

= Andrew Sledd =

Andrew Warren Sledd (November 7 , 1870 ? March 16 , 1939) was an American theologian , university professor and university president . A native of Virginia , he was the son of a prominent Methodist minister , and was himself ordained as a minister after earning his bachelor 's degree and master 's degree . He later earned a second master 's degree and his doctorate .

After teaching for several years , Sledd was chosen to be the last president of the University of Florida at Lake City , from 1904 to 1905 , and the first president of the modern University of Florida (first known as the " University of the State of Florida ") , from 1905 to 1909 . He was also president of Southern University from 1910 to 1914 , and later became a professor and an influential biblical scholar at Emory University 's Candler School of Theology from 1914 to 1939 .

Sledd first gained national recognition after he wrote a 1902 magazine article advocating better legal and social treatment of African @-@ Americans . He is also prominently remembered for his role in founding the modern University of Florida , his scholarly analysis of biblical texts as literature , his call for an end to racial violence , and his influence on a generation of Methodist seminary students , scholars and ministers .

= = Early life and education = =

Sledd was born November 7 , 1870 , in Lynchburg , Virginia , the son of a Methodist Episcopal minister , Robert Newton Sledd , and his wife , Frances Carey Greene Sledd . The elder Sledd was an influential minister within the Virginia Methodist Conference , and at various times while Andrew was growing up , his father held prominent pastorates of large Methodist congregations in four different Virginia cities ? Danville , Norfolk , Petersburg and Richmond . Andrew received his early education in the Petersburg school of W. Gordon McCabe , a former Confederate captain and veteran of the U.S. Civil War .

In 1888 , Sledd entered Methodist @-@ affiliated Randolph ? Macon College in Ashland , Virginia . While at Randolph ? Macon , he was a member of Phi Delta Theta Fraternity (Virginia Gamma chapter) ; he was also the college 's outstanding student @-@ athlete and was particularly known as the college baseball team 's first baseman and star hitter . Sledd left the college without finishing his undergraduate degree requirements , first accepting a position as a teacher in Durant , Mississippi , and then as the principal of a high school in Arkadelphia , Arkansas . After teaching in Arkansas for two years , he returned to Randolph ? Macon and completed his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in 1894 . Sledd graduated in mathematics , was recognized for completing the best work in the mathematics and Greek departments during his senior year , and was honored as a member of Phi Beta Kappa .

Sledd taught at the Randolph @-@ Macon Academy in Front Royal , Virginia , from 1894 to 1895 , before returning to graduate school . He earned a second master of arts degree in Greek from Harvard University in Cambridge , Massachusetts , in 1896 , and completed one year 's additional graduate work toward a doctoral degree . While he was at Harvard , he played for the Harvard Crimson baseball team , and he is remembered as one of Harvard 's greatest athletes of the era ; he was offered a professional baseball contract but turned it down . Several years later , during a break in his teaching career , Sledd completed his doctorate .

= = Scholar and educator = =

= = Emory College and the " Sledd Affair " = =

After completing his graduate studies at Harvard , Sledd briefly served as a Latin instructor at Vanderbilt University in Nashville , Tennessee . He was ordained as a Methodist minister and licensed to preach in 1898 . At the suggestion of his father , he contacted Methodist minister Warren Akin Candler , who was the president of Emory College in Oxford , Georgia , a prominent leader of

the Georgia Methodist Conference , and a few months from being elevated as a Methodist bishop . Candler was impressed with the character and academic credentials of the young scholar , and assisted him in becoming a professor of Latin language and literature at Emory College , a position Sledd held from 1898 to 1902 . While living in the Candler family home , Sledd fell in love with the bishop 's only daughter , Annie Florence Candler , and he married her on March 22 , 1899 ; his father conducted the wedding ceremony .

Later in 1899 , while traveling by train between Atlanta and Covington , Georgia , Sledd witnessed the aftermath of the lynching of an African @-@ American man named Sam Hose . The idealistic young minister was outraged . In reaction , he wrote an essay entitled " The Negro : Another View , " which was published as an article in the July 1902 issue of The Atlantic Monthly . In the article , Sledd denounced the lynchings of black men in the South in graphic terms : " lynching is not ' justice , ' however rude ; it is a wild and diabolic carnival of blood . " While he flatly asserted that the " negro race " was not the equal of the " white race , " he nevertheless demanded equal justice for blacks and whites alike , writing " There is nothing in a white skin or a black to nullify the essential rights of man as man . " Even though Sledd 's essay condoned the continued racial segregation of white and black Southerners as a necessary social expedient , a public firestorm ensued in Georgia over Sledd 's criticism of the South 's treatment of its black citizens , with the controversy stoked by the vitriolic letters and editorial attacks of agrarian populist Rebecca Felton in the Atlanta Constitution newspaper . As the controversy grew , the Atlanta Journal and Atlanta News quickly joined the anti @-@ Sledd chorus . When a majority of the members of Emory 's board of trustees threatened to withdraw their support of the college because of the negative publicity , the newly installed college president , James E. Dickey , demanded Sledd 's resignation from the faculty , and Sledd resigned on August 9 , 1902 . The Sledd Affair subsequently attracted attention throughout the United States as a matter of academic freedom and freedom of speech .

