

EXHIBIT BACKGROUNDER

MEDIA CONTACT: Wendy Aitkens, Curator
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The Mighty Bridge

Sat MAY 9 - Sun SEP 20.09

The celebration of a centennial of any sort helps people identify more strongly with their community and discover a renewed or new sense of pride in their history.

For over one hundred years, the **Lethbridge Railway Viaduct**, known locally as the **High Level Bridge**, has been a part of the landscape and human fabric of southern Alberta. Locals bring visiting family and friends to see it in hopes of watching a mile long train travel its length, artists capture its many views and moods in paintings and photographs, and the Canadian Pacific Railway hauls a myriad of products across it many times daily.

The Galt Museum & Archives developed *The Mighty Bridge* exhibit as a part of this year's community-wide bridge centennial celebration.

Visitors will enter the exhibit by walking across a painted mural on the floor of the gallery, giving them a sense of walking on the bridge looking down through the railway ties and tracks to the river valley 307 feet below. Artifacts in the exhibit include a velocipede - or rail-friendly bicycle, a two-person handcart, a riveting gun on loan from the California State Railroad Museum, a 1950's conductor's uniform, and a diving suit on loan from Glenbow Museum similar to the one used to check the concrete support piers for flood damage.

A 1938 Chevrolet - converted by the CPR to provide the Superintendent in southern Alberta easy transportation on the rails - is a part of the Galt's Collection. It will be on exhibit in the showroom of Davis Pontiac Buick GMC dealership in Lethbridge from June 20 through September 20.

Because of the iconic significance of the High Level Bridge, many types of memorabilia, souvenirs, and household products sport the image of the bridge, and numerous samples from the Galt's Collection will be displayed. Hands-on activities will include building a model of the bridge with Styrofoam blocks, manipulating a Meccano crane, and playing with an elaborate toy train set. Audio sounds of steam powered bridge construction tools and a DVD of footage taken from the engineer's compartment of a locomotive as it crossed the bridge are part of the exhibit.

Four smaller exhibits will fill the Galt Museum & Archives with the bridge theme. Contemporary images of the bridge from the Lethbridge Photo Club and the Lethbridge Artists Club will be exhibited. Children will be invited to take photographs and write a short story about the bridge and these will be posted in the gallery. Treasures from the Archives such as copies of the original design engineer's drawings of the bridge, historic photos of construction of the bridge, commemorative stamps, train timetables and tickets will also be displayed.

Programs and events reflecting the railway and bridge theme will be offered throughout the run of the exhibit. All of this will complement other centennial activities available for residents and visitors to participate in as they celebrate and acknowledge the landmark and icon of the High Level Bridge at Lethbridge.

“Artifacts, photographs, and artwork from the CPR railway and bridge are abundant in the Galt Collection and Archives. Many of these items have not been displayed to the public for five years or more.”

“Interpretive and School Programming will supplement the learning opportunities provided by the exhibition. This learning will involve the story of the construction of the bridge, the economic benefits of the railway to the agriculture and industry of southern Alberta and the use of a major icon such as the bridge in promoting and celebrating our community.”

“The design for *Mighty Bridge* that incorporates exhibit elements already existing in the permanent gallery into a temporary exhibit with the use of a train track guide on the floor and a hand held souvenir booklet is a unique approach to exhibit design. We hope to engage visitors in a sensory ‘train trip’ that involves their eyes, ears, hands and imaginations.”

