**1. BUILDING NAME (Common)**
Ney, Paul S., House

**2. TOWN CITY**
Farmington

**3. STREET AND NUMBER (land or location)**
54 Town Farm Road

**4. OWNER(S)**
Tomasso, Brothers, Inc.

**5. USE (Present)**
Residence

**6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC:**
- Yes
- No

**7. STYLE OF BUILDING**
Colonial Revival

**8. MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate)**
- Wood Shingle
- Asbestos Siding
- Brick
- Other (Specify)

**9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM**
- Wood frame
- Siding Type:
- Other (Specify)

**10. ROOF**
- Gable
- Material:
- Other (Specify)

**11. NUMBER OF STORIES**
2

**12. CONDITION (Structural):**
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Deteriorated

**13. INTEGRITY:**
- On original site
- Moved
- Yes
- No
- Aluminum sided

**14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES**
- Barn
- Shop
- Garage
- Other landscape features or buildings (Specify)

**15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT**
- Open land
- Woodland
- Residential
- Scattered buildings visible from site
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Rural

**16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS**
The Paul S. Ney House sits on the east side of Town Farm Road just north of Farmington Avenue. Open land, made up of farmland and a golf course, surround it to the north and west. Scattered buildings are visible from the property.
This two-story, ridge-to-street, Colonial Revival-style house features little original detail. Its exterior has been aluminum sided and decorated with red and white shutters. An enclosed front porch of wide proportions is displayed on the west elevation. Probably not original to the building, is the exterior brick chimney on the south elevation.

By 1914 Paul S. Ney owned several acres of farmland, which may or may not have included this house. If it did not exist, it probably was built shortly after the purchase recorded in FLR 77:542. Ney, a farmer, (b. 1880) married Bertha Beecher (b. 1885) and had three daughters: Bertha (b. 1910), Gail (b. 1911), and Roxana (b. 1916). In 1917 Ney purchased the Stewart S. Bishop Farm, once owned by Lucius S. Bishop (see 99 Town Farm Road) (FLR 78:679). In 1921 Ney's estate was released of a mortgage by his executor William F. Conklin to Thomas S. Stephenson (FLR 79:46 and 82:47). During the same year Stephenson sold the farm to John H. Henriksen, a farmer from London. Born in 1868 Henriksen died in 1931 and his property was inherited by Elise Henriksen, his wife (FLR 89:148, 74:543). From that time on, it has changed hands several times.

The Paul S. Ney House, ca. 1915, contributes to the historical development of Town Farm Road.

Sources:
This house is pictured on page 143 of the Farmington Book and it stood near where Folly Road, which led to Avon, left Town Farm Road and took off to the left and toward the northwest. Not much is known of the Hannons. Mr. Hannon is said to have operated the typical small farm, keeping a few cows, some pigs and chickens and having one team of horses. The Hannons were said to have had two children, a son and a daughter, the latter of whom married and lived on Hartford's Capitol Avenue.

Paul Ney purchased the property in 1912, and operated it as a sort of gentleman's farm. He built a new residence a little south of the one pictured in the Farmington Book. He had spent some time roaming the western United States and built this house on the ranch style with which he had become accustomed out west. The older house was probably used as the residence of his farm manager. Both Mr. and Mrs. Ney were fond of sports and of horses. They kept a fine stable of riding horses and laid out riding trails which were used for years by succeeding generations. The writer has heard that the Neys moved to Cheshire just after this property was purchased in 1917 by Thomas E. Stephenson.

Paul Ney's wife was the former Bertha Beecher, niece of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Their daughter Gail Ney married Robert Waldo Boas, son of Herbert Allan Boas and Marguerite Chase, the latter being of 87 Main Street, Farmington. Paul Ney died in Cheshire.

The Stephenson's had enormous admiration and respect for Paul Ney and they continued the use of his name "Green Brier" for the farm. Gertrude Stephenson as a child was also grateful to him for leaving behind some books that I loved, a beautiful set of Kipling --- and pictures, including a Rembrandt reproduction --- and a Barye sculpture of a tiger --- all those were lost in the 1955 flood.

