

# GALT GARDENS PARK

## HISTORY

This is the oldest parks in the city located in the downtown core and it was first known as The Square. Other names were Public Square, changed to Galt Park in 1909 and finally Galt Gardens, in 1913 and the present designation of Galt Gardens Park.

The park commemorates the Galt Family, Elliot [1850-1928] and his father Alexander, one of the fathers of Confederation [1817-1893] who were an intrical part instrumental in developing Lethbridge in 1885 through the coal resources found nearby. The Galt Company Alberta Railway & Irrigation Company owned much of the land and Elliot set aside the area in 1885 for what he called “a breathing space for the town”. The area was used for many years as a turning-around place for bull trains. In 1909 Elliot Galt donated a portion of that 10-acre to the city. The Galts retained a 200x200foot square in the centre referred to as the ‘Reserve’ which was deeded to the city in 1926 by the CPR who held title.



Bull trains turn around 1890  
19891046021-070



The centre of the park is called the Reserve. 1908  
19780088000

## PHYSICAL LAYOUT



Flower beds, shrubs and walkways 1910-1915  
19891054019

The park covered the area bordered by 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue [Baroness Road] and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue [Redpath Street], and 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Street [Round and Glyn Streets]. It had the Train Station to the north and the business section to the south, west and east of it. Trees were first planted on the 10 acre empty square in 1901 and were watered by irrigated water from a ditch on the north side. At one time there were caragana bushes, shrubs.

## BUILDINGS/STURCTURES

Despite the fact the Galts had not intended for buildings to go in the park, over the next 100 years a variety of buildings did find a home in Galt Gardens.

A bandstand was built in the 1890s on the west side a bandstand for concerts and speeches was built opposite the Lethbridge Hotel. It was later moved to the north side of the park, and wings added. It became the first Board of Trade had their officers there. When they moved to the Marquis Hotel, the lower space became home of the Gurney Museum for 20 years before the structure was demolished in the 1961.



19981035021

1909-1913

The Sheran Memorial Cairn unveiled in 1928 to commemorate Alberta's Coal pioneers and specifically Nicholas Sheran. In the 1930s a comfort station [washrooms] were built on the west side of the park and they were demolished in the 1960s. The Carnegie Library was built on the south side facing 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and used from 1922-1974. The steam Locomotive 3651 found a home on the north side of the park from 1964 to 1987. The Cenotaph was placed in the park in 1931 and was enlarged in 1956. A plaque and rock donated by the Rotary Club and the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers 32 Technical Squadron in 1959, is situated on the south side of the park reminding citizens of the gift of the park by the Galts in 1909.



19891068101

1931-35

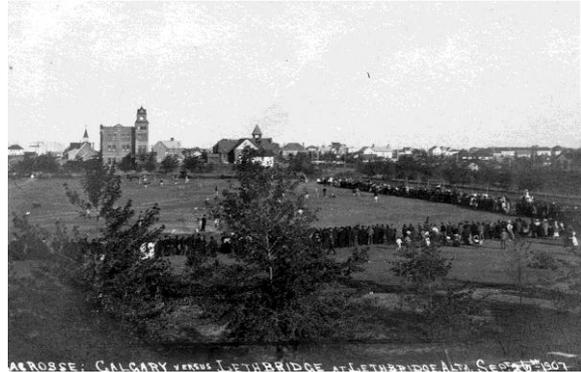
## ACTIVITIES

Many community activities occurred in the park. In 1891-1914 the square was used for sports like cricket, lacrosse, baseball, bowling. Band concerts featuring the Colliery and Citizens Bands 1890 & 1906, City Band 1920s, Lethbridge Junior Band 1940s. The circus pitched their tents there in 1910.



The circus comes to town

1910-11  
19760209184



A game of Lacrosse in the Square

1907  
19760235173

These activities were curtailed except the band concerts as there was more landscaping and pathways crisscrossing the park over the years.

Galt Gardens has gone through changes throughout the last 104 years. It began as a barren square with little or no trees, to an area with trees and flowerbeds. A crude bandstand was constructed. Now a pergola is there for concerts and dramatic performances. At one time cricket and baseball games were played in the square now people go for a stroll through the park on the walkways bisecting the park. A water spray was installed for the children who visit the park. The library building has been taken over by the Southern Alberta Art Gallery and in 2010, the organization did a renovation to enlarge the existing building. The Rotary Plaza in the centre is used for small gatherings of musicians and outdoor plays and band concerts.