

The Maze

The Middlebrooks Family Association, Inc.

274 Wilder Drive, Forsyth, GA 31029

February 2017 Edition

Winter is upon us! Those of us from Arkansas know that means we may run our air conditioners one day and our heating units the next. However, the East coast does not share the South's ability to experience all four seasons within a week's time. The average temperature in the Boston area for February is projected to be 34 degrees, and that's considered above normal. I began to wonder just how our brave Middlebrooks ancestors made it through the harsh winters in the Massachusetts Bay Colony or the Concord Plantation in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Approximately fifty percent of the passengers on the Mayflower survived their first East coast winter. Celebrating the first recorded Thanksgiving in 1621 were only four women who cared for the Colony's fifty surviving men and children. Those few that did survive did so with the help of the Native Americans who had been in the area some 10,000 years previous to the Europeans' arrival. English speaking Native Americans not only interpreted for both ethnic groups but also mediated when faced with disputes. The Native Americans did share their knowledge of agriculture, particularly how to raise corn, and hunting and fishing. We seasoned teachers would call those lessons "Survival Skills."

Yet just fifteen years later, we have Mary Middlebrooks Reyner and her sister Esther Middlebrooks Wigglesworth travel to America, settle in the same weather climate and both live to be in their late 60s. What changed? First of all, the population increased considerably giving the colonies a better sense of community. Perhaps our Middlebrooks ancestors embraced the philosophical grounding of *Ubuntu*. The word, which has no direct English translation, essentially means "I am because we are." Sharing, whether it is knowledge or actual supplies, increases the community's collective resources creating a community that is stronger as a whole.

Let's consider some things the Middlebrooks sisters, Mary Reyner and Martha Wigglesworth, may have done to increase the survival rate of our ancestors. Not only those two ladies, but also Ann Sims Middlebrooks (wife of Isaac), Rachel Middlebrooks (wife of Thomas), Lucy Middlebrooks (wife of John), and Sally Middlebrooks (daughter of John) must have carried on the "survival skills" learned by and passed down from our earliest ancestors. One factor may certainly be that they lived in houses unlike the Mayflower passengers who continued to live on the ship for several months after arriving on the East coast. Since there was little if any modern medicine, families had to be knowledgeable about homeopathic health care. Honeysuckle was used to treat fever, lemon balm brought comfort for the heart, morning glories acted as a laxative, and sage calmed the nerves. Columbine, taken in wine, was thought to give a speedy delivery for childbirth. Roses were thought to cure about anything, and rosemary was used for embalming. By the way, should any of you be in need of some good herbs, we Arkansas women found a wonderful herb farm and shop outside Macon, Georgia in 2010 while waiting to join the Middlebrooks group for dinner.

When Mary Middlebrooks Reyner and Lucy Middlebrooks were building their homes, certain considerations were necessary. Since heat rises, they decided to have family bedroom in the loft. Although the house needed to be sufficiently sealed to keep out the cold, families needed to remember to open a window or crack a door so as not to come down with "cabin fever." "Cabin fever" is really another name for carbon dioxide poisoning due to the fire (and people) using all the oxygen in the house.

Hygiene, as we know it, didn't exist. Washing up before meals usually consisted of dipping one's fingers in a pan of water. When the family decided to bathe (perhaps prior to all-day Sunday church), everybody shared the same tub of bath water. Clothes were worn in layers, sometimes up to sixteen corsets, blouses, petty coats, etc., for women. One story in *Countryside* (Jan/Feb 2013) told of a man who

wore his long-johns so long that they had to be cut off him because his body hair had grown through the fabric.

The ability to knit, spin, and weave was an absolute necessity for our Middlebrooks women. Once fabric was made and clothes sewn, garments were handed down in order to clothe as many as possible in the family. Of course, we are all aware of those quilts that were finally created from the scraps of leftover fabric.

Most of the articles I read before writing this month's MAZE submission stressed community as one of the most stabilizing factors for survival. Information, seed, even animal breeding fluids were passed from neighbor to neighbor. Folks shared such knowledge as animals can be dangerous – pigs will eat you. This type of information was probably shared with and by Jane C. Crawford Middlebrooks, since 1847 ledgers list her as managing 400 acres of land with horses, cattle, and twenty-five swine.

