

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Cape Cod National Seashore
www.nps.gov/caco



Quest at Fort Hill

Description: self-guided, GPS and compass information scavenger hunt. This quest is also available online at <http://www.nps.gov/caco/planyourvisit/outdooractivities.htm>, if you would like to download the coordinates.

Distance: 1½ miles **Time:** approximately 2 hours

Welcome to Fort Hill at Cape Cod National Seashore.

Your quest is to discover why Fort Hill is nationally significant. Its designations include Nauset Archeological District National Historic Landmark and Fort Hill Rural Historic District. Additionally, it contains a house listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Why should people care about Fort Hill? What makes it special enough that the National Park Service decided to include it within the protected boundaries of Cape Cod National Seashore? It is your job to find out. You will use your GPS to explore the trails and features of the area. This guide provides clues and questions about each waypoint. Read and answer all of the clues and questions before moving on to the next section. Consider reading a section out loud to your family and friends. Resist the temptation to read ahead - you'll spoil your own detective work! Finally, circle every underlined letter in the guide; it will come in handy later.

Help keep Fort Hill enjoyable for all. Please practice "leave no trace" hiking principles: stay on marked trails, do not disturb the ground at all (no digging, turning over stones, etc.), do not remove any objects, and avoid touching plants as there is a lot of poison ivy!

Answer the question first, then turn the page to read the answer before moving on to the next question.

1) You will begin at N 41°49'08.2" W 069°57'52.6", which is the lower parking lot at Fort Hill.

Your next GPS point will be heading north, towards N 41°49'09.6" W 069°7'51.4". Look for a stone on the ground to your right.

- Look carefully at this stone. What letter is carved into it?
- Stand at the base of the stone. What do you see in the field when facing 130°?
- What do you see in the distance when facing 160°?

2) Next head towards N 41°49'11.8" W 069°57'52.2", and look for a sign.

- What type of area are you entering?
- What might this area have contained that was important for the Native Americans and European colonists who lived here? (Hint: not salt water)

3) Your next waypoint is N 41°49'13.1" W 069°58'01.7".

Enjoy the trail and boardwalk until you get to this point, which will be farther than any of the points so far.

- What type of fern is growing here? Use the plant identification sign.

4) Your next stop will be at N 41°49'17.9" W 069°57'56.8". Go left to get there.

Look carefully at the identification sign for this plant, which is behind the railing on your right.

- What is the family name listed?
- Can you see any berries? If not, what do you think may have happened to them?

5) When you leave the boardwalk from the Red Maple Swamp, be sure to climb up the stairs, turn right, and head towards Skiff Hill. Your next waypoint is N 41°49'19.9" W 069°57'48.0".

Take some time to enjoy the amazing views of Nauset Marsh. When you're ready for some compass work, sit in the middle of the bench with your back towards the water. Walk 10 paces (a pace is two normal walking steps) towards 127°.

- What bird is #7 on the sign?
- Next, walk 10 paces towards 263° (avoid the obstacle). Who made a sketch of himself and a historic map?
- When did he make the map?
- What is the name of the local Native American tribe?
- How was the rock used?

6) Starting between the two signs, walk 268° for 12 paces. Next, take the path that is at 148°. When you arrive at N 41°49'18.3" W 069°57'45.1", take a look at the built structure at the edge of the field, which may be partly hidden beneath trees and plants.

- Who do you think built this wall - the Nausets, or European settlers who used the land later?
- What function did the walls serve?

7) Your next stop comes quickly at N 41°49'17.1" W 069°57'43.7". Look for an opening in the shrubbery to your left.

- What do you see in the distance at 80°?

8) At N 41°49'10.5" W 069°57'36.5", can you find another man-made feature on your right? You may need to look under a lot of plants, but remember not to touch!

9) Now is your chance to be an archeologist! Take a look at all sides of the boulder at N 41°49'08.9" W 069°57'35.5".

- Do you see the stake that is pounded into the rock? No one is sure who did this, when, and for what reason. What do you think?

