

## The Boom Years

The Holcombs first came to Mt. Sylvia prior to 1900. The 1982 history also recounts that, "The McKelveys remember that there was Baptist preaching in the school house once a month."

However, Tex Lilly recalled, that as a child, he remembered Madison McKelvey saying that he was the only remaining charter member, indicating the official beginnings of the missionary Baptist church to be after his arrival in the community in 1907.

Exactly when Bro. P. H. Rogers began preaching at Mt. Sylvia is unknown. He was raised in the area now known as Midway. His obituary record in the Mt. Pleasant Daily News, September 9, 1929, is reproduced here.

In the year, 1912, B.F. Willson moved his family from Nevill's Chapel to Mt. Sylvia and was elected treasurer. Below is a transcribed copy of a document found by Tex Lilly in the personal journal of his grandfather, B. F. Willson. Mr. Willson was a blacksmith by trade and kept both his business and church records in this same journal. This document is a signed list of contributions made toward the purchase of the school house for the church. A transcript of that list is on the next page. One cannot help but notice the differences in spelling.

**REV. P. H. ROGERS  
PASSES AWAY**

**PIONEER MINISTER OF COUNTY  
IS LAID TO REST SUNDAY  
AFTERNOON**

Rev. Peter H. Rogers, pioneer Baptist minister of Titus County, died at 5:50 Saturday afternoon at his home in the south part of this city after a lingering illness due to the infirmities of age. Funeral services were held Sunday afternoon at four o'clock at the Gladewater church, eight miles north of town, with interment following immediately afterward at the nearby cemetery.

Rev. Rogers, affectionately called by many "Uncle Peter," was born in Alabama seventy-nine years ago, and moved to Titus County when a small child. During the seventy or more years in which he lived here he held the respect of all who knew him, and his death is universally mourned. No other man, perhaps, had the influence for good in this county that has been many times attributed to this outstanding citizen. At the age of nineteen he became a member of the Baptist Church, and had been preaching for over 64 years. He had at various times been County Judge, County Superintendent of Instruction, Representative to the Legislature, and last Winter, because of ill health, had resigned from the position of Justice of the Peace for this precinct.

He leaves a wife, two sons, Ad and Rev. Don Rogers, and three daughters, Mrs. Barbara Allen, Mrs. John A. Willson and Mrs. Uiman Brown, all of this county, besides numbers of relatives and a host of friends to mourn his death.

The funeral was conducted by Rev. J. N. Vandiver and Rev. Emanuel Driggers, and was largely attended, people coming from every part of the county to pay their last tribute of respect to this honored citizen. Many beautiful floral tributes were presented at the grave.

Wee the under sined a gree to pay the a mount opposit our names for the purpos of buying  
 Mt Silvy School house and land for a missionary Baptist Church

		Payed	Dollars	Cents
	J. W. Barrow	P	5	00
	O. T. Barrow	P	2	50
	C. M Erain	P	7	00
	B. F. Willson	P	10	00
	W. L. Brownlee	P	3	00
	G. W. Day	P	10	00
	W. H. Harris	P	10	00
	H. B. Wilson	P	2	00
	W. T. Hammond	P	1	00
	R. B. Cargile	P	2	50
	B. L. McCray	P	2	50
	J. A. Willson	P	2	50
	L. M. Cargile	P	2	50
	P. H. Rogers	Pd.	5	00
	Collected by G W day	P	2	00
	Collected by W. H. Harris	P	5	50
	- Mamie Willson	P	11	00
	Gradie Ward	P	4	00
	(erased entry)	P		
	Collected by G. W. Day	P	1	00
	Donated by Hopewell Association	P	4	15
	Roggerd and Spencer	P	8	00
	Balance due on church		24	35
	B. B. Hammond		1	00

As has already been indicated, many believe that at least regular preaching and probably a group functioning as a church, were already using this location prior to that legal transaction. What prompted this transaction is unknown, but Willson's background in a missionary Baptist church and the national and state movements of the Landmarkers, led to this clear statement of Mt. Sylvia being a "Missionary Baptist Church."

