



The Middler

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

Vol. 6, No. 1

Spring 2006

EDITOR'S RESEARCH REPORT

Middletown descendants want to know: What is the story with "Mary Hyanno"?

Editor's Note: Since assuming editorship of *The Middler*, I have arrived at enough topics of interest to fill these pages for years to come. A subject of particular interest is the conjectural marriage of first settler **William Cornwell** and Mary "Little Dove" Hyanno, since many SMFSD members are Cornwell descendants (myself included). The following article provides the background of

this conjecture, its spread via the Internet, the experiences and opinions of researchers, and the view of some noted genealogists.)

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

Today the newcomer to genealogy is more likely to use a computer to "surf the net" for information rather than methodically pursue primary sources. After all, it's easy, fun, and one can amass mountains of information quickly. But after the beginner clicks through pages of unsourced pedigrees, chases annoying dead-ends, and puzzles over incompatible

facts, the need to apply standards of proof becomes apparent. On the Internet, unsourced genealogical information multiplies like a virus.

Middletown descendants starting Internet research on Middletown first settler William Cornwell (1609-1678) will ultimately face a decision of whether to include Mary "Little Dove" Hyanno (Native American "princess" of the Cummaquid Wampanoags) as Cornwell's second wife and mother of his children.

If you are not a Cornwell descendant and have never heard of this conjecture, your eyes may be rolling

continued on page 8

Spring features . . .

What is the Story With Mary Hyanno?	1
Professor Knows Middletown Sources	3
First Settler Profile: John Kirby	6
Places: Rowley, Mass.	7



This bird's-eye view shows the bell tower of the old courthouse on the west side of Main Street in Middletown. The image was included in *Souvenir of Middletown*, a collection of photographs published in 1903 by J.A. Broatch, a Middletown bookseller.

Schedule set for triennial meeting in Middletown

The 2006 triennial meeting of the Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants August 18-20 is an opportunity to gather with cousins, genealogists, and local history enthusiasts in our ancestral hometown. Our board has secured a superior headquarters hotel at reasonable rates, and has scheduled an itinerary of essential genealogy destinations. Check our schedule of activities and registration form (page 11), and then plan to join us for three days of research, stimulation, and fun. **See page 11 for more info.**



MEMBER NOTES

A roundup of member questions, reminders, & events

A few months ago *Donald Sage of Andover, Minnesota* suggested that a brief primer on the **Barbour Collection of Vital Records** might be useful to members.

Lucius Barbour was the Examiner of Public Records in Connecticut from 1911 to 1934. He made it his mission to convert vital records before 1850 into a massive statewide index. The Connecticut State Library in Hartford has the original card file of this index in huge banks of wooden file drawers. The card file is indexed by surname, so it is possible to track down elusive ancestors statewide within the same file

drawer. Of course, everyone can't get to the library in Hartford, so this is where the Genealogical Publishing Co. comes into the picture. They have published 50 volumes of the vital records – organized by town. Middletown records comprise volume 26(A-J) & 27(K-Z) of the series.

Each volume contains birth, marriage, and death records for a given town. Entries are listed in alphabetical order, and list name, date of event, names of parents, names of children, names of both spouses, and sometimes age, occupation, and residence.

The Barbour Collection can be found at large genealogy libraries, or individual volumes can be purchased from the Genealogical Publishing Co. (www.genealogical.com).

The town-by-town Barbour vital records are also on the Jane Devlin's *Dunham-Wilcox-Trott-Kirk* web site. The link to the Middletown records: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~jdevlin/barbour/middletown_barbour_main.htm.

Donald Brock of Glen Arm, Md. suggested recently that members might benefit from a refresher on the **AGBI (American Genealogical & Biographical Index)**, a monumental, but often-overlooked resource begun by Fremont Rider, founder of Godfrey Library, in 1936. Today, at 226 volumes, the AGBI is the largest genealogical set ever published. Available at Godfrey, select libraries, and at *Ancestry.com*, the AGBI boasts an index from 850 sources including 741 family histories and all 40 years of the Boston Transcript genealogy column. Most works referenced are held by Godfrey Library, Middletown.

Events (from Donald Brock):

- **FGS/NEHGS Conference 2006**, by the Federation of Genealogical Societies & NEHGS; Aug. 30 - Sept. 2, 2006; Hynes Convention Center & Sheraton Boston Hotel, Boston, Mass. (www.fgs.org).
- **New England Connections 2007**, 9th New England Regional Genealogical Conference; April 26-29, 2007; Conn. Convention Center & Marriott Downtown, Hartford, Conn. (www.nergc.org).



The Middler

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

Vol. 6, No. 1
Spring 2006

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

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

SMFSD OFFICERS

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

FROM THE COMMANDER

Members: Will we see you in August?

Dear SMFSD Members:

The e-mails have been flying, and the plans are coming together. The triennial meeting of your society is coming on August 18-20, 2006.

We hope to see many of you there, especially you charter members. We remember the organizing meeting when we were all strangers. We on the board have gotten to know many of you. Whenever you begin this sort of society it is hard to know just what people expect when they join. For whatever reason you chose to be a part of the society we hope you have not been disappointed.

Some of you we have never heard from again. We can only assume it wasn't what you expected. The organization has grown, but there is still a long ways to go. We can't really accomplish what we envision without

the support of the members who showed an interest from the beginning and those who have joined since.

So if you have not been renewing membership, or if you are a life member but have not been participating, we hope that you will come for our third official meeting. If you are one of the newer members, we are anxious to meet you. To those who have steadfastly supported our meetings and efforts, we say "thank you." We want to see you again, too.

Our founder, Gale Cornwell, has had some rocky roads to travel with illnesses, but he says "God willing, I will be there!" We hope you will be there to greet him.

