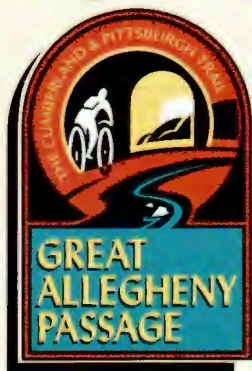


The GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE is the longest multi-purpose rail-trail in the East, with 100 continuous miles of trail open from near McKeesport to near Meyersdale, plus several smaller segments open in the Pittsburgh area. When finished, the Passage will offer a total of 150 miles of non-motorized, nearly level trail system between Cumberland, MD and the Forks of the Ohio River at Pittsburgh, PA, with a 52-mile spur to the Pittsburgh International Airport.



At Cumberland, it joins the C&O Canal Towpath to expand the off-road trail linkage to Washington, D.C. Designated a National Recreation Trail, the Great Allegheny Passage enables hikers, bicyclists, cross-country skiers and people with disabilities to discover the region's singular beauty in river gorges, mountain vistas and sweeping cityscapes.

The Great Allegheny Passage is the registered mark of the Allegheny Trail Alliance, a coalition of seven trail organizations in Southwestern Pennsylvania and Western Maryland.

www.atatrail.org
888-ATA-BIKE

COVER: On May 21, 1975, the Chessie System ran this special train over the soon-to-be-abandoned Western Maryland corridor from Connellsville to Hancock, MD to show the line to government and conservation officials and the press. This was the last passenger train to cross Salisbury Viaduct. The Viaduct was decked for trail use in 1999. The color photo was taken in May, 2002.

Photos by Bill Metzger

A Passage Through Time and the Mountains



The Story
of the
GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE





Photo by Bill Metzger

Through the mountains - not over them. The Great Allegheny Passage, at right, crosses the Casselman River twice at Pinkerton Neck over bridges built by the Western Maryland Railway.

A PASSAGE THROUGH TIME *and the* MOUNTAINS

THE GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE is no mere footpath through the forest. This 10-foot wide recreational trail tells the story of events and discoveries that helped form this nation. It crosses bygone routes of trade and conquest, exploration and conflict on its way from Cumberland, Maryland, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The Passage has witnessed the evolution of transportation, from footpaths and canals to railroads and superhighways, and the region's transformation from pristine forests to bare hills and blazing industrial sites to once again clean streams and new forests.

The Great Allegheny Passage crosses the Mason-Dixon Line and the Eastern Continental Divide and cuts through spectacular water gaps and gorges. It passes the sites of long-cold iron furnaces and coke ovens and an active steel mill, of worked-out coal mines and working dairy farms. This abandoned railroad corridor invites travel on gentle grades, sweeping curves and viaducts, bridges and tunnels that take you through the mountains, not over them.

You can experience this history on a trail that is quiet, clean and safe, where you can pause and absorb the events that shaped the region and the nation. And, best of all, you're doing it under your own power and at your own pace.



Salisbury Viaduct and Garrett wind farm



Photo by Andy Stewart

The FIRST PEOPLE

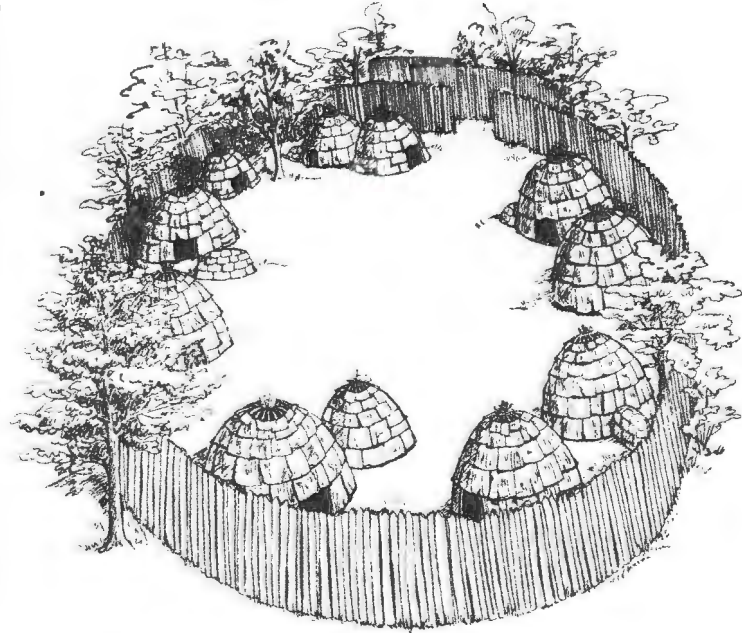
ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAVE LEARNED that people lived in this region over 12,000 years before the first Europeans arrived. From 900 A.D. to about 1650, the area was inhabited by the Monongahela people who lived in stockaded villages. They farmed, growing corn, beans and squash along the floodplains and terraces of major rivers.

