

I'M THE LEADER OF THOUSANDS.

“Together, we can **BUILD** a colony **OVERNIGHT**. And one of our favorite places to do that is **INSIDE** pad-mount transformers. When you're not looking, 200,000 of my closest friends and I are **MOVING** into this dry, warm and cozy environment.”

When it comes to being good stewards of our environment, we believe that includes protecting the critters that share East Texas with us. At Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, we take proactive measures to keep animals safe from electrical hazards. And by protecting our furry and feathered friends, we're also providing more reliable service for you, our members.



 **Sam Houston**
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Warning: Don't Bake All Bulbs

Be careful when replacing your oven's light bulb

EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, CO



[PHOTO] A co-op member in Colorado scraped this melted CFL bulb off the side of his oven. Replacing general use lightbulbs with efficient CFLs or LEDs saves energy, but not every bulb works under extreme temperatures.

NRECA



[PHOTO] Use caution when replacing an oven light. Never put a bulb in the oven that's not built for high heat.

Since CFLs don't use heat to create light, they are 75 percent more energy efficient. But the technology that cuts energy use doesn't stand a chance in an oven's 400+ degree heat. CFLs are good for the pocketbook but not perfect in every situation.

The same advice rings true when it comes to your refrigerator and freezers. Make sure whatever bulb you choose can withstand extreme temperatures—both hot and cold.

Oven lights are handy. Curious if a casserole's ready? Flip the switch; no need to open the oven and release heat to get a baking update.

But be careful when replacing this little light. Never put a bulb in the oven that's not built for high heat.

Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) use less energy than classic incandescent bulbs, but they're not safe in extreme temperatures.

Most lighting labels designate safe temperatures, but warnings may be in fine print.

Need to replace your oven light? Look for appliance light bulbs. Found at Home Depot, Lowe's, Walmart and other retailers, these bulbs are designed for extreme temperatures in ovens and refrigerators. Be sure the bulb is designed specifically for appliance use before purchasing.

The hardy bulbs are here to stay; 40-watt appliance bulbs are exempt from federal lighting efficiency standards.

Why won't CFLs work? Instead of heating a filament until white-hot to produce light like an incandescent bulb, a fluorescent lamp contains a gas that produces (UV) ultraviolet light when excited by electricity.

The UV light and the white coating inside the bulb result in visible light.

Keep These Tips in Mind



1. Don't dim unless it's dimmable. Buy a specifically designed CFL to use in a dimmer switch application.
2. Don't flip too fast. CFLs work best if they are left on for more than 15 minutes each time they are turned on. Older bulbs take 30 seconds to three minutes to reach efficient operation.

Frequently switching them on and off shortens bulb life. Newer CFLs feature an 'Instant on' capability; look for that on the lighting label if you expect frequent flipping.
3. Give them air. CFLs may be used in enclosed fixtures as long as the enclosed fixture is not recessed. Totally enclosed recessed fixtures create temperatures too high for CFLs.
4. Protect CFLs outside. Look at the package or bulb for temperature restrictions before using a CFL outdoors.
5. Don't shake. Don't use CFLs in vibrating environments such as a ceiling fan or garage door opener.
6. Do the twist. Always screw and unscrew the lamp by its base. Never forcefully twist the CFL into a light socket by the glass tubes.

To learn more about using and recycling CFLs, visit www.epa.gov/cfl.

SOURCE: EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY



Co-op Employees Bring Christmas Cheer



Two local families had a happier Christmas after Sam Houston Electric Cooperative employees donated more than \$600 worth of presents to them through the Empty Stocking Program.

The floor by the Christmas tree in the Sam Houston EC call center was covered with presents for the two families. Both families are single-parent households. One family has two children, a girl age 3 and an 11-month-old boy. The second family has one daughter, age 14.

Founded in 1998, the Empty Stocking program helps low-income families provide Christmas gifts for their children. The program is sponsored by the Livingston Interagency Council—a network of social service agencies that provide various forms of assistance throughout Polk County. Area schools and local social service providers come together to serve the needs of needy families in Polk County.

Tips for Space Heater Safety



As temperatures drop this winter, many will look for supplemental heating sources for their homes. Space heaters can be a good alternative, however, space heaters are also responsible for 32 percent of house fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Review these tips from Sam Houston Electric Cooperative to keep you, your family and your property safe.

