



DAREDEVILS OF NIAGARA







Jay Cochrane

ARE YOU A DAREDEVIL?

Have you ever taken a
RISK
or have ever done something
DANGEROUS
IN YOUR LIFE

Daredevils can be best summarized as persons who wish to take conscious risks with their lives with the emphasis on survival.

*A BIRD
ON A WIRE*



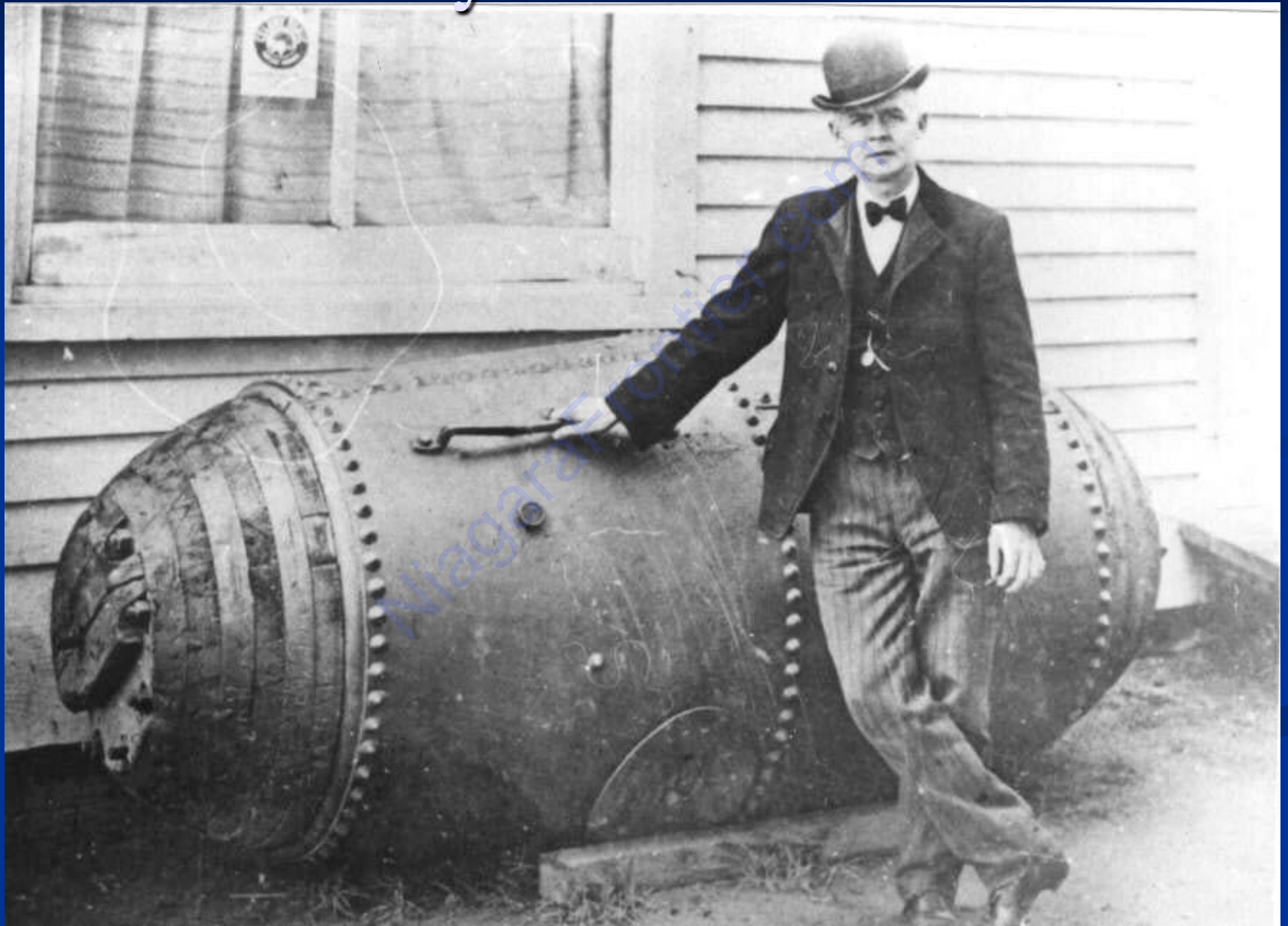
*The art of being a daredevil has become
so sophisticated that chances of survival
are almost predictable*

Most of the contraptions that the daredevils used usually had a nickname or had a statement printed on it such as something political, a charity, and a sponsor or of course their own name.

Most importantly daredevils pursued fame and fortune or notoriety. NONE have ever become rich and/or lastingly famous.

**CAN YOU
NAME
A
NIAGARA DAREDEVIL?**

Bobby Leach Barrel



Dave Munday's' Barrel



If you weren't the very first, remarkably the members of the public didn't care beyond perhaps watching the event.

Spectators came not watching for a successful conclusion but rather the deadly consequences of failure.

Daredevils of today can't compare to those of forty years ago because of changing water conditions and technological innovations.

