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by ^{MARBLE} WYATT II'
History on Leavitt Lands in Chemung, Meredith, NH. 1994.

Thomas L Leavitt, cousin of Dudley Leavitt, who willed the Town what is known today as Leavitt Park on Meredith Neck, died in Laconia, NH. in 1902, making bequests to both communities, Laconia and Meredith. In the 8th paragraph of his will, dated 10 May 1897 and approved the 3rd Tuesday in August 1902 by the Belknap County Probate court, #6624, he willed the Town of Meredith, "all income derived from all the real estate I shall own in the Town of Meredith at my decease. Said income to be used under the direction and by vote of the citizens of the Town of Meredith, from year to year, for the relief of the poor of said Town or for the support and maintenance of the Public schools of said Meredith, excepting the Public schools in Meredith Village". The paragraph ends with this request, "It is my earnest request that the town of Meredith keep a certain burial ground in said Town of Meredith, where my mother and father, John and Sarah Leavitt, are buried in good repair and see that the burial ground is properly attended to". This cemetery is located about 150 yards north of the old Leavitt Mountain road. His grandparents are buried in a small yard in the lot on north corner of the junction of Tucker Mountain and Chemung roads. Both of these can be found in the Meredith Cemeteries book, a copy of this book is to found in the Meredith Public Library and in the Town clerk's office. Thomas L Leavitt left about 35 acres to the City of Laconia, including Leavitt Park on Elm St. The Elm St school may be located on a part of that lot.

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While Warner Plummer sat on the board of Selectmen, he agreed that we should petition the Belknap county Superior Court to obtain quiet Title to these lands in fee simple. This action required a research, granteing and grantoring of Mr Leavitt's real estate deals in Meredith for nearly fifty years, determining the boundaries of those he owned at his decease and marking them, all done under the supervision of Warner Plummer, a licensed surveyor. This search also included locating any possible heirs. Thomas L Leavitt never married but his sister had a son who died without issue. Some of his cousins, Edgerlys, had moved to Mobile, Alabama but a search there failed to reveal any relatives.

This part of the search required a GUARDIAN AD LITEM, but she did the same thing I did with no different result. At the end of 1983, our lawyer, Walter Mitchell, informed us that our petition had been granted and it was recorded in the Belknap County Registry.

The first of these lands, the ~~her~~ hermit lot and the Dockham place (Boy Scout Boondocks) were obtained by Mr Leavitt through a foreclosure of mortgage deeds from Mary Dockham.

The old hermit, Joseph Plumer, was raised in a house that is still in good condition at the end of the Hermit Woods road in Sanbornton with several brothers and sisters. There is history and a movie at the town Library about him. Though he never married he had thirty something relatives that signed quit claim deeds to his property when he died in 1862 at the age of 88 years. Legend has it that he had already made his pine box to be buried in, dug his own grave and built a stone wall around it.

When Joseph Plumer bought his first land, it was 7 acres and is now a part of the Meyers Farm. He built a house on a round cellar hole which can still be seen, with a dam in the brook. Later a heavy rain washed out the dam and he moved further into the woods on a hill where the water would never get to him again.

I believe his gravestone, still in good condition the last time I saw it, must have been put in by the Administrator of his estate, Lane Plummer, a nephew of the Hermit. Lane Plummer was a store keeper, post master at Meredith Center, Justice of the Peace and a power in Town politics. Like many other family names, Joseph Plumer spelled his name with one m where his nephew used two. The gravestone itself is large for that time and is engraved as follows; THE GRAVE OF A HERMIT, JOSEPH PLUMER, OF MEREDITH, DIED, DEC 2, 1862, AGED 88. "Content with seeking happiness for himself only, he lived in seclusion. He died alone. Peace to his ashes and rest to his soul.

This grave was partially dug up a few years ago. This was reported to the Meredith Police but of course there was no hope of finding the culprit. A Meredith Police Officer did go in to view the grave. More information on the "Hermit" can be found in the Meredith Library as well as the film that was made in 1968 for the Meredith Bicentennial Celebration.

After the death of Joseph Plumer, probably around 1870, the land was bought by George Gordon, a lumberman, who cut off the wood and lumber and then sold the land. One of the woods products on this lot was hemlock bark which was used in local leather tanning.

The lumber may have been harvested again about 1924 when a sawmill was allowed to set up on the lot to saw lumber from neighboring land. However, I do not think much was cut on the Hermit lot itself. I helped my father cut the hay in the field as late as 1932. Except for a few Christmas trees and a small amount of wood cut near the road east of the brook, I am sure nothing has been cut since 1932. Mr Plumer had cleared and cultivated about six acres of land for a garden and raising hay for his single ox. The selectmen used to allow the cutting of the hay to keep the brush from taking over but I think we were the last ones to cut it. Around this field are the only stone walls on the lot except for a short distance on the northeast end where an abutting owner began but did not finish a wall on their common boundary.

