



The Middler

NEWSLETTER of the SOCIETY of MIDDLETOWN FIRST SETTLERS DESCENDANTS
CONNECTICUT, U.S.A.

Vol. 5, No. 2

Fall 2005

FROM THE COMMANDER

Mark your calendar: Planning ramps up for Aug. 18-20, 2006 meeting in Middletown

Greetings to all members:

I want to introduce you to the new editor of *The Middler*, Reginald W. Bacon. He comes from a publishing background, and I know he will bring a fresher, more informative, and complete newsletter than we have had. I am very pleased and grateful that he has consented to this task.

August 18-20, 2006 is our regularly scheduled triennial meeting, as called for in our constitution and bylaws. So far we have had dismal response to our inquiry as to whether people think they will come for this meeting. Therefore we changed the date so that it is not over the Labor Day weekend. We hope this makes a difference and we will see more there. This is an election meeting

and we need as many members there as possible.

We are going to have the meeting in a place where costs are minimal. We tried the all-in-one-place idea and found it is too costly with so few attending. So we will try to book a block of rooms at a motel or hotel in the area, but are looking at the Godfrey Library or other place for the meetings. Some aspects of the one place idea were good. We were able to have a gathering place and we will strive to have that again somehow. Planned times for research at various libraries will also be available. We are still getting ideas on activities, etc. We will also find a restaurant for our banquet. We all had a wonderful time in 2003 even

We changed the date so it is not over the Labor Day weekend. We hope this makes a difference and we will see more there. This is an election meeting and we need as many members there as possible.

**Barbara Stenberg
Commander, SMFSD**

though the group was small, and we will do so again this time I am certain. I hope to see many of you next August 18-21 in Middletown.

In the six years since our founding, the officers have been working to make it a good organization and one in which you can be proud to belong. Are we there yet? Not by a long shot, but we continue to improve things slowly. We do ask for people to step up to the plate and support our efforts and our meetings. We are always willing to listen to suggestions and ideas from you. We are convinced the potential for growth is there. We have to find what gives people the most incentive to join. One thing we know is that there are

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FROM THE EDITOR

New editor's ancestral lines all tangled up in Middletown

Hello Middletown Cousins:

As you may know, our Commander, Barbara Stenberg, has been prospecting for a new *Middler* editor. Several months ago I responded to this convergence of interest and opportu-

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MEMBER NOTES

SMFSD Founder Gale Cornwell relocates, looks toward '06 meeting

In an e-mail communication to SMFSD officers in early September, Gale Cornwell, the organization's founder, announced his relocation to Carmichael, Calif., near Sacramento, effective Sept. 9, 2005. His new address: Atria Seniors Facility, 2426 Garfield Ave., #B-1, Carmichael, CA 95608; phone: (916) 977-0844. Gale wrote "I'm doing OK and good Lord willing will attend (SMFSD meeting) in 2006. I will be 80+ then but if alive and kicking will see you in Middletown. Please advise all concerned."

(Editor's note: Many would agree that the "all concerned" referred to includes the entire SMFSD membership that is indebted to Gale Cornwell's initiative and energy in founding the organization in 2000.)

From Donald A. Sage of Roseville Minn., descendant of David Sage:

"I have been doing quite a lot of research on the Sage name and the origin of the Sage name in America from **David Sage** (b. 1639). I was informed and sent a list by the Godfrey Library of 10 pages (index) of Sage names and events listed in the Barbour Collection and listed under Middletown, Conn. I don't think there has been a current & complete updated genealogy of the Sage family for many years. I am trying to put together our branch and have about 12 generations including myself pretty much sorted out. (I think?). The first plat map of

Middletown showing those original inhabitants might make a good story to review in *The Middler* someday."

From Averill Smith Pappalardo of Wellesley, Mass., a descendant of George Hubbard:

"In looking over the list of the First Settlers, I have just realized that I have a little information on another of the men, **William Smith**. William moved around a lot. He was in Wethersfield, died in Farmington, but was also in Middletown in 1649, according to Savage. I am not descended from him, but from his brother Simon, who was a first settler of Haddam, Conn. I have not spent a great deal of time researching William, but have accumulated this while searching for Simon. I used to have William's wife as Elizabeth Standley; now have her with a question mark since I can't

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SOCIETY of MIDDLETOWN
FIRST SETTLERS DESCENDANTS
1650-1700 - Middletown, Connecticut, U.S.A.

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Please send articles, letters, news items,
and corrections to:

The Middler
c/o R.W. Bacon, Editor
P. O. Box 489
Newburyport, MA 01950
(E-mail: rwbacon@comcast.net)

SMFSD OFFICERS

Commander Barbara Stenberg
Deputy Commander . . . Suzanne Welles
Secretary Janet Kohlenberger
Treasurer Albert C. Dudley
Registrar Donald Brock
Historian Thomas Smith

GODFREY LIBRARY NEWS

With Godfrey Library future secure, Thomas Kemp steps down as Director

Editor's Note: On Oct. 11, 2005 Godfrey Library Director Thomas J. Kemp announced he accepted a new position. The Acting Director will be Richard E. Black, Godfrey's current Outreach Librarian. In three years Kemp made our home-base library into a national resource through the Godfrey Scholar internet genealogy portal. In his last week at Godfrey, he assisted with our 2006 meeting plans.

