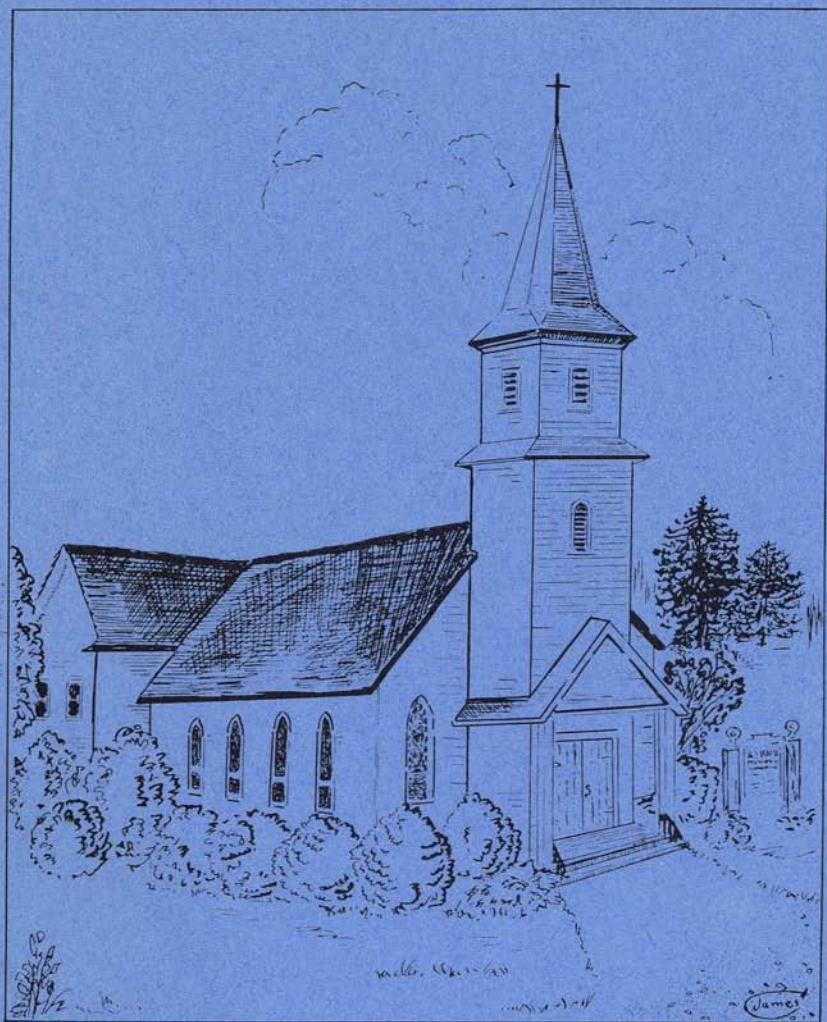


Lest We Forget



The Story of Our Methodist Heritage

1778-1978

Straits United Methodist Church

LEST WE FORGET

The Story of Our Methodist Heritage

Prepared for Straits United Methodist Church
in commemoration of its two-hundredth anniversary

1778-----1978

A Bicentennial Project

of the

Church Historical Committee

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Dedicated to the memory of all who have walked this way before whose lives commend the love of Christ to us today.

"One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts."

--Psalms 145, Verse 4

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Eloise Blair

Editor

Gloucester, N.C.

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FOREWORD

As we commemorate the Bicentennial Anniversary of Straits United Methodist Church, we feel that no worthy observance of this occasion could ensue without our pausing to look back. Looking back for us means reviving acquaintances with kindred who have established and nurtured our Methodist tradition for two centuries; it means revisiting the landmarks in our community which from time to time have figured significantly into our history; it also means renewing our commitment to the faith of our fathers.

At the outset, we are reminded of Lord Acton's advice in 1887: "to those about to write history--don't." Our research has often been frustrating because so little documented information exists. It appears that our forefathers, busily engaged in the affairs of the moment, were unaware that their descendants might someday seek to know them. They were humbly oblivious to the fact

that their lives were indeed to have impact for the future.

It is not our intent to glorify our past or to extol our early leaders. Their lives and accomplishments, if duly recorded, stand on their own merits. We make no apology, however, for the awe and respect which are engendered by our venturing to commune with these early leaders whose energy and vision have been our example.

We come from this research with feelings not unlike those recorded by the writer of Hebrews: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us." The "Cloud of Witnesses" who speak to us from our rich heritage here at Straits call us to new centuries of renewed commitment to Christ.

FROM A HEART STRANGELY WARMED

1703--1760

John Wesley, the English founder of the Methodist Movement, never envisioned himself as being outside the Church of England. Born in 1703 to an Anglican priest and his wife, Samuel and Susanna Wesley, John was the fifteenth of nineteen children. In a society beset with all kinds of social and moral evils, John early recognized that the conditions of his day were deplorable; likewise, he recognized that the church of which he was a part was failing to speak to the needs of his day. Thus our founding father began the tradition of zealous outreach and reform which has forever hence been associated with Methodism.

Young John Wesley entered Christ Church College at Oxford University in 1720. At this time in his life he did not evidence any particular religious leanings, but by 1725 he had decided to devote all of his time and

talents to God. After being ordained a deacon in the Church of England on September 19, 1725, he spent a brief period assisting his father in his duties as rector of Epworth Parish in Lincolnshire. In 1727 John Wesley was ordained a priest in the Church of England after which he again returned to Epworth to help his father.

It was during Wesley's absence from Oxford between 1727-1729 that a small group of students began to meet together for prayer, Bible study, and a study of the classics. This group was known synonymously as "The Enthusiasts", "Reforming Club", and "Holy Club." The term "Methodist" was applied to them because of the fervent, methodical way in which they pursued their goals. When John Wesley returned to Oxford in 1729, he found the club already established and he joined immediately. Although his brother Charles was a charter member, it was John who very soon became recognized as the leader.

In October of 1735 John and Charles Wesley went to General Oglethorpe's colony in Georgia. John was to serve as a missionary to the settlers and the Indians, and Charles was to be secretary to General Oglethorpe. John Wesley's efforts in the new World did not meet with much success; he was unable to enforce High Church Anglican rituals and regulations among the wilderness settlers. Feeling somewhat dejected about the failure of his mission to the Georgia Colony, Wesley returned to England in 1738.

Shortly after his return to England, Wesley attended a prayer meeting in London on May 24, 1738. Such informal prayer meetings were being held weekly by a little group of people who were members of the Church of England but who failed to find in the stately services of that church the spiritual strength they craved. Having been through a crisis and struggle in his own personal religious life, Wesley had meditated all day on two passages of scripture from the New Testament: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might

be partakers of the divine nature;" and "Thou are not far from the kingdom of God."

At the close of this day the slightly-built young Wesley, attired in the habit of an Anglican priest, found his way to Aldersgate Street to the gathering assembled there. We do not know what hymns were sung, what prayers were said, or who spoke on this occasion. Wesley's own words can best summarize the magnitude of his Aldersgate experience: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." The great historian Lecky in his monumental work England in the Eighteenth Century says, "it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the scene which took place at that humble meeting in Aldersgate Street forms an epoch in English history." Unwittingly the young man whose heart was thus strangely warmed was destined to change the course of religious history, perhaps more consequentially in our country than in his own.

Wesley's new insight, though profound, had a characteristic New Testament simplicity. Hear him as he defines in his own words a Methodist: "A Methodist is... one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength." Though noted for his zeal and fervor, Wesley was not dogmatic or authoritarian. He set the precedent for an open-minded, democratic spirit among his followers when he said, "Methodists alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion, but they think and let think."

As we evaluate Wesley's contribution to the Christian world, we credit him with three monumental bequests. First, he forced men to face the ethical implications of their religion. No longer could they be content to observe outward forms and rituals. He believed and preached that only the pure in heart would see God.

Furthermore, John Wesley made clear to his followers the social responsibilities of Christian discipleship. Wesley could not conceive of how men could claim to be living according to God's will and yet be unconcerned

about their fellowmen who were hungry, naked, troubled, or lonely.

Wesley's greatest single legacy to Christianity is his emphasis on personal experience as the channel through which men experience the love of Christ. He reduced religion to its simplest terms by making it a personal experience. What had once been merely a rigidly formal creed became the real source of energy for living. No greater service could have been done for the cause of Christ.

A GLEAM ACROSS THE WAVE

1760--1778

In the middle of the 18th Century a group of young evangelists who had shared John Wesley's heart-warming experience appeared in New York and Maryland and began to form societies of the people called Methodists. America at this time presented a singularly complicated religious pattern. In nine of the thirteen colonies there were established churches. The Congregational Church was the established church in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, while in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and part of New York the Anglican Church was established. Only in Rhode Island and the Quaker Colonies of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware were there no state churches. North Carolina, in addition to having an established church, had a further religious mandate incorporated into its early charter of 1669 which read:

"No man shall be permitted to be a free man of Carolina, or to have any estate or habitation within, that does not acknowledge a God, and that God is publicly and solemnly to be worshipped."

There were Methodists already at work up and down the East Coast prior to the formation of the first Methodist societies in 1766. In that year Robert Strawbridge in Maryland and Phillip Embury in New York formally organized Methodist societies in their homes. The message they espoused--the message of Wesley--was to be disseminated by pioneer preachers on horseback, the remarkable breed known as the circuit riders.

No lukewarm commitment could have inspired the circuit riders to endure the rigors and uncertainties of the frontier. Methodist circuit riders forged ahead with every new wagon train of pioneers heading into the wilderness; indeed the Methodist circuit rider was more familiar than the doctor and surely more familiar than any government official. So appalling were the dangers faced by

these fearless men that the average life span among them was only twenty-seven years.

These men were appointed to circuits, and often those circuits were as large as entire states. They had no fine church buildings to inhabit; they preached wherever the opportunity presented itself--in taverns, in log cabins, in town halls, in county poorhouses, in courtrooms, in schools, on street corners, in barnyards, and in clearings in the woods. While there are some records of large congregations, the work of the preachers was primarily with small groups.

By far the most intrepid and self-sacrificing of the circuit riders was Francis Asbury, our first Methodist Bishop in America. Traveling on horseback through heat, rain, snow, and blizzard, he logged 270,000 miles in his ministry and preached more than 16,000 sermons. He arose at 4:00 a.m. daily and usually preached his first sermon by sunrise. Asbury was perpetually in the throes of personal danger--wolves following him, his horse falling.

being thrown from his horse, or being lost in a dismal swamp. An excerpt from his Journal depicts some of the hardships of his way:

"I too have my sufferings, perhaps peculiar to myself--no room to retire to; that in which you sit common to all, crowded with women and children, the fire occupied by cooking, much and long-loved solitude not to be found, unless you choose to run out in the rain, in the woods. Six months in the year I have had, for thirty-two years, occasionally to submit to what will never be agreeable to me; but the people, it must be confessed, are among the kindest souls in the world.

But kindness will not make a crowded log cabin, twelve feet by ten, agreeable; without are cold and rain, and within six adults, and as many children, one of which is all motion; the dogs, too, must sometimes be admitted.

On Saturday I found that among my other trials I had taken an uncomfortable skin disease; and considering the filthy houses and filthy beds I have met with, it is perhaps strange that I have not caught it twenty times.

I do not see that there is any securing against it, but my sleeping in a brimstone shirt."

Because of the passion which infused Asbury and other early circuit riders, a movement of small and humble beginnings mounted rapidly to a great ingathering. When Asbury landed in Philadelphia in 1771, Methodism in our country numbered 600 members in all the societies and a half dozen preachers in the whole of the continent. By 1784 when the Methodist Episcopal Church was born the number of preachers had grown to 83 and the membership numbered 15,000. In the five years before Washington's inauguration, the number of preachers more than doubled and the church membership in this country grew to 40,000. The church in America quickly surpassed that in England in size.

The coming of war with England occasioned a temporary decline in membership. All the Methodist preachers who had come from England returned home except Asbury, and entire circuits were left without leadership. The Anglican clergymen likewise returned to England or else

abandoned their parishes and went into hiding.

Although our movement was intimately connected with England, the young Methodist Church cast its lot with the new Republic. Less than a month after George Washington was inaugurated Bishops Coke and Asbury, along with two Methodist ministers, read an address to Washington pledging their loyalty. Thus the Methodists became the first church to promise to support the new nation.

No adequate discussion of the circuit rider era can disregard the moments of levity which were interspersed with the toils of the way. Many humorous accounts remain as a part of our heritage, most of them a composite of fact and fiction.

One account has it that Peter Cartwright on returning to Springfield, Illinois, after a month of riding the circuit greeted street loafers with the question, "What's new?" One young man said innocently, "I suppose you came home for the funeral." Cartwright asked who had died. "Why", said the wag, "while you were gone the devil died." Cartwright smiled, reached for his purse, and pulled out

a penny. The jokester asked, "What's that for?" The circuit rider replied, "It's for you. My religion teaches me to be charitable to orphans."

THE SEED SHALL BE PROSPEROUS

1778-1810

It appears that organized religion had made little headway in Carolina during the Proprietary Period. The Anglican Church, although established by law, was weak and poorly supported. Dissent against the established church was strong and substantial, particularly from the Quakers.

The Anglican Church's lack of popularity is attributable to various factors. Because it was established by the Royal Government, non-Anglicans deeply resented having to support it by taxes. They further resented its control over education and its decree that only Anglicans could perform marriages. The Church's aristocratic outlook and its lack of interest in the common people did nothing to endear it to the general populace.

When Carteret Precinct was designated as St. John's Parish of the Church of England in 1723, it too was

destined to suffer a lack of support from the people. The parish could not provide for a pastor, and therefore a minister from New Bern had to be in charge. It is reasonable to assume that St. John's Parish was further reduced in strength because it lacked effectual leadership close at hand.

At least one other religious group was extant and viable in Carteret County as early as 1723. Quakers in this area, some of them having come from Rhode Island, formed the Core Sound Meeting in 1723. In 1736 they built the Core Sound Meeting House a few miles north of Beaufort. It is probable that Primitive Baptists held organized worship in our area during this period also.

As early as 1760 there are records of persons in New Bern who identified themselves as Methodists. James Reed, an Anglican clergyman there, denounced the Methodists as being "ignorant, censorious, and uncharitable." Here is Reed's accusation against the Methodists in 1761: "The Methodists of late have given me a great deal of trouble

along the borders of my parish by preaching up the expediency of dreams, visions, and immediate revelations." Some of these very early Methodists who were troubling the Anglicans had probably been members of Societies in England before coming to the New World; others were converts made by Methodist preachers here. It is quite conceivable that some of the Methodist "troublemakers" along the borders of Reed's parish could have been our forefathers.

In an attempt to quell the advance of Methodism hereabouts, the vestry of the Church of England appointed Colonel Bell in 1760 "to agree with Reverend James Reed to preach twice at the Chapel (Bell's Chapel on the Newport River) for once at the town (Beaufort) and Straits." An attempt was thus made for the established church to reassert its influence in the face of mounting growth among the Methodists.

The Straits, to which Colonel Bell was to come and preach, was one of the oldest settlements in Carteret.

Land grants dating back as early as 1713 attested to the ownership of land here by such families as Fulford, Whitehurst, Nelson, Bell, Ward, and Shackelford. The name Chadwick appears as early as 1725 when Samuel Chadwick, a New England Whaler, migrated to the Straits and bought land.

These original settlers were engaged in farming, whaling, fishing, shipbuilding, and tar and pitch making. The remains of an old tar pit can now be seen in Florence Pigott's yard in Gloucester. John Fulford of the Straits was a commercial fisherman as early as 1711. Elijah Pigott operated a shipyard dating back before the Revolution. Other local industries included a salt works (located near where Winifred Willis' home in Gloucester now stands) and a brick kiln (located at the head of Whitehurst's Creek.)

The first church in Straits was the Straits Chapel, an Anglican Church built in 1750 by order of the Colonial Assembly. It was located at the head of Fulford's Creek

Straits Chapel also housed the first school in the Straits area. According to the records of St. John's Parish, John Bell was authorized in 1756 to employ a schoolmaster and keep school in alternate years at both Straits and Shepard's Neck. In 1762 school was actually in session at Straits Chapel.