After resigning from the Emory College faculty , Sledd entered the graduate school of Yale University in New Haven , Connecticut , where he began work in the advanced classics doctoral program , specializing in Latin . Sledd received \$ 1 @,@ 000 in severance pay from Emory pursuant to an agreement with Dickey and unanimously approved by the Emory faculty , and his father @-@ in @-@ law contributed \$ 900 to help cover his tuition and living expenses while he attended Yale . He received a scholarship from the university , and earned his doctor of philosophy degree in Latin from Yale in 1903 , after only nine months . Stanford University and Syracuse University offered him professorships in Latin ; Antioch College offered him its presidency . Sledd declined all offers from Northern and Western institutions , and was determined to return to his native South .

= = = University of Florida at Lake City = = =

After completing his doctorate , Sledd obtained an appointment as a professor of Greek at Methodist @-@ affiliated Southern University (now known as Birmingham ? Southern College) in Greensboro , Alabama . Several months later , on July 6 , 1904 , he was unanimously selected to be the president of the University of Florida at Lake City by its board of trustees . At the time of his appointment , the University of Florida at Lake City was experiencing a controversy of its own : its administration and faculty were hopelessly fractured by personality conflicts and its unpopular president 's failed attempts at improving the small school 's instruction and academic standing . The university 's board of trustees had removed the ineffectual president , and dismissed seven members of its small faculty . The university , such as it was , had been known as " Florida Agricultural College " until 1903 . When Sledd arrived in Lake City , it was a school with a new name , a faculty fractured by contentious personalities , an unknown number of returning students and an uncertain future . Sledd required all previous faculty members to re @-@ apply if they desired to keep their jobs , hired replacement instructors , most of whom had earned doctoral degrees in their respective fields (in contrast to the previous faculty) , and set about devising rigorous academic standards for the school 's new students . Although the university was a designated land @-@ grant college under the federal government 's Morrill Act , it received insufficient annual financial assistance from the state government , and its finances remained tenuous .

= = = University of the State of Florida = = =

Sledd and members of the faculty were actively involved in urging Florida 's state government to combine the state 's several small institutions of higher education . The university consolidation movement gained the political backing of newly elected Florida Governor Napoleon B. Broward , and , in 1905 , the Florida Legislature passed the Buckman Act , which abolished the hodge @-@ podge of state @-@ supported colleges and consolidated their assets and programs into a new comprehensive university and land @-@ grant college for white men , and a liberal arts college and normal school for white women . The Act mandated the merger of four separate institutions , including the existing University of Florida at Lake City , into the consolidated men 's university ? the new University of the State of Florida . By a vote of six to four , the new Board of Control charged with the governance of the consolidated institutions , selected Gainesville as the location for the new men 's state university .

Sledd had not anticipated that the Lake City campus would be abandoned , and had assumed that it would be selected as the location of the newly consolidated men 's university , placing him in a strong position to become the first president of the new institution . The selection of Gainesville for the campus of the new men 's university put Sledd 's future as its first president in question . The University of Florida in Lake City was just one of the four existing institutions that were to be merged to form the new university , and there were other possible candidates for the presidency . Albert A. Murphree , president of Florida State College in Tallahassee , was the favorite of several prominent members of the legislature . But Sledd had Governor Broward 's backing , and the Board of Control ultimately selected him to be the first president on June 7 , 1905 ; Sledd 's appointment was for a single year , but renewable on an annual basis , as was typical in the university 's early years when the Board of Control appointed or re @-@ appointed the presidents of the state 's public colleges for each academic year . Murphree remained the president of the newly consolidated women 's college in Tallahassee until 1909 .

Sledd nominated all of the original faculty members , a majority of whom he had previously selected to be professors at the University of Florida at Lake City . The new University of the State of Florida operated in Lake City during the first academic year of its existence (1905 ? 06) , while the buildings of the new Gainesville campus were being erected . Sledd managed the move of the school 's assets from Lake City to Gainesville during the late summer of 1906 , and participated in the official dedication of the campus on September 27 , 1906 . When registration for classes was held in Gainesville on September 24 , 1906 , there were 102 students and fewer than a dozen faculty members . Sledd received a \$ 2 @,@ 250 annual salary in his first year as the head of the new state university , and , together with his wife and their young children , moved into the still incomplete Buckman Hall dormitory on the Gainesville campus .

Sledd played a key role in the formation and ultimate success of the new university , but his time as its president was a relatively short four years . His political backing ended with the retirement of Governor Broward , and the inauguration of the new governor , Albert Gilchrist , in January 1909 . The Florida Board of Education , which then consisted of the governor and the state 's elected cabinet members , oversaw the Board of Control and made no secret of its desire to remove Sledd , in part because members of the Board of Education believed Sledd 's admissions standards were too high and that the university was not growing quickly enough . Nevertheless , the Board of Control continued to back Sledd , and its members threatened to resign in protest . Seeking to avoid an unwinnable political controversy , Sledd resigned , and the Board of Control replaced him with Albert Murphree , the political favorite of several legislative leaders and the Board of Education .