Oct. 11, 2005

Friends,

I wanted to let you know that I am stepping down as the Director of the Godfrey Memorial Library later this month (*Oct. 21 -Ed.*).

It has been an honor to work with you, the staff, our members, and all associated with the library. I am very pleased with all that has been accomplished in the past three years.

It is difficult to leave the library at any time but it is gratifying to know that the library is now on a firm financial footing, with a strong future and will remain so with its hard working, knowledgeable staff, board, volunteers, and thousands of members across the country.

I have accepted the position of Director of Genealogy Products with NewsBank, Inc. (Naples, Fla.). I look forward to seeing many of you as our paths cross at conferences across the country.

All the best as you continue to climb your family tree. It will be impressive to watch the library continue to grow in the years ahead. I am just sorry that I will not be here to see first hand all that is yet to be accomplished.

Onward,
Tom

'Dunham-Wilcox-Trott-Kirk' web site makes Jane Devlin a friend to Middletown researchers

A profile of the person behind the scenes at this valuable information source

Editor's Note: Anyone using the internet for Middletown genealogy research in recent years has undoubtedly come across Jane Devlin's ever-growing *Dunham-Wilcox-Trott-Kirk* web site, a compendium of vital records, cemetery records, and local history for the central Connecticut region and beyond. Jane, who lives in Lake Orion, Michigan, but whose roots extend to Middlesex County, agreed to an e-mail interview with *The Middler* so members could get a glimpse of the real person behind this gem of a genealogy resource.

The Middler: *What motivated you to create the web site?*

Jane: The *Dunham-Wilcox-Trott-Kirk* site (named for my grandparents) started out as a simple family tree in hopes of connecting with more cousins. I had put quite a bit of effort into documenting what I could and thought that having it on the web would garner corrections and new information as well as helping others with the same lines.

The Middler: *What was on the site when it was first launched?*

Jane: I put the first files online in January 2001. At first it was just my descendant reports and brick walls.

The Middler: *At what stage were you at in your own family history research when you launched the site?*

Jane: About where you see it now. I've put far more effort into getting records on line than I have on my own research. Sometime soon, I need to sit down and pull the new information on my families off the site and update my database.

The Middler: *At what point did you decide to expand your vision for the web site? How did you decide on what would be included?*

Jane: I had transcribed records for a site that Ray Brown was managing in 1999. That site went offline and I still had the material, so I decided that it should be available to others. Since then, it has grown like Topsy. I started the Middlesex County mail list on RootsWeb in February 1999, because I had so many ancestors from the area, and there wasn't a

mailing list at the time or much online. At first the site was Middlesex County material along with other Connecticut counties for which I'd transcribed records. Ray, whose *New England Genealogy* site is another great source, was instrumental in sending me hard copy. Without his help and encouragement, the site would have never materialized.

As I was able to find more out-of-copyright material, I expanded the scope first to areas where I had ancestors and then to anything I could find from those states. After Connecticut, I added Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, New York, Michigan, and family-specific files.

The Middler: *Tell us about your many valuable collaborators.*

Jane: When Coralynn Brown started helping, the site really expanded! Ray was feeding records to both of us as he lives in Connecticut and could go to the State Library in Hartford, and after transcribing, the data would go online both on my site and on Ray's. We've always worked on the theory that the more places data could be found, the more useful

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A sampling of Middletown information found online at 'Dunham-Wilcox-Trott-Kirk'

- Barbour Collection of Vital Records
- Middletown cemetery listings & photos
- Excerpts from David D. Field's *Centennial Address* (1853)
- Middlesex County wills & deeds
- *History of Middlesex County 1635-1885* (Beers Co., 1884), including *History of Middletown* by Henry Whittimore
- *Middletown Upper Houses* (Adams, 1908) (genealogical/biographical chapters)

Prolific transcriber Coralynn Brown takes a short break from the keyboard

Editor's Note: A profile of Jane Devlin's *Dunham-Wilcox-Trott-Kirk* web site would be incomplete without getting to know one of the site's most prolific transcribers, Arizona-based Coralynn Brown. Connected to Middletown through first settlers George Hubbard and William Smith, her roots also extend to Hartford and Haddam, Conn.

The Middler: *When did you begin researching your central Connecticut family history? Are you still involved*

in your own research, or is your focus now on your transcription projects?

