

# Ohio Yearly Meeting

Ohio Friends were very optimistic during the second decade of the 19th century. New meetings were being established throughout Ohio, along with many new schools. In addition to working to build houses and barns for the continuing immigration of Quakers into eastern Ohio, Friends reached out in Christian love to relieve the sufferings of others who were burdened by unfair legislation or by prejudice from their neighbors.

The Meeting for Sufferings (M4S) was remarkably active given the challenges of travel. It published 500 copies of a tract against war in 1813 to encourage members to avoid participation in the War of 1812, and two years later a tract written by John Iwells on the same topic was republished (5,000 copies). Throughout 1814, MMs forwarded accounts of the sufferings of members for not participating in military activities. The M4S filed a suit in Guernsey County and was able to restore a farm to a non-registrant member, and it also was able to secure the freedom of another member who had been jailed. After the war ended, the M4S addressed letters to Congress and the Ohio legislature on the rights of blacks and Indians as well as an address to the Ohio legislature against capital punishment.

One of the major events during the first decade of Ohio Yearly Meeting was the construction of the Yearly Meeting House at Mount Pleasant. The YM appointed a committee in 1814 on the topic of the yearly meeting house, and it reported back three days later that it had purchased nearly six acres of land in the southern part of the village of Mount Pleasant from Henry Beeson. The YM directed the QMs to raise \$8,500 according to the following proportions: Redstone QM 17%, Short Creek QM 34%, Salem QM 21%, Miami QM 16%, and West Branch QM 12%. The work was completed under the direction of Jacob Ong, a minister of Plymouth MM. By the 1815 YM, the QMs were \$3,500 behind in forwarding their amounts, but \$10,215 had been spent; the YM increased the amount to be raised by an

additional \$2,500. The final cost was \$12,345. At the time of its completion, the Mount Pleasant Meeting House was the largest building in the state of Ohio.

An early concern of Ohio YM was the establishment of a boarding school. The topic was first raised at the 1814 YM, which considered "the establishment of a publick Institution of the youth of our Society within the limits of this Yearly Meeting." With the ongoing problems of raising money for the Mount Pleasant Meeting House, it was not yet time to press the issue. Nevertheless, in 1815 the YM asked QMs to voluntarily raise money for a boarding school. Four Friends were appointed to receive these funds. They reported in 1818 that there was widespread support for such a school but that no money had been raised yet.

Ohio Friends also played a major role in assisting the Indians in the state. Jonathan Taylor had an interesting idea that would prevent deportation of the Indians – he purchased a tract of 500 acres of land in northwestern Ohio in the vicinity of Wapakoneta. Ohio YM appointed an Indian Committee that built a mill and school there (1817) and sent people to help teach the Indians skills they could use to survive among English settlers. A Baltimore Friend gave a large amount of iron in 1818 that was used to make 28 plows for the Indians, and the following year Ohio Friends raised \$664 to send to Wapakoneta.