BLONDIN



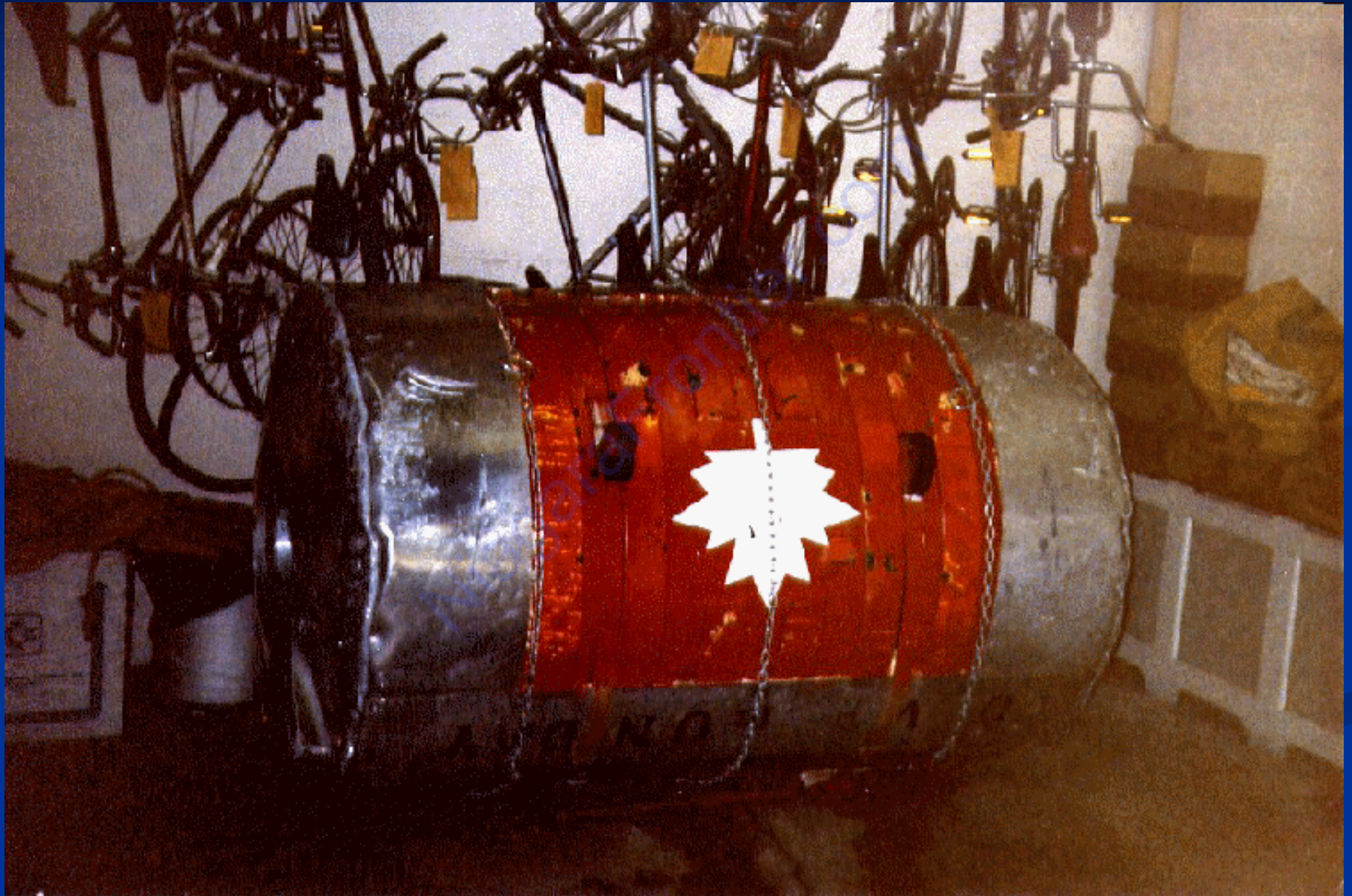
The Great Gorge



IT'S ALL BEEN DONE

- Can you think of something that hasn't already been done at Niagara Falls? OR
- WHAT WOULD YOU DO AS A NIAGARA DAREDEVIL ?

Dave Munday's Barrel



Come One Come All

SEE
The Incomparable

BLONDIN

CROSS THE PERILOUS GORGE

AT
Niagara Falls

Pushing
A WHEELBARROW

The Master Funambulist
Will Amaze All
With His Airborne Antics
And Death-Defying Courage

July 16, 1859
at 5:00 p.m.

Admission.....25 Cents

Things Daredevils Have Done

- 1) Barrel or Contraption over Falls
- 2) Barrel or Contraption through Rapids
- 3) Swim the Rapids
- 4) Over Falls without devices
- 5) Parachute
- 6) Aircraft
- 7) Tight Rope Walking

BLONDIN MARCH



BY
Albert Poppenberg

BUFFALO

Published by
BLDGGETT & BRADFORD

THE UPPER NIAGARA RAPIDS

- The Cascade Rapids begins 1/2 mile upstream of the Horseshoe Falls
- The river descends 55 feet through a series of rapids and cascades.

THE UPPER RAPIDS:

- The Cascade area is divided into two channels by Goat Island. These channels carry the flow of the water to both the Horseshoe Falls and the American Falls.
- The rapids located just upstream from the Falls is on average just 2 feet (0.6m) to 3 feet (0.9m) in depth

- The rock strata located upstream of the Horseshoe Falls tilts 20 feet towards the Canadian shoreline in 1 mile.
- The rate of water flow over the Falls prior to hydro diversion was in excess of 220,000 cubic feet per second.
- Today less than 50% of the available water flows over the Falls



UPPER GREAT GORGE

- is the section located nearest the Falls. It has an average width of 365.5 meters (1,200 feet). The Niagara River from the base of the Horseshoe Falls descends only 1.5 meters (5 feet) to the upper reaches of the Whirlpool Rapids.
- Every 24 hours the water at the base of the Falls rises and drops 3 feet

- Ninety percent (90%) of the total amount of water flows over the Horseshoe Falls while ten percent (10%) of the total amount of the water flows over the American Falls.
- Thirty-seven million (37,000,000) gallons of water per minute are flowing over the Falls when the rate of flow is 100,000 cubic feet per second.

- Since the early 1900's, water diversion for hydro-electric generation has reduced the volume of water flowing over the Falls. This diversion has caused the plunge pool at the base of the Falls to drop by approximately 15 feet (4.6 meters), and in turn increasing the height of the Falls by the same amount.

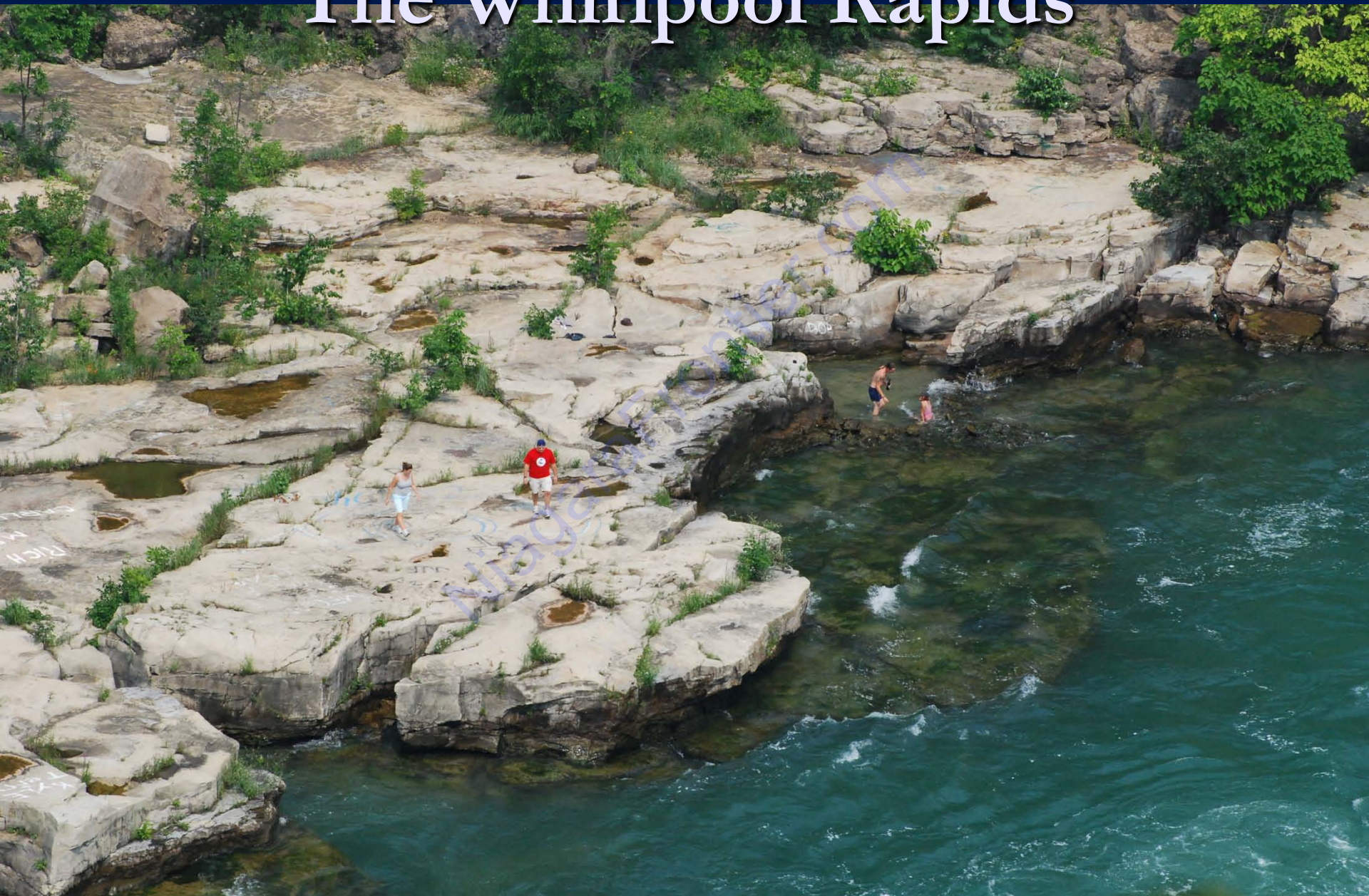
THE AMERICAN CHANNEL:

- The American Channel is created by Goat Island which divides the flow of the Niagara River. Only 10% of the total river flow follows this channel. It is 3,000 feet (914m) long, extending from the eastern tip of Goat island to the American Falls. The width of the channel at the eastern tip of Goat Island is approximately 800 feet (244m).
- At the American Falls, the channel widens to approximately 1,100 feet (335m). The upper rapids are created by an approximate 60 feet (18m) descent in the river bed over this short distance.

