

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



827

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Middlefield Center HD

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 138-188 Skyline Trail and 7 Bell Road not for publication

city or town Middlefield vicinity _____

state Massachusetts code MA county Hampshire code 015 zip code 01243

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Brona Simon

August 10, 2012

Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon, Executive Director Date
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

Edson H. Beall *10-3-12*

Middlefield Center
Name of Property

Hampshire, MA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
36	22	building
8	0	sites
5	2	structures
5	1	objects
54	25	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC - single dwelling, secondary structure, hotel

COMMERCE - department store

GOVERNMENT - city hall, post office

RELIGION - religious facility, church-related residence

FUNERARY - cemetery

RECREATION and CULTURE - fair, monument

AGRICULTURE - agricultural field, animal facility, outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC - single dwelling, secondary structure

COMMERCE - department store

GOVERNMENT - city hall, post office

SOCIAL - meeting hall

RELIGION - religious facility

FUNERARY - cemetery

RECREATION and CULTURE - museum, fair, monument

AGRICULTURE - agricultural field, animal facility, outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

EARLY REPUBLIC - Federal

MID-19th CENTURY - Greek Revival

LATE VICTORIAN - Italianate, Queen Anne

LATE 19th CENTURY REVIVALS - Colonial Revival

LATE 19th / EARLY 20th C. MOVEMENTS - Craftsman

Mixed

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone, Brick, Concrete

walls Wood, Stone, Synthetics

roof Asphalt, Tin

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Middlefield Center HD
Middlefield (Hampshire), MA

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Middlefield, MA, is located in the Berkshire Hills, which are the eastern foothills of the Green Mountains, between the West and Middle Branches of the Westfield River. Known from the 19th century as a town in the "Hampshire Highlands," Middlefield consists of hilly uplands with an average elevation of about 1,600 feet. The valleys of the Westfield River branches define a fairly level plateau, which slopes gently to the southeast. Three tributaries of the Westfield River flow to the southeast and divide the plateau into smaller sections. In the northeastern part of the town, Glendale Brook empties into the Middle Branch of the Westfield River and sets off the portion of the town containing the small hamlets of Smith Hollow and Glendale. In the western part of the town, Factory and Coles Brooks empty into the West Branch of the Westfield River. The hamlets of Blush (or Factory) Hollow and Bancroft are located along Factory Brook.

Middlefield Center is located on the secondary plateau, defined by Glendale Brook on the northeast and Factory Brook on the southwest. This is the largest and flattest area in the town, and was the first to be inhabited by colonial settlers.

Middlefield is an isolated Hampshire County town that, like many of its neighbors, has great visual appeal stemming from both its natural and architectural past. The Middlefield Center district lies mainly along Skyline Trail, which travels in a northeast-southwest direction, with two roads, Bell and Town Hill, intersecting this main street to form the core of the district. This core area contains the church, store, and old town hall (now a senior center and historical museum), as well as a number of closely spaced residences. As one moves north or south, away from the most densely populated area, the houses are spaced farther apart, with fields and woodland interspersed among them. To the east, a short distance up Bell Road, lies the agricultural fairgrounds, a complex of buildings set within a large opening in the woodland. The outlying areas of the district, which encompass the back lots of the residences along the road, consist of open fields and woodland, allowing beautiful short range and distant views, especially to the west where the land falls away and reveals the Berkshires in the distance.

Middlefield Center did not begin to develop until after 1783, the year in which Middlefield was incorporated. In fact, between 1769, when settlement began in Middlefield territory, and the 1783 incorporation, the Center was the site of only a few small dwellings where families lived while building their larger, more permanent homes. None of these early houses remains, so Middlefield Center does not have Georgian style houses among its earliest buildings. Rather, the architectural history of the Center begins with the Federal style.

Federal Style (1776-1820)

Residential Buildings

Approximately a dozen Federal period houses survive in Middlefield, including several well-preserved examples in the Center. These houses constitute a significant portion of the total standing buildings in the town, and are generally conservative in form; almost all of them have center-chimney plans. Of particular note during this period, however, was the use on several of the buildings of reeded corner pilasters, an unusually developed stylistic detail for the region. Though the town's original meetinghouse burned down in 1901, it does retain two of its original taverns as well as two of its earliest stores. Seven Federal-style houses, one of the taverns, and the two stores are located in the district.

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The 1½-story ell on the Daniel Chapman House, 140 Skyline Trail (MHC# MIF.20, photograph 3), at the northernmost end of the district, may be the oldest building in the Center, dating to 1780. The earlier section has an end-gable roof with substantial returns above a moderately wide frieze. It is three bays wide and two bays deep. The center entrance on the southwest-facing facade is a Federal-style, trabeated entrance. It is tall and narrow in proportion, and is composed of narrow pilasters supporting a high entablature enclosing a five-light transom. There have been several window alterations on the ell, with two bay windows inserted on the west, and a contemporary stock, curved, bay window added on the south facade. At right angles to the ell is a two-story, east-facing main block under an end-gable roof that was added in 1802. The east facade is composed of three bays, and the south of three bays. The center door of the east facade is virtually identical to the door surround on the older ell, but has had a projecting pediment added above the entablature, and the transom has been filled in. Trim on this section is well detailed, with eaves making full returns on the west to form a pediment facing the street. A single-story ell, with a shed-roof porch on the east, extends on the north to connect to a livestock barn.

The Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.18 - photograph 6), built in 1783, is a 2½-story Federal house with an end-gable roof and a center chimney. A single-story ell on the east connects to a carriage barn, actually the original Center District schoolhouse, moved to its present location in 1867. The block of buildings creates a farmyard on the south, an arrangement that also developed at the Daniel Chapman House. The five-bay house has a center entrance on the street facade, and a three-bay south facade that includes a secondary entrance on the southeast corner, an arrangement that allowed the separation of the tavern from the rest of the inn. The exterior of the house is simple but well detailed, with both west and south entries framed with tall, trabeated surrounds enclosing glazed transoms. Corner pilasters are paneled, an unusual feature in Middlefield. Sash in the main block of the house is 12/12.

The Thomas Blossom House, 172 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.12), built in 1787, is a 1½-story cape-style house moved to its present location ca. 1830 from Bell Road. The south facing, end-gable house has a center chimney, and is four bays wide on the west side and five bays on the south. The west facade windows on the second floor follow a pattern found less frequently in the hill towns than in Franklin and Berkshire Counties: two center windows with 6/6 sash are flanked at each side by a smaller pair of fixed, four-light sash, set just beneath the raking eaves. This is an arrangement that permitted more light in the attic floor, but was frequently reduced to two center windows in many cape-style houses of the area. An ell and barn on the east create a complex plan, and a low stone patio on the south connects the building to its slightly sloping site. Trim on the Federal house is simple, with flat stock creating the center door surround and window surrounds. Sash is a combination of 6/6 and replacement 12/12. Two shed-roof dormers were added to the original structure on the east side.

The Edmund Kelso House, 164 Skyline Trail, ca. 1811 (MHC # MIF.16 – photograph 8), is an Adamesque Federal style building. Two stories in height beneath a front-gable roof, the building has a single-story, hipped-roof ell on the south, and a single-story, gable-roofed wing on the north. The main block of the finely proportioned building has a front-gable roof, the eaves of which return fully to form a flushboarded pediment. A broad entablature is found beneath the eaves on the west facade, but does not continue around the house, as is usually the case in Middlefield. This gives it the appearance of breaking forward from the facade. The high-style intentions of the 19th-century builder are made clear by the presence of a pair of reeded corner pilasters at each end of the entablature. This motif, which may well come from an architectural handbook of the period, is repeated at the center door surround of the three-bay west facade, where a pair of reeded pilasters frames the tall Federal surround and encloses a single glazed transom. A projecting pediment was added above

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the original door surround. The center door and full-length 12/12 sash on the first floor may date from the remodeling that took place when the structure was converted to its commercial use between 1848 and 1858. These alterations remained in place when the building was converted to a residence ca. 1860.

The Timothy Root House, 147 Skyline Trail, ca. 1827 (MHC # MIF.36 – photograph 13) was built in the Center but later moved further north to its present location and set behind a low stone wall. The house, which is 2½ stories in height under an end-gable roof, the house may have been either an ell of an earlier building or a separate structure. Fenestration is irregular on both floors. First-floor sash is 9/9 and 12/12, and second-floor sash is 9/6 in the outer four bays and 12/8 in the center bay. The house is a single bay in depth. A porch with a distant view extends across the west facade, with a piazza extension on the south. A central door surround on the east facade is flanked by a pair of 12/12 sash, a detail often found in Berkshire County Federal residences, with the windows acting as broad sidelights to the entry. Some of the detailing, including the door surround (an unusual treatment if the building was originally an ell), and the addition of twin exterior chimneys, may have been Colonial Revival alterations made at the time that the building was moved to its new site, ca. 1908. The first floor also includes a pair of 9/9 windows and a single 9/8 window.

The James Dickson House, 126 Skyline Trail, ca. 1827 (MHC # MIF.21 - photograph 2), also set behind a stone wall but constructed on a brick foundation, is a conservative Federal house with an end-gable roof and center chimney. The 2-½ story hillside house is five bays wide and three bays deep. A secondary entry on the south facade is a feature also found at the Blush House. The main center entry is a trabeated surround that encloses a tall, single-glazed transom. The transom has been altered from its original state, having been composed of a fanlight as late as 1978. Sash on the first floor are 12/12, and on the second they are 12/8. There is a 1½-story wing on the north, with a dormer, two casement windows, and an added bay window on the first floor. North of the ell is an attached, two-bay garage with a fanlight in its exposed gable. There is also a single-story kitchen ell on the south. The outbuildings are a large gambrel-roofed dairy barn, ca. 1890, and a second garage.

The Blush Tavern Hostelry, 162 Skyline Trail, ca. 1820 (MHC # MIF.17) was originally a separate building on the grounds of the Blush Tavern. The building was remodeled for use as a single-family residence by Sardis Putnam ca. 1830-1837, and was moved to its present location by Joseph and Mary Blush, ca. 1837. When it was moved, the two-story, end-gable building was reoriented with its gable end to the street. The house is two bays deep and three bays wide on the south facade, with an additional fourth bay inserted on the first floor. The center entrance on the south facade has a trabeated surround, and the windows have simple drip cap surrounds. Sash are 12/12. A single-story ell was added to the east facade, creating an L-shaped plan.

Burial Ground

Also dating from early in this period, the Mack Cemetery, 184 Skyline Trail, ca. 1783 (MHC # MIF.800), is the oldest cemetery in the town and contains the graves of several of the town's earliest residents, including many of the Mack family. Identified by a small wooden sign, the cemetery has approximately twenty headstones in varying condition. Most of the stones are in rows running north/south, but a few rows run east/west. There are two headstones in red sandstone carved with angel heads, while the remaining stones are granite and limestone. Most have post-1850 Neo-classical motifs, including urns and willow trees.

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Greek Revival Style (1820-1850)

Residential

The mid-19th century was among the most prosperous periods in Middlefield's history and the Greek Revival style is well represented. The earliest house in the Center from this period is the Dr. Warren House, 158 Skyline Trail, ca. 1823 (MHC # MIF.19 - photograph 5). It is a Greek Revival house on brick foundations. Brick continues to be an unusual foundation material for this period in western Massachusetts, and its presence in the district is explained by the fact that the brickworks, which had operated during the previous period on the nearby property of the James Dickson House continued to operate. The front-gable, 2½-story house has a sidehall plan with transverse gable bays on the north and south facades, and a two-story, three-bay long rear wing, that attaches to a barn, forming a complex plan. According to Middlefield historian Edward C. Smith, the Warren house was the first in the town to be built with a sidehall plan, and the first to use a Franklin stove for heating rather than the central fireplace stack of earlier periods. Designed in the Greek Revival style, the house's eaves make a full return on the west or street facade to enclose a pediment, within which is set an arched fanlight. This pedimented field is repeated, without the fanlight, on both north and south transverse gable bays. The entry surround is trabeated with three-quarter length sidelights beneath an added shed-roof portico. The south bay has an Italianate-style paneled base, suggesting both transverse bays were later additions. On the south façade, a shed-roof porch has also been added and partially enclosed. A variety of windows appears on the house, including 2/2, 4/4, and 6/6. Cornerboards at the Dr. Warren house are paired, fluted pilasters, a detail that, along with the use of the more modern sidehall plan, signals the high-style intentions of the builder.

The Edmund P. Morgan House, 166 Skyline Trail, ca. 1832 (MHC # MIF.45), was built next door to the Mack General Store (see below). The two bear a striking resemblance to one another, both being 2½-story, front-gabled, Greek Revival-style buildings of generous proportions. The Morgan house has seen many alterations, including vinyl replacement windows, asphalt siding, and an exterior cement block chimney which cuts through the eaves, but retains some of its important details. As with the store, the eaves make full returns to form a pediment. The pediment on the Morgan house also contains a window enclosed within a molded surround with corner blocks, but here the window is composed of a single, 5/5-light rectangular opening. The sidehall entry has a broadly proportioned Greek Revival surround with wide, fluted pilasters enclosing half-length sidelights and a full, five-light transom.

The Congregational Parish House, 159 Skyline Trail, ca. 1835, (MHC # MIF.44), is also in the Greek Revival style. The house, now shingled in asphalt, is two and a half stories beneath a front-gabled roof. A typical sidehall plan house, it is three bays wide and four deep. A single-story ell on the south side attaches to a garage, creating an L-shaped plan. Greek Revival detail is modest, consisting primarily of a trabeated door surround enclosing full-length sidelights, a wide frieze at the cornice, and an oculus in the gable end of the house. Sash is 6/6 and 4/4.

Commercial

Although the Mack General Store, 168 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.15 - photograph 10), was constructed in 1804 during the Federal period, it was moved to its present site ca. 1830, at which time it was altered to reflect the Greek Revival style. The 2½-story, front-gabled store is three bays wide and five bays deep. A one-story, shed-roof porch, with a small centered pediment, faces the street on the west. Above this, the flushboarded pediment of the main building contains two, six-light openings enframed in a molded surround with corner blocks. This is the only gable-field window of its type in Middlefield.

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A contemporary, secondary entrance on the south facade leads to the town post office, which is located in the rear of the store. Second story sash are 6/6.

Institutional

Incorporating both Greek Revival and the succeeding Italianate styles simply because it is composed of two buildings dating from those periods, the Congregational Church, 167 Skyline Trail, 1791-1903 (MHC #MIF.14 - photographs 9 and 14) is finally eclectic due to the addition of a third element, the belltower, which dates from 1903. Placed on the 1791 foundation of the First Congregational Church, which burned in 1901, the current church building is made up of three blocks. The first block, the 1½-story sanctuary dating from 1847, is Greek Revival in style. Temple front in composition with a pedimented gable, wide frieze divided by a narrow fillet, and corner pilasters, this section, like the other main block of the current building, was moved in 1903 and altered by the removal of its entrance and the substitution of three paired, arched windows in the Italianate style on its east facade. In the gable field is a semicircular stained-glass window, within which is set a circular rose window. This composition presumably dates from ca. 1903-04. The second block, variously dated, is the parish hall, a hipped-roof section set back from the plane of the sanctuary on its north side. The parish hall section is two bays wide and two bays deep. Windows in this section are shorter versions of the arched openings in the sanctuary. In the angle formed by the junction of the two main blocks is a 2½-story bell tower that contains the entrance to the building. This third section of the building, constructed in 1903-04, has a square, 1½-story base that repeats the corner pilasters beneath a wide frieze found in the sanctuary section.

