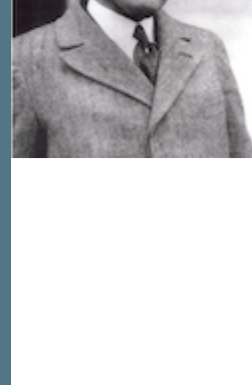


Creating the Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park

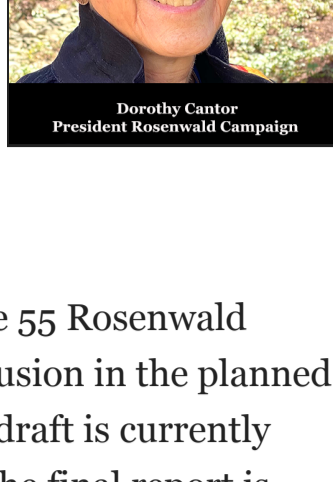


"All the other pleasures of life seem to wear out, but the pleasure of helping others in distress never does."
JULIUS ROSENWALD



President's Message

This issue of the Campaign Update focuses on the ways in which Julius Rosenwald touched many lives, both through his leadership of Sears, Roebuck & Company, and his visionary philanthropy. The Campaign is grateful to Debby Greenberg, a Campaign supporter, for recommending the memoir by Katherine Johnson and for providing input on the article about her. We encourage others to submit information on the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools that could be used in future issues to info@rosenwaldpark.org.



The Campaign has received the first complete draft of the report on the 55 Rosenwald Schools and one teacher home recommended to the Campaign for inclusion in the planned Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park. The draft is currently being reviewed by the Campaign Board. The projected release date of the final report is early September, at which time it will be submitted to the National Park Service to assist its staff in conducting the special research study mandated by the law signed earlier this year. The Campaign will make the report available to all interested parties and post it on its website.

I am pleased to announce that since early June six more organizations have become official supporters of creating the Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park, bringing the total to 55. They represent a broad spectrum of constituencies, including National Park and historic preservation groups, Civil Rights groups, churches, synagogues, and other Jewish organizations. Also, the support groups for seven Rosenwald Schools have now joined the campaign to express official support were the Washington Hebrew Congregation and the Mildred Ridgley Gray Charitable Trust, Inc. We encourage our subscribers to identify other organizations that might be interested in becoming supporters. Please contact me at dorothycenter@rosenwaldpark.org for additional information and/or to receive the current list of supporting organizations.

Two donors just delivered to the Campaign a scale model of a 1920s Sears kit house to add to its collection of Sears and Rosenwald memorabilia. The Summer 2021 Campaign newsletter will feature an article on the model. Please stay tuned.

The Campaign greatly appreciates the support of its donors and subscribers. Together we will establish the National Historical Park and ensure that the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald and his partnership with African American communities across the South will not be forgotten.

The Man Who Saved Sears

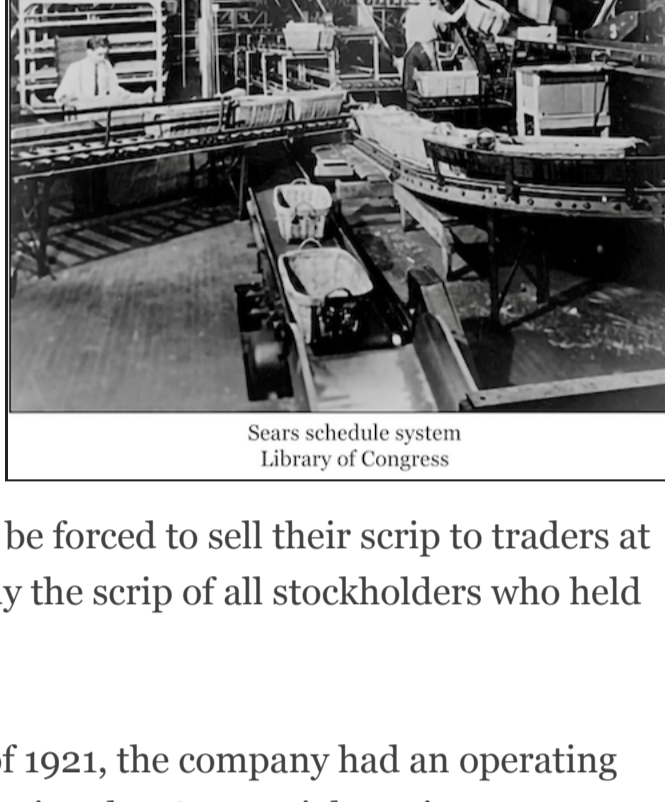
One of the great pioneers of business management, Julius Rosenwald not only took the key actions to make Sears, Roebuck & Company the retailing powerhouse of the early twentieth century but also later saved the company and thereafter a number of its employees from financial ruin.

