



The Middler

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

Vol. 15, No. 2

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Fall 2015



Research

2015 TRIENNIAL MEETING RECAP

Members from across the U.S. gather in the ancestral hometown

New facts & new friends highlight triennial event for Middletown 'cousins'

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

The SMFSD Triennial Meeting October 8-10, 2015 drew Middletown, Conn. "cousins" from across the U.S. to enjoy research, networking, and social gatherings in and around the ancestral hometown.

For three days – Thursday through Saturday – more than 30 members, spouses, and friends hailing from all corners of the continent fanned out from the headquarters hotel to

explore the riches of genealogy research repositories in both Middletown and Hartford, Conn.

Every three years, SMFSD event planners aim for a fresh twist on activities, and this year, event chairperson Barb Stenberg, assisted by David Bowe, Laura Hobbs, and Cindy Nicewarner, included more free-choice periods within the three-day schedule.

Thursday, Oct. 8. Event registration opened at 8 a.m. Thursday morning at the Marriott Residence Inn in Rocky Hill, Conn., followed by a brief orientation to Middletown and Hartford research destinations by *Middler* editor Reg Bacon. A good number of attendees were up with the roosters and ready to charge off with gusto, as they had arrived the previous afternoon.

Because Thursday was designated as "Middletown Research Day," members chose to visit either the

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Exploration



Friends, Food, & Fun

SMFSD business: New ideas, plus new registrar & secretary

New initiatives, shifting roles of the "working board," support of history/genealogy resources in Middletown, and the future of *The Middler* were among topics addressed at the SMFSD business meeting at Russell Library on the afternoon of Thursday, Oct. 8, 2015 during the Triennial Meeting.

SMFSD president Marge Pierson of Deerfield, Ill. called the meeting to order, which was followed by reports from treasurer Mike Campbell, secretary Cindy Nicewarner, and registrar Hal Whitmore.

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Top photo: (l. to r.) Jack White, Kem Marcum, & Jim Collins scrutinize the resources at Russell Library. *Photo by Marge Pierson.* **Middle photo:** (l. to r.) Michael Whitmore & Christopher Whitmore converse with a docent at the Wetmore House tour. *Photo by Marge Pierson.* **Bottom photo:** (l. to r.) Barb Stenberg, Jack White, Kem Marcum, Reg Bacon, & Laura Hobbs enjoy the outdoors at Laura's fabulous opening day lunch. *Photo by Kitty Ryan.*

~ DUES are DUE! ~

Annual Membership dues (\$20) are due January 1, 2016 for the 2016 calendar year.
Please send payment to:

Mike Campbell
SMFSD Treasurer
3570 Willow Street
Bonita, CA 91902-1226

Thank You
!!!

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SMFSD NEWS

SMFSD enjoys 'membership rush' in advance of meeting; member Jack L. White recruited for NEHGS council service

• **Welcome new members.**
SMFSD welcomes seven new members since the last issue of *The Middler*: **Thomas W. Savage**, AM-354, San Jose, Calif. (1st settler John Savage); **James W. F. Collins**, AM-355, Wenham, Mass. (1st settler Nathaniel Collins); **Kem E. Marcum**, AM-356, Double Oak, Texas (1st settler Daniel Markham); **Dale L. Markham**, AM-357, Granger, Ind. (1st settler Daniel Markham); **D. Jolene White**, AM-358, Scotts, Mich. (1st settler Daniel Markam); **George A. Calcut**, AM-359, Mesa, Ariz. (1st settler John Wilcox); and **Dennis M. Savage**, AM-360, Wallingford, Conn. (1st settler John Savage).

• **Alert SMFSD readers** of the summer 2015 issue of *American Ancestors*, the fine quarterly magazine of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, could puff up with pride that one of our members, **Jack L. White** of El Cajon, Calif. (LM-292), has been recruited for a three-year term on the NEHGS Council, an advisory body to the organization's board of trustees. The brief biographical sketch in the magazine (Vol. 16, No. 3) noted Jack's long career as an environmental consultant and his valuable experience as a project manager. Now retired, he is immersed in genealogical research, analysis, and writing. Publications in recent years include

Bilek-White/Nagel/Feederle Ancestral Lineage of the Walter L. White Family of Calabasas, California (2014), *The Bramford-Earls Colne Connection* (with co-author Jolene White, 2012), and *Rawson Freewill Baptist Church Records 1830-1916* (with co-author S.L. Emmons, 2008). Jack attended his first SMFSD Triennial Meeting in Middletown this fall. He is a descendant of Daniel Markham (1641-1712), who arrived in Middletown from Massachusetts in 1677.

• **SMFSD Facebook presence.**
Don't forget that in addition to our website content, you can keep up with SMFSD on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SocietyofMiddletownFirstSettlersDescendants>. ■



The Middler

NEWSLETTER of the
SOCIETY of MIDDLETOWN
FIRST SETTLERS DESCENDANTS
1650-1700 - Middletown, Connecticut, U.S.A.
www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ctsmfspd/index.html

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

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SMFSD OFFICERS

President Margery Piersen
Vice President Sue Welles
Secretary Laura Hobbs
Treasurer Mike Campbell
Historian Don Brock
Registrar Cynthia Nicewarner
Middler Editor R.W. Bacon

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Many to thank for successful Triennial Meeting

This year's triennial meeting was another great success, with 34 registrations. Thanks to everyone who helped our committee chair Barb Stenberg. Organizing activities for several days is a huge accomplishment.