The tower may, in fact, contain the original Greek Revival door surround that was removed from the sanctuary. It is a tall, trabeated surround, the entablature of which has a wide frieze divided by a narrow fillet. The opening is filled with double-leaf, paneled doors. The paired, arched windows found on the other two blocks recur on the north side of the tower. The second stage of the tower sits on top of the truncated-hipped roof of the first. It has four louvered belfry openings, and at each corner are three pilasters. A bell-shaped mansard roof that contains an oculus on each of its four sides tops this stage. A row of oversized dentils between the first and second stories adds visual interest.

Italianate Style (1850-1870)

Residential

The Oliver Church House, 161 Skyline Trail, 1869 (MHC # MIF.24 - photograph 7), is one of the most elaborate examples of the Italianate style in the hilltowns. The main block of the two-story house is square in plan, three bays wide, and three bays deep. There is a two-story ell on the west. A strict symmetry and order rule the exterior design of the building. In the center of a truncated-hipped roof is a rectangular belvedere that is illuminated by Italianate arched windows. The roof is given variety by a through-cornice dormer, with an oculus opening, on the east facade. The center door surround on the east facade has an arched, double-door opening flanked by full-length windows of 2/2/2 sash. Window surrounds have full entablature lintels. The street-facing east facade has a hipped-roof porch resting on paired and bracketed square piers. The middle piers support an arched entry. Second-floor windows have segmentally arched lintels, and the central opening is a pair of segmentally arched windows. The south facade, facing Town Hill Road, is composed on the first floor of two bays flanking a center door, beneath an arched portico supported by square piers. The three-sided bays of 2/2 sash have paneled bases. The north facade also has a three-sided bay on its eastern end. The west wing of the house has a side porch that is also supported by Italianate piers. Ornament on the house is generous and well

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preserved. Paired brackets at the widely extended roof eaves, at the bays, and on the belvedere are scrolled and separated by curved dentils. A stone fountain, ca. 1880 (MHC # 924), is in the yard to the south of the house. Approximately five feet in height, it consists of a draped female figure balancing an urn on her shoulder and standing on a plinth in the center of a shallow, lotus-shaped bowl that is itself supported on a hexagonal pedestal.

Institutional

The Agricultural Fairgrounds and Buildings, 7 Bell Road, 1859-1981 (MHC # MIF.33), is a complex of buildings constructed over a period of more than one hundred years. A chain-link fence encloses the several-acre site. Like the rest of the plateau on which it is located, the fairground site generally slopes to the west. The ground rolls gently, with a number of areas of exposed ledge. Upon this base sits a complex of fourteen buildings. The entry road from Bell Road leads past a small board-and-batten ticket booth and winds through the site to the main building, the Agricultural Hall.

The first building constructed on the fairgrounds was the Agricultural Hall (MHC # 33), built in 1859 to house the exhibits of the Ladies Auxiliary to the fair. The building is fairly utilitarian, 2½ stories high, with a front-gable tin roof, and sits on a fieldstone foundation. The roof has boxed eaves with no returns, but does have a raking cornice. The main block is three bays wide and five deep. Windows are 6/6 sash with drip molds. The north and west facades are board-and-batten sided, while those on the east and south are clapboard sided. To the east of the main block, a later, one-story dining ell sits on a poured-concrete foundation. This two-by-five-bay ell is clapboard-sided beneath a tin-covered gable roof and it has 6/6 sash. On the north facade is a shed-roof entry portico, and to the south a secondary one-story kitchen wing, two bays deep, and also sided in clapboards. On the south side of the hall is a low, poured-concrete well house covered with a gable roof. The ground is graded steeply up one side to contain water line connections to surrounding outbuildings.

Queen Anne Style (1870-1900)

Residential

Very little construction took place in the town during this period, however there are two examples of the Queen Anne style in the Center. The first is the house at 148 Skyline Trail, ca. 1890 (MHC # MIF.37). It is a 1½ story, front-gable, clapboard house that sits on a fieldstone foundation. It is three bays wide with a sidehall entry on the west façade, behind a shed-roofed porch on posts. To the north of the main block is a small fieldstone wing of two bays followed by a shingled garage. On the south side there is a single-story wing, one bay long, that has two triple windows on its southern, gable end. Decorative shingles fill the stepped front gable on the main façade, in Queen Anne fashion. Sash is all replacement 2/1.

Institutional

The other example of the Queen Anne style is Middlefield's Old Town Hall, 169 Skyline Trail, 1901 (MHC # MIF.13 - photograph #11). It is a 2½-story building with a front-gable roof. Three bays wide and five bays deep, the building has modest brackets at the eaves of its slate roof, and a hipped roof porch on turned supports that are bracket-supported. The porch has incorporated in its design a recently

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constructed access ramp. The center entry has its original broad, paneled door. A scroll-cut, bracket-supported hood shelters a secondary entry on the north façade. A row of classroom windows on the south facade has large-scale, 6/6 sash, while the remaining windows in the building are 2/2. Surrounds have drip-cap lintels.

Colonial Revival (1880-1915)

Residential

After the turn of the century, construction of new houses picked up somewhat as the town became a popular summer resort area. Several buildings were remodeled as inns, and a number of Colonial Revival and Craftsman-style summer homes were built. At the southern end of the district, the Mrs. Roberts House, 187 Skyline Trail, 1915 (MHC # MIF.51 - photograph 12), is a rambling and eclectic version of the Colonial Revival style. It is composed of four sections, each of which appears to represent a variation on a Colonial-era house form. From the south, the first section is a one-story wing, two bays in width, under an end-gable roof. It has an end-wall chimney, and sash is 8/12. This section suggests the style of the early Tidewater houses of the 18th century. The second section is a three-bay block of 1½ stories, with an end-gable roof extending on the east to form a porch on four columns. A shed-roof dormer rises above the porch and is lit by three 8/8 windows. This section suggests a type of house brought to the south, and Louisiana in particular, by the French during the 18th century. An interior chimney is located on the single ridge of the second and third sections. The third section is four bays long, with 8/12 sash. The section is 2½ stories high, and has an exterior end-wall chimney. A pent roof between the first and second stories, recalling the Dutch colonial homes of Pennsylvania, distinguishes it. A pedimented portico extends from the pent roof. The fourth and final section of the house, set back from the third block, is 2½ stories with a center chimney in its end-gable roof. Five bays long, the first floor fenestration is irregularly spaced, and composed of 8/12 and 4/8 windows. Second-floor windows are 3/6. This section has a garrison overhang, which together with the center parged chimney suggests First Period and Georgian architecture of New England. There is an open, shed-roofed porch on the north end of the house, under a hipped roof. The house is three bays wide and four bays deep.

As mentioned earlier, the Timothy Root House may have undergone Colonial Revival alterations, including the central door surround on the east facade and the addition of twin exterior chimneys, at the time the building was moved to its new site ca. 1908.

Craftsman Style (1915-1930)

Residential

Middlefield Center has three Craftsman-style houses dating from the first decades of the 20th century. The fieldstone Charles W. Shaw House, 151 Skyline Trail, ca. 1915 (MHC # MIF.40 - photograph 4), is a very fine example of the style. It is 1½ stories in height, and extends on the east to form a small porch on fieldstone piers. Two tall exterior chimneys, also of fieldstone, are placed asymmetrically on the north and south sides of the house. A hipped dormer is centered on the main facade. On the south there is a shed-roof wing, and on the north a small, shingled wing under a gabled roof. Exposed rafters at the eaves of the house and its wings are Craftsman-style details, as is the low profile of the house and the use of mixed local materials, including fieldstone and shingles. Sash on the house is double-hung, with diamond panes above a single light. A wood shed and stone well house are outbuildings that continue the Craftsman style.

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The David C. Coe House, 173 Skyline Trail, ca. 1920 (MHC #MIF.46), a second outstanding example of the Craftsman style in native fieldstone, has many similarities to the Shaw House. The same local builder, Samuel Bennett, is thought to have built both. The 1½-story, hipped-roof Coe House also has stone piers supporting a shed-roof porch, an exterior fieldstone chimney, and rafters exposed at the eaves. The dormers on the Coe House are shed roofed, and a glassed-in side porch was added in the mid-1960s on the south facade. Sash are 6/1.

The Griffin House at 157 Skyline Trail, ca. 1920 (MHC # MIF.43), is not as architecturally distinct as the other two houses, but has Craftsman characteristics as well. It is a 2½-story, shingled house with an end-gable roof. The main block of the building is three bays wide and two bays deep, with a one-story wing on the south, and a shingled, hipped-roof porch on the north, forming a complex plan. The roof extends in a wide overhang, with the style's characteristic exposed rafters. A shed roof portico on the east is supported on decorative king-post truss brackets. This house also has an exterior fieldstone chimney, but it is more ornate than those at the other two Craftsman houses in the Center, as it has a basket handle of fieldstone at its top. Windows here are replacement 1/1 sash.

Institutional

A number of utilitarian buildings of various sizes were added to the fairground complex during this period, ca. 1930. The largest of these is a grandstand/judges barn (MHC # MIF.913) west of the Agricultural Hall. It is two stories high, with vertical siding and a shed roof. The building has no glazing, but large swinging doors can be opened on the west side to permit the viewing of animal events. Flanking the grandstand is a pair of open bleachers (MHC # MIF.914) offering additional seating. Other buildings of this period include a bandstand (MHC # MIF.915), a food stand (MHC # MIF.921), and a small utility building used as a concession stand (MIF.925). The bandstand and concession stand have been moved several times since construction, but now sit to the west and the north, respectively, of Agricultural Hall. The bandstand is square in plan with a hipped roof and exposed rafters in Craftsman style, and shares the vertical siding of the grandstand. The one-story food stand has a simple gable roof and is sided with board and batten. Like the grandstand, the sides of these buildings fold down to form unglazed openings when in use. The smallest building, the concession stand, sits to the east of the hall. It is one story in height, one bay deep and two bays wide, with a front-gable roof. The poultry building (MHC # MIF.926) is one story in height beneath a gable roof and has vertical siding. It is located north of the dining hall and is now used for storage.

In 1966, a flagpole was added along the entry road leading to Agricultural Hall. It is set in concrete with a metal plaque bearing the inscription "Presented by the Hampden County Radio Association, June, 1966." Five buildings have been added to the fairgrounds since 1970. The first were a sheep pavilion (MHC # MIF.928) constructed in 1974, and two cattle pavilions (MHC # MIF.932, 933) constructed in 1975 and 1976. Each barn has a braced timber-frame structure with a tin gable roof. Floors are dirt, and walls are covered in wood from ground level to three feet and open to the roof above that point. Each barn is thirteen bays long, with entries at each end and in the middle of each side. In 1977 an open pavilion for animal events was added west of the grandstand. The building frame is metal and includes a raised wood platform for an announcer. The most recent additions were made in 1981, when a bathroom and storage shed were added. Both have stained wood siding and metal roofs. All elements in this paragraph are noncontributing.

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Neo-colonial Style (1915-1940)

Residential

The house at 156 Skyline Trail, ca. 1940 (MHC # MIF.42), is a 1½ -story, Neo-colonial style, cape-form house constructed on concrete block foundations. It is five bays long and two wide. A small entry portico on posts faces the road from the west facade. An open porch begins on the south side and wraps around the west where it meets a one-story kitchen ell, which is one bay deep. A fieldstone chimney rises from the center of the house. Windows are 6/6.

Monuments

The Center has seen several monuments erected over the course of the 20th century. On a small plot of grass in front of the town garage lies the Baptist Church Memorial, ca. 1905 (MHC # MIF.9112). Surrounded by a U-shaped stone wall about four feet high, the monument—a granite stone about three feet by three feet, with smooth faces and rough edges—bears the inscription "On the ledge back of this stone stood the Baptist Church of Middlefield 1847-1903," and it lists the names of the pastors who served the church.

In front of the new town offices, a monument dedicated to David Mack, 188 Skyline Trail, 1906 (MHC # MIF.929), is made of rough granite inset with a metal plate upon which is written, "In the cemetery yonder lies buried Col. David Mack 1750-1845 one of the founders of the town of Middlefield 1783 in honor of whose integrity public spirit and enterprise this memorial is erected by his great-grandchildren 1906 A.D."

A slightly smaller stone of similar appearance marks the World War I Memorial, ca. 1918 (MHC # MIF.911), at the intersection of Skyline Trail and Bell Road. Along with a twenty-foot white fir tree, the stone is set in a small triangular island in the intersection and bears the inscription "Honor roll—in honor of the boys of the town of Middlefield who served in the World War 1914-1918." The memorial includes the names of thirteen veterans.

Also in front of the new town offices is the World War II Memorial, 188 Skyline Trail, ca. 1945 (MHC # MIF.930). Beside a flag pole stands a granite block, five feet tall by three feet wide, with rough edges and smooth faces upon which are listed the names of fourteen Middlefield residents who served in the war.

Several historic buildings have been lost in recent years in Middlefield Center, including the David Mack house and the Hiram Taylor house. The Mack house, built in 1781, was among the first houses in Middlefield and was located at the southern end of the district. It was destroyed by fire in 1983, after being struck by lightning. The Hiram Taylor House, built in 1848 and converted to an inn in 1906, was demolished in 1983 to make way for a new house. Some of the timbers were saved to be used in the new construction. Five houses, eight garages, and a barn have been built in the district since 1950. The houses are located closer to the outer edges of the district where lots have been divided from farms; the garages are distributed throughout the district. The overall character of the district remains that of a well-preserved 18th- and 19th-century town center (photographs 1, 14).

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Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are recorded in the district, sites may be present. One ancient site is recorded in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the area indicate the presence of several locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable indicators for some types of ancient Native American sites. Middlefield lies in an area of hilly uplands averaging 1,600 feet above sea level at the eastern foothills of the Green Mountains, known locally as the Berkshires. The center includes a well-drained, level to moderately sloping plateau and several terraces located within 1,000 feet of small ponds, wetlands, and tributary streams of Factory and Glendale Brooks, tributaries of the West and Middle Branch of the Westfield River respectively. Middlefield Center is located within the Connecticut River drainage. Given the current state of knowledge for ancient Native American settlement systems in the region, the size of the district (292 acres), and the availability of open space, a moderate to high potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources in the district. Due to the ruggedness and environmental potential of the terrain, ancient sites in the area may be limited to smaller campsites and short-term, special purpose-type sites, rather than larger habitation sites.

There is a high potential for historic archaeological resources in the district beginning in the mid- to late 18th century, through the 19th century. Structural evidence of residences, farmsteads, and occupational-related features (trash pits, privies, wells) may survive from squatter settlement made prior to Prescott's grant in 1771. Squatter settlements were challenged in court, where they lost their claims and were forced to move. The sites of these early settlements are unknown; however, they may have been located along the main ridgeline between Glendale and Factory Brooks. This settlement pattern has been reported as typical of other hill-town settlements, and characterized later settlement in the Middlefield Center Historic District. Historic settlement of the center was slow throughout the 18th century, with dispersed farmsteads characterizing the period. Several potential historic archaeological sites have been identified in the area. The late 18th-century farmsteads of Joseph Blush (1783) and Lewis Taylor to the north covered most of the Center with the homesteads of David Mack (1779) and James Dickson, Sr. at its endpoints. None of these farmsteads are extant at their original sites today. Structural evidence of residences, barns, and outbuildings may survive. Archaeological evidence of occupational-related features should also be present. The David Mack house (1779) burned in 1983. Mack opened his house as a tavern in 1785. Archaeological evidence of a cabin may also survive at the Mack site. Mack lived in the cabin while building his wood framed home. Unmarked graves, artifacts, and postholes may also survive at the Mack Cemetery (ca. 1783), located at 184 Skyline Trail. The James Dickson, Sr. house was located at the site of the house built later by his son James Dickson, Jr. at 138 Skyline Trail. The Joseph Blush house (1783) was reportedly the first structure built in the newly designated center after Middlefield's incorporation. The Blush house was originally built at 160 Skyline Trail, and later converted to a tavern by Joseph's son Oliver and moved to its present site at 162 Skyline Trail. Archaeological evidence from the Josiah Leonard house, also from the late 18th-century period, may also survive between the Dickson and Mack sites on County Road (Skyline Trail). Archaeological evidence from 18th-century religious sites may also survive in the district. Middlefield's First Meetinghouse or the First Congregational Church, was built between 1789 and 1791 at 184 Skyline Trail. The church burned in 1901, after which a new church was reportedly built on the same foundation. Structural evidence from the old church and any related outbuildings may survive, in addition to evidence of construction features and occupational-related features.

