

Newsletter331

Keith's Corner/McGill News

August 29, 2025

School Bus Driver

McGill, Ruth and Lund high school students traveled by bus, to the White Pine High School, in Ely.

I rode the freshman/sophomore boy's bus in 1950-51 and 1951-52. This bus was driven by Oscar Siegle, the bus manager. The bus was an old International. Oscar in an effort to keep us heathens occupied, furnished us with several 2x2 foot pieces of plywood to play cards. Four of us heathens would sit on the aisle end of the seat and hold the plywood on our knees and play "Old Maid".

During my Junior year, 1952-53, I rode the Junior/ Senior boy's bus, driven by Clark Varney. Jimmy Bell drove the Junior/Senior girl's bus and Joe Anderson drove the freshmen/sophomore girl's bus.

Jimmy Bell recommended me to Oscar to train as a driver for my senior year.

I had to get a chauffeur's license. I was 16 years old at the time.

Bill Keegan from the DMV met me at the bus garage at the west end of Ely. We were in the actual bus that I was to drive the next year. It was an old GMC. It had two gear shifts on the floor. There was a 5 speed shift and an over and under shift that was for the two speed axile. I

was familiar with the 2 speed shift as I had driven a large dump truck , with a 2speed for Isbell Construction that summer, building the road over Whit Horse Pass by Ferguson Springs.

He had me back out of the garage, turn left onto Aultman.

Did some sharp left and right turns using the mechanical turn signal on the side of the bus. With the signal arm down was a left turn, straight out was stop and up position was a right turn. Then Bill had me stop on a steep hill, set the emergency brake and get out of the seat for a minute. Then sit down, start the engine, push in the clutch, put the gear shift into first gear, release the brake and go up the hill without rolling back. Then we went down Aultman by the cemetery, stop at the railroad tracks, (they were still in use back then), put the signal out straight, open the door. The open door was to listen for a train, especially when you couldn't see down the track very far. Trains have to signal before each crossing with 2 long, 1 short and a final long blast on the whistle. Had to look both ways and then get started again.

The next step in the test was to pull up to the curb in front of the school. Oscar, the bus manager was standing there. He and Bill Keegan talked for a few minutes and then they told me I was now a bus driver. Oscar drove the bus and Bill back to the bus garage, while I rejoined my class. What a great feeling.

I would be a relief driver my junior year. The driver, I believed would pay me the \$2 per day at the end of the month when he got paid.

That doesn't sound like much, but I could get 5.2 gallons of gas for one dollar. The second dollar would take me and my girlfriend to the

movies and some popcorn and a drink. The ‘gubberment’ didn’t have their grubby hands on our money back then.



Letting the freshmen/sophomore girls off in front of the White Pine High School. This is the old GMC bus that I drove.

Old Photo



This guy was always sitting at the Schelbourne Bar. The Pony Express map is on the wall behind him. Those were fun days with Lyman and Charlse.