

PH 0509426

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED NOV 29 1977  
DATE ENTERED JAN 9 1979

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 <sup>St.</sup> Mount Saint Joseph Academy  
AND/OR COMMON  
Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN <sup>RY 56</sup> St. Joseph  
~~Maple Mount~~ VICINITY OF  
STATE Kentucky CODE 021 COUNTY Daviess CODE 059  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 02

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) (5)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Ursuline Sisters  
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Maple Mount VICINITY OF STATE Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Daviess County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER Second and Frederica Street  
CITY, TOWN Owansboro STATE Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky (Supplement)  
DATE 1976  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Kentucky Heritage Commission  
CITY, TOWN Frankfort STATE Kentucky  
 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT                       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                                 RUINS  
 FAIR                                  UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

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

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

Mount St. Joseph Academy is located on a low promontory that rises between the East and West Forks of Panther Creek several miles south of its descent into the Rio River near Curdsville. The Academy is about ten miles southwest of Owensboro, a fairly large city and seat of Daviess County. Although Maple Mount itself is hardly more than the academy and a post office address, the small town of West Louisville is only a mile or so west of the institution. The general area consists of meandering ridges with broad fertile agricultural bottomlands between.

The main body of the campus consists of well-maintained lanes and groupings of superb trees (see the air view, photo 1). The early buildings faced Cummings Road on the west, toward St. Alphonsus Rectory. The larger 1904 north wing of the original building, however, changed the orientation toward the north. Elaborate formal gardens with terraces, geometric paths and sloped plantings, and a fountain, provide a setting for the north wing, while the 1929 chapel and novitiate were north across sweeping lawns dotted with trees. The peripheries of the campus are enclosed with mature trees; beyond is open farmland.

As shown in an early engraving (photo 2), the 1874 Academy building was a nine-bay brick structure with two main stories, a high basement, and full attic, and a mansard roof. There are shallow pilaster strips rising from the ground to the flat cornice between the bays on the west front; the other sides were flat. Windows are large plain sash with stone lintel and sills. The central entrance has three superimposed round-arched openings under an acute gable that breaks that roofline. There are two shaped dormers on either side of the gable (and three double dormers across the rear). In the middle of the roof is an octagonal cupola on a square base, which had a view platform in the engraving. The original open step leading to the fanlit double entrance was replaced fairly early by a handsome and elaborate three-bay cast iron porch (photo 3). The engraving also shows a columned one-story porch at the north end of the block onto which two doors gave access (photos 2, 4). The engraving also shows many newly-planted trees, some of which no doubt are the fully-grown specimens that still distinguish the campus.

A perpendicular south wing was added to the Academy building in 1882 across its south end to house dormitories and an Assembly Hall (photos 5, 6). It resembled the 1874 block with a similar central feature at its narrow west end, but with segmental-ledged windows and no pilaster strips. It was used later as chapel (1899-1929) and as library (1929 to present). (This wing was extended by a plain flat-roofed four-story block in recent years (see photo 19).

(continued)



# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

[Anonymous]. An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, Kentucky.  
 N. P., Leo McDonough and Co., 1876 [Carefully compiled from personal examinations  
 and surveys].

(continued)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 10 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	4,7,1	2,5,0	4,1,7,1	7,2,5	B	1,6	4,7,1	5,1,5	4,1,7,1	5,7,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C	1,6	4,7,1	2,6,0	4,1,7,1	5,4,0	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

Calvin P. Jones, Senior Historian

GM:WEL

ORGANIZATION

Kentucky Heriage Commission

DATE

November 1977

STREET & NUMBER

104 Bridge Street

TELEPHONE

(502) 564-3741

CITY OR TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Cedric W. Melton*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

11/18/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Charles A. ...*

DATE

1-9-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Jam H. Gurnon*

DATE

1/5/8

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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In 1904 a large three-story brick block was placed at the north end of the old Academy (photos 1, 8). With its main facade facing north, this block henceforth had dominated the campus. Elaborate terraced gardens lead up to the small north porch, although currently access is generally by means of a curved drive to the rear (southeast) of the main complex.

At some early date, although not originally, a handsome two-story porch was placed across the rear (east side) of the Academy building (see photo 7). This has a unique and charming balustrade of rhythmic cut out patterns and delicate spandrels atop the square ports. A similar but taller porch (now truncated) was extended across the rear (south side) of the 1904 addition (see photo 19).