Richard Sears, the founder of Sears, Roebuck, was a gifted salesman (a colleague once said Sears could sell "a breath of air") but hardly a businessman. In 1895 his original partner Alvah Roebuck withdrew from the company. Sears offered a half interest in it to Aaron Nussbaum, Rosenwald's brother-in-law. Nussbaum asked Rosenwald to buy one-half of his share. Rosenwald, then in the wholesale men's clothing business in Chicago, readily accepted the offer, noting that Sears already owed him money for large orders of men's suits.

He quickly observed how chaotically Sears, Roebuck was being run. Orders piled up and often were not filled or filled with the wrong items, which led to an excessive number of returns. Also, operations were spread over downtown Chicago. Realizing that the company needed a system for processing the rapidly multiplying orders and the space in which to track, assemble and ship them, he insisted that the company build a huge merchandising facility on the West Side of Chicago.

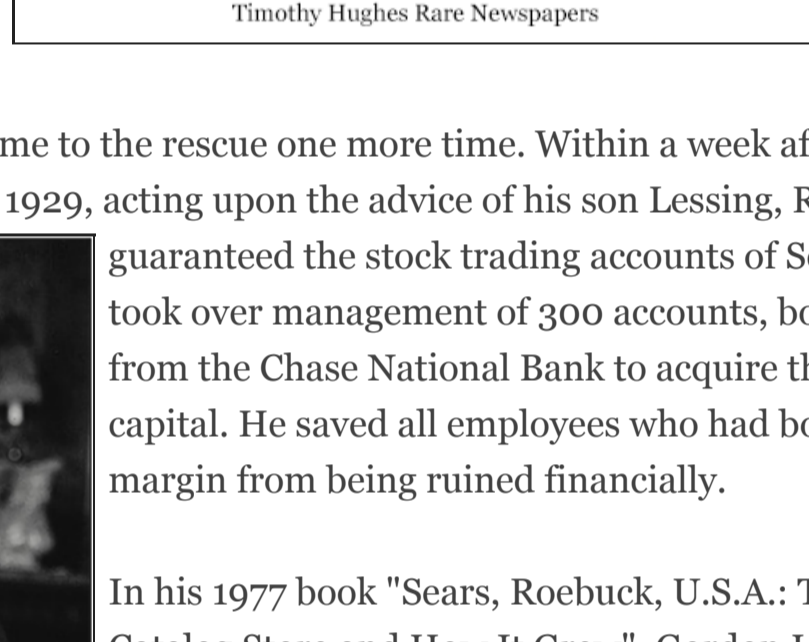
Rosenwald combined excellent management skills with idealism. He insisted on the need for honesty in the Sears catalogues and other advertising. Rosenwald also insisted that the customers had to be kept happy, coining the phrase "Satisfaction guaranteed, or your money back." Rosenwald created the Sears employee profit-sharing plan in 1916, one of the first in the nation. It would serve as the company's pension plan until 1977.

Following World War I a big surge in demand for retail items led Sears to increase its inventory substantially, often paying inflated prices. In 1920 a serious recession struck, and Sears was not able to sell off its inventory. The company sold \$50 million in notes at seven percent interest in October 1920 and then missed its quarterly dividend in March 1921, issuing scrip instead. Worried about small investors who might be forced to sell their scrip to traders at a big discount, Rosenwald offered to personally buy the scrip of all stockholders who held less than 50 shares of Sears at full face value.



