

In 1883, a 72 x 32 foot wing was built across the front of the original building. The wing included four large classrooms, three cloakrooms, a library, an auditorium, and a belfry. The school bell from the original Methodist Church (on West Washington St. in front of the old cemetery) was used in the school. It marked the time for the beginning of school and for recess until Newby was built in 1936. This bell was tolled at the time of Samuel Moore's death. The bell currently resides in The Academy.



From 1883 through 1907 the building housed all grades and was known simply as Mooresville School. In 1907, the building was full. A new Mooresville High School was built next to what would now be known as The Academy. Beginning in the 1908-09 school year, The Academy would house grades 1-8.

In 1936, the William and Milton Newby Memorial Elementary was erected to house the elementary school. Forrest Caldwell was Superintendent at this time. The plans were to tear down The Academy. As they were tearing down the front addition, he decided that the rest of The Academy should be preserved, and the school board agreed. He had front doors made following a picture of the old building. After 1936, the original Academy building was used for junior high classes, until the current Mooresville High School building on North Indiana Street was built in 1960. The old high school became a junior high, and The Academy was filled with elementary students until Neil A. Armstrong Elementary was built in 1971. (Incidentally, Neil Armstrong school was built on the land originally owned by John D. Carter, one of the 13 original donors to The Academy).

Mooresville historian Rebecca Hardin once observed that "The brick Academy Building located on North Monroe Street in Mooresville, Indiana is probably the only school building in the United States which was paid for by private donations, and in which students attended public school for one hundred and ten years."

The building was leased for 25 years to the Morgan County Historical Society in 1971. It was placed on the state and national Historic Registers in the summer of 1975. In 1997, the Mooresville Community Foundation received a grant to help with the restoration of the building. The building was re-dedicated in 2000 and houses the Foundation as well as the newly created Academy Museum. The museum features local and school history items and information as well as changing exhibits and a one-room school.

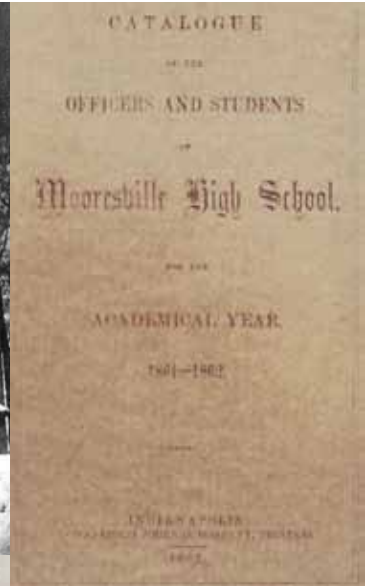
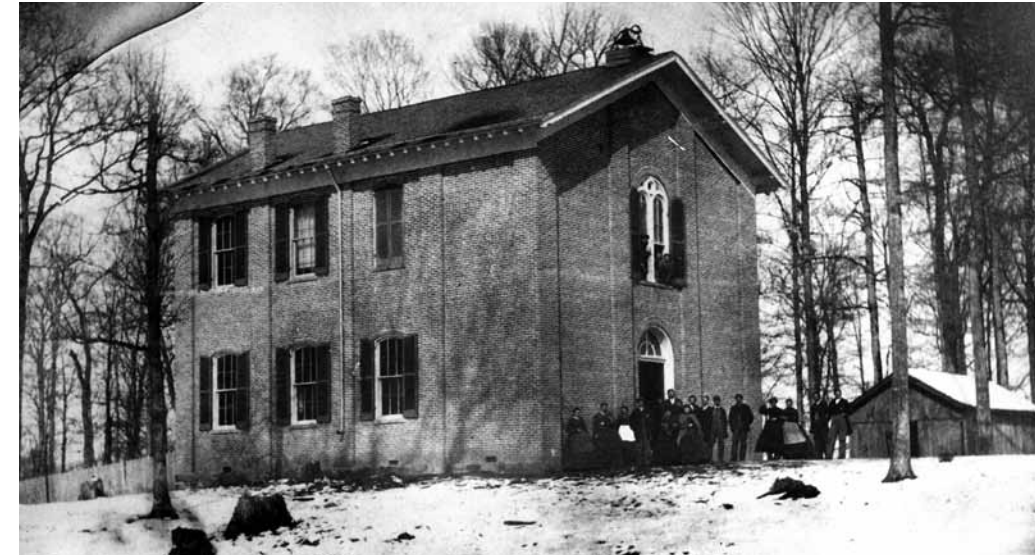
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PHOTOS: The Academy between 1883 and 1936. **Cover top left:** The first known photo of the Academy after being completed in 1861. **Cover top right:** The Catalogue of the Academical Year 1861-1862, which includes the school's course listing and student list. **Cover middle left:** The Academy today includes a museum of local history, including a pattern used by Paul Hadley to create the Indiana State Flag. **Middle right:** The Academy with the front addition, photo likely from the 1920s. **Bottom:** The Academy in 2012.

