

Founded in 1926 in rural South Carolina and officially closed in 1954, Rosenwald Hope School reopened in August 2009 as the Hope School Community Center. Through an historical perspective on the birth and rebirth of the Rosenwald Hope School, the reader gains insight into the political and ideological contexts regarding the struggle to improve African American education during the early twentieth century. Though the Hope School's initial operation spanned only a twenty-eight-year period, the school and its story speak to the heritage of African American education in South Carolina, the broader national debates surrounding African American education, and the legacy of community perseverance fostered by the Rosenwald schools.

–Eds.

The Rosenwald Hope School of Pomaria, South Carolina:

A Historical Perspective

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The beginning of the twentieth century was a time of considerable change in American society. Nowhere was the change more evident than in response to the educational needs of African Americans.¹ Influential arguments about the purpose and structure of Black education were articulated by Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois in a 1901 collection of essays entitled *The Negro Problem*.² Washington's industrial training model, oriented to the practical education of southern Blacks, clashed with Du Bois' "talented tenth" idea—that the "best and most capable of [African American] youth must be

schooled in the colleges and universities of the land” in order to promote the race educationally and economically.³ The differences between Washington and Du Bois were both philosophical and practical, influencing generations of African Americans and the thinking of generations of students of the Black educational experience.⁴

Beginning in the late nineteenth century and continuing well into the twentieth, there was a convergence of efforts by philanthropists, typically Northern capitalists, to provide opportunities for newly freed Blacks of the southern states who were still suffering from the long-standing effects of slavery. While these efforts differed, many centered on developing a practical education for African Americans in an attempt to raise their economic standing. One such effort was the establishment of the Hope School, a country school for African American children in Pomaria, South Carolina. This school was an expression of the vision of Booker T. Washington and the philanthropy of retailer Julius Rosenwald.

This study examines the development and operation of the Hope School. Funded in part by the Julius Rosenwald Building Fund (hereafter the Rosenwald Fund) in 1925, the school was the principal elementary school for African Americans in a section of rural Newberry County from 1926 until its closing in 1954. The following analysis of Hope School’s place in South Carolina history and the influence of politics on African American education in the early twentieth century draw upon official documents, incomplete official documents, limited first-hand narratives, secondary accounts, and informal histories recorded by various individuals.

Washington and Rosenwald

While Du Bois’ “talented tenth” concept held intriguing and far-reaching possibilities for supporters of the liberal education of African Americans, it was Washington’s ideas that brought northern philanthropists and others to support industrial education as the best vehicle of improving the lot of southern Blacks. James A. Anderson’s analysis of this philanthropy proposes that these efforts were designed to contribute to economic efficiency and stability as well as the contentment of Black labor in the post-war South.⁵ Among supporters were wealthy capitalists such as Andrew Carnegie, George Eastman,

John D. Rockefeller, and Julius Rosenwald. Five U.S. Presidents—Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson—endorsed Washington’s plan, as did preeminent educators Charles W. Elliot and Jabez L. M. Curry, along with influential southerners such as newspaper editor Clark Howell.⁶

Washington’s vision was based in part on his pragmatism and acute awareness of the restrictions placed on southern Blacks in a Jim Crow society. Further influenced by the *de jure* segregation fiat of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and its “separate but equal” doctrine, he was motivated to take action to see that Blacks had opportunities to improve their lot in American society. That motivation took the form of the Tuskegee Institute (founded in 1881), where African Americans could receive a basic, practical education. Washington’s goal for his school was to teach “those industries that are of the South, the occupations on which our men and women find most readily employment . . . to put into practice the lessons taught on every side that make for practical, helpful every-day living.”⁷

Thirty years after he had established Tuskegee, Washington found a backer who would help extend his ideas. Julius Rosenwald was born the third of six children of German-Jewish immigrants.⁸ Growing up in a middle-class merchant’s family, he worked in a succession of family-owned retail stores until meeting Richard Sears of the struggling mail order catalog company, Sears, Roebuck, and Company. With an initial investment of \$37,500, Rosenwald expanded the company,⁹ its assets increasing to \$48.6 million by the time of his death in 1932.¹⁰

Rosenwald’s life-long interest in philanthropy began early in his career as reflected in this declaration to a business partner, “The aim of my life is to have an income of \$15,000 a year; \$5,000 to be used for my personal expenses, \$5,000 to be laid aside, and \$5,000 to go to charity.”¹¹ Rosenwald’s holdings far surpassed these numbers. As his fortune increased, Rosenwald’s giving expanded to include the preservation of his Jewish heritage and the growth of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) in Chicago.¹²

