**Behind *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*:**
**A Digital Strategy of Interpretation of St. Johns Elementary School**

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## Abstract

The 20th century brought great struggle and opportunity for African Americans in the South, and that heritage needs to be told to the public. One component to the complete history, especially concerning African American educational heritage is the Rosenwald Fund, which allowed rural African American elementary education to develop and helped create a constructed schooling landscape. Some of these Rosenwald Schools still stand today, but are vacant and unused by the communities surrounding them. St. Johns Elementary School in Albemarle County, Virginia, is on its way to becoming part of the community again. However, it is in need of interpretation for the public, in order to not lose the meaning of the original building and its students' experiences.

Public history informs society of parts of their past that they might not have realized was significant, however, access to this information creates meaningful exposure to the past. With the growing world of technology, St. Johns is able to become a physical part of the community again while telling the important story of its history through digital heritage online. It preserves both the community engagement and the building's lived experience.

This thesis specifically will look at the digital interpretation of African American educational heritage and Rosenwald Schools through St. Johns Rosenwald School, located outside of Gordonsville Virginia. The first goal of this thesis is to discuss the process of the creation of a digital strategy of interpretation of Rosenwald Schools as a source of public African American educational history, while preserving the Rosenwald School community engagement in order to act as a template for Rosenwald digital interpretation. The second goal is the product itself: a digital interpretation of St. Johns Elementary Rosenwald School through the creation of the public history website *Rosenwald Reinterpret*.

The written work acts as a template to follow in order to create a digital strategy of interpretation of a Rosenwald School where the building is not accessible or no longer exists. Chapter One is a discussion of the historical foundations of African American educational heritage through the ideas and beliefs of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Carter G. Woodson. Chapter Two analyzes four strategies of interpretations of African American heritage in Virginia, all indirectly made possible by the three figures in Chapter One, and how the sites aided in the creation and understanding of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. Chapter Three looks to one specific example of a restored Rosenwald School, Scrabble School, in order to see what is already available to the public and how that contributes to this interpretation of St. Johns. Chapter Four closes the text with a breakdown of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* in order to understand the incorporation of precedents and the display of content.

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**Introduction**

"This museum will tell the American story through the lens of African American history and culture. This is America's story and this museum is for all Americans." Louie B. Bunch, III

African American heritage is "America's story." Director Louie B. Bunch III makes clear with his statement that African American heritage is an essential part of America's public history. Museums and other institutions and sites of African American heritage allow for this history to have a voice in the public history world. This thesis specifically examines the digital interpretation of African American educational heritage and Rosenwald Schools through St. Johns Rosenwald School, outside of Gordonsville Virginia. Primarily, this thesis discusses the process of the creation of a digital strategy of interpretation of Rosenwald Schools as a source of public African American educational history. This is done while preserving the Rosenwald Schools' current community engagement and is intended to act as a template for further Rosenwald digital interpretation. The second half of this thesis considers the production of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*, a public website which allows for digital interpretation of St. Johns Elementary Rosenwald School. Prior to the discussion on digital interpretation, some background on public history, the Rosenwald Schools in general, and St. Johns Rosenwald School in particular will be provided to establish clarification.

Public history is "a movement, methodology and approach that promotes the collaborative study and practice of history. Its practitioners embrace a mission to make their special insights accessible and useful to the public."[1] The aim is to create interpretations of

[1] "About the Field," National Council on Public History. https://ncph.org/what-is-public-

history that are accessible and relatable to the public in order to deepen and empower citizens' connection with the past. There are several different means of interpreting public history for the general population to both appreciate and understand it. These include museum exhibitions and oral histories. The primary forms considered are digital humanities and digital histories. Digital history is "understood broadly as an approach to examining and representing the past that works with the new communication technologies of the computer, the Internet network, and software systems."[2] By combining public and digital histories, a wider audience can be reached and the available means of interpretation and appreciation are increased. St. Johns is able to grow and still retain its history through digital means although the Schoolhouse is unable to be used as a museum and is in ownership of the community to serve their needs rather than to act as a physical interpretation.

The Rosenwald Schools were African American schools constructed between 1917 and 1932 through the contributions of The Rosenwald Fund. Booker T. Washington (1856–1915), a prominent African American advocate for African American education, persuaded a Jewish businessman, Julius Rosenwald (1862–1932), to establish a foundation which would aid in the construction of rural African American elementary schools all throughout the South. The Rosenwald Fund officially formed in 1917 with the construction of seven schools in rural Alabama starting in 1913. The focus was on the schoolhouse to provide a stable structure for schooling from grades one through seven.[3] There were over 5,000 schools constructed over its 15

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[2] Douglas Seefeldt and William G. Thomas, "What Is Digital History?" *Perspectives on History: The Newsmagazine of the American Historical Association,* May 1, 2009, https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2009/what-is-digital-history#note3.

[3] Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006), 26-29**.**

years of existence, but most closed after *Brown v Board of Education* in 1954.[4] Some of these structures have survived today, including St. Johns Elementary School.

St. Johns, constructed from 1922 to 1923, along with seven other Rosenwald Schools throughout Albemarle County, Virginia served the Cobham African American community in the county. The Schoolhouse was sold to a private owner after it closed in 1954 and converted into a home until St. John's Baptist Church on the neighboring property purchased the building in 2003. Evidence of a small house-fire was found within the Schoolhouse. The church now seeks to reestablish the building's identity in the landscape as a community-centered building. The church congregation, comprised of many of the alumni of St. Johns, established the St. Johns Family Life and Fitness Center Foundation. They hope to raise funds to convert the Schoolhouse into the St. Johns Family Life and Fitness Center. With this new function, the Schoolhouse will serve the community, just as it once did as an elementary school. Both the building and the community it serves share a rich history representing an important part of African American educational heritage. Because of this history, St. Johns represents an opportunity to expand appreciation for and understanding of the site. The building is for the community, but the history can remain accessible for the general public through digital interpretation.

**Historiography:**

In recent years, the Rosenwald Fund has grown in popularity as a topic of study. The foundational text of Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of American South* (2006), was the first comprehensive look at the history of the Fund through its formation by Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald. Her text looked at their writings and speeches along with

[4] Ibid, 88-95.

data collected by the Board of Education on schools throughout the South and provides an understanding of the physical schools themselves. Although the book provides a comprehensive history there is a crucial piece missing: the lived experience of the schools and a lack of consideration for the smaller sites. Many questions come to mind along this line of lived experience. What was it like for the students? What effect did the schools have on the community? How did they influence the lives of the students? Various interpretations of public history have begun to answer these questions and have created the ability to open the discussion of Rosenwald history to other communities along with the opportunity to gather oral histories of the lived experience.[5] Public history has provided an additional opportunity for discussion of the Rosenwald Schools and African American educational heritage today.

Public history comes from the world of academia, but is meant for the masses. It first emerged as a field in the 1970s, but today some prefer the term, "applied history." Scholar Robert Kelly published the article "Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects" in 1978 through *The Public Historian* journal. Kelly's text provided the foundational definition of public history at its outset. However, today, the analysis of public history is shifting away from asking "What is it?" to the question 'How is it created?"[6] Through publications such as *The Public Historian,* different strategies of interpretation may be constructed and explained in order for the historian to develop an interpretational strategy. Within the field, there are primarily four means of interpretation used for successful public history: physical exhibitions, digital heritage, documentary format, and written text. The goal is for public history to serve and inform a general

[5] "The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock, Virginia," accessed February 24, 2019, https://www.scrabbleschool.org/index.shtml.
[6] Robert Kelley, "Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects," *The Public Historian* 1, no. 1 (1978): 16–28, https://doi.org/10.2307/3377666; Bob Beatty, ed., *An American Association for State and Local History Guide to Making Public History* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

audience through accessibility of information, engaging display, inclusive history, and relatable presentation of the everyday history. These guiding principles provide an outline for the goals of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*: for Rosenwald Schools to be presented through the Rosenwald Foundation's history, the schools' architecture, and the communities' experiences.

**Approach:**

This thesis looks at two sides of research: process and product. Through community engagement, primary source research, precedent studies, and architectural documentation, a public history digital strategy of interpretation of the St. Johns Schoolhouse and lived experience within it is produced (*Rosenwald Reinterpreted*).

The written portion of this thesis acts as a template to follow in order to create a digital strategy of interpretation of another Rosenwald School in a situation where the building is not accessible or no longer exists. Chapter One is a discussion of the historical foundations of African American educational heritage through the ideas and beliefs of the leading African Americans in this process: Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Carter G. Woodson. Chapter Two analyzes four strategies of interpretations of African American heritage in Virginia, all indirectly made possible by the three figures in Chapter One, as well as how each site aided in the creation and understanding of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. Chapter Three looks to one specific example of a restored Rosenwald School, Scrabble School, to establish what is already available to the public and how its interpretation contributes to that of St. Johns. Finally, Chapter Four concludes with an analysis of the website *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* as a way to understand the incorporation of precedents and the display of content within an interpretive website.

**Chapter One:**

**Establishing the Identity of African American Educational Heritage**

Three key figures from American history are largely responsible for building the foundations of African American educational heritage through their contributions to African American education during segregation. Booker T. Washington (1856–1915), W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963), and Carter G. Woodson (1875–1950) worked within the political framework of "separate but equal," following the 1896 Supreme Court Case *Plessy vs. Ferguson,* and the generally negative white perspective of African Americans prevalent at that time. The idea that the white population was superior was so pervasive that it was commonly accepted that "blacks were inferior mentally and culturally."[7] These beliefs were compounded by that fact that white leaders controlled the public expenditures for all schools.[8] It was understood that black education should focus on manual labor through industrial education. African American education was not "of the same caliber as whites," and did not consider the complexities of ethics or philosophy.[9] Instead, it was about *doing*, what the hands and the body could do. This mentality and perception emphasized the public representation of African American education as limited and not necessary for society.

Yet, St. Johns School was somehow still able to develop and operate within this framework. Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois influenced the foundations of African American education through contrasting views on the approach of its establishment, while Carter G. Woodson sought to promote the education of African American heritage and history in school curricula. Together these perspectives and figures contributed to African American educational

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[7] Vincent P. Franklin and James D. Anderson, eds., *New Perspectives on Black Educational History* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1978). 200.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

heritage and allowed for the students of St. Johns to be exposed to the effects of these ideas and beliefs. They set the stage for public interpretation and representation of African American education and heritage. St. Johns must consider these founding principles of African American educational heritage established by the community, and the public figures of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Carter G. Woodson are thus central to the interpretation of segregated African American education and Rosenwald Schoolhouses.

**Booker T. Washington:**

Born a slave and freed at approximately nine years old in 1865, Booker T. Washington was an illiterate child who sought to teach himself to read and write. He was able to attend school in West Virginia and find his way to Hampton Institute, a school to educate freedmen and their descendants, where he worked to pay for his studies, and went on to attend Wayland Seminary in 1878 in Washington, D.C. Washington was at the forefront of African American achievement and believed wholeheartedly in the benefits of education. He was a self-made man who established both greatness for himself and the African American race through his accomplishments. He believed that "his life did not represent an exception to the black experience; rather, it was a model that others could follow."[10] He recognized the capability of any African American citizen to achieve his or her own greatness, while taking a philosophical approach of self-help, racial solidarity, and accommodation. He thought it most beneficial to accept discrimination at that moment in time and move on, focusing instead on self-improvement. His opinion clashed with other prominent figures, as he believed that identity

[10] Booker T. Washington et al., *The Booker T. Washington Papers Collection: Volumes 1-14* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2015), vol. 5, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uva/detail.action?docID=3414409.

needs to begin within the individual in order to establish the outside perception. He wished to earn the respect of the white community through accepted "Negro education" in craft, industrial, and farming skills.[11] To further develop his goals and achieve success, he established the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1881. The educational focus at the Tuskegee Institute was industrial skills for African Americans. As an exemplar of his philosophy, the students at Tuskegee physically constructed their own school.[12]

Washington hoped to move beyond elementary education and establish the foundations of technical education for African Americans. It was not his goal to push back on the white perspective, but rather he believed African Americans would ultimately gain full recognition in society by showing responsibility and reliability as American citizens. The founding of the Tuskegee Institute ultimately led to the beginnings of the Rosenwald Foundation by which Washington contributed to the construction and success of St. Johns as a Rosenwald School.

**W.E.B. Du Bois:**

In contrast to Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois was born a free man in Massachusetts and attended school from a young age. Little is known about his elementary education, but he graduated from Searles High School, an integrated public school, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Du Bois then attended an African American college, Fisk University, from 1885 to 1888, earning a bachelor degree. Attending school in Tennessee was Du Bois's first true exposure to legalized white racism and the realities of the Jim Crow South. Du Bois

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[11] "The Debate Between W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington," *Frontline,* February 10, 1998, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/debate-w-e-b-du-bois-and-booker-t-washington/.

[12] "Bricks and Peanuts," Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service), February 25, 2016, https://www.nps.gov/tuin/index.htm.

later attended Harvard to earn a second bachelor degree, this time in history. This led him to be able to receive a scholarship and continue to a graduate program at Harvard in sociology. Through a fellowship, Du Bois traveled to Germany and other parts of Europe, which exposed him to other perspectives of thought. He returned to the United States and, in 1895, became the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University.[13]

Later, Du Bois sought out political action and a civil rights agenda. He argued for social change through the development of a small group of college-educated African Americans, he called "the talented tenth."[14] Du Bois took the self-improvement methodology of Booker T. Washington and amplified its scale. With a small population of African Americans educated for political success, he believed they could act as leaders for the general population in order to achieve social and political equality. Du Bois sought to develop the promotion of the African American race, believing they were capable of anything and that they desired situational improvement. Du Bois' beliefs were broadcast through print media as a form of social education and activism. His push for high education was built off the desire for improved elementary education for African Americans. Although not much is said of his childhood education, it is clear he was able to succeed partially due to his early education and access to information. These circumstances were the same when it comes to the students of St. Johns. For some, it was their first and possibly last opportunity to attend school. St. Johns provided students with the ability to build foundations and grow in society, with the hope that they would attend high school and contribute to their communities.

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[13] Ralph McGill, "W.E.B. Du Bois," *The Atlantic Monthly,* November 1965, pages 78–81. https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/unbound/flashbks/black/mcgillbh.htm.
[14] "The Debate Between W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington," *Frontline,* February 10, 1998, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/debate-w-e-b-du-bois-and-booker-t-washington/.

Du Bois saw an advantage in the published word for spreading ideas. This was his major means of information distribution and was the most accommodating mention at the time. He compiled a series of his speeches and reformatted them into a published text: *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906-1960*.[15] Although he was a passionate speaker, he realized his message reached a wider geographical audience through print. Today, the means of public distribution has changed, but the goal remains consistent. For St. Johns, the distribution of its African American educational heritage is most suited to online platforms discussing both the people and the architecture associated with it.

**Booker T. Washington and W.E.B Du Bois**

Although they held contrasting philosophies, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois believed in the importance of elementary education for African Americans as a consistent foundation for further substantial education. Their beliefs in the improvement of the condition of African American education, expressed in print, largely informed how the white public perceived these men. Their ideas were publically accessible in newspapers and journals, such as *The Independent, The Colored American,* and *The Atlantic*, which served as examples for African Americans to establish their own opinions and values.[16] Washington and Du Bois both achieved the relative freedom and prominence to decide where they wanted to go in the future and through what means. Both men's beliefs are embedded in the foundation of St. Johns and other

[15] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906-1960*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amhert, University of Massachusetts Press, 1973).
[16] Booker T. Washington, "The Awakening of the Negro," reprinted in *The Atlantic*, November 23, 2011, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/02/the-awakening-of-the-negro/308813/; Du Bois, *The Education of Black People*

Rosenwald Schools, allowing for students' education to be substantial and sustainable, and provided a foundation for the students to further develop.

These and other African American publications acted as a public voice for African American communities. They created a platform for public understanding of African American heritage. For example, in Washington's piece "The Awakening of the Negro" in *The Atlantic* (1896) he wrote:

> Someone may be tempted to ask, has not the Negro boy or girl as good a right to study French grammar and instrumental music as the white youth?
>
> I answered, yes, but in the present condition of the Negro race in this country there is need of something more.

He continued to discuss, in this article, the advantages of learning practical skills in order to earn a living.[17] This discussion began to put African Americans within the same context as the white population through print media, while still not fully achieving equality. He used this public platform, along with the Tuskegee Institute, to promote the position of African Americans through technical education in society.

**Carter G. Woodson:**

Born in Virginia to former slaves, Carter G. Woodson was unable to attend school on a consistent basis from childhood through adolescence. He went on to become a staunch advocate for solid African American education. He did not attend high school until the age of 20, and then he did so in West Virginia. From there, he dedicated himself to education. He received his Bachelor of Literature in 1903 from Berea College in Kentucky and began a career in education. Eventually, he went back to school for a master's degree from the University of Chicago in 1908

[17] Washington, "The Awakening of the Negro."

and received a Ph.D. in History from Harvard University in 1912. Carter G. Woodson played a role in the official formation of African American history. He was younger than both Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois and also firmly believed that education would enable African American citizens to make a living and establish their place. The African American education system did not provide a knowledge of or respect for their culture or heritage.[18] Woodson ultimately became known as "the Father of Black History."[19] He and African American rights advocates established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and a year later the *Journal for Negro History*. These organizations and publications provided the opportunity for official development and advocacy for African Americans within the education system.[20] Similar to the previous two figures, Carter G. Woodson was an African American history advocate whose work was crucial for the interpretation and representation of African Americans today.

Woodson believed that the promotion and study of African American history within school curriculum was central to the development of an accurate and whole cultural identity. Woodson wrote about the current situation of African American history education, saying

> Of the hundreds of Negro high schools recently examined by an expert in the United States Board of Education only 18 offer a course taking up the history of the Negro, and in most of the Negro colleges and universities where the Negro is thought of, the race is studied only as a problem or dismissed as of little consequence.[21]

Carter G. Woodson looked to the representation of African Americans in their own eyes, rather than focusing on shifting the opinions of the white population. He did not simply advocate for

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[18] Carter Godwin Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (New York : AMS Press, 1977), 3.
[19] Fath Davis Ruffins, "Building Homes for Black History: Museum Founders, Founding Directors, and Pioneers, 1915–95," *The Public Historian* 40, no. 3 (August 1, 2018): 15, https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2018.40.3.13.
[20] Jacqueline Anne Goggin, *Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993).
[21] Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, 1.

African American history education in print; he took action to support it. He established "Black History Week" in 1926, and it later became a celebration and recognition of African American heritage for an entire month. Woodson's emphasis on the understanding of the self allows for African Americans to establish themselves at a higher standard than previously thought. Woodson's creation of a foundation of African American history contributed to the future interpretations of African American heritage. The website *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* looks to represent Woodson's conception of heritage through a digital means.

**Chapter Conclusion:**

This chapter laid out the educational beliefs of three prominent figures who contributed to the ideological landscape of African American education during segregation. During this time, St. Johns was constructed and operated as a school. The public identity of the structure and the students of the time are essential to fully understanding its heritage and history. Initially, one must realize that American history is a system. Things will inherently change over the course of understanding, providing new interpretations and means of interpretation. However, "history is the study of change over time and sometimes, in the long view, the results show truly revolutionary change."[22] African American history and culture represents a study of change. The next step is to take the foundations that Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Carter G. Woodson built, along with the population's lives, and interpret African American history through various means. It is not about the "what," but rather the "why."[23] Their work on improving the African American education system created a public identity and advertised the significance of discussing African American issues in the public sphere.

[22] Beatty, *Guide to Making Public History*, 27.
[23] Beatty, 27-28.

**Chapter Two:**

**Strategies of Interpretation for African American Educational Heritage**

Developing out of the distinct values and goals of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Carter G. Woodson as well as the history of America, different modes of public interpretation of African American heritage have taken root. These include national museums, documentaries, and educational centers. How does one go about representing this history today? With evolving spaces and shifting perspectives, flexibility is always required in representation and interpretation. This flexibility allows for both interaction with and development of African American cultural history. For example, once an audio recording is complete, can it be manipulated and presented in a new way? The content is there and the person has spoken, but the editing and form of presentation of the audio greatly impact the way it is received and understood. This idea can translate to how a physical space presents a story. Place plays a large role in understanding how one thinks about and understands the past. Memory and reaction are intertwined with location, so it is not surprising to think that once an interest in a topic is sparked, it will be enhanced by its connection to place.[24] African American educational heritage acts the same way, whether it is represented physically or digitally, through built or designed forms. Chapter Two highlights four examples of spatial and digital interpretations of African American cultural history with specific associations to the representation of African American educational heritage. These interpretations are:

1. The National Museum of African America History and Culture (NMAAHC)
2. The Black History Museum of Virginia
3. The John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center
4. The Jefferson School African American Heritage Center

[24] Beatty, 138.

These four sites of interpretation, physical and digital, provide insight and guidance for the interpretation and development of the *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website and contribute future possibilities for the physical St. Johns Schoolhouse as well. These four interpretations were selected for three distinct reasons. First, their geographical locations relative to St. Johns gives them an automatic relationship with it and an already constructed public history interpretation of African American heritage. Second, each site's scale of interpretation allows for unique considerations of African American heritage. This discussion spans from the national scale to the local. The final contributing factor is the type of interpretation. Each of the sites is both a physical location and a website/digital interpretation, however, the first two (NMAAHC; The Black History Museum of Virginia) look through the lens of a museum, while the latter two (The John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center; The Jefferson School African American Heritage Center) are educational and cultural centers. These three reasons provide different levels of interpretation to use as examples and precedents for the *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website. Each interpretation will be considered through its physical site, its built forms, and then through its website/digital design and display.

**The National Museum of African American History and Culture:**

The National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) in Washington DC (Figure 1) was established in 2003 and opened its doors to the public on September 24, 2016 as the 19th and newest museum of the Smithsonian Institute. This example is on the national and even international scale of interpretation; it offers a broad history for discussion to the widest audience. The national scale allows for a consideration of how one caters to a large diverse audience. The museum has four primary goals, laid out on its website:

> 1. It provides an opportunity for those who are interested in African-American culture to explore and revel in this history through interactive exhibitions,
> 2. It helps all Americans see how their stories, their histories and their cultures are shaped and informed by global influences,
> 3. It explores what it means to be an American and share how American values like resilience, optimism, and spirituality are reflected in African-American history and culture, and
> 4. It serves as a place of collaboration that reaches beyond Washington, D.C. to engage new audiences and to work with the myriad of museums and educational institutions that have explored and preserved this important history well before this museum was created.[25]

It is a public institution promoting and providing public history for the nation. These four pillars are the basis for understanding the importance of African American history and its connection to the general public. The pillars reflect the history of not just one interpretation and are the culmination of all of them. The NMAAHC states the goals clearly and from the outset. *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* seeks to do the same in order for the viewer to understand both the site's goals and the significance of African American educational heritage in Rosenwald Schools. The NMAAHC provides an example of magnifying a building's identity within the landscape, insight into the representation of general African American educational history, and an inspiration of place and history promotion that have influenced the creation of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted.*

The NMAAHC is a prime example of how architecture represents a part of public history, not only through design, but also through physical space. The structure rises up amongst the white history of the United States through its location on the National Mall and its proximity to the White House. Philip Freelon, in association with other architects, designed a now iconic part of the National Mall. Freelon is regarded as one of the leading African American architects

[25] "About the Museum," National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institute, January 4, 2016, accessed February 24, 2019, https://nmaahc.si.edu/about/museum.

in the United States. Aside from the NMAAHC, his work includes the Center for Civil and Human Rights (Atlanta, Georgia), the Museum of the African Diaspora (San Francisco, California), and the Harney B. Gantt Center for African American Arts and Culture (Charlotte, North Carolina). The NMAAHC is now seen as the most prominent piece he has designed — working with two other architects, J. Max Bond, and David Adjaye.[26]

The viewpoint from each of the cardinal directions speaks to its public presence. Looking North stands the White House. To the East, the US capital rises above the NMAAHC. To the South and West are monuments and memorials to Thomas Jefferson, Martin Luther King Jr., Abraham Lincoln, and George Washington (Figure 2).[27] Even before the visitor steps into the building, designed to house a tremendous number of exhibitions and experiences of African American history, the stage is set for this specific part of America's story. The architecture truly acts as part of the story and public history of the National Mall and places it in the national public's view. It allows for African American heritage to stand on the same stage as every other history represented on the Mall. It lays the groundwork and promotes the establishment of more interpretations to come.

This idea of emphasizing the presence of the building in the landscape translates across to St. Johns through the website *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. Although the two-teacher schoolhouse is small in scale and modest in design, by taking its existence and architecture to the digital world, its presence becomes a part of the larger identity. St. Johns can grow in scale and understanding in its digital interpretation through *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. The National Museum of African

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[26] Charles Henry Rowell and Philip G. Freelon, "An Interview with Philip G. Freelon," *Callaloo* 38, no. 4 (2015): 752–61, https://doi.org/10.1353/cal.2015.0124.
[27] "The Building," National Museum of African American History and Culture, January 4, 2016, https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/building.

American History and Culture achieved this through its placement and design on the National Mall, and St. Johns can attain such growth through its internet presence.

