

RECORDS OF THE MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

CONSTITUTION, 1837

MINUTES, 1837-1841



14/11

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[Congregational] Michigan Association

Records





At a meeting of delegates from several con-  
gregational held at Richland Guil Parish  
March first eighteen hundred & thirty seven  
Sherman Cummings was chosen Moderator  
and William P. Bell was chosen clerk  
pro tem when the following Gentlemen  
presented their credentials and were an-  
nounced as delegates to act in this Convo-  
tion Sherman Cummings. Montgomery  
Perceval. Stephen Kimbal. William R  
McCall. Isaac Barnes. Mitchell Hinsdale.  
Henry Little. Henry Wright. Canfield  
Brid. Rockwell May. James Washburn.  
Elijah Washburn. Geo Wright. Lester  
Barnes. Philip Gay. Augustin  
Austin. William Logan. Charles  
W Spaulding.

on motion it was resolved  
that an association be now formed  
the motion being put it carried unanim-  
ously in the affirmative a Committee  
of three was then appointed to draft  
a Constitution and bond of union for  
this association this Committee Consis-  
ted of Mitchell Hinsdale Stephen  
Kimbal & Geo Smith the  
Committee retired and after

deliberation reported their proceedings  
& after some discussion on the Subject  
it was motioned & carried to adjourn  
till to morrow at nine o'clock. At  
the meeting with prayer by the Mod-  
erator and adjourned

March 2 met according to adjournment  
the association was called to order  
by the Moderator and opened with  
prayer by the Rev Mr Ware  
a motion was made that the Rev  
Mr Ware be invited to sit as an  
Honorary member of this body  
it was moved and seconded that  
the following preamble be adopted

### Preamble

Having in the Providence of God  
settled down in Michigan, and  
feeling the obligations we are under  
to Him, the God of all our mercies,  
for His kind Providence to us, and  
feeling also as the descendants  
of the Pilgrims, veneration for the  
Religious institutions of our fathers,  
and believing really free equal  
and Scriptural and to have been

To us and our ancestors eminently  
help'd of God therefore to continue to  
ourselves in this new Country and  
to transmit to our children the heritage  
we have received and to secure Christian  
advice and the apostolical ordination  
of the Ministry we adopt the following  
Constitution and bond of union.

## Constitution

art 1<sup>st</sup> This association shall be called the  
Congregational Association of Michigan.

art 2<sup>nd</sup> This association shall consist of all  
Congregational Churches by representation  
and Ministers who consent to the  
following articles of union.

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art 3<sup>rd</sup> The officers of this association shall  
consist of a Moderator and Clerk  
who shall be chosen annually. The  
Moderator shall preside in all meetings  
of the association and decide questions  
of order until an other be chosen;  
& the Clerk shall keep the records  
and conduct the correspondence of the  
association: he shall call special

Meetings & be a paper organ through which its members shall obtain letters of recommendation & dismission; & do such other business as naturally devolves upon his office.

Provided also that in the absence of the Moderator, the Clerk shall act as Moderator and either shall have ~~power~~ and be required to call special meetings, when requested to do so by any Church of this Association.

Art 4 This Association shall be considered a proper board for the associated Churches to apply to, for advice in all difficult cases of discipline, and for the application of candidates for licensure and ordination  
Credentials, &c.

Art 5 The one great object of the meetings of this Association shall be the edification of the people who they meet and in all their meetings their proceedings shall be preceded by prayer to the Great Head of the Church for wisdom and



Guidance in their deliberations, and  
close both thanksgiving and praise  
for renewing grace

art 6 We cordially fellowship all evangelic-  
al denominations who hold our articles  
in substance, & occasionally will  
invite their Ministers to our Pulpits,  
and when convenient exchange delegates  
if mutually found desirable.

art 7 We hold it indispensable that all  
Ministers of the Gospel wishing to  
become members of this association  
shall present testimonials of their  
good and regular standing in  
some Evangelical Ecclesiastical body.

art 8 Though a highly educated Ministry  
is very desirable yet under present  
circumstances the qualifications of  
a candidate for licensure and ordination  
shall be a good English education,  
and a thorough knowledge of the duties  
and doctrines of Christianity together  
with an acquaintance with the best  
authors on this subject.