Unfortunately, we have been able to find no records of what the old Straits Chapel looked like. We can assume that it was modest in size because the Methodists who took it over during the Revolution found within a matter of a few years that they had outgrown it.

Much about the life of our congregation at Straits Chapel must of necessity be left as a matter of conjecture. Just as we know little or nothing of the physical structure of the Chapel, we are likewise limited in what we know of those who actually conducted Methodist services there. We know that in 1772 Joseph Pilmoor came to North Carolina as the first itinerant preacher to visit the colony after the Methodist Societies were formed. We know further that

Edward Dumbole, Francis Poythress, and Isham Tatum came as preachers for the Carolina Circuit in 1776. At the beginning of that year, there were 683 Methodists in the Colony, and at the close of the year there were 930 members. The following year John King, John Dickens, Lee Roy Cole, and Edward Pride were preachers for the circuit. John King, of all those aforementioned, would have been most likely to preach at Straits because we have documented evidence that he did preach at Beaufort.

Amy Muse in her book The Story of the Methodists in the Port of Beaufort includes a personal letter written by John Wesley to the circuit rider, John King. It reads: "My dear brother, always take advice or reproof as a favor; it is the surest mark of love. I advised you once, and you took it as an affront; nevertheless, I will do it once more. Scream no more at the peril of our soul. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream. It was said of our Lord, 'He shall not cry.' The word properly means, 'He shall not scream.' Herein be a follower of me as I am of Christ, I often speak aloud,

often vehemently, but I never scream. O John, pray for an advisable and teachable temper. By nature you are very far from it; you are stubborn and headstrong."

Such was the gentle reproof and advice that our founder gave to one who might very well have raised his voice at our own Straits Chapel.

The year 1778 is most significant for us because this is the year to which we date the founding of the Methodist Congregation at Straits. We deduce this date on the basis of minutes of a Quarterly Conference held in Beaufort in March of 1878 at which time Dr. Closs, the Presiding Elder, mentions the Tabernacle Church at Straits as "an old established Church of a century's standing." This Dr. Closs is the same William Closs who served at Straits Church as a young pastor in 1834. In all probability Dr. Closs had members in his congregation in 1834 who could give a firsthand account of the Methodist Congregation here in the early 1770's as well as of Bishop Asbury's visit to Straits Chapel in 1785. While Dr. Closs's remark

certainly gives credence to the fact that we were a Methodist Congregation in 1778, it does not preclude the possibility that our founding date could have been even earlier.

Perhaps one of the greatest crisis facing the young Methodist Churches in this period was that there were no ordained preachers until 1784. Methodists were forced to depend upon ordained ministers of other denominations to administer the Ordinance of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Inasmuch as ordained ministers of other denominations were few and far between, the Methodists were often deprived of the services of clergymen.

By 1784 John Wesley felt that the time had come for him to ordain our own ministers. He ordained Dr. Thomas Coke in England and authorized Coke to ordain Francis Asbury in America. Late that year Freeborn Garrettson traveled over 1200 miles on horseback gathering preachers from New York to Carolina to attend a conference called

by Asbury to discuss the organization of the Methodists in this country. This historic Baltimore Conference known as the Christmas Conference was held in Baltimore, Maryland, and was attended by 60 of the 83 Methodist preachers in our country. Coke and Asbury were elected as bishops and other elders were ordained to administer the sacraments. One year later the first Annual Conference of the new Methodist Episcopal Church of America was held at Louisburg, North Carolina.

December of 1785 must have been a time of considerable excitement among the Methodists at Straits when news came that Bishop Asbury was coming to preach at Straits Chapel. In his Journal, Asbury records simply: "Wednesday, December, 21, 1785. Sailed down to Beaufort and preached in the Church. The people are kind but have very little religion. On the same evening I pushed down to the Straits, and the next day preached at Straits Chapel, thence I returned to town and preached again, after which we sailed back to Colonel Bell's whence we started."

One popular story hereabouts has it that Asbury insisted on having his clothes pressed before he came to preach at Straits, thereby deferring to the reputation of the people at Straits for their insistence on neatness in dress! The reader is left to draw his own conclusions on the fact/fiction ratio of this tale. Our grounds for pride lie in the fact that our church, even at this early date, was a reputable, well-organized congregation--worthy of a visit from Bishop Asbury.

The Methodists at Straits were typical of other Methodist groups all over the colonies in that they occupied a building originally built by the Church of England. As earlier mentioned, most of the Anglican clergymen abandoned their parishes during the Revolution. In their absence the Methodists occupied their houses of worship.

While Methodists worshipped in Anglican Churches, their form of worship and organization were also much like the Old Church of England. Wesley, who died still being an Anglican Priest, instructed the Methodist preachers to

use a prepared liturgy on the Lord's Day. They were told to read the Litany on Wednesdays and Fridays and to pray extemporaneously on other days. After a few years the Prayer Book was laid aside and has never been used since in public worship. In many ways the Old Church of England gradually merged into Methodism. Since it is impossible to say where one movement stopped and the other began, it seems more accurate to view the transition as a consolidation rather than a separation of two forms of worship.

It is interesting to examine some of the regulations and practices the Methodist Episcopal Church adopted when it was formed in 1784. Sacrament tickets were given to bona fide Methodists who sought to partake of the Sacraments; however, an early discipline says: "None shall be given to those who wear high heads, enormous bonnets, ruffles or rings." Members were cautioned (threatened with expulsion or suspension) for marrying "un-awakened" persons, ie., non-Methodists.

The first stipulated Conference salary for preachers was \$64.00 a year, and rarely was that amount paid in full. More often it was paid in kind--food, fodder, clothing, or leather. Deacons and elders were forbidden to accept pay for administering baptism, marriage, or burial.

Just as a minister's travel allowance is a valid item in today's church budget, so provision for his horse was a valid concern of the early Conferences. Indeed, it was customary to take collections at Annual Conferences for preachers who had lost their horses during the year. Moreover, preachers were admonished in the early disciplines to "be merciful to your beast. Not only ride moderately but see with your own eyes that your horse be rubbed and fed.."

It was customary in those early days for males and females to "sit apart" in the church, with men on one side and women on the other. No music except singing was allowed, and even then Methodists were advised against singing with too much formality. Not until a century later would

the reed organ gain acceptance as a part of the worship service.

Our local congregation was included in a number of different circuits in its infant years, since circuits changed often as the new movement grew. In 1785 we were a part of the New River Circuit of which Philip Bruce was in charge. James O'Kelly also visited us during Bruce's term. In 1790 Thomas Ware was our Presiding Elder and Joshua Cannon, M.Howe, and D.Dean rode the circuit.

When Goshen and Trent Circuits were formed from the old New River Circuit in 1792, we were probably on the Trent Circuit served by Samuel Cowles and Peter Gautier. Trent was served in 1793 by Simon Carlisle, in 1794 by Aquilla Sugg, in 1795 by Christopher S. Mooring, and in 1796 by William Ormond.

Straits was included in the New Bern Circuit formed in 1797 with James Jones and John Turner as preachers. Francis Poythress was the Presiding Elder of our circuit

in 1800. The next recorded Presiding Elder is Phillip Bruce who served in 1806, assisted by William Barnes, James E. Glenn, and Bridgers Arendell as preachers.

The first few years of the 19th Century were apparently fruitful ones for our local congregation just as they were for the Methodist Movement at large. Rapidly increasing membership gave abundant evidence of God's grace and favor to His work at Straits. It was time now for the local congregation to venture forth and build a new, better, and larger place of worship.

TO WORSHIP THE GOD OF HEAVEN

1810--1890

The minutes of the Annual Conference of 1810 enumerate the membership of Straits as being 310 white members and 40 black members. We must remember that Straits at this time was the only church in this part of Carteret County and that it drew its members from a wide radius. With a membership of this size it is easy to see the necessity for building a new place of worship to accommodate the growing numbers.

On April 23, 1808, Richard and Margaret Whitehurst deeded a parcel of land to the trustees of the Straits Congregation--Samuel Chadwick, Levi Pigott, Dellano Ellis, Freeman Ellis, Oliver Chadwick, Thadeus Chadwick, and Daniel Willis--for the purpose of building the new church. A portion of the text of that deed follows: "Witnesseth that for and in consideration of the promoting and encouraging religion, piety and virtue do agree, grant,

set over and mark title to the Trustees and their successors in office a certain piece or part of the land on the west side of Chadwick's Creek and on the south side of the Main road opposite the old brick-kiln or yard adjoining said road on the north, the marsh of said Chadwick's Creek on the east, and so by a line through a small rush glade to said road so as to make the land in a triangle form, for the purpose of building and erecting a house by the said Trustees for a meeting house in order to worship the God of Heaven."

It may be helpful to insert here that the Chadwick's Creek referred to in the 1808 deed is also called Whitehurst's Creek, the two names being used interchangeably in this area.

The Tabernacle Church completed in 1809 was most probably built in the manner prescribed by an early Methodist Discipline: "Let all our churches be built plain and decent; but not more expensively than is absolutely unavoidable; otherwise the necessity of raising money will

make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent on them, yea, and governed by them."

The site of our "plain and decent" first Tabernacle Church was what is now Ned Golden's property, approximately 200 yards east of the present church and on the south side of the highway. This site was a likely choice because of its central location and its accessibility to navigable waters. Navigable waters were the main highways in those times, and traveling to church by boat was the mode of the day.

It is difficult for us now to envision how this area immediately adjacent to the Tabernacle Church must have looked one hundred and seventy years ago. Some members of our present congregation can recall in the early 1900's when there were very few rushes in Whitehurst's Creek. The bridge at Walter Stewart's was known as Canal Bridge, and it was a familiar sight at that time to see logs piled up waiting to be made into rafts to be taken down Whitehurst's Creek to the sawmill at Beaufort. Based on

this recollection of Whitehurst's Creek in the early 1900's it is possible to conceive of Whitehurst's Creek one hundred years earlier as a wide-open, navigable body of water.

Unfortunately, there are no drawings or photographs of the first Straits Tabernacle Church. We must rely on information handed down from earlier generations in order to visualize what the building looked like. This Tabernacle Church, approximately 60 feet long by 32 feet wide, could seat about 200 white people on the main floor. A balcony with a separate entrance and stairs was used to seat about 50 black people. For most of its span of some eighty years, the Tabernacle Church was a place where both black and white lifted their voices to the God who loved them all.

Due to its proximity to Whitehurst's Creek, the building site was low ground and it was advisable that our forefathers built the church on piling made from sections of logs. All of the lumber and framing came from an



An Artist's Conception of old Straits Tabernacle

abundant supply of local virgin pine. The framing was cut and shaped with a broad axe and adz. The siding and shingles were split from logs with tools made for that purpose. The framing joints were mortice and tenon. Two old dwelling houses built in the same period still stand in the neighborhood; they still have their original weatherboarding, although it has become thinner over the years.

The interior walls and ceiling were lathed and plastered, the home-made lime for plaster having come from burnt oyster shells. There was a row of posts down the middle to support the roof and ceiling joists. There was also a four-foot high partition down the middle of the church to separate the men from the women, according to the custom of those days. There was a row of seats on each side of the partition, then an aisle and a row of seats next to the outside walls. The seats were made from rough boards with no backs; these seats were smoothed by hand planing.

There was no space for a choir in the first Straits

Tabernacle; organized choirs were not yet a part of Methodist worship at this time. There were, however, three short rows of seats, "anxious seats," in the right-hand front corner of the church facing the pulpit. Here members would come to pray, repent, and exhort one with another. This area later became known as the "amen corner."

The windows of our 1809 church were multi-paned frame with clear glass and bottom sashes that would raise to provide "air conditioning." Heat was provided by a large fireplace. There was never a bell or steeple on the building.

From all accounts, the Tabernacle Church was esteemed and revered by many, many people in the eastern part of Carteret County. Until the very end of its existence there were many who were reluctant to concede to "progress"; there were many who deplored its being torn down and replaced by the church where we worship today.

"Sitting apart", the custom whereby men and women parted company at the door and sat separately on opposite

sides of the Church, has been mentioned already. Even with this imposed impediment, there were those, especially courting couples, who found ways to exchange occasional glances during the service. "Sitting apart" died out with the 19th Century and the practice was never revived after our present church was built.

The very fact that a slave balcony was a part of the Tabernacle Church gives evidence that the church and its pastors ministered to black as well as white members. Even in 1875 a decade after the close of the War Between the States, the Conference records show that Straits Tabernacle Church had one black member.

In the appendix at the conclusion of this writing there is a complete listing of all the preachers who have served the Methodist Congregation here at Straits in its two hundred years of existence. Although we are grateful for knowing who all our pastors have been and what years they served at Straits, we regret that for many of these men nothing is known except their names and dates of

service. Whenever pertinent information is known about a preacher or about his service at Straits, he has been included in this narrative; for those, however, about whom no information exists, their names are included in the appendix.

In the year 1816 Straits ceased to be a part of the New Bern Circuit and became a part of the newly-created Beaufort-Straits Circuit, with Waddell Johnson as preacher in charge. This newly-formed circuit consisted of 268 white members and 228 black members. For the next fourteen years Straits and Beaufort, as sister churches on the same circuit, were to share the same preachers.

The most illustrious and memorable preacher of this era was William H. Starr who served Straits in 1817. Of his labors here among our forefathers we know very little; his legacy is a famous prayer which has survived the vicissitudes of 160 years. The year 1817 came shortly after the conclusion of the War of 1812; times were hard and made even harder by a severe winter. With food

shortages bringing near-famine conditions to his people, Rev. Starr cried out from the depths of his soul: "Oh, Lord, I do not ask that somebody may suffer injury, or that someone's property may be lost to him, but if it must be that a vessel shall be stranded, send her to these shores; may she be cast on our beach, and may her cargo be food for these poor, destitute ones who are so near the door of starvation." In less than a week, the story goes, a vessel laden with flour was cast on the beach on Core Banks. Grateful souls rejoiced that God had again provided manna from Heaven!

Thompson Garrard, who first served Straits in 1825, was to hold the record for number of separate appointments to Straits. He served his second and third terms in 1836 and 1844. Beginning his ministry in 1818, Garrard served 25 circuits in a long tenure of over thirty years as an itinerant preacher.

The very earliest Sunday Schools may have come as a result of a directive from the General Conference of 1790:

"Let us labour as the heart and soul of one man to

establish Sunday Schools in or near the place of worship. Let persons be appointed to teach (gratis) all that will attend and have the capacity to learn; from six o'clock in the morning till ten; and from two o'clock in the afternoon till six. The Council shall compile a proper school book, to teach them learning and piety." These earliest efforts appear to have been discouraging and largely unsuccessful, perhaps in part because the early preachers were more interested in pulpit oratory than in trying to instruct numbers of squirming youngsters whose hearts, too, may have been elsewhere!

In the year 1828 it was made mandatory that every preacher of a circuit or station form a Sunday School. The duration of the Sunday School Day was shortened considerably by a North Carolina Conference ruling which stated: "On ordinary occasions the Sunday School shall not remain in session above three hours. Many of our schools have been injured by being kept in session from morning until evening." One wonders who in that day would have had the fortitude to volunteer to teach Sunday School

from morning until evening! Although we do not know who the first Sunday School teachers at Straits were, we can assume that Sunday School became a part of the program of our Church shortly after 1828.

As Methodism in our area grew, the number of charges increased and the territorial limits of each charge shrank concomitantly. While in our infant years we were a part of the vast Carolina Circuit, by the year 1830 the Beaufort-Straits Circuit was deemed too large an assignment for one man, and the two churches were divided into separate charges. We know that Beaufort's membership in 1830 numbered 164 whites and 94 blacks, although we do not have membership figures for Straits in the year 1830.

The year 1834 brought to our pulpit a man who is in retrospect perhaps our most renowned and noteworthy pastor. While most of the early preachers at Straits are now known to us in name only, there is surely no dearth of information about William Closs.

Dr. Closs was born in Virginia in 1809, and he joined the Virginia Conference in 1833. In his youth he had

enjoyed very few religious advantages, and he attributed his conversion entirely "to the irresistible influence of the Holy Spirit," not to any particular sermon or to the reading of the Bible. He was a confident and spirited preacher, never doubting that his call to preach was of God. He preached ably for nearly fifty years; for twenty-eight years he was a presiding elder and several times he was elected to the General Conference.