During the summer of 1910, Paul J. Sachs, Rosenwald’s friend and junior partner of the Wall Street financial concern, Goldman Sachs, gave Rosenwald a copy of Washington’s autobiography, *Up from Slavery*. Peter Max Ascoli, Rosenwald’s grandson and biographer, claims this book helped to shape Rosenwald’s desire to further the advancement of African Americans.¹³ On May 18, 1911, Washington and Rosenwald met at a banquet celebrating

the fifty-third anniversary of the Chicago YMCA.¹⁴ The two men began a series of correspondence on their common interests; and Rosenwald, along with his personal and business associates, visited Tuskegee that fall.¹⁵ In 1912, Rosenwald joined Tuskegee's Board of Trustees, beginning a close relationship with Washington lasting until Washington's death in 1915.¹⁶

Washington's vision extended beyond the Tuskegee campus. His vision of expanding primary and secondary public education for southern Blacks began with a school project in Macon County, Alabama, home of the Tuskegee Institute. Other projects (sometimes called Tuskegee branch schools) soon spread to other sites in Alabama and Tennessee, often with support from Rogers and Jeanes' funds,¹⁷ along with local contributions. Washington's work in rural African American schools and his ongoing discussions with Rosenwald eventually led to a gift from the philanthropist for additional rural school projects in celebration of Rosenwald's fiftieth birthday. The contribution was announced in Rosenwald's letter to Washington of August 5, 1912, "\$25,000 for the colored schools that have grown out of Tuskegee Institute, or are doing the same kind of work as Tuskegee branch schools, the funds to be distributed by Dr. Booker T. Washington, or Tuskegee Institute, under certain conditions and for certain purposes."¹⁸

With that first pledge, a twenty-four-year program of constructing community-based African American schools began. Rosenwald followed a practice he had used with other projects: he required local communities to raise financial support for each school.¹⁹ Rosenwald's resources were seed money. From 1912 to the conclusion of the Rosenwald Building Fund in 1936, \$28,408,202 (approximately \$377,030,232 in 2013 dollars) was spent on 4,977 Rosenwald school building projects. Of that amount, the Rosenwald Fund donated \$4,364,869 (valued at \$57,929,380 in 2013) while the remainder consisted of contributions from Black (\$4,725,891/ \$62,720,768 in 2013) and White (\$1,211,975/\$16,085,009 in 2013) citizens. Local tax money funded the remaining costs (\$18,105,805/ \$240,295,429 in 2013).²⁰ Most of these schools were in the heart of the former Confederacy. Of the states receiving Rosenwald funding, South Carolina ranked third for monies received and fourth in the number of schools built.²¹

Black Education and White Politics

Rosenwald's resources were desperately needed in South Carolina. The condition of state-supported education for African Americans was dismal. Not only was racial segregation *de facto*, but the South Carolina Constitution of 1895 mandated a racially separate school system.²² More so, the Constitution permitted each local school district to allocate its funds as the local board of education saw fit, creating a situation rife with financial disparity for African American schools.²³ For example, in the period from 1903 to 1915, state funding for Black schools dropped from 21 to 11 percent.²⁴

A majority of the White citizenry of South Carolina exerted no pressure to change this imbalance. In fact, based on the views of elected representatives of the period, the inequity suited the general feelings of the White populace. Governor Benjamin Ryan Tillman (1890–1894), later U. S. Senator (1895–1918), spoke for many White southerners of his time when he stated he saw “. . . no good in the education of black children. When you educate a Negro, you educate a candidate for the penitentiary or spoil a good field hand.”²⁵ Tillman was a principal architect of the South Carolina Constitution of 1895.

Tillman's protégé, Coleman Livingston Blease, governor from 1911 to 1915, was as adamant as his mentor was in opposing equal educational opportunities for African American children.²⁶ In his 1912 annual message to the South Carolina legislature, Blease encouraged the status quo of racial separation, recommending to that body

. . . that you pass an Act prohibiting any White person from teaching in Negro schools or teaching Negro children. We boast of the fact that we have no social equality in South Carolina, yet White people are teaching in Negro schools, who are associating with pupils and teaching them that they are as good as White people and are instilling in their heads ideas of social equality.²⁷

Booker T. Washington knew first-hand the violent nature of the racism inspired by men like Tillman and Blease. His invitation from Theodore Roosevelt to dine at the White House, the first given to an African American, sparked a call for mass lynching from Senator Tillman.²⁸ During a July 1914 visit to Iva, South Carolina, Richard Carroll, a Black associate of Washington and a South Carolina native, survived a near lynching by Blease supporters at a meeting of the Saluda Baptist Association as he attempted to give a speech describing

Tuskegee's education efforts. Only the quick action of association members prevented Carroll's murder.²⁹ Such was the racially poisoned atmosphere facing efforts to educate African Americans in South Carolina in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Funding for Black Education in South Carolina

In those laudable actions of the Saluda Baptist Association lay a glimmer of hope for *any* helpful response to the educational needs of African American children. Blease's successor as governor, Richard Irvine Manning (1915–1919), elected to office without opposition on a Progressive platform, could count six former governors of the state among his ancestors.³⁰ Manning was an effective voice supporting a reduction in child labor rampant in South Carolina textile mills, calling for increased educational requirements for those attending public schools, urging a more liberalized funding mechanism for public education, and insisting on the eradication of lynching.³¹

