

BOTTERILL BOTTOM PARK

HISTORY

This portion of the river valley is named for Thomas Botterill who ranched up the river near what is now the Country Club. The word 'bottom' refers to the floodplain or bottom land near a river. This American term is used mostly in the Lethbridge area.



Botterill's Store on 5th Street, 1885-87.
Galt Archives 19891046021-021

Thomas Botterill was an early Lethbridge Merchant and rancher who came to Lethbridge in 1885. His store, Botterill's, which carried hardware, stoves and groceries, was located on 5th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues in 1885.

As a rancher Thomas was the first to introduce a windmill and pump for the purposes of irrigating his crops. He registered a brand and had a few cattle. His store was bought by other merchants in 1889 from his estate and we can assume that Botterill passed away that same year.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

The park is located on 200 acres of river valley between the Whoop Up Bridge and the Country Club. Using the asphalt pathway, or Coalbanks Trail, that runs south beside the Oldman River, one could walk the winding trail in the direction of the Country Club and experience nature at its best. Past the golf course the trail continues up the coulee and connects with Ravine Park and stretches on toward Mayor Magrath Drive and eventually to Henderson Lake Park.

Head along the 3.5 km trail through mature cottonwood forest and see the variety of flora, fauna, see and hear the birds and watch the beavers if you are lucky to spot one at work.

There is a clearing next to the river with the path continuing along to the Portage sign. In the same area and to the left is the City of Lethbridge electric substation and the power plant. Opposite those buildings is a gravel parking lot with boat launch and the weir a few hundred yards to the south. The pathway crosses the gravel road, heads toward the power plant side and carries on southward.



Aerial of the Oldman River, 1972. Botterill Park is the dark area at the centre of photograph.
Galt Museum Archives 19760236153



Looking towards the Country Club where the Botterill Ranch was once located, 2013.
Photo: T. Purkis

The next major observance is the Police Firing Range, south of the power plant. A sign cautions folks to stay on the path and not venture onto the police restricted area. Walking down the curved path it heads off to the left. There is a gravel road to the right and it takes you to the portage area. A few feet ahead there is another fork. The left path begins a climb up the coulees to meet the Scenic Drive trail at 4th Street, the right goes on along the river to the view loop. The University can be seen from this vantage point. Further on the Coalbanks Trail the next buildings are those belonging to the Lethbridge Country Club. It is in this area that the Botterill Ranch was located. The trail continues southward and again heads up the coulee side to Scenic Drive at and into the Sugar Bowl or Ravine Park where the trail goes under the road and carries on to Mayor Magrath Drive and to Henderson Lake.

ACTIVITIES

The winding pathway is excellent for joggers, walkers, runners, bikers, hikers and rollerbladers and it can be crowded. This portion of the Oldman River is also excellent for fishing. For the dare-devil adventurers there is a new mountain bike park just south of the Whoop-Up Bridge with lots of jumps, moguls and trick stunt areas.