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“THEY DID THIS WORK”: BLACK ACTIVISM, EDUCATION, AND THE ROSENWALD RURAL SCHOOL-BUILDING PROGRAM IN KENTUCKY

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“THEY DID THIS WORK”: BLACK ACTIVISM, EDUCATION, AND THE ROSENWALD RURAL SCHOOL-BUILDING PROGRAM IN KENTUCKY

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts & Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

Le Datta Denise Grimes

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Gerald L. Smith, Professor of History

Lexington, Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

"THEY DID THIS WORK":
BLACK ACTIVISM, EDUCATION, AND THE ROSENWALD RURAL SCHOOL-BUILDING PROGRAM IN KENTUCKY

This study examines what Black Kentuckians did on their own behalf to educate themselves in the early twentieth century. I argue that Black Kentuckians' agency and activism formed the bedrock of the Rosenwald movement in Kentucky. From 1917 to 1932, they built 158 Rosenwald Schools across the Bluegrass by welding together multiple strategies of resistance. Such agitation included voluntarily taxing themselves, waging legal battles, deploying military-style fundraising campaigns, and building institutions to support their schools. Seeking first-class citizenship, they also volunteered labor, donated land, and bought supplies to uplift themselves and their community through education. This work took place against a backdrop of White superiority, Jim Crow laws, systemic discrimination, and the threat of violence. Yet Black Kentuckians persevered making use of philanthropies such as the Rosenwald Rural School Building Program (Rrsbp), which produced Rosenwald Schools, to foment their own educational goals.

In the early twentieth century, the Rrsbp was one of many Northern agencies working to shape Southern Black Education. It differed, however, in important ways that afforded Black Kentuckians historical agency and aided them in building architecturally advanced schools, expanding school terms, and increasing teacher pay. While most narratives of the Rrsbp center the work of Jewish philanthropist Julius Rosenwald and his benevolence, my work specifically explores the work of Booker T. Washington, who created the program and administered it along with his cohorts at Tuskegee. It positions him as the social architect of the program and demonstrates how Washington empowered Black Kentuckians at the state and local levels by creating specific leadership roles in the program for Black men and women. They, in turn, used those roles not only to build up

their communities, but to promote their own professional goals. Ultimately, they became some of the first Black men and women to work in state government post-Reconstruction.

KEYWORDS: Kentucky, African Americans, Rosenwald Schools, Education, Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald

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09/01/2021

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This is a journey I never thought I would take. I was content with a bachelor's degree and my career in journalism, and never thought I'd continue my education. I had the career I wanted, work that bristled with daily excitement, and I was content. That was it. That was all. Only. Then came changes that rocked the journalism world as we once knew it. I returned to school by faith – with absolutely no intention of getting a degree: I just wanted to learn something new. I applied to the history department because I loved history, particularly Black History. Then, slowly and surely, this became a process of real inquiry, research, and revelation. Some things I understood. Others I did not. I was a voracious reader – but I had to learn how to read academically. I was an award-winning writer, but I had to learn how to write for scholars, which, at times, defied every journalist instinct in me. It was hard, but I have now reached completion – by grace.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Rosenwald Schools weren't always known as such. Instead, they were once named for the Black communities that built and attended them.[1] In Kentucky, there were 158 schools and teacher cottages built from 1917 to 1932, and they originally had names like the Russellville School (Logan County), the Jeffersontown School (Jefferson County), and the Mayslick School (Mason County).[2] These names, though simple and seemingly uninspired, speak volumes and they point to a long tradition of Black agitation and activism for better schools and education. They tell us who the schools belonged to and whose ideas informed them. And, their very existence points to Black Kentuckians belief in education as a tool of uplift and their desire to free themselves from forced ignorance, and thereby White superiority, subjugation, and dehumanization.

Though the schools were ultimately named for Julius Rosenwald, a business magnate and philanthropist who provided small grants to help build the schools, many of these schools existed before Black Kentuckians ever heard of the Rosenwald rural school-building program (Rrsbp). They were built by Black communities with the most meager of funds and later rebuilt or expanded after the Rrsbp, which provided aid to counties who agreed to increase their spending on Black education, arrived in Kentucky

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[1] In accordance with Mary Hoffschwelle's seminal text, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, this study uses Rosenwald Schools to refer to a distinct body of Black schools in Kentucky that received a grant from either Julius Rosenwald, his philanthropic organization, the Rosenwald Fund, or the Rosenwald rural school-building program (Rrsbp), which was the name of the larger, overarching school-building construction project. This is important to note because all Rosenwald Schools were Black schools, but not all Black schools were Rosenwald Schools. Some were built and funded by the state, while most during this era were built by Black grassroots efforts and churches with the aid and support of benevolent societies.

[2] Edwin R. Embree, "Julius Rosenwald Fund: A Review of Two Decades, 1917-1936," (Chicago 1930) 23. Accessed December 12, 2019 https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.77971/page/n7/mode/2up.; Fisk University Rosenwald Fund Card File Database, John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library Special Collections and Archives, Fisk University, Nashville, TN. Accessed at http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/. Hereinafter Rosenwald Database.

in 1917. How Black Kentuckians enfolded the Rrsbp into their long tradition of educational activism was evidenced in Campbellsville in 1918. When Black Kentuckians sought to replace their old school built in 1913, the county board of education allotted them $1,500. They raised an additional $500, but still fell short of the funds needed to complete a new school. They then turned to the Rrsbp, which had only recently arrived in the state. Acknowledging the grassroots activism of Black Kentuckians in Campbellsville, Francis Marion (F. M.) Wood, a Black educator and Kentucky's state director of the Rosenwald Fund, wrote "They did this work before they had heard of the Rosenwald Fund for Kentucky."[3] This was the case in numerous communities across the Bluegrass, demonstrating that the Rrsbp was not the impetus for Black school-building campaigns across the state, but a much-needed resource to continue their work of building and equipping better schools.

To date, there is very little scholarship on Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky, and the lone work concerning them is Alicestyne Turley-Adams's *Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky, 1917-1932*. Undertaken as a report for the Kentucky Heritage Council and the Kentucky African American Heritage Commission, Turley-Adams' work offered cursory information on Julius Rosenwald, the Rosenwald Fund, and Black education in Kentucky, and served as a springboard for this study. Her central focus, however, was Rosenwald school buildings, their architecture, designs, and costs. This is understandable given that the Rrsbp on its face was an architectural venture meant to construct quality school buildings for Black rural youths. The schools, however, embodied so much more meaning than this. Beyond Turley-Adams's work, there is William E. Ellis's *A History*

[3] F. M. Wood to Clinton J. Calloway, September 28, 1918, Series 18, Clinton J. Calloway Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL. Hereinafter CJCC-TUA.

of Education in Kentucky. Ellis's work, which traces in great detail the evolution of public education in Kentucky as well as the politics that stymied its growth for both Black and White Kentuckians, also fails to grasp the importance of Black agency and activism within the Rosenwald movement. In fact, Ellis's work mischaracterizes the school by conflating them with the work of other philanthropies and contending that the Rosenwald Fund allowed Kentucky "to divert funding to White schools from monies that should have been expended on African American education."[4] Rosenwald funding was only available, however, to counties that agreed to do more for Black schools and the aid was not given until this stipulation had been met.

It is a fundamental mistake for earlier scholars to have ignored the active roles of Black Kentuckians in advocating and creating the schools. Yet, their work – their quest – to build Black schools and free themselves both mentally and physically has largely been lost. This research, however, examines the institutions now known as Rosenwald Schools and the Rrsbp in the state of Kentucky, and it specifically centers Black Kentuckians' agency, agenda, and activism. This analysis reveals the work Black Kentuckians did on their own behalf to educate themselves in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and it positions them as the head and heart of the movement to build Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky. I argue that despite entrenched White supremacy within the state, Black Kentuckians utilized whatever opportunities they could to advance education, whether through the significant Union presence during the Civil War, their strategic relationships with private philanthropy, and their leveraging of community wealth.

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[4] William E. Ellis, *The History of Education in Kentucky* (Lexington KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2011) 179.

Given this legacy of grassroots organizing and activism in education, this study contends that Rosenwald Schools were an actual outgrowth of Black Kentuckians long struggle for equitable funding, better schoolhouses and supplies, and education. Such work was necessary because Black Kentuckians' lives developed in a wholly different pattern from those in the lower south states in the aftermath of slavery. Because Kentucky was a border state and its secession was not officially recognized, Black Kentuckians did not immediately benefit from Reconstruction laws governing the Confederate states. Accordingly, the Emancipation Proclamation did not free Blacks in the Bluegrass, and they remained enslaved until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, which the state of Kentucky refused to ratify.[5] Additionally, Black Kentuckians were not afforded a substantial military presence to protect them or the agencies meant to help them negotiate their newfound freedom. This meant that agencies such as the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (The Freedmen's Bureau), which aided freed Blacks in the lower south, and the American Missionary Association (AMA), had limited tenures in Kentucky, where Democrats had seized control of the government and worked to maintain White Supremacy.[6] Blacks were then left to rely on their own resources, though meager, to implement the beginnings of a public-school system for themselves.

This, in and of itself, was an act of defiance. In the face of Southern elites who refused to fund Black schools, they chose to educate themselves, to defy a lifetime of forced ignorance and subjugation. Using church-run schools as their foundation, Black

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[5] Marion B. Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky: From Slavery to Segregation, 1760-1891* (The Kentucky Historical society, 1992 & 2003) 178.
[6] Ibid, 231-232.

Kentuckians welded together multiple strategies – taxing themselves, fundraisers, conferences, alliances, PTAs, forming their own teacher association, and ultimately legislation – to build the most basic, yet unequitable, school system. While James Anderson's *The Education of Blacks in the South: 1860-1935* contends that this was double taxation, my scholarship argues that it was also a form of agency and resistance.[7] This was a tax Black Kentuckians willingly placed on themselves in order to escape the confines of White superiority, exploitation, and poverty. Then, when additional resources were made available through programs such as the Rrsbp, they took advantage of them to further their own goals.

1.1 Booker T. Washington, Black Self-Help and the Rosenwald Rural School Building Program

To appreciate how the Rrsbp functioned in Kentucky, it is first necessary to understand the program itself. In the early twentieth century, there were numerous philanthropies working to shape Black southern education. In Kentucky these agencies included The John F. Slater Fund, which aimed to build Black vocational high schools, The Jeanes Fund, which provided Black industrial teachers, and the General Education Board, which helped the Commonwealth of Kentucky establish a Black division within its State Department of Education.[8] Few of these organizations, however, sought to improve Black education or the Black socio-political condition. Instead, they were interested in "the role of (B)lack workers in the southern agricultural economy and the

[7] James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South: 1860-1935,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 156.
[8] Ellis, *The History of Education in Kentucky*, 179.

relationship of that economy to the emergent urban-industrial nation."[9] In short, they sought to create a low-wage working class, a work force with just enough education to serve their economic interests, but not enough to challenge White supremacy and racial inequality. They therefore funded and supported schools rooted in industrial education which emphasized learning a skill versus liberal arts training, which focused more on intellectual pursuits. Because of this Anderson has rightly contended that the "structure, ideology, and content of (B)lack education (w)as part and parcel of the larger political subordination of (B)lacks," and historians have overwhelmingly accepted his argument concerning Black schools in the early twentieth century.[10]

The Rrsbp differed from these agencies in important ways, however. I contend that the program was a carefully crafted Black response to the neglect of Black schools by discriminatory public-school systems and self-interested northern philanthropists. And, while it did not outwardly challenge Jim Crow laws and segregation as historian Mary Hoffschwelle has posited in *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, I argue that it functioned as a type of social entropy – a cog in the machine – that worked to counter both systemic and institutional racism. This was by design.[11] This research positions famed educator Booker T. Washington as the social engineer of the program and it demonstrates how he sought to not only to provide new, safe schoolhouses, but also to empower southern Blacks at the state and local levels. His agenda was evidenced in his "Scheme for Helping Colored Schools." Written in 1912, this "Scheme," which ultimately became the basis for the Rrsbp, was a brief, yet noteworthy analysis of the

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[9] Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 88.
[10] Ibid, 2.
[11] Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006) 2.

issues affecting Black education in the South and how to counter the tactics of Whites Southerners who routinely robbed Black education coffers to fund White schools.[12]

Though much has been written about Rosenwald Schools in the last decade or so, the work Black southerners – Booker T. Washington, his cohorts at Tuskegee, and the Black southern masses – did to construct the program, then organize, fund, build, and maintain the schools, has yet to be fully examined as an act of both activism and resistance. Instead, this has been overshadowed by the popular narrative that Jewish philanthropist Julius Rosenwald built Rosenwald Schools *for* Black people. This is untrue. Rosenwald neither created the Rrsbp which produced the schools, nor did he fully fund them. Instead, it was Booker T. Washington and his cohorts at Tuskegee Institute that both designed and ran the program in its earliest years. And, it was rural Black southerners across the South that largely funded them.[13] Rosenwald provided small grants to Black communities that raised funds, donated land, and bought supplies to equip the schools. This was not seed money, nor was it meant to stimulate Blacks' interest in education because this was not necessary. Southern Blacks readily understood the importance of education and drew direct connections between it, freedom, self-determination, and first-class citizenship. Plus, they had a long history of grassroots fundraising and educational activism. Rosenwald's "challenge grants" were meant to

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[12] Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South, 34; Booker* T. Washington to Julius Rosenwald, June 21, 1912, The Rosenwald Fund 1912, Folder A-C, Archives and Special Collections, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL.

[13] Embree, "Julius Rosenwald Fund: A Review of Two Decades, 1917-1936," (Chicago: 1936) 23. Accessed August 26, 2020, https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.77971/page/n7/mode/2up.

exert external pressure on local Whites and incentivize public spending on Black schools in the south, which were grossly underfunded and neglected.[14]

While Rosenwald's contributions were both substantial and meaningful, poor, disenfranchised, rural Black southerners actually contributed more financially than the multimillionaire. From 1912 to 1932, rural southern Blacks built 5,347 Rosenwald Schools and teacher cottages across the southern landscape at a cost of $28 million in fifteen states: Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Florida, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Maryland, and Virginia. Of this, Blacks donated seventeen percent of the overall $28 million required to build the schools and Rosenwald donated fifteen percent.[15] The remaining bulk of the cost to build Rosenwald Schools was paid by public taxes, which Blacks also paid, but had rarely benefitted from.

This fact does not diminish Rosenwald's largesse or benevolence in supporting Black education. It instead positions him as a true ally not interested in his own aggrandizement, but in aiding Blacks and highlighting the work Blacks could do when given equitable resources and opportunity. Still, the fascination with Rosenwald and the idea that he built Rosenwald schools for southern Blacks is understandable, and it is likely rooted in historians' newfound excitement and discovery of Rosenwald himself. Rosenwald, the president of Sears and Roebuck and a noted philanthropist in the early twentieth century, was a contemporary of men like John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie, yet he is less well known. This was largely his own doing. Unlike his fellow

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[14] Peter M. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald: The Man Who Built Sears, Roebuck and Advanced the cause of Black education in the American South* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006) 151-152.
[15] Embree, "Julius Rosenwald Fund," 23.

philanthropists, Rosenwald's philanthropic efforts did not bear his name – again, Rosenwald Schools were not initially known as such – like the Carnegie libraries or Rockefeller University in New York. Additionally, Rosenwald famously disagreed with perpetual philanthropy and wrote extensively about each generation's responsibility to take care of its own social iniquities. He therefore mandated that his foundation, the Rosenwald Fund, cease operations within twenty-five years of his death.[16] Because of this, Rosenwald's social, cultural, and economic impact on the nation has only recently been discovered, and this discovery has led to a wealth of scholarship. In the rush to celebrate his contributions, however, Rosenwald has emerged as a messianic figure who single-handedly saved Black education from the evils of southern racism, prejudice, and inequality.

This perspective obfuscates Booker T. Washington's role in the founding ideology and intentions of the Rrsbp. It also diminishes Southern Blacks' activist efforts to improve their schools and thereby their lives and that of their children. This research serves as a corrective to this misguided narrative by centering the role of Washington, Tuskegee, and rural Black Kentuckians in this movement. Previously, Washington's "Scheme for Helping Colored Schools" has sustained very little analysis. While works by both Anderson and Hoffschwelle acknowledge it as the founding platform of the Rrsbp, neither dissects it fully to reveal the fulcrum that it was. This research, however, considers it an important point of inquiry that demonstrates Washington's desire to empower Blacks and undermine the work of northern philanthropists' and their southern

[16] Alfred Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree: The Julius Rosenwald Fund, Foundation Philanthropy and American Race Relations* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011) 84.

allies. This idea aligns itself with newer scholarship such as Robert J. Norrell's *Up from History: The Life of Booker T. Washington* and Kenneth H. Hamilton's *Booker T. Washington in American Memory,* that argue for a reinterpretation of his life and work. It questions whether he was truly an accommodationist or whether that was just one method of many in a multi-faceted arsenal against White Supremacy.

1.2 Chapters

Chapter One explores Black Kentuckians' quest for education as a form of resistance to White oppression. Building on Marion B. Lucas's *A History of Blacks in Kentucky: From Slavery to Segregation, 1760-1891* and George C. Wright's *A History of Blacks in Kentucky: In Pursuit of Equality, 1890-1980,* this chapter surveys the educational landscape in Kentucky during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and it reveals the challenges Black Kentuckians faced as they sought to build an equitable Black public education system. It demonstrates that Black Kentuckians welded together a multitude of strategies to overcome both White supremacy and systemic and institutional racism. Using state education records, autobiographies, letters, and secondary sources, this chapter explores how Blacks in Kentucky attended day schools, learned from their enslavers, and cobbled together an education over several years during the slave era.[17] Later, during the Civil War, Black men used their military status to make claims to education and demanded books and classes on military bases such as Camp Nelson in Jessamine County, Kentucky. Black men like Elijah Marrs taught one another while enlisted and were aided by local churches and women's groups in the quest to

[17] Lucas, *The History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 140-145.

improve their own lives as well as that of their families.[18] During Reconstruction, newly freed Black Kentuckians built a slow, yet steady program of schools and education through their churches and benevolent societies with some assistance from agencies such as the Freedmen's Bureau and American Missionary Association. Then, in the late nineteenth century, Black Kentuckians demanded state-funded schools. They pressured the state's Republican Party to support equal funding of Black schools. They met with government officials, filed lawsuits, and held education conferences across the state, and they threatened both state and federal lawsuits if the legislature did not create a public-school system, which lawmakers did.[19]

This chapter is a foundational one. It establishes Black Kentuckians as the key agitators for their own education and it demonstrates that they waged a long and sustained fight for Black schools. Understanding the Rrsbp is understanding this struggle which the program was both built and depended on. To move forward any other way destroys the true context and meaning of the program and it results in a top-down analysis that focuses on the goals and desires of peripheral actors such as northern philanthropists and White Southerners. Setting rural, southern Black Kentuckians at the crux of the conversation, however, centers their values, desires, and understanding of the program, and how it could meet their needs.

While Chapter One establishes Black self-help and grassroots activism as the core of the Rrsbp in the Bluegrass, Chapter Two examines the program itself to better understand how the social construction of the program aided Black Kentuckians in their

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[18] Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007) 46-7.
[19] Lucas, *The History Blacks in Kentucky*, 230-232, 254.

quest for better education. To do so, this study engages James A. Anderson's seminal text *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* as well as Mary S. Hoffschwelle's *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, which provides an in-depth deconstruction of how the program functioned at the national, state, and local levels. While each of these monographs acknowledged Booker T. Washington's 1912 "Scheme for Helping Colored Schools" as the founding platform of the Rrsbp, neither fully teases it apart to understand it as the agitator and disruptor Washington meant it to be. Using the Booker T. Washington Papers as well as the Julius Rosenwald Papers, this chapter examines Washington's "Scheme" and its intent to fight both systemic and institutional racism from within versus posing a direct challenge to Jim Crow laws and discrimination. It additionally explores the construction of the first Rosenwald Schools in Alabama as well as the program's spread to other states.

Using the General Education Board Papers and the Rosenwald Fund Papers, both rich resources containing monthly reports on the work taking place in Black communities, Chapter Three chronicles the arrival of the Rrsbp in Kentucky and its spread across the Bluegrass. Backed by Tuskegee officials, F. M. Wood led the charge to build Rosenwald School throughout the state. It identifies the barriers he faced and explores why Kentucky built less than two hundred schools, while other states like North Carolina built over 800 schoolhouses. Additionally, this chapter examines Black Kentuckians strategies for organizing, fundraising, and building their schools in the face of White oppression. These measures went far beyond basket suppers and "entertainments" and included both legal measures such as those used in Graves County and literal military-style formations to raise funds such as the campaign in Henderson

County.[20] Both the Kentucky Negro Education Association and its journal, the K. N.E.A. Journal, played an important role in this work as well. Black educators in the state used it to spread news about the Rrsbp, how it worked, how to get funding, and they celebrated their accomplishments with pictures of their new schools once they were completed. Surprisingly, they also challenged the need for programs such as the Rrsbp to supplement their schools' funding – in the very same issue.[21] They believed the state and their taxes should pay for their schools just as Whites' taxes paid for White schools. This demonstrates the Black Kentuckians never invested their energies in any one philanthropy or strategy, but waged a prolonged, multifaceted assault on discriminatory funding for their schools.

Chapter Four continues to examine Blacks' agitation for schools in Kentucky through the lens of Black women. It demonstrates their long history of community engagement and uplift. And, it contends that Black women used the Rrsbp to improve not only their communities but also as an important steppingstone in their own professional development and career trajectory.[22] This did not take place by happenstance. Instead, Booker T. Washington mandated that communities receiving aid from the Rrsbp had to work alongside the Jeanes Fund, which employed hundreds of Black women throughout the south as teachers in rural communities. This work catapulted many of these women

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[20] "Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of May 1918," Box 80, Folder 702, GEB-RAC; P.T.A. Raises $1,000 in Three Days," The Louisville Leader, April 11, 1925, The Louisville Leader Collection 1917-1950, The University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, Kentucky. Accessed June 9, 2020, https://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/ref/collection/leader/id/3128.

[21] "Funds Aiding Our Colored Schools" The K.N.EA. Journal 1, no 3 (February 1931): 6. Accessed Jan. 16, 2018. http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt78kp7tmw34_9.

[22] Stephanie J. Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do : Black Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago: Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1996), 218.

out of their own, rural backgrounds and into middle-class status by virtue of their work.[23]

This work produced unusual lives for Black women in this role. Because they were often in charge of whole counties, they were not tied to the home sphere and traveled regularly instructing and checking on the various communities under their jurisdiction. Though their work was sometimes challenged, they were largely respected by both rural Black Kentuckians as well as White education officials. In fact, many regarded them as unofficial assistant superintendents who did the work the White county superintendents refused to do on behalf of Black schools.[24] For this reason, Jeanes Teachers in Kentucky and the work they did – teaching, gardening, running Rosenwald School building campaign, fundraising, visiting the sick, teaching Sunday schools – in rural homes, classrooms, and churches is a central focus of this chapter. Beyond this, Black women served as traditional teachers in the classroom, a revered position in early twentieth century Black life that symbolized Blacks' ability to learn, excel and achieve. Last, the chapter looks at the work of Black women as parents, P. T. A. members, rural clubwomen, and community members. While not every woman had children in the local schools, most were invested in the work of the school and sought ways to support it. This was done through School Improvement Leagues, Homemaker's Club, Black P. T. A.'s,

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[23] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 44-45. "Plan For the Distribution of Rosenwald Aid In the Erection of Rural Schoolhouses" September 20, 1917, Box 11, Folder 90, CJCC-TUA.; Valinda Littlefield, "'To Do the Next Needed Thing': Jeanes Teachers in the Southern United States 1908-34" Kathleen Weiler and Sue Middleton *Telling Women's Lives: Narrative Inquiries in the History of Women's Education*. (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1999) 141.

[24] Atwood S. Wilson, "Research Abstracts on Negro Education" *The K. N. E. A. Journal* 3, no. 2 (January-February 1933): 18: Accessed March 13, 2018, http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt72v6986904_18?.

tomato clubs, moral improvement clubs, and a host of other activities that raised community awareness, helped fund local schools, and supplied much needed equipment.

In Chapter Five, each of the elements discussed in Chapters 1-4 come together in a case study of the Knob City Rosenwald (Russellville) School in Logan County, where Black communities built nine Rosenwald Schools – more than any other county in Kentucky.[25] This is telling given that both Fayette and Jefferson Counties had larger Black populations in the early twentieth century, yet they only built seven Rosenwald Schools each. This points to an anomaly that took place in Pre-Civil War Logan County. Upon his death in 1839, Richard Bibb freed sixty-five Black bondsmen and women and bequeathed to them land, houses, tools, money, farm animals, and much of what they needed to establish themselves as freedmen. With this bequeath, the freedmen built three, free Black communities: Upper and Lower Bibbtown and Russellville's Black Bottom. They also built churches, businesses, and schools, and when the Rrsbp arrived they built a bigger, better school – an $11,500 structure – that produced an elite group of students known as the "Royal Six." These men and women achieved professional success as scientists, writers, and educators and most returned to Russellville to teach and serve their community.[26]

While this case may seem an anomaly – as it did for Rrsbp officials in 1917 – it demonstrates a central thesis of this study that Rosenwald Schools were products and reflections of the Black communities that built them. And, while they were all adherent and bound by the larger overarching rules of the Rrsbp, few Rosenwald fundraising

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[25] Rosenwald Database.

[26] Rosenwald Database; Last Will and Testament of Richard Bibb, Sr., Will Book G, Logan County Kentucky Archives and Genealogical Society, Russellville, KY.

campaigns were alike. Black communities have never been a monolith and their strategies for building and maintaining their Rosenwald Schools varied over time, region, and geography. The struggles they faced against White supremacy and Jim Crow laws were local battles fought against local leaders, local forces, and local people. So, each Rosenwald School is its own chapter in a vast collection of stories of Black hope, Black activism, Black strategy, and Black organizing.

CHAPTER 2. "I, A POOR, FRIENDLESS COLORED BOY…CAN READ": BLACK ACTIVISM IN EDUCATION PRIOR TO THE ROSENWALD RURAL SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAM

Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky were directly linked and an actual outgrowth of Black Kentuckians' long and sustained fight for proper education, equal funding, and quality schoolhouses. This work, their activism, was a flat-footed refusal to accept White Supremacy and a bold rejection of the Jim Crow laws and systemic injustices that sought to keep them docile, illiterate, and non-threatening. Rather than accept forced illiteracy, Black Kentuckians set their own educational agenda and pursued it over and against White supremacist ideas. In the short term, newly freed Blacks sought "basic literacy skills plus the rudiments of citizenship training for participation in a democratic society."[1] This was a proactive approach to both secure and maintain their newfound independence from White southerners who refused to accept Black equality and sought to maintain political, social and racial control of the south. In the long-term, however, they pursued "intellectual and moral development." Their hope was to train and equip "a responsible leadership class that would organize the masses and lead them to freedom and equality."[2]

They pursued this goal relentlessly and over time won massive gains in their fight against illiteracy. In Kentucky, nearly 56 percent of the Black population was illiterate in 1890. Illiteracy rates declined steadily over the next three decades, and by 1930 stood at 15.4 percent.[3] This slow, yet steady progress was evidence that Black Southerners were

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[1] Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 31.
[2] Ibid.
[3] George C. Wright, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky: In Pursuit of Equality, 1890-1980, Vol. 2* (The Kentucky Historical Society,1992) 106-7. Accessed May 7, 2019. https://uknowledge.uky.edu/upk_african_american_studies/12.

able to advance their own interests despite racial and political opposition. Against a backdrop of racial violence, Jim Crow laws, and both structural and institutionalized racism that robbed Black schools of their funds, Southern Blacks built their own schools and educated their youths with the most meager of resources. This work took place in Black churches, shanties, and makeshift classrooms, and was conducted without benefit of proper equipment, pay, or school supplies.

This continual agitation and collective social action formed the bedrock of the Rrsbp and Rosenwald Schools are best understood in the context of this sustained effort. This anchors the schools, and it locates Black activism at the core of the Rrsbp movement in Kentucky. While previous works have emphasized the role of agencies such as the Freedmen's Bureau, the American Missionary Association, and Northern philanthropies, my work seeks to highlight the work Black Kentuckians did on their own behalf. It demonstrates not only that they oftentimes spearheaded school-building campaigns, but that they also worked alongside these varying agencies and accepted their financial support to foment their goals - which weren't necessarily always in line with their benefactors. My work also examines the varying strategies – clandestine activity, grassroots organizing, institution-building, political protests, legal strategies – to win for themselves equal education opportunities which would allow them to secure their citizenship.

2.1 Slavery

Enslaved Blacks in antebellum Kentucky educated themselves and each other. For them, education was a tool of resistance because slavery functioned as a system of brutal and complete domination. White southern slaveholders sought not only to control Blacks

physically, but both mentally and spiritually. Their power lay in their ability to "speak for the slave, to deny his or her humanity and to draw a line between slave consciousness and human will."[4] This was a necessary tool in the dehumanization of enslaved Blacks because those who thought for themselves, who could read or write or interpret their world for themselves, threatened the very fabric of slavery and White supremacy. Both southern White slaveholders and Black bondsmen understood this, and literacy therefore "constituted one of the terrains on which slaves and slave owners waged a perpetual struggle for control."[5] Just as White southern slaveholders fought to maintain control of their "property" and economic status by denying literacy in most southern states, enslaved Blacks sought greater control over their lives and their destinies by scraping together the most basic forms of education. Such knowledge afforded them the "language of liberation. …"[6] The ability to read books, newspapers, the bible, and other literature augmented their growing awareness of a world outside bondage and it allowed them to interpret for themselves issues such as abolitionism and war. Beyond this, reading allowed both enslaved and free Blacks the ability to craft "an alternative narrative about bondage" and Black inferiority.[7]

This made works such as *David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* dangerous. Written by a free Black man in 1829, Walker's *Appeal* advocated anarchy, slave insurrection, and the mass murder of Whites in order to free southern slaves and overthrow the entire system of slavery. Realizing that literacy and works like

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[4] Heather Andrea Williams, Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom. (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007) 8.
[5] Ibid, 13.
[6] Ibid, 24.
[7] Ibid, 7.

Walker's Appeal functioned as "an instrument of resistance and liberation," most southern states – though Kentucky was not one of them – passed laws forbidding both slave and free Blacks' literacy.[8] Some of the oldest statutes outlawing slave literacy can be found in South Carolina where on September 9, 1739, twenty South Carolina slaves plotted their escape on the Stono River near Charleston, SC. They murdered local storekeepers, stole guns and supplies and reached a mass of about sixty slaves before they were confronted by local Whites. Twenty Whites were killed, and forty slaves were massacred, and within a year, teaching slaves to write was outlawed.[9] In 1829 and 1830, Georgia and Louisiana, respectively, passed laws outlawing slave literacy. This was in direct response to Walker's *Appeal*, which promoted not only armed rebellion but also 'linked literacy to slavery's demise."[10] Fearing its inflammatory message, Georgia state officials searched and seized any ship carrying a free Black person fearing that they might have abolitionist materials with them. In Louisiana, the legislature not only outlawed teaching slaves to either read or write, but also bringing rhetoric such as Walker's *Appeal* into the state least it "excite insubordination or cause discontent among the African Americans, free or enslaved."[11] Like Louisiana, North Carolina's statue drew a direct connection between slave literacy and slave rebellion. In 1830, state lawmakers passed a statute that specifically stated that "teaching slaves to read and write has a tendency to excite dissatisfaction in their minds and to produce insurrection and

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[8] Ibid, 8. It is unclear why Kentucky did not outlaw slave literacy. However, Marion B. Lucas' *A History of Blacks in Kentucky* contends that some slaveholders believed that enslaved Blacks should receive religious training and instruction and promoted this on an individual basis.
[9] Ibid, 13.
[10] Ibid, 14
[11] Ibid, 15.

rebellion."[12] In response to this, they passed laws making it illegal to teach enslaved Blacks to read and write.

Following the lead of other southern states, lawmakers in Virginia passed laws forbidding Black literacy in the spring of 1831. Just months later, however, the Southampton Rebellion struck fear in White Virginians. On August 22, 1831, Nat Turner, a Black slave preacher, marched through Southampton County, Virginia, killing and assaulting southern White slaveholders and freeing the enslaved. Eighty freed slaves joined Turner's rebellion and they killed nearly sixty Whites before local militia captured them. In Virginia, Turner's rebellion led state lawmakers to revisit the issue of abolishing slavery, but the measure failed. In places like Alabama, however, state legislatures pass stricter laws against slave literacy, slave gatherings, and the interactions of slaves with free Blacks just three months after Turner's insurrection. [13]

The fact that Kentucky did not outlaw slave literacy has led some to contend that slavery in Kentucky was gentler or more humane than in Deep South states.[14] This is untrue. Slavery in Kentucky, as in other places, "was a heinous evil for everyone it touched regardless of the degree of degradation" and it functioned as a system of both economic exploitation and race control.[15] This system of degradation manifested itself in every aspect of slaves' lives, and in 1860, more than 200,000 Black Kentuckians were

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[12] Ibid, 15.
[13] Ibid, 15-16.
[14] The idea that Slavery was mild or less cruel in Kentucky was a common idea in early Kentucky history. See: Ivan E. McDougle, *Slavery in Kentucky*, 1792-1865. (Lancaster, PA: Press of the New Era Printing Company); Winston J. Coleman Jr., *Slave Times in Kentucky*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1940); William Elsey Connelley and E. M. Coulter, *History of Kentucky*, 5 vols. (Chicago and New York, 1922)
[15] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky,* 43, 140.

subjected to slavery's brutality and inhumanity.[16] Black Kentuckians pursued and attained education in varying ways to combat their forced illiteracy. Isaac Curtis walked six miles each Sunday to study with a tutor. Madison Campbell, a slave, paid his master's son to teach him. And famed slave minister George W. Dupree taught himself to read. Most, however, were like William Hayden, a Black bondsman in Kentucky, who cobbled together an education over several years and eventually became a teacher in Lexington, Kentucky.[17]

William Hayden was born a slave in Stafford County, Virginia, in 1785, but was later sold at auction as a child to a Kentucky slaveholder.[18] He spent his life seeking an education and later teaching others. Hayden received his first instruction from local Whites. After this, he sought education wherever possible. In one arrangement, he did chores for a White schoolteacher "provided she would teach me at nights, and on the Sabbaths."[19] In another, he was hired out as a wagon-maker and he was taught by workmen there.[20] After this, Hayden sewed together leaves from an old spelling book he found.[21] He studied it until he learned to read adequately and then moved on to learning to read scriptures. Writing proved more difficult because Hayden once believed it beyond the "pale of a colored man's nature, to ever be able to write."[22] After much ridicule by a friend, however, Hayden was moved to attempt his first words in the sand with a stick.

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[16] Ibid, xvi.
[17] Ibid, 141.
[18] Ibid, 141. William Hayden, *Narrative of William Hayden Containing a Faithful Account of His Travels for a Number of Years, Whilst a Slave, in the South*. (Cincinnati, Ohio: 1846) Electronic Edition, 13-20. Accessed May 29, 2015.
[19] Ibid, 28.
[20] Ibid, 28.
[21] Ibid, 31.
[22] Ibid.

He cried over his success, and then began collecting scraps of paper he found near the Court house to practice his reading and writing with. Learning to read and write gave Hayden great pride. He thought to himself, "Yonder is a WHITE man--he … has never been able to learn to read the word of God or transmit by writing one solitary thought … whilst I, a poor, friendless colored boy, --a slave--can read the consolations held forth in the Scriptures, and inform my distant friends of my progress through life. … I would not part with my little knowledge, for all the wealth of your illiterate dealer in flesh and blood!"[23]

Once educated, Black Kentuckians sought to teach others. In 1807, Hayden move to Lexington, KY, where he later taught night school for both free and enslaved Blacks.[24] During this period, he was one of several Black Kentuckians opening schools and teaching in the Bluegrass during the slave era. Others included Ham Graves, a free Black man, who taught night school on a Shelby County plantation and Jane Washington, a "pioneer Black educator" in Lexington who ran her own school before the Civil War. There was also a slave named Joe in Green County who taught school and offered fellow bondsmen instruction as early as 1816. The school closed, however, after White trustees threatened students with "fifteen stripes" if they continued their education.[25] Taken together, stories such as Washington's, Hayden's and Joe's demonstrate that they readily understood the importance of literacy. And, while it allowed both free and enslaved Blacks mental freedom, for those enslaved it sometimes served a more practical function. In most cases, enslaved Black Kentuckians were subjected to White slaveholders'

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[23] Ibid, 32.
[24] Ibid, 31-32.
[25] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 141.

duplicity and whim. The crudest education, however, could afford them some protections. In 1834, A. T. Jones' master reneged on a promise to allow Jones to buy his freedom. Instead, his master sold him for $400. When Jones of Madison County learned of the deceit, he fled to Canada using a slave pass he wrote for himself. At the time of his escape, Jones claimed he "…could scarcely put two syllables together grammatically," nevertheless he was literate enough to write himself a pass across the Ohio River and into free territory."[26]

For those who remained in Kentucky, the Black church was an important source of spiritual growth, mental freedom, and intellectual engagement. There, "education was second only to religion as a goal of Black churches," and several larger congregations ran day schools for those in bondage as well as those who were free.[27] Reverend Henry Adams of the First Colored Baptist Church of Louisville "pioneered" this work. Adams, who arrived in Louisville in 1829, began by tutoring students on an individual basis. By 1841, however, he ran a school with four teachers, and other congregations followed his lead. By 1865, five additional churches – Green Street Baptist, Jackson Street Methodist, Center Street Methodist, Ninth Street Methodist, and St. Mark's Episcopal Church – had all opened their own schools.[28]

Like these churches, Louisville's Fourth Street Methodist Church, which had a history of rejecting White Superiority, also had a mission to educate the Black masses. Built in 1829, the church was originally leased by White Methodists before it was bought by James Harper, a free Black Methodist preacher in 1845. Later, when the Methodist

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[26] Williams, Self-Taught, 22.
[27] Lucas, *Blacks in Kentucky*, 140.
[28] Ibid, 142.

church split and Harper led parishioners into the African Methodist Episcopal Church, White Methodists sought to take the building from them. Harper and his congregation, however, fought back in court – and won. In 1847, the church took on the challenge of education and hired William H. Gibson Sr., a freeborn Black man from Baltimore, Maryland educated by the head of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Upon his arrival in Louisville, Gibson opened both day and night schools in the church's basement. He emphasized reading, writing and arithmetic and also offered both music and vocation training. He later taught algebra, geometry and Latin for older students and regularly drew fifty to a hundred students both enslaved and free to his classes. After the success of his first school, Gibson opened a second school at Louisville's Quinn Chapel. He also opened grammar schools in both Frankfort and Lexington.[29]

Headed by former slave London Ferrill, Lexington's First African Baptist Church had a membership of nearly two thousand making it the largest in Kentucky at the time and it ran one of the most successful education programs. The church began offering classes in the 1830s and continued to do so throughout the Civil War. Other church run schools could be found in Bowling Green, Maysville, and Richmond demonstrating that Black religious leaders considered it a part of their religious mandate to educate Black Kentuckians. This work combined with other intellectual pursuits – speeches, exhibitions, and lectures – posed a direct threat to slavery and White supremacist ideas by educating Black Kentuckians and exposing them to various speakers, ideologies, and perspectives. This gave them the ability to craft their own worldviews and ideas about freedom and choose their own responses to slavery.[30]

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[29] Ibid, 128, 143- 144.
[30] Ibid, 122, 144.

