# Historical Resources Inventory

## Building and Structures

### State of Connecticut

**Connecticut Historical Commission**

59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106

(203) 566-3005

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. <strong>Building Name</strong> (Common)</th>
<th>Porter-Woodford House</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Town City</strong></td>
<td>Farmington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Village</strong></td>
<td>Unionville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County</strong></td>
<td>Hartford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Street and Number</strong> (and or location)</td>
<td>76 Main Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Owner(s)</strong></td>
<td>O'Neill, William F. and Leger, Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Use (Present)</strong></td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vacant</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Accessibility to Public
- Exterior visible from public road: Yes
- Interior accessible: Yes

### Style of Building
- Style: Queen Anne
- Date of Construction: 1869/ ca. 1880

### Materials
- Clapboard: Yes
- Asbestos Siding: No
- Brick: No
- Other: None
- Wood Shingle: Yes
- Asphalt Siding: No
- Fieldstone: No
- Cobblestone: No
- Board & Batten: No
- Stucco: No
- Concrete Siding: No
- Cut stone Type: No

### Structural System
- Wood Frame: Yes
- Post and beam: No
- Balloon: Yes
- Balloon and beam: No
- Load bearing masonry: No
- Structural iron or steel: No

### Roof (Type)
- Gable: Yes
- Flat: No
- Mansard: No
- Monitor: No
- Sawtooth: No
- Gambrel: No
- Shed: No
- Hip: No
- Round: No
- Other: No

### Number of Stories
- 2½

### Condition (Interior)
- Excellent: No
- Good: No
- Fair: No
- Deteriorated: Yes

### Integrity
- On original site: No
- Moved: Yes
- When: Yes
- Other: No

### Related Outbuildings or Landscape Features
- Barn: No
- Shed: Yes
- Garage: Yes
- Other landscape features or buildings: No
- Carriage house: No
- Shop: No
- Garden: No

### Surrounding Environment
- Open land: Yes
- Woodland: Yes
- Residential: No
- Scattered buildings visible from site: No
- Commercial: No
- Industrial: No
- Rural: Yes
- High building density: No

---

Situated along the northeast side of Main Street in Unionville, the Porter-Woodford House sits on a small, open lot bordered to the rear by a wooded incline. The surrounding neighborhood contains other historic dwellings representing the Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne styles.
This ornate Victorian-period house features Gothic-, Stick-, and Queen Anne-style embellishments. Oriented gable-to-street, the four-bay facade exhibits a full-length, open porch with stickwork and a turned balustrade. The second story displays raised horizontal and vertical bands with varied patterns of wood siding. The gable end is enhanced by a decorative arched window surround, imbricated shingles, and modest vergeboard. The east elevation displays a two-story, cutaway bay window embellished with scroll-sawn brackets, imbricated shingles, and vergeboard. The rear portion of the house, which is smaller in scale and probably the original section of the house, features an ornate cutout vergeboard, more commonly found in the Gothic Revival style.

A portion of this dwelling was built in 1869 by wealthy paper manufacturer, Samuel Quincy Porter, on land he acquired from the Unionville Parsonage Association (FLR 61:193). The rear portion of the house, which exhibits Carpenter Gothic-style characteristics, is probably the original section. The front portion of the building displays elements of the later Stick and Queen Anne styles and probably dates from the late 1870s or early 1880s. Porter, who was a partner in the successful firm of Platner and Porter Paper Company, lived at 63 Main Street in Unionville and presumably rented this house to factory employees. A mortgage, dated August 6, 1869, to the Farmington Savings Bank, confirms the building date of the earliest portion. In 1881 retired farmer and merchant, Corydon Woodford (1810/11-1883) purchased the property for $3000 (FLR 65:524). He died two years later and willed his wife, the former Sylvia Woodruff, "use and control during her life of the house now occupied by us with lot and barn adjoining in Unionville" (FPR 17:192). Mrs. Woodford died in 1890 and the property passed to her two sons, Matthew and William Wesley Woodford. In 1891 Mrs. Sophia Sauer bought the house (FLR 68:597; 70:319). At the time of the sale, the house rented to Frederick Peck until April 1, 1892, at $10 per month. Mrs. Sauer was the wife of Lawrence Sauer, a German immigrant, who owned and operated a successful meat market in Unionville. Timothy F. O'Leary, a native of Ireland, acquired the house in 1923 (FLR 80:389). Mr. O'Leary, who formerly was a conductor for the trolley company, is said to have operated a local bar and grill. The property remained in the O'Leary family until 1976. (see cont. p.12)

Although the building has been vacant for the last few years, it is currently undergoing renovation. Architecturally this building is significant as one of Unionville's most ornate Queen Anne-style buildings. Historically the property is notable for its association with early Unionville manufacturing.
In June 1869 the Unionville Parsonage Association sold ¼ acre plus a barn to Samuel Q. Porter; the property had previously been part of the parsonage lot at 70 Main Street. Two months later, August 1869, S.Q. Porter mortgaged the property to the Farmington Savings Bank, with the description reading "...with the dwelling house and horse barn thereon..." (63-47). So this house was built in 1869. S.Q. Porter probably did not live here; his home was at 63 Main Street, and he didn't sell that when he bought this. He owned several pieces of property in downtown Unionville. It would seem reasonable to assume that he rented this house, but to whom is not known.
In 1861 S.Q. Porter sold the house to Corydon Woodford; he had grown up in West Avon, was a farmer, had stores in Collinsville and Avon for 25 years, was postmaster of West Avon for 15 years, and was about 70 years old when he bought this house. See p. 239, "Commemorative Biographical Record of Hartford County", for a biography of his son Matthew Woodford. Corydon Woodford owned the "Tillotson farm" in West Avon and was probably a wealthy man. One can guess that he came to live in Unionville because both of his sons, Matthew and Wesley, lived here. The Woodford family is mentioned in Pepper's history of Unionville; he discusses their home on Huckleberry Hill, Woodford's hill in West Avon, and the Tillotson farm at Cherry Park. At one point Corydon is erroneously referred to as Gordon (Reference: Hurlburt, "Town Clerks and their Times", p. 326-328). Corydon Woodford was a stockholder in the Union Cabinet Company, when it was incorporated in 1873; in 1874 he became President of the company for just a year. He and his family sold their holdings in 1876.

