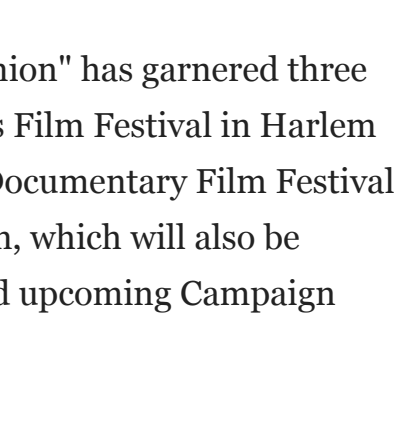


President's Message

2023 has been a very busy and productive year for the Campaign. We are thrilled to be gaining wider support for the National Historical Park.

This issue of the newsletter features an inspiring article by Sharon Davies, President and CEO of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, about the profound effect that a Rosenwald School in South Carolina had on her family. We are so pleased that Sharon recently joined the Campaign's Advisory Council and became a part of Team Rosenwald.



Dorothy Canter, President Rosenwald Campaign

The Campaign's 10-minute film "Rosenwald: Toward A More Perfect Union" has garnered three separate film festival awards: for best documentary short at the People's Film Festival in Harlem and the North Carolina Film Festival and for best story at the Toronto Documentary Film Festival. Several more film festivals in October and November will screen the film, which will also be featured at a number of other events, including museum exhibitions and upcoming Campaign programs.

On September 7 the National Park Service (NPS) held a public meeting at the San Domingo Rosenwald School in Wicomico County, Maryland, soliciting community input on the possibility of the school becoming a National Park unit. Representatives from two Maryland Congressional delegations attended the meeting. Newell Quinton, President of the John Quinton Foundation, owner of the school, reported that the meeting went very well.

We continue to evaluate sites in Chicago that could possibly house the ultimate visitor center for the National Historical Park. Of particular interest are sites within and near the original boundary of the former Sears, Roebuck merchandising plant in North Lawndale. Campaign Board members have met with several community representatives and a member of the newly elected city government. More meetings are in the offing.

The theme for the 2023 conference of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History held in Jacksonville, Florida, last week was Black Resistance. The Campaign held a session entitled Rosenwald Fellows: "Resisting Oppression, Promoting Excellence." The Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program is not nearly as well known as the Rosenwald Schools, but it played an important role in breaking down barriers to careers in academia, medicine, industry and government for African Americans.

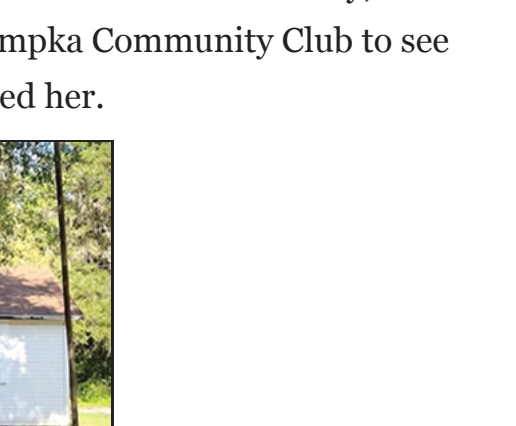
Although Julius Rosenwald dropped out of high school to learn the clothing trade in New York, he always valued education for all citizens as an essential path to making our nation a more just and democratic society. As he so aptly stated,

I do not see how America can go forward if part of its people are left behind.

Julius Rosenwald and the partnerships he formed with Booker T. Washington and nearly 5,000 African American communities across the South to provide the education sorely needed for equal opportunity is an inspiring part of twentieth century American history. A new National Park will preserve and promote this story, which is as relevant today as it was 100 years ago. The time to create it is now!

