The Andrus Building sits in a densely populated area of Farmington's commercial district. It is bounded on the east and north by Parsons Motors. To the west and south are buildings of commercial use. A small driveway exists on the west side of the building.
The Andrus Store has undergone some alterations since its construction which could date around 1880. Sometime after 1950 a lean to was added to the east elevation and the exterior was shingled. More recently a modern picture window has been added to the front facade. However, the original storefront and six-over-six sash still exist. A relatively plain building, its two-bay facade exhibits shutters and a small square attic window.

In 1822 Erastus Porter, Rebecca Seymour, Samuel Dickinson, and John and Anna Street sold one-half interest in the real estate of Cyrus Curtiss, deceased, to Frederick Andrus for $150 (FLR 44:3). The property was bounded by Main Street (Farmington Avenue) on the south, the property of John North, Jr. on the west, the property of Andrus on the north, and the property of Elisha Lewis and the highway on the east. Little is known about Andrus except that he died in 1846 and the property was sold (name of grantee not recorded). By 1888 it was quit-claimed to Royal and Juliette (Fuller) Andrus (FLR 69:97). A laborer, Royal Andrus was born in 1808 and married Juliette Fuller (1819–1903) in 1840. They raised two sons: Charles E. (b. 1847) and Frederick Pierce (b. 1856). (The name of the second son suggests that Royal Andrus may have been the son or a close relative to Frederick Andrus). In 1896 Juliette Andrus sold a two-acre parcel of "land with buildings" to Frederick P. Swanston (FLR 71:223). This deed and the aforementioned suggests that the Andruses owned a building on the site by 1888, probably this present one. Swanston mortgaged the property through Juliette Andrus (FLR 71:224) for $2500 and later through her son Charles E. Andrus (FLR 72:212). After Swanston's death in 1937, it changed owners several times.

This building is historically significant due to its association with the Andrus family for more than 100 years. Its original commercial function, however, is unknown.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner's Name</td>
<td>TAFT, FRANCES SWANSTON SPERRY, RAYMON A. et ux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>768 Farmington Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Built</td>
<td>ca. 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For</td>
<td>Frederick P. Swanston (inf. W.J. Griswold)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>Frederick P. Swanston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master-Builder</td>
<td>Frederick P. Swanston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Owners</td>
<td>Frances S. Taft from Est. of her father, Frederick P. Swanston 11/10/1939, Vol. 92, p. 553.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>&quot;Farmington, Conn., 1906&quot;, p. 152</td>
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The Frederick P. Swanston House
Farmington Avenue just east of present #768

This house is pictured in the Farmington Book in the center of page 9, as the Frederick Andrus Place - Residence of Emma J. Andrus. It also appears in all three photos on page 152. It has been written up for the Colonial Dames Society in two separate pamphlets, once as the Orton House, and once as the F. P. Swanston House. Baker and Tilden's Atlas of 1869 gives it no name, but shows the house next north of it with the name. R. Andrews, which could also apply to this one.

Regarding the date of construction two dates are mentioned, 1670 and 1688, but the writer favors 1670.

Joseph Bird was probably the first owner of the property. Mrs. Hurlburt says in "Town Clerks", page 356: "Joseph Bird lived in 1666 on the east side of Hartford Road at the end of High Street where the large yellow house belonging to Mrs. Mary Barney Carey now stands. He was made a freeman on the same day as his brother James in 1657. He sold the land on the opposite corner to Thomas Orton. Joseph Bird died in 1695".

Thomas Orton, who was a very early settler here, had his homestead about where 47 Main Street now stands. He had settled first in Windsor, but had come to Farmington very soon after. Regarding the site of the house we are presently discussing, Mrs. Hurlburt, on page 369 of "Town Clerks", speaks as follows: "Thomas Orton also recorded in 1656 five acres with a tenement thereon bought of Joseph Bird. He later built a house there. This Orton house was lined with brick, probably brought from England as ballast, and in 1704 was one of the houses ordered fortified against the Indians".