Once inside the NMAAHC, visitors have access to a comprehensive story of African American heritage, but only one exhibition will be the focus here: "Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom, Era of Segregation 1876 to 1968," (Figure 3).[28] St. Johns School originally existed within the context of this exhibition, the Era of Segregation (1876–1968), and now is able to interpret and share this history. Although the exhibition in the NMAAHC looks to African American colleges and universities after the Civil War, the choices made and ideas conveyed can translate over to the elementary schooling level. In order to get to the colleges, one must first complete a more basic level of education. The NMAAHC focuses on nationally significant figures to tell the American story. It hopes to cater to a wide audience and provide needed information to visitors in order for them to gain a better understanding of the country as it is today. The museum develops the idea of public history and is able to cater to specific audiences of families, adults, educators, students, and interns/fellows.[29]

This broad history needs to be considered even on a local scale. Although St. Johns was a local rural African American school, it existed in the larger context. Visitors to the *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website need to understand this history as well. Interaction with information is where personal reactions occur. However, the exhibitions in the NMAAHC are the spaces that trigger response through sensory contact with text, visuals, and sound. The work in this thesis selects individual interconnected pieces of African American educational history to provide a comprehensive look at the school for a wide audience online. The NMAAHC is looking to

[28] "Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom," National Museum of African American History and Culture, September 16, 2016, https://nmaahc.si.edu/defending-freedom-defining-freedom.
[29] "Adults," National Museum of African American History and Culture, January 28, 2016, https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/adults.

provide history to the country and beyond for an expansive audience, while *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* has the chance to focus on general and local history and set itself into the larger context through the digital world initially for a smaller, more local audience.

On the other hand, the NMAAHC website (Figure 4) is used as a promotional piece for the museum. It is likely that visitors will explore the website before even entering into the space. The website presents basic and enticing pieces of information on the exhibitions without giving away any specifics. Additionally, the NMAAHC is a so popular it is often overbooked, so many people who intend to visit and do not get the chance will revert to the website. *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* will act a little differently, where the website will be the exhibitions and not just the introduction to them. The National Museum of African American History and Culture is part of the Smithsonian Institute, a large foundation, providing a public image of African American educational heritage. Everyone knows one of the Smithsonian Museums, but very few know of St. Johns. The NMAAHC is a stepping-stone to discussing Virginia's African American educational heritage a little more in depth because the museum has become a piece of the American story. Although *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* will be a digital exhibition, it is an opportunity for community goal promotion. It will allow for the site to incorporate what the community currently wants out of St. Johns Schoolhouse with the history of the school within the community.

**The Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia:**

The Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia (Figure 5), located in Richmond, Virginia was founded in 1988. The current space was recently renovated and tells the story of African Americans within Richmond and their role in the foundation of the city. The

museum resides in the old Leigh Street Armory, which has been completely refurbished with an addition constructed as part of the renovation.[30] This museum demonstrates a strategy of interpretation on a state scale, although in Richmond, as Virginia's capital, it speaks to both city and state African American history. It is of a slightly smaller scale than the NMAAHC, but much larger than that dealt with by the *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website. The Black History Museum also indirectly represents a part of the history of St. Johns through its connection to Virginia and its location within the State capital. The Black History Museum provides an example of building re-use, spatial experience, and an opportunity of adaptability, all of which contributed to the choices made in the development of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted.*

The re-use of the old Leigh Street Armory as The Black History Museum created a new life for the building. The historic armory now stands proud in the city with a new story to be told.[31] By bringing the Black History Museum to the site of the armory and renovating its structure to become publicly beneficial, the building now serves two new purposes for the city and the people's public identity: it is a usable structure and a suitable place to explore Virginia's African American History. St. Johns, the building and its digital interpretation, is inspired by way the Virginia Museum brought a building and story back from an invisible landscape. The Black History Museum used restoration and construction to their advantage, however *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* must seek to create the same impact through a digital platform so the building can adapt and serve the community in a new fashion. When it comes to St. Johns Schoolhouse, the

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[30] "Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia (Richmond) - 2019 All You Need to Know BEFORE You Go (with Photos)," TripAdvisor, accessed February 25, 2019, http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g60893-d11045481-Reviews-Black_History_Museum_Cultural_Center_of_Virginia-Richmond_Virginia.html.

[31] "Richmond Black History Museum Renovation in Full Swing," *NBC12*, November 6, 2014, http://www.nbc12.com/story/27317911/richmond-black-history-museum-renovation-in-full-swing.

structure is empty and was forgotten by the public from the 1950s until 2003. Today its goal is to serve the community again through rehabilitation by the community into the Family Life and Fitness Center, as a gathering space. When considering the Black History Museum in terms of making St. Johns digital, it is crucial to find the right context for the interpretation of St. Johns' history and its contributions to the built landscape. The physical building is for the community's use and therefore unavailable for historical reinterpretation. A digital platform looks to recreate that now inaccessible space in an accessible way. *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* seeks to create an eye-catching representation and experience from the beginning, in the same way the renovated Armory does for the Black History Museum.

As in the NMAAHC, there is one exhibition at the Black History Museum that specifically focuses on understanding African American freedom and heritage as it led to the evolution of education. This provides an impactful experience. Riggs Ward, an exhibition design firm, created the exhibit "In Pursuit of Freedom, Justice, and Equality" as a permanent installation at the Black History Museum.[32] It contains interactive touchscreens, graphics, and a key feature of discussion, The Emancipation Oak. The designed Emancipation Oak (Figure 6) represents where the Emancipation Proclamation was first read in Virginia. The Oak invites the visitor into the space while also being educational and accessible. It creates a space within the room promoting interaction, both spatially, by provoking the viewer to look around, and textually through the two touchscreens positioned at the base of the Oak. These touchscreens are the source of more detailed information and associated visuals in a much more accessible and interactive format. The construction of and informational sources for the Emancipation Oak provide examples of the outside coming into a space in the form of a tree intersecting with digital

[32] "In Pursuit of Freedom, Justice, and Equality," Riggs Ward Design, accessed February 25, 2019, http://riggsward.com/portfolios/in-pursuit-of-freedom-justice-and-equality/.

information technologies. These pieces feed into the *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* experience as inspiration for transporting the physical building of St. Johns onto a digital platform. Instead of nature coming into a building, a building is going virtual. The digital touchscreens at the base of the Oak are a small-scale version of the larger Black History Museum website. The museum visitor touches and explores his or her way through a narrative digitally. The website takes the same ideas as the touchscreens and transfers them to a larger scale to reach a wider audience, accessible through a computer and the internet. The Emancipation Oak, on the other hand, provides an example of creating a smaller physical space within the larger room, while *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* will look at creating the schoolhouse space through a non-built construct.

The Black History Museum's online presence is currently limited due to the website being temporarily under construction (Figure 7). While this limits further immediate interpretation, it still allows for the assumption that the website is constantly redeveloping. This capacity for redevelopment is a core strength of a digital platform. Clearly, the site's intention is to draw a visitor in, rather than existing as a primary platform providing educational information.[33] This inaccessibility during redevelopment calls for consideration of the site development process for *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. How might the information still be present and available to the public even while new information is being added? In 1988, there was general lack of African American heritage discussion, but museums started to recognize the public importance of this history, and these conversations continue today. Complicated histories necessitate constant conversation and research. This fact requires that historical websites such as

[33] "Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia." BHMVA: Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia, accessed February 25, 2019, http://blackhistorymuseum.org/.

*Rosenwald Reinterpreted* must be simultaneously updatable and accessible. Otherwise, periods of access are lost.

**The John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center:**

The John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center (Figure 8) opened in Fredericksburg, Virginia in 2010, with the goal to:

> …celebrate Spotsylvania by collaborating with like-minded individuals and organizations to collect, archive, share, and facilitate learning about the interactive history of education, cultures and civic life of the country's African American citizens. In doing so, one demonstrates how those interactions within the wider population contributed to the richness of Spotsylvania County's development.[34]

The John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center provides an example of a county scale institution. Rosenwald Schools were organized based on counties as well, so although this center was not a Rosenwald School, it highlights a discussion of county level education. Three components of the Educational and Cultural Center influenced elements of design in *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*: First, the reestablishment of architecture; second, an emphasis on a community; and third, specific website components to be considered within the St. Johns context.

The interpretation at the Educational and Cultural Center features a physical exhibition on the history of Spotsylvania County's education of African Americans through 15 principles, the first being John J. Wright from the mid 1920s. The Center today is housed in a former middle school, on the site of the Spotsylvania Training School, originally constructed in 1914 as the first African American high school.[35] The former school acts as a space for heritage representation

[34] "John J. Wright Educational & Cultural Center Museum, Inc." John J. Wright Educational & Cultural Center Museum, Inc., accessed February 25, 2019, http://jjwmuseum.org.
[35] Ibid.

through its history. Although the school might have been altered, the life of the structure and its African American stories continue. The space is built for the conversation and promotion of the interpretation of African American educational history. This Center interprets African American educational heritage through a different lens compared to a traditional museum by connecting the narrative and function back to the county's communities. Thus, a former school has become a space of interpretation. Although St. Johns Schoolhouse is not becoming a physical space for historical interpretation in the same way, the idea of connecting the built environment and history to each other is key. Whether in a physical or digital context, architecture and community history exist within the same context and landscape.

The Educational and Cultural Center's website (Figure 9) provides the basic information in order to later explore the exhibitions in the old Training School. A brief timeline on one of the initial pages sets the visitors within the context of the space, while the linked African American Heritage Trail takes the viewer digitally a little further afield to the connections between several African American heritage and education history sites.[36] Through tools provided by the Environmental Science Research Institute (ESRI), the Educational and Cultural Center has created an interactive map of the area's African American heritage, showing where African American history is actively being interpreted (Figure 10).[37] This map engages the viewer and promotes interaction through scrolling, clicking, reading, and moving across the landscape. In a similar way, *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* takes the viewer through the perspective of one building's narrative rather than through the African American heritage of numerous communities. However, both the Wright Center and *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* look to promote and interact

[36] "John J. Wright"
[37] "African American Heritage Tour." County of Spotsylvania (VA), accessed February 25, 2019, http://gis.spotsylvania.va.us/tour_AAHT/#.

with the public as its main audience, rather than purely addressing academics. Combining the history of the built form with the history of individuals begins the conversation on African American educational heritage: a significant and often overlooked portion of American history.

The *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website takes the digital representation of the Educational and Cultural Center into account by incorporating the impact of the visual importance of an African American education history timeline. Greeting the visitor with a context timeline allows for basic understanding to be achieved in a dynamic and interactive manner. By incorporating St. Johns' history throughout the greater African American story, a relationship is established between local rural elementary schooling and the national education system.

**The Jefferson School, African American Heritage Center:**

The final interpretation to consider in the creation process of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* is the Jefferson School, African American Heritage Center (Figure 11), which takes the same idea as the Wright Center of remaining locally relevant. However, it focuses on its own local history of Charlottesville and the surrounding Albemarle County while inviting a wider audience into the physical site itself through the hosting of symposiums and other African American heritage–related discussions. The Heritage Center opened in 2013, three years after The John J. Wright Center in Spotsylvania, in the former Jefferson School, an African American high school in Charlottesville. The city's public forgot the old school for many years, but the past decade has brought it back to life as a community center through contributions from Andrea Douglass, who is the director of the Center today. After extensive work, an interpretation of African American heritage found a home in Charlottesville again through the Jefferson School. This is especially

important following the demolition of Vinegar Hill in 1965, a topic too extensive to cover here.[38] Now the Jefferson School is a resource for the whole city and it hosts exhibitions and symposiums representing African American heritage, both nationally and locally. The Jefferson School provides insight into a strategy of interpretation that looks to the same geographical context as *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* as an example of a local mode of interpretation. In this highly localized context, St. Johns begins to have a voice. To show the intimate connection these two places share, St. Johns' alumna and president of the St. Johns Family Life and Fitness Center Foundation, Rebecca Kinney, has been invited to attend numerous events at the Jefferson School for the public distribution of information on St. Johns and the significance of Rosenwald Schools.[39]

The architecture of the Jefferson School carries significance both historically and currently as a platform for African American heritage dissemination for the public's understanding. The Jefferson School's spaces bring others in to start conversations and to uncover more information through exhibitions and symposiums, which act as examples for *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. Even though the website is not a collaborative space, it does not have to be closed off from its audience, but is a resource that is open for conversation, while still presenting information. This intentionality of openness found in the Jefferson School through symposiums translates over to *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* so that the website visitors can have a voice alongside the information, possibly providing something new to Rosenwald and St. Johns

[38] Laura Smith, "In 1965, the City of Charlottesville Demolished a Thriving Black Neighborhood," *Timeline* (Medium), August 15, 2017, https://timeline.com/charlottesville-vinegar-hill-demolished-ba27b6ea69e1.

[39] I have learned of these event and connections to the Jefferson School through conversation with Rebecca Kinney

history. To allow for this dual conversation, *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* provides a contact page inviting the website's visitors to contribute to and interact with the St. Johns story.

The Jefferson School website (Figure 12), along with the community and exhibition spaces provided by the physical site, promotes the Heritage Center through upcoming events and brief descriptions, as well as supporting the local Albemarle County community.[40] Although the website itself does not provide examples of content interpretation for *Rosenwald Reinterpreted,* the Heritage Center is the stepping stone for St. Johns in this regard as well as an opportunity for locating new possibilities and interpretations. There are more residents in the City of Charlottesville than there are in the St. Johns Cobham community, so the physical digital interpretations of the Jefferson School are both a promotion of local and surrounding African American history and representations of historic structure reinterpretation for the promotion of African American legacies.

**Chapter Conclusion:**

Each of these four interpretations of African American heritage, both physical and digital, provides significant information to the people through increasing their access to public history. However, the significance here lies in the newfound understandings presented through these interpretations, which are then considered in the creation of the *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website: the digital interpretation of St. Johns Elementary School. The values and goals of a spatial interpretation translate over to the digital through the visitor experience, visual impacts of spaces, and design choices within the website. The individual websites of these institutions provide sources of opportunity for *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. Their examples are valuable

[40] "Jefferson School," The Jefferson School for African American Heritage and Culture, accessed February 24, 2019, https://jeffschoolheritagecenter.org/.

resources for the maximization of the website through updatability, engaging and appealing information, and the availability of additional sources for further research.

## Chapter Three:

### Scrabble School Presentation

Another Rosenwald School in Virginia, Scrabble School, in Rappahannock County (Figure 13), acted as a primary precedent of interpretation for *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. Because of this, exploration and analysis of Scrabble School's website and physical schoolhouse are necessary for the understanding of the *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website and its interpretation. Scrabble School was constructed from 1921 to 1922 as a two-teacher schoolhouse. As the first of four Rosenwald Schools in Rappahannock County, Scrabble School operated until 1968.[41] The School provides an in-depth look at African American educational heritage and public engagement through the lens of the Rosenwald Fund's work. This lens influenced *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* and the understanding of Rosenwald history presented in Scrabble School's website. Scrabble School is interpreted through both the physical schoolhouse and a digital platform, providing a comprehensive and engaging interpretation of the school as well as the Rappahannock community's heritage.

*Rosenwald Reinterpreted* requires the digital incorporation of the physical St. Johns Schoolhouse in order to provide a holistic Rosenwald experience similar to that of Scrabble. Though this chapter references *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*, the in-depth exploration of the digital interpretation is in the following and final chapter. The information included here demonstrates the connections between *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* and Scrabble School through the information and interpretation techniques used in the construction of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. Scrabble School provided an example to follow and showed different means of interacting with the

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[41] "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Scrabble School)," National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, accessed February 18, 2019, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/VLR_to_transfer/PDFNoms/078-5107_Scrabble_School_2007_NRHP_final.pdf.

information specific to a singular Rosenwald School, which differs from the other, more broad interpretations discussed in the previous chapter. Because of this, Scrabble School's interpretation influenced *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* more deeply, culminating in four guiding categories: the overall experience and navigation, the incorporation of oral histories, the consideration of visuals, and the means of architectural interpretation.

**The Physical Scrabble Schoolhouse:**

The physical structure of Scrabble School is accompanied by its online presentation. The schoolhouse went through serious restoration due to its deterioration in the years after closing. The choice to restore the structure by the Scrabble School Foundation included changing its use, but still focused on promoting the community's heritage. The Scrabble School Senior and Heritage Center split the building back into its original two classrooms while renewing community involvement and revitalizing the building. The two rooms house separate functions of the Center. The Senior Center (Figure 14), occupying one of the classrooms, provides the Scrabble School alumni community with a spaced filled with memories, along with the opportunity to create new ones. In the other classroom, the Heritage Center (Figure 15) provides a physical, interactive exhibition looking back on the school's history and its role in the community. The St. Johns alumni community, on the other hand, wishes to take their building in a different direction following the completion of ongoing fundraising efforts. The St. Johns Schoolhouse will serve the community through its revitalization and conversion into the St. Johns Family Life and Fitness Center. Unlike Scrabble School and its website, which acts in conjunction with the physical schoolhouse, the *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website stands on its own. *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* provides a digital spatial experience separated from the physical

structure. Both of these schools hope to represent their histories and heritage through reinterpretation, but, for their histories to prosper, the two interpretations have to be as unique as the communities they represent.

**Overall Experience and Navigation:**

Though the Scrabble School website (www.scrabbleschool.org) is unremarkable at first glance, there is much more to be explored behind the text. The website aims to create a clear online interpretation of African American educational heritage, accessible to both the public and the community, while maintaining a connection between past and present. The homepage sets the stage with light blue backing and faint numbers and letters feeding behind the main panel of information, reminiscent of a school chalkboard (Figure 16). This creates a theme of education and learning and sets the tone for the conversation to come. A brief history of African American education and school creation information welcomes the visitor to the page. After just a short scroll down, the real interaction begins. There are four options of navigation: "Around the Classroom," "Timeline," "Video Scrabble," and "What's New?"[42]

The website is easily navigable as well as engaging. Unfortunately, the copyright date is 2010, which creates an assumption that it is out of date. Due to this, some of the linked sites are no longer accessible, nor are many of the embedded videos. Even with these flaws, the site conveys Scrabble School's history and legacy very well, and is transferable to numerous platforms including the computer, iPad, and smartphone, which enhances its accessibility to the public. These flaws, however, emphasize the fact that *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* requires easy navigation and a means of continuously updating the website content, in order to provide a

[42] "National Register of Historic Places (The Scrabble School)"

comprehensive experience. On the whole, Scrabble School's online presence provides the wider public with extensive facts and relatable personal information through visuals and oral histories. It brings together these and individual elements, which enhances the viewer's experience and understanding of a topic that is often ignored or misinterpreted.

**Oral Histories:**

The oral histories are some of the most significant pieces of evidence due to their documentary characteristic, voice preservation, and intergenerational relationship development. The impact of oral histories is extremely significant and beneficial to understanding the interaction between a story and a voice, no matter the context. Nearly every page of the website presents a recording of former Scrabble School students recounting their time in the school as well as their connections to the community. Hearing the voices of the former students is a remarkably personal interaction that also provides important historical information. The students' voices allow for a connection to form between the website visitors and former students, and the addition of images would only enhance this connection.

One of Scrabble School website pages, "Everyday Life" (Figure 17), creates a personal connection with the reader. The page provides an overall level of understanding, and the specifics of different lived experiences amplify the impact of the information on the reader. Four audio recordings line the right-hand side of the page, each with its own voice and unique lived experience.[43] What makes these recordings significant is the method of oral history collection. Scrabble School created an opportunity for current high school students to interview these

[43] "Everyday Life," The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, VA, accessed February 24, 2019, https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Everyday-Life-At-Scrabble-School.shtml.

former Scrabble School students.[44] This method bridges the gap between the younger and older generations and teaches valuable lessons and skills to the local high school students through the physical recording of these histories and the conversation with the former students. Additionally, being able to hear this interaction, although limited, is remarkable. Bridging the gap between generations is a significant step towards promoting and distributing information from one generation to the next, and the digital component fosters more public interaction with these histories and their preservation. The conduction of interviews and presentation of oral histories on the website establishes and promotes the ongoing presence of Scrabble within the current Rappahannock County community. The School's history is still very much alive.

Although these oral histories were a primary component of the Scrabble School site's success, a different approach of exploring the students' lived experience within St. Johns and the representation of these experiences had to be taken for *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. Using the previously recorded interactions and conversations between St. Johns' alumni and Lorenzo Dickerson, the web and social media specialist for Albemarle County Public Schools, a similar effect to that of oral histories is achieved through text and visuals.[45] Even though oral histories are not currently on the *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website, they would be an excellent opportunity for the future development of the interpretation of St. Johns, allowing for further community engagement moving forward.

[44] "Everyday Life."
[45] *Albemarle's Black Classrooms*, Amazon Prime (Streaming), directed by Lorenzo Dickerson (2017; USA, Maupintown Media, 2017).

**Visuals:**

The Scrabble School website visuals provide three primary benefits for the visitors' experience: they are dynamic, personally interpreted, and actual examples of universal language. There is an abundance of information and visuals, so there is always something new to look at and to discover no matter how many times the visitor returns to the site. A linked image of Catherine Dennis's 1948 Scrapbook (Figure 18) is a collection containing scanned handwritten class agendas, letters, cards, and text. Although technically this is written work, the way the page is formatted has the scans act as a photo album of Catherine Dennis's personal and meaningful belongings.[46] It is a celebration of her graduation and the love and affection she received upon her completion of school at Scrabble. The scrapbook provides a unique element enhancing the Scrabble School website through its dynamic experience, where the physical becomes digital. Even though many websites have gallery-type pages, this specific format creates a story behind the stream of images. *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* takes this concept into consideration through the use of a pattern book element showing Rosenwald Schoolhouse plans, which allows the viewer to explore the pages of the book by digitally turning the individual pages. They are able to read and look at their own pace, forming their own personal interpretations of and connections with the information presented.

Within the Scrabble School website's "African-American Education in Rappahannock" tab (Figure 19), there are four visuals on the left-hand side. The first is of a small scale and the second is unable to be enlarged, but the third allows for enlargement and interaction when clicked (Figure 20). Many Rosenwald Schools today have lost their photographs and material

[46] "African American Education in Rappahannock," The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock, VA, accessed February 24, 2019, https://www.scrabbleschool.org/African-American-Education-In-Rappahannock.shtml.

documentation from their times of operation, but having the enlarged view of the Scrabble Grade School class of 1924 filling the screen leaves a great impact.[47] There are no names associated with the individuals depicted, but that information is not needed to understand the photograph. The viewer is still able to be influenced by the image without written information accompanying it. Photography connects to a wider audience than any other medium, turning it into a universal language.[48] This image, along with others throughout the website, is able to stand on its own as an impactful piece. St. Johns School and the *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website are no different. There are limited period photographs from St. Johns' operation as a school, but visuals of the alumni today and the school as it currently exists are able to speak to the history on their own. Within the website once an image is enlarged and encapsulates the entire screen, the viewer can think for herself/himself and decide what information they want to take away from it

**Architectural Navigation:**

Scrabble School's presentation of the architectural navigation within the website allows this Rosenwald School to stand out compared to many similar stories found online. The architectural layout intractability and schoolhouse experience page, "Around the Classroom" Figure 21), brings the physical school into the digital narrative, inviting exploration. A plan of the schoolhouse building is laid out with the site plan off to the right side. There are sixteen numbers scattered about the plans. As one moves from left to right, clicking on the individual numbers, a description of an item is exposed at each unique location on the plans. For example, number one is positioned near the center of the leftmost of the two classrooms. Once clicked, it

[47] "African American Education in Rappahannock," The Scrabble School, accessed February 24, 2019, https://www.scrabbleschool.org/African-American-Education-In-Rappahannock.shtml.
[48] August Sander and Anne Halley, "From the Nature & Growth of Photography: Lecture 5: Photography as a Universal Language," *The Massachusetts Review* 19, no. 4 (1978): 674–79.

reads: “Student Desks: the students’ desks included an attached chair and slanted top. There was space to store books under the desk” (Figure 22).[49] The viewer begins to understand the space itself and its uses while still connecting back to the students and teachers who previously occupied it. Although photographs of the spaces do not accompany the plans, the viewer understands the use of each element within the school. Once the viewers make their way to the site plan, more can be uncovered, including the outhouses and grounds. This page leads the way to understanding that the Scrabble School is not just about the people and their experiences, but also about the physical building and design. This digital interpretation of physical space provides an example for *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*, while still leaving space for adaptation. *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* seeks the same exploration of space created by the plans, but does so through the interaction of images overlaid onto the school’s interior and exterior *Community School Plan No. 20,* from the Rosenwald Schools Pattern Book.[50] This interaction focuses on the discussion of architecture over that of the students’ lived experiences, but still allows for a digital spatial experience.

The architecture of Scrabble School today displayed in the webpage “Architecture and Restoration” and its subsection “A New Beginning for an Old School” (Figure 23) provides insight into the building’s condition before and after restoration. Although the school space was used primarily for storage following its closure as a school, it has since been brought back into the public’s eye. This revitalization of Scrabble School provides an example of reuse that is key

[49] “Around the Classroom,” The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock, VA, accessed February 24, 2019, https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Around-the-Schoolroom.shtml.
[50] Smith, Samuel L. “Community School Plans, Bulletin No. 3, the Julius Rosenwald Fund. : African American Education.” Accessed December 12, 2018. http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p16062coll13/id/4554.

to the future preservation of Rosenwald Schools.[51] Both the physical school and the digital interpretation work together to create a cohesive narrative while the two elements are still able to stand on their own.[52] Because the basis of understanding is achieved for this school, the Scrabble School Foundation has made it possible to continue to explore local and broader African American educational heritage. Four links are embedded under "Additional Information" providing further information for the viewer (Figure 24). Continuing the exploration allows for the content presented to be both engaging and in-depth. In order to present the heritage of St. Johns and its future through *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*, the use of external informational sources is also key. The external sources allow the content presented in *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* to be more engaging and detailed, rather than broad and overwhelming or simple and remaining surface level in consideration of St. Johns' history.

**Chapter Conclusion:**

Scrabble School looks to the public not only for information, but especially for interaction. The Scrabble School Foundation created its own public history of Scrabble both online through individual exploration and in the physical building through community heritage and continued use. Scrabble acts as a key example of interpretation for *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*, while also providing opportunity for inspiration and innovation. It creates the chance to promote and discuss the interpretation of a nearby Rosenwald School a couple steps ahead of St. Johns in both its rehabilitation and interpretation.

