STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
(203) 566-3005

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY
BUILDING AND STRUCTURES
HIST.6 NEWS 77

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

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<th>DISTRICT</th>
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1. BUILDING NAME (Common)  (Historic)  Farmington Academy
2. TOWN CITY  VILLAGE  Farmington
3. STREET AND NUMBER (land or location)  Church Street
4. OWNER(S)  First Church of Christ
5. USE (Present)  School
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC:  X Yes  No  X Yes  No
7. STYLE OF BUILDING  Federal
8. MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate):
   - X Clapboard
   - X Brick
   - Other (Specify)
   - X Wood Shingle
   - Asphalt Siding
   - Fieldstone
   - X Board & Batten
   - Stucco
   - Cobblestone
   - X Aluminum Siding
   - Concrete
   - X Cut stone
   - Brownstone foundation
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM
   - X Wood frame
   - X Post and beam
   - X Balloon
   - X Other (Specify)
   - X Load bearing masonry
   - Structural iron or steel
10. ROOF (Type)
    - X Gambrel
    - X Mansard
    - X Monitor
    - X Sawtooth
    - X Other (Specify)
    - X Wood Shingle
    - Roll
    - Asphalt
    - Tin
    - X Slate
    - X Other (Specify)
11. NUMBER OF STORIES  APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS  2½  30 x 80
12. CONDITION (Structural)
    - X Excellent
    - X Good
    - Fair
    - Deteriorated
    - X Excellent
    - X Good
    - Fair
    - Deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY (Location)
    - X On original site
    - X Moved 1919-22
    - X Yes  No  Modern chimney and bay window
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES
    - Barn
    - Shed
    - Garage
    - Other landscape features or buildings (Specify)
    - Carriage house
    - Shop
    - Garden
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT
    - X Open land
    - Woodland
    - Residential
    - Scattered buildings visible from site
    - Commercial
    - Industrial
    - Rural
    - High building density
16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS
    Located on the southeast corner of Church and Hart streets, the Academy building faces north toward the Noah Wallace School's playing fields. The surrounding neighborhood contains primarily nineteenth and twentieth-century residential architecture. The Noah Wallace School and Village Library are located a short distance to the northwest.
This building is made up of two sections: a long rectangular building and a narrower front addition. The largest section (the original building) features a brownstone foundation and a bay window along with five other windows on the west elevation. On the roof lies two square chimneys. The front addition displays an open porch supported with square posts and a modest balustrade. A round cupola sits on the roof. Note the twelve-over-twelve sash found throughout the building.

**DESCRIPTION (Continued)**

In 1815 a number of Farmington parents felt the need for a grammar school to be erected in town. It was suggested to the First Ecclesiastical Society of Farmington that a two-story building constructed in the center of the village could be used by the church for public functions as well as serving as a new schoolhouse. The approximate cost of construction was $1700; $700 donated by the society and $1000 collected from subscriptions. Those men who acquired subscriptions were known as proprietors and comprised many of the town's most influential and prominent citizens. In the spring of 1816, it was decided that the Academy was to be built just to the north of the Meeting House (First Church of Christ, Congregational) and Samuel Dickinson was hired as the builder. The school was completed by the following fall and was opened to students in November. The first principal was Epaphras Goodman and students numbered 50. The Academy was governed by a five-member Prudential committee whose members were appointed by the proprietors. This committee was responsible for hiring instructors, admissions, school accounts, and the overall general operation of the school. In January of 1817 the chapel on the second floor was completed. Tuition for the Academy was $4 a quarter which included arithmetic, writing, and geography and $5 if Latin and Greek were included. In 1823 Simeon Hart, a recent graduate of Yale, was hired as headmaster. He served the Academy until 1835 and is credited with the great success of the school. By the late 1820s enrollment reached 90 students with approximately half the pupils female. A number of students came from out of town as well as from other states and board with (SEE CONT.)

