



CROWNE PLAZA®

NIAGARA FALLS - FALLSVIEW

A LOOK BACK IN TIME



Before the Crowne Plaza there was the General Brock...



THEN April 14, 1927

Eddie Hodge, a photographer working for the bridge commission, captured a moment in time with this photo taken from the U.S. end of the Falls View Bridge. Across the bridge in Canada you can see the historic Oneida factory and just to the left is the Clifton Hill Hotel. Also captured in this photo, a gorge car traveling into Canada.



NOW -APRIL 14, 2008

Taken from the same location eighty-one years prior, it is clear many changes have taken place. Noticeably the Rainbow Bridge has since replaced by the Falls View Bridge. In 1938, after many efforts to combat large amounts of ice from Lake Erie, the Falls View Bridge collapsed. Through the years, the Oneida Factory was replaced by Casino Niagara, Sheraton on the Falls and the Crowne Plaza Hotel.



WELCOME TO THE CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL

For almost 80 years, hundreds of thousands of people have made this gracious hotel their home while visiting world famous Niagara Falls. Recently, millions of dollars have been spent to preserve and enhance the original elegance of this landmark building, securing its reputation as the grand lady of Niagara hotels.

This booklet is designed to give you some background information about the hotel and the surrounding area. You are invited to explore both. We hope you will enjoy your stay with us.

ABOUT THE NAME

Your hotel was named in honour of one of Canada's great heroes, Major General Sir Isaac Brock. Originally named the General Brock Hotel, the hotel first opened for business July 1, 1929. Later owned by the Sheraton Hotel chain, the General Brock Hotel saw the addition of two floors and was renamed the Sheraton Brock Hotel. In 1989, the Sheraton Brock Hotel



was renamed the Skyline Brock and later in 2001 to Brock Plaza Hotel. On April 17, 2008 the Brock Plaza became the Crowne Plaza Fallsview Hotel.

Major General Sir Isaac Brock, originally from Guernsey in the Channel Islands, Brock was the military commander of the British and Canadian forces during the early months of the War of 1812. A significant part of the battle, between the United States and England, took place along the Niagara Frontier, as American troops attempted to conquer what was then the British colony of Upper Canada.

In the early morning hours of October 13, 1812, a large American force crossed the Niagara River at a point approximately seven miles below the Falls. Their objective was to capture a high, prominent piece of land on the Canadian side of the river called Queenston Heights.

Brock was leading a charge against an American position part way up the side of the heights when he was killed. The British and Canadians, along

with considerable help from many Native Americans, eventually won the battle. But the 'Joss of Brock, a greatly admired man, had been a high price to pay. His courage and heroic death became an inspiration to Canadians for the duration of the war.

Queenston Heights' battle site is now a large park complete with a commemorative monument of General Major Sir Isaac Brock. Completed in 1856, the Brock monument stretches 190 feet into the sky and features a statue of Brock at the top. It is here, at the Brock Monument, where the hero has been laid to rest in a vault beneath the monument. The park also features recreational facilities, a restaurant, a bandshell and spectacular views from the edge of the heights looking north towards Lake Ontario.

Queenston Heights is well worth a visit during your stay in Niagara.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE SITE

The land on which your hotel stands, was originally owned by Philip George Bender, one of the first settlers in what is now the City of Niagara Falls, Ontario. While a young man, he emigrated from Germany to New Jersey, and later moved to the Philadelphia area. While there the American Revolution broke out. As Tories, or Loyalists, he and his wife were driven from their home and persecuted to the point where they decided to relocate into Canada.

As a result, in the winter of 1776, they became part of a group of 53 Loyalists who followed the wilderness trail to Niagara. The journey was a very difficult one. Some, unable to continue, dropped out and were cared for by sympathizers. Others succumbed to disease, exhaustion, cold and hunger.

