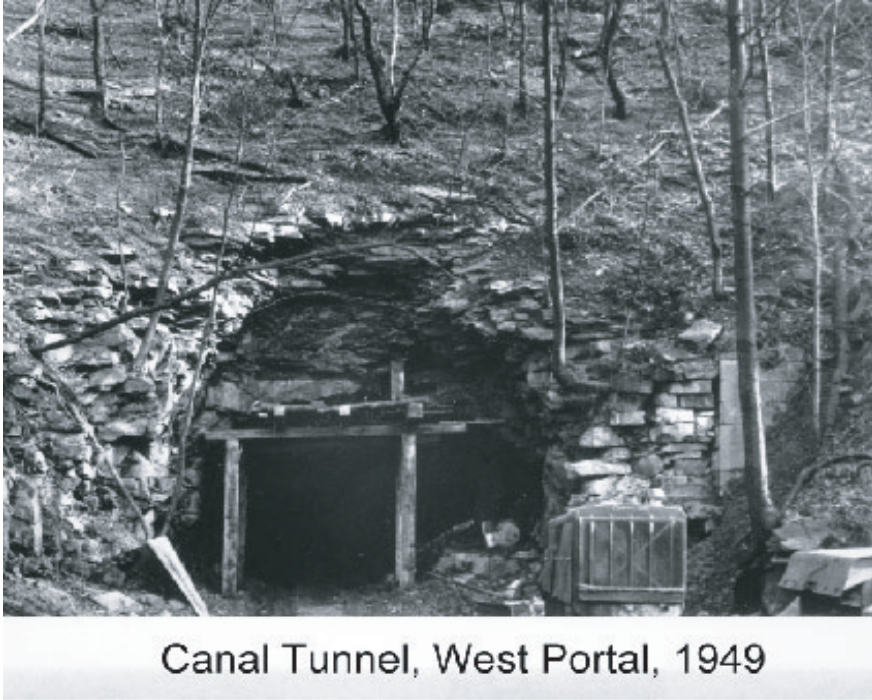


WEST PENN TRAIL at CANAL TUNNEL, WEST PORTAL



Canal Tunnel, West Portal, 1949



You are standing 30 feet above the portal of the third tunnel ever dug in America. This tunnel entrance was buried, in 1950, by construction of this road, needed while the Conemaugh Dam was being built.

This tunnel, built in 1828 by State canal engineer Alonzo Livermore, was 817 feet long and wide enough for a water-filled prism 15 feet wide at bottom and 5½ feet deep, bordered by a towpath 6½ feet wide.

The tunnel floor is at elevation 870 feet (above sea level), 35 feet below the usual water level (905 feet) in the reservoir on the other side of this hill (Bow Ridge); therefore, this tunnel, like the neighboring railroad tunnels, is

plugged with a concrete stopper 20 feet thick, to prevent the escape of water from the lake by bypassing the dam built to hold back that water.

These photos (by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) show that the tunnel had been stripped of cut stonework years before the men began the work of plugging the tunnel. A few pieces of dressed stone, from the missing facade, can barely be seen (behind the tree) on the right-hand side of the picture. In the other photo, the man on the right side is standing on what remains of the towing path. A sloping, cut-stone wall (not seen in the photo) had protected the towpath from abrasion by boats and waves.