After his death in 1882, Dr. Closs was eulogized at the next session of the North Carolina Conference. We include parts of this eulogy because they give us insight into the character of this man and also because they reveal something of his stature and prominence in the Methodist ministry:

"He was a profound thinker, a learned theologian, a logical and incisive preacher. His sermons in substance and in structure were unique, compact, strong, oftentimes grandly eloquent, and often impressive. Speaking of Dr. Closs's ability as a debater, Bishop Pierce said of him, "He has not an equal in the

Southern Church.'

As was truly said of him by another preacher, 'He was conscious of his strength and therefore fearless of any odds.' He did not float with the tide but crossed it at a thousand points. He quailed not at the criticism of the present, conscious of the fact that the tribunal of the future would rectify all the errors and justify his wisdom. His views on every question affecting the doctrine or the policy of his church were clear and positive. He never hesitated to defend his position. His arguments were clear and strong, often profound. None knew better than he the power of wit, but his wit was never poisoned by personal rancor...

In social intercourse he united in his conversation the vivacity and freshness of youth, the dignity of a strong manhood, and the simplicity of childhood with the wisdom of age. Young and old alike listened with unbroken interest to his fireside or table talk. So full of information, so like a divine harmony with its undertone, and overtone of gospel faith, so aptly freshened

with pleasant anecdote, in one respect his conversation was remarkable--it was singularly pure. In a day when a talent for vulgar buffoonery is too often the test of fitness for public office, William Closs remembered in every circle that he was a gentleman and a Christian."

It is interesting to note how William Closs was remunerated for his work during his first years as a preacher. His daughter, a Mrs. Parker of Henderson, North Carolina, is mentioned in old Conference records as saying that her father told her he received "A Butter-nut suit of clothes and boarded around" for his first year's work--the year he served at Straits. For the second year's work he received twenty-five dollars and "boarded around."

Notwithstanding the old adage "all's well that ends well," Dr. Closs's ministry began at Straits with its due share of trials. He was young and inexperienced, and he and his Straits Congregation did not take too well to each other. In his last service of the Conference year here, he prayed as follows: "Oh, Lord, send this people a preacher that they will like better than me." To his

surprise, this utterance was followed by a resounding A M E N from the congregation. After hesitating a moment, William Closs continued: "And Lord, be pleased to send me to a people that I shall like better than I do these!" At this, the amen corner was silent.

Many are the humorous stories and anecdotes told of Dr. Closs. Some of them are gross exaggerations, but some have grounds for credibility. It is a matter of record that Dr. Closs, sometime between 1845 and 1850, was instrumental in having transferred to the North Carolina Conference the North Carolina territory then belonging to the South Carolina Conference, including Fayetteville and Wilmington, and the adjacent circuits lying along the South Carolina line. The session of General Conference was rapidly drawing to a close. In the city where the General Conference was being held, there was a yellow fever scare, and the brethren were all eager to go home. Dr. Closs threatened to make speeches of three days' length, yellow fever or no yellow fever, if the transfer were not made. The

brethren had thus the alternative offered to them to risk the yellow fever or give up the territory. They chose the latter, and so Dr. Closs claimed that he had the Lord on his side. At any rate the transfer was largely brought about by yellow fever. And so men move in mysterious ways their wonders to perform!

In appearance Dr. Closs was portly and slightly stoop-shouldered. His face, owing to some cause of malformation in his earlier years, was shorter on one side than on the other. This facial unevenness gave his countenance a somewhat peculiar expression. It is said that a traveler in passing a place where Dr. Closs was once preaching to a large congregation in a brush arbor stopped awhile and listened. In passing on he met a gentleman going to the brush arbor meeting. The traveler told the gentleman that a man was preaching back there whose name, he had learned, was Closs, and that this preacher was bringing heaven and earth together while having only opened one half his mouth. Then the traveler exclaimed, "What will come to pass when he opens the other half!"

One final Closs story must be included because Dr. Closs himself told it as the truth to one of his subordinates and because its setting is the Straits. This story is extracted from an address entitled "The North Carolina Conference as I First Knew It" by Rev. R. F. Bumpas; it was presented to the North Carolina Conference Historical Society Meeting at Elizabeth City, North Carolina, on November 13, 1923. Here is a portion of the address:

"The second and third years of my ministry my presiding elder was William Closs, a man of unique personality and sparkling wit. Many good stories of Dr. Closs have been current. I have one which has not appeared. He immortalized the Straits; it was his first pastorate. Later Dr. Closs returned to the Straits to conduct a meeting, bringing with him two young preachers. He approached the house where he had formerly boarded. A gentleman he did not know met him and asked them in, but when the lady of the house appeared, Dr. Closs recognized her as the mischievous girl, daughter of the former proprietor. She had little to say and seemed worried and

all out of sorts, and so after supper, under plea of fatigue, Dr. Closs proposed to retire. His host said they would retire after prayer and handed the Doctor the Bible. Meanwhile his wife had brought a pig into the next room and all the time Dr. Closs was praying, she whipped the pig to keep it squealing.

The Doctor had prayers next morning but there was no squealing pig. His host invited the preachers to leave their horses in the stable and walk to the church which was not far away. Dr. Closs sent the young men on to start the meeting.

'And I stayed behind,' he said to me in relating the story, 'to see what would happen.' He retired to his room, throwing open the window so that he could watch as well as pray. He heard his host order the servant to saddle the riding horse. His wife, coming into the yard and seeing the horse at the block, asked what it meant. 'It's for you to ride to church,' the husband said; 'I'm not going to church, but you've got to go.' He stepped into the house, took down the cowhide from the rack, tapped

his wife gently, and told her to get on the horse and go to church. When she flatly refused, he brought it down with some vigor, whereupon she mounted and rode to church.

In due time the Doctor and his host walked over to the church to find the young preachers there having a great time. People were singing and mourners were praying at the altar. Dr. Closs took his seat in the congregation and was soon called upon to lead in prayer. 'I got down,' he said to me in relating the incident, 'determined not to get off my knees until my hostess yielded to God.' And so he prayed, and on and on he prayed until the woman sprang up saying she could stand it no longer and went forward for prayer, kneeling at the altar for a long time. The meeting broke up, but Dr. Closs and some friends continued to pray for this woman until at length she arose, her face radiant with joy. Throwing both arms around the neck of Dr. Closs, she shouted, 'Thank God for the man who invented the cowhide!' Years later as Presiding Elder, Dr. Closs asked her mischievously, 'Do you still thank God for the cowhide?' Yes,

she replied, 'but for that cowhide I should have been lost!'"

After leaving Straits, William Closs pastored the Beaufort Congregation in 1838, and it appears that he was greatly loved by the people there. While in Beaufort he married a Mrs. Patterson whose grandson, Joseph Arrington, was later to become a Methodist preacher.

The man who served Straits in 1835 as successor to William Closs was John Lewis, a young preacher who joined the Conference the same year as Closs did. Whether God honored Dr. Closs's request that his successor be found pleasing and acceptable to the Straits people, we do not know.

Prior to 1837 the North Carolina Conference did not exist as a separate unit, and most of North Carolina was still a part of the Virginia Conference. At a Conference held in Petersburg, Virginia, on February 8, 1837, the North Carolina Conference was set apart from the Virginia Conference.

For the first one hundred years of its life the Methodist Movement experienced continual, uninterrupted

growth. In 1839, the one-hundredth anniversary of Wesley's heart-warming experience, there were more than 6,000 Methodist preachers in England and the United States. There were more than 1,400,000 communicant members, and missionaries were at work in Sweden, Germany, France, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Malta, Africa, Ceylon, India, New South Wales, New Zealand, Tonga, the Habai Islands, the Vavou Islands, the Figi Islands, and throughout the West Indies. The Centenary of 1839 was the occasion of great rejoicing throughout the world.

Methodism, however was on the brink of its first major crisis in our country. The slavery issue was soon to lead to the threatening fracture which gave rise to the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

John Wesley's position on slavery was unequivocal; he called slavery "the sum of all villainies." Likewise Bishops Coke and Asbury were vehemently opposed to slavery. Their convictions on the issue led them to travel to Mount Vernon and obtain George Washington's private condemnation of the slave traffic. Our early Methodist preachers

were almost unanimous in their opposition to slavery. It was a matter of course that they should liberate their slaves. Our early Conferences adopted rules to attempt "some effectual method to extirpate this abomination from among us." These rules required members who owned slaves and lived in states where emancipation was possible to free their slaves or withdraw from the church. If members refused to withdraw, they were to be expelled.

As slavery took on more and more importance in the economic structure of the South, the Methodists found it impossible to maintain their absolute rejection of it. From its clear-cut stand of opposition the church retreated little by little until by 1808 the church had nothing to say against slaveholding by its individual members. It only refused to admit slaveholders to official positions in cases where they failed to emancipate their slaves when state laws made that possible.

The years from 1840-1844 saw increased anti-slavery sentiment in the North and an equal concurrent stiffening of sentiment in the South. During the quadrennium

of 1840-1844, Bishop James O. Andrew married a wife who owned slaves and thereby technically became a slave holder himself. He was loved and respected as a man, and no one could question his sterling character or his outstanding service as a bishop. Debate about the Andrew issue continued for a month, and finally the Northern delegation pushed through a resolution requiring Bishop Andrew to resign his office because of his being a legal slaveholder, albeit technical ownership by marriage.

At this time it was reported that there were 200 traveling preachers holding 1,600 slaves; about 1,000 local preachers holding 10,000 slaves; and 25,000 church members holding 208,000 slaves. The Southerners felt that it was grossly unfair to punish Bishop Andrew in this way when other clergymen were not censured in any way. Moreover, Bishop Andrew lived in Georgia, a state which did not permit the freeing of slaves; therefore, he had violated no church law.

At this stage in the crisis the Southerners declared that they could no longer remain within a church which

had unjustly deprived a beloved bishop the rights of his office. The Southern delegates to that General Conference resolved to leave the church and form the Methodist Episcopal Church South. A plan of separation was drawn up, and within a year a convention was held in Louisville, Kentucky, to formally establish the new Southern Church.

This Southern Church, the product of a painful fracture, rapidly gained in strength and numbers; by 1860 the membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church South was a remarkable 757,245, about one-sixteenth of the population of the Southern States. Even more interesting is the fact that one-third of these members were black.

Locally, our congregation at Straits as well as the congregations which sprang up as out-growths of it, i.e., Summerfield (Smyrna), Springfield (Williston), and Shackleford Banks, were numbered among the Southern Methodist Churches. It would be several decades before the first Northern Methodists would infiltrate our area to establish Northern Methodist Churches on Harkers Island and near Deep Hole Point (Marshallberg).

Two notable preachers who served here at Straits in

the 1840's were Washington Chaffin and Nathan Hooker. Chaffin joined the Conference in 1840 before being assigned to Straits in 1841. He preached in the Conference for fifty years and lived to be eighty years old. Nathan Hooker who served in 1845 was loved and respected by the people here. He married Miss Catherine Fulford of Carteret County on October 25, 1845, and he was affectionately called "Uncle Hooker."

Perhaps it is worthwhile to look briefly at some of the doctrinal beliefs our forefathers held one hundred years ago as they worshipped at Straits Tabernacle. An old Methodist Treatise, The Convert's Counsellor, copyright in 1856 was recently found in our Church. In it Daniel Wise, the author, outlines the fundamentals of the Methodist doctrine, gives reasons why Methodist converts should join the Methodist Churches, and gives "an antidote to certain recent publications assailing the Methodist Episcopal Church."

According to Wise, the Methodist Episcopal Church in the middle of the 19th Century was fundamentally evangelical. It held to the doctrines of human depravity, the

deity of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith alone, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the future punishment of unbelievers, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and their sufficiency for salvation. In further advocating Methodism, Wise wrote: "for in its creed you will find doctrines which commend themselves to your enlightened reason, which harmonize with the word of God, and which are eminently adapted to support and develop a vigorous religious experience."

Apparently there were in this era many people who were converted to Christ at Methodist revivals but who did not choose to affiliate with local Methodist Churches. The Convert's Counsellor urges Methodist converts to join Methodist churches; it goes on at great length to draw the analogy that Methodist converts are like orphans or, at best, adopted children if they seek the fellowship of some other denomination.

One interesting phase of the church program at this time was the class meeting (not to be confused with Sunday School). The purpose of the class meeting,

perhaps the forerunner of the prayer meeting, was to provide a time and place for the communication of religious experience. It was the duty of the class leader to draw out such communication by inquiring of his members "how their souls prosper," a question covering the entire range of religious experience. Sometimes class meetings led to penitence and confessions, depending on the spiritual health of those present.

In a day when equal rights for women is an issue of great consequence, we may be surprised to know that the Methodists in the 1850's and 1860's championed the rights of women, particularly the status of women in the church. Other denominations, chiefly the Calvinists, assailed the Methodists for the "extreme" liberty they allowed their women. Here is Daniel Wise's defense of the Methodist position: "Believing, with an apostle, that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, we do not reduce woman to a cypher, or restrict her power to do good by depriving her of the privilege of offering prayer, or of declaring the goodness of God to her soul, in class and

prayer meetings. Woman's equality in the rights, privileges and blessings of the gospel is practically declared in Methodism, by her admission to these privileges. If the reader is a woman, this fact must commend Methodism to her esteem. She may not wish to use these opportunities for herself, for she may possess so sensitive a nature as to shrink from public observance. Still, she can but feel the honor done to her sex by a usage which so distinctly recognizes its equality. She can but acknowledge that Methodism has an especial claim on woman's gratitude for this most excellent custom."

One role through which women traditionally have assisted in the functioning of the church is their generous hospitality to preachers. While entertaining preachers is now regretfully a declining practice, it was not to be taken for granted a century or more ago. At that time preachers traveled continually between churches, and there were no parsonages. The usual custom was for the preacher to stay a month at a time with various members of the church. Most of the circuit riders were unmarried men who never

owned or established their own homes. It has been said that a preacher and his horse were looked upon as companions, whereas a preacher with a family was an unfamiliar sight. An integral part of the preacher's salary in those days consisted of board and lodging for himself and provisions for his horse.

It was customary in the early days for pastors to be changed each year to provide variety. As one Methodist historian wrote, "One year they have a logician to defend the doctrines of the Church; next they have a son of thunder to awaken and arouse the sleepers; this year a revivalist to get the people converted, the next an experienced disciplinarian to train them." To be sure, there were not many exceptions to the one-year rule at Straits, because during a period of sixty years at Straits Tabernacle, there were forty-eight different preachers assigned here.

Straits was somewhat isolated in those days and we have evidence that it was sometimes difficult to get preachers to fill this charge. Straits became a proverbial proving

ground for new preachers, young men newly affiliated with the Conference. The majority of our preachers from 1810 to 1890 appear, according to Conference records, to have been assigned to Straits as their first pastorate.

In 1850 John Jones, A Beaufort native, served as our pastor. Rev. Jones had been an exhorter and a local preacher for fourteen years before he joined the Conference in 1850. Typically, Straits was his first pastorate, and he remained here two years. Madicus H. Hight who came to Straits in 1856 immediately after joining the Conference served one year; in 1861 he served as a Chaplain to the Confederate Army, and two years later he died of typhoid fever. Joseph Wheeler who served here in 1858 was highly regarded both at Straits and at Beaufort where he served two separate terms. One of his sons taught school at Beaufort and married there, and three other sons became Methodist preachers.

By 1860 the Methodists were the largest and most evenly distributed religious denomination in our country. President Lincoln paid the following tribute to the

Methodists in 1864: "The Methodist Episcopal Church, not less devoted than the best, is by its greater numbers the most important of all. It is no fault in others that the Methodist Church sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospitals, and more prayers to heaven than any other. God Bless the Methodist Church."

A look at the Annual Conference records for North Carolina in 1865 reveals some of the standards preachers were expected to adhere to. The question "Are all preachers found blameless in their life and official administration?" was asked. In answer, names of all the preachers were called one by one, and each preacher's character had to be examined and passed upon. In that year one preacher was expelled.

In the late 1860's the reed organ made its first appearance as a part of Methodist worship. As strange as this may seem now, the use of the organ was considered radical and suspect by many members. Methodists from the outset had been great hymn singers. Indeed Charles Wesley, the brother of Methodism's founder, had written more than 6,500

hymns. These hymns were to be sung without accompaniment, however, until after the Civil War.