Coralynn: I began this research in 1999 when, upon receiving family trees from my sister, I began to check on the accuracy. Going online, I noticed George Hubbard had been entered on many trees incorrectly. The "two Georges" were so entwined I decided to separate them for good and all, and then share what I had found. That led to a Hubbard website still going strong today.

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PLACES***Middletown's southern neighbors – Haddam & E. Haddam***

Editor's Note: Thanks to **Donald Brock** for this contribution. Source: *History of Middlesex County, Conn.*, Beers & Co., N.Y., 1884.

The original Haddam tract included East Haddam, and was purchased from four Indian kings in 1662, for 30 coats, of a value not exceeding \$100. As with colonial Middletown families, our Haddam neighbors used the Connecticut River as their highway, connecting them with the outside world.

Haddam was granted the privileges of the 20th town in the Connecticut colony in the late 1660s, and they adopted the name Haddam from a town in England. The town was divided in 1734 between Haddam on the west of the Connecticut River and East Haddam on the east.

The first settlement in East Haddam was around Creek Row, which today is near Brainard State Park just north of East Haddam center. Of the early Haddam names, many of also appear in Middletown. The first 28 settlers after the 1682 purchase were Nicholas Ackley, Joseph Arnold, Daniel Brainerd, Thomas Brooks, Daniel Cone, George Gates, Thomas Shailer, Gerrard Spencer, John Spencer, William Ventres, John Bailey, William Clarke, Simon Smith, James Wells, James Bates, Samuel Butler, William Corbee, Abraham Dibble, Samuel Ganes, John Hannison, Richard Jones, Stephen Luxford, John Parents, Richard Piper, Thomas Smith, Joseph Stannard, John Webb, and John Wyatt. The first 10 named were from Hartford.

In doing genealogical research, Haddam cemetery sites are unique in that for many years after early settlement, the people of East Haddam carried their dead across the river to Haddam for burial. Not long after 1700, a funeral party of mourners bearing the deceased crossed the cove and the narrow peninsula of Haddam Neck, and then attempted to cross the Connecticut River, but failed. The river had overflowed its banks, and floating ice made passage impossible. Slowly and sadly, the funeral procession was forced to retrace its steps back through ice and snow to East Haddam. They picked a site to bury the deceased in the forest there, in a romantic spot back away from the cove, and thus commenced the Cove Burial Ground now known today as Grave Yard Point. ■

MEMBER NOTES

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prove it. More work needs to be done by someone on this. Actual marriage "Vital Record" says, "William Smeth was married to [Eliz?] in August one thousand six hundred forty & fower." (In Original Distribution of the Town of Hartford (Conn.) among the settlers, 1639, transcribed by Lucius M. Boltwood in the New England Historical & Genealogical Register, Vol. 12, p. 331)."

From Deborah Hanna of Storrs, Conn., descendant of George Stocking:

"I wanted to send on some information about my Stockings of Middletown (Upper Houses). These two were very interesting, and hope this will be of interest to someone else: Two descendents of **George Stocking**, cousins two generations away from each other who married.

The two cousins who married: (1) Bethea Kirby (1731-1823) was the 2nd great-granddaughter of George

Stocking – and the wife of George's 2nd great-grandson. (2) Daniel Stocking (1728-1800) was the 2nd great-grandson of George Stocking – and the husband of the 2nd great-granddaughter of George Stocking.

Some information about Daniel Stocking and other Stockings in Middletown from *Cromwell, Conn., 1650-1990: The History of a Port Town*; Decker, Robert; Cromwell Hist. Soc.; Phoenix Pub. Co., West Kennebunk, Maine; 1991:

"In 1714 the school committee consisted of Joseph Ranney, Sgt. William Savage and John Sage. Samuel Gibson, Samuel Stow, and John Warner made up the committee in 1715/1716. They hired Mrs. Joseph Smith for three months at five pounds and levied a school tax of two pence on a pound to secure funds for the school building. Other teachers included Thomas Webb (1715/16, 1716/17, two three-month terms), Charles Goodrich (1715), William Prout (1717), Mrs. Thomas Stow (daughter of Deacon Samuel Stocking, 1720), and Jonathan

Boardman (of Rocky Hill, six months 1719/20). These teachers had little preparation for teaching. A new era began in 1748 when Daniel Stocking became the teacher. A Yale graduate, Stocking became well-known for his teaching skills and commonly received the title "Master Stocking."

Daniel Stocking and Bethea Kirby's ancestry:
George Stocking 1582 + Anna George 1582 + Anna
Samuel Stocking 1620 + Bethea Hopkins
Daniel Stocking 1677 + Jane Mould
Bethia 1658 + Thomas Stowe 1650
(Daniel and Bethia were brother and sister)
Joseph Stocking 1703 + Abigail Ranney
Hannah Stow 1696 + John Kirby 1691
Daniel Stocking 1728 + Bethea Kirby 1731

The line continues on down to Seth, and eventually gets to my Mom." ■

Editor's Note: Thanks to all who contributed information for this issue's *Member Notes*. Please send research findings of interest and member news to: R. W. Bacon, P. O. Box 489, Newburyport, MA 01950; or by e-mail to rwbacon@comcast.net.

