

history it was not surprising he should decide to dedicate a mountain and a monument to Georgia's founder. Neither is it surprising that Mr. Tate himself became an historical figure among the people of Pickens County. For when he turned away from the boisterous ways of the mountaineers he changed the ways of a whole community.

After he stopped fighting he wanted no more fights and after he stopped drinking the county became dry. Tobacco and gambling too were prohibited. Anyone residing on Col. Tate's 15,000 acres of land who was deemed undesirable could be pitched out at his word. And when Sam Tate spoke the word, his word became law.

Col. Sam grew up in an enterprising family with a strong American heritage. His great-grandfather John Tate served in the Revolutionary War and through the years the family slowly migrated South from Pennsylvania to Georgia.

Col. Tate's grandfather, another Samuel Tate, bought some land in what is now Pickens County in 1834. As it turned out his land contained the finest marble deposit in the United States, marble which has become famous all over the world. This Sam Tate



Col. Sam Tate gave up drinking and fighting to become a philanthropist and leader of men.

was a state senator and a captain in the Confederate Army.

Col. Tate's father, Col. Stephen Tate, also served with the Confederates. He was influential in the organization of the Georgia Marble Company, and eventually became its vice-president. All of these Tates also were farmers.

Col. Sam Tate, one of 19 children, was born Jan. 13, 1860. After attending North Georgia College in Dahlonega, he started his business career in 1879 as a clerk in a store in Canton, Ga. In 1883 he joined his brother-in-law in establishing a mercantile firm in Tate.

But his business interests did not absorb all his time and he found plenty of opportunity for fighting and drinking with some of the rugged mountaineers of the region. As a strong 215-pounder, he loved the challenge of a good fight.

At 45, Mr. Sam woke up to the great worth of the marble company. He saw that it had

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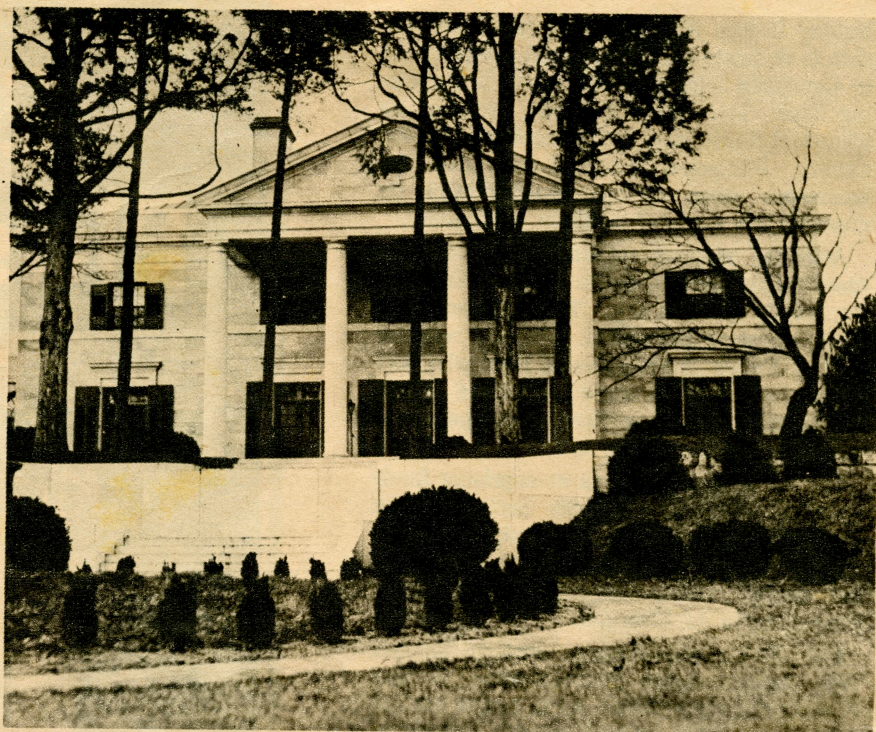
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The outside walls of Col. Tate's home are pink Georgia marble with two-story white marble columns. Floors downstairs are also marble.

## There Were No Jails

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the potential of enriching the community and its people. By this time Mr. Sam could easily purchase a controlling interest in the company. But he could not so easily change the habits of his mountaineer friends. He had to start with himself first. He did. And three years later he was ready to reform the community.

