

## *Recollections of Aubrey Wedgeworth*

*Jeremy Hight interviewed his granddad, Aubrey Wedgeworth, April 12, 2001. Mr. Wedgeworth, 72 years young, led the singing at Cedar Grove for several decades and is one of the senior active resident members of Cedar Grove Baptist Church. His daughter, Linda Hight, transcribed the audiotape interview. The interview is also available at the East Texas Oral History Archive housed in the LaGrone Family History Center on N. Shelby St. in Carthage, Texas.*

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My earliest memory of our church is of the women sitting on the right as we came in the door. The men sat on the left side. There were pallets in the corner for the children. My parents moved to this community when I was two months old and they raised me in this church.

In the real early days, the church met in the building at the Missionary Baptist Six Mile Church. We only had quarter time so we had no trouble sharing the building. We had two services, morning and night, one Sunday a month. Which church really built that building, I really don't know. But, our church moved to our present location and built the church that we moved to build our new sanctuary. At that time, we became Cedar

Grove. Mr. Born sold us the land [in 1911] to build the new church.

The church only had one big room, no Sunday school rooms, and I can remember us having Sunday school in different corners of the room, with four teachers teaching different lessons at one time. Then we got up town! We hung wire across the room and hung curtains up across for Sunday school rooms. That didn't last too long. We built

Sunday school rooms across the back of the church. Three of them. We had no restrooms at all, just the outhouse.

I recall us sharing pastors with Clayton, Fair Play, Macedonia, and sometimes Friendship. We only had quarter time so the same pastor could handle them all. Then Clayton went half time, and that is when Friendship came in. Our pastors turned over pretty frequently because we got our pastors from the school at Marshall. East Texas Baptist was a two-year school at this time, so the preacher boys didn't stay too long.

I remember Bro. Bryant, Bro. Muxworthy, and then we had a bunch of S's all in a row. Bro. Stiles, Bro. Sage, Bro. Smith, Bro. Stiles, and Bro. Strickland. The first preacher I ever remember and I had to be real young, was Bro. Vermillion. Now, I was talking to C.B. Marshall about this one time and he didn't believe I could remember, but I really remember laying on the pallet and listening to Bro. Vermillion preach.

We also used Bro. Garrett; he would preach on Saturday and Sunday afternoon because he was full time at Central Baptist Church in Carthage. We had gotten tired of having those young boys as pastors, so we used Bro. Garrett when he could be with us.

One of those young preacher boys was Carroll Chadwick. I can remember going with Uncle Carl to Marshall to pick up Carroll and Doyle at the school at East Texas Baptist College. We'd go in the pickup and we didn't have double cab trucks then!

These pastors are not in order, but we had Bro. Boland, Bro. A.B. Lightfoot, Bro. Howell, Bro. Pemberton and Bro. Thompson. Then we got Bro. Bazer, and then about 33 years ago we called Bro. Freddy Mason. That stopped this list.

Some of these preachers really turned out to be really good preachers. Bro. Chadwick became the president of the Baptist Convention of Texas. Bro. Boland was a good evangelist. He held lots of revivals. Years later, we were at a funeral in Snyder and Bro. Lightfoot was holding the service. We had some really good preachers that grew up in our church. We were a stepping-stone for a lot of young preachers.

During the years, I taught intermediate boys Sunday school class. We've never had a choir at Cedar Grove, I always thought if you took the singers out of the congregation, then the ones who just sang along would stop singing. We've always had good singing out here at Cedar Grove. I started leading the singing at a very early age and continued until last year when I got too old.

We've never had a parsonage here at Cedar Grove.

There have been lots of changes in my lifetime. I can remember when 15 people were a really big crowd. When I was really little I remember we had lots of young people in our church around my age. Then the war came on and they went away. Farming quit in our community and went to cattle. Some people moved to town, some went to the shipyards during the war and our church went down. That's when it got really low. In fact, it was talked about us disbanding at one time. But there were a few that said they would never disband, and I'm sure proud that we didn't because it grew back into the good church we have now. It is one of the best in our county.

