

SITE #16: THE HALL PROPERTY

The Hall property is located at the bottom of Hulse Road near the Black Rock gate on Route 9W.¹ The lands of this farm actually spanned across Route 9W and were connected with the property that is presently the site of the Black Rock Forest Headquarters.² As with several other homesteads throughout the forest, two sets of structural remnants from different eras are still visible upon the landscape. The extensive network of stone walls date from an earlier period around the turn of the century when the Halls still owned the property. The young growth and lack of rocks within the fields of the southern portion of the property indicate that these lands were under cultivation long before Stillman created Black Rock. Although the cleared lands to the west as far as the Continental Road lie outside the forest boundary and are now privately owned, they too were probably farmed by the Halls. Their home was also most likely located in this area. As one moves northward down Hulse Road, however, the terrain steepens to a grade that would have made agriculture more difficult. Here, in these northern fields bordering Route 9W, logging may have taken precedence over farming. The steep grade of the landscape would have been suitable for skidding logs while Route 9W would have given the Halls easy access to local timber markets. Although it is unknown whether the Halls practiced such logging, there is no doubt that after the creation of Black Rock Forest these lands were extensively cutover. According to locals who had worked for Stillman, the old tarpaper shack in the northern portion of the property and the cement floor of a woodshed are all that remain of the sawmill and wood storing area built by Black Rock in this location.³

¹ The location of the Hall property is noted on Black Rock Forest Compartment XXV Map, Black Rock Forest Archives, Cornwall, New York.

² Babcock, interview with author, 20 May 1995.

³ Buster Babcock remembers cutting logs for Black Rock at this sawmill and storing the timber in a this nearby shed. Babcock, interview with author, 20 May 1995.

