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<th>“Aren’t Lights Grand?”: Breaking Barriers in History with Rural Electrification</th>
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360° Lighted Rotating Display (Video Slide)
“Aren’t Lights Grand?” (Courtesy of Rose Dudley Scarce, Rural Electrification News, A Summary of Rural Electrification Activities, 1938)
On May 20, 1936, Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act, removing the Rural Electrification Administration from the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act and making it a permanent, independent, lending agency that issued low-interest loans. Rural Americans created cooperatives to apply for electric service, and by 1950, 80% of farms had electricity, breaking the barrier of darkness in rural America by bringing light to homes, easing the burden of work, and increasing access to information.
Life Without Electricity

In 1935, 90% of rural Americans were denied electricity. Electric companies did not want to build electric lines because they were expensive to construct, costing around $1,500-2,000 per mile. In rural areas where there were fewer than 10 homes per mile, electric companies believed they could not make a profit.

Life without electricity for rural people was challenging. Everyday work that urban Americans could do with ease took hours of hard work. Women spent hours cooking, washing, sewing, and cleaning. Men spent hours milking cows and cutting wood. Water was hauled from wells or springs, which could be as far away from rural homes as half-a-mile. Milk and produce spoiled due to lack of refrigeration.

“You milked all the cows by hand, and if you was a dairy farmer back then you only had 20 to 25 cows to milk, but you still had to milk them by hand.” (Courtesy of Robert Klink, 2020)

[Photo] This is a picture of hand milking (Courtesy of FineArtAmerica.com)
“It was hard to regulate the temperature on a wood stove. I don’t know how they ever made anything. The only way you controlled it was by putting wood on the fire or opening the oven door… I was more jealous of their [city people] bread more than anything because they always had bought bread, and we always had homemade burnt bread. You made toast on top the stove too, and you always burnt it, even baking it, it was burnt…I can still see mom chiseling the bread off.” (Courtesy of Richard Knotts, 2020)

Without electric radios, rural people did not get news or weather updates, except through newspapers or word of mouth.

“...the vacuum cleaner, electric range, refrigerator, percolator- all of these are unknown to farmers’ wives and daughters.” (Courtesy of M.H. Aylesworth, The Watauga Democrat, 1925)
“You didn’t know any better and everybody did the same thing. When you look back you think, ‘Wow! How did you ever do this? How did you ever do that?’” (Courtesy of Shirley Winner, 2020)

[Photo] This is a woman filling an oil lamp in 1940 (Courtesy of Library of Congress).

Because there were no electric lights, the workday ended early. After the sun went down, the only light was from kerosene lamps, which were dangerous due to the risk of fire.

“We all sat around the dining room table with the oil lamp in the middle of the table… If somebody like my brother, he wasn’t very old and he stood up on a chair and took a book and laid it on top of the globe of the lamp and smoked the globe completely black and made the flame go out, he was in big trouble.” (Courtesy of Jeanie Knotts, 2020)

“We had to carry oil lamps, which in a way was pretty dangerous, because the flames could have caused a fire pretty quickly because of the hay.” (Courtesy of Robert Klink, 2020)
“From boyhood, I had seen first-hand the grim drudgery and grind which had been the common lot of eight generations of American farm women, seeking happiness and contentment on the soil. I had seen the tallow candle in my own home followed by the coal-oil lamp. I knew what it was like to take care of the farm chores by the flickering, undependable light of the lantern in the mud and cold rains of the fall, and the snow and icy winds of winter. I had seen cities gradually acquire a night as light as day.” (Courtesy of George Norris, Fighting Liberal: The Autobiography of George W. Norris, 1992)

“Sometimes we were a little jealous of the electricity our cousins in town had.” (Courtesy of Jeanie Knotts, 2020)

“Mother had to heat the water on the stove in different containers, and she’d fill them with water and dump in the wash machine. Now the wash machine had a motor on it, wasn’t electric but it had a pedal on it, and you tramped on that pedal and that got it going. You had to chain the crank to the house to keep it from running off the porch. You spent as much time trying to start the motor as it took to do the laundry. Mother used to get really angry with that thing because it wouldn’t start right away.” (Courtesy of Jeanie Knotts, 2020)

[Photo] This photo shows a woman hand washing clothes in 1939 (Courtesy of Library of Congress).
Breaking the Barrier

Thesis: On May 20, 1936, Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act, removing the Rural Electrification Administration from the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act and making it a permanent, independent, lending agency that issued low-interest loans. Rural Americans created cooperatives to apply for electric service, and by 1950, 80% of farms had electricity, breaking the barrier of darkness in rural America by bringing light to homes, easing the burden of work, and increasing access to information.

