



## An interview with Centenarian Harold Wass

Can you imagine being a centenarian and living for over 100 years? Just think of all the changes someone born in 1913 has experienced from horses to vehicles, even electric vehicles for that matter!

On March 9, Jon Weitgenant (nephew to Harold), Gary Sieve and Tracey Haberman had the privilege of sitting down with Harold Wass. Harold was born in 1913 in the Manson's Hospital in Worthington. Dr. F. M. Manson founded the Worthington hospital in 1906 and was the Wass family physician for a number of years. Harold had five siblings. "People had a lot of kids back then, they needed workers," explained Harold. His oldest sister married Paul Soderholm, the brother to Hjalmer O. Soderholm, one of the first directors to serve on Nobles Cooperative Electric's (NCE) Board of Directors.

Harold's family was one of the lucky ones. Since 1920, they had electricity from the "Bigelow line that came out of Worthington." That year a group of farmers in Worthington and Bigelow Townships pioneered this rural elec-

tric project. They built 16 miles of line serving approximately 50 farms from the Worthington municipal plant (see page 4.) Just to put that in perspective, only one farm out of ten had electricity in 1936. Harold remembers it costing \$450 to connect. That is a lot of money now, let alone 98 years ago.

The Worthington-Bigelow line was taken over by NCE in 1950. "Before the REA, every time we had an ice storm we always had problems with our line. I remember going out and using a long fishing pole on the line to drop the ice and get the line back up. We were all very glad when the REA came. The REA had good service." (37-16-76) For many years, NCE purchased its electricity from the Worthington municipal plant. However, in 1957, NCE became one of the rural power systems comprising the Cooperative Power Association. They arranged for the delivery of power from Federal power plants on the Missouri River, which resulted in savings on power costs.

One storm that stays etched in Har-

*Cont. on page 3*

*Cover photo: (Middle) Harold speaking to a group of businessmen during a tour of his farm. Many groups from Europe and all over the United States would tour the farm and others in the region. This picture was taken in the 1950s.*

## Energy saving tip

When streaming online content, use the smallest device that makes sense for the number of people watching. Avoid streaming on game consoles, which use 10 times more power than streaming through a tablet or laptop.

*Source: energy.gov*

## Mark your calendar

Apr. 22..... Earth Day  
Apr. 25..... Electric bills due  
May 13..... Happy Mother's Day!

## Spot your location number in *Current Matters*

Find your location number (as it appears on your monthly electric bill) in this issue and you will receive a \$10 credit.





A word from your  
General Manager  
**Adam Tromblay**

I hope you enjoyed a look back into history in this month's newsletter. It is very hard to put your mind around all the changes that have taken place in Harold's life.

Someday, I would like to go on NRECA's International trip and see the amazement in a child's eyes as they flip a switch and a light bulb lights up a room for the first time. Until then, I live through stories like the one told here. (516-37-199) My neighbor Pete also remembers a fall many years ago when electricity came very close to his home. Pete's family had to wait until spring to have the line completed so his family could enjoy life changing appli-



## Just take a minute to win it Sign up for Auto Pay today!



**Lori Debates**  
March Winner

"Auto Pay Sign Up Form." You may also sign up by calling our office at 800-776-0517. Join now to be eligible for our Auto Pay drawing.

Take a minute to **sign up for Auto Pay**. You could win a **\$25 credit** on your NCE bill.

Members who are already saving time and money with Auto Pay will be automatically entered in our monthly contest. **The Auto Pay promotion will run all year**. Each month a winner will be randomly selected to receive a \$25 credit on their electric bill.

There is no fee to sign up for Auto Pay. By enrolling, you choose to conveniently have your bill payment automatically deducted from your checking or savings account. This eliminates mailing payments and helps avoid late payments. Whether your home or away, this service keeps your payments on time. No fees. No checks. No postage.

Visit our website ([www.noblesce.coop](http://www.noblesce.coop)), go to "Quick Links" and click on

ances and tools electricity would bring them.

It's nearly impossible to fathom life without electricity. No lights whenever we want them, no TV, no electric oven, no microwave, and, worst of all, there would be no cell phone connected to the internet to consume so much of our waking hours.

As much as I love history and looking back, I love looking at where we are today and where we are going in the future even more. The products we use today are getting more efficient and using less energy than ever. Some may think this is a bad thing coming from an individual that sells energy, but it forces

us to make sure we are doing things the most efficient way possible and spending our member-owners' money in the most prudent ways.

The last couple of years, NCE has brought our system into the digital age. We have automated things to help us monitor what is going on and used future modeling to ensure we are delivering quality power to our member-owners now and into the future.



