Sited at the southern end of Farmington Village's historic Main Street, the George E. Mills House faces east towards "the Lodge" (185 Main Street). The house sits on a well-manicured lawn with large shade trees and is bordered to the north by woodland. Heavy commercial and residential development has occurred to the south and southeast.
This well-preserved, Colonial Revival-style house features a three-bay facade capped with a pyramidal-hipped roof. The ornate wraparound veranda exhibits classical posts and a pedimented entry bay. Note the full-height corner pilasters supporting a wide entablature which extends around the house beneath the eaves. Gable-roofed dormers with three-over-one sash provide added light to the attic story. A two-and-one-half story cross gable with cutaway bay window and brackets extends from the south elevation and both six-over-six and six-over-one sash are found throughout.

George Elihu Mills built this house in 1902 on a thirty-one acre parcel of land he acquired from Frederick C. Rockwell (FLR 71:534). He hired Henry O. Wilcox, a local contractor, to erect the dwelling. Born in Bloomfield, Mills (1862-1940) was the son of George and Sarah (Bliss) Mills. His wife was the former Harriet Willis, a native of New York State. Mills was employed as a draftsman at the Colt Manufacturing Company in Hartford. In 1919 Agnes K. Curtin purchased the house (FLR 80:89). She was the daughter of George A. and Ida Augusta Keller and wife of John Joseph Curtin (m. 1911 in Philadelphia). Agnes worked as a nurse and her husband, a restauranteur, was assistant manager at the Elm Tree Inn. Later, Mr. Curtin owned and operated the successful Farmington Coffee Shop, which was located just south of his home. The house today is owned and occupied by the Curtin's daughter, June C., widow of John D. Morrissey.

This well-preserved Colonial Revival-style house is one of the best examples of early twentieth-century domestic architecture in Farmington. Historically it is notable for its association with the Mills and Curtin families.


Photographer:
Nathan Ainspan

Date:
4/86

View:
W

Negative on File:
18:32 A

Compiler:
Elizabeth R. Hart

Address:
27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT

Photograph Description:

Threats to Building or Site:

☐ None known
☐ Highways
☐ Vandalism
☐ Developers
☐ Other

☐ Renewal
☐ Private
☐ Deterioration
☐ Zoning
☐ Explanation
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ADDRESS: 84 Main Street

DATE BUILT: 1902 FOR: George E. Mills

ARCHITECT
MASTER-BUILDER Henry O. Wilcox


REFERENCES: "Farmington, Conn., 1906", p. 102

OWNER'S NAME MORRISSEY, JUNE C. (Mary June)
1950-res.

ADDRESS: 84 Main Street

DATE BUILT: 1902 FOR: George E. Mills

ARCHITECT
MASTER-BUILDER Henry O. Wilcox


REFERENCES: "Farmington, Conn., 1906", p. 102
This house is pictured on page 102 of the Farmington Book as the residence of George B. Mills.

First owner of this land appears to have been John Lankton, as Mrs. Hurlburt makes the following statement on page 366 of her book "Town Clerks", which was published in 1943. She says that John Lankton "also owned land farther south on the Main Street about where John Curtin now lives. Here his son Joseph, baptised March 18, 1659, probably lived as he married Susannah Root of Farmington, October 1683, and here also John Lankton's daughter Elizabeth lived".

The land on which the present house was built had for many years been the property of Egbert Cowles, who had lived across the street at what is known as 185 Main Street. See the account of that house and also of 174 Main Street, for more information regarding him.

F. C. Rockwell, a land developer, bought all of the Egbert Cowles property west of Main Street from the Estate of Egbert Cowles on October 31, 1901. On November 7 of that same year he sold the south 31 acres of this property to George E. Mills, reserving that portion north of the little brook, along the present Tunxis Street, for further development into building lots. This was with the exception of that already occupied by the houses at 172 and 174 Main Street, which he sold to Lena Mason.

George E. Mills then engaged Henry O. Wilcox, of what is now 157 Main Street, to build for him the house presently on this site. George Elihu Mills is remembered by some local residents as having been elderly and perhaps retired before coming to Farmington, although that appears not to have been the case. They had no children. Mrs. Mills had a sitting room and sewing room upstairs, two rooms which have later been used as bedrooms. Mr. Mills did not farm the property, although he raised chickens, and some say, cocker spaniels.

Mr. Mills, born in Bloomfield, had been employed in New York City prior to coming to Farmington, and there had married Harriet Willis of New York State. Mr. Mills was the son of Mrs. Anson Porter of 149 Main Street, born in 1862, the son of her second husband George Mills, Anson Porter having been her third husband.

After selling this property in 1919, Mr. and Mrs. Mills moved to Hartford and Mr. Mills was employed by Colt Manufacturing Company as draftsman.

