



Adding to the appeal is the intimate manner in which we can explore the falls. A set of stairs descends down the side of the gorge to a viewing platform at the base of the waterfall, providing a uniquely close-up view and a spectacular vantage point for taking photographs. Even better, when stream levels are low enough to safely allow it, you can even venture behind the curtain of falling water. Indeed, it's not unusual during the summer months to hear children giggle excitedly as they peer out through the glistening sheet.

Adding to the sense of intimacy is a series of informative signs that familiarize visitors with the valley's geology and history.



Some of Hilton Falls's rich history is on display in the form of stone ruins, the remnants of 19th century sawmills, that are visible at the brow of the falls. These ruins serve to remind visitors of the importance of waterfalls to early settlers

of the province as the source of power by which they could operate their mills— sawmills, gristmills, and woolen mills. These industries provided all the necessities of life: lumber for shelter, flour for food, and wool for clothing.

The first individual to harness the power of Hilton



Falls was Edward Hilton who leased the land from Henry Young and built a sawmill on-site in 1835.

The lumber he cut supplied many settlers throughout Nassagaweya Township for use in their homes, barns, and businesses. But the 1830s were a turbulent time in Ontario, and battle lines were being drawn between the Tories, who supported the occasionally corrupt government, and followers of

the fiery rabble-rouser William Lyon Mackenzie who demanded radical political reform.

Hilton was one of Mackenzie's supporters and got caught up in the Rebellion of 1837. Unfortunately, he chose the losing side, and was forced to flee to the United States and into exile.

In Hilton's absence, the sawmill sat vacant and was allowed to rot. It wasn't until 1856, when an



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