

A Tumultuous Decade

The 1990s was a decade of new growth as well as difficulty in Ohio YM. Ongoing visitation to scattered Friends, work with the continuing stream of visitors to Ohio, and relocations contributed to the establishment of seven new meetings throughout the decade, though only one survived into the new millennium. As Rockingham MM reported, "the Lord is stirring among Friends in many places."

Susan Smith was Clerk of Ohio YM from 1989 to 2001. Only five people served longer terms as Clerk. During her years of service, Susan re-defined what it meant to serve as Clerk, establishing a new standard. During discussions, she would write down phrases used by Friends (called the *clippings* or the *snippets*) and use them in the proposed minute. This clarified that the final minute was based on things that were said at the time, and in some cases she was able to draft a minute that demonstrated a unity that emerged even if some things that were stated appeared not to be in unity.

The first of the seven new meetings of the 1990s was Glenside, Pennsylvania. The meeting had existed in various forms for two decades but joined Somerset MM in 1991. The following year, Glenside Friends raised an objection to the way that Rockingham Friends had dealt with a former member who had molested some young women in the meeting. Stillwater QM appointed a committee to try to resolve the dispute, but Glenside Friends chose to withdraw rather than work with the committee.

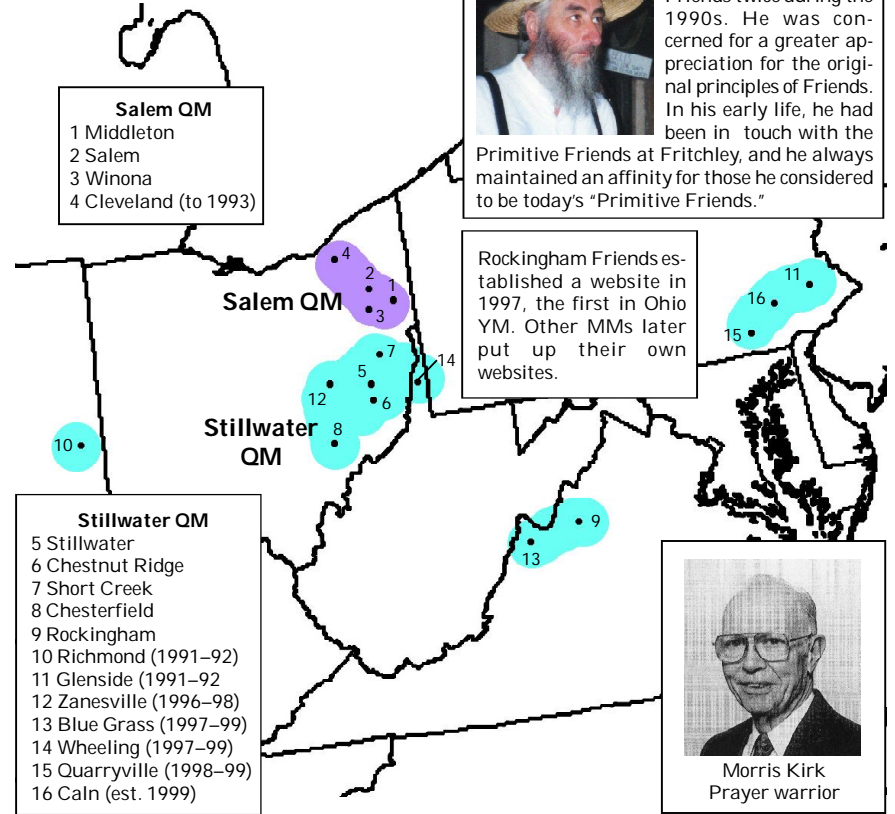
Rockingham Meeting had started a "travelling meeting" that continued for several years in the early 1990s. Once a month, Rockingham Friends would visit a meeting in the vicinity of Washington DC and Baltimore upon request. These visits provided these liberal meetings the first traditional Quaker worship that many had experienced. On several occasions, these visits precipitated the first vocal prayers in living memory. A group of Friends from Baltimore YM joined in the travelling meeting, some of whom later relocated to Barnesville.

Two developments in 1992 opened up new opportunities. Ohio YM approved the category of affiliate membership for Friends who wanted a tie with Ohio but were not able to participate as a full member due to distance. That same year, Jack Smith and Chuck Hughes of Rockingham travelled to England to visit with like-minded Friends there. Local Friends called two meetings for them, and they visited a weekend gathering for Christian Friends and had six other opportunities for worship. Several Friends in England became affiliate members of Ohio YM. In the following years, several additional pairs of Ohio Friends travelled in the ministry in England, strengthening the new ties and bolstering the new life the Lord was bringing forth.

In 1993, Cleveland Meeting left Ohio YM. It had been a part of Lake Erie YM as well as Ohio YM. Tensions between Cleveland and the remainder of Ohio YM had been festering for years. Cleveland had expressed its frustration with Ohio through its answers to the Queries and its lack of hospitality to visiting Friends. It was the only meeting in Ohio YM that was not substantially Christian in outlook. Two women at Cleveland announced their intentions of marriage, which lit a fire that eventually broke the tie between Cleveland and Ohio. Attempts to work out a solution failed, the marriage was approved even though there was not unity, and the Clerk of Salem QM (who was a member of Cleveland) wrote a minute that Cleveland was no longer part of Salem QM. Although it was a difficult parting for many, it relieved the ongoing tension between Cleveland and Ohio YM.

Scattered Friends in southeastern Pennsylvania had been in contact with Ohio Friends for decades. When Glenside joined Ohio YM, it seemed possible that these scattered Friends could be gathered into a new meeting. In 1998, a group of Friends in southern Lancaster County joined Rockingham, and a meeting was established at Quarryville. The meeting was held in the home of a member family, and as that family continued to raise barriers to visitors, it fell apart in the fall of 1999. The third attempt to

1990 to 2000



form a meeting in southeastern Pennsylvania began thereafter, meeting at Caln.

Other meetings had been established as well, and these new meetings had the effect of greatly extending Stillwater QM and helping it to surpass the membership of Salem QM. The meeting in Richmond, Indiana, closed when the two central couples moved to Barnesville. Short-lived meetings were held in Zanesville, Blue Grass, and Wheeling.

At the end of the decade, Olney became an independent school. The school board had been divided for over a decade over the issue of how much of a Christian influence should be evident at Olney. Administration of the school was increasingly difficult because of the disunity on the board, and heads of school became frustrated quickly. In 1998, the decision was made to allow an independent board to assume the administration of Olney, and the school committee was laid down.