



Smithsonian

*National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center*

## Guide to the Niagara Falls Power Company Photographs

NMAH.AC.0949

Alison Oswald

2016

Archives Center, National Museum of American History  
P.O. Box 37012  
Suite 1100, MRC 601  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012  
archivescenter@si.edu  
<https://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Arrangement.....	3
Scope and Contents.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	3
Container Listing .....	4
Series 1: Photograph Albums, 1899 - 1919.....	4
Series 2: Photographs by Subject, 1899 - 1908.....	7

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Niagara Falls Power Company Photographs
<b>Date:</b>	1899 - 1919
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.0949
<b>Source:</b>	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of History of Technology (Collector) National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Mechanical and Civil Engineering (Collector) National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Work and Industry (Collector)
<b>Creator:</b>	Niagara Falls Power Company (Creator)
<b>Extent:</b>	7 Cubic feet (14 boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The collection consists of bound photograph albums and loose photographs documenting the construction of the Adams Power Station (hydroelectric plant) and allied structures of the Niagara Falls Power Company, 1899-1919.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated to the National Museum of American History's Division of Mechanical and Civil Engineering (now Division of Work and Industry) by the Niagara-Mohawk Power Corporation, through E.B. Strowger, System Project Engineer in 1965.

### Provenance

Transferred to the Archives Center by the Division of Work and Industry in 2007.

### Other Finding Aids

[Inventory](#) for photographs available.

### Processing Information

Processed by Alison Oswald, archivist, 2016.

### Preferred Citation

Niagara Falls Power Company Records, 1899-1919, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

### Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

## Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

---

## Biographical / Historical

In 1853, the Niagara Falls Hydraulic Power & Manufacturing Company was chartered. The company purchased the water rights and began construction of a canal (1860-1861) and was the first company to generate hydroelectric power from Niagara Falls.

The Niagara Falls Power Company was founded on September 19, 1889 after being re-organized and renamed from its predecessor company, the Niagara River Hydraulic Tunnel, Power and Sewer Company. Edward Dean Adams, a New York financier became president of the company. Adams created a subsidiary company, the Cataract Construction Corporation to build a power tunnel before deciding on a method of power distribution. Adams also secured the help of financiers, J.P. Morgan, John Astor, and William Vanderbilt.

In 1893, alternating electrical current (AC) was selected as the standard to use and the Cataract Construction Company began using AC for power generation and transmission. From 1892 to 1894, the Niagara Falls Power Company built two powerhouses, Powerhouse #1 (1892-1894) and Powerhouse #2 (1901-1903). In 1895, the Niagara Falls Power Company began placing contracts with the Westinghouse Company for long distance electric transmission development and implementation.

In 1927, by resolution of the board of directors of the Niagara Falls Power Company, the power-houses and sub-stations were renamed in appreciation of the men who pioneered the power industry and developed it. Niagara Power Stations Number One and Two were renamed the Edward Dean Adams Station. Also known as the Adams Power Station. The Adams Power Station built in 1895 was not the first hydro power station at Niagara, but it was one of the largest hydroelectric power generators of its time and it was the first large scale application of AC power in North America. General Electric and Westinghouse collaborated on the project. Engineers Thomas Evershed, George Forbes, Benjamin G. Lamme, Oliver Shallenberger, Nikola Tesla, William Stanley, Dr. Louis Bell, and Charles P. Steinmetz contributed.

### Sources

<http://www.edisontechcenter.org/Niagara.htm> (last accessed on May 3, 2016)

Adams, Edward Dean. *Niagara Power History of the Niagara Falls Power Company, 1886-1918, Volumes I-II*. Niagara Falls, N.Y., printed for the Niagara Falls Power Co., 1927

---

## Scope and Contents

The collection consists of bound photograph albums and loose photographs documenting the construction of the Adams Generating Station #2 (hydroelectric plant) and allied structures of the Niagara Falls Power Company, 1899-1919. The images depict generators, wheel pits, governors, plant interiors, river views, transmission lines, turbines, and unidentified people.

The albums are arranged numerically from one to thirty. Albums 13, 19 and 20 are missing. Each photograph has a number, date, and caption located in the lower left of the image. Typescript indices are included at the beginning of each album and the full index is linked to this finding aid.

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into two series.

