

Ohio Yearly Meeting

Ohio Yearly Meeting was first held on Eighth Month 14th, 1813, in the Short Creek Meeting House. The process of setting off the new YM was not easy – no new yearly meeting had been established in over a century, and Baltimore YM set several precedents that were followed when later YMs were established.

The first indication of interest in establishing a new YM took place when Restone QM considered the topic on 3/7/1808. At its following session, RQM sent a committee to visit Short Creek QM on the idea. This committee reported back to RQM on 9/5/1808 that the way was not yet open to propose a new YM.

Interest in establishing a new YM increased in 1810. Travel to Baltimore to attend YM was difficult, time consuming, and expensive. Redstone QM discussed proposing a new YM again on 9/3/1810, and although it was not ready to make a recommendation to Baltimore YM, Salem QM united with the idea and forwarded the request. Baltimore YM considered the proposal but decided to consider the issue in 1811.

Friends in the western QMs of Baltimore YM continued their efforts in preparation for YM in 1811. Salem QM appointed a committee on 12/15/1810 to correspond with Redstone and Short Creek QMs on the matter. Miami QM had grown substantially and forwarded a proposal to Baltimore YM in 1811 asking to be divided. Committees from Redstone, Short Creek, and Salem QMs met in the summer of 1811 and drafted a proposal that included specifics of meeting at Short Creek on 8/21/1812. The three QMs forwarded this proposal to Baltimore YM. Friends at Baltimore YM were still not convinced of the propriety of dividing the YM. Ohio Friends brought information about new meeting houses under construction and the establishment of new meetings, and to some extent this represented the bulk of the expansion of Baltimore YM at the time. The YM decided in 1811 to add a sentence to the outgoing epistles to Virginia and Philadelphia YMs asking them to send representatives to the 1812 session of Baltimore YM to assist in the discernment.

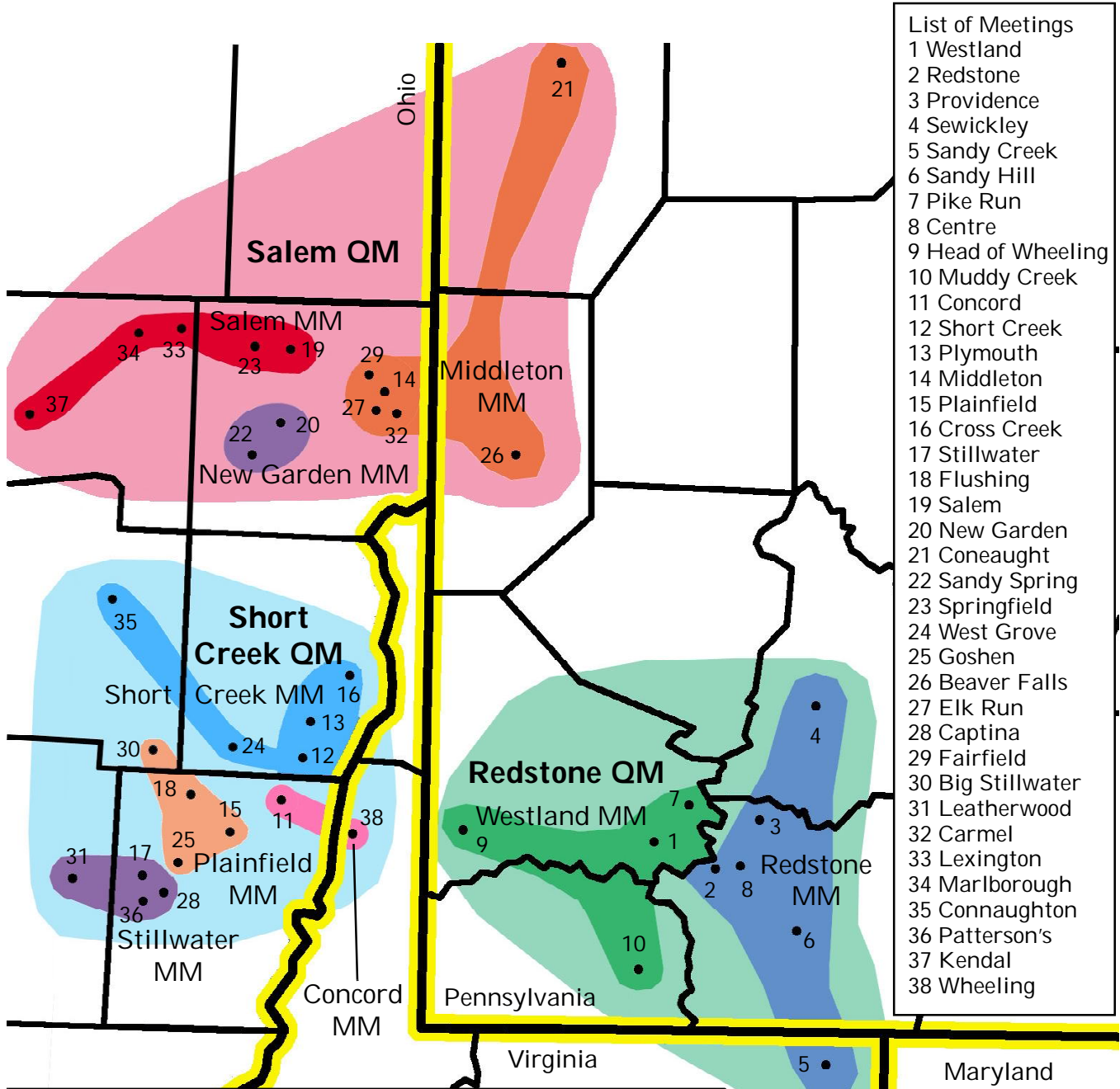
Baltimore Yearly Meeting set off its five western QMs on 10/15/1812 to meet as Ohio YM. Early in YM week, it appointed a large committee to meet with the representatives from Virginia and Philadelphia YMs to consider the topic. A rather substantial group of men and women Friends gathered for this committee meeting. The committee reported in favor of the proposal, and Baltimore YM followed suit and granted the new yearly meeting. In a break from the normal procedure, Baltimore neglected to appoint a committee to open the new Ohio YM, but this may have simply been an oversight.