A last source of education for Black bondsmen was White Kentuckians. Some learned to read and write through local White churches who viewed the salvation of Blacks as their Christian duty to the "heathen at their own door."[31] Many slaveholders, however, were less altruistic in their thinking and educated Black bondsman for greater profit or their own benefit. Cabell Chenault was a wealthy slaveholder in Madison County in the mid nineteenth century. He owned about fifty slaves and built a school on his property where both he and his daughter taught "the more mentally alert of his slave flock" reading, writing and math.[32] Green Clay, also of Madison County, educated his bondmen as well. Both men "understood that a literate Negro brought a much larger price on the market." Additionally, Clay believed that "having literate Negro overseers who could make intelligent reports to their master meant a great deal of savings" because it kept them from hiring White overseers.[33]

2.2 The Civil War

During the Civil War, Black Kentuckians demanded an education as they worked, took refuge, and ultimately fought for freedom at military camps across the Bluegrass. In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln sanctioned the first use of Black troops in the military, and this signaled a major shift in the lives of Black Kentuckians. During the Civil War era, skilled laborers earned higher wages, some Whites' hostilities toward Blacks diminished, and Black bondsmen gained greater opportunities to challenge the slave system. White Kentucky slaveholders reported that Blacks were less likely to obey, that

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[31] Ibid, 142.
[32] Robert E. Little, "History of Education in Madison County, Kentucky" (Master's Thesis, Eastern Kentucky University), 42-43.
[33] Ibid.

they resisted slave codes, and that there was an increase in barn burnings as well as other acts of violence.[34] The greatest changes in the lives of free and bondsmen's lives, however, came with the arrival of both Confederate and Union soldiers on Kentucky soil.

Enslaved Black Kentuckians first flowed into military camps seeking labor and were often hired by troops to perform their duties. The availability of work and soldiers' willingness to hire them led to an influx of bondsmen into military camps in various parts of the state.[35] On January 1, 1863, Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation freeing enslaved Blacks in the confederate states. Kentucky's status as a border state, however, exempted it from this legislation, but Blacks were emboldened by the new federal law and fled their captivity in even greater numbers. In 1864, the federal government began the full-fledged recruitment of Black Kentuckians. The state boasted over 40,000 able-bodied Black men aged eighteen to forty-five, and Lincoln authorized their enlistment despite earlier promises to Kentucky officials he would not. Without regard to slaveholders' protests, federal officials set up military camps at several sites throughout the state including Bowling Green, Paducah and Louisville and Camp Nelson, and offered protection to bondsmen who volunteered their service. This offer of protection triggered a massive response and thousands of Black Kentucky men flooded Union lines to join the war effort.[36]

While enlisted, Black Kentucky soldiers sought to educate themselves and acquired an education however they could. Literate runaway slaves taught others to read, and military chaplains, army wives, and officers also helped created "a fragile structure

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[34] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 147.
[35] Ibid, 148.
[36] Ibid, 152 -54.

of schools within Black regiments."[37] Beyond this, Black soldiers used their military service to make claims to first-class citizenship, which they believed entitled them to an education. They petitioned the government to provide for both books and schools for Black soldiers, and they in turn donated funds and labor to build schools that would serve Blacks outside the military camps. Black soldiers' desire to provide schools in the communities where they served symbolized and foreshadowed their hopes of greater civic engagement and governance in their post-military lives. They saw service as a means to assert their honor, gain respect, and secure their rights to self-determination.[38]

Thousands of Black soldiers were educated at Camp Nelson, a ten-mile military base in Nicholasville that sat along the Kentucky River. When union officials began recruiting Blacks in 1864, an estimated five thousand Black bondsmen fled with their families and enlisted there, making it the main military base for military enlistment of Black troops.[39] Though some were mistreated and eventually expelled from the camp leading to their deaths, many soldiers remained and took advantage of the military's resources. They demanded an education and were eventually afforded two school rooms in a government facility as well as books and slates. John G. Fee, a White evangelical abolitionist, taught and preached at Camp Nelson during the war, and his letters described Black soldiers' eagerness to learn. In a letter dated August 8, 1864, to the American Missionary Association, Fee wrote that soldiers at the military base "manifest(ed) an almost universal desire to learn …" and he described them as "noble men, made in the

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[37] Williams, *Self-Taught*, 46.
[38] Ibid, 46-47.
[39] Richard Sears, "John G. Fee, Camp Nelson, and Kentucky Blacks, 1864-1865" *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 85, no 2 (Winter1987): 30. Accessed June 7, 2015, http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uky.edu/stable/23380817,

image of God, just emerging from the restraints of slavery into the liberties and responsibilities of free men, and of soldiers." Working with the men, Fee, along with his son, Burritt Fee, also found that the newly minted soldiers were quick learners and that they had varying degrees of literacy. Many knew their letters, some could spell, and a few could read, which was all evidence of the work Black Kentuckians undertook during slavery to acquire even the most minute mental training and education.[40]

Elijah Marrs' ability to read catapulted him into leadership in the military during the Civil War. In 1864, Elijah Marrs was one of the thousands of Black bondsmen who liberated themselves by walking away from his Shelby County plantation. After organizing a group of nearly thirty bondsmen, he marched east to Louisville where they enlisted in the military. Standing five feet, ten inches tall, Marrs had long been considered a leader among other Black bondsmen. At the onset of the war, Marrs made use of his literacy by reading local newspapers to his fellow bondsmen as well as letters from men like his brother Henry C. Marrs who had enlisted in the war. This act earned him the ire of local Whites who dubbed him the "Shelby County negro clerk" and it turned the plantation where he was enslaved into a "general headquarter for the negroes." During the war, Marrs' ability to read and write earned him the respect of not only his regiment and fellow soldiers but also military officials.[41]

Marrs served in Company L, 12th U.S.C. Heavy Artillery Regiment. Literate ex-slaves held the best chances for advancement during the Civil war, and Marrs literacy won him the role of third duty sergeant as well as regimental quarter-master sergeant.[42]

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[40] Ibid, 32, 35.
[41] Williams, *Self-Taught*, 45-46.
[42] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 170.

Despite this designation, Marrs found that he was still forced "to move at the command of a White man" and wondered if his condition was "any better … than before (he) entered the army." He concluded, however, that at least he was "a soldier fighting for his freedom … and the time (would) come when no man can say to me come and go, and I be forced to obey." [43] The conclusions that Marrs drew about his military service indicated that he deemed his present condition better than that of slavery. It also revealed his hope that his service to his country would someday afford him the freedom and liberty afforded Whites. While enlisted, Marrs dedicated himself to helping others prepare for this future hope by teaching basic English skills and grammar. He also taught music and wrote letters for soldiers who did not yet possess the skill to do so for themselves.

Letters written by Francis A. Boyd demonstrated Black soldiers' desire for an education. Once a house servant, Boyd enlisted in the 109th United States Colored Troops in Lexington, Kentucky in June 1864, where he served as a sergeant, chaplain, and educator during the Civil War. In a letter to his superior dated December 31, 1864, Boyd wrote about his soldiers' desire for education. His men, he said, were '"actually clamoring for books and readers"' and could be found in their quarters at all hours '"… trying to decipher lessons in their spellers."'[44] In this same letter, Boyd reported that he had championed his regiment's quest for education with a local, Christian organization and had requested both books and a teacher for his men. When this arrangement fell through, Boyd later requested a detail of men or volunteers be allowed to build a school

[43] Williams, *Self-Taught*, 48. Ibid.
[44] Williams, *Self-Taught*, 56.

‘“in view of the pressing demand for moral improvement and education.”’[45] Boyd’s efforts proved unsuccessful, and he was removed from his position as chaplain before he could build a school for his men. His letter, however, evidenced the zeal for learning and education many Black men exhibited as they served their country and prepared for their future freedom. This fervor for literacy was also demonstrated elsewhere around the state.[46]

Like Boyd, First Sergeant John Sweeny also sought to educate his troops. In an October 8, 1865 letter to the Tennessee Freedmen’s Bureau Assistant Commissioner, Sweeny, a Black soldier and Kentuckian, petitioned the commissioner for a school for his regiment. He noted that his men had formed a successful literary association on their own, but he now wanted something more for his men who had once been slaves but were now soldiers fighting for their country and their freedom. He sought “a general system of education … for our moral and literary elevation” and he was very clear on why this education was necessary.[47] Sweeny’s letter explained that Blacks needed an education “to make ourselves capable of business in the future” and to become people capable of self-support.” Beyond this, Sweeny spoke of the plight of Blacks in his native Kentucky, a place “where Prejudice reign(ed) like the Mountain Oak.” He detailed their illiteracy, their neglect, and ill treatment and he firmly blamed their condition on the lack of an education and the inability to read, write, and make known their complaints and applications to the government.[48] His hope was that through education he, his regiment

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Williams, Self-Taught, 51-53; Ira Berlin, Joseph E. Reidy, Leslie S. Rowland, *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867* Series II, *The Black Military Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1982) 615-616. http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Sweeny.html. Accessed June 2015.
[48] Ibid.

and the Black community as a whole could advance themselves and their future. Sergeant John Sweeny's letter demonstrated that Black Kentuckians fought not only for their liberty and physical freedom, but for education and self-determination.

Sweeney's letter revealed that many Black Kentuckians drew direct connections between education, equality and citizenship, and they used the Civil War Era as a way to equip themselves for future independence.[49] Their desires, however, were not simple to educate themselves, but to educate the Black communities in which they lived. Literate Black soldiers taught in their regiments while in the military. Once discharged, Black military men often became teachers and leaders throughout their communities.[50] They sought both political and economic equality and led the fight for equitable, Black public education. Their grassroots organizing and protests politics informed and foreshadowed the Rosenwald Schools Movement of the early twentieth century.

2.3 Reconstruction

Black definitions of freedom included education, and despite White resistance Black Kentuckians made huge grassroots efforts to found and support schools in the immediate aftermath of their emancipation. This occurred despite the problems Kentucky's position as a border state posed for newly freed bondsmen. Under federal legislation, laws governing the confederate states did not govern enslaved Black Kentuckians, therefore Reconstruction efforts developed in a different manner in the bluegrass versus the lower south states. As an example, in March 1865, the United States Congress enacted legislation that freed all Blacks serving as Union soldiers. This

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[49] Ibid.
[50] Williams, *Self-Taught*, 1.

legislation also freed their wives and children. Kentucky law did not, however, recognize slave marriages, and slaveholding Kentuckians refused to free Black soldiers' wives and children. Circuit Court judges backed White slaveholders' position and the matter eventually landed in a Kentucky Appeals Court. Enslaved Black Kentuckians remained in political limbo until John A. Palmer, a Federal military commander stationed in Kentucky, defied local court rulings and enforced the federal laws setting the wives and children of Black soldiers free. His actions freed about 160,000 enslaved Blacks, yet another sixty-five thousand remained in bondage. Then, on December 18, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment ended legalized slavery throughout the nation. Still, enslaved Kentuckians experienced freedom in varying "degrees, in different ways and at different times in various places across the state."[51]

Once free, freedmen "blended their energies" during the Reconstruction years to create Black institutions and organizations. They also demanded land, voting rights for Black men, fair wages, the right to testify in court, and the right to compete economically. The loudest pleas, however, asserted their rights to an education, which afforded Blacks "assess to democratic activity" and the ability to shape their future.[52] In short, Blacks understood that an education was the foundation to attaining and securing both their freedom and their rights. This belief resulted in feverish agitation for schools and what famed educator Booker T. Washington described as "a whole race trying to go to school … ."[53]

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[51] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 178-179.; Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press) 234-235.
[52] Williams, *Self-Taught*, 69.
[53]Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 5.; Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.: 1901) 30. Accessed June 16, 2020, https://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/washington/washing.html.

In 1865, Black-run and supported schools could be found throughout the state of Kentucky in cities such as Louisville, Lexington, Danville and Maysville. In Lexington, Black women started fundraising for a local school. One year later, Black leaders in Lexington purchased a brick facility known as "Ladies Hall" on Church Street for $3,500. The Howard School, which was named for Freedmen's Bureau Director O. O. Howard, opened with three Black teachers and five hundred students. The school was partially furnished with partitions separating the oversized classrooms.[54] In Fall 1865, Black Lexingtonians also opened a school at the First Baptist Church of Lexington (formerly First African Baptist Church) pastored by James Monroe. The school was taught by E. Belle Mitchell and boasted an opening enrollment of twenty-seven students. Days later, enrollment jumped to fifty-one students, and by November attendance reached sixty-nine. Despite the fact that students lacked adequate supplies, most mastered their alphabet quickly and a small few moved into their first readers and primary arithmetic.[55] Beyond the school at the First Baptist Church, tuition-based schools were started at Pleasant Green Baptist Church, Main Street Baptist Church, Asbury CME Church, and the Christian Church.[56] Such schools demonstrated the continued importance of Black churches to Black education. Just as Black churches played key roles in educating Blacks during slavery and the Civil War eras, they did so during the Reconstruction era. In fact, many benevolent agencies worked through Black churches to help provide education for Blacks, making Black churches not only a place of worship, but also an anchor in Black communities for civic and social undertakings. Additionally,

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[54] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 239-240.
[55] Ibid, 239.
[56] Ibid.

Black pastors and their wives functioned as leaders in Black communities and were often therefore at the center of Black communities' quests for education.

By Spring 1866, at least thirty-five Black-run schools existed in the bluegrass, and only five of the schools received outside help from benevolent associations. The schools boasted more than four thousand students, were taught overwhelming by Black teachers, and financed "almost entirely" by Blacks.[57] One of these schools was run by Elijah P. Marrs, who opened a school in Simpsonville for the "development of (his) race."[58] The school opened on September 1, and was under the leadership of three trustees Wilkerson Bullitt, Isaac Simpson, and Benj. Elmore. Marrs was paid $25 a month for his services, and the school was fully supported by the Black residents of Simpsonville. Marrs wrote in his autobiography that "at this time we had no aid from the Freedman's Bureau" and that each parent paid a dollar per month for their children to attend. Marrs also received various gifts as payment from the school trustees.[59] Though poverty beleaguered Black communities throughout the state, many pooled their resources to build schools, rent classroom space, hire teachers, pay for school supplies and help indigent students. While many Black Southerners were forced to meet in dilapidated buildings, others met in churches, where they were restricted to one room and taught by either the pastor or his wife. Each instance demonstrated the values Blacks placed on education. In dire circumstances, crowded and confined in the most basic of spaces without proper supplies, Black Kentuckians demonstrated a steadfast faith in education as a tool of uplift and donated more funds for their children than any other southern state except Louisiana.[60]

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[57] Ibid, 234.
[58] Elijah P. Marrs, *Life and History of the Rev. Elijah P. Marrs*, 78.
[59] Ibid, 77-78.
[60] Lucas, *Blacks in Kentucky*, 234.

Black Kentuckians platform of self-help launched the larger campaign for state-funded, public Black schools in Kentucky. This was a difficult task, however, given that state lawmakers did not believe in state funded education for Blacks or Whites. This was evidenced in Kentucky's earliest constitutions as neither the state constitution of 1792 or 1799 mentioned education. Kentucky's elite Whites educated their children in the state's private institutions, and therefore did not see a need for support public spending on schools. They chose instead to invest in the state's infrastructure such a roads and bridges, and it was therefore the federal government that financed the first common schools for Whites in Kentucky in 1838. Nearly a decade later, Kentucky's legislature established state taxation for the funding of public schools in 1847.[61] Black schools, however, did not receive state aid until after the Civil War – and even then, it was delayed because Confederates argued that "Blacks must pull themselves up by their own bootstraps."[62]

On February 16, 1866, Kentucky's General Assembly passed legislation that created a dual system of schools throughout the commonwealth. The new law created a Colored School Fund, placed a $2 tax on Black males and mandated that both Black schools and Black paupers be supported solely by Black taxes.[63] This proved problematic because Blacks owned very little land and generated relatively little money for taxes or schools. In December 1866, Black taxes amounted to $5,656. Of this, half was used to pay for Black indigents, leaving $2,828 to educate more than forty thousand school-aged Black youths in Kentucky. This amounted to six cents per child. In 1867,

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[61] Ellis, *A History of Education in Kentucky*, 7-8.
[62] Lucas, *Blacks in Kentucky*, 231.
[63] Ibid, 198.

Whites sought further control over Black schools, and a new law allowed county governments to take full control of Black schools – despite the fact Black schools were supported solely by Black taxes. The law also allotted $2.50 per student for Black youths attending school three months or longer. In 1868, a new law further crippled Black education with a mandate that pauper fees be paid before any money was expended for Black schools. Blacks in Kentucky asserted that what meager funds remained were often withheld from Black communities by corrupt government officials who did not supports schools for Blacks.[64]

Such practices convinced Black Kentuckians they could not depend on state government for aid though they continued to agitate for it. They also understood that they could not independently sustain the educational needs of Black freedmen across the state. Black Kentuckians therefore made use of various philanthropic organizations, benevolent Whites, missionary societies and government agencies such as the American Missionary Association and the United States Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, more commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau, in their quest for schools and education. Contrary to popular narratives, these organizations did not introduce Black freedmen to the idea of education nor did they start the first schools. In fact, Black schools in Kentucky received proportionally less aid from benevolent societies than states of the former Confederacy. These societies "lost sight of the fact that there were Blacks that needed aid in states that had not seceded," and therefore functioned only as a tools in Black Kentuckians arsenal of resources.[65] During Reconstruction, Black freedmen

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[64] Ibid, 231.
[65]Victor B. Howard, "The Struggle for Equal Education in Kentucky, 1866-1884," *The Journal of Negro Education*
46, No. 3 (Summer, 1977) 308.

viewed help from varying agencies as tools of uplift and agency just as they viewed schools themselves.

Because Kentucky did not secede from the union, Black Kentuckians were not immediately afforded the same protections as newly freed Blacks in other parts of the South. White Kentuckians hostility to Black equality, however, forced the federal government to eventually extend its protection to Black freedmen in Kentucky. In 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau, was created to aid newly freed bondsmen in their transition from slavery to freedom. The bureau was intended to serve Blacks in the Confederate states only, but violence against Black Kentuckians moved General Oliver O. Howard, head of the bureau, to send aid to Blacks in the Commonwealth as well. From 1866 to its demise in 1870, fifty-seven bureau agents worked in 110 Kentucky counties to provide food, medical aid, and help with contract negotiations to newly freed Blacks. The bureau's primary focus, however, was the establishment of Black schools.[66] By November 1867, there were nearly one hundred Black schools in Kentucky with over 5,000 students. Eighteen months later, there were 250 schools with 10,360 students with a teaching force that was 80 percent Black. Of the seventeen states operating under Freedmen's Bureau control, Kentucky ranked either first or second in the percentage of school-aged Black students enrolled.[67]

Black Freedmen worked alongside Kentucky's Freedmen Bureau officials in numerous capacities. Blacks organized and worked within the Black community while bureau agents worked on logistical matters. Black Kentuckians elected Black trustees in each of their school districts, set and collected tuition, paid teacher salaries while also

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[66] Lucas, 185-6.
[67] Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky, 238*.

providing housing them, and financed poorer youths' education. Simultaneously, Freedmen's Bureau officials surveyed school-age youth, sought teachers, scouted schoolhouses and determined what local funding might be available for Black schools. They additionally helped fund these schools by paying the tuition of impoverished Black youths and renting Black churches or properties to be used as schoolhouses. Black freedmen then used the money collected for tuition to pay their teachers. Beyond help with rent and tuition, Black freedmen across the state were aided by the Freedmen's Bureau through loans, the completion of construction on Black schoolhouses started by freedmen, the payment of teacher salaries and board, the purchasing of furniture and repairing schoolhouses. By 1869, there were more Blacks attending schools supported by the Freedmen's Bureau than there were Whites attending public schools in Kentucky. Aid from the Freedmen's Bureau, however, did not last. In 1869, the Freedmen's Bureau announced plans to stop operations in Kentucky and ceased operations in 1870.[68] This left Black communities throughout the Bluegrass without much needed resources, and many of the schools they built closed.

In addition to the Freedmen's Bureau, Black Kentuckians viewed Berea College as a value tool for uplift and change. Founded by John G. Fee in 1866 and supported by the America Missionary Association, Berea College was a Christian, anti-caste school open to all races and all sexes with a founding mission of racial equality. Lower level courses were offered for its first three years and college level courses were taught beginning in 1870. Among those who attended Berea College were Carter G. Woodson, historian and founder of Black history Month; Mary Briton, Lexington's first Black

[68] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 232.

female doctor; and future educators such as William H. Humphrey, James S. Hathaway, and John Bate who would each go onto head Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky. Former students such as Mary Briton and James S. Hathaway would become instructors at Berea College. Briton taught music and Hathaway taught both science and Latin.[69] Though renowned for acceptance of both Black and White students, Berea was not without problems. Cracks in the school's core principles of equality appeared in the late nineteenth century when the school leaders began recruiting White students from the mountains in lieu of Black students. Former Black students, however, refused to be relegated to second-class citizenship. In 1895, Black graduates of Berea College waged a public war against their alma mater. In a 32-page pamphlet, Blacks questioned the school's commitment to its original ideas of racial equality and an anti-caste society. They charged the school with shunning Blacks in favor of the recruitment of rural Whites, and they called for economic sanctions to rectify the problems they saw overtaking Berea College. This fight would become one of many at the turn of the twentieth century to obtain and preserve Black education. Casualties were great as problems at Berea College, a school once rooted in racial equality, eventually faltered in its commitment to racial equality.

In the pamphlet entitled "Save Berea College for Christ and Humanity: Elements of Danger, An Appeal," Black graduates J. T. Robinson, F. L. Williams, J.W. Hughes, and J.S. Hathaway claimed that Berea College had been created "to be a Christian school for all persons of character." It was anti-caste institution designed to "overcome race antipathy." Yet, the school had turned away from "the gospel of impartial love" and

[69] Ibid, 250-254. Wright, *Blacks in Kentucky*, 134. Jackie Burnside "Early History of Black Berea" Berea College, Accessed April 7, 2020, http://community.berea.edu/earlyblackberea/mapintro.html.

sought to promote itself as the savoir of mountain Whites.[70] As evidence of these allegations, Black Berea alumni pointed to the expulsion of back faculty from the school under allegations of "incompetency" and the disappearance of the schools motto "God hath made of one blood all nations of men" from the schools catalogues.[71] They also argued that the school had fallen into a demoralized state over the "color question." To rectify this, Black Berea graduates petitioned schools benefactors to make their donations on the condition that funds be "used for the benefit of all on the basis of equality – colored as well as White."[72]

Beyond the call for economic sanctions, Black Berea graduates argued that "it is very probable that the colored people hold a special or legal title on (Berea) college" because of their financial support of the school. As proof, the writers pointed to documents from the American Missionary Association and the Freedmen's Bureau to document the financial contributions they had made to Berea College. They argued that in 1868, the Freedmen's Bureau spent over $41,000 on schools for Black Kentuckians. Of this, Black freedmen raised $14,000. Plus, they raised an additional $17,000 on their own for the payment and support of their schoolteachers. That totaled over $31,000 Black Kentuckians raised to support their schools in 1868. They reasoned that because the Freedmen's Bureau had been created to benefit Black freedmen and they had contributed a large part of this money the Bureau spent at Berea they had special claims to the school.

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[70] J. S. Hathaway, J. W. Hughes, J. T. Robinson, F. L. Williams, *Save Berea College for Christ and Humanity: Elements of Danger, An Appeal*, Pamphlet 1895, 3. Box 1, Record Group 13:15, Histories of Berea College, Berea College Special Collections & Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky.
[71] Ibid, 4-8.
[72] Ibid, 4.

They also asserted that "not a dollar of that fund was contributed by the poor Whites of Kentucky, to whom such desperate efforts are being made to turn the school over."[73]

Despite their protests, Berea College eventually forced Black students from its midst. In November 1903, Kentucky State Representative Carl Day visited Berea College and observed both Black and White students learning and cohabitating on the school grounds. In a bid to maintain racial purity, Day introduced House Bill 25, "An Act to prohibit White and colored persons from attending the same school" in 1904. The legislation passed and was enacted in July 1904. Attempts to appeal the law in both the Kentucky Court of Appeals and United States Supreme Court failed, and Blacks were ousted from the school until 1950 when the law was repealed.[74] After Blacks were pushed out of Berea College, they turned to Lincoln Institute, an all-Black school built in 1912 and meant to fill the void left by Berea. President William Frost of Berea led this endeavor raising both funds and White support for the school. Unlike Berea, however, the new school focused on industrial education and eschewed the humanities. This angered some Black Kentuckians, and J. Sohmers Young, editor of *The Kentucky Standard* – a Back newspaper published weekly in Louisville – argued that the emphasis on industrial education an attempt to "set the Negro Back." Asserting himself and the idea that Black Kentuckians were entitled to all types of training, he called Blacks across the state to action, querying '"Are we forever to tamely submit to the prevailing idea that the Negro now must educated as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' for the more favored race

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[73] Ibid, 9. According to the pamphlet, the Freedmen's Bureau spent a total of $41,000 on Black Schools. Of this, the Black community donated $14,000, and $17,000 of that total $41,000 was spent at Berea College on Howard Hall.

[74] Jacqueline G. Burnside, "Suspicion Versus Faith: Negro Criticisms of Berea College in the Nineteenth Century." The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society 83, no. 3 (1985): 265. Accessed April 15, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/23381032.

or shall we make a plea for the same kind of education ever other race enjoys, telling those among us who elect, and whose minds so incline, to hew wood and draw water to their heart's content."' Despite his protest, however, Lincoln Institute remained rooted in industrial education.[75] While neither the Black graduates of Berea College or Young were successful in their demands for equitable treatment, their vocal protest demonstrated that Black Kentuckians were not afraid to boldly challenge and defy White superiority. Their language and unapologetic stance suggest an inner fortitude and resolve to fight systemic oppression and injustice even under the threat of violence and intimidation.

Beyond their indifference towards public education, several reasons existed for the state's vitriol toward the establishment of Black schools. First, Kentucky politicians sympathized with lower south states and grieved the loss of slavery. These men despised federal interference in state affairs and therefore resisted the efforts of the Freedmen's Bureau, a federal agency, on behalf of Black Kentuckians' education. Second, Kentuckians disliked the influx of northerners to the south for business and political purposes and they especially disliked those there to aid Blacks. They feared that northern outsiders did not know or care to understand the social norms of the south. and that northern teachers would indoctrinate Blacks with ideas of equality. Beyond this, there were those who believed that educated Blacks would not be fit for the labor force the south very much needed in order to rebuild itself and its economy. Last, White Kentuckians rebelled against the idea of Black schools because they "prepared the Blacks to function as enlightened citizens." Black schools served not only as educational spaces,

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[75] G. C. Wright, "The Founding of Lincoln Institute," *Filson Club History Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1975), 60, 67, 69. "Lincoln Institute (Lincoln Ridge, KY)," Notable Kentucky African Americans Database, Accessed April 14, 2020, https://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/415.

but they were also meeting places for Black Kentuckians' benevolent and aid societies as well as political organizations. Because of this, schoolhouses came to represent "centers which gave birth to political interests and ambitions" in the minds off Southern Whites.[76]

This perception led to brutal attacks, violence and the destruction of Black schools in the state of Kentucky. On December 24, 1867, a "colored school- house (was) burned by incendiaries" in Breckinridge, Kentucky. On July 28, 1886, a White mob attacked a "colored school exhibition" in Midway. That same year, mob violence destroyed a Black school in Monroe County as well as a Black school and two churches in Bullitt County. In Graves County, a teacher in one of the Black schools was driven from the town. In May and June of 1870, Black schools in both Christian and Woodford Counties were torched and burned.[77] Beyond these incidents, Elijah Marrs wrote of the Klu Klux Klan threatening his students in Simpsonville, Kentucky. In his autobiography, Marrs wrote that his charges were at recess when a White man fired a gun into their midst. On a separate occasion, the Klu Kux Klan stalked Marrs during the night. They rode up to his home announcing their presence with "a loud din of horns, drum bells and old tin pans," and they pulled limbs from the tree as if to flog him. They shouted threats at him, but rode away, however, without doing any harm.[78]

Violence did not deter Blacks' quest for state-run, publicly funded schools. Blacks believed that a statewide system of education was the "key to achieving equality,"

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[76] Victor B. Howard, "The Struggle for Equal Education in Kentucky, 1866-1884," *The Journal of Negro Education*
46, no. 3 (1977) 308.

[77] B. J. Crampton, Samuel Dempsey, Henry Lynn, Henry Marrs, H. H. Trumbo, "Memorial of a Committee Appointed at a Meeting of Colored Citizens of Frankfort, KY., and Vicinity, Praying the Enactment of laws for better protection of Life" in *Miscellaneous Documents of the Senate of the United States for the First Session of the Forty-Second Congress and the Special Session of the Senate* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Co: 1871) 2-4.

[78] Marrs, *Life and History of the Rev. Elijah P. Marrs,* 78.

and they persisted in their efforts to obtain public schools even as they pursued ways to create schools for themselves.[79] In 1869, Black Kentuckians aided by the Freedmen's Bureau and White supporters held the "Colored Educational Convention" in Louisville. The gathering drew 250 delegates from around the state and served as a platform to demand "equal taxation and equal education" for Blacks.[80] Education leaders such as James Turner and Elijah Marrs pled with state leaders to "rise above prejudices" and treat Blacks fairly by affording them a proper education. In addition to these demands, Black attendees created their own Kentucky State Board of Education. Black education leaders tasked the seven-member board with working with local school boards, creating a program of teacher certification and developing a system of record-keeping.[81]

In 1873, Black leaders forced the issue of public schools. They met with the state superintendent of public instruction, held a series of regional meeting to promote the cause of Black public schools, and they threatened legal action if state legislators did not meet their demands. In February1874, the first fruits of their efforts blossomed. The Kentucky legislature created a "separately maintained, segregated, unequal" Black public-school system. The law required White county officials to establish school districts and appoint Black trustees. Black trustees were then charged with establishing Black schoolhouses a proper distance from White schools, hiring teachers, keeping records, opening at least one school in each county and maintaining a two- to three-month school term.[82] The first Black public schools opened in 1875. There were six hundred schools spread out over ninety-three counties with over 18,000 students. These

[79] Lucas, A History of Blacks in Kentucky, 245.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid, 254-255.

early schools were funded by Black taxes with additional aid expected from city and federal governments. The latter did not always materialize, and Blacks' schools largely remained underfunded, and therefore inadequate in many ways. School buildings fell into disrepair, supplies proved scant and teachers were underpaid. Additionally, Black schools suffered from short school terms, inadequate classroom space and sometimes a lack of quality instructors. Blacks educational leaders, along with White supporters such as Rev. E. H. Fairchild, president of Berea College, began working to change the poor status of their schools almost as soon as the first public schools opened.

As the first public schools opened in Kentucky, members of the State Convention of Colored Baptist (later known as the General Association of Colored Baptist) declared ministerial education their special cause and began working to establish a college. Their organizational and fundraising efforts led to the establishment of a theological school in Louisville, KY, in 1874. Financial hardship and low attendance shuttered the school, but Baptist Normal and Theological Institute reopened in 1879 under the leadership of H.C and Elijah P. Marrs. The brothers raised $1,800 by seeking the support of White Baptists and paid $13,800 over ten years for a two and one-half acres of land a three-story brick house. In 1880, renowned educator and preacher William J. Simmons took the helm of the school. Despite issues such as low teacher pay and low initial enrollment, Simmons led to school to stability and prominence by seeking professors with advanced degrees and emphasizing rigor with both basic education and advanced college liberal arts training with classes such as history, science, literature, math, English and modern foreign languages. He also changed the school's name to "State University" to reflect its diversity of classes and attract a wider range of students. In its new incarnation, Williams

created an industrial education program and established the theological school as a separate department. Ultimately, the school was renamed Simmons College and it became the first Black College in Kentucky, educating many of the state's best educators and preachers. After spearheading State University's growth, Williams, alongside Charles H. Parrish Sr., went on to establish Eckstein Norton Institute in 1890 in Bullitt County. The school, which sat on 75 acres of land, consisted of seven building and offered grades first through 12th grade as well as a college department.[83]

A critical aspect of the movement to equalize schools was the creation of the Colored Teachers' State Association – later known as the Kentucky Negro Education Association – in 1877.[84] John H. Jackson, a man of many "firsts," served as the group's first president and led Born in Lexington in 1850, Jacks graduated from Berea College with both a Bachelor of Arts (1874) and a Master of Arts degree (1883), making him the first Black man to receive a college degree from Berea college and in the State of Kentucky. He also served as the first Black delegate to the National Republican Party from the state of Kentucky, and in 1886, he was elected the first president of the State Normal School for Colored Persons in Frankfort, now Kentucky State University. Jackson was additionally known as a civil rights activist who led the fight against legislation to racially segregate stagecoaches in the state of Kentucky.[85]

Under Jackson, Black Kentuckians worked at both the political and grassroots level to attack inequality in public schools. First, the State Association of Colored

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[83] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 213-9. "African American Schools in Bullitt County, KY," Notable Kentucky African Americans Database. Accessed April 14, 2020, http://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/2725.
[84] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 258.
[85] Jamie Bradley, "Jackson, John Henry" Berea College website, Accessed July 20, 2015, http://libraryguides.berea.edu/johnhenryjackson.

Teachers created a five-member committee to study the condition of Black schools in Kentucky and presented their findings before the state legislature. In 1879, the committee called for equal funding on a per capita basis, an increase in the age eligibility requirement for schools from 16 to 20 as it was in White schools, and the creation of a state normal school to educate Black teachers. At the community level, the Black teachers' association urged Blacks to support them by holding meetings and winning others to their cause. These initial efforts failed, but Black leaders pursued their cause in federal court.[86] In September1881, Black Kentuckians filed a suit to force the equalization of public schools. A year later, in *Kentucky v. Jesse Ellis*, a federal court declared Kentucky's separate funding system unconstitutional and a violation of the Fourteen Amendment, which guaranteed citizenship rights and the equal protection of all under the law. On April 24, 1882, the state law makers revoked unlawful taxes on Blacks, equalized school funding and awarded an increase in school property taxes.[87]

The 1882 legislation proved a major win in theory for Blacks, but it did not result in equality. Local, all-White boards of education remained in power and continued the manipulation of state funds. Only Blacks in Paducah and Louisville benefited from the new law in the 1882-83 school year. Blacks in other parts of the state, however, continued their fight for equal education. In Owensboro, Black leaders challenged the city's unfair distribution of school funds in *Claybrook v. Owensboro*. On July 18, 1882, Blacks in Owensboro petitioned city officials to provide equal funding for both Black and White schools. When school officials failed to respond, Edward Claybrook and local Black leaders marched three Black youths into an all-White school on September 18,

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[86] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky,* 260.
[87] Ibid, 261.

1882, and demanded they be enrolled. The youths' denial resulted in a federal lawsuit challenging the unequal distribution of school funds that had resulted in subpar schools for Black youths.[88] In 1883, U. S. Circuit Judge John ruled in Owensboro Blacks' favor when he declared Owensboro Black youths were entitled to equal protections under the law and thereby equal school funding.[89]

As Blacks in Owensboro fought for equal funding, Black Baptist women across the state formed the Baptist Women's Educational Convention of Kentucky to raise funds for State University in Louisville, which later became Simmons College. The convention was the first of its kind in the nation and served as a model for women's religious organizations across the country. Amanda V. Nelson of Lexington served as the convention's first president and from 1883 to 1900, the Baptist Women's Convention of Kentucky raised over $12,000 for State University. The money was used to build a women's dorm on campus and pay the school's remaining debt.[90]

In November 1885, the State Association of Colored Teachers met in Lexington, Kentucky. They created a list of grievances and formed a committee led by William J. Simmons to present their protests to the state legislature. In January 1886, Blacks throughout the state with the support of the superintendent of public instruction assembled in Frankfort, Kentucky, to present their petitions to the governor. In May 1886, state lawmakers awarded Blacks $7,000 to create the State Normal School and they

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[88] Ibid, 261-2

[89] "Claybrook v Owensboro," Notable Kentucky African Americans Database, Accessed April 16, 2020, https://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/376.

[90] "Baptist Women's Educational Convention," Notable Kentucky African Americans Database, accessed June 18, 2020, https://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/1768.; Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church* 1880-1920 (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1994) 59-61.

dedicated $3,000 annually to support the school. The State Normal School opened a year later in October 1887 in Frankfort, Kentucky under the leadership of John H. Jackson. Admission was free to Blacks who agreed to teach in Kentucky's public schools two years for every one year they attended the school.[91]

2.4 The Early Twentieth Century

The legal entrenchment of Jim Crow at the turn of the century undid some of the victories that Black Kentuckians had won. This was the context for the Rrsbp. Entering the twentieth century, White Kentuckians "viewed Black education as a burden, (and spent) only the minimum" on Black schools. They repeatedly approved bonds to support their schools, but vetoed bonds to fund Black schools which resulted in gross underfunding of Black education This occurred despite the 1882 federal court ruling in *The Commonwealth of Kentucky v. Jesse Ellis* that mandated equal funding in schools throughout the Bluegrass, and poor funding led to other inequalities.[92] At the turn of the twentieth century, forty percent of Black Kentuckians were illiterate. This placed Kentucky sixth among fifteen southern states. Additionally, eight counties – Campbell, Elliott, Jackson, Johnson, Letcher, Martin, Menifee, Morgan – neither had schools for Blacks, nor arrangements with nearby counties to provide them an education. This was especially problematic for places like Campbell County and others which boasted five hundred or more Black citizens.[93] In those counties that offered Blacks' schools, Black students suffered from various problems. One concern was the inequity in school terms.

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[91] Lucas, *A History of Black in Kentucky*, 262.
[92] Wright, *History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 104-105.
[93] Ibid, 107.

At best, only one-third of Kentucky's African American students attended school six months. One-fifth, however, attended less than three months while Whites attended school a full eight to nine months out of a year. Compounding this issue was the need for many Black families to have their children home and working in the fields during harvest season. Yet another glaring issue in Kentucky's Black schools was the lack of quality school buildings. Across the state Blacks' schools were "housed in old, dilapidated buildings that had outlived their original purposes."[94] This too was rooted in a lack of adequate funding, and Blacks were forced to pay for their own school with private funds, a practice known as double taxation. Or, they relied on churches as they had in the nineteenth century. Beyond inequitable school terms and squalid school facilities, Black Kentuckians had very few books or libraries, they were forced provide their own transportation to sometimes faraway cities, and they lacked Black high schools. Instead of fixing these problems, White county superintendents often blamed Blacks for their lack of progress.[95]

In addition to these issues, rural education was one of the biggest problems facing Black Kentuckians. While Black schools were grossly underfunded and neglected, rural Black schools suffered even more. In fact, rural schools across the state were in dire need of improvement. At the turn of the twentieth century, Kentucky was "predominantly agrarian and rural." In 1900, only 467,688 Kentuckians lived in urban areas. In stark contrast, 1,679,506 remained on the states 234,667 farms, hills, and villages.[96] Despite this, education in these areas languished. In 1905, Kentucky Superintendent of Public

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[94] Ibid, 103.
[95] Ibid, 109.
[96] Ellis, *History of Education in Kentucky*, 156.

