

Mason-Dansville Experimental Rural Electric Line

By Michigan Farm Energy Program



Electric Park, located near the intersection of Meridian Road and M-36, is the site of the first rural electrical line in Michigan, and the world (Holt-Delhi Historical Society, n.d.).



This experimental line between Mason and Dansville was a collaboration between Michigan State University (Michigan State Collage (MSC)), Consumers Energy (Consumers Power Company), farm organizations, and twelve farm families located along the line.

The line was built between 1926-1927, and formally energized February 4th, 1927

The line was paid for by Consumers Power Company, with no costs to the farms (Holt-Delhi Historical Society, n.d.).



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Image from *MSU Brand Studio*, by Michigan State University (n.d.).

Consumers Energy

Image from *Consumers Energy Brand Assets – Media Center*, by Consumers Energy (n.d.).

Herman Gallagher, a professor in the Department of Agricultural Engineering at MSC, was tasked with supervising this experimental electric line designed to study the usefulness of electricity in farm life (Holt-Delhi Historical Society, n.d.). The line passed by thirty-three farms, of which only twelve farms, initially thirteen, expressed interest in the experiment (Mason History Museum, 2021).

MSC, Consumers Power, and Gallagher and his students helped supply the participating farms with appliances and mechanical equipment for testing their use on farms (Holt-Delhi Historical Society, n.d.).

