

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

STATE REVIEW BOARD COPY

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Middlefield Center HD

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number #138-188 Skyline Trail and #7 Bell Road not for publication

city or town Middlefield vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Hampshire code 015 zip code 01243

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain):	_____	_____

Middlefield Center

Hampshire, MA

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

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

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>36</u>	<u>22</u>	building
<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>54</u>	<u>25</u>	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, secondary structure, hotel
- Commerce - department store
- Government - city hall, post office
- Religion — religious facility, church-related residence
- Funerary - cemetery
- Recreation and Culture — fair, monument
- Agriculture — agricultural field, animal facility, outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic — single dwelling, secondary structure
- Commerce — department store
- Government — city hall, post office
- Social — meeting hall
- Religion — religious facility
- Funerary - cemetery
- Recreation and Culture — museum, fair, monument
- Agriculture — agricultural field, animal facility, outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- No Style
- Early Republic - Federal
- Mid-19th Century — Greek Revival
- Late Victorian — Italianate, Queen Anne
- Late 19th Century Revivals — Colonial Revival
- Late 19th / Early 20th C. Movements — Craftsman
- Mixed

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Stone, Brick, Concrete
- walls Wood, Stone, Synthetics
- roof Asphalt, Tin
- other

Narrative Description

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

Middlefield Center

Name of Property

Hampshire, MA

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Community Planning and Development
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1783-1962

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Samuel Bennett, builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository:
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Middlefield Center Historic District
Name of Property

Hampden, MA
County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 292 acres

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1.18	663202	4691576	3.18	664026	4689792
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
2.18	664151	4690541	4.18	663519	4689882
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing

x See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bonnie Parsons, Principal Planner

organization Pioneer Valley Planning Commission date _____

street & number 60 Congress Street telephone (413) 781-6045

city or town Springfield state MA zip code 01104

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

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

Property Owner

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

name _____ multiple _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

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

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Middlefield Center HD
Middlefield (Hampshire), MA**

Section number 7

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Middlefield is located in the Berkshire Hills, which are the eastern foothills of the Green Mountains, between the West and Middle Branches of the Westfield River. Known from the 19th century as a town in the "Hampshire Highlands", Middlefield consists of hilly uplands with an average elevation of about 1600 feet. The valleys of the Westfield River branches define a fairly level plateau, which slopes gently to the southeast. Three tributaries of the Westfield River flow to the southeast and divide the plateau into smaller sections. In the northeastern part of the town, Glendale Brook empties into the Middle Branch of the Westfield River and sets off the portion of the town containing the small hamlets of Smith Hollow and Glendale. In the western part of the town, Factory and Coles Brooks empty into the West Branch of the Westfield River. The hamlets of Blush (or Factory) Hollow and Bancroft are located along Factory Brook.

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

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

Middlefield Center did not begin to develop until after 1783, the year in which Middlefield was incorporated. In fact, between 1769 when settlement began in Middlefield territory and the 1783 incorporation the Center was the site of only a few small dwellings where families lived while

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building their larger more permanent homes. None of these early houses remains, so Middlefield Center does not have Georgian style houses among its earliest buildings. Rather, the architectural history of the Center begins with the Federal style.

Federal Style 1776-1820

Residential Buildings

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

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

The Joseph Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail (MIF.18 - Photograph #2), built in 1783 is a two-and-a-half story Federal house with an end-gable roof and a center chimney. A single-story ell on the east connects

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to a carriage barn, actually the original Center District schoolhouse, moved to its present location in 1867. The block of buildings creates a farmyard on the south, an arrangement that also developed at the Daniel Chapman House. The five bay house has a center entrance on the street facade, and a three bay south facade that includes a secondary entrance on the southeast corner, an arrangement that allowed the separation of the tavern from the rest of the inn. The exterior of the house is simple but well detailed with both west and south entries framed with tall, trabeated surrounds enclosing glazed transoms. Corner pilasters are paneled, an unusual feature in Middlefield. Sash in the main block of the house is 12/12.

The Thomas Blossom House, 172 Skyline Trail (MIF.12 - Photograph #3), built in 1787, is a one-and-a-half story cape style house moved to its present location ca. 1830 from Bell Road. The south facing, end-gable house has a center chimney and is four bays wide on the west side and five bays on the south. The west facade windows on the second floor follow a pattern found less frequently in the hill towns than in Franklin and Berkshire Counties; two center windows with 6/6 sash are flanked at each side by a smaller pair of windows of fixed, four-light sash, set just beneath the raking eaves. This is an arrangement that permitted more light in the attic floor, but was frequently reduced to two center windows in many cape style houses of the area. An ell and barn on the east create a complex plan, and a low stone patio on the south connects the building to its slightly sloping site. Trim on the Federal house is simple, with flat stock creating the center door surround and window surrounds. Sash is a combination of 6/6 and replacement 12/12. Two shed roof dormers were added to the original structure on the east side.

The Edmund Kelso House, 164 Skyline Trail, ca. 1811, (MIF.16 - Photograph #4) is an Adamesque Federal style building. Two stories in height beneath a front-gable roof, the building has a single-story, hipped roof ell on the south, and a single-story, gable roofed wing on the north. The main block of the finely proportioned building has a front gable roof whose eaves return fully to form a flushboarded pediment. A broad entablature is found beneath the eaves on the west facade, but does not continue around the house, as is usually the case in Middlefield. This gives it the appearance of breaking forward from the facade. The high-style intentions of the 19th century builder are made clear by the presence of a pair of reeded corner pilasters at each end of the entablature. This motif, which may well come from an architectural handbook of the period, is repeated at the center door surround of the three bay west facade, where a pair of reeded pilasters frames the tall Federal surround and encloses a single glazed transom. A projecting pediment was added above the original door surround. The center door and full-length

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

The Timothy Root House, 147 Skyline Trail, ca. 1827, (MIF.3 6 - photograph #5) was built in the Center but later moved further north to its present location and set behind a low stone wall. Two-and-a-half stories in height under an end-gable roof, the house may have been either an ell of an earlier building or a separate structure. Fenestration is irregular on both floors. First floor sash is 9/9 and 12/12 and second floor sash is 9/6 in the outer four bays and 12/8 in the center bay. The house is a single bay in depth. A porch with a distant view extends across the west facade, with a piazza extension on the south. A central door surround on the east facade is flanked by a pair of 12/12 sash windows, a detail often found in Berkshire County Federal residences, the windows acting as broad sidelights to the entry. Some of the detailing, including the door surround, an unusual treatment if the building was originally an ell, and the addition of twin exterior chimneys, may have been Colonial Revival alterations at the time the building was moved to its new site ca. 1908. The first floor also includes a pair of 9/9 windows and a single 9/8 window.

