



In-Depth First Settler Profile:
Joseph Rockwell (1675) /
Elizabeth (Foster) Rockwell

Name: Joseph Rockwell

Birth: July 8, 1668, Windsor, Conn. (NEHGSR vol. 5, p. 361)

Emigration: From Windsor to Middletown, Conn. at the age of seven after his widowed mother married Robert Warner of Middletown. (Hartford, Connecticut, Land Records: 1638-1688)

Death: October 27, 1742, Middletown, Conn. (NEHGSR vol. 15, p. 166); October 28, 1742 (MLR vol. 1, p. 19) [Compiler's note: BCVR date for his death is incorrect; his wife died on August 15, 1753 as shown in land records (MLR vol. 1, p. 19)]

Occupation & Public Service: Cooper (MLR vol. 1, p. 92); town clerk from 1708 to 1734; deacon of the church; deputy to the General Assembly (CAF); captain of the north company or trainband on the south side of the Ferry River (Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, 1636-1776, vol. 6, p. 7); on November 12, 1705, inventory of William Cheny taken by John Collins, Joseph Rockwell, and William Harris (MAN vol. 2, p. 39); on July 30, 1709, inventory of estate of Alexander Rollo taken by Thomas Ward and Joseph Rockwell (MAN vol. 2, p. 106); on May 1, 1710, court appointed Joseph Rockwell, Andrew Bacon and Nathaniel Stow as distributors to the estate of Obadiah Allyn, Jr. (MAN vol. 2, p. 11); on January 28, 1711/2, inventory of Captain John Hall taken by Samuel Hall, Joseph Rockwell, and Thomas Foster (MAN vol. 2, p. 215); on February 1, 1711/2, inventory of estate of Lt. James Ward taken by Seth Warner, Joseph Rockwell and Samuel Warner (MAN vol. 2, p. 317); on February 18, 1711/2, inventory of estate of Deacon Daniel Markham taken by John Hamlin, Joseph Rockwell and John Bacon (MAN vol. 2, p. 256); on April 4, 1715, "David Cornwall, a minor, 16 years of age, made choice of Joseph Rockwell to be his guardian." (MAN vol. 2, p. 47); Will of John Williams dated February 27, 1721/2 witnessed by Joseph Rockwell, Joseph Rockwell, Jr. and William Rockwell (MAN vol. 3, p.210); on December 16, 1725, inventory of estate of Rev. Noadiah Russell taken by John Collins, Samuel Hall and Joseph Rockwell. (MAN vol. 2, p. 566)

Marriage: m. Elizabeth Foster, February 1, 1693/4, Middletown, Conn. (b. May 7, 1673, Middletown, Conn.; d. August 15, 1753, Middletown, Conn.) She was the daughter of Edward Foster and Elizabeth (Harris) Foster of Middletown, Conn.

[**Compiler's note:** BCVR incorrectly states that her parents were Thomas and Elizabeth Foster; correct information found in land records (MLR vol. 1 p. 47); on March 20, 1705/6, son in law Joseph Rockwell and Elizabeth his wife, daughter of Mr. Edward Foster (MLR vol. 2, p. 243); on December 2, 1737, Joseph Rockwell with Elizabeth his wife quit claim all right to land laid out to their father Mr. Edward Foster decd (MLR vol. 1, p. 295); BCVR incorrectly assigned her date of death to her husband; see land records. (MLR vol. 1, p. 19)]

Parents: John Rockwell (1627-1673) and his second wife Deliverance Hawes (1640-1718), m. August 18, 1662, Windsor, Conn. (NEHGSR vol. 5, p. 361). John Rockwell was the son of William Rockwell and Susan (Capen) Rockwell of Dorchester, England, Dorchester, Mass. and Windsor, Conn. who arrived on the William and Mary in 1630 (GMB); estate of John Rockwell of Windsor, Conn. who died September 3, 1673, to son Joseph Rockwell aged five (MAN vol. 1, p. 227).

