

HISTORY OF THE ATLANTIC UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



## EARLY HISTORY OF ATLANTIC TRACT

Atlantic was settled about 1740 and originally was called "Hunting Quarters", a name given to it by the tribes of Tuscarora Indians. The Coree Indians lived in this area, and to them it was their hunting quarter. Relics of the indian occupancy have been found in Atlantic, and in Sea Level, and on Cedar Island. It was so called until 1890 when it was renamed Atlantic. Atlantic was incorporated in 1905, but is not now active in municipal affairs.

## LAND ACQUISITION

The land on which the present church building of the Atlantic United Methodist Church stands was acquired on the 17th day of April, 1888 from William Hill and Barsheba Hill, his wife. The deed from Wm. Hill and his wife conveyed the land to George Rose, J. F. Morris, William H. Fulcher, John Rose, W. T. Rose, John W. Fulcher, Alex Salter, and Wallace Salter as Trustees of the Church Property of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at Hunting Quarters, Core Sound Mission, North Carolina Conference. This tract of land, about fifty acres, more or less, was formerly known as the Plantation of Robert Wallace, deceased, and at the time of the transfer to the Trustees was known as "Smith Tract Oak Hammock."

There were two witnesses to the signing of the deed, namely: J. J. Mason and J. M. Parsons. On the following day, April 18th, 1888, William Hill and his wife attested to their signing before John O. Mason, Justice of the Peace. The certification was adjudged correct by John D. Davis, Clerk of the Superior Court on the 24th of April, and the deed was duly registered. The original of this deed, time worn and damaged, is in the records of the church.

## BEFORE EARLY CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

The history of Methodists in North Carolina shows that they often met as "classes" in the homes of members, and later branched out into community church buildings or school houses to hold their meetings. Along the North and South Carolina coasts the people were called together in "Camp Meetings" and often camped in specified areas while they held protracted meetings. So it was with the Atlantic Methodists. They first met in homes and the camp meetings were held in the oak grove that now holds the church. In the early days the area was fifty acres, and the early church was known as the "Church of Two Hundred Trees" Because so much of the original fifty acres has been deeded to other causes this site no longer has two hundred trees, but the setting is a richly endowed grounds with the present church surrounded by a grove of oaks, with a few pines, the oaks having stood here since the earliest days of this church. The notes of Allen Taylor contained this statement: "I was a boy of fourteen years of age at the time and can remember very well attending the old time Camp Meetings held there outdoors and seeing the boats anchored in Core Sound opposite."

## THE EARLY BEGINNING

Although the deed for the grounds is dated in 1888 and construction of the "old" church began in 1897 neither of these date the beginning of the Methodist Class in Atlantic. An old register of members contains a note that it was copied from an earlier class record. This register was copied on October 6, 1902. The first records it lists are those for 1890; however, it had added to it on November 27, 1902, information from the journals compiled by D. N. Swindell, and these go back to the year 1879. This makes this church over 95 years old.

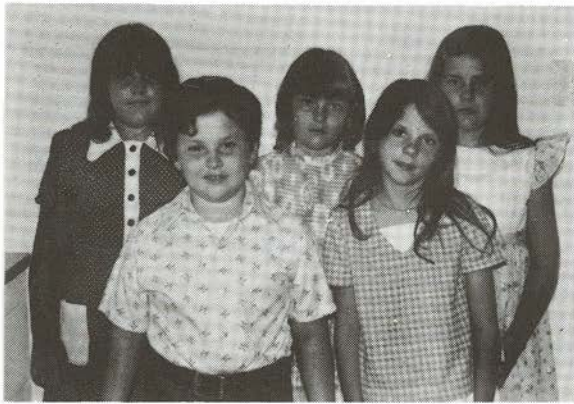
The first marriage on record was that of Samuel Rose and Rodie Clark, and Rev. Joseph Dixon officiated at their wedding in July 1891. Also married that same month and year were Henry Salter to Emma Rose, Willis Nelson to Carolyn Rose. Rev. Joseph Dixon summarized the "charge" (not church) as having twenty-six members in November 1891. This figure increased over the years and by 1914 the charge had reached over one hundred members. The only breakdown by churches was made by Rev. Thomas W. Mansfield in 1904 when he showed that Manns Chapel (Sea Level) had fifty members and Harris Chapel (Atlantic) had forty-five members. today the membership at Atlantic stands at one-hundred sixty-five.

