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Keith's Corner/McGill News

December 6, 2024

Downwinder/The Atomic Tests

The first above ground nuclear test in Nevada was conducted on January 27, 1951. The bomb was dropped from a B-50 Air Force Bomber. The test was called-'Short Able'. The AEC (Atomic Energy Commission) teste a total of 1,021, of which 100 were done above ground. nuclear devices , between 1951 and 1992 at Frenchman's Flat, Nevada.

The city of St. George, Utah was hit the hardest with radiation after a test on May 19, 1953. The test was later to be known as Dirty Harry.

The Nevada Test Site was authorized by President Harry S. Truman in 1950. It was first called the Nevada Proving Ground.

In 1990, the US Government authorized the RECA or Radiation Exposure Compensation Act.

This established a fund to compensate those people that developed certain types of cancers.

There are not very many of us McGill heathens around, that lived through those years of above ground tests. I was a freshman at WPHS when the first test was conducted.

I was delivering the Salt Lake Tribune during 1951-52. I would go to the Sheriff's office before dawn to pick up the papers. They were brought in on a P.I.E. semi-truck. The driver would back up to the high curb in

front of the Sheriff's office and toss the bundles of paper out onto the dirt space between the curb and the sidewalk.



There were two of us, Earl Edwards and myself. We would sit in the office and fold our papers and put them in our large bag with the Salt Lake Tribune in big red letters on it's side. If the paper was not too big, we could fold it into the shape of Nevada. We didn't fold the papers to throw, as we were required to put the paper behind the screen door at each house. We could only throw the paper if there was a mean dog loose in the yard. It took a lot of time to put the paper behind the screen door. It was easier to grap the papers when they were folded and they took up less space.

Upon leaving the office, I would walk to the bank and leave a paper and then go up K ave leaving one at A. E. Prestons's house and then Irelands, Buck Jones, Slaters and then turn onto 2nd street. Several

times as I turned onto 2nd street, the black morning sky would suddenly turn very light for a few seconds and then go dark again. First stop was Ralph Crosser, then Christenson, the hustle across the street to the Roylance house, leave my bag there and go up the alley to 1st street to Cecil Coopers. He had a beef with Earl Edwards and wanted me to bring the paper. Back down on 2nd Frank Ball was next, then Dick Crane and then up on J ave. to Don Brooksm Louis Perkins, Moose Elliot, Art Salvi, Harold "hod' Farr. Back on 2nd, went across the street to Harold Bartons and then back up to George Holmans and about that time the croud would shake and the windows would rattle. That describes about how long it took the shock wave to reach McGill.

We had no idea that the fallout would reach McGill. Our glorious gubberment didn't give us much information and of course were lying when they did.

McGill News



This is the cinder block room that houses the heating and cooling furnace. It is very cold in the winter and hot in the summer. I don't think the blocks were filled. Outside cold or hot air is seeping in through cracks, which are being filled with foam. The room is filled with the furnace and lots of shelves. I wanted to insulate the inside, but there are too many things in the way. The next best thing would be to do the outside. I am tarring the outside of the blocks and will cover with tar paper and then fir strip it and put 1 inch of Styrofoam insulation and then a layer of corrugated tin. It will match the rest of the building. The roof will be done in the same manner. When done soon, it will help lower heating and cooling costs.

