A Social Analysis of Blacks in Middletown, 1850 to 1880

As Uncovered from the Manuscript Census.

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History 325X
Our research concerns the social history of blacks in Middletown, Connecticut from 1850 to 1880. Having little to guide us except general notions and stereotypes of the northern black during this period, we quickly realized that those notions, namely, that northern blacks lived as integrated members in their communities, were false. The historical setting in which Middletown blacks found themselves prior to and after the Civil War made them social outcasts and second-rate citizens. Although these blacks were spared the obvious horror of slavery, the white people of Connecticut were blatantly discriminatory in their legal and social relations with the blacks. For one thing, the remnants of Connecticut slavery existed until 1840, when the last twenty slaves were finally emancipated. Abolitionists were few, and when vocal, were quickly silenced; as an alternative to abolitionism, many whites favored colonization, including Wesleyan's President Fiske. Any isolated attempts to ameliorate the oppressed blacks' position, such as Prudence Crandall's shortlived school for black girls, were met with public outcry and constraining legislation. Although Connecticut citizens favored emancipation, they certainly did not espouse equal social and economic opportunities for the blacks. Moreover, black suffrage as a proposal was defeated as late as 1860 in Connecticut.

The activities of Connecticut's "engineers" on the underground railroad and the State's general dislike for the Fugitive Slave Act suggest some concern for the black's situation. A very limited interest, however, one which aimed at the evils of Southern slavery per se, while ignoring the daily situation of free blacks in their own midst. They did not work to improve the condition of
the blacks nor did they look forward to an increase in the black population following the Civil War.

Middletown had a notorious history of slave traders and slave ships in the 18th Century. Though legislation may have abolished these activities by the middle of the 19th Century, it did not necessarily alter the attitudes which they implied. The social setting of Middletown blacks was hardly enviable. By 1880, though, their condition was improving. For Connecticut blacks the Civil War brought suffrage in 1865 and an overall improvement in their legal status. In addition, though occurring more slowly, their economic condition improved along with the increasing economic diversity and prosperity of the entire country.

From 1850 to 1880 the black population of Connecticut rose from 4,693 to 11,547. The percentage of blacks in the total population decreased, however, from .2% to .17%. In this period the black population of Middletown fluctuated between 149 and 170. The total population of Middletown grew from 4,211 in 1850 to 6,286 in 1880. The black population did not rise proportionately with the rest of Middletown, but shrank from 3.5 percent to 2.4 percent of the total population. Compared to most other cities in Connecticut, and to the total population of the state, this small proportion of blacks is significantly high. The diminishing percentage of blacks in Middletown's population shows the beginning of an absolute decrease; for by 1920 the black population of Middletown had dwindled to fifty-seven. While assessing this population, we must always remember how small the group is, especially when working with social statistics.

The black population in Middletown in 1850 was 149, 75 men and 74 women. This community was relatively young, with the average age at 26.6. It was a male ordered community in which 36 working blacks were male, 39 of whom were semi-skilled. (See appendix for
occupational groupings). In addition, 80% of those reporting real estate on the 1850 Census were men. The wealth recorded indicates a poor community in which only 6% (10) of the population owns real estate valued at $100 or more, and even then the total for the entire community is only $19,300 ($9,500 of this was owed by one individual). The vast majority (95.5%) of the blacks were Connecticut born. The dwelling size was 7.7; the average household size 6.9. Nearly a quarter of the black community lived in households with at least one white; 15% of the total population had a white head of household. Out of the 29 households comprising the black community 25 were male headed. In short, the 1850 black population may be characterized as homogeneous and poor, interacting little with the rest of the community, as shown by the limited range of their occupations.

During the intervening thirty years the black community was marked by expansion, diversity, and mobility, particularly in the areas of real estate ownership, nativity, and occupations. After 1850, there were consistently more females (56% or more) in the black population of Middletown. In 1860, ninety-eight, or sixty percent, of the 170 blacks were female. This could be partially attributed to the mobility caused by the Civil War; if job opportunities were better elsewhere, there would be little reason to return to Middletown. Immigrants coming into Middletown could have taken over semi-skilled positions occupied earlier by blacks. This is reflected by the increasing number of blacks employed in the services over the thirty year period. The increasing number of women employed, while the percentage of employed men remained constant, may indicate that the job market for black males in Middle-
town was limited.