A Win for Rosenwald on National History Day

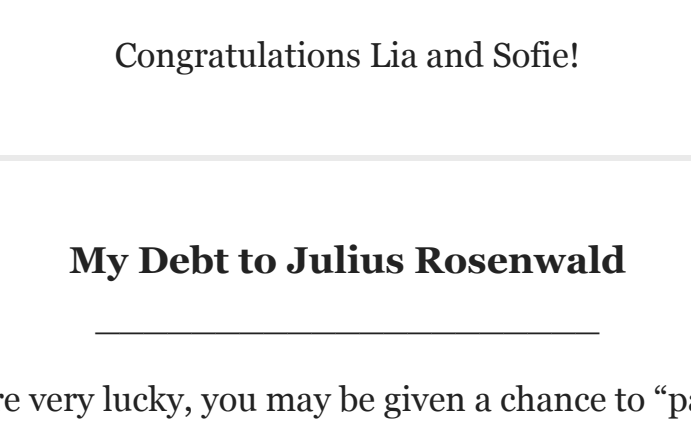
Lia Macdonnel and Sofie Devan are ninth graders at the American School in Singapore who traveled to the University of Maryland in June this year to compete in National History Day, a competition founded in 1974 to foster interest in and love of history. To their delight, in the Junior Group Performance category, their project won first prize. Their subject? Rosenwald Schools!



In their ten-minute dramatization Lia and Sophie portrayed guides at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture explaining to visitors the story of the schools created by the partnership of Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald as they collaborated with communities across the South during Jim Crow segregation to provide schools for African American children.

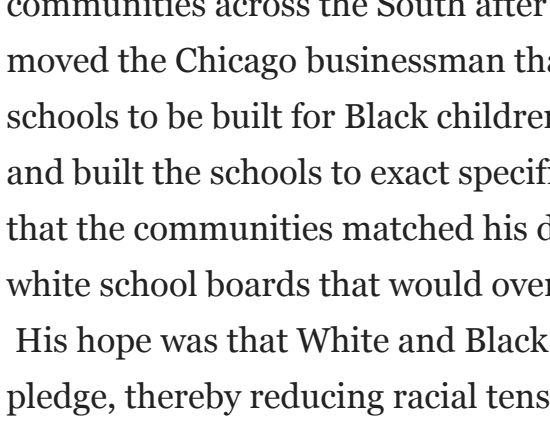
Lia said the choice of topic had been "quite random." Sofie's mother had put together a "giant" list of possible topics, one of which was Rosenwald Schools. Nobody seemed to know much about it, which was part of the appeal. Lia said they wanted to do a story that hadn't been done much before, and she wanted a connection to the Civil Rights movement. And when she mentioned the topic to her history teacher, she was astonished to learn that he owned a copy of Booker T. Washington's book Up From Slavery that had been signed by the author.

It was luck that took Lia's family to Florida and South Carolina and Sofie's family to Georgia on vacation last Christmas. Internet research revealed a Rosenwald School in Lake County, close to where Lia would be. She cold called Chip d'Amico of the Okahumpka Community Club to see if she could visit the Okahumpka School. His response astonished her.



Okahumpka Rosenwald School (Courtesy S. Deutsch)

"I was a random 8th grade student from across the world," she said. He not only agreed to show her around the school but made arrangements for her to meet Harriet Hawkins, a graduate of the school, and to speak by phone with Stephanie Deutsch after the visit.



Mr. Elms, Lia and Sofie (Courtesy L. Macdonnel)

