



The Middler

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

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Fall 2009

TRIENNIAL MEETING REPORT

SMFSD members from across the continent gather in Middletown for genealogical inquiry

By R.W. Bacon
Editor, *The Middler*

The SMFSD Triennial Meeting Aug. 27-30, 2009 drew over 30 members, spouses, and friends from across the continent to Middletown, Conn. for four days of immersion in genealogy and local history.

Descendants of Middletown's earliest settler families arrived from 14 states – from as far west as California, and as far south as Florida – to enjoy a stimulating schedule of library research, member networking, cemetery walks, museum visits, guest speakers, and social gatherings.

SMFSD extends gratitude to board members, presenters, attendees, and our hosts in Middletown and Hartford for their contributions to our successful meeting.

For those who did not make it to this year's Triennial Meeting, here is a chronological report:

Thursday, August 27. Attendees arriving on Thursday afternoon were



Above left is the entrance to Middletown's Russell Library. Above right are the intrepid cemetery sloggers next to Founders' Rock outside Riverside Cemetery, burial place of early Middletown settlers. At lower left is the Connecticut State Library – although genealogists are more familiar with the back door! (Photos by R.W. Bacon)

greeted at the Marriott Residence Inn in Cromwell, Conn., where enthusiasm bubbled for the 6-9 p.m. research night at Godfrey Memorial Library in Middletown. In between spurts of research at Godfrey, SMFSD "cousins" reconnected and new friendships were forged.

Friday, August 28. Hardcore researchers headed to Hartford in the morning for a day at the Connecticut State Library, including a tour of library holdings by Jeannie Sherman of the History/Genealogy Unit. Several meeting attendees took advantage of an alternative option, a visit to Gillette Castle State Park & Museum in East Haddam, Conn.

The Friday afternoon and evening activities were held at St. Francis Church in Middletown. The SMFSD business meeting was followed by a catered dinner, to which we were glad

to host a number of guests from the local community. Dinner was followed by the dedication of a plaque honoring SMFSD founder Gale Cornwell, which will be displayed at Godfrey Library. Capping the evening was the lecture-performance of *A Vaudeville Retrospective* by R.W. Bacon, a living history program with a genealogical twist, incorporating tips on researching circus and vaudeville ancestors.

Saturday, August 29. The morning destination was Russell Library's Middletown Room, a goldmine of local
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~ DUES are DUE! ~

Annual Membership dues (\$20) are due November 1, 2009. Please send payment to:

<i>Do it Today !!!</i>	Mike Campbell SMFSD Treasurer 3570 Willow Street Bonita, CA 91902-1226	<i>Thank You !!!</i>
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SMFSD NEWS

Triennial Meeting triumph, Paula's peerless profiles, & six new members

• Triennial Meeting Triumph.

Your editor is glad to report that everyone survived the 2009 Triennial Meeting in Middletown. Our successful meeting was a triumph of long-distance advance planning, hundreds (thousands?) of e-mails, determination, collaboration, and patience. And once at the meeting, there were no bloody noses and no hair-pulling. Seriously, it was wonderful to gather with friends and cousins – real cousins! – to share ... and indeed, revel ... in our common interests. Further, the meeting served to

strengthen our foundation for future stability and growth.

• Paula's Plethora of Peerless Profiles Proliferates Profusely.

SMFSD researcher **Paula Higgins** of Mansfield, Texas, has completed a whopping 30 more in-depth first-settler profiles since the last issue of *The Middler*. Slowly-but-surely your editor will add these profiles to the SMFSD web site. To date, Paula has prepared 37 in-depth profiles, while your editor prepared those for the first 22 settlers. Some 32 profiles remain, and with completion on the horizon, your editor is investigating the feasibility of publishing the entire collection of 90-plus profiles in book form. There will be more good news on this front forthcoming.

• The Connecticut Migrations Project.

At the Triennial Meeting in August, **Barb Stenberg** brought to our attention the Connecticut Migrations Project, a 10-year-old USGenNet web site (<http://www.usgenet.org/usa/ct/state/ctmigrate/index.htm>) that

serves as a clearing house of information on migrations in-and-out of Connecticut. The Middlesex County page as yet has information on only 45 individuals, but with greater participation, this project has potential to be of great assistance to those researching peripatetic "brick wall" ancestors.

• Welcome new members.

SMFSD extends an enthusiastic welcome to six new members since the last issue of *The Middler*: **Patricia Porter Kryder**, AM-272, Nashville, Tenn., (1st settler Nathaniel White); **Arline Whitmore Harris**, AM-273, Middletown, Conn. (1st settler Francis Whitmore); **Scott Patrick Burchill**, AM-274, Van Nuys, Calif. (1st settler William Cornwell); **John William Cornwell**, AM-276, San Francisco, Calif. (1st settler William Cornwell); **Sandra Terrell Glowa**, AM-277, Southington, Conn. (1st settler John Wilcox); **Robert Henry Swenson**, AM-278, Hillsboro, Ore. (1st settler William Southmayd). ■



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and corrections to:

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Deputy Commander . . . Rita Urquhart
Secretary Margery Piersen
Treasurer Mike Campbell
Historian Thomas Smith
Registrar Donald Brock
Middler Editor R.W. Bacon

A message from the Commander

Greetings:

We had a wonderful and informative meeting of the SMFSD in August. If you were not there you missed a great time and we missed you! I'm truly sorry if you weren't there to see Reg Bacon's presentation on vaudeville history. It was great!