Feature Graphic #1 – Main Street, Middletown, Conn., 1790-1800

(Original 1836 drawing by Dr. Joseph Barratt, M.D., adapted for readability by R.W. Bacon, 2005.)

Corner of Court St. (formerly Talcott's Lane) and Pearl Sts.
Old Court House.

**MAIN STREET
MIDDLETOWN
1790 TO 1800.**

"Some shanties about this corner."

WASHINGTON

- COL. JABEZ HAMLIN (First mayor of Middletown, 1784)
- JOSEPH WRIGHT - FARMER
- GEORGE STARR - SEA CAPTAIN & MERCHANT
- NATHANIEL SHALER
- ELISHA BEWSTER - TAVERN KEEPER
- DR. ELLIOT RAWSON

TALCOTT'S (NOW COURT ST.)

- RICHARD HALL - SHIPMASTER
- JOHN STOCKING - IRON WORKS
- JOSEPH KING - SILVERSMITH

HENSHAW LANE

- ABNER ELY TANNER & SHOEMAKER
- MICHAEL STEWART - FARMER (Previous home of John Ward; built in 1678)
- WENSLEY HOBBY (Middletown's first postmaster)
- EPHRAIM FENNO - TAVERN
- CALEB FULLER (Schoolmaster, minister, constable, storekeeper, & tavern keeper)
- TIMOTHY BOARDMAN - JOINER
- ZACHARIAH PADDOCK - JOINER
- ELISHA CLARK - TRADER

PARSONAGE LANE

- CAPT. NATHANIEL BROWN - SHIPMASTER
- ADINO POMEROY - TANNER
- DR. WALKER - SLAVE DEALER
- CAPT. THOMAS GOODWIN
- WILLIAM SOUTHMAYD - SADDLER
- RETURN MEIGS - HATTER
- DEACON CLARK - APOTHECARY
- GENERAL HOLDEN PARSONS

STREET

- JACOB SEBOR - MERCHANT
- JAMES CORNWALL - FARMER
- GEORGE PHILLIPS - MERCHANT
- GILES HALL - SHIPMASTER
- COL. MATTHEW TALCOTT MERCHANT & FARMER

LANE

- SAMUEL JOHNSON - SHOEMAKER
- TIMOTHY BIGELOW'S TAVERN (George Washington stayed at this tavern.)
- JOSEPH SOUTHMAYD - FARMER
- RICHARD ALSOP MERCHANT & SHIP OWNER

COURT HOUSE (Also location of first Town House.)

- WAIT PLUM - JOINER
- ASAH EL JOHNSON
- BEZALEEL FISK TOWN CLERK
- CAPT. GROVE WARD - SHIPMASTER
- M. BURNHAM - HOTEL

AVENUE OF BUTTWOOD TREES

- JOHN THOMPSON - SHIPMASTER
- SAMUEL BULL - MERCHANT

BULL'S LANE

COURT HOUSE

- CAPT. JOSEPH GLEASON SLAVE DEALER

PHILIP MORTIMER'S ROPEWALK

W.D. KEITH ROPEMAKER

DUNCAN MacINTIRE BARBER

CAPT. COTTON SHIPMASTER

JOHN BACON FARMER & CONSTABLE

HENRY BASSETT FARMER

EASTER WETMORE TAVERN

CEMETERY

Location of first Meeting House

Road to Hartford

Road to New Haven

Episcopal Church

CONNECTICUT RIVER

Main Street, Middletown, Conn., 1790-1800

In September 1836 Joseph Barratt, M.D., drew his "plan of Middletown showing its buildings and occupants." At least two versions exist, one 1790-1800, another 1770-1775, both substantially the same. This adaptation for easier readability uses the original as a template and retains the art, but resets and repositions the type. It also integrates some information from both versions. In 1800 there are still first-settler family names on Main Street: Bacon, Cornwall, Hall, Hamlin, Stocking, and Wetmore; plus many other pre-1700 family names.

(Art production by R.W. Bacon.)



Prolific transcriber Coralynn Brown

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Jane joined that website and we began e-mail correspondence. We both had many Middlesex County ancestors, and decided this was the place on which to concentrate.

My own family research occasionally gets pushed ahead, but you can only work on brick walls so long until your head hurts. My focus is on transcribing, because (1) in 1999 the popular wisdom was that “you can’t do genealogy online,” and I wanted to change that; and (2) It becomes addictive. People e-mail and say they’ve finally found an ancestor, which results in me charging ahead with even more determination.

The Middler: *Have you made research trips to Connecticut?*

Coralynn: I lived in Michigan for 20 years, close to where Jane lives, though our paths never crossed. In 1982 I moved to Phoenix, Arizona.

