

19 Prospect Street
New London, Connecticut

In 1835, a group of developers led by Sabin Smith, a prosperous merchant, began New London's expansion to the northwest by purchasing property and laying out Prospect Street, subdividing it into building lots. This kind of development contributed to meet the demand of new housing by a rapidly expanding population. It was fueled by the whaling industry, often giving whaling merchants the means to invest their surplus profits. Most of the people investing in the Prospect Street Historic District were either directly involved in the whaling business as mariners, coopers, grocers supplying capital for the voyages, or builders kept active with the booming population.

Sabin Smith sold the land west of Prospect Street for \$1,400 to local investors in November 1837, and three weeks later, he sold the property on the eastern side of the street to Lewis Crandall, William Gray, William Holt and Joseph Skinner for \$1,450. The four men who purchased the land on the east side of Prospect Street divided up their holdings a month later, each receiving approximately 80 feet of frontage on the new street. Building activity began immediately.

Most of the homes constructed on Prospect Street were modest Italianate and Greek Revival structures. The superb quality of design and workmanship illustrated the skills of men such as Lewis Crandall, Jr, a notable local builder, who was responsible for erecting several homes on the street. William T. Holt built his own house, in the Greek Revival style with a later addition of a Colonial Revival entry porch, at 19 Prospect Street (c. 1840-1845) on part of the land he received from Sabin Smith. He mortgaged the house to the town of New London and later sold the adjoining lot to John Richards, a grocer.

William, his wife, and their four children lived at the home until 1868 when it was sold to Leander R. Williams (1815-1889), a retired tinsmith in New London. According to the 1880 census, he lived there with his nephew and wife: Charles, a bookkeeper, and Addie Lyon, a homemaker. At the time, they were in their mid 20s, and William was in his sixties. A middle-aged relative, Mary Williams, also lived there, but she is listed as being ill with tumors. In 1889, Leander sold the house to James N Sterry (1870-1956) and his sister, Charlotte H Sterry.

James married Helen Allen Hovey on 7 December 1892. They were the parents of at least 1 son, Alan. According to newspaper accounts, James worked as an attendant and was a student at Norwich State Hospital. Helen died in 1922 at age fifty three, and he remarried Lizzie Belle Furth (1869-1950) in 1926. Her father, Moris G. Furth, lived with the couple until his death at age 90 in 1928. Originally from Austria, he worked with the Singer Sewing Machine Company as an agent covering different parts of the state for forty five years. During their time in the home, there were also two female Canadian lodgers: Marguerite Mitchell and Alice Lennaelir, both of whom worked as sales ladies in a department store. James and Lizzie are both buried in Jordan Cemetery.

In 1938, Lizzie Belle Furth Sterry sold the house to Edith M (1878-1965) and Mary T Talcott (1889-1965), sisters who were born in Providence, to John and Mary Talcott. John later relocated the family to New London where he worked as an engineer for the railroad. The sisters never married and lived at 19 Prospect Street for the majority of their lives. Edith was a librarian at the New London Public Library, and Mary was a teacher at Williams Memorial Institute. Both sisters were well respected in their fields. As they grew older, Dorothy Love, an English teacher at W.M.I., became a lodger at their residence. The sisters are both buried In Jordan Cemetery in Waterford, CT. The estate of Mary Talcott sold the home to Edwin and Jane Roland in 1971.

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.