



From the president ...
continued from page 2

editorial and graphic production duties to SMFSD member Kitty Ryan. He has worked tirelessly since 2005 to give our volunteer organization a professionally researched and written newsletter. Kitty has volunteered to gather our input and put *The Middler* together, but she will not be writing most of the material. Content will depend on what each of us contributes.

For this re-imagined publication to be a success, I suggest we each actually write and submit at least one article rather than dwelling on whether our input will be equal in quality to that of a professional. You might start by sharing how you discovered your Middletown ancestors or by researching some fact about pioneer life or the Connecticut River valley. Our contributions will be enough, if actually sent.

Don't forget to use our relocated website to find general society information, first settler profiles, back issues of *The Middler*, local research institutions, and our society bylaws.

Especially if you live in New England, consider joining some of us at the 2019 New England Regional Genealogical Conference (NERGC) April 3-6 in Manchester, N.H. Our members have staffed an SMFSD booth at this biennial event each year since 2007. Lectures, booths, and conversation bring attendees great opportunities to advance their knowledge and skills.

Recruit your relatives and those friends who might have ancestors who

lived in early Middletown. Even living in the Midwest, I have found six such friends, two of whom are currently applying. Another friend has ancestors who were early settlers of Wethersfield, Conn. Refer your friends to our website at www.Middletown1650.org for more information. Speaking of the website, don't forget to utilize our relocated website to find general society information, Middletown first settler profiles, back issues of *The Middler*, local research institutions, and our society bylaws.

One last bit of encouragement: It would ease our treasurer's work if you paid your annual dues upon receipt of this issue. They are owed by January 1, 2019. Alternatively, write the treasurer if you would like to convert to a life membership. ■

- Marge Pierson,
President, SMFSD

www.Middletown1650.org



Triennial Meeting draws descendants near-and-far to meander in the footsteps of Middletown ancestors

Three stimulating days of research, networking, tours, & social activities

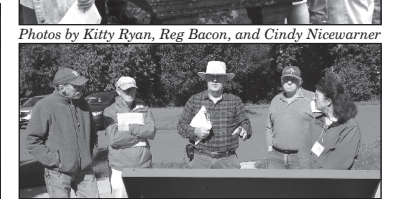
By R.W. Bacon
Editor, *The Middler*

SMFSD members, prospective members, and new-found cousins congregated in Middletown October 11-13 for the organization's 2018 Triennial Meeting.

The event held every three years in the ancestral hometown attracted 25 energized genealogy and history enthusiasts from across the continent to immerse in research, museum visits, cemetery wanderings, and cousinly conviviality.

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Clockwise, from top left: Nadine Markham-Itteilag and David Bowe compare notes; attendees get the latest news from Augie DeFrance, chairman of the Middletown Old Burying Grounds Assn.; Bob McDougall leads a tour of the defunct brownstone quarries; and cousins gather for an informal dinner.



Photos by Kitty Ryan, Reg Bacon, and Cindy Nicewarner

EARLY MIDDLETOWN

A roam about Maromas: Rocky wooded lands were the last to be settled by early families

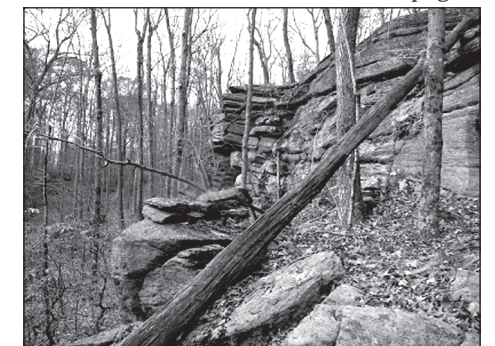
By R.W. Bacon
Editor, *The Middler*

At the SMFSD Triennial Meeting, your editor discerned curiosity from a number of members about a section of Middletown known as Maromas. This craggy wooded area to the southeast along the river was addressed briefly in an article about agriculture in early Middletown that appeared in the fall 2014 *Middler*. This present article, and the accompanying maps on pg. 4

& 5, combine for a closer look at Maromas, its relatively late settlement, its eventual de-population, and its present active commercial, residential, and recreational land use.

