



# The Middler

## 2020.1 HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

### CIVIL WAR SLEUTHS BRING A.I. TO BEAR

Technologists harness artificial intelligence to identify forgotten Civil War soldiers. p.20

### CONSIDERING THE MOTIVES

Understanding the motivations of earlier researchers help us evaluate secondary sources. p.9

### DISCOVERING YOUR VETERAN ANCESTOR

Our national archives sometimes hold a treasure trove of information about our ancestors. p.12

## Middletown and the Quasi-War with France

Newly constructed warship USS  
Constellation battles French  
frigate L'Insurgente in 1799







4



20



21



9



16



12



18



NEWSLETTER of the SOCIETY of MIDDLETOWN FIRST SETTLERS DESCENDANTS

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

Volume 20, Number 1, Spring 2020

Please send articles, letters, and corrections to:

**The Middler**  
c/o Warren Savage, Editor  
1648 Capitancillos Place  
San Jose, CA 95120  
[smfsd.middler@gmail.com](mailto:smfsd.middler@gmail.com)

**SMFSD Officers**

**President** Marge Piersen  
**Vice President** R.W. Bacon  
**Secretary** Laura Cowles Hobbs  
**Treasurer** Mike Campbell  
**Historian** Don Brock  
**Registrar** Cynthia Nicewarner

[www.middletown1650.org](http://www.middletown1650.org)



15



**A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

Congratulations to Warren Savage for producing the first issue of *The Middler* in this new format. Thanks to everyone who has contributed. Please keep your articles coming; we hope to provide a forum in which to share your specific Middletown-related interests and heritage.

In February, SMFSD made donations to the following organizations which work to preserve the history of Middletown for the years 2019 and 2020.

<b>Middlesex County Historical Society</b>	\$100.00 per year
<b>Godfrey Memorial Library</b>	\$150.00 per year
<b>Middletown Old Burying Ground</b>	\$100.00 per year
<b>Russell Library</b>	\$50.00 per year

These donations had been pre-approved by the board of directors when we gathered for the October, 2018 triennial.

I want to remind our members that we accept supplemental applications and send you a certificate for each Middletown settler from whom you prove descent. (If you so request, one certificate will be created to list up to ten ancestors.) The fee is only \$10 per supplemental application. For instructions and a list of the original settlers, see <http://www.middletown1650.org/Membership.html>. Working on a supplemental application is one way to enjoy Middletown-related research between Triennial meetings.

Marge Piersen  
President, Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants

**CONTENTS**

- 04 **Middletown and the Quasi-War**  
Merchants of Middletown were unwitting participants in the first American conflict after the Revolutionary War
- 09 **A Good Detective Considers the Motive**  
What we can learn from the case of the Wetmore chart, the fine print, and Henry Hays
- 11 **What's in a Name**  
Linda Whitmore shares her research on the popularity of an old family name that persisted for generations
- 12 **Research Corner: Military Archives**  
Military archive specialist Geoff Gentilini on discovering your veteran ancestor's military record
- 15 **Middletown Military Museum**  
An interview with Ken McClellan, director of the newly opened military museum in Middletown
- 16 **Book Review**  
*A review of Finding Early Connecticut Vital Records: The Barbour Index and Beyond*
- 18 **What Makes Me Tick**  
*The Middler* editor takes us through his life's genealogical journey and connection to SMFSD.
- 19 **Reading Nook**  
Books related to articles appearing in this edition
- 20 **Tech Corner: Photo Sleuths**  
Scientists bring artificial intelligence to bear in identifying long forgotten Civil War veterans
- 21 **Middletown's Birthday Bash**  
19 years ago Middletown celebrated its 350th birthday

**ABOUT THIS ISSUE**

Welcome to the 2020.1 edition of *The Middler*, the inaugural edition in this new full color format. We are also now "full digital" which provides this and future editions being available to members in PDF and online versions, as well as the usual print.

Due to a lucky accident of available content, this edition contains quite a few articles related to military history and research which I hope you find useful and interesting.

Warren Savage, Editor, Spring 2020



# MIDDLETOWN AND THE QUASI-WAR WITH FRANCE



A British cartoon mocking the American and French troubles during the “XYZ Affair.”

Here Frenchmen are molesting Lady America, while the corrupt French Revolutionary government line their pockets under threat of the sword.

Meanwhile, John Bull (a character representing England, akin to our Uncle Sam) sits atop Shakespeare Hill in his easy chair laughing at it all.

## By Warren Savage

The years following the close of the Revolutionary War were an unsettled time as the country attempted to build a government the likes of which the world had never known. Walking out of Independence Hall in 1787, Ben Franklin responded to a shouted question, “Doctor, what have we got? A republic or a monarchy?” to which he answered, “A republic, if you can keep it.” Franklin was prescient in that response as for the next 15 years the United States faced challenges that could have easily stopped what Hamilton referred to as the “Grand Experiment” in its tracks.

The Quasi-War was a little-known conflict between the United States and France that began on the heels of the American Revolution and ended with the Louisiana Purchase. It was a time of great economic growth for New England, now unshackled from Great Britain’s control of trade.

The Connecticut and Hudson Rivers were key arteries connecting the heartland of New England to vast trade destinations. Middletown and Hartford were important ports and this time cannot be described as anything but one of great optimism by the locals. However, one cannot understand this period of economic growth without understanding the geopolitical landscape of Europe during this time and we will endeavor to frame that story here.

Before the Revolutionary War, most Americans were indifferent at best towards France. Benjamin Franklin was an exception to this, who in his retirement from printing turned to the pursuit of Natural Philosophy (later to become known as “Science”) and enjoyed the company of like-minded intellectuals such as Voltaire, becoming a favorite guest of the French aristocratic social circles. It was Franklin that secured the military and financial assistance of France to aid in the war against

the British in 1778. However valuable Franklin’s charm was to securing aid, King Louis XVI had other more military factors in mind when agreeing to come to the aid of the American revolutionary government. France saw the support of America as an opportunity to weaken its archenemy—England. By supporting America, it would force Great Britain to expend resources in America, not Europe, and if successful saw America as an important new trading partner. The cost to France of this gambit would be nearly \$13 billion U.S. dollars in today’s currency.

The benefits of the 1778 Treaty of Amity with France were immeasurable. Aside from the money and troops, was a well-supplied French navy that kept the British Redcoats into a constant cat-and-mouse game with Washington’s army on the ground. By the time the war ended, the American attitude towards the French became

one of friends with a common enemy just as Louis XVI has desired. However, as is often the case in war, there can be unintended consequences as France was soon to learn.

Enterprising young men of Middletown soon saw an opportunity to take advantage of the vacuum left by Great Britain’s former control of the American shipping trade. Young men, such as Timothy Savage of Middletown Upper Houses, became masters of their own ship by their late teens and saw opportunities for trading New England grain and cattle for West Indies sugar and rum. America had one other very significant export—approximately 20,000 French troops returned to France as witness to a country of ordinary people throwing off the shackles of an abusive king. The alluring story of American independence was not lost on the French proletariat.

After the Treaty of Paris was

signed in 1783 officially ending the Revolutionary War, France was optimistic that better days lay ahead with favorable trade with the United States. They saw three reasons for this: American resentment towards Britain, American gratitude towards France, and Britain’s restrictive trade policies making France a more friendly partner. But the French came to find that the American merchants were much shrewder businesspeople than expected. Many American producers still preferred to sell to the British and the French began dumping shoddy products on the American market which refused to buy them. Americans tastes had long been used to English goods, but the French refused to modify their products for the American market. France was also tighter with credit than the British and bankruptcies of fledgling American businesses left many French traders to suffer major losses.

Meanwhile, France continued

the form of crop failures, floods, and even a swarm of rare tornadoes that wiped out much of one year’s crop. Widespread famine forced the government to import vast amounts of food to stave off starvation which further worsened its economic conditions. Seizing on France’s unfortunate situation, Great Britain began a policy of enlisting privateers to capture trade vessels bound for French ports to further weaken her, including American ships.

By August of 1788 France was essentially bankrupt and Louis XVI was scrambling for his life, moving from villa to villa and plotting his escape from France. Riots spread throughout the country and on July 14, 1789 a rumor of troops being deployed to massacre the peasantry of Paris resulted in an angry and frightened mob that would storm the Bastille where weapons and gunpowder were being stockpiled. The King was arrested, returned to Paris, and a new French Revolutionary government (called the

**RILEY SAVAGE & Co.**  
**HAVE** and will continue to keep on hand a good assortment of E. Hartford manufactured Glass Bottles packed in casks, which they will sell at the same price they are sold at the works, transportation only added. They have just received a new supply of French Brandy, Holland Gin and West-India Goods, among which are 20 Bbls. of Jamaica Sugar. They have also 1 Ton of Ginger in Bbls. and half Bbls. with a general assortment of Groceries as usual. Also 6 Bbls. N. York Flour; 3 Tons of Swedes Iron, and a few thousands of Shingles, all which may be had on good terms by applying at their Store four rods North of the Ferry.  
 Hartford, Jan. 2d, 1797.

to spend heavily on wars with its neighbors resulting in large deficits. One source of income to help fund these wars were vast plantations in its Caribbean colonies which relied on enormous slave populations to work the cane fields providing sugar and molasses for trade. During this time there was a constant threat of slave revolts which required military assistance from France to put down, creating yet another front for the French government to fight. Compounding it all was a series of natural disasters in

Directory) began to form all the while American trade continued to increase at a healthy pace. By the summer of 1792 France had formed a republican government, convicted the king of treason, and freed all French slaves. Within six months, Louis XVI would be executed along with many of the hated aristocracy.

