The Thomas Hart Hooker House is located on the west side of Main Street. To the south lies the Farmington Fire Station and to the north most of Miss Porter's School campus.
This house, built in 1770, represents the Georgian style with the exception of the Greek Revival-style recessed doorway, a circa 1830 addition. Its rectangular form features a double overhang. The twin end interior chimneys have been altered as they are too narrow to be original. Note the six-over-six sash and additions off the south and west elevations.

Capt. Judah Woodruff  
Capt. Judah Woodruff

By 1770 Thomas Hart Hooker's house was standing according to a land transfer worth 300 pounds (FLR 17:350). It is possible that this house could have been built a few years earlier due to the fact that Hooker (1745-1775) married in 1769 Sarah Whitman (1745-1837). The son of Roger and Mercy (Hart) Hooker and a descendant of the Rev. Thomas Hooker of Hartford, Thomas is said "to have been extravagant" with his estate inherited from his maternal grandfather Captain Josiah Hart. He died in Roxbury, Massachusetts in the army after selling this house to Amos Cowles in 1773 (FLR 19:393). Cowles (1730-1800), a merchant and innkeeper, was the son of Isaac and Elizabeth (Smith) Cowles and during the same year sold the property to Samuel Deming (FLR 19:404). Deming was a farmer who was also involved in trade with H.L. Bidwell. Deming sold the "homelot where John and Chauncey Deming now dwell" to sons John and Chauncey Deming (FLR 26:462) in 1786. The property included a grist mill (Mill Lane) at the west end of the lot. The Deming brothers married two Cowles sisters; Susannah and Diadema, daughters of James Cowles, and were involved in export and import trade. John died at an early age in 1810 but his brother Chauncey ran a highly profitable business. John's son Samuel (1798-1871) inherited the property in 1869 (FPR 15:7). He had married Catherine Matilda Lewis in 1821 and raised three children: Chauncey, Catherine, and Caroline. In 1921 Caroline C. Deming's estate was passed to Elsie L. Deming, her niece and daughter of Chauncey, her brother (FLR 74:371). (see cont. pg.)
The house has been attributed to Capt. Judah Woodruff, architect; however, this cannot be proven since he left no special mark on his buildings. Nonetheless, the Thomas Hart Hooker House is historically significant due to its association with the Hooker and Deming families.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OWNER'S NAME</th>
<th>KEEP, ROBERT PORTER &amp; ROSE ANNE DAY</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADDRESS</td>
<td>Main Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>DATE BUILT</td>
<td>1768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR</td>
<td>Thomas Hart Hooker</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARCHITECT</td>
<td>Capt. Judah Woodruff</td>
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<td>MASTER-BUILDER</td>
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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The central chimney of 1768 house was removed when addition was built in 1821.

Added to 1821 "Chauncey Deming at time of his marriage" and modernized 1941.

**REFERENCES:**

- "Stephan Hart and His Descendants": "Hooker Genealogy": "Farmington Town Clerks, 1943", pp. 40, 41
- "Colonial Dames Pamphlet" at State Library

**FORMER OWNERS:**

R.P. & R.A.D. Keep from Elsie L. Deming 2/16/1940, Vol. 87, p. 533; E.L. Deming from her aunt Catherine Deming by will 9/30/1921, Vol. 71, p. 371, known as The Homestead; C. Deming from her father, Samuel Deming, equally with Caroline, Frederick, Susan, John Chauncey, by will 5/5/1871, Vol. 15, p. 7; (later quit claim deed, etc., from the brothers & sisters); Samuel Deming from father Chauncey Deming, Est. Involved in French Spoilation Claims; Chauncey & John Deming from their father Samuel Deming by deed, "the homestead where John & Chauncey now dwell, 6 acres, 12 1/2 rods, e. on Town St., w. & s. on land of Amos Cowles n. on passway to Mill, with dwellinghouse & other edifices, h.6/1786, Vol. 26, p. 162; (see Mill card); S. Deming from Amos Cowles, same desc., h.28/1778, Vol. 19, p. 164; Amos Cowles from Thomas Hart Hooker, same, desc. (10 or 11 acres) n. & w. on passway, s. on A. Cowles, s.w. on Indian Hill, the use of which is given to said Demings so long as they shall keep

**OWNERS AS OF:**

KEEP, ROBERT PORTER & ROSE ANNE DAY 1950
Former owners, cont.:
a mill where it now is & when said Deming shall neglect to keep a mill it shall revert
Thomas Hart Hooker inherited this land and the old Josiah Hart homestead from his grand-
father, razed the old house and had this house built at the time of his marriage to Sarah
Whitman, granddaughter of the Rev. Samuel Whitman. Thomas Hart Hooker and Sarah had 2 child-
ren, Thomas Hart Hooker and Abigail Pantry Hooker. T.H. Hooker marched in the first regi-
ment from Conn. to the relief of Boston and was killed in action in Roxbury, Mass., where
he was buried.
The house at this address is pictured on page 15 of the Farmington Book as "The Samuel Deming Place, built in 1768, the residence of Miss Catherine L. Deming". It is indicated in the 1869 Baker and Tilden Atlas as "Samuel Deming". In the early part of the 20th century it was known by the Deming family as the "Homestead", to distinguish it from the other Deming house at 80 Main Street, which they knew as "Ancestral House". It was written up in 1950 by Mrs. Mabel Hurlburt as "Thomas Hart Hooker House, 1768", and that same name is on the plaque near its front door, although to those of Miss Porter's School, its present owner, it is known as "The Deming-Keep House".

