

Newsletter271

Keith's Corner/McGill News

July 12, 2024

Summer Jobs—1950s

What kind of work did we, McGill heathens do, during those precious 3 summer months of freedom, from the 9 months of mandatory school confinement.

We did all kinds of things to make a few dollars.

During grade school it was small menial tasks like mowing lawns, pulling weeds etc.

After my freshman year at White Pine High School, I was fortunate to get a job with Mr. Bell at the old dairy, working in the hay fields. It was hard work. We worked 90 days straight and earned \$3 a day and a huge lunch at the Bell resident. . I remember getting a check for a whooping \$270.00. It was all mine,

The next summer (1952), David Robb, Bill Schroeder and I went to work for Isbell Construction, building a road over White Horse Pass. We lived in a work camp at Ferguson Springs. The job ended August 1. I was able to secure a job as janitor at the old White Pine Hospital until school started.

Back in school that fall I had a job cleaning my Uncle, Dr. Reed Anderson's office on main street, in Ely. About where the Chinese café is now. The pay was \$5 every Sat., which I gave to Hall's Hardware to pay for a Winchester Model 12 , 12 gauge shotgun. It took all year, but finally paid it off.

The next summer (1953), the Nevada Northern Railroad was hiring young men over 17. Several of us McGill desperados became 'gandy dancers'. It only lasted 2 weeks. I landed a job with the Coca Cola bottling plant in Ely. Lou Drakalich ran the bottling phase and I was tasked with checking every bottle, by grabbing 2 bottles by the neck with each hand and placing the 4 of them on a box with a glass top and a bright light shining through the coke. It was hectic, keeping up with the bottling machine. The plant was bought out in late July by an outfit from Vegas and I was laid off August 1.

Jobs were scarce, but I found some work with an outfit called Teleweld. My job was to cut the slots between the rails on the 'ore train tracks', from the tunnel above Ely to Keystone.

Sounds a little fetched, right??

The heavy ore trains coming down the hill from Ruth, caused the rails to stretch at both ends. This caused a slight dip in the joint between the rails. This dip caused a jolt on the ore car wheels as they hit it.

The first man of our crew, tacked some weld on the joints to build them up. The second man had a heavy, 4 wheeled outfit with a gas powered grinder. He ground the weld back so that it was smooth with the rest of the rail.

I had a gas powered fiber bladed power saw and cut the slot back between the rails.

We had to get our equipment off the track before each train went by, so we had to place a "torpedo" on the track several hundred yards in both directions. The "torpedo" made a very loud bang, thus, warning the engineer that we were working ahead. It also warned us in time to get out equipment off the tracks. It took all 3 of us to get the big grinder off the track.

Here is one of my pay stubs.

EMPLOYEE'S EARNINGS RECORD									Nº 27386
PERIOD ENDING	CONTRACT	GROSS EARNED	DEDUCTIONS						NET AMOUNT
			BOARD	GROUP INS.	SPECIAL ADVANCE	F.O.A.B. TAX	INCOME TAX		
6/15/53	F & X	59.38				.89	6.20		52.29

TELEWELD, INC.

TO EMPLOYEE: RETAIN THIS RECORD. IT IS A STATEMENT OF YOUR EARNINGS AND TAX DEDUCTIONS AS REPORTED TO THE FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS.

We were lucky, to have lived at a time when we got to work at hard jobs, alongside men. We learned how to work and get along. It was hard, but I am so thankful for all the experience and wonderful memories.

McGill News



The awning over the sidewalk is the next project. Ift will be wire brushed to get rid of the rust and then coated with a red metal primer and then painted white.

Old Photo



William McGill home in Ely at the turn of the century.

On the right side of the house I can see a water tank on a stand. I am certain that there is windmill by the tank.

Anybody know exactly where this house is????