



## THE PENNY PRESS

1650 - CELEBRATION - 1900 — Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Town of Middletown — 1650 - CELEBRATION - 1900

# The Settlers of Mattabeseck

1650 — 1660

BY

**FRANK FARNSWORTH STARR**

*Typographic facsimile in the theme of the Middletown Penny Press*

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**Transcriber's Note:** This collection of profiles of the early settlers of Middletown was published in the *Middletown Penny Press* on October 11, 1900, as well as in a special supplement to the *Middletown Tribune*. In this transcription, author F.F. Starr's punctuation, capitalization, usage, and quotation of original records are presented as originally published, with one exception – the word "pound" is used instead of the monetary symbol.

In the limited time allowed in which to prepare for this celebration, it has been impossible to do more than to prepare brief sketches of the settlers for the first ten years. Later it is hoped that papers much more complete and covering a longer period will be printed, with other historical matter, to be preserved by the interested public.

In order to understand some of the facts herein stated, it must be remembered that in England and in the colonies, the change in the calendar did not take effect until 1752.

Prior to that date, the year commenced on the 25th of March. In several other countries the change was made many years before, consequently in New England, it was the custom to write all dates between January 1 and March 25 in both years – thus – January 27, 1705-6.

### THOMAS ALLEN

Thomas Allen is considered to have been one of the company of white men who commenced a settlement at Mattabeseck in 1650. His home lot on the East side of Main street was bounded North by the burying ground and meeting house yard, and East by the Great River.

In 1656 he was appointed the gravedigger, and two years later the town leased the burying ground to him for ten years, reserving the right of burial therein.

He held the office of Fence viewer; was three times chosen Townsman and was a Deputy to the General Court.

He was one of the persons who organized the First church in 1668, and in 1670 was elected one of the Deacons.

In 1685, he was named as one of the

persons to receive a patent of the town from the Colonial authorities.

Nothing is known regarding his first wife, except that she was probably living in December 1668. His second wife was Martha, widow of Roger Gipson.

Having no children of his own, he made a will, in which, after providing for his wife, he gave his property to his nephew Obadiah Allen, and his wife's Gipson children.

Deacon Thomas Allen died in October, 1688, and his widow Martha in May, 1690.

### NATHANIEL BACON

Nathaniel Bacon, nephew of Andrew Bacon of Hartford, is supposed to have resided for a time in that town before coming to Middletown. He settled here before April, 1653, and resided on the

West side of Main street, a few rods South of Spring street.

In 1654, he was chosen town Constable and later Fence viewer, Howard and Pound keeper, Rate maker, Surveyor of highways and Townsman or Selectman.

The date of his marriage to Ann, daughter of Thomas Miller is unknown. She died in July, 1680, and he married second, Elizabeth Pierpont.

He died in January, 1705-6, having probably out lived his wife.

He had eleven children.

### WILLIAM BLOMFIELD

A man by this name sold a house and lot in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1638. He is supposed to be the same person who appeared at Hartford in the following year, where later he had two children baptized.



He located in Middletown before March, 1652, and resided on the North side of the Riveret. He sold his land here to Nathaniel Dickinson, and in 1660 resided in New London, removing a few years later to Newtown, L.I.

#### **WILLIAM CORNWELL**

William Cornwell, "Serjant at armes," was a resident of Hartford in 1639. He removed to Middletown before November, 1652, when he was appointed one of the committee to apportion the home lots and planting fields.

Five years later he was appointed on a similar committee.

In 1664 he was chosen Constable and in 1668, Surveyor of highways.

In 1669, the town voted to build a new meeting house and he was appointed one of the building committee.

For three years he was a Deputy to the General Court.

His home lot of five acres, was located on the South east corner of Main and Washington streets.

He made his will "4th, 12th, 1674," in which he described himself as "being well stricken in yeares & much abatted in my Naturall Strength."

In 1675, the General Court "freed Sarj't William Cornwell his head from paying of rates."

He died in February, 1677-8, leaving a widow Mary, whose date of birth and parentage are unknown.

They had eight children.

#### **JOHN HALL**

John Hall from Hartford, was a resident here in 1652. A town meeting was held at his house in February, 1652, when it was voted to build a meeting house.