We have a daughter who lives in Stratford, Conn., who we visit once or twice a year. We go to the Godfrey Library one day of our vacation there to photocopy cemetery records, etc., and have gone to the cemeteries in Middletown and Haddam to take photos. One of my first goals was to get the enumeration for Mortimer Cemetery, which I did; this was the first thing I transcribed and sent to Jane for her website.

The Middler: *How many pages do you think you have transcribed over the years? What has been the most difficult project undertaken?*

Coralynn: I’d estimate about 15,000 pages, give or take a thousand. But who’s counting? I spend two to four hours a day transcribing, depending on my motivation. When I began I was typing eight hours a day until I realized I was overdoing it.

The most intense period was that first project: the Mortimer Cemetery; that’s the one I spent eight hours a day on. The most difficult, or ambitious, was the Genealogical & Family

History of Northern New York, with the Middletown Barbour and the Vital Records of Bridgewater, Mass. a close second/third. I enjoy accomplishing something that no one in their right mind would even consider.

The Middler: *Do you keyboard everything in manually, or use optical character recognition software?*

Coralynn: Until quite recently I typed out every word. Dave (husband Dave Swerdfeger) convinced me to try OCR, which I’ve used on a couple projects, *Middletown Upper Houses* being one of them. Some projects just “feel” right if I type them, however.

The Middler: *What transcription project has been the most rewarding?*

Coralynn: I have had more positive feedback from *Middletown Upper Houses* than any other transcription, which makes it the most rewarding. If people use it and find information, it’s rewarding. (*Middletown Upper Houses* is also available on HeritageQuest via the Godfrey Library. Jane and I encour-

age everyone to join Godfrey, as it is the best deal in genealogy today.)

The Middler: *What do you do in “real life?” (People like to read about the behind-the-scenes individual who on weekends scales Himalayan peaks or tours with a punk-rock band . . .)*

Coralynn: Sorry about not scaling the Himalayas. I spend quite a bit of time knitting. I have always loved to write. Another woman and I have been writing a demented story about our royal ancestors for five years; a time-travel science fiction, sort of *Back to the Future* meets *The Lion in Winter*. It would make a great TV series.

I have a degree in music education from the Crane School of Music, Potsdam, N.Y., and taught public school music in New York and Michigan. In Arizona I subbed and gave piano lessons in my home.

Both Dave and I spend time with the grandchildren. The youngest lives in Connecticut, which brings us full circle, that being an area I am more than eager to spend time in. ■

FIRST SETTLER PROFILE

Middletown First Settler Thomas Allen

Editor’s Note: Past *Middler* profiles included William Blumfield, William Cornwall, Giles Hamlin, Daniel Harris, Samuel Stocking, & John Stow.

Neither David Field nor Henry Whittemore had anything to say about Thomas Allen in their respective Middletown histories of 1853 and 1884. But in the *Middletown Penny Press* of Oct. 11, 1900, Frank Farnsworth Starr profiled all first settlers in an issue devoted to the town’s 250th Anniversary celebration. Here is Thomas Allen’s profile:

“Thomas Allen is considered to have been one of the company of white men who commenced a settlement at Mattabeseck in 1650. His home lot on the east side of Main Street was bounded north by the burying ground and meeting house yard, and east by the Great River.

In 1656 he was appointed the grave digger, and two years later the town

leased the burying ground to him for 10 years, reserving the right of burial therein.

He held the office of Fence Viewer, was three times chosen Townsman, and was a Deputy to the General Court. He was one of the persons who organized the First Church in 1668, and in 1670 was elected one of the Deacons. In 1685 he was named as one of the persons to receive a patent of the town from the Colonial authorities.

Nothing is known about his first wife, except that she was probably living in December 1668. His second wife was Martha, widow of Roger Gipson. Having no children of his own he made a will, in which, after providing for his wife, he gave the property to his nephew, Obadiah Allen, and his wife’s Gipson children. Deacon Thomas Allen died in October 1688, and his widow, Martha, in May 1690. ■

Jane Devlin's web site a boon to researchers

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it would be. Janece Streig has submitted transcriptions of the Middlesex County deeds from the FHL microfilms, which are great for proving family connections. She's also submitted tombstone photographs. Now Coralynn's husband, Dave Swerdfeger, is helping with Massachusetts vital records. Without these four, the site would be a shadow of what it is, and the best part is that they've become friends. There have been many others who have submitted a file here and there and my thanks go out to all of them. Full credit is given to the person who transcribed the records.

The Middler: *What awards and recognition has the web site earned?*

Jane: 2003 - They Live Again Genealogy Excellence Award; 2003 - The Genealogical Journeys in Time Home Page Pick of the Month; 2003 - Golden Gate Genealogy Forum Best Site Pick; 2002 - Family Tree Magazine Site of the Day. The site has also received nice reviews in the RootsWeb Review and Eastham's Genealogy Newsletter. Best of all are the e-mails I get from people who have used the site and found information they needed. Also, in the newest issue of *New England Ancestors* from NEHGS, on page 47, in *The Computer Genealogist* listing of "Favorite Websites for Tracing New England Ancestors," my site is mentioned! (Ray's is, too).

