

NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: 87-91 E. Haines Street, Philadelphia PA

Postal code: 19144

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Providence Baptist Church

Current/Common Name: Providence Baptist Church

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: ☒ excellent ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☒ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: church, place of worship and community gathering place

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1943 to _____

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1939-1943

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Maurice J. Rosenthal, Richard R. Neely and H. Stanley

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: James Amaker

Original owner: Providence Baptist Church

Other significant persons: Rev. Roland C. Lamb, Sr. & Rev. Roland Lamb, Jr.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- ☐ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- ☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- ☐ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- ☐ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- ☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- ☐ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- ☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- ☒ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization Providence Baptist Church Date 8/1/2025

Name with Title Denise Way & PHC Staff Email thewayhouse@hotmail.com

Street Address 87 E Haines Street Telephone _____

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA, 19144

Nominator ☒ is ☐ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 8/1/2025

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 8/1/2025

Date of Notice Issuance: 8/1/2025

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Providence Baptist Church

Address: 87 E Haines St.

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19144

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 9-3-2025

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 10-10-2025

Date of Final Action: 10-10-2025

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected

Nomination of 87-91 E. Haines Street
To the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places



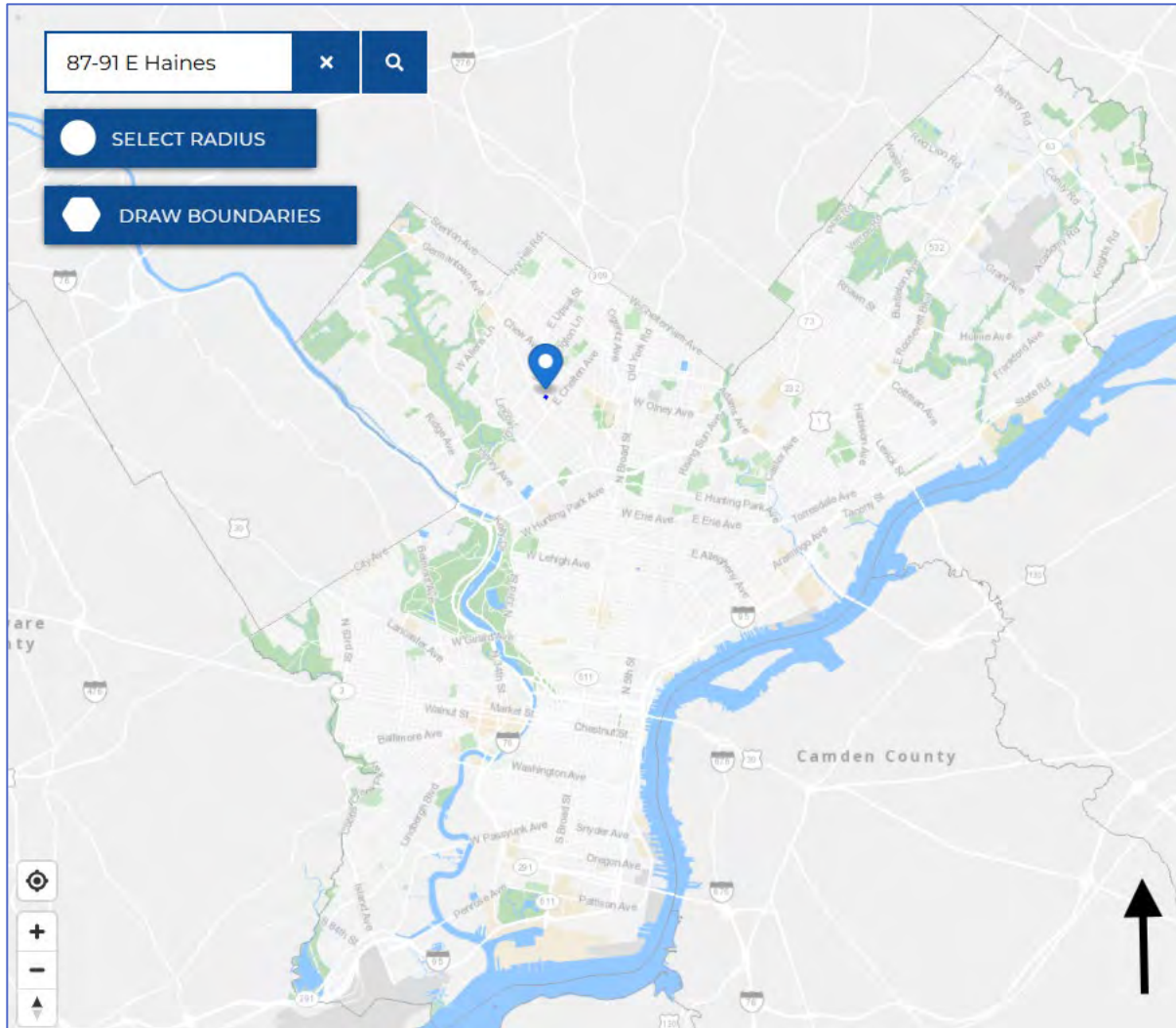
Providence Baptist Church
built 1940-1943



1. Aerial view captured through Google Earth and edited by author, showing location of Providence Baptist Church in relation to surroundings.

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

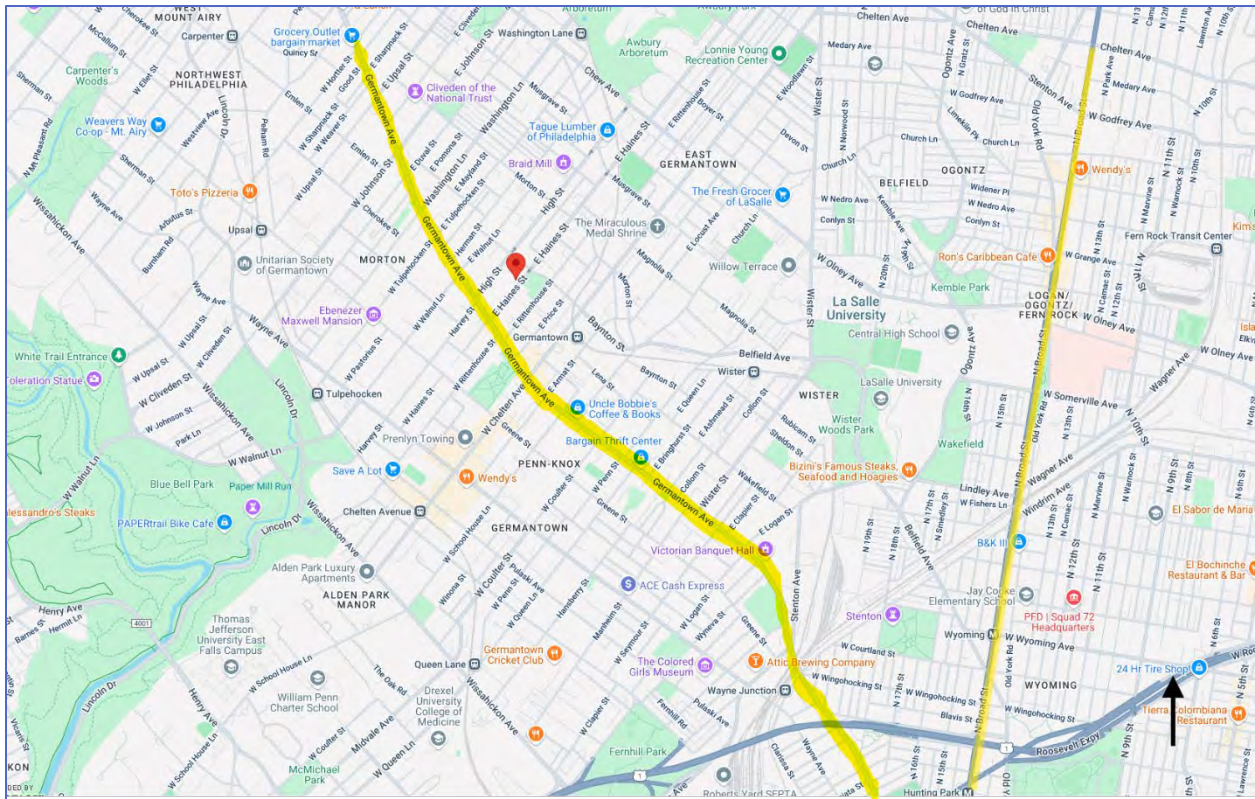
Providence Baptist Church, located at 87-91 E. Haines Street, is situated in the Germantown neighborhood, in northwest Philadelphia.



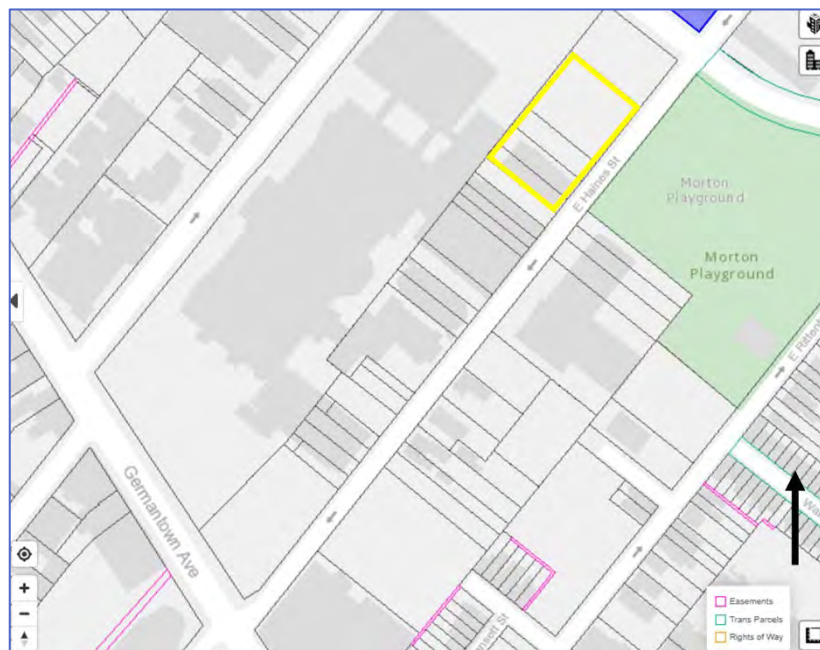
2. Map of Philadelphia's boundaries. Location of Providence Baptist Church indicated by blue map marker. Source: Philadelphia Office of Property Assessment, property.phila.gov.