By 1880 the average age of the population was nearly thirty. This increase in the overall age could be a reflection of the small amount of marriageable men in the population at this time. In 1860 twenty-five percent of the black population was under ten; in the subsequent years the number in this age group decreased to 13.6 percent.

There are no statistics for real estate in the 1880 census, but by 1870 the value of real estate owned by members of the black population had increased significantly from $19,300 to $45,600. The ownership of real estate was more widely distributed by this time, heads of household owning real estate increased from ten in 1850 to twenty-five in 1880.

Reflecting the nationwide increase in geographic mobility following the Civil War, those blacks born outside of New England and living in Middletown rose steadily from 1850 to 1880. The Middle Atlantic and Southern born contributed 9.7% and 10.2%, respectively. (See states, appendix).

The occupational possibilities also expanded and diversified. Although blacks employed most frequently in semi-skilled occupations, domestic work and services offered new work opportunities for many blacks, especially women. Those blacks working as domestics and in the services rose from 1 each to 21 and 19, respectively, in 1880.
Although the number of blacks in Middletown remained fairly constant from 1850 to 1880, comparison of the names listed in the censuses of these years shows that the individuals making up this population changed frequently. Only nine individuals appear on all of the four censuses that cover this period. It must be remembered that dates of birth and death affect this number; 1850 to 1880 is an arbitrary time span determined by the available censuses. No one born after 1850 would appear in this figure, no matter how long they stayed in Middletown. In spite of these considerations, nine is a surprisingly small figure.

We can compare the number of blacks that stayed in Middletown for at least ten years, in the three ten year periods defined by the censuses. These figures must also be considered carefully because the census was taken only every ten years. If a person moved to Middletown in 1851 and stayed eighteen years until 1869, he or she would only appear in one census year, 1860.

Out of the 149 blacks and mulattos living in Middletown in 1850, twenty-nine were still living there in 1860. Over the following ten year periods, the number of individuals staying at least ten years slowly but steadily increased.

Table 1

<table>
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<th>Year of first Appearance</th>
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It appears that the black population was becoming more stable as time passed. Fifty-seven is over a third of the 1870 population. When you consider that twenty-four of the 169 blacks listed in 1880 were under ten, and fourteen of the 1870 blacks were over sixty, the black population of Middletown appears fairly consistent at this time. It is important to remember, though, that this period was the beginning of a serious decline in the black population of Middletown, which, by 1920, had dropped to fifty-seven (see footnote 1). This indicates that blacks, as a group, had not established a permanent place for themselves in the community. The fact that the black population fell so low, so quickly, reinforces evidence from the census that blacks were not settling in Middletown for long periods of time.

In view of the fact that in 1860, 70, and 80, the black population of Middletown was 56 percent, or more, female, it is interesting to ask whether the individuals that stayed in Middletown were more often female than male. Of those who stayed from 1850 to 1860, thirteen were male, and sixteen female. From 1860 to 1870, seventeen males and twenty-five females stayed. These figures show a majority of females, but of those who appeared on both the 1870 and 1880 censuses, thirty-one were male and twenty-six female. Of the nine people present throughout the thirty year period, five were female and four were male. There is no strong indication that black women consistently stayed in Middletown for long periods of time more than black men.

The occupational status of those black men of working age who had been living in the city for at least ten years is not sig-
significantly better than the occupational status of the black male population as a whole. A slightly higher percentage of the older residents were employed in the services, particularly in 1870, but this is not a consistent trend. (See appendix for occupational groupings.)

In 1860 there were nine men of working age that had lived in Middletown for ten years or more; six were laborers, one was a domestic servant, and two had positions in services. This group has proportionately more laborers and fewer people in service jobs than the total group of employed black males. One woman who had been living in Middletown for more than ten years was employed, in 1860, as a servant. This shows that the newly appearing group of black domestics was, for the most part, not made up of long-term Middletown residents.

Of the stable population from 1850 to 1860, seven men were of employable age by 1850. In 'employable age', I include those from eighteen years old to sixty, and any outside that age group that are employed. Out of those seven, four; three semi-skilled and one domestic; kept the same occupations until 1860. The three others had no employment in 1850, and by 1860 two were semiskilled workers, and one a domestic. Two males of this stable group attained employable age by 1860, one became a semiskilled worker and one worked in the services as a barber. Although the occupations of blacks had become much more diverse by 1860, the long-term residents were not the ones benefitting from this diversification.

