Indian Falls Tragedies and Rescues

(Information pulled from The Batavia Daily News, The Batavian & Buffalo area news outlets)

June 17, 2021 Jacob C. Minnick – Lockport Teen, age 18. Jumped into creek, resurfaced and then went back under the water and not resurfacing. Alden dive team called, grappling hooks and poles were used and the teen was found deceased in the base of the falls two hours later.

July 17, 2020 Four Juvenile males – unable to reach embankment to hoist themselves out of the water but not in distress. Mercy Medic and Water Rescue Team #14 called to rescue. Three are fine, one needed medical attention.

July 13, 2016 Bradley Augustin – Buffalo man drowned after jumping into water at base of falls and did not resurface. Victim found under water.

August 12, 2015 Donnie Lorrens – Lancaster teen. Slipped off ledge in an instant and swept by current. Stuck spinning in churning water and blacked out. Friend able to grab his arm and pull him ashore. Fire and rescue were dispatched. Victim taken by ambulance to Batavia Hospital. Survived.

July 3, 2015 No Name given – distressed person in about a foot of water and pretty beat up. Was swimming when pulled under by current twice and finally reemerged about 50 feet down stream. Survived.

May 3, 2013 Matthew Kwiatkowski - of Tonawanda, NY. Fell 15-20 feet from top of falls onto rocks at the base. Sustained neck and back injuries. Rescue took two hours and was flown by Mercy Flight to ECMC. Survived.

August 5, 2012 Unknown female and son - woman who was swimming with her son at night in at Indian Falls had to be rescued from these rocks below after she suffered a diabetic reaction. Firemen at the scene said “these instances are becoming all too frequent of people getting injured while swimming and diving into the creek, just below the Log Cabin Restaurant”.

June 10, 1974 Robert A. Ralston - Amherst Youth. Victim in water several minutes before he was sucked under by the undertow. Scuba diver called in to recover body to no avail. Dragged for body with grappling hooks for one day before finding him.

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June 22, 1964 William Hardy – of Tonawanda, NY. Lost balance on ledge and plunged over the ledge. Stuck head on rock under water and drowned.

May 10, 1964 Robert Stafford – Buffalonian. Minutes after he rescued a friend, he sank beneath the water believed due to leg cramps and drowned.

August 6, 1962 Robert Isaac – Dove in and failed to resurface. Body was found underneath ledge at the base of the falls.

July 22, 1962 Edward Klehn – Slipped off ledge and struck head on rocks before plunging into water, was rescued, and taken to hospital. Survived.

September 8, 1959 Frederic Ronald Dressel – Former Marine, rated excellent swimmer, dove in, and did not resurface, believed he hit rocks that moved during winter and drowned.

June 30, 1949 Daniel Kocol & Lester Coniber – Kocol went under and did not resurface so Coniber dove in to save him and they both drowned. Dragged for bodies with grappling hooks for one day before finding them.

June 9, 1931 Albert Heusinger – Drowned and caught in undertow. Dragged for body with grappling hooks for two days before finding it.

July 23, 1929 Isabel Mansell – caught in the undertow while swimming and drowned.

July 23, 1887 Harlow Higgins – Not from Pembroke, drowned while swimming. Dragged for body for two days before finding it.

July 22, 1870 John Wight – Jumped into pool as he has done many times in previous year, but rocks had moved over winter and he dies on impact.