The property was described in 1688 by deed of Thomas Orton to his son John Orton as; bounded on the north by John Norton, on the east by the highway and John Woodruff, on the south by the highway, on the west by William Judd.

We do not have the sequence of ownership following this, but the following names may be connected with it: Ensign Samuel Newell, Margaret Thomson Orton, Solomon Thomson, Zebulon Woodruff, and his wife Sarah.

Julius Gay makes the following definite statement on page 10 of the Farmington Book: "The old house next west, in 1752 the residence of Samuel Curtis, became thereafter the home of his son Solomon until he died in the army in 1776. In 1822, his heirs sold it to Frederick Andrus".

This was ten years later than Mr. Andrus's purchase of the house next east of here, the old library. He probably used what was later the old library, as his shop, and used the one purchased in 1822 as his residence. He later added to the second one the wing extending February 9, 1971
to the rear, to house his parents. This may be a good place to transcribe the Andrews Genealogy (or Andrus as called sometimes), to show the family lineage to this point. This will be shown in the following seven paragraphs.

John Andrews, the settler, birthdate unknown, married Mary, family name unknown, and lived until 1681. Mrs. Hurlburt states of him, in "Town Clerks" on page 356: "John Andrews an original proprietor and settler, lived about where the Farmington Savings Bank and the house of Miss Florence Gay now stand. (These are now numbers 32 and 36 Main Street). He was made a freeman of the colony May 20, 1658. He later purchased the land two miles up Waterville Road and his descendants have owned it until very recently".

Benjamin Andrews, his son, 1659-1727, married three times, but his first wife, Mary Smith, was mother of all his children.

John Andrews, son of Benjamin, born 1685, married Elizabeth Orvice of Southington, and lived in Southington. They had ten children.

John's son, David Andrews, 1723-1762, married Mary Wilcox, who died in 1745, later married Mary Miles. He was a lieutenant in the army, in Captain Patterson's Company, 1st Regiment, of General Israel Putnam. He was in the war against the French and was later in the taking of Havana, where he caught yellow fever. He died in New York City on his way home in 1762.

Theodore Andrews, 1751-1823, his son, later married Susannah Thompson, daughter of Solomon Thompson and Susannah Gridely, was only eleven when his father died. He was in 1767 placed under the guardianship of Joseph Porter of Farmington, who put him to learn the weaver's trade under Thomas Smith, also of Farmington. He followed this trade, served in the Revolutionary War, and died in the home of his son Frederick, opposite the Whitman Tavern. It was this son, the only one of his sons to stay in Farmington, who purchased this house in 1822.

Frederick Andrus, 1774-1845, referred to by Julius Gay as "Boss Andrus", was married in 1794 to Sally Barnes, who was mother of all his children. After her death he was married in 1833 to the widow Sarah Fuller, the former Sarah Case of Canton. He was a tanner and shoemaker, a man of kindness, and generosity. He added a wing to his house for his parents (see previous paragraph). Afterward he used this wing for a shoe shop, in addition to the house next east, used for the same purpose. One of his daughters, Sarah, born in 1814, married David Alvord of Winsted, later a wagon maker of Winchester. Still later they moved to Austinburg, Ohio, home of Giles Hooker Cowles, who was born in what is now 185 Main Street. Another daughter, Hannah, married Hezekiah Johnson of Farmington, a shoemaker who had learned his trade from her father. Frederick's widow, Sarah, inherited at the death of her husband, taking title in 1846.

Royal Andrews, 1809-1890, Frederick's son, married in 1840 Miss Juliette Fuller, daughter of his stepmother, and they too lived in this house, which he inherited from his stepmother. He was a farmer, and was a fifer for the Putnam Phalanx for between 40 and 50 years. See his photo on page 84. His daughter Frances Elizabeth, 1844-1878, married Robert Swanston in 1864. Another daughter, Emma Jane, born in 1846, never married, continued living in this house with her mother.