Art 9 We reserve to our ~~several~~ Churches the right of self Government and hold this body to be only advisory.

Art 10 Every Church shall have the right of being represented by a clergyman and two delegates.

Art 11 This Association shall hold its annual meeting on the first Wednesday in March.

Art 12 This Constitution may be altered by a vote of two thirds if said alteration shall have been laid before the Association at a previous meeting.

# Bond of Union

1<sup>st</sup> We will receive and treat each other affectionately as brethren in the Lord in good faith.

2<sup>nd</sup> We will avoid all slanderous expressions and innuendoes about each other persons and character, and use our influence to promote the same tender regard for Christian Character wherever we find it.

3<sup>rd</sup> We will watch over each others practice with mutual good will and reprove an erring Brethren privately in kindness instead of the unjustifiable and ruinous course of reporting them or his natural imperfections to others.

4<sup>th</sup> We will in <sup>all</sup> things consult the Christian peace and reputation of our associated Brethren both in the churches and in the Secret Ministry;



5<sup>th</sup> Feeling deeply interested in the edification of our Brethren, we severally and jointly agree, that we will affectionately consult the interest of each other Churches and Societies in the employment and support of Ministers till we shall be able to support Pastors in our respective Churches.

6<sup>th</sup> We will by every reasonable means endeavour to extend a knowledge of the Gospel and its saving influence into all the new settlements of this rising State, by promoting among them all the benevolent operations of the day.

7<sup>th</sup> We require no other test for uniting with this association than a good heart sincere by Evangelical doctrines and a Holy life.

8<sup>th</sup> The great foundation of our faith shall be the Bible, and no other Standard shall be erected which shall contravene the right of proving our doctrines and defending our

Practice by it but.

9<sup>th</sup> as a declaration of our general understanding of this sacred word, we affirm our belief in the Holy Trinity and Deity of the three Persons in the Godhead, the original upright man and subsequent total fall of man, the vicarious sufferings of Christ, the necessary Divine influence in producing a change of heart, Justification by faith, the Resurrection, the Judgement day and the eternal happiness of the Righteous, and ceaseless misery of the finally impenitent.

10<sup>th</sup> The liberal system which we accept shall never be construed to prevent free and full discussion.

after adopting the foregoing Constitution  
and bond of union the association ad-  
journeled to meet at Plainfield on  
the sixth of April. 1836.

April 6<sup>th</sup> 1836 Association met agreeably to  
adjournment, at the House of Geo. St. Smith  
Rev. Mr. Knappen Moderator in the  
Chair, Rev. John D. Pierce made the open-  
ing Prayer and was voted a member  
of the association Mr. C. Thompson  
and Wm. Orr delegates of Plainfield  
and Otsego Churches be received as  
members of this association. It was  
then voted to proceed to the ordina-  
tion of Geo. St. Smith with a view to  
obtain him. The association then  
proceeded to examine him and he  
passed examination. It was then  
voted unanimously to ordain him  
to morrow at ten o'clock. voted  
that the Moderator preach the  
ordination sermon and give the charge  
and that Rev. St. W. make the  
ordination Prayer give the right hand  
of fellowship and read a portion of  
Scripture.

voted also that the Rev John D. Pierce  
be a committee in connection with the  
Rev McCall to prepare and publish a notice  
of the ordination also to revise and  
correct the Constitution and report at the  
next meeting voted to close by Prayer  
adjourn to meet at this place to morrow  
morning at eight o'clock Prayer by  
Moderator

April 7<sup>th</sup>. Met again by adjournment opened  
with Prayer by Rev A. H. Rose  
and adjourned to the school house and  
proceeded to ordain Mr Geo A Smith  
according to the previous order and  
after the administering of the Lords Supper  
returned to Geo A Smiths and made  
out his Credentials and adjourned  
to meet at Comstock on the second  
Thursday of September at 2 o'clock  
Closing Prayer by Mr Cummins