Another possible explanation of the sale of the property from R. W. Crooks is revealed in a very complicated set of land transactions that took place because of the death of one, W. Y. Crooks. As was stated by Mrs. May Riddle Jones, it seems likely that a lawyer, W. P. McLean, gave the property to the community for school and church purposes. The property including the surrounding 1107 acres had been deeded to Margaret J. McLean, W. P. McLean's wife, on June 17, 1862. W. P. McLean sold this property to P. W. Fennell who in turn sold it to W. Y. Crooks. An affidavit filed October 5, 1938 in the court, by I. H. Hammond, records Rufus Crooks moving to the area 25 years before. The property described in the affidavit is the property immediately south of the church's two acres. Thus Rufus Crooks seems to have come into possession of the school property at the death of W. Y. Crooks and this transaction to sell it to the community was mostly intended to provide the members of the Baptist congregation with a clear title to this land and building.

I. H. HAMMONDS

TO  
PUBLIC

AFFIDAVIT  
DATED: October 5, 1938  
FILED: Aug 31, 1939 at 8 am  
RECORDED: Vol 114, Page 603  
DEED RECORDS OF TITUS COUNTY  
T E X A S.

FILE NO. 1159

THE STATE OF TEXAS ( )

COUNTY OF TITUS ( )

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, a Notary Public in and for Titus County, Texas, on this day personally appeared I. H. Hammonds known to me to be a long time resident citizen of Titus County, Texas, who after being by me first duly sworn states as follows:

"That he was well acquainted with W. Y. Crooks, during his lifetime, the said W. Y. Crooks being an uncle of this affiant; that the said W. Y. Crooks died many years after his father and mother, and that he had five brothers and sisters which are as follows:

1. T. M. Crooks, a brother
2. R. W. Crooks, a brother
3. M. A. Crooks, a sister, who married P. H. Rogers
4. L. M. Crooks, a brother
5. Martha Jane Crooks, a sister who married B. B. Hammonds Sr.

That the said W. Y. Crooks died intestate prior to November 9th 1908, in Titus County, Texas, and was never married.

That the said Martha Jane Hammonds died on October 25th 1904 and left surviving her, B. B. Hammonds Sr., the surviving husband, and the following named children; that B. B. Hammonds Sr died intestate on Feb. 5th 1938.

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I. H. Hammonds, a son  
T. L. Hammonds, a son  
Barto E. Hammonds, a son  
R. W. Hammonds, a son  
T. G. Hammonds

Affiant further states that the above named persons constituted the sole surviving heirs of the said W. Y. Crooks.

Affiant further states that he is well acquainted with that certain parcel of land owned by R. W. Crooks out of a tract out of the G. W. Smith survey which was conveyed by T. M. Crooks to R. W. Crooks by deed dated August 28th 1909 recorded in Vol 22 page 58 deed Records of Titus County, Texas, and that there was a log house thereon at the time W. Y. Crooks purchased said land from P. W. Fennell on November 22nd 1906 as is shown by deed recorded in Vol. 20 page 276 of the Deed Records of Titus County, Texas; and that said land was fenced about 1908 or 1909 and that the same has been under fence since said date, and that R. W. Crooks and his vendor's in title have held said land in open, peaceable, continuous, adverse and un-interrupted possession with such improvements thereon and land in cultivation for more than twenty-five years, and that he has never heard of any person other than the said R. W. Crooks and his vendor's in title asserting any claim to said land or any part thereof, except as is herein shown.

Affiant further states that he is well acquainted with those certain parcels of land described in a deed executed by L. M. Crooks et al to R. W. Crooks, a part of the G. W. Smith survey as is shown by deed dated November 9th 1908, recorded in Volume 20 page 389 of the Deed Records of Titus County, Texas; that there was a house on said land when R. W. Crooks purchased said land, but that the same has been rebuilt since said time, and that said R. W. Crooks moved in to the same soon thereafter and has lived in the same all these many

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years since erection thereof, and that said land was under fence when R. W. Crooks purchased the same, and has continued to be under fence, and that the said R. W. Crooks and his vendor's intitle have held said land under fence, with dwelling thereon, land in cultivation, and other improvements thereon, for more than twenty-five years, and that the said R. W. Crooks has held said land in open, peacable, continuous, adverse and un-interrupted possession for more than twenty-five years, and that he has never heard of any person, other than the said R.W. crooks and his vendor's asserting any claim to said land or any part thereof.

