

# LETHBRIDGE

## *Historical Walking Tour*





## foreword

This tour consists of 28 sites in the historic district of Lethbridge. It is approximately 2.5 km in length and takes about two hours to complete. The tour takes the form of a loop, beginning and ending at the Sir Alexander Galt Museum and Archives (Site 1, Galt Hospital). **A map of the route, showing the location of the sites, can be found in the middle of this booklet.** Wherever possible, historical names have been used for buildings, names which often do not correspond to their current owners or occupants. In viewing these buildings and sites, please remain in the public areas.

cover photos:

*Inset: Family in Galt Gardens, c. 1907 (P19750096004-GP)*

*Looking south on 5th Street South c. 1907 (P19951049001-GP)*



Oldman River Valley with Incline Railway, c. 1885 (P19738072000-GP)

## Introduction

In 1874, Nicholas Sheran, an American, began a small-scale coal mine at the base of the coulee approximately 300 metres north of the present-day roadway to West Lethbridge. He operated this venture until his death in 1882. In 1881, Sir Alexander Galt, Canadian High Commissioner to Britain, encouraged a group of English investors to support a full-scale coal mining project in this part of the North-West Territories to fulfill the fuel requirements of the future Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) line. Galt dispatched Captain Nicholas Bryant to investigate the coal resources at Coal Banks, as Sheran's operation was known. In the summer

of 1882, William Stafford, a mine manager from Nova Scotia, accompanied Bryant on a tour of inspection. They then met with Sir Alexander and his son, Elliott. As a result of these meetings, the Galts decided to develop a mine on the east side of the Oldman River, across from Sheran's original site.

The first Galt mine began operation in October 1882. It was a drift mine - essentially a tunnel bored horizontally into the wall of the coulee. A number of small mine-related buildings were constructed that year, and in the summer of 1884, the Stafford family arrived with 30 Nova Scotia miners. In 1883 and



Galt Gardens looking southeast, c. 1912 (P19750116000-GP)

1884, coal was shipped by steamboat and barge down the meandering Oldman River to the main CPR line at Medicine Hat. In 1885, the Galt's North Western Coal & Navigation Company, Ltd. completed a narrow gauge rail line from Coalbanks, as the settlement was known by then, to Dunmore Junction, east of Medicine Hat. A second narrow gauge line was built south to Montana in 1890 to gain access to additional coal markets.

The community's population increased quite rapidly during its first years and, in 1885, moved from the river-bottom mine site to the prairie above, where a number of commercial and residential buildings were constructed. Lethbridge, named after William Lethbridge, first president of the North Western Coal & Navigation Company, was incorporated as a

town in 1891. The CPR completed the Crow's Nest Pass branch rail line in 1898, and the improved rail service contributed to a general growth of the economy. Lethbridge attained city status in 1906, and by 1909, with the completion of the CPR High Level Bridge, evolved into an important regional rail centre. Coal mining continued to be the town's chief industry until 1919, by which time irrigation and innovative agricultural techniques had attracted many farmers to the area and agriculture became the predominant economic force. The combination of coal mining, agriculture, and rail traffic sustained Lethbridge's economy for nearly 60 years. In the last three decades important new industries have become established, diversifying the local economy.

## 1. Galt Hospital, 1910 1st Street & 5th Avenue South



The Galt Hospital, c. 1910 (P19770090001-20)

Lethbridge and the surrounding district experienced significant population growth during the first decade of the 20th century. As the need for hospital services increased, it became clear that the Galt company hospital, an 1891 wood frame building, could not meet the demand. In 1908, plans for a new building were prepared by the New York firm of architect Arnold Brunner, who designed many significant institutional buildings in the eastern United States, including Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York. The Galt family proposed to the Lethbridge City Council that the estimated \$60,000 cost be equally shared by the two parties. Council accepted their offer, and when the structure was officially opened on September 1, 1910, by Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier, it was debt free. An addition was made on the building's west elevation in 1930, at which time most of the 1891 structure was demolished. A fragment of one wall remains in the museum courtyard.

In 1955, the Lethbridge Municipal Hospital was completed, but the old hospital continued to function as the Galt Rehabilitation Centre until 1964. One year later the building reopened as the home of Lethbridge's municipal museum. In

April 1978, the building was designated a Provincial Historical Resource, and in 1984 the 1930 wing was demolished and replaced with a modern addition. The viewing gallery provides a vista over the urban park system as well as a space to interpret the history of Lethbridge. On September 24, 1985 the building was officially opened as the Sir Alexander Galt Museum. It is the only remaining structure in the city which bears the Galt family name and which relates to an era when Lethbridge was essentially a company mining town.

**The next four sites are located in or across the Oldman River valley. They can be viewed from the grounds of the Sir Alexander Galt Museum & Archives. Site 2 is located on the far (west) side of the river, near the present location of the 6th Avenue Bridge.**

## 2. Nicholas Sheran's Mine, 1870s River Valley

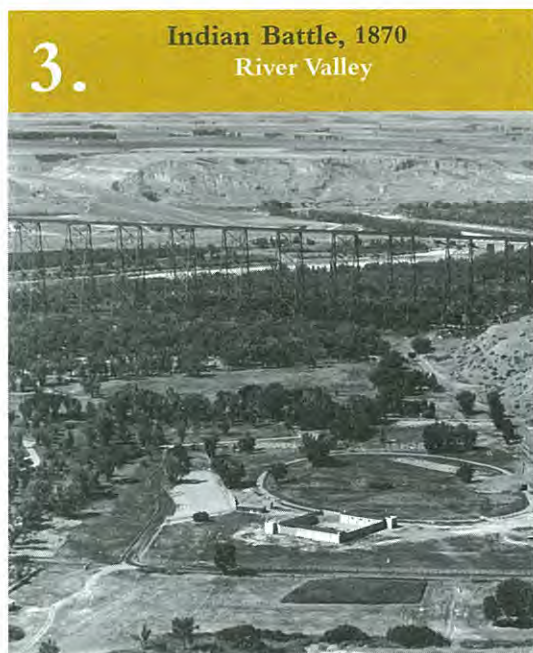


Nicholas Sheran at his mine in 1881 (P19640462000-GP)

Alberta's earliest commercial coal mine was operated here at Lethbridge by Nicholas Sheran. He was a New Yorker of Irish descent, and a veteran of the American Civil War. Sheran traveled to Fort Benton, Montana, and then north along the Whoop-Up Trail, apparently

with foreknowledge of the coal to be found along the Oldman River. At the original site of Fort Whoop-Up, four kilometres south of Lethbridge, Sheran discovered coal deposits. In 1874 he established a ferry and dug for coal in his spare time. Sheran moved his ferry downstream from Whoop-Up and began to quarry coal from a 1.6 metre exposed seam on the west bank of the Belly, now Oldman River. Later he opened a small drift mine just north of what is now Whoop-Up Drive in Lethbridge. His customers were the North-West Mounted Police at Forts Macleod and Walsh, but his coal was also hauled south to Fort Benton by bull train. A profit of \$11.00 to \$20.00 per ton could be realized in coal-starved Fort Benton.

