



WALKING TOUR

# BRADFORD

National Historic District



ph Erio Piccagliani © Teatro alla Scala



MCKEAN COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

# FROM BACKWOODS TO BOOMTOWN

## A WALKING TOUR THROUGH BRADFORD'S NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

UNCOVER  
BRADFORD'S  
FASCINATING PAST  
AS YOU WALK IN  
THE FOOTSTEPS  
OF THE EARLY  
OIL BARONS.

THEIR STORIES UNFOLD  
IN THE ARCHITECTURAL  
TREASURES THEY LEFT BEHIND,  
PAYING TRIBUTE TO THEIR  
SPIRIT OF INNOVATION AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP.



From the moment the first wildcatters arrived in the 1870s, they converged on Bradford's hastily built downtown, a vast amphitheater in the Tuna Valley formed by the surrounding hills.

Listen carefully and you can almost hear the steady hammering of nails on a makeshift mercantile, an investor plunking down a gold bar at the Option House as he throws back a shot of whiskey, and oil producers passing out cigars to celebrate a successful deal.

The railroad whistles, announcing another trainload of workers has arrived. Soon they'll be jostling with bankers and big city entertainers for hotel rooms. At nightfall, a moonlighter shoots a torpedo and the roar of another gusher echoes all the way from Glycerin Hollow down Main Street.

In the morning, a telegraph operator taps out the news—It's true! Bradford is the world's first billion-dollar oil field!

While many early boomtowns went bust, Bradford's oil barons decided to stay, using their wealth to transform the city into a sophisticated center for arts, culture and commerce.



*This project is financed by the Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau, the official Destination Marketing Organization for McKean County; and in part by the PA Route 6 Alliance and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, with funding from the Environmental Stewardship Fund and the Heritage Areas Program Fund.*



This walking tour features 25 significant buildings in the center of Bradford's National Historic District. Over 166 commercial properties are within Bradford's national and state registered historic district.

### LOOK UP!

Amazing architectural details crafted of brick and stone decorate the top of the buildings.

Art Deco style, multi-story buildings, Hooker-Fulton – home of the Main Street Moviehouse, and Marilyn Horne Hall, book end Main Street.

The Zippo lighter was invented in Bradford, and just five minutes from downtown is the Zippo/Case Museum.

Bradford is surrounded by natural beauty. Extensive trail systems bisect the City and link to the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, Marilla Reservoir, and the Allegheny National Forest.

Maybe that is why the oil barons, and others decided to stay.



## 1 PINE STREET BRIDGE

Built 2013  
Tunungwant Creek



There is no better way to explore a city's history than on foot, and the Pine Street Bridge is the perfect place to start. The bridge connects Bradford's historic downtown with Community Parks Trail along the Native American named Tunungwant Creek, nick-named "Tuna Creek," you could see kayaks and canoes paddling in the sunlight or a young couple biking or hiking along the landscaped pathway.

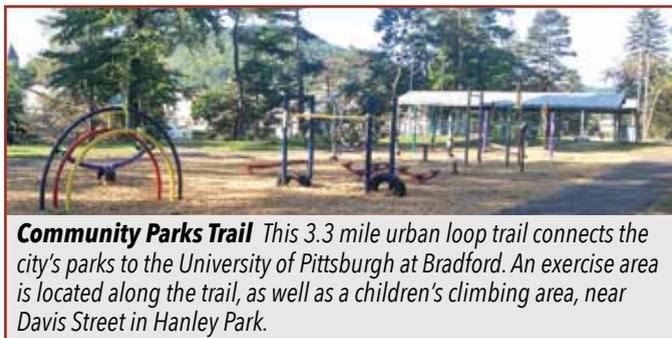
Imagine standing on the bridge back in 1891 as hundreds of thirsty baseball fans scrambled across an older, far less stable bridge on their way to the Black Bear Hotel. After a doubleheader on Memorial Day, the structure swayed and gave way, sending 200 people tumbling into the creek. The accident did nothing to dampen Bradford's love of baseball. Legendary Hall of Famer Rube Waddell, born on nearby Jackson Avenue, got his start in the region's Iron and Oil League.



