

# THE MAZE

Middlebrooks Family Association, Inc.

274 Wilder Drive, Forsyth, GA 31029

February 2010 Edition

by Sharon Holland Bartlett

It was a beautiful fall day in Goshen Hill, Alabama. All the leaves were bursting with their fall colors of red, yellow, and orange on that 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1902. And in this small community everyone was attending the wedding of Henry Snow Middlebrooks and Celestia Pearl Folmar. Everyone wanted to be there to show their love and support for this special couple. It was said that inside Elam Primitive Baptist Church, a small church, friends and family were standing all around; even outside in the churchyard there were people gathered.

Henry Snow Middlebrooks, known as Snow, was the third child of Henry Alford and Elizabeth Mitchell Middlebrooks. He was born in January of 1868 in Pike County, Alabama. Celestia Pearl Folmar, commonly called Pearl, was the third child of Walter Duncan and Sarah Tryphosa Rodgers Folmar. She, too, was born in Pike County, on October 15, 1879. Both bride and groom being deaf and mute, the ceremony was being held in sign language. Pearl had sewn her own wedding dress. Perhaps they had met a few years earlier where Pearl attended school at the Talladega, Alabama, Institute for the Deaf and Blind. Pearl's deafness was due to a childhood illness, and the origin of Snow's deafness is not known. But his younger brother, Ben Middlebrooks, was also deaf, so perhaps there was a congenital trait.



Snow & Pearl on their wedding day.

Snow and Pearl Middlebrooks had two children. A daughter, Mayme, was born June 27, 1903, but died nine days later. Their son, Willis Brewster Middlebrooks, was born August 11, 1904. Tragically, the marriage only lasted about three years as Snow was killed on July 7, 1905.

According to a newspaper article about Snow's death, he was living about three miles from Ansley, where he conducted a farm on his mother's place. Snow came to Troy in a buggy that morning with his sister (possibly Johnnie Middlebrooks Sikes), and he had been endeavoring to sell some cotton. Along in the afternoon, he went to a factory with pencil and pad to "talk" to a good friend. Later, after leaving his friend, Snow went for a walk and was walking along the railroad tracks when the Atlantic Coast Line passenger train pulled out of Troy on its run to Montgomery. No one could get Snow's attention, and he was struck and killed by the train.

Pearl never re-married after Snow's death. She and her son, Willis Brewster Middlebrooks (my maternal grandfather), moved into the home place of her parents and lived with them. Pearl died on March 4, 1939, from burns received during

an explosion that happened when she was cleaning a cook stove.

Pearl's mother, Sarah Tryphosa Rodgers Folmar, loved to tell stories of the days past. Born February 3, 1856, near Columbus, Georgia, Sarah Tryphosa Rodgers, commonly called "Phosie," was my great-great-grandmother. Following are extracts from memoirs written by Phosie in 1939:

"The Civil War began when I was only five, and all who could fight went to fight for their beloved Southland. My father's health being poor, he was asked to stay behind to oversee the farms in the neighborhood. But in the fall of 1864, my dear father was called to arms, leaving my mother with six children and expecting a seventh. On April 26, 1865, the Yankee renegades made one of their notorious raids at our home. They tore everything apart, taking whatever they chose. They carried away mules, cows, and chickens. My mother had a small bag of gold, but because we had advance word of the Yankees coming, my maternal grandmother Miller, who was visiting us from Georgia, took the gold under her dress and went for a walk. For fear someone was watching, she fell down near a hole, slipped the gold in, covered it, then got up and kept going; so we didn't lose it. My father was captured and died in a Yankee prison at Camp Douglas, Illinois. He died from yellow or scarlet fever. My grandmother and grandfather Miller came to live with us after the end of the war as their home was burned during Sherman's infamous march through Georgia."

Phosie also recalled everyday life growing up back then in southern Alabama:

"Cooking was done on a huge fireplace that extended almost across one end of a large room. I was a large girl before I ever saw a match, as they were unknown in our part of the country. Fire was started from flint rocks, and coals were kept banked in ashes. I remember a man came to our home with a jug of almost clear, yellowish liquid which was the first kerosene ever seen in our neighborhood. Buttons were made as they were needed. We used bone, [also] plum and persimmon seeds. I was nearly grown before I saw either a cooking stove or a sewing machine — and they were very crude in comparison to present day models. Scissors, needles, pins, and thimbles were treasures to be guarded. To get new clothes, cotton was hand-separated from seed, thread was spun and dyed, and then the cloth was woven and shrunk. The cloth was cut and sewed by hand. We obtained bedclothes, curtains, and towels in the same way."

Returning to the Middlebrooks side of my family:

Henry Snow's father was Henry Alford Middlebrooks, born October 8, 1832, in Hancock County, Georgia, and died November 12, 1904 in Pike County, Alabama. He married Elizabeth Mitchell December 2, 1858, in Pike County, Alabama, and they had seven children. Henry Alford Middlebrooks served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, enlisting May 12, 1862, as a Private in Company A of the 39<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry Regiment. His name appears on the Confederate Monument in Troy, Pike County, Alabama, as Henry Middlebrooks. My mother and I visited the Confederate Monument this past July 2009 while at a Folmar Family Reunion.

While we were in Troy attending the Folmar Family Reunion, we also visited the Troy City Public Library for the purpose of researching the Middlebrooks Family. Old newspaper articles at the library told of the fate of Henry Alford and Elizabeth Mitchell Middlebrooks's eldest child, William Ellis Middlebrooks, who was born in October 1859 in Pike County.