**Barbara Stenberg
Commander, SMFSD**

For Middletown primary source research, it's hard to match the mayor of Kalamazoo

**Michigan professor
'wrote the book' on the
town's economic history**

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

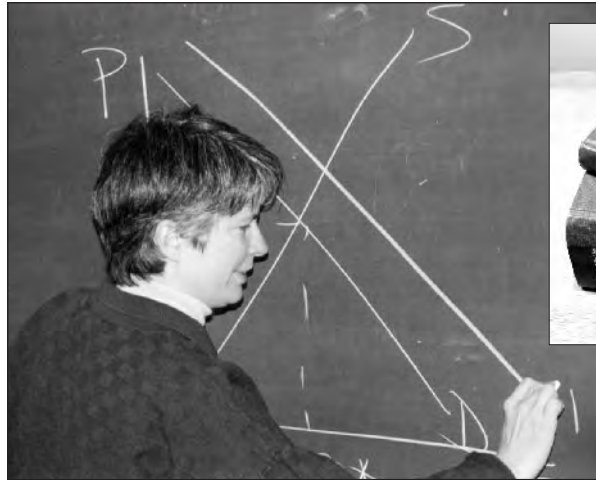
Genealogists take pride in the hours spent combing through materials deep in the inner sanctum of libraries, archives, and historical societies. In the domain of Middletown research, however, it is an economist who may deserve the prize for hours spent with primary source documents.

In the process of investigating Middletown local history, your editor discovered a gem in the depths of Harvard's Widener Library: *The Development of Local Public Services 1650-1860: Lessons from Middletown, Connecticut*, by Hannah J. McKinney, Ph.D., Professor of Economics & Business at Kalamazoo (Mich.) College. She is currently mayor of Kalamazoo.

Published in 1995 by Greenwood Press, the 224-page scholarly volume explores how citizens of Middletown wrestled with decision-making and financing of public services over the course of 200 years. The book is part of a series in economic history, and takes its place alongside such titles as *The Chinese Financial System* and *The Recent Industrialization Experience of Turkey in a Global Context*.

The book began with the author's discovery of the riches of original records in Middletown. Supported by fellowships and grants, she dug into primary sources. "I wanted to be able to trace the actions of individual citizens as well as actions taken by official government units."

The premise of the book is that despite constant citizen grouching about not getting enough services for the tax dollar, and that government always worked better in some former time, there really never was a "golden age" of local government. "Our ancestors had



At left, Hannah J. McKinney, Ph.D., author of *The Development of Local Public Services 1650-1860: Lessons from Middletown, Connecticut*.

the same problems with lack of voter participation and interest," she writes. "They faced all of the complications that arise in group decision making today. They voiced their complaints loudly, and they, too, looked to the past as a time when government worked."

The book followed the provision of public services over a 200-year period. Middletown was far from perfect, yet consistently provided public services. "Yes, they had potholes," McKinney writes, "but they also had roads that led to the places they wanted to go."

The book concentrates on the provision of public services during Middletown's 18th and 19th century growth, but also addresses the early days in Middletown.

"Middletown was born when 30 families settled on a Connecticut River bend . . . Unequal wealth and power were the rule from the beginning," writes McKinney. "The two most powerful institutions were the church and the town meeting. The only town-level officers were the peacekeeping constable who also collected colony and town taxes, and the townsmen, also called selectmen, who were the town's agents. The town meeting made all communal decisions. All men could vote in town meetings, but only a select few could be church members. From the earliest

days, all levels of local government (secular and religious) used majority rule to determine which local public goods would be provided and what regulations would be made."

"Middletown was never a tightly cohesive church society, and was unable to choose a minister. This theological polarization was exaggerated by the physical separation of townspeople into two distinct settlements called First Society and North Society. The problems came to a head in 1659 when the General Court appointed a committee 'to inquire ye nature of ye troublesom differenc fallen out there, and to indeauour a composition threrof.' It took almost another 10 years to establish a church. The General Court chose the minister instead of the community."

A most illuminating chapter is "Who Counts in the Community." McKinney sorts Middletown's early settlers into six distinct political groups, a kind of "pecking order" that evolved and changed over time, a categorization that provides insight into Middletown's early decades.

In the last of 13 chapters, the author draws her conclusions: "Over and over, Middletown's public service history highlights two issues. The first was a lack of participation in

continued on page 4



Hannah McKinney . . . *continued from page 3*

public affairs by those qualified to do so. From its first settlement, many people refused to take the oath of office and to fulfill the responsibilities of office once elected. Others refused to come to meetings or to vote.”

Hannah McKinney is currently the Mayor of Kalamazoo after serving four terms as vice-mayor and six years on the city’s planning commission. As chair of the Economics Dept. at Kalamazoo College, she currently teaches courses in urban economics, public finance, and the history of local economic development. Married with two school-aged children, she remarkably found time to respond to *The Middler’s* e-mail interview request:

The Middler: *What led you to choose Middletown for your case study ahead of other potential subjects?*

Hannah J. McKinney: I was teaching at Wesleyan and became fascinated by the wealth of original documentation. My initial thought was to do some sort of analysis of population changes in Middletown but became more interested in how public finance evolved in Middletown.

The Middler: *Where did you do most of your primary source research?*

H.J.M.: I did my research primarily at the Historical Society and City Hall. I did spend time at the State Library. Also the newspaper was available via microfilm, so I did a lot of work here in Kalamazoo as well.

The Middler: *What were your favorite sources? Did you work with microfilm or original documents?*

H.J.M.: Newspaper microfilms were my favorite because I liked the stories. I also enjoyed the bills for service (town orders) which were available at the Historical Society. Except for microfilms of newspapers, I worked with primary documents. I’ll never forget all the red rot that I got all over me every day.

