Middletown, Connecticut

Background

Towns Once Part of Middletown

Middletown was once much larger and included parts of several other towns. Cromwell, north of Middletown, was founded as part of the Mattabesset settlement in 1651. It was called “Upper Houses” until its separation from Middletown in 1851. Parts of modern Portland and East Hampton also once belonged to Middletown and were called “East Middletown.” The areas were first settled in 1714. In 1767, East Middletown became part of the township of Chatham. In 1841, it split again. “East Middletown” became modern Portland. Middlefield was the last of Middletown’s parishes to split off, in 1866. As a result, records for other towns may be found in Middletown archives.¹

Major Events in Middletown History

1646: Plans created by General Court for settlement at Mattabset.²
1650: First English settlement.³
1653: First called Middletown.⁴
1784: Incorporated as a city.⁵
1785: First newspaper – Middletown Gazette.⁶
1831: Founding of Wesleyan University.⁷
1840: First high school.⁸
1868: Founding of the State Hospital (today Connecticut Valley Hospital).⁹
1872: Middletown Mansfields active (professional baseball team).¹⁰
1875: Russell Library founded.¹¹
1927: Major flood.¹²
1936: Major flood.¹³
1938: September 21, 1938 is the “Great New England Hurricane.”¹⁴

Publications

The list of publications was taken from the Library of Congress “U.S. Newspaper Directory.”¹⁵
The list is organized by date, from earliest to latest.

The Middlesex Gazette: 1785-1787
The Middlesex Gazette or Federal Advertiser: 1787-1792
The Middlesex Gazette: 1792-1823
Connecticut Spectator: 1814
American Sentinel: 1823-1833
Middlesex Gazette and General Advertiser: 1823-1824
Middlesex Gazette: 1824-?
Sentinel and Witness: 1833-1867
The Witness: 1833
New England Advocate: 1834-1836
The Constitution: 1838-1889
The Castigator: 1840
The Son of Temperance: 1847-1850
The Adder: 1849
The Oasis: 1850
The Son of Temperance and Family Visitor: 1850
The Middletown Daily News: 1850-1851
The Middletown Oasis: 1851-1852
News and Advertiser: 1851-1854
The Morning News: 1851
Weekly News and Advertiser: 1851
The Rainbow: 1853-1860
Middletown News: 1854
Middlesex County Argus: 1855
Middletown Explorer: 1856
The Middletown Republican: 1857
The Middlesex County Democrat: 1860
Middletown Democrat: 1861
The Daily Patriot: 1861
Our County and Sentinel and Witness: 1867-1868
Our County: 1867-1868
The Sentinel and Witness: 1868-1872
Middletown Advertiser: 1871-1874
The Daily Constitution: 1872-1876
The Middletown Sentinel and Witness: 1873-1877
The Advertiser: 1874
Middletown Daily Sentinel: 1876
Sentinel and Witness: 1877-
Middlesex Monitor: 1878
The Young American: 1878-
State Temperance Journal: 1879-
Middletown News: 1881-
Middlesex Daily Herald: 1883-
The Penny Press: 1884-1918
The Middletown Herald: 1885-1896
Evening Journal: 1887
The Drug Bulletin: 1888
The Middletown Constitution: 1889-1890
Sunday Morning Call: 1891
The Middletown Tribune: 1893-1901
The New Republic: 1895
The Tribune: 1901-1903
The Middletown Tribune: 1903-1906
The Middletown Times: 1914
The Evening Press: 1918-1919
The Middletown Press: 1919-Present
The Middletown Graphic: 1937
The Middletown Bulletin: 1949-Present
The Herald Press: 1996-Present

Colleges, Industrial Schools, and Universities

Partridge Academy: Failed 1829, land became part of Wesleyan University.\(^{16}\)
Wesleyan University: Founded 1831.\(^{17}\)
Berkley Divinity School: 1854-1928\(^{18}\)
Connecticut Industrial School for Girls (Long Lane): Founded 1870.\(^{19}\)
Wilcox College of Nursing: Founded 1908, closed 1997.\(^{20}\)
Middlesex Community College: Founded in 1966, branch of Manchester Comm. College.\(^{21}\)

High Schools (current schools)

Middletown High School: public.
Mercy: All girls, Catholic.
Vinal Regional Vocational Technical School: public, vocational.
Xavier: All boys, Catholic.

