This dwelling which originally stood close to the east side of Main Street facing west, was moved to its present site around 1926. It now faces south and stands approximately 200 feet back off the east side of Main Street, accessible by a private drive. Located in a small thicket of woods, the Jesse Porter House is bordered by other historic dwellings of similar style and age.
The five-day facade of the Jesse Porter House features a combination of Colonial-period and Georgian-style elements and is attributed to architect/builder Capt. Judah Woodruff. The large brick center chimney and hewn overhangs are characteristics of earlier Colonial-period architecture. Georgian-style embellishments include the leader heads and a door surround. The original twelve-over-twelve sash remain. When the house was moved around 1926, a number of Colonial Revival-style elements were added including the classical entry portico and open, wraparound veranda on the west ell. The veranda is enhanced by Ionic columns and a simple stick balustrade. The entasis of the columns shafts are quite pronounced.

The ell also exhibits six-over-six sash, wall dormer, and a period entry door. Additions also extend from the north and east elevations.

**Architect**
Capt. Judah Woodruff

**Builder**
Capt. Judah Woodruff

**Historical or Architectural Importance**
This house was built around 1785 by Jesse Porter on land owned by father John. In 1786 John Porter willed his son "the new dwelling house on the east side of Town Street in which he (Jesse) now lives" (FPR 3:42,44). Little is known about Jesse Porter, except that he was the son of John and Prudence (Braynard) Porter. In 1795 he sold his homestead to Romant Norton (FLR 31:200). Three years later in 1798, brothers Elijah, Jonathan, Seth, Gad, and Martin Cowles and Company, acquired the property (FLR 32:221). One of Farmington's leading mercantile businesses in the eighteenth-century, Elijah Cowles and Company was also involved with exporting native goods like cattle and fruit as well as importing rum and molasses on their own ships. The firm was also instrumental in the building of the "ill-fated" Farmington Canal. The youngest of the five brothers, Martin (1774-1844) received title of this property in 1813 (FLR 37:560). Besides being a successful merchant, Martin Cowles also was a director of the Phoenix Bank (1837-43), director of the Protective Insurance Company (1826-7), and treasurer of the Farmington Academy. He served in the Connecticut State Militia as Colonel of the 4th Calvary. Cowles first wife, the former Nancy Hooker died of scarlet fever in 1808. In 1809 he married Harriet Wells of Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania. Upon Colonel Cowles' death in 1844, the property was willed to his four sons: Francis, John, Henry, and Edmund (FPR 10:490). In the distribution of the estate, the widow Harriet Cowles received "the whole house" and one acre of land with woodhouse, half hog house, barn, and cowhouse (FPR 11:23). Eventually, the youngest son Edmund Butler Cowles (1833-1893) took title to the homestead (FLR 64:8). (see cont. pg.)

Sources:
He married Grace Cooke (1850-1912) a native of England and piano teacher at Miss Porter's School in 1871. Mrs. Cowles for many years was the organist at the Congregational Church. Upon her husband's death, Grace Cowles inherited the house "as long as she remains my widow. At her death or marriage the property is to go to our surviving children" (FPR 22:217). Mrs. Cowles did remarry and in 1906 the homestead passed to her daughter, Harriet Cowles Allen (FLR 76:56). Mrs. Allen and her husband, Henry T. Allen, were responsible for turning the house ninety degrees and moving it back off the road around 1926. The house remained in the family until 1940.

Although the building has been moved it retains most of its original detail and is notable as one of the dwellings attributed to architect/builder Capt. Judah Woodruff. It derives added historical significance for its association with the Porter and Cowles families.
OWNER'S NAME: CHILDs, MELISSA W. to CHILDs, Thomas S. 1950-Res.
ADDRESS: 41 Main Street
DATE BUILT: 1784 FOR: John Porter
ARCHITECT: Capt. Judah Woodruff
MASTER-BUILDER: Capt. Judah Woodruff

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The house was built close to the sidewalk & faced the st. While owned by Harriet Cowles Allen, the house was moved in 1920 to its present site. The stone steps leading to the front door are still in place.