## 2 COMMERCIAL NATIONAL BANK

15 Main Street  
Built 1922  
20th Century Modern

A dozen years after its stylish new building opened, one of Bradford's most trustworthy banking institutions—home to oil fortunes and the savings of everyday workers—was rocked by scandal. Eleven prominent businessmen conspired to defraud the Commercial National Bank of \$1.3 million in a scheme that forced the bank's closure in 1935. The bank's assistant cashier committed suicide after the FBI discovered it was an inside job. Commercial National was the first bank in the nation to fall under the new FDIC insurance regulations.



**Community Parks Trail** This 3.3 mile urban loop trail connects the city's parks to the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. An exercise area is located along the trail, as well as a children's climbing area, near Davis Street in Hanley Park.

## 3 PHOENIX BUILDING

1 Main Street  
1895  
Late 19th Century Commercial



Fires ripped through this bustling oil town in the 1870s, 80s and 90s, claiming entire city blocks despite the best efforts of volunteer fire fighters. Out of the ashes of the Columbia block rose the Phoenix Building, named for the city's resilience. Soon the Bradford Olean Traction Company was up and running again, filling the first floor corner office with its trolley line waiting room.



## 4 EMERY HOTEL

2 South Avenue  
1929  
Colonial Revival

Lewis Emery Jr. had a hand in more than 2,000 oil wells, built Bradford's first refinery, constructed a pipeline to the East Coast going head-to-head with John D. Rockefeller, founded a daily newspaper, and served two terms in the Pennsylvania Senate. He was widely respected, but his daughter, Grace Emery, was perhaps his fondest admirer. After his death in 1927, she built the Emery Hotel, breaking ground on Father's Day. Enscorced in Bradford's signature red brick, the seven-story hotel was impeccably decorated and furnished, replete with fine china and a well-trained staff. A hotel until 1964, it was converted into a dormitory for the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, and later, senior citizen housing.



## 5 VETERANS' SQUARE

Corner of Main  
& South Avenue  
1837  
Landscape



When Bradford's earliest settlers came from New England, they brought the idea of a town commons with them. First known as Public Square, it was a community gathering place lined with flowers, park benches, and a gazebo bandstand. Starting with the Spanish American war, memorials were placed along the walkways to honor Bradford's fallen soldiers. Renamed Veterans' Square in 1954, every year the park hosts a service following Bradford's Memorial Day parade.



## 6 MARILYN HORNE HALL

2 Marilyn Horne Way  
1932  
Art Deco



Once known as the Seneca Building, the building was commissioned by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) and sits on the site of the original Producers Petroleum Oil Exchange. The Marilyn Horne Museum & Exhibit Center pays tribute to world-famous opera star, and Bradford native, Marilyn Horne. Opened in 2017, the museum features replica costumes, displays which highlight Horne's life and career, and exhibits which teach visitors about music and opera.



## 7 JOSEPH MARKS BUILDING

24 Main Street  
1905  
20th Century Commercial

Two large dry goods stores at 20-24 Main Street, owned respectively by Robert Rosenberg and Isaac Cohn, were destroyed by fire a few days before Christmas in 1904. Rosenberg, who lived upstairs, lost everything he owned. Cohn invested his insurance settlement in a new two-story brick building, restocked his shelves, and, in less than a year, announced he was back in business. The building's long retail tradition continued with the Joseph Marks Furniture Store, which served the community for nearly half a century.

In 1972 the building was purchased by Tullah Hanley, the Hungarian-born widow of Bradford's Harvard-educated oil, gas and brick tycoon, T. Edward Hanley—whom she met while belly dancing professionally in Buffalo, New York. Mrs. Hanley transformed the empty storefront into the Hanley Creative Youth Club, adorning its walls with fine art she and her husband had collected from around the world. A photo of Tullah Hanley with surrealist Salvador Dali appears in her autobiography, *Love of Art and Art of Love*. The Hanleys donated their rare book and art collections to universities and libraries around the country.



