

Walking Tour of Kildonan Drive North

Tour Guide – Jim Smith - President and Historian/Archivist - North East Winnipeg Historical Society Inc. 2011

This walk begins at the northern end of Fraser's Grove Park which was named after William Fraser who lived from 1832 to 1909. He was the son of one of the original Selkirk Settlers and lived his early life on the west side of the Red River before moving to the east side of the Red River around 1880 with his wife and 3 adopted Children. He served as a Municipal Councillor for the Municipality of Kildonan from 1882 to 1885 and as Reeve from 1886 to 1897.

He also served as the treasurer of Kildonan Presbyterian Church for 40 years and was the chairman and treasurer of the committee to establish Manitoba College now part of the University of Winnipeg.

The area owned by Fraser included the present area of Fraser's Grove Park but also included the property extending to Henderson Highway. In 1910 the area was offered to the University of Manitoba as a permanent site for the University with 50 acres to be given free to the university and a further 150 to 300 acres available for purchase for \$600 to \$800 per acre. How different the area would have looked if this offer had been accepted by the University of Manitoba.

In 1911 his property was subdivided into a new subdivision called Rossmere Grove. It took many years before all the lots were sold for residential homes as the various lots changed hands several times before most of the lots reverted to the Municipality for taxes in the 1930's. During the 1930's, 1940's and into the 1950's the area was used as picnic grounds and a camping area.

There is mention in the Municipality of Kildonan Council Minutes that a ferry across the Red River was to be built at the foot of the present day Rowandale to West Kildonan in the 1880's but it is not known whether a ferry was ever located at this location.

In 1913 the Municipality of Kildonan and after 1914 the Municipality of East Kildonan began the process of purchasing the land in sections for Kildonan Drive originally known as East Kildonan River Drive with the North Kildonan part of Kildonan Drive not fully completed until after North Kildonan was created by the division of East Kildonan in 1925.

1158 - Built 1967 – Henry W. Redekopp, Owner of Redekopp Lumber and Supply, bought the existing Roadside Store in 1938 located on Henderson Highway on the present site of the Kildonan Village Shopping Centre where the Existing Starbucks, T.D. Canada Trust property etc. is located. Henry's terms for purchasing the property was \$10 per month in rent and \$10 per

month from the sale of the stock until the purchase price was reached. Soon after much hard work he was able to build a larger store and hire 5 employees. In the next few years he began to sell hardware and general merchandise and appliances.

In 1951 he established Redekopp Lumber and Supply at the same location at 1126 Henderson Highway. In 1957 he started a window manufacturing plant, a roofing and hardware wholesale business to become independent of the whims of suppliers; who often kept him waiting a long time for his orders. The year 1963 saw Henry establish Allmar Distributors to handle both his building and hardware wholesale company at 11 Higgins Avenue and then in 1968 at 287 Riverton Avenue. He established branch plants in Regina in 1963, Vancouver in 1968, Saskatoon in 1970, Calgary in 1979 and Edmonton in 1981. The manager for Allmar for the first 15 years was his son in law William Fast who bought the window manufacturing division in 1978 renaming it Willmar Windows. In 1978 the Redekopp retail lumber yard at 1126 Henderson Highway was sold to Bert Polet. Henry Redekopp celebrated the 50th anniversary of his family business in 1988 and he passed away shortly after that.

Henry also served on the North Kildonan School Board from 1947 to 1953 and was a North Kildonan Municipal Councillor from 1961 to 1964 and he was a Social Credit candidate for Kildonan for the Manitoba Legislature in 1966. Henry had a great deal of personal integrity; at his first North Kildonan Council meeting he insisted that as long as he was on the North Kildonan Municipal Council, nothing from municipal funds was to be purchased from his business even though North Kildonan had been purchasing supplies from his business for many years.

Henry's son and his family now live in this house.

