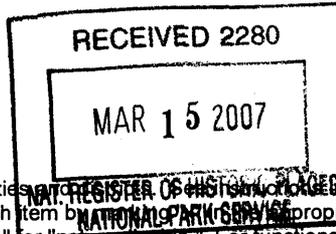


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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See *National Register of Historic Places: How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by checking 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 Middlebush Village Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Amwell Road, South Middlebush Road, Railroad Avenue, Olcott Street and Debow Street not for publication

city or town Township of Franklin vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Somerset code 027 ⁰³⁵ zip code 08873

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Amy Cradic Date 2/7/07
Signature of certifying official

Amy Cradic, Assistant Commissioner Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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

Signature of commenting 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

for Signature of the Keeper *Edson W. Beall* Date of Action 4.24.07

other (explain): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
37	21	buildings
3	3	sites
		structures
		objects
40	24	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

RELIGION/Religious Facility

EDUCATION/School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

RELIGION/Religious Facility

EDUCATION/School

GOVERNMENT/City Hall

COMMERCE/Restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Greek Revival

Craftsman/Bungalow

Italianate

Gothic Revival

Queen Anne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone; brick

walls wood; brick

roof asphalt shingle

other

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheets.

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 a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a 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.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

1834 – c. 1931

Significant Dates

1834, 1842-54, 1870-1880s, 1920s

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

P. Metz
John Wyckoff
Lewis Stryker
John Van Middlesworth

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of Repository:
Rutgers University Archives & Special Collections

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 33.7

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>539953</u>	<u>4483101</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>18</u>	<u>540024</u>	<u>4483071</u>

3	<u>18</u>	<u>540181</u>	<u>4482863</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u>18</u>	<u>539886</u>	<u>44823654</u>

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 Ann M Keen, Architectural Historian

organization Farewell Mills Gatsch Architects, LLC date January 2006

street & number 200 Forrestal Road telephone 609/452-1777

city or town Princeton state NJ zip code 08540

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 _____

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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 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 National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Middlebush Village Historic District
Somerset County, New Jersey

Section 7 Page 5

Summary

The Middlebush Village Historic District is a small residential enclave centered on South Middlebush Road in Franklin Township, Somerset County, New Jersey. The district essentially comprises two blocks, bounded by the Middlebush School and Voorhees House on the north side of Amwell Road; the triangular park on the south side of Amwell Road (the site of the original Voorhees House) and the west side of South Middlebush Road; Railroad Avenue; the west side of Olcott Street until just south of DeBow Street; and the east side of Olcott Street as it extends north back to Amwell Road. The district is residential in character along South Middlebush Road and Olcott Street, commercial on Railroad Avenue, and mixed along Amwell Road, with a school, township hall, church and restaurant in addition to a few residential dwellings.

There are a total of 56 buildings and 6 sites in the district, with the 34 contributing buildings ranging in date from 1791 to the 1920s. Of the 25 non-contributing elements, 11 are garages, 6 are outbuildings and 3 are parking lots; only five non-contributing elements are primary structures. While there have been some changes to individual buildings (such as the addition of synthetic siding), the architecture of the district still illustrates the full range of architectural styles that dominated American building in the late 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, exhibiting examples of vernacular Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman styles. After about 1930, through the Great Depression, the war years and the postwar period, the district's growth essentially stopped, therefore, since that time, few changes have been made to the architectural fabric of the district, except for additions and/or modifications to existing structures.

The majority of buildings in Middlebush Village can be organized into three periods: 1840s-1850s; 1870s-1880s; and 1920s-1930s. Middlebush began to emerge as a village in the 1830s. At this time, original Harrison Tract parcels were divided and subdivided again into half-acre plots. Owners of these village lots began building homes on them beginning circa 1840, with approximately 8 houses built by 1854, all located along the west side of Main Street, also known as South Middlebush Road. One of the landowners, Peter Brokaw, also built a store, hay press, coal shed and scales between 1844 and 1860.

The architecture of the 1870-1880 period indicates the growth experienced by the town when the railroad installed a stop in Middlebush along the Millstone-New Brunswick Railroad Line. In 1880, Middlebush was a community with 25 dwellings and 84 inhabitants.¹ By this time, Middlebush now had a private high school (Middlebush Institute), blacksmith shop, wheelwright shop, and post office.

During the final period of growth for the village, public buildings were erected and the town solidified its status as a self-sufficient, permanent township center. The population of Middlebush reached 100 by 1914, according to a *Farm Journal Directory* from that year,² but the growth of the village had begun to slow and effectively stopped by the early 1930s.

¹ James P. Snell, *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*, Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1881, p. 817.

² William B. Brahms, *Franklin Township, Somerset County, NJ: A History*, Somerset, NJ: Franklin Township Public Library, 1998, p. 426.

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**Middlebush Village Historic District
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Main Roads

In general, the roads in the district are narrow and reflect the continued rural tradition of the area. All are two-lane roads, but range in character from curbed with painted lane markers and street lights to uncurbed, unstriped, and unlit. The most heavily traveled road is Amwell Road, known as Hamilton Street on its way into Middlebush from the east, which runs in a general east-west direction through Middlebush. It is a two-lane, two-way, curbed road, 66 feet wide, including shoulders on either side of the road. Lane markers are painted on the asphalt road, both in the center and on the sides of the road.

South Middlebush Road runs north-south through Middlebush. It is a two-lane, two-way, road, 50 feet wide, including narrow shoulders on either side of the road. Certain portions of the road in the district are curbed. Lane markers are painted on the asphalt road, both in the center and on the sides of the road.

Three of the streets within the district underscore the rural feeling of the district. Olcott Street is an asphalt road, 50 feet across, and is also curbed intermittently. It is unstriped. DeBow Street connects Olcott Street and South Middlebush Road in the center of the district. The asphalt-paved road is 30 feet wide, unstriped and has no curbing. Railroad Avenue also connects South Middlebush Road and Olcott Street, approximately 220 yards south of DeBow Street. The asphalt road is 41.5 feet wide, unstriped and curbing is present on the southwesterly side of the street.

Site of original Voorhees House

Block 81, Lot 1

Contributing site

This open space, populated only with scattered trees and park benches, is the site of the original Garret Voorhees, Sr. home. It was a six-room house with entry and kitchen prior to being burned by Hessian soldiers working for the British army in 1777.³

Voorhees House, now O'Connor's Beef and Chowder House (Photos 1 & 2)

1719 Amwell Road

Block 417.01, Lot 5.01

2 Contributing, 3 Non-contributing

Constructed in 1793 by P. Metz, the Voorhees House (C) is in a vernacular Georgian style and features an irregular plan because of the additions to the building. The house has a 3-bay, 2 ½-story main block with a 2-bay, 2-story wing. This main section of the house has a side-gabled roof and single-hung sash wood windows. There are interior end chimneys at the eastern and western sides. The existing porch that wraps around the building most likely dates from the late 19th or early 20th century, and while now enclosed, it was probably originally open. Contemporary materials include the asphalt shingle roof and aluminum siding.

³ Brahms, p. 51.

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**Middlebush Village Historic District
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Section 7 Page 7

There is a 1-story shed-roofed addition at the eastern end of the main block and multiple 1-story additions on the northern end of the house. A stone well is located just off the southeast corner of the house. The house stands on a large plot that now features a parking lot for restaurant customers. The building is set back approximately 75 feet from Amwell Road.

A large, 19th-century Dutch barn stands at the rear of the house (C). The two-story, red shingle building has a masonry foundation, a gabled entryway and an attached silo. Windows are all 1/1 modern replacements. It has been converted to office and retail space, after having been used as a theater for a local troupe. Two additional non-contributing buildings (NC) stand on the property, currently serving as additional commercial space. The parking lot for the restaurant is also located in the district (NC).

1739 Amwell Road (Photo 3)

Block 417.01, Lot 6

1 Contributing, 1 Non-contributing

This home was built in 1928 to serve as the new parsonage (C), as the original parsonage at 37 Middlebush Road was sold to A. Willard Totten. From 1928 until 1993, this residence served as the parsonage for the Middlebush Reformed Church. Built on a heavily wooded plot, this gable front and wing house has 2 ½ stories plus a visible basement, and is 3 bays wide and 3 bays deep. The visible foundation is concrete. There is a brick end exterior chimney on the western side of the house and 6/1 double-hung sash windows throughout. The gabled entry to the building is centered, and to the north of the entry is an enclosed porch that does not appear to be original to the building. Cornice returns, typical of many buildings in the area, are still visible on the front gable. The house is set approximately 50 feet from Amwell Road. The property also has a two-door, modern garage (NC).

1741 Amwell Road (Photo 4)

Block 417.01, Lot 7

Contributing

This residence was built circa 1930 in the Craftsman style and features a square plan. It is 1 ½ stories tall, 3 bays wide and 3 bays deep. Visible Craftsman elements include tongue-and-groove eaves, a full-width integral porch with Tuscan columns, the river stone foundation and piers at the entry stairs, exterior river stone chimney at the east wall, and exposed rafter ends in the ½ bay window and dormer. The house also features a large end gable dormer with miniature 3/1 windows. Other windows are 6/1 with aluminum triple-track storms. The central entrance has plain surrounds and a door with 3x3 glass panels over 3 vertical panels. There is a 1-bay deep extension at the rear of the house. Modern elements include the asphalt roofing and aluminum siding. The house is set back approximately 60 feet from Amwell Road on a plot with heavy vegetation and many trees. The plot features a paved drive on the east side of the house and a concrete path from the drive to the entry steps, but there is no sidewalk in front of the house.

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Middlebush School, also known as Franklin Township Board of Education Building (Photo 5)

1755 Amwell Road

Block 417.01, Lot 8

1 Contributing, 1 Non-contributing

Built in 1926 as an elementary school, the seventh Middlebush School (C) operated as such until 1979, when the Franklin Township Board of Education decided to close it. In 1976, the auditorium ceiling had collapsed and while no one was injured, the board felt that the cost of completing necessary renovations throughout the building would be prohibitive. The Board of Education is currently housed in the building.

The 2-story, 11-bay buff brick building features a flat roof with a parapet, raised and stepped at the center of the façade. The bays are divided by brick pilasters with cast stone capitals. The two end bays project forward slightly and feature quoining. There are no windows in the end bays. The central entrance to the building has a pediment that reads "Middlebush School;" and the entrance bay is flanked by paired pilasters with decorative capitals. Windows are metal sash. A denticulated cornice caps the second story and garlanded escutcheons are present at the end bays at the parapet level. The property features a large parking lot (NC) at the rear of the building (north).

Franklin Township Hall (Photo 6)

1760 Amwell Road

Block 79, Lot 5

1 Contributing, 2 Non-contributing

The Franklin Township Hall (C) is located on the site of two of the former Middlebush schoolhouses, numbers 5 and 6. The 1-story, rectangular plan building is 3 bays wide, 2 bays deep, and is covered in a rough coat of stucco. The asphalt-shingle roof is hipped and features a centered cross-gable with a 6-light wood window. The central entry bay breaks forward and the entry itself has a gabled overdoor and is capped by a tripartite window with 9/1 wood sash. The windows are grouped sash and appear to be vinyl replacements with size modifications. The building has a tall, concrete block foundation and two central brick chimneys. A 1-story, red brick garage (NC) with a tall, hipped roof has been appended to the rear of the building. The plot has a parking lot (NC) at the south side of the building.

Middlebush Reformed Church (Photos 7 & 8)

1 South Middlebush Road

Block 79, Lot 6

Contributing

Located on the southwest corner of the busy intersection of South Middlebush Road and Amwell Road, the current Middlebush Reformed Church building was built in 1919 as a replacement for the 1834 church that burned in 1917.

The original church was a two-story, front-gabled wood clapboard structure with a crowning cupola towards the front of the building. It was 3 bays wide and 4 bays deep. The current church is a 1 ½-story

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mix of Gothic Revival and Craftsman styles with a basilica plan. An asphalt shingle roof caps the stone sanctuary and brick addition. The building has a gabled roof with cross gables, and the roof has exposed rafter ends. There is a 3-story stone tower with stone buttressing at the east elevation. Original wood casement windows feature straight stone lintels and sills. There is a pointed, arched stained glass window on the eastern elevation. The building's original main entrance at the tower has bluestone steps, modern handrails and stone sidewalls.

A flat-roofed, glass hyphen links the sanctuary with a 2-story, red brick, flat-roofed addition at the building's south end. The steel and brick addition, the Christian Education Center, was built in 1958 at a cost of \$100,000. The addition has grouped windows with cast stone surrounds. A low brick wall with cast stone cap frames the building at the eastern elevation.

11 South Middlebush Road (Photos 9 & 10)

Block 79, Lot 7.01

Contributing

This Craftsman-style bungalow was built in 1921-22 on the site of a mill, according to Stryker.⁴ The residence currently serves as the parsonage for the Middlebush Reformed Church, acquired as such in 1993. It occupies the lot immediately to the south of the church site.

The 1½ story, 5-bay building has a stucco and wood trim exterior and asphalt shingle, hipped roof. The concrete foundation is visible on all 4 elevations. On the east elevation (the front of the building), there are 4 sets of paired, 12-paned windows (3 across, 4 down) on the first floor, two sets on each side of the central front entry. On the south elevation, there is a 6/1 sash, with the 6 panes in a single row. There is a brick chimney at the back of the house at the southern end. On the east elevation, a central dormer has 3, 6/1 sash windows. Each elevation has a dormer with a hipped roof. The dormers on the north and south elevations have 2 windows and are modern replacements. The enclosed porches at the front and rear of the house were originally open, according to the Franklin Township Historic Preservation Commission. The front porch has 4 wood steps leading up to the wood landing.

The building is situated on a large plot, with a tall hedge approximately 40 feet from the south elevation separating it from the next house. The site also features a Craftsman-style rubblestone well.

17 South Middlebush Road (Photo 11)

Block 79, Lot 9.01

1 Contributing, 2 Non-contributing

This residence, built c. 1842-43, reflects a transition phase between the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. Originally built by John Wyckoff as a 1 ½-story home (C), the 2 ½-story, side gabled building has a wood clapboard exterior, a brick foundation, and a wood shingle roof. It is 2 ½ stories tall, 5 bays

⁴ Elsie B. Stryker, *Where the Trees Grow Tall*, Franklin, NJ: Franklin Township Historical Society, 1963, p. 97. According to the current resident who serves as the pastor of the Middlebush Reformed Church, there are concrete remains of a water conduction system in the back of the property, lending credence to the presence of some sort of commercial-use structure prior to the present building's construction.

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wide and 3 bays deep, and features a rectangular plan. Windows are 6/6 wood sash with louvered shutters and projecting wood sills and lintels. Wood storm windows are installed on the first story. There is a circular window in the uppermost level on the north elevation. The visible basement windows are 3/3 sash. A central, gabled dormer features an arched window. The entry door is central with a rectangular transom and sidelights, and is recessed into the house. A mid-20th century enclosure has been added in front of the entrance door. The building's wood cornice is paneled and bracketed, matches the cornice on the front porch. Square wood columns support the open porch, which spans the 3 central bays only. There are 4 brick interior chimneys, two at each end of the building. The west elevation (back of the house) has a 1-story enclosed porch.

There is an early to mid-20th century side gabled shed also on the property, along with a later garage (NC) and a poolhouse (NC). The contributing shed was erected during the district's period of significance and reflects the original style of the main house. Two bluestone steps remain leading up to the property, and the house is set back approximately 50 feet beyond the steps.

21 South Middlebush Road (Photo 12)

Block 79, Lot 10

1 Contributing, 2 Non-contributing

The side-gabled residence (C) at 21 South Middlebush reflects a Greek Revival influence, built circa 1842-54. This lot is one of the two neighboring lots purchased by Cornelius Van Doren from the Middlebush Reformed Church in 1839. The original section of the house is 2 ½ stories, 4 bays wide and 2 bays deep. A 1-story, 7 bay addition exists at the rear of the house. The exterior, including the addition, is wood clad with a stone foundation and asphalt shingle roofing. The windows are 6/6 sash with louvered shutters. Storm windows are installed on the second floor. The building's main entry is centered, but hitched slightly to the right, with half-height windows flanking the door and a frieze above. A 4-bay open porch is 1 ½ stairs raised above grade and it features square wood pillars and an asphalt shingle roof. Two interior brick chimneys are located on the north and south elevations. The south elevation has 2 small 2/2 shuttered windows in the uppermost story.

The residence is set back approximately 50 feet from the road. Brick and slate steps lead up to the property, and a brick path leads up to the porch and branches off to skirt the south side of the house. Hedges grow around the south side and in front of the house. At the front of the property is a low wooden fence and a 1 ½-level brick wall next to a small stone sidewalk. There are three buildings behind the main house: a wooden barn (NC), a modern, small 1 ½-story building (NC), and a small shed.

25 South Middlebush Road (Photo 13)

Block 79, Lot 11

1 Contributing, 1 Non-contributing

This lot is one of the two neighboring lots purchased by Cornelius Van Doren from the Middlebush Reformed Church in 1839. This side-gabled residence (C) reflects a Greek Revival influence like its

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neighbor at 21 South Middlebush, but is also primarily vernacular in design. It is 5 bays wide with a 3-bay porch extending 6-7 feet in front of the house, with 4 square wood piers supporting the porch. A 2-foot railing encloses the porch. The visible foundation is brick. A modern vinyl cornice features a built-in gutter that wraps around the sides of the building. On the front elevation, there are 9 6/1 sash windows with simple, straight lintels. There is a round window in the front dormer. Two interior chimneys flank the house on its north and south sides. The south elevation has a small porch, 1 bay wide by 3 bays deep, with 2/2 sash windows and a flat roof, with paneled millwork exposed. All windows are wood with metal storms and shutters are louvered in the front, probably a 20th-century modification. The attic level has 2 rounded 6/6 windows on both the north and south sides of the building, one of each pair has rounded shutters. The north and south elevations also feature 4 full wooden 6/1 windows each. There is a 20th-century porch at the back of the house, and a 20th-century garage (NC) at the northeast corner of the plot. The house is set back approximately 50 feet from the road and there is no sidewalk in front.