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During the 19th century, Middlefield's settlement intensified, with the Center becoming the town's commercial, civic, and religious focal point. Potential residential sites from this period include the sites of the J. K. Upham cottage, originally located near the parsonage lot; the Hiram Taylor house (1848), converted to an inn in 1906 and demolished in 1983 for a new house; the Solomon Root house, originally located south of the store now located at 137 Skyline Trail; and the Timothy Root house (1827), built in the center but moved to its present site at 147 Skyline Trail in 1908. Potential sites of 19th-century businesses are also more common in the district than similar sites during the preceding period. Structural evidence from the original site of the Mack General Store (1804) may survive next to the site of the Mack residence. The Mack Store was moved to its present site at 168 Skyline Trail in 1830. Similar evidence may also survive from an early 19th-century store operated by Solomon Root, across the street from a house at 164 Skyline Trail and the 1811 Co-op store. Archaeological evidence from the 19th-century Old Town Hall located at 167 Skyline Trail and destroyed by fire in 1901 may also exist. The town hall was rebuilt on the same foundation; however, construction features and structural evidence from the earlier building may exist. Archaeological evidence from several 19th-century religious structures may also survive in the district. Structural evidence from the Baptist Church of Middlefield (1847-1903) and related outbuildings may survive on Bell Road, east of the Mack Store. Similar evidence may also exist from the Baptist parsonage located on Main Street. Archaeological evidence from the Methodist Chapel, relocated to the center in 1853, may also survive south of the town hall. The Baptist and Methodist churches were abandoned in the late 19th century. Portions of both churches were used to reconstruct the Congregational Church after it burned in 1901. Structural evidence of the Congregational Parish (ca. 1835) house, outbuildings, and occupational-related features may survive at the site of the current town offices. The parish house was dismantled and reconstructed at its present location in 1865.

(end)

Middlefield Center

Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Hampshire, MA

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1783-1962

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Samuel Bennett, builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Historical Significance

The Middlefield Center Historic District is the institutional and residential focus of this western Massachusetts agricultural hilltown, and it is significant for having retained much of its late 18th and 19th century character: its simple crossroads layout, buildings, cultivated landscape, monuments, and cemetery. Now a mixed community of farmers, commuters, second-home owners, and others who work from home, Middlefield Center Historic District has nevertheless maintained its rural agricultural aspect with open fields, barns, farmhouses, and agricultural society fairgrounds integrated with the institutional buildings found at the Center: a church, a senior center, and town offices that operate from historic buildings.

Historically, the Center is representative of the integration of town commerce, government, and craft with agriculture that typified western Massachusetts communities through much of the 19th century. Residents of Middlefield Center consistently maintained their farms while running stores, working for the town, and keeping side businesses such as brick making, potash processing and carpentry. Vacant and awaiting a new owner is the 1804 general store that has served the town as a commercial center for generations of families who farmed and took part in town affairs while running the store (photograph 10).

Middlefield Center is also representative of the adaptation to changing economic conditions that many of the region's hilltowns made during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Without the commercial agriculture and industry that brought prosperity to many Connecticut River valley towns, Middlefield and its neighboring hilltowns expanded their economy by entertaining visitors as a summer destination. This activity supported a consistently small resident population that never rose above 877, requiring relatively few new buildings during the first half of the 20th century. By 1900, visitors to guest houses and two inns had been replaced by more permanent, second-home owners and retired persons, who came to Middlefield through the second half of the 20th century for weekend and seasonal homes that they adapted from the extant buildings.

The architecture of the district ranges from the Federal style to modern ranch, and much of its rural beauty is carried by the Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate-style buildings on Skyline Trail, enriched by several Craftsman-style buildings of note. Middlefield Center retains integrity of workmanship, materials, association, feeling, design, location, and setting, fulfilling National Register criteria A and C at the local level.

For a small community with origins in several earlier towns, Middlefield has a particularly well-documented history due to its members having made and preserved town and church records, narratives by and about its residents, maps, company ledgers, and memoirs. During the first decades of the 20th century this material was compiled, interpreted and written up by three brothers: Edward, Philip and Theodore Smith in 1924 in *A History of the Town of Middlefield, Massachusetts*. The book was followed by its sequel in 1985, *Middlefield History*, by Mary Sternagle, and Henry S. C. Cummings, Jr.—the latter a cousin of the Smith brothers. The two volumes reflect the ongoing historical consciousness of Middlefield's residents. The following historical narrative draws in part on these two volumes, using a period framework established by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

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Contact Period (1500-1630) and Plantation Period (1620-1635)

Native American Presence

During the Contact and Plantation Periods, the area that is Middlefield had no known Native American settlement. However, between 1500 and 1625 Middlefield is thought to have been within the two-day hunting/travel range of the Native Americans known as the Mohicans whose permanent base was along the Hudson River in New York. After 1625 - and the formation of the Six Nation confederacy - the Mohicans, a subgroup of the Algonquins, were no longer in complete control of such a vast territory, but maintained their primary settlement in upstate New York with a small number of families moving into the Connecticut River valley. Some of the eastward movement of the Mohicans was precipitated by conflict during this period with a second group of Native Americans, the Mohawks, who dominated trade and tribute in a region that encompassed New York and western Massachusetts. Between 1625 and about 1664, the Mohawks controlled the hunting lands of Middlefield, though there are no indications that they settled permanently. In turn, the Mohawks after 1664 were no longer able to control the region and the Mohicans filled the void by moving east to the Housatonic River, ranging once again for hunting into the Middlefield area. According to the Smiths, an early history of the Mohicans reported that they hunted moose on the hills during March, and in the fall would hunt deer, bear, otter, raccoon, and martin, and that they also fished in the plentiful streams. Several artifacts have been found and identified with the Mohicans, namely a grain grinding mortar carved in a large stone and a pestle found nearby, as well as arrowheads and spear points.

Colonial Period (1675-1775)

Native American and British Settlement Patterns

As larger numbers of colonists moved west during this period and acquired land, the Mohicans were granted a tract of land in Stockbridge in 1735 where they then settled through the Revolution. Though they would continue to hunt in the region, their use of the land in Middlefield from their Stockbridge base has not been confirmed. They did, however, lay claim of ownership to it when British colonial interest in the hilly uplands of western Massachusetts developed in the middle of the 18th century. Native Americans sold much of the land that would become Middlefield in three separate transactions. The balance of the township was part of an equivalent grant awarded three Prescott brothers from Groton, and land set off from newly formed townships of Murrayfield (Chester), Worthington, Partridgefield (Peru), Hartwood (Washington), and Becket.

Primary settlement of the region during the 1760s occurred in the more easily accessible centers of the surrounding townships, and a few settlers—some of them squatters from Blandford—came and left the Middlefield area, including Prescott's Grant. Early squatters in Prescott's Grant included James Taggart, William Mann, and Miles Washburn. Perhaps the first permanent settlers in the Middlefield Center area were Samuel Taylor, along with his wife and six sons, who arrived from Pittsfield ca. 1770. The Taylors cleared much of the land encompassing what is now the town center, and built a house about one half mile east of it. Several other families followed them, often boarding with the earlier arrivals while they cleared land and built a rudimentary cabin. Most of the early settlement was scattered along the main ridgeline between two brooks in Middlefield—Glendale and Factory Brooks—with several families in what was to become the town center. This settlement pattern is consistent with other hilltowns, in which the first areas to be settled were usually the uplands which were flatter and easier to clear and convert to agricultural uses.

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After the Taylors, one of the next settlers in the area was David Mack in 1773, who was to play a pivotal role in the town's development over the next three-quarters of a century. Mack arrived from Hebron, Connecticut, after purchasing a lot just south of Taylor's land and the current center, in what was then northeastern Becket. After clearing and sowing two acres and building a small house, he was followed by his wife and baby daughter in the spring of 1775. As did many of the town's early settlers, Mack lived in his cabin while constructing a more substantial, framed house that was completed in 1779 (burned down 1983). By the end of the period there were eight families settled along the main ridge, three of which (those of Josiah Leonard, William Mann, and Elnathan Taylor) lived in the area that was to become the Center, and two (David Mack and Samuel Taylor) just outside the district boundaries (their houses all gone).

Transportation

Transportation routes during the period improved in extent, but remained primarily a trail system with few prepared roads. Early settlers primarily followed existing native trails. The primary trail ran along the ridgeline connecting Murrayfield (Chester) through Prescott's Grant to points north and west. This trail bypassed the area that was to become the Center, but was later discontinued in favor of the more direct route through the historic district along what is now Skyline Trail, a 20th century name change to the main road. Another north-south trail crossed this one at the site of Samuel Taylor's house, becoming Bell Road. Early settlers on this trail were David Mack, Josiah Leonard, and Daniel Meeker. The gradual improvement of the trail system followed settlers to the northwest as each new settler extended the trail system further into the forest. Connections from Middlefield to neighboring townships were rudimentary, as through-travel was limited, so the secondary trails connecting the area to the surrounding townships and their better-established highway systems were quite rugged.

Agriculture and Industry

Early settlers engaged in mixed farming, providing for most of their own needs. Some, for supplemental income, grazed additional livestock and cut timber. Because of the area's lack of good cropland, crop production was generally limited, but farmers are known to have grown corn, rye, and wheat as they raised sheep, cattle, and swine. Local timber and timber products were probably sold to valley towns such as Hatfield, Northampton, Springfield, and Westfield. The only documented period mill operation was the settlement's first grist and sawmill complex, established by John Rhoads ca. 1772-3 on Glendale Brook, near its confluence with the middle branch of the Westfield River. Rhoads would have supplied new settlers with the lumber needed to construct their dwellings.

Federal Period (1775-1830)

Town Development

The Federal period was the beginning of Middlefield's first period of substantial development. During the last quarter of the 18th century, increasing population pressures from the south and east, cheap land prices, and existing roads in the Connecticut and Westfield River valleys made settlement of the area hill towns increasingly attractive. As the period progressed, the availability of waterpower along Middlefield's many streams also became a population draw. In absolute numbers, the Federal period saw steady population growth from a total of two families in 1770 to about 30 in 1780, and by 1790 the population had soared to 608 inhabitants. Peak population came in 1800, when Middlefield had 877 residents.

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Though just slightly over half of the town's early settlers came from Connecticut, they came primarily from only five towns—East Haddam, Enfield, Hebron, Windsor and East Windsor—and were therefore more apt to know one another than their Massachusetts counterparts, who came from a much wider array of towns. This probably led to the prominence of the Connecticut settlers in local government during the town's early years and into the 19th century. All of the town's first five officers were from Connecticut, including three from Hebron and one from Enfield. While this dominance led to some conflict, it also may have lent a degree of stability in a new town where villagers were more widely dispersed than those in more typically mixed settlements.

Once here, settlers found the terrain intractable for frequent travel to schools, town meetings, church meetings, and trade. However, the difficulty of travel between the Middlefield plateau and surrounding town centers had two positive effects. It encouraged residents to create their own township, and it brought about a strong commercial base for the future town by guaranteeing the market for its first general stores.

It took two tries to form the new township. After a 1779 effort failed, a second effort was made when a group of residents led by David Mack in 1781 petitioned the General Court citing "the many disadvantages arising from the roughness of the roads, steep hills, and rapid rivers" (quoted in Smith, p. 48). Their petition was granted and Middlefield was incorporated as a separate township on March 12, 1783. The new town was formed from Prescott's Grant, along with outlying districts from the five surrounding towns: Becket, Chester, Worthington, Washington, and Peru. The area that would become the town center was primarily made up of land in the southwest corner of Worthington, along with small pieces of Becket and Prescott's Grant.

The unusual circumstance of Middlefield's formation from the outlying districts of several surrounding towns, rather than from the separation of an established population center from its larger parent town, left the new town with a pattern of dispersed settlement and no recognizable town center. Residents of the new town addressed this issue at the first two town meetings, held at the Mack residence on April 10th and 24th, 1783. During these meetings they began the process of selecting a site for a meeting house, thereby establishing an official center, and voted to raise 30 pounds to support preaching, and ten pounds to establish schools. They looked also to improve their road system. During the following fall and winter thirteen roads were built, connecting the outlying districts with the new town. In addition, a new county road from Westfield to Hinsdale and Pittsfield, built in 1784, connected to the main road (Skyline Trail) at David Mack's house and continued past the meetinghouse, encouraging increased settlement of the town as well as increased through-traffic.

Selecting a site for a new meetinghouse was harder to accomplish than building roads. Conflicts between Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists, as well as differences of opinion on the most central location, delayed the final decision on the establishment of the meetinghouse for several years. It is important to note that, as all the land in the new township was already in private ownership, selecting a site for the meetinghouse, a school, and a minister's residence was more complicated than for towns being laid out on undistributed land. Agreement was finally reached and construction of the meetinghouse began in 1789 on the site of the current Congregational Church, 167 Skyline Trail, 1791-1900 (MHC # MIF.14; photograph 9).

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It was completed in 1791. The land chosen for the meetinghouse had first been in the ownership of the Taylor family in 1770, and changed hands several times before being purchased by Joseph Blush from Bolton, Connecticut, in 1783, the year of Middlefield's incorporation. That same year, he and his wife built the Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail, 1783 (MHC # MIF.18; photograph 6). Between 1783 and 1791, town meetings and religious services were held in the David and Mary Mack residence (no longer extant) a half-mile south along the county road (Skyline Trail), and at the Blushes' house.

Even with the presence of the meetinghouse, development of the new center was slow to occur. David Mack's house acted as one town center where town meetings and church services had been held for several years and where he had a room devoted to a general store. Establishment of the town's first cemetery, the Mack Cemetery, 184 Skyline Trail, ca.1783 (MHC # MIF.800), across the street from the Mack residence increased its importance. The second center functioned around the meetinghouse, further west on Skyline Trail, and the several houses that had been built there. In addition to the house of Joseph Blush, Daniel Chapman added a house to the Center ca. 1780, the Daniel and Lucy Chapman House, 140 Skyline Trail, ca.1780 (MHC # MIF.20; photograph 3). The 1792 conversion of the Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House by son Oliver into a tavern began to tip the scales to the area of the meetinghouse as town center. The meetinghouse center's prominence was finally cemented in 1830, when David Mack moved his store to a lot across the road from the meetinghouse.

The town's population between 1800 and 1830 was more unstable than the simple figures would suggest. New settlers came from the east and south but were unable to offset the loss of residents who began to move westward to the newly settled and more easily farmed valleys of New York and Ohio. Emigration from Middlefield was somewhat offset by local births, but the population of the town dipped from its high point of 877 in 1800 to 720 in 1830.