I. H. Hammonds

Subscribed and sworn to before me this the 5th day of October  
A.D. 1938.

W. B. Wright, Notary Public,  
Titus County, Texas.

SEAL

THE STATE OF TEXAS ( )  
COUNTY OF TITUS ( )

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, a notary public in and for Titus County, Texas, on this day personally appeared I. H. Hammonds known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed.

Given under my hand and seal of office this the 5th day of October  
A.D. 1938.

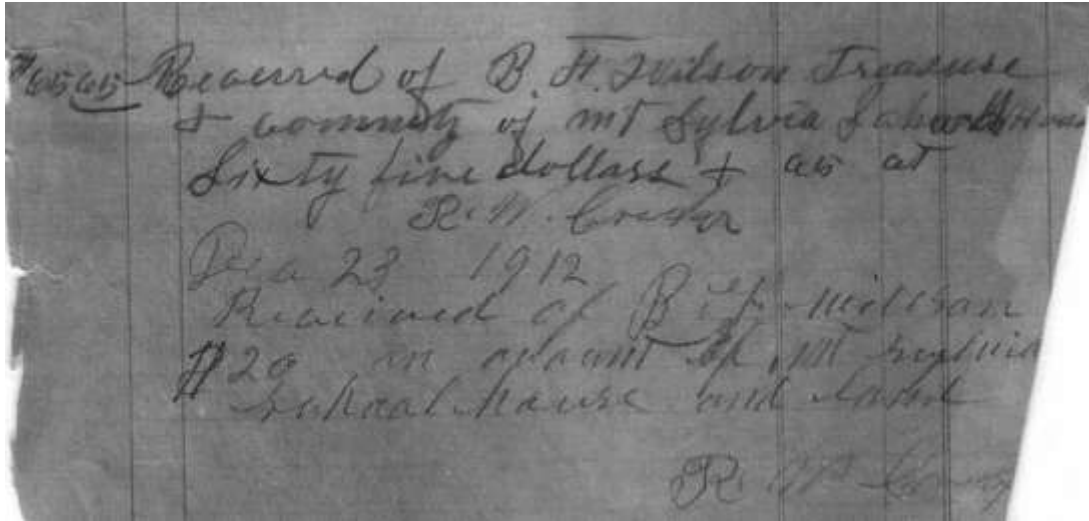
W. E. Wright, Notary Public,  
Titus County, Texas.

SEAL

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As no official church roll is available for this period, this contribution list is the next best thing. It is possible that some who signed were not official members, but the likelihood that they were members is great. P. H. Rogers is listed among the contributors.

“Ben Willson kept accurate records during the 16 years he was treasurer from 1912 to 1928. I'm sure you will enjoy the facts to follow as much as I did. Mr. Willson had a receipt for payments for the Mt. Sylvania School house and 2 acres of land made to R. W. Crooks dated December 23, 1912.” (*History of Mt. Sylvania*, 1982) Tex Lilly provided the copy below:



The land was purchased by donations from 50¢ to \$1. There was one generous contribution of five whole dollars. The Hopewell Association contributed \$4.15. Donations were also made to repair the building and to buy windows. To show you how valuable those 50¢ contributions were, Brother Willson purchased 100 2"x4"x14' for \$9.40. Just think how big this building might have been if it were not for inflation. (Ibid)

Archie Lilly, who married Carrie Willson, one of the younger daughters of B. F. Willson, served as treasurer for many years. His son, Tex Lilly, became the treasurer in 1970 and served in this office faithfully for 37 years until his death. In addition to his faithfulness in the office of treasurer, he also served as a deacon. He did much plumbing and carpenter work around the church, including much of the interior finish work for the family center that was constructed in 1995.

