

**George E. Curtis Photographs of Niagara Falls collection, ca.1860s-1870s**

RG 703

Brock University Archives

**Creator:** George E. Curtis, 1841-1910

**Extent:** 101 albumen photographs 3x4 mounted on 5x6.25 card stock or smaller

**Abstract:** A collection of albumen photographs featuring the American Falls and Horseshoe Falls in Niagara Falls, Ontario and Niagara Falls, New York taken by George E. Curtis ca. 1860s-1870s. Photographs also include parks located near these falls.

**Materials:** Black and white photographs mounted on board.

**Depository:** Brock University Archives

**Processed by:** Edie Williams

**Finding Aid:** Edie Williams

**Last Updated:** December 2019

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**Terms of Use:** The George E. Curtis Photographs of Niagara Falls collection, c1860s-1870s is open for research.

**Use Restrictions:**

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**Preferred Citation:** RG 703, George E. Curtis Photographs of Niagara Falls collection, ca. 1860s-1870s, Brock University Archives.

## **Administrative History:**

George E. Curtis was born ca. 1841. His birthplace has been given in various sources as Buffalo, NY, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. He died 16 December 1910 in Niagara Falls, NY and was buried in Oakwood Cemetery with his wife Emma Symonds Curtis. In 1864, Curtis enlisted in the United States Navy at Erie, Pennsylvania and served aboard the USS Michigan and USS North Carolina. He was discharged in February of 1865.

Active from 1860s-1910, he is well known for his stereoscopic views of the Niagara Falls. Additional photographs are located in the collections of the Eastman Museum, Rochester, NY and the New York Public Library: Photography Collection and others.

This collection came from photographer James Cremer of Philadelphia as a sample set of Curtis's images of the Falls stored in a period sample box. The sample box was manufactured by Samuel Peck and Co., a New Haven-based company that manufactured photographic accessories in the 1870s. James Cremer, a stereoscopic photographer himself, is best known for a series of photograph views of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition and owner of the Stereoscopic Emporium on South 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Philadelphia, PA. The collection comes from the estate of his grandson Henry Richardson Cremer, a photographer himself.

Highlights of the collection include the snow and ice encrusted landscape of the Falls and parks as well as tightrope walker Henry Bellini, and the new suspension bridge. Most of the photographs have been captioned in perhaps Curtis' own hand.

## **Scope and Content:**

The black and white photographs have been mounted on paper board and the majority (89 of 101) have been numbered in pencil on the reverse. Where no numbers existed, the processing archivist has assigned an alphabetical letter. The photographs are in excellent condition with slight marks to the paper mounts only. Three photographs seem to be out of scope of the Niagara Falls collection. They are items J, K, L. They appear to be images from Philadelphia and may have been photographs taken by James Cremer himself.

**Organization:** The photographs are arranged in numerical order followed by an alphabetical lettering system.

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**Inventory:**

1. Ice cave behind the Horseshoe Falls, Niagara
2. American Fall from Canada, Niagara
4. Crystal grotto, Niagara
5. Rapids and Cataract House, Niagara
6. Rapids above the Falls, Niagara
7. American Fall from below, Niagara
8. Wirldwind [sp] Rapids, Niagara
9. Winter in Prospect Park, Niagara [NY]
10. The Rapids above the Falls, Niagara
13. Horse shoe Fall from Goat Island, Niagara
14. Prospect Park winter of 1875, Niagara [NY]
15. American Fall and Inclined Railway from the Ice Bridge, Niagara
16. The Ferry Grove winter, Niagara
17. General view from Victoria Point, Niagara [ON]
18. Ice Arch in Prospect Park, Niagara [NY]
19. Winter in the cave of the winds, Niagara [NY]
20. Five feet of frozen spray on arch in Prospect Park, Niagara [NY]
21. Prospect Point the new park, Niagara [NY]
22. Prospect Point, Niagara [NY]
24. Silver Cascade, [Three] Sister[s] Islands, Niagara [NY]
25. Prospect Point, Niagara [NY]
26. American Falls, Niagara
27. Railway Suspension Bridge 800 feet long, Niagara

