

# The Methodist Church at Cedar Bayou, 1844-1886,<sup>1</sup> by Chuck Chandler<sup>2</sup>

## 1. The Sam Houston Picnic

The *Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church Sesquicentennial History 1844-1994* says:

Through the early 1840s the burning question was that of annexation to the United States. One of the most famous public discussions of this topic took place at a Fourth of July celebration that was held at the Cedar Bayou church. For this occasion the citizens of the place had prepared for a big barbecue and public speaking, a very popular type of gathering in those Times. All the notables for miles around were invited to the affair. Sam Houston and his guest, Andrew Jackson Donelson, who a few months later became the United States minister to the Texas Republic, were there; Mirabeau B. Lamar was there, as well as other celebrities of the new nation.<sup>3</sup>

**However, this story does not belong to the Baytown area.** It was copied verbatim from Amelia Williams' 1935 book *Following General Sam Houston: From 1793 to 1863*.<sup>4</sup> The chapter in that book was itself copied almost verbatim from *Sixty years on the Brazos; the life and letters of Dr. John Washington Lockhart, 1824-1900*.<sup>5</sup> "Cedar Creek"<sup>6</sup> in Lockhart's book was changed to "Cedar Bayou" in Williams' book and assumptions about the church's early history were made based on her error. As a history professor at the University of Texas, Dr. Amelia W. Williams<sup>7</sup> had worked with Dr. E. C. Barker to transcribe all documents they could find that were signed by Sam Houston. Her reference for that chapter, *Sixty Years on the Brazos*, Chapter XXVII, page 210, places the event at Cedar Creek which was about two miles north of today's Chappell Hill, the home of John Washington Lockhart, who attended the picnic. The keynote speaker was named as Judge Nimrod from Chappell Hill. Nimrod Chappell served as

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<sup>1</sup> Published in the *Heritage Journal*, an annual publication of the Texas United Methodist Historical Society, Volume 17, 2021, p54.

<sup>2</sup> Member, Harris County Historical Commission.

<sup>3</sup> *Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church Sesquicentennial History 1844-1994*, by Louise Devereux Travis, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> *Following General Sam Houston: From 1793 to 1863*, by Amelia W. Williams and Bernhardt Wall, 1935.

<sup>5</sup> [\*Sixty years on the Brazos; the life and letters of Dr. John Washington Lockhart, 1824-1900\*](#), by Mrs. Jonnie Lockhart Wallis in association with Laurance L. Hill, 1930.

<sup>6</sup> Maps during the 1830s showed the name of the stream as Cedar Creek and that was the name when it was described as the eastern boundary of Harrisburg County. [Telegraph and Texas Register, August 19, 1837, p2](#), By 1845, the name was recognized as Cedar Bayou.

<sup>7</sup> [Amelia Worthington Williams. TSHA.](#)

County Judge of Washington County from 1846-1848.<sup>8</sup> Cedar Creek had been the site of an important Methodist camp meeting in 1843 and was a center for the Texas Methodist Episcopal Church in Texas until the early 1850s.

During the project, Amelia Williams had also transcribed a letter from Sam Houston to H. Stuart of the *Civilian and Gazette*, [Galveston, Tx.], which was reprinted in the *Central Texian*, [Anderson, Tx], September 22, 1855 and specifically names Washington County as the site of the barbeque.<sup>9</sup>

Independence, August 25th, 1855

Dear Sir: ... I will, to illustrate further the character of this witness, relate an incident which occurred at a barbecue on Cedar Creek, in Washington County, Texas, on the 4th of July, 1843. After an oration, delivered by Mr. Nimrod Chappell, Mr. Lamar, in the presence of the American Charge d'Affaires [Andrew Jackson Donelson], arose, and in the course of his speech, ...

It is unknown why she changed “Cedar Creek, in Washington County” to “Cedar Bayou” and her book also incorrectly stated the year as 1844. She transcribed Sam Houston’s letter as 1843 and Lockhart gave the date as 1842 in *Sixty Years on the Brazos*. But the barbeque was actually held on the Fourth of July 1845, because that was the only Fourth of July that Andrew Jackson Donelson was in Texas. He was appointed Chargé d'Affaires to Texas on September 16, 1844 and left Texas on or soon after August 9, 1845.

Even if the event had happened in the Baytown area it could not have been at the location of today’s Cedar Bayou church because there was no church there. The deed from John R. Rhea to Hance Baker, Gilbert Brooks, Harrison McLean, Columbus Wiseman and Edward A. Stocking for the 10 acre Church and Parsonage tract wasn’t drawn up until Apr 25, 1847; almost two years *after* the barbeque. It specified two building projects. One was a parsonage for “the use and benefit of the Ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and their families.” The other was “a place of worship for members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.” It was not filed

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<sup>8</sup> [Washington County, Texas 2018, a Guide to Your County Government](#). Page 43

<sup>9</sup> Regardless of the semantics of Cedar Creek vs Cedar Bayou, Sam Houston specifically stated that the barbeque happened in Washington County. [The Kemp Sketch: Sam Houston](#). Written by Louis W. Kemp, between 1930 and 1952. Click "Read the Full Bio" and scroll about halfway down.

with Harris County until Oct 6, 1856<sup>10</sup> and the church was not built until 1858.

The log house claimed by Williams as the first church was actually the 1848 parsonage. By 1860 it was no longer being used as a parsonage and was probably used as a chapel and Sunday school classroom, becoming the “log church” illustrated in Williams’ book. The first known interment at Cedar Bayou Methodist Cemetery was Sarah Scudder Hamilton (1794-1850),<sup>11</sup> mother of the circuit preacher,<sup>12</sup> indicating that the parsonage was built soon after the deed was written. The property was referred to by other surrounding deeds as the “Parsonage Tract” until after the 1858 church was built,<sup>13</sup> after which time new surveys began to call it the “Church Tract.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> HCDB S, p531, John R Rhea et al to Hance Baker, et al. Apr 27, 1847; filed and recorded Oct 6, 1856.

<sup>11</sup> Her grave is within feet of the parking lot on the south side of the 1956 church.  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/19062573/sarah-ellen-hamilton> (cenotaph)

<sup>12</sup> “From the T.W. Banner.” *Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register*, January 3, 1851, p 3.

<sup>13</sup> HCDB O, p550, March 11, 1847, John R Rhea et al to Gilbert Brooks, references “Parsonage Tract”  
HCDB Q, p16, February 26, 1852, John R Rhea et al to A.H. Kipp, references “Parsonage Tract”  
HCDB 11, p15, March 6, 1855, E.A. Stocking to Rachel Carey, references “Parsonage Tract”  
HCDB 11, p17, July 23, 1855, John R Rhea et al to Seth Carey et al, references “Parsonage Tract”

<sup>14</sup> HCDB 7, p510, April 1, 1869, Seth Carey to J. L. Pounds, references “Church Tract.”

## THE CHURCH AT CEDAR BAYOU



EDAR BAYOU runs adjacent to Goose Creek, a tributary to Galveston Bay. Along this waterway settlers established their farm homes during the colonial period of Texas history, and the little log house that they built as a place of worship was one of the first Protestant churches to be erected in Texas. Tradesmen and a few farmers built their homes about the church, and, in time, it became the nucleus of a thriving village. Ten miles from the town of Cedar Bayou there is a point of land extending far into the bay that is known as Cedar Point. In 1841, Houston bought this tract of land, and, on the projection that reached farthest into the bay, he established a simple summer home to which he brought his family every summer to enjoy the cool sea-breezes and long swims in the healthful salt waters.

Through the early 1840's the burning question in Texas was that of annexation to the United States. One of the most famous public discussions of this topic took place at a Fourth of July celebration that was held at the Cedar Bayou church. For this occasion the citizens of the place had prepared for a big barbecue and public speaking, a very popular type of gathering in those times. All the notables for miles around were invited to the affair. Sam Houston and his guest, Andrew Jackson Donelson, who a few months later became the United States minister to the Texas Republic, were there; Mirabeau B. Lamar was there, as well as a score of other celebrities of the new nation. Houston, Lamar, and Donelson all made speeches on the great topic of the day.



The First Church of Cedar Bayou, Texas, in which was held a Fourth of July meeting. A barbecue was included. President Houston was present. Collection of Mrs. D. F. Devereaux, Cedar Bayou

Text and picture from Following General Sam Houston by Amelia Williams, Ph.D., The Steck Company, Austin, 1935.





*Following General Sam Houston: From 1793 to 1863, page 162.  
by Amelia W. Williams and Bernhardt Wall, 1935.*



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Through the early 1840's the burning question in Texas was that of annexation to the United States. One of the most famous public discussions of this topic took place at a Fourth of July celebration that was held at the Cedar Bayou church. For this occasion the citizens of the place had prepared for a big barbecue and public speaking, a very popular type of gathering in those times. All the notables for miles around were invited to the affair. Sam Houston and his guest, Andrew Jackson Donelson, who a few months later became the United States minister to the Texas Republic, were there; Mirabeau B. Lamar was there, as well as a score of other celebrities of the new nation. Houston, Lamar, and Donelson all made speeches on the great topic of the day. The people were especially interested in Donelson's speech, not only because he was an eloquent speaker, but also because he was the adopted son of Andrew Jackson and was supposed to speak the opinions of Jackson himself on the subject. But the master of ceremonies, and really the speaker of the day, was Judge Nimrod, of Chappell Hill. He was a highly educated man in his full prime, and John W. Lockhart, in his *Sixty Years on the Brazos*, says: "On this occasion the Judge was full of pluck and in full feather. He soon left the earth and was among the planets on the track of the Ameri-

can Eagle. But the national bird led him from star to star, but wandered most gloriously in the constellation of the original Thirteen, where he wished to plant the Lone Star of Texas. When he began his descent he circled gently among murky clouds, touching now and then a high point, until to his great delight and safety he reached the arc of a rainbow, and after decanting eloquently on its beauties, he slid gracefully to earth again without having ruffled a feather." This is a humorous but excellent description of the kind of speeches made on such occasions in the early days.

The old church where this great political speaking was held is still standing, but it has undergone so many alterations and has had so many additions that there is little resemblance between the building that stands today and the little log house in which the celebration of 1844 was held. Our picture, however, shows the church as it was in Houston's day.



## CHAPTER XXVII

CEDAR CREEK CHURCH AND THE SPREADING  
OF THE EAGLE

**I**T WAS at this old church that a barbecue was given by the citizens in 1842. General Houston, Major A. J. Donaldson and General Lamar were invited to make speeches on the topics of the day. At that period the subject of Annexation was being discussed and as Major Donaldson was the minister to Texas from the United States, it was expected that he would base his remarks on that subject, which he did in glowing and eloquent terms.

His discourse was listened to with marked respect, as he, in addition to being the minister of the United States, was also the adopted son of General Jackson. Consequently, he in a large sense spoke the opinions of that great and influential man.

However, the day was opened by Judge Nimrod of Chappell Hill, the orator of the day. The Judge was a highly educated gentleman who had taken his degree at the State University in Alabama, and was in his prime.

The day being the Fourth of July, the Judge was full of pluck, and fully feathered. He soon left the earth and was amidst the planets, on track of the American Eagle. The national bird led him from star to star, and wandered most gloriously among the original Thirteen.

When he commenced his descent he circled gently among the murky clouds, touching now and then upon their highest points, until, to his great delight and safety, he reached the arc of a rainbow, and after descanting eloquently and grandly of its beauties, slid gently to the earth without rumpling a feather.