February 9, 1971
Mrs. Hurlburt once stated that in April, 1949, she visited in Canton one Mrs. Estella Woodford, aged 94 at that time, who recounted that as a young woman she took her mother-in-law, Mrs. Edward Woodford, formerly Julia Case, to visit Mrs. Royal Andrews in this house. She may have been an aunt, or perhaps a cousin, of Mrs. Andrews’ mother.

Mr. and Mrs. Timothy McCarthy, newly married, came from Windsor in 1880 and lived for a time in a couple of rooms which they rented from Royal Andrews. The McCarthys moved to Main Street and later to Garden Street, and more will be told of them in relation to the house at 53 Garden Street which was built as their residence.

It is believed that Robert Swanston who married Royal Andrews’ daughter, was of New Britain, and perhaps never lived in Farmington, at least as a landowner. Their son Frederick was only eight years of age when his mother died. He was taken in by his grandmother, Mrs. Royal Andrews, to live in this house. His father re-married, and lived thereafter in New Britain, visiting only occasionally in Farmington.

One of Fred’s boyhood friends was Russell Lee Jones, who lived in what is now the home of Austin D. Barney, from 1876 until 1890, writes of some of their activities, one of which was trap shooting from the top of the gristmill dam. He says “instead of clay pigeons we used clam shells and glass bottles and took turns standing on the dam, while the other would skim a clamsheel up from below when the shooter called ‘pull’. The shooter would never know whether the target was to be a clam shell or a bottle. On one occasion when we had planned to have a shoot after a bird stew, Fred brought a basket of ink bottles, some of which still contained ink, and which he confided to me he had obtained from the North District Schoolhouse. These bottles were a great innovation and added to the sport, as when thrown into the clear skyline the ink would make a beautiful pattern and there was no question as to the target’s being hit.”

Frederick Pierce Swanston, 1870-1937, married Harriet Woodford Hart, 1868-1937, daughter of Truman Woodford Hart and Mary Jane Woodford, in 1894, and they lived the first two years here in his grandmother’s house, his grandfather Royal Andrews, having died in 1890. In 1896 Mr. Swanston purchased from his grandmother the house next east, which had been in the Andrews family since 1812, and used from 1882 until 1890 as the library. He remodeled the house somewhat, adding the square portion to the rear at that time. Their first child, Josephine Marie, was born in Avon, the home of Mrs. Swanston’s parents. Their next two children, Frances Gertrude, and Harriet Julia, were born in their own home.

Mr. Swanston in 1900 built the store building next west of his grandmother’s house, and started a plumbing business there. (Note: this building still stands, at 768 Farmington Avenue, presently housing the Zarick Gallery).

Mrs. Juliette Andrews continued living in her home until her death in 1903, and it is believed that her sister, Emma Jane, who lived with her, lived until 1905.

February 9, 1971
Mr. Swanston inherited this house after the death of his grandmother and his aunt, and soon thereafter moved his family from the old library building to the house in which he had grown up. In late 1915 or possibly 1916, he remodeled and modernized it extensively, removing entirely the old front section, and enlarging the rear section which his great-grandfather Frederick Andrus had added to the house.

A letter written by Julius Gay in 1915 describes the house just before it was renovated and the front section removed. He says "The oldest house in town is owned -- and some rooms occupied -- by F. P. Swanston, and is on the line of the trolley about four houses before you reach the Elm Tree Inn. You will recognize it by the falling off of the clapboards which reveals the brickwork referred to in a vote passed by the town on March 31, 1704, Vol. 1, p. 99, regarding seven houses to be fortified".

Ada Louise Taylor, of 90 Washington Street, Hartford, who wrote up the report on the house for the Colonial Dames Society, visited the house in 1915 with Miss Mary K. Talcott, in preparation for writing the report. Photos taken then show the older section still there, and a well near the northeast corner of the rear section.

