

# Ohio Hicksites

## A New Century

Ohio Hicksites were sorely tried as the twentieth century dawned. The YM at that time was comprised of three Quarterly Meetings: Salem, Short Creek, and Stillwater. It had seven Monthly Meetings and nine meetings for worship; five of these meetings continued to use pre-division meeting houses. The map shows the surviving meetings at that time.

Ohio YM (H) went into joint session in 1884. This change, though controversial at the time, streamlined business sessions. Earlier, among Hicksites, Gurneyites, and Wilburites, a committee report was read on both sides of the partition, not always at the same time, and the two had to coordinate responses (which was very time consuming). Holding joint session business meetings made it possible to approve a minute immediately following the reading of the report and thus eliminate a great deal of duplication of effort.

Perhaps a more tangible result of the merging of business sessions was a movement to "reduce" meeting houses. Most Hicksite meeting houses reflected the "Quaker Plan." These buildings were often difficult to heat, and by the late 19th century many of them suffered from deferred maintenance. In several cases, Ohio Hicksites "reduced" their meeting houses. Since the separate men's and women's rooms were no longer needed with the advent of joint session business meetings, one half of the earlier meeting house was torn down and the entire building renovated. Concord Friends went further, reducing the size of their 1815 meeting house by two thirds. The resulting buildings reflected the "Cottage Plan," a common layout of Friends meeting houses of the late 1600s and the 1700s. Reduced Hicksite meeting houses in Ohio included Plainfield, Westland (Morgan County), and Carmel.

In 1900, the Hicksites organized the Friends General Conference. Several national committees of Hicksites had been holding their own national conferences, with delegates from all Hicksite yearly meetings. It was decided to hold all these national committee meetings concurrently, but

there was a major scheduling problem. The various yearly meeting sessions around the country had been arranged to make it possible for traveling ministers to attend each one in course. This meant that there was no available time to insert another weeklong event. Organizers of the first session weighed their options and finally decided that the best solution was to hold it the week that had been historically set aside for Ohio YM (Hicksite), which was the weakest of all Hicksite bodies. Ohio Hicksites objected to this decision, which drew younger Friends away from their own YM sessions, but by 1910 they had settled into a quiet dissatisfaction about the decision.

## Final Years

Ohio was the only one of the original five Hicksite yearly meetings to disappear. After the death of Isaac Vickers of Concord, there were no recorded ministers in the entire yearly meeting, though Richard Roberts of Short Creek (Emerson) often spoke during worship. By 1914, his meeting was the only Ohio Hicksite meeting being held every First Day; Salem, West, and Concord met monthly and Richland met twice a year as Stillwater Half Yearly Meeting. Their other four meetings existing in 1900 had been laid down.

In 1919, Ohio Yearly Meeting Hicksite disbanded. It authorized the Representative Committee to meet annually to transact any needed business. Monthly Meetings quickly disbanded, with only Salem MM being held after 1923. In 1927, the Representative Committee purchased a safe to hold the minute books collected by a yearly meeting committee over the previous three decades. The safe was kept in the second floor of a garage owned by Daniel J. Roberts of Salem. Most remaining business was held in conjunction with Salem MM, which met in homes after the sale of the YM House. YM Treasurer J.F. Lamborn opened these meetings by reading prepared messages during the worship. The Representative Committee last met in 1931; Salem MM was last held on 8/17/1937. Surviving members attended the worship of other denominations, and the last member of Ohio YM (Hicksite) died in 2006.

# 1900 to 1937

