

Newsletter296

Keith's Corner/McGill News

January 3, 2024

A Winter Days-1949

The familiar ringing of the 5 a.m. alarm clock in Mom and Dad's bedroom managed to cut its way through the frigid air and into my left ear, which was hiding, along with the rest of my body, under several blankets. I eased my head out from under the covers. It was still very dark and my warm breath made a small white cloud. The towel wrapped hot brick that Mom had put by my feet last night was icy cold. The alarm meant that Dad was getting up to build a fire in the kitchen stove. He would get the fire started, then go back to bed until 6 a.m.. During that hour, the stove would warm up the kitchen and heat some water to wash with. The stove burned coal and inside the firebox there were water pipes that were connected to the vertical water tank by the stove. There was no gas or electric water heaters in those days. The kitchen stove was by the door to my bedroom and some of the heat seeped into my room.

As Dad was going back to bed, he stopped and asked if I was awake. I said yes and threw the heavy blankets off and sat on the edge of the bed. It was very cold and I could see the ice on the inside of the window. I knew what was coming next and braced myself for it. I put my bare feet on the cold linoleum floor and made a dash for my clothes. The clothes were very cold, including my boots, but that was the way it was. The boots were thin leather, Red Wing, hiking boots. There were metal hooks for the leather laces. Now, if you were a competent McGill heathen, you could tie both laces at the same time with one hand. This sped up the process. Next step was to put on a sheepskin lined coat and hat and some thin leather gloves and sneak a few moments by the

kitchen stove before subjecting my beautiful body to the harsh cold, waiting for me.

Then, open the back door and push the newly fallen snow aside with the screen door that all the McGill houses had.

It was still snowing as usual. At the bottom of the long back steps, (16), I found the rope tied to the railing and followed it to my newly buried sled. After bouncing the sled on the frozen ground a few times to get the snow off, I started to trudge through the snow and down the alley between Jack Morrison's and Zip Marque's houses. As soon as I reached 2nd. Street I turned north, going around the traffic barrier saw horses KCC used to keep cars off our famed I street sledding area.

It was tempting to jump on the sled and ride down the hill to the bottom, where KCC had put lots of the black tailings that kept us maniacs from shooting out into traffic, but the new snow was not the best for sledding. I kept on 2nd. St. And turned down the alley by Barton's and came out on 3rd. St. By arlson's. Then on to the Sheriff's office. Earl Edwards was there and we both talked with Jim Browning, the Deputy on night duty. Soon, the P.I.E. semi from Salt Lake showed up. He would back up to the large curb in front of the Sheriff's Office. He would open the big back doors and climb in and throw out bundles of the Salt Lake Tribune Newspaper. Earl and I would carry our bundles into the building, before they got wet from the snow. Once inside the warm office, we untied the bundles and folded the papers and put them in our newspaper bags. We folded and tucked the loosed ends so they would be easier to handle. Sometimes in the summer months we would fold them into the shape of the state of Nevada. Yes, Myrtle we were very artistic back then.

The bags became quite heavy, but the sled did just fine. I have, in a previous Newsletter described most of my route. After finishing I would head back home and then to school on weekdays, but weekends it was a little different. Arriving back home, I would have a quick bowl of Cream of Wheat , piece of toast and jam and some hot cocoa Then grab my sled and hurry through the other alley, between Slater's and Hall's houses, to Ave. I and start sleigh riding. The other kids were out early and had the snow packed down for some good runs. They also had a nice fire going at the top of the hill, with the wood KCC gave us. It was a wonderful time to be a kid. I had a job and was making \$1.10 a day. We worked every day of the month. We paper boys got one cent for each paper. I delivered around 110 a day. Earl did over 200. A nice job that didn't interfere with school, but did interfere with sleeping . So, a good job, some of my own spending money and lots of friends made it a good time to be alive. The memories never fade and are a treasure to have in later life.

McGill News

The weather this winter is crazy. It's more like fall or spring. Maybe the summer will be like winter this year. Hopefully, we will get some good wet snows this spring, especially in the mountains.

Old Photo



I think the Ely Drugstore was on this corner when I was in high school. It is a vacant lot now.