

THE
APPALACHIAN TRAIL
IN PENNSYLVANIA'S
SOUTH MOUNTAIN

By
MYRON H. AVERY
With Map By
HAROLD G. CONGER



Supplement to October 1936 Bulletin

OF THE
POTOMAC APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB

901 UNION TRUST BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Price 10 cents

THE
APPALACHIAN TRAIL
IN PENNSYLVANIA'S
SOUTH MOUNTAIN



ROBERT APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB
PENN. STATE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY PARK, PA.

THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL IN PENNSYLVANIA'S SOUTH MOUNTAIN

By MYRON H. AVERY

With Map by

HAROLD G. CONGER

Washington, D. C., a tidewater city located at the head of the Potomac River marshes, is hardly to be thought of as affording opportunity for mountain wilderness travel—such as remains today in the East—unparalleled for accessibility and extent east of the Mississippi. Like a far-flung breastwork, the crest of the Appalachian Range forms, to the west and northwest, a mountain barrier extending through a quadrant of 120 degrees. As if Washington were the center and the Blue Ridge the circumference of a circle, this mountain barrier curves so that from Washington it is practically equidistant in three states—Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. Like the spokes of a wheel excellent highways radiate from Washington, crossing the range in such proximity as to make very easy the penetration of this area.

Along the crest of the curving mountain barrier extends a continuous foot trail. It is a portion of the Appalachian Trail, a footway through the mountain wilderness extending from Maine to Georgia. It is the route of the foot traveler, who finds his pleasures and recreation in his own strenuous exertions.

This mountain barrier, which forms the playground of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club of Washington, may be divided into sections according to the states which it traverses. To the west along Virginia's Blue Ridge¹ the footway is already completed and in use for the 143 miles from Harpers Ferry to Rockfish Gap at the southern end of the Shenandoah National Park. Rockfish Gap is only 120 miles from Washington.

The central portion of this mountain barrier is South Mountain in Maryland, offset to the east from Virginia's Blue Ridge. The Trail along the crest line of this ridge was constructed in 1932.

The left flank or northern section of this mountain barrier extends from the Maryland-Pennsylvania line to the Susquehanna River. Beyond that point the range swings north too rapidly to be readily accessible from Washington.

The completion of this primitive mountain wilderness footway from the Maryland-Pennsylvania line to the Susquehanna for a distance of 77 miles makes easily accessible a new wilderness region for the hiking clubs in the vicinity of Washington. The western terminus of this section at Pen Mar is 79 miles by road from Washington, and the eastern terminus at the Susquehanna River is 118 miles. The major portion of this section is the South Mountain of Pennsylvania, a continuation of the range bearing the same name in Maryland. Not as high as the Blue Ridge, it nowhere exceeds 2,200 feet, yet for expansive outlooks, majesty of forest growth, the excellence of its trails, its peculiar topographic features and its economic and historical background, Pennsylvania's South Mountain region is a worthy peer of its

¹For an account of the Appalachian Trail in Virginia, see "In the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia," by Myron H. Avery, *Supplement, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club Bulletin*, January, 1936; and for Maryland, see "Along the Appalachian Trail in Maryland," by H. C. Anderson, *Supplement to July, 1934, P. A. T. C. Bulletin*.

better-known rival. Except at its extreme southern and northern ends, South Mountain is now in public ownership in the form of the Mont Alto and Michaux State Forests. This fortunate circumstance assures the perpetuation of South Mountain's recreational resources, already developed to a high degree. Well-maintained trails traverse the valleys and ridges of both forests so extensively that the development of the through trail required little new construction. Approach trails up picturesque streams, descending from the watershed, lead to the trunk line at frequent intervals.

The Pennsylvania State Forest program was initiated in 1888 and the acquisition of land by purchase begun in 1898. The last extensive commercial use of the forest area was in the days of the expiring charcoal iron industry. In the forests the traveler passes many grassy, level, circular openings, which would form an excellent base for an Indian tepee. These spots are the remains of the old charcoal hearths. The Appalachian Trail passes near the Rothrock cabin site, northwest of Snowy Mountain fire tower, a charcoal hearth operated in 1902, the last in the Mont Alto Forest. This project was not a commercial enterprise, however, but was designed to teach the forest school students a process which was rapidly becoming a lost art. The last charcoal produced by the Mont Alto Iron Company had been approximately in 1893, and when the Rothrock cabin charcoal was burned there was considerable difficulty in finding an experienced man, who had learned the process at the Iron Company, to direct the work.