She also tells of the farm's part in the filming of "Way Down East". She says "The haying scenes were made on Green Brier Farm....My mother impressed upon me that everyone must do as Mr. D. W. Griffith said. It was a very hot July day, and there was Lillian Gish herself, a vision of loveliness in a pink dress, sitting in the hay field on a folding stool with a pink parasol! And Richard Barthelmess in khakis, helping Daddy and his men to load the hay. It was one of my precious early memories."

Thomas Edward Stephenson, purchaser in 1917, was the son of Thomas Edward and Ellen Stephenson, and had been born in Dunlavin, County Wicklow, Ireland, in 1887. His wife was the former Gertrude Sheil, the daughter of Patrick and Ellen Sheil of the village of Cloonacool in County Sligo, in the heart of the Yeats' country. Gertrude's father and mother were both schoolteachers. Thomas and Gertrude both came from Ireland to the United States when they were in their early twenties, and they were married in New York in 1914.
Mr. and Mrs. Stephenson lived until 1917 in Litchfield, where he was manager of a large estate. He was on the alert however for some property which they could own, and when they Ney farm was up for sale the opportunity brought them to Farmington in 1917. Mr. Stephenson was an exceptionally gifted farmer, and in addition to that he was a very hard worker. He had one of the early tractors, started with gasoline and then fueled by kerosene. Neighbors would hear his tractor running at night, and see the tiny gleam of his light, a lantern hanging out in front, passing back and forth in the fields. He had fine Guernsey cattle, his own milk route, and delivered milk to many Farmington families.

Mr. Stephenson's daughter Gertrude suspects that the story of the tractor running at night was apocryphal. She says:

"My father was certainly a very hard worker, but at the same time he was quite religious about keeping the Lord's time table and His commandments. Work began in the summer at dawn, but the schedule was absolutely rigorous: dinner at 12 noon sharp, supper at 6, no work was ever allowed on Sunday. I did not know that my father had one of the early tractors, but he certainly was an innovator in many respects: was the first to grow hybrid corn, the first to buy fertilizer by the carload and to use it generously even on the pastures (I remember delegations of farmers coming to inspect what was in those days a model farm). My father loved to reclaim unused land, and he always said this valley was one of the most fertile and favored spots in the East. He traveled periodically to Canada and Wisconsin to purchase carloads of cattle and to look over farming conditions in other parts of the country. These trips confirmed his conviction that the Farmington valley was the best place to live. In his last years he served on the Town Planning and Zoning Commission. During the Depression years the farm continued to prosper and so, during his short life (he died at 53) he had the satisfaction of constant growth and expansion".

In 1928, after 180 years of its operation, the Town of Farmington decided to abandon the Alms House, and sell the Town Farm on which it was located, which was adjacent and to the north of this property. Mr. Stephenson took advantage of this opportunity, and its acquisition doubled the size of his farm. He increased his herd of cattle and his tilled land and operated a very productive farm.

The houses on the Town Farm property are pictured on page 144 of the Farmington Book. The almshouse itself is behind the large tree at the left in the photo. The farm house is to the right, behind a smaller tree.

The farm house had been occupied for years by the people who operated the Town Farm, the people who had fed and cared for the occupants of the Alms House, and had paid the town a nominal fee for rental of the farm property. The last ones to operate the town farm in this manner were the Arthur Ingvertsens, who had taken it over from the Sperrys in 1924.

Mr. Stephenson moved the almshouse across Town Farm Road and converted it to a two-family residence, where it still stands, six-tenths of a mile north of Route 4, Farmington Avenue.

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1766.
The farm house, perhaps built by Deacon Noah Porter around 1781, stayed on the property and was used to house some of the farm workers.

Mr. Stephenson died of a heart attack on December 3, 1941.