Asked to tell something of the early life of the Swanston girls, and something of their father, Mrs. Orvis G. Taft, formerly Frances Swanston, wrote the following:

"My father was a very civic minded man -- and loved Farmington. I well remember the year that he instigated a very successful 'safe and sane' Fourth of July -- for the town parade and all. My sisters and I had a very happy childhood, and the process of growing up was not as complicated as it is now. My grandmother and grandfather Hart lived right across our driveway and we spent many happy hours with them.

"Dad had what we called a dancing school, which was in the second floor of the Hurlburt Building. The young people came once or twice a week and would dance the waltz and the two-step and some of the square dances. The music was furnished by a phonograph.

"My father thought he should provide summer employment for his daughters, so he ran an ice cream parlor summers. At first this was in the Hurlburt Building, then later it was in the front of Dad's store. This was during my high school days. My Mother made home baked cakes and pies. At first she did this herself, but as we grew older we helped. My sisters and I waited on tables in the ice cream parlor. The ice cream was made in Unionville, the name was Hackney's Ice Cream and I have never since eaten any to compare with it.

Most of our activities while growing up centered around church and school. Our family were all members of the Farmington Grange -- we attended many dances sponsored by the Grange. At one time Mrs. Fred Scott put on a Mother Goose show which both my sisters and I participated in. We were the 'pretty maids' in Mary's Garden!"

These were the pre-World War I days, remembered by those of us who are in our seventies as "the good old days", and we tend to think that in spite of the progress since then, that these old days were in many ways better than the present.

Mr. Swanston, who had built the building at 768 Farmington Avenue in 1900, operated it as a plumbing and heating business, and later included some hardware items, all through his later life, and also included the ice cream parlor business for some years, in the front portion of the lower floor.

He owned, at least for part of the time, four adjacent buildings on this corner. The one farthest east was the old library, his residence from 1896 to 1905. The next one west was what was earlier called the "Andrus House", where he lived from 1905 until his death in 1937. West of this was the store building at #768, which still survives, now housing the Zarick Gallery. West of that is the brick building, formerly Mr. Hurlburt's blacksmith shop, which Mr. Swanston purchased from Mr. Hurlburt's daughter Clara, in 1923. Fire fighting apparatus was kept here for some years, Mr. Swanston ready at all times to answer calls.

Mr. and Mrs. Swanston both died in 1937 and their residence was inherited by their daughter Marie, who took title in 1939 as Marie Parsons.

The property was occupied by various tenants for some years, some were members of the family and some were outsiders.

Occupants from 1942 until 1948 were newly married Granville Smith and his wife, the former Harriet Hunt, and it is believed that their daughter Elizabeth was born during their residence here. In 1948 they purchased the house at 113 Main Street and lived there until 1969 when they moved to the Seattle, Washington, area.

Paul Parsons and Roberta Parsons, son and daughter of Marie Swanston Parsons, lived here for short intervals, exact dates not yet known.

The house was razed sometime in the early 1950's when the Parsons Motors business needed more room for expansion. John Christensen saved the mantel from the old fireplace, but has not yet found a place to use it.

The following two pages will tell something of the later lives of Marie Swanston Parsons and of Frances Swanston Taft, two of the Swanston daughters. For more information on their daughter Harriet, see account of 47 Garden Street, where she lived after her marriage to J. Charles Haworth.

The third page following will show something of the Hart family genealogy, from the early settler Deacon Stephen, down through the generations to Harriet Woodford Hart, mother of the three Swanston girls.

February 10, 1971
Frances Gertrude Swanston was married in 1919 to Orvis Griggs Taft, son of George Edward Taft and Harriet Griggs. George E. Taft was of Unionville, a lawyer practicing there, whose wife had been born in Bakersville, Connecticut.

Frances and her husband lived in Unionville after their marriage, but her husband worked with her father in the plumbing business in Farmington, and took it over after the death of Mr. Swanston. Mr. and Mrs. Taft had four children: George, Orvis, Frederick and Mary.

