Situated on a small rectangular lot on the east side of Garden Street, the Gay-McCarthy House sits in a densely populated residential neighborhood. The surrounding neighborhood contains other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century vernacular architecture, with a limited amount of modern intrusion.
Erected in 1900, the facade of the Colonial Revival style house faces south away from the street. Sided in clapboards, the three-bay facade exhibits a decorative central entry porch with Adamesque-like features including the gable roof with arch and keystone and slender supportive posts. A simple stick balustrade and lattice base also enhance the entry porch. An interesting tripartite dormer is found on the third floor; a small central shed dormer flanked by two larger, gable-roofed dormers. Note the slight overhang between the first and second floor. The elevation oriented gable-to-street features two bays and a wood-shingled gable end with small paired sash. Eight-over-one sash are found on the first floor and eight-over-eight on the second floor. A diminutive brick chimney rises from the western end of the roof.

While the building’s construction date cannot be clearly determined through the land records, the house was probably erected in 1900 by Julius Gay for Timothy McCarthy and his family. It is believed the house was constructed by R.F. Jones, a local and well-respected carpenter. Gay, who resided in the grand Gothic Revival-style house at 36 Main Street, had this dwelling built at the rear of his homelot facing onto Garden Street. Julius Gay, who for many years was employed as a land surveyor, was treasurer and later president of the Farmington Savings Bank. He is well remembered as a noted local historian and served as town clerk from 1860 to 1861. McCarthy was employed by Gay as a "jack-of-all-trades". He was in charge of caring for the grounds, maintaining the house and driving the horse and carriage. A native of Hoboken, New Jersey, McCarthy (1853–1928) worked as a blacksmith and "milk peddler" before hiring on with Gay. He was the son of Irish immigrants, Owen and Honora McCarthy. In 1880 McCarthy married Elizabeth Goss (1852–1911), a native of Ireland, and they raised eight children. Their eldest daughter Mary was the first curator of the Stanley-Whitman House, and daughter Elizabeth was Miss Theodate Pope’s private secretary for many years. Gay died in 1917 and willed the property to his wife Maria C. Gay (FPR 31:360 and FPR 34:244). Timothy McCarthy shortly thereafter moved to Hartford, although he later returned and resided on High Street. In 1918 Maria C. Gay sold this house to Alice G. Haworth (FLR 79:16). Mrs. Haworth sold the house to her daughter Alice Lillian Haworth in 1938, who remained here until 1956 (FLR 87:382 and 129:233). (see below)

Sources:
OWNER'S NAME: (HAWORTH, ALICE L. Est.) to SCOTT, Malcolm Jr.
1950-res.

ADDRESS: 53 Garden Street

DATE BUILT: 1900 FOR: Julius Gay as a home for Timothy McCarthy

ARCHITECT: Julius Gay
MASTER-BUILDER: R.F. Jones

FORMER OWNERS:
- Alice L. Haworth from mother, Alice G. Haworth, 2/17/1938, Vol. 87, p. 382;
- Alice G. Haworth from Maria C. Gay, land & bldgs., 9/21/1918; M.C. Gay by inheritance from husband, Julius Gay, 5/14/1918, Vol. 74, p. 324;
- land was part of the homestead of Julius Gay.

REFERENCES:

OWNER: (HAWORTH, ALICE L.)
AS OF: 1950
PHOTO NO. 53 Garden St.

SCOTT, M. Jr 1950 1960
This house, pictured on page 108 of the Farmington Book as the property of Julius Gay, residence of Timothy McCarthy, was built in 1900 by Julius Gay, and specifically to be the home of Mr. Timothy McCarthy and his family. Mr. McCarthy, son of Owen McCarthy and Honora McCarthy, was employed by Mr. Gay in the comprehensive role of "man of all work". Mr. Gay at that time owned all the land adjoining the north side of Porter Lane, from Main Street to Garden Street. His own home was the house now known as 36 Main Street. This residence of Mr. Gay is shown in photo on page 15, and house on Garden Street may be seen to the left, in this same photo.

Mr. McCarthy and his family had earlier lived in the northernmost house on the east side of Main Street, on land which is now the west end of the Village Green. This house may have stood on the site of one of the earliest houses in Farmington, as mentioned by Mrs. Hurlburt on page 360 of "Town Clerks". Here she says that "Thomas Demon (Seymour or Dement) was one of the original proprietors and settlers of the town. His first recorded home was at the east corner of Main Street and Hartford Road, now the Park, which he sold to William Smith". Mr. Thomas Demon later moved to Colton Street.