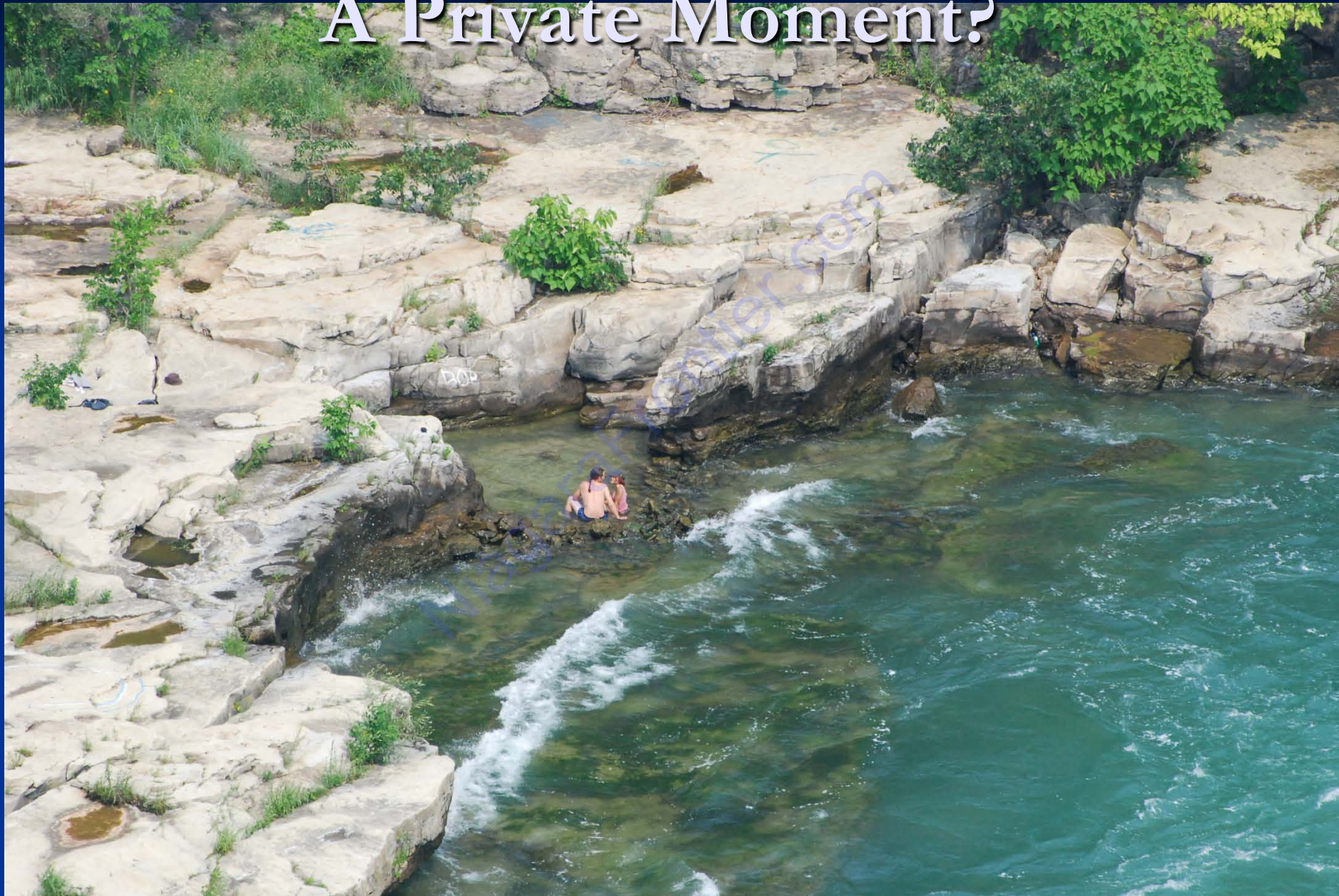
- The depth of the Niagara River downstream of the Falls varies from place to place as follows:
 - *at the base of the Horseshoe Falls - 46 meters (150 Feet)*
 - *at the Whirlpool Bridge - 65 meters (215 feet)*
 - *at the Whirlpool - 38 meters (126 feet)*
 - *at Queenston - Lewiston - 30 meters (100 feet)*
- Each day it is estimated that the Niagara River carries over 80,000 tons of dissolved minerals and sediments towards Lake Ontario. It is equivalent to 1,600 railway freight car loads.

- **WHIRLPOOL RAPIDS GORGE** is located north of the Whirlpool International Bridge. It has an average width of 750 feet wide.
- The width of the Whirlpool Rapids Gorge narrows to approximately 150 yards. The rapids generated here are amongst the wildest and most formidable in the world.
- The depth of the Whirlpool Rapids is 35 feet and the speed of the water at the Whirlpool Rapids is 22 mph. The descent is 52 feet in less than 1.2 miles.
- *Since the early 1950's, because of water diversion for hydro generation, the water level of the Whirlpool Rapids has dropped 12 - 25 feet. Today less than fifty percent of the original maximum amount water flows through this portion of the river.*

The Whirlpool Rapids



A Private Moment?



In a Very Dangerous Place!



IN MEMORIUM

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
MAGDALENA MARTA LUBOWSKA
AUGUST 3, 1996 - AUGUST 13, 2008
WHO DROWNED IN THE RIVER
BELOW THIS POINT

- DEVIL'S HOLE RAPIDS is the section located just north of the Whirlpool.
- Here, the Niagara Gorge is only 250 feet (76m) wide.
- The rapid descent of the river - 14 meters (47 feet) in less than one third of a mile contribute to a white water rapids (class III). A portion of this section of rapids is called the "Devil's Hole" for its sudden elevation drop of 16 feet (5m).



NiagaraFrontier.com

- The speed of the Niagara River at the crest of the Horseshoe Falls is 15 miles per hour.
- The height of the Horseshoe Falls is 173 feet to the plunge pool at the base of the Falls.
- The water depth at the base of the Horseshoe Falls is 184 feet.