Elected as part of this change was John E. Swearingen, superintendent of education (1908–1922). Swearingen was equally concerned about upgrading the state's public educational facilities. The son of a Confederate officer, Swearingen had been blind since his early teens as the result of a hunting accident. Despite the disability, he attended the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind and the South Carolina College (now the University of South Carolina), where he graduated with highest honors. After that, Swearingen returned to the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind where he served until his election as superintendent of education in 1908.³²

Swearingen had no easy task.³³ State funding of education was appalling, and support for Black education even more abysmal. As superintendent of education, he asked rather pleadingly, "Is it too much to hope for a minimum of \$25 per White child and \$5 per Negro?" Clearly, he needed funding from private sources.³⁴ His office actively pursued monies from the Jeanes Fund and the General Education Board.³⁵ In 1917, he appointed J. Herbert Brannon to serve as the first Negro agent for South Carolina,³⁶ an action designed to draw funding for Black schools from northern philanthropies, especially the Rosenwald Fund. In his superintendent's report of 1918, Swearingen and Brannon indicated progress

toward this goal, reporting that plans for some five hundred schools, funded in part by the Rosenwald Building Fund, had begun.³⁷

Regardless of these efforts, conditions of African American schools remained shameful. In the 1919 report, Brannon stated, “. . . practically every Negro school is overcrowded—a great many dreadfully so. They are generally in a very dilapidated condition. They were built with no attention to proper lighting conditions . . . often the number of seats are entirely inadequate. . . . A great many classrooms have no blackboard. . . .”³⁸ Brannon asked for the replacement of these old buildings.³⁹ That year, the legislature set aside \$10,000 for the improvement of African American schools, increasing the amount to \$15,000 for 1920 and 1921. These funds, matched with private monies, were used to improve both the buildings and operations of the schools.⁴⁰

Swearingen’s defeat in a 1922 reelection bid led to new leadership in the superintendent’s office. James Haskell Hope, the new superintendent, was a descendent of Hessian mercenaries in the American Revolution. Hope was an 1896 graduate of Clemson College (now Clemson University) and later received a Master of Arts from Newberry College. He was a teacher and a school administrator in Union County, South Carolina, prior to his election as superintendent.⁴¹ According to his official biography, he was the longest serving superintendent of education in South Carolina history.⁴² He received credit for an attempt to equalize funding between poorer and richer counties. Under his long superintendence, “a mandatory attendance law was introduced, a teacher retirement system was created, and the twelfth grade was initiated.”⁴³

Hope took considerable pride in the Rosenwald Fund projects in his state. Over the lifespan of these projects, he spoke at length in support of the schools. For example, he told a meeting of Negro preachers of his belief that “. . . we confidentially expect that we shall erect more than 52 buildings for colored children this year” and expressed his appreciation “. . . that you accepted the challenge at the state teachers’ meeting this year . . . of erecting each week one new school for colored children.”⁴⁴ Five hundred Rosenwald schools were built during Hope’s tenure,⁴⁵ prompting him to write Rosenwald to express his “deep and sincere appreciation,” calling Rosenwald “. . . the man whose name is a household word in this state.”⁴⁶

The Birth of a Community School

Beyond Hope's concern for the education of all South Carolina's children, his interest in the rural Pomaria community and the education of its Black children was personal. His family's service to the area had begun in the eighteenth century. Located near the main road from Pennsylvania to Georgia in the 1700s, German Americans established the area northwest of Columbia, South Carolina, generally known as Dutch Fork. John Christian Haupt was a settler who had traveled from Philadelphia to the Pomaria area, served in the Dutch Fork Militia during the time of the American Revolution, and stayed in the area after the war.⁴⁷

His son, Johann Christian Haupt, remained in the area as a farmer and merchant. Johann's son, John Christian Hope (the Anglicized family name), developed the area known as Hope Station near what is now the town of Pomaria. Trained as a Lutheran minister, he later served as a South Carolina legislator for the area in the mid-nineteenth century. John's son, James Cornelius Hope, fought for the Confederacy during the American Civil War. Upon his return from the war, he married Martha Frederica Miller and together they had five children, one of whom was James Haskell Hope.

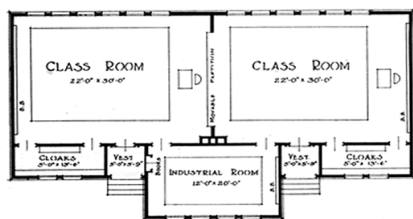
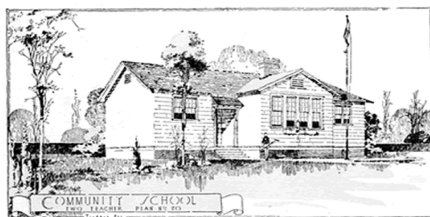
It was on the property of this family that Pomaria's Rosenwald school, later known as the Hope School (named after the Hope family), was established. On March 11, 1925, James Haskell Hope, along with his brother, John Julius Hope, and their sister, Mary Hope Hipp, sold approximately two acres of land from the family estate in Hope Station to the Trustees of School District No. 60 for Newberry County, South Carolina, for five dollars.⁴⁸

