Facing west onto Main Street, the Wadsworth-Dorman House sits on a small landscaped lot which slopes off toward the east. The surrounding neighborhood contains other single-family dwellings dating from the late seventeenth century to the present.
This building was originally erected as a one-and-a-half story, gable-to-street cape-style cottage. It was enlarged and altered to its present appearance during the first half of the twentieth century. Today, the house exhibits a three-bay facade with little architectural detailing. The twelve-over-twelve sash are modern replacements and the two-and-one-half story cross gable was added when the house was enlarged. The building once displayed a Victorian-period wraparound veranda, which has been removed.

While the building's construction date can not be clearly determined through the land records, the house was probably built by Sidney Wadsworth as early as 1826. The son of William and Mercy (Clark) Wadsworth, Sidney (1786-1846) acquired this land from his father in 1808 (FLR 36:111). He inherited the family homestead across the street (see #164 Main Street) in 1817 and probably erected this dwelling as a tenement at a later date (FPR 7:357). In 1825 Sidney Wadsworth owned one house valued at $1775. A year later, in 1826, he owned two dwellings worth $2125. Ebright Cowles acquired this lot with buildings from Wadsworth's estate in 1846 (FLR 49:568). In 1850 Amos Case purchased the house for $460 (FLR 52:124). The next owner was Rumah Dorman, who bought the property in 1865 (FLR 61:127). The daughter of Azariah and Philena (Lewis) Gladding, Rumah (1837-1916) was the wife of Edward H. Dorman, a Civil War veteran. Upon Mrs. Dorman's death in 1916, the house was inherited by her son, Frank E. Dorman (FPR 31:305). Frank, who at various times was employed as a mailman, painter/decorator, sheriff, and night watchman, was responsible for altering the appearance of the house in the early twentieth century. His wife was the former Jessie Maude Allock of Montreal. Around 1940 the Dorman family moved and rented the house to others. In 1942 Francis Dorman Simonds inherited the property and continued to rent it (FLR 96:312). It was sold out of the family in 1963.

Although the building has undergone a number of modifications since its construction, the Wadsworth-Dorman House is a notable example of how a house can be altered (see below).
OWNER'S NAME: SIMONDS, FRANCES
1950-res.

ADDRESS: 165 Main Street

DATE BUILT: 1840? FOR: Sidney Wadsworth?

ARCHITECT
MASTER-BUILDER

FORMER OWNERS: Frances (Dorman) Simonds from Est. Frank Dorman 2/26/1842, Vol. 96, p. 312; Frank Dorman by will from Est. of mother, Reumah Dorman, "to my son all my property", Prob. Rec. Vol. 31, p. 305; Reumah Dorman from Amos Case, "where I (Case) now live, 3/4 acre n. on Jeremiah Wilcox, with dwellinghouse & other bldgs." 3/8/1869, Vol. 61, p. 127; Amos Case from Egbert Cowles, same, 5/25/1850, Vol. 52, p. 124; Egbert Cowles from Est. Sidney Wadsworth, 2 acres & bldgs., e. side of Main St., s. on Timothy Hoot, n. on Jeremiah Wilcox, 4/18/1846, Vol. 49, p. 568. Egbert Cowles owned much of this land and the land south, including the house lately the Farmington Lodge, selling parts including this house, by measurements from a heap of stones or a fence or a tree.

165 Main Street

This house is pictured in the Farmington Book on page 101 as the residence of Edward H. Dorman, and Baker and Tilden's 1869 Atlas shows E. Dorman at this location. There is a marker at the street near the north line of this house lot, which shows ten miles to Hartford, and this is still correct, right to Main Street, Hartford, by via Route 4. Librery records show the house to have been built by Sidney Wadsworth in 1840 on property which had been owned first by John Warner. John Warner came to America on the ship INCREASE in 1635 at the age of 20, and was an original proprietor and settler here. See page 377 of Mrs. Hurlburt's "Town Clerks", and pages 129 through 132 of Farmington Papers by Julius Gay, for some information on the Pequot War in which John Warner participated.

Sidney Wadsworth, born in 1786, son of William of the fifth generation of Wadsworths, was at one time owner of four houses in this immediate area. They were: one at 164 Main Street, two at 172 and 174 Main Street, (which originally were one house), and this one at 165 Main Street. More of him is written in relation to the other three houses mentioned. His two children died young. His widow, the former Clarissa Buck, later purchased the house at 99 Main Street in 1850. All of the properties owned by Sidney Wadsworth passed into the hands of Egbert Cowles after Mr. Wadsworth's death.

Egbert Cowles purchased the property from the estate of Sidney Wadsworth in 1846, including that across the street. It was probably merely an investment for Egbert Cowles, as he already owned a fairly large tract of land and lived at what is now 185 Main Street.