28. American Fall from Luna Island, Niagara [NY]
29. Luna Island in winter, Niagara [NY]
30. Natural ice formation shape of an eagles head, Niagara
32. Great icicle below Table Rock, Niagara [ON]
33. Horseshoe Fall Winter, Niagara [ON]
34. Horseshoe Falls from Goat Island, Niagara [NY]
36. Falls of Niagara from New Suspension Bridge
37. Tree in Prospect Park broken with over weight of frozen spray, Niagara [NY]
38. Moonlight view of Horseshoe Falls, Niagara
39. Statue tree, Niagara
41. Horseshoe Fall from below Canada side, Niagara [ON]
42. Fairy cascade, [Three] Sister[s] Island, Niagara [NY]
43. Horse shoe Fall, Niagara
45. Colum [sp] of spray 1000 feet high, Niagara
46. Birds eye view of the Horseshoe Fall, Niagara
47. The Maid of the Mist in the Whirlpool Rapids, Niagara [ON]
48. Rapids and Goat Island, Niagara
50. The Tower grove winter, Niagara
51. Niagara River above the Falls
52. American Falls and Village of Niagara Falls [NY]
53. General view from Victoria Point, Niagara [ON]
54. Cedar grove winter, Niagara
55. View from below the Table Rock, Niagara [ON]
56. Horse shoe Fall from the Ice Bridge, Niagara
58. American Fall from below, Niagara
59. The Railway Suspension Bridge, Niagara [includes man walking on bridge]
60. Crystal Grotto, Niagara
61. Winter in Prospect Park, Niagara [NY]

64. Niagara River from the Lewistown [Lewiston] R. R. [Railroad] [NY]
65. Sunshine and shadow, Luna Island, Niagara [NY]
66. Railway Suspension Bridge Interior, Niagara
67. The Bridal Veil [Falls], Niagara
68. Crystal Grotto, Niagara
69. The Frost Kings umbrella, Luna Island, Niagara [NY]
70. The Three Brothers, Prospect Park, Niagara [NY]
71. Sunshine and shadow, Luna Island, Niagara [NY]
72. Ice bridge and American Fall, Niagara
74. Bridge to 3<sup>rd</sup> Sister Island, Niagara
75. Wind blown icicles. Frost work on Luna Island, Niagara [NY]
77. Terrapin Tower, Winter, Niagara [NY]
78. Great ice mountain and American Fall, Niagara [NY]
80. Scenery near Streets Island, Niagara [ON]
84. New bridge to Luna Island, Niagara [NY]
85. The ice bridge, Niagara
87. American Fall from below, Niagara [NY]
88. American Fall and Village of Niagara Falls [NY]
89. The Lovers Corner, Goat Island, Niagara
93. Crystal Grotto, Niagara
94. Frost bound tree in Prospect Park, Niagara [NY]
95. Luna Island thawing out, spring of 1875, Niagara [NY] [damaged with red ink spots]
96. View taken between the ice mountain and American Fall, Niagara
99. Terrapin Tower frost bound, Niagara [NY]
100. Terrapin Tower frost bound, Niagara [NY]
103. Sunshine and shadow, Luna Island, Niagara [NY]
104. American Fall from below, Niagara [NY]
106. The ice bridge, Niagara

107. Frost fringe on the ice mountain, Niagara; includes two people standing on top of "mountain"
109. Luna Island scenery, Winter, Niagara [NY]
110. American Fall from below, Niagara [NY]
112. Statue tree, Niagara
113. The old man of Niagara
114. Pathway leading under the Horseshoe Fall, Niagara
116. Café in Luna Island ice mountain, Niagara [NY]
117. Scenery near Streets Island, Niagara [ON]
122. New suspension bridge showing Falls, Niagara
124. Horseshoe Fall from Goat Island, Niagara

Un-numbered and uncaptioned images

- A. Henry Bellini, tightrope walker, prepares to cross the Falls
- B. Henry Bellini, tightrope walker, prepares to fall into the waters below the Falls
- C. American and Horseshoe Falls, spring or fall
- D. Ice coated tree at the American Falls
- E. Ice coated trees in a park [Luna Island?]
- F. Two men in a boat below the Falls, one rowing, the other shooting a rifle
- G. A man overlooks the water surrounding Terrapin Tower and bridge [NY]
- H. Giant icicle formed from freezing falling water
- I. Frozen trees and arch located in a park [Prospect Park?] [NY]
- J. Interview of the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art
- K. First public drinking fountain in Philadelphia, inscription reads, "Pro bono public, Esto perpetua" [located on Forbidden Drive, Philadelphia, PA]
- L. Man reading a book beside the first public drinking fountain in Philadelphia, inscription reads, "Pro bono public, Esto perpetua" [located on Forbidden Drive, Philadelphia, PA]