A striking feature is the number of hunting lodges or camps located in the forests. This condition is quite readily understood when it is recalled that more deer are killed each year in Pennsylvania than in any other state in the Union. In 1928 on the Michaux Forest alone 748 deer were legally killed. The statistics of the Board of Game Commissioners show that for the season of 1932, 19,724 male deer were legally killed; in 1933, 20,480. In that year there were 31 fatal hunting accidents. It was even found necessary, in 1935, to resort to the unusual expedient of an open season on does. So numerous are deer in the state forests that the Department of Forests and Waters has made a special study to determine the extent of their damage to the plantations of young trees. Half of an experimental plantation of Chinese chestnut trees was destroyed by deer. The Trail in the Mont Alto Forest skirts a 2,000-acre game refuge, established in 1906, through which all traveling is prohibited in the hunting season.

The southern, or lower, forest takes its name from the old Mont Alto Iron Company. The village of that name, situated on the western slope of the forest, was originally known as Funkstown. The Mont Alto Forest of 23,000 acres is, in its timber growth and plantations, one of the most advanced of the state forests. Within its confines is located the old Mont Alto Park, an 8-acre resort developed in the early '80's by the Cumberland Valley Railroad Company. Its extensive development is shown by the plan of the park in the office of the District Forester at Mont Alto.

This region has much of interest for the botanist. The Cumberland Valley and South Mountain have long been noted for the richness of their flora.

More than 350 woody species can be observed in the course of a few hours in the vicinity of the Forest Research Institute. In the Mont Alto State Forest is found the northern limit of the shortleaf pine, the blight-resisting chinquapin, the laurel, magnolia, persimmon and American holly. Such trees as the gray birch and American aspen find here the southern limit of their range. The largest table-

mountain pine ever recorded in America grew on the first bench of Mont Alto Mountain, about 100 yards south of the pipe line. At the age of 100 years it had a breast diameter of 21 inches and a height of 65 feet. A considerable stand of this rather rare tree grows today in the vicinity.

The Mont Alto State Forest¹ itself is one of the oldest and best-equipped forest stations in America. Within its borders are extremely interesting and instructive forestry projects. On the western slope of the forest in Mont Alto village are the buildings of the Pennsylvania State Forest School, established in 1903, among the first schools in the United States. At the present time first year forestry instruction is given here, the advanced courses being offered at the State College. Here also is located the Pennsylvania Forest Research Institute, unique as the first state establishment of its kind.

On its grounds is the site of the old Mont Alto Iron Furnace, built in 1807-8 by Samuel and David Hughes, early iron producers who immigrated from England. Production increased from two to three tons per day to the high figure in 1864 of 90 tons per week. Much of the pig iron smelted at the Mont Alto furnace was transported by mule teams across Sandy Ridge to the Old Forge, which was supplied with water diverted by canals from the East Branch of Little Antietam Creek. Here the crude pig iron was manufactured into bars of wrought iron and articles of domestic use. The company's speciality was "ten-plate" stoves. Many of their stoves are the prized possessions of local residents. The Appalachian Trail passes the ruins of this once thriving forest industry.

The arboretum on the grounds of the Forest School contains more than 100 exotic species of north temperate trees. Adjoining the district forester's headquarters at Mont Alto is a well-planned and equipped forest-tree nursery, which up to January 1, 1930, had produced over 35 million seedlings. Here also is a very successful black-walnut plantation, established in 1909, numbering 411 trees. A 3-foot trench between the plantation and the nursery beds counteracts the toxic condition in the soil produced by the black walnut plantation which is detrimental to other tree growth in its immediate vicinity. Near the residence of the district forester is a plantation of 100 seedlings of Chinese chestnut, made in 1927 in an effort to find a blight-resistant species to replace the stands of dead chestnut in the southern Appalachians. It is interesting to know that a few of the Chinese chestnut trees have been attacked by the blight but none have been killed.