Constock Sept 12<sup>th</sup> 1839

Association met at the school house  
3 o'clock opening Prayer by the Moderators  
Ministers Present Rev. Mason & Miller  
" of J. Stone  
" Geo. A. Smith

Delegates. from Gull Prairie N. May  
Constock J. Cummins Geo. A. Smith was  
appointed Clerk pro ten voted that the  
members of our churches that are present  
be invited to sit as corresponding members  
of association voted that a committee of  
overtures to consist of three be appointed  
Geo. A. Smith J. Cummins  
J. Percival was chosen said committee

Overture 1<sup>st</sup>

What is the duty of our churches  
towards professing Presbyterian & Congre-  
gationalists who have been some time  
among us but have not connected  
with us

Resolved that such members of  
Presbyterian & Congregational  
Churches as show a disposition to delay  
be kindly admonished & expostulated with  
by the churches where they are & if



Refraction reported to churches to which  
they belong

## Overture 2

What is the duty of churches  
toward their members who habitually  
absent themselves from Public  
Worship & pursue their ordinary business  
on the Sabbath

Resolved that such persons  
be dealt with as Covenant breakers  
adjourned to Public Worship half past  
Noon this evening Prayer by ~~Geo~~  
~~Smith~~ Prayer by Rev Mr Knappen  
Sermon by Rev Geo A Smith from  
Romans 12. 21<sup>st</sup> Closing Prayer by  
Rev A S Ware adjourned to  
morrow morning 6 o'clock

Sept 13<sup>th</sup> Met according to adjournment  
Prayer by Geo A Smith

Overture 3<sup>rd</sup> is it advisable that the  
Comstock Church under existing circum-  
stances be divided

Resolved that it is the duty of the  
Comstock Church from its extensive location

To be divided for the sole purpose  
of the greater accommodation & useful-  
ness of its members

voted C Andrews  
assistant clerk

Overture 4<sup>th</sup> Should not a church which  
is delinquent in sending delegates  
to this association be admonished

Resolved that the churches belonging  
to this association not represented  
~~and~~ be requested to to render  
a reason for absence at the next  
meeting of this body & if no  
reasonable excuse be rendered that  
they be admonished

Public Worship attended half eleven  
o'clock sermon by A Stone from  
Ezekiel 15-5

Overture 5<sup>th</sup> is it right  
for the Comstock church after  
having made exertions to obtain  
a suitable minister to employ a  
Baptist



Resolved that this association  
believe it to be right and proper for  
the Cornstock Church to employ a  
Baptist Ministers to preach to them  
for a short time under existing  
Circumstances

Voted to defer the unfinished business  
till the next meeting

Voted that the Rev. Ellison Knapp  
Preach at the next annual meeting

Voted to adjourn to meet at  
Marshall on the first Wednesday  
in March 1834 approved by vote  
of association

attest Ellison Knapp Moderator  
Geo. A. Smith Clerk for term

Marshall March 7<sup>th</sup> 1838  
Association met at 2 o'clock  
opened with prayer by the Rev Mr  
Cockson of Vermont Colony Catarci  
it was then moved that delegates  
now present their Credentials when  
the following Gentlemen appeared  
as delegates from their respective churches  
from the Church at Plainfield Rev  
Geo. A. Smith and A. S. Ware Delegates  
Church at Gull Pass and Confield Bnd  
Delegate Church at Marshall  
Doct L. W. Hart Delegate the  
Rev Mr Cockson appeared from  
Vermontville Mr A. S. Ware  
was then Chosen Moderator for  
the ensuing year and William  
H. McCull was Chosen Clerk for the  
ensuing year. The Association  
then heard a sermon from Rev Mr  
McCoy of Grand Rapids from  
Numbers 4-15-