Instruction Jas. H. Fuqua Sr. lamented the condition of rural schools, noting "the supreme problem of Kentucky is the problem of education; and the supreme educational problem is the problem of the rural school district, the elementary school."[97]

To combat this issue, Kentucky appointed T. J. Coates as State Supervisor of Rural Schools in October 1910. In his first report dated August 15, 1911, Coates revealed the results of a study he'd conducted on rural schools. In his six-page assessment, stabilizing and improving the teaching force were key issues in the state. He contended that the state was in dire need of normal schools to improve teacher quality, higher salaries to attract the best people into the field, merit pay, and steady raises to maintain its labor force. He also argued for subject matter that "prepare(d) the child for life, not a long apprenticeship" and he suggested courses be "cultural and vocational, disciplinary and industrial." Additionally, Coates found problems with teacher-turnover and a lack of organization, supervision, and standardization.[98] In 1912, F. C. Button of Morehead joined Coates in his work. Though both men held the title of Supervisor of Rural Schools, Button focused on "… all questions affecting the colored schools exclusively. …" His hiring fulfilled Kentucky's 1874 law that mandated segregated, separately maintained school systems for Blacks and Whites. Under this law and legislation later passed in 1882, "the White and the colored schools (were) thought of as parts of one great system and no distinction (was) made in the Department of Education in planning for their welfare."[99] This egalitarian ideology existed only on paper, and Blacks across the state of

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[97] "Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Two years Beginning July 1, 1905 and Ending June 30, 1907" (The State Journal Company: Frankfort, KY) 20.
[98] "Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction 1910-1911" (The State Journal Company: Frankfort, KY) 227-232.
[99] "Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction" (The State Journal Company: Frankfort, KY) 297.

Kentucky continued to struggle with the severe social and political realities of Jim Crow, disenfranchisement, and second-hand citizenship. A 1913 letter from Coates to Button demonstrated that the rhetoric of progress was alive and well, but there were no real efforts by White Kentuckians to bring about systemic change. Like the Kentucky Department of Education, Coates insisted that they should do their best to "make more efficient the rural schools of this state as regards the White and colored races." But, he pivoted, it was also important to remember two important things in carrying out their work. He wrote, "in working out the large and perplexing problem, I think we should observe pretty closely two rules: to recognize the social and political conditions as they exist; and in bringing about desired results, to follow the lines of least resistance."[100]

Such rhetoric reproduced and reinforced White supremacist ideology and inequality, and this was reflected in a series of news articles published in 1911. The first article gave a bleak assessment of two Daviess County schools. One was a school for Whites. The other was a school for Blacks. Both schools were in ill repair, yet the Black school fared far worse. The school for Whites was "almost ready to go to pieces." Outside, planks of wood had been ripped from the front of the building "as if the children had needed extra fuel or kindling" to warm the old school. Inside, the school had "rough walls", outdated desks, and the county superintendent deemed the old stove sitting in the middle of the room a safety hazard. In the article, the Daviess County school superintendent expressed outrage over the atrocity passing as a schoolhouse. He blamed local citizens who refused to pay higher taxes for better schools for the poor condition of

[100] T. J. Coates to F. C. Button, Jan. 1, 1913, GEB-RAC Papers.

the schoolhouse. Despite budget woes, however, plans for a new school were underway for local White youths.[101]

The Black school in Daviess County "WAS AS BLEAK AS A CATTLE BARN" and the article declared that if White schools seemed bad, "the negro schools … (were) almost beyond the flight of imagination." The Black school was in a small unnamed village. The building had a "peculiar style of architecture," its front step was missing, the windows were broken and the fence had been destroyed except "for some lonely pieces of posts". Inside stood "two rickety benches made of undressed lumber," a rusty stove that spewed ash onto a "badly warped floor," and walls made of "undressed siding" that had never known "any inner wall of plaster … to keep out the cold." The picture painted evidenced a desperate need for a new school. The articles' writer, however, pointed out that the school for Blacks was "not any worse than others he had seen." No mention was ever made of providing a new schoolhouse for Black youths.[102]

In Spencer County, stood an "ancient wreck, with its sagging floors."[103] The school was at least thirty years-old and had never been painted. Old hand-made desk sat outside the school in a pile atop the supply of winter coal and the school had no closets. The school was in such disrepair that the writer was sure he had "stumbled upon a typical negro school." In fact, it was the local White pauper school – but the writer's assumption, his equation of Black schools with squalor, reveals White Kentuckians apathy and ideas toward Black schools and education in the early twentieth century.[104] Such practices demonstrated a harsh disregard for Black life and safety, and decrepit

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101 "Daviess Schools." *The Adair County News*, Oct. 11, 1911.
102 Ibid.
103 "The White School." *The Adair County News*, Oct. 11, 1911.
104 Ibid.

Black schoolhouses stood as both monuments to and messengers of White superiority and Black inferiority. Their substandard quality and decaying nature underscored a southern social caste that esteemed White humanity and citizenship, but subjugated Blacks to lives of impoverishment, illiteracy, and inequality.

Despite the violence and unrelenting oppression, Black Kentuckians continued to agitate for equitable funding and proper schools. They pooled their resources and made use of any outside fund available to them always seeking to define themselves and their futures for themselves and independent of White superiority. This activist spirit was evident from Slavery through the twentieth century. While enslaved, Blacks sought education as a form of resistance. They very fact that literacy was forbidden by Whites intrigued them and they stole books, hoarded bits of paper and taught both themselves and one another. Armed with the most rudimentary education, they sought to understand ideas in the larger world beyond their slave quarters and sometimes used their education to escape physical captivity. Black military men claimed citizenship and demanded an education as a civic right due them because of their service to the country during the Civil War. After the war, Blacks used grassroots efforts to fund private and church-run schools. They also worked alongside agencies such as the Freedmen's Bureau and the America Missionary Association to provide schools for themselves before later pressing state officials to provide public schools for Blacks. Accepting these agencies aid, however, did not mean that Blacks accepted their ideas about Black education or Blacks in general. Instead, Blacks viewed these agencies as tools to further their own goals of educating themselves and becoming first-class citizens, a people who could understand the laws of the land and better protect their freedom. Beyond these things, Black Kentuckians

boasted at least three major victories: the establishment of their own public schools by 1874, the founding of the Colored Teachers' State Association in 1877, and the of the creation of the State Normal School for Colored Persons 1886.

Moving forward, Black Kentuckians, as well as those across the south, were afforded a wealth of new resources. At the turn of the new century a number of northern philanthropies were created to help shape Black Education in the South. The goal was to create a low-skilled, compliant workforce that would strengthen and rebuild the Southern economy. Black Southerners, however, had their own goals and agenda. Continuing their quest for uplift and first-class citizenship, they used these agencies to build schools, acquire high schools, educate teachers, and increase school terms. One of the most prominent programs of this era was the Rrsbp because it most readily aligned itself with the goals Black Kentuckians had set for themselves. It did so because it was specifically designed to include their grassroots organizing, fundraising, and strategizing.

CHAPTER 3. "LITTLE TUSKEGEES": THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND GOALS OF THE ROSENWALD RURAL SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAM

Black Kentuckians' sustained agitation for proper schools and education formed the bedrock of the Rrsbp. Their work proceeded the Rrsbp, supported it from 1917 to 1932 during its tenure in the state, and continued long after the program ended. Still, the Rosenwald movement in Kentucky was an important flashpoint in their longer struggle for quality schools and education because its atypical social design and structure afforded Black Kentuckians power and agency in ways that other Northern philanthropies did not. My work argues that it did so by design, that Booker T. Washington engineered the Rrsbp to increase public spending on Black schools, create specific positions of power for Black southerners within its hierarchal structure, provide national support and funding, and foment interracial cooperation.

Understanding these components of the Rrsbp is critical to the understanding of how the program worked in Kentucky. This chapter therefore diverges briefly from the discussion of the Rrsbp in Kentucky to explain the larger social dynamics of the program itself and how it differed from other northern philanthropies. This means dissecting both Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald's understanding of race and social justice in the early twentieth century. This exploration of the Rrsbp's origins and goals illuminates why Black Kentuckians embraced the program and how they made use of the national program's funding, guidance, and support while also exercising historical agency at the community level by sometimes rejecting the program's emphasis on industrial education and determining their own curriculums.

This analysis of Rrsbp offers a new perspective on the program's origins. It centers Booker T. Washington's "Scheme for Helping Colored Schools," as the founding

ideology of the program and dissects the social and cultural meanings embedded within it. While other sources mention his "Scheme," none have yet to tease out its ideological implications and its more subtle intent to win better schools by eroding the then present system of racial inequality from the inside out. Doing so, however, contradicts the idea that Rrsbp was simply a "well-intentioned but limited effort to redress the South's neglect of its Black children…"[1] Additionally, I explore how Washington's scheme evolved into a Tuskegee-run program with Blacks in leadership roles at the state, local, and county levels. In this construct, Julius Rosenwald becomes an ally of both Washington's and rural Black southerners. Instead of a flat "White savoir" trope who single-handedly saved Black southern education, he becomes a cohort or constituent in the fight to overthrow social inequality.

This focus on Booker T. Washington's role as the program's originator and social architect sheds light on his covert work to promote Black public education and it aligns itself with more recent scholarship on Washington such as Robert J. Norrell's *Up from History: The life of Booker T. Washington*, Kenneth M. Hamilton's *Booker T. Washington in American Memory,* and Washington biographer, Loius R. Harlan. This interpretation frees Washington from long-entrenched ideas of accommodation, Uncle Tom-ism, and self-aggrandizement at the expense of the larger Southern Black community's expense. Such stigmas dogged Washington's legacy for nearly a century after his death and have somewhat obscured his contributions to early twentieth century Black southern life. More recent interpretations such as this study, however, demands a

[1] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 2.

more nuanced interpretation of Washington's life and work and makes room for further inquiry.

3.1 Booker T. Washington

Born enslaved on a Franklin County Plantation in 1858, Booker T. Washington rose to international fame as an educator, orator, and race leader during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[2] He was a complex man – one of many talents and accomplishments – but two key events shaped and defined his life and legacy.[3] The first was his 1895 Atlanta Exposition address and the second was the 1901 publication of his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*. In his famous speech, which was later dubbed the Atlanta Compromise, Washington implored Black southerners to "cast down your buckets where you are," meaning drop the demand for political power and civil rights, eschew thoughts of higher education, and forget migrating to the industrialized north as ways of improving themselves.[4] Instead, Washington advised learning the honor and dignity of hard work in the southern agricultural landscape. He argued that learning a trade, working with one's hands, and demonstrating their worth to White southerners would lead to the social and political advancement that Black southerners sought. He also endorsed segregation when he argued that "in all things social we (Black and White southerners) can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."[5]

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[2] Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery*, (Garden City, NY: Double Day & Co Inc, 1901) 1.
[3] Louis R. Harlan, "The Secret Life of Booker T. Washington," The Journal of Southern History, Vol 37, No. 3, (August 1971) 393-394.
[4] Raymond D'Angelo, "The Atlanta Exposition Address" in *The American Civil Rights Movement, Readings and Interpretations*, (McGraw Hill-Dushkin, 2001) p. 12.
[5] Ibid, 13.

This rhetoric – his support for segregation, his emphasis on industrial education versus liberal arts training, and his seeming disdain for higher education – has cast a long, dark shadow over Washington's legacy because it won him the backing of both southern White school reformers and northern industrialists seeking to reshape Black southern education to fit their goals. In the south, White education reformers sought to "train laborers to be better citizens and more efficient workers" thereby maintaining the racial and power dynamics of the South.[6] In lieu of the liberal arts training Black southerners had chosen for themselves, they supported industrial education and learning a trade, which would keep Black workers in subservient roles. Northern White philanthropists who were "interested in the role of Black workers in the southern agricultural economy and the relationship of that economy to the emergent urban-industrial nation," also sanctioned industrial education, and deemed Washington an ally in their work.[7] The publication of Washington's *Up From Slavery* further secured this image in their minds. The book, which was as much propaganda as it was biography, chronicled Washington's rise from enslavement, but also cast him as an Horatio Alger-type character – a true American who overcame poverty and oppression by hard work, thrift, and virtue.[8]

Together, both the speech and the book, catapulted Washington to international acclaim and power, which was evidenced by the elite associations he made and the financial support he garnered. Steel magnate Andrew Carnegie became a patron of Tuskegee, supported Washington's numerous Black enterprises, and personally gifted him $150,000. Washington drank tea with Queen Victoria, had dinner at the White House

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[6] Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 80.
[7] Ibid, 88.
[8] Harlan, "The Secret life of Booker T. Washington," 393-394.

with Theodore Roosevelt, and consulted with southern governors.[9] Most important, however, Washington garnered the support of wealthy men like Robert C. Ogden, who helped shape the course of both Black and White universal southern education in the early twentieth century. In 1898, Ogden organized the Conference of Southern Education in Capon Springs, West Virginia. Initially an informal meeting of Christian ministers, the conference grew to include southern education reformers and northern philanthropists who sought to mold both Black education and the southern economy to benefit their business interests. Out of these conferences grew philanthropies such as the Southern Education Board (SEB) run by Ogden, the Peabody Fund led by George Foster Peabody, and the General Education Board (GEB) funded by John D. Rockefeller with an initial $1 million gift.[10]

Though separate in nature, each of these organizations were deeply interwoven. While Ogden was head of the SEB, he was also a board member of the GEB. At the same time, Peabody served as the treasurer for both the SEB and the GEB while also heading his own fund. This tangled web of interests and agendas meant that the power to shape, fund, and control Black education lay in the hand of a select few White men. These men and their money were important to the growth and success of Tuskegee, but their ideas were harmful to Black southerners. They viewed them as a "child-like race" and argued that the best education for southern Blacks was one that taught them how to work, obey authority, and respect their "superiors."[11]

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[9] Ibid, 394.

[11] Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 83-85.

Washington's seeming alliance with these men drew the ire of leaders such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells Barnett. Both activists questioned Washington's loyalties and decried his politics and methods as pandering to White sensibilities and betraying Blacks' rights to full citizenship. Du Bois, a Harvard bred intellectual, dubbed Washington's 1895 Atlanta speech the "Atlanta Compromise" and challenged its legitimacy. He asserted that without political power – which Washington advised Blacks to forgo – they could not protect their homes, land or families. He also contended that without higher education few educators existed to teach in the trade schools or at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Trade Institute, Washington's own institution. Last, Du Bois posited that free Blacks and missionary organizations had created and tried industrial schools long before Washington advocated it – but to no avail.[12]

Others criticized Washington as well. In *Booker T. Washington and His Critics*, activist, suffragist, and journalist Ida B. Wells-Barnett chastised Washington's allegiance to industrial education or what she deemed the "gospel of work." She called it "the South's old slavery practice in a new dress" and argued that Washington had joined forces "with the enemies of (Blacks') highest progress." She wrote that "the world which listens to (Washington) and which largely supports his educational institution has almost unanimously decided that college education is a mistake for the Negro." Such ideas fed both northern and southern Whites' beliefs in Black inferiority, and Wells argued that

[12]W. E. B. Du Bois, "Of Mr. Washington and Others" in *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. Brent Hayes Edwards (New York: NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) 33-44.

Blacks' limited access to education shrank even further as Washington "condemned every system of education save that which teaches the Negro how to work."[13]

Specifically, Wells-Barnett pointed to four outcomes of Washington's plans for Black education. First, Wells contended that Northern schools rejected Blacks at higher rates than they previously had. Second, there were fewer Black colleges in the south, which generated a third problem – a lack of industrial schools to replace the defunct schools. And fourth, Wells-Barnett contended that southern cities cut back their curriculums for Black students and did not provide high schools. As evidence of the last issue, Wells-Barnett pointed to the New Orleans Board of Education that cut the curriculum of Black youths down to fifth grade – and cited Booker T. Washington "as an inspiration for doing so."[14]

The fact that Washington supported and believed in industrial education, however, does not mean that Washington shared the racialized motives or perspectives espoused by these philanthropies. Instead, he supported industrial education because he believed it to be the best way forward for oppressed Black southerners and that "the individual who can do something that the world wants done will, in the end, make his way regardless of his race."[15]As a son of the south, Washington understood its caste, its mores, its systems, and White supremacy – as well as the violence and intimidation that undergirded it. He understood it because he had lived it. Most importantly, he learned over time that he could not publicly challenge any of these things without risking his life,

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[13] Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "Booker T. Washington and His Critics" *The Battle for the Souls of Black Folk : W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and the Debate that shaped the Course of Civil Rights* (Santa Barbara, California; Denver, Colorado: Praeger, 2016) 241-243.
[14] ibid.
[15] Washington, *Up From Slavery*, 155.

his work, his benefactors' support, or his program of uplift and self-determination for rural Southern Blacks. He therefore crafted a way to carry on his program of Black self-sufficiency while also subverting the larger system of White supremacy. He therefore crafted a way to carry on his own program of Black self-sufficiency while also subverting the larger system of White supremacy.

In public, Washington assumed a submissive posture whereby he seemingly accepted segregation, subjugation, and political disenfranchisement. He played "the fox" because he understood that direct confrontation of White supremacy or "to play the lion was to invite disaster."[16] This served him in important ways. First, it won him the trust and support of White benefactors. More significantly, it won him the funding necessary to grow Tuskegee into the machine that it became and train Black men and women who could start and teach in Black schools. Second, it afforded Washington's rise to international acclaim, which won him even more funding and support. It also afforded him a platform with both Black and White audiences, which he used to win people to his cause. Last, Washington's enthusiastic support for industrial education provided the perfect cover for his more clandestine activism on behalf of southern Black communities.

In private, Washington assumed an assertive posture that allowed him to think freely, set his own agenda, and carry out his plans for Black "strength, self-improvement, and mutual aid." Behind his "mask of acquiesce," and with the aid of a select few, Washington directed and paid for a series of lawsuits that challenged voter discrimination, Black southerners' rights to sit on juries, and segregated railroad cars.[17] When southern states began to write new constitutions to disenfranchise Black voters by

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[16] Norrell, *Up From History*, 167.
[17] Harlan, "The Secret Life of Booker T. Washington," 394 -396.

adding property and education requirements, Washington publicly advocated that such laws be applied to both Black and White voters. When this did not happen, Washington refused to argue against these state constitutions. Instead, Washington worked secretly with Black city leaders in New Orleans to wage war on the state's grandfather clause. Though unsuccessful in Louisiana, Washington also waged lawsuits in Alabama using code names and his secretary to carry out his clandestine work. In *Giles v. Harris* and *Giles v. Teasley*, Washington paid his personal attorney Wilford H. Smith to challenge disenfranchisement laws. Though both cases reached the United States Supreme Court, both were defeated.[18] In 1904, Washington launched a successful campaign to desegregate juries, and won a Black man's freedom because qualified Black jurors had not been allowed to sit on his jury. In another successful suit, *Bailey v. Alabama*, Washington again secretly used his personal lawyer and his own funds to fight against peonage. When Alonzo Bailey failed to complete a work contract for which he'd been given a $12 advance, he was arrested and convicted under Alabama peonage laws. Hoping to test these laws, which were used to force the southern Black masses into labor, Washington orchestrated the case from behind the scenes as it worked its way to the United States Supreme Court. In 1911, the court declared peonage illegal, and Bailey was freed.[19]

Much like his covert legal work, Washington also hoped to shape Black education. But, by the turn of the twentieth century, he understood that he could not effectively work through northern agencies to improve rural Black Southern education. Though Progressive Era agencies such as the Southern Education Board (SEB), the

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[18] Ibid, 398.
[19] Ibid, 402-403.

General Education Board (GEB), the Peabody, and Slater Funds, had been formed to improve education for all southern youths, they continually ignored Black schools, and instead focused on the improvement of White schools.[20] This callous disregard for Black education mirrored that of state and local school officials, yet Washington could do nothing about it. Though he had close ties to the men who ran these agencies – many were major contributors to Washington's Tuskegee Institute or sat on its board of trustees – this afforded him no leverage. In fact, these same men barred Washington from joining their boards or even attending their meetings. This "proved one of the most frustrating (experiences) of his life," as he was relegated to second-class citizenship and a minor role as a paid agent.[21] This work, which largely consisted of "touring the South urging Blacks to improve their own schools and to conciliate their White neighbors" was meant to pacify Washington, but he scoffed at efforts to appease and quiet him. He argued instead that the work he'd been given was no different than the work he had been doing before they started paying him and he was disappointed that there was not "… a definite, systemic, organized plan. …" established to help Black schools.[22]

By this, Washington likely meant a plan that would attack the racist and systemic problems plaguing Black schools such as poor schoolhouses, low teacher salaries, shortened school terms, and inadequate supplies. When such changes did not materialize, Washington shifted strategies and embarked on a campaign to solicit individual

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[20] The Southern Education Board was also known as the Ogden Movement. More specifically the SEB was the administrative arm of the Ogden Movement, which was named for Robert C. Ogden, a northern businessman who led the charge to improve southern Black education in order to bolster the Northern economy.

[21] Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington : The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915* (New York: New York : Oxford University Press, 1983).,187.

[22] Ibid, 188-190.

benefactors that he could "more directly control" to support his.[23] In 1903, Booker T. Washington's work in Black education and uplift won the financial backing of Henry Huttleston Rogers, an early twentieth century tycoon whose wealth was rooted in railroads, oil and various investments. With Rogers' aid and that of various other philanthropic organizations, Washington funded forty-one, one-teacher schools in Macon County, Alabama, which was also home to Tuskegee Institute. The school-building campaign was headed by Clinton J. Calloway, a native Cleveland, TN and an 1895 graduate of Fisk University. Under Calloway, who served as the director of Tuskegee's extension services, the program morphed from a school building program to a program of community uplift and engagement. Calloway, along with extension agent William M. Rakestraw, worked in Black communities throughout Macon County to drum up finances and support for the new schools. They offered matching funds to Black communities that raised their own funds to support teacher salaries and better school buildings, and they raised about $20,000 among community patrons. Calloway then built upon this success by luring Black people from other parts of the state with the promise of good schools. He enticed over 50 Black families to the area with the school building program, which lasted until Rogers's 1909 death.[24]

3.2 Washington and Rosenwald Partnership

Intent on carrying out his plans to build Black primary schools, Washington formed a partnership with Julius Rosenwald after their May 1911 meeting at an event in

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[23] Ibid, 194.
[24] Hoffshwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 24-26.

Chicago.[25] It was a providential meeting: Washington was in search of a new benefactor to support rural southern schools and Rosenwald, a newly minted millionaire, had just begun his philanthropic efforts in earnest. Born August 12, 1862, Rosenwald, the son of Jewish immigrants, grew up in Springfield, Illinois. Though stories once abounded that Rosenwald was a rags-to-riches story, he, in fact, was not. Instead, he had a middle-class upbringing. His father owned a men's clothing store, and the family lived a block from the home of President Abraham Lincoln.[26] At 17, Rosenwald who finished only two years of high school and never attended college, joined the family business.[27] By the turn of the century, however, Rosenwald was his own man. He bought stock in a then fledgling mail order company, Sears, Roebuck and Co., and later became both president and a major stockholder. When the company's stock went public in 1906, he became an instant millionaire and major philanthropist, donating to charities in Chicago, across the country, and ultimately the world. [28]

Rosenwald's philanthropy was rooted in his Jewish heritage. He grew up a Reformed Jew and worshipped as such in later years. Reform Judaism was rooted in The Enlightenment. It was an intellectual movement based in reason that sought to place contemporary life at the center of worship. This meant the erasure of ideas that were purely religious or traditional, and the embrace of modern language, music, and dress. More specifically, common language replaced the more formal, traditional use of the Hebrew language; yarmulkes and the talith – a prayer shawl – were no longer worn;

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[25] Peter M. Ascoli, Julius Rosenwald: The Man Who Built Sears, Roebuck and Advanced the cause of Black education in the American South. (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2006) 87.
[26] Ibid, 2.
[27] Ibid, 5.
[28] Ibid, 28-9, 41.

choirs sang during worship versus a cantor; and prayer services became shorter while also allowing men and women to pray together. A major change was worshipping on Sunday mornings in lieu of Friday night or Saturday morning, which freed Jews to work and better align their schedules with those of the larger community. These changes exemplified Reform Judaism's belief in practicality and its attempt to place "life and actual observance, not law or custom …" at the center of Judaism.[29]

In Chicago, Rosenwald was a devout follower of Emil G. Hirsch who led the Chicago Sinai Congregation from 1880 to 1923 and was once a rabbi in Louisville, Kentucky. Known for crafting the major tenets of the Reform Judaism movement in the late nineteenth century, Hirsch is credited with making social justice a pillar of the faith, and he used his Chicago pulpit to preach on issues such as child labor, the dangers of unchecked capitalism, and women's issues. A central platform of his teaching was Tsadakah, a Jewish principle that intimately intertwines charity and justice, and he admonished his congregants that "charity is not a voluntary concession of the part of the well-situated. It is a right to which the less fortunate are entitled in justice."[30]

This idea guided Rosenwald's philanthropy, and the Washington-Rosenwald partnership evolved during an important shift in Black-Jewish relationships. In the pre-Civil War South, Jewish southerners were considered White. They accepted ideas of Black inferiority and they fully participated in the slave trade as masters, traders, merchants, and auctioneers. They, in fact, "were everything in the Old South except

[29] Ibid, 51-52.
[30] Ibid, 54.

abolitionists."[31] Later, during the Civil War, southern Jews defended slavery thereby securing their "acceptance and success in the South."[32] By the early twentieth century, however, there were a few successful alliances. These included the Campaign to free the Scottsboro Boys, a group of Black men falsely accused of assaulting two White women, the burgeoning civil rights movement, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which engaged both Black intelligentsia such as W.E.B. DuBois, Mary Church Terrell, an Ida B. Wells, as well as wealthy, influential Jews such as Jacob Schiff and brothers Author and Joel Springarn.[33]

The Washington-Rosenwald partnership can and should be counted among these successful collaborations, which had far-reaching and long-term benefits throughout the country. Rosenwald threw his support behind Washington and Tuskegee after an October 1912 trip Alabama. He travelled there with his wife, Rabbi Emil Hirsch, family members, and several prominent businessmen in a private train car.[34] The group was met with a marching band, treated to Negro spirituals and a tour of the school, which was a common practice for Black schools entertaining White patrons. Rosenwald later wrote that Tuskegee would "prove to any doubter that colored men and colored women are just as capable of good citizenship, of learning, as any of the White people who have come into

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[31] Oscar R. Williams Jr., ""Historical Impressions of Black-Jewish Relations Prior to World War II" *Negro History Bulletin* 4, No. 4 (1977): 728.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Huey L. Perry and Ruth B. White, "The Post-Civil Rights Transformation of the Relationship between Blacks and Jews in the United States" *Phylon* 47, No. 1 (1986): 55.
[34] Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 87-89.

my experience."[35] He added that "What I have seen here today has inspired me beyond words."[36]

For Rosenwald, this trip likely dispelled many of the images northern men like himself held about southern Blacks.[37] Private letters to his wife, Augusta "Gussie" Nusbaum, demonstrated that Rosenwald and his family may have held varying prejudices about Blacks or at best had very little personal experience with them. This was true despite the fact he was fully engaged in the work of improving Black life with his contributions to Black YMCA's and the newly formed National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). On Washington's first visit to Chicago, he and a prominent Black doctor toured the Sears' plant and had lunch with Rosenwald and a few other White businessmen. Rosenwald later wrote about the occasion using terms like "darkies" and "niggers."[38] In a separate letter, Rosenwald described a birthday party for his brother where a guest dressed as a "Southern darkey with a dress which was made out of a coffee sack."[39] In both instances, Rosenwald's racist language demonstrated that he was not immune to prevailing stereotypes about Blacks and had in some ways embraced them. His collaboration with Washington as well as his interactions with students at Tuskegee and Blacks across the south changed as his philanthropy grew helped to change such ideas.

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[35] "Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington," *The Tuskegee Messenger*, February 1932, Box 39, Folder 24, Julius Rosenwald Papers, University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center, Chicago, Illinois.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Stephanie Deutsch, *You Need a Schoolhouse: Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald, and the Building of Schools for the Segregated South* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2011) 105
[38] Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 88
[39] Deutsch, *You Need A Schoolhouse*, 105.

In the aftermath of his trip to Tuskegee, Rosenwald joined Tuskegee's Board of Trustees, and Washington and Rosenwald forged both a partnership and friendship rooted in mutual admiration and respect. White philanthropists such as Rosenwald embraced Washington because his story largely mirrored their own. He viewed himself as a man who started with little yet made something of himself through hard work and self-reliance. Washington had further proven himself by building and overseeing a thriving and well-respected empire – Tuskegee – much as they had done themselves.[40] For Rosenwald who never finished high school, Washington's education likely inspired admiration as well, and letters demonstrate that he clearly trusted the Black educator on issues of race and philanthropy. He often asked Washington's advice on Black schools seeking donations, and it was Washington who advised Rosenwald to invest $5,000 in Mound Bayou, one of several Black towns begun in the early twentieth century.[41]

Neither Washington or Rosenwald believed in direct protests and agitation for civil rights, and both rejected "the militances that affected their specific ethnic identities (a nascent Back to Africa movement and aggressive political campaigning in the case of Washington, and Zionism in the case of Rosenwald)."[42] As a southern Black man, Washington could not sanction direct action without risking his life, the financial backing of northern philanthropists, or Tuskegee – though he did challenge Jim Crow segregation and discrimination behind the scenes. Rosenwald, however, eschewed racially charged

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[40] Louis R. Harlan, *Wizard of Tuskegee*, 142.

[41] William Graves to Dr. Washington, Dec. 6, 1912, and William C. Graves to Dr. Washington, Feb. 14, 1914,
Booker T. Washington, Special Correspondence, Rosenwald, Julius, July-Oct. 1912, BTW-TUA.

[42] Abraham Aamidor, "Cast down Your Bucket Where You Are": The Parallel Views of Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald on the Road to Equality," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 99, No. 1 (1998): 48.

direct action because he thought it caused more harm than good. His aim, therefore, was Black uplift and "… bringing about a condition whereby the Whites do what they can to make the Colored people a decent, respectable element if not from a sense of justice, at least in self-defense."[43] Both Washington and Rosenwald believed "one could achieve equality through hard work and self-improvement, and by making oneself valuable and desirable to the people whose hearts and minds one wanted to conquer."[44]

A letter between Washington and Rosenwald further demonstrates their like mindedness on issues of race. On December 24, 1912, Washington wrote to Rosenwald about then president-elect Woodrow Wilson visiting Chicago. He questioned whether it would be possible for Rosenwald to arrange a private meeting with Wilson and select guests concerning Tuskegee. When Rosenwald apparently responded offering to host a luncheon for Wilson and Washington, Washington vetoed the idea and asked that it be a "simple meeting" instead. "My idea is this," he explained, "if you think it important that I be present at such meeting, the matter of the luncheon would bring up the old question of social equality and might embarrass Governor Wilson, and would certainly furnish the newspapers with the basis for some rather sensational reports…" Washington then left the decision up to Rosenwald but noted that "it may be possible to have the luncheon without my presence, and in that case, I should just as well be satisfied." With this sentiment, Washington displayed not only a keen awareness of the social and political

[43] Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 96.
[44] Aamidor,"Cast down Your Bucket Where You Are," 48.

forces at work during that era, but the ways in which he navigated small injustices in order to win larger gains, funding and support for Black Southerners.[45]

A last, yet vital commonality between Washington and Rosenwald was their activist spirit in the face of racial injustice. Both believed education was the answer to the Negro Problem and chose to invest in schools as a means to resolve it. Washington famously espoused education – in particular, industrial education – as the primary foundation of southern Blacks' uplift. He argued that industrial education would "… help the Black man to make for himself an independent place in our great American life" and he lauded it as the path to economic prosperity.[46] He believed that Blacks who learned a trade would be valuable to southern Whites, the southern economy, and ultimately a respected and valued asset in society. Rosenwald believed education the primary source of uplift for southern Blacks as well. In an interview, he stated that "too much injustice has been practiced against the negro. He needs education and a chance to earn a good living."[47] Collectively, they believed education and economic power would lead southern Blacks to first-class citizenship.

3.3 Social Design and Framework

On its face, the rural school building program was an architectural one meant to supply southern Blacks with quality schoolhouses: it served as a tangible solution to a

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[45]Booker T. Washington to Mr. Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington Papers, Special Correspondence, Rosenwald, Julius, July-Oct. 1912, BTW-TUA; Booker T. Washington to Julius Rosenwald, December 30, 1912, in *The Booker T. Washington Paper Vol. 12: 1912-14*, Raymond W. Smock and Louis R. Harlan (University of Illinois Press:1982) 95-96.

[46] Booker T. Washington, *The Fruits of Industrial Training*, (Tuskegee, AL: Institute Press, 1910) 16. Accessed May 10, 2021, https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=AAo-AQAAMAAJ&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA1.

[47] Hoffschwelle*, Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 29.

desperate need and no other philanthropy had specifically taken up this cause.[48] Closer examination of the program, however reveals that the rural school building program was a social experiment in Black self-help, interracial cooperation, and private-public collaboration. Though flawed by its acceptance of segregation, the program sought to combat both systemic and institutional racial inequality, prejudice, and discrimination. Washington and Rosenwald believed they could work peacefully within the cultural context of White supremacy to build relationships that would slowly undermine and cripple that ideology. They sought gradual progress through a type of socio-cultural entropy or decay within the system, believing that Rosenwald Schools could function as both segregated institutions and private spheres that allowed southern Blacks both the space, resources, and relationships to fight for equality.

Rosenwald Schools were born in this climate of racial animosity and angst over Black education, and on June 21, 1912, Booker T. Washington wrote to Julius Rosenwald about the inequities in Black and White school funding. He explained that state laws mandated separate yet equal facilities for both races, but such edicts were not enforced. Instead, southern states dispersed funds to various counties and "the county board of education divides the money between the races as it sees fit (with) the colored schools receiving a very small share." As an example, Washington wrote that Alabama spent $2,865,254 on public education. Of this, Black schools received only $357,585 and were often "as bad as stables." Washington argued that practices such as those in Alabama

[48] Ibid, 30.

represented “a fair sample of what other states are doing,” and he proposed a “Scheme for Helping Rural Colored Schools” to fight such inequalities.[49]

In this, one of the first letters to discuss what later became the Rosenwald Rural School Building Program, Washington never discussed the role of Blacks. His concern was not race control, which was the case with southern White school reformers, and he never mentioned creating a labor force for the industrializing north. This was not necessary because Washington was more than familiar with the self-help practices of Black communities across the south. Instead, Washington’s sole focus was explaining how southern racism worked and how to best combat it. His “scheme” proposed a private-public partnership in which Rosenwald made small grants to rural, southern counties that agreed to increase their spending on Black schools. The money was to specifically be used to build Black schools, extend school terms and increase teacher salaries. In short, Washington proposed an economic stimulus plan that targeted systemic injustice and hoped to dismantle a culture of inequality that devalued Blacks education.[50]

Washington’s “scheme” was both strategic and detailed. He suggested that he and Rosenwald start small and work with a select group of county school supervisors and board members – those “in thorough sympathy with our plan” to build Black schools – and allow the program to grow slowly. This would attract the attention of other county officials who would then apply for funds to build Black schools. He wrote, “beginning in this way, I believe the plan would attract attention and gradually spread throughout the South.” Washington emphasized working at the county level because that is where the

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[49] Booker T. Washington to Mr. Julius Rosenwald, June 21, 1912, Collection 1, Special Correspondence, Folder The Rosenwald Fund 1912, A-C, BTW-TUA.
[50] Ibid.

discrimination and unequal distribution of public-school funds took place. He proposed he and Rosenwald counter this by working only with counties that agreed to "give a certain amount in the way of an increase over what is now being done." This was necessary because the "temptation in some places would be for the counties to lean on you and do even less than they are now doing instead of more." With this statement, Washington demonstrated he was not interested in simply building Black schoolhouses. His aim was to counter prevailing prejudices and economic discrimination and win for southern Blacks their right to equal funding afforded them by law.[51]

The private-public strategy was meant to combat southern Whites' ambivalence toward Black education in several ways. First, this model promoted, and ultimately mandated, the active engagement of both state and local, White school officials. In order to receive Rosenwald funding, White school officials accepted the numerous social agreements embedded in the Rrsbp. They agreed to increase funding to Black schools, adhere to strict building polices, and provide modern, up-to-date supplies such as desk and Blackboards. Most important, however, White school authorities submitted to the all-Black leadership at Tuskegee. Second, the private-public strategy forced southern White school officials to play an ongoing role in Black schools. A key component of the Rosenwald Rural School Building Program mandated that southern Whites accept responsibility for the schools and run them as a part of the public-school system. Though rural southern Blacks were charged with securing land, buying supplies, fundraising, and providing labor, once the schools were completed, they were to be deeded to the public school system to be maintained and run alongside White public schools – though

[51] Ibid.

evidence indicates that some southern Black communities did not relinquish ownership of their schools or the land they were built on.[52]

In exchange for running the schools, struggling southern school systems added a new, modern facility to their holdings for a relatively small investment. Additionally, the Rosenwald Rural School-Building Program aided sympathetic southern White education reformers in their attempts to improve education for Blacks by affording them a northern, White ally, Rosenwald, who welded considerable power, wealth and influence as a businessman and multimillionaire. Rosenwald's support was important because southern Whites largely disapproved of schools for Blacks and balked at the idea of additional funds being spent on Black schools. The program also offered rural southern Blacks a powerful ally and northern friend to aid them in whatever struggles arose as they attempted to work with southern, White school officials.[53]

3.4 Interracial Cooperation

A core concept of the rural school-building program was interracial cooperation. Booker T. Washington was a southern Black man who enjoyed favor with both southern and northern Whites alike. Booker T. Washington's work at Tuskegee also fostered an appreciation of interracial cooperation. When Washington first arrived in Tuskegee, he traveled the county studying both Black educational needs and attitudes of local Whites toward education. He wrote, "I clearly saw that there was no hope of putting negro education on a firm basis in the South, unless it was possible to secure the interest and

[52] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 53, 238-239.
[53] Ibid, 34, 70, 238-239.

sympathy of White people."[54] This work likely taught Washington that the process of building a school created important relationships and community ties both among Blacks and across racial lines. He understood as well that such bonds could be useful in undermining systemic and institutional injustice. As Blacks and Whites intermingled in the work of negotiating spaces, buying materials, raising funds, providing labor and building schoolhouses together, Washington posited that southern Whites would eventually better understand southern Blacks' and their potential to uplift both themselves and the southern economy.

Rosenwald used a similar concept while working to build Black YMCA's across the country in 1910. In addition to his mandate that Black communities raise their own funds to match or exceed his donation, Rosenwald required that White YMCA officials join their Black cohorts in raising funds and agree to mentor Black YMCA officials as they built their new facilities. The outcome of these partnerships inspired Rosenwald and led him to believe that southern Whites and Blacks could work amicably together for mutually beneficial causes. In a speech at Tuskegee, he spoke of Whites launching fund raising campaigns, training and mentoring efforts to help Blacks build their own YMCA. "This is only one instance of what looks like a bright future, not alone for the colored man, but for the promise of the colored man and the White man being able to live together in America."[55]

Washington and Rosenwald's faith in interracial cooperation was likely further bolstered by their own alliance. Their partnership presented a cross-cultural, interracial

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[54] Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock*, Booker T. Washington Papers Vol 11: 1911-1912* (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1981) 471.
[55] "First Visit to Tuskegee 1912," Box 53, Folder 11, The Julius Rosenwald Papers, University of Chicago Library, Chicago, Illinois.

model of the friendship and cooperation the duo hoped to foster in southern communities. Washington was a southern Black man, and Rosenwald a Northern Jewish man. Yet, they entertained one another in their homes, ate publicly together and Washington, on at least one occasion, visited Rosenwald at the Sears, Roebuck & Company plant. This garnered stares, but Rosenwald understood early in the acquaintance that their work and friendship could impact race relations. After one of their first luncheons together, Rosenwald wrote to his wife that it had been a "unique" experience eating with "darkies." He wrote of people staring and others marveling how he came to be in the company of 'niggers," but he concluded that such musings and stares were useful and "I'm sure it was an object lesson which will have its effect on prejudice in many forms."[56] Ironically, Rosenwald himself was the first person to be transformed by his friendship with Washington. In subsequent letters he ceased using racial slurs when referring to Blacks.