The Middler: *I get the impression that the town met its public service needs in spite of itself, rather than through vision or initiative. Certainly*

in the earliest years of the settlement, the main concern of inhabitants was carving out an existence. Did you discover any conditions or behaviors that were unique to Middletown in the period 1650-1860?

H.J.M.: The story of the railroad is unique to Middletown. They could have had the line go through Middletown in the early 1830s, but too much of the wealth in Middletown was tied up with steamships and the turnpikes. Once the opportunity was lost, it could not be regained. The same kind of story is replayed over and over again – some people are far-sighted and take risks while still protecting the investments they have today. Others don’t believe the future will be radically different than the present.

The Middler: *Anyone reading the book will not miss the parallels to small-town government today: low voter turnout, low citizen participation, taxpayer stinginess, etc. Have you observed the same parallels in your years in city government?*

H.J.M.: The parallels were part of what fascinated me about Middletown. The difficulty in getting the county buildings and jails redone in Middletown – in Kalamazoo County, we’ve voted down a jail millage twice in recent years although the jail is dilapidated. Economists believe voters balance political exclusion costs against transactions costs – political exclusion means having to live with the consequences of a vote when you chose not to vote – and transactions costs include all the hassles and time it takes to get up to speed to vote. Because the

“Except for microfilms of newspapers, I worked with primary documents. I’ll never forget all the red rot I got over me every day.”

Hannah J. McKinney

personal costs of personal exclusion are so low, and transactions costs relatively high, people choose not to participate. Too sad if you ask me.

The Middler: *Do you have any favorite stories from your research?*

H.J.M.: I enjoyed the stories about the people who took care of the poor and elderly and also the stories of the poor and elderly themselves. The historical society has a wealth of letters written to public officials. I also enjoyed matching information from the letters to material at the state library.

The Middler: *A revealing assertion in the book is that “Middletown was never a cohesive church society,” and that in 1667 only one-third of white males were church members. Did your research illuminate the degree of commitment to religion among Middletown’s early settlers?*

H.J.M.: The earliest records reveal the animosity between factions of the original settlers who could not choose a minister that suited both factions. They did not have a minister for 10 years and that minister was imposed upon them. Church membership was for the very elite only in the 1660s.

The Middler: *As one who has spent so much time with primary sources, what advice do you have for someone making a research trip to Middletown?*

H.J.M.: Go the City Hall and check out the records. Also the historical society has box after box of records.

The Middler: *From your research experiences, what books on state and local history would you recommend?*

H.J.M.: *Middletown Upper Houses* by Charles Collard Adams; and *The Connecticut Town - Growth & Development, 1635-1790*, by Bruce Daniels. (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1979). ■

The Development of Local Public Services 1650-1860: Lessons from Middletown, Connecticut can be found in select libraries, or can be ordered (\$59.95) from Greenwood Press (www.greenwood.com), P. O. Box 6926, Portsmouth, NH 03802; 800-225-5800.

Feature Graphic #2 – Engraving of Middletown, Conn., c. 1835

This engraving was the frontispiece for David Field's Centennial Address published in 1853. The caption reads "City of Middletown, in 1835." The art was signed by engraver W. C. Butler, who also engraved the sketch of Middletown's first meeting house that appeared in Field's book.



"Suitable for Framing?" – Simply mask the background on the page, take the image to a copy shop, and request a copy on ivory cover stock. For a 5"x7" frame, copy at 86%. (The resulting image will be 3.5"x5.5".) For an 8"x10" frame, copy at 133%. (The resulting image will be 5.5"x8.5".)

SMFSD BUSINESS

Agenda & minutes of 2003 SMFSD Triennial Meeting

SMFSD Meeting
August 30, 2003, 4 p.m.
Marriott Hotel, Rocky Hill, Conn.

Call to Order. Prayer by Commander Barbara Stenberg.

Introductions

New members appointed by the board: Janet Kohlenberger, Secretary; Al Dudley, Treasurer

First-Settler Liaisons: Jack Savage (for John Savage); Tom Smith (for William Blumfield); Al Windsor (Chief Liaison).

Minutes of September 2001 meeting: Accepted as read.

Treasurer's Report: Al Dudley reported \$7320.83 in the SMFSD account, and noted expenses for the meeting/conference.

Registrar's Report: Donald

Brock reported 200 members at the time of the previous meeting (2001), and somewhat fewer members at the 2003 meeting. Liaisons were asked to publicize SMFSD. Work continues on local contacts.

Historian's Report: Donald Brock reported that member files at Godfrey Library are spotty. Members are asked to review files and verify lineage. Information on the living will be screened to protect against identity theft.

Old business: None.

New Business: Elections require 30 days notice, therefore will be done by mail. Volunteers are needed for bylaw committee and nominating committee. Nominating Committee: Sandra Salm, Leigh Hanscome, Rita Urquhart. Bylaw Committee: Jack

Savage, Barbara Stenberg, Al Dudley.

Items of business to be done by mail-in vote: Elections, Bylaw Changes, Added Membership Categories (associate member, i.e. spouses, libraries; family membership for families).

Proposed Budget: Al Dudley will mail the proposed budget.

Presentation of Honorary Membership: Al Dudley made a motion to designate Nancy Doane, former director of Godfrey Library, as an honorary member of SMFSD. Donald Brock seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Set Next Meeting Date & Location: Labor Day 2006 was agreeable for a meeting in the Middletown area.

continued on page 10

FIRST SETTLER PROFILE**A sketch of Middletown First Settler John Kirby**

By Deanna Speer, CM-39

John Kirby (1623-1677) was born 4 January 1623 in Rowington, Warwickshire, England to Humphrey Kerbe. In 1635 as a young boy of 12 years, he set out for the new world on the ship "Hopewell" under the watchful eye of Capt. Babb, master. In 1643 he was in Plymouth, Mass., and registered to bear arms.

