

Newsletter245

Keith's Corner/McGill News

January 19, 2024

Steam Engines of Long Ago

A few weeks ago, I received a call from for information on some of my books. It was from Steve Swanson, WPHS 1956. We chatted for over an hour about the old days and specifically about steam engines.

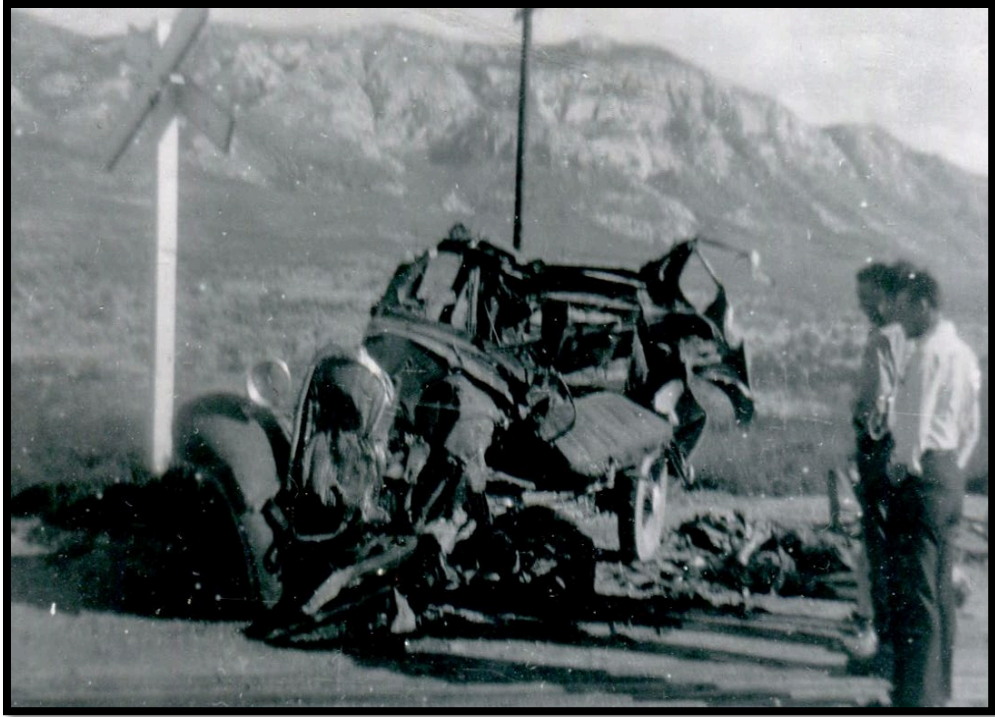
Turns out, Steve is an expert on the steam engines that NN used in the early and middle of the 1900s. Especially the ones that served McGill. He agreed to let me use the photos and info in my Newsletters. Thanks very, very much, Steve. Most of these engines I never heard of nor remember. The ones I remember best are, #20, #40, #81 and #93.

I remember running alongside of #40 as it delivered freight to McGill. The sound of it chugging up the hill was comforting. I lived at #26 E Row in Townsite, which was close to the tracks. I remember at night hearing the train chugging up the hill and then watching thru the window for the red flare on the first coal car.

The train always backed up the hill from the junction. This allowed the engine to leave at the head of the empty cars going back to Cobre. At night one of the switchmen would sit on the back of a coal car with a red flare to warn people.

The coal cars were all black and on a moonless night were almost invisible. There were several people that hit the train as it crossed the highway just outside of McGill.

This is what happens. I don't know the date or who was involved. Maybe somebody can let me know.



This phot is from the collection of Dr. Roger Knighton.



#40 with a load of sightseers. Public photo.



#10 at McGill Depot. Swanson collection



#20 at the East Ely yards. Son collection



#6 switch engine. Swanson collection.

Old #6 was being used to switch the fore cars and push them into the car dumper at the mill. Steve, points out that the overhead electric grid is there, which means the electric engine was in use at that time. I remember seeing units like this switching cars in the McGill freight yards. The sloped tender was evident.

Steve also points out the men picking up coal, keeping the sides of the tracks clean.

I want to thank Steve Swanson for the photos and info.

If anyone out there has any train or depot photos to share, please let me know and I will pass them on to Steve.

Old Photo