No Monongahelas remained when the first Europeans came into the area. Native Americans who moved here after the Monongahelas included the Delawares (Lenape), who were refugees from the east, the Shawnee and the Iroquois who hunted for food and fur here. These were the people encountered by the first Europeans in the late 1600s.

For approximately one hundred years after they arrived in America in the early 1600s, British colonists were content to live on the eastern side of the Alleghenies, but as the population grew, British traders, trappers and settlers started pushing westward over the mountains.

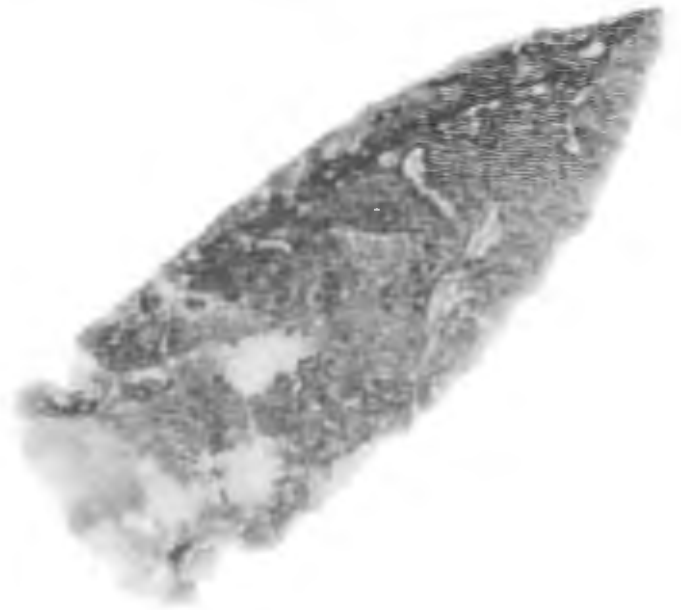
During that time period, the French were exploring and setting up trading posts, then forts in the interior of the continent, establishing beachheads in Quebec and Louisiana at the mouths of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi Rivers. The French population numbered in the tens of thousands spread out over a thin line 3,000 miles long. The English population grew past a million by 1750, concentrated in an area less than 200 miles wide and 600 miles long along the eastern seaboard.

(Right) A 3,000-year-old point called a Meadow Wood point for the area in New York where arrowheads like this were first identified. It was used for hunting and was made of locally-found chert, a flintlike material, and was found near the trail in the Sewickley Creek area.



The Monongahela people typically settled in stockaded villages. Remains of these settlements were found by the first Europeans to enter the area, but the people who inhabited them had mysteriously disappeared.

Illustration courtesy of Carnegie Museum.



ACROSS THE ATLANTIC, France and England had been warring for military and trade dominance during the first fifty years of the 18th century. Inevitably, this conflict was also played out in North America. The ensuing hostilities in this War for Empire became known as the French and Indian War in America and the Seven Years War in Europe.

The series of forts the French built to secure their claim on the interior of the continent were a threat to the British. Consequently, in early 1754, the British engaged Colonel George Washington to reclaim the juncture of the Ohio, Monongahela, and the Allegheny Rivers, where the French had built Fort Duquesne. He left from Wills Creek (Cumberland) but did not reach Fort Duquesne.

On May 28, 1754, Washington ambushed a group of French soldiers led by Ensign Joseph Coulon de Villiers, Sieur de Jumonville. Jumonville was killed in the glen that bears his name. Washington, anticipating French retaliation, built a circular palisaded fort at Great Meadows which he called Fort Necessity. The French attacked and defeated Washington at Fort Necessity on July 3, 1754. Washington and his men were allowed to return to Virginia.

