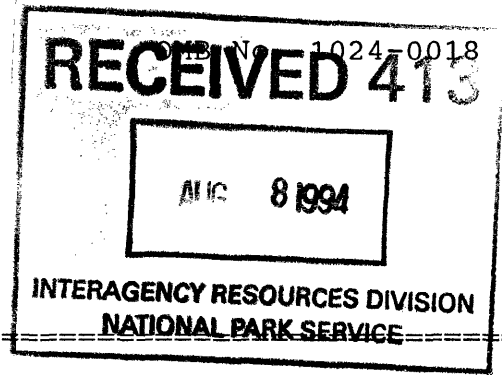


NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name N/A

other names/site number Morris House (preferred)

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 221 Tolson Boulevard not for publication N/A
city or town Langston vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Logan code 083
zip code 73050

=====
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Blak Wade July 25, 1994
Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
State or 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 or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
4. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall 9/8/94
 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): _____

**Entered in the
National Register.**

for Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

=====
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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Multiple Dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub: _____

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: National Folk

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls CONCRETE

other WOOD

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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

Period of Significance 1904-1944

Significant Dates N/A

=====
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)
=====

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
=====

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)
 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
 X State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: N/A

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>657410</u>	<u>3978920</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

N/A 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 Dr. Mary Jane Warde

organization _____ date March 1, 1994

street & number 2806 W. 18th telephone (405) 377-0412

city or town Stillwater state OK zip code 74074

=====
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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Langston
street & number P. O. Box 370 telephone (405) 466-2271
city or town Langston state OK zip code 73050
=====

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

RECEIVED 413

AUG 8 1994

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Morris House
name of property
Logan County, Oklahoma
county and State

SUMMARY:

The Morris House is a one-and-one-half-story, concrete-block building with a basement. A plain, rectangular National Folk Gable-front house, it measures approximately 28 feet wide by 40 feet deep. Standing at the intersection of Tolson Boulevard and Hale Street, opposite the present Langston City Hall, the house is situated in a primarily residential area approximately one block from Langston University and Highway 33. Although it has suffered considerable deterioration, as well as internal fire damage, the building maintains its integrity.

DESCRIPTION:

The Morris House stands on the southeast corner of Tolson Boulevard and Hale Street opposite the present Langston City Hall and at the edge of a primarily residential area. To the north and east are residences; to the south is a fenced enclosure used by the City of Langston for storage of vehicles and supplies. One block west, directly across State Highway 33, is the Langston University campus.

Stylistically, the Morris House is a plain, rectangular National Folk Gable-front multiple family dwelling with one-and-one-half stories and a semi-exposed basement. The roof of the house has no visible exterior chimneys. Most of the asphalt shingles are gone, leaving the decking exposed. Gable ends are wood-sided, and the rafter tails are exposed. The foundation, exterior walls and original interior walls are broken ashlar-faced concrete blocks painted light green. Wood doors and wood-framed windows are mostly original. Most of the windows on the north, east, and west elevations have cast sills and lintels. The house has suffered internal fire damage and a number of broken or boarded over windows. Interior bars are visible on the exposed windows.

Facing Tolson Boulevard, the Morris House west elevation has a full-width, hipped-roofed porch with a paling skirt and plain wood supports. A number of sections are missing from the simple wood railing. Six wood steps lead up to the porch. There are paired double-hung windows in the gable end. Originally on the first floor level, two single entrances alternated with two single double-hung one-over-one windows. The entrance and window on the left have been filled with concrete blocks. The remaining door is a nonoriginal wood slab. On the north elevation are two rows of windows with aluminum storm windows. There are two double-hung first floor windows. Another first floor window opening is filled in with concrete blocks. The basement level has three double-hung one-over-one windows, and two windows on the extreme right that are paired. The east elevation is the rear of the Morris House. On this elevation, the frames of the double windows in the gable end have been removed. To

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 10

Morris House
name of property
Logan County, Oklahoma
county and State

=====

DESCRIPTION (continued)

the right of the window opening is an air conditioner unit set into the wall. On the extreme right of the first-floor level is a new glazed wood door under a small gabled wood porch. The porch, reached by a flight of seven wood steps, stands on wood supports set into a concrete apron. Immediately left of the door is a window with a new two-over-two aluminum frame. On the left of the east elevation are two one-over-one windows, partially boarded over. On the basement level of this elevation a window on the extreme left has been boarded over. To its right is a gabled-roofed extension enclosing a basement entrance. The glazed wood door is partially destroyed. To the right of the entrance are two stepped single wood-framed one-over-one windows, probably lighting an interior stairwell to the basement. On the south elevation are two rows of windows. Five nearly equally-spaced first floor one-over-one windows overlook a new wood ramp that extends the length of the house and provides handicapped access to the west elevation porch. Below the ramp are four equally-spaced basement-level windows.

