

Welcome to EMLENTON, PA!



Emlenton Borough, located along the Allegheny River at the southeastern corner of Venango County, was surveyed in 1830. Emlenton was a quiet town when it was incorporated in January 1859; its few residents were mainly connected to the river through trade along the waterway. After Edwin Drake successfully struck oil near Titusville (approximately 30 miles to the north) in August 1859, Emlenton changed dramatically.

After 1859, prospectors and residents drilled oil wells in and near Emlenton with varying degrees of success. Shortly thereafter, railroads traveled through Emlenton and the area grew rapidly, adding houses, churches, and businesses. One of the new businesses was the Emlenton Refining Co., which was one of several companies consolidated to create the Quaker State Corporation in 1931. The refinery was on the west end of Emlenton; it ceased operations in the late 20th century. Today, Emlenton attracts outdoor recreation enthusiasts who hike and bike the Allegheny River Trail and float and fish in the Allegheny River.



This brochure was developed by the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism. The mission of the Alliance is to manage the Oil Region National Heritage Area and to increase the prosperity of the Oil Region by enticing all people to live, work, learn and play in the “the Valley that Changed the World” through the preservation, promotion, development, and support of historical, education, natural, recreational, residential, commercial, and industrial destinations.

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pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

EMLENTON, PA WALKING & DRIVING TOUR

30 - 40 minutes round trip



Walking ROUTE

Panels 1 - 15



The Emlenton Tour has walking and driving routes, which will take you to informational panels in the Borough. The panels, marked on the map below, provide more insight into the area's unique history. Begin the walking tour portion at the Crawford Center (511 Hill Street) with the panel in front of the main entry. This panel is labeled number 1 and circled on the map.

1. EDUCATION - A LOCAL PRIORITY

Emphasis on quality education began in Emlenton in 1839. In 1928, successful industrialist Henry Jennings "H. J." Crawford donated the school building that was used into the 1990s. As the Crawford Center, this building now features several businesses, Borough offices, and the Blue River & Black Gold Visitor Center.

Walk west along Hill Street, remaining on the uphill side of the street. The next panel is on the stone wall across from 7th Street.

2. EMLENTON'S "NUMBER ONE CITIZEN"

H. J. Crawford not only contributed to Emlenton's economic growth, but his strong moral example and work ethic inspired generations.

Walk downhill along 7th Street to Main Street and make a left to view the next panel in the window of Farmers National Bank.

3. FARMERS NATIONAL BANK

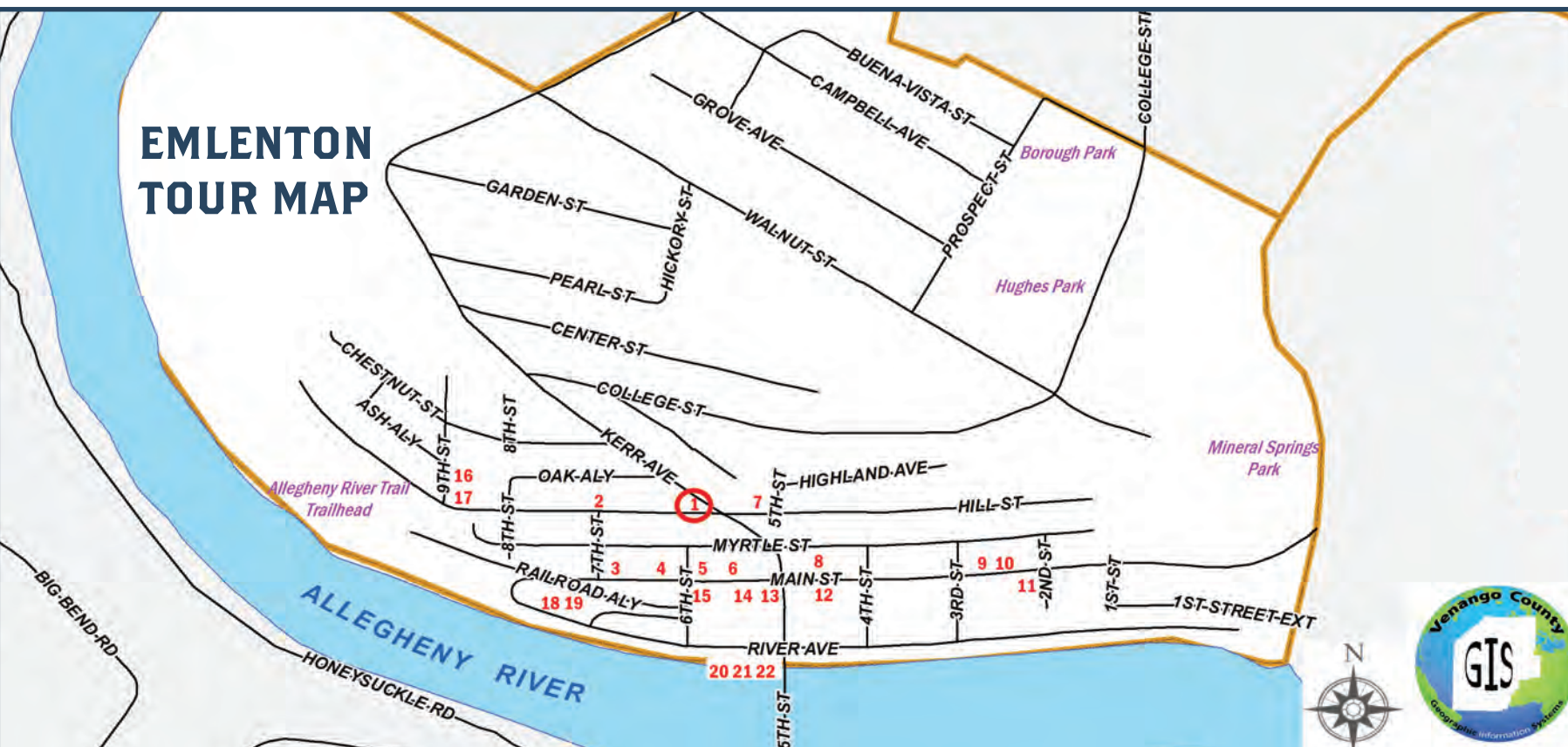
The bank was organized in 1900 and this building was constructed in 1904. More than 100 years later, the building continues to house the bank!