## 8 OPTION HOUSE

41 Main Street  
1903  
Neo-Classical Revival

Fortune-seekers who piled into the 1880s Option House to smoke cigars and negotiate oil contracts soon outgrew their quarters. As Bradford became more gentrified, so did its buildings. In 1902, Frank McBride commissioned a beautiful façade for a new, four-story brick Option House Hotel equipped with an elevator, spacious dining room, and a pub.

The hotel nearly closed during the Great Depression, but friendly local bankers kept the business going. After prohibition, in 1935, a new owner installed a 62-foot-long oak bar and a second-floor nightclub, Peacock Parlor, named for New York's Waldorf-Astoria restaurant. The Option House underwent a major renovation in 2008 and continues as a restaurant with apartments upstairs.

## 9 WAGNER OPERA HOUSE

62 Main Street  
1876

Late 19th Century Commercial



Reportedly the oldest surviving building on Main Street, the Wagner Opera House opened to great fanfare when Bradford's oil rush began. Among the headline performers were actress Lily Langtry, showman Buffalo Bill, Shakespearean actor Edwin Booth, master magician The Great Hermann, bandleader John Philip Sousa, and famous vaudeville crooners, clowns and daredevils from New York. Carrie Nation once lectured here on behalf of the women's temperance movement; Susan B. Anthony argued women should have the right to vote.

Martin W. Wagner knew there was money to be made in the oil patch, having labored in Oil City and run a hotel in Pithole before that boom went bust. Now he counted the Bradford opera house among his most successful ventures. By 1879, he had expanded the building and taken on a partner, Moses Ries. Together Wagner & Ries would go on to manage 11 theaters in Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio. Like most opera houses, the Wagner Opera House met its demise when movie houses captured the American imagination. The building was sold to the J. C. McCrory Corporation in 1920 and served as a five-and-dime store until 1992.

## 10 MASONIC TEMPLE BUILDING

79 Main Street  
Late 19th Century Commercial

The Masonic Temple Building was a meeting place for the Union Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons. The roofline and upper Victorian façade were significantly altered in 1946.



## 11 AUERHAIM-FOREST OIL BUILDING

78 Main Street  
1901  
Neo-Classical Revival

Solomon Auerhaim, an ambitious entrepreneur from Prussia, Germany, who got his start manufacturing cigars in New York City, came to Bradford in 1881. He established successful dry-goods stores in Petroleum Center and Oil City during the first oil boom.

After 20 years he outgrew his original Main Street shop and erected a new, fireproof structure that would become Bradford's first department store. Forest Oil Corporation owned and managed the building from 1930 to 1995. A producer of oil and natural gas, Forest Oil is credited with developing a process called water flooding in the early 1900s, that could extend the production of oil wells by as much as ten years.

## 12 BAKER BUILDING

82 Main Street  
1902  
Colonial Revival

Architect Frederick French designed many prominent buildings in downtown Bradford, but he took particular interest in this one—he and his wife made the third-floor apartment their home. The first floor was devoted to The Evans & Ginnane, a men's clothing store that later became the James R. Evans Store. Offices occupied the second floor. The Flemish bond brickwork and three-bay upper façade remain original and unaltered.



## 13 BAY STATE HOTEL

84 Main Street  
1897  
Colonial Revival

Bradford's William Hanley, a contractor and founder of the Hanley Brick Company, whose "Bradford reds" became the brick of choice throughout the region in the early years of the twentieth century. He built the Bay State Hotel for owner Catherine Hurley after her wood-framed hotel was destroyed by fire. The new, 36-room hotel was known for its fine-dining restaurant and beautifully appointed accommodations. Room rate at the time was \$2 per day.



## 14 GRAHAM FLORIST & GIFTS

9 Kennedy Street  
1927  
Neo-Classical

One of Bradford's finest buildings was designed to house a bank, but the bank went under before it was completed. Lucky for George Graham, who opened Bradford's first greenhouse in 1891—he knew it would be the perfect place to sell his fresh-cut flowers and plants. On opening day, Graham gave away 3,000 rosebuds, one for each person who came through his impressive doorway. Generous to a fault, when Bradford's temperature dipped below freezing in the 1920s and 30s, the family opened "Graham's Skating Pond," located behind the greenhouse, to public skating and served hot cocoa for a nickel. The Graham's family-owned business has been in continuous operation here since 1927.

