



# COLQUITT EMC NEWSLINE

VOLUME 51, NUMBER 7

JULY 2021

## CELEBRATING OUR LEGACY: STORIES FROM OUR LEGACY MEMBERS

By Jennifer J. Hewett

When Colquitt Electric Membership Corp. power lines came to Alonzo “Lonnie” Grimsley’s family farm and homestead in Cook County, everyday life—and processes on the farm—changed. Russ Grimsley, 88, grew up there, and had four older siblings: Myrtle, Cleo, Jewel and Carroll. Today, he lives in Marietta with his wife, Doris.

He recalls the days before electricity at his family’s home in Adel:

“Electricity came real close to my home, and then [the electric lines] came across a field and then into our house.

“That all came across from the Van Brackle [Road] area (at the Crossroads). They were the first ones to have things like that. Then they ran the electric lines [over to us].

“I remember when they put the power lines in—I was out there watching it, the whole thing, because it was interesting. Especially to be able to have some light at night with those electric lights.

“Oh, it was very dark on the farm [until then]. There were no road lights.

Later on they put lights along the road, but there was nothing like that out there back then.

One big change Grimsley recalls were with the appliances at home:

“At that time, Daddy had a washing machine that had a gasoline-powered motor, and we converted that to run on electricity/power. For drying clothes, we always hung clothes out on a wire to dry in the yard.

“And naturally, Dad did most of the conversion of things—we did it ourselves. We didn’t hire anyone to do it. Back then a farmer could do [things like] that.

“Initially, we had just a few lights when they first put in electricity at our home. They were hang lights. The wire came out of the ceiling and dropped down so far, and you’d have one single bulb on that.

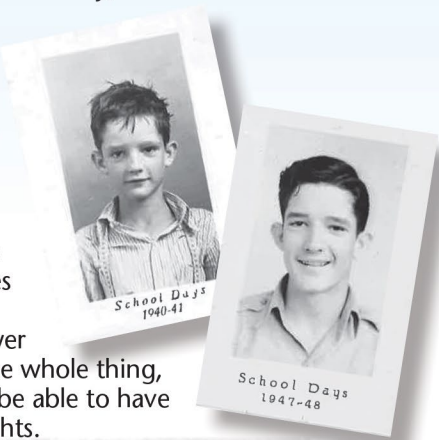
“[Before that] I studied in front of a fire, usually in the winter. I would get down [on the floor] and study in front of the fireplace. For light, we had kerosene lamps with a wick in it that we would carry from room to room. We also had an Aladdin lamp before we had the others. It had a little cone on it, and it would heat up and [illuminate] the area around it. (It had a wick that went down into oil, just like the room lamps.)”

“For refrigeration, it was real interesting. We had an ice plant in

*Continued on page 2.*



*Russ and Doris  
Grimsley*



*Family photos of Russ Grimsley and his mother, Ruby.*



## CELEBRATING OUR LEGACY *Continued from Front*

Adel, and we had individuals who ran ice trucks. And they would drive ice around to the farms. We had a refrigerator [a non-electric icebox] that had a place for the ice above and the other goods below. [The iceman] would come by, and you'd buy 50 pounds of ice. But naturally having the ice on top, the cold would [circulate] down to cool the food that was stored."

Grimsley says that his mother, Ruby, was a bit skeptical when it came to switching over to her new electric stove.

"We had an old wood-burning stove in the kitchen, and it also had a water heater on the side of it. The water was heated by the wood stove. When my mom first got the electric stove, she moved it in next to the old wood stove, but she didn't use the electric one for a long time. She was so used to how the wood stove worked, she didn't want to mess up any of her cooking."

"She was really afraid it wouldn't bake her biscuits like she was used to making them," Doris says. Ruby made biscuits three times a day to go with meals she'd prepare for the family. She often cooked cornbread, potatoes, butterbeans and other vegetables from her garden that grew just outside the kitchen.

"Eventually she moved from one stove to the next," Grimsley says.

Ruby's cooking often fed the neighbors and other workers who came to the farm when they needed help during tobacco season to help crop tobacco, string it and hang it in the barn where it would be cured.

"We called it 'swapping work,'" Grimsley says. "We'd work on one farm, then help at the next one. There were about 20 people. The women would cook meals for the workers. Whoever came to help got fed. We'd fill a tobacco barn at one farm, then go to the next farm to help out.

