

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED **DEC 9 1975**  
DATE ENTERED **MAY 13 1976**

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC

**Providence Baptist Church**

AND/OR COMMON

**Old Stone Meeting House**

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER **6 miles southwest of Winchester and 2 miles northwest of U. S. 627**  
**on Lower Howard's Creek**

CITY, TOWN

**Winchester**

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**06**

STATE

**Kentucky**

VICINITY OF

**021**

COUNTY  
**Clark**

CODE  
**049**

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

**Providence Baptist Church Board of Trustees**

STREET & NUMBER

**Route 4, Old Stone Church Road**

CITY, TOWN

**Winchester**

VICINITY OF

STATE

**Kentucky**

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

**Clark County Courthouse**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

**Winchester**

STATE

**Kentucky**

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

**Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky (Supplement)**

DATE

**1974**

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

**Kentucky Heritage Commission**

CITY, TOWN

**Frankfort**

STATE

**Kentucky**

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Providence Church is situated in a valley in which Lower Howard's Creek flows. It is located between Boonesborough (one of the first settlements in Kentucky) and Strode's Station (now Winchester) on an early extension of the Old Wilderness Road, the major land route through Kentucky used by the earliest settlers. The extension connected the two settlements and followed Howard's Creek (see Filson's 1784 map). The hills surrounding the church seem to provide the protection that would have been sought in the early days when Indians would have been a threat.

"Kentucky marble" (white limestone), quarried from a nearby cliff, composed the building material of the church. The structure is 40' x 60' with walls 20" thick. When the church was first built there were loopholes in the walls where guards could be posted to watch for Indians. The original fenestration on the sides consisted of two windows on the lower level with two windows directly above on the upper level. A fifth window was located in the center, midway between the upper and lower windows, indicating that the pulpit was probably located in the middle of the south side (see photo 1). (For an example of a similar arrangement found in Kentucky see the National Register form for Big Spring Church, Versailles, Woodford County, Kentucky, listed on the National Register May 6, 1975.) The original front entrance was located in the center of the northwest wall, facing Howard's Creek with a single window above. Before 1870 the entrance was changed to the opposite southeast wall. A 1923 picture shows that the upper windows on the sides were taken out and the center mid-level window lowered to the level of the bottom window (see photo 2). At a later date the front entrance was moved to the opposite end of the church facing the cemetery. The rectangular windows were altered to the present narrow Gothic ones (see photo 3). The original floor of the church was made of hand-hewn white ash boards nailed to the large oak joists with old iron nails which must have been made by some nearby blacksmith. Originally the interior walls were mud-daubed and the first benches that anyone can remember were hand-made poplar wooden benches.

The church was gutted by fire 1949 and at that time the original galleries, located at each end, were destroyed. When the interior was restored, months after the fire, only the gallery at the southeast end was replaced.

Despite the alterations, Providence Church retains much the same setting and appearance as it did when it was constructed. A fairly old cemetery is located south of the church.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES circa 1793

BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Providence Church is the oldest constituted Baptist church in Kentucky and continues to hold church services today. Erected circa 1793 by members of the Bush colony (one of the earliest permanent settlements in Kentucky in 1784), it was one of the "traveling churches" constituted in Virginia which came to Kentucky under the leadership of Reverend Lewis Craig. In 1801 a convention that resulted in the union of the Regular and Separate Baptists took place here; they became known as the United Baptists. Daniel Boone and his family attended services at the Providence Church in the 1790's (then known as the Howard's Creek Church). In spite of vicissitudes through the years, the basic fabric and setting of the building remain essentially intact--a remarkable survival.

"Traveling Churches" originated in Colonial Virginia (predominantly Episcopalian), as a result of the Baptists being persecuted for their beliefs. The Baptists, democratic in spirit, permitted negroes to attend their meetings. Because of this, the Baptists were arrested; the Episcopal Church feared that the Baptists would incite the slaves to revolt.

