The Charles Frost House sits on the north side of Farmington Avenue. It is bounded to the east by the North-Frost Blacksmith Shop, historically associated with this house. Mature trees surround the house and a driveway runs along its east elevation.
By 1906 this Federal-style building had been altered to exhibit characteristics popular during the Victorian period. A historic photograph shows that the building once featured a rectangular attic vent and a Victorian-period, shed-roofed porch with brackets and turned posts. Today somewhat returned to its original appearance, the house features a heavy pediment in its gable end highlighted by a fanlight. The three-bay facade with modest overhanging eaves exhibits a Federal-style door surround topped with a fanlight and flanked with small pilasters. Note the six-over-six sash, also probably an alteration from its original appearance. A one-story building of an earlier age could be incorporated into the rear section of the house. Also of note is the foundation stone marked "1826".

In 1823 the executor of Adna North's estate, Pomeroy Strong sold two acres with buildings to Charles Frost for $750 (FLR 41:456). Adna North (1785-1822) was a blacksmith and the son of John North, Jr. (1718-1840). His widow Lura (Case) North, however, retained her dower rights until she married her second husband Mark Lewis after Adna's death in 1822. In 1824 Lura sold Charles Frost her deceased husband's blacksmith's shop (FLR 42:360). In 1825 in an unusual circumstance, John North, Lura's father-in-law, and Frost quit-claimed back Lura's dower rights which had been sold earlier. It seems as though they were "joint tenants in common of one certain lot" (FLR 42:518). Lura regained title to a house and barn (776 Farmington Avenue) and Frost, a blacksmith from East Elliott, kept his interest in the shop and its adjoining land. In 1826 as inscribed on a foundation stone, he built this house, sharing the use of Lura North's well. The estate was sold at Frost's death in 1847 to William D. Hurlburt (1841-1916) of New Haven for $3250 (FLR 62:320). A blacksmith like the previous owners, he operated the shop next door to this house. He died in 1916 and his estate passed to his wife Margaret (Fox) (1845-1918) who died shortly thereafter in 1918. She willed all of her real estate to her only child, Clara L. Hurlburt (FPR 31:358). Clara, in turn sold it to Edith L. Beetham in 1925 (FLR 83:215). Since that time the house has belonged to several owners.

Architecturally a good example of the Federal style, the Charles Frost House also has historical associations with the development of Farmington Avenue.


This house is pictured on page 10 of the Farmington Book as the residence of Wm. D. Hurlburt. Baker and Tilden's 1869 Atlas shows it as "Chas. Frost".

As mentioned in the account of 772 Main Street, this land was under the earlier ownership of the same people who owned the property at 776 Main Street, so the reader may refer to that account for early settlers here.

Julius Gay, quoted from page 10 of the Farmington Book, says that this, the then white house adjoining #772, was built soon after 1823 by Charles Frost.

The front foundation of this house has the date 1826 cut into its stone. The rear section, with no cellar, but a cistern under it for storing rain water, appears to be very possibly even older than the house at 776 Farmington Avenue, and a small section of it may have been a smithy. It was originally only one story, as indicated by marks on the chimney. Some of the siding is of 18" boards. The old beams used as floor joists show the extreme age of the older portion.

Could it be possible that this was the smithy of John North? It seems quite possible, as he bought this land in 1806 and had been without his smithy at Main Street and Mountain Road, as far as the writer knows, from the time he had sold that property in 1786.

Charles Frost purchased this property from John North, Jr., or his widow, the library card says, "in 1823 and 1825".

Town records show that Charles Frost was officially the town blacksmith in 1832, and perhaps other years, although the writer has seen only the record for that one year. See more on Mr. Frost in the account of 772 Main Street.

William D. Hurlburt purchased this house in 1875, along with the brick blacksmith shop at 772 Farmington Avenue. Whether he is the Hurlburt pictured on page 207 of the Farmington Book as Burgess is not known, as the Burgess is designated as William L. Hurlburt.

William D. Hurlburt, born 1840, was married to Margaret Fox, born 1844, and they had a daughter Clara Louise Hurlburt, born 1871. Clara Hurlburt was a piano teacher, never married, later became quite deaf. Mr. Hurlburt died in 1916, leaving this property to his wife who lived until 1918, leaving it to her daughter. Clara Hurlburt sold it in 1925 to Edith M. Beatham. It is not known to the writer where she lived from then until her death in 1944.

Mrs. Beatham was the wife of Harry Ney's chauffeur, and she and her husband lived here until they sold to Rebecca Field Jones in 1945.

January 25, 1974

261.
A huge piece of stone was found in the rear of this building, a round flat stone which had been used as a place to lay wagon wheels while they were being fitted with their iron tires by the smith. It had been planned by Mabel Beatham to sell it to the Ford Foundation for their River Rouge Museum, but it was still here on the property when purchased by Mrs. Jones, so it became hers. It is pudding stone, a variety of volcanic stone. The piece from which it was cut encircled a well up on the hill at Mountain Road. It had been brought down from there to the blacksmith shop and a hole cut in its center to receive the hubs of the wagon wheels while they were being fitted with their tires. Mr. Jones cut the stone in two pieces and used them as doorsteps for two of his houses on Norton Lane, the first one being at 1 Norton Lane, and the next one at number 3. Where the original piece of volcanic stone originated is not known.

There is a small room on the basement floor of this house which was originally meant to be an antique shop. The entrance door is flanked by a bow window, and it takes only a glance to see that it exactly duplicates the drawing of a shop entrance which is on the cover of "Ginger and Pickles", a book for children by artist and writer Beatrix Potter. It may be found in the Village Library for verification.

This house has been gradually converted to rental apartments, and there are now three, one down and two up. The former pantry downstairs was converted to a kitchen.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Graeme Smith lived here for a time when first married. Richard S. Klinck is shown in the 1970 and 1972 phone books as resident here.

January 25, 1974