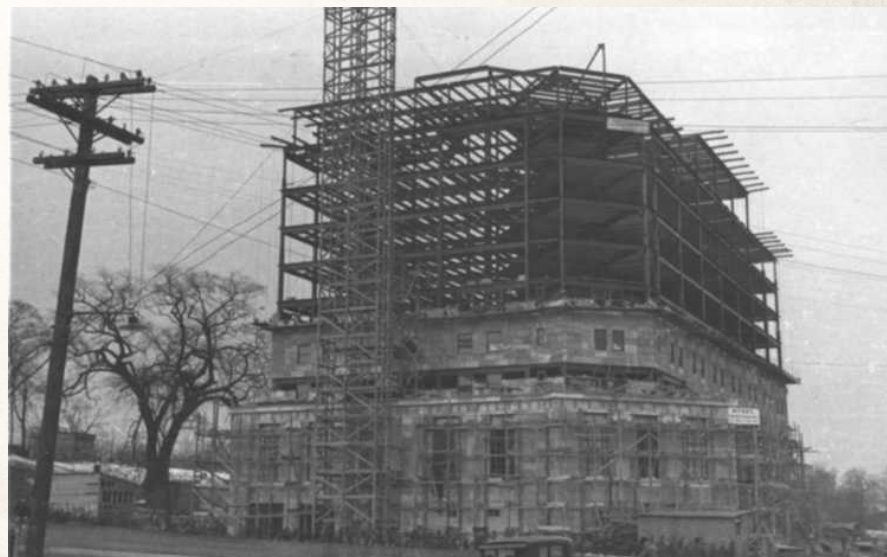
The following April only seven out of the 53 Loyalists, including the Benders,

reached Fort Niagara. Standing on the east side of the Niagara River, where it empties into Lake Ontario, the fort was still controlled by the British. Here Phillip joined Butler's Rangers, a force that raided American frontier settlements.

In 1782, because of his loyalty and service, the British government awarded Bender a large tract of land on the Canadian side of the Niagara River facing the Falls. This Crown Grant eventually totaled some 390 acres. The Bender house stood immediately to the southwest of the site now occupied by the Crowne Plaza. Bender Street (or Hill) just north of the hotel commemorates this pioneer family.

CONSTRUCTION

The hotel's planning stages began in 1927, with work beginning in early January 1929. Establishing a record for this particular type of construction in Canada, the Pigott Company of Hamilton, Ontario, completed the large project in just .six months. Originally named the Hotel General Brock, it opened for business July 1, 1929.



Built at a cost of \$1.5 million, the hotel boasted 260 rooms and such features as a roof garden, fireproof construction and a large ballroom, along with the last word in comfort and beauty. The local press described it as a “mammoth edifice, gleaming white in the sunlight, classic in appearance, looming over the Niagara River.”

NOTABLE GUESTS

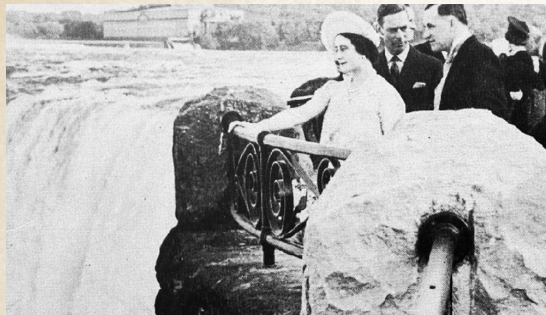
The Crowne Plaza has played host to many famous personalities. Some of these included Marilyn Monroe, Walt Disney, Gene Autry, Jack Paar, Jimmy Stewart, Shirley Temple, former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and Princess Margaret (sister of Queen Elizabeth II).

In more recent years, the hotel has played host to actresses Angelica Houston, Jessica Tandy and Bridget Fonda. Actors Matt Dillon, Matthew Perry, Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone, and Jackie Chan have also been guests. Recent Canadian Prime Ministers Paul Martin, Joe Clark and Stephen Harper also paid the Brock a visit.

