

Quakers first settle in Ohio

Ohio was opened for settlement in phases, with land offices being established in various parts of the state. In 1800, an area indicated in purple on the map was opened. This area, called the "First Seven Ranges," began at the point where Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia met, proceeded due west and then south to the Ohio River. Square townships were established in the First Seven Ranges, with each township divided into uniform "sections." Surveying was not a simple matter, as the hilly landscape required the use of trigonometric functions to establish the corners of the square sections and townships. Large portions of the First Seven Ranges were originally surveyed by Horton Howard, who settled near Concord Meeting (13). He was among the 78 Friends from North Carolina to settle in the First Seven Ranges in 1800.

Concord was the first Friends meeting in Ohio. In 1801, Redstone QM granted a MM at Concord, first held on 12/19/1801 in their log meeting house. Horton Howard served as the first men's MM clerk (the first volume of women's minutes is lost).

Concord was the mother meeting of the early meetings in Belmont County. The earliest of these was Richland, established in 1801 and renamed Plainfield in 1802. Stillwater was founded in 1803 by William Hodgkin and William Patten, Friends from Wrightsborough MM in Georgia. Hodgkin and Patten originally planned to settle among Friends in southwest Ohio, but because of diseases there they decided to settle in eastern Ohio. The first meeting at Stillwater was held in the log house of Robert Vernon; Ruth Boswell, a minister who was present that day, was the first person to speak in ministry at Stillwater. James Edgerton was the first overseer. Flushing, originally called "Head Waters of Wheeling Meeting," first met in the house of Jacob Pickering; his wife Hannah Pickering was one of the early recorded ministers in Ohio. It was renamed in 1806.

Short Creek MM was set off from Concord MM in 1804 and originally consisted of three meet-

ings in Jefferson County. Short Creek was then held in a log meeting house just west of the later village of Mount Pleasant. Plymouth Meeting was founded in 1801, and Cross Creek (just west of Steubenville) was founded in 1803. Prominent ministers at Plymouth included Jacob Ong and Benjamin Townsend.

A large tract of land in southwestern Ohio was also opened for settlement. This tract, called the "Virginia Military District," had been retained by Virginia to give to veterans of the American Revolution. Friends began to purchase these lands from the veterans in the early years of the 19th century and established several meetings there. By the end of 1805, seven meetings existed in this area, subordinate to Miami MM. The wide gulf of unavailable land between these meetings and those in eastern Ohio provided a convenient dividing line when the meetings to the west were set off as Indiana YM in 1820.

Back in eastern Ohio, the land north of the First Seven Ranges was opened for settlement early in the new century. This land included the Western Reserve, much of which was settled by people from Connecticut and other parts of New England. An important early surveyor in this area was William Heald, a member at Middleton. Columbiana County was formed to span the distance between the Western Reserve and the First Seven Ranges, and three meetings were founded there by 1805. The earliest was Bethel, established in 1802 but renamed Middleton when a MM was granted in 1803. Salem Meeting was founded by Friends living near Samuel Davis's house. The third meeting was New Garden, established in 1804. Redstone QM granted Salem MM in 1805, consisting of Salem and New Garden PMs.

Another trend that began in the years 1801–1805 was the long, slow decline of Westland and Redstone MMs. Fallowfield Meeting was laid down in 1802 and attached to Pike Run. Richland Meeting, which had constructed a meeting house in 1802, was laid down in 1805 because all local families were moving to Ohio.

1800 to 1805