It may be noted in the photo on page 15, that the barn shown at the left had its door on the south side. The barn was given a 180 degree turn sometime later, and the doors now open to the north, and it seems to have been moved a little way west. This barn was earlier used for storing grain, one of the grain shovels used is now on exhibit in the Farmington Museum. This building is now the garage.

This house was one of the earliest in the village to have been supplied with running water. A line of wooden pipe had been brought down from a spring on Deming land, the spring having been about across Church Street from the present site of the old Academy building, just east of Hart Street. It is believed that this spring also supplied the drinking fountain, the base of which can be seen at the foot of School Street. It also supplied the horse trough at the foot of Church Street. See photo on page 93, bottom left. The log pipe line was later replaced by "Seamed Lead Pipe", described by Adrian Wadsworth on page 180 of the Farmington Book, and made for Samuel Deming by David Carrington.

The house was built, as stated above, in 1768, and was built by Captain Judah Woodruff for Thomas Hart Hooker, who had inherited the land and the old house which formerly stood there. The former house had probably been built either by Thomas or Josiah Hart. It stood on the north edge of the original Deacon Stephen Hart homestead.

Deacon Stephen Hart, 1605-1682, is believed to have been born in Braintree, England, and came to Massachusetts sometime prior to 1632. His first property in Connecticut was his house lot in Hartford on the west side of what was later Front Street, where Morgan Street crossed it. His first settlement in the Farmington Valley was made near Cider Brook just east of Waterville Road. His first land in the village itself was some 15 acres directly across Main Street from the Congregational Church.

A chart follows, which shows some of the genealogy of three important families, and the lineage which connected them and produced the marriage of Thomas Hart Hooker and Sarah Whitman. This chart is on the following page.

January 20th 1971
rev. Mar. 22, 1973
The published genealogy of the Hart family is not available to the writer at this time, however he does not remember having seen therein the name of the wife of Deacon Stephen Hart. A genealogical record which he has seen lately however, gives the name of Margaret Smith, probably as his second wife.

Brief comments on various people shown in this preceding chart will follow. Their biographies, as they appear in their respective genealogies, make very good reading, and anyone interested will find them worthy of the time needed to look them up. It is unfortunate that there is not a Hooker Genealogy in the Farmington Village Library, since that family was very important in Farmington history for many generations.

Deacon Stephen Hart has been mentioned on the previous page.

Captain Thomas Hart, 1643-1726, Son of Deacon Stephen, is mentioned in Mrs. Hurlburt's "Town Clerks", on page 362, as follows:

"Thomas, the youngest child, born 1643 perhaps in Farmington, married Ruth, daughter of the wealthy and prominent Mr. Anthony Hawkins. He was given his father's homestead on February 24, 1668, where he lived in the north half of the house".

Thomas Hart, Deacon Stephen's third son, and probable builder of the first house to stand on this site, was on the list of Farmington freemen by 1669, was made a captain in the train band in 1695, served as representative to the general court several times, and was Speaker from 1700 to 1706. The Hart genealogy states that he was a "man of wealth, activity and usefulness".

Capt. Thomas Hart is mentioned in Burpee's "Story of Connecticut", 1939, Vol. 3, page 562, as the ancestor of the founder of what was later Arrow-Hart Hegeman Company of Hartford. He says that in the seventh generation from Capt. Thomas Hart, was Gerald Waldo Hart, who founded the Hart Manufacturing Company of Hartford in 1898. He was one of the foremost pioneers of the electrical industry.
Gerald W. Hart was succeeded in the presidency of his company by George Hegeman Hart. This son had been named for a partner of his father, who had been co-founder of the Hart and Hegeman Company of Kansas City, Missouri, a fore-runner of the Hartford company. See more regarding this on one of the last pages of the account of 80 Main Street.

Captain Josiah Hart, 1686-1758, son of Captain Thomas, inherited his father's homestead. He married Sarah Bull, the daughter of Deacon Thomas Bull and Esther Cowles, of the Bull homestead on Colton Street, just past the site of 15 Colton Street. It was said that Capt. Josiah "was the wealthiest and one of the most influential men of his day in the town". He was justice of the peace, and was representative in general court 1731-1734. It was his daughter Mercy Hart, who married Roger Hooker. Captain Josiah was chosen Selectman in December 1741.

The Reverend Thomas Hooker, 1586-1647, came to New England on the ship "Griffin" in 1633, and after a short time in Massachusetts, brought a group of followers and settled in Hartford in 1636. He had received degrees from Emmanuel College in Cambridge, England, in 1608 and 1611. He moved to Holland around 1630, where his non-conformist views would be better received. His second wife, mother of Samuel Hooker, was Susannah Garbrand.

The Reverend Samuel Hooker, 1633-1697, is believed to have been born in Newton (now Cambridge), Massachusetts, and to have come to Connecticut with his parents. He was graduated from Harvard in 1653, entered the ministry in 1657, married Mary Willett in 1658, preached in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and was invited to settle in Springfield. He did not accept that offer. He did however, come to Farmington, and he succeeded his brother-in-law, the Reverend Roger Newton, as minister here in 1661. He remained in this post until his death in 1697. From his sons came all who claim descent from his father, the Reverend Thomas Hooker of Hartford.

John Hooker, 1665-1746, the Rev. Samuel's fourth son, was for many years the leading man of the town of Farmington, and was one of the most noted men of his day. He lived at what is now 24 Main Street, and more will be written of him in the sketch of that house. His wife was Abigail Standley, daughter of Captain John Standley and Abigail Fletcher. It was John Standley who built the house which is now the Farmington Museum on High Street.