One finds in these forests a striking reminder of the scenes which ushered in the Civil War. Opposite the new extension of the Mont Alto tree nursery a monument marks the site of the capture in 1857 of Captain John Cook who was with John Brown at the seizure of Harpers Ferry. Captain Cook was convicted of high treason at Charles Town, now in West Virginia, and executed. Lee's army poured through the gap in South Mountain at Caledonia Park in its march to Gettysburg. Local tradition has it that the Confederates halted at Travelers Spring.

Along this 15-mile section of Trail are four sets of open lean-tos; three are in the Mont Alto Forest; these are Red Run, Antietam Creek

¹For data relative to the forests the writer is indebted to "A Guide to Forestry Studies and Demonstrations on the Mont Alto and Michaux State Forests," Research Bulletin 1, Department of Forests and Waters; Former District Forester, T. O. Bradley and Assistant Forester T. G. Norris have also furnished much information with respect to their forests. Mr. Norris has also furnished much data on the early history of the region.

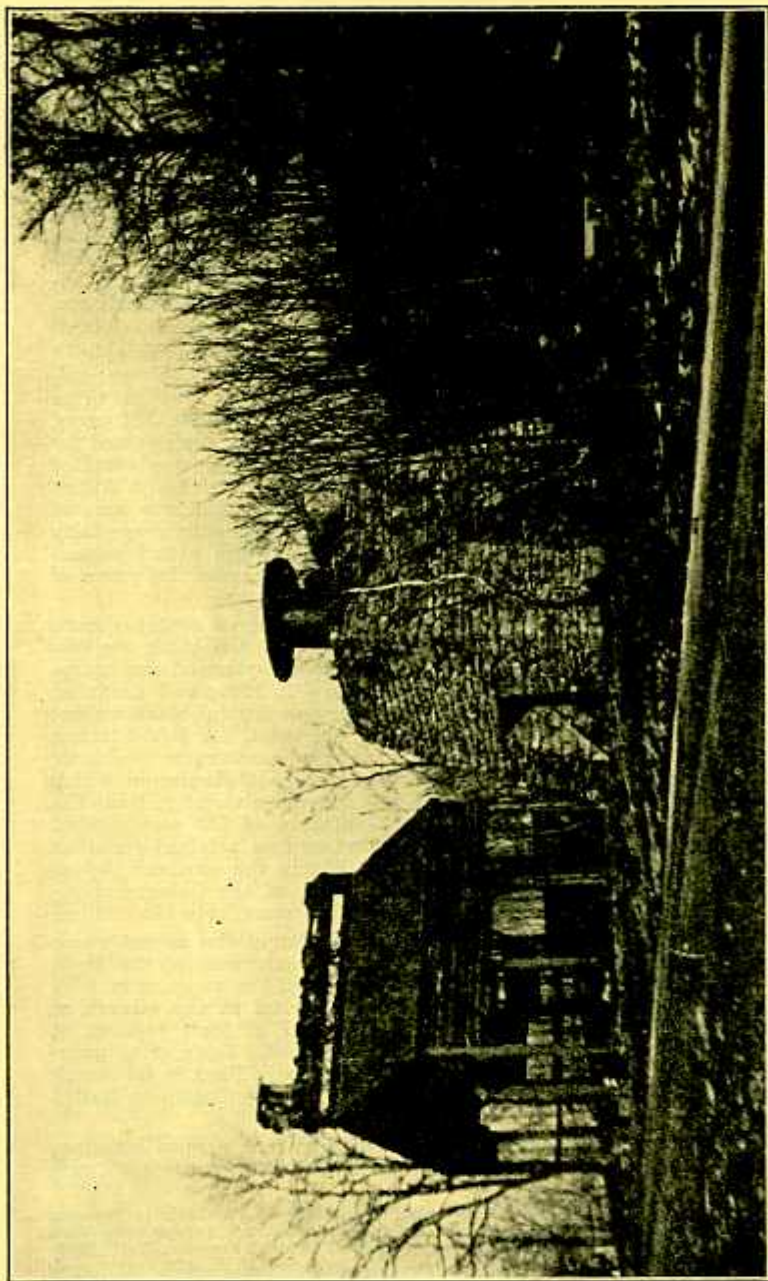


Photo by T. B. Meyer

A RELIC OF PENNSYLVANIA'S CHARCOAL IRON INDUSTRY—THE BIG POND FURNACE STACK IN THE MICHAUX STATE FOREST

and Tumbling Run. Near the Michaux-Mont Alto Forest boundary are the Raccoon Run lean-tos.