With a weakened France, England became increasingly belligerent

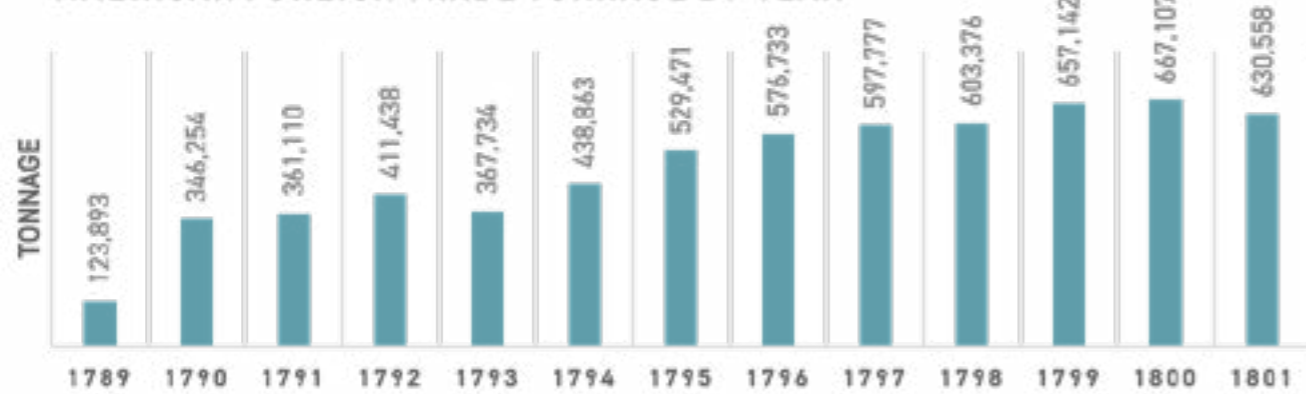
Continued on page 7

## QUASI-WAR TIMELINE

	Jul 4, 1776	Declaration of Independence starts the Revolutionary War
	Dec 6, 1777	France recognizes the United States as a sovereign nation
	Feb 6, 1778	Treaty of Alliance and Treaty of Amity signed between France and the United States
	Sep 3, 1783	Treaty of Paris officially ends the Revolutionary War
	Aug 6, 1788	France declares government is bankrupted and country plunges into chaos and famine
	Mar 4, 1789	First Congress of the United States sworn in under the new Constitution
	Jul 14, 1789	A rumor of impending massacre results in panic and storming of the Bastille setting in motion the French Revolution
	Sep 21, 1792	The French National Convention declares France a republic, declares Louis XVI guilty of treason, and freed all slaves
	Jan 21, 1793	King Louis XVI executed. Britain joins with Austria, Prussia and Sardinia in war against France
	Apr 8, 1793	France pressures United States to allow privateering against British vessels. US vows neutrality in foreign conflicts
	May 9, 1793	France declares it will not recognize neutrality of vessels destined for English ports
	Nov 6, 1793	Britain orders all French ports in Caribbean be blockaded. Jefferson resigns as Sec. State due to “tumult in the world”
	Jun 10, 1794	France argues that US neutrality is a violation of the Treaty of Alliance
	Jul 7, 1796	France authorizes all seized ships and cargo be sold for the benefit of their captors
	Feb 1, 1797	France authorizes seizure of neutral vessels bound for various Caribbean ports
	Mar 27, 1797	Congress authorizes the country’s first warships, the <i>United States</i> , <i>Constitution</i> , and <i>Constellation</i>
	Oct 4, 1797	Secret US delegation arrives in France to negotiate in what becomes known as the “XYZ Affair”
	Feb 1, 1800	The <i>Constellation</i> battles the French frigate <i>La Vengeance</i> in the West Indies
	Sep 30, 1800	The United States and France agree to a treaty ending the conflict



## AMERICAN FOREIGN TRADE TONNAGE BY YEAR



**Geneva**, 60-ton sloop, Giles Savage, master. Built in Connecticut in 1795. Edward, Jonathan, and Daniel Danforth, Justus Riley, and Luther and William Savage, of Hartford, owners. Departed Hartford on May 5, 1799, for the Danish island of St. John with beef, pork, horses, staves, fish, corn meal, rye flour, hams, lard, beans, walnuts, candles, soap, cars, grain, hay, pumps, and shoes. Captain Savage's noon observation on the 24th put him at 18°15'N/62°52'W, the weather was fair, winds light and variable, course WNW. Between 3 and 4 o'clock they observed four sail to the south. One of them was Captain Charles Mendibourg's French privateer schooner *Les Deux Amis*. The schooner came up and ordered Captain Savage to heave to, which he did. A boat was sent over and the officer demanded all the sloop's papers. Captain Savage was asked where he was from, where bound, and "to what place his people and cargo belonged." After answering all the questions, everyone on the sloop was ordered into the boat. The prize crew stayed aboard and Captain Savage and his crew were put in irons in the privateer's hold along with crews from other seized vessels who were already on board. Captain Savage was informed the privateer was taking the *Geneva*, another sloop, a schooner, and a ship to St. Bartholomew as prizes. The plan fell apart for some reason and the privateer and the *Geneva* arrived at St. Martin the next day. Immediately upon landing Captain Savage and his crew were brought before the commissary, M. Dormay, and questioned. Captain Savage was asked if he had any friends who would serve as security to insure his appearance when called—human bail bond. Captain Savage found Captain Bruce who agreed to act as security. He and his crew were then imprisoned but not chained up. Captain Savage eventually went to the western Dutch part of the island, Sint Maarten, and filed a formal protest for damages against the privateer. On June 7 vessel and cargo were condemned at Guadeloupe and ordered sold for the benefit of the privateer on the ground that the bill of lading did not show the ownership of the cargo. Value of vessel \$2,430, freight \$1,000, cargo on invoice \$4,340, cost of insurance \$380.

*Records detailing the seizure of ships and cargo from Connecticut during the Quasi-War. Some captains experienced harrassment by the French on multiple occasions.*

**Caroline**, 91-ton brig, Elihu Cotton, master. Built at Haddam, Connecticut, in 1794. Benjamin Williams and William Blodgett, owners. Homeport Middletown, Connecticut. Departed Middletown on March 4, 1797, for St. Nicholas Mole, Jamaica, and Havana with beef, pork, vegetables, lumber, and grain owned by Williams. The cargo was sold and they left for Middletown with rum and sugar. Seized on April 20 by Captain Henry Groselier's French privateer *La Fortune* or *Le Triomphant* and taken to St. Jago de Cuba. Vessel and cargo condemned at the Cape for going to ports in rebellion against the laws of France and under British protection. Value of vessel \$3,379, freight \$1,014, cargo \$3,000, cost of insurance \$1,666.66. Net loss to Williams on voyage \$4,559.66.

**Henry and Gustavus**, 91-ton schooner, Giles Savage, master. Built at Hartford, Connecticut, in 1794. Homeport New London. Departed St. Kitts for New London in 1796 with cargo owned by Timothy Savage. Seized on 26 Frimaire, year 5 (December 16, 1796) by a French brig and brought to St. Barthelemy where Captain Savage was robbed of 129 joes and "some small articles" then released. Thomas Sanford and Aaron Gaylord were the owners when the schooner departed New London on January 9, 1800, for Martinique under Captain John Smith with general merchandise, provisions, and 36 oxen belonging to the owners. Seized in March by Captain Joseph Février's French privateer *La Tourterelle* and taken to Guadeloupe where vessel and cargo were condemned on 8 Germinal, year 8 (March 28, 1800). Value of schooner \$3,413, cargo \$1,543.76, and cost of insurance \$312.50.

*Continued from page 5*

towards the United States and President Washington was concerned about a second war with Great Britain. As a result, the United States reiterated its policy of neutrality much to the protest of the French who (correctly) pointed out that the treaties signed between the countries in support of the Revolutionary War were still in effect and called for mutual protection. However, American diplomats pointed out that these treaties were made with monarchy of Louis XVI and were now void given the new French government under the Directory. To say the least, the French were furious.

To placate the British, Washington dispatched Founding Father and Supreme Court Chief Justice, John Jay, to England to develop a treaty to reduce the hostilities between the countries to avoid a second war. The Jay Treaty was ratified in 1795 and among other things normalized trade between the countries as well as gaining territorial concessions west of the former colonies. Again, the French were enraged but this time took more serious action against the Americans, albeit indirectly. At war with most of Europe and at a quasi-war now with the United States, France took to the use of plunder to diminish its enemies and to enrich itself. Authorizations were made encouraging privateers to seize vessels in transit to and from French ports (including those in the Caribbean) and to any ports of nations it was at war with. The list of safe ports for American shipping was becoming very small indeed.

By 1797, attacks on American ships were escalating and New Englander shippers were now suffering large losses at the hands of privateers, something that later became known as the "French Spoilation." The Adams administration dispatched a group of diplomats to France to

meet with French Foreign Minister, Charles Maurice Talleyrand, in the hopes of negotiating a new set of treaties to reduce hostilities and remedy the many complaints accrued on both sides since the end of the American revolution. However, upon arrival in Paris the American diplomats were greeted by not Talleyrand, but three of his diplomats who informed the Americans that there would be no meeting with Talleyrand unless three pre-conditions were met. First, a personal bribe must be paid to Talleyrand on the order of fifty thousand dollars (in modern value.) Second, the United States must agree to a large loan to France on the order of twelve billion (modern) dollars. Finally, Adams himself would have to apologize for negative comments he made regarding France to Congress. While the American diplomats were aware that bribes and the such were commonplace in European politics, they knew that the United States government, filled with New Englanders of puritan descent and high-minded ideals, would be outraged at the thought. And they were right.

The delegation not only returned home empty-handed but had to tell Adams what had transpired. Adams was outraged as expected, but also owed Congress an update on the diplomatic mission. An equally outraged Congress demanded copies of the dispatches from Talleyrand's negotiators. To protect these men, it was decided to provide these dispatches with the names of the three men redacted: Jean-Conrad Hottinguer, Pierre Bellamy, Lucien Hauteval, were now referred to as "X", "Y", and "Z" respectively. While anti-French sentiments had been building for some time in America, the "XYZ Affair", now fodder for the newspapers, stoked American patriotism unlike anything since the start of the revolution itself.

In France, turmoil increased as it was drawn into wars all over

Europe and the Middle East and by 1799 it was on the losing end of many battles. The government itself was becoming quite wobbly dealing with a number of attempts to wrest control of it by various members of the ruling elite. Napoleon Bonaparte was in the Middle East as part of campaigns in Egypt and Syria where he scored unexpected victories and was welcomed home as a war hero. Napoleon, seeing his own window of opportunity for power, wasted no time in staging a bloodless coup d'etat to overthrow the French Directory and establish a new government and constitution with himself at the head of it all. During the lead up to this change in government, Talleyrand realized his earlier strategy towards the Americans

sticking point—payment of damages. The French insisted on repayment of loans made by Louis XVI and the Americans insisted on compensation to merchants damaged by privateering. Neither country had significant cash reserves and so the negotiations drug on, but found a willing negotiator in Napoleon. On September 20, 1800 the parties agreed to the treaty without any provision for compensation for past damages. France would forgive the loans and the Americans would compensate their own merchants.

It would take several more years for the treaty to be finalized by both countries, but in the meantime, Napoleon was not finished with making deals. Spain had long possessed the land around

**A HARD CASE.**—The Northampton Courier says, that Capt. Wm. Smith, who for the last ten years has been an inmate of the Northampton Almshouse, has just claims, against the government, for French spoiliations, prior to 1800, to the amount of \$10,000. In 1798 and '99, he commanded, at different times, three vessels, in the cargoes of which he was interested to the amount of \$10,000, prime cost—all of which vessels were captured by French privateers, and, with their cargoes, confiscated. The French government made compensation for these damages more than forty years ago, and the money was used in the purchase of Louisiana. Capt. Smith has sent a petition to Washington for relief, which is dated at the Northampton poor house. We trust that our Senators and Representatives will interest themselves in his behalf, and endeavor to have justice done him before he drops into the grave.

and the resulting XYZ Affair had backfired badly and he set out to make conciliatory gestures suggesting the possibility of a new treaty. Napoleon sought to move on from burdensome historical and far-away conflicts and was open to closing out the long simmering feud with the Americans in order to focus on more important conflicts closer to home.