Such was the character of the speeches made in those days upon such occasions. General Lamar followed Major Donaldson and Judge Nimrod, his efforts bristling with eloquence and with patriotism.



administration, while President of Texas: "an error of the head and not of the heart." He further states, that I thought he wished to supplant me. He is mistaken; I was fearful of no man supplanting me! When Mr. Lamar was appointed by the Cabinet (without law) a Major General in the army, over the heads of decent men, I was confined with my wound, not, as he says, in the United States, but in Nacogdoches. I certainly made no complaint that I recollect, for with the news of his appointment that of his rejection by the army as commander, also came. If the statement was incorrect, the history of the times will correct the error. Mr. Lamar was informed that the army would not receive him, as General. After some negotiations, it was agreed that a vote of the army should be taken upon his acceptance or rejection. The vote was taken, and out of eighteen hundred ~~or~~ two thousand men Mr. Lamar received not exceeding one hundred and sixteen votes. Thus was un-Generaled the veritable "hero of San Jacinto." General Houston had ample revenge for the modest presumption of Mr. Lamar, if he desired any. I will, to illustrate further the character of this witness, relate an incident which occurred at a barbecue on Cedar Creek, in Washington County, Texas, on the 4th of July, 1843. After an oration, delivered by Mr. Nimrod Chappell, Mr. Lamar, in the presence of the American Charge d'Affaires, arose, and in the course of his speech, after assuring the audience of the good intentions by which he had been actuated in his administration of the Government while he was President, he asserted that if "he had committed any errors, they were errors of the head and not of the heart." To this no one

<https://www.sanjacinto-museum.org/content/documents/KempSketches/SJV428.pdf>

[Sam Houston Letter](#). San Jacinto Museum. Herzstein Library, Sam Houston Biography.

## 2. Alexander Chapel Historical Committee, 1897

In 1897, Alexander Chapel appointed a committee to put together a church history. The findings of this committee have been passed down, virtually unchanged, through the decades. The original report has been lost to time and floods, but it is possible to piece together most of the story from three local newspaper articles dating from 1933 and 1935, *Pioneer Sketches*, written in 1931 by the Robert E. Lee Library Club based on interviews with area pioneers, and the surviving Quarterly Conference record of the Lynchburg circuit from 1853-1871. Other details unknown by the Historical Committee can be found in articles from the *Texas Wesleyan Banner* (1849-1854), the *Texas Christian Advocate* (1854-1931), *Annual Conference Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (1845-1865), and other 19<sup>th</sup> century sources.

A 1933 article in the Goose Creek *Tri Cities Sun* says:<sup>15</sup>

A yellowed and stained document, now in the possession of the present pastor, Rev S.P. Wright, prepared by a historical committee in 1897 says briefly, 'Previous to this time Bros. Thurber and Hobbs had visited this place and preached frequently.' That yellowed report of 1897, to which the original pink ribbon binding is still attached, prefaces itself as follows: 'To the P.C. and members of Alexander's Chapel: Dear Brethren: We, your committee appointed to look up the history of the Church at this place, beg to report as follows: We find no record of any kind earlier than 1853.<sup>16</sup> Our report, the first eight or nine years, is made from memory of our oldest people and in some cases there is a difference of opinion. We believe the facts presented to be correct.'

The document tells of the purchase in 1847 of ten acres of land at \$4 per acre. 'As much as we can learn from memory the first church house was built in 1847 or 1848. This structure apparently cost \$104 and was replaced ten years later by a frame building erected under the supervision of a building committee composed of E.A. Stocking, H. Baker, J.W. Evans, G. Brooks and Seth Carey.

The following paragraph from the *Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church Centennial History* is probably quoted from the 1897 committee report because of the detail in names and numbers.<sup>17</sup>

One hundred years ago, Texans gathered in the community of Cedar Bayou to organize a Methodist Church under the direction of Dr. Robert Alexander. We find no official records of the meeting of this organization. The first church was organized in the private home of Hance Baker. Nine persons united with the church the first day and eighteen the second day. It is supposed the first nine were the charter members. The following were

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<sup>15</sup> "M.E. Church at Cedar Bayou is first in Area." [The Tri-Cities Sun, July 28, 1933, p30.](#)

<sup>16</sup> The 1853 record was the Lynchburg QC Minutes, 1853-1871.

<sup>17</sup> Travis, p7.

among the charter members: Mr. and Mrs. Hance Baker, Capt. and Mrs. Mosley Baker, and Gorham Tenbrook Brown. The other names are not known. We find no record of a conference at this time, hence, our record is for the conference instead of the church, in many respects. This vague history of the first church is from memory of our eldest members and in many respects there is a difference of opinions.

*Pioneer Sketches* read:

The first church in this community of which we have any record was at Midway, near the spot where the high power electric lines cross the ship channel at Baytown. Rev. Robert Alexander organized the church there. Busch's Island was then called Alexander's Island for the preacher who traveled his circuit from Midway to Crosby, Cedar Bayou, Fairview, Evergreen and other community centers. He organized the first church at Cedar Bayou, a Methodist congregation, called Alexander's Chapel.<sup>18</sup>

An article in a 1933 *La Porte News Tribune* read:

The first [or the next] church was built in this section of the country on a spot known as Harmony Grove somewhere near the present Duke Homestead between Pelly and Baytown. This church was moved to Cedar Bayou later and the new church was erected by these pioneers. The building was rough-sawed six inch stuff on a high crude but sturdy frame. The floor was made of one by twelve planks. Neither the walls nor the roof were completely covered, and keeping it warm was a problem.<sup>19</sup>

These articles predate the Williams book and are significant because they contain no mention of the Sam Houston barbeque story but do state other earlier church locations and dates. A history

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<sup>18</sup> This is a mashup of stories from several different time periods. Robert Alexander was Presiding Elder of Galveston District from 1841 through 1844 when the Cedar Bayou church was organized at Hance Baker's home near Midway. From 1845 to 1868 he was serving in Methodist Districts removed from Galveston and would not have regularly preached in this area. Churches at Manayunk (Crosby) and Greenville (probably Evergreen) were only in the circuit during the early 1860s. Alexander returned to the area in 1868 when he purchased Adam's Island, later called Alexander Island. When he was appointed as a circuit preacher to Bay Mission in 1870 the only two churches active in the circuit were Cedar Bayou and Midway. By the end of 1871 there were four. *Robert Alexander and the Early Methodist Church in Texas*. The church was not called Alexander's Chapel until the new church was built in 1886. (*Texas Christian Advocate*, April 1, 1886, p3).

Richard Hogue "Grandpa" Dickson, who had come to the Baytown area in 1850, and was the subject of one of the interviews, stated that the church was first established at Midway. His brother in law, John Ross Hamilton, was a Methodist preacher who lived in the parsonage on Cedar Bayou, and his nephew, Wm. H. Hamilton, was the preacher for the (Methodist) San Jacinto Circuit in 1850. "Grandpa" Dickson was a devout Methodist and was an eye witness to the goings-on in the Methodist circuit during the mid-1800s. When he died in 1931, just forty-three days shy of his one hundredth birthday, he was about 30 years older than the oldest Cedar Bayou Methodist church member and was the only person alive with first-hand knowledge of the church at Midway. *Pioneer Sketches, Cedar Point to San Jacinto*. 1931, page 69, by the Robert E. Lee Library Club, sponsored by Mrs. O.L. Nelson. The book was dedicated to Grandpa Dickson, "Our Patriarch." It is at the Baytown History Museum and a copy is in the reference section of the Sterling Municipal Public Library in Baytown.

<sup>19</sup> *The News Tribune*, (LaPorte, Tx), July 28, 1933, Section 7, Page 2, Column 1. (Preserved on microfilm at the Sterling Municipal Public Library).



of the church was published by a Centennial Committee in 1947 and stated in the introduction that "many of the early records of the church are either missing or unreadable, so there are some gaps." The same committee stated:

This circuit was known as the Lynchburg Circuit. It was organized in April of 1844 and embraced all the Territory between the Trinity River and the San Jacinto River lying south of Cold Springs. There were fourteen appointments in this circuit. In 1853, they were divided and were known as the San Jacinto Mission but the following year it was changed and were known as Lynchburg Station and Cedar Bayou Circuit. In 1860, they were again renamed and became Lynchburg until 1863 when Harmony Grove Circuit was created. It did not embrace so much territory as the other circuits. In 1870, the Bay Mission was organized embracing a territory from Dayton to Galveston and from the San Jacinto River to the Trinity River.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church, Forever Beginning*, Louise Travis, Chairman of History and Records.

### 3. Findings from Historical Records

In 1838 Wm. Scott heirs established a town named Louisville<sup>21</sup> at Point Pleasant<sup>22</sup> located at Midway, about a half mile from “where the high power electric lines cross the ship channel.” Exxon docks and tank farm are situated there today. Louisville consisted of at least twelve town blocks and lots went on sale July 4, 1838. The location of this town and its wharf provided easy access for the steamboats which increasingly plied the waters between Houston, Galveston, and points around Trinity Bay. A.L. Crossman had a store and Dr. David Drysdale had his office there and because of its convenient location in the precinct it was used as a voting place. In 1840 Thomas O. Summers was the preacher for the Galveston circuit and the following year he served Houston as well, traveling between the two cities every two weeks, passing and probably stopping at Louisville both ways.<sup>23</sup> Moseley Baker, G.S. Hardcastle, and John H. Walton, who all lived in the Baytown area in 1840, were charter members of the Shearn Church in Houston in Summers’ circuit,<sup>24</sup> so it’s easy to believe that he would have preached here. Louisville did not succeed and only a few lot sales were recorded because it was inundated in the 1844 hurricane. In 1842-1843 Rev. Summers made a tour through the eastern states to secure funding to build churches at Houston and Galveston.<sup>25</sup> The Methodist Church in Houston, later named the Shearn Church, met in the Presbyterian Church, built in 1842, until they completed their building in 1843,<sup>26</sup> and Ryland Chapel in Galveston was opened that same year.<sup>27</sup> The buildings were valued at \$6,000 each. The Cedar Bayou church at Midway was the second oldest Methodist and the third oldest Protestant church building in Harris County. The church at Midway<sup>28</sup> would have

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<sup>21</sup> “Town of Louisville” [Telegraph and Texas Register, June 30, 1838, Page 7.](#)

<sup>22</sup> “Dr. David Drysdale takes the pleasure of informing the public that he has established himself at Mr. Scott’s, Louisville, formerly called Point Pleasant... “[Telegraph and Texas Register, July 21, 1838 Page 5.](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Dr. Summers, a Life Study](#), by O.P. Fitzgerald, p109.

<sup>24</sup> Blandin, p23.

<sup>25</sup> [Dr. Summers, a Life Study](#), by O.P. Fitzgerald, P111.

<sup>26</sup> “They have a Catholic church [in Houston], and there is also a house of worship for the Presbyterians. The Methodists have a very neat brick chapel, nearly finished, for which we are mainly indebted to the indefatigable labors of Brother Summers, and the liberality of our friends in the States.” [History of the Shearn Church 1837-1907](#), p28.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.moody.org/church-history>

<sup>28</sup> The Midway location was important enough that another Methodist church was built there in 1868 after the Harmony Grove church closed. Quarterly Conference (QC) minutes, Lynchburg circuit, February 13, 1869, p94.

been small enough to not require additional funding and also small enough to easily build and escape notice.

On August 8, 1844, Mrs. Sam Houston wrote a letter to her husband and said:

We had preaching in our little church yesterday by Mr. Friend, the Methodist.<sup>29</sup>

Her wording hints that the preaching by L.S. Friend, named by Cedar Bayou Methodist Church as its first preacher, could have occurred in a church building rather than in a private home. But whichever it was, the location would have been in or near the former town of Louisville at Midway, and since she specified the denomination, the pulpit would have been filled by whatever preacher was available. L.S. Friend came to Texas as a missionary preacher sometime during 1844 and was admitted to the Methodist East Texas Conference on trial in January 1845. His circuit assignment that year was to Liberty.<sup>30</sup> Cedar Bayou became part of the San Jacinto circuit which was established in 1845 and Annual Conference records show that the first preacher assigned to the circuit was William Hamilton.<sup>31</sup>

The 1847 purchase date of the ten acres of land on Cedar Bayou may indicate a growth in the area because the Cedar Bayou Post office was established in March of that year at the Houston to Liberty mail crossing in Liberty (today Chambers) County. W.G. Mills was appointed postmaster<sup>32</sup> and the mail stop was located at his store on the east side of Cedar Bayou near the ferry he operated at today's Needle Point Road.<sup>33</sup>

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Robert Alexander mentioned the church at Midway in 1870 when he was appointed to Bay Mission. Lide, p96.