We had some new members there and the return of some old friends. You will see a report on the meeting elsewhere in this issue.

I want to commend the board for their superb efforts on this meeting. All contributed and made a success of the meeting. We are pleased to have added some new blood to the board also. We made good contacts with other organizations in Middletown as well.

After 9 years as Deputy Commander, Suzanne Welles has hung up her hat. We are grateful for her years of dedicated service and her excellent

work in helping to make our triennial meetings fun and productive. She has agreed to help with the next one, so we can be sure a good time will be had by all yet again. Our heartfelt thanks for her service to this organization.

We urge all of you to become involved in our society. Make suggestions for how we might best serve you. Tell your friends who might be descendants of our settlers about us. Come out for our next meeting and see how we have progressed.

All of you have a blessed Christmas season and a great new year.

Barbara Stenberg, Commander

*After nine years as
deputy commander,
Suzanne Welles has
hung up her hat ...
Our heartfelt thanks
for her service to this
organization.*

Cousins compare notes at the SMFSD Triennial Meeting Aug. 27-30, 2009

Top row photos, l. to r.: James Cornwall & Barbara Stenberg; Sue Welles & Tom Smith; officers Marge Pierson, Barb Stenberg, Sue Welles, & Don Brock.

Bottom row, l. to r.: Tom Smith, Reg Bacon, & Toni Smith; Michele Doherty, Janet Wallace, & Pat Doherty; JoLynn Campbell, Hal Whitmore, & Mike Campbell.



Albert C. Dudley, charter member, board member, & friend, 1928-2009

By R.W. Bacon
Editor, *The Middler*

Albert C. Dudley, a charter member and mainstay of SMFSD since its inception in 2000, died Oct. 18, 2009 in Merrimack, N.H. at the age of 81.

Al and his wife, Sandy (another Middletown first settler member), attended every Triennial Meeting, including the August 2009 gathering. At the conclusion of his term as SMFSD treasurer, Al served officially as an honorary board member – but unofficially as an instant and loyal friend to everyone he encountered.

Al Dudley was born in New Haven, Conn., on August 29, 1928, the son of Albert George Dudley and Marion Alfreda Crossland. He was a descendant of William Dudley, a 1639 settler of Guilford, Conn., in addition to his many central Connecticut ancestors. Al was a graduate of Yale University, and as a chemical engineer and later as an executive, worked in the natural gas utility industry for 40 years.



Albert C. Dudley (1928-2009)

In his retirement he pursued an avid interest in genealogy, sharing his research with others through speaking engagements, service on the board of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists, leading a genealogy group at the Nashua (N.H.) Senior Center, and working for the Nashua Historical Society. In the year 2000, he published *The Descendants of William Dudley and Jane Lutman*. He was the founder and president of the William Dudley Family Association.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Sandra Yvonne (Guetens) Dudley; three daughters, Sandra Caldwell of Norfolk, Va., Deborah Tewksbury of Littleton, N.H. and Denise Green of Merrimack, N.H.; two sons, Albert E. Dudley of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada and Stephen J. Dudley of Mont Vernon, N.H., their spouses and children, as well as several great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by a son, Peter H. Dudley in 1995.

Private services will be held at the convenience of the family.

Those planning an expression of sympathy are asked to consider a donation to the Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut, P. O. Box 768, Wallingford, CT 06492, or to Community Hospice House, 210 Naticook Rd., Merrimack, NH 03054, or to The Dudley Foundation, 2351 Durham Road, Guilford, CT 06437. ■

Editor's Note: When I first met Al Dudley at an SMFSD meeting in 2001, I knew immediately this was a man of easygoing confidence and unfailing good humor: He was wearing a t-shirt that proudly proclaimed, in big letters, "I'm A Dud!" Al was an enthusiastic supporter of the SMFSD and *The Middler*, and his friendship will be missed. – R.W. Bacon

An interview with Augie DeFrance, president of the Middletown Old Burying Grounds Association

By R.W. Bacon
Editor, *The Middler*

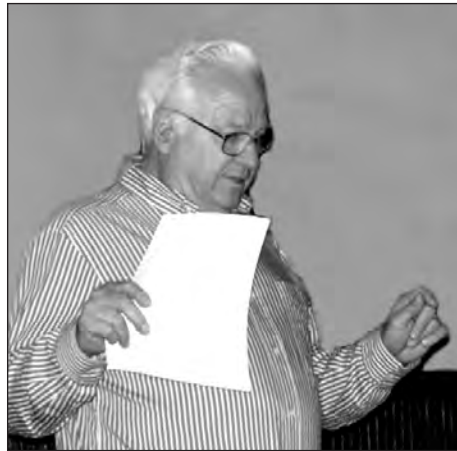
Our 2009 Triennial Meeting guest speaker was August L. DeFrance, president of the Middletown Old Burying Grounds Association. The association is responsible for the maintenance and preservation of seven cemeteries in Middletown, including Riverside Cemetery, the burial place of so many early Middletown settlers.

In his presentation at Carmen Anthony's Restaurant on Saturday, Aug. 29, 2009, DeFrance provided an overview of the association's accomplishments, challenges, and goals. Assisting in the presentation was Ruth Shapleigh-Brown, executive director of the Connecticut Gravestone Network, who spoke on the preservation of gravestones, especially the vulnerability and deterioration of those made from Portland brownstone.