Industry and Agriculture

Like most New England farmers of the period, Middlefield's early residents, including those in the Center, engaged in a form of mixed agriculture that included grazing, crop production, lumbering, and a variety of cottage industries. These cottage industries ranged from small in-home crafts to larger concerns. David Mack, for instance, processed potash from ashes that he bought from his neighbors and then sold in Westfield and Hartford. Similarly, James Dickson, a farmer and a weaver, started a brickworks using clay deposits on his farm, later the site of a house built by his son James Dickson, Jr., the James and Sally Dickson House, 126 Skyline Trail, 1827 (MHC # MIF.22; photograph 2). The success of Dickson's brickworks shows up in the large number of brick foundations in the Center dating from the 19th century, a time when granite was a much more common foundation material. Orrin Pease, who owned the house after 1847, according to Smith's History of Middlefield, Massachusetts, also burned charcoal at this location, selling it to powder mills in Connecticut. Others distilled liquor, made cider brandy, cooked up lime in the 1790s from quarried limestone, and during the first quarter of the 19th century quarried soapstone. Some farmers like Daniel Chapman, Daniel and Lucy Chapman House, 140 Skyline Trail, ca.1780-1800 (MHC # MIF.20), were active in town politics. Chapman was a member of several committees, as well as being chosen town treasurer, and deacon of the Congregational Church.

The abundant waterpower, as well as demand fueled by early population growth, led to the establishment of a number of small mill operations. By 1800, there were approximately twelve sawmills operating along various streams within the town.

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The Federal period also saw the beginning of Middlefield's primary industry, the manufacture of wool cloth, by the Church and Blush families with the resulting development of a village at Blush Hollow on Factory Brook, a few miles southwest of the Center. Early mill operations along Factory Brook began in the 1790s, and the town's first textile mills were started ca. 1810, manufacturing cloth from the wool produced by Middlefield and other area farmers. The interdependence of sheep-raising farmers and the mills of Factory Hollow provided a strong boost to the local economy.

The Center's farmers were among those from Middlefield supplying wool during this period. They raised primarily Merinos imported from Spain, though the effects of the town's high elevation eventually led area farmers to switch in the 1830s and 1840s to Saxony sheep, which wintered better at Middlefield's high elevation.

Commercial Development

With population growth and increased through-traffic, especially between Worthington, Becket, and Chester, the early 1780s saw a significant increase in the number of taverns to serve the growing community as well as visitors from neighboring towns. The Blush Tavern took advantage of the increasing traffic through the Center and became a favorite spot with local residents. Oliver was "genial in disposition and possessed a goodly fund of stories with which to entertain his guests and neighbors." He ran the tavern from ca. 1790 until 1827.

David and Mary Mack ran a tavern and general store as well, but David also brought a more sophisticated kind of commerce to Middlefield. He capitalized on local farmers' reluctance to make the long and difficult journey to Westfield, Hartford, and Springfield to sell their extra produce, and began a small business traveling periodically to collect and transport the surplus production of local farmers from Middlefield and surrounding towns to the cities.

In 1811 a second general store was opened, this one in the town center. Edmund Kelso of Chester and several citizens of Middlefield, including Oliver Blush and James Dickson, Jr., began a co-op store (building now gone) and within a few years Edmund Kelso moved in order to run the store, to a new house in Middlefield Center, the Edmund Kelso House, 164 Skyline Trail, ca. 1815 (MHC # MIF.16; photograph 9). The co-op venture didn't work out and the store was closed in a few years, but in 1818, Orrin Smith, son of one of the original partners, returned from a short stint living and working in New York and bought the store and the house. He ran the store and lived in the house until 1828, when he sold both to Solomon and Laura Root, who ran a successful business for the next thirty years. Not coincidentally, some of these men were listed in the 1798 Direct Tax Census as among the wealthiest in town. David Mack, who in addition to his tavern and commercial enterprises also invested in new area businesses, was the wealthiest individual in town with holdings valued at \$4,117. James Dickson's property was valued at \$2,692, while the textile manufacturing Church and Blush families had combined assets of \$3,949 and \$1,500 respectively. Mack remained one of Middlefield's most prominent citizens throughout the first half of the 19th century, and over the course of his life donated almost \$70,000 to the town and to a variety of charities. The Church and Blush families would become the town's preeminent industrialists.

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Transportation

Around the turn of the century the turnpike movement proved a boon to local commerce and industry. During the late 18th century there was an increased demand for roads in the western part of the state, especially a road which would connect the Connecticut River valley towns over the Hampshire and Berkshire Hills to Pittsfield and Albany. Many towns were unable or unwilling to support the upkeep of these roads, so the state began granting charters to private groups whose members agreed to construct and maintain roads in exchange for the right to collect tolls from travelers.

In 1797 the Third Massachusetts Turnpike was constructed between Northampton and Pittsfield, north of Middlefield (along present day MA Route 143), and in 1800 the Eighth Massachusetts Turnpike (now U.S. Route 20) was constructed along the Westfield River from Westfield to the Becket line south of Middlefield. In 1803, the state granted control of the stretch of highway through Chester and Middlefield, connecting the Third Turnpike and the Eighth Turnpike, to a group headed by David Mack, thus creating a much shorter route from Springfield to Pittsfield. This road was operated as a turnpike for about fifteen years, later reverting to municipal ownership, as most of the turnpikes did, by 1840. The new turnpike passed by the Mack house and tavern, and then by the Mack and Root stores as it went through the Center.

Architecture

Building in the Center after the Revolution was reflective of what was being built throughout the town. There were small houses of 1½ stories under side-gable or gambrel roofs. The ell of the Daniel Chapman House, 140 Skyline Trail, ca.1780-1800 (MHC # MIF.20), is an example of this form. Also dating from this period and representing the 1½ -story Cape Cod form—although it was moved to the Center later— was the Thomas Blossom House, 172 Skyline Trail, 1787 (MHC # MIF.12). The main block of the Chapman house was added in 1802 and represents the larger 2½-story house form under a side-gable roof that was also being built. Falling in this second category and the earliest example in the Center is the Joseph Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail, 1783 (MHC # MIF.18; photograph #2), a 2½-story house. The Edmund Kelso House, 164 Skyline Trail, ca. 1815 (MHC # MIF.16; photograph 8), is a fine example of the 2½-story house with its gable end to the street and a developed Federal-style entry surround.

The Federal period extended until 1830, thereby encompassing the Greek Revival style as well as the Federal style, and several houses in the district were influenced by this style. Among those, the Dr. Joseph Warren House, 158 Skyline Trail, ca.1823 (MHC # MIF.19; photograph 5) north of the Blush Tavern, was the home and office of the town physician. His house was one of the first in the town to be built without a central chimney or fireplace, and was the first to use a new Franklin stove for heating. It was also built with its gable end to the street to suggest the pediment of a Greek temple. The Mack Store (168 Skyline Trail), when it was moved to the Center, was turned with its gable end to the street and a pediment finished in its gable ends to give it a Greek Revival-style appearance.

At the north end of the Center, the younger James Dickson continued his father's work on the farm and constructed the James Dickson House, 126 Skyline Trail, ca. 1827 (MHC # MIF.22; photograph 2). His is a 2½-house under a side-gable roof. James Dickson, Jr. also continued the manufacture of bricks that had been begun by his father. After the younger Dickson's death in 1844, the house was sold to his brother-in-law Russell Pease in 1847.

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Barns and outbuildings were part of every farmstead and enterprise in the Center. One remaining today is the Blush Tavern Hostelery, 162 Skyline Trail, ca.1820 (MHC # MIF.17), which originally served as lodging for stagecoach drivers and helpers at the nearby Blush tavern. It was probably moved to its present location by Ira Sampson, a shoemaker, who lived and worked in the hostelery during the early 1830s, or by Oliver Blush, who moved into it in 1837, after giving the tavern to his nephew Oliver Smith. Blush lived in the hostelery until his death in 1846. Members of the Blush, Church, and subsequent families during the 20th century have continued to use the structure as a residence.

Early Industrial Period (1830-1870)

Town Development

During the Early Industrial Period, Middlefield's population remained fairly stable as continued industrial activity and local birthrates counterbalanced emigration to increasingly attractive farmlands in the west and to industrial centers in other parts of the region and state. At the start of the period, the town's population was 720, down from its peak of 877 in 1800. Except for a brief but pronounced spike in the census of 1840, which included roughly 1,000 migrant railroad workers engaged in the construction of the Western Railway, the town's population remained fairly steady throughout the period. It ranged from a high of 748 in 1860 to a low of 677 in 1855, but the population of 728 at the close of the period was nearly identical to that at its outset. The population's distribution, however, had shifted noticeably. Most of the emigration from Middlefield was by struggling farmers from the outlying districts that became increasingly emptied, while immigration into Middlefield was from workers to the industries and commerce in its villages. This immigration increased the density of the villages, especially in the Center and Factory Hollow at the same time that the countryside margins were emptying of residents.

Wool and paper manufacturing centralized in Factory Hollow, and eventually at a second village in the southern section of town known as Bancroft, while the Center remained the town's major commercial, civic, and religious focal point. By the close of the Early Industrial period in 1870, more than half of the town's population lived in one of these three main villages.

Agriculture and Industry

Agriculture made an impact on the Center during this period in a very important manner. As noted above, the number of farmers in Middlefield diminished during this period, and those who remained tended to specialize in either sheep-raising, mainly in the more hilly areas, or beef-raising in the flatter uplands. Those raising sheep continued to breed Saxony sheep, which was for a time profitable. In 1837, the Statistics of Industry in Massachusetts reported that there were 9,724 Saxony sheep in Middlefield, the third-highest total in the state. This prosperity continued into the 1840s, and in 1845 there were 9,840 sheep (valued at \$19,680) in Middlefield, the highest total in its history.

The lowering of tariffs on imported woolens in 1846, combined with competition from new fancy worsteds introduced from England, adversely affected Middlefield's, as well as the rest of the state's, production of wool and wool products. Flocks were sharply reduced, and by 1855 the number of sheep in Middlefield had declined to 4,849 (valued at \$7,276), though this still ranked third in the state. The farmers' wool production also dipped to 14,473 lbs.

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Those farmers breeding cattle approached the topic as scientifically as the sheep farmers, and they invested in stock from as far away as England to produce the best cattle and horses, too. They raised primarily the Devon, Jersey, and Durham breeds, and according to the Middlefield Reconnaissance Survey report, the Durham breed, "introduced in 1842, was so far improved that the town became famous for its cattle" (page 9). The town's 666 head of cattle were valued in 1855 at \$21,477, almost triple the value of the sheep in the town.

The exchange of breeding knowledge and demonstration of their achievements among Middlefield's farmers led to a significant development in the town's agricultural history: the formation of the Highland Agricultural Society in 1856.

Matthew Smith, a relative of David Mack, became the first president of the Highland Agricultural Society in 1857, and Ambrose Loveland and Solomon F. Root, a partner in Boise, Smith, and Root, the company then operating the Mack General Store, organized the first exhibition that included 400 head of cattle as well as horses, sheep, and swine. An annual fee of one dollar was charged for membership in the Society, and the following year Smith donated a large parcel of land in the Center to be used for the annual exhibition. This is the Middlefield Fairgrounds, 7 Bell Road, (MHC #s MIF.33-63). Beginning in 1858, a fee of ten cents per day was charged for fair admission.

In 1859, the Highland Agricultural Society sought incorporation in Boston, but faced competition from neighboring towns that had also held cattle shows the previous year and wanted the single available charter. The Smiths report in their History of Middlefield that Matthew Smith addressed the committee of the General Court in such a forceful manner that the charter was granted to Middlefield. In addition to the status it conferred on the town, incorporation by the state was economically attractive because the legislature provided funds to pay premiums awarded to exhibitors.

In 1859, the society added a ladies fair and constructed the Agricultural Hall, 7 Bell Road, ca.1859 (MHC. # MIF.33) in which to exhibit the products of their home industries. Beside the exhibition of stock and the women's handiwork, festivities at the fair often included social gatherings, addresses, parades, horse races, music, and dancing. Fair time was always a boon to local businesses, but the fairgrounds were also put to practical use, as during the Civil War, recruits from Middlefield and area towns were trained on the grounds and housed in the Hall. Food was supplied by the Root store and paid for by the state. The fair has been held every year since the society's incorporation, except for one year during World War II.

In 1865, when Massachusetts produced its agricultural census, Middlefield's farmers were once again enjoying some of their most productive years. There were 74 farms operating within the town, employing 120 people. Roughly two-thirds of the land in the town had been cleared for use as pasture or for growing hay. Though sheep and wool continued to provide income to the town, cattle for dairy, and now beef, remained the most valuable product for the town's farmers.

The prosperity of the manufacturers mirrored that of the farmers during the first fifteen years of the period. The primary woolen manufacturers continued to be the Blush and Church families and by 1840 Factory Hollow was a thriving mill village, with 46 people employed by the wool mills. The village also included a variety of other small-scale mills, tenement housing, a school, and a store run by the Blushes.

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In 1841, the construction of the Western Railroad along the West Branch of the Westfield River affected the town in several ways and eventually led to the formation of its third major village center at Bancroft, which by 1850 was a regular train stop. The railroad provided easier access to markets and raw materials for the mills at Factory Hollow as well as the town's merchants, but was in the long run a mixed blessing. Middlefield's already-established mills and merchants were initially aided by easier access to broad markets. However, in time, other area towns with more direct access to the railroad began to rival Middlefield.

Commercial activity and development of the Center

Beginning in 1830, the town center grew denser with both new construction and moved buildings. Solomon and Laura Root built a store on Skyline Trail, where they kept the post office between 1835 and 1857. Keeping up the cottage industry tradition, Root also made buttons for the Williston button factory in Easthampton at a two-story building he put up in 1838 (now gone), and acted in town as selectman (1824-30), treasurer (1835-52), representative to the General Court (1834), and postmaster. The Roots lived in the house at 164 Skyline Trail, ca. 1815, across the street from their store. At some point after 1828, Solomon Root built a house south of the store for his brother and business partner, Timothy Root, now located at 147 Skyline Trail, ca. 1828 (MHC # MIF.36; photograph 13).

Rev. Alexander Dickson later occupied this house, which is thought to be the house moved by Gerald B. Smith in 1908 to its present location, further north on Skyline Trail, to be used as a summer residence.

In 1835, David Mack financed the construction of the Edmund P. Morgan House, 166 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.45; photograph 10), for Morgan, his partner and the storekeeper. Morgan later became the owner of the store, and eventually sold it to G. W. Lyman in 1841. In 1848, Lyman sold the store to the company Boise, Smith, and Root, which consolidated the business of this and the old Solomon Root store into the Mack store building. Solomon Root then remodeled his vacated store (no longer extant) and turned it into a dwelling for himself, selling his former house at 164 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.16; photograph 10) to Uriah Church and Sons Company which, Smith reports, "curiously enough, turned it into a store." At this point, then, there were two general stores operating in the Center.

The success of the stores at the Center during the early part of this period was secured by continuing the practice begun during the Federal Period of the store owners acting as exporters for the farmers of Middlefield and surrounding towns. This practice increased with the improvement of transportation routes through the town, but was eventually undermined by the coming of the railroad. The Church Brothers' store remained in the Center until 1858, when the business was moved to the growing village at Factory Hollow. At this time, the post office was moved back into the store run by Boise, Smith and Root, the old Mack General Store at 168 Skyline Trail (MHC #MIF.15; photograph 10).