**Site 3 is also located across the Oldman River, in the general vicinity of the coulee north of Whoop-Up Drive.**



Indian Battle Park in 1965 (P19760216041-GP)

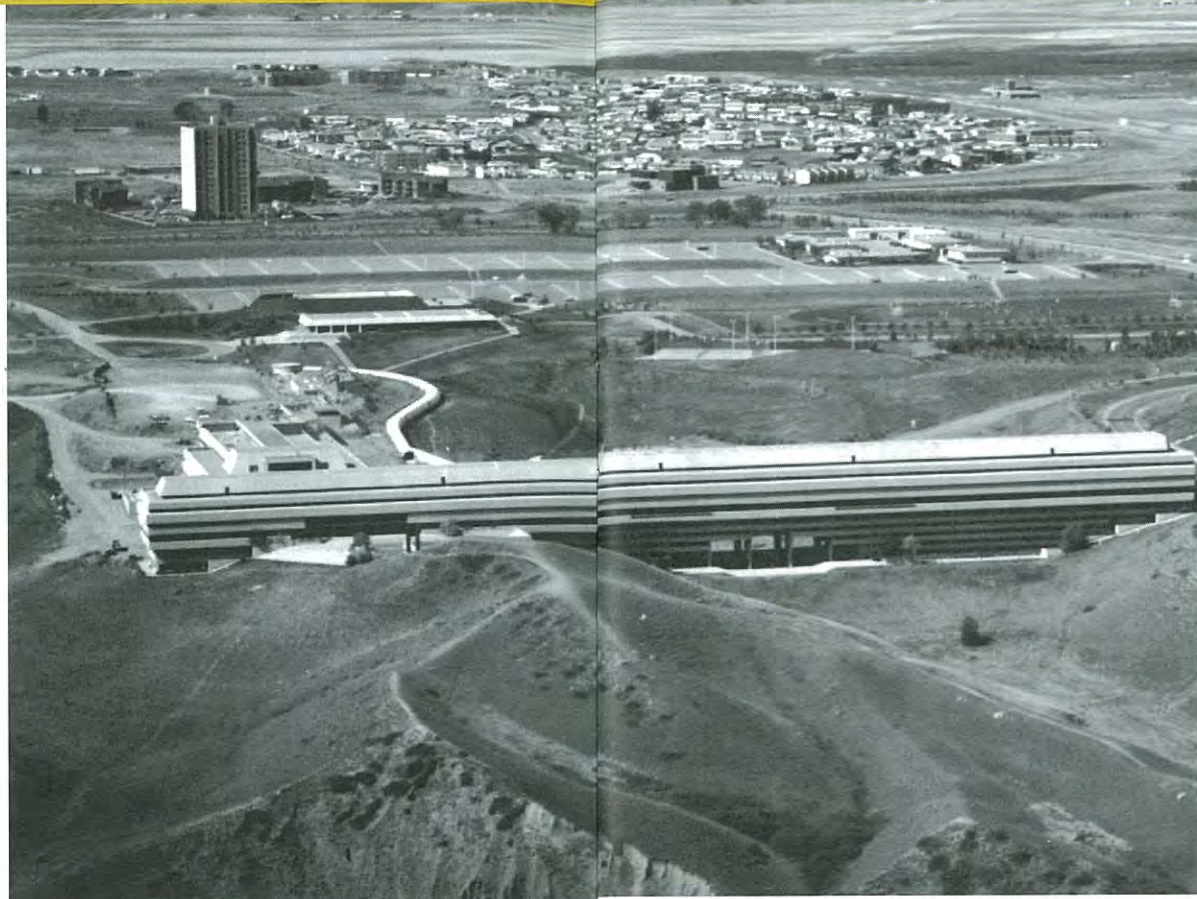
The last major inter-tribal battle in the Canadian west occurred in the late autumn of 1870 and involved two peoples of long-standing enmity, the Blackfoot Confederacy (Blackfoot, Blood, and Peigan) and the Cree-Assiniboine.

The battle began west of the Oldman River, on October 25, approximately four kilometres downstream from the original Fort Whoop-Up on a site now within the City of Lethbridge. By dawn the next day, the fighting had gravitated to the coulee now crossed by Whoop-Up Drive, to the ridge, and to the coulee due north. The Cree occupied the southernmost coulee while the Blackfoot initially took refuge in the other.

A Blackfoot contingent, including the future NWMP guide and interpreter Jerry Potts, made its way to a strategic location on a butte overlooking the Cree coulee. With the added advantage of sophisticated weapons – revolvers and repeating rifles obtained from Montana traders – the Blackfoot were able to force the Cree, armed with muskets and bows and arrows, to retreat. The Blackfoot charged, forcing the Cree into the river. The battle moved to the east bank, and a few Cree prepared to make their final stand in a grove of trees. At this point the conflict came to an end when the Blackfoot, having secured the victory, permitted the remaining Cree to depart unscathed. As many as 300 Cree, about half of their total number, were killed in the battle, while the Blackfoot sustained 40 fatalities.

The following year a peace offering of tobacco was extended by the Cree to the Blackfoot Confederacy, ending the warfare between the two. In February, 1980, the Blackfoot-Cree Indian Battle Site was designated a Provincial Historical Resource.

**Site 4 is visible across the Oldman River, and to the south of the 6th Avenue Bridge.**



*The University of Lethbridge in 1979 (P19891005002-GP)*

#### 4. University of Lethbridge, 1972 4401 University Drive

A prominent modern-day landmark, this unique structure was designed by Vancouver architect, Arthur Erickson. Erickson conceived a building design compatible with the surrounding topography and having a tangible link with Lethbridge's past. The 1.6 kilometre span of the CPR High Level Bridge impressed upon Erickson the fact that a massive structure could meld with the prairie skyline and coulee contours. Nine storeys high and more than 300 metres long, the main academic building, in Erickson's words, "could span the coulees, and

like the old bridge in its rigid flatness, reveal the rich contours of even the most level prairie."

Students were first accepted into the university in 1967, attending classes at the Lethbridge Junior College (now Lethbridge Community College). The sod turning ceremony for the new campus took place on September 5, 1969, students were admitted to the new building in the fall of 1971, and construction was completed in 1972. Further structures, designed by other architects, have since been added to the campus, including the Fine Arts Building, and the Student Union Building.