In 1755 General Edward Braddock moved to attack the French at Fort Duquesne. He built a road through the wilderness that became the foundation for the first **federally** funded road project (1806)

called the National Road.

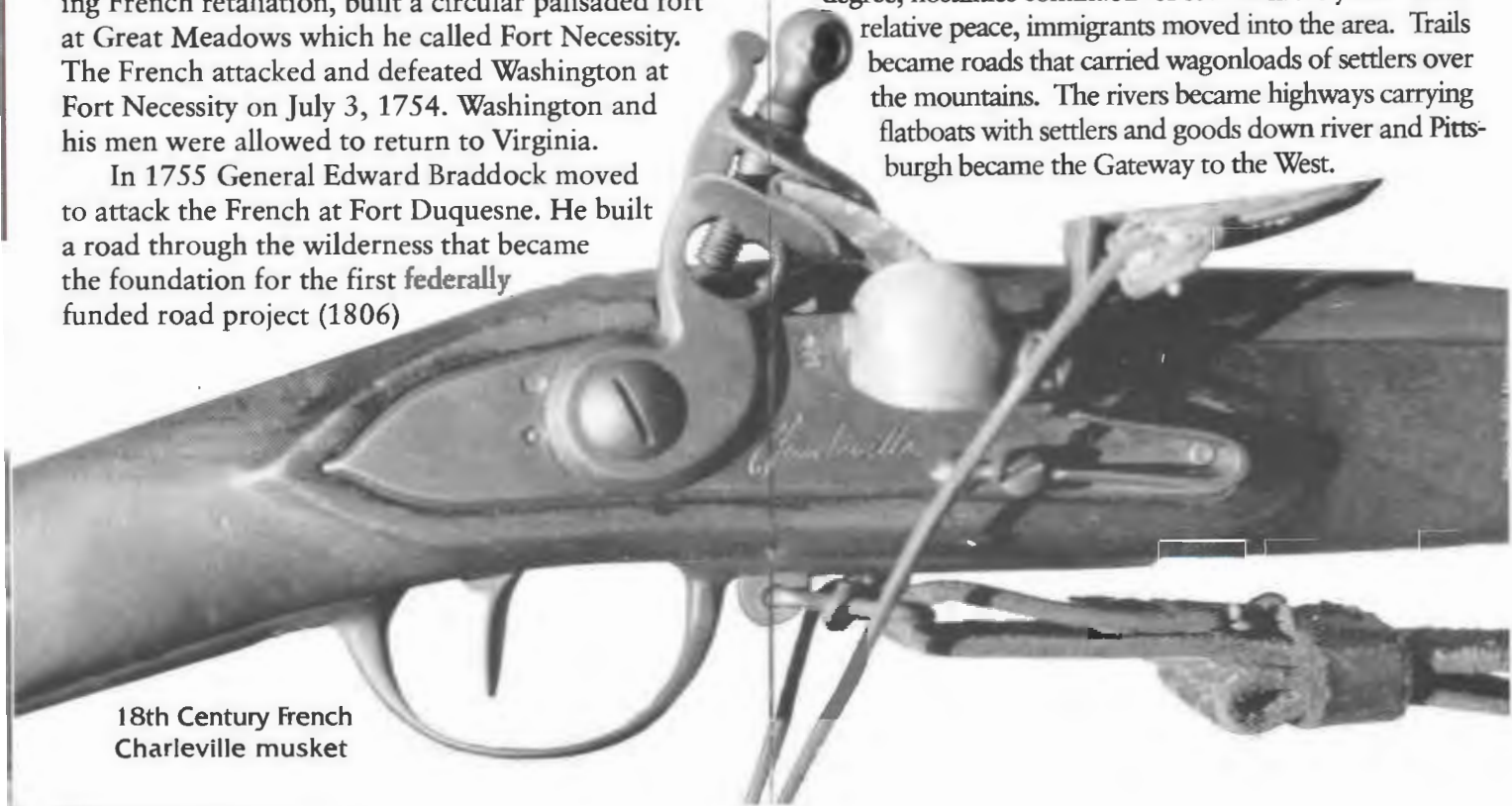
Braddock crossed the Youghiogheny at Stewart's Crossing (Connellsville) on his way to battle. The battle was a humiliating defeat for the British and Braddock was mortally wounded.

