

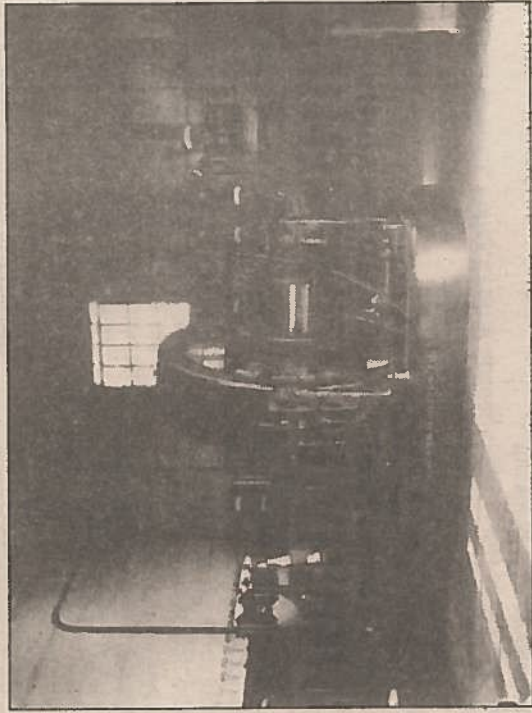
TRANSFORMER HOUSE

BY C.W. LATTIN

Our photo with this article was taken by the late Fred Holt in the mid-1920s. It shows the interior of the BL&R Transformer House which was located on East State Street in Albion, near the village limits.

This large concrete block structure, part of which is two stories, was completed in 1908. It was, in essence, a power house for the trolley system which opened at that time extending from Buffalo to Lockport to Rochester. This electric railway system ran until April 1931.

The power house, or transformer house, still stands on East State Street as a forgotten landmark. Another such transformer house was located on the Culvert Road near the intersection of Route 31 behind District No. 5 School in the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Town of Ridgeway. That building was torn down many years ago.

These transformer houses did not generate electric power but rather transformed the current

sion of low-voltage D.C., the trolleys were limited to short runs. With the subsequent development of the transformer, high voltage A.C. transmission line and motor-generator, it became feasible to develop long-distance electric railways with A.C. power.

The substations, as they were also referred to, were located about 10 miles apart along the trolley line. Hence, in Orleans County we had the two mentioned above. These were substations, fire proof structures that could be operated in three shifts by one attendant.

Other substations were located as Gasport, Brockport and near South Greece Road with five in all on the BL&R line.

Power was supplied at the time by the Niagara Lockport Ontario Power Co. at 60,000 volts.

from D.C. to A.C. In the early days of trolleys, virtually all electric power was generated, transmitted and used as D.C. Because of the high costs and losses associated with transmis-