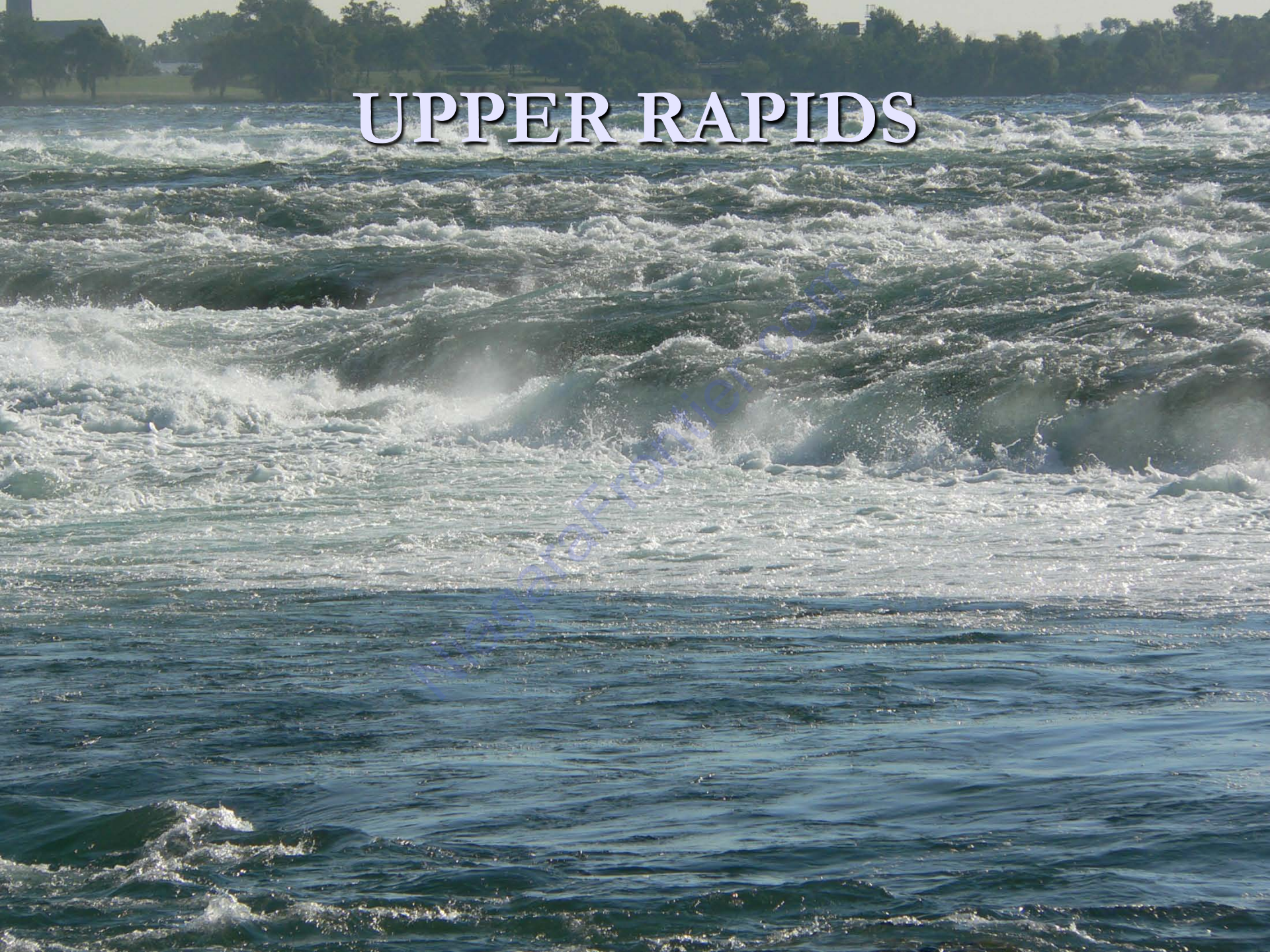
- In one second, a total of 600,000 gallons of water flows over the width of the crest line of the Horseshoe Falls.

100,000 cubic feet per second in Summer

50,000 cubic feet per second in Winter

- 1 cubic foot of water = 59.5 pounds
- The average depth of water above the Falls is only 3-5 feet in depth

UPPER RAPIDS





DAREDEVIL LISTS

OVER THE FALLS

■ 1901	Annie Taylor	October 24 th
■ 1911	Bobby Leach	July 25 th
■ 1920	Charles Stephens	July 11 th
■ 1928	Jean Lussier	July 4 th
■ 1930	George Strathakis	July 4 th
■ 1951	William "Red" Hill Jr.	August 5 th
■ 1961	Nathan Boya	July 15 th
■ 1984	Karel Soucek	July 2 nd
■ 1985	Steven Trotter	August 19 th
■ 1985	David Munday	October 5 th
■ 1989	Jeffery Petkovic (with partner)	September 28 th
■ 1989	Peter Dibernardi (with partner)	September 28 th
■ 1990	Jessie Sharp	June 5 th
■ 1993	David Munday	August 26 th
■ 1995	Lori Martin (with partner)	June 18 th
■ 1995	Steven Trotter (with partner)	June 18 th
■ 1995	Robert Overacker	October 1 st
■ 2003	Kirk Raymond Jones	October 20 th
■ 2009	Mr. Y	March 11 th

FUNAMBULISTS (*Tight Rope Walkers*)

■	1859	Blondin	June 30 th -September
■	1860	Blondin	June 6 th -September
■	1860	Farini	August-September
■	1865	Harry Leslie	June 15 th
■	1869	Professor Jenkins	August 25 th
■	1873	Signor Balleni	August 25 th
■	1873	Stephen Peer	September 10 th
■	1874	Stephen Peer	July 27 th
■	1876	Maria Spelterina	July 8 th
■	1887	Stephen Peer	June 22 nd
■	1890	Samuel Dixon	September 6 th
■	1891	Samuel Dixon	July 17 th
■	1892	Clifford Caverley	October 12 th
■	1893	Clifford Caverley	July 1 st
■	1896	James Hardy	July 1 st
■	1897	D.H. McDonald	April 3 rd
■	1911	Oscar Williams	June 25 th
■	1975	Henri Rachatin	June 4 th

WHIRLPOOL RAPIDS BARREL RIDERS

■	1886	Carlisle Graham	July 11 th
■	1886	William Potts - George Hazlett	Aug 8 th
■	1886	Carlisle Graham	Aug 22 nd
■	1886	George Hazlett - Sadie Allen	Nov 24 th
■	1887	Carlisle Graham	June 15 th
■	1889	Carlisle Graham	Aug 24 th
■	1898	Bobby Leach	June 13 th
■	1898	Bobby Leach	June 20 th
■	1901	Martha Wagenfurher	Sept 6 th
■	1901	Maud Willard	Sept 7 th
■	1910	Bobby Leach	Sept 24 th
■	1911	Bobby Leach	June 28 th
■	1930	William "Red" Hill	May 30 th
■	1931	William "Red" Hill	May 31 st
■	1945	William "Red" Hill Jr.	July 8 th
■	1948	William "Red" Hill Jr	Sept 1 st
■	1949	Major Lloyd Hill	July 30 th
■	1950	Major Lloyd Hill	Aug 6 th
■	1954	Major Lloyd Hill	July 31 st
■	1956	Major Lloyd Hill	July 30 th
■	1977	Karel Soucek	June 11 th
■	1987	David Munday	October 13 th

WHIRLPOOL RAPIDS BOATERS

■ 1887	C.A. Percy	Aug 28 th
■ 1888	Robert Flack	July 4 th
■ 1888	C.A. Percy	Sept 16 th
■ 1889	Robert Campbell	Sept 15 th
■ 1900	Peter Nissen	July 9 th
■ 1901	Peter Nissen	October 12 th
■ 1910	Captain Klaus Larsen	Sept 18 th
■ 1911	Peter Langaard	Oct 24 th
■ 1911	Captain Klaus Larsen	Oct 28 th & 29 th
■ 1961	Raymond Weaver	July 23 rd
■ 1977	Kenneth Lagergren	Oct 31 st
■ 1974	Edward Friedland	July 28 th
■ 1981	Chris Spelius	Oct 14 th
■ 1981	Don Deedon	Oct 14 th
■ 1981	Carrie Ashton	Oct 14 th
■ 1981	Kenneth Lagergren	Oct 14 th

