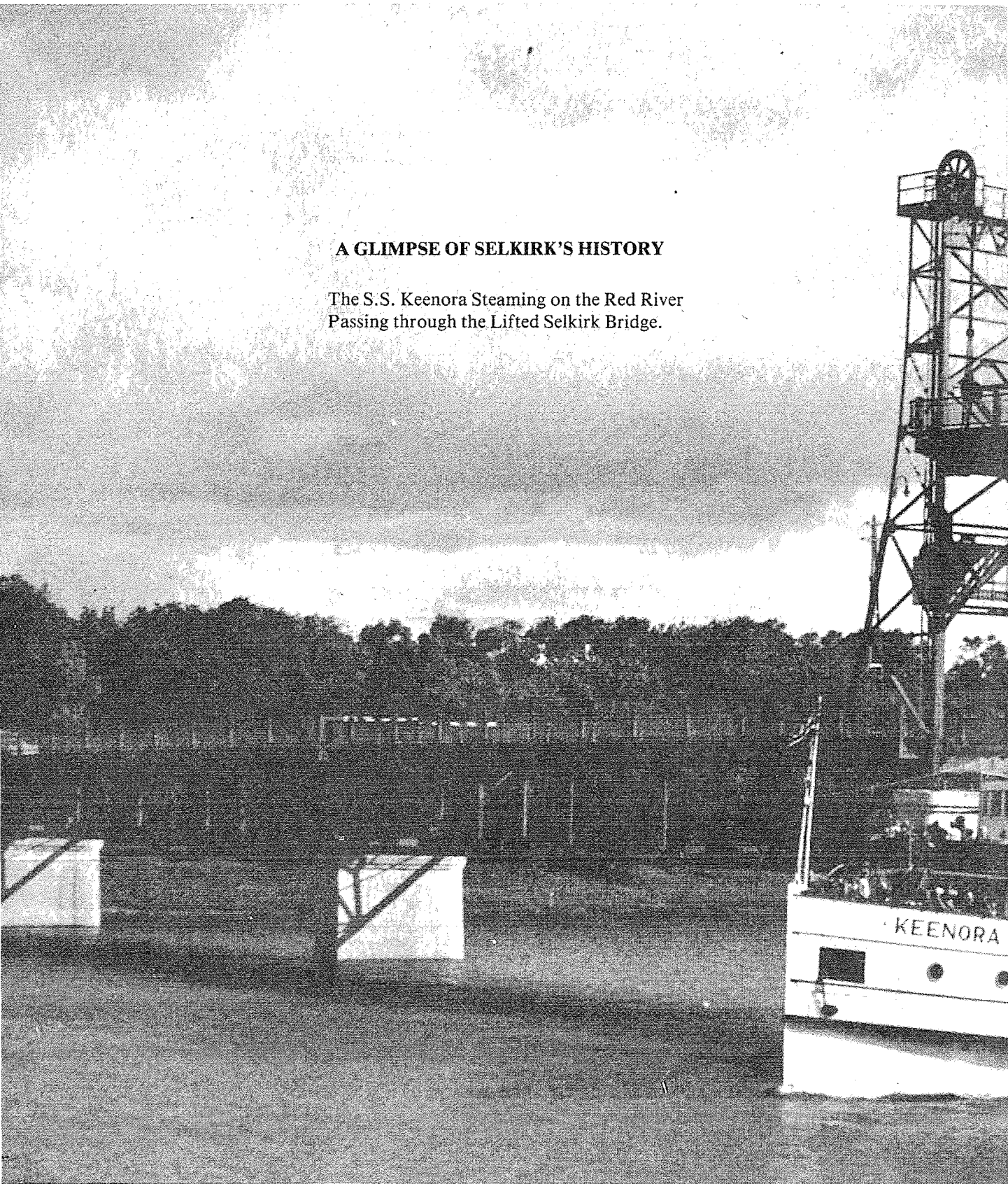


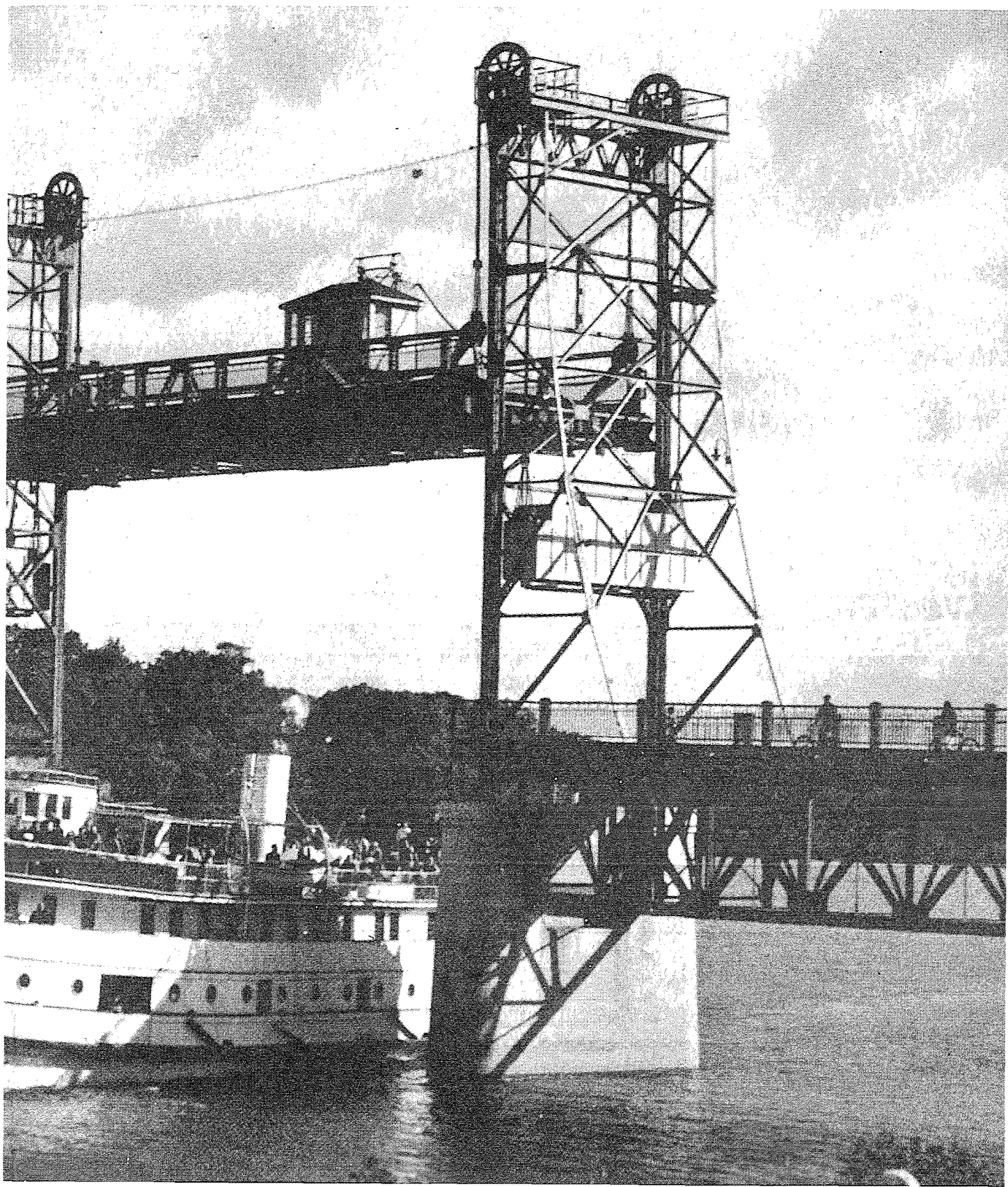
SELKIRK

"THE  
FIRST  
HUNDRED  
YEARS"

**A GLIMPSE OF SELKIRK'S HISTORY**

The S.S. Keenora Steaming on the Red River  
Passing through the Lifted Selkirk Bridge.







**SELKIRK**  
*The First Hundred Years*

by Barry Potyondi



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BARRY POTYONDI

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*DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF SELKIRK*

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## PREFACE

IN 1895, when Selkirk was still a young, false-fronted, clapboard community of just 1,700 residents, local newspaperman R. W. Stewart boldly proclaimed that the town and its district already abounded "in legendary lore sufficient to furnish a novelist or the quasi-historian with food for reflection for a life time." His statement was one of calculated exaggeration, published in a bombastic promotional supplement to the weekly *Record*, and yet he was nearly correct. The story of Selkirk, like that of all small communities, is complex and captivating. Much of the tale has been lost, but even more has been preserved in the documents, photographs, and recollections of another generation.

This brief history, which took a year rather than a lifetime to prepare, is often unable to do more than glance fleetingly at events that occupied the attention of the townspeople for months on end. Such is the surfeit of historical information that confronts every local historian who cares to seek it out. Selectivity becomes a genuine challenge when one tries to reconstruct, within so few pages, the main changes in a century or more of experience. I can only hope that this scaffold of a book stirs memories of Selkirk and similar prairie towns in some of its readers, tells them a few stories they have not heard before, and encourages them to set straight the record where I have erred.