He held the offices of Townsman, Constable and Grand levy man.

"John Hall Senior Ended this life the 26 of May, 1673, being the 89 year of his age & the 40th yeare of his living in new England." There is no record of his wife.

He left four children.

#### **JOHN HALL JR.**

John Hall Jr., son of John Hall Sr., was here in 1652, and became one of the important men of the town.

He was chosen Sealer of Measures, Constable, Rate maker, Townsman, and in 1653 Deputy to the General Court.

In 1658, he made a canoe for the town ferry, for which he was paid in corn to the value of four pounds.

In 1669, he was chosen master builder of the new meeting house.

He was appointed to keep the ordinary or tavern, was a schoolmaster, on committees to seek for a minister for the town and to complete the parsonage house.

He was one of the ten males who organized the First church in 1668, and two years later was chosen one of the Deacons.

In 1685, he was named as one of the patentees for the town.

His wife Ann, daughter of John Wilcox, died in July, 1673, and he married in October, 1674, widow Mary Hubbard.

He made a will in which he gave his property to his widow, her Hubbard children and his nephews and great nephews that were named for him.

Deacon John Hall died in January, 1694-5, aged 74, without issue.

#### **RICHARD HALL**

Richard Hall, son of John Hall Sr., was a resident here before 1654, and lived on the West side of Main street, between Court and College streets.

He held the offices of Surveyor of highways, Packer, Culler of staves and Townsman.

He died March 27, 1691, aged about 71, and his wife Mary died three days later.

They had seven children.

#### **SAMUEL HALL**

Samuel Hall, son of John Hall Sr., was located here in 1854, and lived on Main street, later removing to the North Society, now Cromwell.

He was chosen Fence viewer, Surveyor of highways, Grand Levy man and Townsman.

He died March 14, 1690, his wife Elizabeth surviving him. They had three children.



### ***Frank Farnsworth Starr***

**Frank Farnsworth Starr** (1852-1939) was Middletown's own preeminent professional genealogist. Born in Middletown, he was a descendant of Comfort Starr, a Middletown arrival in 1673. Starr's meticulous work continues to be highly regarded. His *magnum opus* among his numerous genealogies is *Various Ancestral Lines of James Goodwin and Lucy (Morgan) Goodwin of Hartford, Conn.* (1915). (Starr worked on genealogical projects for over 25 years for Hartford banker James Junius Goodwin, cousin of J.P. Morgan.) Starr had an encyclopedic knowledge of early Middletown families, and as early as 1881 planned a genealogical record of the town, posting his intentions to the NEHGS Register. This project was never completed, continually deferred in favor of revenue-producing work on behalf of clients across the country. In 1900 he compiled these sketches of Middletown's early settlers for the *Penny Press* and *Tribune*. Starr bequeathed his research papers to the Middlesex County Historical Society, where they are consulted by researchers of today. (Text by R.W. Bacon; photo of F.F. Starr in 1889 courtesy of the Middlesex County Historical Society.)



### **GILES HAMLIN**

Giles Hamlin that  
— — — — “cedar tall  
gently wafted ore  
from Great Brittain's isle  
to this western shore,”  
where he arrived before 1651.

He is supposed to have resided for a few years in Hartford, settling in Middletown before March, 1654. His home lot on the East side of Main street, extended from about the North side of J. H. Bunce's store nearly, if not quite, to Court street.

In 1679, he purchased a house and ten acres of land on the South west corner of Main and Washington streets. This was the home of the family for four generations.

His occupation was that of a mariner and from the inscription on his grave stone, we learn that he was “near fifty years crossing the ocean wide.”

In 1665, he was in command of a vessel called the “Desire,” and in 1679 the “John and James.”

He was chosen Rate maker, Grand Levy man, also Townsman, and was appointed one of the committee to seat the new meeting house.

Rev. Nathaniel Collins, the pastor of the town, died in December, 1684, and the following month Hamlin was one of the persons appointed “to seek for help in the ministry,” also “to Purchase house for the use of the minister as convenient as may be.”

In 1686, he was one of five appointed to attend the finishing of the parsonage house. In 1666, he gave “a drum to the town and train band,” and the town passed a vote regarding its use.