The following tribute to Tex's father was written for the memorial dedication in 1994:

Mr. Archie Lilly, Tex's father. Mr. Archie was a deacon, ordained by our church; A Sunday school teacher and a spiritual leader. I have always wanted to write a story about Mr. Archie. First, he was a Christian who lived so humbly; he served the Lord above all else. Tex



won't mind my remarks because they are all through precious memories. He was a man who was not in any way influenced by the world and its goods. He loved to read the Word of God and discuss it with his neighbors. He was not a man of means, as the world would view it, but, so rich in the kingdom of God. He was not a man of renown and didn't strive to accumulate goods of this world. Not well known in the society pages, but as God had planned it, Mr. Archie died of a heart attack while driving his little red car, causing it to wreck. Yes, the accident brought on front page coverage in the local paper with the county officials on hand to investigate the accident. I couldn't help but think the world just got to know who he was as he was leaving it. Mr. Archie, your memory will live forever in our hearts.

At the same memorial service Tex's mother, Carrie Lilly, was also remembered. Her tribute reads: "Mrs. Carrie Lilly, Tex's Mother. As we all at Mt. Sylvia can recall, Mrs. Carrie played the piano for us for many years. I can see her now as she struggled to walk to the piano each Sunday morning; Mrs. Carrie was crippled from childhood." Randy Homer, who played the piano by ear from sometime shortly after Carrie Lilly's passing until the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, often said of his playing "that he was only playing it the way he had heard Ms. Carrie play it all those years." So Ms. Carrie's playing continued though Randy's gift for many more years.

Carrie Lilly is the first member of Mt. Sylvia whose official baptismal record remains. It is unknown who was baptized prior to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but other early baptisms, include I. E. Driggers and his brothers Sam and Virgil.

Bro. I. E. Driggers is named as the church clerk of Mt. Sylvia in the 1918 Hopewell Minute Book. Thus, we know that he was a respected member of the church by that date. As was previously mentioned, he and his two brothers made professions of faith and were baptized by Mt. Sylvia Church. Although the dates of their baptisms are not known, we know that at least I. E. was baptized prior to 1918. Other church clerks whose service is documented in the old Hopewell Minute Books are C. C. McKelvey and Madison McKelvey. They are both on a contribution list of the 1910s, along with their brother, John, and their mother. They were the sons of Thomas J. McKelvey who migrated to Titus County as a large family unit in 1907.

The following story was also found in the family records of Mary Helen Parsons:



William Madison and Georgia McKelvey came to Texas in 1900. They came to Omaha on the train and went to Beasley's Ranch. All of the McKelvey family (brothers and sisters) came except Jesse, who was already in Texas. They spent the first night with the Phillips family (John/Oscar). Madison said that when he got to Texas that if he had had the money to go back to Alabama he would not have got off the train. Myrtle McKelvey was 4 and Joe McKelvey was 2 when they came to Texas. Will and Bud were born in Texas. Madison was 25, Georgia was 24.

The Jesse McKelvey mentioned in the above quote was also a lifelong member of Mt. Sylvia. He was the adventurer of the family and the first to arrive in the community. He was born in Alabama, March 19, 1878. He is listed on each of the old church rolls through 1957. He went to meet his reward on March 3, 1962.

The same document describes Thomas Jefferson McKelvey as a foreman on the "McFarland Plantation, located on the Tennessee River, not too far from Guntersville, Alabama." It goes on, "He worked for the Plantation for 15 years, up and down the river. The landing for the crops was at Pine Island on the Tennessee River. ... They lived 2 miles up on the hills and rode mules and horses to work. They had to 'break' the animals before they rode them. They 'farmed on the halves'."

Another daughter of B. F. Willson and a lifelong member until her passing on to glory in May 21, 1962, was Mamie Brownlee. She married William Luther Brownlee, the oldest son of Bessie and William Brownlee on February 23, 1913. Luther and Mamie are both listed on the early contribution list. Mamie is listed under her maiden name. Luther and Mamie Brownlee are the parents of John Raymond, the grandparents of Doyle, the great grandparents of Troyce. Troyce's two daughters, Tristen and Taryn, who have been seen frequently around Mt. Sylvia, have three of the oldest Mt. Sylvia historical families for ancestors: the Coldcutts, the Brownlees and the Willsons.