The Middler: *How much time to you spend working on the web site?*

Jane: I'm not spending as much time as I should recently. Coralynn & Dave have been carrying the bulk of the transcription tasks as I've become more active in our local Senior Center where I teach knitting and knit for charity. If I could figure out how to transcribe at the same time I'm knitting, I'd be all set.

The Middler: *Do you get a lot of e-mail feedback from researchers?*

Jane: I have a wonderful folder of e-mails from people who like the site. I call those my "warm fuzzies" because they make me feel so good.

The Middler: *What is the oddest e-mail you have received from a researcher? The most satisfying?*

Jane: I get a few of the "My great-grandfather was John Smith. Send me everything you have about him," messages: no dates, no location, no information to work with. I usually steer people to a mailing list for the name along with regrets that I can't do more to help. One of the most satisfying was after putting a Middlesex County cemetery online, I got an e-mail that relatives had been trying for years to find where one person listed was buried.

The Middler: *What are your current goals for the project?*

Jane: Getting more data on line! Plus, I think it's time to re-code the main page, as it's getting quite large and probably cumbersome to download on a dial-up connection.

The Middler: *How can members of the genealogy community help your site flourish?*

Jane: If anyone has hard copies or electronic scans of out-of-copyright records they'd like to see online and would send them to me, I'll get them transcribed and out there for others. One of the biggest limitations is finding data to put online. The latest revision of the copyright law puts a lot of data published after 1923 that would have normally passed into the public domain off-limits as lawmakers protected Mickey Mouse for Disney. I know Godfrey Library in Middletown has many more cemetery listings from the Hale Collection that were never copyrighted and that could be put online, but getting paper copies is expensive. If someone who lived locally had a scanner and would be allowed to scan the listings that would be a tremendous help.

The Middler: *What do you do, as they say, in "real life?" Any background in history or research? What*

do you like to do when you are not thinking about genealogy?

Jane: I grew up on a farm in St. Clair County, Mich., where we had cows & chickens. I now live in Lake Orion, just north of Pontiac, Mich. With the exception of my maternal grandmother's family, my ancestors have lived within 45 miles of here since the 1800s. When I started tracing my family, I discovered a lot of roads led to Middlesex County, in particular, to Haddam.

I majored in history & art at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich., and taught school before having two daughters. After years as a stay-at-home mom, I stumbled into a part time job designing printed circuit boards and I did that for 25 years until my position was sent over to China three years ago and I found myself prematurely retired. I also programmed software in four flavors of BASIC in the late 1970s & 1980s and taught myself HTML four years ago in order to put the site online.

I love research – that was the best part of studying history in college. I was reminded of that in 1997 when my youngest daughter had a college class in which she had to write a paper on the culture from which her family came. I received a panic phone call asking "What culture are we?" The only thing I could come up with on the spur of the moment was "American Farmer." I started doing a little research online and at our library and sent her the results. It turns out that we were farmers dating back to colonial New England. She received an A+ on her paper and I was hooked on genealogy.

My hobbies, other than genealogy, are reading, knitting, quilting, & crocheting. I learned to knit when I was 8 and haven't stopped since. In music, I'm basically a Grateful Dead fan who also likes folk music. I'm happily married, have two daughters who live in California and two wonderful grandchildren ages 6 & 4.

Editor's Note: Visit Jane Devlin's web site at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~jdevlin/>.



The Editor wants to know . . .

The Middler is published twice per year, so there are only two chances a year to get it right – or wrong. In an effort to best serve SMFSD member/readers, I pose the following questions. Your responses will help me choose content that is both informative and useful to you. Please take a moment to send your responses by e-mail or postal mail. Thanks!

At what stage are you in your Middletown genealogy research?

(A) Just starting. (B) In the thick of it, still digging below the surface. (C) Done – nothing left but brick walls.

We all have one “qualifying” Middletown first settler. Have you discovered multiple connections?

Where did your first settler(s) families go when they left Middletown? _____ When did they leave? _____

Have you been to Middletown to do research? Hartford research?

(A) Godfrey Library (B) Russell Library (C) City Hall (D) Cemeteries (E) Other _____

Do you use the Internet for genealogy research? _____ Are you a Godfrey Scholar member? _____

What genealogy or local history topics would you like to see addressed in *The Middler*?

Send your responses – and any Middler suggestions to:

R.W. Bacon, P. O. Box 489, Newburyport, MA 01950; (E-mail: rwbacon@comcast.net)

THE FINE PRINT – Some background for new & prospective members

The origins of Middletown . . . and a brief history of SMFSD

The Origins of Middletown, Conn.