Beyond the Mont Alto Forest on the Lincoln Highway is the 260-acre Caledonia State Forest Park, a popular unit of Pennsylvania's incipient state-park system. The park area contains a bathing pool, public 18-hole golf course, 12 shelters and 15 open fireplaces. Many beautiful summer homes are located in this region on land leased from the Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters. Here was located the old charcoal iron furnace built in 1837, operated in Civil War days by Thaddeus Stevens, which was destroyed in June, 1863, by Confederate cavalry under General Jubal Early. This loss may have intensified the fanatical bitterness and hatred displayed in the Reconstruction days by Stevens toward the South. Stevens was born in Caledonia, Vermont, and gave to his furnace the name of his birth-place.

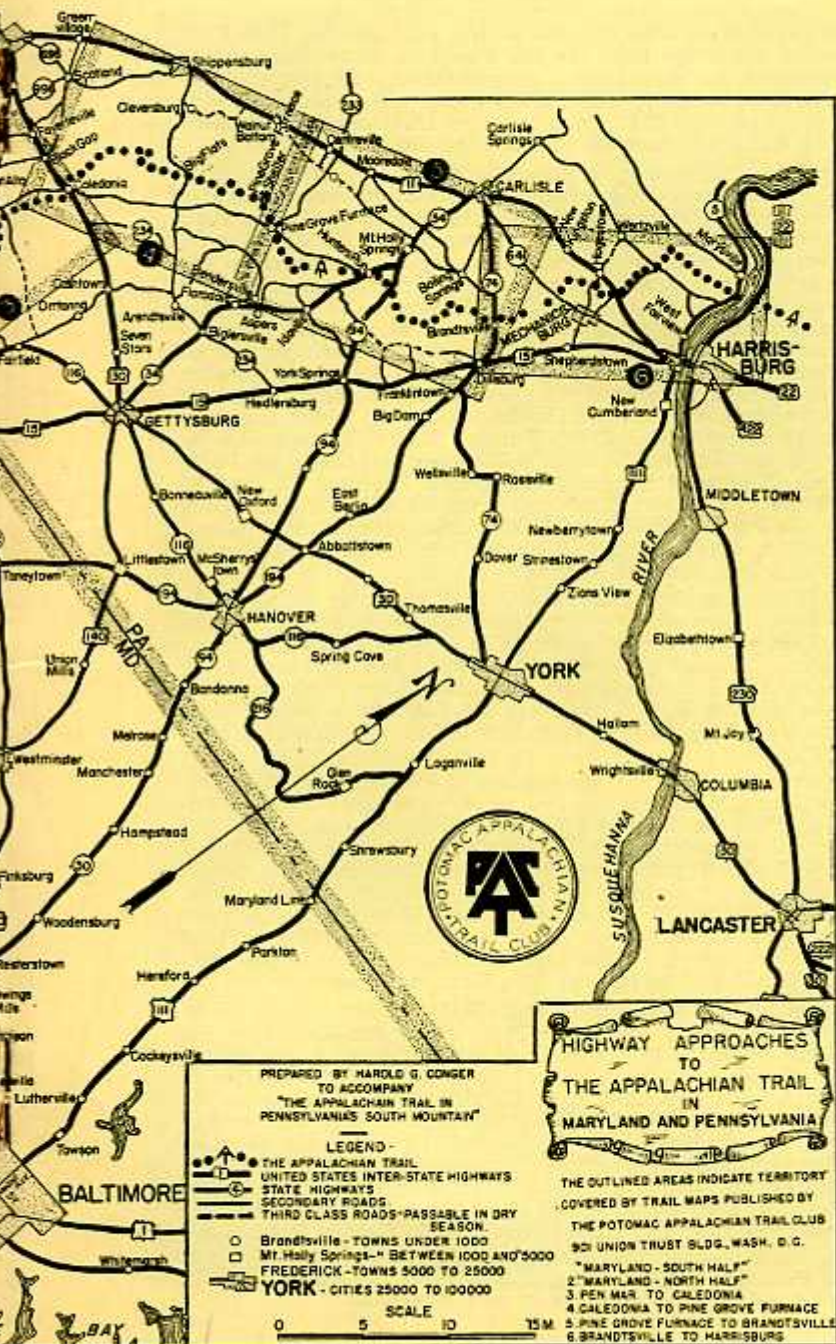
East of Caledonia State Forest Park is the 42,000-acre Michaux State Forest. This forest is a fitting memorial to the two great French botanists of that name, father and son, whose early American explorations and silvicultural studies have won a fame as enduring as their memorial. These two French naturalists traveled within view of the land that now bears their name, the former in 1793 and the latter in 1802. When he died in 1855 the younger Michaux bequeathed to the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia the sum of \$14,000 which became available for forestry instruction in 1870. In 1877 the late Dr. J. T. Rothrock, father of Pennsylvania forestry, was appointed Michaux lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania. These lectures blazed the way for forestry work now in progress in Pennsylvania.

