Standing on a large lot bordered to the west by the Farmington River, the Frederick F. Hurlbert House faces east onto Garden Street. The surrounding neighborhood contains a number of early to late nineteenth-century dwellings erected when the village was developing as a prosperous residential community. Farmington's Historic District lies directly to the east.
Capped with a ridge-to-street gable roof, this nineteenth-century vernacular-style dwelling features characteristics of the Italianate style. Note the small, decorative paired brackets found on the facade. The porch, which has been enclosed, once exhibited turned columns and scroll-sawn brackets. The second floor features gable-roofed wall dormers with one-over-one sash. Two-over-two sash are displayed throughout the rest of the building. Additions include the rear two-story ell and modern exterior chimney on the north elevation.

This house was built in 1878 by Frederick Fuller Hurlbert on land he purchased in that same year from Richard and Elizabeth Connell (FLR 65:349). A carpenter by trade, Hurlbert (1851-1936) was the son of Lyman and Caroline (Gillette) Hurlbert of Farmington. It is reputed that he built a number of Farmington homes in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, including 47 Garden Street, 164 Garden, and 30 Colton streets. In 1877 he married Mary Gallagher (b. 1858), who died shortly after their marriage. A year later in 1878 he married Ellen Louise Tillotson (1855-1906), daughter of John Tillotson of Farmington. They raised three sons; Henry Wesley (1879-1918), Frederick Walter (1881-1932), and Louis Raymond (1887-1909). Their son, Frederick W. Hurlbert operated a small blacksmith shop along Garden Street, directly south of his father's home. Shortly after his second wife's death in 1906, Hurlbert married Mrs. Ida M. Lake (b. 1864). Five years later in 1911 he married again. His fourth wife was Mabel (Spencer) Fitzpatrick (1885-1975), a widow from Bristol. She was the daughter of Edwin and Lucy (Conzelman) Spencer of Bristol. Hurlbert adopted Mabel's two sons from her previous marriage; Charles William and Wilson Spencer. From 1921 to 1926, Mabel Hurlbert was employed as a writer/reporter for the Hartford Times. In 1926 she was elected Town Clerk, a post she held for seventeen years. After leaving her post, Mrs. Hurlbert continued to do historical research and frequently wrote articles for the Farmington Valley Herald. She was also known as a noted local historian, publishing such works as "Farmington Town Clerks and Their Times" and "Farmington Church and Town". (see cont. pg.)


Photographer: Alex Paredes
View: NW
Date: 8/85
Negative on File: 1:28

Compiled by: Elizabeth R. Hart
Organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
Address: 27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT

Threats to Building or Site
- None known
- Highways
- Vandalism
- Developers
- Other
- Renovation
- Private
- Deterioration
- Zoning
- Explanation
She also served as historian of the First Church of Christ, Congregational and helped found the Farmington Historical Society. In 1935 Frederick sold the house to his wife (FLR 87:243); and she later sold it to her son, W. Spencer Hurlbert in 1974 (FLR 230:485). The house was sold to its present owners in 1975 (FLR 239:456).

Although some alterations have been made to the house, it remains a good example of a late nineteenth-century vernacular architecture. The house derives historical significance for its association with the Hurlbert family.
OWNER'S NAME: HURLBURT, MABEL S.

ADDRESS: 54 Garden Street

DATE BUILT: 1878 FOR: F.F. Hurlburt

ARCHITECT
MASTER-BUILDER: F.F. Hurlburt

FORMER OWNERS: Mabel S. Hurlburt by deed from F.F. Hurlburt 3/27/1935,
Vol. 87, p. 243.
Land purchased from R.&E. O'Connell 10/21/1878.

54 Garden Street

This house is pictured on page 111 of the Farmington Book as the residence of F. F. Hurlburt, its builder in 1878.

Frederick Fuller Hurlburt, carpenter and house builder, had been born in 1851, the son of Lyman Hurlburt and Caroline Gillette. Lyman Hurlburt owned the house which formerly stood on High Street. See photo on page 158 of the Farmington Book. It was designated in 1906 as the home of George Hurlburt, son of Lyman, and brother of Frederick.