During the 1860's people came from a wide radius to worship at Straits Tabernacle, and local tradition has it that it was an honor to hold membership at Tabernacle Church. This was still the only Methodist Church east of North River, although new congregations were soon to emerge as out-growths of the ministry at Straits. People came in boatloads from Harkers Island and Shackleford Banks; names like Tyre Moore and Devine Guthrie were well known here in the church. These same men later became leaders in the Methodist Church on Shackleford Banks. Devine Guthrie is remembered especially for his lengthy, fervent prayers.

It is a tribute to the grace of God and the faithfulness and steadfastness of our forefathers that the Church survived the Civil War years intact. Even during the years 1863 and 1864 when we were without an assigned Conference preacher, the Church continued to fulfill its mission. We were assisted by two volunteers from Beaufort, Rev.

John Jones and Rev. John Rumley, who would sail down to Straits and hold service here. We can surmise that there might have been local preachers in this immediate area who also proclaimed the Gospel during this time; however, we have been unable to verify their names.

The 1870's and 1880's were years when great revivals were a vital part of the ministry of the Methodist Churches. Many older people in our community recall revivals or protracted meetings as they were called then. Protracted meetings, by definition, were drawn out over a considerable period of time, often lasting three or four consecutive weeks. Lucy Piper has a newspaper account of a local protracted meeting held in the 1880's. This account was found in a scrapbook belonging to Mrs. Piper's aunt, Mrs. Haddie Davis. Although this particular protracted meeting was held at the Straits Bethlehem Church (also called the Star Church) not at Straits Tabernacle, it is of interest to us for several reasons. First, the Star Church was our nearest geographical neighbor, and there was much visiting back and forth between

congregations. Moreover, the "Brother Hancock" mentioned in this article was W. B. Hancock, a local Southern Methodist preacher who was associated with both Tabernacle and Summerfield Churches. Most importantly, however, this article reveals something of the style as well as the substance of a protracted meeting--the channel through which many of our ancestors came into the fold of Christ. Here is a part of the text of the article: "I wish to speak of the special services we have been holding at the Straits Bethlehem Church. We began on the 24th of March and closed on the 15th of April. Soon after the meetings commenced the rains commenced, and for about a week we had to go through mud to get to the church, but this did not stop the people nor weaken their interest. Only one night was missed out of three weeks. Our congregations were large and attentive. We started out with 'Victory for Christ' as our motto and surely we gained the victory. Men of families, young men and young ladies, and all of them of the very best families of the community professed saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The

number of converts were twenty-four. The number of accessions was twenty. We were assisted two nights by Rev. W. B. Hancock of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Brother Hancock is a man of deep piety and great usefulness to the church, but on account of failing health, has retired from active labor. I wish to speak in regard to the future prospects of our church in this section. We have no fear or doubt in saying that nowhere in North Carolina is there a more inviting field, and nowhere can the Methodist Episcopal Church accomplish more permanent good. Tis true, there is not a great deal of wealth in this region, but these people are true, loyal Methodists, and the Methodist Episcopal Church alone can meet the wants of these people."

No generation is without its skeptics, and there were those in other denominations who were quite dubious of Methodist revivals. Although we have found no local objections raised against Methodist revival meetings, it is interesting to know that in other areas of our country Methodist revivals were barraged with accusations. They

were called "scandals and religious comedies," and of the conversions these revivals produced it was alleged by other denominations that "most of them were found to be spurious, after a longer or shorter trial."

Statistics of a century's standing often have a way of intriguing rather than boring the reader. Such is the case with statistical information obtained from the North Carolina Conference for the year 1875. In that year the average white Methodist member in North Carolina contributed \$2.96 to the church. The average salary of a pastor was \$552.00 and the average salary of a presiding elder was \$969.00 Straits had the following financial exhibit in the Conference records in 1875:

\$ 11.81	Presiding Elder
144.50	Pastor
3.00	Bishop
7.50	Conference Collections
7.00	Foreign Missions
10.00	Domestic Missions

Our membership in 1875 was 274--273 whites and one black. We had 16 Sunday School Teachers, 70 Sunday School Scholars, and 120 volumes in our library. Four infants were baptized that year.

In recent years it has been said of Straits Church that it has never failed to meet its budget. As enviable as this record might be, research has proved it to be very inaccurate. Quite to the contrary, the actual financial records of the church one hundred years ago bear out the fact that it was quite an exception to the rule for Straits to meet its financial obligations. Figures for the year 1877 are typical and representative of the financial dilemma which Straits and most other churches found themselves in:

<u>AMOUNT ASSESSED</u>		<u>AMOUNT PAID</u>
Presiding Elder	\$ 20.00	\$ 7.96
Pastor	400.00	116.00
Conference Collections	10.00	1.75
Foreign Missions	10.00	3.00
Domestic Missions	12.00	1.75

In short, a look into the record books will verify that trouble with meeting the budget is not a new phenomenon!

The decade of the 1870's saw Methodists branching out into new programs within the church and being instrumental in areas of social concern all over the world. Children's Day began to be observed in the church, and a Methodist woman named Ann Jarvis from Grafton, West Virginia was responsible for the first observance of Mother's Day. The first Women's Foreign Missionary Societies were formed in this era, and shortly thereafter came the Epworth Leagues. A Methodist woman, France E. Willard, was president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1879; under her leadership it expanded to a worldwide organization. Methodists also sparked movements for national prohibition, women's suffrage, and child labor reform.

There were two years in the 1870's when Straits Tabernacle was without a regularly appointed pastor. Again, we were fortunate enough to be assisted by pastors from the Beaufort Church. In 1873 J. W. Wheeler came to Straits at least once a month to hold services.

It will be remembered that he had served Straits as its appointed pastor in 1858. In 1876 Beaufort's pastor, Alexander Raven, held the services at Straits in the absence of a regular pastor.

One of the greatest rewards of this research and writing effort has been the delight of finding old local records, both Quarterly Conference and Sunday School records covering most of the years from 1880-1920. These priceless accounts are an invitation to glimpse the past, to taste the yesteryears when our fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers first experienced the love of Christ at Straits Church. These old records are captivating in many ways--the penmanship, the diction, the semantics, the style. Most compelling, however, is the witness they bear to the kind of commitment our forebears felt for the mission of their church. One comes away from a careful perusal of these records knowing that it is not by accident that Straits Church has lived for two hundred years.

Sometimes stealthily sleeping among the pages of an old church record book, a document will be found which

does not relate directly to church business but which does relate to the lives of those persons who were our church eighty or ninety years ago. Such a document was found, and it pertained to a civil dispute--someone had shot a sow hog belonging to I. M. Ellis. Although the document is faint and hard to decipher, we assume that a preacher or some reputable layman in the church was taking sworn testimony from persons who supposedly knew something about the hog-shooting incident. The names of those who gave sworn testimony are John Leffers, Robert Hancock, and J. D. Chadwick; these gentlemen, we might add, appear to have been altogether innocent in the hog-shooting. It is interesting that this method employed to investigate a wrong done to a brother in the church is exactly what Francis Asbury prescribed a century earlier.

The condition of our local roads is a matter we largely take for granted in our day. Impassable roads are no longer a legitimate reason why church attendance might decline. Such has not always been the case. The old

records of our church frequently mention road conditions (often in conjunction with bad weather) as a reason for poor attendance. Sunday Schools in the 1880's and 1890's often ceased to operate--or in the language of that day "went into winter quarters"--owing in part to the poor condition of the roads during the winter months.

Road maintenance in those days was not provided by paid Department of Transportation personnel in yellow trucks. It was a local matter in which all able-bodied men were expected to share responsibility. Here is a copy of a letter, again found in a church record book, which reveals to us the procedure whereby men were made aware of this responsibility:

Straits Township Board
of Road Supervisors

To: George T. Gillikin

You are hereby appointed Road Overseer
for the lower end of North River road:
Beginning at the South Side of Bells'
Creek and ending at Black Stump. All

able-bodied hands from Leopards Pine to Piners Creek from August 2nd 1890 until first Saturday in August 1891. The copy of the road law you will keep in good order and return to the Township Board of Road Supervisors at the Annual meeting in August 1891.

Straits, August 2, 1890

Cull Pigott, Chairman Board

Just as every other facet in the life of the church has experienced great change, so has the procedure for becoming a minister. While today's requirements demand far more formal education, the requirements in terms of commitment and self-sacrifice were equally as exacting in 1885. At that time there were twelve steps or plateaus in the ministry. They are listed:

1. Admitted on trial
2. Admitted into full connection
3. Deacons of one year
4. Traveling preachers elected as deacons

5. Traveling preachers ordained
as deacons
6. Local preachers elected as
deacons
7. Local preachers ordained as
elders
8. Traveling preachers elected as
elders
9. Traveling preachers ordained as
elders
10. Local preachers elected as
elders
11. Local preachers ordained as
elders
12. Presiding elders elected and
ordained as bishops

In examining the North Carolina Conference records which Straits submitted in the 1880's, we find that the number of churches on the Straits Charge fluctuated greatly. Unfortunately the churches included in the charge are

not always specifically named, and it is a matter of conjecture as to which churches they were. In 1880 the Straits Charge consisted of two churches, 1885--five churches, 1886--two churches, 1889--three churches, 1895--six churches. Of three of these churches--The Banks, Summerfield, and Springfield--we have relatively accurate information.

The first mention of the Banks Church in the Conference records in Raleigh is in the year 1882, although we believe there was a Methodist congregation on Shackleford Banks considerably earlier. The pastor in 1882 was T. J. Browning. For much of its lifetime the Banks Church was a part of the Straits Charge and consequently was assigned the same pastors. Mr. Allen Moore of Harkers Island was a member of this church until he moved from Shackleford Banks at the age of twenty. Mr. Allen very graciously shared of his information and his memories of the Banks Church; he will be quoted both in this chapter and the next. Mr. Allen recalls that the Banks Church was always housed in the school house; he believes that

there was never a church building per se built by the Methodists on Shackleford. The schoolhouse was located "between Wade's Shore and the end of the woods."

Bembridge Hancock, a local preacher from Straits, was the first to hold Methodist services at Williston. It is said that he stopped there on his way down east one day and asked some people how they would like to have him preach in the new schoolhouse. Sensing some degree of interest in his offer, "Uncle Bembridge" continued, "Go around and tell folks that Old Uncle Bembridge Hancock will preach at 2 o'clock." People came out to hear him, and he served them a year before they found out that he had actually been appointed by the Conference to preach to them..

During Daniel A. Watkins' term as pastor of Straits Tabernacle (1881-1882), he was appointed to the work at Williston, although there was no building yet set up. During Frank B. McCall's stay at Straits (1883) the Springfield Church building was begun, and Springfield was a part of the Straits Charge in 1885 when Edmund

Hoover was pastor at Straits.

We do not know when the first Methodist Congregation began at Smyrna, but in all likelihood it dates back to Civil War days or even earlier. The original Summerfield Church building was located near Dr. J. J. Davis' home; the site of the old church is now pasture land where Morton Davis keeps cattle. This original church was a two-story building with a slave balcony. This building was used until 1886. Mrs. Hilda Gillikin has a copy of the deed dated July 19, 1886, wherein Robert H. Whitehurst and Fannie A. Whitehurst deeded property to John G. Roberts, William B. Hancock, Alfred H. Chadwick, Cull Pigott, James P. Pigott, R. H. Whitehurst, Tyre Moore, B. B. Chadwick, and Samuel W. Davis, all trustees of the church property of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, Summerfield, Straits Circuit, New Bern District. This land was to be the building site of a new church, and it was the intent of its donors "that said piece or parcel of land shall be used, kept, maintained, and disposed of as a place of divine worship for the use of the

ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church South." The 1886 building was used until it was destroyed in the 1933 storm, at which time the present Smyrna Methodist Church was erected.

During the early 1880's Straits Charge received the following amounts of money from the Conference Domestic Missions Fund:

1882	\$142.00
1883	217.50
1884	102.38
1885	266.67

We assume that these sums of money were used to help the young Congregations at the Banks, Springfield, and Summerfield as they attempted to become independent and build new buildings. We include information about these churches because we feel that Straits Tabernacle one hundred years ago would have had great interest and pride in the birth of these new congregations which were an out-growth of the ministry at Straits.

On March 6, 1888, Straits Charge held Quarterly

Conference at Summerfield. This meeting was attended by the following officials:

J. T. Harris	Presiding Elder
E. D. Hoover	Presiding Clerk
William B. Hancock	Local Preacher
Richard Leffers	Sunday School Superintendent and Exhorter
James F. Hancock	Steward
Oliver C. Whitehurst	Steward
Bedford B. Chadwick	Steward
Alonzo Willis	Steward
Cull Pigott	Steward

Under the heading of miscellaneous business that day the minutes read as follows: "That if the members at Tabernacle want to build a church that they be instructed to do so." And so we see the first mention that the days of the old Straits Tabernacle are numbered.

An interesting story is told of Joseph G. Nelson who served our church in 1884. Rev. Nelson came here at the

age of twenty-one and remained only one year. After leaving Straits he came back later to hold a protracted meeting. At the protracted meeting he confessed: "I'm sorry I didn't have any religion when I was here before, but I've found some since." Some Straits people seemed to agree with him in the former assertion.

Edmund Hoover, who followed Nelson in 1885, was a short, fat man scarcely able to see over the pulpit. He served four years, the longest term of any pastor up to his time. Mr. Hoover was loved and esteemed in this community. A baby born to Mr. and Mrs. John Augustus Pigott was named for him--Edmund Hoover Pigott. The bridge near Giles Willis' home is called Hoover's Bridge, again a reminder of a preacher whose life meant a great deal to Straits.

Rev. Furney S. Becton, a native of Harlowe, was ordained an elder on Sunday, December 2, 1888, at an Annual Conference held in New Bern. He was sent immediately to Straits as pastor. Like his predecessor, Mr. Becton, too, left a legacy of love and good will in this area. We have found two persons, Mrs. Pauline Wade and Mr. Allen Moore,

who remember Mr. Becton well. At the mention of his name, both Mrs. Pauline and Mr. Allen came forth with fond memories of a man both called a great preacher.

We are including excerpts of Quarterly Conference reports submitted by Mr. Hoover and Mr. Becton relating to the condition of the churches and Sunday Schools on the charge:

November 9, 1887--Sabbath School Report

"We have three schools, an increase of one this quarter. They have been doing well, but the one at Tabernacle has had but little or no attendance. It has been one of our banner schools, but for want of attention is now in a drooping condition and unless the members of the church come to its rescue, it will be an entire failure and the children now asking instruction of us will, if they get it, have to look to others for it."

Respectfully submitted,

E. D. Hoover, P. C.

November 9, 1837 Church Report

"The attendance on public worship is not to be complained of, but at our prayer meetings there is a falling off owing in part to the fishing season, but I am sorry to say there is not manifest that zeal for the glory of the Lord and the advancement of His kingdom here and elsewhere that as soldiers of the cross should be."

Respectfully submitted,

E. D. Hoover, P.C.

The following statistics on local church activities for the year are noteworthy:

Sunday School Superintendents:

D. S. Guthrie	Banks
W. H. Stewart	Tabernacle
Jas. F. Hancock	Summerfield
C. J. Willis	Springfield

Amount of money contributed in one quarter to the support of the pastor:

Tabernacle	\$25.05
Summerfield	9.75
Springfield	9.25
Banks	3.00

Delegates to District Conference:

Alonzo Willis	Springfield
James F. Hancock	Summerfield
Cull Pigott	Tabernacle
Tyre Moore	Banks

Local preachers and exhorters whose character has been approved:

William B. Hancock	Summerfield
D. S. Guthrie	Banks
Dr. Richard Leffers	Tabernacle

One year later, on February 11, 1890, Eugene Yeomans of the Banks Church was also granted his license to exhort.

In writing on October 12, 1889, Rev. Becton gives a glowing account of the work on his charge: "The church all over the work has been revived. We have had good meetings at all the appointments. At Summerfield we had no accessions but I think it did help the others. At Springfield we had seven accessions. At Tabernacle we had a glorious revival in the church with twenty-six

professions and twenty-five accessions to the church. It was as good a meeting as it ever was my privilege to see. At the Banks we had one at both ends of the work--several conversions and accessions."