In 1850 this particular property was purchased by Amos Case, the son of Giles Case. After 19 years of ownership he sold it to Rumah Dorman in March 1869, and Mr. Case bought property on Meadow Road from Patrick Campbell, West District, on March 21, 1869. His new purchase included the house pictured on page 133 of the Farmington Book as the residence of Ellis Case, the son of Amos. Amos Case died on June 15, 1900.

Rumah Dorman, wife of Edward H. Dorman, was the daughter of Azariah Gladding and Philena Lewis, and was the sister of Franklin Blakeslee's wife. See photo of his house on page 127. It stood just northeast of the Esso Gas Station at Scott Swamp Road and Route 6, and was recently razed. Both Edward Dorman and Franklin Blakeslee were Civil War veterans. Edward Dorman died in May 1870 and this property was already in his wife's name.

Rumah Dorman died in February 1916, and her son Frank Edward Dorman inherited.

Frank Dorman's wife was Jessie Maude Alcock, born in Montreal, who died in 1923 at the age of 50, the daughter of Thomas Alcock and Ellen Bowen. Mr. Dorman (whose photo as sheriff appears on page 207 of the Farmington Book) was in various occupations, having been noted as working in a clock factory, working for A. J. Parker, and carrying the mail. Mr. Dorman also worked with Frank Hotchkiss as painter and decorator, calling themselves "The Two Franks".

September 16, 1972 During the period including the "Blizzard of '88", Frank Dorman, a young man then, was working at the Burner Shop on Brook Street at Stafford Avenue in Forestville, as a machinist. This was prior to his work at the clock shop.
Frank Dorman, in addition to serving as sheriff, as noted in the Farmington Book, worked for some time as night watchman at Hillstead Estate, during the residence there of Ambassador and Mrs. John Wallace Riddle. Mr. Riddle often had trouble getting to sleep and sometimes made the rounds with Mr. Dorman during the night.

The Dormans had two children, Frances and George, and Mr. Dorman took his wife and the children on many Sunday hikes through the woods and up and down the hills of the area, visiting Scott Swamp, Hospital Rock, Will Warren's Den and Pinnacle Rock on these hikes. He was always interested in nature and its study. In 1929 he retired from outside work and in the thirties he started a program of photographing the Main Street houses. His daughter has the album and it shows changes in many of the houses from the time of publication of the Farmington Book some 25 years earlier.

George Dorman states that he has heard that this house was first a cider mill and then converted to a residence, but he has never seen any particular evidence to back this up. He believes that the section which might be called a basement, which can be entered from the rear at ground level, was originally used as the kitchen and dining room, and that the smaller room to the south may have been the pantry. The outer door of the larger section is very large and of rugged construction. Windows are on each side of it, still containing the very old, wavy glass, and set into the center of the stone wall which is over a foot thick. The old fireplace inside this section is of beehive design, contains a separate oven and a crane for the cooking kettles. There was ample room for a dining table in the room also.

The walls of this house are of oak planks with clapboards on the outside and lath and plaster on the inside.

As to the alterations made to the house during Frank Dorman's ownership, his son George says that the upper floor of the house was added in the early 1900's. The front porch was added perhaps at the same time, connected to the south porch which shows in the 1906 photo.

Around 1923 or 1924 the ell was added to the south side. It was about the width of the old porch, which it replaced, but a new foundation wall had to be built on the south side to support it. There was formerly an outside door leading to the porch about in the center of the south side of the house. When the addition was built that door was moved to the west end of the ell, so that two outside doors faced the street, as they still do. Prior to this alteration there had been a hallway leading from the front door of the house to the kitchen, with a door in this hall which opened to the living room. The north wall of this hall was removed when the ell was built, thus enlarging the living room, the front door now leading right into it. There are two fireplaces on the main floor of the house and both of them, plus the larger one in the basement are served by one chimney.

About two years or so before Frank Dorman's death in 1940 he purchased a furnace from Sears Roebuck, and that company contracted with a plumber to install it and also the necessary plumbing to supply hot water heat. The furnace was set in front of the ground floor kitchen fireplace. Not long after this the Dorman family moved out and the house was rented.

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A small building to the rear, one which almost has the appearance of a doll's house, was built for Frank Dorman as a chicken house. Nelson Keyes and Henry Deming built it for him in their own shop, a very fine job of construction, and hauled it to Mr. Dorman's place on a wagon. The whole job cost $25.00 and Mr. Dorman was very pleased, both with the work and the price. George Dorman later built the addition to the south side. The building still stands, and from the outside at least, seems as good as new. Mr. Dorman spaded the whole rear yard every year for a garden, the chickens following every shovelful of dirt to pick up the worms.

