

# Some Interesting Redstone

## Henry Beeson (1743–1819)

Henry Beeson was involved in two important early events in the history of Ohio Yearly Meeting.

He was born in 1743 across the road from the Providence Meeting House in today's West Virginia. His grand mother Charity (Grubb) Beeson was a well-known Friends minister of the time, but Beeson's parents had lost their membership and he did not have contact with Friends for many years. In 1768, when Beeson was 25, Providence Meeting was laid down, and his parents moved to central North Carolina. He moved into the Redstone Settlement, in violation of the Proclamation of 1763.

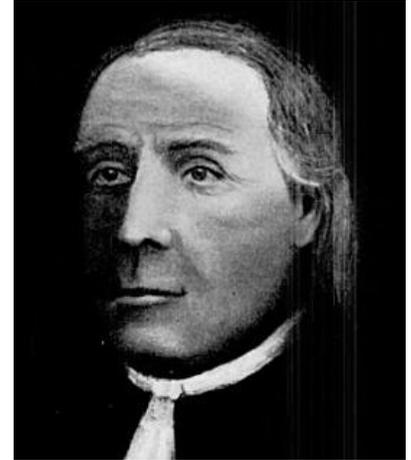
Around 1769, Beeson constructed a grist mill in the thinly settled area southeast of the Redstone Old Fort. In 1776, Beeson laid out a town "called Union" surrounding his mill.

While the town was usually called Beeson's Town at the time, it was officially named Uniontown in 1796. It is not known if the Beesons worshipped with Friends during these years, but the nearest meeting to their house was Sandy Hill (founded 1791).

Henry and his wife Mary later moved to Columbiana County, Ohio after lands there opened for settlement. They joined Friends in 1806 at Middleton.

Henry and Mary relocated to Jefferson County, Ohio, around 1810. They purchased lots in the southern end of the newly laid out village of Mount Pleasant. Before they could build on the lots, however, Jonathan Taylor made the arrangements for Ohio YM to purchase some of Beeson's lots for the construction of the Yearly Meeting House (1814-1815).

Henry Beeson died in 1819, and Mary died in 1821. They are buried in the Short Creek Burial Ground near Mount Pleasant.



A likeness of Henry Beeson published in *A History of Uniontown*

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## William Wilson (1739–1795)

William Wilson was the first Elder of an Ohio meeting. He had grown up in Delaware, but apparently his parents were not Friends because he joined Friends by conviction.

In 1781, Wilson moved to a farm near the Westland Meeting House. Although only 42 years old, he was already a concerned Friend, and one of his concerns was that the new meetings in the Redstone settlement have rightly concerned Friends among them. Wilson does not appear to have been a highly critical Friend, as many were in those times – in fact, his memorial states that "he was preserved an example of plainness and humility."

In 1788, Wilson raised a concern at Westland that a meeting of Ministers & Elders be established. These meetings were the successors to the Second Day Morning Meetings that George Fox had established for public Friends, and at the time they were instructive sessions in which public Friends shared among each other in the Lord's things (these meetings at a later time kept a minimal routine).

Descendants of William Wilson include members of the Cooper family (James and Thomas Cooper), the Heald family (including Abner Heald, Sarah Hollingsworth, Mary Hawkins and daughters Nancy and Becky), the Sidwell family (including Harold, Dean, and Richard Sidwell), and the Starbuck family (including Jesse Starbuck and Dorothy Smith); also Albert Gamble and Rebecca Price.

# QM Friends of 1775 to 1800

## Rees Cadwalader (d. 1800)

Rees Cadwalader was instrumental in the early history of Brownsville, Pennsylvania.

Cadwalader was a member of Hopewell MM in Virginia in the 1770s and was active in MM affairs – serving on many committees. In 1777, he was appointed overseer at the Mount Pleasant Meeting (Virginia).

In 1779, Hopewell MM appointed Cadwalader to its committee to visit Friends in the Redstone Settlement. Philadelphia YM had directed Hopewell to send this committee in 1776. Cadwalader travelled with a QM committee on this visit. He apparently found the area to his liking, as he purchased several tracts of land and settled there. In 1784, Cadwalader purchased the southern part of the Redstone Old Fort and re-named it “Peace Hill” in recognition of the fact that the fort was never used. He also constructed a mill, powered by a mill pond that he also constructed.

In 1786, Cadwalader was recorded as a minister by Westland MM at the request of Restone PM. He was the first person so recorded west of the mountains, and he traveled widely in the Redstone settlement to encourage scattered Friends to establish worship groups.

In 1794, Cadwalader laid out the town of Brownsville. Its plan was similar to Henry Beeson’s plan for Uniontown, as the town was laid out around Cadwalader’s grist mill. After the original Redstone MH burned in 1799, Cadwalader convinced the meeting to build a new meeting house in his settlement. The second Redstone MH was often informally called “Peace Hill” to distinguish it from the original site, which came to be called the “Bull Run” burial ground.

Cadwalader died on 10/13/1800. His first wife (Ruth) was an Elder at Redstone who died at the age of 41. Rees Cadwalader’s second wife Elizabeth Sharples Cadwalader moved to Middleton after his death.

## The Townsend Family

The Townsend family was prominent in Redstone QM for many years. Two brothers – Joseph and Benjamin – moved to Westland from Concord MM in Philadelphia YM in 1786.

Benjamin Townsend had been recorded as a minister prior to his removal to Westland and as such was the first Ohio minister. As long as he was active in the ministry, Townsend visited with scattered Friends and encouraged them to form new meetings as well as performing many family visits to nurture local meetings. Townsend’s concern to visit North Carolina Friends with information about the opening of lands in the Northwest Territory is told elsewhere in this publication. His first wife Jemima Townsend was an Elder at Westland. They moved to Concord in 1803 and were among the founding members of Short Creek MM in 1804 and then of Plymouth (Smithfield) in 1808. Benjamin and his second wife Elizabeth moved to New Garden in 1810; she moved to Baltimore following his death in 1814.

Joseph Townsend was another prominent Friend at Westland. Before moving to Westland, Townsend served as a companion for Hugh Judge during his travels in 1782. He was appointed librarian at Westland soon after his arrival in 1786, the first of many appointments. He was the first men’s Clerk of Redstone QM (1798–1805). His wife Sinah Townsend served as the women’s Clerk of Westland MM for several years. The family relocated to Beaver Falls and was active in that meeting, which was attached to Middleton MM in 1803. Joseph Townsend apparently died around 1806. Sinah moved back to Westland, then to Hopewell, and ended up in Salem in 1817. She became a Hicksite in 1828, but her children were Orthodox. Two grandchildren were Edward Stratton and Sina Hall, the only brother and sister combination to serve as Clerks of Ohio YM at the same time. Among the descendants of Joseph and Sinah Townsend were J. Howard Edgerton, Foster Hall, and Wilson Morlan.