



Justin Morrill Homestead Quest

Strafford, Vermont

Physical Difficulty: Easy

Special Features: Historical, Architectural, Natural

Walking Conditions: Trail

Duration: 0:45

Bring: Compass, Boots

To get there: From I-89 take Exit 2 at Sharon and drive northeast on Vermont Route 132 for six miles to South Strafford village. In South Strafford, take a left at the stop sign onto Justin Smith Morrill Highway. Drive two miles to Strafford's "upper village." The homestead will be on your right, just before the library. The Quest begins in the parking lot of the Morrill Homestead. Admission is charged to enter the House. (You do not need to enter the house to complete the Quest, but you will want to once you are there!) The Homestead is open from late May through mid-October, Wednesday through Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

QUEST SITE OVERVIEW

Senator Justin Morrill (1810 – 1898) was born in Strafford, the son of a blacksmith. At age 15, he had to leave school to work as a merchant's clerk, and in later years he became a legislator. He worked tirelessly to provide others with the opportunities he himself lacked.

Inspired by his own lack of formal education, Senator Morrill was the chief sponsor of the Land Grant Act, signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862. The goal of the Act being to create a land grant to each state to provide an education to farmers, mechanics, artisans and laborers. However, colleges in former Confederate states denied this opportunity to African Americans. The subsequent 1890 Morrill Act forced all states to either establish separate colleges for African Americans or to desegregate the colleges established under the first legislation. The southern states chose to establish 16 black colleges and universities. Ultimately the 1890 legislation provided federal funding

for the founding of 105 black colleges and universities established before 1964. Students and alumni of these institutions played pivotal roles in the passage of civil rights laws in the U.S. (See Source - [VT African American Heritage Trail](#) for more information)

The Morrill Homestead is an example of Gothic Revival Architecture. It was designed and built by Justin Morrill before embarking on his political career. The Justin Morrill Homestead is a Vermont owned Historic Site. Find out more about this place and many others at: www.historicvermont.org.

Clues:

If you stand between two landmarks
One very tall, one very short, and look to the rising sun and the bay
Into which the setting sun does stray
There you will find the very first clue...
But try as you might you can't peek through!

Next turn in place to where is featured
The horse rising from within the four lions' heads,
A parking place for four legged creatures
Visiting the Senator's homestead.
And there you will find the second clue,
But don't get tied up, there is more to do!

Next head up the hill to a door without a house
Where without a roof plants will get doused.
There you will see some rusty pipe
That kept the plants from getting frostbite
And now you have found the third clue,
You're just warming up, there is more to do!

Look uphill again to the red door in midair,
What could have ever lived up there?
Downstairs lived the bacon, upstairs lived the beef,
Aren't you sorry they aren't here still to eat?
And thus you have found your fourth clue
Don't stop now; keep on the "mooo"ve.

Head to the smaller of the storage places
Where the outside wall has lots of vertical spaces.

Peek in the crib, you won't find a baby
Unless it's a baby ear of corn, maybe.
Now you've found the fifth clue
Are you ready to go where the ice blocks grew?

Now climb up the hill almost to the trees
But watch your step, you might fall in and freeze.
No fishing, no swimming,
No boating, no floating,
And in the water there's probably no otter.
Now you found the sixth clue
Used for making ice cream for me and you.

Roll down the hill to the first two buildings
"Baa" lived on the left, horseshoes forged on the right.
Next is the home of Jim, Charlie and Ruth
Each in their own spacious booth.
Now we'll move on to the next clue
Don't horse around there is more to do!

Go to the stage where games were played
To get there head left towards a high castle wall.
Here they played shuffleboard
And hoped to get a really good score.
Now we'll meander on a path of gravel
For our very next clue to unravel.

To the front of the castle you should perambulate
And spy the oldest Norwegian in the state.
Spend a moment on the tour
To see plants that have been here before the Civil War.
Last and least there is a building we missed
For your last clue cross any bridge.

Now that you've done your very best
Look for a box that ends your Quest.
On a post much like Morrill's fence
Lift up the lid that you have sensed.
Stamp your journal; you're on your way
Hope you have a very great day!

This Quest was created by children and adults participating in “Family Nights” at the Morrill Library in 2001. Revised by Vital Communities staff 2021.

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 160+ 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.