FORMER OWNERS: M.W. Childs from H. Trowbridge Allen & Muriel Allen Bevan 1/9/1941, Vol. 94, p. 372, (also various quit claim deeds to clear title); Allen, H.T. & Muriel A.B. from Est. Harriet C. Allen 2/18/1930, Vol. 74, p. 515; Harriet Cowles Allen from father Edmund B. Cowles by Will. Terms of will were that the property was left to the widow Grace C. Cowles unless she should re-marry, which she did; then the property should go immediately to the two daughters, Harriet & Nancy. Mrs. Cowles married and quit claim the property to Harriet Allen 10/6/1906, Vol. 76, p. 56. The date of the will of E.B. Cowles was 1/13/1891, Prob. Vol. 22, p. 217; also Harriet Cowles Allen from Henry Martin Cowles 1/10 acre with old house (the old house lot, orchards and bldgs. which went to Col. Martin Cowles in 1813), 12/17/1919, Vol. 79, p. 111. The present Childs house was moved to the site of the old house which stood here & which is pictured in "Farmington, Conn., 1906" p. 29, at rt. of

"G. Gay Papers", p. 123

(OVER)

OWNER: CHILDs, (MELISSA W.) THOMAS S. 1950 1960
PHOTO NO. 41 Main St.
Former Owners, cont.:
Frederick Miles house, and p. 149, property of H.M. Cowles. Cowles, Edmund B. from Est. of father Col. Martin Cowles by will 11/23/1844, Vol. 10, p. 490, Prob. Rec., subject to dower & equal rights with his 3 bros., Francis W., John E., and Henry M., including his share in the dowers. Edmund B. Cowles was a minor at the time of his father's death & was not given a house in the dist. of the Est. This house "all the homestead" went to John E. Cowles, subject to dower... see Dist. of Est. 12/15/1846, Vol. 11B, Prob. Rec. p. 22; Henry M. Cowles d. 1846 & his Est. was dist. in part to Francis W. Cowles who with Henry had a 1/3 interest in the house now "Brick" of Miss Porter's School. Edmund B. Cowles recd. 1/4 of the ownership in "Brick" through the Est. of his brother Henry, and Francis W. Cowles recd. 1/4 in addition to his 1/3. See Probate Rec., Vol 11, p. 3.; Edmund B. Cowles from Mary L. (Root) Cowles, widow of Francis W. by quit claim deed 1 acres and all bldgs. n. by John & Eliza Rice, e. by J.& E. Rice, s. by John E. Cowles and w. by highway, 10/28/1871, Vol. 64, p. 8. This conveyance from the widow of Francis appears to have been in settlement of two claims Edmund B. had against Francis' Est. which were not allowed by the commissioners, also for the interest Francis had in the dower rights of his mother in this homestead. See Francis W. Cowles Est., Prob. Rec. Vol 13, p. 1437; Col. Martin Cowles by dist. of the Est. of his father Elijah Cowles "to have his house lot, with the orchards and all bldgs. thereon standing" (cf. Harriet C. Allen from Henry M. Cowles 12/17/1919) 7/24/1813, Vol. 37, p. 560; Col. Martin Cowles from Romanta Norton, 1 acres 2 roods, dwelling-house, barn, etc., with the encumbrance of a lease for two years from date 1/1/1798 to Luther Seymour (who was then building his house on Main St.) 2/13/1799, Vol. 32, p. 221; Romanta Norton from Jesse Porter "being the homestead where I now dwell, w. on town st., n. and e. on heirs of Elijah Cowles & part e. on land of Noadiah Hooker, s. on land of Asahel Porter (line to be changed)" 4/21/1795, Vol. 31, p. 200. Jesse Porter from his father Elijah Porter 5/16/1760, Vol. 12, p. 221.

NOTE: The gap in the title from John E. Cowles was remedied in the deeds from H.T. Allen et al to M.W. Childs by quit claim deeds from collateral relatives & their descendants - it was not thought necessary to mention these deeds.
The house at this address is pictured on page 26 of the Farmington Book as the Col. Martin Cowles Place, residence of H. Trowbridge Allen. Baker and Tilden's 1869 Atlas shows it as "Martin Cowles Heirs". It has been written up for the Colonial Dames Society as "Henry Trowbridge Allen 1784", author unknown, 1913.

It is believed to have been built for John Porter by the architect and builder Judah Woodruff in 1784, on land inherited by Jesse Porter from his father Elijah Porter in 1760.