#### THE CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

The deed to the land given in 1888 contains the statement "to have and to hold the said piece or parcel of land containing fifty acres more or less with all improvements thereon." So there may or may not have been some sort of building on the land at the time. The first church was constructed in 1897-98, and this building was remodded in 1920. Part of the remodeling was that church school rooms were added to the church. This 1897 church served well for sixty-eight years. Present day members are pleased with modern air-conditioned facilities, but still remember with warmth the old church that was taken down to make room for the present church.

#### FOLLOWING THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

The following letter gives us some insight into the past at Atlantic. It was written by the Rev. Charles C. Brothers to Rev. Fernifold S. Becton on December 13, 1906. The letter is as follows:











Dear Brother Becton:

I send you the plan of Atlantic Charge to which you are assigned. As you know, there is no parsonage here, and you need none. You, I suppose will come by Beaufort. Apply to J. B. Jones for permit over this mail route and you will get one-third off. I think the people are satisfied with your assignment here, and I hope you will have a good year of success. I got back home today, Thursday. I intended getting here yesterday but I missed connection at Beaufort, and also missed a marriage fee last night. I haven't a plan of my charge, and know nothing about it. I am expecting to hear from Rumley every day. I very much fear that I will not realize much out of the work, as we have to board, and board I suppose is high there. There are two appointments, Atlantic and Wit. They are about four miles apart. Services are as follows: Wit 1st and 3rd Sundays, Atlantic 2nd and 4th Sundays. Wit is also called Mann's Chapel, and Atlantic has been known as Harris' Chapel. Wit has 50 members, Atlantic has 37. Stewards: Atlantic-Alfred C. Morris, Alonzo Fulcher(Recording Steward), Henry Salter, Augustus Fulcher. Wit-Wallace Willis (District Steward), Joe E. Salter, Edward Nielson. Trustees are: Atlantic-Joseph F. Morris, Daniel Morris, Jno. Atwell Hill, Milton S. Lee, and Wit-John W. Rose, Wallace Willis, Jno. W. Lewis. There is a fine Graded School here. Prof. R. C. Holton is Principal. He is a "Disciple" but works well in our Sunday School, so do two of his teachers ladies. There is another school here called the "James Improved School", but 90 percent of your members patronize the Graded School. Play mum about the school question while you stay here. There is bad feeling between the two schools. At Wit, go to Bro. Wallace Willis for your first stop. He keeps the first store you come to at the land or shore end of the pier. At Atlantic, if the brethren are not off oystering go to James R. Morris, or, Dan. Morris.

Give my warmest regards to your family. Hoping you have a pleasant time on this charge, I will close.

Yours Most Sincerely,  
Charles C. Brothers

PS: The Mission Board appropriated \$300.00 to this charge, and the assesment for salary will be the same I suppose, Just as it was for me. I got \$564.00 out of it, more than anyone else ever got here.

NOTE: Rev. Fernie Becton never joined the conference, although he was an Elder, he continued to earn his income from farming, and kept a farm on Clubfoot Creek, in Craven County, where one of his sons still resides. Although he went blind late in his ministry, he continued to preach nine years after he lost his sight.

#### PARSONAGES CONSTRUCTED

The parsonage removed when the present parsonage was built was acquired by purchase, not constructed. It was a two story house built on the lines called and "L Shaped" house, popular in this area at the time. The present parsonage was constructed under the leadership of Rev. R. C. Goodchild in 1948. This parsonage was dedicated by the Rev. L. A. Lewis in 1958. On the church grounds is a multiple use building known locally as the "Scout Hut" and it offers space for group meetings, retreats, youth activities and scout meetings. It was started under the ministry of Rev. L. A. Lewis, and was dedicated March 15, 1959 by the Rev. David Lewis. Dr. A. J. Hobbs officiated at the dedication.