Frederick F. Hurlburt purchased this land on Garden Street in 1878 from Elizabeth and Richard O'Connell. In that same year he married Ellen Louise Tillotson, and built this house which was to be their home.

Ellen Tillotson, 1856-1906, was the daughter of John Tillotson of Waterville Road, whose house is pictured in the Farmington Book on page 61. Earlier background on the Tillotson family may be found in the account of Walnut Grove Farm, the residence of John Tillotson's ancestors. Named as Ellen in the Tillotson Genealogy, Mrs. Hurlburt was perhaps better known as Ella, as indicated on the Hurlburt gravestone. Information on that same stone indicates three children of this marriage, namely:

- Henry Wesley Hurlburt 1879-1918
- Frederick Walter Hurlburt 1881-1932
- Louis Raymond Hurlburt 1887-1909

Mrs. Hurlburt died in February 1906.

Frederick Walter Hurlburt operated the blacksmith shop shown also on page 111 of the Farmington Book, and very clearly indicated as his by the sign over the door. This stood just a short way south of his father's house. Frederick W. was married in 1903 to Emma Tew, daughter of Alfred D. Tew and Anna Williams of the house which formerly stood near the sidewalk and was later numbered 20 Garden Street, also pictured on page 111. There are reports that the Fred W. Hurlburts moved to Manchester with their daughter Grace, after closing up the blacksmith shop. The latter is said to have been moved a short way down the street, and "is now a nice small house".

Some years after the death of his wife Frederick Fuller Hurlburt married the present Mabel S. Hurlburt, who was widowed by his death in 1936. She is the daughter of Edwin Wilson Spencer and Lucy C. Conzelman. Edwin Spencer was a clockmaker in Bristol. Mrs. Hurlburt's two sons by a previous marriage, Charles William and Wilson Spencer Fitzpatrick, were adopted by Mr. Hurlburt and given his name. Charles has been deceased for some years. Wilson Spencer Hurlburt, better known to his friends as "Spen", is now Town Clerk, having succeeded his mother in 1943, and is also Judge of Probate for the Town of Farmington. He and his wife own and occupy the house at 30 Colton Street.

June 3, 1973
Fred Hurlburt served as constable at President "Teddy" Roosevelt's visit to Farmington on October 22, 1901.

Mrs. Hurlburt tells on page 104 of "Town Clerks", of the Hurlburt migration to the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania, a migration which had started in 1760, and was continued by settlers for several years. She says, written in 1943:

"The family of Deacon John Hurlburt, on their way to their FortyFort home, missed the massacre (of July 3, 1778) by two days, having been delayed by the death of one of their children. Deacon Hurlburt, and ancestor of Frederick F. Hurlburt of Farmington, bought eight hundred acres running from the banks of the Susquehanna River up into the hills where his family lived for three generations. He was buried in his own orchard there, but now the only vestige of the great farm is the green house-lot in front of great piles of coal slag rising hundreds of feet above the spot where the orchard stood".

Mrs. Hurlburt tells on page 309 of her own first acquaintance with the town of Farmington in these words:

"When I was very young, we lived on Federal Hill in Bristol, and one of our favorite Sunday afternoon walks was to the end of Woodland Street and into the woods. After many adventures there, we always came to the edge of the Hill and looked out to the northeast, toward Farmington. There we played the game of trying to be the first to see the spire of the Farmington Congregational Church. Sometimes father would win, and sometimes, I suspect, he let me win. Then he would tell me again about the church and town. I always wanted to hear more and I learned then, as so many others have, even before I had seen the town where my roots were very deep, to love its traditions and partly understand why Farmington stands apart".

Mrs. Hurlburt, after her younger boy was well into high school, became a feature writer for the Hartford Times, and served as such from 1921 until 1926. In that latter year she became town clerk, the twenty-third, and served the town in that post until 1943.