In 1870 the situation is different. Only one of the ten males living in Middletown in 1860 and 1870 and old enough to work by 1870 is a semi-skilled laborer, and seven are employed in the
services. Two of these seven had the same occupations in 1860 and 1870, one was a laborer in 1860 and became a barber, and four had reached employable age by 1870. These four were all of the men in this group who first had occupations listed in 1870. Those growing up in Middletown were moving into occupations relatively new for these blacks. But most men's occupations did not improve after working for ten years; five of the original ten kept the same occupations and two more remained in the same occupational category. One exception is one semi-skilled worker that moved into a position classified as prestigious. In 1870 only three of the twenty-five employed women had been in Middletown in 1860. One was a domestic throughout this period, one became a seamstress and one became a washerwoman by 1870.

The number of ten-year residents that are semi-skilled rises again in 1880 to five. There are eighteen employable males from 1870 in 1880, and eight of them are employed in the services. Four were steadily employed in the services in this ten year period, two were laborers in 1870, and two began to work between 1870 and 1880. A total of six males between the ages of eight and eighteen appeared in the 1870 census, that stayed until 1880; in that year, three of them were laborers and one was unemployed. Between 1870 and 1880 the number of blacks in services increased from twelve to nineteen, but this cannot be accounted for by the occupational mobility of those staying in Middletown.

In 1880 eight 1870 female residents were employed, two as domestics, four in the services, and one as a laborer. (The eighth's occupation is listed as 'other!') The domestics had kept their
positions since 1870, one had been a servant since 1860. Only six women were employed in service jobs in 1880, so two-thirds of these women were older residents of Middletown. It should be noted, though, that the service jobs performed by women were often menial ones such as washerwoman or working out at housework. It is surprising that the servant population is so instable; these jobs ought to have been steady, involving some personal ties. At the same time, they are obviously not desirable positions.

One would assume that people staying in the city long periods of time would be more likely to own real estate. After 1850, when only one individual staying until 1860 owned real estate, the censuses show this assumption to be true. In 1860, five of the twenty-nine people in Middletown for at least ten years owned $2,500 in real estate, which is still, averaged out, less than the average real estate owned by the whole black population. But ten of the twenty-two real estate owners in 1860 are part of the group of forty-two individuals who would be in Middletown until at least 1870. These ten owned $100,00 of the $171,00 of real estate owned by blacks. In 1870, $187,00 of the $456,00 of real estate owned by blacks was owned by people who would still be in Middletown in 1880. With only twenty-six real estate owners in the whole black population, fourteen of the fifty-seven blacks staying from 1870 to 1880 owned real estate.

Whether they got their positions by staying, or stayed because of their positions, the social and economic positions achieved by blacks staying in Middletown for ten years or more were above average. At the same time, these people were not breaking through
the occupational and economic limitations that we see in the black population as a whole.

While the number of the black population of Middletown increased only slightly between 1850 and 1880, the number of employed blacks increased more significantly, from thirty-six in 1850 to seventy-one in 1880. Most of this increase is accounted for by the increase in the number of employed women, from zero in 1850 to twenty-seven in 1880.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
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</table>

The majority of women worked as domestics. As the number of black servants in Middletown progressed over time from 1, to 12, to 26, to 21, the number of female servants increased from 0, to 10, to 19, and then fell back to 13 in 1880. The few remaining working women were in service and skilled positions. In 1880, for the first time, six women were employed in semi-skilled positions. No woman ever occupied a prestigious position. The increase in female employment, especially in 1880, in the semi-skilled category, while the population remained steady, may reflect a shortage of
labor, particularly in rural areas where women might work as farm laborers. There were more women than men in the employable age groups. This would be consistent with an increase in the demand for labor, but that increase would make it more difficult the discrepancy in sex distribution in these age groups. This possibility may also be discredited by the fact that some unemployment is shown in the 1880 census.

As would be expected, most of the working blacks were between the ages of twenty and sixty. The number of individuals working between the ages of ten and twenty was between four and six from 1850 to 1870. In 1880 it increased to ten. A surprising number of elderly blacks were working. In 1850, three out of the six people between sixty and sixty-nine (4M, 2F), and one of the five over seventy (1M, 4F), were working. In 1860, four of the six people older than seventy (3M, 3F) listed occupations. In 1870 and 1880, seven out of fourteen, and four out of thirteen, older than sixty were still working. This suggests some lack of security in the position of the elderly in the community, as would usually be true in poor groups of the population.

