The North-Frost Blacksmith Shop is sited on the north side of Farmington Avenue among historic buildings of similar age or function. Located to the south is a sculpture created by Frederick Russell Jones.
The appearance of this shop has changed some since its construction around 1827. Perhaps incorporating a small shop of older materials in the rear, the building is made of brick. It is oriented gable-to-street with modest overhanging eaves and displays three modern bays on the south elevation and five original bays on the west elevation. Other alterations include the removal of a second-story veranda and the installation of a small balcony on the same level and nine-over-six sash which replaced the original fifteen-over-fifteen sash. A historic photograph dated around 1906 shows the building featured two corbelled chimneys set close to each other on the east elevation. A small entry porch, now removed, also once existed on the same elevation.

In 1824 Lura (Case) North, the widow of Adna North (1785-1822), quit-claimed a blacksmith shop "being my right of dower" to Charles Frost for $35 (FLR 42:360). One year prior to this deed, the executor of Adna North's estate sold the same building along with its two acres and other buildings for $750 to Frost (FLR 41:456). Charles Frost was a blacksmith born in East Elliott in 1797. The shop he purchased probably belonged to Adna North also a blacksmith. Historian Julius Gay records that the shop was incorporated in the rear portion of the existing brick blacksmith shop and dates to 1821 (as inscribed on the foundation), the year before Adna North's death. This suggests that Adna built the rear section of the building and after Frost's purchase, he added to the shop by 1827, giving it its present configuration. In 1874 Frost's estate was sold to William D. Hurlburt of New Haven, a blacksmith born in 1841, for $3250 (FLR 62:320). By 1923 his daughter Clara L. inherited it and soon sold it to Frederick P. Swanston (FLR 79:656) who continued to operate it as a blacksmith shop as well as a fire station garage. It has changed owners since that time.

Architecturally and historically significant, the North-Frost Blacksmith Shop is one of Farmington's only blacksmith shops, a good example of early nineteenth-century commercial architecture.

Sources:
OWNER'S NAME: BRUERTON, JOHN E.) HUNTER, Russell from 1951-res. & business Bruerton 4/19/53
ADDRESS: 772-Farmington Avenue Vol. 113, p 42
DATE BUILT: ca. 1800 FOR: John North

ARCHITECT
MASTER-BUILDER

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FORMER OWNERS: J.E. Bruerton from Harriet S. Haworth 12/3/1940, Vol. 94, p. 328; Harriet Swanston Haworth from Est. of her father, Frederick P. Swanston by Certificate of Distribution 11/10/1939, Vol. 92, p. 553; F.P. Swanston from Clara L. Hurlburt "The Old Blacksmith Shop" 7/25/1923, Vol. 79, p. 656; C.L. Hurlburt from Est. of her mother, Margaret E. Hurlburt, by will, cert. of devise 5/31/1923, Vol. 79, p. 396; M.E. Hurlburt from Est. of her husband, Wm. D. Hurlburt, by will, cert. of devise 3/12/1918, Vol. 74, p. 321; Wm. D. Hurlburt from Est. of Charles Frost, 1 acre, dwellinghouse, blacksmith shop & other bldgs. 1/1/1875, Vol. 62, p. 320; C. Frost from Lura North 3/18/1824 Vol. 42, p. 360, shop only. It would appear that John North, who also had a blacksmith shop at one time at the corner of Mountain Rd. & Main St., had this shop built sometime prior to or about 1800, as it was included, entire, in the deed whereby he gave his son, Adna North"for parental affection, an undivided of 2

REFERENCES: "Farmington, Conn., 1906", p. 9
"Baker & Tilden Atlas, 1869, p. 33 - 'Charles Frost'.

(OVER)
Former Owners, cont.:

acres with dwellinghouse, barn, & the whole of the blacksmith shop" 11/11/1811, Vol. 37, p. 340, with life use to himself and wife, Rhoda. When Adna died, his widow Lura was given the blacksmith shop as part of her dower.
This building is pictured in the Farmington Book on page 9 as Wm. D. Hurlburt's blacksmith shop. Baker and Tilden's 1869 Atlas shows at #774 "Charles Frost", and here shows "B. S.", which the writer takes to mean "blacksmith shop". The land on which it was built was owned in earlier years by the owner of the land at 776 Farmington Avenue. See sketch of that house for earlier ownership of both these pieces of property.

The library card indicates that this building was built ca 1800 by John North who had formerly a blacksmith shop at Main Street and Mountain Road. John North sold that earlier shop in 1886, and purchased the house at 776 Main Street, and including this land, in 1806. There is quite a variety of dates here from which to choose.

It is the writer's opinion that perhaps John North built in the middle of his large lot, and about on the site of 774 Farmington Avenue, a framed wooden blacksmith shop, and that it is still a part of the building at #774, and that this brick building was built later.

Julius Gay, on page 10 of the Farmington Book, says:

"The brick blacksmith shop and the white house adjoining (meaning 774 Farmington Avenue), were built soon after 1823 by Charles Frost".

The original one-story section of this building is inscribed on the rear foundation with the date of 1821. It was of brick, but a definite line of demarcation shows that the second story was a more recent addition to the building.

The former "white house adjoining", as mentioned by Mr. Gay, has a front foundation with the date of 1826 cut into the stone, but the rear section, with no cellar but an old cistern under it for storing rain water, appears to be very much older, and a small section of it may have been a smithy. The writer believes it quite possible that it was the one used by John North.

Records regarding #772 Farmington Avenue, as are on the library card, indicate title passing from John North, Sr., to his son Adna North in 1811, and inherited by Adna's widow Lura, then sold by her to Charles Frost in 1824. Nothing definite is known of Charles Frost by the writer, and he has not been mentioned by Mrs. Hurlburt. Town records show that he was the official Town Blacksmith in 1832.

