Situated along the west side of Colton Street near its intersection with Hatters Lane and Diamond Glen, the Stephen Root House stands on a well-manicured lawn trimmed with a stone wall. Colton Street, which was originally called "Back Lane," is lined with both historic and modern residences and is contained within Farmington's local historic district. A modern road with Colonial-period reproductions is located directly across the street to the east.
This colonial-period house features a five-bay facade with a Greek Revival-style door surround. Twelve-over-twelve sash exist throughout the building. A modern addition has been added to the rear of the building. Its center chimney has been removed and today two small brick chimneys, centrally located, extend from the roof.

In the fall of 1739 Joseph Root sold his great-nephew, Stephen Root, a vacant parcel of land bounded east and south by a highway, north on William Wadsworth's homelot and west by Samuel Lee's homelot (FLR 6:204). Stephen (1711-1752), the son of Timothy and Margaret (Seymour) Root, probably erected this house at the time of his marriage to Sarah Hart (1719-1789) in 1740. Root, who operated a fulling mill, died in 1752 and willed the house and home lot to his twelve-year-old son, Stephen Root, Jr. (1740-1767) (HPR #4643). The widow Sarah Root had life use of the property, although in 1758 she married Capt. Eldad Lewis of Southington. In 1766 Stephen Root, Jr. married Mercy Newell, but died just a year after the marriage. His widow later married John Strong and the homestead was distributed to Stephen's siblings: James Root, Sarah (Root) Sloper, and Ruth (Root) Newell. In 1773 John Case acquired the property (FLR 19:384). Between 1773 and 1785 the house passed through a number of owners, including John Stedman, Amos Tubbs, Timothy Wadsworth, Eliphelet Richard, and Samuel Richards Jr. (FLR 19:512, 24:51, 101, 525, 528). In 1785 Stephen Brownson, Jr. purchased the house an surrounding half acre for L60 (FLR 26:338). Brownson operated a callender shop (a machine to press cloth, rubber, or paper to make smooth, glossy, glazed or into sheets) nearby and built a shop on his homelot for "manufacturing and dyeing". He mortgaged the lot to John Mix in 1800 and to Elisha Colt in trust for Almy and Brown in 1806 (FLR 35:215,217). In November of 1807 Mix foreclosed on Brownson's mortgage and sold his right to the land, buildings, machinery, tools, and implements to William Almy, Obadiah Brown, and Samuel Slater of Providence, Rhode Island (FLR 36:328). In 1833 Chauncey Hills acquired the property from the firms of Almy and Brown for $425 (FLR 45:108). Paul Burrows owned the lot for a short time (see cont. pg.)

between 1842 and 1843 before selling land to his son-in-law, Reuben Lewis Hills (FLR 48:265, 384). Later in 1852 Burrows sold the same lot with buildings to his daughter, Sarah A. Hills, Reuben's wife (FLR 52:513). Engaged in farming, Hills (1817-1891) was the son of Chauncey and Sarah Hills. In 1839 he married Sarah A. Burrows (1818-1894) and had one son, Edgar B. Hills born in 1839. In 1895 Edgar inherited the house from his mother's estate (FLR 70:575). The house was sold out of the family in 1909.

As one of several well-preserved Colonial-period houses located along Colton Street, the Stepe Root House is historically significant as a tangible link to both Farmington's early manufacturing heritage and agricultural past.
OWNER'S NAME (LABBADIA, SALVATORE) to CAMP, WILLIAM L. 
res. - 1951 11/17/1952 
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION 
ADDRESS: 44 Colton Street Vol. 107 p 452 
DATE BUILT: ca 1670 FOR: John Brownson 
ARCHITECT 
MASTER-BUILDER 