### Summer Business Hours

**May 1 through September 28**  
7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

## The Wass interview

*Cont. from page 1*



*Jon and Harold reminiscing about the past. Jon's mother, Marian, was Harold's sister. Marian passed away in 2016, just shy of turning 100.*

### Cost of electricity in 1950

First 40 kWh or less	\$4.00 per month
Next 40 kWh	\$.04 per kWh
Next 120 kWh	\$.02 per kWh
Over 200 kWh	\$.015 per kWh

### Today

First 700 kWh	\$.087 per kWh
Next 700 kWh	\$.083 per kWh

old's mind is the Armistice Day Blizzard. It was an incredible storm that wiped out all the turkeys in Nobles County. Years ago, if you were to look at the countryside, you would see the whole ground white covered with range turkeys. This storm took out all the turkeys, "Nobles County especially."

"Electricity was really great. It made lighter work out of milking and picking corn by hand. I remember going into town with my mother in a buggy with old Kate, our horse. We'd drop off the horse and buggy at Hay's Feed Barn in Worthington, do our business, while they fed and watched our horse." The very large barn was widely known as the Hay Barn for the quantity of hay that was inside. But it was actually owned by Bill Hay dating (23-23-28) back to the 19th century and located on 11th Street beside the now demolished YMCA building and outside the back door of what was the Daily Globe building facing Third Avenue.

At one time they had nine horses, 11 milk cows and 200 chickens. The eggs were brought to town to sell and helped purchase groceries to feed the family. Working with horses caused many serious accidents to farm families in those days from being thrown when riding, kicked or being involved in a runaway.

Harold remembered a time in 1932 when he was involved in a runaway. He was hauling tile for his brother Louis from the Vernon Widboom farm going home around 4 p.m. on Second Avenue North in Worthington, north of the lake, at the top of a hill, when his horses were spooked by the sound of a steam engine whistle. The horses went into a full gallop for quite some distance before calming down.

Harold recalls having electricity for a number of years before appliances. Their first wash machine was a second-hand machine from their pastor. When the pastor moved, the Wass family purchased the machine. Harold remembers it being made of copper.

While he was in high school in 1928, Harold purchased his first car, a Model T, for \$50 from his brother. "That Model T never failed me." When Harold first started farming, he farmed with his brother Clarence. Their first tractor was a John Deere GP with a two bottom plow. They continued to use horses to help them cultivate. Later they would purchase a cultivator that eventually would eliminate the horses from the farm.

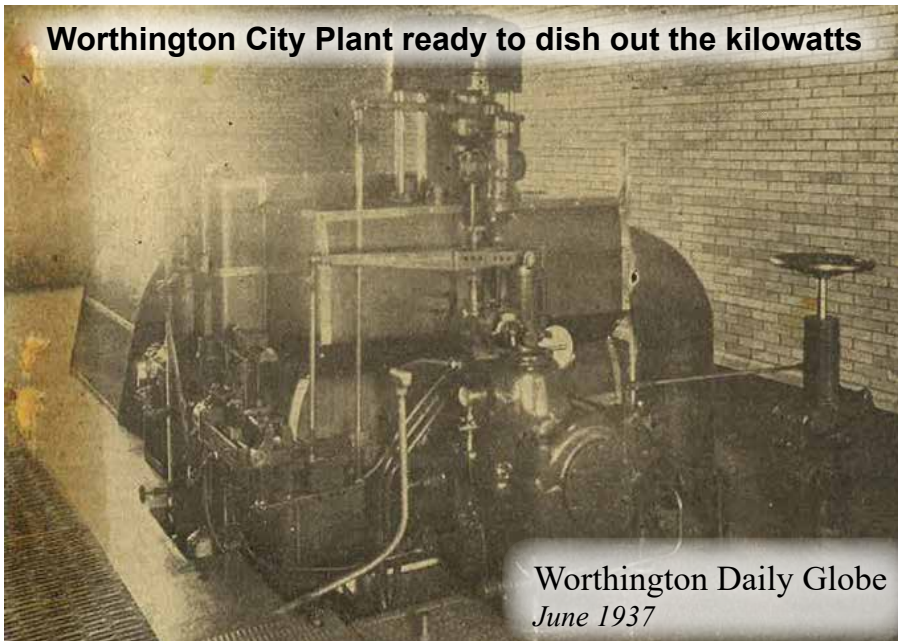
In 1939, Harold married Thelma Thompson. They had three children: Patricia (Dale) Frantz, lives in Laurens,

Iowa. She is a retired school teacher. Tom, a retired hog buyer from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Nancy (Kevin) Flynn is a librarian from Worthington. The family farmed and raised about 300 feeder cattle each year, later switching to Angus. In 1974, farming had changed so much that Harold and Thelma needed to decide if they were going to purchase new equipment or retire. They decided to retire and moved to Worthington.

