



In-Depth First Settler Profile: *Benjamin Hands (1682) /* *Sarah (Ward) Hands*

Name: Benjamin Hands

Birth: Abt. 1659, Little Bourton, Parish of Cropredy, Oxfordshire, England (*NEHGSR*, vol. 15, p. 165)

Emigration: From London, England to Boston, Mass. about 1681; to Middletown, Conn. in 1682 (*Catalogue of the Names of the Early Puritan Settlers of the Colony of Connecticut*/Hinman, 1852) [**Compiler's note:** According to information on his gravestone, he lived in Middletown for 58 years (*NEHGSR*, vol. 15, p. 165).]

Death: January 8, 1739/40, Middletown, Conn. (*NEHGSR*, vol. 15, p. 165) [**Compiler's note:** BCVR incorrectly states that he died July 8, 1739/40.]

Occupation & Public Service: Husbandman (MLR vol. 2, p. 80)

Marriage: m. Sarah Ward, June 14, 1688, Middletown, Conn. (b. December 18, 1667, Middletown, Conn.; d. April 27, 1744, Middletown, Conn.) She was the daughter of William and Phebe Ward of Middletown, Conn. (SAV) [**Compiler's note:** Will of William Ward of Middletown, dated December 25, 1688, "to my daughter Sarah Hand;" codicil dated March 27, 1690, "to my sons-in-law, Samuel Hall and Benjamin Hand." (MAN vol. 1, p. 515); on July 8, 1731, Benjamin Hands and Sarah his wife quitclaimed all title in land "laid out in right of our honored father William Ward decd" (MLR vol. 6, p. 75).]

Parents: Benjamin and Katheren Hands of Little Bourton, Oxfordshire, England (*Catalogue of the Names of the Early Puritan Settlers of the Colony of Conn.*, by Royal Ralph Hinman, 1852) [**Compiler's note:** On August 14, 1689, Ensign William Cheney for the good will and affection I bear to Benjamin Hands nephew to Ann my wife lately deceased (MLR vol. 2, p. 30).]

Children: (MLR vol. 1, p. 45½; BCVR)

(1) Ann Hands, b. January 13, 1689/90, Middletown, Conn.; d. June 23, 1760, Middletown, Conn. (unmarried) [**Compiler's note:** On February 4, 1734/5, Benjamin Hands to my daughter Ann Hands (MLR vol. 6, p. 251).]

(2) Sarah Hands, b. July 29, 1697, Middletown, Conn.; d. August 6, 1719, Middletown, Conn. (unmarried) [**Compiler's note:** "Here lies the Body of Sarah, Daughter of Mr Benjamin & Mrs Sarah Hands who died Aug 16th, 1719, aged 22 years & 8 days" (*NEHGSR*, vol. 15, p. 165).]

(3) Phebe Hands, b. July 14, 1702, Middletown, Conn.; d. December 14, 1782, Middletown, Conn.; m. John Rockwell, January 3, 1733/4, Middletown, Conn. (5 children) [**Compiler's note:** BCVR incorrectly states their marriage as July 3, 1733/4;

however, July is never double dated. Their first child was born on March 26, 1735 (BCVR); on February 4, 1734/5, Benjamin Hands referred to my daughter Phebe now the wife of John Rockwell (MLR vol. 6, p. 251).]

(4) Benjamin Hands, b. October 4, 1706, Middletown, Conn.; d. October 2, 1767, Middletown, Conn. (Cromwell Church Records); m. Hannah Johnson, February 6, 1733/4, Middletown, Conn. (8 children) [**Compiler's note:** On April 20, 1747, conveyed nine acres to "my sisters Ann Hands and Phebe the wife of John Rockwell" (MLR vol. 12, p. 307); on December 31, 1751, "our brother in law Benjamin Hands of Middletown" land that was "our Honrd. Father's Mr. John Johnson of New Haven, decd" (*NEHGSR* vol. 56, p. 136).]

