

NIAGARA FALLS, NY



INCORPORATION OF THE CITY

The Village of Niagara Falls was first incorporated on July 1848 and the Village of Suspension Bridge (Bellevue) was incorporated in June 1854. On March 17th, 1892, the New York State Governor, Roswell P. Flower signed the charter merging both villages to form the City of Niagara Falls, New York. The first May of Niagara Falls, George W. Wright, was elected on April 19, 1892.

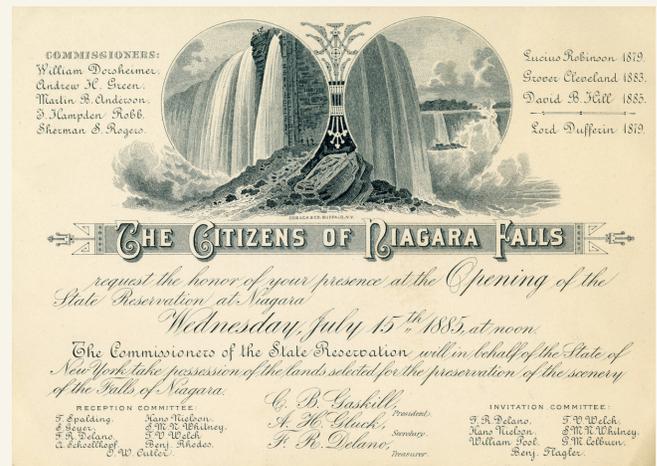
When officially established as a City, Niagara Falls population consisted of approximately 11,711 people. The new City of Niagara Falls had a land area of 6,970 acres the 412 acres of the Niagara Reservation State Park. The first City of Niagara Falls budget was \$79,000.

STATE PARK

The State Reservation at Niagara (1885), designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, is the oldest state park in the United States. New York State Assemblyman Thomas V. Welch (1850-1903) worked tirelessly with the “Free Niagara” movement to make Niagara Falls a place where the natural landscape would be preserved and that the public could visit free of charge.

Right: Official invitation State Reservation at Niagara opening ceremonies.

Established in 1885, the State Reservation of Niagara is now known as Niagara Falls State Park. Names include: Gaskill, Gluck, Delano, Dorsheimer, Green, Anderson, Robb, Rogers, and Olmsted.



Left: People skating and sledding on the ice mountain at the bottom of the American Falls, ca. 1903. Photographer: Orrin E. Dunlap

POWER

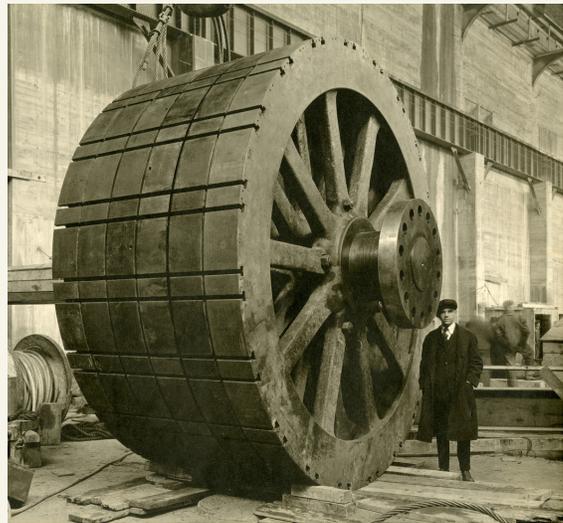
Throughout history, people have continuously tried to harness the power of Niagara Falls. In 1895, the first large-scale hydroelectric generating station opened in Niagara Falls but the plant used the direct current (DC) system and could only transmit electricity 100 yards.

Nikola Tesla proved to the world that it was possible to transmit electricity from Niagara Falls to the city of Buffalo, NY in 1896. Tesla was able to complete this feat by using his new alternating current (AC) induction motor. That marked the first long-distance commercial use of the AC system that is still used around the world today. Electricity was first sold as a commodity at the now-ruined Schoellkopf Power Station.