Wendy Aitkens, Curator, Galt Museum & Archives

GRAND OPENING

Sat MAY 09 | 11:00

A Red Ribbon Affair held as part of Museum Community Day | 10:00 am to 4:30 pm

The Mighty Bridge is generously sponsored by:



and supported by local engineering firms:

Associated Engineering, EBA Engineering Consultants, Hasegawa Engineering, ISL Engineering and Land Services, MPE Engineering, and Stantec Consulting

Exhibit includes:

50+ ARTIFACTS, INCLUDING:

Diving Suit and Bell on loan from Glenbow Museum, similar to the one seen in this photograph:



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American Flyer Model Train, ca.1945-55

CPR Railroad Lantern, 1908

Excavation Scraper, ca.1900-15 *A horse drawn scraper or 'Fresno' larger than this example was used along with steam powered excavators to dig the pits for the concrete piers for the High Level Bridge towers.*

"High Steel 1907-1909" Bridge Construction Model, 1990-1994 *built and donated by Robert Gardner*

Rail-bending Machine, ca.1910-20

Riveting Gun on loan from the California State Railroad Museum, *believed to be similar to those used for the construction of the Bridge.*

Survey Transit and Tripod, 1908

Souvenir Spoon, nd *On loan from Mrs. Klingender in Peterborough, Ontario, who discovered it when she ripped out the sink cupboard in the kitchen of her historic 1929 Halliday Home - a Hamilton, Ontario company manufactured "package" home.*

Superintendent's car M602, Lethbridge Division of the Canadian Pacific Railway, 1959 *on exhibit at Davis Pontiac Buick GMC Lethbridge JUN 20-SEP 20.09*



Galt Museum & Archives, 19752910652

Teacup, ca.1909

Two Man Section Handcart, ca.1930-40

Variety of memorabilia featuring the High Level Bridge from the Galt Collections, including pins, badges, calendars, pendants and more.

2 DIMENSIONAL PIECES, INCLUDING:

Archival photographs sourced from the Galt Museum & Archives and Glenbow Museum.

A floor mural simulating what it would be like to walk on the bridge *created by Jay Johnston and Jim Wills, University of Lethbridge Drama Department*

AUDIO-VISUAL STATIONS

Song: *The Mighty Bridge*

Poem

Historic Construction timeline

Handcar

Locomotive Engineer's view across the bridge

INTERACTIVES

Imaginarium Train Set on loan from Toys "R" Us, Lethbridge

Large format map

Build your own High Level Bridge

Discover:

- How many rivets were used
- Who wrote and recorded the song *The Mighty Bridge*
- Why there are two sets of rails on the bridge
- What historic house was destroyed to make way for the bridge
- What happened to the two labourers who jumped down before the dignitaries could step off and claim they were the first people to cross the bridge
- What 1976 movie featured the High Level Bridge
- Which end of the bridge they started building first
- Which end of the bridge is the highest
- Why the bridge is painted black
- What type of power was used to build the bridge
- How the rivets were heated

Abridged History:

In 1897 and 1898, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) constructed the Crowsnest Pass line from Medicine Hat, Alberta into the mineral rich Rocky Mountains. The only major obstacle the surveyors found along this route was the river valley at Lethbridge. The first rail line avoided the chasm and involved a temporary route which included a long gradual sloping line into and out of two river valleys and across 20 wooden trestles. Within six years this section of the Crowsnest line needed to be repaired or replaced by a better route.

Surveys were done to determine a new route during the summers of 1904 and 1905. It was determined that a new bridge across the river at Lethbridge and a shorter line to Macleod would cost just a bit more than to repair the old wooden bridges and worn out track. The CPR designed a mile long viaduct and from 1907 to 1909, hundreds of men were employed to run draglines in the river, pour concrete piers for the towers, move materials, and join the steel structural elements together with hot rivets.

The viaduct comprised a series of 33 support towers and long spans of steel laid horizontally between the towers. The ties and tracks were installed on the deck of the spans. Tall side rails or girders and an extra set of tracks were incorporated to prevent any derailed car from tumbling off the bridge.

Early on the afternoon of June 22, 1909, the last span was put in place. Two dignitaries waiting to be the first to step onto the western side were robbed of that glory by two workmen who jumped to the ground before the span settled into its permanent location. Within the hour the remaining track was laid. Later that same afternoon a series of flatcars carrying a hundred men and women dressed in their finest clothes crossed the bridge.