The church was still there when the 1875 hurricane hit, "The Midway church was removed from its foundation, Lynchburg washed away..." Christian Advocate, April 1, 1876, p6. (continued next page)

It was rebuilt again because it appears on the 1901 Lynchburg to Cedar Bayou Road (today's Bayway Drive). HC Map Book 3, p68.

<sup>29</sup> [The Personal Correspondence of Sam Houston](#), Madge Roberts, (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1994), p 313.

<sup>30</sup> [Annual Conference minutes, M.E. Church, 1839-1845, p554.](#)

<sup>31</sup> Annual Conference minutes, M.E. Church, South, 1845-1846, p98.

<sup>32</sup> Post Offices in Liberty County Texas, 1847, [M841 - Record of Appointments of Postmasters, 1832-Sept. 30, 1971.](#)

<sup>33</sup> "... The petition of G. W. Ferrand for license to keep a ferry on Cedar Bayou, at the ferry formerly Kokernot's since Mills at the mail crossing from Lynchburg to Liberty..." HCCC, February 1859, Vol A, p223.



The Cedar Bayou church historical narrative states that “For a time the members met in the home of Hance Baker which was located about two miles down the bayou from the site chosen for the permanent home of this church.” However, since no church records exist from that time period to justify this statement, it seems to be: 1) an attempt to reconcile the 1844 founding date with the 1847 purchase date of the Parsonage Tract, 2) perhaps they met in Hance Baker’s house after the church at Midway was destroyed in the 1854 hurricane, but the most plausible explanation is that 3) the organizational meeting with Robert Alexander occurred early in the year<sup>34</sup> and they met in Hance Baker’s home until a proper church could be built at Midway sometime before Mrs. Houston wrote her letter in August. On December 31, 1844, Baker purchased a 100 acre tract of land on Cedar Bayou from John H. Walton,<sup>35</sup> another charter member of Houston’s Shearn Methodist church,<sup>36</sup> at the stated location. However, the 1850 census shows that he and his family still lived next door to future Baytown Postmaster Simon Hagerman near Midway.<sup>37</sup> So, through 1850, and probably until the 1854 hurricane, the “private home of Hance Baker” was not at the 100 acre tract on Cedar Bayou,<sup>38</sup> but by 1860 he had moved to that location.<sup>39</sup>

The 1850 Census of Social Statistics shows three Methodist churches in Harris County (see Appendix).<sup>40</sup> The largest was the Shearn church in Houston which could seat 350 people and had property valued at \$6,000. Both of the other two Methodist churches in Harris County could seat 100 people and had property valued at \$400 each. The Cedar Bayou church at Midway was undoubtedly a frame building because there were sawmills around Galveston Bay and on the San

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<sup>34</sup> An unreferenced article stated that the Lynchburg circuit was established in April 1844, [Baytown Sun, October 5, 1969, p18](#). This is not borne out by Texas Conference records. San Jacinto circuit was created in 1845.

<sup>35</sup> HCDB J, p273. John H. Walton to Hance Baker, Dec 31, 1844, recorded Mar 31, 1845.

<sup>36</sup> *History of the Shearn Church*, p23.

<sup>37</sup> The particular wording, “Texans gathered in the community of Cedar Bayou to organize a Methodist Church,” indicates that they considered Hance Baker’s residence, which was west of Goose Creek, to be in Cedar Bayou, the name of the post office which served the area. According to the [1850 census, p54](#), Hance Baker’s residence was located near Midway. He appears sequentially with Simon Hagerman who lived where the old Baytown Post Office is situated on Market Street today. HCDB M, p283, Scott to Hagerman, Sep 3, 1847. By 1860 Baker had moved to his farm on Cedar Bayou.

<sup>38</sup> See the map on page 23.

<sup>39</sup> [1860 Harris County Census, Pct 8, p7](#).

<sup>40</sup> Four Protestant churches in Houston were mentioned in the Texas Wesleyan Banner, June 12, 1850, p34.

Jacinto River which were easily accessible by boat.<sup>41</sup> A church large enough to accommodate 100 people would have been at least 800 square feet, or about 20' by 40', but probably closer to 1000 square feet.<sup>42</sup> If the picture of the log parsonage illustrated in Amelia Williams' book is an accurate rendition, it was much smaller, and if the door width was three feet, that building was about 14' by 28' or about 400 square feet<sup>43</sup> and could not have possibly seated 100 people, but would be an appropriate size for a log cabin parsonage.

The Cedar Bayou school house was used as a voting place for elections held 1850-1852.<sup>44</sup> Voting places were located near the center of population at convenient sites within precincts,<sup>45</sup> such as near Midway with easy access for boat traffic. Sites near Midway had been the voting place for all the earlier and subsequent precinct elections<sup>46</sup> until Cedar Bayou split off from the precinct in 1862. The Fourth Quarterly meeting of the San Jacinto Mission<sup>47</sup> in 1851 was held on September

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<sup>41</sup> "In 1831 David G. Burnet returned for the third time to Texas, bringing with him a boiler and steam engine for a saw mill which he proposed to erect at the town of Lynchburg." *Pioneer Sketches*.

<sup>42</sup> This estimate is based on the [Churchplaza.com](http://Churchplaza.com) website and confirmed by comparing the size of three Houston Churches which are shown on the [1877 Sanborn Fire Insurance map](#) as compared with the 1870 Social Statistics Census, page 12. The Methodist and Presbyterian churches had about 10 square feet per seat and the Baptist had 8 square feet per seat.

<sup>43</sup> Since Amelia Williams wrote that the log structure was still standing in 1935, a photograph of the building may exist, and the drawing in her book may have been from a photograph, as were several others.

<sup>44</sup> The Cedar Bayou, School House was named as a voting place for elections in the Cedar Bayou Precinct from 1850 through 1852. *Telegraph and Texas Register*, [February 21, 1850, p3](#); [July 4, 1850, p3](#); [October 16, 1850, p3](#); [July 30, 1852, p3](#)

<sup>45</sup> The following extract from the Cedar Bayou Masonic lodge history, written by John P. Sjolander, speaks of the isolation of the Christian Smith League to the rest of east Harris County in the 1870s and why a school there could not have been a precinct voting place in the 1850s. "The old settlements were far apart, with no roads except the wide prairies between them and with many deep bayous and creeks to cross, all without bridges, and with very few ferries. For many of the old settlers, even in dry seasons, to reach Lynchburg was a hard day's journey. In wet seasons, the journey was almost impossible. But Lynchburg was the only place where a Masonic Lodge could live and thrive, because of all the population of the town, and the nearness of some of the older settlements. But some of the members of the lodge lived as far as thirty miles away. However, in the late 1860's of the last century, Cedar Bayou began to grow to some importance. On account of its brick manufacturing plants, the population had doubled and tripled in a few years." [Cedar Bayou Lodge No. 321, A.F. & A.M., THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL HISTORY \(1870 - 1920\)](#).

<sup>46</sup> The notice for the 1841 election named B. Page's dwelling, Goose Creek as the voting place. [Telegraph and Texas Register, August 18, 1841, p3](#).

Page had already purchased land near Cedar Bayou in the Christian Smith league, but at the time of election, he still lived on Goose Creek (HCDB Q, p425) on the farm which was later sold by Elizabeth Page to Henry Busch and would become known as Busch Landing (HCDB 88, p164).

<sup>47</sup> "Mission" means that the church or circuit was not expected to be able to pay the preacher's salary, and that the Conference would pay all or part of the preacher's salary. Naturally the hope was that the church or circuit would

20 & 21 at Cedar Bayou.<sup>48</sup> This meeting notice, the 1850 Social Statistics, and the school house voting place indicates the existence of a church building called Cedar Bayou, probably the same building mentioned by Margaret Houston in her 1844 letter. Richard Hogue “Grandpa” Dickson stated that he attended class in a “log cabin”<sup>49</sup> located on Cedar Bayou [stream] however this was the parsonage and not the church or what was properly called the Cedar Bayou school house.<sup>50</sup>

On September 18, 1854, a hurricane swept up the San Jacinto River, inundating everything in its path. The wind and storm surge leveled hundreds of acres of timber and buildings along the San Jacinto River and Buffalo Bayou. It washed away all the bridges in Houston and Harrisburg and steamboats were washed ashore hundreds of yards onto the prairie.<sup>51</sup> The Cedar Bayou Methodist church history says that “during the years of 1854 and 1855, nothing of importance took place in the church.”<sup>52</sup> That was because the church at Midway, which actually *was* called Cedar Bayou,<sup>53</sup> was destroyed along with the church at Lynchburg including their records.<sup>54</sup> With no church to meet at, the November 1854 Quarterly Meeting was held at Judge Burnet’s house.<sup>55</sup> The minutes state that at that meeting the entire board of stewards was dropped<sup>56</sup> and new stewards were

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prosper and eventually not need the subsidy. From Bill Hardt, Methodist historian and archivist.  
<http://txmethhistory.blogspot.com/>

<sup>48</sup> Texas Wesleyan Banner, September 6, 1851, p43.

<sup>49</sup> “When nineteen, Richard returned to Texas to visit with a brother-in-law, J. R. Hamilton, a Methodist preacher and a teacher in a small, one-roomed log cabin on the present site of the Cedar Bayou cemetery.” *Pioneer Sketches*.

<sup>50</sup> In a 1931 interview, Grandpa Dickson “recalled vividly his difficulties in trying to master the problems of logarithms in the early school.” When he attended this school he was about 19 years old. This indicates that he was being tutored by his brother in law in a private school setting, rather than attending a primary school, further showing that this was not what they considered the Cedar Bayou school house. [Houston Chronicle, June 22, 1931, p3.](#)

<sup>51</sup> “The Storm in Texas – Lynchburg and San Jacinto.” [The Weekly Advertiser \(Montgomery, Al.\), Oct 18, 1854, p2.](#)

<sup>52</sup> Travis, p9.

<sup>53</sup> The Fourth Quarterly meeting, San Jacinto Mission was held at Cedar Bayou on September 20 & 21. Texas Wesleyan Banner September 6, 1851, p43.

<sup>54</sup> Churches at these same locations were again destroyed twenty-one years later during the 1875 hurricane. “Bay Mission.- This work is served by Rev J.S. Clower. His circuit was greatly injured by the storm last September. The Midway church was removed from its foundation, Lynchburg washed away...” *Texas Christian Advocate*, April 4, 1876, p6.

<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, the QC minutes followed a strict format and remarks were submitted in separate reports which have not survived. Other circuits did meet in private homes, but it was unusual in this circuit that the meeting was held at a person’s dwelling rather than at a church. QC minutes, Lynchburg circuit, November 18, 1854, p8.