ALTERATIONS:

The Morris House has undergone little actual alteration. The primary modification is the addition of the handicapped-access ramp on the south elevation, a requirement of public buildings. The addition of the ramp did not obliterate any of the architectural details on the south elevation as the basement-level windows concealed by the ramp maintain their integrity to actually a higher degree than those exposed on the north elevation. Other alterations include the blocking of one west elevation door and some windows. The building retains its original configuration and architectural detail. The boarding over of several windows appears to have been a temporary measure following fire damage, while the loss of window glass is probably due to the fire and general abandonment of the property. Although the loss of shingling over most of the roof puts the house in some danger from natural elements, the concrete block walls appear sturdy. The deterioration and alterations which have occurred do not impeach the integrity of the Morris House.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11

Morris House
name of property
 Logan County, Oklahoma
county and State

=====

SUMMARY:

The Morris House, Langston, Oklahoma, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A due to its association with the early development of Langston, Oklahoma, an all-black town, and Langston University, founded in 1897 as Oklahoma's Colored Agricultural and Normal University. Built about 1904, the Morris House is the only remaining building from Langston's territorial period. It served for at least six decades as Langston's only boarding house for students and faculty before beginning a new career as a church and, most recently, the city hall. It is a rare extant product of Oklahoma's black heritage.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The town of Langston, Oklahoma was the creation of black activist and promoter E. P. McCabe. McCabe viewed the opening of the Unassigned Lands in 1889 for non-Native American homesteading as an opportunity for black economic, social, and political equality. A native of New York, McCabe moved westward in the late 1800s, holding state offices in Illinois and Kansas before moving to the new Oklahoma Territory. McCabe helped found the Oklahoma Immigration Association in Topeka and hoped to be named governor of a potentially black territory.¹ Although he was disappointed in this ambition, McCabe joined white real estate promoter Charles H. Robbins of Guthrie in acquiring land for the creation of what McCabe described as "the only distinctively Negro City in America."² Robbins bought a homestead about twelve miles northeast of Guthrie, the territorial capital, platted a town on October 22, 1890, and began seeking settlers. McCabe bought an adjoining homestead, named the town in honor of prominent black Virginia educator and Congressman John M. Langston, and advertised it throughout the South as the place where the "black man was to prosper and rule supreme in his own community."³

McCabe's promotion was quite successful. His agents recruited settlers in the Southern states, offering contracts for lots, which could reportedly never be sold to Euro-Americans, in Langston City. The contract entitled the purchaser to train tickets to Oklahoma Territory and the new black town McCabe envisioned. Having begun a newspaper, the Langston City Herald, McCabe used it to contrast the picture of a hospitable Western environment with fertile soil and favorable climate to the hostility and oppression most blacks endured. "What will you be if you stay in the South?" McCabe asked. "Slaves, liable to be killed at any time, and never treated right; but if you come to Oklahoma you have equal chances with the white man...."⁴

In addition to the hope of a better life, Langston City offered some practical benefits. It was on the rise south of the Cimarron River, one mile southwest of the white town of Coyle. Surrounding farm land was soon producing cotton

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

 Morris House
name of property
 Logan County, Oklahoma
county and State

=====

SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

and food crops. More importantly, Langston City stood near the boundary of the Iowa and Sac and Fox reservations soon to be opened for non-Native American settlement. McCabe hoped Langston City would serve as the market center for new settlers, especially incoming blacks. He actively recruited those who could bring capital, energy, and ambition to his town. By January 1891 there were about six hundred residents, six retail groceries, a wholesale grocery, two liquor stores, a feed store, two blacksmiths, two barbershops, and a post office. By the next year there were twenty-five businesses in town. Their number and diversity continued to grow through the 1890s. An elementary school was built in 1891; in 1893 a Catholic school, Holy Family, provided additional grades. Baptist, A.M.E., Catholic, and Presbyterian churches promptly served the religious needs of the community. Telephone lines were extended to the town in 1895, and in 1900 the women of Langston raised money through socials and handwork sales to purchase gasoline street lamps. The establishment of the Colored Agriculture and Normal University at Langston in 1897 seemed to crown McCabe's efforts with success.⁵

