

Newsletter101

Keith's Corner/McGill News

April 23,2021

Kindergarten-1941-42

Life is a series of good times and bad times. Up to the summer of 1941, I had it made. Every day was a play day. Then the big change in my life happened. It was in late August, when I was hauled to the clothing store to get the dreaded “school clothes” and the horrible things called “school shoes”. What was wrong with my patched up overalls and sometimes bare feet? The next brutal thing was the “school haircut. Why not a good, cool butch haircut? My little mind was having trouble coping with all this torture. But, it only got worse. That was the day I had to report to the local gulag, to be confined in one room for half a day. There were some toys and a few friends to play with, but it was all controlled by some lady I never knew. And, for no reason at all, we had to lay on small blankets the moms had brought, on the hard floor and take a nap. What a stupid idea to nap instead of playing. What happened to the freedom we youngsters had enjoyed all our short lives?

As with others, we soon adapted to the rigor discipline of a structured schedule.

Then, Monday, December 8, our lives really changed. The cowardly sneak attack on Pearl Harbor was explained to us. Our nation was at war with Japan and a little later, with Germany and Italy. Many of my fellow classmates had to say goodbye to their fathers. My father was too old. He wanted to get in the fight like all men did in those days, but the military would not take him.

The Japanese-American kids in our school were not there. We were told that they were taken to a safe place, by order of FDR. We never saw them again.

Christmas that year was very hard for the kids, whose fathers were not there. It would be the last Christmas as we knew it, for many years.

By mid- January , 1942, we received our ration books. It was hard to understand that the gubberment could tell us what we could and could not buy. Our parents and the teachers explained that we were on a war footing. Soon we had blackouts, barrels of sand were put on corners of each block for fires, searchlights were installed around the company property and our school had one on the west side, at the top of the fire escape. We were told that Japan may attack the west coast and drive inland to take control of the copper smelter in McGill. Even we kindergarten heathens knew it was serious. The young men were gone and the moms had to replace them to keep things rolling. My Mom worked at the local gas station. In the evenings First Aid classes were taught on the second floor of the grade school, with the sheriff standing on the top of the fire escape ready to turn on the searchlight in case of attack. It was all very serious .

Sometime that winter, a Japanese submarine surfaced off the coast of California and shelled the Long Beach area. This made things ever more real. Then the terrible month of April, with the fall of Corregidor and the horrible Bataan Death March hit us hard. I remember seeing a Life Magazine with photos of the march and the grisly stuff they did to our soldiers. Those were dark days for the U.S. Then, The Greatest Generation got in the fight. The Doolittle Raiders pulled off one of the greatest military feats in history. Flying large bombers off aircraft carriers seemed impossible, but they did it. The morale of the country got better. Then the great sea battles of the Coral Sea and Midway gave us more hope. These events were covered in school and by our parents. We were not sheltered from the truth. Sadly, these events are not covered in schools any more. It is hard for younger folks to understand how it was in those dark days. Thanks to our military, the younger crowd has never had to face such danger.

Finally, the last school bell of the year rang and we were free again. Back to our coveralls, butch haircuts etc. But, instead of playing in the dirt, we picked up metal, string, tin foil and other things for the war effort. We were part of it all.

This all happened 80 years ago. I was lucky to have lived thru all those dark years and long enough to see this little guy, Calvin Keith, my great grandson, brought into this world by my beautiful granddaughter, Payton, early this morning, April 20th.



McGill News

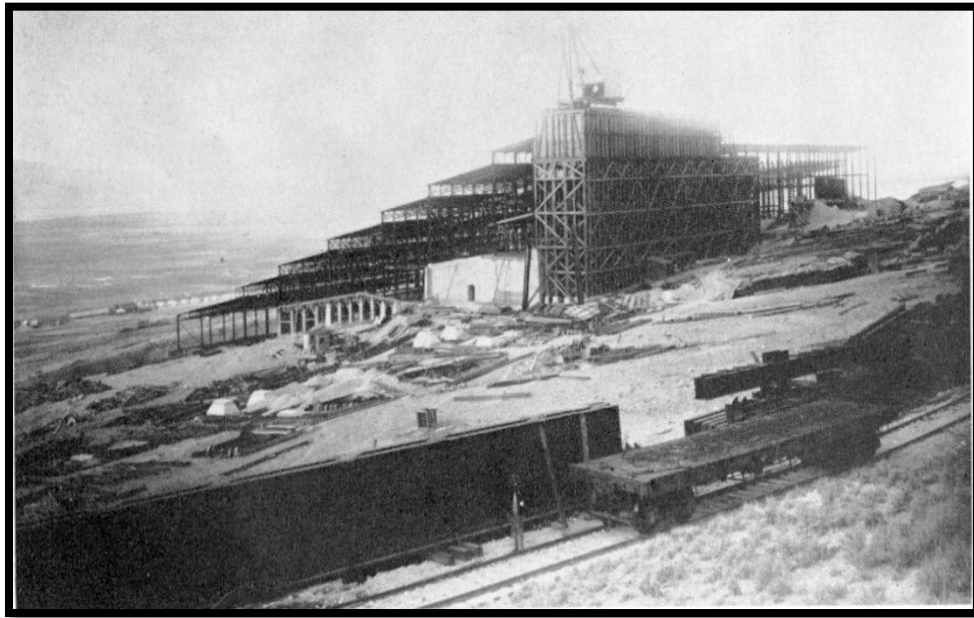
Work is still going on at the service station. We are all excited about getting gas and snacks here in McGill. They hope to have the gas pumps running by this weekend and some food on May 1. Some rumors about KCC buying out Rio Tinto, floating about.

McGill Oldies

1925-July 21---The McGill Dairy started to deliver milk to Ely area.

1920—July 20—U.S. Weather Bureau established a station at McGill

Old Photos



The huge beam in the bottom left will be part of the trestle being built in the background. Circa 1908.