The Junction Quest

White River Junction, Vermont
Physical Difficulty: Easy
Special Features: Historical, Architectural
Walking Conditions: Pavement
Duration: 0:45
Bring: Pencil

To get there: Take Exit 11 off I-91 and travel north on Route 5 down the hill toward the village of White River Junction. Continue straight through the second set of lights. Route 5 turns left, but you should continue straight on North Main Street to the stop sign. Continue for one block and turn left over the tracks. You will then follow the “Welcome Center” signs into the parking lot for the Court House and the Train Station.

Overview:
This walk through a vibrant town center features galleries, museums and trains.

Clues:
Life in White River has changed its ways, since the railroad had its glory days.
With a short walk around the town, there’s lots of history to be found.

My wheels are not in motion, though I’m still a sight to see.
Find 494 near the center of town and start your Quest with me.
With the tracks on your left follow the path to the RR crossing.
Turn right toward the courthouse and keep on walking.
Go left past three new buildings;  
the first houses RSG.  
The second even newer building  
is just as modern as can be.

Then turn north across Ralph Lehman bridge  
that spans our Class “B” water  
Cleaner today and flowing free  
for fishermen, swimmers, and otters.

Enter where your leaders park  
Keep right or risk road rage  
Continue to the children’s park  
Until you see the stage

Follow the river east down low  
Beneath the rusted junction track  
Past views of scenic flow  
You’ll soon be turning back

For now take in expansive sights  
Then continue on to a scenic point  
where in 1704 the Iroquois did alight.  
To fight French and English forces joint.

Enjoy the confluence, take in the view,  
Then head back to the west from here  
Cross grass onto pavement  
to a garden nicely planted; 1991 was the year.

Travel back across the bridge,  
no need to dive and swim,  
count the light posts on your left,  
bright or dark or dim

Remember the number,  
you’ll need it soon,  
to find the treasure  
this journey’s boon.  
At the last post, look right to a place  
where red trucks housed.  
Now the Main Street Museum’s home,  
stop in sometime and see the collection!
Slip under a trestle walking straight 'til you see on your right a cornerstone of 1960. Inside this home of Ma Bell for many a year you would find many telephones here.

Heading east from the corner, travel along artist’s row, our Quest drawing soon to a close At the end of the block turn left with your toes, some mathematics to you we pose:

Remember the light posts you counted before, subtract five from the number you got. The answer’s the number of doors you must pass before reaching our finish spot.

Inside this place there’s a desk lit by lamps and someone seated behind. This is the person to ask for the box that you’ve worked so hard to find!
About your destination:

The Hotel Coolidge has been the center of hospitality in White River Junction since 1849, when railroading began. Formerly called The Junction House, owner Nathaniel “Than” Wheeler renamed his hotel when Calvin Coolidge became President of the United States in 1923, in honor of his good friend and patron John Coolidge of Plymouth, Vermont, the president’s father. For generations, it has been an important place to stay, eat, greet and meet.

This Quest was created by Linny Levin, Sue Kirincich and Marty Layman-Mendonca in 1999. Revised by Laura Dintino in Marty’s honor in 2007.

Other things to do nearby: Find a meal at Piecemeal Pies or Tuckerbox, or drive over to VINS to watch raptors do backflips.

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.