The James Dickson House, 138 Skyline Trail, ca. 1827, (MIF.22 - Photograph #6), also set behind a stone wall but constructed on a brick foundation, is a conservative Federal house with an end-gable roof and center chimney. Two-and-a-half stories in height, the hillside house is five bays wide and three bays deep. A secondary entry on the south facade is a feature also found at the Joseph Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail (MI:F.18 - Photograph #2). The main center entry is a trabeated surround that encloses a tall, single-glazed transom. The transom has been altered from its original state, having been composed of a fanlight as late as 1978. Sash on the first floor is 1²/₁₂, and on the second it is 12/8. There is a one-and-a-half story wing on the north with a dormer, two casement windows, and an added bay window on the first floor. North of the ell is an attached, two bay garage with a fanlight in its exposed gable. There is also a single-story kitchen ell on the south. The outbuildings are a large gambrel-roofed dairy barn, ca. 1890, and a second garage.

The Blush Tavern Hostelry, 162 Skyline Trail, ca. 1820 (Mif.17) was originally a separate building on the grounds of the Blush Tavern. Ca. 1830-37, the building was remodeled for use as a single-family residence by Sardis Putnam, and was moved to its present location ca. 1837 by

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Joseph and Mary Blush. When it was moved, the two-story, end-gable building was reoriented with its gable end to the street. The house is two bays deep, and three bays wide on the south facade, with an additional fourth bay inserted on the first floor. The center entrance on the south facade has a trabeated surround and the windows have simple drip cap surrounds. Sash is 12/12. A single story ell was added to the east facade, creating an L-shaped plan.

Burial Ground

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

Greek Revival Style (1820-1850)

Residential

The mid-19th century was among the most prosperous periods in Middlefield's history and the Greek Revival style is well represented. The earliest house from this period in the Center is the Dr. Warren House, 158 Skyline Trail, ca. 1823 (MIF.19 - Photograph #7). It is a Greek Revival house on brick foundations. Brick continues to be 'an unusual foundation material for this period in western Massachusetts and its presence in the district is explained by the fact that the brickworks operated during the previous period on the nearby property of the James Dickson House, 138 Skyline Trail, ca. 1827 (MIF.22 - Photograph #6) continued to operate. The front-gable, two-and-a-half story house has a sidehall plan with transverse gable bays on the north and south facades, and a rear wing of two stories, three bays long, which attaches to a barn, forming a complex plan. According to Middlefield historian Smith, the Warren house was the first in the town to be built with a sidehall plan, and the first to use Franklin stove for heating rather than the central fireplace stack of earlier periods. In Greek Revival style, the eaves make a full return on the west or street facade to enclose a pediment, within which is set an

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arched fanlight. This pedimented field is repeated, without the fanlight, on both north and south transverse gable bays. The entry surround is trabeated with three-quarter length sidelights beneath an added shed roof portico. The south bay has an Italianate style paneled base, suggesting both transverse bays were later additions. On the south facade a shed roof porch has also been added and partially enclosed. A variety of windows appears on the house, including 2/2, 4/4, and 6/6. Comerboards at the Dr. Warren house are paired, fluted pilasters, a detail that, along with the use of the more modern sidehall plan, signals the high style intentions of the builder.

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

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

Commercial

Although the Mack General Store, 168 Skyline Trail (MTF.15 - Photograph #8), was constructed in 1804 during the Federal period, it was moved to its present site ca. 1830, at which time it was altered to reflect the Greek Revival style. The two-and-a-half story, front-gabled store is three bays wide and five bays deep. A one-story, shed roof porch, with a small centered pediment, faces the street on the west. Above this, the flushboarded pediment of the main building contains two, six-light openings enframed in a molded surround with corner blocks. This is the only gable field window of its type in Middlefield.

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A contemporary, secondary entrance on the south facade leads to the town Post Office, which is located in the rear of the store. Second story sash is $\frac{6}{6}$.

Institutional

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

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

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Italianate Style (1850-1870)

Institutional

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

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

Residential

The Oliver Church House, 161 Skyline Trail, 1869, (MIF.24 - Photograph #10) is one of the most elaborate examples of the Italianate style in the hilltowns. The main block of the two-story house is square in plan, three bays wide and three bays deep. There is a two-story ell on the west. A strict symmetry and order rule the exterior design of the building. In the center of a truncated-hipped roof is a rectangular belvedere that is illuminated by Italianate arched windows. The roof is given variety by a through-cornice dormer, with an oculus opening, on the east façade. The center door surround on the

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east facade has an arched, double door opening flanked by full-length windows of 2/2/2 sash. Window surrounds have full entablature lintels. The street facing east facade has a hipped roof porch resting on paired and bracketed square piers. The middle piers support an arched entry. Second floor windows have segmentally arched lintels, and the central opening is a pair of segmentally arched windows. The south facade, facing Town Hill Road, is composed on the first floor of two bays flanking a center door beneath an arched portico supported by square piers. The three-sided bays of 2/2 sash have paneled bases. The north facade also has a three-sided bay, on its eastern end. The west wing of the house has a side porch that is also supported by Italianate piers. Ornament on the house is generous and well preserved. Paired brackets at the widely extended roof eaves, at the bays, and on the belvedere are scrolled and separated by curved dentils. A stone fountain, ca. 1880 is in the yard to the south of the house. Approximately five feet in height it consists of a draped female figure balancing an urn on her shoulder and standing on a plinth in the center of a shallow, lotus shaped bowl that is itself supported on a hexagonal pedestal.