31 South Middlebush Road (Photo 14)

Block 80, Lot 9

Contributing

One of the six half-acre lots sold off by the Middlebush Reformed Church in 1839, this parcel was purchased by Simon Wyckoff in 1839 and it is located on the southwest corner of South Middlebush Road and DeBow Street. Stryker suggests the house was built circa 1843 by John Oakey. This 2 1/2-story residence is 3 bays wide by 3 bays deep and side gabled. The visible stone foundation has quoins as well as sections of brick. The exterior is clad in vinyl siding with a wood grain, with an asphalt-shingle roof. Cornice returns and roof cornice have been covered in siding. Windows are 1/1 replacements with decorative shutters on the front elevation and awnings on the 2nd story front windows in addition. The front door is off-center with Greek Revival details, including fluted pilasters and a dentillated cornice. The door itself is a replacement storm with 1 screen over 2 wood panels. The full-length, single-story front porch has a bead board ceiling, plain square posts, a sided balustrade, and Victorian detailing at the top with small brackets. Two internal chimneys are located at the west end (rear) of the building. A modern addition has a 1-bay, 1-story north end and a 2-bay, 2-story south end. The main section of the building is set back approximately 50 feet from the road. A bluestone path leads from the concrete sidewalk to the steps up to the front porch and a wrought iron gate begins halfway up the path. A post and rail fence that turns into a picket fence encloses the entire yard and neighboring lot.

33 South Middlebush Road (Photo 15)

Block 80, Lot 10

1 Contributing, 1 Non-contributing

John G. Polhemus purchased this half-acre lot from the Middlebush Reformed Church in 1839. The original home (C) is said to have been built circa 1843. This residence has been greatly altered, yet a small portion of its original structure is visible on the exterior, in the single bay joining the two early 20th-century additions. Originally, the building was side gabled, 5 bays wide by 2 bays deep with a visible brick foundation. It had internal end chimneys and a 3-bay-wide, centered front porch.

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At present, the front elevation shows 3 bays in the gabled addition and 4 bays in the side-gabled section. The front addition is 3 bays deep and the side-gabled section retains the original building's 2-bay-deep plan. The exterior is clad in wood shingle, except for the visible section of the original house, which is painted brick, scored on the façade. The main entrance is off-center in the side-gabled section, and it features a Colonial Revival surround. Most wood windows are 6/1 sash with a flat lintel, except for the single rounded-arch window on the second story and two sets of 4/1 sash windows on the first story, all on the building's front façade. There are cornice returns at all end gables. On the north side of the front-gabled addition, there is an entrance with a glazed door. There is an end chimney at the north end of the original house, as well as an internal chimney at the central ridge of the addition on the southern end of the building. The visible foundation is parged along the additions and brick at the original block. Basement windows in the original block are 3/3 sash, while the additions have 3-light windows. The house is set back approximately 50 feet from the road, and a brick path leads from the concrete sidewalk to brick steps at the main entrance. A gravel path leads up to a side-gabled, 3-bay, barn-like garage at the north end of the lot (NC).

The Parsonage, 37 South Middlebush Road (Photos 16 & 17)

Block 80, Lot 11

1 Contributing, 1 Non-contributing

Joseph Wyckoff bought this half-acre plot from the Middlebush Reformed Church in 1839, one of six original parcels the church sold. It served as the church's parsonage from circa 1843 to 1927, when a new parsonage was built at 1709 Amwell Road.

The side-gabled residence (C) is 2 ½ stories, 4 bays wide with an exposed basement of parged masonry. The exterior is clad in vinyl siding with an asphalt roof. Windows are 2/2 replacements with louver-operated shutters. There is an arched window in the 2nd-story central gable on the east elevation (front). The entrance is off-center, in the second bay from the southern end of the building. The front porch extends very nearly the full length of the façade and features 5 chamfered support columns. A flat-roofed, 2-story bay window extends from the south elevation. Cornices are dentillated with decorative brackets and all front windows have projecting lintels. There is one central chimney in western (back) section of the house, one exterior chimney on the northern end, and one in the central rear of a 20th-century addition. The building is set back approximately 50 feet from the road. A new sidewalk with gravel leads to the entrance from the street. A modern concrete wall, approximately 1 ½ feet high, begins at the front of the house, where a modern, low metal fence on top of the wall, to the southern side. The wall borders a circular drive leading to a side entrance on the south elevation. A poolhouse (NC) and a shed sit at the western end of the property.

41 South Middlebush Road (Photo 18)

Block 80, Lot 12

Contributing

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Set on one of the original 6 half-acre lots sold by the Middlebush Reformed Church, this property was purchased by Alche Van Doren, who built what is believed to be the oldest residence in Middlebush besides the Voorhees House. While portions of this early structure may remain, significant changes to the façade make the determination difficult. The exterior now primarily reflects Queen Anne style.

The side-gabled house is 2 ½ stories with a visible basement, is 3 bays wide, and features an octagon-shaped turret on the south end of the front façade. The exterior is clad in wood clapboard of differing sizes and wood shingle, all painted gray with white trim. The second-story windows in the main section of the house are 2/2 pedimented windows and the first-story 2/2 windows have straight wood lintels. All windows have louvered shutters. As part of its modification to Queen Anne style, in addition to the turret, the building has a two-story bay window on the south elevation. The cornice on the main section of the building has medallions that turn the corner on the south side, and the turret features the same wood cornice detailing. There are 3 windows on each story of the turret, and each is a 1/1 metal replacement except on the north upper level, which is 2/2 wood. Curved copper siding ornaments the building between the first and second floor on the turret. Rectangular wood paneling is visible on the 2-story side bayed windows. In the bay, the 3 first floor windows are 2/2 wood, and the 3 second floor windows are 1/1 metal. Windows original to the bay are 2/2. The front porch is 2 bays with square columns and wood bracing for support. A wrought iron rail has been installed on the porch. On the main section of the house, the central dormer has a round window with 8 divides. The top cornice features brackets mildly reminiscent of Italianate style, with triangular dentillation. No garage is visible, cars park in the driveway. There is a large 2-story addition to the rear of the main house that is 3 bays deep. It has 3 2/2 windows on the upper level and 3 windows on the lower level with 12 square glass panels each. A herringbone brick sidewalk leading up to the house complements a wrought iron fence and gate. The house is set back approximately 20 feet from the road.

43 South Middlebush Road (Photo 19)

Block 80, Lot 13

1 Contributing, 1 Non-contributing

This Colonial Revival home (C) was built before 1860, as it appears on an 1860 map of Middlebush, although it has undergone significant modification. A 2 ½-story, side-gabled building, it is clad in asbestos shingle and has a visible brick foundation. An original 3-bay front porch is no longer on the east façade. The front entry (east façade) is centered in the 3-bay main section, and it has a shed, wood-paneled roof supported by 2 thin, square wood columns. The replacement entry door has a large, single-paned storm, with a 9-paneled (3x3) interior door. Windows are 6/6 throughout, with small lintels and sills. The house also has a very basic, plain wood cornice. The south side addition 2 bays wide, although a modern window spans both bays across the front façade. The modern, side-gabled garage in back (NC) is built with brick and cinderblock. No sidewalk fronts the property, although there is a brick path up to the main entry.

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45 South Middlebush Road (Photo 20)

Block 80, Lot 14

Contributing

This side-gabled home was also built prior to 1860, and retains the basic structural elements of that period. Bargeboard decoration has been added and it is now clad in asphalt shingle, but the simplicity of the structure still reflects its mid-19th century character. The home is 2 stories with 3 bays across plus an addition to the south end. There are 2 entrances, one is central on the main façade and the other is on the north side of the addition. The main entry is 9-paneled glass and wood with an exterior screen door. The windows in the main section of the house are 6/6, and in the addition they are 10/10 flanked by 2 6/6 on the east façade. The 3 windows on the first floor of the north elevation are 4/4 and the upper-floor window is 6/6. On the north elevation, there is an exterior stuccoed chimney. There are two additions in the back of the house, one flat-roofed and the most recent is shed-roofed. The asphalt-shingled front porch has a shed roof and is centered on the façade. Two wood pillars support the porch, which, in keep with the décor, is replete with wood bargeboard balustrade, cornice and brackets. The house is set back about 50 feet from the road and the path leading to the house is gravel.

49 South Middlebush Road (Photo 21)

Block 80, Lot 15

1 Contributing, 1 Non-contributing

Like 43 and 45 South Middlebush Road, 49 South Middlebush (C) originated as a small Colonial Revival home, side-gabled and 3 bays wide. The house is 2 stories with a visible parged foundation. It is clad in asbestos shingle with and asphalt shingle roof. The entrance is off-center to the south side, and while it appears oddly placed in the current view of the house, it was the same way in a circa-1935 photo as well. On the first of 2 stories, there is a set of 2 6/6 replacement windows on the north side of the front elevation, and a single 6/6 replacement window to the south of the front door. The door itself is a 9-paned glass and wood door. The original full-length porch has been removed. A single-story addition in the back of the house on the southern end is 1 bay wide by 1 bay deep. Another addition in the back on the northern end is 1 story, 2 bays wide by 1 bay deep with a shed roof. The house is set back approximately 50 feet from the road. A concrete sidewalk leads to a gravel driveway on the north side of the house. There is a modern, hipped-roof garage in the back of the house with shiplap siding (NC).

51 South Middlebush Road (Photo 22)

Block 80, Lot 16

Contributing

Records indicate this house was built in 1916 to replace an 1883 home that was destroyed by fire. It is a 2 ½ story Craftsman-style house, 4 bays wide by 3 bays deep. The exterior is clad in wood shingle and the roof is asphalt shingle with wide eaves. It is side-gabled with a jerkinhead roof with central hipped dormer and central chimney. The foundation is not visible. The full-width front porch has a low, hipped roof with canted wood posts, wood deck, and simple wood railing. The entrance door with sidelights is in the right (north) bay. Windows are 1/1 wood sash, and the dormer has paired wood sash

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windows. There is a concrete sidewalk in front of the property and there are heavy plantings in the front of the house.

53 South Middlebush Road (Photo 23)

Block 80, Lot 17

1 Contributing, 1 Non-contributing

Built circa 1850, the house (C) was owned by Peter Brokaw, who, after purchasing the Van Liew farm in 1844, decided to move and begin several businesses in Middlebush. According to Stryker, he owned and ran "a store, a grain store, hay press, scales, and coal sheds."⁵ The house has 2 ½ stories plus a visible basement. The main section of the house is 3 bays wide and 4 bays deep, and there is a 1 ½-story addition on the back of the house, 3 bays wide by 4 bays deep. The exterior is clad in wood siding on the front, with wood-grained asbestos siding on the sides. The house is front-gabled and the original open L-shaped front porch has since been enclosed. Windows are 6/6, although the window in the center of the front gable is arched with panes and lintels pedimented. Italianate-style brackets support both the gabled roof and the flat-roofed front porch. The front porch windows are 6/1 and were probably installed in the 1920s, based on style. Chamfered columns support the front porch. The house has 3 interior chimneys, all centered along the gable: one in the front and one in the rear of the main section of the house, and one at the end of the addition. The house is set back approximately 35 feet from the road. A wood fence defines the lot boundary on the south and west edges of the property. A modern shed and garage (NC) are in disrepair at the rear of the property.

56 South Middlebush Road

Block 82, Lot 1

Contributing

According to Stryker, this house was built between 1881 and 1884, perhaps in anticipation of turning it into a railroad station when increased space was needed.⁶ This potential was never realized, as the majority of railroad service through Middlebush sharply declined thereafter and stopped altogether in the early 20th century.

The residence has 2 stories with a visible foundation, 3 bays wide by 2 bays deep. Unlike other homes in the proposed historic district, it has a salt-box roof, and it features a shed-roofed dormer on the front façade. There is a flat-roofed addition on the back (east end) of the house. There are two internal chimneys, one in the center of the plan, and one at the north end. The property, which used to be accessible from an extension of Railroad Avenue east of South Middlebush Road, is no longer as accessible, as that extension has been converted to a private drive, and the house sits back at least 100 feet from South Middlebush Road. Given the limited access available, a present-day assessment of the house is difficult.

⁵ Stryker, p. 95.

⁶ Stryker, p. 96.

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8 Olcott Street (Photo 24)

Block 79, Lot 4

2 Non-contributing

This gable-front-and-wing residence shows a Colonial Revival influence, but was constructed at a much later date, as it is not shown in the 1935 map of Middlebush included in Stryker's *Where the Trees Grow Tall*.⁷ The 1 ½-story home has a concrete foundation and is 5 bays wide, 3 bays deep. It is clad in aluminum siding and has an asphalt shingle roof. The windows are 6/6 except in front (west elevation), where the uppermost opening is a vent. An exterior end brick chimney is located on the north elevation. There are 3 brick steps up to the centered entry door that is flanked by two fluted pilasters. The window frames are modern, with no lintel and a small, plain sill, and the building's side entry and back deck are modern additions.

The house is set approximately 50 feet back from the street and hedges line the front and sides of the building. There is no sidewalk in front of the property. A concrete pathway meanders from the driveway to the front door. A modern 2-car garage is also on the parcel.

12 Olcott Street (Photo 25)

Block 79, Lot 3

2 Contributing

Built 1922-27, 12 Olcott shows hints of Colonial Revival influence. It is 1 ½ stories and features a square plan, 3 bays wide, 3 bays deep. This side-gabled house has wood shingle cladding and an asphalt shingle roof with beaded eaves. The foundation is parged concrete and there is an exterior brick end chimney at the south elevation. Both the north and south elevations have a single, large arched window. The south elevation also features a 1 x 1 ½-bay oriel window. There is one 2-bay shed dormer at both the east and west elevations (back and front, respectively). The windows in the dormers are 8/1 paired. The roof flares at the 2/3-width enclosed porch at the front of the house and an open porch at the rear. The 1 bay x 1 bay enclosed entrance has wood shingle cladding and features 1/1 windows. The off-center entrance has 2x4 glass panes over a paneled door and is flanked by two sidelights. A modern addition has been added to the back of the house.

A barn-like structure is at the back of the parcel, the central section of which is original, but much altered. The first floor is stucco while the upper ½ story is wood shingle. A roof is a Dutch gambrel with asphalt shingles and has a mini-cupola. The windows are 8/8 at the ends of the addition. The building is set back approximately 50 feet from the street. A concrete and gravel drive is to the side of the house on the north elevation. There is no sidewalk in the front of the property.

16 Olcott Street, originally Middlebush Institute (Photo 26)

Block 79, Lot 2

Contributing

⁷ Stryker, p. 90.

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16 Olcott is primarily a vernacular Victorian style residence with an L plan, although the L section does not appear in a 1935 photo of the building. J. Newton Voorhees had it built in the 1870s as the main building for his Middlebush Institute, a private high school he started with his wife Amanda Olcott in 1864. When the original Middlebush Reformed Church burned in 1917, services were held in this building until the new church opened in 1919.⁸ According to Stryker, before it was converted to a residence circa 1920, it had 2 large rooms divided by sliding doors on the first floor, and space for some student boarders on the second floor.⁹ The house is 2½ stories plus a basement, 2 bays wide and 4 bays deep. The L-shaped addition is 2 bays. The building is clad in asbestos shingle and the roof is asphalt shingle. The original section of the house is front gabled with a central entrance. Original windows are 6/6, but several replacements are 1/1. The uppermost opening on the front façade is a louvered window. Windows in the original section all have shutters and metal shades installed on the exterior of the windows. There is a brick chimney at the back (east) of the main section. The entry porch is full width of the main section and features square wood pillars, wood railings and wood spindles. The 9-paned entry door is centered on the façade. Five brick steps lead up to the wood plank porch. An entry door on the south side of the building is a modern addition. The 1950s-era addition is two bays deep and the first story is a two-bay garage. A large, multi-paned window on the second story is flanked by two 6/6 windows. There are no projecting sills or lintels, so the windows are modern. The house is set back approximately 50 feet from the road and the front façade has hedges. There is no sidewalk in front of the property.

24 Olcott Street (Photo 27)

Block 79, Lot 1

2 Contributing

This 1888 vernacular residence is 2 stories high and 2 bays wide. Records indicate it was built by carpenters John Van Middlesworth and Lewis Stryker for John Wyckoff.¹⁰ At the turn of the century, the Wyckoff family conducted a homemade ice cream business from this building. Currently, it has vinyl siding and an asphalt-shingled, discontinuous roof. The end gable faces west (onto Olcott Street). The house has an L-shaped porch, full width at the end gable, and ends at the entrance bay on the south elevation. The porch has a wire balustrade. The parged chimney is at the central ridge of the roof. The foundation is also parged. Windows are 2/2 wood, with some 1/1 and 2/1 replacements. There is a fabric awning over one rear window and over the rear entrance. The building is set back approximately 40 feet from the road. A concrete path leads from DeBow to the entrance, but there is no sidewalk in front of the building. There is also a 1-bay rusticated concrete block end-gabled garage on the property, with the end gable facing south. Swinging doors and windows have been boarded up. The garage has an internal brick end chimney.

⁸ Brahms, p. 363.

⁹ Stryker, p. 53.

¹⁰ Stryker, p. 98.

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30 Olcott Street

Block 80, Lots 7 & 8

Non-contributing

Built in 1938, 30 Olcott is a gable-front-and-wing Colonial Revival style building with a concrete foundation, wood clapboard exterior and an asphalt shingle roof. It is 1 ½ stories, 3 bays wide and 3 bays deep. Three wood steps lead up to the central entry that has a shed roof above it, supported by 2 wood pillars. The chimney is centralized on the building's square plan. The wood framed 6/6 windows are very plain, with minimal sill and lintel. A side porch on the north elevation was formerly open, but now is screen-enclosed. Two concrete steps lead from the sidewalk to the bluestone walk, which leads to the front stairs.