Deliverance Hawes was the daughter of Richard and Ann Hawes of Dorchester, Mass. who arrived on the Truelove in 1635 (SAV); Deliverance Rockwell (widow) married Robert Warner of Middletown on February 2, 1674/5 (Hartford, Connecticut Land Records: 1638-1688) and then Nathaniel Bissell of Windsor (administration of estate of Deliverance Bissell, widow of Nathaniel Bissell, of Windsor granted to Capt. Joseph Rockwell of Middletown, "son of the decd." MAN vol. 2, p. 358) "Deliverance Bissell, formerly wife of Robert Warner, died June 12, 1718." (BCVR)

Children: (BCVR; MLR vol. 1, p. 19)

(1) John Rockwell, b. October 29, 1694, Middletown, Conn.; d. January 18, 1780, Middletown, Conn.; m. Phebe Hands, January 3, 1733/4, Middletown, Conn. (5 children) [**Compiler's note:** BCVR incorrectly states their marriage as July 3, 1733/4; however, July is never double dated. Their first child was born on March 26, 1735 (BCVR). Inventory of estate taken March 21, 1780, to the widow, to John Rockwell the son, to Sarah Cummings, to Phebe Rockwell, to Esther Hall, to Ann Rockwell. (Probate Files Collection, Early to 1880; Middletown District, John Rockwell, Case No. 2818)]

(2) Joseph Rockwell, b. August 24, 1697, Middletown, Conn.; d. October 16, 1757, Middletown, Conn.; m. Susannah Yeomans, December 21, 1721, Stonington, Conn. (5 children) [**Compiler's note:** Will dated January 8, 1747, "being Engaged in an Expedition against His Majesties Enemies and considering of the uncertainty of my temporary Life;" inventory of estate taken March 6, 1758 (Probate Files Collection, Early to 1880; Middletown District, Joseph Rockwell, Junior, Case No. 2820); "In memory of Mr. Joseph Rockwell, who died Oct 16th, A.D. 1757, in the 61st year of his Age." (NEHGSR vol. 15, p. 166)]

(3) Edward Rockwell, b. October 10, 1700, Middletown, Conn.; d. March 21, 1701, Middletown, Conn. (died young) [**Compiler's note:** Twin with Elizabeth.]

(4) Elizabeth Rockwell, b. October 10, 1700, Middletown, Conn.; d. March 15, 1701, Middletown, Conn. (died young) [**Compiler's note:** Twin with Edward.]

(5) William Rockwell, b. July 3, 1702, Middletown, Conn.; d. July 28, 1765, Middletown, Conn.; m. Hannah Foster, June 2, 1731, Middletown, Conn. (8 children) [**Compiler's note:** "This monument is sacred to the memory of Deacon William Rockwell who Departed this life July 28th, 1765, AEstatis 63. In religious and civil life he was active, useful and benevolent, a faithful Husband and affectionate Father & kind Friend. Survivors mourn his Death as their loss, while they trust that it



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was his gain.” (NEHGS vol. 15, p. 167); on July 30, 1765, “Funeral of Deacon William Rockwell, aged 63, had been a long time lingering, died yesterday about 6 o'clock AM (*First Church, Middletown, Marriages/Deaths from 1762-1869*, p. 75)]

(6) Hannah Rockwell, b. December 18, 1704, Middletown, Conn.; d. May 23, 1781, Rocky Hill, Conn.; m. Obadiah Dickinson, November 22, 1733, Middletown, Conn. (5 children) [**Compiler's note:** Wethersfield Vital Records has date of death as May 23, though gravestone had April 23; “In memory of Mrs. Hannah, Wife of Mr. Obadiah Dickinson, Who departed this Life 23 Apr 1781, in the 77th Year of her Age.” (Wethersfield Inscriptions/Tillotson, 1899)]

(7) Edward Rockwell, b. July 23, 1707, Middletown, Conn.; d. November 7, 1791, Middletown, Conn.; m. Hannah Robins, January 5, 1737/8, Wethersfield, Conn. (9 children)

[**Compiler's note:** On November 8, 1791, Edward Rockwell died yesterday morning age 85 (*First Church, Middletown, Marriages/Deaths from 1762-1869*, p.128)]

(8) Ebenezer Rockwell, b. March 9, 1710/1, Middletown, Conn.; d. September 1783, Middletown, Conn.; m. Susannah Foster, September 7, 1741, Middletown, Conn. (11 children)