Nevertheless, some settlers were disappointed both in the extent of development in Langston City and the increasing evidence of racism in Oklahoma Territory. Many moved on, including McCabe himself in 1908. The railroads by-passed the town in the early 1900s, and the lack of good roads isolated the community. By 1907, the year Oklahoma became a state, Langston's population had declined to 274. Soil erosion, the collapse of cotton prices after World War I, and economic depression in the 1920s and 1930s further hindered growth. The population stood at 339 in 1910, 259 in 1920, and 351 in 1930. It regained the level of 1891 only in 1950 but declined again thereafter.

The sustaining factor in Langston's development was the university, eventually renamed for the town. Citizens of the community lobbied for its establishment, helped raise funds to purchase the forty acres on which it was built, provided space for the earliest classes, and thought of the institution as "their" school. Classes, with forty-one students attending, opened in 1898 under the guidance of Dr. Inman E. Page. By 1904, enrollment at the university equalled Langston's population. Both faculty and students boarded in town until dormitories as well as classroom facilities were built after the turn of the century.⁶

It was at this time shortly before statehood, according to the testimony of Langston's nonagenarian residents, that the Morris House was built on the southeast corner of (then) Lincoln Boulevard and Cunney Street. The land in Block 71 of First Addition had been part of the Austin Swan homestead sold to Charles Robbins in 1891. Andrew Curtis purchased Lots 9-12 from Robbins in 1892 and evidently transferred it to Charles F. Sneed, who relinquished the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 13

Morris House
name of property
 Logan County, Oklahoma
county and State

=====
SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

property by a quit claim deed in 1912. Sneed may have been the original owner of the house. Its ornamental concrete block construction and one-and-one-half stories with a full basement were contemporary with late territorial period buildings. These features also served to make it one of the most substantial houses in Langston. The multiple doors on the east and west elevations suggest that it was intended as a multiple dwelling. Alexander Morris, about whom nothing else is known, acquired the house from Sneed in 1912 and mortgaged it for \$1,000, a substantial sum for Langston property, the following year. About the same time, Morris also brought suit against Robbins with Zelia Page (Breaux), director of the Department of Music and daughter of Langston's president, as his surety. When Morris died intestate in 1925 his property passed into the administration of A. Breaux. The Breaux family, descendants of Langston pioneer merchant and homesteader Clairville Breaux, owned much real estate in the town. In 1929 Inman A. Breaux bought the property from Morris's heirs but never lived in the house. Rather, it continued to house Langston University male students and faculty. It was known as "Mrs. Parrish's Boarding House" in the 1940s.⁷

In 1963 Inman and Elwyn E. Breaux sold the house to the Protestant Episcopal Church Foundation of the Diocese of Oklahoma for \$2,000. For the next seven years Father Pike, an Episcopal priest, used the house for church services, while students continued to room in the basement level. Lula Brown bought the house in 1970 and sold it to Henry and Lula Collier in 1974. The City of Langston bought the property in 1985 and made the house the City Hall until a fire on July 29, 1987 forced the abandonment of the building.⁸

The Morris House is thus reminiscent of Langston's early development. Although Langston, in spite of McCabe's claim, was one of twenty-eight all-black towns in Oklahoma, it was one of the two most prominent, in part because of McCabe's separatist vision and in part because it was the home of the only black institution for higher education in the state. The construction of the house and its use through at least six decades as a boarding house recalls the entrepreneurial spirit of the settlers McCabe recruited. Its clientele further exemplifies the link between the Langston University campus and the community. Both institution and community have struggled to survive at times, but while the institution has continued to grow, the town currently relies on the university for its meager economic base.