August "Augie" DeFrance, a Middletown native, is retired from a 40-year career with Northeast Utilities, mostly in the field of human resources. About 10 years ago he became involved with the Middletown Old Burying Ground Association. His education and business experience drew him into helping non-profit organizations. Currently he is treasurer of Godfrey Library, president and treasurer of Indian Hill Cemetery, and a board member of numerous Middletown groups. His wife, Claudia, is also involved in volunteering and raising money for organizations and causes.

"This year we are beginning a three-year conservation effort to protect the table stones in Riverside. Most of these are from the 1600s, and we will lose them if we do nothing."

– Augie DeFrance



SMFSD Triennial Meeting guest speaker August L. DeFrance, president of the Middletown Old Burying Grounds Association, makes a point during his after-dinner presentation Aug. 29, 2009. (Photo by Lyn Brock)

In the weeks following our meeting, your editor posed a number of questions in an e-mail "interview," to which Augie DeFrance thoughtfully and thoroughly replied, expanding on topics covered in his presentation.

The Middler: You noted that the Middletown Old Burying Grounds Association (MOBGA) \$70,000 budget is a line item within the city budget. Is any maintenance performed by the city public works staff? Or do you hire all outside contractors?

Augie DeFrance: The city Parks & Recreation Department does not get involved with the maintenance of the cemeteries. We hire outside contractors and monitor what they do. Usually, we use professional landscapers who are responsible for a particular cemetery. Our original three cemeteries (Riverside, Mortimer, and Vine Street) are maintained by a superintendent who hires as needed. Maromas Cemetery is maintained by Pratt & Whitney Corp. The other three cemeteries are maintained by landscapers.

The Middler: How many people comprise the association? What is their background and interest?

A.D.: There are 15 board members, all volunteers who have an interest in

the cemeteries, and most have been involved for many years. We have discussed having "Friends" who could help. That is something for the future.

The Middler: What are the greatest maintenance and budget challenges for the association?

A.D.: The largest item in the budget is for the maintenance of the cemeteries. This category includes lawn mowing, leaf and brush removal, and topsoil. Large expenditures in the past have been roofs on the two buildings and a metal door on the crypt in Mortimer. This year we are beginning a three-year conservation effort to protect the "table stones" in Riverside. Most of these are from the 1600s, and we will lose them if we do nothing. This is moving us in a new direction as we have not been financially involved in stone repair or restoration.

The Middler: Can an individual or family arrange for privately financed gravestone conservation work? Has there been interest from families in placing new "memorial stones" at old and currently unmarked gravesites?

A.D.: There has been some interest in restoring some old family stones. We direct anyone interested in doing this to some experts in the field of restoration. It is very expensive and none have been done by a family. Some groups have done this to honor someone. As for unmarked graves, we are not sure who is buried where.

The Middler: What is the current conjecture about graves possibly moved from Riverside Cemetery during the railroad construction?

A.D.: Now that I have a map of Riverside, I am going to try to figure that out. There are no records of anyone being moved.

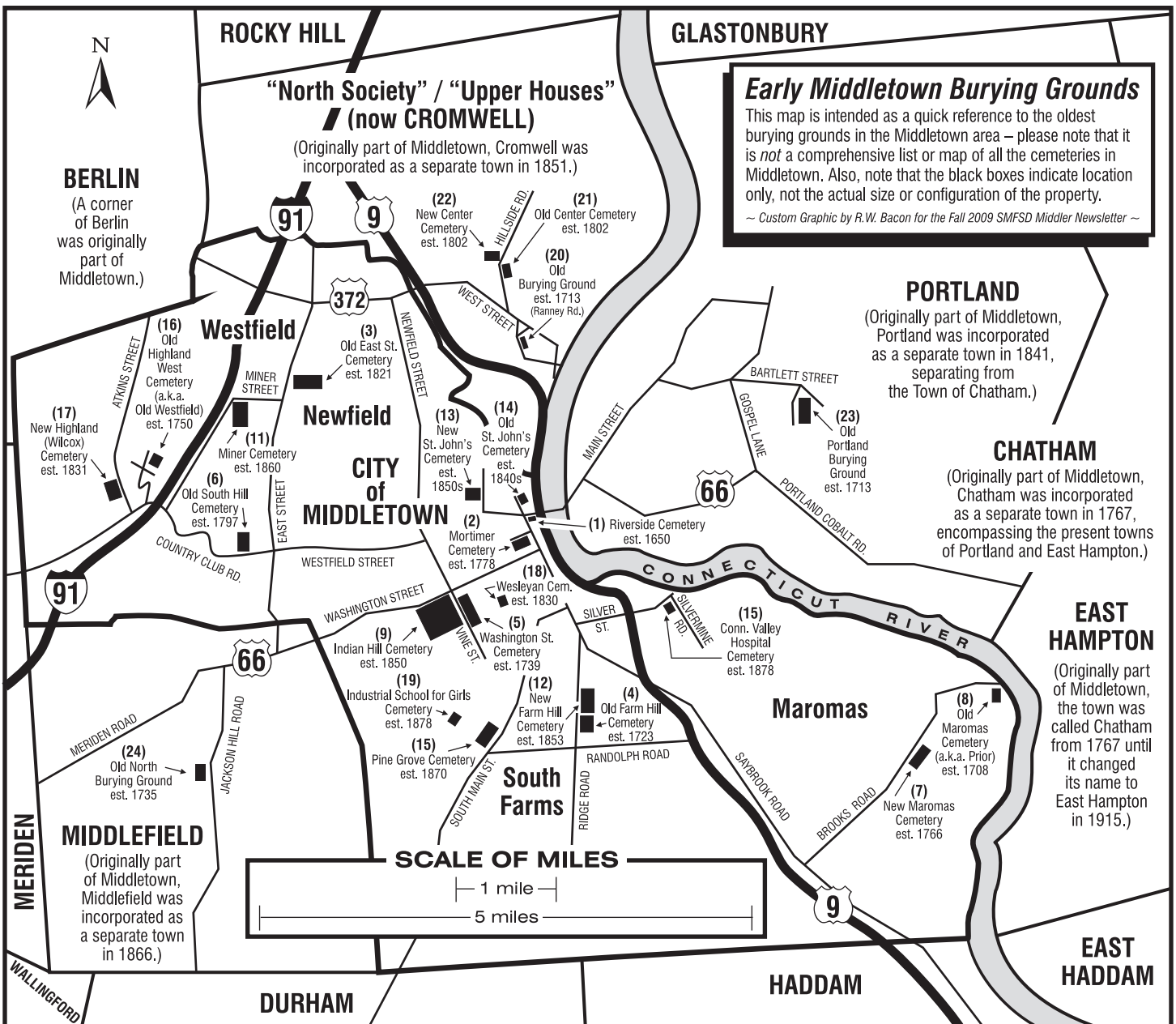
The Middler: You mentioned that one goal is to complete a database that includes every burial (over 17,000) in the MOBGA cemeteries, with name, inscription, and a photo of every stone. How many people work on the project?