Among these Baptists persecuted was the prominent Baptist preacher, Lewis Craig, who brought his congregation to Kentucky where there was freedom of worship, and established Craig Station in Lincoln County. Captain William Bush (1746-1815), a Revolutionary War soldier, came to Kentucky with Daniel Boone in 1775 and helped Boone blaze a trail to Boonesborough. Captain Bush, enchanted with Kentucky, returned to Virginia to organize a colony, consisting of relatives and neighbors, to settle there. By 1780 a colony of forty families was organized. Bush had returned to Kentucky in advance to locate farms for the families, deciding to settle north of the Kentucky River, several miles northeast of Boonesborough.

At this time there was an outbreak of Indian trouble and Bush sent word to the colony to delay their journey. The travellers had reached the Holston River (now Abingdon, Virginia) when they received word to stop. Here they stayed for three years. Within a month of their arrival on the Holston, the majority of the colony under Elder Robert Elkin organized themselves into a church, which was the beginning of the Providence Church. (Elkin was the first minister to settle in Clark County, Kentucky, in 1784).

(continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

A Transcript of the First Record Book of Providence Church Clark County, Kentucky 1780-1833. Transcribed by George F. Doyle. Winchester, Kentucky: Clark County Historic Society, 1924, p.1.  
 Clark, Lucille Goff. "The Old Stone Meeting House of Clark County, Kentucky."  
 Unpublished pamphlet.

(continued)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5

UTM REFERENCES

742

A	16	421040	42102260	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mary Cronan

October 1975

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Kentucky Heritage Commission

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

401 Wapping Street

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Frankfort

Kentucky

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Eddred W. Melton

TITLE

SHPO

DATE

11-25-75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5/13/76

Acting DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*[Signature]*

DATE

5.12.75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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Providence Baptist Church

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In 1783 word was received from Bush to continue their journey to Kentucky. The colony then moved forward to Craig's Station on Gilbert's Creek, Lincoln County, where they were delayed by bad weather. A year later some members of the church moved to southwestern Kentucky, while the majority moved to the north side of the Kentucky River on Lower Howard's Creek, in what is now Clark County, where Captain Bush had located their farms (see map of farms before 1800). Their first meeting as a church at the new settlement took place in November 1784. In the First Book Records of Providence Church the following is recorded:

December 1780 Moved to Holston Brother Robert Elkin Minister and John Vivian Elder, and in January 1781 they with other Baptists formed themselves into a body in order to carry on Church discipline, and on September the 28 1781 Being duly constituted by Lewis Cragg [sic] & John Vivian with the members, to wit [followed by a list of forty-two names] and continued there a constitution till the first day of September 1783. Then a principal part of the members with their minister being about to move to Kentucky, it was agreed they should carry the constitution with them. This is an abridgement of the business of Holston. Now having arrive [sic] in Kentucky and settling on the South side of the Kentucky River near Cragg's [sic] Station. But though the badness of the weather and scattered situation, nothing of importance was done till April the 3rd of 1784...

November 17 1784 Through a turn of God's providence the church chiefly moving to the north side of Kentucky and for the health and prosperity of Zion, we have appointed a church meeting at Brother William Bush's, November 24, 1784, the former clerk not having moved to the north side, the church appointed Daniel Ramey Clerk, also received John Johnson by letter.

For the first two years church meetings were held in different homes. In 1787 the first meeting house was constructed of logs on the site of the present church. The log church had loopholes so that guards could be posted during services to watch for Indians. Francis Bush and Robin Richards (brother and brother-in-law to Captain Bush) donated the land on which the log church was built.