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[51] "National Register of Historic Places (Scrabble School)"
[52] "Architecture and Restoration," The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock, VA, accessed February 24, 2019, https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Architecture-Restoration.shtml.

## Chapter Four:

## Process of Digital Interpretation

Chapter Four is an in-depth look at the process of creating the site *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* (https://stjohnselementary.wixsite.com/stjohnsrosenwald) as a template for future Rosenwald School interpretations. It utilizes the values and beliefs of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Carter G. Woodson from Chapter One as a foundation, in order to accurately represent African American educational heritage during segregation. Each of the four different interpretations from Chapter Two (National Museum of African American History, Black History Museum of Virginia, The John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center, and The Jefferson School, African American Heritage Center) provided important insight that has been considered and incorporated into the design and content of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. Most importantly, Scrabble School in Chapter Three provided a template, though imperfect, for interpretation of a Rosenwald School without an accessible physical structure.

The website creation process worked through the consideration of content, audience, platform, and aesthetics and navigation, discussed within the subsections of African American Education, the Rosenwald Fund, and St. Johns. The goal of presenting this process is to allow *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* to act as a template for Rosenwald Schools across the South to follow in order for them to be digitally interpreted as a part of the American public history. It explores the generative process of African American educational heritage and St. Johns through the means of a digital platform and a strategy of interpretation.

In order to combine the significance of St. Johns Elementary School with public history, while still considering the community active today, an online platform of interpretation provides the most suitable solution. The history can be told in the digital context without damaging the

physical structure, while also reaching a wide audience. The architecture of St. Johns, despite its alterations, exemplifies the Rosenwald Foundation's goals. The alumni community has continued the legacy of the building into the wider Albemarle area by attending symposiums, contributing to documentaries, and sharing their stories. The interpretation of St. Johns history allows for the school to thrive again after years of neglect and into the future. "Technology has the capacity to share collections more widely and create new ways for the public to interact with history" while still allowing for the structure to have its own new life.[53] The *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website seeks to tell this comprehensive story of the physical site and the lived experiences of the schoolhouse in order to benefit both the public and St. Johns. Beginning with background information on African American education and Virginia African American schooling specifically, the Rosenwald Fund and St. Johns can be discussed more comprehensively. Each of these sections: African American Education; The Rosenwald Fund; and St. Johns takes documentation and community interaction into consideration. However, the primary goal is for digital public history to act as a platform for Rosenwald School interpretation in the future. Each of the following sections begins with the main question to be considered when evaluating a Rosenwald School for digital interpretation.

***Rosenwald Reinterpreted* Content:**

What stories have to be told?

*Rosenwald Reinterpreted* considered the variety of scales in African American educational history in order to place St. Johns in the larger American story. The National Museum, John J. Wright Center, and Scrabble School all provided parts of the inspiration for

[53] Beatty, *Guide to Making Public History*, 23.

developing the website content through their interpretations. The overall content of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* needed to address three separate areas: African American education, the Rosenwald Fund, and St. Johns in order to create a complete story.

Documentation and communication were the two largest factors in achieving the creation of a complete story, and to provide St. Johns the opportunity to still have a voice. First, reaching out to the St. Johns alumni community allowed for these opportunities to develop. With Rebecca Kinney as the primary contact, the conversation was able to begin and remain inclusive of the Community's voice.[54] She began the process of researching to establish the school's connection to the Rosenwald Fund in the early 2000s and enthusiastically encourages anyone who wishes to explore the history more. Next, there needed to be an understanding of the building's physical evolution and changes alongside the lived experiences set within the background of the African American education system. Photographing and acquiring the building documentation of St. Johns together with an understanding of Rosenwald's *Community School Plans* allowed for the website to begin to develop. The architectural documentation and community interaction provided a vast majority of the context, producing a visually heavy and text-specific public history resource.

**Audience:**

Who is this site for?

When determining an audience, it is important to be aware of the community's history and whom the information would benefit the most. If there are alumni associated with the school,

[54] Erin L. Conlin, "Reports from the Field: Organizing and Executing Meaningful and Manageable Community-Based Oral History Projects," *The Public Historian* 38, no. 3 (August 1, 2016): 50–77, https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2016.38.3.50.

allow them to provide insight for its use. Today, there are an increasing number of young adults and teenagers on devices and staying home, rather than going out to places for educational purposes. Historians should use this digital aptitude and interest to their advantage. The National Museum, The Jefferson School, and Scrabble School all consider and address the question of audience very well. At different scales, each one looks to bridge the gap between generations. *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* must do the same. By choosing the younger generations as the main audience, *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* allows for the content stemming from an older generation to be retold, providing this connection between older and younger generations.

This digital strategy of interpretation uses education and technology to increase the availability of this information to young adults. The website acts as an enhancement of the curriculum they may learn elsewhere, and also acts as a stand-alone source of information. Fortunately, if a broader audience outside that of the young adult wishes to explore the topic, the website is open to them with no limit to accessibility. The choice of a website over that of a built exhibition allows for this accessibility. However, there still needs to be a consideration for the spatial experience that the physical site provides. Because of this disconnect between the digital and physical, one must consider how to make the digital experience a spatial one.

**Platform:**

What platform?

This question mainly focuses on how to present the information. To determine this, it is important to begin the process with a conversation: to build off possibilities and options so that experimentation may occur, and to look to others as examples. The Black History Museum of Virginia, The John J. Wright Center, and Scrabble School were some of those examples in this

case. Each website possessed positive and negative qualities, but they all offer insight to the process of creation by demonstrating the importance of updateability, timeline interaction, and visual experience. The main goal is to have a platform of digital interpretation that is transferable across devices, that is updatable, and that presents open design choice options.

Through a process of beta testing and trial and error, different platforms can be tested. The Scholars Lab at the University of Virginia presented the idea of working through ESRI's Story Map℠ technology. At first the Story Map Tour℠ template seemed like the right choice because of Mount Vernon's use of the program for its enslaved laborers' website. It appeared to be a fitting format to use for the discussion of St. Johns while considering the community and its various backgrounds. However, it did not transfer content across devices well. Testing beta sites on computers, iPads, iPhones, and other devices considers the viewers' choice of platform. On an iPad, the content of the Story Map Tour℠ shifted from vertical scrolling to swiping and tapping in a horizontal direction, altering the effect of the page entirely.

Next, the ESRI Story Map Cascade℠ format was considered. In order to navigate this format, the viewer simply scrolls, both on a computer and on smaller devices. After creating a mock-up of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*, it was informally presented to various individuals as beta testers. Everyone seemed to enjoy his or her physical interaction with the site, but as the process continued and the site developed, a limitation in design interaction was revealed: the freedom of design choice was limited to a specific format, operational only within certain parameters. At this point it was most suitable to explore other possibilities due to issues with the content representation.

Google LLC presented various platform options for free website design, but they did not all remain free for the duration of their use. SquareSpace® presented itself as a free platform, but

after an account is created a message appears saying: “You have 14 days until your free trial ends,” meaning it was unable to remain a free service for this interpretation. Ultimately, Wix.com, Inc. fit the desired parameters best. The only limitation within Wix.com, Inc. is the inability to have a private domain without paying. This platform acts as an Adobe InDesign®–style program for website design, allowing for freedom of exploration and interaction. In order for a website to accurately and engagingly display this information, it has to be both visually and graphically focused to appeal to a wider audience and not just to academics. Wix.com, Inc. provided the platform to develop an organized narrative, while still allowing the viewer to have their own free-flowing interaction with the site.

**Aesthetics and Navigation:**

How should a website look?

Scrabble School designed its website to evoke an educational, schoolhouse appearance through its background choice as well as its textual brevity. Would way to determine the look for *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* was to begin by looking at the significant architectural elements of the Rosenwald School in question. For all Rosenwald Schools, the building was constructed to maximize light and to promote healthy school atmospheres, so these values should be consider in the appearance of the site as they appear in the physical building design. The home page is the first impression, and should contain a holistic view of the website. In the case of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* the header and footer are of a grey-blue color, which matches that of the window frames of St. Johns (Appendix C, Figure 1). The core of these pages is backed with white, both to lighten the experience of the page and to connect to the white-painted wood siding of the schoolhouse today.

The digital interpretations of the NMAAHC and the John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center possess informative and dynamic designs, which translate over to *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* through the clearly presented information and ease of user interaction. The focus is about the public history of St. Johns and what impact the school has today.

**Website Subsection Breakdown:**

Three primary sections of the site each have their own landing page to navigate the viewer through the content associated with each section and general information pages to help set up and close the website's narrative within the larger site. These subsections are easily navigable from the "Home" page. Below is a breakdown of the website beginning and ending with the general information pages and the subsections with their associated goals:

1. Welcome and About: setting the stage of the viewer on what is to come (Appendix C, Figures 1–2)
2. African American Education: a balance between visuals and text, taking the viewer though the National, Regional, and local scales of education while considering the precedents of Chapter Two (Appendix C, Figures 3–6)
3. The Rosenwald Fund: Considering the Scrabble School's interpretation in order to convey the history of Julius Rosenwald, while adding the importance of the architectural design (Appendix C, Figures 7–10)
4. St. Johns Elementary School: Going from the general information on St. Johns history to the lived and spatial experience of the students and schoolhouse through digital integration, concluding with where the schoolhouse and community are going in the future (Appendix C, Figure 11–19)
5. Gallery and Contact: Providing a visual story to *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* and the opportunity to incorporate the public's voice through inspiration from the Black History Museum of Virginia and Scrabble School (Appendix C, Figure 20–21)

*Welcome and About:*

The *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* "Home" page (Appendix C, Figure 1) welcomes the viewer to the site and, together with the "About" page (Appendix C, Figure 2), provides an

understanding of the overall composition of information within the site. In order to make the information clear, the previously mentioned interactive timeline from Chapter Two presents significant dates of African American education from the end of the Civil War to desegregation and into the present day.[55] The key component of the timeline is that St. Johns' history is incorporated throughout in order to have it in the same context as the rest of African American history.

The "About" page explains why *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* was created and by whom. These two pieces are necessary in order to create a connection between the viewer and the author. One of the primary long-term goals of this site is to create an updateable resource. Because of this, feedback from the audience is significant, but no one will provide those comments if they do not know who they are contacting.

*African American Education:*

Half of the site is devoted to general information (African American Education and The Rosenwald Fund) providing background for St. Johns, and the other half is specific to the physical two-room schoolhouse and its history. The order of navigation of a website curates the experience of the viewer of the site. *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* is meant to be scale specific, beginning with the broad (African American Education) and reducing to the specific (St. Johns Elementary School). The "African American Education" page (Appendix C, Figure 4) is first. The text emphasizes the impact literacy had on African Americans as well as how self-improvement and motivation were the driving forces for the establishment of the educational system for African Americans. The visuals here are not specific to the text, but instead they

[55] "The Scrabble School," The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock, VA, accessed April 7, 2019, https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Timeline.shtml.

allow the viewer to get a visual sense for the schools constructed, both rural and urban, during segregation. The visuals are there to trigger a reaction to the conditions and appearances of African American schools at the time. African American educational accomplishments shaped a large part of American history, yet they were not publically represented until recent years.

Next, the focus shifts to Virginia schools and the rural context. Although, both of these topics do not specifically use St. Johns as an example, they provide cases of what the area was working with in the same context as St Johns. There needs to be a balance between the amount of text and the number of visuals within the page. With "Virginia Schooling" (Appendix C, Figure 5) the history and text are most prominent, while in "Rural Schools" (Appendix C, Figure 6) the viewers have an opportunity to look inside period schools at examples of students and teachers, both African American and white. This juxtaposition will allow for a comparison of African American and white schools specifically within a rural context. Discussion of African American schools usually focus around their limited access to resources and their inequality in comparison with white schools. While these conditions are true, most discussions focus on the urban context.[56] St. Johns is located within a rural context. Did the African American and White differ from each other, as urban ones did? The "Rural Schools" page enables viewers to make this decision for themselves based on the photographs taken by Russell Lee during segregation. These photos allow the viewer to develop their own opinions and reactions without being dictated to or being told what to think. These opinions and reactions, whether verbalized or simply internal, are the main goal within *Rosenwald Reinterpreted.* This personal interaction with the images promotes engagement with the site.

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[56] Elliewood Patterson Cubberley, *Rural Life and Education: A Study of the Rural-School Problem as a Phase of the Rural-Life Problem.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1922. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.49015000461724.

*The Rosenwald Fund:*

After African American Education, three more pages follow on the website that are specific to the Rosenwald Foundation: first, the background and Julius Rosenwald; second, the schoolhouse design and Dressler; and third, the Rosenwald Fellowship and African American artistic expression. Together they explain the Rosenwald story and how the Fund was unique from others at the time. "The Rosenwald Fund" (Appendix C, Figure 8) looks at Julius Rosenwald and where the idea for the schools originated. Next, "The Rosenwald Schoolhouse" page (Appendix C, Figure 9) dives into the architecture and the design process of the Rosenwald Schools themselves. This page focuses strongly on visual interaction between the viewer and the site. Architects and designers had a role to play in the creation of the schools, and the Rosenwald *Community School Plans* are a significant element of that role available to explore on the website. The viewer is able to see what the Rosenwald Fund produced through their architectural considerations and ideas. The page acts as an opportunity to discuss the existence of the many schools still in the landscape today, while also considering their innovative designs for the time.

The third page in this section is "It Wasn't Just Schools" (Appendix C, Figure 10). This page breaks away from the physical Rosenwald Schoolhouse design and explores the other areas that Julius Rosenwald affected. The African American artists' world was able to develop and grow to an extent through to Rosenwald Fellowship. One such example is Jacob Lawrence, whose painting series, *The Migration Series*, looked at African American heritage in the United States and represented its presence visually.[57] Like photography, a painting is able to speak for

[57] Daniel Schulman, Peter Max Ascoli, et al, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, Chicago, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2009.

itself with few words, so this page allows for a visual break in navigation, which depends on the viewer's insight and interest to interpret the pieces for themselves.[58]

*St. Johns Elementary School:*

The second half of the website is devoted to St. Johns: the building and the people. Page one, "St. Johns School" (Appendix C, Figure 12), talks about location, brief design, and building evolution of St. Johns to set the stage for the following four pages. "Talking with the Students," (Appendix C, Figure 13) uses the St. Johns content from Lorenzo Dickerson's documentary, *Albemarle's Black Classrooms,* and conversations with Rebecca Kinney to develop a story about the students' experiences and the impact of the school in their lives.[59] St. Johns, unfortunately, does not have many photographs from the years of its operation of as school, but in 2009 the Foundation put together a reunion for alumni, more than 70 of whom attended. During that event, photos were taken of many of the former students in attendance. Kinney provided these photos to scan and gave permission for their use on the *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* website, for the benefit of the community. These photographs provide an opportunity for the viewer to put a face to some of the stories being told. The inspiration for the use of lived experiences was derived from the Scrabble School oral histories, but this time, with a visual connection, the viewer of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* can connect people to their stories through the use of photos and texts rather than bare audio recordings.

The next two pages focus on the building fabric itself and are where the use of space and light are presented to the viewer. The first, "Experiencing the Space" (Appendix C, Figure 14) is

[58] August Sander and Anne Halley, "From the Nature & Growth of Photography: Lecture 5: Photography as a Universal Language," *The Massachusetts Review* 19, no. 4 (1978): 674–79.
[59] *Albemarle's Black Classrooms*, directed by Lorenzo Dickerson (2017; USA, Maupintown Media, 2017).

broken up into three pages: “Exterior Views” (Appendix C, Figure 15), “Interior Views” (Appendix C, Figure 16), and “Interior Changes” (Appendix C, Figure 17). These pages allow the viewer to look at the school model, No. 20, from *The Community School Plan* off of which St. Johns was based. Comparing the model to the existing structure shows how it became a reality on St. Johns Road. These pages provide the largest portion of site’s viewer interaction. The viewer can hover over the school drawings of model No. 20 and expose the evolution of the school from the drawing to its current state. In addition, drone footage of the exterior environment and property is presented for the viewer to watch in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the building is situated in the landscape.

The second page, “Lighting and Windows” (Appendix C, Figure 18), follows to emphasize the interaction between daylight and space and the importance of daylight on the experience of Rosenwald Schools and its connection to the health of students. Although the school has replaced its wooden double-hung sash windows with vinyl ones, the dimensions are still true to the original school’s design from the 1920s, allowing for the interaction of light to remain relatively the same. The final St. Johns page, “St. Johns Moving Forward” (Appendix C, Figure 19), takes the viewer into the future and highlights what the community hopes to do for themselves and the building. The purpose of this page is not to simply restate what the community’s existing website already discusses about the potential St. Johns Family Life and Fitness Center, it instead connects the viewer to the community’s website and to other resources. This provides an opportunity for supplementary exploration of the preservation of St. Johns and other Virginia Rosenwald Schools.

**Gallery and Contact:**

The website closes with two final pages: “Visual St. Johns” (Appendix C, Figure 20) and “Contact” (Appendix C, Figure 21). “Visual St. Johns” takes all the photos used throughout the website as a whole and puts them in one space as a gallery for *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. It is a page the viewer can come back to repeatedly in order to focus more closely and intentionally on the visuals. “Contact” connects the viewer with the creator or site editor. The goal for this page is to provide the public an opportunity to potentially contribute their own voices and more information of their own to the website.

**Chapter Conclusion:**

In order to explore the possibilities of other Rosenwald School interpretations in the future, both those where the schoolhouse still stands and those where it no longer survives, the various means of distributing these histories need to be understood. Architecture acts as the host of public history, but, by creating a digital platform, the viewer is able to access St. Johns and information about African American education quickly and seamlessly, regardless of location. In conclusion, Chapter Four looked at the process of creating a website for St. Johns to aid in the creation of a template for the digital interpretation of other Rosenwald Schools. *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* ultimately becomes a digital strategy of interpretation of a Rosenwald Schoolhouse while preserving community engagement.

**Conclusion**

Rosenwald Schools across the South contributed to the landscape during segregation, and today there is an opportunity to continue the impact and stories of these schools. St. Johns contributed to the development and growth of many students from the 1920s to the 1950s. And now, through the restoration and rehabilitation of St. Johns, the schoolhouse will ideally come back to serve its community again. Use of the building is for the community, while the digital interpretation through *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* will preserve its history and communicate its story and impact to the community and beyond, even if the building is not in use. *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* allows for both the community and its history to grow, while this written work provides a template for future Rosenwald School interpretations to expand as well.

By looking at Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Carter G. Woodson initially, the context in which the schools were constructed and how African American education and educational heritage developed over the years is made clear. Washington and Du Bois looked to African American educational practices, while Carter G. Woodson contributed to the establishment of education surrounding African American history specifically. Together, these three individuals contributed enormously to the establishment of African American educational heritage identity today.

Next, the four strategies of interpretation in Chapter Two provided insight into the display and representation of African American heritage constructed in the landscape of Virginia as well as how these different scales of interpretation, physical and digital, provided inspiration and influenced components of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. Scrabble School acts in the same way as the previous three, but with a focus on the digital interpretation side and the Rosenwald Fund

in particular. The Scrabble Schoolhouse interpretation sets the stage for *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* as a precedent for St. Johns to develop further.

Ultimately Chapter Four is about the breakdown of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*'s composition. It focuses on the question: How is a Rosenwald School digitally interpreted with regard to the experiences of students and of the space? It provides a template to follow to answer this question through digital interpretation, such as that presented in *Rosenwald Reinterpreted*. The website's focus on its content, audience, platform, and aesthetics explains the reasons why decisions were made during its design process.

St. Johns is not the only Rosenwald School where the schoolhouse is unavailable for public history interpretation or that has remained untouched and deteriorating for many years. The history of rural communities and Rosenwald Schools is still under exploration. For example, Tankersley Rosenwald School in Montgomery County, Alabama; Retreat Rosenwald School in Oconee County, South Carolina; and Pleasant Hill School in Cass County, Texas have all been identified as Rosenwald Schools and are significant to the landscape through their listings as National Register Historic Sites. Each of them provides another opportunity for further interpretations if their communities want their stories to be a part of the public understanding of Rosenwald Schools. The template provided here and through St. Johns and its digital interpretation, *Rosenwald Reinterpreted,* looks at the story of African American education, the Rosenwald Fund, and the lived experiences of local rural African American schoolhouses.

**Figures**

Figure 1: National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington DC
Alan Karchmer, *National Museum of African American Culture.* 2016, digital photograph. National Museum of African American Culture, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC. In: "Reflecting on the First National Museum of African American History and Culture," St. Louis Public Radio, https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/reflecting-first-national-museum-african-american-history-and-culture#stream/0 (accessed on April 13, 2019).

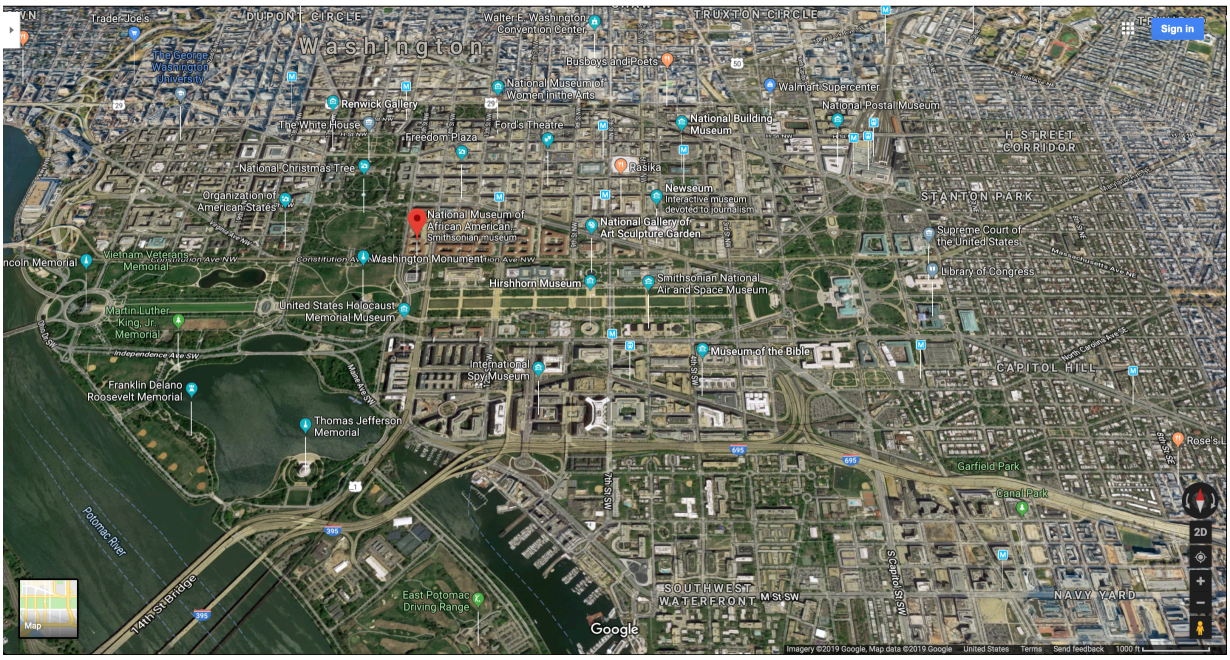


Figure 2: Cardinal Direction Viewpoints from NMAAHC
Google Maps, 2019. *National Museum of African American History and Culture.* https://www.google.com/maps/place/National+Museum+of+African+American+History+and+Culture/@38.8615703,-77.0216481,3686a,35y,38.66t/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0x98019bd758632f06!8m2!3d38.8910644!4d-77.032614 (accessed April 13, 2019). Screenshot by Author.


Figure 3: "Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom" NMAAHC, Washington DC
"Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom: Era of Segregation 1876–1968." National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institute. https://nmaahc.si.edu/defending-freedom-defining-freedom (accessed February 25, 2019).


Figure 4: NMAAHC, Website Homepage
"National Museum of African American History and Culture." National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institute. https://nmaahc.si.edu/ (accessed February 25, 2019). Screenshot by Author.

Figure 5: Black History Museum of Virginia, Richmond, VA
"Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia." 2016. Digital Image. In: "Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia opens with 3-day event," *Richmond Free Press*. http://richmondfreepress.com/news/2016/may/13/story-told/ (accessed April 13, 2019).


Figure 6: Riggs Ward, "In Pursuit of Freedom, Justice, and Equality" Emancipation Oak
Riggs Ward, "Emancipation Oak." Digital Image. In: "In Pursuit of Freedom, Justice, and Equality," Riggs Ward Design, http://riggsward.com/portfolios/in-pursuit-of-freedom-justice-and-equality/# (accessed February 25, 2019).


Figure 7: BHMVA Website Homepage
"Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia." BHMVA: Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia. http://blackhistorymuseum.org/ (accessed February 25, 2019). Screenshot by Author.


Figure 8: John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center, Fredericksburg, VA
"John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center Museum." Digital Image. John J. Wright Educational & Cultural Center Museum, Inc. http://jjwmuseum.org/ (accessed February 25, 2019). Screenshot by Author.


Figure 9: John J. Wright Educational and Cultural Center, Website Homepage
"John J. Wright Educational & Cultural Center Museum, Inc." John J. Wright Educational & Cultural Center Museum, Inc. http://jjwmuseum.org (accessed February 25, 2019). Screenshot by Author.

