**Building Name:** Riley, John, House

**Town/City:** Farmington

**Street and Number:** 1 High Street (formerly 5 High Street)

**Owner(s):** Zwick, Ernst W., Jr. and Ann C. (life use Margaret R. Zwick)

**Use (Present):** Residence

**Style of Building:** Nineteenth-century vernacular

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1880

### Materials

- **Indicate use or location:**
  - [x] Clapboard
  - [ ] Asbestos Siding
  - [x] Brick Foundation
  - [ ] Other (Specify)
  - [ ] Wood Shingle
  - [ ] Asphalt Siding
  - [ ] Fieldstone
  - [ ] Board & Batten
  - [ ] Stucco
  - [ ] Cobblestone
  - [ ] Aluminum Siding
  - [ ] Concrete Type:
  - [ ] Cut stone Type:

### Structural System

- [x] Wood frame
- [ ] Post and beam
- [ ] balloon
- [x] Other (Specify)

### Roof Type

- [x] Gable
- [ ] Flat
- [ ] Mansard
- [ ] Monitor
- [ ] sawtooth
- [ ] gambrel
- [ ] Shed
- [ ] Hip
- [ ] Round
- [ ] Other (Specify)

- [x] Wood Shingle
- [ ] Roll
- [ ] Asphalt
- [ ] Tin
- [ ] Slate
- [ ] Asphalt shingle
- [ ] Built up
- [ ] Tile
- [ ] Other (Specify)

### Number of Stories

- 2½

### Approximate Dimensions

- 20 x 34; 23 x 18

### Condition (Structural)

- [x] Excellent
- [ ] Good
- [ ] Fair
- [ ] Deteriorated

### Integrity (Location)

- On original site
- [x] Moved
- [x] Yes
- [ ] No

### Related Outbuildings or Landscape Features

- [ ] Barn
- [ ] Shed
- [x] Garage
- [ ] Other landscape features or buildings (Specify)

### Surrounding Environment

- [ ] Open land
- [ ] Woodland
- [x] Residential
- [ ] Scattered buildings visible from site
- [ ] Commercial
- [ ] Industrial
- [ ] Rural
- [x] High building density

The John Riley House faces west onto High Street near its intersection with Farmington Avenue and sits on a small lot shaded with maples. The surrounding neighborhood is both residential and commercial and contains buildings dating from the early eighteenth century to present. The Brick Walk shops are located directly across the street to the west.
17 OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (cont.)
Oriented gable-to-street, this late nineteenth-century vernacular-style dwelling exhibits a three-bay facade with side-hall entrance. Relatively devoid of any architectural embellishments, the facade features a single-story, open porch with square posts and simple stick balustrade. Note the arched window in the gable end. A one-and-one-half story ell with gable-roofed dormer and modest wraparound, open veranda extends from the north elevation. A diminutive brick chimney rises from the center of the main block and from the middle of the ell as well. Two-over-two sash are displayed throughout. (Note: According to Hurlburt and Lewis, the ell may date from the eighteenth-century, although there is no documentation to prove so. Architecturally the ell appears to be integral with the main block).

18 ARCHITECT

19 HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE
This house was erected by John Riley about 1880, replacing the old "John Clark House" (ca. 1700), which he purchased in 1871 from the heirs of Erastus Porter (FLR 61:362, 62:130). In December of 1880 he mortgaged the property for $913 to Nelson O. Keyes, indicating the house may have been constructed at this time (FLR 65:487). Engaged in farming, Riley (1830-1906) was a native of Ireland as was his wife Anna (Shields) Riley (1835-1916). In 1898 Alfred A. Pope, iron magnate and owner of Hill-Stead acquired the property (FLR 71:371). The house was occupied by employees of Hill-Stead and at times rented to employees of Danforth Barney, who lived at #11 Mountain Spring Road. In the early twentieth century Barney rented the dwelling for Charles C. Henderson, caretaker of the country club of Farmington. William Chidsey, a night watchman at Hill-Stead, and his wife Ann later resided here. The Chidseys let out rooms for other employees of Hill-Stead including second butlers and chefs. Mr. Pope's daughter, Theodate Pope Riddle inherited the house in 1917 (FLR 34:225). In the early 1930s William Kegley and his family moved into the house. Mr. Kegley, a native of Enfield, was employed by Theodate Pope as a watchman at the Avon Old Farms School during its construction. After completion of the school, Kegley remained in its employ and held a variety of positions. For many years he was the head of building maintenance, grounds, and equipment. In 1956 he purchased the house from Mrs. Riddle's estate and it remained in the Kegley family until 1978 (FLR 132:463).

Architecturally significant for its state of preservation, the John Riley House is also historically important for its association with Farmington's Irish immigrants and (see below)

SOURCES

PHOTOGRAPH
K.J. Istok
9/85

VIEW
SE
DATE
9/85
NEGATIVE ON FILE
8:11

NAME
Elizabeth R. Hart
1/86

ORGANIZATION
Greater Middletown Preservation Trust

ADDRESS
27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT

Threats to Building or Site

☐ None Known
☐ Highways
☐ Vandalism
☐ Developers
☐ Other

☐ Renewal
☐ Private
☐ Deterioration
☐ Zoning
☐ Exploration
FOR: John Riley
ca. 1700(n. end)  " Lewis?

ARCHITECT

MASTER-BUILDER

FORMER OWNERS: T.P. Riddle from her father, Alfred A. Pope, by distribution of his est. 11/26/1917.


John Riley purchased and had moved from the adjoining property on the n., then owned by D.N. Barney, the small old house which is now the n. end of this present dwellinghouse. It was moved by Francis of West Hartford. John Riley about the same time razed the old John Clark house which stood on the site of the s. end of the present dwellinghouse & built the addition.

