***LOUISE BRIDGE***

The Louise Bridge is named after Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, the daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. She was born on March 18th, 1848 in Buckingham Palace, London, England and died December 3rd, 1939 in Kensington Place, London.

The original bridge at the location, the first Louise Bridge, was built in 1880 at a cost of $300,000 and was one of the incentives used to have the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) build its Main line through the City of Winnipeg and establish its shops here instead of in Selkirk, Manitoba. The railway company was given the right to use the bridge for a monthly rent of $100 and along with other tax exemptions, the railway did come to Winnipeg.

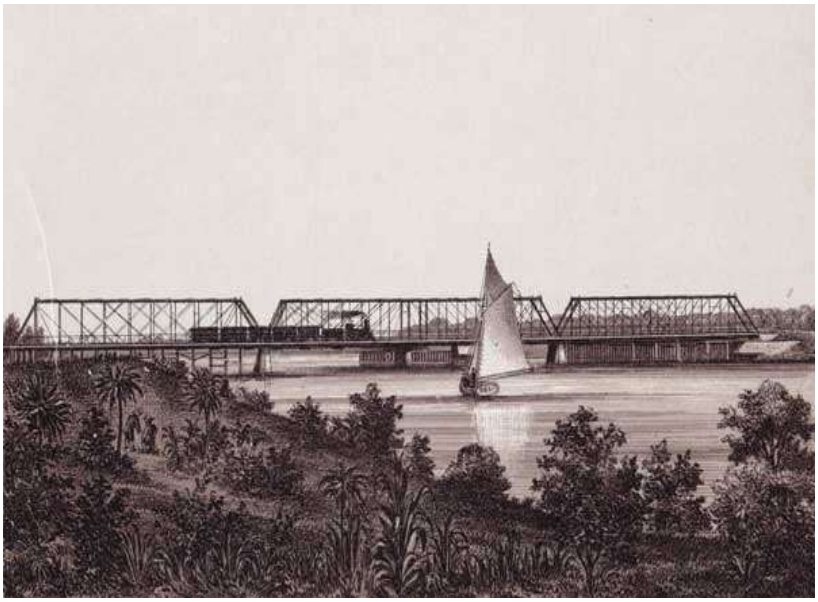
The bridge was the first bridge to be built over the Red River and it carried not only trains but pedestrians, horses and rigs of all kinds, which certainly must have created a potential disaster if a train was using the bridge at the same time as other traffic. The tracks were surrounded by wooden planking as there were no sidewalks on this first bridge.

By the late 1890s the C.P.R. had built a new railway bridge over the Red River due to the fact the trains were now heavier and the Louise Bridge was not deemed sturdy enough for the extra weights. As a result the company discontinued using the Louise Bridge and in 1904 it stopped paying its monthly rent on the bridge.

In 1903 the Winnipeg Street Railway Company laid its tracks on the bridge, providing streetcar service along Midwinter Avenue to Henderson Highway and north, eventually reaching East St. Paul. After the Redwood Bridge was completed in 1908 and had streetcar tracks laid on it in 1909, the portion of the streetcar route along Midwinter Avenue from the Louise Bridge to downtown was discontinued, as the Redwood Bridge was used as the route from downtown to Henderson Highway. Streetcars now ran from the Redwood Bridge to Midwinter as part of the Griffin Spur serving the pork packing plant on Midwinter, along with other businesses and factories in the area.

After the opening of the Redwood Bridge, Winnipeg City Council made the decision to replace the original Louise Bridge with a new 663 foot long structure at the same location, using part of the original piers. This new bridge was built with vehicular traffic in mind but also with a separation for sidewalks to allow for pedestrian traffic. This new bridge opened in 1911 and was constructed at cost of $120,000, much cheaper than the first bridge.

Today the Louise Bridge is the second oldest bridge in Winnipeg after the Redwood Bridge and there are plans to replace it with a new structure containing four lanes instead of the current two lanes. This would help provide a new rapid transit route to the eastern portion of the city, but a construction date has not yet been determined.



**A drawing of the ORIGINAL Louise Bridge 1889 – Source Souvenir of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Toronto News Company**




**Louise Bridge  west side of the bridge – Source Eric de Schepper 2017**



**West side of the bridge _ Source Eric de Schepper 2017**




**The NEWHS Inc. first book cover shot – Source Eric de Schepper 2017**



**Louise Bridge – Source Eric de Schepper 2017**




**Louise Bridge construction date 1910 – Source Eric de Schepper 2016**



**Louise Bridge form the west – Source Eric de Schepper 2016**



**Spring view in March – Source Eric de Schepper 2019**

***BERGEN CUT-OFF BRIDGE***

The Bergen Cut-off Bridge is a defunct steel train bridge situated to the south of the Kildonan Settlers Bridge. The swing bridge, the only one of its kind in Manitoba, sits disjointed over the Red River. Swing bridges are able to rotate around their central support, allowing boat and vehicle traffic to travel alternately (think of a drawbridge, but with rotation instead of lift).

It was built in the years 1912 to 1914 and opened just before the beginning of World War I. Constructed for the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) along a former rail line that extended west from the Transcona Yards parallel to Springfield Road and over the Red River, these rail yards were built to allow railway traffic destined for outside Winnipeg to bypass the crowded central Winnipeg location entirely.

