

Newsletter109

Keith's Corner/McGill News

June 18, 2021

Tailings Ditch #3

All of the McGillites of my vintage, remember growing up with one main tailings ditch running thru middle town. It was always called the "slag" ditch, but the real slag ditch is on the north end of town in the flume. The difference is, the slag ditch carries the slag from the smelter and the tailings ditch carries the tailings (residue) from the mill.

So, why did I title this article, Tailings Ditch #3. Well, I recently had an opportunity, to scan some old Nevada Consolidated Copper Co. plot maps and to my surprise, found the 3 tailings ditches. These plots were drawn in April of 1922, just 3 months before the mill burned to the ground in July.

After the mill fire and with the new mill being built, I think the copper company elected to have just the one ditch.

There was a small boy, Elmer David Kime, aged 5, than fell into one of the ditches on, May 23, 1918 and drowned in the swift water. He was pulled out quickly by other boys, but he had swallowed too much of the chemically laced water. All of us, old turkeys remember the, FRAGRANT, smell that came from the chemicals, such as pine oil and xanthate oil in the water.

There was a little kid that fell into the ditch just before it went under 2nd street. I was walking home from the grade school,(circa 1944), just as several men came out from under the street, with the lifeless body. Those ditches were not a good place to play around.

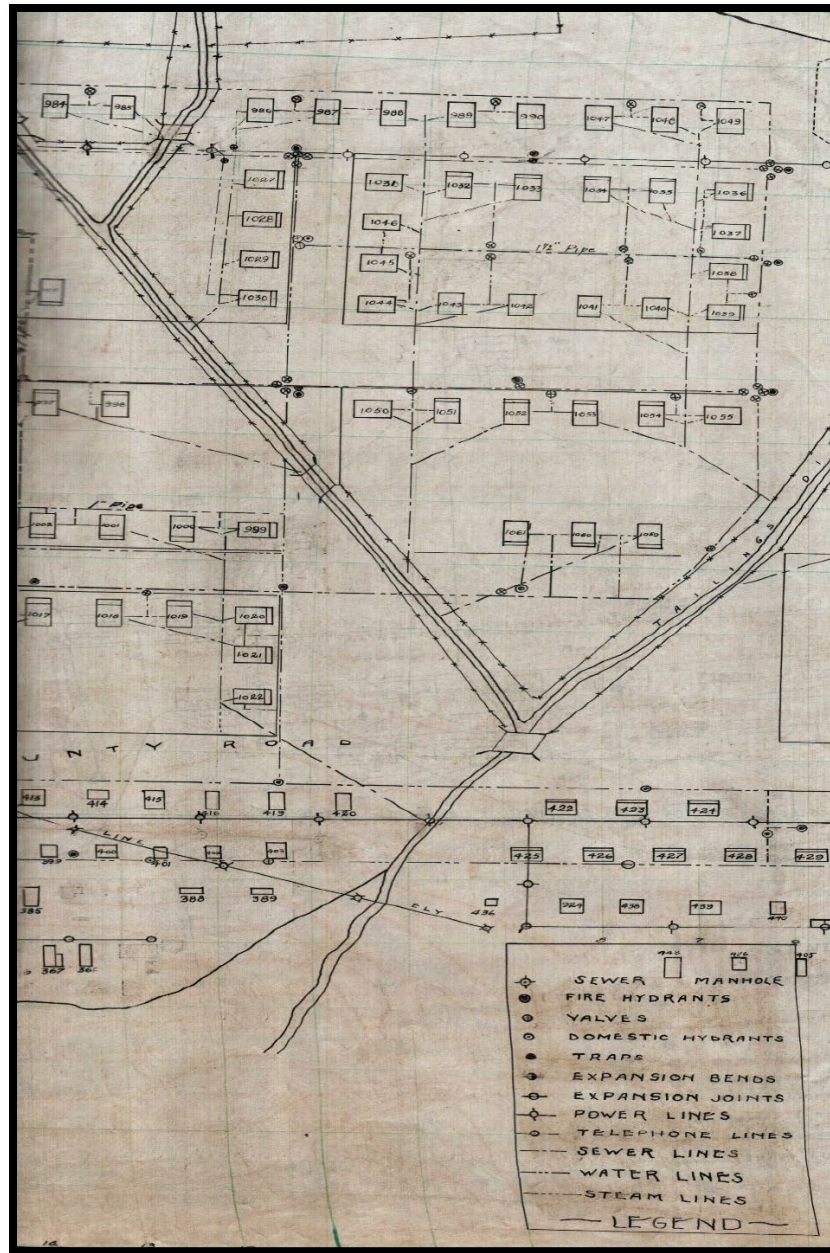


Figure 1-Tailings ditches 1,2 & 3—1922

I label them 1,2 & 3 in this manner. Number 1 is at the top left and then #2. Number 3 is on the right side of the plot. 1 and 2 cross under 1st. st. and then join together, between 1st and 2nd streets. 1, 2 and 3 all join together and then cross under 4 th. street. That crossing is still there.

