

The Middletown News 135 Years and Counting

The *Middletown News* is beginning its 135th year with this issue, noted Volume 135, Issue 1. The News has been continuously published since 1885 and a copy of most all of those issues are kept bound in the paper's archive. Those old papers have a story to tell of the people

who chose to call Middletown home.

Many things have changed about your hometown newspaper over the years, while some things have stayed just about the same. Club meeting minutes, obituaries, and police reports are present in issues going back to 1885. *The News* used to contain more gossip and even published front-page articles about

ugly divorces and drunken fights. The line between news and advertising was a little more blurry back 100 years ago and ads for actual snake-oil could be seen in those old pages.

Beginning in July of 1999, the current owners, Drew and Sue Cooper, along with future partner and their son, Joey Cooper, began the weekly task of

bringing the community their information through the distribution of newsprint. Celebrating nearly 20 years of publishing, the Coopers hope you enjoy this little peek at the last 20 years of your hometown newspaper through five photographic examples of what exciting things have happened and have received a spot in the newspaper.

Local Impact of September 11, 2001



THE MIDDLETOWN NEWS FILE PHOTOS

☉ The terrorist attacks in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001, caused a rush and long line of vehicles as local residents began to worry about the high potential for a price jump at the gas pumps. Pictured is the Ricker's location on the corner of 8th and Mill Streets, just one of many stations unable to keep up with the sudden onslaught of vehicles.

Downtown Fire on November 9, 2001



Red Men's Lodge Fire Severely Impacts Downtown Middletown

The skyline of Middletown was changed dramatically and tragically by a huge early morning fire on November 9, 2001. The fire destroyed two historic buildings and claimed the life of one man. Seven residents who lived in the old Red Men's Lodge building and the Jacobs' Country Corner Kitchens building escaped with

the clothes on their backs and one resident, Robert Griffith, a retired Navy veteran, was unable to escape. His body was found 3-4 feet from the back door of his apartment.

Fire departments from three counties were called in to assist the Middletown Fire Department, including aerial

ladder trucks from Center Township in Muncie and Edgewood in Anderson. Investigators from the State Fire Marshal's office later determined that the cause was electrical.

Both buildings were declared a total loss. Delmar Griggs, the owner of the Red Men's Lodge building, had the remainder

of his building razed. Dan Jacobs, the owner of the brown building on the corner, had a new roof put on his building and rebuilt his workshop inside.

Many people who drive through Middletown now don't even know that the corner of 5th & Locust Streets was the scene of a great tragedy in town history.