Houghton Hill Quest

**Thetford, Vermont**
Physical Difficulty: Moderate  
Special Features: Natural, Vista  
Walking Conditions: Trail  
Duration: 0:45  
Bring: Binoculars, Field Guide

**To get there:** Get off at I-91 Exit 14, the Lyme/Thetford exit. At the top of the hill take a right onto Houghton Hill Road. Continue 1.5 miles on this road until you see a small pond on your left. Shortly there will be a small, rocky pull-off on the right, across from a "No Hunting" sign. There is only room for one or two cars. The trail begins on the opposite side of the road.

**Overview:** A moderate uphill walk to one of the best views in Thetford, this woodland trail was made possible with permission of private landowners.

**Clues:**
Walk towards “No Hunting” after parking your car. The Quest trail starts there, it is not far. It slopes down gently to a dip in the land, Then rises up steeper, without a bend.

You’ll see many young trees with light gray bark  
And ugly raised blisters, the beech blight’s mark.  
Attacked by an insect, a fungus moved in.  
It caused the cankers and pockmarked the skin.

Tall hemlocks are lining the trail left and right,  
Their tiny green needles show no signs of blight.  
They stay green in winter and help shed the snow;  
Turned over, you’ll find two white lines in a row.
You’ll get to a trail marked with polar bear signs. It was laid out for skiers in wide curving lines. It comes up from Thetford’s large school parking lot. You’ll cross it again in a different spot.

Keep hiking uphill and you’ll see it three times. Yellow stake on the left marks the property lines. Barbed wire imbedded in trees is there still Remembering sheep farms high up on the hill.

In late eighteen hundreds Vermont was well known For wool and sheep raising in every town. The forest was cleared, but some big trees would stay Like the old sugar maple on the left of your way.

Now close to the top the land opens up. Young birches and white pines are filling the gap Where loggers made room for the gorgeous view. An old apple tree was left as a clue,

Because right beyond it and there on the left The trail leads up through a narrow cleft To the rocky summit of Houghton Hill. Turn around and admire, if you will!

Moose Mtn., Holts Ledge far out in the East, Then Smarts, Cube and Moosilauke, what a feast, AT hikers walk over all of them! Behind you, look down to another gem:

Lake Abenaki, the Girl Scout camp too, Ascutney and Killington, far out in the blue.
The QUESTBOX? Quite close to the narrow cleft, 
By a right-angled rock down there to the left!

Revisions made by Inge Trebitz April 2020