RECORDS OF THE MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

CONSTITUTION, 1837
MINUTES, 1837-1841
Congregational Michigan Association Records
At a meeting of delegates from several con
gregation held at Richland Gulf Barrie
Mag he first eighteen hundred thirty seven
Sherman Cumming was chosen moderator
and William Telfair was chosen clerk
for ten whom the following gentlemen
presented their credentials and were an
ounced as delegates to act in this Convoca
tion. Sherman Cumming, Montgomery
Percival, Stephen Kimbal, William
Caldwell, Jesse Barnes, Mitchell Kinsdale,
Henry Little, Henry Wright, Canfield
Birt, Stockwell Lay, James Whiting,
Elijah Whilby, Su Wright, Lester
Bivins, Phillip Gay, Augustin
Austin, William Logan, Charles
W. Shawling.

On motion it was resolved
that an association be void formed
the motion being four. It carried unani-
ously in the affirmative. A committee
of three was then appointed to draft
a constitution and bond of union for
this association. This committee con-
sicled of Mitchell Kinsdale, Stephen
Kimbal and Geo. Smith. The
Committee retired and after
To us and our ancestors continuously, helped 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

This association shall be called the Congregational Association of Michigan.

Art. 2 This association shall consist of all Congregational Churches by representation and ministers who consent to the following articles of union.

Art. 3 The officers of this association shall consist of a Moderator and Clerk, who shall be chosen annually. The Moderator shall preside in all meeting 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 the proper organ through which its members shall obtain letters of recommendation & dismissal & do such other business as naturally devolves upon his office.

Provided also that in the absence of the moderator, the clerk shall not as moderator and latter 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 encouragement and ordination Excellent, etc.

Art. 5 One great object of the meetings of this association shall be the edification of the people when 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.

We cordially fellowship all evangelical denominations who hold our articles in substance, and occasionally will invite their ministers to our pulpits, and when convenient exchange delegates if mutually found desirable.

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.

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 doctrine of Christianity together with an acquaintance with the best authors on this subject.
1. The reserve to our local churches the right of self-government and hold this body to be only advisory.

4. Every church shall have the right of being represented by a clergyman and two delegates.

5. This association shall hold its annual meeting on the first Wednesday in March.

12. This constitution may be altered by a vote of two-thirds of said alteration shall have been laid before the association at a previous meeting.
Bond of Union

1st We will receive and treat each other affectionately, as brethren in the Lord, in good faith.

2nd We will avoid all slanderous expressions and invectives about each other, persons and characters, and use our influence to promote the same tender regard for Christian character wherever we find it.

3rd We will watch over each other's practice with mutual good will and approve or censure brotherly faults in kindness instead of the unjustifiable and injurious course of repeating them or his natural imperfections to others.

4th We will in all things conduct the Christian peace and reputation of our associated brethren both in the churches and in the Secular Ministry.
Feeling deeply interested in the elevation 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.

We will by every reasonable means Endeavor 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 purposes of the day.

We require no other test for uniting with this affection than a good heart evinced by Evangelical doctrines and a holy life.

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

9th 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 uprightness and subsequent total fall of man; the vicarious sufferings of Christ; the necessity Divine Influence in producing a Change of heart, Justification by faith; the Resurrection; the Judgement Day; the Eternal Happiness of the Righteous, and cease of misery of the finally impenitent.

10th The Liberal System which we elect shall never be construed to prevent free and full discussion.
After adopting the foregoing Constitution and bonds of union the Association did journeys to meet at Plainfield on the 6th of April 1836.

April 6, 1836 Association met agreeably to adjournment at the House of God with Rev. Mr. Knappen Moderator in the Chair Rev. John Q. Pierce read the Preamble. Baker, and was voted a member of the Association. Mr. E. Thompson and the other delegates of Plainsfield and Otsego Churches be elected as members of this Association. It was then voted to proceed to the ordination of Geo. A. Smith with a view to ordain him. The Association then proceeded to examine him and he suffered 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. A. S. Ware make the ordination Prayer give the right hand of fellowship and read a portion of Scripture.
Voted also that the Rev. John O. Pace
be a committee in connection with the
church all to prepare and publish a notice
of the ordination also to revise and
correct the Constitution and report at the
next meeting not to close by Prayer
adjourn to meet at this place tomorrow
morning, at eight o'clock. Prayer by
Moderator