Miss Elizabeth McCarthy describes the setting as follows:
"My father owned 1½ acres of this land, having purchased it from Mrs. Mary Skelly, a Civil War widow. Her name is on the early district map of the village. There was a large open lot to the rear, quite similar in extent to the present Green. Around the corner on Main Street were four houses. Each was the first, then the Maxwell house, part of which was used as a saloon, next was a small house where the shoemaker plied his trade, and the fourth house had both living quarters and a meat market. Across the street were the barber shop and Gay's Store, and on the little green strip between the streets was the public weighing scale. This was in fact the business center of the town". She remembers also that they had no well, but had to get their water from Whiting's Livery Stable. A sign indicating the Whiting Feed Store appears to the right in the photo of the Col. Fisher Gay homestead on page 210 of the Farmington Book.

Mr. and Mrs. McCarthy (she was the former Elizabeth Goss, daughter of John Goss and Bridget Cavanaugh) were married in May 1880, and came from Windor to Farmington very shortly thereafter. They lived for a time in two rooms rented from Royal Andrews in the house shown on page 9 of the Farmington Book as the residence of Anna J. Andrus. This stood just west of the present 763 Farmington Avenue, the Enrick Gallery. Mr. McCarthy's first employment was with William Hurlburt next door, where he learned the blacksmith's trade. He worked here several years.

From here the McCarty's moved to the MacFalls house, on the site of what is now 19 Main Street, living in apartments attached to the rear of the house, quite an attractive living quarters in fact. See photo A-7 on page 27 of the Farmington Book. The MacFalls family was quite large and their children were teenagers or older at that time. Mr. McCarthy was still working for Mr. Hurlburt during their residence here.

September 1, 1971
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Mr. and Mrs. McCarthy (she was the former Elizabeth Goss, daughter of John Goss and Bridget Cavanaugh) were married in May 1880, and came from Windsor to Farmington very shortly thereafter. They lived for a time in two rooms rented from Royal Andrews in the house shown on page 9 of the Farmington Book as the residence of Emma J. Andrus. This stood just east of the present 768 Farmington Avenue, the Zarick Gallery. Mr. McCarthy's first employment was with William Hurlburt next door, where he learned the blacksmith's trade. He worked here several years.

From here the McCartys moved to the MacFalls house, on the site of what is now 19 Main Street, living in apartments attached to the rear of the house, quite an attractive living quarters in fact. See photo #47 on page 27 of the Farmington Book. The MacFalls family was quite large and their children were teenagers or older at that time. Mr. McCarthy was still working for Mr. Hurlburt during their residence here.

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Mr. McCarthy and his family had earlier lived in the northermost house on the east side of Main Street, on land which is now the west end of the Village Green. This house may have stood on the site of one of the earliest houses in Farmington, as mentioned by Mrs. Hurlburt on page 360 of "Town Clerks". Here she says that Thomas Demon (Dimon or Dement) was one of the original proprietors and settlers of the town. His first recorded home was at the east corner of Main Street and Hartford Road, now the Park, which he sold to William Smith. Mr. Thomas Demon later moved to Colton Street.

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September 1, 1971
The McCarthy family later moved to what they sometimes refer to as "the corner house" and sometimes as "the park house", the house mentioned in the second paragraph of this account. They rented it at first, from Mary Skelly, and she reserved a part of it for her own use. She had purchased it on May 26, 1870, from George Bodwell, administrator of the estate of his father August Bodwell, deceased. In 1895, Mrs. Skelly having moved to Waterbury, she sold it to the McCarthys. The land extended to the east as far as the property on which now stands the Judatz house, 785 Farmington Avenue. The house was similar in appearance to what was earlier known as the A. J. Parker Store, pictured on page 179 of the Farmington Book. It stood on the busiest corner in the village. All the east-west traffic and the north-south traffic passed here, and the house stood close to both roadways.

After moving into this house and having a barn and stable on the property, Mr. McCarthy started a milk route, buying milk, some of it the excess from the creamery's needs, picking it up at 2:30 AM and taking it to Hartford for door-to-door delivery. This was successful and ultimately he had two or three men working for him, one of whom was William O'Meara, whose father had sold his farm on Bird's Hill to the Pope family. It was the success of this milk route in fact which enabled Mr. McCarthy to buy this house. The family was large but the parents were careful and frugal, and taught their children these traits also. The days when collections were made were also the days for paying the grocery bills and other expenses. When everything was paid up Mr. McCarthy would say "If they offered me City Hall for fifty cents I couldn't buy it, but all our bills are paid". He felt happy.

