Tate Methodist Church

Tate
Georgia
A HISTORY OF THE
TATE METHODIST CHURCH

TATE, GEORGIA
1957.

DEDICATION

This history of the Tate Methodist Church is affectionately dedicated to the founders of that Church and to the pioneer circuit-riding Ministers who served it and the community of Tate.

FOREWORD

We are indebted to Mr. Henry McHan of Fairmount, Georgia, a charter member of Tate Methodist Church, to Mr. H. L. Litchfield of Tate and to the late Mr. Luke E. Tate of Tate for important facts concerning the founding of the Church and its early history.

Too many times things pertaining to the Church activities are taken for granted and are not recorded. For this reason we acknowledge that there are perhaps errors and even the names of some who had an active and important part in the Church have been omitted. Therefore, for any errors of facts or omission of names we humbly apologize.

COMPILED BY

Mildred and J. B. Hill
The discovery in the early 1880's of marble in unlimited quantities and a wide variety of colors transformed Long Swamp Creek valley from a peaceful and rich farming section into an industrial community. People with training as marble craftsmen came to Tate to quarry and fabricate marble for buildings and monuments and to train local men to become craftsmen. With the people came a need for local churches.

Most of the people of Tate prior to the 1880's who were Methodists attended Church once each month in Jasper and it is in the minutes of the 4th Quarterly Conference held in the Jasper Church in December 1887 that we find the earliest record concerning a Church at Tate. Those minutes record the list of the first Trustees for the Tate Methodist Church and these men were: William Tate, John Zimmerman, W. H. Simmons, B. M. Hall and C. J. Faulkner.

About one quarter of a mile from the Stephen C. Tate home there was a one room school building. This small building was about sixteen feet square but it was in this building that Church services were held on one Sunday of each month. There four other Churches in the charge with Tate - Jasper, Nelson, Ball Ground, and Marble Hill. The early Pastors were circuit-riders in fact. In addition to being Pastors of the charge some of these pioneers of Methodism in the mountains served as school teachers in Tate.

An interesting sidelight concerning services of the first Minister sent to the Charge by the North Georgia Conference, Rev. M. S. Williams, was that it was in Tate that he found his bride - Miss Sarah C. Tate, daughter of Stephen C. Tate (1832-1903) and Eliza D. Tate (1842-1889) and sister of Sam, Luke, Walter, Venita, Emaline, and Florence Tate. After Rev. M. S. Williams (1855-1933) was retired by the Conference he spent the last years of his life in Tate.

Stephen C. Tate and his family lived in the old but remodelled Harnage Tavern, on the site of the present Tate home. Realizing the necessity for a new Church nearer to the center of population he started the campaign for a new Church and offered the site and many other concessions if a new Church could be built. Sufficient interest was created in the need for a new Church and a Finance and Building Committee, composed of P. B. Henn, William Snyder, and T. M. Buchanan, was elected in December 1887. Generous donations, not only of money, but of materials and labor time were given. Stephen C. Tate donated the framing, flooring, and shingles in addition to the site. This site was selected by Mr. Miller McHan, who had been elected Chairman of the Actual Building Committee. When plans had been decided upon several young men of the community volunteered their services to grade the site and dig the foundation for the building. This work was all done with picks, shovels and wheelbarrows. Some of these men were Henry McHan, now a resident of Fairmount, Will James, Charles Fowler, Luke and Walter Tate. They were assisted by a number of the colored men of the community. Generous donations to the building fund from all residents - both white and colored - made it possible to raise the grand sum of $1,500.00. The contract for the actual building was awarded to a Marietta contractor, Mr. Daniel.
The spirit of cooperation and good fellowship between the white and colored citizens of Tate in building the new Church was directly responsible for a new Methodist Church for the colored people in Tate. As soon as the Tate Methodist Church was completed a movement was started to raise funds for the new colored Church and the members of the Tate Methodist Church not only gave generously to the funds but donated time as well.

In the meantime, the first Pastor of the Charge, Rev. Williams was moved to another charge and was succeeded by Rev. W. B. Dillard. Rev. Dillard served as school teacher also, and it was while he was Pastor of the charge that he married a Miss Stephens of Young Harris, Ga. His wife helped him teach in the school, becoming the first woman teacher in Tate. Rev. Dillard was the last Pastor to use the School House as a Church. He was succeeded in 1889 by Rev. Duncan M. Edwards. He also served as teacher and in his first year there were 75 pupils.

