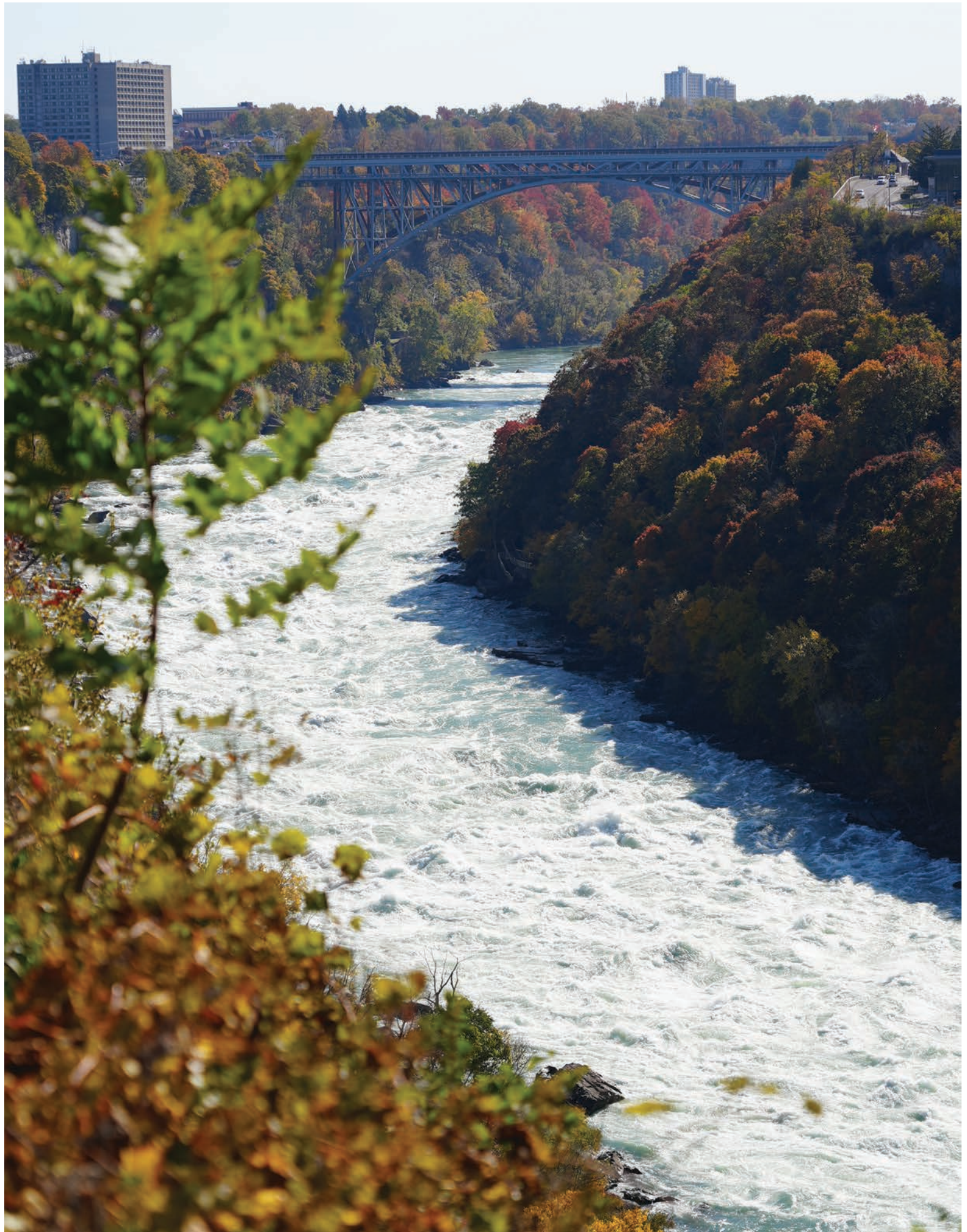




NIAGARA
FALLS
NATIONAL
HERITAGE
AREA

BEST OF
2022





Resilience is the backbone of our National Heritage Area. It has shaped our history, our communities, who we are as people and who we are as the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. Resilience is earned, not given. It comes with challenges and not ease. Built by listening and having conversations with our community and partners, it is anchored in the history we share, celebrate and honor. Resilience has a tendency to be invisible, a silent champion that urges our team forward to ensure that all voices in history are represented, that projects are shepherded with care and completed with the highest standard of excellence and authenticity.