April 7th. Met according to adjournment open
with Prayer by Rev. O. J. Pace
and adjourned to the Schoolhouse and
proceeded to ordain Mr. Geo of Smith
according to the previous order and
after the administering of the Lord's Supper
return to Geo of Smith 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 12th 1839
Association met at the School House 3 o'clock opening prayer by the Moderator Ministers present Rev. Mason Russell Geo. Smith, Geo. Smith
Delegates from Gull Pearsie R. Way Constock J. Cummins Geo. Smith was appointed clerk for ten voted that the members of our churches that are present be invited to sit as corresponding members of association voted that 3 members of Overtures to consist of these be appointed Geo. Smith J. Cummins Percival was chosen said Committee

Overture 1st
What is the duty of our churches towards professing Presbyterian & Congregationalists who have been some time among us but have not connected with us

Resolved that such member of Presbyterian & Congregational Churches as 3rd a dissolution to delay be kindly admonished & expostulated with by the Churches where they are & if
Overture 2

What is the duty of churches toward their members who habitually absent themselves from public worship and pursue their ordinary business on the Sabbath?


Overture 3d. is it advisable that the Comstock church under existing circumstances 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 and useful ness of its members

Voted to Andrews

Assistant Clerk

Overture 2: Should not a church which is dilatory in sending delegates to this association be admonished

Resolved that the churches belonging to this association not represented tender be requested to tender a reason for absence at the next meeting of this body if is no reasonable excuse be tendered that they be admonished

In black worship attended half eleven o'clock sermon by A. Smith from Ezekiel 15:5

Overture 5: Is it right for the Comstock Church after having made exertions to obtain a suitable ministry to employ a Baptist
Resolved that this association believe it to be right and proper for the Comstock church to employ a Baptist minister 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. Mason Knapp preach at the next annual meeting.

Voted to adjourn to meet at Marshall on the first Wednesday in March 1836 approved by vote of association.

attest, Mason Knapp, Moderator.
Geo. A. Simon, Clerk.
Marshall March 7th 1838

Association met at 2 o'clock

Said with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Cockrum of Vermont Colony, Eton. It was then moved that delegates and present their credentials when the following gentlemen appeared as delegates from their respective churches:


Rev. L. W. Hart. Deleg. of the

Rev. Mr. Cockrum appeared from Vermontville, Mr. A. W. More was then chosen Moderator for the ensuing year and William A. Holcomb was chosen Clerk for the ensuing year. The Association then heard a sermon from Rev. J. O. C. of Grace Rapids from

The Rev. Sylvester Cockrum was admitted a member of the Association. It was then moved the members of the church present be invited to seat 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 to constitute the Committee: Doctor A. Smith, Rev. and Hon. John Q. Pule and Rev. Sylvester Cockman. On motion, adjourned to meet at 9 o'clock this evening. It is accordingly adjourned, however, by Rev. Mr. Cockman from Joshua 13:1st. The Rev. E. W. Smith was invited to sit as Corresponding Member of this Association.

Adjourned to meet 5th of March. Must be met according to adjournment.

Opening Prayers by Capt. F. B. Pope. The following Overtures were then adopted: TheAlso there attended to the Communion Service by God. Called the Churches to favour the Cause of Moral Reform by the circulation 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 sedition

2nd

Whereas the Congress of the United States have granted to the State of Michigan upwards of seventy-two sections of valuable land for the founding and support of a University and whereas the convention that framed 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 favorable to the interest of religion and good morals therefore

Resolved that we esteem it of very great importance and our duty as good citizens to give it countenance and support.

3rd

Resolved that we esteem it expedient that the Lord's Supper be administered in our Churches as often as once in
two months beginning with the first Sabbath in each year.

4. Resolved, that the Fluent stood 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.
Benefit the Indians and we recommend
it to the Churches of our Association
as one that provides great good to the
aborigines of our Country and as worth
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's wards
province 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 alcoholic spirits.

Believing that there is a glaring discrepancy between the precept and example of our state authorities in relation to Sabbath observation, which is very derogatory to character as a state as well as a people 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 boats upon the several rail roads of the state upon the Sabbath.
Resolved That the Clerk be authorized to forward the closing 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 Rev. Dr. Otis be appointed to preach the opening sermon, and the Rev. Dr. Clark be appointed as substitute. The meeting closed with prayer and adjourned.

Attent William Belcher
Otego. Sept 5th 1838

Association meet agreeably to appointment and opened with prayer by the Rev. Capt. H. Deacon Thompson presented a certificate as a delegate from the church at Plainfield. The members of the church at Otego were invited to sit as Corresponding Members. The resolution offered at the last meeting for altering the name of the association from the Congregational Association of Michigan to the Western Congregational Association of Michigan was then adopted. Also the following resolution 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 the 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 any 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 O. Hince 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 Knappen be appointed

Resolved that association adjourn to meet at the School House on Islands Burasie on the first Wednesday in March 1839

Attest William Reil to clerk
Association met at the school house 11 o'clock A.M. agreeably to adjournment.
Then bring no Moderator Present. Association was called to order by Geo. W. Smith.
Open by prayer by J. Ballard.
Minister present Mason Knappen Geo. W. Smith.
Delegates from the church of Richland S. Hoyt.
... from the church of Plainfield O. H. Hone.
... from the church of Constant S. Cummings.
J. R. Cummings.
On motion voted that Mr. M. Knappen be Moderator for the ensuing year.
On motion voted that Geo. W. Smith be Clerk for the ensuing year.
Mr. S. Vancant tagged delegate from the church in Menange presented the request of that chur.
... to become connected with this association.
The chur was accordingly received and was
... as its delegate.

