



# Florida State University

## ARF News Special Feature

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## *Appalachian Trail Museum & Library*

BY: LINDA PATTON, RETIRED FROM STORZIER LIBRARY

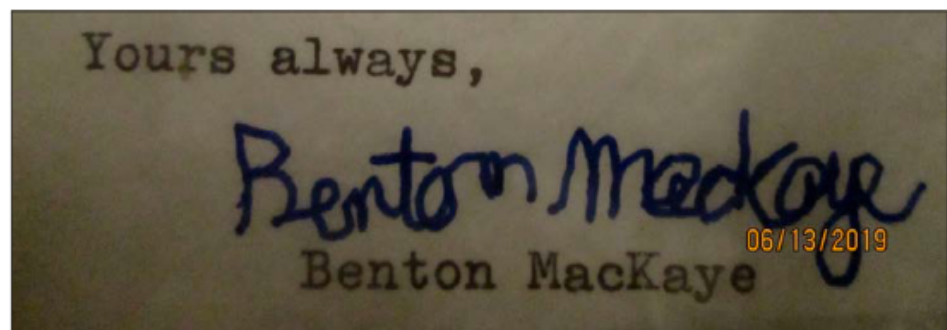
# The ever-growing A.T. story finds a home in new library

By LINDA PATTON  
Founding Librarian  
A.T. Museum

**L**arry Luxenberg collected A.T. memorabilia for many years after his 1980 thru-hike. Eventually his collection grew so huge his wife wished he would “get the stuff out of the house.”

At that point, he began dreaming about a museum to house all “the stuff.” His 12-year dream finally became a reality when the Appalachian Trail museum opened to the public in the spring of 2010 in the renovated first floor of the old Grist Mill at Pennsylvania’s Pine Grove Furnace State Park. Later, a storage space in Carlisle was acquired as a home for all the extra things from Larry’s collection and other donations that are not yet exhibited.

The museum collects, preserves and interprets materials that portray the history of the trail and also the essence of the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual human experience of the Appalachian environment and the culture of hiking. There is no other museum like it in the country.



Letters, documents and books belonging to Benton MacKaye are now part of the museum.

In early 2018, eight years after the museum opened and following many months of hard work by Ron “Yellow Shoes” Bungay and his crew, the mezzanine above the second floor of the museum was finally renovated and ready to be transformed into a library.

Which meant another dream would soon be realized — this one 20 years old — when my collection of Appalachian Trail books and other books on trails and hiking (which had been the inspiration for my website, booksfor-

hikers.com), would become the nucleus of a research library within the museum. This research library, like the museum, would have an emphasis on the Appalachian Trail but also contain materials about other hiking trails, hiking/backpacking in general and the natural history of the Appalachian Mountains.

In the fall of 2017, I was designated the founding librarian and began the process of ordering furniture, equipment and supplies. I also created a unique classification system that would

provide call numbers better suited to the narrow focus of the library's collection than those of the Dewey Decimal System or Library of Congress.

In April 2018, with my SUV's cargo space filled with boxes containing more than 700 of my books, I drove to the museum from my home in Florida. Dave "Capone" Crooks from Chicago arrived at the museum soon after I did, bringing his 600-book collection and 300 books from Roger Williamson's collection. In addition to all those, there were books previously donated by others, including the ATC, and already on site.

To get the library up and running, a myriad of tasks had to be accomplished and several museum staff and volunteers worked alongside me to get the work done. Among them were Jim "Early Bird" Foster, Jerry "Thumper" Johnson, Gwen Loose, Joan McKean, Sandy "Honcho" Moyer, Jay "Jaybird" Sexton, Margy Schmidt and Nate "Angry Bird" Shank. They moved heavy furniture and boxes, wrapped acid barrier material around each wooden shelf, installed UV-blocking window film, wrote call numbers on hundreds of book slips, put ownership marks in every book, shuffled books around on the shelves to merge the three major collections by call number, and helped with a lot of filing.

## HOW TO DONATE ITEMS

Books and other items can be sent to:

**Librarian, Research Library  
A.T. Museum  
1120 Pine Grove Road  
Gardners, PA 17324**

Or they can be dropped off at the museum when it's open (check hours at <https://bit.ly/2Hq9unL>) or, if it's closed, by making an appointment with the manager at [manager@atmuseum.org](mailto:manager@atmuseum.org) or 717-486-8126. Be sure to mark all containers "For Research Library."

By the time I had cataloged all the books and left for home eight weeks later, the research library housed 1,660 books, 36 periodicals containing articles on the A.T., and 46 subject files of articles — a total of 1,742 items.