Today a roam through the winding and hilly back roads of Maromas reveals private homes creatively situated among rocky outcroppings.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Stepping down ... but not vaporizing

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

The fall 2018 issue of *The Middler* ends my 14-year tenure as editor and designer of SMFSD's twice-yearly publication. To all avid readers over

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~ DUES are DUE! ~

Annual Membership dues (\$20) are due January 1, 2019 for the 2019 calendar year.

Please send payment to:

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

www.Middletown1650.org



c/o R.W. Bacon, Editor • P. O. Box 489 • Newburyport, MA 01950

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





After the 2018 Triennial Meeting, attention turns to membership, 2019 NERGC, & Middler transition

• **Welcome new members.** SMFSD welcomes three new members since the last issue of *The Middler*: **Heather E. Curtis**, AM-372, Waterford, Mich. (1st settler: Samuel Stow); **Suzanne Hetrick Madore**, AM-373, Higganum, Conn. (1st settler: Nathaniel Bacon); and **Richard W. Potter**, AM-374, Cromwell, Conn. (1st settler: Benjamin West).

• **2019 New England Regional Genealogical Conference (NERGC).** Since 2007 SMFSD has had an exhibit booth at the NERGC's "society fair" event to publicize and promote membership in our organization. SMFSD will participate once again in 2019, this time in Manchester,

N.H. on April 3-6. If you are geographically within reach, consider joining your cousins to promote SMFSD. For information about the conference, visit <https://www.nergc.org/2019-conference/>.

• **The Middler transitions to a new editor.** The spring 2019 issue of *The Middler* will be produced under the enthusiastic direction of a new editor, SMFSD member Kitty Ryan. Your present but outgoing editor will assist Kitty in this transition in every way to propel *The Middler* into a rousing and readable future. Read more about the transition in separate articles within this issue.

• **Our new SMFSD website** finally made its way to the top of the Google search rankings. It took a few months, but now when searching "SMFSD," www.Middletown1650.org is at the top of the search results. As noted in the spring 2018 issue of *The*

Middler, our longtime website host, Ancestry/Rootsweb, pulled the plug on all its freely-hosted websites in late December 2017. For several months, SMFSD became undiscoverable online except through our Facebook presence. In late April SMFSD secured a new URL and a new website host so that members and prospective members would have access to the same comprehensive content.

But there is no end to website rigamarole. In October, without notice, our *old* website was restored on Ancestry/Rootsweb. Your exasperated website wrangler intends to post a notice on each page of that website to redirect visitors to our current site.

• **New vice president.** At the Triennial Meeting, your soon-to-be former editor was appointed by the SMFSD board to fill the vacant vice president position. ■

FROM THE PRESIDENT

On Marge's mind: Triennial highlights, gratitude, momentum, membership, & more

By Marge Pierson
President, SMFSD

Our Triennial Meeting October 11-13, 2018 was a huge success, enlivened by several activities not on previous meeting agendas – a tour of the now abandoned Brownstone quarries in Portland, Conn.; a private tour of two museum exhibits; and musical entertainment rather than a lecture to conclude the banquet. Of course, we included the "must do" visits to Riverside Cemetery and local research libraries. We were very pleased to meet a number of first time attendees.

One more shout-out must go to SMFSD secretary Laura Hobbs, who planned the weekend and also invited us to her home for lunch. Thanks also to Mike Campbell and Reg Bacon.

Mike handled registration and created the handouts; Reg Bacon handled advance publicity to our members and the community.

Let's keep this momentum going between triennial gatherings. Those attending the business meeting voted to give increased donations to the groups that work to keep interest alive in Middletown history while we are back at home. Donations were approved for the Middlesex County Historical Society, Godfrey Memorial Library, Russell Library, Middletown Old Burying Ground Assn, Connecticut Historical Society, Connecticut State Library, and the Portland Historical Society.

Starting with the spring 2019 issue of *The Middler*, Reg is turning over his

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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 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.
- 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.

From the editor ...

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the years, thank you for your interest, encouragement, and kind words.

As explained in prior issues, I am still engaged professionally in the museum and history field. I also have several more book projects in the works relating to my long career as an acrobatic juggler and vaudeville/circus scholar to complete (... while still physically and mentally capable!).