The home hospitality of Middletown resident Laura Hobbs added warmth to our gathering. The wine and cheese social hour hosted by Lyn and Don Brock provided a further opportunity to get to know new attendees and reconnect with old friends. Mike Campbell efficiently handled registration, name tags, and the informational packet. Reg Bacon provided internal and external publicity. The way he professionally provides a public face to our organization is an achievement we too often take for granted. Reg also presented an introduction to research opportunities in the Middletown area.

Thanks to David Bowe for pinch-hitting to give Peter Irvine's DNA project report, and for his special presentation on how he has used Facebook to connect with various previously unknown cousins.

Hal Whitmore, who has served us as registrar for the past three years, resigned from his board position. One of Hal's accomplishments was the creation of a standard form to be filled out by all applicants. This form better guides them and makes application review easier. He also brought many Whitmore/Wetmore cousins into our organization. Hal will be heading a new SMFSD initiative - to document descendants of Middletown first settlers based on the 1790 federal census. You will be hearing more about this activity in which we will aim to involve a larger share of our membership. Thanks, Hal, for your continuing service.

Cindy Nicewarner, our very capable secretary and an experienced genealogist who works for NSDAR, will now fill the registrar position. Laura Hobbs was appointed to fill the

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Scenes from SMFSD's Triennial Meeting Oct. 8-10, 2015



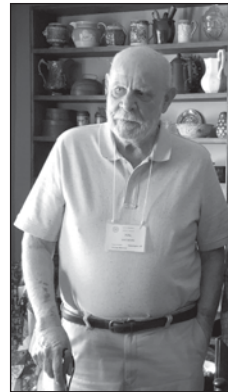
Enjoying the proceedings at Russell Library are (l. to r.) Mary Jane Jones, Cindy Nicewarner, & Martha McLaney.



Sometimes genealogy gets heated! Making their points are David & Victoria Kelsey.



Also at Russell Library were (l. to r.) Michael Moss, Carol James, Kitty Ryan, & David Bowe. (Photos in this row by Marge Pierson)



Hal Whitmore (above at center) arranged a Thursday morning tour for SMFSD attendees of the exquisitely furnished 1746 Judge Seth Wetmore House in Middletown. (Photos of exterior and interior by Kitty Ryan; photo of Hal by Marge Pierson)



At Founders' Rock above right are cousins David Kelsey & Don Brock. At left? A "distant" cousin.



Marge Pierson runs a great meeting. Note the sign: "No Exit"!



At Riverside Cemetery are (l. to r.) Sue Welles, David Kelsey, Reg Bacon, & Don Brock.



Comparing notes are (l. to r.) David Bowe, John Cornwell, & Don Brock.



At the impromptu farewell dinner are (l. to r.) Marge Pierson, Reg Bacon, Jack White, Victoria Kelsey, Barb Stenberg, Eric Stenberg, David Kelsey, Sue Welles, Lyn Brock, & Don Brock.

Thanks to Kitty Ryan, Marge Pierson, & Victoria Kelsey for their ardent photo documentation!

Meet Laura Hobbs, SMFSD's new secretary: A Middletown descendant – and also a resident

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

This is the fifth in a series of profiles that give SMFSD members across the U.S. an opportunity to get to know more about the “cousins” and genealogy enthusiasts who keep the organization going. This fall *The Middler* interviews Laura Hobbs, who is in the enviable position of living in Middletown, Conn., in the midst of the resources that abound in the ancestral hometown. By profession, Dr. Laura Hobbs is the clinical coordinator of the Department of Pharmacy Services at Hartford (Conn.) Hospital, and the director of the hospital's pharmacy residency program. At the recent SMFSD Triennial Meeting she was elected as secretary to fill the position vacated when previous secretary Cindy Nicewarner was elected as SMFSD registrar. Like all of our officers, it's clear that Laura can manage the small details – somehow she found time to respond to your editor's “email interview.”

The Middler: When and how did you become interested in family history and genealogy?

Laura Hobbs: I became interested in family history in 2002 a year after my last grandparent died. I do wish I had talked to my grandparents more about their lives growing up and the stories they heard of their ancestors.

The Middler: When did you learn that Middletown is an ancestral home?

Laura: I learned that I had ancestors from Middletown about 2004 as I received a printout from a cousin who had researched our paternal family. I joined SMFSD through William Cornwell although I also descend from Matthias Treat, both on my father's side, and from John Savage on my mother's side.

The Middler: Who is your favorite Middletown ancestor ... and why?

Laura: So far, William Cornwell is my favorite Middletown ancestor,

New SMFSD secretary **Laura Hobbs, who lives in Middletown, Conn., has been active with several Middletown history and genealogy libraries.** (Photo by Kitty Ryan)



principally because I know more about him and can imagine him and his family in a small house living at the corner of what is now Washington and Main Streets in Middletown.

The Middler: How did you first encounter SMFSD?

Laura: When working at the Middlesex Historical Society back in 2012, I read in *The Middler* newsletter about the Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants and recognized the names of some of my ancestors as being settlers of Middletown. Over that summer I worked to complete the documentation demonstrating the line of descent from William Cornwell allowing me to join SMFSD.

The Middler: What are your most memorable research experiences?

Laura: My two most memorable genealogical experiences involve visits to cemeteries. In 2010, my father and I drove to Montclair, New Jersey for the day. We visited Mount Hebron

“William Cornwell is my favorite Middletown ancestor ... I can imagine him and his family in a in a small house ... at Washington & Main Sts. in Middletown.”

