

Electricity Arrives in Springfield

Ella Carpenter Pickering and Eleanor Carpenter Farr gave some family pictures and articles that they had saved over the years to the Springfield Historical Society. One of the items of interest was when electricity arrived in Springfield. This article dated March 26th was cut out of a NH paper in 1937. We do not have the name of the paper, but the by-line was H.N, Wells. The city is Claremont. The headline reads, SPRINGFIELD, SOUTH CORNISH AND NORTH CHARLESTOWN AREAS GOT SERVICE WASHINGTON PLANNING 19 MILE SETUP SOON. The article said that Springfield folks could rejoice that they could put away their kerosene lamps that had served them so long because electricity had come to town! The Public Service had flicked the switch. The red letter day had been March 13th for the strictly rural town tucked away in the northeastern corner of Sullivan County. This made electricity available to most of the town.

The people involved in bringing electricity to Springfield were Mr. and Mrs. Ed. C Philbrick, A.H. Metcalf and Mrs. S. A, Alexander. They were aided by Sullivan County Extension Svc. and the Farm Bureau. The town's people voted additional funds to complete financing the project. The construction began at Robinson's corner near Georges Mills and covered about 9 miles. It went through West Springfield village, Philbrick Hill, and George Hill.

Through these efforts, 40 homes were lighted as well as a powerful beacon on Philbrick Hill to guide the ships of the Boston and Maine airways as they pass in the night. The leaders of the enterprise hoped that the arrival of electricity would bring more "summer folks."

Around 1940-1941, the REA (Rural Electric Agency) one of the New Deal programs, brought electricity to 4A, then called the 4th NH Turnpike. What a difference that made to my grandparents' farm on 4A. I quickly learned about the power of electricity when at age four, I stuck a bobby pin in a wall plug in our new house by Lake Kolelemook! I believe that most of the Springfield people kept their kerosene lamps handy for sometimes electricity was know to fail especially in the winter. Who remembers the powerful beacon Philbrick Hill? If you do let us know. Neither my mother nor I remember it. *(Patsy Heath Caswell)*