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Feature Graphic #10 – A Reference Map of Early Middletown Burying Grounds

This map was created by determining the addresses of the area's early cemeteries, verifying their location by aerial photos, plotting the locations according to an up-to-date road map, and then redrawing the map for clarity, simplicity, and easy reference. (Custom graphic by R.W. Bacon, 2009.)

CEMETERY	EST.	LOCATION	CEMETERY	EST.	LOCATION
Middletown (MOBGA cemeteries in boldface):			(16) Old Highland West Cem.	1750	Boardman Lane
(1) Riverside Cemetery	1650-1713	Rte. 9 & Main Street	(a.k.a. Old Westfield Cemetery)		
(2) Mortimer Cemetery	1778	Liberty Street	(17) New Highland Cemetery	1831	Atkins Street
(3) Old East St. Cemetery	1820	East Street	(a.k.a. Wilcox Cemetery)		
(4) Old Farm Hill Cemetery	1723-1850	Ridge Road	(18) Wesleyan University	c. 1830	Foss Hill
(5) Washington St. Cemetery	1739	Washington Ter. & Vine St.	(19) Industrial Sch. for Girls Cem.	c. 1878	614 Pine Street
(6) Old South Hill Cemetery	1797	Country Club Road			
(7) New Maromas Cemetery	1766	Aircraft Road	Cromwell:		
(8) Old Maromas (Prior)	1700-1766	(Near RR tracks on riverbank)	(20) Old Burying Ground	1713	Timber Hill & Ranney Sts.
(9) Indian Hill Cemetery	1850	Washington Street	(21) Old Center Cemetery	1802	Hillside Road
(10) Pine Grove Cemetery	1870	S. Main Street	(22) New Center Cemetery	1855	Hillside Road
(11) Miner Cemetery	1859	Miner Street			
(12) New Farm Hill Cemetery	1853	Ridge Road	Portland:		
(13) New St. John's Cemetery	c. 1850s	Johnson Street	(23) Old Portland Burying Ground	1713	Bartlett Street
(14) Old St. John's Cemetery	c. 1840s	St. John's Street			
(15) Conn. Valley Hospital	1878-1957	Silvermine Road	Middlefield:		
			(24) Old North Burying Ground	1735	Jackson Hill Road



SMFSD Registrar Don Brock shares recollections of his youth on a farm in 20th century Middletown

By R.W. Bacon
Editor, *The Middler*

Editor's note: The spring 2009 *Middler* featured a profile of SMFSD Registrar Donald H. Brock. This was the first in a series of profiles designed to help members across the U.S. get to know their SMFSD "cousins" and fellow genealogy enthusiasts.

Brock, currently of Glen Arm, Md., grew up in the South Farms area of Middletown, and thus has a unique perspective on connecting the earliest agricultural roots of the town to the changes of the 20th century. Therefore, Part II of this profile calls upon Don's evocative recollections of growing up on a 300-year-old farm in mid-20th century Middletown.

The Middler: Many descendants of first-settler families left Middletown shortly after the American Revolution, but your family remained. Can you tell us a bit about *your* family's history in Middletown?

D.B.: Both of my parents' families were rooted in New England – mostly farmers in the Connecticut River valley. This results in multiple Middletown first settlers for me. I have



Above is Donald Brock in 1951, with the Brock Farm dairy barn in the background. (Photo courtesy of Don Brock)



Above are cousins (... yes, real first cousins!) Sue Welles and Donald Brock. Sue, who lives in Connecticut, is our former Vice Commander, while Don, who lives in Maryland, is the longtime SMFSD Registrar. (Photo by Barb Stenberg)

10 ancestral lines from the first 21 Middletown settlers, and about 20 lines from the 88 1650-1700 settlers. My first settler lines settled mainly in the southern districts of Farm Hill, Long Hill, and Johnson Lane.

