

Ohio YM (Conservative)

When Ohio Yearly Meeting began to recognize the new Conservative Yearly Meetings in the 1880s, it broke its self-imposed isolation from other Friends. Though many Ohio Friends continued to be entirely in unity with John Wilbur, there was a desire among some Ohio Friends to drop the label "Wilburite." Once Ohio began to recognize the Conservative bodies, it thus became Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative).

In the early part of the 1880s, some decisions were made regarding yearly meeting time. Stillwater ran out of water during yearly meeting in 1879, so in 1880 the M4S appointed a committee to make sure that enough water was supplied for those attending YM. The committee purchased some large water jars for \$4.26. In 1882, Iowa Friends complained about large depressions in the ground near Stillwater. These depressions were areas where clay had been dug to make the brick for the Stillwater MH. The YM appointed a committee to re-grade the lawn area around the meeting house, and at the same time more hitching "facilities" were provided.

On the last day of yearly meeting in 1881, a committee was appointed to consider the situation of the Conservative yearly meeting to the west (Western, Iowa, and Kansas). The committee visited the three and recommended in 1883 that Ohio recognize them. In 1884, Ohio YM received its first incoming epistle in 30 years when the epistle from Kansas YM was read. Recognition of Iowa YM led to a discussion of transferring Hickory Grove QM to Iowa YM, but the members of Hickory Grove stood in the way of the transfer. In 1885, Ohio YM recognized Canada YM and New England YM. It was an irony that Ohio did not recognize the latter body (the initial Wilburite body) for 40 years. The committee was continued to consider other Wilburite groups such as New York YM at Poplar Ridge, but there was not unity for additional recognitions.

The Yearly Meeting for Ministers & Elders appointed a committee to visit Hickory Grove QM to help remove disunity there. HGQM Friends mentioned the need in 1882, and a committee of

14 weighty Friends was appointed to visit them. Wilson Hall, the men's YM Clerk, wrote a minute that recommended that Iowa Friends "keep low before the Lord [and] avoid all controversy, tale-bearing, and detraction." The M&E committee reported back in 1883 that "there is serious cause for the lack of unity" but did not see a way to heal it. A new committee was appointed; it visited Iowa again and reported back in 1884 that the disunity was mostly limited to Hickory Grove Meeting. The second committee visited again in 1885 and 1886 but was then released, as no solution was in sight.

The Journal of Joseph Edgerton was published in 1885. His daughter, Eunice Thomasson, prepared his notes for publication and presented them to the Meeting for Sufferings in 1883. A committee was appointed to read the draft. This was one of the first times that a woman attended the meeting of the M4S. The committee made some changes, and in 1884 the M4S began to read the text aloud. The text was finally approved in 1885, and 2,000 copies were published. The YM decided to sell them for 27¢ each, with the Book Committee in charge of the copies. That turned out to be a poor decision, as it took years to sell them. Later journals, such as those for Mildred Ratcliff and Ann Branson, were published and sent out to the members without charge.

The Clerks of the men's and women's YM in the early 1880s were husband and wife, the only time this happened in Ohio. Sina Hall had been appointed the women's YM Clerk in 1871. At that time, her brother Edward Stratton was serving as the men's Ohio YM Clerk. Stratton asked to be relieved in 1873, at which time Wilson Hall was appointed. In addition to being Sina Hall's husband, Wilson Hall was a son of prominent Elder Nathan P. Hall. Wilson and Sina Hall served together on opposite sides of the partition until 1886, when Sina Hall was relieved. Her service of 15 years placed her in a tie for the third longest term of office (behind Benjamin Hoyle and Jane Plummer, and tied with Esther French). Wilson Hall was replaced the following year (1887) by Barclay Stratton.

1880 to 1890