PARACHUTE JUMPERS

■ 1879 May 28	H.P. Peer	Upper Suspension Bridge
■ 1886 Nov 7	Lawrence Donovan	Upper Suspension Bridge
■ 1890 May 3	I. Athey	Upper Suspension Bridge
■ 1908 July 1	Bobby Leach	Upper Steel Arch Bridge
■ 1920 July 1	Bobby Leach	from plane
■ 1925 Oct 10	Bobby Leach	from plane
■ 1927 Sept 15	Vincent Taylor	Upper Steel Arch Bridge

BEGINNINGS

- On September 8th 1827, with a crowd estimated at 10,000, the ship was towed by Captain James Rough from Black Rock to Navy Island using the paddle steamer "Chippawa". Here the "Michigan" was pointed towards the Falls in mid-river. Prior to the release of the "Michigan", visitors were allowed to board the schooner and view the condemned animals.
- At approximately 6 p.m., the schooner "Michigan" was released into the currents of the upper Niagara River and drifted towards the Falls. As it reached the rapids, its hull was torn open and the schooner began filling with water. The two bears running loose on deck jumped free of the schooner into the rapids. They were able to swim to Goat Island. The other animals were caged or tied to the ship and died when the schooner went over the Horseshoe Falls. At the base of the Falls, only the goose had survived the plunge and was caught by Mr. Duggan.



ANNIE EDSON TAYLOR

- became the first woman/person to challenge Niagara Falls in a barrel.
- Mrs. Taylor was born on October 24th 1855 in Auburn, New York.
- On October 24th 1901, her birthday, Taylor rode her barrel over Niagara Falls. She was a 46 year old widow and was a school teacher in Bay City, Michigan. She weighed 160 pounds. Annie Taylor had no previous experience when she came to Niagara Falls seeking fame and fortune.



- Taylor's barrel was built with white Kentucky oak held together by seven iron hoops. It was 22 inches in diameter at the head, 34 inches in diameter in the middle and 15 inches in diameter at the foot. The barrel was four and a half feet long and weighed 160 pounds. For ballast a 100 - 200 pound anvil was placed in the barrels bottom.
- At 4:05 p.m., when released, the barrel flowed toward the Canadian side and over the Horseshoe Falls. Mrs. Taylor successfully endured the trip without any major injuries (slight cuts and bruises only). It wasn't until 4:40 p.m. that rescuers could get close enough to Taylor's barrel along the Canadian shore to let her out. The top of Taylor's barrel had to be cut away. When released from the barrel Mrs. Taylor said " nobody ought ever do that again".
- Following her record feat, Taylor managed a meagre living by posing for photographs. Taylor died on April 29th 1921 at the Niagara County Infirmary in Lockport, New York. She is buried in the stunter's section of Oakwood Cemetery in Niagara Falls, New York.



MARY ANNIE EDSON TAYLOR

S. J. Detroit.



LEAVING SHORE TO ENTER BARREL

14

How Old was Annie?

- Some reports indicated
 - 46 years old
 - 49 years old
 - 53 years old
 - 62 years old
 - 64 years old
- Many historians use the 62 years because of how old she looked in the pictures.
- She was 66 when she died . Actually she was likely 83.

SAM PATCH - 1829

- On Wednesday October 7th 1829, Sam Patch became the first daredevil to challenge the Niagara River. The 22 year old from Rhode island dove into the churning waters of the Niagara River from a height of 85 feet. Mr. Patch chose Goat Island between the Luna Falls and the Bridal Falls to erect his diving platform. He survived this headfirst high dive unscathed. On October 17th 1829, Sam Patch made the second successful high dive at the falls from a height of 130 feet.
- Following his feats at Niagara Falls, Sam Patch went to Rochester where he attempted a 100 foot dive into the Genesee River. During this dive, Patch died by drowning.



October
17th.



SAM PATCH.

To the Ladies and Gentlemen of Western New York, and of Upper Canada.

ALL I have to say is, that I arrived at the Falls too late to give you a specimen of my Jumping Qualities, on the 6th inst.; but on Wednesday, I thought I would venture a small Leap, which I accordingly made, of Eighty Feet, merely to convince those that remained to see me, with what safety and ease I could descend, and that I was the TRUE SAM PATCH, and to show that some things could be done as well as others; which was denied before I made the Jump.

Having been thus disappointed, the owners of Goat Island have generously granted me the use of it for nothing; so that I may have a chance, from an equally generous public, to obtain some remuneration for my long journey hither, as well as affording me an opportunity of supporting the reputation I have gained, by Aero-Nautical Feats, never before attempted, either in the Old or New World.

I shall Ladies and Gentlemen, on Saturday next, Oct. 17th, precisely at 3 o'clock, P. M. LEAP at the FALLS of NIAGARA, from a height of 120 to 130 feet, (being 40 to 50 feet higher than I leapt before,) into the eddy below. On my way down from Buffalo, on the morning of that day, in the Steamboat Niagara, I shall, for the amusement of the Ladies, doff my coat and spring from the mast head into the Niagara River.

SAM PATCH.

Buffalo, Oct. 12, 1829. Of Passaic Falls, New-Jersey.

BLONDIN - 1859

- Jean Francois Gravelot, better know as "The Great Blondin". He was born February 28th 1824 in St. Omer, Pas de Calais in Northern France.
- Blondin first came to Niagara in early 1858. He became obsessed with crossing the Niagara River on a tightrope. On June 30th 1859, Blondin successfully walked across the river on a tight rope. For this crossing , Blondin utilized a 1,100 foot long - 3 inch diameter manila rope stretched from what is now Prospect Park in Niagara Falls, New York to what is now Oakes Garden in Niagara Falls, Ontario. He began his first walk from the American side and completed his crossing in 20 minutes. Blondin used a thirty (30) foot (9m) long balancing pole that weighed 40 pounds.