On motion J. Cummings S. Hoyt S. Vancant
were & Geo. W. Smith were appointed a
Committee of Overtures.

Mr James Ballard 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 re.
On motion voted to commence the examination of Br. Ballard 2 Ocloc. P.M.
Voted to adjourn one hour—Closed by Prayer.

2 O'clock P.M. Association met according to adj.
Openly by prayer by Rev. A. 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 examination, on motion of P. Voted to sustain his examination in Theology.

On motion Association Voted that public worship commence tomorrow at 11 Ocloc. A.M.
Voted to adjourn till 7 Ocloc. 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 Thomson Voted to receive him.

Voted to adjourn to this place 8 O'Clock tomorrow morning.

7 & 8 O'Clock A.M. Association met according to adjourned

Order of the day: Opening by prayer by J. N. Smith.

The minutes of yesterday were read.

On motion voted to sustain the examination of Mr. Ballard as far as relates to his religious experience. When the body proceeded to examine him on church history, government voted to sustain his examination in church history & government.

The following resolutions were then moved & adopted:

The Association being satisfied that Mr. Ballard is a graduate of Williams College, therefore resolve that we admit his examination on the laws & sciences & languages.

Also being satisfied with his qualifications for the gospel ministry, therefore resolve to proceed to the Ordination services at 11 O'Clock A.M.

Association then assigned the part of the Ordination services as follows:

Mr. Mason to preach the sermon & make the concluding prayer.
Br. Knappen to give the Charge—
Geo. W. Smith to give the right hand of Fellowship.
Br. 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 assign'd 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 Lord's Supper was administered by Brs. Mason & Clark.

Voted to adjourn to meet at the house of A. Cumming at ½ past 3 O'clock P.M.
½ past 3 O'clock Association agreed to adjourn.
Prayer by Br. Mason.
On motion voted that when we adjourn we adjourn to meet on Gull Prairie the first Wednesday of next Sept ½ past 10 O'clock A.M.
At the request of Brs. Mason & Himball voted that they have leave of absence.
On Motion voted to adjourn to meet on Gull Prairie the first Wednesday of next Sept ½ past 10 O'clock.

Abner Mason, Knappen.
Geo. W. Smith, Clark.
Richmond June 2nd 1841

Association met at the meeting house
9 Clark St. N. according 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
and 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
Measrs. E. H. House & Henry Green appeared as
Delegates from the church of Otsego
Measrs. R. May & S. Hoyt appeared as Delegates
from the church of Richland
Mr. C. Andrews appeared as Delegate from
the church of Cowstock

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

Voted that members present from churches
connected with this association be invited
to sit as corresponding member of this body

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

On motion, voted that Rev. W. C. Rissman
be Moderator of this Association
On motion, voted that Geo. W. Smith be Clerk of this Association.

Moderator appointed Rev. C. Clarke, Rev. N. May & C. Andrews Committee of Overtures.

Committee reported Overture No. 1

See question above—

Discussion of the question continued.

Voted to adjourn to this place 11 o'clock P.M. in the morning.

Closed by prayer.

11 o'clock P.M. Association met accordingly to adjournment— Opened by prayer.

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

Discussion of the question continued—

2nd. O'clock P.M. Public worship sermon by Geo. W. Smith from John 15: 22.

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

Overture No. 2— Resolved that we hear disapprove the Articles of the Constitution of the Marshall Congregational Conference of Churches— Unanimously adopted.
Overture No. 3. Resolved that we recommend the individual churches and ministers composing this association, to the Marshall Congregational Gemein of Churches.

Unanimously adopted.

Overture No. 4. Resolved that this body dissolve itself at this meeting, and hereby dissolve itself to recommit to the ministers and churches which compose it, to unite with the Marshall Congregational Gemein of Churches.

Unanimously adopted.

Closed by prayer by Moderator.

Attest, Mason Kenyon, Moderator.

Geo. W. Smith, Clerk.
1836
Association to
Mark for this Book of
March 21 to Postage on Double letter 25
Aug 15 to Postage on letter to District 13
March 6th  By Cash 20/ $2.50