THROUGH THE YEARS, SOME SPECIAL MOMENTS AT THE BROCK

1939

On June 7, 1939, King George VI of England and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, visited Niagara Falls as part of their cross-Canada tour. After viewing the famous Cataracts, the royal couple was driven to the Brock Plaza where some



12,000 school children were gathered around the hotel to greet their majesties. The King and Queen later had dinner in the Rainbow Room.

1952



The arrival of a 20th Century-Fox film crew at Niagara Falls to shoot, on location, the movie Niagara. Its star was Marilyn Monroe, who, along with her co-stars Joseph Cotton and Jean Peters, stayed at the Brock Plaza Hotel. Needless to say, their presence at the hotel, and in the area, created a great deal of interest. Incidentally, if you are staying in Room 801, you are in what was Marilyn's room.

1948

A major addition to the Brock Plaza Hotel was completed. Two floors were constructed on top of the building. They contained additional guest rooms, a new Rainbow Salon, an expanded Rainbow Dining Room and a new kitchen.

A bit of television history was made on Sunday, September 12, 1948, when WHEN-TV (now WIVE) from Buffalo made a live telecast from Niagara Falls, Ontario. This program showed the American and Canadian Falls as well as the immediate area. It was the first time the Falls of Niagara had been shown on television. It was also the first international telecast ever made in the Americas.

The cameras were mounted on an eleventh floor balcony of the Brock Plaza Hotel. Officials from both sides of the border were invited to view the landmark show on screens set up in the hotel's Blue Room.

In 1952, the Brock Plaza also saw the installation of the first commercial television in a Canadian hotel.

1951

England's Princess Elizabeth, soon to become Queen Elizabeth II, and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, visit the Brock Plaza.

1958

England's Princess Margaret following in her sister's, Queen Elizabeth II's footsteps, becomes the next in a long list of royalty to visit the Brock Plaza.

1959

The Brock Plaza undergoes a \$500,000 expansion, including the addition of the Crystal Ballroom with its ornate chandeliers, wall murals, and oriental carpets.

**1960**

The King and Queen of Nepal dine in the Rainbow Room restaurant overlooking the Falls. They are joined by the General Manager of the Brock Plaza, Mr. Albert A. Bonnet.

1966

The Brock Plaza Hotel welcomes its sister hotel, the Sheraton Foxhead Inn, which is constructed next door. The 14-storey hotel is enlarged and completely refurbished in the year

2000, becoming Niagara's largest resort property - the Sheraton on the Falls.

1967

Construction begins on the Sheraton Motor Inn, later renovated and renamed the Skyline Inn, directly behind the Brock Plaza.

1976

The Brock Plaza's owners build a Maple Leaf Village Amusement Park and all next to the hotel, the original site of the Oneida Silver Company. The popular tourism destination includes a falls viewing tower, large ferris wheel and unique stores and shopping.

1981

Niagara's spectacular winter landscape "lights up" for the first time. The Winter Festival of Lights, which would become a glowing annual tradition, celebrates its first year.

1996



The Hard Rock Cafe - with an outstanding rock memorabilia collection - opens next to the Brock Plaza on Falls Avenue. It becomes Niagara's hot spot for dining and celebrity viewing. Diners enjoy the multi-million dollar memorabilia from the collections of Elton John, George Harrison and Elvis Presley.

1989

This year the Sheraton Brock Hotel is renamed the Skyline Brock. Later in 1995, the name of the hotel is changed to the Brock Plaza Hotel.

1996

Casino Niagara, Ontario's second commercial gaming facility and its largest, is opened in the former Maple Leaf Village. The Brock Plaza being the only hotel with a direct connection to Casino Niagara. The Casino continues to be one of Canada's most popular gaming facilities.

