

HISTORIC TOWN BARN
EASTERN UNION TURNPIKE
AVERILL PARK, NY

Around the turn of the century, before I was born, there was a Troy/New England Railroad, which ran from Albia to Averill Park. This railroad was originally intended to run from Troy to Pittsfield, MA. Unfortunately, the company ran out of funds and was limited to running from Albia to Averill Park. The New England section was never built.

The steam generating plant for this railroad was located at the site at which is now Mrs. Barbara Lawrence's home in West Sand Lake...the area known as "Stop 13." In fact, the building was, indeed, located right where Mrs. Lawrence had her fireplace built. This building was a large, brick building...later to be known as the town barn.

When United Traction bought the railroad, in the early 1900's, they had trolley cars running from Albia to Averill Park. My father, Clifford Hastings, was in charge of the steam generating plant. He would be called from Troy the day before to tell him that a trolley would be making a run, and I would go into the plant and make the electricity necessary for the run. You see, the trolley cars they used were large and long. If there was a picnic in Averill Park, there wouldn't be enough electricity generated from Troy to make the trip up the hill into Averill Park; so, we had to supplement the electricity so that the trolley would make it to Averill Park. If they called to cancel the trip, I was

paid \$12 for my efforts.

During the depression, in the 30's, there was a federal project called the WPA.* This was formed to put people to work who were out of work. My father, now Supervisor for the Town of Sand Lake, thought it would be a good idea to use the old steam generating building which was not being used anymore. The Albia to Averill Park trolley run had been discontinued. He devised a plan that would include the building as a WPA project for local masons and laborers who were out of work. The laborers took the building down brick by brick, and the masons rebuilt the building brick by brick on its new site at Eastern Union Turnpike; thereby, putting many to work, and the building cost the town nothing, as it was financed with the funds from the U.S. government's WPA project. The town barn has remained a town garage ever since.

* Works Progress Administration

Bob Hastings

D. Robert Hastings
Box 62A, R.R.#1
West Sand Lake, NY 12196