As previously stated, one of the Rosenwald Fund's requirements was the use of community resources and monies contributed by the fund. These assets came from many sources. In South Carolina, African Americans typically gave their contributions to the county treasurer, who documented the contributions and passed them on to the appropriate school districts.⁴⁹ Often, these contributions were in-kind donations of labor or materials. Additionally, community rallies of African Americans challenged the Black community and their White supporters to raise money.⁵⁰ The Hope School supporters followed this model. The South Carolina Rosenwald School database indicates that, of the

\$2,900 required to construct the Hope School, the Rosenwald Fund contributed \$700; White donations amounted to \$400; Negro, \$600; and tax-funded contributions, \$1,200.⁵¹

The Hope School structure followed plans drawn by Rosenwald Fund director Samuel Leonard Smith. Rosenwald employed Smith to refine the original Tuskegee-drawn plans for African American rural schools and to administer the school building projects.⁵² Smith had trained with architect Fletcher Dressler in rural school design. They shared a concern that lighting, ventilation, general hygiene, and sanitary conditions be appropriate for the safe use by schoolchildren.⁵³ In fall of 1921, the Rosenwald Fund, under Smith's direction, published *Community School Plans*.⁵⁴ In his designs, Smith took into account the limitations of building schools for poor African Americans, often in rural and unelectrified settings without modern plumbing. His plans reflected contemporary state-of-the-art school designs with an awareness of the school's purpose and setting.

The Hope School was a two-classroom building constructed using Smith's "Community School Plan Number 20: Two-Teacher Plan to face East or West" (Figure 1).⁵⁵ Like all community school plans (also called "Nashville Plans" to differentiate them from the previously used and discarded "Tuskegee Plans"), the building was planned so that its windows faced the sunlight in order to make the most of natural lighting. A center partition similar to a modern garage door divided the building into two classrooms for instructional purposes while allowing for its removal for larger spaces as needed. Air circulation was enhanced by the cross-ventilation provided by large windows, and a raised foundation helped prevent problems with moisture and vermin.⁵⁶



FLOOR PLAN No 20
TWO TEACHER COMMUNITY SCHOOL
TO FACE EAST OR WEST ONLY

Figure 1: Community School Plan #20: Two Teacher Plan to Face East or West. Reproduced in *Community School Plans*, [http:// historysouth.org/_schools/twoteachew.html/](http://historysouth.org/_schools/twoteachew.html/).

As was typical of Community School Plan campuses, the Hope School had two outdoor privies, one each for boys and girls.⁵⁷ Although these privies, no longer standing, were of unknown design, the Nashville Plan privies were common pit/trench outhouses.⁵⁸ Other parts of the campus were constructed according to specifications in the *Community School Plans*. For example, the design discouraged the use of trees that could block light or ventilation from reaching the school building, and the grounds were graded to allow for proper storm water and sanitary drainage away from the school.⁵⁹ A view of the surviving campus of the Hope School shows the significant remnants of these Community School site plan specifications, even more than eighty years after its construction (Figure 2).



Figure 2: The Hope School, April 2008. Photo taken by Ron Knorr.

Memories of the Hope School

In 1926, Pomaria was (and remains today) a largely rural area. The historical documentation for institutions in such areas is often scant. This situation is more the case when dealing with the history of a rural African American educational institution in the South. The evidence that remains is often sketchy, and frequently the researcher relies on oral history, second-hand sources, and individuals whose memories are fading. For example, documentation appears lost on how Black supporters of the Hope School raised donations for their building fund.⁶⁰ These limiting factors are somewhat mitigated by the fact that there exists a close-knit community in Pomaria of both Black and White residents with ties to the school. The school building also exists much as it did at its opening.

The Hope School served as an elementary school giving instruction in grades 1 to 7 from 1926 to 1954. Documentation of the school's daily operations is scant.⁶¹ The Hope Community Center, Inc., the current owner of the campus, has a list of living alumni and teachers of the school, but these individuals are scattered across South Carolina and the United States. Most did not retain artifacts of the school.

As was previously stated, a history of the Hope School must be constructed from incomplete official records, limited first-hand narratives, and secondary accounts. For this narrative, interviews were conducted with a number of people connected with the school, including alumni, families of alumni, and descendants of James Haskell Hope.⁶² Documents from the South Carolina State Archives, official reports, and other written accounts of the time were used to reconstruct a broader view of the history of the school.

The Hope School was a centerpiece of life for the African American citizens of rural Hope Station. Pride in the school is obvious from the interviews done for this study and others previously recorded. Memories of the school, its building, and the lives touched by its operation remain with those influenced by their experiences there. The building was considered remarkable. Alberta Reeder, a long-time teacher, said the Hope School was "the most beautiful school in the county at that time." Although considered a vast improvement over most Black schools in South Carolina, the building was still primitive. Two potbelly stoves, one in each classroom, were used to keep students and teachers warm in the winter. Both of the original stoves remain in the building, but the stands on which they once stood are gone. The original blackboards and many school desks also remain.

