

SITE #11: THE JOHN ODELL PROPERTY

The John Odell homestead was one of the more extensive farms in Black Rock Forest.¹ Bisected by Jim's Pond Road, the Odell property covers several dozen acres and lies between Hall Road and Upper Mineral Spring Brook. The foundation of the Odell farmhouse lies just west of Jim's Pond Road. Although it is not known when this house was constructed, it had been abandoned by 1908.² Just north of the Odell home is a sunken area which most likely represents the cellar remains of a small out-building or barn. Evidence of agriculture abounds on the Odell land. To the west of Jim's Pond Road, rock walls, piles of plowed-up stones, and open land with few mature trees suggests that the area surrounding the Odell home was cultivated or cleared for other purposes such as cordwood cutting. To the east of Jim's Pond Road, a number of Black Rock planting areas also indicate former Odell fields. The fenced planting opposite the junction of Hall and Jim's Pond Roads, in fact, was at one time called "Odell field."³ The two cleared areas south of this site, also used by Black Rock Forest as planting sites, were most probably cleared by Odell for farming, as is suggested by the stone wall which partially borders the field closest to Jim's Pond Road. In the southern portion of the property between the Arthur Trail and Upper Mineral Spring Brook is another set of fields. Sparse tree-growth, stone walls, and a landscape that has been cleared of rocks, all suggest that this area too was previously farmed. Because the southern-most field on the Odell property is bordered by stone walls and the stream it could have been used as an animal enclosure, although this seems unlikely since it lies upstream from the Odell's water source. The John Odell spring is marked by a large tree on the west side of Jim's Pond Road where it crosses Mineral Spring Brook.

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

² Howell mentioned the abandoned Odell farmhouse in his diary entry dated April 4-5, 1908. Howell, *Memorial*, Vol. 1, p. 43.

³ Howell identifies this area as "Odell field" in his diary entry dated November 4, 1906. Howell, *Memorial*, Vol. 1, p. 23.

Site #11: The John Odell Property
 Location: South of the Intersection of
 Sutherland, Hall & Jims Pond Roads
 Map Created by Neil M. Maher

Legend

- stone wall
- swamp
- pile of stones
- cleared field
- trail
- scale