The opening of southern Alberta to mining, ranching and farming was heavily dependent on railway transportation to get the coal, beef and grains to market. Many immigrants, looking for work and a new place to live, arrived by train bringing along their household belongings, tools of labor and a determination to succeed.

RELATED EXHIBITS

Moods of the Bridge

MAIN LEVEL MEETING ROOMS

Photographers look at the bridge through many lenses and capture its powerful elemental structure and the play of light along its beams at all times of the day and night and through all seasons of the year. They record images of fog shrouding the bridge and Chinook arches that crown it and they describe the contrast of colours between the stark black of the bridge and the golds, greens and browns of the river valley. Their photographs entice us to have another look at the bridge with a new perspective and interest.

A juried exhibition featuring the photographs by members of the Lethbridge Photography Club: Colleen F. Bains, Mike Byneshewsky, Van Christou, Carmen Cook, Grant Forsythe, Lorelei Hoffarth, Svat Jonas, Ian McGillivray, Heather Morrison, Maggie Larson, Danny Ponomar, Samantha Postman, Sheri Richardson, David Tanaka, Ian Thompson, Scott Van't Land, Thane Vanderaegen, Kathy Villeneuve, Wendy F. Warren and Frank Welder. This exhibit will also be featured on the Galt Museum & Archives flickr.com site.



The Lethbridge Photo Club's "main purpose is to bring photographers of all varieties and skill sets together to share, educate and socialize." Members are challenged each month to interpret a topic or theme and present their work at meetings. For further information or to join the Lethbridge Photo Club please contact Grant at 403.328-0610.

Art of the Bridge

LOWER LEVEL FOYER

Many members of the Lethbridge Artists Club, a society that started as the Lethbridge Sketch Club in 1932, search out the bridge as a subject for their art. The engineered structure of the bridge set against the organic nature of the Oldman River valley is reflected in artwork involving a wide range of media, perspectives, seasons, and personal artistic style.

A juried exhibition featuring the work of members of the Lethbridge Artists' Club: Iris Andronowich, Carol Berner, Helen Franiel, Anne Krystoff, Katherine Kolpak, Arlene Litchfield, Karina Mak, Joan Martens, Iris McRae, Renee Pahara and Sue Wilkie.



The Lethbridge Artists Club comprises aspiring artists of all levels of expertise. Approximately eighty members enjoy creating artwork in mediums including oil painting, watercolor, pen and ink or pencil drawing, acrylic painting and pastels. The Club has studio and exhibition space at the Bowman Arts Centre and offers lessons during the fall, winter and spring for members and all interested people in the community and surrounding area. For more information about the Lethbridge Artists Club and its many programs and activities, please contact Joan at 403.345-3067.