Goaded by the French, Native American attacks raged through the western English colonies. General John Forbes built a series of forts and a military road that later became known as the Forbes Road (Lincoln Highway, Route 30), and routed the French in 1758. The Seven Years War ended with the Treaty of Paris in February 1763 and effectively ended France's hope of becoming a global power.

Battles continued between the colonists, who rapidly moved into the area, and the Native Americans whom they were forcing out, culminating in Pontiac's Rebellion in 1763, a desperate effort to drive the settlers back over the mountains.

The tribes under Chief Pontiac were defeated at the Battle of Bushy Run on August 5 & 6, 1763 but, to a degree, hostilities continued for several more years. With relative peace, immigrants moved into the area. Trails became roads that carried wagonloads of settlers over the mountains. The rivers became highways carrying flatboats with settlers and goods down river and Pittsburgh became the Gateway to the West.

18th Century French
Charleville musket



The CORRIDOR

LONG BEFORE THE INVENTION of the railroad, there was a vision of a transportation system along the Potomac River and through the mountains to the Ohio River and the West. When young George Washington's family invested in the Ohio Company of Virginia, his destiny was caught up in the project with lifelong impact on him and on the emerging nation.

Washington improved the Ohio Company's road through the Alleghenies as his military adventures against the French expanded. He later promoted a canal between the new Federal capital and the interior. This "Patowmack Canal," completed in 1802, operated for 26 years, when it became part of a much more ambitious project: a canal from Georgetown in the District of Columbia to Pittsburgh.

The new C&O Canal was proposed to link the Chesapeake Bay with the Ohio River Valley, with mule-drawn boats passing through a series of lift locks. In 1850, the Canal was completed to Cumberland falling far short of its intended destination of Pittsburgh.

On the same day that the C&O Canal broke ground, July 4, 1828, the cornerstone was being laid for the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad in Baltimore. An epic struggle began between the two technologies. Both were a vast improvement over the roads of the day, but the railroad offered transportation that was fast, cheap and reliable year round, not affected by drought, freezing or floods that plagued the canal. The canal ceased operations in 1924.



PLACES of INTEREST

CUMBERLAND

Milepost 0 of the Great Allegheny Passage is here. The steam-powered Western Maryland Scenic Railway leaves from the old Western Maryland station and visitor center and recreates the thrilling climb where the railroads challenged the Allegheny Mountains. Called the Queen City of the Alleghenies, this is the western terminus of the C&O Canal and the site of Fort Cumberland, in colonial times the last point of civilization before the trek over the mountains.

MASON DIXON LINE

Between 1763 and 1767, English astronomers Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon surveyed the boundary that settled a long-running dispute between the Penns of Pennsylvania and the Calverts of Maryland. Its extreme accuracy over its 300 mile length was considered one of the greatest scientific achievements of its day.

BIG SAVAGE TUNNEL

This 3,300-foot-long tunnel was dug through Big Savage Mountain by the Western Maryland Railway in 1912. Reconstruction work for trail use began in February, 2002.

DEAL

Here the Great Allegheny Passage reaches its highest point, 2,375 feet above sea level and crosses the Eastern Continental Divide, the boundary between the waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico.

MEYERSDALE

Meyersdale is the scene of the Official Pennsylvania Maple Festival held each March. The renovated Western Maryland station now houses a visitor center. About a mile and a half north of the station is the Salisbury Viaduct. This 1,908 foot-long and 101 foot-high steel trestle was decked for trail use in 1999.

WYMP'S GAP FOSSIL QUARRY

The rock here is filled with marine fossils that are between 323 and 360 million years old. Feel free to dig around and take some with you. The small quarry, marked with a post that says "GR-5," is between Rockwood and Garrett.

PINKERTON

Both the Western Maryland and the B&O built tunnels through the mountain here. In the 1870s, when the B&O's tunnel collapsed, a temporary track (a shoofly) was laid around Pinkerton Horn until a new tunnel could be dug. Today, the Western Maryland tunnel is unsafe; the trail uses the shoofly.