Washington's "Scheme For Helping Colored Schools" demonstrated an acute awareness of southern Whites' animosity towards Black education, and he advised Rosenwald that they must navigate such attitudes carefully. He wrote "the Southern White man likes to be talked to, but does not liked to be talked about" and he warned Rosenwald that "great care should be exercised to let county officials feel as far as possible that they are doing the work – in a word, to place the responsibility upon them."[57] Understanding this, Washington sought to work in such a way that southern Whites were not offended by the work, but actually won over to it. But that was not his only goal. Washington sought to create relationships across the color line, and he did so

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[56]Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 88.

[57] Booker T. Washington to Mr. Julius Rosenwald, June 21, 1912, Collection 1, Special Correspondence, Folder The Rosenwald Fund 1912, A-C, BTW-TUA.

by placing a Black man at the head of his new program. Washington's scheme suggested "a good, strong man be employed" to oversee the program whose duties included "talking to the Southern White people and convincing them that it is in their interest to help educate the Negro."[58] This work mirrored Washington's own work and his passion, and he wrote "there is no work that I do in the South that I get more satisfaction out of than going through different states and talking directly to Southern White audiences about the interest they should take in the education of the Negro."[59] This work was important to Washington because he believed that the fates of southern Blacks and southern Whites were inextricably intertwined. He argued that they shared an intimacy and an understanding of one another that outsiders did not, and therefore believed they could and ultimately would aid one another in restoring and rebuilding the southern economy.

Clinton J. Calloway helmed the Rrsbp from its experimental stage through its tenure at the Tuskegee Institute. He was the natural choice for the position with an extensive history in community activism and school-building campaigns. Calloway joined the staff of Tuskegee's extension department after his 1895 graduation for Fisk University, and one of his first assignments was a school-building campaign in Kowalgia, Alabama. There, in the small farming community just 30 miles from Tuskegee, Calloway aided Blacks in building a three-building, eleven-teacher school. In 1901, he became director of Tuskegee's extension department and he worked with Black farmers and White school officials in Macon County, Alabama, to build schools and extend the school term. Later, he founded the monthly magazine, *Messenger*, to aid farm communities in

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[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.

building schools.[60] Beyond this, Calloway oversaw the Rrsbp's forerunner that Washington established through a partnership with railroad tycoon Henry Rogers. Under his leadership, the program morphed from a school building program to a program of community uplift and engagement. Calloway worked in Black communities throughout Macon County to drum up finances and support for the new schools. They offered funds to Black communities that raised their own funds to support teacher salaries and better school buildings, and they raised about $20,000 among community patrons. Calloway then built upon this success by luring Blacks from other parts of the state with the promise of good schools. He enticed over 50 Black families to the area with the school building program, which lasted from 1903 to 1909.[61] Later, when Washington partnered with Rosenwald in 1912, it was Calloway that suggested Rosenwald donate funds to build public schools. And, just as he had done with previous school-building campaigns, Calloway took the lead in developing the program. He chose Lee, Macon, and Montgomery Counties as the experimental sites for the schools in 1911 and immediately began educating White school officials on the merits of the program. Beyond this, he engaged in fund raising efforts, kept enthusiasm for the schools alive, oversaw the building of the schools and reported each community's progress back to Washington who forwarded the information back to Rosenwald.

Joining Calloway in this work was Booker T. Washington Jr., the famed educator's son, who also worked Tuskegee's Extension Department. His work in various Black communities included attending fundraisers, hosting picnics and rallies, and going

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[60] Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 157; Hoffscwhelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 25.
[61] Hoffscwhelle*, Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 24-26

door to door to invite farmers to meetings about the new schools. Detailed reports by Booker T. Washington Jr. reveal that middle class Whites sometimes responded with enthusiasm to the schools and their fundraising campaigns. He noted that a number of bankers and merchants donated money to Black schools. His reports also demonstrated that Blacks were not monolithic concerning the school-building campaigns. Washington Jr. encountered both Black communities that were enthusiastic about the work as well as those who were not. He worked with Blacks who were "living well" and those who struggled to raise funds. He wrote of his work with both Blacks and Whites, "On the whole I feel very much encouraged with the work because of the interest which is being shown on the part of the people in their efforts to raise their share of the funds with which to build better schoolhouses."[62]This statement along with newspaper reports about how both southern Blacks and Whites embraced the schools demonstrate that the interracial cooperation Washington and Rosenwald hoped to foster was taking place. These relationships were sustained as counties built additional Rosenwald Schools. As the program developed, the positions once held by Calloway and Booker T. Washington Jr. were duplicated in states across the south. These men were known as Rosenwald School Agents, a group of Black men who worked within their state to stir interest in Rosenwald Schools.

Similarly, the rural school building program promoted interracial cooperation by allowing Booker T. Washington and his staff at Tuskegee total control of the program in

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[62] Booker T. Washington Jr. to William C. Graves, September 16, 1915, Collection 1, Folder: Special Correspondence Julius Rosenwald, Aug-Sept 1915, BTW-TUA; Rural Schoolhouse Building Monthly Report ending May 31, 1915, Rural Schoolhouse Building Monthly Report ending June 30, 1915, Collection 1, Folder: Special Correspondence Julius Rosenwald, June-July 1915, BTW-TUA; Rural Schoolhouse Building Monthly Report ending August 31, 1915, Folder: Special Correspondence Julius Rosenwald, Aug-Sept 1915, BTW-TUA.

its early years. While Rosenwald donated finances and consulted with Washington on some aspects of the schools, he largely left the day-to-day operations to Washington and Tuskegee's Extension Department. This meant that the rural school-building program was conceived, administered and largely run by southern Black men. White state officials hoping to build Black schools with Rosenwald funding were forced to deal regularly with a cadre of educated, Black southerners who held positions of authority. Though many sought to circumvent this at times by writing directly to Rosenwald in Chicago, the philanthropist routinely referred all queries about the program back to Washington and his staff at Tuskegee.[63]

In addition to men like Booker T. Washington, Clinton J. Calloway and Booker T. Washington Jr., the rural school-building program boasted the talents of other Black men. They included men such as Robert R. Taylor, George Washington Carver, and Robert Russa Moton. Taylor, an architect and director of mechanical industry at Tuskegee, drew the architectural designs for the earliest Rosenwald Schools. Born June 8, 1868 in Wilmington, North Carolina, Taylor's father was a merchant and contractor who owned his own business prior to the Civil War. This allowed Taylor a privileged upbringing and he graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1892. With the exception of three years, Taylor spent his entire career,1892-1930, at Tuskegee. Beyond designing the earliest Rosenwald schools, he also designed several buildings at Tuskegee including The Oaks, Booker T. Washington's home, and the school's chapel. [64] George Washington Carver, the renowned Black scientist, scholar, and researcher designed the

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[64] Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 35-39.

gardens and the grounds surrounding the schools. Born enslaved in 1864 in Missouri, Carver lost both parents and was orphaned as an infant. Raised by his enslaver, he was a sickly child whose health forced him to remain around the house doing chores. This led to his love of gardens and science and Washington later attended Iowa Agricultural College, where he earned both an undergraduate and master's degree. In 1896, he was hired at Tuskegee to head the school's new agricultural department where he achieved many of his greatest successes working with peanuts, soybeans, and sweet potatoes.[65] By 1912, however, he was fully engaged in the work of designing the schools for the rural school program. With Calloway and Alabama's White, Negro Rural School agent, he authored *The Negro Rural School and Its Relations to the Community*, which "used the same rhetoric and design elements that southern educational writers applied first and foremost to White schools. Carver's contribution to the schools centered on creating vegetable gardens that southern Blacks could reproduce at home for their own personal use.[66] Last, there was Robert Russa Moton. Born August 26, 1867, in Amelia County, Virginia, graduated from Hampton University in 1890, and succeeded Booker T. Washington as president of Tuskegee in 1915. As president, he and Clinton J. Calloway oversaw the rural school building program and its expansion in the years following Washington's death. They remained at the head of the Rosenwald School Building Program until 1920 when it was moved to the Nashville, Tennessee and run exclusively by the Julius Rosenwald Foundation.[67]

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[65] Gary R. Kremer, *George Washington Carver: In His Own Words* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2017) 5-7, 10.
[66] Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South,* 53-55.
[67] "Dr. Robert Russa Moton," www.Tuskegee.edu, Tuskegee University, Accessed May 17, 2021, https://www.tuskegee.edu/discover-tu/tu-presidents/robert-russa-moton.

3.5 Black Self-Help

As plans for the new, rural school-building program developed, Booker T. Washington introduced the concept of Black self-help and insisted that the "best thing" to do was to "have the people themselves build houses in their own community." He wrote "I have found by investigation that many people who cannot give money, would give a half a day or a day's work and others would give materials in the way nails, bricks, limestone, etc."[68] This demonstrates that Washington's aim was not to foster Black self-help, but to embrace it as a demonstration of Blacks' commitment to education, uplift, moral improvement and citizenship. Washington understood that such examples would win southern Whites to the cause of Black education and disabuse them of the notion that their tax dollars were being used to finance Black education. This was a popular notion among Whites though the exact opposite was often true: Black tax dollars were being withheld from Black schools and being spend on White education. Beyond this, Washington also saw value in parents working alongside their children, neighbors and sympathetic Whites to invest in their own well-being.

Washington understood well southern Blacks' tradition of self-help. His knowledge on the subject was culled from his lifelong experience with southern Blacks and education. As a Black freedman, Washington experienced what he termed a "whole race trying to go to school" at the Civil War's end.[69] He witnessed firsthand Blacks' double taxation – their willingness to pay for schools, teachers and supplies above what they had already paid in taxes. He watched them build schools and pay subscription fees

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[68] Principal (Booker T. Washington) to Mr. Julius Rosenwald, Sept. 12, 1912, Folder: Booker T. Washington, Special Correspondence, Julius Rosenwald, July-October, 1912.
[69] Washington, *Up From Slavery*, 30.

even as they hosted and fed teachers in their own homes. Not only had Washington witnessed Blacks' many sacrifices for education, he benefitted from it himself. When Washington left his hometown of Malden to attend Hampton Institute, his family and neighbors donated what they could to send him on his way. Then, from 1903 to 1909, Washington had run a successful school-building program with the help of multimillionaire H. H. Rogers in Mason County, Alabama. Yet again, he witnessed Blacks' overwhelming enthusiasm for Black schools and the numerous ways they supported them.

Ultimately, Rosenwald accepted Washington's suggestion. His first response, however, as a businessman and president of Sears, Roebuck and Co, was to offer his company's products and materials to aid in building the schools.[70] In 1908, Sears introduced its wildly popular, portable houses and its "Modern Homes" catalogue. This innovation allowed customers to purchase pre-cut timber, fitted materials, and everything needed to build a home and have it shipped directly to them via freight. Over 70,000 of these homes and buildings were manufactured, and it's understandable that Rosenwald suggested the buildings might work as schoolhouses.[71] The idea was rejected, however, for two reasons. First Tuskegee officials realized that local businesses hoped to see a profit from the new schools being built. Making local purchases of timber, paint, nails, and other supplies from local, White businessmen had the potential to win their support for Black education. Second, Washington's architects at Tuskegee and men like Clinton J. Calloway, who worked in the field building the schools, believed the pre-fabricated

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[70] Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 36-37, Julius Rosenwald to Booker T. Washington, September, 16, 1912, Box 76, Folder: Julius Rosenwald, July-Oct, 1912, BTW-TUA.
[71] "What is a Sears Modern Home?" Www. Searsarchives.com, Accessed May 17, 2021, http://www.searsarchives.com/homes/index.htm.

buildings to be too small.[72] This established, Rosenwald readily accepted Washington and his staff's suggestion, writing, "I do not want Sears, Roebuck& Co., considered in the purchasing except as a factor toward reducing the cost."[73]

The decision to build upon and embrace southern Blacks' tradition of self-reliance and uplift positioned southern Blacks to remain as the central agents in the Rrsbp. They were encouraged to continue with fundraising, buying supplies, providing labor, sometimes constructing buildings, maintenance, securing the land where the schools would be built, and winning the support of local and state White education officials. This, again, was an important element that allowed southern Whites to see Blacks' accomplishments, which Rosenwald and Washington hoped would lead to greater respect and interracial cooperation.

3.6 Rosenwald Schools

The Rrsbp began with six, small experimental schools near Tuskegee in 1912. The Loachapoka School in Lee County, the Notasulga and Brownsville schools in Macon County, and the Little Zion, Big Zion, and Madison Hill schools in Montgomery County served as the forerunners to a movement that ultimately produced over five thousand schools for rural Black youths across fifteen states. The schools were built between 1912 and 1914, and each cost $700 to build. Of this, Rosenwald donated less than half for each

[72] Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 36-37. Booker T. Washington to Mr. Julius Rosenwald, Sept. 30, 1912, Box 76, Folder Julius Rosenwald, July-October 1912, BTW-TUA.
[73] Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 37. Julius Rosenwald to Dr. B. T. Washington, Dec. 26, 1912, Box 77, Folder: Special Correspondence, Julius Rosenwald, Nov-Dec 1912.

school and rural Black communities, along with support from their county school board and benevolent southern Whites, donated the additional funds.[74]

In 1915, a Boston newspaper recounted the story of the Notasulga School in Macon County, and in doing so demonstrated the work Black communities did prior to the arrival on the rural school building campaign and how it aided them. A Black woman, Mary Johnson, led the campaign for a new school in her community long before Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald's rural school building program became available. Upset by the conditions of the local Black school, which bore no windows or heat and had holes in both the floor and walls, Johnson wrote to Washington and asked how to go about building a school. She received plans from Tuskegee's extension office, organized the local women to do bake sales and raised funds before the money was stolen by the group's treasurer. Undaunted she started over, raised funds again and this time purchased lumber for the new school. The wood, however rotted. The third time proved successful with the aid of the new rural school building program. With the aid of Clinton J. Calloway, Head of Tuskegee's extension department, Johnson started over yet again. The Notasulga community raised funds with a Thanksgiving Rally, a concert, and various other events such as a birthday party where guests brought bags of pennies to support the new school. A local church donated land this time, and various other local churches and lodges made private donations to the cause. Blacks also donated $100 in labor, and no outside labor was used. With the additional aid from Rosenwald funding, the new school opened in May 1913.[75]

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[74] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 35-39.
[75] Ibid, 39-41.

Like the Boston newspaper, newspapers across the country carried reports of the new schools and their benefactor. Largely, the earliest Rosenwald Schools won both acceptance and praise from both Black and White southerners. Established in 1887, The *New York Age*, a leading Black newspaper hailed the schools writing, "the securing of these schoolhouses through the generosity of Mr. Rosenwald marks a long step forward in the advancement of our race." Without the schools, the paper wrote, "the masses of our people will in a large measure remain in ignorance."[76] Southern Whites were just as vocal in their praise of the new schools. One letter to a local newspaper read, "we take pleasure in saying (on) behalf of the White citizenship of Loachapoka that we commend the assistance you have given your race in erecting a nice school building at this place." Others wrote, "we, the White people of this community (Auburn), wish to say to the friend that is helping the colored people through Booker T. Washington to build better schoolhouses and foster education, indorse and appreciate the aid given the colored people of this community. And this is the sentiment of all concerned." Such praise revealed some southern Whites' acceptance of the schools and their willingness to adhere to the social contracts embedded within them. With Rosenwald's aid and support, rural southern Whites agreed to increase funding for Black schools as well as work alongside southern Blacks to build the new schools. According to the newspaper articles, they also donated money, aided with lumber and hauling supplies, and paid their way at various fundraising events, "lending encouragement by their presence." While such things did not mitigate issues of White superiority and racism, at least one article indicated that the new, rural school-building program had "soldered the White and the colored people closer

[76] "Create Fund to Build Rural Houses," *The New York Age*, June 25, 1914.

together and won many a local White man to faith in negro education."[77] And the mayor of Notasulga wrote, "It (the new rural school) is a credit to the town, and I feel sure it will be the means of benefitting not only your race but ours as well."[78]

Not all southern Whites were so altruistic in their thinking, however. In the early twentieth century, southern Whites witnessed southern Blacks' mass exodus from the south and into the north in search of factory jobs, better pay and stability. Whereas nearly 50 percent of Blacks worked in agriculture in 1910, this number fail sharply by 1920 to only 21 percent. By 1930, it was only 16 percent. Alarmed, southern Whites offered Blacks' education as a compromise. When researchers for the United States Department of Labor researched the issue, they found that Whites believed that "a viable system of Black schools" was the best way to "keep the Negroes in the south and make them satisfied with their lot."[79] This sentiment coincided with the arrival of Washington's rural school program and positioned the campaigns for the schools to win mass approval by southern Whites interested in retaining a cheap, Black labor force.

With the success of the first schools, Washington and Rosenwald's moved forward with their plans. On June 10, 1914, Washington and Rosenwald met in Chicago to discuss expansion of the new schools. Both saw the program's potential for growth, and Rosenwald donated an additional $30,000 to the cause with the intent to build as many as one hundred new school buildings in Alabama.[80] This plan expanded almost immediately into a regional plan that included Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi, where

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[77] "Schools For Negro Great Boon to Race" *The Inter Ocean*, Chicago, Illinois, Sept. 15, 1913.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 152.
[80] Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 65.

the need for Black schoolhouses was thought to be "especially serious."[81] The program gained steady momentum and eventually spread to fifteen southern states as both Blacks and Whites overwhelming embraced the program. Despite this, there were problems.

Though Southern Blacks largely applauded the schools and built more than 5,000 Rosenwald Schools and teacher cottages, the schools drew both skepticism and criticism from some Blacks. For rural, impoverished southern Black communities raising their required portion for a new school proved a fantastic feat and many were initially weary of trusting Whites. Many Blacks did not trust northern philanthropists and the "suspicion of Negroes had to be overcome" early in the program. They questioned why Whites would "give something for nothing, and especially to colored folks" and they wondered whether Whites would keep their word if they raised their share of the money.[82] A somewhat related trust issue involved the ownership of the schools once they were built. A core component of the Rosenwald school building program mandated that Blacks secure land, buy supplies, fundraise, and provide labor to build the schools. However, once the schools were erected, Rosenwald rules dictated that the schools be deeded to the local school boards to be run by the same southern Whites who routinely discriminated against them. Such rules caused Blacks to question whether there was a "bug under the chip somewhere" and demonstrated the paradoxical nature of the schools. They were centers of uplift and enlightenment, yet, in some ways, they empowered Blacks' southern White oppressors. This was not Booker T. Washington or Julius Rosenwald's intent. By deeding the school to state officials, they guaranteed that a Black school was forever available to

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[81] Ibid, 46.

[82] Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund,* (New York, NY: Harper, 1949), 43.

rural Black communities where, in many cases, there had previously been none. Moreover, deeding the schools to White school authorities increased the value of their holdings for a relatively small investment.[83]

Other issues arose over the Rrsbp's acceptance of segregation and its emphasis on industrial education. Because Rosenwald Schools did not challenge Jim Crow laws and segregation directly, they appeared to aid southern White racists in maintaining both a costly and unwieldy system that was separate and unequal. This, however, was not the program's intent. Washington sought to dismantle economic inequality through the process of building rural schoolhouses, not by desegregating schools. He believed the interactions and relationships fostered through changing the material landscape would lead to larger societal change. Neither he nor Rosenwald believed in direct political action, which they believed aggravated racial hostilities rather than helped them. The process of building schoolhouses through the Rrsbp, however, forged new relationships across racial lines, placed Black men and women in positions of authority as Rosenwald State building agents and Jeanes Supervisors, challenged existing power structures, and celebrated and highlighted Black self-help and uplift.

Some also questioned Rosenwald School's emphasis on industrial education. Rosenwald Schools were known as "Little Tuskegees." The moniker paid homage to the schools' founding visionary and administrator Booker T. Washington as well as his historic institution, the Tuskegee Institute. Like Tuskegee, the schools' central platform was industrial education or skill-based training rather than intellectual or liberal arts instruction. This proved problematic, because skills-based training, which was promoted

[83] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 34, 70, 238-239.

by both northern philanthropists and southern reformers, did not equip southern Blacks to challenge White supremacy, Jim Crow laws, segregation, or their relegation to second-class citizenship in southern society. Instead, industrial education, which promoted skills such as brickmaking, sewing, and Blacksmithing, forced southern Blacks into lower class, subservient positions and stunted their upward mobility. In short, it solidified long-held ideas of White supremacy and Black inferiority. For this reason, industrial education provoked "more controversy than any other issue in Black education during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."[84]

Booker T. Washington, however, viewed industrial education as the foundation for Black upward mobility. In lieu of liberal arts education or "the mere performance of mental gymnastics," Washington called for southern Blacks to focus on skills-based training and the "every-day practical things of life." He believed all work to be honorable and he scorned any type of intellectual prowess independent of skills-based training. His goal was Black economic empowerment, and he believed this would be the platform from which all other social and political uplift would arise.[85] This stance drew the ire of some because it too readily aligned itself with the ideas of northern White philanthropists and southern reformers working to shape southern Black education during the early twentieth century. The emphasis on industrial education also seemed suspect because Tuskegee was a major beneficiary of these agencies' largess, receiving millions of dollars from them over time to build new facilities, upgrade their current plants, pay salaries, and remain a viable institution. Additionally, the heads of these philanthropies such as

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[84] Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 32.

[85] Booker T. Washington, "Industrial Education for the Negro" *The Negro Problem* (New York: James Pott & Company, 1903), 17. Accessed May 19, 2021, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t5bc3tr2z.

Wallace Buttrick and Robert C. Ogden, served on Tuskegee's Board of Trustees, holding considerable power and influence over both Washington and the institution.[86]

Because of this, some have accused Washington of promoting industrial education and prospering at the expense of other Blacks. Washington's personal correspondence, however, "does not reveal a conspiracy, either large or small."[87] While organizations such as the General Education Board and the Southern Education Board used industrial education as a form of both race and social control, Washington viewed it as an economic lynchpin or fulcrum. He chose to work both through and with these agencies, accommodating their prejudice and paternalism, to prepare southern Blacks to become "independent small businessmen, farmers, and teachers rather than wage-earners or servants of White employers."[88] Writing on industrial education, Washington wrote, "I plead for industrial education and development for the Negro not because I want to cramp him, but because I want to free him. I want to see him enter the all-powerful business and commercial world."[89] Additionally, Washington embraced all types of education, not just industrial education as many once believed. In an address to the National Colored Teachers Association on July 30, 1911, Washington stated "I believe in all kinds of education – college, university, and industrial education – but I am most interested in industrial, combined with public school education for the great masses of our people; that is our salvation."[90] Washington demonstrated his belief in higher education by serving on the board of trustees for both Fisk and Howard Universities. He

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[86] Harlan, *Wizard of Tuskegee*, 187.
[87] Ibid, 142.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Washington, "Industrial Education for the Negro," 19.
[90] Harlan*, The Booker T. Washington Papers, Vol. 11,* 279.

also sent his own children to college as well as those Tuskegee students who showed an adeptness at academic work.[91]

Despite these perceived problems, Washington's rural school "scheme" spread quickly across the south becoming the "second crusade for Black common schools in the rural south."[92] The first occurred in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War as newly freed Black men and women sought the most rudimentary literary skills and the basic tenants of citizenship to maintain their freedom. The second crusade, however, was ignited and best characterized by the rural school program. Though it bore similar characteristics to other programs working in Black southern education at the time with its focus on industrial education, it was unique and distinct for several reasons. First, Washington's rural school program was an initiative that depended solely upon Blacks' activism and ingenuity. Understanding southern Blacks' willingness to provide labor, supplies, materials, and funds above and beyond their taxes, Washington made Black's collective social action the core component of the program. Also, it was the only philanthropic program to foment and develop Black leadership. In its earliest incarnation, the rural school program was conceived and run by Black men at Tuskegee such as Clinton J. Calloway, George Washington Carver, and Robert R. Taylor. Their roles were duplicated at the state level by Black men serving as Rosenwald state agents. Black women also played an important part through Washington's mandate that any Black communities receiving funds work with Jeanes Foundation.

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[91] Harlan, *Wizard of Tuskegee*, 176-181.
[92] Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 152.

Southern Blacks centrality to the rural school program meant that interracial cooperation was a critical component, and it was the only program to emphasize it. Washington believed the shared experience of building schoolhouses could build relationships and undermine racial animosity. He mandated that local Whites contribute and support the schools as a condition of funding which meant that schools were only built in communities where Whites were favorable to Black education. This also ensured that local Whites would absorb the Black school into the local school system and fund it according to Rrsbp rules. Additionally, Blacks were less likely to be harassed or endure violence because of the schools and the schools themselves were less likely to be destroyed. Similarly, Washington's incorporation of the private-pubic partnerships meant that southern Blacks had a powerful, White ally in Rosenwald working on their behalf. His power, wealth, and deferment to Washington and Tuskegee's leadership positioned Blacks to become local, state and national leaders.

All together, these principles – Black self-help, interracial cooperation, and private-public partnerships – were to function as a type of social entropy that undermined segregation, racial prejudice and ideas of White superiority and Black inferiority. Without necessarily acknowledging its underlying goals and ideas, however, Black and White communities across the south accepted Rosenwald funding and the program spread rapidly across fifteen southern states. After the unveiling of the first, six experimental schools, letters poured in seeking help to build Black schools. One of the first states to inquire about the program in 1914 was the state of Kentucky, where both Black and White education proved poor and in desperate need of improvement.

CHAPTER 4. BLACK AGENCY AND ROSENWALD SCHOOLS IN KENTUCKY

In 1914, Booker T. Washington deemed Black education in Kentucky far better than that in other southern states. Therefore, when Kentucky initially applied for aid from the new program, Washington denied their request. He wrote, "just now the needs are so great and pressing in the Gulf states that we feel our first duty is to try to relieve these conditions" and "your state, fortunately, unfortunately, has the reputation of being pretty prosperous in the matter of school buildings as compared with the states in the far south."[1] Washington's knowledge of Black education in Kentucky was drawn from his various travels in the Bluegrass. He had numerous allies throughout the state, and Black Kentuckians – particularly leading Black educators – had great respect for him and his program of racial uplift through industrial education.

In June 1902, Washington delivered the commencement address at Kentucky State Normal Industrial Institute and toured the state visiting various schools. He spoke especially highly of Louisville's public schools, noting "I have had the opportunity of seeing something of the public school work being done for our people in most parts of the United States and I think I do not exaggerate when I say that in their equipment and in their conduct they are the superior of any public school system that I have seen conducted for the people of my race."[2] That same month, Washington spoke at the Lexington Opera House to a mixed-race crowd on Black uplift and self-help. He left the state with an

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[1] Booker T. Washington to F. C. Button, Nov. 6, 1914, Series 1. 1, Box 79, Folder 693, General Education Board Papers at Rockefeller Archives Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY. Hereafter GEB-RAC.
[2] "Great Booker Washington in Louisville" *The Courier-Journal*, June 06, 1902.

especially favorable opinion of the Bluegrass, touting it as "the finest object lesson of racial friendship and progress to be found in America."[3]

Despite Washington's positive outlook on race relations in the Bluegrass and its "reputation" for good school buildings, his assessments proved questionable for several reasons. First, his analysis was a comparative one. He did not hail them as "superior" schools on their own merit, but relative to those in the deep south. Black life in Kentucky has often been deemed better than that of Blacks in the lower southern states, yet this does not necessarily mean Black Kentuckians enjoyed equitable conditions. Second, Washington visited Louisville's public schools, urban schools which were overwhelmingly better funded than those in rural settings, which his rural school building program was meant to aid. Additionally, race relations in Kentucky changed dramatically from 1902 when Washington visited Kentucky to the state's 1914 request for aid. In 1902, Berea College, which was rooted in racial equality, educated both Blacks and Whites. This changed in 1904, however, with the passage of the Day Law, which forbid interracial education in the state of Kentucky. The school expelled Blacks from its campus based on this legislation, and they were banned for the next fifty years.

Despite the true nature of Black schools and education in Kentucky, the Rrsbp did not arrive in the Bluegrass until 1917. It spanned fifteen years in the Bluegrass – 1917-1932 – and Black communities across Kentucky built 155 schools, two teacher cottages, and one industrial shop across sixty-four counties. The schools cost over $1 million, educated 18,090 students, and employed 402 teachers throughout the Bluegrass.[4] Of this, Black Kentuckians donated $88,897 in addition to the taxes they already paid. While

[3] "Blue Grass Object Lesson, Says Booker T. Washington," *Kentucky Evening Gazette*, 1902.
[4] Embree, *Review of the Rosenwald Fund*, 22.

significant, these numbers pale in comparison to most other states engaged in the Rrsbp. Over 800 Rosenwald Schools dotted the landscape of North Carolina. In Mississippi, Black communities built over 600 schools, and Black Texans produced over 500. Kentucky's Rosenwald Schools did not saturate the state in this manner. In fact, the Bluegrass state ranked in the bottom five when ranked according to the number of schools built, with only Maryland (149), Florida (120) and Missouri (3) building fewer schools.[5]

Several reasons exist for Kentucky's inability to make better use of the Rrsbp. First, the program arrived in Kentucky in 1917 with the start of World War I. Most able-bodied men were a part of the war effort, and supplies to build new schools were in short supply and costly. Additionally, there was a ban on the construction of new buildings that slowed the program's momentum. Then, in the winter of 1918, a flu epidemic closed schools in the state and further retarded the Rosenwald School work in Kentucky just as it began. Geography was yet another problem. Black rural communities were spread out over the state in distant and remote areas, and last, some communities had very few Blacks, which made fundraising especially difficult.[6]

Despite such circumstances and the seemingly miniscule number of Rosenwald Schools built in Kentucky, the schools impacted Black Kentuckians, their communities, and their education in important ways. It provided an economic incentive to invest in and build Black schools, which in and of itself helped improve Black education. It also aided

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[5] Ibid. Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 283.

[6] Report of F. C. Button , State Agent of Rural Schools for Kentucky, For the Month of June 1918, Box 80, Folder 702, GEB-RAC; Edward W. Hines to F. E. (sic) Button, June 17, 1918, Box 79, Folder 694, GEB-RAC; F. C. Button to Prof. C. J. Calloway, April 15th 1918, Series 18, Box 79, Folder 694, Report of F. C. Button, State Agent of Rural Schools for Kentucky, For the Month of November 1918, Box 80, Folder 702.

Black Kentuckians in building new schools, making additions to older schools, consolidating schools, demanding quality materials and construction, providing libraries, and school transportation. Beyond this, there were very specific and key ways in which the Rosenwald Rural School Building Program aided the fight for quality Black education in the Bluegrass. This research posits that the campaign for Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky was an important flashpoint in a long trajectory of civic and grassroots agitation for schools and education. In fact, some of Kentucky's Rosenwald Schools were not brand-new buildings. Instead, they were schools that Black Kentuckians built long prior to the Rrsbp's existence. Then, when the program was introduced in Kentucky, Black communities used Rrsbp's funds to add additional classrooms, construct a new building, or build an industrial shop to improve their schools. In this way, Black Kentuckians used Rrsbp funds as well as the national leadership and the support it provided to augment their own resources and promote their own social and political goals. Blacks pursued legal remedies in the court system. They launched grassroots fundraising campaigns. They taxed themselves to raise additional funds for their schools. And they formed interracial relationships to improve their schools. The Rrsbp supplemented Black Kentuckians work by supplying much needed outside pressure to change the state's racist practices.[7]

The work of the Rrsbp in the bluegrass can be divided into two distinct stages, the foundational years, which began in 1914 with the state's first attempts to bring the program to Kentucky, and the Rosenwald Fund Years, which lasted from 1924 to 1932.

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[7] "Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of May 1918," Box 80, Folder 702, GEB-RAC; "Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of March 1919," Box 80, Folder 703, GEB-RAC; Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of June 1919, Box 80, Folder 703, GEB-RAC.

The program's foundational years documents how F. M. Wood and F. C. Button laid the program's foundation and it demonstrates how the KNEA and later, the KNEA Journal, aided the program's spread throughout the state. It also examines the overall state of education in Kentucky, attitudes toward Black education and the unique problems faced by rural Blacks seeking education. The second phase of the Rrsbp in Kentucky coincided with a shift in national leadership. As Julius Rosenwald shifted oversight of the program from Tuskegee to his own philanthropic organization, The Rosenwald Fund, in 1920, the program's founding leaders in Kentucky left the program to pursue other opportunities. This led to a period of predominantly White leadership at the state level, yet Black Kentuckians continued to use the program to advance their own agendas, making it one tool among several they used to support education on their own terms.

4.1 The Foundational Years 1914-1924

Despite Washington's initial rejections, the Rosenwald effort in Kentucky continued under the leadership of F. M. Wood and Frank C. "F. C." Button, Kentucky's Rural Supervisor of Negro Education. Both Wood (Black) and Button (White) were highly esteemed educators in the state and together, their relationship mirrored that of Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington. It symbolized and underscored the program's social mission of fostering interracial cooperation among southern communities and it demonstrated that Blacks and White Kentuckians could work together effectively for a larger common good. Their relationship also functioned as a bridge from Julius Rosenwald, "one of the nation's wealthiest men to some of its humblest citizens," meaning rural Black communities across the south. Beyond this, Button and Wood acted

as intermediates between state agencies that controlled Blacks' school funding and the Black Kentuckians hoping to build schools and uplift their communities. [8]

After Washington's initial rejections, Button, continued his campaign to win Rosenwald aid for Kentucky.[9] When Button's letters did not work, he met Rosenwald at a conference in Washington D. C., which resulted in Rosenwald's interest in expanding the program to Kentucky.[10] Tuskegee officials later approved this, and awarded Kentucky $5,100 for the 1917-1918 school year.[11] "Under the Plan For the Distribution of Rosenwald Aid In the Erection of Rural Schoolhouses" dated September 20, 1917, Rosenwald aid consisted of no more than $400 for a one-teacher school and $500 for a two-teacher school. This money came with stringent stipulations meant to safeguard Blacks from White discrimination and improve their schools. Rosenwald money was intended to supplement funds raised by local Black communities and county school boards. Blacks and their White allies were charged with raising funds for the new school, securing land, providing materials such as nails and paint and oftentimes providing labor for the new facility. Rosenwald guidelines dictated that Blacks' portion and that of the state had to meet or exceed Rosenwald contribution before they qualified to receive aid.[12]

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[8] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the America South*, 163.

[9] Button, a native of Oquawka, Illinois, was born November 19, 1863, and he boasted a long history of educational activism, which included Black education, women' education, and that of mountain Whites throughout his career. In 1887, Button and his mother founded Morehead Normal School, now Morehead State University, as a direct response to the Rowan County Wars. The feud – also known as the Martin-Tolliver- Logan Feud – resulted in twenty deaths, nineteen wounded, state militia involvement and a mass exodus of the county's most prominent citizens. More information on Button can be found at the Rowan County Library.

[10] F. C. Button to Prof. C. J. Calloway, Sept. 10, 1017, Series 18, Folder Correspondence Rosenwald Schools 1917, CJCC-TUA.

[11] Director of Extension Department to F. C. Button, Dec. 3, 1917, Series 18, Correspondence Rosenwald Schools 1917, CJC CPapers.; "Report of F. C. Button, State Agent of Rural Schools for Kentucky, For the Month of December, 1917" Box 80, Folder 701, GEB-RAC.

[12] "Plan For the Distribution of Rosenwald Aid In the Erection of Rural Schoolhouses" September 20, 1917, Series 18, CJCC-TUA.

In this way, Rosenwald funds increased spending on Black schools. This contradicts William E. Ellis' assertion in *A History Of Education in Kentucky* that the Rrsbp "allowed the Commonwealth of Kentucky to divert funding to White schools from monies that should have been expended on African American education."[13] Additionally, under the 1917 rules, Rosenwald aid was extended only to those communities with school terms of five months or longer, those who could complete and furnish the schools within six months, and those who promised to equip the schools with proper furnishings including separate toilets for boys and girls, desk, Blackboards and heaters.[14] Embracing the Rrsbp's tenants, Button set out across the state and enjoyed almost immediate success in places like Scott County. He wrote excitedly about the program's impact and noted that "a great deal of good can be done in Kentucky in this indirect way, that is, by making County Boards feel ashamed that they have not provided better buildings for colored schools by showing them that people outside the State have noticed that we are deficient in this way."[15]

Black educator Francis M. Wood joined Button in administering and overseeing the first Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky in 1918.[16] That year, Wood became one of nine Black men hired by the Rrsbp to promote the program in Black communities across the south. These men were known as Rosenwald state building agents, yet Wood's title in Kentucky was state director of the fund, a title which none of the other agents were afforded in their respective states.[17] In this role, Wood served primarily as a community

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[13] Ellis, *History of Education in Kentucky*, 179.
[14] "Plan For the Distribution of Rosenwald Aid," Series 18, Folder, CJCC-TUA.
[15] F. C. Button to Prof. C. J. Calloway, April 15th 1918, General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.
[16] "Report of F. C. Button, State Agent of Rural Schools for Kentucky, For the Month of July, 1918." Box 80, Folder 702, GEB-RAC.
[17] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 175.

organizer and program evangelist – though he also communicated directly with Tuskegee officials and held decision-making and negotiating powers in the Kentucky communities where Rosenwald Schools were built. This was an important role for Wood and his Black cohorts in this position. Rosenwald state building agents held positions of both authority and power and were some of the first Black men to do so in post-Reconstruction southern education. These men were backed by both the power of the state and the largesse of Rosenwald wealth and aid. This afforded them authority and respect as Black men, and it bolstered their platform of Black education. Their standing as Rosenwald state building agents gave them power they were otherwise denied in the segregated, Jim-Crow south and it launched their careers in state government. It also mitigated the dearth of Black leadership when the program was wrested away from Tuskegee in 1920 and placed under the administration of the all-White Rosenwald Fund, located in Nashville, TN. In their Black communities, these men held places of both prestige and honor due to their extensive education and professional backgrounds. Black southerners valued these traits as well as the state agents' sense of paternalism and goals to improve Black education.[18]

[18] Ibid, 169 -170.