36 Olcott Street (Photo 28)

Block 80, Lot 6

Contributing

According to Stryker, this building, built by John Van Middlesworth, was the first that was constructed after Olcott Street was laid out in 1870. This Italianate-influenced, centered-gabled residence has 2 ½ stories with a visible basement, and is 3 bays wide by 4 bays deep, with an addition on the north side. The exterior is clad in textured asbestos shingles with an asphalt-shingled roof. First-floor windows are almost full-length 2/2 sash. Windows on the second story are segmental arch 2/2 sash with simple hood lintels and plain sills. The window in the central gable on the front facade is a rounded arch window. There is a wraparound L-shaped porch from the west to the north elevation. The front entry is in the right-most bay and has a screen door. A brick chimney stands in the center of the rectangular plan. On the south elevation, there is a decorative window at the back, a stained glass window in the center bay of the first floor, and another rounded-arch window in the upper level. The north elevation features a 1-story bay window with simply decorated support brackets. The house is set back approximately 25-30 feet from the road, with a brick path between the sidewalk and front porch.

39 Olcott Street (Photo 29)

Block 78, Lot 19

Contributing

Built in 1878, 39 Olcott is 2 stories, 3 bays wide by 2 bays deep. It has a centered gable in the front, and a foundation indicating a basement, although the foundation is covered by vegetation. The windows are 2/2 sash with straight lintels and sills, although the central window on the second story has been covered over by the building's siding. There are cornice returns on the front gable, and paired Italianate brackets are along the roofline. Three wood steps lead up to the front porch, which features 4 Doric column supports and simple, low railings. The front porch roof is very slightly sloped. The entrance is in the central bay, and includes a transom window. A brick path overgrown with vegetation leads to the front steps, and the house is set approximately 30 feet back from the road.

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40 Olcott Street (Photo 30)

Block 80, Lot 5

Contributing

This house was built immediately after 36 Olcott circa 1870 by Abram Stryker. It is Italianate-influenced, has 2 ½ stories with a visible basement, and is 3 bays wide by 2 bays deep. The exterior is wood clapboard with a steeply sloped, centered-gabled, asphalt shingle roof. The front porch is full, extending across 3 bays, and has a slightly sloped roof. Four chamfered columns support the porch. All windows are sash and have straight lintels. First-floor windows are vertical 2/2. Second-floor windows are 1/1 and there is an attic vent at the uppermost level. The south elevation has a bay window with 4 long, 3-sectioned windows. The house has decorative bracketing on the gables on either end and a large "M" at the center of the central gable. There is an internal chimney at the center of the rectangular plan. A 20th-century addition is at the rear (east) of the building. A brick sidewalk in front of the home leads to a brick front walk. "Simonson House since 1972" is paved on the front walk. The house is set back approximately 25 feet from the road.

42 Olcott Street

Block 80, Lot 4

Contributing

John Van Middlesworth also built this home, shortly after he built the house at 36 Olcott, indicating a construction date of circa 1871-72. Greek Revival in influence, it features 2 ½ stories plus a basement, and is 4 bays wide by 2 bays deep. Minimally decorated, the exterior is clad in vinyl siding, with an asphalt-shingle roof. The front door is in the far right (south) bay. The house is side gabled, and the full-length front porch has a small central gable. The porch also has an asphalt roof, and is supported by 4 Doric columns. Six wide stairs lead up to the porch at the front and narrower stairs lead up to the porch from the south. Windows are 2/2 with storms and have replacement shutters. Two interior chimneys are centered on the gable, one between the two bays on the north end of the home, the other between the two bays on the south. There is 1-story bay window on the south elevation with a flat roof. There is a small addition to the rear of the building on the north end, 1 bay wide. The addition in the rear on the right side is side-gabled, 1 ½ story, with wood siding, vertical wood planks, and an asphalt shingle roof. A brick path leads to front door. The house is set approximately 25 – 30 feet from the road.

45 Olcott Street

Block 78, Lot 20

Contributing

Built circa 1872, 45 Olcott shows evidence of both Italianate and Greek Revival styles. The house is side-gabled, and its 2½ story rectangular plan is 3 bays wide by 2 bays deep. A visible brick foundation indicates a basement. The house is clad in wood clapboard and has an asphalt shingle roof. The front entrance is centered on a full porch that extends forward 4 feet. Four chamfered columns and low railings support the porch. There is a 2-story bay on the south side of the building, with 6 2/2 windows (3 on first floor, 3 on second). Decorative bracketing is located at the bay and at the porch columns.

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The top cornice has been rebuilt with metal gutters. There is no bracketing at the top of the house. There is a rounded window in the front dormer, although it is covered by painted plywood. The 3 top-floor windows on the front elevation are 2/2, with the center window blocked out. Windows have louvered shutters. The 2 front first-floor windows are 2/2 wood. There are no attic-level windows on the sides of the house. An external brick chimney is located on the north side of the building. There is a long porch and an addition at the back of the house. There is also a small shed from the 1930s in the back of the property. A gravel sidewalk leads to the front of the house from a cement front walk.

Lot South of 45 Olcott Street

Block 78, Lot 21

Contributing site

On a lot to the south of 45 Olcott Street, there is a structure that may be the remains of some sort of storage or work facility that was located on this parcel. Records indicate Joseph A. Roach operated a blacksmith shop on this lot beginning in 1901, taking over an existing blacksmith business in the same location owned by Alfred Van Dyne. Retiring just prior to his death in 1954, Roach was the last of Franklin Township's blacksmiths.¹¹ His shop was reportedly gutted of its blacksmith's tools in 1956, yet the Franklin Township Historical Society makes no mention of the structure being torn down.

46 Olcott Street

Block 80, Lot 3

Contributing

This front-gabled house, according to Stryker, was built in 1923 as one of several homes Elmer T. Smith had built on his land. The house at 46 Olcott reflects the Craftsman influence prevalent in the 1920s. It has a rectangular plan, 3 bays wide by 2 bays deep, and is 2 ½ stories with an exposed basement. The exterior has its original wood siding up to approximately ¾ of the building's height, with painted wood shingles covering the remaining area. The roof is asphalt shingle and the foundation is parged concrete block. Simple brackets support the extended roof. There is an open porch in front, supported by simple, paired box wood columns, with concrete column supports underneath. The 2-bay-wide porch is also front gabled. Four steps lead up to the porch and the front entrance is in the left bay. There is a side entrance on the north side of the building. Front windows are 2/2 sash, except for the 3/3 window in the front gable. Side windows are 2/2 and some are obvious replacements. Basement windows are 1 x 3 along foundation. There is a brick chimney in the center of the plan. An attached 2-car garage in the back is front-gabled, with a 1 x 3 window in the gable and a weathervane on the top. The house is set back approximately 35 feet from the road. A brick path leads up to the front porch.

50 Olcott Street

Block 80, Lot 2

2 Non-contributing

¹¹ Brahms, p. 201.

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Elmer T. Smith also owned this property and had a house built on it in 1931. Like 46 Olcott, it reflects the popularity of the Craftsman style in the first decades of the 20th century. It is 3 bays across, 3 bays wide, and is 2 ½ stories. Its exterior is painted wood shingle above with wood siding installed below. The roof is asphalt shingle. The house is front-gabled with a covered main entry. A beam between the attic and second floor is articulated. All windows are wood frame with metal storms. Two gable windows are 6/1 paired sash. On the first floor, there is a covered entry with 3-part windows—one main and 2 sides—with the main being 6/1 and the sides 4/1. There is a porch on the south side of the house, as well as a 1-story, 20th-century addition. There is a garage in the back of the property. The house has a gravel driveway, and an asphalt sidewalk with a herringbone brick patterned walkway leading up to the house.

7 DeBow Street (Photo 31)

Block 79, Lot 11

2 Non-contributing

This 1-story, 3 bay, ranch-style house was built circa 1940s, after the period of significance for Middlebush Village. It is covered in aluminum siding and has an asphalt-shingle roof. Gabled side roofs on the east and west elevations project out and connect to the main gabled roof with overhang. The main entry door is modern. The porch has 4 metal columns. The windows are 6/6 sash, except for one 8/8 window. There is a chimney on the east elevation. The house is set back approximately 75 feet from the road and a brick path leads to the house.

Also on the property, a 3-bay garage is set back approximately 15 feet from the road. The garage has shiplap and wood shingle cladding. It has asbestos shingle roofing over the garage bays and brick-patterned asphalt over the door.

Original Middlebush Volunteer Fire Department (Photo 32)

Block 79, Lot 12

Contributing

The current building had been modified to serve as a garage, yet it retains the majority of its historic fabric. The current gabled roof with asbestos shingles was originally flat with eaves, and the two wood entry doors for the fire engine were changed from 5 glazed panels above x-braced batten doors to a set of x-braced wood dutch doors. Original windows have been filled in. The cut stone walls remain intact.

Floral Image II

1 Railroad Avenue

Block 80, Lot 1

Non-contributing

This rectangular plan commercial building was probably built circa 1950s. Painted concrete masonry unit columns hold up the building's extended roof, with the glass and brick storefront below. The pedimented roof is asphalt with an aluminum cornice. There is an interior chimney with vent in the center of the rectangular plan.

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Granny's Deli and Scott C. Williard Land Surveying, formerly Store & Middlebush Post Office

7 Railroad Avenue

Block 80, Lot 17

Contributing

This 2-story building was built circa 1870s. The main section of the end-gabled building is 3 bays wide by 3 bays deep, clad in aluminum siding. The asphalt shingle roof features cornice returns on the front façade. An interior concrete block chimney is located at the northern elevation. Several windows are 1/1 replacements, although a single 6/6 top sash remains over an air conditioning unit on the side of the building, and huge 3/3 picture windows are installed on the first floor. The full-width porch has a plain wood balustrade and picket enclosure under the porch and an enclosed bay above. There are steps at either end of the porch. The side-by-side entry doors are large, glazed ranch style with rectangular transom above.

The addition, Granny's Deli, is a brick 1-story section with 5 bays consisting of 2 entrances and 3 large windows. The addition extends to the full depth of the main structure. The building has a flat roof and an exterior chimney at its west end. The building is set back only 5 to 10 feet from the street and the area between the street and the building is paved.

Lot Across from 7 Railroad Avenue, Site of Railroad Station

Block 75, Lot 13

Contributing site

This site, while overgrown today, was the location of Middlebush's railroad station. The station measured 12 x 24 feet and was built in 1860. The station was torn down in 1948. A freight house was located on this lot as well, but has also been torn down.

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Somerset County, New JerseySection 8 Page 23**Summary**

The Middlebush Village Historic District illustrates the importance of a small crossroads community centrally located in a large, mainly rural township in New Jersey from the 1830s through the early 20th century. The emergence of a village at Middlebush in the 1830s was due to its proximity to the historically important intersection of Amwell and South Middlebush Roads in Franklin Township (originally known as the Eastern Precinct), Somerset County. Most of the original settlements in Franklin Township were scattered along its periphery, located along the Raritan or Millstone Rivers or the eastern edge of the township (Route 27). Middlebush, on the other hand, was not sited on a river or canal, but its central location secured its important role, both to area farmers and to the municipality of Franklin Township. Middlebush saw its population swell with the arrival of stagecoach and railroad (1838 and 1854, respectively) and ultimately reached its maximum development capacity in the 1920s.

Like other rural villages in central New Jersey, Middlebush provided goods and services to local farmers, including the conveyance of crops to the major markets of New Brunswick, New York and Philadelphia. Its location at the crossroads of Amwell and South Middlebush Roads, however, has been essential to its role in the development of municipal government in Franklin Township. Records indicate that even before official incorporation, township business was conducted in Middlebush. Dated 1764, *The Poor Book for the Eastern Presink of the County of Somerset*, which lists the records of the overseers of the poor, notes that early meetings of the committee were held at William Spader's house (tavern) in Middlebush. Middlebush was the site of the first township meeting after incorporation in 1798, and it took place at the "widow Jane Spader's house."¹ Between 1798 and the 1830s, Middlebush alternated with Six Mile Run as the site of the annual town meeting. When the township decided to centralize its municipal services in 1926, it selected Middlebush once again. The township took over Middlebush School No. 6 on Amwell Road in 1926 and used it as a town hall until 1972. When the government began to outgrow the building on Amwell Road, additional space was allocated on Railroad Avenue in Middlebush in 1961. The town hall now lies outside the historic district.² While Franklin Township's Millstone and Six Mile Run have served as the county seat for Somerset County at different times in history, the township's municipal government recognized the logistical advantages of choosing Middlebush for its activities. Accessibility was key, and no other village shared Middlebush's centrality.

The period of significance for the village district is 1834 through circa 1931, corresponding to the origin of the crossroads village through the completion of the development of the two-block area, circa 1931. Middlebush Village qualifies for the State and National Registers of Historic Places under Criterion A as a significant entity integral to the history of municipal government in Franklin Township and under Criterion C as a distinguishable entity that helps define community development in the Township.

¹ This is presumably the same location as the meetings for the overseers of the poor, although no records have been found that tie William Spader and John Spader (Jane's husband) together, as the earliest tavern license petitions in Somerset County date to 1782. Both instances are discussed in William Brahms, *Franklin Township, Somerset County, NJ: A History*, Somerset, NJ: Franklin Township Public Library, 1998; and James P. Snell, *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*, Philadelphia, Everts & Peck, 1881.

² Brahms, p. 300.

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Historical Background

The first effective settlement of the neighborhood that encompasses the village of Middlebush began in the first decade of the 18th century. On November 17, 1701, a group of eight Dutchmen from Long Island, New York bought 10,000 acres (approximately 15.6 square miles) of land from John Harrison of Flushing, Long Island, whose original plot spanned 27 miles. The portion purchased, known as the Harrison Tract, was located south and west of the Raritan Lots (along the Raritan River) that had been divided and sold in 1681.³ Upon purchase, the tract was separated into eight long-lot parcels. Each lot measured between 1,250 and 1,350 acres.

Soon after the initial purchase of the Harrison Tract, the partners in the venture established an 8-mile north-south dividing line to divide the eight plots into 16. This median became a path or road soon after 1703, as houses were soon built along it, according to historian James P. Snell.⁴ It was originally called the Middle Line (now South Middlebush Road).⁵ Through the years, it has also been known within the village as Main Street and Front Street.

Long Islander Cornelius Wyckoff was allocated Lot 5 of the Harrison Tract. Wyckoff divided his land into four plots and gave one to each of his sons: John, Simon, Jacob, and Peter. Records indicate by 1704, two of the sons, John and Peter, settled into the area known as Middlebush.⁶ They are credited with being the first settlers in Middlebush. According to Snell's *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties*, Middlebush Village was located in Lot 2, the parcel originally purchased by Stoeffel Probasco.⁷ By the time the village was first settled in the 1830s, descendants of Cornelius Wyckoff had purchased much of the original lot. Please see the diagram of the Harrison Tract of 1701.

The earliest reference to the name of the area as Middlebush uncovered so far is included in *Garretson Genealogy* by Lois Van Auten.⁸ Marytje Wyckoff, daughter of Lot 5 purchaser Cornelius, married Gerrit Gerritson in 1730 and they are listed as settling in an area called "Middilbus." Maps dating from the Revolutionary War period and later feature Middlebush, but no earlier maps consulted show the name. There is no documented evidence on the origin of the name "Middlebush." However, local tradition has it that John Wyckoff, son of Cornelius, described the location of his new home as "midden van bosh," translated as "middle of the woods" or Middlebush.⁹

Amwell Road, known as Hamilton Street on its way into Middlebush from the east, runs east-west through Middlebush and the heart of Franklin Township. Its origins date back to the 1690s and it served

³ For the original language laying out the Harrison Tract, see *East Jersey Deeds*, Liber G, 339, also quoted in Brahms, p. 52.

⁴ Snell, p. 813.

⁵ Elsie B. Stryker, *Where the Trees Grow Tall*, Franklin, NJ: Franklin Township Historical Society, 1963, p. 6; Snell, p. 813.

⁶ On p. 57, Brahms quoted Tunis G. Bergen, "More About the Dutch Settlers," in *Our Home*, p. 560.

⁷ Snell, p. 803.

⁸ As noted in Brahms, p. 60.

⁹ Sources recounting this story include: Brahms, p. 58 and p. 424; Stryker, p. 10; and Rev. James LeFevre, "Historical Discourse Delivered at the Semi-Centennial Anniversary of the Reformed Church of Middlebush, N.J.," New Brunswick, NJ: The Consistory, 1884, p. 7.

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as a direct route between New Brunswick and the village of Millstone, Somerset County's seat of government through most of the 18th century. Officially designated in 1712, it extended all the way from Inians' Ferry on through Middlebush, where it crossed the middle line of the subdivided Harrison Tract. Brahms states that by the middle of the 18th century, Amwell Road was a major thoroughfare, connecting Pennsylvania and Hunterdon County goods with the New Brunswick markets and beyond. Confirming the importance of the settlement of the Middlebush area in the 18th century, the first Middlebush Schoolhouse, located on South Middlebush Road across from the Wyckoff-Garretson House (south of the historic district) was erected circa 1730.

In the 1730s or 1740s, Garret Voorhees, Sr. purchased land from Christian Van Doren, who had acquired a 323-acre tract in the vicinity of Amwell Road in 1723. Voorhees built a 6-room house that stood on the southeast corner at the intersection of Amwell and South Middlebush Road. Upon his death, he passed the property down to his son, Garret Voorhees, Jr. Gen. William Howe's British troops were returning to New Brunswick on June 19, 1777 and one group of Hessians, under the leadership of Gen. Philip De Heister, decamped from Middlebush. Under British orders to burn every building between Middlebush and New Brunswick, the original Voorhees house was destroyed.¹⁰ The plot of land where the original house stood remains vacant to the present day and is included in the historic district.

Brahms recounts the story of the British under Col. Simcoe trying to reach South River Bridge from Millstone in 1779. At the intersection of Amwell and South Middlebush Roads, the troops were to turn off Amwell Road to avoid New Brunswick, an American stronghold at that time. Simcoe was unaware of the fact that the Voorhees House, the landmark indicating the intersection, had been burned in 1777. The troops missed the turnoff since the house was no longer there, and walked almost as far as New Brunswick before realizing the mistake. Simcoe himself was taken prisoner in the skirmish that ensued.