<sup>56</sup> Stewards at the time of the hurricane were Hance Baker, John Rundell, and G. Van Houten. They all lived within the flood zone.



elected. At the Quarterly Meeting held in Lynchburg on May 5, 1855 two building committees were named.<sup>57</sup> Gilbert Brooks, Seth Carey, and I.W. Ashby were named to a Cedar Bayou building committee and John Rundell, John Adams, and the Rev. Williamson Williams were named for Lynchburg. The Cedar Bayou committee almost certainly built the church on the property of Valentine T. Dalton, on the road from Lynchburg to Goose Creek in 1856. The small wood-frame building was located at the east end of today's Missouri Street at W.C. Britton Park on the west bank of Goose Creek.<sup>58</sup>

The narrative for the Cedar Bayou Methodist Church states that "By 1856, the minutes reflected that Cedar Bayou Sabbath School had one superintendent, 4 teachers, 35 scholars, 75 volumes in the library, and also 15 colored scholars." But that is not completely true. It is a mashup of two separate questions posed in the May 5, 1856 Q.C. Minutes. The first question was "What is the Sunday School report?" to which the answer was "1 superintendent, 4 teachers, 35 scholars, 75 Vols. in the library." The second question was "How many have been received into the church?" to which the answer was "15 Colored members. See report." The report no longer exists.

Sometime between February and March 1857, the Cedar Bayou church broke away from the Lynchburg Circuit. Lynchburg became the Lynchburg Station with W.R. Fayle as the Preacher in Charge, and the Cedar Bayou Circuit was formed. Throughout 1857, the two groups conducted joint Q.C. meetings.<sup>59</sup> A building committee was appointed in April 1857 composed of E.A. Stocking, H. McClain, Gilbert Brooks, H.J. Bond and M.S. Tunnill,<sup>60</sup> but Bond and Tunnill were replaced by Gardiner Brown and Jesse Brooks at the next quarterly meeting. The Cedar Bayou church history book says that from 1858-1860 nothing of importance took place in the church,<sup>61</sup> but this is far from the truth. In 1858, the Cedar Bayou Circuit stopped meeting with the Lynchburg Station for its quarterly conferences, and don't appear in the Lynchburg Circuit Q.C.

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<sup>57</sup> QC minutes, Lynchburg circuit, May 3, 1855, p11.

<sup>58</sup> The road to Shearn roughly followed Bayway Drive and Missouri Street, crossing Samuel Page's ferry "...Thence on the north side of Mrs. Lang's prairie field nearly direct to the Goose Creek crossing near Harmony Grove School House, Thence along Mrs. Anson Jones' road to her north gate, thence nearly direct to Shearn on Cedar Bayou..." HCCC Vol B, p7, August 19, 1861.

<sup>59</sup> QC minutes, Lynchburg Station and Cedar Bayou Circuit.

<sup>60</sup> Note that this is a different group of names from the building committee which had been appointed in 1855. QC minutes, Cedar Bayou circuit, April 18, 1857, p26.

<sup>61</sup> Travis, page 11.

Minutes during 1858 and 1859. The meeting records for the Cedar Bayou Circuit no longer exist but newspaper articles show a period of unprecedented and sustained growth with the building of a new church on Cedar Bayou stream, as well as regular quarterly meetings of the circuit separate from the Lynchburg Station. The Goose Creek church does not appear in the Lynchburg minutes because it was part of the Cedar Bayou Circuit. In February 1858, E.A. Stocking sent the following letter to the *Texas Christian Advocate*:<sup>62</sup>

Revival at Cedar Bayou. Mr. Editor: In reply to your call for revival intelligence in your issue of the 23d February, I will say that we can send a report of blessed things from Cedar Bayou.

The quarterly meeting for this Circuit was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of this month, and the meeting was protracted until Tuesday evening the 9<sup>th</sup>. The church was baptized from on high - enjoying a glorious time of refreshing.

We had several additions to our strength by letter - among them your old correspondent, "Tom Palmer" and family, sixteen I think, joined on probation, and four have joined since. I hear that the gracious work is going on at other points on the Circuit.

Our Presiding Elder, Brother Seat, recommends himself to all, both by his power in the pulpit and his conciliatory manners privately and above all by his unfeigned piety, and we are well satisfied with our Circuit preacher, Bro. Parker. There is an earnest desire on the part of the members in this society for holiness. I have lived among this people for many years and have never at any time seen the Church in as good a condition as at present. We have *determined* [italics by Stocking] to build a commodious chapel; the place has become entirely too straight<sup>63</sup> for us. Can't you come over and see us this spring or summer. E.A. Stocking. *Cedar Bayou*, Feb 25, 1858.

The letter indicates a growing rift in the circuit, possibly as a result of disagreements between Rev. William R. Fayle (b. 1818 in England) and members of the circuit churches.<sup>64</sup> Stocking's

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<sup>62</sup> "Revival at Cedar Bayou." *Texas Christian Advocate*. March 16, 1858, p1.

<sup>63</sup> Stocking almost certainly meant that the place had become entirely too strait. The [1862 Webster Dictionary, page 1090](#) defines strait as distress or difficulty. A common idiom today is "in dire straits," meaning in a very bad or difficult situation.

<sup>64</sup> From May 1856 to September 1857, William Rose Fayle appeared in the Lynchburg Station and Cedar Bayou Circuit minutes as a Local Preacher (and also Conference Secretary) and throughout 1858 was Preacher in Charge of the Lynchburg Station. During 1858, he was assigned as circuit preacher for Oyster Creek and African Mission but, the minutes show that he continued as P.C of Lynchburg Station. In November 1859, he was the preacher for the Houston and African Mission, including the Shearn Church. The Shearn Church in Houston was the largest and most influential Methodist congregation in Harris County, but his service there did not go well. According to the 1906 *History of the Shearn Church*, "his pronounced sympathy with the Republican party, the war party, made him out of harmony with his congregation, and being a man of firm convictions he would not suppress his views. In those troublous times many of the pews remained unrented, and of course the salary was small." Fayle went on to pastor Black churches for several more years and the 1870 census shows his occupation as Minister of the

letter says that a new church was to be built at Cedar Bayou in the spring or summer of 1858.<sup>65</sup> That was the first real church to have been built in the Christian Smith League, although by this time, the log parsonage was probably being used as a chapel. Stocking was a strong advocate for the church at Cedar Bayou and the community in general,<sup>66</sup> writing numerous letters to various newspapers extolling the virtues and benefits of the area. In May 1858, John L. Bryan, a charter member of the Shearn church in Houston,<sup>67</sup> purchased 375 acres on Goose Creek from Valentine Thomas Dalton.<sup>68</sup> The Goose Creek church was situated on that property. A revival held in July 1858 brought more than fifty people into the church.<sup>69</sup>

The Cedar Bayou Circuit and Lynchburg Station merged in January 1860 under the name Lynchburg Mission with James Rice appointed as the preacher.<sup>70</sup> That month, Stocking wrote another letter to the *Texas Christian Advocate* recommending that several more churches be added to the circuit.<sup>71</sup> Through May 1860, the church on John L. Bryan's property was called Goose Creek,<sup>72</sup> but sometime before July, the name of the Goose Creek church was changed to Harmony Grove.<sup>73</sup> The Cedar Bayou church history says that a new parsonage was built shortly after the 1857 church was completed (in 1858),<sup>74</sup> but in July 1860 Rev. James Rice was living with his family one dwelling over from Ashbel Smith,<sup>75</sup> indicating that a parsonage at Christian

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Gospel in Houston, although he was not assigned to a church. In 1880 he was enumerated as a school teacher and in 1900 he was retired, living on Cedar Bayou. He moved to La Marque, Texas where he died in 1905.

<sup>65</sup> Cedar Bayou UMC history states that in 1856 a church was built in Christian Smith near the log church, but if that were true, there would have been no need for another church two years later. The Cedar Bayou history states that the 1858 building committee was for construction of a parsonage, but in the 1860 census, Rev. James Rice was living at Evergreen near Ashbel Smith. In 1875, a parsonage was built.

<sup>66</sup> "Cedar Creek, Chambers County." [\*Civilian and Gazette. Weekly, November 9, 1858, p1.\*](#)

<sup>67</sup> *History of Shearn Church*, p23.

<sup>68</sup> HCDB Vol U, p124, Valentine T. Dalton to John L. Bryan.

<sup>69</sup> "Our Home Work." *Texas Christian Advocate*, July 3, 1858, p3.

<sup>70</sup> "Appointments of the Preachers of the Texas Annual Conference." [\*The Weekly Telegraph, November 30, 1859, p2.\*](#)

<sup>71</sup> "The Rice Field." *Texas Christian Advocate*, February 9, 1860, p1.

<sup>72</sup> The church at Goose Creek was noted in the QC minutes, Lynchburg circuit, May 6, 1860

<sup>73</sup> In the minutes from July 21, 1860, p53, it is called Harmony Grove.

<sup>74</sup> Travis, p15, 91. This could have been an attempt to reconcile two building committees (1855 and 1857) within two years of one another.

<sup>75</sup> [1860 census, Harris County Precinct No. 6, p5, Lynchburg Post Office.](#)

Smith did not exist. A camp meeting at Cedar Bayou in October 1860 added another twenty-eight members to its roll.<sup>76</sup>

In 1861 the Lynchburg Mission was renamed as the Harmony Grove circuit.<sup>77</sup> The Cedar Bayou Centennial history book states that Harmony Grove “did not embrace so much territory as the other circuits,”<sup>78</sup> but this huge circuit actually covered the entire Galveston and Trinity bay area in Harris and Chambers counties and continued north between the San Jacinto and Trinity Rivers all the way to Dayton. It was much larger in territory as well as the number of churches than any previous or subsequent circuit. The churches in the Harmony Grove Circuit were Harmony Grove, Cedar Bayou, West Liberty (Dayton), Lynchburg, Greenville (Evergreen), Red Buff, and San Jacinto in Harris County and Oak Island, Barrows (Double Bayou), and Old River in Chambers County.<sup>79</sup> The minutes tell that 1861 was a particularly difficult time in the church with many members leaving for the war and a yellow fever epidemic raging.

When Seth Cary platted his new town in 1860 where the Cedar Bayou church was already located, he named it Shearn,<sup>80</sup> most likely in tribute to Charles Shearn and the Shearn Methodist Church in Houston. A secession meeting, led by Ashbel Smith, was held at the Cedar Bayou church in February 1861<sup>81</sup> and the location was given as Farmersville in the precinct which was interchangeably called Cedar Bayou or Goose Creek.<sup>82</sup> In October 1861, the board granted permission to P.T. Woodall to purchase “the old church building” at Cedar Bayou,<sup>83</sup> located on a

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<sup>76</sup> “Lynchburg Circuit.” *Texas Christian Advocate*, November 8, 1860, p2.

<sup>77</sup> Minutes of the Texas Conference, 1860, p277.

<sup>78</sup> *History of Cedar Bayou Methodist Church*, page 1. In her introduction, Louise Travis states that “many of the early records were either non-existent or unreadable so there were some gaps,”

<sup>79</sup> QC minutes, Lynchburg circuit, March 2, 1861, at Harmony Grove.

<sup>80</sup> HCDB X, p493, Seth Cary P.A. to William Shepherd, Oct 6, 1860.  
Also see note 64.

<sup>81</sup> “Letter from Galveston Bay.” [The Weekly Telegraph April 30, 1861, p 2.](#)

<sup>82</sup> “Letter from Cedar Bayou,” [The Weekly Telegraph, March 5, 1861, p2.](#)

“Public Meeting at Farmersville,” [The Weekly Telegraph, May 7, 1861, p2.](#)

<sup>83</sup> “The old church” could have been built by the 1856 building committee or it could be an unknown earlier chapel. It was not the 1848 log parsonage which, according to Amelia Williams’ book, survived until at least 1935. It confirms that the 1858 church that E.A. Stocking wrote about was built.