The boys brought water and firewood to school each day. The students would have to walk to the "summer store" on Peak Road (about a quarter-mile from the school) to fetch buckets of water. In 1953, one year before its closing, the building was finally electrified. Sanitary facilities were also primitive. Louis Flemon recalled the two primitive outhouses that served as toilets for both the students and faculty. Only recently, in 2009, was a fully functional septic system added to the building's facilities.

School days for students reflected the harsh realities of African American life in rural South Carolina, as well as the joyous childhood experiences of a simple time. School ran from the first week in September until June. During the fall harvest, school met for half-day sessions so that students could help bring in crops. Former students recalled walking

to school in all kinds of weather and bringing in firewood with them to warm the building in the winter.

The families, schoolteachers, and nearby communities met the daily needs of the students.⁶³ Supplies consisted of “marking books” (a form of notebook and grade book) and blackboard chalk. Parents had to ask for help from the Black and White communities to get books, and they were hard to get. Textbooks were primarily handed down from White schools, along with books borrowed from community members. Otherwise, students were forced to provide their own books. Typically, children in each grade had to use books used by White students in the former grade, i.e., second graders were given books used by White first graders).

Hot meals were served at the school for a time. Former students remember Annie Grace Young, Elizabeth Smith, and Jonell Johnson as cooking meals for students and teachers. In the 1940s and 50s, hot lunches were \$.25 per week. These simple meals typically consisted of beans, potatoes, and rice. Occasionally, oranges and apples were the after-school snacks. At other times, there were no meals provided and students brought their lunches from home.

Alumni recall a remarkable number of teachers over the Hope School’s twenty-eight years of operation. Alberta Reeder remembered teaching the earliest grades offered, grades 1 to 4. A former student related that Miss Reeder was a very difficult teacher and an extremely strict disciplinarian. “She would whip us good.” Mrs. Gertrude B. Brown recalled teaching grades 4 to 8. Students remember that Mrs. Norton (whose first name is lost to history) taught grades 4 to 8. Alumni remember other teachers at Hope School, such as Mrs. Manie Moore, Miss Annie Martin, Mrs. Q. Glenn, Miss Sara Baiten, and Miss Beatrice Counts. Usually, one teacher taught four grades.

Louis Flemon, who attended the Hope School, 1943–1950, recalled, “School was lots of fun.” He described a student day with this typical schedule. After chores, such as gathering firewood and water, and the recitation of a Bible verse, class instruction took place. Students enjoyed two recess periods, a short one at 10:00 a.m., and a longer one in the afternoon. Like elementary schools of every generation, the Hope School was filled with energetic, fun-loving children who played baseball and rode a merry-go-round.

The Legacy of the Hope School

It was a Supreme Court decision that ultimately led to the closing of the Hope School. The segregation of South Carolina schools, racially separated by the state constitution, legislation,⁶⁴ and the actions of White politicians, was met by challenges in state and federal courts. In *Briggs v. Elliott* (1951), Black parents sued the Clarendon County School District 22 in federal district court, claiming violation of their children's Fourteenth Amendment right to equal protection because of school segregation.⁶⁵ The school district won that case, but the dissenting opinion of Judge J. Waties Waring, "*Segregation is per se inequality*," (italics his) was a death knell for segregated schools in the United States.⁶⁶ *Briggs*, one of five school U.S. district court cases from across the country, consolidated in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kans.* (1954), challenging the "separate but equal" doctrine as a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution.

South Carolina politicians were quick to react to what they saw as an upcoming crisis. In a desperate attempt to create separate *and* equal facilities, Governor James F. Byrnes, a former U.S. Supreme Court Justice and Secretary of State, told South Carolinians in his inaugural address, "It is our duty to provide for the races substantial equality in school facilities. We should do it because it is right. For me, that is sufficient reason."⁶⁷ Byrnes' words were not a call for integration. Indeed, South Carolina lawmakers took drastic action to provide "equal" facilities in an attempt to avoid the threatening possibility of racial integration.

In 1951, the South Carolina legislature established a committee to determine what actions the state should take if *Plessy v. Ferguson* was overturned. That committee, eventually known as the Gressette Committee, took no specific action; but a legislatively sponsored referendum, removing the constitutional requirement of South Carolina to maintain public schools, passed that fall in a landslide.⁶⁸ In addition, Byrnes proposed massive school funding for the construction of African American schools in an attempt to give an appearance of separate but equal schooling.⁶⁹

This action eventually resulted in the closing of the Hope School. From 1951 to 1954, 824 schools, mostly rural and heavily African American, were closed and replaced by

new school facilities.⁷⁰ Local community members recall seeing Dave Tobias and Robert Holley, trustees of St. Paul AME Church (a church long associated with the Hope School), and John Earnest Gibbs, a teacher in the community, moving the salvageable furniture to its replacement, the new Garmany Elementary School, located near Pomaria, which opened in the fall of 1954.