Hospitals

Middlesex Hospital: Charter granted 1895. First hospital opened 1904.\(^{22}\)
Connecticut Valley Hospital: Founded as Connecticut Hospital for the Insane, 1867.\(^{23}\)

Religious Communities

1. East Middletown:
   a. First Congregational Church: 1714.\(^{24}\)
2. Upper Houses
   a. First Congregational Church: 1715.\(^{25}\)
3. Middlefield
   a. St. Colman Church: Originally a mission of St. John Church. Became a mission of St. Francis after 1904.\(^{26}\)
   b. Middlefield Federated Church: Middlefield Congregational Church was established in 1745; Middlefield Methodist Church had its first meeting in 1790. The two merged in 1900.\(^{27}\)
4. Middletown
   a. Roman Catholic:
      - St. John’s: First church opened April 1844. Second (and current) church dedicated September 1852. Mostly Irish.\(^{28}\)
      - St. Francis: Founded 1904. Originally controlled Notre Dame (Durham) and St. Colman’s (Middlefield).\(^{29}\)
      - St. Sebastian: Founded 1931. Mostly Italian.\(^{30}\)
      - St. Pius: Founded 1959, run by the Capuchin Friary. “Modern Parish.”\(^{31}\)
- St. Mary’s of Czestochowa: Formally Polish Roman Catholic Church of St Mary of Czestochowa. Dedicated 1905.\(^{32}\)

b. Lutheran
- Christ Lutheran Church: Established as Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Tabor Church in 1891. First church 1895. Renamed as Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1922.\(^{33}\) Merged to become Faith Lutheran in 2012.\(^{34}\)
- Grace Evangelical/ St. Paul Lutheran Church: Founded 1893.\(^{35}\) Merged to become Faith Lutheran in 2012.\(^{36}\)
- Grace Evangelical Lutheran/St. John’s Evangelic Lutheran Church: First built as German Evangelical Lutheran Church. Organized 1901; the first building was built in 1905. Changed name in the 1950s when moved to current location.\(^{37}\)

c. Episcopal
- Holy Trinity: Originally called Christ Church. First services were in 1724, and the first building in 1750.\(^{38}\)

d. Congregational
- First Church of Christ, Congregational: Founded November 1668.\(^{39}\)
- South Church: Founded 1747 in a home. Became a church in 1818.\(^{40}\)
- Third Church: Organized in Westfield in December 1773 from first and second churches.\(^{41}\)

e. Jewish
- Congregation Adath Israel: First services in 1905, first building 1908.\(^{42}\)

f. Hindu

g. AME
- Cross Street AME Zion: Established 1823.\(^{43}\)