In 2022, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area led projects that saved our history from being minimized and lost, inspired hope for the future and concentrated on our greatest resource; the people who call this incredible place home. We did this by:

- Creating the inaugural Niagara Falls Jazz Fest where we strived to bring joy and remind people of the rich legacy of jazz in the Highland neighborhood.
- Sponsoring the first girls AAU basketball team in Niagara Falls. In doing so, we gave opportunity to girls to participate in a sport, building confidence and future leaders.
- Inviting the public to engage in public art Main Street and incorporating their dreams and vision into the art. This generated conversation and collaboration on the possibilities of what a vibrant Main Street could mean to a community that has experienced decades of disinvestment
- Providing the use of Discover Niagara Shuttle vehicles to community groups and visitors, which connects people of all ages to the extraordinary natural and cultural resources we have within the National Heritage Area

What we do in any given year always takes me by surprise. It simply exceeds all expectations and inspires us to continue forward. Turn the pages and take a look at 2022.

You will see a pattern of our team's dedication to saying **YES** again and again, to thinking **BIG**, and to not entertaining mediocrity. You will see that our resilience is built on the history that shaped Niagara Falls and inspires us daily to tackle what is often seen as the impossible.

Ever forward,



Sara Capen
Executive Director
Niagara Falls National Heritage Area



Sara Capen & Don King



Niagara Falls Jazz Fest



Create A Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative Walk The Falls



Live NF Maker's Market

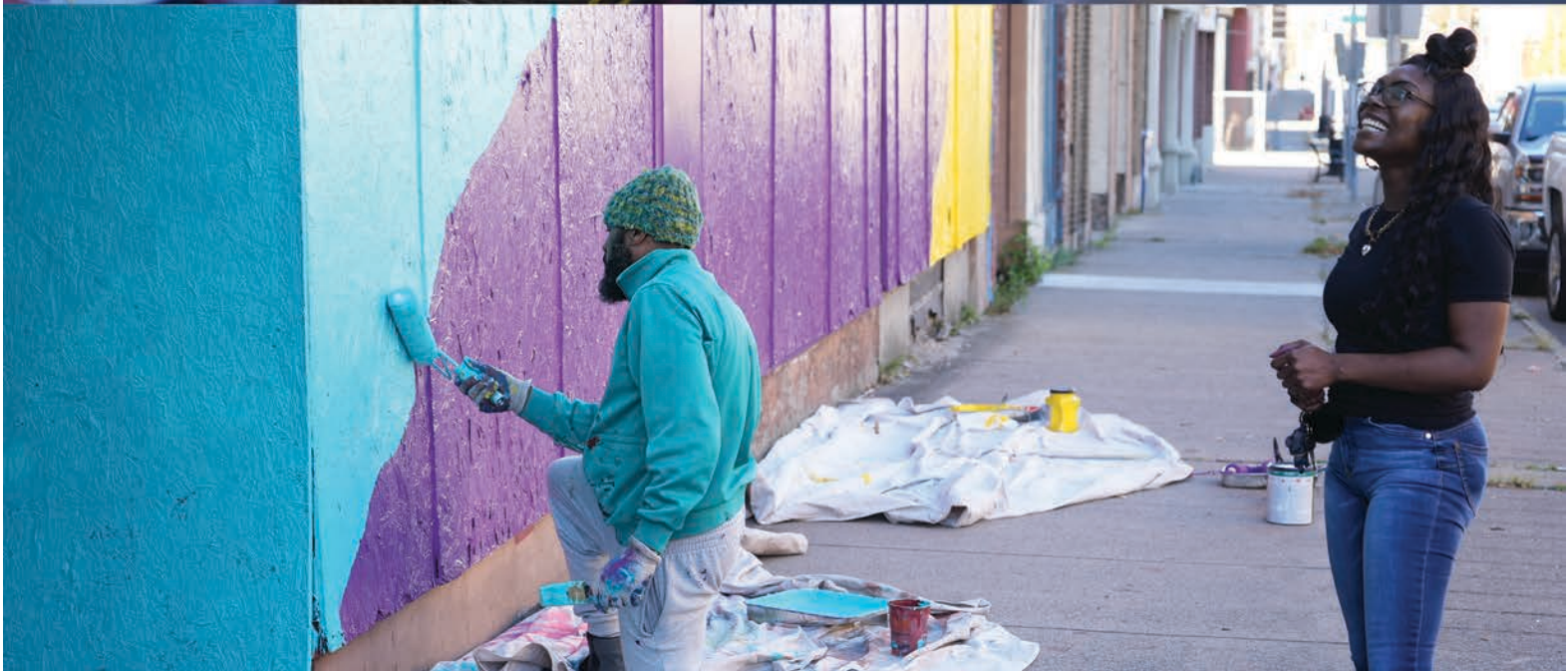
SPONSORSHIPS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