(For a deeper dive into the evolution of this block over time, please view the nomination compiled by the Keeping Society of Philadelphia for Germantown High School:

<https://www.phila.gov/media/20191101141133/5915-41-Germantown-Ave-nomination.pdf>)



3. Map of section of northwest Philadelphia. Location of Providence Baptist Church indicated by red map marker. Germantown Avenue and North Broad Street are highlighted. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network, philageohistory.org.



4. Parcels of land owned by Providence Baptist Church outlined in yellow. Source: Atlas, atlas.phila.gov.



5. Closer view of parcels of land owned by Providence Baptist Church. Source: Atlas, atlas.phila.gov.



6. Parcels of land owned by Providence Baptist Church separated by transactions over time. Source: Atlas, atlas.phila.gov.

For the purposes of this nomination, only Parcels A and B are proposed as part of the nominated area. These are the parcels included in the address 87-91 E. Haines Street. Information on Parcel C is only included to note that the lot is also owned by Providence Baptist Church.

Parcel A – 87-89 E. Haines Street

This parcel was the first parcel to be acquired by Providence Baptist Church on July 21, 1939 for \$3,500. This parcel (87 E. Haines Street) was cleared by James Carlyle, “Mr. Jim” as he was known by his friends. It was recorded in Deed Book DWH vol. 779, page 29, with the following boundary:

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, described according to a Survey and Plan thereof made by John T. Campbell, Surveyor and Regulator of the Ninth Survey District on the Twenty-sixth day of May A.D. 1939 as follows, to wit:

BEGINNING at a point on the Northwesterly side of Haines Street (Forty feet wide) at the distance of Two hundred twenty feet eleven and one-quarter inches Southwestwardly from the Southwesterly side of Baynton Street (Fifty feet wide) in the Twenty-second Ward of the City of Philadelphia.

CONTAINING in front or breadth on the said Haines Street Fifty-eight feet and extending of that width in length or depth Northwestwardly at right angles to said Haines Street, on the Northeasterly line thereof One hundred twenty-five feet one and one-half inches and on the Southwesterly line thereof One hundred twenty-five feet four and one-half inches; and containing on the rear thereof Fifty-eight feet.

BEING known and numbered 87 East Haines Street

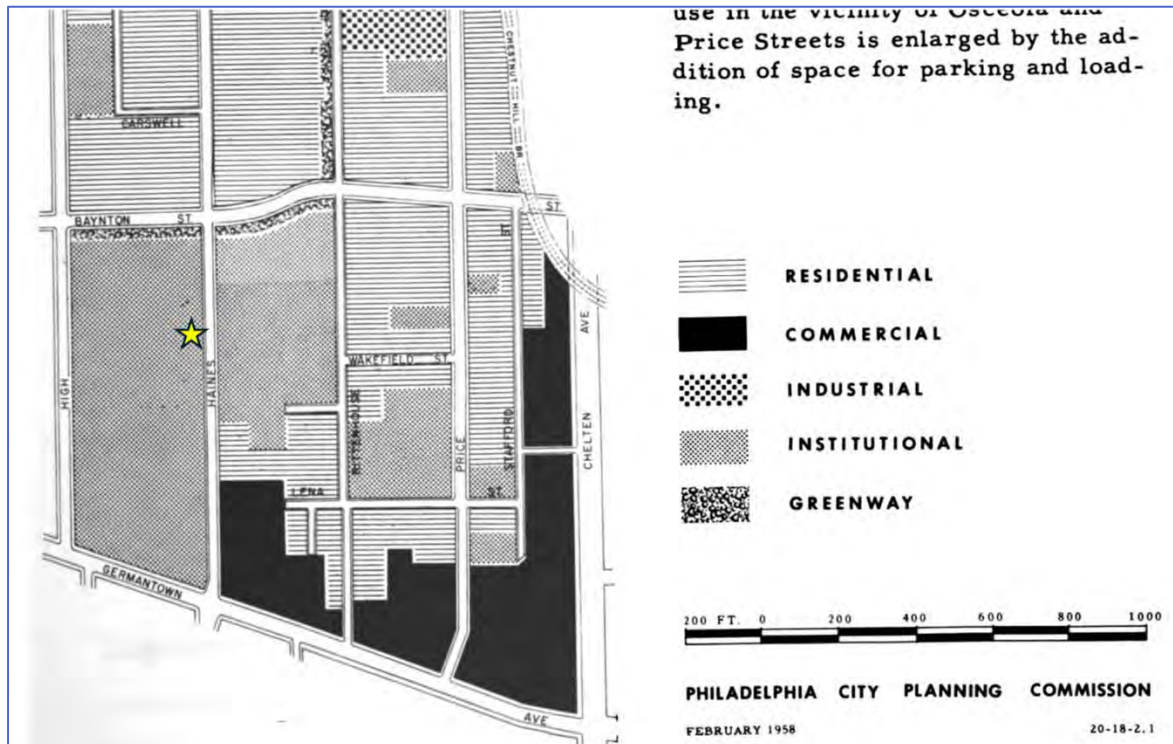
BEING the same premises which Edwin C. Ernhardt, by Indenture bearing date the Fourth day of August A.D. 1906, and recorded in the office for Recording of Deeds in and for the Couty of Philadelphia, in Deed Book W.S.V. No. 668 page 514 etc., granted and conveyed, inter alia, unto Warren R. Shriver, in fee.

AND the said Warren R. Shriver, being so thereof seized, departed this life on the Twenty-seventh day of April A.D. 1918, having first made and published his last Will and Testament in writing, bearing date the Twentieth day of March A.D. 1912, since his death duly proved and remaining on file in the office of the Register of Wills in Philadelphia County, in Will Book No. 400 page 251 etc.,

WHEREIN and WHEREBY he did give, devise and bequeath all the rest, residue and remainder of his estate, real, personal and mixed, unto the Germantown Trust Company, In Trust, for the uses and purposes as more fully set forth in his said Will.

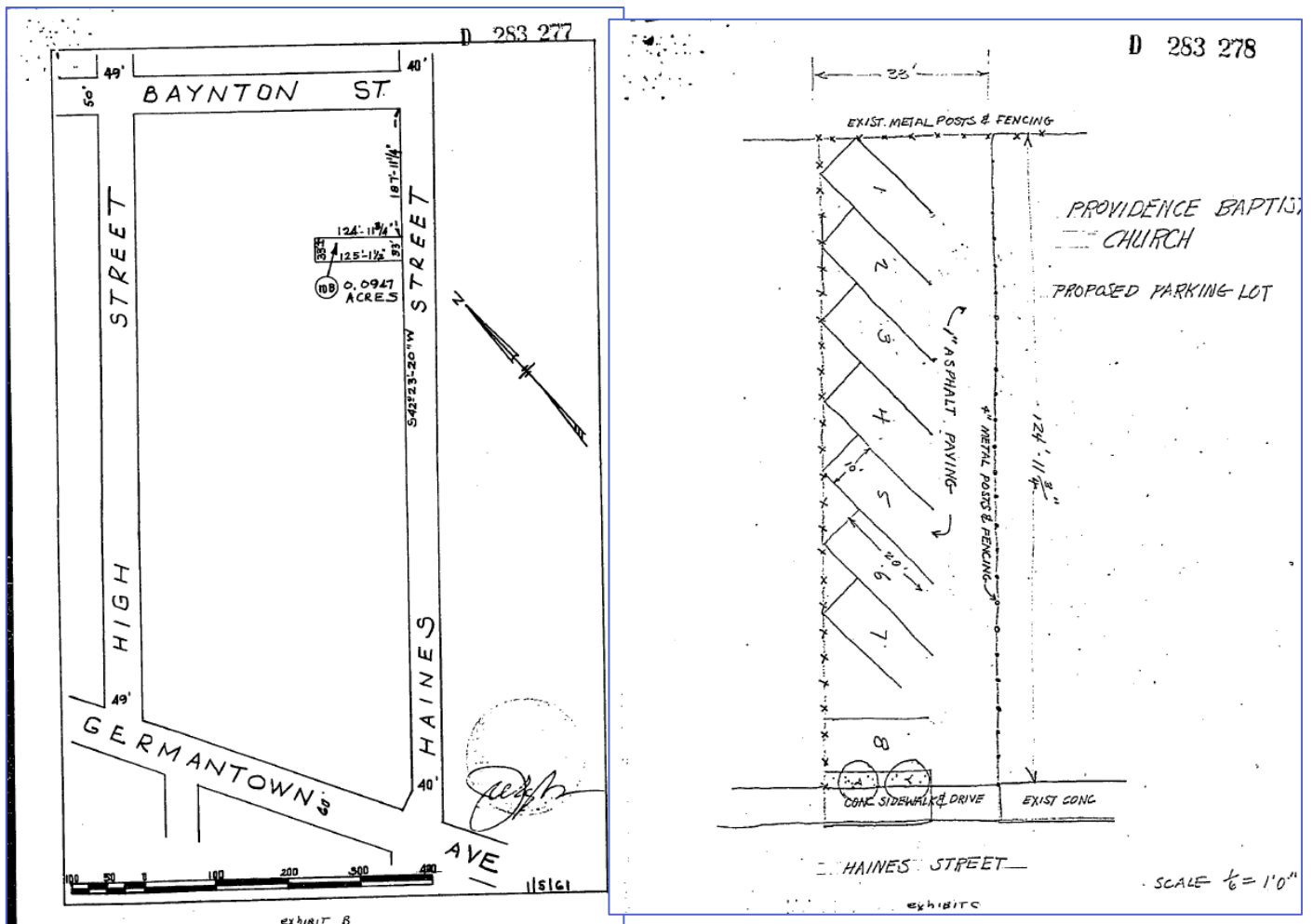
Parcel B – 91 E. Haines Street

Parcel B was part of the land that the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia appropriated by eminent domain for the development of the Morton Redevelopment Area. The lot was called “Morton Urban Renewal Area, Unit No. 10B”. It was conveyed to Providence Baptist Church as a cleared lot for \$900 with the stipulation that it contain “parking improvements” for a period of 25 years from May 1, 1959 “to be used only for parking purposes including access drives and walkways, sidewalks and landscaping.”¹



7. Portion of the area encompassing Morton Urban Renewal Area. Yellow star approximates location of 91 E. Haines Street and Providence Baptist Church. Land was cleared on the north and south side of Haines Street to give more open space to Germantown High School and the Robert Fulton Public School. Source: Morton Redevelopment Area Plan, Philadelphia City Planning Commission.