Succession of ownerships is shown in the Colonial Dames pamphlet as follows:

John Porter
Jesse Porter
Romanta Norton
Elijah Cowles and Co.
(Mrs.) Harriet (Cowles) Allen.

Dates of the above title transfers are not given in the pamphlet but some information is available on this matter.

Romanta Norton received title from Jesse Porter in 1795 and, Mr. Norton having married one Belinda Porter in 1791, it is presumed that she was perhaps the daughter of Jesse Porter.

In April 1798 it was leased to Capt. Luther Seymour for the period of two years, to provide him with a residence while he was engaged in the construction of the house at 19 Main Street. Elijah Cowles and Company probably purchased it subject to this lease, and title passed to Martin Cowles in 1799.

Regarding the owners of the property prior to this time the writer has little knowledge other than their names. We do know that Luther Seymour was a builder, as he later built the house at 93 Main Street, and he was also a fine cabinet maker. It may be noted that one Elijah Porter, perhaps the same man who had owned this property, purchased the house at 117 Main Street the same year that this house was built. Would it be that he had lived here until then? and that the old house in which he had perhaps lived was torn down to make room for the new one? Who does know?

Col Martin Cowles, 1774-1844, was of the fifth generation of the Cowles family in Farmington. Briefly his genealogy is as follows:

John Cowles
 m. Hannah

Samuel Cowles
 m. Abigail Standley

Isaac Cowles 1675-1756
 m. Elizabeth Smith

Elijah Cowles 1727-1793
 m. Eunice Gould

May 20, 1971
Isaac Cowles had lived about where 48 Main Street now stands. He was captain of the train band, constable, representative to general assembly, a tailor by trade.

Elijah Cowles inherited the place later occupied by Seth, which was still later the site of Ward House, 56 Main Street. He was a shoemaker by trade, and of a very saving nature. His first wife was Sarah Hart, daughter of Josiah Hart. She had only one child who died as an infant, and she died shortly after. His second wife, Eunice Gould, was of North Guilford, and bore him ten children.

Col. Martin Cowles also was married twice. His first wife was Nancy Hooker, daughter of Noadiah Hooker and Rebecca Griswold, of the house which stood just west of that now known as 50 High Street. She bore him three children and died rather young. He then married Harriet Welles, daughter of Judge Roswell Welles and Hannah Butler, of Glastonbury, Connecticut, and Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. She bore him eleven children. Four sons who survived infancy were:

- Francis Winthrop Cowles, born 1810, who later built and occupied the house at 48 Main Street,
- John Edward Cowles, born 1819, who built and occupied the house at 47 Main Street,
- Henry Martin Cowles, born 1822, a "vigorous, promising young man suddenly cut off by bleeding at the lungs",
- Edmund Butler Cowles, born 1833, who inherited this house.

Col. Cowles was active in the State Militia, 1802 until 1818, was a director of the Protective Insurance Company and of the Phoenix Bank of Hartford, and was Treasurer of the Farmington Academy.

It is stated in the Farmington Book on page 81 that Martin Cowles "kept a drug store where stands Miss Adgate's summer house, or near there". The Cowles genealogy states that he was a member of the prosperous mercandising firm comprised of five brothers. They were the following, with their addresses:

- Elijah Cowles, 53 Main Street,
- Jonathan Cowles, 59 Main Street,
- Gad Cowles, 63 Main Street,
- Martin Cowles, 41 Main Street, and
- Seth Cowles, 56 Main Street.

One Edward D. Mansfield, student at Edw. Hooker's Red College on Mountain Road, in his "Personal Memoirs" published in 1879, had something to say about this, after attending a social gathering at the Pitkin house at 2 Colton Street: "of these young ladies more than half bore one name, that of Cowles ... There were on the Main Street five families of brothers, in all of whose homes I visited, and to whom I was indebted for many pleasant hours".

Nancy Cowles, born 1813, one of the daughters of Col. Cowles, was married in 1839 to the Rev. Thomas Kendall Fessenden. After his retirement from his years in the ministry in various localities, they came to Farmington and lived in what was the Episcopal Rectory at No. 13 Mountain Road.