Each year, the NFNHA sponsors a wide variety of events and initiatives in our communities. In 2022, we supported the following:

- Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center Development Plan
- Highland Clubhouse "The Amazing Shake"
- Niagara University History Department "Voices Across the Border" Program
- Niagara Falls Boys and Girls Club 716 United W Team
- Niagara Arts and Cultural Center 2022 Event and Program Sponsorship
- Niagara Falls Public Library "Local History Inventory Project"
- Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative
 - Walk With Us
 - Niagara Falls City Market Programming
 - Walk the Falls
 - "White Washed" Film Screening and Community Conversation
- Niagara Falls Jazz Fest
- Aquarium of Niagara Programming
- LaSalle Education Club
- Live NF "Maker's Market" and "Tap and Craft Festival"
- Town of Niagara Digitization of Historic Tax Assessments

The Discover Niagara Shuttle was utilized for the following:

- Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society Tour
- Lewiston Electric Light Parade
- Lewiston Peach Festival Parade
- Youngstown Labor Day Parade
- Niagara Falls Santa Con Event
- Niagara University Student Tour
- Lockport Youth Field Trips to NHA Sites
- Niagara Falls Youth Field Trips to NHA Sites
- Lockport City School District Field Trip to NACC Opera "La Boheme"
- New York State Urban Planner's Conference
- Niagara County Fair
- Niagara Celtic Festival



MAIN STREET NIAGARA FALLS: DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

A Main Street, any Main Street, every Main Street, all Main Streets are the core of communities. They are the hub, the hive, the community heartbeat that pulls people in for commerce, for conversation and to better understand who we are as a people. They are a keeper of a place's history, holding chapters that can't be found at shopping centers.

Main Street, Niagara Falls is special. When you walk along Main Street and look at the buildings, you can immediately feel the care and pride that went into constructing them. You gain a sense of the history of Niagara Falls and the economic engine it once was. Our Main Street has seen better days. Despite this, it shouldn't be abandoned. Since we have been involved in opening the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center in 2018 and serving on the Downtown Revitalization Initiative Planning Committee in 2019, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area has been committed to preserving the stories of Main Street through oral history projects, public art initiatives and placemaking efforts that capture the authentic character and opportunity that exists in revitalizing Main Street. Main Streets are more than one building. They are the fabric of the community. In 2023, the NFNHA looks forward to continuing our work with community members and partners to create public art that amplifies the tremendous history of Main Street and the people who call it home today.





TORONTO'S 100
AND FACTORY
GOOD FOR TWO DAYS
The Golden Horseshoe
at Niagara Falls
The Scenic Route
A LOCAL ATTRACTION

This is the Barrel
in which
Mrs. Taylor
Went Over
Niagara Falls.

Cataract
CONSUMERS
BREWERY
BEER
NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y.

COOPER
BREWING COMPANY

BEER
& PORTER

[A blank white rectangular sign leaning against the barrel.]

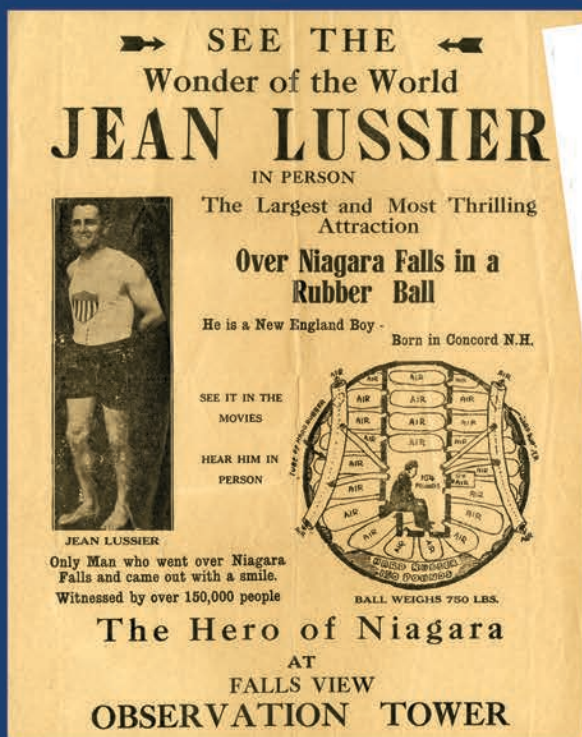


Annie Edson Taylor,
Heroine of
Horseshoe Falls.

