

# Cleveland and Uniontown

Societal upheavals characterized the 1960s, both in American culture at large and Ohio Yearly Meeting in particular. The YM adopted a new Discipline in its 150th year, giving it the most modern Discipline among the Conservative YMs. Outreach was centered in peace activities, and inreach was centered on the labors of Bill Taber and the Spiritual Life Committee.

Several important changes took place in Ohio YM during the 1960s. After several years of labor, the new Discipline was approved in 1962 and published in 1963. In 1969, the YM approved the idea that when a committee was appointed, the first named Friend would serve as the convener. The next year, the last primary school – the one at Ridge – closed, ending two centuries of primary schools sponsored by MMs. The Historical Committee was established in 1965; it assumed the north committee room at Stillwater and installed heat and electricity for the space, where donations of items of historical and cultural interest were donated by many Friends.

Two meetings joined Ohio YM during the decade, and one left. Ohio YM had been part of a regional gathering that brought Friends together from several YMs as well as independent meetings. A result of these sessions was the decision by Cleveland and Uniontown Meetings to join Ohio YM in 1966. At that time, Fairhope MM was considering the possibility of disbanding, but in 1967 they decided instead to become an independent MM and left Stillwater QM on 2/8/1967.

A major reason that Cleveland and Uniontown joined Ohio YM was the activity of the Peace Committee. Under the leadership of Albert Livezey (who was also Stillwater QM Clerk), the Peace Committee held annual workshops, provided peace literature to Olney and public schools, provided information on the situation in Vietnam, offered counseling to COs, and prepared packets to assist others in counseling COs. It sponsored trips to various conferences (Quaker and non-Quaker) on peace and civil rights issues throughout the decade. Although the YM approved several statements on peace-related

issues, the committee complained in 1968 that of a general “indifference to the sufferings of others.” Ohio Friends gave financial support to a leper colony in Korea, and Floyd Sidwell visited there in 1968 to assess its operations.

Bill Taber worked as a released Friend in Ohio YM from 1964 to 1970. The Representative Meeting had recommended someone be appointed YM “Secretary” in 1964 and recommended Taber for the post, for the purposes of visitation, youth ministry, and office services. Although he was willing to take up the work, he preferred to be called a “released Friend.” Some Ohio Friends were uneasy with what was happening, as they saw the process leading to a paid ministry. Friends were allowed to voluntarily provide Taber with money as a compromise. He also taught at Olney part time as a means of lessening his financial needs. He visited all the meetings, held opportunities with families, and published a newsletter. When Stillwater MM recorded his gift in the ministry in 1967, someone noted that those present should take note because it was likely the last time such a recognition would happen in Ohio YM.

The spiritual life of Ohio YM remained a concern. The Spiritual Life Committee held annual gatherings on various topics related to spiritual growth. In 1961, it called on ministers and elders to be “more forward, vitalized, and fruitful.” Later in the decade, the committee worked with the YM for M&O to approve a statement on ministry that may be the most important YM publication on the topic and retains its relevance today. A visitor, Edmund Goerke, raised a concern in 1962 about the “apparently beautiful and serene culture” of Ohio YM that some feared was becoming “vastly altered” and “slipping into history.” Goerke asked that Conservative Friends hold a general meeting to help bolster their identity. It was held at Stillwater in 1965; sixty Friends visited from elsewhere and the event was so helpful that North Carolina YM asked that it be held again. The event was called the “General Meeting of Conservative Friends” until 1990 and the General Gathering afterwards.

# 1960 to 1970

