PACK-HORSE AND CANAL BOAT:
Important Sites Preserved by County Societies

THE KITTANNING PATH

By Robert F. Pruner

The Cambria County Historical Society, recently reactivated under the presidency of Henry M. Gooderham of Patton, has received the benefit of researches by P. J. Little, an Ebensburg lawyer, on the Kittanning Path, the famous Indian and packer's

The Kittanning Path tract owned by the Cambria County Historical Society is indicated by the arrow.
trail which Colonel Armstrong used in his attack on the Delaware town of Kittanning in 1756.

Mr. Little not only succeeded in establishing the route of the path across the county, but also in establishing the interesting fact that a small section of the path was visible at a point in East Carroll Township, Cambria County, three miles west of the Borough of Chest Springs. Local residents knew of that part of the path in East Carroll Township, and reported that the ground at that point had never been disturbed by plow or wheel.

In the summer of 1951, Mr. Gooderham and the officers of the Society believed it to be in the interest of the Society to acquire title to the land in East Carroll Township where the path was visible. Mr. Gooderham, having been a long time resident in the area, communicated with the owners of the land and, after many calls and with patient attention to details, succeeded in obtaining consents. In December, 1951, the Society received deeds at no cost to the Society, by which Mrs. Olive Eckenrode conveyed .57 of an acre and Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Yeckley conveyed an adjoining plot of approximately 150 feet by 30 feet. The land acquired lies on the northerly side of Legislative Route 11041, which extends
from a point near Chest Springs to a point on the highway between Carrolltown and Patton.

The deeds for the site of the path were received by the Society at a meeting held in Johnstown on December 14, 1951. At the December meeting the Society also authorized one of its members to file such application and to take such other action as might be necessary to arrange for an agency of the Commonwealth to mark the site of the path.

THE OLDEST CANAL TUNNEL IN THE UNITED STATES

By John J. Foster

One of Pennsylvania's historical landmarks recently passed into the hands of the Lebanon County Historical Society when the old Union Canal Tunnel, located two miles northwest of the

The Old Tunnel as It Is Today.
City of Lebanon, and approximately eight acres of adjoining land was purchased by the Society. Money to defray this purchase was raised by public subscription.

When the original canal was laid out, it was planned to pass north of the city because of the natural terrain. It was later decided, however, that it would be to a greater advantage to have this artery of traffic pass through the city—the center of trade and population. To accomplish this it was necessary to cut a tunnel through a rocky ridge northwest of the city.

Digging the tunnel was done during the years from 1825 to 1827, boring 729 feet through solid rock. It is 18 feet wide and 16 feet high. This hole in the hill was one of the engineering wonders of the times. During the years 1853 to 1857 the tunnel was shortened to 600 feet and widened to permit the passage of larger boats. This tunnel served all boats using the Union Canal from Middletown on the Susquehanna to Reading on the Schuylkill.

The tunnel was first opened to canal traffic in 1828, and the last boat passed through its portals in 1885. With the advent of the railroads, the canal company was unable to stand the competition of this new kind of travel, and operations ceased. Since that time the tunnel has been a public landmark.

Its site is marked by a bronze plaque, telling visitors and travelers of the history of the tunnel and its importance to the commerce and industry of Lebanon County and the State of Pennsylvania—in fact, its importance to the young nation. Paths led from the main highway through privately owned lands down to the mouth of the tunnel. One of the problems in connection with this was that any time visitors and sightseers followed these paths to view the tunnel, they were trespassing over privately owned lands. Besides, the paths were in poor shape, often grown over with brush and becoming veritable mudholes following rains.

In order to correct this condition, protect the site from falling prey to the march of modern civilization, and afford tourists an unhampered opportunity to see the famed historical spot, the Lebanon County Historical Society purchased the area of land surrounding the tunnel. Much of this land has already been used for residential dwellings. Since acquiring the site, the Society has provided parking facilities, and permanent paths have been constructed to afford visitors easy access to the mouth of the
tunnel. The remaining area is in the process of being landscaped, and plans are being developed to beautify the entire plot.

The whole project was a sizable one for an operation of this kind, and much thought was given to it before it was undertaken. The one idea in the minds of those responsible for the venture was that it was "now or never" and that the opportunity for acquiring such a site might never occur again. Since the decision was made to undertake the project it has met with success from all quarters. Cooperation of city and county officials, together with civic and fraternal organizations has been most gratifying, and the Lebanon County Historical Society is indeed proud of its efforts in preserving such a historical monument for the county, the state, and the nation.