NIAGARA FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY: LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Historical archives and records are critical to understanding a place's history. For decades, people, industries, and organizations have donated photographs, hotel registers, artifacts, records to the Local History Collection at the Niagara Falls Public Library. Preserving collections is not often a priority for local municipalities or foundations. However, preserving collections is a priority for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area who views them as vital to research and creating additional heritage tourism experiences for travelers and residents. Since 2018, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area has contributed funding to generate a full inventory of the Local History Collection. In 2022, History Associates, Inc. completed the full inventory and the Niagara Falls Public Library will have the entire collection accessible in 2023. Here is a small sampling of the significance of the collection:

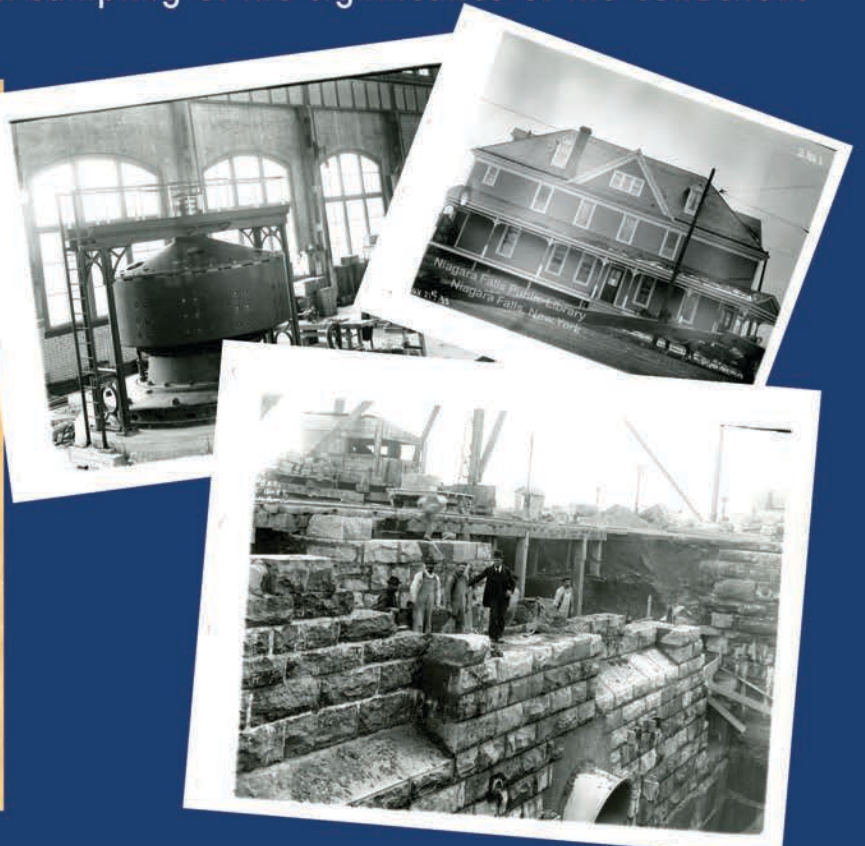
SEE THE
Wonder of the World
JEAN LUSSIER
IN PERSON
The Largest and Most Thrilling
Attraction
**Over Niagara Falls in a
Rubber Ball**
He is a New England Boy - Born in Concord N.H.



JEAN LUSSIER
Only Man who went over Niagara
Falls and came out with a smile.
Witnessed by over 150,000 people

BALL WEIGHS 750 LBS.

