

## West Hills South:

# Mt. Misery Nature Preserve

The Mount Misery Nature Preserve is the much quieter and less visited portion of West Hills County Park, and is located on the south side of the Northern State Parkway. The main trail entrance is on Sweet Hollow Road, 500 feet south of the Northern State Parkway overpass. The trails in the preserve are steep and beautiful. Some trails pass through forests with canopies of Oak trees and an under story of low bush blueberry and huckleberry, while others traverse thick stands of pine trees. One can walk here all morning without seeing another person.

Unlike most of Long Island, this land was not suitable for farming and has been relatively uninhabited. However, the surrounding area did contain a small rural population. In 1829, the local residents formed and built the Sweet Hollow Presbyterian Church, which is directly adjacent to the park property, and can be seen from some of the trails. The oldest part of this building was originally located down the road, at the northwest corner of Sweet Hollow Rd and Old Country Road; it was moved to its current location in the 1970s.

There are countless local legends about ghosts and spirits haunting the woods of Mt. Misery, dating back to Native Americans and the first settlers, with stories and visions of fantastic creatures and strange lights in the skies over these woods. The most famous of these fantastic ghost tales is that of Hatchet Mary, a young woman who is said to have murdered her family with a hatchet and then to have taken her own life. According to the legend, following the gruesome murders, her house sank into the ground, leaving nothing but the chimney. Hatchet Mary's ghost is said to still haunt these woods today.

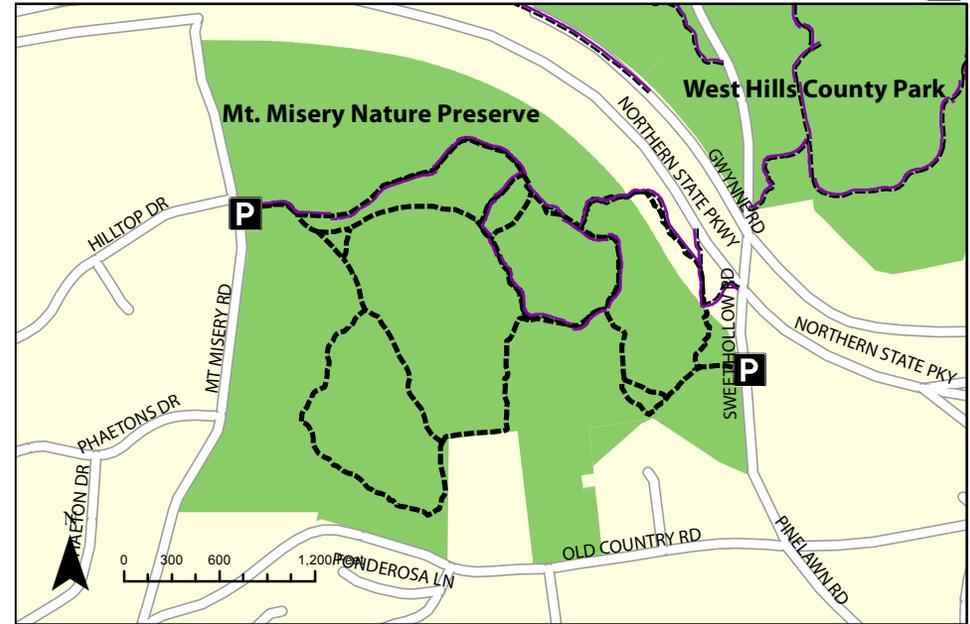
### You May See:

American Chestnut, Black Cherry, Black Locust, Bracken Fern, Canada Mayflower, Mountain Laurel, New York Fern, Pink Lady's Slipper, Princess Pine, Red Cedar, Red Maple, Red Oak, Sassafras, Tulip Tree, Eastern White Pine, White Wood Aster, Wild Grape, Wild Sarsaparilla

American Robin, Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Jay, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Towhee, Northern Cardinal, Red-tailed Hawk | Eastern Chipmunk, Eastern Gray Squirrel,

### Additional Information

Ghosts of Long Island,  
by Kerriann Flanagan Brosky



**Location:** On Sweet Hollow and Mt. Misery Rds in Melville.

**Terrain:** Many hills | **Length:** 3.3 mi | **Parking:** Street | **Type:** Network

**Surface:** Ground, Sandy Bridle Paths | **Acres:** 175 | **Trailhead:** 40.796077, -73.421463