A word here may be in order to delineate the difference between professions and accessions. Professions refer to those persons who professed faith in Christ and were converted to Him. Accessions refer to those who, after professing their faith, went on to affiliate with the church.

Mr. Becton wrote in 1890 of a new Sunday School being started at South River. Of this Mr. Becton said, "I am very much inspired with the outlook at that place." North River is also mentioned in local Quarterly Conference records during Rev. Becton's term. On October 4, 1890, the Quarterly Conference appointed the following men as a building committee to build a new church at North River: Alex M. Lewis, William R. Hancock, William H. Stewart, Watson Lawrence, and Rev. F. S. Becton. W. M. Willis was named as a trustee for North

River Church.

By 1890 Straits Charge had 329 members. At a Quarterly Conference held on February 11th of that year the following information was recorded in the minutes under miscellaneous business: "A building committee of five to be appointed by the chair at Tabernacle to pursue a site and build a church. Chair appointed O. C. Whitehurst, A. H. Chadwick, Richard Leffers, Cull Pigott, and B.B. Chadwick." The work of this committee, on a larger plane, was to culminate a glorious era in the life of our Church and to commence another, equally abundant with promise of the future.

NEW FIELDS OF CONQUEST

1890--1978

We would be less than honest if we implied that the transition from the first Straits Tabernacle to the second Straits Tabernacle was accomplished without some dissent among the membership. Nor should we expect that the membership eighty-eight years ago would have found themselves totally of one accord when faced with the issue of building a new church. On the one hand there were those who felt that the low, wet ground surrounding the old church was objectionable. Since church-goers were no longer as dependent on water travel as they had been in earlier days, it was not obligatory that the church sit at the edge of the creek. Furthermore, proponents of a new church yearned for a more modern building in keeping with the times. We do not discount the idea that the new buildings being erected at Summerfield and Springfield may have engendered aspirations here at Straits for a new

church.

On the other hand, however, there were those whose sentiments for the old church ran deep. They did not relish the thought of abandoning the church which their fathers had nurtured before them. What had been good enough for Papa was still good enough for them.

Even among the advocates of a new church there was conflict on the proposed building site. Some members wanted it moved down the road toward the center of the Straits Community. Members from Up Straits (present-day Gloucester) were insistent that the church not be moved a foot farther toward the west.

Finally the question was settled under the leadership of Rev. George Washington Starling who negotiated for a piece of land across the road and a few hundred yards to the west, adjacent to the Straits Schoolhouse. In April of 1891 the present site amounting to one half acre was given by Josephus Pigott, Sarah C. Pigott, James Chadwick, Zilphia Chadwick, Sophronia Stewart, and

Albin S. Pigott. Trustees receiving the land were A. H. Chadwick, James P. Pigott, Cull Pigott and B. B. Chadwick.

In reply to those who declared that they could not bear to tear down the old building, young George Starling quickly retorted that he had no misgivings about it and that he would gladly knock off the first board. The new church was well under way at the end of Starling's first year, and he stayed a second year to see it through to completion. Although Starling was resented by some because of his aggressive leadership in building the new church, most people recognized that here was a young preacher with remarkable courage and determination. "Brother George," as he came to be called at Straits, went on to serve seventy-five congregations in his ministry; he also furnished inspiration and leadership in the building of eight churches and two parsonages.

Locally we know that both George W. Starling and his predecessor, Furney Becton, were honored by having families name infant sons for them. An 1890 baptismal record

for Tabernacle Church certifies that Rev. Furney Becton baptized a baby named Furney Becton Lewis. A year or so thereafter a child on Harkers Island was named George Starling Lewis for Rev. George W. Starling.

Having resolved the issue to build a new Tabernacle Church, the members committed themselves to raise money for the project. One interesting money-raising/social event in the year 1890 was a box party which was patronized by members young and old alike. It is recorded that Claude Chadwick in his anxiety to be sure that there would be enough boxes, went to Beaufort on the day of the party and bought a batch of delicacies; he then hastened home to find girls who would decorate boxes for the pastries he had bought. On this occasion each box sold for fifty cents rather than being auctioned off to the highest bidder. Elderly men were seen eating with little girls, and young boys were enjoying the company of women old enough to be their grandmothers.

The Tabernacle Church completed in 1891 was somewhat

smaller than the first Tabernacle. Membership since 1810 had decreased for two reasons: black people no longer lived or worshipped in the area; and other churches had emerged in neighboring communities to serve people who had once traveled to Straits to church. There was no longer any need for a slave balcony or a partition down the middle of the church; consequently the new church had a center aisle.

The new church was constructed largely of material from the old. When the present roof was put on the church in 1970, the old shingles were stripped down to the framing, and it was quite evident that the rafters were from the old church since they were of heart pine and had adz marks on them. When the asbestos shingles were put over the siding in 1959, Lester Pigott who did the work said that the siding was hand split and therefore uneven in thickness, requiring furring in most areas to get a firm base for the shingles. Lester also said the siding was heart pine and that every hole had to be drilled for nails---

again, an indication that these materials came from the old church.

The new church had no foyer or entrance, no steeple, and no alcove behind the pulpit. There was a chimney on the outside of the building near where the choir presently sits. A stove designed to burn wood or coal sat in front of the first pew on the right.

The pastors who initiated worship in the new Tabernacle Church were the same pastors who served a smaller but equally dedicated band of Methodists on Shackleford Banks. Mr. Allen Moore recalls that it was the responsibility of the Banks people to come to Straits on Saturday afternoon and get the preacher when it was his appointed time to preach at the Banks on Sunday. Straits people would often accompany the preacher to the Banks and visit the church there. In particular Mr. Allen remembers John Leffers and his daughter Sallie and numerous Chadwicks and Whitehursts who would go by boat to share in the fellowship of the Banks congregation. Prayer meetings were

often held in the Banks woods near the cemetery, and voices from all over Shackleford could be heard singing "I've Anchored My Soul in the Haven of Rest."

Sometime near the turn of the century Rev. Joe Carraway and Rev. Furney Becton held a Camp Meeting of some four weeks' duration out under the trees near Tyre Moore's house on the Banks. According to Mr. Allen, there was one member of the Banks Church who was about to be expelled at this time because he occasionally lapsed into sprees of drunkenness. Tyre Moore and Devine Guthrie were opposed to expelling the man because they felt that turning him out of the church was the equivalent of turning him into Hell. The quality of mercy prevailed, and the backslider was converted at the Camp Meeting. He went on to become a glorious Christian and an active Methodist layman.

The Banks Church, under the able leadership of Tyre Moore, Hedrick Moore, Joe Lewis, Devine Guthrie, and Eugene Yeomans, continued to exist until around 1903.

Its demise came as people began moving away from Shackleford and resettling at Harkers Island, Morehead City, and Salter Path.

Rev. Joseph M. Carraway who served Straits from 1895-1897 was a native of Merrimon where he lived on a farm. His usual custom was to come to Straits--a distance of some thirty miles--by buggy on Saturday, preach morning and evening services here on Sunday, and return home on Monday. Mr Carraway is remembered as being one of the most respected men in Carteret County in his day.

Rev. Furney Becton returned to us for his second pastorate in 1898. Like Mr. Carraway, he lived at his home and traveled from Harlowe to preach here. Rev. C. P. Snow (1899-1900) is remembered as a short, chunky man who wore a big derby and served his work in a sail skiff. Mr. Snow lived at the Nancy Roberts place in Straits.

Records for the year 1895 reveal that there were two Woman's Missionary Societies doing an active work on the Straits Charge. Christian education in this era was also

a vital concern both in the church and in the home. Frequently our pastors' reports echo this goal: "We endeavor to instruct the children in the homes as well as in public." Speaking of Christian education in his book The Methodist Armor, H. T. Hudson writes: "It is obligatory upon parents to bring up their families 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' The lessons imparted at the fireside, the spirit of Christianity pervading the house, and the gentle courtesies and sweet attachments of home, ought to engrave the words of God and the gospel of his Son upon the heart and mind of every child and every member of the household."

In the year 1895 Tabernacle M. E. Church South became the recipient of a tract of land on Shackelford Banks. No one now seems to know exactly why the transaction was made or what circumstances prompted the gift, but on February 20th of that year, Henrietta Roberson and Mary Roberson of Carteret County deeded the parcel of land to O. W. Whitehurst, George Gaskill, and James P. Pigott,

trustees of Tabernacle Church, "as a place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church South."

By the turn of the century the practice of having the preacher rotate from house to house had begun to be tiring and impractical for both the preacher and the people. More and more, it seemed, pastors were married men with families. They began either to board with a family by the year or to rent a house for themselves and their families. George W. Starling (1890-1892) had lived in the home of George Whitehurst. J. P. Pate (1892-1893) had lived with Dr. Richard Leffers. William Y. Everton (1893-1895) was married, and he and his wife rented the Nancy Roberts place in Straits. (The Nancy Roberts place was later owned by Stephen and Carl Gaskill. Eloise Pigott of our present congregation was born there. The house still stands and is now owned by George Huntley.) Now that Straits Tabernacle was thriving in its new church building, the congregation was ready to undertake

the building of a parsonage for its preachers.

James Emory Bristowe who came to Straits in 1900 led the congregation in this endeavor. Mr. Bristowe was married but childless when he came here; he and his wife lived at the Nancy Roberts place. Land for the first parsonage was given by Sophronia Stewart to the church, its trustees being William H. Stewart, Arendell Lewis and A. T. Willis. The deed states that such land was given "for and in consideration of the love I have for and bear toward the Methodist Church." We know the name of only one member of the building committee, J. B. Willis.

The land given by Sophronia Stewart is the same site where our present parsonage sits, although our present parsonage is not the 1900 house built when Rev. Bristowe was here. The parsonage was practically completed when Mr. Bristowe left in 1901. He went on to preach in the Conference for more than twenty-five years. According to his own count he preached 3,285 sermons during these years. The average annual salary paid to him was \$413.00.

When Rev. F. E. Dixon came in 1901, it was his task to finish the parsonage, especially to ceil it on the inside. While waiting for the house to be completed, he too lived at the Nancy Roberts place. An interesting story is told about an eventful trip which C. T. Jarvis and George Whitehurst made to New Bern to get the lumber to finish the parsonage. The second part of their mission on this trip was to bring the new preacher, Rev. Dixon, back to Straits with them. With lumber and preacher aboard they started back home only to run aground on low tide and be stranded for two days. The waiting seemed interminable, and the predicament of Mr. Jarvis and Mr. Whitehurst was even more vexing because they were fearful of saying something to offend the new preacher!

Rev. Dixon and his successor E.H. Creel (1901-1903) both taught school at Straits. Mrs. Pauline Wade reminisces about a very disquieting experience she and Ludie Chadwick had under the strict tutelage of Mr. Creel. It

seems that the older girls at the schoolhouse were accustomed to going into the church at lunchtime to play and sing. These older girls, however, were quite vigilant in keeping the younger ones out of the church. Being thus denied a coveted privilege, Pauline and Ludie decided to crawl through the window. Their bold maneuver abruptly came to an end when they were caught by their teacher. The mere threat of a spanking which Mr. Creel proposed scared the wits out of them.

The people of Straits in 1904 felt that there was an element of providence in the coming of the preacher who was to serve from 1904-1906. Presiding Elder E. H. Harris had been unable to find a preacher for the Straits Charge. In desperation he decided to advertise in newspapers. Rev. B. F. Watson, reading the advertisement in a Richmond paper, was intrigued by the offer and sympathetic toward our plight of being without a pastor. He accepted the Straits appointment and brought outstanding leadership to the Church. Rev. Watson's flock at Straits

were known to quip that when the Conference failed to send them a preacher, they prayed one out of Virginia. Members recall that the night Rev. Watson preached his last sermon here was a heartrending experience because his congregation hated the thought of his leaving. B. F. Watson's son, Herbert, married a Straits native, Miss Nellie Whitehurst. They lived at Straits and reared their six children, Ben, Earl, Herman, Ernest, Myrtle, and Elizabeth here.

M. W. Dargan (1906-1908) is remembered for his outstanding work with the choir. Being a competent musician himself, he instructed the choir in the system of shaped notes. On one occasion, Mr. Dargan's anxiety for musical perfection threatened his rapport with his congregation. When he brought in an outsider to play the organ for the District Conference which Straits hosted during his stay, the local people did not take kindly to his bypassing their own organist, Nannie Stewart

Mrs. Kate Leffers mentions this District Conference

in her work, "A Short Historical Sketch of Life in Straits Church." According to Mrs. Leffers, people came from far and near and stayed about a week in the homes of local families. "It was then" Mrs. Leffers adds, "that people learned we had something to eat in Straits besides fish. This enlightenment helped to counteract the old custom at each session of Annual Conference of examining pastors who came from Straits to see if they had grown any scales."

In writing on August 11, 1908, Mr. Dargan reports: "The general state of the Church is good. Our people are spiritually minded and keenly alive to the advancement of Christ's kingdom. They attend church well; at least 90% of our membership attend the regular services. There is but very little worldliness in the church with a few exceptions. The spiritual state of the church is all we could expect it to be. We have had two gracious revivals since last reporting. The Lord greatly blessed us. The Church was revived, backsliders reclaimed, and

fourteen souls added to the church. Following are the names of those on profession of faith: Guy L. Stewart, Charlie Davis Stewart, Walter Roland Stewart, Marie Elsie Stewart, Maudie Estell Stewart, Irene Gray Stewart, Mary Rachel Whitehurst, Olivia Roberts Willis, Lorenzo Blocksom Chadwick, Alice Bell Chadwick, Allie Day Chadwick, Marena R. Pigott, Ella McCall Pigott, Flora May Chadwick. By certificate, Sister Eva Whitehurst came to us from the Bethlehem M. E. Church."

Respectfully submitted,

M. W. Dargan, P.C.

In 1908 the Sunday School enrollment was 120, and the average attendance was about 75. The average collection was slightly more than one dollar per Sunday. Our Sunday School teachers in 1908 were as follows: Robert H. Davis, Sam Leffers, M. F. Willis, Lavinia Hancock, Cora Davis, Jessie Pigott, Georgie Whitehurst, Nannie Stewart, Wilbur Stewart, Maud Willis, Elizabeth Stewart, Alice Chadwick, Martha Pigott, Mary J. Davis, and David Chadwick.

W. J. Watson, the son of B. F. Watson, served our church two years after his father left. In reading the reports that Will Watson himself wrote, one is touched by the way he speaks with filial affection of "my people"--his congregation. He wrote on September 18, 1909: "The general state of the church is fairly good. During the quarter we have had one revival at Tabernacle and the church was greatly revived. There were received into the church on profession of faith six members--Sadie Davis, Effie May Chadwick, Lena Chadwick, Carrie Chadwick, Aleeze Leffers, and Earl Chadwick. Four infants have been baptized during the quarter--Helen R. Willis, Gilbert B. Whitehurst, Edith Chadwick, and Kate Chadwick."

Respectfully submitted,

W. J. Watson, P.C.

Two Sunday Schools on the charge, Tabernacle and Springfield, survived the winter of 1909 and had a total of 230 scholars. Tabernacle also had a regular prayer

meeting "in a live condition." The value of Tabernacle Church, as reported by its stewards, W. R. Hancock, J. A. Whitehurst, D. W. Chadwick, and R. H. Davis, was \$2,000. In other news of the year 1909 we find that our sister church at Springfield was about to begin a new church building.

W. E. Trotman (1909-1911) is remembered as being a tall, handsome man and an excellent preacher. His skill as a builder was a great asset to him as he helped to build the present Williston Church and the first M. E. Church South on Harkers Island, both in the year 1910.

We learn from Mr. Trotman's reports that Tabernacle was scarcely large enough to accommodate the crowds who came to Sunday School. Teachers from Tabernacle Sunday School were going to Harkers Island in 1910 to help that church rejuvenate its waning Sunday School.

Trotman commends Tabernacle for "the excellent missionary spirit that prevails among our people," and he records that the Ladies Aid Society at Tabernacle raised

and contributed to the parsonage \$24.30. He makes one guarded but salient observation about Tabernacle's church attendance: "good attendance in favorable times but not the disposition to overcome difficulties."