Hydroelectricity is a monumental part of Niagara Falls' history and present. Combined, both the American and Canadian power plans have the capacity to produce up to 2.4 million kilowatts of electricity.



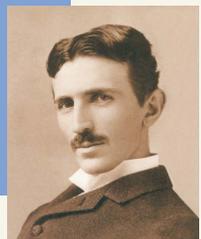
Above: Men using a crane to dredge rocks during construction of Power Station #2, ca. 1896



Above: Paul Schoellkopf standing next to a huge armature for Power Station #3B turbine. December 5, 1919

"We have many a monument of past ages... But the monument at Niagara has something of its own, more in accord with our present thoughts and tendencies. It is a monument worthy of our scientific age, a true monument of enlightenment and of peace. It signifies the subjugation of natural forces to the service of man, the discontinuance of barbarous methods, the relieving of millions from want and suffering"

- Nikola Tesla, Opening Ceremony of the hydroelectric power station, January 12, 1897.



DAREDEVILS

For over 100 years, Niagara Falls has drawn daredevils to brave the rapids. People have gone over Niagara Falls in barrels, swam across the Niagara River, navigated the rapids in a boat and walked over on a tightrope. Women and men have sought fame and fortune; others needed to challenge themselves against the harshest conditions that could be found in nature. What makes Niagara Falls' daredevils unique is the combination of "people vs. nature" mentality and a circus-like atmosphere that brought tourists from far and wide.



Annie Edson Taylor stands with her barrel. In 1901, Annie would become famous for becoming the first person to go over the Falls in a barrel and survive.



Blondin carrying Harry M. Colcord over the whirlpool rapids August 29, 1860

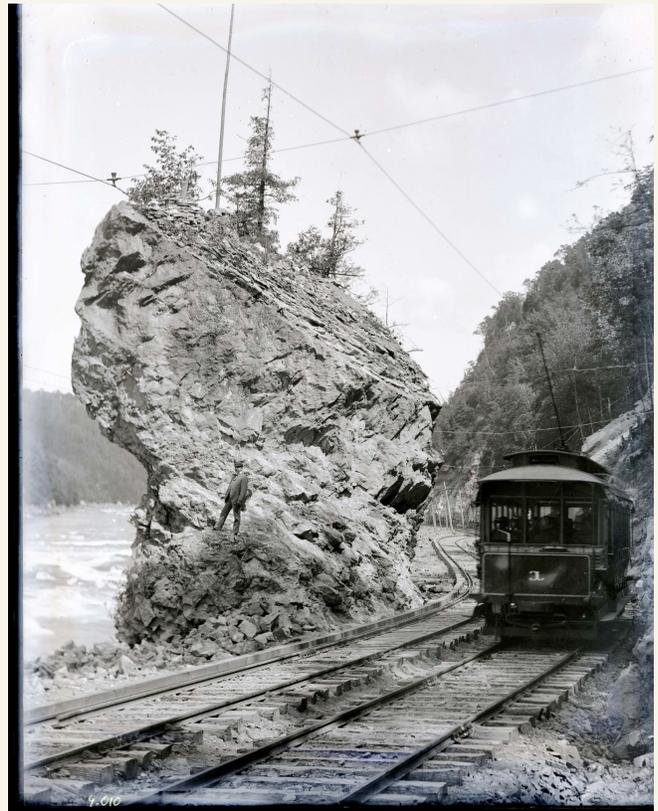


Stereoscopic view card of Maria Spelterina (sometimes Spelterini) Spelterina with peach baskets on her feet as she crosses the Niagara River. Image by Charles Bierstadt.

