

The Challenge of Conquering Niagara Falls

Over the years there have been a number of people who have tried to travel down Niagara Falls in a barrel, or other means. While these people may seem to have a death wish this stunt looks like it will continue for years to come. Many people have successfully crossed the falls by walking a tightrope, but it is the barrel stunts that are the most intriguing.

The first successful barrel stunt took place on July 11th, 1886. An Englishman, Carlisle Graham, traveled over the falls in a barrel that he had constructed himself. Luckily, he was a barrel maker by trade, and the barrel held up to the stress.

The first duo to travel the falls in a barrel was George Potts and William Hazlett. They used a barrel built by Carlisle Graham for the stunt on August 8th, 1886.

In November, 1886, the first male and female team successfully navigated the falls in a barrel. George Hazlett and his girlfriend Sadie Allen both survived the stunt without major injury.

The first woman to die whilst attempting the barrel stunt was Maude Willard. She took her pet dog with her in her barrel on September 7th, 1901. She died, but her dog survived.

Willard entered the barrel with her pet dog for the journey through the rapids. As the barrel reached the Whirlpool it became stranding for the next six hours in the middle.

The first woman to travel over the falls in a barrel was a woman named Annie Taylor. On October 24th, 1901, she succeeded in an airtight wooden barrel that had been pressurized using a bicycle pump. Unfortunately her stunt did not lead to great riches, and she eventually died penniless.

On July 25th, 1911, the first person in a non-wooden barrel succeeded. Bobby Leach used a steel barrel, rather than Annie's wooden one. Unlike Annie, he was seriously injured during the plunge, and broke both of his kneecaps and his jaw.

One of the more bizarre attempts to travel over the falls was attempted on July 11th, 1920. An Englishman, named Charles Stephens, used a wooden barrel with an anvil for ballast. He had tied himself to the anvil and, when it was recovered, the barrel was empty, apart from his right arm. The rest of his body had been taken to the bottom by the anvil.

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