



24.1949.1 Little Cedar Grove Baptist Church
Franklin County
Marker Text Review Report
02/10/2012

Marker Text

Built in 1812, this is the oldest church building still on its original location in the state. Interior shows rifle openings in walls, a balcony and raised pulpit. Burial plot adjoins church.

Report

IHB now avoids the use of subjective and superlative terms such as “first,” “best,” and “oldest.” Such claims are often not verifiable and/or require extensive qualification to be truly accurate. That is the case with this marker’s claim that the building is the oldest church in the state on its original foundation. IHB staff found neither evidence that the claim is untrue, nor confirmation of the assertion.

Current IHB guidelines require primary source documentation to support all information on a marker. This marker was placed under review because IHB had secondary sources on file and the marker text lacks context to demonstrate the significance of the church in early Indiana history. Regarding the accuracy of other points on the marker:

- National Register of Historic Places registration forms are secondary sources of varying reliability depending on the breadth of research performed by the applicant. In the case of this structure, the applicant references unpublished manuscripts and church records from the period to support the construction date. The documents are too fragile to be copied, but are held in the Indiana State Library’s manuscript collection.
- Popular stories claim the purpose of the holes in the wall of the building was “defense against marauding Indians.”ⁱ According to the NRHP registration form, a more reliable, but still secondary source, they were “openings [...] used to support scaffolding.” No primary source has been located to support the use of the term “rifle opening” in the marker text.

Learn More

[Little Cedar Grove Baptist Church](#) is now owned by the Franklin County Historical Society and is open to the public.

The National Register of Historic Places, registration form offers an excellent overview of the property. For additional assistance in locating resources relating to historic preservation and architecture in Indiana, contact the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, [Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology](#) and the non-profit organization, [Indiana Landmarks](#).

For more information on religious groups in early Indiana, see Conner Prairie’s essay on [Baptists in Indiana](#), transcribed [Baptist histories](#) from as early as 1826, and Christian Theological Seminary’s [Subject Bibliographies](#).

ⁱ “Oldest Church in Indiana” [postcard], R.C. Holmes, publisher.