



The Middler

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PURITANISM IN MIDDLETOWN

Middletown, as a '2nd generation' settlement, was less than thrilled with Puritan doctrine

When a permanent minister was hired in 1668, the church had just 10 'members'

Editor's Note: The following article is adapted and abridged from a chapter in the recently-published book, *Early Families of Middletown, Conn. - Vol. I: 1650-1654* (Variety Arts Press, 2012), and is used by permission.

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

When researching the settlement of 17th-century towns in New England, one accepts that the rules and regulations of Puritan colonial administration shaped daily life. Church and state were intertwined, part of the "ground rules" of the 17th century, and it is tempting to simply accept it and quickly move on to the researcher's happy immersion in all the names, dates, and records.

A settlement-by-settlement study, however, reveals that the application of Puritan standards was not uniform throughout all of New England in the

Early Puritan arrivals in New England have been easy subjects for caricature. The drawing is from *The People's Standard History of the United States*, by Edward S. Ellis (1840-1916), first published in 1897.



17th century. The degrees of participation, piety, enforcement, and punishments ranged along a continuum, and also changed over time.

The chapter entitled "Puritanism in Middletown" from *Early Families of*

Middletown, Conn. - Vol. I, by R.W. Bacon, defines Puritanism, compares the different strains found in early Connecticut settlements, clarifies some misconceptions, and illuminates Puritanism in 17th-century Middletown, a "second-generation" town with an increasing population of "outliers." What follows is an ultra-condensed version of that chapter – about one-third of the total text.

Puritanism defined. The movement began in England in the 1530s as a reform effort by those dissatisfied with the Church of England. The term originated as a derogatory moniker directed toward the non-conformists who wanted to "purify" the established church. The crux of the Puritan vs. Anglican division that came to a

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Historic Nehemiah Hubbard house (1744) hits the Middletown real estate market

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

A tiny ad on page 7 of the April 2013 issue of a giveaway real estate guide revealed buried treasure for Middletown history, genealogy, and architecture enthusiasts: The 1744 Nehemiah Hubbard house just hit the market.

Your editor's follow-up to this news became an interesting exercise in sorting out the confusion wrought by the real estate ad, local history web sites, and online family histories. Thank goodness for the comprehen-



sive nomination form for the structure's listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

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SMFSD NEWS

Facebook presence, 25 new members, and a new life member centenarian

• **Welcome new members.** SMFSD welcomes 25 new members since the last issue of The Middler: **Richard Waverly Whitmore II**, AM-311, Salinas, Calif. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **John Benjamin Wetmore**, AM-312, Meeteetse, Wyo. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Richard Dayle Wetmore**, AM-313, Meeteetse, Wyo. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Jonathan H. C. Wetmore**, AM-314, Woodbury, Minn. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Jennifer Lerrie Ehrhart**, AM-316, Tucson, Ariz. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Suzanne J. Brock**, AM-316, Fallbrook, Calif. (1st settler Samuel Stocking); **Richard Donald Wetmore**, AM-317, Jacksonville, Fla. (1st settler Thomas

Wetmore); **Linda Whitmore**, ASM-318, The Villages, Fla. (Associate/Friend Membership); **David Alan Bowe**, AM-319, Chagrin Falls, Ohio (1st settler Alexander Bowe/Bow); **Craig E. Hubbard**, AM-320, Nuevo, Calif. (1st settler George Hubbard); **Conrad W. Terrill**, AM-321, Lanham, Md. (1st settler Thomas Miller); **Kevin J. Wetmore**, AM-322, Cheshire, Conn. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr.**, AM-323, Los Angeles, Calif. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Lisa Wetmore Fitzgerald**, AM-324, Cheshire, Conn. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Thomas F. Wetmore**, AM-325, Cheshire, Conn. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Toni Kathryn Wetmore**, AM-326 Cheshire, Conn. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Brendan Fitzgerald**, AM-327, Cheshire, Conn. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Thomas F. Wetmore**, AM-328, Meriden, Conn. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Paul F. Wetmore**, AM-329, Santa Monica, Calif. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Yetta Ann Auger**, AM-330, Cheshire, Conn. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Kristin M. Wetmore**, AM-331, Hamden Conn. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Mildred Story Broadbent**, LM-332, Park Rapids, Minn. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Thomas Trask**

Wetmore IV, AM-333, Newburyport, Mass. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore); **Peter Bennington Irvine**, AM-334, Homewood, Ill. (1st settler Daniel Harris); and **Perry M. Wetmore**, AM-335, Marco Island, Fla. (1st settler Thomas Wetmore).

• **SMFSD awards a Life Membership to soon-to-be centenarian.** Mildred Broadbent Story of Park Rapids, Minnesota, will celebrate her 100th birthday in August 2013. She is a descendant of first settler Thomas Wetmore, and was born August 17, 1913. In honor of the occasion (and after submission of a documented line of descent by her daughter, Linda Rae McCoy of California), SMFSD has awarded Mrs. Story a life membership. Members who want to observe the occasion with a card or note can address them to Mrs. Story at 909 Crocus Hill St., Park Rapids, MN 56470. Those who no longer use the U.S. Postal Service can send an e-mail to her daughter, Linda Rae, at lraemc@comcast.net, who will print them and take them to her mother when she goes to Minnesota in August.

• **New SMFSD Facebook presence.** Shortly after our Triennial Meeting in October 2012, new SMFSD secretary **Cindy Nicewarner** constructed a public Facebook page as a way to facilitate member networking – and draw prospective members. Visit and participate at <https://www.facebook.com/SocietyofMiddletownFirstSettlersDescendants>. ■



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

President gives her report on NERGC – and her reminder to vote on bylaw changes

By Marge Piersen,
President, SMFSD

At this writing (late April) the New England Regional Genealogical Conference in Manchester, N.H. has just concluded. SMFSD members Laura Hobbs, Reg Bacon, and I were there and manned a busy booth at the Society Fair. Many attendees stopped by just to chat and look at

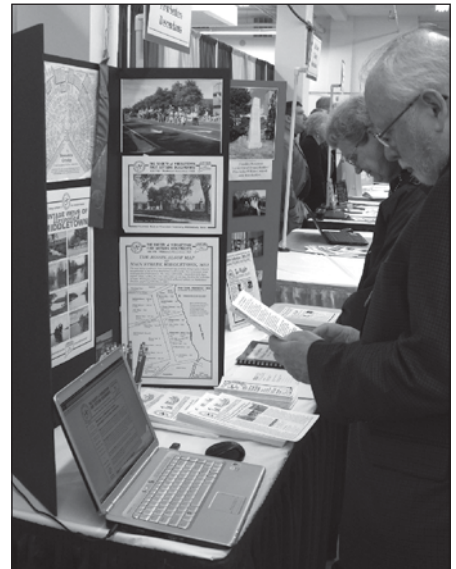
our great displays, but we did meet a few serious member prospects.