In October 1861 the board approved disposition of parsonage and church property at Cedar Bayou: “to sell to A.W. Hutton [Travis, p12 says A.M. Britton.] a certain corner of the parsonage land, to lay off and sell certain burial lots on the same land, and to sell to Bro Woodall the old church building to appropriate the process of said



corner of the parsonage land which they agreed to sell to A.W. Hutton<sup>84</sup> at the same time. The old log parsonage may have been used as a chapel and Sunday school classroom since 1854, but this was not the “Cedar Bayou school house” at Midway that was used as a voting place from 1850-1852.<sup>85</sup> This may have been the building which was to be sold. If so, the sale probably didn’t go through because, according to Amelia Williams, it survived until at least 1935. A new parsonage was built at Cedar Bayou in early 1875.<sup>86</sup>

On September 27, 1862 Harmony Grove was the only Sunday school recorded in the Q.C. minutes. They show "1 Superintendent, 1 Assistant Superintendent, 6 teachers, 44 Scholars (with average attendance of 30), and 200 volumes in the library." Many of the circuit churches closed between 1862 and 1864. The June 4, 1864 minutes show only Harmony Grove, Cedar Bayou and San Jacinto as contributing churches.

After losing four sons during the Civil War, John L. Bryan, a Steward and financial benefactor of the Harmony Grove church, moved back to Houston in 1864<sup>87</sup> where he died in 1867.<sup>88</sup> Harmony Grove continued as a church until the end of 1866<sup>89</sup> and the Bayland Orphan Home began to use it as a classroom.<sup>90</sup> A Sunday school at a church called Prairie Grove<sup>91</sup> was named in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarterly meeting in 1866.<sup>92</sup> In 1867 the circuit name changed back to Cedar Bayou. No Q.C. meetings from 1867 and 1868 and few newspapers exist to tell the story of this era, and it is unknown if the circuit was even active during this time. It is probable that services were held

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sales to the improvement of the church property by fencing it. All of which was granted.” QC minutes, Harmony Grove circuit, October 14, 1861, p62. Neither deed has yet been found in the county records.

<sup>84</sup> Travis, p12 says “A.M. Britton.”

<sup>85</sup> "The Schools at Cedar Bayou," by Chuck Chandler, THC Marker pending approval (2023).

<sup>86</sup> “We must not overlook the neat parsonage built this year at Cedar Bayou.” *Texas Christian Advocate*, July 3, 1875, p4.

<sup>87</sup> The last QC meeting attended by John L. Bryan in the Harmony Grove circuit was March 11, 1864.

<sup>88</sup> [The Galveston Daily News, July 21, 1867, p3.](#)

<sup>89</sup> The fourth QC meeting held October 13, 1866 is the last entry in which the Harmony Grove church appears.

<sup>90</sup> “The small community church building at Harmony Grove was moved to the Home to become a schoolhouse.” *Candle by Night, The Story of the Life and Times of Kezia Pane de Pelchin, Texas Teacher, Social Worker, and Nurse*, p208. By Harold J. Matthews, 1942.

<sup>91</sup> This could have been the Midway church before it took that name. The 1901 survey shows Midway at a location different from the original site of Midway south of Louisville. This site was exactly where the "where the high power electric lines cross the ship channel at Baytown," as described in Pioneer Sketches.

<sup>92</sup> QC Meeting October 13, 1866..

sporadically, if at all. Cedar Bayou church records William Monk as the preacher in 1867, but the Annual Conference minutes show him as the circuit preacher at Sulphur Springs that year.<sup>93</sup> Prairie Grove only appeared once in the minutes in 1866 and could have been renamed as Midway. The first quarterly meeting in 1869 was held at Midway Landing<sup>94</sup> on February 13, 1869 when the circuit consisted of churches at Cedar Bayou, Midway, Bayland Orphan Home and San Jacinto.<sup>95</sup>

It was undoubtedly a very difficult time as the circuit was downgraded to Mission status in 1870.<sup>96</sup> Robert Alexander returned as preacher to Bay Mission in 1870 and 1871, living in his island home. A March 1874 letter from circuit preacher J.S. Clower gave his address as Midway, Texas rather than Cedar Bayou indicating that there was not a parsonage and Robert Alexander probably boarded circuit preachers.<sup>97</sup> The 1875 hurricane inundated Alexander's Island. He and his wife almost died in the storm and afterwards, they moved to Chapel Hill in Washington County where he died on April 25, 1882.<sup>98</sup>

Sometime after the Civil War, the town of Shearn became known as Cedar Bayou and in October 1870 the Cedar Bayou Post Office opened in Charles F. Ilfrey's store<sup>99</sup> with Ilfrey as postmaster.<sup>100</sup> The name of Shearn continued to appear on deeds until at least 1895 and even as late as 1915, the name was still remembered, as evidenced by an unpublished book, *Genealogic Notes concerning the Pioneer Families & Landowners in the Cedar Bayou District before 1915*.

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<sup>93</sup> Northwest Texas Conference held at Waxahachie, Texas September 26 – October 2, 1866.

<sup>94</sup> There is an unidentified church shown on the 1901 map of the road today known as Bayway Drive. Harris County Map Book 3, page 68 - Wooster & Cedar Bayou Road to Goose Creek.

<sup>95</sup> The first Quarterly Conference in 1869 was held at Midway Landing. Subsequently this was called Midway Chapel.

<sup>96</sup> QC minutes, Bay Mission, February 12, 1870, page not numbered.

<sup>97</sup> *Texas Christian Advocate*, March 18, 1874, p7.

Although there was not an official U.S. post office there, Midway Landing was shown as a mail stop in the 1870 Census, Harris County, Subdivision 35, p4. The census shows Robert Alexander on that page so he probably opened his home to board circuit preachers. If Rev. Clower lived near the Methodist church, he would have used the Cedar Bayou Post Office across the road.

<sup>98</sup> [TSHA Online: Robert Alexander](#).

<sup>99</sup> This agrees with John P. Sjolander's statement, "However, in the late 1860's, Cedar Bayou began to grow to some importance."

<sup>100</sup> Application for Cedar Bayou Post Office, [M1126 - Post Office Department Reports of Site Locations, 1837-1950](#).

*Cedar Bayou – alias Shearn City.*<sup>101</sup> The family names listed in the book (Leger, Scoregga, West, Pelly, Gaillard, Pruett, etc.) show that, even then, they considered that the Cedar Bayou district extended as far west as Midway because at the time, the whole area was served by the Cedar Bayou Post Office.

The Cedar Bayou history book states that "Hymns of praise resounded as the members cleared the timber to build [in 1848] this first log church, known as Alexander Chapel in honor of the founder of the church. But this is not true either. In 1884 a new church was built on the same property as the 1858 church<sup>102</sup> and, in 1886, it was dedicated to Robert Alexander, becoming Alexander's Chapel. Up to this time, the Q.C. meeting notices appearing in the *Texas Wesleyan Banner* and *Texas Christian Advocate* had given the location for all meetings held there as "Cedar Bayou at Cedar Bayou." Beginning in the second quarter 1886, and for all subsequent notices, the location was given as "Cedar Bayou at Alexander Chapel."<sup>103</sup>

The 1897 report and other documents show that, although they misunderstood the extent of the Cedar Bayou district in the mid-1800s, some Cedar Bayou Methodists knew that their history began at Midway and then to Harmony Grove and then to Cedar Bayou. But when Amelia Williams published her book in 1935, they interpreted the Fourth of July barbeque story as their long-lost history and rewrote the early history of the church around an event which happened eighty-five miles away.

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<sup>101</sup> Written by Leon G.A. van Meldert, M.S. D.V.M., Cedar Bayou, Texas and available at the Sterling Library in Baytown.

<sup>102</sup> "ME Church at Cedar Bayou is first in Area," [\*The Tri-Cities Sun, July 28, 1933, p30.\*](#) This came from the 1897 study and the 1884 date is within the memory of the committee and is probably correct.

<sup>103</sup> See Appendix Table 1.

It is also ordered that said account be recorded. It is further ordered that James W. Singleton above made as conveyance of the interest of said Estate in & to two hundred twelve & a half acres of land lying on Carpenter Bayou in Harris County, being part of the half league of land originally surveyed for James Singleton to Henry S. Bowles the purchaser at said sale, selling security for the payment of the same worth. Now therefore I as administrator of the estate of Robert Stewart deceased, by virtue of my appointment, the decree of sale, confirmation of sale and proceedings of said court, and by virtue of the law and the premises, and in consideration of the sum of one hundred & one dollars to me paid by the said Henry S. Bowles which is acknowledged to have been received as aforesaid, have granted, bargained, sold & released, and do by this act grant, bargain, sell and release unto the said Henry S. Bowles his heirs and assigns forever the property as herein before described in the order of confirmation of sale. I have and do hold, the aforesaid property to him the said Henry S. Bowles his heirs and assigns forever with all the rights & claims belonging as in any case incident or appertaining, lawfully warranting and defending the title, only to the extent and in the mode by which I am by law required, as administrator, to do and no further. In testimony of all which I have hereunto set my hand and official seal as administrator (seal) for and of the City of Houston this day of 29<sup>th</sup> September 9. D. 1856 James W. Singleton administrator (seal) of the Estate of Robt. Stewart deceased, Harris County, before me J. B. Bart clerk of the County Court of said Co. This day at my office came James W. Singleton administrator of the estate of Robert Stewart deceased, and acknowledged the execution of the foregoing deed, in his capacity of administrator aforesaid for the purposes and considerations therein contained. Witness my hand and seal of office, at my office in Houston this 29<sup>th</sup> day of September 9. D. 1856. J. B. Bart Clerk (seal)

Received October 1<sup>st</sup> 1856 at 9 o'clock A. M.

J. W. Henderson  
 to  
 W. H. Howard

The State of Texas County of Harris. Know all men by these presents that I James W. Henderson do for and in consideration of eight hundred dollars in hand received to be paid I do hereby warrant the title made by W. B. Vincent on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of Sept 1856 to W. H. Howard for Block 116, one hundred and sixteen and will hold the said Howard harmless against the claims or titles of any and all other persons claiming or to claim the said block of lots situated in the city of Houston, this 16<sup>th</sup> Sept 1856 signed J. W. Henderson the State of Texas Harris County. Before me J. B. Bart clerk of Harris County Court this day came J. W. Henderson to me known who acknowledged the execution of the foregoing instrument for the purposes and considerations therein set forth contained. Witness my hand & seal of Harris County Court at office in Houston October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1856. J. B. Bart Clerk (seal)

Recorded October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1856 at 9 o'clock A. M.