The greatest gift that the author of a commissioned work can receive from his patrons is the freedom to pursue those lines of research and thought that he considers most impor-

tant, and in this I have been most fortunate in working with the Selkirk Centennial Committee. All of the Committee members, and Steven L. Banera in particular, freely contributed their valuable time, energies, and specialized knowledge of the community to ensure the success of the project. I will always be grateful for their co-operation and understanding.


Many others assisted with the writing of this history. The staffs of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, the Legislative Library of Manitoba, and the Public Archives of Canada were congenial as always and did much to expedite the research in primary documents, as did those of the Western Canada Pictorial Index and the University of Manitoba Archives in photograph selection. I was fortunate to receive, throughout the duration of the project, the assistance of Randy Rostecki, who generously offered early maps of Selkirk from his private collection, his own research notes on the railway controversy of the 1870s, and his valuable advice on many related topics. Wendy Owen and Gerhard Ens, who acted as my research assistants for several months, have earned my gratitude for their enthusiastic involvement in the project and my respect for their abilities as historians. I owe a special thanks to Dorothy Garbutt, who graciously permitted me to examine and to use, without restriction, the invaluable personal papers of her grandfather, James Colcleugh, without which Selkirk's first decade would still be an unfathomable mystery. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not thank my wife, Terry Homik, to whom my gratitude is unending.



# SELKIRK LOCATION MAP



**LEGEND**

HIGHWAYS 

C. P. RAIL 