



**Herbert B. Prentice
C. 1930
46 Woodlawn Road
New London, Connecticut**

The house built at 46 Woodlawn Road is situated near the top of the hill formed by the long high ridgeline that defines Ocean Avenue and then slopes westward down to Alewife Cove. This part of south New London, once the site of farms, large estates and other land in its natural state, was one of the last areas of the city to be developed for residential housing. By 1929 the land had been subdivided and Herbert Browning Prentice bought the tract known as Woodlawn Terrace from the estate of Gilbert Lehmer.¹ It was perhaps not the most auspicious time to invest in real estate.

According to research conducted by Mary Beth Baker, “Herbert Browning Prentice (1876-1945) was a carpenter and building contractor in New London. One of eleven children, he was born in North Stonington where the Prentice family had, since colonial times, been leading and legion. He moved to New London with his wife, Maude E. (Ladley) Prentice (1879-1984), and they had two children: Arthur and Grace. They lived at a number of addresses in New London, but never at Woodlawn Road. In the 1930s and ‘40s they rented at 49 Nameaug, 770 Williams, and 123 Mohegan Avenue.” From title research conducted on buildings in this area we know that Prentice built some houses including number 23 Woodlawn but he also sold lots to other builders. He was also active in house construction in the area of Connecticut College and the Coast Guard Academy. According to a story that appeared in *The Day* in 1930, changes were being made to improve the exterior of the Prentice home on Nameaug Avenue and a house was being built for him on Woodlawn. (Unfortunately, the story did not include street numbers.)

Prentice may have overextended himself financially. On July 14, 1936 a notice appeared in

¹ As described in contemporary newspaper accounts, what later was called Woodlawn Terrace was once part of the complicated litigation between various landowners, land speculators and the city involving much of the land in the southern end of town, taking into account the “improvements” such as filling in marshes, ponds and wetlands that had already been made. The Lynch-Lehmer-Johnson case to decide the partition of the land was heard in 1885 before an appointed board of commissioners in a “decision...likely to affect the development of the city in that direction for many years to come.” Prentice bought the land from the estate of Gilbert Lehmer who in turn had inherited it from the estate of his father, J. D. Lehmer of Cincinnati and frequent summer resident of New London.

The Day declaring in U.S. District Court in New London that “Herbert B. Prentice was duly adjudicated a bankrupt” and that his creditors could present claims against his remaining assets. According to the title research conducted by Tom Couser, the parcel of land that included what later became 46 Woodlawn became the property of the New London National City Bank in 1935. Since the parcel included buildings, it is likely that Prentice may already have built a house there, possibly with a garage. At any rate, the 1940 New London directory shows a listing for 46 Woodlawn (vacant) but it is not listed in the 1939 directory.

At the end of 1940, Mrs. Esther C. Turello bought the property at 46 Woodlawn from the New London National City Bank. Mrs. Turello, the former Esther C. Ehn of West Hartford who married Anthony P Turello in 1937, lived next door at number 42 Woodlawn. Mr. Turello was a former policeman from New London, and eventually they were the co-owners of the A. P. Turello Insurance Agency. Mrs. Turello also sold real estate and, at the time of the sale of 46 Woodlawn, Mr. Turello was listed as a contractor in the directories. They continued to live at 42 Woodlawn for the rest of their lives. In 1941 Esther Turello sold the house next door at 46 Woodlawn to William J. Murphy and his wife Mabel M. Murphy.

The Murphys were the first family to live at 46 Woodlawn although that was only for a short period of time and not much biographical information can be found about them. The 1941 New London directory lists William J. Murphy, radio engineer in the US Navy living at 46 Woodlawn with his wife Mabel M. and William J. Murphy, Jr., who was an apprentice machinist at Electric Boat. The 1930 census lists a William J. Murphy, age 30, married, born in Pennsylvania, at the submarine base in Groton. Unfortunately, in the 1947 directory Mrs. Murphy is listed as a widow. It is also the same year that the city of New London announced a sewer line project to Woodland Road. In 1948 Mrs. Murphy sold the house to Harold B. Marchese.

