

Tidence Lane, The First Baptist Minister in Tennessee



"Tidence Lane Preaching at Buffalo Ridge, Tennessee, in 1780", by Calvin Lemuel Hoole was painted in 1859.

Tidence Lane's "claim to fame" is that he was the first minister to preach regularly to a congregation in the state of what is now Tennessee. He was born in Maryland on August 31, 1724 to Richard and Sarah Lane. It is believed that he was christened "Tidings," as his paternal grandmother's name was Pretitia Tidings. Over his lifetime, the name went through a bit of change, and became known as "Tidence."

Lane married a woman named Hester Bibber while living in Maryland. The couple had at least ten children. It is believed that Lane and one son, also named Tidence, fought in the Revolutionary War, and were at the Battle of Kings Mountain.

Lane's first appearance in Tennessee was around 1778 or 1779, when he became the first pastor of Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church, a congregation that is still active today. A state historical marker bears the inscription, "...the first Baptist Church on Tennessee soil." The photo below was taken as one of the older buildings that housed the Buffalo Ridge congregation was being torn down.

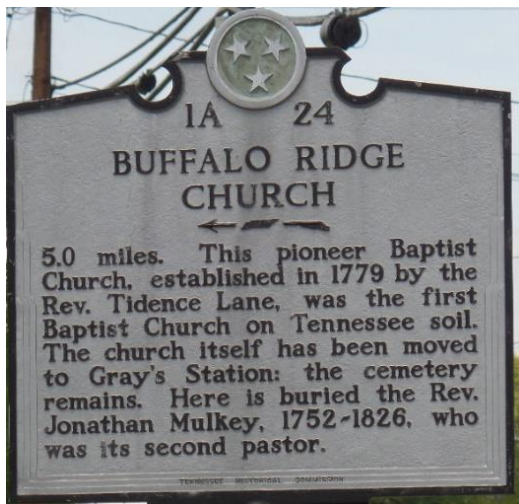


Photo by Donna Cox Briggs



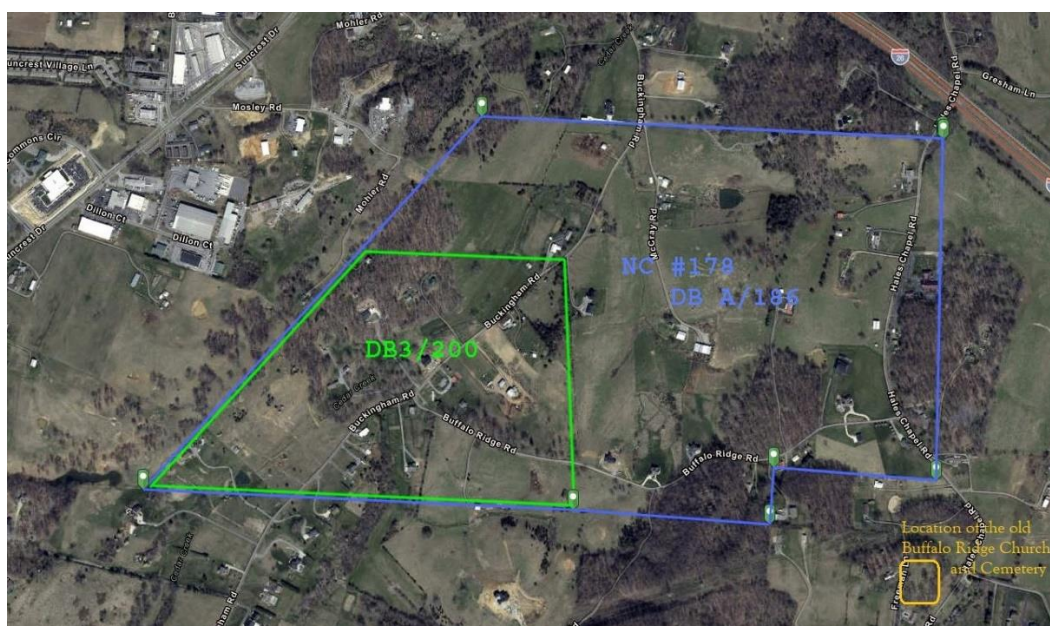
Photo courtesy of the Irma Kitzmiller family.

Property:

This *Early Northeast Tennessee Landowner* is a study in two early settlers in this area, **Tidence Lane** and **Thomas Jonakin**. Jonakin owned property in the Gray area of Washington County. He made entry on the property in 1779 and officially received a land grant, NC #178, in 1782. His property is shown by the blue lines on the map below. (Deed Book A, page 186)

One year later, Tidence Lane purchased 104 acres from Jonakin in 1783, but he did not keep it very long. It was sold in August of 1784. His being a minister, this is not surprising—he ministered to the congregation at Buffalo Ridge, then moved on. Lane's property is marked by the green lines on the map. (Deed Book 3, page 200)

The location of the old Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church where Lane was the first minister is marked by the gold lines on the map. The church would have been within easy walking or horseback ride from this property.



Tidence Lane died Jan 30, 1806 in Hamblen County. He is buried at First Baptist Memorial Garden, Whitesburg, Tennessee. The grave was moved from its original location in the Tidence Lane Cemetery which was located on private property.



Inscription:

TIDENCE LANE

August 31, 1724 – January 30, 1806

A Pioneer Baptist Preacher

Tidence Lane organized and became the first pastor of the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church in 1779. This church is in Washington County and is recognized as the first church of any denomination established in what is now the State of Tennessee. He served faithfully many other Baptist Churches in east Tennessee.

This monument erected by Tennessee Baptists in 1946.

For more information on Tidence Lane, see: Williams, Samuel Cole. "Tidence Lane, Tennessee's First Pastor," *Tennessee Historical Magazine* (Ser. 2) 1 (1930 – 1931, 40 – 48.