NPS Form 10-900 (Oct. 1990)

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

### **National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

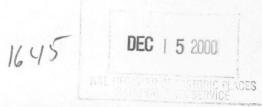


This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate how or by entering 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 Robinson Historic District other names/site number	
2. Location	
street & number   city or town Conway  state Arkansas code AR County Faulkner code 045	not for publication vicinity zip code 72116
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this in noming request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant interpretation and interpretation property. Signature of certifying official/Title and the state of the property of the National Register criteria. In my opinion, the property in meets in does not meet the National Register criteria. See Continuation sheet for a comments.)	er of Historic meets
Signature of certifying 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:)	Date of Action  OI   39   OI

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### 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		
1. Name of Froperty		
historic name Asa P. Robinson Historic	District	
other names/site number	2.2850	
2. Location		
street & number		not for publication
city or town Conway		vicinity
state Arkansas code	AR County Faulkner cod	e <u>045</u> zip code <u>72116</u>
3. State/Federal Agency Certification		
request for determination of eligibility meets the of Places and meets the procedural and professional does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend to procedural and professional does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend to provide the National Register cri	storic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that the documentation standards for registering properties in the Na requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the commend that this property be considered significant ontinuation sheet for additional comments.)  Date  Date  Date	ational Register of Historic property   meets
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	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
National Register.  removed from the National Register.		
other, (explain:)		

Name of Property			County a	nd State	
5. Classification					
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)			within Property ted resources in count.)	
private public-local	<ul><li>☐ building(s)</li><li>☐ district</li></ul>	Contri	buting	Noncontributing	
public-State	site	83		54	Buildings
public-Federal	structure				Sites
	☐ object	_			Structure
		has a gland by fall.			objects
		83		54	Total
Name of related multiple (Enter "N/A" if property is not par	property listing t of a multiple property listing.)	Number of C in the Nation		ng resources previously r	listed
N/A		6			
6. Function or Use					
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions	s)	Current Fur (Enter categories		tions)	
Domestic/Single Dwelling		Domestic/Sir	Domestic/Single Dwelling		
Domestic/Multiple Dwellin	g	Domestic/Multiple Dwelling			
Religious Facility		Religious Facility			
7. Description					
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions		Materials (Enter categories	from instruct	ions)	
Queen Anne	,	,		ne, cast concrete	
Colonial Revival			Wood, Br		
Tudor Revival					
Tudor recvivar		Roof	Tile, Com	position shingle, slate	
Prairie Craftsman		Other			
Prairie					

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET.

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#### **Summary**

Located immediately west of the central business district and Faulkner County Courthouse, the Robinson Historic District comprises the oldest residential area in the city of Conway, Arkansas. The area experienced ongoing residential development over a period of sixty years, 1890-1950. Approximately 86% of the buildings in the Robinson Historic District were constructed during the years between 1890 and 1950, with the heaviest concentration (58% of the district) built between 1900 and 1930. Boundaries of the district are based on an architectural survey of an area in Conway which was initially identified by the grassroots organization which began the process of survey and ultimately NR listing, the Old Conway Homeowners Association (OCHA). To quote a newspaper article in the Log Cabin Democrat when the survey was begun, "the neighborhood chosen [for the survey] are a "core area" that OCHA felt would be most representative of a historic district". The survey area, for the most part, mimics the boundaries of the area that was added to the Asa P. Robinson Plan in the 1880s by Sanford Robinson.

Exemplified in the 143 buildings in the district is an array of historic architectural styles ranging from the ornate Queen Anne style to early versions of the "ranch" style. Colonial Revival and Craftsman style designs make up the bulk of the district's building stock. The Minimal Traditional style is also well represented with twenty-three houses (16%) of this style attesting to the growth of the neighborhood during the 1930s and 1940s. Of the 143 buildings within the boundaries of the Robinson Historic District, 140 were originally residential, and three of the buildings are churches. Sixty-two percent of the properties in the district contribute to the area's historic significance (including six individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places- enumerated below). Almost one-half of the 54 non-contributing properties are historic, but have been covered with synthetic siding or otherwise altered obscuring their original historic appearance.

Six of the total number of 89 contributing properties in the district are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- 1. Harton House- 1821 Robinson Avenue
- 2. Brown House-1604 Caldwell Street
- 3. S. G. Smith House- 1837 Caldwell Street
- 4. Dunaway House- 920 Center Street
- 5. Greeson-Cone House-928 Center Street
- 6. First United Methodist Church-1620 Prince Street

#### Elaboration

The Robinson Historic District is a residential area which encompasses the northwestern portion of 640 acres given to Asa P. Robinson in 1871 by the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Company as a reward for his outstanding service as chief engineer during construction of Arkansas' first railroad line. The historic district is characterized by a typical 19<sup>th</sup> century grid pattern of development imposed on generally flat terrain. The most distinguishing characteristic of the neighborhood is its broad, tree-lined streets with

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houses set well back from the streets. The neighborhood was planned and designed by Asa P. Robinson as the town he founded, Conway, grew westward from its center around the railroad depot. The Robinson Historic District is contained in "Robinson's Plan" within the northwest section of his original land holdings. Railroad tracks divide the city's commercial district from its historic residential neighborhood. The district contains a total of 143 properties, of which there are 140 original residential structures and three churches.

#### 1890-1900

The four earliest extant houses in the Robinson Historic District were constructed in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These four houses reflect early examples of the transition from the Queen Anne style to Colonial Revival with their irregular massing and lack of ornate characteristics. The earliest houses in the Robinson Historic District feature hipped roofs with lower cross gables. Details vary, but include circular gable end windows, double hung sash windows with multi-pane upper sash hung above a single pane lower sash and columnar, often Tuscan, porch supports. The Harton House at 1821 Robinson Avenue, constructed in 1890, is exemplary of the large "estate sized" homes built in the area as development began. This house features a two-story servants quarters on the back portion of the property.