The 1904 north wing contains an Auditorium, Dining Room and Kitchen, dormitories, classrooms, and study hall. The main north facade has five symmetrical units, with the second and fourth slightly renewed. There is a low hipped roof over all, with a central cupola that is a slightly more graceful version of the 1874 cupola without the square pedestal. There is a high round-arched dormer over the central pavilion, which has three wide bays on the two main stories. There are pairs of narrower windows in the other four units, but the third story has a series of smaller square attic windows above a belt course. Because there are more of these than in the corresponding bays below, the attic windows provide rhythmic variation and a strong horizontality that supports the modillioned cornice above. The windows of the main two stories on the north front and ends have strongly marked and splayed keystones. A small square one-story porch marks the central entrance while, like the windows flanking it, is round-arched. There is a stone water table over the high basement.

The 1898 Chaplain's Residence, southeast of the main campus, is a similar two-story five-bay brick structure, but with a striking parapet-pediment across the entire front (photos 10,11). The bare brick surfaces are enlivened only by the segmental arches of the openings, a corbelled brick band under the coping of the pediment, and a charming porch across the front, which has unfortunately lost its upper and lower railings.

The large St. Angela Hall was erected in 1913 parallel to the north wing but set some distance east of the Academy complex (photos 12, 13). A full three stories

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high, plus basement and attic, it, too, is of brick, with plain stone lintels, a handsome Ionic porch at one end, and triple galleries along the south side.

The smaller one-and-a-half-story St. Michael Hall was built in 1921 west of St. Angela Hall. Of brick with a stone foundation set into a gentle southward slope, it was enlarged and the original facade somewhat altered in the early 1960's.

The brick Chapel and Novitiate built in 1929, was designed by Louisville architect Fred J. Erhart. The design effectively plays off the relatively complex and ornamental vertical entrance facade of the Chapel against the plain horizontal mass of the Novitiate behind. The Chapel actually faces north, not the liturgically correct west (with the altar at the traditional east end); this orientation allows it to look out across the extensive open lawns behind and beside the Academy building and its wings. The central pavillion of the Chapel is a three-story mass with a small projecting one-story vestibule framing the entrance. On either side of the vestibule are small windows; above and behind it is a large traceried "west" window, with a small rose window above that in the low gable under a pyramidal pedestal for the cross. The openings of the Chapel have low pointed arches. There are buttresses with stone shoulders at the corners, including those of the main sanctuary set back several feet from the entrance feature. The coping of the curving stairway to the vestibule, the watertable, window labels, and other ornamental features are of stone.

The interior was interestingly arranged to accommodate the complex functions of Academy, Novitiate, Convent. The rather low central space was covered with a shallow vault on highly ornamented arches. The altar was set in front of an enclosed passageway within the shallowly curved chancel, whose vault with its two side windows rose above the arch of the nave ceiling. The side walls are set back beyond the arches of the main space, forming implied side-aisles. The side walls have recessed pointed-arch openings on an upper level, presumably to allow secluded nuns and perhaps invalids to participate in the sacraments unseen by the congregation in the auditorium. The geometry of the room is rather broad, yet thinly outlined, with clusters of sculptured foliage only at the capitals of the colonnettes of the recessed apertures and the corbels of the main side arches. The delicately buttressed and pinnacled passage behind the still more elaborate altar formed the major visual and ceremonial interest of the chapel; the side altars, surmounted by statues, were far simpler.

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The man responsible for the early growth of the institution, Paul Joseph Volk, was born in western Germany in 1841.<sup>3</sup> He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Fulde in 1865. After preparation at the American College in Louvain, Belgium, he came to Louisville, Kentucky, in 1869. He worked in the Diocese of Louisville 1869-85, 1893-95, and 1915-19, building nine churches in central and western Kentucky. He also served during other intervals in the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky, extending his pioneer missionary efforts into eastern Kentucky. Father Volk spent the years 1888-91 in Ecuador and 1891-1915 in Panama (then part of the Republic of Columbia), where he was responsible for the establishment of eight churches.

