

**Man Standing on Table Rock in Winter (glass stereograph, 19th century) Niagara Falls
Stereo Cards RG 599**

Researched by Zoe Huang



This is a glass stereograph of a man standing on top of the Table Rock over the Niagara Falls in the cold winter. This is part of the Niagara Falls Stereo Card Collection in the Brock's Archives & Special Collections (RG 599) and is titled "Man standing on Table Rock in Winter." The photo shows the grandeur and scale of the Table Rock through the inclusion of the man standing proudly on top of the rock who seems so tiny in comparison to his surroundings. The cold weather crafted long icicles dangling off the edge which displays the grand height of the rock. In the background, the Clifton Hotel can be seen.

Table Rock was a flat piece of rock that peered out over the Falls. It partially collapsed in 1818 and continued to deteriorate in the subsequent years.¹ The deterioration was caused by the erosion from the constantly moving water from the Falls. Today, a plaque is left in place as a reminder of this once popular natural marvel and tourist attraction.

Table Rock inspired many buildings and cultural endeavors such as the first museum built by Thomas Barnett—the museum's location was selected to take advantage of the popularity and of Table Rock. Another notable building was the Table Rock House built by Saul Davis in 1853, which is the predecessor of the current Table Rock Centre housed closer to the Horseshoe Falls.²

This is a stereograph, two photos of the same scene but captured at slightly different angles to produce a 3-D effect when seen through a stereoscope. Stereoscopes are designed to merge

¹ "The History of Table Rock Centre." n.d. Niagara Parks. Accessed February 4, 2025.

<https://www.niagaraparks.com/things-to-do/table-rock-centre/>.

² "The History of Table Rock Centre."

the two photographs together to breathe life into the still images.³ These types of photographs were incredibly popular during the 19th century due to the novel presentation of 2-D images reaching the 3-D realm of vision. This stereograph is quite unique, as it is made of glass rather than paper. Glass stereographs are pricier than their paper counterparts but are prized for their quality of detail and clarity.⁴

Further Reading:

Andrew Burke, *Burke's Descriptive Guide: or the Visitors' Companion to Niagara Falls*, Buffalo: A. Burke, 1856.

“Cities and Sites Glass Stereograph Collection, 1854-circa 1880.” n.d. Research Collections | Getty. Accessed February 21, 2025.
<https://www.getty.edu/research/collections/collection/113YMJ>

“Double Takes: A Brief History of Stereographs – Library Matters.” n.d. Accessed February 4, 2025. <https://news.library.mcgill.ca/double-takes-a-brief-history-of-stereographs/>

“The History of Table Rock Centre.” n.d. Niagara Parks. Accessed February 4, 2025.
<https://www.niagaraparks.com/things-to-do/table-rock-centre/>

³ “Double Takes: A Brief History of Stereographs – Library Matters.” n.d. Accessed February 4, 2025. <https://news.library.mcgill.ca/double-takes-a-brief-history-of-stereographs/>.

⁴ “Cities and Sites Glass Stereograph Collection, 1854-circa 1880.” n.d. Research Collections | Getty. Accessed February 21, 2025. <https://www.getty.edu/research/collections/collection/113YMJ>.