The Hero of Niagara
AT
FALLS VIEW
OBSERVATION TOWER





POLLY KING GALLERY & PORTRAIT LADIES PROJECT

Polly King's legacy as an artist is prolific. Whether is her versatility and experimentation with art, the extraordinary volume of art she created which is in the tens of thousands, or her love of the people and places she experienced, Polly King's life is the arch to possibility and human potential. Polly is the only know artist to have painted the construction of the Niagara Power Project. Additionally, through her work in portraits, she painted over 250 women who lived in Niagara Falls and reflect missing chapters and stories of our social history. In 2022, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area funded a preservation and digitization plan for the Polly King Gallery that includes biographies of 250 "Portrait Ladies" that were researched and written by Sandra Rutkowski. In 2023, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will be developing an immersive art experience that takes travelers and residents through the remarkable landscape and history of the National Heritage Area through the art and life of Polly King.

"Pollymobile" shuttle wrap concept. Polly King wanted her art to be enjoyed. By wrapping our Discover Niagara Shuttle in her art, it then becomes part of our community landscape for all to enjoy.





NIAGARA FALLS UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HERITAGE CENTER

The Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center had another outstanding year in 2022, sharing the stories of the Underground Railroad right here in Niagara Falls and creating conversations around the issues of today. In February, the Heritage Center created a wide variety of programming for Black History Month. The events catered to all ages and were in-person, hybrid, and online.

Their signature Freedom Conversation Tours continued, and they've been a popular choice for visitors. The tours engage visitors in conversation about their life experiences to foster personal connections with the authentic stories of freedom seekers and abolitionists in Niagara Falls.





AND AS IT WAS IN
THE DAYS OF NOAH SO
SHALL IT BE ALSO IN
THE DAYS OF THE
COMING OF THE SON
OF THE LIVING GOD
LUKE 17:26
ISAIAH ROBERTSON

PROPHET ISAIAH SECOND COMING HOUSE PROJECT

In partnership with the Kohler Foundation, Prophet Isaiah's Second Coming House is being preserved and restored. Most importantly, this unique art environment is staying right here in Niagara Falls.

In 2022, renowned preservationists B.R. Howard & Associates painstakingly inventoried and disassembled most of the artwork at the site to take to their site for processing. Many pieces are being restored and/or preserved, while others are being re-fabricated with more durable materials to withstand the harsh winter weather in Western New York. NFNHA staff were able to visit the B.R. Howard site to see the incredible work being done.

The house itself was in need of some care, and construction work was done to prepare the site for the re-installation of the art in 2023. We're looking forward to bringing this treasure back to the community.