Sears schedule system
Library of Congress

But those measures were not enough. By the end of 1921, the company had an operating loss of almost \$16.5 million. Rumors started circulating that Sears might go into bankruptcy. Gambling that demand would return when the economy improved, Rosenwald personally donated 50,000 shares of Sears stock to its treasury and bought its real estate assets. These actions were pivotal in turning the company around. When the economy recovered, Sears began to grow again. His heroic gesture paid off.



Front page NY Times, December 30, 1921
Timothy Hughes Rare Newspapers

Julius Rosenwald came to the rescue one more time. Within a week after the stock market crash of October 29, 1929, acting upon the advice of his son Lessing, Rosenwald guaranteed the stock trading accounts of Sears employees. He took over management of 300 accounts, borrowing \$7 million from the Chase National Bank to acquire the needed working capital. He saved all employees who had bought stock on margin from being ruined financially.

In his 1977 book "Sears, Roebuck, U.S.A.: The Great American Catalog Store and How It Grew", Gordon L. Weil stated that "never before and never again in the annals of American business would a stockholder of a huge corporation step in with his personal finances to save the company." Rosenwald saved the company in 1921 and then its employees in 1929.

What Did Ralph Ellison and Gordon Parks Have In Common?

Ralph Ellison, author of the acclaimed and provocative 1952 novel *Invisible Man*, and photographer Gordon Parks shared a common vision of American racial injustices and belief in the communicative power of photography. They were also close friends.

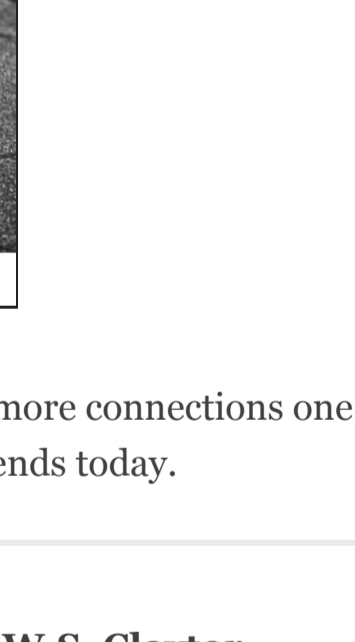
And both Ellison and Parks were Rosenwald Fellows. Ellison received his award in 1945 in creative writing, and Parks his fellowship in 1942 in photography.

In 1952 they collaborated on an article for the August 25th issue of *Life* magazine, "A Man Becomes Invisible," promoting Ellison's newly released novel. One of the photographs was of an actor emerging from a manhole cover. The book won the U.S. National Book Award for Fiction that year and went on to become an iconic work. Ellison received many awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom.



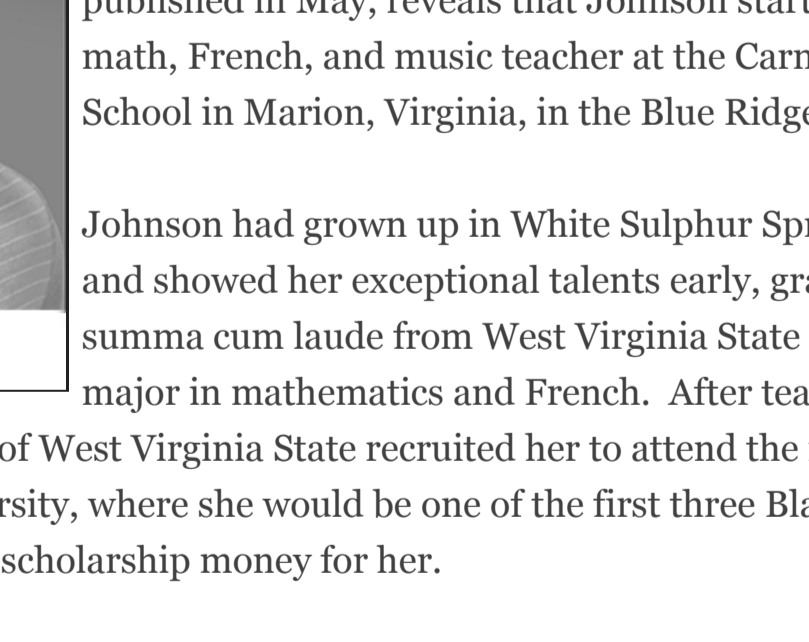
Life magazine, August 25, 1952

A renowned photographer, musician, writer, and film director, Parks focused on civil rights, poverty, and African-Americans but also in fashion. Parks took the famous photos of Black children being shown dolls of different skin colors by social psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Phipps Clark as part of their research into the self-esteem of the children. The Clarks' research played a pivotal role in the briefs supporting the *Brown v. Board of Education* lawsuit. And -- no surprise -- both Clarks were also Rosenwald fellows.