He was appointed a Committee of Justice of the Peace for Middletown from 1666 to 1685, both inclusive, and by that body was often appointed on important committees.

In 1685, he was chosen one of the Assistants, and held that office until his death.

He was one of the persons named by the town in 1685, to whom on behalf of the town, a patent should be granted by the Colonial authorities.

The date of his marriage to Hester,

daughter of John Crow of Hartford, is unknown.

He died September 1, 1689, “aged 67 years,” and his grave stone bears the oldest date of any now extant in Middletown.

His widow Hester died August 1700, aged 72.

They had seven children.

### **DANIEL HARRIS**

Daniel Harris came from Rowley, Mass., before 1653, and located on the East side of Main street.

In 1659, he was appointed to keep the ordinary.

He was one of the persons who had charge of the town stock of powder and arms, and in 1685 was named as one of the patentees of the town.

In 1664, he was chosen Lieutenant the train band and in 1677, Captain.

He was four times a Deputy to the General Court.

He died in November, 1701, his wife Mary surviving.

They had ten children.

### **WILLIAM HARRIS**

William Harris and his wife Edith came to Middletown from Rowley, Mass., before November, 1652 when was chosen one of the Townsmen. Later he held the offices of Grand Levy man, Rate maker, Packer and Constable.

He was appointed by the town on various committees, and in 1685, was named as one of the patentees.

“Eudith wife to William Harris parted this life August fifth 1685.” He married a second wife, Lydia, and died before 1700.

### **GEORGE HUBBARD**

George Hubbard “of Middletown was mayd free,” at a session of the General Court in 1654.

His home lot was situated on the East side of Main street, North of Green street.

“At a town meeting december 17th 66. Wharas in Mr. Hamline this day Gave a drum to the town and train band: The towne Voated to allowe

Goodman Huberd fourtie Shillings for Sweeping the meeting hous and keeping the Glas and for his Son Josephes beating the drum for all Comon meeting both on Saboth days and all other meeting and to be beaten twis on fornouns and twis in afternouns Saboth days and thank Giving days and fast days to be beatten from the meeting hous to against mr. stows to be Gine first with a preparative and after a Calle this for the year Insuing; but the drum for futer to be beaten after the Sam maner.”

In 1666 he was, by the County Court “freed from watch ward and traineing.”

His name stands last in the list of ten males who organized the First church in 1668.

The date of his marriage with Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Watts of Hartford, is unknown.

He made his will May 22, 1681, “being about eighty yeares in age” and died March 18, 1684-5.

It is not known whether his wife survived him.

They had eight children.

### **JOHN KIRBY**

John Kirby, probably a native of Warwickshire, England, was a resident of Hartford in 1645. Two years later he was living at Wethersfield and removed to Middletown between December, 1651, and January, 1653-4 locating in what ii now the town of Cromwell.

He held the offices of Deputy Constable, Surveyor of highways, Pound Keeper and Townsman.

He died April, 1677, age unknown. His widow Elizabeth married Abraham Randall of Windsor and died after April. 1700.

They had eleven children.

### **JOHN MARTIN**

At a meeting held November 8, 1652, John Martin was chosen the town Constable. In the early days of the Colony it was the custom for the Constable from each town to take the oath of office at a session of the Particular Court, generally in March following the election. There is no



record of Martin's being sworn, but in March, 1652-3, Thomas Whitmore was sworn Constable for Mattabeseck, from which it is inferred that Martin had died and that Whitmore was chosen to fill the vacancy.

In March, 1654, Mistress Martin is one of the persons whose names appear on the record regarding the building of the meadow fence. From this date there is no mention of either Martin or his wife, and it is not known whether they left any children.

#### **THOMAS MILLER**

Thomas Miller, by trade a carpenter, came from Rowley, Mass., in or before 1652. At the annual town meeting of that year he was appointed Surveyor of highways and later Townsman.

In 1655, the town authorities made an agreement with him regarding the building of a grist mill, which he was to have charge of when completed, and, in 1671, the town released him from paying taxes so long as he owned and ran the mill.

The date of death of his wife Isabel, is unknown. He married second, Sarah Nettleton.