Most of the real estate owners were employed, but there are a few individuals with no paid positions that just seem to get richer and richer. The highest percentages of property owners over the whole period are in skilled and prestigious positions, six out of eleven, and three out of eight, respectively, owned real estate. A surprising number of semi-skilled workers own real estate, nine out of twenty-one in 1860 and nine out of nineteen in 1870. Those working in the services did not do so well; the only
individual employed in the services in 1850 owned real estate, but as the number employed in services increased to twelve in 1860 and 1870, real estate owners among them only increased to two. In 1870, five domestics owned real estate, which is surprisingly high.

As the birth places of blacks living in Middletown diversified, the birth places of those employed in different occupations diversified as well. Over the thirty year period, those born outside of Connecticut do not seem to concentrate in any type of employment, in fact those from different regions are surprisingly well scattered throughout the occupations. In 1870 and 1880, seven and six Southerners are laborers, but in 1860 only three are (however, only five Southerners are employed in this year.) People in prestigious positions have all different birth places. Four out of the seven in 1860, and of the sixteen in 1870, employed from the Middle Atlantic states worked in the services. It seems surprising that New Englanders do not occupy more of the prestigious and skilled positions, but in these groups the number of people is very small, and it is possible that skilled people would feel more confident about their mobility.

In the 1860 censuses, six black adults were listed as illiterate. Four of these were domestics, and one was a laborer. Twenty-seven illiterate adults were listed in 1870, again five were domestics, six were semi-skilled, and two worked in the services. In 1880 the seventeen illiterates divide into one domestic, four semi-skilled, and two in the services. The fluctuation in the number of illiterate adults over this period gives me doubts about the validity of the figures. I wonder what the criteria for illiteracy
was and how carefully it was checked. It does not seem surprising that most illiterate adults would be working as domestics or semi-skilled laborers.

The distribution of marital status shows us that domestics are the only occupational category with more single than married individuals. This is probably due to the fact that most domestics lived with their employers. If women working as domestics were getting married, they would probably leave their jobs.
As remarked earlier, the place of birth for Middletown blacks was no longer confined exclusively to New England by 1880. At that point, 25% of the population had been born outside of New England. This geographic mobility is also evinced in the birth places of the blacks' fathers and mothers. It is important about that 50% of the total population (15.9% did not know where their parents were born) was first generation in New England, which means that half of the respondents' parents moved to New England. For this time period, and adding the 25% mobility factor of the respondent generation, it seems significant that blacks could have participated in so much geographical mobility. Fathers were only slightly more prone to migrate into New England than mothers, with 51% of all mothers and 51.4% of all fathers born in New England.

When the present generation is broken down by sex, this percentage assumes small quantities for there is no one dominating or characterising relation between sex and nativity is revealed. A slight trend can be detected, however. Black males always relied more heavily on the Middle Atlantic states for additional members than did females, while the black males' dependence on the Southern states fell from 15% in 1870 to 7.9% in 1880. Females, on the other hand, showed a gradually increasing dependency on the South for members: 2% in 1860, 7.4% in 1870, and 12% in 1880. We may attribute some of this female increase to an expanding job climate generally more favorable to females than males in 1880 in Middletown. The economic climate must have been favorable enough for these females to find work.

Those migrating from the
Middle Atlantic and Southern states were well-rewarded, when their relative success is revealed in real estate ownership, that is. In 1850, 94.7% (186,000) of the real estate and 90.0% (9) of those owning it were born in New England; the other 10,000 was owned by a Southern-born black. By 1860, 8.7% (13,000) and 5.2% (9,000) were owned by Southern- and Middle Atlantic-born blacks, respectively. In 1870, Southern blacks had increased their total to 26% (113,000) of the real estate listed that year, while 3% (34,000) was owned by the Middle Atlantic-born. This does not necessarily indicate a worsening of the situation for New England blacks, however, for between 1850 and 1860 and 1860 and 1870 they too increased vastly the absolute amounts owned, and even those owning property among all New England-born rose from 6% in 1850 to 12.7% in 1870. We see, then, that as blacks born outside of New England increased in population from 1850 to 1870, their wealth also increased. (Though we must always ask that question: How many others left within each decade because they couldn't make a go of it?) On the other hand, New England-born blacks also shared significantly in the "new" wealth available to the community.