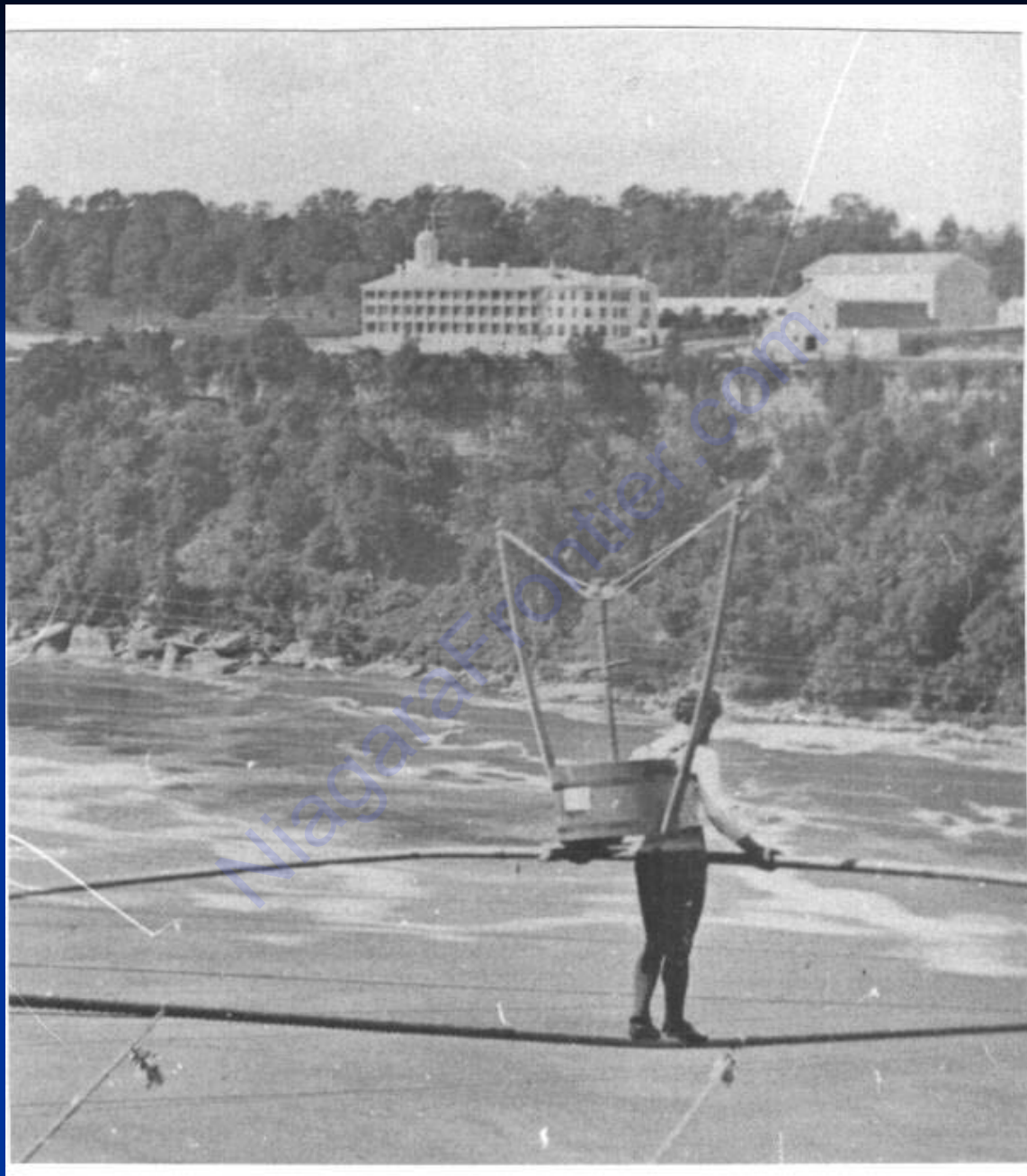


- During the summer of 1859, Blondin completed eight more crossing times. His most difficult crossing occurred on August 14th when he carried his manager Harry Colcord on his back. One of his acts included pushing a wheelbarrow along as he crossed.
- On September 8th 1860, Blondin completed his final tight rope crossing of the Niagara River.
- Blondin died in 1897 at the age of 73 years.



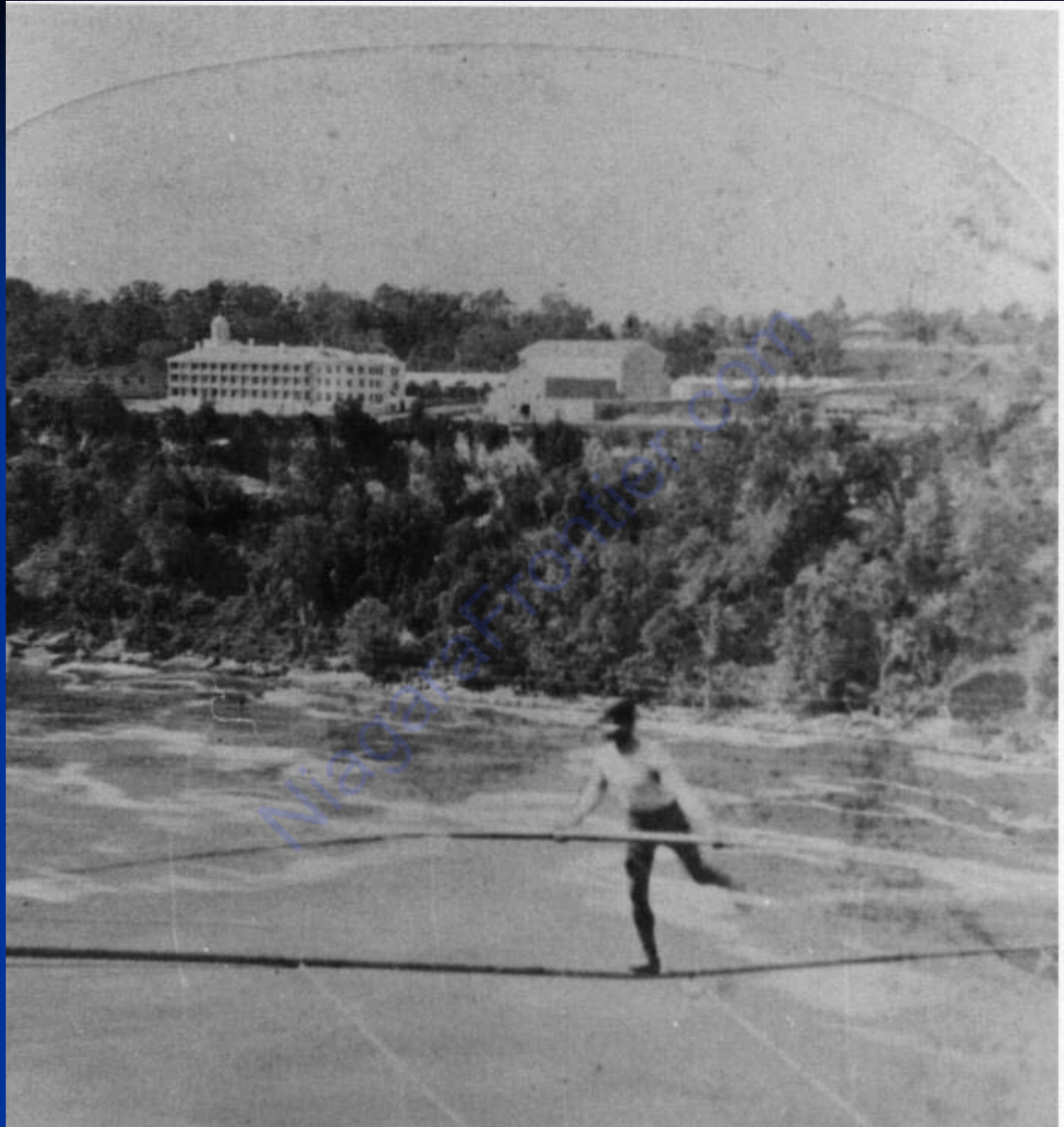
THE GREAT FARINI - 1860

- William Leonard Hunt was born Lockport, New York in 1838. Hunt was raised and educated in Port Hope, Ontario. He had dual citizenship.
- William Hunt changed his name to Signor Guillermo Antonio Farini. He would quickly become known as "The Great Farini". Farini left his home in Port Hope after his father accused him of being a disgrace to his family by becoming a circus performer.



- Farini's first performance at Niagara Falls occurred on August 15th 1860.
- Farini began the tightrope walk while carrying a balancing pole and an additional coil of rope strapped to his back. When Farini reached the mid-point he tied the pole to the tightrope and using the coil of rope he carried with him, Farini lowered himself to the deck of the Maid of the Mist boat 200 feet below. Getting down was relatively easy. On the deck of the boat, Farini drank a glass of wine before ascending back to the tightrope above. This task was much more demanding than Farini anticipated. Farini was near total exhaustion and nearly fell on several occasions. Farini did make it back to the tightrope, and continued to the shoreline. After a brief ten minute rest, Farini made the return crossing blindfolding and wearing baskets on his feet. This was the first and only time that Farini tried lowering himself from the tightrope to the river below. Blondin did not try to equal this feat.