1160 – Built 1962 – George Janzen is a builder who came from Europe starting his company in the 1950's. Later he established his company Janzen Builders Limited (1963) Holdings Limited, which has remained in operations for over 50 years. Mr. Jansen first lived at 1168 Kildonan Drive which was built in 1958. In 1962 he built 1160 Kildonan Drive where the family lived for years and which has remained in the Janzen family to this day. George Senior and his wife have three sons, two who are active in the business, along with four of their grandchildren, making this a third generation company. Janzen Builders has built over 2,000 homes, 30 apartment blocks, a couple of shopping centres, a hotel, at least 6 assisted living 55/ plus complexes just to name a few. Currently they are working on projects. Maintaining long business relationships with developer and suppliers are a key to their success. North Kildonan's Henry Redekopp of Redekopp Lumber and Supply, and Martin Bergen of MDC Limited (Marlborough Development Company Limited.)/Edison Properties were friends and business associates with Janzen Builders for many years with friendships lasting to the present. The Janzen Family participates on many boards as directors or consultants within the City of Winnipeg, with the purpose of making

Winnipeg a better place to live. Janzen Builders and members of the Janzen Family are quiet benevolent philanthropists.

1166 - Built 1959 – home of Abram Albert DeFehr. He was the son of the founder of C. A. DeFehr and Sons, Cornelius Abraham DeFehr .He was born in South Russia in 1910 and immigrated with his family in 1925. He founded Palliser Furniture which began as a North Kildonan business on Edison Avenue and is now one of the largest furniture manufacturers in Canada with plants in Manitoba, Alberta and North Carolina. He was one of the founders of Mennonite Brethren Bible College later Concord College, Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute, Camp Arnes and he helped form the Mennonite Economic Development Association. He passed away in 1998

1168 –Built 1958 – George Janzen and family's first home.

1170 – Original House Torn Down Present House Built 1984 - James Thompson Finlay Aiken, North Kildonan Mayor from 1946 to 1953. He was born in 1900 and worked at Brown and Rutherford for over 30 years. He married Helen McFadden in 1932. In World War II he served in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders reaching the rank of major. He died in 1973 and is buried in Elmwood Cemetery.

Ron Delbigio President and Board Member of Del's Electric Motor Supply Limited established by his father and uncles in 1927 at 54 Princess Street

1172 – Built 1959 - William Dueck was born in 1918 in the Ukraine coming to Canada with his family in 1924. He was married in 1941 to Olga Neufeld and had 3 children. He taught at a Hutterite School near Elie at and at schools in East St Paul and North Kildonan and later at the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute and still later in the Winnipeg School Division serving as Principal of Isaac Brock, River Elm and Ralph Brown Schools; At Ralph Brown School he began the first Ukrainian Immersion program in Manitoba. In the early 1980's he was a River East School Division School Trustee. He died in 2009.

1182 – Built 1914 – Angus Matheson McKay born in 1862, he married Anne McLeod in 1904 and had 3 daughters. He started out as a farmer then worked for the W.R. Hamilton Company, a real estate company. He was a Kildonan Municipal Councillor from 1908 to 1909. East Kildonan Municipal Councillor in 1908 and 1909 and North Kildonan Municipal Councillor in 1925; despite being a councillor for 3 different municipalities he did not move as it was the result of municipal division, first the dividing of Kildonan into East and West Kildonan in 1914 and then the dividing of East Kildonan into East Kildonan and North Kildonan in 1925. He was the Public Works Foreman for North Kildonan starting in 1926 at 90 cents per hour. He was a land owner in Elmwood, East Kildonan and North Kildonan, Angus McKay School named after him. He donated his piano to the school at its opening in 1953. He died in 1958

1186 – Built 1962 - Dr. Henry P. Krahn, well known urologist was head of Urology at Concordia Hospital after working for many years at St Boniface Hospital. He had interned at the famous Bellevue Medical Centre in New York City becoming a MD in 1964. He was a pioneer in the use of laser surgery for prostate operations. He was a candidate for political office in 1977 against Ed Schreyer for the riding of Rossmere for the Progressive Conservatives losing by about 750 votes

1204 – Original House torn down, Present House Built 1987 - Edward Spice, Prominent Lawyer and land developer, for many years was the Municipality of East Kildonan Solicitor and several other suburban municipalities.