The n. end of the present house appears to be of early date. It has exposed interior framing some wide panels & had a central chimney which was not moved when the house was moved.

REFERENCES: "Farmington, Conn., 1906", p. 184 - 'Residence cottage at Hill-Stead Farm.'
This house is pictured in the Farmington Book on page 184 as the "Cottage on Hillstead Farm". Baker and Tilden's Atlas of 1869 shows it as one of two houses identified by the name of Mrs. C. Porter.

Library records show it as a combination of two houses, the north section (which appears as sort of an ell) may have been built by a Lewis around 1700, or by Thomas North 1698, and added to in 1880 by John Reilly.

Russell Lee Jones in his memoirs stated that his mother rented this house for the summer of 1874. The Jones family lived in New York City but Mrs. Jones was a relative of Mrs. Elijah Lewis and began coming to Farmington each year to spend the summer.

This house was purchased from the Reillys in 1898 by Alfred A. Pope, to become a part of the Hillstead Farm property, and the Reillys then purchased on the north side of Farmington Avenue the house pictured as theirs on page 151 of the Farmington Book.

The sequence of occupation, even after the acquisition by the Pope family, is not known. The sequence as surmised by the writer, will be given in the following narrative.

D. Newton Barney rented it for a time from Mr. Pope to house Charles C. Henderson and his family. Mr. Henderson had been brought from Hartford to Farmington by Mr. Barney to take care of the golf club and grounds. The Henderson's later lived on Farmington Avenue in the house pictured on page 112 of the Farmington Book, second house on the left side of the page.

The next occupants of this house were Mr. and Mrs. William Chidsey. Mrs. Chidsey was the former Annie Shanley, his second wife, his first having been Margaret Rourke. Mr. Chidsey had been Mr. Barney's coachman, now was night watchman at Hillstead. The Chidseys received free rent here in return for supplying rooms for Hillstead employees, second butlers, chefs, etc. The first butler, Ernest Bohlen, was housed at Hillstead itself.

Farmer Dorset, who is stated to have managed Hillstead farm at one time, may have lived here for a period, but dates are not known.

William James Kegley has lived here since the early 1930's.

Mr. Kegley was hired by Mrs. Riddle in 1924, upon the recommendations of Thomas Hewes and Richard H. Phillips (later a Superior Court Judge), to police the area of construction of Avon Old Farms School, which was being built at that time.

June 15, 1973
William Kegley was born and reared in Enfield, the son of Michael Kegley and Bridget Gibbons. His first employment as an adult had been at Wethersfield State Prison, from which he resigned after two or three years. Following a six-month employment at another job, he was employed by Mrs. Riddle. Avon Old Farms School was in its second year of construction at that time, a work which took over three years, with a crew of sometimes 525 men, to complete.

When first hired, and for the first few years of his marriage, he lived at 181 Garden Street, in one of the small houses just north of Winchell Smith Drive, which Mrs. Riddle, before her marriage, had built to house employees of Hillstead. Mr. Kegley was married during his residence there, to Marcella Pascus. She had lived with her parents in the house pictured on page 105 of the Farmington Book as the Charles Hills place, now known as 426 Main Street.

Three or four years later Mr. and Mrs. Kegley moved to this house at 1 High Street, a two-family house at that time, with Mr. and Mrs. Chidsey occupying only the north section. Two children were born to the Kegleys while here, Catherine and William James, Jr. Both these children are now married and living in the western United States.

Marcella Kegley died in 1956 after a relatively minor operation. Mr. Kegley later married Ann Rourke and they now occupy all of this house, the Chidseys now having been deceased for some years. Ann Rourke had been born in Farmington, her parents and she having lived in the house pictured of page 112 of the Farmington Book as the residence of John Rourke.

Mr. Kegley purchased this house in 1956 from the Hillstead Estate.

William Kegley is still employed at Avon Old Farms School and as of August 4, 1972, he had completed 48 years with the school. He has handled a succession of different jobs, including that of fire chief during the period of army occupancy during and following World War II. At that time it was used as a rehabilitation center, training blinded veterans of the war for useful and normal lives. He is presently, and has been for many years, in full charge of maintenance of buildings, grounds and equipment. This also included construction of small buildings as necessary. It has been hard work and required long hours. Since a heart attack in 1971 he has been induced to shorten his hours to not over eight per day. He feels that this is just part-time work, but his physician says it is enough.

Mr. Kegley was well acquainted with the founder of the school, Mrs. Riddle, and has known every headmaster and all of the faculty members, and earned the respect of every one. His brother was Charles H. Kegley of Enfield, state representative 1954-55, and employee of Bigelow-Sanford for many years, coach of their baseball team, and later employed at Bradley Field.

June 15, 1973
Mrs. Kegley's interest in Farmington is very great and she usually takes daily walks around the village. One of the rooms in their house she calls the O'Rourke Room, keeping there her inherited possessions from their old home. Her grandfather had been the O'Rourke of High Street. See the caption under the top photo on page 186 of the Farmington Book. Ann Kegley also keeps in a prominent place the old sleigh bells worn on their harness by Jack and Queen, the team driven by Mr. Chidsley when he was coachman for the Barneys.

June 15, 1973

On May 18, 1974, Avon Old Farms School held a well-attended celebration in honor of William Kegley's 50th year at Avon. They gave him a beautiful party at which there were nearly 200 people, including many, many of his old boys from all over the country. He had been sure they were going to retire him but they did not, he will still be going strong. They presented him with two fine books, one filled with very appreciative letters from many of the boys and their parents, and another one describing the construction of the school from its very beginning. Mr. Kegley was very pleased with the whole affair, especially the reassurance that he can stay with his boys.

September 4, 1974