"And naturally, when [our homestead got] electricity,

it cut out a lot of my jobs. I was always outside splitting wood, cutting it down to these small pieces of wood to feed the wood stove. And I didn't have to do that anymore.

"Some of the other big changes were in curing tobacco," Grimsley says. His family's farm had a tobacco allotment, as did other farms in the area at the time.

"We were able to run power out to the tobacco barns. In curing tobacco, you would run the temperature up in the barn. Before that, we'd have a big furnace and you'd ram wood up inside it to heat the tobacco in the barn. What you had to do was—say, run it to 100 degrees or so until the tobacco would start turning—or we call it 'curing out.' Eventually it would change the color of the tobacco—then go to 180 degrees inside the barn to cure the stems.

"One good thing about it was, before we had electricity, we had to go around and feed the furnace wood—and we'd have to do it constantly. I'd lay out there at night, then go around put a bunch of wood in the furnace—then it would burn down. It was a constant job.

"When we got electricity, we cut that out, because [with an electric furnace], it automated it." He says the process of curing the tobacco took about a week.

### **Background:**

At age 16, Russ Grimsley graduated from Sparks-Adel High School. He attended South Georgia College, where he excelled in science and mathematics, and transferred to the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, where he earned a degree in mechanical engineering; he later earned his master's degree in business information systems from Georgia State University in Atlanta. He served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy and retired from a 35-year career with the Lockheed Corp. in Marietta. He and Doris raised four children in Smyrna and now live in Marietta.

## 2021 BOARD CANDIDATES

The Nominating Committee of Colquitt Electric Membership Corporation met Wednesday, June 9, 2021, and nominated the following individuals whose names will be placed on the ballot and voted on by the Colquitt EMC membership prior to the November 2, 2021 Annual Meeting:

District 1 - Colquitt County

**Clay Underwood**

District 5 - Lowndes County

**Bobby Exum**

District 7 - Worth/Tift Counties

**Gary Branch**

In addition to nominations made by the Nominating Committee, any 50 or more members may make nominations by petition. The deadline to receive nominations by petition is August 6, 2021. Members vote for directors via mail with election results presented at the Annual Meeting.\*

\*Note: The Colquitt EMC Bylaws allow for district director elections. This means that the only members who will be voting for director positions are those who have memberships in the districts (counties) of the directors who are up for election.

*See biographies on page 3.*



## DISTRICT 1 – COLQUITT COUNTY

### Clay Underwood

- Served on Colquitt EMC's Board since 2018  
- Currently serving as secretary-treasurer
- Completed all required courses to earn the NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate
- Row-crop farmer engaged in cotton, peanut and vegetable production
- Member of First Baptist Church of Moultrie



## DISTRICT 5 – LOWNDES COUNTY

### Bobby Exum

- Served on Colquitt EMC's Board since 2006  
-Currently serving as president; has previously served as president, vice president and secretary-treasurer
- Completed all required courses to earn the NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate
- Manages and operates his own farm in Lowndes County
- Member of Lowndes County Farm Bureau
- Member of Lowndes County Farm Service Agency Committee
- Member of Lowndes County Young Farmers
- Attends Primitive Baptist Churches



