

Suggested Hikes

Woods Walk - Orange/White

[Easy, 1.0 mi, 120 ft total ascent, 0.6 hr] Start in the picnic area west of the lake, cross the footbridge [A] and follow the orange blazes. After curving left, the trail turns sharply right, crosses a brook, and intersects the white blazed trail. Turn left and follow the white blazes to the footbridge over I-691 [C], then turn around and follow the white-blazed trail back to the picnic area.

Halfway House - White

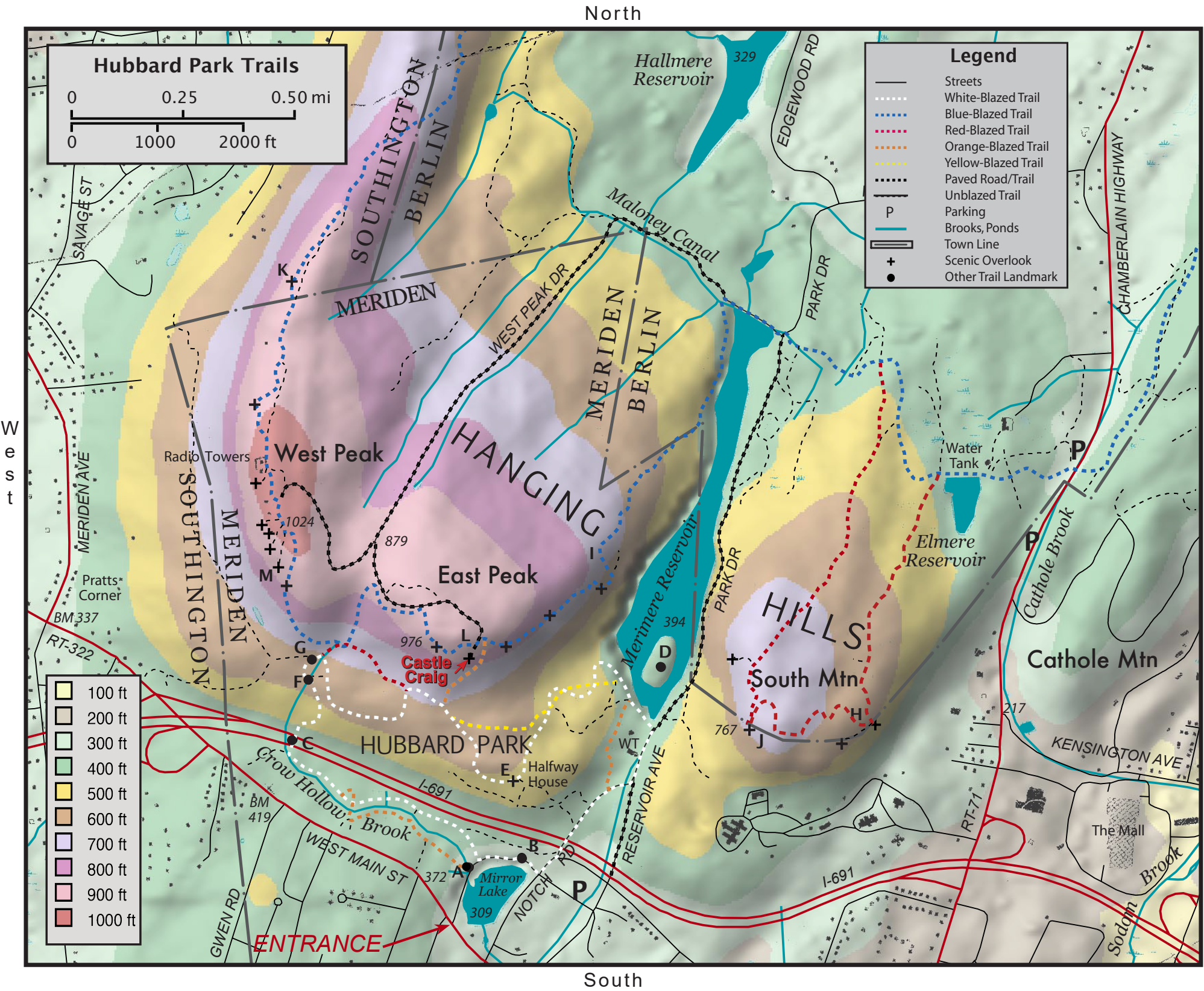
[Easy, 2.7 mi, 350 ft total ascent, 1.7 hr] Follow Notch Rd. from the gate under I-691, then turn left on Reservoir Ave. Just before the reservoir, turn left at the gate onto the white-blazed dirt carriage road. Climb the hill through several switchbacks until you reach the Halfway House [E], with its view of Meriden. Continue on, past a large boulder and past an orange-blazed trail that ascends steeply to Castle Craig [L]. Turn left, off of the carriage road, still following the white blazes. When you see the red-blazed trail further on, turn left to continue on the white-blazed trail, then left again just after the Beehive Spring [G]. The return takes you across a high footbridge over Crow Hollow Brook [F]. Turn left after the footbridge over I-691 [C], left at Mirror Lake, pass the Spring House [B] and back to Notch Rd.