For the purposes of fire protection, the Michaux Forest Service has constructed, along the crest of the ridge from the Lincoln Highway to Mount Holly, a dirt road known as the Ridge Crest Road, which obliterated a few miles of the old Appalachian Trail. This has resulted in a relocation of several sections of the old Trail in an improved, more scenic location, so that while the route of the road and the Trail are generally parallel for about ten miles, the hiker is not conscious of the existence of the road. Four roads, crossing the crest of the ridge at right angles, afford a possibility for many interesting short hikes in this section. These roads are the Milesburn, the Arendtsville-Shippensburg (to Big Flat Fire Tower), the Tumbling Run, and the High Mountain Roads, respectively 1.4 m., 7.1 m., 9 m. and 12.1 m. from U. S. Route 30 on the road from Caledonia Park to Pine Grove Furnace. The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club's two-story, locked Pine Grove Furnace Shelter, 1.75 m. west on the Trail from Pine Grove Furnace, affords an excellent base for exploration in this region. Nearby is the half-mile, very scenic Sunset Rock Trail to the top of Little Rocky Ridge. Midway this section, where the Milesburn Road crosses the ridge, is the two-story, locked Milesburn Cabin, the use of which may be had on application to The Forester, Michaux State Forest, Fayetteville, Pa. There are also three sets of lean-tos located along this section: at Quarry Gap, Birch Run and Toms Run. At the latter there is the novel innovation of a lean-to with a fireplace in the back. These lean-tos are appropriated by hikers in the order of their arrival.

The Michaux Forest contains High Point, 2,180 feet, the highest elevation on South Mountain. A feature of this forest, forming a striking contrast to the narrow crest-line of the Virginia Blue Ridge, is the breadth, expansiveness and uniform height of the watershed.

THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL





The area bears such expressive names as Big Flat and Big Pine Flat. At one point on the Ridge Road the Big Flat Fire Tower looms up at the seeming end of the High Road, a canyon through an area of dense scrub oak, as if it were only three miles away. However, so deceiving is this level expanse that seven miles of traveling with scarcely any ascent or descent is required to reach the fire tower.

The forest geography may be generally described as consisting of two ridges. The eastern ridge, Piney Mountain, extends the entire length of the range. The western portion, the region of the Big Flat, is composed of several broken ridges. Beyond Big Flat Fire Tower, the Trail descends Toms Run to Pine Grove Furnace³, located in the valley between the two ranges. Pine Grove Furnace was erected in 1760 and was in continuous operation for 150 years. It supplied iron for the cannon and arms made at the armory at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, during the Revolutionary War. The original stack, as well as many old houses, is still standing. The deep, cool waters of Fuller Lake afford splendid opportunity for swimming. Near Mountain Creek is the remnant of a majestic white-pine forest, which once covered the entire valley. Pine Grove Furnace is readily accessible by automobile. It is 106 miles via Lincoln Highway and Caledonia Park, 103 miles, via Hunters Run and Pennsylvania Highway 34, and 95 miles, via Bendersville, from Washington and 14 miles by automobile from Caledonia Park. The Fuller Lake tourist camp at Pine Grove Furnace has four closed log cabins for rent and the same number of open shelters for campers and hikers.