**SOURCES**


**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Nathan Ainspan

**DATE**

4/86

**VIEW**

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**NEGATIVE ON FILE**

15:2A

**NAME**

E. R. Hart

**DATE**

4/86

**ORGANIZATION**

Greater Middletown Preservation Trust

**ADDRESS**

27 Washington St., Middletown, CT 06457
local families. Deacon Hart left the Academy in 1835 to start his own boys boarding school on Main Street. During the next fifteen years, the proprietors had a difficult time finding a principal with Simeon Hart's ability and enrollment continued to decrease. Finally in 1849, the First Ecclesiastical Society acquired full title of the building from the trustees of the Academy (FLR 51:197). In September of 1850, Simeon Hart, Edward Tillotson, John Hooker, and Thomas and Charles Cowles, trustees of the Academy, sold the First Ecclesiastical Society "all interest in building formerly occupied by Farmington Academy which sits on the public green in the village of Farmington and is owned by both the trustees of the Academy and the Ecclesiastical Society, the upper story by the said Ecclesiastical Society and the lower floor by said Academy proprietors. The said proprietors reserving the bell, benches, and seats, the stove and Philosophical apparatus in or pertaining to said building and upon said condition that the Society turn the building so that the end shall be toward Main Street and the north side on a line with the present schoolhouse of the Middle School District" (FLR 51:238). For many years this building was known as the chapel as well as the Academy. During the last half of the nineteenth century, the building was used as the town hall, village library, grange hall, and social gathering place. The town offices moved to the new town hall in 1890. During the summer months of 1888, 1889, and 1890, Thomas Davidson's School of Philosophy, an offshoot of the Concord School of Philosophy, held sessions in Farmington and used the Academy building and Methodist Church for meeting places. Guest lecturers were Richard Horey, Percival Chubb, and Professor Hyslop and subjects varied from "Philosophy and Ethics to Primary Concepts of Economic Science." In 1900 the building was moved a short distance to the east to make way for the Sarah Porter Memorial, which was completed in 1901. From 1900 to 1917 Theodate Pope used the Academy building to house a small girls' day school open to any local girl interested in learning sewing, cooking, and other domestic arts. The building was moved again in 1917 to its present site on the southeast corner of Church and Hart streets, to make room for the Sarah Brandegee Barney Memorial Library. In 1914 the Farmington Recreational Association moved in, although the First Church of Christ, Congregational had retained ownership. Today the Art Guild of Farmington occupies the building and uses it for classes and exhibitions.

Although the building has been moved three times, the exterior appearance of the building has changed little since its construction in 1816. Historically the Academy is significant for its role in Farmington's educational development and for its wide variety of uses over the past 170 years.
The Old Academy, pictured on page 41 of the Farmington Book, and described on pages 39 to 42, originally located on Main Street approximately where the Porter Memorial now stands. It has been moved three times in all. It is shown in Baker and Tilden's 1869 Atlas as the Chapel.

Mrs. Hurlburt's account of its life, as made up in pamphlet form for the Colonial Dames Society, compiled in January 1951 and recorded by the State Library on October 28, 1953, seems very complete and is quoted verbatim in the following:

"The Academy was built by Major Samuel Dickinson, one of Farmington's foremost builders of the day, in 1816. Deacon Edward Hooker made a note in his diary under date of March 15, 1816 that he met with a committee that morning to fix a spot for the "Society House". It was completed and ready for students in November 1816, and was advertised in the "Connecticut Courant" November 16.

"Proprietors who signed the constitution September 17, 1816, were:

Daniel Tillotson
Sydney Wadsworth
Zenas Cowles
Richard Cowles
Isaac Cowles
Solomon Cowles, Jr
Seth Cowles
Edward Porter on the share of the late Deacon
    Noah Porter, deceased
Timothy H. Root
Merwin Clark
Solomon Cowles
Elijah Porter
Ezekiel Cowles
Timothy Pitkin
Noadiah Woodruff
Joseph Porter
Ozem Woodruff
Martin Cowles
Gad Cowles
Henry Whittlesey
Eleazar Root
Asa Andrews
Timothy Cowles
George Cowles
Selah Porter
Samuel Dickison
James K. Camp
Noah Porter, Jr
Chauncey Deming
William L. Cowles
Samuel Deming
Nathaniel Olmsted.

May 19, 1971
The Constitution gave the members, their heirs and assigns, subscriptions at 20 dollars quarterly per share except that part which has been agreed shall be the property of the First Ecclesiastical Society of Farmington. Beside chairman and other usual officers there was a Prudential Committee.