Father Volk's association with Mount Saint Joseph may have begun in the early 1870s, when he was probably serving as pastor of St. Alphonsus' Church.<sup>4</sup> It is known that he filled that capacity in 1882, probably until 1885, while he was also Chaplain at Mount Saint Joseph. In any case, he is given credit for the revitalization of the Academy in 1874 when the present original building was completed, and also for the 1882 south wing.<sup>5</sup> During the last four years of his life Father Volk again served the Diocese of Louisville, making regular visits to Mount Saint Joseph and finally moving there just before his death in 1919.<sup>6</sup>

The early purpose of Mount Saint Joseph Academy, which was first staffed by Ursuline Sisters from Louisville, Kentucky, was similar to the purposes of other Catholic academies, "to form young ladies to virtue, ornament their minds with useful information, accustom them to early habits of order and economy, and to cultivate in them those qualities which render them both amiable and attractive, not only in the family circle, but in society likewise."<sup>7</sup>

The Ursulines have long been an honored and respected order in the United States. Ursulines from France formed a community in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1845.<sup>8</sup> The first German Ursulines came to the United States from Austria.<sup>9</sup> They arrived in 1848, at the invitation of Father Joseph Melcher, Vicar--General of St. Louis, Missouri. The founders of the convent at Louisville, Kentucky, came from Straubing, Bavaria, in southern Germany, in 1858.<sup>10</sup> Despite their financial difficulties after the American Civil War, the Louisville group was very missionary-minded and Mount Saint Joseph was only one of their many endeavors in both western and southern Kentucky.

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When the Louisville Ursulines established Mount Saint Joseph Academy in 1861, they had over a century of historical precedent to imitate.<sup>11</sup> The oldest Catholic academy for girls in the United States was one founded in New Orleans in 1727 while the Louisiana Territory was still under French rule. By 1860 there was more than 200 of these schools in America, many of which evolved from finishing schools to four-year high schools before the turn of the twentieth century.

The general demand for Catholic religious teachers was urgent to young women from Daviess County, and provided the impetus for newly rapid expansion of the institution. In 1852 and 1866 the first and second Plenary Councils of Baltimore, Maryland, officially exhorted all Catholic parents to send their children to Catholic schools at all levels, and also stated that as far as possible all teachers in Catholic parish schools should be either clergy or members of religious orders. The Third Plenary Council of Baltimore (1884) formally decreed that every pastor must build a parish school and that all Catholic parents must send their children to Catholic schools. These decrees were considered reactions of American Roman Catholic bishops to the philosophies of materialism, naturalism, and nativism prevailing at that time in the industrially burgeoning United States. They were also intended to accommodate the continually increasing population of European Catholic immigrants who needed both Americanization and religious education.

It is only natural that academies taught by women who were members of Holy Orders and often attached to conventual motherhouses should foster vocations to their own institutes. To accommodate aspirants to the Daviess County Ursulines, who were still required to enter the Louisville Motherhouse, and "to perpetuate and vitalize the work of ... religious education in southwestern Kentucky," on August 15, 1895, the Right Reverend William George McClosky, Bishop of the Louisville Archdiocese, formally opened a novitiate at Mount Saint Joseph. One of the early graduates of the Academy, Leona Willett, known as Sister Aloysius, was appointed Mistress of Novices and assumed the title of Mother.

By 1905 there were 40 graduates of Mount Saint Joseph Academy. That year Mother Aloysius Willett replaced Mother Augustine Bloemer as local superior of the

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Mount Saint Joseph religious community of twenty-four members. One of her first responsibilities was to respond to the appeals of parish priests for Sisters to staff their schools. During her tenure (1906-1912), 51 sisters were sent to teach in 13 elementary parochial schools in Kentucky, mainly in rural areas, many of them poor.

As the missionaries went forth, the Novitiate and Academy populations multiplied. By September 1912, 78 girls had been graduated and 89 Ursulines were attached to Mount Saint Joseph. During the next month, on October 12, 1912, the Daviess County Ursulines were granted autonomy. Mother Aloysius became Superior General of Mount Saint Joseph. At the time of her death in 1920, the independent and thriving religious community staffed a total of over 40 schools besides the Academy, and had extended its 30 Kentucky missions into one in Indiana, seven in Nebraska, and three in New Mexico. It claimed 210 living members, and the academy, having obtained state accreditation in 1919, had granted high school diplomas to 126 graduates, some of whom would teach in the public common schools of the state.<sup>12</sup>

The adequate preparation of teachers constantly occupied Mother Aloysius' attention from the time of her appointment in 1882 as teacher and Director of Studies at Mount Saint Joseph. By that time the Academy had also come to be known to many merely as "Maple Mount" from the grove of trees planted by Father Volk on the academy grounds in 1875.<sup>13</sup> Before the turn of the century there was little professional preparation of public school teachers, communities of religious women being somewhat in the lead in teacher education. For the sake of both pupils and teachers, professional summer courses were introduced early at the Academy.<sup>14</sup>

Beginning in 1895, efforts were made, both on the national level by the National Education Association and locally by Mount Saint Joseph to encourage modernization and strengthening of educational training. The study of psychology, and the methodology and history of education, were introduced. Statewide accreditation was achieved.