John's son Roger, 1710-ca 1772, is described in the Hooker Genealogy as follows: "a thorough gentleman of the old school, who prized the wide-spreading Hooker elm as his father had done, while he continued the far famed hospitality of the house, and greeting his friends under the beautiful tree, sped the time away with tale and jest and merry quip". It was he who married Mercy Hart and sired Thomas Hart Hooker.

March 22, 1973
The Reverend Samuel Whitman, 1676-1751, was born in Hull. He was graduated from Harvard in 1696, took up teaching for a few years in Salem, preached occasionally in Lancaster, Mass. He was called in 1705 to come to Farmington, at that time "one of the largest and wealthiest towns of the state". He was married in 1707 to Sarah Stoddard of Northampton, Massachusetts. Their home was on the site of the present house at 36 Main Street, residence of Wellesley Wright, assistant headmaster of Miss Porter's School. Mr. Whitman's ministry here lasted until his death in 1751.

Deacon John Whitman, 1713-1800, son of the Reverend Samuel, settled in West Hartford and married Abigail Pantry, granddaughter of William Pantry, who in the earlier days of Farmington had owned some 120 acres of meadow land in Farmington, although never was a resident here. Deacon John Whitman was one of the congregation in West Hartford of the Reverend Nathan Perkins, under whose guidance and tutelage the Honorable Timothy Pitkin of Colton Street prepared for entrance to Yale College. See more regarding William Pantry on page 370, "Town Clerks".

It was John's daughter, Sarah Whitman, 1747-1837, born in West Hartford, who married Thomas Hart Hooker on February 1, 1769, and who presided as a bride, over the newly built house at what is now 66 Main Street, Farmington.

Thomas Hart Hooker, 1745-1775, son of Roger Hooker, was, it appears, somewhat of a wastrel, and his properties diminished rather than increased, reversing the trends established by most of his ancestors. In an account in the Whitman Genealogy appears, essentially, the following: "He joined a company of volunteers immediately after the Battle of Lexington. Before he left home he liberated all his slaves, saying 'I will not fight for liberty and leave a slave at home'. He inherited a large estate from his maternal grandfather Captain Josiah Hart, but is reported to have wasted it in extravagance. He died in the army November 26, 1775".

Regarding the freeing of his slaves, the copy of a document granting freedom to one slave named Bristow (or Briston) on February 9, 1775, is on file on page 539 of volume 20 of Farmington Land Records. No record of any other liberation has been noted. Some report appears extant, stating that Bristow was still with Mrs. Hooker later in West Hartford, but this could have been employment as a freed slave.

Mrs. Hurlburt, in her sketch of this house for the Colonial Dames Society, says: "The house stands on the site of the home of Josiah Hart, whose daughter Mercy married Roger Hooker. Mercy died when her son Thomas Hart Hooker was born, and he inherited, at 21, his grandfather's property. After some time at sea and travel he razed the old house, built the present house, married Sarah Whitman, granddaughter of the Rev. Samuel Whitman, 3rd pastor of the Congregational Church. They had two children, Abigail Pantry Hooker, born Jan. 23, 1770, and Thomas Hart Hooker, Jr., born March 3, 1772. Thomas Hart Hooker enlisted as a private in 1775, marching in General Joseph Spencer's Regiment to the defense of Boston. He was killed in action in Roxbury, Mass., Nov. 26, 1775, and buried with other soldier dead, in Roxbury".

January 20, 1971
It appears however, that Thomas Hart Hooker and his family had probably left Farmington and taken up residence in West Hartford prior to his leaving for the Revolutionary War. It is recorded that on May 19, 1770, he transferred title to the old grist mill on the Farmington River (which had been part of his grandfather's estate) to Samuel Deming. On April 26, 1773, title to other land and the house was passed to Amos Cowles, and from Amos Cowles to Samuel Deming two days later.

According to records in West Hartford, he took title at about this time to property known as the "Mill's Place" on Four Mile Hill in West Hartford, including land and a house on New Britain Avenue, south side, about a hundred yards east of South Main Street. It would appear therefore, that they were living in West Hartford when he went off to war. Mrs. Hooker continued to live here. In this same year of 1775 Governor Trumbull sent Governor Philip Skene and his son Andrew to stay in voluntary exile in this house, to be fed and housed, at his own expense, by Mrs. Hooker. The Skenes were strong Tory partisans and Governor Trumbull wished them to be restrained from possible adverse influence on revolutionary patriots. Andrew, not having given his word that he would stay, left in December and joined the British forces. His father stayed there a year, was later placed in the Hartford jail, was soon after exchanged by General Washington as a prisoner of war. This has been made into an interesting story and a book "Philip Skene of Skenesborough" has been written of it by Doris Begor Morton.

The West Hartford chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was formed in 1906 and chose Sarah Whitman Hooker as the American patriot for which their chapter would be named. In the 1930's, the house in which she had lived having become very run-down, the chapter restored it to something of its former glory. By 1947 it had been acquired by private owners. On August 15, 1947, the West Hartford News carried an article stating that its then owner, Mrs. Ralph E. Gerth, was having it redecorated and that it would soon open, leased by Steven Juvelis, who would operate it in the atmosphere of an old New England Inn, specializing in fine foods. At the present time however, it has not been operated as such for several years, and its future appears to again be uncertain. It is still however, identified by a sign outside, as the Sarah Whitman Hooker House, built sometime prior to 1739. Mrs. Gerth and her husband, now deceased, had long been residents of the nearby area, having operated a farm upon part of whose land the Corbin's Corners Shopping Center is located, most of the remainder of the land having been developed and built up as a residential area.

