

Electric Service in Hugo
Public Service Has Had Unique Growth In Hugo
transcribed by Ron Henson

For 35 years, since before statehood, Hugo has enjoyed the convenience of electricity.

Electricity first came to Hugo through a direct grant by the federal government.

A 50 year franchise was awarded William Busby January 9, 1906, by the department of the interior. Contract provisions required that school buildings, the city hall and the "town prison" be furnished free lights.

Busby operated the generating plant in conjunction with a sawmill.

Such was the beginning, the nucleus, of electrical service in the Choctaw county capital.

Back in 1906, business firms were required to pay a flat rate, as much for each electrical bulb in the store or office, regardless of how many minutes or hours it was burned daily.

Service was "spotted" and was used chiefly from dusk until midnight.

The first residential service cost 50 cents each for the first two lamps a month, 40 cents a month each for the next six lamps and 30 cents a month each for lamps in excess of eight.

In 1909, C.W. Dawley of McAlester acquired the Hugo electric properties. One of the first acts of the new management was to reduce and adjust the electric rate on a kilowatt usage basis.

At this time, Hugo's streets were lighted with 21 arc lamps, in the downtown area. There were 103 other street lights of smaller size.

It became part of the present system in 1913 and improvement in the system, its service and rates was the constant aim and endeavor [sic] of the company. Hugo's estimated population at the time was 5500 and there were 600 meters in the city of Hugo.

J.W. Dawley, a brother of C.W. Dawley, was manager of the Hugo light and ice plant at this time. He remained in charge until 1918.

He was succeeded by R.C. Trube. The succession of managers then includes O.H. Weddle, P.J. Hayes, Douglas Parks and W.B. Harris, who now is manager and has been in charge of the enlarged district for 12 years.

Public Service Company of Oklahoma brought inter-connecting lines into the Hugo territory in 1927, enlarged and improved the Hugo generating station with the removal of a 250 kilowatt turbine and a 100 kilowatt belt-driven engine generator set and the installation of a 1,000 kilowatt and a 1,500 kilowatt condensing type turbo-generator unit, bringing the total capacity up to 3,000 kilowatts in turbo generating units or four times the

capacity which had existed prior to them.

At that time, the top rate for electric service was 14 cents a kilowatt hour, and the bottom rate was 8 cents a kilowatt hour. The average residential use, [unreadable] kilowatt hours, cost at that time \$8.54.

Today, it costs only \$3.51, which is a reduction of [unreadable] or 50 per cent. The average commercial use, 191 kilowatt hours, cost \$25.2. Today it costs \$10.76, a reduction of \$14.75, or [unreadable] per cent.

Manager Harris is a veteran in the electric utility business.