A residential area was expected to surround the rail yards in what is now the Grassie Boulevard and Kilcona Park neighbourhood. Projections made in 1912 predicted a residential population upwards of 50,000 people. This never happened and only a small number of houses were ever built. Instead of the expected 5,000 workers, the space never had more than 300 employees. When the yards closed in 1932, C.P.R. laid off 200 employees and the former yards became a space to store train cars, continuing as a storage location for many decades after that.



**Aerial View of the Bergen Cut Off Bridge in use in 1923 – Source Archives of Manitoba Surveys Branch Aerial Photographs (A 0262) GR11610, FA 23 - 42**

Tracks branched off from the C.P.R. mainline east of Winnipeg to the yards with a western outlet from the south side of Springfield Road. A railway bridge crossed the Red River and met up with tracks leading first north and then west, going through what is now the airport region to join the C.P.R. mainline west of Winnipeg. This branch line was called the Bergen Cut-off, named for an area west of Winnipeg.



**Overview of the Bergen cut off Bridge in 1974 – Source City of Winnipeg Archives**

There were overhead railway bridges over both Henderson Highway at Springfield Road and Main Street by the Kildonan Golf Course. These were both removed in 1980, although there is still the railway bridge that exists over the Red River. It never had an official name, but it was usually called the Bergen Cut-off Bridge. Some people living on the east side of the Red River refer to it as the “black bridge”.




**Henderson Highway underpass at Springfield Road/Bergen cut off in 1931. Lord Kitchener School now John Pritchard school on the left touching the underpass in the background – Source Archives of Manitoba Winnipeg-Streets-Henderson #5 Municipality of North Kildonan R-125**

During World War II the bridge was used by the Canadian Army for demolition practice. In the 1960s and early 1970s there were many complaints from local residents that the former railway bed from Henderson Highway to the bridge was being used illegally by noisy snowmobiles at all hours of the day and night during the winter months, and by teenagers partying in the summer.

The bridge was built to be opened to allow boat traffic to travel down the river. In 1948 the Municipality of North Kildonan proposed that it be used as a bridge for vehicles, but as it was only wide enough for one lane of traffic, it was deemed inefficient and would be too costly to be turned into a highway bridge to carry traffic across the Red River from Henderson Highway to Main Street. As a result, it was decommissioned in 1946. The mechanism to open and close the bridge was removed in the late 1960s and the bridge was left in the open position.



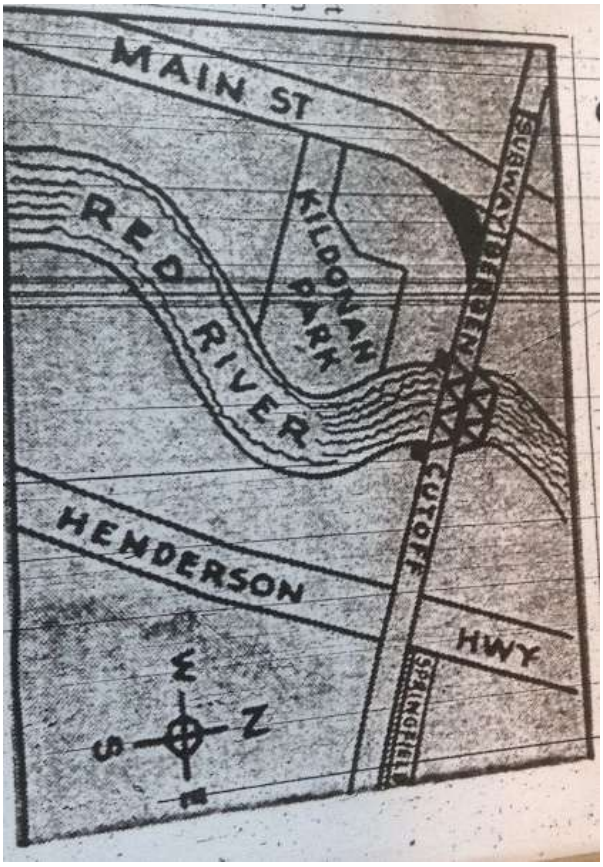

*S.S. Keenora* going under Bergen Cut-off Bridge in 1939 - Courtesy of Jerry Olenko

Access to the bridge on the east side of the Red River is made possible by walking on the elevated former roadbed of the track located opposite Springfield Road, starting behind the Cambrian Credit Union building on Henderson Highway. The track and gravel were removed by the C.P.R. in the late 1960s and the roadbed is now a public green space. On the west side of the Red River access is reached by following the crushed gravel pathway running along the river from Kildonan Park to the Kildonan Settlers Bridge.

Plans have been proposed to turn the site into a restaurant, but nothing has yet been done in this regard. The bridge continues to decay and rust and sometime in the future the whole structure will likely collapse into the river.



**NEWHS Inc. 2014 Walking Tour Bergen Cut-off Bridge – Source Donna Cudmore**




**Western Canada Fire Underwriters' Association map September 1953 – Source City of Winnipeg Archives**



**Bridge left in the 'open' position for boats to pass through – Source Eric de Shepper 2017**



**Graffiti on the river edge in the fall when water levels are low – Source Donna Cudmore 2016**



**View of the bridge from the west side by Kildonan Park – Source Eric de Schepper 2017**



**Pile up of debris from the south – Source Eric de Schepper 2017**



**Bergen Cut Off Bridge – Source Eric de Schepper 2017**