In the earlier days, our air-conditioning worked real good in the winter and our heat worked real good in the summer. We tried to keep cool in the summer with funeral home fans and to keep warm in the winter with closeness and a big old stove in the aisle.

That heater would just about be warm when it was time to go home. Sometimes it never seemed to get warm.

We had good socials back then. I don't remember what we called them, Sunday school parties, or church parties, but I remember us all cooking soup in a wash pot under the oak tree. Everyone just brought their canned foods and we put them all together in the pot.

We had a school in our community and then it closed so the church was open for the young people to have get-togethers. We always had men and women to chaperone the parties and get-togethers for the young people to have entertainment.

We always seemed to have enough money to pay the preachers and the bills. I can remember the treasurer coming around to the men folks and telling them we needed a little more money for the visiting preacher after the revival. But we never had any box suppers or such to raise money. When the time came, we always seemed to have the money taken care of. We just dug a little deeper and paid the bills. But we never had a whole lot of bills.

Sunday dinner with the preacher was something we looked forward to. Every Sunday, he would go home with someone. It was too far to go back to Marshall and he couldn't just run into town to eat. People were always glad to have the preacher. Lots of Sundays, the good women of the church would invite the preacher and all the youth to her house on Sunday. I can remember six or eight at a table and being the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> table to eat. There would still be food. This was during the depression and I remember we always had plenty of food and it was good food, too.

In those days we had summer revivals, and later we added a spring revival. They would run Sunday to Sunday and all the denominations in the community would turn out for our revival. I can

remember as many as 25 joining the church by profession of faith and promise of letter during one service. Sometimes there were not many at all that made a public profession. We would invite a visiting evangelist or a former pastor, and he would do some good old hard preaching straight from the Bible. They didn't call them "cowboy preachers" or "youth preachers" back then. They just preached the Word.

Baptism was quite an ordeal back then. We had different stock ponds in the community. We'd go to different ponds to baptize. Back then you knew who had the good ponds. Most of the good ponds had diving boards and we swam in them. So you knew which ponds were good and clear. Those were where we would go. My dad had the pond behind your house and it was used quite a bit. Mr. Alexander had a good pond and we also used the Born's pond. I think it is all grown up now. Mr. Lee Dennard had what we called "the washhole". It is not very big now, but it was cold spring water and you couldn't muddy it up. It also had a good bottom. The preacher would hold a devotional before the baptism, then he would baptize them, bring them right there out of the water while we were singing, and then we would give them the right hand of church fellowship. We had some touching services right there in the woods.

I was baptized in Dixie Lake - - it took a lot of water for me - - right at the east end of the end of the dam at Dixie Lake. There were a lot of grownups, and the water was almost over my head when they quit walking out in the lake. Bro Garrett had just held our revival and he was the one who baptized me.

I don't ever remember our church ever having to discipline or church anyone. If there were ever any squabbles, the older people handled them without us ever knowing about them.

Our clothes were always whatever we had. They were clean and if you had a new pair of blue overalls, you were fixed up. I can remember when they were right popular. We wore overalls and felt comfortable in them. We never went out to dress fancy or have to be dressed up to go to church. You wore what you had and were comfortable.

Leading the singing, I did get to see the ladies wearing their hats. Then they stopped wearing them and some began again to wear them. But, they don't wear them much now. There is too much spent on hairdos now to cover them up.

I guess what I would bring back is the reverence and discipline we had in the sanctuary. Coming into the auditorium - - now this is strictly my opinion - - we would be quiet and reverent with no wasted time or noise and we would begin the worship service.

I'm very proud of our church and her history. We've had no discipline problems or problems that couldn't be solved with each other. We've never had to go outside to raise money. I think we have one of the best churches anywhere. I'm proud of the leadership of our church and the young people of our church. I just like our church, that's what I'm proud of. Now, not to the extent that I take the honor away from the Lord, for he is the one that has blessed us. And we are blessed. I don't want to give the impression that we've done it ourselves; the Lord has done it. He has blessed us so much. I think we have a really good church and give thanks to the Lord for it.

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