

# Some Interesting Ohio

## Horton Howard (1770–1833)

Horton Howard was a leading Quaker and early settler of eastern Ohio. He was born on 1/22/1770 in Carteret County, North Carolina. In early life, he was trained as a medical doctor, but he did not practice formally.

In 1799, Howard was one of three North Carolina Friends appointed to investigate the possibility of Friends moving as a body into the Northwest Territory, where slavery was forbidden. He moved there before other Friends and worked closely with the Steubenville land office, assisting hundreds of Friends and others to find suitable property in the “First Seven Ranges” and other areas as they were opened for settlement. He completed many of Ohio’s earliest surveys.

Howard played a key role in the developing Quaker organization in Ohio. He was appointed the first men’s Clerk of Concord (Ohio) MM when it was opened in 1801 as the first Monthly Meeting of Friends in the Northwest Territory. His gift in the ministry was recorded in 1804, making him the second person so recorded in Ohio. When Baltimore YM sent a committee to consider dividing the increasingly unwieldy Redstone QM, Howard made a map of all Friends meetings in the area to help establish the two new QMs in Ohio (this

map was discussed on the television program “History Detectives”). Howard later served as the first men’s Ohio Yearly Meeting Clerk, 1813-1815. The respect that Ohio Friends had for Howard is indicated by his appointment as the first men’s YM Clerk and by the fact that he was the first person appointed to the Meeting for Sufferings. He is sometimes confused with his son Horton J. Howard, a printer and newspaper publisher in St. Clairsville.

When the new land office was opened in central Ohio, Horton Howard moved to Columbus with his second wife and young children. Their memberships were transferred to Alum Creek MM in 1820. While living there, Howard became a homeopathic doctor. During his surveying work, he visited local Indians and collected information on their medical practices. A book containing his research was printed after his death, with illustrations of various herbs and plants used by the Indians. The book was a standard homeopathic text in the United States for decades thereafter.

Howard died in Columbus, Ohio, on Eighth Month 14, 1833. He, his wife Hannah, and daughter Ann died within five days of each other during a major cholera outbreak.

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## Jacob Ong (1760–1849)

Jacob Ong was an early Quaker settler in Ohio who was the contractor for the Mount Pleasant Meeting House.

Ong was born in Burlington NJ. During the American Revolution, Ong served in a Pennsylvania regiment that monitored western Pennsylvania. After the war, Ong apologized for this military service, and he rejected his military pension.

Ong moved several times early in life: to Hopewell, Virginia, in 1786, to Westland in 1792, and then to Jefferson County, Ohio, in 1803. Concord MM recorded him as a minister in 1803. Ong was a founding member of Short Creek MM in

1804 and then of Plymouth/Smithfield MM in 1808. A Friend later recalled that during his ministry, Ong would tremble. On occasion, he would weep during ministry, with the tears flowing down his beard.

When Ohio YM decided to construct a large new meeting house in Mount Pleasant to house yearly meeting sessions, Ong was chosen to oversee the work. At the time, his position was called “carpenter,” though we would call it a contractor today. Ong included an interesting vestigial architectural element found in early meeting houses he had seen in his youth: the narrow walkway over the gallery.

# Friends of 1800 to 1825

## Charity Rotch (1766–1824)

Charity Rotch (pronounced *roach*) is the first known Clerk of the women's Ohio YM.

Charity was the youngest daughter of Thomas Rodman, a sea captain who died when Charity was less than a year old. She was born in Newport, Rhode Island, and the family home was open to hosting many Friends during the sessions of the yearly meeting (then called Rhode Island YM).

In 1790, she married Thomas Rotch, a rising merchant in Newport. They were married in the yearly meeting house in Newport. In 1791, the Rotches moved to New Bedford, a commercial port that was just recovering from the Revolution. They later moved to Hartford, Connecticut, where Thomas began his lifelong interest in Merino sheep and wool manufacturing. Both Thomas and Charity were recognized as ministers while living in New England.

Charity contracted a disease that swept through Connecticut in 1808. It is unclear what the disease was, but Charity nearly died, and her doctor recommended that she move to the South for

a more temperate climate. Hearing about the new Quaker settlements in Ohio, they travelled through the southern portion of the state in 1811.

The Rotches settled in Kendal, Ohio, in 1812. Thomas Rotch laid out the town, naming it for the English woolen town. He operated a store, woolen mill, and brickyard and sold lots to small businessmen such as blacksmiths and masons.

Thomas and Charity were both active in Quaker affairs. Thomas was a witness to the signing of the treaty of St. Mary's, in which Indians signed off all claims to land in Ohio, and he also visited the German Separatists at Zoar, helping get them established in their new homes. Charity served as Clerk of the women's Ohio Yearly Meeting several times. She signed the women's epistles to Philadelphia YM in 1814, 1818, and 1819 and may have been the first women's YM Clerk. They were part of the Underground Railroad as early as 1820.

Thomas Rotch died while attending Ohio YM in 1823, and Charity died the following year.

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## William Flanner (1766–1837)

William Flanner was a minister at Short Creek and Somerton in the early 1800s. He had a meek spirit that exemplified Ohio's ministers at the time, but his continuing labors for Christ Jesus were done without fanfare. He is an example of a faithful Friend with a mentoring attitude who does not usually appear in histories.

Flanner was born in North Carolina. His father died when he was very young, and his mother apprenticed him at an early age. A Quaker school teacher taught Flanner to read, and it was after this time that Flanner joined Friends.

Flanner and his wife Peninah moved to Short Creek in 1808. They lived there until 1831 and lived at Somerton most of the remainder of their

lives. As a recorded minister, Flanner visited many Friends in these two MMs. He played a major role in keeping the women Friends informed on the planning of the Mount Pleasant Yearly Meeting House, as the building committee was comprised entirely of men.

During the troubles surrounding the Hicksite division, Flanner made a concerted effort to limit the widening conflagration. He called on Friends to proceed with caution, and encouraged ministers to set a better example than they chose to do. Flanner objected to the increasing vitriol that appeared in the press, and to be consistent, he burned his own journal so that nothing that he had written would be used to fuel the flames. He died in 1837.