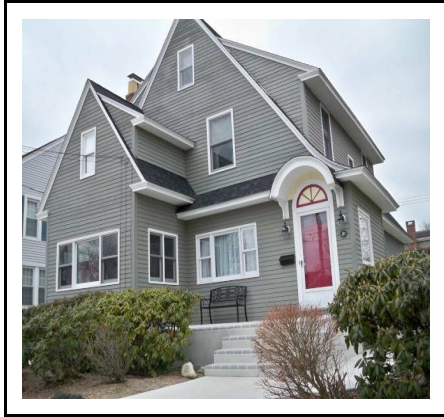


## 20 Parkway South<sup>1</sup>

Archibald S. McFarlane, developer

Alice Crocker Snow, first owner/resident  
1929



The contractor for 20 Parkway South was George Dayton – for developer and realtor, Archibald MacFarlane. It was built with seven rooms, a “sun parlor,” alcove and tile bath, with hardwood floors throughout (*The Day* 16 Feb. 1929). The house was sold to Alice Snow, wife of James Nelson Snow, at the same time that Snow sold a lot on Ocean Avenue to MacFarlane (22 July 1929).

Alice Snow (1877-1975) was the daughter of William E. and Mary (Gardner) Crocker. Alice’s husband, James N. Snow (1880-1940), worked for Gardner Moving and Storage (Alice’s relatives were the owners). James Snow eventually became manager of the storage side of the business.<sup>2</sup> He was a Bulkeley School graduate. Alice graduated from the eighth grade.

The 1930 U.S. Census lists the house at a value of \$12,000. Living with the Snows at that time were their two sons, Harris Gardner Snow (1908-1997) and James Benjamin Snow (1912-1995). The Snows sold the house in 1939 and moved to 42 Sherman Street. (One may well imagine that the Great Depression affected the moving and storage business.) Sherman Street is where James Snow passed away after a long illness in 1940. By 1950 Alice was living at 260 Montauk Avenue and then moved nearby to Perry Street. When she passed away at the age of 96 in 1975, she was living at Beechwood Manor on Vauxhall Street. She was noted as the oldest member of New London’s United Methodist Church. She left two sons, their wives, one grandchild, and three great grandchildren.

The Snows sold the Parkway house in 1939 to Louis Dean. Louis had just married Mildred Cooper of Mount Vernon, New York, and the couple would raise two sons at

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<sup>1</sup> Note that Parkway South or Park Way had various other names in its early years.

<sup>2</sup> Gardner Moving & Storage is one of New London’s oldest companies, long owned by one of New London’s oldest families. Though no longer in the Gardner family, the company possesses a large archives yet to be mined by any historian. Perhaps the last Gardner to manage the company was Charles Benjamin Gardner (1890-1977), Alice Snow’s first cousin, who is remembered today for his famous bottle collection, which fetched a record \$1.8 million at Skinner’s in 1975. The moving company was started by William Benjamin Gardner (1836-1917) to accommodate the comings and goings and storage requirements of the Pequot colonists. His ancestors owned a good deal of today’s lower Ocean Avenue, including the “Old Homestead” at 802 Ocean, a house dating from the early 1700s. The next Gardner in the moving business was William’s son, Benjamin Billings Gardner (1865-1915), and then Charles B. Gardner mentioned above, who had no offspring.

20 Parkway South: Richard and Barry. The family belonged to Beth El Synagogue in New London.

Louis Dean (1905-1992) was born in New London, the son of Benjamin Dien and Rose Luchanskaya, both immigrants from Kiev. Louis had six siblings, including a younger brother, the well-known New London attorney, Harold Dean (1910-2003), whose college and law school expenses were subsidized by Louis. Louis owned and ran Dean's Grill and Casino on Route 1, Poquonnock Bridge, Groton. Before that, with his older brother Irving Dean ("Izzie") (1900-1988), he ran a successful concession at Ocean Beach until the Hurricane of 1938.

The 1940 census values the Deans' home at 20 Parkway South at \$7,300. The couple sold the house in 1967 and moved to a ranch with water views at 74 Quinnipeg. The couple moved to Miami Beach in 1976, where Louis passed away in 1992 and Mildred in 1995.

### Earlier History

The title chain for the property at 20 Parkway South goes back to Amelia Frances Guthrie of New York in 1925, when she was selling numerous parcels of land to Pequot Realty. Amelia (Lamson) Lehman Guthrie (1861-1957) was the wealthy widow, first of Frederick Leo Lehman (1856-1896) with whom she had three sons, and then of Charles Strong Guthrie (1860-1906), a steel magnet from Ohio.