Gordon Parks, 1947

Many years later Andrew Feiler took a photograph of Gordon Parks' daughter, Leslie Parks Bailey, sitting on a manhole cover holding a framed photo of her father, a self-portrait that Parks submitted with his application for the Rosenwald Fund fellowship. Feiler's wife Laura had become friends with Bailey in yoga class. The photograph is included in Feiler's new book "A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America."



Courtesy of © Andrew Feiler, andrewfeiler.com

The more one researches the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald the more connections one discovers. His investments in people are still paying significant dividends today.

Investing in People: Katherine Johnson and William W.S. Claytor

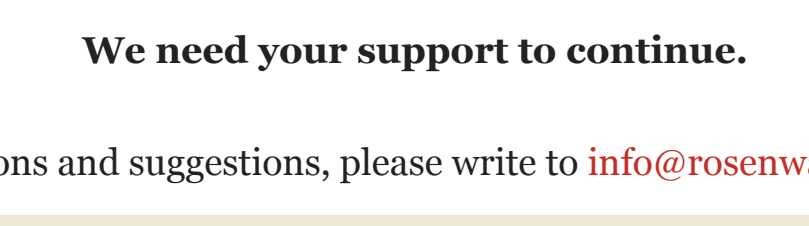
The philanthropy of Julius Rosenwald impacted the early careers of two gifted individuals whose exemplary lives and interlocking careers demonstrate the value of investing, as the Rosenwald Fund did, in people.

The 2016 feature film "Hidden Figures" introduced the world to Katherine Johnson (1918 – 2020), the brilliant NASA research mathematician whose calculations were critical to the success of the first series of NASA space launches. Her memoir, "My Remarkable Journey," published in May, reveals that Johnson started her career as a math, French, and music teacher at the Carnegie Rosenwald School in Marion, Virginia, in the Blue Ridge mountains.

Johnson had grown up in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and showed her exceptional talents early, graduating at age 18 summa cum laude from West Virginia State College with a dual major in mathematics and French. After teaching for several years, the President of West Virginia State recruited her to attend the newly integrating West Virginia University, where she would be one of the first three Black graduate students, and found scholarship money for her.

Marriage and motherhood would end Johnson's graduate career but not her long-term goal of becoming a research mathematician. She continued to work as a teacher until the opportunity opened for her to apply for a job at NASA, where she worked from 1953 until her retirement in 1986.

In 2015 President Barack Obama awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom saying "Katherine G. Johnson was a pioneer who broke the barriers of race and gender, showing generations of young people that everyone can excel in math and science, and reach for the stars." NASA dedicated two major research facilities in her name, one in Virginia in 2016 and the other in West Virginia in 2019 to honor her legacy.



2015 Medal of Freedom Award Ceremony
France 24

This exceptional career was encouraged early on by her professor and mentor William Waldron Schieffelin Claytor (1908 – 1967), the third African-American to earn a PhD in mathematics. After Johnson completed every math course offered by the college, he added several more to the curriculum specifically for her. Prophetically, the last course was Analytic Geometry of Space.

Dr. Claytor received his undergraduate and master's degrees from Howard University and his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. After teaching for three years at West Virginia State College, he received two Julius Rosenwald Fund fellowships to do postgraduate work at the University of Michigan. After serving in the Army in World War II, he taught at Howard University from 1947 until his retirement in 1965, serving as department chair.

The transformative philanthropy of Julius Rosenwald provided opportunities to both of these exceptional people to make a difference by contributing to the advancement of American science and mathematics.

I can testify that it is nearly always easier to make \$1,000,000 honestly than to dispose of it wisely.
 Julius Rosenwald

Stephanie Deutsch, editor

DONATE

We need your support to continue.

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