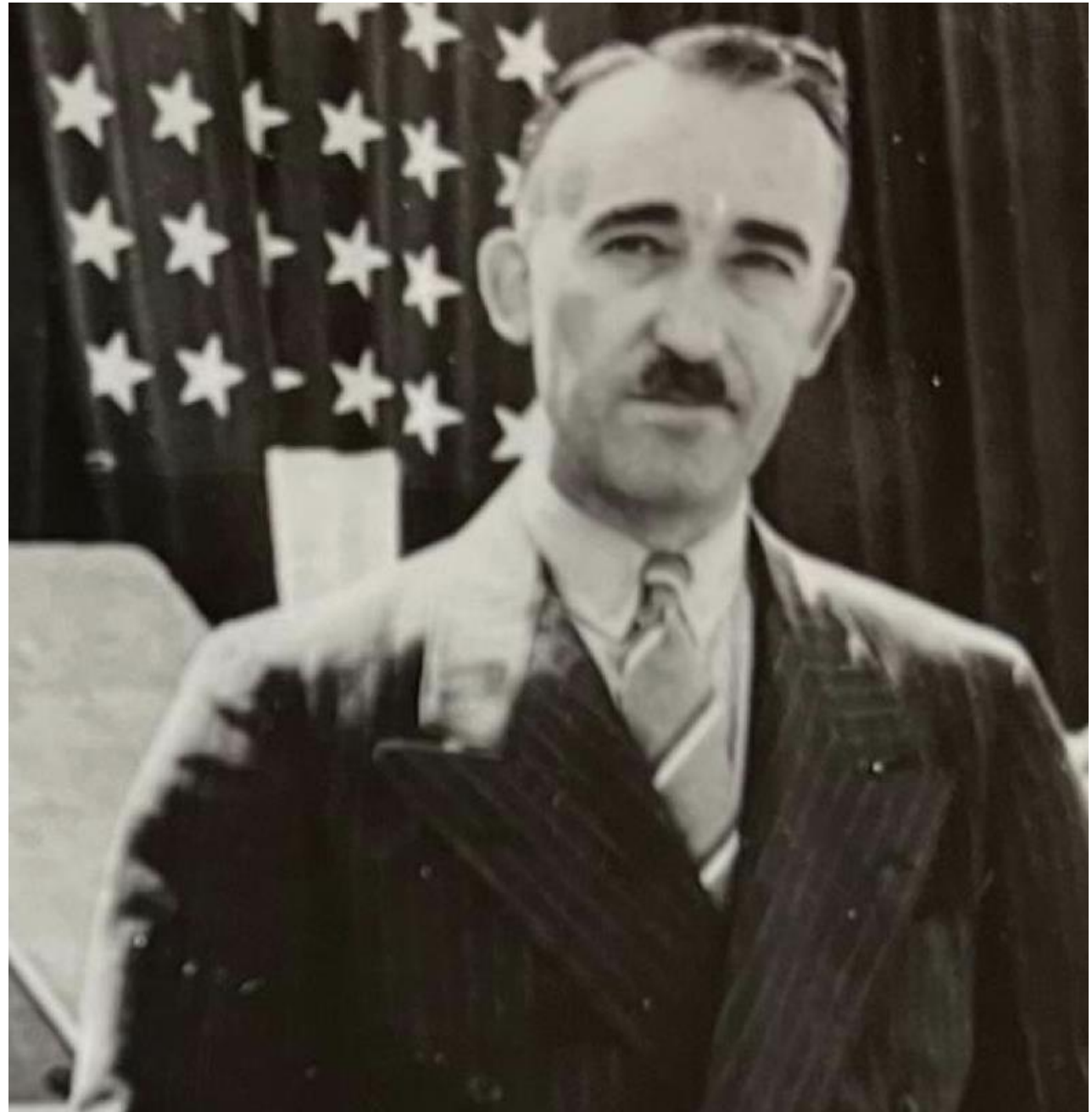
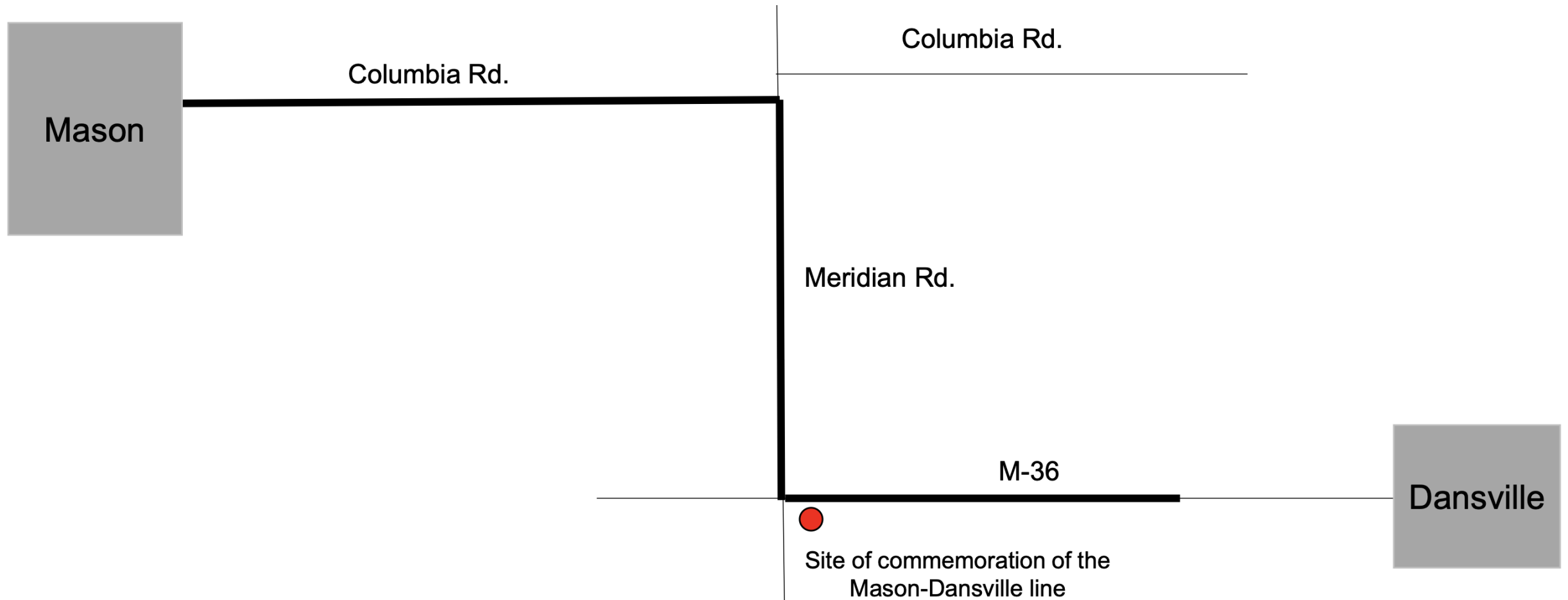
