

Newsletter 340

Keith's Corner/McGill News

October 31, 2025

Duck Hunting 1950s

Duck hunting was second only to deer hunting for many of us McGill renegades. We didn't do as much planning as we did for a deer hunt. There were no outlandish menus to shop for and no sighting in of high-powered rifles, or sharpening of hunting knives. We didn't need to plan extensive camping trips, unless we were going to the Ruby Marshes. (see next week's Newsletter).

Usually, we McGill gunners confined ourselves to the Bassett Lake area. The lake was much larger in those days and so there was plenty of room for us all. Some hunters had boats and stayed close to the thick tules around the edges of the lake. They used a lot of decoys and duck calls.

Speaking of duck calls, check out Newsletter 127. You can pull it up by going to www.mcgillnvheritage.com, a well-organized site, that was created for me by Marcie from Idaho. Thank you, Marcie.

We, non-boaters usually made a 'blind' around the edge of the lake or in the nearby sagebrush. A few of us had blinds on the outgoing stream from Bassett Lake. Hunting ducks near water that is too deep to safely wade, you need either a boat or a retriever dog.

My brother Paul had a black lab named Blackie that did our retrieving.

Now Blackie was a good retriever, but had a problem with cold water on the first retrieve. He would take off at a run, but would stop at the water's edge and put a front paw in the water. If it was too cold, he would just stand there. Someone would have to push him in and then he was just fine. The rest of the day he would run and leap into the cold water.

Another trait was when we would stand up and shoot at some ducks. Blackie would stare in the direction we were shooting, as if to see if something falls. If we missed, he would turn his head and give us a disgusted look.

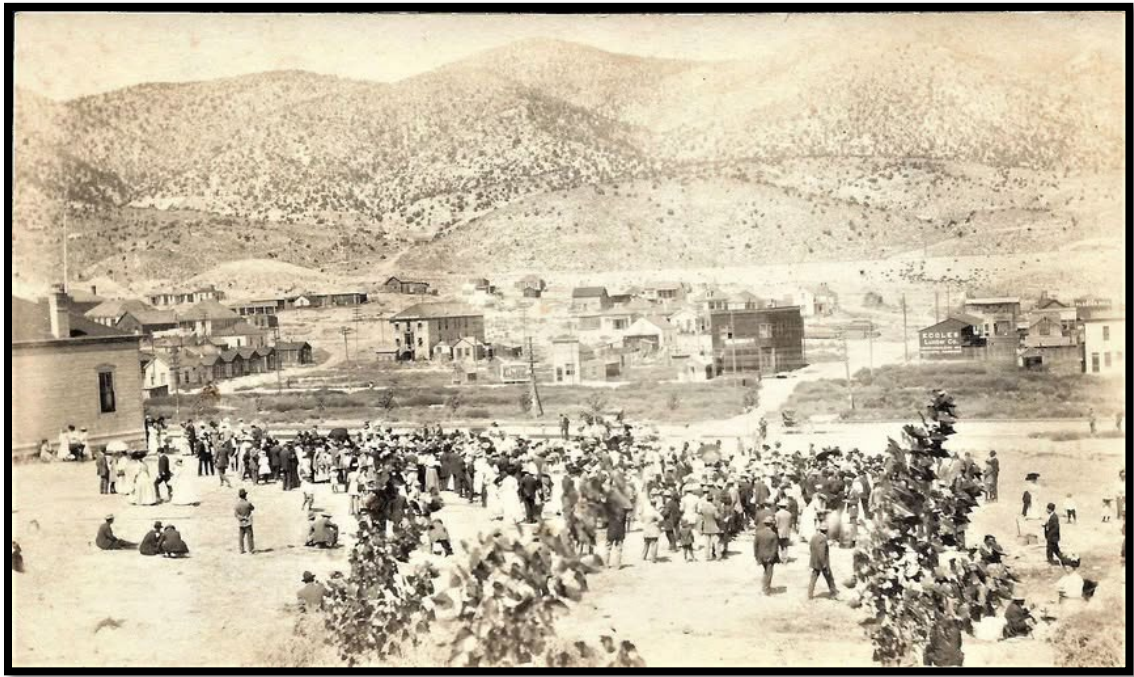
I had a black lab, named Tuffy, that I hunted ducks with. I liked to hunt on a stream above Bassett Lake. I would walk upstream a few yards to the side of the stream in the tall grass and tulles. Tuffy would be right behind me. When I crouched down, he would do the same. If I got down and crawled, he would do the same. It was like an instinct with him. There is a bond that is hard to explain. You have to experience it to really understand what it is. Dogs are good companions, but a good hunting dog has a special bond with the hunter.

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We got started on the task of painting the front of the Drugstore. The first thing was to take down the signs. Then the metal siding had to be rubbed down with some etching cloth and then brushed and then wiped with a damp rag. Next, a coat of Kilz primer was applied. Due to the cooler weather, we stopped painting at 2 pm to give the paint a chance to dry and set up. We will finish the project this weekend. That is, if the weather cooperates.

Old Photo



Waiting for the first train in 1906. This is similar to waiting for Neil Armstrong to step out onto the moon in 1969. The first train into the area and a man walking on the moon only took us 63 years. Think about that. We live in the most remarkable country in the world.