When Mr. McCarthy had his milk route he often mentioned that he and Mr. Woodward, the operator of the livery stable at 50 High Street, were usually the only ones on the road coming home when a snowstorm was in progress. Once they had to stop at Albany Place because their horses could not get them up the grade at Gin Still Hill. They built a fire for heat and spent the night there. Mr. McCarthy contracted pneumonia soon after, and could not work for several months. When he recovered he did not attempt to resume the milk route but went to work for the water district. They were contracting for a lot of excavation and land clearing for the construction of reservoirs in the east end of town, and were using a lot of horses for the work. Mr. McCarthy obtained the job of keeping all these horses properly shod, and capitalized on what he had learned from Mr. Hurlburt. He walked to and from work, and quite a distance too, as much of the work was almost to the West Hartford town line. On good days the children would walk up as far as the Great Rock above the Mary Lewis house, almost to Mountain Spring Road, to meet him.

Published in the Connecticut Quarterly for the first quarter of 1895, was an article by George H. Carrington, which described the main street of Farmington as follows: "We descended the hill and drove through one of the most beautiful of village streets. The long shady road and sidewalks, the large trees, the old, richlooking houses, lend a charm to Farmington that it is its own. Quiet and restful yet full of thought is its atmosphere, a fitting place for philosophers to live".

September 1, 1971
Perhaps this article may have stimulated a desire in Miss Sarah Porter to make the whole of Main Street more attractive, and she began a campaign to change its north entrance. In June 1897 she purchased from Bridget Maxwell the property next south of the McCarthys. She sold that house to the Lawrences and they moved it to its present site at 7 Waterville Road, where it became Miss Emeline Lawrence's Hat Shop. See photo on page 59 of the Farmington Book.

By April 1898 she had convinced Mr. McCarthy that he too should sell, and she then purchased his house. It was torn down, as were the barn and outbuildings to the rear. This freed most of the area needed for the park, or Green, so that it was cleared and graded and made ready for the planting of the McKinley Oak. See Farmington Book page 187.

After the sale of the "park house" the McCarthy family moved into one of the three apartments in the house which stood opposite the Farmington Savings Bank. This is pictured on page 24 of the Farmington Book as the former residence of Ruben S. Norton. They lived here until in 1900, when Mr. McCarthy purchased the Warren house (now known as 101 Main Street). It was basically a very well built and comfortable house, but was in badly run-down condition and it took considerable work to fix it up. The family had been in it only a short while when Dr. John B. Griggs needed a house and liked it. He made Mr. McCarthy such a good offer that it could not be refused.

Back they went to the Norton house, but this time they were not to stay very long. Mr. McCarthy had now for some little time been in the employ of Mr. Julius Gay, and Mr. Gay was having a house built for them to live in. Mr. McCarthy was man-of-all-work for Mr. Gay, taking care of his house and grounds, driving his horse and buggy, running his errands, taking care of fuel supply, and doing anything else that needed doing. Mr. Gay's house lot extended all the way from Main to Garden Street on the north side of Porter Lane, and there was plenty of work to do. Mr. Gay had firm beliefs about what should be done and how it should be done, he didn't even allow smoking in the bank by customers! -- but he and Mr. McCarthy got along fine. The house built for the McCarthys at this time was the house at 53 Garden Street. It is shown on page 108 and also shows plainly in the center photo on page 146. The McCarthys were very comfortable here. Garden Street was a neighborly place, Mr. McCarthy was good to all the children. A lady now living in Unionville remembers that at her birth on Garden Street during that era, Mr. McCarthy started a bank account for her with a ten dollar deposit, and we don't know how many more could possibly say the same thing.

Mr. Gay died in 1917 and Mrs. McCarthy, his wife having died in 1911, wished a change of work and a change of scene, and moved to the city of Hartford for a while. His daughter Elizabeth, employed as secretary by Miss Theodate Pope, stayed in Farmington and had a room at "The Cottage", Miss Pope's residence at 13 High Street, but the others of the family moved with their father. Hartford was not home for the McCarthys however, and they moved back to Farmington.