Materials – Parts of your space heater like metal grating can be hot to the touch and may burn anyone who gets too close. Make sure you purchase a heater that is cool to the touch and has guards over the coils just in case little fingers get too close.

Placement - It is safest to leave the heater on a level floor on a nonflammable surface. Keeping the space heater on the floor can keep it from falling over, preventing fire hazards. Also, remember that space heaters and bathrooms are not a good combination, unless the heater is designed for bathroom use. Space heaters should always be kept three feet away from flammable materials and out of the way of children and pets.

Cords – You should never use an extension cord when plugging in a space heater as it can cause overheating. The space heater should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, and should be the only thing plugged in to the wall outlet. Also make sure cords aren't in a high-traffic area so they are not a tripping hazard.

Use – Never leave a heater unattended while in use. If you are leaving your home or going to bed, make sure to unplug the heater.

Co-op Connections Deals



The Co-op Connections Card is a member benefit program that delivers

discounts from participating businesses, both local and nationwide. Visit www.connections.coop for more deals.

G's Cleaning & Maid Services

830 Hughes Road
Coldspring, TX 77331
888-629-7832
www.gsgogreen.com
M-F, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.; Sat, 8-5
Offer: 10% off deep cleanings

Top Knotch Tree Service

Livingston, TX
409-377-3997
24/7 emergency services
Offer: 10% discount on total job

A-Z Tire & Battery Inc.

1205 N. Washington
Livingston, TX 77351
936-327-7032
M-F, 7:30-5:30; Sat, 8-1
www.atoztire.com
Offer: 5% off purchases, excluding special orders.

Conservation Corner



Fighting winter chills? A crackling fire in the hearth warms the house, but don't let it heat up your electric bill. To

cool energy costs, keep the fireplace damper closed when not in use. Caulk around the fireplace hearth. Double up on wood-earned warmth by lowering the thermostat setting to between 50 degrees and 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY



Service is the Heart of Our Community



We're seeing red (and pink). Valentine's Day could be a great holiday, but the cards, balloons, and candy cramming aisles this time of year miss the mark. We need a card for our community. It's great to let loved ones know you care about them, but let's go a step further. As a member-owned electric cooperative, we're committed to powering our community and empowering you to improve your quality of life. How can life be better in East Texas? We need hearts for service.

On February 14, take time to send a card to a police officer or firefighter. Give candy (or an apple) to a school teacher. Visit a retirement home and spend time with the folks who built our community. Send balloons—or better yet, sign up for Sam Houston Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up program, where members like you are donating just a few cents a month to strengthen our community. On Valentine's Day (and every day), let's celebrate service, the heart of our community.

Together We Save



Here's a question for you: "What's the best part about being a member of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative?"

While narrowing it down is tough, we believe it's the peace of mind that comes with knowing that the Co-op is working hard to provide safe, reliable electric service at the lowest possible cost. It's also about how we play a vital role in the community, return money to members when

revenues exceed costs, and help make everything from your electric bill to everyday purchases more affordable.

One specific way we help members save money is with the Co-op Connections Card. Offered for free, the card can help you save on everything from dry cleaning to oil changes to dining out. Your card also helps lower the cost of prescriptions, dental and vision care by up to 85 percent. You can save at both local and nationwide retailers, too. All you have to do is show your card!

In addition to local deals, Co-op Connections Card holders receive access to special partner discount sites, like Coupons.com for grocery shopping and Pet Assure for savings on veterinary services. The Co-op Connections Card can also be used when you shop online and at nearly 23,000 businesses nationwide.

To search for discounts or to find out more about your card, visit www.connections.coop/samhoustonec. With the Co-op Connection Card, together we can save even more.

Think Safety.

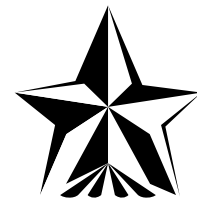
Power Poles are a Bad Place to Post Signs

Power poles may seem like the ideal place to hang a garage sale sign or a basketball goal, but nails and tacks make it dangerous for line technicians to climb poles. They can puncture gloves and other protective equipment, creating a serious safety hazard. Please help us work safely by not posting signs on power poles.




SAFETY DOESN'T STOP HERE.

At Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, we believe one of our most important roles in the community is to educate our members and neighbors about what to do in order to stay safe around electric power. Visit www.samhouston.net and click on "Safety Sense."



