

Memorial Tribute  
February 26, 2026

What Cedine Bible Camp Means to Me-Through the Eyes of a  
Camper by Janice Upton

In 1942, after several years in church planting and home missions and after being denied as a foreign missionary, Bro. Paul was introduced to B.M. Nottage of Detroit, Michigan who challenged him to be involved in sharing the gospel with his African American brothers and sisters.

Bro. Nottage had such an impact on Bro. Paul's life that the camp chapel is named B.M. Nottage Chapel. Bro. Nash and Mrs. Nash were local community leaders and educators who loved supporting Cedine Bible Camp. Mr. Nash was one of the 5 original board members of Camp Cedine. Nash Hall is named in honor of him. Curtis and Shirley Hodge were disciples of Aunt Hattie and were attending New Tribes Mission in Wisconsin to become missionaries when Curtis was suddenly and unexpectedly promoted to heaven in a drowning accident while swimming in the lake at Cedine. Hodge Memorial Hall which houses the camp offices is named in memory of Curtis's life.

When I think of Camp Cedine missionaries my heart is warmed with many fond memories. It all starts at Lincoln Park (the only segregated park in Chattanooga) as I excitedly wait for the big yellow bus to come take us to camp. I can see Bro. Paul opening the door for us to get on the bus headed up the highway to Cedine Bible Camp and turning off 27 onto dusty Rocky Springs Road. We didn't care if we were covered with dust from miles of travel on the dusty road. We were at Camp Cedine and we were happy. This was our heaven on earth.

**Bro. Paul and Mom Z** were just one of the many people working at Camp Cedine that loved having us around and I can see Bro. Paul busily working in the kitchen opening big tin cans of unpasteurized milk that came from the farm for us to drink at breakfast which I hated because it tasted bitter to me. And seeing him run errands shopping for food in the kitchen. **Mom Z** was working faithfully by his side in the craft room preparing plaques of plaster of paris with Bible verses on them for us to paint when we went to craft class which was a special fun highlight of the week, especially when we got to take it home and hang it on our wall. It was our special art project from Camp Cedine and we were so proud of our work.

I can remember bro. Paul sitting next to me in the camp chapel singing from the top of his lungs "*What can wash away my sins, nothing but the blood of Jesus*". He saw me looking sad one day and I told him how I was burdened for everyone in my family to be saved. He told me to not let my heart be troubled because Jesus loved my unsaved family members much more than I could ever love them.

And when I said as a young teenager that I believed the Lord wanted me to go to Prairie Bible institute in Alberta, Canada, he said if that's where the Lord is telling you to go Mom Z and I will drive you there. He drove me and Lenelle Thomas for 4 days and nights all the way to Canada when I had no idea how I was going to pay for my schooling. He kept asking me all the way there - what was God saying to me and I didn't know until I finally got to the registrar's window and she asked me my name and I told her-Janice Sanderfur. She looked at me and said your tuition has already been paid in full!!! To this day I don't know who paid it but God was faithful all 4 years providing my tuition until graduation day.

After graduation from Prairie I worked at Cedine Bible camp that summer and was engaged to JC Upton who had just returned from New Guinea as a missionary for 4 1/2 years. JC asked me to marry him that summer and we asked Bro .Paul to do the wedding ceremony on Christmas Day 1969. He was a spiritual father to both of us. On

Christmas Day it snowed in Chattanooga and bro Paul and Mom Z had to drive from the snowy roads in Spring City all the way to Chattanooga and they did. The faithful missionaries from Cedine were there even when many other people weren't there because of the snow.

**Bro. Neddo and Mrs. Neddo** were such busy missionaries. Bro. Neddo had his whistle busy leading recreation and we had a lot of activities that he planned with gusto! His world famous hikes, hobo breakfast, and “*don't put the wiener on the wrong way but the long way*” were just some of his famous quotes. He was so full of life and energy. He walked fast and he had a soul winning heart. He was always telling people how to be saved and going to my school sharing the gospel and sponsoring our Youth for Christ club and Saturday night Youth for Christ rallies. He had a passion for teaching Bible quizzing and was able to take campers to the national Bible Quiz competitions. His love for us campers and Camp Cedine was without a doubt all-consuming in His life. **Mrs. Neddo** was a faithful wife by his side; a wonderful team raising a big family of kids serving Jesus at Camp Cedine. Mrs. Neddo was a major pioneer in starting the Ladies' retreats at Cedine and leading them for many years. They were two faithful servants loving Jesus and pouring their lives into the African American community. I will never forget the whole family taking time on Christmas Day to decorate the church and my reception with the big theme on the wall saying “Co-laborers with Christ” on JC and my wedding day.

Every camp meal was filled with delicious food and we had unforgettable cooks in the kitchen. We could never forget **Bro. Tom and Aunt Hattie** with their smiling faces in the kitchen laughing and making jokes as they prepared the meals with hearts overflowing with love for Jesus and for us campers. We could taste it in Aunt Hattie's “melt in your mouth” rolls and Bro. Tom's special delights. Bro. Tom was gifted with not only cooking but singing and playing the piano. He also wrote the camp song. He was also a faithful preacher and teacher at the Cedine Bible Institute where he served as Dean of

Students for many years and led a house church in his home for many years. He was not alone as he ministered. His devoted wife **Ms. Shermine Florence** was by his side not so quiet as he. She was an Oscar winning actress who could tell a Bible story with so much gusto that you felt like you were a part of the story. She was an awesome Bible teacher and Program Director for the camp for many years. They had a house full of kids and were a shining light in the community in Spring City sharing the gospel with their neighborhood and discipling them in the Word and in their daily lives.

**Aunt Hattie** was my special mentor. She followed up and ministered to me when the summer months were over in my home town where she also lived. She took me to Child Evangelism classes to teach me how to teach Good News Bible clubs in my neighborhood and I did learn from her example. She taught me the book of Philippians as she memorized the whole book. Because she was going blind, she wanted to have Scriptures memorized. She only had one eye but she took drivers ed classes and got her license in later years and earned the nickname of "Hot Rod Hattie". She was a prayer warrior and I attended prayer meetings in her home around the kitchen table. She was passionately in love with Jesus and you could hear it in her fervent prayers. The Alton Park Bible church was birthed in her home. She paid for an engagement party for me in the most expensive hotel in town, the Reid House, just before I got married and my picture was in the paper. When JC became the pastor of Alton Park Bible Church she bought him a brand new suit to preach in. There are so many fingerprints on my life from these wonderful servant leaders of God who poured unselfishly into the life of a little shy and wounded black girl who was desperate for their loving touches in my life. I am who I am because of them and I will never forget them.

Last but not least is JC and Butch Upton who answered the call to foreign missions in New Guinea. Butch and JC were not related but they were best friends who grew up in Sweetwater, TN. They both deeply loved Cedine and were saved through their ministry. JC was the missionary speaker when I was a camper and the Lord led us

together as husband and wife and that is another story at another time. I cannot leave out the impact camp had on my life without the greatest impact of all being my darling husband JC who loved Jesus with all his heart and his wife and family and everyone he met. He simply lived the gospel as a part of his everyday life and after his promotion to Heaven I am still living in the impact of that great love.