



## The Town House Quest

### **Strafford, Vermont**

Physical Difficulty: Easy

Walking Conditions: Pavement

Special Features: Historical

Duration: 0:45

**To get there:** Take I-91 to the Norwich Exit, #13. Drive straight through Norwich. After 5 miles, merge onto Route 132 West. Continue to South Strafford (8 miles) where you will leave 132 and stay straight toward Strafford Village.

### **Clues:**

History's Winding Path to Strafford's Town House  
(Park behind the Town House. Face the stream)

Seventeen-eighty was the year  
Enoch Bean has his mill dam here.  
Walk around front, to the present green,  
Where only his log house could then be seen.

There, ten times Town Meeting met,  
With surveys made and roadways set  
So folk could get to Enoch's mill,  
Though routes were rough and rugged still.

With Revolutionary War's alarm,  
Bean's Quaker Beliefs cost him his farm.  
For trumped-up debts, his land was sold  
While he was away and was not told.

Buyer, Daniel Robinson, in 1788,  
Walked from Foxboro to Vermont State –  
One hundred-fifty miles with wife, eight children,  
Bringing his handmade desk, and Bible with him.

Cross the green to a house, the light grey one,  
Daniel built in 1790, with two of his sons,  
A dwelling, an inn, public tavern and more.  
Then, together, they built the store next door.

Follow the Brook Road (no sign) to your right,  
Past bridge, past stones piled "half-wall" height.  
Joel Hatch walked home this way  
When he ran Daniel's inn and store each day.

His house (#34) is our destination.  
A tiny half-cape with foundation,  
First Moses Sanborn's early building;  
Then Joel enlarged to full-cape with wing.

Across the road was Joel's potash,  
Where folks brought hearth ash in for cash,  
Or "outdoor ashes" from clearing woods  
That paid the bill for store-bought goods.

Walk back now, down the Brook Road, straight  
Up to the cemetery gate.  
Then through the ancient turnstile pass,  
To climb a smooth, steep slope of grass

Before the first big tree stump, turn right –  
At infant Sanborn's dove in flight.  
A pink granite spire lifts up the soul  
Then a gray spire – Royal, son of Joel.

Follow flagstones by an iron fence,  
Plus five more paces, turn right and thence  
Seven stones to Moses Sanborn's space –  
The man who first built Joel's place.

Exit left and the hill's crest follow  
A drive goes right, back to "The Hollow."  
Where, left, this 1807 Blacksmith Shop  
Used Enoch's dam for power nonstop!

Back on the Green, face Daniel's blue door.  
A "long room" across the second floor,

For gatherings or Masonic Hall,  
Revelers and dancers had a Ball!

A tavern: drinks, victuals and lodging,  
And next door, Daniel's store (the brown wing)  
Seth Burbank ran it – 1794 the date –  
Joel Hatch took over in 1798

That year, Strafford met at Daniels's inn.  
To see whose Town House plan would win:  
"The City's" site near Smith's Falls and Mill,  
Or "Upper Hollow's" on Daniel's hill.

The people chose to set the stake  
On "The Hollow's hill – and that would make  
The name "Old City," the City's lot  
And "Upper Village," the chosen spot.

The inn was roof over builders' heads,  
The tavern kept them wined and fed,  
The store sold hardware and supplies,  
While Daniel helped to supervise!

But Three years passed before the Town could get  
Title to where Common and Town House set.  
Not 'til Daniel sold his two sons his lands –  
On the deed, it was THEY who set their hands.

Still, with money from pews, all ended fine,  
The Town House was raised in 1799  
Your Town House Quest, too, will turn out well –  
At the box outside, 'neath the clock-tower bell.

**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](http://vitalcommunities.org).

Have a suggestion, question, comment, or idea for us? We'd love to hear from you. Reach us at [valleyquest@vitalcommunities.org](mailto:valleyquest@vitalcommunities.org) or 802-291-9100.

