

STATE OF OREGON INVENTORY  
 HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
 State Historic Preservation Office  
 Oregon State Parks, Salem, 97310



County Linn  
 Theme 9-A; 10-A *1974 C ARCH. RELIGION SETTLEMENT*  
 Name (Common) Providence Pioneer Church  
 (Historic) Providence Church  
 Address Between Larwood and Crabtree, Oregon  
 Present Owner Providence Pioneer Church  
 (Address) Scio, Oregon  
 Original Use Church  
 Date of Construction 1898  
*STYLE: GOTHIC REVIVAL*

Physical characteristics and statements of historical significance:

Providence Pioneer Church is a one story, wood frame building with a rectangular shape. The building has four bays of four-over-four, double hung sash windows in its north and south elevations. The exterior is shiplap. The building is set on a stone foundation. Sitting atop the gable roof at the west (front) elevation is a square base for a square belfry with a cone roof. The belfry has louvers.

Writing about this church, Floyd Mullen stated: "On April 9, 1853, a little group of Baptist followers met in an oak grove on the Joab Powell Donation Land Claim a mile north of the present Providence church and decided to form a congregation. Nineteen members signed the charter and appointed Rev. J. G. Berkeley as minister. Rev. Berkeley served the congregation for four years, followed by Joab Powell throughout the next five years. During this time, Providence church received state-wide attention because of its rapid growth in membership and Joab Powell became the most famous preacher and circuit rider ever to proclaim the gospel in the Pacific Northwest."

A log building served this congregation from 1856 until 1893. The present building was erected between 1893 and 1898.

Continue back if necessary

Recorded by Stephen Dow Beckham Date 27 June 1976 Sources Consulted:

For Oregon State Historic Preservation Office Mullen, Floyd. Land of Linn. Lebanon, Ore.:  
 Dalton's Printing, 1971, pp. 91-93.

Please enclose map Township 11 <sup>N</sup><sub>S</sub> Range 1 <sup>E</sup><sub>W</sub> Section 10

OREGON INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM

HIST. NAME: Providence Pioneer  
Missionary Baptist Church

SHPO INVENTORY NO.: 22

LINN COUNTY NO.: 22

COMMON NAME: Providence Church

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: ca. 1893-1898

ADDRESS: 35787 Richardson Gap Rd.

ORIGINAL USE: Church

OWNER: Providence Missionary  
Baptist Church, c/o Leonard  
Shelton, Route 2 Box 53, Scio, OR

PRESENT USE: Church

ARCH./BLDR.:

T/R/S: T11S R1W Section 10

STYLE: Vernacular

MAP NO.: 11 1W 10 TAX LOT: 400

QUAD: Lebanon, 15'

BLDG  STRUC  DIST  
 SITE  OBJ

THEME: Culture: Religion, 19th  
Century Architecture/Settlement

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PLAN TYPE/SHAPE: Gable-front/rectangular

NO. OF STORIES: 1

FOUNDATION MATERIAL: Concrete

BASEMENT (Y/N): Y

ROOF FORM & MATERIALS: Gable roof clad with wood shingles.

WALL CONSTRUCTION: Wood

STRUCTURAL FRAME: Wood

PRIMARY WINDOW TYPE: 4 over 4 double-hung sash windows with cornice style heads.

EXTERIOR SURFACING MATERIALS: Horizontal drop siding, capped corner boards, frieze composed of vertical boards.

DECORATIVE FEATURES: Square, hipped-roof bell tower with spire located on gable ridge.

OTHER: Small, apse-like, one-story projecting bay on rear elevation; double leaf entry doors with transom on rear elevation.

CONDITION:  EXCELLENT  GOOD  FAIR  DETERIORATED  MOVED  
(DATE)

EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS (DATED): See text.

NOTEWORTHY LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

ASSOCIATED FEATURES: Providence Cemetery adjacent to church. Monument dedicated to Joab Powell and other church founders located in front of church.

KNOWN ARCHEOLOGICAL FEATURES:



SETTING: The Providence Pioneer Missionary Baptist Church is located approximately six miles northeast of Lebanon and six miles southeast of Scio, on the east side of Richardson Gap Road.

