

MIDDLEBROOKS FAMILY ASSOCIATION, INC.

Quarterly Newsletter

June 2015
Editor,
Jarrelyn Lang

Volume 15, Number 1
Founding Editor,
Dianne Middlebrooks

Here's what you'll find inside

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From the President June 2015

We are starting the 2014-2015 year with a new slate of officers: Joyce Arnold as President, Leonard Middlebrooks as Vice President, and Kathleen Hunter as Secretary/Treasurer. New Board members beginning two-year terms are Neal Middlebrook and John Middlebrooks of SC. New Team Leaders for Nathaniel b. 1764 are Ella Tripp and Sandy Ahmad, and Leslie Middlebrook Shealy is added to the to the John b. 1755 group. We are in need of new Team Leaders for the Micajah b. 1758 group. If anyone can help, please contact Joyce Arnold at joycenjim@sbcglobal.net . A BIG Thanks to all for taking on these responsibilities.

In the coming year, you will see additional work in the website: <http://middlebrooksfamily.org> Please check out the website. If you have ideas, please send them to Joyce Arnold, cc to Neal Middlebrook and Leonard Middlebrooks. The continuing *Register* update is always in progress. Contact Leonard Middlebrooks. We need your ideas!

Would you be willing to submit a family article for the Newsletter? If so, please contact Jarrelyn Lang, our editor, at thelangs@hotmail.com She will be glad to help you get your article ready for the Quarterly Newsletter. ARTICLES ARE NEEDED.

Would you like to give a gift that will keep giving for many generations to come? Then contact our DNA project leader, Bob Middlebrooks, at mid293@earthlink.net to learn more how your Middlebrook/s family line ties into the older generations back to North Carolina and earlier. This is also another way to get around the frustration of finding out that the early county records you need have been destroyed. We are looking for Middlebrook/s lines for DNA testing.

The MFA 2015 meeting/reunion will be in Vicksburg, Mississippi, October 1, 2, 3, 2015. If you have any suggestions for Middlebrooks family information ion and around there, please contact Leonard Middlebrooks at gambol@juno.com We need your help in spreading the word. We would appreciate your efforts in passing on information about the meeting to other relatives, and we can always use additional help with outreach. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend.

Letters from a 49er --

In a previous MFA Quarterly Newsletter, I did a "Reader's Digest" version of various letters written from Charles Middlebrook (#230 in the *Register*) to his brother, James Monroe Middlebrook (#231). I now have all those letters, courtesy of Bill Sterling, and I'm including as many in this issue as space permits. -- Jarrelyn Lang, Editor

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Letter # 1:

Dear Brother,

May 30, 1849

As we expect to be in Chagres early tomorrow morning, I will write you a few lines to go back by the steamer.

we have had a very pleasant passage. with nothing to mar our happiness or expectations. The ship has but forty passengers all told, consequently we have an abundance of room, which is much to be desired in a sea voyage. Our passengers are very intelligent, civil, and kind and we could not have enjoyed ourselves more had we been here in New York.

Most of our voyage the weather has been as

calm as it is generally on Long Island Sound at this season of the year. We came through the Windward Passage (that is, between the islands of Cuba and San Domingo) The shores of each of which were visible. The coasts of these islands are lined with high hills ranging from one hundred to upwards of seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, and can be seen on a clear day from sixty to one hundred miles at sea. We came through the Windward Passage (that is, between the islands of Cuba and San Domingo) The shores of each of which were visible. The coasts of these islands are lined with high hills ranging from one hundred to upwards of seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, and can be seen on a clear day from sixty to one hundred miles from Chagres. The last twenty-four hours we have been two hundred and sixty-five miles, which is the greatest distance in any

one day, and two hundred and nineteen miles the least number made in one day. We expect to be in Chagres about eight o'clock in the morning, then I will finish this letter.

Friday morning, June 1st

Chagres in sight and about five miles off. The rainy season has fully set in. I shall get on my way soon as possible after the ship anchors. I will write on my arrival at Panama.

In haste, your afft. Brother, C Middlebrook

P.S. On board the Crescent City at anchor.

IN MEMORIAM

Onita Farris Wigington's funeral service was April 4, 2015, at Coker Funeral Home in Jacksboro, Texas. She was laid to rest at Lynn Creek Cemetery, north of Jacksboro. Onita was one of the shining lights of our clan, and she will be missed

----- Submitted by Sam Middlebrooks

Letter #2

Chagres, June 2, '49

I hasten to add that the steamer California is at Panama waiting for our passengers. The passengers have all left at Panama. We are in first rate luck. The California sails from Panama the 15th instant. I start across the Isthmus today. The California brought 600,000 dollars in gold from San Francisco which will go to New York in the Crescent City. I will write from Panama. Good Bye. C.M

Parents -- Are you worried about your child using the Internet too frequently? Do you think it will create forgetfulness? Do you fear the rise of yet another communications technology? Do you fear that they will not use their memories, that they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without reality?

Actually, this quote is adapted from Plato's Phaedrus, in which a man named Thamus announces the evils of a rising technology called the book.

Letter #3

Acapulco, Mexico, July 2, 1849

Dear Brother,

I arrived here this evening in the steamer California. We left Panama on Sunday, June 24th, with 30 cabin passengers and 120 steerage passengers. Three passengers have died with the fever. We had a great deal of sickness on board at one time but now the health of passengers is very good. We stopped here for provisions and passengers. There are about fifty Americans in town and most of them without money. Probably twenty of them will be able to get aboard the steamer. The others will have to trust to Providence, for there is no accommodations on board the steamer, the only object in view (be the owners of the steamer) being to make money. They care not how soon a man dies after

they have secured his passage money as they consider it all tends to their gain. The price of passage from here to San Francisco is the same as from Panama, although we are fifteen hundred miles nearer to San Francisco than when at Panama. All we got to eat is some stinking pork, sometimes a little rice and beans (but they are like angels visits) and served up in rations of about a teaspoonful to the passenger. The steward will not even let you have a little meal to make gruel for the passengers that are sick. The town poor in Wilton fare ten times better than the steerage passengers do on this ship.