#### 1900-1910

Fifteen houses in the nominated district represent constructed in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century represent the transition from Queen Anne style to Colonial Revival. The W. B. Wilson House at 1517 Caldwell, constructed in 1904, is a one-story transitional style cottage featuring patterned shingles in gable ends, projecting bays, and slender turned posts. Built in 1906, the Durham House at 1605 Robinson Avenue is an irregularly massed two-story house with a Colonial Revival style porch supported by square columns. The 1906 Hardin Stark House at 1822 Robinson Avenue originally featured a wrap-around porch later changed to a center bay two-story front porch supported by pairs of two story Doric columns. Other houses in the district built between 1900 and 1910 such as the Dr. G. S. Brown House at 1604 Caldwell are excellent examples of the one and one-half story transitional cottage with irregular massing and classical style porches so popular during the era.

#### 1910-1919

The Robinson Historic District contains nineteen houses constructed during the decade 1910-1919. The Colonial Revival style cottage is still prevalent, but popular new house designs began to appear in the neighborhood during this time. Constructed in 1915, the Smith House at 1623 Caldwell is the district's only example of the Dutch Colonial Revival style with its distinctive front-facing gambrel roof. The Moore Harton House at 1807 Robinson Avenue is a textbook example of the American Foursquare subtype of the Prairie movement in design. A wide hip roof containing a central hip roof dormer, give a massive quality to

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the boxy shape of this two-story frame house constructed in 1915. A one-story porch supported by tapered wood columns on brick piers spans the front of the house and a bay window projects from the west side of the house. The O. L. Dunaway House at 920 Center Street is another American Foursquare form, but with stronger Prairie style influences in its low, spreading roofline and heavy brick porch columns lending the horizontal emphasis that was a defining feature of the Prairie movement. Although the Moore Harton House and the Dunaway House are the nominated district's only examples, the American Foursquare was a popular style in almost every American community and plans were widely available through mail-order house companies which described the house as "truly American- simple, strong, and substantial."

#### 1920-1930

#### Craftsman

Of the 143 buildings in the Robinson Historic District, 39 (27%) reflect the Craftsman and Craftsman Bungalow style. Features such as low pitched, gable roofs accentuated by wide, unenclosed eave overhangs and exposed roof rafters, as well as tapered square columns on pedestal porch supports are frequently seen on the houses in the district. A two-story Craftsman style example found in the district is represented by the Guy Farris House at 1617-1619 Caldwell. The H. D. Hicks House at 1814 Robinson Avenue is a one and one-half story Craftsman style house designed by prominent Arkansas architect Charles L. Thompson. The most common Craftsman form seen in the district is the bungalow. These are one or one and one-half story houses scattered throughout the neighborhood.

#### Craftsman Bungalow

The American Craftsman Bungalow became the "cottage" in the early decades of the twentieth century. It began as a small Craftsman house but acquired a wide diversity of stylistic influences, specific examples showing links with many popular American architectural styles. The American Bungalow adapted itself to widely divergent environmental and climatic conditions, made use of numerous kinds of local building materials and ranged in size from spacious versions to small, low-income residences constructed specifically to meet the need for small affordable housing.

The Craftsman Bungalow, as an architectural archetype, is set low to the ground, nestling into and becoming part of its environment. The use of rustic materials on the exteriors of Bungalows was common. Low-pitched roofs with wide eaves also characterize these houses. Living space was often extended to the outside with the use of the spacious porches on bungalows. The bungalow porch was a key factor in the livability of these small homes as they were geared to the outdoors and perfectly suitable for the southern climate of Conway.

The "California Bungalow", characterized by a one-room second story perched on the roof and low-pitched gable roofline with broad eaves is represented in the W. O. Scales House at 1804 Robinson Avenue. Often referred to as "airplane bungalow" because airplanes could be seen from the second story room, this

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Craftsman subtype often featured a line of three or more windows as seen in bands of three and six sets of windows on the Scales House and combination of covered porches wrapping into uncovered or trellised porches.

#### Period Revival

Nationwide in the 1920s an eclectic flavor of design emerged as a period revival. Homes incorporating many of the "romantic" styles of the past in their design were frequently constructed in this period. English and Spanish styles were some of the historic styles incorporated into these picturesque houses. Underscoring the dominance of Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles in the neighborhood, there are only five English Revival style homes and one Spanish Revival style house in the nominated district. The English influenced homes are modest in scale and detailing. Their main feature is the use of varied wall materials in combination such as brick and stone with steep, pointed gables. The one Spanish Revival style house is a small, very simple version of the style with characteristic tile roof and stucco walls.

#### 1930s

Nineteen houses in the Robinson Historic District were constructed during the 1930s. The earliest of these houses featured Craftsman, English Revival or Colonial Revival detailing in their design. The large number of houses constructed in the area during the years of nationwide economic crises was largely due to the stable economy of Conway which was supported by the transportation industry and the three colleges in the city.

#### Minimal Traditional

The majority of the houses in the proposed historic district constructed in the 1930s are Minimal Traditional design. This style was popular from the mid-1930s to 1950. The Minimal Traditional style house, usually small, reflects the conservative attitude of the economy in lack or ornamentation, close rake eaves and simple, box-like appearance.

#### 1940s

The Minimal Traditional style, popular at the onset of World War II, was resumed as the style of choice for new construction in the neighborhood after the war ended. A total of 23 (16%) of the houses in the district are of the Minimal Traditional style. Eight of these were constructed in the late 1930s, with the remaining sixteen built between 1946 and 1950.