Mrs. Hurlburt's interest in Farmington and in its history has never flagged.

In 1943 she published the book "Farmington Town Clerks and Their Times", which covers the history of Farmington as portrayed by town records, from its incorporation in 1645 until the date of 1940, as stated on the title page. It also includes much other information. It is a "must" for any student of Farmington history, and it has been a "bible" for the writer of this account.

In 1967 she published "Farmington, Church and Town", based on church records, containing information on thirteen ministers and their regimes, from 1645 until 1937.

Mrs. Hurlburt does her writing at home, in the house which her late husband had deeded to her prior to his death. She loves and reveres that house, which has its 95th birthday this year. The only alterations she has made to it are minor, to make the upstairs space more usable for her as a working area.

June 3, 1973
Another great work, not published, but the results of which are in the Village Library, was the compilation of title searches of all houses which stood in the Farmington section of the town in 1952. From these records a card file was made up at the instigation of Mrs. Wilmarth Lewis. This has been an invaluable aid to researchers since 1952. In 1971 Mrs. Hurlburt released her notes, which were the basis for the card file, and those notes are now available for reference in the Farmington Room. It was the existence of this card file which made possible the work done by this writer.

Mrs. Hurlburt also, at the request of the Colonial Dames Society, made up special reports on thirty-eight of the older houses of Farmington. In pamphlet form these are part of a total of fifty-two such pamphlets which are on file in the genealogical vaults of the Connecticut State Library on Capitol Avenue in Hartford.

Mrs. Hurlburt was chosen to receive in 1965 the Farmington Exchange Club’s "Book of Golden Deeds" award.

She is still active in research, has articles published frequently in the Farmington Valley Herald, and an especially interesting one was published on January 4, 1973. In it she presented proof of the fact that George Washington had slept in Farmington, and located the house in which he stayed, the one which had stood across Main Street from #101, and which had been built by very early settler John Wadsworth. The night was of September 22, 1780.

As far as the writer can ascertain, Mrs. Hurlburt is the tenth in the sequence of dates, of Farmington historians, but certainly first in the volume of data produced. In sequence of dates these historians are:

- Martin Bull, who gathered much material,
- Governor Treadwell, who wrote up that material,
- Noah Porter, Jr., who spoke at 200th anniversary,
- Rev. Noah Porter, at his own 50th anniversary,
- Julius Gay, whose lectures are in "Farmington Papers",
- Arthur Brandegee, editor of the Farmington Book,
- Richard Bissell, who re-organized it in 1927,
- Rev. Quincy Blakely, who wrote "Farmington, One of the Mother Towns of Connecticut",
- Lydia Hewes, who wrote "A Short History of Farmington",
- Mabel Spencer Hurlburt.

Mrs. Hurlburt discussed the matter of Farmington historians, starting the discussion on page 207 of "Town Clerks", telling of these historians in more detail.

June 3, 1973

402.
The writer believes that one more name should be added to the list of historians, and that name is of Deacon, and Captain, Samuel Richards, of whom information may be found in Sketch No. 149, the subject of which is 10 Main Street. He had served throughout the Revolutionary War, and had kept a diary all through the period of his service. Interesting portions of his diary have been edited by one of his descendants and published in booklet form, available in the Village Library. Many years after the war Capt. Richards, at the request of John Hooker, wrote a "Manuscript History" of Farmington, parts of which are quoted on pages 202 through 204 of the Farmington Book. The writer believes that Samuel Richards should be included in the list of Farmington's historians, and if that is done he would become Number Three, following Governor Treadwell, thus making Mrs. Hurlburt Number Eleven.

Reported in "Bookends", the Village Library bulletin, dated June 1974, is the fact that Mrs. Hurlburt made a "generous gift of books on Farmington and Connecticut history from her own fine collection". Further information on this incident is that "She was so brave about parting with the books. They were old and dear friends, and it must have been hard for her".

The library was most appreciative and benefitted greatly from the gift.

September 14, 1974