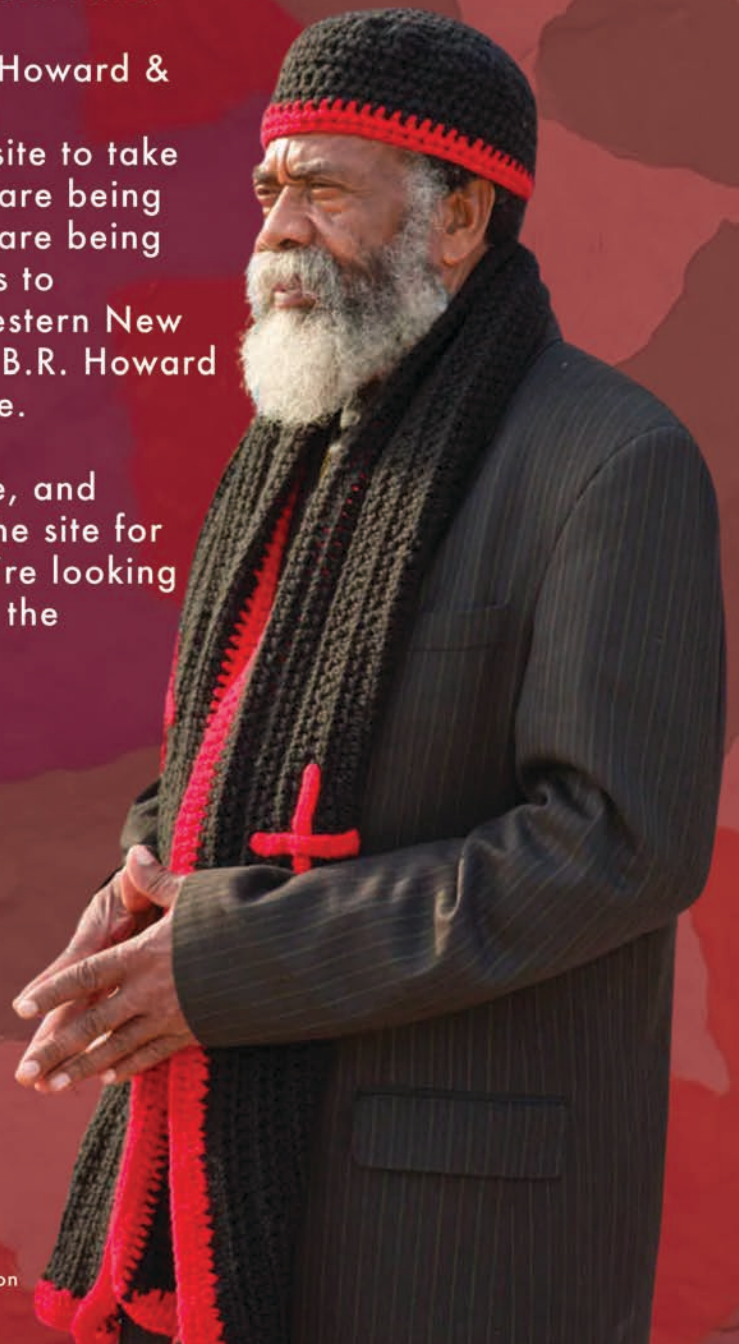


Photo courtesy of Fred Scruton



THE DISCOVER NIAGARA SHUTTLE

The Discover Niagara Shuttle enjoyed another busy year, transporting visitors and locals alike to destinations throughout our National Heritage Area and beyond. It was a year where tourism really picked up steam after years of disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lockport route continued for its second year, allowing visitors to experience the history of the Erie Canal and everything Lockport has to offer. Three new stops were added in 2022: Goat Island Pedestrian Bridge, Niagara Falls State Park, and the Niagara Falls Public Library. These strategic additions allow our riders closer access to Niagara Falls than ever before.

For 2023, we're planning a new stop at Devil's Hole State Park and a new pilot route that connects Four Mile State Park to our Falls to Fort Route in Youngstown.

The Discover Niagara Shuttle is also utilized for a wide variety of community events. Some of those for 2022 included:

- Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society Tour
- Lewiston Electric Light Parade
- Lewiston Peach Festival Parade
- Youngstown Labor Day Parade
- Niagara Falls Santa Con Event
- Niagara University Student Tour
- Lockport Youth Field Trips to NHA Sites
- Niagara Falls Youth Field Trips to NHA Sites
- Lockport City School District Field Trip to NACC Opera "La Boheme"
- NYS Urban Planner's Conference
- Niagara County Fair
- Niagara Celtic Festival



Niagara County Peach Festival Parade



Artist Ali Price works on her mural at Sammy's Pizzeria.



Artist Abigail Penfold completed a mural depicting our local Underground Railroad history on Depot Ave.



Community art projects helped raise awareness of preservation issues on Main Street.

HERITAGE ARTS: MURAL MAKING CONTINUES TO BRING PRIDE OF PLACE, BEAUTIFYING COMMUNITIES

The team and talented artists continued creating stunning public art in Niagara Falls, which we encourage you to engage with using #nfmurals on social media. In addition to the traditional murals we have been creating for the past few years, we invited the community to help paint the fronts of boarded up, vacant buildings on Main Street to help raise awareness of what those buildings were and what they could be. At the same, the new art helped beautify Main Street and inspired the community to get involved in preservation. As a thank you, we also provided a "We Are The Community" breakfast for the community on Main Street on a day that turned out to be quite snowy!

"We are the Community" Breakfast Photo. Courtesy of Chi Enyia.



THE LONG, WINDING ROAD TO PROGRAM LEGISLATION



HOW IT CAME TO BE, EXPLAINED BY SARA:

In 2023, the authorization of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area would have expired alongside 45 additional National Heritage Areas from across the country. For over a decade, Niagara Falls National Heritage Area has been a member of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas and through our participation have witnessed the incredible stress and urgency National Heritage Areas experience in seeking reauthorization from the United States Congress. Authorization requires "an act of Congress". **There is no other way around it.** To be reauthorized a bill needs to be introduced and follow the legislative process which includes hearings and votes in both the House and the Senate. The common practice for Congress has been to temporarily reauthorize National Heritage Areas in the appropriations package for 1-2 years. This practice leads to severe instability and stress for National Heritage Areas as they wait to see if they are included in what has become ultimately an end of the year package. For individual National Heritage Areas, it requires time, energy, resources and constant outreach to members of Congress to ensure that reauthorization occurs.