In addition to the increased commercial activity, and the location there of the Highland Agricultural Society in 1857, the Center also became the clear focal point of religious activity within the town. In 1847, the Baptists relocated to the Center and built a new meeting house on Bell Road, just east of the Mack store, on a site now marked by the Baptist Church Monument, Bell Road (1905, MHC # MIF.912). The Baptist Church was built in a more traditional style than the

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Congregational Church. Its builder was Isaac Pierce, uncle of Volney Pierce, and also of Peru. In 1852, the Methodists built a parsonage (no longer extant) on Main Street, and the following year moved their chapel to the Center, to a spot just south of the town hall (Old Town Hall, 169 Skyline Trail). However, the combination of competition from the rival churches in the Center and distance from their former parishioners led them to discontinue services after a few years.

By mid-century, and for a few years thereafter, the Center contained three churches, two stores, a new schoolhouse, a post office, and several smaller businesses, including two blacksmiths, two shoemakers and a tailor. In addition, a growing number of residences were either moved to or built in the district. The Congregational Society built a parish house, ca. 1835, at the site of the current town offices on the lot of 188 Skyline Trail. In 1865, it was dismantled and reconstructed at its present location, Congregational Parish House, 159 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.44), by Oliver and Sumner Church where it continued to serve as the residence of the Congregationalist minister well into the 20th century.

In 1846, the Congregational Society decided to modernize their meetinghouse by turning it ninety degrees so that its gable end faced the road. At the same time, substantial remodeling of the interior and fenestration occurred, as well as the construction of a new tower and belfry. The Church was remodeled under the supervision of a building committee consisting of James and Uriah Church, Erastus Ingham, George McElwain, and George Lyman, aided by Volney Pierce, an architect and builder from the nearby town of Peru. The new gable facade was designed in the Egyptian Revival style and the tower had a belfry with tall columns. The remodeling was not a hit with townspeople, and in 1855 the tower and belfry, were replaced in an effort to make it more attractive.

During the 1830s, Sardis Putnam, a shoemaker, moved the Thomas Blossom House, 172 Skyline Trail, 1787 (MHC # MIF.12) to its present location in the Center, perhaps to take advantage of the better commercial prospects there. Thomas Blossom had built the house in 1787, making it—at its arrival in the 1830s—the second-oldest structure in the Center. Thomas was a member of the school committee as well as being the town's first poundkeeper. Sardis Putnam added his cordwainer's trade to the Center's offerings.

Continuing the building-moving activity that characterizes much of this period, in 1867 Ambrose Newton bought the old center schoolhouse and moved it to the rear of the Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail, (MHC # MIF.18; photograph 6), to be used as a carriage house and stable. It is now gone.

The success of the Church brothers' manufacturing business during and after the Civil War enabled them to build several large houses in the town. The only one still extant, the Oliver Church House, 161 Skyline Trail, ca.1869 (MHC # MIF.24; photograph 7), is one of the finest examples of Italianate architecture in the hilltowns. Construction of the Church house signaled the culmination of the residential building boom in the Center for the Early Industrial Period.

Late Industrial Period (1870-1915)

Town Development

With the decline of local industry after a series of disasters at the mills in Factory Hollow, and slow decline in agriculture, Middlefield's population dropped drastically, from 728 at the period's outset to fewer than 300 in 1920. From about 1880

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the town benefited from the seasonal influx of a number of summer residents, a phenomenon found in many of the surrounding hilltowns. This movement was so striking that the Smiths, in their history of the town, were able to list five houses in the Center that were by then owned and occupied as summer residences. Additionally, several houses were remodeled into inns and new construction was begun in the Center after three decades of little building.

Agriculture and Industry

In 1870 at the outset of the period, Middlefield, especially at Factory Village, was a thriving manufacturing town. However, as Smith reports, "as a result of economic changes, only gradually realized, combined with a series of misfortunes, this prosperity began to decline." The first wave of disasters struck in the early 1870s: the Upper Church mill was destroyed by fire in 1871; valuable stock stored in Boston warehouses was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1872; a serious slump in the market for woolens was caused by the Panic of 1873; and finally, in 1874, the reservoir dam gave way, destroying mill buildings and houses as far south as Huntington. Damages to the mills in Factory Hollow were estimated to total \$100,000, while damages to the railroad at Bancroft totaled at least that much. Despite the setback, however, the mills were rebuilt and things seemed to return to normal. A shift in popular taste from broadcloth to worsteds that came about at the beginning of the period, as well as competition from large factories nearer labor and transportation centers, put the products of Middlefield's out-of-the-way mills at a disadvantage.

After the flood repairs, production at the two woolens factories dropped from its high point of \$170,000 a decade earlier to only \$45,900 in 1875. Ironically, the number of residents employed in agriculture had once again risen higher than the number employed in the factories. By 1885, only one woolen factory, that of the Church Brothers and Company remained in the town. By 1890, the Churches had ceased their woolen manufacturing, and there were just nineteen families living in Factory Hollow, half as many as there had been ten years earlier. Another flood in 1901 again destroyed the dam, causing similar damage to that of 1874. The mills were prohibited from rebuilding this time, and by the end of the period there was virtually no industry in Factory Village.

The value of the town's agricultural output, however, continued to rise throughout the second half of the 19th century. The shift from a reliance on sheep and wool to cattle and cattle products continued unabated. With wool production in decline, the local wool market collapsed, and by 1875 the value of wool produced in Middlefield was only \$1,545 (2% of the town's agricultural output). The value of beef and dairy products produced in the town had meanwhile increased to over \$18,000 (28% of total output) and dairy farming grew, so that by 1905 it accounted for over 50% of the town's total agricultural output.

In 1873, five years after the first subordinate Grange was set up, Middlefield Grange #33 was organized with Metcalf J. Smith as Master and Jonathan McElwain as treasurer. Attendance at Grange meetings was somewhat sporadic and the charter was eventually turned in to the State Grange. In 1912, a new charter was granted for Middlefield Grange #310, with 54 charter members. Meetings were held upstairs in the Old Town Hall, 169 Skyline Trail, (MHC # MIF.13; photograph 11) and the Grange has been active in Middlefield ever since.

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Commercial Activity / Development of Town Center

The Center did not suffer as precipitous a decline as Factory Village during the first three decades of this period, but it was certainly affected by the changing fortunes of the town as a whole. During the late 19th century, building in the town came to a virtual standstill, but a number of prosperous farms and businesses continued to operate in the Center as well as other parts of the town. The Highland Agricultural Society continued its annual fair during this period, and the town's reputation for raising excellent stock continued unabated. Gay's Hampshire County Gazetteer (1887) shows the Church, Pease, and Smith families to be among the most prominent in the town in the late 19th century. Oliver Church continued to live in the Center at 161 Skyline Trail, and operated his mill in Factory Hollow until 1890. The Pease family owned almost a thousand acres of farmland, 300 of which were farmed by Orrin Pease at the old James Dickson farm, 126 Skyline Trail, (MHC # MIF. 22; photograph 2). In addition to his farming operation, Pease was a blacksmith and cider maker, and manufactured charcoal on his property for a number of years.

The Taylor farm, which had been in the family for several generations, continued under the ownership of Hiram Taylor. With the farmstead (now gone) on Skyline Trail as its center, the farm covered much of the land north and west of the Center, and consisted of 650 acres. Taylor was well known as a breeder of pureblood Short Horns, and also raised beef cattle. Other residents of the Center during the latter part of the 19th century included Royal Geer, a carpenter and joiner, who had operated the Church Brothers sawmill for a number of years and lived in the Edmund Kelso House, 164 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.16; photograph 8); the blacksmith John Bell (house no longer extant); and Ambrose Newton, in the Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.18; photograph 6).

Though the town was generally in a period of decline at this time, Gay's Gazetteer referred to Middlefield Center as a "pleasant summer resort" as early as 1887. By the first decade of the 20th century a number of families, both former natives and newcomers, were spending summers in town. Some of these summer homes were handed down through older families to children who had moved away and continued active lives elsewhere. Others were bought or built by descendants of Middlefield families or newcomers looking for a quiet, picturesque vacation town. By 1895 the Massachusetts census listed 2,339 acres of land as owned by non-residents.

Architecture

Fire during this period caused several important architectural changes in the Center. In 1900, lightning hit the Congregational Church, 167 Skyline Trail, 1791-1903 (MHC # MIF.14; photograph #9) and it burned to the ground, taking with it the town hall on its south side. A new town hall, 167 Skyline Trail was built in 1901 on the foundations of the old one, with similar proportions and styling. While the town hall was being rebuilt, the library it held was moved to the Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.18; photograph 6), then occupied by long-time town librarian Mrs. Lucy S. Newton. It took longer to rebuild the church, as church members were split over whether to rebuild a new stone church or to buy and reuse the Baptist Church. Finally, it was decided to buy and move the Baptist Church and also to move the Methodist Church to form the north wing of the church, while adding a new tower and a belfry. The rebuilt church was dedicated at the beginning of 1904.

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Several Queen Anne cottages were built in town around the turn of the century, including one in the Center, at 148 Skyline Trail, ca.1890 (MHC # MIF.37). The grandest house built at the end of the period was the Mrs. Roberts House, 187 Skyline Trail, ca.1915 (MHC # MIF.51; photograph 12), which was built as a summer retreat in the Colonial Revival style. This architect-designed house is something of a visual manual of colonial-era houses, with sections reproducing colonial homes from all over the country. Mrs. Roberts, from Hartford, Connecticut, also acquired a cottage in the Center (no longer extant) that had been built for J. K. Upham of Brooklyn, New York, and was located near the Parsonage Lot.

In 1900, the Reverend Herbert Youtz, pastor of the Congregational Church from 1896-1898, purchased the Kelso House, 164 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.16; photograph 8) and returned to make it his summer home. Reverend Youtz and his brothers also purchased the Mack General Store, 168 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.15; photograph 10) and the Edmund P. Morgan House, 166 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.44). The brothers operated the store and a stage line, and converted the Morgan House into the Middlefield Inn between 1903 and 1904 to accommodate summer visitors in the town. The first telephone service arrived ca. 1905. The switchboard was located in the Daniel and Lucy Chapman House, 140 Skyline Trail, ca.1780 (MHC # MIF.20). Helen M. Cook was the first operator. The house also acted for a time as the post office and as a part-time sheriff's office.

In 1906, the Hiram Taylor house (no longer extant) was converted to an inn and operated under several names until the 1960s. Also, ca. 1908, Gerald B. Smith purchased and moved the Timothy Root House, 147 Skyline Trail, ca.1830 (MHC # MIF.36; photograph 13) from its location in the Center proper to its present location in the northern part of the district, to be used as a summer home. Gerald's sister, Kate Smith, also began to use the Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail, 1783 (MHC # MIF.18; photograph 6) as a summer residence sometime before 1924. Both were teachers in Illinois, she in high school and he at the University of Chicago. Also during this period, the James and Sally Dickson House, 126 Skyline Trail, ca.1827 (MHC # MIF.22; photograph 2), which had remained in the family for almost a century, was sold to William Birnie of Springfield, who used it as a summer home until his death, upon which his brother Judge Birnie inherited it and used it as a weekend home during the early 20th century. Also in 1906, David Mack's descendants erected the Mack Monument, 188 Skyline Trail, 1906, at the site of his former residence and store, in front of the present-day town offices.

Early Modern Period (1915-1945)

Town History and Development of the Center

Decreased population in the town and the increase of auto use for shopping trips to larger commercial areas led to decreased trade in the Center. The operation of the store was intermittent during this time, until George Olds purchased it in 1927. It then operated continuously throughout the period, as did the church, town hall, library, and other town institutions.

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Use of the town as a summer retreat continued. Alice Church, Oliver's daughter, used the Oliver Church House as a summer residence. Kate and Gerald Smith also continued to occupy their summer homes. Three Craftsman style houses were built as summer residences during the early part of the period. The Charles Shaw House, 151 Skyline Trail, ca.1915 (MHC # MIF.40; photograph 4), and the David C. Coe House, 173 Skyline Trail, ca.1920 (MHC # MIF.46) are both constructed of local fieldstone. Mr. Shaw, from Springfield, was a member of the Middlefield Improvement Association, an organization dedicated to involving the many summer residents in local affairs. Coe was a tailor who lived in Longmeadow and worked in Springfield. According to the research of Nancy Burnham of the Middlefield Historical Commission, Samuel Bennett, a stone mason (or waller) from Becket, who built the stone walls around the old cemetery behind the Congregational Church in North Becket, built these houses of local fieldstone.

During the early part of the century, the Oliver Church House, 161 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.24; photograph 7), was used as a summer residence by Alice Church. It was later sold to Dr. Amber A. Starbuck, who operated first an inn and then a retirement home there, until 1969. At one point Dr. Starbuck also owned the Taylor house (no longer extant) and used it for overflow guests from her inn. By 1924 Dr. Starbuck, who graduated from the Boston University medical school in 1906, owned and lived in the Samuel Bennett House, 173 Skyline Trail (MIF.46). She was active in Middlefield town government, working for the creation of a town zoning board and for the adoption of zoning bylaws; she also took care of Middlefield's school medical needs and ran a practice in Springfield.

The former Baptist Parsonage that had been owned by Mrs. Gertrude Pease, was by 1924 the summer home of the Griffin family, from Shelton, Connecticut. In 1927, the Griffins tore down the parsonage and had a summer house built in the Craftsman style, Griffin House, 157 Skyline Trail, ca.1920-27 (MHC # MIF.43). The Griffin house was built by George Olds, then-owner of the Thomas Blossom House, 172 Skyline Trail, (MHC # MIF.12), and proprietor of the Olds Store, which operated out of the house's front room. The store also contained the post office, which was operated by Mrs. Olds. George Olds conducted the mail route between the Bancroft and Middlefield post offices. In 1930 the Olds purchased the original Mack General Store, 168 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.15; photograph 10) and moved their business there, selling the Blossom house to Reverend Herbert Youtz. "That same year George Olds was elected town clerk and treasurer, adding to his now full-time work at the store," according to Sternagle and Cummings. The store and post office operated continuously in the original Mack store building until ca. 2000, when they were closed.

Two modest memorials to veterans of the World Wars were constructed by a committee to beautify the Center during the period. The first, War Memorial Park, Bell Road at Skyline Trail, ca.1918 (MHC # MIF.920), is situated on a small triangular island in the intersection across from the church, and includes a polished granite stone with names of thirteen veterans. It has the inscription "Honor roll - in honor of the boys of the town of Middlefield who served in the World War 1914-1918." The World War II Memorial, at 188 Skyline Trail, ca. 1945 (MHC # MIF.930) that stands in front of the current town offices is also polished granite, and lists the names of fourteen veterans of the Second World War. Also constructed near the end of this period was the house at 156 Skyline Trail, ca.1940 (MHC # MIF.41), a modest cape in the northern part of the district.

(continued)

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Middlefield Center HD
Middlefield (Hampshire), MA

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Post-1945 to Present

Town History and Development

After 1945, the increased popularity of the automobile, along with continued improvement of roads, led to population growth in several area towns and made it possible for residents to live in Middlefield and work elsewhere. During this period, Middlefield's population again began to rise, increasing steadily until it had almost doubled from its low point of 201 in 1940 to 392 in 1990. However, the settlement pattern remained fairly dispersed, and the Center did not regain its prominence as a commercial center. Several houses were built in the Center during this period. A number of the older houses in the Center remained seasonal residences for a while, but this number has dwindled over time. The town retains some active farms, and commuters, weekenders, or retired persons now occupy many homes. Its 2003 population was 552.