– Laura Hobbs

cemetery where his maternal grandparents and great grandparents are buried. He does not remember visiting the cemetery previously despite many trips to Montclair over the years. My father and I also visited the house where his mother and aunt were raised and the Israel Crane Museum in Montclair, where we saw the harp donated by his mother's family. This harp traveled from London via ship, then over land via sleigh, and by boat down the Ohio River to Cincinnati in 1831 when my father's mother's second great-grandparents emigrated to the United States. Later that same year, I joined second cousins traveling to Bristol, Rhode Island, and in the North Burial Grounds found the gravestones of my great grandparents as well as gravestones for two more generations. The company of history-minded family on a beautiful fall weekend made this trip especially memorable.

The Middler: Has your interest in genealogy spread to others in your family? What has been the response?

Laura: As for family members showing an interest in family history, my parents answer my questions and listen to my discoveries, but they have not researched on their own. Neither my husband nor son share my interest in genealogy, although I am grateful neither complains when I attend conferences, visit cemeteries, or spend money on genealogical endeavors. I do have a first cousin once removed on my mother's side who shares my interest; she and I have spent many days together inspecting old photos and reading century's-old letters.

The Middler: How does your education & career background relate to your genealogical interests?

Laura: Training as a pharmacist to read physician's prescriptions has helped me read old handwriting. My research of drug information questions

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CEMETERY NEWS

Fund-raising efforts continue for restoration Russell Chapel (1867) at Indian Hill Cemetery

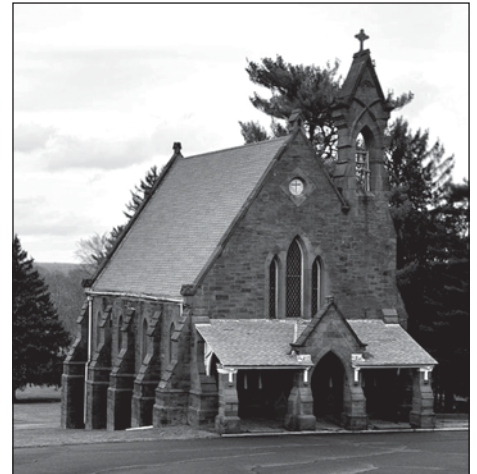
Fund-raising efforts continue for the restoration of Russell Chapel at Indian Hill Cemetery in Middletown, the expansive 45-acre park-like resting place for generations of many descendants of Middletown's early families.

During SMFSD's 2015 Triennial Meeting, *The Middler* tracked down Augie DeFrance, treasurer of the privately-owned Indian Hill Cemetery, for an update on the restoration of the ornate 1867 brownstone structure. (To clarify, Augie DeFrance is also president of the Middletown Old Burying Grounds Association, which maintains Middletown's eight publicly-owned cemeteries.) At the time of the 2012 Triennial Meeting, the cemetery had received a state grant for an engineering study to determine restoration priorities. The current situation: While phase I restoration is in progress thanks to a subsequent \$200,000 grant received from the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office in 2014, a total of \$600,000 is needed to complete the project. As such, the cemetery and its extended family of grassroots supporters have conducted numerous fund-raising events throughout the year in Middletown, and plan more in the future.

At the SMFSD Triennial Meeting banquet on Oct. 9, 2015, Augie and Claudia DeFrance were on hand to

accept SMFSD's \$500 donation to the Middletown Old Burying Grounds Association in support of Middletown's public cemeteries. Those wishing to make individual donations toward the Russell Chapel restoration project can visit the Indian Hill Cemetery website at www.indian-hill.org/chapel/ to print a pledge form or donate online.

Russell Chapel has been a centerpiece of Indian Hill Cemetery since its construction, 17 years after the cemetery opened in 1850. Frances Osborne Russell (1798-1882), widow of China-trade entrepreneur, civic leader, and philanthropist Samuel Russell (1789-1862), donated the chapel to the cemetery in memory of her late husband. According to a 2014 *Hartford Courant* article (April 19, 2014), in his lifetime Samuel Russell was politely referred to as a "tea merchant," a euphemism for his brisk trade in exchanging Turkish



Above is a rear view of Russell Chapel at Indian Hill Cemetery in Middletown, Conn.

opium for tea, silk, and porcelain. (Samuel Russell was a descendant of several early Middletown settlers, including Giles Hamlin, William Harris, Robert Warner, Francis Whitmore, and Noadiah Russell.) ■

– R.W. Bacon

Early Middletown Families, Volume II: What happened?

In early 2015, the goal of completing Vol. II of *Early Families of Middletown, Conn.* in time for the SMFSD Triennial Meeting was still within reach. This second volume was to include profiles of families that arrived in Middletown

between 1654 and 1700, plus additional chapters on 17th-century context.

Unfortunately the book was not completed in time, and at the meeting your editor fielded many inquiries about the status of the follow-up to *Volume I: 1650-1654*, published in 2012.

The mundane explanation: Work on the book progressed steadily through January 2015. But then came January 27, 2015 and its 30-plus inches of snow. And then 80 more inches in the next few weeks. Work on the book came to a halt, as for the next two months almost every spare moment outside of work was devoted to "snow management." And as a proud descendant of a long line of northern Vermont mountain men, I continue to tackle all snow management with a shovel only.

By April other projects advanced in priority. Vol. II was set aside, but it *will* be completed. *Vol. I: 1650-1654* is still available at www.VarietyArtsPress.com. ■

– R.W. Bacon

From the president ...

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remainder of Cindy's term as secretary. Welcome to the board, Laura.

