

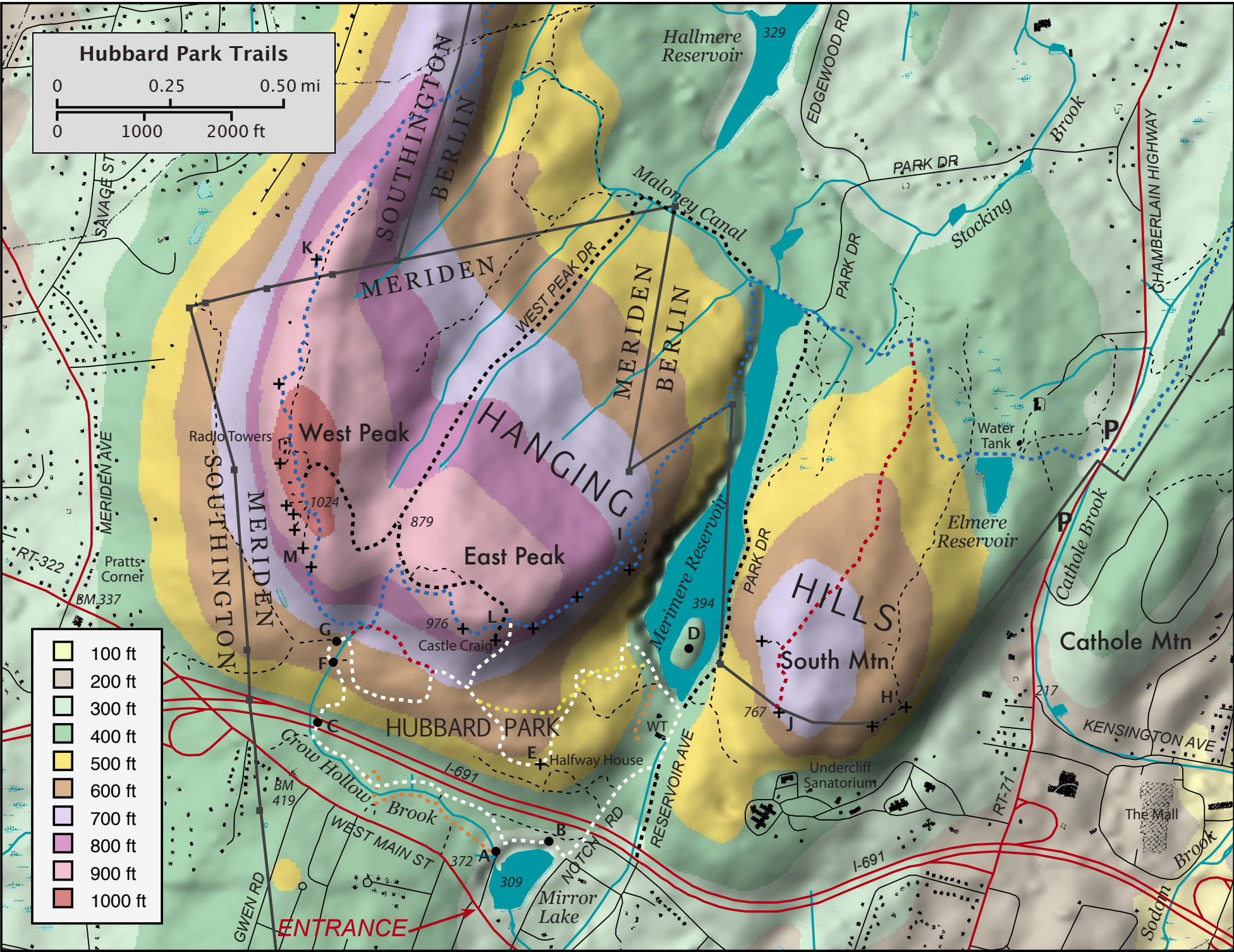
The map was created using open source software, Geographic Resources Analysis Support System (GRASS). The background is a shaded relief map generated from National Elevation Dataset (NED) data obtained from the United States Geological Survey (USGS), reproduced at a scale of about 1:17,000. Each shade of color represents a change in elevation of 100 ft. Map overlay data were obtained from USGS 1:24,000 scale topographic maps, with GPS field corrections for some brooks.

The location of each trail and landmark was determined from GPS tracks and waypoints recorded during the year 2009. Note that portions of blazed trails may have been relocated since then.

An excellent source of up-to-date information on the blue-blazed Metacomet Trail is the web site for the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, the organization that maintains the blue-blazed trails: <http://www.ctwoodlands.org/blue-blazed-hiking-trails>

- Streets
- White-Blazed Trail
- Blue-Blazed Trail
- Red-Blazed Trail
- Orange-Blazed Trail
- Yellow-Blazed Trail
- Paved Road/Trail
- Unblazed Trail
- P Parking
- Brooks, Ponds
- Town Line
- + Scenic Overlook
- Other Trail Landmark

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]



Trail Descriptions

Metacomet Trail [Blue]

The Meriden segment of this National Scenic Trail offers spectacular views ranging from Long Island beyond the Sound to Mount Tom in Massachusetts. Access the trail where it crosses Chamberlain Highway (Rt-71). The trail first passes Elmere Reservoir and provides access to two trails (one red-blazed) that each ascend to several overlooks on South Mountain. The trail then descends, and just after crossing the northern end of Merimere Reservoir ascends steeply to the ridgeline overlooking the reservoir. Passing the Castle Craig observation tower on East Peak, it briefly follows the ridgeline before first descending steeply and then ascending steeply to the radio towers on West Peak. From there the trail leaves Hubbard Park on its way north to Massachusetts. There is very limited parking on Rt-71 near the Meriden/Berlin town line sign and at the gas line right-of-way on Edgewood Rd. just north of Hallmere Reservoir (in Berlin).