See also note-book containing supplementary material on houses.
Stephen Brownson by Judgement of Foreclosure, (see file no. 357 State Lib. 
Brownson, Stephen from Samuel Richards Jr., 7/15/1785, Vol. 26, p 338; 
Richards, S. from E. Richard, 5/12/1783, Vol. 24, p 528; 
Woodruff, T. from Amos Tubbs 3/11/1782 Vol. 24, p 161; Tubbs, A. from John 
Stedman 12/14/1781, Vol. 24, p 51; Stedman, J. from John Case, 
4/14/1773, Vol. 19, p. 512; Case, J. from James Root, Ambrose and Sarah (Root) 
Sloper and Joseph and Ruth (Root) Newel, 4/13/1773, Vol. 19, p. 384; "formerly 
the home of our brother Stephen Root deceased"; Root, Stephen from Joseph 
Root 8/16/1739, Vol. 6, p 204; Root, Joseph from Abraham Brownson, 8/15/1739 
Vol. 6, p 203 "formerly belonging to my deceased father John Brownson 
being my part of the legacy" also Joseph Root from Isaac, John, Thomas and 
Ebenezer Brownson all rights in this property, 11/1/1739, Vol. 6, p 213; 

Richard Brownson had given this land and the bldgs. to his son John 
before he (Richard) died in October 26, 1687, Vol. 1, p 279. John died Nov. 
28, 1680.
This house is pictured on page 131 of the Farmington Book as the residence of Mr. Edgar B. Hills.

Mrs. Hurlburt, in her 1950 account of this house written for the Colonial Dames Society, says that the original settler on this land in 1645 was John Bronson, or Brownson, one of the seven men who on October 13, 1652, organized the First Church here.

The library card on this house states that it was built in 1670 for John Brownson, who was given the land by his father Richard.

Mrs. Hurlburt goes on to say in the Colonial Dames pamphlet that a house on this lot in 1737 was sold by Benjamin Bronson to John Cole. Another entry says John Brownson died in 1749, giving the south half of the house to David, and the north half to James, and that the south part appears to be older than the north.

Of the first John Brownson and his brother Richard, Mrs. Hurlburt has written the following on page 358 of "Town Clerks":

"John Brownson was an original proprietor and settler of Hartford before coming to Farmington in 1641. He was a soldier in the Pequot War and one of the founders of the First Church in Farmington in 1652. With his brother Richard he owned a large part of the land in the triangle formed by Hatter's Lane and Colton Street and land on the south side of the mountain road now called Diamond Glen Road. At the top of this mountain road the brothers built a mill which was in operation for sawing lumber until 1650 when sold to Stephen Hart, Sr. The remains of the mill can still be seen on the banks of the brook....."

"In 1650 John Brownson lived on the south side of the Ould Mill road near the present junction of Colton and Diamond Glen Roads with Hatter's Lane. A road was attempted through the swamp known as Porter's Swamp, which was to be a continuation of Meadow Lane. The road through the swamp was soon found impractical, and Hatter's Lane, also known as the road to the ould mill, was used instead. However, occasionally we do find a reference to a highway, which means none other than the first attempt to travel directly from the fork at Meadow Lane to Brownson's Mill, through the swamp. Streets were not named in those early years except as they acquired a descriptive name from their use or location. Until 1700 there were two roads leading to ye ould mill --- the present Colton Street and Hatter's Lane".

"John Brownson had a daughter, Dorcas, who married Stephen, son of John Hopkins".

"Richard Brownson removed from Hartford to Farmington about 1653, joining church 1654. He died in Farmington 1687. His first wife was a sister of Margaret, wife of William Pantry, by whom he had at least two children. His widow when he died was Elizabeth, widow of George Orvis. He lived on the south side of the mill road.....next west of his brother John".