South Mountain - Blue/Red

[Moderate, 3.6 mi, 762 ft total ascent, 2.5 hr] Park where the Metacomet Trail crosses Rt-71 (Chamberlain Highway). Follow the blue blazes to the west, past the water tank and Elmere Reservoir. Immediately after the reservoir, turn left onto the red-blazed trail, which leads you to the cliff [H] that overlooks Target and the Mall. Continue following the red blazes to point [J] where there is a dramatic view of downtown Meriden. Continuing North on the red-blazed trail, you come to a gorgeous view of Merimere Reservoir, Mine Island [D], and East Peak. From there, the trail descends as you continue North until you meet up with the blue-blazed trail. Turn right and follow the blue blazes back to your vehicle.

East Peak/Castle Craig - White/Red/Blue/Orange

[Moderate, 3.9 mi, 1,080 ft total ascent, 3.0 hr] Starting at the Spring House (B), head west to the white-blazed trail. Follow the white blazes over I-691 [C] and up the hill over a high footbridge [F]. Turn right at the Beehive Spring [G], but do not follow the white blazes when they make a second sharp turn to the right. As the white-blazed trail takes a sharp right, continue straight on the red-blazed trail a short distance past the first blue-blazed trail that angles sharply back to the left toward West Peak. Follow the second blue-blazed trail that ascends steeply on the left toward East Peak. Just before the paved road, follow the blue blazes to



the right, which will bring you to spectacular overlooks of Meriden. The trail passes straight across the parking lot for the 32 ft Castle Craig tower [L]. Continuing east, follow the blue blazes down a ravine to the intersection with a steeply descending orange-blazed trail. For now, continue straight on the blue-blazed trail for about a third of a mile to beautiful overlooks [I] of Merimere Reservoir, Mine Island [D] and South Mountain. Return to the orange-blazed trail and descend steeply to the carriage road (white blazes). Instead of turning right, which would take you back the way you came, turn left. Follow the white blazes past the Halfway House [E], past the southern edge of Merimere Reservoir, and turn right onto the paved road (Reservoir Ave.). Turn right at the next road (Notch Rd.), pass under I-691, and return to your starting point.

West Peak - White/Red/Blue/Black/Yellow

[Difficult (steep and slippery), 4.5 mi, 1,100 ft ascent, 3.4 hr] Follow the trail as though going to East Peak (above), but turn sharply back to the left at the first set of blue blazes (easy to miss from this direction). Ascend steeply to West Peak on a rocky slope with an open view to the west. At the top, where the blue blazes turn right, turn left or go straight for several overlooks [M] of Meriden and Cheshire. Return to the blue-blazed trail and turn left at the parking lot toward the radio towers. There are breathtaking views [K] of Southington and Hartford in the first half mile. Return to the parking lot and follow the paved road down the back side of West Peak. At the fork in the road turn right toward East Peak. At the bottom of a gully look for blue blazes on the right, and follow them as they descend steeply down a ravine to the carriage road (red blazes). Instead of turning right, which would take you back the way you came, turn left. The red-blazed trail soon connects up with the white-blazed trail. Just after a large boulder, pass the orange-blazed trail that ascends to Castle Craig. Then, look for and follow a yellow-blazed trail through the woods on the left, which is a shortcut that skips the Halfway House [E]. Turn right at the reservoir, right onto the paved road (Reservoir Ave.), and right at the next road (Notch Rd.). Pass under I-691 and return to your starting point.

Trail Landmarks [Elevation]

A	Footbridge (Picnic Area)	[315 ft]
B	Spring House	[320 ft]
C	Footbridge (Over I-691)	[430 ft]
D	Mine Island	[435 ft]
E	Halfway House (S. Overlook)	[575 ft]
F	Footbridge (Brook)	[575 ft]
G	Beehive Spring	[600 ft]
H	South Mountain (Target Overlook)	[630 ft]
I	East Peak (Merimere Overlook)	[720 ft]
J	South Mountain (S. Overlook)	[760 ft]
K	West Peak (N.W. Overlook)	[910 ft]
L	East Peak (Castle Craig Tower)	[950 ft]
M	West Peak (S. Overlook)	[1,015 ft]

Hubbard Park

Walter Hubbard, a local philanthropist and President of the Bradley & Hubbard Mfg. Co., dreamt of a recreation space for the citizens of Meriden. He briefly consulted with the sons of America's foremost landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted. He then proceeded to design and build Hubbard Park, which he donated to the City of Meriden. Hubbard was involved in the park's development until his death in 1911.

Today, Hubbard Park features well-marked hiking trails, including a portion of the blue blazed Metacomet Trail which is managed by Connecticut Forest & Parks Association. Other colored blazed trails, managed by Meriden Parks and Recreation, offer many hiking alternatives for all skill levels. Pick a trail and follow the castle shaped signs to the tower!