Many of the conference talks mentioned that genealogy is about the culture of the times and not just about names, dates, and places. Even before the conference began I had a real treat jumping back into the 17th century colonial world by attending a lecture at

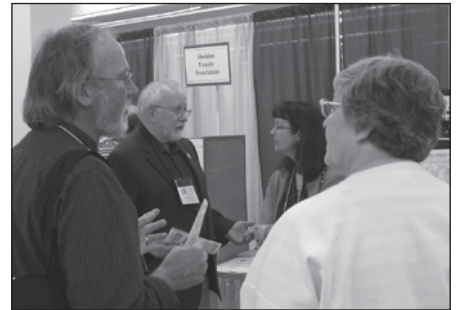
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SMFSD stands out from the 'society' crowd at N.E. Regional Genealogical Conference

SMFSD president **Marge Pierson**, *Middler* editor **Reg Bacon**, and member **Laura Hobbs** converged in Manchester, N.H. on April 18, 2013 to represent the organization at the "Society Fair" event at the New England Regional Genealogical Conference. The web site demonstration, publications, and display material drew a steady crowd of browsers and prospective members.



Below, **Laura Hobbs** and **Marge Pierson** engage member prospects. (R.W. Bacon photos)



NEWS FROM MIDDLETOWN

Mortimer Cemetery fence, damaged by Hurricane Sandy, is slated to be rebuilt & preserved with original materials

By R.W. Bacon

Just one week after SMFSD's Triennial Meeting on October 18-20, 2013, Middletown's Mortimer Cemetery – along with the rest of the East Coast – suffered the ravages of Hurricane Sandy. On October 29, about 150 feet of the heavy wrought-iron fence surrounding the cemetery blew down onto the sidewalk along Liberty Street. There were no injuries.

The 22 six-foot-tall fence sections had been in place, with bases set in concrete, since 1911. Corrosion at the base of the posts weakened the structure, and it could not withstand the storm's 75-mile-per-hour gusts.

Now, after months of investigating options by insurance representatives, the Middletown Old Burying Grounds

Association, the city's public works department, FEMA, and the State Historic Preservation Office, it was decided that the original 102-year-old fence sections will be preserved and reinstalled on the same footings.

Mortimer Cemetery, established in 1778, and expanded in 1781 and 1794, is located on Liberty Street just off Main Street in Middletown, and is the resting place of later generations of many of the town's early families.

Augie DeFrance of the Middletown Old Burying Grounds Association sent a recent e-mail update: "It took a long time to get the decision. City insurance is covering most of the tab. If there is anything not covered, FEMA will get involved. We priced replacement fences, etc. This is the

At right was the scene on Liberty Street, Middletown last October, after 150 feet of wrought iron fence blew down during Hurricane Sandy. (Thanks to Cassandra Day of the *Middletown Patch* for the news alert.)



best decision, but it will take time to repair the old fence, then reinstall it on the old footing with a concrete cap so that it looks the same as it did. The State Historic Preservation Office agreed that this was the best solution." ■



Middletown, as a '2nd generation' settlement, was less than thrilled with Puritan doctrine

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head in England in the early 17th century was this: The Puritans believed that the Church of England was corrupt, had not reformed enough, and was continuing to endorse beliefs and rituals associated with the Roman Catholic Church. The Anglican Church establishment, bound closely to the civil administration of King Charles I (1600-1649, reign: 1625-1649), believed that Puritanism was a political as well as a religious threat, and suppressed deviant or extremist Puritan ministers.¹ The clash of Anglican vs. Puritan and monarchy vs. Parliament would lead to the English Civil War (1642-46, 1648-49), the executions of William Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury (1645), and Charles I (1649), and the period that New England historians and genealogists refer to as The Great Migration (1625-1640).²

Puritanism in early New England. The more radical Puritans that left the country of their birth to populate early New England were of two categories. Those who established the Plymouth Colony in 1620 were earlier "separating" Puritans, or "Separatists," who believed in a complete separation from the corrupt Church of England. Those who founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony were "Congregationalist" Puritans who wanted to reform the established church, but also wanted to form their own congregations to meet the needs of civil and religious life.³

In the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the newly-formed Puritan congregations embraced the ideas of Rev. John Cotton

(1585-1662) about individual church self-sufficiency and self-regulation. His idea was that people would covenant themselves to each other, creating checks-and-balances essential for a self-governing church. By extension, Rev. Cotton's ideas of church self-governance carried into civil affairs – after all, in early New England the "meeting house" was both the church hall and the town hall. It is important to note that Rev. Cotton's approach did not require nor embrace all residents and church attendees as "members." Full membership, and thus the right to vote on church and civil affairs, was extended only to those (male only) "elect" that had testified about their personal experience with God. His principles became known as *The New England Way*.⁴

Because early Middletown, the subject of our interest, was a "second generation" town first populated by those from the already established River Towns of Windsor, Wethersfield, and Hartford, it is useful to consider the background and migration motivations of the earlier settlers in both central and coastal Connecticut – but space precludes its inclusion. The study of the earliest Puritan settlements in Connecticut reveal that neither rank-and-file citizens nor church leadership were always uniformly content, and that movement from settlement-to-settlement was not uncommon in an effort to find a place that was a better fit for individual and group desires.

The 1650 Connecticut Code. Overlaying the character of each newly-settled community was the Connecticut Code of Laws, established by the General Court in 1650, which provides a comprehensive look into the region's Puritan values. The code's 81 sections, compiled by Roger Ludlow, the colony's only lawyer, define and address the entire range of citizen rights and responsibilities. The code was notable for its brutal punishments that included branding, whipping, and even capital punishment for children over age 16 who disobeyed parents.⁵

Notable throughout the Connecticut Code of 1650 is the latitude afforded individual magistrates and constables regarding enforcement. In the early decades of the Middletown settlement, considering its composition of second-generation inhabitants and the unsettled situation with its first minister, Samuel Stow, this latitude was probably welcome.