*The famous "Hanley Red" bricks used to construct the Neo-Classical, Colonial Revival and Art Deco buildings in Bradford were manufactured by local builder William Hanley. Hanley held the patent on the equipment to produce pressed bricks. By 1920, Hanley Brick Company was the second largest producer of face brick in the United States.*





## 15 OLD CITY HALL

23 Kennedy Street  
1897 and 1901  
Romanesque Revival government building

Bradford's Old City Hall combines Victorian elegance with practicality,

balancing art and function in one of Bradford's most recognizable landmarks. Its main entrance and decorated stonework make it an architectural treasure, but its most distinctive feature is the 100-foot tower which houses a highly prized, four-dial clock created by the Seth Thomas Company, America's oldest clockmaker.

Nearly destroyed by fire in November 1901, the building was refurbished and served the city's government for decades. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.



## 16 SCHONBLOM BUILDING

101 Main Street  
1901  
Neo-Classical Revival

Built for financier Otto Schonblom, president of Bradford National Bank, who made his first fortune in oil and gas-producing interests. The building was part of Schonblom's real estate holdings. Druggist W. O Neely occupied the first floor from 1903 to 1944.



## 17 BRADBURN BUILDING

113 Main Street  
1890  
Italianate

Considered to have one of the finest Mesker iron façades in the country,

this three-story brick building was constructed for C.L. Bradburn's wallpaper store. Bradburn, a native New Yorker, was one of the most artistic paperhangers and drapers in the United States at the time. The interior was finished with antique oak throughout, decorative embossed wall coverings, and high-relief bronze. The upper story included lodge rooms and a dining room for the Knights of Pythias, a benevolent organization and secret society of which Mr. Bradburn was a member.



## 18 HOOKER-FULTON BUILDING

119-125 Main Street  
1931  
Art Deco

The historic district's tallest building was built for hotelier Robert Fulton and insurance agent Clarence Hooker to house offices and a theater. Bradford's Main Street Movie Theater was completed in 1935 by D. J. Selznick, who was related to the famous Hollywood movie moguls. Miss America attended the grand opening and participated in the live stage show, "Broadway Vanities," on Christmas Day, 1935. The first movie shown was a comedy, "\$1,000 a Minute." Admission was 42 cents for adults, 16 cents for children.



## 19 LA STELLA ITALIAN CLUB

Festival Way  
1928  
Early 20th Century  
with Mediterranean motif

Built to carry on the traditions and culture of Bradford's Italian citizens, the La Stella Lodge helps to host a popular Italian street festival near its original brick building, constructed in 1928.



## 20 ST. BERNARD'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

95 East Corydon Street  
1892  
Late Gothic Revival

The parish dates back to 1870 when a small group of Catholics held religious services here in an old wooden schoolhouse. The church's modernized gothic style structure, built from classic Hanley red bricks, was an impressive sight to all who witnessed its completion in 1892. The interior has undergone some remodeling over the years, but the exterior remains largely untouched. St. Bernard's soaring tower can be seen from almost anywhere in the valley.



## 21 OLD POST OFFICE

80 E. Corydon Street  
1913  
Colonial Revival,  
Neo-Classical Revival

One of Bradford's most impressive buildings, the Old Post Office was the first federal building in the city, and served in that capacity until 1982. Entering the building through a revolving door, patrons found themselves in a lobby that was handsome in plan and finish—the terrazzo floor bordered by variegated Easton green marble, quarried in Pennsylvania; the wainscoting fashioned of imported Italian marble; a marble stairway with railings of iron and brass leading from the money order lobby. General contractor William Hanley produced the rough-texture bricks at his factory, Bradford Pressed Brick, of Lewis Run. Exterior features are of Indiana limestone, while the basement walls are granite.

Restored for adaptive reuse, today the Old Post Office is home to shops and offices, including the Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau Welcome Center.