“We need to go forward with the rural electrification program to bring the benefits of electricity to all our farm population.” (Courtesy of Evening Star, 1948)


Executive order #7073, signed on May 11, 1935 by President Roosevelt, established the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) as an emergency agency. However, electric companies did not apply for the loans. On May 20, 1936, the Rural Electrification Act was passed by Congress. This act made the REA a permanent lending agency that made loans to member-owned cooperatives.

Morris Cooke was the first Administrator of the REA.
“Early in 1936, shortly after REA had been created by executive order and had gone into operation, I introduced a bill in the Senate to make it permanent, and to effect some changes in the plan of operation and administration that I thought were desirable. Under the provisions of the bill I introduced, rural electrification was made nation-wide in scope and in jurisdiction.” (Courtesy of George Norris, Fighting Liberal: The Autobiography of George W. Norris, 1992)

“Farmer Brown and his friends learned that in 1936 the Rural Electrification Act had been passed by Congress, whereby they could borrow money at interest rates that they could afford to pay and organize co-operatives and serve themselves with electricity at cost.” (Courtesy of The People’s Voice, 1955)

“What is an REA Cooperative? Briefly, it is a rural community enterprise through which the farmers provide electric service for themselves with the help of REA.” (Courtesy of Rural Electrification Administration, Guide for Cooperative Members, 1939)

“They come and put it in. REA put it in.” (Courtesy of Richard Knotts, 2020)
“Light and Power-clean, safe, dependable—at the flip of a switch! Yours, at last, through cooperative effort.” (Courtesy of Harry Wallace, A Guide for Members of Cooperatives, 1939)

Farmers became excited about electricity. Neighbors joined together to form cooperatives and applied for loans. REA field men attended meetings to provide information about electricity.

[Photo] This is two men looking at a map of where the electric lines will be built in 1940 (Courtesy of Library of Congress).

[Photo] This is a photo of building the lines in 1938 (Courtesy of Library of Congress).

REA engineers developed less expensive ways of building lines, which now cost about $950 per mile.
“REA organized a traveling demonstration caravan with its big tent and lesser tents. Manufacturers of electrical farm and household appliances were to send demonstration equipment. The response was generous, and farmers were enabled to observe such equipment in operation” (Courtesy of Dr. H.S. Person, Rural Electrification Administration in Perspective, April 1950)

The administrator of the “circuses” was Louisan Mammer, who worked for the REA. The group traveled to 26 states from 1939 to 1941, when the program was discontinued due to the war.

[Photo] This is Louisan Mammer demonstrating at an REA Circus. (Courtesy of Cooperative.com)

Posters were hung in communities to show the benefits of electricity.
New Opportunities

Electricity revolutionized rural America. Electricity helped farmers save time and eased the workload. Ultimately, electricity paid for itself for the rural people with increased productivity. With electricity, farmers could have more cows because milking took less time. Farmers could make more money from their produce, eggs, and milk because they now had refrigerators to prevent spoilage.

“I think ours was about between ‘45 and ‘50 when we got it. One thing when we did get electric, you’d better not leave a light on in the room when you went out of it. I guess it was such a wonderful thing that you wanted to preserve it or something.” (Courtesy of Jeanie Knotts, 2020)

[Photo] This photo shows people using electric appliances, 1942 (Courtesy of Library of Congress).

[Photo] This photo shows a man tuning his electric radio in 1940 (Courtesy of Library of Congress).

“Cheap electric service for your home, with current for lighting for the home, barn and yard, radio, a modern plumbing system with running water in the house, refrigeration, automatic washer, ironing, cooking, water heating, and other conveniences; cheap power for your farm that can cut production cost and raise your income by many times the cost of power consumed; increase value of your home and farm (many farmers say their farms were worth an extra $10 or more per acre when they were electrified); improved facilities for carrying on church and other community activities; and a chance for children to get their education in a modernized school with electric lights, electric equipment for home economics for the girls and for practical shop work for the boys” (Courtesy of Rural Electrification Administration, A Guide for Members of Cooperatives, 1939)
With electric radios, rural people could get news and weather updates without relying on newspapers or word of mouth.