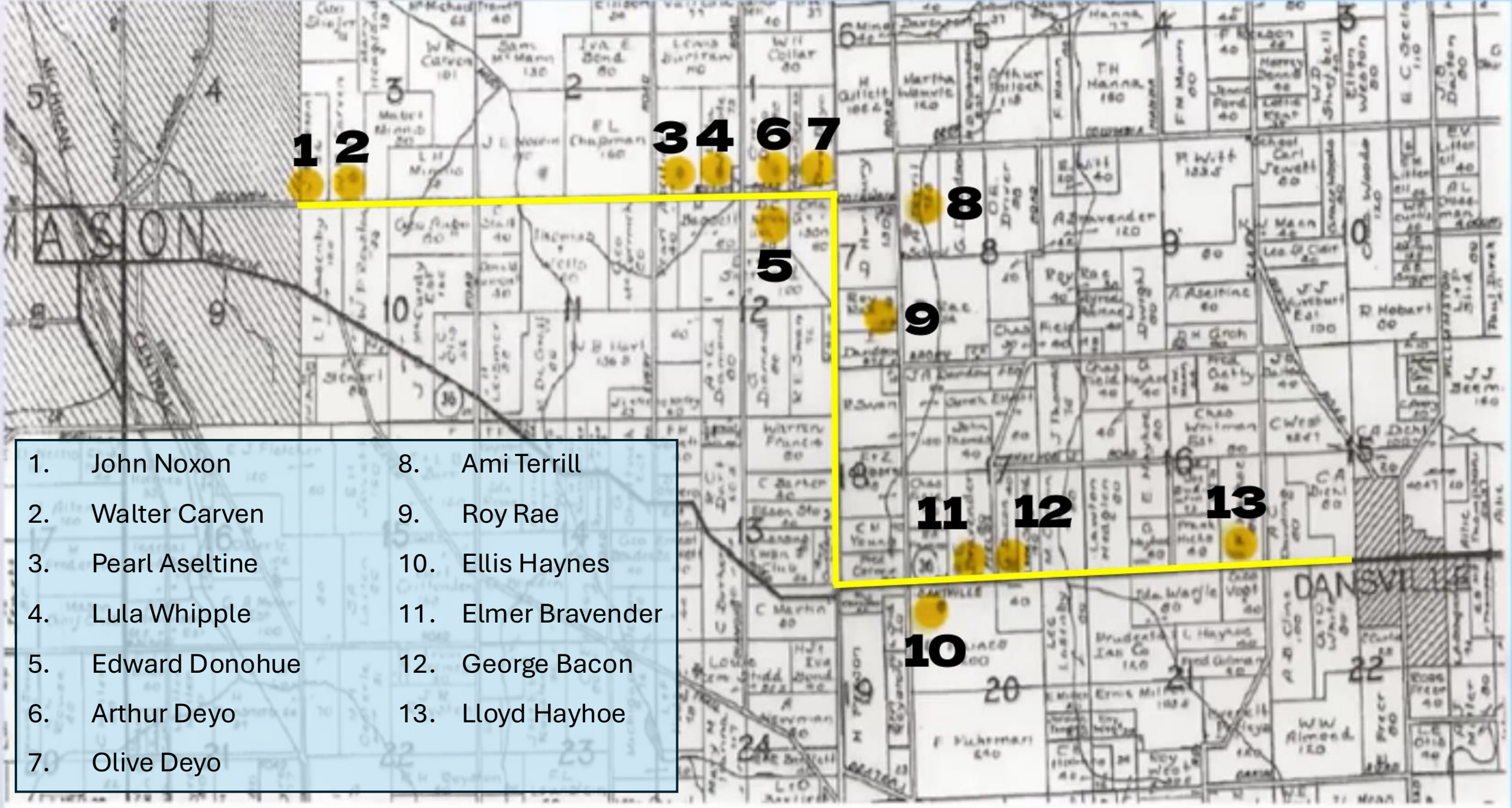