Sam Houston
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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[PHOTO] A.T. and Addie Odom,
direct descendants of Jim &
Winnie, seen here in the 1930s.

a love supreme

By Randy Mallory

A spring of clear water flows from a wooded hillside in Shankleville, a community of some 200 residents, three churches and two cemeteries in northern Newton County. This steady stream makes its way from tributary to tributary into the Sabine River, then into the Gulf of Mexico. Dozens if not hundreds of such hidden East Texas springs follow a similar path to the sea. This spring is different, however, because of a love story that took root here more than 170 years ago...a love story that continues to inspire this rural community today.

The story begins 400 miles east in Wayne County, Miss., where a budding romance was broken apart in the 1840s. That's when a young couple—Jim Shankle and Winnie Brush, both born into slavery—fell in love on the plantation of their owner, Isaac Rollins. After Rollins' daughter and son-in-law moved to East Texas to establish a frontier farm, he either gave them or sold them Winnie and her three children.

Heartbroken, Jim fled the plantation determined to find Winnie. He traveled on foot in the dark of night to avoid apprehension as a runaway. He foraged for food, got directions from field hands, and swam rivers to make his way to East Texas. One day, miraculously, he happened upon Winnie gathering water from her new master's spring and called her name. Surprised and delighted, Winnie secretly fed Jim who hid in the woods for some time. Finally, the reunited couple approached Winnie's master—a man named David Ford (or Forde), believed

to be a Methodist minister—and convinced him to buy Jim and let them start a family.

Jim and Winnie had six more children and, after emancipation and the end of the Civil War, received a parcel of land from Ford. Ever industrious, by 1867 Jim was able to buy more land and founded the freedman's community of Shankleville near the spring where he and Winnie reunited. The Shankles became the first African-Americans in Newton County to own land and become community leaders. Jim partnered with son-in-law Stephen McBride to buy more land, hundreds if not thousands of acres.

Shankleville eventually grew into a mostly self-sufficient farming community with a school, two stores, and three churches, plus a blacksmith shop, cotton gin, gristmill, sawmill and syrup mill. Stephen McBride even established McBride College (1883-1909) a so-called "normal school" where educators from the North came to train locals in the skills of teaching.



Now in his late 80s, Anderson White Jr. fondly recalls growing up in the community founded by his wife Lillie's great-grandparents.

"Times could be tough, but we all shared with each other," White says, still a Shankleville resident. "If somebody had to butcher a cow, the teacher would announce it at our little four-room school, and families would show up to help."

Younger descendants of Jim and Winnie also recall Shankleville as an idyllic place to grow up.

"Back then, there was just a small dirt road through here, so we were pretty much on our own," adds the Whites' youngest son, Billy White of Houston. "As kids we could just wander around on our own to play. Everybody looked out for everybody else, it was such a close-knit community."

Today that dirt lane is two-lane FM 1415, and Shankleville, like many rural communities, is a place where people grow up, but often drive through or move elsewhere to work.

"We sometimes worry about younger generations moving away and losing contact with Shankleville," says the Whites' oldest son, Phillip White of Orange. "But I'm optimistic. We know the hardships our ancestors went through, and we still have a drive to hold on to what they built."

Adds sister Geri White Rowe of Houston, "This is our children's heritage. That's what I think Jim and Winnie had in mind for all the sacrifices they made."

Indeed, Shankleville always has drawn its strength from Jim and Winnie's story of love and

determination, explains their great-great-great granddaughter, Lareatha Clay of Dallas. "That history gives all the descendants a sense of pride about where we came from and where we want to go."

In fact, two state historical markers in Shankleville recount that rare history. Nearby at the Jim Shankle Cemetery, a homemade concrete tombstone erected in 1945 rises beside a modern marker where Jim and Winnie are buried side by side. An inscription on the older marker says: "Remembered For What They Have Done."

Within eyesight is the Mt. Zion CME Church, which Jim and Winnie helped found. That church and the community's two other churches—the Church of God and Mount Hope Baptist Church—rotate duties as host for an annual community reunion each August. Known as Homecoming, the reunion began in 1941, almost a century after Jim and Winnie's fateful reunion by the spring. Each Homecoming, families from across the state and nation gather to renew the ties of family and friends and to retell the story of Jim and Winnie.

"It's the only time of year we see some of the folks we've known from childhood. It's a great way to keep our collective memory alive," Lareatha Clay explains, who in 1988 joined others in forming the Shankleville Historical Society to document, celebrate and preserve their shared history.