May 20, 1971
Another of the daughters of Col Cowles, Harriet Welles Cowles, was married in 1856 to Dr. Mills Olcott Heydock, of Hanover, New Hampshire, and Chicago, Illinois. After his death in 1881, she returned here to live, residing with her sister at 13 Mountain Road. Neither of these sisters had children.

Edmund Butler Cowles, 1833-1893, son of Col. Martin Cowles, probably lived here, although the Cowles Genealogy gives very little information regarding him, except that he served as assessor in Farmington in 1870 and 1871. He was mentioned twice in Mrs. Hurlburt's "Town Clerks", first as a member of Robert Treadwell's Cornet Band in 1876, and second as a member of the committee formed in 1888 to decide whether or not to split Farmington into two towns, based on the boundaries of the two voting districts.

Edmund Butler Cowles was married around 1876 to Grace Cooke of London, England, daughter of John Parker Cooke, of Chester, England, and Carolyn Usher, of Kent, England. Miss Cooke had been brought from New York City to Farmington by Mr. Karl Klauser, to be piano teacher at Miss Porter's School. She served 25 years as organist at the Congregational Church, before and during her marriage with Edmund B. Cowles, and was succeeded by Mrs. F. L. Scott. One of the daughters of Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Cowles was Nancy Fessenden Cowles, born 1876, who never married. Their daughter Harriet Welles Cowles, born 1873, was married in 1896 to Henry Trowbridge Allen of New Haven.

After the death of Edmund B. Cowles his widow re-married, marrying Edward Prime Coe. She died in 1912 and is buried in Farmington beside her first husband.

Henry Trowbridge Allen, born in New Haven in 1870, was the son of William T. Allen and Harriet Emily Trowbridge. He was in the brokerage business in Hartford, perhaps with Putnam and Company. His brother, W. Bradford Allen, lived at 93 Main Street. Their father, after his wife's death, married Elizabeth Hart, school teacher, daughter of Deacon Simeon Hart.

At the time of Mr. and Mrs. Henry T. Allen's wedding in 1896, the newspaper account of the wedding stated that they would be living at 109 Elm Street in Hartford. They may have done that, and they also took an extensive trip to Europe, as may be evidenced by the fact that their daughter was born there in 1898. For two years or so this house was occupied by Dr. and Mrs. John Bagg Griggs. That couple came to Farmington after Dr. Griggs' internship was concluded in 1897, and their son John Bolter Griggs was born here in 1899. Dr. Griggs and his family moved into the house at 101 Main Street later that year. They moved to Hartford in 1903.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Trowbridge Allen had a daughter Muriel, and possibly a son, although if so, the writer does not know his name. Mrs. Hurlburt says of Mr. and Mrs. Allen, that "They were in the social life of the village during their years here, being musically inclined, and up-to-date in church and village activities".

May 20, 1971
The property line between this house and that of Henry Martin Cowles, to the south, now 47 Main Street, was long in dispute, and in 1919, to settle this, Harriet Cowles Allen purchased of Henry Martin Cowles one and one-tenth acres of land, with the buildings, barns and orchard that were on it.

In 1926, according to the Allens' daughter, and using the additional land purchased, the house was moved to the east and was turned 90 degrees to the left, so that it now faces south instead of west. Its present site is that of the house on page 149 of the Farmington Book, the residence of John Hurley and Frank Chidsey, the latter house having been moved to make way for it. According to a report, this was the second move for the Hurley-Chidsey house, it having stood originally on the first site of the Allen house, at street-side.

Mrs. Allen died in 1930 and the property was thereafter in the name of Mr. Allen and his daughter.

Muriel Trowbridge Allen, the daughter, was born in 1898 in Dresden, Saxony, while her parents were on an extensive trip to Europe, having been married in Farmington in 1896. Muriel Allen was married in 1924 to Arnold Bevan, son of F. M. Bevan and Mary E. Wilson, of England. Mr. Bevan had been in the employ of the same firm with which Mr. Allen was associated in Hartford. Mr. Bevan served with Canadian military forces during World War I.

Mr. and Mrs. Bevan lived in England for some time, and their daughter Nancy was born there in 1926. They have a son Allen also. They later moved to La Jolla, California, where Mr. Bevan died. Mrs. Bevan lives there at present.

Some more information about the Allens' house has come to light.

