Located in the northeast portion of Farmington, the Harris-Bennett Place lies just south of the Avon town line. Not visible from the road, the house is accessible by a private drive. The building sits on a small open lot bordered by dense woodlands on all sides except to the south, where there lies an open field. Neighboring dwellings, which are sparsely located along the ridge, are primarily modern.
This modest, vernacular-style dwelling exhibits a large, two-story main block with both twelve-over-eight sash and eight-over-twelve sash. A small single-story ell with an entry door extends from the west elevation, and a small addition has been incorporated onto the southeast corner. The building displays little else in the way of decorative detailing.

This building was erected on its present site around 1901 by Myron Harris. According to Dudley Prentice in his History of Farmington Houses, this dwelling originally stood along Farmington Avenue and was slated for demolition when the West Hartford Reservoir System was developed around 1900. Harris is said to have dismantled and moved the building to this lot along the east side of Ely Road. He purchased the sixteen acre lot from Luke J. Conlon in 1901 for a sum of $200 (FLR 71:524). A native of Beekman, New York, Harris (1863-1932) and his family came to Farmington from Hartford in 1899. His wife was the former Alma Lindgren, a native of Sweden, and they raised four children. The youngest, Margaret, was born in Farmington in 1900. Soon after moving to town he was hired by Charles M. Beach to work as the caretaker for the surrounding "Mountain Spring Farm". Harris later was employed by M. Toskin Bennett and Mr. Ely. In 1910 he sold the property to his employer, M. Toskin Bennett, a lawyer for the firm of Bennett and Goodwin. The Harris family presumably remained in the house until 1921 when they moved to their new home at 254 Farmington Avenue. The present owners acquired the house in 1946 (FLR 99:583).

Although the building has been moved, it is historically notable for its affiliation with the Harris and Bennett families and derives architectural significance as one of the few remaining historic dwellings in this section of Farmington.

Sources:
This house is pictured in the Farmington Book on page 121. It is located off Ely Road on the right, its driveway being just a short distance from the Avon Town Line.

The house originally stood on the site of what is now Professional Park, on Farmington Avenue, and was designated as "Conlin" on Baker and Tilden's 1869 Atlas. It was owned by Luke C. Conlin until taken over by the Hartford Water Department ca 1900 when they developed the West Hartford Reservoir system and this became part of the water shed. The house was slated for removal from the property, either by demolition, or by removal to some other site. Myron Harris purchased it, reputedly for $50.00, dismantled it, took the materials to the present site, and reconstructed it.

It has been said that a house previously stood on the new site, a station of the under-ground railway for handling the movement of escaped slaves, and that the old Conlin house was reconstructed on its foundation. An old combination carriage house and horse shed which was still on this property in the late 1940's tends to bear out this belief. It is not known just when the Conlin house had been built but its hand hewn lumber in some parts of it would indicate that it had been quite old.

Myron Harris, 1863-1932, was originally from Beekman, New York. Upon first coming to the Connecticut area he and his wife, the former Alice Barton, lived on Zion Street in Hartford, and Mr. Harris worked at the Cedar Hill Cemetery. During this residence their daughter Alice was born. Mrs. Harris died shortly after this and Mr. Harris remarried, this time to Alma Lindgren, 1868-1934, who had come to Hartford from Sweden. Three more children were born in Hartford; Myron, Esther and Carrie.

In 1899 the Harris family moved to Farmington and lived first on what was then the Butler place, although Mr. Butler had just purchased it, from William and Joseph McKee. It was the farm whose photo appears on page 120 of the Farmington Book, designated there as "The Old Ward Farm". Mr. Butler died very shortly after this and the property was then purchased by Charles M. Beach. After a short time here, Mr. Harris, who was then employed by the Beach family, moved the Conlin house up the mountain, and lived in it thereafter. One more child was born to them here, while they were living in a house on the Butler Farm. She was Mabel Margaret, born on July 5, 1900. Her father rode his bicycle all the way to West Hartford for the doctor who delivered her.

Myron worked at the Beach farm for several years, and one of his first tasks was to fence it for sheep raising. He cut and set the fence posts and strung the wire, which Mr. Beach furnished. The children attended school in Farmington Center, Mr. McCormick picking them up with his school wagon. Later when Mabel was the only child attending school, she walked to Four Corners and was picked up by William Deming in his buggy.

July 31, 1970
Mr. Harris later left the Beach employ, worked for himself for a while, then still later took care of the property of M. Toskin Bennett, member of the law firm of Bennett and Goodwin, who bought a place in the area. He may have worked for Mr. Ely for a time also, as William Wollenberg remembered that on Armistice Day 1918 he was up at Ely's farm picking up a cow to drive home, and that Mr. Harris was caretaker for Mr. Ely at that time.

