

Newsletter347

Keith's Corner/McGill News

December 19, 2025

Christmas -1944

It is getting harder and harder to remember back to those older days, but some things are never forgotten. Somehow those memories and visions still exist in some hidden areas of that grey mass between our ears.

I remember 1944, because it was the last Christmas my family spent living in the house at E 26.

WWII was still raging and toys were hard to get so my Dad, like many dads-built stuff for us heathens. My Dad built a wooden work bench for my brother Paul and me. It had a back to hang tools on, a drawer and a vise on the front. There was a hook on each side of the back to hang a woodworker's apron on. Paul and I always put the apron on to build stuff. The front of the apron had a large pocket at waist level for small tools and at chest level were two narrow pockets that held official flat wooden carpenter pencils.

I have no memory of how Dad got the wood home without being seen. I do remember him not letting us in the small narrow basement. The entrance had some steep stairs and was covered by a slanted cellar door. We knew he was building something for us, but we had no clue what it was.

Christmas morning Paul and I hurried into the living room and there it was. Dad was a top machinist but also did fantastic woodworking. It was beautiful.

The drawer had 2 hammers, 2 slotted screwdrivers, (Phillips were not in use), 2 small squares and 2 rulers. On the sides were hung 2 small crosscut saws. It is impossible to say how excited we were at the sight of it. I can still see it in my mind.

A lot of the other dads made toys for their kids. I remember lots of toy trucks and cars made out of wood. Most houses had a workshop of some kind. Most adult men knew how to use all kinds of tools.

These home-made toys were very strong and lasted for many years. I think they lasted for two reasons. One was they were built strong and they meant more to us heathens than store bought toys.

In 1946 after WWII ended, toys were once again available. In our area of the world, we could only look at toys in Sears or Montgomery Wards or other catalogs. A few of the stores had some toys but the really good stuff was in the catalogs. I remember Erector sets and Lincoln Logs, chemistry sets, board games of all kinds. We McGill heathens were back in the clover again. We started to be polite, nice and did our chores promptly. This change usually started right after Thanksgiving. We became perfect little angels right up until we went back to the confinement camp in January. We never could figure out why the US Congress never extended Christmas vacation a few more weeks.

Guess they take enough time off the rest of the year to do their thing.

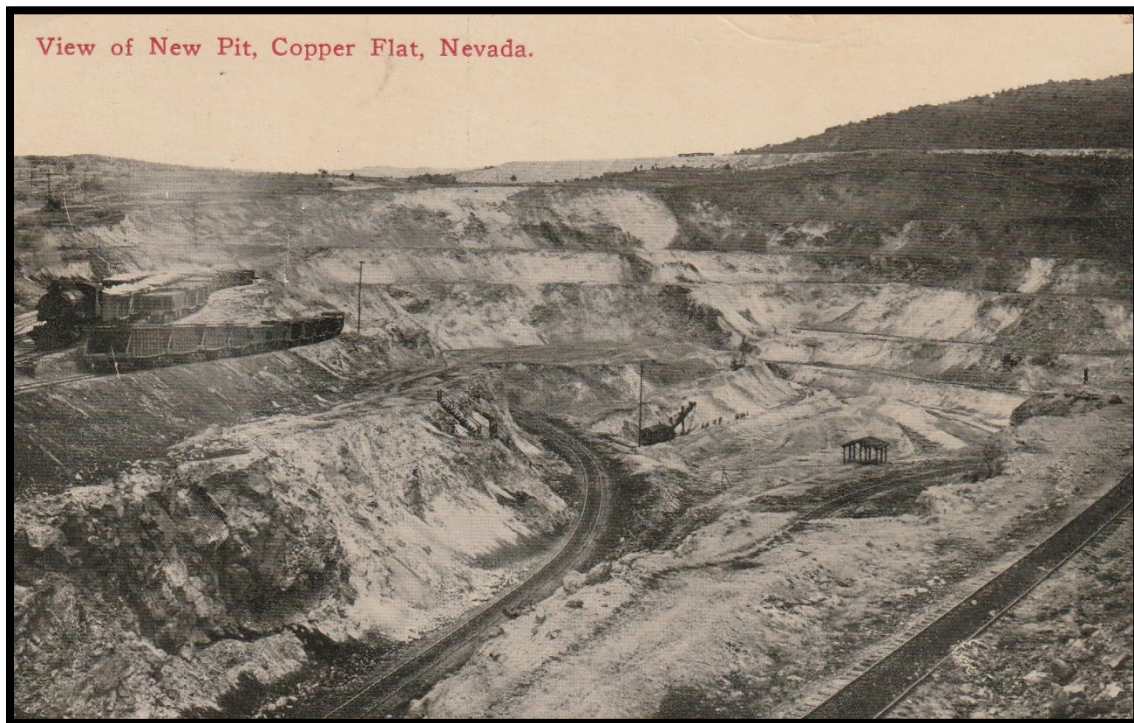
McGill News



Gary Stokes made some cups for us. Drugstore, Club 50 and Lincoln Hiway. Have a few t-shirts left also.

Have a very Merry Christmas.

Old Photo



Early days of the copper mine at Ruth.