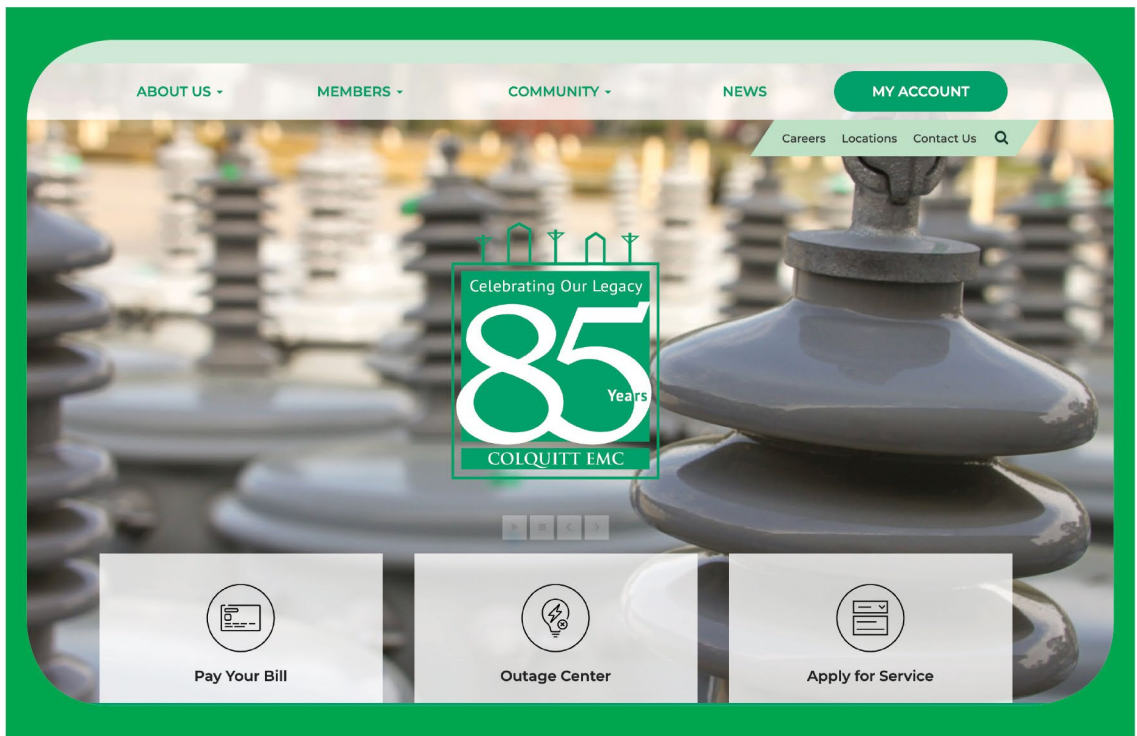
## DISTRICT 7 – WORTH/TIFT COUNTIES

### Gary Branch

- Served on Colquitt EMC's Board since 2009  
-Has served as president and secretary-treasurer
- Completed all required courses to earn the NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate
- Received an Associate Degree from ABAC & Bachelor of Science in Agronomy from the University of Georgia
- Farmer and Manager of Ty Ty Ag Services
- Member of Journey Baptist Church

# CELEBRATING OUR LEGACY

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### Statement of Nondiscrimination

Colquitt Electric Membership Corporation is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities. The person responsible for coordinating this organization's non-discrimination compliance efforts is Doug Loftis, Manager of Human Resources & Corporate Services. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Washington, D.C. 20250. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.



## Recipes of the Month



### Blueberry Cheesecake Pizza

#### INGREDIENTS

Serves: 8-10

1 cup all-purpose flour  
 1/4 cup powdered sugar  
 1/2 cup butter, melted  
 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened  
 1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk  
 1/3 cup lemon juice  
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 1/2 cup granulated sugar  
 2 tablespoons cornstarch  
 1/2 cup water  
 3 pints blueberries

#### DIRECTIONS

Combine flour and powdered sugar; add butter, mixing well. Pat dough out in a 14 inch pizza pan; bake at 350F for 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Combine cream cheese, condensed milk, lemon juice and vanilla; mix well and spread on cooled crust. Chill. Combine sugar and cornstarch in a large saucepan; add water, mixing until smooth. Cook over medium heat until thickened (about 5 minutes) stirring constantly. Add blueberries. Cool completely. Spread blueberry mixture over cream cheese layer; chill, cut into wedges to serve.



### Blueberry Lemon Bread

#### INGREDIENTS

Yield: 1 Loaf

1 1/2 cups flour  
 1 teaspoon baking powder  
 1/4 teaspoon salt  
 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened  
 1 cup sugar  
 2 large eggs  
 2 teaspoons lemon rinds, grated  
 1/2 cup milk  
 1 1/2 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen

#### ICING

1/3 cup sugar  
 2 tablespoons lemon juice

#### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 325° F. Butter 8 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 2 1/2 loaf pan. Combine first 3 ingredients in small bowl. Using electric mixer, cream butter with 1 cup sugar in large bowl until mixture is light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each. Add lemon peel. Mix in dry ingredients alternatively with milk, beginning and ending with dry ingredients. Fold in blueberries. Spoon batter into prepared loaf pan. Bake until golden brown and toothpick inserted into center comes out clean, about 1 hour 15 minutes. Meanwhile, bring 1/3 cup sugar and lemon juice to boil in small saucepan, stirring until sugar dissolves. Pierce top of cake all over with toothpick. Pour hot lemon mixture over loaf in pan. Cool 30 minutes in pan on rack. Turn bread out of pan and cool completely on rack.

(Cut Here)