

# Orthodox and Hicksite

The Society of Friends divided into two organizations in the years 1827–1830. The majority group nationwide came to be called the Orthodox Friends, and the alternate group was called the Hicksites. Ohio YM played an important role in the division.

The division was caused by disagreements over the ministry of Elias Hicks, an acknowledged minister from Long Island. Hicks had long been one of the more liberal Quaker ministers, but a series of books published by Marcus T.C. Gould in the 1820s presented Hicks's ideas as representing traditional Quaker doctrine. Gould also recorded sermons of other Friends ministers, and some of them reported at the time that their statements were not represented correctly when they appeared in print. In 1827, Philadelphia Friends divided into a pro-Hicks group that came to be called the Hicksites and an anti-Hicks group that came to be called the Orthodox.

## Ohio YM of 1827

The first half of Ohio YM week in 1827 was very difficult. The YM opened as usual on 9/3/1827 at Mount Pleasant. The men and women, holding their separate business meetings, read incoming epistles from all YMs except for Philadelphia, which sent both the Hicksite and Orthodox epistles. There was not unity to read either epistle, but the discussion occupied the remainder of the day's session. Routine business occupied Friends on the 4th. Another divisive business meeting took place on the 5th. The entire day, Friends only completed two business items, and the men's YM Clerk, Elisha Bates, forced through minutes on both items that overstated the sense of the meeting. The first minute issued a call to all Friends to send representatives to a nationwide conference of Friends. Philadelphia YM had recommended such a conference a few years earlier, and that time it was Ohio's reluctance to participate that ended the project. The second minute recognized the Orthodox group in Philadelphia and was followed by the reading of their incoming epistle. With this decision, Ohio YM officially became Orthodox. Bates became sick the following day, and

Jonathan Taylor was appointed men's YM Clerk for the remainder of YM week.

## Stillwater division 1/29/1828

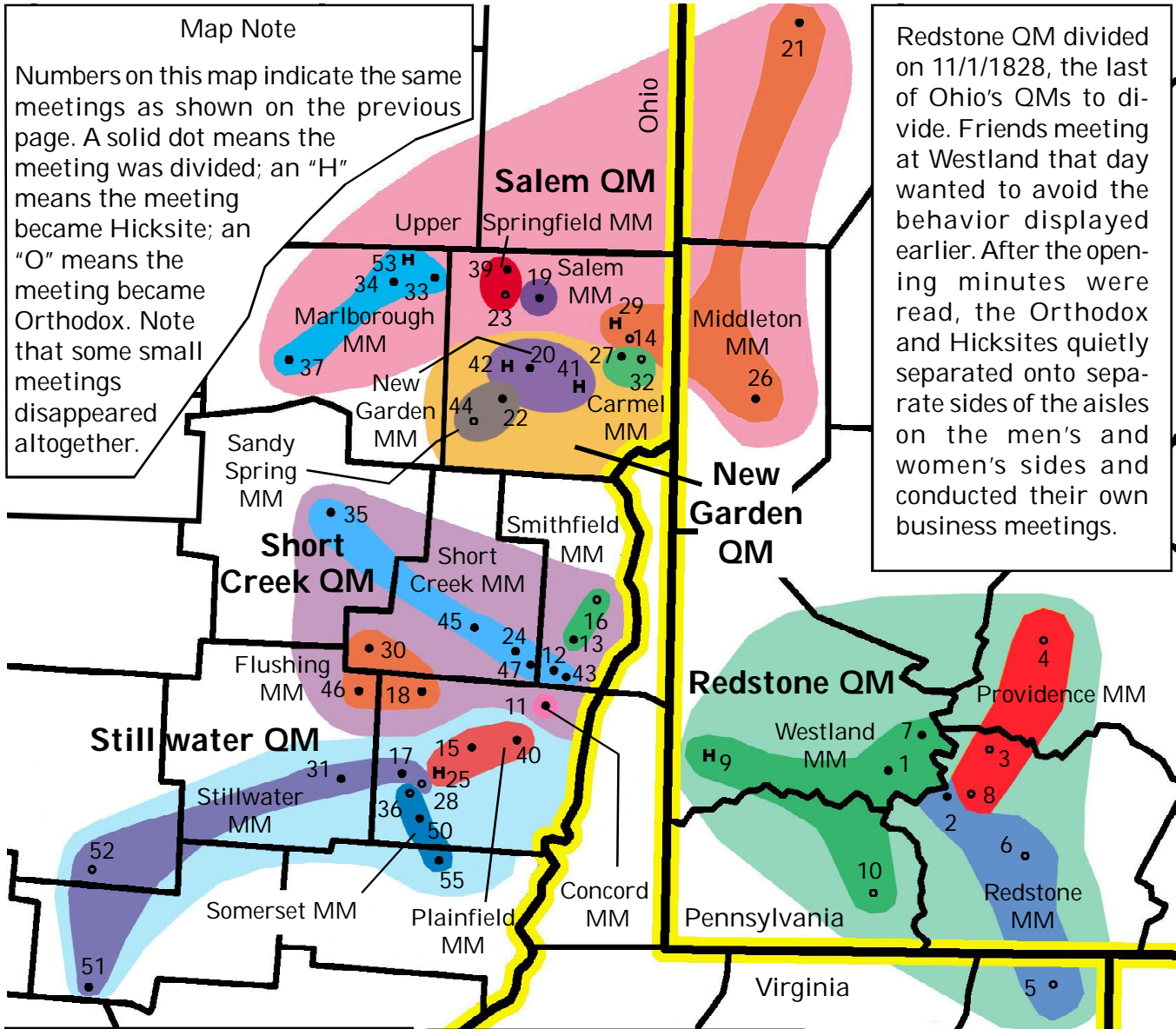
Ohio Hicksites corresponded with Hicksites in Philadelphia, and in early 1828 they began to establish independent Hicksite meetings. On 1/29/1828, a group of Hicksites of Stillwater and Somerset MMs organized their own Stillwater MM (Hicksite). The pre-existing MMs began to disown the Hicksites to take them off the membership list. During a routine re-organization of Short Creek QM, the local Hicksite majority objected when Concord MM was laid down and attached to Short Creek MM; they continued their own Concord MM and joined New Garden QM, which was overwhelmingly Hicksite. By YM time, all QMs except Redstone had divided, too.