**Site 5 is north-west of the Museum, spanning the Oldman River at a height of up to 100m.**



*The High Level Bridge, c. 1910 (P19770090001-20)*

## 5. High Level Bridge, 1909 Spanning the Oldman River

Railway technology in southern Alberta underwent significant changes during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From 1885 to 1893, a Galt enterprise known as the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company operated a narrow gauge railway from Lethbridge to Dunmore Junction on the CPR main line. The CPR leased the Galt Company rail interests in 1893, upgraded the line to standard gauge, and in 1897 commenced to build the Crow's Nest line to the interior of British Columbia. The Crow's Nest railroad crossed the Oldman River south of present-day Lethbridge, and a 2.4 kilometre spur line linked the town with the main line.

By 1905-06, the wooden bridges on the Crow's Nest line were in a bad state of repair, and CPR survey parties were sent to search for an alternate route. In 1905, when the CPR divisional point was transferred from Macleod (now Fort Macleod) to Lethbridge, a bridge was built across the Oldman River, west of the town site. Spanning the river valley at this location was

a monumental engineering task. John E. Schweitzer, CPR senior engineer of the western lines, proposed a steel viaduct to span the valley. C.N. Monsarrat of Montreal designed the bridge and C.C. Schneider of Philadelphia was the consulting engineer. F. St. Clair Farran took charge of construction for the CPR, and Blair Ripley, the field work. F.M. Young was the CPR engineer responsible for the initial survey of the route. It took six weeks of measurement to calculate the length of the span to be 5,516.9 feet.

The Dominion Bridge Company of Walkerville, Ontario secured the construction contract and 100 men were hired to work on the project. This company built a gigantic steam-powered crane, or "traveler", weighing more than 320,000 kilograms and standing 20 metres high. It was constructed on site at a cost of \$100,000, and traveled along completed sections of the bridge, lowering steel girders to workmen below. A second "traveler" was employed to support platforms for workers riveting the steel beams together. Erection of the steelwork began on August 15, 1908, and was completed on June 22, 1909. The first train crossed the bridge the next day and the structure was officially opened on November 1, 1909. It is the longest and highest bridge of its type in the world, and newspapers of the day were not hesitant to describe it as one of the wonders of the world. The bridge continues to serve rail needs today, despite heavy freight traffic. The engineering and design skills of Schweitzer and Monsarrat have stood the test of time.

**Go north on Scenic Drive as far as 2nd Avenue South. Site 6 is located to the west, in the river valley below this point. It is not visible from here, but if you wish to make a 20 minute detour to view it, continue north to 1st Avenue South and go west down the hill. Rejoin the tour at this point to continue to Site 7.**





*The Brewery Gardens in 1960 (P19760219077-GP)*

## 6. Brewery Gardens, 1950s 1st Avenue South

The Brewery Gardens were largely developed by the Sick's Brewery between 1960 and 1963, but may have been started as early as 1945 or 1950. The brewery, known originally as the Alberta Brewing & Malting Co., was the first in operation in Lethbridge, having opened in 1901. The name was later changed to Sick's Lethbridge Brewery Ltd. It was built near the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company water tower, the only source of water at the top of the valley at the time. At its peak, Sick's Brewery could produce 100,000 barrels of beer a year. Their most popular product was their Alberta Pride pilsner beer, but the plant also produced soft drinks, notably Okla-Applo, an apple drink, and Sick's Ginger Ale. The Brewery was demolished in 1991, but the Brewery Gardens are still maintained, and are now home to Chinook Country Tourist Information.

The first roads linking Lethbridge with the expanding system of highways in the region

came up from the river valley through the present location of the Brewery Gardens and near the present route of Whoop-Up Drive. They were known as Brewery Hill Road (after 1901), and Laundry Hill Road (see Site 8, Chinatown), respectively. Teamsters driving four-horse teams hauled two-ton loads of coal up these roads from the drift mines. Once at the top, the coal was weighed and put into railway cars. Brewery Hill Road was closed in 1950 with the development of Brewery Gardens.

**Go east on 2nd Avenue South. Site 7 is on the north side of the Avenue.**

## 7. Castle Hotel, 1909 221 - 2nd Avenue South

When the Castle Hotel opened for business on September 19, 1909, the Lethbridge Herald described it as "first class in every way." The structure stands three storeys high and was adorned with stained glass windows on the



*The Castle Hotel in 1912 (P19891049301-GP)*

ground floor. It was built during the city's boom years of 1905-1912. Its location in proximity to the downtown area and within walking distance of the railway station attracted a steady clientele of business travelers. According to one of the hotel's advertisements, it "catered in particular to the theatrical trade." The original design and character of the building remain evident, even after extensive renovations in the 1980s. The building now houses single room apartments.

**Continue east on 2nd Avenue South.**

## 8. Chinatown 300 Block, 2nd Avenue South

The Chinese community was the earliest non-European immigrant population in Lethbridge. The first Chinese immigrants to southern Alberta were indentured labourers brought from the Canton area of China to build the western portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Initially, during the 1880s and 1890s, Chinese settlement caused little interest in the community. This may have been because Chinese immigrants engaged in businesses that the predominantly white population did not, such as laundries, cafes, and market gardening. However, after about twenty years, this situation changed, and Chinese immigrants suffered police raids, derogatory labels and were victims of a

hostile press. On January 1, 1911, Bylaw 83 came into effect, restricting Chinese laundries to an area bordered by the coulees on the west, 1st Avenue South on the north, 4th Street South on the east, and 6th Avenue South on the south. The effect of this legislation was that all Chinese businesses outside this area were moved into the approved Chinatown district. Five years later the bylaw was repealed, but by then the actions of the City had engendered a sense of community in Chinatown, which remained strong well into the 1930s. Today, like other such districts in western Canada, Lethbridge's Chinatown has declined and has been largely abandoned as the population becomes more integrated. The three buildings featured on this tour were important elements in Chinatown's historical development.

## 9. Kuo Min Tang Building, 1909 309 - 2nd Avenue South



*The Kuo Min Tang Building in 1974 (P19941040001-GP)*

The oldest of the three buildings is the Kuo Min Tang or Chinese National League Building, completed in 1909. The main floor was a meeting hall and the top floor was a residence and cafe. In 1915 the building was taken over by the newly formed Lethbridge branch of the Kuo Min Tang, which used it as a Chinese language school. The building is still in use today by the Chinese National League Chinese Ethnic Society.



*The Chinese Freemasons Building , 1974 (P19941040001-GP)*

## 10. Chi Kong Tong Building, 1924 310 - 2nd Avenue South

Across the Avenue from the Kuo Min Tang building is the Chi Kong Tong building. It was the meeting place of the Lethbridge Branch of the Chinese Freemasons. This branch was incorporated in 1922, as part of Canada's oldest Chinese organization, the Chinese Freemasons, formed in the British Columbia gold mining boomtown, Barkerville, in 1862. A Canada-wide subscription campaign helped to finance the 1924 construction of this building. The second floor Masonic Hall was also used as a Chinese language school for members' children. The ground floor commercial space is now occupied by the Sun Kwong Grocery. In August, 1987 this building was designated a Provincial Historical Resource.