I also have numerous Connecticut lines from the surrounding towns of Middletown, a native-American Pequot line from New London, a French Huguenot line by way of England, and one family line from Maine. So, I guess I am an American melting pot, and not all that unique.

Isaac Johnson was a prolific first settler in 1670 and he represents a typical ancestor for me. His father-in-law, Daniel Harris, also was a first settler of Middletown in 1650. Isaac Johnson has been described as having more descendants buried in Middletown than any other early settler. The Johnson genealogy by Ada Modern published in 1945 shows, however, that there were many who left, and migrated in clusters with other Middletown families into western New York, western Mass., Vt., and on to Ohio and beyond. Some of these families went back and forth to-and-from Middletown for various reasons. A common reason was they inherited some property back in Middletown, and came back to settle an estate. Some returned when the wife became homesick, or because of

family sickness. My Middletown lines, like my Johnson line, seemed to stay put in Middletown, and I truthfully am not quite sure why they did.

My great-grandparents, Henry Brock and Sarah (Roberts) Brock, were a typical Middletown farm family. Henry's brother went west, but he stayed in Middletown on the farm. He married Sarah, and they both spent an active married farm living close to nature. He designed and built the Brock Homestead in 1867. This is where I lived and grew up, and the Homestead is still occupied by a Brock cousin today.

The Middler: What was it like growing up in Middletown in the 1940s, on a 300-year-old farm?

D.B.: The Brock Farm was first settled in 1650 by my ancestor, Middletown first settler Daniel Harris, who bought 40 acres on what is now is part of the Brock Farm acreage. Eleven generations have worked the beautiful farmland, part of the rolling hills of Middletown's southern Farm Hill District. In 1987, a Constitution

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At right is Don Brock's father, Henry J. Brock (1912-1954) sometime in the 1920s, outside the dairy barn, pictured below. (Photos courtesy of Don Brock)



Growing up on a farm in Middletown, Conn. ...

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Bicentennial Farm Survey recognized the Brock Farm as the 5th oldest continuously-operated farm in the U.S.

My farm youth in the 1940/1950s was in a very rural setting. I vividly remember a team of Belgian work horses on the farm, Dan and Dolly, used to mow hay, etc., and were used in addition to the old Farmall tractor. I was surrounded by my cousins. My bedroom overlooked the barn, and I could smell the sweet hay year-round. I walked to school for all 12 grades. We all swam and skated at a nearby lake. We went blueberrying, and we all tended our own vegetable gardens. My cousins and I baited the herd of cows – limiting them to only grid portions at a time. I picked up baled hay, loaded it on trucks, and helped store it in the 2nd floor of the barn. My father and I delivered milk by truck around Middletown, and I learned all the streets. I often operated the milk bottle washer, and it was a repetitive job – I sometimes dozed with my eyes open, and admit to breaking a few bottles. My pay would be a bottle of chocolate milk, and I am still drinking gallons of milk a week.



Above is a 1918 photo of the house built on Ridge Road in South Farms, Middletown, by Don Brock's great-grandfather, Henry Brock, in 1867. Below is the house in recent years. (Photos courtesy of Don Brock)



At left is a 1910 photo of the Brock Farm milk wagon, with Don Brock's future uncles E. Leroy Brock in the wagon, and Clifford Brock tending the horse. (Photo courtesy of Don Brock)

Brock Farm has been recognized as the 5th-oldest continuously operated farm in the U.S., dating back to 1650. At right is a member of the Brock family that operates the farm today, Richard Y. Brock. (Photo courtesy of Don Brock)



Thanksgiving was a very special day. My cousins all came, including our past SMFSD Vice Commander, Sue Welles, whose family came from the big city of Waterbury, Conn. I always got into big trouble with my father, as he felt I was a ringleader in taking my cousins on adventures that were far to dangerous. My father did not like any of this, but I just had to let my cousins experience all the fun of being on a farm. I usually led all my cousins sightseeing around the farm that included going through each and every manure pile. It was a game to get close to the bull pens – the closer you went, the braver you were. New shoes or clothes were ruined by going out onto unsafe lake ice, as well as by climbing up to the tops of haylofts and silos. The competitive game to be played was “chicken” – each person in turn had to climb higher and higher up into the silo or loft and then jump down to the bottom – into hay that would hopefully offer a soft and safe landing. Thank God no one ever broke their neck at this stunt, and only ruined their new shoes or clothes. One cousin still recalls all these adventures with great excitement. Others were less than excited, and waited anxiously for their escape from farm life and return home to the safety of the big city.

Now, in all fairness, I was honestly both hesitant and fearful of that big city of Waterbury when I made my childhood visits there!

The Middler: Was Middletown's local history valued in your youth? Do you remember any of the Middletown Tercentenary celebration in 1950?

D.B.: My mother was a librarian at Russell Library in the 1930s before her marriage, and became addicted to local history. Her interest and knowledge of local events, families, historic houses, and sites was passed along as I was growing up.