We were especially delighted to meet new and prospective members in person and to become acquainted with Eric Stenberg (son of Barb Stenberg), and Christopher and Michael Whitmore (sons of Hal Whitmore). A number of attendees took this opportunity to encourage cousins to meet them

for the weekend. Thanks to each and every attendee, whether you came from across the country or from nearby, for helping to make our meeting special. What a privilege to gather with other descendants or our 17th-century ancestors to pay them tribute. We hope all members will consider coming to Middletown for our next triennial meeting in October 2018. ■

Marge Pierson,
President, SMFSD

Searching out Middletown's oldest homes provides a lesson in how 'preservation' occurs

The real estate mantra about 'location' influences preservation – in reverse

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

At the conclusion of SMFSD's 2015 Triennial Meeting, your editor took a "busman's holiday" of sorts before setting out on the highway for home.

In addition to taking on independent projects for museums, your editor is also in the employ of Historic New England, the regional preservation organization that interprets New England culture through its properties, collections, programs, tours, exhibitions, and archives. Influenced by that background, I was moved to conduct my own informal survey of Middletown's earliest surviving homes.

In preparation, I scurried off to Russell Library at odd times during

the weekend to consult three surveys of Middletown's architecture that are held in the Middletown Room.

The first comprehensive survey of Connecticut's oldest houses was conducted by the Connecticut Society of Colonial Dames between 1915 and 1935. Notable Middletown historian Jessie Alsop (1875-1951) worked on the project, which documented over 1000 18th-century houses in the state. The full report was completed in 1940. The form developed for the survey included title search, measurements, materials, floor plan, and photograph.

Between 1934 and 1937 the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) began a survey that became known as "The Census of Old Buildings in Connecticut." Jessie Alsop also worked on this survey, and in fact its survey form was modeled after the form developed by the Colonial Dames.

Some of the WPA survey documentation and photos are viewable online at the Connecticut State Library website: <http://cslib.cdmhost.com/cdm/landingpage/collection/p4005coll7>.

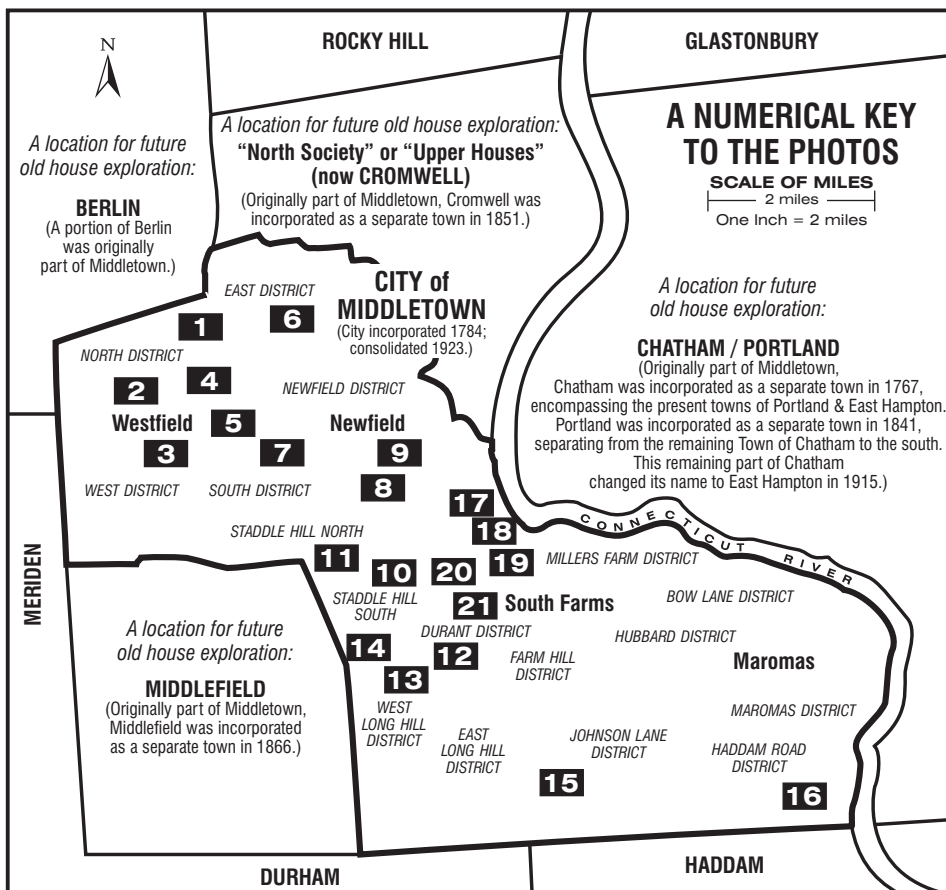
The third and most recent survey was conducted by the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust between 1977 and 1979. Beginning with a street-by-street evaluation, an eight-person team coordinated by Barbara Cleary identified 1000 buildings of "historical importance" according to criteria of architectural significance, historical significance, notability, or preservation value. In-depth research was conducted on 315 of the buildings. The intent was that the survey would be used by community leaders as a guide for preservation action.

Middletown businessman, banker, civic leader, and preservation advocate John E. Reynolds III (1923-2005) founded the non-profit Greater Middletown Preservation Trust (GMPT) in 1974 to mobilize public opinion, and to educate city officials who were still determined to carry out the city's 1952 urban renewal plan of mass demolition of downtown residential structures.

The survey is comprised of four bound volumes – 1242 letter-size pages. Downloadable PDF files of the survey are available at the city's website: www.middletownplanning.com/Committees/DRPB/historicpropertieslist.html.

Because the GMPT survey drew liberally from the documentation collected in the earlier surveys, and also had a easy-to-use index, it became the preferred resource.

The selection. Because so many descendants of the early families departed from Middletown to points north and west shortly after the Revolutionary War, I elected to search for and photograph the oldest homes, as they would likely have the greatest relevance to the greatest number of



Text continues on page 8



(1) **Jeremiah Wilcox House (1747)**, Bradley St. (Westfield).