On 2 March 1644 he married Elizabeth Hinds at Hartford; her family home was at Bury St. Edmunds, England. The couple soon went to Hartford, for John was registered there as a resident before April of 1645. Their large family included Mary (b. 1644), Elizabeth (b. 1646), Hannah (b. 1649), twins John & Eunice (b. 1651), Esther (b. 1652), Sarah (b. 1654), Joseph (b. 1656), Bethiah (b. 1658), Susannah (b. 1664), and Abigail (b. 1666). Daughter Elizabeth married David Sage, a prominent Middletown citizen; he is buried at Riverside Cemetery.

While in Hartford, John Kirby and Seth Grant contracted to herd cattle for a stated price payable at their houses in corn, peas, etc. on their demand. In addition, he recorded "earmarks" for his cattle in 1647 while living in Wethersfield.

In 1655 the Town Books of Middletown record a land sale to John Kirby, and he is listed as a resident in 1657. The Kirby family resided on Pleasant Street on the north side of the rivulet in what is now called Cromwell, the North Society. The bridge over the Mattabeset River, later known as Little River, is named Kirby Bridge. The General Court of Connecticut made John a freeman in May 1658.

John Kirby's son, John, Jr., while traveling between Middletown and Wethersfield in 1676, was attacked and killed by Indians.

John Sr. died in April 1677, leaving a will made on April 6 and an estate valued at 551 pounds.

John Kirby's son Joseph was the first of the township to be admitted to Attorney at the Bar in 1708 in

“ . . . that so these two parcels of land may pertain to some of my children or children's children to the end of the world.”

John Kirby (1623-1677)

Hartford County. Joseph Kirby was married to Sarah Markham.

Sources: *Genealogical and Family History of Connecticut, Vol. III; Middletown Upper Houses* by Charles C. Adams; and *Catalog of Names of First Puritan Settlers of Colony of Connecticut* by R.R. Hinman. ■

More on John Kirby . . .

Editor's Note: Many thanks to Deanna Speer for the John Kirby profile – and for leading me to the discovery of Kirby's fascinating will, an excerpt of which is below.

When John Kirby died in April 1677, his will indicated that he owned 24 parcels of land totaling 1068 acres. The Pleasant Street homestead in Cromwell included a house, barn, and 2½ acres.

In his will, John Kirby states his vision for the future of his property in an uncommon way:

“ . . . my will is that to whichsoever of my children or children's children these parcels of land or any part thereof shall fall, they shall not at any time be sold out of the blood, but in case any of my children or their children see cause to sell any part thereof it shall be only given one to another of them, that so these two parcels of land may pertain to some of my children or children's children to the end of the world.”

For those seeking further information one might also consult *The Kirbys of New England* by the Rev. Melatiah Everett Dwight, D.D., originally published in 1898.

Considerable information about John Kirby can be found on the Internet. John Kirby's sketch from Middletown Upper Houses can be found at Jane Devlin's web site at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~jdevlin/bios/kirby.htm>. The text of John Kirby's will and estate inventory can be found at http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~jdevlin/wills/kirby_john1677.htm. ■

MEMBER NOTES**CSG article clarifies Sage genealogy**

By Donald Sage

In December of 2005, Dave Cummings, a descendant of Elias Sage (b. 1758) (the same family branch as mine), published in the *Connecticut Nutmegger* (Connecticut Society of Genealogists) an excellent research paper entitled *Elizabeth Norton, the Wife of Elias Sage of Middletown, Connecticut*.

He reviews Elias Sage's Revolutionary War NARA report, which

shows he enlisted over six times between the Mass. & N.Y. Militia and Continental Army and even had a six-month stint in the "Marines."

Cummings also debunks once and for all the erroneous information that Sarah Reed was once married to Elias Sage. This has been a long standing error reported by the DAR dating way back to 1906 or earlier, and has confused many of the Sage Clan in their research. ■

PLACES – WHERE THEY CAME FROM

Several Middletown first settlers were also among the earliest settlers of Rowley, Mass.

Editor's Note: In the study of local and family history, one fascination is the movement of our ancestors from one place to another. Each issue of *The Middler* will explore a particular place our first settler families came from, departed for, or a neighboring town important to their lives.

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

Of the 23 first settler families of Middletown, at least three had settled first in Rowley, Mass. and spent nearly a decade there: **Daniel Harris** (1615-1701), **William Harris** (1626-1717), and **Thomas Miller** (1609-1680). Of later pre-1700 Middletown settlers, it appears that John Ward (1637-1684) and Isaac Johnson (1643-1719) also had connections to the coastal Massachusetts town.

Rowley, Mass. (first syllable pronounced as in *fowl*) is located on the Atlantic coast about 30 miles north-east of Boston. With a population of about 5,700 on 18 square miles, it retains its rural character even today.

Rowley was settled in the spring of 1639 by 20 families from near Rowley, England who arrived in Salem on the "John of London" the previous fall. The leader of the settlement was the fiery and forceful preacher, the Rev. Ezekiel Rogers.

In late 1643 the town apportioned house lots to 75 persons, including later Middletown settlers Thomas Miller, William Harris, and Daniel Harris. Many of the settlers had been clothiers in England, and the town became known for its manufacture of cotton, hemp, and flax cloth.

