

# The Three Bridges at Riverside

The search for the “best” crossing at Riverside spanned many decades

Beginning in 1885, one by one, the communities in the Southwest Corner got their rail service, and by 1910 almost every farmer was within ten kilometers of an elevator. Life was transformed. What had essentially been an almost subsistence existence became viable agribusiness.

At the same time it ushered in a new era in terms of lifestyle. Trips back to eastern Canada were possible. Shopping excursions to Brandon and Winnipeg were a reality: what had once been a four or five-day journey was now a day trip.

The introduction of the car brought another revolution in transportation freedom. With the development of a system of roads, the trip to Brandon became even easier. No waiting for the train, you came at went at your convenience.

There was still the Souris River to cross, but when bridges began to replace the ferries, they cut more time off of the trip.

The crossing at Riverside—directly between Boissevain and Brandon—was always the most popular route. By 1882 Sheppard’s



▲ The site of the first Riverside Bridge, once a popular swimming spot.

**...the bridge was damaged when Tom Nesbitt’s steam tractor fell through...**

Ferry and Heaslip’s Ferry were operating near where the Highway 10 bridge was later built. Over the next century bridges and roadway upgrades made the journey go more smoothly... literally.

A wooden bridge built in the early 1900’s, was just a short distance downstream from today’s crossing. The view from Google Earth (below) shows traces of the old roadway.

That bridge was damaged when Tom Nesbitt’s steam tractor fell through while crossing in 1928. As

the tractor started to break through, Tom was able to jump off and watch from the abutment as his tractor sank into the stream – where it stayed. Keith Tufts remembers the site as a good swimming hole in the 1930’s and 40’s and that the tractor was still visible.

A new concrete arch bridge was completed in 1929. This crossing became a popular recreation spot with a dance hall, ball diamond, a store and gas station. The Old Highway #10 crossed the bridge and proceeded straight up the hill running parallel to the current Highway, which runs a bit to the west.

The current bridge was built in the early 1970’s, leaving the old bridge and the access to it in place. Liskum Campbell Park was created on the site. Next time you’re passing by, stop and take a walk around – it is a beautiful spot.

#### Sources:

Personal Reminiscence from Interviews  
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