Three other children of B. F. Willson must be covered. They are J. A. (James Albert), Leonard and Rosie. In the memorial service in 1994 the following tribute was given for James A. Willson. "Mr. Albert Willson – Also, a deacon ordained by our church. Mr. Abb, as he was called, never married. He fought for our country in World War I, where he lost an eye in combat. Mr. Abb was a Godly man. Ironically, Mr. Abb's mule laid down and died right before our eyes, the day he died!" That date was December 2, 1972. Since he was born

March 6, 1890, he would have been twenty-two years old when his family moved to Mt. Sylvia. His baby brother, Leonard, was born September 13, 1904. He also spent the majority of his adult life associated with Mt. Sylvia. Rosie, another daughter of B. F. Willson, cared for her father after the death of her mother and following the death of her father, stayed on to take care of her brother, Abb. A suitor from outside the area appeared later in her life and she was finally married and moved off, but not before the suitor had created a number of problems for Mr. Abb. Rosie moved her membership out of Mt. Sylvia, April 5, 1950. Thus, she was a member almost half of her life, and that being a long time as she died, December 27, 1996, one day shy of one month after her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The partial list of pastors in the 1982 *History of Mt. Sylvia* included W. M. Price and M. M. Sheets. (It is thought that the 'W.M' should be W.H.) Since Hopewell Association records were available from 1918, and these two men are not found as pastors after that year, it is thought that they pastored after P. H. Rogers and prior to M. M. Pate. W. H. Price was the son of Solomon Price, the pioneer preacher previously mentioned. He was 10 years old in the 1870 census. If he pastored after 1913 then he was at least 53 years old when he began at Mt. Sylvia. W. H. Price was moderator of the Hopewell Association in 1889 and from 1899 until 1903. M. M. Sheets was only found on the U. S. Census in Titus County in 1910. He was age 28. He was moderator of the Hopewell Association in 1913 and 1914, and it is thought that he was pastor at Mt. Sylvia from 1915 to 1917. He would have been 33 in 1915.

Based on a collection list in 1913, it appears that this may have been M. M. Pate's first year with the church. M. M. Pate was also a local. He maintained a house very near the current location of the Gladewater church. His obituary carried in the Mt. Pleasant Daily Times, Friday evening July 14, 1950, reads:

Rev. M. M. Pate Dies At Gladewater Home Thursday  
Afternoon

The Rev. Miles M. Pate, 69, Baptist minister and resident of this county for about fifty years, passed away at his home in the Gladewater community at 4:20 o'clock, Thursday afternoon. His death was attributed to a heart ailment that become critical about three weeks ago.

Rev. Pate's death brings to a close one of the most colorful and active ministerial careers the county has ever known. His work carried him into every community and into hundreds of homes in the county. All who knew him held him in high esteem, and though he was an unassuming man, he worked tirelessly to bring good into the world.

Surviving him are his wife; two sons, Hiram Pate of Atlanta, Ga., and Justin Pate of Los Angeles, Calif.; three daughters, Mrs. Opal Spencer, Mt. Pleasant, and Mrs. Erma McFerrin and Mrs. Fae Newman, both of Houston. Other survivors include a half-brother, Paul Burgess of Texarkana; two sisters, Mrs. Sam Deloach, Hanesville, La., and Mrs. Mae Mills, Hot Springs, and four grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at the Gladewater Baptist Church at 3:00 o'clock Friday afternoon, under direction of Rev. J. N. Vandiver and Rev. T. H. Maxberry. Burial was in the Gladewater cemetery.

The 1982 *History of Mt. Sylvia* goes on to describe this decade as follows:

In 1916 (66 years ago), Bro. M. M. Pate was paid \$9.00 for preaching a protracted meeting and in 1917, \$12.40 was paid for the same type meeting. The pastor's salary went from \$71.16 in 1919 to \$200 in 1923. That may sound like a small salary, but the preacher also received the following: Cotton seed, peanuts, corn, potatoes, peas, sugar cane, syrup, board timber, hams, fryers, and middling meat. I know that many of you know what middling meat is. But I had to ask, and for you other young whipper snappers that are in ignorance, it is like bacon or seasoning meat.

We presently have a very active Ladies Auxiliary who have contributed greatly to this new building. Well, you ladies will be glad to hear that your predecessors also had a Ladies Aid and the record shows that they contributed \$5.00 to the pastor's salary in May, 1921.