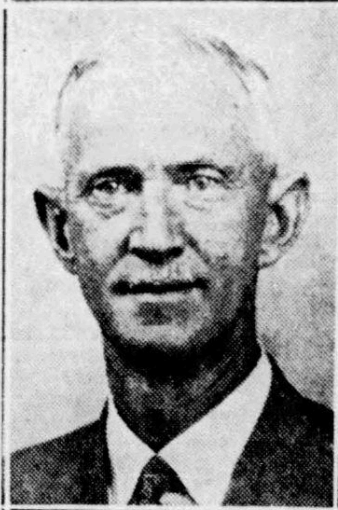
Harold B. Marchese (1899-1961) was from W. Springfield, Massachusetts but lived much of his adult life in New London where he worked for the National Cash Register Company for 47 years. He was active in the Masons, the Kiwanis Club and served on the board of directors of the YMCA. A notice in *The Day* in 1960 records that Mr. Marchese added an extension to the garage of his house at 46 Woodlawn to make room for a new car. At the time of his death in 1961, he was married to the former Mary Virginia Young (1912-1993), who was born in Norwich. After her husband's death Mrs. Marchese inherited his estate and continued to own 46 Woodlawn until 1967. However, in July 1966, a notice was placed in *The Day* to announce the marriage intentions of Isadore Tarnapol, merchant, of 67 Woodlawn, and Virginia Marchese, registered nurse. Isadore Tarnapol, the widower of Helen Tarnapol, was the owner of Tarny's, a men's clothing store on Bank Street.

The new Mrs. Tarnapol moved into her husband's house at 67 Woodlawn and, in 1967, sold 46 Woodlawn to Mrs. Mary E. Romano whose previous address was 20 Jefferson Avenue in New London. Mrs. Romano was the former Mary Elizabeth Miceli (1909-1989). She was born in Tusa, Sicily, the town of origin of many members of the Italian American community in New London. She was divorced from James Francis Romano, also from New London, from whom she was granted an uncontested divorce in 1942, with custody of their two minor children given

to the mother and the father ordered to pay support. Mrs. Romano was an active member of the Tusana Ladies' Society and other Italian American women's groups. Her son, Joseph J. Romano "Sonny" of Rocky Neck, CT, who was born and raised in the Shaw Street neighborhood and a graduate of Chapman Tech, sold the house in 1997 to Matthew J. Gallagher who was the executive director of the American Red Cross of Southeastern Connecticut from about 1995 to 2001.

This short history was prepared by Laurie M. Deredita 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 and on other information sources publicly available on the Internet and in print including the digital archives of *The Day* newspaper. January 2025

H. B. Prentice, Builder, Dies At Age of 68



Herbert B. Prentice, 68, of Bolles hill, Quaker Hill, a building contractor and building developer in this city for 35 years, died early this morning at the Lawrence Memorial hospital where he was admitted as a patient Wednesday after being stricken by a cerebral hemorrhage while eating lunch at the yard of the City Lumber Co. of Bridgeport in Groton where he lately had been employed.

Mr. Prentice, a former resident of this city and widely known here, was rushed to the hospital when he collapsed and remained on the critical list until he succumbed.

Born in North Stonington, he was the son of Paul and Amanda Prentice. He lived in this city for 45 years. He resided at 770 Williams street but some months ago moved to the old Ladley homestead in Quaker Hill.

Mr. Prentice did considerable building work in this area. He developed the section in the vicinity of Woodlawn and Greenway roads, building homes and then selling them. He also built some homes and then sold them in the section near Connecticut college. He had worked at the Electric Boat Co. for two years before going with the Bridgeport concern some months ago.

Mr. Prentice, a bridge enthusiast, took part in many bridge tournaments locally. He was a member of the former John Winthrop club and was prominent in bridge activities there.

He is survived by his wife, Maude; a son, Arthur B. Prentice of this city; two brothers, Albertus and Webster Prentice, both of Groton; seven sisters, Mrs. Susan Simpson and Mrs. N. Asa Richards of Quaker Hill, Mrs. Della Bosworth and Mrs. Dorothy Petty of this city, Mrs. Sadie Hammil and Miss Alice Prentice of Groton and Mrs. Agnes Watt of Poquonoc Bridge, and three grandchildren.