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#### Ranch

Two early ranch style houses are included in the boundaries of the Robinson Historic District. The J. Lawrence duplex at 1612-1614 Caldwell was constructed in 1947 and the Haven House at 1520 Prince was constructed in 1949. These early predecessors of America's most popular suburban design were constructed on lots sold off of once large estates in the neighborhood. Another sixteen ranch style houses have been constructed in the district since 1950.

#### **Multi-family**

A number of historic two-family residences are located within the Robinson Historic District boundaries, but often have the appearance of a single family residence. They reflect the styles popular and common to the neighborhood. Of particular note are the two Lincoln Apartment houses located at 1618-1620 and 1622-1624 Robinson Avenue. These buildings are mirror images of each other, built in 1917 and featuring two-story front porches with Colonial Revival details. Blending into the surrounding single-family residences, the duplexes at 837-839 and 939-943 Faulkner Street are both one-story single-family appearing houses. The apartment building at 915 Faulkner, constructed in the late 1930s, is a large two-story Colonial Revival influenced structure with a single entry denoted by a small center porch covered by a gable roof and supported by two round wood columns.

#### Churches

Three churches are located in the Robinson Historic District, only one of which is historic. The First United Methodist Church of Conway, located at 1620 Prince Street, is individually listed on the National Register. Architect George W. Kramer of New York City, New York designed the building. Constructed in 1913, the First United Methodist Church building stands as the most elaborate and physically impressive expression of the Classical Revival style in the city of Conway. The First Baptist Church of Conway, at 1719 Robinson Avenue was also an impressive Classical Revival design built in 1909, but was destroyed by fire in the mid 1990s. The First Baptist Church was listed on the National Register within the Charles L. Thompson, Arkansas Architect thematic context. A new structure has been constructed in the same location. The Assembly of God Church in the 1800 block of Robinson Avenue was constructed in the 1960s. Although two of the three churches in the district are not historic buildings, it is a significant point that these congregations have remained in the historic neighborhood rather that move to the rapidly growing suburban developments on the outskirts of Conway.

Overall, 89 (62%) of the district's 143 buildings contribute to the historic significance of the neighborhood. Of the 54 non-contributing buildings, only twenty were constructed since 1950. Buildings constructed since 1951 were considered non-contributing as were buildings with unsympathetic siding that obscured the

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defining features of various architectural styles. For example 1504 Robinson was determined ineligible due to the lack of exposed raftertails, and the fact that the siding eliminated the window surrounds. The majority of non-contributing buildings in the district are historic, but have been altered from their original historic appearance, most often through the unsympathetic application of synthetic siding.

Development in the Robinson Historic District seldom marched neatly down a street, filling each block with houses of the same style, built at approximately the same time. Blocks in the district are commonly comprised of houses built over a period of twenty or thirty years. As a result of this scattered approach to development, the appearance of the area encompassed by the historic district is- and always has been-diverse. Some blocks are comprised of only two or three houses, while others have as many as six or seven. Further diversity in appearance results from small and large houses being interspersed in the same block. The most uniform element in the Robinson Historic District is the front yard setback. Dramatically deep front yards and exceptionally wide streets lend a unique charm and character to the district.

Most of the buildings in the Robinson Historic District are in good to excellent condition. The generally good condition of the neighborhood is attributable in large part to active rehabilitation efforts that have been underway since the 1980s. Although the neighborhood had not deteriorated significantly, there has been resurgence in interest and desirability of houses in this Conway neighborhood.

The Robinson Historic District is flanked on its north and south by similar, though less concentrated in historic character, residential blocks. To the east and west sides of the district's boundaries, the historic neighborhood is easily distinguished from its surroundings. East of the district is the Faulkner County Courthouse and county office buildings, separated from the downtown business district by the railroad tracks. To the west of the district is Donaghey Avenue, a major thoroughfare and main entry to the largest of the three colleges in Conway. It is from the east and west that the historic integrity of the neighborhood is most endangered as commercialization of former residences threatens to push deeper into the area. Boundaries of the district are based on an architectural survey of an area in Conway which was initially identified by the grassroots organization which began the process of survey and ultimately NR listing, the Old Conway Homeowners Association. The survey area, for the most part, mimics the boundaries of the area that was added to the Asa P. Robinson Plan in the 1880s by Sanford Robinson. A strong neighborhood organization has invigorated the renewal of the area. The residents' alliance is dedicated to keeping Conway's oldest residential neighborhood intact by maintaining the features which has made this area attractive to buyers for over 100 years- proximity to the downtown business district, plentiful shade trees, broad, quite streets, and attractive, well maintained residences which appeal to a wide range of homeowners.

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Levels of Significance (local, state, national) Local
Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) Architecture
Community Planning & Development
Period of Significance 1890-1950
Significant Dates N/A
Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)
Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)
Architect/Builder
Charles L. Thompson

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

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#### **Summary**

The Robinson Historic District is an early twentieth century residential district located in the central Arkansas city of Conway. Surrounded by rich farmland and adjacent to the Arkansas River, Conway's establishment was a direct result of construction of Arkansas' first railroad line. The Robinson Historic District contains 146 buildings, mostly residential, the earliest dating from 1890. The architectural significance of the Robinson Historic District derives both from the presence within the district of certain examples of late 19th and early 20th century residential architecture- such as the S.G. Smith House, the Brown House and the Harton House- and from the range of architectural styles popular in the United States during this period.

The Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad gave Asa P. Robinson his choice of a 640 tract of land for his service as chief engineer. The Robinson Historic District is an extension of "the Original Robinson Plan of the Town of Conway" that was platted by Sanford Robinson in the 1880s. The development of this tract represents community planing and growth of Conway from the period 1890 to 1950. The Robinson Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A and C**.