Frances Dorman worked for some years with Mrs. Jenner in the kindergarten at 117 Garden Street. In 1939 she married Harrison Keen Simonds of East Hartford, son of Benjamin Harrison Simonds and Mary Lyman. Harrison Simonds was working with Aetna Life at that time. Later he joined International Business Machine and is at present retired from his position as field manager for that company. They moved to Unionville after their marriage, into the house formerly owned and occupied by the William Hitchcock family. The latter had moved to Farmington in 1914, to live at 27 Main Street. The Hitchcocks had sold to newly married Frank F. Brewer and his wife, who sold to the newly married Mr. and Mrs. Simonds, who still reside in the house. Their children are:

Edward Sprague Simonds, a CPA living in Simsbury, his wife the former Joanne Varcoe,
William Thomas Simonds, living at home, employed by Superior Electric, Bristol,
John Robert Simonds, engineer for Western Electric in North Carolina, and
Dorothy Simonds, wife of Raymond Sheflin. They live in Florida where he is employed in boat building.

George Dorman started his working life delivering the Hartford Times, keeping the Roots' woodboxes filled and driving the cows to and from pasture. He was first employed as an adult by the A & P store in Unionville, and it was in Unionville that he met and married Mabel Locke of Glastonbury, daughter of Frank Locke and Nellie Clark. Mr. Locke had been in shoe manufacturing in Lewiston Maine before moving to Glastonbury. When Mabel was about six years of age they moved to Unionville where Mr. Locke worked as a weaver for Charles C. House and Sons.

George Dorman left the A & P to work for Marlin-Rockwell in Plainville. Later he was employed in Hartford by Grenby Engineering, owned by Soby and Gray, and his last shop job was for C. H. Dresser of Sheldon Street, Hartford, as a woodworker and cabinet maker. He has now been employed six years as custodian at Farmington High School.

Mrs. Dorman is employed by the Conductive Shoe Company of Simsbury, a company manufacturing a device to trap static electricity produced by contact between shoes and floors, especially those of hospital operating rooms, where the electricity might cause an explosion.

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Mr. Dorman is a very good woodworker and cabinet maker and his prize piece of furniture is a desk of solid cherry with an oxbow front which he made. He is also a skillful metal worker and makes true scale models such as cannons and their mounts. His talent in the way of woodworking has been well utilized in the restoration of their colonial house, duplicating moldings and trim with excellent results.

George Dorman and his wife were married in 1933 and in 1936 they moved to Unionville, his sister Frances and her husband moving in 1939. This left Frank Dorman the only one in their old home so he moved also, spending some time with his son and then moving to his daughter's house, where he died in 1940.

Mrs. Simonds inherited the house in Farmington and continued renting it out. The first tenant was Frederick Talmadge Day, who had already been renting from Mrs. Simonds' father. Mr. Day's wife was the former Cassandra L. Arnold. They had a son Carrington Beach Day, perhaps born during their occupancy of this house.

The next tenants were Robert B. Keegan, his wife the former Cornelia B. Philips, and their son Peter, perhaps also born during their residence here. Mr. Keegan worked for Wiremold in West Hartford, and it is thought that they moved to Ohio.

Mr. and Mrs. Frederick T. Gear and their family lived here a few years and in 1958 purchased the house next door at 169 Main Street, moving into it in 1963.

Michael W. Gordon purchased this house in 1963. The furnace which supplies the heat for the house now must have been installed by the Gordons, and it is placed in the large fireplace in the basement. The Gordons also took off the front and side porch, and changed the two front doors, putting in solid doors instead of the former ones with glass in the top section.

Mr. Gordon sold the house in 1968.

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Mr. and Mrs. Charles T. Sardeson were the purchasers in 1968, and are the present owners and occupants.

Charles Thomas Sardeson, born in Chicago, is the son of Orville Sardeson and Edna Hovland. His father was in the clothing business, both manufacturing and retailing. His early ancestors had settled in Wethersfield, Connecticut, early in the seventeenth century, but had soon pushed west and settled in Wisconsin. They operated the earliest flour mill in all Wisconsin, on the Pecatonica River, the crookedest river in America. Charles Sardeson has the stencil which James Sardeson used to mark his barrel heads, reading: "Family flour from Selected Wheat. Jas. Sardeson, Argyle, Wisconsin". The Sardeson family averages about three quarters Norwegian and one quarter English, the latter having been the settlers of early Wethersfield.

Mrs. Charles Sardeson, the former Elizabeth Hope Weaver, always known as Hope, was born in Savannah, Georgia, but grew up in Red Springs, North Carolina, to where her parents moved when she was a little girl. Her paternal ancestors were of England and Scotland, and her mother's family were very early settlers of South Carolina. Her father was William Nathaniel Weaver, a furniture retailer, owner of several stores. Her mother was Frances Pegram, whose grandfather had a large plantation near Charlotte, North Carolina. Her grandmother was Francis Louise Hope of York, South Carolina.