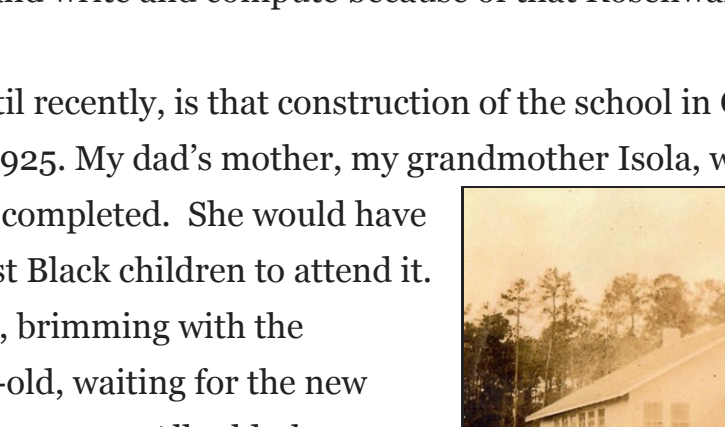
So on Christmas Eve, her hands turning blue from the unexpected cold, Lia met Chip and Ms. Hawkins at the school. Their enthusiasm for the story and their positive attitude reinforced her enthusiasm for the topic. Speaking with Stephanie filled in some gaps in the story. Hard work with her friend Sofie every day after school over the spring semester and on lots of Saturdays and Sundays brought the story to life. Their teacher, Matthew Elms, encouraged them saying "You can do this for the prize or you can do this for you." It ended up being both – a powerful experience of personal growth for Lia and Sofie and the reward of both recognition and a check. An added treat was that Mr. Elms was on hand to see their success.

Congratulations Lia and Sofie!

My Debt to Julius Rosenwald

Sometimes in life, if you are very lucky, you may be given a chance to "pay forward" on a debt you owe to a stranger. When I first heard that Dorothy Canter was building support for the creation of a National Park to commemorate the extraordinary legacy of Julius Rosenwald, I knew I had found my chance. Very few of us were taught in our American history courses about Julius Rosenwald's creation of a fund at the beginning of the 20th century to build schools for Black children across the south during the age of Jim Crow. Without a determined effort to remember him, Julius Rosenwald is in danger of being forgotten altogether, a determined effort to remember him, Julius Rosenwald is in danger of being forgotten altogether, just when we need the encouragement of his unparalleled example.

The "Rosenwald Schools", as they came to be known, grew out several conversations that Tuskegee President Booker T. Washington had with Julius Rosenwald, the then fabulously successful CEO of Sears, Roebuck, about the lack of schools for Black children in rural communities across the South after the conclusion of the Civil War. Booker T's descriptions so moved the Chicago businessman that Rosenwald leaped in to help. He agreed to help pay for schools to be built for Black children, provided the communities themselves had skin in the game and built the schools to exact specifications to ensure their quality. He set two conditions: first, that the communities matched his donation with their own, in cash or kind, and second, that the white school boards that would oversee the schools agreed to operate and maintain the schools. His hope was that White and Black community members would work together to match his pledge, thereby reducing racial tensions over time.



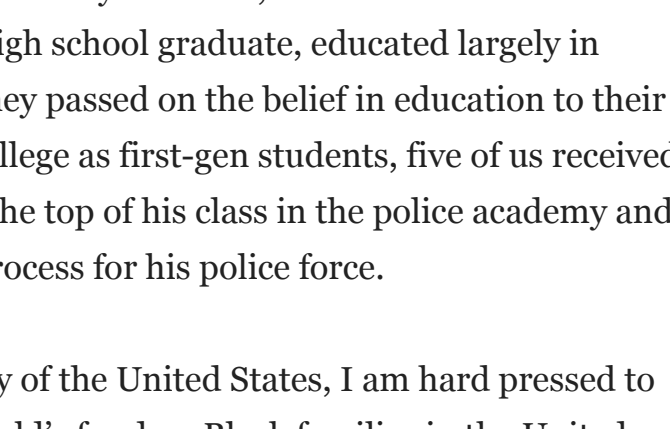
THE JULIUS ROSENWALD FUND SCHOOLS DISTRIBUTION MAP 300 SCHOOLS JULY 1, 1912 Source: National Park Service

The scope of the building project grew quickly and dramatically, starting with the construction of schools in communities near Tuskegee, then other counties in Alabama, and then farther away still. Remarkably, even after Booker T. Washington died, Rosenwald's commitment to the project never flagged, until finally Rosenwald schools and shops and teacher homes stretched across eleven former Confederacy states, plus Oklahoma, Missouri, Kentucky and Maryland as well – all of them beacons of hope.

If more African Americans knew of this history, a large percentage of Black families would be able to trace their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents back to one of those schools. Just as I can.

