

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form**

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

____ New Submission Amended Submission

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A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

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"Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina (ca. 1770-1941)"

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B. Associated Historic Contexts

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(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Wake County's Rosenwald Schools, 1917-1950

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C. Form Prepared by

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D. Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official

Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

Date

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Table of Contents for Written Narrative
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Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

| | Page Numbers |
|---|--------------|
| E. Statement of Historic Contexts (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.) | E 1-4 |
| F. Associated Property Types (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.) | |
| G. Geographical Data | |
| H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.) | |
| I. Major Bibliographical References (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.) | I 5-6 |

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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 120 hours per response including the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Wake County's Rosenwald Schools
Addendum to "Historic and Architectural Resources
of Wake County, North Carolina"
Wake County, North Carolina

Context: Wake County's Rosenwald Schools

At the opening of the early twentieth century, the educational system for African Americans in North Carolina, and throughout the south, was rudimentary at best. The public school system had officially segregated the races in 1875, declaring that there should be separate but equal educational facilities for white and black children. Not until 1910, however, did public elementary schools for blacks begin receiving state funds. In 1913, further recognizing the need to improve schools for black students, North Carolina established the office of supervisor of rural elementary schools to promote the education of African-American children. In 1921, a separate agency, the Division of Negro Education, was created to further advance public education for black students.¹ A survey in the early 1930s conducted by the Division of Negro Education found that some black classrooms had sixty to one-hundred students, that only half of the schools stayed in session for the full school year, and that only seven percent of black students attended high school.²

Simultaneously, as North Carolina was working toward bettering education for its African-American children, Julius Rosenwald, a philanthropist, started a fund for building new and modern school facilities for black students. Rosenwald (1862-1932), who made a fortune through his part ownership of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, became interested in aiding the African-American community after reading two books, a biography of William H. Baldwin, a northern white man who devoted his life to promoting black education in the South, and *Up From Slavery*, the story of Booker T. Washington's life. In early 1911 he met with Booker T. Washington in Chicago, and later that year, toured Washington's Tuskegee Institute which impressed him greatly. In 1912, he was made a trustee of Tuskegee.³

Rosenwald created his Fund in southern education in 1917 with four funding priorities: the building of schoolhouses for rural African-American children, the establishment of libraries, the education of teachers, and the development of centers for higher education for the black population.⁴ When Rosenwald established his fund, in all of the South there was not a single standard eight-grade rural black public school and no black public high school approved for even two years of high school work. Where there were African-American schools, they

¹ Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, Flora H. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992) 154, 155.

² Crow, 135.

³ Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949) 5, 25-26.

⁴ Embree and Waxman, 37.

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were open an average of four months a year, and the teacher usually had only attended school through eighth grade.⁵

For a community to qualify for support from the Rosenwald Fund to build a school they needed to meet certain criteria. According to a publication printed by the Rosenwald Fund,

A school had to represent common effort by the state and county authorities and the local colored and white citizens. The state and county had to contribute to the building and agree to maintain it as a regular part of the public-school system. White citizens had to take an interest and contribute part of the money, since it was felt that white leadership was essential to the success of such a program in the South. . . . And the Negroes themselves had to show their desire for education by making gifts of money or labor, usually both.⁶

The buildings were to be constructed according to simple plans that were provided by the Fund. The curriculum was to include formal and theoretical education, and as according to the principles of Booker T. Washington, students were also taught practical skills.⁷

The plans provided by the Fund featured the most up-to-date pedagogical thought regarding the best spaces to help children to learn. Since the majority of schools were in rural areas where there was no electricity, maximizing natural light was a major concern. For this reason, the Rosenwald plans all had groupings of tall, double-hung sash windows along the east and west walls. A southern exposure would be too warm during the late spring, summer, or early fall months; and northern light in the winter would not provide enough light. The plans also specified that each window should have two tan shades, to better regulate the amount and intensity of light. Windows were always to the children's left, so that a shadow would not be created as they wrote (except for left-handers). The interiors were to be painted either a cream ceiling with buff walls and walnut-stained wainscot or ivory cream ceiling with light gray walls and a walnut-stained wainscot. Interior corridors were to be minimized so that usable space was maximized.⁸

⁵ Embree and Waxman, 38.

⁶ Embree and Waxman, 39.

⁷ Embree and Waxman, 40.

⁸ Thomas H. Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review* Vol. LXV, No. 4, October 1988: 401.

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Each Rosenwald school also included an "industrial room," smaller than the standard-size classroom, for girls to be taught home economics and boys farmwork and how to use simple tools. In addition, the school was to be used as much as possible by the public, and to that end, an auditorium that could seat the entire community should be built as part of the school. If there were not sufficient funds for an auditorium, a moving partition should be erected between two classrooms to create enough space for a large public meeting.⁹

Alabama was the first state to take advantage of the Fund's support, and Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia soon followed. When the Fund closed its building program in 1932, North Carolina had received the greatest support and had constructed 813 buildings for 114,210 students at a cost of \$5,167,042.¹⁰ The fund had decided to end its building program not because it felt that its work was finished, but because they "felt that this particular demonstration had served its purpose of stimulating interest and must be discontinued in order that the southern states should not rely too heavily on outside aid and thus be delayed in assuming full responsibility for the schools. . . as an integral part of public provisions for the education of all people."¹¹

In Wake County, the Rosenwald Fund helped to build twenty-one schools with eighty-one classrooms, contributing \$23,000, while the school board gave \$143,805 (the second highest in the state), the white community donated \$605, and the African-American community raised \$35,756 (the largest in the state).¹² Part of Julius Rosenwald's vision was that the schools he helped fund would become a meeting place and a source of education for all members of the nearby African-American community. For this reason, he ensured that the black community would have a personal interest in the building by requiring that they raise funds for the construction of the school.

There are five Rosenwald Schools that still stand in Wake County: Panther Branch School, St. Matthews School, Riley Hill School, W.E.B. Dubois School, and the Berry O'Kelly School in Raleigh's Method Community. The W.E.B. DuBois School in Wake Forest, a

⁹ Hanchett, 401-405.

¹⁰ Embree and Waxman, 51.

¹¹ Embree and Waxman, 57.

¹² Jerry L. Cross, "Julius Rosenwald: His Fund and His Schools, A Brief Historical Sketch of the Rosenwald Fund and Black Education in the South 1917-1948," March 19, 1980; unpub. typescript in the "Rosenwald Schools" file, Eastern Office, Division of Archives and History, Greenville, NC; 7. The Johnston County school district contributed \$156,500 toward the cost of constructing African-American rural schools. The greatest number of school buildings were constructed in Mecklenburg County, a total of 26.

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brick seven-room building completed in 1926, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.¹³ Nominations to the National Register have been prepared for Panther Branch, St. Matthews, and Riley Hill.

¹³ Beth P. Thomas, National Register Nomination for the W.E.B. Dubois School, Wake County, North Carolina, March 31, 1993.

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