

OAK GROVE METHODIST CHURCH

The Oak Grove Methodist Episcopal Church South had its beginning under the trees and brush arbors under the leadership of the Reverend William E. Bates.

In July, 1880, the Rev. Bates donated six acres of land for a church and cemetery. The early Denton County records were destroyed by fire, but copies of the early field notes, church description for the contractor and a list of the donators were found in the purse of Mrs. Wm. E. Bates. These were copied by Mrs. Lorena Bates Smith. It is Mrs. Smith to whom we are indebted for the following description of the deed, contract agreement, and the list of donors as follows:

Field notes of six acres of land out of the Marcella Jones Survey League and Labor Survey for church purposes.

"Beginning at the south west corner of Wm. E. Bates tract of 375 acres out of said Marcella Jones Survey; a Rock corner; Thence north with his west line 150 $\frac{4}{10}$ varas a Bois D'Arc stake for corner; from which a post oak marked X bears south 49 $\frac{1}{7}$ degrees east 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ varas; another post oak marked X bears south 42 $\frac{1}{2}$ degrees east 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ varas; thence east 225 $\frac{6}{10}$ varas; a Bois D'Arc stake for corner a small post oak marked X bears south 27 degrees west 1 varas; thence south 150 $\frac{4}{10}$ varas a Bois D' Arc stake in Bates' south line a large post oak marked X bear 70 degrees 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ varas; thence west with said south line 225 $\frac{6}{10}$ varas to the place of beginning, containing 6 acres of land.

July 2nd, 1880
John Bacon, Surveyor"

Contract made and entered into this 8th day of April A.D., 1881 between the Building Committee of the Oak Grove Methodist Church and A. B. Harris.

"Said A. B. Harris agrees for the sum of one hundred and sixty-five dollars to build a house 32' by 50' and 17' side walls with self supporting roof to be sided with 6" siding to show not more than 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to the weather with a hanging cornice 12" wide on eave and rake and covered with shingles to show not more than 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to the weather with 9 windows and 3 doors and to be ceiled throughout. All work to be done in a good plain workman-like manner.

Said Building Committee agrees to furnish all material in good working condition, flooring and ceiling worked and finishing .. to be of good hard pine, except sills to be oak and they further agree to board all workmen free of charge while said church is under course of construction and to pay said A. B. Harris one hundred and sixty-five dollars on completion of building.

A. B. Hartis (Contractor)
 W. E. Bates
 W. P. Bates
 E. E. Miller
 J. M. Key
 W. L. Zumwalt

Building Committee

Received of Building Committee M. E. Church Oak Grove one hundred and sixty-five dollars in full for building said church.

May 24th, 1881
 A. B. Harris

Following is a copy of the original subscription list for the building of the Oak Grove Church.

We, the undersigned subscribers, do hereby agree to pay the sum of money severally annexed to our names to the Board of Trustees of Oak Grove Church for the purpose of erecting a house of worship for the M. E. Church South on a six acre tract of land situated in the S. W. corner of a three hundred and seventy five acre block purchased by Wm. E. Bates from Scuyler Oldham and donated by the said Wm. E. Bates to the Methodist Church South for church and graveyard purposes. The church house to be erected as aforesaid is to be of the following dimensions, to wit:

50 feet in length
 30 feet in breadth, and
 17 feet in height from floor to ceiling

The sums hereto subscribed are due and payable on the 1st day of January A. D., 1881.

Subscribed to build the Church

1. Wm. E. Bates	\$100.00	Paid	2. Wm. P. Bates	\$50.00	Paid
3. Joshua Zumwalt	30.00	"	4. Wm. L. Zumwalt	20.00	"
5. W. G. Tipps	20.00	"	6. Henry G. Key	25.00	"
7. J. M. Key	50.00	"	8. T. A. Hamilton	2.50	"
9. E. D. Spencer	5.00	"	10. Tullis Bates	25.00	"
11. M. E. Roark	20.00	"	12. J. R. Button	20.00	"
13. B. L. Rogers	10.00	"	14. G. H. Shrader	5.00	"
15. J. B. Rogers	10.00	"	16. Jonta Rogers	2.50	"
17. J. H. Goode	2.50	"	18. Clayton Rogers	2.50	"
19. Walter Shearer	1.00	"	20. Mat White	2.50	"
21. J. N. Swader	1.00	"	22. Jacob Hass	1.00	"
23. J. W. Sneathen	5.00	"	24. Wm. Rogers	2.00	"
25. George Goode	1.00	"	26. Ben Goode	1.00	"
27. Wm. A. Parvin	5.00	"	28. L. L. Naugle	3.00	"
29. Elizabeth Rogers	1.00	"	30. J. M. Shuford	10.00	"
31. J. F. McElhannon	10.00	"	32. J. T. Davis	5.00	"
33. Joel Phillips	25.00	"	34. John Tankersley	10.00	0
35. William Tipps	10.00	"	36. Alfred Burt	25.00	"