## 22 CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

11 Chestnut Street  
1910  
Colonial Revival

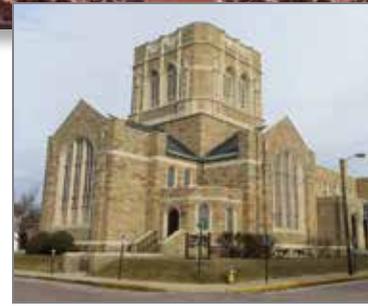


At the dawn of the 20th Century, fires remained a constant threat to the growing city. As time passed, many of the original wood-framed buildings—hotels, banks, churches, homes, mercantile stores, grocers, theaters and dance halls—thrown up in haste after the discovery of oil, had either burned or been razed to make way for more modern, brick buildings. Bradford witnessed a proud succession of volunteer fire companies, and by 1903 the city formed the Central Fire Department, consolidating the scattered departments into a professional, paid force. The fire department moved into its new building in 1910.



## 23 TOWER FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

23 Chambers Street  
1924-1927  
Late Gothic Revival



The first Methodist Church to occupy this location was a smaller, wood-framed structure, which met the congregation's needs until the end of World War I, when plans were made for a large church that would seat 1,000. The new church was built from 35,000 square feet of native limestone found on the property of the Lewis Run Manufacturing Company and quarried by two church members. Massive slabs, chosen for color, were carted to the site in the rough and then measured and cut to size. Stonemasons were kept busy for three years. E.E. Smathers, a New York financier, donated the immense center tower in memory of his mother, Cynthia Smathers.



## 24 FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

54 E. Corydon Street  
1917  
Gothic Revival

Bradford's Presbyterians worshipped wherever they could find space until they had a church of their own—from the Wagner Opera House to the Theatre Comique, a second-rate music hall dedicated to an uninhibited brand of burlesque. The first official Presbyterian Church building was dedicated in 1880. Members were committed to missionary work, and made fervent efforts to "convert" residents in the town's red light district, "Pig Island," at the end of Charlotte Avenue. In 1917, they built a new church to serve a growing congregation, funded, in part, by oilman Lewis Emery, who was a parishioner.

## 25 CARNEGIE LIBRARY

27 Congress Street  
1900  
Romanesque,  
Neo-Classical Revival



Established in 1901 with a gift of \$30,000 from Pittsburgh philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, the Carnegie Library drew its design from one of three sets of plans Carnegie approved for his libraries worldwide. The contract was awarded to Bradford's William Hanley, who had the library's collection under roof in 10 months. The building remained a public library for 90 years. Today the Carnegie building is occupied by Beefeaters Restaurant, whose decor preserves the landmark's literary past.

# NEARBY SIGHTS

# HISTORY TRAIL



## ZIPPO/CASE MUSEUM

Museum exhibits will spark your interest in two "Made in America" icons the Zippo lighter and the Case knife. The Zippo lighter was invented by George G. Blaisdell in 1932, and both Zippo lighters and Case knives are manufactured in Bradford.

Free Admission.

1932 Zippo Drive, Bradford.



## PENN BRAD OIL MUSEUM

Discover Oil! Hear the "Wild Catting Tales" at the site of their 72 foot tall, 1890 Era Standard Rig. Experience the excitement of the FIRST billion-dollar oil field. Learn about yellow-dogs, barkers and hurry-up sticks. Tour an oil lease house.

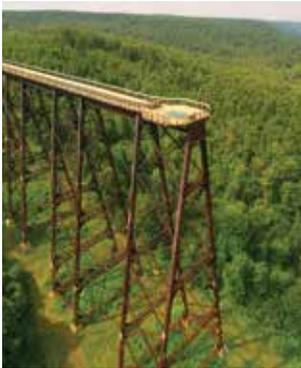
901 South Avenue, Bradford.

(3 miles south of Bradford on Rt. 219)



## BRADFORD LANDMARK SOCIETY

Herbig Bakery, 45 E. Corydon Street, contains extensive collections of historical and genealogical material. Crook Farm Homestead, 476 Seaward Avenue, features a 1847 farmhouse, a one room schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, and railroad station. An Annual Country Fair is held in August.



