

A Bit of North Tonawanda History



Most likely, few will remember the heyday of the Niagara Falls Power Transfer Station at 435 Robinson at Division streets.

Around 1889, what would become the Tonawanda Power Company supplied electricity to NT from a small steam unit on Tonawanda Island, fed by wood shavings from the Doebler Planing Mill whose office was at the northeast corner of Main and Goundry in an old frame building. In late 1896, The Niagara Falls Power Company built a long-distance power line from Niagara

Falls to Buffalo, with a substation located at North Tonawanda. Tonawanda Power soon after began distributing power under the Tonawanda Power Company name.

In 1920, a horrific explosion killed 13 men early Halloween morning. The fire chief alleged the work was rushed.

In 1925 the plant become “associated with” Buffalo General Electric, Niagara Falls Power Co. and others. In 1929, a new headquarters was built on Sweeney and Webster, today Buffalo Suzuki Strings.

The plant was used the following year to transfer electricity for the first time in world history. In the building’s earliest days, Nikola Tesla and George Westinghouse worked there together.

National Grid has replaced a lot of brick on the building that had broken off and cracked, replaced the roof slight tiles. While looking at doing the physical work on the building National Grid wanted to honor the history of this building.

Buffalo Niagara Nikola Tesla Council founder Marty McGee says “what they’ve done to beautify it is just perfect and we’re just so happy.”

In recognition of this site’s historic significance, National Grid has constructed a new public access pocket park that allows access for better viewing of the window artwork and informational plaque detailing the significant contributions Westinghouse & Tesla made in the earliest development of electric transmission in this area.

The North Tonawanda Service Center is an historic landmark and North Tonawanda is proud to be a part of showcasing the legacy of Nikola Tesla!