The record also indicates that there were many protracted meetings held under a brush arbor attended by people in wagons, buggies, and on foot or horseback. Since Mt. Sylvia was a school before it was a church, then we cannot take the credit for naming her. But the name would indicate a high place and the original site probably is the highest point in this area. And a Sylvan place is a heavily wooded or forest like area. I can envision my great grandparents trudging up the steep hill to congregate beneath the huge old trees for a protracted meeting at Mt. Sylvia.

The records indicate that Bro. J. W. Price followed Bro. M. M. Pate as pastor. Bro. J. W. Price was one of the sons of Solomon Hayes Price, one of the earliest of the Baptist preachers of Titus County. He pastored only one or two years around 1924.

Bro. I. E. Driggers followed him and pastored from 1926 through 1927. This church was Bro. Driggers' first pastorate. He was licensed to preach by Mt. Sylvia on August 22, 1920 and a certificate attesting to that fact is still in the possession of his daughter, Mary Helen Parsons. This certificate is typed with the signatures of M. M. Pate, pastor, and J. A.

Wilson, church clerk. It is also commonly reported that he was also ordained by Mt. Sylvia, but the date and documentation was not found. It probably occurred in 1926 when he became pastor of the church.

Mary Helen's mother also an early member of Mt. Sylvia was born in Alabama, December 23, 1894, and passed away, April 13, 1919. She is buried at Liberty Hill (12-O). Her tombstone reads, "Wife of I. E. Driggers, In my Father's house are many mansions, Gone but not forgotten." She was a sister to the McKelvey men mentioned above as church clerks, the daughter of Thomas J. and Nannie R. McKelvey. Another brother L. M. (Lish) McKelvey was recorded as the clerk from 1935-1940.

After serving as pastor at Mt. Sylvia, Bro. Driggers and his second wife, Velera decided to pursue higher education in Decatur. As there were no family living in the area and childcare for college students was unheard of, Bro. Driggers' mother, Nancy, insisted and prevailed in the argument that Mary Helen and W. T., who were 12 and 10 at the time, should return to Titus County and live with them. After they completed their education, there were other siblings born and Mary Helen and W.T. had grown comfortable living with their grandparents. The 1930 census confirms this living arrangement and we also find the first evidence of Archie Lilly boarding there and working on their farm.

This is probably as good a place as any to tell a story that is often repeated. When J. D. Parsons was a boy his family moved to Elector in Wichita County, Texas. The ravages of the Great Depression forced his parents to return to Titus County and they took up residence in the same general area as W. T. and Nancy Driggers, Mary Helen's grandparents. J. D.'s mother was Myrtle who was a sister to Richard Cox. J. D. took a fancy to Mary Helen and approached her grandfather and asked permission to court her. Her grandfather was judgmental of one of J. D.'s father's methods of making a living during those hard Depression days, and refused to allow them to court. Both went their separate ways, until 2003. Both had lived successful and happy lives; J. D. having out lived two wives and Mary Helen being a widow of a happy marriage of 62 years. They renewed their courtship and were married at the ages of 90 and 87.

Bro. I. E. Driggers went on to pastor many churches. He pastored Damascus, Liberty Hill, Ripley and Gladewater in the immediate area and also pastored in Greenville and Murchison. His second wife also preceded him in death November 29, 1959, at the age of

58, and he buried her at Damascus. He, like Bro. Archie Lilly, made front page news when he died in a car crash on his way home from Dallas. His widow, Gladys Wilson Driggers, “suffered a concussion. She did not suffer any broken bones and was believed not to have internal injuries. She is in Titus County Memorial Hospital.” (*Mt. Pleasant Daily Tribune*, July 15, 1963, front page). He was buried at Damascus beside his second wife.

Bro Driggers was remembered in the 1994 memorials as well. It said, “In Memory of Bro. Manuel Driggers, her loving father. Bro. Manuel seemed like family to all of us; he was our native son in that he grew up here and pastored our church. His love and devotion for God is reflected in his descendants.” The “her” in the preceding quote refers to Mary Helen Parsons.

Bro. J. A. Brown came to pastor in 1928, and pastored until 1930. He was living in Cuthand, which is located just north of the Sulphur River in Red River County. While pastor at Mt. Sylvia, he also pastored Adams Chapel. Adams Chapel was located just south of Mt. Pleasant on the Monticello Road (now FM127). In other minute books his address is given as Mt. Pleasant and Pittsburg, thus it is unknown whether he was a native of Cuthand. Preaching was being held twice a month by this time. The 1982 *History of Mt. Sylvia* records that, “In the 1930's the church organized a Sunday School that met every Sunday.”