#### Elaboration

The Robinson Historic District is the earliest residential neighborhood in Conway. The 143 building district is located just west of the city's downtown business district and separated by railroad tracks. The overwhelming majority of the district is residential (140) with three churches. The district contains five homes and one church previously individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, eighty-nine contributing historic properties and fifty-four non-contributing properties. Only twenty buildings have been constructed in the district since 1950. Laid out in a grid pattern, the Robinson Historic District features exceptionally broad tree-lined east/west streets (Robinson Avenue, Caldwell Street, Prince Street) with stately homes on large tracts set well back from the street crossed by narrower north/south streets with more modest sized homes.

The decade following the United States Civil war was one of both economic and territorial expansion nationwide. Development of the nation's railroad network made undeveloped lands accessible to the public. The first rail line in Arkansas, the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad, was constructed in 1871. Located thirty miles west of Little Rock, Conway grew from a railroad construction camp for the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad.

As a railroad official, Colonel Asa Peter Robinson came to Little Rock in 1869 to assume the position of chief engineer for the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad. Robinson was born in Hartford County, Connecticut in 1822 and was educated in the public schools of Newburg, New York. He earned a degree in civil engineering from Yale University.

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The Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Company offered Asa P. Robinson an entire section of land as a reward for his "outstanding" services in 1871. He chose a section split by the railroad tracks about thirty miles northwest of Little Rock. Robinson set aside the northeast quarter as the townsite and the south half as his private hunting grounds. Robinson named his new townsite "Conway Station" after the Conway family, a prominent force in Arkansas politics of the time. A post office was established at the "Conway Station" in 1872. A year later Faulkner County was formed and Conway Station became the county seat. The county was named after Sanford Faulkner, an early settler and reputed horseback rider in the "Arkansas Traveler" painting. When the town was incorporated in October 1875, the name was shortened to "Conway". Asa P. Robinson was elected one of the first councilmen and served as mayor in the 1880s.

As the town grew, Robinson began to convey portions of his property to various groups and individuals. He designed the new town to encircle the railroad depot with major commercial establishments. Robinson donated the land for the railroad depot and several local churches. To maintaining his vision for the town, Robinson sold land with deeds that stipulated "no intoxicating drinks, except under license would be sold", "no trees were to be cut within the front of the premises", and "fencing would be built on the street line with three months of property purchase".

Conway grew into a bustling city, primarily due to its regional importance as a financial and transportation center for the farmers of the surrounding productive lands. Conway served the regional agricultural community both as a transportation center for selling and conveying their crops and as a mercantile outlet where local farmers could purchase various staples and commodities. The thriving commercial center built by early Conway merchants continues to be economically vital to Faulkner County.

This original town, as platted in 1871, was centered around the railroad depot. It was mostly commercial and had a western boundary extending only to Center Street. Sanford Robinson, in the 1880s, platted an extension of the town to the west for residential development -- this is the area that comprises the district that is being nominated to the National Register and is considered a later addition to the original Asa P. Robinson Plan. Robinson's personal estate, "Prairie Vue" was located south of the proposed district boundaries, and was not in the historic Robinson's Plan Addition. Prairie Vue was on a portion of the 320 acres of his land west of the railroad track. He built a home and fenced a large section of the land where he raised Jersey cattle, hogs and sheep. Later, Robinson's Prairie Vue land and other portions of his original tract of land surrounding the 1871 Original Robinson Plan of the Town of Conway and the 1880's Extended Robinson Plan, were opened as various other "additions".

By the early 1880s Conway boasted a population of 1,028. An article in the Arkansas Gazette on April 26, 1883 referred to Conway as "charming" and "one of the most beautiful and prosperous towns of Arkansas". The article stated "Situated about thirty miles from the city of Little Rock, on the Little Rock and Fort Smith railway, and lying in the midst of the beautiful rolling prairie, is the little city of Conway, the county seat of Faulkner County. It is one of our thriving Arkansas "cityettes" to coin an expression, and is a burg of which no state need be ashamed". "The Grove City as it is lovingly called by its inhabitants, is divided almost

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equally by the railroad, which cuts through it from north to south, most of the business houses being on the east side of the track". The article praised the west part of town which contained "handsome homes", "excellent schools", and "beautiful scenery".

By the early twentieth century, Conway had become an educational center in Arkansas, with three colleges. Hendrix College had relocated to Conway in 1890 another area of the state; Central Baptist College was established in Conway in 1892; and Arkansas State Normal School (later Arkansas State Teachers College, now the University of Central Arkansas) was established in Conway in 1908. All three of these institutions of higher education were constructed outside of the original city boundaries. Naturally, the draw to these colleges helped development of the edges of Conway.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps in 1886 show the beginnings of a small residential area developing in the blocks just west of the downtown. Asa P. Robinson foresaw the necessity of the westward expansion of the city and proceeded to develop plans to lay out and extend the city limits. The expanded "Robinson Plan" was drawn by Asa P. Robinson's brother, Sanford Robinson in the late 1880s. Properties were developed piecemeal, with large portions of blocks set aside for construction of residential estates.

Sanford Robinson named the streets in "Robinson's Expanded Plan". Center Street was so named because Robinson thought this street would be the center of the residential section of Conway. Other streets in Robinson's plan were given names reflecting his love of trees- Ash Street was one of nine streets he named after trees. Robinson Avenue, the broadest of the east/west streets was named for the founder of the town. Caldwell was a young attorney who had been accidentally killed by feuding parties "shooting it out" on the Faulkner County Courthouse grounds. At the suggestion of friends, Colonel Robinson named the street for Caldwell. Several of the streets in the district were named for residents who built their homes on that particular street- Prince Street for Judge P Holcomb Prince- Davis Street for Dr. Louis Davis. Other streets were named for people Robinson felt were important to the community- Faulkner Street for its adjacent location at the side of the Faulkner County Courthouse Square (the county was named for Sandy Faulkner, the original "Arkansas Traveler". Watkins Street for an early school teacher in Conway and deputy-clerk of the county, Mitchell Street for James R. Mitchell, county clerk of Faulkner County.