**Literature**


## Repositories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congregation Adath Israel</td>
<td><a href="http://www.adathisraelct.org/">http://www.adathisraelct.org/</a></td>
<td>8 Broad St., Middletown, CT</td>
<td>Only extent worship site for Middletown’s Jewish community. Many materials on long term loan to Wesleyan University Special Collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court of Probate, Middletown, Middlesex County</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>94 Court Street, Middletown CT 06457</td>
<td>Wills (transcribed). No original copies extent. Middletown Only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Street AME Zion</td>
<td><a href="http://www.crossstreetamezion.org/">http://www.crossstreetamezion.org/</a></td>
<td>440 West St., Middletown CT</td>
<td>Church records AME since 19th century.</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Church of Christ Congregational, Middletown</td>
<td><a href="http://www.firstchurchmiddletown.org/">http://www.firstchurchmiddletown.org/</a></td>
<td>190 Court St., Middletown CT</td>
<td>Church Records, Congregational, dating back to 17th century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Congregational Church, Cromwell</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fcc">http://www.fcc</a> Cromwell.org/</td>
<td>355 Main St., Cromwell CT</td>
<td>Church records, Congregational, dating back to the 18th century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Congregational Church, Portland</td>
<td><a href="http://www.firstchurchportlandct.org/">http://www.firstchurchportlandct.org/</a></td>
<td>554 Main St., Portland CT</td>
<td>Church records, Congregational, dating back to the 17th century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godfrey Library</td>
<td><a href="http://www.godfrey.org">www.godfrey.org</a></td>
<td>134 Newfield St., Middletown, CT 06457</td>
<td>Databases, books, original Middletown records; access to FHL microfilms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Department, Middletown</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cityofmiddletown.com">www.cityofmiddletown.com</a></td>
<td>245 deKoven Drive, Middletown, CT 06457</td>
<td>Vital Records, 17th Century Deeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Trinity, Middletown</td>
<td><a href="http://holytrinity.cdiocese.org/default.asp">http://holytrinity.cdiocese.org/default.asp</a></td>
<td>381 Main St., Middletown, CT</td>
<td>Church records</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mercy High School, Alumnae Association</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mercyhigh.com/page/alumnae">http://www.mercyhigh.com/page/alumnae</a></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Alumnae contact, possible images.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlefield Federated Church</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mfcct.com/home.shtml">http://www.mfcct.com/home.shtml</a></td>
<td>402 Main St., Middlefield, CT</td>
<td>Church records.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex County Historical Society</td>
<td><a href="http://www.middlesexhistory.org">www.middlesexhistory.org</a></td>
<td>151 Main St., Middletown CT 06457</td>
<td>Books, manuscripts, Middletown vital records (Starr Collection), city directories, local newspapers (paper versions), early Wesleyan yearbooks and manuscripts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Address</td>
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<td>Middletown High School, Guidance Department</td>
<td><a href="http://www.middletownschools.org/page.cfm?p=8668">http://www.middletownschools.org/page.cfm?p=8668</a></td>
<td>200 LaRosa Lane Middletown, CT 06457</td>
<td>Transcripts, Student Attendance, Yearbooks pre-1950 (scattered)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olin Library</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/">http://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/</a></td>
<td>Wesleyan University Campus, Middletown</td>
<td>Manuscripts, Books, Databases, Wesleyan University Archives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Library</td>
<td><a href="http://www.russelllibrary.org">www.russelllibrary.org</a></td>
<td>123 Broad St., Middletown, CT 06457</td>
<td>Books; Manuscripts; Local Documents; City Directories; Local newspapers; Access to Ancestry.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Church, Middletown</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 Pleasant St., Middletown</td>
<td>Church Records, Congregational, dating back to 1747.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Francis, Middletown</td>
<td><a href="http://www.saintfrancisofassisi.com/">http://www.saintfrancisofassisi.com/</a></td>
<td>10 Elm St., Middletown, CT</td>
<td>Baptismal Records, post-1903 (Catholic, mixed). Originally controlled Catholic parishes in Middlefield and Durham, likely holds their original baptismal records. Now primarily Hispanic.</td>
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<td>St. John’s, Middletown</td>
<td><a href="http://www.saintjohnchurchmiddletown.com/">http://www.saintjohnchurchmiddletown.com/</a> Pages/default.aspx</td>
<td>19 St. John Sq, Middletown, CT 06457</td>
<td>Baptismal Records, post-1843 (Irish Catholic). Originally controlled Catholic parishes in Middlefield and Durham, likely holds their original baptismal records.</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s, Middletown</td>
<td><a href="http://stmarymiddletown.com/">http://stmarymiddletown.com/</a></td>
<td>79 S. Main St., Middletown, CT</td>
<td>Baptismal Records, post-1903 (Polish Catholic).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Sebastian’s, Middletown</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stsebastianmiddletown.org/">http://www.stsebastianmiddletown.org/</a></td>
<td>155 Washington St., Middletown, CT</td>
<td>Baptismal Records, Post-1920 (Italian Catholic).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Congregational Church</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thirdchurchmiddletown.org/">http://www.thirdchurchmiddletown.org/</a></td>
<td>94 Miner St., Middletown, CT</td>
<td>Church records, back to 18th century</td>
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<td>Xavier High School, Alumni Association</td>
<td><a href="http://www.xavierhighschool.org/alumni-giving">http://www.xavierhighschool.org/alumni-giving</a></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Alumni contact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endnotes


3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.


8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.


14 Ibid.


16 Elizabeth A. Warner, A Pictorial History of Middletown (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1990), 44.


18 Elizabeth A. Warner, A Pictorial History of Middletown (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1990), 44.

19 Elizabeth A. Warner, A Pictorial History of Middletown (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1990), 49.