Editor’s Note: The following is paraphrased from the 1884 *History of Middletown* by Henry Whittemore (Beers Co., 1884), and *A Pictorial History of Middletown* by Elizabeth A. Warner (Greater Middletown Preservation Trust, 1990).

Middletown originally included Chatham, Portland, Cromwell, Middlefield, and a small part of Berlin, an area 16 x 9 miles.

Of native inhabitants before white settlement, south of Hartford, and extending south of Middletown, was a small but distinct population known as the Wangunks. Their chieftain, Sowheag, removed to Massabesec (Mattabesett or Mattabeseck to the English), now Middletown, in 1634 after a quarrel with settlers in Wethersfield. (He was accused of aiding the Pequots in their movement against settlers there.)

As early as 1639 the General Court recommended action against Indians in the area. Although there were settlements above and below Mattabesett, the hostile attitude of the Indians prevented the influx of settlers. Sometime before the settlement, however, Sowheag conveyed to Governor Haynes of Connecticut a large portion of the township.

In 1646 the General Court in Hartford appointed a committee to look into the planting of Mattabesett. On March 20, 1649/50, this committee reported that the land might support 15 families, but soon more arrived. The 1651 records state: “It is ordered sentenced and decreed that Mattabeseck shall be a Towne, and that they shall make choice of one of their inhabitants . . . that so hee may take the oath of a Constable, the next convenient season.”

In 1653, the General Court approved that the town be known as Middletown. By 1654 there were 31 taxable persons, mostly clustered near the meeting house near the north end of the present Main Street.

The “Indian Deed of 1672” further clarified property ownership, and the Wangunks remained in Middletown and Chatham, living on three separate reservations. (By 1785 the native Americans had sold their property and moved elsewhere.) ■

A Brief History of SMFSD

The Society of Middletown (Conn.) First Settlers Descendants was founded in 2000 by Gale Thomas Howe-Cornwell, a descendant of William Cornwall. In 1900 his grandfather had worked with other descendants to place a large rock now known as the Founder’s Rock in St. John’s Park next to Middletown’s Riverside cemetery. On the rock they installed a plaque honoring the first settlers there, and a plaque naming the Indian landowners who sold them their land. It was the hope of these descendants that a ceremony would be repeated in 2000 that recognized those first settlers.

Gale Cornwell decided that something should be done to honor that wish, so in 1996 he began to locate and contact any descendants of these settlers he could find, with the hope of forming a new society that would honor the pioneer families of Middletown.

After four years of work on the project, he had enrolled over 200 people by the time of the first formal meeting on Oct. 29, 2000, at which there were 58 members in attendance. At that time membership was opened to include descendants of any who settled there by the year 1700 and in the area around Middletown now known as Cromwell and Portland. Officers were elected and bylaws voted upon.

The city of Middletown graciously welcomed the descendants of the early settlers. The mayor presented a proclamation now displayed at the Godfrey Library. The Godfrey library offered to house the archives of the society, and therefore became its official headquarters. Four plaques were mounted on the library wall commemorating the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Puritan settlement, Mattebesec, now known as Middletown, and honoring the 23 men and 22 women who first settled there in 1650-1654.

In 2001 the society participated in Middletown’s 350th Anniversary festivities and parade. Since that time the society has met in Middletown every three years for organizational business, genealogy research, museum visits, member networking, and social gatherings. ■



SMFSD Membership Information

If you descend from anyone on this list, we welcome you to join us

The following is a list of those individuals (and presumably spouses & families) said to have settled in Middletown, Conn. before 1700. The list is based on information from *The History of Middlesex County* (Henry Whittemore, Beers Co., 1884), which was in turn derived from the *List of Householders & Proprietors*, Middletown, March 22, 1670. (Names in boldface are the original 1650 settlers of Middletown listed on the SMFSD plaque at Godfrey Memorial Library.)