[**Compiler's note:** Funeral of Ebenezer Rockwell, age 73, held on September 12, 1783 (*First Church, Middletown, Marriages/Deaths from 1762-1869*, p. 105); inventory of estate taken January 5, 1784 (Probate Files Collection, Early to 1880; Middletown District, Ebenezer Rockwell, Junior, Case No. 2812)]

Residence/Property: On September 7, 1693, Israhiah and Rachel Wetmore sold to Joseph Rockwell for twenty seven pounds one half acre of land with a dwelling house bounded west on the street east by Deacon John Hall north by Widow Wetmore south by James Ward; on September 8, 1694, Nathaniel Stow with his wife Hannah to Joseph Rockwell two acres in the West Field (MLR vol. 1, p. 92); land recorded to Joseph Rockwell in 1698, twenty acres of upland in the south quarter given him by his father in law Edward Foster; one hundred twenty acres of upland given him by his father in law Foster, fifth part of the great lot that was his wife's grandfather Harris (MLR vol. 2, p. 22); on March 20, 1705/6, Mr. Edward Foster for love, favor and affection to his son in law Joseph Rockwell and to Elizabeth his wife daughter of the said Mr. Edward Foster, seventy acres on the west side of the great river. (MLR vol. 2, p. 243)

Will: Intestate; on March 28, 1743, “Deacon Joseph Rockwell Late of Middletown ... Deceased Left his Estate Intestate, and we John Rockwell, Joseph Rockwell, Willm Rockwell, Edward Rockwell and Ebenezer Rockwell all of sd. Middletown and Obadiah Dickinson and Hannah his wife of Wethersfield ... Being the Children and Heirs of the sd Deceased and Being Desirous of a Peaceable and Loving Settlement of the Said Estate have agreed to Divide the Same” with the sons dividing the land lying near Sugar Loaf Hill and Indian Brook and the

land at Sugar Loaf Swamp along with the homelot and Hannah Dickinson to have the land at Boggy Meadow and Hornet Bay Meadow. (MLR vol. 13, p. 560-561)

Burial Location: Riverside Cemetery, Middletown, Conn. “Here lies interred the Body of Capt. Joseph Rockwell, who was chosen Deacon of the first church of Christ in Middletown, May the 31st, 1704, and having served his own generation by the Will of God, fell on sleep October ye 27, 1742, in the 75th year of his Age.” (NEHSGR vol. 15, p. 166)]

Notes:

(CAF): Joseph Rockwell was a deputy to the General Court in 1710, 1712, 1713, 1714, 1715, 1716, 1717, and 1719.

(SAV): “ROCKWELL, JOSEPH, Middletown, s. of John the sec. may have first liv. at Norwalk, m. 1 Feb. 1694, Elizabeth Foster, and had John and Joseph, tw. b. 1694; Edwin and Elizabeth tw. 1700; William, 1702; Hannah, 1704; was a deac.” [Compiler's note: Joseph Rockwell of Norwalk died abt. 1714. (*Genealogy of the Families of John Rockwell of Stamford, Conn. 1641*, by James Boughton, 1903)]

(SAV): “ROCKWELL, JOHN, Windsor, s. of William prob. b. in Eng. m. 6 May 1651, Sarah Ensign, perhaps d. of James, had Sarah, b. 12 May 1653; Ruth, 5 Mar. 1655; and Lydia, 27 Nov. 1656. His w. d. 23 June 1659. He m. 18 Aug. 1662, Deliverance Haynes of Dorchester, rem. to Stamford, had John, b. 6 Sept. 1663; Hannah, 30 May 1665; Joseph, 8 July 1668; and Elizabeth 5 Feb. 1671; and he d. 3 Sept. 1673, aged 46, all his ch. exc. John, being then liv. Sarah, m. 8 Oct. 1676, John Crampton of Norwalk, unless Hall, in his Hist. 188, be wrong. But Stiles, 762, says that she m. David Hall; Ruth, m. Daniel Mix; Lydia m. Joshua Atwater, 24 June 1680, and h. and w. d. next yr.; Elizabeth m. 1 Feb. 1694, James Ward.”