Besides hiking, Hubbard Park is an ideal spot for picnics, group yoga or just a casual stroll around Mirror Lake. Amenities include a community swimming pool, a safe playscape and courts for pickleball & tennis. There are recreation facilities for rent. Hubbard Park is also home to several historic structures and landmarks:

Fairview Observatory, more commonly known today as the Halfway House, is perched at an elevation of 500 feet and marks the "halfway" point between Hubbard Park proper and Castle Craig Tower. The structure built on Fairview Point offers beautiful panoramic views and a glimpse of the destination tower. Fairview Point was once a popular picnic area for families who traveled by foot or horse drawn carriage along Cliff Drive, a historic trail that weaved throughout the park, some of which remains as part of the White Blazed trail.

James J. Barry Bandshell, built in 1956, was named after a former superintendent of Hubbard Park. The bandshell has been the site of numerous concerts and symphonies and is an integral part of outdoor festivals, such as the Daffodil Festival and the Puerto Rican Festival. Among its most notable guests include: Roberta Peters, Roger McGuinn, the Turtles, the Hooters, and Gary Burr. In 2006, Rock-n-Roll pioneer Chuck Berry gave a memorable performance in honor of Meriden's 200th birthday.

Merimere Reservoir, nestled between East Peak and South Mountain, is one of 6 working reservoirs used by the city of Meriden. In its center, sits Mine Island which was once falsely rumored to be rich in minerals and gold, hence the name.

Castle Craig Tower

Castle Craig Tower is the crown jewel of the present day 1900 acre Hubbard Park. On October 29, 1900, this stone observation tower, along with the park grounds, was presented to the citizens of Meriden. Constructed of native trap rock, Castle Craig was built by local masons. It stands 32 feet in height and its base is 950 feet above sea level.

The inspiration for the tower's design likely originated from Hubbard's early travels to Scotland where he saw a similar tower in the Craigellachie region. Historians speculate this is from where the name Castle "Craig" was derived.

Today, visitors flock to the tower to enjoy stunning panoramic views, sunsets and full moon viewings. The tower provides an expansive view of Meriden in the valley below. To the South, the Sleeping Giant mountaintop is visible and, on a crystal clear day, the glistening waters of Long Island Sound can be seen some 25 miles away. To the North, the Hartford skyline and the Berkshires in Massachusetts are frequently visible.

The paved access road to Castle Craig Tower is often open to vehicles from spring to fall, weather permitting. Contact Meriden Parks and Recreation office for opening updates.

Geography/Geology

At 1,024 feet above sea level, West Peak is the highest point within 25 miles of the coastline from Southern Maine to Florida. The "Hanging Hills" of Meriden, which include West Peak, East Peak, and South Mountain, were formed about 200 million years ago as the eastern portion of our newly formed continent tried to pull away.

Rifts running north to south were created in the earth's crust by this pulling action. Lava flowed upward through these rifts from the magma below over a period of 20 million years. The lava flows cooled and hardened into step-like basalt "trap" rock formations, hundreds of feet deep. ("Trap" derives from the Swedish word "Trappe", which translates to "step").

Subsequent erosion and shifting of the earth's crust has caused a tilting and layering effect to these formations. The resulting bands of sandstone, siltstone and clay were embedded within the basalt cliffs of Hubbard Park, thus enhancing the beauty of the landscape. From a distance, one can visualize the lava flows of 200 million years ago.

Legends

It is only natural that the passing of years would spawn park legends. Perhaps the most unusual story tells of the fabled "Black Dog". It is said that those who glimpse this animal roaming the mountains' upper reaches will, upon first sighting, experience an increase in worldly goods. According to the legend, should there be a second sighting of the Black Dog, the visitor will begin to suffer physical ailments, and finally, a third view would bring death to the beholder.

The Hanging Hills were the occasional abode of a 19th century regional wanderer known as the "Old Leather Man", who sometimes slept in a cave in the hills. It was said that there was a spot so deep in the hills that snow and ice were to be discovered in the shadows throughout the year.

Keep it Clean - Keep it Green

The Meriden Parks and Recreation department works tirelessly year round to preserve and accentuate the historic nature of the park while keeping Walter Hubbard's vision of an area of recreation and respite alive. Please help keep Hubbard Park in pristine condition by carrying out any items you have carried in. Leave behind only footprints.



Much of the information for this brochure came from *Hubbard Park Hiking Trails*, a guide published by Meriden Land Trust in 2009. The original map, created by the late Dwight Needels, was used and revised with permission from Meriden Land Trust.

Special thanks go to Kathy Matula, David Cooley, Bruce Burchsted and Justin Piccirillo, for their creative collaboration.

Photo credits go to Leonardo Reis, Lynne Vigue and David Cooley.

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For additional information, call 203-630-4259.

Scan the QR code for a portable version of the map!



Hubbard Park



**999 West Main St.
Meriden, CT 06451**