



Monadnock Mills Area Quest

Claremont, NH

Moderate

Architectural, Historical

Pavement

1:00

Season: Year round

This Quest takes you back in history to city mills and now the restoration of some of the same structures. It is a great area to enjoy food and scenery.

To get there: This quest is the near the center of Claremont's downtown and municipal area, by the Monadnock Mills along the Sugar River. It can be reached via Exit 8 of I-91, proceeding east on 103 East/12 North on Main Street almost 5 miles. Before you reach Opera House Square, please turn right into the 4-level parking garage that is just past the intersections of Central and Water Streets. Or, come to the center of Claremont on Route 103 West from Newport, and turn right onto Water or Tremont Streets to reach the garage, or route 12 North from Charlestown, and after proceeding around Opera House Square turn down Main Street near the Tumble Inn Diner. The parking garage will be straight ahead. This is where your Quest begins.



Super Quest 2019: Gateway to Summer Fun

This quest is one of 25 featured in this year's Super Quest challenge to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Vital Communities. For the rest of your adventure: vitalcommunities.org/superquest

Now that you're here...

For more adventure check out the Colonial Claremont Quest or Mount Ascutney's trails. Also be sure to explore the Claremont Spice and Dry Goods shop.

Clues:

*Park your car in something big and gray,
It's the new parking garage, I say!
If you get a chance to go to Level 4
Enjoy views of the mills, Ascutney and more!*

*Walk out the door and look down to your left,
Brick and mortar are all that are left.*

The Sullivan "Sawtooth Building" is what you see
Once the forge shop for this top engineering company.
Their drills dug up diamonds in Africa and the Panama Canal
Sullivan forgers must have had great morale!
Do you want to hear something really neat?
There's a tunnel that led under and across the street!

*Now cross on the crosswalk then down diagonally right,
Here is where you will find your next sight.*

The first building on your left is Monadnock Mill #3,
The first mill in the area run by electricity.
In this building they wove fancy jacquard bedspreads,
Even the White House ordered them for their beds!
It was also known as the Peterson Mill,
That nice new condos soon will fill.

*Next keep walking down Water Street
Stop as soon as the very next building you meet.
First look across to your right, way up high
There you will see Mill #5.*

Before it was Pittsburgh Paints and Marro Plumbing Supply,
Monadnock added a floor for 64 looms to occupy.
It 1880 it stored bales of raw cotton,
In 1911 it became storage and was forgotten.

Beside it on the left, built in 1881,
This building housed the Monadnock Office where their business was done.

In front of you "21 Water Street" should be what you see,
Monadnock Mill #2, built in 1853.
Once used to weave fabric, then where you could buy furniture and bikes too,
Now the Common Man Inn where you can get a room with a view.
Underneath their great big sign,
Take a minute to read their nice timeline.

*Please walk down the street to the very next mill
Stop and look to your right upon the hill.*

On the right, this brick building was once a house
For two families, and maybe even a mouse.
There once was another just like it next door,
It was razed to make room for more parking for stores.

The men in charge of the Monadnock Mills
Lived with their families, up there in the hill.

*Now here beside you, right where you stand,
Please look at the mill that is on this land.*

Built in 1839, unoccupied 5 years,
Constructed by local investors who sold it to their peers.
Sugar River Mfg. Company, Monadnock Mill #1,
The oldest mill in the area, it's stood rain, snow and sun.
It once had a cupola up on its roof,
A photo from 1857 is the proof.
Now home to State offices, like the DMV
NH residents can get services, like Driver IDs.

*Continue on to the next building you see,
A moving company now owns it but not its history.*

In 1902 the Monadnock Cloth Room was named,
Trimming, singeing and dyeing cottons is how this one's famed.
Across the street on the right, a big brick place with shingles,
Boarding house for mill workers, but just ones who were single.
To its left, mill apartments once sat in that spot
That is now a great big parking lot.

*Is that pizza and garlic in the air?
Follow your nose right on up there.*

The Monadnock Bleach House is what Ramunto's used to be,
Before that a repair shop and a schoolhouse for everybody.

*Take a left on the street that we call Broad.
Sometimes you can see people hanging their fishing rod.*

Cross the bridge for whom Charles Puksta was dedicated,
16 years he was Mayor and for 26, City Council Incorporated.
Look to your left and you will see near
The current home of "Slypner Gear".

