



New Paltz Hamlet Histories: Middletown

The Hamlet of Middletown lies approximately two miles north of the village of New Paltz. It encompasses the area that runs along Route 32 North and Old Kingston Road, once called “Middletown Road” on account that it was a direct route to the village of Middletown in Orange County*.

This area was settled by the children and grandchildren of the Patentees of New Paltz and some of the earliest homes are directly related to the families of the twelve New Paltz founders. For example, Elias Ean, one of the first settlers of Middletown, married Elizabeth Crispell, the daughter of Patentee Antoine Crispell. As a result of this marriage, Elias inherited one third of the Crispell estate and one third of his land in the the Paltz Patent**. He soon built his home on what is now Route 32 North. Ean also played a major role in the village of New Paltz in that he was the only one of the non-Patentee families who helped build the original stone church on Huguenot Street in 1718***. Although the original home fell into disrepair, Elias’s fourth generation grandson (also named Elias) built the stone house at 294 Old Kingston Road in 1789 (as indicated by a carved stone in the southwest corner which also bears the initials E E and R H B)*. The 1790 U.S. census lists 1 free white male 16 years and older, 2 free white females and 1 slave living in the Ean residence. Petrus Hasbrouck, grandson of Patentee Abraham Hasbrouck, made his home at 315 Old Kingston Road around the time he married Sarah Bevier in 1765. He had four children between 1766 and 1774. From October 25, 1775 to 1782 he served as a 2nd Lieutenant in Col. Johannes Hardenbergh’s Regt during the American Revolutionary War and from 1776 and 1782 he fathered another six children****. His farm resided on 82 acres of land and comprised of a Dutch barn, hay house and hatters shop in addition to the stone dwelling. The U.S. census of 1790 records two free white males 16 and

older, three free white males under 16, three free white females and two slaves. Samuel Hasbrouck inherited the farm after his father's death in 1799 and during the U.S. Census of 1820 owned three slaves****. Another prominent early settler was Josiah Elting, who built what is now the oldest brick house in the Town of New Paltz in 1786 at 272 Old Kingston Road. Elting owned a large portion of land that amounted to around 178 total acres, 90 of which lay on the west side of the road and was the northern half of his grandfather's tract†. According to the 1790 U.S. Census, 1 free white male 16 and over, 2 white males under 16, 2 white females and 1 slave lived in the Elting house. In addition to the brick house, the property also included a Dutch barn (destroyed in 1915), a carriage house and outlying woods. Josiah gave his son Charles the western 90 acres of land in the early 19****.

Several small industries thrived in Middletown from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries. A blacksmith shop was owned and operated by Philip Hasbrouck from the early 1820s to 1855 at 328 Old Kingston Rd††. Elias Ean's home became known as "Indian Farm" under his son James, who owned the property from 1836 to 1900. James worked as a teacher for one year but was forced by ill health to turn to farming. By 1896 he was described as "an enterprising farmer [and a] capable business man...he now owns and operates 144 acres of good land and...is engaged in raising some stock"†††. By 1922 the property was passed to Wayne M. and Sadie Wiseman, who turned it into the "Ox Bow Tea Room" which served "Ice Cream, Tea, Lunches, Iced Soft Drinks [and] Chicken Dinner"††††. The Elias Bevier house, built around 1810 at 330 Old Kingston Road, was used as a tenant house for the property of 316 Old Kingston Road. As of 1868 the Bevier house was described as sitting on "7 ¾ acres...Well stocked with fruit of every description"†††††. In 1898 the property was mentioned as having "One of the very few peach orchards now left in this town"†*.

Just south of the Elias Bevier house lies the Middletown Public School at 336 Old Kingston Rd. The first school in the hamlet of Middletown existed around 1820 on the property of 338 Old Kingston Road. 19th century historian Ralph Lefevre described it as a "Small, unpainted frame building, a little north of [the present school at 336 Old Kingston Rd.]"†**. The present schoolhouse was built to replace the previous school in 1855 and served the Hamlet of Middletown until 1932. The property was bought by Edward Rose in July of 1932 for \$310. By December of that year Rose had "Converted the old school house in the Middletown district into an attractive bungalow"†***. The close proximity of Middletown to the Village of New Paltz meant that there was no real need for a church in this small hamlet.

Middletown still remains a sleepy hamlet with a wealth of history. The fact that many of the early structures from the 18th and early 19th centuries still survive are a testament to its strong connection to the past.

* Hasbrouck, Kenneth. *Historic New Paltz*. New Paltz, NY: 1959. 81-83. Print.

** Gentile, Nancy, and Eric Roth. "The Eans: An Overlooked New Paltz Family: With Transcriptions of Two Ean Family Records." *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*. 136.4 (2005): 255-257. Print.

*** Lefevre, Ralph. *History of New Paltz, New York and Its Old Families*. 2nd. Albany, NY: Fort Orange Press, 1909. 91. Print

**** Hasbrouck, Kenneth. *The Hasbrouck Family in America: With European Background*, Vol. I, New Paltz, NY: 1961. 58-59. Print

***** Middletown Area Parcel F, Sep 2006. Print

† Larson Fisher Associates, Historic and Natural District Inventory Form: Middletown Area Parcel D, Sep 2006. Print

†† Lefevre p. 205

††† Commemorative Biographical Record of Ulster County, New York, p. 490. Chicago: J.H. Beers & Co. 1896

†††† *New Paltz Independent* 12 Jul 1923, Print

††††† *New Paltz Independent* 4 Mar 1868, Print

†* *New Paltz Independent* 2 Sep 1898, Print

†** Lefevre, Ralph. *History of New Paltz, New York and Its Old Families*. 2nd. Albany, NY: Fort Orange Press, 1909. 205. Print.

†*** style='font-size:10.0pt;line-height:115%;font-family:"Calibri","sans-serif">[13] *New Paltz Independent*
9 Dec 1932, Print