

A Brief History of 99 Phelps Road, Colebrook, Connecticut

This property was originally part of lot # 1, second division, as laid out by the proprietors (land owners) of Windsor when they portioned out the virgin forest that was to become the Town of Colebrook. The initial assignments of land (it couldn't really be called a survey) took place in 1732, but were reinforced by a second survey in 1760. It is this 1760 document that all Colebrook land allocations are based upon.

Colebrook was laid out by strips of land three quarters of a mile wide called tiers, commencing at the western, or Norfolk Town Line. As they are parallel to this town line, which was constructed 19° east of true north, they have a decided northeast/ southwest slant. The eight tiers were next divided into three divisions, called one, two and three, starting from the western town line. Initially, there were seventy-nine Windsor residents who bought shares in the land development that was to become Colebrook. Each drew a number from one to seventy-nine, which was repeated in all three divisions. As it turns out, your property falls within lot number one, second division, originally laid out to (assigned to) John Palmer and Isaac Pinney, two men who had gone in together on the land allocation.

Other than the clear-cutting of the original forest, and subsequent destruction of re-growth, primarily for charcoal production to supply the energy for the important local iron industry, nothing was done to your property from 1760 until late in the nineteenth century.

Although the exact date for the dwelling house at 99 Phelps Road cannot be pinpointed, we can infer by land records that Hiram Smith built it around 1890. Here are some of the more important dates derived from those records:

Sept. 14, 1782 Isaac Pinney of Windsor, for the love, good will and affection that I have for my son Martin Pinney of Windsor, do give, grant and convey various parcels of land within the township of Colebrook, one half of the original right laid out to Deacon John Palmer. 1st lot: lot # 1, containing 11 chains, 50 links [759 feet] in width. Bounded **south** on the Winchester line, **north** on a lot laid out to Anthony Horskins [Hoskins], **east** on the highway, **west** on Norfolk line.

2nd lot: lot # 1, second div., 3rd lot: lot # 1, third division. Also the one half of a lot laid out on the original right of Thomas Griswold in the 1st div., 1st tier # 14. All lands with appurtenances.

Town Records, Vol. 1, p. 44

[Appurtenances means that either some of the land had been cleared of timber or that fences had been constructed. If a barn or other outbuildings had been erected, it would have stated: "with barn (or buildings) standing thereon". When a dwelling house was present, the deed would read: "with dwelling and other buildings thereon standing". Another means of determining whether or not a dwelling house existed was the sale price of the property. If someone purchased acreage for \$100.00, then sold it ten years later for \$3,000.00, you can be certain that a house had been added to the property during that period of ownership. This rule of thumb doesn't work when a relative is involved; then it is common for a piece of land (with dwelling) to sell for \$1.00, or other valuables.]

April 19, 1800 Frederick Brown of Colebrook, for \$70.00, sold to Rachel Crissey of Colebrook 5 acres and 61 rods of land lying in Colebrook bounded: beginning at a

point where the west line of the Saw Mill Road (so called) [*today Phelps Road*] strikes the north line of the country road, [*today Stillman Hill Rd., or Connecticut Route 182*] thence **west** on said country road to the west end of the tier of lots and four rods [66 feet] on the original 10 rod [165 feet] highway, thence northerly including said four rods on the east side of said original 10 rod highway to the north line of the grantor's lot, then easterly on said north line about 48 rods [792 feet] to the west line of said Sawmill Road, then southerly on said Sawmill road to the first bound.

Also about one acre and 35 rods of land adjoining northerly, being four rods [66 feet] in width on the east side of the 10 rod highway and extending northerly the same width so far as to contain all that part of said 10 rod highway which was heretofore deeded by the selectmen of Colebrook to Juda Pinney and wife and to contain in both pieces 6 acres and 96 rods of land.

Town Records, Vol. 3, p. 42

Aug. 8, 1893 Hiram A. Smith sold to Julian H. Smith five acres, more or less with a dwelling house standing thereon bounded **north** and **west** on land of Hiram, the grantor, **east** on the highway leading from the West Schoolhouse past said grantor's dwelling house, and **south** on the highway leading from Colebrook to Norfolk.

Town Records, Vol. 18, p. 274

[We see here that Hiram Smith resided on this plot of land, and it is presumed that it was he who had the house built. We can assume that the building date is approximately 1890, give or take a year or two.]

Sept. 3, 1938 Wyllys & Saima Smith sold to Hilja Winter Willis a lot of land 200 feet by 250 feet with the buildings standing thereon. Located on the west side of Phelps Road. [Now known as 99 Phelps Road.]

Town Records, Vol. 24, p. 358

[As Wyllys and his wife retained the remainder of the original plot, Hilja (a relative), becomes the first person to live on what is now 99 Phelps Road.]

Oct. 14, 1963 Hilja W. Willis sold [99 Phelps Road] to Peter P. & Henrietta M. D'Addeo.

Town Records, Vol. 36, p. 495

June 6, 1972 Henrietta M. D'Addeo sold to James M. & Charlotte S. Walker.

Town Records, Vol. 40, p. 124

May 17, 1985 Charlotte S. Walker sold to Walter & Linda Wick.

Town Records, Vol. 46, p. 252

July 30, 1993 Walter & Linda Wick sold to Steven W. Sinding & Monica Knorr Sinding.

Town Records, Vol. 55, p. 642

2003 Steven & Monica Sinding sold to Timothy Sayers-Jarvis & Elizabeth Brody.