Adams dispatched a new diplomatic team to begin anew negotiations with the French. Terms were drawn up that essentially dissolved the treaties from the American revolutionary era and installed new bilateral trade policies that were beneficial to both sides. There remained only one

the Mississippi River but had no settlements as Spaniards had little interest in emigrating to a wilderness. Napoleon saw in Louisiana a potential solution to its famines as it could serve as the "breadbasket of France"; settled by French emigres who could have direct trade with France without involvement of the Americans. Napoleon completed the deal in 1801, trading the conquered territory of Etruria (modern day Tuscany, Italy) for Louisiana and cash. However, France soon learned that Louisiana was not empty— it was full of American pioneers who had put down stakes there and were

*Continued on page 22*





## A GOOD DETECTIVE CONSIDERS THE MOTIVE

*What we can learn from the case of the Wetmore chart, the fine print, and Henry Hays*

By R.W. Bacon

We genealogy nerds are all familiar with the visceral excitement felt upon the breakthrough to a new discovery. That wonderful all-natural high leaves us bubbling the zestful truism: "Every time you find one new ancestor, you've got two more to look for!" Then we charge off with renewed vigor into more research.

But tempering intoxications of any sort is usually a good thing. In genealogy as well as in history research, our work can turn up sources that span centuries, and of course they are not all equal. In evaluating sources (and resultant evidence) for substance, relevance, and reliability, one of several considerations is the motive, or intention, at the time the source was created. It is this awareness of motive in secondary sources that became central in a recent Middletown-related genealogical consultation. Because of its relevance and potentially educative value, I share the following report with fellow SMFSD members.

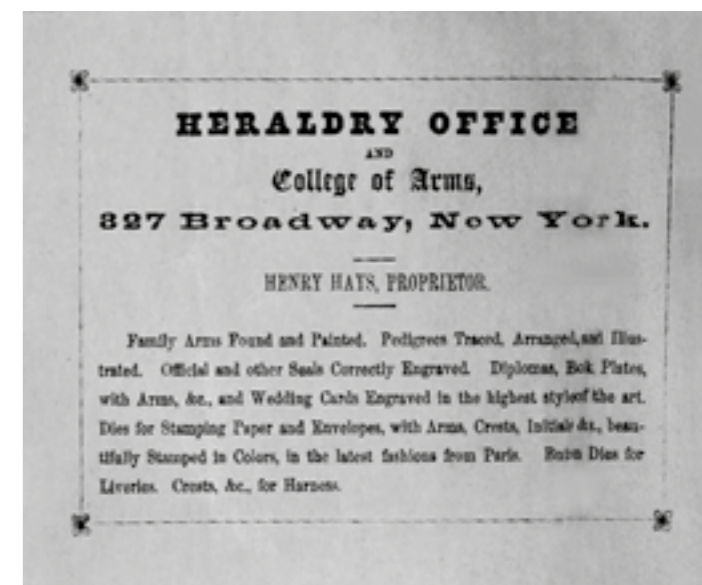
In November 2019 I received an email inquiry from a descendant of early Middletown, Conn. families (Wetmore, Hall, Stow, Butler) about the origin of an old family genealogy chart. Attached to the email were a few images of chart sections. The brief email noted that the large (40" wide x 31" deep) mostly hand-written chart was handed down in the family for generations. The reason for the inquiry was puzzlement about a copyright date of 1859 printed at the bottom of the chart.

At my first cursory look at the images, I figured that it was a typi-

cal "fill in the blanks" pre-printed chart template popular during the late 19th-century. In that period, interest in genealogy perked up, motivated by a host of converging factors. It was a time of rapid technological and social change, a time when descendants of the earliest families to arrive on these shores — families that generally called the shots for more than two centuries — were beginning to feel queasy about the influx of immigrants and the coming challenges at the ballot box and in the labor force. Therefore a family genealogy that claimed a connection to the old "real American" families could not only bring peace-of-mind, but also reassert an assumed Anglo-Saxon pre-eminence in a rapidly changing world. It is no accident that this period is known as the protracted "Colonial Revival" era. Veteran genealogists aware of the historical context of the time know that some of the most unreliable and overtly aggrandizing genealogies and local histories were published in this period.

But the 1859 date on the chart placed it more than a decade before the much-publicized Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia that first stirred the fervor of Colonial Revival patriotism and pride. While at first the chart looked like a filled-in template, upon closer inspection the various small circles, offshoots, tangents, and hand-scrawled details made it apparent that this was a customized hybrid of sorts. Some of the genealogical information fit the template format, and some information did not.

I read the text at the bottom of



the chart over and over again: "Entered according to Act of Congress A.D. 1859 by Henry Hays, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of New York." The name "Henry Hays" stuck in my brain like a pebble in a shoe. I had a dim recollection of coming across that name years before, and eventually I remembered that it was because of its association with fraudulent 19th-century genealogies. For a refresher, I pulled my copy of Francois Weil's *Family Trees: A History of Genealogy in America*, off the shelf, a book published in 2013 that I reviewed in the spring 2014 issue of *The Middler*.

I was off and running. The book by historian and scholar Francois Weil provides a clear understanding of the evolving motivations for interest in genealogy among Americans through the centuries. So on page 99, there he was, Henry Hays of New York City. Hays was one of a number of market opportunists in the mid-19th century who created pedigree charts and family crests for customers seeking to puff up their social status. In the mid-19th century, there were unscrupulous researchers-for-hire that lured clients with the possibility that buttressing a previously fuzzy family lineage might bestow rights to property or other ancient family assets back in England. Then as now, some family

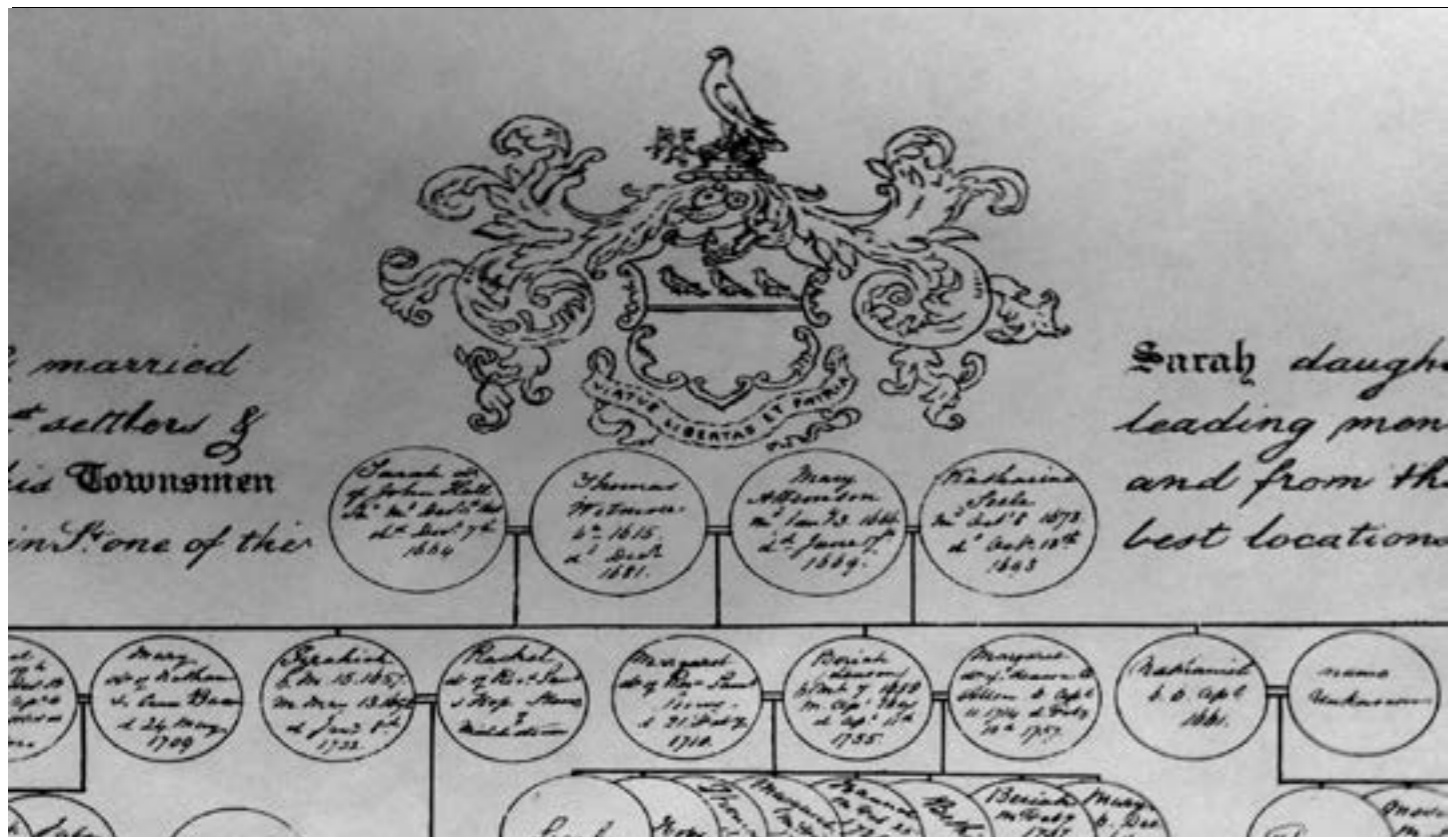
*During the 2nd half of the 19th century, a period referred to as the Colonial Revival, new businesses emerged offering family heraldries to wealthy people looking to document their place in American history.*

lines are "tougher nuts to crack" than others. So if genealogy opportunists in this era reached an impasse in their quest to link back to nobility, it was nothing that a fanciful leap of logic couldn't surmount to create a convincing continuity of lineage.

For the Henry Hays copyrighted template chart of a Wetmore family line that I inspected for the inquiry, it is unknown whether Hays himself customized the chart and filled in all the information as a service-for-hire, or whether the chart was modified and filled in by a Wetmore descendant. Judging from some of the calligraphy, it could have been a combination of both. From my knowledge of the first several generations of the family, as a Wetmore descendant myself, the names and dates on the chart appear to coincide with the vital records and land records recorded in early Middletown. Although the chart has the pre-printed copyright date of 1859, the date that the information was entered is also unknown. Because the chart is so complete, however,

*Continued on page 10*





Continued from page 9

it appears likely to me that it relied, at least in part, upon the family genealogy compendium by James Carnahan Wetmore published in 1861, *The Wetmore Family in America*.

