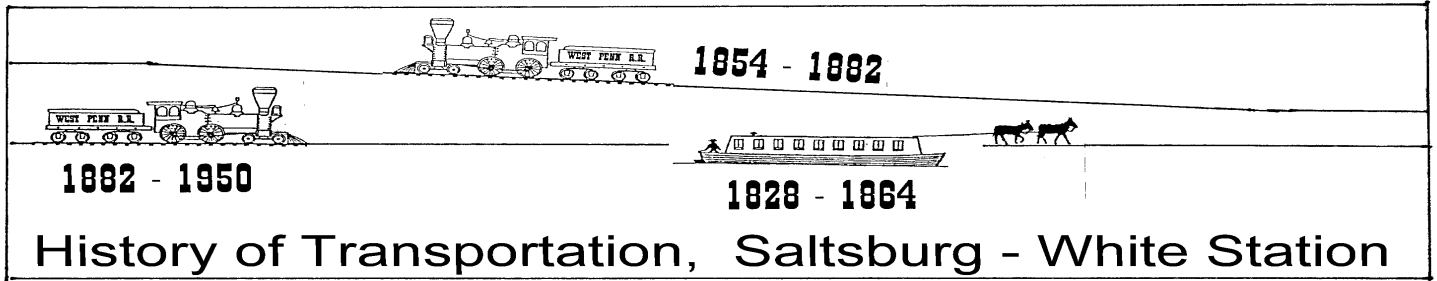


WEST PENN TRAIL
at
1864 RAILROAD RAMP



You are standing on the line of the canal (now filled-in) that was in use until 1864, when the first train ran on the rail line adjacent to the canal.

When the route for the West Penn Railroad was being laid out, in 1854, the surveyors could locate the tracks next to the canal, but had to avoid doing anything that would interrupt traffic on the canal. Along this stretch of the river bank, there was not space wide enough to fit in a railroad bed next to the canal. Therefore, it was necessary for the railroad to climb away from the river on an inclined ramp cut into the face of the bluff that borders the river here. That ramp is supported by the stone wall visible from this wayside sign.

The 1854 railroad grade begins to move away from the canal at the bend of the river above Saltsburg. The track bed passes through town high above the canal and then, at the north end of town, the railroad crosses over the canal on an elevated bridge. The piers of that bridge are still standing. The original railroad station, on that elevated line, today houses the Saltsburg borough offices.

After crossing the river at Saltsburg, the railroad remains on the south side of the river as far as the Allegheny River, where a bridge carries trains to the west side of the Allegheny River and from there to Pittsburgh (Allegheny City).

Trains ran on that elevated line until 1882, when the tracks were relocated onto the abandoned right-of-way of the canal, where the hiker-biker trail is now. Trains ran on this old canal line until 1950, when construction of the Conemaugh Dam necessitated relocation of the tracks onto the elevated line where trains run today.