The 1897 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show considerable expansion of the city's boundaries to the west. A number of large estate-sized residences appeared along Robinson Avenue, Caldwell and Prince Streets, with smaller residences located on the north/south streets.

In 1913, Conway was a bustling community of over 4,000 residents. The town had become an important regional governmental and commercial center. Conway had three banks, three large wholesale houses, a cotton compress, and a cotton-seed oil mill. Cotton shipments ran as high as 25,000 bales per year. The Conway public school system was well established by 1913 and the city also had several parochial schools. This achievement was due, in large part to Asa P. Robinson, who was a strong supporter of public education and served as president of the Conway School Board. With three colleges located in the city, an article in the *Arkansas Gazette* newspaper in September, 1908 referred to Conway as a "college town".

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The Log Cabin Democrat was established in 1879 and continues to be the local newspaper for Faulkner County. Early twentieth century residents of Conway boasted of several active and growing churches, a city-owned water work costing nearly \$100,000 and a \$40,000 light plant. Also in the early years of the century, the Missouri-Pacific Railroad had constructed a \$25,000 "modern" railroad depot and passenger station in the center of Conway's business district. There were forty miles of grades streets, 30 miles of concrete sidewalks and five miles of paved streets in Conway by 1913.

The Robinson Historic District represents the planned development of the City of Conway, Arkansas. Developed by Asa P. Robinson, the location was a portion of his selection of a prime piece of land adjacent to the railroad and in a fertile valley between mountainous foothills separating the Ozark and Ouachita mountain ranges. Conditions accompanied development of lots in Robinson's plan as they were sold. Specifically, the forbidding of unnecessary cutting of trees ensured the natural setting of the development. As early as 1883, the Arkansas Gazette referred to Conway as "The Grove City", largely due to the proliferation of natural elements amid the new construction. Laid out in a grid pattern, the streets in the district are exceptionally broad and houses are set well back from front property lines.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, Conway saw the establishment of two colleges; a third college was established shortly after the turn-of-the century. A city founded around rail transportation serving as a regional center for agricultural shipping, Conway began to change as the significant presence of academicians was felt. The fashionable and natural way for the city to expand was west, along the broad, tree-lined streets laid out by Asa P Robinson.

The earliest extant construction in the area contained in the Robinson Historic District dates to 1890. In the decade between 1890 and 1900 four houses within the district boundaries were constructed. These frame houses and cottages, while certainly not major works of architecture, are valuable resources because they document the earliest years of residential development in what then was Conway's western edge. Much of the earliest development in the Robinson Historic District included entire blocks, or significant portions of, with frame houses and cottages set back from the street. The four houses representing construction in the district prior to 1900 are Queen Anne or Colonial Revival or combinations of the two in architectural style. The Harton House at 1821 Robinson Avenue (individually listed on the National Register) is an example of the large scale grounds upon which Conway's upper-middle class began to build. Other houses of this era in the historic district are frame one-and-one-half story homes reflecting the transition from Queen Anne style to Colonial Revival.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, development of the western areas of Asa P. Robinson's plan was well established. By 1920, a number of new homes had been constructed in the western area of Robinson's original tract of land. There are thirty houses (21%) in the historic district representing construction from the period 1900-1920. Within this group Colonial Revival is the predominate style. However, by 1915, the

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Faulkner County, AR

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National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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fashionable Craftsman style began to be seen in the neighborhood. A "California Bungalow" style house was constructed by F. D. Hicks at 1814 Robinson Avenue in 1919, exemplifying the use of a one-room second story commonly called "airplane bungalow".

The American Foursquare design of the Prairie movement is best represented in the Robinson Historic District by the James Harton House at 1807 Robinson Avenue. Located adjacent to the large Colonial Revival Harton House at 1821 Robinson constructed in 1890, this particular block is a significant example of the large family plot of land, divided and developed among family through subsequent generations.

The greatest single period of growth in the Robinson Historic District was during the 1920s when 53 (37% of all buildings in the district) were constructed. Reflective of nationwide prosperity beginning after the end of World War I, Conway saw a dramatic increase in population and wealth during the 1920s. This was due, in part, to the economic benefits as a regional transportation center and to the growing campuses of the three colleges located in the city. The Craftsman style was the dominate choice of design for the homes built in the 1920s, largely due to their easily available book plans and affordability.

The overall character of the 143 buildings in the Robinson Historic District is traditional. Twenty-four percent of the buildings in the district feature characteristics of the Colonial Revival style. The style was popular in the earliest houses, and was again popular in its 1920s presentations. A Colonial Revival variation, the Dutch Colonial, is represented by the S. G. Smith House at 1623 Caldwell with its distinctive front-facing gambrel roof.

The "period revival" styles built in great numbers throughout the country's developing neighborhoods in the 1920s included the English Revival and Spanish Revival styles. Ranging from grand to modest versions with subdued characteristics, there are five English Revival style houses in the boundaries of the Robinson Historic District and only one Spanish Revival influenced house.

Although Conway was not immune from the debilitating economic crises during the years of the Great Depression, the presence of the railroad and three colleges kept the economy of the city stable. The city continued to grow during the 1930s, and although modest, nineteen houses in the Robinson Historic District reflect construction during this period.