## Ohio YM of 1828

When Ohio YM met in 1828, the situation had worsened around the nation. New York YM divided in the summer, and Elias Hicks was travelling to visit the undivided YMs. He met with sympathizers in Mount Pleasant just prior to Ohio YM to plan what to do when the business meeting opened. While there, a committee from Hicks's home MM arrived with a request that under the tried situation, he should return home. Had he taken their sound advice, further divisions may have been avoided.

Ohio YM assembled at Mount Pleasant on 9/8/1828. Because there was not room inside the Mount Pleasant YMH to hold all Friends who came for YM, doorkeepers kept out people who were not members. In 1828, this included many disowned Hicksites. A group of Hicksites broke into the building, walked down the center aisle, pushed B.W. Ladd out of the way, and threw Jonathan Taylor, men's Ohio YM Clerk, out the clerk's door. They appointed David Hilles the new Clerk (a Hicksite from Westland), after which the Orthodox Friends withdrew. Taylor went to a local doctor's house, who bled him with leeches. The Orthodox appointed Elisha Bates the new Clerk.

# 1827 to 1828



Redstone QM divided on 11/1/1828, the last of Ohio's QMs to divide. Friends meeting at Westland that day wanted to avoid the behavior displayed earlier. After the opening minutes were read, the Orthodox and Hicksites quietly separated onto separate sides of the aisles on the men's and women's sides and conducted their own business meetings.

The situation in Stillwater QM was very difficult. Friends who joined the new Hicksite meetings early in 1828 were disowned long before YM time. At the Fifth Month QM, the Orthodox minority at Plainfield was attached to Stillwater MM. Hicksites attended QM in Eighth Month; one of them physically hit several Orthodox Friends outside before the organization of Stillwater QM (Hicksite).

Short Creek QM divided on 8/16/1828. Friends who attended the independent Hicksite meetings ignored the winter and spring QMs. When the QM attached Concord to Short Creek MM, local Hicksites objected and continued to meet. The new Hicksite MMs sent representatives to Short Creek QM in Eighth Month and established their own QM at that time.

Salem QM was overwhelmingly Orthodox, with the Hicksites concentrated in Marlborough MM but with small meetings in the remainder of the QM. New Garden QM was the only majority Hicksite QM in Ohio. Hicksites were the majority in New Garden MM and retained small MMs at Sandy Spring and Carmel.