

## Keith's Corner/McGill News

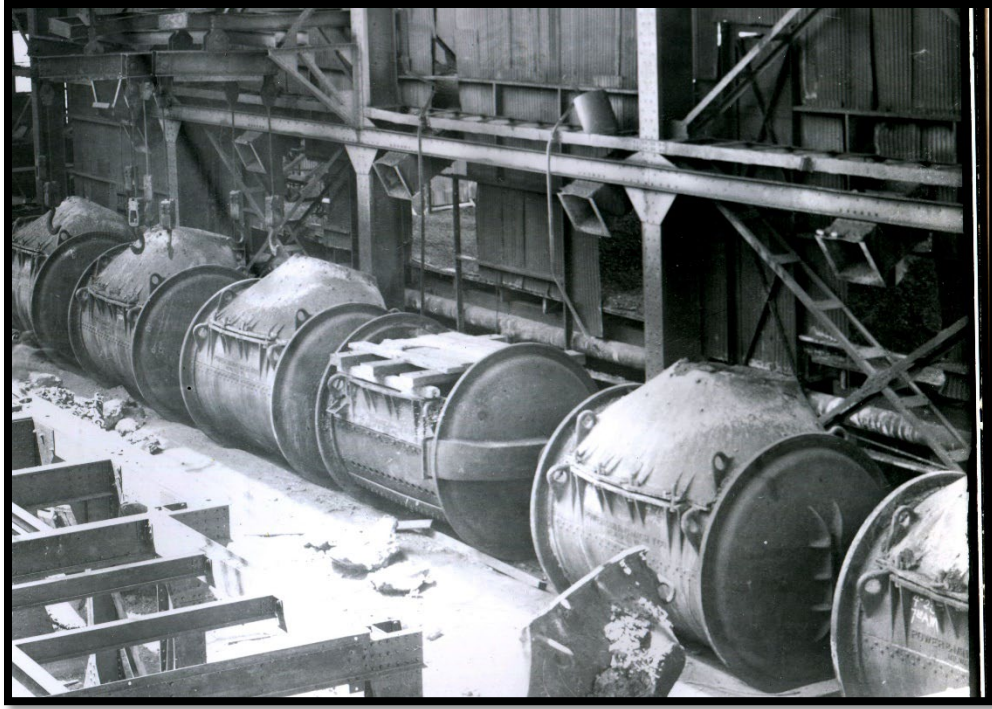
August 7, 2020

### Converter Replacement

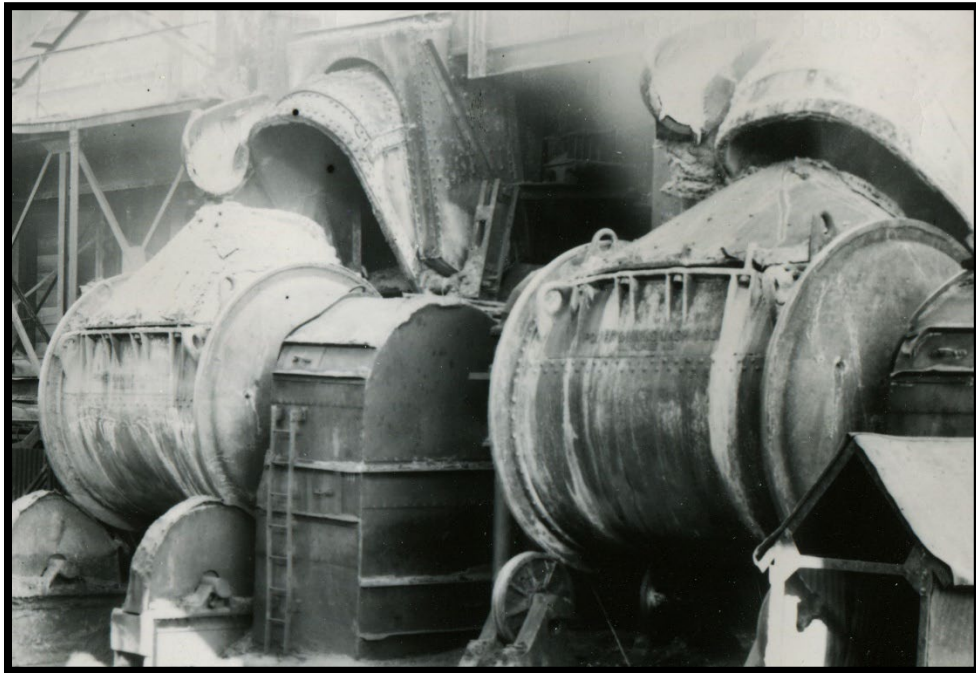
The process of producing copper metal from copper ore is very interesting. The ore was dug in the Ruth pits and transported by rail to McGill. It was dumped into the mill or concentrator building where it was crushed down to a powder. It was then mixed with chemicals and water. The impurities were sent down the hill in the tailings ditch, forming the great area known as the "sands". The residue was dried and sent to the smelter and put in the reverberatory furnaces. It was melted, using powdered coal as a fuel. The impurities floated to the top in the form of a slag and were sent down the hill in the slag flume that crossed over the highway and formed the "black sand". The heavier material sank and was called "matte" and was about 45-70% copper. The matte was then put in the converters. It was heated to at least 2300 degrees without using any fuel. Compressed air was blown into the molten mixture, where it combined with sulfur, forming sulfur dioxide, which then was blown out the smokestack. This was the dreaded sulfur smoke. This process in the converters produced 98.5-99.2% copper, or "blister copper". This was poured into molds and shipped to a refining plant to end up as 100% copper.