(2) **Atkins/Barnes House (1730)**, 573 Atkins St. (Westfield North).



(3) **John Warner House (1750)**, 136 Atkins St. (Westfield). The house remained in the family to 1846.



(4) A 2nd **Jeremiah Wilcox House (1760)**, 861 Middle St. (Westfield).



(5) **Samuel Harris House (1686)**, 612 Middle St. (Westfield). This is the oldest existing house in Middletown.



(6) **Josiah Boardman House (1734)**, 953 East St. (Westfield).



(7) **Sylvester Wilcox House (1750)**, 489 East St. (Westfield). Remained in the family to 1866.



(8) **Benoni Plum House (1722 & 1744)**, 62 Westfield St. (Newfield). A good example of the early 3-bay style.



(9) **Nathaniel Bacon II House (1738)**, 353 Newfield St. (Newfield). The easternmost house built on the 1670 land grant to Nathaniel Bacon I.



(10) **Southmayd Homestead (1739)**, 797 Washington Street (Staddle Hill North). This saltbox-style house remained in the family into the 1940s.



(11) **Judge Seth Wetmore House (1746)**, Washington St. Extension (Staddle Hill North). Middletown's finest example of high Georgian architecture. A landmark 300-year-old oak tree in front of the house was felled by a storm in June 2015.



(12) **Robert Hubbard House (1675 & 1719)**, 1340 Randolph Rd. (Long Hill). The first floor is of brownstone – the structure was originally a “watch house” against Indian attack built in 1675 during King Philip’s Indian War.



(13) **Bacon/Barnes House (1728)**, 1678 Randolph Rd. (West Long Hill). One of the few remaining 1½-story Colonial-era houses in Middletown.



(14) **Nehemiah Hubbard House (1744)**, Laurel Grove Rd. (West Long Hill). Remained in the family through the 19th century. Restored in 1929.



(15) **Obadiah Brainerd House (1725)**, Mount Rd. (Johnson Lane District). Constructed on the site of the earlier tavern of Daniel Harris.



(16) **Daniel Prior House (1730)**, 1762 Saybrook Rd. (Maromas). Formerly an inn, the house remained in the family until 1879.



(17) **Starr-Fisk House (1752)**, 108-110 Washington St. (downtown). Built by Jeremiah Wetmore, it was sold to Jehosophat Starr in 1756 and remained in the family to 1845. The Fisk family owned it to the 1970s.



(18) **William Southmayd House (1747)**, 73 Main St. (downtown). Rescued from demolition, moved to current site, and restored in 1977.



(19) **Rockwell/Sumner House (1721)**, 21 Pleasant St. (downtown).



(20) **Edward Rockwell House (1740)**, 227 Pine St. (Wesleyan). This house was moved from Washington St. to Pine St. in 1873.



(21) **Hall/Stevens House (1698)**, 57 Highland St. (Durant District). John Hall acquired the property in 1674, which remained in the family through the early 20th century.



Searching out Middletown's oldest surviving houses ... continued from page 7

SMFSD members. Even without a direct connection to a particular structure, descendants viewing photos of the pre-1750 houses would see examples of the types of homes built in that period. With limited time on Sunday before heading home on the highway, I confined the project to the 20 oldest of the city's pre-1750 homes.

Mapping the search. Most of Middletown's oldest surviving homes are in sections most distant from the

city center, in the Westfield, Long Hill, and Maromas sections. This was not surprising, as long-term survival of early domestic architecture throughout New England is usually inversely related to development pressure on the land the house sits upon. Simply put, with less economic pressure for development, there is greater likelihood that an older house will avoid the wrecking ball of progress.

Often related to location and relative development pressure is the continuity of family ownership and the degree of family attachment to a long-

held homestead. The notes in the surveys provide valuable information about the builder (if known), original owner, subsequent owners through the centuries, and alterations.

Closer to the city center, there are quite a few c. 1800 homes in a well-preserved, well-cared-for state, but only a few from before 1750. The first tipping point toward proactive preservation occurred in the late-19th-century Colonial Revival era, and by then most of the 17th- and 18th-century homes in the growing industrial city were already lost to progress. Almost a century later, the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust summoned a critical mass of preservation interest in the face of the city's urban renewal makeover. In fact, in the 1970s it was GMPT's founder, John F. Reynolds III, who doubled as investor/developer in relocating and restoring a handful of 18th-century structures that stand in downtown Middletown today.

Finding the houses. Locating the addresses was straightforward, but some of the houses were not visible from the street. A few of the earliest homes had been demolished since the GMPT survey. They suffered the misfortune of being located too close to industrial development.

General observations. Most of the houses were obviously functioning in a fluid state and clearly adapted to the 21st century. The changes and adaptations through the years in many cases made them more interesting. A few of the homes appeared to have been aggressively "restored," for better-or-worse, at some point, affecting a preciousness that is a matter of taste.

Reference map. On page 6 is a map showing the location of the 18th-century houses photographed on Sunday, October 11, 2015. On page 7 are the photos, along with some details excerpted from the GMPT survey.