The Regulations required English Grammar, Geography, Greek and Latin. Not teacher was to have more than 40 pupils without an assistant. Prayer and Bible reading were to open and close each day.

In 1850, the Academy had seen the end of a long and useful service. The Proprietors voted in 1849 to sell their share of the Academy building to the First Ecclesiastical Society.

In 1839 the Farmington Library Company, one of the numerous libraries which had been open in Farmington since 1795, was given a room in what was then the southeast corner of the lower floor.

Town Meetings were held in the building, unless the turnout proved too large, when the meeting would be held in the Church.

The Academy building, before it was taken over entirely by the First Ecclesiastical Society, was used by both local and traveling entertainers. Missionary societies brought out several hundred on a Sunday evening, where in the same hall the night before entertainment of far different character had been offered.

Deacon Simeon Hart was one of the famous teachers at the Academy. His salary of about $500 to $700 per year came from the pupils. They were also charged 12½¢ per quarter toward repairs and 25¢ per quarter for wood.

Miss Sarah Porter and her brothers and sisters attended school here.

In 1835 Deacon Simeon Hart wrote that he had 'Commenced a Boarding School in my own house, May 1, 1835'.

In June 1827 at the annual meeting of the subscribers it was voted to allow Mr. Hart at his own expense to take one of the partitions and make what other alterations he thinks proper.

An agreement by Mr. Hart, not dated, is to the effect that he would continue in the school 'on condition that I receive the whole amount of tuition paid by the scholars at 4½ and five dollars per quarter'. (5 dollars was for Latin and Greek and 4½ for arithmetic, writing, geography) and that the repairs and improvements contemplated by the proprietors be made at their expense, that 'I am to refund nothing of this expense to the subscribers unless I should leave the school within five years. Should I leave within that time I will refund to the Treasurer the amount that shall now be raised and expended for the building and apparatus provided I shall have received $550.00 per year'.

After Mr. Hart left, to conduct his own school, the Academy subscribers had a difficult time to secure a teacher near his ability.

In 1838 they 'proposed to make a new effort to procure a suitable Preceptor, but no permanent person can probably be found without having a fair compensation secured to him for the first year'.

May 19, 1971
5:3
"In order to raise the $500 for such a teacher, Egbert Cowles pledged 5%, Richard Cowles 3%, Giles Stillman 1% and Solomon Cowles 5%.

"But this was the beginning of the end. Already townspeople were divided on the uses to which part of the building was put. School meeting records show the voters to be equally distressed about the condition of their old school house. As a new Middle District School was built in 1851, and the old school sold, residents probably decided to use the new school, for which they were now being taxed.

"For another 40 years the Academy served as a Town Hall, at times for the Village Library, a place for school entertainments, church suppers. The new Town Hall built in 1890 provided a large rear room for the Library, with villagers looking at the old Academy in growing disfavor.

"Following the death of Miss Sarah Porter and the resolution of her former pupils to build a Memorial to her, the site of the Academy was chosen and the building moved east on School Street, just east of the Town Clerk's office, where it stood from 1900 to 1917. Here Theodate Pope Riddle used the building for a school for any of the town's girls, teaching sewing, making their own clothes, hospital clothes, and rug making. About 125 girls ranging in age from sixth grade up, met for the various classes. Mrs. A. A. Pope read during part of the work hours, and Mrs. Charles Brandegee was one of the teachers.

"When D. Newton Barney planned the new Library building, to be a memorial to his mother, Sarah Brandegee Barney, it was necessary to move the Academy again. D. Newton Barney bought a plot of ground from John Hart, at the corner of present Church and Hart Streets. The Academy was used here, as in its previous location, by the Farmington Grange. Since 1944 it has been headquarters for the Farmington Recreation Association, the First Church of Christ Congregational maintaining insurance.

"The upper hall has a barrel ceiling, and is not now considered safe as a gathering place. It formerly held 450 persons at a meeting.

"For published references see:

"Farmington, Conn., 1906" pp 39,40,41,
"Farmington Magazine" Vol. 1, No. 5, pp 12,13,14,
"Baker and Tilden Atlas 1869", p 33 for Chapel,
"Farmington Town Clerks 1943", pp 142,178,179,184,
"Reminiscences", John Hooker, p 10,
"Farmington Academy" cards, notebook and folder, to be filed at Village Library.