“Rural Electrification has contributed greatly to the increased business of merchants in local communities…” (Courtesy of Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation Tabor City Tribune, 1959)

“It was exciting. We didn’t really realize what hardship it was without it until we got it.” (Courtesy of Jeanie Knotts, 2020)

“We got electric in 1952…Our neighbor only had two light bulbs in his whole house.” (Courtesy of Richard Knotts, 2020)
“I can tell you that rural electrification was a wonderful thing.” (Courtesy of Corlista Murphy, 2020)

[Photo] This photo shows girls learning how to use an electric iron, 1942 (Courtesy of Library of Congress).

“After electric, we had one [light bulb] in every room, porch lights, and that was all.” (Courtesy of Shirley Winner, 2020)

“Already there are over 200 separate uses for electric power on the farm, and the list continues to grow. While many of these uses relate primarily to household activities, a substantial number of them are directly concerned with labor-saving, cost-reducing, and income-producing equipment for farm operations.” (Courtesy of Robert T. Beall, Farmers in a Changing World; Yearbook of Agriculture 1940, 1940)

“More than 95% of the farms in 20 states had the service on June 30, 1955. Only 5 states-Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Wyoming-had less than 85% of their farms electrified at that time.” (Courtesy of Joe F. Davis, Use of Electricity on Farms, 1956)

[Photo] This is a man using an electric milker in 1942 (Courtesy of Library of Congress).
“I can’t think of anything that was really negative about rural electrification, unless you count losing the coziness of sitting around a lamp at night and being together.” (Courtesy of Jeanie Knotts, 2020)

“Before electricity, times were hard, but everybody helped each other. Everybody worked together and was friendly, but today with electricity, everything is so fast.” (Courtesy of Shirley Winner, 2020)

Electricity broke barriers for rural America and will continue to break barriers for rural people in the future.

“The availability of the internet allows people in the most rural areas to access the same information as people in the most urban areas. Through these tools, people in rural areas can now access educational, medical, entertainment, and countless other resources. Without cheap and reliable electric power, access to the Internet would not be possible for people in rural areas. In the future, people in rural areas will not be bound by constraints of their geography and can overcome not having direct physical access to resources once only available in urban areas.” (Courtesy of Paul Fuchs, Ph.D., 2020)
Posters were hung throughout communities to promote electrification.

This poster advertises the Rural Electrification Administration (Courtesy of Library of Congress).

This poster shows the many ways a farm will benefit per kilowatt hour of electricity (Courtesy of Technologystories.org).
This poster shows a farmer using water pumped by an electric pump (Courtesy of Library of Congress).

This poster shows how the farm home will benefit per kilowatt hour of electricity (Courtesy of Technologystories.org).
This poster shows a woman using an electric light (Courtesy of Library of Congress).

This poster shows the many ways a farm could use electricity (Courtesy of A Guide for Members of Cooperatives, Rural Electrification Administration).
Experiences in Rural Electrification

“Anyone who knows the long hours and drudgery which go with rural life, especially for women, must be interested in the labor-saving aspects of electricity in a house or barn - In washing and milking machines, vacuum cleaners and pumps which do away with the never-ending carrying of water.” (Courtesy of Morris L. Cooke, An Engineer Looks at Rural America, 1936)
“I think the nicest thing about electric at our house was we got a hot water tank, and then we would have hot water to bath in, and we wouldn't have to carry it in buckets and dump it in the tub.” (Courtesy of Robert Klink, 2020)

“The gap between farm and city grows narrower when rural electrification brings radio to the farm...A radio is usually the first or second electrical appliance bought by project members when they get high-line service.” (Courtesy of Rural Electrification News; A Summary of Rural Activities, 1938)
“No refrigeration... We had a spring below the house, that was the big thing, and in that spring there was cold water. You could put stuff in any kind of a sealant and put it in the water that ran and that kept that cool.” (Courtesy of Leonard Winner, 2020)
“The school was heated with a big pot-bellied stove, and we had great big windows because we didn’t have any lights to light up the school. We started early, and when the time changed, we would quit a little early because it would get dark.” (Courtesy of Robert Klink, 2020)

“At that time everything was done by hand, there was no power saws nothing like that, you cut it by hand.” (Courtesy of Leonard Winner, 2020)
“We did a lot of ironing at our house, too. You had those irons with one handle and the iron was severed. It had a little latch where you would put the handle on one, and you ironed until it got cold. When it did, you took it back, put it on the stove, and you hooked it [the handle] on the next one. You went back over and ironed some more. It was a big chore.” (Courtesy of Jeanie Knotts, 2020)

“We never had a newspaper. You didn’t know what was going on really, unless somebody came to tell you.” (Courtesy of Leonard Winner, 2020)
The house symbolizes an electric light in a house. Electric lights were often the first upgrade that people made after electrification.