- On September 5th 1860, Farini carried an Irish washer woman across the gorge on his back to counter an earlier performance by Blondin.
- When Blondin took out a stove on the tightrope and cooked an omelette, Farini carried a washtub out on the tightrope. He then lowered a bucket to the river below to retrieve water in order to wash a dozen handkerchiefs. Farini had a driving desire to be the best.
- Although his acts were more daring and drew larger crowds, he never achieved the fame that Blondin did.



- On August 8th 1864, Farini returned to Niagara Falls and attempted to perform another death defying feat. Farini wearing a pair of specially made stilts waded out into the cascading water just above the American Falls. Farini planned to walk to the brink of the Falls but one of the stilts he was wearing was caught in a crevice in the riverbed causing it to break. Farini suffered a badly injured leg but was still able to reach Robinson Island which is nearest the Luna Falls. Here he was rescued. Farini left Niagara Falls defeated and deflated.

- In 1866, Farini took his tightrope and circus act to England, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. During the years that followed, Farini did many other things with his life. He was an explorer and during the American Civil War, Farini was a member of the Secret Service for the Confederate Army, The Great Farini returned to Canada in 1899. He took up the art of oil painting. He remained active in his later years as well.
- William Leonard Hunt, aka: The Great Farini died in January of 1929 at the age of 91 years. Farini is buried in Port Hope, Ontario. The Great Farini was one of the worlds greatest tightrope walkers to ever conquer Niagara.

CHARLES STEPHENS - 1920

- Charles Stephens came to Niagara Falls to challenge the Niagara River during the summer of 1920. Stephens was a 58 year old barber from Bristol, England. He was the father of eleven children. His wife was named Annie. He had acquired a reputation of daredevil in Europe where he made a number of high dives and several parachute jumps. In Bristol, England he was known as the "Demon Barber of Bristol".
- On July 11th 1920, Charles Stephens went over the Horseshoe Falls in a barrel made from Russian oak.



- Hill Sr. suggested that Stephens send his barrel over the Falls unoccupied for the first time as a test but Stephens refused. The barrel was heavy and had straps for Stephens arms. As ballast, Stephens strapped an anvil to his feet while Leach and Hill Sr. looked on in amazement and horror. Charles Stephens was a stubborn man. He was reluctantly persuaded to take a small tank of oxygen with him. He wore only padded clothing.
- Stephens decided to begin his trip over the Horseshoe Falls with little fanfare at 8:10 a.m.. Stephens went over the brink at 8:55 a.m.. When the huge barrel hit the water at the base of the waterfall, the anvil which was tied to Stephens feet was propelled through the bottom of the barrel taking Stephens to his death.

- The remnants of the barrel remained trapped at the base of the Falls until its iron rings broke away. When recovered, only the tattooed right arm of Stephens was still strapped in the harness. The tattoo read "**Forget Me Not Annie**".
- Stephens arm is buried in an unmarked grave at Drummond Hill Cemetery in Niagara Falls, Ontario.
- Charles Stephens became famous for being the first of the barrel stunters to die challenging the Falls.

GEORGE STRATHAKIS - 1930

- In 1930, George Strathakis came to Niagara Falls to challenge the Niagara River. He was a 46 years old bachelor.
- George Strathakis lived in Buffalo, New York where he was employed as a chef. Strathakis however wanted to become a professional writer.
- Strathakis would often take a rowboat into the Niagara River. Each trip would take him closer to the Falls and the roar of the great thunder. The death of Charles Stephens in 1920 and the success of Jean Lussier in 1928 provided Strathakis with the desire to follow in their footsteps.

Strathakis' Barrel



- His plan called for the creation of a two thousand pound vehicle. Strathakis decided to construct his barrel on the basic design utilized by Charles Stephens by using lots of wood and steel. The size and strength of Strathakis' barrel proved impressive.
- Strathakis rode his barrel over the Horseshoe Falls on July 5th 1930. The barrel survived undamaged.
- Strathakis made one very serious miscalculation. He had taken with him an air supply for only eight hours. Strathakis' barrel became stuck behind the Falls and was held for twenty-two hours before being released in an eddy. When the barrel was recovered and the lip opened, Strathakis had died of suffocation.



- Strathakis had taken his fondest friend - pet turtle "Sonny" with him in the barrel. The turtle which was believed to be 150 years old, survived the journey.
- The medical examiner was Doctor W. Thompson. Following his death, no one claimed the body of George Strathakis.
- Of the seven human bearing barrels to go over the Horseshoe Falls, Strathakis' barrel was the only one to ever get caught behind the wall of water.