Bergen Cut-off Bridge - known locally as “Black Bridge” built in 1913 built by the C.P.R. to transport rail traffic across the Red River from the North Transcona Railway Yards partly located in North Kildonan, partly in the Municipality of Springfield. This “Bergen Cut-off” led from the bridge along the south side of Springfield Road with a highway underpass at Henderson Highway and Springfield Road that was removed in 1980 along with the one at Main Street. The yard was built to replace the C.P.R. Yards in Central Winnipeg but it never served the purpose after it opened in 1914. A large town site for the workers and their families was planned for the area north of Springfield Road in the Kilcona Park area with a projected population of 50,000. At its peak a work force of 2,000 worked on constructing the yards with 500 men working at the yard after it opened. By 1932 the work force at the yards was reduced to a few dozen employees. During World War II the Canadian Army used the bridge for practice demolition purposes. The last train to cross it was in 1946. North Kildonan Council suggests that it be turned into a bridge for vehicles in the late 1940’s but it would not contribute any of the costs to convert the bridge. After World War II, the mechanism to open and close the bridge was removed and the bridge was left in the open position. Since then in the 1980’s and early 1990’s various proposals were made for the bridge such as a restaurant on the west side of the river but these plans came to not. A contributing factor was the lack of a road access to the bridge and the opposition from the city and local residents to building one.

To the north of this bridge at Whellams Lane, known until the mid-1960’s as Ferry Lane was a ferry that crossed the Red River from the foot of Ferry Lane to what is now John Black Avenue in Old Kildonan. It was in existence from the late 1870’s to 1917, but unlike what people think of a ferry today it was more like a raft that was pulled across the river by cables. There was a man hired to operate it on a seven day per week basis with fees charged according to what was being ferried across, including horses, wagons, pedestrians, animals of all kinds and in the latter years, automobiles and small trucks.

It was proposed in the 1980’s that Whellams Lane be connected to Kildonan Drive through another street and then a roadway be extended across the Bergen Cut-off thus allowing traffic

to travel from Whellams Lane along the entire length of Kildonan Drive but this proposal was killed by the objection of local residents.

1205 – Built in 1972 – Vic Schroeder – M.L.A. for Rossmere 1979-1988, served as a cabinet minister in the N.D.P. cabinet of Howard Pawley from 1981 to 1988; he served as Minister of Finance, Chairman of the Treasury Board, Minister of Labour, Minister of Energy and Mines, Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology and Attorney General. He was a City of Winnipeg Firefighter who became Lawyer and he also was the Chair of Manitoba Hydro from 2000 to 2012

An earlier house on this address was owned by Robert H. Black and his wife Glaydus Black who ran the Chick Grill at the southeast corner of Henderson Highway and Leighton Avenue across from Lord Wolseley School. During the 1960's this restaurant serving the standard hamburger and chips menu was a place to be for the teenage and young people of that era.

1195 – Built in 1912 – Henry J. Dick, a teacher, vice principal and principal was born in 1924. He Taught in Coaldale Alberta and when he came to Winnipeg, he taught in the Fort Garry School Division and later in the River East School Division. He became the vice principal of Miles MacDonell Collegiate and served as principal of Miles Mac in 1967. In 1969 he stepped down as principal and moved to River East Collegiate serving as vice principal until his retirement. He married Katherine for 59 years and had 3 children. He was involved in the Mennonite Conference, the Gideon's Society and the Gleaners. He passed away on August 19, 2005 in Abbotsford British Columbia, where he had moved after his retirement.

1191 – Built in 1950 – Donald Townsend was the publisher and owner of the local weekly "The Examiner" which existed in the area from 1961 to 1977 in competition with the "Herald"

1187 (House no longer there) – H. Audrey Bayne who was a North Kildonan School Trustee from 1932 to 1938. He served as the Assessor for several local municipalities and he drew many of the local district plans in the Winnipeg area

1185 – Built in 1920 – J. M. Morton, Lawyer was a North Kildonan School Board Trustee from 1926 to 1932, served as Chairman in 1928-1929 and also served as the Municipal Solicitor for Old Kildonan; his wife Mrs. J. Morton served as a North Kildonan School Board Trustee from 1944-1949.

1175 – Built in 1952 – Jack Lawrence Pearce, North Kildonan Mayor from 1954 to 1957 and 1962-1963. He was born in 1923 and served in the 10th District Depot in World War II. He worked for the Greater Winnipeg Transit Commission, Winnipeg Emergency Measures

Organization and Winnipeg Parks and Recreation retiring in 1979. He married Margaret Sumpton in 1950 and had three children; he passed away in 2010.

1171 – Built in 1920, Byron E. W. Doak was an Inspector for the Manitoba Department of Labour. He was a North Kildonan School Trustee from 1953 to 1957. He also served as the Secretary-Treasurer for the North Kildonan School Board during these years as North Kildonan did not have a paid Secretary-Treasurer so one of the school board trustees filled this position.

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