The Hermit owned this lot before the road was built and he was very much against the road. He felt that roads were the ruination of the land but was not successful in trying to stop it. The road was never formally accepted by the Town until just a few years ago when the selectmen exchanged quit-claim deeds with the owner of land on the south side to determine the center line of the road as a boundary with the road extending 25 feet each side of the center line. This was not a legal transfer of land but it did provide a boundary.

Before the beaver flooded the low land, near the road, in the early 1940s, there was a road up to the Hermit's cellar and grave from the road with the crossing of the brook filled with stone. In 1946, after Oliver Robinson came back from the war, we cut a

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new trail starting from the road just west of where the brook crosses the road and running out to Fourel's line, crossing the brook on the way, then following the boundary with Fourel down to the cellar and grave. When the beaver got their dams high enough to flood this trail, a trail was made over the beaver dams. My Dad cut trees for this when chains saws were first used. This route was dangerous. About 1970, my wife and I with the help of two Boy Scouts, Mike Dever and Jimmie Duren, cut a new trail starting at the Meredith-Sanbornton town line, following that across the first brook, caused by the beaver, turning right from the Town line and crossing the original brook on rocks and through the woods to the cellar and grave. These dams have washed out since that time.

The center line of the road has been determined as a boundary and the Meredith-Sanbornton town line is the boundary on that end, which has recently been surveyed by the owner on the Sanbornton side. So, leaving the road at the town line marker and following that line to a couple of hemlock trees with a considerable amount of barbed wire wound around and into these trees. I think this is at the end of a stone wall marking the town line to the Saddle Hill road then making a sharp right turn, with the inside angle being about 75 degrees, and following the barbed wire through the woods until it meets another stone wall. At the end of this stone wall the boundary turns a right angle to the right along another stone wall for a short distance and then in the same direction to the Hermit Woods road.

Joseph Plumer bought two lots of 25 acres each, one from Samuel Sanborn, Joiner, to Joseph Plumer, Husbandman, dated 12 August 1809, 25 acres for \$68.75. The other from Asa Rundlet, Yeoman, to Joseph Plumer, Husbandman, dated 12 September 1817, 25 acres for \$152.50. In both these deeds Mr Plumer, insisted on square corners on the ends except for the one on the Town line. This was because that part of the second division south west of Lake Wicwas, all the rangeways ran parallel to the Meredith Sanbornton line while the range lines ran parallel to the Meredith New Hampton Town line, leaving the ends of the range lots with short and long corners which Mr Plumer did not like.

DOCKHAM LOT

The Dockham lot was known as the "Boy Scout Boondocks" for many years as the Boy Scouts used it for camping out. It has also been called the "Town Poor Farm" which it never was.

There were originally two sets of farm buildings on this lot quite close together with a blacksmith shop between. The house nearest the road was T shaped with the top of the t facing the road and the stem of the t in back, with a cellar under the whole house. There was an opening in one corner of the cellar wall that led to a well that was actually outside the cellar wall. The walls of the house were normal construction for early farmhouses except that the walls had been lined with brick, no mortar, making this house quite possibly the first insulated house in Meredith.

Those brick were made on the farm and the pit from which the

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clay for making them was dug is still visible, looks like a small frog pond near the road at the south corner of the lot. Sixty years ago this pond was four feet deep. We still have two clumps of these brick that did not bake properly and were used in the stone walls along the road.

Except for the shoreline on Robinson Pond, this lot is bounded almost entirely by stone walls. Leaving the junction of the Hermit Woods and Chemung roads, going northwest on the Carleton road about 400 feet +/- to a stone wall that runs easterly from the road to the pond, turning left along the shore of the pond to the next stone wall, turning left again and following this wall to where there is a right angle turn to the right for perhaps 100 feet to another right angle turn to the left and running to a yellow birch tree at the end of the wall. Turning left at this point and follow an old barbed wire fence to a large oak tree on another wall then turning left and follow this wall back to the road just below the school house, then turning left and follow the road back to the point of beginning.

More than fifty years ago, the Meredith Boy Scouts, Perley Valliere, was one of them, planted some small pine trees which I believe are still standing beside the old road leading to the Scout's camping area. I believe the Scouts started using the area at about the same time, and have used it ever since. I think Robert Valliere might have some information on this subject. If I find more I will see that it gets to you and would be happy to show anyone around any of these lots.

