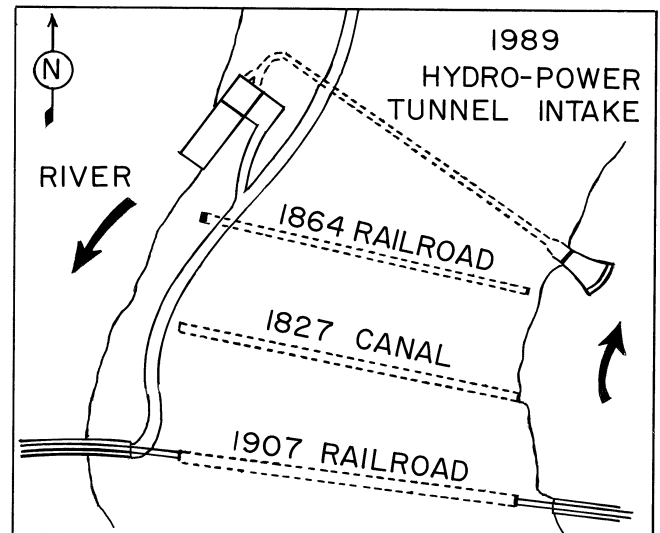


**WEST PENN TRAIL**  
at  
**TUNNELTON ["TUNNEL TOWN"]**

This village was begun, in 1827, as a temporary housing site (shanty town) for the workmen engaged in building this part of a canal that eventually extended from the Allegheny River to Blairsville, and finally to Johnstown. The canal construction camp here began to take on the character of a more permanent residence when construction was halted by the discovery that, one mile upriver from here, there was no flat ground on the river bank that was wide enough for a canal. The State engineer, Alonzo Livermore, did not know how the canal could be continued, but after wrestling with the problem for some time, he joyfully reported to the canal commissioners that he had found a way to work around the obstacle:

For some time I was at a loss to conceive what should be done... Happily, however, I discovered a passage, where, by crossing the river to the south side and making a tunnel of 750 feet in length, through a hill of about 300 feet elevation, I could cut off in distance two and a quarter miles of the most unfavourable navigation...

That was only the third tunnel ever dug in America, so people visited this site to see the unique structure being created near here. In those days, few people knew what a tunnel was, so the canal commissioners had to explain that "A tunnel is like a well, but dug on the horizontal."



That tunnel worker's village merited recognition in Gordon's Gazetteer of Pennsylvania, published in 1832, which identified this village site by the name TUNNELVIEW, Indiana County, 191 miles from WC (Washington City) and 171 from Harrisburg.

Today, that original name would be even more appropriate, for now there are four tunnels through the tunnel hill (Bow Ridge), one of the few places in the world where there are so many diverse tunnels so close together. The canal was located midway between the river and this railroad line, which was built parallel to the canal, in 1854, then replaced the canal as a carrier, in 1864.