In June 1926 they purchased from Theodate Pope Riddle, Mrs. John Wallace Riddle, a piece of property across High Street from the "Gundy", property on which had formerly stood the home of George F. Hurlburt who had died in late 1919. Mrs. Riddle had purchased it in April of 1921.

September 1, 1971
The old house which had stood on this property, see photo on page 158 of the Farmington Book, had been very run-down and dilapidated when she bought it, and Mrs. Riddle had had it torn down. The McCaryys had Fred I. Jones build them a nice house in its place, a house of colonial style which matches many of the older houses in Farmington.

The McCarthy children were the following:

Mary worked several years in clerical and secretarial work at Avon Old Farms School, then when the Farmington Museum opened on High Street she became its first curator. She served there from that time on, recording and classifying and arranging for exhibit and caring for the many antiques and mementos of early colonial life which were brought in for exhibit. She also started the herb garden in the rear yard, which has in it so many of the same herbs that the early settlers raised. The trustees of the museum gave her a plaque on which was transcribed the following testimonial: "To extend to Miss Mary McCarthy the grateful thanks of the Trustees for her twenty years of devoted service. Hers was the first custodianship of the Farmington Museum. Her knowledge, her affectionate care and the warm and friendly manner with which she greeted visitors helped to establish the Museum as an important and honored institution in the Farmington Community and to make its name known and respected by historical associations throughout the country." Mary died in 1955.

Eugene graduated from Holy Cross College and received his M. A. from St. Peter's College in Philadelphia, where he taught Latin and Greek. He later moved to New Jersey and was employed at the Bayonne refinery of the Esso Standard Oil Company. He was married to Anna Kelly of New Britain, who pre-deceased him. He served as director of public works on the Bayonne Board of Commissioners. The Bayonne Times said of him after his death in 1954: "He taught good citizenship by being a good citizen, maintaining lofty standards for himself and then striving to live up to them". He is survived by a son Eugene who lives in Livingston, New Jersey.

Margaret joined the Catholic order of the Sisters of Mercy, was educated for the field of education in the Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C., and has spent her life prior to recent retirement, in teaching posts in Catholic schools in various parts of the state of Connecticut. She currently resides at the convent in West Hartford.

Elizabeth started working early in her life as secretary for Miss Theodate Pope, who lived until her marriage in the house she called "The Cottage", the south portion of 13 High Street, which is joined on the north to what she called "The Gundy". Miss McCarthy started working for her during Miss Pope's earlier years when she was single and was designing houses and a school, doing good works for Farmington girls and Miss Porter's girls. She continued with her after she became Mrs. John Wallace Riddle and lived at Hillstead. Mrs. Riddle's greatest achievement was the planning and building of Avon Old Farms School in Avon, and Miss McCarthy was with her every moment practically, serving all her secretarial and probably many other needs. She still carries on with some of the affairs of the estate.
Julia McCarthy was employed in a wide field of stenographic work. While the family was living in Hartford she was employed for a time by Underwood Typewriter. When the family came back to Farmington she worked for several local residents and also assisted Miss Helen Scarth at the Farmington Book Shop. Soon after the publication of the first two volumes of "The Yale Edition of the Horace Walpole Correspondence" she was employed by Mr. Wilmarth S. Lewis and continued there until her retirement in 1964. Mr. Lewis has graciously acknowledged her contribution to her work in several volumes of the Correspondence.

John McCarthy married Beatrice Moran, lived and worked in Hartford, but he and his wife are now both deceased.

Their father Timothy McCarthy did not have long to enjoy the new house they had built on High Street, as he died in 1928, at the age of seventy-five.

September 1, 1971

In 1918 Mrs. Joseph C. Haworth, of the house at 47 Garden Street, purchased this house from the estate of Julius Gay, the McCarthy family having vacated it and moved to Hartford.

Mrs. Haworth and her son Raymond and daughter Alice lived here, while her son Charles occupied her previous home at 47 Garden Street after his marriage. Raymond moved into his own house, with his wife the former Marion Bronson, into the house which they had built at 51 Garden Street.

Mrs. Haworth and her daughter lived here until Mrs. Haworth's death in 1938, and her daughter Alice stayed in possession until her own death in 1956.

In 1956 the house was purchased from Alice Haworth's estate by Malcolm Scott.

Michael F. Rita was listed in the 1969 city directory as the occupant, and also in the 1972 telephone directory.

November 14, 1973