Clarifying misconceptions. In every area of history, myths and misconceptions have a way of perpetuating themselves, and misconceptions about Puritanism have always been easy candidates for exaggeration. Consider the typical cartoon caricature of an early New England Puritan: Dour, humorless, and dressed in drab and dorky clothing. Today, even the word "puritan" as a common noun is used to indicate prudery and dullness. Below are some clarifications of selected myths and truths:⁶

Alcohol use. Although drunkenness was punished by the Puritans, moderate use of alcohol was encouraged.

Christmas. Puritans eschewed any overt ceremony at Christmas. To the radical Puritans that came to New England, such observation was just the kind of ritual they wanted to "purify" out of the Church of England.

Clothing. Clothing was plain and modest, but could be of any color. The color and material of clothing was more indicative of class status than piety.

Conjugal relations. Sex within the bounds of marriage was heartily encouraged, viewed as a gift from God, and justified in the Bible. It was referred to as "matrimonial duty" and "due benevolence." Sexual relations outside the bounds of marriage, however, was a punishable offense.

Games. Personal industriousness was a paramount Puritan value. Games of chance and dramatic entertainments were banned in many colonies.

Marriage. Despite the dominance of the church in daily life, in the 17th century, marriage was exclusively a civil ceremony to be performed only by a magistrate. (Ministers were not allowed to officiate until 1694.)⁷

Music. Choral music was incorporated by the Puritans in their religious services. Rev. John Cotton, however, cautioned that music should not be appreciated for its artistry or ornament, but for its quality of spiritual arousal. Musical instruments such as fife, drum, trumpets, or bells were used only outside the church for special occasions (proclamations, executions, whippings, etc.) Probate records of early New England settlers indicate that guitars, lutes, and bowed stringed instruments were common. Very likely they were played in private at home for family and friends – to avoid public accusations of indulging in too much time-wasting "illegitimate leisure."⁸

The Half-Way Covenant. Because Middletown was essentially a "second generation" settlement, the 1662 "Half-

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At left is King Charles I (1600-1649), whose reign extended from 1625 until his execution in England's civil war.

At right is William Laud (1573-1645), Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633 to 1645, when he was beheaded in the civil war.



Puritanism in Middletown

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Way Covenant,” is relevant to the lives of most pre-1700 arrivals in Middletown. For those Puritans in Connecticut who made the decision to (1) leave their homeland in England, (2) embark on a perilous ocean voyage, and (3) forge a new life in an unknown wilderness, that decision was undeniably momentous, a life-changing act of faith. Once settled in their new congregations, with their act-of-faith rewarded by survival, many could convincingly “testify” and publicly profess their faith on the way to becoming a church member, i.e. one of the “elect.” The next two generations that grew up in New England and did not share the experience of the earliest settlers, did not hold the “act-of-faith” decision as central to their being, and generally were not as fervent believers. Puritanism was still the way of the land, but for the second and third generations, they did not feel an “ownership” of the cause in the same way the earliest settlers did. To ensure that the church and civil structure (supported by tax levies) would continue to function smoothly, this issue demanded attention.

The children of the earliest New England settler church members were included as limited members with the assumption that they, too, would eventually experience a “conversion,” then publicly “testify” their faith, and become full church members. The problem was that not everyone experienced a “conversion.” One could lead an upright life, but without the conversion experience, one could not be accepted as a member of the church.

The Half-Way Covenant, first drafted by Richard Mather (1596-1699) of Boston in 1646, but refined and advocated by the younger Rev. Solomon Stoddard (1643-1729) of Northampton, Mass. in the 1660s, proposed a kind of “half-way” church membership, in which second- and third-generation children could be baptized as infants, and admitted as full members of the church at age 14 – upon testifying a conversion experience. The goal was that by embracing the “half-way” members, they would ultimately value full membership.⁹

The Half-Way Covenant sparked much debate, with the more radical Puritans insisting that the original strict church membership policies be upheld. The reality of civil administration, however, was that more citizens needed to be involved in town affairs. Not every New England congregation accepted the Half-Way Covenant, but “the horse was out of the barn.” The unity of Puritanism was

weakened, which led to more participation in town affairs by rank-and-file citizens.

Puritanism in 17th-century Middletown. For a specific look at Puritanism in Middletown, one might first consult David Dudley Field’s *Centennial Lecture*, published in 1853. In light of more recent scholarship, it appears that Dr. Field was wearing rose-colored glasses, but his description is worthwhile reading. Here is a very brief excerpt:

“They were a very religious people. All attended public worship. Before they had a meeting-house, they worshiped God under the boughs of a tree, and in less than two years they built them a Sanctuary, and 18 years after, another. These were humble structures it is true; but they were grateful for the accommodations they afforded. They secured regularly the services of a minister of the gospel . . . The Sabbath was on their minds through the week, and before the sun sunk in the west on Saturday, worldly concerns were laid aside that their minds might be free to keep the day in a holy manner.”

The narrative goes on about the succession of ministers and the remarkable and unanimous devotion to piety by Middletown citizens. To address D.D. Field’s rosy narrative point-by-point: (1) By the late 17th century, those most distant from a meeting house did not always attend public worship; (2) Middletown’s first minister, Samuel Stow (1623-1704), the founder of the First Ecclesiastical Society, was a controversial figure throughout his tenure, and was eventually replaced; and (3) the first generally approved minister, Rev. Nathaniel Collins, was not settled in his role until 1668, and at that time the church had but 10 male members (i.e. those that had publicly professed their faith and testified their conversion experience). So much for Middletown being a “very religious” settlement.

The ministers of 17th-century Middletown. In preparation of the 1884

By today’s standards, Puritan punishments for various crimes were crude and uncivilized. Physical discomfort and public humiliation were a double deterrent.



History of Middlesex County, chronicler Henry Whittemore mined town records to construct a picture of Middletown’s early difficulties in settling a compatible minister.