Under Mother Agnes O'Flynn, who had succeeded Mother Aloysius in 1923, the transition from evangelism to professionalism was clearly launched. The active professional community at Mount Saint Joseph reached its numerical peak in 1965 with 400 teachers staffing 69 schools in the United States and one in Santiago, Chile. The total living

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membership was 452. Since then, Sister retirement and diminishing religious vocations have reduced the total membership to 400, with about 81 Sisters retired.

Mount Saint Joseph soon leaped into higher education, the consequence of a natural process of growth which had educational, economic, and practical purposes. No doubt two motivating factors were the high cost of educating the institution's rapidly increasing teacher membership and the clear distinction being generally made between the high school and college courses of study. The Academy curriculum had begun with Primary, Intermediate, and Senior levels of study. For some it was a finishing school after a one-or-two year course. Post-graduate offerings which included Music and Literature, Science, Rhetoric, and a Common School Course had been appended to the Senior Department by 1894. By 1912 the curriculum had been expanded to include Languages and Art.

When the Academy reached its Golden Jubilee Commencement, June 18, 1924, it was bursting into a two-year collegiate institute. Mount Saint Joseph College for women was opened at Maple Mount in the fall of 1925. It immediately sought and obtained state approval to confer two-year liberal arts certificates of graduation, and both standard and provisional elementary teacher certificates.

By 1943 the junior college had experienced an impressive growth and success. It had been fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in 1933. By 1943 it was recognized by the Kentucky State Department of Education and the University of Kentucky as a "Junior College of First Class." By that time the teacher training curricula at Mount Saint Joseph Junior College also met the requirements for teacher certification in various other states as the result of reciprocal recognition accorded to acceptable institutions.

Eventually, more rigorous controls on accreditation by the State Department of Education, and the consequent financial burden of sending nearly 300 Sisters to obtain at least the Bachelor's degree, forced the development of Mount Saint Joseph Junior College into a Senior College. The location was transferred to Owensboro in 1950 when it became co-educational and changed its name to Brescia College, in honor of the

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city in Italy where the Ursuline order had been originally founded in 1535 by Saint Angela.<sup>15</sup> Only seven nuns now are teaching at Mt. Saint Joseph with credits below the Bachelor's level. All except those near retirement do in-service study toward continuous professional advancement.

In 1974 Mount Saint Joseph Academy celebrated its centennial. At that time its accomplishments and its purpose were expressed by its principal, Sister Laura Abell, in terms of the insights of Vatican II:

It is our intention to offer a liberal education, not just for college but for life, and spiritual values which will prepare those attending the Mount to always seek the truth and to continue their own formation.

By graduating more than 1,600 young women of whatever faith who attended there between 1874-1974 in secular studies, for religious instruction, for creative development, for help toward economic advantage and for homemaking, both at the high school and junior college levels, and by educating many more from the primary to the junior level, "Maple Mount" has joined hands with both Church and State in working for the rightful betterment of this world in which all men alike live.

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FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>[Anonymous], History of Daviess County, Kentucky (Chicago, Interstate Publishing Company, 1883), p. 559.

<sup>2</sup>"Precinct Histories," An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, Kentucky (No place of Publication, Leo McDonough and Co., 1876), p. 21. Also see Reverend Walter A. Hancock, "Centennial Brochure. St. Alphonsus Church, 1870-1970" (Louisville: Church Directory Publishers, 1970), pp. 3-9.

<sup>3</sup>Norbert Russwurm, Pioneer Missionary in Two Continents: Reverend Paul Joseph Volk (St. Bernard, Alabama, St. Bernard Abbey Cookshop, 1937), pp. 1-65; pp. 127-145.

<sup>4</sup>Sister Mary Eva Thompson, Centennial Brochure of Mount Saint Joseph (Owensboro, Kentucky, Greenwell-Chisholm Printing Company, 1974), p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>Honorable Ben J. Webb, The Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky (No place of publication, Charles A. Rogers, 1884).