PLACES of INTEREST

CONFLUENCE

Traditionally named "the Turkeyfoot," three streams: the Youghiogheny and Casselman Rivers and Laurel Hill Creek join here, forming what looks like the track of a turkey. This small valley was the site of ancient Native American villages. George Washington camped here in 1754. The Yough Dam, a major flood control and recreation project built and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is nearby.

OHIOPYLE STATE PARK

Since the arrival of the railroad in 1871, Ohioyle has been popular tourist destination. Visitors are attracted to the falls, the 19,000 Acre state park, and recreational opportunities that include rafting, hiking and bicycling. The park straddles the Youghiogheny River Gorge and includes Ferncliff Peninsula, a National Natural Landmark.

LAUREL HIGHLANDS HIKING TRAIL

This 70-mile trail, a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, meanders along Laurel Ridge between Ohioyle State Park and the western edge of the Conemaugh River Gorge near Johnstown. Maintained by the Pennsylvania Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, the Trail traverses over rugged sandstone formations, under deep hemlock cover, and along ledges high above the Youghiogheny River.

CONNELLSVILLE

Its location at the edge of the mountains made this an important transportation hub. Native American paths crossed the river here, as did Braddock's Road. It was the financial center of the Connellsville Coke District during the coal and coke boom around the beginning of the 20th century.

ADELAIDE

The Adelaide Coke Works was named for coke baron Henry Clay Frick's wife Adelaide Childs Frick. It was a beehive coke operation that at its peak employed 230 men at 375 coke ovens and the accompanying mine. Coke is the fuel that is essential in making iron and steel. Adelaide, like Whitsett, Van Meter, and Smithdale along the Passage, is an example of the "coal patch" towns that were built by the coal and coke companies to house their workers. Between Dawson and Adelaide, the Pittsburgh Coal Seam outcrops and you can take a close look at old coke ovens and the rock formation that fueled the Industrial Age in western Pennsylvania.



The CORRIDOR

DAWSON

Dawson was at the heart of the great coal and coke empire of Philip Cochran. Philip's widow Sarah Boyd Cochran built a mansion nearby, Linden Hall. Now owned by the United Steelworkers, Linden Hall is open to the public. Dawson's magnificent Philip G. Cochran Memorial United Methodist Church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

VAN METER

Near Van Meter the Pittsburgh Coal Company operated the Darr Mine and the adjacent Banning No. 1 Mine. On December 19, 1907, the Darr Mine was the site of a gas and dust explosion that killed 239 miners.

WEST NEWTON

There has been a river crossing here since the days of the Native Americans. Westward immigrants on the Glades Road built flatboats here to go downriver. The river was opened to two-way steamboat navigation down to McKeesport in 1850; ten years later the railroad came to town. Because of good transportation and coal from local mines, West Newton became a manufacturing center.

RED WATERFALL

One of the effects of coal mining is acid mine drainage which occurs when water and oxygen come in contact with unmined coal and dissolves iron and sulfur from the coal. In a series of chemical reactions, the iron becomes iron oxide (rust) and the sulfur becomes sulfuric acid which kills aquatic life.

DRAVO CEMETERY

Revolutionary War veterans are buried in this isolated cemetery which has been restored by the local trail group and historical society. The meadow near the cemetery has been replanted in native grasses.

McKEESPORT

Strategically located where the Youghiogheny and Monongahela Rivers join, McKeesport was a thriving steel center until the early 1980s. Today, the major industries are telecommunications, pipe making and steel fabricating. Here the trail branches to the Pittsburgh International Airport.

PITTSBURGH

The journey ends at Point State Park, site of Fort du Quesne and Fort Pitt in downtown Pittsburgh. The former "smoky city" has evolved from an industrial-era eyesore to a gleaming jewel of urban development.

C&O CANAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

After the C&O Canal ceased operation, the Federal government bought the Canal and its corridor in 1938. After World War II, Congress proposed a scenic highway. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, an avid outdoorsman, rallied support to preserve it as a nature sanctuary and historic area. In 1971, the C&O Canal National Historical Park was created. Today, the park attracts millions annually along its 184.5-mile journey from Georgetown in the District of Columbia to Cumberland.

THE B&O WAS THE FIRST LONG DISTANCE railroad to be chartered in the United States.