Another interesting day from Pine Grove Furnace is to follow the portion of the southern of the two ridges of South Mountain, used by the Trail. This is a distance of eight miles from Pine Grove Furnace to Pa. Highway 34. Located somewhat down from the crest of the ridge, the route affords a spectacular view toward the northern ridge. The quartzite cliffs of Pole Steeple are the features of this section. A set of lean-tos is to be built at Tagg Run, 1.2 m. west from Pennsylvania Highway 34.

The western, or northern, ridge dies out at Mt. Holly and the eastern ridge or Piney Mountain becomes more prominent. Its continuation is the route of the through Trail. The fire tower on Long Mountain affords wide-spread views of the confused, disconnected mass of hills over which the Appalachian Trail makes its way east. South Mountain comes to an abrupt end 57 miles from the Maryland line, terminating in a knob 1,180 feet in height and 700 feet above the road from Dillsburg to Brandtsville. A few scattering foothills extend from Brandtsville toward the Susquehanna River but the ridge crest, which has been followed north from Pen Mar, has come to an end.

From Pennsylvania Highway 94, the York Springs-Carlisle Pike, north to the Susquehanna River, the Trail is now maintained by the Mountain Club of Maryland. This Club has developed a very interesting series of side trails here. The feature point in this section is Center Point Knob, equidistant from Katahdin and Mt. Oglethorpe; a monument erected here by the Mountain Club of Maryland marks the location. Equally impressive is the striking view over the disconnected mass of hills and the broad Cumberland Valley to the north. Two blue-blazed side trails afford an interesting circuit hike. One from Beavertown, near Dillsburg, is along the broken jagged White Rocks Ridge, with its spectacular formations, to Center Point Knob

³A detailed history of the iron operations at Pine Grove Furnace is contained in "Recollections, Historical and Otherwise, Relating to Old Pine Grove Furnace," by Horace Andrew Keefer, in the October, 1934, P. A. T. C. Bulletin.

