

## St. Mary's Academy Timeline

March 1864 – Father (later Bishop) Joseph P. Machebeuf purchased the George W. Clayton residence at the corner of 14th & California for \$4,000. The house was considered quite large for a residence and was reputed to be the first two-story frame house in the area. Locals referred to the residence as “The White House.” (Today the location is the site of the Hyatt Regency Center Denver at Colorado Convention Center where a plaque commemorates St. Mary's Academy.)

June 27, 1864 – Sisters Johanna Walsh, Ignatia Mora and Beatriz Maes-Torres departed Santa Fe, NM with all their possessions in one trunk. After a five-day journey they arrived in Denver and prepared to open the first “select school for girls.”

August 1, 1864 – Twelve years to the day before Colorado became the 38th state, St. Mary's Academy for girls opened with 20 students. From the beginning, St. Mary's Academy has welcomed students from all religious, ethnic and economic backgrounds.

1868 – Sister Pancratia Bonfils joined St. Mary's Academy. She was a first cousin of Frederick G. Bonfils, co-founder of *The Denver Post*. Sister Pancratia went on to direct both St. Mary's Academy and Loretto Heights College. She is known as the founder of Loretto Heights College.

April 18, 1869 – Fire destroyed part of the original school. Denver residents contributed so generously that repairs included the addition of a new wing added on the 15th Street side of the building.

1870 — The railroad arrived in Denver. The population grew from 4,800 in 1870 to 106,700 in 1890.

1872 — The new wing of St. Mary's Academy was completed.

1874 — St. Mary's Academy was chartered.

June 1875 — St. Mary's Academy issued the first high school diploma granted in the Colorado Territory to Miss Jessie Forshee. She became a Sister of Loretto and her religious name was Sister Mary Vitalis. She went on to earn a master's of arts at the Catholic University of Washington, D.C. and a music degree from the Chicago Conservatory. She served as dean of Webster College in St. Louis.

August 1, 1876 — Colorado became a state.

1884 – St. Mary's Academy faculty numbered 25; there were 100 boarders and 25 day students.

November 4, 1888 – St. Mary's Academy purchased land that became the campus of Loretto Heights College.

1891 – Loretto Heights Academy was built to accommodate the boarders of St. Mary's Academy.

1911 – St. Mary's Academy opened a new day school at 14th & Pennsylvania. Denver's legendary Molly Brown was a neighbor and benefactor of the school. Among the many anecdotes of that era are tales of children running into Molly's backyard to retrieve balls accidentally kicked over the fence at recess.

1913 – St. Mary's Academy was accredited by the University of Colorado.

1914-1918 – St. Mary's Academy continued to educate throughout World War I.

1925 – St. Mary's Academy was accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

1939-1945 – St. Mary's Academy continued to educate throughout World War II.

1951 – St. Mary's Academy moved to its current campus at 4545 S. University Blvd. What is currently the Sanders House served as convent and school. The house had been the residence of the Hickerson family.

1952 – The building that currently houses the Lower School was dedicated. It served as the school for all grades, elementary and high school

1964 – St. Mary's Academy celebrated its 100th anniversary. The cornerstone for the high school building, Bonfils Hall, was laid. A generous \$500,000 gift from Helen Bonfils, secretary-treasurer of The Denver Post, funded half the cost of the new high school building.

1977 – While still maintaining its Loretto heritage, the school's governance moved to an independent, self-perpetuating board of trustees.

1977-1986 – Sister Mary Ann Coyle SL served as first president of St. Mary's Academy.

1977-1992 – Terry Macaluso served as president of St. Mary's Academy.

1986 – Bishop Evans Sports Center was dedicated.

1992 – St. Mary's Academy Lower School was named a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education.

1992 – Kathleen O'Malley SL served as interim president.

1993-2006 – Judith Dillon Baenen '57 served as president of St. Mary's Academy.

1998 – St. Mary's Academy Lower School was again named a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education.

1998 – The Board of Trustees approved a new Long-Range Master Plan which includes a new Middle School building, community building, performing arts center, auxiliary gym and site improvements.

1999 – SMA broke ground for the new Middle School building.

1999 – St. Mary's Academy High School was named a U.S. Department of Education Recognized School of Excellence.

2000 – St. Mary's Academy opened its new Middle School building.

2004 – St. Mary's Academy celebrates 140 consecutive years of academic excellence.

2006 – Deirdre V. Cryor appointed president of St. Mary's Academy.