In 1910 Rev. Trotman voiced a concern unlike any we have found in local records before then: "There is no one attending any institution of higher learning from this work, though there are many that should be in some high school. Several are, I believe, preparing to start another year and I hope several others will follow."

Mr. Trotman must have been gratified one year later when Lola Leffers went to A and M College in Raleigh and Guy Stewart enrolled at St. Paul's School in Beaufort. Incidentally, news reached Lola Leffers in Raleigh that year through a letter from his father "that our preacher Trotman, like many others in the neighborhood has the mumps!"

In the years between 1900 and 1910 the church appears to have had more success in meeting its financial commitments. Much credit is due the faithful stewards whose

task it was to bathe and dress on Saturday afternoons and solicit money door-to-door from the church members. Some of these dedicated stewards who might have been found at various times during this century making their rounds on Saturday are O. C. Whitehurst, B. B. Chadwick, Cull Pigott, J. P. Pigott, W. H. Stewart, J. W. Stewart, M. C. Fulford, W. R. Hancock, John A. Whitehurst, David Jones, D. W. Chadwick, R. H. Davis, R. H. Whitehurst, Jr., Fred Chadwick, Clarence Chadwick, Alfred Whitehurst, Adrian Davis, W. R. Stewart, Lorenzo Chadwick, Gilbert Whitehurst, Walter H. Chadwick, and Monroe Willis.

One event of local significance in 1910 was the naming of Gloucester. Prior to that time the present-day Gloucester area was known as Up Straits. When a post office was established there in 1910, another name had to be chosen for it in order to avoid confusion with the Straits Post Office already serving the other end of the community. Captain Joe Pigott adopted the name Gloucester because this area reminded him of Gloucester, Massachusetts,

which he visited in his schooner.

During N. B. Strickland's term (1911-1912) a great revival was held at Tabernacle. Mr. Allen Moore recalls coming with other people from Harkers Island in boatloads to attend the meetings. The church would be filled to overflowing at every service, and many of those who came were filled with the Spirit to the extent that they shouted. It is interesting that among all those persons who now recall shouting at Tabernacle, everyone attributes the shouting to women. We wonder why the men were not moved in the same way.

Rev. Strickland has been called "a great gathering-in preacher." Of his gathering in of souls to advance Christ's Kingdom, we have no doubt. As for gathering in remuneration for his efforts, however, his success was meager--he earned \$105.00 for a whole year's work!

Several older member of our church can recall protracted meetings which lasted from two to three weeks at Tabernacle. These meetings, customarily held in summer,

would include morning and evening preaching services each day; often midday dinner would be served on the grounds. At some time during this period a tent meeting was held between the schoolhouse and the church by a visiting preacher named Kindell.

Without question, protracted meetings were a vital part of the religious experience of our forefathers. Perhaps some mention should be made of the social implications these meetings had. Imagine, for example, what might have transpired in the days of preparation for protracted meeting. Homes were readied to entertain visitors who would come. Wives and daughters prepared the festive board, sparing no pains to be sure that everyone would have plenty to eat. Candles and lamps burned far into the night as yard after yard of cloth evolved into new frocks.

Protracted meetings afforded a unique opportunity for fellowship among family and friends as people visited and discussed topics of mutual interest. Likewise

protracted meeting time was a godsend, long-sought and long-remembered, for courting couples. The leisurely strolls or buggy rides to and from the church were sometimes as memorable to the younger set as the services themselves.

Gerald Whitehurst tells an amusing story about some local youths of courting age who were not above scheming to find ways to "protract" the protracted meeting. It seems that these young men, more self-serving than penitent, would get together and decide to delay going to the altar to confess their sins until the last scheduled night of the meeting; they hoped in so doing that the preacher might be encouraged by their response and decide to keep preaching another week in the hope that others would come likewise!

W. B. Humble (1912-1914) is reported to have had the first car ever to come to this community. Mr. Humble was an outstanding builder and craftsman. When a storm destroyed the new church on Harkers Island, Mr. Humble's

talents were put to good use as he helped the people there rebuild their church.

Rev. Humble is known as a man who was not afraid to speak his mind. Those who remember him will attest to the fact that he did not mind telling people about their sins. This same boldness of spirit made itself manifest when he informed the choir at Tabernacle that he wanted only those to sing who could sing "with the Spirit." Someone quickly fired back the response that Mr. Humble's directive would reduce the choir down to two members!

A letter was recently found in an old Sunday School ledger for that year. We include it because it gives us insight into the process of public education in Straits. It reads:

Straits, N.C.

August 4, 1913

Miss Alma Savage

Beaufort, N.C.

Dear Miss Savage:

Having learned that you were in Beaufort, I am writing you in regard to teaching at this place. Would like to know your terms.

Rev. W. B. Humble, our preacher, recommended you to me as being a suitable teacher for our school. We employ three teachers in the school. Would an offer of \$50.00 per month be of any interest to you as principal of the school, subject to the approval of the committee and the County Superintendent? If so, write me by return mail. Also notify Mr. L.B. Ennett (County Superintendent) at Cedar Point, N.C.

Very truly,

Robert H. Davis

H. M. Jackson who served two terms at Straits (1914-1915 and 1922-1924) is remembered among other things for his diminutive size. He was so short that he stood on a box behind the pulpit in order to see his congregation while he preached. But for the derby he wore, Mr. Jackson's head could hardly be seen as he drove his Model-T roadster through the community. During his first term he lived at the parsonage; when he came back during the 1920's he boarded first with Sally Chadwick and then with Hugh Whitehurst.

Mr. Allen Moore tells a delightful story about a trip he made to Straits to get Mr. Jackson and take him to Harkers Island to preach. After leaving Straits on this particular Saturday afternoon, Mr. Allen's sail skiff passed very close to a sizeable oyster rock out in the Straits. Mr. Allen and Rev. Jackson observed a seagull making attempts to break a clam on the oyster rock. When the first two attempts failed to fracture the clam shell, the gull soared high into the air

dropping the clam with sufficient impact to break the shell and free the contents for the gull to eat.

Neither observer made any special comment about the seagull's feat. When Mr. Jackson got to the Harkers Island Church and began the service, however, this is what he said: "My brethren, here in my hand is the sermon I worked all week to prepare for you. But the Lord gave me another sermon on the way over here yesterday-- the name of the Lord's sermon is 'The higher you go, the better it is'." Allen Moore says that there was not a dry eye in the house at the conclusion of the sermon.

Shortly after J. L. McNeer came to pastor Tabernacle Church (1915-1916) the parsonage was sold. Robert Lee Chadwick bought it for \$300.00 and moved it with oxen to the spot where it now sits in front of the church. No one seems to understand the rationale behind selling this parsonage which was then only fifteen years old.

Through the witness and example of W. E. Hocutt who

came to Tabernacle in 1916, one of the native sons of our Church was led into the ministry. Guion Whitehurst ascribed his own decision to become a preacher to the inspiration of Rev. Hocutt. Guion preached first in the North Carolina Conference, serving pastorates at Grimesland and Henderson. From here he went to Maryland where he married and continued to preach for some forty years. His last assignment before retiring was a fourteen year term at Bel Air, Maryland. Guion and Rhea returned to Gloucester in 1962 where they built a home and enjoyed four happy years together before Guion's death in 1966. During this period, Guion often filled our pulpit when the pastor was ill or away, and Rhea was a great asset to the choir. Guion's brother and sisters, Gerald Whitehurst, Mildred Chadwick, and Ella Jones, are active members today of the Church which Guion always called home.

What we know of the Straits Circuit from 1915 to the present reveals that the churches on this charge

fluctuated with baffling frequency. In 1918 Straits Tabernacle and Atlantic comprised the charge. In 1919 Atlantic was taken off the charge, but by 1925 both Atlantic and Sea Level were with Straits. In 1926 and 1927 Atlantic and Sea Level were no longer with Tabernacle, Summerfield, Springfield, and Harkers Island. In 1928 Summerfield and Springfield became a part of the Atlantic Charge and Tabernacle joined with Merrimon, Oak Grove, Harlowe, Tuttle's Grove, and Harkers Island. In 1930 Harkers Island affiliated with the Atlantic Charge. In 1938 Marshallberg, Tabernacle and Summerfield became one charge, while Atlantic, Sea Level, Cedar Island and Williston united into a Charge. In 1941 Tabernacle and Harkers Island were separated from Marshallberg and Summerfield. Since 1961 Harkers Island has been a station church and Straits and North River have been one charge.

Mildred Chadwick's description of the Tabernacle Church yard in her childhood strikes a nostalgic chord

for anyone who cherishes memories of the church in days gone by. Mildred recalls that a picket fence enclosed the parsonage yard on all four sides. The fence was more functional than decorative in that it served to keep hogs, chickens, and other roaming creatures away from the parsonage door. It was also used by some church-goers to hitch their horses on Sunday Morning. Mildred says, however, that her family's horse always elected to be hitched to a certain pine tree in the church yard rather than to the fence.

The General Rules for Methodists in 1918 are quite timely to read today. We quote them from the 1918 Ritual which belonged to Rev. Samuel Leffers. "It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation. First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind especially that which is most generally practiced: such as

The taking of the name of God in vain;

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary works therein, or by buying or selling;

Drunkenness, or drinking spirituous liquors unless in case of necessity;

Fighting, quarreling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using of many words in buying or selling;

The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty;

The giving or taking things on usury, i.e.; unlawful interest;

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, particularly speaking evil of magistrates or ministers;

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us;

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God: as, the putting on of gold and costly apparel;

The taking such diversions as cannot be used in

the name of the Lord Jesus;

The singing those songs, or reading those books,
which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God;

Softness or needless self-indulgence;

Laying up treasures upon earth;

Borrowing without a probability of paying, or
taking up goods without a probability of paying
for them."

The proceedings of the North Carolina Conference in 1920 enlighten us as to the paramount social concerns of that day. Methodists were eloquent and vocal in their opposition to cigarettes, liquor, moving pictures shows, street carnivals, and the playing of games such as baseball and golf on the Sabbath. Luther Hamilton of Morehead City was appointed by the Conference to serve on a committee to work within the State Legislature for laws to combat the aforementioned evils.

When E. W. Glass (1920-1921) came to serve Tabernacle, he began his term with a great revival conducted by a

preacher named Mr. Bass. Many people joined the church at this time. Aside from the serious memories of this occasion, a funny story is told about Ervin Whitehurst, who made his presence known at one of the services in a most extraordinary way. Owing to some unexpected circumstance, Ervin arrived late for the service. He slipped in through the back door in an effort to be inconspicuous; his effort was thwarted, though, by the thud which was heard when he sat down on the mourner's bench--precisely on top of Mr. Glass's hard-top derby.

Revivals thus far have played a very significant role in the life and mission of our church. After the first quarter of the 20th Century, however, records of old-time evangelistic revivals begin to diminish. The traditional zealous spirit of Methodism seems to have subsided somewhat as descendants of our founding fathers began to move up the social ladder and talk more and more of the "Social Gospel." An analysis of the present trends in Methodism reveals that we are now in the

1970's seeking to rekindle the zeal and fervor of the early Methodists and to re-establish the priority of fundamental Gospel preaching.

The paucity of local church records for the period from 1920 to the present makes our attempt to set forth accurately the history of our Church extremely difficult. We do not know what happened to such records as were kept; we are only confronted with the task of trying to reconstruct the past fifty-five years or so solely on the basis of oral records. These oral records and shared memories have been invaluable; yet they are subject to human limitations. It has surely been our intention to get our information as complete as possible. We deeply regret any omissions, inaccuracies, or discrepancies which may have resulted from our having to rely on word of mouth.

In thinking back to our earliest religious experiences, we acknowledge the great positive influence of Sunday School, largely due to the patience, devotion,

and industry of its leaders. We record here as many names of those superintendents and teachers as we have been able to find. (Those who may have already been listed earlier in the narrative will not be listed here).

Sunday School Superintendents in this Century:

W. R. Hancock	Gilbert Whitehurst
Robert Hancock	Walter Stewart
John Lewis	Dan Pigott
Robert Davis	Norman Chadwick
Guy Stewart	David Chadwick
John Whitehurst	Bert Meares
Tilden Jarvis	Leonard Davis
William H. Stewart	William Chadwick
Charlie Stewart	

One of these superintendents, Charlie Stewart, is remembered for an intriguing scheme he devised to boost Sunday School attendance. He would divide the scholars into two groups, giving white ribbons to one group and

red ribbons to the other. Each group was commissioned to go forth from Sunday School and enlist recruits to come with them the following Sunday. When the reds and whites and their inductees gathered the next Sunday, a banner would be awarded to the side which had yielded the greatest number of newcomers.

Following is a list, as complete as we have been able to compile it, of most of the Sunday School Teachers who have served at Straits during this Century. (The present 1978 Sunday School Teachers are listed in the appendix.)

Charlotte Pigott	Josie Pigott
Sam Leffers	Nannie Stewart
Kate Leffers	Giles Whitehurst
M. F. Willis	Maud Willis
Lavinia Hancock	Elizabeth Stewart
Mary Stewart	Alice Chadwick
Jessie Pigott	Martha Pigott
Georgie Whitehurst	Lena Chadwick
Mary Whitehurst	W. H. Stewart

Eugene Chadwick

Robert H. Davis

Cora Davis

Wilbur Stewart

Mary J. Davis

David Chadwick

Ethel Pigott

Flora Chadwick

Twyla Pigott

Aleeze Leefers

Carrie Chadwick

George Moore

John Lewis

Henry Whitehurst

Guion Whitehurst

Eva Stewart

E. W. Glass

Walter Stewart

Virgie Davis

Evelyn Chadwick

Ethel Whitehurst

Elva Whitehurst

Lillian Willis

Mae Whitehurst

Drusilla Chadwick

Anne Meares

Bert Meares

Evelyn Damren

Thelma L. Chadwick

Thelma H. Chadwick

Erma Hansen

Vance Chadwick

Genevieve Chadwick

Mamie Chadwick

Sarah Davis

Cappie Chadwick

Grace Guthrie

Frances Watson

Belzora Chadwick	Kathy Styron
Linda Gates	Abbie Guthrie
Jane Gibble	Ella Jones
Myrtle Pigott	Patricia Chadwick
Eloise Pigott	Robin Stryon
Bill Blair	Sharon Kay Guthrie

In the years prior to 1920 our church was illuminated by lamplight. The twenties saw the advent of carbide lights; many people still remember how Mr. Clarence Chadwick would leave home early for church services and use a long rod to reach up and light the carbide lights. When Delco lights were installed in the early thirties, it was Mr. Clarence who serviced the Delco generator out behind the church. He also served faithfully for many years as custodian of the church and as an administrator of the Straits School.

Samuel Leffers, who pastored his home church at Tabernacle in 1921-1922 and 1924-1925, was born and

reared in this community. He was well-read and well-educated; although keenly intellectual, he was a man of common sense, too. He could preach profound, scholarly sermons; and he could grow bountiful crops of sweet potatoes as well. He is remembered as a man of exemplary Christian character--a prophet who was honored in his own country. No testimony seems quite as fitting as Mr. Allen Moore's tribute to him: "We loved the wind that blowed around him."

Sam Leffers was admitted to the North Carolina Conference in 1894. He served many churches, among which are Cape Hatteras (his first assignment), Ocracoke, Belhaven, Columbia, Pink Hill, And Straits. He served the Washington Church for seven years and organized the first church in the Belhaven community.

Mr. Leffers appears to have differed refreshingly from many of his contemporaries in that his sermons were not as long. Mrs. Pauline Wade says that if you would give him thirty minutes he could preach a two-

hour sermon!

A brief digression from Sam Leffers the preacher to Sam Leffers the businessman will give us a glimpse of life in Gloucester some sixty years ago. We quote part of a letter Mr. Leffers wrote to his son then in college at North Carolina A. and M.: "I am still working in the potato business. Been to John Gaskill's today and helped to measure up about 200 bushels which I bought from him and Stanford for fifty cents per bushel. They will get over \$100.00 for their crop this year. Some of the people are getting .57 1/2¢ per bushel for haymans right here."