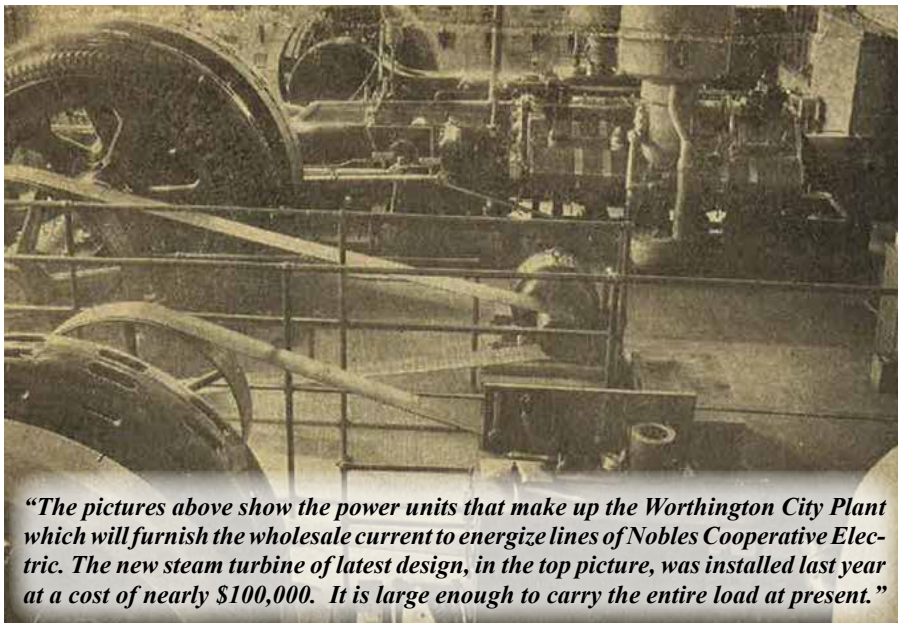
Harold was active in the First Covenant Church and was on the Worthington School Board for 18 years, with another 10 years on the County School Board. He was on the Worthington Farmer's Elevator Board (which later became Consolidated Co-op and New Vision) for 19 years, (2-22-35) holding the office of president for nine years. Harold was removed from office through consolidation. They put all seven directors' names in a hat and picked out six, the one name not selected was removed from the board. That name was Harold Wass.

He attributes his long life to, "Eating all the wrong foods. I love fat meat and candy. They trim pork chops way too thin nowadays. I may not have eaten right, but I worked hard on the farm from hay work, shucking, threshing to handling the square bales. I think working hard over the years has helped.

## Worthington City Plant ready to dish out the kilowatts



Worthington Daily Globe  
June 1937



*"The pictures above show the power units that make up the Worthington City Plant which will furnish the wholesale current to energize lines of Nobles Cooperative Electric. The new steam turbine of latest design, in the top picture, was installed last year at a cost of nearly \$100,000. It is large enough to carry the entire load at present."*

## Country Cupboard

### Hamburger Soup

2 lg. potatoes, sliced	2 onions, thinly sliced
1 lb. bag baby carrots	1 1/2 lb. ground beef, browned
2 stalks celery, diced	1 can tomato soup
1 - 15 oz. can peas	1 c. water
1 - 15 oz. can corn	4 beef bullion cubes

Layer ingredients in crock pot in order given, seasoning to taste each layer as you go. Cover and set to low. Cook six to eight hours or all (8-24-5) day while at work. Stir when ready to serve.

Send your favorite **salad** recipe to Nobles Cooperative Electric, ATTN: Tracey, P.O. Box 788, Worthington, MN 56187-0788. Entries must include your name, address, telephone number and NCE location number. All entries must be received by April 25. The winning recipe will be featured in the next edition of *Current Matters* and the winner will receive a **\$10 credit** on their electric bill.

Jan Sathre  
Ellsworth



Nobles Cooperative  
Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

### Official monthly publication

22636 U.S. Hwy. 59, P.O. Box 788  
Worthington, MN 56187-0788  
Phone: 507-372-7331,  
507-836-6107 or 800-776-0517  
Fax: 507-372-5148

### Website

[www.noblesce.coop](http://www.noblesce.coop)

### E-mail address

[nce@noblesce.com](mailto:nce@noblesce.com)

### Office hours

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Monday through Friday

### 24-Hour outage service

800-776-0517

### Gopher State One-Call

800-252-1166 or 811

### Electrical inspectors

Murray County  
Randal Maha - 507-274-5261  
Nobles County  
Scott Preuss - 507-430-3652

### General Manager

Adam Tromblay

### Board of Directors

Ronald Schwartau, President - 734-3052\*  
Lee York, V. President - 879-3497\*  
David Clarke, Sec./Treas. - 425-2646\*  
Bruce Barber, Director - 329-4399\*  
Jerry Beckering, Director - 442-8511\*  
Cindy Hokeness, Director - 478-4965\*  
Gary Sieve, Director - 926-5455\*

\*Telephone prefix 507

### Next Board Meeting

April 16, 2018

*This cooperative is an equal  
opportunity provider and employer.*