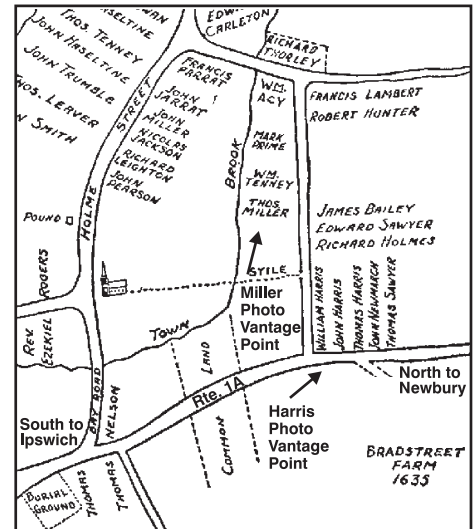
Three Harris brothers, sons of Capt. Thomas Harris, ferry captain in Charlestown, Mass., settled in Rowley by 1643: John, Daniel, and William. Brother Thomas Harris was granted a house lot in Rowley, but settled in the

adjacent town of Ipswich. It appears the Harris family was not among those that arrived with Rev. Rogers.

Daniel, a carpenter and wheelwright, sold his Rowley land in August 1652 and removed with his family to Middletown. William, who owned a house lot next to his brother, John, moved with his family to Charlestown, then Middletown in 1652. John remained in Rowley.

The story of Thomas Miller and his later transgressions is well-known, therefore only the Rowley-related facts will be presented here. It is unclear whether Miller was one of the settlers that arrived with Ezekiel Rogers. A carpenter who was often engaged for fence-building, Miller had a 1½-acre lot in Rowley in 1643. He was licensed to draw wine in 1647. He and his wife Isabel and daughter Ann removed to Middletown in 1651. After he fathered a child by his young servant girl in 1666, he was placed on trial by the church in Rowley, found guilty, and excommunicated.

Indispensable sources for Rowley history and genealogy: *Early Settlers of Rowley*, by George B. Blodgette, (1933); *Rowley Town Records 1639-1672*, by Benjamin Mighill & G.B. Blodgette, eds. (1894); and *Rowley - Records of the First Church*. ■



The photo above shows Thomas Miller's land in Rowley, 1643-1651. The photo below shows the former house lots of the three Harris brothers in Rowley in the same period. The map above is a section of "House Lots of the Early Settlers 1639-1650." The vantage point of each photo is indicated. (R.W. Bacon)



Cornwell-Hyanno: Truth or fiction?

continued from page 1

dismissively right now. If you are a Cornwell descendant, you may appreciate some clarification.

The romantic story. Just for just a moment, let's set aside concerns about standards of proof, and indulge in a brief version of the romantic story woven by circumstantial evidence, indicated by (?): William Cornwall came from England to Boston with his wife, Joan, in 1633, and became a member of Rev. John Eliot's ("the Indian missionary") church. In the mid-1630s, after Joan was murdered by the Pequots (?), Cornwall spent a winter on Cape Cod (?), where he presumably met "Little Dove" (?). He emigrated to Hartford, and joined with John Mason's forces for the Pequot Massacre of 1637, fighting alongside Chief John Hyanno (?). In 1638 he negotiated with John Hyanno for the purchase of Indian lands for the Stratford Colony in Connecticut (?). In 1639 he was granted a lot in Hartford, and by this time was married to his second wife, Mary, though the marriage was not recorded. Later he was granted land in Middletown that originally belonged to the Narragansetts (?). His will indicated he also owned land at "Indian Hill" in Middletown, perhaps inherited from his father-in-law (?). (Note: *This is a conjecture woven from threads of circumstantial evidence only. It is not fact.*)

How did all this get started? In the late 1990s, United Ancestries, a now-defunct company, published a CD-Rom of its compiled genealogical information, "Family Archive CD-100: 1500-1990 Family Pedigrees." Included on this CD was research done for Sharon L. Dodson that showed the second wife of William Cornwall to be "Mary Hyanno." It is important to note that no source information about any Mary Hyanno "facts" was provided.

This tiniest kernel of information about Mary Hyanno and the possibility of Native American ancestry apparently set the wheels turning for a number of Cornwell researchers, who set about looking everywhere for verification. In a genealogy published in 1901, *William Cornwall and His Descendants*, by Edward E. Cornwall, M.D., there is no mention of Mary Hyanno. It appears there was no hint of Mary Hyanno in any Cornwell-Cornwall genealogies until the publication of the United Ancestries CD. Until that point, first settler William Cornwall's second wife and mother of his children was always "Mary ____ (b. ?, m. by 1640)."

Cornwell-Hyanno on the Internet. Today one can easily find information on the Cornwell-Hyanno question via a simple web search. The most thorough compilation of information is at the web site of Linda Coate-Dudick, a Columbus, Ohio, librarian and media specialist who has researched her family for over 25 years. The biographical summary of William Cornwall's life is fully sourced and footnoted, including notes for some of the circumstantial evidence for the Cornwell-Hyanno marriage. These notes include records of communication with others probing the question. She is careful to note, however, that there are no primary

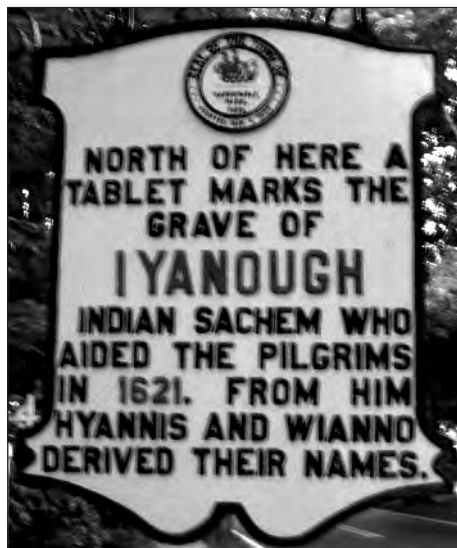
sources upon which to base any conclusions. (Coate's web site: <http://www.ancestrees.com/pedigree/901.htm>)

Mary Hyanno gets a complete biographical sketch on the web site of Lee Murrah, an engineer and patent attorney in Michigan who counts Hyanno as an ancestor through her supposed marriage to Augustine Bearse. Yet the sketch includes the following explicit statement: "All information about Mary Hyanno – her life, ancestry, and even existence – should be viewed as legend and not as proven fact." The sketch details her ancestry, her supposed marriage to Augustine Bearse, the effort by Franklin Bearse to be recognized as an Indian to win benefits for his family, and the debunking of that theory by legendary genealogist Donald L. Jacobus. The sketch can be found at <http://www.murrah.com/gen/hyanno.htm>.

