

32 Cutler Street
New London, Connecticut

32 Cutler Street is a multi-family dwelling, constructed of wood, where each floor consists of a single apartment. Typically, these homes were built in the early 20th century as a means of providing housing for newly arrived immigrant families who sought jobs in the factories throughout New England. The apartments were often lived in by extended families or rented out for additional income.

In 1901, lot #41, part of the Colman Cutler farm, (1899), was bought by Oscar and Lena Wegman from Benjamin Armstrong, Walter Perry, and Thomas Williams. These men were prominent citizens who were heavily involved in speculative real estate. In fact, in 1894, some of these men were responsible for the eventual development of nearby Groton Long Point, and formed the Groton Long Point Land Company, Inc. Mr. Wegman was originally from New London but employed with the Connecticut Trust Bank in Wethersfield, CT. He and his wife, Lena, resided in Hartford for the duration of their lives. Possibly, they originally bought the lot as an investment or with the idea of later building on it. In 1904, they decided to sell the lot, and it was purchased by Christina and Carl Hopf.

The Hopfs, both born in Germany in 1860, immigrated to New London in 1883 with their two children. Many Germans settled in New London during the early 1900s due to the area's thriving manufacturing opportunities and were sought out for their skilled craftsmanship. The United States was also appealing to Europeans seeking better economic conditions. We can assume that the Hopfs found New London an advantageous community for their family. They settled into a house on Blackhall Street, and Carl found work as a railroad car inspector at Union Depot. The family grew rapidly with an additional four children born in New London. All together, the Hopfs had six children within nineteen years! Christina sold the property prior to her death in 1914 to Gustav and Pauline Stahr. Carl died in 1924, and both are buried in Jordan Cemetery in Waterford.

In 1915, Gustav and Pauline Stahr paid \$2200 in real estate tax on a dwelling house at 32 Cutler Street. The address first appears in the city directory of 1916 with the Stahrs residing in their new home. Therefore, it appears that the house was built by the couple in 1914. Gustav was born in Buderose, Germany in 1867. He, his wife, and their son, Otto, departed from Bremen in 1898 and settled in New London and became citizens in 1910. Gustav worked as a baker, selling his products to other businesses in the area. Pauline became involved in the German immigrant community and was elected as president of the Edelweiss Lodge in 1911, a year after they became US citizens. We can assume that this club was created for and by the German community as a way to celebrate their traditions. No record of this organization was found in any of the directories, so quite possibly it disbanded prior to WWI due to growing anti-German sentiment. The couple had two more children, Anna and Elsie, who were born in New London. Pauline died in 1919, and Gustav continued to live in the house until his death in 1940. After their parents' deaths, the children inherited their

childhood home and rented it out until it was sold to Mary and Thomas Paul Bonnano in 1949. The Stahr family were owners of their home for thirty five years!

Paul T. Bonnano and Mary Loprinze, born in Ohio, were married in New London and settled on Bank Street. They lived with their son, Paul, and Mary's mother until purchasing the home at 32 Cutler. Paul worked as a steamfitter at Electric Boat while Mary worked as a customer service rep at Hartford National Bank. Michael Cosmos, a previous tenant of the Stahrs as of 1939, continued to rent one of the apartments until 1951. We can assume that both families were living in the same house at that time. In 1965, Paul and Mary bought and moved into a home on Sandy Hollow Road in Waterford. They sold 32 Cutler to Dennis and Phyliss Pezzolesi who lived there until 1978. Mary died in 1994 and Paul in 2006. They are buried in Saint Mary Cemetery.

This short history was prepared by Janet Berggren for New London Landmarks. It is based on property/ deed information provided by Thomas Couser, plaque researcher, and on census, newspaper, and directory information available through Ancestry. com.

