

## Keith's Corner/McGill News

December 18, 2020

### Christmas Memories--2

The Christmas' I remember the most were during WWII. For many of the younger readers, that was World War 2, not World War eleven. I guess the reason was because of the war and the constant threat of an invasion, Christmas was a time to enjoy a few days of peace. The wartime footing this country was put on is hard to explain to those that weren't there. I had just started kindergarten in September. Monday, December 8, our teachers explained what had taken place and to stay close to our homes and schools. The many Japanese families were quickly evacuated to internment camps far away. None of them ever returned to McGill. Two reasons were given for the move—1-fear of sabotage(which was never shown) and 2-the anger over the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor could be a threat to the families. That anger was many, many times greater than that felt after 911.

So that first wartime Christmas was a somber time. It would be the last one for many years that toys were available. My brother Paul and I got a pedal, Big Mack dump truck that year. It was red and had a bed that actually dumped. We wore it out over the years. There is one on EBAY today priced at \$4,500.00.

The next 4 years were pretty bleak for toys. Toys made of metal were rare. Things like Tinker Toys made of wood were popular. I remember a small farm set with a small cardboard barn and small fence. Rex Alred and some other kids had gotten some farm animals and so we pooled our stuff and pretended to be farmers. A lot of pretend stuff back then.

The problem was solved, as usual, by the people themselves. Most houses in McGill had small workshops in the garage or basement, so Fathers made toys for

their kids and we McGill heathens made stuff for our parents. The Moms baked homemade cookies and candy. My favorite was divinity. Sugar was of course, rationed, so Mom had to scrimp and save up sugar for Christmas. We also made things at school, usually for the Moms.

Unlike the PC schools of today we had Christmas plays, made gift cards and sang Christmas songs. We made decorations for the classroom. Garlands were made by interlocking small rings of colored paper. We made them for our trees at home. Decorations, especially lights were hard to get. We cherished what we had, took care of it and made it last a long time. No throwaway stuff.

Thanksgiving and Christmas time in school was, ALMOST, a pleasant time for us kids. We also got a parole for about 10 days from our gulag. New Year's eve was exciting. KCC would blow the shift whistle at the stroke of midnight and everyone would shoot their guns. Sounded like a small war. During the war we would only shoot one shell per person. But, the parole period went by fast and soon we were back in the detention center-- that place, teachers and parents call school.

## McGill News

Last Sat. was the annual Christmas parade in McGill. There were several floats. It went from the grade school along 2nd street and ended up at the library. Santa was there. There was a large bake sale with lots of goodies and stockings full of stuff for the kids. I was working the Drug Store so didn't get any pictures. Every one I talked with said they had a great time.

Several of the poles have been decorated and I will make it a point to get some photos.

Christmas is one week from today. Hope you all have a Merry one. If you have been nice ALL year, then expect a nice gift. If you were not nice then look for a lump of coal. Best Wishes to all.

## Old Photo



Whenever the subject of winter pops up, we old timers refer to the bad one, 48/49, when we had the hay lift to feed the stranded cattle. Here is a photo of one of the USAF Cargo planes that did the job.