Located along the south side of Farmington Avenue, the Alpheus Gordon Porter House stands in a densely populated residential neighborhood comprising other historic dwellings dating from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
This asymmetrical, L shaped, Italianate-style dwelling was erected in 1872. The facade exhibits a single-story, wrap-around, open veranda embellished with beveled posts, cutwork, brackets with pendants and an elaborately turned balustrade. The porch entablature features decorative raised panels set between small paired brackets. The first-story of the two-bay facade displays the original paneled entry door and floor-length double window. Six-over-six sash are featured throughout the rest of the house and the first-floor windows exhibit simple window heads. The wide overhanging eaves are supported by decorative paired brackets. A single-story Italianate-style bay window is featured on the west elevation and an integral two-story ell with exposed basement extends from the rear elevation. Note the Italianate-style barn with cupola.

In 1864 Brothers Alpheus Gordon Porter and Rienzi Dwight Porter purchased the old Langdon Inn along the south side of Farmington Avenue from George, Lucas, and Solomon Richards (FLR 58: 559). Born in Greenville, South Carolina in 1841, Alpheus married Sophia C. Youngs (b.1841) in 1865. At the time of his marriage his occupation was listed as a soldier. After the Civil War, Porter engaged in farming. There is little information available about Rienzi except that he died in 1868 and appointed Alpheus the administrator of his estate (FPR 13:460). The early history of this dwelling is obscure and confusing. It appears that Rienzi's portion of the Langdon lot was divided between family members including his brother, Charles G. Porter and his mother, Martha R. Porter. Charles sold his portion of the property to his sister Kate Montague Porter and sister-in-law Sophia C. Porter in 1870 (FLR 59:607). Upon Kate's death in 1872 she willed her interest to her brother Alpheus Porter (FPR 15:83). Their mother sold her portion to Caroline E. Youngs in 1873 (FLR 64:64). The only indication that the house was constructed in 1872 is in a lien (62:214). The house was mortgaged twice in 1877 to Hannah Youngs and Corydon Whittelsey (FLR 61:540, 517). Four years later Whittelsey received the property through two quit-claim deeds (FLR 62:447; 64:340). One month later he sold it to Dr. Edwin M. Ripley (FLR 65:263). Ripley married Helen E. Elton (1859-1929) of Burlington, Connecticut and they raised two sons: Edwin Elton and Herbert Jones. In 1925 Ripley sold his practice to Dr. John R. Lee and retired. The house remained in the family until 1934. This well-preserved dwelling is one of Unionville's finest examples of Italianate-style architecture. The house

derives historical significance from its association with the Porter family and Dr. Edwin M. Ripley, one of the village's most prominent citizens in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
The town assessor's record states that this house was built in 1855, but there is no proof of this; it is difficult to trace the house back beyond 1873. The author believes that this house was built on part of a larger piece of property once known as the "Langdon Lot." This feeling is based on a record at Town Hall showing a lien to A. Gordon Porter for materials purchased in the construction of a house in 1872 (62-214). What is certain is that the house was owned jointly in 1873 by Carrie Youngs, Sophia Youngs Porter, and Sophia's husband A. Gordon Porter. They mortgaged it twice in that year, once to Hannah Youngs (61-540) and once to Corydon Whittlesey of Saybrook (61-517). Four years later, Whittlesey acquired the property through two quit-claim transactions (62-447; 64-340); but he probably never lived here. One month after acquiring a clear title, he sold the "55 rods of land plus buildings" to Dr. Edwin M. Ripley (65-263).
Dr. Ripley graduated from the Eclectic College of New York in 1871; he formed a partnership with Dr. Albert Fox in Pawling, N.Y. for a year, then practiced alone in South Dover, N.Y. for four years. In 1876 he came to Unionville; a factor in his decision to practice here may have been that his wife, Helen Elton Ripley, came from Burlington. He maintained an office over George Burnett's store on South Main Street for 53 years. He served as medical examiner for the town and was politically active - elected to the General Assembly in 1889, nominated for Governor by the People's Party in 1892, and nominated as the Democratic candidate for State Comptroller in 1896. Dr. Ripley was a direct descendant of Governor William Bradford of Massachusetts. He was also very active in the Masonic Lodge. On November 5, 1925 he retired and sold his practice to Dr. John R. Lee, reserving "the right to attend Mrs. Elizabeth Sage and her sister Miss Mary Pinney" (83-388). Dr. and Mrs. Ripley lived in this house for 57 years. A biography of Dr. Ripley appears in "Commemorative Biographical Record of Hartford County", p. 938. The accompanying photograph is copied and included here.
Architecture - The exterior of this Victorian home remains virtually unchanged. Inside, originally the kitchen was located on the first floor, the living area was on the second floor, and the third floor became Dr. Ripley's library, where he played cards with his friends. The house contains several decorative mantles, oak woodwork, and oak bookcases. Today it is divided into three apartments.

Genealogy

Alpheus Gordon Porter: b. 1841 in Greensville, S.Car.; m. Sophia C. Youngs 3-21-1865; d. ---
Sophia Youngs Porter: b. 1841; d. ---

Henry Montague - b. 5-20-1866
Carrie Emma - b. 6-26-1868

Edwin M. Ripley: b. 7-31-1847 in Pleasant Valley; m. Helen Elton 2-10-1870; d. ---
Helen Elton Ripley: b. 5-1-1851 in Burlington, daughter of Romeo & Emeline Belden Elton; d. 11-20-1929

Elton - b. ---
Herbert - b. 1875; m. E. Grace Brooks 6-19-1903