*The Bow On Tong Building, 1930 (P19800127000-GP)*

## 11. Bow On Tong Building, 1919 316 - 2nd Avenue South

The third building is the Bow On Tong or Good Health Medicine store. It is located east of the Freemasons building. The store was one that had been established earlier, in Vancouver, and then moved to Lethbridge. The building was constructed in 1919 and opened as a Chinese pharmacy or herbalist shop in 1926 by Way Leong (1879-1967). His family continues to own the building and if you go inside, you will find herb and drug containers with their Chinese characters on the shelves. In fact, the interior of the building looks much as it did fifty years ago. **Site 12 is on the south-east corner of the next intersection.**



*Fire Hall No. 1 in 1914 P19760218013-GP)*

## 12. Fire Hall No. 1, 1908 402 - 2nd Avenue South

When Lethbridge was incorporated as a town in 1891 it boasted a number of civic improvements, including a two-storey brick fire hall.

In January 1907, the city fire chief resigned, citing outdated facilities and equipment as his reason for leaving. By the autumn, a city engineer's report called for improvements and general renovations to the building, particularly to the jail cells, as they were "very damp." In June 1908, architect J.A. MacDonald was hired. The new Fire Hall No. 1 was constructed on the same site as the 1891 structure, using 85% of the materials salvaged from the original building as a means of holding down costs.

The new building accommodated the mayor's office, city council chambers, city engineer and waterworks offices, police headquarters, jail wards and the fire department facilities. The latter included a 13 by 15 metre garage, stalls for nine horses, a 10 by 15 metre gymnasium on the reinforced concrete second floor, dormitories, and a third floor recreation

gallery. Quarters were provided for married firemen and their families, and several babies were born in the building. The first floor ceiling was six metres high, with a mezzanine floor over the stable for workshops and the storage of horse feed. The building was steam heated throughout. An interesting feature is the tower, which housed the fire bell and provided space to hang the fire hoses to dry.

City council awarded the building contract of \$30,225 to Smith Brothers & Wilson of Lethbridge and Regina. Hick Hardware of Lethbridge received the heating and plumbing contract for \$3,975. Construction began in September 1908 and was completed four months later, when the building was described as the best combination fire hall and administrative complex in the West. Just twenty men were employed on the project. The building became known as the Municipal Public Building.

Fire Hall No. 1 was designated a Provincial Historical Resource in July, 1979. In 1998 it was renovated into business space, a private residence, restaurant, bar and wine cellar.

**Go one block north on 4th Street South.  
Turn left (west) on 1st Avenue South.**

## 13. Royal Hotel, 1885 316 - 1st Avenue South



*The Bar in the then Arlington Hotel, 1900 (P19760211018-GP)*

Right across from the railroad track and close to the Galt No. 1 mine shaft, there was a convenient saloon where a worker could wet his whistle. Known variously as the old Royal Hotel, Alphonse Hall, or the Arlington Hotel, it was later called Bourgoin Hall, and is now known as the Bridge Inn. On Sunday, November 27, 1885, the first Anglican church service in Lethbridge was held here. Musing on the occasion, an early pioneer, C.F.P. Conybeare, had this to say:

*The floor was strewn with sawdust reeking with dregs of beer habitually spilled thereon, the walls were impregnated with smoke of cigars consumed at the Saturday nights' concert, and sometimes there might be detected an alcoholic mixture which led one to suppose that the prohibition law then in force was not altogether successfully enforced. No stained glass windows adorned this edifice but the walls were decorated with flaming circus posters.*

**Retrace your steps east on 1st Avenue South. Continue east to 7th Street South.**

## 14. Union Station, 1905 801 - 1st Avenue South

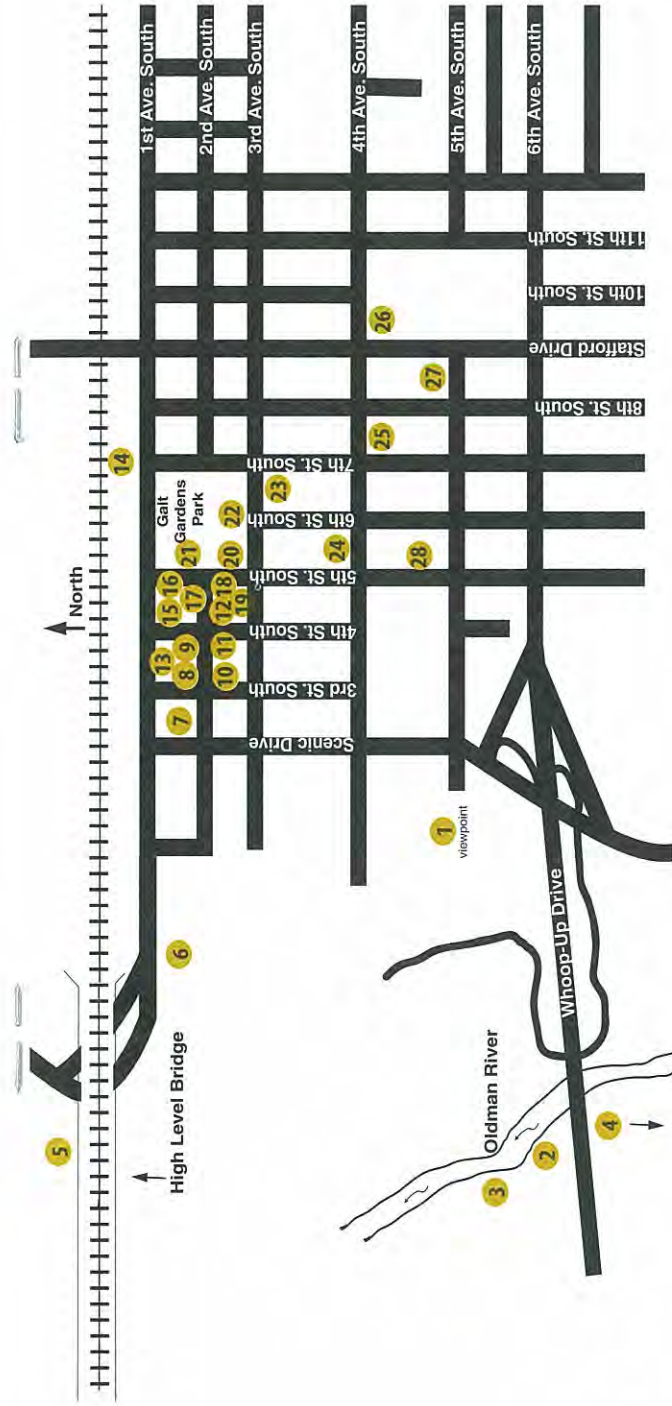


*Union Station in 1905 (P19841023000-GP)*

In its early years, Lethbridge was connected to the Crowsnest-Medicine Hat rail line by a 1.5 mile spur line. The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) soon promised improvements to Lethbridge rail facilities. In November 1905, the CPR made Lethbridge its divisional point for the region. A substantial round-house was completed in 1907; and from 1907 to 1909, the CPR High Level Bridge was constructed. Lethbridge was transformed into a hub of railway activity for south-western Alberta and south-eastern British Columbia.

