

WEST PENN TRAIL

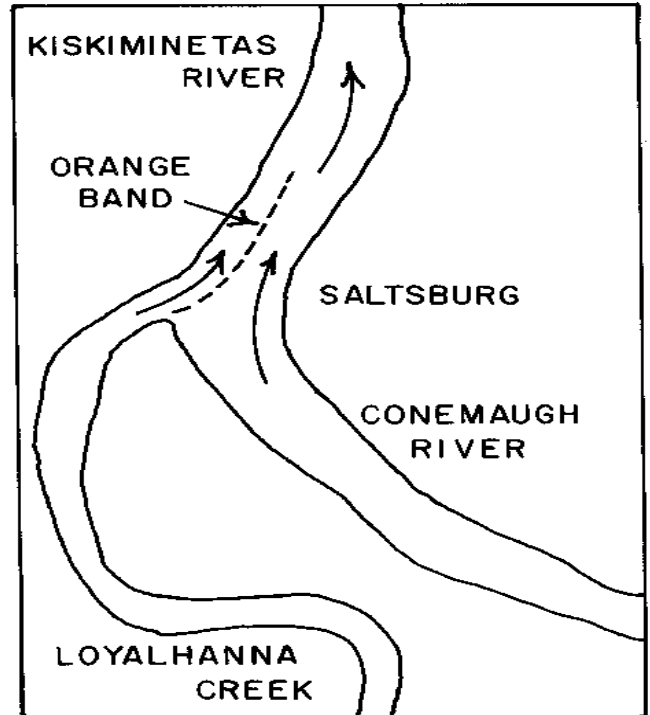
at

LOYALHANNA CREEK CONFLUENCE

To the Indians, Lawel-hanna meant "Middle Stream" – midway between the waters of the Juniata River and the Ohio River, on the path (Rte. 30) from Raystown (Bedford) to Shannopin's Town (Pittsburgh), via Ligonier. Loyalhanna Creek begins on a hillside near Donegal and ends here, where the stream flows into the Conemaugh.

Below this confluence, the Conemaugh was known to the Indians as Kiskiminetas, said to mean "plenty of walnuts," hardly a reason to rename a river. Nor is there any other reason to rename the river here, because Loyalhanna Creek adds only ten percent to the flow of the Conemaugh. The influx of a minor tributary is no reason to rename a major stream. Further more, the shape of the terrain bordering the river proves that the Kiski Valley is merely a continuation of the channel identified as the Conemaugh Valley.

What is different here is the color of the two streams. The water in the Conemaugh is green; the water from Loyalhanna Creek is usually orange in color. That is because the Conemaugh is acidic, so that the iron salts it contains can remain dissolved, while the water in Loyalhanna Creek is more alkaline, which causes iron to fall out of solution in the form of yellow and red (orange) oxides.



The orange stream issuing from the mouth of Loyalhanna Creek does not mix immediately with the green water in the Conemaugh River; instead, an orange band hugs the left bank, as a separate stream, for some distance, until boulders on the river bed cause enough turbulence to effect mixing of the two waters.

A similar orange band can be seen where the Kiskiminetas River flows into the Allegheny River.