The chart's connection to Henry Hays makes it a genealogy relic and a family history "keeper" regardless of the accuracy of the chart data. The life of Henry Hays is scantily documented, but the one page of coverage in the Francois Weil book was a springboard to discovery of additional details. Henry Hays was born in England in 1802, and by the 1830s was conducting business as an engraver and printer, with a specialty in heraldry art, at 168 Regent Street in London. Examples of his early work are held by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. H.W. Fincham, in his 1897 survey entitled *Artists and Engravers of British and American Bookplates*, notes the artistry of Henry Hays in both London and New York. Newspaper advertisements indicate that he traveled back-and-forth with regularity after his bankruptcy in London

**HERALDRY OFFICE**  
 AND COLLEGE OF ARMS, 827 BROADWAY, NEW YORK,  
**HENRY HAYS, Proprietor.**  
 Family Arms Found and Painted. Pedigrees Traced, Arranged, and Illustrated. Official and other Seals Correctly Engraved. Diplomas, Book Plates, with Arms, etc., and Wedding Cards Engraved in the Highest Style of the Art.

in 1840. An engraved trade card now in the collection of the New York Public Library announced his official relocation of business from London to 343 Broadway in New York in 1850.

For the next several decades Henry Hays ran his business at several addresses on Broadway, known as "The Heraldry Office and New York College of Arms." He advertised regularly in newspapers and magazines, offering to send a chart and family sketch for a fee of \$1.00. In 1856 Hays published a 16-page book on heraldry, *Heraldry: Its Origin, Antiquity, Uses, and Advantages*, which advanced his rationale for pursuit of the subject. (Incidentally, this book includes a small Wetmore crest, in color, on the front cover.) Other services offered by Hays included engraving crests and painting seals on the carriages of well-to-do status-conscious customers in

New York City. In the 1860s he advertised to undertake genealogical and heraldry research services for clients on his trips back to England. An ad on the front page of the *New York Herald* (Sept. 13, 1860) proclaimed: "Millions of dollars unclaimed in the Bank of England. --- Lists of 30,000 names wanting heirs can be examined. --- Fee \$3 --- At the Heraldry office, 649 Broadway. H. HAYS, proprietor, at present in London, undertakes searches for Wills, Chancery Records, Advertisements, Grants of Family Arms and Pedigrees." In 1865, prior to a trip to England, he advertised "Henry Hays intends leaving on his annual tour of Europe, undertaking the recovery of debts, prosecution of claims, searches of every description and all manner of agency, for Great Britain and all its dependencies, the continent of Europe, etc." Earlier in 1865, Henry Hays aroused ire when, after the as-

*Pre-printed family tree templates emerged during the late-1800's*

sassination of President Abraham Lincoln, he displayed in his window at 651 Broadway the supposed coat-of-arms of the Lincoln family, with the motto, "To live with a wish concealed" --- followed by Hays' own assumptive commentary. According to *Myths After Lincoln* (1941), by Lloyd Lewis, one newspaper editor asked his readers what Lincoln would have thought of attempts to "trace a lineage of exploded aristocracy. Surely he would have scorned the intended sycophancy."

Although Henry Hays appears in New York City directories, he appears to have eluded most federal census enumerations. The exception is in 1870, when he was enumerated twice. In the first enumeration in July, he was listed as a 68-year-old engraver. It must have been a tough summer, because in the second

enumeration he was a 70-year-old artist. In both instances he was in the household of John Patterson, 40, and his wife, Jane, 28. Jane, born in England, was possibly his daughter. Confusing things further is that, according to *Who Was Who in American Art* (Peter H. Falk, ed.), Henry Hays had a son of the same name who was also a talented engraver, heraldry artist, and census mystery. They worked together from 1854 until 1865, when the younger Henry Hays (b. c. 1835-40?) went into business for himself. So while we know which Henry Hays was assaulted by a "friend" with a knife on the street in 1851, it is less clear which Henry Hays was suspected of soliciting vanity content for a genealogy magazine --- for a fee --- under an assumed name with a phantom staff in 1873.

Eventually the trail to follow the elder Henry Hays grows cold. But we can learn from its cautions. A rewarding trail to follow after this excursion is the path straight to Francois Weil's *Family Trees: A History of Genealogy in America*. The book illuminates understanding of the motivations driving genealogy in America through four centuries, from the earliest period of little interest and little access, since lineage was long of concern only to princes and kings; to Colonial-era naming practices and family Bible inscriptions; to late-18th-century Revolutionary War pensions and land bonuses; to 19th-century status-driven genealogy, as southern "Cavaliers" and northern "Puritans" jostled for the mantel of virtue; to Colonial Revival genealogy driven by patriotism and/or assumed racial superiority; to the early 20th-century professionalism of genealogy (led by Connecticut's own Donald Lines Jacobus); to the 1970s explosion of interest after the publication of Alex Haley's *Roots* (and the television production that followed the book); to the internet-era genealogy driven by self-awareness

and personal discovery; to contemporary genealogy driven by DNA and the science lab.

Digging into the origin of the Wetmore family chart with the Henry Hays copyright notice was a reminder that motive and intent exist to some degree in every secondary and tertiary source. Historian Francois Weil made a succinct and relevant observation at the end of his book: "Over the past four centuries, family trees have always said more about the genealogists than about their ancestors." So years from now, when our own compiled family histories are consulted as secondary sources, what will our genealogies say about us?!

**R.W. Bacon**, SMFSD member, former Middler editor; and author of *Early Families of Middletown, Conn, Vol. I: 1650-1654* (2012), *The Micro-Historian's Guide to Research, Evidence, & Conclusions: Step-By-Step Research Planning & Execution* (2018), and 10 other books.

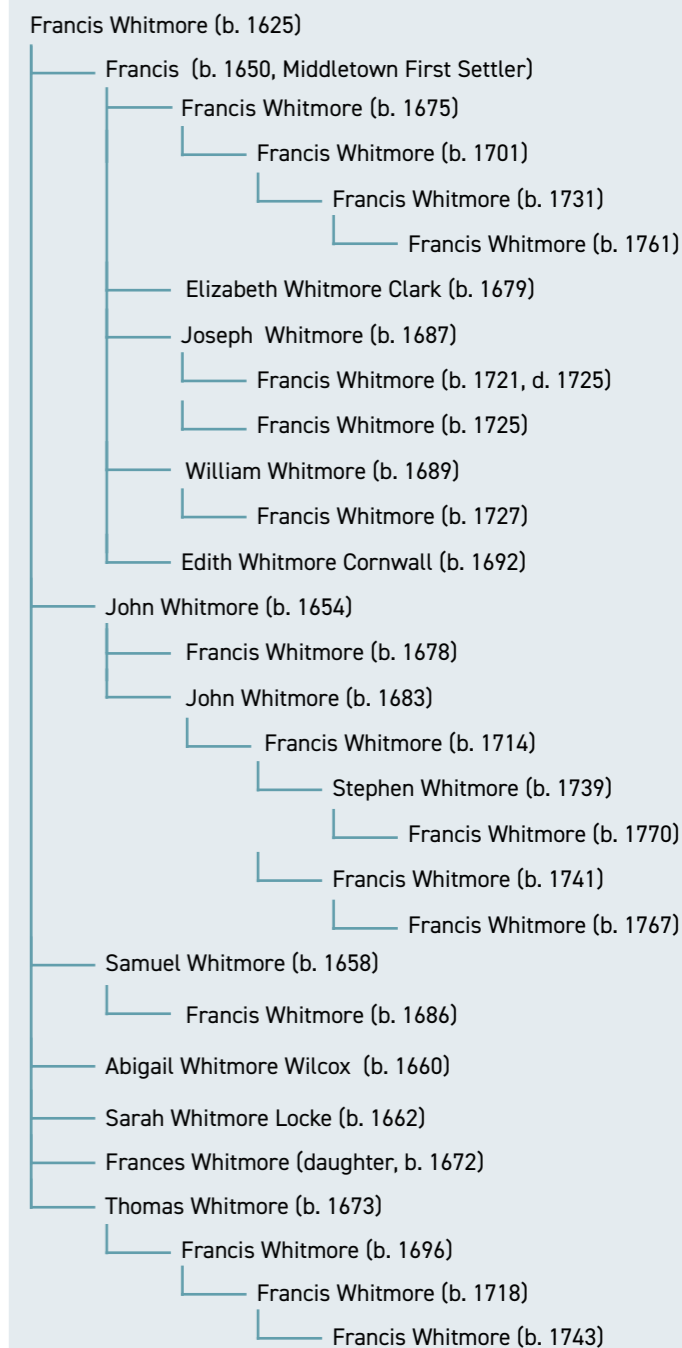
**WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

MIDDLETOWN FIRST SETTLER FRANCIS WHITMORE'S NAME REMAINED POPULAR FOR MANY GENERATIONS

By Linda Whitmore

An ancestor's name can yield important clues to relationships in family research. In my husband, Michael Whitmore's case, his oldest known American ancestor was Francis Whitmore who is known to have owned property in Massachusetts and his son (Francis) eventually became a well-known Middletown first settler. Francis' name remained popular in the family for nearly 150 years with 17 or more instances during this time. Francis also continued as a popular name in a number of distaff lines as part of the Clark, Cornwall, Wilcox, and Locke lines.

Editor note: An overview of family naming patterns can be found here: <https://homepages.rootsweb.com/~hornbeck/naming.htm>





RESEARCH CORNER: AN INTERVIEW WITH GEOFF GENTILINI

# DISCOVERING YOUR VETERAN ANCESTOR

By Warren Savage



Geoff Gentilini

We sat down with Geoff Gentilini, founder of [Golden Arrow Research, LLC](http://GoldenArrowResearch.com). Geoff's company helps people discover their ancestors with his team's expertise in navigating American military archives.

**The Middler:** Geoff, thanks for taking the time to speak with us today. Let's just start with you telling us a bit about Golden Arrow Research and the work you do.

**Geoff:** Hi Warren, it is a pleasure to speak with you. Thanks for having me. In a nutshell: Our mission is to help folks to gain a better understanding of the experiences of individual U.S. veterans from the Civil War through Vietnam. When I was studying military history as part of my education at Norwich University I quickly realized that I was most fascinated by the experiences of the men at the 'fox-hole' level (so to speak). I began to spend a lot of time studying the holdings of the National Archives to learn

how a researcher might be able to use archival records to trace the steps of individual veterans during their time in the service. Ultimately, I wanted to be able to show where an individual soldier was and what they were doing throughout their service. The most gratifying thing about this job is being able to (in a sense) connect people with loved ones who have passed away. This is especially true since many of the details we uncover are things that those veterans could not bring themselves to say to their kids or grandchildren. It is often very emotional for folks when they are able to fill in those gaps and understand just what their loved one experienced.

**The Middler:** What was the inspiration for your founding of Golden Arrow Research?

**Geoff:** My first research subject was my grandfather Charles Gentilini who was a veteran of WWII. When he was alive he refused to speak about his wartime experiences. About ten years after he had passed away, my grandmother allowed me to peruse the various medals and also the war trophies he had brought back from Germany after WWII. It did not take much to get me hooked! From that moment forward I became determined to find answers about where he was and what he did during the war. I wanted to be able to share his story with my father and also to preserve it for future generations. As I would learn through my research: My grandfather

was a light machine gunner who was awarded the Silver Star for capturing a German patrol which had infiltrated the company lines near Siegen, Germany in 1945. He was also awarded two Purple Hearts for wounds he received in the Hurtgen Forest in 1944. After completing the research of my grandfather's service I realized that others could benefit from this same process and I began to offer this process as a service to customers. During WWII my grandfather was assigned to the 8th Infantry Division which was also known as the 'Golden Arrow' Division and this was the inspiration for the name of my research business.

