Facing south, this building sits at the northeast corner of Old Mountain Road and Ely Road. Although the surrounding property was once actively farmed, a large number of modern dwellings have recently been constructed, threatening the rural character of the area.
This small, Cape Cod-style house underwent a number of Colonial Revival-style alterations in the early twentieth century. The five-bay facade with ridge-to-street gable roof and center brick chimney features a Colonial Revival-style portico and hip-roofed dormers with paired windows. The entry door is flanked by sidelights and the original multi-paned facade sash are capped by a narrow, applied window hood. A small ell extends from the east elevation.

19 ARCHITECT
William B. Graves

This house was built by William B. Graves in 1818 "near a place called Mountain Spring" on a four-acre parcel purchased from William Tryon (FLR 38:557). Little is known about Graves except that he came to Farmington from Granville, Massachusetts. In December of 1818 Graves sold the four acres with house to Colonel James Ward and Roswel Bartholomew of Hartford (FLR 40:301). Neither Ward nor Bartholomew ever resided here. The house and surrounding land, which was now known as Mountain Spring Farm, was rented out to tenant farmers. Erastus Pinney and his family occupied the 220 acre farm for a number of years. Although it is not recorded, Bartholomew eventually sold his interest in the property to Colonel Ward, who later willed the farm to his son, William. In 1866 William A. Ward of New York City sold Mountain Spring Farm to Francis Woodford of Avon for $6500 (FLR 60:358). Woodford, two years later, sold the land and buildings to Dwight Chidsey of Avon (FLR 60:689). Chidsey (b. 1823), a native of Avon, married Ann Fuller in 1868. In 1878 Moses McKee to title to the property by a foreclosure on a mortgage made by Chidsey in 1868 (FLR 62:519). The McKee family, who lived to the northwest along Talcott Notch Road, also rented this dwelling to tenant farmers. In 1890 Moses McKee left the Mountain Spring Farm to his four children; William, Moses, Joseph, and Esther (FLR 70:206). Francis G. Butler, who leased the farm from the McKees, owned the property for a short time between 1899 and 1900 (FLR 73:266 and 74:61). The next owner was Charles M. Beach of West Hartford, who acquired full title to the farm between April of 1900 and March of 1901 (FLR 71:488 and 74:61). The house continued to be rented to farm employees. Later, Thomas C. Beach, who in 1931 modernized the house, lived here. It remains in the Beach family today. (See below)

Sources:
OWNER'S NAME: BEACH, THOMAS C.

ADDRESS: 207 Old Mountain Road

DATE BUILT: ca. 1814-18 FOR: William B. Graves

ARCHITECT: BEACH & CO.

MASTER-BUILDER: BEACH & CO.

FORMER OWNERS: T.C. Beach (Beach & Co.) by inheritance from Charles M. Beach; C.M. Beach from Est. Francis G. Butler by adm. deed "Mountain Spring Farm" with the bldgs., 1/24/1900, Vol. 71, p. 56, and 3/27/1901, Vol. 71, p. 188; F.G. Butler from Sarah, Wm., Esther, and Joseph McKee by lease to run from 4/1/1896 for five years with option to buy, 250 acres known as the Ward Farm 3/31/1896, Vol. 70, p. 618; Butler from Wm. & Joseph McKee 12/6/1899, Vol. 73, p. 266; McKee, Wm & Joseph from their father, Moses McKee, by inheritance 10/3/1890, Vol. 70, p. 206, land & bldgs., known as "Mountain Spring Farm", 31 acres & house occupied by Moses McKee; McKee from Dwight Chidsey by decree of foreclosure of mortgage at Superior Court of land purchased by D. Chidsey from Francis Woodford 4/11/1866, Vol. 60, p. 690, 5/21/1878, Vol. 62, p. 518; D. Chidsey from Francis Woodford, Mountain Sprg. Farm with all bldgs. 4/13/1868, Vol. 60, p. 689; Woodford from Wm. A. Ward, Mt. Spring Farm "Farmington, Conn., 1906", p. 120 ('The Ward Farm').

REFERENCES: "Farmington, Conn., 1906", p. 120 ('The Ward Farm'). (OVER)
Former Owners, cont.:

4/13/1866, Vol. 60, p. 358; W.A. Ward from father, Col. James Ward, of Hartford "the same property"; Col. James Ward from Erastus Pinney, Mountain Spring Farm 11/21/1850, Vol. 50, p. 299, by quit claim; Pinney from James Ward, Mountain Spring Farm 3/23/1849, Vol. 50, p. 187; James Ward from Wm. B. Graves, land, house and other bldgs., 4 acres at Mt. Spring Farm, w. & s. on highways, n. on said Ward and e. on Rowe, 12/25/1818, Vol. 40, p. 301; Graves from Wm. Tryon 4 acres - no bldgs. mentioned - at or near a place called "Mountain Spring", e. on Abiah Rowe, n. on Ward, s. & w. on highways, 10/1/1814, Vol. 38, p. 557.
The Old Ward Farm
on
308 Old Mountain Road

The farm house, to the right, and some of the farm's outbuildings show in the photo at bottom right on page 120 of the Farmington Book. The photo was taken from what is now Ely Road, and a few yards of Old Mountain Road can be seen in the photo on the extreme right.