Bro. G. F. Lee came as pastor in 1931 and stayed until 1933. In 1934, Bro. M. M. Pate was again called as pastor. Under his ministry, the building was rebuilt in 1937 or 1938. The *Pastors of Gladewater Baptist Church*, found online at the TXGenWeb Project, Titus County, Texas website, M. M. Pate was pastoring Gladewater in 1922-1924 and 1931-1939. This would indicate that the last time he was at Mt. Sylvia, he was also pastor at Gladewater. Many pastors during this time were the pastor of more than one congregation.

The marriage of Richard and Tennie Cox has already been included but the story would not be complete without talking about their close friendship with Leonard and Nannie Willson. Leonard and Nannie were married October 20, 1928. Nannie was the daughter of Jesse McKelvey and his wife Hassie. In 1994 his memorial read, “In memory of Mr. Jesse McKelvey, a former member and deacon of our church. He, like David, was ‘a man after God’s own heart.’ He loved God and his fellowman and the whole world knew it by the life he lived.”

Nannie and Tennie were lifelong close friends. They planned their lives together and raised their children together. They both only bore one daughter and these two daughters were raised as close friends at Mt. Sylvania. The Willson and the Cox families were the newlyweds in the Mt. Sylvania church of the 1920s. Nannie Willson was among the first to work in town, but she would not be the last. Life in rural northeast Texas had been primitive but things were about to change.

Jess McKelvey, Nannie Willson's brother was also raised at Mt. Sylvania. He and his wife, Lucille, married a little later and never had children. Although they moved to town they continued to support Mt. Sylvania in various ways.

The children were now attending school at Midway, since the consolidation of Mt. Sylvania School and Gladewater School in 1912. Mary Helen Driggers and Syble Holcomb were basketball stars. Before long a young farmer, T. A. Reese, from Oak Grove had found Mary Helen Driggers and made her his wife. It was not until 1943 that they would go in partners with T. A.'s brother, Howard, to buy a "big" farm in the Mt. Sylvania Community. Mary Helen Reese was back, home at Mt. Sylvania. Louise Reese, Howard's wife, also made Mt. Sylvania her church home.

In the 1994 memorial service, Pearl Swafford made the following dedication: "In memory of her sister, Oletta Rainey Soller, and her parents, Mr. & Mrs. Albert Holcomb. Mr. Albert was a deacon ordained by our church. Mrs. Gennie, as we called her, always faithfully prepared the bread for the Lord's Supper." Gennie's name was Geneva and she was Mr. Albert's second wife. Mr. Holcomb was responsible for many of the children who were influenced by Mt. Sylvania. Syble Brownlee is one of Pearl's older sisters by Mr. Holcomb's first wife, Esther, who died on April 26, 1935 after bearing four daughters. His dedication to the church can also be seen in a picture taken by Pearl in 1961, of a cake with 71 candles, which she had prepared for her father's birthday. In the picture is the preacher at Mt. Sylvania, Bro. Harvey B. Wilson. Another picture of the Holcombs shows the family all ready to go to church. Mr. Albert has a large Bible tucked under his arm. Syble's and Pearl's mothers are both buried at Liberty Hill, as is Mr. Albert.

Another young couple who raised their children at Mt. Sylvania in the 1930s was Will and Irene McKelvey. They were married April 30, 1932. Will, the son of Madison and Georgia McKelvey had been raised at Mt. Sylvania. Irene was a Cameron and though not

raised at Mt. Sylvia, her family was also a pioneer family of the northeast part of the county. Will and Irene were faithful members of Mt. Sylvia until they were moved to the city, late in life, to be taken care of by their daughter, Imogene. Imogene had married William Hollie Summerlin and moved to town. The house where Will and Irene raised their two daughters and the old well can still be seen on the west side of the road about a ¼ mile south of the church. It is currently owned by a Cameron relative. July 15, 1966, G-Nell, their younger daughter, married a South Carolina native, Edward Winslow. She has spent her adult life in that state and raised three children there.