He died August 14, 1680, "being Sumthing above seaventy years of age," his wife surviving.

He had nine children.

#### **JOHN SAVAGE**

On the town records of Hartford is following entry. "John Savage of Hartford was married to Elizabeth Dubbin ye tenth day of febr: one thousand sixe hundred and fifty two."

"John Savidge" of "Middletowne," was one of seven men who were "mayd free" by the General Court in 1654.

The following entry is taken from the records of the Particular Court.

"A court of Magistrates in wethersfield the 18 Aprill 54." "Those persons of the Trained Band of Mattabeseck that came too late to the last training which were all (except those that Came not at all) are fined 15d for each person & those that Came not at all are fined 2.6d apeece according to order, those persons that

can give satisfying answer or Reason to the Courte of their Late Comming are only to bee freed, John willcock & John Sauage are freed from the aforesaid penalties."

He resided in that part of the town which lay on the "North side the River," now Cromwell, also owning lands in other parts of the town.

His name stands seventh in the list of organizing members of the First church of Middletown, November, 1668.

He died March 6, 1684-5, leaving an estate of 480.15.06.

His wife Elizabeth was living in November, 1684, when he made his will. How long she survived is unknown.

They had eleven children.

#### **WILLIAM SMITH**

William Smith and his wife Elizabeth were residents of Middletown before November, 1652, living on the North side of St. John's Square.

He was one of the Townsmen, a Deputy to the General Court and the first Recorder or Town Clerk, which last office he held until about November, 1656.

In 1659, when he sold his house and lands here, he was a resident of Farmington, where he died about ten years later.

He had nine children.

#### **SAMUEL STOCKING**

On the Hartford town records is found this entry. "Samuel Stockin sonn of Georg Stockin was married to Bethia Hopkins daughter of John Hopkins the twenty seaventh day May one thousand six hundred fifty twoe." The following November he had become a resident of Middletown, and at a town meeting held that month, he was appointed on a committee regarding the laying out of lands.

He was made a freeman by the General Court in 1654.

He held the offices of Townsman, Rate maker, Surveyor of highways, Grand Levy man also Fence viewer, I and was Deputy to the General Court for several sessions.

His homestead was on the bank of the Great River in the North society, and he owned many acres elsewhere.

Samuel Stocking died in December, 1683, and his widow is supposed to have married James Steele of Hartford.

Samuel Stocking had eleven children.

#### **SAMUEL STOW**

Rev. Samuel Stow became a resident of Middletown before September 1652.

On the present page one of the volume of town votes is an entry, partially indecipherable, relating to the erection of a building for Mr. Stow, presumably a house.

In November, 1652, the town meeting was held at his house. He was the minister of the town from his settlement here until 1659. Opposition to him had been growing for some time, which culminated in petitions to the General Court, from him and his opponents. The Court authorized the town to employ some other minister, but gave him permission to preach to those who cared to hear him.

In 1668, he was chosen Rate maker, and in 1679-80, the Townsmen were ordered "to make Adres to Mr. Stow in order to being a Sohoollmaster for the year ensuing."

From 1681 to 1685 he preached at Simsbury.

In 1695, the General Court voted to "return there thanks to Mr. Stow for his great paynes in preparing a History of the Annalls of New England."

He was a Deputy to the General Court in 1697.

Rev. Samuel Stow died May 8, 1704, having out lived his wife Hope, daughter of William Fletcher.

They had eight children.

#### **MATTHIAS TREAT**

Matthias Trot or Treat was a resident of Middletown before November, 1652, and at a town meeting held in that month, he was elected a Surveyor of highways.

His home lot of three acres was in the North society, adjoining that of his



brother-in-law, Joseph Smith. He also owned lands in other parts of the town.

In January, 1653, he sold his house and lands in Middletown to John Wilcox "payle maker," and removed to Wethersfield.

#### **ROBERT WEBSTER**

Robert Webster, son of John Webster of Hertford, came to Middletown before November, 1652, and located in the North society.

He was one of the Townsman, several times chosen a Deputy to the General Court, and by that body appointed on various committees.

In November, 1656, he was chosen Recorder for the town and held this office for about five years.