Residence/Property: On August 14, 1689, Ensign William Cheney for the good will and affection I bear to Benjamin Hands nephew to Ann my wife lately deceased conveyed seven acre homelot bounded south on Daniel Hubbard north on William Cheney and east & west on highway, also four acres of meadow lying at wongogue on the east side of the great river (MLR vol. 2, p. 30); on January 16, 1700/1, Benjamin Hands exchanged the four acres of meadowland with his brother-in-law Sgt. William Ward for seven acres in the wood lots (MLR vol. 2, p. 80-81); on September 17, 1704, William Cheney bequeathed "to my kinsman Benjamin Hand" eighty acres in the southernmost range of lots, (MAN vol. 2, p. 39-40)

Will: Probate not found in Manwaring; Benjamin Hands conveyed his real estate to his three surviving children before his death. On February 4, 1734/5, Benjamin Hands of Middletown in consideration of parental love and fatherly affection that I have for my only son Benjamin Hands conveyed seven acre homelot where I now dwell bounded east and west on highway north on Cheney Clark and John Hurlbut Junior south on Edward Foster, reserving "for my self and for my wife during our natural life the one equal half of said lands;" half the lotment that was originally "my Honrd uncle William Cheney decd," containing forty acres; eight acres in lotment of land southward from town (MLR vol. 6, p. 206-207); on February 4, 1734/5, Benjamin Hands in consideration of parental love and fatherly affection for my two daughters Ann Hands and Phebe now the wife of John Rockwell conveyed forty acres in the southernmost range of lots bounded westerly on the other part of the same lot which was originally "my Honrd unkle's William Cheney decd." (MLR vol. 6, p. 251)

Burial Location: Riverside Cemetery, Middletown, Conn.; called Old Burying Place when information was copied in 1861, "Here lies Interrd the Body of Mr Benjamin Hands, son of Mr Benjamin Hands in Great Britain. He was born in the County of Oxford and in the Parish of Cropody, and lived in Middletown 58 years, who died January the 8th, 1740, in the 82nd year of his Age; Here lies the Body of Mrs. Sarah Hands, Widow of Mr Benjamin Hands, who died April 27th, 1744, in the 77th year of her age." (*NEHGSR*, vol. 15, p. 165)



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Notes:

(SAV): "HANDS, BENJAMIN, Middletown, m. 14 June 1688, Sarah, d. of William Ward, had Ann, b. 13 Jan. 1690; Sarah, 29 July 1697; Phebe, 14 July 1702; Benjamin, 4 Oct. 1706; and Ann; and d. 8 Jan. 1740. His wid. d. 27 Apr. 1744.

(NEGHSR): "Benjamin Hands m. Sarah Ward, Jun 14, 1688. 1. Anna, b. Jan 13, 1689-90; 2. Sarah, b. July 29, 1697; 3. Phebe, b. July 14, 1702; 4. Benjamin, b. Oct. 4, 1706; 5. Ann, b. June 23 17__ . Benjamin Senr. d. Jan. 8, 1739-40. Sarah, his widow, d. April 27, 1744." (vol. 14, p. 66)

(*A Catalogue of the Names of the Early Puritan Settlers of the Colony of Connecticut, by Royal Ralph Hinman, 1852*): "For some cause Mr. Cheeney sent to England, to his brother-in-law Hands, to send his son, Benjamin Hands, to him at Middletown, Conn., and he would make him his heir ... He gave Benjamin Hands, his kinsman (nephew), 80 acres of land; ... In the will he made in 1699, he noticed Anne Hand, daughter of Benjamin Hand; ... By Hand's letter it appears that Wm. Cheeney and Benjamin Hands, his nephew, were from Little Bo[ur]ton, near [B]anbury, in Oxfordshire, England." [Compiler's note: William Cheney's 1699 will was nullified by his 1704 will.]

(*A Catalogue of the Names of the Early Puritan Settlers of the Colony of Connecticut, by Royal Ralph Hinman, 1852*): "Cheeney, Mr. William, of Middletown, not having children of his own, sent to England for Benjamin Hand, his nephew, to come to Middletown, Conn., and become heir to his estate. He came to Boston, in Mass., and on the 20th of Feb., 1681, Hand wrote a letter to his 'Dear loving uncle and aunt William and Ann Cheeney, of Middletown, from yr cousin, Benjamin Hands son of your dear brother Benjamin and Katheren Hands of little bo[ur]ton near [B]anbury in Oxfordshire' – also stating the opposition he met with at home in his coming, and his strong desire to come to him that he lived in London, &c., that he had not money to pay his passage, that he was in distress at Boston, Mass., out of money and business, and owned £6 toward his passage and desired his uncle Cheeney to redeem him for his passage and he would be his trusty and faithful servant. Also to pay £3 which a friend had paid for him in London. That he had come to a strange place among strangers, except Mr. Whitwell or Wilson, who was kind to him, imploring his uncle and aunt Cheeney to redeem him ... On the trial as to the estate of Mr. Cheeney, Caleb Stanley testified, then aged about 60, that soon after Benjn Hand come from England, Mr. Cheeney came to his house in Hartford, and told him sd Benjn was his kinsman, and he sent for him to be his heir ... Mr. Cheeney called for his young kinsman, for Mr. Standly to see him, being much taken with him, and told before his wife that he had sent to Engld for the young man to be his heir, and he should be his heir, &c.; that