"The Academy was built with the long side toward the street, (similar to the church). The sale from the Proprietors to the First Ecclesiastical Society, stipulated that the building be turned with its end toward the street. The Academy has been moved, in all, three times. The turning, noted above, was the first move, in 1850. The next was the moving to the east in 1900 to make room for Porter Memorial, and the last was in 1917"(see text above).

May 21, 1971

End of quote from Mrs. Hurlburt's report.
In addition to published references given on the preceding page, one might add "Farmington Papers", a collection of papers on talks given by Julius Gay during the period from 1890 to 1911, most of them given at annual meetings of the Farmington Library Company. On pages 66, 67 and 68 is given some information on the Academy. See next page.

It is interesting to note the names of the proprietors who signed the constitution of the organization which was to govern the operation of the Academy founded in 1816. It is a roster of the influential men of the Village. One can easily go through the Farmington Book and locate the residences of practically all of these men, and can walk through Farmington's streets and also point them out.

Regarding names of students taking part in the exercises of April 24, 1832, as shown on page 42, we can recognize eight names out of the eighteen mentioned on the program. They are:

J. Brandegee, probably John Brandegee, born in 1816, whose sister Sarah, born in 1833, married Danford Newton Barney, and after his death came to Farmington with her half-sister Julia, to live at 763 Main Street, and whose son built our Village Library in her honor.

H. A. Cowles must have been Henry Augustus Cowles, born in 1816, son of Gad Cowles and Anna Deming of 63 Main Street, which is now MPS dormitory "Humphrey". He died in 1837 at the age of 21 but his nephew of the same name, born in 1846, in this same house, became an important business man of the area.

J. E. Cowles, probably John E. Cowles, born in 1819, for whom in 1844 was built the Keep House at 47 Main Street by his father Col. Martin Cowles.

J. Hooker undoubtedly was John Hooker, born in 1816, the son of Edward Hooker of 50 High Street. John Hooker was a law partner of U. S. Senator Joseph Hawley and moved to Hartford in 1853. Later he was to form the Nook Farm Settlement on Forest Street.

G. H. Porter was Giles Meigs Porter, born in 1815, brother of Miss Sarah Porter. He was the only one of the children of the Rev. Noah Porter who moved west and did not return, except for short visits.

T. C. Pitkin was probably Thomas Pitkin, born in 1815, son of the Hon. Timothy Pitkin of Colton Street. Thomas later married Harriet L. Starr.

E. Warren was perhaps Edward E. Warren who purchased 101 Main Street with Giles Stillman in 1842, and

L. T. Woodruff appears to have been Lewis T. Woodruff, born in 1816, of the 7th generation of Woodruffs in Farmington, son of Sydney Woodruff and Mary Anna Thompson. He went to South Carolina at the age of 18 where he became a merchant, later a Captain and then a Colonel in the 36th Alabama Infantry. Wounded at New Hope, Georgia, he died in 1869.

The old Academy still stands on Church Street and still serves Farmington in its 155th year. It is still the headquarters of the Farmington Recreation Association and sees quite a bit of action, although nothing like it did in its youth.

May 21, 1971
In 1816 the Farmington Academy was opened with Mr. Epaphras Goodman as principal, who was succeeded in 1823 by Simeon Hart, Jr., long known and honored by the more familiar name of Deacon Hart. Deacon Hart, who dearly loved to make boys happy, revived in that institution the old school exhibitions. An account of the entertainment concluding his first year in the Academy is preserved in the diary of a very lovely girl of sixteen. As this exhibition had some interesting peculiarities not now associated with dramatic performances, I give a few extracts. The exhibition took place November 13, 1823, in the meetinghouse, where a part of the room was curtained off, and the curtains hung with festoons of roses by the young ladies of the school. She says: "The scholars met at the schoolroom and walked over in procession. We had two flutes which supplied us with music between the scenes .... We had plenty of cake and wine behind the curtains and all was mirth and happiness. Our dialogue was the last --- 'Not at Home'. When that was ended the scholars who had been engaged during the evening with speaking, formed a semi-circle on the stage and Mr. Porter stood in the center and made a prayer, which closed the exercises of the evening".