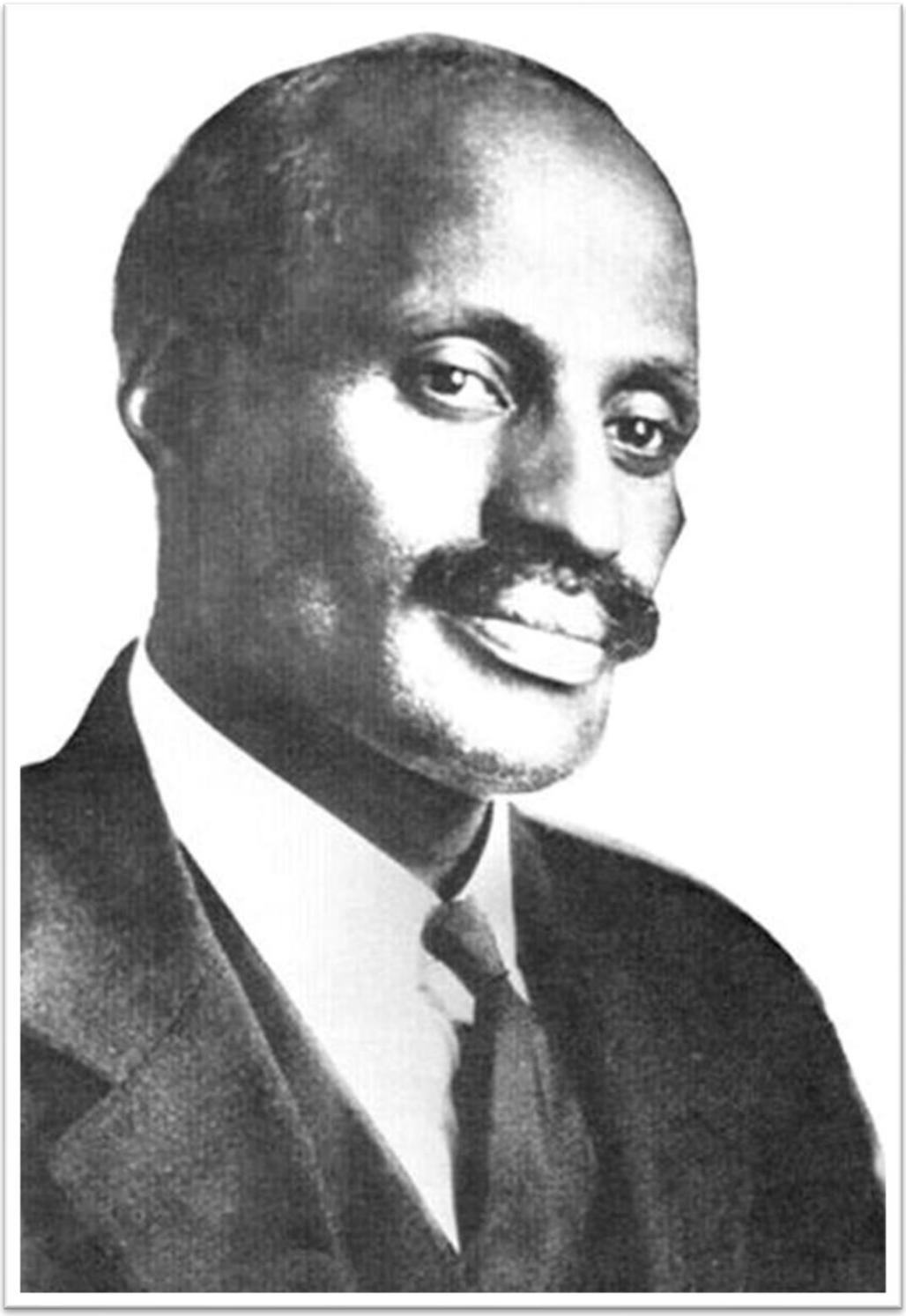

Figure 1: Francis Marion “F. M.” Wood (Glasgow Daily Times, February 21, 2010)

Prior to becoming a Rosenwald State Building Agent, Wood was a highly respected educator who ultimately became president of the Kentucky Normal and Industrial Institute, led the Kentucky Negro Educational Association several years, and later served as the Director of Colored Schools in Baltimore Maryland as well as the president of the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools in Washington D.C. Born on a farm in Glasgow, KY, in 1878, Wood attended the Glasgow Normal School and Terre Haute College in Terre Haute, IN, before graduating from Kentucky State University in 1901 with diplomas from both the academic and agricultural departments. He later received his master's degree from Eckstein-Norton University, now the Lincoln Institute of Kentucky in 1906. He was principal of Western High School, a Black school in Paris, when he was hired by the Rrsbp.[19]

Because of his status and varied accomplishments, Wood was not easily persuaded to take the position as a state building agent – especially after the state offered him only half the salary others made. Under the Rrsbp rules, the program paid $750 if the state paid an additional $750 towards their state worker's salary. The state of Kentucky either refused or lacked funds to match the Rosenwald offer and sought to employ Wood at only $750 per year. Wood refused, writing "it may be best for me not to take the work, as I cannot think of taking the work at that small a salary and pay my expenses and board out of that allowance."[20] He instead countered their proposal by offering to work only

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[19] "Colored Teachers Elect their Officers," *The Winchester News*, December 31, 1908; "Colored Institute," *The Mt Sterling Advocate*, (Mt. Sterling, KY) July 15, 1919; "Kentucky Normal and Industrial Institute Installs F. M. Wood As Its New President," *The Courier-Journal*, Oct.13, 1923; Gina Kinslow, "Francis Wood left legacy in education," *Glasgow Daily Times*, (Glasgow, KY) February 21, 2010.

[20] F. M. Wood to F. C. Button, Mr. C. J. Calloway, June 4, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJC-TUA.

part-time in this position and having his manual training teacher assist him in the work.[21] Button, however, believed Wood to be a "very competent man" and wanted him specifically for the position. He therefore secured the funds to match Rosenwald's offer from "White friends and organizations in Paris and Bourbon County" and Wood was commissioned state director of the Rosenwald Fund.[22] The title demonstrated the broad latitude and authority he held, and it signaled state officials' support for both Wood and the program. In one of his earliest reports to Tuskegee on the program in Kentucky, Wood wrote that Button and Superintendent of Public Schools V. O. Gilbert were, "very enthusiastic over the work and say it must go. They are arming me with all the power they can that there may be no let up in the work."[23]

Professionalism and training were key components of Progressive Era education, and the Rrsbp mandated both. Wood began his work as the State Director of Rosenwald Fund on July 12, and spent July 15-20 at a conference of "Rosenwald workers" at Tuskegee.[24] Such conferences and training were routine for Black Rosenwald state building agents as well as teachers who taught in Rosenwald Schools. They were also held for the White state supervisors of Black rural education. All trips were fully funded and paid for by Tuskegee with aid from Rosenwald. Such trips were important to men like Wood because it allowed them professional development and the opportunity to interact with Tuskegee president R.R. Moton and Calloway at Tuskegee. It was also a

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[21] F.M Wood to Clinton J. Calloway, June 4, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJC-TUA.
[22] "Report of F. C. Button, State Agent of Rural Schools for Kentucky, For the Month of July 1918" Box 80, Folder 702, GEB-RAC; "Report: Rural Schoolhouses Building, Kentucky For the Month Ending July 31, 1918, Series 18, CJCC-TUA.
[23] F. M. Wood to Prof. C. J. Calloway, Aug. 1, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.
[24] "Report: Rural Schoolhouses Building, Kentucky For the Month Ending July 31, 1918," CJCC-TUA.

space in which Black building agents could collaborate with both one another as well as their White state supervisors and the heads of other philanthropies.

Wood laid the foundation of the Rrsbp in the summer of 1918. With a budget of $25,150 for the upcoming school year – and the intent to increase teacher salaries, plus build forty one-teacher schools and fifteen two-teacher schools – he launched Kentucky's campaign with 1,000 flyers that explained the program's rules.[25] In them, Wood hailed the Rrsbp as an important "psychological moment for the erection of school buildings for Negro children of the South" and he likened it to "finding money when one is not sure how he is to get out of an embarrassing situation." He then urged Black Kentuckians to take advantage of the program, even suggesting that "it will be economy and good business sense, where necessary, to borrow money in order to take advantage of the Rosenwald offer."[26]

Despite Wood's enthusiasm, problems arose in the program almost immediately. Wood mistakenly printed flyers saying that Julius Rosenwald had set aside $5 million dollars to build Black schools across the south. This was incorrect and Wood was quickly corrected and chastised by Tuskegee officials who wrote, "Mr. Rosenwald has made no such announcement. He has simply given us what we have asked for so far.[27] Later, someone masquerading as a Rosenwald school building agent traveled the state misleading Black communities about his association with the Rrsbp.[28] The scattered

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[25] V. O. Gilbert, F. C. Button, F. M. Wood to Mr. C. J. Calloway, July 30 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA; Report of F. C. Button, State Agent of Rural Schools for Kentucky, For the Month of July 1918" Box 80, Folder 702, GEB papers.
[26] "The Rosenwald Fund in Kentucky" undated, Box 80, Folder 702, GEB-RAC.
[27] Clinton J. Calloway to Mr. F. M. Wood, Oct. 3, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.
[28] F. C. Button to Maj. R. R. Moton, May 3, 1918, Robert Russa Moton Collection 2, Tuskegee University Archives, Tuskegee, AL. Hereinafter, RRMC -TUA.

nature of Kentucky's Black population and its geography was yet another issue. Amid slow progress, F. C. Button wrote Clinton J. Calloway to explain, "many of our colored children in rural districts are scattered over large territory. Our problem is to reach a scattered population rather than to serve large groups and this is a very difficult problem to solve … ."[29]

Wood overcame problems of time and distance by tying his role as a Rosenwald state building agent to his work with the state's Black teacher organization, the Kentucky Negro Education Association (K.N.E.A.).[30] Founded in 1877 as the Colored Teachers State Association, the group was vocal on issues such as rural education, equitable pay for Black teachers, and good schoolhouses, all issues that readily aligned themselves with the Rrsbp's goals.[31] Wood was president of the K.N.E.A. from 1909-1916, and later served on its board. During his seven year-term as president, Wood aligned the timing of the groups' annual convention with that of the White teachers' association, the Kentucky Education Association, in Louisville, so the segregated groups could share speakers. This move afforded Wood an audience with the state's Black educators and the opportunity to garner support for the Rrsbp among White educators as well. Published proceedings of the KNEA's annual meetings demonstrate that the event featured some of the most elite Black activists, educators and thinkers of that period.[32] They included the likes of sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, author and educator Charlotte Hawkins Brown, poet, journalist and political activist Alice Dunbar-Nelson, and historian Horace Mann Bond.

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[29] F. C. Button to Clinton J. Calloway, April 15, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.
[30] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 199-200.
[31] Gerald L. Smith, "Kentucky Negro Educational Association" *The Kentucky African American Encyclopedia* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2015) 305-6.
[32] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 199-200.

The heads of the nation's largest philanthropies also spoke at the meetings. Prominent White men such as James Hardy Dillard, president of the Anna T. Jeanes Fund, and General Education Board officials E. C. Sage, Jackson Davis, and W.T.B. Williams spoke on various topics in Black education.[33]

KNEA meetings drew hundreds of Black educators from across the state, and as state director of the Rosenwald Fund, Wood used his platform at the 1919 K.N.E.A. convention to speak on "A Building Program for the Year."[34] In 1923, the same year Wood became president of Kentucky State Normal and Industrial Institute and was promoted to Supervisor of Colored Schools in Kentucky, K. N.E. A. program materials implored "Negro teachers of the state especially the rural teachers (to) inform themselves as to the various outside funds available for supplementing the state and county funds for the erection of buildings, employment of teachers, etc. such as the Rosenwald Fund."[35] In later years, the organization launched the KNEA Journal, a vehicle that was vital to the continued growth of the Rrsbp in Kentucky.

Like Black professionals in the KNEA, Black communities embraced the Rrsbp. They readily understood both the program's ability to augment their resources and the power it wielded to sway local Whites to fund and build better facilities. Coupling their sustained self-help efforts with funds from the Rrsbp and the support at Tuskegee, Blacks in some of the farthest flung regions of the state built their first schools. In May 1919, F. M. Wood traveled the mountain regions of Kentucky sharing news of the Rrsbp and he

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[33] Ibid.

[34] "PROGRAM AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE Principals' and Supervisors' Conference HELD UNDER AUSPICES Kentucky Negro Educational Association, April 25-26, 1919, p4. http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt7j6q1sfm4j_4?. Accessed Oct. 30, 2017.

[35] Proceedings of the Kentucky Negro Educational Association, April 18-21, 1923, 26. Accessed Oct. 30, 2017. https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt7w3r0pw43s.; Hoffschwelle, 199-201.

found “that section very much in need of help.” Conditions were especially bad in Harlan, which Wood visited twice. The Black community had never had a school building and met in what Wood called a “pretended school” that met in both residents’ homes and in churches. Harlan’s Black community pledged $500 to help building a new school, which was more than the $400 Rosenwald donated to their school. They initially built a two-teacher school at a cost of $2,500 and added two additional rooms in the 1926-27 Rosenwald budget year. The total cost of the completed four-room structure was $7,500.[36] In the Black mining community of Middlesboro (Bell County), Wood arranged for a school that would serve 100 youths from twelve mining camps, located in “the hollows” of Stoney Fork and Mingo. Terms were negotiated such that mine operators agreed to provide transportation to a centrally located school outside of Middlesboro.[37]

While some communities relied solely on self-help efforts, others welded multiple strategies together with the Rrsbp to meet their educational needs. In this way, Black communities who had wrestled for years with discriminatory practices and underfunding maximized the power of the program and won for themselves not only better schools, but private spaces in which to further foment their own social goals. For them, the Rrsbp was one tool among many such as grassroots organization, litigation, and voting that Black Kentuckians used to battle inequality, racism and discrimination in the early twentieth century. For Black communities, education and the creation of private spaces to foment social change and advance their own social goals and agendas was the ultimate upshot. Their vision of uplift through education superseded any misgivings they held about

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[36] “Report: Rosenwald Schoolhouse Building in Kentucky, Month Ending May 31, 1919,” Box 80, Folder 703 GEB-RAC; Rosenwald Database.

[37] “Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of August, 1919”, Box 80, Folder 703 GEB-RAC.

alliances with White northern philanthropic organizations. Blacks in Mayfield, Kentucky, (Graves County) demonstrated this. At one point, Mayfield Blacks received only $250 from county coffers for their schools.[38] In 1918, however, Black trustees sued White school officials for a portion of city taxes that had been denied them over a six-year period. They argued it was discriminatory to exclusively allot all taxes arising from local corporations to White schools and sued on behalf of Mayfield's 2,778 Black students. The Supreme Court of Kentucky sided with the Black trustees and awarded them nearly $3,000, writing "Colored children are the wards of the state in the same sense and to the same extent as are White children, and are equally entitled to care, protection and training … The prime object and fundamental principle of our free school system is to educate all citizens …"[39] In 1919, a year later, Black women voted for the first time in a contentious fight for school funding, and a $10,000 bond to build a Black school was passed with a vote of 888 to 12. Each of these victories – along with an additional in $4,000 in cash raised by local Blacks – produced funds that were ultimately combined with Rosenwald funding to build a new school in Mayfield.[40] The result was a six-teacher Rosenwald school with a library that sat on three acres of land. In 1928-29, three additional rooms were added to the school for a total cost of $40,350.[41]

Blacks in Providence, Kentucky (Webster County) also welded multiple strategies together to build their new school. In 1919, Black miners and their families from three school districts "voluntarily taxed themselves thirty cents on the hundred dollars and

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[38] "Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of May 1918," Box 80, Folder 702, GEB-RAC.
[39] Ibid.
[40] "Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of May, 1919.," Box 80, Folder 703, GEB-RAC.
[41] Rosenwald database

three dollars per poll." With aid from the Rrsbp, Black communities and their allies built an eight-teacher county training school with both an elementary and high school library for $20,000. Of this, Blacks donated $600, local Whites gave $500, state taxes contributed $17,600, and Rosenwald donated $1,200.[42] Two additional Rosenwald buildings were also built in Webster County. The Dixon School, a one-teacher school, cost $1,500, to which Blacks, states taxes and Rosenwald each contributed $500 each. During the 1923-24 budget year, Blacks in Webster County and their allies were one of only two communities in Kentucky to build a teacher home. The home was in Providence and built at a cost of $1,800.[43]

Figure 2: Teacher Home in Webster County (Rosenwald Database)

Once Blacks won the funding for better schools, quality construction was a major problem. Through their alliance with the Rrsbp, however, Blacks won for themselves the

[42] "Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of March 1919," Box 80, Folder 703, GEB-RAC; Rosenwald Database.
[43] Rosenwald Database.

much-needed oversight and accountability that would ensure that better schools would be built in the Bluegrass. Prior to the program, White school authorities held the purse strings and exercised authority over Black schools. They chose when to build, if to build, and where to build Black schools, which led to glaringly deficient Black schools. Most often, Blacks in Kentucky were forced to use schools abandoned by Whites while their tax dollars supported new schools for White youths. The Rrsbp was meant to counter such measures, and, under the gaze of Black leaders at Tuskegee, White county board members were forced to maintain strict building standards – or risk losing their Rosenwald grant.

The Rosenwald Rural School Building Program provided strict guidelines concerning construction, lighting, sanitation, lot size, and materials used. To ensure quality, the program provided construction plans and building designs to Black communities building Rosenwald Schools. *The Negro School and Its Relationship To The Community* was a 100-page booklet that featured plans for approved Rosenwald School buildings. This ensured that schools across the state were standardized and met the program's guidelines. The book featured plans for three types of buildings. A one-teacher school was an elementary school meant for students up to fourth or fifth grade. A central school was a larger unit meant to draw students within a five-mile radius. It was typically a two-teacher unit meant for older Black youths and vocational in nature. The last design was for a County Training school, which offered advanced training in home economics for girls, trades and agriculture for boys, and teacher training for youths hoping to teach in rural schools. Black communities across Kentucky could purchase the

designs for $1 each.[44] And, though White schools were not eligible for the Rrsbp, they too could purchase the school designs and numerous counties did.

Before erecting a school, *The Negro School* advised Black communities to begin by choosing a lot for the new building. Rosenwald guidelines mandated that schools be located on a two-acre lot with proper spacing for a garden, playground, and yard. They were to be built on level, well-drained ground with a proper water source nearby. Hills were forbidden: hillsides were generally muddy and the ground washed away in harsh rains, and hilltops were hard to each and exposed to the rain. Schools were also to sit 70 feet from a public road and could not be built within 200 feet of a railroad. Lighting was especially important to the schools, and *The Negro School* called for lighting from either the east or west, because Northern light would not filter into the schools properly and southern rays proved too strong or harsh. Last, schools were to be built "with a view to future growth near the center of the school population."[45]

Numerous Kentucky counties were rebuked for failure to meet Rrsbp guidelines. Plans for a new, one-room schoolhouse in Currentsville (Bourbon County) were rejected due to issues with lighting and the failure to include room for industrial training. In 1918, Black Kentuckians in Owingsville, Bath County, sought to build a two-teacher school at a cost of $2,600. Wood submitted plans for the school that August and requested $500 in Rosenwald funds to support the school.[46] He wrote that the new school – with the

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[44] *The Negro School and Its Relationship To The Community*, (Tuskegee, AL: The Extension Department Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, 1915) 7-8. Accessed April 23, 2021 https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=SbM-AQAAMAAJ&hl=en&pg=GBS.PP1, Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 53-56.
[45] Ibid 9-10, 13.
[46] F. M. Wood to Clinton J. Calloway, August 27, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.

addition of a room for industrial education – would make an "excellent building for the community." Rrsbp officials disagreed. In his response to Woods' letter, Clinton J. Calloway declared that plans for the Owingsville school were "not satisfactory" and he detailed a myriad of problems preventing him from approving the application. He wrote, "Have you figured out the amount of light as compared with the floor space in the building? Did you notice the partition between the two classrooms is not sufficiently arranged so the two rooms can be made into one? Did you notice that there is no arrangement made for the teaching of any of the Industries, so far as this plan is concerned?"[47] Calloway's suggestions elicited a response from R.W. Kincaid, Superintendent of Bath County Schools, who revised plans to include a "two-room basement for industrial work and domestic science" with "two cloakrooms" to be completed the follow spring.[48] Ultimately, the community built a three-room school at a cost of $2,500. Two additional rooms were built in 1925-26 with additional Rosenwald aid.

Beyond demanding accountability, Black Kentuckians used the Rrsbp to standardize and consolidate their schools, and this brought their schools into compliance with 1914 state legislation that mandated consolidation. At the turn of the century, Kentucky had more than 8,000 school districts. Some had only one school, and most were 'miserably supported, poorly attended, wretchedly taught, and wholly inadequate for the education of the people."[49] Southern progressives sought to rectify these

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[47] Clinton J. Calloway to Wood, Sept. 27, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.
[48] R. W. Kincaid to F. M. Wood, Oct. 9, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.
[49] Valerie Roddy Summers, "A New Rural Life: Kentucky Education Reform and the Country Life Movement" PhD diss., (University of Kentucky: 2001) 68.

conditions through school consolidation. Reformers believed that sanitary, modern schoolhouses would serve as the bedrock of rural change and advancement. They sought efficiency, order and greater social control by eliminating the smaller, one-room, one-school districts into larger ones that were tightly controlled through county and state oversight. In this paradigm, teachers no longer created their curriculums and local communities no longer determined schools' terms. Tests and school surveys became standardized, students were organized into grades according to their age and ability. Most importantly, reformers created a centralized hierarchy at the state level that administered policy and managed schools at the county and district levels.[50]

The Rosenwald Rural School Building Program played a key role in this work in Black schools and represented the first effort to standardize Black schools in the state.[51] In October 1918, F. M. Wood visited Clark County and met with Nancy Stevenson, county superintendent, about Rosenwald funding for a consolidated school. Stevenson sought to consolidate three, small Black schools – Bookersville, Ford, and Duarda Creek into a larger more modern facility. Wood awarded her $1,200 – $400 for each consolidated school – on the condition Stevenson agreed to provide at least three teachers for the new school.[52] This negotiation demonstrated the power Wood welded through the Rrsbp. Under ordinary circumstances, Black men had little influence or authority with Whites. Through the Rrsbp, however, Wood leveraged both the power and wealth of the program to win important gains for Black Kentuckians and their education.

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[50] Ibid. 4-5.
[51] Ibid, 93-95.
[52] "Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of November 1918," Box 80 Folder 702, GEB-RAC

Because Black support of Black schools was not an issue in most places, a major component of the Rrsbp was to win Whites to the cause of Black education. This was not an easy task, but Black Kentuckians witnessed some success in this area. In 1918, F. C. Button submitted applications for three schools in Scott County. Only the Sadieville application, which ultimately became a one-teacher school that cost $2500, was approved. The others, however, were paid for by the Scott county School officials. Button wrote, "The County Board of Education has become aroused by the matter and will provide for the other two schools. In a way, it will insure as good buildings as though the Rosenwald Fund were to help."[53] Later, Button wrote "this matter in Scott County has worked out exceedingly well in getting the County Board aroused about buildings for colored schools" and that the boards' interest "has grown out of our agitation for new buildings and a direct result of the Rosenwald help."[54] Clinton J. Calloway, who administered the program from Tuskegee applauded this work, writing that he hoped the "awakened conscience" of Whites would "result in a marked change in the rural schools of Kentucky." Ultimately, Scott County Blacks along with White school officials and their allies built seven Rosenwald schools at a cost of $17,175. Many of these were new schools, and at least one was a replacement school.

School officials in Jefferson County were also excited about Rosenwald funding. In August 1917, the school board "decided by motion and put it in their records that they

[53] F.C. Button to Clinton J. Calloway, April 8, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.
[54] F.C. Button to Clinton J. Calloway, April 15, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.

would appropriate an amount sufficient to use all the Rosenwald money available."[55] Local Whites showed their support as well. When Black communities in Harrod's Creek and Prospect sought to build a new school, F. C. Button noted in his monthly reports that the new school would be built "in the section in which many of the residences of the richest people in the state are located (and) many of these White families have taken quite an interest in this school and have given liberally to it." The new school, which was renamed the Jacob School, was a three-teacher facility that sat on two acres of land. An additional eighteen acres was purchased with the goal on dividing it into plots and selling it to local Blacks. The school cost a total of $4,800 when completed. Of this, both Blacks and the Rrsbp donated $400 each, and public taxes contributed the additional funding.[56] White women in Stanford (Lincoln County) also took an interest in the Rosenwald School in their community. In 1919, Blacks built a four-teacher county high school at a total cost of $3,600 for the school and land. Black women bought a piano for the school and "White women of the community … equipped the Domestic Science Department."[57]

Whites' support of the Rosenwald Schools in Jefferson and Lincoln Counties exemplified the interracial cooperation and social interaction the Rrsbp sought to bring about, but it was one of only a few instances in which Button wrote about White's contributions to the Rrsbp. This does not mean that Whites did not contribute to the program, but Rosenwald records indicated that White Kentuckians did not have a large

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[55] Report Rural Schoolhouse Building, Kentucky, For month ending August 31, 1918, Box 80, Folder 702, GEB-RAC.

[56] Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of November 1917, Box 80 Folder 701, GEB-RAC. Note: Though Button lauded the contribution of Whites to the school, no record of their actual donations was recorded in the Rosenwald Archives, which generally list separately funds donated by blacks, Whites, public taxes and Rosenwald.

[57] Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of June 1919, Box 80, Folder 703, GEB-RAC. No record of financial assistance by Whites is listed in the Rosenwald database. Purchases may have been gifts made directly to the school.

economic impact on the program. Instead, in some instances, there was clear resistance to the schools. In Oldham County, Black communities sought to build a school and the General Board of Education purchased a two-acre lot for $600. The school, however, was "held up" when White residents near the proposed site "seriously objected to the location of the colored school there." [58] Blacks ultimately built a County Training School, a Rosenwald school, under the 1921-22 budget year.[59]

When Oscar B. Fallis, the White superintendent of schools of Boyle County, sought to build a school for Blacks, he met with White resistance. In a letter to Wood, Fallis described his plight to build a new Rosenwald school in Perryville, a district of forty-four youths. The school was meant to replace "the old burned building" and Fallis secured funds for the school by going to the school board with a promise from the Black community to assist him financially as well as a $400 grant for the Rosenwald Rural School Building Fund. Fallis wrote, "I have put in half a months' work on the building showing the colored people that I am putting forth an honest effort toward their new building, when it has added nothing to me other than criticisms."[60] Ultimately, a one-teacher school was built at a cost of $1,500.[61]

Beyond dealing with White Kentuckian's resistance to Black schools, Wood and Button were often forced to deal with race relations. During these times, Button appropriated a paternalistic tone in his reports. White progressives like Button, much like their cohorts in larger southern society, "rejected the image of Blacks as beast of burden

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[58] Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of March 1919, Box 80, Folder 703, GEB-RAC.
[59] Rosenwald Database.
[60] Oscar B. Fallis to F. M. Wood, December 31, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.
[61] Rosenwald Database. The Perryville School is listed under Hardin County in the Rosenwald Database.

and replaced it with a counter-image of Blacks as dependent children."[62] After a Black man, "Worley" attempted to run for state legislature in Jefferson County, Button and another official decided "that it would be best not to have any public meeting of negroes for some time to come as they might be taken advantage of by agitators and would bring about more harm than good."[63] In October 1919 in Garrard County, "conditions for a race riot were in evidence" after a Black preacher "led a faction against the County board of Education" and hired a White lawyer to advise them. Button resolved the situation by staying with Blacks in the community until midnight and later meeting with both factions. He also admonished the White attorney "that it was not a very good time for the kind of work he was doing."[64]

Such statements demonstrated the precarious nature of Black-White social change interactions. Black Kentuckians as well as those throughout the south had to employ a racialized vigilance that guarded their interest even against White allies whose interests were seemingly the same yet complicated by race.[65] Wood and Button, however, shared a mutual respect for one another with almost no friction, it seemed. In a letter to Clinton J. Calloway at Tuskegee, Wood characterized Button as a "splendid gentlemen to work with," yet he had no problem going over Button's head when he needed help. When Button apparently began issuing funds to schools that were incomplete, Wood wrote, "I

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[62] Michael Dennis, "Schooling along the Color Line: Progressives and the Education of Blacks in the New South" The Journal of Negro Education, 68, no. 2 (1998), 144.
[63] Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of August 1919," Box 80, Folder703, GEB-RAC.
[64] "Report of F. C. Button, state Supervisor of Rural Schools for Kentucky For the Month of October 1919, Box 80, Folder703, GEB-RAC.

would suggest that you ask Mr. Button not to send checks to the County Superintendents until the last piece has been put on. I have said to all that one half the money will be paid when the building has begun and the last half when it is entirely completed.[66]

4.2 Changes, 1924-1932

In 1920, Julius Rosenwald shifted responsibility for the Rosenwald Rural School Building Program from Tuskegee to the Rosenwald Fund, Rosenwald's philanthropic organization based in Nashville, Tennessee. This change in leadership amounted to a change from Black oversight and guidance to all-White control. Shortly after this national shift in leadership, oversight of Kentucky's Rosenwald building program changed as well. Button returned to Morehead as president of Morehead University in 1923, and Wood, who had been promoted to "Supervisor of Colored Schools" took on additional duties and became the president of the Kentucky Normal and Industrial Institute. He left the state in 1924 to become Director of Colored Schools in Baltimore, Maryland. Wood's exit largely signaled the end of Black oversight in Kentucky's building program. James William (J. W.) Bell, a Black educator, replaced him, but seemingly had a much more limited role in the program.

Bell served as Rosenwald state building agent in Kentucky from 1922-1924.[67] Though few records detailing his work as a state agent exists, it is clear that Bell was a "race man," a Black man who eschewed ideas of accommodation and second-class citizenship to boldly advocate for the rights of the race. Born in Tennessee in 1874, Bell was an activist, orator and educator. As the superintendent and principal of the Black

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[66] F. M. Wood to Clinton J. Calloway, Dec. 5, 1918, Collection 18, CJCC-TUA.
[67] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 281.

Hopkinsville school in 1903, Bell was one of eight men in Hopkinsville who petitioned a judge for a fair trial on behalf of local Black men accused of killing a White woman. In 1910, he later became head of Black schools in Earlington and was lauded as "one of the best colored educators in the south."[68] As chair of the legislation committee of the KNEA in 1916, Bell argued for unequivocal equality in education. He contended "that the program of Negro education should be such as to meet the needs of the race and arouse within them a passion for achievement. Any kind of education that is good for the White man is good for the Negro. Any education that will make a good citizen of one will make a good citizen of the other. We believe education should be calculated to develop manhood as well as to prepare one for making a living. We believe education should arouse the divine element of discontent and raise one's aspirations to attain a man's place in the world. Education should inspire thought, and man's highest prerogative is to think."[69]

Further evidence of Bell's candor and vehemence lay in his 1923 address at the Inter-race Conference in Louisville that condemned the Ku Klux Klan. Bell spoke on "why he considered the negro race near[er?] the standard of 100 per cent Americanism than the Ku Klux Klan" and shared a litany of Black accomplishments in America, from the death of Crispus Attucks in the American Revolution to the service of Blacks in subsequent wars and their importance to the southern economy.[70] In 1925, he served on a KNEA committee that authored a series of resolutions calling for "statewide appeal for

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[68] Sally L. Powell, "James William Bell" *The Kentucky African American Encyclopedia*, 40.
[69] J.W. Bell, "Resolutions of the K.N.E.A," Proceedings of the Kentucky Negro Educational Association, Louisville, Kentucky, April 25-28, 1916, 25-27. Accessed Jan. 12, 2018. http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt7nzs2k6v8w_27?.
[70] Inter-race Body Condemns Klan," Louisville Courier Journal, Louisville, Kentucky, December 9, 1923.

inter-racial justice", improved health conditions, more Black colleges, improved training, and better school buildings.[71] Bell's outspoken and courageous stance did not align with the typical rhetoric of the state's Black male educators. While many accepted segregation and industrial education as the best path to uplift and education, Bell openly defied their tolerance and emphasis on vocational training. Instead, he believed that secondary schools should prepare students for higher education, and he argued that Blacks needed liberal arts education instead of vocational training. Without it, he predicted the race would be doomed to "serve as manual laborers, and semiskilled craftsmen."[72] Bell's defiance and critique of Kentucky's social climate and order might account for his short-lived time as a Rosenwald state building agent. He was the last Black man to hold this position, and the dearth of Black leadership in Kentucky state education prompted the KNEA to protest. In 1925, the organization passed a special declaration demanding Black representation. They called on the Department of education and the Legislature … to replace a Negro in the Department of Education," and contended that it was "since it is impossible that any man that has not live with our race, nor even been a part of them, to know our real condition, it would be impossible for them to sympathize with our conditions or needs."[73] Despite their protests, however, no Blacks were hired in state government for some time.

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[71] "K. N. E. A. Report Urges Better Negro Education," P*roceedings of the Kentucky Negro Educational Association*, (April 1925), 33-39. Accessed Jan. 12, 2018 https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt7c599z3b39.
[72] John A. Hardin. *Fifty Years of Segregation: Black Higher Education in Kentucky, 1904-1954*, (Lexington, Ky: The University of Kentucky Press, 1997) 23.
[73] Prof. A. E. Meyzeek, "Resolutions Adopted at the 1925 Session of the K.N.E.A.," *Proceedings of the Kentucky Negro Education Educational Association*, (April 1925) 23. Accessed Jan. 12, 2018 https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt7c599z3b39.

As the Rosenwald Fund was in flux nationally, new personnel replaced Button in Kentucky. In 1924, Kentucky's Department of Education revamped its structure. Under McHenry Rhoads, Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Division of Negro Education was created in the department and L. N. Taylor, who then served as Assistant State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Kentucky, was named supervisor of Negro Rural Education.[74] Like Button, Taylor appeared genuine in his quest for equity and the overall improvement of Black education. As supervisor of rural Negro education, Taylor supported both Black education and the Rrsbp by attending K. N. E. A. meetings and regularly donating $10 to the group. In 1926, Taylor spoke at the seventh annual state interracial conference in Louisville in 1926, which was attended by hundreds and featured James Weldon Johnson of the NAACP as guest speaker.[75]

Unlike Button, Taylor initially proved outspoken about Whites' discrimination against Blacks. In a 1929 unpublished paper for the Kentucky Department of Education, Taylor laid bare the discrimination Blacks faced in school funding. He claimed that White school officials refused to levy taxes on Black property to deny funding to Black schools. In areas where Black property was taxed, it was typically taxed at a much lower rate yielding less revenue to support Black schools. Taylor also argued that rural Blacks received less funding for consolidation, transportation, extension of terms, school buildings, and the extension of courses through high school. He wrote "wherever racial discrimination of any of these forms is practiced, its purpose and effect is to discriminate

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[74] "Assistants," The Enquirer, Cincinnati, Ohio, December 27, 1923. "Division of Negro Education (Kentucky)," *Notable Kentucky African Americans Database*, accessed June 16, 2021, https://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/1681.

[75] "Secretary's Report," *Proceedings of the Kentucky Negro Education Educational Association*, (April 1925) 23. Accessed Jan. 12, 2018 https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt7c599z3b39. "Hundreds Attend Big Interracial Meeting in State of Kentucky," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, Dec. 11, 1926.

in revenues and schools service against the colored children of the district as compared with the White children of the same district. It results in shorter terms, shorter courses, poorer schoolhouses, more meager equipment, poorer teacher service, and deprivation of transportation to school for the colored children of the districts. Such are its purposes. Such are its effects. This practice is so invidious in its distinction, so unjust in its purpose, so unfair in its operation, that you would not look for its beginnings in this, the twentieth century. It does not belong here except as a vestigial hangover from the days of African slavery, when taxation for education was for White children only, when there were no colored owners of property subject to the tax."[76] Such stances won Taylor favor with the K. N. E. A., and they lauded him as a man "vitally interested in Negro education … (and) a hearty supporter of the program of the KNEA."[77]

In 1931, the KNEA launched the KNEA Journal, a valuable tool in the continued promotion of the Rosenwald Rural School Building Program. The bimonthly edition was aimed at keeping Black educators abreast of its work and issues of interest, but it emerged over time into a powerful tool of Black advocacy and commentary. Acting as a reservoir of Black intellectual educational thought, the journal commented on issues of race, education, health, equality, and politics, often passing resolutions to support or condemn issues affecting the Black community. Like F. M. Wood before them, Taylor and KNEA officials used the new journal to educate Black communities about the Rrsbp and its work. This new print vehicle, however, had the power to demonstrate to Black communities across the Bluegrass the work being done by their peers. And, from 1931 to

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[76] Alicestyne Turley- Adams, *Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky 1917-1932* (Frankfort, KY: The Kentucky African American Heritage Commission, 1997, 2005) 14-15.
[77] "Mr. L. N. Taylor," The Kentucky Negro Educational Association (K.N.E.A.) Journal 1, no. 3, (1931): 4. Accessed Jan 12, 2018 https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt79s46h4883 .

1932, the journal regularly featured pictures of the state's Rosenwald schools. Among those featured were the $20,000 Newburg School in Jefferson County, a six-teacher facility; the $96,000 Mayo-Underwood School (Known as the Frankfort School in Rosenwald records), a sixteen-teacher building in Franklin County; The $20,000 Providence County Training School in Webster County, an eight-teacher school; the $24,500 West Side School in Mercer County, an eight-teacher school; and the $18,400 Lebanon Colored School in Marion County, a six-teacher building.[78] The newly built schools were symbols of Black pride and accomplishment and demonstrated what was possible for Black communities that made use of the Rrsbp. More often than not, the journal also celebrated the principals of the schools and praised them for overseeing the schools' construction as well as the work they were doing in their schools. Men such as W. O. Nuckolls, principal of the Providence County Training School, were praised as "one of Kentucky's progressive Negro educators."[79]

[78]The Kentucky Negro Educational Association (K.N.E.A.) Journal 1, no. 3, (1931) Accessed Jan 12, 2018 https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt79s46h4883; The Kentucky Negro Educational Association (K.N.E.A.) Journal 2, no. 1, (1931) Accessed Jan. 15, 2018 https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt74xg9f7n33; The Kentucky Negro Educational Association (K.N.E.A.) Journal 1, no.3, (1931) Accessed Jan. 15, 2018 https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt79s46h4883; The Kentucky Negro Educational Association (K.N.E.A.) Journal 3, no.1, (1932) Accessed Jan. 15, 2018; "Webster County Training and Rosenwald City High School," The Kentucky Negro Educational Association (K.N.E.A.) Journal 1, no .3, (1931): 16. Accessed Jan. 15, 2018 https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt79s46h4883 .

[79] "Rosenwald Schools," The Kentucky Negro Educational Association (K.N.E.A.) 1, no .3, (1931): 3. Accessed Jan. 15, 2018 https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt79s46h4883 .

The K.N.E.A. Journal

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF KY. NEGRO EDUCATIONAL ASSN.

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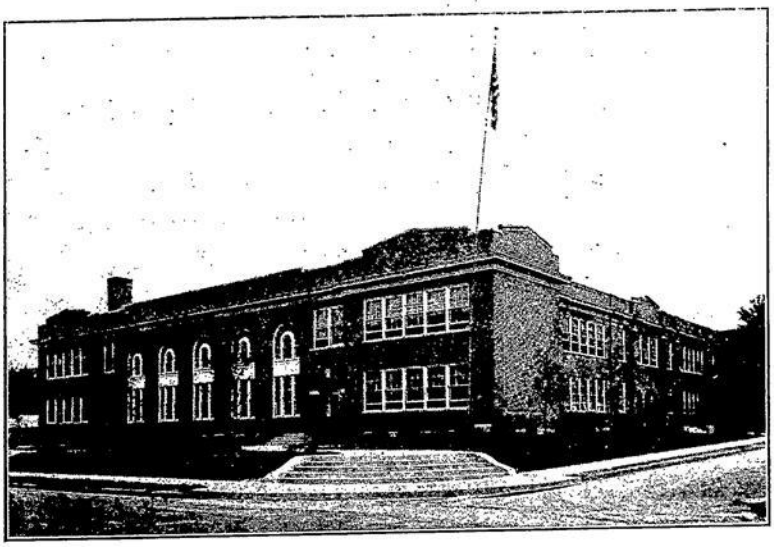
ROSENWALD SCHOOL DAY ISSUE



The Mayo-Underwood School

FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY

One of Our New Rosenwald Buildings

"An Equal Educational Opportunity for Every Kentucky Child"

Figure 3: Rosenwald Day Issue, February 1931 (ExploreUK Database)

Beginning in 1931, the KNEA produced a special "Rosenwald Day Issue." Rosenwald Day was a day of regional festivities meant to inspire continued community support, beautify the grounds, repair buildings, and commemorate the spirit in which the schools were built. Originally organic in nature and an expression of community pride, Rosenwald Day evolved into a day of propaganda that promoted the various northern philanthropists and their work in Southern Back education. Blacks resisted this attempt to coopt their community celebrations and Rosenwald Day attendance was fairly low and often yielded very little in donations to the schools.[80] Though Black educators devoted whole issues of the K.N.E.A. Journal to Rosenwald Day and how to receive aid from the Rrsbp as well as other philanthropies, they did not compromise their larger goal of winning fair and equitable funding from the state.

