

1785 - The Geographic Center of Connecticut

First reference, at the 50th anniversary of the Kensington Soldiers Monument, that at the original dedication in 1863, Senator Foster began his speech by saying: “We stand today, friends, in the geographical center of the state of Connecticut.”¹

In 1922, The Hartford Courant found that according to “*a very careful survey of the country by the United States Interior Department during which the geographic center of each state in the union was determined. In Connecticut the point was situated in East Berlin in the Hartford County.*”²

Decades later, according to the United States Geological Survey publication: Elevations and Distances in the United States, c2001: The geographic centers and positions listed below should be considered as approximations. In Connecticut: Hartford County at East Berlin³



According to Berlin Town Historian, Ann Borthwick and Berlin Town Clerk Joanne Ward, the geographic center of Connecticut is in East Berlin, located at 12 Savage Hill Road, East Berlin⁴

Latitude: 41 degrees 36' 56.1442"
Longitude: -72 degrees 43' 40.3172”⁵

The house at 12 Savage Hill Road is the Steven Wilcox house built in 1800. The swamp behind the house is bounded by Savage Hill Road, Mill Street (Route 372), and Middletown Road.

12 Savage Hill Road, East Berlin⁶

¹ Hartford Courant, July 28, 1913

² Hartford Courant, September 7, 1922: E. Berlin Center of Connecticut

³ On the Internet: USGS: Elevations and Distances in the United States, 2001. This booklet was originally published and printed in 1995 and revised and reprinted in 2001. The online edition contains the full text from the printed publication.

⁴ Specific location identified by Ann Borthwick, Berlin Town Historian, 1991-2001 and Joanne Ward, Berlin Town Clerk 1973-2001

⁵ On the Internet: Steve Morse: Converting addresses to/from latitude/longitude in one step, 2004

⁶ Cathy Nelson photo

According to a newspaper article *“Local legend (says the marker) lurks in the swamp behind the old yellow house. According to a number of sources, the property on Savage Hill Road is home to the state’s center. But no one has had success locating anything besides tree stumps in the boggy wetlands and woods. Nobody it seems, knows exactly where to find it.”*⁷ Many people have heard about the marker, but it seems that the actual marker is lost.⁸ Ann and David Borthwick found a marker, but Ann doubted that she would be able to find it a second time.⁹ In the swamp there is a US Coast & Geodetic Society & State Survey Station No. 232 elevation feet marker which is set on the top of a concrete monument. Today the NGS (National Geodetic Survey) monitors the elevation marker. The USGS states that the No. 232 marker was set up for vertical elevation information and not for marking the geographic center of Connecticut.¹⁰

However, there are plenty of ideas as to the location of a geometric center of Connecticut marker. According to another newspaper article, back in 1957, there were *“some pretty lively discussions as to just where the center is, and according to the opinions expressed, the center has been in more places than a grasshopper trying to shake off an itch. It is somewhere in the swamps off Middletown Road known during days gone by as the East Berlin flats. Others say the spot is marked by a tree stump at the flat.”*¹¹ Lini Corvi was certain that a concrete marker at the Berlin Depot was the geographic center. It turned out that the C & GS bench mark A-16 marker was from 1935 and showed the elevation was 60.725 feet at the Berlin Depot.¹²

However, in 1957, Edward L. Davis Jr, Town Engineer, noted in the same newspaper article **“that there is no marker hidden in East Berlin that locates the exact point of the geographic center of Connecticut.”**¹³ Merna Pauloz noted *“Don’t search for a monument or a marker, because there isn’t one. It’s kind of swampy down there, she said “I don’t think thy would know how to put one in.”*¹⁴

Meanwhile, everyone knows that there is a marker – somewhere in the swamp – and it is just a matter of finding it.

⁷ Hartford Courant, August 2, 2004: Location, Location

⁸ Hartford Courant, August 2, 2004: Location, Location by Jessica Feinstein and followed by an editorial on August 11, 2004

⁹ Kay Murray, Berlin Town Historian, 2006-present

¹⁰ Letter from USGS, March 19, 2009: *“The marker 232 was established for vertical elevation information, not for marking the geographic center of CT. Sometimes an entity, such as a town, will place a marker stating “geographic center of such and such”, and this may have happened in East Berlin. But it would not be anything established by federal agencies as an official spot.”*

¹¹ New Britain Herald, August 15, 1957: Did Lino Corvi find center of Connecticut?

¹² New Britain Herald, August 15, 1957: Did Lino Corvi find center of Connecticut?

¹³ New Britain Herald, August 15, 1957: Did Lino Corvi find center of Connecticut?

¹⁴ Hartford Courant, May 15, 1991” Back lot is center of state by Dana M. Tofig