THE HISTORY OF TUCKSTON METHODIST CHURCH

WINTERVILLE- TUCKSTON CHARGE

ATHENS- ELBERTON DISTRICT
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In writing the history of Tuckston Church it is befitting to tell something of the community prior to the organization of the first church located there. In most rural communities of those days there usually was at least one man who loved his community and had the well being of his neighbors at heart. In this community Mr. John R. Tuck thought quite a lot about the children of the neighborhood who were growing up without an education. He talked with some of the parents and promised to provide a teacher if they would send their children to school near home, the nearest school at that time was located in Winterville. After securing their promise to send the children to school, Mr. Tuck obtained a teacher. She was to be paid a small salary during the winter months and was to board free at Mr. Tuck's house. Mr. Tuck also gave the use of a tenant house on his farm until a school house could be built. He later built a small one room house which was used as a school house.

Mrs. Elizabeth Tuck, the wife of John R. Tuck, was troubled because her children and those of her neighbors were unable to attend church or Sunday school regularly since the nearest churches were several miles distant and the only means of travel was a horse and buggy. She felt that something had to be done to remedy this deplorable condition. Prayer meetings were being held in the homes, but Mrs. Tuck felt that these services were not reaching the children.

At this time Miss Emma Nabors was secured as the school teacher. She and Mrs. Tuck discussed the problem and they decided it would
be possible to organize a Sunday school, if all the children who attended school, their parents, and their older brothers and sisters would attend. They decided to meet each Sunday afternoon.

They discussed their plans with a neighbor, Mrs. Mollie Greer. She immediately became interested for she was anxious for her children to have the religious influence of the Sunday school. No one in the community felt capable of organizing the Sunday school, so Rev. W. M. Coile, the Baptist minister in Winterville, agreed to come over and organize the school. Mrs. Greer was a Baptist and Mrs. Tuck belonged to the Methodist Church. Since the church membership of the community was almost equally divided between these two churches, it was decided that the first Sunday school should be a union Sunday school. Mrs. Tuck ordered union literature, but after one year they decided to order Baptist literature. After twelve more months the members of the Sunday school decided that Methodist literature suited them better and after this Methodist literature was used.

The little one room school house was used for several years and then the citizens decided to remodel and enlarge it.

Among those teachers who came to Tuckston was one Miss Lillie Young, a music teacher. She realized how badly the church needed an organ and began to raise funds by staging entertainments.

During the winter months, when the roads were muddy and the weather was cold, the attendance decreased so much the officials decided to go into winter quarters. With the coming of spring, however, Sunday school was begun again with much enthusiasm. A
preacher was secured to preach one Sunday afternoon each month. These preachers were from many churches.

After getting the Sunday School well under way, revivals were held in the little school house. Sometimes the men would build a brush arbor in front of the school house to help take care of the congregations.

Mrs. W. H. Dean, who lived in a nearby community, and who was District Secretary of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Athens District, organized a Woman's Missionary Society in the community at the home of Mrs. Greer. The Society began with a small group of interested women who held monthly meetings in the various homes. These meetings were discontinued when winter came.

Later Mrs. Dean organized a children's missionary society with Miss Elizabeth Hale as lady manager. Miss Hale was very enthusiastic about the work and entered whole-heartedly into it. She gave much of her time and talents to the training of these young minds. She was a born leader and a true Christian. She accomplished much good with the youth of the community.

The Sunday School had many different leaders in its beginning. Often Mrs. Greer would be called upon to act as superintendent when there was no man to serve. Mrs. Tuck and Mrs. Greer taught in the Sunday School for many years. Among these early leaders there was a pious old man, Mr. Greene Bailey, who walked from Athens each Sunday afternoon for two years. Then, because of failing health, he gave up with reluctance.

The first superintendent who lived in the community and
kept the Sunday School going all year round was Mr. John Prickett, who came to teach in the community. He had studied for the ministry at Emory University, but lacked sufficient funds to complete his education, so he accepted a teaching position in the little school. His life meant much to the community and he put forth much effort for the advancement of the young people. The next year he went to Vanderbilt University to complete his preparation for the ministry. His good influence was felt and when he left the people wanted his good work continued, so for the first time the Sunday School was carried on during the winter months. The attendance was only fair.

Rev. Asbury Church, from Athens, now became superintendent. His brother, Felix, led the singing. Later Rev. Felix Church succeeded his brother as superintendent. The good influence of these two Christians meant much to the church and the community.