<sup>6</sup>Sister Mary Eva Thompson, For further information concerning Father Volk, please consult the following: Reverend Paul E. Ryan, History of the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky: On the Occasion of the Centenary of the Diocese, 1853-1953 (Covington, privately printed, 1954), p. 582; p. 660; pp. 346-347; also Russwurm, loc. cit.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Theodore Roemer, "The Ludwig-Missionsverein and the Church in the United States (1838-1918)," Franciscan Studies, No. 12, August 1933, p. 128.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

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Footnotes

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>11</sup>Sister Mary Eva Thompson, loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

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(August 23, 1970), p. 1-E.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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RECEIVED	DEC 28 1978
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Mt. Saint Joseph Academy

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ADDENDUM

Boundary Description

The nominated area includes all the remaining historic buildings associated with Mt. Saint Joseph Academy and the open landscaped lawn to the north of the older structures which is an integral part of the campus and visually important to the setting of the buildings.

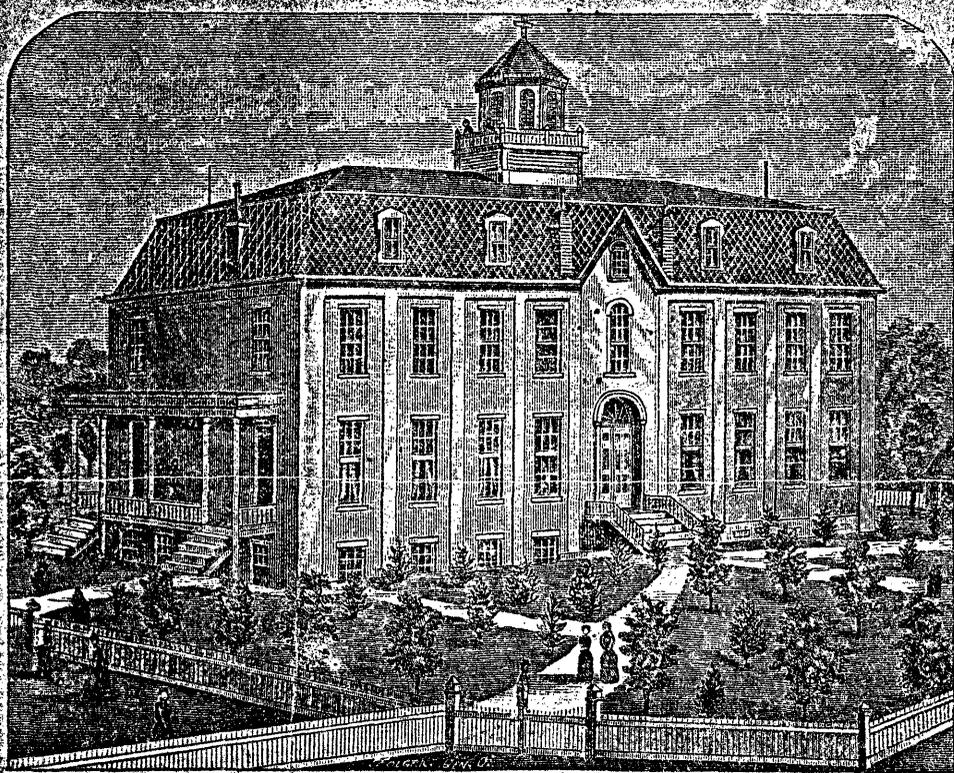
Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the southeast corner of Cummings Road and Hwy. 56, the boundary extends south along the east side of Cummings Road, turning eastward along the entrance drive just south of the 1874 Academy Building, and continues southward to include Michael Hall. The boundary then turns in a northerly direction to include the Chapel and Chaplain's Residence and continues until it intersects with Hwy. 56. The boundary runs along the south side of Hwy 56 until it intersects with Cummings Road.

UTM References:

- A) 16/471495/4171780
- B) 16/471520/4171540
- C) 16/471320/4171530
- D) 16/471310/4171760

Approx. 9 1/2 acres



This is a picture of the original 1874 building before the others were erected. No photographer named. It was printed by Daily Messenger Print in 1887, for a small brochure, "Mount Saint Joseph's Academy."

Mount Saint Joseph Academy  
Maple Mount, Daviess Co, Ky.

JAN 9 1979

Photo #2 NOV 29 1977

Xerox copy of engraving from brochure, "Mount Saint Joseph's Academy" (1887).

View of 1874 Academy building from northwest.