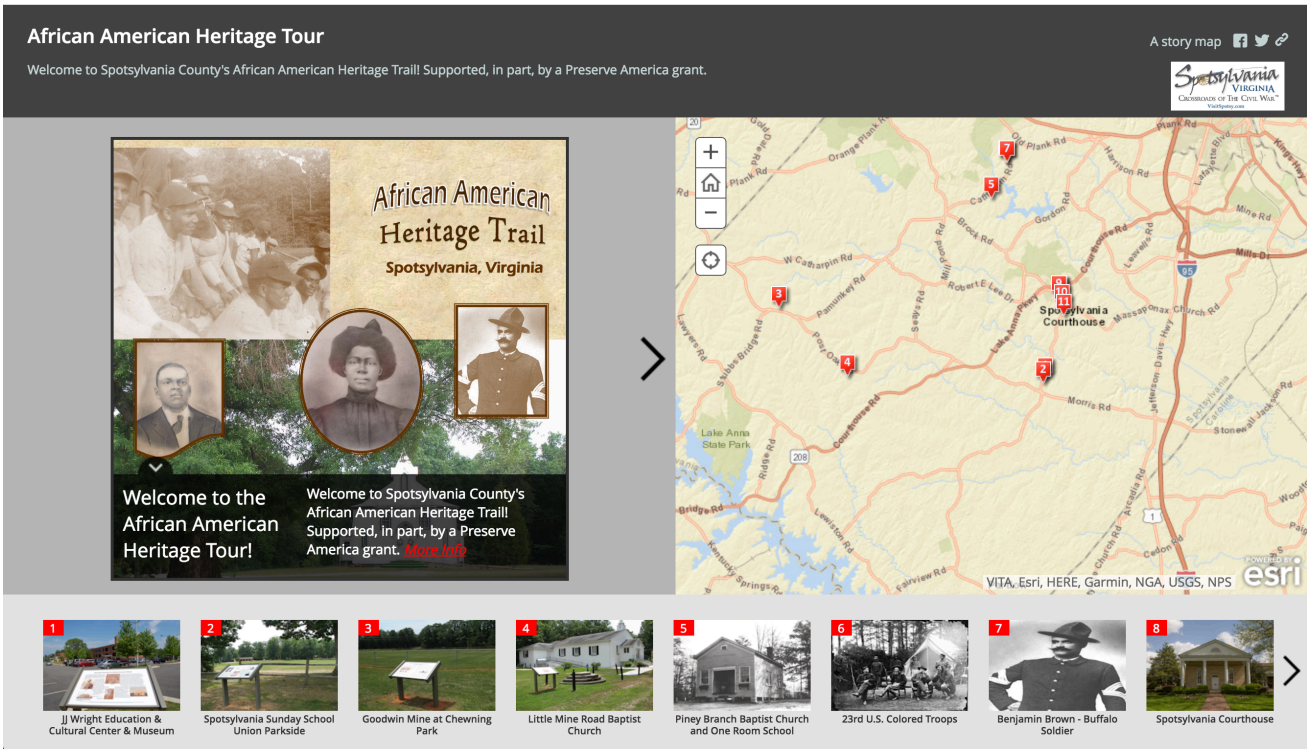


Figure 10: African American Heritage Trail ESRI Map
"African American Heritage Tour." County of Spotsylvania (VA), http://gis.spotsylvania.va.us/tour_AAHT/# (accessed February 25, 2019). Screenshot by Author.


Figure 11: The Jefferson School, African American Heritage Center, Charlottesville, VA
"Charlottesville Virginia: The Jefferson School City Center." 2017. Digital Image. In: *2RW Consultants, Inc*. https://2rw.com/jefferson-school-city-center/ (accessed April 13, 2019).


Figure 12: The Jefferson School, African American Heritage Center, Website Homepage "Jefferson School." 2018. Jefferson School: African American Heritage Center. https://jeffschoolheritagecenter.org/ (accessed February 24, 2019). Screenshot by Author.

Figure 13: Scrabble School, Rappahannock County, VA
"This Place Matters." 2010. Digital Image. In: "Architecture / Renovation: A New Beginning for an Old School," The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Architecture-Restoration.shtml (accessed February 24, 2019).


Figure 14: Scrabble School Senior Center Render
"Scrabble School Senior Center." 2010. Digital Image. In: The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. www.scrabbleschool.org (accessed November 2017).

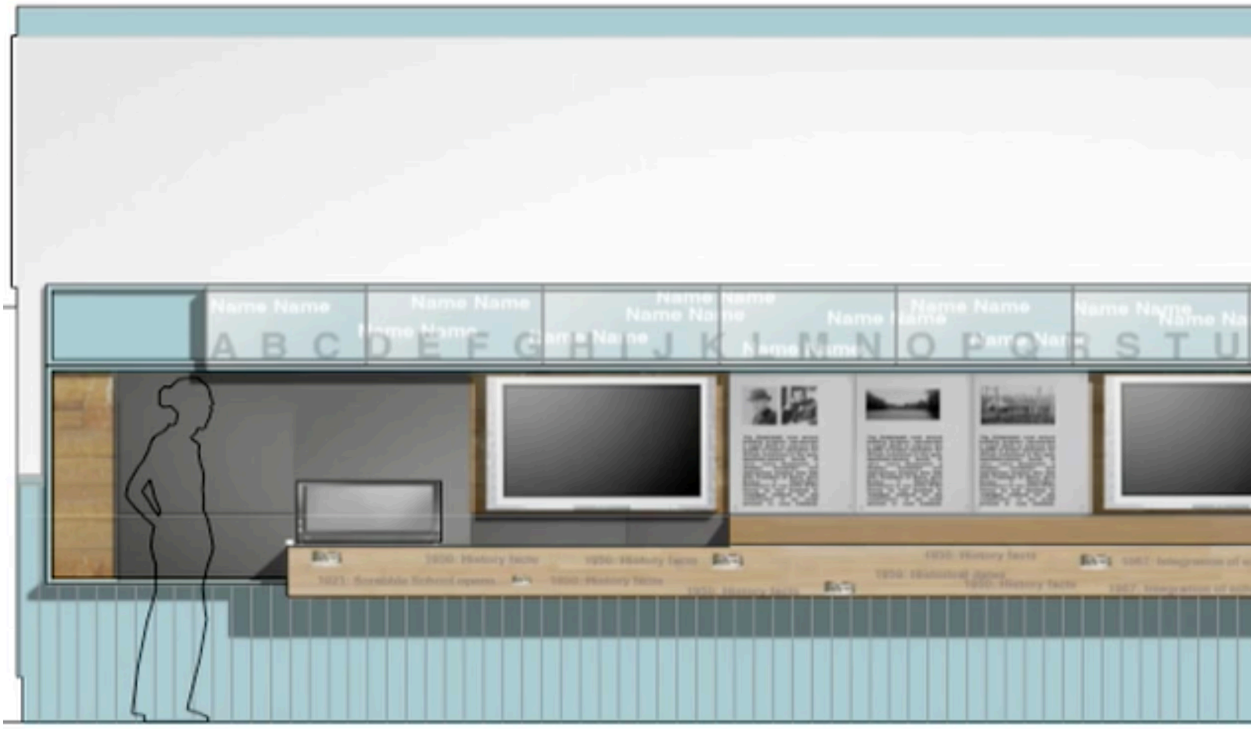

Figure 15: Scrabble School Heritage Center Render
"Scrabble School Heritage Center." 2010. Digital Image. In: The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. www.scrabbleschool.org (accessed November 2017).

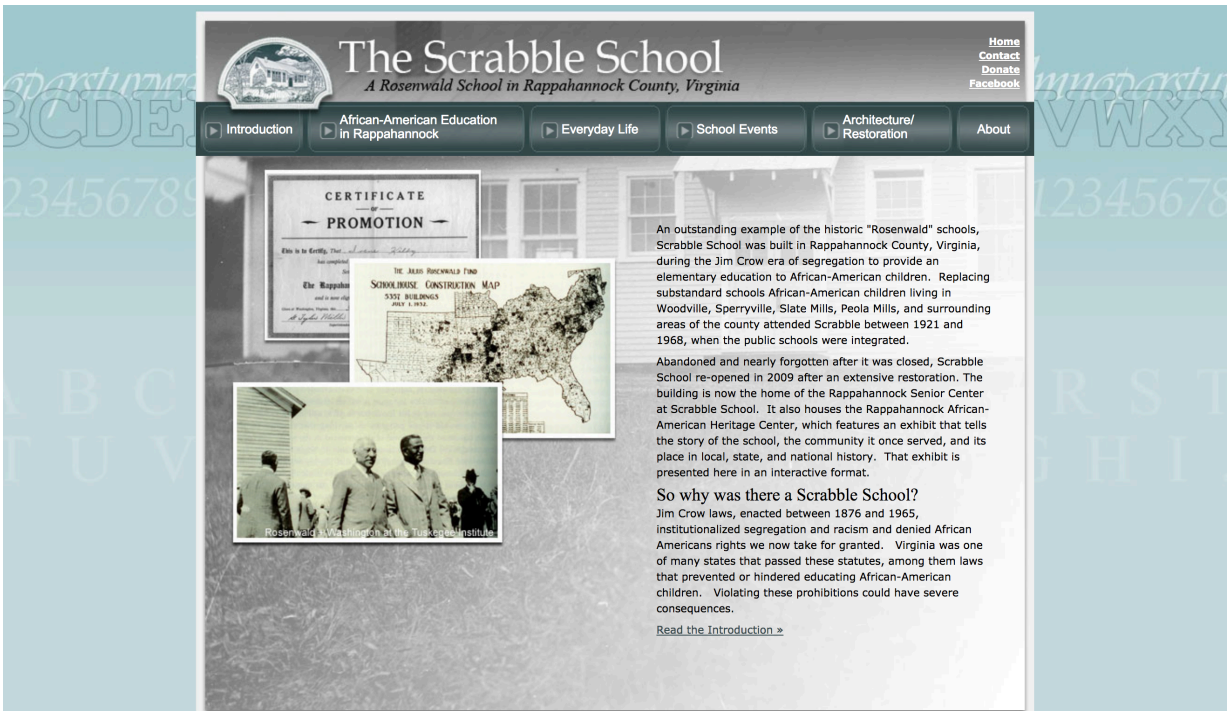


Figure 16: Scrabble School, Website Homepage
"The Scrabble School." 2010. The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. www.scrabbleschool.org (accessed February 24, 2019). Screenshot by Author.

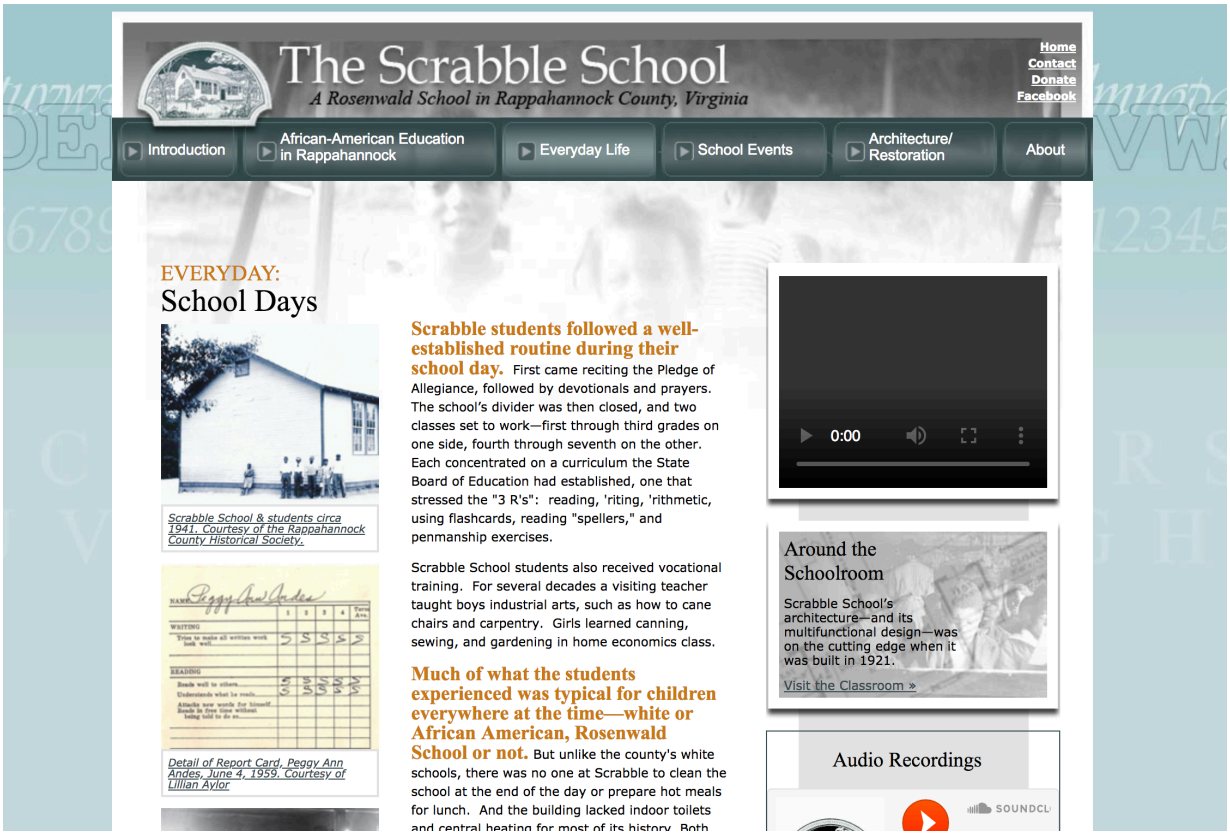


Figure 17: Scrabble School, "Everyday School Day" Page
"Everyday Life." 2010. The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Everyday-Life-At-Scrabble-School.shtml (accessed February 24, 2019). Screenshot by Author.

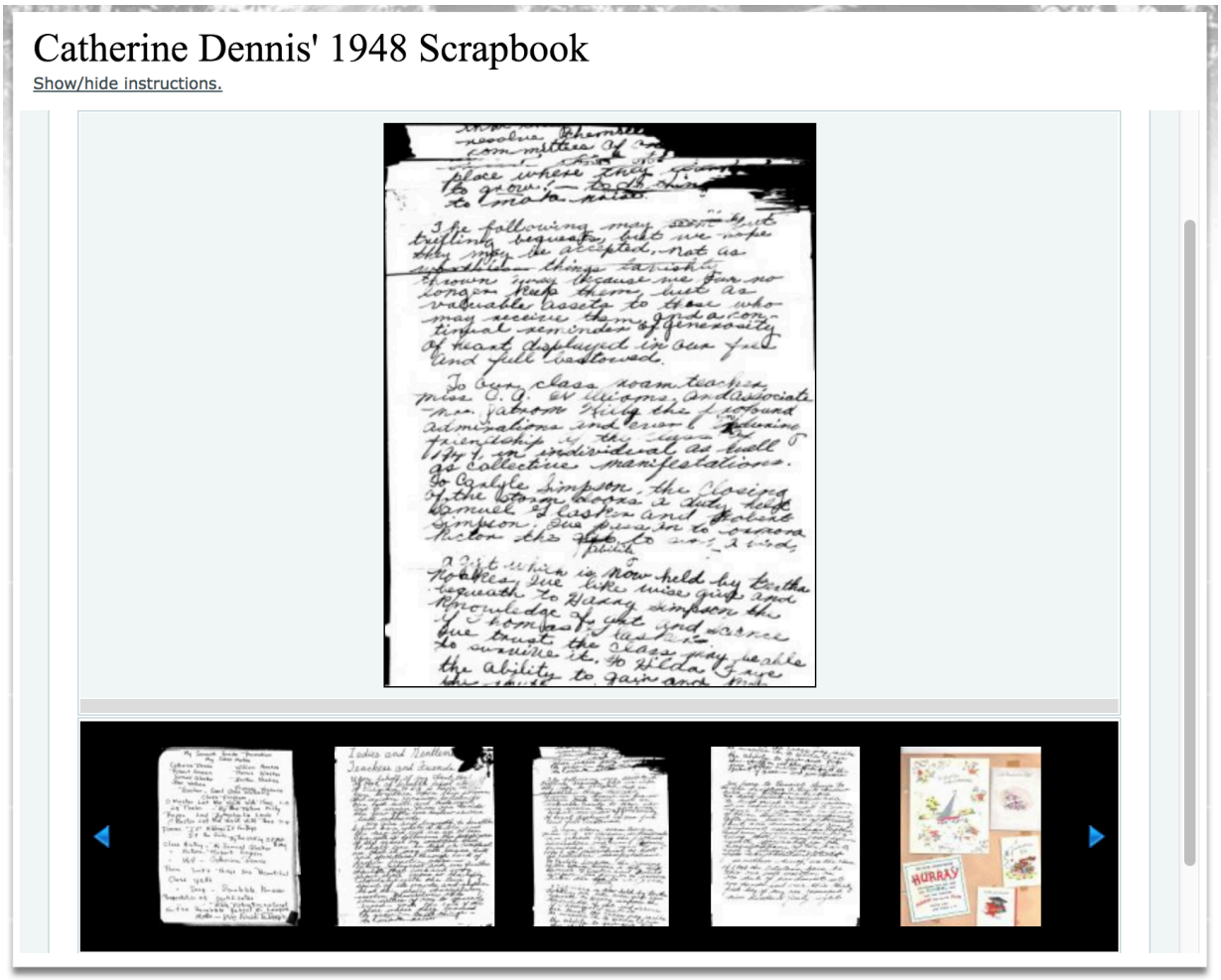


Figure 18: Scrabble School, “Catherine Dennis’ 1948 Scrapbook
“Catherine Dennis’ 1948 Scrapbook.” 2010. The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Scrap-Gallery.shtml (accessed February 24, 2019). Screenshot by author.


Figure 19: Scrabble School, "African-American Education Rappahannock" Page
"African American Education in Rappahannock." 2010. The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. https://www.scrabbleschool.org/African-American-Education-In-Rappahannock.shtml (accessed February 24, 2019). Screenshot by Author

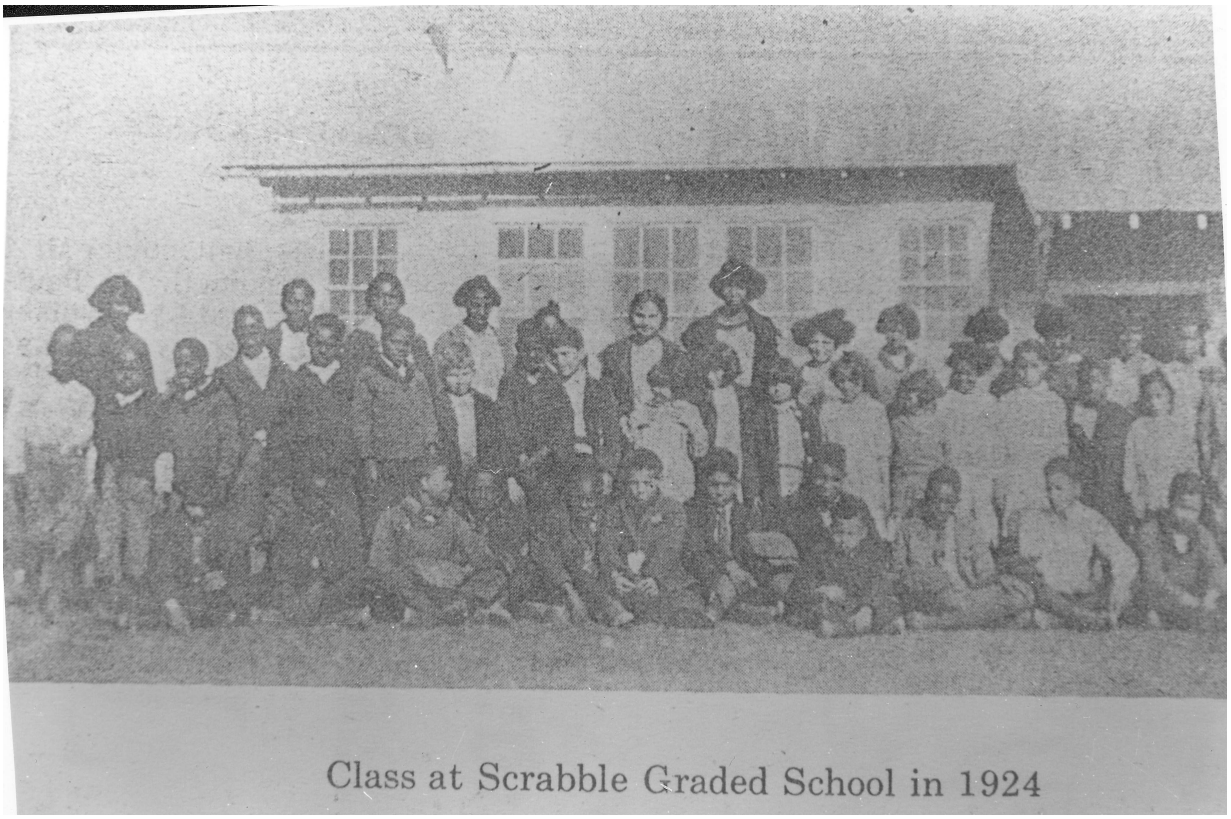


Figure 20: Scrabble School, “Class at Scrabble Graded School in 1924”
“Class at Scrabble Graded School in 1924.” 1924. Black and white photographic print. Available from: The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. https://www.scrabbleschool.org/coppermine/albums/uploadhistoric/exhibit_-_artifact_-_photo_-_scrabble_school_class_1924_-_RappHS.jpg (accessed February 24, 2019).


Figure 21: Scrabble School, "Around the Schoolroom" Page
"Around the Classroom." 2010. The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Around-the-Schoolroom.shtml (accessed February 24, 2019). Screenshot by Author.

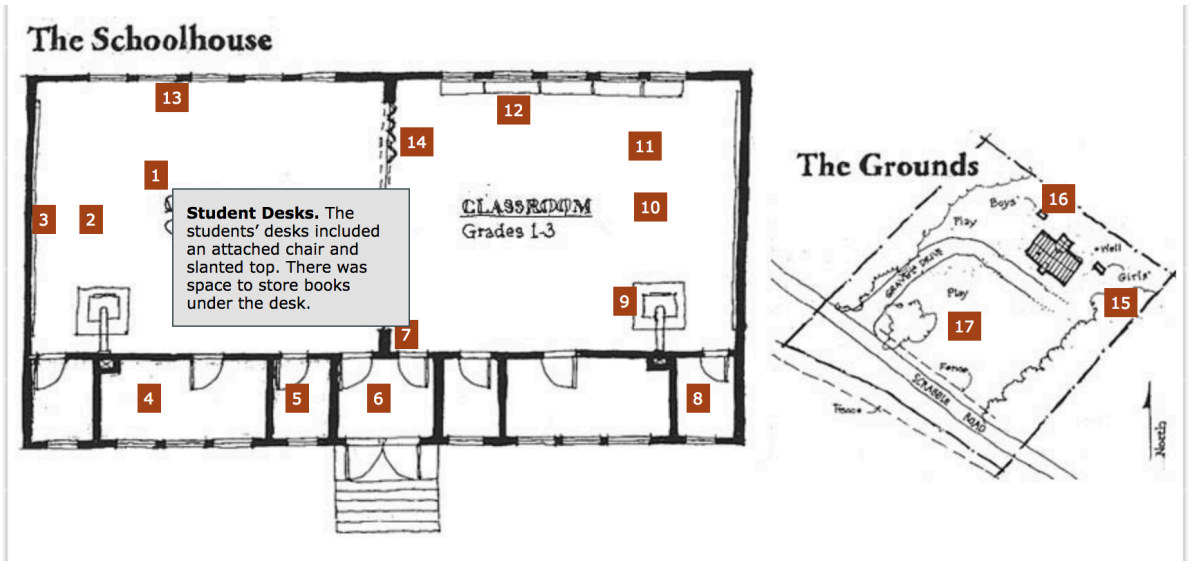


Figure 22: Scrabble School, "Around the Schoolroom" Page interaction with icon No. One. "Around the Classroom." 2010. The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Around-the-Schoolroom.shtml (accessed February 24, 2019). Detail Screenshot by Author.


Figure 23: Scrabble School, "Architecture/Renovations" Page
"Architecture and Restoration." The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Architecture-Restoration.shtml (accessed February 24, 2019). Screenshot by Author.

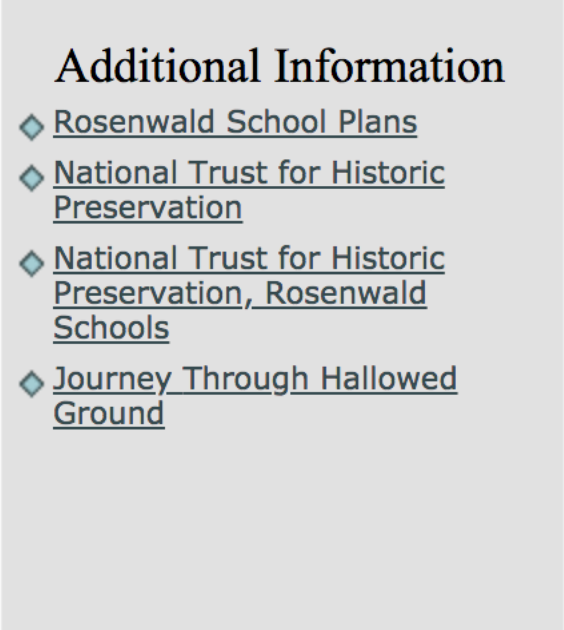


Figure 24: Scrabble School, "Architecture/Renovations" Page – Additional Information Focus "Architecture and Restoration." The Scrabble School: A Rosenwald School in Rappahannock County, Virginia. https://www.scrabbleschool.org/Architecture-Restoration.shtml (accessed February 24, 2019). Screenshot by Author.