**The Middler:** Is there anything that is especially challenging about researching military records? What advice do you have for researchers?

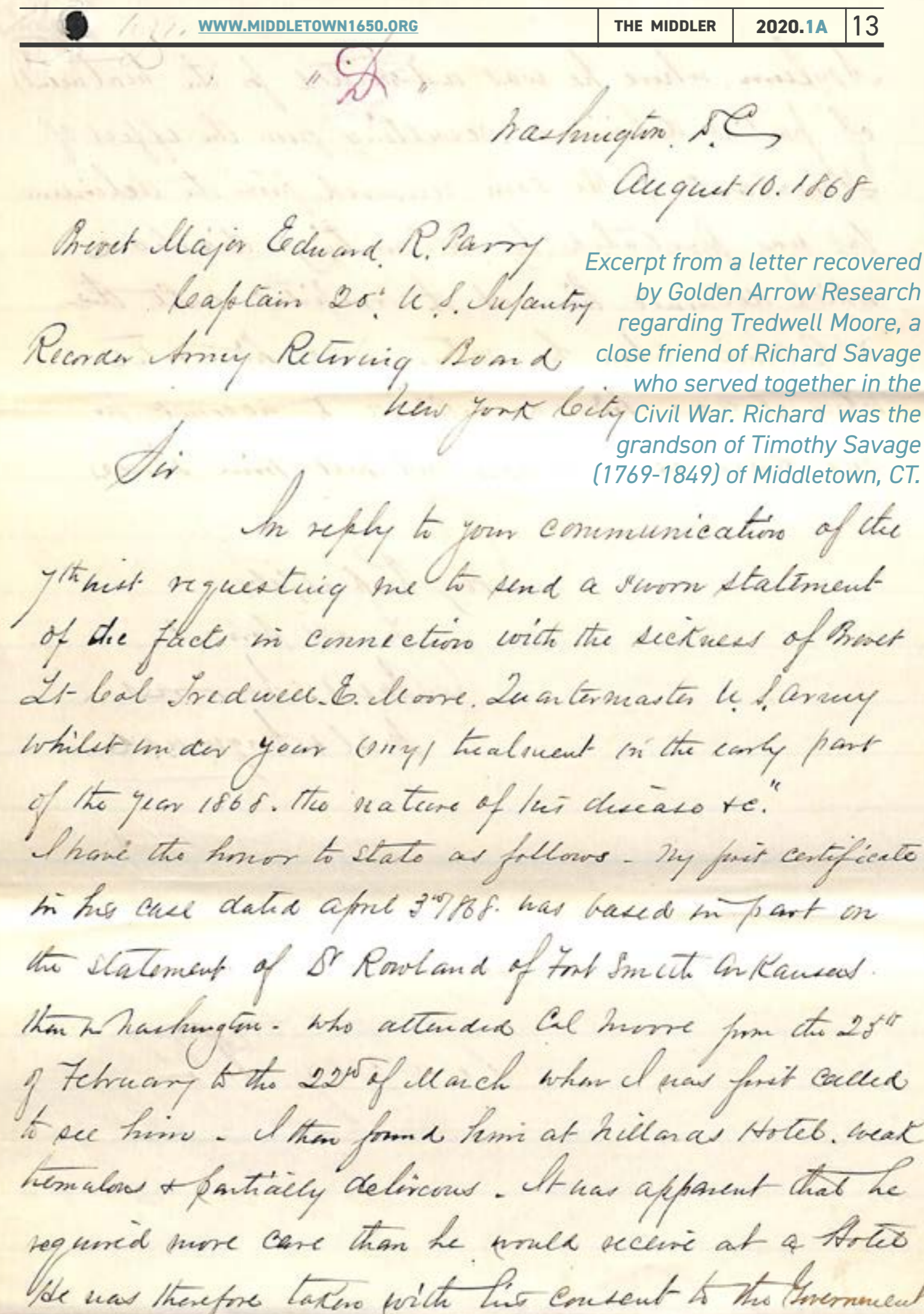
**Geoff:** One of the biggest challenges to our research is the 1973 fire which wiped out most of the service records of individual veterans who served in the Army and A.A.F. during the 20th Century. I've spent many years creating a unique reconstruction process for WWI, WWII and Korean War veterans whose records were lost in the fire. We are able to synthesize records from archives around the country into a package which allows us to rebuild a good portion of the service history of these individuals. This comprehensive research process is probably what we are best known for, although we do offer a wide variety of other re-

search services. My advice to researchers is this: If you are really serious about research then you have to go to the archives (or hire an expert to go there). While there are some records on the internet which can be really valuable for research, the really informative and in-depth material has yet to be digitized. There are a lot of great resources stored at both federal and state archives so the possibilities are really exciting for researching military records from about the Civil War through Vietnam.

**The Middler:** Which records at the National Archives contain the most valuable information on individual veterans?

Geoff: In my view the most valuable records at the archives are the military service records for Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard veterans. These files are really detailed and they cover both military service and also detail things outside of the military scope of things. These records can often contain info on dependents, marriage, correspondence and so forth. Officer candidates in the Navy sometimes submitted high school and college transcripts and info on their hobbies during the application process. These records were preserved in the service file. You never know what you will find in those files. Most of them even have beautiful, period photographs of the veterans. For me, these are the most exciting of the service files

Continued on page 14



Excerpt from a letter recovered by Golden Arrow Research regarding Tredwell Moore, a close friend of Richard Savage who served together in the Civil War. Richard was the grandson of Timothy Savage (1769-1849) of Middletown, CT.



Continued from page 12

at the archives. Unfortunately, for Army and Army Air Forces it is rare to find complete service records. From time to time we get lucky and find a file with pages which survived the fire. You will often find burn or singe marks on the edges of these pages. The 'burn' files actually have to go to the preservation lab for mold treatment at the archives before they can be handled because they were drenched during the effort to put out the fire. Because the fire consumed so many Army and A.A.F. service files, it is usually necessary to carry out the more complex and time-consuming reconstruction process which I referred to previously.

**The Middler:** Many of us researching our ancestors from Middletown, CT have learned that this community was very active during the Revolutionary War but have few details on the specifics of an individual's service. Do you have any advice for researching this period?

**Geoff:** My focus is primarily on the research of veterans from the Civil War through Vietnam. I do know that there were no service records maintained for veterans going back to the Revolutionary War. Much of the research for this period consists of records which are pulled together from muster rolls and land bounty documents.

**The Middler:** Can you explain the process of working with Golden Arrow Research? How long does it take? How much does it typically cost?

**Geoff:** Much of our work consists of scanning military service records at the archives. These files are typically in the fifty to one-hundred page range and they detail the individual's service from start to finish. This process takes about three weeks because we have to wait for the archives to provide access to

the records so that we can scan them. Once the file is ready we scan the records, artifacts and photos so that our clients can view the records as they appear in their original form (the archives will currently only provide photocopies of these files). We charge \$100 to go to the archives and scan the military service records. Now, the comprehensive reconstruction process (for fire related veterans) is more complicated and often requires research at multiple facilities around the country. This is an intensive rebuilding effort which often requires several research specialists to work simultaneously at different archival research centers gathering records on the individual and their unit. These projects are typically in the \$300 range. I should note that I have kept the pricing on these projects the same for almost ten years. In most cases it would cost more money for someone to buy a plane ticket to come to the archives to do this themselves. There is no chance that a novice would be able to find all of the material that we can locate. This is not me being braggadocious... It just takes many years to learn where all these records are located and how to use them to trace the steps of individual soldiers.

**The Middler:** What are your favorite records to work with at the archives?

**Geoff:** I think right now my favorite records are the WWI and prior service records and burial case files. These records are really exciting, detailed and often contain period photos from one hundred years ago or more. It is like being transported back in time when you handle these files. The burial files which are the records for killed in action veterans of the Great War are really fascinating. These records often include eye-witness accounts describing events which led to the death of the individual veteran. I've also recently handled about six hun-

dred compiled service records of individual marines who fought in Chinese Boxer Rebellion in the year 1900. This series includes many Medal of Honor recipients among a wide variety of other fascinating (and sometimes hilarious) men.

**The Middler:** Can you share a story about any specific research you have done that you found particularly interesting?

**Geoff:** There have been so many wonderful people and fascinating cases over the years. I have probably worked several thousand cases in the past ten years. My favorite thing is when I have almost no clue about an individual (nor does the family) and we are able to document his career from start to finish. Sometimes we find an incredible amount of detail, including records detailing heroic achievement in battle. I've worked on cases where the family knew nothing about the veteran's service and I was able to document him parachuting in to France on D-Day. I've also worked on cases where the family was told that the veteran was storming the beaches on D-Day

For more info visit: [www.goldenarrowresearch.com](http://www.goldenarrowresearch.com)

## AFTERWORD

My personal experience with using military records has been profound in being able to get to the bottom of family mysteries that have persisted for decades. One case in my family was especially poignant and I thought I would share that here.

The first project that Golden Arrow Research worked on for me was related to my grandmother's brother who served in the Navy during WWII. I never met him but was told that he was on a ship that was attacked by a Japanese airplane and was "shell-shocked." He spent the rest of his life in a mental hospital and was "never right" after he came

when in reality he was playing the tuba as part of a military band in Kansas during the invasion. Sometimes we are able to prove eligibility for medals and decorations. Yesterday I received an email from one of my clients describing the ceremony where the Army posthumously awarded his grandfather the Purple Heart (based in part on our work). Every veteran has a different story and so I like to say that our mission is to tell those stories and help our clients to preserve the memory of their veteran's time in the service. On a humorous note: I did recently go through the file of a marine who had fought in the Philippine insurrection and Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the century. He was discharged around 1904 and became a banker. When the U.S. joined the Great War in 1917 he was determined to do his part to help with recruitment in the Marine Corps. He wrote several letters trying to have the Marine Corps loan him a Lewis machine gun to display in his bank window! To his dismay the Corps never got around to sending that machine gun to him. I could write a hundred pages in answer to this question.

home, waking up everyday believing he was still on the ship. He died in 1982.

His military records revealed that he was on the USS San Francisco which was engaged during the Battle of Guadalcanal. Volunteering in January 1942 stating "patriotic reasons", he was deployed and received high marks until the first battle in July 1942. From there you see in the records his steady decline- refusing orders, talking to himself, and eventually being removed from duty. It turns out his ship was indeed hit by a Japanese torpedo plane and the back of the ship blown off.

Warren Savage

# GREATER MIDDLETOWN MILITARY MUSEUM

By Laura Cowles Hobbs

I had the opportunity to meet with Ken McClellan, director of the newly organized Greater Middletown Military Museum which opened in Veterans Park on April 13, 2019. Ken became involved with a group of veterans who were working to preserve military artifacts and memorabilia. With significant effort the group received funding from the city and state to construct a building located in Veteran's Park, which was eased in part by the fact that the land on which is was to be built was already owned by the city.