In 1826 another exhibition took place, but our youthful diarist was not among the number of the happy actors. For two years the grass had grown above her grave. Most of the actors were scholars from other towns, but a few have familiar names. One of the principal scenes was from the then very famous tragedy of Douglas, by John Home, a minister of the Kirk of Scotland.... In this scene, Edward L. Hart, afterwards a very successful and beloved teacher in this town, declaimed.... "My name is Norval. On the Grampian Hills my father feeds his flocks, a frugal swain", and Noah Porter Jr., now the venerable ex-president of Yale, had the part of John, and later in the evening acted the part of a Frenchman in a play called "The Will or the Power of Medicine". The next year N. Porter, Jr., Ralph Cowles and Edward L. Hart recite a colloquy "On Improvements in Education", and Winthrop M. Wadsworth, then a youth of 14, acts the part of John Hickory in "The Country Boy", with Timothy Pitkin, son of the Hon. Timothy Pitkin, as Hotspur. Elijah L. Lewis has the part of Philip in the play of "The Curfew", in which Noah Porter, Jr., is a robber disguised as a minstrel.

November 7, 1971
Further notes regarding the Academy.

School Street, or rather the lane which preceded it, formerly was on the location of the present walk from Main Street east of the library entrance door. The Academy was built just north of this.

It was later called the Chapel by many residents.

Omitted from the list of students mentioned on page 4 of this account was that of Chauncey Rowe, who has somewhere been noted to have been a classmate of John Hooker and Giles M. Porter.

An article in the Farmington Magazine of May 1900, in mentioning the plans by Charles Whitmore for the Memorial to Miss Porter, tells also of future plans for the old academy building. It says: "Miss Pope is to use the old chapel building for a sewing and cooking school, and a nobler purpose it could not serve. It will stand back further on the village green and will be restored and repaired".

Also in the Farmington Magazine, this under the date of August 1901, is the following: The Academy now stands 30 feet east of the Town Clerk's Office. There is a new macadam road on the north line of the church green, taking the place of the dirt road. This probably was the present School Street.

Mary Twitchell Blakely, the widow of the Rev. Quincy Blakely who had died in 1945, wrote in 1954 of the old school formed by Deacon Simeon Hart in 1835, which had superceded the Academy. Her comments will be found in the account of 93 Main Street, Deacon Simeon's home.

June 1, 1973
The Academy was built in 1816 on the corner of Main and School Streets. It was moved further up on School Street (just east of the Town Clerk's office) around 1900 to make place for the Sarah Porter Memorial. The Academy was moved again, between 1919 and 1922, from School Street to its present location.

REFERENCES: "Farmington, Conn., 1906", pp.39,40,41: "Farmington Magazine, Vol.1, no.5, pp.12, 13,14; "Baker & Tilden Atlas 1869", p.33 for 'Chapel'; "Farmington Town Clerks" Hurlburt, 1913, p.142; "Reminiscences" by John Hooker, p.10; Colonial Dames of America pamphlet at Conn. State Library; also MSS letters, votes, first constitution of Academy signed by the
proprietors in 1816, as well as the final vote to sell in 1850.

"Simeon Hart, Edward Tillotson, John Hooker, Thomas Cowles, & Charles Cowles, Trustees appointed by the Proprietors of Farmington Academy, for $366. (three hundred dollars) received to their full satisfaction from the Trustees of the First Ecclesiastical Society of the Town of Farmington conveyed all the interest of said Proprietors in the Farmington Academy and in the building formerly occupied as such Academy which building is set on the public Green in the Village of Farmington and is owned by said Proprietors in connexion with said Ecclesiastical Society (viz) the upper story of said Society and the lower story by said Academy Proprietors, including the addition at the North end of said building and all the benches and other furniture in said building including the stove" November 3, 1849 Vol. 51, p. 197

and in Vol. 51, p 238 under date of September 21, 1850 the same above Committee of the Proprietors gave a similar deed adding "reserving the bell, the benches and seats, the stove and the Philosophical Apparatus in or pertaining to said building and upon the condition that the Society (Ecc) turn the building so that the end shall be toward Main Street and the North side on a line with the present School House of the Middle School district and at the same distance from Julius D. Cowles fence and upon condition that the woodshed and outbuildings be removed from the said building."

The Ecclesiastical Society, now the First Church of Christ Congregational, has since that date been sole owner of the Academy building.