Numerous personal genealogy web sites include information on the Cornwell-Hyanno marriage. Most have explicit language that there is no source to substantiate the marriage. Yet the story woven by the circumstantial evidence has proven intoxicating enough for others to accept the information as fact. The Rootsweb World Connect Project (same as "Ancestry World Tree" at *Ancestry.com*) shows 31 GEDCOM files (family trees) that include the Cornwell-Hyanno marriage – 26 with no sources, and five with minimal sources. The "OneWorldTree" at *Ancestry.com* has four files, and the LDS *familysearch.org* site has eight "Pedigree Resource Files" indicating the Cornwell/Hyanno marriage.

Stanley Cornwall's research adventure. At least one researcher pried his eyes away from the computer monitor in favor of some old-fashioned pound-the-pavement investigation. SMFSD member Stanley H. Cornwall of Westport, Mass., spent several years pursuing leads on the Cornwell-Hyanno marriage through the genealogist of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe. The

continued on page 9



Above is the historic site marker on Rte. 6A in Cummaquid, Mass., the ancestral home of the Cummaquid Wampanoags.

Cornwell-Hyanno . . .*continued from page 8*

story of his research is almost as remarkable as the Cornwell-Hyanno conjecture itself. In a recent telephone interview, he related how over 2½ years of research – and waiting – unfolded. “Gale Cornwall (SMFSD founder) found me on the internet,” and prompted him to the task, he said. Cornwall consulted Patricia Oakley, tribal genealogist for the Mashpee Wampanoags, and presented his inquiry about proof of a Cornwell/Hyanno marriage. Cornwall understood that his inquiry was not a high priority for the tribal genealogist, but he kept in contact with Oakley to push the process along, even offering to pay her for her efforts. She would not accept any money, but she did confirm that the very information he sought was in the tribe’s basement archives, but that it had not been compiled into a report. Upon one of many queries on progress, Cornwall was told that a package of information was in an envelope ready to mail to him in Westport, Mass., just 50 miles away from tribal headquarters. Although Oakley reassured Cornwall that the package was mailed, it never made it to Westport. Cornwall notified interested researchers that information from the tribe was on the way, provoking some excitement and anticipation, but all he could do was wait for a package that never came.

In follow-up calls, Oakley told Cornwall that she had received orders not to pursue any further peripheral genealogy research, and that all of her time would be devoted to the effort to win federal recognition for the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe. This monumental project for the understaffed tribal office involved research and compilation of 400 years and 30,000 pages of history and tribal genealogy. In a later contact with the tribe, Cornwall said Oakley told him that the information she had compiled on the Cornwell-Hyanno question was lost when a

“Genealogy without proof is mythology.”**A sign in the office of James E. Cornwall**

computer system was replaced. Repeated attempts to contact Oakley for this article were unsuccessful.

“It’s like they’ve put out a smoke screen,’ said Stanley Cornwall, frustrated that the information may be there in the archives, but is not accessible. But he has some staying power: “Maybe if enough of us band together we can get some answers.”

The intrigue lurking between the lines is bound to lead some to conclude that the tribe is intentionally withholding information to protect its future interests. To be fair, one might also consider mistakes, the volume of business-at-hand, or some combination of policy and priority. It is also possible there never was a “package” at all.

Just a few weeks ago the Mashpee tribe celebrated preliminary approval of the federal recognition it has sought for 30 years. A final ruling from the Bureau of Indian Affairs is due on March 31, 2007. Stepping from behind the scenes during the celebration was Herb Strathers, a Michigan developer and philanthropist who has given \$15 million to the tribe since 1999 to aid the push for federal recognition – and to secure a development partnership. His company develops residential mega-properties – and gambling casinos.

Gale Cornwall, founder of SMFSD. Gale Cornwall, now of California, was kept informed of Stanley Cornwall’s efforts, and in 2001 contributed some prematurely optimistic posts about research conclusions to genealogy message boards. Today he admits there is no firm proof. “To my knowledge, all the evidence related to the marriage of William to Little Dove is circumstantial,” he wrote in a recent e-mail.

Gale Cornwall has also pursued family history through the Cornwell DNA Project, begun in 2004. But according to project administrator Larry P. Cornwell, DNA cannot answer the Mary Hyanno question.

SMFSD member James E. Cornwall. James Cornwall of Florida has been working on a book on descendants of Middletown first settler William Cornwell for the last decade. He has researched over 1000 of William Cornwell’s ancestors and descendants, and has discovered some new information about William Cornwell himself. Among his findings: “No information about the Hyanno connection. Why? Because there is not even one ounce of proof!”

“I think we should use common sense,” he explained. “Why would William Cornwell, after taking part in almost annihilating the Pequot tribe in 1637, marry an Indian woman? Why would the Puritan community around him allow such a marriage? How many settlers, either in Hartford or Middletown, can one find who married Indian girls? You know, I have a big sign on my desk where I do all my writing, and it says ‘Genealogy without proof is mythology,’ and I look at it every day.”