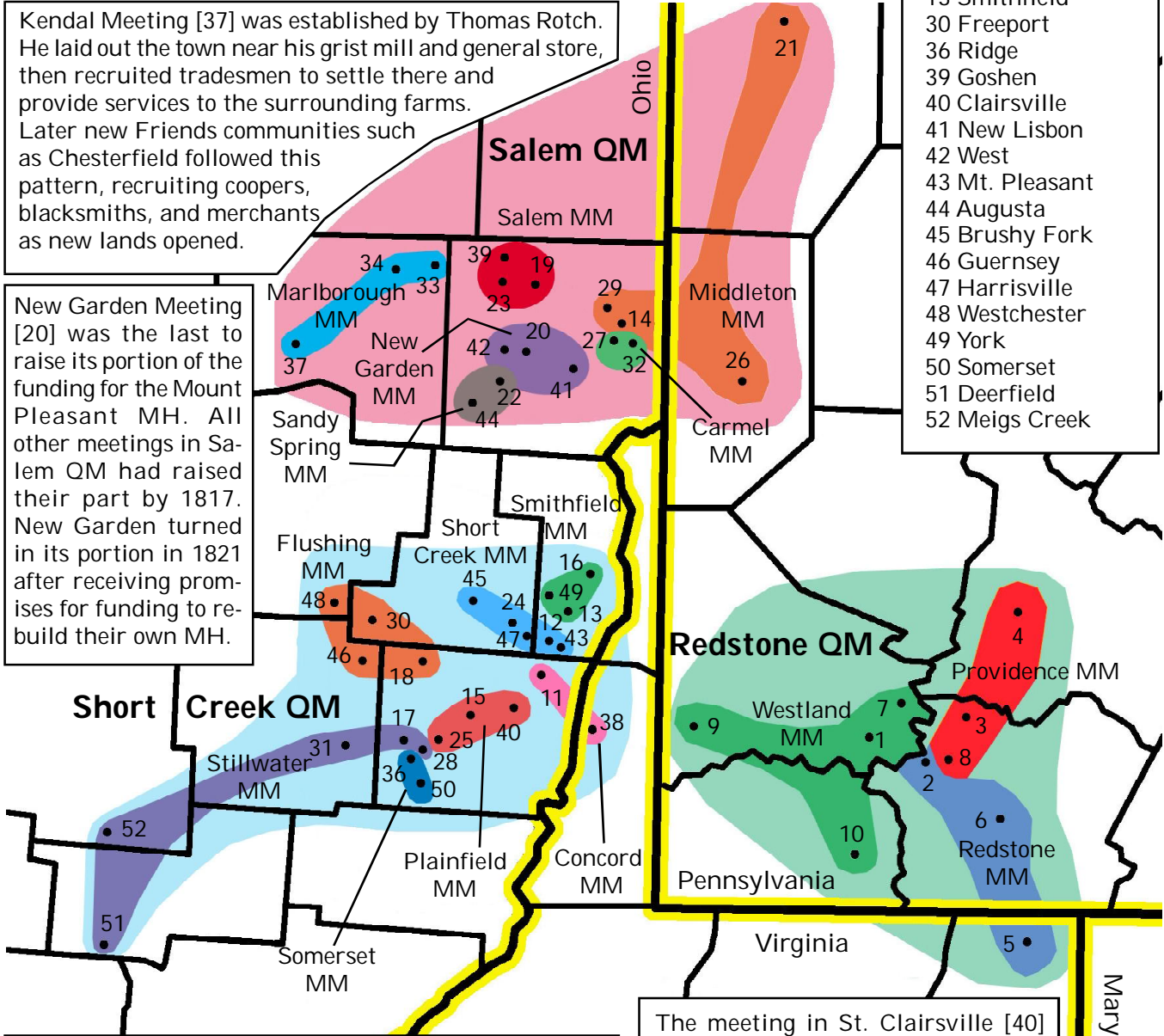
In 1818, the M4S began to take actions that resulted in the publication of the Ohio *Discipline*. A committee collected all the changes that had been approved, and during Ohio YM the women's YM sent a committee of their weighty Friends to read through the entire text and make a recommendation to the YM. Meeting at Short Creek, the M4S spent five days reading and discussing the *Discipline*. It was approved over objections by visiting minister Elias Hicks and was published by Elisha Bates, who had served as the men's YM Clerk.

# 1813 to 1820

Kendal Meeting [37] was established by Thomas Rotch. He laid out the town near his grist mill and general store, then recruited tradesmen to settle there and provide services to the surrounding farms. Later new Friends communities such as Chesterfield followed this pattern, recruiting coopers, blacksmiths, and merchants as new lands opened.

New Garden Meeting [20] was the last to raise its portion of the funding for the Mount Pleasant MH. All other meetings in Salem QM had raised their part by 1817. New Garden turned in its portion in 1821 after receiving promises for funding to rebuild their own MH.

- List of Meetings (same as on page 17 except these:)
- 13 Smithfield
  - 30 Freeport
  - 36 Ridge
  - 39 Goshen
  - 40 Clairsville
  - 41 New Lisbon
  - 42 West
  - 43 Mt. Pleasant
  - 44 Augusta
  - 45 Brushy Fork
  - 46 Guernsey
  - 47 Harrisville
  - 48 Westchester
  - 49 York
  - 50 Somerset
  - 51 Deerfield
  - 52 Meigs Creek



The Mount Pleasant Yearly Meeting House [43], completed in 1816. A meeting was established here in 1817.

The meeting in St. Clairsville [40] presented Friends with a naming challenge. Because Friends would not pronounce the "saint" portion of the village's name, the meeting here was called either "Clairsville" or "Sinclairsville."

Freeport Meeting [30] was originally founded in 1809 with the name of Big Stillwater. The meeting was renamed Nottingham in 1813 when a preparative meeting was granted. In 1819, a brick meeting house was built to the west in the village of Freeport, and the meeting was renamed Freeport that same year.