

HENDERSON LAKE PARK

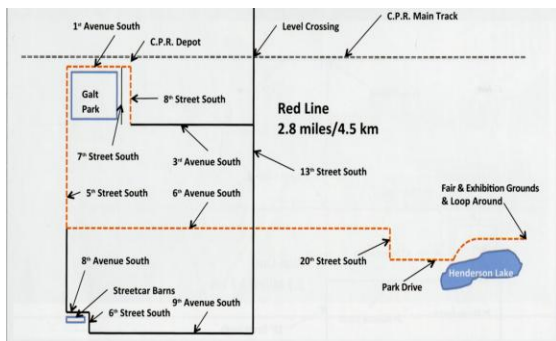
HISTORY

This early Lethbridge park, the first important recreational park according to Alex Johnson, is located on the east side of Lethbridge between Parkside Drive to the south and north and Mayor Magrath Drive to the west and Exhibition Drive to the east.



It was named for Mayor William Henderson who was a leader in the town's development. Henderson was a town councillor in 1891-1892 and 1896-98 and mayor 1908-09. He also operated one of the first hotels, the Lethbridge House which became the Lethbridge Hotel opposite Galt Gardens.

In the early days (1911-12) the town extended to within 2 miles of Henderson Park so the Municipal Railway ran a line, the Red or Park Line over the bald prairie to the park for easier access for the residents.



Streetcar line to Henderson Lake 2010
20101092000



Streetcar tracks Henderson Park 1912
19640657000

There are many access points to the park but the park entrance sign on the corner of Parkside Drive South welcomes all to the park with the words "*Area purchased for parkland April 6, 1910 from the Alberta Railway & Irrigation Company and named in honor of Mayor Henderson 1908-1909. It has been a focal point for the Lethbridge Park System since then.*"

PHYSICAL LAYOUT

The park is on 315 acres of land and started its life as a slough called Slaughterhouse Slough due to the proximity to an animal slaughterhouse. Improvements were made and a high embankment was built and the 91-acre basin was filled with irrigation water.

The park was formed for Lethbridge and District citizens to enjoy their favorite pastimes of walking, picnicking, family gatherings, swimming, fishing, skating, hockey and ice fishing. At one time swimming was allowed in the main lake, the area to the east of the foot bridge. Years later swimming was restricted to the west lake on the west side of the foot bridge but the practise was stopped in 1950 due to the excessive weeds, itch and leeches. The Henderson Lake Outdoor Pool was built to the west and opened in 1962.



Steps down to the water. 1950s
199710803168

At the northeast shoreline of the park visitors notice cement steps leading into the water. These old steps were the Rotary Club's first project and assisted the swimmers. Occasionally called the old steps Rotary Beach.- opened in 1926. They were also used by fisherman. A gazebo and dressing rooms were built just north of the steps. They led to the swimming area.

Redevelopment including dredging, creation of islands, a perimeter pedestrian-cyclist trail bridges was completed in June 1986.

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE PARK

There are picnic areas adjacent to the parking lot areas. The Kiwanis Picnic Shelter on the north side of park nearer eastward and the Gunnery Point Picnic Shelter at east end adjacent the playground which are: On the west side of pool, by the dock and on the east end.

All these above are connected by pathways – an asphalt and red brick one around the circumference of the lake and one that winds through the middle of the park on the north side.

BUILDING AND STRUCTURES



Aerial of the Dance Pavilion 1977

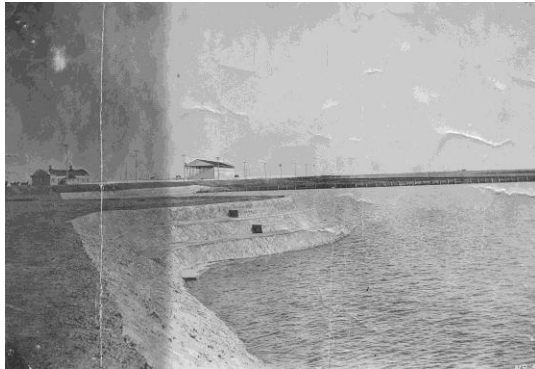
From the dock pavilion located at the centre of the north side of the lake a dock made of heavy plastic juts out into the lake. This replaces the wooden dock once located at the west end where the dance pavilion stood. There are several structures adjacent to Henderson Lake. These are: Henderson Ballpark [now Spitz Stadium] as of 2010. The Henderson Lake Golf Course. The course had grown from the Athletic Association's desire to start a golf course there in 1913. The Henderson Lake Campground was until

recently across the road to the east of the park. It was well treed, with serviced lots and room for 100 tents and tent trailers. There were shower houses with toilets. The campground closed 2012 when their lease ran out. The Henderson Lake Tennis Courts across the road to the north of the lake. The Japanese Gardens is on the west and it was developed from a portion of the lake. There is a Horseshoe Pitch once the Bowling Green facing Mayor Magrath Drive as well as the Rose Garden which was developed in 1967.

Throughout the park there are many monuments dedications to various ethnic groups, War Veterans, commemorating the 100 years of irrigation in southern Alberta, and the redevelopment of the park itself in 1986.

ACTIVITIES

This is a year-round park with activities of swimming, walking, boating, dragon boating, fishing, playground, family gatherings, and picnics.



Swimming area at Henderson Lake 1912
19640317000



Water slide and swim area 1930
19730064000

Also marching bands frequented the park during the summer. In the 1950s and early 1960s the Lethbridge Junior Band marched from their practise hall on 12 Street and 7th Avenue to Henderson and using the bandstand gave an impromptu concert for park goers. In the late 1960s the Lethbridge Kiwanis Band did the same but by then the bandstand was gone and they stood in the area where the entrance to Japanese Gardens is today.



The bandstand is behind the teahouse 1912
19640532000

In the winter a variety of activities can be engaged in. Walking, ice fishing, cross-country skiing, and on a warm winter's day there is activity at the playground.