J. R. Elken  
 to  
 James Baker et al

The State of Texas County of Harris this Indenture made this twenty fifth day of April A. D. one thousand eight hundred and forty seven between John R. Elken and Eleanor Elken (his wife) of the aforesaid state and county of the first part, and James Baker, Gilbert Beards, Harmon M. Lean, Columbus Weisman and Edward B. Stocking, Trustees in trust for the uses and purposes hereinafter mentioned, all of the aforesaid state of Texas of the second part. Witnesseth, that the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of Forty Dollars in hand paid the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged hath given, granted, bargained, sold, released, confirmed and conveyed, and by these presents do give, grant, bargain, sell, release



confirm and convey unto the said party of the second part, and their successors in office all the estate, right, title, interest property claim and demand whatever either in law or equity which the party of the first part have in to or upon all and singular a certain lot or piece of land, situate, lying and being in the state of Texas and county of Harris on the West side of Cedar Bayou (being a portion of the South west division of a league of land originally granted to Sebastian Smith by the Mexican Government, beginning at the east or upper side of a small bayou at its junction with Cedar Bayou. Hence up the bank of said Cedar Bayou at 69 1/2 E. 237 rods to a post 3 in dia mch x. Hence N 25° W 245 7/8 rods to a stake from which a post 3 in dia mch x to S 28° E 3 1/2 rods dist. Hence S 67° W 237 rods to a stake in the prairie. Hence S 25° 23 7/8 rods to place of beginning, containing and laid for ten acres of land. Do have and to hold all and singular the above mentioned and described lot or piece of land, together with all the privileges thereto belonging, or in any wise appertaining unto the said party of the second part and their successors in office forever in trust that they shall erect and build or cause to be erected and built thereon a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, according to the rules and discipline which from time to time, may be agreed upon and adopted by the ministers of the said church at their General conference, and in further trust and confidence they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the said church, as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General conference of the ministers and preachers of the said Methodist Episcopal Church South, or by the annual conferences authorized by the General conference to preach and expound Gods Holy word therein. That they shall also erect and build or cause to be erected a parsonage for the use and benefit of the ministers and preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and their families and in further trust and confidence that as often as any one or more of the trustees herein before mentioned shall die, or cease to be a member or members of the said church according to the rules and discipline as aforesaid then and in such case it shall be the duty of the stationed preacher or minister (authorized as aforesaid) who shall have the pastoral charge of the members of the said church to call a meeting of the remaining trustees as soon as conveniently may be, and when so met, the said minister or preacher shall proceed to nominate one or more persons to fill the place or places of him or them whose office or offices has (or have) been vacated as provided. Provided the person or persons so nominated shall have been one year or more a member or members of the said church, immediately preceding such nomination, and be at least twenty one years of age, and the said trustees so assembled shall proceed to elect and by a majority appoint, the person or persons so nominated to fill such vacancy or vacancies, in addition to keep up the number of five trustees forever, and in case of an equal number of votes for and against the said nomination, the stationed minister or preacher shall have the casting vote. And the said party of the first part do by these presents warrant and forever defend all and singular the before mentioned and described lot or piece of land, with all and singular the appurtenances thereto belonging unto the said party of the second part and their successors in office chosen and appointed as aforesaid, from the claim or claims of all persons whatsoever. In testimony whereof the said party of the first part hereunto set their hands and seals, the day and year aforesaid. J. R. Shea (seal) Clerk, his X mark

Edward A. Stocking a Notary Public for Liberty County this day came John R. Shea and Elenas Shea his wife both to me well known and severally acknowledged the aforesaid and foregoing deed of conveyance from themselves to Hance Baker, Gilbert Brack, Harrison McLean, Columbus Waceman and Edward A. Stocking. In witness to their act and deed for the purpose & consideration aforesaid stated, and the said Elenas Shea having been by me examined separate and apart from her husband, the same being fully explained to her, declared that she had willingly signed, sealed, and delivered the same and that she wished not to retract it. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and official seal of office at Cedar Bayou on this 25th day of July A.D. 1856. E. A. Stocking, Notary Public (seal)

Recorded October 5- 1856 at 9 o'clock A.M.

J. Com Massie  
to  
M. B. Hogan

The State of Texas, County of Harris, know all men by this public instrument, made and entered into by and between J. Com Massie of the County of Harris in the State of Texas of the first part and Mary Francis Hogan of the County of Harris and State of Texas of the second part Witnesseth. That for and in consideration of the sum of sixty dollars in hand paid by the party of the second part to the party of the first part, the receipt of which is hereby fully acknowledged and confessed, the said party of the first part, by this act has granted, conveyed, sold, conveyed and released, and doth hereby grant, convey, sell, convey and release unto the party of the second part, her heirs, assigns and legal representatives the following described land and premises, lying and being situated in the County of Harris in the State of Texas, to-wit: 1/2 of lot No. 10, in Block No. 19 & improvements being the corner half in the City of Houston, together with all and singular the rights, members, improvements, hereditaments, and appurtenances to the same belonging as in anywise incident or appertaining and the proceeds and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof. To have and to hold all and singular the premises and hereditaments above mentioned and hereby and herein granted, with the appurtenances thereto belonging, to the said party of the second part her heirs and assigns, to the only proper use and behoof of the said party of the second part, her heirs and assigns forever, and the said party of the first part by this act binds himself his heirs, executors and administrators to warrant and forever defend, all and singular the said herein above described premises unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, against every person or persons whomsoever lawfully claiming or to claim the same, or any part thereof by through or under him. In witness of all which, the party of the 1st part hereunto sets his hand and seal (using scroll for seal) at Harris Co. this 19th day of April 1855. J. Com Massie. Witness M. B. Hogan  
M. J. Massie. The State of Texas, Harris County. Before me J. C. Dent Clerk of the County Court of Harris County, in the State of Texas, duly commissioned and qualified this day came and personally appeared J. Com Massie of the County of Harris to me personally known who acknowledged the execution of the foregoing deed, dated the 19th day of April A.D. 1855 and delivered the same as his binding act and deed for the purposes and consideration here in contained and at length set forth. Given under my hand and official seal at my office in the City of Houston this 25th day of Oct. 1856. J. C. Dent Clerk (seal)

Recorded October 5- 1856 at 9 o'clock A.M.

Geo. Reesley  
by Sheriff  
to  
D. J. Allen

The State of Texas, County of Harris, know all men by these presents and all whom these presents may concern. That whereas at the Spring Term of the District Court of Wilcox County on the 25th day of May A.D. 1856 one Jerry S. Allen by the Judgment of said Court recovered of one George Reesley, the sum of two thousand four hundred & ten dollars

# Social Statistics Census

## Social Statistics Schedules from U.S. Censuses

RELIGION.			
No. of Churches.	Denomination.	No. each will accommodate.	Value of Church Property.
95	96	97	98
1	M. P. Baptists	500	6000
2	Methodist E	350	3000
3	Roman Catholic	300	2500
4	Episcopalian	300	7000
5	Baptist	350	6000
6	Methodist S	100	400
7	Methodist E	100	400

### 1850 Census Social Statistics Schedule.

One of the two smaller Methodist churches is Cedar Bayou at Midway. The 350-seat Methodist church is the Shearn Church in Houston.

### The 1870 Census Social Statistics Schedule lists only churches in Houston.

RELIGION.			
No. of Churches.	Denomination.	No. each will accommodate.	Value of Church Property.
95	96	97	98
1	Meth	150	400
1	"	300	1000
1	"	200	600
1	Ev. Lutheran	600	900
1	"	400	600
1	Presbyterian	350	10,000
1	Episcopal	450	20,000
1	M. Episcopal	350	12,000
1	M. Lutheran	300	-
1	Baptist	350	8,000
1	Lutheran	230	2,000
1	M. German	250	4,000

### 1860 Census Social Statistics Schedule.

It is unknown which churches are Cedar Bayou and Harmony Grove.

APPENDIX, p2

Lynchburg Station and Cedar Bayou Circuit  
QC Meeting Notices, 1858 through 1859

GALVESTON DISTRICT—FIRST ROUND.		
Galveston,	January	23 and 24
Lynchburg, at Lynchburg,	do	30 and 31
Cedar Bayou, at Cedar Bayou,	February	6 and 7
Oyster Creek, at Sandy Point.	do	13 and 14
Brazoria, at Columbia,	do	20 and 21
Union Chappel, at Union Chappel,	do	27 and 28
San Philipe, at San Philipe,	March	6 and 7
Richmond, at Richmond,	do	27 and 28
Houston, April		3 and 4

Wm. H. SEAT, P. E.

Cedar Bayou Circuit, 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr, 1858  
1858-01-26 *Texas Christian Advocate*, p3

GALVESTON DISTRICT FOURTH ROUND		
Houston Station,	Aug.	27th, 28th.
Galveston Station,	Sept	3d, 4th
Cedar Bayou,	"	10th, 11th.
Lynchburg,	"	17th, 18th.
Richmond,	"	24th, 25th.
Union Chapel,	Oct.	1st, 2d.
Velasco Chapel,	"	8th, 9th
Brazoria,	"	15th, 16th.
Columbia,	"	22d, 23d.
Sandy Point,	"	29th, 30th.

F. C. WILKES P. E.

Cedar Bayou Circuit, 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr, 1859  
1859-09-01 *Texas Christian Advocate*

Robert Alexander died in April, 1882, and the Cedar Bayou church was named Alexander Chapel sometime during the first quarter 1886.

GALVESTON DISTRICT—FIRST ROUND.		
Washington St., Houston.....	Jan 3,	4
Alvin cir. at Alvin.....	Jan 9,	10
Cedar Bayou cir. at Cedar Bayou.....	Jan 16,	17
Bolivar cir at Johnson's Bethel.....	Jan 23,	24
San Felipe, at Patterson.....	Jan 30,	31
Matagorda cir. at Matagorda.....	Feb 6,	7
Velasco cir. at Oyster Creek.....	Feb 13,	14
Columbia cir. at Columbia.....	Feb 20,	21
McKee St., Houston.....	Feb 27,	28
Richmond cir. at Richmond.....	March 6,	7
St. James, Galveston.....	March 14,	15
St. John's, Galveston.....	March 21,	22
West End Mission, Galveston.....	March 21,	22
Shearn Church, Houston.....	March 28,	29

The district stewards will meet at Alvin, Jan 8th at 11 a m. Names as follows: H. C. Deadeke, P. Lee, J. A. Shapard, Jacob Seibcal, J. J. Shirley, Thos Waters, A. I. LeFevre, Ed. Smallwood, J. A. Crenshaw, N. B. Sligh, H. T. Compton. Brethren, please be prompt. Hope the Boards of Stewards will meet early and make liberal allowance for their pastors, and adopt such measures as will secure the amounts in full. Hope the pastors will take their collections early in the year.

J. F. FOLLIN, P. E.

All previous notices where a location is stated say "at Cedar Bayou."  
1886-01-02 *Texas Christian Advocate*, p3

GALVESTON DISTRICT—SECOND ROUND.		
Wharton. at Wharton.....	April 3,	4
Washington St., Houston.....	April 11,	12
Eagle Lake, at Alleyton.....	April 17,	18
San Felipe, at San Felipe.....	April 24,	25
Cedar Bayou, at Alex. chapel.....	May 1,	2
Bolivar, at High Island.....	May 8,	9
Alvin, at Sandy Point.....	May 15,	16
Velasco, at Island chapel.....	May 22,	23
Matagorda, at Trespacios.....	May 29,	30
McKee St., Houston.....	June 5,	6
Columbia, at Chauncey Prairie.....	June 12,	13
St. James, Galveston.....	June 19,	20
St. John's, Galveston.....	June 20,	21
West End Mission, Galveston.....	June 20,	21
Richmond, at Richmond.....	June 26,	27
Shearn Church, Houston.....	June 27,	28

Delegates to district conference elected this round.