The Union Station provided a crowning touch to Lethbridge's new railway dominance. Lethbridge contractors Smith Brothers & Wilson began construction on November 5, 1905. The building is of brick and sandstone, the latter having been quarried at Cardston by local contractor, S.S. Newton. The structure has a hipped roof with five hipped dormers on the north-facing side of the roof. Also on the north, or track, side of the station, decorative brackets support the wide eaves that sheltered the platform, and a projecting bay gave the station-

- 1 Galt Hospital** (1910)  
1st Street & 5th Avenue South
- 2 Nicholas Sheran's Mine** (1870s)
- 3 Indian Battle** (1870)
- 4 University of Lethbridge** (1972)  
4401 University Drive
- 5 High Level Bridge** (1909)
- 6 Brewery Gardens** (1950s)  
1st Avenue South
- 7 Castle Hotel** (1909)  
221 - 2nd Avenue South
- 8 Chinatown**  
300 Block, 2nd Avenue South
- 9 Kuo Min Tang Building** (1909)  
309 - 2nd Avenue South
- 10 Chi Kong Tong Building** (1924)  
310 - 2nd Avenue South
- 11 Bow On Tong Building** (1919)  
316 - 2nd Avenue South
- 12 Fire Hall No. 1** (1908)  
402 - 2nd Avenue South
- 13 Royal Hotel** (1885)  
316 - 1st Avenue South
- 14 Union Station** (1905)  
801 - 1st Avenue South
- 15 Hudson's Bay Co. Store** (1908)  
102 - 5th Street South
- 16 The Bentley Block** (1905)  
118 - 5th Street South
- 17 Higinbotham Company** (1904)  
122 - 5th Street South
- 18 Lethbridge House Hotel** (1885)  
204 - 5th Street South
- 19 Whitney Block** (1906-07)  
411 - 3rd Avenue South
- 20 Galt Gardens** (1908)  
1st-3rd Ave. & 5th-7th St. South
- 21 Cenotaph** (1931)  
Centre of west side of park  
(moved to City Hall, 910-4th Ave. S)
- 22 Lethbridge Public Library** (1922)  
601 - 3rd Avenue South
- 23 Hick-Sehl Building** (1912)  
618 - 3rd Avenue South
- 24 IOOF Hall** (1907)  
501 - 4th Avenue South
- 25 Post Office** (1912)  
704 - 4th Avenue South
- 26 Barrack Square** (1885)  
4th-6th Ave. & 9th-11th St. South
- 27 Bowman School** (1912)  
811 - 5th Avenue South
- 28 Knights of Pythias Block** (1910)  
427 - 5th Street South



master a view down both directions of the track. The building was completed in 1906, and a 40 foot addition to the structure's west elevation was completed in 1908. Until April 1912, when the CPR completely took over the interests of the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company, the two companies operated jointly from the building - hence the name Union Station. The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway also maintained a freight office in the station for a period of time. After 1912, the CPR was the sole occupant of the station. Passenger service continued until 1971, when the dayliner run by the CPR was abandoned. Freight service continued for 12 years after that.

In 1977, a study recommended the relocation of the rail yards from Lethbridge to Kipp. In 1983 City Council passed the final bylaw necessary for the project, and in 1984 the yards were removed from Lethbridge. In 1986 renovations began to turn the former railway station into what is now the Chinook Health Region's Community Health Office in the city. Remodeling of the building was finished in 1987, and in May of that year it was declared a Provincial Historical Resource. The old Union Station is now well into its second life.

**Retrace your steps west on 1st Avenue South. Turn left and go south on 5th Street South.**

## 15. Hudson's Bay Co. Store, 1908 102 - 5th Street South



*The Hudsons Bay Co. Store in 1909 (P19740030032-GP)*

Unlike most of the cities and towns where the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) is represented, there is no long history connecting Lethbridge with the activities of the Company. The connection only dates from the year 1891, when Lethbridge was a small trading station, and the HBC premises was a one-storey frame store about 40 feet square. With the development of coal mining and agriculture, Lethbridge became the chief service centre for a large territory. The increase in population and trade necessitated more extensive retail space, and in 1908 the Company erected a two-storey brick building on the site of the old store. The original frame building was moved to the rear of the property and still serves as a warehouse. In the late 1910s, this was considered one of the best-equipped "departmental" stores in any city of equal size in the West.

The building is faced with special pressed brick, and is trimmed with sandstone. On the first floor alone there was 520 square feet of plate glass windows. This showed off the goods to passers-by and gave the interior of the store a fine airy appearance. Departments within the Hudson's Bay Company Store included a groceteria, men's and ladies' apparel, boots and shoes, home furnishings, and dry goods. In 1910,



*Interior of the HBC Store (P19891049243-GP)*

men's suits were \$25, overcoats cost \$20, and a pair of shoes was \$3.50.

On January 1, 1931, A.E. Dodman, then manager of the Lethbridge HBC store, received word that he was to shut it down. This was a direct result of the deepening economic Depression that followed the 1929 stock market crash. There was a clearance sale in February, and on the 28th of that month, the store was closed.

A new use was soon found for the building. The upstairs portion was made into the Trianon Dance Hall. Jack Patey, the new owner, spent days pulling nails out of the floor and walls, sanding, varnishing, and waxing. At that time, Patey had an orchestra, hence his interest in developing a dance hall with a 3500 square foot dance floor. The official opening of the Trianon was on November 6, 1931. It became a favorite hang-out during the 1930s, and was especially popular among the young airmen stationed at the nearby airbase during World War II. The

Trianon continued to operate for several years after the war.

The name of the Trianon comes from a pavilion in the gardens of Versailles: Le Petit Trianon. It was one of Marie Antoinette's favourite places to go to escape the everyday pressures and cares of life at court in pre-Revolution France. Likewise, the patrons of Lethbridge's Trianon could leave their cares behind when they crossed the threshold. The slightly raised dais at one end of the hall provided the orchestra with an ideal setting for their melodies. An artistic background blending up into an artificial night sky studded with golden stars set off the stage, which was surrounded by a low curtained railing.

Today the Trianon houses an architect's office and art gallery.

**Continue south.**



## 16. The Bentley Block, 1905 118 - 5th Street South



*The Bentley Co. in 1906 (P19760208061-GP)*

The Bentley Block was opened in 1905 by the Bentley Company Limited. The brick building was constructed to replace the wood frame structure that had housed Lethbridge's first general store, owned by Harry Bentley. A pioneer merchant on his way to open a business in Medicine Hat in 1885, Bentley stopped off in Lethbridge, stayed, and opened his store here instead. Within a year, the man who had started his store in a tent was one of the wealthiest men in Lethbridge. He owned a wholesale outlet, a stage-coach operation and had a partnership in a hotel business. Although his connection with the Bentley Company and the store was apparently severed in the late 1890s, his name continued to be used.