Lighted Farmhouse Replica Represents Electrified Farm House (Courtesy of Laura and Matthew Huelskamp, 2020)
The radio symbolizes one of the most popular appliances rural people purchased after getting electricity. It increased their access to news and entertainment.

1930s Radio Replica Represents increased access to information and entertainment (Courtesy of Laura and Matthew Huelskamp, 2020)
This is an actual iron used before people got electric. It is heavy and the handle detaches from the base.

Original Asbestos Sad Iron 1900-1920 (Courtesy of Dorothy Knotts, 2020)
This is an actual hand drill used before rural people had electric drills. The crank turns the drill bit.

Original Egg Beater Hand Drill 1950-1960 (Courtesy of Joseph Burns, 2020)
This is a copy of the Rural Electrification Act (Courtesy of Laws Relating to Interstate and Foreign Commerce, 1946)
“Aren’t Lights Grand?”: Breaking Barriers in History with Rural Electrification

Laura Huelskamp
Junior Division
Individual Exhibit
Process Paper: 499 Words
Student-Composed Words: 498
I chose to study rural electrification because I wanted a topic that related to my community. I live in a rural area which got electricity about 75 years ago. It is interesting to think that something we take for granted today has only been here for a relatively short time. This topic is important to history because it allowed rural Americans to have the same benefits as urban Americans.

I began my research by looking at different websites and books. One book that gave me general information was *The Next Greatest Thing* by Richard Pence. This book explores the first 50 years of rural electrification and was a valuable resource for all aspects of my topic. After obtaining general information, I interviewed six people in my community who began life without electricity, including five people from Maryland. These interviews gave me a new perspective on my topic because I was able to learn the unique stories of individuals during this time period. The Library of Congress was also a great asset to my research. On this website, I found many pictures that gave me a better understanding of my topic by showing me actual events. A difficulty I had while researching my project was finding that everyone’s experiences with electrification were different. For example, everyone did not get electricity in the same year, and everyone had a different process for how they got the electricity. I overcame this difficulty by using the interviews I did to connect the stories while still keeping their uniqueness.

I decided to make an exhibit because I wanted to display information in a creative way. I wanted the shape of my display to relate to my topic, so I chose to make a rotating board in a lightbulb shape. To draw the shape, I projected an image of a lightbulb on the wall and traced
it on a large piece of paper. I then cut the lightbulb shape out of plywood, using both a handsaw and an electric saw to compare working without and with electricity. I learned that the handsaw was harder to use because it took more time and force. I secured the panels at 120° angles, using brackets and rivets. I created a turntable base using a lazy susan between two pieces of wood. For my header I chose to use an old lamp shade to compliment the lightbulb shape of my board.

On May 20, 1936 Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act, removing the Rural Electrification Administration from the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, and making it a permanent, independent, lending agency that issued low-interest loans. Rural Americans created cooperatives to apply for electric service, and by 1950, 80% of farms had electricity, breaking the barrier of darkness in rural America by bringing light to homes, easing the burden of work, and increasing access to information. This event is significant in history because it gave Americans increased opportunities to live in rural areas with some of the advantages of an urban area.
Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources


This illustration is a poster promoting the REA. These types of posters would be hung around town or in stores to encourage farmers to join cooperatives. This photo helped me understand how the REA got rural Americans to form cooperatives and apply for electric services.


This illustration is a poster promoting rural electrification. The poster shows a woman, happily using an electronic lamp. This poster helped me understand that rural electrification had an important impact on rural people. This poster also helped me understand how the Rural Electrification Administration promoted electric service to rural people.


I used this poster to learn how rural electrification improved Americans’ lives. This poster shows a farmer using a faucet to get water instead of having to haul it from a well or spring. This poster helped me understand that rural electrification made work for farmers much easier, and having electricity saved them a lot of time.