37.	A. A. Miller	\$ 5.00	Paid	38.	H. H. Rhoads	\$5.00	Paid
39.	E. E. Miller	10.00	"	40.	M. M. Hines	10.00	"
41.	John L. Landrum	10.00	"	42.	W. F. Hawkins	5.00	"
43.	F. J. Hawkins	5.00	"	44.	J. M. Hawkins	5.00	"
45.	G. T. Hawkins	5.00	"	46.	J. H. Bates	5.00	"
47.	George L. Button	2.50	"	48.	W. B. Smith	5.00	"
49.	J. R. Hodges	2.50	"	50.	G. W. Bates	5.00	"
51.	T. M. Whittenburg	2.50	"	52.	J. W. Hicks	2.50	"
53.	G. S. Hawkins	2.50	"	54.	R. N. Martin	2.50	"
55.	W. E. Bates, Jr.	2.50	"	56.	Milton Wells	1.00	"
57.	James Massey	5.00	0	58.	B. F. McNiell	5.00	"
59.	R. G. Hayhurst	5.00	Paid	60.	F. D. Fain	10.00	"
61.	W. W. Shelton	5.00	"	62.	E. C. Smith	10.00	"
63.	G. M. Gann	5.00	"	64.	R. H. Hopkins	1.00	"
65.	Thos. Hicks	1.00	"	66.	G. C. Bell	5.00	"
67.	Nathan Johnson	20.00	"	68.	J. L. Rudell	5.00	"
69.	J. R. McCormick	2.00	"	70.	Marshall Fulton	10.00	"
71.	L. L. Zumwalt	10.00	"	72.	John C. Smith	10.00	0
73.	S. A. Venters	5.00	0	74.	J. A. Carroll	5.00	Paid
75.	F. E. Piner	5.00	Paid	76.	C. B. Shelton	5.00	"
77.	W. P. Seale	1.00	"	78.	John McMurray	2.00	"
79.	Elish Biggerstaff	2.00	"	80.	R. F. McElhaney	1.00	"
81.	John Hines	10.00	.	82.	W. N Odell	2.00	"
83.	J. D. Landrum	2.50	"	84.	John W. Moore	2.00	"
85.	J. H. Standefer	2.50	"	86.	J. M. Donnell	5.00	0
87.	Sam Hawkins	2.00	"	88.	T. B. Norwood	6.00	Paid
89.	W. J. McNiell	10.00	"	90.	W. L. Rector	15.00	0
91.	Emma Rector	5.00	0				

Extra subscriptions to buy sleepers for the Church

G. C. Bates	\$ 2.50	Joel Phillips	\$ 2.50
W. P. Bates	1.62	W. L. Rector	3.00
W. L. Zumwalt	2.50	A. T. Bates	1.00
Ed Burrton	1.00	G. E. Utley	.50
J. Zumwalt	2.50	J. M. Kay	2.50
			<u>19.62</u>
			\$ 19.62

April 1, 1883 A. D. Subscription for materials to seat pulpit Oak Grove M. E. South:

Henry Key	\$ 10.00	W. C. Tipps	\$ 10.00
J. Zumwalt	10.00	J. M. Key	5.00
W. P. Bates	11.22		
		Total Cash	\$ 46.22
Paid on the work by Joel Phillips:	1 Horse at		<u>40.00</u>
	Total		\$ 86.22

Joel Phillips was a man of few words. When the Committee arrived to ask him for a donation, he said "Wait." He galloped his horse out in a field

and roped a horse. When he returned with the horse, he handed over the roped horse.

The lumber for the church was hauled from the saw mills of East Texas by church members as follows. Hoard Smith, W. C. Tipps, H. C. Key, and E. E. Miller. Others may have assisted. This information has been handed down through the generations.

According to the church records of August, 1881 to August, 1893, there were 47 members whom we assume were the charter members. They are listed first in the book without any information as to how they were received. Copies of the Register of Members, August, 1881 to August, 1893, the Register of Baptisms, Register of Deaths, and Disposals and Register of Marriages are attached. (Attached to Application)

According to church school records, the following number of classes and the number of members are given for a few years to show growth and decline of membership:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Sunday School Classes</u>	<u>Number Enrolled</u>
1884	7	95
1916	8	137
1923	9	95
1942	4	70
1972	1	20

The enrollment in the church and Sunday School is the lowest that it has ever been. The majority of members are the third, fourth, and fifth generations. There are no children in the community now. The last child in the community has joined a Baptist Church in the adjoining community to be with friends his own age.

The church is in a good state of repair. The outside frame has remained the same, except for the front doors. In the original building there were two front doors with steep steps leading into each. Now there is only one opening at the front with a double door. There is a small covered concrete porch. The outside has been covered with white asbestos shingles. The windows have been replaced with windows as near like the originals as possible.

The slatted benches have been replaced with solid wooden benches. It has the original flooring.

Lights have progressed with changing times. The kerosene lights were replaced with carbide lights and then came REA with electricity for the community.

The old wood stove has been replaced by circulating gas heaters and one electric heater. Two large electric fans have been added.

The old window blinds have been replaced with venetian blinds. The walls have been covered with light green wall paneling.

In February, 1968, the vandals visited the church and much damage was done. The vandals were caught and they paid \$600.00 for damage done.

With the \$600.00 and public donations from former members and friends, the floor was covered with vinyl tile, the aisle and pulpit were covered with red carpet. A red velvet curtain was hung around the choir loft. A new piano was added and a cross was hung in the back window. The wood work was painted inside and outside.

The church is in an excellent state of repair both inside and out except some repair is needed on the roof which will be done very soon.

The church members have, through the years, gone out to all parts of the United States as valuable citizens where ever they go. The professions have been varied. Some are: ministers, county judges, district judges, bankers, contractors, missionaries, agricultural extension agents and state specialists, county and city school superintendents, ball coaches, counselors, vocational agriculture and homemaking teachers, farmers, ranchers, mechanics, secretaries, clerks, nurses, carpenters, and many excellent teachers. There are probably many other important professions which have been omitted.

The Oak Grove Methodist Episcopal Church South was made the Oak Grove United Methodist Church in 1967.

The church has continued services from 1881 to the present. They have had excellent young ministers in spite of the small number of active members for two reasons. One, the ministers are able to continue their education because of nearness to Southern Methodist University in Dallas; and second, the church has been fortunate to have two trust funds left in memory of former members. There is no lack of funds.

The first regular minister after the establishment of the church was the Reverend W. S. May with the Reverend Wm. E. Bates as the Presiding Elder.

The present minister is the Reverend Phil McLarty.