The oldest part of the house is the kitchen wing. The newest part consists of what was called "the big room", and the master bedroom above it. It was added in about 1885 or 1890.

The house was built right on the main street, as most of the old houses were. In about 1926 it was moved back into the apple orchard. Done on large rollers, with the cook's husband acting as night watchman during the process. A full glass of water never spilled during the move, it was all done so smoothly.

A secret panel in the butler's pantry is about 64 years old at most.

June 6, 1973
This house was purchased in 1941 by Thomas S. Childs and Melissa W. Childs, from Henry T. Allen and Muriel E. Bevan.

Thomas Southworth Childs, born in Holyoke, Massachusetts, is the son of Thomas Southworth Childs of Oxford, Mass., and Eliza Prescott of Rockville, Connecticut. His ancestor Sadie Southworth was the wife of Governor Bradford, the Puritan governor of Massachusetts. Mr. Childs was school and Yale College classmate of the late Alden Y. Warner of 149 Main Street, and Yale classmate of Robert B. Coburn, who has lived in two houses on Main Street. Mrs. Childs was the former Melissa Wadley of Indianapolis.

Mr. Childs attended Hotchkiss School and is a graduate of Yale. For three years after his graduation he was employed at R. H. Macy's store in New York City. His father had been operator for many years of the Thomas S. Childs shoe stores in Holyoke and Springfield, and later the president of W. G. Simmons Corp., in the same line of business. Upon the death of the senior Mr. Childs in 1932, his elder son Benjamin succeeded him, and Thomas came to this area to be in charge of the Hartford store of the W. G. Simmons Corporation.

Mr. Childs' first residence in Farmington was as a bachelor, on Main Street across from the Meeting House. When first married he and his wife lived in the Commander Hunter house for two years, at 345 Waterville Road, Avon. That house, now greatly enlarged, is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Hewes, formerly of Talcott Notch Road. Commander Hunter had taught at Avon Old Farms School.

Mr. and Mrs. Childs then moved to 46 Mountain Spring Road, the house presently the home of A. H. R. Wears. Their attempts to purchase that house were unsuccessful, so in 1941 they purchased this house at 41 Main Street, which Mr. Childs calls "Old House", moving into it when their eldest son was one year of age.

Mr. and Mrs. Childs had two children, Thomas Southworth III, and Samuel Wadley. They have now been divorced for several years, Melissa Childs now being Mrs. James T. Soby of New Canaan.

Thomas Childs succeeded his brother Benjamin as president of W. G. Simmons Corp., in 1944, and continued in that post until his retirement in 1966. His nephew, David L. Childs, son of the late Prescott Childs of 19 Main Street, became president in 1969. See an appended account of W. G. Simmons Corp. After Mr. Childs' sale of this house in 1968 to Dr. and Mrs. Guy Owens, he moved to an apartment on Garden Street, where he wintered, spending summers on the shore.

His son Thomas Southworth Childs is married to Susan Knott of Westbury, Long Island, whose father is head of famed Knott Hotels. They live in Pound Ridge, N. Y., and he is employed by Bankers Trust Company. His son Samuel Wadley Childs was married in Grosse Point, Michigan, in June 1969, to Elsie Caulkins, daughter of Edward B. Caulkins of Detroit. They live in Bloomfield, Conn., both graduates of Wake Forest College, Samuel employed in Hartford by Connecticut Bank and Trust Company.

Thomas Childs, now residing in Farmington Woods, was married in September 1972 to the former Alice Cooke, widow of the late Charles Stoddard, Jr., of Greenfield, Mass. She is the mother of four children similar in age to his sons, and they all have great times together.

October 31, 1973
Dr. and Mrs. Guy Owens became owners and occupants of this house in July, 1968, having purchased it from Thomas S. Childs.

Dr. Owens was born in Amarillo, Texas, and Mrs. Owens in Greenville, New Hampshire. They met at Tufts University. Dr. Owens was graduated from Harvard Medical School, specialized in neurosurgery, and was head of that department at Roswell Park Memorial Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York.

Dr. Owens came to Farmington as Professor and Head of the Department of Surgery at the new University of Connecticut Medical School at Farmington. Mrs. Owens was one of the founders and the first President of the U-Conn Health Center Association.

Their children are Victoria Anne Owens and Guy Parkinson Owens.

June 6, 1973