January 31, 1974
The library card shows the succession of ownership of this house, from John Brownson, as follows:

1680 Abraham Brownson inherited,
1739 Joseph Root purchased,
1739 Stephen Root inherited,
1773 John Case purchased,
1793 John Stedman purchased,
1781 Amos Tubbs purchased,
1782 Timothy Woodruff purchased,
1783 Eliphalet Richards purchased,
1783 Samuel Richards took title, undoubtedly the Samuel Richards who built and resided at 10 Main St.,
1785 Stephen Brownson purchased
    John Mix took title by foreclosure,
1808 William Almay, Obadiah Brown and Samuel Slater of Providence purchased,
1833 Chauncey Hills purchased, from William Almay, William Jenkins and Anna Jenkins,
1842 Paul A. Burrows purchased,
1843 Ruben Lewis Hills purchased,
* 1895 Edgar B. Hills purchased from Sarah Hills.

Reuben Lewis Hills, born in Farmington in 1818, was the son of Chauncey Hills #389, 1784-1857 and Susan Craig, 1787-1839. Reuben married Sarah Burrows, and it was apparently from her that Edgar B. Hills inherited.

The Chauncey Hills who purchased this house in 1833 was probably Reuben Lewis Hills' father, as he, the son of Amos Hills and Rachel Lewis, had also been born in Farmington, but probably in the southern part of it, as at that time Farmington included so much more area.

Purchaser in 1909 from Edgar Hills was Salvatore Labbadia. Later generations of this family took the name of Rose. The Rose family was quite large. Two of the sons, Joseph A. Rose and John P. Rose, served in World War I, and were charter members of James Pålache Post #53, American Legion, chartered October 22, 1919. Lawrence is a well known painter and interior decorator of Farmington. Anthony started Rosewood, the well known eating place in Simsbury. Eleanor started the Eleanor Rose Shop, ladies wear, on Canal Path.

Mrs. Hurlburt's Colonial Dames Pamphlet on this house contains the following observations, which include some of the improvements made in the house by the Labbadias. She says:

"The south part of the house appears to be older than the north side, having three perpendicular windows, and formerly a door, now made into a window. Very heavy construction and the wide boards indicate the large trees used. The chimney, not entirely central, has been rebuilt by Salvatore Labbadia, present owner. It is smaller than the original chimney, leaving a rear wall in the front hall, which is deeper on the right side than on the left.

February 1, 1974

* Note: Edgar B. Hills, the last owner on the list starting at the top of this page, son of Lewis Hills and Sarah Barrows, died on March 11, 1911.
"The north, or right side of the house, has a more modern arrangement of windows, two on each floor, no chimney or fireplaces from original chimney, until a modern chimney and one fireplace was built a few years ago (possibly 1925). The heavy construction however, and panels are tied in, and indicate early eighteenth century addition.

"John Brownson (who left the south part of his home to his son David in 1749, and north half to his son James), was of the Brownson family of two brothers who had lived in that vicinity, having a mill on the hill above since 1650. The boundaries of the land as described in Farmington Land Records, are of 1670-80, as checked from Farmington Land Records".

Purchasers of the house in 1952, coming from 30 Waterville Road, were Mr. and Mrs. William Lewis Camp III, Mrs. Camp being the former Jane Lee Lowry. Their two children are William Lewis IV and Susan Lowry Camp. Mr. Camp is believed to have been Director of Public Relations for Connecticut Mutual, and area representative of Oglethorpe College.

Mr. Camp is known to have been very interested in this house, took a great pride in it, and was very active in restoring some of its original features which had been lost. The writer is very sorry that he failed to make the acquaintance of this house and its owners. He did at one time meet Mrs. McClunie, who lived in one of the Elm Tree Apartments. It is not known that Mr. Camp was related to James K. Camp, former owner and operator of what was later Gay's Store, north of what is now the Corner House. Now retired, Mr. Camp and his family lives in Noank, Connecticut.

This house was sold in June 1971 to Thomas O. Richardson, formerly of 14 Colton Street. As of June 1972 his daughter Heidi was attending Noah Wallace School. One of the Richardson girls is a popular baby sitter in Farmington.

February 1, 1974