

Some Interesting Ohio

Wilson & Sina Hall

Wilson and Sina Hall were the only husband and wife who served as Clerks of the men's and women's Ohio Yearly Meeting. Wilson was the men's Clerk from 1873–1887, and Sina was the women's Clerk from 1871–1886.

Wilson Hall (1832–1890) was a son of Nathan P. and Rachel (Wilson) Hall. His mother died when he was three, and his father remarried to Merab Coffee. Nathan P. Hall was a leading Elder at Short Creek; he and Merab helped Wilson learn many proverbs and short words of wisdom that he repeated throughout his life.

Sina Hall (1820–1896) was a daughter of Joshua and Rachel (Townsend) Stratton. Her maternal grandfather was Joseph Townsend, the leading Friend at Westland. Sina was one of the initial students of the Mount Pleasant Boarding School. She was 12 years older than Wilson; they were married in 1857.

Barclay & Hannah H. Stratton

Barclay and Hannah Stratton were leading Ohio Friends of the late 19th century. They lived most of their lives at New Garden (Winona).

Barclay Stratton (1829–1892) was a son of Daniel and Abigail (Borton) Stratton, whose family was prominent in Salem MM. In 1842, several young Friends from Salem went swimming in a mill pond when an accident occurred. Barclay and one brother survived, but another brother and two cousins drowned. An Elder, Barclay chose not to speak much about matters of doctrine in order to create space for Hannah.

Barclay was a conscientious objector during the Civil War. He was taken to a camp near Columbus where soldiers there took off his clothes and put a military uniform on him. He was forced to march with them, but the officers took an interest in him because they appreciated that he did not use profanity. Barclay was shipped out to New York and then to North Carolina, but unlike some Ohio Friends he was never placed in

Wilson Hall became a teacher. Because he and Sina were left childless, they both had a lifelong interest in young Friends. They served as Superintendent and Matron of the Boarding School from 1870–73.

In 1871, Sina was appointed the women's Ohio YM Clerk. Her brother Edward Stratton was appointed the men's Ohio YM Clerk that same year. In 1873, Edward asked to be released, and Wilson was appointed to replace him. Wilson played a major role in drafting Christian school books for use in Friends schools. He also played a major role in urging Hickory Grove Friends to heal their wounds and adopt a charitable Christian attitude towards each other.

Wilson became ill while attending Yearly Meeting in 1889 and died the following year. Sina was one of the last Friends at Carmel; she died in 1896.

battle action. Eventually, he was released and returned home.

Hannah (Hobson) Stratton (1826–1903) was a daughter of Joseph and Ruth (Ball) Hobson of Flushing. Joseph Hobson was one of the most prominent Elders in Ohio YM in the mid-1800s. A minister, Hannah travelled widely among Ohio YM and Conservative Friends. She was recognized in her day for her modesty and her concern for African Americans. Her visit to London YM in 1896 was the first by an Ohio minister in half a century.

The Strattons were serving as Supt. and Matron of the Boarding School when the Ohio Supreme Court handed it to the Gurneyites. Several times during the transition to the Olney campus, Hannah had ministry that was remembered for years afterwards. They retired in 1881 but returned 1886–1890. Barclay was the men's Ohio YM Clerk 1887–1892; he died before YM in 1892.

Friends of 1875 to 1900

Isaac Huestis (1810–1888)

Isaac Huestis was a well-known medical doctor and Elder at Chesterfield. Huestis (pronounced hooos-tis) served Friends in many capacities on all levels of the organization.

After teaching in a Friends school in Salem QM as a young man, Huestis studied medicine with Sylvanus Fisher, a well-known doctor of the time. He was active in the American Medical Association and was one of the best surgeons in Ohio in the 1800s. He settled at Chesterfield in 1837, where he began his practice. His main competitor was George Michener, whose wife was a minister at Chesterfield.

Huestis held many positions in the Society of Friends. He served 14 years as Clerk of Pennsville QM and 19 as Clerk of Chesterfield MM. Once while serving as Clerk at Chesterfield MM, the business was interrupted by a medical emergency. An alternate Clerk was appointed, and Huestis left in the middle of the business meeting to aid the injured person. Huestis also volunteered his time on the Boarding School Committee in the late 1800s.

Asa Branson (1810–1909)

Asa Branson was one of the leading men's ministers in Ohio YM in the late 19th century. Asa was a son of John and Abigail (Holloway) Branson. The family moved from Hopewell, Virginia, to the Flushing area in 1815, and John Branson died later that same year. Abigail, a minister, had poor health also and died when Asa was only 16. She impressed the importance of the Christian life on the children, and both Asa and his sister Miriam Ellis were recognized as ministers. They were first cousins of Ann Branson, who lived near them all her life. Ann and Asa maintained a deep spiritual kinship and nurtured each other in the ministry.

Asa served as the men's Ohio YM Clerk from 1865–1871. He was relieved from service because of his increasingly bad hearing. Later in

John W. Smith (1825–1902)

John W. Smith was the leading Elder in Ohio Yearly Meeting in the 1880s and 1890s. He was appointed Clerk of many bodies and was respected for his careful choice of words when participating in business meetings. Smith was a portly man whose very presence contributed to the weight of a business meeting.

Smith was the son of Robert H. Smith, a man who was considered in his own day among the strictest of the Wilburites, and Elizabeth Smith, a minister at Stillwater. The family lived in the brick house that is the old section of today's Walton Home.

While his brother Barclay Smith served as Clerk of the men's Ohio Yearly Meeting, John W. Smith was serving simultaneously as Clerk of the Meeting for Sufferings and of the Select Yearly Meeting. JW Smith's 20 year term clerking the Meeting for Sufferings (1876–96) was one of the longest in the history of Ohio YM. He served two terms as Clerk of the Select YM: 1873–81 and 1893–1900. His son Nathan R. Smith served as the Ohio YM Men's Clerk 1899–1905.

the century, Asa sat on the highest bench beside the men's Assistant Clerk during YM time with Asa Garretson, who was similarly deaf. The Assistant Clerk would make notes about the business being considered and would hand these notes to Branson and Garretson. By this time, Asa's judgment was highly valued. Several times, Ohio Friends listened in sympathy as Asa addressed a business item, not understanding that what he was saying either had just been said by another or that he had not rightly understood the matter at hand. This was humbling to him, and on one occasion he apologized to the Yearly Meeting for what he had said earlier.

When Asa Branson died in 1909 in his 99th year, he was the longest serving member of the Meeting for Sufferings.