The church is situated on the northwest facing slope of a hill and fronts west with Providence Cemetery located to the east and south of the church building. In front of the church is a granite monument dedicated to Joab Powell and other founders of the church. A parking lot is located on the south side of the building.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (HISTORICAL AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE, DATES, EVENTS, PERSONS, CONTEXTS). USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY:

In 1853, a group of Baptists, many of whom had emigrated from Missouri the previous year, met to form a congregation in the area of the forks of the Santiam River. The church was organized by Joab Powell, J. G. Berkley, and R. Cheadle. Nineteen members formed the charter and appointed Reverend J. G. Berkley as minister. Joab Powell named the church saying, "Since Providence has led us to this place and prospered us in the forming of a church, why not call it Providence Baptist Church". At first, the members met in the homes of various members. Later they met at Shilo School (Providence School).

A log church building was erected in the mid-1850's on two acres of land (in the location of the present church) transferred to the trustees of the Providence Pioneer Baptist Church by Philip and Ann Carmical. The log church had puncheon floors and a shake roof. Doors were located on each corner and the benches were divided by a wooden board to separate the men and the women. Candles hung on the side walls.

At about the same time that the log church was constructed, Joab Powell became pastor. Under the leadership of Powell, church membership grew from 19 to 400. In all, Powell is reputed to have converted 3,000 souls during his 21 years in Oregon. Standing at six feet and weighing 300 pounds, legends have been passed down about this backwoods preacher.

Joab Powell was born in Tennessee in 1799. Prior to emigrating to Oregon, Powell developed a reputation as a circuit rider in Missouri. Powell arrived in Linn County in 1852 locating a claim approximately one mile north of the present church. One description of Powell says, "he was homespun in his talk, but sincere and honest. His very uncouthness, disregard for anything but the simple fundamentals of life, his prodigious strength and energy, coupled with his stentorian voice--which it was said could be heard a mile when he discoursed or preached--made him a successful saver of souls. He was kin to the people among whom he labored and understood them as they understood him".

Joab Powell preached all over the Willamette Valley and as far south as the Umpqua region. He also dedicated the first church in Prineville in 1870. He established several other congregations in Linn County including Liberty Church (1853) northwest of Sweet Home, the North Santiam Baptist Church (1856), and the Washington Butte Baptist Church near Lebanon. Joab Powell died in 1873.

In the spring of 1893, the construction of the present church building was begun. The church was not completed and dedicated until 1898, however. The current church was built in the same general location as the former log church. It has been said that church services have been continuously held at Providence Baptist Church, although membership was once as low as five people.

One Sunday, June 15, 1924, a granite monument was placed in front of the church. The monument is dedicated to Joab Powell and the charter members of the church.

Architecturally, Providence Pioneer Missionary Baptist Church is generally intact. Some alterations occurred very recently. Alterations include replacing the original stone foundation with a concrete foundation and adding a basement. Two basement entries were also added: one on the main facade and one on the rear elevation. Two small aluminum sash windows replace an original window on the north (side) elevation. On the main facade, the original paneled double-leaf entry doors have been replaced and a gable roof entry porch has been added. The integrity of the church's interior has not been determined.

The Providence Pioneer Missionary Baptist Church is associated with Joab Powell. Joab Powell has been called the outstanding figure in all Linn County church history (Wheeler, 1983). Another writer states that Joab Powell was the most famous preacher and circuit rider ever to proclaim the gospel in the Pacific Northwest (Mullen, 1971). Certainly there is a body of legend about Powell that has become a part of Linn County and Oregon history. In 1935 a book, Joab Powell: Homespun Missionary by Leona M. Nichols, was published by the Metropolitan Press in Portland.

The Providence Pioneer Church exemplifies special elements of Linn County cultural history. The Providence Pioneer Missionary Baptist Church represents the efforts of certain early Linn County pioneers, many of them from Jackson County Missouri, to culturally reestablish themselves by creating similar institutions to those they left behind when they migrated west. The Providence Pioneer Church is a physical representation of the efforts of these first settlers.

The Providence Pioneer Church, embodies distinctive characteristics of its style, type, and period. The Providence Pioneer Church is typical of the small, rural, community church built in Linn County during the 19th and early 20th Centuries. Characteristics include a simple front-gabled rectangular volume with symmetrically fenestrated windows on the side elevations. Often a square bell tower and spire is located on the main facade. One writer notes, "At their best these churches were a typically beautiful feature of this region and in their gleaming whiteness seemed to typify all the integrity, simplicity, grace, and purity of idealized Christianity" (Wheeler, 1983).

#### SOURCES:

- (1) Haskins, Leslie L. et al. Linn County, Oregon Pioneer Settlers: Their Firwood Churches and Church Histories, Richard R. Milligan, Albany, Oregon, 1983.
- (2) Leever, Mrs. Edith. Personal Communication to Mary Kathryn Gallagher, February 6, 1987.