Queen Anne Style (1870-1900)

Residential

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

Institutional

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

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

Colonial Revival (1880-1915)

Residential

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

As mentioned earlier, the Timothy Root House, 147 Skyline Trail, ca. 1827 (MIF.36 — photograph #5),

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

Craftsman Style (1915-1930)

Residential

Middlefield Center has three Craftsman Style houses dating from the first decades of the 20th century.. The fieldstone Charles W. Shaw House, 151 Skyline Trail, ca. 1915 (MIF.40 - Photograph #12), is a very fine example of the style. It is one-and-a-half stories in height extends on the east to form a small porch on fieldstone piers. Two tall exterior chimneys, also of fieldstone, are placed asymmetrically on the north and south sides of the house. A hipped dormer is centered on the main facade. On the south there is a shed roof wing, and on the north a small shingled wing under a gabled roof. Exposed rafters at the eaves of the house and its wings is a Craftsman style detail as is the low profile of the house and the use of mixed local materials including fieldstone and shingles. Sash on the house is double hung with diamond panes above a single light. A wood shed and stone well house are outbuildings that continue the Craftsman style.

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

The Griffin House at 157 Skyline Trail, ca. 1920 (MIF.43) is not as architecturally distinct as the other two houses, but has Craftsman characteristics as well. It is a two-and-a-half story shingled house with an end-gable roof. The main block of the building is three bays wide and two bays deep, with a one-story wing on the south and a shingled, hipped-roof porch on the north, forming a complex plan. The roof extends in a wide overhang with the style's exposed rafters. A shed roof portico on the east

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is supported on decorative king post truss brackets. This house also has an exterior fieldstone chimney, but it is more ornate than those at the other two Craftsman houses in the Center, as it has a basket handle of fieldstone at its top. Windows here are replacement 1/1 sash.

Institutional

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

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

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Neo-colonial Style (1915-1940)

Residential

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

Monuments

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

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

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

Also in front of the new town offices is the World War II Memorial, 188 Skyline Trail, ca. 1945, (MIF.930). Beside a flag pole stands a granite block five feet tall by three feet wide, with rough edges

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and smooth faces upon which are listed the names of fourteen Middlefield residents who served in the War.

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

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Middlefield

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are recorded in the district or in the general area (within one mile), sites may be present. Environmental characteristics of the area indicate the presence of several locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable indicators for some types of ancient Native American sites. Middlefield lies in an area of hilly uplands averaging 1600 feet above sea level at the eastern foothills of the Green Mountains known locally as the Berkshires. The Center includes a well drained, level to moderately sloping plateau and several terraces located within 1000 feet of small ponds, wetlands and tributary streams of Factory and Glendale Brooks, tributaries of the West and Middle Branch of the Westfield River respectively. Middlefield Center is located within the Connecticut River drainage. Given the current state of knowledge for ancient Native American settlement systems in the region, the size of the district (292 acres) and the availability of open space, a moderate to high potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources in the district. Due to the ruggedness and environmental potential of the terrain, ancient sites in the area may be limited to smaller campsites and short term, special purpose type sites rather than larger habitation sites.

There is a high potential for historic archaeological resources in the district beginning in the mid to late 18th century through the 19th century. Structural evidence of residences, farmsteads and occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) may survive from squatter settlement made prior to Prescott's grant in 1771. Squatter settlements were challenged in court where they lost their claims and were forced to move. The sites of these early settlements are unknown; however, they may have been located along the main ridgeline between Glendale and Factory Brooks. This settlement pattern has been reported as typical of other hill town settlements and characterized later settlement in the Middlefield Center Historic District. Historic settlement of the Center was slow throughout the 18th century with dispersed farmsteads characterizing the period. Several potential historic archaeological sites have been identified in the area. The late 18th century farmsteads of Joseph Blush (1783) and Lewis Taylor to the north covered most of the Center with the homesteads of David Mack (1779) and James Dickinson, Sr. at its endpoints. Each of these farmsteads are no longer extant at their original sites today. Structural evidence of residences, barns and outbuildings may survive. Archaeological evidence of occupational related features should also be present. The David Mack house (1779) burned in 1983. Mack opened his house as a tavern in 1785. Archaeological evidence of a cabin may also survive at the Mack site. Mack lived in the cabin while building his wood framed home. Unmarked graves, artifacts and post-holes may also survive at the Mack Cemetery (ca. 1783) located at 184 Skyline Trail. The James Dickinson, Sr. house was located at the site of the house built later by his son James Dickinson, Jr. at 138 Skyline Trail. The Joseph Blush house (1783) was reportedly the first structure built in the newly designated Center after Middlefield' incorporation. The Blush house was originally built at 160 Skyline Trail and later converted to a tavern by Joseph's son Oliver and moved to its present site at 162 Skyline Trail. Archaeological evidence from the Josiah Leonard house, also from the late 18th century period, may also survive between the Dickinson and Mack sites on County Road (Skyline Trail). Archaeological evidence from 18th century religious sites may also survive in the district. Middlefield's First Meetinghouse or the First Congregational Church was built between 1789 and 1791 at 184 Skyline Trail. The church burned in 1901 after which a new church was reportedly built on the same foundation. Structural

evidence from the old church and any related outbuildings may survive in addition to evidence of construction features and occupational related features.

During the 19th century, Middlefield's settlement intensified with the Center becoming the town's commercial, civic and religious focal point. Potential residential sites from this period include the sites of the J.K. Upham cottage, originally located near the parsonage lot, the Hiram Taylor house (1848), converted to an inn in 1906 and demolished in 1983 for a new house, the Solomon Root house, originally located south of the store now located at 137 Skyline Trail and the Timothy Root house (1827) built in the Center but moved to its present site at 147 Skyline Trail in 1908. Potential sites of 19th century businesses are also more common in the district than similar sites during the preceding period. Structural evidence from the original site of the Mack General Store (1804) may survive next to the site of the Mack residence. The Mack Store was moved to its present site at 168 Skyline Trail in 1830. Similar evidence may also survive from an early 19th century store operated by Solomon Root across the street from a house at 164 Skyline Trail and the 1811 Co-op store. Archaeological evidence from the 19th century Old Town Hall located at 167 Skyline Trail and destroyed by fire in 1901 may also exist. The Town Hall was rebuilt on the same foundation, however, construction features and structural evidence from the earlier building may exist. Archaeological evidence from several 19th century religious structures may also survive in the Center district. Structural evidence from the Baptist Church of Middlefield (1847-103) and related outbuildings may survive on Bell Road, east of the Mack Store. Similar evidence may also exist from the Baptist parsonage located on Main Street. Archaeological evidence from the Methodist Chapel relocated to the Center in 1853 may also survive south of the town hall. The Baptist and Methodist churches were abandoned in the late 19th century. Portions of both churches were used to reconstruct the Congregational Church after it burned in 1901. Structural evidence of the Congregational Parish (ca. 1835) house, outbuildings and occupational related features may survive at the site of the current town offices. The parish house was dismantled and reconstructed at its present location in 1865.

