

THE DISAPPEARANCE AND REDISCOVERY OF THE CENTER POINT KNOB PLAQUE

In my last article--about our club history as an Appalachian Trail (A.T.) maintaining club, I noted that soon after the Mountain Club of Maryland (MCM) received responsibility for maintaining the Appalachian Trail, our founders moved quickly to begin taking care of its new section. The MCM Bulletin for March-April 1935 stated plans were underway for a Center Point Knob marker and a dedication gathering in the Fall." That autumn, after several work trips on the Trail, MCM moved to implement its plan for a monument at Center Point Knob to mark the center point of the Trail. Photos in the MCM scrapbook show our volunteers selecting this boulder located nearby.



They dragged the boulder to the place on the Trail where it passes Center Point Knob, and then attached a bronze plaque to the boulder to commemorate the significance of the location. At that time, this marker was the only notice to hikers that they had reached the halfway point of the A.T.



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AND THEN CAME THE MEMORABLE DAY OF THE
DEDICATION OF THIS MONUMENT WITH ITS
CROWDS FROM FAR AND WIDE - AND WITH
THE RAINS THAT PREVENTED BETTER PICTURES -

This is a close-up of the plaque.



Sometime between 1940 and 1948, someone pried the plaque from the boulder and removed it. We know the plaque was still there in 1940 because PATC has a photo of a group of hikers around the boulder—plaque and all. We know it was gone by 1948 because a photo exists of Earl Shaffer (the first A.T. thru hiker) standing by the boulder—and the plaque is gone. And it stayed missing for 40 years.

Then in 1994, a local PA resident named Bruce Dunlavy visited the home of another resident, Wilmer Harris, to discuss business matters. Dunlavy saw the Center Point Knob plaque on Harris' mantel. Harris said he had found it while digging fence post holes. Dunlavy later said he recognized the plaque, but he told no one about it at that time.

More than 10 years later, after the Appalachian Trail Museum was being formed, Dunlavy suggested to Harris that the plaque be returned or offered to the new Museum. When the news of the plaque's discovery became known, there were discussions between the Museum, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, other local trail clubs, and MCM about its proper disposition. As the original owner, the MCM Council voted in July 2010 to donate the plaque to the Museum—but first we had a mold made of the old plaque, which was then used to make a new bronze replica. This new plaque was installed at the original boulder site on July 8, 2012.

Here is a photo of the newly installed copy at Center Point Knob, with MCM's Rosie Suit and bronze-caster Ben Lock.



The original can be viewed at the A.T. Museum at Pine Grove Furnace State Park.



*The original plaque on display
at the Appalachian Trail
Museum at Pine Grove
Furnace State Park, PA*

Both of these photos are taken from the October 2012 issue of Hiker High Points

There are various number of articles and sources written over the years that tell aspects of this story. Perhaps the most interesting is a March 21, 2023 episode of the Green Tunnel podcasts, which are a series of podcasts about the A.T. You can listen to this podcast at [Iconic Locations: Center Point Knob | The Green Tunnel \(r2studios.org\)](#).

In addition, several editions of our Hiker High Points contain articles about the discovery and disposition of the plaque—specifically, the February 2011, June 2012, and October 2012 newsletters—you can view them all on the MCM web site.