Amelia married Guthrie in 1900, and they developed a 12-acre summer estate overlooking Long Island Sound in the Pequot section, the house known as Meadow Court (1902), now the Lighthouse Inn.<sup>3</sup> The property was purchased from James D. Lynch, a great advocate of development in New London and the creator of Boulevard (later Montauk Avenue and Lower Boulevard) and the trolley line to Ocean Beach. Top soil from the future Meadow Court estate had



The lily pond in front of Meadow Court was part of acres of wildflower gardens designed by the Olmsted firm.

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<sup>3</sup> In 1927 the main house became the Lighthouse Inn and was a successful hotel and restaurant for years. Its height of popularity was in the 1940s when it was favored by a number of movie stars, including Bette Davis and Joan Crawford. The Lighthouse Inn was first opened by Frederic M. Mercer, president of Pequot Realty, and J.P. Armstrong Taylor, a silk industry executive, who lived at 979 Pequot before moving to Greenwich. Taylor (1882-1962), Yale, 1904. Brainerd & Armstrong Silk Company which became in 1922 Corticelli Silk Co.

previously been stripped, and so Guthrie purchased a lot on Alewife Cove and brought in 13,000 truckloads of soil from there to the Meadow Court estate (*The Day*, 30 July 1979).

Guthrie died in 1906, age 43. The couple had lived primarily in New York, and after Guthrie's death, Amelia lived mainly in Paris.<sup>4</sup>

Meadow Court (on the National Register) was built in the Mediterranean style designed by William Ralph Emerson. The surrounding grounds were particularly noteworthy, containing six acres of wildflower meadows, designed by the Olmsted Brothers. The mansion had 30 rooms and eight bathrooms along with greenhouses and outbuildings. In 1912, *American Homes and Gardens* magazine reflected:

There are few homes in America more attractively situated than the property of Mrs. Charles S. Guthrie, in New London, CT. This is the embodiment of the ideas of what a house should be.

Indeed, Amelia was a professional interior decorator in her early years. By the early 1920s she was summering on Long Island and elsewhere and renting out Meadow Court. In 1925 she sold her New London property to Pequot Realty for residential building lots and remained an investor in the company for some years. The original idea was to provide building lots for middle class homes. The mansion itself was to be made into apartments, but it soon was developed into a seaside hotel.

Frances Amelia Guthrie died at her home in New York City at 160 East 72 Street, in 1957 at age 95.

The Pequot Realty Company handled what was called the Guthrie Place Development (*The Day*, 21 Sept. 1926). Frederic W. Mercer was the company's president. The company purchased beach rights from Amelia Guthrie in 1925 (*The Day*, 22 Jan. 1969) and those rights were conveyed along with the company's 95 lots to the new owners. Guthrie Beach Association took on the maintenance and assessments in 1944, and Pequot Realty dissolved in 1945.

Archibald Steward McFarlane (1879-1953) was a real estate developer from Scotland who lived at 248 Montauk Avenue with his sister, Myra Lathrop, and his in-laws. McFarlane built at least one two-story frame house on Lester Street in 1920, according to reported permits (*The Norwich Bulletin*, 5 July 1920) and besides 20 Parkway South, was no doubt involved in the building and sale of many homes in the vicinity.

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<sup>4</sup> Amelia's children: Frederick Victor Lehman (1885-?); Alexander Hay Lehman (1889-1946) who married Dorothea Keasby at the Pequot Chapel in 1914; and Charles Lamson Lehman (1892-1954).

In an earlier period, much of this section of New London belonged to the Jerome family. The first of the Jeromes in New London was John Jerome who came about 1750. This John had many descendants, one of whom was Benjamin Willis Jerome (1851-1906), who married in 1891 Sarah Hathaway of Suffield, Connecticut.<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Willis was the owner of the old Jerome homestead (1705) at what today's 939 Pequot Avenue (yet to be documented by NLLandmarks). He owned much other real estate in New London even before his father left him more property. He tried to develop what he called Osprey Beach into a day-trippers' resort, much to the chagrin of the Pequot Colonists. Its success was short-lived, and he gradually sold off his New London real estate and moved to Indian River, Florida, where he was an early orange grower. Benjamin Willis and Sarah Jerome spent winters in West Palm Beach, long before it was a resort, and summers in New London. City Directories list him on Ocean Avenue, though he supposedly lived in the old homestead during the summer.

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*The narrative above starts with title information supplied by Tom Couser for New London Landmarks. From there, we look at various primary and secondary sources that are readily available online, including local and family histories, cemetery and military service records, and where supplied by the current owner, oral history. Generally, our research concentrates on the home's earliest owners. It is by no means exhaustive and does not attempt to document families after the last available U.S. Census in 1950. – Mary Beth Baker, November 22, 2024.*

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<sup>5</sup> After Benjamin Willis Jerome died, Sara Hathaway Jerome married E.H. Leath and lived in Wilson, N.C. Her childhood home in Suffield, CT, is a historic house museum, the Phelps-Hatheway House.