One Mr. Frost has been mentioned by Russell Lee Jones, and could have been a son of Charles Frost, who died in 1875. Mr. Jones, whose parents and their children took up residence in the present home of Mrs. Austin D. Barney in the summer of 1876, tells of Mr. Frost what is quoted on the following page.

January 25, 1974
"In the house where Mr. A. J. Parker now lives (now known as 778 Farmington Avenue), lived a Mr. Frost, and he had a paint shop in the basement for several years after we came to Farmington. Mr. Frost always wore a stovepipe hat, and about all the painting he did in his little shop was for Miss Porter who, after the schoolgirls had left for the summer vacation, sent all the metal cans and slop jars to Mr. Foster for a new coat of paint".

William D. Hurlburt, blacksmith, and brother of Frederick F. Hurlburt of Garden Street, purchased this brick blacksmith shop in 1875 from the estate of Charles Frost. Mr. Hurlburt was a member of Robert Treadwell's Cornet Band organized in 1876.

Mr. Hurlburt, himself living next door at 774 Farmington Avenue, permitted the second floor of this blacksmith shop building to be used for social purposes.

The Farmington Magazine of May 1900 tells of a Lyceum. It says "the winter of 1874-75 was enlivened by fortnightly meetings dignified by the name of "The Lyceum". Their originator was a Mr. Ward, teacher at North School, and they were begun as a debating club. Later readings were given, tableaux, short farces, all by citizens. Mrs. A. D. Vorce was president of the Lyceum at one time".

Another issue of the Farmington Magazine says: "A club has been started by several enterprising young men of the village who have rented Hurlburt's Hall for their club room". It was called the Union Club, and was once addressed by Mrs. Edward Porritt, teacher at Miss Porter's School, and mother of Lonnie Porritt of Canton.

A. A. Redfield of 45 High Street closed the 1900-1901 season of the Union Club on April 26, 1901, with a discourse on "The Expansion of Connecticut".

A play and other entertainments were given on May 13, 1902. The play was a farce called "A Likely Story", and among those taking parts were:

- Miss Cora Klauser, 34 Mountain Road,
- Miss Jennette Vorce 123 Main Street,
- Miss Hilda Johnson 96 Main Street,
- Miss Daisy Hart 5 Carrington Lane,
- Mr. Charles Foster 42 Mountain Road, rear,
- Dr. John B. Griggs 101 Main Street.

A bowling alley was upstairs at one time, and the drum corps practiced up there.

Margaret E. Hurlburt inherited from her husband in 1918.

January 25, 1974
Around the time that Mrs. Hurlburt inherited this building the upstairs was rented to a Lawrence Murphy. He is said to have come to Farmington with a Mr. Miles who had gone to New York to get married. There is no verification of this. Mr. Murphy, said to have had two artificial legs, was an upholsterer who did beautiful work. He lived in a back room of his shop. He became very ill and Father Dignan sent him to the Little Sisters of the Poor in New Haven, where he later died.

Clara L. Hurlburt inherited from her mother in 1923, and in that same year she sold to Frederick P. Swanston. He held dances upstairs, and a dancing class was held there also, by Rosa Klauer.

While Fred Swanston was the owner of this building the ground floor became the town's fire station and the first fire truck, a Reo, was stationed here. Before that there had only been a hand-drawn hose cart.

Harriet Swanston Haworth, whose husband was the fire chief, inherited this building from her father, Fred Swanston, in 1939, and in 1940 she sold the building to John E. Bruerton. Nothing is known by the writer of his use of the building.

Russell Hunter purchased the building in 1953, and he and his family lived upstairs for a while, later moved to 22 Main Street, which they purchased in 1961.

Mr. Hunter uses part of the ground floor for his own office as a realtor, and rents space to others for offices. He removed the front veranda which shows in the photo on page 9 of the Farmington Book.

January 25, 1974
One of the tenants of this building, having an office here, is Donald O. Hammerberg, Jr., an architect, who, with his wife and family, resides on Wells Drive, Farmington. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hammerberg are very interested in Farmington, in its people, its history, and its present and future well-being.

Mr. Hammerberg, born in Taylors Falls, Minnesota, is the son of Donald Odeen Hammerberg and Ebba Jackson, both of whose families emigrated from Sweden and became neighbors in Minnesota. The senior Hammerbergs presently reside in Storrs, Connecticut, Mr. Hammerberg being Federal Milk Administrator, based in Hartford. Mrs. Hammerberg, Jr., born in Boston, Massachusetts, is the former Sally Elizabeth Spector, daughter of Dr. Nathan Moses Spector and Mary Margaret Crawford, of Willimantic. Dr. Spector was born in Russia, of Jewish descent, and came to America when he was eleven. Mrs. Spector is of English and German ancestry, and was born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

Donald Hammerberg, Jr., is a graduate of Middlebury College and of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a former partner in the firm of Hirsch, Hammerberg and Kaeste of New Britain, coming from there to Farmington, where he has set up his own office. In addition to his continuing search for good architectural design, he has been studying communities and all aspects thereof, in depth, for some five years. Sally Hammerberg was graduated from Windham High School, Willimantic, and from the University of Connecticut. She worked for McGraw-Hill in New York City before her marriage.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Hammerberg are active in community affairs. He is a member of the Farmington Exchange Club and she of the Village Green and Library Association and the League of Women Voters. Both are active in the Farmington Recreation Association.

Their children are Jill, a student at Wheelock College in Boston, and Peri, a student at Farmington High School. Jill has already announced her engagement to Mark B. Fey of Farmington, a student at the University of Connecticut. Their wedding is planned to take place on August 18, 1973.

March 23, 1973