

Niagara Falls—an ever-popular tourist destination—is a beautiful place to visit during any season.

This clip depicts the Falls—on the Canadian side—during winter.

Where does the word "Niagara" originate? It's derived from the Iroquois word "Onguiaahra" which means "the strait."

The Falls straddle the Canadian-American border and are situated in both the Province of Ontario and the State of New York. Every year, these spectacular falls draw around 12 million tourists.

This image, from the Niagara Falls State Park website, depicts why they are such a popular destination.



What happens to the falls in the winter? "Niagara Falls Live" [answers this question](#) for us:

The tremendous volume of water never stops flowing. However, the falling water and mist create ice formations along the banks of the falls and river. This can result in mounds of ice as thick as fifty feet.

If the winter is cold for long enough, the ice will completely stretch across the river and form what is known as the "ice bridge." This ice bridge can extend for several miles down river until it reaches the area known as the lower rapids.

Until 1912, visitors were allowed to actually walk out on the ice bridge and view the Falls from below. February 24th of 1888 the local newspaper reported that at least 20,000 people watched or tobogganed on the ice. Shanties selling liquor, photographs and curiosities abounded. On February 4th 1912 the ice bridge broke up and three tourists lives were lost.

There can also be a great deal of "mini-icebergs" which flow down the Niagara River from frozen Lake Erie. The flow of ice has been reduced considerably by the yearly installation of the "ice-boom" on Lake Erie.

The ice-boom is a long floating chain (2miles- 3.2 KM) of steel floats strung across the Niagara River from Buffalo New York to Fort Erie Ontario. It is set in place during the month of December and removed during the month of March or April. It is maintained by the New York State Power Authority.

The ice boom helps prevent the ice from clogging the river and most importantly the hydroelectric companies water intakes.

On the 2nd of January, 1929, Canada and the United States signed a treaty to preserve Niagara Falls. Among things, the agreement between the two countries limits the diversion of water to produce hydroelectric power.

Credits:

Video clip online via ClickVirtualTour's Channel at YouTube.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Virtual-Tour-Niagara-Falls>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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