

## Obscurity Point

### Cedar Point's White Water Landing

Written by classyonabudget

If there's anything all of us Midwesterners can agree on, it's that there's no better place to spend a summer weekend than at Cedar Point, the lakeside amusement park and vacation peninsula located in Sandusky, Ohio. Opening in 1870 as a summertime beach resort, the park began its metamorphosis into the roller coaster capital of the world when it opened up its first roller coaster, the Switchback Railway, in 1892. Since then, the park has grown to become one of the country's most popular amusement parks, and has become the flagship park of the Cedar Fair company, which owns and operates 13 different amusement and water park locations across the United States and Canada. Being well over one hundred years old, it is no surprise that the park has had its number of rides and attractions that have come and gone throughout its lifespan. Some of these defunct rides are probably better off forgotten, while others deserve to be remembered,(or perhaps even resurrected), for the great attractions they were. Take White Water Landing for example.



## Obscurity Point

### The Splash of '82

In the 1970's, Cedar Point introduced a plethora of new attractions for families and thrill-seekers alike to enjoy. These included the Corkscrew, the first roller coaster in the world to feature 3 inversions, the 136 foot tall Giant Wheel, and Gemini, a steel racing roller coaster that, upon its opening, was the tallest, longest, and fastest roller coaster in the world. The park was beginning to change- transitioning from a summertime lake resort to one of the largest and most popular amusement parks in the world. With new, record-breaking thrill rides and attractions, more and more people began to flock to the park. By the time the 1980s came around, it was evident that with the amount of people visiting the park in the blistering, hot summer temperatures, more needed to be done to both attract guests to the park and provide them with a fun way to cool down and escape the unbearable summer temperatures. After all, why swim in the murky, surrounding waters of Lake Erie when instead you could be waiting 45 minutes to an hour in line for a thrilling, refreshing 2 minute splashdown? The answer was simple, and in the summer of 1981, work began on an all-new water ride for the Frontier Town section of the park under the title "White Water Landing."

Summer 1982

**CEDAR POINT'S INFORMATION GUIDE**

**THE CEDAR POINT SUMMER**

**White Water Landing Puts Big Splash In '82!**

**MAP INCLUDED**  
Rides and Entertainment  
**SUPER**

**NEW THIS SUMMER!**  
**WHITE WATER LANDING**  
Raging currents, a 45-foot drop over the falls and an exciting, high-speed finale are just part of the challenge of White Water Landing, the longest water flume ride ever built. Hold on as your canoe tips and turns in the current, is lifted to treetop level above Frontiertown and then plunges over the falls!

**THE CEDAR POINT CINEMA PRESENTS "HAIL COLUMBIA!"**  
Treat yourself to a motion picture experience as "Hail Columbia!" presents actual footage of the first manned space shuttle from blast-off to touchdown. Shown on one of the world's largest indoor motion picture screens (67 feet high by 88 feet wide), this IMAX film features exclusive footage of America's greatest space adventure. "Hail Columbia!" is shown daily at regular intervals.

**CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION AREA (next to Kiddieland)**  
There's even more for your youngsters to do when Cedar Point's new children's participation area opens this summer. The participation area contains an assortment of activity elements specially designed for children ages 4 through 12 and their parents.

**NEW FOR 1982!** **CEDAR POINT**

**Fun-For-All Planned at C.P.**

## Obscurity Point

White Water Landing would be located just off the Frontier Trail, and would take up a hefty amount of space by replacing both the 1967 log flume Shoot the Rapids,(more on that later), and the Swan Boats ride, making it the focal attraction in the back section of the park. It would be constructed by the now-defunct roller coaster manufacturer Arrow Dynamics, and cost approximately \$3,400,000 USD to build; when it opened, it would be the longest log flume ride in the world. Advertising for the ride promised a new, thrilling adventure that the whole family could enjoy, and softly promoted a reworking of the previously quiet Frontier Town area by providing it with a large, new attraction. Upon its opening in the summer of 1982, White Water Landing proved to be a huge success and became the second water ride in the park with the other being Mill Race, a log flume located on the Main Midway where Raptor sits today. Although the ride was the highlight of the 1982 season, it should also be noted that two other family venues opened in the park the same year, one being “Hail Columbia!”, a new IMAX film about the world’s first space shuttle landing, and Kid Arthur’s Court, an enormous children’s play area that would be located in the Kiddy Kingdom section of the midway. While these other two family-oriented attractions proved to be popular venues, nothing that year could beat the new, record-breaking experience that was White Water Landing.