¹ Deed for 91 E. Haines Street between the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia and Providence Baptist Church. CAD 283 (September 1964): 261–78. Philadelphia Historical Land Records and Vitals Site.



8. Above: "Exhibit B" and "Exhibit C" from the deed between the Redevelopment Authority and Providence Baptist Church, outlining the boundaries and the proposed plan for parking. Source: Deed, CAD vol. 283 p. 277-278.

9. Below: View of the parking lot July 23, 2024. Source: Cyclomedia.



The lot boundaries, as noted in Philadelphia Deed Book CAD vol. 283, p. 261 for 91 E. Haines Street are as follows:

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

DEPOSITION TO THE PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHURCH

ALL THOSE CERTAIN Lots or Pieces of ground situate in the in the 22nd Ward of the City of Philadelphia, known as part of the Morton Area;

PARCEL NO. 10B – BEGINNING at a point on the northwesterly side of Haines Street 187 feet 11-1/4 inches southwest of the southwesterly side of Baynton St.; thence South 42°-23'-20" west along the northwesterly side of Haines Street 33 feet to a point; thence extending northwesterly along the boundary line of property now or late of the Board of Education 33 feet more or less to a point; thence extending southeasterly along a boundary line of property now or late of Henry and Sarah Jacobs 124 feet 11-3/4 inches to the point of beginning; containing 0.0947 acres more or less.

Parcel #C – 93 E. Haines Street (not proposed as part of Nomination)

The property boundary is described in the most recent deed, dated October 8th, 1987 as follows:

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground situate in the 59th Ward of the City of Philadelphia and described according to a survey of property by Francis X. Burns, Surveyor and Regulator of the Ninth Survey District, as follows:

BEGINNING at a point on the Northwestern side of Haines Street (40 feet wide) which point is measured South 42 degrees 23 minutes 20 seconds West along the Northwestern side of said Haines street, the distance of 82 feet 11 ¼ inches from the point of intersection formed by the Northwestern side of said Haines Street and the Southwesterly side of Baynton Street (50 feet wide); **thence** extending South 42 degrees 28 minutes, 20 seconds West, along the Northwestern side of said Haines Street, the distance of 105 feet 0 inches to a point; thence extending South 47 degrees 37 minutes 40 seconds West the distance of 124 feet 11 ¾ inches to a point; thence extending North 42 degrees 38 minutes 19 seconds East the distance of 105 feet 0 inches to a point; thence extending South 47 degrees 37 minutes 40 seconds East the distance of 124 feet 6 ¼ inches to a point on the Northwestern side of said Haines Street, being the first mentioned point and place of beginning.

CONTAINING in area 13099 sq. feet or 0.30071 acres.

BEING PART Of the same premises which Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia by Deed dated 11/30/1965 and recorded in Phila. County in Deed Book CAD 691 conveyed unto School District of Phila., its successors and assigns, in fee.

UNDER AND SUBJECT TO all restrictions, reservations, covenants, conditions, rights of way and easements properly of record, if any, affecting the above-described property (See Attached Deed).

6. DESCRIPTION

Providence Baptist Church building Timeline:

Organized, October 14, 1938
Incorporated, January, 1939
Recognized, May 3, 1939
Ground Breaking, March 24, 1940
Entered Lower Unit of Church, July 7, 1940
Corner stone laid, May 22, 1942
Entered Main Sanctuary, January 3, 1943
Burned Mortgage, July 6, 1947
Installed Pipe Organ, June 25, 1950
Completed Renovations, 1957-1958
25th Anniversary Celebration, October 1963
Founders' Day, Sunday October 8, 1978
50th Anniversary Celebration, October 9, 1988

Providence Baptist Church, located at 87-91 E. Haines Street was built in two stages between the years of 1940 and 1943. According to church historical documents, it was in 1939 that the then nomadic congregation was first made known of a property that was for sale at 87 E. Haines Street. James Carlyle, a Trustee of Providence Baptist Church investigated and measured the land to determine if there would be enough space for a church to be built. At that time there was a house, stables, a three-story stone building, and “the old pear tree”² on the property. Mr. Carlyle determined that there was ample footage for a church building, and the property was secured.

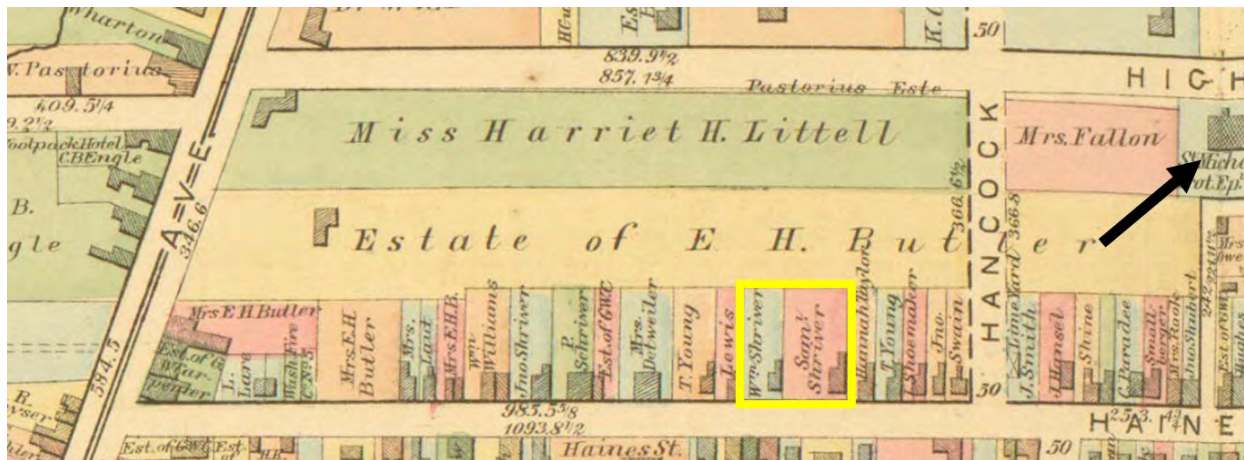
According to the Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide issued November 1, 1939, plans were in progress for a church at 87 E Haines Street by architect Maurice J. Rosenthal of 338 Maple avenue, Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania. These plans were for a “stone and concrete, 1 story (with provisions for 2 stories) [church], 46 x 101 feet.”³

In January of 1940, the Builders' Guide noted that a contract was awarded to James Quaker of 215 East Rittenhouse Street. This was likely a misspelling, as the building contract was awarded to James Amaker who did reside at 215 Rittenhouse Street. It noted Morris J. Rosenthal as the architect for a building of “stone and concrete, 1 story, 91 x 58 feet, steam heat, oil burner, cement floors, electric work, plumbing.”⁴

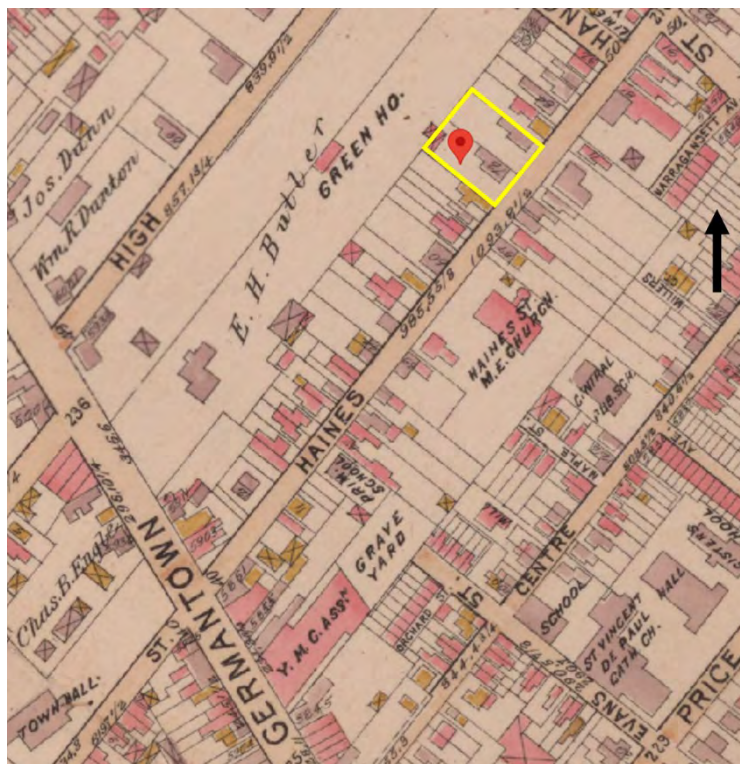
² This pear tree is mentioned several times in the Church's historical documents.

³ Phila Builders' Guide, v. 54, 1939, p. 169 (11/1/1939), www.philageohistory.org/BuildersGuide/, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Accessed May 24, 2025.

