



# Little River Valley Loop

A 21 mile driving loop through eastern Allegheny County, suitable for all vehicles.

Farm Valleys

Scenic Vistas

Historic landmarks

**All roads on this loop are paved: Great for motorcyclists and bicyclists**

Allegheny County  
Chamber of Commerce  
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Alleghany is principally drained by the New River in the west and the Little River in the east. The Little River flows into Virginia and joins the New River. The New River eventually finds its way to the Ohio River. This loop circles a broad hilly valley that the Little River forms as it meanders through the county — an area generally more suitable for grazing cattle than growing Christmas trees that so dominate western Alleghany. The loop is approximately 21 miles and a leisurely ride should take an hour or less, plus any time for stops. All roads are paved. A short stretch is only one lane wide, but sparsely traveled. The road shoulder provides room to pull over should you meet oncoming traffic. There are no retail establishments along the way, so take a pit stop at the beginning and pack any snacks you may desire.

At the beginning, if set your trip odometer to zero, the recorded mileage will help guide you. The numbers at the far left and sometimes found within parenthesis in the text are the approximate loop mileage to help locate turns and landmarks and should approximately correspond to your odometer reading. Bold text indicates turns. Many landmarks are private property and except for commercial establishments, should be treated with respect and not trespassed.

**0.0 Begin at US 21-Chestnut Grove Church Road Intersection, 2.6 miles south of Sparta.** Turn onto Chestnut Grove Church Road going north.

**0.2 Right onto Narrow Road.** You will shortly cross US 21 (.06 — do not turn) as name changes to Old US 21. In the early days of the automobile, auto clubs were formed to provide instruction for people wanting to navigate the patchwork of state and local roads to drive cross county. The Lakes to Florida Highway ran from Detroit to Jacksonville and was a major route for snowbirds who wintered in Florida. What would later become US 21 constituted a large part of that route. This stretch of Narrow Road and Old US 21 give you an idea of the road conditions they navigated in Model Ts and As and other early motorcars.

**1.7 Right onto US 21.**

**1.8 Left onto Sheriff Road.**

**2.0 Left onto Fox Ridge Road.** The Lee Fender

house on the right was built around 1915. At 1 1/2 stories it is a slightly smaller version of the 2-story, rooms wide and 1 bay deep construction so common in the county the 19th and early 20th Century. The center gable and porch are nice embellishments.

**3.6 At the intersection with Laurel Glen Church Road, turn right and then immediately turn left onto Quincy Road.** (Remember this intersection. We will loop back to here.) On the left is Laurel Glen Regular Baptist Church. Established in 1929, it is the meeting place for members of the small, conservative Regular Baptist denomination that still thrives in Alleghany. Its entrance is at the center of the building's long side, more like New England Meeting Houses, but rare here.

Built around the 1900 by local builder Jim Andrews, the home on the right (4.5) is associated with the late Quincy Higgins for whom the road is no doubt named. It exemplifies the popular square plan with a central hall, but reflects Queen Anne influences, such as the gables, wrap-around porch, turned porch supports and brackets.

**5.4 Right onto Chestnut Hill Church Road.** Chestnut Grove Baptist Church is on the left. You will enjoy the views and newer homes as the road winds down to cross the Little River (7.1). The Pioneer-Eclipse entrance is on the right (7.4). The company manufactures high-speed floor-cleaning equipment and supplies. It came to Alleghany County in the late 1970s, with its founder Bill Wilson. Wilson moved to the area in order to take an active role in the local Jehovah Witness congregation and brought his business with him. Now owned by a Japanese firm, it employees around 100.

**7.8 Right onto NC 18.** The W.R. Gentry house (immediately on the left) is known for its owner/builder who operated a large saw mill and grist mill in the area that once thrived as Edwards Crossroad. Though in disrepair, the elaborate asymmetrical house built in 1909 still reflects its Queen Anne influences, including numerous gables, wrap-around porch, turned posts and other ornamentation.

The road briefly follows the ridge affording views on either side as it winds east. It descends and is followed briefly on the right by Moccasin Creek before

flowing into the Little River. The Little River comes up on the right before you cross it (9.9)

**11.1 Right onto Little Pine Road.** The view to the right well shows the expanse of the valley carved by Little River. The former Walker Store building (12.7) was once among the many small stores that dotted the countryside and offered a food, feed and hardware. It was a popular gathering place for community residents to play music, pitch horseshoes and gossip. It closed in 1994.

**13.5 Right onto Barrett Road.** The Glade Creek Community Center on the left occupies what originally was the Little Pine School. In the 1970s, the building was one of three manufacturing locations in the county of Troutman Industries, a maker of men's pants.

The Little Pine Store on the left (13.7) is another one of the many country stores that once served the area. It was built around 1932 by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Murphy who lived in the brick and stone bungalow across the street. The Murphy home heralded the increasing popularity of brick homes. However, its construction of a mix of brick and granite block quarried in nearby Mt. Airy is unique.

**14.5 Left onto Fox Ridge Road.** Immediately on your right is Bittersweet Farm which raises belted Galloway and black angus cattle on a little over 600 acres. You will cross Brush Creek (14.8) which flows north into Little River.

Glade Creek Union Baptist Church (16.2), established 1888, is located at the intersection with Ridgeglen Road. At the close of the 19th Century, the intersection was the center of the Hooker community, so named for the Confederate general who stationed troops there. The community once included a store, post office and school. The area also reportedly once was home to a legal still that produced liquor for retail sale. You pass Christian Home Baptist Church, left, and Windy Hill Farm, right, (10.2)

The road becomes Laurel Glen Church Road (18.4, no turn). This should look familiar. We crossed through here near the beginning of the loop. Continue straight.

**19.6 Left on Chestnut Grove Church Road.** Continue for 1.4 miles to the beginning of this loop.