Rev. Samuel Stow arrived in Middletown to serve as minister in 1651. He had come to New England with his family in 1634, and was a member of the first graduating class at Harvard College in 1645. Before arriving in Middletown he served as a minister in Massachusetts, and lived variously in Roxbury, Charlestown, Chelmsford, and Concord. He served as minister in Middletown until 1659, when growing opposition resulted in his petition to the General Court to settle the differences.¹⁰

Of surviving records of Middletown, the oldest is from February 10, 1652: “It was agreed at a meeting at John Halls hous to build a meeting hous and to make it twenty fot square and ten fot between till and plat, the heygt of it.”¹¹ The structure was built in the middle of what is now Main Street, at the north end, and surrounded by palisades for protection against Indians. It is here that Rev. Samuel Stow first preached in Middletown, and from the records he was deemed acceptable in his first years of service:

“A vote of ye towne 20 of August 1657, whether it be the mind of ye towne to continue mr. Stow amongst us lookinge at him as in convenient time to call him to office. God in his providence make way thereunto. It was concluded by ye towne that he should continue among us for that end according to ye vote above written.”¹²

But just days after this vote of confidence, on August 26, 1657, a case was heard at the Particular Court of Connecticut that reveals that Rev. Stow was a very strict interpreter of Puritan church membership policy. Rev. Stow was quoted in charges by John Hall as saying that “those not in visible Covenant are dogs among dogs and in the kingdom of Satan, and at Satan’s command.” For his part, Hall reproached Rev. Stow, saying that he was “a pestilent person, a plague to the place, and what he preached was not worth hearing.” (Hall was publicly censured and fined.)¹³

By 1659 it appears that differences could not be settled without outside mediation. From October 5, 1659: “At a towne meeting . . . the inhabitants of Middletowne being met together did manifest by a vot that they did not desire Mr. Stow’s continuance amongst us, in thee work of the ministry with reference to calling him to office. At

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the same town meeting Willyam Harres and Robeart Warner wear chosen by the towne to treat with master Bowers of new haven consarning his affording help to uss in the ministry.”¹³

The General Court of Connecticut took action, and recorded their decision on March 14, 1660, allowing Middletown to seek another minister:

“This Court having heard and considered the difference twixt ye Towne of Middle Towne and Mr. Stow and their allegations and answers, doe judg and determine that ye people of Middle Towne are free from Mr. Stow as their engaged minister.”¹⁴

In settling the matter, the General Court also allowed Rev. Stow to continue to preach to those who wanted to hear him, and ordered that the town pay him what he was due for the past year’s service.

After his service in Middletown, Rev. Stow continued to live at the corner of Main Street and Washington Street, but preached in numerous locations, including Simsbury from 1681 to 1685. He completed several books, including a history of early New England, but the texts have been lost. Rev. Stow married Hope Fletcher (1625-1702) in 1649, with whom he had eight children, all but one born in Middletown. During his life he amassed 1374 acres of land, and upon his death bequeathed 505 acres in the Newfield and Westfield sections of Middletown to endow a fund for Middletown schools.¹⁵

The second minister in Middletown’s 17th-century Puritan era was Rev. Nathaniel Collins (1641-1684), who was born in Cambridge, Mass., and attended Harvard College from 1656 to 1663. He married Mary Whiting (1643-1709) in 1664, with whom he had eight children, all born in Middletown.¹⁶ Negotiations with Rev. Collins began as early as 1661, and town correspondence over the next several years described to him the situation in Middletown.

When Rev. Collins was finally ordained as the town’s first settled minister in 1668, the church had 10 male members. During

his 16 years of service, 76 individuals were admitted to the church as members. Upon his death at age 43 in 1684, Cotton Mather wrote: “The church of Middletown ... was the golden candlestick from whence this excellent person illuminated more than that whole colony.”¹⁶

The third minister in Middletown’s 17th-century Puritan era was Rev. Noadiah Russell (1659-1713), who was born in New Haven, Conn., and graduated from Harvard College from 1681. He married Mary Hamlin (1662-1743) in 1690, with whom he had nine children, all born in Middletown. He arrived in Middletown in 1688, and served as minister of the First Church for 25 years. During his 25 years of service, the church admitted 180 new members, which is indicative not only of his being “a man of weight and wisdom throughout the colony,” but also of the evolution of Puritanism and less stringent church membership standards. He was so well-regarded that after his death in 1713, his son, Rev. William Russell II (1690-1761), a 1709 Yale graduate, was recruited to serve as minister of the First Church in Middletown. He held the position for 46 years until his death in 1761.¹⁷

What about the “official history” of Middletown’s First Church? An obvious source for information about Puritanism in Middletown’s early days is *A Brief history of the First Church of Christ in Middletown, Connecticut 1668-1918*, by Azel Washburn Hazen, who served as minister of the church from 1869 to 1916. Unfortunately its coverage of the pre-1668 period relies almost entirely on the glossy writings of David Dudley Field from 70 years before. Of the dissatisfaction with Rev. Samuel Stow, the author tiptoes around the court and town records, and writes: “He continued his work till 1660. Yet the people were not in full harmony with him.”¹⁸ The author does, however, name the 10 males in all of Middletown who were members of the church in 1668: John Hall, Jr., Samuel Stocking, Sr., Thomas Wetmore, Sr., Thomas Allen, Andrew Warner, Sr., George Hubbard, and William Harris (all who lived relatively near the meeting house); and Daniel Harris, John Savage, and Samuel Stocking (who lived at the Upper Houses, now Cromwell, Conn.).¹⁹ The first deacons, elected in 1670, were Thomas Allen, Samuel Stocking, and John Hall, Jr.²⁰

The church history noticeably avoids directly addressing the division in congregations throughout New England caused by the Half-Way Covenant, but it does mention

that in February 1671, “a deep solicitude was felt for the children of the church,” and the last day of the month was devoted to fasting and prayer. The children were read the covenant with explanations and scriptural basis, and before church was dismissed “both parents and children commended to ye grace of God.”²¹

The author rhapsodizes on the devoted service of Nathaniel Collins, Noadiah Russell and subsequent ministers, and provides welcome detail on the succession of meeting houses.

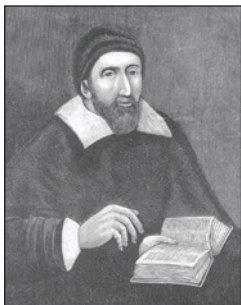
The first meeting house – a structure also addressed in a fall 2007 *Middler* article about “The Log Cabin Myth” – was built in 1652. Town records indicate that at meeting on February 10, 1652 at the home of John Hall, Sr., by town vote the decision was made to build a meeting house. The vote specified the structure to be 20 feet square, 10 feet from sill to plate. The site was to be at the northernmost end of what is now Main Street in Middletown, not far from the burying ground (now known as Riverside Cemetery).²² The meeting house was used for religious services on the Sabbath, for the meeting of selectmen (or “townsmen”) at least every 28 days, and for town meetings.