Corydon Woodford only lived here for about two years, because in 1883 he died. His will stipulated that the house should become his wife's property for the rest of her life, then pass to his two sons, Matthew and Wesley. His wife Sylvia lived here until he death in 1890.

In October 1891 the house was sold to Sophia Sauer, the wife of Laurence Sauer, who had a meat market in Unionville (68-597, 70-319). The first of these two deeds says that the house "is rented to Frederick A. Peck until the first of April next for the sum of ten dollars per month". A biography of Laurence Sauer, in "Commemorative Biographical Record of Hartford County", p. 1469, is copied and included here. There is one minor, but interesting, town record with Laurence Sauer's name on it - a purchase by him of a cash register for his market, bought for $150 from the National Cash Register Co. in December 1902 (73-438). Mrs. Sauer owned this house until 1923, when she sold it to Timothy F. O'Leary.

L. SAUER, a well-known business man of Unionville, and the present efficient treasurer of the town of Farmington, was born in Bavaria, Germany, Nov. 18, 1857. His parents, Joseph and Barbara (Koeniger) Sauer, and also his grandparents, Joseph and Kathrina Sauer, spent their entire lives in Bavaria. There our subject acquired a good education in his native tongue, and at the age of sixteen years commenced learning the butcher business in Wurzburg, serving an apprenticeship of a year and a half, and paying $60 for the privilege of learning.

Before he attained the age of eighteen Mr. Sauer came to the United States and located in New Haven, where he worked in a meat market for seven years. It was in 1882 that he came to Unionville, where he was in the employ of J. A. Merriman for six years, but for over eleven years he has engaged in the meat business on his own account with good success, having built up quite a profitable trade. His prosperity is due entirely to his industry, perseverance and well-directed efforts, for he began life here empty-handed, a stranger in a strange land, and unfamiliar with the English language.

In New Haven, Mr. Sauer was united in marriage with Miss Sophia Rexroth, a native of Canton, Conn., and to them have been born three children: Leonora, Nettie Ray and Eva Elizabeth. In the fall of 1888 Mr. Sauer was elected treasurer of Farmington on the Democratic ticket, and is now acceptably filling that office. Socially he is a member of Evening Star Lodge, No. 101, F. & A. M., of Unionville; Phoenix Lodge, No. 52, I. O. O. F., of New Britain; Agenda Lodge, No. 31, K. T.; and of the I. O. R. M.
Timothy Francis O'Leary had been born in Ireland in 1870 and had come to the United States about 1890. At one time he was a conductor for the trolley company; later he became the proprietor of a tavern and grille. He was the father of four sons - Daniel, John, Timothy A., and William. In March 1940 Timothy F. O'Leary died intestate; when his estate was settled in 1943 (P43-562), ownership of this property was distributed one-third to Daniel, one-third to William, and one-ninth each to Noreen, Patricia Anne, and Edward, the three children of Timothy A. O'Leary. The year 1940 had been a tragedy for the O'Leary family; in addition to the loss of Timothy F., both Timothy A. and his wife Marjorie died, leaving their three young children parentless. A woman named Lena Quigley became their guardian for awhile; then their uncles Daniel and John assumed guardianship. John O'Leary's family lived in this house, and perhaps some more of the O'Learys as well. In 1954 William acquired a clear title to the property; he then quit-claimed a half interest to John. After John's death in 1975, his half passed to his widow Ella; she and William sold it to the Ryans in 1976.

Genealogy

Corydon Woodford: b. 1810/11 in Avon, son of John & Belinda Woodford; d. 1883
Sylvia Woodruff Woodford: b. 1815/16 in Avon; d. 1-20-1890
   children: Matthew, b. 8-5-1837; see 87 Main Street
   William Wesley, b. ??

Laurence Sauer: b. 11-18-1858 in Bavaria, Germany; d. 8-22-1919
Sophia Rexroth Sauer: b. ? in Canton; d. ?
   children: Leonora, b. 6-24-1884
            Nettie Rae, b. 2-27-1899
            Eva Elizabeth, b. 10-13-1890, m. Albert Griswold

Timothy Francis O'Leary: b. 4-30-1870 in Ireland, son of Daniel & Ellen Coughlan O'Leary; d. 3-3-1940
Ellen Costello O'Leary: b. 9-20-1871 in Lakeville, Conn., dau of John & Bridget Monahan Costello; d. 5-21-1937
   children: Daniel F., b. ?
             John J., see below
             Timothy A., see below
             William H., b. 1905/6
Genealogy (cont.)

John J. O'Leary: b. 3-12-1897; d. 11-23-1975
Ella Yahne O'Leary: b. 5-31-1908, d. 6-14-1979

children: John J., Jr.
  Barbara Ellen
  Marjorie Ann

Timothy A. O'Leary: b. 12-28-1898, d. 2-23-1940
Marjorie Curran O'Leary: b. 11-28-1902, d. 4-16-1940

children: Noreen
  Patricia Anne
  Edward Curran