This report by an economist for the Rural Electrification Administration explains all aspects of the process for rural electrification. This report helped me understand a great deal, like why there was no electricity in rural areas, the benefits of electricity, what the act did, information about the loans, and information on cooperatives.


This journal article explained many topics of rural electrification. This article was very informative because it was written by the second administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration, so it had first-hand knowledge about my topic. This article helped me understand information about the act and why it was needed. It also gave me important information about the cooperatives farmers formed to apply for electric service.


This journal article by the first administrator or the Rural Electrification Administration explained the project through an engineer's point of view. This article helped me understand that not many rural areas have electricity, even though they would benefit greatly from the service.


This journal article by the first administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration explained the need for electric service in rural America. I used this source to learn more about
why electricity was important on farms. This journal article helped me understand how electricity would improve rural life.

**Davis, Joe Frank. *Use of Electricity on Farms: A Summary Report of Ten Area Studies.***


I read this report to learn more about after the act. This report was useful because it explains the process rural people went through to get electricity and the uses they had for electricity on the farm. This primary source was important because it helped me understand the impact electricity had on rural Americans.


I used this newspaper article to learn more about the need for rural electrification. This primary source helped me understand how rural people benefitted from electrification and how rural electrification will even help the economy.
Elliott, John. E-mail. Received by the author, 20 May 2020.

I emailed this expert to learn more about the hand drill I have with my project. This man is a member of the Richmond Antique Tool Society. He identified that it is an Egg Beater Drill. He gave me valuable information about the tool, like between what years it was made, where it was made, and how it was used.


I used this journal article to learn more about what rural America was like before the act. This article was helpful because it explained the importance of electricity in agriculture. This source helped me understand my topic by explaining how the rural population is decreasing and the amount of man and horsepower agriculture takes.


This photo helped me understand the appliances that impacted rural Americans’ lives. Radios helped rural people to be able to be connected to the world and have entertainment. This photo shows a man using radio to do these things.


This person has a doctorate in electrical engineering and owns an engineering consulting firm. I emailed him to learn more about the long-term effects of rural electrification. He helped me understand how far electricity has come in the last 50 years and how he sees electricity continuing to benefit rural communities in the future.
Hand Sawing. Waldwissen, 

This web site showed a photo of men hand sawing a log. This photo helped me understand how men did work before electricity. Also, this source helped me understand how hard and time consuming their work was.


I used this photo to see what it was like for Morris L. Cooke to sign off on loans. This photo shows Cooke and other important men of the administration launching seven projects. This photo helped me understand that Cooke had an important job as the administrator, and he was very important in the process to bring electricity to rural people.


This online interview is of a person’s experience getting electricity. This interview helped me understand what it was like to get electricity for the first time and how the rural people felt about this change.

I used this newspaper article to learn more about what life was like for rural people before rural electrification. This primary source was useful because it helped me understand how rural women were burdened with work.

**Klink, Robert. Interview. 19 Jan. 2020.**

I interviewed this person to learn about what life was like before electricity. This interview was an important primary source because he grew up on a farm without electricity, which is what my project is directly about. This person helped me understand how they milked the cows without an electric milker, and how they did barn work in the dark without electric lights.

**Knotts, Jeanie. Interview. 19 Jan. 2020.**

I conducted this interview to learn more information about what life was like before electricity, and the process that was taken to get electricity. This person was helpful because she grew up in a time before electricity and experienced getting it. This person helped me understand my topic because she gave me information about how work was done before electricity, as well as shared with me her feelings about not having electricity and getting electricity for the first time.

**Knotts, Richard. Interview. 19 Jan. 2020.**

This interview I conducted was a very important primary source for me. This person began life without electricity and experienced getting it. I was very interested in interviewing
him because he grew up near the area where I live. This interview helped me understand what it was like for this man to get his first electric appliance, and what types of chores were difficult without electricity.


This newspaper article discusses how rural people benefited from rural electrification, the many innovations to farm work that were a result of rural electrification, and how rural people wanted the same advantages as city people. This primary source helped me further understand the enormous impact rural electrification had on rural life.


This photo shows men putting in poles in rural areas. I used this photo to learn about how they put in these poles and what it was like to work on them.


This photograph from the Library of Congress was important in providing me with first-hand information about what it was like to wash clothes without electricity. This photo helped me understand how women did work without electricity.