On March 19, 1665 the town meeting voted to construct a gallery in the original meeting house “from the east end to the middle beams” to accommodate more people. By 1679 the first meeting house was outgrown after 27 years of use, and the town voted to build a new structure “32 feet square, and 15 feet between joints” on the east side of Main Street, opposite what is now Liberty Street. This meeting house was in use for 35 years, until 1715. (A separate church was established in the Upper Houses in 1703).²³

In 1715 a new church was built on High Street near the present Church Street. The new building was 40 feet wide, 60 feet long, stood two stories high, and featured ample galleries. “No picture of it has come down to us, yet traditions reports it to have been an ungainly structure,” writes Rev. Hazen. In 1740 a 25-foot wide addition was built on its west side. “It was then capacious indeed, but of uncouth appearance, and very ill accommodated for the advantage of the speaker,” recalled Rev. Enoch Huntington, who served as minister in the church for 38 of its 84 years of use.²⁴

In 1799 Middletown’s fourth meeting house, designed by church architect Lavius Filmore, was built on Main Street, located front-and-center in a row that included the

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At left is Rev. Richard Mather (1596-1699), the Puritan theologian who advanced the idea of the Half-Way Covenant in 1646. The idea was taken up by the more liberal Rev. Solomon Stoddard in the 1660s.

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impressive edifices of the court house, a bank, and the custom house.²⁵ This would be the last of the taxpayer-supported Congregational churches, as this practice ended in Connecticut in 1818. The last service in this church was in September 1872, and the fifth church, around the corner on Court Street, completed in 1873, is still in use today.

At this writing (2012) the 1799 church building still stands, although in a different form and location. In the 1870s the massive wood-frame structure was moved by teams of oxen to the north end of Main Street, and placed onto a prepared lot backwards. The back of the building, now facing the street next to the busy O'Rourke's Diner, was well camouflaged for a century, but in recent decades renovations have revealed the ornate evidence of its former use.

Middletown's 1670 Land Grants ... and Puritanism. Middletown's 1670 land grants – relatively narrow frontage, but extending in strips of acreage for a mile or two – undoubtedly impacted the reach of Puritan doctrine in early Middletown.

The reasoning is laid out in *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* by Richard L. Bushman. This book became a classic soon after its publication in 1967, and won the Bancroft Prize in American History. Its premise is that between 1690 and 1765, the weakening of local government institutions, combined with rising individual economic ambitions, transformed what had been a majority of submissive “godly Puritans” into a majority of outspoken, secular, and materialistic “Yankees.”²⁶

The author contends that in the 17th century, preachers that advocated holding back individual ambition while at the same time urging personal industriousness had created a gray area of vulnerability in societal and church institutions. “Puritan preachers could not clearly distinguish laudable industry from reprehensible worldliness,” Bushman writes, and as the economy prospered in the late 17th century, “laudable diligence” began to morph into acquisitiveness.²⁷

Bushman advances that in the last decades of the 17th century, individual ambition to prosper led to an increasing disregard of the established social order. Non-proprietors, non-church members, and the common “outliers” wrangled with leadership and bristled against laws. “Under these circumstances, the social order became a menace to peace of mind rather

than a shield against divine wrath,” writes Bushman.²⁸

Outliers? These were families that lived some distance from the center of town, and participated in church and civic matters less frequently. Bushman devotes a chapter to the “outliers,” and the subject has a particular relevance to Middletown due to the shape of many of the 1670 land grants.

In the early years, lots were laid out to keep residents close to the central settlement and meeting house. Later land grants, such as the 1670 grants in Middletown, distributed narrow strips of land, beginning on a road and sometimes stretching miles into the wilderness. At first this permitted families to live near the town center and still work their more distant land. But as families grew, and as distant resources were developed, houses were built on outlying parts of family acreage by the younger generations. Logistically it was difficult for farmers to work outlying lands and participate in town and church affairs. The result was the disengagement of the more distant residents, the disruption of community, and the weakening of authority.

Of course, individual choice played a role in the “Puritan to Yankee” evolution, notes Bushman. “All outliers were to a degree at variance with the community and with the ideal of social order; for they chose to promote their economic interests at the expense of their spiritual welfare.”²⁹

Bushman concludes that by 1730, the rank-and-file settlers felt distanced from church and government leaders. While there was still conformity to the church establishment, the author contends that it had become a facade.

In summarizing the early settlers of Middletown, Dr. Field wrote in his Centennial Address, delivered Nov. 13, 1850 and published in 1853: “The character of the early settlers of Middletown may be given in few words. It is not pretended they were a perfect community. They had their faults as other early settlers of New England. But their faults were not peculiar to themselves; they pertained to the age in which they lived, and are susceptible of much palliation from the circumstances in which they were placed.”³⁰

Considering the available evidence about Puritanism in “second-generation” Middletown in the last half of the 17th century, it appears to this writer that the settlement was among the least church-oriented of the second-generation towns, and that in fact, individuals may have chosen to settle in Middletown to be free from the more strict Puritan surveillance.

Preventing a firm conclusion is the lack of specifics about the causes of division within a given congregation. This is the rule rather than the exception – There are many instances of divided congregations in early Connecticut, but in so many cases we only know the aftermath, and not the origin of the strife. In any case, the disaffection with Puritanism and the dilution of the Half-Way Covenant as seen in Middletown and elsewhere in this period helped pave the way for the Great Awakening of the 1730s.

In Connecticut, the 1708 Act of Toleration permitted membership and attendance at the church of one's choice. The grip of Puritanism had loosened, but individuals still had to pay taxes to support the Congregationalist minister. In Connecticut, taxpayer support of the Congregational Church did not end until 1818. By the end of the 19th century, life was vastly different. In 1884, the *History of Middlesex County* included profiles of 17 churches of various denominations.