Although the figures concerning dwelling composition are not available, we may relate birth place with composition of household—and conclude that no clear pattern emerges. Those blacks living households with at least one white generally remained near 20% of the population for the four census years, reaching a peak of 25% in 1880. Because of their numerical superiority, New England-born blacks always account for the highest percentage of those living in such households, though Southern- and Middle Atlantic-born blacks had high percentages in 1870 and 1880 respectively.
Living with a white may have entailed domestic work in a white household, marriage to a white, or even white boarderss. We may also see some improvement in the living conditions for all three geographic groups, especially regarding the sizes of dwelling and households in which these blacks lived. For all three groups there is a general improvement in living situations, specifically, as indicated in dwellings and households of progressively fewer people. This may be partially attributed to the more widespread distribution of real estate, to which we will turn next.

The period from 1850 to 1870 indicates an increase in females owning real estate, as listed in the census reports. The peak year for female ownership was 1860 when 32% of all real estate was female-owned, which was an increase of 20% from 1850. Even though female-owned property fell to 24% in 1870, the general increase in their ownership still reflects an increasing "democratization" of ownership. Occuring in the same period is an increase in real estate possessed by younger blacks. As expected, those owning the largest quantities of real estate ($1,500 or more) were those blacks aged 50 and older, which indicates a steady accumulation of property over the years rather than immediate, newly-found wealth. (None of the occupations held by blacks offered chances for windfall wealth). On the other hand, the many occurrences of smaller property amounts does not suggest young blacks exclusively, that is, those aged 20 to 50. Older as well as younger blacks owned property amounts of only $100 or $200. By 1870, the younger blacks (20-40) have increased their holdings, five of which are estates of $1,500 or more. In 1870, however, we also find traces of a group of blacks who have made little improvement in their holdings.
We see this group in 1860 in the 20-30 age category owning very small amounts, and in 1870, this same group, now 30-40, the still possesses smaller amounts listed. This ambiguity again points out a crucial characteristic of Middletown black community: progress for the community and its members was limited and occurred unevenly. If we had information dealing with absolute figures, that is, explaining what was generally considered at that time to be an average real estate holding, then we could better explain the true condition of these blacks.

Those blacks possessing real estate rarely lived in households inhabited by a white. In 1850, 20% of those owning real estate had black/white households, while the percentage fell to 5% and 4% in 1860 and 1870, respectively. Furthermore, the percentage of real estate owned by black/white households fell from a high of 10% in 1850 to 3% in 1860, settling at 5% in 1870. The initial, and then shrinking, intermingling of blacks and whites as reflected here is not surprising, however, for although 20% of the black population lived in black/white households, it would be the poorer segment of the black community, the domestic servants, newly arrived semi-skilled laborers, and the like.

Illiteracy, fairly high, especially in 1870, was clearly important in determining real estate owners. In 1860, only one person owning real estate was illiterate. More importantly, in 1870 when there were 27 illiterates (adults 21 and over who could not read and/or write) only 3 of them owed real estate. Of course we can't determine how much of a factor illiteracy was in real estate ownership, but on the bare facts it's evident that it didn't help.

The period of 1850 to 1870 also reveals an increase in the number of blacks living in dwellings and households owned by a black head of household. In 1850, 46% of the black population lived in black-
owned dwellings (assuming, of course, that real estate means one's house). This figure rose to 65% in 1860 and 75% in 1870. If one assumes that living in a dwelling not owned by a black indicates tenancy, boarding, or servanthood, then this rise reveals an improvement for the black population insofar as real estate (home) ownership is better than non-ownership. If we look at the figures for households we see that, again, 46% of the blacks lived in households which owned real estate in 1850, 64% in 1860, and 67% in 1870. Although the householders' percentages for 1860 and 1870 are slightly lower than those for dwellings in the same years, this doesn't reflect adversely upon blacks and their increasing real estate ownership. It just indicates, rather, that very few dwellings housed more than one household.

