

# *A Stroll Through History...*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SUPPORT

The activity that is the subject of this Brochure has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, and administered by the State Historic Preservation Office of Utah. The contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior or the Utah State Historic Preservation Office, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior or the Utah State Historic Preservation Office.



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## *A Walking Tour Of Providence City*



Providence City was first settled in 1859 by Ira Rice, a 65-year old veteran of the War of 1812 from Massachusetts, and Hopkin Mathews, accompanied by his teenage daughter Elizabeth. They were joined by the Bowen, Busenbark, Campbell, Clark, Clifford, Dees, Bunn, Durfey, Gassman, Gates, Hall, Lane, Lau, Maddison, Rammell, Theurer, Thompson, Williams and Wright families.

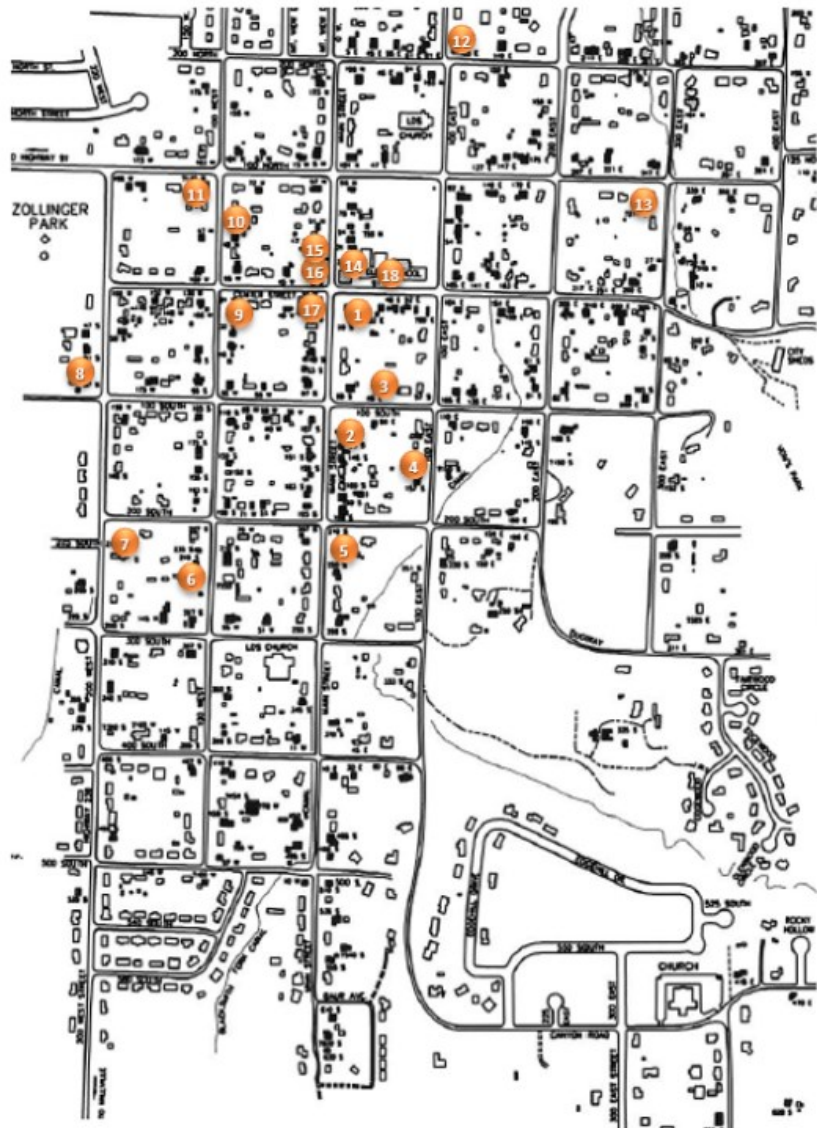
Obedient to the instructions given the pioneers by Brigham Young to build their homes close together to create closely-knit towns surrounded by their fields, the Providence settlers planned their town as they camped at the Big Spring.

During the first few weeks, until logs could be hauled from the canyons, home to each pioneer was the wagon box in which they came to the Valley. The wagon-box served as an all purpose room— living room, bedroom and closet, while the kitchen, a stone fireplace, was laid out on the ground.

Pioneer homes were simple structures built of logs with dirt roofs, floors of earth or rough-hewn boards, and window openings covered by pieces of cloth instead of scarce or unobtainable glass. Each home had a fireplace at one end where dry logs cheered the family on cold days and nights, and where the family meals simmered. Stoves and ranges, even of the old fashioned patterns were luxuries beyond most pioneer family finances.