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Historical Significance

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

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

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

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The architecture of the Center ranges from the Federal style to modern ranch, and much of its rural beauty is carried by the Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate style buildings on Skyline Trail, enriched by several Craftsman style buildings of note. It is vernacular architecture at its best.

Middlefield Center is significant according to criteria A and C. It has integrity of workmanship, materials, association, feeling, design, and setting. It has local significance.

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

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

Native American Presence

The area that is Middlefield during the Contact and Plantation Periods had no known Native American settlement. However, between 1500 and 1625 Middlefield is thought to have been within the two-day hunting/travel range of the Native Americans known as the Mohicans whose permanent base was along the Hudson River in New York. A subgroup of the Algonquins, the Mohicans after 1625 - and the formation of the Six Nation confederacy — were no longer in complete control of such a vast territory but maintained their primary settlement in upstate New York with a small number of families moving into the Connecticut River valley. Some of the eastward movement of the Mohicans was precipitated by conflict during this period with a second group of Native Americans, the Mohawks, who dominated trade and tribute in a region that encompassed New York and western Massachusetts. Between 1625 and about 1664 the Mohawks controlled the hunting lands of Middlefield, though there are no indications that they

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settled permanently. In turn, the Mohawks after 1664 were no longer able to control the region and the Mohicans filled the void by moving east to the Housatonic River and ranged once again for hunting into the Middlefield area. According to the Smiths, an early history of the Mohicans reported that they hunted moose on the hills during March, and in the fall would hunt deer, bear, otter, raccoon, and martin, and that they also fished in the plentiful streams. Several artifacts have been found and identified with the Mohicans, namely a grain grinding mortar carved in a large stone and a pestle found nearby as well as arrowheads and spear points.

Colonial Period (1675-1775)

Native American and British Settlement Patterns

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

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

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settled were usually the uplands that were flatter, and easier to clear and convert to agricultural uses.

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

Transportation

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

Agriculture and Industry

Early settlers engaged in mixed farming, providing for most of their own needs. Some, for supplemental income, grazed additional livestock and cut timber. Because of the area's lack of good cropland, crop

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production was generally limited, but farmers are known to have grown corn, rye and wheat, as they raised sheep, cattle and swine. Local timber and timber products were probably sold to valley towns such as Hatfield, Northampton, Springfield and Westfield. The only documented period mill operation was the settlement's first grist and sawmill complex, established by John Rhoads ca. 1772-3 on Glendale Brook near its confluence with the middle branch of the Westfield River. Rhoads would have supplied new settlers with the lumber needed to construct their dwellings.

Federal Period, (1775-1830)

Town Development

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

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

Once here, settlers found the terrain intractable for frequent travel to schools, town meetings, church meetings, and trade. However, the difficulty of travel between the Middlefield plateau and surrounding

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town centers had two positive effects. It encouraged residents to create their own township, and it brought about a strong commercial base for the future town by guaranteeing the market for its first general stores.

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

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

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

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It was completed in 1791. The land chosen for the meetinghouse had been first in the ownership of the Taylor family in 1770, and changed hands several times before being purchased by Joseph Blush from Bolton, Connecticut, in 1783, the year of Middlefield's incorporation. That same year, he and his wife built the Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail, 1783 (MEF.18 - Photograph #2). Between 1783 and 1791 town meetings and religious services were held in the David and Mary Mack residence (no longer extant) a half mile south along the county road (Skyline Trail) and at the Blush's House.

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

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

Industry and Agriculture

Like most New England farmers of the period, Middlefield's early residents, including those in the Center, engaged in a form of mixed agriculture that included grazing, crop production, lumbering for some, and a variety of cottage industries. These cottage industries ranged from small in-home crafts to larger concerns. David Mack, for instance, processed potash from ashes that he bought from his neighbors and then sold in Westfield and Hartford. Similarly, James Dickson, a farmer and a weaver,

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started a brick works using clay deposits on his farm (later the site of a house built by his son James Dickson, Jr., the James and Sally Dickson House, 138 Skyline Trail, 1827, (MIF.22 - Photograph #6). The success of Dickson's brickworks shows up in the large number of brick foundations in the Center dating from the 19th century, a time when granite was a much more common foundation material. Orrin Pease, who owned the house after 1847, according to Smith's History of Middlefield, Massachusetts, also burned charcoal at this location, selling it to powder mills in Connecticut. Others distilled liquor, made cider brandy, cooked up lime in the 1790s from quarried limestone, and during the first quarter of the 19th century quarried soapstone. Some farmers like Daniel Chapman, Daniel and Lucy Chapman House, 140 Skyline Trail, ca.1780-1800 (MIF.20) were active in town politics. Chapman was a member of several committees, as well as being chosen town treasurer, school committee, and deacon of the Congregational Church.

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

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

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

Commercial Development

With population growth and increased through-traffic, especially between Worthington, Becket,

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

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

In 1811 a second general store was opened, this one in the Center. Edmund Kelso of Chester and several citizens of Middlefield, including Oliver Blush and James Dickson, Jr. began a co-op store (building now gone) and Edmund Kelso within a few years moved up to run the store living in a new house in the Center, Edmund Kelso House, 164 Skyline Trail, ca. 1815 (MIF.16 - Photograph #4). The co-op venture didn't work out, and the store was closed in a few years, but in 1818, Onin Smith, son of one of the original partners, returned from a short stint living and working in New York and bought the store and the house. He ran the store and lived in the house until 1828, when he sold both to Solomon and Laura Root, who ran a successful business for the next thirty years. Not coincidentally, some of these men were listed in the 1798 Direct Tax Census as among the wealthiest in town. David Mack, who in addition to his tavern and commercial enterprises also invested in new area businesses, was the wealthiest individual in town with holdings valued at \$4117. James Dickson's property was valued at \$2692, while the textile manufacturing Church and Blush families had combined assets of \$3949 and \$1500 respectively. Mack remained one of Middlefield's most prominent citizens throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, and over the course of his life donated almost \$70,000 to the town and to a variety of charities. The Church and Blush families would become the town's preeminent industrialists.

