

# Indiana Yearly Meeting

Quakers first settled in southwestern Ohio in the 1790s, and these individual families were the seeds that later sprung into Indiana Yearly Meeting.

Isolated Friends families began to settle in southwestern Ohio in the late 1790s. George and Marjorie Harlan are thought to be the earliest Quaker settlers in this area, taking up land near Cincinnati in 1796. A large tract of land was made available for settlement in 1784 that was called the Virginia Military District. This land was reserved for veterans of the American Revolution from Virginia. Quakers began to purchase small tracts of land in the VMD, which extended from Cincinnati north through Columbus and then to Kenton. A substantial but smaller tract of land was opened for settlement in 1794. This land, called the Symmes Purchase, was located mostly in today's Hamilton and Butler Counties (Ohio).

Additional Friends settled in these areas in the late 1790s. In 1797, Joseph Cloud and Jacob Jackson visited the area from Lost Creek MM in North Carolina YM and called all the scattered Friends together for a time of worship, but due to the distances between Friends, a permanent meeting was not formed.

An early settler who encouraged early meetings was Thomas Beals. He had been recognized as a minister in North Carolina and travelled in southwestern Ohio in 1796. After their return to North Carolina, Beals's travelling companion Nathaniel Pope moved to southwestern Ohio, and in 1799 Beals moved, too. A short-lived, independent meeting was held in Lawrence County until Beals moved further inland to a place where there was a greater concentration of Friends.

Bolstered by continuing immigration from Bush River QM of North Carolina YM, Friends in southwestern Ohio contacted Westland MM in southwestern Pennsylvania (the nearest MM) and requested to have an official meeting opened in 1801. Westland wrote back to them with ques-

tions and was shocked to hear there were dozens of Friends in the area. Redstone QM established Miami MM in 1803, at which time there were 160 members. In the next four years, 1826 Friends were received by certificate, 800 of whom came from Bush River QM (South Carolina and Georgia). New meetings sprung up quickly: Fairfield and Leesburg in 1804; Caesars Creek, Dover, Elk, Todd's Fork, and West Branch in 1805; and Clear Creek, Fall Creek, Union, and Turtle Creek in 1806.

Establishing new meetings was not a simple matter. It took weeks for correspondence to travel to Redstone QM, and usually no one from Miami MM attended QM sessions. Similarly, Friends in southwestern Pennsylvania were reluctant to travel to southwestern Ohio to assess the needs for preparative or monthly meetings. Usually, Miami MM's requests for organizational changes were approved without the usual committee.

In 1807, Miami, Center, and West Branch MMs in southwestern Ohio requested that a new QM be established in their area. Redstone QM forwarded the request to Baltimore YM, and in 1808 Miami QM was granted. With many experienced Friends already living in southwestern Ohio, having their own QM facilitated the needs to amend the structure to grant new meetings. The new QM followed the traditional pattern of appointing Friends to represent it in the Baltimore YM Meeting for Sufferings, though of course these men very rarely attended YM in Baltimore.

The growing body of Friends in the area led to the establishment of new QMs and multiple new MMs. The western MMs were set off as West Branch QM in 1811. All meetings in the area were founding meetings of Ohio YM in 1813. Ohio YM established Fairfield QM in 1814, Whitewater QM in 1816, and Blue River QM in 1818. All five QMs in the area continued to appoint Friends to the Ohio M4S, and Eli Overman was the Ohio men's YM Assistant Clerk one year.

# Set Off from OYM 1820

