

# Bishop Estate East & Darling House Trails

This Woodbridge Town Property known as the Bishop Estate/Darling House trail is located on the Litchfield Turnpike. The house is now home to the Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society.

Thomas Darling (1720-1789) played a significant role in colonial Connecticut and counted such prominent citizens as Benjamin Franklin, Ezra Stiles, Roger Sherman, and Benedict Arnold among his friends and associates. He studied theology at Yale University in New Haven, CT, graduated in 1740, and was licensed to preach in 1743. During his years in New Haven he was a manufacturer, merchant, Justice of the Peace, and "entrepreneur." He ran a Rope Walk, helped set up the first printing press in New Haven, tried to establish a glass business, and was a deputy to the General Assembly.

The Bishop Estate/Darling House is located just south of Lake Dawson (a Regional Water Authority Property) and just west of the West Rock Ridge State Park on the eastern border of Woodbridge. The trail also connects to a hike along the West Rock Ridge and then to the Regicides Trail (a CT Blue Blazed Trail). The Regicides Trail is named after the three judges who imposed the death sentence on Charles I of England in 1649 and fled to New England in 1660. Two of these men, William Goffe and Edward Whalley, hid from agents of the king in a rock cave on West Rock Ridge from May 15 to June 11, 1661. They returned to the cave in October 1664, after hiding out in Milford, and then fled to Hadley, Mass. The area is named Judges Cave in recognition of this historic event.

The Darling homestead is 160 acres of rolling meadow with surrounding woodlands. The trail includes numerous stone wall crossings and a bridge crossing over the West River.

When Thomas Darling decided to leave New Haven to pursue a country squire's life, he hired Abiel Gray of West Hartford, CT to build his new home. Gray took two years (1772-1774) to complete the project. The Gambrel roofed structure is now on the National Register of Historic Places. Many of the interior's furnishings are Darling family pieces, as the house and grounds were owned by the family until 1973. The house can be viewed by appointment only.

## Easy or Difficult Hike

Blue and Blue/Yellow Trail: 0.64 miles. Hard Hike/ Difficult Climb. The blue trail starts off on a gentle slope through RWA land and ascends up over the mountain. About 0.25 miles climb up rocky terrain almost 300 ft.

Red Trail: 1 mile. Easy Hike. Minor slopes. Can be both wet and dry.

## Directions and Parking:

The main entrance to the trails and parking is located adjacent to the Darling House located at 1907 Litchfield Turnpike (Route 69).

## Permitted/Prohibited Activities:

This land is for passive recreational use only. No motorized vehicles are permitted. Only hiking and bicycles. Dogs are permitted on leash. Please bag and pick up all dog waste. Hunting or trapping is prohibited. Fishing is allowed in the West River.



*Photo By The Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society*

**Total Trails Length:** Approx. 2.43 miles

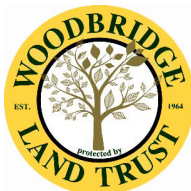
**North Summit Trail:** 1.01 miles

**Naugatuck Trail:** 0.5 miles

**RWA Trail:** .64 miles

**Shortcut Trail:** 0.04 miles

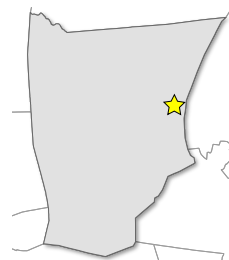
**Loop Connector Trail:** 0.24 miles



**For more information about this location, contact:**

Woodbridge Land Trust, Inc. or  
Town of Woodbridge  
(203) 389-3400

[www.woodbridgect.org](http://www.woodbridgect.org)



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