Josiah Adkins 1673	Samuel Cotton 1697	Edward Higby 1667	Daniel Pryor 1696	Samuel Stow 1651
Obadiah Allyn 1670	Samuel Doolittle . . . 1693	Thomas Hill 1678	Thomas Ranney . . . 1660	Thomas Stow 1669
Thomas Allen 1650	George Durant 1663	Thomas Hopewell . . 1662	William Roberts . . . 1680	William Sumner . . . 1687
Nathaniel Bacon . 1650	Samuel Eggleston . . 1663	George Hubbard . 1650	Joseph Rockwell . . 1693	James Tappin 1662
William Briggs 1677	John Elton 1677	John Hulbert 1669	Alexander Rollo . . . 1697	Matthias Treat . . 1659
John Blake 1677	Thomas Ferman . . . 1679	Isaac Johnson 1670	Noadiah Russell . . . 1696	Edward Turner 1665
William Blumfield 1650	Edward Foster 1670	Francis Jones 1672	David Sage 1662	John Ward 1664
John Boarn 1677	Jonathan Gilbert . . 1672	John Jordan 1678	John Savage 1650	William Ward 1659
Alexander Bow 1660	John Gill 1676	John Kirby 1653	Arthur Scovill 1671	Andrew Warner 1667
Nathaniel Brown . . . 1655	Richard Goodale . . . 1671	Isaac Lane 1664	Edward Shepard . . . 1687	Robert Warner 1655
Thomas Burk 1670	George Graves 1650?	Thomas Lewis 1687	Joseph Smith 1675	Robert Webster . . 1650
William Cheney 1655	John Hall 1650	William Lucas 1667	William Smith . . . 1650	Benjamin West 1698
Samuel Clark 1676	Richard Hall 1650	Daniel Markham . . . 1677	William Southmayd . 1674	Thomas Wetmore 1650
Jasper Clements . . . 1670	Samuel Hall 1650	Anthony Martin 1661	Comfort Starr 1673	Nathaniel White . 1650
Henry Cole 1650?	Giles Hamlin 1650	John Martin 1650	James Stanclift . . . 1686	Francis Whitmore . . 1674
Nathaniel Collins . . 1664	Benjamin Hands . . . 1678	Thomas Miller . . . 1650	Samuel Stocking . 1650	John Wilcox 1654
Samuel Collins 1665	Daniel Harris 1653	John Payne 1676	John Stow 1667	James Wright 1690
William Cornwell 1650	William Harris . . . 1650	George Phillips 1680	Nathaniel Stow 1676	

Membership benefits . . .

When you join the Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants, you will receive:

- Two issues per year of *The Middler*, the SMFSD newsletter full of information useful for research about Middletown’s first settler families and local history.
- The annual membership roster enabling you to network with Middletown “cousins” across the country who are interested in Middletown genealogy research.
- The opportunity to attend SMFSD meetings (every three years) in Middletown that include genealogy research, cemetery tours, library/museum visits, member networking, and social events.
- The opportunity to participate in the organization, suggest/plan meeting activities, and vote on SMFSD business.

Membership is a simple 1-2-3 procedure . . .

If you are a descendant of anyone on the above list, and would like to join SMFSD, here is the simple 1-2-3 procedure:

(1) Send an outline/worksheet of your lineage to the Registrar. The applicant shall do their own genealogical research, and the resulting lineage should be accompanied by copies of reference material by generation. The Society seeks to verify submitted information, but does not research family lines.

(2) Send a check payable to the Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants [1650-1700]) for the non-refundable \$10.00 application handling fee.

(3) The application is then reviewed by the Society for approval. Documentation need be furnished only through the line of descent from the 1650-1700 founder. If needed, guidelines will be sent that help document descent by generation. (The Society will return an application if more documentation is needed. It is the applicant's responsibility to do any additional research, and to complete any gaps in the records.) When approved, the new member can choose to pay annual or lifetime dues:

(A) Annual dues from November 1 to October 31 are \$15.00 (in addition to the initial \$10.00 handling fee).

(B) A new member may elect to pay lifetime dues (instead of annual dues) based on age: Age 0-50, \$300; Age 51-70, \$200; Age 70+, \$100.

Please send membership inquiries and/or lineage information to: Donald H. Brock, Registrar, Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants, 10 Windy Hill Road, Glen Arm, MD 21057.



From the Editor

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nity and answered the call. The result is before you – the Fall 2005 *Middler*.

As I have expressed to some of you via e-mail, my aim is not only to bring to you enriching content, but also to carry on in Barbara's lively spirit. After all, for the years between meetings, the newsletter is our bond.

I know many of you from attending SMFSD meetings in Middletown in 2001 and 2003. Some background: I am a longtime publication designer/editor who took time out for a 25-year career as a performing artist. Working on a fourth career, I am in a graduate program in Museum Studies.

I began genealogy research in the 1970s and made huge progress at the Godfrey Library. Later in the 1990s I found the extent of my entanglement in a web of Middletown ancestors: 8

of the first 23 families, and 10 more pre-1700 families.

In future issues I plan to include member news, member articles, in-depth features, first-settler profiles, and some special graphics worth saving. As you will see in the member survey on page 8, I'm eager to

From the Commander

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many in the Middletown area who are eligible to join, but have not. So we need a better presence there. One way to achieve that is to have a large group come for the meetings in Middletown. The parades are over so we can't march in front of the town again. So if you have ideas on that subject, please pass them to us.

I have been blessed to work with such a great group of willing volun-

teer officers. Please join me in thanking them for their efforts on the behalf of the Society. The nominating committee is active and should be searching. Please give them a positive response if they contact you. There may be some of you who would really like to serve in an office. We have no way of knowing unless you tell us yourself. I encouraged you to do just that.

See you in Middletown.

Reg Bacon
Newburyport, Mass.
rwbacon@comcast.net

Barbara Stenberg
Commander, SMFSD