In 1958 the elementary school was moved from the Old Town Hall, 169 Skyline Trail, to a new building constructed at 188 Skyline Trail. Its construction was helped by the Middlefield Grange. Beginning in the 1920s, Middlefield's Grange members had raised money with the idea of building a Grange Hall, but the project was never complete, so in the 1950s Grange members voted to donate the building fund to the construction of a new elementary school with the understanding that meetings would be held there after its construction.

In recent years, residents have taken an active interest in learning about and preserving Middlefield's past and the character of the town. After years of use as an elementary school and meeting space, the Old Town Hall, 169 Skyline Trail (MHC # MIF.13 - Photograph #11) was refurbished and now houses the senior center on the first floor and the Middlefield Historical Museum on the second floor. The Middlefield Historical Society catalogues and cares for the many artifacts in the museum. The Middlefield Historical Commission has been involved in an ongoing effort to inventory the historical homes and cemeteries of the town.

Archaeological Significance

Since patterns of ancient Native American settlement and subsistence activities in Middlefield are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Ancient Native American sites in this area can be significant by contributing important information on site types, variability, and function along tributary streams of the Westfield/Connecticut River drainage, and on a larger scale in the Berkshire uplands of Western Massachusetts. Ancient Native American sites in this area may contain information that indicates the extent to which this environmental zone was exploited by Mohican groups and their predecessors from the New York locale, or from the Woronoaks and Nonotucks and their forebears in the Connecticut River Valley. This information can be used to test the extent to which river basin boundaries were analogous with Native socio-political boundaries at different points in history.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to document the social, cultural, and economic history of a village that developed as the commercial, civic, and religious focal point of an isolated hilltop town in the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains of western Massachusetts. Additional documentary research, combined with archaeological survey, testing, and careful mapping, may help document the settlement history of the town from the

(continued)

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period of squatter settlement through more dense settlement in the 19th century. Detailed information relating to squatters who settled the district area prior to Prescott's Grant of 1771 is generally lacking. Structural evidence and artifacts may survive from residences and outbuildings of these individuals, and possibly their families, illuminating architectural details of their homes and how their lives were organized for their subsistence. This information, and detailed analysis of occupational-related features, can be used to identify the extent to which timbering, agriculture, and husbandry were important in the lives of early settlers. The above information can also be used to determine the extent to which a subsistence-based economy was practiced. Similar research and results as presented above can also be used to learn more about the lives of Middlefield's settlers who officially settled the town and district after Prescott's Grant in 1771. Settlement in the Center was the earliest in the town, characterized by dispersed farmsteads and taverns throughout most of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Archaeological research, conducted at the sites of early settlers, can help reconstruct the overall settlement of the Center Village along Skyline Trail and the lives of these early residents. Archaeological research at these early farmsteads and taverns may contribute information that describes the social, cultural, and economic lives of these early settlers, and the extent to which isolation, a term that is often used to characterize the town's early history, affected their lives and occupations. Unmarked graves at the site of the Mack Cemetery (ca. 1783) may also contribute valuable information relating to the boundaries of the cemetery, physical characteristics, and health of the town's early settlers. The above information may help further define a pattern of hilltown settlement for western Massachusetts, often said to characterize the area. Structural evidence, artifacts, and archaeological features associated with the First Congregational Church may also contribute valuable information relating to the architectural form and evolution of the 1791 and existing (1903) structures, as well as the early citizens of the Center and town. Archaeological evidence may exist that details architectural elements of the original 1791 structure, and the extent to which the original foundation was used in building the present structure. Structural evidence from outbuildings and detailed analysis of the contents from occupational-related features may contribute information that identifies activities conducted at the church and facilities available for parishioners.

Archaeological resources related to 19th-century residential, commercial, and religious/institutional buildings are more common in the district as a result of increased settlement throughout the period, and the development of the Center as the town's commercial, civic, and religious focal point. Structural evidence of residences, barns, and outbuildings can help document the changes that occurred on 19th-century farmsteads and characteristics of more exclusively residential and residential/commercial buildings, such as tavern/residences. Structural evidence, combined with the detailed analysis of occupational-related features, may also contribute important information relating to the domestic lives of individuals and families, as well as economic activities that characterized the farm, business, or residence. Important information may be present that documents the growth of the district's economy beyond subsistence agriculture, and the role of cottage industries in that development.

The analysis of occupational-related features at the sites of several general stores in the district may also contribute important information on the extent to which local farms and businesses relied on regional economies or goods from other areas in their subsistence and operation. This information can also help describe the extent to which the Center was isolated from other towns, regions, and economies. Archaeological evidence from civic and religious buildings can also contribute important information relating to those structures. Artifacts and structural evidence at the sites of the Baptist

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Middlefield Center HD
Middlefield (Hampshire), MA

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and Methodist churches may contribute information relating to architectural features of those buildings. Construction features may also document techniques used to build the structures. Analysis of occupational-related features associated with the Baptist and Congregational parsonages may detail the lives of ministers who occupied those structures and their families. This information may identify aspects of the lives of the clergy that differed from members of the community at large. Archaeological research at the site of the Old Town Hall at 167 Skyline Trail may also help document architectural details of that building, and the extent to which its foundation and other architectural features were incorporated into the existing town hall structure. Archaeological resources associated with many of the extant 18th- through 20th- century buildings in the district may also contain information that contributes to the district's significance. Structural evidence of outbuildings, construction features, and occupational-related features may survive related to earlier periods of land use at related structures. Several buildings have been moved; however, even these structures can be associated with important features post-dating their date of moving. For example, the Mack General Store (1804) was moved to its present site at 168 Skyline Trail in 1830, indicating the potential for related archaeological resources on that site after that date.

(end)

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Middlefield (Hampshire), MA

Section number 9 Page 1

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Secondary Sources

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Johnson, Clifton. Historic Hampshire in the Connecticut Valley. Springfield, Massachusetts, 1932.

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(end)

Middlefield Center Historic District
Name of Property

Hampshire, MA
County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 292 acres

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1.18 Zone	663082 Easting	4691583 Northing	3.18 Zone	663992 Easting	4689887 Northing
2.18 Zone	664141 Easting	4690539 Northing	4.18 Zone	663531 Easting	4689750 Northing

x See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bonnie Parsons, Principal Planner, PVPC with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date August 2012

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name multiple

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Middlefield Center HD
Middlefield (Hampshire), MA

Section number 10 Page 1

10. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

UTM CONTINUATION

5. 18 662845 4690630 6. 18 662713 4691222

Verbal Boundary Description

See assessor's maps 406 and 407. The district lies roughly in the center of the town, on the plateau defined by Factory Brook to the west and Glendale Brook to the east. It consists of properties between 138-188 Skyline Trail inclusive, as well as the fairgrounds at 7 Bell Road, and town land between the fairgrounds and the intersection of Bell Road and Skyline Trail. The district boundary follows the back lot lines of these properties.

Verbal Boundary Justification

Middlefield Center has a significant concentration of properties dating from the 18th century through the 1940s. Historically the Center was a farming, commercial, and civic center for the town. Despite some recent noncontributing development, many of the properties and the district as a whole continue to exhibit the visual character associated with the district's historical role. The boundaries of the district were drawn to include both the buildings and the historic landscape of the Center. The central core area of relatively dense settlement has been extended to the north and south to include larger parcels and their historical association as part of the Center. To the east, the district has been extended to include the Agricultural Fairgrounds of the Highland Agricultural Society, a significant site in Middlefield's history that has long been considered a part of the center. The boundaries follow the back lot lines of these parcels, as indicated on the assessor's map.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Middlefield Center HD
Middlefield (Hampshire), MA

Section number photos Page 1

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Chris Skelly, MHC

Date: May 2012

1. Junction, Skyline Trail, Bell Road, facing N. Town Hall, Church on left, Mack General Store on right.
2. Dickson House, 126 Skyline Trail
3. Chapman House, 140 Skyline Trail
4. Shaw House, 151 Skyline Trail
5. Dr. Warren House, 158 Skyline Trail
6. Joseph Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail
7. Oliver Church House, 161 Skyline Trail
8. Edmund Kelso House, 164 Skyline Trail
9. Congregational Church, 167 Skyline Trail
10. 164-166-168 Skyline Trail (left to right)
11. Old Town Hall, 169 Skyline Trail
12. Roberts House, 187 Skyline Trail
13. Timothy Root House, 147 Skyline Trail
14. Town Center, facing south

**Middlefield Center Historic District
District Data Sheet**

Map #	MHC#	Address	Historic Name	Date	Style/Form	Resource	C/NC
ROW	MIF.920	Bell Road & Skyline Trail	War Memorial Park	ca. 1918	N/A	Si	C
ROW	MIF.911	Bell Road & Skyline Trail	WWI Memorial	ca. 1918	N/A	O	C
		Bell Road					
406-21	MIF.49	Bell Road	Firehouse	1980	utilitarian	B	NC
406-21	MIF.50	Bell Road	Municipal garage	ca. 1980	utilitarian	B	NC
406-21	MIF.912	Bell Road	Baptist Church Memorial	ca. 1905	N/A	O	C
406-87	MIF.33	7 Bell Road	Agricultural Hall	1859	mid-19th c.	B	C
406-87	MIF.913	7 Bell Road	grandstand	ca. 1930	utilitarian	Str.	C
406-87	MIF.914	7 Bell Road	bleachers	ca. 1950	utilitarian	Str.	C
406-87	MIF.921	7 Bell Road	food stand	ca. 1930	utilitarian	B	C
406-87	MIF.925	7 Bell Road	concession stand	ca. 1930	utilitarian	B	C
406-87	MIF.915	7 Bell Road	bandstand	ca.1930	utilitarian	Str.	C
406-87	MIF.926	7 Bell Road	poultry house	ca. 1930	utilitarian	B	C
406-87	MIF.927	7 Bell Road	ticket taker's booth	ca. 1980	utilitarian	B	NC
406-87	MIF.928	7 Bell Road	sheep pavilion	1974	utilitarian	B	NC
406-87	MIF.932	7 Bell Road	cattle pavilion	1975	utilitarian	B	NC
406-87	MIF.933	7 Bell Road	cattle pavilion	1976	utilitarian	B	NC
406-87	MIF.916	7 Bell Road	animal event pavilion	1977	utilitarian	Str.	NC
406-87	MIF.917	7 Bell Road	pulling arena	ca. 1930	utilitarian	Si	C
406-87	MIF.58	7 Bell Road	toilets	1981	utilitarian	B	NC
406-87	MIF. 59	7 Bell Road	storage building	1981	utilitarian	B	NC
406-87	MIF.918	7 Bell Road	flagpole	1966	utilitarian	O	NC
406-87	MIF.919	7 Bell Road	well house	ca. 1970	utilitarian	Str.	NC
		Skyline Trail					
407-12.4	MIF.21	126 Skyline Trail	James & Mary Dickson Hse.	ca. 1827	Federal	B	C
407-12.4	MIF.60	126 Skyline Trail	barn	ca. 1890	utilitarian	B	C
407-12.4		126 Skyline Trail	garage	ca. 1960	Colonial Revival	B	NC
407-12.5		126 Skyline Trail	open field		N/A		
407-12.6		126 Skyline Trail	open field		N/A		
407-13	MIF.62	138 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1980	contemporary	B	NC
407-14	MIF.20	140 Skyline Trail	Daniel & Lucy Chapman Hse.	ca. 1780	Federal	B	C

Map #	MHC#	Address	Historic Name	Date	Style/Form	Resource	C/NC
407-14	MIF.922	140 Skyline Trail	barn foundations	ca. 1860	N/A	Si	C
407-14	MIF.63	140 Skyline Trail	dairy barn	ca. 1960	utilitarian	B	C
407-20	MIF.64	143 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1980	Cape Cod	B	NC
407-20	MIF.65	143 Skyline Trail	garage	ca. 1980	utilitarian	B	NC
407-19	MIF.66	145 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1935	Cape Cod	B	C
407-19	MIF.67	145 Skyline Trail	garage	ca. 1990	utilitarian	B	NC
407-18	MIF.36	147 Skyline Trail	Timothy & Amanda Root Hse.	post-1820	Federal	B	C
407-15	MIF.37	148 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1890	Queen Anne	B	C
407-15	MIF.38	148 Skyline Trail	cabin	ca. 1920	utilitarian	B	C
407-16	MIF.68	150 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1980	Neo-colonial	B	NC
406-8	MIF.39	151 Skyline Trail	Charles Shaw House	ca. 1915	Craftsman	B	C
406-8	MIF.70	151 Skyline Trail	woodshed	ca. 1915	Craftsman	B	C
406-8	MIF.923	151 Skyline Trail	stone well house	ca. 1915	Craftsman	Str.	C
406-10	MIF.71	152 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1980	Cape Cod	B	NC
406-7	MIF.69	153 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1980	contemporary	B	NC
406-11	MIF.72	154 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1950	English Cottage	B	C
406-11	MIF.73	154 Skyline Trail	barn	ca. 1960	utilitarian	B	C
406-12	MIF.74	156 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1940	cape	B	C
406-12	MIF.75	156 Skyline Trail	garage	ca. 1990	utilitarian	B	NC
406-5	MIF.47	157 Skyline Trail	Griffin House	ca. 1920	Craftsman	B	C
406-5	MIF.76	157 Skyline Trail	garage	ca. 1970	utilitarian	B	NC
406-13	MIF.19	158 Skyline Trail	Dr. Warren House	ca. 1823	Greek Revival	B	C
406-4	MIF.43	159 Skyline Trail	Congregational Parish House	ca. 1835	Greek Revival	B	C
406-14	MIF.18	160 Skyline Trail	Joseph Blush House	1783	Federal	B	C
406-14	MIF.77	160 Skyline Trail	garage	1950	utilitarian	B	C
406-3	MIF.23	161 Skyline Trail	Oliver Church House	1869	Italianate	B	C
406-3	MIF.924	161 Skyline Trail	fountain	ca. 1880	Neo-classical	O	C
406-15	MIF.17	162 Skyline Trail	Blush Tavern Hostelry	ca. 1820	Federal	B	C
406-16	MIF.16	164 Skyline Trail	Edwin Kelso House	ca. 1815	Early Classical Revival	B	C
406-17	MIF.44	166 Skyline Trail	Edmund P. Morgan Hse.	1832	Greek Revival	B	C
406-92	MIF.14	167 Skyline Trail	Congregational Church	1791-1903	Eclectic	B	C
406-18	MIF.15	168 Skyline Trail	Mack General Store	1804/1830	Greek Revival	B	C
406-93		Skyline Trail	open field		N/A	Si	C
406-91	MIF.13	169 Skyline Trail	Town Hall	1901	Queen Anne	B	C
406-94.3		Skyline Trail	open space		N/A	Si	C

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Middlefield Center Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Hampshire

DATE RECEIVED: 8/17/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/12/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/27/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/03/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000827

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10.3.12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



MIDDLEFIELD

#1

MA - MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTER ROAD. tif

JCT. SKYLINE TRAIL, BELL RD FACING N

TOWN HALL, CHURCH on LEFT, MACK GENERAL STORE on RIGHT

CHRIS SKELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, SKYLINE TRAIL 126

2

MA. MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE) - CENTER 002. Kf

DICKSON HOUSE

CHRIS SKELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, 140 Skyline Trail

#3

MA-

MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTER003.tif

CHAPMAN HOUSE

CHRIS SKELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, 151 SKYLING TRAIL

4

MA. MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTER ROAD, 151

SITAW HOUSE

CHRIS SKELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, 158 SKYLINE TRAIL