Mrs. Kate Leffers, Mr. Sam's wife, was very active in the school as well as the church. Around 1910 she organized a little group called The Good Luck Club to raise money for the Straits School. Giles Willis won the prize for raising the most money. (Mrs. Leffers, we might add, would be proud to know that Giles is still exercising this money-raising talent in our present congregation.)

In a speech before her Good Luck Club she expresses concern over the fact that so many capable youths have left the community. She implores them to stay in the area and be "the hope of the place." She urges them to "take up this work and in the vigor of your youth try to bring old Straits to the front."

In spite of tireless efforts by Mrs. Kate Leffers and many others, the Straits High School ceased to function after 1923. It is a source of great pride here that the last class to graduate from Straits High School won the county-wide commencement singing competition in 1923. Under the direction of Gladys Banks they sang "Come Where the Lillies Bloom." Those in the Straits Chorus were: Hannah Gaskill, Leona Jarvis, Nadine Smith, Nat Smith, Clyde Moore, Monroe Willis, Elva Chadwick, Ina Smith, Joyce Moore, Cecil Moore, Odessa Jarvis, Virgie Chadwick, Vera Fulford, and Margaret Fulford.

When E. B. Bell (1925-1927) came to Straits to preach, he initiated the building of the present parsonage. Since

1916 when the first parsonage was sold, pastors had been living in various places. As previously stated, Mr. Jackson boarded with Sally Chadwick and Hugh Whitehurst. Samuel Leffers, of course, lived at home as did Joseph Carraway (1919-1920). E. E. Glass boarded with Sam Leffers until his marriage to a Gloucester native, Miss Ludie Chadwick. Mr. Hocutt stayed for his three years at the parsonage at Atlantic.

Typically, there was an issue to be resolved before the new parsonage could even be started. Some Gloucester members insisted that the new parsonage should be situated near the ferry dock so that travel by the ferry would be more convenient. Others were equally convinced that the most logical place for the new house was the original parsonage site beside the church. The will of the majority prevailed, and their choice, in retrospect, surely seems to have been the wisest one.

Rev. E. W. Downum came to Straits in 1927 for a two-year term. He is remembered as an outstanding preacher;

one particular sermon he preached entitled "Rolling Away the Stone from the Tomb" is still vivid in the minds of some of our members. Mr. Downum's son Wilford married a Straits native, Miss Nellie Chadwick and they reside in Beaufort.

E. L. Stack (1929-1930) came to us from Elizabeth City. His broad background of experience included travel in the Holy Land. Rev. Stack held interesting study courses and prayer meetings while he was here, sharing his travel and his knowledge of the Bible with his congregation. When he left Straits he assumed the leadership of Oxford Orphanage.

Rev. Stack's assignment to Oxford Orphanage came before the end of his year here; a young student minister, Byron Shankle, finished out Rev. Stack's year. Mr. Shankle was a very good athlete. He especially enjoyed playing baseball, sometimes to the displeasure of some older members of the congregation who could not conceive of a baseball-playing preacher. People at

Straits still recall that Rev. Shankle, upon first seeing sweet potato banks, thought that they were graves and commented that judging from the length of the "graves", some awfully tall people must have been buried in them!

J. C. Harmon (1930-1931) is remembered for his outstanding sermons; one in particular has been mentioned based on the scripture "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I unto thee." Mrs. Harmon often played for church. She appears to have been a rather "liberated" lady in her day--she drove the Model-T while Rev. Harmon sat in the back seat.

Ironically, one of those who complained when Mr. Harmon was moved from Straits after just one year's service here was Gerald Whitehurst. Gerald, of course, had no way of knowing at that time that he might never have met Mae Brandenburg if the Conference had not moved Mr. Harmon and sent F. B. Brandenburg here in 1931. Straits was Rev. Brandenburg's second charge and he stayed here four years; he was the first pastor to serve four years

since Edmund Hoover.

Mr. Brandenburg was well-liked here and his family used their musical talents to enhance his work in the church. His mother-in-law, Mrs. Annie Horger, his wife, Jennie Mae, and his daughters, Annie Laurie, June, and Mae were all excellent singers. Mae, after her marriage to Gerald Whitehurst, played the piano at Straits for many years.

Mae remembers an ill-fated trip which Rev. Brandenburg made to fill his appointment at Merrimon. On the way there he ran over a bear and wrecked his car; from then on he was jokingly called "the preacher and the bear."

Mae's memories of life in the parsonage during those Depression years are nonetheless pleasant. Although her father earned only \$1,200 a year for serving five churches, his church friends were generous in their gifts of vegetables, seafood, and meat. Furthermore, the neighborhood was filled with young people, and the parsonage was always a center of lively activity.

The September Hurricane of 1933 totally destroyed the Summerfield Church and caused considerable damage at Tabernacle. A large pine tree blew down across the roof. Many people say that this tree kept the church from being totally destroyed. When repairs were being made, it was decided that in order to improve the structural reliability of the church, its walls should be tied together at the eve line. At this same time the dropped ceiling was added.

One can hardly think of Tabernacle Church in this era without thinking of Walter Stewart and Lorenzo Chadwick. Rarely did a day go by that Mr. Walter or Mr. Lorenzo did not stop by just to check on things or to do little odd jobs which needed to be done. It has been said that a water pipe never froze at the church or parsonage until after Walter Stewart's death.

In 1934 the old reed organ was discarded and the first piano was purchased for the church. Through the years there have been many faithful organists and

pianists; among them are Jane Leffers Pigott, Nannie Stewart, Annie Willis, Josie Willis, Edna Willis Gibbs, Aleeze Leffers Smith, Myrtle Watson Pigott, Mae Whitehurst, Dorothy Chadwick Berry, Alice Bovard, Ruth Hubbard, Ginger Chadwick, Eloise Blair, and Kandace Smith Davis. Many of our pastors' wives have played the piano and organ also.

Until recent years there were no organized choirs as we know them today. It was common in the old days for someone who had a good voice to go around just prior to the service and select singers to fill the choir area. Anybody could go in the choir on any given Sunday and help "to hoist the tune." Millard Filmore Willis is remembered as an unofficial choir director in the early years of this century. Following is a list, as complete as we have been able to get it, of those persons who have raised their voices in song in the past. (The present choir members are omitted here because they are listed in the appendix.)

Filmore Willis	Richard Leffers
Nat Gaskill	Gerald Whitehurst
Robert Chadwick	Neal Willis
Stanford Gaskill	Elwood Willis
Dave Davis	Marie Jarvis
Addie Gaskill	Zelma Jarvis
Ida Chadwick	Leona Jarvis
Clayton Willis	Madolyn Chadwick
Hannah Gaskill	Ella Whitehurst
Cleo Jarvis	Florence Pigott
Virgie Davis	Odessa Jarvis
Leon Chadwick	Hilda Whitehurst
Gilbert Whitehurst	Monroe Willis
Sabra Gaskill Chadwick	Ida Pigott
Mary Gaskill Jarvis	Marjorie J. Chadwick
Lillie Davis Chadwick	Edna Pigott
Mamie Davis Smith	Edna Willis
Belle Chadwick Fulford	Gladys Pigott
Annie Pigott	Matilda Gaskill

Myrtle W. Pigott	Mary E. Chasteen
Lillian P. Willis	Marion Chasteen
Lena Stewart	Lynell Davis
Walter Stewart	Helen Chadwick
Frances Watson	Ellen McGee
Connie Chadwick	Anne Meares
Edna G. Chadwick	Patricia Chadwick

J. L. Joyce (1934-1937) came to pastor Tabernacle Church as a young man just out of college. He did outstanding work with the young people and enjoyed excellent rapport with them. It was during Rev. Joyce's term that the first electric lights were used in the church.

From 1937 to 1939 our pastor, C. W. Guthrie from Morehead City, lived at Marshallberg and preached at Marshallberg, Summerfield, and Straits. During this time our parsonage was vacant, and District Superintendent Hillman proposed to sell it to Franklin Memorial Church in Morehead City. Mr. Sam Leffers led our congregation in opposing this idea; Mr. Sam argued that the

parsonage vacancy was a temporary situation and that it would be very short-sighted of us to sell the house.

His wisdom prevailed.

Our next pastor, C. B. Harris, was a native of Cedar Island. Mr. Harris was quite at home with the Straits people and his ministry here was more effectual because of the good will that existed between him and his congregation. Mr. Harris enjoyed life and liked to have a good time. It is said that he and Murray Pigott made a regular game of pilfering Monroe Willis' watermelon patch; Monroe, of course, knew quite well what the preacher was up to, and he enjoyed the joke as well as anyone.

1939 was a monumental year in the history of Methodism because it saw the long considered and long awaited union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Protestant Church. This merger provided an impetus badly needed by Methodists for revitalizing their faith.

Conference records in 1940 still refer to our church

as Tabernacle, and newspaper clippings from the old Beaufort News as late as 1947 still call the church Tabernacle. During the early forties Tabernacle began to have Sunday School in the morning rather than the afternoon. Another innovation was the use of gas heaters to replace the old stove which had sat in the front of the church for fifty years.

L. D. Hayman, a Manteo native, served our church from 1942-1943. Rev. Hayman had preached at Ann Street in Beaufort prior to coming to Straits; he had been privileged to preach the first sermon at Ann Street after the three branches of the Methodists merged in 1939. Mr. Hayman loved the coast and loved being on the water. It is said that he begged to be assigned to Straits so that he could stay in this area.

1939 was the last year the Straits Public School operated. It ceased to function when the decision was made at a higher level to consolidate several of the schools in this area and send all of the elementary

students to Smyrna. The closing of the Straits School ended an era of some 180 years of local schooling in the Straits Community.

Just out of college, full of wit as well as wisdom, came our next preacher, C. M. Mitchell (1943-1945). In the trying days of a great World War, he is remembered for the way he shared the assuring promises of God's providence. Mr. Mitchell is still associated with the North Carolina Conference as head of its Pastors' Credit Union.

Mitchell's successor, E. R. Bromley (1945-1946), was talented as a musician and a writer as well as a preacher. He could sing, play the violin, and play the piano. He was a conscientious objector, a man of deep conviction that war was an evil. Those of us who are engaged in this present writing effort are deeply indebted to Mr. Bromley for the extensive historical research he did about Straits. His superb historical sketches were published in serial form by The Beaufort

News.

R. L. Harrell (1947-1950), as many recall, was a good preacher and an outstanding Sunday School teacher. He was faced with a difficult and controversial issue-- whether or not to move the old schoolhouse and join it to the rear of the church as an educational building. A hint of the discord which troubled the church at that time can be found in a letter written by the District Superintendent, Dr. H. K. King: "I am sorry the people at Straits are in difficulty and sincerely pray that a Christian spirit may lead all of them to cooperate in doing the best thing for the cause of Christ in the Kingdom and that personal interest may be made secondary to the demands and Spirit of Christ."

In addition to moving the schoolhouse to its present location and making it over into a fellowship hall and Sunday School rooms, many other major renovations were made. The old foyer and steeple were torn down and rebuilt, and a new bell obtained from Harkers Island was

installed. New stained glass memorial windows did much to enhance the beauty of the sanctuary.

During Mr. Harrell's term the first Woman's Society of Christian Service was organized. Prior to that time the women's organization was known either as the Ladies Aid Society or the Woman's Missionary Society. The first members of the new WSCS were Mrs. Mae Whitehurst, Mrs. H. L. Harrell, Mrs. Kate Leffers, Mrs. Thelma Harvey Chadwick, Mrs Thelma Lorenzo Chadwick, and Mrs. Mildred Chadwick. Mae Whitehurst and Mrs. Harrell represented the group at a Sub-District Conference at Ocracoke where they traveled by mailboat. They brought back the silver cup award from this meeting because of the distance traveled and the manner in which they had to go.

A. C. Regan (1951-1952) was a conscientious man who brought a broad background of pastoral experience to his ministry at Straits.

D. M. Tyson (1953-1955) was greatly appreciated

because of his preaching and also for the singing he and his wife did. Local people felt very much at ease with the Tysons' and enjoyed their presence here. During Mr. Tyson's stay, work on the Educational Building, the pulpit, and the choir area was completed.

Henry Gibat (1955-1957) joined the Methodist Conference after serving in the U. S. Navy. After his pastorate at Straits he worked as a printer for the Christian Advocate. He later came back to Carteret County and now lives in Morehead City.

The decade of the 1950's brought the faces, names, and services of many new people into our congregation. Native people who had lived away for a period of years began to come home, often bringing spouses from other areas of the country. Newcomers began to seek retirement homes along the tranquil shores of the Straits. These people adopted Straits Church and have been instrumental in its mission to this community.

Olive Whitehurst who came in 1950 and Al and Ruth

Hubbard who came in 1956 have made invaluable contributions to the church's music program. Emmitt and Lucy Piper, who came in the mid-50's, have worked for more than twenty years to coordinate the maintenance and upgrading of the parsonage. From this time forward, the names Pigott, Stewart, Chadwick, Smith, Jarvis, Gaskill, Fulford, Meares, Whitehurst, Nelson, Leffers, Watson, Willis, Damren and Davis, would be joined by names like McGee, MacFarlane, Bovard, Anthony, Blair, Hansen, Murphy, Henderson, Perry, Kaszas, Wade, Wynne, Garner, Long, Fink, Murphrey, Piper, Hubbard, Schaaf, Waters, Barrow, Sparks, Jorgorsen, Schlick, and Powell.

Ray West (1958-1961), a Newport native, gave dedicated leadership to our church and saw it prosper as a result. Both he and his wife and daughters were excellent musicians. During his stay the first electric organ was used in the church and the first central heating system was installed. Hardwood floors were laid in the sanctuary and asbestos shingles were added

to the exterior. When Harkers Island Methodist Church became a station church in 1961, Mr. West left Straits to become its pastor.

Lionel C. Swink (1962-1965) has the distinction of being the only pastor in the history of our church whose wife was also an ordained minister. Both Lionel and Norvice were very highly regarded in this community. At times when Lionel was ill or away, his wife very ably filled the pulpit for him.

In 1965 the Methodist Publishing House, observing its 175th anniversary, honored all Methodist Churches in existence at the time of its founding. Straits, recognized by the Methodist Historical Society as one of the oldest congregations in American Methodism, received a citation. At a special service on February 7, 1965, Rev. Swink and Lester Pigott, Chairman of the Official Board, presented the citation to the church. Also at this service Rev. Guion Whitehurst read a brief history of the church which he and Miss Mary

Whitehurst had compiled.

Carey H. Brigman's ministry here (1966-1968) is remembered with affection and admiration. It has been said of him that he "left a trail of kindness everywhere he went." Members of the congregation still remember his sermons, in particular the one he preached on the Beatitudes. Mr. Brigman and his wife now live at Snead's Ferry, North Carolina. Their children Rodney and Dale married locally and still live in our area.

A monumental Development in the history of Methodism was the merger of The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren to form the United Methodist Church. This union, accomplished in 1968, represented the coming together of the English--and German--speaking Christian believers who followed the teachings of John Wesley.

Rev. R. D. Shinkle was pastor of our church from 1969-1972. He is remembered not only as an outstanding preacher but also as the "good shepherd" in the way he carried

out his other pastoral functions such as counseling, visitation, and caring for the sick. Witty and humorous, he often referred to his position as former pastor at Ocracoke by calling himself "the Bishop of Ocracoke." A new roof was put on the church during Mr. Shinkle's term. He loved the people here and returned here often to visit until his death in 1975.

Rev. Charles I. Umstead (1973-1976), a native of Rocky Mount, was a literate, well-educated pastor, having graduated from college after joining the North Carolina Conference. He was dedicated to his work and particularly interested in the youth. The United Methodist Youth Fellowship prospered during these years under the leadership of Anne Meares, Patricia Chadwick, and Linda Gates. During his stay the church was air-conditioned, largely through the money-raising efforts of the United Methodist Women and their "unofficial steward," Mildred Chadwick.

On April 3, 1976, Straits Church was invited to attend

the Bicentennial celebration of the old Carolina Circuit. This gathering, honoring the oldest churches in the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences, was held at Duke University. Rev. Umstead, his son Henry, Belzora Chadwick, Evelyn Chadwick, and Sharon Kay Guthrie represented our church on this occasion. Belzora and her daughter, Joyce Chadwick Griggs, made a lovely banner depicting an old-time circuit rider which was displayed at this celebration and later featured in The Christian Advocate.