Robert Charles Anderson, FASG. For recent authoritative research, James Cornwall cited the William Cornwell biographical sketch in Robert Charles Anderson’s *Great Migration Begins* series published in 1995 by the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS). The *Great Migration* project will ultimately include a sketch of every known immigrant to New England between 1620 and 1640. In the William Cornwell sketch, his second wife is listed as “m. by 1640 Mary _____.” There is no mention of Mary Hyanno, in either fact or conjecture.

David Lambert of NEHGS. A call to NEHGS Native American genealogy specialist David Lambert on the subject of Mary Hyanno was met with a groan. “That story is dead in the water – deader than a dead

continued on page 10

Cornwell-Hyanno

continued from page 9

fish,” said Lambert, veteran genealogist and also tribal historian of the Ponkapoags of Massachusetts. He said he still receives inquiries about the Hyanno-Bearse marriage, and refers people to the 1938 article in *The American Genealogist* by Jacobus. As for the United Ancestries CD-Rom, Lambert explained that information on such CDs may be taken en masse from unsourced family group sheets, amounting to “a glorified pedigree dump.” As for marriages between New England settlers and Native Americans, “they just didn’t happen,” said Lambert.

Lambert said the subject of the Bearse-Hyanno marriage keeps coming up because new researchers keep going back to secondary sources that were never corrected. Therefore, years after the debunking of the theory by Jacobus, there has to be what Lambert calls a “rebunking.”

Donald Lines Jacobus. Speaking of Donald Lines Jacobus (1887-1970), who many regard as the father of modern scholarly genealogy, it is worth reading his article on the Bearse-Hyanno issue. The article lays out the claims of the unpublished manuscript by Franklin Bearse that his ancestor Austin (Augustine) Bearse, married Mary Hyanno. Jacobus methodically refutes the claims, citing an utter lack of evidence. But Jacobus does allow that “Every person has a right to examine the historical basis for genealogical statements that have been published . . . and every person has the right to publish his own conclusions . . .”

Is the word of Jacobus the final word? In the August 1985 issue of *Nexus*, an NEHGS publication, Rev. Robert J. Goode, Jr. wrote an essay on the Bearse-Hyanno subject entitled “Keeping an Open Mind.” Goode takes issue with the way Jacobus dismissed Bearse’s claims: “We tend to take the word of those who have rightly earned a position as

unassailable as Jacobus’s. Yet there are mysteries like this one which continue to haunt us and remain unresolved. They require that we make our own decisions.”

“I can make a few general observations of my own,” he continues. “As an Anglican priest, and as one who has actually been a pastor in an Indian community, I can testify to the incredibly complex and involved entanglements to which the human condition is heir. Many of these never see the light of day, even within the family, let alone the civil records. Those of us who dote on our tidy genealogies, certain that we are the scions of those whose names appear on the birth certificates and baptis-



A sign at the road leading to the ancient Indian cornfields in Cummaquid, Mass.

mal records, should spend a few months hearing confessions. I, for one, want to keep an open mind for a little while longer.”

What to do? After digesting all of the foregoing, what is a Cornwell researcher to do? In this editor’s view, the best course is to rigorously apply to one’s work the highest standards of genealogical proof. (*Evidence! Citation and Analysis for the Family Historian*, by Elizabeth Shown Mills, FASG, comes to mind.) Then, if so inclined, one can compile all the circumstantial evidence and legend, but keep it quarantined from the rest of the sourced genealogy. Then in a few years, when the Mashpee tribe is more comfortably situated with long-sought federal recognition, they may be in a more secure position to reveal what may or may not exist in the depths of tribal archives – be it truth or fiction. ■

Editor’s Note - Humor Dept.: For the next issue, we will investigate the mist-enshrouded rumor that one of my Middletown ancestors, Egbert ‘Egg’ White, was descended *not* from the esteemed first settler Nathaniel White, but from Snow White and one of the seven dwarfs – yet unidentified.

2003 SMFSD meeting

continued from page 5

Announcements: A meeting was set for 8:30 a.m. on Monday. Members were asked to please return evaluation forms.

Other Business/Questions:

- Glenn Palmer moved that Jerry Seagrave of the Cromwell Historical Society be presented with an honorary membership. Dorothy Alair seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- A meeting was proposed at 4 p.m., to be hosted by James Cornwall, to see photographs and share information.

- It was noted that the Godfrey Scholar Program, at \$35, has many benefits and online programs. The Connecticut Genealogical Society will

be offering a similar program.

- Suzanne Welles made a motion that the SMFSD donate \$100 to the Godfrey Library Fund. James Cornwall seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- Al Dudley made a motion that the SMFSD make a donation to the Connecticut Genealogical Society along with a letter of appreciation. Suzanne Welles seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- It was noted that dinner would be in the Rocky Hill Room at 6 p.m. A meeting was set for 10 a.m. Sunday in the lobby to carpool to the Pequot Museum.

Adjourned: The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m. ■

Janet A. Kohlenberger
Secretary, SMFSD

MARK YOUR CALENDAR & REGISTER NOW!

Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants Triennial Meeting – August 18-20, 2006

Meeting Headquarters:

Marriott Residence Inn, Rocky Hill, Connecticut



Join us for three days of events & research

The 2006 triennial meeting of the Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants presents the opportunity to gather with Middletown cousins, genealogists, and local history enthusiasts in our ancestral hometown. Our board has secured a superior headquarters hotel at reasonable rates, and has scheduled an itinerary of essential genealogy destinations. Registration is just \$23 per person (plus options). Complete the form below, return it with your check, and prepare to join us for three days of research, stimulation, and fun. Our schedule of activities (*subject to change*):

Friday, August 18:

- 10 a.m. Registration & greeting at the Marriott Residence Inn, Rocky Hill, Conn.
- 11 a.m. Visit to **Godfrey Memorial Library**, Middletown; SMFSD Community Open House.
- Mid-Day Lunch at Godfrey Library (Box Lunch optional - \$10).
- Afternoon Visit to the **Russell Library** and its **Middletown Room** local history collection.
- 6 p.m. Dinner at the Town Line Diner, Rocky Hill.

