



# A THANKSGIVING STORY

By **JACK HAMBLIN**  
 Manager, Southeast Electric Cooperative



*Manager's note - I wanted to share this little story of one family's experience during one Thanksgiving many years ago. It was written by H. Gordon Green and appeared in an edition of Reader's Digest magazine in 1956. I do not have a copy of the original article, so I will attempt to re-tell the story as my best recollection of how I heard it. It seems particularly appropriate for all us co-op members at this time of year.*

**GORDON** grew up on a farm, where he and his siblings had to hurry home from school while the other children played ball and went swimming. Their father, however, helped them understand that their work amounted to something. For Thanksgiving each year, their father would show his thankfulness by taking an inventory of everything they had.

On Thanksgiving morning he would take the children to the cellar with its barrels of apples, bins of beets, carrots packed in sand, and mountains of sacked potatoes. He had them carefully count the jars of peas, corn, string beans, jellies, strawberries, and other preserves. Out in the barn they calculated how many tons of hay there were and how many bushels of grain were in the granary. They counted the cows, pigs, chickens, turkeys, and geese. Their father said he wanted to see how they stood, but they knew he really wanted them to realize on that day how richly they had been blessed and what all their hours of work really meant. The Thanksgiving feast their mother prepared was then something for which they were truly thankful.

One year, however, they seemed to have nothing for which to be grateful. The year started off well: they had left-over hay, lots of seed, four litters of pigs, and their father had a little money set aside so that someday he could buy a hay loader—a wonderful machine most farmers just dreamed of owning. It was also the year that electricity came

to their town—although not to them because they couldn't afford it.

One night when Gordon's mother was doing her big wash, his father stepped in and took his turn over the washboard and asked his wife to rest. He said, "You spend more time doing the wash than sleeping. Maybe we should break down and get electricity?"

Although elated at the prospect, she shed a tear or two as she thought of the hay loader that wouldn't be bought.

So the electrical line came up their lane that year. They acquired a used washing machine; one that worked all day by itself. And soon brilliant light bulbs dangled from each ceiling. There were no more lamps to fill with oil, no more wicks to cut, no more chimneys to clean. The lamps went quietly off to the attic.

That was almost the last good thing that happened to them that year. Early, heavy rains completely destroyed all the young plants. They planted again, but more rains came and beat the crops into the earth. Their potatoes rotted in the mud. They sold all their livestock, getting very low prices because everyone else had to do the same thing. All they harvested that year was a patch of turnips, which had somehow weathered the storms.

Then it was Thanksgiving again. Their mother said, "Maybe we'd better forget it this year. We haven't even got a goose left."

*See THANKSGIVING, next page*

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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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 District #3 – Mike Hansen  
 District #6 – Karen Kreitel  
 District #5 – Clayton Jardee  
 District #8 – Dave Hayden  
 District #2 – Doug Gardner**

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 Tye Williams, Asst. GM  
 Robin Kuntz, Office Mgr.  
 Rita Williams, Office Asst.  
 Vicki Fix, Member Services  
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 Dave Johnstone,  
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 William Kalstrom  
 Sam Erfman**

## **APPRENTICE LINEMEN**

**Tanner Fix  
 Anton Schell**

# Thanksgiving

*Continued from previous page*

On Thanksgiving morning, however, Gordon's father showed up with a jackrabbit and asked his wife to cook it. Grudgingly she started the job, indicating it would take a long time to cook that tough old thing. When it was finally on the table with some of the turnips that had survived, the children refused to eat. Gordon's mother cried, and then his father did a strange

thing. He went up to the attic, got an oil lamp, took it back to the table, and lighted it. He told the children to turn out the electric lights. When there was only the lamp again, they could hardly believe it had really been that dark before. They wondered how they had ever been able to see anything without the bright lights made possible by electricity.

The food was blessed, and everyone ate. When dinner was over, they all sat quietly. Gordon wrote, "In the humble dimness of the old lamp we began to

see clearly again. . . . It was a lovely meal. The jackrabbit tasted like turkey and the turnips were the mildest we could recall. Our home. . . for all its want, was rich to us."

*A good story always has a good moral and this one isn't difficult to find. Most of us today cannot remember the days without electricity. But there are still those who do. For all the "youngsters" out there who have never been without it, let's make sure we remain thankful also. Happy Thanksgiving! RM*

## Veteran's Memorial Park Committee sets \$20K budget

**T**WO years ago, an idea was brought up at a council meeting by Jessica Walker, to put in a Veteran's Memorial in Ekalaka. The idea was then brought to the Chamber of Commerce who formed a committee to research the cost of such project. It was suggested that PERSO Park, which is located at the west end of Mainstreet, be a possible location.

The Veteran's Park Committee has set a budget of \$20,000 for this project. They are looking into grants for funding and donations are being accepted as well. Should someone like to make a donation, they are asked to please make any checks out to the Carter County Community Foundation with "Veteran's Park" written in the Memo. RM



### CLOSURE

Southeast Electric Co-op will be closed Thursday Nov. 26, 2020 for Thanksgiving

## Special meeting held Sept. 18

**S**OUTHEAST Electric held a Special Meeting on September 18, 2020 for the purpose of holding director elections.

92 people were served sloppy joes, chips, and homemade cookies from the FCCLA. 55 members were present and voted to elect Albert Paul and Clayton Jardee to 3



Jardee



Paul

year terms. We were pleased to have Gary Wiens, CEO of Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association, join us and speak to the members. President Albert Paul and General Manager Jack Hamblin also had

a few remarks to share. Hope to see you all at next year's Annual Meeting in June 2021. RM

### VETERANS DAY 2020

## WE SALUTE YOUR BRAVERY



We're proud of all you've  
done for our country.