## KINZUA SKY WALK

"One of the top 10 most scenic skywalks in the world," is located at Kinzua Bridge State Park. An on-site Visitors Center offers fun and informative exhibits on the history of the Kinzua Viaduct, engineering and the environment. 296 Viaduct Road, Mt. Jewett. Free Admission.



KINZUA SKY WALK

## DAY ONE OIL FIELDS TO OPERA

In Bradford, an entertainment experience awaits visitors at the Marilyn Horne Museum. Discover the stories of Bradford's rich oil history at the Penn Brad Oil Museum, then zip over to tour the Zippo/Case Museum. A wide variety of trails lead you outdoors. Enjoy shopping, dining, and a night out at the Main Street Moviehouse. Lodging includes hotels, a B & B, nearby cabins and campsites. The Lodge at Glendorn is a grand lodge style, luxury resort destination.



## DAY TWO KINZUA TO KANE

"Walk the Tracks Across the Sky," the amazing Kinzua Sky Walk and tour the new Kinzua Bridge Visitors Center, Mt. Jewett. In Kane, visit Artworks at the Depot-a delightful artisan co-op. Foodies will enjoy The Sweet Shoppe, Flickerwood Wine Cellars, CJ Spirits-Craft Distillery, local restaurants, and Bell's Market, a real old-time grocery store. The historic Kane Manor and the nearby Olmsted Manor offer unique lodging.

## DAY THREE SMETHPORT TO ELDRED & PORT ALLEGANY LOOP

The Eldred WWII Museum is history you can see, touch and feel. Search for treasures at the Old Schoolhouse Village Shoppes. Loop over to Port Allegany to view Serenity Park - fashioned of glass, then travel scenic Route 6 to Smethport's Mansion District. Bring your fishing gear or kayak to enjoy a day on Hamlin Lake. For a glimpse into the past visit the Old Jail Museum - legend has it a resident ghost haunts the dungeon.



Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau  
800-473-9370 [visitANF.com](http://visitANF.com)

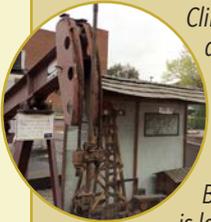


# BRADFORD FIRSTS, FAMOUS & FUN FACTS

The oil can was invented in Bradford.



Visible from the end of Main Street, the famous Zippo Neon Sign was designed and erected in 1950.



Cline Oil No. 1, drilled in the 1870s, is the oldest producing oil well in Bradford and is located beside