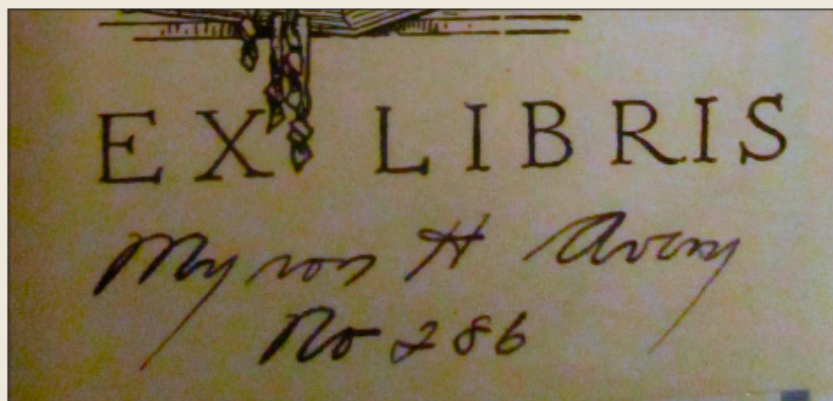
I returned to the museum once more in the spring of 2019, this time bringing my collection of A.T. media. I added other discs and tapes that had already been donated and cataloged the 163 media items for the library's collections. Fred "Springfever" Kirch generously donated the funds to have all the VHS tapes professionally converted to DVD format. A security system was installed and another donation from Fred paid for sun-blocking window shades for the library, the purchase of dozens of newly published trail books and a better cordless telephone system for the museum.

A volunteer cataloger, Kristin Senecal, helped me go through the donation boxes in the museum's storage unit in Carlisle, and we gathered up all the A.T. guidebooks and periodical issues

we could find so that I could catalog them.

By the time I returned home after nine weeks of work that second year, the research library had 1,745 cataloged books, 286 uncataloged books, 698 periodical issues, 53 periodical articles, 134 subject files, 163 media, and 190 guidebooks. Its holdings had almost doubled — to a total of 3,269 items with an appraised value of more than \$100,000.

But in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced me to cancel my work trip. Now hundreds of



## SPECIAL ITEMS IN A SPECIAL COLLECTION

In addition to MacKaye's books, here are a few of the other special items in the library's collections:

1. Four books, published in the late 1800s and early 1900s, from Myron Avery's personal collection.
2. Copies of correspondence between Benton MacKaye and Richard "Peregrine" Judy.
3. Three of the 120 privately printed copies of the first edition of Earl Shaffer's "Walking with Spring." (Donated by D. Crooks, R. Williamson, and the estate of Ed Garvey)
4. Sam Waddell's heavily annotated copy of Larry Luxenberg's book, "Walking the Appalachian Trail." Sam was the caretaker of the memorable Jerry Cabin shelter — the one with the nonfunctional light fixture and mailbox. (Donated by Sam Waddell)
5. Papers from Ward Leonard about his hiking style. (Donated by Jennifer "Odyssey" Pharr Davis)
6. Earl Shaffer's personal copy (signed on the front cover) of the August 1949 National Geographic magazine containing Brown & Sisson's article on the Appalachian Trail, "Skyline Trail from Maine to Georgia." The article begins with sev-



Ward Leonard in Caratunk, 1990

eral paragraphs about Earl Shaffer's thru-hike of the preceding year. Emma "Grandma" Gatewood said later that after reading this article, "I immediately knew this was something I had to do." (Donated by the estate of Earl Shaffer)

7. Three 2-volume sets of "Hiking the Appalachian Trail," published in 1975 by Rodale Press and still in their original shrink-wrap. (Donated by Arthur P. "Meadowlark" Foley)

books, periodicals and shelter registers are still waiting to be cataloged, and the books from Benton MacKaye's "Sky Parlor" study are still in boxes and need to be archived. There's a lot of work remaining to be done and I hope to get back to the museum in the coming year to complete it.

The research library's extensive collections can be used by writers, academicians and anyone else who wishes to research the story of the Appalachian Trail — those who hike it, those who build and maintain it and those who love it.

## BOOK BENEFACTOR KNOWS TREASURE WHEN HE SEES IT

One of the principal benefactors of the new research library at the A.T. Museum is Dave Crooks of Florida, whose yearslong search for books related to the Appalachian Trail has paid off to the library's benefit.

Crooks, originally from Illinois, likes to joke that he's "one of the Crooks of Chicago." And in that spirit, his trail name is "Capone." But he is just the opposite when it comes to a selfless personality.

The value of the hundreds of books he has donated is \$38,000. One volume alone is appraised at \$1,500.



He's been able to amass such a large and valuable collection because of a twist of fate many years ago when he found himself sitting on a bar stool in a pub in Key West, Fla., next to legendary goldhunter Mel Fisher. The rest is history.

Crooks went on to co-discover his share of Spanish treasure off the coast of Florida.

He shared a doubloon with museum board members during a meeting a few years ago. He appears as passionate about the new museum library as he is about sunken treasure.



Linda Patton, holding an annotated book donated by Sam Waddle.



The upper floor of the A.T. Museum has been fitted out as a research librarian's haven.