Facing west onto Main Street, the Gad Cowles House is part of a group of buildings which constitute the campus of Miss Porter's School. Lying in the heart of Farmington's state-enabled historic district, this dwelling's neighbors are other well-maintained Georgian- and Federal-style architecture. The Sarah Porter Memorial and Farmington Congregational Church abut the property to the south.
An exceptionally well-preserved example of Federal-period architecture, the Gad Cowles House was built around 1800. Oriented gable-to-street, the three-bay facade is embellished with four symmetrically placed full-height classical pilasters supporting a modest entablature. The side-hall entrance door exhibits a semi-circular fanlight and small ornate entry portico adorned with slender columns, decorative frieze, and a modillioned cornice. The fully pedimented gable end displays an ornate Palladian window and modillioned cornice. The large two-and-one-half story southern wing with large portico is a later addition, as are the shed dormers.

Gad Cowles built this house around 1800 on land his brothers, Elijah and Jonathan Cowles, purchased from William Wadsworth in 1793 (FLR 30:205). In 1802 Cowles enlarged the lot with a "small triangular piece adjoining the land where said Cowles has lately erected his brick house" (FLR 39:78). Born in Farmington, Gad Cowles (1768-1845) was the fourth son of Elijah and Eunice (Gould) Cowles. He was a member of the wealthy mercantile firm of Elijah Cowles and Company, which he and his four brothers, Elijah, Jr., Jonathan, Seth, and Martin operated. This successful and prosperous enterprise also owned a number of ships, which they used to export and import such goods as wood, cattle, rum, and molasses. Gad served in the Connecticut State Militia from 1784 to 1812 obtaining the rank of Major. He also served as a director of the Hartford Bank (1818-27) and Farmington Canal (1827).

The Cowles brothers were instrumental in the building of the "ill-fated" Farmington Canal, which operated from 1828 to 1848. Gad received full title to his house and lot in 1813 (FLR 37:559). His wife was the former Anna Deming (1777-1848), daughter of John and Susannah (Cowles) Deming of Farmington. In 1846 the property was willed to Gad’s three sons: Elijah, Julius, and Horatio (FPR 10:481). Both Elijah and Horatio quit-claimed their portion of the homestead to Julius in 1852 (FLR 51:308). Shortly thereafter the property was sold to Lester M. Case of Madison, New York (FLR 52:528). Two years later, in 1854, Milton Humphrey acquired the house for $4500 (FLR 57:89) and in 1881 Humphrey willed the house to Sarah Carrington (FPR 17:32). The property remained in that family until 1915, when Mrs. Elizabeth V. Keep, headmistress at Miss Porter’s School, purchased the house (see cont.)

**SOURCES**

(FLR 74:304). The building has since then been used as a dormitory.

This well-preserved Federal-period dwelling contributes to Farmington's historic village and displays the Cowles' family wealth and prominence in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PORTER'S SCHOOL MISS
1930 - "Humphrey" dormitory

ADDRESS: 43 Main and School St

DATE BUILT: ca 1800 FOR: Gad Cowles

ARCHITECT
MASTER-BUILDER

FORMER OWNERS: Miss Porter's School from Estate of Elizabeth V. Keep Trustee, 3/15/1919, Vol. 74, p. 336; Keep, E. V. Trustee from Estate of Sarah Whittlesey, by executors deed by E. Trowbridge Carrington, 1 & 3/4 acres & buildings, north on land of Sarah Porter, and Delinda Woodford, south on School Street west on Main Street, east on highway 9/3/1915, Vol. 74, p. 304; Whittlesey, Sarah (Carrington) from Milton Humphrey by will, 2/17/1881, Vol. P.R. 17, p. 32; Humphrey, Milton from Lester M. Case dated 7/6/1854, recorded 1/19/1860, Vol. 57, p. 89; Case, L. M. from Julius Deming Cowles, 11/13/1852, Vol. 52, p. 528; Cowles, J. D. from his father Gad Cowles by will, 1/8/1846, Vol. 10, p. 481, together with Elijah and Horatio, and by quit claim deed from Elijah and Horatio 11/13/1852 Vol. 51, p. 308; Cowles, Gad from his father Elijah (Over)

REFERENCES: "Farmington, Conn., 1906" p. 24
Cowles Genealogy, p. 135
Baker & Tilden Atlas 1869, p. 33 "M. Humphrey"
by will 9/6/1793 p.r. Vol.4, p.35.

There was no distribution of the estate of Elijah.
OWNER'S NAME PORTER'S SCHOOL, MISS
1950 - "HUMPHREY"

ADDRESS: 65 Main and School Streets

DATE BUILT: ca. 1800 FOR: Gad Cowles

ARCHITECT

MASTER-BUILDER

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ARCHITECT

ADDITIONS & ALTERATIONS have been made from time to time by the R.F. Jones Co., Inc.

