



# WEST PENN TRAIL

at

## 1936 FLOOD MARKER



The "1936" line marked on the underside of this bridge arch indicates the height attained by the water in the Conemaugh River on March 18, 1936. The river valley here was filled with water for many hours, as the water level rose slowly to maximum height and then fell, equally slowly.

If the Conemaugh Dam had been in place, in 1936, it could have held back enough flood water to reduce the depth of water in Pittsburgh on Liberty Avenue, by 4.6 feet.

Before flood-control dams were built on the Mon, Yough, Allegheny, and Conemaugh rivers (and tributaries), Pittsburgh was flooded 112 times, from Fort Pitt days to 1946.

Flooding at Pittsburgh begins when water level rises to 25 feet above river bottom.

The four greatest floods were these:

Year Water level (feet)

1936 46.0

1763 41.1 (Fort Pitt flooded)

1762 39.2 (Fort Pitt flooded)

1832 38.2 (canal works destroyed)

It was the St. Patrick's Day Flood of 1936 that compelled construction of flood-control dams in the upper Ohio River basin. The first such dam was finished in 1938, on the Monongahela River at Grafton, WV. Conemaugh Dam went into operation in 1952.