The Rev Sylvester Cockson was  
admitted a member of the Association  
It was then moved the members  
of the Church present be invited to  
set as Corresponding members of the

association on motion it was voted  
that a committee of overtures be appointed  
for this association the following members  
were chosen said committee Rev Geo  
W Smith Rev John O Pirkle and  
Rev Sylvester Cockran on motion  
adjourned to meet at 7 o'clock this evening  
but according to adjournment sermon  
by Rev Mr Cockran from Joshua  
13-1st. The Rev L M Smith  
was invited to sit as corresponding  
member of this association

adjourned to meet 4th of March  
March 6 - met according to adjournment  
opening Prayer by Consistent Bishop  
the following Overtures were then  
adopted: The do than attached to the  
Overture first Communion Sermon by G. W. S.

ought the churches to favour the  
Cause of Moral Reform by the circu-  
lation of information on the subject

Resolved that we approve of the circulation  
of the Advocate of Moral Reform  
and also recommend to the ministers  
of our Association to exert their influence  
in all suitable ways to banish from

our Country the destructive sin of <sup>and</sup> Intemperance  
Dissipation

Whereas the Congress of the United States  
have granted to State of Michigan  
upwards of Seventy two Sections of  
Valuable land for the founding ~~and~~  
Support of a University and whereas  
Convention that formed the State  
Constitution laid the foundation  
for the establishment of such an  
institution and whereas the Legislature  
in providing for the organization of the  
same have evinced a liberal system  
of Policy and whereas the course of  
the Regents so far as it has shown  
itself in action appears favourable  
to the interests of Religion and  
good Morals therefore

Resolved  
That we deem it of very great  
importance and our duty as good  
Citizens to give it Countenance and  
Support

3 Resolved that we deem it expedient  
that the Lords Supper be administered  
in our Churches as often as once in

two months beginning with the first  
Sabbath in each year

- 4) Resolved the recent Stanes taken  
by the American Temperance  
Union in favour of Total abstinence  
is worthy of our approbation  
and Support
- 5) Resolved that we approve of the formation  
object and plan of operations as far as  
we are acquainted with them of the  
Western Society of Michigan ~~for~~  
benefit the Indians and we recommend  
it to the Churches of our Association  
as one that promises great good to the  
aborigines of our Country and as worthy  
of their Cordial Support
- 6) Resolved that it shall be the duty  
of our permanent Clerk to give notice  
of the meetings of Association in  
the Michigan Observer six weeks  
previous to the meeting



Notice is hereby given that the following resolution will be presented at the next meeting of the Association

Resolved that the name of this Association be changed from Congregational Association of Michigan to the Western Congregational Association of Michigan

Resolved that we recommend to the Churches connected with this Association to memorialize the Legislature to repeal the law licensing the Sale of ardent Spirits

Believing that there is a glaring discrepancy between the precept and example of our State authorities in relation to Sabbath desecration which is very derogatory to character as a State as well as a great sin against God we resolve that we consider it the duty of all connected with this Association to memorialize the Legislature to prevent the running of Cars upon the several Rail Roads of the State upon the Sabbath

Resolved that the Clerk be authorized  
to forward the doing of this meeting  
to the Editor of the Michigan  
Observer for Publication Resolved  
that we adjourn to meet at Otsego  
the first Wednesday in Sept at 7 o'clock  
A.M. and that the the Rev. Mr. May  
be appointed to preach the opening sermon  
and the Rev. Mr. Gookin be appointed  
a Substitute then meeting closed with  
prayer and adjourned

at test William R. McCallum



Otsego Sept 5<sup>th</sup> 1838

Association met agreeably to appointment  
and opened with prayer by the Rev. G. P. Smith.  
The Association then proceeded to business  
Deacon Thompson presented a certificate  
as a delegate from the Church at  
Plainfield. The members of the Church at  
Otsego were invited to sit as corresponding  
members. The resolution offered at the  
last meeting for altering the name of  
this Association from the Congregational  
Association of Michigan to the Western  
Congregational Association of Michigan  
was then adopted. also the following  
Resolutions

first Resolved that the Association  
appoint one of its Ministers as a  
delegate to attend a meeting of  
an Association formed in the eastern  
part of this State and establish a  
Correspondence between these bodies