Transportation

Around the turn of the century the turnpike movement proved a boon to local commerce and industry. During the late eighteenth century there was an increased demand for roads in the

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western part of the state, especially a road which would connect the Connecticut River valley towns over the Hampshire and Berkshire Hills to Pittsfield and Albany. Many towns were unable or unwilling to support the upkeep of these roads, so the state began granting charters to private groups whose members agreed to construct and maintain roads in exchange for the right to collect tolls from travelers.

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

Architecture

Building in the Center after the Revolution was reflective of what was being built throughout the town. There were small houses of one-and-a-half stories under side-gable or gambrel roofs. The ell of the Daniel Chapman House, 140 Skyline Trail, ca.1780-1800 (1\41F.20) is an example of this *form*. Also dating from this period and representing the one-and-a-half story Cape Cod form - although it was moved to the Center later - was the Thomas Blossom House, 172 Skyline Trail, 1787 (MIF.12 - Photograph #3). The main block of the Chapman house was added in 1802 and represents the larger two-and-a-half story house form under a side gable roof that was also being built. Falling in this second category and the earliest example in the Center is the Joseph Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail, 1783 (MEF.18 - Photograph #2) a two-and-a-half story house. The Solomon Root House, 164 Skyline Trail, ca. 1815 (MIF.16) is a fine example of the two-and-a-half story house with its gable end to the street and a developed Federal style entry surround.

The Federal period extended until 1830 thereby encompassing the Greek Revival style as well as

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the Federal style and several houses in the Center were influenced by this style. Among those in the Center, the Dr. Joseph Warren House, 158 Skyline Trail, ca.1823 (MIF.19 - Photograph #7) north of the Blush Tavern, was the home and office of the town physician. His house was one of the first in the town to be built without a central chimney or fireplace and was the first to use a new Franklin stove for heating. It was also built with its gable end to the street to suggest the pediment of a Greek temple. The Mack Store 168 Skyline Trail when it was moved to the Center was turned with its gable end to the street and a pediment finished in its gable ends to give it a Greek Revival style.

At the north end of the Center, the younger James Dickson continued his father's work on the farm and constructed the James Dickson House, 138 Skyline Trail, ca. 1827 (MIF.22 - Photograph #6). His is a two-and-a-half story house under a side-gable roof. James Dickson Jr. also continued the manufacture of bricks that had been begun by his father. After the younger Dickson's death in 1844, the house was sold to his brother-in-law Russell Pease in 1847.

Barns and outbuildings were part of every farmstead and enterprise in the Center. One remaining today is the Blush Tavern Hostelry, 162 Skyline Trail, ca.1820 (MLF.17) that originally served as lodging for stagecoach drivers and helpers at the nearby Blush tavern. It was probably moved to its present location by Ira Sampson, a shoemaker, who lived and worked in the hostelry during the early 1830s, or by Oliver Blush, who moved into it in 1837, after giving the tavern at 160 Skyline Trail (MIF.18 Photograph #2) to his nephew Oliver Smith. Blush lived in the hostelry until his death in 1846. Members of the Blush, Church and subsequent families during the 20th century have continued to use the structure as a residence.

Early Industrial Period (1830-1870)

Town Development

During the Early Industrial Period Middlefield's population remained fairly stable as continued industrial activity and local birthrates counterbalanced emigration to increasingly attractive farmlands in the west

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

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

Agriculture and Industry

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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by the state. The fair has been held every year since the Society's incorporation, except for one year during World War II.

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

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

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

Commercial activity and development of the Center

Beginning in 1830 the town Center grew denser with both new construction and moved buildings. Solomon and Laura Root built a store on Skyline Trail, where they kept the post office between 1835 and 1857. Keeping up the cottage industry tradition, Root also made buttons for the Williston button factory in Easthampton at a two-story building he put up in 1838 (now gone) and acted in town as selectman (1824-30), treasurer (1835-52), representative to the General Court (1834) and Postmaster. The Roots lived in the house at 164 Skyline Trail, ca. 1815 that was across the street from their store. At some point after 1828, Solomon Root built a house south of the store for his brother and business partner, Timothy Root, now located at 147 Skyline Trail, ca. 1828 (MIF.36 — Photograph #5).

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

In 1835, David Mack financed the construction of the Edmund P. Morgan House, 166 Skyline Trail, (MIF.45) for Morgan, his partner and the storekeeper. Morgan later became the owner of the store and eventually sold it to G. W. Lyman in 1841. In 1848, Lyman sold the store to the company Boise, Smith and Root, which consolidated the business of this and the old Solomon Root store into the Mack store building. Solomon Root then remodeled his vacated store (no longer extant) and turned it into a dwelling for himself, selling his former house at 164 Skyline Trail, (MIF.16 - Photograph #4) to Uriah Church and Sons Company who, Smith reports, "curiously enough, turned it into a store." At this point, then, there were two general stores operating in the Center.

The success of the stores at the Center during the, early part of this period was secured by the continuing the practice begun during the Federal Period of the store owners acting as exporters for the farmers of Middlefield and surrounding towns. This practice increased with the improvement of transportation routes through the town, but was eventually undermined by the coming of the railroad. The Church Brothers's store remained in the Center until 1858, when the business was moved to the growing village at Factory Hollow. At this time, the post office was moved back into the store run by Boise, Smith and Root, the old Mack General Store at 168 Skyline Trail, (MEF.15 - Photograph #8).

In addition to the increased commercial activity, and the location there of the Highland Agricultural Society in 1857, the Center also became the clear focal point of religious activity within the town. In 1847, the Baptists relocated to the Center and built a new meeting house on Bell Road, just east of the Mack store, on a site now marked by the Baptist Church Monument, Bell Road, and 1905 MIF.912. The Baptist Church was built in a more traditional style than the Congregational Church. Its builder was Isaac Pierce, uncle of Volney Pierce, and also of Peru. In 1852 the Methodists built a parsonage (no longer extant) on Main Street, and the following year moved their chapel to the Center, to a spot just south of the town hall (Old Town Hall, 169 Skyline Trail). However, the combination of competition from the rival churches in the Center and distance from their former parishioners led them to discontinue services after a few years.