Very few of Langston's historically-significant structures still stand, and the Morris House is the only surviving territorial building. Listing the Morris House, which retains much of its historic and architectural integrity, on the National Register of Historic Places would recognize the contributions of the town and the university to Oklahoma's black heritage.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 14

Morris House
name of property
Logan County, Oklahoma
county and State

NOTES

¹Kenneth M. Hamilton, "The Origin and Early Developments of Langston, Oklahoma," Journal of Negro History 62 (1977):270-271.

²Plat of Langston City, Oklahoma Territory, Langston City Hall, Langston, Oklahoma.

³Mozell C. Hill, "The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma: The Natural History of a Social Movement," Journal of Negro History 31 (1946):264-265.

⁴Quoted in Hamilton, "Early Developments of Langston," 273.

⁵Ibid., 272, 275-276, 279; Arthur Lincoln Tolson, "The Negro in Oklahoma: A Study in Racial Discrimination, 1889-1907," unpublished dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1966, 60-62; Harold Antor, "A Brief History of the City of Langston, Oklahoma," Langston City Hall, Langston, Oklahoma; The Western Age (Langston, Oklahoma), April 20, 1906; The El Reno (Oklahoma Territory) News, January 11, 1900.

⁶Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans: A History, 1541-1972 (New Orleans: Edwards Printing Company, 1966), 95, 105; interview of Fanny Frances Allen, 12:251, Works Progress Administration, "Indian-Pioneer History," Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Thomas Knight, "Black Towns in Oklahoma: Their Development and Survival," unpublished dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1975, 106; Zella J. Black Patterson, Langston University: A History (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 110-111, 195-200.

⁷Abstract of Lots 7-12, Block 71, First Addition, Langston, Oklahoma, Langston City Hall, Langston, Oklahoma; J. Randall Cotton, "Ornamental Concrete Block Houses," The Old House Journal 12 (October 1984):179-183; interviews of Vivian Trice Mack Britton, Fannie Holland, and Mayor Viola Jones, Langston, Oklahoma, February 28, 1994.

⁸Abstract of Lots 7-12, Block 71, First Addition, Langston, Oklahoma, Langston City Hall, Langston, Oklahoma; interviews of Vivian Trice Mack Britton, Fannie Holland, and Mayor Viola Jones, Langston, Oklahoma, February 28, 1994.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 15

 Morris House
name of property
 Logan County, Oklahoma
county and State

=====

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Abstract of Lots 7-12, Block 71, First Addition, Langston, Oklahoma. Langston City Hall, Langston, Oklahoma.
- Antor, Harold. "A Brief History of the City of Langston, Oklahoma." Langston City Hall, Langston, Oklahoma.
- Britton, Vivian Trice Mack. Interview. Langston, Oklahoma. February 28, 1994.
- Cotton, J. Randall. "Ornamental Concrete Block Houses." The Old House Journal 12 (October 1984):179-183.
- The El Reno (Oklahoma Territory) News. 1900.
- Hamilton, Kenneth M. "The Origin and Early Development of Langston, Oklahoma." Journal of Negro History 62 (1977):270-280.
- Hill, Mozell C. "The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma: The Natural History of a Social Movement." Journal of Negro History 31 (1946):254-268.
- Holland, Fannie. Interview. Langston, Oklahoma. February 28, 1994.
- Jones, Viola. Interview. Langston, Oklahoma. February 28, 1994.
- Knight, Thomas. "Black Towns in Oklahoma: Their Development and Survival." Unpublished dissertation. Oklahoma State University, 1975.
- Patterson, Zella J. Black. Langston, University: A History. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979.
- Plat of Langston City, Oklahoma Territory. Langston City Hall, Langston, Oklahoma.
- Tolson, Arthur Lincoln. The Black Oklahomans: A History, 1541-1972. New Orleans: Edwards Printing Company, 1966.
- _____. "The Negro in Oklahoma: A Study in Racial Discrimination, 1889-1907." Unpublished dissertation. University of Oklahoma, 1966.
- The Western Age (Langston, Oklahoma). 1906.
- Works Progress Administration. "Indian-Pioneer History." Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 16

Morris House
name of property
Logan County, Oklahoma
county and State

=====

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description:

Lots 7 through 12, Block 71, First Addition

Boundary Justification:

These are the boundaries that have historically been associated with this property and are the boundaries recorded at the County Clerk's Office, Logan County Courthouse, Guthrie, Oklahoma.