Despite the cost of the new Church building and other expenses, all bills and assessments were paid so that in 1890 at Annual Conference Rev. Edwards reported no indebtedness.

With the early Pastors of the Charge serving as school teachers in Tate it was necessary that they live in Tate. Within a few short years, however, the school had grown so much that it was no longer possible for the Pastor to teach. This necessitated a parsonage in Jasper - the largest Church on the Charge. Stephen C. Tate went to annual conference with the proposition that in order to have the Pastor living in Tate, a parsonage would be furnished and that he personally would make generous annual contributions to the Conference. Tate got the Pastor as a resident, even though he preached in Tate only one Sunday in each month. One Sunday in each month, in fact, was given to each Church in the Charge with services being held in Marble Hill on one Sunday afternoon in each month.

The arrangement of preaching dates continued until about 1912 when Rev. Nath Thompson was serving the Charge. The population of Tate had increased considerably and Church attendance had increased proportionately. The Annual Conference in 1912 scheduled Tate for two Sundays in each month with Jasper and Nelson having services one Sunday each. Ball Ground had their services on one Sunday afternoon of each month but there is no record of just what happened to the Marble Hill services. This arrangement continued with little variation until an assistant Pastor was assigned to the Charge and Tate and Jasper had services on alternate Sundays.

The Tate Methodist Church has been an important factor in the community life of this little industrial community in the Appalachian foothills. It has, in turn, been served by many noble men of God. One of the most illustrious of these was Rev. W. T. Watkins, now Bishop of the Louisville Area. A number of its former Pastors are now or have been Presiding Elders and District Superintendents. Three fine young men have gone from this Church directly into the ministry and are at present serving in the North Georgia Conference. These are Rev. Harry Wood of Covington, Rev. H. G. O'Bryant of Roswell, and Rev. T. E. Fowler of Boynton, near Ringgold.

In 1931 when Rev. J. S. Thrailkill was Pastor of the Charge and Rev. Marvin Williams was Presiding Elder of the Marietta District, they, together with Mr. Sam Tate planned a meeting in Tate which was called
"Methodism in the Mountains". A list of the churches and their activities was made in the form of a huge banner – 36 feet long. This was mounted above the stage in the Tate High School auditorium. In a program several hours long the history and progress of Methodist Churches individually and collectively were given. Practically every Church in North Georgia was represented. All in all, it was one of the most important days in the history of the Methodist Church in North Georgia. The several hundreds of people in attendance were inspired by the records of accomplishment which were highly praised by the many prominent visiting speakers.

In addition to its profound spiritual influence on the people of the community and section, the Tate Methodist Church has served the community well in other ways. The local High School building burned in 1927. Immediately work was begun on additions to the Church building and two class room buildings were built on the Church property. Thus again for a limited time, the Church served the dual purpose of Church and school.

The additions to the Church made the building inconvenient for Sunday School purposes and in fact detracted a great deal from the appearance of the interior of the Church. The modernization and beautification of the Church property was begun during the pastorate of Rev. L. F. Van Landingham in 1946. Generous contributions were given by members and friends of the Church. Plans were made and the contract for the work was given to Fred Stancil, a Jasper contractor. The sanctuary was completely rebuilt so that the choir was located directly behind the pulpit. An assembly room in the classroom area was made for the children of the Sunday School. This room is adjacent to a modern kitchen, fully equipped, and serves as a dining room for social functions of the Church. Rest room facilities were installed for both men and women. The interior of the entire building was painted. One of the small buildings on the Church property was removed and the Church and the Amicalola Garden Club cooperated in remodeling and redecorating the remaining building which now serves as a club house in which the Garden Club has flower shows and as headquarters for the Boy Scout Troop in Tate. The grounds were landscaped. In 1950 a new pulpit was added to the Church. This pulpit was made by George W. Harben of Tate and greatly enhances the beauty of the church. An interesting sidelight concerning the Communion Rail is that there are 26 balusters in it - one for each Church Sunday in a year.

