

## HISTORY OF VONORE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH SOUTH

Vonore, Monroe County, Tennessee

Written by Vivian Kennedy Plyley on the occasion of the corner stone laying for the new annex in 1932.

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(NOTE: Vonore was founded on September 30, 1893 by Dr. Walter Brownlow Kennedy. His oldest daughter, Vivian, was the first child born in Vonore, on September 12, 1894. Her grand father, James Crawford Hall, donated the land on which the church was erected and her mother, Annie Ruth Hall Kennedy, was its first member.)

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Heaven has bounteously lengthened out our lives that we may enjoy this day.

You are where you stood 32 years ago, the same hour, shoulder to shoulder with our neighbors. The same heavens were indeed over our heads.

The occasion is not familiarly known to all of course, out there are some here who witnessed the corner stone laying in 1901. The ways of the dead, as well as the absent living persons, present themselves before us. We miss their faces and presence.

In 1901 Rev. J. E. Spring, who was pastor of the Madisonville circuit, and had been delivering sermons in the town school house, was convinced of the necessity of building a church. After various conferences among citizens in the small town of Vonore, decisive steps were taken to erect a church. Several subscriptions were made, but the perseverance and final success of the project was largely due to the leadership of four veneral men whose spirits have been gathered to their fathers...three of them sleep within the shadow of the church they so loved and cherished.

Mr. James C. Hall, who set apart as a gift from his estate, the terrestrial foundation as the first momentum of this institution of worship.

Mr. Thomas W. Humes, Mr. Louis S. Moser and Dr. W. B. Kennedy, whose untiring efforts were to vindicate the financial encumbrance, and procure the pecuniary necessities whereby this place of worship, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, was erected beneath these towering oaks, which have beautified the surrounding of this environmental Diety, and held vigil with the mystery of silence.

In May, 1902, Dr. David Sullins, president of Centenary College, Cleveland, delivered the dedictorial address to practically the entire population of the town.

There have been 13 pastors. They were the Revs. J. E. Spring, John Stewart, Mr. Harris, T. M. Hicks, D. F. Wyrick, S. A. McGhee, R. M. Walker, G. B. Henderson, J. C. Spurling, M. D. Wyatt, T. N. Orr, W. E. Browning and the last, our present pastor, the Rev. B. H. Green jr., under whose splendid leadership the new edifice is being erected, is not only appreciated by our church, but every person in town admires and appreciates his merits. He is always ready to promote the welfare of the community, and to him we credit the joy of having electricity in our church and town.

The church lays its hands on us in infancy, and is a guiding and controlling force all our lives. It is wise, just, efficient and an instrument of happiness.

Our object is by this new edifice, not only to show our deep sense of value and importance of the achievements of our ancestors but we wish that its structure may proclaim its importance to all ages and classes.

We wish that infancy may learn the purpose of its erections, and that the weary and aged may behold it and be comforted by the recollection it suggests.

We wish, finally, that it will be the last object in sight to him who leaves his native shore and the first to gladden his revisits.

And to those of us who remain let the sacred obligation sink deep into our hearts. As those drop from among us and the great trust descends into new hands, let us not feel that earlier and more worthy hands have gathered the laurels, but consecrate ourselves to the work and duty presented to us, and so by mark a spot which may forever be dear to us and our posterity.

May the light of peace rest upon it forever!