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## Appendix A

***Rosenwald Reinterpreted* Website Written Content**

https://stjohnselementary.wixsite.com/stjohnsrosenwald

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| Home | Rosenwald Reinterpreted<br>"A Digital Strategy of Interpretation of St. Johns Elementary School Preserving the Community's Engagement"<br><br>-Explore the website to learn and interact with the history of African American education and understand the impact of the Rosenwald Fund on the built landscape with a focus on St. Johns, a rural Albemarle County, Virginia school built in the 1920s.<br><br>African American education developed from a system, suppressed by the white population, but the African American population pushed their way through hardship as to educate themselves. Growing from the self-taught to the schoolhouse to top universities, African Americans pushed their way through hardship in order to educate themselves.<br><br>Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald came together to establish and launch the Rosenwald Fund aiding in the construction of rural African American schools from 1917 until 1932.<br><br>St. Johns, a two-teacher Rosenwald Schoolhouse constructed in 1922-23, served the Cobham African American community outside of Gordonsville, Virginia as an elementary school until 1954. Today, the schoolhouse is looking to build a new future.<br><br>Timeline of the histories of African American Education, the Rosenwald Fund, and St. Johns Elementary School<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| About | What is the research?<br>St. Johns is a large part of the former students' lives but also the physical landscape. Rosenwald Schools and African American education that took place there for much of the past century have rich histories that need to be shared. This research into Rosenwald Schools generally and St. Johns specifically began through the completion of a Preliminary Information Form in order for the schoolhouse to be listed as Nationally Registered Historic Site of Virginia. The site combines information about the Rosenwald Fund |

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| | and research on St. Johns in an effort to use a digital public history platform to share this heritage with a wide audience.<br><br>Who Created the Site?<br>My name is Hannah Glatt. I completed this site as a project of my master's degree training in architectural history and I hope this site is a useful resource that shares some important history and heritage. Virginia has been my home for many years, and I find it important to understand the landscapes we occupy in order to appreciate everything and everyone's pasts.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| African American Education | There is a long history of African American education in the United States spanning from the self-taught individual to the establishment of public school systems available to all. This evolution speaks to the formation and resilience of African American communities throughout the country. However, the history is complicated when it comes to the discussion of segregated schools.<br><br>The following three pages explore this history. After a discussion of African American education on the national stage, the site takes a closer look specifically at Virginia schools, then examines rural schooling more specifically.<br><br>Each page looks at providing a basic understanding of the development of an official school system and the roles of rural schools, whether they be through the Rosenwald Fund or not.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| - National African American Education | The foundations of African American education were built on individuals' desires to learn as a means of improving their own circumstances. They laid their own groundwork and took the initiative into their hands because it was clear no one was going to do it for them. Nothing was going to stop African Americans from improving their lives after they gained their freedom.<br><br>*The Roanoke Daily Times* published an issue on May 19, 1896 (a day after the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling) stating "Important Decision by the Supreme Court...Washington, May 18--the supreme court of the United States decided today in the case of *Plessy vs. Ferguson* that the statute of the State of |

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| | Louisiana requiring railroad companies to supply separate coaches for white and colored persons constitutional."<br><br>Three figures that shaped African American education and promoted the public recognition of the importance of educating African Americans through actions, speeches, and writings are:<br><br>Booker T. Washington 1856-1915: Washington promoted the idea of self-improvement through the education of African Americans through specialized skills.<br>W.E.B. Du Bois 1868-1963: Through his focus on "The Talented Tenth" Du Bois believed in the higher education of African Americans in order to elevate their voice and statue amongst the dominant white population.<br>Carter G. Woodson 1875-1950: Woodson advocated understanding where African Americans came from and who they are through the education of African American history and culture.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| - Virginia African American Education | Virginia was no exception to the South, there was a slow development of official systems and the African American communities were the driving force. There were 837 African American teachers and 818 white teachers in Virginia in 1868, but what resources were they working with and in what conditions? African American schools seemed to only acquire the white's "hammy downs." The difference between African American and white schools was vast and wide-ranging impacting the availability of books, transportation, permanent structures and more.<br><br>Virginia education at the end of the 1800s and the 1900s was split between the white and African American schools. This also meant that the data collected was specific to those categorizations. Hover over the charts below in order to determine what each one represents.<br><br>What Surveys of Schools Can Tell Us:<br>Period studies of Virginia county and town schools show the differences and similarities between white and African American schools. W.E.B. Du Bois looked at Farmville, Virginia and in 1929 and in 1940 Master's students at the University of Virginia (Warwick County, VA & Bedford County, VA) explored the very different conditions between African American and white schools. All three were rural regions of Virginia. On average, African |

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| | Americans and white elementary students seemed to attend school only six months a year. Due to funding shortages, the students did not have access to school otherwise. The schools remained in operation annually until the money ran out.<br><br>The Teachers:<br>The difference was in the teachers. There were more white teachers available in Virginia than African American teachers. Although statistically there were fewer African Americans to teach, African American teachers received far poorer educational training. Some areas of Virginia did not have access to well-trained teachers, African American teachers were generally at the bottom. The teachers tried their best and achieved a lot, allowing elementary students to learn some, however, it was not everything. White communities had access to higher quality education.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| - United States Rural Schools | Rural schoolhouses, both African American and white, were built of the homeschool idea, the simple log structure, to the limited framed schoolhouse. Rural schools were based on the communities they were found in. Into the 20th century, the typical rural school was built by and for the local community, with little to no official statewide system. This was true for both African American and white communities.<br><br>It was all about the resources. Rural schools rarely had necessary resources and when they did, they generally went to the white children first. There were more African Americans living in the country than in urban contexts in need for school and education resources.<br><br>In the 1940s Russell Lee took a series of photographs documenting rural schools in various states. Now take a moment and look through the photos and discover the interiors and resources of the students in rural contexts. There is a mixture of white and African American schools. Do you see a difference between the spaces? What resources does each of the schools have? These photos are from nearly halfway through the 20th century and they are limited, so imagine the conditions before then.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| The Rosenwald | Rural schools for African Americans need to be given a chance to grow and |

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| Fund | become more available to all. The Rosenwald Fund was part of the answer. It was a philanthropic fund focused on the physical schoolhouse compared to previous funds looking to provide aid of resources and teachers to these schools.<br><br>Click on the buttons below to explore what the fund was and who was behind it. Or learn some of the details about the buildings themselves and the importance of a good schoolhouse. Or branch out from the schoolhouse and see how else the fund aided African Americans of the time through the Rosenwald Fellowship.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| - The Rosenwald Fund | Who was Julius Rosenwald?<br>Born in Illinois in 1868, Julius Rosenwald was the son of German immigrants, and he grew up in the life of sales. In 1908 he became president of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, beginning two decades of business success. In 1910, he looked to expand his life to a career of philanthropy alongside the success of his business. Through his wife, rabbi, and Judaism, he saw a need to serve society's needy citizens.<br><br>Who influenced him?<br><br>A friend, Julian W. Mack introduced Rosenwald to Jane Addams, through whom he was exposed to Hull House and the idea of service. He contributed to Hull House and an African American YMCA. Through William H. Baldwin Jr.'s biography, which discussed Booker T. Washington, Rosenwald encountered the Tuskegee Institute and the importance of schooling in rural areas. When Washington traveled to Chicago in 1911, Rosenwald hosted a lunch for him.<br><br>How did it all begin?<br>Rosenwald told the audience gathered for the 1913 dedication of the Chicago YMCA for Colored Men "The negro should command himself to the highest standard of living and efficiency. This cannot be done by brooding over justice, nor by declaiming about it, but by living up to the full standard of American citizenship." These statements later fed into the Rosenwald Fund, where Rosenwald, along with the guidance of Washington, sought to provide the opportunity of education to rural African Americans so that they could "ultimately attain a high place in the scale of society." Rosenwald provided |

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| | contributions to the physical schools. This was a new kind of fund aiding African American education development.<br><br>What did the Fund accomplish?<br><br>The Rosenwald school building program, The Rosenwald Fund, officially launched in 1917, and within the same year, the first school was constructed in Alabama. The Loachapoka School in Lee County was a one-teacher schoolhouse and constructed for the simple cost of $942, $300 of which was contributed by Rosenwald. As a result of this program, by 1932, over 5,000 rural African American schools with a student capacity of 663,615 were constructed across 15 states. After Rosenwald's death, Edwin Embree took over the fund from 1932 until 1948, when it was ultimately dissolved.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| - The Rosenwald School House | Schoolhouse Goals<br>The Community School Plans looked to create an environment beneficial to learning with specific guidelines both for school building and grounds. The Fund suggested that specific lot sizes were found in order to accommodate the schoolhouse, teacher accommodations, a boy's privy, a girl's privy, area for a playground, and space for agricultural demonstrations. Each element promoted the space and aimed to improve school experience and atmosphere. Today, the key feature of Rosenwald Schools are the large bays of windows. Lighting in the classrooms was emphasized from the beginning, and there was an entire page of the Bulletin dedicated to lighting; it states: "a child needs more light by which to read or study than an adult. When a child studies from day to day with an insufficient amount of light the tendency is to draw the book close to the eyes. If this condition is allowed to exist long enough, the muscular adjustment of the eye is so changed that the child becomes "nearsighted."<br><br>School Construction<br>These schools were unique in construction, to the point that each element contributed to the spatial experience. It was only in later years that the Rosenwald Fund shifted from the promotion of improving existing schoolhouses to an actual building program. With the publication of the Community School Plans in 1924, spearheaded by Samuel L. Smith while looking to Fletcher B. Dresslar in considering the spatial environment of the school, did the Rosenwald Fund form a visual identity to the landscape? The |

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| | Fund had moved their headquarters from the Tuskegee Institute to Nashville Tennessee and began implementing a series of different school designs throughout the rural south.<br><br>Healthy Spaces<br>Environmental and health factors were taken into consideration at every moment in the design of the schoolhouses, no matter if they were a one-teacher building or a seven-teacher community school. The Community School Plans Bulletin was one of the first times these factors were taken into consideration for African American schoolhouses, although it was clear the white schools had already been able to benefit from these circumstances with the publication of American schoolhouse designs and the importance of school hygiene by Dresslar in 1911 and 1921.<br><br>End of Construction<br>The Rosenwald School Fund provided partial funds for rural schoolhouses across the south until Julius Rosenwald's death in 1932.However, the Fund lasted for another 5 years until Edwin Rogers Embree discontinued the building program and ultimately closed the fund in 1948. Although construction ended, many schools continued to be used past desegregation and today a select few of the buildings survive and allow for the history to be retold and the function of the unique spaces to have a new beginning.<br><br>Page through the 1924 publication of the Community School Plans designed by Samuel L. Smith.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| - It Wasn't Just Schools | The Rosenwald Fund history disappeared from the United States heritage for many years, but now the schools are being recognized across the South. These schools were so much more than schoolhouses. Julius Rosenwald believed in the arts and hoped to allow African American artists to represent their heritage and culture. Edwin Embree established the Rosenwald Fellowship Program. These were three-year fellowships offered to 587 African Americans and 278 white Southerners in fields of education, public health, agriculture, sociology, economics, visual arts, music, dance and more.<br><br>Being an artist can be expensive. An artist often must buy paper, inks, pens, paints, paintbrushes, and so much more to simply create a piece that conveys a rich history. |

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| | It was not just one painting or just one artist, the talents were spread across numerous individuals. Jacob Lawrence (1940/41/42), Dilbert Dwoyid Olmsted (1946), Elizabeth Catlett (1946/7), and Richmond Barthé (1930/31) are among some of the talents. This is a different kind of gallery. Click on the different paintings to find out who painted them and see the details on your screen.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| St. Johns School | St. Johns has a rich history, but in order to understand it, you have to explore a little more. First look into the school's history and the process of creation through where it is, when it was built, and more.<br><br>Next talk with the students who went to the school until the 1950s and see what they thought of their time there<br><br>Then experience the space for yourself by looking around the building at the exterior and interior of the schoolhouse.<br><br>Once you understand the space a little better you will understand why large windows are so important to space, but explore the significance of light in St. Johns.<br><br>Finally, you need to know where the building and the community are going in the future. What are they hoping to achieve with the school today?<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| - St. Johns School | The Quick Overview<br>The St. Johns School, a Rosenwald School constructed in 1922-23, was built for the Cobham African American community near Gordonsville, Virginia area. The building with the T-shaped footprint follows Rosenwald Schools plan number 20, a two-teacher schoolhouse. After the school's closing in 1954, it was purchased by a private owner and converted into their residence until St. John's Baptist Church, next door, bought the 2.0-acre property in 2003.<br><br>About the Building |

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| | The Front<br>The St. Johns School is a five bay, one story, wood frame building with standing steam, gabled tin roof and a parged brick foundation, which is no longer visible. Two bays are on either side of a central projecting bay, and they form the industrial room. The school contains a series of vinyl double-hung sash windows, originally made of wood. Evidence of one door is no longer visible, except in the concrete steps that lead up to the side of the building, directly under this small window. The second bay from the right is where the front entrance is located. There is an inset entrance porch. The door is not original to the building. The replaced door exists where an original door once stood. The central, front gabled projecting bay consists of a single bank of three 9/9 double hung vinyl sash windows. The original central interior chimney is visible directly over the central projecting bay.<br><br>The Southern Classroom<br>In the rear, the building has three banks of 9/9 double hung vinyl sash windows (identical to those of the industrial room), one door and a pair of smaller windows. The pair of smaller windows and the door occupies the far left bay where another bay of large windows would have been. While none of the exterior windows are original, the existing windows are mostly of same size, shape, and location as the originals. The footprint of the interior space in the St. Johns School has been altered since its original construction in 1922. The current and only front entrance leads into the southern classroom (grades 1-4), which has been divided into two smaller rooms with an east-west running partitioning wall.<br><br>The Northern Classroom<br>The same can be found in the northern classroom (serving 5-6 grade). This dividing wall was added when the structure was converted into a private home after the schools closing. The plaster wall dividing the building into its two classrooms is original, matching the buildings outer plaster walls; although The Community School Plan indicates a removable partition. The majority of these plaster walls have painted wood beadboard wainscoting with chair rails and baseboard trim. There is the original approximately 3-inch wide wood flooring running north-south throughout, with strong evidence of staining and wear and tear. The interior doors are wood and have wood trim at the door frames.<br><br>The Integrity of the Building<br>Each of the two classrooms has a large walk-through closet on their west |

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| | walls. These closet walls are clad in wood siding, possibly resembling the original exterior. The northern classrooms original entrance from the front has been closed and turned into another smaller closet for storage. Within this space, the original exterior wood siding has been preserved. The replacement windows have been installed in the original openings and retain the wood window trim and narrow sill, above the bead-board wainscoting. The ceiling throughout is finished with painted wood bead-board. The industrial room is accessible from both classrooms. This is of similar finish as the classrooms but has a brick chimney in the center of its east wall where the central stove once stood. The chimney has two openings, one leading into each of the individual classrooms, which provided heat to the school.<br>The physical integrity of architectural fabric on the exterior and interior is relatively good. Though there have been alterations made, such as the partition walls, and the addition of electricity, the 1920s wainscoting, flooring, and various other features are original and still in place.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| - Talking with the Students | The students are the ones with the stories and experiences from inside and outside the schoolhouse. They remember their time at St. Johns and are still part of the community today. Read about some of the experiences these students had in St. Johns Elementary School by hovering over their photo.<br><br>Rebecca Kinney: An alumna of St. Johns School,<br>The school felt large when I was there.<br><br>Odell L. Gardner: An alumnus of St. Johns School<br>I acted as a kind of custodian to the school while a student.<br><br>Lucille Chapman: An alumna of St. Johns School<br>May Day was an enjoyable day, the whole day.<br><br>Jean Dickerson Payne: An alumna of St. Johns School<br>My dad drove me to school every morning<br><br>Bernice Chapman Mitchell:An alumna of St. Johns School<br>We would walk from Grandma's house to school<br><br>Herbert Payne: An alumnus of St. Johns School<br>Wow looky here, that’s going to be my lady. |

Friendships and Relationships

St. Johns Elementary School was not just about the building and the curriculum but was also about the relationships formed while the students were there. Herbert Payne was 7 years old when he attended the school and saw his future wife pull up and get out of her dad's car. "Wow looky here, that's going to be my lady." He kept his word; over 50 years later they are still married. His wife is Jean Dickerson Payne.

Although Bernice Chapman Mitchell and Jean Dickerson Payne were a couple of years apart in age, they bond today over the fact that they both found their husband while at school in Albemarle County.

Some of the students of St. Johns Elementary School still sit in the same space every week. St. Johns Baptist church has kept the friendships and community together that St. Johns Elementary School made possible.

Who Taught the Students, and what was Taught?

The teachers of St. Johns truly cared about the success of the students, but that also meant it was not always easy. Odell L. Gardner remembers how his teacher loved requiring students to copy and learn words. Notepads of word lists were taken home for the students to study. The next day she would call on the students to spell them out. If the students were wrong there was a chance of losing recess. Lucille Chapman remembered the same threat of losing recess, but for her case, it was when homework was not completed. But she knew it was because her teacher cared about her and the other students.

There was not much history taught, and what was, was skewed. Odell recounted that there were not many books from the school board about history, especially African American history. In High School, slavery was covered for a week, but only about certain people. But May Day, filled with sports and games, was the most enjoyable. There were sports competitions between different schools and the students got to have fun all day.

Remembering the Schoolhouse

For Rebecca Kinney, she thought back to the schoolhouse and realized it felt so much larger when they were students. She recounted it as two big rooms, with old chalkboards, and the students' backs facing the middle wall.

Lucille and Bernice both remembered the stoves in the classrooms being heated in the mornings by the boys and would be used to make stews for the student lunches.

For Odell, school seemed to last a little longer. He stayed after school to mop

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| | the wood floors with motor oil in order to shine them back up. The potbelly stoves, which were heated by some students in the mornings, would discolor the floors.<br><br>St. Johns School Song:<br>St. John gon'shine tonight<br>St. John gon' shine<br>St. John gon' shine tonight<br>On down the line<br>St. John gon' shine tonight<br>St. John gon' shine<br>When the sun goes<br>And the moon comes up<br>St. John gon' shine<br>Don't we look fine tonight<br>Don't we look fine<br>Don't we look fine tonight<br>On down the line<br>Don't we look fine tonight<br>Don't we look fine<br>When the sun goes down<br>And the moon comes up<br>St. John gon' shine<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| - Experiencing the Space | Experiencing the Space<br>What do you want to explore?<br><br>There are three options to explore:<br>1. The Exterior<br>2. The Interior<br>3. The Architectural Changes<br>Clicking through photographs can only give you so much information about space, but starting a conversation between the photos and where they were taken in association with the site, the building exterior, and the plan allows you to think a little more.<br><br>Some questions to think about as you explore St. Johns:<br>What might it feel like to attend school in this school every day with no |

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| | plumbing or electricity?<br>How did one teacher teach multiple grades at once?<br>Can you imagine the space in perfect condition? Do you ever think it ever was?<br>Does this add a level of appreciation for the school you attend today?<br>Can you think about how space would have been with the resources today?<br>How do you hope to see the building in the future?<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| -- The Exterior Views | The Exterior Views<br>An architectural drawing can only tell you so much, but documentary photographs of the buildings exterior help to evoke a deeper understanding of St. Johns. Some of the money might have come from the Rosenwald Fund to build St. Johns but it is about the community raising money and building it together.<br><br>Hover over the Community School Plan No. 20 exterior drawing to explore the exterior elements of St. Johns Elementary School. Click on the images to find out a little bit more.<br><br>Fly around the school and its property to understand the connections between the school and the landscape. How has the site changed since its construction?<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| --The Interior Views | The Interior Views<br>Seeing the building in architectural plan and through photography allows you to think a little deeper about the spaces you occupy. How can the two-dimensional influence the three-dimensional? Students moved throughout these rooms every day for class.<br>They arrived early to heat the furnaces and stayed late to clean the floors.<br><br>Hover over the Community School Plan No. 20, which was used to build St. Johns, to uncover some of the interior views of the schoolhouse. Click on the images to find out a little bit more.<br><br>Explore the videos and images of the current conditions of St. Johns Elementary School. What would space have felt like if the windows and |

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| | walls were all still in perfect condition as they might have been in 1922-23 when the school was first completed.<br><br>Imagine the clean floors and the sunlight spanning the width of the building with fewer walls blocking you from one side to another.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| --The Interior Changes | The Interior Changes<br><br>How has a building changed over its lifetime? What has been added? What has been removed? How has that affected the space today?<br><br>Hover over the Community School Plan No. 20, which was used to build St. Johns, to uncover the changes the schoolhouse has undergone since its construction.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| - Lighting and Windows | Lighting and Windows<br>When it came, and actually comes to Rosenwald Schoolhouses, light was an important factor in understanding and experiencing the space.<br><br>When first constructed, electricity did not exist within the buildings, so daylight was key and the primary light source during the school day. The students and teachers needed to maximize their days and gain as much out of them as possible.<br><br>St. Johns was and still is no different from that of the "typical" community plan Rosenwald School. It has 3 primary bays of larger double-hung sash windows lining the east exterior wall. Originally there were four bays, but over the years and, due to private use, the most southern bay was removed and replaced by a back porch door and smaller windows.<br><br>The original wooden windows have been replaced with modern vinyl ones, however, it appears they stayed true to the planned locations.<br><br>The 9-by-9 windows maximize the light, while also allowing for great ventilation of the space. |

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| | Imagine Yourself in The Space<br>Take a moment to look at the images above, you do not need to know the exact location of the windows, however, think about the effect this amount of light would have on you. When you are stuck in a small limited windowed classroom for hours you start to go stir-crazy. How do you alleviate that? You escape.<br><br>Hover over the image of the dark space. See what is exposed. Which do you prefer? Which would St. Johns' students prefer?<br><br>Some of the students were going from a poorly built shed, with no light other than from the door opening, to this two-teacher schoolhouse. The amount of light available in the space altered the experience completely.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| - St. Johns Moving Forward | St. Johns has a rich history through its architectural significance and connection to the Rosenwald Fund, but its key heritage is connected to the people. They are stepping away from the traditional interpretation of these schoolhouses by making the building truly serve the community again.<br><br>For years the schoolhouse taught elementary students and then, as stated, went into private ownership. But it is back with the community again.<br><br>They have determined that the most beneficial way the building will serve them is through a renovation in order to transform the building into the St. John Family Life and Fitness Center. The Center is still in the process of gathering funds in order for this future to become a reality.<br><br>For more information on the current condition of the schoolhouse and to contribute to the building and community's story, click the link "St. John Family Life and Fitness Center Website."<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |
| Gallery | Each of the previous pages was scattered with photographs, drawings, and paintings but here is an opportunity to see all of them collected. See if you missed one or simply want to go back to something you already looked at. Each image has something new to uncover. |

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| | This is an opportunity to get away from all the words and explore the visuals of the entire site. Scroll through and click on any image to find out a little bit more information.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. Gallery images contain full citations when enlarged. |
| Contact | If you have any comments about the site or the information please feel free to contact me. I will be happy to speak with you.<br><br>For those of you have more information they would like to add or contribute pertaining to African American education, Rosenwald Schools or specifically St. Johns I would be thrilled to add it to the site.<br><br>For full text and image citations reference the two linked PDFs in the website footer, at the bottom of the page. |

## Appendix B

***Rosenwald Reinterpreted***
**April 2019 Website Bibliography**

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**The Rosenwald Fund**

**"The Rosenwald Fund"**

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**"St. Johns School"**

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**"Experiencing the Space"**

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**"Lighting and Windows"**

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***Rosenwald Reinterpreted***
**Full Image Citations By Individual Webpage**

**"Home"**
Image 1: Front Panorama, St. Johns Elementary School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. March 30, 2019.

Image 2: Back Panorama, St. Johns Elementary School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. March 30, 2019.

**"About"**
Image 1: St. Johns School, Albemarle County, VA. 1922–23. Photograph. Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database.

Image 2: Hannah Glatt, University of Virginia. Photograph by Rosenbaum, Kira. March 28, 2019.

**"African American Education"**
Image 1: Tanner Henry Ossawa (1859–1937). 1893. Painting. The Banjo Lesson. Easel Painting / Identified Artist. Place: Hampton (VA), Hampton University Museum, No accession number. https://library-artstor-org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/asset/IBWA_DB_10313295174.

Image 2: Janet Gustave, del. (1829–~~~~), artist, VERDEIL Pierre, sculp. (1812–after 1874), engraver. 13 February 1875. Print. Illustration for "Color in the New Orleans Schools," Harper's Weekly 19, no. 946 (Supplement, 13 February 1875), p. 146: "Education in Senegal-A School for Boys.". Print / Engraving on Wood - Illustration. Place: HOUSTON (TX)., Rice University. Fondren Library., Call no.: AP2.H32.. https://library-artstor-org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/asset/IBWA_DB_10313287853.

Image 3: Brothers outside St. Johns, Albemarle County, Virginia. c. 1940s/50s. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney

**"National African American Education"**
Image 1: Scottsville School, Albemarle County, VA. 1922–23. Photograph. Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database.

Image 2: "Jefferson School City Center - City Center - Jefferson School History." Accessed April 13, 2019. http://jeffersoncitycenter.com/city_center/history.php.

Image 3: Cismont School, Albemarle County VA. 1922–23. Photograph. Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database.

Image 4: "The Roanoke Daily Times. (Roanoke, Va.) 1895-1897, May 19, 1896, Image 1," May 19, 1896. http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn95079481/1896-05-19/ed-1/seq-1/.

**"Virginia African American Education"**
Image 1: Unknown. 1920s. Colored Elementary School Annex. South Boston, Virginia.. https://library-artstor-org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/asset/LOCEON_1039798974.