Every Sunday morning promptly at 10 o'clock Sunday School begins with Mr. H. L. Litchfield as Superintendent. The young people assemble in their assembly room in the back of the Church while the older people and boys and girls of intermediate age and above assemble in the main auditorium. The main auditorium also serves as class room for the Sam Tate Bible Class. The Sam Tate Bible Class was named for its first teacher, Mr. Sam Tate (1860-1938) who was also Sunday School Superintendent for many years.

During his life time Mr. Sam Tate made many notable contributions to the Methodist Church - its personnel and schools. He sponsored the period of study of W. T. Watkins before he became a bishop and assisted many other young men along the way while they were studying for the ministry. He made generous contributions in funds and marble to Emory University and Wesleyan College.

The first Boy Scout Troup in Tate was organized while Rev. L. B. Linn was pastor on the Charge. It was sponsored by the Church and O. B. Horton was Scout Master. This was in 1940.
The Woman’s Society of Christian Service has always been active, holding regular meetings and doing a fine service for the Church and the community. Recently a young matron’s circle has been organized and they, too, have regular meetings and projects.

In recent months several men of the Church have joined the Methodist Men’s Club which had been organized by the men of the Jasper Methodist Church.

A number of young men from the Church served with distinction in the armed forces or our country in World War I and World War II. Two young men from the Church lost their lives during World War II. These were George Pruitt and James Hugh Fowler. Our present pastor, Ernest P. Kendall, served as a Chaplain in the Navy during World War II and was Director of the Wesley Foundation at Georgia School of Technology just before coming to the Charge.

Church membership has varied from 100 to 125 and there are very few of the charter members of the Church surviving. Notable among there are Miss Florence Tate of Tate, her sister, Mrs. I. P. Morton of St. Louis and Mr. Henry McHan of Fairmount, Ga. Perhaps there are others who have long since moved away from the community. Two of the Trustees of the Church have passed away within recent months. These are Mr. Luke E. Tate (1879-1951) and Mr. J. J. Seay (1868-1951).

Present Trustees of the Church are:
Mr. H. L. Litchfield
Mr. Homer Nix
Mr. Sam Buchanan
Mrs. Luke Stancil

Stewards of the Church are:
Mr. Rowland Bryce - also Church and Charge Treasurer
Mr. Howard Nix
Mrs. J. B. Hill
Mr. Sam Buchanan
Mrs. H. L. Litchfield
Mr. H. E. O’Bryant
Mr. Homer Mix (Honorary)
Mrs. J. W. Chappell

LIST OF PASTORS OF TATE METHODIST CHURCH

1887-1888 M. S. Williams
1888-1889 W. B. Dillard
1889-1890 D. M. Edwards
1890-1891 W. D. Shea
1891-1893 Ford McRee
1893-1894 M. D. Smith
1894-1895 G. W. Farr
1895-1897 Loy Warwick
1897-1899 W. E. Tarpley
1899-1901 J. H. Little
1901-1902 C. C. Jarrell
1902-1903 J. D. Turner
1903-1904 G. D. Stone
1904-1905 E. K. Aiken
1905-1908 Felton Williams
1908-1910 W. H. Clark
1910-1911 G. W. Barrett
1911-1914 Nath Thompson
1914-1915 N. A. White
1915-1916 C. L. King
1916-1917 Firley Baum
1917-1918 H. C. Emory
1918-1922 W. T. Watkins
1922-1923 W. E. Brown
1923-1925 C. L. Middlebrooks
1925-1926 J. R. Allen
1926-1929 A. Lee Hale
1929-1933 J. S. Thrailkill
1933-1935 D. P. Johnston
1935-1939 D. S. Patterson
1939-1944 L. B. Linn
1944-1948 L. F. VanLandingham
1948- Ernest P. Kendall
Tate Methodist Church

Tate  Georgia
ADDENDUM

The History of the Tate Methodist Church

May 1962

List of Pastors of Tate Methodist Church

1948-1952 Ernest Kendall
1952-1953 Roy Neal
1953-1957 Sanford McDonald
1957-1960 Robert Kerr
1960-1961 Claude Smithmier
1961 Charles Wilson

In the spring of 1953 the Methodist Men's Club was organized with about 25 members. Some men from this Church had been members of the Mens Club in the Jasper Church of this Charge and with increased interest it was felt that a local Club in the local Church could serve the Tate Church better. This has been proven many times with generous contributions to the Church building. In 1956 the Mens Club secured the franchise for the sale of Birthday Calendars in Pickens County and for two or three years handled the sale but in 1959 it was decided that to include the Jasper Mens Club would increase the amount of sales and by doing so could increase the effectiveness of both clubs. The Club has contributed a stove and refrigerator to the Church kitchen and has given scholarships to Pickens County students at Reinhardt College.

