



Center of Town Quest

Hartford, Vermont

Physical Difficulty: Easy

Special Features: Historical, UV250

Duration: 0:45

To get there: Take Route 4 west two miles from White River Junction. Turn south onto Center of Town Road and proceed to the top of the hill (about 0.8 miles). Park along the green that is on your right. Your Quest begins here.

Overview

This Quest explores the first settlement in Hartford: the mustering ground, an old cemetery and inn, School # 1, and other hidden treasures. Meeting House Common is maintained by the Hartford Department of Parks and Recreation, whose goal is to serve the needs of the community through quality parks and facilities; and by offering life long learning opportunities through recreational and cultural programs. For more information regarding Hartford's parks, please visit www.hartford-vt.org

Clues

Many years ago, upon this green
 Hartford's Center of Town was a bustling scene.
 So park your car and come on down
 Let's explore this old ghost town!
 Start at something red, white, and blue
 And about old Hartford we will tell you.

King George the 3rd was no nerd
 On July 5th, 1761 he gave us his word
 By signing the charter to declare this town Hartford.

Now gaze across the green
 And imagine this scene:
 Folks coming down from the hills
 To practice their drills,
 In preparation for fights
 To free up our rights.

While imagining the beat of their marching feet
 Turn your body to look across the street.
 Note the tall trees, so scary and old
 They are locust trees we are told.

Now turn twice and walk to the sign.
Stop to read it, line by line.
At the back of the sign let's face the woods
Look toward the left please if you could.
Take 35 steps between the biggest tree
And all the picnic tables that you see.

Turn to the left and proceed 70 paces.
Stop at the road and turn your faces.
Right, find two trees together. Stop & visit # 2.(now a stump)
Cross the street to find your next clue.

This old Inn is now some one's home.
Instead of walking down their driveway,
Please walk on the side of the road.
Leavitt's Inn opened in January of 1794.
Original stenciling is hidden behind the door.
This once was the place for the stagecoach drop.
Between Boston and Montreal, people would stop.

Walk around this property but stay along the road
When you reach the rock, stop like a toad.
Look both ways before you cross.
Make a right so you don't get lost.
Keep walking to the end of the old stone wall.
Stand here a minute and reflect on it all.

Stop and read the sign of white.
The bush by the back porch is your next site.
With your back to the porch, walk past some trees.
When you reach the rock, stop if you please.
Look both ways, cross and keep on right
Continue on to rock wall's end
Decades if not hundreds old, and yet still strong no need to mend

The rocks in this wall were an old foundation.
From a church which once held the Hartford Congregation.
Now turn your eyes towards the back corner of this space
Where old town buildings once stood with grace.

Reverse directions and head down the hill
To the sign of red that makes you stand still.
Head to the right and look for the stump of a tree
Further down hill and 2 mailboxes you'll see.
Turn your back to these boxes & go back up 20 paces.
Gaze at the school house where kids once held races.

Josephine Orizzonto once taught at this school.
In 1943 she ended her rule.
Envision all the history we're telling
As you look upon what is now a private dwelling.

Walk back to the green and look for a pipe.

It is also green and an “out of the ground” type.
Then, search for a white cross. Then go stand below
For this old cemetery we would like to show.

Enter quietly and look for stones in a line:
3 tall light ones and 4 of the small, dark kind.
With your back to the gate
Go check out their fate.

Welcome friends, meet the Tildens.
Josiah ran a tavern out of his buildings.
Also an authority on the weather forecast
He fought in the Revolutionary War gone past.

Pay final respects to son of Stephen and Abigail
And continue along this historic trail.
With your back to Josiah, put your right hand out
Look for an arcing stone top...then give a shout!

Here lies Solomon Strong with his two wives
And his many children who lost their lives.
This family we know has many roots here,
Farmers, soldiers, and millers—they were all held dear.

So exit if you would this yard of bone
Take a last look around and keep a low tone.
The final moment is here at last.
It is the end of our story from Hartford’s past.

The treasure is hidden down on the ground
If you find a green chimney, then it will be found.

Created by Mary Bouchard’s students at Hartford High School in 2003.

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 100+ 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.