In 1790 the church entered the constitution of the South Kentucky Association of Separate Baptists (those who held to a strict interpretation of the Scripture). A year later the church had grown to be quite large. During the year difficulty arose over the constitution between the Elders Robert Elkin and Andrew Tibble, which resulted in a split within the church. The followers of Elkin retained the constitution and continued a Separatist church, but changed the name from Howard's Creek to Providence, while the Tibble

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followers were constituted under the name of Unity. (Soon after the division, Tibble built a log meeting house two miles above Providence Church on Lower Howard's Creek.) The Providence congregation replaced the original log building in 1793 with the present stone structure.

In 1801, during the Great Revival, a conference was called between the Regular Baptists of the South Elkhorn Association and the Separate Baptists of the South Kentucky Association. The meeting was held at the Providence Church, and, after lengthy discussion, terms of union were agreed upon and accepted. As a result the terms Regular and Separate Baptists were dropped and they became known as the United Baptists. A year later the church joined the North District Association.

Mrs. Julia Tevis, founder of Science Hill School in Shelby County, Kentucky (see Science Hill School, Shelbyville, listed on the National Register September 18, 1975), and a native of Clark County, gives this description of the Providence Meeting House in her autobiography, Sixty Years in a School-room (1878):

When I first recollect it was a community of Baptists, and they all worshiped at the stone meeting-house on Howard's Creek. There is an interest attached to this old church that deserves mention. It is, probably, the first Baptist church built in Kentucky, and its foundations are laid deep and strong, though not large and wide. A community of Baptists, living on the Holston, in Virginia, determined to emigrate to Kentucky in 1780. The ruling elder, Rev. Mr. Vinton [sic], was their leader. They passed through much tribulation, and finally reached their destination, but had no permanent place of worship until the stone church referred to was erected, and called "Providence." The Reverend Robert Elkin was their pastor for forty-two years....I visited the neighborhood in 1824, and found attached to the congregation thirteen widow Bushes. During the past summer, 1864, I had the privilege of entering within its hallowed walls, and hearing an excellent sermon from a reformed Baptist minister. The Reformers preach on alternate Sundays with the old Baptists, and the two congregations worship together, generally without disagreement.

The old church is in good condition. We reach it through a lovely blue-grass region, dotted with stately mansions, rendered attractive by green lawns and magnificent old sugar-trees, through whose foliage the sunlight, streaming down, covers the ground with enchanting figures of light and shade. The rugged hills surrounding the creek present a striking contrast to green valleys where Summer sleeps upon beds of roses. Now and then a simple cottage is seen like a diamond in its granite cup; or on top of some green and goodly hill a dwelling, white and fair, gleaming through depths of the richest verdure. (pp. 48-49).

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During the spread of Campbellism in 1830 (a significant movement in Kentucky church history which resulted in the establishment of a new Protestant denomination, the Disciples of Christ), when many Baptist churches withdrew from the Associations and became Disciples of Christ, Providence Church retained its constitution.

In 1869, when the Boonesborough-Winchester Pike became a major thoroughfare, a committee was formed to investigate the possibility of building a new church on the main highway. A large frame meeting house was completed in 1870. The stone meeting house was gutted by fire, but it was restored and regular services are still held there today.

