

Keith's Corner/McGill News

July 25, 2025

Dusting Off Old Memories

Recently, I was a passenger in a small van, heading to Salt Lake for an eye doctor appointment. As we turned onto main street from J Street, I took a good look at the McGill downtown area.

It was a sad sight for an old McGillite.

The car window was down and a small breeze went into my right ear and instead of usually whizzing on thru and out the left ear, it swirled around in the back of my noggin and dusted off some old memory cells.

All of a sudden it was 80 years ago and I was in the back seat of my parent's 1941 Chev sedan angle parked in front of the Bell Telephone building. Mom was inside, having Mrs. Ivin Munson, the Bell Telephone operator call our Grandmother, Hazel in Salt Lake to let her know we were on our way and to expect us in about 8 hours. It took that long as you had to drive at 35 MPH during WWII to save on gas and tires.

My brother Paul and I were looking out the back window, watching Ray and May O'Neil servicing a car. Mary was putting in gas and Ray had the hood up checking the oil. They owned the Ray and Mary O'Neil Service. It was a Texaco station and had the gas pumps next to the street. There was a lube bay, an office and a large storage area where the school buses were kept. Now it is an unsightly building with paint peeling off. A real eyesore.

It was a long wait for Mom. When she got in the car, she said the telephone lines were jammed with the news that the US Army was fast approaching Berlin and that the war in Europe was almost over.

As Dad backed the Chevy away from the high curb and onto main street, I could see the McGill Meat Market. It was owned by Gus and John Assuras. I remember the meat counter at the back of the store where Gus and John would cut your choice of meat. I can see the big block butcher table standing amidst the sawdust on the floor.

Now there is a vacant spot and some weeds. A sad remembrance of a big part of McGill's history.

Next to the meat market was the J.C. Penney Store. I don't clearly remember much about it. I knew there was an apartment above the store and that the building was once a silent film theater. I wrote about that in an earlier Newsletter.

Here are some photos of what these places looked like in bygone times.





This is a later photo of the O'Neil gas pumps. The Standard Market has started to take over the whole building.

McGill News

We seem to be having another infestation of wild animals in McGill the last few months. The animal control officer has been getting complaints of raccoons, skunks etc. in various parts of the town. Several rattlesnakes have been found in yards, garages and even on a back porch. Several skunks and two raccoons have been trapped.

I have deer in my yard almost every night and they leave their little balls of scat all over the yard.

Old Photo



Ore train going thru the tunnel just above Ely. I don't know what year. The interesting thing is the fact that the back of the train is going over the highway, not below it like today.