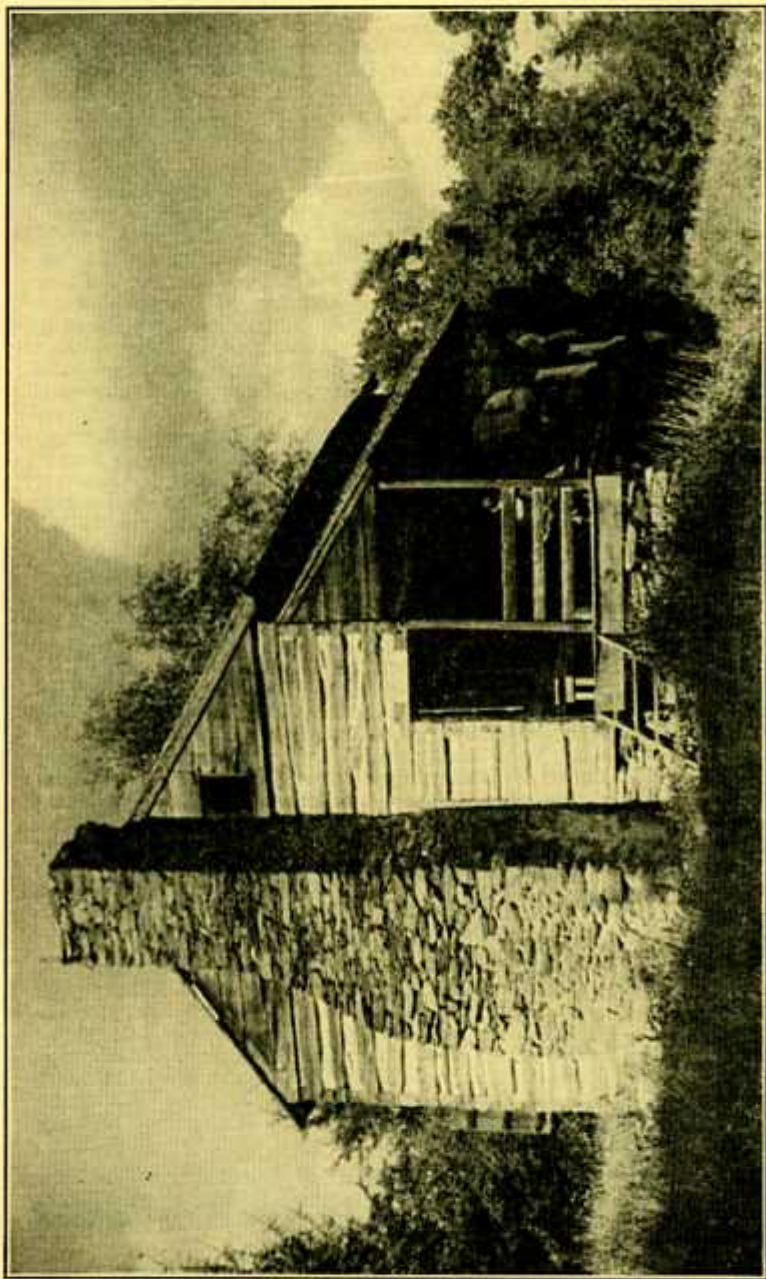


Photo by G. F. Blackburn

THE P. A. T. C. PINE GROVE FURNACE SHELTER

and thence via the Dogwood Run Trail back to Beavertown, a distance of 11.1 miles. Another alternative round trip from Brandtsville is over the Appalachian Trail to Center Point Knob and thence back by the White Rocks Trail and Brandtsville Link, a distance of 6.6 miles. Dark Hollow and the Pipe Line Hill are other features of this interesting locality.

The Trail leads into the Cumberland Valley as did so many of the famous Indian warpaths'. This fertile region was a perpetual battleground long before the advent of the ever encroaching white settlers. The Potomac River formed the dividing line between the northern and southern Indians. Normally the Cumberland Valley was regarded, at least by themselves, as within the sovereignty of the Six Nations known to the French as the Iroquois. However, the Lenni Lenape (the original people), called Delawares by the colonists, continually disputed with the Iroquois the possession of these rich hunting grounds. By permission of the Iroquois for a time the Shawanees held the Cumberland Valley. This continuous warfare prevented the development of permanent Indian villages in the valley. Only at a cost of vast sacrifice and suffering did the white settlers finally wrest the valley from the Indians. During the French and Indian War this region was the frontier. Indian raids were a common occurrence for a period of 25 years. Finally the last wave of these harrowing onslaughts crumbled but during that period on the border 50 per cent of the settlers had sacrificed their lives to hold their lands.

To the north across the fertile Cumberland Valley—the geographical counterpart of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley—trends a mountain range in the direction of the projected Appalachian Trail route. West of the Susquehanna River this range is the North Mountain; west of the Delaware it is the Blue Mountain; in New Jersey it is the Kittatinny; its northern terminus in New York is known as the Shawangunk. Accordingly, from the end of South Mountain at Brandtsville the Appalachian Trail leads north by secondary roads into Lambs Gap on North Mountain. The Trail crosses the Chambersburg-Harrisburg Pike (U. S. Route 11) within view of the Old Silver Spring Tavern, the oldest stone building in the Cumberland Valley west of Harrisburg. Silver Spring derives its name from James Silvers, who settled near or on it prior to 1733. As early as 1735 a road was laid out from Harris Ferry toward the Potomac River. This road, which was the first in the Cumberland Valley, passed directly in front of the old Silver Spring Tavern and the route of the original road can still be discerned on the banks to the north of Silver Spring ford.

From Lambs Gap the Trail leads east along a narrow ridge crest to a magnificent panoramic outlook at the eastern end of the range, with the Susquehanna River below. At night this view is particularly striking. The scene is comparable with the Water Gap of the Delaware and with Harpers Ferry, where the Potomac breaks through the Blue Ridge. From this viewpoint the Trail leads down the south slope of the ridge to the Susquehanna River at Overview Station on the trolley line, where Pennsylvania Highway 5 crosses the railroad tracks by a bridge.

This through skyline trail for a distance of 77 miles from Pen Mar to the Susquehanna is now marked throughout by white paint blazes and the entire section has been measured by a cyclometer on a meas-

⁴For an account of these war paths see "Indian Trails of the Southeast," by William Edward Myer, 42nd Annual Report of Bureau of American Ethnology.

uring wheel and detailed guidebook² data have been issued by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, 901 Union Trust Building, Washington, D. C.

Inasmuch as the through route of the Appalachian Trail with its approach trails affords not only an opportunity for an extensive exploration of this readily accessible playground but as a traverse of the route affords a week's vacation of the type so popular in the New England States, suggestions as to an itinerary may aid the hiker on South Mountain. The suggestions are made from south to north. The minimum is a five-day trip; the maximum nine days.

