

Papas Blacksmith Shop

Sisson Jacob Hatch

I remember the old blacksmith shop with fond memories. When I was a child it was a cozy place to be on a chilly fall or spring day.

Sometimes a lot of the town men would bum there and I didn't like to go in then. It was a log building south of the house in Koosharem, the door faced east and the forge and coal bin was on the west end, with the anvil in front of the forge.

The forge burned coal. That is the only place I remember seeing coal burned, as we heated our houses and schools and did our cooking with wood, pine for the heaters and cedar for the cook stove.

Close by the anvil was an array of different sized hammers, chisels, tongs and a bucket of cold water. Near by was several wooden kegs of different sized horse shoes.

A bench on the south wall held all kinds of interesting things, that would have been fun to play with but we were taught not to touch father's tools, machine parts, nuts, bolts, nails and etc.

On the north wall hung a drill for drilling holes in metal. Occasionally we were allowed to put a board in it, screw it down tight, and turn a wheel that made the bit make a tiny hole in the board. That was fun.

Above the drill was a paper poster purple and white that read "Keep Smiling". A chiropractor hung it there one day.

The pear shaped bellows was south of the forge and it was pumped to make the fire burn hotter. I liked to watch the bellows being pumped.

Sometimes when he had an iron or horse shoe in the fire, he'd sprinkle white sand on it. That made pretty flames, but he knew it would also cause sparks when hammered so we'd have to get out of the way.

Father would take the iron from the fire with long handled tongs, lay it on the anvil and pound it with a large hammer, then cool it in the bucket of water. That would make a hissing sound.

After the bellows was discarded it lay in the brush north of the ranch house. One day we discovered it had a bumble bee nest in it. We tried to get to it, then when the bees came after us we'd lay down and they'd fly over our heads.

When I was a fourth grader I had to memorize the poem, "A Village Blacksmith". I enjoyed the poem because I could relate to it.

Pearl Hatch Miller