J. F. FOLLIN, P. E.

All subsequent notices where a location is stated say "at Alexander Chapel."  
1886-04-01 *Texas Christian Advocate*, p3



**Table 1. Quarterly Conference Meeting Locations  
From the *Texas Wesleyan Banner*, *Texas Christian Advocate*  
and Lynchburg Circuit Q.C. minutes 1853-1871**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Qtr</u>	<u>Circuit</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Qtr</u>	<u>Circuit</u>	<u>Location</u>
1845-1849		San Jacinto	Mission no extant records	1861	4	Harmony Grove	Cedar Bayou
1850	2	San Jacinto	Old River	1862	1	Harmony Grove	Wm Hutchinson's House, San Jacinto
1850	3	San Jacinto	West Liberty	1862	2	Harmony Grove	West Liberty
1850	4	San Jacinto	Lynchburg	1862	3	Harmony Grove	no meeting
1851	1	San Jacinto	Note 2	1862	4	Harmony Grove	Bryan's House
1851	2	San Jacinto	Penn's Meet'g House	1863	1	Harmony Grove	San Jacinto
1851	3	San Jacinto	Tarkington's Prairie	1863	2	Harmony Grove	Cedar Bayou
1851	4	San Jacinto	Cedar Bayou	1863	3	Harmony Grove	Harmony Grove
1852		Unknown -	No extant <i>Wesleyan Banner</i>	1863	4	Harmony Grove	Cedar Bayou
1853	2	San Jacinto	Lynchburg	1864	1	Harmony Grove	Bryan's House
1853	3	San Jacinto	Manayunk	1864	2	Harmony Grove	San Jacinto
1853	4	San Jacinto	Cedar Bayou	1864	3	Harmony Grove	Cedar Bayou
1854	1	Lynchburg		1864	4	Harmony Grove	Rev. Preston's House (Bayland)
1854	2	Lynchburg	Lynchburg	1865	1	Harmony Grove	San Jacinto
1854	3	Lynchburg	Cedar Bayou	1865	2	Harmony Grove	Harmony Grove
1854	4	Lynchburg	Judge Burnet House	1865	3	Harmony Grove	Harmony Grove
1855	1	Lynchburg	Cedar Bayou	1865	4	Harmony Grove	Cedar Bayou
1855	2	Lynchburg	Lynchburg	1866	1	Harmony Grove	Bayland High School
1855	3	Lynchburg	West Liberty	1866	2	Harmony Grove	Cedar Bayou
1855	4	Lynchburg	Lynchburg	1866	3	Harmony Grove	no meeting
1856	1	Lynchburg	Cedar Bayou	1866	4	Harmony Grove	Cedar Bayou
1856	2	Lynchburg	Lynchburg	1867	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 3
1856	3	Lynchburg	Red Bluff	1867	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 3
1856	4	Lynchburg	Lynchburg	1867	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 3
1857	1	Lynchburg	Cedar Bayou	1867	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 3
1857	2	Lynchburg	West Liberty	1868	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 3
1857	3	Lynchburg	Cedar Bayou	1868	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 3
1857	4	Lynchburg	Lynchburg	1868	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 3
1858	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 3	1868	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 3
1858	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 3 & 4	1869	1	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou
1858	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 3	1869	2	Cedar Bayou	Midway Chapel
1858	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 3	1869	3	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou
1858	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 3	1869	4	Cedar Bayou	Midway
1858	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 3	1870	1	Bay Mission	Cedar Bayou
1858	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 3	1870	2	Bay Mission	Midway Chapel
1858	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 3	1870	3	Bay Mission	Cedar Bayou
1860	1	Lynchburg	San Jacinto	1870	4	Bay Mission	Midway
1860	2	Lynchburg	Cedar Bayou				
1860	3	Lynchburg	San Jacinto				
1860	4	Lynchburg	Cedar Bayou				
1861	1	Harmony Grove	Harmony Grove				
1861	2	Harmony Grove	Oak Island				
1861	3	Harmony Grove	no meeting				

1871	1	Bay Mission	Cedar Bayou	1883	4	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou
1871	2	Bay Mission	Midway	1884	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1871	3	Bay Mission	White's S.H.	1884	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1871	4	Bay Mission	Note 1	1884	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1872	1	Bay Mission	Note 1	1884	4	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou
1872	2	Bay Mission	White's S.H.	1885	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1872	3	Bay Mission	Note 1	1885	2	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou
1872	4	Bay Mission	Note 1	1885	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1873	1	Bay Mission	Note 1	1885	4	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou
1873	2	Bay Mission	Note 1	1886	1	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou
1873	3	Bay Mission	Note 1	1886	2	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1873	4	Bay Mission	Note 1	1886	3	Cedar Bayou	Barbers Hill
1874	1	Bay Mission	Note 1	1886	4	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1874	2	Bay Mission	Note 1	1887	1	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1874	3	Bay Mission	Note 1	1887	2	Cedar Bayou	White's
1874	4	Bay Mission	Note 1	1887	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1875	1	Bay Mission	Note 1	1887	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1875	2	Bay Mission	Note 1	1888	1	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1875	3	Bay Mission	Note 1	1888	2	Cedar Bayou	Island Chapel
1875	4	Bay Mission	Note 1	1888	3	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1876	1	Bay Mission	Note 1	1888	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1876	2	Bay Mission	Note 1	1889	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1876	3	Bay Mission	Note 1	1889	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1876	4	Bay Mission	Cedar Bayou	1889	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1877	1	Bay Mission	Note 1	1889	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1877	2	Bay Mission	Note 1	1890	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1877	3	Bay Mission	CB (camp-meeting)	1890	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1877	4	Bay Mission	Note 1	1890	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1878	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 1	1890	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1878	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 1	1891	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1878	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 1	1891	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 1
1878	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1891	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1879	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1891	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1879	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1892	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1879	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1892	2	Cedar Bayou	Barbers Hill
1879	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1892	3	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1880	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1892	4	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1880	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1893	1	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1880	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1893	2	Cedar Bayou	Barbers Hill
1880	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1893	3	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1881	1	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou	1893	4	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1881	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1894	1	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1881	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 1	1894	2	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1881	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 1	1894	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1882	1	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou	1894	4	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1882	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1895	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1882	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1895	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1882	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1895	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1883	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1895	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1883	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1896	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2
1883	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1896	2	Cedar Bayou	Note 2

1896	3	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1899	2	Cedar Bayou	Barbers Hill
1896	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1899	3	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1897	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 2	1899	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 1
1897	2	Cedar Bayou	Barbers Hill	1900	1	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1897	3	Cedar Bayou	Camp-ground	1900	2	Cedar Bayou	Fisher's Chapel
1897	4	Cedar Bayou	Note 1	1900	3	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1898	1	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel	1900	4	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1898	2	Cedar Bayou	Dayton	1901	1	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1898	3	Cedar Bayou	Barbers Hill	1901	2	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel
1898	4	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel	1901	3	Cedar Bayou	Fisher's Chapel
1899	1	Cedar Bayou	Note 1	1901	4	Cedar Bayou	Alexander Chapel

Note 1 – Meeting notice not found

Note 2 – Location not stated

Note 3 – Cedar Bayou Circuit minutes lost or not recorded

Note 4 – The church at the Christian Smith league was built mid-1858

**Table 2. Churches in the Local Methodist Circuit  
From the *Texas Wesleyan Banner*, *Texas Christian Advocate*  
and Lynchburg Circuit Q.C. minutes 1853-1871**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Circuit</b>	<b>Locations of Q.C. Conferences<sup>1</sup></b>
1845-53	San Jacinto Mission	Cedar Bayou <sup>2</sup> , San Jacinto, West Liberty, Old River, Lynchburg, Tarkington Prairie, Penn's Meeting House (Crosby)
1854-57	Lynchburg Circuit	Cedar Bayou <sup>3</sup> , Lynchburg, West Liberty, Manayunk, San Jacinto, Red Bluff, Magnolia, Cotton Bayou, Tarkington Prairie, Clear Creek, Old River, Edenton (location unknown), Sardis (on the San Jacinto)
1858-59	Lynchburg	San Jacinto, Lynchburg, West Liberty, Old River, Red Bluff, Barrows (Double Bayou), Greenville, Oak Island
1858-59	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou, Goose Creek <sup>4</sup>
1860	Lynchburg	Cedar Bayou, San Jacinto, Manayunk, Red Bluff, Goose Creek, <sup>5</sup> Old River, West Liberty, Red Bluff
1861-66	Harmony Grove	Cedar Bayou, San Jacinto, Harmony Grove, <sup>6</sup> West Liberty, Old River, Red Bluff, Barrows, Greenville (probably Evergreen), Oak Island, Lynchburg, Prairie Grove <sup>7</sup>
1867-69	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou, Midway, San Jacinto, Bayland Orphan Home
1870-78	Bay Mission	Cedar Bayou, Midway Chapel, White School House (Crosby), Bayland Orphan Home
1879-00	Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou, Barber's Hill, <sup>8</sup> White's School House, Island Chapel, <sup>9</sup> Camp-ground, Dayton, Goose Creek <sup>10</sup>

There was an African Methodist Episcopal<sup>11</sup> Goose Creek circuit in 1917. The location and duration of the church is unknown.<sup>12</sup>

The Goose Creek and Mont Belvieu circuit was established in 1919 with 170 total members. They had a parsonage for J.W. Wardlow, the Preacher in Charge, and had two Local Preachers.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There may have been other churches not mentioned in the Q.C. minutes. All churches may not have existed during the entire duration of the circuit.

<sup>2</sup> The Cedar Bayou church was located at Midway.

<sup>3</sup> The Cedar Bayou church at Midway was destroyed in 1854 and rebuilt on Goose Creek.

<sup>4</sup> When the new church was built on Cedar Bayou in 1858, it took that name and the 1856 church on Goose Creek took that name.

<sup>5</sup> Renamed Harmony Grove in Jul 1860

<sup>6</sup> Closed at the end of 1865

<sup>7</sup> Only shows up in Oct 1866, was probably renamed Midway.

<sup>8</sup> Barber's Hill became known as Fisher's Chapel in March, 1900.

<sup>9</sup> Unknown location, April 1888

<sup>10</sup> There was a Sunday school at Goose Creek in 1897. Minutes of the 1897 Texas Annual Conference

<sup>11</sup> [AME Church: Our History](#)

<sup>12</sup> Methodist Episcopal Church, Official Journal, 1917.

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of the 1919 Texas Annual Conference



**Table 3. Preachers at the Cedar Bayou Church's Circuit  
from M.E., South; Annual Conference Minutes  
and Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church Centennial History**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Circuit</b>	<b>P.C.</b>	<b>L.P.</b>	<b>Members<sup>1</sup></b>
1843 <sup>2</sup>	Houston	Thomas O. Summers <sup>3</sup>		
1844	Galveston	John Clark <sup>3</sup>	L.S. Friend <sup>4</sup>	
1845	San Jacinto Mission	William Hamilton <sup>3</sup>		121/28
1846	San Jacinto Mission	William Hamilton		112/24
1847	San Jacinto Mission	Wiley Whitby		87/9
1848	San Jacinto Mission	To be supplied		81/9
1849	San Jacinto Mission	William S. Hamilton <sup>5</sup>		71/7
1850	San Jacinto Mission	To be supplied	W.F. Hubert <sup>6</sup>	79/17
1851	San Jacinto Mission	To be supplied	J.W. DeVilbis <sup>6</sup>	Not listed
1852	San Jacinto Mission	To be supplied	G.D. Parker	41/12
1853	San Jacinto Mission	To be supplied	E.A. Stocking	44/12
1854	Lynchburg	John W Addison		44/12/1
1855	Lynchburg	Williamson Williams <sup>6</sup>		60/15/1
1856	Lynchburg	Robert W. Pierce		75/22/2
1857	Lynchburg & C.B.	To be supplied	J.W. Harper <sup>7</sup>	150/28/6
1858	Cedar Bayou	George D. Parker <sup>8</sup>		125/20/2
1859	Cedar Bayou	To be supplied	Note <sup>9</sup>	125/20/2
1860	Lynchburg	James Rice		172/34/4
1861	Harmony Grove	James Rice		177/35/4
1862	Harmony Grove	Thomas F. Windsor <sup>10</sup>	E.A. Stocking	--
1863	Harmony Grove	To be supplied	E.A. Stocking	89/--
1864	Harmony Grove	To be supplied	E.A. Stocking	67/10
1865	Harmony Grove	George W. Fleming		61/4
1866	Harmony Grove	To be supplied	E.P. Angel <sup>11</sup>	58/4
1867	Cedar Bayou	To be supplied	Wm. Monk <sup>12</sup>	60/--/1
1868	Cedar Bayou	B.A. Kemp		Not listed
1869	Cedar Bayou	John S. Clower		41/--/--
1870	Bay Mission	Robert Alexander		54/--/1
1871	Bay Mission	Robert Alexander		68/--/--
1872	Bay Mission	J.M. Turner		72/--/--
1873	Bay Mission	To be supplied	A.J. Carter	72/--/2
1874	Bay Mission	To be supplied	Wm Yates & Rev. Rose	88/--/--
1875	Bay Mission	J.A.G. Rabe		93/--/1
1876	Bay Mission	John S. Clower		102/--/1
1877	Bay Mission	P.E. Nicholson		168/2/1
1878	Bay Mission	P.E. Nicholson		160/--/2
1879	Cedar Bayou	S.H. Brown		125/-- <sup>13</sup>
1880	Cedar Bayou	S.H. Brown		126/--
1881	Cedar Bayou	G.H. Phair		Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1882	Cedar Bayou	G.H. Phair		Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1883	Cedar Bayou	C.L. Dealy		Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1884	Cedar Bayou	J.A. Savage		Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1885	Cedar Bayou	J.A. Savage		Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1886	Cedar Bayou	J.A. Savage		204/1
1887	Cedar Bayou	J.L. Murray		208/1
1888	Cedar Bayou	J.W. Kelley		105/--

1889	Cedar Bayou	L.P. Davis	148/1
1890	Cedar Bayou	H.G. Williams	Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1891	Cedar Bayou	G.J. Leath	Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1892	Cedar Bayou	J.W. Holt	Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1893 <sup>15</sup>	Cedar Bayou	G.S. Sandel	Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1894	Cedar Bayou	G.S. Sandel	Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1895	Cedar Bayou	E.M. Meyers	Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1896	Cedar Bayou	J.R. Murray	Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1897	Cedar Bayou	J.R. Murray	Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1898	Cedar Bayou	B.J. Guess	Unknown <sup>14</sup>
1899	Cedar Bayou	T.R. Cain	245/1
1900	Cedar Bayou	T.R. Cain	235/1

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<sup>1</sup> White/Colored/Local Preachers reported for the entire circuit.

