Located at the north end of Farmington’s Historic District, the Dr. Chauncey Brown House stands close to the east side of Main Street. The ancient Steele House sits directly to the rear of the house. Other historic eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth-century dwellings border the parcel.
Oriented gable-to-street, the Dr. Chauncey Brown House exhibits a two-bay facade and fully pedimented gable end. The facade features a Victorian-period wraparound veranda with bracketed turned columns, turned balustrade, and lattice-like base. The multi-paned entry door is set in a modest surround and the six-over-six sash feature louvered shutters. Greek Revival-style characteristics include the corner pilasters and wide entablature beneath the eaves. A two-story ell with modern entry porch extends from the rear elevation.

In March of 1843 Dr. Chauncey Brown purchased the old "Gleason House" along the east side of Main Street from Gad Cowles (FLR 48:376). Shortly thereafter he moved the "Gleason House" a short distance to the east and built this dwelling on the front portion. In January of 1844 Brown mortgaged the property for $1800 to the Society for Savings (FLR 47:384). The Doctor operated his office in the basement of the house. He resided here with his wife, the former Julia M. Strong and two young children. In 1861 the property passed to Ira Bowen through a certificate of foreclosure (FLR 57:182). A year later, Mrs. Emeline D. Porter purchased the house for $3,000 (FLR 58:346). She was the wife of Thomas Lewis Porter, who served as Farmington's town clerk from 1879 to 1895. He also served the town as a representative to the Connecticut General Assembly. The Porters resided here until 1897. The property has been owned by the Balazy family since 1920.

One of the few Greek Revival-style homes found along Farmington's historic Main Street, the Dr. Chauncey Brown House makes a significant contribution to the village's historic character.


Photographer: N. Ainspan
Date: 4/86
View: Negative on file
Name: Elizabeth R. Hart
Date: 1/86
Organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
Address: 27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT

Threats to Building or Site:
- None known
- Highways
- Vandalism
- Developers
- Other
- Renewal
- Private
- Deterioration
- Zoning
- Explanation
### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dr. Chauncey Brown evidently moved the old Gleason house, possibly leaving the "new part now the rear of the Balazy house and built the present house near site of Gleason house... Nevins building about the same time the present Helen K. Deming house. Note similarity of the two houses.

### FORMER OWNERS


### REFERENCES

"Farmington, Conn., 1906", p. 90.
This is the house pictured on page 90 of the Farmington Book as the residence of B. C. Maxwell. It was built in 1843 by Dr. Chauncey Brown on land purchased that same year from Gad Cowles and Samuel Smith Cowles, land on which also stood the old Gleason House, now 23 Main Street. Its use as a house had been discontinued some time prior to this, and it served Dr. Brown as a barn.

Chauncey Brown is mentioned for the first time in Mrs. Hurlburt's "Town Clerks" (without the title of Dr.) as having been appointed a school visitor on November 29, 1833, in place of Henry Farnum who had moved away. He was married on August 10, 1836, to Julia M. Strong, 21 years of age, the daughter of Pomroy Strong and Susan North of Waterville Road. The writer does not know where they lived prior to 1843, but it may have been across the street with the Strong family.

Mrs. Hurlburt mentions his wife, on page 170, in connection with the Mendi Negroes, saying "Mrs. Chauncey Brown took Tamie into her home, answering her many questions, teaching her to lead a civilized life, and missing her after she returned to her own home in Mendiland".

Dr. Brown had his office while they lived there, in the basement, but the office windows cannot now be seen, hidden as they are by the long veranda which was added sometime later. Dr. and Mrs. Brown were good friends of Miss Elizabeth Eels Sheffield, as mentioned in her personal letters, and it is just possible that she may have roomed with them a while during the time that she was a teacher here. She was from New Haven, but returned to Farmington in late 1845 as the wife of Thomas Cowles, and later became the mother of Admiral William Sheffield Cowles.

Records show that title to this property was passed in 1861 to Ira Bowen upon foreclosure of a mortgage. They perhaps moved across the street in 1861, as in 1862 Mrs. Brown became heir to half of the property at 1 Waterville Road, and then also acquired the half interest of her sister Ellen, who had in 1846 married John N. Bartlett.

Dr. and Mrs. Brown had a son Philip Chauncey Brown, born in this house on March 1, 1850, and had a daughter Julia P. Brown, but whether she was born in this house, or when she was born, is not known to the writer.

Ira Bowen sold the property in 1862 to Thomas L. Porter as mentioned in the following account by Mrs. Hurlburt, which is copied from pages 274-5 of "Town Clerks":

"Thomas Lewis Porter was born in Farmington about 1820 and was baptised in 1822. He was the son of Selah and Sophia Cook Porter. His father lived in the ancient Samuel Cowles house, the second on the left on Colton Road. He was a direct descendant of Thomas Porter, tailor, who had lived on Main Street just opposite the intersection of Colton Road and Main Street, and who had married Sarah Hart. Selah and Sophia Cook Porter had two other sons, John Cook Porter who married Mary Root and had a son Thomas, and Timothy Porter, who lived in the old homestead, later burned in the fire of 1864. Selah Porter died in 1847 or 1848. His widow Sophia died May 3, 1865, leaving one half of her estate to Thomas L. Porter and one half to her daughter-in-law, Mary, for the use of her grandson Thomas "who live with me". Mr. Porter married Mrs. Emeline Woodford Deming, widow of Franklin Deming, on December 19, 1859. He gave his age as 39 and she gave her age as 47. Mr. Deming had died March 16, 1856. He had built the house on the Unionville Road, known to later generations as the Montieth place. Mrs. Deming brought some wealth to her husband, from her own family, and also from her marriage.
She was of the Woodford family of Avon. Her brother Franklin built the house on the corner of High Street and Mountain Road where H. H. Whaples now lives. During the Civil War the Porters adopted a daughter, not only to fill the vacancy of no children of their own, but in order that her father might enlist to fill the quota from East Hartford. Mr. Porter, who was Quartermaster Sergeant, 25th Company, Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, served in the Civil War from October 20, 1862, to August 26, 1863. 

