

NORTHERN KENTUCKY VIEWS PRESENTS:

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Old Cedar  
Baptist Church:

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by  
Viola S. Patton, Clerk Pro Tem.  
(Mrs. Glen J. Patton)

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From  
**A History of Owen County Baptist  
Association and Its Churches**

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## A Brief History of Old Cedar Baptist Church

Compiled in 1964-1965

The Old Cedar Baptist Church has been for so many years the center of our Community life that we have taken her work for the Lord more or less for granted. It has been a joy to study her history and we pray that it will inspire us to work more diligently to carry on the Word for the future generations.

Through research of Kentucky Baptist Associational minutes and State historical records, we find that our church is one of the six oldest Baptist churches in Owen County. We are unable to determine the exact date of organization, but in 1820, we appear as an organized church, known as Mouth of Cedar, with 23 members. The Franklin County Associational Minutes of 1820 listed as sending the Church Letter with two accredited messengers, Silas B. Calvert and M. H. Hawkins, to the annual meeting.

Franklin County Associational records in 1842 show our name as Cedar Creek; later in 1871 as Cedar, then in 1921, as a member of the Owen Association, we began to be known as Old Cedar.

Our church remained a member of the Franklin County Association until 1899 when our church letter was presented to the Owen Association for membership and was accepted. This association was formed in 1880 by the following churches: Beech Grove, Caney Fork and Richland. Owen and Concord Associations merged in 1924 to form the present Owen County Baptist Association.

The first place of worship near Ford's Spring on Cedar Creek, was a log structure on land donated by Mrs. H. H. Ford, the great-great grandmother of our present Moderator, Kenneth Karsner. Under the leadership of Tobias Wilhoite, one of our early Kentucky pioneer preachers, this group consecrated Christians grew to a membership of 77 in 1839. At this time, the church adopted the present Church Constitution, Church Rules, and Articles of Faith, and also moved to a new building near the site of the present building. Under the Constitution, the church was to be known as the "Baptist Church of Jesus Christ at Cedar."

James E. Duvall now became pastor and records would indicate that he served until the latter part of the 1860's. The church prospered, baptizing 110 converts in the year 1842, making a total church membership of 201. These years of growth brought many people to the Lord and into the church, until in 1871, the date of our oldest church record book, there were 398 members on the church roll, 17 of which were colored. The names on this roll are largely the family names that are familiar to our community, to name a few: Smith, Claxon, Karsner, Rogers, Taylor, Brammell, Grugin, Thornton, Tackett, Johnson and Oliver.

Rev. John A. Head was called as Pastor in 1871 and became a vital part of the lives of all the members. He was Pastor for about 35 years. In August 1872, "the brethren at Poe School House called for assistance to constitute a church at the above named place." This church is now Mt. Vernon in Franklin County.

A great Day came in the life of the church, after years of praying, planning and sacrifice, the lower floor of the present building was finished during the pastorate of Reverend Edward N. Lawson. On April 29, 1929, 35 men and many teams came and worked hard breaking the ground, and hauling stone from the hillsides to use in building the walls. The women came and brought dinner. After many days of work by both men and women of the church, the work was finished and in August, 1929, a business meeting was held in the lower floor of the new building. We continued to use it for both Sunday School and Worship Service until 1949. The old building was made into a parsonage to be replaced by our new one bought in 1960.

In June 1949, God answered our prayers and gave us the pastor to fill our needs, Reverend W. M. Wilson. Under his inspiring leadership, the building was completed. He worked day and night; praying, planning, working and directing others, pleading for money, work and sacrifice from the members and many friends of the church. This building is unique in that it was built almost entirely by the men of the church, the stone used was native stone; procured from the road being constructed on Claxon's Ridge.

The first service was held in the new building on June 11, 1950. The formal dedication was on October 1, 1950. Many friends came from near and far to be present on this day of answer to prayer. We now had our new building, but also an indebtedness. Again, the call came from the Lord--sacrifice and give--and on May 2, 1954 our Pastor, Reverend W. M. Wilson, and the Deacons burned the last note of the debt. The church was built and paid for during the pastorate of Rev. Wilson.

The Woman's Missionary Society was organized in 1917 by our pastor's wife, Mrs. W. S. Shearer. The Baptist Young People's Union, later the Baptist Training Union, was also organized under Reverend Shearer. Reverend Jessie Farris, who came to us in 1921, was our first full-time pastor.

Perhaps the greatest testimony to the effectiveness of the work of Old Cedar is the number of our young men who have heard the call of the Lord for the ministry and have been ordained by the church as preachers of the Gospel. We have ordained these young men: Tobias Wilhoite in the early 1800's, John Alfred Head 1867, Walter Oliver 1917, George Kerby, 1919, Jesse Stephens 1941, David Lathren 1944, Joseph R. Tackett 1951, and in 1953 Ralph Rogers. Many other young people have answered the call to give their service to the Lord's work. Roberta Claxon Young is a graduate of the Woman's Missionary Training School.

During the 145 years of record for this church, it has been our privilege to have as pastors the following list of God-chosen men: Tobias Wilhoite 1820, James E. Duvall 1842, John Alfred Head 1871, Frank H. Hodges 1875, John A. Head 1876, Clark M. Riley 1877, John A. Head 1879, James A. Peters 1886, W. H. Johnson 1887, James Allin Davis 1891, John A. Head 1894, Earnest R. Sams 1916, Walker S. Shearer 1917, Jessie Farris 1921, J. R. Shuman 1924, Edward N. Lawson 1928, C. H. Foster 1937, Berger Howard 1943, J. V. Watterson 1946, W. N. Wilson 1949, Reece Acklen 1956, Ronald Higdon 1958, Al Craft 1961, Roy Godwin 1962, and Robert Barker, who came to us in 1964.

Our church library was organized in 1964 and is growing in both size and use.

Reverend Barker is proving that God has answered our prayers again and has sent to us a pastor, preacher and friend, who will help the people of Old Cedar Baptist Church to grow and to live in the way that our Father would have us do.

Viola S. Patton, Clerk Pro Tem.  
(Mrs. Glen J. Patton)