## White Water Rising

The ride was given an Appalachian river ride theme, which fit in with Frontier Town’s five acres of wooded forests and lagoons perfectly. Riders would enter a rustic wooden boat house and board canoe-themed fiberglass boats that circulated about a rotating platform which worked to load and unload riders more efficiently. Upon exiting the station, riders would approach the ride’s first conveyor belt lift, which would take canoes through an abandoned mine

## Obscurity Point

shaft and into a faster-flowing section of the river. The mine shaft canoes would enter was complete with an effect that made it seem like precious gold lined the rockwork, and upon exiting the shaft, riders would be met by a small waterfall that functioned to provide an extra splash to the ride experience. Canoes would then wind their way along the rapids through wooded forests and more artificial rock work installed to enhance the theme of the experience before approaching the ride's much larger second lift, that raised riders above the trees 50 feet in the air. After a few twists and turns, canoes would snake their way to the main element of the attraction- a 45 foot dual flume drop that would plunge riders 45 feet down at a 40 degree angle into the lagoon below. The fun wouldn't stop there; in order to enhance the splashdown, the ride came with a unique 225 foot hydro-jump element at the bottom of the dual-flume drop that caused boats to skip down a runout area in a series of thrilling splashes before slowing down and floating their way back to the rotating platform of the boathouse.



The entire ride was exactly what a park like Cedar Point needed at the time: it broke records, had a unique and well-planned theme and layout, and provided an experience that thrill

## Obscurity Point

seekers and families alike could enjoy. With all of that in its favor, many would probably think that a 2,370 foot long, five minute attraction such as White Water Landing would stick around for good, maybe even becoming something of an untouchable park icon. They would be gravely mistaken.

## White Water Downfall

Twenty years passed, and White Water Landing continued to stand and soak riders above the treeline of Frontier Town. Something that must be taken into consideration, however, was that the White Water Landing riders were experiencing in the early 2000s was not the same attraction it was twenty years earlier. Like many water rides, White Water Landing had experienced much wear and tear over the years due to water damage and having to withstand the harsh elements throughout its seasonal operation. Maintenance costs for the ride were unsurprisingly very high, and led to small changes to be made in order to cut back on operating costs and to preserve the aging log flume. One of the most notable changes was the removal of the mine shaft sequence altogether. The wooden structure, being exposed to nearly two decades of splashing and water damage, began to become unstable and dangerous to keep sending boats through. It didn't help either that the waterfall at the exit of the gold mine ceased to function and was never bothered to be repaired. This neglect to the ride's theme and condition was the first of many signs that the attraction was reaching the end of its long lifespan.

## Obscurity Point



What didn't help the ride's image either was an incident that occurred during the 2002 season. At the bottom of the dual flume drop, two boats descended along the identical chutes at nearly the exact same time and became stuck together at an awkward angle where the two chutes merged themselves back into one. Normally in this case, sensors would be activated to prevent any further canoes from descending down the chute in order to allow boats to get free, but the vehicles became stuck before they could trigger the sensors. Naturally, a third canoe descended down the 45 foot drop before ride operators could stop it and rammed itself into the two lodged canoes. Thankfully, of all six people that were rushed to the hospital to be treated of their minor injuries, none were seriously injured and the ride continued to operate under one condition; boats could no longer descend down the dual flume element at the same time, eliminating some of the thrill and uniqueness to the ride due to safety concerns. This pretty much became the final nail in the coffin for the once-beloved log flume, and by the end of the 2005 season, it was officially confirmed that the ride was slated for demolition, and would not be returning to the park in 2006. News that White Water Landing would be ending its 23-year run at the park came as no big surprise for park guests, as the aging log flume was failing to produce

## Obscurity Point

the same thrills it did two decades earlier, and Cedar Point's demographics had changed throughout the early 2000s from marketing itself as a family fun park to the roller coaster capital of the world. But the question that ran through the heads of many was what would replace the classic Cedar Point log flume? What could possibly take over the five acres of land White Water Landing once called its home? By the time the 2007 season came around, the answer was clear.



