Tuckston United Methodist Church had its origin in a one-room school house on the property of Mr. John R. Tuck (about where the cemetery now stands). Mr. and Mrs. Tuck were interested in the welfare of the community. He was so concerned about the children growing up in the neighborhood without a school that he secured a teacher on a small salary for the three summer months. The county agreed through Mr. Tuck's persuasion to pay the teacher's salary during the three winter months. Thus the school was financed for the first few years using a tenant house on Mr. Tuck's farm. Later a one-room school house was built.

Mrs. Elizabeth Tuck, wife of John Tuck, being a good Christian woman, and realizing the great need of a Sunday School and Church, set out to remedy the situation.

Miss Emma Nabers, the school teacher, was also distressed over the lack of church facilities.

She and Mrs. Tuck spent much time in prayer for guidance in their plans. They decided to invite the school children and their parents to the school house on a Sunday afternoon. Here plans were made to organize a Sunday School. Mrs. Mollie Greer, another good woman living in the community was called upon for help.

These ladies asked the Reverend W. M. Coile, minister at Winterville, to help in the organization. In this manner the first Sunday School was officially organized in the spring of 1889.
In the beginning the Sunday School was interdenomina-
tional and was called a Union Sunday School. This was because
some of the founders were Methodist and others were Baptists.
After using the little school house for one year they decided
to remodel and enlarge it.

Among the teachers who came, there was one who also
taught music. She was Miss Lillie Young. The people recognized
the need for an organ and began to raise funds to secure one.

In those first few years, due to bad weather and poor
roads, the attendance decreased so much during the winter
months that it was decided to end the Sunday School sessions
until spring.

In the spring a preacher was secured for one Sunday
afternoon each month. Many preachers from the surrounding
churches gave their service to the little church.

Each summer revivals were held. Sometimes it was necessary
to build a brush arbor in front of the building and put seats in
it to accommodate the crowd.

Mrs. W. H. Dean, who was district secretary of the
Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Athens-Elberton
District, organized a woman's missionary society with a small
membership of interested women.

Later Mrs. Dean organized a Children's Missionary
Society with Miss Elizabeth Hale as "Lady Manager," as the
office was then called. Through her enthusiasm and capable
leadership she was able to accomplish much with the youth of
the community. As a result of her faithful efforts many of

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these young people became willing workers in the church.

Among the early leaders of the church there was a pious old man named Mr. Greene Bailey who walked from Athens each Sunday afternoon. After three years of faithful service, due to failing health, he was forced to give up the work.

Mr. John Prickett became the first regular superintendent in 1892. Mr. Prickett had begun studying for the ministry but due to the lack of funds was unable to finish at that time. He came back to the community and taught school. The life of this good man meant much to the community. It was under his leadership as superintendent that the Sunday School really began to thrive. For the first time it was not discontinued during the winter months.

The next year Mr. Prickett went to Vanderbilt University to complete his studies for the ministry.

In 1893 the Reverend Asbury Church became superintendent and his brother Felix became song leader. In 1896 Rev. Church resigned and Felix became superintendent and served for two years. These two brothers had a very religious influence upon the church and community.

During the summer of 1895 a great revival was held in the little school house. The congregation was so inspired by the Spirit of God that plans were made to organize a church.

Mr. and Mrs. John Tuck donated a lot to the North Georgia Conference on which to build the church. It was during the revival that the Reverend John Sewell asked for members to begin the new church, and Evelyn Tuck, then a child, came
forward, followed by ten others. Thus Tuckston Church had its beginning.

Plans were drawn for the church building and a committee appointed to solicit funds to begin the building. Among those serving on the committee was Mr. Augustus Fambro, who with his family had been among the first to join the church.

With the aid of many volunteer workers and the success of the building committee in securing funds the building of the church was begun in the summer of 1896. Through many sacrifices on the part of the members the outside of the building was completed. But the funds were depleted before the building could be floored. Mrs. Ella Blackman, teacher of the young people's class, contributed the money she usually spent on spring clothes for the floor, which is still in use. The building was completed in 1897.

It was shortly after the completion that the first wedding took place in Tuckston Church. This was the wedding of Miss Eltha Tuck and Mr. John Hardeman.

Among the outstanding men that the church was able to have as superintendent was Mr. D. C. Barrow, a professor at the University of Georgia. He walked out from Athens each Sunday afternoon. He was also teacher of the adult class. He served Tuckston Church in this capacity from 1897 to 1906. Under his efficient leadership the Sunday School grew in interest and attendance. When he was made Chancellor of the University he was no longer able to continue his services to everyone's regret.

Other faithful workers in the church were Miss Nettie Jones, organist, and Mr. Walter Childs, cornetist. These
two lead the music for quite some time.

Mr. N. B. Davis, a local man, was chosen superintendent to succeed Mr. Barrow. He served his church and community well for one year and then resigned in 1907. Then Mr. Edward Burt became superintendent and served until 1911. Following Mr. Burt came Mr. J. A. Hardy, another good man.

In 1914 Mr. Robert David Hancock followed Mr. Hardy. By this time, due to insufficient leaders, attendance had become very poor. But through much prayer and faith in God and with the help and concern of his daughter, Miss Bertha Hancock, attendance and enrollment increased until it became one of the best-attended Sunday Schools in the area. In 1930 Mr. Hancock, after fifteen years of service resigned because of health reasons.