## Providence

1. Old Rock Church  
10 South Main
2. Alma Morris & Sophia Mathews  
110 South Main
3. Hopkin & Margaret Mathews  
55 East 100 South
4. Benjamin R. Tibbitts  
157 South 100 East
5. Godfrey Fuhriman  
210 South Main
6. Bartschi Blacksmith Shop  
245 South 100 West
7. Lytton & Jerusha Mathews  
206 South 200 West
8. Henry & Eliza Zollinger  
87 South 200 West
9. Adolph & Louisa Baer  
94 West Center
10. John & Barbara Theurer  
52 North 100 West
11. John Francis Maddison  
104 West 100 North
12. Gottlieb & Katharine Gessel  
105 East 200 North
13. Margaret Mathews Rice Cabin  
274 East 100 North
14. Theurer Brothers Store  
2 North Main Street
15. Providence Post Office  
15 North Main Street
16. Barkle Service Station  
5 North Main Street
17. Providence Cooperative Mercantile Institution  
5 South Main
18. Providence Elementary School  
91 East Center Street





The magnificent stone building, also featured on the cover, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, in recognition of its "Architectural and Historical significance and to encourage its preservation." Its rich history goes back to the early settlement of Cache Valley. The first permanent European settlers arrived in the Valley in 1856. Construction of the "Rock Meeting House" began in 1869 and was completed in 1871. The buildings has now affectionately come to be known as the "Old Rock Church."



This home, built in 1902, is a 1½ -story Victorian frame home built on a stone foundation and sheathed in drop-novelty siding and fish-scale shingles. It is the finest example of the Eastlake style in Providence. This exuberant, decorative style was named for English architect Charles Locke Eastlake, who generated a new style of domestic architecture in America, featuring an abundance of wooden ornamentation. These elements included carved spindles, fan-shaped corner brackets, and lathe-turned columns, all of which are found on the Mathews Home.



This stucco-covered central-passage type 1½ -story house was built circa 1882. The central passage type was common in the mid-to-late 19th century in Utah; however, this is an unusual example of the type built perpendicular to the street. It is possible that the owner planned, but did not complete, a cross-wing to the house. The house combines two popular styles of the 19th century: the Italianate style, as seen in the projecting bay window on the south end, and the Gothic Revival style, illustrated by the steeply pitched dormers in the upper level. There is also a historic coop in the rear.



This classically-symmetrical frame house was built circa 1885. The 1½ -story house is covered in drop-novelty siding and has a historic rear addition on the southwest corner. The house type is central Passage and the style is Gothic Revival, based on the steep pitch of the upper-floor dormers. The façade is divided into five bays on the main floor and three bays on the upper level. The upper level features what is commonly known as an angel door. Angel doors are found on the second floors of many Utah houses, and occasionally they were built without corresponding balconies, hence the name "angel door." It is believed the doors had a practical use for getting large furniture that would not fit through narrow 19th-century staircases into second-story rooms. The property also includes a hewn-log cabin, historic garage, and a wrought-iron fence.





This house, built circa 1897, is a classically-symmetrical frame house on a stone foundation. Two unusual features of the house are the central dormer, and full-size windows in the end gables. The wrap-around porch, with its hipped roof and Tuscan-style columns may have been a 20th century addition to the home. The house has been expanded to the rear on its gently sloped site.



The Bartschi Blacksmith Shop is a one-story commercial building built in two phases between 1890 and 1910. The older portion of the building is frame and originally covered in unpainted drop-novelty siding, which is visible on the south elevation but obscured by mature bushes and clinging vines. Around 1910, the building was expanded to the north, a false-front completely obscuring the older portion. The surrounds of the openings feature courses of wood blocks cut to resemble traditional brick, creating Victorian-style segmental arched "brick" hoods. In 1883, Fredrick Bartschi immigrated from Switzerland with his wife, Suzanna Stauffer, and their family. Fredrick was a farmer who also did some blacksmithing; the oldest portion of the shop may have been used by him in the late 1880s. His son, John Bartschi, a full-time blacksmith and repairman, was responsible for enlarging the original building to its current size around 1910. John had great talent for inventing and repairing mechanical devices and machines of all kinds. Because his shop contained many useful and unique pieces of equipment made from scratch, many in the community considered it more of a machine shop than blacksmith shop. He was known for his craftsmanship and built the gates at the Edgewood Hall estate.



The Lytton & Jerusha Mathews House, built in 1907, is a one-story frame residence draped in novelty-siding. It is a simple rectangle, measuring 18x32 feet. The entrance is located at the southeast corner, which has a small entrance foyer within a screened porch. The north gable features alternating diamond and circular shingles and a diamond-shaped attic window. The south gable trim has similar shingles, but a small double-hung window. The wood has aged to a natural gray color and appears not to have been painted. Lytton Young Mathews was grandson of early Providence settlers Hopkin and Margaret Mathews. The next known occupants of the home were Joseph and Lulu Keefe, who purchased the property from the Mathews in 1922. In April 1948, the Keefes sold the property to its current owners, Delmer and Jean Braegger, who lived with their young family in the frame home during the construction of their new home on the south side of the property. The historic-period occupants of the Mathews Home represent the economic diversity of Providence. For example, Lytton Mathews was a descendant of the town's first agricultural settlers. He worked in the local sugar factory, but moved his family to Wyoming to become a rancher. Joseph R. Keefe worked in the poultry industry in Providence, but also held an office job in his later years.