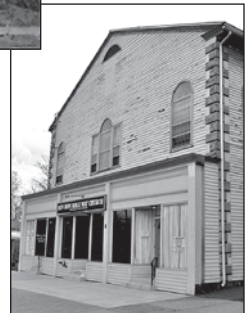
This overview of Puritanism in central Connecticut is drawn from secondary sources, and built on the scholarship of many, past and present. The final word on the subject has not been spoken or written. Scholars continue to study the influence that English affairs and the Restoration of 1660 had on Puritan society in the New England colonies. Another kind of analysis was explored by Cedric B. Cowing in *The Saving Remnant: Religion and the Settling of New England* (1995), in which he correlated early settlers' English regional origins with their new community's degree

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At left is an 1870s photo of Middletown's 4th Congregational meeting house, built in 1799 and used until 1872. Shortly after, the building was moved to the north end of Main Street.

There are at least two theories about why the building was placed with its backside facing the street, but in any case, the large church windows and Georgian features remain.



Puritanism in Middletown

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of devotion to Puritan ideals.⁴⁷ This regional micro approach awaits the next practitioner to carry on the work of the retired Professor Cowing. In the meantime, while we anticipate the next wave of scholarship, we can continue to pore over the Middletown records for more clues and insights to the town's 17th-century life. ■

Editor's Note: The foregoing article is adapted by permission from a chapter in *Early Families of Middletown, Conn. - Vol. I: 1650-1654* by R.W. Bacon, published in late 2012. For information about the book, visit www.VarietyArtsPress.com.

Endnotes:

- (1) Francis J. Bremer. *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society From Bradford to Edwards*. (Lebanon, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1995) pg. 11-14.
- (2) Norman Davies. *The Isles: A History*. (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1999), pg. 560-561
- (3) Bremer. *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society From Bradford to Edwards*, pg. 29-47.
- (4) John Cotton. *The New England Way*. (1645) (New York, N.Y.: AMS Press, 1983).
- (5) Roger Ludlow. *Connecticut Code of Laws Established by the General Court, May 1650; The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut 1636-1776*, pg. 509-563.

- (6) Bruce C. Daniels. *Puritans at Play: Leisure and Recreation in Colonial New England*. (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995).
- (7) Van Dusen, *Puritans Against the Wilderness: Connecticut History to 1763*, pg. 92-94.
- (8) Bruce C. Daniels, *Puritans at Play*, pg. 56-58.
- (9) Sydney Ahlstrom. *A Religious History of the American People Vol. 1*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1965), Ch. 10.
- (10) R.W. Bacon. *Middletown First Settler Profile: Samuel Stow*. (Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants; <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ctsmfsd/Index.html>).
- (11) Town of Middletown, *Town Votes & Proprietors Records* (Middletown, Conn.), February 10, 1652.
- (12) Town of Middletown, *Town Votes & Proprietors Records* (Middletown, Conn.), August 20, 1657.
- (13) Town of Middletown, *Town Votes & Proprietors Records* (Middletown, Conn.), October 10, 1659.
- (14) *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut 1636-1776*, March 14, 1660.
- (15) R.W. Bacon. *Middletown First Settler Profile: Samuel Stow*. (Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants; <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ctsmfsd/Index.html>); Azel Washburn Hazen. *A Brief History of the First Church of Christ in Middletown, Connecticut 1668-1918*. (Middletown, Conn.: publisher not noted, 1920), pg. 12.
- (16) Paula Higgins. *Middletown First Settler Profile: Nathaniel Collins*. (Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants; <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ctsmfsd/Index.html>).
- (17) Paula Higgins. *Middletown First Settler Profile: Noadiah Russell*. (Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants; <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ctsmfsd/Index.html>).

- (18) Azel Washburn Hazen. *A Brief History of the First Church of Christ in Middletown, Connecticut 1668-1918*. (Middletown, Conn.: publisher not noted, 1920), pg. 11.
- (19) Hazen. *A Brief History of the First Church of Christ in Middletown, Connecticut 1668-1918*, pg. 19.
- (20) Hazen. *A Brief History of the First Church of Christ in Middletown, Connecticut 1668-1918*, pg. 27.
- (21) Hazen. *A Brief History of the First Church of Christ in Middletown, Connecticut 1668-1918*. pg. 27-28.
- (22) Hazen. *A Brief History of the First Church of Christ in Middletown, Connecticut 1668-1918*. pg. 10.
- (23) Hazen. *A Brief History of the First Church of Christ in Middletown, Connecticut 1668-1918*. pg. 28.
- (24) Hazen. *A Brief History of the First Church of Christ in Middletown, Connecticut 1668-1918*. pg. 41-42.
- (25) Hazen. *A Brief History of the First Church of Christ in Middletown, Connecticut 1668-1918*. pg. 58.
- (26) Richard L. Bushman. *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pg. 58.
- (27) Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765*. pg. iv-v.
- (28) Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765*. pg. 190.
- (29) Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765*. pg. 58.
- (30) David D. Field, D.D. *Centennial Address, with Historical Sketches of Cromwell, Portland, Chatham, Middle-Haddam, Middletown and its Parishes*. (Middletown, Conn.: William B. Casey, 1853) pg. 47.
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1744 Hubbard house hits the market ...

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“Spectacular historic homestead, first time offered in 56 years,” states the ad in *Hallmark Homes* magazine. “Large gracious rooms with high ceilings. 5 bedrooms, 3.1 baths, over 8 acres of stunning gardens published in *The Passion for Gardening*. Preserved antiquity with modern convenience.” The property, at the corner of Laurel Grove Road and Wadsworth Street in Middletown, is listed at \$599,000.

Investigation of the background of the house on the Internet led to a slew of hagiographies on Nehemiah Hubbard II, known for his numerous

business and civic accomplishments, Revolutionary War service, and an investor in what would become Hubbard, Ohio. Probing only slightly below the surface, however, revealed that *this* most notable Nehemiah Hubbard (1752-1837) never lived in the house as an adult, preferring to live in a Georgian-style mansion on Main Street, near his work – he was the first president of two Middletown banks. It was his father, Nehemiah Hubbard I (1721-1811), a grandson of early settler George Hubbard (1594-1685) who purchased the lot in 1744 and erected the house. Nehemiah II retained ownership of the 1744 house, and the family used the property for farming.