Frances M. (Mrs. Karl E.) Fransson, present Regent of the Sarah Whitman Hooker chapter of the DAR, plans to read a paper on Mrs. Hooker and her life and residence in that house, and her war experiences with Tory exiles, and it should prove quite interesting.

January 20, 1971
Regarding Philip Skene, who was quartered in the Sarah Whitman Hooker house for the period of a year in 1775 and 1776, he was of a Scotch family but had been born in London. He was the founder of Skenesborough, New York, at the southern end of Lake Champlain, a town which is now Whitehall, New York. He was a man friendly with officers of the British army, and believed that a quick show of force in America would put down any thought of resistance by American forces against British troops attempting to put down their uprising.

He had been in America earlier but was in England in the early part of 1775, and on January 28 was appointed by King George the Third to be Lt. Governor of the forts of Ticonderoga and Crown Point. He sailed for America and was met at Philadelphia by a committee of the American Congress, including John Hancock himself, President of the Congress. They took Skene into custody as a "dangerous partisan of administration" and a potential danger to the forces of the revolution. He was brought to Wethersfield with instructions that he be furnished suitable lodgings "in some remote part" of Hartford. He was taken to West Hartford with his son Andrew who had joined him in Wethersfield.

They were quartered, at their own expense, with the family of the widow of Thomas Hart Hooker, in her house at the top of "Elmwood Hill". The widow was an ardent patriot, as had been her husband. In December 1775 Andrew, not being signatory to the parole of honor, as was his father, escaped to New York and later to Canada. The prisoners were often reviled by local inhabitants as enemies of the colony, and Skene narrowly escaped being tarred and feathered by his neighbors in West Hartford for what they deemed his unpatriotic and insulting demeanor.

On May 23, 1776, Governor Skene's parole expired. He refused to sign a new parole so was jailed in Hartford. After much correspondence between British and Revolutionary officials he was released in return for the release of Congressman James Lovell, who had been a British prisoner. The release was effected on October 7, 1776, and Governor Skene joined his friend General Howe in New York. He went to England early in 1777, but returned to America thinking that he could be of aid to General Burgoyne, but the British were finally defeated at Saratoga. Philip Skene was again taken prisoner and this time was kept in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In October 1778 he was finally released and sailed for England again.

The above information has been taken from the book "Philip Skene of Skenesborough" and transcribed here, not so much because of its positive importance, but rather to explain more completely what has been a rather hazy understanding of the circumstances and import of this semi-voluntary exile. Philip Skene died on June 10, 1810, after some 22 years of residence in Hartwell, England, and his body is buried there.

"Philip Skene of Skenesborough" was written by Doris Begor Morton, published by Grastorf Press, Granville, New York, in 1959.

February 28, 1971
The two children of Thomas Hart Hooker and his wife both married and had families. Abigail Pantry Hooker married on January 25, 1795, Samuel Talcott, son of Samuel Talcott and Mary Smith of Glastonbury. She died in West Hartford January 30, 1839, having had six children and 27 grandchildren. Thomas Hart Hooker, Jr., was married on September 27, 1798, to Betsey Mills, daughter of Deacon Jedediah Mills and Sarah Andrews of West Hartford. He died in West Hartford March 16, 1843, having had nine children and 37 grandchildren.

Mrs. Thomas Hart Hooker, Sr., in 1778 became the second wife of Captain Seth Collins, son of Robert Collins of West Hartford. She lived out her life in West Hartford and died there on June 5, 1837.

January 20, 1971

On January 25, 1971, after having shown some of the preceding text to one of the most knowledgeable of Farmington's residents as regarding its history, she said that: "Some of the things from the Sarah Whitman Hooker House in West Hartford are in the Farmington Museum, a standing desk in one of the bedrooms for instance".

Later, sometime in August 1972, an article regarding that same house appeared in the West Hartford News, an article which is reproduced on the following page. Some of the history stated in this article does not agree with facts as stated previously in this sketch, but its present condition seems to be correctly stated.

September 25, 1972
A TOUCH OF HISTORY

Landmark Hooker House, Legends Happy and Sad

Unless the town fathers take an interest with some dispatch, the house that Bristol made famous will fall victim to abandonment and neglect.

Bristol lies buried beneath a crumbling stone in the ancient burying ground on North Main Street, just above the center. The inscription on the stone in the northeast corner of the cemetery was simple: "In memory of Bristol, a native of Africa who died March 11, 1814, Aged 83 years." She had served her mistress long and well.

In the Revolutionary days, the name of Sarah Whitman Hooker was on many tongues in town; on some, like Bristol's, in kindness, but others in wagging rebuke.

Sarah Whitman was a deacon's daughter. Her father, John, and her mother, Abigail Pantry were God-fearing folk who brought up their daughter, after her birth on Feb. 27, 1747, in exemplary ways. When she was 21, after frequent journeys over the old South Road to Farmington, she married Thomas Hart Hook of that town.

Five years after they were married, Tom Hooker bought a lovely house on Four Mile Hill where Main Street joined the old South Road, now known as New Britain Avenue. Only two years later, the news of Lexington and Concord jolted the scattered community of Hartford's West District (not to become West Hartford until 78 years later.) Tom Hooker almost immediately enlisted.

The day he left to fight, Hooker turned to his slaves and told them they were all free. It didn't make sense, he told his wife, to be out fighting for freedom from England while he held blacks in bondage on his own farm. Bristol, grateful, stuck by her mistress and was with her to share the tragic news, a few months later, that Tom Hooker had been killed.