Walk east along Main Street to the end of the block.

4. WEST MAIN STREET DEVELOPMENT

Unlike some towns in Venango County, Emlenton was already established before the start of the oil boom in 1859.

Cross 6th Street to find the next panel on the brick building's wall.



5. ARTHUR W. PHILLIPS - PHYSICIAN/HUMANITARIAN

“Doc” Phillips’ love for his fellow man is ongoing as reflected in medical services, health care, and the charitable trust he established.

Continue on Main Street to the blue marker.

6. THE CRAWFORD FAMILY - PA HISTORICAL MARKER

The Crawford family’s profound influence on the natural gas industry established Emlenton as the “Little Town of Millionaires.” The Emlenton Presbyterian Church was built in 1874 and remains active.

Continue straight, crossing the intersection with Kerr Avenue/5th Street. Walk up the sidewalk, to the Memorial Triangle, and then up the steps to the panel.

7. HONORING MILITARY VETERANS

Serving in the military and honoring veterans continue to be important Emlenton traditions.

Return to Main Street, then turn left (east) to reach the next panel, which is displayed in the window of the Progress News building.

8. GAS INDUSTRY - EARLY BEGINNINGS

Natural gas was also a significant industry in the region, especially in Emlenton.

Continue east on Main Street for approximately 750 feet. The next two panels are in an open grassy area.

9. & 10. EAST END COMMERCE

Emlenton touted various businesses throughout its history.

Walk east to the end of the block, and then cross Main Street at the walkway.

11. THE EMLENTON MILL

The Mill was a community landmark for more than 100 years.

Walk west (back towards downtown). The next panel is immediately before the gas station.

12. ELEGANCE AGAINST COMMERCE

Many shops once lined this block, which now features several businesses and building types.

Cross Kerr Avenue/5th Street. The next two panels are displayed in the Hickman Lumber building.

13. JAMES BENNET - PREMIER ENTREPRENEUR

Bennett’s vision for Emlenton led to economic vitality and progressive education.

14. RAILROAD SUPPLIES THE AREA’S NEEDS

Some of yesterday’s railroads correspond with today’s interstate system. Others became rail trails like the Allegheny Valley Railroad that is now the Allegheny River Trail.

Continue on Main Street to the end of the block.

15. EMLENTON AT LEISURE

A determined work ethic earned Emlentonians the luxury of fun and relaxation. Today, citizens enjoy the area’s outdoor recreation opportunities and community festivals.

This concludes the walking portion of the tour.



Driving ROUTE

Panels 16 - 22



To begin the driving tour, start at the Crawford Center and travel west on Hill Street to 9th Street to the parking lot of St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Church. Panels 16 and 17 are located together in a grassy area.

16. THE EMLENTON REFINERY 1891 - 2000

From its humble beginnings Emlenton's small refinery became the nucleus of the international company of Quaker State Motor Oil.

17. EARLY INDEPENDENT OIL PRODUCTION

Anyone could be an oil speculator, but knowledge of geology, financial stability, and a bit of luck could mean the difference between a boom and bust.

Return to Hill Street and travel east to 7th Street. Make a right on 7th Street, and then another right at the end of the road onto Main Street. Drive around the tight bend onto River Avenue. The next panels are immediately after the bend on the righthand side of the street.

18. & 19. HOTELS OF EMLENTON

The first hotels in Emlenton served people traveling along the Allegheny River, and later those connected to the oil industry. Today, bed and breakfasts and campgrounds cater to visitors enjoying the area's scenic views and outdoor recreation amenities.

Continue along River Avenue. The final three panels are together on the righthand side before the bridge.

20. EARLY RIVER COMMERCE

Emlenton came into existence because of its key position on the Allegheny River.

21. LIFE ON THE ALLEGHENY

From early industrial transportation to modern-day recreation, the Allegheny River has been an integral part of community life.

22. HISTORY OF EMLENTON

From its early days as a trading center, Emlenton evolved with the oil and gas industries.

This concludes your tour of historic Emlenton. Thank you for visiting!

More to EXPLORE



THERE IS MORE TO EXPERIENCE IN EMLENTON!

A trailhead of the Allegheny River Trail with paved parking is on the west side of town. The paved walking and biking trail travels north approximately 28 miles to Franklin where it connects to the paved Samuel Justus Trail to Oil City. Both trails are part of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail system, which plans to link both cities.

AVTA-Trails.org EriePittsburghTrail.org

Emlenton Summer Festival is held annually during the second week of July with various activities spread across several days.

SummerFestival.EmlentonPA.com

Hughes Park, Emlenton Borough Park, and Mineral Springs Park each offer outdoor recreation opportunities from picnics, sports, hiking, and fishing.

Various shops are along Main Street, River Avenue, and in the Crawford Center. Have a bite to eat or engage in some retail therapy!