When I assumed editorship of *The Middler* in 2005, I developed a long

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) **Contact our Registrar, Cindy Nicewarner** (cnicewarner@verizon.net), about your interest. She will email an instruction sheet and application.
- (2) **Complete the SMFSD application** and mail to the Registrar. The applicant shall do their own research. Lineage should be accompanied by copies of reference material by generation. SMFSD seeks to verify information, but does not research family lines. A \$10.00 application fee will be added to the dues payment upon verification.
- (3) **The Registrar will review the application** for approval. Documentation is required only through the line of descent from the 1650-1700 settler. Instructions are included with the application that explain guidelines for documentation of descent by generation. (SMFSD will return an application if more documentation is needed. It is the applicant's responsibility to complete any gaps in the records.)

Dues: When approved, new members can choose to pay annual or lifetime dues: (A) Annual dues (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31) are \$20.00. (B) New members may elect to pay lifetime dues based on age: Age 0-50, \$300; Age 51-70, \$200; Age 70+, \$100.

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 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.

list of topics to cover that encompassed the entire range of 17th and 18th-century life in Middletown, plus the English origins and eventual western destinations of the earliest settlers. In 2012 this research resulted in the award-winning book, *Early Families of Middletown, Conn. - Vol. I: 1650-1654*. That book is still available (www.VarietyArtsPress.com), and the aim is to complete Vol. II (1655-1700).

While I am stepping down as editor, I will assist your new editor, SMFSD member Kitty Ryan, so the transition

is as painless as possible. Change is good – Let's look forward to some fresh ideas, new topics, and maybe even a new look. I won't disappear, however, as my plan is to contribute an article from time-to-time.

You can help our new editor by contributing an article or two. How about the story of how your family got from Middletown ... to Ohio ... to Oregon ... to New Britain? We all have fascinating stories from our research. Let's share them in *The Middler*.

As always, thanks for reading. ■

Many early settlers departed Maromas for 'greener pastures'

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There is even some agricultural use. Closer to the river are the insulated high-security "do not enter" tracts of the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Corp. and the Kleen Energy Systems power plant. Closer to Saybrook Road are conservation lands laced with hiking trails. In the 17th-century, however, Maromas was the least desirable part of Middletown, so rocky that even subsistence farming was difficult.

Essential reading for those with ancestors known to have lived in Maromas are (1) a 45-page paper by Wesleyan University student Ted Pena entitled "The Short and Obscure Historical Geography of Maromas" (1978), and (2) *A Sketch of Maromas* (1937) by Jessie Alsop, a 42-page booklet published by the Works Progress Administration.

Ted Pena's student paper describes the terrain and the below-the-surface geology of Maromas and its influence on human habitation and land use. The land division of Maromas in 1671 distributed acreage to Middletown "proprietors" according to their economic status and contributions to the town. Many of those grantees (see pg. 4) may never set foot on their Maromas acreage, but rather "banked" the land for future family needs or future sale. Later generations of early families that did settle on divided lands

in Maromas faced challenges for subsistence at best. In the early decades of the 19th century, the only surnames of the earliest Middletown families that remained were of those who began granite quarry operations (Whitmore, Scovill, Lucas, Hubbard), ran boarding houses for quarrymen, or inns on the Haddam/Saybrook Road (Prior).

Old Maromas Cemetery, also known as Prior Cemetery, is now off-limits on Pratt & Whitney property. The Charles R. Hale Collection of cemetery inscriptions (1932-35) recorded seven grave-stones, the earliest being for Sarah Prior (1670-1707), "wife of Daniel."

2018 Triennial report ...

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As in several past meetings, the home base hotel was the Marriott Residence Inn in Rocky Hill, Conn. Our event planning subcommittee led by SMFSD secretary Laura Hobbs, arranged a rich program hailed by all.

Thursday, October 11. After breakfast at the hotel, some attendees ignored a light drizzle to visit and roam Riverside and Mortimer cemeteries, hosted by Augie DeFrance, chairman of the Middletown Old Burying Grounds Association, while others headed for research at Russell Library. An early afternoon tour of the award-winning exhibition, "A Vanished Port: Middletown and the Caribbean" at the Middlesex County Historical Society with museum director Debbie Shapiro, was followed by a jaunt to the west side of town for a tour of the Judge

Of the 205 gravestones recorded at New Maromas Cemetery between 1768 and 1934, 50 are for Scovill, Whitmore, and Clark burials, and 20 are for early Middletown settler surnames Hubbard, Johnson, and Lucas.