From the fall of 1954 until 1958, the building and grounds of the Hope School remained the property of the Newberry County School District. On January 23, 1958, the District sold the entire Hope School campus to the Jackson Community Center and Cemetery Association Inc., for \$500. The school appears on a list of excess properties sold; many of the disposed properties were marked “negro.” An additional note on the Hope School said, “Sold with special consideration.”⁷¹

From 1958 until 2007, a period longer than the Hope School was in operation, the Hope Station community and St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church used the building and surrounding property for various purposes. The building itself was occasionally used for congregational and community functions and ultimately for church storage. The two-acre campus unofficially melded into the church grounds. While some maintenance was done to the structure, the building fell into some disrepair.

In the late 1990s, new church leadership at St. Paul had a fresh vision of the old Hope School and its importance to the community. Reverend Patricia Brisbon saw possibilities for the school’s use as a community and heritage landmark and encouraged her congregation, several with ties to the school, to support its restoration. Many of the school’s alumni, families of alumni, former teachers, and community leaders began to view the school with a new appreciation. As word spread about the possible renovation of the school, interest in that effort rose throughout the old Hope Station community and beyond. Tenetha Flemon Hall, sister of a number of Hope School alumni, spearheaded community efforts to renovate the school. As the activities continued, Jay Hope (grandson of James Haskell Hope) and Ron Hope (grandson of John Julius Hope) joined these individuals as a community entwined in the educational heritage of the school.

The efforts of this group became the starting point of a new phase in the history of the Hope School. In 2006, the newly formed Hope School Community Center, Inc., acquired the campus; and this organization made application for its inclusion on the National

Register of Historic Places. On October 3, 2007, the Hope School was included on that list.⁷² Also in 2007, the Hope School Community Center Inc., originally chaired by Tenetha Flemon Hall and later led by Ron Hope, made application to the State of South Carolina for a historic building restoration grant. On June 29, 2007, the State awarded the Center \$100,000 to restore the building as a historic structure for use as a community center for Pomaria/Hope Station.⁷³ The center held a grand reopening celebration upon completion of the restoration in August 2009 (Figure C), and artifacts and oral histories of the school were given to the Smithsonian Institution collection for a future exhibit on Rosenwald schools.



Figure 3: The Hope School, August 2009. Photo taken by Ron Knorr.

Conclusion

Like any school, the Hope School has a distinct history in the annals of its community and in the hearts of its alumni, supporters, and donors. In the history of Black education, it stands not only as a monument to the segregation era, but also as a memorial to the spirit of a people and their struggle for the right to an education in the face of legal restrictions and White indifference. There can be no debate that the negligent state funding of African American education prior to *Brown* was solely aimed at suppressing Black Americans. In South Carolina, belated and feeble attempts to maintain a separate but equal educational system by dramatically increasing funding under the guise of equality was a pathetic effort to accomplish this goal.

The Hope School's twenty-eight-year heritage of educating the children of an African American community began in the era of the segregated South. The 1895 Constitution of

South Carolina, the “separate but equal” fiat of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and the legacy of Jim Crow and Governor Tillman gave rise to substantial injustice for African Americans and created an immense inequality in the schooling of Black children, in no way balanced by philanthropy or noble intentions.

A number of scholars have criticized Washington’s industrial education model and Rosenwald’s educational plan. For example, James Anderson stated, “Rosenwald and other industrial philanthropists believed that Tuskegee was training Black leaders to maintain a separate and subordinate Negro society. They were primarily interested in supporting that mission.”⁷⁴ The validity of such charges does not diminish the immense pride that African Americans have in the accomplishments of Rosenwald schools. Much like the planned Hope School Community Center, surviving Rosenwald School campuses all across the South are now the centers of their own communities. Mary Hoffschwelle’s statement that “Rosenwald schools became part of the cultural capital held by their communities, a productive investment in social change upon which community members could draw as they saw fit”⁷⁵ is an apt description of the rich legacy of the Rosenwald Hope School of Pomaria, South Carolina.

Notes

¹ The terms *African-American* and *Black* are used interchangeably in this study, and I have chosen to capitalize *Black* and *White* when describing the race of certain groups. The term *Negro* is used in its non-disparaging historical context. Other terms for African Americans, offensive and racist, are used only in quoting relevant historical documents and events. Modern scholars such as James Anderson, Amilcar Shabazz, and Elizabeth Ihle, along with Rosenwald’s contemporary, W. E. B. Du Bois, allege that Rosenwald Schools were designed to keep African Americans as a subservient class to Whites. Ironically, Du Bois was the recipient of a Rosenwald fellowship in 1931. See Alfred Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree: The Julius Rosenwald Fund, Foundation Philanthropy, and American Race Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

² Jim Manis, ed., *The Negro Problem*, Electronic Classics Series (Hazleton, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 2007), accessed March 30, 2008 at <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/webdubois/TheNegroProblem6x9.pdf>.