The Henry and Eliza Zollinger House was built circa 1915, possibly in phases. The house is an unusual hybrid of the Victorian Eclectic and the Bungalow styles, built on a concrete foundation. The walls are built of striated red brick. The roof consists of a main gable running east to west, a secondary (cross) gable to the north, and a one-story frame addition on the west elevation. Henry M. and Eliza S. Zollinger represent the second-generation of Providence residents. Like most Providence residents at the time, they made their living from agriculture while making significant contributions to the civic and social development of the community.



Adolph was the first postmaster in Providence and built a special room on the southeast corner of his home to serve as the post office, so the original construction is probably between 1885 and 1890. The house has been expanded multiple times, but all within the historic period. The house is built on a stone foundation encased in concrete (circa 1915). The brick masonry is laid in common bond with headers every sixth course. The only exterior modification is the wrought-iron rail around the small balcony, which early photographs show as being wooden. The balcony door is the center of the west elevation, under a central gable and features a half-glass "angel" door. The door and windows feature corbelled brick hoods. The bungalow porch wraps around the east side. The east half of the north porch was enclosed in brick in 196. The late-turned posts may also date from that period. Adolph Baer assisted in the construction of the Logan LDS Temple, the Logan Tabernacle and the Providence School, so he may have built the house himself. He planted numerous orchards and his trees were the first in Providence to successfully produce peaches. The Adolph Baer family is representative of the many contributions made by Swiss immigrants to the community.



The John & Barbara Theurer house is a 1½-story classical structure with a central passage plan. Tax records indicate it was built in 1887, but the actual construction is closer to 1880. There is a one-story frame addition on the rear elevation, which appears to have been built in phases between 1900 and 1930. The house is built on a rubble foundation; the yellowish brick is laid in common bond with headers every sixth course. It has a more solid course of brick as a header for each door and window opening. The house is classically symmetrical, but features the steeply-pitched gables over the upper windows characteristic of the Gothic Revival style. The interior has been upgraded recently, but retains its Victorian feel. John Theurer served as a school trustee, water master, sexton and constable. The Theurer House and its early residents represent the transition of Providence from a settlement outpost to a stable farming community by the early 20th century.





The John Francis Maddison House is a two-story, classical and Greek Revival style double-cell house with an original lean-to. The house was constructed of stone around 1875 and covered with stucco in the early 20th century. The small stucco-covered structure with a pyramid roof was added circa 1925 for the home's first bathroom. The larger frame building was a summer kitchen built circa 1890. John, who also went by Frank, came to Providence in the Spring of 1859. In October 1860, he married Emily Hemming, the first school teacher in Providence. She was the mother of five sons, all of whom died in infancy. On April 10, 1876, Frank married a second wife, Emma Dell. Emma had six children, but only two lived to maturity. Emma died on March 9, 1884 and Emily raised her young children, Walter and Emily (also called Lillie). Emily also raised Frank's niece, Emma Florence. Emily is credited with being the first professional candy maker in Cache Valley. She sold several varieties of stick and hard candy to the Providence Co-op Store and the Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution in Logan. Frank became the town's first Justice of the Peace in 1872.



The Gottlieb and Katharine Gessel House is a 1½ -story four-square within the Victorian Eclectic style and was built by Gottlieb around 1897. The house has a truncated pyramidal roof with dormers on each of the four elevations. It is built on a rubble foundation with four courses of red brick at the water table. The main yellowish brick is laid in a running bond, with red brick used for accents at the window hood moldings. The sills on the primary elevations are stone, with rowlock brick on the secondary elevations. Gottlieb and Katharine immigrated to Providence from Germany with their children in 1880 and he continued his profession of brickmaking. He found clay just north of Town limits. The first brick made by Gottlieb was used to build the John Theurer and Ernest Kendrick homes and the titling office. As Gottlieb's reputation grew, he furnished bricks for many larger structures: the Logan Sugar Factory, the Borden Milk Plant, several Utah State Agricultural College buildings, and many LDS church buildings. The Gessel House is an excellent example of the craftsmanship of Gottlieb Gessel.