5

MA - MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTER ROOS. tif

DR. WARREN HOUSE

CHRIS SKELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, 160 SKYLING TRAIL

6

MA. MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTER006.tif

JOSEPH BLUSH HOUSE

CHRIS SKELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, 161 SKYLINE TRAIL

7

MA - MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTER 007.tif

OLIVER CHURCH HOUSE

CHRIS SKELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, 164 SKYLINE TRAIL

8

MA-MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY)-CENTER 008

EDMUND KELSO HOUSE

CHRIS SKELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, 167 SKYLINE TRAIL

9

MA - MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTER ROOM. tif

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

CHRIS SICELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, 168 SKYLINE TRAIL

#10

MA. MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTER 010.tif

164-166-168 SKYLINE TRAIL (L-R)

CHRIS SIKELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, 169 SKYLINE TRAIL # 11

MA - MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTER OIL. tif

OLD TOWN HALL CHRIS SIKELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, 187 SKYLINE TRAIL

12

MA - MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTER 012.tif

ROBERTS HOUSE CHRIS SKELLY PHOTO MAY 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, 147 SKYLINE TRAIL

13

MA - MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTER 013. tif

TIMOTHY ROOT HOUSE

CHRIS SKELLY PHOTO - May 2012



MIDDLEFIELD, SKYLINE TRAIL

14

MA - MIDDLEFIELD (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY) - CENTERLOVE. tif

TOWN CENTER, CONG. CHURCH ON RIGHT

CHRIS SICELLY PHOTO

MAY 2012

688 I NW
(MONTPELIER)
688 I NW
(MONTPELIER)

20

MIDDLEFIELD CENTER HD

688 I NW
(MONTPELIER)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

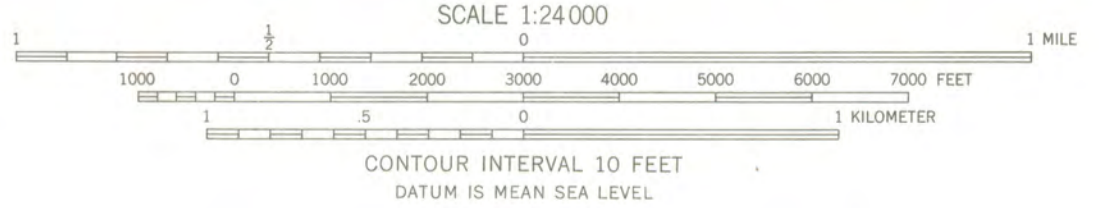
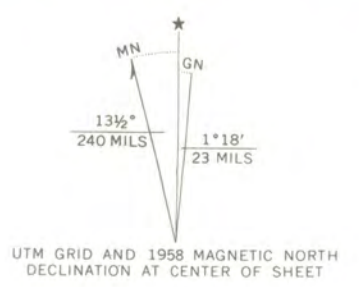
STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

BECKET QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



- June 18
1. 663082
4691583
 2. 664141
4690539
 3. 663992
4689887
 4. 663531
4689750
 5. 662845
4690630
 6. 662713
4691222

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1945. Revised 1958
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

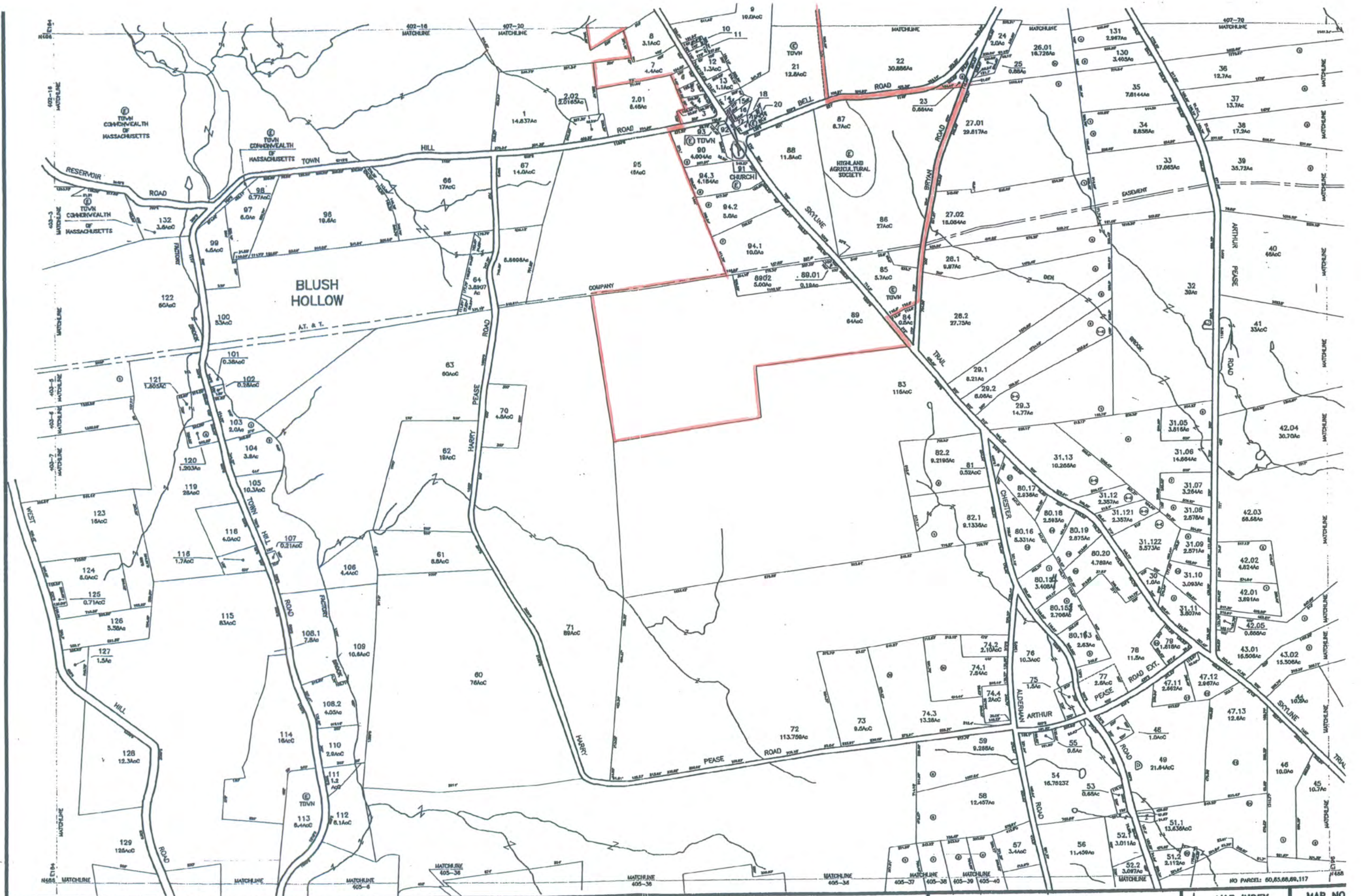
Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

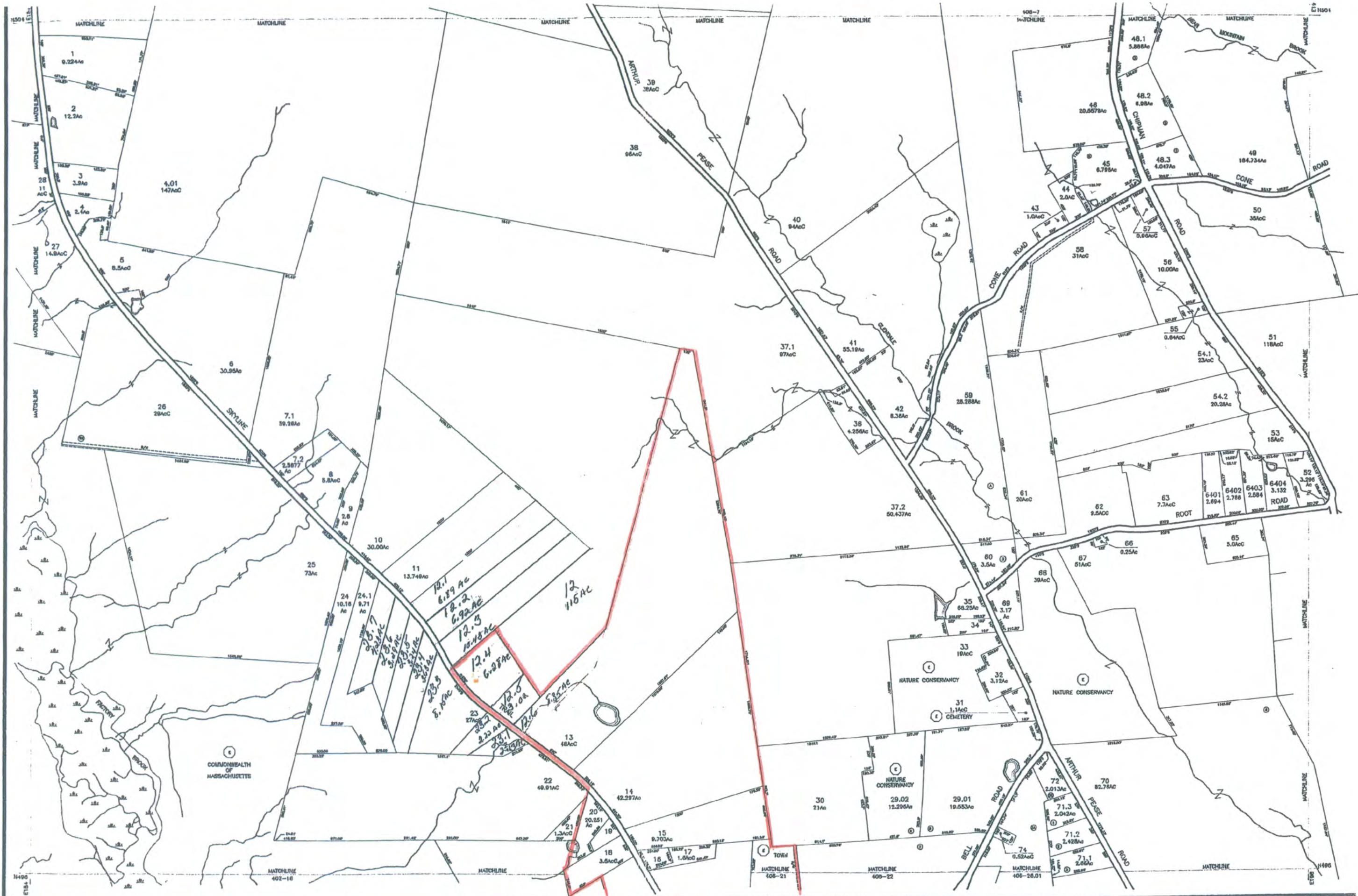
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

BECKET, MASS.
N4215-W7300/7.5

1958

AMS 6368 1 SE-SERIES V814





PIONEER Land Services
 128 PROSPECT STREET
 CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

SCALE
 FEET 1 INCH = 400 FEET
 0 200 400 800 1200 1600

LEGEND
 Ac = AREA CALCULATED
 Ac = AREA BY DEED OR SURVEY
 ? = COMMON WEALTH

■ = LOT NUMBERS & ACREAGE
 ■ = RIVERS & STREAMS

THIS MAP IS FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES. IT IS NOT VALID FOR LEGAL DESCRIPTION NOR CONVEYANCE.

ASSESSORS MAP
MIDDLETOWN

MAP INDEX
 401 | 408 | 409
 402 | 410

MAP NO.
 1.07



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

August 10, 2012 William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Mr. J. Paul Loether
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Middlefield Center Historic District, Middlefield (Hampshire County), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer.

This nomination was first proposed in 2001. At that time, following notification by the State Historic Preservation Officer, four letters of support and six letters of objection were received. The objections were from eight owners of private property and the Middlefield Board of Selectmen. The nomination was tabled in 2001 and was brought forward again in 2012 at the request of the Middlefield Board of Selectmen, the Middlefield Heritage Society, and the Middlefield Historical Commission. The owners of the properties were once again notified of pending State Review Board consideration, 30 to 45 days before the State Review Board meeting, and were afforded the opportunity to comment. None of the original objections from owners of private property were rescinded. They constitute approximately 16% of the private property owners in the proposed district. An additional letter of support from the Middlefield Board of Selectmen was received in 2010, reversing the 2001 letter of objection from that Board. All letters of support and objection are enclosed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosures

cc: Bonnie Parsons, consultant
Noreen Suriner, Middlefield Board of Selectmen
Jack Cobb, Middlefield Historical Commission
Jay Swift, Middlefield Planning Board
Cathy Roth, Middlefield Heritage Society
Elizabeth Rairigh, PVPC



Town of Middlefield

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

RECEIVED

AUG 10 2010

MASS. HIST. COMM

188 Skyline Trail • P.O. Box 238 • Middlefield, MA 01243
PHONE: (413) 623-2079 • FAX: (413) 623-6108

Betsy Friedberg, Director

July 21, 2010

Mass. Historical Commission

Division of National Registration Districts

220 Morrissey Blvd.

Boston, MA 02125

Dear Ms. Friedberg,

The Middlefield Board of Selectmen strongly supports the creation of a National Registration District in Town Center, Middlefield. Therefore we unanimously support application in the community's behalf by the Middlefield Heritage Society (MHS) for this designation from the Mass. Historical Commission.

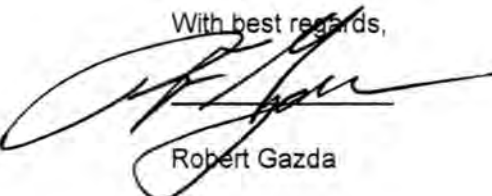
We understand that you have some concern about the town's support based on your experience in 2000 with a similar application from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. We assure you that this is both a different time and a different selectboard. What is also different from that time is that the MHS has worked for the last two years to raise public awareness of the importance of our historic assets. Therefore we now have a level of strong and active community support that we did not have 10 years earlier. In fact at three community meetings about the proposed district there has been no stated opposition from the property owners in the proposed area nor from the general public.

In short, we are both a community and a board of elected officials who in 2010 share an interest in identifying and recognizing our historic homes in Town Center and receiving National Registration District status for this important historic area.


We invite you to Middlefield to meet the Selectboard and to visit the historic Town Center which has received renewed attention and improvement during the last two years. We are proud of our heritage and welcome you to see the three houses in this approximately one mile-long corridor that are over 200 years old and eight that are 100 years old or older. Several of these, including the 217 year old meeting house, have been newly repaired and painted. We recognize the historical value of these structures not only to our own town history, but also to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' unique place in American history, culture and architecture. These structures are truly national treasures.

Please call if you have any questions please call Noreen at 413-623-8788

With best regards,


Robert Gazda


Larry Pease


Noreen Suriner



Town of Middlefield

OFFICE OF SELECTMEN

P.O. Box 238, Middlefield, MA 01243

Tel (413) 623-8966

FAX (413) 623-6108

COPY

Register me
Re: National Historic District

The Middlefield Board of Selectmen is very pleased to have been asked to write this letter of support for the Middlefield Heritage Society's efforts to investigate the establishment of a National Historic District in our town. Such efforts to bring positive recognition to our town and to focus ourselves and others on the rich history of Middlefield is both commendable and worthy of support.

Specifically, the Town of Middlefield Board of Selectmen supports and encourages a continuation of the very open public process which has been initiated by the Middlefield Heritage Society to date. The board emphatically and enthusiastically supports the plan going forward to conduct two additional Public Hearings to answer any and all questions and concerns that townspeople may have on this proposal; and to consider the creation of a National Historic District in the town of Middlefield, Massachusetts.