My father was born in 1932 in a small farming community in Marion County, South Carolina, in a town named Centenary. Upon their application for a school, the Rosenwald fund pledged the residents of Centenary \$700. Records reveal that the Black members of Centenary community contributed \$400, in cash, labor, or materials, and although not an exact match, the administrators of the fund approved the school to be built. My dad and his siblings had the chance to learn to read and write and compute because of that Rosenwald school.

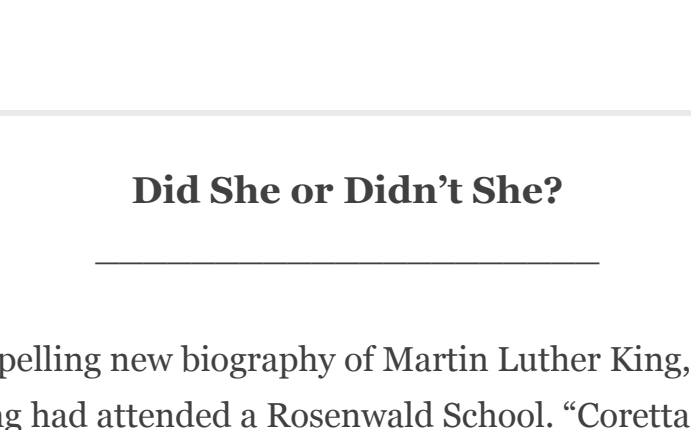
What I did not know until recently, is that construction of the school in Centenary was started in 1924 and completed in 1925. My dad's mother, my grandmother Isola, would have been just 10 or 11 years old when it was completed. She would have been among the very first Black children to attend it. I can easily imagine her, brimming with the excitement of a 10-year-old, waiting for the new school for Black children to open. All told, the Rosenwald fund provided money for 23 schools to be built in Marion County, S.C., alone, 500 across the state, and more than 5,000 schools, shops and teacher homes across the South. Somehow, Black communities raised more than \$4.7M to help construct the schools, a mind-blowing feat.



Centenary School, Marion County, SC Park University, Rosenwald Fund Archives

The background context is well known to us. This was during a time when white southerners openly opposed education for Blacks as a threat to their established social and economic hierarchy and system of white supremacy. Before the Civil War, Blacks had been excluded from the limited public schools built in the south, and most southern states prohibited Blacks from being taught to read and write. After the war, southern states refused to appropriate meaningful funds for public education for Black students. It was common for local school boards which distributed state school funds created by White and Black tax dollars, to divert the share that should have gone to Black schools, to White schools instead.

The Rosenwald School Fund impacted the trajectory of countless Black families like mine and is credited with a large portion of the educational gains made by southern Blacks during this period. The education that my grandmother and my father received may not have been the best that we can imagine for our children today, but they would have received far less education without their Rosenwald school.

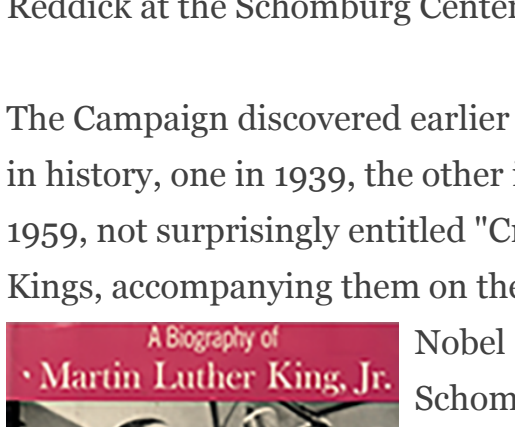


Grandmother Isola Davis, center front, father Forrest Davis, far left front and 7 siblings (Courtesy S. Devan)

I am certain that my father's experiences attending that school were part of what instilled in him a deep belief in the transformative power of education. Some years later, while he was in the military, my father met my mother. My mom was a high school graduate, educated largely in Catholic schools in upstate NY. After they married, they passed on the belief in education to their six children. All six of us went on to graduate from college as first-gen students, five of us received advanced degrees as well, and the sixth graduated at the top of his class in the police academy and then designed and led the professional certification process for his police force.

