

AMBRIDGE TOWN HISTORY

Ambridge owes its existence to the American Bridge Company (from which its name is derived) and the Harmony Society, one of America's most successful 19th Century Christian communal sects.

To this day, a parcel of land in Ambridge called Old Economy Village preserves the history of this pious sect, comprised of immigrants from Germany's Rhine Valley. Established in 1824, Old Economy was the third and final home of the society—the first being Harmony in Butler County, the second in New Harmony, Indiana. The village's name, Economy, refers to the society's lifestyle of self-sufficiency. As such, the Harmonists contributed to the culture and economic progress of western Pennsylvania by amassing goods made primarily from wool, cotton and silk. In 1894, the land known as Old Economy became property of the state and has been restored as a public museum.

In 1903, American Bridge Company erected an immense iron and steel manufacturing plant along the Ohio River. The borough, which was formally incorporated in 1905, became known for bridge building, metal molding and iron pipe manufacturing. Ambridge grew rapidly during the war decades—with 60 percent of its population being European immigrants—then declined in the latter part of the 20th Century. Ethnic influences can still be seen in the area: Polish, Russians, Ukrainians, Croatians, Slovenes, Serbians, Italians, Germans and Greeks still have churches, social clubs and heritage festivals. The annual Nationality Days takes place every May along Merchant Street, complete with traditional foods such as pirohy, haluski, stuffed cabbage and borscht.

Ambridge has also been home to several other steel mills, including Armco and A.M. Byers. With the eventual shift of steel production overseas, American Bridge shut down in 1983 but its legacy holds strong in structures like the beautiful Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and Brooklyn Bridge in New York.

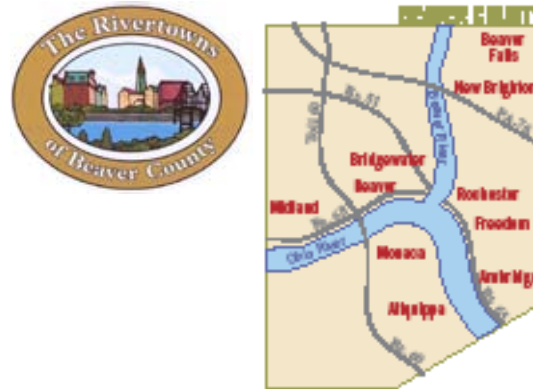
Ambridge underwent revitalization in the 1970s when blighted areas were cleared and replaced with new houses and buildings—including a community center, medical facilities and a shopping mall. Entrepreneurs and investors are renovating the Victorian storefronts along Merchant Street, and a once industrial warehouse area is being converted to condominiums and shops. In 2007, Ambridge was designated a Preserve America Community by the White House. With its proximity to Pittsburgh International Airport and affordable cost of living, "Bridgers" (as the locals are known) still have a lot to be proud of.

Courtesy of Beaver County Bicentennial Atlas

The Ohio and Beaver rivers have played an important part in the development of Beaver County, spawning many unique river towns, each with a personality and character all its own. Today, each of these river towns shares a common focus on family values, hometown pride, economic growth and historic preservation.

The purpose of the Beaver County Community Walking Maps project is: 1) to promote health and exercise among the residents of the various river towns; 2) to highlight points of interest within each community; and 3) to promote community pride among all residents of the county. Through these maps, we hope people will see Beaver County as a collection of welcoming neighborhoods, all connected by common goals of economic progress, community pride and historical preservation.

THE RIVERTOWNS OF BEAVER COUNTY



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COVER PHOTO

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BROCHURE DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Brkich Design • www.BrkichDesign.com

BEAVER COUNTY RIVER TOWN Walking Maps



AMBRIDGE

PENNSYLVANIA

AMBRIDGE WALKING MAP

POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 OLD ECONOMY VILLAGE VISITOR CENTER
270 16th Street
- 2 OLD ECONOMY VILLAGE MUSEUM
1401 Church Street
- 3 LAUGHLIN MEMORIAL LIBRARY
99 11th Street
- 4 AMBRIDGE FAMILY THEATER
647 Merchant Street
- 5 ECONOMY BOWLING
1307 Merchant Street
- 6 AMBRIDGE MUNICIPAL
600 11th Street
- 7 BEAVER COUNTY DISTRICT COURT
650 11th Street
- 8 TRINITY EPISCOPAL SCHOOL FOR MINISTRY
311 11th Street
- 9 AMBRIDGE AREA HIGH SCHOOL
909 Duss Avenue

10 AMBRIDGE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
562 Merchant Street

11 STREET JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
1320 Church Street

12 FORMER AMERICAN BRIDGE COMPANY HEADQUARTERS
341 Park Road

13 AMBRIDGE – ALIQUIPPA BRIDGE
#1 11th Street