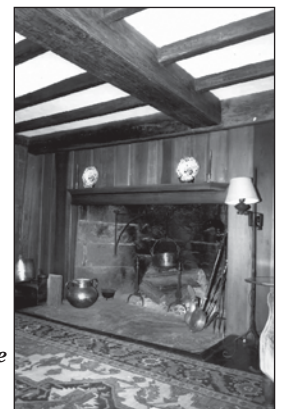
According to the nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places, the house remained in the Hubbard family into the early 20th century. In 1916 the property was purchased by Col. Clarence Wadsworth, who in 1929 engaged the services of two authorities on early Connecticut architecture, J. Frederick Kelly and Norman M. Isham, to restore the house.

The center-chimney, three-bay, post-and-beam house sits on a brownstone foundation and has clapboard siding and a wood-shingled roof. The lean-to section at the rear gives the house its “saltbox” profile. The 1930s “restoration” went overboard by today’s standards, adding an elaborate entry that is inconsistent with the period. Additions at the rear of the house in 1952 and 1962, while tasteful, do not pretend to echo the 18th century.

So, once again, in history, the facts are often hidden just beneath the shiny surface. ■



The brownstone fireplace in the south front room of the Nehemiah Hubbard house is 86 inches wide, 50 inches high, and 39 inches deep, with a beehive oven at the back wall. (1981 photos by D. Ransom for the Conn. Historical Commission.)



Meet Cindy Nicewarner, a genealogy professional in Washington, D.C. ... and SMFSD's new secretary

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

This is the fourth in a series of profiles that give our members across the U.S. an opportunity to get to know more about the "cousins" and fellow genealogy enthusiasts who keep SMFSD going. This spring *The Middler* interviews Cindy Nicewarner of Hanover, Md., a member since 2010, who was elected secretary of SMFSD at our Triennial Meeting in October 2012. Since then, in addition to her working life as staff genealogist at the DAR library in Washington, D.C., she has updated our ever-growing member roster, established our well-received Facebook presence, and somehow found the time to respond to your editor's "e-mail interview."

The Middler: How did you first encounter SMFSD?

Cindy Nicewarner: I was co-leading a genealogy workshop for the State of Connecticut DAR Society in Windsor, Conn., several years ago. When Nancy Pexa found out I was a descendant of George Hubbard of Middletown, she drove me to the Connecticut State Library and gave me a copy of *The Middler*, encouraging me to submit my application.

The Middler: When in life did you get the genealogy bug?

Cindy: I was raised by a family of storytellers. When we visited with the relatives they reminisced and I hung on their every word. From a young age my aunt was showing me how to fill out family trees. And another aunt drove me to the National Archives and the Georgia Archives to research the military records of our ancestors.

The Middler: When did you discover your Middletown ancestors?

Cindy: When I was in my early 20s I discovered the book *1000 Years of Hubbard History*, and that is the source that connected my Hubbard



Cindy Jones Nicewarner of Hanover, Md., was elected secretary of SMFSD at our Triennial Meeting in October 2012.

line back to Middletown. My grandfather John Max McLaney was raised in Alabama. He and my great aunts would tell me stories about their Mother Emma Hubbard and alluded to a New England connection. William Tryon Hubbard was born in 1812 in Greenfield, Mass., the child of Ephraim Hubbard and Irene Tryon of Middletown. William left New England with a teacher's certificate and traveled south where he served as a tutor for wealthy Southern families. He fell in love with a student and married Amy Youngblood of Edgefield, S.C. He migrated with her family to central Alabama where the family stayed until my grandfather left during the Depression. How surprising to discover my rich New England heritage through my Southern roots.

The Middler: What geographical areas do you focus on the most?

"I was raised by a family of storytellers. When we visited with relatives, they reminisced and I hung on their every word. From a young age my aunt was showing me how to fill out family trees"

– Cindy Nicewarner

Cindy: My New England lines have been researched quite thoroughly and published. There hasn't been much new information to discover for me there. I work more closely on Maryland, West Virginia and Virginia research, which covers my father's and husband's family. I would love to do more research in Georgia and Alabama but don't often get chances to travel there.

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

Cindy: This is the toughest question of all. I cherish and admire them all in different ways. And some I barely know and I'm always working to discover more. I love finding their old photos, to know what they looked like and what they wore. I also love to find their letters or diaries written in their own handwriting, to understand what they were thinking and feeling. I visit their churches, final resting places, and neighborhoods. I go to treasure them.

The Middler: Have you spread the genealogy bug to others in the family?

Cindy: My husband enjoys researching cemeteries, libraries, and courthouses. My mother enjoys learning about her family history, although she leaves the research to me. Mom especially enjoyed the last SMFSD Triennial Meeting. It was our first visit to Middletown, and she felt a strong connection to her Hubbard homeland. I take the show-and-tell approach to sharing genealogy with my kids, nephews, and niece. We explore the old home towns, visit old homes and cemeteries, and walk the footsteps of our ancestors while we tell their stories. We explore our heritage up close and personal, and the stories come alive. We experience our genealogy. While I don't have kids jumping up and down for a chance to visit the county courthouse, I do have kids jumping at a chance to head out on an adventure we can see and touch and feel.

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Meet Cindy Nicewarner, new SMFSD secretary

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The Middler: How do your education and career relate to genealogy?

C.N.: I have always enjoyed reading and studying American history. That was my major in college. I was fortunate to work in Washington, D.C. for DAR as a summer intern in my college years. I was already doing genealogy at that time, but learned many skills and research sources there. I continued working on my own family after leaving DAR and returned there to work as a staff genealogist when my kids were older. My education, career and passion are all one in the same. I live, breathe, and dream genealogy.

The Middler: As a professional in the genealogy field, can you share some insights from your experience?

Cindy: As we research we are constantly finding new records that bring a fresh understanding to the lives of our ancestors. Our stories are constantly being re-written, using newly discovered evidence and records. Most of our conclusions concerning our ancestors should not be written in stone. Be flexible.

Be creative in where you search for records. The Internet makes it easy for armchair genealogists. Sometimes we make our most valuable discoveries in the basements of old courthouses in long-forgotten, mostly buried boxes of loose court files, or by spending hours paging through rolls of microfilm looking for the elusive obituary. Sometimes those efforts bring the most exciting rewards.

The more I work with ancestors and the records they leave behind, the deeper is my understanding of how the evidence and clues fit together to form a tapestry portraying the lives of our people. I'm not speaking of just the dates and places, the deeds, census records, and wills, although these are the building blocks we use. That is the skeleton that gives us form. The essence of our people is my final goal – how they lived, how they related to one another, how they

“While I don’t have kids jumping up and down for a chance to visit the county courthouse, I do have kids jumping at a chance to head out on an adventure we can see and touch and feel.”

