

crest. He was within 200 feet when one stilt slipped into a crevice. He pulled and yanked and twisted but couldn't get it loose. Hours later he was dragged ashore by a cable while thousands snickered. He left and never came back.

**1876:** Comely Maria Spelterina, the first woman to cross, wore flesh-coloured tights, high green boots, a sea green bodice and a scarlet tunic, with peach baskets attached to her feet. Once she covered her head with a paper bag, and on another occasion she walked across backwards.

**1886:** On July 11, Carlisle D. Graham shot the rapids below the Horseshoe Falls, wrapped in a waterproof canvas sack, slung inside a barrel. He survived. Five weeks later he did it again, this time with his head sticking out. He again survived, but the pounding waves rendered him deaf. The same year a Boston policeman named William Kendall swam through the rapids wearing a life belt.

bottom as ballast. She made it over the Horseshoe crest to a reef just off the Canadian shore in seventeen minutes, wet and slightly cut on the jaw. She then went on the stage but made no fortune and died twenty years later in a poor-house.

**1911:** Bobby Leach went over the Falls and was severely injured. Barreling was subsequently outlawed.

**1928:** Jean Lussier, a machinist, went over in violation of the law, in a six-foot rubber ball. The ball, which he designed himself, was covered with tire material and lined with rubber sacs and a couple of tubes filled with pressurized oxygen. He bounced to an easy landing and said the sensation was rather like going down a ski jump. He made a sizeable amount of money by selling bits of what he said were the inner tubes at fifty cents each. "I sold hundreds of tubes," he said.



*Maria Spelterina and her peach baskets.*

**1888:** With the success of rope walkers and rapid shooters, some folks began to regard the Falls with nonchalance until one, Robert Flack, went over the Horseshoe Falls in a boat and drowned.

**1890:** Samuel Dixon, a visiting photographer strolling by the Falls, noticed a rope stretched across the gorge and on the spur of the moment walked across, all the way.

**1900:** William "Red" Hill, still a lad, shot the lower rapids in a barrel of wood and steel. It was the start of a long career.

**1901:** Mrs. Anna Edson Taylor, 43, of Bay City, Michigan, was a widow and a schoolteacher who, fearing a penniless old age, decided to make a fortune by being the first person to go over the Falls in a barrel. The barrel was padded with pillows and had a 100-pound anvil attached to its

**1945:** William "Red" Hill Jr., son of the original, repeated his father's trip through the rapids.

**1951:** Roger Woodward, seven years old, wearing swimming trunks and an ordinary life jacket, was swept over the Falls when his boat capsized on the upper river. He made it without a scratch and was pulled to safety by the crew of the *Maid-of-the-Mist*.

**1961:** On July 15 a strange man who said his name was Nathan T. Boye went over the Falls without any fanfare in a rubber ball six feet in diameter. He was pulled out of the water and arrested by a park policeman who found a banner inscribed "Plunge-O-Sphere. Step from your Pit of Darkness into Light-Dell." The man said he had made the trip for reasons that were "very, very personal" and refused to lend himself to any kind of promotion. He then slipped back into obscurity.