

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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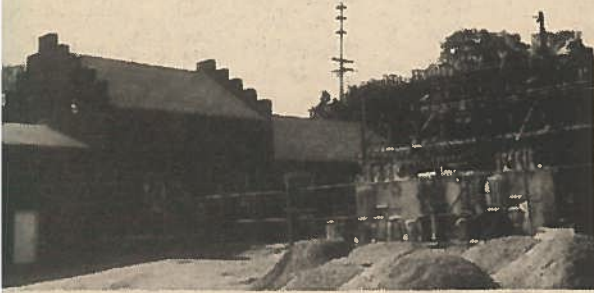
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## ELECTRICITY IN HOLLEY 1889-1989

By

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During 1989 the Village of Holley has celebrated the 100th anniversary of its Municipal Electric System. The power house which is located on South Main Street at Batavia Street in Holley is pictured above.

It is easy to take for granted the convenience of electricity. For 100 years now the people of Holley have had access to low-cost electrical service. We light our homes, businesses, and streets, with scarcely a moment's thought as to the history of said service.

100 years ago, dim kerosene street lights dotted the village, highly inadequate, many of the lights would often blow out by 10 o'clock in the evening.

In January of 1889, the Village of Holley considered receiving electric service from Brockport. In February, a representative from the Thomson-Houston Electric Light Company came to the village to work on the project, and local businessmen pledged their patronage for the establishment of a local electric plant.

In a Charter Election held in March, village residents voted 96 to 22 to authorize village trustees to contract for electrical street lighting at a cost not to exceed \$750.00 per year. Estimates of a power plant, including boiler, engine, and building the plant would cost between eight and ten-thousand dollars.

Following several well-attended meetings, the Holley Electric Company was incorporated April 7, 1889 using a Direct Current system. The following officers were elected to the company: President - H.O. Jones, Vice President - John Downs, Secretary - Bert Keyes, and Treasurer - G.N. Cowman.

Soon After incorporating, the Holley Electric Company received bids for their power plant from

several firms, and chose Western Electric Company. A lot was purchased on the old canal loop from George C. Gordon, next to a lumber yard (where Buddy Passino's Body Shop is currently located), and construction quickly began.

On August 1, 1889, electric lights were turned on in the business section of the village, accompanied by public tours of the power plant. The newly-formed Holley Cornet Band honored the occasion by playing several selections from the hotel steps, and later playing at the plant site. By the end of August the street lights were coming in operation, and lights were in place in the Methodist Church at the north end of the square.

The Western Electric direct current system was used until the spring of 1893, when a Westinghouse alternating system was substituted at a cost of over \$5,000.00. This was powered by a

75-horsepower steam engine that was used into the 1900's.

In the summer of 1901, a new light station was erected, and A.M. Lawrence had charge of moving the machinery from the old plant to the new site on South Main Street. Power for this plant was purchased from the then Niagara-Hudson Corporation. In 1912, all-day service was installed, and in July of 1913, connections were made with Sweet Company powerlines, giving Holley 24-hour electric service.

The sub-station was modified under Supt. Seth Davy in 1956 to have a capacity of 2,500 KVA. In 1969, the sub-station structure and capacity were doubled to 5,000 KVA.

In 1984, the sub-station was again added to and the capacity was raised to 7,500 KVA. The 1984 expansion was extensive, with the installation of two new three-phase 2,500 KVA power transformers, new voltage regulators, and new oil circuit breakers. Both the 1969 and the 1984 expansions were done under the direction of past superintendent of Public Works and Utilities, Raymond E. Neale.

The present incoming service to the sub-station is 34,500 volts which feeds two new 2,500 KVA three-phase power transformers, plus another bank of 3-833 KVA single phase transformers. The distribution voltage throughout the village is 2,400 volts.

More than 850 customers are fed from this sub-station by five feeder circuits with one spare.