Mr. Porter's first mention in "Town Clerks" is on page 227 when it was noted that on November 19, 1864, he was appointed one of three members of a committee formed to fill the town's quota of men for army service, prior to another draft call by the Federal government. The committee was authorized to use as much as $10,000 for this purpose. He is noted to have been the moderator at three Town Meetings, those of October 2, 1871, October 25, 1875, and November 30, 1878. It is interesting to note that at the second meeting mentioned above, there was accepted a report from the selectmen regarding extension of a road from Main Street to High Street to be a continuation of Charpentier Avenue (now Porter Road). It will be noticed that this extension has never been built.

Thomas L. Porter was elected on November 6, 1877, to be our representative to the Connecticut General Assembly for one year, and on October 6, 1879, was chosen at a regular Town Meeting to be Town Clerk. He held this post until 1895.

Mrs. Hurlburt begins her report on his term of office, on page 253, as follows: "For the sixteen years from 1879 to 1895 that Thomas L. Porter was Town Clerk, Farmington went through another growing period. There were no wars, nor other major disasters until the "hard times" of 1893-95, and the townspeople had ample opportunity to catch up on many small details of town government. In addition to building two town halls, one for each district of the town, many new roads were laid out, and efforts were made to divide the town in such a manner that Unionville would have become a separate town. Every item brought before a town meeting received full and painstaking attention, no matter how small a detail it might appear to be. It was as though the town fathers were building another wall on the foundation already laid -- and every stone used was inspected and its place in the structure carefully planned, that it might not only be worthy of what had been built before, but be an example for the future".

Three other actions perhaps worthy of attention were the following. In November 1884 it was decided that no more burials would take place in the old cemetery on Main Street, unless the spouse was already buried there. In November 1886 appropriations were approved for decoration of graves and other expenses of Memorial Day, and in April 1894 a right-of-way was granted to the Hartford-West Hartford Electrical Railway for a trolley line to Farmington.

"In 1894 Thomas L. Porter, now aged 74 years and with chronic nephritis, no longer attended all of his duties. Henry N. Whittlesey was appointed the assistant town clerk June 13, 1895, by E. H. Deming, First Selectman, and the entries during that year in the record books are in his fine and delicate handwriting. (Town Clerks, page 273). "Mr. Porter's affairs did not go well and Miss Sarah Porter took over his home. He moved into the Riley house, as it was then known, now in front of the Parsons Garage." (Town Clerks page 275). The action just mentioned apparently took place in 1897, as there is a transfer of title from the Porters to Sarah a. Higley on June 22, 1897. Final mention of the Porters is on page 276 of Town Clerks: "Mrs. Emeline Woodford Porter died August 7, 1898. .... He died at Fitch's Home for the Soldiers, Noroton Heights, Conn., April 1, 1903". Both are buried in Riverside Cemetery.
Thomas L. Porter, while he was Town Clerk, also served as Librarian from January 2, 1882, until Miss Julia Brandegee took this post later in the year. At that time the library was moved to Farmington Avenue, to the eastermost of the two Andrus houses across the street from where Miss Brandegee lived, which was with her sister Mrs. Barney at 763 Farmington Avenue.

The Maxwells, who purchased the house at 25 Main Street in June 1897 from Sarah A. Higley, had previously lived on Main street, on the east side, on a site just about 50 or 100 feet north of the house presently standing at 11 Main Street. Their former house had served partly as a saloon, and partly as their family residence. Miss Sarah Porter had been anxious to beautify the northern entrance to Main Street, and as a part of this program she purchased the old Maxwell house and sold it for a small sum to the Lawrence family, who moved it to Waterville Road. There it was remodeled and became Miss E. S. Lawrence's Hat Shop, shown on page 59 of the Farmington Book.

While the Maxwells lived here at 25 Main Street Bridget Maxwell took in sewing, doing considerable work for Miss Porter, and for her school. The Maxwells had a grand piano, given them by Miss Porter after the school had replaced it with a new one, and neighbor girls were permitted to play the piano as a reward for picking up the pins from the living room floor after sessions of dress fittings.

This property was sold on August 24, 1920, to Stanisława Balazy, and has been owned and occupied by members of the Balazy family since that time.

Stanisława (Stella) was the wife of Teofil Balazy, and they lived here with their family, having moved here from another residence on Main Street.

The Balazys had three children: Richard, Walter and Stacia. Walter and Richard are owners and operators of a construction business. Walter was married to Jean Chappell of Haddonfield, New Jersey, and they lived here also. Their children, Richard David and Jean Ann, were born during their residence here. The brothers do not live here at present.

Teofil Balazy died in 1930 and his widow in 1958, leaving the property, which includes the Gleason house at 23 Main Street, to their daughter Stacia, a teacher of English in the Farmington High School.

March 17, 1973

Note to add to page 1 of this account. Dr. Chauncey Brown also had a daughter, Helen Stanley Brown, who on February 21, 1871, was married to Robert Brenner.