A key goal of the new museum is to educate the public about those who served and their lives after they returned from service. Storytelling is a central vehicle for making these histories come to life for people of all ages, especially students. Ken's favorite exhibits are those that contain artifacts that tell story of the veteran's experiences along with the reasons why it was important to the people who preserved the artifacts for many decades.

When you walk into the museum, you'll see display cases on the left and bookcases full of military books and documents are on the right. Most display items came from donations, but some are on loan from museum members. Exhibits ranging from the Civil War to Iraq-Afghanistan eras are on display, including:

- » A Calvary saber produced about 1818 by Nathan Starr's company in Middletown
- » A bayonet used by William H. Hall of Middletown who served with the 14th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry Regiment during the Civil War
- » The uniform of private William Braren from East Haddam who served in Company D, 103rd Machine Gun Battalion, assigned to the 26th Infantry Division during WWI

The next time you are in Middletown consider a visit.



## Greater Middletown Military Museum

200 Walnut Grove Road, Middletown, CT 06457

Admission: Free, donations welcome  
 Visiting Hours: Weekdays 10:00am – 3:00pm  
 Call for Information: 860-788-7215  
 Website: <https://gmvm.com>



# BOOK REVIEW

## FINDING EARLY CONNECTICUT VITAL RECORDS: THE BARBOUR INDEX AND BEYOND BY LINDA MACLACHLAN

By R.W. Bacon

It does not take long for researchers of Colonial-era Connecticut genealogy to realize that in comparison to many other states, the early vital records of Connecticut towns present an embarrassment of riches.

In New York or New Hampshire, where records of some towns are non-existent until the 1880s or later, even the most intrepid researchers of early records can be driven to glum defeat ... or alternatively, to a frustrated sputtering of epithets. (From experience, I advocate for the second option: Sputtering in private ... preferably in a soundproof room.)

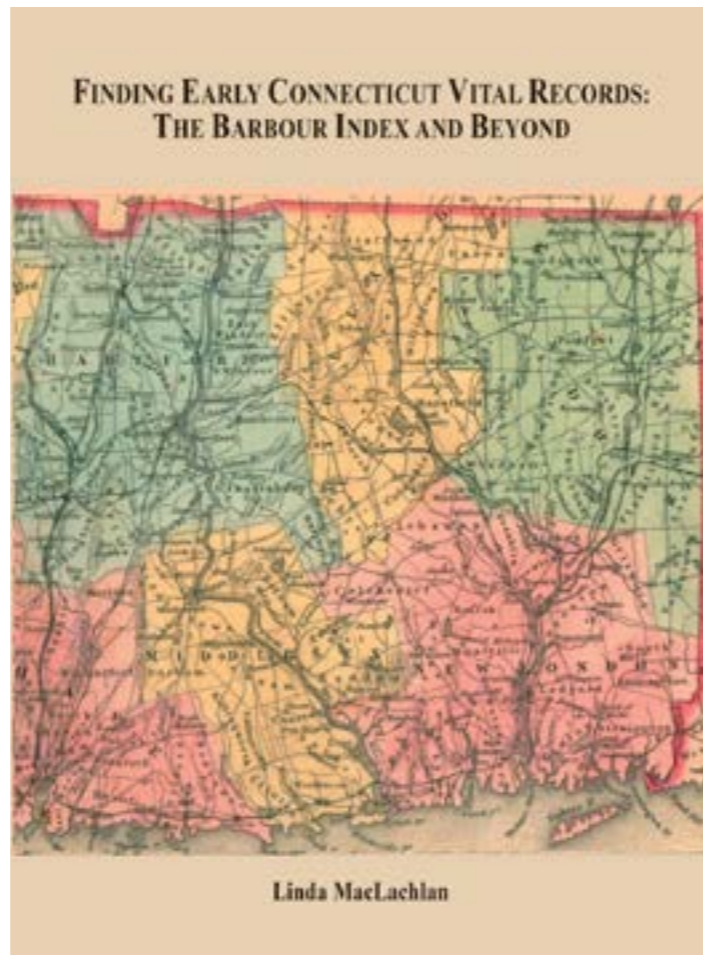
In the research of early Connecticut records, we don't have to sputter epithets, because we have the riches of the Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital Records Prior to 1850. In 1911, one of Connecticut's genealogy heroes, Lucius Barnes Barbour (1878-1934), appointed that year as the state's first Examiner of Public Records, engaged a team of genealogical deputies to fan out across the state to ascertain and transcribe each town's early birth, marriage, and death records up to 1850. Barbour's project took more than two decades to complete, and the transcriptions were ultimately abstracted and assembled into an alphabetical collection of index cards for each individual. The index cards include reference to the original record source, and are housed in patron-accessible card-catalog drawers at the Connecticut State Library in Hartford.

The most prolific of the traveling transcriber team was James Newell Arnold (1844-1927) of Providence, R.I., the famously cantankerous publisher of the

Narragansett Historical Register (1882-1891), and compiler of Vital Records of Rhode Island 1636-1850 (21 volumes, published between 1891 and 1912). Arnold, who navigated the world on crutches for most of his life, traversed Connecticut in his later years working on Barbour's vital records project. He transcribed the six books of Middletown land records and vital records in 1918.

Now a century later, well into our age of multifarious improvements and advancements, we have enhanced access to the riches of what we refer to informally as "the Barbour Index." We have access to the original file cards that we can thumb through at the Connecticut State Library. We have access in books, in 55 volumes alphabetical by town. We can order town indexes on microfilm from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. We can purchase the index on a readable and searchable CD. And we have the Barbour Index databases hosted online by paid-subscriber services.

The problem is that, despite the multiple means of access to the Barbour Index, the various media and their content are not all created equal. Understanding the differences between the file cards, the books, the CD, and the online databases is critical to maximizing the utility of this great compilation. The need for that understanding motivated the new reference book by veteran genealogist (and retired lawyer and judge), Linda MacLachlan, entitled *Finding Early Connecticut Vital Records: The Barbour Index and Beyond*. The book was published in late 2019 by the Clearfield Co. Ten years in the making, the book is 344 large-format pages, well-orga-



nized, amply-footnoted, and includes maps, appendices, and a location index.

This book first describes the Barbour Index and sorts out the differences among its various incarnations on different media. In my view, these first 21 pages are the most valuable in the book, because they make a convincing case for thumbing the cards in person at the Connecticut State Library, and after that, getting the eyeballs directly on the original source, on-site at a designated town hall. (For those who have never "thumbed the cards" in person, here is an example: Let's say you are looking for your long-lost Joe Doaks, born in Middletown but vanished from the earth after his marriage to Matil-

da Muckle in 1745. Your at-home mouse-clicking turns up nothing in the online Barbour Index beyond the marriage record. But on-site, you might stumble upon a reference to the couple just a few well-thumbed cards away as the parents of Jehosaphat Doakes of Riverton. Eureka! A truly "digital" breakthrough. (Who knew Joe and Matilda rode away on a mule to the hills of Riverton in 1746?)

But the bulk of *Finding Early Connecticut Vital Records: The Barbour Index and Beyond* is devoted to a town-by-town survey of exactly what records were transcribed and abstracted in each of the state's 149 towns, including equivalent information for several towns not included in



*Lucius Barnes Barbour (1878-1934)*

the original project. For example, the four-page entry for Middletown notes the transcription of two books of land records (1654-1742); and four books of births, marriages, and deaths (1714-1778, 1738-1820, 1778-1847 in two volumes.). Also abstracted were vital records from Christ Church, Middletown, 1836-1839.

As promised in the title, the book also goes "beyond" the Barbour Index. For each town, the author includes additional pre-1850 vital records sources she has identified, plus a list of church record sources, cemetery transcription sources, and record-bearing published local histories. For example, in the Middletown entry, the author lists two Family History Library microfilms with Middletown vital records from 1852 to 1878, but which include some pre-1850 records. Also

referenced is *Data Copied from Original Records at Middletown, Conn.*, by Nettie Barnum Eells (1867-1916), a manuscript held by the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, but available on microfilm from the Family History Library.

In a monumental project such as this book, I extend the author a "pass" for not including the Frank Farnsworth Starr collection at the Middlesex County Historical Society as a valuable additional resource for researchers of early Middletown families. [For readers unfamiliar with Frank Farnsworth Starr (1852-1939), he was an accomplished Middletown-based professional genealogist for 70 years. This tireless and irascible iconoclast was profiled in the spring 2007 issue of *The Middler*.]



*James Newell Arnold (1844-1927)*

For researchers with just a few Connecticut ancestors, *Finding Early Connecticut Vital Records: The Barbour Index and Beyond* is a book to consult at your nearest genealogy library. If your nearest genealogy library does not have it, the suggestion for acquisition is yours to make. But if you are

up to your neck in researching Connecticut ancestors in various towns across the state, this is a book to have in your library and keep close-at-hand.





# WHAT MAKES ME TICK

*The Middler* editor, Warren Savage, shares his story of how he went from dairy farmer to tech executive to family historian to SMFSD member.

## By Warren Savage

What makes a genealogist tick? I don't know about others, but for me, a relentless curiosity certainly helps. I grew up on a dairy farm on the northern panhandle of West Virginia which afforded me not only an expansive playground but also copious amounts of time to ponder big thoughts. I can point to two events in my youth that set me on a path towards becoming your editor.

One of my chores on the farm was to "bring in the cows" for milking time. They were often scattered in the pastures of the wooded hollows and I needed to herd them towards the barn for milking. One day, when I was about ten, I was on this task and walking under some walnut trees and tripped over something tangled in grass that sent me flying face first into the ground. When I got up to investigate what I had tripped on, I was astonished to find a large round rock on which what looked like an animal footprint-- a pad and four toes. Excitedly, I thought "Dinosaur tracks!" The stone was heavy and a long way from the house, so over the course of several months I moved it 50 feet at a time until one day it was fully extracted and in my house. I told everybody I knew that I had found dinosaur tracks. Most were disinterested. But one day, an older neighbor man visited us to buy some hay and I told him about my discovery. He wanted to see it and quickly informed me that it had nothing to do with dinosaurs, but rather it was a stone tool used for cracking walnuts that was created by the Adena tribes that had been native to that area. To me, this was even better than dinosaurs, and my imagination ran wild thinking about the peo-

ple that walked here hundreds of years before. My Indiana Jones adventures climaxed the following year when I discovered a previously unknown burial mound. I contacted the neighbor again and he brought in accredited archaeologists who excavated the tomb and confirmed it of the period of my special stone. I felt a sense of excitement and the pride of discovering something lost—and the satisfaction of preserving it.