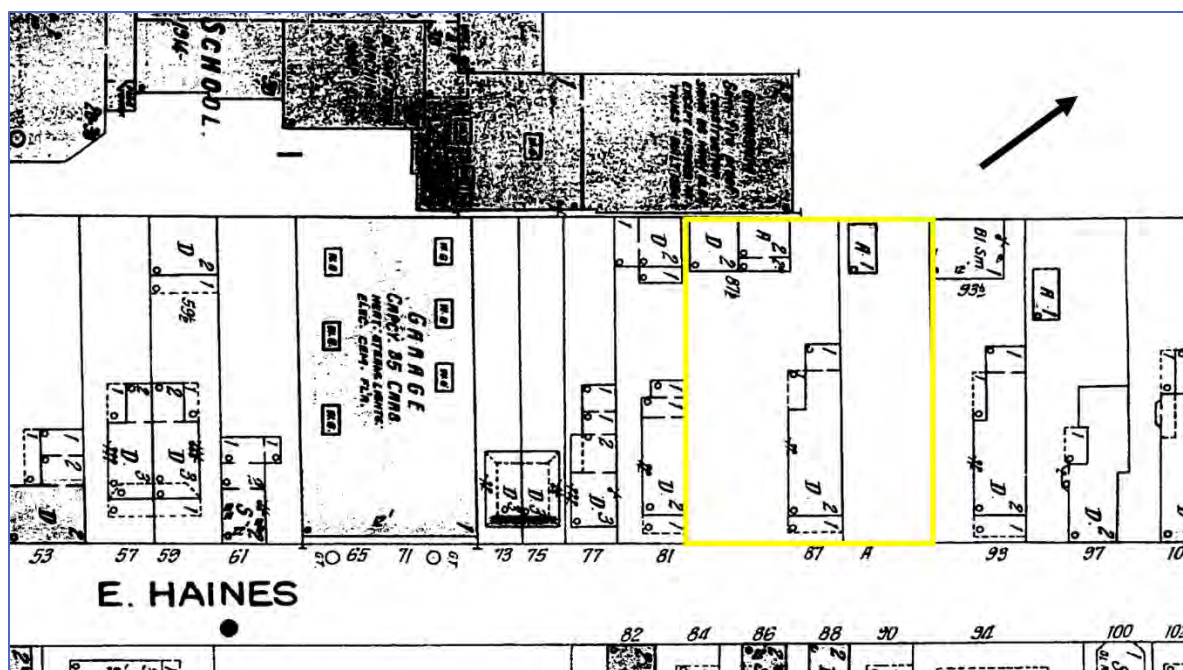
⁴ Phila Builders' Guide, v. 55, 1940, p. 6 (1/10/1940), www.philageohistory.org/BuildersGuide/, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Accessed May 24, 2025.



10. Providence Baptist Church would eventually be built on land once owned by William and Samuel Shriver, as shown in this c. 1848 Map of the Township of Germantown by James C. Sidney. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.



11. 1895 Atlas of the City of Philadelphia by Bromley, showing future location of Providence Baptist Church. The entire block was residential at that time. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.



12. 87-91 E. Haines Street as documented in the 1926 Sanborn map, Volume 22. Of Germantown. The street still had many residential buildings and, in this map, it is clearer to see what was demolished to make way for the church building. Source: ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps.



13. 2025 Aerial view from satellite imagery. The block is completely institutional, and it is clear to see the aftermath of the Morton Urban Renewal program of 1958. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

Architectural Description:

Providence Baptist Church was built as, and still is currently, a place of worship. The church edifice sits on the west side of East Haines Street, between Germantown Avenue and Baynton Street, in the Germantown section of Northwest Philadelphia. To the west of the church and fronting on High Street, is the historic Germantown High School, built between 1914-1916. To the south of the church is a later addition to the Germantown High School complex, the Industrial Arts Building, built between 1967-1968. Directly behind the church is the Germantown High School Gymnasium, built between 1964-1965. To the north and northeast of the church is a large expanse of empty asphalt parking lots. Across the street is the Art Deco Robert Fulton Public School and accompanying large grass playing field and playground which fronts Haines Street, Baynton Street and East Rittenhouse Street.

On the same side of Haines Street (north side), towards Germantown Avenue is another church building, Janes Methodist Episcopal Church, which has similar building materials and forms as Providence Baptist, built around 1928, designed by architect C. S. Parker.



14. Providence Baptist Church as viewed from the south side of Haines Street. Photo by author.



15. Front façade of Providence Baptist Church. Photo by author.

Front Façade:

Providence Baptist Church is designed in a Gothic Revival style using Gothic motifs, symmetry and emphasizing verticality on a small scale, rectangular-footprint ecclesiastical building. The building is constructed mainly of Wissahickon shist and CMU block with cast stone detailing.

The nearly symmetrical front façade consists of a main central bay flanked by two narrower side bays which each include a large paneled metal double door painted red. The doors are recessed, framed by simple cast stone detailing and accessed by short staircases with iron railings. The left staircase is done in concrete while the right staircase is of rough-cut stone with flagstone treads. The basement level is constructed of concrete block and provides a visual foundation. At the center of the basement level are two symmetrical window openings filled with industrial glass blocks.

The central bay features a large, pointed arch stained-glass window with Gothic tracery. It is the main feature on the front façade and is separated into three stained-glass panels, the central panel being the largest. The window mullions, muntins, and spandrel panels of this central window are painted light blue. There is protective glazing on the exterior of the stained glass. The window is set within a recessed arched surround, emphasizing verticality. The side bays each include a narrow vertical slit stained-glass window which are also covered in protective glazing, and each have a cast stone surround.

The corners and vertical divisions between the bays are marked by buttress-like projections done in cast stone that culminate in pinnacle-like elements, adding vertical articulation. The roofline is defined by a stepped gable parapet in the center, flanked by lower side parapets. The parapet is capped with cast stone coping.

A freestanding church sign is positioned in front of the central bay surrounded by a small, landscaped garden which is enclosed by a low wrought iron fence.



16. View of east façade of Providence Baptist Church. Photo by author.



17. Section of west façade. Photo by author.

Side Façades:

Both the east and west façades (right and left side of the building) are essentially identical. The side façades of the Providence Baptist Church of Germantown present an example of mid-20th century ecclesiastical architecture, characterized by a vernacular adaptation of Gothic Revival elements rendered in local materials. Constructed primarily of Wissahickon shist, the walls exude a robust and textured appearance.

The elevation of each façade is rhythmically organized into seven vertical bays. There are five bays within the main middle section which are flanked by two stone tower bays, one to each side. The front tower bay is taller and has a narrow rectangular stained-glass window, covered by protective glazing and surrounded with light colored cast stone. The rear tower bay is shorter, nearly the same height as the middle portion of the side façade and contains one small square stained-glass window. On the east façade, there appears to be a door that has been filled in with shist, however on the west façade, there is still an existing door in that location. The west façade does not have a window in the rear tower section.



18. Rear of west façade. Photo by author.



19. West façade front tower. Photo by author.

The five middle bays are each articulated by tall, narrow, pointed-arch window openings that recall the Gothic lancet form. These windows are evenly spaced and symmetrically aligned along the façade. Each window is framed by simple stone surrounds and contains protective glazing over stained glass. The window frames have all been painted light blue.

The side façade is capped with a steeply pitched gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. The upper portion of the building, including the gable ends, is accentuated by minimal detailing, directing attention to the materiality of the stone and the articulation of the fenestration. On the roof, there are three evenly spaced gabled blind dormers that protrude from the roof right over the side cornice.

The base of the building features a series of small, rectangular basement windows protected by metal grilles, set within the stone foundation. These are interspersed with wall-mounted utility fixtures and signage. A utilitarian chain-link fence surrounds the property.



20. View of rear section, looking from the east side of the building. Photo by author.

Rear

Off the rear of the church is a one-story structure that is the width of the church building. It is constructed of Wissahickon schist, like the main building. On the east and west side, there is an 8/8 rectangular sash window covered by a protective metal grate. In the rear of this one-story structure are three 8/8 rectangular sash windows with protective metal grates. The roof of this one-story structure serves as a platform for the church's various mechanical necessities such as HVAC.

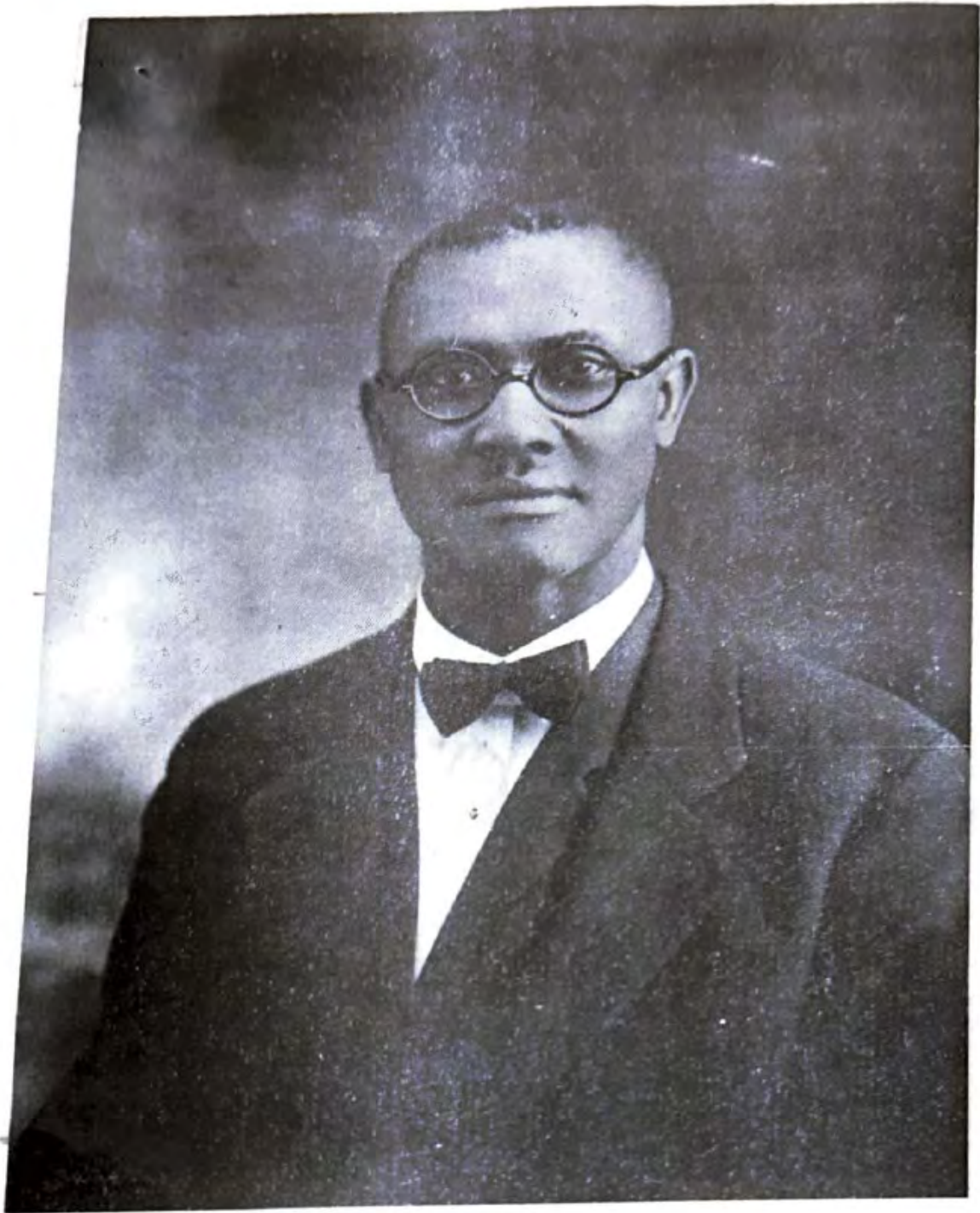
7. SIGNIFICANCE

Providence Baptist Church, located at 87 E. Haines Street in the Germantown section of northeast Philadelphia, is a historic resource that merits designation and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It satisfies Criterion for Designation J as defined in Section 14-1000 of the Philadelphia Code.

