

THE HISTORY OF PROVIDENCE

Can't find Providence on the map? No, it's not the Providence that became a ghost town in the 1800's and ultimately vanished from the landscape. Providence is a fictional town, but in the world of the Cheese Shop Mysteries, it is a stone's throw from Millersburg, set in the rolling hills of Holmes County, Ohio.

<http://www.holmescountychamber.com/>



Providence is an old town that has enjoyed its proximity to the tourist-draw of Amish country and its beautiful location in the hills of Ohio. The town's shops sell quilts and other products from the Amish community. Providence is a grid-style town, built around a village square, with a wishing well and a clock tower as a tribute to the many from Providence who have served America in battle.

Thanks to tourism, the town has exploded with B&Bs, art galleries, and shops. Sew Inspired is the place where townsfolk and tourists learn to sew and quilt. Europa Antiques offers unique one-of-a-kind pieces. Mystic Moon Candles not only sells candles but holds yoga and New Age classes. All Booked Up is a popular a book store. The Silver Trader deals in handmade jewelry. Out of Hand is a crafting store. Nuts for Nails Hardware is a thriving concern. Waggin' Tails is the store that caters to the pampered pets of Providence, which are plentiful.

With all the influx of visitors, Providence dining establishments have multiplied. La Bella Ristorante is the town's four-star gem, while the Country Kitchen is the place everyone goes for a good hearty meal, a milkshake, and a song.

In addition, there are wonderful inns and specialty spots. The Harvest Moon Ranch is known for its extravagant weddings. Lois's Lavender and Lace Bed and Breakfast is the in-place to stay in town, with high tea served every afternoon.

A wealth of family farms abound around Providence, including two cow dairy farms, one sheep farm, and one honey bee farm. Wineries are also springing up. The third-generation Bozzuto winery is the most respected and specializes in reds. For the children, Bozzuto's also makes the best root beer around!

Notable places include the Providence History Museum, established by one of the town's wealthiest women. The museum displays a terrific retrospective of the people that settled in Providence, their clothing, their silver and china, and the books that chronicle the period. The town library is also a hotspot, specializing in book clubs and children's events. The theater, Providence Playhouse, is known for its cutting-edge material and has drawn raves from reviewers across the region. Actors from Hollywood and New York are showing interest in performing there. The private high school at the edge of town used to be a reformatory prison for the criminal elite.

Charlotte Bessette, the protagonist of *The Cheese Shop Mysteries* is in her early thirties. She is college-educated and has been burned once in love. She has lived in Providence all her life and can't think of a better place to live. Orphaned at three, she was raised by her grandparents, Bernadette and Etienne, who left war-torn France in the late 1940's and have embraced all things American.

Charlotte's feisty grandmother, Bernadette, is the current mayor of Providence and the town's driving creative force. She has served as the town's mayor for three terms and is running for her fourth. She also oversees the town's theater productions.

Hardworking Etienne Bessette opened Fromagerie Bessette, a specialty cheese shop, when he first arrived in Providence and has turned the place into a must-stop local business. However, at seventy-two, he feels it's time for him to retire, so he has offered the business to his two grandchildren, Charlotte and Matthew, though it is difficult for Etienne to let anything out of his control for very long.

Matthew Bessette was a sommelier in Cleveland, but when his wife up and left him and his twins, running off to dear old mumsie and dear old dad in England, Matthew looked for a new life. He and Charlotte wish to grow Fromagerie Bessette into a thriving concern, with a wine annex, cheese classes, internet newsletters, and more.