PHOTOGRAPHS TO REMEMBER



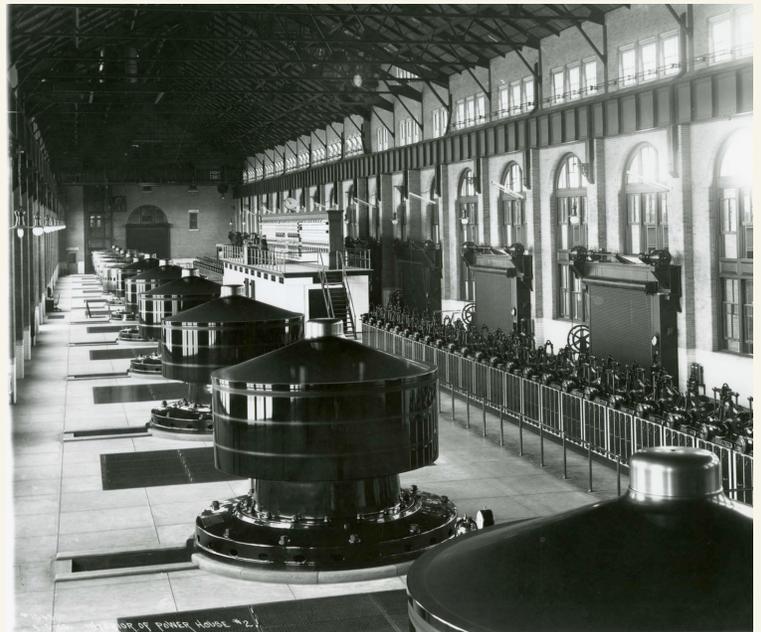
Left: Photograph of William McKinley in a carriage visiting the Niagara Falls Power Co., Niagara Falls, NY. This picture of President McKinley was taken at the entrance to the Power House of the Niagara Falls Power Co. on September 6, 1901, at about 2:45 pm on Friday. About one hour and twenty minutes after the picture was taken he was shot.



PHOTOGRAPHS TO REMEMBER



Left: Kaythryn Fredericks from the Carbo Wheel newsletter, April 1944

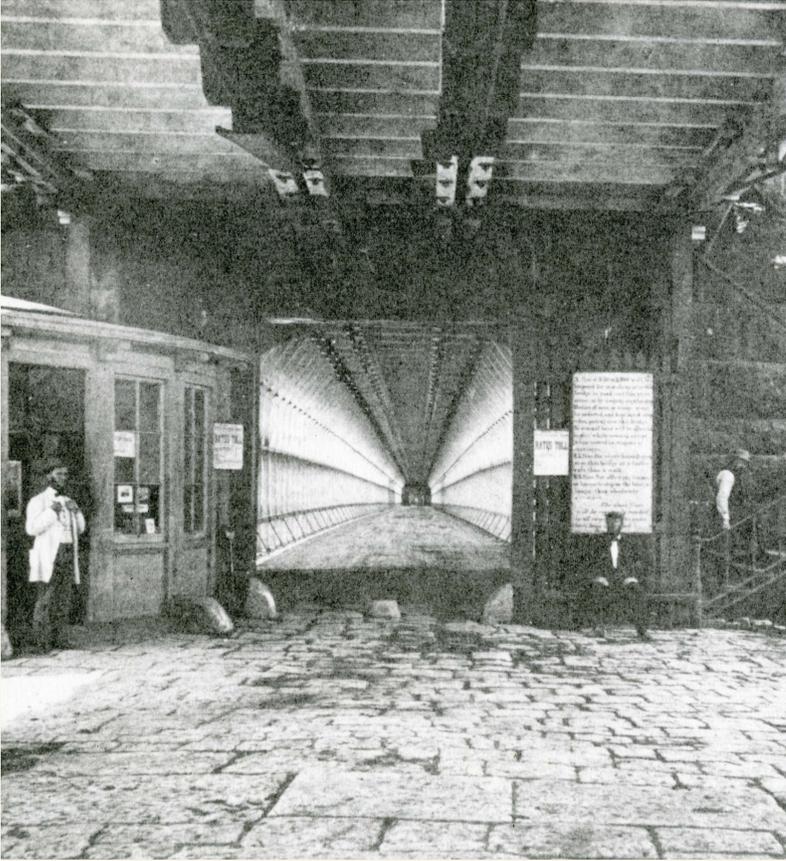


Above: Adams Power Project, Power House; Interior of Power House #2. April 5, 1905



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PHOTOGRAPHS TO REMEMBER



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