Saturday, August 19:

- 7-8:30 a.m. Breakfast at the hotel.
- 8:30 a.m. Business meeting & elections.
- 9 a.m. Depart for Hartford, Conn.; visit the **Connecticut State Library** (open 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.).
- Mid-Day Lunch on our own in Hartford.
- Afternoon Visit to **Connecticut Historical Society & Library**, Hartford, Conn. (open 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; adults - \$6, seniors - \$3).
- 5 p.m. SMFSD Wine & Cheese at the Marriott Residence Inn, Rocky Hill.
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner at Chuck's Steak House, Rocky Hill. **Guest Speaker: Nicholas Bellantoni, Ph.D.**, Connecticut Archaeology Center, Connecticut State Museum of Natural History.

Sunday, August 20:

- Early a.m. Early church for those wishing to attend.
- 10 a.m. Depart for **Old Sturbridge Village museum**, Sturbridge, Mass., a recreated 1830s rural New England town. (Admission: Adults - \$20, Seniors - \$18, Children age 3-17 - \$6).
- Dinner To be arranged.

Accommodations: Please make hotel reservations independently by contacting our meeting headquarters, the Marriott Residence Inn, 860 Cromwell Ave. (Rte. 3, off Rte. I-91), Rocky Hill, CT 06067, at 860-257-7500 (<http://marriott.com/property/propertypage/BDLRR>) and mentioning the SMFSD meeting. (SMFSD Meeting Rates: Studio - \$89, 1 bedroom - \$99, 2 bedroom - \$129. Rates include full breakfast daily.)

For more information contact Suzanne Welles at karilsmom@sbcglobal.net

Optional destinations . . .

In addition to our scheduled activities, there are many optional destinations in the Middletown area of interest to the genealogy & local history enthusiast*:

- Cemetery visits
- Middletown Heritage Trail (self-guided 20-station downtown walking tour)
- Exploration of ancestral properties & neighborhoods
- Middlesex County Historical Society (Sunday 2 - 4:30 p.m.)
- Haddam Historical Society (Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.)
- City Clerk's Office, Middletown City Hall (Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

In the Hartford area . . .

- Connecticut Society of Genealogists, East Hartford
- Ancient Burial Ground, Hartford
- Wethersfield, Conn. (fine examples of mid-18th-century architecture)

*Admission charges may apply.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Date arriving: _____ Date departing: _____ Do you need transportation to & from events? Y N

Please check events you will attend (for planning purposes):

Fri. at Godfrey Library Fri. at Russell Library Fri. Dinner at Town Line Diner

Sat. at Conn. State Library Sat. at Conn. Hist. Soc. Sat. Wine & Cheese Social

Sat. Dinner at Chuck's Steak House Sun. at Sturbridge Village Sun. Dinner TBA

Event Registration# _____ @ \$23 = _____

Fri. Box Lunch at Godfrey ..# _____ @ \$10 = _____

Sat. Conn. Hist. Soc.# _____ @ \$6 (adult) ... = _____

Sat. Conn. Hist. Soc.# _____ @ \$3 (senior) .. = _____

Sun. Sturbridge Village# _____ @ \$20 = _____

Sun. Sturbridge Village# _____ @ \$18 (senior) = _____

Sun. Sturbridge Village# _____ @ \$6 (child) = _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED\$ _____

Please make check payable to
The Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants.

Please note that the registration fee does not include any restaurant meals or lodging.

Please make hotel reservations independently by calling our meeting headquarters hotel, the Marriott Residence Inn, Rocky Hill, Conn., at 860-257-7500 and mentioning the Society of Middletown First Settlers meeting.

Send this form with your check to: Suzanne Welles, 60 Avalon Avenue, Oakville, CT 06779

MARK YOUR CALENDAR & REGISTER NOW!

Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants Triennial Meeting

August 18-20, 2006
Friday – Saturday – Sunday

**Meeting Headquarters:
Marriott Residence Inn,
Rocky Hill, Conn.**

**Join your Middletown
'cousins' for three days
of events & research**

THE SOCIETY of MIDDLETOWN
FIRST SETTLERS DESCENDANTS

1650 – 1700
Middletown, Connecticut, U.S.A.

**Registration form
& schedule on Page 11**

**Join us in SMFSD . . .
Open to descendants
of all 1650-1700 settlers**

The Society of Middletown (Conn.) First Settlers Descendants is devoted to the study of the early settlers of Middletown, 1650-1700. Among these are the first 23 settlers named on Founders Rock:

Thomas Allen	George Hubbard
Nathaniel Bacon	John Kirby
William Blomfield	John Martin
William Cornwell	Thomas Miller
John Hall	John Savage
John Hall, Jr.	William Smith
Richard Hall	Samuel Stocking
Samuel Hall	Samuel Stow
Giles Hamlin	Matthias Treat
Daniel Harris	Robert Webster
William Harris	Nathaniel White
	Thomas Whitmore

For membership information and a list of qualifying pre-1700 settlers, contact Donald Brock, Registrar, SMFSD, 10 Windy Hill Rd., Glen Arm, MD 21057.

SMFSD ELECTIONS

**will be at our TRIENNIAL MEETING August 18-20
in Middletown, Conn.**

Elections for three offices (6-year term for each): Commander - Secretary - Registrar

Send your nominations by June 15 to the Nominating Committee:

Sandra G. Salm • 6358 Skinner Road • Vernon Center, NY 13477 • sgsalm@yahoo.com

