

### The First Telephone on the Farm

I was at a fam meeting a few days ago. Six of us were having lunch.

There was one other old guy besides me. The rest of the fellows were from 20 to 40 years old.

Someone brought up the subject of phones. That got the other old guy talking.

I personally think that old guys talk about the "old days" too much so I try to minimize that when I am with a group of folks that I do not know.

This other old guy had no such inhibition.

He got to telling us about how he helped his dad mainatine the first telephone line in their farm neighborhood. The younger guys really could not relate and their pretty much glazed over.

Mom said that we got electricity on the farm the year I was born and the telephone after that.

The thing I remember best about electricity is that Mom would light a kerosene lamp on the kitchen table when a thunderstorm approached after dark. Obviously, the power went out a lot.

Electric service and phone service were both cooperative efforts in farm areas.

We were connected to an Elk River exchange but the party line was local.

The maintenance of the telephone system was a shared effort.

Each of the serveral party members was responsible for mainatning the line for a period of time.

Pa was the local lineman for a time. I think at least a year.

He had a set of pole climbing gear. That includes the barbed footgear and a waist strap for shinning up the poles. That was necessary if the wires got tangled or an insulator needed to be replaced etc.

The telephones were a relatively large wooden box that hung on the wall. I have pasted a photo.