When Ethan Allen captured Fort Ticonderoga later in that same year, he took scores of British officers as prisoners. They were dispatched to various parts of the colonies to be quartered in private homes. Two of them were assigned to the Hooker farm. Bristol kept a sharp eye on them and Sara Hooker doubled as guard and hostess for several months, an assignment whose possibilities others in the town gossiped enviously about.

When the two British officers were officially released, they presented the intrepid Sarah Hooker a gold ring as a token of their appreciation and respect. Mrs. Hooker lived on in the West District, becoming the wife later of Seth Collins, and outlived faithful Bristol by 23 years. At her death at 90 in 1837, Sarah Whitman Hooker had become a legend in her time.

The Hooker house passed down through the family and finally in the middle of this century was owned by the Gerth family and was leased as a landmark tavern for travelers to tarry on the road to Farmington.

Finally, the old house with its capacious fireplaces, its panelling and wide pine board flooring, was abandoned and lies idle, awaiting the destruction of some real estate deal. The legend of Bristol and the British officers echoes among the still-sturdy rafters put in place in 1774.
The Samuel Deming who purchased the grist mill property in 1770 and purchased this house in 1773 was of the fourth generation of Demings in America. His father, Hezekiah, may have been here before him, as it is stated that he died here in 1747, but at this time it is not known what property he owned, or where he lived.

Since this is the first house known by the writer to have been the home of Demings in Farmington, it may be a good place to introduce the early genealogy of the Deming family, which is shown briefly in the four paragraphs following.

John Deming, first of the family in America, recorded ownership of property in Wethersfield as early as 1641. He married Honor Treat, daughter of Richard Treat.

John Deming his son, 1638-1712, was born and died in the town of Wethersfield. His wife was Mary Mygatt.

John's son Hezekiah, 1680-1747, was born in Wethersfield and married in 1700 to Lois Wyard, daughter of John Wyard and Sarah Standish. He resided some time in Newington, later in Plainfield, and died in Farmington.

Samuel, his son, 1724-1796, born in Plainfield and later the owner of Root's Mills there, was married in 1749 to Anna Hart of Farmington, daughter of Deacon Thomas Hart and Anna Stanley. He owned some land in Bristol. The Deming Genealogy states that he probably served in Captain Shipman's Company, Colonel Webb's Regiment, though at what time is not stated. His two sons, John and Chauncey, were born in Plainfield in 1753 and 1757, respectively.

After this house had been owned by their father since 1773, he deeded it to them on April 6, 1786, describing it as "the homestead where they now dwell". They perhaps both lived there with their families (John had married in 1775 and Chauncey in 1780) until in 1795 they purchased also the house at 80 Main Street. John died in 1810 and Chauncey not until 1827, but John's son Samuel having remodeled this house at the time of his marriage in 1821, it appears that John and his family lived here and Chauncey and his family in the house at 80 Main Street.

John's wife was Susannah Cowles, daughter of James Cowles and Abigail Hooker of "The Maples" pictured on page 105 of the Farmington Book, which still stands, one-half mile south of Scott Swamp Road on the west side of Main Street. They had six children:

Samuel born 1776, died in infancy
Anna born 1777, married Gad Cowles of 63 Main St.
Abigail born 1780, married George Cowles of 130 Main St.
Fanny born 1786, married Richard Cowles of 144 Main St.
Caroline born 1789, married James Kellogg Camp, owner and operator at one time of the Gay Store

Samuel born 1798, married Catherine Matilda Lewis, daughter of Seth Lewis of the house later to become the Elm Tree Inn.
The marriage of Fanny Deming and Richard Cowles took place here on December 30, 1811, being solemnized by the Rev. Noah Porter. Miss Deming's father had died the previous year. Edward Hooker, whose "Red College" on Mountain Road was well known as a college preparatory school in the early 1800's, was a guest at the wedding, and describes it as follows:

"attended the wedding of R. Cowles and Fanny Deming at Mrs. Deming's. Large concourse of relations and friends present - perhaps sixty - not much ceremony. The parties were seated in the room when the company arrived. None stood up with them - but Mr. Camp and Caroline sat near them and after the ceremony handed round two courses of cake, three of wine and one of apples - the company in the different rooms then conversed half an hour - then those who could sing collected and sung very handsomely a number of psalm tunes and half an hour after had quite a merry cushion dance. I came away about nine leaving still a large number capering round the cushion".
The last paragraph of Mrs. Hurlburt's sketch of this house reads as follows: "Mrs. Elsie Deming stated that this house was remodeled when her grandfather Samuel Deming married Catherine Matilda Lewis in 1821. John Deming gave the house to his son Samuel. He had the central chimney removed, the present two chimneys built - had the new kitchen with great chimney, now the dining room, built. This kitchen was later used as a dining room and a new kitchen built in the rear. Floor in upper hall shows where original stairs were against the front of chimney".

John Deming had for many years been a partner with his brother Chauncey in the ownership and operation of a store which they built in 1795 just south of the house at 80 Main Street, and in the importing and shipping business which they had operated prior to and coincidental with that of the store. John having died however, seventeen years prior to his brother, and Chauncey having gained the reputation of having been the more astute business man and financier, this business will be discussed at greater length in relation to the life and times of the brother Chauncey. See 80 Main Street.

