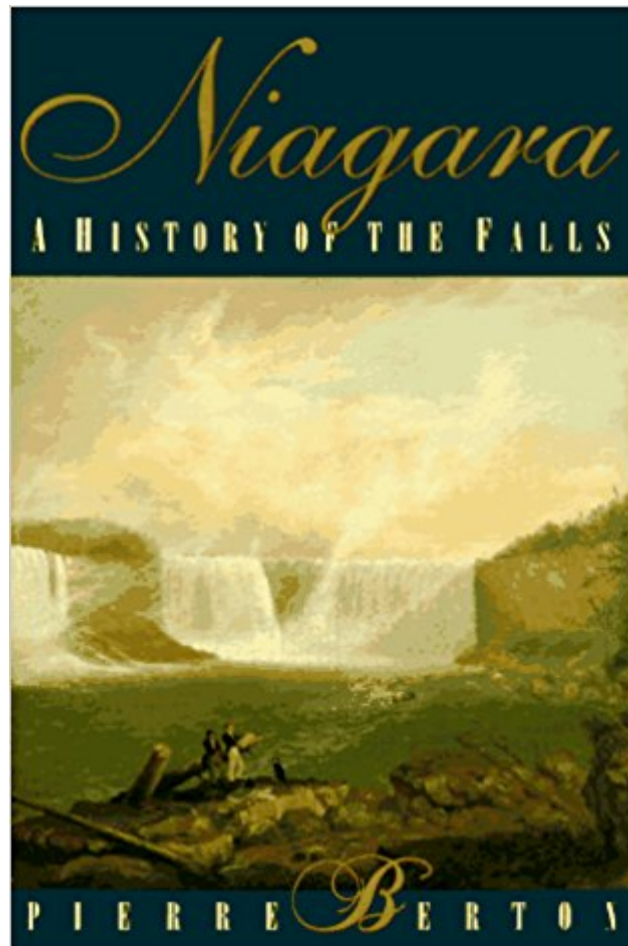




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Niagara: A History Of The Falls



Synopsis

Replete with engaging details and colorful anecdotes, a lively history of Niagara Falls recounts the exploits of engineers, daredevils, photographers, industrialists, and honeymooners who have been drawn to the Falls' treacherous beauty.

Book Information

Hardcover: 480 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (15 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

"Niagara" is a nice little book, stringing together a series of anecdotes about Niagara Falls and its immediate region, especially from the mid 19th century to the mid 20th century. As histories go, it is fairly light (the author does not cite his facts, although he does include an extensive bibliography), but Pierre Berton is adept at telling stories, especially human stories. The stories mostly develop along one of two themes - daredevil encounters with the Falls, and human manipulation, either for the purpose of exploitation or protection of the Falls. Berton is best with the small stories of explorers, tightrope walkers, barrel riders, a family of "rivermen" (the Hills), and their ilk. The small becomes large with what is perhaps the best-crafted story, that of Lois Gibbs and the toxic tragedy of Love Canal, with which Berton ends the book. Although the story of the Falls did not end in 1980, Love Canal is a fitting final story. Despite the occasional preservationist triumphs, the story of the Falls really culminates in Love Canal. The natural wonder of the Falls became framed by hucksters, factories, power stations, tacky museums, homes, roads, manicured parks and everything else unnatural. Engineers even managed to stop the falls in an attempt to clear out fallen rocks (they wisely chose not to once they realized that the rocks propped up the rock face behind the falls). A visit to the Falls today is a jarring reminder of what a mess we humans have made of the natural

world. It is an obscene juxtaposition of nature's best and humanity's chintziest. Berton is less skilled at relaying scientific stories about the formation of the falls, and the energy and chemical industries.

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