



Floyd Davis, caretaker for Doc Rogers' Place – circa 1951.



The rock house today.

Doc Rogers' Place

Benton MacKaye Trail Section 15a (Unicoi Gap » Tate Gap)

Directions

Directions: Headed NOBO from Unicoi Gap on the BMT, after about 3 miles cross over the ridgeline and pass through a gap (this also is NC/TN State Line). The remains of an old chimney (not Doc Rogers' Place) will come into view on your left. A short side trail to the chimney is present in the summer. After passing through the gap, the BMT enters an old roadbed. Continue on this roadbed a half mile to a signed intersection with a portion of the Unicoi Mountain Horse Trail. Go straight, following the BMT for another mile on this roadbed to a road intersection. Proceed straight ahead on this road (about 100 yards) to reach Doc Rogers' Place. At this intersection, the BMT continues to the right and uphill with blazes. After about 150' on the BMT, there's another road that bears to the left and downhill. Follow this road for about 150' to reach Doc Rogers' Place. These first and second roadbeds connect about 25' from the ruins. In the winter you can see the ruins from the second side trail intersection on the BMT. Neither of these two trails is marked -- both of these side trails bare off to the left of the BMT's route.

The old boxed in spring is still evident. Inside the old house ruins are the remains of the water system in the form of an open end of a pipe. Follow this partially exposed pipe uphill about 50' to find the old boxed in spring.

On the first side trail, an old ambulance will be downhill of the roadbed and about 30' away. It is recognizable from the red cross painted on the roof that is still partially visible.

There are also the remains of the foundation of another building downhill and on your left. The foundation of this building is much larger than the house, but just what it was remains a mystery.

Doc Rogers' Place

Benton MacKaye Trail Section 15a

Unicoi Gap » Tate Gap

The remains of old home sites are a familiar sight along the Benton MacKaye Trail. One of the most intriguing is between Unicoi Gap and Tate Gap. Approximately four miles from the Unicoi Gap Trailhead, NOBO hikers will find the two side trails to a once stately rock house known as Doc Rogers' Place. At one time it was a rather spacious three-story home with ground-level access for all three floors. Water came from a nearby spring and a generator provided electricity. Three partial walls, including a fireplace, are all that remain.

Doc, as he was affectionally known by the town folk, arrived in Tellico Plains, TN, in 1908. By the late 1940s, Doc's asthmatic condition had become such that he wanted to get above the "dust line". He and his wife Armina built the rock house that now lies in ruins below the BMT on Unicoi Mountain in Coker Creek. Contrary to rumors, the house never was used either as a medical or tuberculosis hospital. It was the Rogers' home and the base of operations for Doc's medical practice. Doc's transportation was an old ambulance that also lies abandoned on the property.

A bit of an eclectic visionary and entrepreneur, Doc also purchased the old Tennessee Rock Products silo. He added six floors above the main floor of the structure that became known as the "Roundhouse". Inside and outside staircases provided access to what he hoped would become profitable rental units. Unfortunately, fire regulations put an end to Doc's dreams for a lucrative enterprise.

Cira 1957, Doc and his wife moved into another home he built adjacent to the Roundhouse. Floyd Davis became the caretaker of the Coker Creek home. The property was sold to the Cherokee National Forest in the 1960s. Two decades later, a fire destroyed the rock mansion.

- Interviews by Pam Hall Mathews in 2009 with Doc's friends, Charles Hall and Kenneth Dalton; Charles Hall Museum files
- Ken Jones