In the very same issue – on the very same page – that they implored counties to make use of the available funds, they boldly questioned the need for outside dollars to help fund Black education. In the article "Funds Aiding Our Colored Schools" the journal listed philanthropic agencies such as the Rosenwald, John F. Slater, Anna T. Jeanes Funds, and the General Education Board working in Kentucky.[81] Beyond listing the funds and their functions, however, the KNEA challenged the necessity of these agencies and their true usefulness. They questioned, "Is it to be expected or desired that philanthropic funds should continue permanently to be used especially for colored schools and that there should be permanently a state agent for colored schools or a special

[80] Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 140-2.
[81] "Funds Aiding Our Colored Schools" The K.N.EA. Journal 1, no 3 (February 1931): 6. Accessed Jan. 16, 2018. http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt78kp7tmw34_9.

supervisor for colored schools? Or is it to be expected and desired that these special services give way as fast as the colored schools are taken fully into the general program of administration and supervision along with the other schools? … Can these funds work to a better end than to remove the need for them?"[82] Posing this question proved that Black Kentuckians could not be silenced, swayed, or bought by the multiple agencies funding Black schools in the state. Emblazoned across the front of each K.N.E.A. Journal was the slogan, "An Equal Educational Opportunity for Every Kentucky Child," meaning they understood properly funded Black schools as a basic right of citizenship and they could not be mollified with outside aid.[83] They sought equal treatment under Kentucky state law and advocated for such even as they accepted funds from agencies whose interests were not always directly aligned with their own.

In the waning years of the Rrsbp, the K.N.E.A, Journal was an important tool in disseminating news on the program's latest initiatives such as its funding of school libraries and bus transportation.[84] In 1927, the Rrsbp launched a campaign to increase the number of books in Black schools and provide positive examples of Black Americans and people of color around the world. Under this initiative, any elementary or high school for Black youths – not just Rosenwald Schools – could buy a set of books containing 155 volumes. The books were chosen by professional librarians and cost $120 per set. Of this, The Rosenwald Fund paid one-third of the cost as well as shipping. Black communities and public-school authorities paid the additional cost. White schools could also purchase

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[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid, cover.
[84] L. N. T., "How to Get Aid From the J. R. F." The K.N.EA. Journal 1, no 3 (February 1931): 12. Accessed Jan. 16, 2018. http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt78kp7tmw34_9.

the volumes at full price.[85] In February 1931, only two other states had more Rosenwald libraries than Kentucky and Black schools across twenty-two counties owned nearly $5,000 in books because of the program.[86] Blacks willingness to raise these additional funds for libraries demonstrated their desire for books like W. E. B. Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk,* which was included in the libraries, that taught their history and mirrored their experience. Further evidence of this can be found in the poem "My Books And I" written by a student at the Bond-Washington Rosenwald School in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. In a brief sonnet, Mary F. Dixon wrote, that books "mean all the world to me" and they gave her "consolation and real peace in times of strife."[87]

Understanding the meaning and importance of literacy, reading, and access to libraries, Blacks in Kentucky had long been advocating for this right. Just as they had been building and funding their own schools long prior to the Rrsbp, they had been fighting for libraries and the campaigns to raise funds for the Rosenwald libraries was an extension of this earlier work. One example of this was the work of noted Louisville educator and civil rights activist Albert E. Meyzeek. After Meyzeek, the principal of several Louisville schools, was denied service at the local White library, he began lobbying the Louisville Library Board for a site that would serve Blacks. The result was the Louisville Polytechnic Library (now the Louisville Public Library), which opened in 1905. The library was the first in the United States to offer library services to Blacks by

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[85] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 121-2.
[86] Reinette F. Jones, "Kentucky Negro Education Association (NKEA) Journal: Accounting of Librarians and Libraries" (Library Faculty and Staff Publications, 1997) 72. Accessed https://uknowledge.uky.edu/libraries_facpub/72 ; "COUNTIES AIDED ON SCHOOL LIBRARIES July 1, 1930, to June 30, 1931" The K.N.E.A. Journal 2, no. 2 (January 1932) 28. "Do You Know These Things?" The K.N.E.A. Journal 1 no. 3 (February 1931) 12.
[87] Mary F. Dixon, "My Books And I," The K.N.E.A. Journal 2, no. 2 (January 1932) 27.

an all-Black library staff. When the library moved to a new location with aid from the Carnegie Foundation, it became the first Black Carnegie library in the US.[88]

A second and important initiative listed in the 1931 K.N.E.A. Journal was bus transportation. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, both the state of Kentucky and the RRBSP emphasized school consolidation. These schools served multiple Black communities – sometimes both city and county students – and were typically built in a centralized location. Still, this presented problems for many Black youths in the farthest flung parts of the county. While county officials often funded busses for White pupils, Black students were typically denied this service. To resolve this issue, the Rrsbp began issuing aid for school bus transportation in 1929.[89] The grants were available to only one school per county. In keeping with the program's goal of improving Black education, funds were only available to communities that had school terms of at least eight months and paid Black teachers at least $60 per month. Within a year of the program's arrival, 14 counties were making use of the service including Fayette, Jefferson, Woodford, and Boyd Counties. Altogether, nearly nine hundred students were transported over one thousand miles. In addition to this, the K.N.E.A Journal noted that there were "many transportation buses … being operated that are not being aided by the fund," indicating that the Rrsbp was only one source among many resources Blacks used to achieve their goal.[90]

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[88] Aisha Johnson, "Developing Southern libraries to influence the life of the African-American User: An Exploratory, Archival Analysis," PhD Diss. (Florida State University, 2015) 14-15.
[89] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald School of the American South*, 131-135.
[90] "Counties Aided on Transportation" *The K.N.E.A. Journal* 2, no. 2 (January 1932) 29. Accessed Jan. 16, 2018.

Beyond libraries and school buses, Black Kentuckians also made use of several other Rosenwald Fund programs. In1928, the program officials determined that there were 193 counties across the south that had yet to build a Rosenwald School. They awarded Blacks in these counties up to 50 percent more funding to build their first two-room or larger Rosenwald School. The same year, grants were awarded for brick and concrete buildings. This afforded Black communities in Kentucky more durable, fireproof buildings that could withstand the attacks of racists Whites. The following year, Kentucky state authorities and those across the south were required to carry insurance on all Rosenwald Schools, which again protected the new buildings from White racism. They were also an attempt to make sure that Black Rosenwald Schools guidelines and regulations remained on par with state guidelines and construction of White schools. These improvements were one of the many reasons Black Kentuckians embraced the Rrsbp and supported it throughout the life of the program. Where Blacks could not made headway alone, they used programs such as the Rrsbp to win gains for their communities that kept their schools on par with White schools and the serviced provided there.[91]

4.3 Curriculums

Though Black Kentuckians readily supported the Rrsbp and accepted its funds, they did not wholly embrace its ideologies or methodologies. In particular, the program's focus on industrial education proved especially controversial as Black Kentuckians' views on industrial education shifted over time. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Booker T. Washington had numerous allies throughout the state and they whole-

[91] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald School of the American South*, 129.

heartedly supported his program of accommodation and industrial education. These men – all leading Black male educators at Kentucky's post-secondary institutions –excepted both industrial training and segregation as necessary evils. They embraced it as a type of "civil or polite racism" that pacified Whites and afforded them both funding for their schools and political power within the state.[92]

Men such as William J. Simmons and apprentice, Charles H. Parrish, were prominent Black leaders in early twentieth century education in Kentucky. Both products of slavery and Reconstruction, Simmons and Parrish received liberal arts education, but supported industrial training. Simmons attended Madison (Colgate) University and later attended Howard University, where he graduated in 1873. Parrish attended Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute, which was under Simmons's leadership and later became State Colored Baptist University, and graduated in 1886. Parrish, delegate to the Republican State Convention, the American National Baptist, and the Committee for the State Normal School, helped Simmons establish Eckstein Normal Institute in 1890 in Cane Springs just outside Louisville. Parrish assumed the presidency of the school after Simmons death in late 1890 and used it as a platform to advance the fight for industrial education.[93]

Like Simmons and Parrish, Kentucky State president James S. Hathaway received a liberal arts education, but he too promoted industrial education as the right path for the southern Black masses. Hathaway, who graduated from Berea College, became president of State Normal School for Colored Persons in 1902. That same year, the school's name

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[92] Hardin, *Fifty Years of Segregation*, 21.
[93] Ibid, 24-25.

was changed to the Kentucky Normal Industrial Institute, signaling a shift in its pedagogical focus. Hathaway, a devotee of Booker T. Washington, used his biennial report to the trustees to emphasize the industrial work being done a KNII and ingratiate himself to his White benefactors. He wrote, "We are pleased with the industrial feature of our school… Students who remain at school here (long enough to catch the inspiration of the place) will not, as a rule consent to idleness thereafter, but in shop or on a farm, will work when and where work can be had." John H. Jackson, Hathaway's predecessor who served a second term as president of the institution from 1907-10, also accepted and embraced industrial education.[94]

By the time the Rrsbp arrived in Kentucky, however, sentiments towards industrial training had changed. Black Kentuckians rebelled against ideas of accommodation and increasingly rejected industrial education as the sole form of educational uplift. They did not, however reject Rosenwald Schools or their accompanying funding, though the program was firmly rooted in industrial training. Instead, they adopted a submissive posture – much like Booker T. Washington in public – and asserted their own communal goals in private. They accepted both the Rrsbp's emphasis on industrial education and funding but chose curriculums that best suited their own social and political goals. Within the confines of their classrooms, in the private spaces created by Rosenwald Schools, Black teachers exercised almost absolute control of their curriculums, giving them the freedom to teach what they chose. Though they at times spoke publicly of the need for industrial training to win funds for their schools or to build bigger, more modern schools, some Black teachers shunned the industrial

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[94] Ibid, 26-27.

equipment and classrooms provided by the Rrsbp and chose instead to promote liberal arts training.

Professor Robert Blythe promoted liberal arts training over industrial training at the Middletown (Rosenwald) School, in Berea, Kentucky. Born to former enslaved Blacks, who later attended Berea College, he readily understood the importance of liberal arts training. A veteran of World War I, Blythe earned a bachelor's degree from Kentucky State College in 1922 and a master's degree from the University of Cincinnati in 1938, and he valued developing students' minds more so than teaching them a skill.[95] Though he understood the ideological argument for the promotion of manual or industrial training for southern Blacks and its potential labor benefits, Blythe, wanted "more than a job for their students." He "wanted them to be more than just an uneducated industrial worker who could do only one thing (but) had no … understanding of his life and actions."[96] This pedagogical ideology set the atmosphere for nearly four decades of Black students.

Middletown Elementary School was a brick, four-teacher school that cost $12,500. The new building consolidated schools from Black communities in Berea, Middletown, and Farristown and held grades one to eight. Blacks donated $200 in cash, Black fathers built the playground, and the sale of a previous Black school for $3,000 contributed to the overall cost of the school. The school boasted a library with over 250

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[95] Sharyn Mitchell, "Robert Henry Clay Mitchell Blythe," Notable Kentucky African Americans Database, accessed June 17, 2020, https://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/300004109; "History of Middletown Elementary School," (1963) 3. Eastern Kentucky University Special Collection &Archives, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY. Hereinafter, EKUSCA-EKU.
[96] Ibid.

books and was insured for $8,000.[97] Berea College donated four acres of land to the school and supplied both water and electricity. Blythe was named principal of the school in 1927, and he remained in this position until 1963, when desegregation forced the school to close. He also taught both seventh and eighth grades, and, his sister, Nancy Blythe Deatherage, joined the faculty at Middletown in 1938. While at Middletown, Black students engaged in both liberal arts and industrial based training. Classes included history and world geography, and Middletown patrons donated "one large globe" and "folding political maps of … Europe, Africa, Asia, S. America, Kentucky (sic)."[98] Industrial courses were also offered, and Middletown was home to a thriving 4-H Club that produced sewing, canning, poultry and gardening projects that aided students in improving rural life. Classes that prepared students for high school, and possibly college, took precedent, however. Blythe and his staff's "main objective was that of getting the pupil interested in his studies (to) further his or her education at Richmond high School."[99]

Whites in Berea accepted Blythe's promotion of liberal arts training, and seemingly encouraged it. When the new building was dedicated in December 1927, both Black and White state educators spoke at the event. Berea College President William Goodell Frost spoke on "the complete education of the child," and contended that a proper education included reading, which he deemed "the gateway to knowledge," as

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[97] Ibid, 7; Rosenwald Database; "The Consolidated School," Box 13.07, Folder: Blacks, Middletown School, Berea College Vertical Files, Berea College Special Collections & Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky; Hereinafter, BCSPA-BC. Untitled newspaper article, Aug. 15, 1929, Berea Citizen," Box 13.07, Folder: Blacks, Middletown School, Berea College Vertical Files, BCSPA-BC.
[98] Robert Blythe, "Middletown School Opens" *Berea Citizen*, Aug. 7, 1930," Box 13.07, Folder: Blacks, Middletown School, Berea College Vertical Files, BCSPA-BC.
[99] "History of Middletown Elementary School, "3, EKUSCA-EKU.

well as math and science. Frost also asserted that children should be taught history, "for the great thoughts of Washington and Lincoln are neither White nor Black; they belong to us all."[100] White Bereans acceptance of liberal arts training for Blacks was rooted in the both the city's and the college's historic founding by abolitionist John G. Fee over a half a century before Middletown was built. Though Berea College itself no longer admitted Blacks students after 1904, various newspaper articles demonstrate that local Whites sought to "give the colored people an equal opportunity in education."[101] This is not to say that Black Bereans did not experience prejudice or racism, but possibly less of it regarding liberal arts training.

In Maysville, Kentucky, Professor William H. Humphrey used his school's need for industrial training and equipment to win additional aid from the Rosenwald Fund to build a new high school. There is some indication, however, that Humphrey's promotion of industrial training was little more than a ruse to win the support of the fund and a $25,000 donation. In a 1928 letter, Humphrey pleaded his cause to Edwin R. Embree, the new White director of the Rosenwald Fund and his former classmate at Berea College. Though the county school board had allotted $40,000 to build a new school for Blacks and the Rosenwald Rural School Building Program had already promised aid, Humphrey deemed this insufficient. He went over L. N. Taylor's head and leveraged his relationship with the head of the Rosenwald Fund, which administered the Rrsbp, to accomplish his goals. He wrote that the local Black school "looks more like a warehouse than a school building," had "no playground whatever," and "very poor" toilets. There was also "no

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[100] "New Building is Dedicated" *Berea Citizen*, December 8. 1927, Box 13.07, Folder: Blacks, Middletown School, Berea College Vertical Files, BCSPA-BC.
[101] "The Consolidated School" Box 13.07, Folder: Blacks, Middletown School, Berea College Vertical Files, BCSPA-BC.

provision for the teaching of any of the industries such as Home Economics and Manual Training." In its place, Humphrey hoped to build a 10-room, fully equipped facility with an auditorium that sat 500. To further solidify his case, Humphrey suggested the school be named for Embree's grandfather, famed abolitionist John G. Fee who had raised Embree in Berea [102]

While his words seemed sincere, a White school official noted that "industrial education and to a certain extent the domestic service idea have never been properly sold to the negro (sic) schools in this state." Of Humphrey, he added "the principal advocates them as a fad or fashion, his own children not taking the courses."[103] Whatever Humphrey's motives, his letter to Embree proved effective. Embree readily supported Humphrey, writing "I … take a great deal of satisfaction in being associated with somewhat similar activities for which my grandfather gave his life," He later sent a Rosenwald official to meet with Blacks and county school officials in Maysville.[104] The collaboration resulted in a four-year high school that served both city and county Blacks and taught grades one to twelve. It was one of only five, Black urban high schools aided by the Rosenwald Fund – the others were in Little Rock, Arkansas; Winston Salem, North Carolina; Greenville, South Carolina; and Columbus, Georgia – in a short-lived effort to shape Black secondary education and promote industrial training.[105]

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[102] W. H. H. Humphrey to Mr. Edwin R. Embry, June 12, 1928, Box 296, Folder 3, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archives, John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library Special Collections & Archives, Fisk University Library and Media Center, Fisk University, Nashville, TN. Hereinafter JRFA-FU.
[103] "FACTS PERTAINING TO THE JOHN G. FEE INDUSTRIAL HIGH SCHOOL," undated, Box 296, Folder 3, JRFA-FU.
[104] Edwin R. Embree to Mr. Humphrey, June 26, 1928, Box 296, Folder 3, JRFA-FU.
[105] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 132-133.

The timing of Humphrey's letter proved fortuitous. It collided with an early twentieth century movement to build urban Black high schools and a reimagining of industrial education. Prior to the 1920's, neither northern philanthropists nor or their White allies took an interest in Black high schools. White southerners largely remained ambivalent to Black elementary education and refused to set aside taxes – even Black taxes – for the most rudimentary education, much less secondary education. Neither they nor northern philanthropist viewed "Black secondary education as relevant to (their) schemes for the social and economic development of the New South."[106] White high schools, however, flourished. Under the leadership and guidance of the General Education Board, a successful campaign to embed White high schools into the southern cultural fabric thrived while Blacks who sought secondary education were largely forced to attend private high schools.

Post-1920, a select group of southern reformers and northern industrialist philanthropists changed their views on Black secondary education. They stood in opposition to the planter elite and sought to use urban Black high schools to control Black youths flooding into the cities from rural areas. From 1916 to 1930, rural Black southern populations migrated in mass from the field to city life. They were driven by both "economic depression" as well as "social and political oppression", which included a lack of Black schools.[107] This migration continued through the Great Depression and resulted in Black overcrowding in urban areas and a labor market that could not easily absorb them. This lead to a Black high school movement that "championed prolonged schooling as the best method to keep teenagers off the street, out of the already saturated

[106] Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 202.
[107] ibid.

labor markets, and to train them properly for their later roles as adults, wage earners and citizens."[108]

Realizing the growing interests in Black public education, northern philanthropies such as the Rosenwald Fund, The Jeanes Fund, The Slater Fund and the General Education Board joined the movement. The Rosenwald Fund took the lead in this work and reimagined industrial education as a tool to train southern Blacks for specific industries in their area rather than "the old manual training," which simply prepared Blacks for menial tasks and labor.[109] To accomplish this, the fund deployed its own team of experts – architects, sociologist, educational leaders - to survey potential sites for schools. Maysville, with a population of 2,500 Blacks and 47 miles from the nearest high school, proved a prime candidate for the program. Beyond this, the city was the third largest tobacco producer in the world and the second in Kentucky. It was also home to at least four tobacco companies and three automotive businesses as well as dairy, brick and construction companies. Each was reported to the Rosenwald Fund as "employing Negroes in large numbers."[110]

Such industries with the potential for Black jobs and favorable attitudes towards industrial education also made it appealing to the fund. In Arkansas, the fund ran afoul of Blacks who decried the emphasis on industrial education and instead sought "a real high school, one that would not be a subterfuge, one that would give a thorough educational training and literary background, and a curriculum upon which a college education could be well predicted."[111] Black Kentuckians, however, took a different approach. In

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[108] Ibid, 202- 203
[109] Ibid, 214.
[110] J. Howard Payne to Mr. George R. Arthur, March 6, 1929, Box 296, Folder 3, JRFA-FU.
[111] Hoffschwelle*, Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 134.

Maysville they found men like Humphrey, who at least feigned support for industrial education, and White county officials willing to invest in a new high school. The result was the John G. Fee Industrial High School, which began as a $40,000, 10-room facility and evolved into $101,000 project with pressure from the Rosenwald Fund to build a bigger, better facility. Of this, Blacks in Mason County raised $5,000. The Rosenwald Fund donated $25,000, forcing the county board of education to raise an additional $31,000 to build the school – or risk losing its contribution.[112] After nearly four years, the new school was dedicated on May 1, 1932.[113]

The John G. Fee Industrial High School was one of the last Rosenwald schools built in Kentucky as the national program shut down shortly after the death of Julius Rosenwald on January 6, 1932. By the program's close in the Bluegrass, Black Kentuckians had built 155 schools and won for themselves not only new school buildings, but greater equity. Black Kentuckians combined grants from the Rrsbp with numerous other strategies such as legal action, grassroots fundraising and voting strategies to build their schools and create better opportunities for themselves and their youths. Though the program did not saturate the Bluegrass and was not as widespread as it was in other states, it was an important movement in Black uplift and the program's impact manifest itself in both in the public and private spheres. Beyond creating classrooms and architecturally advanced buildings, the program helped lengthen school terms, consolidate schools, promoted equal pay for Black teachers, and provided the much-needed external pressure to bring systemic change to Black education in Kentucky.

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[112] John Shaw to Mr. Nathan Levin, June 26, 1931, Box 296, Folder 3, JRFA-FU.
[113] "DEDICATION of the JOHN G. FEE INDUSTRIAL HIGH SCHOOL," May 1, 1932, Box 296, Folder 3, JRFA-FU. John Howard Payne to Mr. Edwin R. Embree Nov. 5, 1929, Box 296, Folder 3, JRFA-FU.

These things combined with Blacks' own strategies worked together to force gradual change in the state's racist practices. In addition to these things, one of the most powerful components of the Rrsbp was the creation of the state building agent role. This position catapulted F. M. Wood from a high school principal and noted Black educator to one of the most influential Black men in the state. Wood, unlike any other state building agent in the Rrsbp in the south, served as State Director of the Rosenwald Fund and enjoyed more power than any of his peers. Booker T. Washington's social construct of the Rrsbp also created a unique and special role for Black women by tying the work of the Rrsbp to the work of the Anna T. Jeanes Foundation, which employed a cadre of Black women throughout the south as industrial education teachers. Their work was a critical part of the Rrsbp in Kentucky.

CHAPTER 5. "VERY STRONG COLORED WOMEN": BLACK WOMEN'S UPLIFT, ACTIVISM AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE RRSBP IN KENTUCKY

Before Booker T. Washington penned his first ideas for what later became the Rrsbp, Black women in Kentucky were already strategizing and working to improve rural Black education in the Bluegrass. In December 1911, the State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs declared "rural schools their especial work" at the annual State Association of Colored Teachers meeting and they began planning, organizing, and recruiting women to their cause. Less than a year later, the group had established fourteen new Parents' Clubs to aid rural schools in their work.[1] During this same period, in what was hailed as a "great move for the education of the colored race in Kentucky," Black communities in Louisville and surrounding counties, banded together to create The Kentucky Rural School Improvement League. Though R. D. Roman, a man, was named president, Black women – Ms. Laura Chase of LaGrange (first vice-president), Miss E. D. Alexander of Louisville (second vice president) Mrs. Anna C. Ingram of Louisville (secretary), Mrs. Olivia Morton (assistant secretary), and Mrs. A. Estes of Eminence (treasurer) – made up the overwhelming majority of the leadership.[2]

Such work represented a long pattern of Black women's active resistance to White racism and the gendered oppression they faced in the early twentieth century, and much of this work centered on improving Black education. In the aftermath of slavery, Black women helped establish schools such as Ladies Hall in Lexington, Kentucky in 1866, and they petitioned local governments for schools even as they worked with local churches to

[1] F. C. Button to Dr. Wallace Buttrick Jan. 18, 1912, Box 80, Folder 697, GEB-RAC.
[2] F. C. Button to Hon. Barksdale Hamlett, Sept. 30, 1912, Box 80, Folder 697, GEB-RAC.

create their own.[3] In September 1883, Black Baptist women formed the Baptist Women's Educational Convention of Kentucky to raise funds for State University in Louisville, which later became Simmons College. This group, which engaged women from across the state, began with a threefold purpose of encouraging attendance at Simmons, to pay off the school's debt and build a new dormitory for women, and promote missionary work. Ultimately, they raised over $12,000 to build a women's dorm on campus and pay off the school's debt.[4] Beyond this, Black women sought political power and voice, and they demanded the right to vote as early as 1886. Then, in 1892, they stood before the Kentucky General Assembly and decried their unfair treatment on state railroads.[5]

Because of their civic engagement, Black women's activism in Kentucky often drew the praise of F. C. Button, Kentucky's supervisor of rural Black schools. In fact, when Black leaders at the Tuskegee Institute suggested Kentucky hire someone to assist in "working up interest" in the program, Button readily thought of a Black woman for the job. He wrote, "we have a few very strong colored women in this State, about whom I have been thinking along this line."[6] Though Button did not explain what he meant by "very strong Colored women" his words demonstrated both his respect and confidence in the training, education, and leadership ability of Black women in Kentucky. And, though the job ultimately went to Frances Marion Wood, a prominent Black male leader in Black Kentucky education, his suggestion that a Black woman be appointed to a state office

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[3] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 239-240.
[4] Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 59-61.
[5] Karen Cotton McDaniel, "Local Women: The Public Lives of Black Middle-Class Women in Kentucky Before the "Modern Civil Rights Movement" (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 2013), 16.
[6] F. C. Button to Prof. C. J. Calloway, April 15, 1918, Series 18, CJCC-TUA.

highlights both the quality and the impact of Black women's activism in early twentieth century Black education. It also hints at the importance of their work to the Rrsbp.

Despite Black women's contributions to the Rrsbp, their narratives and the program's meaning to them has largely been overshadowed by the accomplishments of its Black male leadership. Most notably Booker T. Washington has been credited with creating the program; Clinton J. Calloway has been hailed for his oversight of the early program; famed architect Robert L. Taylor has been credited with designing the plans for the early schools; and George Washington Carver has been noted for designing the manicured grounds and gardens surrounding the schools. But it was a Black woman, Margaret Murray Washington, who stood up to White southern education officials when they tried to wrestle the Rrsbp away from Tuskegee in the aftermath of Booker T. Washington's 1915 death.

In 1917, tensions rose in the Rrsbp when Southern White school officials complained repeatedly about Tuskegee's Black leadership and questioned both their administration of the program and its finances. Beyond this, Julius Rosenwald harbored a growing dislike for Booker T. Washington's successor Robert Russa Moton though he remained a strong supporter of the work done at Tuskegee. Ultimately, the ever-growing turmoil prompted Rosenwald to launch a review of the program, its spending, and its effectiveness. The results were not good. Though no malfeasance was discovered, the study criticized Tuskegee's record-keeping methods and its administration. Ultimately, the study led to a movement to wrestle the program away from Tuskegee's oversight and place it under all-White leadership.[7] During the turmoil, Margaret Murray Washington,

[7] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 71-85.

Booker T. Washington's widow, fought vigorously to keep the program under all-Black leadership at Tuskegee. Washington, who served on the Rrsbp's board, boldly accused southern White school officials of racism and blamed the turmoil on "White officials who could not bear having to take instructions from Black men at Tuskegee." Though she ultimately signed off on the program's removal from Tuskegee, she made it clear that both her husband and Tuskegee's legacy had been blemished and wronged by the decision.[8]

In the early twentieth century, Margaret Murray Washington represented a class of professional Black women who established identities for themselves outside the home and beyond motherhood and marriage. These Black women did not, however, disparage or resent their domesticity. Instead, they esteemed it and built social activist platforms around them and helped shaped ideas about Black womanhood, responsibility, uplift, racial equity, and first-class citizenship both in and outside the home sphere.[9] Their work embraced an ethos of "socially responsible individualism" which involved commitment to their own personal growth, education, and advancement as well as the uplift of their communities. This idea was in direct contrast to the larger society's ideals of rugged individualism, and within this context "Black women emerged as leaders."[10]

Born March 9, 1865 in Macon, Mississippi, Margaret Murray Washington was an 1889 graduate of Fisk University, where W. E. B. Du Bois was a classmate and fellow member of the school's academic team. Renowned for her club work, she was a vocal

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[8] Ibid, 84-85.
[9] Jacqueline Anne Rouse, "Out of the Shadow of Tuskegee: Margaret Murray Washington, Social Activism, and Race Vindication" *The Journal of Negro History* 81, no. 1/4 (1996): 32-3. http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uky.edu/stable/2717606.
[10] Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do,* 218.

proponent of Black self-help and determination, and she contended that "motherhood and wifehood" were the foundation of Black social uplift. At Tuskegee, she served as Lady Principal and Director of the Department of Domestic Services, where she oversaw female students, designed their curriculums, managed faculty as well as her departmental budget and fought for teacher equity and fair pay. Beyond this, Washington twice served as president of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), and she founded the Tuskegee Woman's Club. In Alabama, she also lobbied state legislators for aid for poor and rural Black youths.[11] And, "claiming moral authority as Mrs. Booker T. Washington" – as a married woman and as an extension of the famous educator – she stood before interracial groups in the South and demanded both respect and fair treatment for both herself and members of the NACW. This work provided outlet for her own voice and ideas, which could easily have been overshadowed by those of her husband. Instead, Washington successfully created a platform for herself through her club work that allowed her to voice opinions and stances that stood in direct conflict with Booker T. Washington. While both embracing and 'working within the confines of her patriarchal marriage" Margaret Murray Washington worked through the NACW to fight railroad segregation even as her husband gave his fame 1895 speech at the Atlanta Exposition publicly accepting it.[12]

The work of Mary Margaret Washington, and that of Black women across the nation, was rooted in racial uplift ideology that can be traced to the antebellum period when both enslaved and "quasi-free" Blacks sought ways to improve their social,

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[11] Rouse, 31-32.

[12]Anastasia Carol Curwood, *Stormy Weather : Middle-Class African American Marriages between the Two World Wars* (Chapel Hill, N.C. : University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 25-26.

cultural, economic, and political positions in life.[13] Enslaved Blacks sought to gain their freedom and improve their way of life through their antislavery efforts. Free Blacks, however, sought upward mobility through the creations of Black institutions. Barred from White spaces, they formed churches, built schools, created literary societies, and started newspapers, "providing for themselves a space for fellowship, solidarity, mutual aid and political activism." They were also spaces for "antislavery agitation, education, and self-improvement." During this period, the rhetoric of racial uplift overwhelmingly espoused the physical liberation of enslaved Blacks, the universal education of the Black masses, and claims to citizenship based on natural-rights. The latter principal was a defining one of this era because it embraced enlightenment ideals of "inalienable rights" based on humanity as expressed in the Declaration of Independence. This position embraced all Blacks, "signifying (a) collective social aspiration, advancement, and struggle …"[14]

Early twentieth century ideas of racial uplift differed greatly, however. As upwardly mobile middle-class Blacks sought to combat ideas of innate inferiority and secure the acceptance of White society they crafted ideas of uplift rooted in "upright, cultured behavior."[15] This meant accepting bourgeois principles of piety, self-control, temperance, and a superior work ethic as evidence of Black evolution and progress.[16] Simultaneously, it also meant accepting highly problematic ideas of racial hierarchy. In this incarnation, education became a marker of Black middle-class attainment that defined Blacks over and against one another instead of as a basic right of all. In the minds

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[13] Kevin K. Gaines *Uplifiting the Race: Black Leadership Politics and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill and London, The University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 31.
[14] Ibid, xv.
[15] Ibid, xv, 31, 36-37.
[16] Ibid, 33.

of elite Blacks and liberal White southerners' comportment to White social norms became evidence of a "better class" of Blacks.[17] Because this idea of Black identity relied so heavily on White perceptions of a moral, orderly, Christian society, it necessarily included gendered norms that limited Black women's role within the uplift movement. Such confines, however, placed no limit on their intellectual lives. Instead, Black women were an important component of the Black Intelligentsia in the late 19th and early twentieth century. This era produced women like Margaret Murray Washington, Ida B. Wells Barnett, the famed journalist, speaker, and anti-lynching advocate; Anna Julia Cooper, a noted author and educator; and Mary Church Terrell, a suffragist and equal rights activist.

Though not as well known, Black communities across the south boasted their own Black female leaders. These women, much like Margaret Murray Washington, made important contributions to the Rrsbp and supported the program in various ways. As Washington sat on Rrsbp's board directing national affairs, thousands more served not only as teachers, but also as community organizers, laborers, fundraisers, and benefactors, sometimes purchasing and donating the land the schools sat upon. This work was part of their commitment to improving Black life and Black rural life through service and education. But Black women in this period sought more than just the uplift of their communities. They sought intellectual stimulation, control over their bodies, and a voice in the laws governing their lives. They also sought professional development, training, economic gain, and career advancement, and they used the Rrsbp as a platform to foment these goals.

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[17] Ibid, xiv.

5.1 Black Middle-Class Club Work

Black Women's club work sprang from the Black Church. Though denied leadership roles in the pulpit, Black women were often the heads of various missionary societies and ministries within the church. This afforded them multiple skillsets such as organizational development, strategizing, and fundraising that proved beneficial outside the church walls and in the larger community. In the aftermath of slavery, Black women used club work and missionary societies to meet the needs of their communities and respond to racial, gendered, and cultural oppression. They believed it to be their Christian duty to alleviate Black suffering due to systemic injustice, racism and prejudice through collective work and social engagement.[18] In the early twentieth century, greater access to higher education created a growing class of Black women whose education and training carried them beyond manual field labor and domestic service. These women attended schools such as Howard and Fisk Universities and were employed as teachers, nurses and librarians in their communities. They were also wives and mothers, and care for themselves and their families meant care for their larger world. For these women, private and public life was deeply intertwined. Their duties as professionals, wives, and mothers overlapped with their commitment to the larger society, and "their desire to nurture their own kin expanded out of the private realm and into public activities that advanced the interest off Black people as a group."[19]

In short, self-care meant community care, and protecting and providing for their families meant combatting White racist ideologies that oppressed, demeaned and belittled

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[18] Karen Cotton McDaniel, "Local Women: The Public Lives of Black Middle Class Women in Kentucky Before the "Modern Civil Rights Movement" (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 2013), 3, 79.
[19] Jacqueline Jones, "Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrows: Black Women Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present (New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1985), 3.

Black women, their families and Black communities. Beyond this, Black women's club work was a radical form of self-care and self-help. During this period, club work served as the very center of Black, female intellectual life. Club meetings and work created safe spaces to express their ideas and "throw up highways" beyond the gendered, racist, and negatively sexualized barriers they faced. Creating such spaces provided a means of self-confidence and agency that allowed them to resist social barriers to become leaders and advocates in Black communities across the nation.[20]

In the early twentieth century, Black middle-class clubwomen positioned themselves as the true leaders of the race, and they defined themselves over and against Black men and White women. Because of disenfranchisement, Black clubwomen deemed themselves equal to Black men and just as capable of tackling the race problem. Like Black men, Black women could not vote, and they were equally susceptible to poverty, lynching, Jim Crow laws, and White supremacy. Additionally, some Black women had lost faith in Black men's' ability to uplift the race and they asserted that they were better able to address the nation's race problem. They argued that women "were more nurturing, moral, and altruistic" whereas men were "belligerent, aggressive, and selfish."[21] Separated from traditional ideas of femininity and precluded by racism from fully participating in the larger women's movement, Black women organized through their club work to orchestrate personal, professional, and political gains. This necessarily differentiated their work from that of White women's club work. While Black women's club work improved the race, their counterpart's work "worked primarily to for

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[20] Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do*, 1.

[21]Deborah Gray White, "Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves (London and New York : W.W. Norton & Company ,1999), 37-38.

improvement of the gender, and only occasionally for their communities." Black women were not afforded this luxury, however, because "the race was under assault from all sides." Chief among their attackers were White women, who Black clubwomen argued should play a larger role in their fight for equality. Part of Black women's club work and liberation efforts meant forcing White women to see them as equals and garnering their support as they fought against lynching and White supremacy. White women, however, continued to align themselves with White men choosing both gender and racial superiority to Black women.[22]

Black women in Kentucky formed the Kentucky Association of Colored Women (KAWC) in 1903 to create a centralized and united front against the varying forces of oppression they faced such as poverty, enfranchisement, school inequality, and economic insecurity. It consisted of thirteen women's clubs – The Improvement Club, King's Daughters led by famed Kentucky educator Mary V. Parrish, Women's Industrial Club led by state and national activist Nannie Helen Burroughs, Y.M.C.A. Auxiliary, Economical Club, Ladies Sewing Circle, Sunshine Club, Music and Literary Club, Music and Literary Club No. 2, Normal Hill Reading Circle, Board of Managers, Baptist Women's Education Convention, Ladies Domestic and Economical, and Children's Friend - and was established to 'secure harmony of action and co-operation among all women in raising to the highest plane: Home, Moral and Religious, and Civic life." This was done by "securing the interest and support of the best women of the community, encouraging club work throughout the state where there was none, and educating Black women on the varying ways club work could impact their communities. Education was a

[22] Ibid, 39-40.

primary focus of the state-wide movement, and one of its first projects was the Scholarship Loan Department established in 1913 to aid Black youths in getting their education.[23]

When the need for a new school arose in Mayslick, Black women embraced the cause as their "duty" and created a Health and Welfare League. With $500 promised from the Rosenwald Fund, the group sought to relieve overcrowding in their school and create a space where a domestic science and manual training could be taught. Led by Mrs. W. A. Taylor, who served as president, and Mrs. Mary E. Foley, secretary, the league implored the community to attend a March 1919 rally to raise funds for a new school. According to newspaper accounts, the goal was to raise $1,000 in a single day. The program began with a 2 p.m. sermon by Rev. Robert Jackson of Bethel Baptist Church in Maysville and music was provided by Professor William H. Robinson. A short solicitation speech was given by Mr. Will Pointer, and Mr. J. H. Hicks and W. A. Taylor served as soliciting captains. Each family was asked to give at least $20 and those who could do more were asked to give up to $100. As an incentive, donor's names were to be published in both local and state newspapers "so that everybody will know just who is aiding in this great movement."[24]

The group raised over $500 during the event and planned another rally for May 4 "to go over the top."[25] They implored readers through a local newspaper to do their part in supporting the school. They wrote, "we are asking those who have already given to do more if you can, and those who have never given to, to help your own children." A year

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[23] Charles H. Wesley, *The History of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs: A Legacy of Service* (Washington, D.C.: The Association, 1984) 422-424.
[24] "Mayslick Rally for New Colored School on Sunday" *The Public Ledger*, March 21, 1919.
[25] "Our Colored Citizens" *The Public Ledger*, April 22, 1919.

later, Black men in the community – James Hicks, W. A. Taylor, Eli Bolden, J. W. Story and Vernon Holtz – filed articles of incorporation for the Mayslick Health and Welfare Company to "construct school buildings, store houses, dwellings and other edifices, and to hold real estate."[26] Combined, their efforts raised over $10,000 and the community built a $17,650 four-teacher building that sat on two and one-half acres of land.[27]

When the Rosenwald Fund expanded the Rrsbp to include urban areas, Black women's club work ushered the program into Kentucky's larger cities. In 1928, the president of the Rosenwald Fund Edwin Embree expanded the program's scope to reach even more Black southerners. After nearly two decades of building rural, Black schoolhouses, Embree recognized that the Rosenwald Fund had fallen into the "embarrassing position of having good school buildings for mediocre work."[28] Working alongside famed Black sociologist Charles S. Johnson, Embree launched a new era of initiatives to aid Blacks in achieving social equality. Under Embree, the Rrsbp's support for one-room schoolhouses was done away with, and the emphasis was placed on larger, consolidated schools that served more youths. These schools were typically located in larger cities, which necessitated bus transportation, which the fund also partially funded. This move to urban areas ended the Rrsbp's focus on rural communities, and the program was renamed "the southern school program" to reflect the Rosenwald Funds interest in 'the whole field of Negro education".[29]

When the Rosenwald Fund began offering new schools, libraries, industrial shops and bus transportation in urban areas, Lexington's Elizabeth "Lizzie" Beatrice Cook

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[26] "Mayslick Colored People Organize Corporation" *The Public Ledger*, November 18, 1920.
[27] Rosenwald Database.