The oldest building in the district is the house at 1719 Amwell Road, originally owned by Garret Voorhees, Jr. The Voorhees House, built in 1793 by a P. Metz.¹¹ The Voorhees family sold the house and acreage to the John Van Middlesworth family after the Civil War, and the Van Middlesworths operated the Colonial Farms Restaurant there from 1939 until 1976. The O'Connor family of Watchung, New Jersey bought the property in 1976 and opened O'Connor's Beef and Chowder House, which is still in operation.

Area residents decided it was time for a new schoolhouse for Middlebush by the late 1700s. Middlebush Schoolhouse No. 2 was located on the east side of South Middlebush Road, within the historic district. Built on land owned by Garret Voorhees, Sr., the school was built between DeBow Street and Railroad Avenue. It is no longer extant.

¹⁰ Van Horn, p. 117.

¹¹ P. Metz is referred to as the builder of the 1793 Voorhees house in materials prepared by Harold H. Heins, Sr. for the owners of the then-named Colonial Farms Restaurant. This information is also noted in Brahms, p. 86.

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Additional village elements began to emerge here in the 1830s, with the founding of the Middlebush Reformed Church in 1834. As early as 1817, pastors from the Reformed Churches in New Brunswick, Six Mile Run, and Millstone offered services monthly in private homes in the area.¹² Snell states that ministers from Hackensack, New York City, and Long Island also may have visited Middlebush.¹³ Beginning in 1830, a committee made up of members of the New Brunswick, Six Mile Run and Millstone churches was instructed to determine how best to address the needs of the residents of the Middlebush, Three Mile Run and George's Road members.¹⁴ Committee members were: Rev. Dr. Janeway, David Fine, and Frederick F. Van Liew, from New Brunswick; Rev. Dr. James Romeyn and John Garretson, from Six Mile Run; and Rev. Dr. Zabriskie, Peter Williamson, and Stephen Garretson, from Millstone. These men met in Middlebush on November 3, 1830, and for the 50th anniversary of the Middlebush Reformed Church, Rev. James LeFevre summarized the results of the meeting:

1. That we deem that the interest of religion would be promoted by a separation of the country section of the congregation from the city portion.
2. That the vicinity of John Brunson's is deemed the most proper location for a church, as it would accommodate the neighborhoods of Pool's Landing, Middlebush, Three Mile Run and George's Road.
3. That it be recommended to the Consistory of the church at New Brunswick to carry out the views of the committee as above expressed, as soon as possible.¹⁵

While these suggestions did not result in the founding of a new church in the location dictated by the committee, it is clear that by 1830, establishing a new church for the areas outlying New Brunswick was deemed necessary. LeFevre goes on to say that, while no immediate action was taken towards establishing a new church, by early 1834, plans were well underway. Several meetings had taken place in Middlebush, and John Stothoff and Henry DeMott had been appointed to discuss with the consistories of Six Mile Run, Millstone, and New Brunswick. Subscriptions were gathered at the same time in order to build the new church, as assent from the consistories was promised.¹⁶

The new Middlebush church was located nearly equidistant from these three churches. At the opening ceremonies of the church, statements were read from the presidents of the consistories of New Brunswick, Six Mile Run, and Millstone, to the effect that the members who had applied for dismissal from their respective churches were allowed to do so freely and with the blessing of the church. According to church records, there were 39 members of the new congregation, 20 from the New

¹² Rev. James LeFevre, "Historical Discourse Delivered at the Semi-Centennial Anniversary of the Reformed Church of Middlebush, N.J.," New Brunswick, NJ: The Consistory, 1884, p. 8.

¹³ Snell, p. 818.

¹⁴ These three areas accounted for the members located to the south and west of New Brunswick. Three Mile Run was east of Middlebush on present-day Route 27, and George's Road was east of Route 27, angling southwest out of the city of New Brunswick.

¹⁵ LeFevre, p. 10.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

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Brunswick church, 8 from the Six Mile Run church (now Franklin Park), and 11 from the church in Millstone.¹⁷

Land for the church was acquired in a trade between Sophia Wyckoff and her brother, Joseph Van Doren. Van Doren owned a parcel of the Van Liew farm, one of the original two farms that had covered the Middlebush area. Wyckoff traded two acres she owned for a single acre of Van Doren's land along Amwell Road, where the church still stands today. In discussing the origins of the church building, LeFevre notes that the chairman of the building committee was Henry V. DeMott, the carpenter was Henry Solomon and the mason was Jacob Wyckoff, the latter two listed as "mechanics of New Brunswick."¹⁸ The cornerstone ceremony took place on June 7, 1834 and the building was "raised" in August 7-8, 1834, according to LeFevre. The church was dedicated on February 19, 1835. The original cost of the church was \$3,989.25 ½ in 1834, not including the \$1,046.75 organ.¹⁹ When it burned down on July 2, 1917, it was replaced in 1919 at a cost of \$33,220.51, not including the new \$2,250.00 organ.²⁰ The site has been in continuous use by the same congregation since 1834.

With the establishment of the Middlebush Reformed Church in 1834, the village around it soon began to take shape. In January 1834 Van Doren sold the church five acres of land, three of which it eventually repackaged into six half-acre lots along South Middlebush Road.²¹ In 1839, the six half-acre lots were sold for \$40 each to: Alche Van Doren, Joseph Wyckoff, John G. Polhemus and Simon Wyckoff, with Cornelius Van Doren purchasing two lots.²² Once the first houses were built on these lots, Middlebush truly became a village. Several of the houses along the west side of South Middlebush Road (Nos. 17, 21, 25, 31, 33, 37, 41, 43, 45, 49 and 53) date from the 1840s and 1850s, consistent with this early division of land.

Joseph Wyckoff bought his half-acre plot from the Middlebush Reformed Church in 1839, one of six original parcels the church sold. By 1842, the church decided it needed to build a parsonage for its pastor, on space they had set aside – the plot at 17 South Middlebush Road. When insufficient funds

¹⁷ Ralph W. Thomson, "Centennial Historical Account, Middlebush Reformed Church, 1834- -1934," p. 7. From the New Brunswick church: John C. Wyckoff and wife Catherine Stothoff; Frederick F. Van Liew and wife Maria Voorhees; Alche Van Doren; Joseph Beekman and wife Sarah Burniston; Cornelius Van Doren and wife Mary Brokaw; Cornelius Van Doren, Sr.; Henry V. DeMott and wife Ida Van Liew; John Stothoff and wife Sarah Nevius; Ida Garretson (widow of Cornelius Cornell); Jane Garretson and Elizabeth Garretson; Elizabeth Van Liew (widow); Mary Boice (widow of Peter G. Voorhees); and Elizabeth Van Dyke (widow of Frederick Van Liew). From the Six Mile Run church: Ralph Voorhees; Benjamin Van Doren Wyckoff and wife Maria Van Liew; Jeremiah Voorhees and wife Aletta Wyckoff; Mary Higgins, wife of Henry Hoagland; and Joseph Brokaw and wife Susan Voorhees. From the Millstone church: Joseph Van Doren and wife Sarah C. Schenck; John I. Auten and wife Cornelia Probasco; Ann Bennett, wife of John Probasco; Henry Bennett; Minard Van Arsdalen; Ida Van Liew, wife of Peter B. Van Doren; Rachael Smith, wife of Jacob Van Nostrand; Magdalenah Van Zandt, wife of Benjamin Van Nostrand; and Susanah Little, wife of John Mitchell. All names listed in LeFevre on p. 13.

¹⁸ LeFevre, p. 18.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "Centennial Historical Account of the Middlebush Reformed Church," Middlebush, N.J., 1934, p. 14.

²¹ LeFevre, p. 17.

²² Stryker, p. 92.

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were donated, however, the church opted to purchase Joseph Wyckoff's house and land at 37 South Middlebush Road and give him the undeveloped plot at 17 South Middlebush. The residence at 37 South Middlebush, then, has been known as "The Parsonage" since that time. It served as the church's parsonage from circa 1843 to 1927, when a new parsonage was built at 1709 Amwell Road. While a sign at the house claims the building was built in 1820, there are no records to support this, and it appears contrary to information gathered by local historian Elsie Stryker. She notes that each of the half-acre plots sold by the Middlebush Reformed Church was sold for \$40 and had a deed dated January 14, 1839.²³ It seems unlikely the purchaser of this lot, Joseph Wyckoff, would have paid the same price as other purchasers if his plot already had a home built on it. A date for this building circa 1842 seems much more probable.

Stryker states that local carpenters including Joseph Wyckoff built these early residences.²⁴ She credits Wyckoff with building the homes at 37 and 17 South Middlebush Road, with the house at 17 South Middlebush serving as a "large and showy" advertisement for his carpentry work.²⁵

The development of Middlebush was helped greatly with the establishment of first a stage stop in 1838. As discussed by railroad historian Brock Haussamen, the stage stopped at the corner of Amwell and South Middlebush Roads.²⁶ Three times per week, the New Brunswick-Millstone & Flemington Stage traveled via Millstone, Flaggtown, Shannock, Clover Hill and Greenville, including a stop on Amwell Road in Middlebush. Travelers to New Brunswick and/or their goods could then proceed northeast to New York or southwest to Princeton, Trenton or Philadelphia.

A branch railroad line was built in 1854, the Millstone – New Brunswick Railroad Branch of the Camden and Amboy Railroad. It paralleled the stage line, basically placing Middlebush Village between the major road and the railroad. Railroad service for both passengers and freight was established. The line opened on December 19, 1854. Until the beginning of the 20th century, there were 8 stops daily between Millstone and New Brunswick. South Middlebush Road served as the connector between the railroad station and Amwell Road and Route 27 (Lincoln Highway), major thoroughfares in Franklin Township and beyond. Reducing the time it took to travel to New Brunswick, New York, Philadelphia and Trenton, farms and businesses in and around Middlebush that employed many Middlebush residents now had assurances that their goods and services would be available to an expanding market.²⁷

²³ Stryker, pp. 91-92.

²⁴ Stryker, pp. 92, 94.

²⁵ Stryker, p. 93.

²⁶ Brock Haussamen, *When the Railroads Came to Somerset County*, North Branch, NJ: Raritan Press, 1984, p. 62.

²⁷ In 1871 the line was officially taken over by United Jersey Railroad, which soon became a part of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Passenger transportation ceased in 1925 and Pennsylvania Railroad relinquished control of the line in October 1973. Conrail continued to make freight runs for a brief time, but all tracks were eventually pulled up in the 1980s.

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It was during this time period that another new school was built for Middlebush residents. While Middlebush Schoolhouses Nos. 3 and 4 were located outside the historic district,²⁸ Middlebush Schoolhouse No. 5, which opened in 1859, was located within the district on Amwell Road and Olcott Street, behind the Dutch Reformed Church. It was a two-story frame building. When a new school was needed in 1916, Schoolhouse No. 5 was moved across the street and used as a private residence. It was torn down in 1920.

According to the 1860 Beers map of Middlebush, there were 19 buildings that comprised the village, the majority of which lined South Middlebush Road. Please see Additional Documentation for a reproduction of this map. By this time, Railroad Avenue had been named in conjunction with the arrival of the railroad in 1854, although the road itself existed prior to the village's railroad stop. In addition to residences, the village included a railroad station, a general store, a post office, a wheelwright and blacksmith shop, and a grist mill and store.

The lone remaining building is the general store across from where the railroad station stood. An earlier store existed on South Middlebush road in the mid-19th century, owned by Joseph L. Oakley, but was no longer in operation when the Beers map survey was conducted. Peter S. Brokaw opened the store noted on the 1860 Beers map sometime after 1844, according to Brahms.²⁹ His store opened near South Middlebush Road on what would later be called Railroad Avenue, approximately 100 feet farther south than where the present store stands on Railroad Avenue. The original store was located much closer to the railroad tracks, but 1870s-era owner Samuel Voorhees decided to relocate it. The current building has housed a store since its inception, and it has served as a post office periodically when the Republican party held office locally.

A tannery and a blacksmith shop were operated by members of the Barcalow family in Middlebush. In Snell's 1881 account of industries in Somerset County, he states, "Washington Barcalow also formerly has a tannery at Middlebush."³⁰ While the tannery is not shown on the 1860 Beers map, the wheelwright and blacksmith shop is noted on South Middlebush Road in the vicinity of what is now DeBow Street. Cornelius Barcalow (1803-1890) was born to a farming family in Middlebush but went to Somerville to learn the blacksmithing trade and then to New Brunswick to learn the coach-making trade. He then went to New York City to continue coach-making before returning home to Middlebush in 1832. He opened a carriage-making shop in Middlebush while continuing to work on his father's farm. It is unclear whether he continued the shop after moving to East Millstone in 1861.³¹ Between the time he opened the shop in 1832 and 1861, Barcalow exchanged several parcels of his land for property in New York City, at one

²⁸ Middlebush Schoolhouse No. 3 was located outside of the district on a private road off of South Middlebush Road. It is presumed to have been built in the early 1800s. Local resident Judge Ralph Voorhees, born in 1796, taught at the school for many years. Middlebush Schoolhouse No. 4, located across the street from Schoolhouse No. 3, was built in the second quarter of the 19th century presumably, but was no longer serving as a school in 1858, according to Stryker.

²⁹ Brahms, p. 210.

³⁰ Snell, p. 824.

³¹ Information on the Barcalow family was found in Snell, pp. 831-32.

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point working as a carriage maker there for eight years, so his commitment to running the business in Middlebush during this period remains unclear.

A private high school, Middlebush Institute, was founded in 1864 by J. Newtown Voorhees, a Rutgers College graduate and former instructor at the Housatonic Institute in Connecticut. It was in Connecticut where he met another instructor, Amanda Olcott (for whom Olcott Street is named). They were married and moved to Middlebush in 1864. They began teaching out of their home at 17 South Middlebush Road. Stryker reports that scholars came from Harlingen, Pennington, Bedminster, Griggstown, Franklin Park, and Millstone.

Flush from the success of development along South Middlebush Road, settlers in the 1870s turned the corner of Railroad Avenue and began dividing parcels of land on what would become officially known as Olcott Street, sometimes referred to as Back Street. This is the major area of village development beyond the original parcels along South Middlebush Road. According to Stryker, Rev. John Addison Van Doren purchased land from the then-storeowner Peter S. Brokaw in the 1850s, and then sold the land to J. Newton Voorhees and his brother Samuel on March 20, 1868. J. Newtown Voorhees organized and sold the parcels of land along the road, and named the street Olcott, in honor of his wife Amanda Olcott.³² Several homes on the block of Olcott between DeBow Street and Railroad Avenue date from the period when Olcott Street was first laid out.

The 1873 Beers *Map of Franklin Township* indicates that a J.N. and S.G. Voorhees (J. Newton and Samuel) owned nearly the entire western side of the street, along with two corner plots on the east side, at Cross Street and Railroad Avenue. DeBow Street appears as Cross Street on the 1873 Beers map. Ralph Thomson, an early 20th century inhabitant of Middlebush, said DeBow Street was known locally as "Chicken Alley," as chickens roamed freely outside of a home on the western end of the street. He also claimed that nearly every home in the village at that time had its own chicken yard and horse stable.³³ On the 1873 map, there is a Samuel DeBow listed as a "dealer in poultry, game, fruit, vegetables and eggs."³⁴ His store was located at Olcott and Cross Streets, so it is presumed that DeBow Street was named after him.

Houses extant from the period of development stand at 36, 39, 40, and 42 Olcott Street. Several of these homes reflect the Italianate style. Like the earlier buildings, they are reputed to be built by local craftsmen, including John Van Middlesworth, to whom Stryker attributes 36 and 42 Olcott. This claim is supported by the buildings' visual similarity, materials used, and general sparseness of ornament, which is atypical of later Victorian styles but characteristic of the restraint present in most of Middlebush's buildings. Solidifying the verity of the claim that Van Middlesworth was a local builder, records indicate

³² Stryker, p. 97.

³³ Oral interview with Ralph Thomson, 1974, as quoted in Brahms, p. 425.

³⁴ Brahms, p. 211.

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he purchased the fourth Middlebush Schoolhouse in the 1870s, moved it to his property at 42 Olcott, and used it as a carpentry shop for many years.³⁵

During this period of expansion along Olcott Street, a new building for the Middlebush Institute was necessary, due to increasing numbers enrolled. Built at 16 Olcott Street in the early 1870s, this building originally featured: "two large rooms with sliding doors between...desks for two persons, and long heavy tables and benches."³⁶ The building is identified on the J.W. Beers map of Middlebush in 1873 as "Middlebush Institute and Elocution Hall." When Mrs. Voorhees passed away in 1876, the school closed. Mr. Voorhees remarried a few years later, and reopened the school. The building still stands at its Olcott Street location, albeit with a number of exterior modifications, including an addition on its north side.

Regarding the industrial development of the village in this era, Brahms reports that a blacksmith by the name of Sutphen Cox operated a shop in the 1870s near the corner of South Middlebush Road and DeBow Street,³⁷ presumably taking over the facility run by Barcalow. Another blacksmith shop operated in Middlebush in the 1870s, at the southern end of Olcott Street, opened by Alfred Van Duyn and later run by Joseph A. Roach. None of these buildings are extant. Please see Accompanying Documentation for a photograph of the blacksmith shop on Olcott Street.

By 1880, Middlebush was a community with 25 dwellings and 84 inhabitants.³⁸ The village had its own church, district school, private high school (Middlebush Institute), store, hay press, blacksmith shop, wheelwright shop, and post office, the majority of which indicate the success of the village, small though it may be.

Historians note that life in Middlebush Village continued in the early part of the new century much as it had in the latter part of the 19th century. The village maintained its center bounded by Amwell and South Middlebush Roads and Railroad Avenue and Olcott Street, with additional development stretching east of town on Amwell Road, leading into New Brunswick. Amwell Road was macadamized in 1900 to a width of 12 feet, the first such road in Franklin Township.³⁹

Besides noting that public electric service available in all homes by 1927, detailed accounts of Middlebush covering the period between the 1880s and 1920s are generally limited to the largest disaster to hit the area, the destruction by fire of the original Middlebush Reformed Church on July 2, 1917. The village rallied around its centerpiece, and had a new church rebuilt in the same location in 1919. The Middlebush Village Volunteer Fire Department was also founded in this phase of the town's development. After a series of fires, townsmen got together and formed the fire company on September

³⁵ Brahms, p. 353.