she said her husband would be sorry he ever sent for him to come from Engld that Cheeny's wife desired her husband to send for one of the Cheeneys, that was nearer of kin to him ... By the will sd Cheeny dated March 3, 1699, he gave Anne Hand, daughter of Benjn, one cow as a token of his love for her ... Mr. Wm. Cheeny made a second will, dated Sept. 20, 1704, in which he gave his kinsman, Benjamin Hands, of Middletown eighty acres of land in the second part of the first division of land in Middletown."

(*A Catalogue of the Names of the Early Puritan Settlers of the Colony of Connecticut, by Royal Ralph Hinman, 1852*): "This will was proved in court at Hartford. Dec. 6, 1705 upon which a long trial was had before the court. It was proved by Isaac Johnson, Sen., that in 1681-2, Ensign Wm. Cheeny was informed that he had a cousin who had come to Boston from England, which he had so often sent for to his brother Hands to send one of his sons to enjoy what God had given him in New England. Isaac Johnson and his wife testified that Ensign Cheny employed said Isaac to go to Boston, to look up his cousin if to be found there, and that Wm. Cheney told him that if the boy's name was Cheney, he would not own him, but if he was his brother Hand's son then he would bring him up (to Middletown from Boston) that he brought him, and Ensign Cheeny and his wife received him as a cousin, the son of their brother Hands: testified Dec. 5, 1705 ... John Hall, aged about 56 years, testified that some time before Mr. Cheeny married his second wife, he was informed that Mr. Cheeny had made a second will, in which he had given to Benjamin Hands little or nothing, and he talked with Mr. Cheeny about it, and that Cheeny said it was true ... Worshipful John Hamlin and Noadiah Russell testified, that about fourteen years previous, they had certain knowledge that Mr. Cheeny had a will, to which they were witnesses, in which he gave the town of Middletown for the use of a school, viz., his house and home-lot in Middletown. Anna Coe, alias Everts, testified, that after Mr. Cheeny married his second wife, he then being sick, he heard Mrs. Abigail Clark say, that her father Cheny had sent for Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Russell to make his will, and perceived Abigail and her mother had much concern about the matter. Joseph Miller testified that some time after his master was married to his second wife, he discovered his mistress was very discontented; that he overheard a discourse with his master for making such a will; that she often cried, and she told his master Cheeny that if that will should stand, he had as good turn them out doors, and said she knew he had given a great part of his estate to his cousin Benjamin Hands."

(*A Catalogue of the Names of the Early Puritan Settlers of the Colony of Connecticut, by Royal Ralph Hinman, 1852*): "It will be noticed that Joseph Hand was at Guilford several years before Benjamin Hand came from England to Boston and Middletown, and there is no evidence found they were relatives." [Compiler's note: Benjamin Hand of Guilford, son of Joseph Hand, was a deputy to the General Assembly in



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1744, while Benjamin Hands of Middletown died in 1740
(*Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, 1636-1776*, vol. 9,
p. 2).]

(*Records of First Church of Christ, Congregational, Middletown, Connecticut, 1668-1870*): On February 16, 1689/90, Anne, daughter of Benjamin & Sarah Hands, was baptized “ye mother owning the covenant” (p. 39); on October 15, 1693, Sarah ye wife of Benjamin Hands was admitted to full communion (p. 43); on August 1, 1697, Sarah, daughter of Benjamin & Sarah Hands, was baptized (p. 50); on July 19, 1702, Phebe, daughter of Ben: & Sarah Hands, was baptized (p. 58); on October 6, 1706, Benjamin, son of Benjamin and

Sarah Hands, was baptized (p. 64); on March 15, 1713, Anne, the daughter of Benjamin Hands, was admitted to full communion (p. 76).