= = = Methodist ministry and Southern University = = =

Following Sledd 's resignation , he and his family returned to Atlanta and stayed in the home of his wife 's parents . Within a few weeks , he was appointed minister of the First Methodist Church in Jacksonville , Florida , a position he held for the remainder of 1909 and the first half of 1910 . Sledd

was subsequently invited to return to Southern University as its president , serving from 1910 to 1914 . While president of Southern University , he implemented a new pre @-@ college preparatory school and a four @-@ year course of Bible study , and focused his personal efforts on restoring the school 's finances and improving the quality of its instruction .

= = = Candler School of Theology = = =

In the fall of 1914 , Sledd resigned the presidency of Southern University and returned to Emory College , by then renamed Emory University and relocated to its new main campus in northeast Atlanta , as the first Professor of Greek and New Testament Literature at the Candler School of Theology , the newly established seminary of the Methodist Episcopal Church , South . Sledd became well known as a professor of Greek , Latin and New Testament studies at Candler , and was the author of several scholarly books on New Testament subjects , including Saint Mark 's Life of Jesus (1927) , The Bibles of the Churches (1930) and His Witnesses : A Study of the Book of Acts (1935) . He was selected to be a member of the American Standard Bible Committee , which was preparing a new American Standard Version of the Bible . He continued to advocate internal Methodist reform and an end to racial violence , and his teaching inspired a generation of his Candler theology students to act as change agents within the Methodist Episcopal Church , South . Many of his former students became Methodist ministers who returned to their congregations and annual conferences to work for better treatment of African @-@ Americans , helping the Southern Methodist church to evolve from a mainstay of theological and racial intransigence to an agent for social change and doctrinal reform .

Sledd 's interest in education was not limited to the higher education of colleges and universities . While holding his Candler professorship , he served as a member of the Board of Public Instruction of DeKalb County , Georgia , and volunteered to serve as the board 's treasurer .

Sledd and his wife Annie also suffered a personal tragedy during his time as a Candler professor , when their first @-@ born son and his namesake , Andrew Sledd , Jr . , died after an extended illness in 1919 . Andrew , Jr . , was 16 years old , and had graduated from Decatur High School only weeks earlier .

= = Death and legacy = =

Sledd became a recognized New Testament scholar and a significant voice of educational , social and ecclesiastical reform within the Methodist Episcopal Church , South . For nearly twenty @-@ five years , he remained a professor at Emory University 's Candler School of Theology , until his death from a heart attack on March 16 , 1939 . Following Sledd 's funeral , his body was buried in the Decatur Cemetery .

In his 1960 History of Methodism in Alabama and West Florida , Marion Elias Lazenby remembered Sledd as " one of the [Methodist] Church 's most scholarly and reverent teachers . " Immediately after his death , Sledd was widely eulogized in Methodist churches across the country , and numerous obituaries appeared in regional and national newspapers across the country . The Atlanta Constitution , whose editorials had vilified Sledd in 1902 , paid tribute to him in its obituary as a " nationally known Bible authority " ; no mention was made of the " Sledd Affair . "

Sledd 's advocacy of social change and an evolving understanding of biblical texts came at a high personal price . Given his chosen career of minister and professor , he never accumulated much personal wealth . Sledd died deep in debt , having lost the family home to foreclosure after the salaries of Candler professors were cut when financial support of the school fell during the 1930s . His creditors obtained a deficiency judgment for the unpaid portion of his debt after the foreclosure , and , following his death , forced the sale of some of his furniture and parts of his personal library in partial satisfaction of his remaining debts .

The faculty of the University of Florida awarded Sledd the university 's first honorary degree , a doctor of divinity , at the spring 1909 commencement ceremonies . In 1933 , John J. Tigert , the university 's third president , invited Professor Sledd to be the university 's baccalaureate speaker .

After his death , the university honored him again , renaming one of its early residence halls , Sledd Hall , in 1939 . The small state university , which Sledd had been instrumental in creating and organizing , is now one of the ten largest single @-@ campus universities in the United States , with a total enrollment of nearly 50 @,@ 000 undergraduate , graduate and professional students .

Sledd and his wife Annie had nine children . Eight of their children graduated from Emory , seven with Phi Beta Kappa honors , a fact newsworthy enough to be picked up by the Associated Press wire service when youngest daughter Antoinette graduated from Emory the year following Sledd 's death . Two of their sons followed in their father 's footsteps , earned doctorates and became university professors : James H. Sledd became a Rhodes Scholar and noted professor of English literature at the University of Chicago and the University of Texas ; Marvin B. Sledd was a professor of mathematics at Georgia Tech .

In 2002 , after almost a century of ignoring its role in the " Sledd Affair , " Emory University sponsored a presentation entitled " Professing Justice : A Symposium on the Civil Rights Legacy of Professor Andrew Sledd . " In holding the inter @-@ disciplinary symposium , Emory University acted to " right a wrong committed a century ago by revisiting the ' Sledd affair ' and reflecting on its meaning for Emory today . "