Check out Newsletter-#66 about ditches #1 and 2. I didn't know about #3 at that time.

A month ago, I was researching the McGill Grade Schools and found that when the K-5 building was built, it had a 300 ft sewer pipeline that emptied into an open tailings ditch, then I saw the plot map of the sewer line.

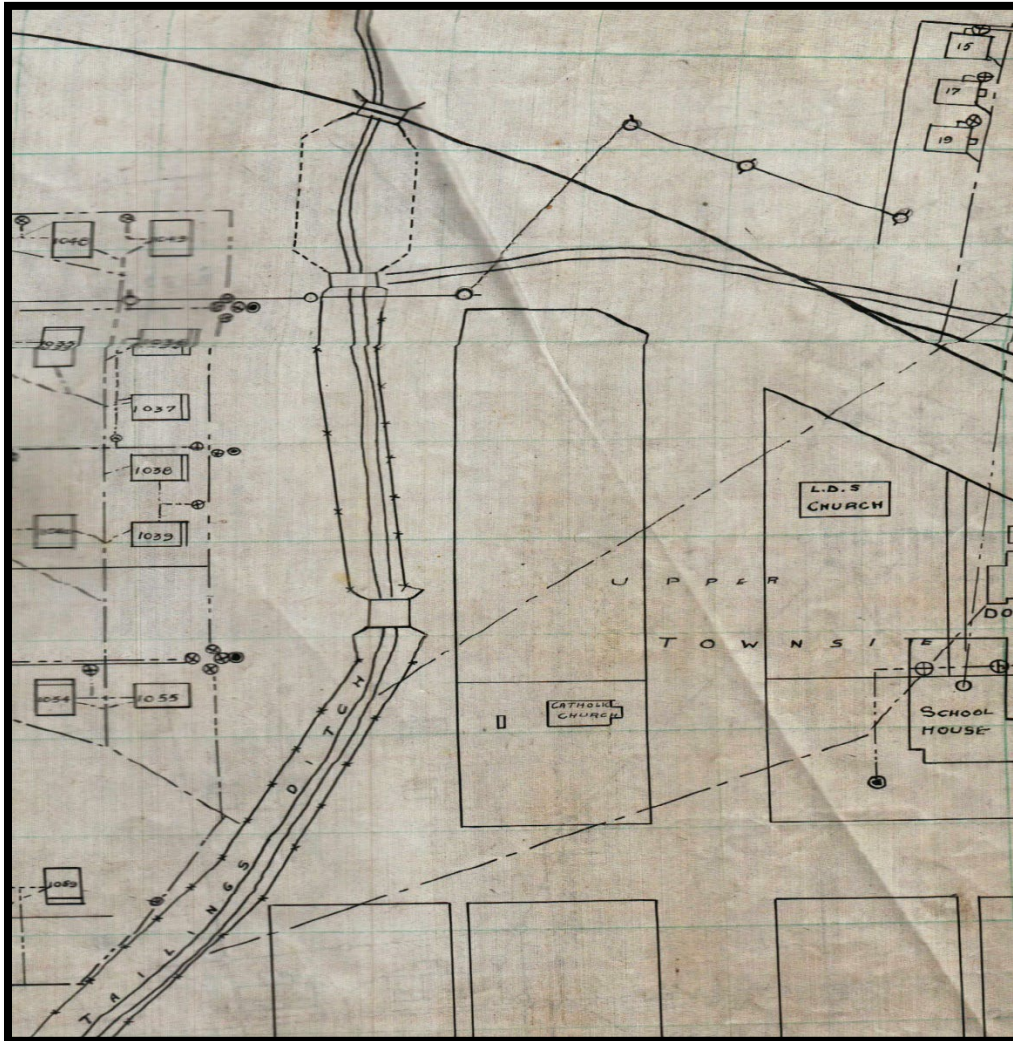


Figure 2--Plot showing ditch #3 and the school.

The ditch goes under the railroad tracks at the top, (the dark line is a crease in the map), then under a bridge on 1st street and on down, probably, the alley between F and G avenues. There is another small bridge by the school, just above the end of 2nd street. Then a sewer line from townsite, enters the ditch from the right side and then one from houses on 2nd street and finally, the one from the school. The ditch is listed as an open ditch, like #1. Note-No ball park below school.

Here is a photo of #3 going under the railroad.



Figure 3- The houses are on F Row.

This old town sure has a lot of surprises when one looks into the “old days”.

McGill News

Not much going on in the old place. At the drug store museum I have had folks from Florida—Tampa and St. Augustine, a lady from Mass. , that was related to Doc Jones and many from Vegas and Phoenix. Guess our museum is getting famous around the country.

Oldies

1910-April 17---The hospital in East Ely (Steptoe Valley Hospital) has started using Galvanic and Faraday electricity and the nurses when not busy, hold hands and see how much electricity they can stand.

1915-July—The Slovenian Liquor Co. gets license in Smelterville. (Smelterville was a short lived town behind the Club 50 near the railroad junction.

Old Photo



Original 300 ft. stack. McGill was called, "Smelter" back then, in 1909.