For those blacks owning real estate, the physical conditions in which they (and the majority of the population in 1860 and 1870) lived improved. That is, the average number of people living within a dwelling and household declined between 1850 and 1870. In 1850, an average of 7.11 persons lived in dwellings and households; in 1860, there were 5.23 persons per dwelling and 5 persons per household; in 1870, there were 5.83 persons per dwelling and 4.83 persons per household. This certainly indicates better living conditions, moving from crowded to less crowded. This, however, is a partial, and perhaps, misleading picture of improved living conditions because it does not consider how large a house, i.e. the real estate value of it, a family may be living in. Although, again, we cannot conclusively say what constituted a typical value for an average dwelling in 1850, 1860, 1870, we can determine whether there was a relative improvement—from ghastly to tolerable—in the physical size/number of people in the dwellings.
and households... By computing the average real estate owned per dwelling, and later, per household, dividing that average by the average dwelling size, we can arrive at an average value of real estate per person. From this we can multiply that average (which is constant within each year) by each dwelling size... if the results are greater than the average real estate size then we can conclude that the dwelling has an above average physical living condition relative to the other black dwellings. For example, in 1850 the average household listed as possessing real estate owned $1,144 worth of real estate and in that same year the average household had 7.11 persons. The average value of real estate owned per person was $160. Thus, a 3 person household owning $300 in real estate would ideally have $360 worth of real estate, that is, "of home". In other words, as symbolized in dollar amounts, they were living slightly below the average, at $300 instead of $360, and we may tentatively and tenuously conclude, slightly below the average living condition. Of course, this method makes no definitive declarations but only steps in where there is a void of more concrete, absolute knowledge. But it seems that the conditions revealed in the amount of real estate owned were already pretty low—and this, we think, will confirm it.

Subjecting each dwelling and each household in each year to the formula we find that 40% of the dwellings and 29% of the people living in dwellings lived in average conditions or better. In 1860, 45% and 35%; in 1870, 55% and 28%. The decline from 1860 to 1870 may reveal a slight increase in physical discomfort. For households, we find 40% of the total number of households and 29% of the people in households living in average conditions
or better. In 1860, 45% and 36%; in 1870, 56% and 35%. Thus, it seems clear that the living situation and comfort improved from 1850 to 1870—but relative to the past conditions. Compared to the white world of Middletown, the blacks probably lived in very bad conditions; though this computing indicates an improvement in their conditions, because all other factors are held constant, it probably hides the real, and ugly, truth. It may be noted here that in 1874 a good number of the black real estate owners congregated near Vine and Cross Streets (present day Dave's Package Store block). This isolated neighborhood was but a short walk to their American Zion Church, the one institutional focal point in their lives. Perhaps because of this congregation, their real estate values were artificially low in that whites would deem it a defect for dwellings to be in a black neighborhood and, thereby, suppress the real estate values.

The most general conclusion one can draw from the ages of blacks is that the black community was getting older, reaching an average age of 29 in 1880. A close analysis of the age statistics broken down by year and sex bring frustration for no readily observable patterns present themselves. The age distribution between males and females at any given age in 1850 is pretty equal, partly because the population itself is nearly half male, and half female. The 11-20 age category comprises 27.4% of the total population, and within this group the male (26.3%) and female (28.6%) percentages are the highest for both sexes in any category. Between 1850 and 1860 something jolted middle aged black men for in 1850 33.8% of all black men were aged 21-40 whereas in 1860 only 11.2% were aged 31-50.
This large loss accounts for much of the age gap between the total number of males and females in 1860, 39.4% and 60.6%, respectively. The considerable increase from 15.6% to 26.2% of black females aged 1-10 accounts for the rest of the difference. Better work opportunities elsewhere may account for some of the removal of these black men, especially in light of the 30.0% decline in those people employed as semi-skilled. (The assumption being that there was a limited market for black semi-skilled labor and that some difficulty attended any changes in occupations.) The black population as a whole was quite young in 1860, 45% of at 20 and under, with the average at 26.8.

From 1860 to 1870 the black population became more stable in that the difference between males and females shrunk to 43.2% and 56.8%, respectively, and remained so in 1880. Again, the 1-10 age group was the most prominent portion of the black population, totally 22.5% of it. Within this category, black males found their highest percentage, 27%. Without this increase in 1-10 year olds, the population and average age would have been higher than 27.6. For one thing, young and middle-aged black men were in fewer numbers, probably as a result of their fighting in the Civil War or working in town with war-related industries, and then not returning to Middletown after the war. In 1860, 28.4% of the black men aged 21-30, but in 1870 those aged 31-40 constituted only 16.4% of the black male population. If the assumption that they left largely because of the war is safe, then it is interesting to note that 17.9% of the black males aged 11-20 in 1860 persisted in 1870, now as 17.8% of all black males as listed in 21-30 category. Perhaps they filled the occupations opened up or the demand for labor caused by the older men’s departures. The black females in the 11-20 category were the largest of all female groups, which is not surprising considering that their group, 1-10, was the largest
in 1860.