³ W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Talented Tenth,” In *The Negro Problem*, ed. Jim Manis, Electronic Classics Series (Hazleton, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 2007), accessed March 30, 2008 at <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/webdubois/TheNegroProblem6x9.pdf>, 20.

⁴ An example of an analysis of Black education during this period is James Anderson’s critical study of educational opportunities afforded African Americans in a region historically known for racism and prejudice. See James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

- ⁵ James D. Anderson, "Northern Foundations and the Shaping of Southern Black Rural Education, 1902-1935," *History of Education Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (1978): 371-396.
- ⁶ Peter Max Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald: The Man Who Built Sears, Roebuck and Advanced the Cause of Black Education in the American South* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 72.
- ⁷ Booker T. Washington, *Tuskegee and its People: Their Ideals and Achievements* (New York: Appleton, 1906), vi.
- ⁸ Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 2-5.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 387.
- ¹¹ Morris R. Werner, *Julius Rosenwald: The Life of a Practical Humanitarian* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishing, 1939), 30.
- ¹² Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 78.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 78-79.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.
- ¹⁵ Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 28.
- ¹⁶ Werner, *Julius Rosenwald*, 107.
- ¹⁷ The Jeanes Foundation, also called the Negro Rural School Fund, was established by the Quaker philanthropist Anna T. Jeanes of Philadelphia. The Rogers Fund is the charitable fund of Henry Huttleson Rogers, an oil millionaire and friend of Washington (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Huttleston_Rogers#Booker_T._Washington); also see Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools*, 25-26.
- ¹⁸ Louis Harlan and Raymond Smoak, eds., *Booker T. Washington Papers*, Vol. 11 (1911-12) University of Illinois Press, 1981), <http://www.historycooperative.org/btw/Vol.11/html/index.html> (accessed March 30, 2008), 576.
- ¹⁹ Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools*, 38.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 283. The 2013 dollars are an average of the distributions estimated over the life of the fund and inflated per the Bureau of Labor Statistics annual Consumer Price Index, <http://www.bls.gov/cpi/>.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² Article XI, Section 7 of the 1895 Constitution states, "Separate schools shall be provided for the children of the white and colored races, and no child of either race shall ever be permitted to attend a school provided for the children of the other race." See The State of South Carolina, *Constitution of the State of South Carolina, Ratified in Convention, December 4, 1895* (Abbeville, SC: H. Wilson, 1900), 45.
- ²³ James Christopher Carbaugh, "The Philanthropic Confluence of the General Education Board and the Jeanes, Slater, and Rosenwald Funds: African-American Education in South Carolina, 1900-1930" (Ph.D. diss., Clemson University, 1997), 26.
- ²⁴ Peter Wallenstein, "Higher Education and Civil Rights: South Carolina, 1860s-1960s," *History of Higher Education Annual* 23, no. 2003-04 (2004): 10.
- ²⁵ "Ben Tillman: Memories of an Agrarian Racist," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 32 (summer, 2001): 48-49.
- ²⁶ Blease's inaugural speech of January 1911 spelled out his thoughts on funding for Black education. "I am opposed to white people's taxes being used to educate negroes." Blease alleged that attendance records in schools for Black students were being overstated by "negro teachers for their financial gain." The State of South Carolina, *Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina*. (Columbia, S.C.: State Publishing, 1911): 84-85.