Following Mr. Hancock the services of Mr. H. A. Haygood were secured. He served until 1932. One of the outstanding achievements of Mr. Haygood and his wife was the organization of a Women's Bible Class. Mrs. John D. Hancock was chosen teacher of the class. The class now bears the name of "Stella Hancock Bible Class."

During the depression years there were about a half dozen men in the church who each year completed the payment of the church budget and in this way kept the church going. These were trying times for the church, but through prayer and faith the church was kept alive.

Under the leadership of the pastor, the Reverend M. B. Sams, four rooms were added. This provided much-needed space for the Sunday School.
After Mr. Haygood resigned came Mr. George Wright, Mr. Ted R. Johnson, Mr. Wesley Whitehead. These men served as Sunday School leaders from 1935-1948.

In 1948 the sanctuary was remodeled and enlarged to make it more comfortable and attractive.

Mr. Hubert Flanagan, Jr. became superintendent after Mr. Whitehead, but after one year of consecrated service, he resigned to take a teaching position. In 1951 Mr. Flanagan heard and accepted the call to the ministry, and today is one of the outstanding ministers of the North Georgia Conference.

Again in 1950, Mr. Wesley Whitehead was elected Superintendent and served for two years. He was followed by Mr. Robert S. Johnson, who served for two years. Then in 1954, he was followed by Mr. Clarence Allen who served well until 1958.

Another young man who grew up in this church heard the Master's call to preach. This man was Archie Hayes. He accepted his first church in 1957.

In 1958 Mr. C. W. Daniel became the leader of the Sunday School. He was followed by Mr. John Cone. Both were capable leaders and a credit to the church.

By 1964, the church school had grown to a membership of about 300 with an average attendance of 160.

If it seems that too much attention has been devoted to the Sunday School, we must remember that the church had its beginning in the Sunday School. Also, at first there were four churches on the circuit. Preaching services were held on only one Sunday per month.
Then in 1950 or 1951 we became a two-church circuit with Winterville Methodist Church. The possibility of becoming a full-time church was often discussed. But before this could be done there were many problems to be solved.

It was on August 9, 1954, that the official board of the church took positive action regarding the possibility of going full time. A parsonage fund was started. In May, 1955, the board decided to work toward going full time by 1957. In the spring of that year the first parsonage was completed. Thus, in July, 1957, Tuckston became a full station church.

In July, 1959, a building committee was named at the first Quarterly Conference to proceed with plans to build a much-needed education building adjoining the church. It was completed by the end of the year and has proved a great help in housing our church school. It was built, air-conditioned, and furnished at a cost of $27,000. It was opened for use the first Sunday in January, 1960. The church members were grateful to God and praised His Name for leading us in this venture.

A called session of the Quarterly Conference took place on April 25, 1965, for the purpose of considering the preliminary studies of the new Sanctuary Planning Committee. The committee's recommendations were accepted and the conference voted for the committee's plans.

On December 12, 1965, a conference was called for the purpose of discussing the possibility of building a new parsonage because it was felt the parsonage then in use was inadequate and somewhat outdated. A vote was taken in favor of building a new parsonage which was dedicated on September 11, 1966.
On that same day the Quarterly Conference voted to build a new sanctuary and fellowship hall. We set about raising funds and soliciting contributions and pledges to finance the cost of the building.

In May, 1967, ground breaking services for the building were held. The $200,000 building was first occupied by the congregation of happy and grateful church members on December 10, 1967. Consecration services took place on January 28, 1968.

Church membership has increased to about 420 with an average attendance at Sunday morning services of 250. There seems to be a renewed interest and a spiritual awakening among the people under the leadership of our consecrated pastor, Malone Dodson.

Tuckston church has been served by many fine and able ministers from the Reverend J. M. Sewell, the first minister in 1896, to our present and beloved pastor, Robert C. Gillespie, a total of thirty-seven ministers. Under the leadership of Reverend Gillespie the church membership has grown to a membership of 813. We have two morning worship services with an average attendance of near 400.

There are now 463 enrolled in the Sunday School with a very good attendance.

We praise God for a consecrated man in Rev. Gillespie who has led us in all the activities of the church since July, 1978.

--Elsa Ann Johnson
June 2, 1981
MINISTERS WHO HAVE SERVED TUCKSTON

J. M. Sewell 1896
P. L. Winter 1899
W. A. Norman 1900
J. V. Morris 1901
J. M. Bowden 1902
J. M. Sewell 1905
J. L. Franklin 1910
J. M. Crewe 1911
P. A. Kellett 1914
George Gary 1916
George Stone 1917
W. M. Benson 1919
J. A. Allen 1921
D. S. Patterson 1925
B. F. Mize 1927
M. B. Sams 1929
A. E. Barton 1933
R. W. Green 1935
G. W. Davis 1937
M. R. Chambers 1939
L. F. Vanlandingham 1940
R. H. Timberlake 1941
William Greenway 1943
R. W. Allison 1945
H. A. McNeil 1950
H. A. King 1951
J. W. Eberhardt 1953
J. R. Styles 1954
Marion J. Sherrill 1954
Travis S. Barnes 1957
Earl E. Seckinger 1959-62
Jimmy Riddle 1962-63
Paul H. Hanna 1963-66
E. Malone Dodson 1966-72
Marcus R. Martin 1972-74
James H. Turner 1974-78
Robert C. Gillespie 1978-