Harold E. Wyatt

MEREDITH TOWN FORESTS

These pieces of land came to the Town of Meredith, N.H. through the will of Thomas Leavitt, 1902, who willed the Town the income from any land in Meredith that he might own at his death. In 1984 the Superior Court, in Town of Meredith v. Thomas Leavitt--E-83-0071, awarded the Town title to the land. At the March 1984 Town meeting there was an affirmative vote to dedicate them as Town Forests under the control of the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission immediately contacted the State Forester to see if there was any assistance in setting up a long range plan for making these lots produce forest products for sale. The first step required was to mark the boundaries which I volunteered to do.

The deed to the Dockham lot R14 lot 22 is found in book 75 page 266, for the Hermit lot R14 lot 24, is in book 67 page 431. The deed for the Edgerly lot R12 lot 44 and the Tucker Mountain lot R11 lot 22 is found in book 37 page 362. This deed to Mr Leavitt included all of the original range lot #58 plus 2 acres 28 square rods of lot 57 and 1/2 of lot 51 called the "Lawrence Land". Mr Leavitt then sold 90 acres of lot 58 which included the 2 acres + of lot 57 to John T Sanborn book 52 page 388, that left the Edgerly lot and the Tucker Mountain lot of 60 acres minus 30 acres sold previously and 12 acres set off to the widows right and sold so the Tucker Mountain lot should contain 18 acres.

The first three of these lots is included in the inventory of Thomas L Leavitts will and the fourth is included in the deed to the third. I have done a thorough search of the records and found that Mr Leavitt never executed any further deeds for these lot proving that he owned them at his decease. All of these deeds are recorded at the Belknap County Registry of Deeds and the will is recorded at the Probate Court in Laconia, N.H.

Dockham lot, map R 14 lot 22 on Carleton road.

Starting at a point about 250 yards from the junction of Hermit Woods road westerly on the Carleton road where both trees and wall are well marked at the boundary with lot 26 and following the stone wall in a southeasterly direction all the way to Robinson Pond, then turning left and follow the shore of the pond to the next stone wall, Turning left again and follow the stone wall to a point where the wall makes a right angle turn to the right for about 100 feet +/- to a point where the wall, a small brook and an old road converge, then a right angle turn to the left again and follow the stone wall to an old yellow birch tree at the end of the wall. Here you turn sharp left again and follow an old barbed wire fence to another very large oak tree on a stone wall. Again a sharp left turn and follow this wall back to the road and follow the road back to the point of beginning. This whole route is well marked with spotted trees painted a very bright red. This lot is supposed to contain 40 acres +/-.

Edgerly lot map R 12 lot 44 Upper New Hampton & Nedean roads.

Beginning at the intersection of Upper New Hampton and Nedean roads and following Upper New Hampton road about two hundred yards to a yellow birch tree, both tree and wall are well marked at this point. Then turning a little to the right and following the stone wall, which is the original west end line of the range lot 58 in the second division of Meredith, past the first wall at right angles to the second wall.. At the present time there is an electric power line through the woods at this point that serve the Selden property. Turning a right angle to the right at this point and following this second wall to the end which is only a short distance from the road. Then follow the Nedean road back to the point of beginning. These lines are well marked with spotted trees and painted. There is no separate deed to this lot because it is what was left after Mr Leavitt had sold 90 acres off the original lot. This lot should contain thirty acres or more.

Tucker Mountain lot (Lawrence land) map R 11 lot 22 Tucker Mountain road.

Starting on the Tucker Mountain road at the eastern side of this lot at an iron pin in the ground at the foot of a white birch tree running almost at right angles to the road about 100 yards to the end of a stone wall. This wall is short, perhaps two hundred yards, from this point on in a straight line there is only a line of marked and painted trees to an old wagon axle in the ground. Turning to the right again there is only a line of trees to another iron pin in the ground at an old barbed wire fence. again turning to the right and following this line back to an iron pin near a very big hemlock tree, and then continuing in a straight line back to the road and along the road to the point of beginning. All of this line has been marked with spotted and painted trees, close enough together so that you can see from one to next and should remain plainly visible for several years.

This lot should contain 18 acres being $1/2$ of the original range lot 51, 60 acres less thirty acres willed by Samuel Edgerly to one of his sons and twelve acres set off to the widow's share and both pieces having been sold. The remaining eighteen acres coming to Thomas L Leavitt when he purchased the Samuel Edgerly farm, range lot 58.

Harold Leavitt

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Hermit Lot map R14 lot 24 on Hermit Woods Road.