- ²⁷ The State of South Carolina, *Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina*. (Columbia, SC: State Publishing, 1912): 6.
- ²⁸ Tillman commented, "The action of President Roosevelt in entertaining that nigger will necessitate our killing a thousand niggers in the South before they will learn their place again." Shamefully, Tillman's reaction was common across the South among white politicians and newspaper editors. See "The Night President Teddy Roosevelt Invited Booker T. Washington to Dinner," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 35 (Spring, 2002): 24-25.
- ²⁹ Harlan and Smoak, *Booker T. Washington Papers*, 103-105.
- ³⁰ Walter B. Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 475.
- ³¹ Robert Milton Burts, *Richard Irvine Manning and the Progressive Movement in South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1974).
- ³² Yates Snowden and H. G. Cutler, *History of South Carolina*, (Chicago: Lewis Pub. Co., 1920), 242.
- ³³ Edward Janak, Swearingen's biographer, discusses Swearingen's efforts in "And ain't that a man! The Intersection of Masculinity, Politics, and Education in the Life of John Eldred Swearingen, State Superintendent of Education of South Carolina" (unpublished manuscript).
- ³⁴ Booker T. Washington had a harsh opinion of Swearingen's actions regarding educational funding for Blacks. In a May 3, 1912 letter to James H. Dillard, Washington viciously castigated Swearingen for the latter's reported comments regarding the issue of the Negro consuming more in educational expenses than the race paid in taxes. See Harlan and Smoak, *Booker T. Washington Papers*, 522-23.
- ³⁵ An excellent discussion of these efforts is in the dissertation of James Christopher Carbaugh, "The Philanthropic Confluence of the General Education Board and the Jeanes, Slater, and Rosenwald Funds: African-American Education in South Carolina, 1900-1930" (Ph.D. diss., Clemson University, 1997).
- ³⁶ South Carolina State Department of Education, *Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education* (Columbia, SC: State Publishing, 1918), 95.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.
- ³⁸ Michael C. Scardaville, ed., *The Brief History of South Carolina Schools from 1895 to 1945* (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1989), 46.
- ³⁹ South Carolina State Department of Education, *Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education* (Columbia, S.C.: State Publishing, 1919), 137.
- ⁴⁰ Scardaville, *The Brief History*, 46.
- ⁴¹ James (Jay) Riley Hope, personal communication, March 20, 2008. Few personal records are extant for James Haskell Hope, according to his grandson, Jay Hope.
- ⁴² South Carolina State Department of Education, "James H. Hope—Former State Superintendent of Education," http://ed.sc.gov/agency/superintendent/former/hope/james_hope.html (accessed 4/18/2008)
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ William A. Aery, *Negro Teacher and Preachers Co-operate in South Carolina* (Hampton, Virginia: Hampton Institute Press) 9, cited in Carbaugh, *The Philanthropic Confluence*, 86-87.
- ⁴⁵ Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools*, 283.
- ⁴⁶ James H. Hope to Julius Rosenwald, cited in Alfred Q. Jarrette, *Julius Rosenwald: Son of a Jewish Immigrant, a Builder of Sears, Roebuck and Company, Benefactor of Mankind* (Greenville, SC: Southeastern University Press, 1979), 30.
- ⁴⁷ Ray Haupt, Haupt Family Origins, <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Lake/3234/Christian.html> (accessed March 30, 2008).
- ⁴⁸ Newberry County Title Records, Book 30, Deed No. 291, 11 March 1925.
- ⁴⁹ Carbaugh, "The Philanthropic Confluence," 93.
- ⁵⁰ Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools*, 230.

- ⁵¹ The South Carolina Archives & History Foundation, "South Carolina's Rosenwald School Buildings Database," The South Carolina Archives & History Foundation. <http://www.palmettohistory.org/rosenwald/rosennewberry.pdf> (accessed March 30, 2008).
- ⁵² Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools*, 94.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 95-98.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 95.
- ⁵⁵ Community School Plan #20: Two Teacher Plan to Face East or West. Reproduced in Community School Plans, http://historysouth.org/_schools/twoteachew.html (accessed March 20, 2008).
- ⁵⁶ Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools*, 95-98.
- ⁵⁷ Louis Flemon, personal communication, March 27, 2008.
- ⁵⁸ Hanchett, "Community School Plan #20" in Rosenwald School Plans.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid.
- ⁶⁰ James (Jay) Riley Hope, personal communication, March 20, 2008.
- ⁶¹ For all practical purposes, there is no official documentation of the Hope School in the South Carolina State Archives and little in the records of Newberry County Schools for the period 1926 to 1954.
- ⁶² This author conducted interviews with Louis Flemon, Tenetha Hall, Patricia Brisbon, and James Riley (Jay) Hope. The Hope School Community Center provided information from various interviews conducted before the beginning of this study, especially those with Alberta Reeder and Gertrude B. Brown by LaShunda Wise, then a 16-year-old student at Mid-Carolina High School, and published in that school's newspaper in the 1990s. Many of the people interviewed, including Amanda Reeder, are now deceased. A copy of that article is in the possession of this author.
- ⁶³ The Black community supported the school and its work. Louis Flemon recalls one White pastor who spoke against the school. The pastor thought it was a private school owned by the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal church and financed with school tax money.
- ⁶⁴ Section 5377 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina of 1942 states, "It shall be unlawful for pupils of one race to attend the schools provided by boards of trustees for persons of another race."
- ⁶⁵ *Briggs et al. v. Elliott et al.* (1951), 98 F. Supp. 529.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid. The *Briggs* decision was appealed to the United States Supreme Court and heard in the arguments of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kans.* (1954). As part of the *Brown* decision, the *Briggs* decision was reversed.
- ⁶⁷ The State of South Carolina (Columbia, SC), January 17, 1951, 5-B.
- ⁶⁸ Walter B. Edgar, *South Carolina in the Modern Age* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 100.
- ⁶⁹ Bruce H. Kalk, *The Origins of the Southern Strategy: Two-Party Competition in South Carolina, 1950-1972* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), 3.
- ⁷⁰ Edgar, *South Carolina in the Modern Age*, 100.
- ⁷¹ Eric W. Plaag, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form-Hope Rosenwald School, <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/newberry/S10817736031/S10817736031.pdf> (accessed March 20, 2008).
- ⁷² Ibid.
- ⁷³ James (Jay) Riley Hope, personal communication, March 20, 2008.
- ⁷⁴ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 266.
- ⁷⁵ Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools*, 273.

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