j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

Providence Baptist Church is home to a historically black religious community that was imagined, organized, planned, funded, and brought to fruition by 289 former (and very driven) members of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Germantown. Built by the community from the bottom up and financed by their pooling of collective resources, Providence Baptist Church is a symbol of the community's faith, determination, and ingenuity. The church community was able to start and complete the building of the church despite challenges stemming from the Great Depression, and material shortages during World War II. Two of the founding members would be instrumental in erecting the church edifice: James Carlyle performed the demolition work to prepare the site, and James Amaker was the contractor and church builder. The first church service was held at 87 E. Haines Street on July 7th, 1940, and for 85 years it has remained a vital resource to the people of Germantown and Northwest Philadelphia. The date of significance is proposed as 1943, the year that the church construction was completed. Built by its community from the bottom up and financed by their pooling of collective resources, Providence Baptist Church stands as a symbol of the community's faith, determination, and sacrifice and therefore satisfies Criterion for Designation J. This property merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Note: All historical information about Providence Baptist Church that is found in this nomination was gleaned from souvenir books which were produced and distributed by Providence Baptist Church commemorating significant milestones. One was released the year the church building was completed (1943), one for the 25th Anniversary (1963), and one for the 50th Anniversary (1988). The initial history was compiled by Ms. Artemissa Rodvill, a founding member.



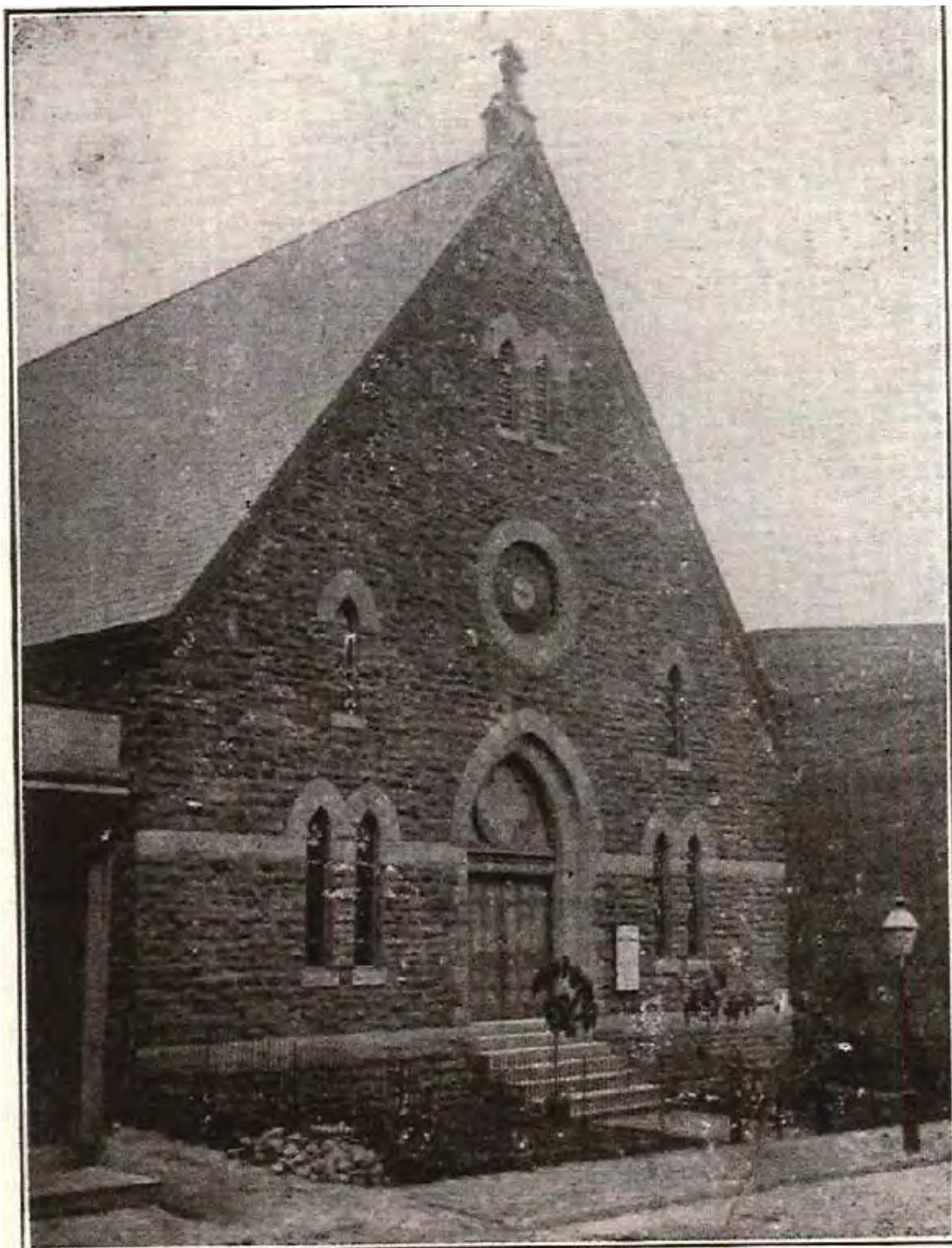
20. Rev. Roland C. Lamb, Sr. First Pastor and Founder of Providence Baptist Church. As pictured in the 25th Anniversary publication. Source: Providence Baptist Church Archive.

Rev. Roland Curtis Lamb, Sr. (1895-1966)

Rev. Roland C. Lamb, Sr., the son of Fred and Kate Lamb, was born in Chowan County, near Edenton, North Carolina, on May 14, 1895. He was brought up on a farm and was familiar with farm life. At the age of nine, he was converted and baptized in the St. John Baptist Church by the Rev. Harry Norman.

He received his early training in the rural school of Chowan County, at Roanoke Institute and at Shaw University of Raleigh, North Carolina. At the age of 22, he married Lillie Gertrude Bembery, the youngest child of John and Malinda Bemberry. She also received her early training in the rural school of Chowan County, Edenton, North Carolina, and E. N. I. College of Edenton, North Carolina. They together had five children: Malina Devora Lamb Johnson, Roland Curtis Lamb, Jr., Lillie Gertrude Lamb Vicks, Willard MacClaren Lamb, and Calvin Cromwell Lamb.

Rev. Roland C. Lamb, Sr. pastored in the rural district of North Carolina for two years, after which time he was called to the pastorate of the St. Stephen Baptist Church, Elizabeth City, North Carolina, where he served for five years. He was then called to the pastorate of the Shiloh Baptist Church, Plainfield, New Jersey, where he served for five years when he was called to the Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he served for ten years as its pastor.



21. Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Germantown, as pictured in *A Souvenir of Germantown*, 1913.

Break from Zion Baptist Church of Germantown, 1938

The history of Providence Baptist Church is the story of 289 people who left the Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Germantown, to follow their spiritual leader Rev. Roland Curtis Lamb, Sr., who had been their pastor for ten years. On the Friday evening of October 14, 1938, a large number of this group met at the home of Mrs. Esther Smith, 463 Winona Avenue, Germantown, to organize a church. The Rev. Robert G. Morton was elected chairman and Mrs. Gertrude Lamb Vicks, secretary. Many names for the church were offered among which was the Roland C. Lamb Baptist Church. The founder did not accept this suggestion and after some debate Rev. Lamb suggested the name "Providence" as "only His Providence could make such a dream come true." A motion prevailed that this would become the Providence Baptist Church. A committee on permanent organization was named and officers were elected.

Traveling church years, 1938-1940

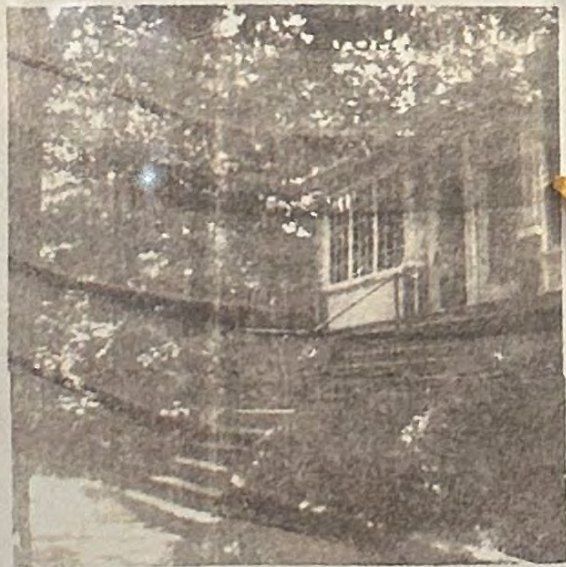
On Sunday, October 16, 1938, just two days after the church was organized, the first church service was held at Canaan Baptist Church. Rev. T. Robert Washington, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Nicetown, opened the church's doors to Providence and they worshipped there from October 23, 1938 until April 2, 1939. Almost every Sunday, someone would join the Church and in the evenings, they went from house to house like in the early Church in the book of Acts, breaking bread and praising God with gladness and singleness of heart. Church clubs were organized which afforded the members an opportunity to become better acquainted and to take a more active part in the Church program.

"Providence Baptist Church of Germantown" became a chartered organization in January, 1939. Easter of 1939 found them worshipping all day at the Masonic Temple, 5425 Germantown Avenue, which was closer to home for most of the members. The first Baptist Young People's Union (BYPU) meeting of Providence was held there. On May 3, 1939, the Masonic Temple was the first place that Providence Baptist Church was recognized. The Recognition Council consisted of twelve ministers, and they were:

Rev. W. W. Brooks	Rev. S. L. Bush	Rev. Bernard	Rev. F. H. Holden
Rev. P. H. Hughes	Rev. J. H. Lucas	Rev. W. J. Lucas	Rev. G. G. McGee
Rev. H. T. McCrary	Rev. T. R. Washington	Rev. J. H. Williams	

Through the efforts of Trustee Vernon Cunningham, the congregation moved even nearer to their eventual home to Orange Hall, 15 W. Harvey Street. Sunday, June 4, 1939, which marked the first Sunday School for the children of Providence. Sunday after Sunday there was standing-room only and the congregation knew something had to be done as they were outgrowing the space.