I used this newspaper to learn more about the effects of rural electrification. This source helped me understand that rural electrification benefited all Americans from rural to urban. Also, it discusses some of the many ways that rural electrification helped rural Americans.

**Murphy, Corlista. Interview.** 7 Feb. 2020.

This interview was a very important primary source for my project. This person lived through the process of rural electrification and experienced life before and after getting electricity. This person helped me understand her experiences and life before electricity.

**National Power Policy Committee. *A New Deal in Rural Electrification; A National Plan.***


I used this report to learn more about the plan the nation had to electrify rural areas. This article helped me understand that the main reason rural areas did not have electricity before the act was because of cost. This source also helped me understand how the lines were constructed and how power was distributed.

I used this newspaper article to learn more about rural electrification in different parts of the country, with this article focusing specifically on North Dakota. In my research, I have learned that electrification was different, but similar, in the many rural areas in the country. This article helped me understand the need for electrification in North Dakota, when the state got electricity, and how much was allotted for the electrification of North Dakota.


I used this autobiography to understand more about George Norris. George Norris was the Nebraska senator that introduced the Rural Electrification Act into Congress. George Norris grew up on a farm and knew what it was like to live in rural areas without electricity. This book explained how he was involved with rural electrification, and it was useful because it gave me a first-hand account of rural electrification.


This is a photo of Louisan Mamer. Louisan Mamer worked for the REA and organized the traveling demonstrations. This photo helped me understand who she was and the type of work she did.

This journal article was a good primary source that gave me important information about the administration. It also is a good source to obtain background knowledge about the topic. From this source, I learned important information like what happened to the administration during the years of World War II.


This video was an important resource for understanding what life was like before electricity. This video was made around the time the act was passed and is a valuable primary source because it has actual video of farms of this time. This video helped me understand what life was like before electricity and what it was like during the process.


I contacted the Pressing Iron & Trivet Collectors of America group through Facebook Messenger to learn more about the iron I am using as an artifact on my display board. I asked them questions like what year it was made, what model it was, and what years it was used. They gave me a lot of new information about the model of iron I have.


I used this source to learn about all aspects of my topic. This report helped me to understand that there were other attempts to bring electricity to rural areas, but they were unsuccessful. The article explains the process for electricity, from how they signed the act to the effects it had on rural life.

This web page by The National Archives gave me important information about the establishment and function of the administration. Also, it listed all of the administrators of the Rural Electrification Administration. This source helped me understand how the administration started and who the important people were.


I used this photograph to learn more about what life was like without electricity. This picture shows a girl in Garrett County, Maryland cooking soup on a wood stove. This helped me understand what cooking was like before electricity.


This photo shows a young man using an electric lathe for the first time. This photo helped me understand the importance electricity had on rural America.


This photo shows a group of cooperative members at their annual meeting. This is a very important primary source because it shows people in the cooperative. This photo helped me understand that cooperatives were large groups of all kinds of people, not just the important people of the community.

This is a picture of cows being milked by an electric milker. I used this picture to learn more about how rural lives were improved with electricity.


This photo shows a group of women learning how to use an electric iron. This photo helped me understand that rural people were very happy to get electric service, and they were interested in learning to use their new appliances.


This photo shows a woman and a man using multiple electric appliances in their rural home. This primary source was very helpful in showing me all the appliances the rural people used. This photo helped me understand how important rural electrification was for rural people.

I used this book to read the portion about rural electrification and an article written by Rose Dudley Scearce. This whole book talks about all agricultural issues throughout the year, but I focused on the section that talked about rural electrification. This portion of this book helped me understand what it was like to get electricity in the rural areas, and how they felt about it. This book also helped me understand cooperatives, and what it was like for communities to get electricity.


I used this brochure to learn more about types of appliances rural people used once they got electricity. This source was a good primary source to learn the types of things they used. This source helped me understand what types of innovations of the time impacted rural Americans’ lives.

This e-book gave information about how to be in a cooperative, the rules of these groups, the functions of these groups, and how cooperatives were important for rural electrification. This e-book helped me understand important information about cooperatives.


I used this newspaper article to learn more about what people in the cities thought of rural electrification. This newspaper helped me understand that people in the cities were not always in favor of rural electrification because they thought that it was paid for by taxpayers, which was not the case, and they did not want to pay for it.