By 1940, the Robinson Historic District was largely developed and had established its character. It was during World War II, when some residences were converted to rooming houses, and the tendency to subdivide the large tracts of land and houses first began. Following the end of the war, the government provided assistance to returning soldiers for buying homes and furthering their education. The nationwide housing shortage in the late 1940s was distinctly felt in Conway. During these years many of the large plots of land surround the homes in the Robinson Historic District were divided and sold off in single lots.

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Robinson	Historic	District

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Seventeen houses constructed between 1946 and 1950 are included in the boundaries of the historic district and are examples of the "Minimal Traditional" style of architecture. Four houses in the district represent construction during the 1950s.

By the 1960s, some of the older homes in the neighborhood were beginning to be razed, as more properties were divided and sold into single lots. Since 1960 there have been twenty buildings and homes constructed, all on property previously developed or once part of an estate.

The three colleges in Conway have grown significantly since the late 1940s. The areas in the historic district located closest to the colleges have seen the most change. Many former single-family homes have been divided into rental units for students, or demolished and replaced by apartment houses. Within the nominated historic district, the residual effects of this housing change has been felt. A resurgence of interest in the historic character of the neighborhood since 1990 has resulted in a number of homes reverting back to single family occupancy as new homeowners have reclaimed the unique character of these properties.

Another threat to the historic residential character of the Robinson Historic District is the encroachment of commercial usage in the eastern areas of the neighborhood. Adjacent to the Faulkner County Courthouse and government offices, homes in the eastern portions of the district are being converted into offices and child-care centers. The city of Conway is one of the fastest growing areas in Arkansas and while city leaders are addressing concerns of new developments and sprawl on its outer areas, they are also dealing with a growing commercialization of older portions of the city. A strong neighborhood association is in place and attempting to protect the historic residential character of the Robinson Historic District.

A list of the builders of the houses within the Robinson Historic District is a compendium of the citizens who were vital links in Conway's economic and governmental prominence, strongly associated with the historic development of not only the neighborhood, but also the city. The architectural fabric of the Robinson Historic District is reflective of building types paralleling national trends from the late Victorian era through the emergence of the suburban "ranch" house.

Despite the various changes it has experienced since the 1950s, the Robinson Historic District documents the period from the 1890s through the end of World War II, when through methodical planning, it grew from a new, sparsely-populated area on the edge of town into Conway's most prominent residential neighborhood.

Robinson Historic District	Faulkner County, Arkansas
Name of Property  Previous documentation on file (NPS):  preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register	Primary location of additional data:  State Historic Preservation Office Other State Agency Federal Agency
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 #	Local Government University Other Name of repository:
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property Approximately 103 acres  UTM References	
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
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2 15 550680 3883240	4 15 549900 3882660  See continuation sheet

#### **Verbal Boundary Description**

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

The boundaries of the Robinson Historic District in Conway, Arkansas are verbally described as follows:

Beginning at a point at the northeast corner of the property line of 1504 Prince Street, the boundary runs due south along the center line of Faulkner Street to the center line of the intersection of Faulkner Street and Robinson Avenue. The boundary then turns and runs west along the center line of Robinson Avenue to the intersection of Robinson Avenue and Center Street. At this junction, the boundary turns to run south along Center Street to the rear property lines of the southern side of Robinson Avenue through the 1900 block. At the southwest corner of the rear (south) property line of 1931 Robinson Avenue, the boundary turns and runs north along the center line of Watkins Street to its intersection with Robinson Avenue, then turns west and runs to the point where rear (west) property lines of houses on the west side of the 800 block of Watkins Street intersect with Robinson Avenue. The boundary then runs north along the rear (west) property lines of the west side of the 800 block of Watkins Street to Caldwell Street. The boundary then continues to run north to the northwest corner of the property line of 2010 Caldwell Street. The boundary then runs east along rear (north) property lines of buildings on the north side of Caldwell Street beginning at the rear of 2010 Caldwell running east to 1808 Caldwell. At the northeast corner of the property line of 1808 Caldwell, the boundary intersects with Davis Street. At this point, the boundary turns and runs north along the center line of Davis Street to the northwest corner of the property line of 1720 Prince Street where it turns to run east along rear (north) property lines of houses and buildings on the north side of Prince Street from the 1700 block east to the point of boundary origin at the northeast corner of the property line of 1504 Prince Street.

#### **Boundary Justification**

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

The boundaries of the Robinson Historic District were derived from a comprehensive architectural resources survey conducted by the City of Conway Arkansas, through a Certified Local Government Grant in 1998. The area surveyed was determined by a neighborhood homeowner's organization and the City of Conway to be the primary and most important fabric of their historic downtown residential area. Each property in the surveyed area was reviewed through a determination of eligibility process by AHPP staff with input from the City of Conway and the consultant who conducted the survey. The boundaries fo the proposed district were determined to be the most concentrated historic contiguous portion of the surveyed area. Only twenty some properties surveyed were not included in the historic district boundaries. These properties are, for the most part, not historic. Eastern and western edges of the surveyed area are also experiencing raped commercial encroachment and though largely not historic, do not retain their original residential character or historic integrity.

