

AMITY METHODIST CHURCH

Amity United Methodist Church is a large white two-story frame building located on U.S. Highway 264 about half way between Lake Landing and Engelhard on a sight that was once known as Indian Ridge. The Church has a balcony which was built to accomodate the slaves who attended Church with their white masters. Some members of the Community who remembered the early days of the Church said that the first lecturn was on a raised platform and was reached by steps on either side of the lecturn. This Church is a landmark in the community, being much larger than is usually found in rural areas. The guest register in the vestibule of the Church shows that many people passing through stop to see the Church, one from as far away as Germany. Amity is a part of Mattamuskeet Charge which consists of 4 Churches.

Much of the history of Amity was never recorded and it is believed some of the records have been destroyed. Research by Mrs. Nell Wechter of Stumpy Point shows that in Návember 1841 a deed was executed for the property on which Amity Church now stands and was acknowledged in open court by Thomas Ballance in person. It was recorded in Book T, page 378 in the Register of Deed's Office on February 9, 1842 by Green Bridgman. This property which contained on acre and 96 poles was purchased for \$80.00.

Research by Miss Rebecca Swindell and Guy F. Gibbs shows that on December 30, 1844 another plot of land was deeded to the Trustees in Trust of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This probably expanded the plot that was bought in November 1841. It is described as being on Indian Ridge and embracing all the land whereon the Mattamuskeet Chapel stands. It was to be used for the erection of a place of worship for the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. This deed is recorded in Book 5 page 54, Register of Deeds Office, Hyde County Court House.

The Chapel referred to in the deed of 1844 apparently was used as a place of worship for all Methodists in the area of what is now Lake Landing Township except those in Gull Rock, then known as Mt. Pleasant. There is no record of when the Chapel was built or what disposition was made of it after Amity Church was built. It is assumed that it was either torn down or moved to another location. According to information handed down by

7

older people, the Church was dedicated about 1852. It is not known why the name "Amity" was chosen for the Church.

Amity Church is surrounded by a Cemetery. There are tomb stones in the Cemetery bearing the date 1846 as the date of death and there may be some even earlier than that. This was probably before the present Church was completed since additional land was purchased in that year by the Trustees of the Mattamuskeet Chapel.

The first parsonage for the Ministers of Amity Church of which there is any record was the house directly in front of the Church. It is now owned by Warren Harris. The entrance to this property was a long driveway from the road which is now highway 264. This driveway was lined on both sides by large trees. There were about 20 acres of farm land which was a part of the parsonage property. The rent from the farm was used to pay part of the Minister's salary. About 1907 or 1908 this property was sold and the proceeds from the sale used to build the present parsonage which is just south of the Church.

In the late 1800's and early 1900's there was an active Sunday School of about 100 pupils as well as a large active Church membership. As of this writing there is no Sunday School and only a few members on the Church roll. It is feared by those faithful few that because of the dwindling membership the beautiful old Church may have to be closed. Regardless of it's uncertain future we know that the members of this Church in the past have had a great influence for good on the life of the Community. The boys and girls who attended Sunday School here are scattered to all parts of the Country and have been successful in many professions and fields of work.