(SAV): “ROCKWELL, WILLIAM, Dorchester, f. of John the first. Came prob. in the Mary and John, req. adm. as freem. 19 Oct. 1630, and was sw. 18 May foll. was one of the first two deac. rem. to Windsor, in its sec. yr. there d. 15 May 1640, leav. wid. Susanna (prob. sec. w. to wh. Hist. of D. gives the surname Chapin), wh. m. Matthew Grant, and ch. John; Samuel; Joan, wh. m. 15 Nov. 1642, Jeffrey Baker; Ruth, wh. m. 7 Oct. 1652, Christopher Huntington; Mary; Joseph; and Sarah, wh. m. 22 Mar. 1658, Walter Gaylord, as his sec. w. Stiles makes Mary m. Jeffrey Mahon; but I doubt the outlandish surname, and suspect the bapt. name was borrow. from the h. of Joan. Of this name, ten had in 1829 been gr. at Yale and one at Dart.”

(HMC): On January 5, 1708/9, Joseph Rockwell admitted as an inhabitant. [**Compiler's note:** Joseph Rockwell was not born in Middletown, although he had lived here since age seven.]

(*Records of First Church of Christ, Congregational, Middletown, Connecticut, 1668-1870*): On May 11, 1673, Elizabeth Foster, daughter of Edward Foster and Elizabeth his wife baptized (p. 18) [**Compiler's note:** Elizabeth later married Joseph Rockwell.]; on July 30, 1681, Deliverance Warner admitted to full communion (p. 31) [**Compiler's note:** She was the mother



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of Joseph Rockwell]; on October 28, 1694, Joseph Rockwell and Elizabeth (formerly Rockwell now) Ward his sister owning the covenant were admitted as members in initiation being baptized in infancy at Windsor where their father was in full communion (p. 45); on November 4, 1694, John Rockwell baptized (p. 45); on August 29, 1697, Joseph Rockwell, baptized (p. 50); on October 13, Edward and Elizabeth twin children of Joseph and Elizabeth Rockwell baptized (p. 55); on May 31, 1702, Joseph Rockwell admitted to full communion (p. 58); on July 5, 1702, William Rockwell baptized (p. 58); on April 16, 1704, Elizabeth wife of Joseph Rockwell admitted to full communion (p. 60); on May 31, 1704, our brother Joseph Rockwell chosen to the office of deacon in this church (p. 60); on December 24, 1704, Hannah daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth Rockwell baptized (p. 62); on March 21, 1705, our brother Joseph Rockwell ordained to the office of deacon (p. 63); on July 27, 1707, Edward Rockwell baptized (p. 66); on August 22, 1708, Deliverance Bissyl (alias Warner) and Ruth Bissyl (alias Warner) were dismissed to the fellowship of the Church of Christ at Scantic in Windsor (p. 67); on March 11, 1710/1, Ebenezer Rockwell baptized (p. 73); on March 20, 1726, William Rockwell admitted to full communion (p. 93); on February 4, 1733/4, Edward Rockwell admitted to full communion (p. 120); on September 20, 1741, Ebenezer Rockwell and Susanna his wife made confession of the sin of fornication (p. 127); on April 6, 1749, William Rockwell chosen a Deacon (p. 143).

(MLR): On July 3, 1704, David Bissell of Windsor and Ruth Warner daughter of Robert Warner of Middletown and now wife of sd David Bissell to their brother in Law Joseph Rockwell land allotted to said Ruth and her sister Bethiah by the distribution of Robert Warner's estate. (vol. 2, p. 142)

(Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, 1636-1776): At a General Assembly on October 9, 1712, Lt. Joseph Rockwell, deputy from Middletown (vol. 5, p. 346); on May 7, 1717, "This Assembly do establish and confirm Mr. Joseph Rockwell of Midletown to be Captain of the north company or trainband on the south side the ferry river" (vol. 6, p. 7); at a General Assembly on May 14, 1719, Capt. Joseph Rockwell, deputy from Middletown (vol. 6, p. 106).

(MAN): On August 7, 1719, court granted administration to estate of William Harris "to Capt. Joseph Rockwell, Francis Wetmore and Solomon Coit, heirs unto sd. estate." (vol. 2, p. 396-397) [**Compiler's note:** William Harris was the grandfather of Elizabeth (Foster) Rockwell.]