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

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

During the 1830s, Sardis Putnam, a shoemaker, moved the Thomas Blossom House, 172 Skyline Trail, 1787 (MIF.12 - Photograph #3) to its present location in the Center, perhaps to take advantage of the better commercial prospects there. Thomas Blossom had built the house in 1787 making it — at its arrival in the 1830s - the second oldest structure in the Center. Thomas was a member of the school committee as well as being the town's first poundkeeper. Sardis Putnam added his cordwainer's trade to the Center's offerings.

Continuing the building moving activity that characterizes much of this period, in 1867 Ambrose Newton bought the old center schoolhouse and moved it to the rear of the Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House, 162 Skyline Trail, (MIF.18 - Photograph #2) to be used as a carriage house and stable. It is now gone.

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

Late Industrial Period (1870-1915)

Town Development

With the decline of local industry after a series of disasters at the mills in Factory Hollow, and slow decline in agriculture, Middlefield's population dropped drastically from 728 at its outset to fewer than 300 in 1920. From about 1880 the town benefited from the seasonal influx of a number of summer residents, a phenomenon found in many of the surrounding hilltowns. This movement was so striking that the Smiths in their history of the town were able to list five houses in the Center that were by then owned and occupied as summer-residences. Additionally, several houses were remodeled into inns and new construction was begun in the Center after three decades of little building.

Agriculture and Industry

In 1870 at the outset of the period, Middlefield, especially at Factory Village, was a thriving manufacturing town. However, as Smith reports, "as a result of economic changes, only gradually realized, combined with a series of misfortunes, this prosperity began to decline." The first wave of disasters struck in the early 1870s: the Upper Church mill was destroyed by fire in 1871; valuable stock stored in Boston warehouses was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1872; a serious slump in the market for woolens was caused by the Panic of 1873; and finally, in 1874, the reservoir dam gave way destroying mill buildings and houses as far south as Huntington.

Damages to the mills in Factory Hollow were estimated to total \$100,000, while damages to the railroad at Bancroft totaled at least that much. Despite the setback, however, the mills were rebuilt and things seemed to return to normal. A shift in popular taste from broadcloth to worsteds that came about at the beginning of the period, as well as competition from large factories nearer labor and transportation centers, put the products of Middlefield's out-of-the-way mills at a disadvantage.

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

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

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

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Commercial Activity / Development of Town Center

The Center did not suffer as precipitous a decline as Factory Village during the first three decades of this period, but it was certainly affected by the changing fortunes of the town as a whole. During the late 19th century, building in the town came to a virtual standstill, but a number of prosperous farms and businesses continued to operate in the Center as well as other parts of the town. The Highland Agricultural Society continued its annual fair during this period and the town's reputation for raising excellent stock continued unabated. Gay's Hampshire County Gazetteer (1887) shows the Church, Pease, and Smith families to be among the most prominent in the town in the late nineteenth century. Oliver Church continued to live in the Center at 161 Skyline Trail and operated his mill in Factory Hollow until 1890. The Pease family owned almost a thousand acres of farmland, 300 of which were farmed by Orrin Pease at the old James Dickson farm, 138 Skyline Trail, (MIF. 22 - Photograph #6). In addition to his farming operation, Pease was a blacksmith and cider maker and manufactured charcoal on his property for a number of years.

The Taylor farm that had been in the family for several generations continued under the ownership of Hiram Taylor. With the farmstead (now gone) on Skyline Trail as its center, the farm covered much of the land north and west of the Center, and consisted of 650 acres. Taylor was well known as a breeder of pure blood Short Horns, and also raised beef cattle. Other residents of the Center during the latter part of the 19th century included Royal Geer, a carpenter and joiner, who had operated the Church Arothers sawmill for a number of years and lived in the Edmund Kelso House, 164 Skyline Trail (MIF.16 - Photograph #4); the blacksmith John Bell (house no longer extant); and Ambrose Newton in the Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House, 162 Skyline Trail (MIF.18 - Photograph #2).

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

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Architecture

Fire during this period caused several important architectural changes in the Center. In 1900 lightning hit the Congregational Church, 167 Skyline Trail, 1791-1903 (MLF.14 - Photograph #9) and it burned to the ground taking with it the Town Hall on its south side. A new Town Hall, 167 Skyline Trail was built in 1901 on the foundations of the old one, with similar proportions and styling. While the Town Hall was being rebuilt the library it held was moved to the Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail (MIF.18 - Photograph #2), then occupied by long-time town librarian Mrs. Lucy S. Newton. It took longer to rebuild the church, as church members were split over whether to rebuild a new stone church or to buy and reuse the Baptist Church. Finally, it was decided to buy and move the Baptist Church and also to move the Methodist Church to form the north wing of the church while adding a new tower and a belfry. The rebuilt church was dedicated at the beginning of 1904.

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

In 1900, the Reverend Herbert Youtz, pastor of the Congregational Church from 1896-1898, purchased the Kelso House, 164 Skyline Trail, (MIF.16 - Photograph #4) and returned to make it his summer home. Reverend Youtz and his brothers also purchased the Mack General Store, 168 Skyline Trail (MIF.15 - Photograph #8) and the Edmund P. Morgan House, 166 Skyline Trail (MIF.44). The brothers operated the store and a stage line and converted the Morgan House into the Middlefield Inn between 1903 and 1904 to accommodate summer visitors in the town. The first telephone service arrived ca. 1905. The switchboard was located in the Daniel and Lucy Chapman House, 140 Skyline Trail, ca.1780 (MIF.20). Helen M. Cook, was the first operator. The house also acted for a time as the post office and as a part-time sheriff's office.

