

Newsletter313

Keith's Corner/McGill News

May 2, 2025

Spring Break 1950s

Way back in the old days, during the 1950s, Spring Break was not the big deal it is now days. Spring Break to us McGill heathens was like a death row inmate getting a last minute reprieve from the Governor.

We had been cooped up in a classroom for several months, since our last parole at Christmas time. We were ready for a break, Spring or whatever it was called.

My brother, Paul, Jimmy Bell and I decided to go camping at the Berry Creek Grove. The weather was perfect. We checked our homemade weather forecasting mechanism. It demonstrated the sheer genius of our heathen scientific brilliance. The unit consisted of a black rock hanging on a 13 inch long string, from an outside clothesline. The concept was simple. If the rock was moving, then it was windy. If the rock was wet, then it was raining and if the black rock was white, it was snowing. If you are wondering why we used a 13 inch long string, it was because we knew our scientific cunning was stronger than a silly superstition about the number 13. We always pushed the frontiers of science to the limit.

The morning of our first day of adventure, we checked the weather unit and found that it was not moving and was not wet or white, so all was right with the weather.

Paul and Jimmy brought two horses up from the old McGill Dairy. Paul rode a quarter horse named Pat and Jimmy and I rode Smokey, a tall blue-gray.

We double checked our camping gear and food supplies. My Mom was bringing the supplies to us that afternoon.

We mounted up and headed for AxeHandle Pass.

The ride over the Pass was breath taking. It had been a good winter and the spring thaw had brought out all kinds of wild flowers. The air was fresh and most importantly, there was no wind.

When we got down on the Duck Creek side of the mountain we started following an old road. It lead through the creek and then aimed toward Berry Creek. Paul and Jimmy spurred their horses and a race was soon in play. Paul jumped to a quick lead on Pat, but the long legged Smokey soon caught up with them.

Things like that form such wonderful memories. We never seem to get enough of them, but if we get too many, then they seem to fade over time. Kinda like meeting lots of new people all the time.

Shortly after arriving at our campsite, Mom drove up with our stuff. We unloaded the car and Mom headed back to town. We unsaddled, rubbed the horses down and put them to pasture and water. Next, we set up camp, got some fire wood, hung our food from a tree limb so the animals couln't get it.

The next important chore was digging some worms and getting our fishing poles and gear ready. Then, we headed for the Berry Creek Grove stream in hopes of catching some nice brook trout. We did and had a nice supper of fresh fish, fried potatoes and onions, Kraft macaroni and cheese and rolls that Mom had made for us. The best and most expensive restaurants in the world could never match that food and especially the smell of the spring flowers, pussy willows in bloom, the chirping of the birds and the crackling of our campfire. I think it is called ambiance and we enjoyed the best.

Then we watched another one of those western sunsets that city people never get to observe. The golden hued sunset hugged the top of the hills between us and McGill. Behind us, the mountain from North Creek to Success Summit was swathed in a pink glow. At the time, we didn't know how lucky we were to see such sights. City folks never get to see such splendor and they also never get to see what is coming up later. Cont---

McGill News



Those 10 boxes contain 10 years of invoices during the 1960s. They were previously stored in cardboard boxes and some of them got ruined. They were rolled up each month and tied with string. We have to unroll and lay them out straight so that later they can be scanned. When done we will have 35 boxes and well over 100,000 invoices from 1946 thru 1980.

Old Photo



This early 1900s copper floor worker has just picked up a heavy, still very hot copper bar from the mold conveyer belt to his right. He will move the bar over to the metal floor and deposit it to slowly cool down. Later after the bar is cold, it will be loaded onto a boxcar and shipped back East for further processing. When I did this kind of work in the 1950s, the bars weighed over 400 lbs. and our cart had small wheels. In later years this job was eliminated. The molten copper was poured into 4 and 6 thousand lb. bars and handled by the large overhead cranes.