In 1955 the Official Board of the Church made the recommendation that the Sanctuary of the Church be improved. Douglas Freret, a New Orleans Architect and friend of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Tate came to Tate and made suggestions for the improvements which were completed in 1955 at a cost of several thousands of dollars. Shortly after the improvements were completed Miss Florence Tate gave the Church a very fine Hammond Electric Organ as a memorial to her brother, Mr. Luke Tate.

In 1958 Mr. Homer Nix, a long time member of the Church and a member of the Board of Stewards passed away and a few months later the members of his family gave the Church a beautiful Georgia Marble baptismal font, sterling silver bowl and cover as a memorial to their parents.

In October 1959 Sam Buchanan who had in turn been a member of the Board of Stewards, Board of Trustees and Chairman of the Board of Trustees and the Official Board passed away.

In October 1958 Stephen C. Tate passed away. He had been active as a member of the Board of Trustees and the Official Board.

In August 1960 Rush L. Litchfield passed away. He came to Tate as a young man in the early 1900's and had served the Church and Sunday School in many capacities. He was Superintendent of the Sunday School for many years.

During the ministry of Robert Kerr a rotation system for
The Friendship Class of young adults and couples has made several contributions to the Church. Notably among these has been the work in tiling the hallways and some of the rooms in the back of the Church. At present members of this Class are working on the nursery room and have done an excellent job of paneling the walls.

The Tate Church has always worked with the Jasper Church and the charge actually has been the Tate-Jasper Charge with Church services on alternating Sundays at each Church. In 1961 it was agreed that Church services should be held at one of the Churches on Sunday morning and the other on Sunday evening. This arrangement was alternated so that there was Sunday morning services every other Sunday in each Church. With the growth of Jasper and the influx of many new people the Official Board of the Jasper Church notified the 1961 Annual Conference that they intended to go full time. Since a year's notice was necessary this means that Jasper will no longer be in the Tate charge after the 1962 Conference. The Tate Official Board and the Ball Ground Official Board have conferred with Dr. Rumble, District Superintendent and have worked out suitable arrangements for the Tate and Ball Ground Churches to work together. There are those in the Tate Church who would like to also go full time but with the limited membership and a comparatively small percentage of the membership being active it is not possible at this time.

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Continuation of list of Pastors-

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During the ministry of Roy Neal, in 1958, the men of the Church who had been going to Jasper for monthly meeting of the Men's Club, decided to have their own organization. At the first meeting the following officers were elected—J. B. Hill, President, Luke Stancil, Vice-President and O. B. Horton Secretary-Treasurer. Now in it's 23rd year the Club is still very active.

December 12, 1953 a Hammond organ was given to the Church by Miss Florence Tate and Mrs. Evelyn Tate Morton in memory of their brother, Luke E. Tate.

In 1954 the members of the Church made the decision to further beautify the front of the sanctuary by installing a reredos-screen background behind the choir. Douglas Feret, a friend of the Steve Tates and a New Orleans architect, made plans for this work. The funds for this work were raised by contributions from the members and former members of the Church. Fred K. Stancil, contractor of Jasper, was employed to do the work.

In 1967, Mrs. L. O. Benton, Jr., of Monticello, Georgia, presented a new Communion Table to the Church in memory of her mother, Mrs. Walter E. Tate, a long-time member and faithful worker in the Church. This table was designed especially for the Church by J. B. Hill as was the pulpit which was given to the Church by Mr. & Mrs. J. B. Hill and these two beautiful additions to the Church were dedicated at the same time.

Early in 1973 Mrs. Steve C. Tate made a generous contribution to the Church and listed the things she would like to be included as a memorial to her late husband. These things included a large stained glass panel to replace the gothic grille in the center of the reredos, a new communion railing and a screen in front of the choir. Plans for these revisions and the remodeling were made by J. B. Hill and the contract was awarded to Fred K. Stancil of Jasper. This work will be completed in February of 1974 and will be dedicated March 31, 1974.