[29] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 128-131, 136-138.

Fouse threw her support behind the program and invited the state's Rosenwald agent to her home to meet with local women.[30] Born May 14, 1875, Fouse attended both Eckstein Normal Institute and State Colored Baptist University, which later became Simmons University, before embarking on a career in education and a lifetime of community uplift and activism. Fouse taught school in Lexington before marrying William Henry Fouse in 1898 and joining him to teach in Indiana. In 1904, Fouse quit teaching to turn her attention to club work and community engagement. She was a charter member of the Kentucky Association of Colored Women, and in 1913 became president of the organization. She also held various positions in the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, and she worked across racial lines in other organizations such as the United Council of Church Women, the Southern Regional Council and the Kentucky Commission on Negro Affairs.[31]

Such associations and power made Fouse an important leader in Black education in Kentucky, and her support for the Rosenwald School movement helped build both a school and shop in Lexington.[32] In 1929, The Douglass School opened on Price Road at the corner of Chiles Avenue. Named for famed abolitionist Frederick Douglass, the school cost $30,000 and was insured under a new Rosenwald mandate for $18,000. The eight-teacher school had both a $120 elementary library and a $120 high school library. Grades one through twelve were taught at the school, and 200 pupils were initially enrolled there. A few years later, a $2,000 two-room shop for industrial sciences was also

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[30] Untitled Notes, Feb. 14, 1932, Box 3, Folder 1, Fouse Family Papers, Special Collections Reearch Center, University of Kentucky Special Collections, Lexington, Ky.
[31] Karen Cotton McDaniel. "Fouse, Elizabeth Beatrice Cook "Lizzie"" Ky African American Encyclopedia (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2015) 185.
[32] Note: All other Rosenwald Schools in the county were built in rural settings, such as Avon, Cadentown, Coletown, Ft. Springs, and Uttingertown.

built on the grounds. Beyond being the only Rosenwald School in Lexington, the Douglass School and its shop were unique accomplishments for another reason. In both instances, Blacks donated very little to their construction financially. Rosenwald records indicate that Blacks contributed only $140 to the total cost of both the school and the shop over a four-year period. This was likely due to financial blight caused by the Great Depression, which affected Blacks, who had very little to begin with, more severely throughout the nation.[33]

5.2 Jeanes Supervisors and Industrial Teachers in Kentucky

Booker T. Washington readily understood the importance of Black women's contributions to Black uplift. Just as he created a role for Black men as state Rosenwald agents, he strategically positioned Black women to be an integral part of the Rrsbp. This was accomplished by tying the work of the Rrsbp to the Anna T. Jeanes Foundation, and mandating that all communities receiving Rosenwald aid engage the aid of a Jeanes supervisor or teacher.[34] The Anna T. Jeanes Foundation – or the Negro Rural School Fund or Jeanes Fund as it was also known – was one of the many northern philanthropic agencies working to shape Black southern education during the Progressive Era. Founded in 1907 by Philadelphia Quaker Anna T. Jeanes with a $1 million donation, the money was devoted "solely to the assistance of Rural, Community, or Country Schools for *Southern* Negroes and not for the benefit or use of large institutions, *but the purpose of rudimentary education* and to encourage moral influence and social refinement which

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[33] Rosenwald Database.

[34] "Plan For the Distribution of Rosenwald Aid In the Erection of Rural Schoolhouses" September 20, 1917, Box 11, Folder 90, CJCC-TUA.

shall promote peace in the land, and good will among men."[35] More specifically, the foundation, which was the only philanthropy to allow Blacks on its board, worked to foster industrial education and homemaking skills. This aligned itself neatly with Booker T. Washington's platform of self-help and uplift for the Black southern masses. Over time, the Anna T. Jeanes Foundation clarified and defined its contribution to Black education by employing a cadre of Black, female educators to promote industrial education in schools across the south. These women were appointed by county superintendents and worked alongside both rural Black teachers and students to improve their lives through education. This work was expansive and knew few boundaries: it simply depended on the needs of each specific community. Still, there were some basic duties such as teaching classes, conducting workshops on sewing and cooking, strengthening lesson plans, encouraging students to stay in school or further their education, and creating various clubs. Such work lay at the very heart of the Rrsbp pedagogy making Jeanes supervisors critical to the program.[36] Together "the Jeanes teachers provided the necessary leadership to fulfill the Rosenwald contract stipulations, profoundly shaping the establishment and maintenance of the African-American educational system in the South. And, "the success of the Rosenwald program was largely the result of their work."[37]

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[35] Lance G. E. Jones, *The Jeanes Teacher in the United States, 1908-1933: An Account of Twenty-five Years' Experience in the Supervision of Negro Rural Schools* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1937) 17-19.

[36] Linda B. Pincham, "A League of Willing Workers: The Impact of Northern Philanthropy, Virginia Estelle Randolph and the Jeanes Teachers in Early Twentieth-Century Virginia," The Journal of Negro Education 74, no. 2 (2005). 115-118.

[37] Valinda W. Littlefield "I Am Only One, But I Am One: Southern African American Women School Teachers: 1884-1954" (Dissertation: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2003) 15, 39-40.

Virginia Estelle Randolph served as the first Jeanes Supervisor. She was hired in 1908, and the program was patterned after her work at the Old Mountain Road School in Henrico County, Virginia.[38] Her belief in hands-on education, school beautification, parent-involvement, educational rigor on par with White schools, teacher training, and the schools' ability to shape and mold the whole child served as guidelines for the hundreds of Black women across the south who worked as Jeanes supervisors. In this role, Black women traveled from school to school crafting ideas and curriculums that met Black communities' needs for education. Some women managed whole counties while others had several districts under their jurisdiction. They interacted with both White school authorities as well as Black communities, and they were free "to do anything they deemed fit for the educational benefit of the community and the school."[39] Such power was typically not a tenet of Black women's' lives in the early twentieth century, making the Jeanes Foundation an important component of Black female empowerment and enrichment for southern Black women during this period.

In Kentucky, F. C. Button secured funding for the first Jeanes Supervisors in 1912, but the program was put on hold for nearly a year as Kentucky state school officials sparred over how the program should work. The main issue was oversight. Though Superintendent of Public Instruction Barksdale Hamlett "was very anxious to have these workers" and gave Button "cordial support," he "insisted that these supervisors come under the State Dept."[40] This was problematic because the Rrsbp as well as Jeanes Supervisors were designed to work at the county level. Button resolved

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[38] Jones, *The Jeanes Teacher*, 22-38.
[39] Pincham, "A League of Willing Workers," 118.
[40] F. C. Button to Wallace Buttrick, July 9, 1912, Series 1.1, Box 79, Folder 692, GEB-RAC.

this issue by writing to both Wallace Buttrick of the General Education Board and James Dillard of the Jeanes Fund in both an official and unofficial capacity.[41] In formal type-written statements, Button wrote of his trouble hiring the new Jeanes Supervisors. He asked for clarity, guidance and direction in the matter, and assumed an objective, professional posture. In handwritten letters, however, he laid bare the varying motives and agendas of state officials and asked the head of these agencies for help. Button's ploy demonstrated the influence and power of national philanthropic agencies to sway state leaders and legislation. Kentucky, like most southern states, relied heavily on outside sources for educational funding and could not easily resist their requests. It also revealed the duplicitous nature of state officials in Kentucky, where in one breath they were "very anxious" to have the work begin, but covertly working to receive funds for their own use and not the education of Blacks. Knowing this, Button used this method repeatedly to win gains for Black education in Kentucky. When Hamlett sought to "hold up the appointment of colored supervisors in Ky," in February 1912, Button secretly approached Buttrick to force Hamlett's hand. He wrote "can you not write me demanding at once a list of the supervisors and the counties in which they are to work, together with the dates when they are to begin. You may make this demand as abrupt and mandatory as you think necessary…"[42] One month later, the first supervisors were named and hired, with Button proclaiming to Buttrick, "Your letters did the work."[43] The victory, however, came too late to secure much funding. The Jeanes Fund allotted only $360 for one Jeanes

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[41] Button made monthly reports of his work to Wallace Buttrick at the General Education Board. He also wrote letters throughout the month concerning various issues. These letters were typewritten. Whenever he had problems with state officials, he wrote private letters by hand or scribbled hand-written notes in the corners of type-written letters.

[42] F. C. Button to Wallace Buttrick, Feb. 25, 1913, Series 1.1, Box 79, Folder 692, GEB-RAC.

[43] F. C. Button to Wallace Buttrick, March 11, 1913, Series 1.1, Box 79, Folder 692GEB-RAC.

worker, which went to Clark County. The General Education Board funded the remaining industrial supervisors, resulting in two separate groups of Black women – Jeanes Supervisors and state industrial supervisors – working to shape Black rural life in Kentucky. These women worked year-round with only four to six weeks of vacation and though they were funded separately and administered differently – one at the county and the other at the state level – they functioned, in largely the same manner.[44]

Florence G. Anderson Muir served as the first Jeanes Supervisor in Kentucky. Born in 1891, Muir was a member of Louisville's burgeoning Black middle class. Her father was Dr. Charles W. Anderson Sr., and her brother was Charles W. Anderson Jr., Kentucky's first Black legislator. Muir attended Louisville Central High School and later both Lincoln University and the Hampton Institute, now Hampton University. She then taught domestic science at the Denton Institute in Maryland, where she was "the only teacher in (the) institute in her teens" as well as the Tuskegee Institute before returning to Hopkinsville, Kentucky to teach in 1912.[45] One year later, Muir was appointed as Jeanes Supervisor in Clark County. Though no records were found detailing Muir's work as a Jeanes worker, a letter written earlier in her career revealed her thoughts on Black education. While attending a summer institute for teachers in Hopkinsville, Kentucky,

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[44] F. C. Button to Dr. Wallace Buttrick, March 17, 1913, Series 1.1, Box 79, Folder 692 GEB-RAC.

[45] "Muir, Florence G. Anderson," Notable Kentucky African Americans Database, accessed June 2, 2020, http://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/2630; "Graduates and Ex-students" in The Southern Workman (Hampton, Virginia: The Press of The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 1915) 414. Accessed Jan. 30, 2018.https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39 015018059967?urlappend=%3Bseq=458.; "At Kentucky's Capital" *Freeman*, Sept. 23, 1911, 8. Accessed Jan. 30, 2018. Readex: America's Historical Newspapers. https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.uky.edu/apps/readex/doc?p=EANX&docref=image/v2%3A12B28495A8DAB1C8%40EANX-12CC9D3939D96708%402419303-12CC2FB359A52B98%407-12E052CAB1E066F0%40At%2BKentucky%2527s%2BCapital.%2BProf.%2BGeorge%2BW.%2BHays%2BElected%2Bto%2BFaculty%2Bof%2Bthe%2BNormal%2BInstitute--Federation; "Colored Rural Schools," *The Courier-Journal*, July 3, 1913.

Muir drew a direct "correlation between home and school life." Practicality was a major theme in her work. Education that bore immediate and palpable results demonstrated the importance of education and bolstered the communities support for it. "Our aim and purpose," she wrote "was to teach such things in rural schools that could be taken home, and there help beautify the homes, improve the farms, so as to obtain the best results; to construct such things from wood and lumber that not only added to the homes, but improved the sanitary conditions on the farm and around the grounds."[46]

In 1915, Muir became the first, Black State Supervisor of Colored Rural Schools in Kentucky.[47] In this role, Muir worked out of Frankfort, but traveled throughout the state organizing "county institutes for colored teachers" and she had "supervision in a general way over the women doing homemaker club work."[48] Muir's work, however, extended well beyond these duties. On a three-day visit to Earlington, KY, in 1915, Muir worked in various capacities in the Black community. She visited the school, attended a teacher's meeting and also spoke at the local Baptist church.[49] In 1916, Anderson married James Muir, an educator, but her new role as wife did not stop her work or travel. That same year, Muir attended Montgomery County's inaugural industrial exhibition where she was a featured guest alongside Lizzie Fouse, an esteemed educator in Kentucky and leader in the Black club women's movement in the state. The event, which was held at the local school and attended by both Blacks and Whites, was hailed as an event "second

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[46] "The History of our Summer School" Florence Anderson to F. C. Button, undated, Box 79, Folder 692, GEB-RAC.
[47] "Graduates and Ex-students," 414.
[48] Barksdale Hamlett, LL. D,"Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Kentucky for the Two Years, Ending June 30, 1915" (Frankfort, KY: The State Journal Company, 1915), 117.
[49] Neva Waters, "Colored Column," The Bee, Earlington, KY, Dec. 3, 1915.

to none of its kind in the state."[50] Beyond this, Muir was a member of the Hospital Club in Winchester and the Church Aid Club in Frankfort as well as the KNEA.[51]

Unlike Muir, most Jeanes Teachers and industrial supervisors were not middle-class women. They were afforded this status, however, by virtue of their positions and the power it afforded them. In reality, most attended industrial-base schools like the Kentucky Normal and Industrial institute and were not very far removed from rural lives themselves. Because of this, rural supervisors better understood the communities they served and did not try "to impose their views and values on an oppressed group."[52] Instead, these women worked to improve the everyday lives of the Black rural communities. Though outsiders in many of the communities served, Black female supervisors quickly engrained themselves in the daily lives of Black rural families. Whereas White county supervisors showed little interest in the educational needs of poor rural Blacks and often blamed them for their conditions, Black female supervisors worked diligently to understand the specific needs and challenges of the communities they served, and their duties extended well outside the educational realm. Black female industrial workers visited the sick, spoke at local churches, attended Sunday Schools and sought to do the "next needed thing", whether it was working across the color line to secure funding for a much-needed school or writing letters and mailing them. Assimilating poor, rural Blacks to White standards was not the goal. Instead, they shared

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[50] "Industrial Exhibition," *The Mount Sterling Advocate*, April 18, 1916, 10.

[51] It is unclear how long Muir remained State Supervisor of Rural Colored Schools. By 1921, however, Muir taught in Mt. Sterling at the local Black school, where her husband served as principal. She died in 1932.

[52] Valinda Littlefield, "'To Do the Next Needed Thing': Jeanes Teachers in the Southern United States 1908-34" Kathleen Weiler and Sue Middleton *Telling Women's Lives: Narrative Inquiries in the History of Women's Education*. (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1999) 141.

their education and skill and sought to create agency among distressed, rural populations.[53] This meant teaching rural Blacks varying skills and techniques to improve rural living rather than imposing their own standards and goals upon them.

Mayme L. Copeland used education and her position as an industrial supervisor to achieve middle-class status. Born in Paducah in 1884, Copeland was the daughter of a brick mason and not very far removed from rural life herself. She married Rev. Dr. Thomas H. Copeland, a Black Methodist Episcopal minister, and began a family before completing her education and embarking on a lifelong career as an educator, journalist, clubwoman, political activist, and church organizer. In 1914, Copeland moved to Hopkinsville when her husband became pastor of the Freeman Chapel. In Christian County, where there were seven Rosenwald Schools – the Blue Spring, Crofton, Dyer's Chapel, Garrottsburg, Henleytown, Lafayette, and West Union schools – Copeland served as the supervisor of music and head of the commercial department at Attucks High School for fifteen years. Later, Copeland studied at Kentucky State College where she received a degree in 1933. She then earned a master's degree from Columbia University in 1937, before receiving an honorary doctorate degree from Mississippi Industrial College in 1955.[54]

For Copeland, such opportunities for education and social advancement meant double occupation, that of home life plus community activism and uplift. Like many women of her time, Copeland was socialized to believe that "not to contribute to the

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[53] Ibid .

[54]"Copeland, Mayme L.," Notable Kentucky African Americans Database, accessed June 3, 2020, http://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/378.; "Kentucky Woman Made Supervisor of Rural Schools," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, Sep 11, 1937, 7.; "Educator is Dead at 78" *The Courier-Journal* Nov. 27, 1962, 15; "Churchwomen Gets Doctorate" The New York Age, June, 11, 1955, 5;

public good was to waste their lives. Not to assume or create community work options for themselves, whether paid or not, would have been to deny their missions and the important roles as community leaders for which they had prepared. And the more skills, training, and preparation they had, the truer this was. Not to use their advantages for the advancement of the race was deemed selfish and even traitorous."[55]

After completing her education, Copeland embarked on a life of service. The scope of her work reached across local, state, and national boundaries, and demonstrated the various ways Black women used their time, energy, and resources to create opportunities for themselves and their community. This did not mean they were endowed with super-human strength and that their public and private lives were not sometimes in conflict.[56] Instead it pointed to a belief, obligation, and undying faith in Black ability and promise that compelled them forward. Embracing the ethos of "socially responsible individualism," Copeland forged a career for herself and simultaneously worked to uplift the Black Community.[57] Regarded as "an educational worker whose contribution during the last generation or more has been incalculable," Copeland worked in Christian County schools for several years while also serving as the head of the K.N.E.A.'s Rural Department. She additionally served as the head of the Rural Department of the American Teachers Association. In 1937, she was appointed State Supervisor of Rural Schools, making her "the first colored person working out of the Kentucky State Department of Education for more than 20 years." In this role, she worked to improve rural Black education and taught part-time at Kentucky State Industrial College.

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[55] Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and Do*, 119.
[56] Ibid, 112.
[57] Ibid, 7.

Beyond this, Copeland led a meaningful civic and social life. One of her most notable roles was leading the Colored Women's Division of the Kentucky Republican Party in the 1920's. In 1935, she worked alongside city councilman and mortician Edward W. Glass to raise funds for the Hopkinsville Red Cross. Serving as the Dean of Pledges, Copeland was also a member of Iota Phi Lambda, a business sorority begun in 1929 to "encourage young women to enter the Business Field by means of business training." Last, Copeland, like many women of her era, was heavily engaged in church work. Married for nearly 50 years to a leader in the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, she was voted president of its missionary board in 1920. Upon retirement, she turned her attention to rural church work.[58]

Organization and "building community" were key themes in the work of E. Birdie Taylor, one of four Black female industrial supervisors hired in 1913 "to help the colored people live better." These women, which also included Julia Ferguson of Charlottesville, Virginia; Lula Coleman of Franklin County, and Mollie Cox Poston of Christian County, were lauded as "high class and experienced colored women" and they worked at the county level to teach industrial arts and foment grassroots community development.[59] In the schools, industrial supervisors taught basic skill such as sewing, gardening, cooking and caning. They also instructed teachers on the latest pedagogies, improving attendance and promoting interest in higher education. In the home, they

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[58] "Kentuckian Gets High Post," Capitol Plaindealer, Sept. 11, 1937; "Prominent Kentucky School Teacher Will Retire July 1" Plaindealer, June 20, 1947; Joshua D. Farrington, "Mayme L. Copeland Brooks," *The Kentucky African American Encyclopedia* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2015) 122. https://iota-deltaphi.org/history. Accessed 1/21/20; "Dr. Weber Speaks to Negro Workers at M. E. Meeting" The Paducah Sun-Democrat, Oct. 28, 1920, 3.

[59] Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Kentucky for the Two Years Ending, 1911-1913, 299.

continued their industrial arts training, but they also promoted good health, sanitation, hygiene and cleanliness. The bulk of their work, however, consisted of rural Black women's club work. Taylor and Kentucky's Black female supervisors sought to unify the rural communities they served by creating communal activities that served both personal and public interests. In 1915, E. Birdie Taylor, oversaw more than twenty clubs. This included nine senior leagues, fifteen junior leagues, girls canning and homemaking clubs, boys corn clubs, church improvement clubs as well as a moral uplift club.[60]

Long before the Rrsbp's arrival in Kentucky, senior school improvement leagues were working 'towards the improvement of the school buildings, and towards buying some of the necessary equipments (sic) of the school, not furnished by the school board …" Each league met monthly to discuss "topics of vital interest to the school and community" and raise funds to meet the school's needs, which varied from location to location. In Fayette County, two leagues built kitchens for their schools, painted them and then supplied cabinets and tables. One league painted its school while others built porches, fences, and stables for their schools. Another league focused its attention on buying a two-acre lot in order to build a new school. To accomplish this work, fundraising was a must in each school improvement league. Members paid five cents in dues but raised "most of their money by giving entertainments and soliciting." Beyond serving the physical needs of the school, Taylor used the senior improvement clubs to inspire interest in the school and establishment themselves as stakeholders in both the school in the community. She wrote, 'the objects (sic) in having them to meet at the schools are to make the schools the social center and to bring about a better cooperation

[60] Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Kentucky For the two years ending June 30, 1915. (The State Journal Company: Frankfort, KY) 117.

between the teachers and the patrons." Like Senior Improvement Clubs, junior improvement clubs focused on the needs of the local school. This group, however, was made up of students and their central focus was the "tidiness, cleanliness and beauty of the school building and grounds. Youth groups met twice a month to plant shrubs, flowers, and trees. They also swept, laundered curtains, dusted, washed windows and cleaned outbuildings. In the neighborhoods, they Whitewashed buildings and held clean up days throughout the community. To raise funds, some schools offered a "potato, onion, apple and egg day." On these days, students brought one of each to school, learned to cook them, and then served them as penny lunches. Additionally, youths formed a "morals and manners" committee to "see after the conduct of the pupils on the grounds and in this way they (were) taught government."[61]

Homemaking Clubs were another important form of uplift and engagement and in 1914, the General Education Board allotted $1,500 for this work in Kentucky. That year, Taylor traveled 2,864 miles across Kentucky and established 122 clubs in Christian, Todd, Daviess, Clark and Fayette counties. These clubs served nearly a thousand rural Black mothers and daughters and taught skills such as gardening, sanitation, hygiene, cooking, sewing and food preservation. Though Taylor noted that in the first year, the homemaking clubs "did not do so well," she also wrote that Black women and their daughters were "very anxious to make a success of the work. And, there were a few successes. In her report to the state, Taylor wrote that "many homes were made more beautiful and home-like by the efforts of the clubs" and she highlighted three young women who raised gardens and made enough money to pay their first month's ret in

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[61] Ibid, 118 -119.

boarding school "where they went after finishing the county schools."[62] Beyond beautifying homes, The goal of Black homemaking clubs was to establish relationships between industrial supervisors and rural Black women in the community. This was necessary because Black women influenced and controlled Black homes and were responsible for what Black children learned and practiced in the home. Without the cooperation and approval of Black mothers – and there was pushback at times against supervisors who sought to change how they conducted things in their homes – supervisors lacked the support they needed to be successful. Beyond this, homemaker clubs allowed supervisors insight into students' home life where they could assess issues such as hygiene, health and sanitation. Such issues had a direct impact on school life and attendance. Children who received proper medical care, were well-fed, and dressed appropriately were more likely to attend school regularly. The clubs also provided supervisors with opportunities to encourage parents to keep their children in school. Beyond these things, there was an economic component to the clubs. Communities canned and sold a large portion of their goods to raise money to build and maintain their local schools.[63] A second economic component benefitted Black mothers themselves. In Kentucky where their career opportunities were limited, domestic training and work often aided families that fell on hard times. The "domestic skills they developed at home and in school allowed them to earn a living and helped avert economic disaster" if their families needed additional income. Such skills as washing, ironing, and sewing allowed Black

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[62] Ibid, 120.
[63] Littlefield, "'To Do the Next Needed Thing, 138-39.

women the ability to stay home, be mothers, maintain their own households, and provide for their families when their husband's sole income could not.[64]

In 1916, Taylor wrote Button about the importance of this work and its impact on Black communities. She wrote, "I find that organization in the communities is necessary for the success of the school. In the communities that have good School Improvement Leagues, and where the people come together often in Literary societies, socials and other gatherings such as lectures pertaining to the welfare of the community, healthfully, morality, and industrially, I have observed that the school in every particular is much better and is more easily managed. The people manifest a greater interest and school life is more pleasant and effective, and the home training is better." Poor schools, however, were a direct result of division. Taylor observed that communities that were separated or "never (came) together in a social or business-like way" had poor schools that "seemingly accomplished nothing."[65]

Because of their positions as industrial supervisors women in these roles like Taylor became community leaders and were highly esteem by both county superintendents and the Black communities they served. Nannie G. Faulconer, superintendent of Fayette County Schools, praised the work of E. Birdie Taylor. She wrote, Taylor "has proven herself capable of handling this work judiciously and well. She has aroused great enthusiasm among the colored people in this county in regard to domestic science and manual training."[66] In Muhlensburg, County Superintendent Amy M. Longest reported that the county paid their industrial supervisor's travel expenses, but

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[64] Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and Do*, 116.

[65] E. Birdie Taylor to Dr. F. C. Button, Feb. 14, 1916, Box 79 Folder 694, GEB-RAC.

[66] Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Kentucky for the Two Years Ending June 30, 1913. (Frankfort Kentucky, The State Journal Company, 1913), 293-294.

it was the Black community that provided for her other needs. Rural Black teachers donated $1.50 each to buy materials for industrial education. Students and their parents provided room and board as well as travel to and from the train station. School patrons also donated a stove and cooking utensils for the school's use. When funds for additional supplies ran low to furnish the school's kitchen, the school principal bought wood for $10 and trained the boys in carpentry. Such work, Longest wrote, made industrial work one of the "best things we have in our colored schools."[67]

In Mercer County, at least one principal credited the county's rural supervisor with building two new Rosenwald Schools. Ananias Lorenzo "A. L." Garvin served as principal of the Black school in Mercer County from 1903 to 1920 as well as the state's first African American extension agent. When he arrived in Harrodsburg, there was no school building for Black youths, and the rural community owed $400 in back rent for two cottages where classes were once taught. By 1920, however, the Black community had paid the debt owed for the cottages, bought four acres of land and "made appropriations for two Rosenwall (sic) schools." The first Rosenwald School in Mercer County was the Harrodsburg School, a six-teacher school built under Tuskegee for $6,000. Blacks raised $750 to build and equip the school and the Rrsbp donated $900. According to Garvin, the school was "fully equipped with Blackboards, desks, (a) domestic science department and a manual training department." The second school was the Mayo School, a two-teacher facility that cost $3,000, which Blacks contributed $100 to and Rosenwald donated $400. Writing about the schools' history some years later,

[67] Amy M. Longest to F. C. Button, April 29, 1916, Box 79, Folder 694, GEB-RAC.

Garvin wrote that "much of this, if not all, was brought about by the efforts," of Effie Williams Garvin, his wife, and the rural county supervisor for Mercer County.[68]

The early success of Kentucky's Jeanes and industrial supervisors both laid the foundation for and sustained the Rosenwald School movement in the Bluegrass. Their intense fundraising campaigns, club work, and organizing efforts were critical to local campaigns to build the schools and garner favor for them. Because of this work, a 1925 state education report argued that "Numerous modern Rosenwald school buildings are monuments to the public spirit and industry of these Jeanes teachers."[69] As industrial supervisors, Black women worked across racial lines creating goodwill for Black education in much the same way as F.M. Wood did as a Rosenwald Building Agent did. Wood, however, worked at the state level travelling the Bluegrass and spending a minimal amount of time in each community. Black industrial supervisors, however, served their counties and districts daily, forming intimate bonds and relationships with both Black men and women as well as Whites. Their work with Homemaker Clubs provided much needed funding for the new schools in each community and their grassroots efforts both amplified and improved upon the work already being done in such communities. Over time, as White county supervisors realized the value of Kentucky's Jeanes and Industrial supervisors, they were given more administrative duties and oversight of Black schools. Because of this, Kentucky chemist, civil rights activist and educator Atwood S. Wilson noted that "Jeanes teachers are teachers who are in reality are

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[68] William McKinley Wesley, "The History of Education in Mercer County," Master's Thesis (University of Kentucky : 1929) 188-189.

[69] Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Kentucky For the two years ending June 30, 1925. (The State Journal Company: Frankfort, KY) 37.

assistant county superintendents."[70] Such statements evidence the importance of Kentucky's industrial supervisors to their counties, their schools and the Rrsbp.

5.3 Traditional Teachers

Black education in the early twentieth century served as "one of the most important political battlegrounds in the South" and "Black teachers were at the center of this battlefield." In the aftermath of slavery, widespread illiteracy "made teachers a vital source of political leadership." Black male teachers entered the political realm and rose through the ranks of the Republican Party. After disenfranchisement, Black teachers continued to view education and politics as "inextricably woven." They formed state organizations, lobbied state legislatures across the south and remained vocal on various issues affecting Black communities. Such actions won Black teachers considerable influence in southern Black life, and during this period, schools stood second only to the Black church in importance and influence. Accordingly, Black communities revered Black teachers in the same manner they revered Black preachers. Both inspired hope, and both served as community leaders. While preachers offered salvation for the Black soul, however, Black teachers offered a more secular deliverance. They "… personified the belief that education meant liberation" and in the minds of the Black southern masses, Black teachers were the very key to a life free from illiteracy, poverty, discrimination, and second-class citizenship. Beyond this, the profession was esteemed because it attracted the ablest and most intelligent among the race. In 1910, more than half of Black

[70] Atwood S. Wilson, "Research Abstracts on Negro Education" *The K. N. E. A. Journal* 3, no. 2 (January-February 1933): 18: Accessed March 13, 2018, http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt72v6986904_18?.

college graduates became teachers, whereas only one-sixth became preachers. By 1940, there were more than 63,000 Black teachers in the United States.[71]

In the classroom, Black Kentucky teachers' roles – as they were across the south – were politicized. In the early twentieth century, Black parents demanded Black teachers as an expression of "racial pride, cultural difference and group solidarity." They understood that "even the best-intentioned Whites found it difficult to accept Blacks as equals" and they sought to shelter their children from such racist ideas. Black teachers embraced the challenge of advancing the race. They sought to prove that Black youths were as capable and as intelligent as White youths and just as deserving of a proper education. One way Black teachers demonstrated the ability of Black youths was through commencement services. Black graduations were public events for both local Blacks and Whites, and often served as the biggest social gathering of the year. They served not only as celebrations of students' accomplishments and acknowledgement of the matriculation, but also demonstrations of respectability. At Black Commencement services or "School Closings, as they were also known, "Black celebrants found a public voice for making moral and political claims on the rest of society." Beyond this, Black closing ceremonies garnered the support of local Blacks for the schools, which further solidified the bonds between teachers and their communities.[72]

Despite the magnitude of the work performed by Black teachers, the earliest historiographies of southern Black education centered on issues of inequality such as substandard housings, inadequate funding, overcrowding, lack of transportation and

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[71] Adam Fairclough, *Teaching Equality: Black Schools in the Jim Crow South* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2016)1-2, 4-5, 9.
[72] Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, 6-8.

shortened school terms. More recent studies, however, highlight the power and agency of all-Black education. Studies by Vanessa Siddle Walker, Carter J. Savage and David Cecelski examine the positive outcomes of an all-Black education, and contend that segregated Black schools fostered academic pride and excellence, encouraged higher education, instilled self-discipline and confidence, offered social support through home visits, and taught Black students to "deflect the negative messages aimed at African Americans coming from White-dominated society."[73] Understanding the power Black teachers welded and their ability to politicize the Black masses, northern philanthropist in the early twentieth century refused to fund liberal arts colleges for Blacks. Instead, they funneled their investments into schools like Tuskegee and Hampton that promoted industrial based education, hoping to control Blacks' ambition and secure their status as second-class citizens.[74] Regardless, Black teachers emerged as community leaders and gatekeepers in the fight for social, economic, and political equality.

Before she became a renowned journalist, Alice Dunnigan both attended and taught at a Rosenwald School. Her story demonstrates the role of Black teachers played in rural Kentucky communities as well as the challenges they faced from both Blacks and Whites. Born April 27, 1906, near Russellville, Kentucky, Dunnigan won national acclaim as the first Black woman to cover the White House Press Corps and the Supreme Court and to travel with a United States President, but her defiance of racial southern norms began during her youth and continued into her teaching years. Dunnigan, who grew up rural and poor, attended Knob City High School, a Rosenwald school in Logan

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[73] Donna Jordan-Taylor, "African American Educators Misconstrued." The Journal of African American History 95, no. 1 (2010): 92. Accessed April 19, 2020.
[74] Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 114-115.

County, which offered grades one through eight, plus two years of high school.[75] Inequality was a regular part of her life, and it was during her youth that she "began to feel the sting of racial discrimination." In her autobiography, *Alone Atop The Hill: The Autobiography of Alice Dunnigan, Pioneer of the National Black Press,* Dunnigan wrote that racism became real to her when she discovered as a child that there were no public restrooms in town for Black women. While Black men could "easily step into an alley, partially conceal himself behind a wagon or parked car," Black women were forced to find the home of a Black friend because the only public restroom "was clearly marked White Ladies." Despite Jim Crow laws, Dunnigan defiantly used the "White Ladies" restroom, and vowed early in life to "break down discrimination wherever (she) found it."[76]

Dunnigan's defiance continued after she became a teacher, and her time in Kentucky's rural schools demonstrated the dire circumstances rural students faced as well as the work teachers did to overcome these barriers. After graduation from Knob Hill, Dunnigan attended both Kentucky Normal and Industrial Institute in Frankfort and the Western Kentucky Industrial College in Paducah. She later taught in several rural schools, and she noted distinct differences between the typical rural schools she taught at and the Rosenwald School in New Hope. Dunnigan's first teaching assignment was "a drab, ramshackle frame building with rough, weather beaten sides, a rusty tin roof and … several broken window panes covered with squares of yellowing cardboard" in Mount

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[75] The seven-teacher Rosenwald school was built prior to 1920 under the Tuskegee institute and cost $11,550 to build. Of this, Russellville Blacks paid $500, while local Whites donated $150 and Rosenwald paid $1,200. Rosenwald Database.

[76] Alice Dunnigan, *Alone Atop The Hill: The Autobiography of Alice Dunnigan, Pioneer of the National Black Press*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press: 2015) xi, 34-35.

Pisgah. She was "completely disgusted at the appearance of the place supposedly representing a center of learning." There, her first task was to overcome the community's skepticism and hesitancy to accept her. Dunnigan was 18 years-old, and several community members decried her age and her ability to teach their youths – three of which were near her age. Additionally, Mount Pisgah was so rural and poor they didn't want to "board no more school teachers," because they worried they couldn't "afford the kind of fancy food that the city folks (were) used to." Such statements demonstrated a class consciousness among rural Blacks. They clearly understood that differences existed even with in the race, and would not accept anyone who would look down upon them or belittle them. Dunnigan was accepted only after a local preacher reassured the people of Mount Pisgah that she was a "plain, country-reared gal." She later secured the community's loyalty through her commitment to improve the local school. Like many teachers, Dunnigan served as a liaison between rural, Blacks southerners and the southern Whites who controlled public funding for schools. This required tact, intelligence, negotiating skills, and the ability to balance her professional position in the Black community with her subservient role in the larger community. Indignation and a defiant attitude due to squalid conditions could mean retribution for both Black teachers and the students they served, so Black teachers bathed their requests in mock gratitude to secure needed improvement in their schools. Dunnigan risked the ire of the Todd county superintendent when she presented him with a list of school needs, but ultimately secured a new tin roof, glass window panes, and second-hand desks to replace the broken church pews in the school.

In contrast to the poorly cared for school at Mount Pisgah, Dunnigan later taught at the New Hope School in Logan County. She described it as a "a modern Rosenwald School … with one large classroom, two cloakrooms, and a kitchen as well as a large front porch where the children could play games during recess on rainy days." Despite the new school building, there were still challenges. During a mandatory meeting of county teachers at the opening of the school year, Black teachers and White teachers sat separately. Dunnigan bristled at the idea, and asked other Black teachers to join her in sitting among Whites. They refused initially, saying there was no need to "create confusion". Ultimately, she and another teacher desegregated the room by sitting among Whites without disturbance. Later, Dunnigan drew the ire of local Blacks when she attended the Whites-only tobacco festival and performed a Paul Lawrence Dunbar poem in what they deemed "nigger talk." They further accused Dunnigan of being an "Uncle Tom or "Aunt Jane". By her account, however, festivals in Logan County were slowly desegregated after this. She wrote, "Black children marched in the parade along with those from high schools (although the Blacks were for a time placed at the back end of the march until this custom, too, eventually changed)."[77]

Dunnigan's account demonstrated that rural Black teachers fought for equality in numerous ways. They worked both in and outside the classroom to uplift the race in a wide range of duties that were both expected of them and fulfilled in numerous ways. Born Nov. 28, 1882, Carrie B. Laine was a longtime educator and activist in Winchester Kentucky. In 1908, Laine donated $10 to the Berea College Industrial School fund. A year later, she was one of eight people in Winchester to pass the civil service exam to

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[77] Ibid, 79-81.

become a postal carrier though she did not get the job.[78] In addition to this, Laine bought a two-acre parcel of land for $850 on Forest Grove-Becknerville Pike (now Waterworks Road) to build the Howard's Creek Rosenwald School in Clark County where she also taught. The school, which was built in 1929, was a two-teacher facility that cost $5,000.[79] Stories by Rosenwald alumni also spoke to the dedication of Black teachers to their communities. Lucille Mason attended the Pleasant Ridge Rosenwald School in Daviess County, a $2,500 two-teacher facility built in 1919. A member of the inaugural class, Mason graduated eighth grade in 1927, and she recalled spending Friday evenings with her teacher. They formed a group called the "Sunshine Band" and they "learned Psalm 23 and books of the Bible" together. They also studied a book called, "Hope," which was likely a tool used to inoculate Black students from the degradation of White racism.[80]

5.4 Parent-Teacher Association/Community Days

The success of the Rrsbp was rooted in collective engagement and cooperation. The program relied on Blacks' financial support, their personal investment, and their ongoing interest and upkeep of the schools. One of the key ways Black women supported the school was through the Parent Teacher Associations, most prominently known as the PTA. While school improvement leagues, tomato clubs, and homemaking clubs could be held in the home in support of the schools, PTAs were community events that brought parents – primarily mothers because of their role in the home as caregivers – teachers,

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[78] "Contributions for the Colored League" *The Winchester News*, December 18, 1908; "Mr. John W. Compton gets Appointment" *The Winchester News*, March 11, 1909.
[79] Jerry Cecil, "Handout of Early Clark County Colored Schools 1869-1930" pamphlet, Clark County Deed Book 107, Clark County Court House, 115; Rosenwald Database.
[80] Noelle Phillips, "Rosenwald School full of memories," *Messenger-Inquirer* (Owensboro, KY), December 28, 1992; Rosenwald Database.

students, and the community to the school house for both business and social engagement. During these meetings, principals and teachers informed parents about their children, their academic progress, and the life of the school. Often, they spoke about the needs of the schools and shared why certain equipment, books, or improvements were necessary. This was not, however, a one-way street. In a non-threatening, easy-going environment, Black parents actively engaged school personnel, questioning them and expressing their own concerns about the school or their children. These exchanges then became the basis for "collaborative plans of actions that were formed to address the needs in question."[81]

Beyond this, PTA meetings served as major social events where women served homemade refreshments and oftentimes watched their children perform in plays, musicals, or recitals. Of all these things, fundraising was one of the most important functions of the PTA. When White county superintendents refused to distribute funds for Black schools appropriately, PTA dues and fundraisers filled this void. This was demonstrated in a Henderson County community. In 1915, the Henderson P. T. A. purchased a new high school for Blacks. The unique way they did so showcased the organizing skills of Black women and the contributions they made to local schools through the organization. After raising $2,000 for a new school, Blacks in Henderson turned to their P. T. A. to secure the remaining $1,000 needed to buy a new building. Under the leadership of P. T. A. president Mrs. O. K. Glass and Supervising Principal F. A. Taylor, Blacks were organized military-style. There were five majors, two captains, and ten lieutenants that lead the masses in canvassing the city for donations, and in just

[81] Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential: an African American School Community in the Segregated So*uth (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press: 1996), 71.

three days, the P. T. A. raised $1,200 with the aid of local citizens, businesses, lodges, and clubs. “With such an organization working with this superior system it was an easy matter to go over the top,” wrote the Louisville Leader in praise of the P. T. A.’s efforts.[82] A few years later, this same community would pool their resources to build their own Rosenwald School. In 1931-32, a ten-room $47,000 facility was built and insured for $15,000.[83]

Like the PTA in Henderson, most clubs were run by Blacks women, and in many schools the county’s Jeanes Supervisor took the lead in organizing the PTA. In fact, it was often written into their job descriptions. In 1932, Adair County’s superintendent of schools requested $315 in aid from the Jeanes Fund to hire Miss Emma J. Alexander. In addition to the overall wellbeing of the schools, such as the “promotion of health and attendance an industrial training, she was also tasked with “P.T.A. and community work.” That same year, Mrs. Blanche G. Elliott of Muhlensburg County was charged with the similar duties.[84] In 1936, Fayette County applied for $247.50 to hire Ethel Baker Peyton as a Jeanes supervisor. In addition to teaching first grade half a day and having charge of the county’s nine Black schools, Peyton’s job was to “assist the regular teachers in organizing P.T.A. and mother clubs and in preparing for community entertainment.” Within in a few years, however, Peyton’s work had gone from working to organize the clubs to working “through the County Teachers’ Association; the P.T.A.