#### THE PRESENT CHURCH

The church we dedicate will seat 200 in the nave and overflow rooms on each side of the narthex will accomodate another 50 worshipers. There are nine classrooms, pastor's study, and the library.

It is of modern design, and masonry construction. This building was designed by architect John N. Peterson, AIA, of New Bern. The building committee consisted of the following:

Bruce Willett, Chairman

William Willis, Vice-Chairman

Joe Mason, Jr., Building Fund Treasurer

with the following members of this committee:

Mrs. Daphne Hill, Mrs. Roma Davis, Charles Caudell, Carl Bell, Oden Fulcher, Grover Willis, Harry Roland, Guy Taylor, Mrs. Veda Styron, Mrs. Kenneth Smith. Ground was broken for the new church in a ceremony on September 6, 1964. Rev. R. Grady Dawson, the District Superintendent at the time, and Rev. M.S. Amspacher officiated. Construction was completed at a total cost, including furnishing, of \$120,000.00. and the first service of worship was held in the church on Sunday, May 9, 1965.

#### ABOUT THE FUTURE

No single act, such as ground-breaking or dedication or compiling its history is conclusive in the worship of God. Each of these are steps taken by those who follow Christ. If a dedication of this booklet was in order then the sweat and tears and joy too of all those who have loved this church and the setting in the oak grove, and who have brought their concerns before God in prayer on this spot, and who have brought their children up in this church would have to have first consideration-and it would be to them that it would have to be dedicated.

## THE MINISTERS WHO SERVED HERE

1879 H.Farrow  
1880-81 B.Hancock  
1882-83 T.J. Browning  
1884 E.D. Hoover  
1885 T.J. Browning  
1886 Daniel Reid  
1887 J.W. Gurgainus

STRAITS & ATLANTIC

1917-19 W.E. Hoecutt

OCRACOKE & ATLANTIC

1920 M.B. Cox

CORE SOUND MISSION

ATLANTIC & SEA LEVEL

1888-91 Joseph Dixon  
1892 J.M. Carraway  
1893 J.L. Abarnathy  
1894 J.W. Wallace

1921-23 E.J. Lewis

1924 J.M. Carraway

1925 C.W. Wilson

ATLANTIC & STRAITS

STRAITS CIRCUIT

1895 W.J. Everton  
1896 J.M. Carraway  
1897 R.T. Wyche &  
J.M. Carraway

1926 E.B. Bell & E.W. Glass

1927 W.T. Cheek

ATLANTIC & SPRINGFIELD (WILLISTON)

1928-29 W.T. Cheek

CORE SOUND MISSION

ATLANTIC

1898 J.M. Carraway  
1899 Lawrence O. Wyche  
C.A. Roy  
1900 C.P. Snow  
1901 C.K. Poole  
1902 L.E. Sawyer

1930 E.L. Hill

1933-34 R.W. Barfield

1935-36 W.J. Freeman

1937 W.J. Hardesty

1938-39 O.W. Matthewson

1940-44 L.D. Hayman

1944-48 C.M. Mitchell

1949 R.C. Goodchild

1950-51 C.W. Wooten

1952-53 Edgar W. Downum

1954-57 Louie A. Lewis

1958-60 David M. Lewis

1961-62 H.F. Pollock

1963-66 M.S. Amspacher

1967 H.B. Harrell

1968-69 Carl K. Wright

1970-72 Bobby E. Smith

1973 Edgar F. Seymour

ATLANTIC CIRCUIT

1903-4 Thomas W. Mansfield  
1905 Edward W. Reed  
1906 C.C. Brothers  
1907-09 Fernie S. Becton  
1910 W.A. Forbes  
1911-12 E.D. Dodd  
1913-15 Zel B. Pyatt  
1916 F.A. Lupton