However I have the satisfaction of knowing that I will be in San Francisco by the 20th instant, providing we meet with no accident. The steamers Oregon and Panama are both us, and on the Oregon is overdue, it is supposed that

she cannot get a crew. The crew of this ship say that they will not go another voyage in her; they are going to the mines where they can make ten dollars per day. I would not advise any person to start for California before the first of October by way of the Isthmus, for several reasons. In the first place, it is very sickly on the isthmus from Chagree to Panama, and, another reason, the steamer will not run with any regularity for the next four months, owing to the difficulty of procuring hands, and, to those that do come, I say, do not bring any more baggage than is baggage then is absolutely necessary, that is, bring two small trunks and not let them weigh more than seventy-five or eighty pounds each. Bring one or two good hams, a few smoked tongues, a few crackers, a jar of pickles, a little sugar, coffee and tea. The above things you will want if you take a steerage passage.

But if you go in the cabin bring about half of the above to eat in crossing the isthmus. Let no man start with less than five hundred dollars, although my expenses will not exceed three hundred and fifty dollars, but I had an extraordinary quick passage.

There are several passengers that left New York last February and March, whereas I did not leave until the 25th of May. I will make one of the quickest passages that has been made by the way of the isthmus, being a little short of two months.

We stop at three or four more places on the way up. To show you how the people are anxious to leave the isthmus, day before yesterday, soon after sunrise, a sail was discovered off the larboard bow. The Captain made her out with his glasses to be a small schooner rigged vessel, and, as such vessels are not often seen out on

the Pacific, he gave orders to stand off and run down to her. In a little more than an hour's time, we ran alongside, and what do you think she was? Why, she was a regular dugout with a deck built on her and had thirty-five men on board. They hoisted American colors and we found them out to be Yankee thirty one days from Panama and bound for San Francisco. They were as fine a looking lot of fellows as you would meet in your lifetime and perfect Republicans. After the Captain had hailed her, he asked if they wanted anything. A stout looking fellow (whom I took to be the captain) replied, "Yes, "send a barrel of beef." We asked, "Anything else?" "A barrel of bread." Our captain inquired if anything more was needed and the answer was "No," with that independent air characteristic of the American people, as much as say, "Give us that and then go along about your business." We send them all they asked for and

then, with nine deafening cheers, we bore on our course and left them to the wide ocean. One hour's time, and our little friend was below the horizon.

I wrote you from Toboga just before we sailed.

Acapulco is a small town of about five hundred inhabitants. The houses are all of one story. The place is kept in a much better condition than Panama. It is a very hot place, being situated at the base of the mountain on a small bay running back of a large chain of hills, thus depriving it from any breezes from the ocean. We will leave here tonight, or early in the morning.

When you receive this, you can write Mary or Sarah. I enjoy very good health and will be in San Francisco in two weeks. Write me all the news.

In haste, your aft. Brother,
Charles Middlebrook

Letter #4

Sacramento City, August 27th 1850

Dear Brother,

I have not heard anything from Wilton since those letters brought by Tom Olmstead from you. I have letters from Palmyra up to April 25th. I also saw Mr. Underhill who left Palmyra last March. He brought a package for me with letters from Mary and Sarah, Prece Smith, Mysick, Sexton, Hough. Henry Perrine and several other Palmyrians are here, all well.

Emigrants are continually arriving from the States and all parts of the world. In fact, California is overrun with people and thousands would willingly return to their homes had they the means to do so. The mines have not turned

out as rich as expected, and take the average of the mining districts and they will not average three dollars per day to the man, although some few, say one in a hundred, are making their fortunes. It is these lucky ones' doings that are heralded throughout the States, while the ninety and nine unfortunate individuals are not mentioned. However, I would not say anything to discourage any person from coming to California that has any desire that way, for it is natural in human nature for every person to see for themselves in order to be satisfied. We have three lines of steamers now running between San Francisco and Panama, connecting with other lines from the Atlantic side, and the trip from San Francisco to New York can now be accomplished in from thirty to thirty five days and with but small chance of detention on the Isthmus. We have also some ten or fifteen steamboats

running from this place to the various towns on the river and San Francisco.

Sacramento City has improved greatly this summer and bids fair to stand second, if not first, place of importance in California. Squatterism has, however, retarded in a measure the growth of the town during the last month, which resulted in a conflict between the citizens and squatters in which three citizens and seven squatters were killed and as many more wounded. Among them the Mayor of the City who was dangerously if not mortally, injured. The sheriff was killed while performing his duty. The ringleader of the squatters was also killed and as many more wounded. Among them letter in the Mayor of the City who was dangerously, if not mortally, injured. The sheriff was killed while performing his duty. The ringleader of the squatters was also

killed. Peace and quiet however, is once more restored among squatters, who have made themselves notorious in the cause, have been arrested and confined on board the prison ship, abiding their time of trial. Among the few individuals that have been fortunate in California, with whom I am acquainted, stands first Mr. Thomas Olmstead. Since his return to this place, he has erected one of the finest stores in town and keeps it well stocked with goods. That is not all, he does the best of trade of any store in town. If Tom remains New York can now be accomplished

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Genealogy Tip:

One document by itself is usually not considered "proof" of anything. One document may contain evidence in support of a conclusion, but it's important to remember that anyone document can easily be incorrect. Proof, in the general sense, is usually considered to be the written summary of the conclusion that is reached when a body of evidence (statements taken from individual documents) have been analyzed.