George Edward Taft, born in 1920, died in infancy.

Orvis Griggs Taft, Jr., married to Shirley Willett of Hartford, lives at Dart Street, Hartford. He had worked for a while in the hardware store which was in the building at 768 Farmington Avenue, connected with the Taft plumbing business which succeeded that of Mr. Swanston, but he left that around the mid 1950's, and is presently employed as salesman by the Colonial Hardware Company in West Hartford.

Frederick Swanston Taft, who married Harriet Jane Lodge, daughter of James Garnett Lodge and Hazel May Richard, also worked with his father in the plumbing business at 768 Farmington Avenue. When they were first married they lived in what had been the old North District schoolhouse, just a little northeast of the plumbing shop. He stayed with that business after his father's death, and a while after its sale to Raymond Sperry, but wishing to start his own business, he left there and moved to Unionville, where he has his own shop and still follows the plumbing trade. His wife and her parents had formerly lived in the old home of Mrs. Lodge's parents, at 117 Main Street Farmington. The Fred Tafts have three children:

Frederick James Taft, unmarried, lives at home at 141 Lovely Street in Unionville, and is employed by the J. M. Ney Company in Bloomfield, Connecticut.

Susan, now the wife of Michael Lee McLarney, lives with him in West Hartford, and both are employed by the Aetna Insurance Company of Hartford, and

Elizabeth Ann Taft lives at home and is a Junior at the Farmington High School.

Mary Candace Taft, now Mrs. Edwin J. Doughty, lives with her husband and family at North Kingston, Rhode Island. Her mother makes her home with them, but visits Farmington some three or four times each year if possible.

April 19, 1974
Edwin Justice Doughty, Jr., Mary's husband, was born in Providence, Rhode Island, the son of Edwin Justice and Elsie Ann Doughty. Mary Candace met him on a blind date while she was in nurse's training in Boston. Mr. Daughty had a varied work experience. He started out after high school with two years in the U.S. Navy, then was successively a carpenter, a fisherman and a yacht captain. For the past five years he has been with the Melroe Division of Clark Equipment Company, and is presently District Manager of Sales for his area. The Doughtys have three children, and as of 1971 they were:

Candace Lynn, a freshman at Johnson State College, Johnson, Vermont,

Cynthia Ann, a junior at North Kingston High School, and

Christi Lee, in the 7th grade at Junior High.

Orvis Griggs Taft, Sr., died in Farmington in 1950, and his widow Frances Taft presently resides with her daughter Mary and the Doughty family, in North Kingston, Rhode Island.

Josephine Marie Swanston, later known simply as Marie, was married in 1914 to Robert E. Parsons, who later established Parsons Motors Company. After her parents' deaths she inherited both of the houses in which they had formerly lived, and she and her husband occupied from 1939 until 1949 the one which we have called the old library. In 1949 they sold it to Dr. Bunnell, who moved it across the street to Brick Walk Lane, and Mr. and Mrs. Parsons moved to Waterville Road. Robert E. Parsons held the posts of State Representative, State Senator, and Lieutenant Governor of the State of Connecticut. Mr. and Mrs. Parsons had three children, Roberta, Stanley and Paul.

Roberta Frances was married in 1940 to William Lacey Wells, formerly of 122 Main Street, but they later separated and were divorced. She later married Wallace Williams and they presently live in the former home of her parents on Waterville Road.

Stanley T. Parsons lives also on Waterville Road.

Paul Frederick Parsons lives at Stony Corners, Avon.

Robert E. Parsons died sometime prior to 1970, and his widow died March 6, 1970, at Key Colony Beach, Florida, and was buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Avon.

As mentioned above, the old Frederick P. Swanston house, the subject of this sketch, was razed sometime in the early 1950's in order to make more space for the expansion of Parsons Motors. April 19, 1974