Image 2: Bonn, Philip, photographer. Keysville, Virginia. One of the Seven Schools which was consolidated to make the Randolph Henry High School. Now used as elementary school. Charlotte County Keysville Keysville. United States. Virginis, 1943. June Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017858372/.

Image 3: Unknown. 1921-61. White Elementary School. South Boston, Virginia.. https://library-artstor-org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/asset/LOCEON_1039798973.

Image 4: Elementary school for Afro-Americans, South Boston, Virginia. South Boston Virginia, None. [Between 1920 and 1940] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/90707445/.

Image 5: White elementary school exterior, South Boston, Va. South Boston, Virginia, None [Between 1930 and 1940] Photograph. https://www.loc.goc/item/95518724/.

Image 6: Colored elementary school, South Boston, Va. South Boston Virginia, None. [Between 1921 and 1935] Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2005693012/.

**"United States Rural Schooling"**
Image 1: Lee, Russell, photographer. School room. Lakeview Project, Arkansas. Arkansas Lakeview. Phillips County United States, 1938. Dec. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017781881/.

Image 2: Lee, Russell, photographer. White school near Southeast Missouri Farm, Missouri New Madrid County Southeast Missouri Farms. Southeast Missouri Farms, United States, 1938. Aug. Photograph. http://www.loc.goc/item/2017781721/.

Image 3: Lee, Russell, photographer. Negro school teacher talking with pupils near Southeast Missouri Farms. Missouri New Madrid County Southeast Missouri Farms, Southeast Missouri Farms, United States, 1938. Aug. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017781273.

Image 4: Lee, Russell, photographer. Map in Negro school, Southeast Missouri Farms. Missouri New Madrid County Southeast Missouri Farms Southeast Missouri Farms. United States, 1938. Aug. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017737273/.

Image 5: Lee, Russell, photographer. Rural school. Williams County, North Dakota. North Dakota United States Williams County Williams County, 1937. Oct. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017780778/.

Image 6: Lee Russell, photographer. Negro children in rural school. Creek County, Oklahoma. Creek County Creek County. Oklahoma, United States, 1940, Feb. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017785202/.

Image 7: Lee, Russell, photographer. Education in rural school, early grades. Williams County, North Dakota. North Dakota United States Williams County Williams County, 1937. Oct. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017780758/.

Image 8: Lee, Russell, photographer. Negro primary school near Southeast Missouri Farms, Missouri New Madrid County Southeast Missouri Farms. Southeast Missouri Farms, United States, 1938, Aug. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017781274/.

Image 9: Lee, Russell, photographer. Negro rural school. Creek County, Oklahoma. Creek County Creek County. Oklahoma United States, 1940. Feb. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017785182/.

Image 10: Lee, Russell, photograph. Arithmetic class. Grade school, San Augustine, Texas, San Augustine San Augustine County, Texas, United States, 1939, Apr. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017783036/.

Image 11: Lee, Russell, photographer. Rural school in session near Tipler, Wisconsin. Florence County Tipler Tipler. United States Wisconsin, 1937. May. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017763991/.

Image 12: Lee, Russell, photographer. Children swinging on maypole, La Forge, Missouri. Project School at Southeast Missouri Farms. La Forge La Forge. Missouri New Madrid County United States, 1938. Aug. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017737266/.

Image 13: Lee, Russell, photographer. Schoolteacher explaining passage to pupil, La Forge, Missouri, School attended by Southeast Missouri Farms children. La Forge. Missouri New Madrid County United States, 1938. Aug Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2017737276/.

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Image 1: Julius Rosenwald and African American Children. c 1920. Photograph. Fisk University John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library Special Collections/The Ciesla Foundation. https://www.washingtonpost.com/goingoutguide/movies/review-rosenwald-a-singular-portrait-of-a-mogul-and-philanthropist/2015/08/26/07382118-4817-11e5-8ab4-c73967a143d3_story.html?utm_term=.cffe3142fc07.

**"Overview of the Rosenwald Fund"**

Image 1: Julius Rosenwald of Chicago, President of Sears, Roebuck and Co., half-length portrait, standing outside the White House, facing left. 1929. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/94509159/.

Image 2: unknown. n.d. (circa 1890–1900). Portrait of Booker T. Washington. photographs, albumen prints, albums. https://library-artstor-org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/asset/SCHLES_130747614.

Image 3: Julius Rosenwald and African American Children. c 1920. Photograph. Fisk University John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library Special Collections /The Ciesla Foundation. In: Michael O'Sullivan, "Review: 'Rosenwald' Is A Singular Portrait of a Mogul and Philanthropist." *The Washington Post,* August 27, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/goingoutguide/movies/review-rosenwald-a-singular-portrait-of-a-mogul-and-philanthropist/2015/08/26/07382118-4817-11e5-8ab4-c73967a143d3_story.html?utm_term=.cffe3142fc07.

Image 4: Loachopoka School, Lee County, Alabama. c. 1914. Photograph. Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database.

**"The Rosenwald Schoolhouse"**
Image 1: East Wall, Central Northern Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017

Image 2: Smith, Samuel L. "Community School Plans, Bulletin No. 3, the Julius Rosenwald Fund: African American Education." Cover. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1924. http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p16062coll13/id/4554.

Image 3: Historic American Building Survey, Creator, Jeremy R Edgeworth, Dean A. Doerrfeld, and Rebecca G Rapier, photographer. *Cadentown Rosenwald School, Caden Lane, Lexington, Fayette County, KY.* Fayette County Kentucky Lexington, 1933. Photograph. https://www.loc.goc/item.ky0414/.

Image 4: East Wall, Northern Most Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 5: Witold, Rybczynski. "Remembering the Rosenwald Schools." *Architect* 104, no. 9 (September 16, 2015): 103. https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/culture/remembering-the-rosenwald-schools_o.

**"It Wasn't Just Schools"**
Image 1: Hale Woodruff, *Poor Man's Cotton,* 1944. Watercolor on paper, 32x24in. The Newark Museum, The Sophronia Anderson Bequest Fund. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL: [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 32.

Image 2: Jacob Lawrence, *In the North the African American had more educational opportunities.* Panel 58 from *The Migration Series* 1940–41. Casein Tempera on hardboard, 12x18in. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL: [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 19.

Image 3: Jacob Lawrence, *The trains were crowded with migrants.* Panel 6 from *The Migrant Series,* 1940–41. Casein Tempera on hardboard, 12x18in. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL: [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 14.

Image 4: Jacob Lawrence, *African Americans, long-time residents of northern cities met the migrants with aloofness and disdain.* Panel 53 from *The Migration Series* 1940–41. Casein Tempera on hardboard, 12x18in. The Philips Collection. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL: [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 18.

Image 5: Jacob Lawrence, *Migrants were advanced passage on the railroads, paid for by northern industry. Northern Industry was to be repaid by the migrants out of their future wages.* Panel 5 from *The Migration Series* 1940–41. Casein Tempera on hardboard, 12x18in. The Philips Collection. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 13.

Image 6: Jacob Lawrence, *Some left because of promises of work in the North. Others left because their farms had been devastated by floods.* Panel 8 from *The Migrant Series,* 1940–41. Casein Tempera on hardboard, 12x18in. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 15.

Image 7: Jacob Lawrence, *Industries boarded their workers in unhealthy quarters. Labor Camps were numerous.* Panel 46 from *The Migrant Series,* 1940–41. Casein Tempera on hardboard, 12x18in. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 16.

Image 8: Jacob Lawrence, *Race riots were numerous. White workers were hostile toward the migrants who had been hired to break strikes.* Panel 50 from *The Migrant Series,* 1940–41.

Casein Tempera on hardboard, 12x18in. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 17.

Image 9: Richmond Barthé, *Blackberry Woman,* modeled 1930, cast 1932, Bronze, 33.75x11x14in. Smithsonian American Art Museum purchase through the Luisita L. Franz H. Denghausen Endowment. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 17.

Image 10: Elizabeth Catlett, *I have special reservations, from the Negro Woman,* 1946–47. Linoleum cut, 6x6in. Howard Museum Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 47.

Image 11: Elizabeth Catlett, *I have studied in ever increasing numbers, from the Negro Woman,* 1946–47. Linoleum cut, $6^{3}/4$x9in. Howard Museum Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 45.

Image 12: Elizabeth Catlett, *My right is a future f equality with other Americans, from the Negro Woman,* 1946–47. Color linoleum cut, $9x6^{1}/_{4}$in. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 50.

Image 13: Elizabeth Catlett, *I have given the world my songs, from the Negro Woman,* 1946–47. Color linoleum cut, $7^{1}/3$x5in. Howard Museum Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 40.

Image 14: Elizabeth Catlett, *I am the Negro Woman, from the Negro Woman,* 1946–47. Color linoleum cut, $5^{1}/_{4}$x4in. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 36.

Image 15: Elizabeth Catlett, *In the fields, from the Negro Woman,* 1946–47. Linoleum cut, 9x6in. Hampton University Museum, Hampton VA. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus

Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 38.

Image 16: Elizabeth Catlett, *And a special fear for my loved ones, from the Negro Woman,* 1946–47. Linoleum cut on cream wove paper $8^{1}/_{3}$x6in. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 49.

Image 17: Gilbert Dwoyid Olmsted, *Untitled,* 1940s/2009. Inkjet print, 11x14in. G. Olmsted Photonegatives, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 54.

Image 18: Gilbert Dwoyid Olmsted, *The Visiting Preacher with Congregation, Jackson Temple, Penn Township,* 1940s/2009. Inkjet print, 11x14in. G. Olmsted Photonegatives, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 54.

Image 19: Gilbert Dwoyid Olmsted, *Untitled,* 1940s/2009. Inkjet print, 11x14in. G. Olmsted Photonegatives, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 53.

Image 20: Gilbert Dwoyid Olmsted, *Untitled,* 1940s/2009. Inkjet print, 11x14in. G. Olmsted Photonegatives, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*. Chicago, IL : [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 54.

**"St. Johns Elementary School"**

Image 1: West Façade, Exterior, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. March 30, 2019.

Image 2: West Wall, Central Northern Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. March 30, 2019.

**“St. Johns School”**
Image 1: Front Panorama, St. Johns Elementary School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. March 30, 2019.

Image 2: West Façade, Exterior, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. March 30, 2019.

Image 3: East Wall, Central Southern Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. March 30, 2019.

Image 4: East Wall, Northern Most Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 5: West Wall, Central Southern Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. March 30, 2019.

Image 6: Floor, Central Northern Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 7: Wainscot Wall, Central Northern Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 8: Possible original wooden 6x6 double-hung sash window in storage, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 9: Original wooden exterior siding in closed-off Northwestern entrance, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 10: Exterior view of closed-off Northwestern entrance, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

**“Talking With the Students” (Not including Gallery)**
Image 1: St. Johns Alumni Singing School Song, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 2: Earnly Chapman Report Card, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 3: East Wall, Northernmost Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

**“Talking with the Students” Reunion Galley**
Image 1: St. Johns Alumni Singing School Song, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 2: Virginia Bowler Monroe, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 3: Wonza Douglas Lawrence, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 4: St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 5: Bertha Gardner, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 6: Robert Bowler, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 7: Rebecca Kinney, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 8: Phyllis Johnson Hopkins, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 9: Percy Payne, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11-12, –2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 10: Pauline Dickerson Young, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

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Image 15: St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 16: Lucille Chapman, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 17: Lucille Chapman holding Plaque in her honor, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

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Image 22: Herbert Payne, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

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Image 25: George Payne, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

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Image 27: Elise Johnson Johnson, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 28: Earnly Chapman, hold his report card, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 29: Delores Johnson Wynn, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 30: Church Service, St. Johns Baptist Church, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 31: Church Service, St. Johns Baptist Church, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 32: Church Service, St. Johns Baptist Church, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 33: Church Service, St. Johns Baptist Church, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 34: St. Johns Alumni Singing School Song, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

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Image 36: Alice Chapman Arnette, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 37: Bernice Chapman Mitchell, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 38: St. Johns Alumni Singing School Song, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

Image 39: Alberta Chapman Mchan, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11–12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

**"Experiencing the Space"**
Image 1: Smith, Samuel L. "Community School Plans, Bulletin No. 3, the Julius Rosenwald Fund: African American Education." North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1924, p.5 http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p16062coll13/id/4554.

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Image 3: Northern end of East Facade, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 4: Southeastern exterior corner, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 5: Northwestern exterior corner, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 6: East Facade corner, window detail, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

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Image 16: Arial Drone Shot of St. Johns School and St. Johns Baptist Church, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Michael Tucker. March 30, 2019.

Image 17/Video: Tucker, Michael. *Drone Footage of St. Johns Exterior, Albemarle County, Virginia*. QuickTimeVideo, 2019.

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Image 8:Southwestern corner, Southern Most Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 9/Video: Glatt, Hannah. *Northern Cloakroom and Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia*. M4v, 2019.

Image 10: West Wall, Industrial Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 11/Video: Glatt, Hannah. *Walking Into St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia.* M4v, 2019.

**"The Interior Changes"**
Image 1: Bates, Niya. "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: St John School." NPA Form 10-9000. St. Johns School: United States Department of the Interior, 2018. p. 27.

**"Lighting and Windows"**
Image 1: Vinyl, 9x9 double-hung sash window, east wall, central northern room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 2: East Facade corner, vinyl 9x9 double-hung sash window detail, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 3: Possible original wooden 6x6 double-hung sash window in storage, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image: 4: vinyl 6x6 double-hung sash window, North Cloakroom, St. Johns School., Albemarle County, Virginia Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 5: Vinyl, 9x9 double-hung sash window, West Wall, Industrial Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 6: East Wall, Northern Most Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 7: East Wall, Central Northern Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. March 30, 2019.

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Image 9: Window Bay Detail, North East Exterior Corner, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

Image 10: "Windows Vs. Windowless | Wittwer, Kendra R." Accessed April 13, 2019. http://blogs.fortlewis.edu/krwittwer/research-project/argument/windows-vs-windowless/.

Image 11: East Wall, Northern Most Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.

**"St. Johns Moving Forward"**
Image 1: "St. John Elementary School - Design Plan, Mission Statement and General Purpose." St. John Family Life & Fitness Center. Accessed April 7, 2019. http://www.stjohnfamilylife.org/the-plan.html.

**"Gallery"**
Full Citations on Website Images

## Appendix C

### *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* Website Screenshots

Following this page are the compiled screenshots of *Rosenwald Reinterpreted* in the order of intended exploration. The interactive elements have been included where possible by capturing the viewer's outcome of interactions. For example when some images are hovered over, more are exposed. These images have been captured twice below, once as the viewer initially sees it and again as he/she is hovering over it.

# Rosenwald Reinterpreted

Home About African American Education The Rosenwald Fund St. Johns Elementary School More...

## A Digital Strategy of Interpretation of St. Johns Elementary School Preserving the Community's Engagement

Explore the website to learn and interact with the history of African American education and understand the impact of the Rosenwald Fund on the built landscape with a focus on St. Johns, a rural Albemarle County, Virginia school built in the 1920s.

### African American Education

African American education developed from a system, suppressed by the white population, but the African American population pushed their way through hardship as to educate themselves. Growing from the self-taught to the schoolhouse to top universities, African Americans pushed their way through hardship in order to educate themselves.

### The Rosenwald Fund

Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald came together to establish and launch the Rosenwald Fund aiding in the construction of rural African American schools from 1917 until 1932.

### St. Johns Elementary School

St. Johns, a two-teacher Rosenwald Schoolhouse constructed in 1922-23, served the Cobham African American community outside of Gordonsville, Virginia as an elementary school until 1954. Today, the schoolhouse is looking to build a new future.

### Timeline of African American Education and St. Johns Elementary School

**1830**

The Virginia General Assembly forbids the teaching of African Americans (free or enslaved) to read and write

**1870**

Virginia Law declares the "...white and colored persons shall not be taught in the same school..."

**1881**

Tennessee passes the first of the "Jim Crow" segregation laws, segregating state railroads

**1896**

U.S. Supreme Court endors "separate but equal" in Ple

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# Rosenwald Reinterpreted

Home About African American Education The Rosenwald Fund St. Johns Elementary School More...

## What is the research?

St. Johns is a large part of the former students' lives but also the physical landscape. Rosenwald Schools and African American education that took place there for much of the past century have rich histories that need to be shared. This research into Rosenwald Schools generally and St. Johns specifically began through the completion of a Preliminary Information Form in order for the schoolhouse to be listed as Nationally Registered Historic Site of Virginia. The site combines information about the Rosenwald Fund and research on St. Johns in an effort to use a digital public history platform to share this heritage with a wide audience.

## Who created the website?

My name is Hannah Glatt. I completed this site as a project of my master's degree training in architectural history and I hope this site is a useful resource that shares some important history and heritage. Virginia has been my home for many years, and I find it important to understand the landscapes we occupy in order to appreciate everything and everyone's pasts.

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# Rosenwald Reinterpreted



## African American Education

There is a long history of African American education in the United States spanning from the self-taught individual to the establishment of public school systems available to all. This evolution speaks to the formation and resilience of African American communities throughout the country. However, the history is complicated when it comes to the discussion of segregated schools.

The following three pages explore this history. After a discussion of African American education on the national stage, the site takes a closer look specifically at Virginia schools, then examines rural schooling more specifically.

Each page looks at providing a basic understanding of the development of an official school system and the roles of rural schools, whether they be through the Rosenwald Fund or not.

National African American Education

Virginia African American Education

Rural Elementary Schools

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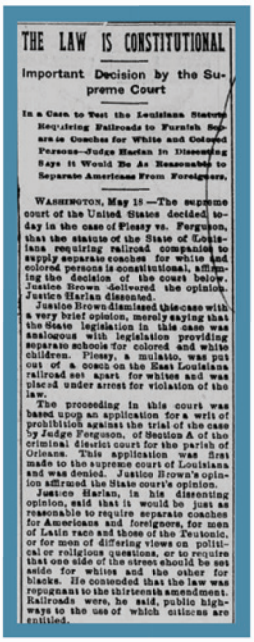
# Rosenwald Reinterpreted



## National African American Education

The foundations of African American education were built on individuals' desires to learn as a means of improving their own circumstances. They laid their own groundwork and took the initiative into their hands because it was clear no one was going to do it for them. Nothing was going to stop African Americans from improving their lives after they gained their freedom.



THE LAW IS CONSTITUTIONAL

Important Decision by the Supreme Court

In a Case to Test the Louisiana Statute Requiring Railroads to Furnish Separate Coaches for White and Colored Persons—Judge Harlan in Dissenting Says It Would Be As Reasonable to Separate Americans From Foreigners.

WASHINGTON, May 18.—The supreme court of the United States decided today in the case of Plessy vs. Ferguson, that the statute of the State of Louisiana requiring railroad companies to supply separate coaches for white and colored persons is constitutional, affirming the decision of the court below. Justice Brown delivered the opinion. Justice Harlan dissented.

Justice Brown dismissed this case with a very brief opinion, merely saying that the State legislation in this case was analogous with legislation providing separate schools for colored and white children. Plessy, a mulatto, was put out of a coach on the East Louisiana railroad set apart for whites and was placed under arrest for violation of the law.

The proceeding in this court was based upon an application for a writ of prohibition against the trial of the case by Judge Ferguson, of Section A of the criminal district court for the parish of Orleans. This application was first made to the supreme court of Louisiana and was denied. Justice Brown's opinion affirmed the State court's opinion.

Justice Harlan, in his dissenting opinion, said that it would be just as reasonable to require separate coaches for Americans and foreigners, for men of Latin race and those of the Teutonic, or for men of differing views on political or religious questions, or to require that one side of the street should be set aside for whites and the other for blacks. He contended that the law was repugnant to the thirteenth amendment. Railroads were, he said, public highways to the use of which citizens are entitled.

The Roanoke Daily Times published an issue on May 19, 1896 (a day after the Plessy v. Ferguson ruling) stating "Important Decision by the Supreme Court...Washington, May 18--the supreme court of the United States decided today in the case of Plessy vs. Ferguson that the statute of the State of Louisiana requiring railroad companies to supply separate coaches for white and colored persons constitutional."

Three figures that shaped African American education and promoted the public recognition of the importance of educating African Americans through actions, speeches, and writings are:

Booker T. Washington

W.E.B. Du Bois

Carter G. Woodson

Booker T. Washington

1868-1963: Through his focus on "The Talented Tenth" Du Bois believed in the higher education of African Americans in order to elevate their voice and statue amongst the dominant white population.
Additional Information

Carter G. Woodson

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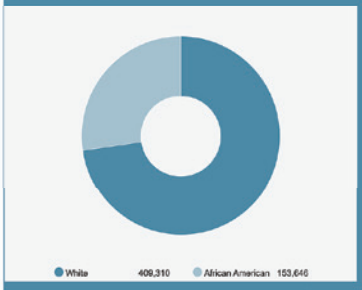
## Virginia African American Education

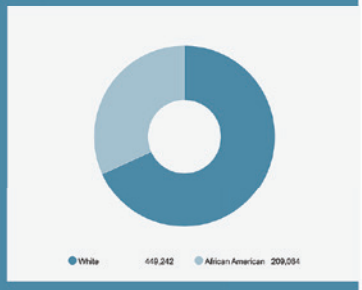
Virginia was no exception to the South, there was a slow development of official systems and the African American communities were the driving force. There were 837 African American teachers and 818 white teachers in Virginia in 1868, but what resources were they working with and in what conditions? African American schools seemed to only acquire the white's "hammy downs." The difference between African American and white schools was vast and wide-ranging impacting the availability of books, transportation, permanent structures and more.

Virginia education at the end of the 1800s and the 1900s was split between the white and African American schools. This also meant that the data collected was specific to those categorizations. Hover over the charts below in order to determine what each one represents.

### What Surveys of Schools Can Tell Us:




Period studies of Virginia county and town schools show the differences and similarities between white and African American schools. W.E.B. Du Bois looked at Farmville, Virginia and in 1929 and in 1940 Master's students at the University of Virginia (Warwick County, VA & Bedford County, VA) explored the very different conditions between African American and white schools. All three were rural regions of Virginia. On average, African Americans and white elementary students seemed to attend school only six months a year. Due to funding shortages, the students did not have access to school otherwise. The schools remained in operation annually until the money ran out.

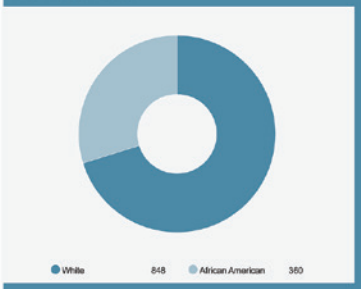



African American Elementary School, South Boston, VA, 1920

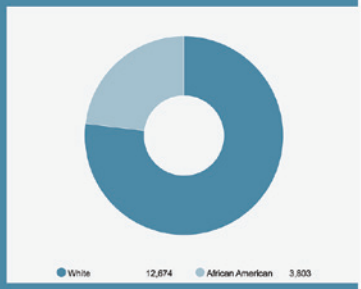
White Elementary School, South Boston, VA, 1930

African American Elementary School, South Boston, VA, 1921

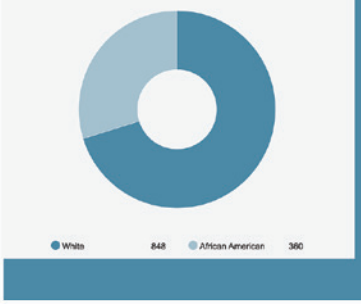
## The Teachers:




The difference was in the teachers. There were more white teachers available in Virginia than African American teachers. Although statistically there were fewer African Americans to teach, African American teachers received far poorer educational training. Some areas of Virginia did not have access to well-trained teachers, African American teachers were generally at the bottom. The teachers tried their best and achieved a lot, allowing elementary students to learn some, however, it was not everything. White communities had access to higher quality education.




## The Teachers:




The difference was in the teachers. There were more white teachers available in Virginia than African American teachers. Although statistically there were fewer African Americans to teach, African American teachers received far poorer educational training. Some areas of Virginia did not have access to well-trained teachers, African American teachers were generally at the bottom. The teachers tried their best and achieved a lot, allowing elementary students to learn some, however, it was not everything. White communities had access to higher quality education.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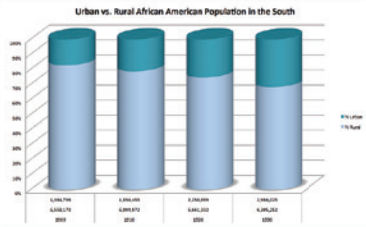
# Rosenwald Reinterpreted



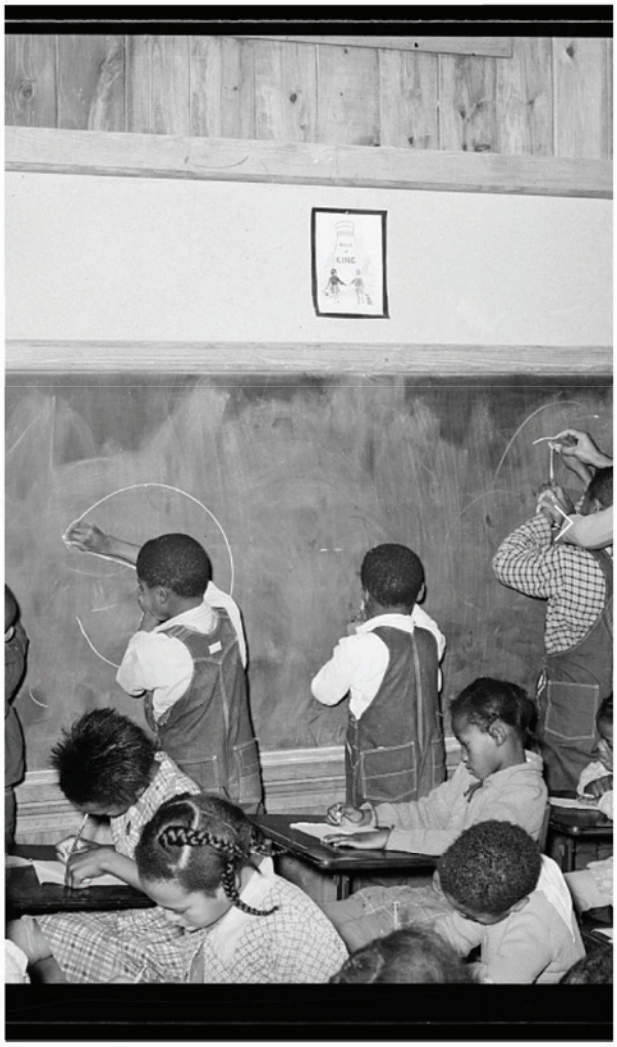
## A Look Inside the Rural School

Rural schoolhouses, both African American and white, were built of the homeschool idea, the simple log structure, to the limited framed schoolhouse. Rural schools were based on the communities they were found in. Into the 20th century, the typical rural school was built by and for the local community, with little to no official statewide system. This was true for both African American and white communities.