During the summer of 1895 a great revival was held in the little school house and the congregation was stirred to organize a church. Mr. and Mrs. Tuck had talked it over with Rev. John M. Sewell, the preacher, and offered to donate a lot on which a church could be built. This lot would be given to the North Georgia Conference. During the revival Rev. Sewell asked for membership to begin a church. When the doors of the church were opened, Evelyn Tuck, then a child, came forward, followed by ten others. That was a great revival and God's presence was felt in many ways. Thus began the church at Tuckston.

Plans were drawn for the church and a committee was appointed to solicit subscriptions for the beginning of a building. Among
those serving on this committee were Mr. Augustus Fambro and his wife, who along with his family had been the first members to join the church. There was never a more loyal or devoted worker than Mr. Fambro. He was untiring in the efforts to help secure funds for the building of this church and was one of the first stewards. He and his wife could always be found serving and working for the upbuilding of the Master's Kingdom on earth.

With the aid of many volunteer workers and much pleading on the part of the committee the building was finally started in the summer of 1896. There was no wealth in the community, so all those who were interested put their shoulders to the wheel and God being their helper carried the work on. All had given some and some had given until it hurt, but still there were not enough funds to complete the building. The outside of the church was completed, but there was no floor. Mrs. Ella Blackman, who was teacher of the Young People's Class, was accustomed to going to Atlanta once a year to buy her "best dress" which usually cost twenty-five dollars. Seeing the need of the church, she gave the twenty-five dollars to the committee, which bought lumber to build the floor. This floor is still in use. The people hurried to get the floor in so the first wedding could take place. This was the wedding of Miss Eltha Tuck and Mr. John Hardeman.

One of the greatest men in the history of Tuckston Church was Professor David C. Barrow, a teacher at the University of Georgia. Mr. Barrow was an educator of renown and a consecrated
Christian gentleman. Being a lover of mankind and believing that walking was essential to good health, he walked out to Tuckston each Sunday afternoon. He was superintendent of the Sunday school and also taught the Adult Class. He served in this capacity for several years. After being made Chancellor of the University he had to give up his work in the Tuckston Sunday School.

After losing this devout man it was difficult to secure a leader to take his place. There had been many faithful workers in the church for quite a while. Miss Nettie Jones, Miss Sue Fambro, and Mr. Walter Childs led the music and kept the interest of the young people alive.

A highly respected man of the community, Mr. N. B. Davis, was chosen to succeed Dr. Barrow as superintendent. Mr. Davis loved his church and community. He did a great deal to keep the Sunday School going through these trying years. Due to declining health, Mr. Davis resigned and was succeeded by Mr. Edward Burt. Mr. Burt served for a few years and then moved to another community.

After a good deal of persuasion, Mr. Dave Hancock agreed to become superintendent. At this time the membership had dwindled until it was difficult to build up the school, but by faith in God and the faithfulness of the remaining few, along with the help of his daughter, Bertha, much good was accomplished and the membership increased.

Too much cannot be said of Miss Bertha Hancock. She was and still is one of the best workers a church or community ever had. She is a devout woman who consecrated her life to the
improvement of her surroundings, always making the best better. She could look ahead and see the work needed in every department of the church. When faced with discouragement she lifted her voice to God pleading for strength and guidance.

Due to ill health, Mr. Hancock resigned and was succeeded by Mr. H. A. Haygood. Mr. Haygood and his wife did much toward building up the Sunday School. He organized a Woman's Bible Class. Mrs. J. D. Hancock was elected teacher and has remained in this office since 1930. The membership of the class had increased from a faithful few to forty-five. The class now bears the name Stella Hancock Bible Class.

At this time it was decided that an addition should be built to the church, for the Sunday School had grown a great deal. Under the leadership of Mr. Haygood four Sunday School rooms were built.

After Mr. Haygood moved away, Mr. George Wright, a local Methodist Minister, served as Superintendent for several years and did a very good job.

When Mr. Wright resigned, a young man of sterling qualities, Mr. Ted Johnson, became Superintendent. Under his leadership the Sunday School continued to grow. After serving many years, Mr. Johnson resigned and Mr. Wesley Whitehead became Superintendent. Under the leadership of Mr. Whitehead more improvements were made on the church building. After serving for five years Mr. Whitehead resigned and Mr. Hubert L. Flanagan, Jr. became Superintendent. He served only one year and moved to another community. Upon his resignation, Mr. Whitehead again became Superintendent.
During its period of existence this church has had many loyal and consecrated teachers who have added much to the making of Christian men and women. The church stands today as a guiding light in this community.