Second

Resolved that the Association appoint  
at each of its stated meetings  
one of its members to deliver a sermon or  
an essay on some of the important  
Subjects connected with the Kingdom

of Christ at the next succeeding  
Meeting.

third

Resolved that Association appoint the  
Rev John Q Pierce to deliver a sermon  
on the original organization and  
constitution of the Christian Church  
at its next stated meeting or in  
case of his absence that the Rev  
Mason Snappen be appointed

Resolved that Association adjourn to  
meet at the School house on Toland's  
Barabaric on the first Wednesday  
in March 1839

attest William Percival Clark

Telou Prairie March 6. 1839

Association met at the school house  
11 O'clock A.M. agreeably to adjournment—

There being no Moderator present Association  
was called to order by Geo. N. Smith—

Opened by prayer by J. Ballan—

Ministers present Mason Knappen Geo. N. Smith

Delegates from the church of Richland S. Hoyt

... from the church of Plainfield & Otsego C. H. Houn

... from the church of Cornstark S. Cummings  
& J. R. Cummings—

On motion voted that Rev. M. Knappen be  
Moderator for the ensuing year—

On motion voted that Geo. N. Smith be  
Clerk for the ensuing year—

Mr. S. VanAntwerp delegate from the church  
in Merenge presented the request of that chh.  
to become connected with this Association  
the chh was accordingly received & he was  
received as its delegate—

On motion S. Cummings, S. Hoyt, S. VanAnt-  
werp & Geo. N. Smith were appointed a  
Committee of Overseers—

Mr. James Ballan a licentiate from the  
Cong. Association of the City of New York  
presented a request to be received as candidate  
for ordination. he was accordingly rec'd—

On motion voted to commence the examination  
of Br Ballard 2 Oclk P.M.

Voted to adjourn one hour - Closed by prayer -

2 O'clock P.M. Association met according to adj.  
Opened by prayer by Rev. S. Mason -  
Rev. Stephen Mason presented credentials from  
the Marshall Presbytery with request to become  
a member of this Association he was accordingly  
received -

Association proceeded to the examination  
of Br Ballard in Theology - after due exam-  
ination, on motion Ass. voted to sustain his  
examination in Theology -

On motion Association voted that public worship  
commence tomorrow at 11 Oclk A.M.

Voted to adjourn till 7 Oclk this evening -  
Closed by prayer by Moderator -

7 Evening Association met according to adj -  
proceeded to business by hearing Br. Ballard  
relate his religious experience -

Mr Stephen Kimball appearing as delegate  
from the church in Marshall therefore  
voted to receive him -

1/2 past 7 - commenced public worship -  
Sermon by Geo. K. Smith on the original  
organization & Constitution of the Christian  
Church - Text Matt. 18-17 Tell it to the Church

voted to adjourn to this place 8 Oclk tomorrow.

7. 8 Oclk A.M. Association met according to adj.  
Opened by prayer by G. K. Smith—

The minutes of yesterday were read—

On Motion voted to sustain the examination  
of Br Ballan as far as relates to his religious  
experience. When the Assn. proceeded to ex-  
amine him on chh. History & government  
voted to sustain his examination in church  
History & Government—

The following resolutions were then moved &  
adopted—

The Association being satisfied that Br  
Ballan is a graduate of Williams College  
therefor resolved that we omit his ex-  
amination on the arts & sciences &  
languages—

Also, being satisfied with his qualifications  
for the gospel ministry— therefore  
resolved to proceed to the ordination services  
at 11. Oclk A.M.—

