

Three miles upstream from the tunnel, the village of Markleton was named after and by the sons of General Joseph Markle of West Newton. Markle became a General during the Indian Wars out west. The Great Allegheny Passage Companion explains that, "General Markle inherited a grist mill and paper mill in West Newton from his father and passed the operations on to his sons S. B. and Cyrus P. The boys purchased 5,000 acres of land in Somerset County and built a pulp mill to supply their West Newton operations." At one time, it was believed to be the world's largest wood pulp mill.

After C. P. Markle died, the timber operation was sold and became the Markleton Lumber Co. The pulp mill site was also sold to become part of a sanatorium (private health spa). It was known as the Markleton Sanatorium, The Markleton, or Little Switzerland Under Turkeyfoot Plateau, and was advertised as "The Ideal All-Year-Round Resort, Where Health is the Sure Result." Opened in 1890, it became a very popular and prosperous resort. In 1916, four trains a day stopped there, carrying guests from Washington, Baltimore and Pittsburgh.



The Markleton Sanatorium had many sections, with its turrets and pointed roofs spanning quite a large area. A long sidewalk leads to the steps at the entrance. A porch the length of the building seems to flow into the porches on the other buildings. Warren G. Harding is said to have stayed here before he became President. (Post Card courtesy of the Myersdale Public Library)

In 1918, the sanatorium was leased to the government for treatment of military personnel suffering from lung ailments, including tuberculosis and World War I poisonous gas attacks in Europe. Repairs and building improvements were made in the early spring of that year when the first nurses and patients arrived by train. For a short time, it also housed German prisoners of war.

At the conclusion of the war, as the automobile became more available to the general public, the big resort spas became less popular. The decline of The Markleton was even more severe due to the stigma attached to the treatment

of tuberculosis at the site. The old sanatorium was torn down in 1938. Meanwhile, aided by the B&O and Western Maryland Railway operations, the area's coal mining and logging industries remained active there for decades.



Scenic beauty of the Casselman River Valley near the Pinkerton Low Bridge

Although the industrial and commercial prosperity of the Pinkerton area are long gone, the Casselman River Valley's scenic beauty remains today for the enjoyment of thousands of rail-trail enthusiasts from all over the world each year.

To help with tunnel rehabilitation efforts, send your
tax-deductible contribution to:
Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association
Attention: Pinkerton
P. O. Box 413
Somerset, PA 15501

Trail Volunteer Update

By David Ringler

MAINTENANCE: Trail users see our volunteers hard at work nearly every day on the Youghiogheny River Trail (YRT). The Quonset hut near P&LE Milepost 21 is the epicenter for nearly **30 volunteers who logged 225 days and almost 2500 hours in maintenance activities during 2014**. These folks were the ones mowing, weed whacking, chain sawing, bush hogging, back hoeing, bench repairing, and sadly, doing vandalism remediation. Assisting the crew during their September month of service were American Water employees.

MONITORING: A small cadre of monitors covered the entirety of the YRT in 2014, generally **3-4 days per week, covering almost 1400 miles and logging 130 hours**. While other sections of the GAP depend on monitors more heavily, the continual presence of our maintenance crew is the primary YRT mechanism.

Plans to Open the Pinkerton Tunnel

Area Rich in History

By Bob Cupp

In 2014, the Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association announced plans to open the Pinkerton Tunnel along the Allegheny Highlands Trail section of the Great Allegheny Passage. The estimated cost to rehabilitate the tunnel is approximately \$2 million with most of the funding already secured.

Somerset County is taking ownership of the area known as "Pinkerton Horn," where the Great Allegheny Passage takes a 1.5-mile detour around the deteriorated railroad tunnel. The 849-foot-long tunnel, built by the Carter Construction Company for the Western Maryland Railway in 1911, has been closed since the 1970's due to deteriorating conditions. Severe damage also occurred in 1993, when eight ton of rock fell onto its concrete liner during a particularly harsh winter. The portals have been blocked for the safety of adventuresome explorers.



The area between Markleton and the Pinkerton Tunnel, including the "Pinkerton Horn," is ideal for cross-country skiing. As you can see from this 1995 photo of MYTC member John Morrell, trail users have been enjoying the scenery and the skiing here for the past two decades.

Because there was an alternative route around the tunnel via the "Pinkerton Horn," the trail bypassed the tunnel. The "horn" was created by a horseshoe bend in the Casselman River about 52 miles from Cumberland. Rehabilitation of the tunnel will create another spectacular feature along the trail, connecting the Pinkerton "Low Bridge," over the river on the upstream side of the tunnel, with the Pinkerton "High Bridge" on the downstream side.

The bridges, located between Markleton and Fort Hill in southern Somerset County, span the scenic Casselman River at very different elevations. Traveling over the low bridge, through the tunnel and over the high bridge in rapid succession will provide cyclists with a unique visual experience.



Spectacular View from the Pinkerton High Bridge - an outstanding photo opportunity

Legend has it that Matthew Pinkerton operated the first local grist mill and the area was named for him. Later, the Pinkerton Lumber Company used the Pinkerton name when a nearby sawmill and town were established here. The actual town of Pinkerton was located about a half-mile upstream from the tunnel on the B&O side of the river.

According to Bill Metzgar's book, *The Great Allegheny Passage Companion*, "The B&O built a tunnel across Pinkerton Neck and to cut expenses, the tunnel was lined with timber rather than brick or stone. In 1879, the timber caught fire and the tunnel collapsed. Rather than rebuild it, they built a railroad around Pinkerton Horn that served as a bypass. This line (railroaders call a temporary track a 'shoofly') is now the grade that's used by the trail."

The B&O's "Pinkerton Tunnel" was rebuilt using brick and stone and reopened in 1885, but Pinkerton Lumber Company also used the grade for a time for their logging railroad. It was used again as a haul road when Pinkerton Horn was logged again in the early 1980's. The Western Maryland built their own tunnel across Pinkerton Neck and saved more than a mile and a half of railroad and a lot of curves. The old grade came to the rescue again when it was found that the Western Maryland's Pinkerton Tunnel was unsafe for trail use. A surface was put down and that's how you ride around Pinkerton Horn today."

The area surrounding the Pinkerton Tunnel is a treasure chest of local history. Downstream, Fort Hill is a small community named for an ancient Indian settlement. The Algonquin Indians created a flat area on top of a 3,100-foot-high hill. A 5.5-acre area was excavated during the 1930's and 40's. Archeologists discovered numerous artifacts, including smoking pipes, knives, scrapers, jewelry, needles and fishhooks. A few graves and some home sites were also found there.