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In 1906 the Hiram Taylor house (no longer extant) was converted to an inn and operated under several names until the nineteen sixties. Also, ca. 1908, Gerald B. Smith purchased and moved the Timothy Root House, 147 Skyline Trail, ca.1830, (MIF.36 — Photograph #5) from its location in the Center proper to its present location in the northern part of the district, to be used as a summer home. Gerald's sister, Kate Smith also began to use the Joseph and Elizabeth Blush House, 160 Skyline Trail, 1783 (MIF.18 - Photograph #2) as a summer residence sometime before 1924. Both were teachers in Illinois, she in high school and he at the University of Chicago. Also during this period, the James and Sally Dickson House, 138 Skyline Trail, ca.1827 (MIF.22 - Photograph #6) that had remained in the family for almost one hundred years was sold to William Birnie of Springfield, who used it as a summer home until his death, upon which his brother Judge Birnie inherited it and used it as a weekend home during the early 20th century. Also in 1906, David Mack's descendants erected the Mack Monument, 188 Skyline Trail, 1906, at the site of his former residence and store, in front of the present-day town offices.

Early Modern Period (1915-1945)

Town History and Development of the Center

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

Use of the town as a summer retreat continued. Alice Church, Oliver's daughter, used the Oliver Church House as a summer residence. Kate and Gerald Smith also continued to occupy their summer homes. Three Craftsman style houses were built as summer residences during the early part of the period. The Charles Shaw House, 151 Skyline Trail, ca.1915 (MIF.40 - Photograph #12), and the David C. Coe House, 173 Skyline Trail, ca.1920 (MIF.46) are both constructed of local fieldstone. Mr. Shaw, from

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Springfield, was a member of the Middlefield Improvement Association, an organization dedicated to involving the many summer residents in local affairs. Coe was a tailor who lived in Longmeadow and worked in Springfield. According to the research of Nancy Burnham of the Middlefield Historical Commission, Samuel Bennett a stone mason, or wailer, from Becket who built the stone walls around the old cemetery behind the Congregational Church in North Becket built these houses of local fieldstone.

During the early part of the century, the Oliver Church House, 161 Skyline Trail (MIF.24 - Photograph #10) was used as a summer residence by Alice Church. It was later sold to Dr. Amber A. Starbuck, who operated first an inn and then a retirement home there until 1969. At one point Dr. Starbuck also owned the Taylor house (no longer extant) and used it for overflow guests from her inn. By 1924 Dr. Starbuck, who graduated from the Boston University medical school in 1906, owned and lived in the Samuel Bennett House, 173 Skyline Trail (MIF.46). She was active in Middlefield town government working for the creation of a town zoning board and for the adoption of zoning bylaws; she took care of Middlefield's school medical needs and ran a practice in Springfield.

The former Baptist Parsonage that had been owned by Mrs. Gertrude Pease, was by 1924 the summer home of the Griffin family, from Shelton, Connecticut. In 1927 the Griffins tore down the parsonage and had a summer house built in the Craftsman style, Griffin House, 157 Skyline Trail, ca.1920-27 (MIF.43). The *Griffin* house was built by *George* Olds, then *owner of the* Thomas Blossom House, 172 Skyline Trail, (MIF.12 - Photograph #3) and proprietor of the Olds Store, which operated out of the house's front room. The store also contained the post office, which was operated by Mrs. Olds. George Olds conducted the mail route between the Bancroft and Middlefield post offices. In 1930 the Olds purchased the original Mack General Store, 168 Skyline Trail (Mff. 5 - Photographs #8) and moved their business there, selling the Blossom house to Reverend Herbert Youtz. "That same year George Olds was elected town clerk and treasurer, adding to his now full-time work at the store", according to Sternagle and Cummings. The store and post office operated continuously in the original Mack store building until ca. 2000 when they were closed.

Two modest memorials to veterans of the World Wars were constructed in the Center by a committee to beautify the Center during the period. The first, War Memorial Park, Bell Road at Skyline Trail, ca.1918 (MIF.920), is situated on a small triangular island in the intersection

Middlefield Center Historic District
Middlefield

Archaeological Significance

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

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

contribute information that identifies activities conducted at the church and facilities available for parishioners.

Archaeological resources related to 19th century residential, commercial and religious/institutional buildings are more common in the district as a result of increased settlement throughout the period and the development of the Center as the town's commercial, civic and religious focal point.¹ Structural evidence of residences, barns and outbuildings can help document the changes that occurred on 19th century farmsteads and characteristics of more exclusively residential and residential/commercial buildings such as tavern/residences. Structural evidence combined with the detailed analysis of occupational related features may also contribute important information relating to the domestic lives of individuals and families and economic activities that characterized the farm, business or residence. Important information may be present that documents the growth of the district economy beyond subsistence agriculture and the role of cottage industries in that development.

The analysis of occupational related features at the sites of several general stores in the district may also contribute important information on the extent that local farms and businesses relied on regional economies or goods from other areas in their subsistence and operation. This information can also help describe the extent that the Center was isolated from other towns, regions and economies. Archaeological evidence from civic and religious buildings can also contribute important information relating to those structures. Artifacts and structural evidence at the sites of the Baptist and Methodist Churches may contribute information relating to architectural features of those buildings. Construction features may also document techniques used to build the structures. Analysis of occupational related features associated with the Baptist and Congregational parsonages may detail the lives of ministers and their families that occupied those structures. This information may identify aspects of the lives of the clergy that differed from members of the community at large. Archaeological research at the site of the Old Town Hall at 167 Skyline Trail may also help document architectural details of that building and the extent its foundation and other architectural features were incorporated into the existing town hall structure. Archaeological resources associated with many of the extant 18th through 20th century buildings in the district may also contain information that contributes to the district's significance. Structural evidence of outbuildings, construction features and occupational related features may survive related to earlier periods of landuse at related structures. Several buildings have been moved, however, even these structures can be associated with important features post-dating their date of moving. For example, the Mack General Store (1804) was moved to its present site at 168 Skyline Trail in 1830 indicating the potential for related archaeological resources on that site after that date.

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across from the church, and includes a polished granite stone with names of thirteen veterans. It has the inscription "Honor roll - in honor of the boys of the town of Middlefield who served in the World War 1914-1918." The World War II Memorial, at 188 Skyline Trail, ca. 1945 (MIF.930) that stands in front of the current town offices is also polished granite and lists the names of fourteen veterans of the Second World War. Also constructed near the end of this period was the house, at 156 Skyline Trail, ca.1940 (MIF.41), a modest cape in the northern part of the district.