## The New Sheriff In Town

Originally slated to open May 12, 2007, Maverick, a new, award-winning steel roller coaster developed by Intamin was erected on the site on which White Water Landing once stood.

## Obscurity Point

The demolition of White Water Landing and construction of Maverick was a lengthy procedure and lasted throughout the 2006 season entirely. Although Maverick was an entirely new high speed roller coaster, upon its delayed opening on May 26, 2007, it was evident that many elements left over from White Water Landing remained and were recycled to fit in with Maverick's thematic elements. For example, the rustic boathouse that acted as the station for White Water Landing remained in tact and now acts as the pavilion that Maverick's que line weaves under. The rotating platform, however, has been filled in with concrete, but concrete footers and sections of the hollowed-out chutes of the log flume can still be seen around the loading area of the ride. The artificial rock work that the boats once snaked their way through also remain, and act as canyon walls that Maverick's track now weaves through. This can clearly be seen when looking out alongside the lagoon by the Wave Swinger ride. Also, when exiting Maverick's gift shop, be sure to turn and look up at the roof. It's clear that whoever was in charge of covering up the White Water Landing entrance sign didn't do a very good job, as people can clearly still make out the ride's painted white logo on both a rustic piece of metal and on the wooden water tower that stands above Maverick's loading platform.



## Obscurity Point

### White Water Tribute

In conclusion, White Water Landing will forever hold a special place in the hearts of many typical Cedar Point guests and roller coaster enthusiasts alike. After all, who doesn't have a childhood memory of embarking down the drop of the 'wildest river ride around', laughing with the entire family on board? The ride served riders for over two decades, being known to many simply as "the log ride", and will always be missed by frequent visitors of the park. It's evident that the water ride won't be forgotten any time soon by Cedar Point management, as a fully-constructed scale model of it still remains on display, encased in Cedar Point's Town Hall Museum, just around the corner from where the 45 foot drop once towered over the treetops of Frontier Town. With the possible idea that the days of the neighboring Snake River Falls and Thunder Canyon are numbered, Cedar Point will be lacking a new, family friendly water ride to thrill guests with and cool them off on a hot summer's day. The park has already resurrected one water ride with the brief return of Shoot the Rapids. Why not try to do it again?... right this time. One can always wish.



## Obscurity Point

### Works Cited

*1999 Cedar Point Brochure & Park Guide,*

[www.rollercoasterfreak.com/WWL\\_Tribute/WWL\\_Tribute.html](http://www.rollercoasterfreak.com/WWL_Tribute/WWL_Tribute.html).

Andrew. "Water Ride Removal Thoughts." *PureCoaster*, 12 Aug. 2014,

[purecoaster.wordpress.com/2012/04/20/water-ride-removal-thoughts/](http://purecoaster.wordpress.com/2012/04/20/water-ride-removal-thoughts/).

"Cedar Point." *Battle of Lake Erie - Ohio History Central,*

[www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Cedar\\_Point](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Cedar_Point).

"Cedar Point Opening Weekend Photo Report - Page 2 - Theme Park Review." *Theme Park Review Forum Index,*

[www.themeparkreview.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=67944&start=10](http://www.themeparkreview.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=67944&start=10).

Mayntz, Melissa. "White Water Landing at Cedar Point." *LoveToKnow*, LoveToKnow Corp,

[themeparks.lovetoknow.com/White\\_Water\\_Landing\\_at\\_Cedar\\_Point](http://themeparks.lovetoknow.com/White_Water_Landing_at_Cedar_Point).

"White Water Landing." *The Unofficial Cedar Point Wiki,*

[unofficialcedarpoint.wikia.com/wiki/White\\_Water\\_Landing](http://unofficialcedarpoint.wikia.com/wiki/White_Water_Landing).