It was all about the resources. Rural schools rarely had necessary resources and when they did, they generally went to the white children first. There were more African Americans living in the country than in urban contexts in need for school and education resources.

In the 1940s Russell Lee took a series of photographs documenting rural schools in various states. Now take a moment and look through the photos and discover the interiors and resources of the students in rural contexts. These photos are from nearly halfway through the 20th century and they are limited, so imagine the conditions before then. There is a mixture of white and African American schools. Do you see a difference between the spaces? What resources does each of the schools have? These photos are from nearly halfway through the 20th century and they are limited, so imagine the conditions before then.







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Rosenwald Reinterpreted

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## The Rosenwald Fund

Rural schools for African Americans need to be given a chance to grow and become more available to all. The Rosenwald Fund was part of the answer. It was a philanthropic fund focused on the physical schoolhouse compared to previous funds looking to provide aid of resources and teachers to these schools.

Click on the buttons below to explore what the fund was and who was behind it. Or learn some of the details about the buildings themselves and the importance of a good schoolhouse. Or branch out from the schoolhouse and see how else the fund aided African Americans of the time through the Rosenwald Fellowship.

The General Fund | The Schoolhouse Architecture | The Rosenwald Fellowship

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# Rosenwald Reinterpreted



## Overview of The Rosenwald Fund

Who was Julius Rosenwald?

Born in Illinois in 1868, Julius Rosenwald was the son of German immigrants, and he grew up in the life of sales. In 1908 he became president of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, beginning two decades of business success. In 1910, he looked to expand his life to a career of philanthropy alongside the success of his business. Through his wife, his rabbi, and Judaism, he saw a need to serve society's needy citizens.

Who influenced him?

A friend, Julian W. Mack introduced Rosenwald to Jane Addams, through whom he was exposed to Hull House and the idea of service. He contributed to Hull House and an African American YMCA. Through William H. Baldwin Jr.'s biography, which discussed Booker T. Washington, Rosenwald encountered the Tuskegee Institute and the importance of schooling in rural areas. When Washington traveled to Chicago in 1911, Rosenwald hosted a lunch for him.

How did it all begin?

Rosenwald told the audience gathered for the 1913 dedication of the Chicago YMCA for Colored Men "The negro should command himself to the highest standard of living and efficiency. This cannot be done by brooding over justice, nor by declaiming about it, but by living up to the full standard of American citizenship." These statements later fed into the Rosenwald Fund, where Rosenwald, along with the guidance of Washington, sought to provide the opportunity of education to rural African Americans so that they could "ultimately attain a high place in the scale of society." Rosenwald provided contributions to the physical schools. This was a new kind of fund aiding African American education development.

What did the Fund accomplish?

The Rosenwald school building program, The Rosenwald Fund, officially launched in 1917, and within the same year, the first school was constructed in Alabama. The Loachapoka School in Lee County was a one-teacher schoolhouse and constructed for the simple cost of $942, $300 of which was contributed by Rosenwald. As a result of this program, by 1932, over 5,000 rural African American schools with a student capacity of 663,615 were constructed across 15 states. After Rosenwald's death, Edwin Embree took over the fund from 1932 until 1948, when it was ultimately dissolved.

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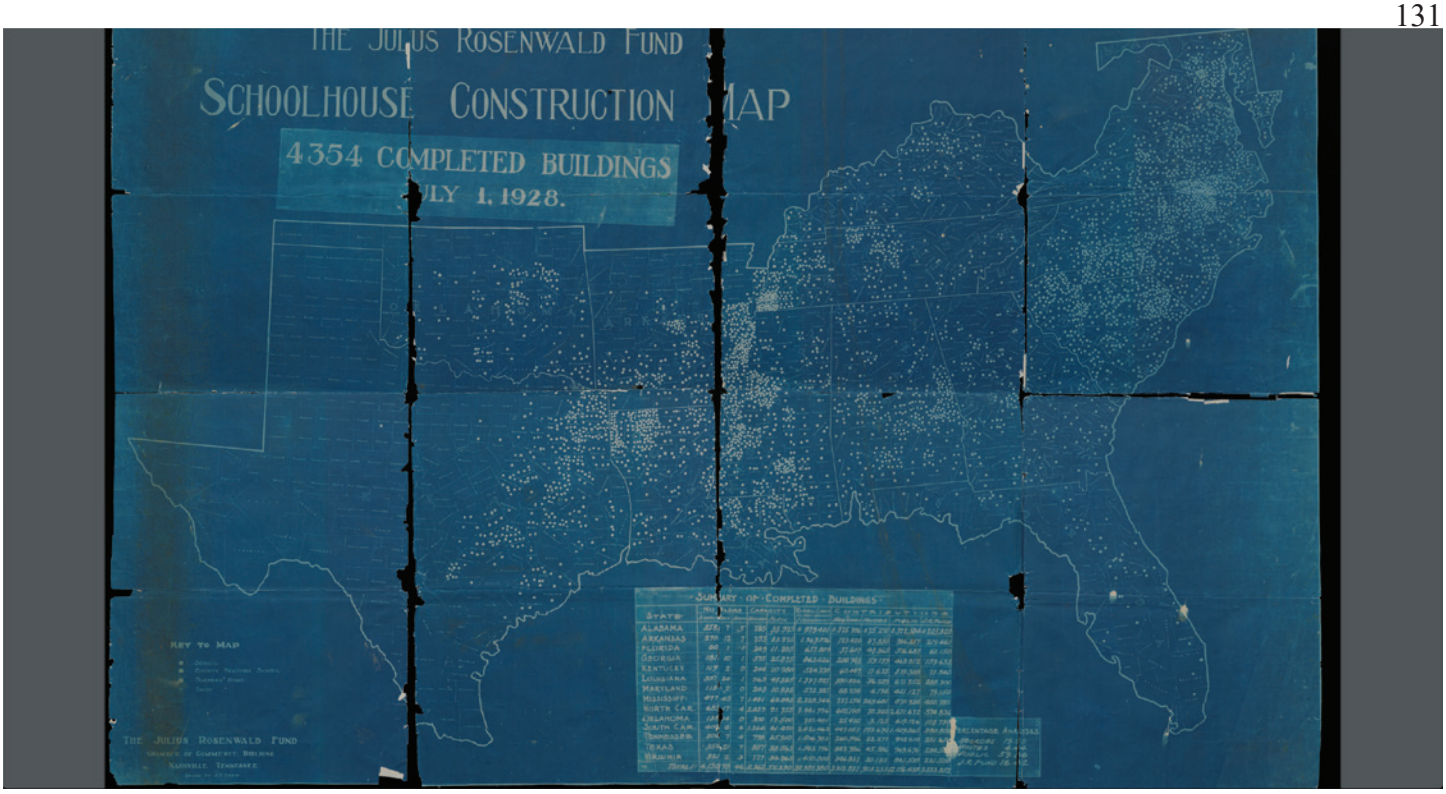
THE JULIUS ROSENWALD FUND
SCHOOLHOUSE CONSTRUCTION MAP
4354 COMPLETED BUILDINGS
JULY 1, 1928.
KEY TO MAP
THE JULIUS ROSENWALD FUND
Nashville, Tennessee
SUMMARY OF COMPLETED BUILDINGS
STATE
ALABAMA
ARKANSAS
FLORIDA
GEORGIA
KENTUCKY
LOUISIANA
MARYLAND
MISSISSIPPI
NORTH CAR.
OKLAHOMA
SOUTH CAR.
TENNESSEE
TEXAS
VIRGINIA
PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

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# The Rosenwald Schoolhouse


Image 1: East Wall, Central Northern Room, St. Johns. Glatt

The Community School Plans looked to create an environment beneficial to learning with specific guidelines both for school building and grounds. The Fund suggested that specific lot sizes were found in order to accommodate the schoolhouse, teacher accommodations, a boy's privy, a girl's privy, area for a playground, and space for agricultural demonstrations. Each element promoted the space and aimed to improve school experience and atmosphere. Today, the key feature of Rosenwald Schools are the large bays of windows. Lighting in the classrooms was emphasized from the beginning, and there was an entire page of the Bulletin dedicated to lighting; it states: "a child needs more light by which to read or study than an adult. When a child studies from day to day with an insufficient amount of light the tendency is to draw the book close to the eyes. If this condition is allowed to exist long enough, the muscular adjustment of the eye is so changed that the child becomes "nearsighted."

## Schoolhouse Construction

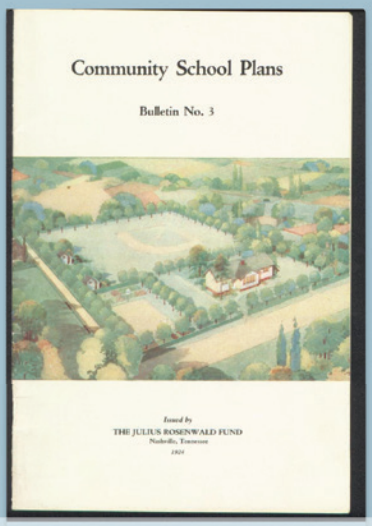
These schools were unique in construction, to the point that each element contributed to the spatial experience. It was only in later years that the Rosenwald Fund shifted from the promotion of improving existing schoolhouses to an actual building program. With the publication of the Community School Plans in 1924, spearheaded by Samuel L. Smith while looking to Fletcher B. Dresslar in considering the spatial environment of the school, did the Rosenwald Fund form a visual identity to the landscape? The Fund had moved their headquarters from the Tuskegee Institute to Nashville Tennessee and began implementing a series of different school designs throughout the rural south.

Image 3: Cadentown Rosenwald School,Fayette County, KY. LOC

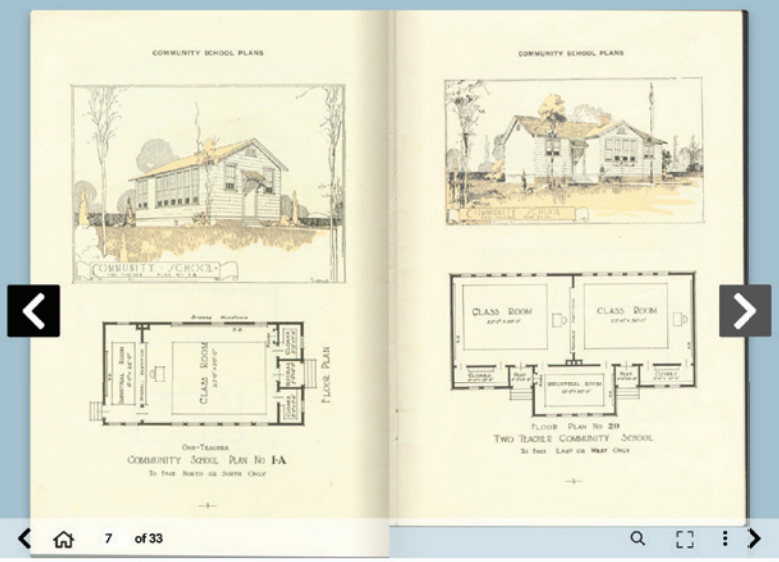

Image 4: East Wall, Northern Most Room, St. Johns School. Glatt.


Image 5: "Remembering the Rosenwald Schools" Witold.

Page through the 1924 publication of the Community School Plans designed by Samuel L. Smith.



Page through the 1924 publication of the Community School Plans designed by Samuel L. Smith.

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# Rosenwald Reinterpreted

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## It Wasn't Just Schools

The Rosenwald Fund history disappeared from the United States heritage for many years, but now the schools are being recognized across the South. These schools were so much more than schoolhouses. Julius Rosenwald believed in the arts and hoped to allow African American artists to represent their heritage and culture. Edwin Embree established the Rosenwald Fellowship Program. These were three-year fellowships offered to 587 African Americans and 278 white Southerners in fields of education, public health, agriculture, sociology, economics, visual arts, music, dance and more.

Being an artist can be expensive. An artist often must buy paper, inks, pens, paints, paintbrushes, and so much more to simply create a piece that conveys a rich history.

It was not just one painting or just one artist, the talents were spread across numerous individuals. Jacob Lawrence (1940/41/42), Dilbert Dwoyid Olmsted (1946), Elizabeth Catlett (1946/7), and Richmond Barthé (1930/31) are among some of the talents. This is a different kind of gallery. Click on the different paintings to find out who painted them and see the details on your screen.



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Image 2: Jacob Lawrence, In the North the African American had more educational opportunities. Panel 58 from The Migration Series 1940-41. Casein Tempera on hardboard, 12x18in. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, N.Y. From Schulman, Daniel, Peter Max Ascoli, Spertus Museum, Allentown Art Museum, and Montclair Art Museum, eds. A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Chicago, IL: [Evanston, IL]: Spertus Museum ; Northwestern University Press, 2009. Plate 19.

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## St. Johns Elementary School

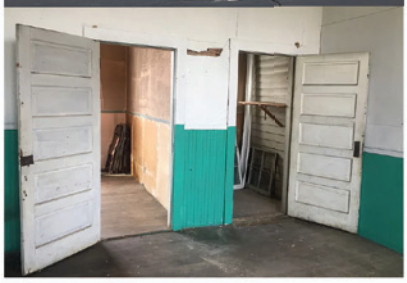
St. Johns has a rich history, but in order to understand it, you have to explore a little more. First look into the school's history and the process of creation through where it is, when it was built, and more.

Next talk with the students who went to the school until the 1950s and see what they thought of their time there

Then experience the space for yourself by looking around the building at the exterior and interior of the schoolhouse.

Once you understand the space a little better you will understand why large windows are so important to space, but explore the significance of light in St. Johns.

Finally, you need to know where the building and the community are going in the future. What are they hoping to achieve with the school today?



### Find Out More About St. Johns

St. Johns: The Big Picture | Talking With The Students | Experiencing the Space | Lighting + Windows | St. Johns Moving Forward

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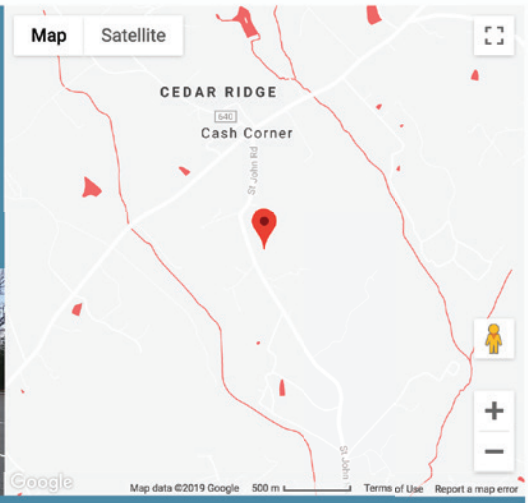
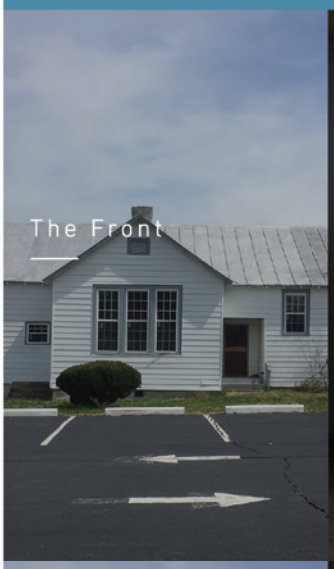
# St. Johns School

The Quick Overview

The St. Johns School, a Rosenwald School constructed in 1922-23, was built for the Cobham African American community near Gordonsville, Virginia area. The building with the T-shaped footprint follows Rosenwald Schools plan number 20, a two-teacher schoolhouse. After the school's closing in 1954, it was purchased by a private owner and converted into their residence until St. John's Baptist Church, next door, bought the 2.0-acre property in 2003.




## About the Building



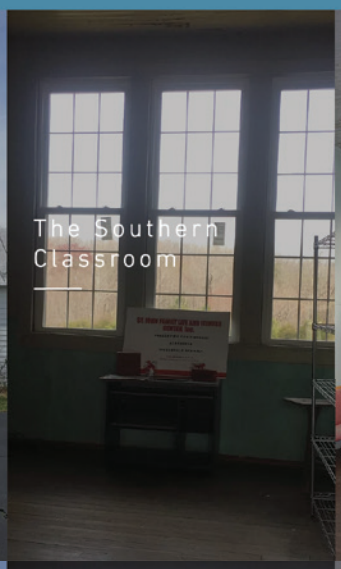






Image 2: West Façade, Exterior, St. Johns School. Glatt

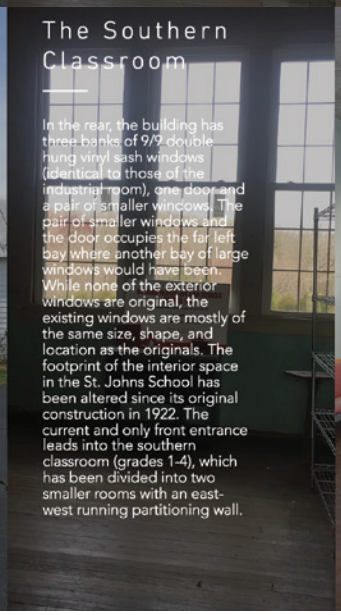




Image 4: East Wall, Northern Most Room, St. Johns School. Glatt

## The Integrity of the Building

Each of the two classrooms has a large walk-through closet on their west walls. These closet walls are clad in wood siding, possibly resembling the original exterior. The northern classrooms original entrance from the front has been closed and turned into another smaller closet for storage. Within this space, the original exterior wood siding has been preserved. The replacement windows have been installed in the original openings and retain the wood window trim and narrow sill, above the bead-board wainscoting. The ceiling throughout is finished with painted wood bead-board. The industrial room is accessible from both classrooms. This is of similar finish as the classrooms but has a brick chimney in the center of its east wall where the central stove once stood. The chimney has two openings, one leading into each of the individual classrooms, which provided heat to the school.
The physical integrity of architectural fabric on the exterior and interior is relatively good. Though there have been alterations made, such as the partition walls, and the addition of electricity, the 1920s wainscoting, flooring, and various other features are original and still in place.



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# Rosenwald Reinterpreted



## Talking With The Students

The students are the ones with the stories and experiences from inside and outside the schoolhouse. They remember their time at St. Johns and are still part of the community today. Read about some of the experiences these students had in St. Johns Elementary School by hovering over their photo.



Friendships and Relationships

St. Johns Elementary School was not just about the building and the curriculum but was also about the relationships formed while the students were there. Herbert Payne was 7 years old when he attended the school and saw his future wife pull up and get out of her dad's car. "Wow looky here, that's going to be my lady." He kept his word, over 50 years later they are still married. His wife is Jean Dickerson Payne.

Although Bernice Chapman Mitchell and Jean Dickerson Payne were a couple of years apart in age, they bond today over the fact that they both found their husband while at school in Albemarle County.

Some of the students of St. Johns Elementary School still sit in the same space every week. St. Johns Baptist church has kept the friendships and community together that St. Johns Elementary School made possible.


Who Taught the Students, and what was Taught?

The teachers of St. Johns truly cared about the success of the students, but that also meant it was not always easy. Odell L. Gardner remembers how his teacher loved requiring students to copy and learn words. Notepads of word lists were taken home for the students to study. The next day she would call on the students to spell them out. If the students were wrong there was a chance of losing recess. Lucille Chapman remembered the same threat of losing recess, but for her case, it was when homework was not completed. But she knew it was because her teacher cared about her and the other students.

There was not much history taught, and what was, was skewed. Odell recounted that there were not many books from the school board about history, especially African American history. In High School, slavery was covered for a week, but only about certain people. But May Day, filled with sports and games, was the most enjoyable. There were sports competitions between different schools and the students got to have fun all day.

Remembering the Schoolhouse

For Rebecca Kinney, she thought back to the schoolhouse and realized it felt so much larger when they were students. She recounted it as two big rooms, with old chalkboards, and the students' backs facing the middle wall.

Lucille and Bernice both remembered the stoves in the classrooms being heated in the mornings by the boys and would be used to make stews for the student lunches. For Odell, school seemed to last a little longer. He stayed after school to mop the wood floors with motor oil in order to shine them back up. The potbelly stoves, which were heated by some students in the mornings, would discolor the floors.

## St. Johns School Song

St. John gon'shine tonight
St. John gon' shine
St. John gon' shine tonight
On down the line
St. John gon' shine tonight
St. John gon' shine
When the sun goes
And the moon comes up
St. John gon' shine
Don't we look fine tonight
Don't we look fine
Don't we look fine tonight
On down the line
Don't we look fine tonight
Don't we look fine
When the sun goes down
And the moon comes up
St. John gon' shine

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Image 17: Lucille Chapman holding Plaque in her honor, St. Johns Elementary School Reunion. July 11-12, 2009. Photograph provided by Rebecca Kinney.

# Rosenwald Reinterpreted



## Experiencing the Space
## What do you want to explore?

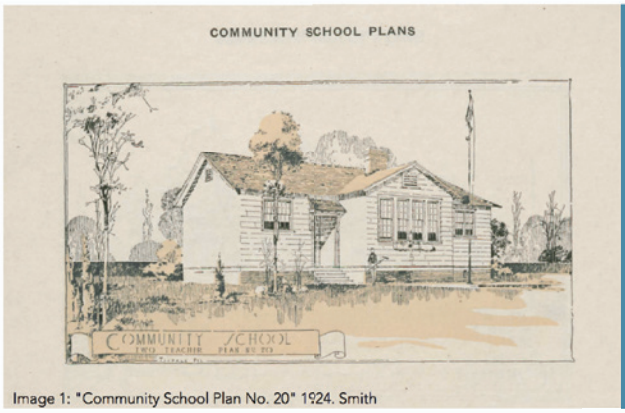


Image 1: "Community School Plan No. 20" 1924. Smith

There are three options to explore:
1. The Exterior
2. The Interior
3. The Architectural Changes

Clicking through photographs can only give you so much information about space, but starting a conversation between the photos and where they were taken in association with the site, the building exterior, and the plan allows you to think a little more.

The Exterior Views | The Interior Views | The Interior Changes

Some questions to think about as you explore St. Johns:

What might it feel like to attend school in this school every day with no plumbing or electricity?
How did one teacher teach multiple grades at once?
Can you imagine the space in perfect condition? Do you ever think it ever was?
Does this add a level of appreciation for the school you attend today?
Can you think about how space would have been with the resources today?
How do you hope to see the building in the future?

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# Experiencing the Space
# What do you want to explore?

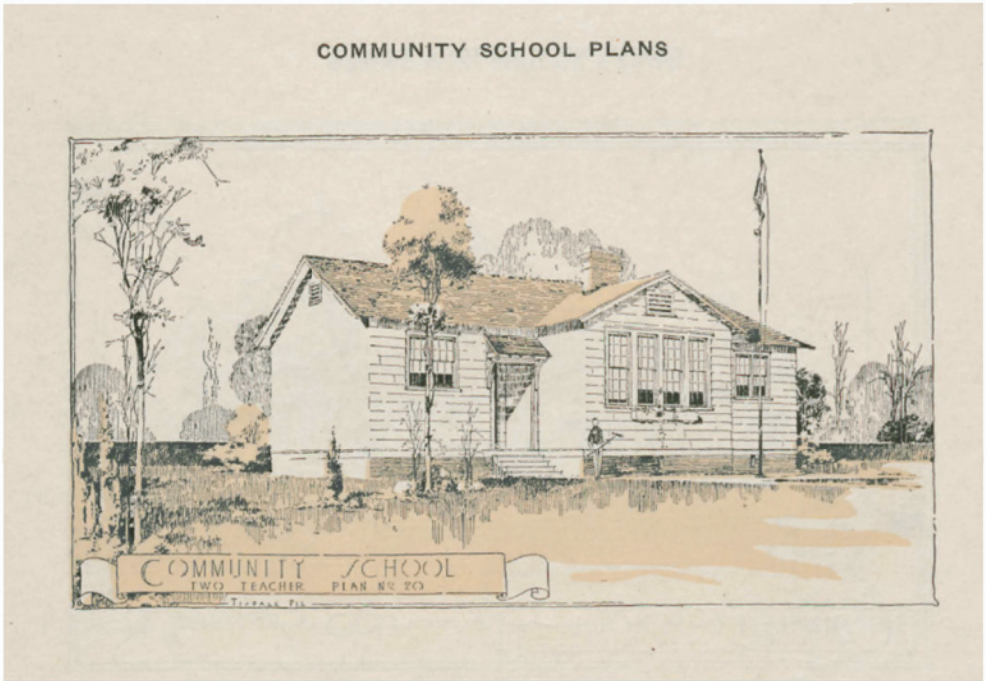
Image 1: Detail of industrial room roof, West Façade, St. Johns School. Glatt.