Julius Gay says of this house on page 14 of the Farmington Book: "Next comes a house built by Capt. Woodruff for Thomas Hart Hooker in 1768, and very soon passing with the mill property, into the possession of the Demings. It was said during the days of the fugitive slave laws to have been an important station on the underground railroad. It is best known to most of us as the residence of the late Samuel Deming, Esq., for many years a trial justice of the town, who fearlessly executed the law, whether his barns were burned, or whatever happened. We did not suffer from that curse of society, a lax administration of justice". See photos of Mr. Deming on pages 84 and 175. Horatio Strothers mentions him in his book "Underground Railway in Connecticut", published in 1962.

Samuel Deming was also mentioned by Mr. Gay on page 83 of the Farmington Book, where he says, in part: "Samuel Deming in his time was one of the staunch citizens of this favored town. His occupation was farming, as he had a large landed estate.... for a period of time he engaged in trade with H. L. Bidwell, the firm being Bidwell and Deming. Mr. Deming was an officer on the staff of Gen, George Cowles, a brother-in-law. He took a lively interest in the affairs of the Mendiculfricans, whose school room was the upper portion of his store building. He served at times as magistrate and was a fearless defender of what he considered right". On page 132 of the Farmington Book he is mentioned as having been one of the directors of the Farmington Canal Co.

Samuel's wife was the daughter of Seth Lewis and Phebe Scott, and there were nine children of their marriage, three of whom lived less than four years. The six who lived to adulthood are listed:

John, 1825, married Catherine Hooker Williams, see below,
Susan Augusta, 1832, married Austin Hart, see 93 Main St.,
Frederick, 1836, married Cornelia Wadsworth Curtiss, see below,
Chauncey, 1838, married Ellen Maria Hart, see 80 Main St.,
Catherine Lewis, 1841, never married, see below,
Caroline Camp, 1843, never married, see below, or rather, the next page.

January 23, 1971
864,
John Deming, son of Samuel, married Catherine Hooker Williams, granddaughter of John Mix and Martha Cowles of 123 Main Street, and her ancestry will be given in more detail in the sketch of that house. Their seven children were as follows:

Anna, 1848, died in infancy
Annie Williams, 1851, married Thomas R. Ennis
Samuel Lewis, 1854, died 1871
Edward Hooker, 1857, married Isabel Plum (see 100 Main St)
Elizabeth Thompson, 1859, to Brooklyn, N. Y.
John Mix, 1862, married Anna G. Duell
Harry Wadsworth, 1868, to Brooklyn, N. Y.

John Deming did not live here with his family, but it appears that they lived for a time at least in Northampton, Massachusetts, and the later years of his life were spent in Millville, Pennsylvania, operating a store and a quarry. An early mission on which he was sent by his family, it is said, was to appraise a small piece of land in New York City, which the family owned. It was so small, and included no access right of way, so they sold it as being of little value. It was the piece of ground on which now stands "The Little Church Around the Corner". John's son, Edward H. Deming settled in Farmington and became the leading citizen of his time. He lived at 100 Main Street.

Frederick, also the son of Samuel, married Cornelia Wadsworth Curtiss. They moved to Buffalo, New York. Their children were:
Gertrude, born 1861, Peter, born 1864 and Frederick, born 1868.

Samuel Deming died on May 5, 1871, and it appears that he left the property to be divided equally among all his children. Shortly after his death the four married children quit-claimed their shares to Catherine and Caroline, noted previously as having never married. They made similar wills, leaving their halves of the property to each other, with the proviso however, that marriage of either would mean a forfeiture of her share. Neither forfeited.

Aunt Carrie and Aunt Kate, as they were known, lived here many years and were well known to all of the village. Girls who were teenagers during World War I will remember that Aunt Kate, in a wheelchair most of the time, taught them knitting at that time so that they could knit socks and sweaters for the "doughboys". Letters to "Dere Mable" would tell them whether they fit or not.

Caroline Camp Deming died in 1902, and Catherine Lewis Deming died in 1921, leaving this house to her unmarried niece, Elsie Lewis Deming, born 1881, daughter of her brother Chauncey.

Elsie Deming, who had been living in 80 Main Street with her mother, Ellen Hart Deming, now moved to this house and brought her mother with her. They had provided room and board for many of the schoolteachers of the village while living in the other house, and perhaps continued this practice here. Mrs. Deming died in 1935, leaving Elsie alone. In a few years Miss Porter's School offered to buy this house and provide Miss Deming a new one on Colton Street, on the Bull Lot, presently 15 Colton Street. Miss Deming acceded to this and signed over the property to Robert Porter Keep on February 16, 1940. Miss Deming's health failed in the latter 60's and she is at present residing in the Plainville Convalescent Hospital.

January 23, 1971
The first occupant of this house after its acquisition by Miss Porter's School is said to have been a tenant, Mrs. Brian W. Downs of Cambridge, England, possibly a refugee from the bombing of London, as several others were quartered in Farmington by Miss Porter's School during the war. Mrs. Downs lived here with her son, and authored books on literary criticism.

Mr. Robert Porter Keep mentioned the house in the spring of 1941, saying: "We think that this house may ultimately become the place where whoever succeeds us will live". His prophecy has come true. All subsequent headmasters have lived here, and the present one still does.

The first headmaster to do so was Ward Johnson. The "Bulletin of Miss Porter's School" in its issue of Summer 1968, states this in the following words:

"At the beginning of the second century (1943) the school entered a new stage of development with the appointment of Mr. and Mrs. Ward L. Johnson as Headmaster and Headmistress".

The Johnsons came here from Lawrence School, New York. Mr. Johnson had been made Headmaster and Member of the Board of Trustees of that school after the death of Mr. Buckley in 1931. Born in Worcester, Massachusetts, he was a graduate of Clarke University there, and did graduate work at Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania. He was a half-miler at school and a football coach at Lawrence, in addition to scholastic work. He was a director for two years of an Adirondack camp for boys.