- (3) Linn County Deed Records, Book D, page 67.
- (4) Mullen, Floyd C. The Land of Linn, Dalton's Printing, Lebanon, Oregon, 1971.
- (5) "News and Comment". Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. 34, Portland, Oregon, 1933, page 183.
- (6) Nichols, Leona M. Joab Powell: Homespun Missionary, Metropolitan Press, Portland, Oregon, 1935.
- (7) Wheeler, L. M. History of Linn County, Oregon, Dick Milligan, Albany, Oregon, 1982.

NEGATIVE NO.:

RECORDED BY: Mary K. Gallagher

SLIDE NO.: 11S 1W 10 22

DATE: March 16, 1987

SHPO INVENTORY NO.: 22

LINN COUNTY NO.: 22

View to east



OREGON INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM

NAME: Providence Church  
ADDRESS: 35787 Richard Gap Road  
Scio, OR 97374

T/R/S: T11S R1W Section 10  
MAP NO.: 11 1W 10  
QUADRANGLE: Lebanon, 15'

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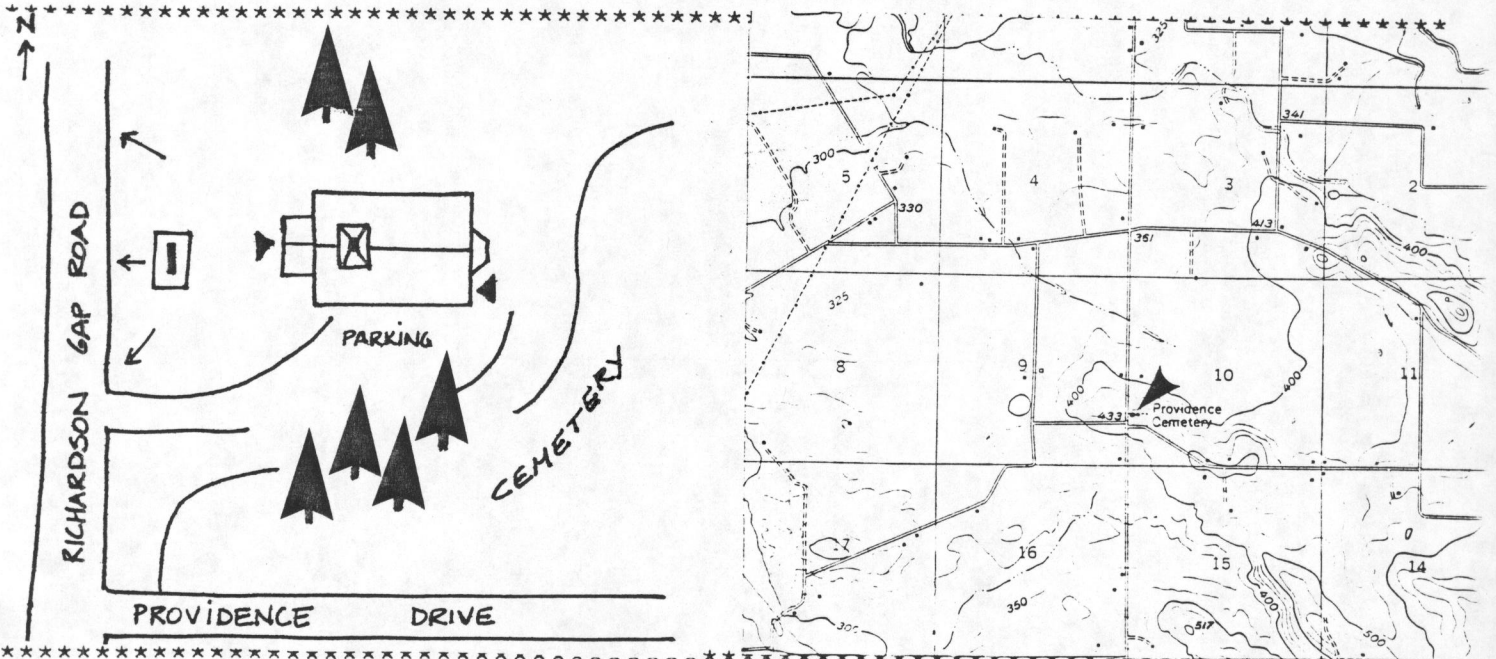
View to north



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NEGATIVE NO.:

SLIDE NO.: 11S 1W 10 22



GRAPHIC & PHOTO SOURCES:

LINN COUNTY NO.: 22

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