



Grafton Cave Quest

Grafton, Vermont

Special Features: Natural, Historic

Physical Difficulty: Moderate

Duration: 1:15

Bring: Field guide

To get there: Follow Rte 11 east to Chester. Turn south on Rte 35 (by the True Value hardware store) and follow to Grafton. Turn right onto Main Street and then left in front of The Old Tavern onto Townshend Rd. Follow Townshend Road 1/4 mile to the Nature Museum. The Nature Museum building will be on the right, with parking on the left.

Overview: The Nature Museum is a dynamic and educational place to visit. They sponsor many off-site, naturalist-led public programs, and teach classes in schools and libraries across the region. Exhibits and the Second Nature gift shop are open to the public 10:00-4:00 on Saturdays and Sundays year round. The museum is usually open on school vacation weeks, holidays and other special occasions. We are happy to open any other time for individuals or groups by appointment. Admission is charged. For more information: <http://www.nature-museum.org/>.

Clues:

This Quest begins at the Nature Museum. To get the most out of your visit to Grafton, you may want to have two other brochures with you on the Quest. Both brochures are available at the Nature Museum.

- The "Walking Tour of Historic Grafton"
- The "Village Park Interpretive Trail Map"

Built in 1876, this wonderful building, now housing the Nature Museum, began its life as the Grafton Grange. The building was moved to this site around 1940 by Miss Lucy Daniels who worried that it might catch on fire and fall on her small house if it stayed where it was. How do you suppose this big building was moved?

The Grange sold the building to the Nature Museum in 1996, and in 1999 the Museum moved its collections here. The Grange members continue to meet here in this building.

To begin your walk to the Village Park, stand in front of the Nature Museum facing the road. Turn left and head up Townshend Road. Pass the Gallery North Star and three old-fashioned street lamps, and then note the Daniels House on the left. It was built around 1820.

On the corner of Townshend and Main, see the Phelps Barn and the Old Tavern, built in 1801. The barn carries the name of brothers Francis and Harlan, who bought the Old Tavern in 1865. They added the third story and the porches to the Tavern with money they got from their California gold finds and ran it as the "Phelps Hotel" for the next 48 years.

If you have time, go inside to the front desk of the Old Tavern. Look on the wall above the front desk for the name of the famous Civil War general who once stayed here.

Keeping the Tavern on your left, travel uphill through the village until you reach the Chapel and the Brick Church, which will both be on the left-hand side of the street. The brick church was built in 1833 and used to have horse sheds behind it. People who belonged to the church bought stalls for their horses as well as pews for themselves. The two church buildings in town united in 1920 and became the "Church of Grafton".