When they came here their elder son, Ward L. Jr., had just graduated from college and was in the air corps. Their son Richard was a student at Gunnery School.

During their regime here the school's library facilities were greatly expanded by the remodeling of Miss Adgate's store and its conversion to the Leila Dilworth Library at 50 Main Street. They also converted the Deming-Lewis house at 80 Main Street and the Dorchester Cottage at 117 Main Street, to faculty residences.

The MPS Bulletin also states: "Under Mr. Johnson the college preparatory program was expanded until by the early 1950's the scholastic standing of Miss Porter's was among the highest in the country. Many girls have credited Mr. Johnson's understanding and subtle discipline for their preparedness in meeting the demands and challenges of later life".

The Johnson's son, Ward L. Johnson, Jr., was married during his parents' residence here, to a third-generation MPS graduate, Jean Taylor. Her lineage concerning MPS is as follows:

Jessie Stillman, MPS 1886-1888, married William Ambrose Taylor,

March 23, 1973
Henry C. Taylor married Jeanette Jennings, MPS 1913-1915, a cousin of Annie Burr Lewis of 154 Main Street, and a granddaughter of Annie Burr Jennings, both of whom were famous MPS graduates,

Jean Taylor, MPS 1939-1942, married Ward L. Johnson, Jr.

Pamela Taylor Johnson, their daughter, was scheduled for entrance into Miss Porter's School in 1961, and did attend, being graduated in 1964.

The Johnsons left Farmington in 1954, and their places were taken that fall by Mr. and Mrs. Hollis S. French.

Ward L. Johnson, Jr., and his wife, the former Jean Taylor, MPS 1939-1942, with all their children now past primary schools, are now at Purnell School, Pottersville, New Jersey. Purnell was founded in 1963 by Sis and Litt Gould, "to provide fine girls with an alternative to the pressures of the more competitive college preparatory schools". One of their sons, Timothy Ward Johnson, has been the 4th of this family to be in education, now teaching at Nichols School in Buffalo.

Jean Taylor Johnson is a recently appointed Trustee of Miss Porter's School.

May 9, 1974
Mr. and Mrs. Hollis S. French had come to Farmington in 1950, Mr. French having been business manager of the school and a teacher of French. They lived their first years here in Dorchester Cottage, 117 Main Street. The Bulletin of Miss Porter's School says, in part:

Mrs. French, being of an active and vigorous nature, soon became secretary of the Alumnae Association. Coming to Farmington from St. Mark's School, the Frenches understood the importance of discipline and carried on in the way of their predecessors..... Mrs. French took a deep personal interest in the girls, counseling with a wisdom which was leavened by a fine sense of humor..... The curriculum expanded under Mr. French to include studies in East Asian History and the Russian language, subjects which were increasingly pertinent to the nation and to students everywhere.

In addition to new buildings, the Mellon Gymnasium, the Nona Evans Pavilion, and a new wing for the library --- several more houses were acquired for faculty residence. These were:

The Timothy Cowles house at 87 Main Street,
The Asche house, 90 Main Street,
The Porter house, 116 Main Street,
(re-acquired actually, as this house, the birthplace of Miss Sarah Porter, had been in the Porter family for some 150 years prior to its sale in the 1950's to Warren Cook),
The Fred McKinney house at 60 Garden Street.

The Bulletin goes on to say:

"Before their retirement in 1966 Mr. and Mrs. French saw students become more involved in extra-curricular life with other schools through sports, dances, and a joint literary production; and in the community through volunteer service at the Newington Home for Crippled Children".

The Frenches left Farmington in 1966.

March 23, 1973
The present residents of this house are Mr. and Mrs. Richard Warren Davis and family. Mr. Davis is Headmaster of Miss Porter's School and has held that position since the summer of 1966.

Mr. Davis is the son of Edgar Davis of Brooklyn, New York, and Della Clark of Butte, Montana. Miss Clark's grandparents had emigrated from Illinois and settled in Butte shortly after the middle of the 19th century. Edgar Davis had been sent to Butte to open a sales office there for Ingersoll Rand Company of Painted Post, New York, and he and Miss Clark met and were married there. Shortly after this he was sent to Seattle to open an office, and from there was sent to New York City. They made their residence in Yonkers, and there reared their children. Mr. Davis continued with Ingersoll Rand, becoming treasurer and one of its directors.

Richard Davis attended local schools through the 10th grade, then finished at Taft and went on to Princeton for his B.A. graduating in 1943 he went into the army, serving as 1st Lieutenant in the European area for three years. He trained in Athens, Pennsylvania, for a selling career with Ingersoll Rand, and it was during the course of this training that he met his wife-to-be, Nancy Payne Mynott. Nancy is the daughter of Edwin P. Mynott of Birmingham, England, and Doris Payne of Scarborough, England. Mr. Mynott was employed in Rochester, New York by the Rochester Products Division of General Motors. When Richard and Nancy met she was just returning to her job as reporter for the Rochester Democrat from a summer leave of absence for study at Oxford University. She had previously been graduated from Cornell University.

They were married while Mr. Davis was selling in Connecticut for Ingersoll Rand, and their first home was on West Avon Road in Avon. He had for some time had the desire to go into the field of education, and it was while here that he took the step to fulfill this desire. He took two steps in fact, he joined the teaching staff at Avon Old Farms School in 1949, and began postgraduate work in Education at Yale University at about the same time. He obtained his M.A. (1952) and Ph. D. (1957) while living and working at Avon Old Farms School, where he was Director of Admissions and Chairman of the History Department. He then taught two years at Syracuse University as Assistant Professor of Social Science and Education, while living at Skaneateles, New York. From there he returned to secondary schools, being appointed the Headmaster of Buffalo Seminary, a day school for girls, in 1959. He served there for seven years, coming to Miss Porter's School as Headmaster in 1966.

