort, like paper, tin foil, scrap metal, string and other drives. Don't forget the blood drives. All Americans tightened their belts, rolled up their sleeves and pitched in to save our precious country. Our military was the greatest ever and were backed up by the civilians back in the US.



The Standard Station my Mom and June Robb worked at during WWII.

Old Photo



The famous McGill pool, when it was fun to dive off the boards and play on the 2 floating rafts. This was before insurance companies and lawyers started scaring everyone and fleecing the taxpayers.