The second seminal event in my journey was a gift from my grandparents when I was nineteen that set me on this course. It was a shiny silver book that said "Savage" in black Gothic script on the cover. It was the life work of my grandfather's first cousin who had spent years collecting stories about the Savage family with incredible detail in an era with no Internet or Ancestry.com to speed up the process. He relied on personal interviews with relatives, writing letters to distant relatives, and visits to historical societies and state archives to assemble this masterpiece. I was immediately enthralled with it and have read all 132 pages so many times the pages are soiled and tattered. It was here that I first learned that my family came from this seemingly mythical town called Middletown, Connecticut. For the next 40 years, I fantasized about what Middletown was really like and wanted to one day see it. Then in 2015 I had the opportunity to visit there for the first time as part of a business trip that included a meeting in Boston.

I had concluded part of my business trip on a Friday in Washington, D.C. and decided that rather than fly, I would drive to Middle-



*Indian nutting stone similar to a larger one I discovered when 10 years old*

town. The drive would give me ample time to think about how I would spend the 3-day weekend and allow me to be in Boston for my meeting on Tuesday morning. During the 6-hour journey my head filled with excitement at what I might find and at each state crossing that excitement grew. My first stop was at the Middletown Historical Society where I met with then director, Debbie Shapiro. I explained I was looking for all things Savage and Debbie soon hauled out piles of books, maps, and documents. I had discovered a treasure trove of information that started making Middletown seem less mysterious and more like home. In one of her final trips out with material to share with me, I spotted something very familiar to me—the sil-

ver book. I spent the entire day there and just as I was about to leave, Debbie said "Oh, you might be interested in this too. I think they are looking for members." It was a copy of *The Middler*! Suffice to say it would be just a few days before I would send Hal Whitmore an email requesting a SMFSD membership package. And with the editorship, a new journey begins.

## MEET THE EDITOR: WARREN SAVAGE

A FEW WORDS FROM THE EDITOR ON HIS LIFE OUTSIDE HIS FAMILY HISTORY INTERESTS.

While I enjoyed growing up in the rural lifestyle, as a young ambitious man I decided that milking cows was not the life for me. I was good at math and loved science which brought me to Silicon Valley in San Jose, California in 1979 where I still reside.

I hold an undergraduate degree in Computer Engineering and went on to obtain an MBA and have been awarded four patents. I have worked for an array of technology companies, including one I started in 2004, and have had the good fortune to work on some amazing technology over the years. If you have used a laptop, an iPhone, or an ATM,

you have used something that I've had a hand in.

I am currently a visiting researcher at the University of Maryland where I focus on advanced research for the Department of Defense on the topic of security in semiconductors.

As for family life, I've been blessed to be married since 1981, have three children and three grandchildren.

Aside from genealogy, my hobbies mostly revolve around sports, predominantly endurance running. I've done many 5K's, 10K's, marathons, ultramarathons, and triathlons which give me a lot of time to myself to think about history.



*My ubiquitous headshot. "No Granddad, there are still are no barbers in California"*



*One of my favorite photos taken during the last leg of a triathlon*

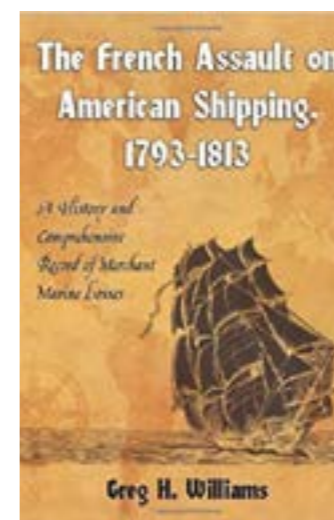


*In my usual Silicon Valley uniform, speaking at one of many tech conferences over the years*

## READING NOOK: BOOKS RELATED TO THIS EDITION



*Finding Early Connecticut Vital Records: The Barbour Index and Beyond*, by Linda MacLachlan is available in hardcover (\$75.00) and paperback (\$49.95) directly from the publisher, Clearfield Co. ([www.genealogical.com](http://www.genealogical.com)), and from other major online book-sellers.



*The French Assault on American Shipping, 1793-1813: A History and Comprehensive Record of Merchant Marine Losses*, by Greg H. Williams is available in paperback (\$95.00) and as a Google Book e-book (free).



*The First War of United States: The Quasi War with France 1798-1801*, by William J. Phalen is available in paperback from various outlets (\$19.95) and as a Kindle and Nook e-book (\$11.99).



# TECH CORNER

## SCIENTISTS BRING AI TO THE GENEALOGIST'S TOOLKIT

“Open the pod bay door, HAL.”  
 “I’m sorry, Dave. I’m afraid I can’t do that.”

2001: A Space Odyssey

By Warren Savage

The above dialog from *2001: A Space Odyssey* is what comes to mind to most people when they hear the term Artificial Intelligence (AI). While murderous spaceship computers are still the domain of science fiction, AI is a very real field of computer science whose applications are still being discovered.

In a nutshell, AI is used to make decisions and recommendations based on efficiently analyzing huge amounts of data, looking for specific patterns that are non-obvious to humans. Crowdsourcing, for those unfamiliar, is a concept of employing a large number of people to solve a particular problem or perform a certain task, usually relying on social media as a vehicle to widely disseminate the problem. GoFundMe is a good example of crowdsourcing in action.

Photography was perhaps the

first technology to “go viral” globally. Enabled by the development of chemistry science in the early 1800’s, photography experienced rapid evolutions and by the 1850’s found a human population obsessed with capturing their own likeness in a permanent way. By the outbreak of the Civil War, photography was becoming mature, inexpensive, and most importantly—portable. It is estimated that more than forty million photographs were taken throughout the course of the Civil War by more than 3,000 photographers that descended into the battlefields behind the troops.

Dr. Kurt Luther and his team of researchers at the University of Virginia have recently applied AI together with crowdsourcing to help historians and genealogists uncover the identity of thousands of Civil War veterans. In 2018 his team erected a web site, [Civil War Photo Sleuth](http://CivilWarPhotoSleuth.com) (CWPS) that allows researchers to upload pho-

tographs of known people along with as much information about them as possible. With this, advanced computer science together with human oversight can achieve discoveries that were not possible just a few years ago.

The first step is to upload a photo of a person that is known to be a soldier in the Civil War. Along with the photo, “metadata” is asked for to augment information about the person in the photo. Such information includes, for example, the branch of the military they served, the ranks they held, the units to which they were attached, etc. This provides the computer additional data that can accelerate the search of other photographs that may contain the same person and thereby increase likelihood of a finding a successful match.

The second step is that the photographs are analyzed using facial recognition technology, which is now a mature and commercialized technology. Facial recognition works by scanning the face and identifying key points (“dots”) on the face. What is the shape of the face? What is the

shape of the lips? Are the eyebrows bushy? Is the nose big or small? These dots then become part of the metadata associated with that photo providing computers even more information to compare against other similarly annotated photographs.

The third step is to allow the researcher community to upload thousands of annotated photographs and to use AI to continuously analyze the photos for similarities and matches. As of today, CWPS has more than 30,000 photographs in its collection.

The fourth step is to engage crowdsourcing to put a “human in the loop” during the process. AI and facial recognition are not perfect and sometime produce erroneously results that may be obvious to a human being. The CWPS site allows researchers to review photos and make suggestions for corrections or missing data. For example, suppose Researcher A uploads a picture of John Smith, private in the Connecticut infantry and Researcher B uploads a picture of John Smith, a colonel in the New York cavalry. Each researcher has a

different history on their John Smith, but because the picture ties the two together, they learn that John Smith was recruited in Connecticut but was later promoted and assigned leadership in the New York cavalry.

I had a chance to experiment with the facial recognition software used by the CWPS project from the company, Betaface. I designed my experiment like a police lineup. I wanted to see if Betaface could pick out my relative from a group of other relatives photographed at a similar time period (1865-1880). I started with a photograph of Richard Savage from about 1865 and added to the lineup another portrait of Richard painted in the late 1870’s along with three other ancestors photographed in the 1870’s. Within about 10 minutes, I got the answer as can be seen in the diagram on the previous page. The software correctly ranked the secondary photo of Richard as being likely the same person having a confidence level of 86%. The software showed some of the other people as potential matches (but with less confidence) and others as unlikely. Betaface ([www.betaface.com](http://www.betaface.com)) offers a free online demo and I’d recommend trying it yourself if you have a photographic mystery that you haven’t cracked so far.

For more information and links to a variety of deeper articles about Civil War Photo Sleuth, visit their site at [www.civilwarphotosleuth.com](http://www.civilwarphotosleuth.com) and think about contributing information about your Civil War veteran to their mission.



# MIDDLETOWN'S 350TH BIRTHDAY BASH



By Warren Savage

Nineteen years ago, Middletown put on its party gear for a year-long celebration of the 350th anniversary of the founding of Middletown with numerous events and exhibitions celebrating our history. The culmination was an enormous festival and parade—a really big parade, on Sunday, September 2, 2001.

SMFSD member, Janet Kohlenberger, recalls that SMFSD founding members were enthusiastic participants in the parade dressing up in period clothing and carrying signs featuring the name of their First Settler ancestor.



Founders of SMFSD march in the “Big Parade” on Sunday, September 2, 2001

But the First Settlers were but just a small part of the celebration as dozens of groups joined together to celebrate the rich history of the town from its inception to the 21st century. According to newspaper reports, the festivities began at 1:30pm with the boom of a cannon followed by church bells ringing out up and down Main Street. The parade started at St. John’s Church on the northern end of Main and continued to the Elks Club on the south end of town, a distance of more than 2.5 miles.

By all accounts, it was a beautiful day with thousands of people descending on the downtown with music, food stands, and even hot

air balloon rides. Hartford Courant reporter, Marlene Clark, reported that the only disappointment of the event was the lack of television coverage which were preoccupied with “Mark Twain Days” in Hartford. However, Marlene goes on to report that the local cable-access company, Calico Broadcasting, produced a video of the entire event, of some five and a half hours! If one of our members might have a copy, I would highly encourage them to digitize that and investigate the possibility (permission) to publish it on YouTube for the enjoyment of our members.

Face	Position	Classifiers and measurements
	131.0, 186.5 -3.44 deg 175 x 254 score: 0.99	5oclock shadow : no (45%), age : 54 (60%), arched eyebrows : no, attractive : no (97%), bags under eyes : yes (34%), bald : yes (79%), bangs : no (59%), beard : yes (53%), big lips : no (44%), big nose : yes (50%), black hair : no, blond hair : no (6)
Face	Matches	
	100%	86%
	82%	76%
		71%



Continued from page 7

using the Mississippi for transport of goods to the Caribbean. Worried of the cost of yet a new entanglement with America, Napoleon struck a cash deal with Jefferson in 1803 for the Louisiana Territory using the proceeds

to fund a new campaign in its war with Austria.