In 1664, he had returned to Hartford and he died about 1676. On our records four children are recorded to him and his wife Susanna.

#### **THOMAS WHITMORE OR WETMORE**

On the Hartford town records is entered the marriage of "Thomas Whittmore and Sarah halles the eleuenth of Desember one Thousand six hundreth forty & fiue."

He was made a freeman at the General Court in May, 1653 and before the following November had become a resident of Middletown.

In March, 1652-3 he was sworn as a Constable for Mattabeseck and again ten years later. He also held the offices of Townsman, Grand Levy man, Rate maker and Pounder.

He represented the town at the General Court in 1654 and 55.

In October, 1654, he with ten others, were appointed a committee by the General Court "to press men and necessaryes," for the expedition against the Narragansett Indians.

In 1668, the General Court abated "Thomas Whitmore his rate that Waspayable this yeare to the country, for his service in ferrying Assists & Deputies over the River."

His five acre home lot was on the East side of Main street, between Green and Ferry streets.

He married three times and died December 11, 1681, "aged about sixty and six years."

He had seventeen children.

#### **NATHANIEL WHITE**

Nathaniel White, son of Elder John White of Hartford, had become a resident of Middletown in 1653, when he was chosen Townsman.

He later held the offices of Constable, Rate maker and Grand Levy man.

He was one of the committee appointed by the town to secure successors to the first and second ministers. In 1669, he was one of the committee appointed to superintend the building of the new meeting house and on its completion was one of the seating committee.

In 1679, with two others he was appointed to take charge of the military stores in the town, in 1685 was named as one of the patentees for the town, and in 1696 was appointed Recorder to act during the absence of John Hamlin.

In military life he held the position of Ensign, Lieutenant and Captain.

His most important duties were as a Deputy to the General Court for 114 sessions, from 1659 to 1710, and as Commissioner or Justice of the Peace from 1659 until his death, except during the Andrus usurpation.

The date of his marriage to his wife Elizabeth is unknown. She died "in ye year 1690 aged about 65 years," and he married second, widow Martha (Coit) Mould of New London.

Captain Nathaniel White "dyed August ye 27th 1711 aged about 82 years" having out lived the head of all the families that settled in the town before 1658, and with one exception before 1660.

His widow Martha died in 1730.

He left eight children.

#### **NATHANIEL BROWN**

Nathaniel Brown was a resident of Hartford in 1647. December 23 of that year he married Eleanor, daughter of Richard Watts of that town.

About 1654 Brown removed to this town and resided on the west side of Main Street, north of Washington.

He died before January 1659-60. His widow married Jasper Clements and died in September, 1703.

Brown left five children.

#### **WILLIAM CHENEY**

William Cheney became a resident of Middletown in 1654 and three years later was made a freeman by the General Court.

He held the offices of Rate maker, Constable, Grand Levy man and Townsman, by appointment served on various town committees, and in 1685 he was named as one of the patentees of the town.

He held the positions of Sergeant and Ensign in the train band.

He outlived his two wives, Ann and Hope, and died in November 1705, childless.

#### **HENRY COLE**

Henry Cole, probably a nephew of James Cole of Hartford, married in that town in 1646 Sarah, daughter of William Rusco.

He removed to Middletown before June 1654, and resided on a five acre lot at the Southwest corner of Main and Washington Streets.

He held the offices of Rate maker and Townsman.

In 1673 he sold his lands to Edward Higby, and removed to Wallingford, where he died a few years later.

He had eleven children.

#### **GEORGE GRAVES**

George Graves of Middletown, was made a freeman by the General Court in 1654. He was son of George Graves of Hartford, where he married April 2 1651, Elizabeth Ventres.

He was one of the Townsmen in 1655, and a Deputy to the General Court in 1657 and 58.

Prior to 1663 he sold his lands here and returned to Hartford where he lived many years.



### **WILLIAM MARKHAM**

In 1654 William Markham was an inhabitant of Middletown, residing on the West side of Main Street, North of Washington.

He was Constable in 1656 and 57.

In 1664 he was living in Hadley, Massachusetts, when he gave a deed of all his lands in Middletown to Robert Warner.