An article about Col. Tate in the December 6, 1924 issue of Collier's Weekly Magazine describes how he began his task:

"... Sam Tate knew the mind and heart of the Anglo-Saxon of those Georgia hills. He knew that no mountain man could ever be driven, but that a mountain man would follow to the death the man in whom he had faith. To establish the faith and confidence of the mountain folk in his leadership became Sam Tate's biggest job. He mastered his job; he walked uprightly among his men and men looked up to him."

It is said that after Col. Tate changed his ways, he walked heavy in the valley. Men did respect him. They feared him, too. But from this time until his death in 1938, Mr. Sam worked in his own way toward serving the people of Pickens County and Georgia. Under his leadership the marble industry flourished and the community prospered. The workmen lived in pleasant homes; there were no jails; there was very little crime and churches thrived. And it has been said that when people went away from home they left their doors unlocked.

Eventually the marble company became an Atlanta-based firm with plants and quarries in Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia, Massachusetts, Vermont, Alabama, Missouri, Florida

and California. Just recently, it acquired four granite companies at Elberton with total annual sales of \$960,000.

His people in Pickens County remember Mr. Sam as "a good man." One who worked for him during the depression of the '30s recalls how Col. Sam went right on paying his employes when sometimes there would be a span of 30 days without a single order coming in. By selling some of his own stocks, he was able to keep most of his men during those rough times. It is reported that he said, "I could close down and put a million in the bank right now, but my men aren't going to suffer."

ANOTHER native recalls how Mr. Sam made it a point to arrive at the mills at 6:30 in the morning, an hour ahead of the first employes, in order to greet them as they came in. He knew all of them and their children by name, and the workers appreciated this.

There is a storekeeper who is grateful to Mr. Sam for her education at the marble high school which the company financed. Not only was he responsible for this high school and the teachers he imported from Agnes Scott, Wesleyan, and G.S.C.W.—he also started a trade school for mountain children. He even provided tuition at Shorter and Reinhardt College for the ambitious students who wanted higher education.

For the children, there were stockings and dolls hung on trees at Christmas and the annual watermelon cutting on the Fourth of July.

Mr. Sam kept busy in his later years in both business and service to

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# Tate's Marble Mansion

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the state. He was president of banks in Ellijay and Jasper, vice-president of a bank in Canton and a director of the First National Bank in Atlanta. He was a member of the staffs of four governors and served for a time beginning in 1929 as chairman of the State Highway Board. Though Mr. Sam is listed in "Who Was Who in America" because of his many accomplishments, he is perhaps best remembered as president of the marble company.

His Georgia marble is in many buildings throughout the world and in the figure of Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial.

Mr. Sam's home at Tate is also an example of the outstanding work that has been done with Georgia marble. This mansion was built in 1922 on the site of the old family homestead. The outside walls of the home are made

Tate and his brother, Luke Tate. From the veranda is a beautiful view of the mountains, including Sharp Top and Mount Oglethorpe.

The mountaintop where Col. Sam put the monument to Gen. Oglethorpe recently changed hands. The shaft went along with the purchase when Earl R. Hardwick, businessman of Atlanta and Miami, bought certain acreage in that area.

For years the monument, one of the few to Oglethorpe in the state, has been neglected. Its base has been defaced by vandals who shamelessly left their names scratched in the cracking marble. But on that dedication day in 1930, the marble was as clean and beautiful as the pristine Georgia marble from Col. Sam's quarries.

Mr. Sam told his shivering audience: "It has been said that a land without monuments is a land without



The Oglethorpe monument has been neglected and its base defaced by vandals who shamelessly scratched their names into the stone.

of pink Georgia marble. The two-story high columns are of white Cherokee marble and monolithic, all in one piece, except for their bases and capitals. There are marble floors throughout the downstairs. A short distance from the house white and pink marble gateposts, topped by classical type urns, dignify the entrance to the driveway. In the garden a marble balustrade and fountains add to the formality.

The interior of the house was decorated in the eighteenth century manner and some of the fine furnishings were purchased abroad. Mr. Sam resided in this elegant home for about 15 years with his sister Miss Florence

history . . . we thought it fitting that this great mountain which will be here to the end of time should be set apart and dedicated as nature's monument to the illustrious statesman who laid the foundations of Georgia.

"The mountaintop on which we stand, 3,300 feet above sea level, is the southern terminus of the Blue Ridge, overlooking the Piedmont Plateau within sight of the state capitol on the south, the North Carolina mountains on the north and Tennessee mountains on the northwest."

The Oglethorpe monument on Mount Oglethorpe is in a way a memorial to Mr. Sam, too.