The Quasi-War was now over, but American merchants would have a long wait to be compensated by the United States government. One reason for this was that the precise amount of damage was

difficult to calculate due to lack of records, including which insurers had paid claims. Secretary of State Timothy Pickering wrote in a report on January 18th, 1799: "Those unjust and cruel deprivations on American commerce, which have brought distress on multitudes, and ruin on many of

our citizens; and occasioned a total loss of property to the United States, of probably more than twenty million dollars; besides subjecting our fellow citizens to insults, stripes, wounds, torture, and imprisonment." This was the equivalent of over \$400M in modern dollars and didn't even reflect that the conflict period would rage for another 18 months.

For more than a century, Congress took up a variety of bills to address compensation. Merchants would write to their congressman, often annually, requesting that the country act and compensate them for their losses. Finally, in 1846 the 29th Congress passed Senate Bill H.R. 561 calling for payments of up to five million dollars. However, President James Polk felt the amount was far too paltry and vetoed the bill which was sustained by a vote of 27 to 15. Over the next 75 years a number of claims were taken up by Congress in piecemeal fashion, but payments were rare as the principals of claims were deceased and supporting documentation of the damages were long ago lost to history.

While the Quasi-War is little remembered today, it had an out-sized impact on shaping the policies and politics of the 19th century. It tested the American constitutional system of government to respond to global issues and its ability to make reasoned decisions for its future. It established a need for a standing military at a time when the country didn't possess a single warship. It established a policy against entanglements in foreign conflicts that would be stubbornly held until World War I. And finally, it established in the American psyche that North America should be free of European colonization that would go on to be expressed in the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 and in blood with the Mexican-American (1846-1848) and Spanish-American (1898) wars.

FOR THE COURANT.  
**Surplus Revenue.**

Mr. Editor:—  
Allow one of your constant readers to reply to a question contained in your first editorial article in your issue of Saturday, the 8th inst.

After adverting to the fact that the revenue gathered in New York for the imports for nine months amounts to the enormous sum of \$34,780,434, you inquire what will be done with this constantly accumulating surplus revenue? You suggest the paying off the national debt as desirable, &c., but in addition to this disposition of the surplus revenue, I would inquire if it would not be well for our Government to pay off their honest debts—debts, as sacred as the price of our national existence—debts, that were contracted to the untold benefit of the United States, and which she is bound by every obligation arising from promise made, and pledges given, and benefits received, to discharge to the uttermost farthing, but which she has never done, although the long abused and suffering petitioners have knocked at the door of Congress, session after session, for more than fifty years—I allude to the claims of the sufferers by French spoliation previous to 1800.

It will be remembered that a bill, granting \$5,000,000 (only about a quarter of that which the Government had acknowledged to be due,) to the sufferers, passed both houses of Congress, and only failed to become a law by the veto of James K. Polk. One reason given for this veto was that it was not as much as the sufferers ought to have, and another was, an exhausted treasury.

Now it would seem that before Congress tax their brains too heavily in devising ways and means to dispose of the surplus revenue, they would do well to pay off these suffering creditors. I believe it has been said as an apology for withholding the pay justly due on account of losses by French spoliations, that these claims had, to a considerable extent, passed out of the hands of the real claimants or their heirs. Allow me to say, that while this is doubtless a mistake, yet, if it were true, it would be very difficult to justify the withholding of the payment of an honest debt, because the original holder of the claim had, for any cause, parted with that claim, so that I deny that Government can, with any show of honesty, repudiate this debt on this account.

Hartford Courant, October 19, 1853

For decades, letters such as these show the public's long memory over the failure to compensate victims.

These sufferers by French spoliations resided principally in New England and New York, where most of the shipping in the merchant service, was owned at that time; and it is a well known fact that John Morgan, John Caldwell, Timothy Savage, Josiah Savage, Justus Riley, Luther Savage, James Darr, and many others in our midst, were large sufferers, and, by the direction of Government, were at much expense and trouble to make legal proof of their losses, and not one of these gentlemen, it is believed, ever alienated the right in their claim on the Government, but continued to petition Congress from year to year, so long as they lived; and one of them, who lived to see the veto of Polk, to the certain knowledge of the writer of this, felt that that act filled the cup of his calamity, for he had fondly cherished the hope that he, at length, was about to realize sufficient from this source, to pay all his debts, and provide for his old age.

One very good reason why the original claimants never did alienate their right to whatever the Government might eventually appropriate to them, is found in the fact that there has, for many years, been a doubt how much or what proportion, Government would finally pay, if any thing, and no one would buy a claim under such circumstances.

Allow me to add, for the information of those who are unacquainted with the nature of these claims, that they arose on this wise: When France came to our aid in the war of the Revolution, we entered into a treaty with that power, offensive and defensive. This treaty remained in force while France was fighting with all Europe. That Government then called upon the United States to aid her in this struggle. We headed it not. France then made reprisals on our commerce. At the close of that struggle, our Government, through Mr. Monroe, then our Minister to France, made a demand for remuneration for these reprisals. France replied that we had failed altogether to redeem the pledge given in the subsisting treaty, which was immensely to the damage of France. Our Government, seeing the justice of this position taken by France, and anxious to annul the subsisting treaty and substitute a merely commercial treaty, agreed with France that the United States Government would pay these spoliations to our citizens, if they would give up the existing treaty, and enter into one merely commercial. This arrangement was made, and to this day our Government has withheld payment to these sufferers. This is but a brief and imperfect view of the nature of the claim, but it is believed to be substantially correct.

Justice.

# SMFSD MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

## 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	Thomas Ferman . . . . 1679	Thomas Lewis . . . . . 1687	Samuel Stocking . . . 1650
Obadiah Allyn . . . . . 1670	Edward Foster . . . . 1670	William Lucas . . . . . 1667	John Stow . . . . . 1667
<b>Thomas Allen . . . . . 1650</b>	Jonathan Gilbert . . . 1672	Daniel Markham . . . . 1677	Nathaniel Stow . . . . 1676
<b>Nathaniel Bacon . . . 1650</b>	John Gill . . . . . 1676	Anthony Martin . . . . . 1661	<b>Samuel Stow . . . . . 1651</b>
William Briggs . . . . . 1677	Richard Goodale . . . 1671	<b>John Martin . . . . . 1650</b>	Thomas Stow . . . . . 1669
John Blake . . . . . 1677	George Graves . . . . 1650?	<b>Thomas Miller . . . . 1650</b>	William Sumner . . . . 1687
<b>William Blumfield . . 1650</b>	<b>John Hall . . . . . 1650</b>	John Payne . . . . . 1676	James Tappin . . . . . 1662
John Boarn . . . . . 1677	<b>Richard Hall . . . . . 1650</b>	George Phillips . . . . . 1680	<b>Matthias Treat . . . . 1659</b>
Alexander Bow . . . . . 1660	<b>Samuel Hall . . . . . 1650</b>	Daniel Pryor . . . . . 1696	Edward Turner . . . . . 1665
Nathaniel Brown . . . . 1655	<b>Giles Hamlin . . . . . 1650</b>	Thomas Ranney . . . . 1660	John Ward . . . . . 1664
Thomas Burk . . . . . 1670	<b>Daniel Harris . . . . . 1653</b>	William Roberts . . . . 1680	William Ward . . . . . 1659
William Cheney . . . . . 1655	<b>William Harris . . . . 1650</b>	Joseph Rockwell . . . . 1693	Andrew Warner . . . . 1667
Samuel Clark . . . . . 1676	Edward Higby . . . . . 1667	Alexander Rollo . . . . 1697	Robert Warner . . . . . 1655
Jasper Clements . . . . 1670	Thomas Hill . . . . . 1678	Noadiah Russell . . . . 1696	<b>Robert Webster . . . 1650</b>
Henry Cole . . . . . 1650?	Thomas Hopewell . . . 1662	David Sage . . . . . 1662	Benjamin West . . . . 1698
Nathaniel Collins . . . . 1664	<b>George Hubbard . . . 1650</b>	<b>John Savage . . . . . 1650</b>	<b>Thomas Wetmore . . 1650</b>
Samuel Collins . . . . . 1665	John Hulbert . . . . . 1669	Arthur Scovill . . . . . 1671	<b>Nathaniel White . . . 1650</b>
William Cornwell . . . . 1650	Isaac Johnson . . . . . 1670	Edward Shepard . . . . 1687	Francis Whitmore . . . 1674
Samuel Cotton . . . . . 1697	Francis Jones . . . . . 1672	Joseph Smith . . . . . 1675	John Wilcox . . . . . 1654
Samuel Doolittle . . . . 1693	John Jordan . . . . . 1678	<b>William Smith . . . . 1650</b>	James Wright . . . . . 1690
George Durant . . . . . 1663	John Kirby . . . . . 1653	William Southmayd . . 1674	
Samuel Eggleston . . . 1663	Isaac Lane . . . . . 1664	Comfort Starr . . . . . 1673	
John Elton . . . . . 1677		James Stancliff . . . . 1686	

## 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.

## JOINING IS EASY AS 1-2-3

If you are a descendant of any pre-1700 Middletown settler, and would like to join SMFSD, here is the easy procedure:

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

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

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

**Please send any membership inquiries to:** Cindy Nicewarner, Registrar, Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants, 6006 River Birch Court, Hanover, MD 21076; or via e-mail to: [cnicewarner@verizon.net](mailto:cnicewarner@verizon.net)





# The Middler

Newsletter of the SOCIETY of MIDDLETOWN FIRST SETTLERS DESCENDANT  
Connecticut, U.S.A.

c/o Warren Savage, Editor, 1648 Capitancillos Pl, San Jose, CA 95120

[WWW.MIDDLETOWN1650.ORG](http://WWW.MIDDLETOWN1650.ORG)

THE MIDDLER

2020.1A

24

## BE A PART OF THE MIDDLER

### GOT SOMETHING INTERESTING TO SHARE? LET US KNOW!

For nearly twenty years, *The Middler* has delivered a rich variety of subject matter of interest to its members like you. If you have something that is Middletown-related or of general interest to our community, please considering sharing it. If writing is not your forte, no worries, we can help with that! Here are some examples of subject matter we are always looking for.

- » **Family stories.** Many of us have histories that have been passed down from our ancestors of their life in Middletown. Let's share them.
- » **Middletown migration stories.** Many of our ancestors migrated away from Middletown at some point and if you have an interesting story about that, perhaps you can share it.
- » **Tip corner.** We all have our methods for tracking down elusive ancestors. If you have something cool to share, I'm sure members would be interested to hear it.
- » **Tech corner.** What's the latest cool technology out there? Tell us about your experience with it.
- » **Interviews with old-timers.** Know an old resident that has stories tell? Perhaps you can interview them and we can capture that history for posterity.
- » **Breakthroughs in your own research.** We have all experienced the thrill of a breakthrough in finding things about our Middletown ancestors that have been forgotten for decades or even centuries. Tell us about it and we can share in your excitement.
- » **Guest writers.** Know a genealogist or historian that has something of general interest. I'd be happy to offer an occasional column to a person that has something compelling to share either about Middletown history or general research methods.

If you would be interested to contribute an article or something along the topics above, please contact me at [smfsd.middler@gmail.com](mailto:smfsd.middler@gmail.com).