With so many SMFSD members with roots in Cromwell, Chatham/Portland, and Middlefield – more distant from the center of Middletown – similar old house sleuthing is in order for those towns in the future. ■

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(203) 566-3005
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM
For Buildings and Structures

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
FORM NO. 1
DATE: 10/11/15
QUAD:
DISTRICT: X

1. BUILDING NAME: Common: _____ Historic: Nathaniel Bacon House
2. TOWN/CITY: Middletown VILLAGE: Westfield COUNTY: Middletown
3. STREET & NUMBER (and/or location): B. Boardman Lane PUBLIC PRIVATE
4. OWNERS: Parker Hannifin Corporation
5. USE: Present: Vacant Historic: Residence
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: yes no
Interior accessible: yes no

DESCRIPTION

7. STYLE OF BUILDING: Center-Chimney Colonial DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: c. 1755
8. MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate):
 clapboard asbestos siding brick
 wood shingle asphalt siding fiberglass
 board & batten stone cobblestone
 aluminum siding concrete type: _____ cut stone type: brinstone
 other: _____ Foundation: _____

9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
 wood frame post and beam balloon
 load bearing masonry structural iron or steel
 other: _____

10. ROOF gable gambrel

11. NUMBER OF FLOORS: 2

12. COORDINATES: _____

13. INTERIOR: _____

14. RELATED TO: building site

15. SURROUNDINGS: view other: _____

16. INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS: _____

1970s House Survey Form

At left and below are two pages of the standard form used in the Middletown Preservation Trust's survey of historic structures in the 1970s. The building detailed on this form, the Nathaniel Bacon III House at 8 Boardman Lane in Westfield, built in 1755, no longer stands.

SIGNIFICANCE

Architect: _____ Builder: _____

18. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: The Bacon family for over two centuries was prominent in the Westfield district of Middletown. This house was built by Nathaniel Bacon III before 1779; a likely date would be around 1755. Nathaniel Bacon III was a well-to-do farmer in Westfield, and owned several hundred acres. The house and farm remained in the Bacon family until 1925. It presently is owned by Parker Hannifin Corporation whose local subsidiary, EIS Automotive, is interested in the property for possible plant expansion. This house displays the center-chimney, two-room deep plan, and double overhang characteristic of mid-eighteenth century house construction in the lower Connecticut valley. The interior is largely original and contains such fine detail work including panelling of dados and fireplace walls, a triple-run staircase, and a corner cupboard. As one of Middletown's best examples of mid-eighteenth century domestic architecture this house retains a characteristic rural setting. Unfortunately, the future of this house is uncertain.

19. SOURCES: Middletown Land Records; Middletown Probate Records; Middletown City Directories; Joellyn Kuhnlein and Elizabeth Reynolds, "Nathaniel Bacon House," unpublished GMPT Report, 1974

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS:

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE:
 none known highways vandalism developers other: _____
 renewal private deterioration zoning zoning explanation: This area has
been zoned industrial; EIS Automotive Corp., a subsidiary of Parker Hannifin, may use this land for expansion. The house may be saved; however, its setting could be destroyed. The house is now vacant and boarded up, leaving it vulnerable to deterioration caused by neglect or vandalism.

PHOTOGRAPH
photographer: John E. Reynolds
date: 9/78 view: south
negative on file: Roll 47, #18A-19

COMPILED BY: John E. Reynolds date: 8/78
name: _____
organization: Greater Middletown Preservation Trust
address: 27 Washington St., Middletown, Ct. 06457

RECOMMENDED READING**Try this two-book refresher on 17th-century Puritanism: 'Puritans at Play' and 'The Case of the Piglet's Paternity'****A classic of Puritan leisure ... and a new anthology of Connecticut court cases****By R.W. Bacon**
Editor, The Middler

In the spring 2013 issue of *The Middler*, the lead article explored the particular strain of Puritanism that evolved in Middletown in the 17th and early 18th centuries. Among the many resources consulted in preparation of that article was *Puritans at Play: Leisure and Recreation in Colonial New England*, by Bruce C. Daniels (1995). The topic as stated on the cover was explored thoroughly of course, but perhaps the book's greatest value was

the overview in the introduction of the shifting interpretations of Puritanism by historians in the last three centuries. Those with 17th-century New England roots will value this book as an aid to understanding Colonial-era Puritan life.

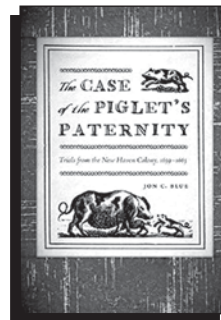
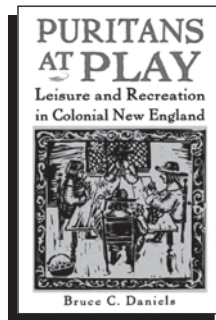
The author's credibility is without question – he is the same Bruce C.

Daniels who wrote *The Connecticut Town* (1979), a masterful study of that subject written while he was a professor at Wesleyan University.

A cursory Internet search indicates that *Puritans at Play*, used widely in college courses, is available as a used paperback for next to nothing.

New in 2015 is a book that aids understanding of the extremes of Puritanism, *The Case of the Piglet's Paternity: Trials from the New Haven Colony, 1639-1663*, by Jon C. Blue, a judge of the Connecticut Superior Court. The author has taken the judicial transcripts of 33 cases from arguably the most strict of early Puritan settlements, the New Haven

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**SMFSD business meeting ...**
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Member David Bowe, M.D., of Chagrin Fall, Ohio, reported on the Middletown DNA projects directed by SMFSD member Peter Irvine of Homewood, Ill., and encouraged participation of members. For more information about the project, visit www.familytreedna.com/groups/middletown-settlers/about.

Regarding the future of *The Middler*, editor Reg Bacon of Newburyport, Mass. reassured members that he was not planning to vaporize in the immediate future, but that (1) with book projects piling up in other areas of scholarship that he would like to complete in this lifetime, and (2) with knowledge that few lifetimes extend to 130 years, he would welcome an "assistant editor" – ideally with some background in publications – to be groomed to ultimately take over. In the meantime he welcomes queries by would-be authors about articles of interest to Middletown descendants. Query by email: rwbacon@comcast.net.