Mr. and Mrs. Davis have four children. Deborah, the eldest, is in Hartford as a student at Hartford Art School. Christine was just graduated from Oxford School, West Hartford, in June 1970. Margaret (Meg) will start in ninth grade at Renbrook School, West Hartford, in September 1970. Richard Tucker (Tuck) will be entering the sixth grade at Noah Wallace School in Farmington this fall.

Mrs. Davis, after their marriage, went into teaching, first in remedial reading, and later in nursery school work. She has been occupied by that, when possible, and last year took up as an additional duty, the editorship of Miss Porter's School Bulletin.

July 15, 1970
Some of the physical features of their home; this house built so long ago for Thomas Hart Hooker, may be noted here. A divided front door, hinged vertically in the middle permits it to be folded into an inconspicuous space, entirely out of the way. The central fireplace and chimney have been removed and a center hall appears in their place. It still has the cooking fireplace, including an oven on the right side, hidden however by cupboard-type doors. Glass on top of an interior door indicates it may have been an exterior at one time. The stairway leads up from near the front door. The kitchen area is an addition, probably of the last twenty or thirty years (perhaps when Mr. Keep bought it in 1940), also the two rooms and bath for the housekeeper, and Christie's bedroom upstairs. A bathroom and more space for the dining room have been added to the south side of the house. An inside wall of the bathroom was a former outside wall, as can be seen. The winding hallway upstairs is unusual. Two beams cross the ceiling of the living room, starting at each side of the fireplace.

The Davises say of their home here: "We love this place -- it has a cozy, close, family feeling". It is a comfortable house, not too large, and it is a pleasant combination of the 18th and 20th centuries, with a little bit of the 19th probably still remaining also.

Mr. Davis thoroughly enjoys his work and its challenge. Schools of course are changing rapidly with the new concepts of the times, and these changes are cause for thought. As Mr. Davis says: "Recognizing the need for change --- one also recognizes the need for a degree of stability". The problem is to balance these two needs, but he will try to achieve this balance.

The Davis family has an 18th century house in Vermont, near Weston, to which they go each summer for a releasing period, and they are gradually improving its comfort and convenience factor, trying however to retain the dignity of its increasing age.

July 15, 1970

This house has been endowed, through a "70's Fund" gift, by Mr. and Mrs. Frederick K. Weyerhauser and family. This will assure its maintenance and preservation.

September 7, 1974
PORTER SCHOOL
HEAD—MASTER'S
HOUSE
Long a house of distinction because of its history, its occupants and its very special family keepsakes, the home for many generations of the Hart and Deming families was built in 1768 and is an excellent example of the structures put up by Captain Judah Woodruff. It is in the site of the early home of Josiah Hart, rated as Farmington's most wealthy man and third in line from the first Hart here, Deacon Stephen.

Josiah married his first wife Sarah Bull and of their children Mercy the second daughter married Roger Hooker. Their only son Thomas Hart Hooker named for his grandfather, inherited an immense estate being his only male heir and to quote the "Hart Family" by Alfred Andrews "most of which he expended in extravagance and dissipation" and finally married Sarah, daughter of Deacon John Whitman of West Hartford and granddaughter of the Rev. Samuel Whitman of Farmington and settled in West Hartford.

At the time of his marriage he is said to have incurred the wrath of his family by razing his grandfather's fine old house and building this present one in 1768. Captain Judah Woodruff making of it one of his finest examples of the hewn overhand, with the central chimney and the great wide kitchen at the rear.

Their life there was short. Thomas Hart Hooker being one of the first company to go to the relief of Boston but was killed on the way and buried at Roxbury. Mercy and their two children lived afterward with her father in West Hartford. A son was named for his father and the daughter Abigail Pantry married Samuel Talcott. The DAR Chapter in West Hartford is named for Mrs. Hooker.

The Demings, Chauncey and John had possession of the property after the death of Thomas Hart Hooker, with highways on the north and west, and east on the main street with Indian Hill on the southwest, the use of which is given to said Demings so long as they shall keep a mill where it now is and when said Demings shall neglect to keep a mill it is all revert to said Hooker. The right of way to the mill is still easily seen in the depression at the north of this house near the boundary line of Porter School property.

When Chauncey Deming married Catherine M. Lewis in 1821 the bride who was from Avon soon saw the new trend in Farmington houses, with many moved back from the street, the center chimney removed with the two end chimneys and the wide front hallway with open stairs and that she must have and of course it was done. The attic shows the type of saw used to cut the frame for the removal of the chimney and the bracing necessary. The house was further modernized with some additions in 1941 with the purchase from Miss Elsie Deming by Robert and Rose Anne Keep who were to have it used by the headmaster and his family at Miss Porter's School.

The passway to the Mill was later replaced by present Mill Lane by the Deming family which also for many years owned and occupied the rare old Colonial House always painted red with the old brick general store at the corner of the lane. The Demings stipulated that the town always keep the lane in order or it should revert to them - it is a very well-kept street, the only one that crosses Garden Street, on its way to the Old Mill.

The Hart Jug, brought from England by Stephen Hart in 1630 was carefully housed in this house as were many fine pieces of china with the initial D brought from China by the shipping interests of the Deming family and sold in the general store for the eager Farmington families.