³⁶ Stryker, p. 53.

³⁷ Brahms, p. 201.

³⁸ James P. Snell, *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*, Philadelphia, Everts & Peck, 1881, p. 817.

³⁹ Ralph W. Thomson, *A History of Franklin Township, Somerset County, New Jersey*, Franklin, NJ: Franklin Township Historical Society, 1963, p. 136. Thomson goes on to say that the new surface proved to be bad for light horse and buggy, so a dirt road developed along the side of the new road.

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2, 1916. The land for the new department was donated immediately after the Middlebush Reformed Church fire and a 14 x 20 building was planned (at a cost of \$170), but the structure was not completed on DeBow Street until 1928 (at a cost of \$725). The fire company was officially chartered in 1929.

By the 1920s, the economic and land development of Middlebush Village had slowed considerably. Effectively halting the growth of the village, automobiles and trucks soon came to replace the railroad for both freight and passenger service, and Middlebush was not located on the newly planned, more direct routes between major markets. All passenger train service and most freight service through Middlebush was discontinued by 1930.

Municipal Government⁴⁰

While economic growth may have slowed in the 1920s, Middlebush remained an important part of Franklin Township, due to its central location. Records indicate that even prior to township incorporation, annual meetings were held at William Spader's inn as early as 1764.⁴¹ According to petitions for tavern licenses in Somerset County beginning in 1782, Spaders in Middlebush applied in 1787, 1788, 1789, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1794, 1796, and 1797. At the first township meeting, held at the house of Mrs. John Spader in Middlebush on April 9 1798, it was determined that the following year's meeting would be held at Mr. Moore Baker's house in Six Mile Run.⁴² In 1800 and 1801, the meetings again alternated between Mrs. Spader's in Middlebush and Mr. Baker's in Six Mile Run. At the annual meeting in 1801, the township resolved that the "Next town Meeting be held at the House of Mrs. Spader in Middle Bush Inkeeper [sic] and for the future after this to be kept year about at the houses of Moor Baker Six Mile Run and Mrs. Spaders Middlebush."⁴³ Given the fact that meetings were taking place at William Spader's as far back as 1764, it is reasonable to surmise that this agreement to alternate sites between Middlebush and Six Mile Run may date back to the colonial era of the township. Also at the 1801 meeting, districts were created in the township to maintain roads, one of which being known as the Middlebush District. Township meeting minutes through 1830 confirm the alternating location arrangement between Middlebush and Six Mile Run. The tavern in Middlebush changed ownership several times over the years, but continued to host the meeting on even-numbered years.⁴⁴ In the meeting minutes for 1824, the arrangement was reconfirmed: "That the Township Committee meet hereafter at Middlebush and Six Mile Run alternatively." By the early 1830s, however, the arrangement was dissolved. Soon after and until 1851, annual township meetings took place at Baker's tavern in Six Mile Run. No discussion on the change in the arrangement of alternating sites is noted in the minute book. Perhaps the tavern in Middlebush was no longer in operation, or the Six Mile Run tavern proved to be

⁴⁰ Research on the minutes of Franklin Township's annual meetings between 1798 and 1830, and tavern license petitions 1782-1876 was conducted by Robert Craig, principal historic preservation specialist with the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office.

⁴¹ *The Poor Book for the Eastern Presink of the County of Somerset*, 1764.

⁴² Snell, pp. 813-14.

⁴³ *Minute Book for Franklin Township, 1798-187*. April 13, 1801 meeting.

⁴⁴ Proprietors of the Spader tavern in Middlebush during this span: Jane Spader (1802), Abram Voorhees (1804), William Whitton (1806), Samuel Brewer (1808), Jacob Flagg (1810-1816), Abraham Van Duyn (1818-1820), James D. Perrine (1822), Peter R. Voorhees (1824), David Williamson (1830).

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more convenient. Beginning in 1851, rotating sites for the annual meeting was adopted again, but between Six Mile Run and East Millstone. In an interesting turn of events, it is at the very time that Middlebush was emerging as a village that it was phased out as host for the township meetings on alternating years. While it was experiencing its growth, other areas of Franklin Township were undergoing far greater population increases, including Six Mile Run, the eastern portion of the township closest to New Brunswick, and East Millstone.

In the early 20th century, when the township decided to establish a permanent site for its government operations, it once again looked to Middlebush. Roads were paved across the township by the 1920s, Middlebush, with its centralized location, appeared to be the logical choice. In 1926, Franklin Township converted Middlebush Schoolhouse No. 6, built in 1916 for \$6,000, into its headquarters for local government. This building still stands at 1760 Amwell Road, in the historic district. While the township moved to a new building outside the historic district in 1972, the former school served as Franklin Township's municipal hall for 46 years, and the local government maintains ownership of the building to the present day, using it for Board of Education office space and storage for miscellaneous maintenance equipment and vehicles. Built in 1926 as an elementary school, Middlebush School No. 7 operated as such until 1979, when the Franklin Township Board of Education decided to close it down. In 1976, the auditorium ceiling had collapsed and while no one was injured, the board felt that the cost of completing necessary renovations throughout the building would be prohibitive. The Board of Education is currently housed in the building.

Middlebush Village: 1930 – Present

Development of Middlebush Village was basically completed with the establishment of the public buildings in the northern half of the historic district in the 1920s. Two residences in the historic district were also built in this period: the present parsonage for the Middlebush Reformed Church at 11 South Middlebush Road (1921-22); and the residence at 1739 Amwell Road, which served as the church's parsonage from 1928 until 1993.

Middlebush Village has maintained its rural character since the 1920s, when Franklin Township's more urban areas saw increased development (near New Brunswick, Millstone, Elizabeth and Easton Avenues).⁴⁵ The back streets of Middlebush were not paved until 1941 and Joe Roach's blacksmith shop at the south end of Olcott Street operated until the early 1950s.⁴⁶ Since that time, Franklin Township and Middlebush residents themselves have made significant attempts to keep development of the area in the spirit of the village origins. In 1977, Middlebush residents requested a real estate developer change from a grid to a cluster plan to protect the village atmosphere and maintain open space. In 1978, residents rejected a proposal to widen Amwell Road. When a master plan for Franklin Township was published in 1982, it called for "preserving the character and special sense of place of the historic village of Middlebush."⁴⁷ Middlebush retains its rural village character to the present day.

⁴⁵ Brahms, p. 180.

⁴⁶ Brahms, p. 427.

⁴⁷ Township of Franklin, *Comprehensive Plan of Township of Franklin, Somerset County*, 1982.

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Middlebush Village Historic District
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Snell, James P. *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*. Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1881.

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Stryker, Elsie Beatrice. *Where the Trees Grow Tall, Part I: A History of Old Middlebush, 1701 – 1935*. Franklin, NJ: Franklin Township Historical Society, 1963.

Thomson, Ralph W. *A History of Franklin Township, Somerset County, New Jersey, Part II*. Franklin, NJ: Franklin Township Historical Society, 1963.

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Van Horn, J.H., compiler. *Historic Somerset*. New Brunswick, NJ: Historical Societies of Somerset, NJ, 1965.

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Maps, Images

Anderson, J.A. *Map of the Rail Roads of New Jersey, and Part of Adjoining States*. Office of the District Court of the U.S., in and for the District of New Jersey, c. 1869.

Beers, F.W., et al. *Atlas of Somerset Co., New Jersey: from recent and actual surveys and records*. New York: Beers, Comstock & Cline, 1860.

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Franklin Township Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.

Von Wangenheim, Friedrich Adam Julius. "Plan du notre camp a New Brunswick le 12e juin, notre marche le 14 a Middlebush." Rutgers Special Collections.

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UTM continued

Zone 18
5.
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Boundary Description

The district is bounded on the north by rear property lines of the Middlebush School (Block 417.01, Lot 8) and O'Connor's Beef and Chowder House (Block 417.01, Lot 5.01) on the north side of Amwell Road. The eastern boundary of the district continues south from O'Connor's to include Block 81, Lot 1, a triangular plot of land that was the original site of the Garret Voorhees, Sr. house. The boundary then crosses South Middlebush Road to include the houses on the western side of the street. The line of the district expands eastward to include Block 82, Lot 1 on the eastern side of South Middlebush Road. The southern boundary line is formed by Block 82, Lot 1 and then proceeds west across South Middlebush Road to include Block 75, Lot 13 on the south side of Railroad Avenue, the site of the railroad station and freight house (no longer extant). The boundary proceeds north along the east side of Olcott Street and then crosses Olcott to include Block 78, Lots 19, 20, and 21 on the west side of the street. At the northern edge of Lot 19, the boundary crosses back over to the eastern side of Olcott Street and proceeds north to meet the property line of the Middlebush School on Amwell Road.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Middlebush Village Historic District include all historic buildings and lots that contribute to the significance of the district as an example of the area's transition from individual rural farms to community living between the late 1700s and the early 1800s. These buildings include the Voorhees House (1793), Middlebush Reformed Church (originally built in 1834, rebuilt 1919), and a diverse collection of 19th- and early 20th-century residential structures, oftentimes built by local residents, representing an eclectic combination of vernacular and historic architectural styles.

The northern boundary was drawn to include the Voorhees House, the oldest house in the area. The western side of South Middlebush Road defines the earliest residential settlement of Middlebush, which occurred beginning circa 1840. The western boundary represents the secondary development of the area, along Olcott Street, beginning with the official layout of the street in 1870. The southern boundary is Railroad Avenue, the site of the local railroad station, the primary catalyst behind Middlebush's 1870s boom. Railroad Avenue used to continue east past South Middlebush Road, thus a home that was built in the 1880s as a potential site for an expanded train station, 56 South Middlebush Road (Block 82, Lot 1), is also included in the proposed district. The northern boundary, along Amwell Road, features two public buildings that represent the village's 1920s consolidation of village and township services: the Middlebush School and the Franklin Township Municipal Hall. Boundary lines follow legally recorded property lines and do not include partial parcels.

Photographs

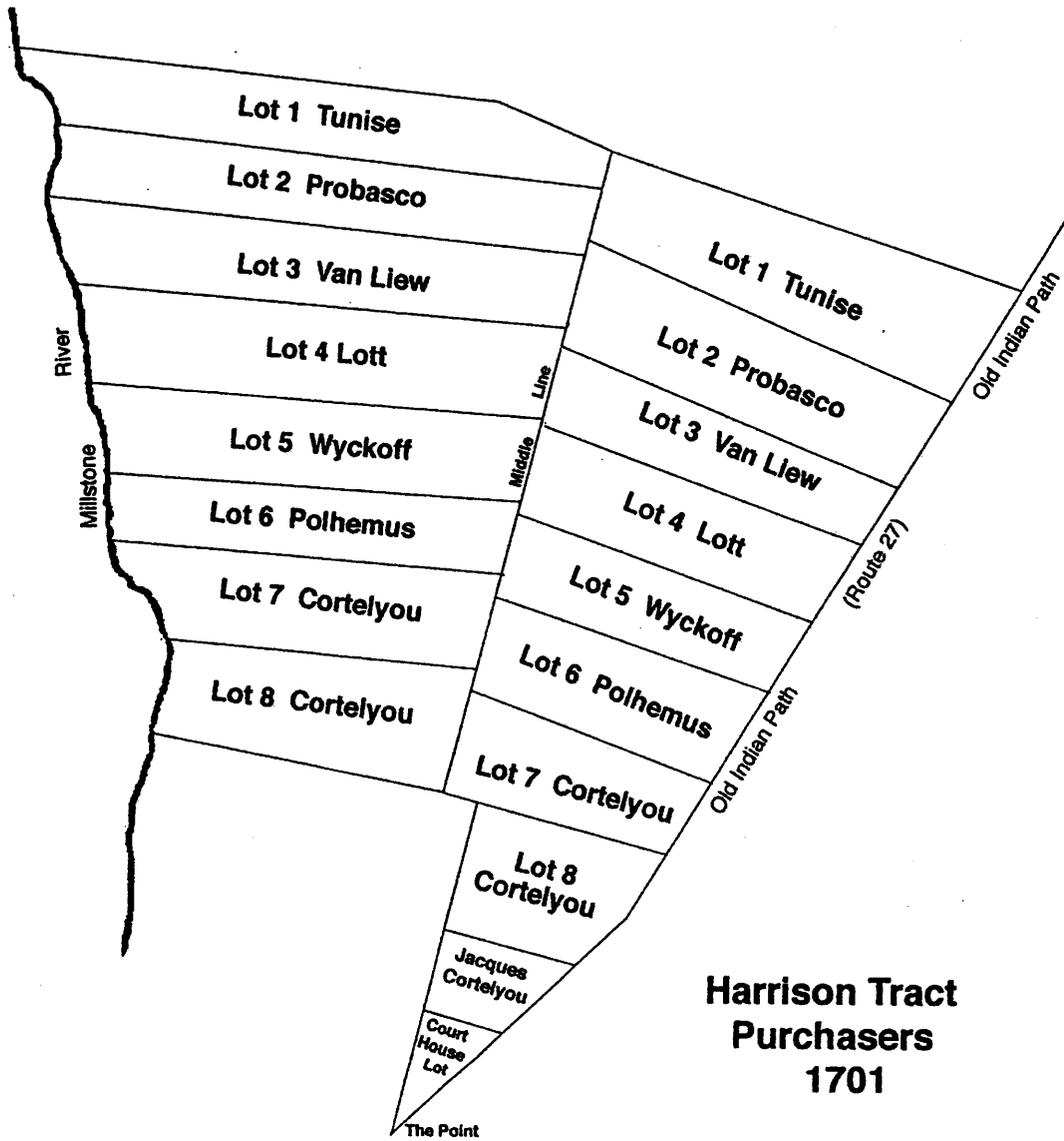
The following information applies to all photographs:

3. Name of Photographer: Meredith Arms Bzdak
4. Date of Photographs: July 2003
5. Location of Negatives: New Jersey Historic Preservation Office

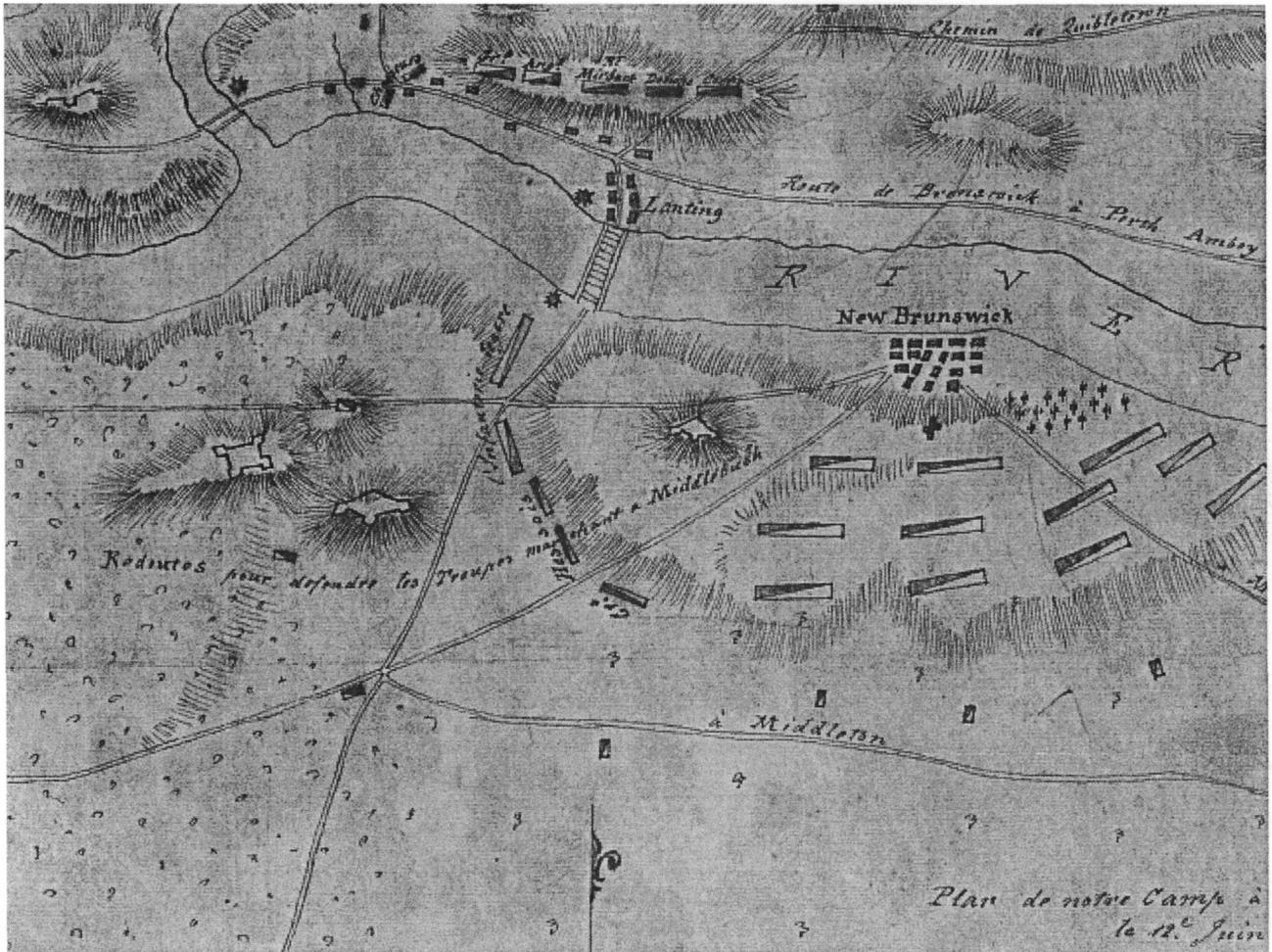
Item 6. Description of View:

- Photo 1. Voorhees House, 1719 Amwell Road, view looking east
- Photo 2. Voorhees House, 1719 Amwell Road, view looking east.
- Photo 3. 1739 Amwell Road, view looking north
- Photo 4. 1741 Amwell Road, view looking northwest
- Photo 5. Middlebush School, 1755 Amwell Road, view looking north
- Photo 6. Franklin Township Hall, 1760 Amwell Road, view looking south
- Photo 7. Middlebush Reformed Church, 1 South Middlebush Road, view looking west
- Photo 8. Middlebush Reformed Church, 1 South Middlebush Road, interior view looking west
- Photo 9. 11 South Middlebush Road, view looking north
- Photo 10. 11 South Middlebush Road, view looking west
- Photo 11. 17 South Middlebush Road, view looking west
- Photo 12. 21 South Middlebush Road, view looking southwest
- Photo 13. 25 South Middlebush Road, view looking west
- Photo 14. 31 South Middlebush Road, view looking west
- Photo 15. 33 South Middlebush Road, view looking west
- Photo 16. The Parsonage, 37 South Middlebush Road, view looking northwest
- Photo 17. The Parsonage, 37 South Middlebush Road, view looking northwest
- Photo 18. 41 South Middlebush Road, view looking west
- Photo 19. 43 South Middlebush Road, view looking west
- Photo 20. 45 South Middlebush Road, view looking southwest
- Photo 21. 49 South Middlebush Road, view looking northwest
- Photo 22. 51 South Middlebush Road, view looking northwest
- Photo 23. 53 South Middlebush Road, view looking southwest
- Photo 24. 8 Olcott Street, view looking east
- Photo 25. 12 Olcott Street, view looking southeast
- Photo 26. Middlebush Institute, 16 Olcott Street, view looking east
- Photo 27. 24 Olcott Street, view looking north
- Photo 28. 36 Olcott Street, view looking east
- Photo 29. 39 Olcott Street, view looking west
- Photo 30. 40 Olcott Street, view looking east
- Photo 31. DeBow Street, view looking southeast
- Photo 32. Original Middlebush Volunteer Fire Dept., DeBow Street, view looking southeast

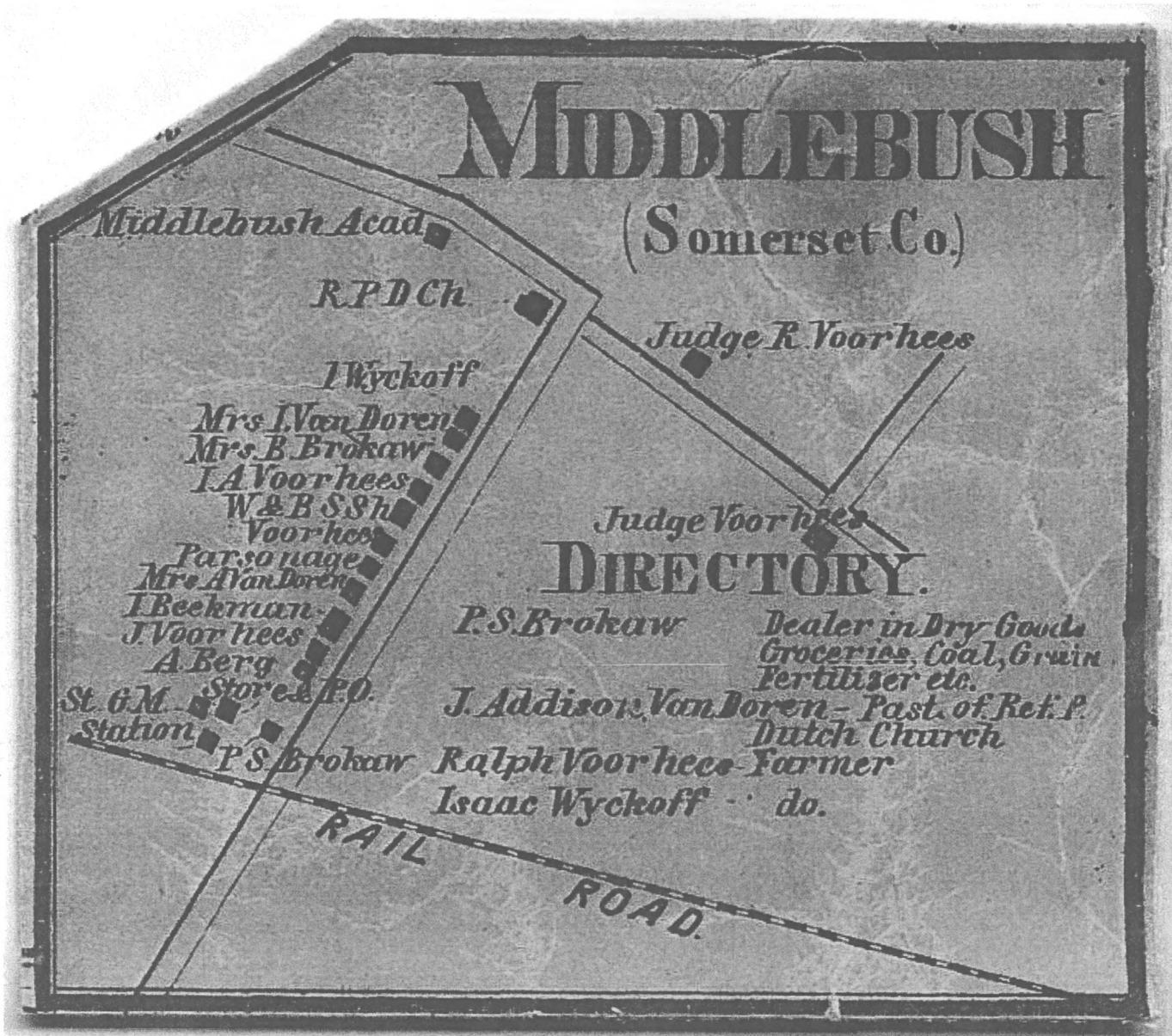
Middlebush Village Historic District
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Middlebush Village Historic District is located in the western half of Probasco's Lot 2, along the Middle Line. Source: William Brahm, *Franklin Township, Somerset County, NJ: A History*, Somerset, NJ: Franklin Township Public Library, 1998, p. 53.

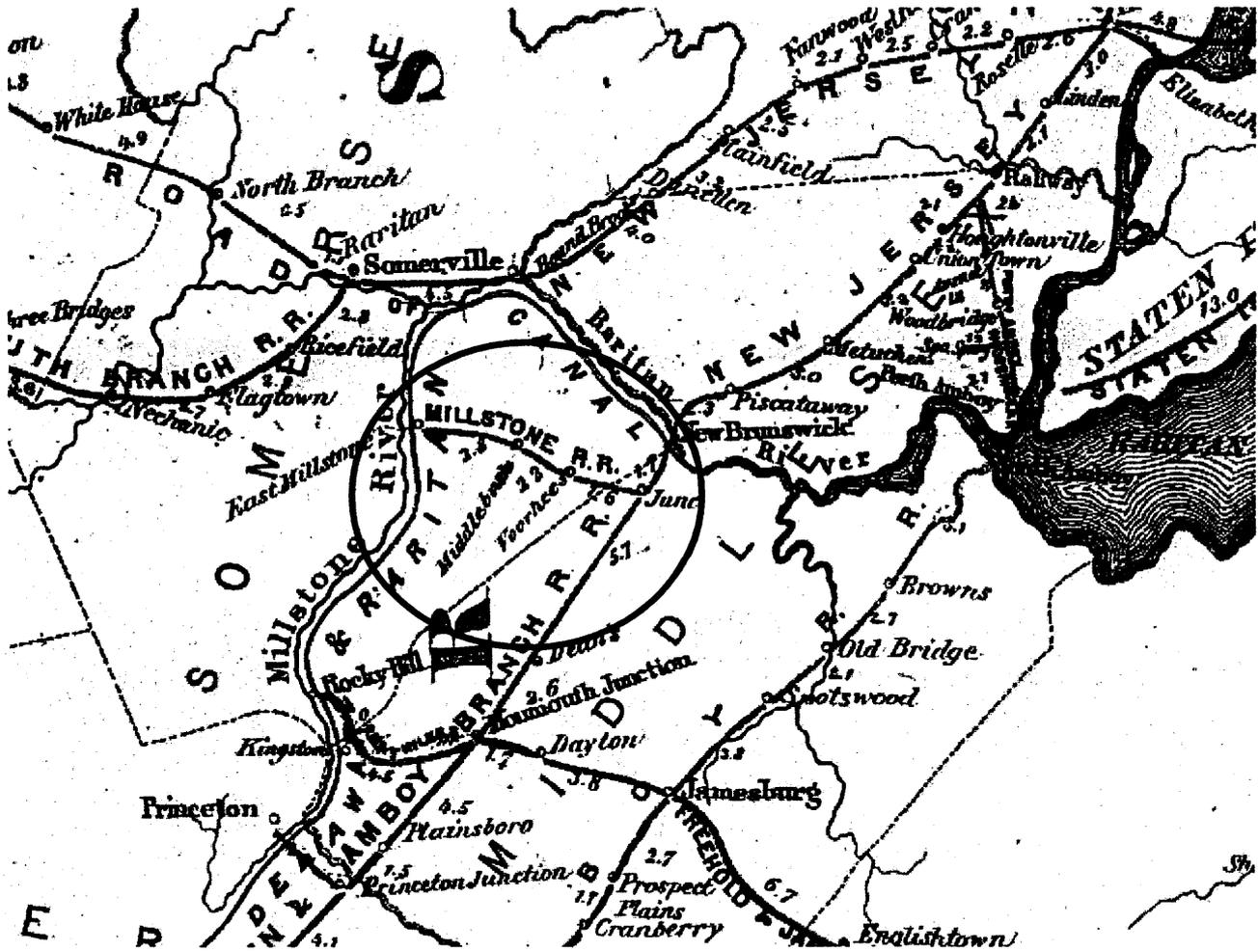


Detail of a Revolutionary War map by Friedrich Adam Julius von Wangenheim entitled *Plan de notre camp a New Brunswick le 12e juin, notre marche le 14 a Middlebush, la situation du camp le 15e juin, et celle du Genl. Washington a Boundbrook, le poste que le Genl. Sullivan occupoit le 15 dans la nuit pour courir Philadelphia, se postant sur la route de Pennington, par V. Wangenheim, Lt. dans les chasseurs Hessian*. Note the map label indicating the location of the defensive fortifications to protect the troops marching to Middlebush June 14-15, 1777.



Map of Middlebush, an inset from the 1860 Beers Map of Somerset County.

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Detail of Map of the Rail Roads of New Jersey, and Part of Adjoining States by J.A. Anderson, c. 1869, for the Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the District of New Jersey. Note Middlebush stop on the Millstone Rail Road Line.

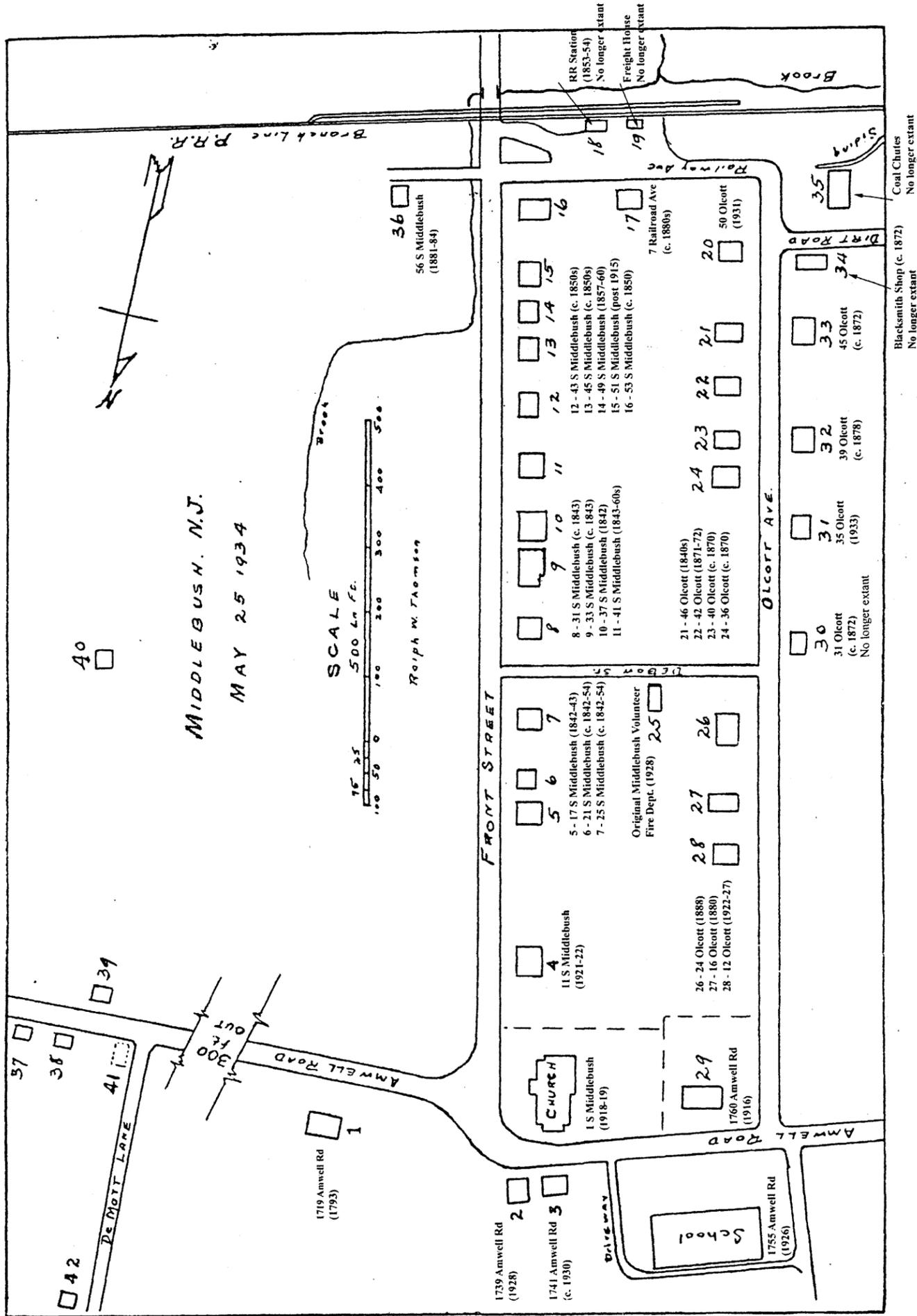
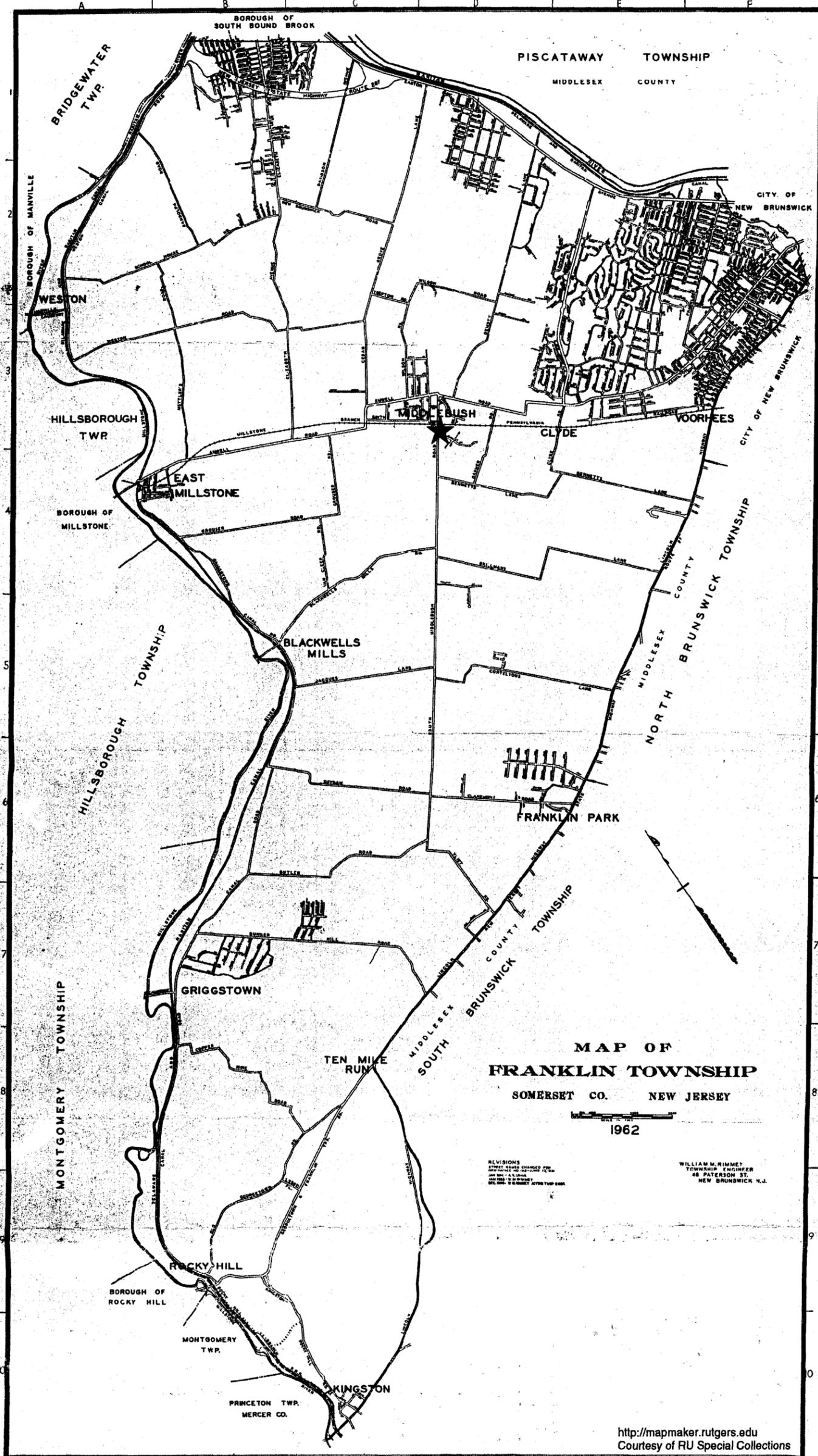


Figure 7. Map of Middlebush Village in 1934 by historian and Middlebush resident Ralph W. Thomson.



