

**EARLY PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATIONS IN JEFFERSON COUNTY, OHIO:
A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING**

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In 1782, the Presbyterian faithful in this area were represented by **The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church**, a merger of the Reformed Presbyterians and the Associate Presbyterian churches. Due to a request by “the Rev. Messrs. John Clark, John McMillan, Joseph Patterson, James Hughs and John Bruce,” the Ohio Presbytery emerged in 1793 from the Redstone Presbytery of the Virginia Synod. Furthermore, “On Sept. 26, 1798 it was reported by the Ohio Presbytery to the Synod of Virginia then meeting in Winchester, Virginia, that the Northwest Territory had [sufficient] settlements for the expansion of the church,” according to Jeffcochapter.com. However, a great deal of confusion in the secondary sources exists about the founding of the **first** Presbyterian Church in Jefferson County; any one of the following, which are presented in chronological order based on the prevailing literature, can lay claim:

- 1) Organized in 1797, a Presbyterian Church at Short Creek, Jefferson County as part of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (as per Slade, p. 6) and now known as the Adena First Presbyterian Church per Jeffcochapter.com
- 2) Early in 1798, “The Rev. Smiley Hughes [Abt 1763-Aft Dec 1798; supposedly buried in the Short Creek Cemetery in West Liberty, WV where his brother, James, was pastor] appointed by the Presbytery of Ohio, held services in a locust grove on Market Street between 7th and 8th Streets” according to Brief History, p. 4 as well as Slade, p. 173.
- 3) On 16 April 1799, the Island Creek Congregation organized
 - a. “With Thomas Vincent, John Milligan, Samuel Hunter, and Samuel Meek,” according to Hunter, p. 260; see point 5C below...
 - b. “An application was made by Island Creek Congregation for a supply minister...” according to Slade, p. 179.
- 4) In June 1799, James Snodgrass preached in this area and returned again during the summer of 1800; by October both the Island Creek and the Steubenville

congregations called him and he was “ordained and installed as their pastor...for the first year or two, for two-fifths of his time at Steubenville and afterwards for the one-half,” according to Brief History, p. 3.

- 5) The First Presbyterian Church aka The Old Presbyterian Church situated on “a lot on the west side of the 200 block of South Fourth Street...was the first site” (to add to the confusion--today, the Old Third church now occupies that location at 235 South Fourth Street); see, Slade p. 173.
 - a) "This pioneer organization was established in 1800, given by Bezeleel Wells where upon a small brick edifice was built in the winter of 1803-1804," according to www.jeffcochapter.com website; see also Brief History, p. 5 which lack the specificity of donor.
 - b) “The First Presbyterian Church was organized in 1800, communion was offered by the Rev. Thomas Marquis [1753-1851] in the spring of that year [1800] and in November James Snodgrass [1772-1833, buried in Two Ridges Cemetery in Wintersville] was ordained,” according to Brief History, p. 1 and Slade, p. 173.
 - c) “In the summer of 1801, the church of Steubenville was first regularly organized ... [with] Thomas Vincent [in Short Creek Township in 1809], John Milligan [1762-1832; in Island Creek Township in 1808], and Samuel Hunter [1765-1837; in Steubenville in 1820 Census; removed as Elder in 1822], as Ruling Elders,” according to Brief History, p. 4. Note that Dr. Vincent was removed in 1800 according to Caldwell and Newton, p. 501, col. 1.
 - d) “In addition to these, in 1803, John Rickey [Abt 1727-1825] and Samuel Meek [Bef 1775-1838, resided in Washington County, PA originally; buried in Dutch Hill, Saint Clairsville, Belmont County, OH; removed as Elder in 1821] were chosen and ordained...Mr. Rickey soon after ceased, from infirmities, to act as an elder,” according to Brief History, p. 4 and Hunter, p. 155.
 - e) “...a small brick building was erected upon the present site [the grove near Wolcott’s factory], which was first occupied in the winter of 1803-4,” according to Brief History, p. 5.
 - f) According to Hunter’s Pathfinders (1898) the dubious claim is made that "The Presbyterian Church kept no records. The Presbyterians are individualists, and thus being the antipode of socialists, the church was not a civil community organized to relieve the individual of responsibility. The head of

- a family was expected to keep the records thereof--to note in his family Bible the marriages, births and deaths of his family" (p. 170).
- 6) The Cross Creek Presbyterian Church (sources indicate that he settled in this township, not to be confused with Cross Creek in WV)

The credibility of Hunter is problematic and seems to be causing some these difficulties.

REFERENCES (Alphabetical by Author with Hyperlinks to full text, if possible)

- J.A. Caldwell and J.H. Newton, [History of Belmont and Jefferson Counties, Ohio](#) (Wheeling, WV: Historical Publishing Company, 1880).
- William H. Hunter, [Pathfinders of Jefferson County, Ohio](#) (Columbus, OH: F.J. Heer, 1899).
- Samuel Houston, "Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, 1793-1795," [Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society](#) 27 (no. 3, September 1949): 179-193.
- John B. Linn, [Annals of Buffalo Valley, Pennsylvania, 1755-1835](#) (Harrisburg, PA: Lane S. Hart, Printer and Binder, 1877), p. 296.
- Alfred Nevin, ed., "Chronological Table of Presbyteries," In [Encyclopedia of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America](#) (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Encyclopaedia Publishing, 1884), p. 1101.
- First Presbyterian Church, [Brief History, Constitution, Rules and Catalogue of Members](#) (Steubenville, OH: Conn's Book and Job Office, 1858), p. 3-4.
- Isaac Grier, [Old Buffalo Church, Presbyterian Church Organized 1773: First Church West of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River](#) (Mifflinburg, PA: Centennial Historical Discourse, 19**).
- Jefferson County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Steubenville Twp Jefferson County, Ohio, "[Presbyterianism in the Upper Ohio Valley](#)" (accessed 25 May 2017).
- Andrew G. Slade, ed. [Presbyterianism in the Upper Ohio Valley: Bicentennial U.S.A.](#) (Steubenville, OH: Presbytery of the Upper Ohio Valley, 1976).
- Joseph Smith, [Old Redstone, or Historical Sketches of Western Presbyterianism](#) (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Company, 1854).
- Joseph Stevens, [History of the Presbytery of Northumberland](#) (Williamsport, PA: Gazette and Bulletin Printing House, 1888), p. 32.

- E. B. Welsh, Records of the Synod of Ohio, vol. 1-3, 1814-1867 (Mss., 1942-1951)
- Alvin D. White, History of the Cross Creek [in Pennsylvania, under the Ohio Presbytery] Presbyterian Church (Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Company, 1969).
- Howard McKnight Wilson, Records of the Synod of Virginia...The Official Records and Relevant Historical Material...on Microfilm [finding aid], (Richmond, VA: Synod of Virginia, 1970).

TO BE LOCATED (WHICH COULD CHANGE THIS CHRONOLOGY)

- Records of the Synod of Virginia, vol. 1-2 (1788-1806)
- E.B. Welsh, Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, vol. 1-10, 1793-1870
 - WOO Spec Coll BX8958.O37 A, vol. 1 (1793-1806) @ (330) 263-2527
 - Aka Records of the Presbytery of Ohio, 1793-1870 or ****Records of The Ohio Presbytery, 1793-1870**** (cited both ways—the latter by Guthrie, 1952, p. 278; not in OCLC, although Guthrie says Western Theological Seminary held them, but their Beardslee Library's HopeCat doesn't show any holdings) or later,
- The Records of the Synod of Ohio, vol. 1 (1802-1827)
- The Records of the Monongahela Presbytery, after 1805?

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