Places of worship – From House to Church to Haines Street



463 Winona Ave.

ORGANIZED OCTOBER 14, 1938

Mrs. Esther Smith

22. Providence Baptist Church organized in the home of Mrs. Esther Smith. Source: photos displayed on Church's bulletin board.



23. First service held at Canaan Baptist Church, October 16, 1938. Source: *A Souvenir of Germantown*, 1913.



24. Worshipped at Second Baptist, Nicetown from October 23, 1938 to April 2, 1939. Source: Google Street View, 2025.



25. Worshipped at the Masonic Hall from April 9, 1939 to May 29, 1939. Source: *The History of Mitchell Lodge, No. 296* by Lincoln E. Leeds (1905).



26. Orange Hall or “back the little alley” as it was sometimes called at 15 W. Harvey Street. Source:



27. Worshipped at Orange Hall from June 4, 1939 to June 30, 1940. Source: cyclomedia.

Great sacrifices were made by the ever-growing congregation. It was said that “when money was needed by Monday morning, it was put on the table that Sunday.” In the midst of a depression when many thought it could not be done, Pastor Lamb remained steadfast. Prayer meetings were held from house to house every Friday evening, and the congregation relied heavily on their faith to get them through that uncertain time. Communion services were held the third Sunday evening of each month. The first Baptismal Service was October 3, 1939, at Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, Germantown.

In the early days of the church, Rev. Lamb was experiencing health issues and spent many months in and out of the hospital, but his congregation’s faith in him never wavered. There were three ministers assisting Rev. Lamb in the pulpit during this time: Rev. Robert G. Morton, Rev. George T. Stubbs and Rev. J. B. Stevens.

Finding and clearing the lot of 87 East Haines Street, 1939

Three men were instrumental in the process of finding a permanent home. In addition to the Rev. Roland Lamb, Sr., these men were James Carlyle, known as “Mr. Jim”, and Mr. James Amaker, Chairman of the Board and Building Committee.

Mr. Carlyle, a Trustee of the Church, was instrumental in the beginning stages of finding a suitable lot for the church. He was born in St. Paul, North Carolina and came to Philadelphia in 1920 to make it his home. Mr. Carlyle and his wife, Mrs. Pearl Carlyle, lived in Mt. Airy and were respected citizens of the community. They had no children of their own but raised a niece, Stephanie Stewart, from an infant to the time she was able to take her own place in the world.

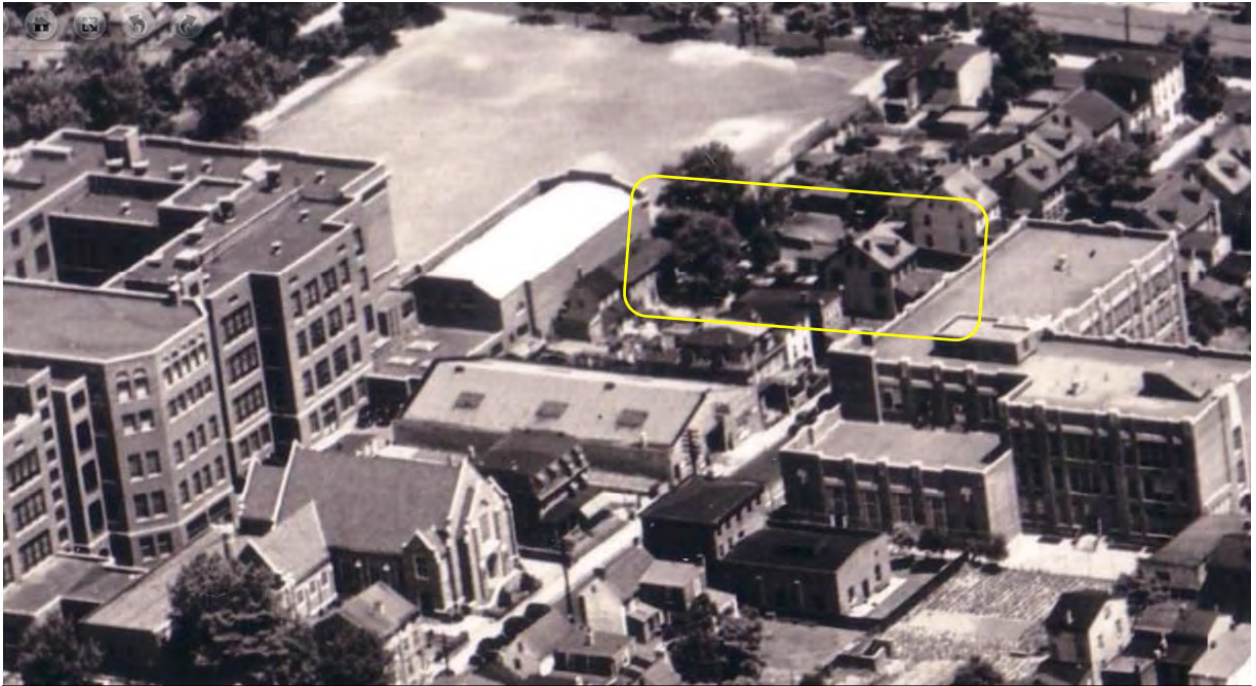
He owned his own trucking business for approximately 50 years. In 1938, when Providence Baptist Church was organized, he worked very closely with Rev. Lamb, Sr. and James Amaker, who would be the church’s contractor and builder. He made his car available every night after work to transact Church business. These men drove around night after night, combing the city to find a suitable location on which to build.

Anthony Moreschi, a real estate broker with Moreschi’s Realtors made it known that 87 East Haines Street was for sale and it was immediately investigated. Mr. Carlyle measured the land to determine if there was ample footage for a church building. At that time, there was a house, stables, a three-story stone building and an old pear tree on the property. The space proved to have ample room and the lot was secured.

Mr. Carlyle contracted to do the demolition work and with his men, worked around the clock to meet the deadline for the steam shovels to come in. They began digging on schedule. At the time of the Founder’s Day celebration (the 50th anniversary for the which took place on October 8, 1978), he was the only living man who actually negotiated for the property at 87 East Haines Street, and was still serving as Treasurer of Providence Baptist Church.

Groundbreaking, 1940

Easter Sunday (March 24th) of 1940 was reportedly a cold, damp, and dreary day, the day that Providence marched from Orange Hall, led by Rev. and Mrs. R. C. Lamb, Sr. to the cleared lot at 87 East Haines Street. The procession was met by hundreds more who had come to break ground for their future church home. The first shovel of dirt was turned by Dr. C. C. Adams, President of the Baptist State Convention with whom Rev. Lamb served as Corresponding Secretary. Now that the ground had been broken for the building of the first unit (basement) of the church, every club in the Church became a beehive of activity, working diligently to raise money for the Building Fund.



28. Dallin Aerial Survey photograph of E. Haines Street (looking north), taken June 22, 1939. Germantown High School is on the left. Yellow rectangle shows the lot where Providence Baptist Church will be built. This lot will be cleared in less than a year from when the photo was taken. Source: Dallin Aerial Survey Collection, Hagley Digital Archives.

ANNIVERSARY SONG - Lyrics by Lollie B. Hill
(Tune - Battle Hymn of the Republic)

It was twenty-five years ago we started on our search,
With heavy hearts, but faith in God, for there was plenty good earth;
So with faith, we marched together, with one grand and noble thought -
To find a new church home.

Chorus:

Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jesus
Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jesus
Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jesus
Our church is marching on.

Pastor Lamb has never failed us, even tho on his sick bed,
When he was weak and weary Christ was there with strength and cheer;
And to us came words of courage, stay together do not fear,
For God is leading on.

The pear tree and the little house gave way to ax and spade,
And soon this church was rising, Hallelujah! praise his Name;
Our God was in the planning, and we knew we could not fail,
For He was leading on.

29. "Anniversary Song". Printed in the 25th Anniversary booklet. Noting the structures and pear tree that were on the lot before demolition. Source: Providence Baptist Church Archives.



30. Seckel pear trees are native to the Philadelphia area and originated in South Philadelphia, found on the land of Lawrence Seckel which is now part of FDR Park. Lawrence Seckel first introduced the pear commercially at the end of the eighteenth century. This image shows a section of *Map of the Township of Germantown, 1848 (circa)* by James C. Sidney. It is possible that the pear tree cut down was a Seckel pear tree, planted on or near land once owned by a member of the Seckel family. Source map: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network, Source of pear information: Philadelphia Orchard Project.

This Indenture,

Made the Twenty-first day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine (1939). BETWEEN GERMANTOWN TRUST COMPANY, a Pennsylvania corporation located in City of Philadelphia, Trustee under the will of Warren R. Shriver, deceased, hereinafter called the Grantor, party of the one part, and the PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHURCH OF GERMANTOWN, PHILADELPHIA, hereinafter called the Grantee, party

of the other part, **Witnesseth**, That the said Grantor,

for and in consideration of the sum of Three thousand five hundred dollars (\$3500.)

lawful money of the United States of America, unto it well and truly paid by the said Grantee,

at and before the sealing and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, hath granted, bargained, sold, aliened, encoffed, released and confirmed and by these presents doth

grant, bargain, sell, alien, encoff, release and confirm unto the said Grantee, its successors and assigns,

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, described according to a Survey and Plan thereof made by John T. Campbell, Surveyor and Regulator of the Ninth Survey District on the Twenty-sixth day of May A.D. 1939, as follows, to wit: BEGINNING at a point on the Northwestern side of Haines Street (Forty feet wide) at the distance of Two hundred twenty feet eleven and one-quarter inches Southwestwardly from the Southwest side of Baynton Street (Fifty feet wide) in the Twenty-second Ward of the City of Philadelphia. CONTAINING in front or breadth on the said Haines Street Fifty-eight feet and extending of that width in length or depth Northwestwardly at right angles to said Haines Street, on the Northeastly line thereof One hundred twenty-five feet one and one-half inches and on the Southwestly line thereof One hundred twenty-five feet four and one-half inches; and containing on the

31. Original deed to Providence Baptist Church for land, dated July 21, 1939, transferred from Germantown Trust Company (Trustee under the will of William Shriver, deceased). Deed book DWH vol. 779, page 29. Source: Philadelphia City Archives.