Robinson Historic District	
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Faulkner County, AR
County and State

**United States Department of the Interior** 

National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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Robinson Historic	District
Name of Property	

Faulkner County, AR

County and State

**United States Department of the Interior** 

National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number	10	Page	1	
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The boundaries of the Robinson Historic District in Conway, Arkansas are verbally described as follows:

Beginning at a point at the northeast corner of the property line of 1504 Prince Street, the boundary runs due south along the center line of Faulkner Street to the center line of the intersection of Faulkner Street and Robinson Avenue. The boundary then turns and runs west along the center line of Robinson Avenue to the intersection of Robinson Avenue and Center Street. At this junction, the boundary turns to run south along Center Street to the rear property lines of the southern side of Robinson Avenue through the 1900 block. At the southwest corner of the rear (south) property line of 1931 Robinson Avenue, the boundary turns and runs north along the center line of Watkins Street to its intersection with Robinson Avenue, then turns west and runs to the point where rear (west) property lines of houses on the west side of the 800 block of Watkins Street intersect with Robinson Avenue. The boundary then runs north along the rear (west) property lines of the west side of the 800 block of Watkins Street to Caldwell Street. The boundary then continues to run north to the northwest corner of the property line of 2010 Caldwell Street. The boundary then runs east along rear (north) property lines of buildings on the north side of Caldwell Street beginning at the rear of 2010 Caldwell running east to 1808 Caldwell. At the northeast corner of the property line of 1808 Caldwell, the boundary intersects with Davis Street. At this point, the boundary turns and runs north along the center line of Davis Street to the northwest corner of the property line of 1720 Prince Street where it turns to run east along rear (north) property lines of houses and buildings on the north side of Prince Street from the 1700 block east to the point of boundary origin at the northeast corner of the property line of 1504 Prince Street.

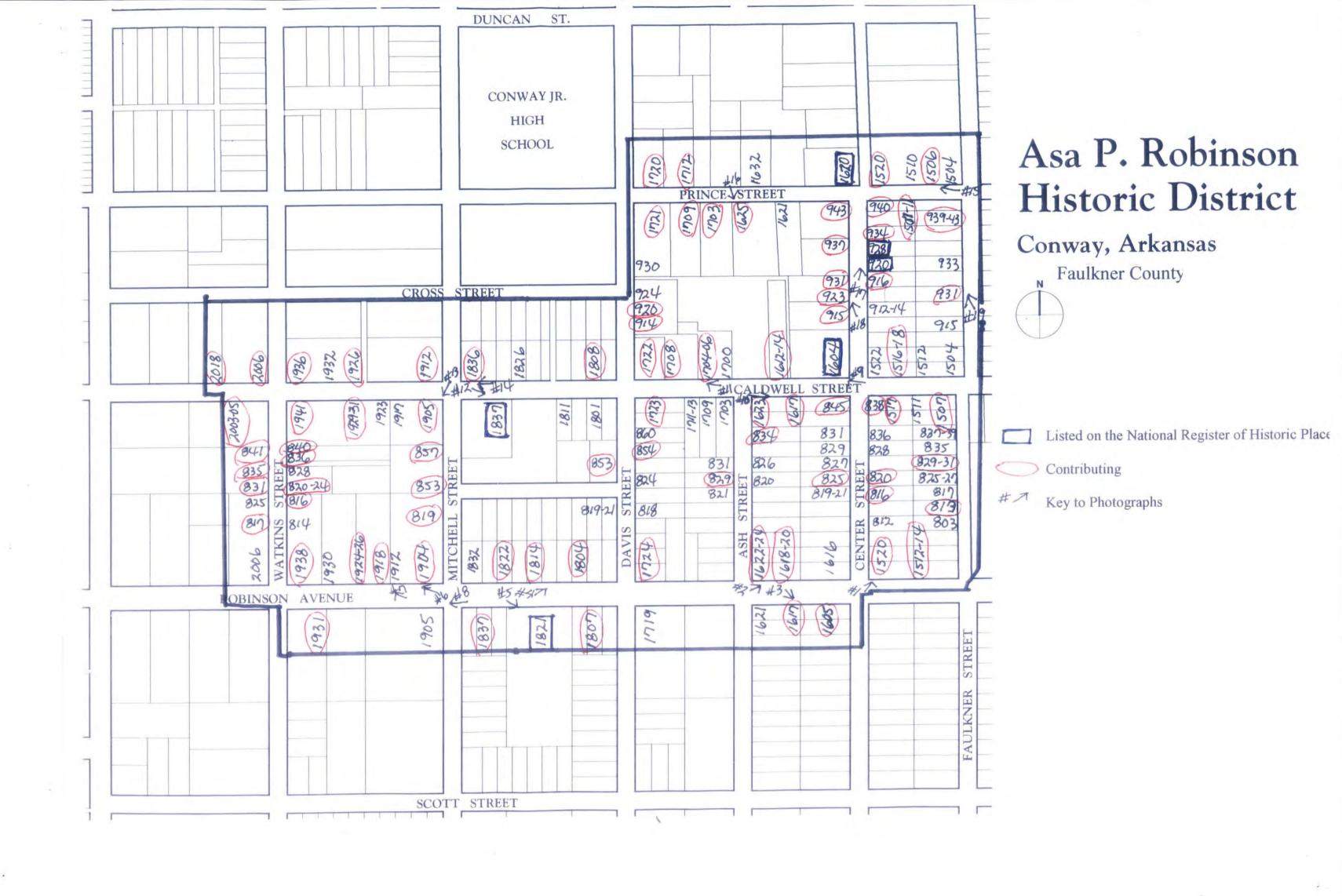
11. Form Prepared By				
name/title _ Sandra Taylor Smith, Consultant to the City of C	onway, Arkansas			
organization City of Conway, Arkansas		Date	11-10-00	
street & number120 Oak Street		Telephone	(501) 450-61	110
city or town Conway	state	Arkansas	zip code	72032
Additional Documentation				
Submit the following items with the completed form:				
Continuation Sheets				
Maps				
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the  A Sketch map for historic districts and properties have			esources.	
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Faulkner County, Arkansas

Robinson Historic District

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 20303.



## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Robinson Historic District NAME:
MULTIPLE NAME:
STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, FAULKNER
DATE RECEIVED: 12/15/00 DATE OF PENDING LIST:12/27/00 DATE OF 16TH DAY: 01/12/01 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 01/29/01 DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:
REFERENCE NUMBER:00001645
NOMINATOR: STATE
REASONS FOR REVIEW:
APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N
COMMENT WAIVER:N
ACCEPTRETURNREJECT_OIDO DATE
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:
the Robinson Historic District is eligible for Listing under Criteria
A and C for Architecture and Community Planning / Development.
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:  The Robinson Historic District is eligible for Listing under Criteria  A and C for Architecture and Community Planning / Development.  It was the first residential development in this town (and the first  It was the first residential development in Conway) and is part of
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RECOM./CRITERIA A.C.
REVIEWER Sarah Pope DISCIPLINE Historian
TELEPHONE <u>202/343-9534</u> DATE 0/29/01
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



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A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

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# The Department of Arkansas Heritage

#### WE LOVE TO TELL THE STORY.

Mike Huckabee, Governor Cathie Matthews, Director

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission

Arkansas Territorial Restoration

Delta Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

November 27, 2000

Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
United State Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
800 North Capitol Street, Suite 250
Washington, D.C. 20002

RE: Asa P. Robinson Historic District - Conway, Faulkner County

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the nomination of the abovereferenced district. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Marchus

Sincerely,

Cathie Matthews

State Historic Preservation Officer

CM: km

**Enclosures** 

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

> 1500 Tower Building 323 Center Street Little Rock, AR 72201 (501)324-9880

fax: (501)324-9184 tdd: (501)324-9811

e-mail: info@arkansaspreservation.org

website: www.arkansaspreservation.org

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ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

#### ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

1600 Tower Building, 323 Center St. Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 (501) 324-9880

#### **FAX COVER SHEET**

TO:	Sarah Pope
FAX NUMBER:	202- 343-1244
FROM:	Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
CONTACT:	Kara
PHONE:	324-9787
OR	IGINALS HARE IN THE MAIL!
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OR	IGINALS HARE IN THE MAK!



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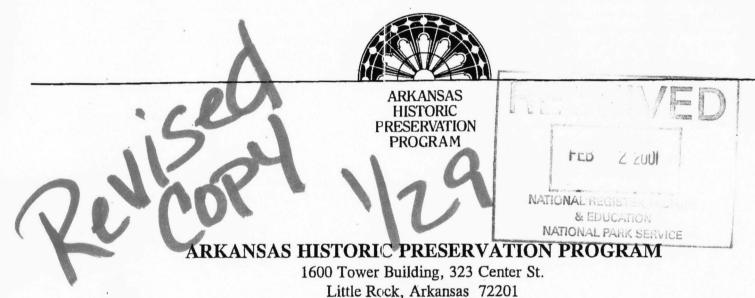
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(501) 324-9880

**FAX COVER SHEET** 

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J	L	•	,	

Sarah

Pope

FAX NUMBER:

202

343-1244

FROM:

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

CONTACT:

Kara

PHONE:

324-9787

ORIGINALS HARE IN THE MAIL!

Name of Property

County and State

#### **United States Department of the Interior**

National Park Service

### **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number5	Page1	
The revised resource cou	nt for the Robinson Historic District is as follows	S.
Contributing	Noncontributing	

84 53 buildings sites structures objects
84 53 Total

In addition, the following buildings within the district are individually listed and are not included in the C/NC counts above:

Brown House at 1604 Caldwell Street - Listed on December 22, 1982.

D. O. Harton, Jr., House at 607 Davis Street - Listed on July 19, 1996.

First United Methodist Church at Prince and Clifton streets - Listed on November 20, 1992.

Greeson-Cone House at 928 Center Street - Listed on September 7, 1995.

- O. L. Dunaway House at 920 Center Street Listed on July 19, 1996.
- S. G. Smith House at 1837 Caldwell Street Listed on December 22, 1982.

Robinson	Historic	District	Additional	Documentation

Name of Property

Faulkner County, Arkansas

County and State

#### **United States Department of the Interior**

National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number	7	Page	1	

The purpose of this additional documentation is to update the resource counts of the nomination and to change the Contributing/Non-Contributing status of one building in the district.

1) Apartment Building at 915 Faulkner (915 Faulkner, Site #FA1169) – The Apartment Building at 915 Faulkner was mistakenly considered non-contributing in the original nomination, and should be considered contributing.

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY Robinson Historic District NAME:
MULTIPLE NAME:
STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Faulkner
DATE RECEIVED: 12/14/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/30/13 DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:
REFERENCE NUMBER: 00001645
REASONS FOR REVIEW:
APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N
COMMENT WAIVER: N
ACCEPTRETURNREJECTDATE
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:
Additional Documentation Approved National Register
RECOM. / CRITERIA CCCIP
REVIEWER CASON BEAU DISCIPLINE / STREET
TELEPHONE DATE L. 29, 13
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N
If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



BUILDING AT 915 FAULKNER

FAULKNER COUNTY, AR

RALPH S. WILLOX

AUGUST ZOIZ

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE ROCK, AR
EAST FACADE, LOOKING WEST



BUILDING AT 915 FAULKNER FAULKNER COUNTY, AR RALPH S. WILLOX

AUGUST ZOIZ

ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM, LITTLE RUCK, AR WEST FACADE, LOOKING EAST



## The Department of Arkansas Heritage

Mike Beebe Governor

Cathie Matthews Director

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars Cultural Center

Old State House Museum



#### Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

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e-mail:

info@arkansaspreservation.org

website:

www.arkansaspreservation.com

DEC 1 4 2012

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

December 5, 2012

Ms. Carol Shull
Chief of Registration
United States Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
8th Floor
1201 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Conway, Faulkner County, Arkansas



Dear Carol:

RE:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Ralph S. Wilcox of my staff at (501) 324-9787. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathie Matthews
State Historic Preservation Officer

CM:rsw

Enclosure