Pen Mar, the southern terminus of this region, may be reached by the Western Maryland Railroad or by Maryland highway 79 miles from Washington. In addition to the Waldheim House (Mrs. M. Ruffler) and the Rosemont House, accommodations are available .6 m. east of the Trail crossing of Pennsylvania Highway 16, at the house of Mrs. Harvey Fitz. It is 16.7 miles from Pen Mar to Caledonia Park, a feasible day's trip; the section, however, may be divided into a two-day trip by obtaining accommodations at Coltnr's Inn (P. O. South Mountain, Pa.), near the South Mountain Sanatorium. At Caledonia Park, accommodations may be obtained at the Log Cabin, Piney Mountain Inn or Graeffenburg Inn, the last in service as an inn for over 125 years. The four sets of lean-tos available on this section have been previously enumerated. If the hiker has the inclination of a naturalist, he will visit the Mont Alto Forest plantations and the Research Institute en route.

For the 19 miles of Trail between Caledonia Park and Pine Grove Furnace, the three available sets of lean-tos, as well as the Forest Service Milesburn Cabin and the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club Pine Grove Furnace Shelter, have already been described. The time devoted to this section is a matter of individual preference. At the hamlet of Pine Grove Furnace, accommodations may be obtained at the Pine Grove Furnace Inn, or at the Post Office (Mrs. Ira Chrisman). At the Pine Grove Furnace campgrounds, in addition to the lean-tos, there are also the four locked wooden cabins which can be rented from the Michaux Forest Ranger at a cost of \$1.00 per person per day.

Both of the foregoing sections may be either a strenuous one-day² trip or a moderate journey of two days. At the end of the next section, an easy day's trip, where the hard-surfaced Hunters Run Road meets Pennsylvania Highway 34, .6 m. from the Trail, accommodations may be had at Myers' Store (Klink Myers, P. O. Gardiner, R. D. 2), or at the hotel at Mt. Holly Springs, which may be reached by going north 2.9 miles on Pennsylvania Highway 34 or 2 miles on Pennsylvania Highway 94.

For the fifth section, Brandtsville, at the terminus of the South Mountain section of the Trail, on the Reading Railroad, has a general store but no tourist facilities. Accordingly, the next day's accommodations in the Cumberland Valley have to be procured at the National Hotel in Mechanicsburg, 1.5 miles east on the Carlisle-Mechanicsburg Road (Pennsylvania Highway 641), from the junction of the Appalachian Trail and the Carlisle-Mechanicsburg Road. From Myers' Store to Mechanicsburg is a total distance of 18.4 miles. The Mountain Club of Maryland has plans to erect a shelter in Dark Hol-

²A supplement to the Second Edition of *Guide to Paths in the Blue Ridge, 1934*, is being prepared, in view of the extensive relocation of the Trail route in Pennsylvania. Detailed maps for the Pennsylvania section are being drafted by the Maps Committee of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club.

low to make this section more accessible. A method of dividing this section into a two-day trip would be to follow the Appalachian Trail over Long Mountain and then the blue-blazed Dogwood Run side trail to Beavertown and thence to Dillsburg, where accommodations can be obtained at tourist houses: C. H. Lehmer, G. R. Coulson, and S. S. Sheaffer, a distance of 11.7 miles from Myers' Store. From Dillsburg the return to the Appalachian Trail may be made by way of the Dogwood Run Trail or the White Rocks Trail to Center Point Knob. From Beavertown, the distances to the next accommodations at Mechanicsburg are 16.2 miles and 15.6 miles, respectively. Five and three-tenths miles farther north on the Trail, another possibility in the Cumberland Valley is the Willow Mills Farm in Hogestown, a mile west on U. S. Route 11 from the Trail crossing.

At Overview, the northern terminus of this section, accommodations are obtainable at the house of Mrs. N. K. Hoffert (Box 116, R. D. 4, Mechanicsburg, Pa.). In Marysville, 2.3 miles north on Pennsylvania Highway 5, from the intersection of the Appalachian Trail, is the Central Hotel, and, in Harrisburg, reached by bus and trolley service from Overview, are numerous hotels, including the Bolton.