At 12-years-old, I remember the 1950 Middletown Tercentenary very well, especially the super parade. My family stationed itself on a steep street-side bank to watch the big event. We had a great view of the biggest parade ever.

This was an upbeat time in Middletown, as people were recovered from their sacrifices and bad memories of WWII. My parents bought a new car in 1950 – a new Nash.

The Middler: Turning attention to the present, how has the Brock Farm survived into the 21st century? And what does the future hold?

D.B.: The farm seemed to adapt

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An interview with Augie DeFrance ...

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A.D.: The database I am working on is a work in progress. There are so many old sources to put together and then sort out duplicates. There are no volunteers except me. I bring the books and information to Godfrey Library and they are digitized and put on their website. So all the information is stored online, but not yet in a database as I am trying to do. The photos are another story. Godfrey Library is looking for additional volunteers to photograph the stones in all cemeteries in Connecticut, index them to the Hale Report, and include all current stones, names, and whatever information is available. This project is in its infancy.

The Middler: You mentioned that another goal was to make available as much information as possible, in as many places as possible. What form will the online database take? How can individuals support this project?

A.D.: Godfrey Library will be where the information will be housed. The databases I am working on will end up there, but are far from done. There are very few records on the old cemeteries. We need to advertise for copies of plot plans and any other information that families might have on their relatives buried in the old cemeteries. Most of the records are lists of the names on the stones, but not for individuals who died and have no stone. Indian Hill has records and those will be available sometime next year. Indian Hill is an active cemetery and we will be doing a marketing campaign for new graves, and hopefully next year, columbariums. There will be a website for Indian Hill. I would like to set one up for MOBGA.

The Middler: You grew up in Middletown – what was your experience or impression of the old cemeteries as a youngster?

A.D.: I'm not sure I even knew about the old cemeteries until later in life. My mother never mentioned that generations of her relatives were from and

buried in Middletown and surrounding towns. My grandfather DeFrance came through Ellis Island in the 1880s.

The Middler: When did you get involved in the Middletown Old Burying Ground Association?

A.D.: I got involved about 10 years ago. This was after I had found my grandparents' gravesites and was involved with Godfrey Library. John Bacon asked me to join, as he was interested in retiring as president of Godfrey. I didn't really know anything about the Old Burying Grounds. I fell in love with the old cemeteries and became president of the association. I firmly believe we must save our history.

The Middler: How much time to you devote to your work for the cemetery association each week?

A.D.: During the winter not much time is spent, however, in the spring, summer, and fall I spend a few hours per week. It probably averages during the nine months of fairly good weather about 5-to-7 hours per week. This includes the traveling, paperwork, etc. Editing the photographs I take is

additional time. I do this in spurts and may spend three-or-four hours in one day and not get back to it for a month.

The Middler: How is progress on your own genealogical pursuits?

A.D.: I have researched my Butler line in Connecticut back to the 1600s. There are some holes in my research. I spend more time trying to find people who have died in Middletown to put in the cemetery database rather than trying to find my old relatives.

The Middler: Finally, what do your family and friends have to say about your involvement with the cemetery association and the monumental database project? Have any family members caught the history/genealogy bug? Do they assist in your work?

A.D.: I have a sister-in-law interested in genealogy. She has researched the Italian line (my mother-in-law) to Italy. Middletown is the sister city to Melilli, Italy. This is where her grandparents came from. No one is interested in helping me yet. One grandchild appears interested. I think some of our friends and relatives think I am nuts. ■

OK, what is it about those crumbling Portland brownstone grave markers?

By R.W. Bacon
Editor, *The Middler*

The distinctive-colored soft sandstone commonly used for gravestones in the Connecticut River Valley in the 17th & 18th centuries was Portland brownstone.

The largest cluster of brownstone quarries was in East Middletown, now Portland, Conn. In the 19th century, brownstone was transported – via ship by Capt. Charles Bacon, your editor's 3rd great-grandfather, among others – to cities along the eastern seaboard for building construction.

Over time, brownstone gravestones deteriorated just like the facades of brownstone buildings. It was easily carved, but had a tendency to delaminate, separating along its sedimentary planes. The gravestones crumble from moisture within, leaving a wafer-thin outer shell, which eventually falls away, as pictured at right. ■



Above is the crumbling brownstone gravestone of Joseph Bacon (1728-1785), 6th great-grandfather of your editor, at Mortimer Cemetery in Middletown.



TRIENNIAL MEETING BUSINESS

With face-to-face business meetings three years apart, SMFSD packs plenty into a standing-room-only session

By R.W. Bacon
Editor, *The Middler*

SMFSD meets once every three years, and with so many activities and research opportunities at hand, the dry-but-necessary business meeting is jammed with topics and moves along quickly. The following is a condensed summary of the minutes of the Friday, Aug. 28, 2009 meeting at St. Francis Church, Middletown, prepared by SMFSD secretary Marge Piersen. (The full text of the minutes will be posted on the SMFSD web site.)

The meeting was called to order at 4:58 p.m. by Commander Barb Stenberg. New members since the 2006 meeting were acknowledged, and the 2006 minutes were read and accepted.

Acting treasurer Sue Welles gave the treasurer's report. The board is recommending a dues increase. To increase retention, individual reminders will be sent as well as publishing a dues notice in *The Middler*.

Don Brock, in his 9th year as Registrar, reported that the SMFSD web site generates an average of one membership inquiry per week.