<sup>2</sup> There was no known church in the Baytown area before the Methodist Schism in 1844.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Alexander was P.E.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Houston's letter to Sam Houston only referred to him as Mr. Friend.

<sup>5</sup> Hamilton's mother, Sarah, died in 1850 and was the first known interment in the Methodist Cemetery.

<sup>6</sup> Williams died during his appointment.

<sup>7</sup> Harper was P.C. of Cedar Bayou Circuit and W.R. Fayle was P.C. of Lynchburg Station.

<sup>8</sup> Cedar Bayou history says M. Tunnell. They got the name from the Lynchburg QC minutes. Tunnell was the Lynchburg preacher, suggesting they didn't know that Cedar Bayou was its own circuit with its own preacher.

<sup>9</sup> Cedar Bayou history says W. Rees. See note above.

<sup>10</sup> Windsor resigned during the first quarter.

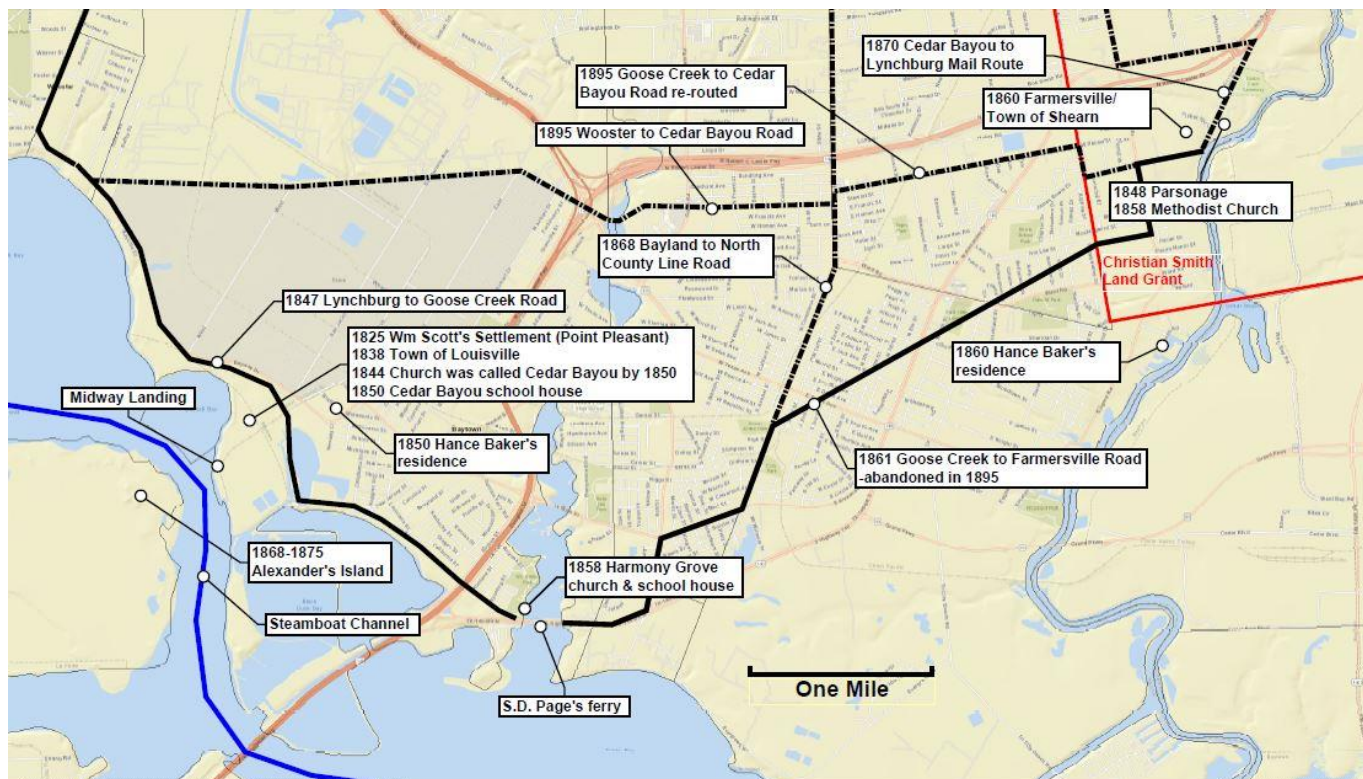
<sup>11</sup> No extant church records from this period; perhaps the 1897 history committee remembered the name.

<sup>12</sup> No extant church records from this period; William Monk was assigned to the Sulphur Springs circuit in 1867.

<sup>13</sup> From this point on, Colored members were not listed separately.

<sup>14</sup> The Annual Conference minutes are the last available online.

<sup>15</sup> Galveston District renamed as Houston District.



**Map 1.** Through almost the entire 19th century, this entire area was considered to be Cedar Bayou. Drawn by Chuck Chandler.

“The first church in this community of which we have any record was at Midway, near the spot where the high power electric lines cross the ship channel at Baytown. Rev. Robert Alexander organized the church there.” [The Daily Sun, April 29, 1935, p7.](#)

“Texans gathered in the community of Cedar Bayou to organize a Methodist Church under the direction of Dr. Robert Alexander. The first church was organized in the private home of Hance Baker.” *Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church Centennial History.*

“The [next] church was built in this section of the country on a spot known as Harmony Grove. This church was moved to Cedar Bayou later and the new church was erected by these pioneers. [The News Tribune, \(LaPorte, Tx\), July 28, 1933, Section 7, Page 2, Column 1.](#) (Preserved on microfilm at the Sterling Municipal Public Library).

As much as we can learn from memory the first church house [which was actually the parsonage] was built in 1847 or 1848. This structure apparently cost \$104 and was replaced ten years later by a frame building erected under the supervision of a building committee. [The Tri-Cities Sun, July 28, 1933, p30.](#)

Although private roads existed, there was no public road to today’s Cedar Bayou community until 1861 when the Goose Creek to Farmersville Road was built. [Commissioners Court Minutes Vol B, p002, May 20, 1861.](#) Three months later the name of Farmersville was changed to Shearn. The road we call Cedar Bayou-Lynchburg was built as the Lynchburg to Cedar Bayou Mail Route when the Cedar Bayou Post Office was established in 1870.

## Resources

*Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church Centennial History*, by Louise Travis, 1947.

*Cedar Bayou United Methodist Church Sesquicentennial History 1844-1994*, by Louise Devereux Travis, 1996.

Cedar Bayou Methodist Church, Historical Marker Narrative, by Marie Ellender Garrett, 1983. Includes portions of the “Church Register of the M.E. Church, South with minutes of selected conference meetings and a list of preachers from 1844 to 1868.

*Following General Sam Houston: From 1793 to 1863*, by Amelia W. Williams and Bernhardt Wall, 1935.

[\*Sixty years on the Brazos; the life and letters of Dr. John Washington Lockhart, 1824-1900\*](#), by Mrs. Jonnie Lockhart Wallis in association with Laurance L. Hill, 1930.

[Sam Houston Letter](#). [San Jacinto Museum](#). Herzstein Library, Sam Houston Biography. Page 18

*Pioneer Sketches, Cedar Point to San Jacinto*, by Robert E. Lee Library Club, 1931.

[\*History of the Great Secession, Methodist Episcopal Church in the Year 1845\*](#). 1855, by Charles Elliott. Cincinnati, Swormstedt & Poe, for the Methodist Episcopal Church

[\*History of Shearn Church 1837-1907\*](#). By Mrs. I.M.E. Blandin, 1908.

*Robert Alexander and the Early Methodist Church in Texas*. La Grange, Texas. Press of La Grange Journal, 1935, by Ann Ayers Lide.

[\*Minutes of the Quarterly Conference \(Q.C.\), Lynchburg Circuit, 1853-1871\*](#).

[\*Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, \(1839-1845\)\*](#).

[\*Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, \(1845-1865\)\*](#).

*Texas Wesleyan Banner* and *Texas Christian Advocate*. Available on microfilm at the Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

*Harris County Deed Books (HCDB)* and *Harris County Commissioners Court minutes (HCCC)* are available at the Harris County Archives, 11525 Todd St, Houston, TX.

[\*The Cedar Bayou Methodist Church: Hidden Truths and Myths\*](#), by Sarah Burnett, Lee College. Published in Touchstone Magazine, 2015.



# Texas United Methodist Historical Society Newsletter

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Wm. C. Hardt, editor

## Editor's Letter

One of the most frustrating problems we find in reading local church histories is the way that errors are perpetuated. All too frequently if a local church historian writing in the 1930s said a church was founded in 1852, that date appears in all subsequent histories of the church—even if it cannot be documented. In some cases, the historian is skeptical of what previous historians have written and goes back to the original sources in the interest of historical accuracy.

I was therefore delighted when a local church historian shared the results of his research in which he overturned a long-standing error and then went even further and demonstrated how the error occurred--- more than eighty years ago.

The historian is Chuck Chandler who writes features for the *Baytown Sun*. He was puzzled about some of the history of Cedar Bayou UMC that just didn't make sense so he dug and dug and in doing so learned how the error began.

The published history of Cedar Bayou said that Sam Houston attended a 4th of July barbeque there in 1844 at the present site of the church. Chandler was skeptical because the deed to the church property dates to 1847. The more he looked into it, the more he thought the barbecue occurred at Cedar Creek in Washington County rather than Cedar Bayou.

Chandler tracked down the source of the 1844 barbecue at Cedar Bayou to the Amelia Williams 1935 book, *Following General Sam Houston from 1793 to 1963*. Williams at the time was employed by Eugene Barker at the University of Texas to transcribe historic letters. Williams even elaborated on the church and included a sketch drawing of the church that existed at the time. Chandler comes to the conclusion in which I concur that Williams mistakenly transcribed Cedar **Creek** as Cedar **Bayou** from one of Houston's letters. When the Williams book was published in 1935, Cedar Bayou Methodists began reconstructing their history around this new information ---even though it was in error.

Chandler's article was published in the *Baytown Sun* on September 6. Access to the full article requires a subscription, but the drawing may be seen at

[https://baytownsun.com/opinion/article\\_88f977f0-f15a-11ea-93e2-b30b4fdcdc20.html](https://baytownsun.com/opinion/article_88f977f0-f15a-11ea-93e2-b30b4fdcdc20.html)

Hats off to Chuck Chandler for showing how local church history should be written.