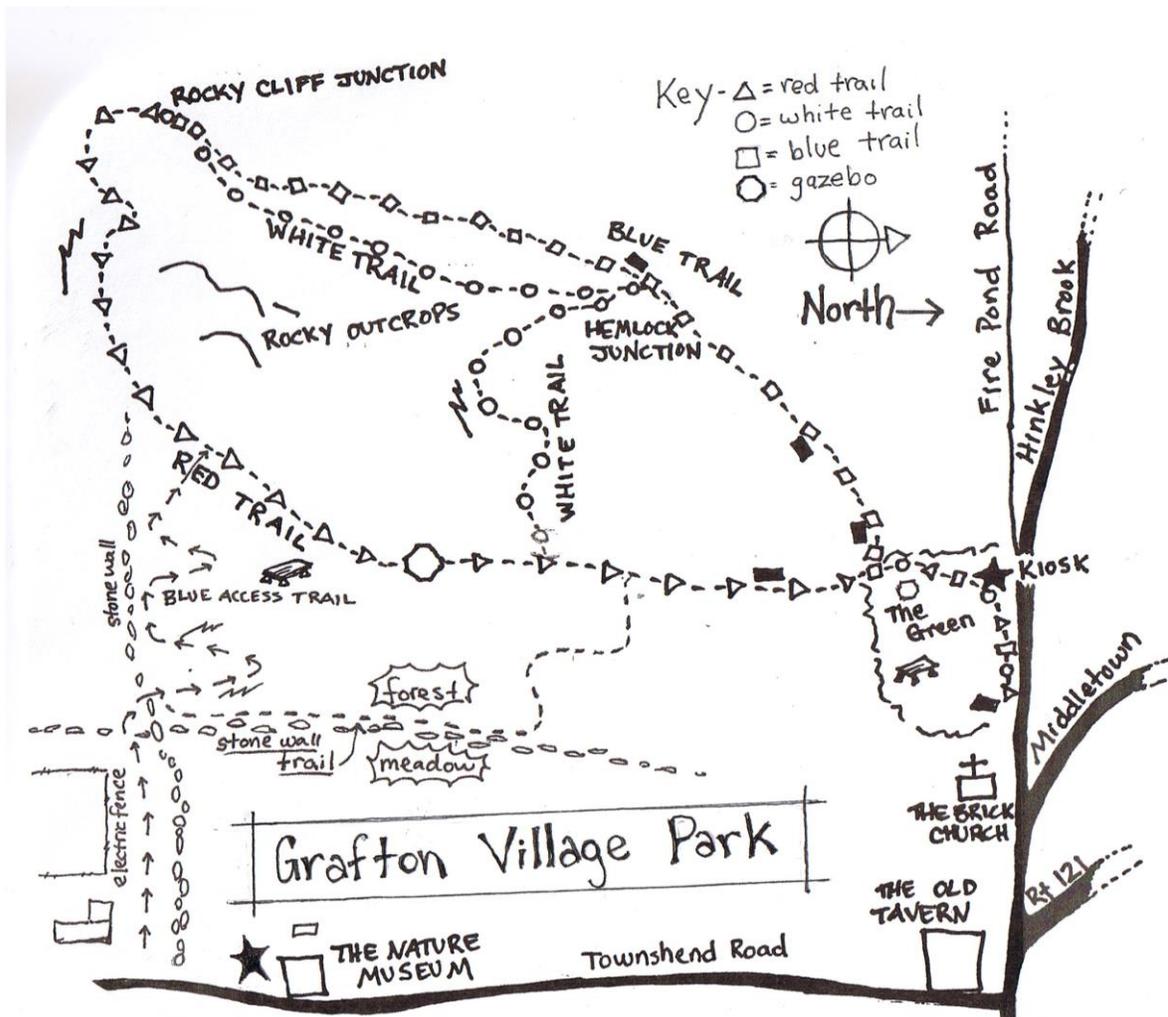
Just past the church, where brick ends and wood begins, you'll find the Village Park.

Read the stone to see who donated this land to the town... and when. Thanks to them, we may still climb to the rock outcroppings through the forests of hemlock, oak, and large pines that began to grow after most of the sheep had ceased to eat grass here.

Once in the Park, follow the Red Trail for the most direct route to the Treasure Box.

Take a rest when you come to the second bench you see. It is near a lot of large white pines. Do you know how many white pine needles are in a bundle?

Near the junction where the White trail turns off to the right off of the Red trail, can you spot the stone steps that led to an old gazebo? The gazebo is no longer there because a large white pine fell on it in 2002.



Further up the red trail you'll see a square Gazebo. Made of cedar, it was built in the 1920's. Before the trees grew up, there was an overlook here, which looked out over the Town.

Keep on hiking. You will know when you are there.
 Your legs will be tired. You will still be climbing.
 There will not be any more benches or gazebos.
 And suddenly you will be saying "Wow!" and then, all jumbled together, you'll hear yourself saying at least as many things as there are needles in the pine bundle:

Look at that rock!!
 How did it get there?
 Who built that wall?
 And why?

Can we go in there?

When all these things are heard from your mouth and those with you, you will know you are in the right place!

If you find the Treasure Box, please sign-in, stamp your book, and close things right.

Others will be coming too, and they'll be happy to find it dry and tight.

When you are ready to retrace your steps, one word to the wise is in order:

Go back to the entrance of the Village Park by whatever trail you wish, but please note that if you follow the white "Museum" sign that points down the blue access trail, that path is quite steep.

We hope that you have had a good time and that you will come again. Our hills, streams, forests and farmland are our real treasures.

Thank you for exploring them and doing your part to take good care of them!

This Quest was written in 2007 by Debby Hinman, based on an original created by students at the Compass School in 2000.

Please be a good steward of the land: leave it better than you found it and pack out any trash you find.



Valley Quest is a collection of treasure hunts that share and teach the natural gems and cultural heritage of the Upper Valley with children, families, adults, and visitors. It is a program of Vital Communities, a regional nonprofit working to engage citizens, organizations, and communities in creating solutions to our region's challenges. Learn more at vitalcommunities.org.

Have a suggestion, question, comment, or idea for us? We'd love to hear from you. Reach us at valleyquest@vitalcommunities.org or 802-291-9100.