Post-1945 to Present

Town History and Development

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

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

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

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10. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

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Verbal Boundary Description

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

Verbal Boundary Justification

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

Middlefield Center		Historic District					
District Data Sheet							
ROW	MIF.920	Bell Road & Skyline Trail	War Memorial Park	ca. 1918	N/A	Si	
ROW	MIF911	Bell Road & Skyline Trail	WWI Memorial	ca. 1918	N/A	O	
		Bell Road					
06-21	MIF.49	Bell Road	Firehouse	1980	utilitarian		NC
406-21	MIF.50	Bell Road	Municipal Garage	ca. 1980	utilitarian	B	NC
406-21	MIF.912	Bell Road	Baptist Ch. Memorial	ca. 1905	N/A	O	C
406-87	MIF.33	7 Bell Road	Agricultural Hall	1869	mid-19th c.	B	*C
406-87	MIF.913	7 Bell Road	grandstand	ca. 1930	utilitarian	Str.	C
406-87	MIF.914	7 Bell Road	bleachers	ca. 1950	utilitarian	Str.	C
406-87	MIF.921	7 Bell Road	food stand	ca. 1930	utilitarian	B	
406-87	MIF.925	7 Bell Road	concession stand	ca. 1930	utilitarian	B	C
0687	MIF915	7 Bell Road	bandstand	ca.1930	utilitarian	Str.	C
406-87	MIF.926	7 Bell Road	poultry house	ca. 1930	utilitarian	B	C
406-87	MIF.927	7 Bell Road	ticket faker's booth	ca. 1980	utilitarian	B	NC
406-87	MIF.928	7 Bell Road	sheep pavilion	1974	utilitarian	B	NC
406-87	MIF.932	7 Bell Road	cattle pavilion	1975	utilitarian	B	NC
406-87	MIF.933	7 Bell Road	cattle pavilion	1976	utilitarian		NC
406-87	MIF.916	7 Bell Road	animal event pavilion	1977	utilitarian	Str.	NC
406-87	MIF.917	7 Bell Road	pulling arena	ca. 1930	utilitarian	Si	
406-87	MIF.58	7 Bell Road	toilets	1981	utilitarian	B	
406-87	59	7 Bell Road	storage building	1981	utilitarian		NC
406-87		7 Bell Road	flagpole	1966	utilitarian		NC
406-87		7 Bell Road	well house	ca. 1970	utilitarian	Str.	NC
		Skyline Trail					
407-12.4	MIF.21	126 Skyline Trail	James & Mary Dickson Hse.	ca. 1827	Federal	B	C
407-12.4	MIF.60	126 Skyline Trail	barn	ca. 1890	utilitarian	B	
407-12.4		Skyline Trail	garage	ca. 1960	Colonial Revival		NC
407-12.5		Skyline Trail	open field		N/A		
407-12.6		126 Skyline Trail	open field		N/A		
407-13	MIF.62	138 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1980	contemporary		NC
407-14	MIF.20	140 Skyline Trail	Daniel & Luc Chaernan Hse.	ca. 1780	Federal		

407-14	MIF.922	140 Skyline Trail	barn foundations	ca. 1860	NiA		
407-14	MIF.63	140 Skyline Trail	dairy barn	ca. 1960	utilitarian	B	C
407-20	MIF.64	143 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1980	Cape Cod	B	NC
407-20	MIF.65	143 Skyline Trail	garage	ca. 1980	utilitarian	B	NC
407-19	MIF.66	145 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1935.	Cape Cod	B	C
407-19	MIF.67	145 Skyline Trail	garage	ca. 1990	utilitarian	B	NC
407-18	MIF.36	147 Skyline Trail	Timothy & Amanda Root Hse.	post-1820	Federal	B	C
407-15	MIF.37	148 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1890	Queen Anne	B	C
407-15	MIF.38	148 Skyline Trail	cabin	ca. 1920	utilitarian	B	C
407-16	MIF.68	150 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1980	Neo-colonial	B	NC
406-7	MIF.n	153 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1980	contemporary	B	NC
406-8	MIF.39	151 Skyline Trail	Charles Shaw House	ca. 1915	Craftsman	B	C
406-8	MIF.70	151 Skyline Trail	woodshed	ca. 1915	Craftsman	B	C
406-8	MIF.923	151 Skyline Trail	stone well house	ca. 1915	Craftsman	Str.	C
406-10	MIF.71	152 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1980	Cape Cod	B	NC
406-11	MIF.72	154 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1950	English Cottage	B	C
406-11	MIF.73	154 Skyline Trail	barn	ca. 1960	utilitarian	B	C
406-12	MIF.74	156 Skyline Trail	house	ca. 1940	cape	B	C
406-12	MIF.75	156 Skyline Trail	garage	ca. 1990	utilitarian	B	NC
406-5	MIF.47	157 Skyline Trail	Griffin House	ca. 1920	Craftsman	B	C
406-5	MIF.76	157 Skyline Trail	garage	ca. 1970	utilitarian	B	NC
406-13	MIF.19	158 Skyline Trail	Dr. Warren House	ca. 1823	Greek Revival	B	C
406-4	MIF.43	159 Skyline Trail	Congregational Parish	ca. 1835	Greek Revival	B	
406-3	MIF.23	161 Skyline Trail	Oliver Church House	1869	Italianate	B	C
406-3	MIF.924	161 Skyline Trail	fountain	ca. 1880	Neo-classical	O	C
406-14	MIF.18	16aSkyline Trail	Joseph Blush House	1783	Federal	B	C
406-14	MIF.77	160 Skyline Trail	garage	1950	utilitarian	B	C
406-15	MIF.17	160Skyline Trail	Blush Tavern Hostelry	ca. 1820	Federal	B	C
406-16	MIF.16	164 Skyline Trail	Edwin Kelso House	ca. 1815	Early Classical Revival	B	C
406-17	MIF.44	166 Skyline Trail	Edmund P. Morgan Hse.	1832	Greek Revival	B	C
406-18	MIF.15	168 Skyline Trail	Mack General Store	1804/1830	Greek Revival	B	C
406-92	MIF.14	167 Skyline Trail	Congregational Church	1791-1903	Eclectic	B	C
406-93		Skyline Trail	open field		N/A	Si	C
406-91	MIF.13	169 Skyline Trail	Town Hall	1901	Queen Anne	B	C
406-94.3		Skyline Trail	open space		N/A	Si	C
406-94.2		Skyline Trail	open space		N/A	Si	