Once again, the Town of Middlefield Board of Selectmen would like to commend and thank this volunteer group for their efforts to accent the positive aspects of our town.

Respectfully,

Town of Middlefield Board of Selectmen

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary J. Leary".

Middlefield Heritage Society P.O. Box 203, Middlefield, MA 0124

COPY

July 29, 2009

Dear Members of the Middlefield Board of Selectmen,

We are writing to you to ask for your support of a process that would allow for a public discussion of creating a National Register District in Middlefield.

A group of Middlefield residents recently became interested in forming a Heritage Society. Our purpose is to create a greater sense of awareness and appreciation of Middlefield's rich and exciting history. We have enjoyed doing this through tours, historic presentations, and demonstrations at the very successful first annual Middlefield Heritage Days in Oct. 2008. We invite you to join us for the second annual on Oct. 2-4, 2009.

In addition to educating citizens about Middlefield history, we are also interested in preserving some of our historic structures. One possible avenue for doing so is to create a National Register District. Please see enclosed brochure. Note that this is not a Local Historic District which puts constraints on private property. Instead this designation is one with no restrictions to owners in the designated area, yet has the advantage of making historic structures in the area eligible for grants for improvement.

Our primary interest at this time is in obtaining National Register District status to create an area of pride along a historic corridor of Town Center which contains a significant number of Middlefield's oldest homes and structures. Were we to receive this designation a second interest is to apply for grant funding through the Heritage Society to paint both the Old Town Hall and the Middlefield Congregational Church. While we have discussed the general store as an important part of the town center, we do not feel that our small group can undertake that more difficult preservation effort at this early period of our operation.

It is a surprise to many that Middlefield already has one National Register District. This is the area of the Keystone Arches which lie within our town borders. Chester has three such designated areas, Huntington, Becket, and most other hill towns have one or more such designated districts that honor and help preserve places in districts that are important to American culture, architecture, and/or history.

The process which we ask you to support is carried out through the Massachusetts Historical Commission. It would involve public meetings to provide information, answer questions, and assess interest among towns people in general and especially home and property owners in the proposed area. To give home owners an opportunity to hear from others who live in such areas of designation, we would include a panel of property owners from neighboring towns whose houses lie within their town's National Register District.

After the public meetings homeowners would be asked to indicate their interest - either for or against. Lack of significant support among the home owners would end the process. If support for the designation was sufficient the next step would entail a study of the homes in the area to demonstrate their historic importance. I have enclosed a copy of such a study of the Middlefield Town Center from 2000. This document gives you a sense of what the effort involves.

To indicate your support for moving forward with the process as described above, a letter of support is required. We are available for any questions that you may have. If you decide to support the process please send your Letter of Support to:

Betsy Friedberg, Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Div. of National Registration Districts
220 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125

We would also appreciate one copy.

Looking forward to further communication with you.
With best regards,
Cathy Roth and Jack Cobb, Co-Chairpersons
Middlefield Heritage Society



American Jewish Historical Society BF

RECEIVED

SEP 12 2001

September 10, 2001

Office of the Director
15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011
212-294-6160
Fax: 212-294-6161
E-Mail: feldberg@ajhs.org
Website: <http://www.ajhs.org>

Brona Simon
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston MA 02125

President
Kenneth J. Bialkin

*Chairman,
Board of Trustees*
Edgar J. Nathan, III

Dear Ms. Simon:

Vice Presidents
Alan M. Edelstein
Michael Jesselson
Ira A. Lipman
Nancy T. Polevov
Louise P. Rosenfeld

I write IN SUPPORT of the proposed National Historic District for the center of Middlefield, MA. With my wife, I own a house at 147 Skyline Trail built around 1780 by the Root family that originally served as the first food market in Middlefield. We feel strongly that the cluster of antique homes and other buildings such as the old town hall (now the senior center and historical society) deserve and will benefit from the recognition historic designation will bring.

Secretary and Counsel
Maurice Zilber

Associate Secretary
Harold Rosenbluth

As in any community, there are Middlefield residents who favor preservation and those who think that change is a good in itself. One of Middlefield's great virtues, however, is the degree to which it has remained relatively undeveloped compared to its neighboring towns. Currently, there are only 450 or so Middlefielders. The quiet is maintained by the fact that there is no public business in town – no convenience store, no gas station, no video store. Middlefield retains much of its nineteenth-century or earlier personality. By identifying the historic nature of the town center, ideally, other Middlefield residents will appreciate the value of what we are fortunate enough to have and resist the urge to alter it dramatically.

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Treasurer
Ronald Tauber

Associate Treasurer
Arthur S. Obermayer

Assistant Treasurer
Zita Rosenthal

*Chairman,
Academic Council*
Prof. Jeffrey S. Gurock

*Chair, Council of Jewish
Historical Organizations*
Marsha Lotstein

Thank you for your efforts to designate Middlefield Center as a national historic treasure. We support your work fully.

Immediate Past President
Justin L. Wynor

Honorary President
David R. Pokross

*Honorary Chairman,
Board of Trustees*
Sheldon S. Cohen

Sincerely,

Michael Feldberg, Ph.D.

Honorary Vice Presidents
William M. Ginsburg
Robert D. Gries
Faye G. Schayer
Sherman H. Starr

Director
Michael Feldberg, Ph.D.

Deputy Director
Kathryn A. Jacob, Ph.D.

*Assistant Director
for Administration*
Stanley R. Remsberg, Ph.D.

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Richard N. Goldman <i>San Francisco, CA</i>	Nancy T. Polevoy <i>New York, NY</i>	Sue R. Warburg <i>San Francisco, CA</i>
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Abram Vossen Goodman <i>Cedarhurst, NY</i>		Justin L. Wyner <i>Boston, MA</i>

Emma Lazarus/Statue of Liberty Award Recipients

Abram L. Sachar, 1986	Armand Hammer, 1987	Edgar M. Bronfman, 1989
Sylvia Hassenfeld, 1994	Aaron Feuerstein, 1996	Beverly Sills, 1998
	Henry Kissinger, 1999	

RECEIVED

AUG 24 2001

MASS. HIST. COMM

Dear Historical Commission,

I would like to encourage the vote to be yes on Sept 12/01 for Middlefield Center to become a historic district. I believe it would benefit our little community in general and could help enhance the prospects for our historic general store which is now closed and looking for new owners.

It also might benefit the middlefield fair prospects. By designating landmark buildings a Historic District, we may increase attendance.

For ourselves, we think the possibility is wonderful.

Thank you,

Judy and Victor
Artoli

140 Skyline Trail
Middlefield, MASS
01243

NR pg



Middlefield - Massachusetts

September 4, 2001

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Cara Metz
Executive Director

Dear Ms. Metz:

As the proud owner of one of the contributing properties within the proposed Middlefield Center Historic District, I would like to state for the record that I am very much in favor of this honorary designation. The nomination recognizes that, in addition to being a collection of historic homes, Middlefield's central neighborhood is culturally and historically significant to the town as whole, that it is tied to many of the events in our common history, and that it exemplifies the character of the hard-working and self-reliant New England people.

There is some concern in town that this designation will place restrictions upon the property owners as to how they use and maintain their individual properties. As I understand it this is not the case – the designation is strictly an honorific that formally recognizes the fact that Middlefield has successfully retained the charm, beauty, flavor, and fabric of small town America. I believe the designation as a Nationally Registered Historic District will help the town in its efforts to carry this charm and flavor forward into the 21st century.

In addition to the honorary recognition of the Historic District, there may also be some monetary assistance available for local non-profit organizations, and possible tax incentives for commercial property owners. Many of the contributing buildings in the proposed district (such as the buildings at the fairgrounds at 7 Bell Road and the Senior Center/Historical museum at 169 Skyline Trail) are maintained and operated by non-profit groups. Most notable of these groups is the Highland Agricultural Society which was formed in 1856 and continues to enrich our town through sponsorship of the annual agricultural fair and exhibition.

This nomination is not a vehicle for change, nor is it a mandate for strict preservation. It simply acknowledges to the state and the nation what we who live here have known all along – Middlefield is a gem!

Best Regards,

Cherryl Beeman

Friedberg, Betsy @ SEC

From: Parsons, Bonnie [BParsons@pvpc.org]
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2001 1:33 PM
To: 'Betsy.Friedberg@sec.state.ma.us'
Subject: FW: Middlefield Center Historic District

Hi Betsy,
I wrote to ask Jack Cobb, chairman of the Historical Commission, to write a letter of support from the commission and this is what came back just now.
Have any objections come in? Cindy Dube who is on the Commission and writes for the Country Journal is putting another article in the paper to explain it again and this time I asked her to add that these historic districts exist in Chester, Huntington and Russell. I kicked myself all the way home that I hadn't said that.
I'll see you the 12th.
Bonnie

> -----Original Message-----

> From: RoyJackD@aol.com [SMTP:RoyJackD@aol.com]
> Sent: Tuesday, August 28, 2001 8:02 PM
> To: BParsons@pvpc.org
> Subject: Re: Middlefield Center Historic District

>
> Hi Bonnie
> Thanks for the update on the meeting; I am sorry we could not be there.
> After our last meeting at the Museum, the Commission agreed that we must
> let
> the town decide this issue. But personally as a property owner in this
> proposed district I certainly strongly support the proposal as I think it
> would be good for the town.
> Look forward to seeing you in September.
>
> Jack

BS BF

RECEIVED

SEP 10 2001

MASS. HIST. COMM

**Town of Middlefield
Board of Selectmen
P.O. Box 238, Middlefield Ma. 01243**

To Whom it may concern: Pioneer Valley:

We, the Board of Selectmen , at this time do not wish to have the following buildings, etc,, to be a part of the Historical Register:

- The Middlefield Town Hall**
- The Mack Cemetery**
- The Stone Monument at the town hall**
- The Senior Center and Museum**
- The Stone Monument in the triangle**
- The old Church Monument at the town garage**
- The Town Hwy. Garage**
- The Middlefield Vol. Fire Station**

and any land area that is a part of these buildings and also land areas adjacent to any of these buildings belonging to the town.

Sincerely.

Thomas Rock *Thomas H Rock*
Peter Oigny
Larry Pease *Larry Pease*

Cemetery Commision

Ann Jewett *Ann Jewett*
Nancy Burnham *Nancy Burnham*
Larry Pease *Larry Pease*

Middlefield Vol. Fire Dept.

Larry Pease - Fire Chief *Larry Pease*
Ronald Radwich - Deputy Fire Chief *Ronald A Radwich*

Marijane Ratawski
Notary Public

My Commission expires 11-27-2003

Sept 6, 2001 ⁴ BF

RECEIVED

Massachusetts Historical Comm.
SEP 12 2001

Dear Brona Simon;

My husband and I
do not wish our property;
175 Skyline Trail; Middle-
field MA.; to be listed
on the National Register
of Historic Places. Our
answer is no.

Janet L Rock
Aery E Rock

175 Skyline Tr.
Middlefield,
MA 01243

My Commission expires
June 14, 2006

Elizabeth C. M. O'Leary
Notary Public

153 SKYLINE TRAIL
MIDDLEFIELD, MA 01243
8/25/01

BF

WILLIAM F. GALVIN, SEC.
MA ARCHIVES BLDG.
220 MORRISSEY BLVD.
BOSTON, MA 02125

RECEIVED
AUG 26 2001
MASS HIST. COMM

DEAR SIR,

WE ARE THE SOLE OWNERS OF
THE PRIVATE PROPERTY LOCATED AT
153 SKYLINE TRAIL. AND WITHIN THE
BOUNDARIES OF THE PROPOSED MIDDLEFIELD
CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT.

WE OBJECT TO OUR PROPERTY BEING
LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NATIONAL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT AND 36 CFR
PART 60.

Chuck H. Winn
Barbara J. Winn
153 Skyline Trail
P.O. Box 215

Municipal Notary Public
Notary Public. Comm. expires 11-27-2003
Middlefield, MA
01243-0215

JSBF

RECEIVED

SEP 12 2001

MASS HIST. COMMISSION

156 Skyline Trail
Middlefield, Mass
01243
Wednesday, August 22, 2001

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
William Francis Galvin, Secretary
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Ma 02125

Re: Middlefield Historical District

Dear Massachusetts Historical Commission:

I am writing this letter to oppose the nomination of the Middlefield Historical District. I understand that this, in the future put certain constraints on my property and possibly delay once again our much needed Skyline Trail road project. Please take into consideration of those of us who are in opposition and allow the residents of the town who do in fact have historic houses to nominate them as individuals and not form a so called district in our town. The townspeople knew nothing of this before hand and our local officials were not fully informed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. It is time they learned to finish one project before they make mistakes on another. The kitchen at the town hall we were promised from them had to be paid for by a private citizen and we never had the handicap accessible doors on the fire house that we were promised, say nothing about the recent road job that was improperly bid by the PVPC. I live at 156 Skyline Trail, nearly in the middle of this proposed district and am voicing my opposition. Thank you for your consideration from those of us who are opposed.

Sincerely yours,
William O'Connor

William O'Connor

*Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 22nd day of August, 2001.*

*Susan Fenswick
Commission Expires: 12-14-01*

RECEIVED
SEP. 12 2001
HIST. C.

152 Skyline Trail
Middlefield, Mass. 01243
August 22, 2001

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
William Francis Galvin, Secretary
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Mss 02125

Re: Middlefield Historical District

Dear Massachusetts Historical Commission,
We are writing this letter in opposition to the proposed Historical District located in the center of Middlefield. The informational meeting held on August 21, 2001 by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission was poorly organized and presented. The proposed street addresses were incorrect and vague and upon speaking with our town Historical Commission, this change is unwanted. We have had many problems in the past with the PVPC in relation to many projects in Middlefield and we are making known our opposition to a Historic District. There are, I'm sure many people in the Town of Middlefield who have historic homes which would certainly be National Register material however we feel that these people should be allowed to go forth as individuals and not a district. Our Skyline Trail road project has all ready been pushed back by the state and any interference by the historical commission would further prolong this job. Our home is certainly not historic, it is a modular home built in the 1970's and our 10 acres of land have no historic value. We do hope you will reconsider this proposed change and be sure that the PVPC for once has it's facts straight. Those of us who were born and raised in Middlefield did not need an inaccurate history lesson. This approach appears to be a near ambush as there are three public buildings included in the proposed district and I would like to know who decides whether or not they are included, it has not been put before a town vote. It is our understanding that those of us in opposition must write these letters but if there is not a town vote on the public buildings, we do not feel that you should consider them as a "yes" vote. This entire proposal was mishandled and misrepresented.

Sincerely yours,
Ronald and Catherine Radwicz

Catherine Radwicz
Ronald R Radwicz

*Subscribed and sworn to before me this
22nd day of August, 2001.*

Susan G Rensvold
Commission Expires - 12-14-01

DS
BT

RECEIVED

SEP 12 2001

MASS. HIST. COM.

Highland Agricultural Society
Bell Road
Middlefield, Massachusetts

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
William Francis Galvin, Secretary
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Mass. 02125

RE: Middlefield Historical District

Dear Massachusetts Historical Commission:
I am writing for the Highland Agricultural Society D.B.A Middlefield Fair, and would like to voice my opposition to the proposed "Historical District" in Middlefield.
Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully Yours,
Richard C. Cook
President
Highland Agricultural Society

Richard C. Cook

*Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 22nd day of August, 2001*

Susan Fensiro
Commission Expires: 12-14-01