Treasures of the Bridge

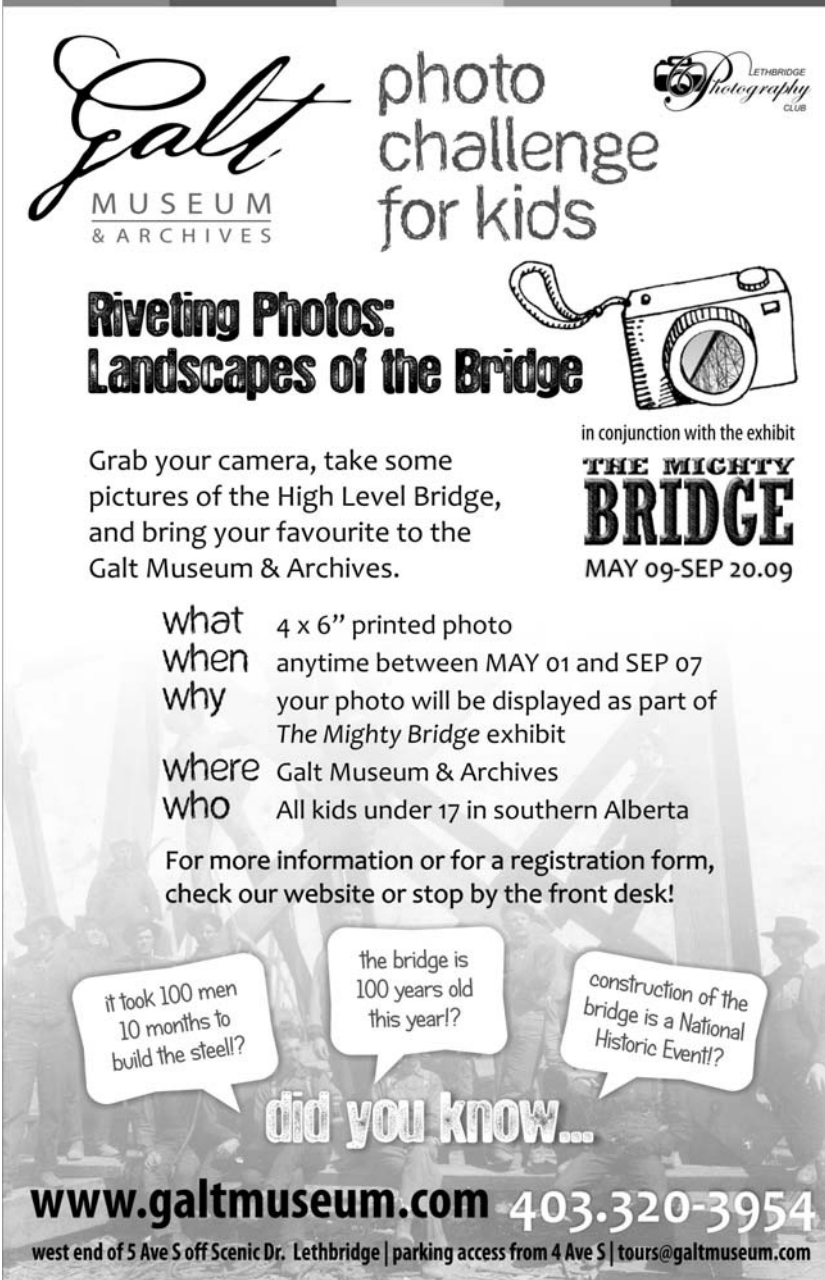
ARCHIVES REFERENCE ROOM, Mon-Fri 10:00 am-4:30 pm

An exhibition of documents pertaining to the Canadian Pacific Railway and Engineers Society reports on the construction of the bridge, as well as reproductions of the original engineers' drawings held in the Galt's Archival collections.

Riveting Photos: Landscapes of the Bridge

DISCOVERY HALL

An exhibition of 4 x 6" photos and stories by children and teens up to age 17: registration forms are available at www.galtmuseum.com/exhibits/mightybridge.htm or at the information desk.



Galt
MUSEUM
& ARCHIVES

photo
challenge
for kids

LETHBRIDGE
Photography
CLUB

**Riveting Photos:
Landscapes of the Bridge**

Grab your camera, take some pictures of the High Level Bridge, and bring your favourite to the Galt Museum & Archives.

in conjunction with the exhibit
**THE MIGHTY
BRIDGE**
MAY 09-SEP 20.09

what 4 x 6" printed photo
when anytime between MAY 01 and SEP 07
why your photo will be displayed as part of *The Mighty Bridge* exhibit
where Galt Museum & Archives
who All kids under 17 in southern Alberta

For more information or for a registration form, check our website or stop by the front desk!

it took 100 men
10 months to
build the steel?

the bridge is
100 years old
this year!?

construction of the
bridge is a National
Historic Event!?

did you know...

www.galtmuseum.com 403.320-3954
west end of 5 Ave S off Scenic Dr. Lethbridge | parking access from 4 Ave S | tours@galtmuseum.com

ArtWalk: 3 Dimensions Sculpture Show

Fri SEP 18, Sat SEP 19 | 10-4:30 pm

Sun SEP 20 | 1-4:30 pm

In celebration of ArtWalk 2009, organized by the Allied Arts Council, the Galt Museum & Archives presents a 3-day juried show featuring sculptural pieces and demonstrations by local artists. This will also be the final weekend to take in *The Mighty Bridge* and related exhibits. To participate, call Wendy at 403.320-3907. Information on ArtWalk is available at www.artslethbridge.org.