The 1905 structure cost \$17,000 to build and dominated Lethbridge's commercial area; it was the first three storey building in the city. The

building was home to the first "departmental" store carrying "a Metropolitan stock worthy of the growing City of Lethbridge." The first floor of the building was the grocery store. The second floor offered clothing and footwear and housed the offices of the accountant and general manager. The third level of the building housed dry goods: everything from Portland cement and bluestone, to glassware, table linen, cloth and bedding.

The Bentley Block stands today as evidence of the early prosperity of the City of Lethbridge.  
**Continue south.**

## 17. Higinbotham Company, 1904 122 - 5th Street South



*The Higinbotham Drugstore in 1912 (P19770146000-GP)*

In 1904, John D. Higinbotham, a druggist, built a brick and metal structure on the corner of 2nd Avenue and 5th Street. It replaced the two storey frame Apothecaries Hall constructed in 1885 by E.J.R. Walton of Medicine Hat. The Higinbotham Building also contained the post office, as Mr. Higinbotham was the postmaster of Lethbridge between May 1888 and 1910. He was later a governor of the Alberta Ladies' College and chairman of the Lethbridge School Board. In 1929 he returned to his birthplace,

Guelph, Ontario, where he died in 1961. This area was the first retail district of Lethbridge, developed by the town's early entrepreneurs. Today, the bulk of business activity has shifted away from this location. Renovations begun in 1999 will restore much of the building's original detailing.

**Continue south on 5th Street South.**

## 18. Lethbridge House Hotel, 1885 204 - 5th Street South



*The Lethbridge Hotel in 1920 (P19760208098-GP)*

The Lethbridge House Hotel was built in 1885 by William Henderson, a prominent contractor of the day. In August of that year, the first Methodist church service in Lethbridge was held here. In true pioneer style, the meeting went ahead, though only the studding of the hostelry was up and no partitions had been made. A corner of the billiard table served as a pulpit and the congregation was seated around the gaming table. The first meeting of the town council was also held here, in similar style. In 1902-03, a larger hotel was built on the same site. In 1939, the front of the hotel was remodeled in Spanish Revival style, which remains today. Now known as the Lethbridge Hotel, this is the oldest business in continuous operation in the city.

**Continue south.**

## 19. Whitney Block, 1906-07 411 - 3rd Avenue South



*The Whitney Block in 1974 (P19901067012-GP)*

Over the years, this block has been used as a hotel, restaurant, second hand store, liquor store, rooming house, Whitney residence, and a furniture and upholstery shop. It has been revitalized, and demonstrates the aesthetic and commercial value of an older structure. The Whitney Block was built in 1906-07 by William D. (Curly) Whitney, a former North-West Mounted Policeman who moved from his ranch near Fort Macleod to become a local businessman in the late 1880s.

In addition to its many other roles, this block may have also played a part in prostitution in Lethbridge. The city's original "Red Light District" was located on 3rd Avenue South, starting one block west of the Whitney Block and continuing on towards the garbage dump at the edge of the river valley. This area was known as "The Point" and consisted of six houses of ill-repute, where prostitutes, whiskey traders and other people on the fringe of law-abiding society were to be found. Lethbridge was one of the last cities on the North American continent to allow a recognized prostitution district. One reason for this tolerance was the significant economic contribution the community made to

Lethbridge: prostitutes used the local dress shops, taxi cabs, and so on. Rumour has it that the Whitney Block was one of the places prostitution continued in Lethbridge after the City ended its tolerant treatment of the illegal practice in 1944.

**Turn left and go east on 3rd Avenue South.**

## 20. Galt Gardens, 1908 1st-3rd Ave. & 5th-7th St. South



*Galt Gardens in the 1920s (P19841062004-GP)*

Over the 103 years of its existence, Galt Gardens Park has evolved from an expanse of native prairie to an attractively landscaped park in the heart of Lethbridge. It stands as a representation of civic pride, and, bearing the Galt name, as a reminder of that family's influence in the development of Lethbridge.

The first survey map of Lethbridge was made by Montague Aldous, on loan from the Hudson's Bay Company, and completed on June 18, 1890 by Charles Magrath, Land Agent with the Alberta Railway and Coal Company. This map identified the ten acres of land at Galt Gardens as a reserve. Development of the square was prohibited and the land was reserved for recreational activities. Baseball, soccer, rugby and lacrosse games were played on the grounds. Sports clubs were

organized as early as 1886. The increasing number of commercial buildings on the perimeter of the square resulted in a steady usage of the park.

Elliott Galt acquired the land in 1904, but donated it to the city in 1908 on the condition that no development would be permitted on the site. As a permanent deterrent, Galt kept title to a 65 square metre plot in the centre of the park. It was not until 1926 that ownership of this area passed to the City of Lethbridge.



*Crowd watching lacrosse game, Galt Gardens, 1907 (P19760235173-GP)*

Increased pressure was put on Lethbridge to develop the park in 1912 as the City hosted the International Dryland Farming Congress. Some 5,000 international delegates visited the city. As part of the preparation, not only was Galt Gardens developed with flowerbeds, walkways and trees, but the streetcar system was established and operating for the event.

**The Cenotaph was located in the centre of the west part of the park, but was moved to the site of the new City Hall in 2000.**

21.

**Cenotaph, 1931**Centre of west side of park  
(moved to 910 - 4th Avenue S)

*The Cenotaph in 1960 (P19760011003-GP)*

The Cenotaph recalls the patriotism, heroism and sacrifice of the Great War years (1914-1918). Sculpted by Coeur de Leon McCarthy of Montreal and unveiled on June 7, 1931, the memorial is the embodiment, in stone, of the Canadian soldier. The larger-than-life statue and its granite pedestal stand 23 feet tall. The monument is embellished with a bronze wreath of maple leaves and poppies. On the front is inscribed: *In Honour of Those Whose Names Endure; The Great War of 1914-1918; and They Have Passed On Leaving The Heritage Of A Glorious Memory*, capturing the feelings of the era. On the back are the names of the battles in which the men of Lethbridge and district fought and died.

In March 1956 a delegation of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veteran's Club asked city council if they could add to the war memorial in Galt Gardens, to commemorate the Second World War and the Korean conflict. To do so, a granite slab was added to the base of the Great War memorial. Inscribed in the stone are the words, *Lest We Forget*, and, *To the Glory of God And In Memory Of Those Who Fell During World War II And The Korean War*. Below are carved 122 names of the dead.