Image from *MAEC History Presentation*, Slide 4, by Michigan Agricultural Energy Council (n.d.).

The line was roughly seven miles in length, starting in Mason and traveling three miles east along Columbia Road, then traveling two miles south along Meridian Road, and finally traveling two miles east along M-36 towards Dansville.





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| 1. John Noxon | 8. Ami Terrill |
| 2. Walter Carven | 9. Roy Rae |
| 3. Pearl Aseltine | 10. Ellis Haynes |
| 4. Lula Whipple | 11. Elmer Bravender |
| 5. Edward Donohue | 12. George Bacon |
| 6. Arthur Deyo | 13. Lloyd Hayhoe |
| 7. Olive Deyo | |

Image from *Mason-Dansville Rural Electrification Project of 1926-27*, Time 25:28, by Mason History Museum (2021, April 9).

A plaque was later dedicated to Electric Park on August 25, 1938, that reads:

“MASON-DANSVILLE ELECTRIC LINE
BUILT 1926-1927 ENERGIZED FEB, 4, 1927

EAST TWO MILES FROM THIS POINT,
NORTH TWO MILES AND WEST THREE MILES
RUNS THE FIRST RURAL ELECTRIC LINE BUILT
IN MICHIGAN FOR THE STUDY OF
ELECTRICITY'S USEFULNESS IN FARM LIFE.

THIS PIONEER BEGINNING IN RURAL
ELECTRIFICATION WAS ACOMPLISHED
TRHOUGH THE COOPERATION OF MICHIGAN
STATE COLLAGE, FARM ORGANIZATIONS,
CONSUMERS POWER COMPANY, AND
TWELVE FARM FAMILIES WHO WANTED
ELECTRIC SERVICE.

THIS MARKER WAS DEDICATED
AUGUST 25, 1938, BY WHICH TIME 92,000
FARMS WERE RECEIVING ELECTRIC SERVICE
FROM MICHIGAN UTILITY COMPANIES.”



Here are some the the electric utilities in Michigan that helped power some of the farms around 1938, by which 92,000 farms had electricity.



Image from *Consumers Energy Brand Assets – Media Center*, by Consumers Energy (n.d.).



Image from *Cloverland Electric Cooperative*, by Cloverland Electric Cooperative (n.d.).



Image from *Midwest Energy*, by Midwest Energy and Communications (n.d.).



Image from *DTE Energy Home*, by DTE (n.d.).



Image from *Thumb Electric Cooperative*, by Thumb Electric Cooperative (n.d.).

References

- Consumers Energy Brand Assets – Media Center* (2024, March 20). Consumers Energy. <https://brandfolder.com/consumersenergy/media-center>
- Herman J. Gallagher* (n.d.). Holt-Delhi Historical Society. <https://www.holtdelhihistory.org/biographicalsketches/hermanjgallagher>
- MAEC History Presentation* (n.d.). About The Michigan Agricultural Energy Council. https://www.maec.msu.edu/application/files/4616/8565/6369/Maec_History_Presentation.pdf
- Mason History Museum (2021, April 9). *Mason-Dansville Rural Electrification Project of 1926-27*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv5Lr4yNYAQ>
- MSU Brand Studio (n.d.). Michigan State University. <https://brand.msu.edu/downloads>
- Schroeder, R. A. (1946). *The economic and social aspects of the Mason-Dansville experimental electric line*. MSU Libraries Digital Collections. <https://d.lib.msu.edu/etd/8276>