FORMER OWNERS: Miss Porter's School from Est. of Elizabeth V. Keep, Trustee 3/15/1919, Vol. 74, p. 336; E.V. Keep, Trustee, from Est. Sarah Whittleseye, by Executor's Deed by E. Trowbridge Carrington 1 3/4 acres & bldgs., n. on land of Sarah Porter & Delinda Woodford, s. on School St., w. on Main St., e. on highway, 9/3/1915, Vol. 74, p. 304; (Sarah H. Carrington Whittleseye was bought up by the Whittleseye family - she was adjudged bankrupt & Adrian R. Wadsworth was appointed Trustee of her property in 1900 - on Sept. 3, 1915, her est. was restored & sold); Sarah (Carrington) Whittlesey from Milton Humphrey by will 2/17/1881, Vol. Prob. Rec. 17, p. 32; M. Humphrey from Lester M. Case dated 7/6/1854, recorded 1/19/1860, Vol. 57, p. 89; L.M. Case from Julius Deming Cowles 11/13/1852, Vol. 52, p. 528; J.D. Cowles from his father Gad Cowles by will 1/8/1846, Vol. 10, p. 481; together with Elijah & Horatio & from Elijah & Horatio by Q.C. deed 11/13/1852, Vol. 51, p. 308; Gad Cowles from his

REFERENCES: "Farmington, Conn., 1906", p. 24
"Cowles Genealogy", p. 135
"Baker & Tilden Atlas, 1869", p. 33 - 'M. Humphrey'

(OVER)
Former Owners, cont.:
father Elijah by will 9/6/1793, Prob. Rec. Vol. 4, p. 35. There was no distribution of the est. of Elijah.
This house is pictured on page 24 of the Farmington Book as the Gad Cowles place, residence of Henry N. Whittlesey. Baker and Tilden's atlas of 1869 shows it as "M. Humphrey".

It was built by Gad Cowles in 1800 on land inherited from his father Elijah Cowles at the latter's death in 1793.

Early settlers on this site are noted by Mrs. Hurlburt on page 370 of Town Clerks as follows: "Obadiah Richards sold his land with a dwelling house to Daniel Andrews in 1672 and removed to Mattatuck (Waterbury). He was the son of Thomas Richards of Hartford, an early settler of Farmington. He was made a freeman May 1669, married Hannah Andrews, daughter of John Andrews of Farmington, later married Esther ? . He died November 11, 1702, in Waterbury."

Gad Cowles, 1768-1848, was the son of Elijah Cowles and Eunice Gould, who lived farther north on the west side of Main Street, on the site of "Ward", 56 Main Street. Gad Cowles was an active merchant together with four brothers. See note in account of 56 Main Street for more regarding their joint activities. Gad and his brother Elijah built, around 1813, the building which now houses the Porter School Library at 50 Main Street, which in the early twentieth century was a drug store but earlier was a general store. John Hooker in his "Reminiscences" says on page 188: "Gad Cowles kept the principal store in Farmington." Old account books of Adna Hart and the Woodruff family show sales of candles to him and purchases of all sorts of dry goods and kitchenwares, in trade with Gad Cowles.

Gad Cowles attained the rank of major in the Connecticut Militia, serving from 1798 to 1812. He was a director of the Hartford Bank and of the Farmington Canal. He was married to Anna Deming, one of the three daughters of John Deming and Susannah Cowles, who married back into the Cowles family. Their daughter Julia Anna, 1810-1843, married Thomas Cowles of 148 Main Street, a marriage very disappointing to Julia, because Thomas spent much of his time in Ohio. Her father was pleased about this for one winter, because Julia stayed with them accompanied by their baby daughter, who gave the grandparents a great deal of pleasure during the cold winter days. Julia died in 1843 after having borne three children, one of whom died in infancy.

Three of the children of Gad Cowles died in infancy: Julia Ann, born 1803; John Deming, born 1806; Jane Eliza, born 1820. A son Henry Augustus, born 1816, lived 21 years, did not marry. A daughter, Helen Maria, born 1801, married George Spalding, 1797-1858, a graduate of Yale in 1818. They had no children. She died in 1883.

Julius Deming Cowles, 1810-1894, also a son of Gad, was a graduate of Norwich Academy of Vermont in 1828, and was married in 1842 to Mary Hull, 1823-1889, daughter of Alfred Hull and Huldah Brockway. They had no children. He lost his eyesight in his early adulthood, not entirely, but to such an extent that he was never able to take up business. They lived most of their married life in the house at 154 Main Street, now the Wilmarth Lewis house.

January 12, 1972
Elijah Cowles, 1808-1859, another son of Gad, married Mary D. Lewis of Waterford, New York, sister of Jane Lewis who married James Cowles of 49 Main Street. They had two children, Henry Augustus born in 1846, and Gad, born in 1848, who died in infancy. Mrs. Cowles died soon after the death of her second child Gad, and Elijah re-married, this time marrying Evalina Beatrice Robinson of Syracuse. They had a daughter Louisa who lived and another daughter who died in infancy. Elijah Cowles had been graduated from Yale in 1826 and engaged in mercantile pursuits in Farmington, then in Sandusky, Ohio. He returned here in 1849, then was back in Ohio, in Cleveland, by 1856. He died in Cleveland of a ruptured aorta in 1859. His widow survived him and died in Cleveland.