By 1982 the war memorial in Galt Gardens had acquired a patina of grime and the lettering had faded. The Legion's Veterans' Field of Honour Committee offered to pay half of the \$23,482 for the refurbishment and re-facing of the monument, providing that the City of Lethbridge supplied the other half. By June 1983, the monument was returned from Fairmont Granite Limited, in Beebe, Quebec, where it had been sent for restoration.

The Cenotaph was relocated to the site of the new City Hall in 2000. It is the only war memorial in the city. As such, it not only serves to commemorate the conflicts already discussed, but is an implicit reminder of Lethbridge's participation in the Riel Rebellion (1885), the Boer War (1899-1902), and various peace-keeping missions around the world.

**Continue east on 3rd Avenue South.**

22. **Lethbridge Public Library, 1922**

601 - 3rd Avenue South



*The Lethbridge Public Library in 1923 (P19891068045-GP)*

The Southern Alberta Art Gallery, located on the south side of Galt Gardens, originally housed the first public library in Lethbridge. It was built in 1922, twenty years after the town originally set out to do so. In 1902 the town council approached the fabulously wealthy American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie with a request for assistance with their library project. As a result of conditions attached to the offer of funding made by Carnegie in response, the idea was abandoned until 1911. Another

request was then directed to the Carnegie Corporation, but a failing local economy forced the city to decline the \$11,000 grant offer they received.

Finally, a third request netted the city a \$25,000 Carnegie grant, and the library was built. Construction costs totalled \$34,000 by the time it was officially opened on January 24, 1922. When protests were received against the plan to name the building after the City's benefactor, Andrew Carnegie, the library was christened the Lethbridge Public Library. Carnegie was - in spite of his open-handed philanthropy - widely hated by working men throughout North America because of his steel company's strong anti-labour methods.

In 1950, a one storey addition was constructed on the east elevation. The building operated as a public library until 1974 and re-opened in 1976 as an art gallery.

**Continue east on 3rd Avenue South.**

## 23. Hick-Sehl Building, 1912

618 - 3rd Avenue South

Hardware merchant Fred Hick, who entered into a partnership with Edward Sehl to form the Hick-Sehl Hardware Company, constructed this building on 3rd Avenue in 1912. Hick was born in Belleville, Ontario in 1875 and came to Lethbridge in 1903, after learning the tinsmithing and plumbing trades in his home town.

The Hick-Sehl building became prominent during the period in which Lethbridge developed a diverse economic base: the coal industry and railroad were complemented by ironworks, a brewery, an electricity & light company, and cement block and flour mill companies. This is one of the most interesting commercial buildings in the city's business



*The Hick-Sehl Building in 1960 (P19871217000-GP)*

district, and represents the climax of the first stage of urban growth in Lethbridge from 1905 to 1914. It was the first and most successful retail hardware store in Lethbridge. General merchandise such as galvanized wash tubs, kitchen utensils and plumbing supplies were available on the first floor. The second floor offered stoves, ranges and heating equipment. Operating until 1947, Hick-Sehl Hardware faced Galt Gardens, in the commercial heart of the city.

In December 1983, the Hick-Sehl building was designated a Registered Historical Resource.

**Retrace your steps west to 6th Street South, turn left and go south. At 4th Avenue South, turn right and go west.**

## 24. IOOF Hall, 1907 501 - 4th Avenue South



The IOOF Hall in 1912 (P19760208004)

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows has a long history here, appearing two years before Lethbridge was incorporated as a town and 17 years before it became a city. The Lethbridge Lodge No. 2, Independent Order of Odd Fellows was instituted May 10, 1889 in the Masonic Hall in the Higinbotham Block (see No. 17). The first Noble Grand was L.N. McEwan. Meetings were held here until the end of June 1891, when the Odd Fellows leased a new hall in the Oliver Block at 316 - 5th Street South. On February 28, 1890, the lodge purchased two lots on 6th Street South at a cost of \$500.

When the final payment was made six months later the lodge had a total of \$1.01 in its treasury. The Odd Fellows' funds were so low at this time that members took turns in caretaking, each in turn supplying wood to start the coal fires and oil to fill the lamps. In 1902, these two lots were exchanged for the present site at 501 - 4th Avenue South. After receiving notice to vacate the Oliver Block hall in 1907, the Odd Fellows made plans for a brick building to be erected on this property. G.B. Wellers, then Noble Grand of Lethbridge Lodge No. 2 IOOF, opened the first meeting of the lodge in the new hall on January 8, 1909, and it was dedicated on April 9, 1909.

In 1927 a 50 by 65 foot one-storey addition was made to the east end of the building. In

1939 and 1949 remodeling of the storefronts was carried out. During 1953 the one-storey addition built in 1927 was torn down and replaced by a two-storey brick and steel building. The 1953 hall boasted such attributes as air-conditioning and concealed lighting and was ranked at that time as one of the most modern and best-equipped halls in the fraternity. Five retail stores occupied the lower floor of the building. This new hall was dedicated on December 4, 1954.

**Retrace your steps east on 4th Avenue South. Continue past 7th Street South.**

## 25. Post Office, 1912 704 - 4th Avenue South



The Lethbridge Post Office c. 1910 (P19770090001-20)

As Lethbridge grew, so did the need for a large and centrally located postal facility. On September 14, 1912, a contract was awarded to Navin Brothers Limited to begin construction of a new building at 4th Avenue and 7th Street South. The clock works were custom ordered from W.F. Evans and Sons, England, and placed in

the clock tower in 1916. Tinted glass for the clock face was imported from Belgium. The clock tower is six storeys in height while the overall structure is four storeys. The basement walls are poured concrete and the west and north elevations are made of limestone from Tyndal, Manitoba. The east and south elevations are of brick, and the interior flooring consists largely of terrazzo with marble skirting. The Post Office originally occupied the first floor with offices on the third floor. Offices and the Customs long room, where parcels coming into Canada were checked, were on the second floor.

