

In March, in a published letter, a summer resident mourned the loss of the Moon River Bridge on the old Highway 69. For many cottagers, this stalwart, rusting steel structure, built in 1959 served as the gateway to the north and prompted many a parent and child to burst into a spontaneous (if tuneless) rendition of Moon River while they sweated in kilometre-long traffic jams during summer long weekends on their way to the cottage. Ugly and unremarkable, the now vanished Moon River Bridge was a symbol for many visitors, a tangible "crossing point" from one reality to another; from work-a-day world to a holiday world and a welcome reprieve from the daily grind. It was a landmark that telegraphed to merry holidayers that after a long drive, the cottage was now within reach.

Moon River Bridge may be gone, but many more bridges span rivers and streams throughout cottage country. One of the most remarkable is the Rose Point Swing Bridge in Parry Sound. Built as a railway trestle by John R. Booth in the late 1800's, the Rose Point Swing Bridge was built to connect the railway to Depot Harbour, which at that time, was a major shipping port.

Entirely built by hand with steel imported from Scotland, the bridge was originally manually cranked in order to allow ships to pass into the harbour. After World War II, the trestle was planked over to allow vehicular traffic and the bridge was turned over to the Parry Island First Nation band.



*Daniel Judge  
The keeper of the Parry Island Swing Bridge*

It is now mechanically cranked, but, in the event of a power outage, it can still be swung by a hand crank. As one of the very few swing bridges left, Rose Point Swing Bridge is a landmark that thousands of tourists admire every year. Boatloads of visitors on local cruises watch it swinging open to allow the ships out into the "sound" every summer. It has been immortalized in paint and by photo, but most of all, it has a special place in people's hearts. 🌟



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