Association then assigned the parts of the  
Ordination services as follows—

Br Mason to preach the sermon &  
make the consecrating prayer—



Br Knappen to give the Charge—  
Geo. A. Smith to give the right hand of Fellowship  
Rev. C. Clark from the Kalamazoo Presbytery  
arriving it was voted that he be invited to  
sit as corresponding member of this body—  
On motion voted that Br Clark take the part  
in the ordination assigned to Br Knappen  
& that Br Knappen make the consecrating  
prayer—

The ordination services were performed  
according to the above arrangement after  
which the sacrament of the Lords Supper  
was administered by Bros Masan & Clark—

Voted to adjourn to meet at the house of S.  
Cunning at 1/2 past 3 Oclk P.M.—

1/2 past 3 P.M. Association, <sup>met</sup> agreeably to adjournment.  
Prayer by Br. Masan—

On motion voted that when we adjourn we  
adjourn to meet on Gull Prairie the first  
Wednesday of next Sept 1/2 past 10 Oclk A.M.

At the request of Bros Masan & Kimball  
voted that they have leave of absence—

On motion voted to adjourn to meet on Gull  
Prairie the first Wednesday of next Sept 1/2 past 10 Oclk

Attest Masan Knappen  
Geo. A. Smith <sup>Mod.</sup> Clark

Richland June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1841.

Association met at the meeting house  
9 o'clock A.M. agreeably to a special call by  
letters missive according to the Constitution  
to consider the question Is it, or is not the duty  
of any church belonging to this body to unite  
& amalgamate itself with a church of any  
other denomination for the sake of greater  
gospel privileges? is it, or is it not, for the  
spiritual benefit of any such church?

Opened by prayer by Geo. N. Smith—  
Messrs. E. H. House & Henry Green appeared as  
Delegates from the Church of Otsego—

Messrs. R. May & S. Hoyt appeared as Delegates  
from the Church of Richland—

Mr. C. Andrews appeared as Delegate from  
the Church of Constock—

Voted that Messrs. Calvin Clark be invited to  
sit as corresponding member of this body—

Voted that members present from chhs  
connected with this Association be invited  
to sit as corresponding members of this body—

Voted that members of Presbyterian chhs  
present be invited to sit as corresponding mem-  
bers of this body.

On motion, voted, that Messrs. M. Knapp  
be Moderator of this Association—



On motion, voted, that Geo. N. Smith be  
Clerk of this Association —

Moderator appointed Rev. C. Clark, Bro. W.  
May & C. Andrews Committee of Overtures —

Committee reported Overture No. 1<sup>st</sup>  
see question above —

Discussion of the question commenced —

Voted to adjourn to this place 1. O'clock P. M.

Closed by prayer —

1. O'clock P. M. Association met agreeably  
to adjournment — Opened by prayer —

Voted that Rev. Veron D. Taylor be invited  
to sit as corresponding member of this body —

Discussion of the question continued —

2. O'clock P. M. public worship sermon by  
Geo. N. Smith from John 15: 22 —

Voted, after considerable discussion to lay  
Overture No. 1. on the table sine die. & that  
the churches be advised to act their wisdom  
on the subject —

Overture N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Resolved that we hear & discuss  
the articles of the Constitution of the Marshall  
Congregational Conference of Churches —

Unanimously adopted —

Overture No. 3.<sup>rd</sup> Resolved that we recommend  
the individual churches & ministers composing  
this Association, to the Marshall Congregational  
Conference of Churches—

Unanimously adopted—

Overture No. 4.<sup>th</sup> Resolved that this body  
dissolve itself at this meeting, & do hereby  
dissolve itself & recommend to the ministers  
& churches which compose it to unite  
with the Marshall Congregational Con-  
ference of Churches—

Unanimously adopted—

Closed by prayer by Moderator—

Attest, Mason Knappes Mod-  
... Geo. N. Smith Clerk—

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4

1834			Association	Do	
March	To	this	Book	6/	75
March	21	To	Postage on Double letter		25
Aug	15	To	Postage on letter to District		13

March 4<sup>th</sup>

By <sup>cash</sup> cash 20/ \$ 2 50