(MLR): On August 6, 1722, Joseph Rockwell and Francis Whitmore of Middletown and Solomon Coit of New London, administrators on the estate of William Harris, deceased, conveyed to Daniel Clark of Middletown seventy four acres in the Northwest Quarter. (vol. 4, p.175)

(MLR): On January 3, 1743, Elizabeth Rockwell of Middletown "in consideration of the love and affection which I have for my Son Willm Rockwell" land laid out in my right in the Third Division of Land on the west side of Connecticut River at a place called Sugar Loaf Swamp containing six acres "begining at the N.E. Corner of a Lot that Did Belong to my husband Dea. Joseph Rockwell Decd." (vol. 13, p. 15-16)

For further reading:

The Rockwell Family in America, by Henry Ensign Rockwell (Boston, Mass.: privately printed, 1873.)

Richard Hawes of Dorchester, Massachusetts and Some of his Descendants, by Frank Mortimer Hawes (Hartford, Conn.: Case, Lockwood, and Brainard, 1932.)

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Abbreviation code used in SMFSD biographical sketches and in-depth profiles:

- (MVR)** Middletown Vital Records (originals at Middletown City Hall, Middletown, Conn.; also available on microfilm at Russell Library, Middletown, Conn.)
- (BCVR)** *The Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records* (original index at Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Conn.; printed index available from Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Md.; digitized index available on CD-Rom as part of *The Ricker Compilation of Vital Records of Early Connecticut*, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Md.)
- (MLR)** *Middletown Land Records* (originals at Middletown City Hall, Middletown, Conn.; also available on microfilm at Russell Library, Middletown, Conn.)
- (MAN)** *Digest of Connecticut Probate Records*, Hartford District (Manwaring, Charles William. *A Digest of the Early Connecticut Probate Records*. Originally published 1904-1906; reprinted 1995, Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995.)
- (CBRMC)** *Commemorative Biographical Record of Middlesex County, Connecticut, Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens, and Many of the Early Settled Families*. Chicago, Ill.: J.H. Beers & Co., 1903.
- (MUH)** *Middletown Upper Houses* (Adams, Charles C. *Middletown Upper Houses, A History of the North Society of Middletown, Connecticut from 1650 to 1800 with Genealogical and Biographical Chapters on Early Families*. New York, N.Y.: The Grafton Press, 1908.)
- (FFS)** Frank Farnsworth Starr ("The Settlers of Mattabesec 1650-1660," *Middletown Penny Press*, Oct. 11, 1900; also published in the *Middletown Tribune* 250th Anniversary supplement.)

- (CAF)** *Centennial Address of Rev. David Field*. (Field, David D. *Centennial Address: With Historical Sketches of Cromwell, Portland, Chatham, Middle Haddam, Middletown, and its Parishes*. Middletown, Conn.: W.B. Casey, 1853.)
- (GMB)** *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633* (Anderson, Robert Charles, FASG. *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620-1633, Vol. I-III*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1996.)
- (SAV)** *Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England* (Savage, James. *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England, Showing Three Generations of Those Who Came Before May, 1692, on the Basis of Farmer's Register*. Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown & Co., 1860-1862.)
- (GFHC)** *Genealogical & Family History of the State of Connecticut* (Cutter, William Richard. *Genealogical and Family History of the State of Connecticut: A Record of the Achievements of Her People in the Making of a Commonwealth and the Founding of a Nation*. New York, N.Y.: Lewis Publishing Co., 1911.)
- (HMC)** *The History of Middlesex County* (Henry Whittemore, ed. *The History of Middlesex County 1635-1885*. New York, N.Y.: J.H. Beers & Co., 1884)
- (RPCC)** *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639-1663* (Adams, Arthur W., ed. *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut 1639-1663*. Hartford, Conn.: Connecticut Historical Society, 1928.)
- (HCCM)** *Hartford County Court Minutes, 1663-1687* (Ullmann, Helen Schatvet, CG, FASG., ed. *Hartford County, Conn., County Court Minutes, Vol. 3 & 4, 1663-1687, 1697*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2005.)
- (NEHGSR)** *NEHGS Register (New England Historical and Genealogical Register)*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1847-2007.) (Online database available at NewEnglandAncestors.org)
- (TAG)** *The American Genealogist* (articles by Donald Lines Jacobus, ed., 1922-1971) (*The American Genealogist*. New Haven, Conn.: D.L. Jacobus, 1922-1971)