Red Springs, North Carolina, was the home of Flora MacDonald College, from which Hope was graduated with a Liberal Arts degree, having studied to be a teacher. The faculty and students of Flora MacDonald were later merged with those of three other schools, becoming St. Andrews University of Laurinburg, North Carolina. The beautiful buildings of Flora MacDonald now house Wardall Hall, a girls' prep school. Hope later did graduate work in merchandizing at William and Mary, Williamsburg.

Charles Sardeson is a graduate of Washington and Lee University and was doing some graduate work there one summer, the only summer that it was ever co-ed, when he met Hope Weaver, who was taking some summer undergraduate courses. Charles went on to study for the ministry at Mt. Airy Lutheran Seminary. Hope Weaver taught one year at Charlottesville High School, holding retailing classes both for the high school students and also for the local merchants of the Retail Merchants' Association.

They were married soon after this and Mr. Sardeson was assigned to be an assistant to the pastor of a large church in Buffalo, New York. From there he was transferred to Waynsboro, Virginia, at the foot of the Skyline Drive. After three and a half years there they went to Edinburgh, Scotland, where Charles did graduate work at both the University itself and at New College Seminary, a Theological Seminary which is a part of the University. Their two children accompanied them during this year in Scotland, but Hope was still able to attend the University also.

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Mr. Sardeson's next move was to the senior pastorate of one of the largest and oldest of Lutheran churches, that of Carlisle, Pennsylvania. It celebrated its 200th anniversary while they were there, aided by its some fifteen hundred members and by a booklet which Mr. Sardeson wrote, containing biographical sketches of all its former ministers. During the seventeen years in Carlisle the Sardesons did extensive traveling in Europe and the Near East, principally in the Holy Lands, where they could usually feel tension in the air even at that time.

Mr. Sardeson has always been interested in writing, and had two books published while at Carlisle, "Rediscovering the Words of Faith" and "A Faith for Complicated Lives". Neither was wholly Lutheran, but rather Ecumenical, and one was designated by the Council of Churches as selected reading for the Lenten Season of that year.

After twenty-five years of service directly to the church Mr. Sardeson expanded his field of action and joined the work force of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. He is now the Executive Director of the Hartford office, and he represents all of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. He likes this work and its possibilities for the promotion of goodwill and joint action by various faiths. He is encouraged by what is being accomplished, and challenged by the opportunity to accomplish much more. In July of this year he was named to the Human Relations Commission of Farmington, something more to add to his busy schedule.

Mrs. Sardeson has always been a great aid to her husband but is now gradually using some of her time to develop a latent outside interest, which is in antiques, searching for the unique and the rare items, and bringing her merchandising training into the foreground again.

The Sardesons are interested in their house and in its origin, and various people who have examined it have been of the opinion that it may antedate considerably the date of 1840 which has been stated as its period of construction. They expect to make more thorough studies when time permits, and to try to establish a firm date. They have made minor changes and improvements in the house, and one which is major, the addition to the east of a dining room and kitchen, extending out over the basement's east door.

The beams used for the remodeling done by the Sardesons are those taken from the original part of the Hoppin house across the street, taken out of that house by its owners when it was remodeled soon after their purchase. Mr. Hoppin had given the beams to the previous owners of this house, the Gordons, but the Gordons had never gotten around to using them.

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The Sardesons have two children, Charles Thomas III and Pamela Hope.

Charles is at York University in Toronto, interested in writing and speaking, hoping however to go on to be a surgeon some day.

Pamela has been three years at Goucher College in Baltimore. She spent one summer in Mayor Lindsay's office in New York, tutoring ghetto children, and one in Boston, with the Park Department. After a year out of college for re-orientation, which included some time in Harvard's School of Public Health, she is now entering the University of Massachusetts in Boston, a city which she loves.

There is an interesting coincidence concerning the purchase of this house by the Sardesons, which is the following.

Robert Rose, an early ancestor of Mr. Sardeson, was born in Suffolk, England, in 1594. He came from Ipswich to America with his wife Margery and their children, in the ship FRANCIS, in 1634. He was one of the adventurers from Watertown, Massachusetts, who first settled Wethersfield. He was in the Pequot War, became a large landholder, moved to Branford in 1644, and died in 1664. His son Daniel purchased property in Wethersfield from Samuel Wylyes in 1670. Mr. Sardeson now notes that this same Samuel Wylyes had also owned land here in Farmington from 1645 until 1655, and that Mr. Sardeson has purchased land almost directly across the street from his!

See Plot #36 on Mrs. Hurlburt's map on page xvi of "Town Clerks". The Sardesons are on Plot 50.

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