THE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA ACT PASSED

Since 2016, I have served as Chair of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, which represents over 50 National Heritage Areas. Together, we have advocated and advanced a bill seeking long-term reauthorizations for all National Heritage Areas. Rep. Paul Tonko (NY-D) and Rep. David McKinley (WV-R) introduced a bill in the House to create the consistency National Heritage Areas needed by establishing a 15-year reauthorization. In 2019, the bill had a legislative hearing in the committee of jurisdiction (House Natural Resources) that was quickly followed by a mark-up in 2020. The bill passed in the House of Representatives on suspension in December of 2020. 2020 marked the end of the 117th Congress which meant that the process had to start from scratch in 2021. Thankfully, it moved quickly in the House, passed on suspension in February 2021. Sen. Debbie Stabenow (MI-D) and Sen. Roy Blunt (MO-R) introduced a similar bill in the Senate in May of 2021. The assigned bill number was S. 1942. In November 2021, Sen. Manchin introduced a Chairman's Bill in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee that simply picked up individual reauthorization bills for National Heritage Areas through 2023-leaving out the entire class of 2024. The ANHA worked hard to have every NHA introduce an individual bill while seeking Republican co-sponsors to S. 1942. We were successful and in May of 2022-S. 1942 was voted out of the Energy and Natural Resources committee. As one of the most bipartisan bills from the committee, S. 1942 was placed on the Senate calendar in September and granted amendment status for the National Defense Reauthorization Bill but was not included when that bill passed.

With only three months remaining, S. 1942 had only three pathways for being enacted:

- Public Lands Package (4 corner sign-off required from House Natural Resources and Senate Energy and Natural Resources committee)
- Omnibus Appropriations Package (Inclusion that would require above 4 corner sign off and priority status from House and Senate leadership)
- Stand Alone Bill (Unanimous Consent by Senate, 2/3 vote on suspension in House) From the beginning, this was considered impossible, unlikely, "5 Hail Marys" needed, undoable.

In the waning days of Congress, this is what happened:

- December 15th -Public Lands Package collapsed. House Republicans, who successfully secured the mid-term elections, did not agree to a public lands package that included the National Heritage Area Act.
- December 20th -Omnibus Appropriations package released. The package did not include the National Heritage Area Act but did reauthorize Oil Region NHA and National Aviation NHA for one year. Both of these NHAs sunsetted in September of 2022.
- December 20th -National Heritage Area Act was hotlined as a stand-alone bill. Two Republican Senators placed blocks on the bill. A block prevents a bill from being voted on. Grassroots advocacy coupled with champion action by Sen. Stabenow and Sen. Blunt led to both Senators lifting their holds. On the evening of December 20th, the National Heritage Area Act passed via unanimous consent in the United States Senate moving bill to the House.
- December 21st - In order to move in the House, the House Rules Committee would have to hold an emergency meeting to place it on the House calendar. With one day remaining in the Congressional session, there were two items that required immediate attention-the National Heritage Area Act was one. The rule was passed in committee, debated on the floor and then passed on the floor later that night
- December 22nd -the National Heritage Area Act of 2022 passed as a stand-alone bill with a total of 326 bipartisan votes.
- January 5, 2023-President Biden signed the National Heritage Area Act into law.