Committees on arrangements appointed by the QMs met at Short Creek three times between Baltimore YM of 1812 and Ohio YM of 1813. At their first session on 11/12/1812, they recommended the construction of a brick yearly meeting house at Mount Pleasant. Redstone QM complained that the proposed size would be too small. The committees met again on 1/4/1813, at which time some Friends proposed to rebuild the Short Creek Meeting House for use as the Yearly Meeting House rather than building a new brick building that would only be used irregularly. More information is given in the box on the following page.

Ohio Yearly Meeting opened at Short Creek on 8/14/1813. The women met in the meeting house, and the men met outside. Horton Howard served as the men's clerk, and it appears that Charity Rotch was the women's clerk. The YM appointed a Meeting for Sufferings, received \$480 from Baltimore YM for the initial treasury, sent epistles to other YMs and an advice to subordinate meetings, and adopted the Baltimore YM Discipline with appropriate changes. Adam Coffin, a member in Indiana, appealed his disownment, and Ohio YM reinstated him. Enoch Harris, the first Treasurer, purchased a treasurer's account book that was used until 1887.

Later in 1813, the Meeting for Sufferings first met. Its first clerk, Jonathan Taylor, began the meeting by reading the list of those appointed, beginning a tradition that continues to this day.

Established 1812 to 1813



Most Ohio Friends wanted to build a special building for holding Ohio Yearly Meeting. Jonathan Taylor, one of the earliest Ohio Friends, advocated a site on the south side of the village of Mount Pleasant. Opponents of the Mount Pleasant site made the case that since the Short Creek Meeting House was too crowded already, it should be torn down and enlarged rather than constructing a yearly meeting house that would stand vacant most of the time. Nathan Galbreath of New Garden questioned the fiscal responsibility of the proposed meeting house, particularly since so many meetings faced expenses from enlarging their existing meeting houses. Eventually, Ohio YM took Jonathan Taylor's advice. Most advocates of rebuilding Short Creek became Hicksites in 1828.