Mrs. Stephenson and her son Edward and daughter Helen continued living in their home. Farming operations were curtailed and gradually terminated. Two large barns and some other outbuildings were lost in a 1953 fire. The old colonial farm house was badly damaged by the August 1955 flood and was condemned and razed.

Mrs. Stephenson died in 1960 and her son Thomas left Farmington a short time later. Mrs. Clinton Pickering, the former Rosamond Stephenson, and her husband and family returned to Farmington in 1962, and in 1963 the two sisters enlarged and remodeled the house. The Pickerings left Farmington in 1955. Mrs. Richard Hooker, the former Gertrude Stephenson, returned to Farmington to live here, in 1966.

In 1961 some 150 acres of land had been leased to the Tomasso brothers, and on that land they built the Tunxis Country Club and Golf Course.

In 1969 the family sold 27 acres to the Tomasso Brothers, on which they built a fairly large group of luxury apartments.

The Stephenson's four children were Gertrude, Helen, Thomas and Rosamond.

Helen Stephenson, born in Mt. Kisco, New York, was a graduate of Mount St. Joseph Academy in West Hartford, and was graduated from Mount Holyoke College in 1939, cum laude. She never married. She taught school, first in Bristol and later in Farmington, was dedicated to her work and spent long hours planning school programs. She taught Shakespeare on the sixth grade level. She had composed a musical adaptation of "Tom Sawyer" which was to have been presented on Monday, June 12, 1972, at the school. She died very suddenly on Sunday, June 11, having taught as usual on Friday June 9. Her sister keeps hearing from many parents and former pupils that she was an exceptionally fine teacher. One boy said: "Miss Stephenson was the best teacher. She wasn't like the others, she was your friend."

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Thomas Edward Stephenson, born in Farmington, was graduated from Loomis Institute and attended Michigan State University. The death of his father left him unprepared for managing the farm, and in a dire predicament due to the labor shortage resulting from the war. He gradually reduced the scope of farm operations and finally rented much of the land to other operators. In the 1940's he renovated the fine old colonial home of Deacon Porter and lived there for a time, but it became a casualty of the August 1955 flood. Edward continued residence in Farmington until after the death of his mother in 1960. He is presently employed as electronics engineer with RCA and the space program. He travels extensively, and was last known by the writer as having been stationed at Ascension Island.

Rosamond Louise Stephenson, born in Farmington is a graduate of Oxford School, and of Smith College, 1951. She married in 1951 Clinton V. Pickering, Jr., son of insurance executive Clinton Victor Pickering and Miriam Cross. Clinton, Jr., is a graduate of Kingswood School and Yale University, with a Master's in Business Administration from Columbia. After living in New York until 1962 they came to Farmington and lived in the Stephenson family home until 1965. During this residence they raised a second floor dormer and built three bedrooms and two baths in that area. Now residing in Greenwich, Connecticut, Mr. Pickering is an insurance executive and Mrs. Pickering works for the Lehman and Pickering Real Estate Agency. Their teen age daughters are Lisa and Ellen.

Gertrude Mary Stephenson, born in Litchfield, attended Mt. St. Joseph's Academy in West Hartford and has advanced degrees from Holyoke College and the University of Chicago. One of her college years was spent at the University of Paris. She married Richard Hooker of Chicago in 1941 and was divorced in 1951.

She has worked at the University of Chicago, for the U. S. Department of State in Rome, for the U. S. Information Agency in Rome and Paris, the Ford Foundation in New York, lectured at the University of Hartford and was Associate Director at the Rome campus of Trinity College. For the past year she has served as Assistant to President Silber of Boston University, and is there in an executive office, Associate Professor, Department of Classics. She has had some writings published and is working on a book, THE GOLDEN LEGEND, on the lives of the saints.

Her memberships include the Modern Language Association, Dante Society of America, the Mt. Holyoke Club, Farmington Historical Society and St. James Church. Non-professional interests include golf, swimming, Ireland, Verdi and some others.

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