Mrs. Mills died in Hartford, perhaps in the late 1930's, and Mr. Mills returned to Farmington, residing at the home of Mrs. William Porter, 145 Main Street, whose husband had been the half-brother of Mr. Mills. George Mills died in December 1940, at the age of seventy-eight.

Agnes K. Curtin was the purchaser of the house at 184 Main Street from George E. Mills in August 1919.

December 14, 1972
Mrs. John J. Curtin, the former Agnes Keller, purchased this house in the name of Agnes K. Curtin on August 28, 1929. It was to be the residence of the Curtins.

John Joseph Curtin had been born in Portland, Connecticut, in 1869, the son of David Curtin and Bridget Bouler Murray, both of whom had been born in Ireland. John Curtin had previously been married to Ellen Casey McDonough of New Haven. The one child of that marriage was John J. Curtin, Jr., who was born in Middletown. They later moved to Hartford, where Mrs. Curtin died.

In Hartford, where Mr. Curtin was employed in the restaurant business, he met Agnes Augusta Keller, a nurse and also previously a school teacher in Pennsylvania. She had been born in Morgan Valley, Pennsylvania, in 1886, the daughter of George A. Keller and Ida Augusta Miechau of Williamsport. Mr. Curtin and Miss Keller were married in Philadelphia, on August 22, 1911.

Agnes Augusta Keller was a descendant of a veteran of the Revolutionary War. His service record, and her ancestry, were as follows:

James Younger Campbell, born in 1753 in Little Compton, Rhode Island, served as sailmaker on the ship COLUMBUS, part of the Continental Fleet, commanded by Capt. Abraham Whittle under Commodore Esek Hopkins of Providence, Rhode Island, in the year 1775. James Campbell also served in the Revolutionary Army in the years 1777-78-79. He married Anny Gardiner in Newport, Rhode Island, on June 12, 1779. His descendants were:

John Gray Campbell
m. Sophia Baldwin
John Gray Campbell 1801-1842
m. Sophia Baldwin on Nov. 12, 1823, at St. George, N. B.

James Campbell
m. Mary Jane Kidd
James Campbell 1824-1899
m. Mary Jane Kidd on July 15, 1847, in St. Marks Church of St. George, N. B.

Ida Sophia Campbell
m. Frank Micheau
Ida Sophia Campbell 1848-1919
m. Frank Micheau on Nov. 16, 1865 " "

Ida Augusta Micheau
m. George Adam Keller
m. George Adam Keller 1857-1942 Morgan Valley (Bastress) Pa.
in Nipenose Township, now RD3, Williamsport.

Agnes Augusta Keller
m. John Joseph Curtin
Agnes Augusta Keller 1886-1957
m. John Joseph Curtin 1869-1945

The latter were married in Philadelphia in 1911, but returned to Hartford where they were both employed, she as a nurse. Their daughter Virginia was born during their residence in Hartford.

They moved to Farmington when Mr. Curtin was employed by James B. Ryan to assist him in the management and operation of the Elm Tree Inn.

December 20, 1972
In 1920, being interested in the well-being of the Catholic Church, Mr. and Mrs. Curtin bought the house at 92 Main Street, with some thought that it might become the Rectory for the proposed St. Patrick's Church. The Rev. Father Ernest Wilson did live there for a time, but only until the present Rectory was built, after which of course he lived there. The house at 92 Main street was sold to the Henry Ludorfs in 1924.

The third and fourth of John Curtin's children were born while they lived at 184 Main Street, Mary June Curtin and Paul Keller Curtin.

In 1920 Mr. Curtin left the Elm Tree Inn and went into business for himself, building the Farmington Coffee House just a little south of his own house lot, and building a small ice house also, north of the coffee house, for its use. The restaurant was very successful for many years, since it was the only one in the area open on Sundays. This has been said to have been the first restaurant on Route 10, but this perhaps was only to mean in this nearby area.

Mrs. Curtin's father, his wife having died in 1904, came to Farmington in 1925 and made his home with the Curtins until his death in June 1942. He was George Adam Keller, son of Michael Keller and Mary Paul, born in Nipenose Township, Lycoming County, Pa.

John J. Curtin, Jr., was married to Sarah Miller, the daughter of Truman Miller and Esther McKee of Talcott Notch Road, Avon, of the first house north of the Avon-Farmington town line. Miss Miller was a descendant of William Miller, a tanner, of Scottish origin, but perhaps from Birmingham, England. Later he was in Ipswich, Massachusetts, in 1648, and was one of the original settlers of Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1654. His wife, Patience, was a skilled physician and surgeon. Their grandson Jonathan was born in Northampton in 1703, married Sarah Ann Allen in 1727, moved to Northington, Connecticut, now known as Avon, in 1745. He helped build the Northington Church in 1754 and upon the arrival of the first minister, Ebenezer Booge, cared for the minister's horse upon arrival and was the first to entertain the minister.