When the smelter was built in 1906-08, the first converters were small clay lined units. They had a top cone of clay, as seen in this photo. This cone served as a pour spout and also to receive material. Look at the third one from the right in this photo of the ones being replaced.

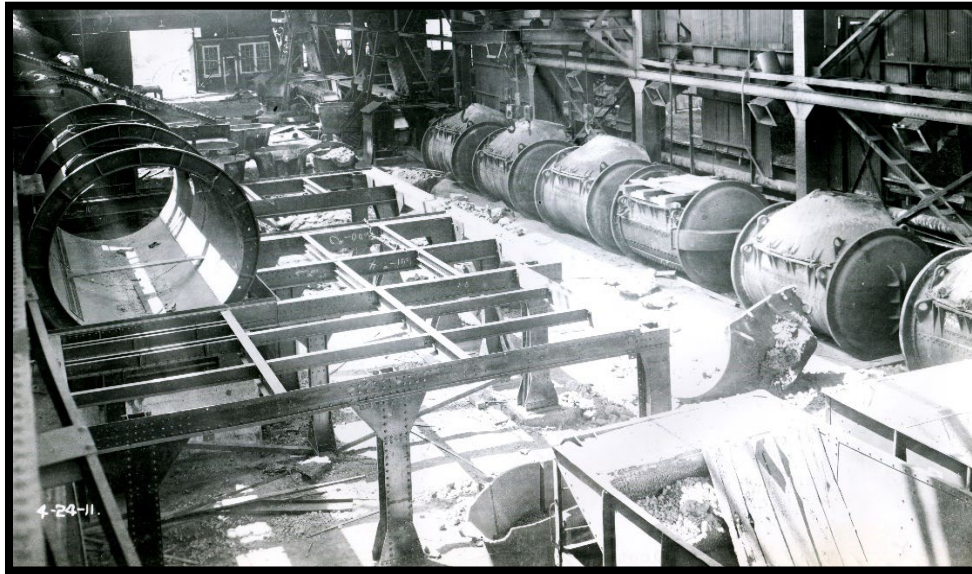
It is incredible how all this was done so long ago. These things were massive and very heavy. How they moved and set this on rollers etc was amazing. These new, bigger ones lasted until the plant was demolished. We had some very smart and hard working generations before us.



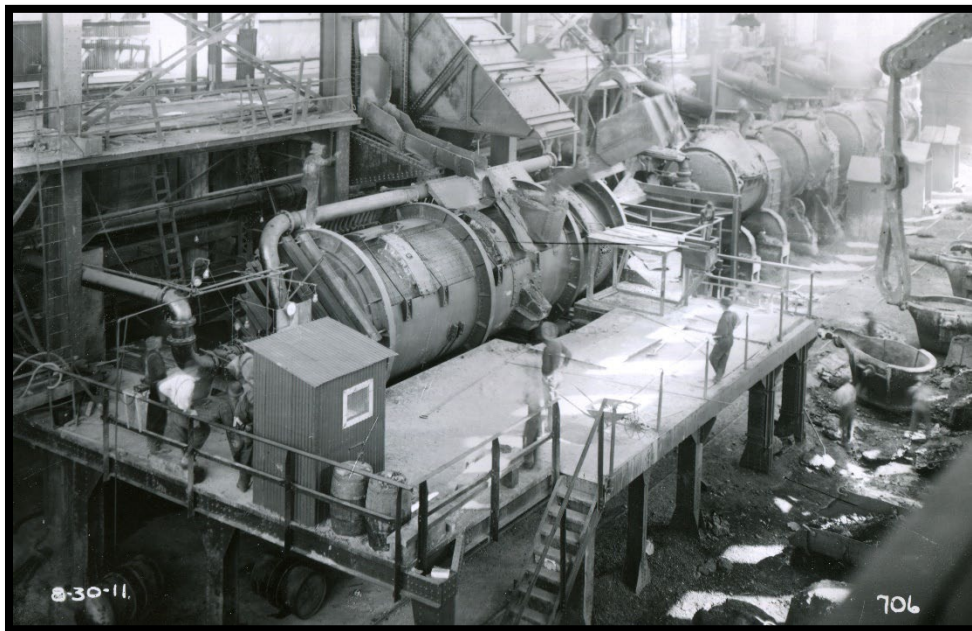
This cone also fit into the flue that carried the smoke to the large smokestacks, as seen in these two that are still operating.



This is a phot of the new larger converter being built and the smaller ones on the floor to be taken out. Date of photo is April 4, 1911.



Almost ready to go. Date of photo August 8, 1911. 109 years ago, tomorrow.



These photos from my Father, Earl "Bud" Gibson's, collection.



# Mc Gill News

It has been fairly quiet around the old town. Work on the IOOF Hall is moving along. The “mask madness “ is still overhanging daily life. Another insult to us locals was the increase in the water/sewer rates. Seems to me that as the rate gets higher, the quality of the water goes down. The taste is horrible and the amount of sand and other debris seems to increase. Us old timer remember the good water from years back. More and more folks are tearing out their lawns and putting in gravel. This town is starting to look like it belongs in the Sahara desert. I remember the nice yards of bygone days and the “Victory gardens”. Gardens are another rare sight anymore. Here is some irony. The dust bowl of old, below the town is now green with hay while the town is becoming less green.

## Old Photos



Carpenter shop on March 18, 1908. Does anyone recognize any of these guys? They are the ones that built the houses in McGill.