For context, on page 5 are maps indicating (1) the relative location of Maromas, (2) the clusters of homes in 1859, and (3) contemporary land use. For more, see the sources below. ■

Also, Jessie. *A Sketch of Maromas*. Old Records Project #2507, Works Progress Administration, 1937. (Held by both Russell & Godfrey libraries in Middletown.)
Pena, Ted. "The Short and Obscure Historical Geography of Maromas" (1978). Student Papers About Middletown Collection, Paper 85. Downloadable at: <http://wescholar.wesleyan.edu/middletownpapers/85>

Seth Wetmore House (1746), led by homeowner Jack Bolles. The Town Line Diner was the destination for Thursday's informal dinner.

Friday October 12. On Friday morning, early-birds fanned out to various research repositories, and then gathered together for a delectable lunch at the home of SMFSD secretary and Middletown resident Laura Hobbs. Well fortified, the group then headed out in the bright, brisk, and sunny afternoon for a tour of the old brownstone quarries on the east side of the Connecticut River, led by Bob McDougall of the Portland Historical Society. Friday evening's informal dinner excursion was to the Saybrook Fish House.

Saturday, October 13. Our Saturday morning SMFSD business meeting at Godfrey Memorial Library was followed by an eagerly anticipated open research period. In the afternoon some attendees packed off to Hartford for a private group tour of "Facing War: Connecticut in World War One" at the Connecticut Historical Society. On Saturday evening, the SMFSD banquet at the First and Last Tavern in Middletown featured a historically-themed musical presentation by Rick Spencer and Dawn Indermuehle.

Late Saturday evening and Sunday morning were filled with fond farewells and hopes for future meetings.

If all of the above sounds like fun, perhaps we'll see you in Middletown in 2021. ■

Middler editor Reg Bacon was surprised at the 2018 Triennial Meeting when David Bowe masterfully (and secretly) sculpted his stern mug on a pumpkin. In this photo your usually cheery editor tries to mimic his grumpy pumpkin face. Needless to say, meeting attendees – and your editor – were highly amused and impressed by David's talent.

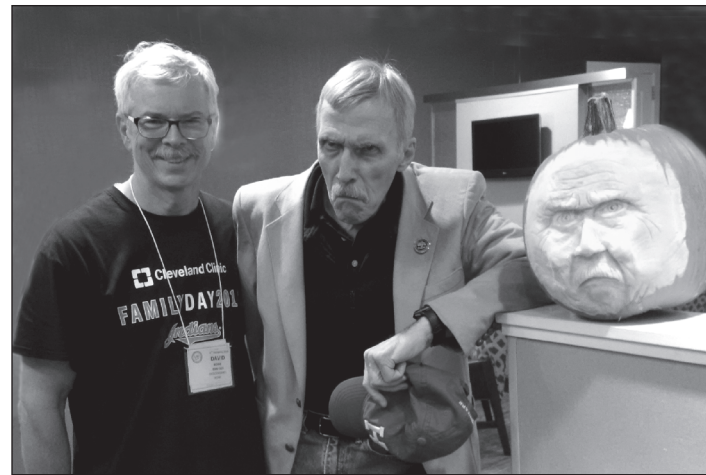


Photo by Cindy Nicewarner

Scenes from SMFSD's Triennial Meeting Oct. 11-13, 2018



At left is Martha McLaney at Founders Rock, at the entrance to Riverside Cemetery.



At right, attendees enjoyed a Thursday morning exploration of Riverside Cemetery, burial site of Middletown's early settlers.



Thanks to homeowner Jack Bolles, attendees enjoyed a Thursday tour of the 1746 Judge Seth Wetmore House.



On Friday, Bob McDougall of the Portland Historical Society led a tour of old brownstone quarries.