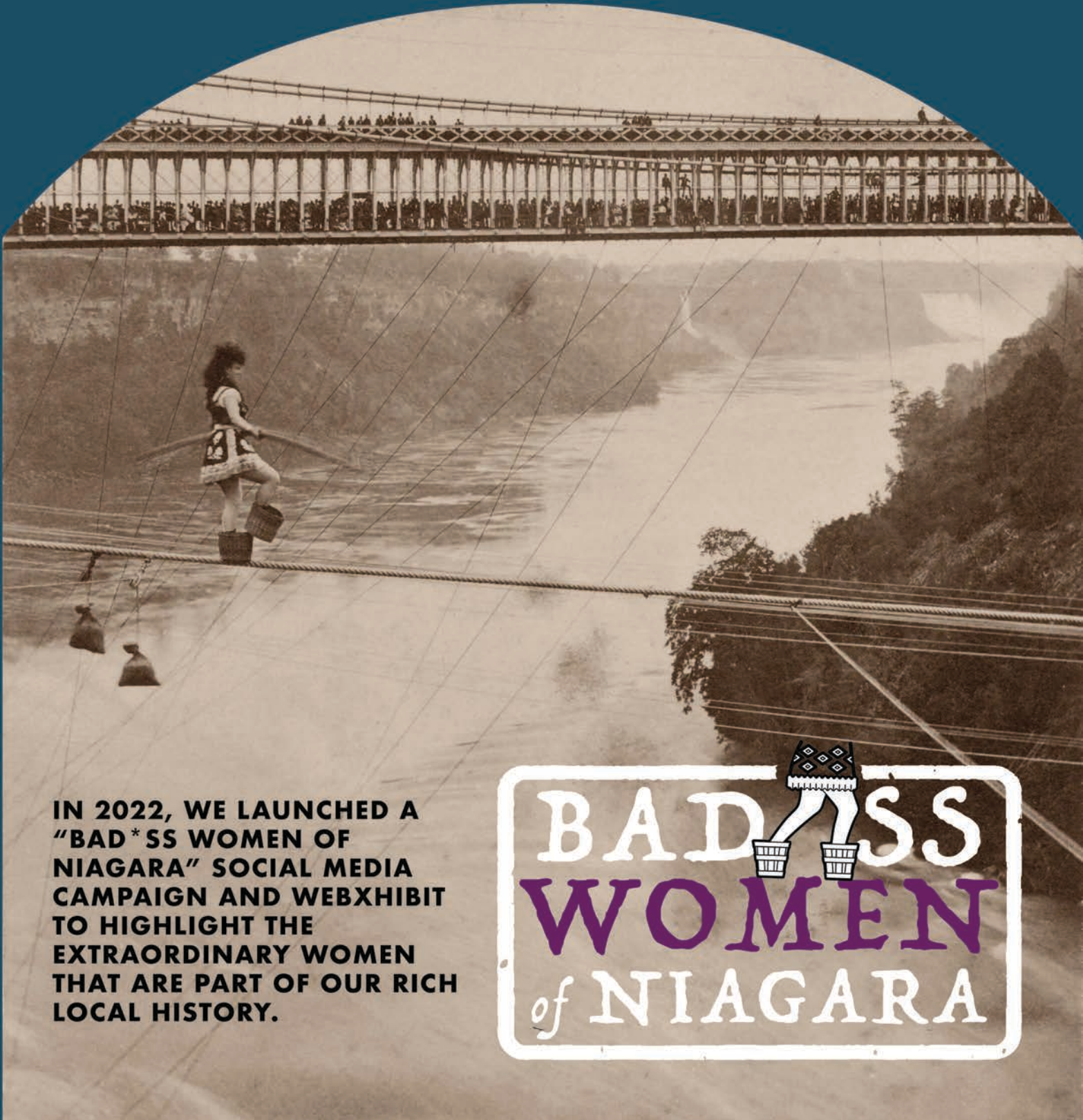
For the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, this means an additional 15 years that we are authorized to receive federal funding and continue the impactful work we do in Niagara Falls, Lewiston, Youngstown, Niagara County and throughout Western New York.

A 15 year reauthorization for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will bring:

- A minimum of \$7.5M in federal funding to Niagara Falls, Lewiston and Youngstown.
- On average, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area matches every federal dollar we receive with \$5.87 in nonfederal dollars which will amount to \$44,025,000.00 in the next 15 years.

OOPS!

WE ALMOST FORGOT...



IN 2022, WE LAUNCHED A "BAD *SS WOMEN OF NIAGARA" SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN AND WEBXHIBIT TO HIGHLIGHT THE EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN THAT ARE PART OF OUR RICH LOCAL HISTORY.





WE CREATED THE FIRST TWO OF MANY "FLAT PEOPLE," BASED ON THE FAMOUS "FLAT STANLEY" BOOK SERIES. THESE HISTORICAL FIGURES OF OUR REGION HAVE ALREADY BEEN ON SOME PRETTY COOL ADVENTURES!

SHOWN HERE ARE "FLAT HARRIET" AND "FLAT TESLA."



FOR EVERY FEDERAL DOLLAR THE NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA RECEIVED, WE MATCHED IT WITH \$5.87 IN NON-FEDERAL DOLLARS. THE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA PROGRAM IS A TREMENDOUS VALUE FOR THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER, AND WE ARE VERY THANKFUL FOR OUR LOCAL PARTNERS THAT WORK ALONG SIDE US TO DO THIS IMPORTANT WORK HERE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.



**NIAGARA
FALLS
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AREA**