Sarah Miller and her widowed mother were living on Mountain Road prior to Sarah's marriage. Afterward Mr. and Mrs. Curtin moved to West Hartford and Mrs. Miller accompanied them. She died in 1942. In 1952 the Curtins moved from Walden Street, West Hartford, to Worcester, Massachusetts, and in 1969 they returned to Hartford. Mr. Curtin has been a salesman most of his life, much of the time selling office furniture and equipment. Mr. and Mrs. Curtin have three children, Charles, Nancy and Jean. Mr. Curtin is now retired, and he and Mrs. Curtin reside in Niantic, Connecticut.

The former Virginia Curtin is now the widowed Mrs. Wallace Raymond Burke.

December 20, 1972
Mary June Curtin, a graduate of Mt. St. Joseph Academy in West Hartford, was married in May 1946 to John David Morrissey, born in Unionville, the son of James N. Morrissey, 1874-1941, and Mary Connelly, 1876-1918. John David's four grandparents: William Morrissey and Mary Hassett, James Connelly and Nora Hurley, had all been born in Ireland, and probably came to America in the 1860's or just a little later. John David's mother, one of a family of thirteen children, died a few months after his birth, and he was reared by his father's sisters. James H. Morrissey had been the eldest child of his parents' eleven children, of whom three went into medical and dental fields, having been aided through college by elder brothers and sisters.

James H. Morrissey was a top-rated insurance salesman for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, and in his later years was postmaster in Unionville.

John David Morrissey presently manages the Postoffice Square Shopping Plaza, the property on which it stands having been part of the acreage purchased by the Curtins in 1919 from George E. Mills, and sold for the purpose of using it as the site of the shopping center, in 1967 or 1968. The family heirs retained the old south district schoolhouse however, and the land on which it stands, which was purchased in 1929.

The Morrisseys have four children.

John David Morrissey, Jr., graduate of Middlebury College of Vermont, is now an orchardist on the shores of Lake Champlain,

Agnes Diedre Morrissey is a student at Emmanuel College in Boston, to be graduated in May 1973,

Brian James Morrissey, just graduated from Farmington High School was a 1972 winner in the 25th Annual Scholastic Arts Award competition sponsored by the Hartford Courant Parade of Youth, and Virginia Curtin Morrissey attends Farmington High School.

Paul Keller Curtin is the youngest of the four Curtin children, and has many memories of his childhood in Farmington. Among these are playing in the old South District schoolhouse, which his mother had purchased in 1929 but which was vacant much of the time, playing in the old ice house, which was later converted to the Colonial Package Store, talking a lot about old Will Warren's Den, and running at full speed past the "haunted house", which is now the home of James McA. Thomson.

Paul finished the third year at Farmington High School during World War II, just when colleges were trying to give young people as much education as possible before their induction into the armed services. He had good grades in high school, so good in fact, that Trinity College qualified him for entrance after only the three years, combining the senior year of high school with the freshman year at college.

December 20, 1972
Paul was graduated from Farmington High School at the end of the year spent at Trinity, and he then went into the Air Cadet program of the Army Air Corps. He served there until he received his discharge in 1946, just one month before his twenty-first birthday.

After having completed military service he entered George Washington University in Washington, D. C. from which he was graduated in 1949. He now lives in Washington, D. C., where he has been with the Association of American Railroads since 1953. He is now Assistant to the Vice President of that organization.

Interested in his family history, Paul researched his ancestry in the Keller family and others, back through the Revolutionary War, and is now a member of the Washington chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. It is due to his research that the writer was able to include some of the Keller Genealogy which was given on the second page of this sketch.

Mr. and Mrs. Burke, and Mrs. Burks's sister Mrs. John Morrissey, formed the Pequabuck Investment Corporation and built the new post office building at 210 Main Street, which was dedicated in October 1966. This was on property which was part of that purchased by Agnes Keller Curtin in 1919. They then used some more of the property and started the development of Post Office Square, tore down the old Farmington House Restaurant and two other buildings on the property, and built the A & P Store and others, and enlarged the postoffice, in 1970.

Title to this property at 184 Main Street had been passed in April 1939 from Agnes Keller Curtin (Mrs. John J. Curtin) to her father, George A. Keller. Mr. Keller died in June 1942, at the age of 84, and the property was inherited in April 1946 by his granddaughter Mary June Curtin, just one month prior to her marriage to John Morrissey. She and her husband and family have lived here continuously since that time.

Agnes Keller Curtin died in January 1957 at the age of seventy-one.