The most pressing business was getting a new membership registrar in place to fill the position vacated by the

reluctant mid-term resignation of Hal Whitmore. Secretary Cindy Nicewarner, a genealogy professional at the DAR library in Washington, D.C., volunteered to assume the task of evaluating research of prospective members. This created a vacancy at secretary, a responsibility that SMFSD member Laura Hobbs of Middletown, Conn. was ready to take on. Both were approved for three-year terms by unanimous vote of members. Cindy will continue to manage SMFSD's Facebook page.

In other unanimous votes, Sue Welles (vice president), Mike Campbell (treasurer), and Don Brock (historian) were elected to new six-year terms.

Hal Whitmore, of Wilmington, Del., in his three years as registrar, guided a steady stream of new members through the application process. His new initiative, endorsed by members, is the Middletown 1790 Census Project. Hal referenced several similar region-specific projects in which a sort of "benchmark inventory" has been taken of families in the 1790 census. He volunteered to lead a project for Middletown, which will be helpful for those tracking ancestors at a time when many were about to depart for points west.

Members were strongly in favor of annual SMFSD donations to support libraries and research archives in Middletown. Donations of \$150 each to Godfrey Memorial Library, Russell Library, and the Middlesex County Historical Society were unanimously approved, as was an annual donation of \$150 to the Connecticut Heritage Foundation in support of the Connecticut State Library.

Also discussed was establishment of an SMFSD scholarship to be awarded to a Middletown high school senior intending to pursue history in college. Difficulties of administering such a program at long distance relegated this idea to "back-burner" status.

On the "front burner" was the support of the Middletown Old Burying Grounds Association. A \$500 donation was unanimously approved.

Volunteering to serve as chairperson of the 2018 Triennial Meeting was current SMFSD vice-president Sue Welles of Oakville, Conn. She will be assisted by a committee of David Bowe, Don Brock, and Laura Hobbs.

The lure of Don & Lyn Brock's wine-and-cheese social propelled the business meeting to a timely adjournment. ■

2015 Triennial Meeting recap continued from page 1

Middlesex County Historical Society or Godfrey Memorial Library before gathering at Russell Library later in the day. A morning highlight was an optional tour, arranged by Hal Whitmore, of the privately-owned 1746 Judge Seth Wetmore House, the finest surviving example of Georgian domestic architecture in Middletown.

The midday highlight of the beautiful sunny Thursday was the lunch hosted by SMFSD member Laura Hobbs at her home in Middletown. It was difficult to leave the delicious food, convivial atmosphere, and the lush greenery of Laura's deck, but somehow attendees made it to Russell Library in time for the day's featured speaker.

In the Hubbard Room of Russell Library, SMFSD members and the public alike were treated to an informative presentation by Mel Smith of the Connecticut State Library's History & Genealogy Unit. This presentation on the assets of interest at the Connecticut State Library was quite timely, as the next day of the Triennial Meeting was designated as "Hartford Research Day." Most researchers of Connecticut genealogy and history know that the Connecticut State Library has comprehensive finding aids online, but the latest-and-greatest news from Mel Smith is that as of September 1, 2015, the library, in collaboration with Ancestry.com, has made 323,000



At left is Mel Smith of the Conn. State Library's History & Genealogy Unit, SMFSD's guest speaker at Russell Library. (Photo by Kitty Ryan)

Connecticut probate records from 1636 to 1932 accessible online – with more to come.

The SMFSD business meeting followed our featured speaker. (See the separate article beginning on pg. 1.) The sprightly pace of the business meeting foretold the next destination in the busy Thursday schedule: The wine & cheese social at the hotel hosted by Don & Lyn Brock.

At 5 p.m. all roads led to Don & Lyn's hotel room, where first-time attendees and grizzled veterans of Middletown's library stacks took a break from research to forge new friendships while sipping and nibbling. Don & Lyn's hosting and hospitality has become legendary, and their hotel room, spacious as it was, was jammed with ultra-cozy cousins, packed in like sardines in a can, not unlike the shipboard stateroom scene in *A Night at the Opera*, the 1935 Marx Brothers movie. Later that evening attendees repaired to restaurants of their choice to continue the energized gab sessions.

Friday, Oct. 9. On Friday, "Hartford Research Day," many attendees set out for the Connecticut State Library or the Connecticut Historical Society, although quite a number chose to continue to mine the riches of the Frank Farnsworth Starr collection at the Middlesex County Historical Society in Middletown. Some completed a triathlon of sorts that day, researching at three different libraries in Hartford and Middletown. The reward at the finish line on Friday was the banquet at the Dakota Steak House in Rocky Hill.

The fine meal was followed by the presentation of SMFSD's donation to the Middletown Old Burial Grounds Association, accepted by its president, Augie DeFrance; and then by our featured speaker, Dr. Lucianne Lavin.

Dr. Lavin, who is Director of Research & Collections at the Institute of American Indian Studies in Washington, Conn., spoke about Native American presence in central Connecticut both long before and long after the arrival of English settlers. An



At left is Dr. Lucianne Lavin of the Institute of American Indian Studies, SMFSD's guest speaker at the Friday banquet. (Photo by Kitty Ryan)

archaeologist by training, and the author of *Connecticut's Indigenous Peoples* (Yale University Press, 2013), she presented an illustrated overview of the history, culture, and survival of the Wangunks, who lived on both sides of the Connecticut River at the time of Middletown's early English settlement.