Editor Reg Bacon was applauded for the high quality of *The Middler*.

Commander Barb Stenberg showed the plaque to be mounted at Godfrey

Library in memory of SMFSD founder Gale Cornwell (1926-2007). A moment of silence was observed in his memory.

Barb Stenberg announced that Tom Smith is willing to continue as SMFSD historian. Terms for the commander, secretary, and registrar continue for another three years. Elected at the meeting were Mike Campbell, treasurer; Rita Urquhart, deputy commander; and Tom Smith, historian, to serve Nov. 1, 2009 through Oct. 2015.

Barb Stenberg announced that SMFSD secretary Marge Piersen will head a committee to plan events for the 2012 Triennial Meeting. The following members volunteered to serve on the planning committee: Suzanne Welles, Barb McCarthy, and Rita Urquhart. The next triennial meeting was set for October 2012, with the date to coincide with the annual Saturday seminar given by the Connecticut Genealogy Society.

Plans to distribute to members an updated SMFSD directory were discussed. Notice will be posted in *The Middler*, and a member may choose to withhold any or all of their personal contact information. (See form below.)

After some discussion it was unanimously voted that annual dues be set at \$20, an increase of \$5 per member.

Also discussed was reducing costs by distributing *The Middler* only by e-mail, thus eliminating printing costs. This idea was dismissed after discussion of the publication as a valuable resource for members and as part of various library collections. Copies distributed to prospective members through libraries also help recruit new members. Reducing the quantity printed would result in negligible savings.

Although there was no formal motion, the consensus of those present was to save money by producing an electronic directory and to continue publishing *The Middler* in hard-copy.

Barb Stenberg proposed three policy changes which were approved, and are detailed in an article on page 11.

Reg Bacon announced that member Paula Higgins has completed 24 in-depth profiles for early Middletown settlers in addition to the 23 he wrote, which are already available on our website. At present (Aug. 28) they have 47 profiles done, and 42 to go. He plans to investigate the feasibility of SMFSD publishing the profile collection.

Reg Bacon then proposed two bylaw changes, which were seconded, are now up for a mail-in vote by the membership, and are detailed in the article and ballot on page 11.

Finally, Reg Bacon offered a proposal for amusement only (... *not worth taking up space here - Ed.*), which was applauded but not officially adopted.

On this upbeat note, the meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m. ■

A dying furnace prompts capital campaign by the Middlesex County Historical Society

In spring 2009, our friends at the Middlesex County Historical Society launched a new capital campaign – the first in 12 years – with the goal of raising \$150,000 to replace and upgrade the HVAC system at its Mansfield House museum headquarters on Main Street, Middletown.

“An inoperative furnace and a cranky window air-conditioning unit are of an era we revere in our collections, but not in our operating plant,” wrote MCHS Executive Director Debby Shapiro in

the MCHS spring newsletter.

The new HVAC system, nearly complete at this writing, will not only be cost-effective, but will protect and preserve the collections – which include the research and papers of legendary Middletown genealogist Frank Farnsworth Starr – for years to come.

SMFSD members wishing to support the cause may contact the Middlesex County Historical Society, 151 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457; 860-346-0746; middlesexhistory@wesleyan.edu. ■

SMFSD Directory Withholding Request Form

Return this form *ONLY* if you wish to withhold any information from publication in the SMFSD Directory. If so, mail this form to: Marge Piersen, SMFSD Secretary, 1343 Knollwood Road, Deerfield, IL 60015.

Name: _____
Information to withhold (circle choices):
Name Address Phone E-mail



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 1650-54 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.
- Full member access to the SMFSD web site which includes first settler profiles, genealogy resources, local history articles, a custom-prepared annotated bibliography for Middletown research, and an archive of past *Middler* issues.
- The annual membership roster enabling you to network with Middletown "cousins" and researchers across the country.
- 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 \$20.00 (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. Life Members receive a certificate suitable for framing.

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.



TRIENNIAL MEETING BUSINESS

SMFSD 'policy changes' approved at Triennial meeting, while proposed 'bylaw changes' require vote of all members

By R.W. Bacon
Editor, *The Middler*

Several policy changes and proposed bylaw changes were introduced at the SMFSD Triennial business meeting on Friday, Aug. 28, 2009 at St. Francis Church in Middletown, Conn. The "policy changes" were unanimously approved by the standing-room-only gathering of Triennial Meeting attendees. According to our SMFSD bylaws, proposed "bylaw changes," seconded at the meeting, require a vote by mail of the full membership.

Below are the policy changes and proposed bylaw changes, extracted from the official minutes by SMFSD secretary Marge Piersen.

At the bottom of the page is the mail-in ballot form on which to record your vote. Mail your ballot to Marge Pierson, SMFSD Secretary, 1343 Knollwood Road, Deerfield, IL 60015.

Policy changes adopted 8/28/09

(1) "At the discretion of the board, the Editor of the Newsletter (currently *The Middler*), the webmaster, and the coordinator of liaisons may be appointed to serve on the board in an advisory position. A past board member who has shown particular value to the Society may be named as a member at large. They will have voting rights. No more than four advisory board members may serve at any one time. The whole board will be called the Administrative board. The

Officers of the Society will be called the Executive Board and will have the power to conduct meetings independently as needed to quickly manage affairs as per article VII, section 3."

