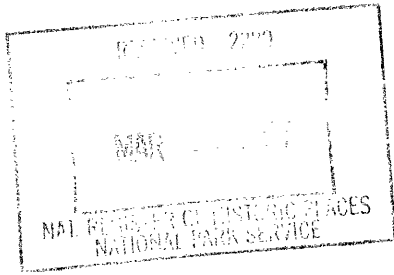


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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**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 Robinson Business College

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 604 Jack McEnery Avenue not for publication

city or town Monroe vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Ouachita code 073 zip code 71202

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.)

Jonathan Fricker 3/20/97
Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Deputy SHPO, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism Date
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:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	<u>Signature of the Keeper</u> <u>Deborah J. ...</u>	<u>Date of Action</u> <u>4/18/97</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____

Robinson Business College
Name of Property

Ouachita 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)

COMMERCE/TRADE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

no style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls concrete

roof asphalt

other brick (veneer)

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.)

N/A

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

1946

Significant Dates

1946

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:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than an acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 5	5 8 3 7 4 0	3 5 9 2 9 0 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

organization Division of Historic Preservation date February 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 Augusta Turner

street & number 6401 Mosswood Drive telephone 318-345-2746

city or town Monroe state LA zip code 71203

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**

Robinson Business College, Monroe, Ouachita Parish, LA
Section number 7 Page 1

The building which housed the Robinson Business College is located in a modest African-American neighborhood in southern Monroe. Built quickly and inexpensively in 1946 to open that year for students, the one story building is constructed of concrete blocks with brick veneer accents on the facade and one side elevation. Although there have been alterations associated with its recent conversion into a hair salon, the building still would be easily recognizable to someone who attended school there the year it opened.

The roughly 4300 square foot rectangular building has a low pyramidal roof and is devoid of ornamentation. There is a small shed roof projection at the rear corner which appears on a 1950 Sanborn map. The metal windows on the side elevations and most of the rear elevation are original. Grouped in twos, each has four horizontal panes.

Alterations to the exterior are as follows:

- (1) Some of the windows on the facade have been covered with wood panels while others have been partially filled in to accommodate smaller modern windows. Burglar bars have been attached to the windows.
- (2) Doors appear to be of recent vintage.
- (3) A section of the facade was damaged in an automobile accident some years ago. This was repaired with concrete blocks with an openwork pattern.

The interior of the building is very simple and functional. The floorplan allows for various classrooms, a small registrar's office and a long, narrow administrative office. The registrar's office retains its curving counter and two interior windows.

Changes to the interior include the placement of glass doors in the wide opening between the two large classrooms at the western end. According to B. D. Robinson, who founded the school along with his wife, the opening between the two classrooms was always large. It appears from interviewing Mr. Robinson that there may have been partitions or some type of folding door in the opening originally. One of the classrooms on the eastern side of the building has been subdivided, although the walls are of a temporary nature and do not extend to the ceiling.

CONTINUED

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Robinson Business College, Monroe, Ouachita Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 2

Assessment of Integrity:

Despite the above alterations, the Robinson Business College building would be immediately recognizable to someone who attended school there in 1946, which is the litmus test for integrity under Criterion A.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Robinson Business College, Monroe, Ouachita Parish, LA
Section number 8 Page 1

The Robinson Business College is locally significant in the areas of education and ethnic heritage because its opening in the nominated building in 1946 represented a breakthrough in professional educational opportunities for African-Americans in the Monroe area.

Robinson Business College began in the home of Mr. and Mrs. B. D. Robinson in the spring of 1944 with four students. Enrollment increased, necessitating the construction in 1946 of the nominated building. In September 1946 twelve "regular" students enrolled and forty-six veterans (the latter via the new GI Bill). Initially there were two teachers. The course of study involved one and two year programs in areas such as executive secretarial, accounting/bookkeeping, typing, stenography, and business administration. By the time the school closed in 1988, the faculty had grown to seven.

Although both individuals played critical roles in the school, Mrs. Robinson seems to be regarded as the driving force behind the institution's founding and success. A graduate of Southern University in Baton Rouge and Tuckers School of Business in St. Louis, Missouri, she dedicated her life to assisting young blacks in the pursuit of secretarial and business careers. Interviews with graduates reveal that the Robinsons did much more than provide a much needed professional educational opportunity. They were both consistently described as "motivators." Graduates speak passionately about how Mrs. Robinson instilled confidence in her young proteges -- that she made them believe they could achieve anything with the proper skills and attitude. An interesting aspect of the curriculum emphasized by graduates during interviews conducted for this project was a course essentially in behavior -- proper deportment and diction, pointers on how to interview well, etc. It is described in a 1980s catalog as "personality development." Graduates often refer to the room where it was taught as the "charm room."

Although almost all of the school's history is within the last fifty years, the Division of Historic Preservation believes that Robinson Business College is eligible for the Register because its very opening was an important breakthrough for African-Americans in the Monroe area, as noted in the summary paragraph above. Prior to its opening, blacks in northern Louisiana seeking professional educational opportunities beyond high school were limited to Southern University in Shreveport, about 100 miles to the west of Monroe, and Grambling University, a teacher's college about 35 miles to the west. With the opening of Robinson Business College in the nominated building in 1946, there was a place locally to acquire a one or two year program of study leading to employment in the secretarial and business fields.

CONTINUED

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Robinson Business College, Monroe, Ouachita Parish, LA
Section number 8 Page 2

(The closest place where there might have been a business school for African-Americans would have been Shreveport.) In filling a need for professional education on the part of students, the Robinson Business College in turn filled a void locally for black businesses in need of professionally trained secretaries, accountants, etc. Prior to Robinson's opening, they had to "import" employees from elsewhere in the state where such training was available.

The principal service area for the school was Monroe and the surrounding rural parishes. Monroe in 1940 was the state's fourth largest city, with a population of 28,309, and in 1950, the fifth largest, with a population of 41,272. Forty-two percent of its population was African-American. In addition to this obvious base, Mrs. Robinson recruited actively for students in the rural high schools near Monroe. (These students either boarded somewhere nearby or lived in one of two bungalows in the neighborhood acquired by the school.)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Robinson Business College, Monroe, Ouachita Parish, LA
Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Robinson, B. D. Interview with Donna Fricker, Louisiana National Register Coordinator,
January 16, 1997.

Interviews with various graduates of Robinson Business College, January 16, 1997.

Sanborn Insurance Company maps, 1932, 1950.

Monroe City Directories, 1945-46, 1947-48.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Robinson Business College, Monroe, Ouachita Parish, LA

Section number 10 Page 1

Boundary Description: Lot 20 of Square 7 of Prichard's Addition to the City of Monroe, Louisiana, bearing the municipal address of 604 Jack McEnery Avenue.

Justification: Boundaries follow property lines of the parcel of land upon which the nominated resource is located.