### **JOSEPH SMITH**

Before 1655 Joseph Smith and his wife Lydia, resided in the North Society on the bank of the Connecticut river. Evidently he lived here but a few years, removing to Wethersfield, where he died before 1674, his widow and four children surviving.

### **WILLIAM WARD**

At a town meeting held in 1654, it was voted that William Ward should pay taxes on 100 pounds only, and in 1655 he was granted a homelot of five acres.

He was chosen Constable, Grand Levy man, Rate maker, Surveyor and Deputy to the General Court. He was also a Sergeant in the train band.

In 1674 the town granted him a piece of land provided he built a Fulling mill on it within three years. In 1677 the time was extended two years, and finally he was granted the land absolutely, "hee ingaging to build his fulling mill as sone as he Can attayn it."

He married twice and died March 28, 1690.

He had nine children.

### **JOHN WILCOX**

John Wilcox, "payle maker" was son of John Wilcox of Hartford, where he resided some years before coming to Middletown in 1654.

He held the offices of Fence viewer, Grand Levy man and Townsman.

Several large tracts of land in various parts of town were owned by him.

He had four wives, Sarah Wadsworth, Catherine Stoughton, widow Mary Farnsworth, and Esther Cornwell.

He died in May 1676 his wife Esther surviving.

There were nine children.

### **JOHN COCKRAN**

At a town meeting held in November 1655, John Cockran was granted five acres of land for a home-lot which he located on the West side of Main street, South of Washington.

Whether he actually resided here I do not know, but he sold the property before 1663 and further trace of him is lost.

### **ROBERT WARNER**

Robert Warner, son of Andrew Warner of Hartford, married in February 1654, Elizabeth, daughter of Seth Grant, of Hartford.

Warner came to Middletown in 1655 and at once became a public official holding various town offices.

His father purchased for him the lands of William Markham, including his home lot on the West side of Main street, where Robert resided.

His wife Elizabeth dying in 1673, he married second, widow Deliverance Rockwell of Windsor, who died in 1718.

Robert Warner died April 10, 1690, having been the father of eleven children.

### **SAMUEL EGGLESTONE**

"At town meeting in febbieary: 9 1658 thear was granted to the showmacker eagellston apease of meddow that was intendid for a shoomacker formerly leying from creacke to creacke buting on the boge meddow as allso ahowse lot beyond goodman mellor in cace adoth not by: and if adoth by then to giv him upland ansuarabell to a house lot: and he ingaging to inheabit it seaven year upon it as allso doth ingag to indeavour to sut the town in his tread for making and mending shoese:"

In 1663 he resided on the North side of St. John's Square.

He died in February 1690, probably having survived his wife Sarah.

They had nine children.

### **THOMAS HOPEWELL**

"At a towne meeting feabarary the:3:1658"

"The inhabytans of middle towne being met together did Reaseave

Thomas hopwell as ane inhabytaut: and did grant him a hows Lot containing fiue acors: more ore Les. The aforsayd thomas ingageing himself to inhabyt uppone it and: build a habytale hows, for the space of four yeare The towne allso Did grant to thomas hopwell: five acors of upland aJoyning toe his hows Lot Lying westward from the Reare of his hows Lot:

The afore sayd Thomas hopwell Dothe ingage and agree with the towne to pay Reats according to a fifty pownd estate."

This home lot was on the corner of Main and Church streets. In 1663 it became the property of Giles Hamlin and Hopewell disappeared from view. It is thought that he removed to Fairfield county.

### **THOMAS RANNEY**

At a town meeting held February 8, 1658, Thomas Ranney was admitted as an inhabitant and granted a home lot next to that of Thomas Hopewell who lived on the corner of Main and Church streets. In May 1659 he married Mary, daughter of George Hubbard and in 1663 had located in the North Society.

Ranney was frequently elected to office by his townsmen.

He died in June 1713 and his widow Mary in 1721. They had eleven children.

This ends the list of settlers for the first ten years.

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May the time soon come, when there shall be written complete sketches of these men and their successors, a part of an exhaustive history of this good old town, that its story may be properly set forth before the public and preserved for the education of future generations. ■

*Frank J. Amos with Stam*