We've come a long way, right? No longer must we ignore hygiene, weave our own fabric, or worry much about getting eaten by pigs. Although there was a man here in Woodruff County who, years ago, had a heart attack while feeding his pigs. The results were not pretty. We might need to consider some herbs rather than high-priced medicines we use today, so I hope the little herb farm is still open outside Macon. However, we Middlebrooks do continue to subscribe to the *Ubuntu* philosophy by sharing our Middlebrooks ancestry information and all that it implies.

On that note, I'd like to add a sincere request for any information you might want to contribute for the "MAZE." Even if you feel you don't have a complete article, I still value and need your information. We can always work together to produce an article. Please stay warm, take care of yourselves, be aware of "cabin fever," and plan to attend our next Middlebrooks Family Meeting.

Dale Kidwell

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P.S. Do you all know we have a Facebook page? Actually, we have two: MFA Association and Middlebrooks Family Meeting 2016. Join us, please!

MFA 2017 MEETING

Plans are developing for our 2017 MFA meeting in Macon, Georgia on October 12, 13, and 14. We have a contract with Wingate at Wyndham, 100 N. Crest Blvd., Macon, Georgia 31210. Their new conference room in that hotel is reserved for us. Double rooms (regularly \$128) will be available to us for \$89. Mention MFA to get this discounted rate. Reservations number: 844-415-8006. Reservations should be made by September 1st.

MFA Meeting coordinators are working on the agenda and will provide updates as they become available. We look forward to seeing you all there. Bring a friend!

Message from the President

The Chipley Historical Center in Georgia is raising funds to build an addition to the present building. The current building is the old city hall with a vacant lot next to it. The vacant lot currently has an old restored caboose which will be enclosed in the new addition. The two buildings will be connected by a glass enclosure. There will be a new brick path in front of the caboose. The Chipley Historical Center is selling bricks to raise funds for the building. The bricks are \$100 each.

Charles Middlebrooks and I are each buying a brick to honor our parents, grandparents, and even more ancestors. Just thought the MFA members would like to know about this endeavor since we visited Chipley, now known as Pine Mountain, in 2014 as part of the MFA meeting in Columbus, Georgia.

Bob Middlebrooks



MFA extends our sympathy to the family of Sue Elizabeth Middlebrooks Webb who passed away on January 2, 2017 at the age of 104 in LaGrange, Georgia. Mrs. Webb was a descendent of Robert Middlebrooks (1766). She is survived by her husband, Wade Webb; daughter, Pat Vessell; granddaughter, Kim Vessell Brauer; great-grandchildren Zachary and Scott Brauer; step-daughters Cathie Lane, Ginny Nelson and Cindy Collins.

The family contact is Kim Brauer, 100 Huntington Drive, LaGrange, Georgia 30240

MIDDLEBROOKS FAMILY ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Ancestor Team Leaders

Isaac born 1753: Leonard Middlebrooks and Jean Shroyer
John b. 1754: Neal Middlebrook
John b. 1755: John David Middlebrooks and Leslie Shealy
Joseph b. 1610: Leonard Middlebrooks
Joseph b. 1773: Dave Clark
Micajah b. 1758: Mary Baker
Nathaniel b. 1764: Ella Tripp
Robert b. 1766: J.A. Middlebrooks
Sims b. 1762: Neal Middlebrook
Thomas b. 1763: Joyce Arnold
England Middlebrooks: Ian Middlebrook and Neal Middlebrook
Unknown Ancestors: Leonard Middlebrooks and J. A. Middlebrooks

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On-Going Projects

Cemetery: J.A. Middlebrooks and William Sterling
DAR-UDC: Jean Shroyer
DNA: Bob Middlebrooks and Dave Clark
Family Register Update: Leonard Middlebrooks
Family Repository: Kerry Middlebrooks
MAZE: Dale Kidwell
MFA Website: Dave Clark and Leonard Middlebrooks
Military Register Update: Kerry Middlebrooks

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Middlebrooks Family Association, Inc. (MFA) was found in 2001 for the purpose of assembling and preserving genealogical and historical material for our future Middlebrook/e/s generations.

MFA Web Site: <http://middlebrooksfamily.org/>

The **MAZE** (currently MFA's only publication) is published and sent to all members (both paid and non-paid) quarterly each February, May, August, and November. You may request to be removed from this list by contacting Dale Kidwell at dalekidwell07@gmail.com