The Exterior Views

An architectural drawing can only tell you so much, but documentary photographs of the buildings exterior help to evoke a deeper understanding of St. Johns. Some of the money might have come from the Rosenwald Fund to build St. Johns but it is about the community raising money and building it together.

The Exterior Views | The Interior Views | The Interior Changes

Hover over the Community School Plan No. 20 exterior drawing to explore the exterior elements of St. Johns Elementary School. Click on the images to find out a little bit more.




Fly around the school and its property to understand the connections between the school and the landscape. How has the site changed since its construction?

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# Rosenwald Reinterpreted



## Experiencing the Space
## What do you want to explore?

Image 1: East Wall, Northern Most Room, St. Johns School. Glatt

The Interior Views

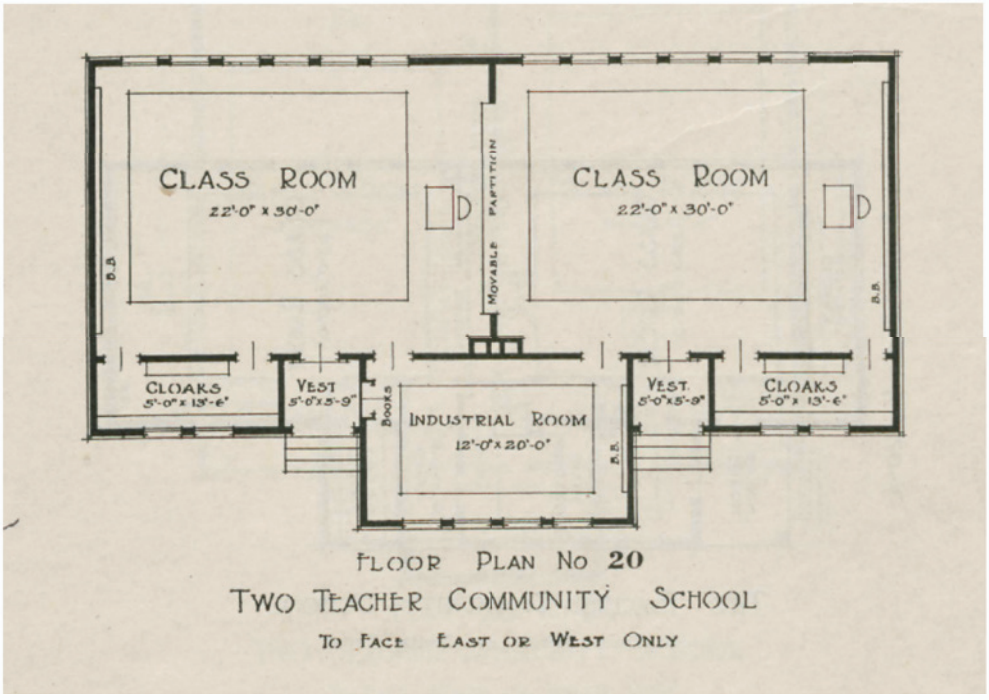
Seeing the building in architectural plan and through photography allows you to think a little deeper about the spaces you occupy. How can the two-dimensional influence the three-dimensional? Students moved throughout these rooms every day for class. They arrived early to heat the furnaces and stayed late to clean the floors.

The Exterior Views | The Interior Views | The Interior Changes

Hover over the Community School Plan No. 20, which was used to build St. Johns, to uncover some of the interior views of the schoolhouse. Click on the images to find out a little bit more.

Explore the videos and images of the current conditions of St. Johns Elementary School. What would space have felt like if the windows and walls were all still in perfect condition as they might have been in 1922-23 when the school was first completed.

Imagine the clean floors and the sunlight spanning the width of the building with fewer walls blocking you from one side to another.

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ROOM
x 30'-0"
VEST
5'-6"x5'-9"
Books
Movable
FLOOR PLAN
TWO TEACHER COMMUNITY SCHOOL
TO FACE EAST OR WEST ONLY

# Rosenwald Reinterpreted



## Experiencing the Space
## What do you want to explore?

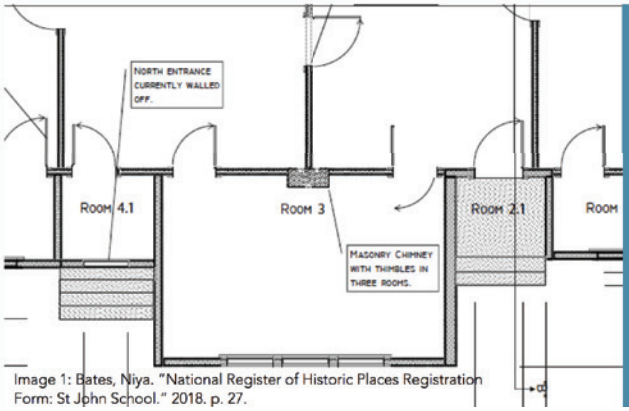


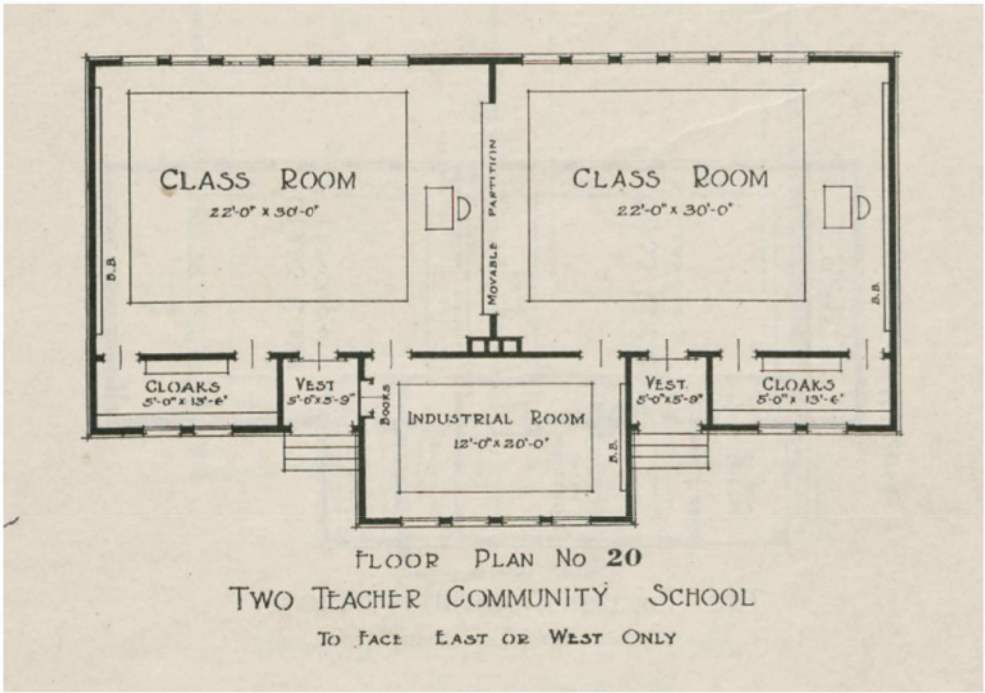

Image 1: Bates, Niya. "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: St John School." 2018. p. 27.

**The Interior Changes**

How has a building changed over its lifetime? What has been added? What has been removed? How has that affected the space today?

Hover over the Community School Plan No. 20, which was used to build St. Johns, to uncover the changes the schoolhouse has undergone since its construction.

The Exterior Views | The Interior Views | The Interior Changes

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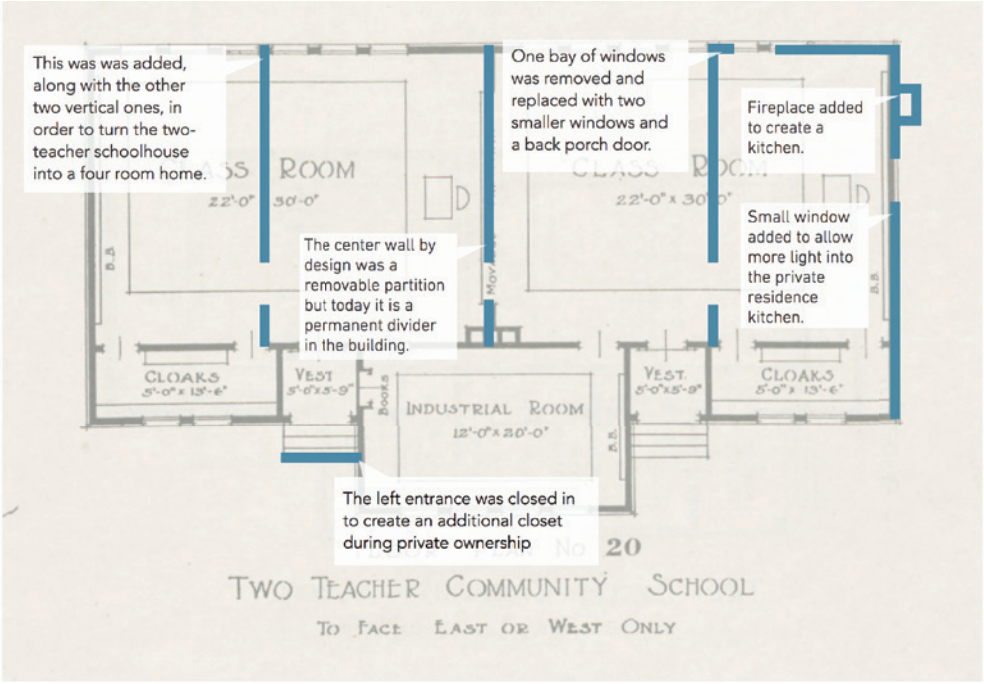
This was was added, along with the other two vertical ones, in order to turn the two-teacher schoolhouse into a four room home.
One bay of windows was removed and replaced with two smaller windows and a back porch door.
Fireplace added to create a kitchen.
Small window added to allow more light into the private residence kitchen.
The center wall by design was a removable partition but today it is a permanent divider in the building.
The left entrance was closed in to create an additional closet during private ownership
CLOAKS
VEST
INDUSTRIAL ROOM
12'-0" x 20'-0"
No 20
TWO TEACHER COMMUNITY SCHOOL
TO FACE EAST OR WEST ONLY

# Rosenwald Reinterpreted

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## Lighting and Windows

When it came, and actually comes to Rosenwald Schoolhouses, light was an important factor in understanding and experiencing the space.

When first constructed, electricity did not exist within the buildings, so daylight was key and the primary light source during the school day. The students and teachers needed to maximize their days and gain as much out of them as possible.

St. Johns was and still is no different from that of the "typical" community plan Rosenwald School. It has 3 primary bays of larger double-hung sash windows lining the east exterior wall. Originally there were four bays, but over the years and, due to private use, the most southern bay was removed and replaced by a back porch door and smaller windows.

The original wooden windows have been replaced with modern vinyl ones, however, it appears they stayed true to the planned locations.

The 9-by-9 windows maximize the light, while also allowing for great ventilation of the space.

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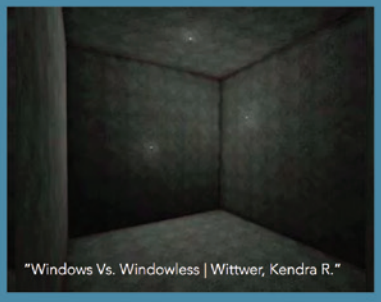
Image 3: Possible original wooden 6x6 double-hung sash window in storage, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 17, 2017.

## Imagine Yourself In The Space

Take a moment to look at the images above, you do not need to know the exact location of the windows, however, think about the effect this amount of light would have on you. When you are stuck in a small limited windowed classroom for hours you start to go stir-crazy. How do you alleviate that? You escape.

Hover over the image of the dark space. See what is exposed. Which do you prefer? Which would St. Johns' students prefer?

Some of the students were going from a poorly built shed, with no light other than from the door opening, to this two-teacher schoolhouse. The amount of light available in the space altered the experience completely.



"Windows Vs. Windowless | Wittwer, Kendra R."

# Imagine Yourself In The Space

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East Wall, Northern Most Room,
St. Johns School. Glatt

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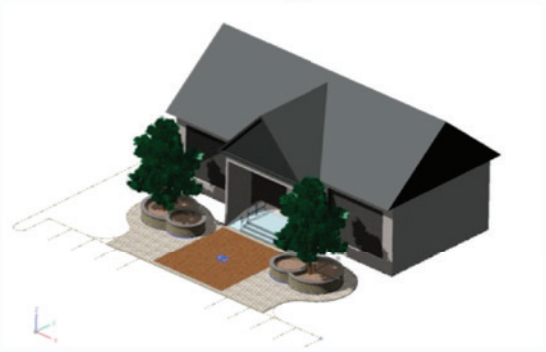
# Rosenwald Reinterpreted



## St. Johns Moving Forward



Additional Information:

- St. Johns National Register Nomination Form
- St. John Family Life and Fitness Center Website
- St. Johns Envisions Second Life
- St. Johns Gets a Historical Marker
- St. Johns Raising Funds
- St. Johns Historical Marker

St. Johns has a rich history through its architectural significance and connection to the Rosenwald Fund, but its key heritage is connected to the people. They are stepping away from the traditional interpretation of these schoolhouses by making the building truly serve the community again.

For years the schoolhouse taught elementary students and then, as stated, went into private ownership. But it is back with the community again.

They have determined that the most beneficial way the building will serve them is through a renovation in order to transform the building into the St. John Family Life and Fitness Center. The Center is still in the process of gathering funds in order for this future to become a reality.

For more information on the current condition of the schoolhouse and to contribute to the building and community's story, click the link "St. John Family Life and Fitness Center Website."

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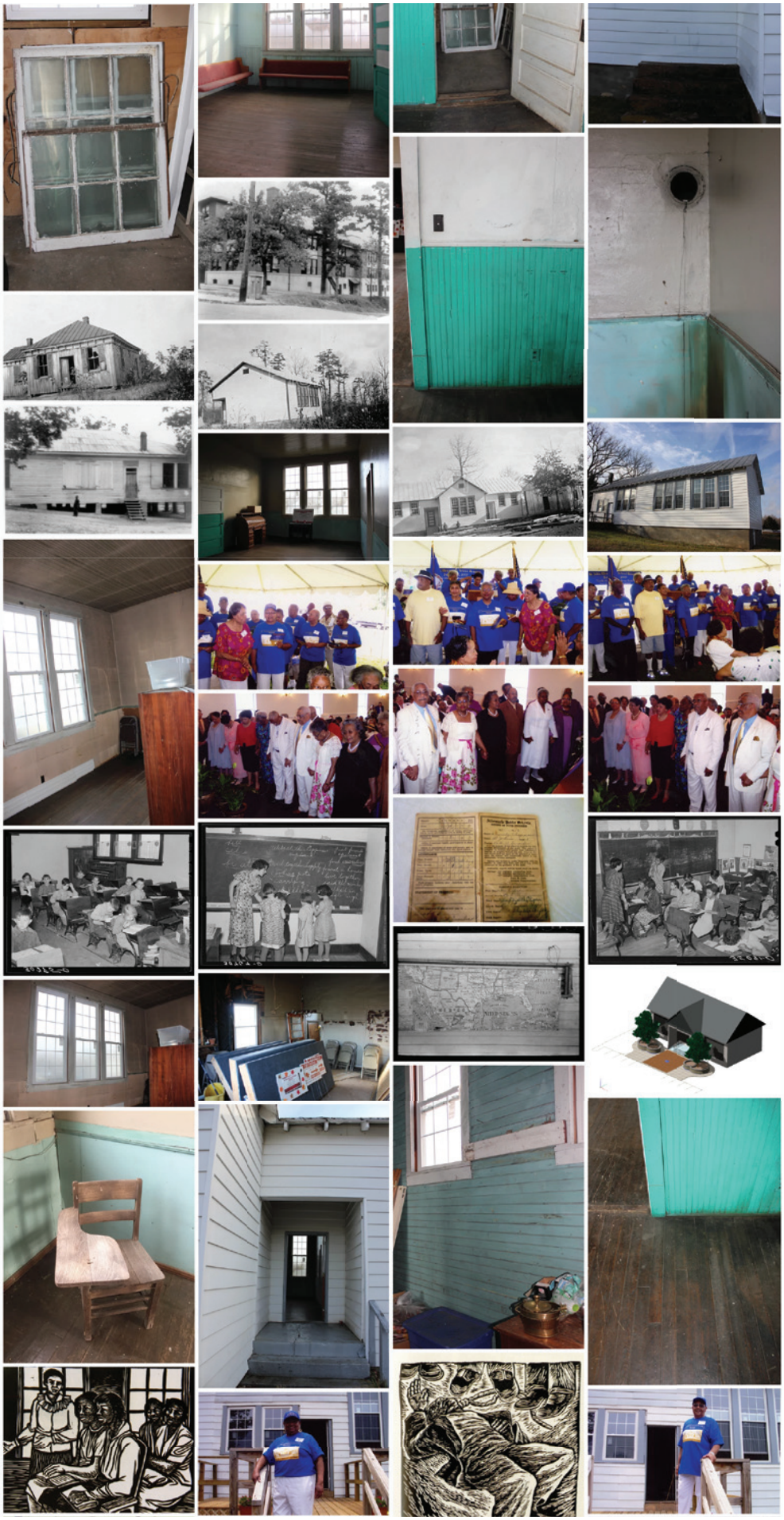
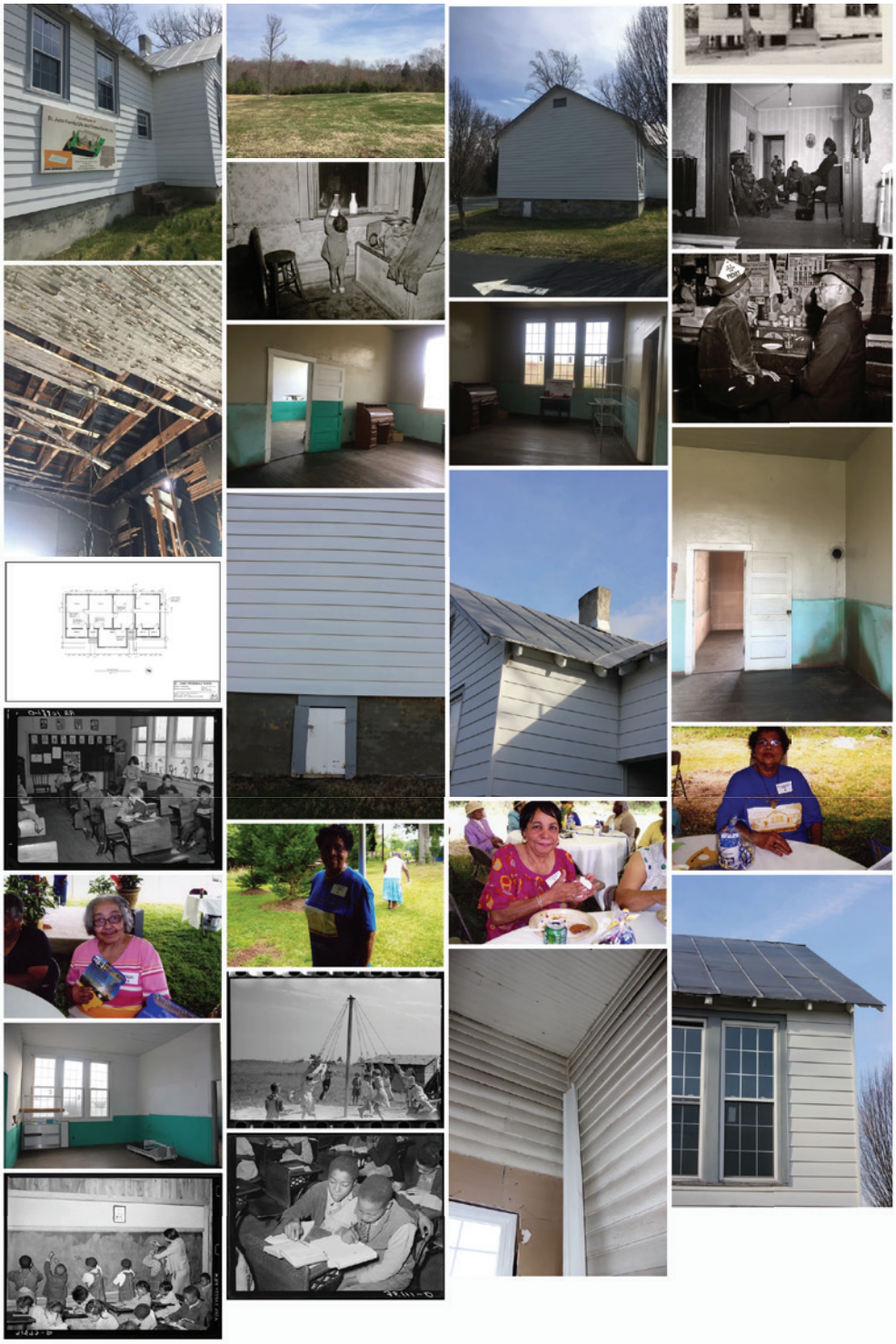
# Visual St. Johns

Each of the previous pages was scattered with photographs, drawings, and paintings but here is an opportunity to see all of them collected. See if you missed one or simply want to go back to something you already looked at. Each image has something new to uncover.

This is an opportunity to get away from all the words and explore the visuals of the entire site. Scroll through and click on any image to find out a little bit more information.




Booker T. Washington
COLORED ONLY



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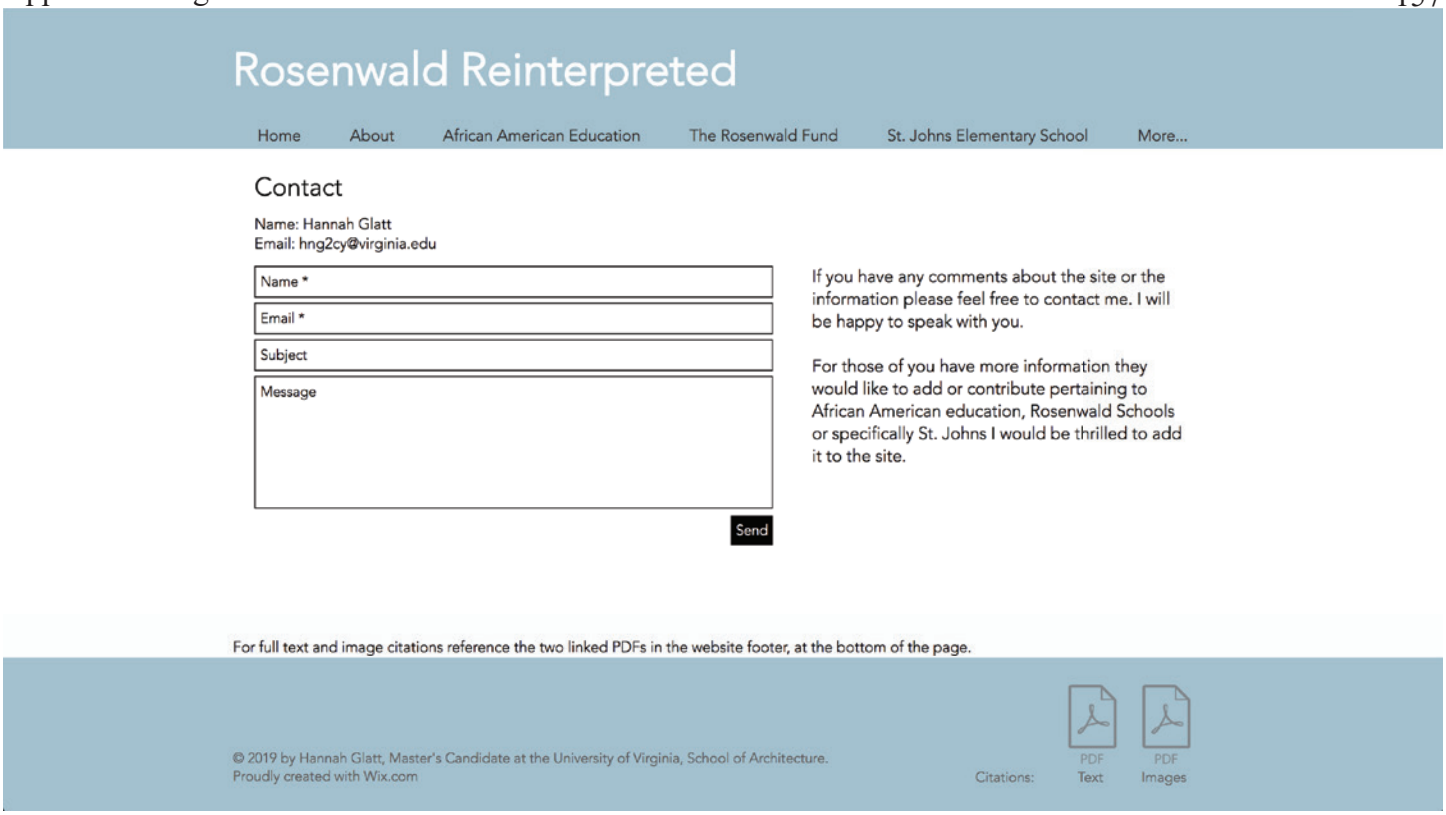
East Wall, Northern Most Room, St. Johns School, Albemarle County, Virginia. Photograph by Hannah Glatt. January 12, 2017.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If you have any comments about the site or the information please feel free to contact me. I will be happy to speak with you.
For those of you have more information they would like to add or contribute pertaining to African American education, Rosenwald Schools or specifically St. Johns I would be thrilled to add it to the site.
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