Saturday, Oct. 10. Saturday was "Free Choice Day," and attendees chose purposefully. The day was perfect for exploring cemeteries, so more than a few seized the time to explore Riverside Cemetery and Old Farm Hill Cemetery. Others took advantage of the accommodating decision by the Middlesex County Historical Society to open especially for SMFSD researchers on Saturday. Member David Bowe hosted a program at Russell Library, "Finding Your Cousins," on the finer points of Internet searching. Your peripatetic reporter/editor found others hunkered down at microfilm readers at Russell Library almost until closing time.

"Dinner on your own" on Saturday evening turned into an improvised group farewell gathering at Rocky Hill's Town Line Diner, where the genealogy talk and planning for the future continued.

After three days of feverish gorging on the smorgasbord of Middletown history and genealogy, the Sunday travel and decompression day was welcome – light grazing and light reading only. But for this editor, upon getting off the highway and arriving at home, there was still enough energy to circle the possible dates for SMFSD Triennial 2018. See you there. ■



SMFSD Membership Information

If you descend from a pre-1700 settler, we welcome you to join us

The following are individuals (and presumably spouses & families) said to have settled in Middletown, Conn. before 1700. The list is from *The History of Middlesex County* (Henry Whittemore, Beers Co., 1884), derived in part from the *List of Householders & Proprietors*, Middletown, March 22, 1670. **Names in boldface** are the original 1650-54 settlers. **N.B.!** *This list is known to be incomplete!* If you descend from a pre-1700 settler *not* on this list, including a Native American or African-American ancestor, please contact our Registrar about submitting lineage and references. **Not a descendant? Join us in the Friends category!**

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 Stancliff . . . 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.
- 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, 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 *any* pre-1700 Middletown settler, and would like to join SMFSD, here is the easy 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 Registrar 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 Registrar will review the application for approval. Documentation is required only through the line of descent from the 1650-1700 settler. 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 complete any gaps in the records.) When approved, the new member can choose to pay annual or lifetime dues:
 - (A) Annual dues (Nov. 1 to Oct. 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.

Friends of SMFSD. Are you a Middletown history enthusiast, but not a descendant of the early families? Would you still like to receive *The Middler*? That's easy! Join us at \$20 per year!

Please send membership inquiries & lineage information to: Cindy Nicewarner, Registrar, Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants, 6006 River Birch Court, Hanover, MD 21076; or via e-mail to: cnicewarner@verizon.net.

Recommended reading ...

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Colony, and translated them from 17th-century English for today's reader.

That these records of the New Haven Colony came to light at all is a story in itself. While records of the Connecticut Colony were preserved by a 1772 order of the Connecticut General Assembly, records of the New Haven Colony were retained by local officials. Over time, some records were lost. In 1856 the General Assembly ordered a transcription of remaining New Haven records.

The transcriptions were published in 1857 and 1858, but the 250 copies were buried in government archives. Further, the transcriber had appointed himself as censor of "matters of a nature unfit for publication," redacting several cases.

In writing *The Case of the Piglet's Paternity*, the author consulted the original 250 folio-size hand-written pages, which are held in the archives of the Connecticut State Library.

The cases range from trade disputes to total depravity, with chapter titles that never fail to arouse curiosity.

As a judge, the author is the perfect guide to the Colonial-era judicial system in all its shortcomings and extremes. In all, the book serves to temper the idealized Colonial Revival era notion of our ancestors' stratospheric piety with the reality of imperfect human nature and frightening religious fanaticism. Readers with generations of Connecticut ancestors will notice familiar surnames.

The Case of the Piglet's Paternity (Wesleyan University Press; ISBN# 978-0-8195-7537-1) is available from your favorite bookseller. ■



Meet Laura Hobbs ...

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requires similar skills as investigating family secrets.

The Middler: As an SMFSD member living in Middletown, tell us about your involvement with local libraries and history organizations.

Laura: Regular visits to Russell library became more frequent with my interest in family history. Over the years, I have read every genealogy book on their shelves as well as requested many others via inter-library loan. I recommend that every family historian frequent their public library – it's an effective strategy to expand your genealogy skills while keeping costs down. The library was the source of several obituaries from the Middletown *Penny Press*, and the arrival date of my Smith ancestors, thanks to *The Famine Immigrants*:

Lists of Irish Immigrants Arriving at the Port of New York 1846-1851.

I have spent many hours at the Godfrey Library and am quite fortunate to have such extensive resources so close. I have used the Barbour collection, Connecticut town and city directories, Arnold's *Vital Records of Rhode Island*, and multiple books of Vital Records of Massachusetts as well as the microfilm readers for films from the Family History Library. In addition, I donated a book of death names-and-dates compiled by my second great grandmother. The names have been indexed, scanned and are now available on their website.

I am a member of the Middlesex County Historical Society and have served as a docent at the Mansfield House, where I first learned of SMFSD. Several years ago I wrote a town profile of Middletown for the

Connecticut Society of Genealogists (CSG) newsletter. Currently, I am working on another article describing the treasures found in my parents' house this past summer after they moved to assisted living.

The Middler: When the computer is off and the books are closed, what do you like to do for fun and leisure?

Laura: When not researching my family history, I am out walking my seven-year old Keeshond, trying new healthy recipes, or visiting with my parents.

Editor's note: Hmmm? New recipes? Members take note! Laura hosted the Triennial Meeting opening-day lunch at her home in Middletown to rave reviews. A highlight for your editor was the delectable apple dessert Laura made with apples harvested from her own mini-orchard. The calendar is already marked for 2018. ■