I started the bounding of this lot where the Hermit Woods road crosses the Meredith-Sanbornton town line. From this point the line runs northwest along the town line to two large hemlock trees growing out of the same stump with a very ~~no~~ noticeable amount of barbed wire twisted around and grown into the tree. This is at the junction with R14 lot 9, presently owned by Mr Walter Southworth. From this point the line turns to the northeast following an old barbed wire fence to the boundary of land of Southworth and Mrs Margerite Fourel and continues in the same direction to the end of a stone wall which marks the boundary between the Town and land of Phillip and Jane Elliot, shown on this tax map as lots 21A thru 21 I. This survey is wrong and nearly the whole of lot 21 I and part of lot 21 H is on Town land (the Hermit lot).

At the point where the barbed wire fence meets the end of the stone wall on the boundary with Mrs Fourel the boundary between the Hermit lot and land of Mr Elliot goes southeasterly to the end of another stone wall, approximately 50 feet, and follows this stone wall to the junction of another stone wall which was the boundary between the Woodman lot and land of Robinson. At this point there is a large white ash tree that I marked and painted to point out the junction of the walls. I did however mark and paint the boundary of the Hermit lot in as near a straight line as possible and well onto what I know to be Town land all the way from the corner at land of Mrs Fourel to the Hermit Woods road. At this point, a few years back the Selectmen exchanged Quit Claim deeds with the owner of land on south side of the road to establish the road as the boundary. This act is questionable but it did establish a boundary and the land of the Hermit lot on that side of the road was wetlands and worthless. It varied in width from 200 feet to at places only six feet.

I have not contacted the abuttor on the Meredith-Sanbokrnton line nor Mr Southworth but I did see Mrs Fourel and she agreed to accept the old barbed wire as the boundary, which when considering the cost of a survey of the line probably would not result in any appreciable loss or gain to either party.

Mr Elliot has been notified of the error in his survey.

These boundaries should be painted again about every seven years if not sooner. This time it took me about 120 hours and 13 cans of paint, to do the job. This time includes trimming the brush so you can see from one mark to the next and also the time spent trying to find a barbed wire fence through the swamp that was last maintained about 40 years ago.

The original deeds to Joseph Plumer for this lot are found in Strafford County records at Belknap County Registry in book 5 page 343 (northern half) and book 8 page 91 (southern half). These deeds were written before the Hermit Woods road was built, and included land to the south of the road.

26 September, 1984
RFD 2 Birch Hill Road
Meredith, N.H. 03253

Selectmen, Meredith, N.H.
re, Northeast boundary of
Hermit Woods lot (R14-24).

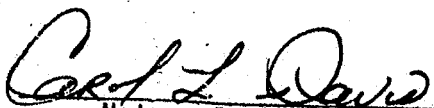
Because I have informed you that the suvey of land of Philip & Jane Elliot which abbutts the Hermit lot is wrong as it defines the boundary between land of Mr Elliot and the Town owned Hermit lot, I will make this statement to show why I believe it to be wrong.

First, my father and I cut the firewood on the Woodman lot about 1932, at that time Mr Woodman told us that his lot was bounded on all sides by stonewall. The only wall mentioned in the deed of Woodman to Elliot is the dividing line between the Woodman lot and the deed from Joseph F Smith, Conservator, for Martin L Smith of said Meredith, to Hilda V Robinson, dated 9 September 1940, recorded Belknap County Records, book 247, page 357, but both lots are marked by stone walls.

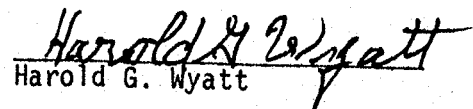
Second, The boundary line for the northeast end of the Hermit lot was a straight line running from the present boundary with Mrs Fourel, (barbed wire at meeting with stone wall) to a stake and stones on the south side of the Hermit Woods road. I have not seen this stake and stone for about 45 years and as the lot has since been logged it might be hard to find. That part of the Hermit lot south of the Hermit Woods road was disposed of several years ago, by exchange of quit claim deeds to establish the road as the boundary on that side.

Third, I have a Soils Conservation map with the boundaries of the Hermit lot marked, to the best knowledge I can find, by Marshall Hodsdon about 1940.

Fourth, I can still find the remains of stumps of trees that were cut by David Robinson, (adopted son of Hilda Robinson) and who was stopped from further cutting on Town land by Archie Scribner at the request of neighbors who knew the location of the boundary. Mr Scribner was Meredith Town Manager at that time.


Notary Public

CAROL L. DAVIS, Notary Public
My Commission Expires December 9, 1986


Harold G. Wyatt