Building Providence Baptist Church, 1940-1943

Providence Baptist Church, located at 87-91 E. Haines Street was built in two stages between the years of 1940 and 1943.

Church, 87 East Haines street, Philadelphia. Plans in progress. Architect, Maurice J. Rosenthal, 338 Maple avenue, Drexel Hill, Pa. Owner, Providence Baptist Church, Rev. Roland C. Lamb, 213 West Pocomona avenue, Philadelphia, Joseph Ammakeer, Chairman of Building Committee, 215 East Rittenhouse st., Philadelphia. Stone and concrete, 1 story (with provision for 2 stories), 46 x 101 feet.

32. Notice in the Philadelphia Real Estate and Builders' Guide, v. 54, No. 43 on November 1, 1939. Source: philageohistory.org, an Athenaeum of Philadelphia website.

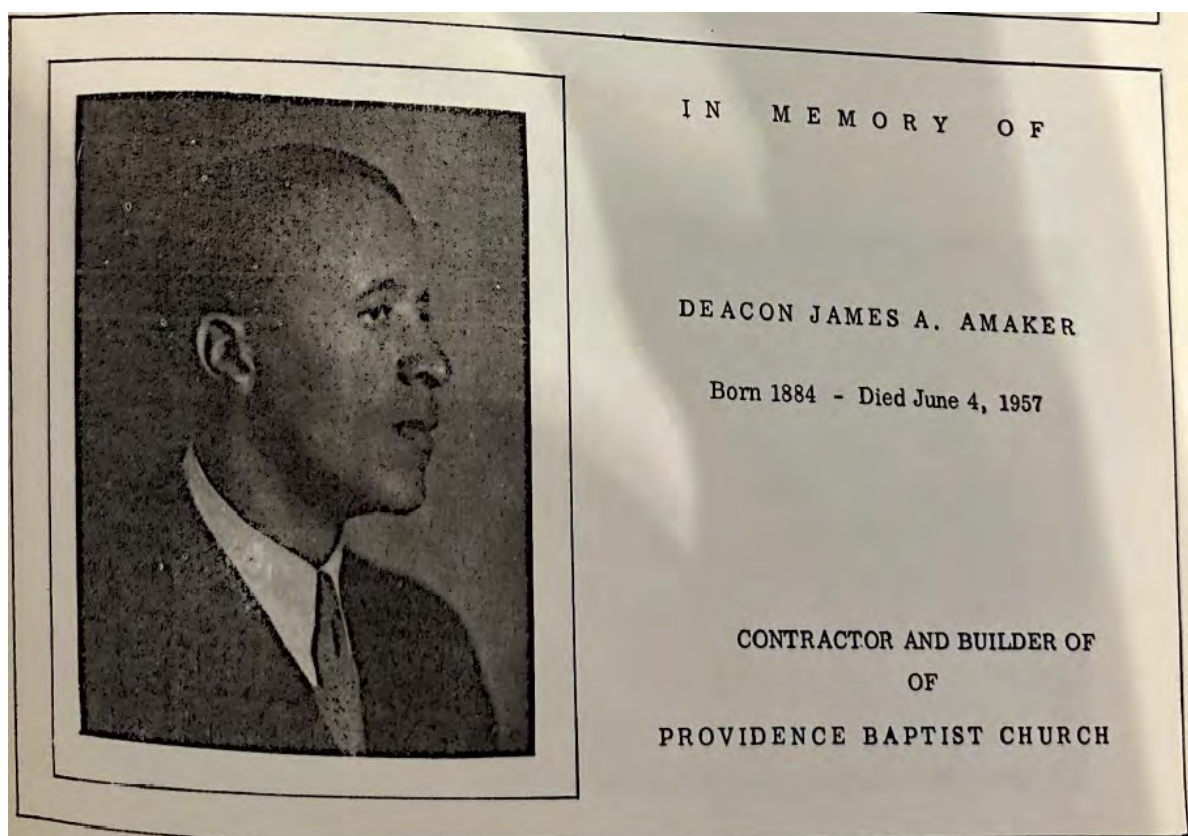
Building Phase I:

According to the Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide issued November 1, 1939, plans were in progress for a church at 87 E Haines Street by architect Maurice J. Rosenthal of 338 Maple avenue, Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania. These plans were for a "stone and concrete, 1 story (with provisions for 2 stories) [church], 46 x 101 feet."⁵

In January of 1940, the Builders' Guide noted that a contract was awarded to James Quaker of 215 East Rittenhouse Street. This was likely a misspelling, as the building contract was awarded to James Amaker who did reside at 215 Rittenhouse Street. It noted Morris J. Rosenthal as the architect for a building of "stone and concrete, 1 story, 91 x 58 feet, steam heat, oil burner, cement floors, electric work, plumbing."⁶

⁵ Phila Builders' Guide, v. 54, 1939, p. 169 (11/1/1939), www.philageohistory.org/BuildersGuide/, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Accessed May 24, 2025.

⁶ Phila Builders' Guide, v. 55, 1940, p. 6 (1/10/1940), www.philageohistory.org/BuildersGuide/, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Accessed May 24, 2025.



33. Image of Deacon James Amaker, as printed in the 25th Anniversary booklet of the founding of Providence Baptist Church. Source: Providence Baptist Church Archives.

Philadelphia Contracts Awarded

Church, \$5,000, 87 East Haines street, Philadelphia. Contract awarded James Quaker, 215 East Rittenhouse street, Philadelphia. Architect, Morris J. Rosenthal, 2206 Chestnut street, Philadelphia. Owners, Providence Baptist Church, Rev. Roland C. Lamb, 213 West Pomona avenue, Philadelphia; Joseph Amaker, Chairman of Building Committee, 215 East Rittenhouse street, Philadelphia. Stone and concrete, 1 story, 91 x 58 feet, steam heat, oil burner, cement floors, electric work, plumbing.

34. Notice of contract award. Philadelphia Real Estate and Builder's Guide, v. 55, 1940. Source: philageohistory.org, an Athenaeum of Philadelphia website.

Mr. James Amaker, was one of the founding members of Providence Baptist Church and was born in 1884 in Sumter, South Carolina. Mr. Amaker was a dedicated husband and loving father of five. He loved and cared about people. It was said that wherever there was a need, no matter what it was, he was always willing to help.

Mr. Amaker was a builder for John B. Kelly and under his supervision, his son, Quillie, son-in-law Rubean and many others were brought into the trade. When it was decided that Providence was to be built, Rev. Roland C. Lamb, Mr. James Carlyle and Mr. Amaker went out in search of ground for the building. Having found a suitable site, Mr. Amaker, being a building contractor, was chosen for the job of erecting the edifice.

While constructing this building, there was a steel strike which made it impossible to purchase the needed material. Mr. Amaker went to Washington and obtained a permit to get the necessary steel to continue the building.⁷

By July of 1940, the lower level of the church was complete. The last service in Orange Hall took place on June 30, 1940. The next Sunday, on July 7th, Providence Baptist Church members came from all over Germantown to gather in their new church building. The church was filled with flowers. The first three nights following the opening were devoted to prayer and song, with each of the ministers belonging to Providence officiating and delivering messages. Starting the second week in July and continuing for two weeks, Dedication Services were held and outstanding ministers throughout the city and vicinity were guests.

The Dedication Sermon was delivered by Rev. A. Hobbs on Sunday afternoon, July 14, 1940. The first regular prayer meeting was held on Tuesday, August 6, 1940, and on August 7 the baptismal pool was used for the first time when Rev. Lamb baptized 20 candidates. Now that the first phase of building was complete, the church set out to raise more money for the Building Fund. They gave dinners and held a competition between the women and men to see which side could raise the most money. Each club undertook work to help raise money for the Building Fund.

⁷ This biographical information was written and submitted to the church by James Amaker's daughter, Thelma Gardner.

Church to Build

Construction of the superstructure to its property at 87 E. Haines st. is proposed by the Providence Baptist Church. Plans for the improvement were prepared by Richard R. Neely. The building will be of stone, 46 by 92 feet.

35. Notice in the Philadelphia Inquirer, May 3, 1942, of Providence Baptist Church building phase II. Source: The Philadelphia Inquirer via newspapers.com.



36. The cornerstone was laid on Sunday, May 22, 1942, by the M. W. Grand Lodge of Masons of Pennsylvania, sponsored by the Star of the East Lodge No. 55. Inside the Cornerstone was placed a New Testament Bible, a record of the Church membership and a brief history of the Church written by Mrs. Alexander Rodvill.

Building Phase II:

There was notice of the second stage of building on April 10, 1940, in the Philadelphia Builders' Guide which noted a contract awarded to the Pennsylvania Building Company located in the Commercial Trust Building. The architects were to be Richard R. Neely and H. Stanley Atkinson, of 10 South 18th Street.⁸

The final copy of the Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide, published by McNamee & Bright was issued November 1940. If the publication had continued, there would likely be more information for the construction progress of Providence Baptist Church, which was finished in 1943.

Sunday, May 22, 1942, the Cornerstone was laid by the M. W. Grand Lodge of Masons of Pennsylvania, sponsored by the Star of the East Lodge No. 55. Inside the Cornerstone was placed a New Testament Bible, a record of the Church membership and a brief history of the Church written by Mrs. Alexander Rodvill. The main auditorium was ready to be started.

It was through the work of Mr. James Amaker, a Charman of the Trustee Board and Contractor-BUILDER of the Church that the members were able to enter the Main Sanctuary in record time. He was faced with building codes, shortages of materials, Substitutions, inflated prices, and trips back and forth to Washington, D. C.

With the lower church finished, some members wondered why not wait until after the War (World War II) was over, but Mr. James Amaker continued to work and it was on Sunday, January 3, 1943 that the congregation marched from the lower church upstairs into the beautifully furnished sanctuary. The journey and the dream that was imagined four years, two months, and twenty days prior when a small group met on Winona Avenue had finally become a reality. Providence Baptist Church was erected at a cost of \$75,000 and was crowded with members and friends.