(**MLR**): On January 9, 1716/7, Benjamin Hands in consideration of the sum of thirty one shillings conveyed to Daniel Hall land lying on the east side of the Great River within the last three miles granted to the town containing thirty one acres being the 57th lot drawn for by the said Benjamin Hands though not as yet laid out (vol. 4, p. 57); on July 28, 1735, Benjamin Hands of Middletown with Sarah my wife in consideration of eleven pounds received from Giles Hall conveyed land in the fourth division on the east side of the Great River lately laid out in the right of the said Sarah bounded east and south on highways north on Halls own land west on land laid out to Nathaniel Brown deceased (vol. 7, p. 272).

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Abbreviation code used in SMFSD
biographical sketches and in-depth profiles:

(**MVR**) Middletown Vital Records (originals at Middletown City Hall, Middletown, Conn.; also available on microfilm at Russell Library, Middletown, Conn.)

(**BCVR**) *The Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records* (original index at Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Conn.; printed index available from Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Md.; digitized index available on CD-ROM as part of *The Ricker Compilation of Vital Records of Early Connecticut*, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Md.)

(**MLR**) *Middletown Land Records* (originals at Middletown City Hall, Middletown, Conn.; also available on microfilm at Russell Library, Middletown, Conn.)

(**MAN**) *Digest of Connecticut Probate Records*, Hartford District (Manwaring, Charles William. *A Digest of the Early Connecticut Probate Records*. Originally published 1904-1906; reprinted 1995. Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995.)

(**CBRMC**) *Commemorative Biographical Record of Middlesex County, Connecticut, Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens, and Many of the Early Settled Families*. Chicago, Ill.: J.H. Beers & Co., 1903.

(**MUH**) *Middletown Upper Houses* (Adams, Charles C. *Middletown Upper Houses, A History of the North Society of Middletown, Connecticut from 1650 to 1800 with Genealogical and Biographical Chapters on Early Families*. New York, N.Y.: The Grafton Press, 1908.)

(**FFS**) Frank Farnsworth Starr (“The Settlers of Mattabesec 1650-1660,” *Middletown Penny Press*, Oct. 11, 1900; also published in the *Middletown Tribune* 250th Anniversary supplement.)

(**CAF**) *Centennial Address of Rev. David Field*. (Field, David D. *Centennial Address: With Historical Sketches of Cromwell, Portland, Chatham, Middle Haddam, Middletown, and its Parishes*. Middletown, Conn.: W.B. Casey, 1853.)

(**GMB**) *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633* (Anderson, Robert Charles, FASG. *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620-1633, Vol. I-III*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1996.)

(**SAV**) *Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England* (Savage, James. *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England, Showing Three Generations of Those Who Came Before May, 1692, on the Basis of Farmer's Register*. Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown & Co., 1860-1862.)

(**GFHC**) *Genealogical & Family History of the State of Connecticut* (Cutter, William Richard. *Genealogical and Family History of the State of Connecticut: A Record of the Achievements of Her People in the Making of a Commonwealth and the Founding of a Nation*. New York, N.Y.: Lewis Publishing Co., 1911.)

(**HMC**) *The History of Middlesex County* (Henry Whittemore, ed. *The History of Middlesex County 1635-1885*. New York, N.Y.: J.H. Beers & Co., 1884)

(**RPCC**) *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639-1663* (Adams, Arthur W., ed. *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut 1639-1663*. Hartford, Conn.: Connecticut Historical Society, 1928.)

(**HCCM**) *Hartford County Court Minutes, 1663-1687* (Ullmann, Helen Schatvet, CG, FASG., ed. *Hartford County, Conn., County Court Minutes, Vol. 3 & 4, 1663-1687, 1697*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2005.)

(**NEHGSR**) *NEHGS Register (New England Historical and Genealogical Register)*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1847-2007.) (Online database available at NewEnglandAncestors.org)

(**TAG**) *The American Genealogist* (articles by Donald Lines Jacobus, ed., 1922-1971) (*The American Genealogist*. New Haven, Conn.: D.L. Jacobus, 1922-1971)