**Continue east to Stafford Drive. Turn right and go south.**

## 26. Barrack Square, 1885

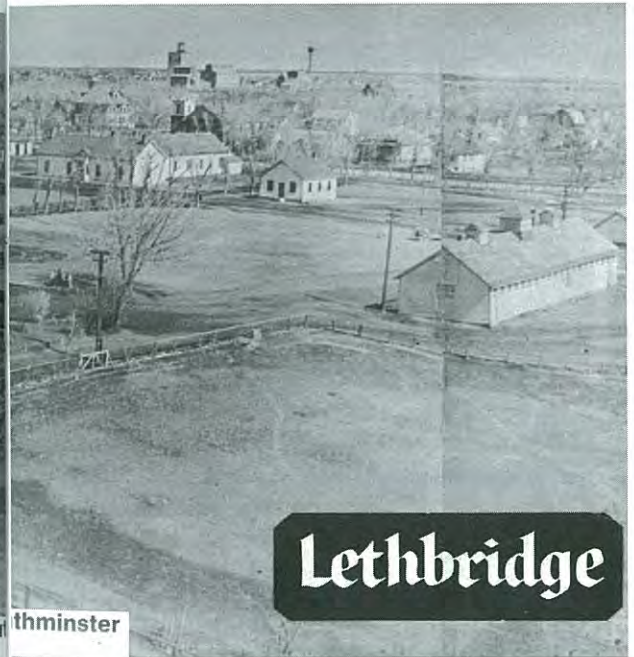
4th-6th Ave. & 9th-11th St. South

In 1885 an area two blocks square was set aside as parade grounds for the North-West Mounted Police. Title to the property was turned over to the Dominion government in 1886 and 1889. Various buildings were located on the north half of the property: the guardroom, jail and quarters for the men, houses for officers, and stables (erected in 1886). The south half was used for training, and paddocks for horses. It served as headquarters of K Division NWMP (1887-1904), RNWMP (1904-1920), and RCMP (1920-1938). It was the site of the City of Lethbridge's only execution when, on January 14, 1911, Wasyl Chobatar was hanged in one of the barns for the murder of Alex Lazaruk. Between 1912 and 1956, 18 hangings took place at the Lethbridge provincial jail, east of the city limits.

*Barrack Square in 1911 (P19760233037-GP)*



R.C.M.P. Barracks complex — Y.M.C.A. and Southminster United Church top left



**Lethbridge**

In 1939 the property was sold to the City of Lethbridge, with the Mounted Police retaining only a small portion on 9th Street opposite 5th Avenue South. The property was turned over to the military in September 1939 for use as barracks, and reverted back to the city in 1946. After 1944 plans were proposed for its post-war use as a civic centre. Though three plans were devised, none were implemented. However, over the years, the area became built up with a variety of institutional, recreational and cultural buildings which, taken together, effectively became a civic centre. A new City Hall (910 - 4th Avenue South) was built in 1949 (since replaced by a third City Hall, designed by architects Horton, Ferrari & Westwood, and opened on July 1, 2000). It was followed, in 1950, by the Civic Ice Centre (6th Avenue & 9th Street South), with its skating and curling rinks, and the Fritz Sick Memorial Centre (410 - 11th Street South) funded by a donation from the prominent Lethbridge brewer. In 1951 the Courthouse (1010 - 4th Avenue South) was erected, and then the RCMP Divisional Headquarters (427 Stafford Drive South) in 1955. In addition, the Genevieve E. Yates Memorial Centre (1002 - 4th Avenue South), a theatre with seating for about 500 people, was built in 1966.

**Turn right and go west on 5th Avenue South.**

## 27. Bowman School, 1912 811 - 5th Avenue South

In 1911, the Provincial Department of Education allotted funds for the construction of a Manual Training School in Lethbridge, the first in the province. C.B. Bowman, its namesake, was an early Lethbridge businessman who served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of Lethbridge School District 51 from 1905 to 1912. Architects H.M. and W.A. Whiddington designed the school. Construction costs totaled \$40,000 with an additional \$20,000



*The Bowman School in 1914 (P19760208177-GP)*

for equipment.

On August 21, 1912 the Minister of Education, the Honorable John R. Boyle, laid the cornerstone for the new school, and on October 10, Canada's Governor-General, the Duke of Connaught, officially opened the building. The school was described as "one of the best in Canada" and offered adult night classes in addition to manual training courses for grades six to ten. The two storey building also accommodated the school board offices and board room. In 1915, the school's funds and teaching staff were reduced and vocational classes were cut. The building was then converted to a high school and used as such until 1928. From 1929 to 1963 it served as the Bowman Elementary School.

The City of Lethbridge purchased the building from the School Board in 1963, and currently leases it to the Allied Arts Council. The building is home to a considerable number of community arts organizations and contains a gallery that features regional artists.

The Bowman Arts Centre was declared a Provincial Historical Resource in March 1982.  
**Continue west three blocks. Turn right on 5th Street South.**



## 28. Knights of Pythias Block, 1910 427 - 5th Street South



The Knights of Pythias Block in 1912 (P1974003000-GP)

The Knights of Pythias was a service group active in early Lethbridge. The group originated during the American Civil War, and was originally dedicated to fostering peace and friendship. Its presence in Lethbridge is evidence of the number of Americans who settled here during the city's formative years. Their first clubhouse was situated over the Lethbridge Herald office on 5th Street. In 1910, they built a second block at a cost of \$18,000. For a time, the meeting hall in this two-storey brick building was rented to the Mormon Church in the morning and the Catholic Church in the afternoon. The building was renamed the Wallace Block after a later owner, Robert W. Wallace.

By the 1930s, the Wallace Block was the most popular dance hall in Lethbridge. Every weekend a dance was held, often featuring Lethbridge's favorite jazz band, the Cannoneers. The success of the venture was due, in part, to the fact that ladies were admitted free to the weekend dances.

**Continue west on 5th Avenue South to return to the starting point of the tour.**

### *Acknowledgements*

This booklet was prepared as a joint project by the Heritage Inventory Program of Alberta Community Development, and the Sir Alexander Galt Museum & Archives in Lethbridge. It is a revised, updated and augmented version of earlier publications. Funding assistance for the production of this booklet was provided by Museums Alberta, the Lethbridge Historical Society, and by the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

### *Production Credits*

Dorothy Field	Coordinator, Editor
Penny Stone	Researcher, Writer
Doris Freadrich	Graphic Designer

### *Photo Credits*

All photographs in this publication are from the Sir Alexander Galt Museum & Archives

### *For More Information Contact:*

Alberta Community Development  
Historic Sites Service  
8820 - 112 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T6G 2P8  
Phone: (780) 431-2300

Sir Alexander Galt Museum & Archives  
910 - 4th Avenue South  
Lethbridge, Alberta  
T1J 0P8  
Phone: (403) 320-GALT (4258)

## Historical Tour Series

*Bellevue and Hillcrest*, 2nd Edition  
*Blairmore*, 2nd Edition  
*Calgary* (Atlantic Avenue, Inglewood)  
*Calgary* (Inglewood & Mount Royal)  
*Calgary* (Stephen Avenue & Area)  
*Coleman*, 2nd Edition  
*East Central Alberta* (Ukrainian Churches)  
*Edmonton* (Downtown), 2nd Edition  
*Edmonton* (The Highlands)  
*Edmonton* (Oliver)  
*Edmonton* (Strathcona)  
*Fort Macleod*  
*Grande Prairie*  
*High River*  
*Lacombe*  
*Lethbridge*, 2nd Edition  
*Markerville*, 2nd Edition  
*Medicine Hat*  
*North Red Deer*  
*Red Deer*, 2nd Edition  
*Turner Valley*, 2nd Edition

Typeface: Bembo  
Printed in Canada  
ISBN 0-7785-0177-9  
Copyright © 2000  
Alberta Community Development

Recycled Paper