EXHIBIT RELATED PROGRAMS

MEDIA CONTACT: Belinda Crowson,
Visitor and Program Coordinator
tel 403.320-4248 | bcrowson@galtmuseum.com

Museum Community Day: The Mighty Bridge

Sat MAY 09 | 10:00 am to 4:30 pm

Free admission and activities throughout the day celebrating the new exhibit and the 100th Anniversary of the High Level Bridge:

- 10:00-4:30 **Crafts & Activities** *Lethbridge Iron Works Classroom*
- 11:00 **Grand Opening: A Red Ribbon Affair!**
- 11:30-3:30 **Cars of the 1930s** *outdoors, weather permitting*
- 12:30 **FILM: *Canadian Pacific, 1949, 95 min* | *Community Savings Learning Studio***
The Crowsnest Line, which includes the High Level Bridge, pushed through the Rockies to protect the rich minerals in the area from the Americans and to better permit transport of Lethbridge's coal. Immerse yourself in a fictionalized Hollywood account of the building of the CPR and watch Tom Andrews (Randolph Scott) fight to build a vital pass through the mountains. Also stars Jane Wyatt, Carrol Naish, Victory Jory and Nancy Olson.
- 1:00 **Riveting Race** *Viewing Gallery*
- 2:15 **FILM: *Silver Streak, 1976, 110 min* | *Community Savings Learning Studio***
What does the High Level Bridge look like on the silver screen? Catch a glimpse of it in this cross-country adventure starring Gene Wilder, Jill Clayburgh and Richard Pryor. Romance, murder, and intrigue are the key ingredients. Wilder witnesses a murder and can't convince anyone - except the murderers - that he has seen a body. The laughs and thrills blend together on this hair-raising trip as Wilder and smalltime thief Richard Pryor battle the murderer to a smashing finale.

Café Galt: The Mighty Bridge

2nd Tue monthly | Exhibit opens at 6:00 pm for viewing prior to program at 7:00 pm | admission rates apply | free for annual pass holders | refreshments

MAY 12 History of Railroad and Highway Bridges in Alberta: John Gilpin From the first bridge built in the 1860s by the Oblate Missionaries to span the Sturgeon River at St. Albert to the steel and concrete structures that are part of the new Calgary and Edmonton ring roads, bridges unite Albertans. More than a physical linking, bridges serve an iconic purpose and virtually every rural and urban community has one or more bridge stories in its past, including, of course, Lethbridge and its High Level Bridge.

JUN 09 History of a ARCC Train Station 1890-2009: Bill Hillen A time record of the 1890 Coultts Sweet Grass International Train Station, Customs Depot, including its past, uses, relocation and restoration and about the people who worked there. Focus will also be on its unique importance to Lethbridge and southern Alberta.

SEP 08 Legends and Lore of the High Level Bridge: Belinda Crowson Does a ghost truly haunt the High Level Bridge? Did the man who designed it really commit suicide? Were there really armed guards protecting the bridge during the First World War? Find out the truths and legends behind Lethbridge's landmark bridge.

Saturdays at 1:00: Engineering the Past

Weekly family program | admission rates apply | free for annual pass holders

MAY 16-JUN 13 | SEP 05-19

What does it take to build a bridge as long, strong and iconic as the High Level Bridge? Could you be an engineer? Join us over the next several Saturdays to test your building and design skills.