December 21, 1972
DEACON JOHN LANKTON was not an original proprietor of Farmington, but was an early settler and one of the substantial and leading citizens of the town. His first recorded land was bought from Rev. Roger Newton, Thomas Barnes and Richard Brownson through which the highway runs north and south, bounded south by Samuel Hooker and highway running to ould millplace, north part on Thomas Barnes and Richard Brownson and west on river and Newton's land." This record was made in 1665 and states that the land was bought in 1650. This is valuable in that it shows us that in 1650 Rev. Roger Newton lived on the east side of the street midway between the present Hatters Lane and the old right of way into the swamp, - it also tells us that in 1665 when the record was made, Newton had sold or given his land to his brother-in-law, Rev. Samuel Hooker, who had been pastor of the church since 1661 and who lived in the former Newton house.

John Lankton had also bought land formerly belonging to John Talcott, later of Thomas Barnes and land of Richard Brownson, to make up his holdings there. He gave one acre on the opposite corner, now the corner of Hatters Lane and Main Street, to his "son-in-law" Thomas Gridley for a house lot. When the elder Thomas Gridley was dying he asked his friend John Lankton, to administer his estate, pay the bills and care for his three children, - Thomas aged eight, Samuel aged five and Mary aged three years.

Thomas Gridley Jr. married Elizabeth Clark December 25, 1679 and in 1680 John Lankton gave him a house lot with a dwelling house on it. John Lankton married Mary (Semmorr or Seymour) Gridley, widow of Thomas Sr.

October, 1683. And here also John Lankton's daughter Elizabeth lived in a leanto with half the cellar, orchards and half the barn. Deacon Lankton died 1689 leaving a grandson John, son of his own son John deceased; heirs of his son Samuel, his son Joseph and daughter Elizabeth. The grandson John, left to his aunt Elizabeth's care, died November 1690 aged eight years and his share of his grandfather's estate went to Elizabeth, who on or before December 7, 1692 married Luke Hayes, the second schoolmaster in Farmington. Elizabeth Langton Hayes died 1703 and Hayes later married Maudlin Daniels who had previously been married to Samuel Street of Wallingford, second to Frank Freeman of Farmington a negro who held elective offices in the town. After the death of Luke Hayes in 1712 Maudlin married Dennis Hoogins of Ireland and the records show that she was Maudlin Hoogins a woman of property in the town. In his will, Luke Hayes did not leave any of his property to Maudlin, leaving all that he had inherited from his first wife Elizabeth, to her brother Joseph Lankton, and all other property to Lieutenant John Stanly and Lieutenant Samuel Wadsworth. Maudlin objected and retained as attorney John Hart. Both she and Hart were ordered by the court to produce property of the estate of Luke Hayes which they were believed to be withholding, but it profited Maudlin little, as she received none of the Hayes and Lankton estates. Hayes had property of his own in pasture, farm land and orchard as well as a small library of Latin and other school books.

John Lankton's son Joseph was named executor of his father's will and given the homestead (now part of the W. S. Cowles place). Joseph and his wife Susannah (Root) had a son Joseph born 1688, married December 24, 1713 to Rachel Cowles. On December 25, 1713 Joseph Sr. gave his son as wedding and Christmas present three acres of land with a new house next to his own, about where the former Barbour house now stands. One acre had been his own and two acres he bought January 1713 from Thomas Barnes. At his death Joseph Lankton Sr., willed to his son Ebenezer "on whom he depended in his last years" his ancestral homestead. The new William Hooker house stood just west south, between Lankton's and Meadow road.

Ebenezer Lankton was born July 17, 1701 and on November 30, 1727 married Jemima Cowles.

The writer believes that the following may help to orient the readers who may not have lived in Farmington very long, and to make the text easier to relate to present homes in the neighborhood.

Regarding the first paragraph, the Rev. Roger Newton's house stood on the site of what is now the Porter house, 145 Main Street.

The land "formerly belonging to John Talcott", was that on which now stand the houses known as 138, 140 and 144 Main Street.

The "acre on the opposite corner", as thought by the writer, is the site of the present house at 141 Main Street, home of Francis Baker.

The land "further south where John Curtin now lives", is that occupied by the John Norrissey house at 184 Main Street.

Land which John Lankton's son Joseph received when he married Susannah Root, is probably the present site of 164 Main Street, the Richard W. Hube home.

In the next-to-final paragraph, the "new William Hooker house" was that whose kitchen, "the 1690 bit" as termed by Mrs. W. S. Cowles, formed the nucleus of the present house at 148 Main Street, Oldgate, and was converted to its library, still containing the huge kitchen fireplace of the original house. Oldgate is presently the property and residence of Mr. and Mrs. W. Sheffield Cowles.

1300.
March 1, 1974