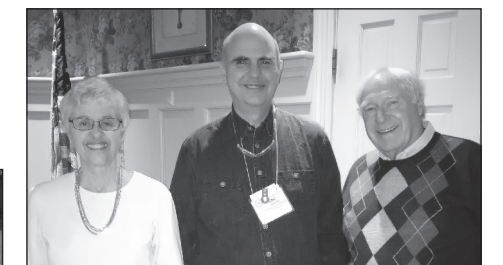


Above are (l. to r.) Marge Piersen, Laura Hobbs, Diane Doolittle, David Bowe, and Kitty Ryan, all descendants of Samuel Doolittle (1665-1714).



On Friday evening, many gathered for dinner at the Saybrook Fish House.

Below left are new SMFSD member Jim Cox and his wife, Meredith, of Litchfield, Conn. Below right are Warren Savage and his wife, Cyd, who traveled to the Triennial Meeting from San Jose, Calif.



Above are Barb Stenberg, Eric Stenberg, and Richard Potter at the SMFSD banquet.



At left (l. to r.), Dawn Indermuehle and Rick Spencer, who performed a selection of 19th-century songs at the SMFSD banquet, are joined by Diane Doolittle on flute.

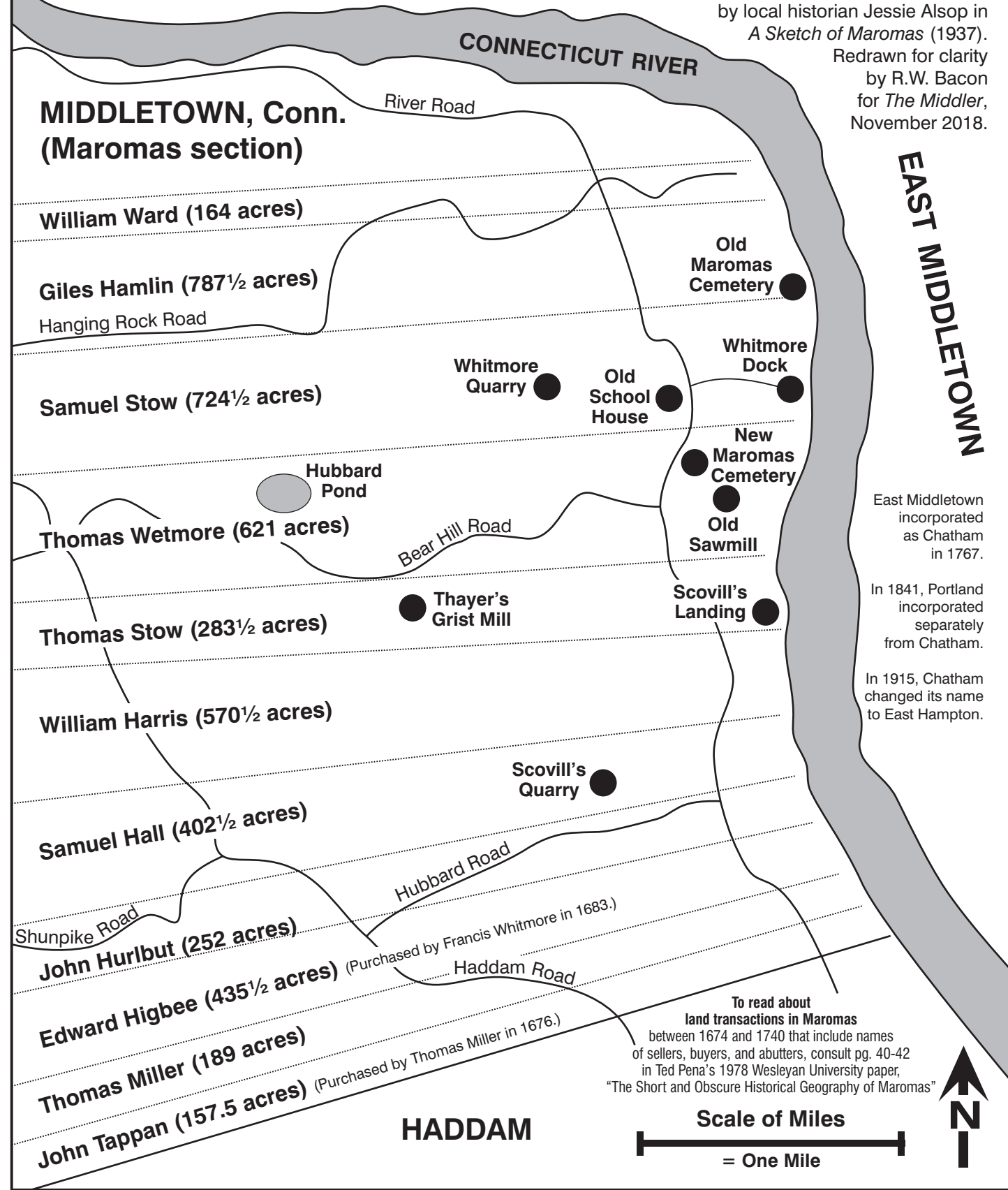


At right, attendees socialize after Saturday's banquet held at First and Last Tavern in Middletown.

Photos by Cindy Nicewarner, Kitty Ryan, & R.W. Bacon

1671 Land Division of Maromas

Based on the hand-drawn map by local historian Jessie Alsop in *A Sketch of Maromas* (1937). Redrawn for clarity by R.W. Bacon for *The Middler*, November 2018.



EAST MIDDLETOWN

East Middletown incorporated as Chatham in 1767.

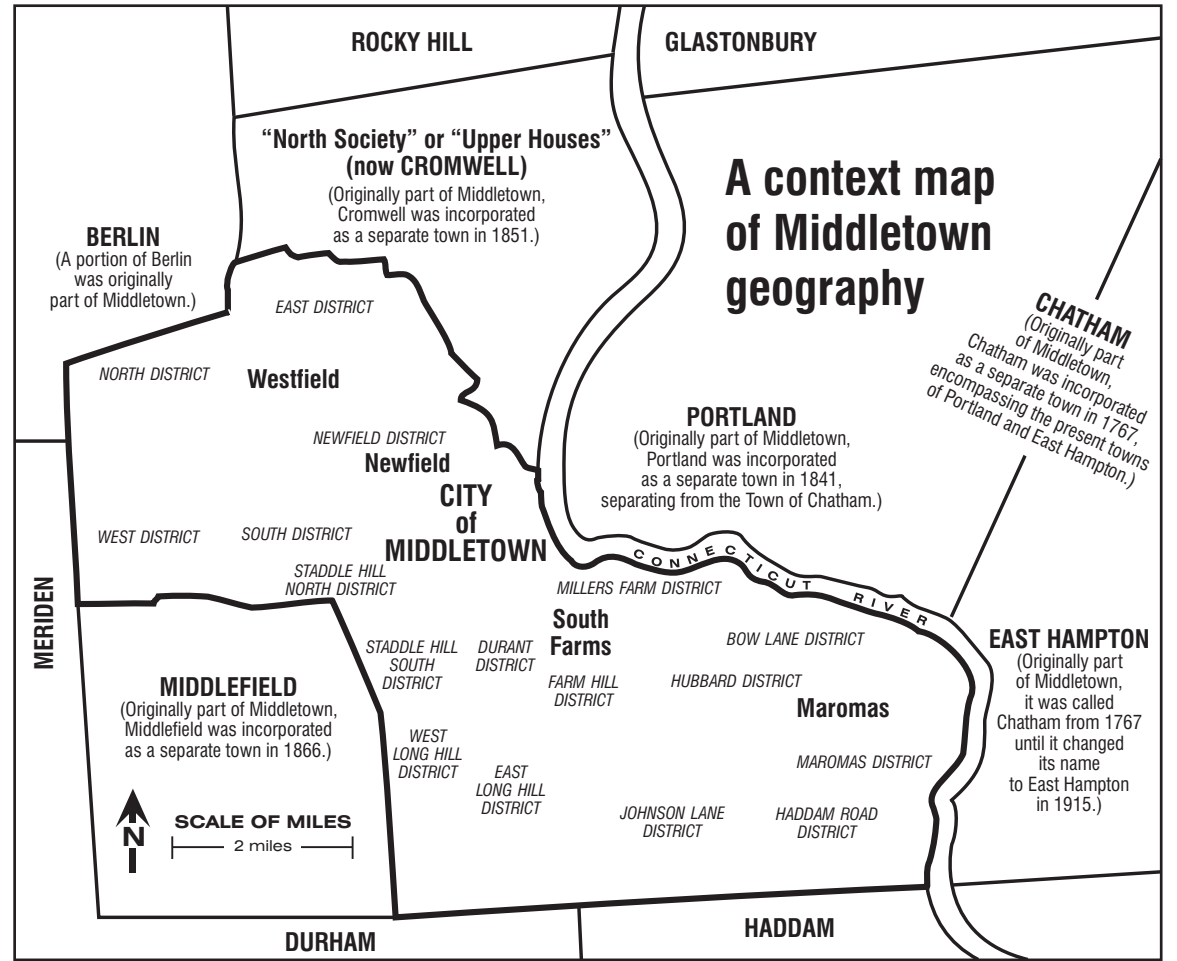
In 1841, Portland incorporated separately from Chatham.