Former home of the Sunapee Mill,
This building sits at the bottom of a hill.
Built in 1843 as a cotton factory,
Has been a grocery store, apartments, cable company.
Down below it in back was gas for lights to be lit
So the textiles of the mills could all be well-knit.

*Stop at the corner and look diagonally to your right,
The Sarah B.H. Smith Park is just out of sight.*

Ms. Smith was a teacher at Stevens High and at church,
She was in the DAR and loved historical research.
In her memory this park was named
Now it's where skateboarders can show off their game.

*Proceed to your left on the street that's named North,
You'll soon see a cannon that once boomed louder than the 4th.*

This cannon sits at Oliver Lacasse Park,
Just a sliver of what was once a great landmark.
This park once encompassed many blocks
But now is just a six foot box.
Sgt. Lacasse was the first Claremonter to make the supreme sacrifice
In World War I the 19 year old fought and lost his life.

*Listen about Daniel Dexter's home if you please,
Unfortunately you can't see it when there are leaves on the trees.*

Look up past the cannon to the left if you will,
His home sits way up high on the hill.
Dexter built the dam back by the Puksta Bridge,
His house once sat at the bottom of the ridge.
Claremont used to make the house "haunted" for Halloween,
It's called the "Fitchburg House" for reasons unseen.

*Continue up North Street, but don't delay.
Go into the Visitor's Center if you may.
Lots of info about Claremont is on display!*

*Now back out, face the intersection with lights,
In front of the rocks please imagine this sight:*

Here in the road once stood a castle of toys
In the 60's and 70's you'd find girls and boys.
The "Toy Castle" was once a big, fun toy store,
Filled with dolls, bikes and games, puzzles and more.
A model train ran up around the edge
Of the second floor, on a special ledge.
There was a waterwheel that spun and a mini waterfall,
A phone on which Santa you could call!
In 1981 the castle came down sadly,
Claremont needed to move the road very badly.

*You are now getting pretty close to the end,
There are 2 optional stops just up 'round the bend.
(If you are too tired or don't have the time
You may skip the next 20 lines.)*

Ahead on the left see the big round stack,
This is where you're headed before turning back.

*Continue to walk down North, and cross Spring Street
Soon on your left a view of the stack you will meet.*

The smokestack is just about all left to see
Of the Sullivan Power Plant that made electricity
For what was once the biggest employer in town.
(You'll learn more about Sullivan a few lines down.)

*Just a few steps further, face the corner of Barnes if you will,
The house on the left with many garages was the home of "Bill."*

In the early 1800's Bill Barnes ran a tavern here,
People would come from both far and near.
"Barnes Tavern" was popular, his business was great.
His name's still on the door on a big brass plate.
At the corner of Spring Street, back in the day
A big lion sign stood pointing the way.
(Don't feel bad if high taxes have got you down-
Barnes was once the 3rd highest taxpayer in town!)

*Now retrace your steps from where you once came
At the Visitor's Center we'll continue our game.*

*Please head down all the stairs if you would.
You are now on top of where Sullivan Foundry once stood.*

They made mining equipment that was known world-wide,
They had buildings on the river that stood on both sides.
First Sullivan, then Joy, they changed their name,
But the company was really just one and the same.
Before many of the buildings burned or were torn down
For over 50 years they were the biggest employer in town.

*Now this lovely park is here on the ridge.
Cross the river on the nice new walking bridge.*

Please stop on the bridge to admire the sight,
Waterfalls on the left, Sullivan Mills on your right.
Past the bridge on your left was Monadnock Mill #4.
Now the Common Man Restaurant, walk up past their door.
If you'd like to eat dinner, go in, have a bite!
Be sure to look at their beautiful site.

*Now walk up the brick path under the wooden awning.
(You're at the end, so stop now, no yawning!)*

Behind Mill #2 attached is Mill #6.
Go in the back door and admire the pix.
Photos of old Claremont hang on the wall.
Now head up the stairs but be careful, don't fall!
Head through the lobby and up to the desk.
Ask for your treasure – you've finished your Quest!

*Out the front door to the right, not too far
You should see the garage where you parked your car.*