Franklin Township, Street,
1962
KIP/3813/S100/208/1968AA

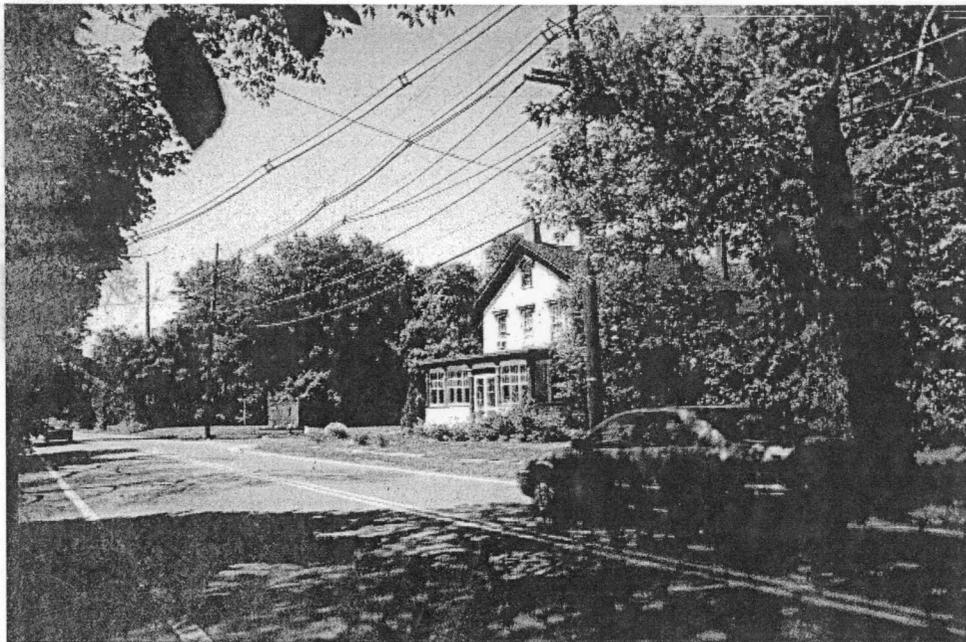
Franklin Township, 1962. Note central location of Middlebush Village.



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South Middlebush Avenue in 2003, view looking northeast.

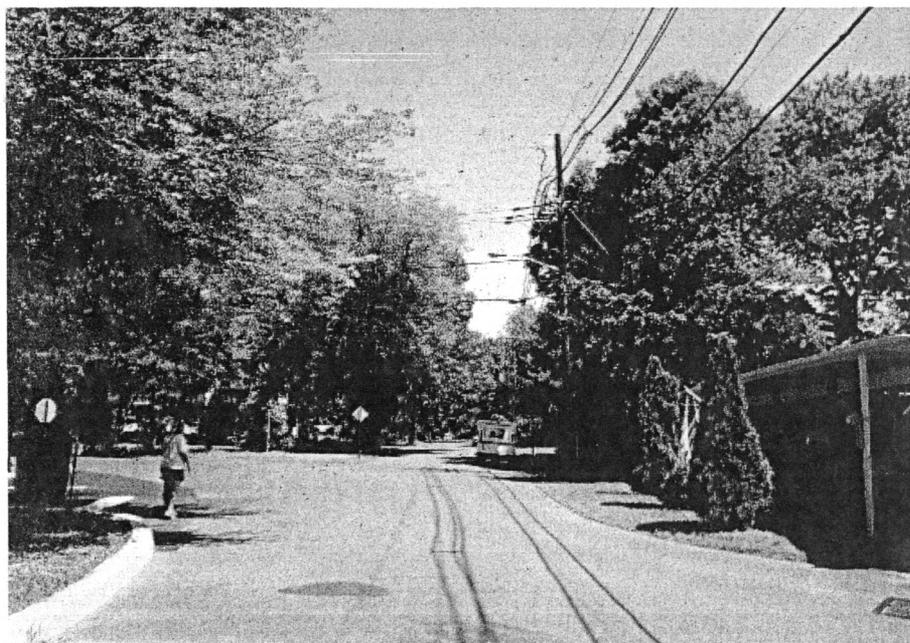


South Middlebush Road in 2003, including 53 South Middlebush, view looking southwest.

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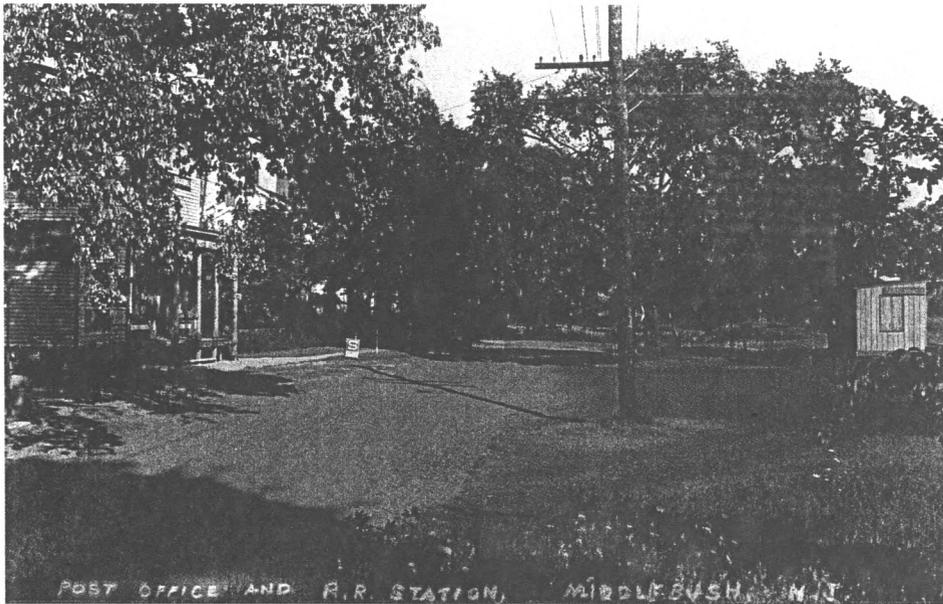


Olcott Street in 1908, view from Railroad Avenue looking northeast.



Olcott Street in 2003, view from Railroad Avenue looking northeast.

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Railroad Avenue in 1935, view halfway between Olcott Street and South Middlebush Road looking southeast.



Railroad Avenue in 2003, view from Olcott Street looking southeast.



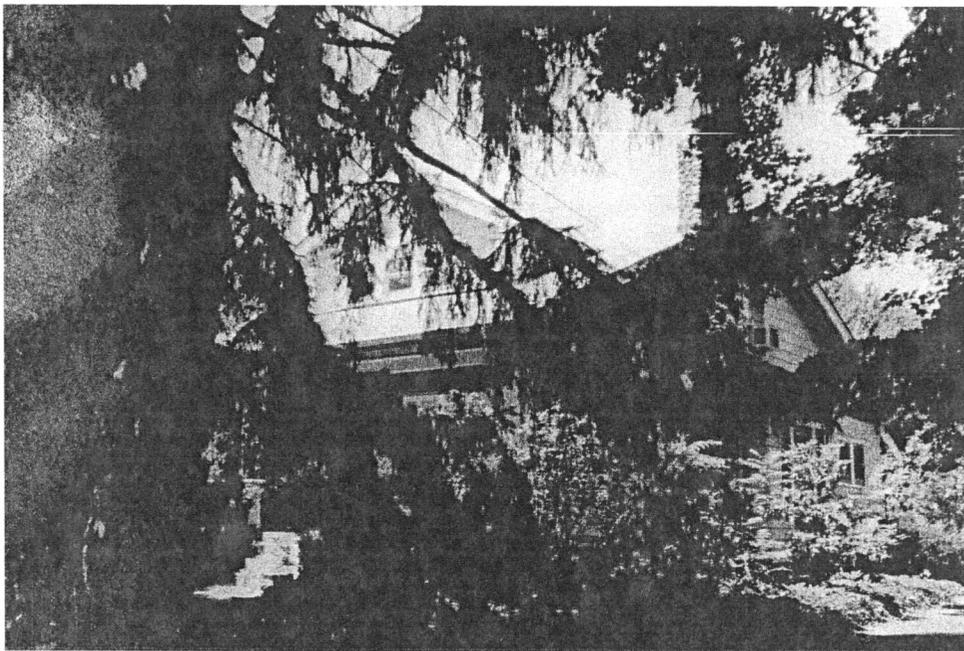
Voorhees House in 1925, operating as Colonial Farms Restaurant, 1719 Amwell Road.



Voorhees House in 2003, operating as O'Connor's Beef & Chowder House, 1719 Amwell Road.

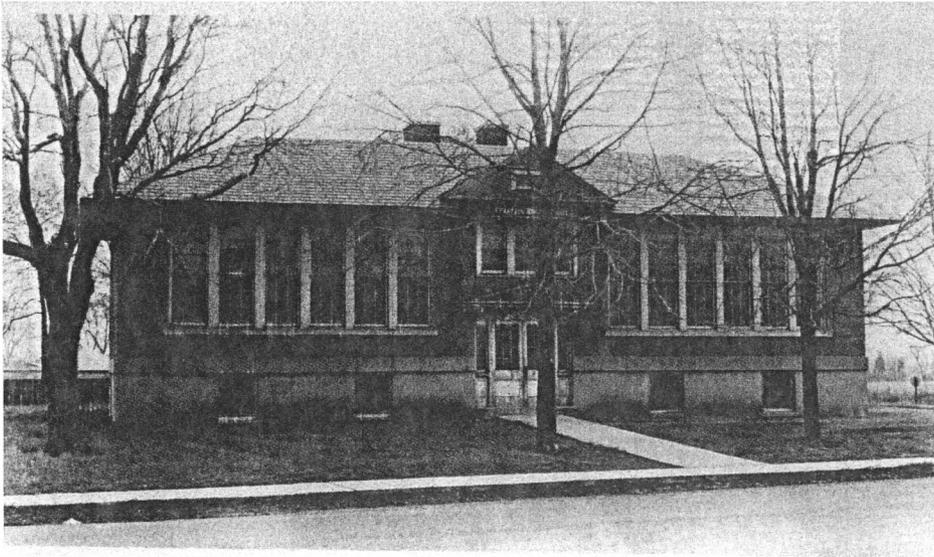


1741 Amwell Road, built circa 1930, photo taken June 1935.



1741 Amwell Road in 2003.

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Middlebush School, built in 1916, serving as Franklin Township Hall, 1760 Amwell Road, photo taken circa 1970.



1760 Amwell Road in 2003. Formerly Middlebush School and Franklin Township Hall, building is now part of Middlebush Board of Education buildings.

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Middlebush Reformed Church, 1 South Middlebush Road, built in 1835, burned down in 1917, photo taken circa 1910.



Middlebush Reformed Church, 1 South Middlebush Road, built in 1918-19, photo taken circa 1935.



11 South Middlebush Road, built in 1921-22, photo taken circa 1935.



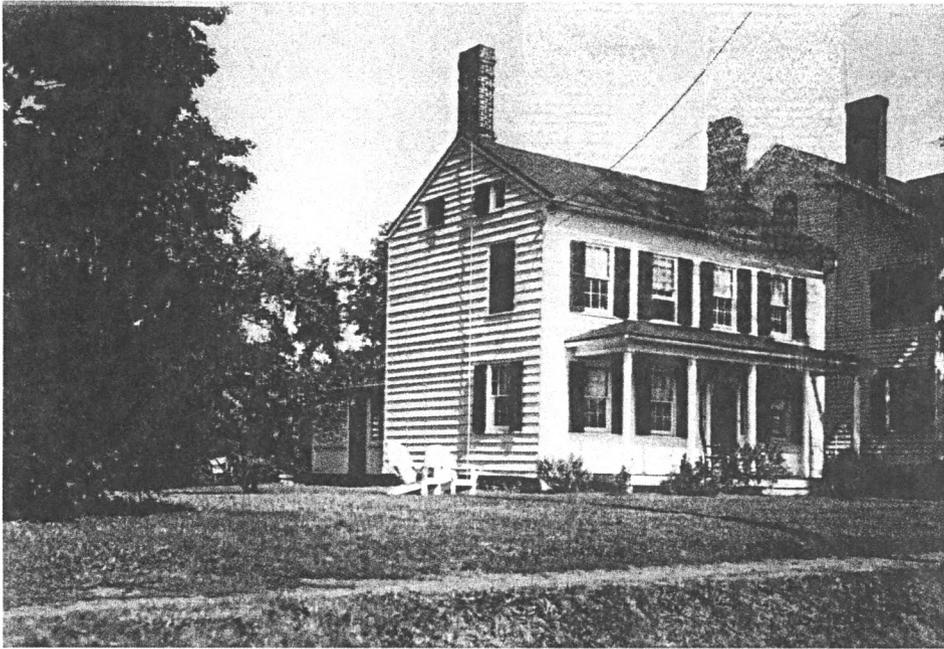
11 South Middlebush Road in 2003.



17 South Middlebush Road, built 1842-43, photo taken circa 1935.



17 South Middlebush Road in 2003.

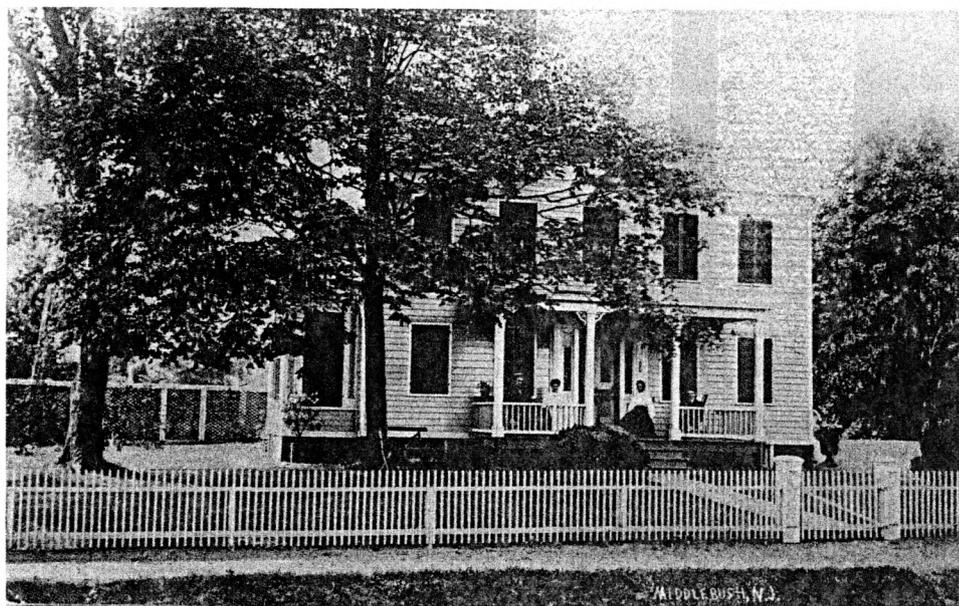


21 South Middlebush Road, built circa 1842-54, photo taken circa 1935.



21 South Middlebush Road in 2003.

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25 South Middlebush Road, built circa 1842-54, photo taken circa 1910.



25 South Middlebush Road in 2003.



33 South Middlebush Road, built circa 1843, photo taken circa 1935.



33 South Middlebush Road in 2003. Notice small sliver of original building visible.

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The original parsonage for the Middlebush Reformed Church at 37 South Middlebush Road, built in 1842 by John Wyckoff. Photograph taken circa 1910.

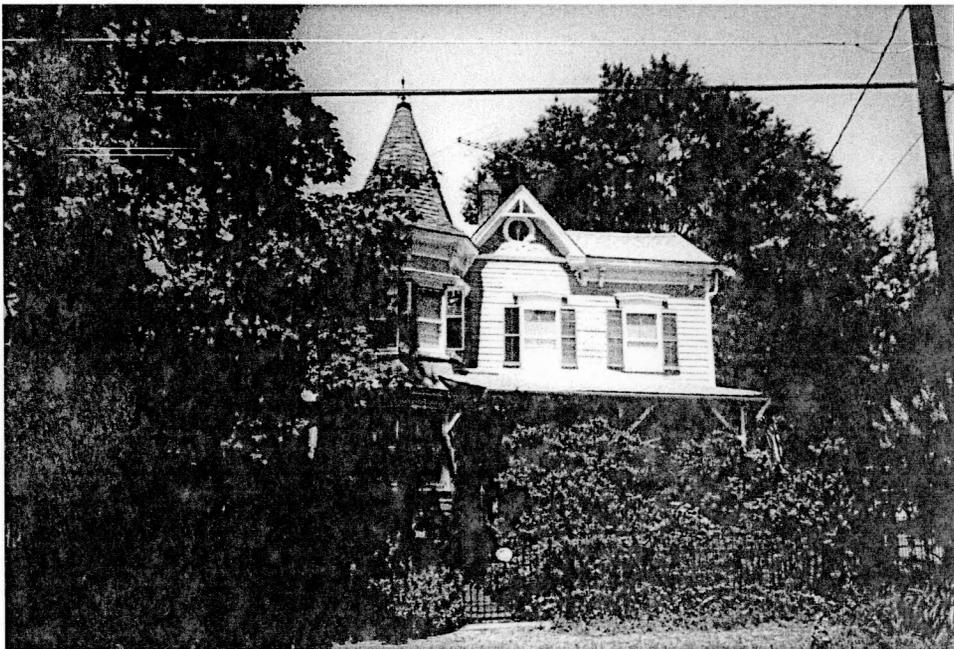


37 South Middlebush Road in 2003.

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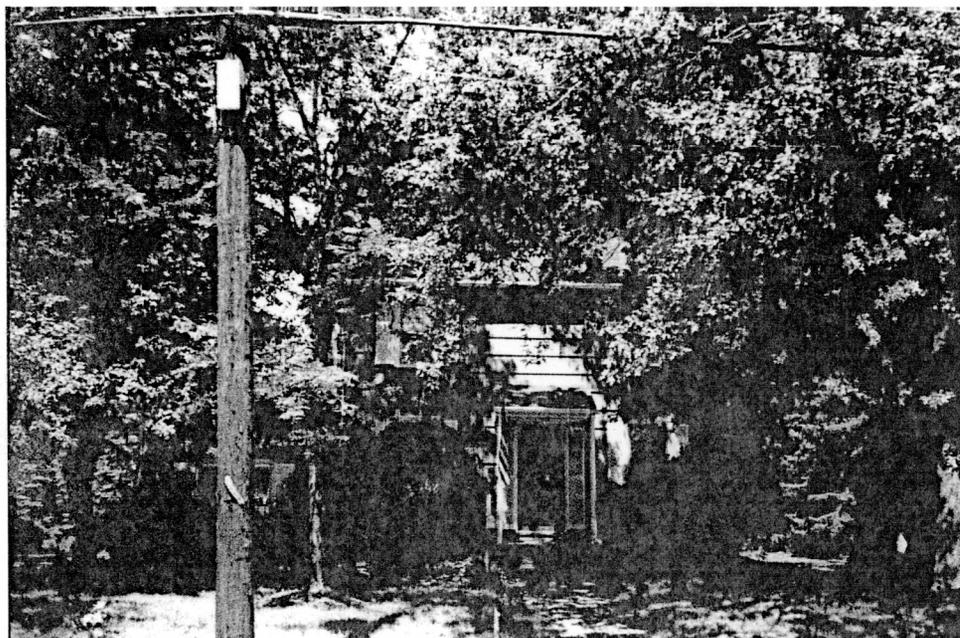
41 South Middlebush Road, earliest section built circa 1843, with Victorian-era modifications, photo taken circa 1935.



