



1182

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name McNutt School

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 720 Millrace Road  N/A not for publication

city or town Boyce  vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Rapides Parish code 079 zip code 71409

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Gerri Hobdy August 20, 1997  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

LA SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 9/20/97

McNutt School  
Name of Property

Rapides Parish, LA  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

no style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation wood; concrete

walls weatherboard

roof metal

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

education  
ethnic heritage/black

**Period of Significance**

1910-1947

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):** N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

McNutt School  
Name of Property

Rapides Parish, LA  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than an acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 5	5 3 2 5 2 0	3 4 6 3 4 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register staff ASSISTED BY DR. ALICE CHILTON AND  
SARA SIMMONDS  
organization Division of Historic Preservation date May 1997  
street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone 504-342-8160  
city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mt. Triumph Baptist Church  
street & number 720 Millrace Road telephone 318-793-2716  
city or town Boyce state LA zip code 71409

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

McNutt School, Rapides Parish, LA  
Section number 7 Page 1

---

The McNutt School is a small one room frame building situated at the top of a small hill in the rural community of McNutt on Bayou Rapides. The school bears the address of the nearest small town, Boyce. The adjacent African-American church with which it is associated is modern, although the congregation was founded in 1891. All available evidence points to a 1910 date of construction for the school. Although the building is deteriorated and has received some non-historic alterations, mainly on the interior, it would be immediately recognizable to someone who went to school there.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of the McNutt School is its small size, measuring only sixteen feet, four inches by twenty-eight feet. The very simple gable end building is sheathed in weatherboards. Originally the roofing material was wood shakes. This is still visible, although in poor condition, beneath the present tin roof. The school has had a tin roof, however, for much of its history. Because the building is located at the edge of what is known as McNutt Hill, its rear is higher off the ground than the front. Some of the original wooden piers remain. The symmetrical facade has a central entrance with a square two over two window on each side. An additional door is on one of the side elevations. The sides have four over four windows at present; however, it is clear that the openings were once taller (see photo). Recollections from former students of the school vary on the subject, although it appears that this alteration occurred many many years ago, perhaps toward the end of the historic period. The rear elevation is pierced by a single off-center four over four window.

The school's original fabric has been covered over on the interior, although the one room floorplan remains. Plywood paneling covers the walls, the ceiling is sheetrocked, and the floor has a vinyl covering. One assumes that beneath the paneling is simple flush board sheathing. Because the interior is exceedingly dark, no photos are being included with this submission.

Assessment of Integrity:

As noted above, the McNutt School would be immediately recognizable to someone who attended school there during the historic period, which is the litmus test for integrity under Criterion A. A restoration project in the planning and fund-raising stages will bring the interior back to its original character.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

McNutt School, Rapides Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

The McNutt School is of local significance in the areas of education and ethnic heritage because it represents the only opportunity available for local African-American children to receive an education. It provided grades one through six to children in the McNutt community and immediate vicinity. The building was McNutt's only African-American school from its construction in 1910 to 1950 when it was closed in a consolidation effort. However, the ending date of the period of significance for this nomination is 1947 to follow the Register's fifty year cutoff.

The school at McNutt must be viewed within its historic context for a full appreciation of its significance. Firstly, it is important to understand that despite its association with Mt. Triumph Baptist Church, the school was not religious in nature. It represents a common and important phenomenon in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Louisiana, churches that assumed much of the responsibility for providing a public educational system for African-American children. By way of background, Louisiana for the most part did not make significant progress in public education until the early twentieth century, whether for whites or blacks. The watchword among late nineteenth century politicians was retrenchment, and although provision for public education was made in various statutes, funding was woefully inadequate for even a single school system, let alone the dual system mandated by segregation. Another factor was the general lack of interest in public education. Private education was more desirable, with public education bearing the stigma of being "pauper" education. In short, its customers were those too poor to go to private schools. And in heavily Catholic South Louisiana, the church provided schools.