As I have reflected on philanthropic gifts in the history of the United States, I am hard pressed to think of any that surpass the impact of Julius Rosenwald's fund on Black families in the United States, and by extension, our larger society. Although it is not possible to know all of the ripple effects of Rosenwald's fund on the social mobility of Black Americans, without those 5,000 schools, shops and teacher homes, southern Black children would have been left largely uneducated and unable to lead the lives that education enables us to lead.

Now in my role as President & CEO of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, a private operating foundation dedicated to the advancement of inclusive democracy around the globe, I think often about the care we must take to remember the stories of men like Julius Rosenwald, which otherwise are so easily lost to history. Celebrating our national heroes is not simply their due, it is a gift of inspiration to ourselves. A beautiful reminder of what is possible when we demonstrate concern for the status and opportunities of others. We are living in a moment marred by divisiveness, not so unlike many other moments in American history. The example of Julius Rosenwald challenges us to find new ways to be better together. May we never forget him.



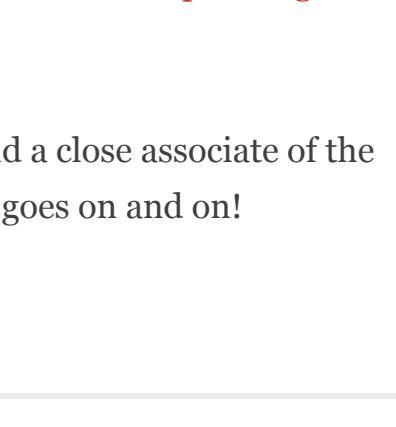
By Sharon L. Davies

Did She or Didn't She?

In "King: A Life," the compelling new biography of Martin Luther King, Jr. by Jonathan Eig, I read that Coretta Scott King had attended a Rosenwald School. "Coretta walked five miles to attend the Crossroads School," Eig writes, "a one-room schoolhouse with outdoor toilets, built with money donated by Julius Rosenwald, one of the founders of Sears, Roebuck and Co." I made note to myself that Eig had gotten a detail wrong -- Rosenwald was NOT, in fact, one of the founders of Sears, although Richard Sears and he made it the retailing powerhouse of the early twentieth century. But I was excited to learn that young Coretta Scott had attended a Rosenwald School in Alabama. This was a prominent Rosenwald alumna of whom I had not been aware.

The Campaign's President, Dorothy Canter, a retired EPA scientist, dampened my enthusiasm some when she cautioned that we needed to have more evidence before going public with such a claim. So the two of us dug deeper.

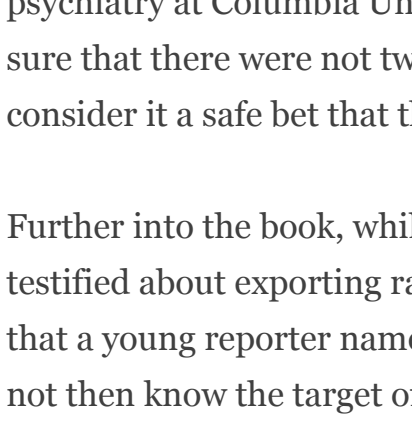
Dorothy located a biography by Coretta's older sister Edythe Scott Bagley, which supported Eig's statement. In her book, "Desert Rose: The Life and Legacy of Coretta Scott King," Bagley stated unequivocally that she and Coretta attended the Crossroads Rosenwald School, noting that it had been built as a one-teacher school "with large windows that allowed light to enter from the right side of the building."



My first step was an easy one. I contacted DeLisa Minor Harris, assistant director of the John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library at Fisk University, and asked her to check the official database of Rosenwald Schools there. The database is temporarily off-line while the Rosenwald Fund archives are being digitized. She got right back to me. No Crossroads Rosenwald School in Perry County, Alabama.

I then checked the notes at the end of Eig's book and found the author credited his information about the school to "Crusader Without Violence," a "typed manuscript" in the papers of L.D. Reddick at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library.