1999

Superstar Bruce Willis visits Niagara Falls to officially open Planet Hollywood restaurant, next to the Brock Plaza. Thousands of screaming fans lined the red carpet and enjoyed a concert by Willis and his band. Later guests proceeded to a private after-party held in the Rainbow Room at the Brock Plaza. Bruce Willis visits yet again this year, filming the Whole Nine Yards on the 11th floor of your very own hotel.

2001

The Rainforest Cafe - complete with live sharks, indoor thunder storms and a steaming volcano - opens on Falls Avenue. The restaurant becomes a family favourite and an attraction unto itself.

2002

The excitement of World Wrestling Entertainment comes to Falls Avenue with the opening of the world's first WWE store and ride. In addition to a superstar-studded opening, visitors flock to the WWE PileDriver a 200 foot drop ride that towers over the store.

2004

The magic of the movies comes to Falls Avenue with the opening of MGM

Studios Plaza. With a unique collection of MGM Studios memorabilia, including a complete James Bond collectibles collection and more, the store and attractions draw movie enthusiasts from near and far.

2006

The new 125,000 square foot Fallsview Indoor Waterpark opens in the spring of this year. Standing 8-stories high. The waterpark features: 16 thrilling slides up to 6-stories high, an aqua play area with 1,000 gallon tipping bucket, a full size wave pool with gradual beach entry and much more. The unique Fallsview Indoor Waterpark is a welcome addition to the Falls Avenue Entertainment complex you do not want to miss.

EXPLORING THE AREA'S HERITAGE

The Crowne Plaza and the neighboring Sheraton on the Falls are ideal places from which to begin a walking tour of the vicinity. A great deal of Niagara's fascinating history can be discovered in this area. So let's begin.

In front of the Crowne Plaza is the entrance to the Rainbow Bridge which connects Niagara Falls, Ontario and Niagara Falls, New York. Officially opened on November 1, 1941, it has a length of 950 feet. The Province of Ontario and the State of New York jointly own this bridge. Due to wartime gasoline rationing, very little traffic used the bridge for the first few years. The Rainbow Bridge replaced an earlier span called the Upper Steel Arch, or Honeymoon Bridge. On January 27, 1938 a massive ice jam, 60 feet thick, formed in the gorge below the bridge, causing the abutments to be weakened and it collapsed onto the ice below.

A prominent feature of the Rainbow Bridge is the Rainbow Carillon Tower. It has 55 bells, ranging in weight from 9 pounds to 10 tons. There are regular concerts throughout the summer and on special holiday occasions during the rest of the year.



Turning right and walking a short distance south of the hotel along Falls Avenue, you will soon see, on the opposite side of the street from the hotel and across from Casino Niagara and the Sheraton on the Falls, a beautiful formal garden. It is known as Oakes Garden Theatre.

During most of the 19th century, this site was the location of Niagara's most famous hotel, the Clifton House. Built in 1833, it was described in a guide book, published 11 years later, as a "large, elegant, commodious, well-finished hotel, standing on the brow of the bank near the ferry and commanding a splendid view of the Falls."

During the closing years of American Civil War, Confederate agents stationed in Canada often held meetings at the Clifton House. This outstanding hotel was destroyed by fire on June 26, 1898.

A new Clifton House was constructed on the same site in 1905, and soon



gained the identical, excellent reputation as its predecessor had enjoyed for so many years. Ironically, on New Year's Eve 1932, it was also lost in a spectacular fire.

Soon after this, the property was purchased by Harry (later Sir Harry) Oakes. He was a mining magnate who had struck it rich in northern Ontario. In 1924, he moved to Niagara Falls. Oakes donated the former Clifton House property to the Niagara Parks Commission in 1934 in exchange for a piece of land above the steep hill at the rear of Queen Victoria Park. Soon after this, the Commission developed the garden theater you see today. Opened on September 18, 1937, it is a beautiful blend of horticulture and architectural skills.