In an American study done a few months ago, more girls say their parents are likely to encourage them to become an actress than the number who say their parents are likely to encourage them to become an engineer.

MAY 16 Edible Bridge Build [and eat?] an edible bridge. Whose can be longest, highest, and strongest? And the tastiest?

23 Compass Race Measuring and surveying are needed to build a bridge. If you (and your team) had a compass and a map, could you find your way to the end? Give it a try and you could win a prize.

30 Build a Train At some point, you will have to test your bridge. Construct your own train and, in your imagination, you can go anywhere you choo-choo-choose.

JUN 06 A House of Cards Building a house of playing cards is quite an accomplishment. What will yours look like?

13 Shaving Cream Tower With only shaving cream, a plastic cup, toothpicks and plastic straws, how tall can you build a tower?

SEP 05 Traveling Along The Traveler was a large machine that lowered the steel girders into place on the bridge. Explore how a simple machine, the pulley, let the traveler move those huge steel pieces.

12 Straw Paintings The bridge was painted to protect it from rust. Try your hand at straw painting. You took can make a puddle of purple or a river of red without ever picking up a paintbrush!

19 It's a Draw Once the bridge is done, you will want to capture a picture of it. Draw the bridge for your records.

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS DAY

Sat MAY 16 | 10:00 am to 5:00 pm | Free admission to *The Mighty Bridge* and related exhibits

The Curator Presents... Oh, look! There's a train on the Bridge!!

Wed MAY 20 | 7:00 pm | *admission rates apply | free for annual pass holders | refreshments*

Many people of southern Alberta form strong emotional connections to the High Level Bridge. We look at it as an icon, a special landmark. We bring visitors to see the bridge in hopes of watching a long train cross it. We walk under its towers, take photos of it, write poems and prose expressing our thoughts about it. What is it about the bridge that fascinates us? *Curator Presents* begins with a Curator's Tour of *The Mighty Bridge* with exhibit Curator Wendy Aitkens, followed by a presentation and lively discussion about our connections with the bridge.

Wendy Aitkens moved back to Lethbridge in 2006 when she joined the Galt Museum & Archives as Curator. Prior to her arrival here she was at Fort Calgary for 16 years. After a long absence from Lethbridge, she felt like she was coming home when she drove into the Oldman River valley and could see the High Level Bridge once again.

100th Anniversary of the Bridge

Mon JUN 22 | 3:00-5:00 pm | Indian Battle Park, Coalbanks Kiosk

Join us for cake, games and other festivities in celebration of 100 years of the bridge, including the 3:30 pm presentation "In the Shadow of the Bridge": The High Level Bridge is our city's claim to fame but what do the animals think about it? Get a "bird's eye view" of this well-known landmark with a nature interpreter from the Helen Schuler Nature Centre.

Museum Community Day: Canada Day!

Wed JUL 01 | 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Free admission to *The Mighty Bridge* and related exhibits, activities throughout the day in celebration of Canada Day.

Coulees and Culture Connection Summer Program

Week 1: JUL 27-31 | registration deadline* JUL 17

Week 2: AUG 10-14 | registration deadline* JUL 31

Ages 6 to 9 | 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

\$125/child each week | min. 10/max. 15 participants

* Register at SAAG at 327-8770 ext 0 or mmericle@saag.ca

Celebrate the Coulees & Culture Connection and discover the cultural, historical and natural treasures in our city. Five full days of fun and exciting activities will keep kids busy and show them the diversity that Lethbridge has to offer. Each day children are dropped off at a different location for a different activity including the Medicine Tree, Helen Schuler Nature Centre, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Brian and Company and Galt Museum & Archives.

Guided Tours of *The Mighty Bridge* or of the permanent exhibit are available for groups and classes.

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For additional information and high resolution images please contact:

Anine Vonkeman, Marketing/Communications Officer

403.320-4009 | avonkeman@galtmuseum.com

www.galtmuseum.com