DiBernardi's Barrel

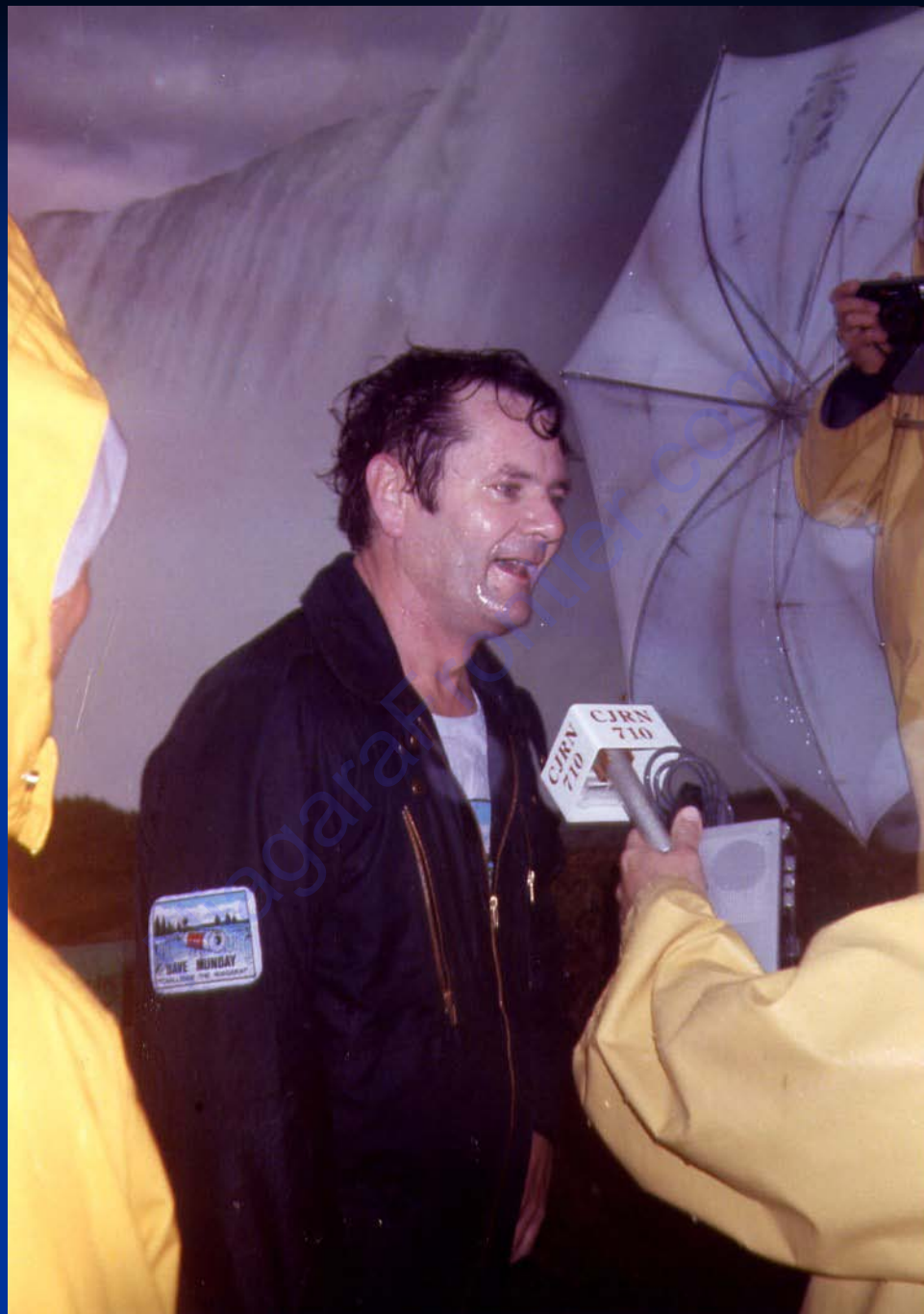


DAVE MUNDAY -1985,1993

- John David Munday was born in 1937. He lived in a rural community in the Township of West Lincoln, Ontario.
- Munday was is a diesel mechanic by trade
- Dave Munday was a skydiving instructor with 1,400 jumps under his belt. In addition Munday is an accomplished helicopter and fixed wing aircraft pilot.



- During the summer of 1985, David Munday came to Niagara Falls to challenge the raw power of the Niagara River.
- On July 28th 1985 at approximately 1:00 p.m., an attempt was made however it was aborted when officials reduced the water level causing the barrel to become stuck above the Falls His barrel was silver and red aluminium and unbreakable plastic barrel measuring two meters wide by one meter long with the words " To Challenge Niagara July 1985" inscribed on the side.



- Dave Munday would become the most persistent of all the daredevils.
- On October 5th 1985, at approximately 9:00 a.m., Munday returned to Niagara Falls. His barrel with Munday inside was launched into the water within one hundred and fifty yards of the brink of the Horseshoe Falls.
- The barrel went over the Horseshoe Falls in seconds. At the base the barrel became trapped in an eddy for ninety minutes before Munday was rescued by river man, Ken Sloggett.
- Dave Munday became the ninth person to survive the trip over the Falls. Munday received only minor abrasions. Munday had video taped his own fall using a video camera shot through a porthole.

- On September 26th 1993 at 8:35 a.m., Dave Munday survived his second successful trip over the Horseshoe Falls. Munday was riding in a six hundred and sixty pound converted diving bell that he had purchased from the Canadian Coast Guard. It took one year to refit. The vehicle was painted with a red maple leaf motif. The diving bell also contained two hundred pounds of ballast. During his journey, Munday was knocked unconscious, had sustained minor bruises and cuts. The vehicle was recovered at the base of the Falls by the little Maid of the Mist.

- Dave Munday could not swim
- He estimated that his fall over the Falls took 3 seconds with an estimated 80 miles per hour
- Dave is 71 retired and living in Nova Scotia. He is recovering from a stroke.

JESSIE SHARP - 1990

- Jessie W. Sharp was a 28 year old bachelor from Ocoee, Tennessee when he came to Niagara Falls to challenge the Niagara River. Sharp was an unemployed at the time and was an experienced kayaker.
- On June 5th 1990, Sharp attempted to ride over the Horseshoe Falls in a twelve foot long, thirty-six pound polyethylene kayak. Jessie Sharp had planned this trip for three years. He brought with him a crew of three persons to video tape his journey into the darkness of the river. Sharp's motive for trying this stunt was to further his career in stunting. Jessie Sharp did not wear any protective helmet so it would not cover his face for the video. He also did not wear a life-preserver because he thought it would hamper his escape if he was caught under the Falls. After going over the Falls, Sharp planned on kayaking through the Great Gorge Rapids through the Whirlpool to the docks at Queenston. Here he had made supper reservations at the Queenston Park Restaurant.

- Jessie Sharp was filmed going over the Falls in his Kayak. Sharp was never seen again nor his body ever been recovered. Another stunt of suicidal proportions.

















ROBERT OVERACKER

- Robert Overacker, a 39 year old man from Camarillo, California challenged the Niagara River and the mighty Horseshoe Falls at 12:35 p.m. on October 1st 1995. Riding on a single jet ski, Overacker launched himself into the Niagara River upstream of the Falls from the area of the Canadian Niagara Power Plant . Robert Overacker rode his jet ski directly at the brink of the Horseshoe Falls.
- Robert Overacker was married and had no children. Overacker became the fifteenth person since 1901 to challenge the Falls. Robert Overacker challenged the Niagara River and paid with his life. His body was recovered by staff at the Maid of the Mist.

- At the brink of the Falls, Overacker ignited a rocket propelled parachute that was strapped to his back. His plan was that the rocket would quickly deploy the parachute allowing him to safely land in to river below the Horseshoe Falls where he could be rescued. Overacker did ignite the rocket which deployed the parachute as planned.
- Unfortunately as the parachute deployed it fell away from Overacker to the ground below. Unknown to Overacker the parachute was not tethered to his body. The parachute was not packed by Overacker prior to the stunt and he was unaware of this fatal error. His step-brother and a friend witnessed this unfolding tragedy as Overacker fell to his death to the water below the Falls.



KIRK JONES - 2003

- On Monday October 20th 2003 at 12:45 p.m., Kirk Raymond Jones became the first human in recorded history to go over the Horseshoe Falls unaided and survive virtually unscathed. The most remarkable aspect was that he did so without any safety and/or flotation device.
- The 40 year old, single and unemployed man from Canton Michigan (south of Detroit) came to the City of Niagara Falls on Saturday October 18th along with a his friend Bob Krueger of Garden City, Michigan. Both spend several nights at a local motel on Lundy's Lane before his actual stunt. In preparation Jones had bought a used video camera. His plan was to have Krueger video record Jones' feat for prosperity, historical and perhaps for financial reasons. Unfortunately Krueger didn't learn to properly operate the video camera before the event and did not capture any part of it on videotape.



- Kirk Jones carried through with his plan of jumping into to upper Niagara River approximately 20 feet from the brink of the Horseshoe Falls at the Table Rock of the Niagara Parks Commission property along the Canadian shore. Jones, wearing only the clothes on his back, was quickly swept over the Falls (170 feet) to the plunge pool basin below.
- Seconds later Kirk Jones emerged from the turbulent waters below and was able to pull himself to safety onto a rock a short distance away from the cataracts. Here he remained stranded until the arrival of emergency service personnel who rescued him from his precarious perch and transported him to the top of the gorge. Jones was transported to the Greater Niagara General Hospital suffering only minor rib injuries.

Mr. Y - 2009

- On March 11th 2009, a 30 year old London, Ontario man jumped into the Niagara River above the Horseshoe Falls with intent to commit suicide. He had just the clothes on his back.
- He became the second person in history to survive going over the Falls without any safety devices.

A Special Thank You

- Niagara Falls Public Library
 - Mr. George Bailey
- Niagara Parks Police

MAKE HISTORY

■ SOME GOOD READING SOURCES ARE:

University of Buffalo Digital History Section

Niagara Falls Public Library Digital Pictures

NY City Public Library Digital Picture

US Library of Congress – Digital Pictures

Google Books – On line history

Making of America Digital Collection

NIAGARAFRONTIER.COM