Over the years, many concerts and special events have taken place at the Theatre. These include a series of live television broadcasts by the “Regis and Kathy Lee” television program, and concerts by artists including Bob Dylan and Kenny Rogers.

Be sure to walk through the park and its ornate Oriental water gardens for a cool and tranquil respite.

Continue walking south on Falls Avenue and across Clifton Hill. You will then pass then pass the Mowat Gate and enter Queen Victoria Park. This 154 acre area, opened in 1888, was the beginning of the Ontario Niagara Parks system and was named after the British monarch of the time. Oliver Mowat was Premier of the Province of Ontario during the time the park was created. The gate you’ll pass through is named after him.

Today, the Niagara Parks Commission, an agency of the Ontario government, owns and maintains nearly 4,000 acres stretching along the entire length of the Niagara River, a distance of 35 miles.

A short distance, inside the Mowat Gate, you will notice a lovely fountain. Originally spring fed, it was constructed in 1856 as part of a private estate located here that belonged to Samuel Zimmerman. Born in Pennsylvania



he came to this area as a young man and became a successful real estate and railway developer. Zimmerman is considered the father of the present day City of Niagara Falls, Ontario.

Queen Victoria Park has many acres of flower gardens, with enough variety to provide blooms from early spring until late fall. Particularly striking, is the daffodil show in late April and early May. There are some 500,000 of these golden flowers, the largest mass planting in North America.

The park also provides a lovely area from which to view both the American and Canadian (Horseshoe) Falls.

Father Louis Hennepin, who was part of the advance party, sent by the French explorer LaSalle, to scout this area, arrived here in early December 1678. He became the first European to see, describe and illustrate the Falls of Niagara. A plaque in Queen Vitoria Park describes his exploits.

If you don’t mind walking as far as the Table Rock area, which is right beside the Horseshoe Falls, you will be rewarded with a spectacular view. The name Table Rock recalls a large flat piece of rock that, at one time, projected from the gorge wall close to the Horseshoe Falls. It was several hundred feet long and fifty to sixty feet wide. It made a unique thrilling vantage point for observing the Falls and gorge. Over the years, large sections of Table Rock fell off until, in 1935, most of what was left was blasted off since it was no longer considered safe.

After enjoying the beauty of Queen Victoria Park and the Falls, return to Clifton Hill (walking back towards the hotel). This thoroughfare was originally part of a road that brought people down to the ferry landing to be rowed across the Niagara River, long before there were any bridges. The name Clifton comes from a small settlement that was established in this area during the early 1830s, and which was christened after a place of the same name in England.

Turn left and walk to the top of the street. You'll pass several attractions and restaurants, including Adventure City and the Rainforest Cafe. Clifton Hill is often referred to as the Street of Fun and you'll easily see why.

At the top of Clifton Hill, along Victoria Avenue, you'll see a lovely landscaped walkway that meanders to the north. This is the site of the former railway line, which was a reminder of the times when most people came to Niagara Falls by train. Service along this particular line began back in 1854. A station, named Victoria Park, was located here. When British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and his daughter Mary came to Niagara Falls by train on August 12, 1943, they used this station, as did President Harry Truman during his visit on June 13, 1947.

Walking back down to the foot of Clifton Hill, you will see the Maid of the Mist Plaza across the street on River Road. This is the entrance to the

famous Maid of the Mist boat ride, one of the most thrilling and unique experiences to be had at Niagara. It is also among our oldest.



2008



On April 17, 2008 the Brock Plaza joins the esteemed InterContinental Hotel Group and is announced as the Crowne Plaza Fallsview. With the completion of renovations exceeding \$8 million the Crowne maintains the historic Victorian style that the Brock was famous for, while boasting world-class amenities.



For over 75 years, hundreds of thousands of people have made this gracious hotel their home while visiting world famous Niagara Falls. Millions of dollars have been spent to preserve and enhance the original elegance of this landmark building, securing its reputation as the Grand Lady of Niagara hotels.



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