(2) "The Treasurer, Commander, and Deputy Commander will be designated to sign checks. If the treasurer is not available when a check is needed, either of the other two may sign the check. They will be the designated signers on the bank's records. Only one signature will be required on the check."

(3) "The Director of Godfrey Memorial Library shall automatically become an Honorary Member of the Society upon assuming the Directorship and lasting as long as he/she fills that position."

The above policy changes were effective immediately and do not require a vote of the full membership.

Proposed bylaw changes

SMFSD *Middler* editor Reg Bacon proposed two bylaw changes:

(1) "Further research into our list of qualifying ancestors. It has come to my attention just in recent months that our list of qualifying ancestors is incomplete – there are at least a half-dozen pre-1700 early Middletown families that are not on our list: Thomas Andrews, Thomas Barnes, Roger Gipson, and additional Hubbard, Ward, Warner, and Stow families. I propose we update this list

from time-to-time based on substantiated research. In my view attention to this issue is essential to our credibility – and if we identify documented pre-1700 Native Americans or African-Americans in Middletown, they belong on the list, too." After Reg so moved, member Hal Whitmore seconded the bylaw change.

(2) "I move to quietly dispense with the pretentious title of 'Commander' in favor of the more accurate title of 'President.' I can't be the only one for whom 'Commander' makes them think of a fraternal organization in which the members wear fur hats, monogrammed slippers, and medals. (I have the image of Jackie Gleason and Art Carney heading off to a meeting of the Loyal Order of Raccoons.) This kind of pretentiousness may have been attractive to members of hereditary organizations a century ago, but in my view it could be perceived negatively and repel potential members today."

Reg so moved. James Cornwall seconded the proposal. As current Commander, Barb indicated her support for this change.

According to our bylaws, a vote on these two proposals will be taken to the full membership.

Don't forget to vote!

Complete and mail your ballot to: Marge Piersen, SMFSD Secretary, 1343 Knollwood Road, Deerfield, IL 60015. We value your participation!■

OFFICIAL BALLOT – SMFSD Proposed Bylaw Changes

— Complete & mail to: Marge Piersen, SMFSD Secretary, 1343 Knollwood Road, Deerfield, IL 60015 —

(1) "Further research into our list of qualifying ancestors. It has come to my attention just in recent months that our list of qualifying ancestors is incomplete – there are at least a half-dozen pre-1700 early Middletown families that are not on our list: Thomas Andrews, Thomas Barnes, Roger Gipson, and additional Hubbard, Ward, Warner, and Stow families. I propose we update this list from time-to-time based on substantiated research*. In my view attention to this issue is essential to our credibility – and if we identify documented pre-1700 Native Americans or African-Americans in Middletown*, they belong on the list, too." (*NOTE: The burden of proof will continue to rest with the applicant in keeping with current membership policy.)

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(2) I move to quietly dispense with the pretentious title of 'Commander' in favor of the more accurate title of 'President.* I can't be the only one for whom 'Commander' makes them think of a fraternal organization in which the members wear fur hats, monogrammed slippers, and medals. (I have the image of Jackie Gleason and Art Carney heading off to a meeting of the Loyal Order of Raccoons.) This kind of pretentiousness may have been attractive to members of hereditary organizations a century ago, but in my view it could be perceived negatively and repel potential members today." (*NOTE: This proposal will also change the title of "Deputy Commander" to "Vice President.")

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Feeling sluggish? Exercise your franchise! -



Triennial Meeting ...

continued from page 1

history. At 2 p.m., after lunch on our own, interested members braved the soggy weather for explorations of Riverside Cemetery and Mortimer Cemetery. Drying out was short-lived, however, as the cemetery slog was followed, back at the hotel, by the festive Wine & Cheese Social hosted by Don & Lyn Brock. Attendees departed for dinner at Carmen Anthony's Restaurant in the town of Wethersfield, which was followed by our guest speaker, August DeFrance, president of the Middletown Old Burying Ground Association. He was assisted by Ruth Shapleigh-Brown, executive director of the Connecticut Gravestone Network.

Sunday, August 30. This day was a travel day for many, but a number of attendees remained for an afternoon

visit to the Middlesex County Historical Society to view the current exhibition, do research in the library, and read through files from the Frank Farnsworth Starr Collection.

Growing up on a farm in Middletown, Conn. ...

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well. There are examples of the farm looking to operate more efficiently. They purchased the first rubber-tire tractor in Conn., and soon all farms used rubber tires. In the 1980s they adapted a new high-tech process for non-surgical embryo transplants. The oversize herd was sold in part in recent times, to places as far away as Taiwan, Korea, and Honduras. They went from farm production to a dairy/creamery and delivered processed products in central Connecticut. They have been

It was clear upon our farewells that upon returning home, members would be marking their calendars for the 2012 meeting. Watch for the date – and then plan to join us! ■

leaders in the Connecticut Guernsey Association, 4-H, Future Farmers of America, and various cooperative agricultural farm associations. Taxes on farm land have been a special problem, and Connecticut Public Act 490 puts farmland into a different tax class. This has become “the cornerstone of farmland use preservation,” and has helped conserve farms up to now. The future is uncertain – the number of U. S. farms nationally continues to decline drastically. My sense, is that sadly, most farms will become part of what has been described as, “an isolated event set in a real estate development jungle.” ■