– Cindy Nicewarner

viewed the world and their place in it. I work to gain a glimpse into their lives. Am I like them?

Finally, a highly developed attention to minute detail and a strong compulsion bordering on obsession to cite proper sources for your discoveries will serve you well in this field. It's not what you know, it's what you can prove that counts. Every date, every place, every fact, every relationship should be properly documented. And that important will, buried in that pile on your dining room table – What book did it come from? What courthouse? What will book and page number? Cite your sources so that you can trace your conclusions later, and so that someone else can follow your research.

Family databases and family trees on sites such as *www.Ancestry.com* offer us a wonderful opportunity to share our family information with others. Unfortunately, so many times I come across family charts that contain egregious errors. I've also seen some valuable and extensive studies, veritable works of art, that cited no sources whatsoever. Cite your sources in such a way that someone following in your footsteps

“The Internet makes it easy for armchair genealogists. But sometimes we make our most valuable discoveries in the basements of old courthouses. ... Sometimes those efforts bring the most exciting rewards.”

– Cindy Nicewarner

will be able to recreate your process. We should be passionate for our research and discoveries. With this comes a responsibility to report faithfully what the evidence presents and to be true to your sources.

The Middler: Your initiative has brought SMFSD presence to Facebook. Tell us more about this initiative.

Cindy: Our SMFSD members are scattered across the country and we get a chance for in-person connections just once every three years. Facebook gives us an opportunity to not only network on our common genealogy interests, but provides opportunities for interaction on a personal level. The public Facebook page should give us more exposure, especially with the Facebook Generation. It is my hope that the public Facebook page will raise interest in Middletown ancestors as well as membership in our organization.

The Middler: Finally, this *Middler* article is an opportunity to ascend the soap-box, so feel free to climb up on the box and have your say!

Cindy: The Internet and amazing improvements in digitization technology have released our precious records from dark and dusty dungeons out into the light of our own homes – and really anywhere we can take a smart phone or i-pad. It offers opportunities for the hobbyists to publish their family trees for all to see. While it's hard to rein in our enthusiasm for such open access to valuable records, we must remember to evaluate these records in light of their acceptability as valid sources. We must especially be cautious in using family trees and family group sheets posted on the Internet. Scrutinize source information for all databases and family trees you find, even from such reputable sites as *www.Ancestry.Com*. The Internet has brought many exciting discoveries to us. Look for ways to give back, such as posting tombstone pictures on *www.findagrave.com*, transcribing records, or indexing documents. There are endless ways to contribute back to the genealogy community. ■



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.

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 history enthusiast? Would you like to receive *The Middler*? Join us at \$20 per year!

Please send membership inquiries & lineage information to: Hal Whitmore, Registrar, Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants, 1301 N. Harrison St., Apt. 201, Wilmington, DE 19806; or via e-mail to: hbwhitmore@yahoo.com.

OFFICIAL BALLOT – SMFSD Proposed Bylaw Change

— Complete & mail to: Cindy Nicewarner, SMFSD Secretary, 6006 River Birch Ct., Hanover, MD 21076 —

Proposal: It has been proposed that Section 7 of the bylaws shall be changed to read: "Dues and fees shall be a set by the Officers and are payable annually to be effective from January to the end of the calendar year. A member who has not paid dues by February 28 of the then current year shall be in arrears and ineligible to vote." **YES** **NO**

Section 7 of the bylaws shall remain as it is: "Dues and fees shall be a set by the Officers and are payable annually to be effective for the 12-month period beginning Nov. 1. A member who has not paid dues by Dec. 31 of the then current year shall be in arrears and ineligible to vote." **YES** **NO**

To vote, complete this ballot and mail it to Cindy Nicewarner, SMFSD Secretary, 6006 River Birch Ct., Hanover, MD 21076. Alternatively, Cindy will accept as a ballot substitute an e-mail which clearly states that you are casting your "yes" or "no" vote to change the SMFSD Bylaws so that the SMFSD dues year will coincide with the calendar year.

Rationale: Our treasurer, Mike Campbell, has asked that we budget and do financial reporting by the calendar year. By adopting this bylaws change we will be better able to match and compare one year's income to one year's expenses. The November-October dues year was a historical carryover from the time of the formation of our organization. The founding and subsequent meetings have been held in the August-October timeframe. No advantage at this timing for dues collection. **Implementation:** For this year only, those who have paid 2012-2013 dues will receive 14 months of membership in return.

----- *Feeling sluggish? Exercise your franchise!* -----



From the president ...

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the New Hampshire State Library in Concord by Emerson Baker, a historical archaeologist and professor of history at Salem (Mass.) State College.

Dr. Baker spoke about the treasure trove of pottery, china, and tools recovered at the dig he directed at the Chadbourne family property in South Berwick, Maine between 1995 and 2007. Because the many buildings on the property were destroyed in 1690 during an Indian raid, the artifacts discovered are a rich source of information on upper-class life at the time. Because of the abrupt destruction, there was no chance for personal property to be dispersed gradually over the years.

On another historical note, you will want to check out the Old Connecticut Path website. There you will find

maps, still photos, and video taken at many points along the probable route taken by Thomas Hooker and his congregation as they braved the wilderness en route to begin the settlement at Hartford. The web site is packed with fascinating information, at least for those of you whose ancestors went to Middletown from Hartford. The web site: <https://sites.google.com/site/oldconnecticutpath/>

Since our Triennial Meeting last October, SMFSD has benefited greatly from the enthusiasm and hard work of our new officers Cindy Nicewarner (secretary) and Hal Whitmore (regis-

trar). The rest of your officers are also hard at work. Some highlights of the past few months have been the introduction of a formal membership application to guide would be members, a very active outreach to distant cousins by Hal, and the creation of a Facebook online presence by Cindy to augment and direct interested people to our web site The SMFSD Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SocietyofMiddletownFirstSettlersDescendants>.

Please remember to send in your vote on the proposed bylaws change described on pg. 11 of *The Middler*. The adoption of this change will simplify our financial record-keeping. You may vote by contacting Cindy Nicewarner by e-mail, or by postal mail using the ballot in this issue.

Have a great summer and travel safely on any ventures you have planned.

Your president, Marge Piersen

**“Please remember to
send in your vote on the
proposed bylaw change.”**

– Marge Piersen