The ten years between 1870 and 1880 suggest additional stabilization among the black population and clearly reveals the gradual aging of the community. In 1880, the average age reached 29. In those ten years there had been a severe decline in births for only 13.6% of the population was under 10. The 11-20 category, as to be expected, was the largest with nearly 25% of the population (remember that 22.5% of the population was under 10 in 1870). More importantly, however, this 25% does not represent full-fledged Middletown residents for only 4 (16%) were daughters of Heads of Households. Eleven (44%) of them resided at the Girl's Industrial School. Although not important in 1880, in 1890 or 1900, the paucity of daughters, of regular Middletown black females at this age in 1880 would be severely felt. So few girls could not begin to perpetuate the black community once they reached marrying age in 1890.

Generally, in both sexes there is a fairly progressive movement from one age group to the next between 1870 and 1880; the only noticeable decline among females between 1870 and 21-30 in 1880. Perhaps we may attribute this an attainment of the maximum employment level of black females as domestics in Middletown. At any rate, 1880 finds the black community aging and with so few children under 10 the seeds for the community's imminent demise are even more assured.

Naked illiteracy statistics suggest that Middletown blacks were never seriously plagued by it. In 1870, there was a particularly high illiteracy rate. From 3.5% to 16% (27) in 1870, rose the illiteracy rate. Upon closer inspection, these percentages appear artificially low for they are based on the entire population, including those blacks aged 1-20. If adjusted to exclude these young blacks, the rate jumps to 6% in 1860 and to 27% in 1870, and settling at 15.7% in 1880. A fairly high rate, indeed. The typical
illiterate would have been female, Southern-born, and 21-30 years of age. (There was a large increase of Southern born females between 1860 and 1870). The Southern-born suffered a major fall in literacy in this decade, from 85% to 45%. In 1880, the illiteracy rate fell though a majority, 64.3%, of illiterates were still females. In the 31-40 category in 1880 6 of the 7 illiterates persisted as a major portion of the 7 listed in the 1870 21-30 category.

Finally, we can glean a few interesting observations from the age-makeup of black households in 1880. First, daughters aged between 21 and 30 (29% of all daughters) still lived with their parents, while only 4% of all sons of this age were still living with their parents.
Appendix

Occupations were grouped as follows:

**Domestics**
- Coachman
- Gardener
- Cook
- Hackman
- Servant

**Semi-skilled**
- Coaster
- Boulder Maker
- Farm Laborer
- Laborer
- Seaman

**Skilled**
- Butcher
- Cabinetmaker
- Printer
- Tailor
- Shoemaker
- Dressmaker
- Upholsterer
- Seamstress

**Services**
- Keeps Restaurant
- Barber
- Waiter
- Groceryman
- Saloon Attendant
- Ice Cream Man
- Works in Art Shop
- Expressman
- Bill Paster
- Livery Stable
- Hostler
- Washerwoman
- Works out at Housework

**Prestigious**
- Clergyman
- Sexton
- Quack Doctor
- Farmer
Appendix (con't)

Birth places were grouped as follows:

**New England**
- Connecticut
- Massachusetts
- Vermont
- Rhode Island
- Maine
- New Hampshire

**Middle Atlantic**
- Pennsylvania
- New York
- New Jersey

**West**
- California
- Indiana

**South**
- Louisiana
- Delaware
- Maryland
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- Mississippi
- South Carolina
- Alabama
- Washington, D.C.
- Kentucky
- Virginia
- Florida
Footnotes

1. Black Population of Middletown after 1880

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<td>127</td>
<td>73</td>
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Figures taken from Leta Pittman's "A Black Profile of Middletown", Appendix B.

2. These percentages are based on altered computations. For the real estate recorded in 1850, 1860, and 1870 whenever amounts over $50,000 were listed they were deleted from the totals. This occurred once in 1850 and twice in 1870. This was done in order to arrive at a more responsible average real estate figure; otherwise, the results would have been artificially and misleadingly high.
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