The Ward farm appears to have been part of the property purchased by William Tryon in 1792. See Mountain Spring Farm on Mountain Spring Road. It would appear that the farm house may have been built by William B. Graves, the purchaser from Mr. Tryon, as no house was included in his purchase, which was in 1814.

James Ward purchased from William B. Graves in 1818.

Erastus Pinney took title in 1849, from James Ward, but Col. James Ward took it again in 1850.

At some date within the next sixteen years title passed to William E. Ward, perhaps by inheritance. The writer has no identification of these Wards, nor does he know of any connection with the Ward family formerly of 56 Main Street.

Francis Woodford purchased in 1866 from William A. Ward, and Dwight Chidsey from Francis Woodford in 1868. Chidsey was the owner shown by Baker and Tilden in their 1869 Atlas.

Moses McKee took title from Dwight Chidsey by foreclosure in 1878. Moses McKee's farm was on Talcott Notch Road, and the house which is shown in his name by Baker and Tilden's Atlas stood just south of the present John DeKoven Alsop house. Pictured on page 63 of the Farmington Book, that house no longer stands, but vestiges of its foundation may still be seen 3/10 mile north of Aqueduct Lane, quite far back from the road.

Moses McKee, son of William and Esther McKee, died on December 4, 1889, and the Ward farm was left to his sons William and Joseph. William J. McKee, whose wife was Caroline A. Wilson, had at least four children. George and Allen are both in the Waterville School photo on page 32 of the Farmington Book, and George appears again on page 33. Charles McKee appears in the photo of Mr. Bushnell's students on page 37, 7th from the left. Albert does not show in the photos.

One Joseph McKee owned the Dr. Thomson house which stood on the site of 15 Main Street, having purchased it in 1880, but whether the same man as noted above, is not known.

A lease is recorded in Farmington Land Records, dated March 31, 1896, showing that Sarah M. McKee et al leased the Ward farm to Francis G. Butler.

January 21, 1974
In 1899 this property was sold to the same Mr. Butler, by William and Joseph McKee.

William McKee is believed at that time to have moved to the Moses McKee house pictured on page 63 of the Farmington Book, and lived there until around 1910, when he moved away and the house was razed. The Moses McKee house wascaptioned as the residence of Truman Miller, but the writer cannot verify that he lived there, altho he did own it at one time, through his wife's inheritance. Truman Miller lived north of there, in the house now occupied by John Dekoven Alsop.

Francis Butler did not hold title to the Ward farm very long, as it was sold to Charles M. Beach in 1900, and became a part of Mountain Spring Farm.

Thomas C. Beach inherited the Ward farmhouse and an unknown acreage of land, in 1931, after the death of his father, the previously mentioned Charles M. Beach, who never lived at either this or the Mountain Spring farmhouse.

Thomas Beach remodeled this house extensively. He has always thought that the house was built in the late 1700's, as he found it loaded with hand made nails. The lumber used had been chestnut, oak, spruce and pine. Some of the roof boards had been pit sawn, and were 30 inches wide.

The house had been tenanted by farm employees for many years. While McKee was in charge of Mountain Spring Farm his son Jimmy lived here and tended the sheep. Henry French, caretaker, lived here later for several years. When Thomas Beach came here the bath tub was being used for potato storage.

The re-modeling begun by Thomas Beach in 1931 included improvement and modernization of plumbing and wiring, the installation of central heating, the uncovering of fireplaces, the partitioning of the second floor, the building of the sun porch, and putting in an oak plank floor, cut from his own oak trees, much of the work being done by his own hands.

Haley Woodford of Avon, a timber man who owned a box factory, watched Thomas Beach renovating this house, and told him of his memory of the new barn being built here in 1910, part of it brought already built from Avon, drawn here by four yokes of oxen.

The Beaches were visited by the writer in the fall of 1970. Mr. Beach's eyesight was failing, but they were planning on a cruise in January. Mrs. Beach is the former Sylvia Tilney, widow of Major Harry H. Skerritt, formerly of 20 Church Street. See more regarding her earlier life in the account of that house.

A portrait of Charles M. Beach by Charles Noel Flagg hangs in the Thomas Beach home.

January 22, 1974