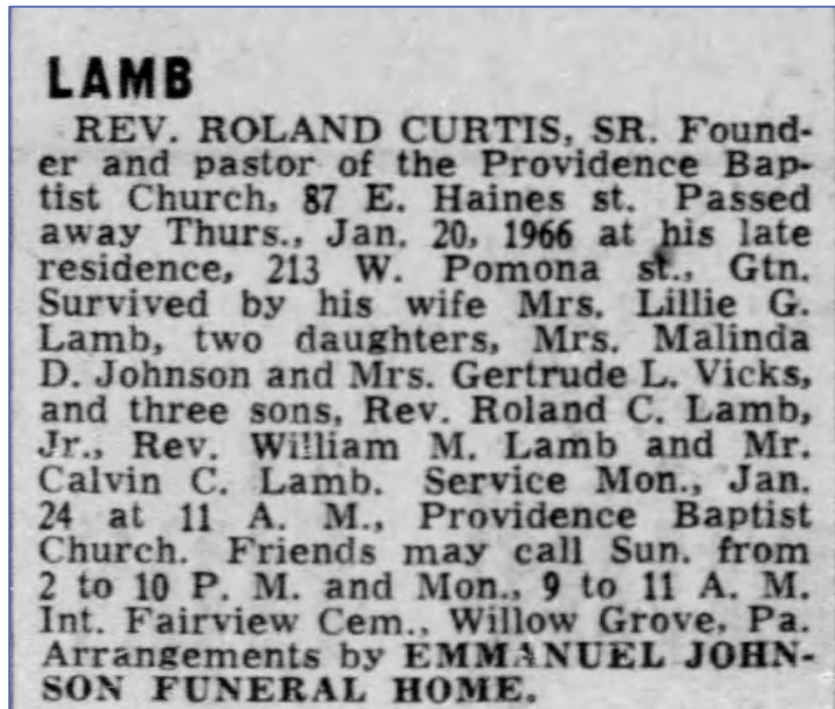
On Sunday July 8, 1945, the first issue of the weekly Church bulletin was printed with an Order of Service that lent dignity to worship. In December of 1945, Rev. Willard M. Lamb returned from the Army to assist his father in the pulpit.

On July 6, 1947, the mortgage was burned. Seven years from the date the lot was purchased, the Church was free of debt.

⁸ Phila Builders' Guide, v. 55, 1940, p. 49 (4/10/1940), www.philageohistory.org/BuildersGuide/, courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Accessed May 24, 2025.

Later years

According to the congregants, Rev. Roland Lamb, Sr. was a great preacher, philosopher, humorist and friend. He founded and pastored the Providence Baptist Church until his death, January 20, 1966, 28 years later.



37. Obituary printed in the Philadelphia Inquirer on January 22, 1966. Source: Newspapers.com.

Rev. Roland C. Lamb, Jr., took up his father's mantle on March 13, 1967 and for the next seven years many things were introduced to the church: A Children's and Young Adult robed choir, the Women's Guild, Family Circle, Evangelism and Bible Study classes, the "Roland C. Lamb, Sr. Scholarship Award," and an annual Memorial Service and A Memorial Plaque for all deceased members of the Church.

Rev. & Mrs. Martin Luther King, Sr., of Atlanta, Georgia were guests at Providence Baptist Church for a special Mother's Day Service, May 14, 1972. Rev. King delivered the morning message and a special "Mother of the Year" award was presented to Mrs. Alberta W. King (mother of the late Martin Luther King, Jr.) by Mrs. Lollie B. Hill who was also a native of Atlanta.

1973 marked the 35th year of Providence Baptist Church which called for a special celebration. The Building Committee presented plans and a miniature replica of a future educational building adjacent to the Church. A formal banquet was held at the Shelron Hotel.

In November, 1973, joint services with Janes Methodist Church were held to establish a Thanksgiving Service on the east side of Germantown Avenue. Formerly, the service was shared with Canaan Baptist Church but they had moved to the west side of Germantown Avenue. This same year also produced a Revised Church Constitution which required long months of hard work. Prayer meeting, Revival, Sunday School, Bible Study, the Music Ministry, Women's Day, Men's Day, Family Circle, Business meetings, Auxiliary affairs, Community out-reach and all activities that make up a Church program were found at Providence. Rev. Roland Lamb, Jr. passed away on January 10, 1974.

Rev. George Thompson, Jr. of East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania was called to assume the pastorate of Providence Baptist Church in January, 1975. He was a young man with tremendous zeal and added programs such as a Dial-A-Prayer service that was extended to carry the Sunday Morning Worship Service to the homes of sick and shut-ins. He established a Credit Union, central air conditioning, Summer Ministries, Prison Ministry and a tribal organization system of creating smaller groups of members (modeled off the 12 Tribes of Israel) so that members could be reached and served individually. Rev. Thompson resigned from Providence Baptist Church on May 3, 1981.

After 17 months of seeking and praying, the Pulpit Committee, under the leadership of Trustee Fred Kilby, recommended the name of Rev. James A. Waller. Rev. Waller, was the youngest son of the Rev. William H. Waller and Mrs. Mattie Greene Waller, was a graduate of Virginia State University and was studying at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He held an Administration Manager position in personnel with IBM. His varied experience in Church work had prepared him for his calling with the ministry. He took over the reins as Pastor of Providence on Sunday, November 28, 1982. He added a tape ministry to the church's activities. The Sunday worship services and other special programs were taped each week and sent to the sick and shut-in. Rev. Waller resigned his position with IBM and became a full time Pastor of Providence as of July 1, 1983.

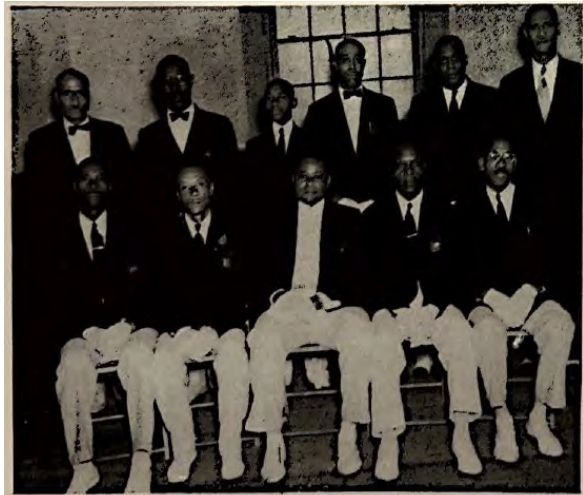
It is clear to see the vibrancy of the Providence Baptist Church community throughout the years by viewing the myriad clubs, organizations, and committees that were part of the church and how well attended they were. As Providence Baptist Church aged, a large part of the congregation aged alongside and the congregation became smaller. The current members of this church wish to safeguard their beloved church building into the future, no matter the fate of the congregation.

Church organizations pictured in the 1943 Souvenir of Providence Baptist Church booklet:





Lady Ushers



Men Ushers



Deacons' Aids



Missionary Circle



R. C. Lambs Chorus



Providence Baptist's Chorus



Guiding Star Club

From the 25th Anniversary Souvenir booklet, 1963:



THE BOARD OF DEACONS



THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



DEACON'S AID



TRUSTEES AUXILIARY



SUNDAY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT



OLIVER LANCASTER, SUPERINTENDENT



JAMES C. JOHNSON, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT



TEACHERS AND BIBLE CLASS

BEGINNERS SUNDAY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT



JUNIOR SUNDAY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT



SENIOR CHOIR



JUNIOR CHOIR



GOSPEL CHORUS



INSPIRATIONAL CHOIR



SENIOR USHERS



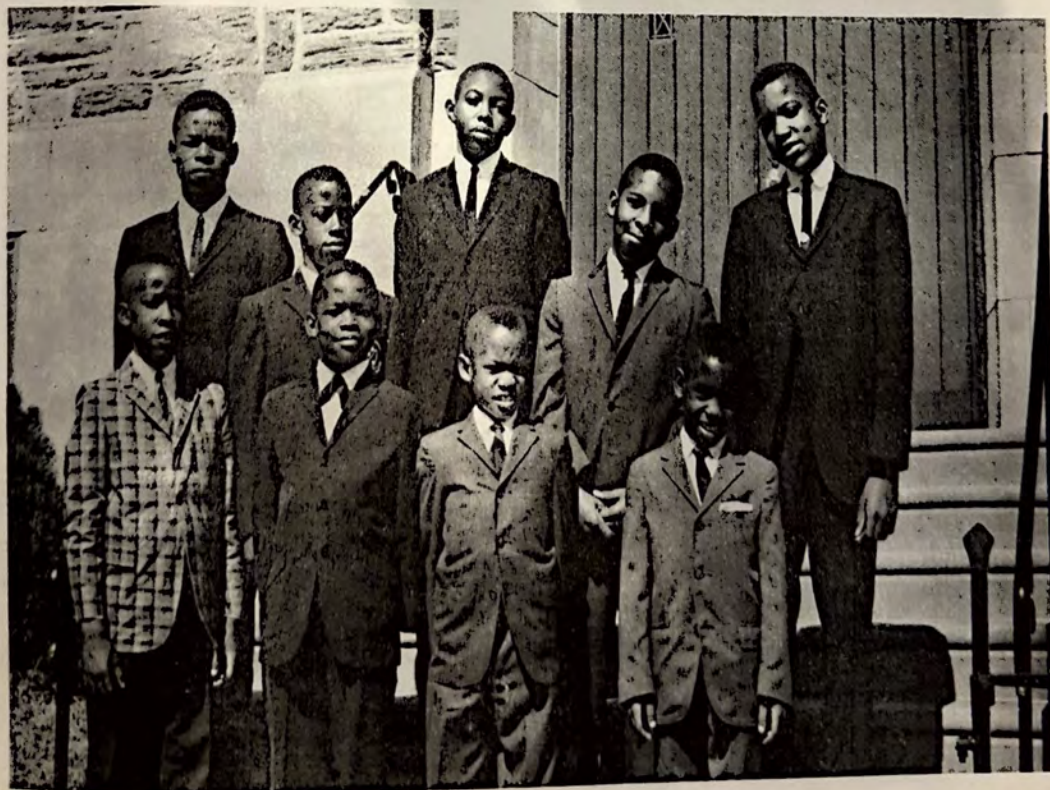
LADY USHERS



YOUNG ADULT USHERS



JUNIOR USHERS



MISSIONARY SOCIETY



GUIDING STAR



FLORAL CLUB



PROGRESSIVE CLUB



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