

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The remaining five buildings of Leland College are located on open, relatively flat land west of the town of Baker in northern East Baton Rouge Parish. Despite the presence of a number of tract houses in the vicinity, the setting remains essentially rural. The campus is traversed by an east-west paved road which is lined intermittently with large trees. All of the remaining buildings are set along this road. They are relatively widely spaced, making it difficult to take in several in one view. Four of the buildings date from sometime between 1923, when the school opened at the present location, and 1929-30, when pictures of them appear in a college bulletin. The fifth dates from c.1940 and hence is a non-contributing element. The site has been abandoned since the college closed in 1960, and, consequently, the buildings are in a deteriorated condition. Despite considerable loss of original architectural fabric, the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office believes the campus is eligible for the Register because its buildings are the only remaining visual reminders of the history of an important black educational institution.

Leland College was incorporated in 1870, and the campus was originally located in New Orleans on St. Charles Avenue between Audubon Place and Audubon Street. However, none of the buildings are extant. The school moved to its present location in 1923, and by 1930 the campus consisted of a brick administration building, two brick dormitories, a frame classroom building, the President's House, a professors' cottage, two farm houses, a power plant, a dairy barn, and a laundry. Four of these structures are extant, namely the two dormitories, the frame classroom building, and the President's House. The two dormitories are common bond brick, hip roof structures, nine bays wide, with central corridors running from end to end on each floor. The entrances are at the ends, as are the staircases. The remaining two pre-1930 structures are a "T" shaped, one story, frame classroom building and the President's House, a two story frame dwelling built along bungalow lines. The fifth structure on the site is a concrete classroom building which is only forty-two years old. It is considered a non-contributing element.

Although the campus has lost many of its original buildings (as listed above), it should be noted that the four pre-1930 structures that do remain were important buildings rather than auxiliary ones such as the dairy barn, farm houses, or laundry. Actually the only pre-1930 "main" buildings that have not survived are the administration building and the teacher's cottage. Obviously someone who was familiar with the Leland College of c.1930 would notice changes in the old campus. However, it would still be easily recognizable. The campus still basically retains its rural setting and configuration, and the individual buildings that remain look almost exactly as they did over fifty years ago, though somewhat deteriorated and overgrown.

Specific dates	1923-1930
Builder/Architect	Builder: Leland College Architect: Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion A

The extant buildings on the Leland College campus are historically significant on the state level in the areas of education and black history because they are the only remaining visual reminders of a black educational institution of statewide importance. Although the school operated for forty-five years in New Orleans, there are no extant structures there associated with it. The nominated buildings on the Baker campus are the only structures left to represent the history of the institution.

Leland College (originally Leland University) had a far-reaching impact upon the education of Louisiana blacks. It was one of four institutions of higher learning for blacks chartered in the state either during or shortly after Reconstruction. The other three were Southern University (1880), Straight University (1869), and New Orleans University (1873). Southern began in New Orleans and moved to Baton Rouge in 1914, while the latter two were in New Orleans for their entire existence. In 1935 they merged to form Dillard University. It should be noted that although all of these institutions were called universities and are thought of as such, none of them during the period under consideration (1870-1930) had more than a small percentage of students enrolled in what could be considered college level courses. The vast majority of their enrollees were elementary and secondary students.

In addition to these four schools, there were two black institutions of higher learning which have their roots in the early twentieth century. Xavier University began at the old Southern campus in New Orleans and purchased its present site in June of 1929. Present-day Grambling University began as a private industrial school on the elementary and secondary levels. It did not begin to award college degrees until 1944.

During the course of its history Leland College educated thousands of black Louisianians. Its main efforts were directed toward training educators and ministers. Leland alumni took jobs as teachers, principals, and pastors throughout the state, thereby extending the institution's influence even further. Some of these individuals rose to positions of leadership within their profession and the black community. For example, Southern University owes much to Leland graduate Joseph Samuel Clark, its president during the crucial period following its relocation in Baton Rouge (Clark was president from 1914-38.)

Finally, Leland had increased statewide impact because of its system of preparatory "feeder" schools. It exercised an influence on various upper elementary and secondary schools by allowing them to become Leland auxiliaries. Faculty and curricula selection at these affiliates was supervised by Leland. In fact, faculty members at auxiliaries were considered to be part of the Leland faculty, and their salaries were paid by the parent institution. The affiliates had to pay Leland tuition for each enrollee. Graduates of these schools were accepted into Leland without examination and good students were awarded small scholarships. The 1909-1910 Leland bulletin lists ten such schools in locations throughout the state.

It is important to note that although a total of six black "colleges" or "universities" operated in Louisiana from c. 1870 to c. 1930, there is very little left as a visual reminder of these institutions. There is nothing left of the old Leland campus in New Orleans. Nor is there anything left of the New Orleans campuses of Southern University, Straight University or New Orleans University. As far as can be determined, the oldest structure on the Xavier campus is the administration building, which dates from 1930 or 1931. The oldest buildings at Grambling appear to date from the 1930's and the overall impression is that of a modern campus. Only Southern University in Baton Rouge and Leland College in Baker have significant collections of pre-1930 educational structures. Thus the Leland campus constitutes one of two extant collections of buildings which to a large extent represent the whole of black higher education during the period under consideration (1870-1930).

NB: The year 1930 (or 1931) is used because it is the required federal cut-off (i.e., fifty years old or older).

Major Bibliographical References

Marshall, David Coughlin. "A History of the Higher Education of Negroes in the State of Louisiana." Doctoral dissertation, 1956, LSU - Baton Rouge.

Lee, Lionel. "The Rise and Fall of Leland College." Masters thesis, 1974, Southern University, Baton Rouge.

Eakin, Myrtle Sue. "The Black Struggle for Education in Louisiana, 1877-1930's" Doctoral dissertation, 1980, University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Leland University Catalogues 1909-1910, 1912-1913, 1923-1924, 1929-1930.