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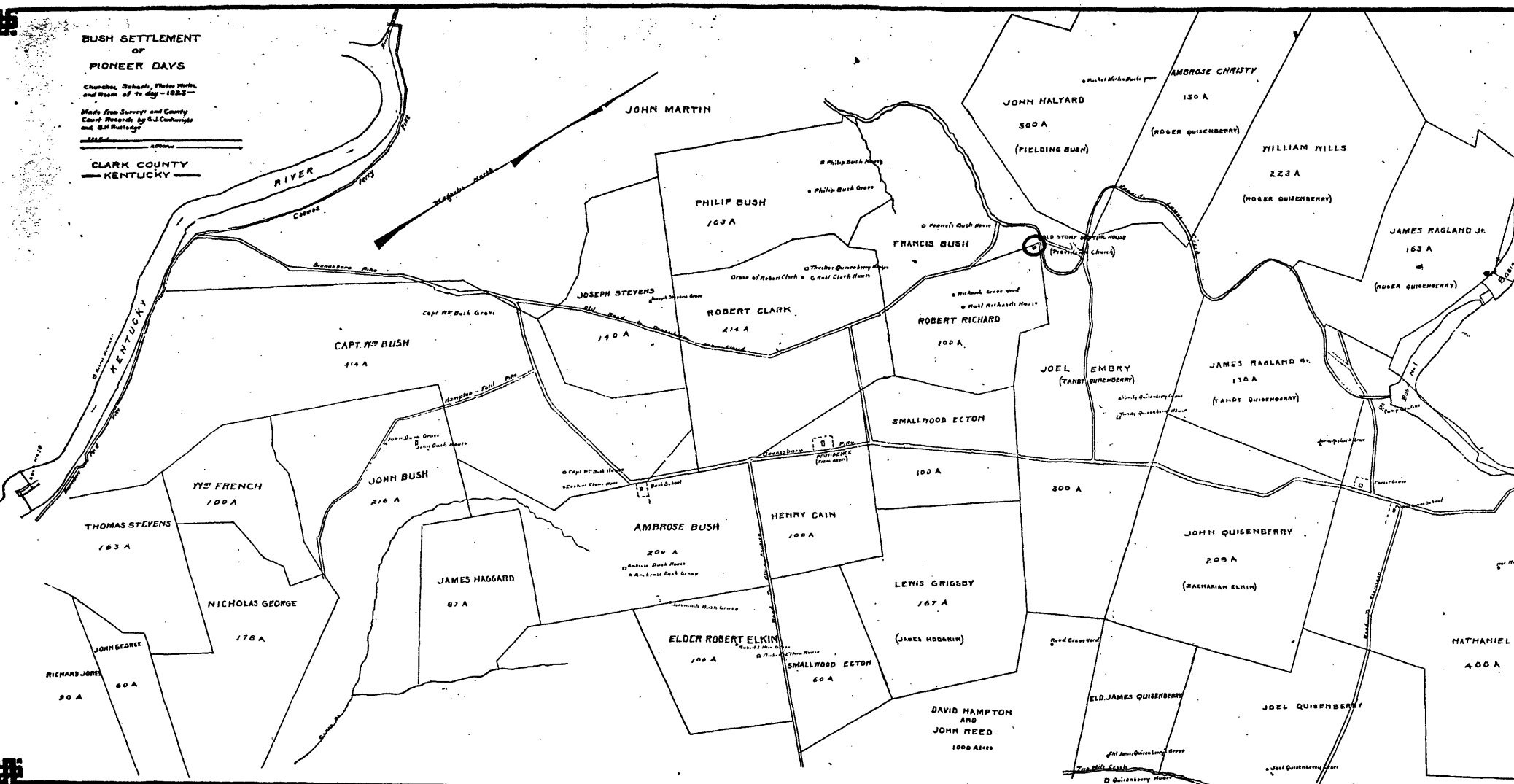
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**BUSH SETTLEMENT  
OF  
PIONEER DAYS**

Churches, Schools, Water Works,  
and Roads of To Day—1923—  
Made from Surveys and County  
Court Records by S. J. Conkright  
and S. H. Rutledge

**CLARK COUNTY  
KENTUCKY**



**THE MAP OF THE BUSH SETTLEMENT.**

The Map in this work of the Bush settlement of Clark County, Kentucky, shows how that Baptist colony of pioneer days, settled around the Old Stone Meeting House (Providence) as a nucleus, which constructed between the years of 1787 and 1793, and located on Lower Howard's Creek in said County. The Map also shows in large type the owners of farms before the year 1800, (with the exception of one or two). In smaller type later owners of some of the farms. The churches (with the exception of the Old Stone Meeting House), Schools, Water Works and Roads of today, 1923.

Made from Surveys and County Court records of Clark County, Kentucky, by S. J. Conkright and S. H. Rutledge.