10) Get ready for a workout - you'll be climbing to the top of Fort Hill. You're looking for N 41°49'05.4" W 069°57'42.9".

- Why do you think this place is called Fort Hill?
- What do you see, smell, and hear when you sit on the bench?

Draw a sketch of the area here:

11) You have almost completed your quest! Continue across the parking area on the trail directly opposite the bench, at 295°. Do not head down the paved road. Your next waypoint is N 41°49'06.1" W 069°57'55.8". A trail through the woods will take you there.

- What was the use for the building closest to you?
- What are similarities between it and the building behind it?

In this guide, certain letters have been underlined. Write them in the order they occurred when you were reading through the questions and answers, and you'll have a clue to your final stop.

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12) I bet you can guess where the next waypoint is. Look for N 41°49'06.5" W 069°57'56.8".

13) You will end your quest in the mouth of the whale at N 41°49'07.5" W 069°57'55.3".

- What product was used to make this gate?

Answers

1) The T stands for Reverend Treat. He was invited to the Town of Eastham in 1672 to be the minister. He worked to convert the Native American inhabitants to Christianity, and also to teach them to read and write.



At 130°, you should see the foundation of an old building, which was used as a dairy barn in the early 20th century. At 160° there is a private historic home, usually with an American flag flying.

The T stone and the foundation are considered *archeological features* – man-made objects whose design and placement can teach us about the past. Together with written documents, these features provide evidence for the relationship between the land and the people who lived at Fort Hill. You are well on your way to gathering clues in your quest. Look for other archeological features along your journey here.

2) The Red Maple Swamp is an important source of fresh water. People who lived here were able to use the land for farming, the marsh for shellfish, but also needed water for drinking. This area may have been the source of fresh water for early inhabitants.

These days, the swamp dries out during droughts, but red maple trees and their associated plants still thrive. Keep a lookout for rabbits and chipmunks, who find good hiding spots in the lush vegetation.



3) **N**etted chain ferns grow in shaded swamps and moist woods. They can provide a nice hiding area for small mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. It seems that Fort Hill was not just a desirable place for people to live. It was and remains so for other animals and plants.



4) Blueberries thrive in acidic soils. The soil provides nutrients for plants to produce delicious fruits, which people and animals like birds can enjoy. See if you can find other fruits growing on this trail. *It is important not to eat wild fruits unless you are certain of what they are, and you know they are safe to eat. It is best to ask a ranger or trained naturalist to be sure.*

5) The Nausets **l**ived in the Nauset Marsh area starting as far back as 6000 years ago. They were part of the Wampanoag nation. When the European colonists first arrived, the two groups were able to share the land and trade some goods. However, disease and the arrival of over 20,000 colonists to the New England area between 1630 and 1642 forced native inhabitants like the Nausets to make some major changes in their lives.

The “sharpening stone,” used by the Nausets for making tools and smoothing beads, is a significant archaeological find that remains a treasure to this day. Compare the map drawn by Samuel De Champlain in 1605 with the view of Nauset Marsh today. Can you imagine the time when the marsh was surrounded by wetus, and inhabitants would come to the sharpening stone to file their tools? Champlain’s map and journal have been very valuable to historians who study the Nauset Marsh area, which includes Fort Hill. When archeologists found artifacts like arrowheads at Fort Hill, they were able to use scientific tests to determine the age of the artifacts. But having written evidence like Champlain’s journal, and oral history that was passed down through generations of Wampanoags, fills in much more of the story. It allows us to come much closer to knowing the Nausets who walked here before us.



6) The Nausets used Fort Hill for **s**ummer crops like corn and squash. They planted small areas using different plots every few years. In this way, the land had a chance to retain its nutrients and stay fertile. The tribe shared the land and its products.