The Campaign discovered earlier this year that Reddick received two Rosenwald Fund fellowships in 1939, one in 1939, the other in 1945, and that he published the first biography of King in 1959, not surprisingly entitled "Crusader Without Violence." Reddick was a close associate of the Kings, accompanying them on their five-week visit to India in 1959 and to Oslo in 1964 for the Nobel Prize ceremony. It is not surprising that his papers are in the Schomburg Center -- he was curator of the Collection of Negro Literature there from 1939 to 1948.



Recently the Campaign acquired a first edition copy of Reddick's biography of Martin Luther King, Jr. to add to its collection of memorabilia pertaining to Rosenwald Fund fellows. So we checked the section on Coretta's education, which stated that she attended the Crossroads School in Perry County and then the Lincoln High School in Marion, Alabama, each for six years. Reddick made no mention of their being Rosenwald Schools.

In her book, "Coretta, My Life, My Love, My Legacy," Coretta herself says nothing about her education having started in a Rosenwald School. She recounts her journey from rural Alabama to Antioch College in Ohio, where she studied music and became politically active in the emerging Civil Rights movement. After receiving a scholarship to study singing, she transferred to the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. There she met the young Martin Luther King, who was working towards his PhD at Boston University's School of Theology. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Obviously, I thought to myself, there is a trip to the Schomburg Center in my future to examine all of Reddick's papers! In the meantime, based on what we have been able to discover, we cannot assert that Coretta Scott King attended a Rosenwald School.

But if anyone has more information on this issue, please share it at info@rosenwaldpark.org. We would love to hear from you!

And it's good to have discovered L.D. Reddick, a significant historian and a close associate of the Kings -- and also a notable Rosenwald Fellow! The journey of discovery goes on and on!

By Stephanie Deutsch

J. Robert Oppenheimer and the Rosenwald Family

For 15 years, the weighty tome "American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer" sat untouched on my bedside table.

In July, my brother and I went to see the movie "Oppenheimer." That finally stimulated me to start the book. While reading about Oppenheimer's first years of heading the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton following World War II, I learned that one of the three experts in psychology that he brought to the Institute for short term appointments was Dr. David Levy, a renowned child psychiatrist. Stephanie Deutsch had previously told me that the psychiatrist David Levy was the second husband of Adele Rosenwald, one of the three daughters of Julius Rosenwald, and the grandmother of her husband David. So I did an online search and found Levy's obituary, which stated that he introduced the Rorschach test for measuring personality traits and general intelligence in the US and coined the term "sibling rivalry."

I knew already from Stephanie that Dr. Levy was a mentor to Dr. Margaret Morgan Lawrence, a child psychiatrist and Rosenwald Fund Fellow whose fellowship in medicine in 1942 enabled her to obtain a Masters' degree at Columbia University. She went on to become a clinical associate professor of psychiatry at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. One cannot be absolutely sure that there were not two renowned child psychologists in the 1940s named David Levy, but I consider it a safe bet that there was only one!

Further into the book, while reading about the 1949 Congressional hearing at which Oppenheimer testified about exporting radioisotopes and belittled prior testimony by Lewis Strauss, I learned that a young reporter named Philip Stern was present. A grandson of Julius Rosenwald, Stern did not then know the target of the sarcasm, but stated "it was clear that Oppenheimer was making a fool of someone." Strauss, who was also present at the hearing, was the mastermind behind and relentless pursuer of removing Oppenheimer's security clearance in 1954. Philip Stern published in 1966 the critically acclaimed book "The Oppenheimer Case: Security on Trial."

No accounting for where one might learn more about the Rosenwald family!

I am no movie critic, but I highly recommend seeing the movie "Oppenheimer."

By Dorothy Canter

"All the other pleasures of life seem to wear out, but the pleasure of helping others in distress never does." - Julius Rosenwald

We need your support to create the Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park.

For questions and suggestions, please write to info@rosenwaldpark.org.

Stephanie Deutsch, editor September 27, 2023