William Ellis Middlebrooks was killed March 27, 1917, when a cyclone hit the family plantation (back then, tornados were known as cyclones). According to the article, he and his wife were both killed when their house was blown down in the western part of Pike County, Alabama. The cyclone killed eleven people and did tremendous damage in both Pike and Crenshaw Counties. The storm was considered the worst storm in the history of Petrey, a small community about twenty miles from Luverne, Alabama. William Ellis Middlebrooks and his second wife, Caroline Lawrence Middlebrooks, had two sons. According to family lore, the elder son, Henry Peterson Middlebrooks, was caught up by the storm and landed in a tree. It was said that he was severely injured, but survived.

I was walking the cemeteries and I got bit by the genealogy bug several years ago. I have traveled, visiting libraries and archives, searching for records (which don't always agree). A census says one thing and draft records say another. I've met people and cousins once, twice removed. And I've discovered family relationships that I'd never known before.

For example, my maternal grandfather, Willis Brewster Middlebrooks, and my daddy, Richard Holland, were third cousins... but that is another story, for another day!

Resources:

1917 Cyclone - Troy City Public Library, Karen Bullard, Genealogist

Henry Snow Middlebrooks Death - Opp, Alabama, newspaper dated July 14, 1905, email by Nancy Reykdal and *Troy Messenger* newspaper, July 1905

**MIDDLEBROOK/S FAMILY ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**2009-2010 OFFICERS**

PRESIDENT – Neal Middlebrook  
VICE PRESIDENT – Tom Middlebrooks  
SECRETARY/TREASURER – Joyce Arnold

**ANCESTOR TEAM LEADERS**

**Isaac b. 1753** – Leonard Middlebrooks  
[gambol@juno.com](mailto:gambol@juno.com)  
and Jean Shroyer  
[TXJean@aol.com](mailto:TXJean@aol.com)

**John b. 1755** – Bob Middlebrooks  
[mid293@earthlink.net](mailto:mid293@earthlink.net)

**Micajah b. 1758** – Sharon Bartlett  
[sharonbartlett@att.net](mailto:sharonbartlett@att.net)  
and Mary Baker  
[mmbaker65@hotmail.com](mailto:mmbaker65@hotmail.com)

**Sims b. 1762** – Neal Middlebrook  
[nealmidbroo1@verizon.net](mailto:nealmidbroo1@verizon.net).

**Thomas b. 1763** – Jarrelyn Lang  
[thelangs@hotmail.com](mailto:thelangs@hotmail.com)

**Robert b. 1766** – J.A. Middlebrooks  
[middle3jam2002@yahoo.com](mailto:middle3jam2002@yahoo.com)

**Joseph b. 1610** - Leonard Middlebrooks  
[gambol@juno.com](mailto:gambol@juno.com)

**Joseph b. 1770** - Dave Clark  
[cdave@austin.rr.com](mailto:cdave@austin.rr.com)

**Virginia Middlebrooks** – Lana Shelton  
[love4crochet@yahoo.com](mailto:love4crochet@yahoo.com)  
and Neal Middlebrook  
[nealmidbroo1@verizon.net](mailto:nealmidbroo1@verizon.net).

**Unknown Ancestor** - Leonard Middlebrooks  
[gambol@juno.com](mailto:gambol@juno.com)

**Board of Directors-----**

Neal Middlebrook, 2009-2011  
[nealmidbroo1@verizon.net](mailto:nealmidbroo1@verizon.net)

Tom Middlebrooks 2009-2011  
[Tomdean4@embarqmail.com](mailto:Tomdean4@embarqmail.com)

Joyce Arnold, 2009-2011  
[joycenjim@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joycenjim@sbcglobal.net)

Charles Middlebrooks, 2009-2011  
[chasmid@att.net](mailto:chasmid@att.net)

Kathleen Hunter, 2009-2011  
[Kathleen@bscn.com](mailto:Kathleen@bscn.com)

J.A. Middlebrooks, 2008-2010  
[middle3jam2002@yahoo.com](mailto:middle3jam2002@yahoo.com)

Jean Shroyer, 2008-2010  
[TXJean@aol.com](mailto:TXJean@aol.com)

Henry Middlebrook, 2008-2010  
[henrym@bga.com](mailto:henrym@bga.com)

**ON-GOING PROJECTS**

Cemetery.....J.A. Middlebrooks  
DNA.....Bob Middlebrooks,  
Dave Clark and Henry Middlebrooks  
MFA Website.....Dave Clark  
and Leonard Middlebrooks  
Family Repository..... Jean Shroyer  
Family *Register* Update.....  
Leonard Middlebrooks  
Military *Register* Update .....  
Michael Kerry Middlebrooks  
[mbrooks@gci.net](mailto:mbrooks@gci.net)

**MFA Web Site:** <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~midregerrata>

**Middlebrooks Family Association, Inc. was founded in 2001 for the purpose of assembling and preserving genealogical and historical material for future generations. MFA has two publications, as below.**

**THE MAZE** is issued February, May, August, and November, is sent to all on the MFA mailing list, and is free to non-paid members. If you want to be removed from this list, please contact the Secretary at [joycenjim@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joycenjim@sbcglobal.net).

**MFA Quarterly Newsletter** is published four times a year (December, March, June, and September) by the Middlebrooks Family Association, Inc., 274 Wilder Drive, Forsyth, GA 31029.

Subscription is to paid members of MFA. Articles for inclusion in the Quarterly, or suggestions for topics, may be sent to Jarrelyn Lang, Editor, at [thelangs@hotmail.com](mailto:thelangs@hotmail.com). All submissions are subject to editing.

Membership is \$20.00 per year, September 01 thru August 31.