

Powder House Hill Core Conservation Area



Size: 100 acres

Access: The main access point is behind the Bolton Town Hall at 663 Main Street. Parking available in the rear parking lot. Trail access is also available at the corner of Golden Run Road and Sugar Road but there is no parking. Another access point is at the beginning of Quail Run Road but this access is unavailable in the spring due to flooding conditions.

Description: Behind the Town Hall the area is wooded hillside providing a good climb via either the marked trail or the wider Old Town House Road. The Powderhouse, built for storage of ammunition was constructed in 1812 and sits up above Town Hall. Ledge and boulder outcrops make the hike up to the Powderhouse interesting. A large vernal pool is located near the entrance of Quail Run and the wooden boardwalk is usually under water during the spring.

Points of interest: 1812 Powder House, a remnant of Old Town House Road, an old wagon path that led northeasterly from the Town House and a large vernal pool near the Quail Run entrance.

Local military companies, an outgrowth of the pre-Revolutionary town-maintained militias, were supported by Massachusetts communities for several decades into the nineteenth century. A state statute still mandated military training for all able-bodied men, but the annual May training and fall Muster Days became increasingly social occasions (at times little more than drunken brawls enhanced by weapons) rather than serious military exercises. **Bolton had two companies of about a hundred men each, the Bolton Rifles and the Bolton Militia, both part of the larger Lancaster Regiment.** The greatest honor for the Militia was forming the guard for the Marquis de Lafayette when he dined at the Abraham Holman Inn and stayed overnight at the Wilder Mansion on his 1824 tour of New England, after which the militia changed its name, to the Lafayette Guards.

The powder and ammunition for the military companies for years had been kept in the meetinghouse--at one time under the pulpit, and later in the attic. Finally, **in 1812, a safer alternative shelter was built for them—the little Bolton Powderhouse,** (#913-NRDIS) which still stands well away from any building on the hill behind the site of the second meetinghouse.