It was an audacious undertaking at a time when there were only three other railroads in the country and none more than a dozen miles long. The founders of the line proposed to build their railroad 300 miles to the Ohio River, often through wilderness.

The B&O reached Cumberland in 1842, Wheeling on the Ohio River in 1852, and finished the branch from Cumberland to Pittsburgh in 1871. This is the railroad you can see and hear along much of the Great Allegheny Passage and the Towpath.



Photo by Bill Metzger

A CSX freight train drifts downgrade toward Pittsburgh on the old B&O main line. The massive thousand-foot-long Western Maryland Keystone Viaduct overhead carries the Great Allegheny Passage across the railroad and Flaugherly Creek.

MUCH OF THE GREAT ALLEGHENY Passage is built on the abandoned rights-of-way of the Western Maryland Railway (WM) and the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad (P&LE).

In 1883, the P&LE built its Youghiogheny Branch from Pittsburgh to Connellsville in 1883, parallel to the B&O to tap the enormous coal and coke resources on the west bank of the Youghiogheny River. In 1912 the Western Maryland was built from Cumberland to join the P&LE at Connellsville.

The Western Maryland was a small railroad that ran from Baltimore to near Williamsport, MD, until it was purchased in 1906 by George Gould, son of financier Jay Gould. The younger Gould envisioned the WM as part of his grand scheme of a transcontinental railroad from San Francisco to Baltimore. While this vision was never achieved, Gould and his

successors did extend the line to Cumberland and then Connellsville.

The B&O paralleled the WM and P&LE all the way from Cumberland to Pittsburgh, generally on opposite sides of the river. After World War I, the B&O gained control of the Western Maryland, but due to federal regulations, still had to operate the WM as a separate - and competitive - line.

By the late 1960s costs were rising and income was declining. Merger proceedings with the B&O became inevitable.

In 1975, the WM had become part of the Chessie System, successor to the B&O, and was formally abandoned as a through route, although short sections were retained to serve local coal mines well into the 1980s. Today, the Chessie System is the CSX Corporation.

After the P&LE Youghiogheny Branch lost its connection with the WM at Connellsville in 1975 and the last big coal mine on the line closed in 1982, there was little traffic, and in 1991 it too was abandoned. Soon both abandoned railroads would see new life as the longest multi-purpose rail-trail project in the eastern United States.



Western Maryland "Challenger" locomotives like this routinely hauled thousands of tons of freight through the mountains.

IN THE EARLY 1800s, flatboats gave way to steamboats that could make the journey both up and down the rivers. Pittsburgh supplied the coal to fuel the new steamboats and the industry to build them. In 1852, the railroad arrived, bringing reliable year-round transportation independent of the vagaries of the river.

The railroads demanded huge amounts of iron and steel for their tracks, locomotives and bridges, and coal for fuel. Mines, coke ovens and steel mills sprang up to feed the iron horse and supply other industries. Railroads were the mills' lifelines, bringing raw materials in and taking finished goods out.

The mills, factories, railroads and steamboats, all burning coal, turned the sky around Pittsburgh sooty black by day and gave it an orange glow by night. Pittsburgh was called "Hell with the lid off." Immigrants from all over Europe and the rural American South came to work in the coal mines, coke ovens, factories and steel mills of southwestern Pennsylvania, bringing wonderfully rich cultures with them.

After World War II, the steel industry went into a long, slow decline which accelerated sharply in the late 1970s and early 80s. Mill after mill shut down, costing hundreds of thousands of jobs. In the same period, demand for coal not only decreased, but much of the Pittsburgh Coal Seam was worked out.

FORGE *of the* UNIVERSE

Mines closed by the score. Loss of the mines and mills hurt the railroads' freight traffic and passengers abandoned trains to ride the new interstate highways and jet airliners.



The smoky industrial Pittsburgh shown here in 1875 is gone; in its place is a thriving center for medicine, technology and finance with clean air, cleaner water and a growing network of trails on former railroad grades.

Banning No. 1 Mine, near Van Meter, in 1933.
The silos and retaining wall below still stand along the trail.



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Coal miners' "company houses" at Smithdale, PA in 1953. The Great Allegheny Passage now follows the railroad tracks.

