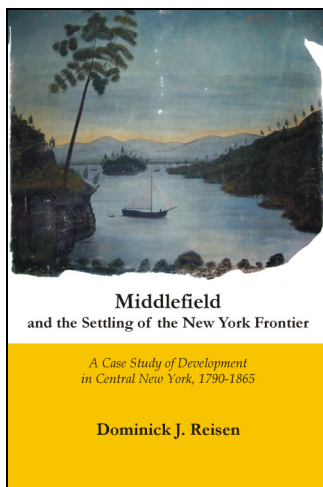


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Publication Information Sheet



Title: Middlefield and the Settling of the New York Frontier: A Case Study of Development in Central New York, 1790-1865
Author: Dominick J. Reisen

Publication Date: August 13, 2009
ISBN-13: 978-0-9789066-3-4 (hardcover)
ISBN-13: 978-0-9789066-4-1 (softcover)
LCCN: 2009929844
Retail Price: \$35.95 (hardcover); \$24.95 (softcover)
Physical: 244 pages, 6 x 9 inches, black & white interior, illustrated
Retail Distribution: North Country Books; Ingram
Library Distribution: Quality Books, Inc.; Square Circle Press

Book Summary: More than just a mere history of one community, Dominick Reisen's scholarly exploration of Middlefield in Otsego County presents this rural, crossroads hamlet as a case study of the development of small towns in central New York State during the early years of the American Republic, through the Civil War.

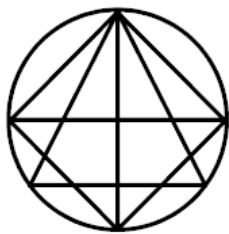
Reisen tracks the emergence and growth of various businesses and social groups within the community, tracing in great detail the lives of various key figures who made their home in Middlefield. He discusses how external agricultural factors and the great social movements of the era, such as temperance and abolition, impacted their lives inside the hamlet, both economically and socially. Viewing these ambitious personalities through the full spectrum of life, the author reveals how their interconnected lives and businesses led to a degree of prosperity and self-reliance in this secluded frontier settlement.

This wide-ranging study's crucial value to historians, however, is the way in which Reisen uses Middlefield to illustrate the development of the entire region of central New York during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He reviews the development of technological achievements such as the Erie Canal and railroads, and explains how these advancements in transportation alternately spurred growth and led to stagnation in various communities. He also provides significant discussion of the unique landownership patterns of central New York and how these arrangements led to social unrest and radical change, resulting ultimately in the Anti-Rent Wars during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Middlefield and the Settling of the New York Frontier: A Case Study of Development in Central New York, 1790-1865 relies heavily on primary source material and is documented thoroughly with endnotes and indexed. The work is substantially illustrated with photographs and maps, and several appendices offer additional detailed information.

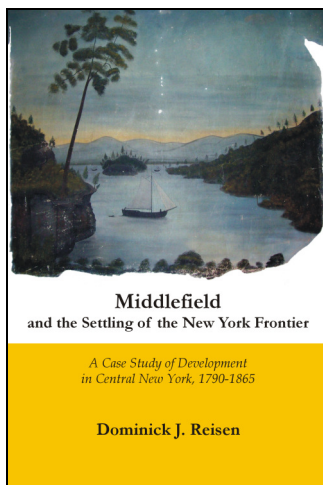
Author bio: Dominick J. Reisen is a 1989 graduate of Bard College with a degree in Social Sciences. He is a founding member and the first president of the Otsego County Historical Association, a position he held from 2003 to 2008. He has served as the treasurer of the Town of Middlefield Historical Association since 1999 and has been on its board of directors since 1994. From 2002 until 2004 he served as the Town Historian for the town of Middlefield. His previous books include: *Middlefield: Otsego Lake's Eastern Shore*, *Inscriptions From the Middlefield Baptist Cemetery*, and *The Middlefield Hamlet Historic District: A Guide for a Walking Tour*. He makes his home in the Daniel Cummings house in Middlefield, the hamlet once known as Clarksville.

(Advance reviews on page 2)



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**Publication
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“Reisen writes knowingly of a hundred intriguing themes, from plank roads and turnpikes to canals and railways, from agricultural societies and hop farming to the crucial role of local commerce in village life, from the importance of churches and schools to the appeal of such movements as Masonry, Temperance, and Abolition. But what is most moving about his book is the sense of how, even as places like Clarkesville were affected by many external currents and pressures in a period of enormous change, they so often managed to remain sources of virtue and opportunity where individual lives and family stories took their rise and ran their satisfying course. Although for most modern readers this world is literally long-ago, none of us is completely out of touch with its value or allure.”

—Wayne Franklin, University of Connecticut

Author of *A Rural Carpenter's World: The Craft in a Nineteenth Century New York Township*, and *James Fenimore Cooper: The Early Years*

“The book is well researched and written so that the general public can engage in the time period that it covers. It will prove to be a key reference source for the study of Otsego County in particular, and upstate New York in general.”

—Harry Bradshaw Matthews, Hartwick College

President, United States Colored Troops Institute for Local History and Family Research

“Professional historians will find in Reisen’s study a useful collection of data supportive of social histories of the early republic. For local historians, *Middlefield* is an admirable model of how to research and interpret the history of even the smallest communities. Readers with a general interest in history might keep in mind that Tocqueville studied America ‘in order to learn what we have to fear or hope from its progress.’ Reisen’s study of Middlefield usefully documents not only the history of a small New York hamlet, but also the fundamental building blocks at the foundation of America’s progress.”

—Brian Carso, Misericordia University

Author of *Whom Can We Trust Now?: The Meaning of Treason in the United States, from the Revolution through the Civil War*

(Story summary & Author bio on page 1)