In 1922 Myron Harris and his wife moved to the house that is now 254 Farmington Avenue, just west of Nott's Corner, and Mabel and Carrie accompanied them, the other children being already married and away in their own homes. Myron's brother John had recently come to Farmington from their old home in Beekman, New York, and together they built this house on two acres of land which Myron had recently purchased from the Estate of Dr. Carrington. Mr. and Mrs. Harris died in 1932 and 1934 respectively, and are buried in Riverside Cemetery.

Alice Harris was the first of the children married, marrying Peter Banfield of Hartford. He has worked throughout his life as an electrician in Hartford. Now retired, the couple lives in Bloomfield, on Blue Hills Avenue. Their two children are Peter and Ruth. Peter lives in Stamford, also having two children, Robert and Doreen, both of whom are married, Doreen now being Mrs. Jurgen Berthold and with a daughter Doreen. Ruth, a registered nurse, and her husband Charlie Lowderback, an engineer with Pratt and Whitney, live near her parents. Ruth has three sons. Gary and Glen are attending college, and James is in high school.

Myron A. Harris, Jr., early became acquainted with, and courted, Helen Miller, daughter of Truman Miller. See photo of house on page 63. The mountain was not as thickly covered with trees then, and he could signal her from his home to hers, letting her know when he would be coming to call.

Myron, Jr., married her in 1917, the daughter of Truman Miller and Ellen Stanley Bishop. In 1921 he started work with the West Hartford Police Department, and continued with them until ca 1960, when he was retired with the rank of Captain. He and his wife now live on North Main Street, West Hartford, next door to one of his classmates in Farmington's Center School, Dr. Maurice Root. Captain Harris, who taught First Aid for several years in the police department, now teaches it at the West Hartford YMCA, which he supervises, as he has always enjoyed working with young people.

Esther Harris, born about 1897, graduate of Farmington High School and of Huntsinger Business College of Hartford, married James Ward McManus of Hartford. They lived in the north end of Hartford on Oakland Terrace. Their one child, a baby girl, died in infancy. Mr. McManus was a cost and blue-print man, first with R. C. Bent Construction Company, and later with Bartlett-Brainerd. He died in 1937.

July 31, 1970
Mrs. McManus started working that same year, 1937, for the accounting department of the Connecticut State Police Credit Union. Two years later when her sister's husband Mr. Munson died, she returned to Farmington to live with her sister at 254 Farmington Avenue. She later became manager of the Credit Union's accounting department and an officer of Connecticut State Employee's Association, Chapter 400, and a director of the Fernside Vacation Home, Princeton, Massachusetts.

Carrie Harris married Paul Munson, son of Andrew Munson and Anna Charlotte Varn, on September 5, 1928, and they lived in her parents' home at 254 Farmington Avenue. Mr. Munson farmed the family property at what is now Munson Road. He had a dairy herd and made milk deliveries in the adjacent area. He died in 1939, his widow continuing her residence here, with her small son Paul, and her sister Esther McManus, whose husband had died two years prior to that.

Paul Munson studied for the ministry, and married Carol Kroyman of Rockville, Connecticut. His first post was the Congregational church in Plymouth, Connecticut, and at present he has the ministry of the First Congregational Church in Woodstock, Connecticut. See 73 South Road for more details.

Mrs. Munson, to supplement her income, had taken in the very elderly Miss Harriet Waterman, who required personal care in her later years. Mrs. Munson died in 1967, Miss Waterman still under her care at that time, so Mrs. Munson's sister Mabel came and took over the care of the patient.

Mabel Margaret Harris was married in 1930 to Kenneth Ruic. She spent her working years with Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, commuting first from here, where she had lived with her parents, and later from 126 Main Street, where she lived with her husband. See 126 Main Street for more information. As stated above, when her sister Mrs. Munson died, Mabel and her husband came from Main Street and moved into this house, continuing the care of Miss Waterman, and renting the house at 126 Main Street to David Holmes and his mother. Kenneth Ruic died very suddenly in June 1969, and his wife's patient, Miss Waterman, died in February of the next year, leaving Mrs. Ruic and her sister Mrs. McManus, here at 254 Farmington Avenue, in front of the very active development of Talcott Village's shopping mall.

To return to the original subject of this sketch, the Myron Harris house on Ely Road, the present owners and residents are Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Powers and their family, who have lived there for some twenty years. It was previously owned by WDRC, Doolittle Radio Corporation, and occupied for some years by a tenant.

July 31, 1970