To encourage the interest of youth, the organization established the Shankleville Memorial Scholarship, which awards college scholarships each Homecoming to essay contest winners who write convincingly about attributes of Jim and Winnie—such as determination, perseverance and hard work.

Many Shankle descendants, such as Lareatha Clay, continue to live out the family legacy. The business consultant has served as a statewide commissioner for the Texas Historical Commission. In 2003, she joined her mother, Larutha Odom Clay of Beaumont, and her sister, Mathia Clay of Dallas, in becoming the first African-American members of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the state's oldest patriotic women's organization. Research required for that milestone confirmed much of Jim and Winnie's story.

Shankleville boasts a number of other accomplished descendants: Public officials such as Arlington, Texas', first black council member and mayor Elzie Odom; Lufkin city councilman Robert Shankle; Beaumont



[PHOTOS, top to bottom] A.T. "Big Papa" Odom lived his entire life in Shankleville, leading the community as an entrepreneurial farmer, carpenter and shopkeeper.

[PHOTO 2] "Big Mama" in the kitchen at the Odom house, now a registered landmark in Shankleville.

[PHOTO 3] A.T. "Big Papa" Odom seen here working on a logging truck in the early 1900s around the age of 20.

city councilman Audwin Samuel; and Anderson White Jr., the first African-American Newton County commissioner. Professional sports figures include Oklahoma City Thunder basketball player Kendrick Perkins and former New York Giants player and media personality Michael Strahan. Included in that list is renowned educator and psychologist Asa Hilliard.

Lareatha Clay and other descendants remain determined to turn Shankleville into a center of African-American heritage in East Texas. Last year they founded the annual Texas Purple Hull Pea Festival, which showcases local culture and foodways. (See the sidebar at right for details.)

They reached another milestone when the National Park Service listed Shankleville's most historic home on the National Register of Historic Places. It is the 1922 Craftsman-style cottage of community stalwarts Addie L. and A.T. Odom (known to his family as "Big Papa") who was a descendent of Harriet Odom, the eldest of Jim and Winnie's six children.

For decades, the Odom line of Shankles has hosted its own family reunion on Father's Day weekend of even-numbered years. The family gathers in the shade of a giant sycamore tree in front of the historic Odom homestead. Harold Odom Jr. of Houston makes the short walk down the hillside from the Odom homestead to clean out the spring where Jim and Winnie reunited. Then the family members—sometimes 100 or more—gather around the spring, drink from its clear waters, and retell the inspiring love story.

"It's emotional to think of what happened here," Harold Odom Jr. says. "During the last family reunion, my oldest grandchild was the one retelling Jim and Winnie's story. It's great to know that their legacy and our love of family is being passed down to future generations."



[PHOTO, left] Jim Shankle Cemetery, located in Shankleville, Texas, includes the graves of Jim and Winnie Shankle. The site is marked by a homemade grave marker from 1943, along with a modern marker. The legacy of Shankleville is maintained by descendants who want to make the community a hub for African-American history in East Texas.

texas purple hull pea festival



Historic Shankleville will host the second annual Texas Purple Hull Pea Festival on June 27, 2015, at the Addie L. and A.T. Odom Homestead, featuring live music, contests, vendors and food.

Events include fun contests such as pea picking, pea shelling and pea shooting, along with food competitions for best purple hull peas, best original recipe using purple hull peas and best condiment. Experts will discuss the nutritional value of purple hull peas and offer tips on planting and preserving them. There will also be a marketplace of vendors and farmers.

This year's symposium will feature writer Nola McKey discussing her book of second-generation Texas recipes. Andrea Roberts, a doctoral researcher at the University of Texas-Austin, also will lead a discussion on the 500 freedmen's communities, such as Shankleville, that once existed in Texas. Representatives of the Texas Historical Commission will highlight resources and preservation practices available to historic communities.

A highlight of the 2015 festival will be guided tours of Shankleville, including its cemeteries and walks to the spring where founders Jim and Winnie Shankle reunited. The festival was organized by the Shankleville Historical Society with support from the Deep East Texas Council of Governments, Foodways Texas, Newton County, and the Office of State Representative James White.

Shankleville is located on FM 1415 two miles southwest of Burkeville, between Texas 63 and Texas 87 in north central Newton County. For additional information, go to www.shankleville.org or contact Lareatha Clay (214-914-8137; lhclay@prm-od.com).

[PHOTO, above] Representative James White (center) at the 2014 Texas Purple Hull Pea Festival.