In 1915, Chatham changed its name to East Hampton.

To read about land transactions in Maromas between 1674 and 1740 that include names of sellers, buyers, and abutters, consult pg. 40-42 in Ted Pena's 1978 Wesleyan University paper, "The Short and Obscure Historical Geography of Maromas"

A time line ...

- **Pre-Contact to c. 1800** - Indigenous Wangunk presence.
- **1671 - 11** Middletown "proprietors" granted lands in Maromas totaling 4,854 acres.
- **1674-1740** - 56 land transactions document the division of original land grants into parcels of 5 to 25 acres. Early use was for wood and stone. Land was generally too distant for pasturing, and too rocky for agriculture.
- **1696 ... or 1722** - First documentation of a house in Maromas (Benjamin West).
- **The Daniel Pryor house** (1730), a former inn, still stands on Old Saybrook Road.
- **1707** - First burial at Old Maromas (Prior) Cemetery.
- **1718** - First reference to Haddam Rd. (Old Saybrook Rd.)
- **1722** - First reference to a farm in Maromas.
- **1745** - Maromas school district established.
- **1766** - First burial at New Maromas Cemetery.
- **1775** - Mining for lead begins at the river's edge. Lead and silver was mined into the 1850s.
- **1790** - Federal census shows no apprentices or slaves in the Maromas section of Middletown.
- **1820s** - First granite quarries - with docking privileges on the Connecticut River - were established by both Bulkley Whitmore (1800-1840) and Julius Scovill* (1802-1883).
- **1859-1874** - Construction of Connecticut Valley R.R. line along the river in Maromas.
- **1880s** - Feldspar mining begins, continuing until 1965.
- **1953** - U.S. Atomic Energy Commission chose Maromas as the site of a secret project to develop a nuclear-powered airplane engine. The project was scrapped in 1961, but the location remains the site of Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, the second-largest employer in Middletown.
- **2011** - Kleen Energy Systems completed a giant power plant, built on the 187-acre brownfield site of the former feldspar mine.



***Genealogical note:** Quarryman Julius Scovill (1802-1883) was a descendant of **John Scovill** (1635-1700) of Farmington, Waterbury, and Haddam, *not* early Middletown settler **Arthur Scovill** (1636-1706) of Boston, Lyme, and Middletown. John and Arthur may have been brothers, but at present that remains inconclusive.

A selection of sources:
Alsop, Jessie. *A Sketch of Maromas*. (Old Records Project #2507). Washington, D.C.: WPA, 1937.
Pena, Ted. "The Short and Obscure Historical Geography of Maromas." *Student Papers About Middletown Collection*, Paper 85. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University, 1978. Downloadable at: <http://wessscholar.wesleyan.edu/middletownpapers/85>

Foye, W. G. "Mineral Localities in the Vicinity of Middletown, Conn." *American Mineralogist*, Vol. 7. Washington, D.C.: Mineralogical Soc. of America, 1922.
Middletown Planning Dept. *Land Use Study of Transferred State Property in the Vicinity of Maromas*. Middletown, Conn.: City of Middletown, March 2007.
Clark, Marlene. "City was home to secret facility to build nuclear aircraft engine," *Hartford Courant*, Nov. 29, 2004.