Series 1: Photograph Albums, 1899-1919

Series 2: Photographs by Subject, 1899-1908

---

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

- Power generation
- Power stations
- Water-power
- Water-wheels

### Types of Materials:

- Business records -- 1850-1900
- Business records -- 1900-1950
- Drawings
- Photographs -- 1900-1920
- Photographs -- 19th century

### Names:

- National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of History of Technology
- National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Mechanical and Civil Engineering
- National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Work and Industry
- Tonawanda Power Company

### Places:

- Niagara Falls (N.Y. and Ont.)
- Tonawanda (NY)

---

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Photograph Albums, 1899 - 1919

Box 1, Folder 1	Album #1 , 1899 November 21-1900 March 8 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #673-#723
Box 1, Folder 2	Album #2, 1900 January 29-1900 April 12 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #724-#771
Box 2, Folder 1	Album #3, 1900 April 13-1900 June 19 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #772-#820
Box 2, Folder 2	Album #4, 1900 June 20-1900 August 24 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #821-#872
Box 3, Folder 1	Album #5, 1900 August 27-1900 November 14 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #873-#922
Box 3, Folder 2	Album #6, 1900 October 6-1901 February 5 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #923-#970
Box 4, Folder 1	Album #7, 1901 february 6-1901 April 16 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #971-#1015
Box 4, Folder 2	Album #8, 1901 April 17-1901July 19 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1016-#1065
Box 5, Folder 1	Album #9, 1901 July 2-1901 Spetember 9 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1066-#1112
Box 5, Folder 2	Album #10, 1901 September 10-1901November 11 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1113-1160
Box 6, Folder 1	Album #11, 1901 November 13-1902 January 27 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1161-#1209

Box 6, Folder 2	Album #12, 1902 January 28-1902 April 11 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1210-#1259
Box 7, Folder 1	Album #14, 19012 June-1902 July 22 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1310-#1356
Box 7, Folder 2	Album #15, 1902 May 23-1902 September 2 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1357-#1396
Box 8, Folder 1	Album #16, 1902 eptember 3-1903 January 1 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1397-#1436
Box 8, Folder 2	Album #17, 1903 February 6-1903 December 22 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1437-#1479
Box 9, Folder 1	Album #18, 1903 December 22-1904 June 23 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1480-1503
Box 9, Folder 2	Album #21, 1901 July 22-1905 May 12 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1524-1556; K-38 to K-41; M1 to M-4; M-9 to M28;
Box 9, Folder 3	Album #22, 1891 - 1905 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1557-#1578; Numbers 1-31
Box 10, Folder 1	Album #23, 1905 August 25-1907 November 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1579-#1593; #1600-#1632
Box 10, Folder 2	Album #24, 1907 Novembetr 10-1908 June 14 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1633-#1746
Box 11, Folder 1	Album #25, 1908 June 14-1909 June 21 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1747-#1816
Box 11, Folder 2	Album #26, 1909 July 2-1911 February 3 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1817-#1867

Box 11, Folder 3	Album #27, 1911 February 3-1913 January 29 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1868-#1916
Box 12, Folder 1	Album #28, 1913 February 4-1914 July 14 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of Adams Generating Station #2, #1917-#1968
Box 12, Folder 2	Album #29, 1914 July 7-1916 December 8 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of the Adams Generating Station #2, #1969- #2017
Box 12, Folder 3	Album #30, 1917 April 3-1919 May 16 1 Photographic album (10" x 13") Notes: Construction of the Adams Generating Station #2, #2018- #2047

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*



## Series 2: Photographs by Subject, 1899 - 1908

Box 13, Folder 1	Turbines and miscellaneous machinery, 1901 - 1906
Box 13, Folder 2	Transmission Lines and Users, 1900 - 1906
Box 13, Folder 3	Main generators, 1900 - 1905
Box 13, Folder 4	Forebay, tunnel and wheel pit, 1900 - 1903
Box 13, Folder 5	Canal and river views, 1903 - 1905
Box 13, Folder 6	General views of powerhouse, 1903 - 1905
Box 13, Folder 7	General view of falls, 1908
Box 13, Folder 8	General views of floor with generators, 1899 - 1901
Box 14, Folder 1	Governors, 1901
Box 14, Folder 2	Miscellaneous views, people, and drawings, 1901 - 1908
Box 14, Folder 3	Tonawanda Power Company, 1900
Box 14, Folder 4	Later construction, not the Adams Station, undated
Box 14, Folder 5	Canal at power house, 1900 - 1907
Box 14, Folder 6	Local unidentified canal, 1902 - 1905

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*