The Margaret Mathews Rice cabin was built circa 1870. Secondary sources for the early history of Providence indicate the cabin has been at its current location since 1871, but conflicting information suggests the cabin may have been moved there around 1890. The cabin is a 1½ -story single cell dwelling constructed of saw-cut logs with dovetail notching. Wood strips on the façade suggest that the owner planned to attach siding to the building but historic photographs indicate this never happened. There are two original windows and a door on both the east and west elevations. The south elevation has an addition built circa 1910, possibly a screen porch that was enclosed circa 1925. The gable trim of the rear addition is square butt shingles. The house has not been occupied since 1950 and is currently used as a playhouse and for storage.





The Theurer Brothers Store is a one-story, one-part commercial-block building. From 1905, when the building was constructed, until 1934, it was a department/grocery store. In 1934, the an addition was completed that housed the Providence post office and a barber shop. In 1972, the building was remodeled again and began operating as the Country Shopper. At that same time, an addition was constructed that held the Country Boy Drive-in on the north east side of the building. The County Shopper closed in 1980 and the Country Boy Drive-in closed in 1993. Since that time, the building has undergone significant renovations and is currently home to several professional offices, including an engineering firm and a residential home builder.

Architecturally, the building was constructed on a stone foundation with masonry materials and narrow, fixed Arts & Crafts styled windows. Over time, it has had a brick wainscot exterior, cedar shakes and other façades. In 2007 it was significantly remodeled to its present façade of stucco and EIFS and decorative veneer brick..



The Providence Post Office was located at 15 North Main Street from 1961-1996, when it moved to its current location at 411 West 100 North. The building was constructed in 1961 and is an example of a contemporary one-story commercial building. During the time it served as the Post Office, the building had a brick façade and a concrete foundation. In 1996, when the Post Office relocated and the building began functioning as the Cache County Library, the interior was completely remodeled to accommodate the library. Additionally, at that time, a gabled asphalt-shingle roof was added and the brick exterior was replaced with a stucco/EIFS cover.

Prior to 1961, the Providence Post Office was located in several buildings in Providence. At various times, it was located in the Barkle Service Station (1955-61), Theurer Brothers Store (1934-46), the home of Postmaster Adolph Baer (1898-1909) and other unidentified locations throughout town.



The Barkle Service station has operated almost continuously since it was first operated as a gas station by the Blue Light Gas & Oil Refining Company in 1929. The Utah Oil Refining Company took ownership of the station in 1932 and operated it through the Depression until 1940 when it was sold to Lowell Barkle. Lowell ran the service station until 1965 when Monte Thompson and Karl Bindrup ran the station. Since that time, it has been operated by a number of individuals but has continued to function as a service station/mechanic shop.

The Barkle Service Station has not been significantly altered since its original historic construction, including a 477 square foot addition built in 1955. It has served as a key feature of Providence's historic district since its construction, with the block having housed the Post Office, City Hall, a confectionary store and other businesses at different points in its history.



This building, a single-story, one block commercial building, was built in 1885 to house the Providence Cooperative Mercantile Institution (PCMI), which had been operating since 1869 and which was part of the LDS Church's program to encourage its members to trade with and purchase goods from LDS merchants. PCMI operated independently until 1910 when it was taken into receivership by the Church-wide Zions Cooperative Mercantile Institution. In 1914, PCMI closed for good when the building and inventory were destroyed by fire.

Despite the closure of PCMI due to the 1914 fire, the building was rebuilt in 1915 on the original foundation and retaining the original walls and façade. Since the time it was rebuilt, the building has operated as: FH Reddish & Sons, Co. (1915-1920); Providence Cash Store (1920-1925); Quality Cash Store (1925-1931); Watkins Grocery & Confectionary (1932-1952); Watkins & Sons Printing (1963-1998). Other businesses have leased or owned the building and, for a time during World War II, the building was closed, despite Watkins Grocery continuing to own the building. The building has been vacant since 2015.

The site of the building is on the original Providence settlement road and remains historically significant to the town.



From the earliest days of Providence City, the school has traditionally been located on the block that runs from Center Street to 100 North between Main Street and 100 East (School Block). Providence City's first school was built in 1859 and was located at approximately 94 North Main Street, the north-west corner of the School Block. After relocating to a nearby corner for several years, the school was brought back to its earlier location in 1880, where Providence Elementary has remained since that time.

For many years after Cache Valley was first settled, building materials were hard to come by, so public buildings typically served many purposes. Providence Elementary served not only as the educational center of Providence, but also as a central location for religious and civic activities.

In 1872, Providence residents began plans to construct a larger, permanent school, which was completed in 1880 and can be seen in the black/white photograph on the right. This was the first permanent school structure built on the School Block. Continued growth in Providence allowed for a large, two-story masonry building to be constructed in 1905 and that building was used until the early 1980s. Between 1939 and 1992, the 1905 school saw the addition of gymnasium, kitchen and school facilities (1939), new classrooms (1957 and 1972), a media center (1969). With the last addition in 1992, the old schoolhouse was finally demolished.

For more than 150 years, Providence Elementary School has served as an anchor of educational and civic interaction for the community.