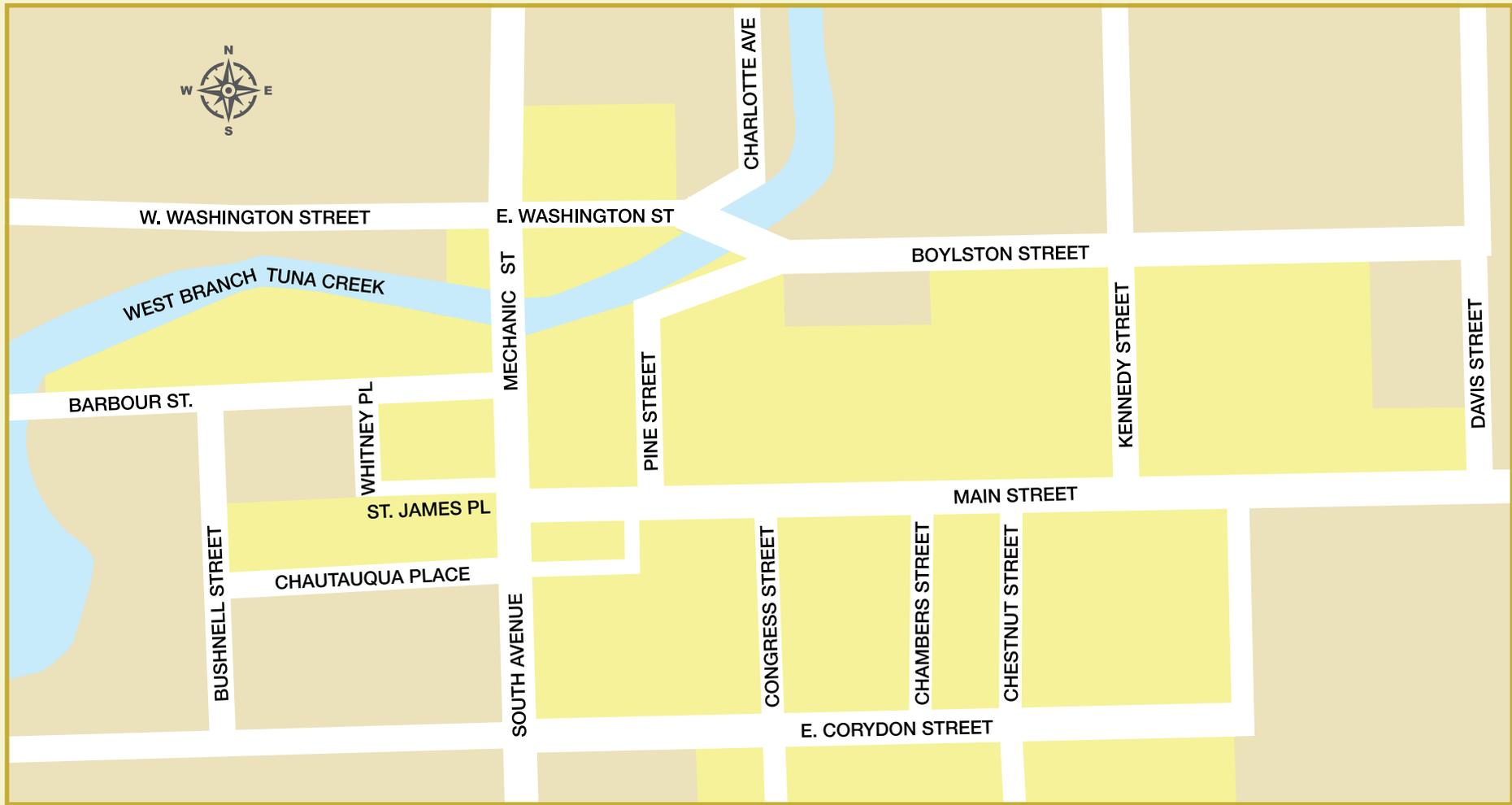
McDonald's drive-thru at 141 Main St.

The Main Street Moviehouse, still operating today as a movie theater, opened in 1935 with Miss America attending the Grand Opening.



## WALKING TOUR

# BRADFORD National Historic District



- ★ 1 Pine Street Bridge
- 2 Commercial National Bank  
15 Main Street
- 3 Phoenix Building  
1 Main Street
- 4 Emery Hotel  
2 South Avenue
- 5 Veterans' Square  
Corner of Main & South Avenues
- 6 Marilyn Horne Hall  
2 Marilyn Horne Way
- 7 Joseph Marks Building  
24 Main Street
- 8 Option House  
41 Main Street
- 9 Wagner Opera House  
62 Main Street
- 10 Masonic Temple Building  
79 Main Street
- 11 Auerhaim-Forest Oil Building  
78 Main Street
- 12 Baker Building  
82 Main Street
- 13 Bay State Hotel  
84 Main Street
- 14 Graham Florist & Gifts  
9 Kennedy Street
- 15 Old City Hall  
23 Kennedy Street
- 16 Schonblom Building  
101 Main Street
- 17 Bradburn Building  
113 Main Street
- 18 Hooker-Fulton Building  
119-125 Main Street
- 19 La Stella Italian Club  
Festival Way
- 20 St. Bernard's Roman Catholic Church  
95 E. Corydon Street
- 21 Old Post Office  
80 E. Corydon Street
- 22 City Fire Department  
11 Chestnut Street
- 23 Tower First United Methodist Church  
23 Chambers Street
- 24 First Presbyterian Church  
54 E. Corydon Street
- 25 Carnegie Library  
27 Congress Street

For Additional Information:  
Allegheny National Forest  
Visitors Bureau  
Welcome Center  
80 E. Corydon Street  
800-473-9370



TRAIL CENTRAL™  
visitANF.com