Henry Augustus Cowles, 1846-1911, son of Elijah noted above, married Helen Mary Harmon, 1856-1936, of Bloomfield or Suffield, and lived in this area until 1900. He was registrar of voters 1876-77, constable 1878-81, notary public 1893-1900, and in 1895 was the treasurer of Upson and Hart, Unionville. They had two children, Julius D. Cowles, born 1877, who entered the theatrical profession, and Helen Harmon Cowles, born 1880, who married a Dr. Whitehead and lived in Norfolk, Virginia. The Henry A. Cowles family moved to Brooklyn, New York, in 1900. After Mr. Cowles died in 1911, his widow moved to Norfolk, Virginia, to be with her daughter.

The following was written about Henry Augustus Cowles:
"Many of us will remember Mr. Van Allen, and James Hart and Mr. Brevoort of the Hudson River School. At the end of their summer's work they gave an exhibition of all their landscape sketches on the veranda wall of the Henry Augustus Cowles house. The people of the town were invited to see them. There was also a little romance added to this exhibition for the engagement had just been announced of Mr. Hart to Miss Gorshuck, Mr. Brevoort's pupil. Many beautiful landscapes have been painted in Farmington by John Hill".

Julius Deming Cowles, 1810-1894, who later lived at 154 Main Street, inherited this house in 1846 and sold it in 1852 to Lester M. Case, who kept it only two years and sold it to Milton Humphrey in 1854. Mr. Humphrey was noted by Mrs. Hurlburt as having been moderator of the Town Meeting of May 1, 1869, at which a remonstrance was made, futile however, against Plainville becoming a separate town. Milton Humphrey was perhaps related to Dwight Humphrey, moderator of Town Meeting of November 19, 1864; Lucius G. Humphrey who in 1875 married Ella G. Fuller; or Lucius C. Humphrey who was chosen in November 1881 to be a representative to the General Assembly, but any relationship to these men is not known by the writer.

Sarah Carrington Whittlesey, born in 1812, was bequeathed this property by the will of Milton Humphrey, and took title in 1881. It is believed by the writer that Sarah Carrington Whittlesey was the former Sarah Cowles, daughter of Seth Cowles of what is now 56 Main Street, who married Dr. Edwin Carrington of Colton Street, and that after his death in 1852 she married Henry N. Whittlesey.

January 12, 1972

Henry Augustus Cowles, mentioned above, purchased a house in Unionville on July 3, 1882, the house just east of the A. S. Upson house on Main Street. See page 6 of the account of 154 Main Street.
Henry N. Whittlesey was a farmer but he was appointed Assistant Town Clerk at the town meeting of June 13, 1895, to aid Thomas L. Porter, aged 74 and with chronic nephritis, and Mrs. Hurlburt says "the entries during that year in the record books are in his fine and delicate handwriting". He was elected Town Auditor at the meeting of October 5, 1896.

Mr. Harvey Whittlesey, perhaps father of Henry, was stated by Thomas Cowles in a letter of October 6, 1845, to have "received second premium, of twenty-five dollars, for the best cultivated farm in Hartford County". The building facing east on the upper part of School Street, to the rear of 4 Mountain Road, now a garage, was formerly the Whittlesey stable, later housed the horses belonging to Miss Porter's School. Mrs. Truman Sanford, formerly Helen Wadsworth, was a frequent visitor at the Whittlesey home and her brother Adrian was a great friend of Charles Whittlesey.

Mrs. Elizabeth V. Hale Keep, in charge of Miss Porter's school at that time, purchased the property from the estate of Sarah Whittlesey in 1915, and in 1919, after Mrs. Kepp's death in 1917, it became the property of Miss Porter's School.

Quite extensively enlarged now, it has been a dormitory since its purchase by Mrs. Keep, and has always been known by the school as "Humphrey".

January 12, 1972

Mrs. James B. Patterson, the former MPS student Gretchen Guinn, 1912-1916, was house-mother at Humphrey for eleven years, retiring in June 1971. At that time she had four married daughters and nine grandchildren. She expects to make her home in Kennebunkport, Maine, spending her winters in Washington, D. C.

James W. Howe, chaplain and perhaps what might be called spiritual counselor, and his wife, are presently the house directors at Humphrey, having been here since September 1971. Their daughter Kathie was two years of age when they came.

A note regarding page 2:
The statement made regarding Sarah Carrington Whittlesey may not be true. Someone has said that Sarah Carrington, a widow who became Mr. Whittlesey's second wife, had three children: May, Hattie & "Trow". The wife of Doctor Carrington had only one child, Charles.

Archibald G. McIlwaine and his wife lived here for a time prior to moving to Waterville Road, and their daughter was born here, later to attend Miss Porter's School.