41 South Middlebush Road in 2003.



43 South Middlebush Road, built pre-1860, according to Elsie Stryker, local historian.



43 South Middlebush Road in 2003.

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49 South Middlebush Road, built prior to 1860, photo taken circa 1935.



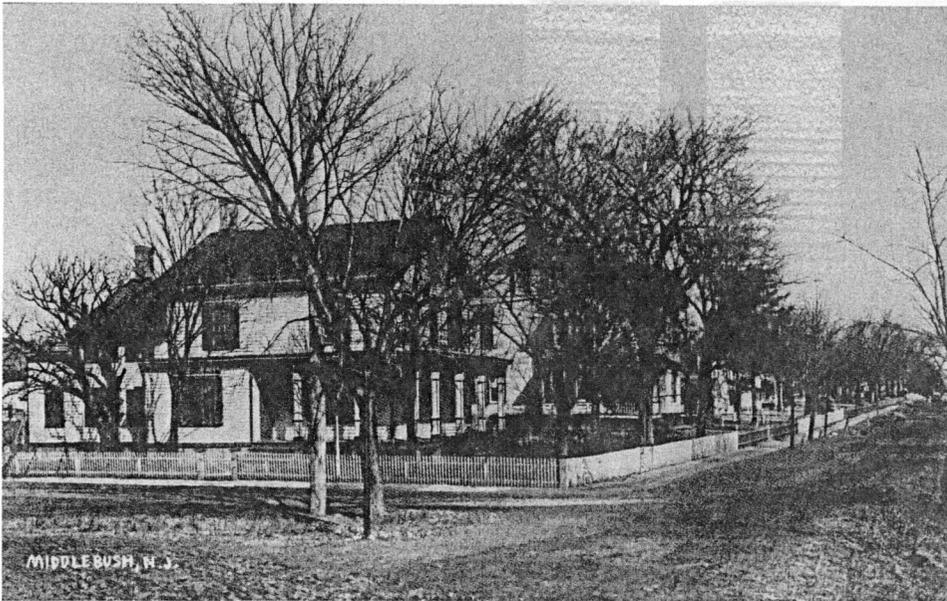
49 South Middlebush Road in 2003.

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Original house built at 51 South Middlebush Road in 1883, destroyed by fire on December 17, 1915. It was replaced by a Craftsman-style house.

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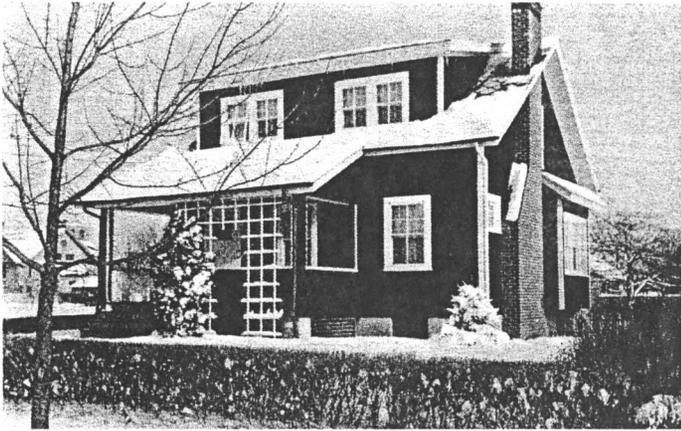


53 South Middlebush Road, built circa 1850, photo taken circa 1910.



53 South Middlebush Road in 2003.

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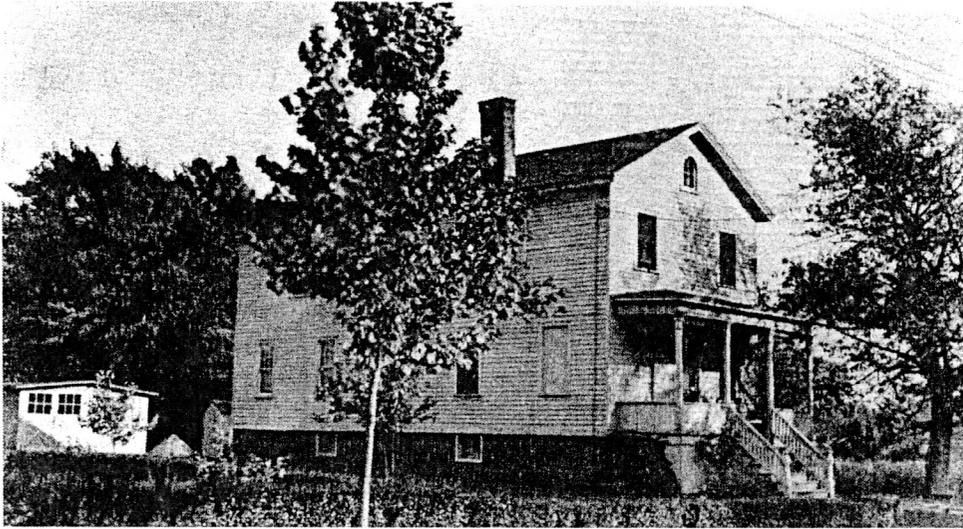


12 Olcott Avenue, built circa 1922-27, photo taken circa 1935.



12 Olcott Avenue in 2003.

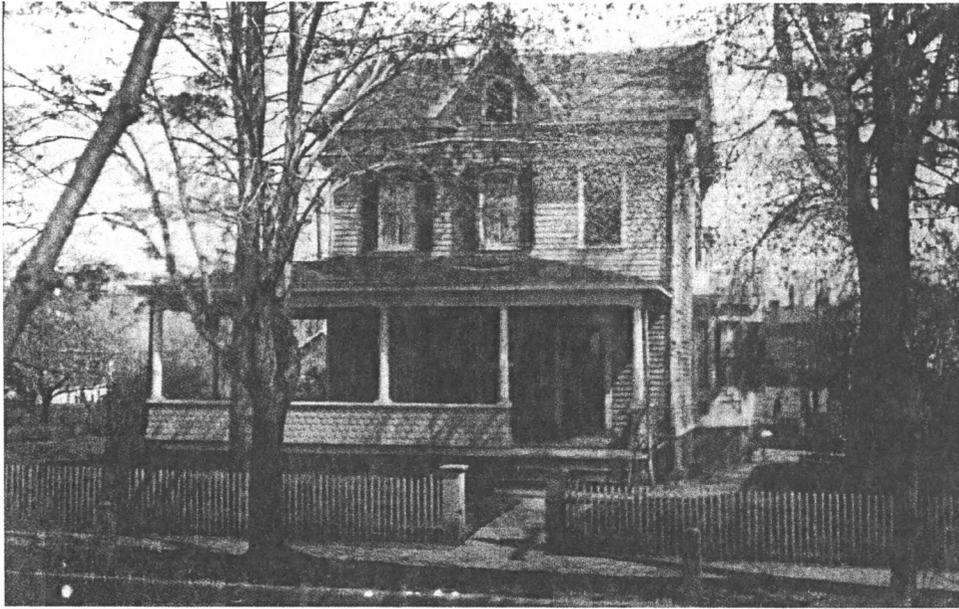
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16 Olcott Avenue, building originally constructed as Middlebush Institute in 1880, converted to a residence circa 1920. Photo taken circa 1935.



16 Olcott Avenue in 2003.



36 Olcott Avenue, built circa 1870, photo taken in 1935.



36 Olcott Avenue in 2003.



39 Olcott Avenue, built circa 1878, photo taken 1934.



39 Olcott Avenue in 2003.

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40 Olcott Avenue, built circa 1870, photo taken circa 1935.

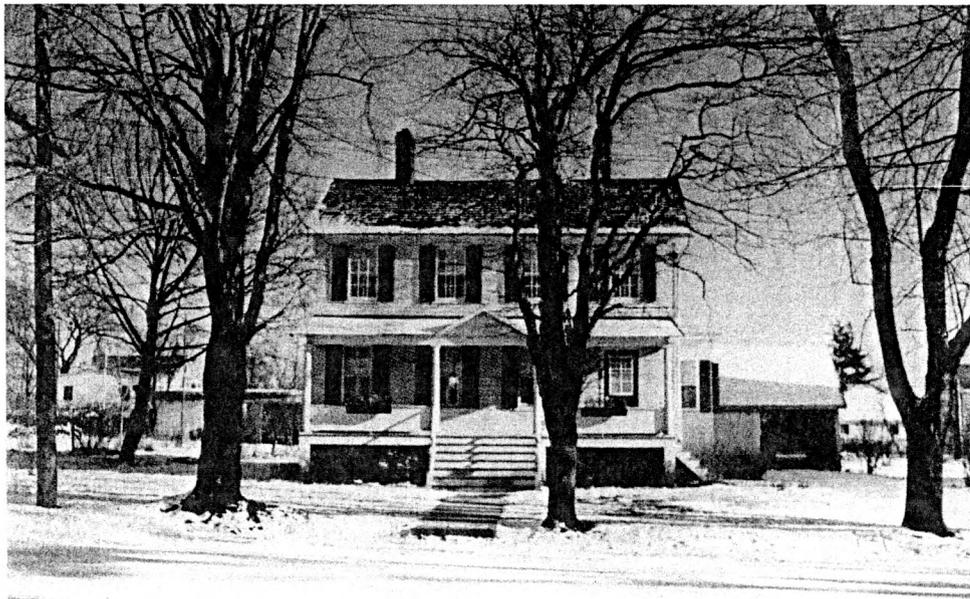


40 Olcott Avenue in 2003.

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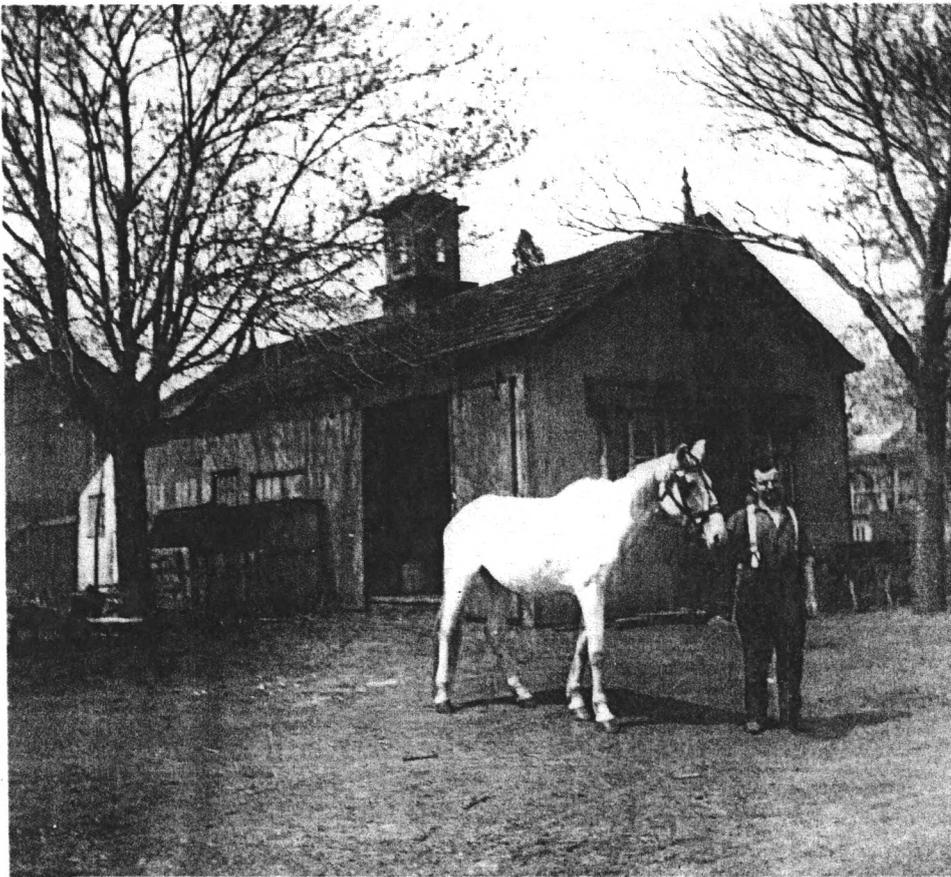
42 Olcott Avenue, built circa 1871-72, photo taken circa 1910.



42 Olcott Avenue, photo taken circa 1935.



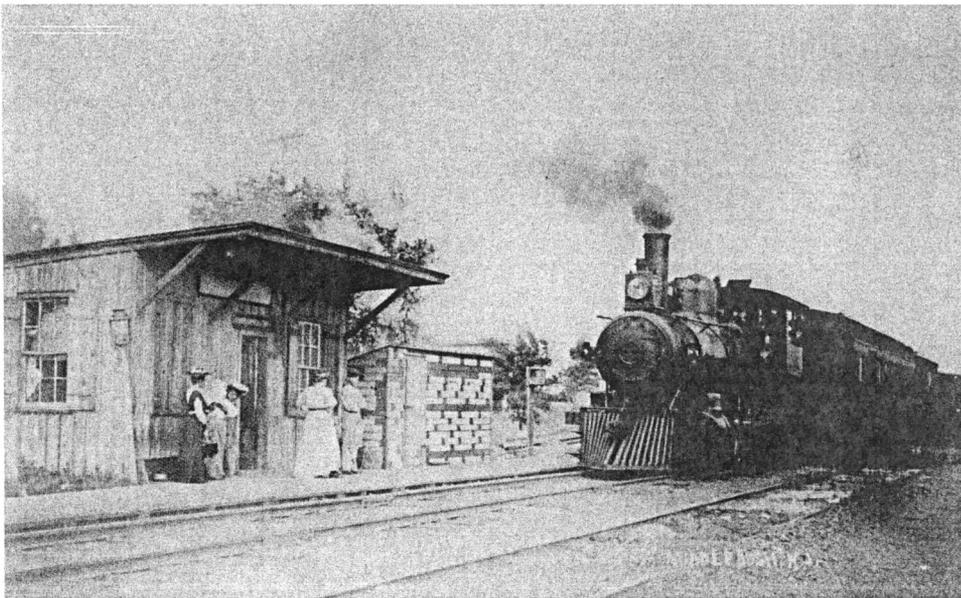
Blacksmith shop on lot south of 45 Olcott Avenue, photo taken circa 1935.



Undated photograph of Joseph Roach in front of his blacksmith shop south of 45 Olcott Street.



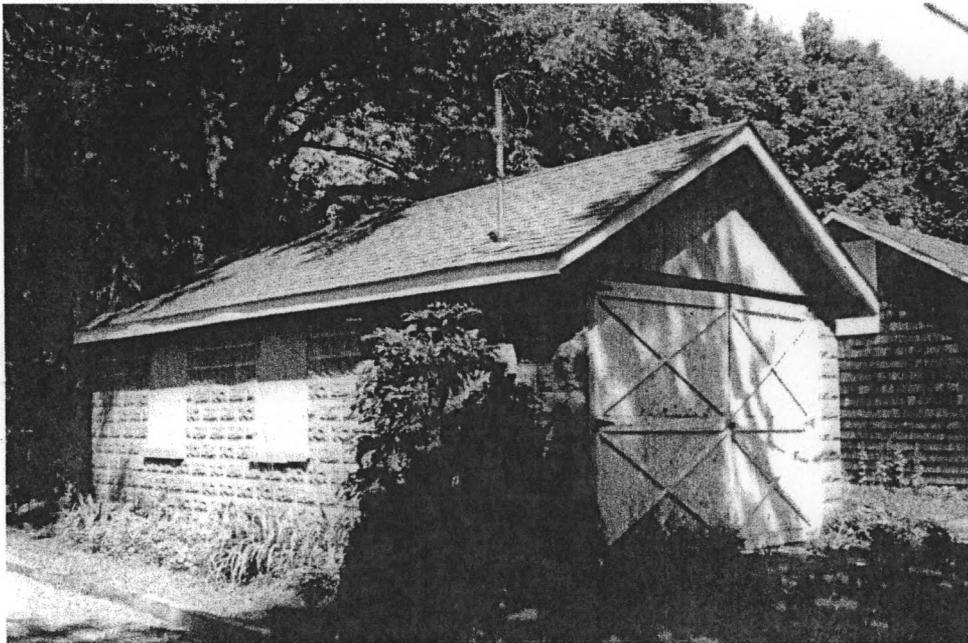
General Store/Post Office at 7 Railroad Avenue, photo taken circa 1930s.



Middlebush Railroad Station, built 1860, photo taken in 1906. The station was torn down in 1948.



Middlebush Volunteer Fire Station on DeBow Street, built 1928, photo taken circa 1930s.



Middlebush Volunteer Fire Station, converted to a garage, photo taken in 2003.