Hubbard Park Loop [White]

The white-blazed trail begins near a picnic and parking area west of Mirror Lake. An old Boy Scout sign marks the entrance to the trail. After crossing a footbridge over I-691 the trail ascends to the Beehive Spring, which lies on an old carriage road planned by Walter Hubbard. The white-blazed trail then turns sharply to the right to follow a southern loop. A red-blazed trail continues straight along a northern loop and provides access to the blue-blazed trails that ascend steeply to either West Peak or East Peak. After the red- and white-blazed trails merge they continue a short distance past a large boulder before a side trail (white-blazed) ascends steeply to Castle Craig. Another large boulder serves as a landmark coming from the other direction. The main trail continues on to the Halfway House (Fairview Observatory) and then to the paved road at the southern end of Merimere Reservoir that returns to Mirror Lake.

Paved Roads to East & West Peak [Black]

During the day from early May through Oct, a paved road is open for driving access to either East Peak or West Peak, with parking at the top. Start at the gate where the road goes under I-691.

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 another trail. Turn left, walk 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 a side trail that ascends steeply to Castle Craig **[L]**. Follow the white blazes left along a southern loop until you join the red-blazed trail. Turn left, 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 left again back onto Notch Rd.

Suggested Hikes, Cont.

South Mountain [Blue/Red]

[Moderate, 3.4 mi, 670 ft total ascent, 2.4 hr] Park at the single space where the Metacomet Trail crosses Rt-71, or at one of the spaces to the south. Follow the blue blazes past a water tank and Elmere Reservoir. Ascend a small embankment and pass through the intersection with an unblazed side trail that goes to the Anderson Pond (to the right) or the cliffs **[H]** that overlook Target and the Mall. Continue following the blue-blazes until you come to an obvious intersection with another trail. Turn left on the new trail, which has occasional red blazes. As you approach the top, follow a poorly marked side trail to the right for a gorgeous view of Merimere Reservoir, Mine Island **[D]**, and East Peak. Back on the main trail, follow it to the end **[J]** where there is a dramatic view of downtown Meriden. Return the way you came.

East Peak/Castle Craig [White/Red/Blue]

[Moderate, 3.9 mi, 1,080 ft total ascent, 3.0 hr] Starting at the road north of the picnic area, follow the white-blazed trail 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. 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]**, which has an unobstructed view to the south. Continue east and follow the blue blazes down a ravine to the intersection with a steeply descending white-blazed trail. 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 white-blazed trail and descend steeply to the carriage road. Instead of turning right, which would take you back the way you came, turn left. Follow the white-blazed road past the Halfway House **[E]**, past the southern edge of Merimere Reservoir, and turn right on the paved road. Turn right on the next road (Notch Rd.) and pass under I-691. Turn right at Mirror Lake, pass the Spring House **[B]**, 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 gravelly 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. Instead of turning right, which would take you back the way you came, turn left. Just after a large boulder a white-blazed trail ascends to Castle Craig. 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 on the paved road, and right on the next road (Notch Rd.) Turn right at Mirror Lake, pass the Spring House **[B]**, and return to your starting point.

Park History

Hubbard Park was donated to the people of Meriden in 1900 by Walter Hubbard, industrialist. He had spent years assembling tracts of land and followed through on his belief that great cities needed great parks with ample land dedicated to public use.

Working with the best landscape architects of his day, he planned out roads, ornamental Mirror Lake, the looming tower on East Peak known as Castle Craig (reminiscent of towers along the Rhine River), and Fairview Observatory, a pavilion on the lower deck of the main mass of the mountain below East Peak.

For lovers of legend, the Hanging Hills were the occasional abode of a 19th century 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.

Hiking Info

Location Hubbard Park is located in the northwest corner of Meriden, straddling I-691, with entrances on West Main St. (accessible from Exit 4 on I-691).

Parking Substantial parking is available within Hubbard Park, in the picnic area, at West Peak and at East Peak.

Terrain Hubbard Park offers some of the most spectacular vistas available in Meriden, including views from West Peak, East Peak and South Mountain (which actually lies outside of the park). These trap rock ridges are extremely steep, and care should be taken. In addition to trails that climb to ridgelines, there are other trails that follow relatively level terrain.

Gear Hikers should wear sturdy shoes or boots on rocky or slippery trails. Don't forget water, and if you carry a daypack you will also have room for a snack, cell phone, binoculars, camera, field guide, first aid kit, insect repellent, etc.

Difficulty Most hikes within the park range between 1 and 6 miles round trip. Each of the suggested hikes has a time estimate that accounts for elevation change and includes time for enjoying the view. These times can be used as a general difficulty rating (0 - 2 hr = Easy, 2 - 4 hr = Moderate, 4 - 6 hr = Difficult).

Following Blazes Many of the trails in the park are marked with colored blazes located on trees or rocks. To avoid getting lost, pay close attention to the blazes. A double-blaze, with the top blaze offset to one side, indicates that the trail turns in the direction of the offset.

The next blaze will usually be visible on a well-blazed trail, except along a paved road. If you don't see the blaze, turn around and look behind you to be sure you are still on the trail. If you do not see a blaze in either direction, re-trace your steps until you find the previous blaze, and investigate further. The blazed trail may take an unexpected turn away from the main path, or a blaze may be on a fallen tree.

Credits Many thanks to Bob Pagini for the cover photograph and to Dwight Needels for the map and GPS data.

Printed courtesy of Connecticut Color, Inc. (located in Meriden, CT).

Order our consolidated trail guide or download free copies of trail guides for other Meriden Parks from our website.

Hubbard Park Hiking Trails



Meriden Land Trust

<http://www.meridenlandtrust.org>