European settlers were accustomed to partitioning land and owning plots. They built walls to mark territory, and sometimes to keep livestock in certain areas. Fort Hill was a well-known *rural* (agricultural) area. It was sometimes used for growing crops like corn for people to eat, and sometimes for growing grasses that livestock like cows could eat. Looking at the size of rocks in a wall can provide a hint about how the land was used in the past. If the wall contains only large-sized rocks, the land around it was most-likely for grazing (livestock feeding). In order to plow and plant crops, all rocks had to be removed, even the small ones. New England contains many stone walls that tell stories of the land’s past.



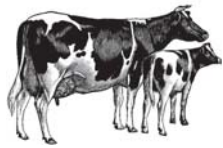
7) Enjoy the view! **N**auset Marsh is still a place where people shellfish, canoe, and kayak. In the distance you can see the inlet where Atlantic Ocean water flows between Coast Guard Beach of Eastham and Nauset Beach of Orleans.

8) Were you able to spot the stone wall under all the shrubbery? You are now standing at the opposite end of the wall that is marked with the T on the other side of the field. Today, part of the wall is missing. This wall was the northern boundary for Reverend Treat’s land.

9) Boulders such as this **o**ne were dragged to their current locations by glaciers, approximately 10,000 years ago. These “glacial erratics” are interesting, especially when there are so few other large rocks around. Another one worth seeing is Doane Rock, in the picnic area one mile east of the Salt Pond Visitor Center.

Some theories about the stake are that it was used for tying up a boat, when the water level was higher. Another theory is that it was used for breaking off pieces of the rock, which would then be brought to other locations to use as steps or cornerstones for buildings. Do you see any other drill marks where pieces of rock have been broken off? Perhaps later in your journey you will find rocks with similar markings.

10) As far as historians can tell, Fort Hill never had an actual fort. Because the incorporation of the town of Eastham in 1651 coincided with the build-up to the first naval wars between England and the Netherlands, there were concerns about attacks by sea. England required early colonial settlements to be able to protect themselves in a battle, and strategic hills were often designated for this



Visitors to Fort Hill today are more attracted to its views than its fortification. The National Park Service works hard to maintain the fields as a rural landscape. As you look to the west down the hill, you can see two old farm-

houses in the distance. Imagine the fields dotted with cows. This is how Fort Hill would have looked in the early 1900s, when it was a dairy farm. Because the fields are kept clear today, the area is a wonderful place to spot predatory birds such as red-tailed hawks searching for mice, monarch butterflies attracted to milkweed, and songbirds flitting amongst the wildflowers.

11) This building was the barn and garage for Captain Penniman and his family. They wanted even this utility building to look like their stately house.

12) Congratulations!



You've made it to Captain Penniman's house! This house and barn are listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*. Be sure to visit again for a seasonal tour or an open house to see the inside. You can find the schedule for the house at www.nps.gov/caco, or by stopping by the Salt Pond Visitor

Center. Additional information may also be found at the National Park Service's website "Teaching for Historic Places." For now, be sure to read the sign in the front yard to learn about this successful whaling captain and his family life.

13) These are jawbones from a finback whale. The Penniman family used whale jawbones for their entrance gate. The ones you see here are the third set and were installed by the National Park Service in the 1970s.



Fort Hill has been recognized for its national significance in a variety of ways. Its designations include, Nauset Archeological District National Historic Landmark and Fort Hill Rural Historic District. Additionally, the Penniman House is on the National Register of Historic Places. Your quest is fulfilled if you can describe how Fort Hill is nationally significant. Think back on all you've seen or learned on your journey. What evidence did you find for these three designations? Fort Hill is not only steeped in history; it is also a wonderful place for observing nature. For these reasons, it is included within Cape Cod National Seashore. What made this place special to you?

The mission of the National Park Service is to "preserve natural and cultural resources. . . for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations." By completing your quest at Fort Hill, you have become a part of this mission. We invite you to share your discoveries and thoughts with others, so that Fort Hill will continue to be enjoyed.

Please share your thoughts below. You may also bring this completed form to the Salt Pond Visitor Center for a prize! If you've got a camera, take a picture of your family in the mouth of the whale to show us.