The Academy Building

Home of Central Indiana's First High School



In 1860, education was a concern of the Society of Friends, and since no commissioned high school had been established in or near Mooresville, the Friends (Quakers) felt the need to create a school containing a grade intermediate between common school and college. If students wanted to go to high school they could travel to Richmond, Indiana or they didn't go.

Thirteen original donors began the building for higher learning. They were Perry Macy, Jesse Hadley, John F. Hadley, A.B. Conduitt, J.L. Kelly, William Macy, Levi L. Hadley, Johnathon L. Holmes, Aiken Dakin, Samuel Moore, Calvin Moore, John D. Carter, and John Day. Their donations ranged from 50 cents to up to \$150. Many more donated stone, labor, or did lime hauling. Not all who helped were Quakers, such as A.B. Conduitt, who helped create the Indiana State Constitution.

The institution was built under the care of the Mooresville High School Association Board of Managers who were members of the Friends Church. These trustees were Alexander Clark, William Beeson, Evan Hadley, Joseph Pool, Perry T. Macy, Aaron Mills, and Tristram Coggeshall. The site of the school was a wooded five-acre tract of land adjoining the Town of Mooresville, which was bought from David and Hannah Yates for \$50. The date for the deed for the ground was September 12, 1860, although it was not recorded at the court house in Martinsville until May 22, 1861.

This school was built in 1860 and opened in 1861, when Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States. The 34 x 64 foot structure was very modern for those days, with two rooms and an anteroom, and a bell. It was built at a total cost of \$4,500. Each floor was one room which was heated by a large stove. The building included slateboards, glass windows, desks, seats, and a set of chairs. The scholars wrote on handheld slates.

In 1867, an addition of two rooms was built on the west side of the original building. Eighty-seven donors raised money for the school addition. The school was nonsectarian and courses drew a large local attendance as well as many students from neighboring towns. At this time there were 150 students, 100 of whom were Friends. The average daily attendance was 119.

With the addition to the original building, an elementary school was started as a preparatory school for the high school, or boarding academy, as it was called. Girls received equal training with boys. The Catalogue of the 1861-1862 Mooresville High School Academical Year shows 30 of the 78 students were girls. Of those first students, 43 were from Mooresville and others hailed from towns such as Springtown, Plainfield, Monrovia, Danville, Bridgeport, and even the state of Iowa. While it was operated by the Society of Friends, the school was open to those outside the church; however, "Scriptural instruction will be imparted in the school, and students will be expected to attend the meetings for worship of the different religious societies of which they may be members, as often as practicable."



Top: The Academy and Mooresville High School building, from the 1920 MHS *Cauldron* yearbook

Right: The Academy loses its roof during a storm in the 1917-18 school year. The back of this postcard states "Storm blew roof from building. It was immediately over 6th grade, Leorah Wall teacher."



Mooresville High School was the state's first subscription school. The expense of operating the school was met by charging a tuition fee. In the first year, the school operated during a fall session at a cost of \$11 and a spring session at a cost of \$9. Beginning in the fall of 1862, the school held three sessions each year at a cost of \$7.50 for each pupil enrolled for each session. Students who lived outside Mooresville boarded with local families at a cost of \$1.50 to \$2 per week.

According to the Catalogue, the object of the school was to offer the opportunity for those who wished to prepare for college, and learning opportunities to those who could not spend the money and time to go to a regular college. The course of study listed English, three kinds of geography, along with meteorology, geology, chemistry, botany, philosophy, physiology, composition, elocution, grammar, history, rhetoric, logic, economy, spelling, six kinds of mathematics, surveying, astronomy, and eight different classes in Latin and Greek.

The Catalogue states that pupils were admitted for the lower grades if they understood spelling, reading, and writing, had a general knowledge of geography, could name the parts of speech and give the definitions in English Grammar, and understood the tables and elementary principles of arithmetic, "so as to be able to progress with the studies without being retarded by a lack of knowledge in these branches."

There were 147 students who graduated from the years 1879 - 1907. Records of graduates prior to 1879 have yet to be found.

The high school was commissioned in 1869 and again in 1889. Due to the small enrollment, the advent of free or public schools, and the in-

ability to maintain a high school with a limited budget, the Friends realized it was not advisable to continue, so in 1870 the Board of Managers sold the building to the Town of Mooresville, which became an independent school district. The Quakers were paid \$5,000, which they refunded to the town with interest.

At the time of the transfer of the Academy to the town, a report in the local newspaper of the transfer said: "The Trustees of the Mooresville High School have sold the high school to the town of Mooresville and the property will be transferred from the trustees of the former company to the proper authorities of the corporation. We understand it is the desire of the trustees who will now have control of the school never to let it fall below its former standard. This school has been ever looked upon with pride by the citizens of the community, its career has been a successful one, and many of its most ardent friends are loathe to change it from its former management, into the hands of the public. But we believe under the present efficient school law the trustees of the corporation can run the school as successfully as its former managers have done."