What developed in the post-Reconstruction years under the name "public education" was often a public-private system in which the state contributed some funding, with local sources providing the building and other necessities. Among African-Americans, churches played a prominent role. An important phenomenon across the state was a so-called public school being held in a church or in a building on church property. As T. H. Harris, State Superintendent of Education from 1908-1940, reported in his autobiography: "In most cases Negro churches were used for schoolhouses and the only equipment in these churches were the benches used for church services." These efforts were augmented with various private philanthropic funds aimed at improving African-American education in the South (for example, the Rosenwald fund).

All available evidence indicates that the McNutt School was a public-private partnership of the type described above. In a deed dated March 14, 1891, Milton J. Dunnam donated a one acre parcel of land on McNutt Hill (the present site) to the elders of the Mt. Triumph Baptist

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

McNutt School, Rapides Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 2

Church “for the purpose of the building of a church and school on the said land.” There is no record of a school, however, until 1910, when on July 2 of that year, as recorded in the school board minutes, Marcus Dunnam moved that a “colored school” be located at Mt. Triumph Church for the next session. School board records show that the average attendance at the new school for the 1910-11 session was seventy-four, dropping to 46 by 1911-12. Of course, it is difficult to imagine seventy-four children in the present small building, which makes one wonder if the candidate is the original 1910 building. However, from the evidence gathered to date, there is no indication of the school building being replaced at any time. The former students interviewed for this nomination can recall no other building. (The earliest memories are from the mid-1920s.)

As documented in school board records and interviews, the school term was generally four-and-a-half to five months with one teacher teaching grades one through six. A notation for the 1913-14 term reads: “Nearly all white schools opened September 22 . . . . The colored schools in the towns and saw mill communities opened one month later, and the rural colored schools opened two months later in order to give the communities the benefit of the children in gathering the crops.” And, of course, such practical considerations would have been important in the cotton community of McNutt. The teacher with the longest tenure at the school was Beatrice Quinney (later Allen), who taught there from 1932 to 1942.

Besides excellent documentation in school board records, the school is fortunate to have many former students living nearby, several of whom were interviewed for this nomination. Two of the individuals started school there in 1925 and ‘26 respectively, while the remaining five have recollections from the 1940s. In fondly reminiscing about their school days, they provided an important oral history of the school. Teachers’ names were recalled as was the privy formerly on the property, walking one or two miles to reach the building, working school around the cotton cycle, etc. They also remember the school as being “crammed full” of children, which is borne out in school board records, which indicate an average attendance over the years of between 40 and 50. And there is no indication from the available sources that there were any other African-American schools (for example, a Rosenwald school) serving the community during the historic period.

Mt. Triumph Church is now in a modern building, and it is fortunate that the old school building has not been torn down, having outlived its usefulness. School was last held there in 1949-50, well into a period when one would have expected more “modern up-to-date” facilities.

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

McNutt School, Rapides Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 3

---

There is no question that the building is highly regarded by its graduates. A “restore our school” effort is gaining momentum, and the Register nomination process has helped increase awareness of the importance of the simple one room building on McNutt Hill which provided an early education to so many.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

McNutt School, Rapides Parish, LA

Section number  $\frac{9}{10}$  Page  $\frac{1}{1}$

---

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Conveyance Records, Rapides Parish, Act of Donation, Filed March 14, 1891, M. J. Dunnam to the Elders of Mount Triumph Baptist Church. Copy in Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Rapides Parish School Board Records, copies and transcriptions in Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Interviews with the following former students of the Mt. Triumph School: Fannie Ward, Mary Ella Jones Record, Velma Rosenthal Jones, Robert Jones, Willie Rosenthal, Dewitt Quinney, Henry Rosenthal. Conducted January 1997 by Donna Fricker, National Register Coordinator, Division of Historic Preservation.

-----  
Boundary Description: Boundary lines parallel building elevations at a distance of 20 feet each. The resulting rectangular parcel measures roughly 55 feet by 70 feet.

Justification: Boundaries were chosen to encompass the nominated resource. Following property lines would have meant including the adjacent church, and although the school was historically associated with Mt. Triumph Church, the present building is modern.