I used this newspaper to learn information from a primary source. This newspaper article helped me understand that the rural electrification administration was authorized to purchase such financial and credit reports as it may be necessary to carry out its authorized work. This shows the power and importance that the administration had in the government.
This newspaper article provided important information about rural electrification, especially information about the administrator. This newspaper article helped me understand that the administrator had an important job. It also helped me understand the functions of the administrator.


This ebook is the yearbook of agriculture for the year of 1940. This book was written during the time of rural electrification and contains a section about the topic. This e-book helped me understand why rural electrification was delayed, the progress it made in rural America, how the Rural Electrification Administration works, and the progress they had made so far on electrification.
---, ---, Senate, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Electrification Administration. 


This book gave the loan information of 1961 and 1962. I used this source to learn more about the number of people getting electric service. It helped me learn about the impact rural electrification had on the country.

---, ---, Senate. [*Public-No. 605-74th Congress] [S. 3483]. 20 May 1936, books.google.com/books?id=tIU1AQAAIAAJ&pg=PA306&lpg=PA306&dq=%5BPublic-No.+605-74th+Congress%5D+%5BS.+3483%5D&source=bl&ots=ww2e8mf1P5&sig=ACfU3U2T-F5CFDntKom6g2g12ccFTjdULAI&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiQ067l-8znAhWRIXIEHSlC9oQ6AEwCnoECAoQAQ#v=onepage&q=%5BPublic-No.%20605-74th%20Congress%5D%20S.%203483%5D&f=false. Accessed 12 Feb. 2020. 74th Congress, 3483rd session, Senate Document 605.

I used a portion of this e-book to get the actual Rural Electrification Act of 1936. This source helped me understand the actual legislature that brought electricity to rural America.


This source was a very important primary source for my research. This book explained the first 25 years of rural electrification and was very informative. This book helped me understand why there was no electricity in rural America, what electric service cost, and information about the first administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration.

This photo is of two men looking at a map of where the lines are going to be built. This photo helped me understand that it was a big job to plan out where the lines went, and that people of the town were interested in where the lines would go.


This photo shows a woman putting oil in an oil lamp. This helped me understand that having light before electricity took time because they had to fill the lamps with oil, which is a lot more than we do today to get light.


This photo shows a man milking cows by hand. I am using this photo on my display board. This photo helped me understand the type of work done by men before electricity.


These posters show how much the rural people could do in a kilowatt hour. This photo helped me understand that electricity was very important to rural people because the poster shows that they could do a lot of work with a little amount of electricity.


I used this newspaper article to learn more about the impact rural electrification had on rural people. This article was useful because it explains what life was like in rural homes before electricity. It was also helpful because a section focused on how the private utility companies felt about rural electrification. This is important because these companies play an important role in why the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 was needed.


I interviewed this person to get information about what life was like without electricity and what it was like to get electricity. This person was a valuable primary source because he was able to give me a first-hand account of my topic. This person helped me understand how work was done before electricity and what life was like for a farmer.


This person began life without electricity and experienced getting electricity. I interviewed this person because she could give me important first-hand information about what it was like for her to get electricity. This person helped me understand how people lived before electricity and what working on a farm was like.
I used this newspaper advertisement to learn more about the benefits of rural electrification. This ad was by the Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation. This advertisement helped me understand how rural electrification helped people and gave me a perspective of what it was like for rural people to see an ad for rural electrification in the newspaper.
Secondary Sources


This web page helped me understand the impact that George Norris and Sam Rayburn had on rural electrification. This source was useful because it explained why there was a need for the act and how it came to be. This source helped me understand who Norris and Rayburn were and their importance in the Rural Electrification Act.


I used this report to learn more about all aspects of my topic. This report was a very informational secondary source and gave me a lot of information. This source helped me understand important information about the act, other attempts at electrification, and information about the process of the REA.


This web page was useful because it explained important information that helped me with my project. This source helped me understand information about the REA.


I read this journal article to learn more general information about my topic. This source helped me understand information about the loans and how they build the lines.

This web page from the National Archives was a good resource to help me with my research. This web page helped me learn general information about my topic.


I emailed this person because she was able to provide me with information about her father’s experience of what life was like before electricity, and what it was like to get electricity. This information was provided to her by her father before his death. This email conversation was a very important secondary source, and helped me with my research very much.