Our present pastor, Wayne E. Thomas, came to us in June of 1977. A native of Florida where he preached for a number of years, Wayne joined the North Carolina Conference in 1974. He is a graduate of Florida Southern College and Asbury Theological Seminary. Our church has been blessed by his presence, and we look forward to continued growth and witness under his leadership. Rev. Thomas has been vitally interested in our plans to observe the 200th Anniversary of Methodism in Straits, and all

those who are endeavoring to make our Bicentennial a meaningful observance are very grateful to him.

Recent years have seen many changes not only on the local scene but also in the way Methodists express their faith. Whereas Methodists of the past expressed their Christian social concerns in negative terms--opposition to slavery, opposition to liquor sales and traffic, opposition to war, opposition to gambling--Methodists today express their social consciousness in very positive terms:

"We believe in God, Creator of the world: and in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of creation. We believe in the Holy Spirit, through whom we acknowledge God's gifts, and we repent of our sin in misusing these gifts to idolatrous ends.

We affirm the natural world as God's handiwork and dedicate ourselves to its preservation, enhancement, and faithful use by mankind.

We commit ourselves to the rights of men, women,

children, youth, and the aging, to improvement of the quality of life, and to the rights and dignity of ethnic and religious minorities.

We believe in the right and duty of persons to work for the good of themselves and others, and in the protection of their welfare in so doing; in the rights to property as a trust from God and in the elimination of economic and social distress.

We dedicate ourselves to peace throughout the world and to the rule of justice and law among nations.

We believe in the present and final triumph of God's Word in human affairs and gladly accept his commission to manifest the life of the gospel in the world."

Our forefathers here at Straits have indeed accepted their commission to manifest the life of the gospel in the world. Theirs has been a vibrant, dynamic mission. Throughout their sojourn of two centuries they have known that neither they nor their descendants would ever arrive, but would forever be on the way. And so we stand, proud of our rich spiritual heritage but humble before the Eternal God who gave it.

NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE-----Robert M. Blackburn, Bishop

NEW BERN DISTRICT-----Harold Leatherman, District

Superintendent

STRAITS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH--Wayne E. Thomas, Pastor

BICENTENNIAL YEAR OFFICERS

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

CHARGE OFFICERS: Lay member to Annual Conference: Delegate:

Leonard Davis

COMMITTEE ON PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS (CHARGE): CHAIRMAN:

Clay Wynne, Leonard Davis, Mamie Chadwick, Mae Whitehurst,

Patricia Chadwick

PARSONAGE COMMITTEE (CHARGE):CHAIRMAN: Lucy Piper, Mildred

Chadwick, Leonard Davis. Honorary Members (Advisory):

Belzora Chadwick, Gertrude Anthony, Anne Meares

CHAIRMAN OF ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD: William E. "Bill" Blair

SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD: Belzora Chadwick

TREASURER OF ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD: Mamie Chadwick

VICE-CHAIRMAN ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD:Clay Wynne

CHAIRMAN, TRUSTEES: Gerald Whitehurst

PRESIDENT UNITED METHODIST WOMEN: Anna Belle Blair

CHAIRPERSON, COUNCIL MINISTRIES: Eloise Pigott

CHAIRMAN FINANCE COMMITTEE: Clay Wynne

LAY LEADER: William E. "Bill" Blair

PRESIDENT J O Y CIRCLE: Barbara Pigott

MYF LEADER: Linda Gates

LADIES PRAYER GROUP LEADER: Belzora Chadwick

TRUSTEES: 1978: Walter Chadwick
 Dan Yeomans
 1979: Ben Watson
 Harvey Chadwick
 1980: Emmitt Piper
 Gerald Whitehurst

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT: Bert Meares

MEMBERS AT LARGE:

Gertrude Anthony	Evelyn Chadwick
Paul Anthony	Genevieve Chadwick
Eloise Blair	Geoge H. Chadwick
David Chadwick	Harvey Chadwick
Dennis Chadwick	Ivey Chadwick

Patricia Chadwick	Sherry Nelson
Thelma H. Chadwick	Barbara Pigott
Thelma L. Chadwick	Charles Pigott
Walter Chadwick	Lester Pigott
Douglas "Danny" Damren	Twyla Pigott
Evelyn Damren	Emmitt Piper
Paul Damren	Lena Stewart
Leonard Davis	Robin Styron
Sarah Davis	Ben Watson
Donna Garner	Mae Whitehurst
Linda Gates	Olive Whitehurst
Abbie S. Guthrie	Roger Wayne Whitehurst
Grace Guthrie	Giles Willis
Sharon Kay Guthrie	Janice Wynne
Anne Meares	Barbara Yeomans
Bert Meares	Dan Yeomans

1978 BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Clay Wynne, Chairman

Wayne Thomas, Pastor

Giles Willis

Mildred Chadwick

Eloise Pigott

Eloise Blair

Erma Hansen

Belzora Chadwick

Barbara Pigott

David Chadwick

Lucy Piper

William E. "Bill" Blair

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Giles Willis

Eloise Blair

Eloise Pigott

1978 CHOIR ROLL

STRAITS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

<u>CHOIR DIRECTOR:</u>	Olive Whitehurst
<u>ASSOCIATE CHOIR DIRECTOR:</u>	Eloise Blair
<u>ORGANISTS:</u>	Ruth Hubbard, Emeritus
	Lillie "Ginger" Chadwick
	Kandace Smith Davis
Eloise Blair	Sherry Nelson
Cappy Chadwick	Pat Schaaf
Genevieve Chadwick	Robin Styron
Harvey Chadwick	Borden Wade
Mamie Chadwick	Nancy Ward
Thelma L. Chadwick	Mae Whitehurst
Jeanette Covington	Olive Whitehurst
Grace Guthrie	Roger Wayne Whitehurst
Sharon Kay Guthrie	Clay Wynne
Algernon L. "Al" Hubbard	

1978 ACOLYES

STRAITS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Amy Blair	Ivy Lynn Gates
Dan Blair	Johnny Rose
Cindy Coley	Jeanne Sparks

1978 SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFICERS

AND TEACHERS

<u>SUPERINTENDENT:</u>	Bert Meares
<u>ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT:</u>	Leonard Davis
	Dan Yeomans
<u>CLASS #1 NURSERY:</u>	Ellen Faye Chadwick
<u>CLASS # 2 KINDERGARTEN:</u>	Donna Garner
<u>CLASS # 3 PRIMARY:</u>	Janice Wynne
<u>CLASS # 4 JUNIOR:</u>	Barbara Yeomans
	Ann Meares, Assistant
<u>CLASS #5-6 INTERMEDIATE:</u>	Nancy Ward
<u>CLASS # 8 ADULT:</u>	Barbara Pigott
	Eloise Blair, Assistant

STRAITS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP ROLL

1978

Paul Anthony	David Chadwick
Gertrude Anthony	Mamie Chadwick
Ann Hitch	Lillie "Ginger" Chadwick
Eva Bailey	Dennis Chadwick
Edward P. Blair	Gladys Chadwick
Anna Belle Blair	Donald Chadwick
William E. Blair	Charles Chadwick
Eloise S. Blair	Leon Chadwick
Alice Chadwick	Durwood Chadwick
Aubrey Chadwick	George Harvey Chadwick
Sybil Chadwick	Patricia H. Chadwick
Ellen S. Chadwick	Gerald Chadwick
Carroll Chadwick	Harvey Chadwick
Clay Chadwick	Thelma H. Chadwick
Drusilla Chadwick	Mildred Chadwick
Douglas Chadwick	Lafayette Chadwick
Ronald Chadwick	Connie Chadwick

Darlene Chadwick	Woodrow Chadwick
Thelma L. Chadwick	Cappie Chadwick
Ralph Chadwick	Grace Guthrie
Viola Chadwick	Sharon K. Guthrie
Sherry Nelson	Douglas Damren
Nancy Gaskill	Evelyn Damren
Ivey Chadwick	Ira P. Damren
Belzora Chadwick	Barbara Damren
Ivey T. Chadwick	Virgie Davis
Stacy Chadwick	Gladys Davis
Cooper Chadwick	Leonard Davis
Walter Chadwick	Sarah Davis
Evelyn Chadwick	David Davis
Genevieve Chadwick	Estelle Davis
Steve Styron	Sallie Davis
Cathy Styron	Susan D. Brooks
Dale Johnson	Robert Fink
Robin Styron	Barbara Fink
Abbie Guthrie	Thurman Garner
Edna E. Chadwick	Donna Garner

Ivey Lynn Gates	Twyla Pigott
Linda Gates	Murray Pigott
Jane Gibble	Myrtle Pigott
Erma Hansen	Joe Pigott
David Hansen	Osborne "Bill" Pigott
Algernon "Al" Hubbard	Eloise Pigott
Ruth Hubbard	Charles Pigott
Ella Jones	Lida Pigott Burney
Julie Joy	Vincent Pigott
Iris McGee	Pearl Pigott
Bert Meares	Emmitt Piper
Anne Meares	Lucy Piper
James Meares	William Schaaf
Ina Misner	Patricia Schaaf
Nola Murphrey	Elizabeth A. Schaaf
W. B. Norman	Ida P. Scott
Clara Norman	Elmer Smith
Florence Pigott	Mamie Smith
Barbara Pigott	Ina Smith
Lester Pigott	Aleeze Smith

Nathaniel Smith	Giles Willis
Nathaniel Smith, Jr.	Winifred Willis
Kandace S. Davis	Dan Yeomans
Lena Stewart	Barbara Yeomans
Jane Wade	Clyde Ward, Jr.
Pauline Wade	Nancy Ward
Herman Watson	Clyde "Lonnie" Ward III
Steve Watson	Patricia Gwendylen Ward
Ben Watson	Sheldon Ward
Gerald Whitehurst	Fannie Watson
Mae Whitehurst	George Long
Roger Wayne Whitehurst	Nancy Thomas
Jeanette Covington	David Thomas
Olive Whitehurst	H. Clay Wynne
	Janice Wynne

PASTORS SERVING TWO HUNDRED YEARS

STRAITS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The names of the preachers and/or circuit riders that served Straits prior to the formation of the Straits-Beaufort Circuit in 1816 were obtained from "Methodism in American History" by William Warren Sweet.

- 1766 The first Methodist Societies were formed in the homes of Philip Embury in New York and Robert Strawbridge in Maryland.
- 1772 Joseph Pilmoor was the first itinerant Methodist preacher to visit North Carolina after the organization of the Societies.
- 1775 There was a Carolina Circuit and Robert Williams made plans for a six-week visit to the Colony and perhaps he did.
- 1776 Edward Dumble, Francis Poythress and Isham Tatum were sent as preachers for the circuit. At the beginning of the year there were 683 members; at the close of the year there were 930 members.
- 1777 The circuit was called the North Carolina Circuit,

with John King, John Dickens, Lee Roy Cole, and Edward Pride as preachers. It is not known how long they served the circuit. Neither is it known how many lay preachers served our area during this period.

1785 Bishop Asbury preached at Straits Chapel on December 22nd.

1785--Philip Bruce 1790	Glenn and Bridgers Arendell
1791--James O'Kelly	1810--Bridgers Arendell with William Compton, Assistant.
1792--Samuel Cowles and Peter Gautier	1811--Robert Thompson
1793--Simon Carlisle	1812--Humphrey Wood
1794--Aquilla Sugg	1813--Erasmus Stimson and R. F. Carney
1795--Christopher S. Mooring	1814--Thomas Mann, James Thomas, and Richard Wright
1796--William Ormond	1815--John Doyle
1797--James Jones and John Turner	1816--Straits-Beaufort Charge was formed with a membership of 268 whites and 228 colored
1798--No Names Recorded 1806	
1806--William Barnes, James	

1816--Waddell Johnson	1833--Robert H. Hill
1817--William Starr	1834--William Closs
1818--Stephen Rowe	1835--John W. Lewis
1819--Enoch Johnson	1836--Thompson Garrard
1820--William Harris	1837--J. McMasters
1821--Robert Wilkinson	1838--William Colson
1822--Mann Dutton	1839
1823--Joseph Carle	1840--Cullen Pridgen
1824--Joshua Leigh	1841--Washington S. Chaffin
1825--Thompson Garrard	1842--Richard L. Wynne
1826--John Pennabaker	1843--John R. McIntosh
1827--Irvin Atkinson	1844--Thompson Garrard
1828--James W. Bell	1845--Nathan A. Hooker
1829--George A. Bain	1846--Thomas C. Moses
1830--Beaufort became a separate charge with a membership of 164 whites and 94 colored.	1847--Peter H. Joyner
1830--Henry Evans	1848--Charles Parker
1831--Henry Weatherly	1849--William Parks
1832	1850--Zebedee Rush
	1851--John Jones
	1852

- 1853--T. B. James
- 1854--J. J. Hines
- 1855--J. H. Hill
- 1856--Simeon D. Peeler
- 1857--M. H. Hight
- 1858--Joseph Wheeler
- 1859--Zion Meekins
- 1860--John C. Brent
- 1861--Thaddeus Troy
- 1862--John D. Beane
- John Jones and
John Rumley served
during Civil War
- 1865--Richard S. Webb
- 1866--No Preacher during
this year
- 1867--Richard Dunkley
- 1868--James B. Webb
- 1869--Edward H. Wilson
- 1870
- 1871--William D. Moore
- 1872--John Brogden
- 1873--Joseph Wheeler,
"Uncle Wheeler"
and Alexander Raven
held services at
Straits at least
once a month in
absence of regular
preachers.
- 1874--Christie A. Gault
- 1875--George W. Hardison
- 1876--No preacher assigned
- 1877--Nathan A. Hooker
- 1878--M.C. Fields
- 1879--Hezekiah Farrow
- 1880--James O. Guthrie
- 1881--Daniel A. Watkins
- 1882
- 1883--Frank B. McCall
- 1884--Joseph G. Nelson
- 1885--Edmund D. Hoover
- 1886--1888
- 1889--F. S. Becton
- 1890

1891--George W. Starling--Dec.	1914--H. M. Jackson--Dec.
1892--Dec.	1915--Dec.
1892--J. P. Pate--Dec.	1915--J. L. McNear--Nov.
1893	1916--Nov.
1893--William Y. Everton--Dec.	1916--M. E. Hocutt--Nov.
1895--Dec.	1919--Nov.
1897--Thomas J. Browning--Dec.	1919--J. M. Carraway--Nov.
1898--Dec.	1920--Nov.
1899--C. P. Snow--Dec.	1921--Samuel Leffers--Nov.
1900--Dec.	1922--Nov.
1900--J. E. Bristowe--Dec.	1922--H. M. Jackson--Nov.
1901--Dec.	1924--Nov.
1901--F. E. Dixon--Dec.	1925--E. B. Bell--Nov.
1903	1927--
1903--E. H. Creel--Dec.	1927--E. W. Downum--Nov.
1904--Dec.	1929--Nov.
1904--B. F. Watson--Dec.	1929--E. L. Stack--Nov.
1906--Dec.	1930--Nov.
1906--W. M. Dargan--Dec.	1930--Byron Shankle
1908--Dec.	finished Stack'
1908--W. J. Watson--Dec.	year.
1909--Dec.	1930--J. C. Harmon
1909--W. E. Trotman--Dec.	1931--
1911--Dec.	1931--F. B. Brandenburg--Nov.
1911--N. B. Strickland--Dec.	1934--Nov.
1912--Dec.	1934--J. L. Joyce--Nov.
1912--W. B. Humble--Dec.	1937--Nov.
1914--Dec.	

1937--C. W. Guthrie--Nov.
1939--Nov.

1939--C. B. Harris--Nov.
1942

1942--L.D. Hayman--Nov.
1943--Nov.

1943--C. M. Mithcell--Nov.
1945--Nov.

1945--E. R. Bromley--Nov.
1946

1947--H. L. Harrell
1950

1951--A. C. Regan
1952

1953--D. M. Tyson
1955

1955--Henry Gibat
1957

1958--C. Ray West
1961

1962--L. C. Swink
1965

1966--C. H. Brigman
1968

1969--R. D. Shinkle
1972

1973--C. I. Umstead
1976

1977--Wayne Thomas

1980 - RICHARD J. DERRETH