Marker Text

Sisters of Saint Francis

Opened in 1852; enlarged in 1876 and 1901. The Academy Classroom Building and the Auditorium were completed in 1968.

Report

New research raised questions about the dates listed on this marker, prompting a text review:

- According to a booklet prepared by the Academy in Oldenburg, the school celebrated a sesquicentennial in 2002. The Sisters of Saint Francis, according to the booklet, "took definite charge of the parochial school" in November 1851. The booklet's authors continued, "Thus by the fall of 1852, the Academy had taken its place in the world as a recognized institution of secondary education." It is not clear whether the school was operational in 1851, and additional secondary sources further complicate the issue. [1]

- IHB research could not confirm the 1876 expansion date. A June 27, 1901 article from the *Brookville Democrat* confirms the 1901 renovation. The article states that the academy building "has been under construction nearly two years and is just finished." [2]

- Although the auditorium was completed in 1968, *The Batesville Herald-Tribune* indicates that the classroom building was in as early as the fall of 1967.[3]

Current IHB guidelines require primary source documentation to support all information on a marker. IHB staff found no mention of Oldenburg or the Academy in Brookville newspapers published prior to 1901. Oldenburg was German-speaking, and it appears from initial research that the community received little attention in English-language newspapers. IHB staff did not explore German-language resources for this review. It is possible that primary sources written in German exist to verify the dates in question.

For individuals interested in pursuing this topic, IHB staff recommends exploring local resources, such as public libraries, historical societies, and museum collections, paying particular attention to documents produced by the Oldenburg Franciscan community. More context for German immigration and education in German immigrant communities is provided in the links below.

Links

Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg have a website with a history of the order and the Academy.

Library of Congress Chronology of Germans in America

Indiana German Heritage Society and Wabash College produce digital and print resources relating to German immigration and culture in Indiana.

Indiana State Library offers resource guides for genealogy (including Religious resources and German resources) and topic categories (Ethnic, Religious, and National Groups, Franklin Co. Papers, and Franklin Co. Maps).

Indiana Historical Society holds ethnic history materials and other resources, including a lesson plan for educators on German immigration in Indiana.

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[1] *Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception*, sesquicentennial booklet prepared by the Academy, 2002; "Famed Academy at Oldenburg Stays Quaint, Yet Modern," *Batesville Herald-Tribune*, October 5, 1967. According to a June 27, 1901 article in the *Brookville Democrat*, the Academy celebrated its "golden jubilee," or 50th anniversary, in 1901. The booklet supports the date on the marker, while the 1901 celebration implies that 1851 is the correct date. An October 5, 1967 article from the *Batesville Herald-Tribune*, also gives 1852 as the opening date.

[2] "Academy of Immaculate Conception," *Brookville Democrat*, June 27, 1901.

[3] "Famed Academy at Oldenburg Stays Quaint, Yet Modern," *Batesville Herald-Tribune*, October 5, 1967. The *Batesville Herald-Tribune* reported on October 5, 1967, "A new classroom building is in use this autumn….Later this year the Academy also will be using its new auditorium." The same paper reported on January 25, 1968 that the first school program would be presented in the new auditorium on January 28.