This journal article was a good secondary source to find general information about my topic. This source helped me understand the process it took to get the act passed. From this source, I also learned the steps that were taken to get electric service to rural people.


This article was useful because it gave information about establishing the REA and the funding for the REA. From this source, I learned important information about how under the New Deal Executive Order 7073 established the REA.
"The Fighting Liberal--George Norris: Rural Electrification Act (REA)." *NetNebraska*, 1 Jan. 1995,

This video is about Senator George Norris. I watched this video to learn about how he was involved with rural electrification. This video helped me understand why the Rural Electrification Act was passed. This video was important because it showed a video of REA building the lines from the time of electrification.


I used this source to learn general information about rural electrification. This source helped me understand how rural Americans lived without electricity and information about how they got electricity.


I used this source to learn more about the people involved with Rural Electrification. This blog helped me understand who Louisan Mamer was. It also helped me understand the "electric circus" the REA conducted.


I used this web page to find more information about George Norris. This source was helpful because it explained why and how he was important to the Rural Electrification Act.

This web page helped me understand what was going on in the country around the time of rural electrification. This is important because it showed me why rural electrification was important at the time and gave me background knowledge about why it was needed.


This web page was a very useful secondary source while doing my research. This source helped me understand why there was no electricity, information about the REA, the cost of electricity, and the effect electric had on rural people.


I used this webpage to learn more about Morris Cooke, the first administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration. This secondary source helped me understand how he was important to the act and administration. This source also helped me learn about President Roosevelt’s role in the act.


I used this web page to learn general information about my topic. This webpage helped me understand that it was important that Congress pass the act because it changed rural Americans’ way of living and made it able for them to get more done with less work.

I used this web page to get general information on my topic. This source was helpful because it helped me learn about what my topic was and it gave me aspects of my topic for more in-depth research.


This source helped me get background information on my topic. From this source, I was able to have a better understanding of my topic. For example, this source helped me understand that rural electrification was a long progress and took many professionals to achieve electrification.


This secondary source helped me get general information about my topic. This source was very useful in helping me gain more knowledge about my topic.


This book explored the first 50 years of rural electrification and was a very important secondary source for me. The book was useful because it explained every aspect of the act like life before, the legislature, and life after. This book helped me understand my topic because it
gave me general information about my topic, as well as in-depth information that I could further research.


I used this report to learn more about Louisan E. Mamer. She was hired as a demonstrator for the Rural Electrification Administration’s traveling circus. This is when the REA went to towns and demonstrated electricity and appliances. This source helped me understand who Mamer was and how she was important to Rural Electrification.


I used this web site to learn more about the executive order that President Roosevelt signed. This source was important because it showed a reprinted version of the actual executive order.


This blog was useful because it helped me learn general information about my topic. This source helped me understand my topic because it gave me an overview of rural electrification.

I used this website to learn about general information for my topic. This website helped me understand how many farms in different areas of the country had electricity and what happened to the agency during World War II.


This web page helped me understand the impact rural electrification had on rural Americans. It also gave me important general information about my topic. This web page particularly focuses on explaining information about the executive order and act, as well as the percentage of people affected in a portion of the country.


I used this secondary source to get a better understanding of my topic. This article helped me learn general information about my topic. This source helped me understand the impact rural electrification had on Americans.


I used this source to learn more about how many people were affected by rural electrification. This source helped me understand that by the end of 1938, there were 350 cooperative projects in 45 states, and 1.5 million farms were electrified.

I used this source to get background knowledge about my topic. This source helped me understand information about all aspects of rural electrification.


This article helped me learn background information about the Rural Electrification Act and the REA. The article explains the establishment of the agency and the impact electrification had on farmers.


This web page helped me understand general information about my topic. The web page explains many aspects of the act and impact like the development of cooperatives, how it changed rural lives, and the act's part in the New Deal.


This report was a valuable resource because it was a very informational secondary source. This source was helpful because it explains what life was like before the act was
passed. This source helped me understand the other attempts the government made to electrify rural areas.


I used this article to learn more about what it was like to get electricity. The author of this source shows how happy they were to get electricity. This source helped me understand the impact electricity had on rural people.


This secondary source helped me obtain general information about my topic. It gave me background knowledge about electricity and how it came to cities, and then it explains how electricity came to farms. This is a very useful source in getting knowledge on the topic.