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[82] “P.T.A. Raises $1,000 in Three Days,” The Louisville Leader, April 11, 1925, The Louisville Leader Collection 1917-1950, The University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, Kentucky. Accessed June 9, 2020, https://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/ref/collection/leader/id/3128.

[83] Rosenwald Database.

[84] “Application for Jeanes Fund Aid,” Adair County 1932, Box 23, Folder 3, Southern Education Foundation Archives, Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center. Hereinafter SEFA-RWWLAUC; Application for Jeanes Fund Aid, Muhlensburg County 1932, Box 23, Folder 3, SEFA-RWWLAUC.

groups; and with individuals to bring about a closer co-operative effort between the home and the school."[85]

Beyond the PTA, Black women and their communities found other ways to support their schools. One important event was the annual community days, which were also variously known as rally days, patron's days, and field days. These events originated within the community to commemorate their Rosenwald Schools and meet the needs of the school, which often meant beatification, planting gardens, mending fences or sidewalks, repainting the school, and various fundraisers. Such events united teachers, students, parents, the larger community, and local school officials in the same spirit that built the schools. They were so popular that they quickly expanded to include all Black schools. Noting this, state school officials attempted to coopt this spirit and "refocused these events from the community and its school to the Rosenwald building program …" These community days then became known as Rosenwald Day. This meant decentering the community and highlighting the work of the Rrsbp, its leaders, and other philanthropies aiding southern Black education. In Kentucky, as well as other southern communities, Blacks rejected Rosenwald Day and their participation in it was largely perfunctory.[86] Their defiance and refusal to have their community days dominated by White propaganda illustrated, yet again, Black Kentuckians' autonomy and desire to maintain control over their institutions.

In Kentucky, Black women's activism foregrounded and undergirded the work of the Rrsbp. Despite the racial and gendered limitations placed on them, Black women

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[85] Application for Jeanes Fund Aid, Fayette County 1936, Box 25 Folder 3, SEFA-RWWLAUC; Application for Jeanes Fund Aid, Fayette County 1939, Box 113 Folder 13, SEFA-RWWLAUC.
[86] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 140-142.

became leaders in their communities through church auxiliaries and their club work. Through their activism and community engagement, they identified rural education as a problem and were working to improve it long before the Rrsbp's became available in Kentucky. When the Rrsbp finally arrived in 1917, Black women in Kentucky pushed the movement forward through a shared consciousness and belief in education as a platform for uplift and activism. In it, they found a paid platform that supported their own goals of personal growth and development as well as their desire to uplift and improve their communities. As Jeanes Supervisors, Black women served as unofficial school superintendents, doing the work of their mostly White male school officials without benefit of the dignity, respect, resources, or salaries these men received. They did so, however, out of a sense of duty and pride in themselves and their communities believing that uplifting the race was an inseparable component of uplifting themselves.

In the classroom, Black women won respect as teachers and led the fight against illiteracy and subjugation. Though the Rrsbp was rooted in industrial education, Black teachers and principals determined what was best for their communities and what was taught in the classroom. While northern philanthropist sought to use industrial training and the Black teaching force to handicap rural southern Blacks and create a better workforce, Black women used the Rrsbp to combat the illiteracy that kept Blacks socially and economically oppressed. Additionally, some women like Muir and Copeland used the program to catapult themselves into the highest ranks of state government, which was unheard of for woman, especially a Black woman. As teachers and Jeanes supervisors, Black women functioned as double agents with roles in both the larger White society and their segregated communities. Interacting with communities across the Bluegrass - in

their homes, in their schools, in their churches, at their rallies – Black women set the tone and agenda for Rosenwald Schools and Black segregated schools throughout the south.

CHAPTER 6. THE ROYAL SIX: RUSSELLVILLE AND THE RRSBP

An examination of the Knob City School demonstrates the inner workings of a community as it sought to educate itself and build its first Rosenwald School. Located in Western Kentucky, the school was unique for several reasons. First, it was one of nine Rosenwald School in Logan County, which built more Rosenwald Schools than any other county in the state.[1] This includes both Jefferson and Fayette counties, which boasted large Black populations at the turn of the century, yet only built seven schools each.[2] Second, the school stood out because of its size and cost. When the program first arrived in Kentucky, most rural Black communities built small, one-teacher schools at a cost of $2,500 to $3,000 each. The Russellville community, however, built a two-story, seven-teacher school that cost $11,550.[3] This was triple the cost of most of the other Rosenwald Schools in the county, and it points to an atypical Black community rooted in generational wealth, landownership, and a modicum of power in the early twentieth century.

Black Russellville's affluence can be traced to 1839 slaveholder, Richard Bibb Sr., freed enslaved Blacks in his will and bequeathed to them land, houses, tools, money, animals, and farm equipment.[4] With their newfound wealth, the Bibb freedmen built three, free, Black communities in Western Kentucky. This wealth played an important role in their institution-building efforts and aided their descendants in building their first Rosenwald School over seventy-five years later. Black self-help was a critical component

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[1] Rosenwald Database.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Last Will and Testament of Richard Bibb, Sr., Will Book G, Logan County Kentucky Archives and Genealogical Society, Russellville, KY.

of the Rrsbp, and Black Kentuckians raised funds, donated supplies, and secured land before they could receive a Rosenwald grant. This type of organizing and fundraising took some communities years to raise their portion of the funding for a new school, but in 1919, Blacks in Logan County had raised $10,000 for the consolidation of three small schools into a new Rosenwald School. The new school was to be built in Russellville, the county seat, and they had set aside an additional $2,000 for "walks, fences and equipment," plus signed a contract for a $1,700 furnace.[5] This was an unusual feat and just one of several anomalies that initially caused both Kentucky and Tuskegee officials to question the community's eligibility for the Rrsbp.

Beyond their ability to raise such large sums of money, Black Russellville stood out because they weren't necessarily rural. In a letter to Tuskegee, F. C. Button, Kentucky's State Supervisor of Rural Negro Schools, described Russellville as a "town of about 2,000."[6] And, as a community, they had built both churches and schools as well as reputations for themselves as "law-abiding citizens" and "prosperous."[7] This stood out because the Rrsbp was meant to aid rural Southern Blacks. Yet, long before the Rrsbp expanded its program to include city schools in 1928, Blacks in Russellville tested its boundaries by requesting and ultimately winning aid for themselves. In addition to this, Black Russellville's application stood out because they had at least one Black school that was "controlled entirely by colored trustees." This was an anomaly because most public

[5] Report of F. C. Button State Agent of Rural Schools for Kentucky for the month ending September 30, 1919, Box 80, Folder 703, GEB-RAC.
[6] F. C. Button to Mr. Clinton J. Calloway, April 8, 1918, General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.
[7] M. B. M, "Bibb Town," *The Louisville Courier -Journal*, Oct. 10, 1897. https://www.newspapers.com/image/32971252/?terms=bibbtown

Black schools were run by local Whites who refused to properly fund or furnish Black schools – thereby necessitating the need for outside funds and pressure from the Rrsbp.

Each of these irregularities taken together pointed to a solid, Black middle class in an era when most Blacks still struggled to define themselves, their citizenship and their rights as free Americans in the hostile, Jim Crow South. Noting these irregularities, Button wrote Tuskegee officials, "I do not know whether this would come within the Rosenwald requirements or not. Please let me know."[8] But Clinton J. Calloway, who oversaw the Rrsbp, was also perplexed. He argued that the schools were for rural Blacks, "colored people who (were) inclined to stick to the farm and follow agricultural pursuits" – and he wasn't quite sure Russellville fit that description.[9] Despite these initial questions, however, Black Russellville waged a successful campaign to win Rrsbp funding. And, it is in its anomalies that they demonstrated both their commitment and determination to build autonomous institutions.

The Rrsbp functioned within a hierarchal power structure. Booker T. Washington, his Tuskegee staff, and Julius Rosenwald set policy, administered the program, enforced its rules and regulations, and disseminated funds. These guidelines were passed down to state education departments where the state agents for Negro education and Rosenwald state building agents dispersed news of the program and worked alongside Black communities to meet these requirements. This top-down system was meant to spark both systemic and social change at the local level. Those at the top believed that the "shared effort of building new schools for Black children would make (all involved) a better

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[8] Ibid.
[9] Director of Extension to Mr. F. C. Button, April 10, 1918, General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.

people, and "they presumed participants would transform their communities by adding a modern institution to the rural southern landscape that would stand as a beacon of hope for Black children and the promise of racial harmony."[10] But the agenda of those at the top meant nothing without the support of local Black communities. It was their work, their buy-in, their permission that allowed the Rrsbp to thrive and grow as it did.

Without them – their donations, their time, their fundraising, their constant agitation for better schools – the program lacked legs, muscle, or heart and would ultimately have proved ineffectual. In fact, Black self-help efforts was the of bedrock the Rrsbp, and without it there could literally be no program. Black schools could be built without the support of local Whites and state government. It was harder and unjust, but they were built. Black schools could also be built without Rosenwald aid. They were before the Rrsbp, and they continued to be built after the program ended in 1932. But there is no scenario or framework in which segregated Black schools were built without Blacks. Despite this, the faces, voices, desires, accomplishments, and agenda of early twentieth century rural Southern Blacks have been drowned out by White voices and agendas because they both wrote and interpreted the history. Beyond this, larger, Black personalities such as Booker T. Washington and their ideas tend to resonate the loudest because they, too, left speeches, letters, essays, newspaper articles and records that afford historians insight into their intellectual lives.

For the most part, however, rural Blacks have not left such materials – not in plain sight, at least. But they are there, and the Rrsbp offers a unique opportunity to hear and understand them. Birthed during the Progressive Era, Rosenwald schools personified

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[10] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 213.

ideas of efficiency, order, oversight and reform. Such ideas produced large volumes of paperwork – applications, monthly reports to multiple agencies, records, architectural plans, programs, dedications, charts, and photos – not only from the top down, but from the bottom up. These records indicate that Rosenwald Schools were a microcosm of the communities who built them and that no two Rosenwald campaigns were necessarily alike. Instead, rural Southern Blacks differed. Race relations, politics, time, space, and geography differed, and each community had its own unique story of resistance and activism. Yes, there were commonalities, such as "inspiration, sacrifice, inertia, dispute, and celebration" but they also "defied uniformity."[11] And, it is in this variance that unique stories of Black agency and autonomy - Black women who bought the land for the schools, military-like strategies for fundraising, and principals who subverted the goals of the Rrsbp to foment their own ideas – unfold. Because of this, Rosenwald Schools must be interrogated at the grassroots level. Doing so reveals the ability of the Rrsbp's social framework to help historians better understand the range, complexities, and variances in early twentieth century Black Southern life.

6.1 Roots of Prosperity

The roots of Black Russellville's wealth and the consternation surrounding the application for a Rosenwald School can be traced to the antebellum period. And, to fully understand Black Russellville in the early twentieth century – both its complexities and commonalities – it is important to examine the pre-Civil War forces that shaped it. When slaveholder Richard Bibb Sr. died in 1839, he freed more than fifty enslaved Blacks – at

[11] Ibid, 225.

least one was believed to be his daughter – and bequeathed to them land, money, tools, houses, and farm animals.[12] His will read in part:

> I do hereby emancipate all of my slaves from and after the first day of January next after my death, and desire that all of them, who have not wives or husbands in bondage, be sent to Liberia. I give to my slaves hereby emancipated $5,000, to be divided out among them and paid out to them from time to time according to the discretion of my executors, and all my stock of horses, cattle, sheep and hogs, farming tools, wagons and carts and crops made the year of my decease or that may be on hand. I also give to said slaves all my lands which are sold or disposed of in the county of Grayson, of this state. The land in the county of Logan … is to be divided among them at the discretion of my executors … My executors … are hereby authorized to sell and convey any of the land or either property hereby given to my emancipated slaves and divide or lay out the money for their benefit. I give to my Aaron the house and lots on which he lives in Russellville and his carpenter's tools as his portion of the legacies left my emancipated slaves. I give to my woman Clarissa, viz., that part most remote from the dwelling-house, to include the smith's shop. …"[13]

This bequeath transferred generations of White wealth to enslaved Blacks and set the foundation for future generations of Black wealth and agency. It was up to the freedmen and women, however, to build on this platform and maintain their economic security. They did so by building their own institutions such as schools and churches, starting their own businesses, promoting education, asserting their will, questioning White authority, and challenging threats to their freedom, which during the Civil War meant taking legal action. This legacy of self-help and agitation was evident in the 1919 campaign to build a Rosenwald School and began almost immediately upon their emancipation. In one of their first acts of freedom, the Bibb freedmen refused to be sent

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[12] Alberta Foulks, "Bibbtown," September 18, 1975, *News-Democrat and Leader*, Russellville, KY; Last Will and Testament of Richard Bibb, Sr., Will Book G, Logan County Kentucky Archives and Genealogical Society, Russellville, KY.

[13] M. B. Morton, *Kentuckians are Different*, (Louisville, Ky: The Standard Press, 1938) 141.

to Liberia, an unknown land where Bibb had previously sent enslaved Blacks in 1829 as a part of the colonization movement.[14] They instead coupled their newfound wealth with the skillsets they had learned while enslaved to create lives for themselves and their families in Logan County, the land they knew and understood.

The first Bibb freedmen began appearing in Logan County court records as free in 1840. While other slaveholders freed their laborers for "integrity, fidelity and deep piety & exemplary conduct" or "faithful & true service", the court records are silent on why Bibb freed those he once enslaved.[15] Instead, the formerly enslaved Blacks are listed and catalogued by their name, age, height, complexion, and weight over several years. Ben Winn was first, and was listed as "about 60, about 5' 11", straight, well made, yellowish complexion, pleasant countenance, quick spoken," while five-year-old Violet Ann as the "ordinary color of Negroes, (with) nothing remarkable in appearance."[16] Such characterizations foreshadowed the circumscribed lives of the Bibb freedmen, who were free but not White. This meant their lives were subject to many of the hardships faced by enslaved Blacks, but legally and on paper they were their "own masters," which made a difference over time in wealth and education.[17] This meant greater control over their labor, their wages and their families, which created a separate caste for free Blacks and distinguished them from Black who remained enslaved.

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[14] *Vermont Telegram*, September 10, 1833, Brandon Vermont; Michael Morrow, "Bibb Slaves Sent to Liberia in Africa in 1832," *The Logan Journal*, Russellville, Ky; J. Winston Coleman Jr. "The Kentucky Colonization Society," *Register of Kentucky State Historical* Society 39, no. 126 (1941), 3. Accessed July 15 2020 https://www.jstor.org/stable/23371638.

[15] Judy Lyne, "Logan County Emancipations," Kentucky Ancestors 41, no. 4 (2006): 194

[16] Ibid, 196.

[17] Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Vintage Book, 1980) 226.

Upon their emancipation, the Bibb laborers joined a very small portion of free Blacks living in the country. In 1790, 114 Black freemen lived in Kentucky. By 1860, however, more than ten thousand Black freedmen lived in the Bluegrass, yet they accounted for only 1.1 percent of the overall population in the state and about 4.5 percent of the total Black population. Of the few free Blacks in the state, most lived in the Bluegrass region – largely near Lexington and Louisville – during the mid-nineteenth century.[18] The Bibb freedmen and women, however, were among a small portion in Western Kentucky, where they created three, small, free Black communities. The first was Upper Bibbtown, a farming community that sat on three hundred acres of land in Homer. It "was said to resemble an Indian reservation," and it was home to three or four Black families. The second community was known as Lower Bibbtown, which sat on nearly twelve hundred acres of land near Epley Station. The last community was Russellville's Black Bottom, a community near the very heart of Russellville. Russellville's Black Bottom drew its name from its location and its residents. It sits in the lowest part of the city, and it was inhabited largely by Blacks though it was once the home of affluent Whites. As the White population moved away, the area was populated by poor Whites and later Blacks. Newspapers then dubbed the area, "The Black Bottom," which differed from Bibbtown in that it lay in the very heart of Russellville while Bibbtown was rural in nature and lay about six miles beyond the center of the city.[19]

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[18] Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 107-108.

[19] Michael A. Morrow, "The Descendants of Julia Bibb 1810 to 2003: 193 Years of Progress," Booklet, SEEK Museum in the Bottom (Formerly known as the Western Kentucky African American Museum) Russellville, KY.

6.2 Work and Institution Building

For the Bibb freedmen, becoming their own masters meant forging their way in a local economy where they competed against both enslaved and White labor to provide goods and services. Work was important to them and served not only as means to earn wages but a tool by which they crafted their identities and sought upward mobility in life. Free Blacks "needed meaningful work … to bolster their self-esteem." Work provided both a sense of purpose and self-respect, and free Blacks worked hard to parlay "skills and connections with White employers into a better life."[20] Like most southerners, many of the Bibb freedmen worked as farmers living on and off the land bequeathed to them. They grew both enough food and products for themselves as well as local markets, and in some cases, this meant supplying goods and services to slaveholders and their plantations. William Bibb was a two-year-old infant of "light complexion" when he was freed in 1840 along with his mother, Sylvie, who was "about 20, (the) ordinary color of Negroes, about 5 (feet), straight, (and) well made."[21] By 1870, he was a farmer married to a woman named Ruth with a personal estate valued at $150 and real estate worth $500.[22] Near the turn of the century, William and Ruth were featured in a newspaper article living in Bibbtown, which the writer dubbed "a little Black world all by itself." By this point, William Bibb could read, he had a house, raised tobacco, and grew apples, peach trees, vegetables, and flowers. A loom, a quilt that hung in their windows, a spinning wheel, chairs and various other equipment strewn about their property hinted at their

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[20] Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South,* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974) 233-234.
[21] Lyne, "Logan County Emancipations" 196.
[22] U. S. Federal Census, 1870.

economic progress, and they were not alone.[23] In 1860, Ben Bibb, a 58 year-old farmer, held real estate worth $1,100 and his personal holdings were valued at $1,400. Similarly, Jack Bibb, a fellow farmer, owned property worth $1,210 and a personal estate of $400.[24]

While many of the Bibb freedmen worked the land, several of their cohorts began businesses, parlaying skills they had learned while enslaved into careers. This included men like Wesley Bibb, a shoemaker, who owned $800 of real estate, and Henry Bibb, a carpenter, who owned $3,000 in real estate and personal estate of $200 in 1860.[25] One of the most successful freedmen, however, was Andrew Jackson Bibb. Born enslaved about 1823 or 1824, he was emancipated at age sixteen and later became both a wagon-maker and carpenter. By 1860, Andrew Bibb owned $300 in real estate and his personal estate was valued at $1,000. Some of this may have come from Richard Bibb's estate, but Andrew Bibb proved successful in his own right as well and showed signs of middle-class prosperity. By 1880, Andrew had moved to Louisville where he continued to work as a carpenter, and married Nellie, who worked as a housekeeper. There, Andrew Bibb took an active part in Black Louisville life joining the Knights of Wise Men, Godfrey Lodge No. 24, both a fraternal organization of Black men and a benevolent society and serving as an officer on a Louisville committee to honor the passing of President James A. Garfield. By his death in 1903, the Louisville Courier Journal hailed Andrew Bibb as "one of the most prominent negroes in the city."[26]

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[23] "Bibb Town" October 10, 1897, *The Courier Journal*.
[24] U. S. Federal Census, 1860.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Lyne, "Logan County Emancipation," 195; U. S. Federal Census, 1880; "Will of Colored Man Probated" July 2, 1903, *Louisville Courier Journal*.

Female-headed households were just as prosperous. Matilda Bibb, described as "About 5' 2", yellowish complexion, straight, well made" was listed as the head of her household in the 1860 census. She was 40 years-old at the time, and she lived with seven others, likely her children. She worked as a laundress and held a personal estate of $100. Collectively, the family may have held much more as each of the young women in her home also worked. Frances J., 17, and Amanda, 15, worked as laundresses like Matilda, while Harriet, 24, and Mary E., 21, worked as house servants.[27] Another young woman, Violet, 25, worked as a farm hand while two younger children in the home Hester M., 12, and Lucy R., 11, did not work.[28] That the younger two children did not work was a function of their freedom. During slavery Black parents had little to no control over their children's bodies or their labor. They were robbed of basic parental rights such a providing for and protecting their children and could offer them little in the way of security or safety. In this scenario, however, the two younger children likely worked in some capacity to contribute to the household but weren't forced by virtue of Matilda's primary roles as a free Black woman, the head of household, and a woman with some financial stability. Like a Matilda, Judy Bibb was also a single, Black free woman. In 1860, she worked as a housekeeper and lived alone with her six children: Napoleon, 22, who worked as a day labor, Illinois, 16, America, 18, Laurinda, 14, Hyson, 12, and Sarah, 8. She owned real estate valued at $280 and a personal estate of $125.[29]

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[27] Lyne, "Logan County Emancipation," 196; U. S. Federal Census, 1860.
[28] United States Federal Census, 1860.
[29] United States Federal Census, 1860. Note: In order to see that Judy lives alone with her children, it is necessary to look at the actual census document for 1860. Viewing the digital transcribed version offers misleading information and shows over forty people living in her household, which suggest that the transcription is wrong.

With these resources and a spirit of collective engagement, the Bibb freedmen embarked on a campaign of institution-building as a form of resistance. In an attempt to both escape and withstand White racial hostility, free Blacks "turned inward" and sought ways to build up and strengthen Black community life. This meant the establishment of Black churches and schools early on and, later the formation of Black fraternities, lodges, and benevolent associations. Within these spaces, free Blacks could "pray, educate their children, entertain, and protect themselves." Beyond this, these institutions and organizations, "gave meaning to Black people's liberty and symbolized their new status."[30] The Black church was especially important to Black communities, and it functioned as the center of Black religious, social, and political life. Black families formed intimate ties with the churches they built and maintained. Their families were baptized, married, and often buried there. In return, "African Churches strengthened the Black family by supporting and insisting that marriages be solemnized by religious services, punishing adulterers, an occasionally reuniting separated couples." Churches also supported schools and fraternities. Their choirs performed concerts to raise funds for various activities including aiding the poor and supporting missionary work.[31]

Two Black women – Catherine Bibb and Rachel Bibb Kennerly – donated the land for the first church in Bibbtown. Built in 1872, Arnold Chapel was affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) church, which was rooted in social protest.[32] In 1816, famed Black clergymen Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and their Black followers left the majority White St. George Methodist Church in Philadelphia after

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[30] Berlin, *Slaves without Masters: the Free Negro in the Antebellum South*, 66, 285-302.
[31] Ibid, 302.
[32] Logan County, Kentucky, Deed Book 52, 79, Logan County Clerk Office, Russellville, KY.

Allen was jerked from their knees while praying in an area reserved for Whites only. They started the separate denomination to not only free themselves from the racism that riddled the White Methodist church, but also to engage a program of socioeconomic activism. At the height of slavery, Allen, Jones and their followers interpreted Christianity as a tool of spiritual liberation that could also be used to address society's evils. While White Christians preached a "gospel committed to the production of more docile and willing servants" Many Black worshippers "saw through such patronizing and oppressive messages" and perceived a "Christianity that promoted liberation and personhood." Such radical thought and interpretation undergirded writings and rebellions of men like Denmark Vesey, who along with A.M.E. church leaders plotted a failed coup in Charleston, South Carolina, and David Walker, author of *An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*.[33]

Black communities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries esteemed schools second only to the Black church, and by the end of the nineteenth century, by 1864, there was at least one school listed the Superintendent of Public Instructions' biennial report. A second school was planned for the Black community in Auburn in 1866, but mob violence prevented the school from being built. By 1879, however, there were twenty-six Black school districts throughout Logan County.[34] By the very late nineteenth century, there were 1,860 students – 853 females and 1,007 males – enrolled in Logan County schools. Most were literate, with only ninety-five students over age 10

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[33] Stephen Ward Angell and Anthony B Pinn, *Social Protest Thought in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1862-1939* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000.) xiv-xv; J. Gordon Melton, "African American Methodism in the M. E. Tradition: The Case of Sharp Street (Baltimore)," *The North Star: A Journal of African American Religious History* 8, no. 2 (2005).

[34] "African American Schools in Logan County, KY," *Notable Kentucky African Americans Database*, accessed July 15, 2021, https://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/2785.

unable to read or write. Between 1895 to 1897, there were thirty-five teachers in Logan County's Black schools. One of them, James F. Gray, held a state teaching certificate while the overwhelming majority held a first-class county teaching certificate. The remaining educators held either a second-class county teaching certificate or a third-class county teaching certificate, meaning each teacher had some form of formal education and training for their position. During this period, three Black trustees oversaw the Black school system which included only twenty-six schoolhouses for Blacks compared to ninety for Whites. These schools were valued at $3,100 (compared to $25,300 for Whites), with twenty-one of them in good condition and seventeen furnished with desks, seats and Blackboards.[35] Though little is known about it, at least one of the schools listed in the 1897 Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Instruction was a school in Bibbtown with thirty-five students.[36]

This collective activism and institution-building was not done in a vacuum. And, despite their wealth and economic well-being, the Bibb freedwomen and men were not exempt from the realities of racism, discrimination, or paternalism. In addition to defining themselves over and against both enslaved Blacks and Whiteness, free Blacks in Kentucky faced numerous challenges. The most glaring challenge was their compulsory dependence on John Bigger Bibb, the executor of Richard Bibb's estate, to use the money bequeathed to them. As executor, John Bigger Bibb oversaw the administration of his father's will and controlled the purse strings. Because of this, the Bibb freedmen did not

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[35] Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, For the two years Beginning July 1, 1895 and Ending July 30, 1897, (Louisville, KY: Geo G. Fetter Printing Company, 1897) 527-532; Michael Morrow, "Logan County Had Quite A Few Colored Schools," May 16, 1997, *Logan County News-Democrat & Leader*.

[36] M. B. M, "Bibb Town," *The Louisville Courier -Journal*, Oct. 10, 1897.

receive title to their land or necessarily have direct control over their finances until the late nineteenth century. Instead, Bibb acted as an intermediary. When the freedmen needed to make a purchase, they wrote the executor who then dispensed the money or made the purchase himself. The circumscribed nature of his process did not deter the Bibb Freedmen, however, and it's in their letters to Bibb that their defiance and resistance can be seen. In one instance, they questioned Bibb about the distribution of the land and why some got better property than others. In another, they questioned him about the proceeds for land that was sold in Grayson County.[37] Black freedmen were subjected to other inequalities as well because freedom did not mean full citizenship, Whiteness, or social acceptance.

Though Kentucky's 1792 constitution allowed free Blacks to vote, many of their other rights were restricted. The criminal system proved an especially harsh climate, and free Blacks faced the death penalty for numerous crimes. This included everything from sabotaging a bridge or canal to rape of a White woman, rebellion and arson. For less severe crimes, they could still be whipped, beaten, fined or imprisoned. Beyond this, local authorities found various ways of policing free Blacks. Free Blacks charged with "loitering or misbehaving" or keeping a "disorderly house" were basically re-enslaved and hired out for up to three months. Their homes were also subject to raids by night patrols who entered their homes without warrants ad ransacked their quarters. Once in the court system, free Blacks operated from a "distinctly inferior position." Once charged, they received a trial by jury and could testify on their own behalf. In some cases, they were even allowed the right to appeal, but most courts throughout Kentucky denied them

[37] John Bigger Bibb Papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, KY.

the right to testify against Whites in court, which proved especially crippling because Whites often accused Blacks of crimes they did not commit.[38]

Beyond this, free Blacks' movement was both restricted and policed. They lived in a constant state of anxiety understanding that their freedom could be questioned at any time by any member of White society. Proving their freedmanship meant carrying their "free papers," which were certificates that "identified the freedmen by name, age, description, county and details of emancipation." At times, even this wasn't enough. Often, free Blacks in Kentucky could not ride trains unless a "respectable White person" vouched for them. Yet another threat to freedmen and freedwomen's safety and freedom was kidnapping. After 1801, it was a crime to kidnap and sell free Blacks into slavery. Still, various incidents occurred, and slave traders proved much more interested in profit than the origins of a Black person sold under suspicious circumstances. They did not ask questions, and free Blacks traveling in the deep south reported various incidents of harassment.[39] Making matters worse for both enslaved and free Black Kentuckians was the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which effectively increased slave patrols by mandating the citizens aid in the capture of enslaved Blacks who escaped.

6.3 Re-Enslavement, Racial Violence, and Resistance

Just as their freedom and wealth distinguished the Bibb freedmen during slavery, it also marked their lives during the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the early twentieth centuries. During the Civil War, the Bibb Freedman were forced to fight for their freedom even as their enslaved counterparts sought their own freedom. According to a

[38] Lucas, *Blacks in Kentucky*, 109.
[39] Ibid, 113-115.

lawsuit filed by Eliza Jane Bibb in 1862, "armed men styling themselves the army of the Confederate States of America" occupied Logan County between December 1861 and January 1862, and "seized many free Negroes and forced them to work for the (Confederate) army." Bibb said the men came to her house, and forced her along with her children William Robert, Telford Rice, John Albert, John Henry, Elijah Hise and Doctor Cole Bibb, an infant, to work for the Confederate Army. Refusing to be enslaved, however, Eliza Bibb ran with her children and "lay days and nights in the woods to escape (the) soldiers." When she was found, Bibb like many other free Blacks in Logan County was forced to declare a master or risk being "carried to a southern state and sold into slavery." In "fear and bewilderment" Bibb chose P. N. Bradley as her master and declared herself a "slave for life," but only apprenticed her children to him. Other Bibb freedmen – like Lemmon Bibb – also declared themselves "slaves for life" during this period.[40] Unlike many Blacks during this period, Eliza Jane Bibb had both the determination and resources to resist captivity and in 1862, she sued Bradley for her family's freedom and won. Her wealth allowed her to hire representation and the social capital she carried as a former Bibb slave likely worked in her favor in the court system. This combination allowed her to bring a suit against a White slaveholder, which she later won. In June 1862, a Logan County court declared her family's re-enslavement "null and void" freeing them from "any control whatever of the defendant." Like Eliza Jane, Lemmon Bibb also sued for her freedom. Her slave order was voided on June 7, 1862.[41]

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[40] Eliza Jane Bibb and William Robert Bibb, Telford Rice Bibb, John Albert Bibb, John Henry Bibb, Elijah Hise Bibb, and Doctor Cole Bibb, infant, who sues by Eliza Jane Bibb, their mother and next friend Against P. N. Bradley, Defendant. Logan County Equity Court Case 92, #2366, Logan County Genealogical Society, Russellville, KY.

[41] Ibid; Logan County Emancipations, Logan County Equity Court Case 92, #2365, Logan County Genealogical Society, Russellville, KY.

Both the Reconstruction era and the early twentieth century were violent and tumultuous times in Logan County as local Whites resisted social, cultural and political change. Because Kentucky did not secede, President Andrew Johnson's program of Reconstruction, did not govern the state. This allowed confederate soldiers to reclaim their place in local and county government almost immediately and stymy Blacks quest for social, political and economic equality. This was largely done through violence and intimidation, and the Freedman's Bureau recorded various ways Whites harassed and intimidated local Blacks. In August of 1866, Benjamin Lamb and a witness reported that he had been assaulted and knocked down by Robert Lamb "with a big stick" though "no hard words (were) used by either party." About that same time, Peter Darby was stabbed "in three places causing severe wounds" by two White men. In Hopkinsville, George Long was stopped on the street and then shot "without any cause whatever," while yet another victim, John Calvin, was robbed of his pistol while traveling from Russellville to Clarksville. Whites also harassed and cheated freed Blacks in other ways. In September 1866, Lewis Thurman negotiated a labor contract with George Doron for himself and his wife, Amanda. He negotiated $150 a year for himself and $30 per year for Amanda, but Doron later fired them and refused to pay their wages. In yet another instance, Charles Littlejohn was cheated when a White farmer sold him a diseased horse that died and refused to return his money or replace the animal when the Freedmen's Bureau demanded that he do so.[42] In each of these cases, Blacks boldly named their attackers and abusers when they sought justice. Records indicate that they made full use of the

[42] "Kentucky Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," FamilySearch.org. Accessed December 9, 2014 https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89G2-VZG7?cc=2333771&wc=SKFG-K62%3A1438540002%2C1438558101 .

Freedman Bureau's resources and refused to accept Whites' continued terroristic rule over their lives.

In the early twentieth century, this same spirit of defiance and resistance resulted in the lynching of four Russellville men. The incident occurred in August 1908 when Rufus Browder, a Black man, asked his employer, James Cunningham, to leave work early to buy medicine for his sick wife. This led to a dispute and Cunningham eventually kicked Browder and his wife off the land. When Browder protested, his employer struck him with a belt and Browder responded by shooting and killing him. Upon his arrest, jailers smuggled him out of Russellville into Louisville to avoid mob violence. Other Blacks, however, paid the price for his safety. When a White mob stormed the jail and did not find Browder, they demanded that Browder's lodge brothers and members of the True Reformers – brothers Virgil and John Jones, Robert Bouyer, and John Riley – be handed over to them. They were hung in their pajamas from a cedar tree with a note pinned to their clothing that read, "Let this be a warning to you niggers to let White people alone and you will go the same way, and your lodges better shut up and quit."[43]

The racial violence of the early twentieth century foreshadowed the difficulties Blacks in Russellville faced in other areas. Despite a long history of agitation for social justice and change, Blacks in Russellville faced continued racism and inequality. Chief among those injustices were poor and inadequate schools. This resulted in the double taxation of rural, southern Blacks who paid taxes, but were also forced to rely on their own resources to fund public schools and provide an education for their youths. Such efforts were organic and originated within the community. Blacks sought education as

[43] "Four Negroes on Cedar Tree," *The Courier-Journal*, Aug. 2, 1908.

their primary answer to the Negro Problem and pooled their resources to overcome the systemic forces that kept them largely poor and uneducated. By the time the Rosenwald Rural School Building program arrived in Kentucky in 1917, Blacks in Russellville had spearheaded their school-building campaign. Student enrollment had reached one hundred thirty-two students, "the largest in the history of the institution" and the Black community was raising funds, so students would no longer have to attend school in an unfinished building. By October 1917, Button wrote "… the colored people (had) spent themselves $2,500 …" and it wasn't until the following year that they applied for Rosenwald aid.[44]

6.4 Knob City Rosenwald School

Russellville's Rosenwald school building campaign commenced under Principal Mose "M. H." Haddox, one of several Black men who led the school during the early twentieth century and contributed to various stages of its growth, transformation, destruction, and rebirth. Haddox was born in 1876, and he married Mary J. Morris on April 4, 1906. In 1910, the couple owned a home at West Cedar Street in Russellville, had three children, and Haddox was a teacher in the Logan County school system.[45] By 1918, however, Haddox was principal of the school and he led the fight to win Rosenwald funding for Russellville and Logan County youths. When Tuskegee's Clinton J. Calloway argued that the schools were to "help the colored people who are inclined to

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[44] "Report of F. C. Button State Agent of Rural Schools for Kentucky for the Month of October 1917," Box 80, Folder, GEB-RAC.

[45] United States Census, 1910, *Marriage Records*. *Kentucky Marriages.* Madison County Courthouse, Richmond, Kentucky. Accessed October 25, 2018, www.Ancestry.com. Note: Transcribed documents on Ancestry.com list Mose Haddox as "Marc" Haddox. Viewing the original document, however, demonstrates it should be Mose.

stick to the farm and follow agricultural pursuits," Haddox responded with a letter that neatly aligned the school's goals and projected student population with the Rrsbp's stated mission. In a letter dated April 17, 1918, he wrote that Logan County was home to nearly six hundred Black farmers and that the Russellville Graded Common School sat in the "central part of a great farming community." Each direction boasted farmland, and Haddox placed special emphasis on the northernmost portion of the school district which extended "a distance of about six miles into the midst of a nest of colored farmers." These men and women, who would have included the remaining Bibbtown landowners, owned "everywhere from a small garden to a 400-acre farm" (sic) and produced "most of the farm and truck products sold into the town." Beyond its geographical setting, Haddox spoke of the school's interest in promoting industrial education. Coopting Calloway's language for his own purposes, Haddox noted that "the school has added to its course of study, a Course in Agriculture designed in itself for the very large number of Farmers' boys who should remain on the farm." He then solidified his point by appealing to an idea central to Tuskegee's promotion of industrial education: that rural southern Blacks should learn skills that best equipped them to serve the communities they grew up in rather than pursuing liberal arts education. Haddox closed his letter writing, "It is the purpose of the management of this school, to have it … articulate more closely with the needs of the community."[46]

Haddox's letter demonstrated Blacks continued agitation for change. Though they had raised at least $2,500 on their own, Blacks in Russellville – like those across the

[46] M. H. Haddox to F. C. Button, April 17, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.

south – valued northern philanthropies and their resources for their ability to amplify and expand their own personal goals. Whether they agreed with these agencies and their agendas or not, southern Blacks refused to leave any resource untapped. In Russellville, Blacks ultimately fought for and won Rosenwald funding. On Nov. 2, 1918, Kentucky's Rosenwald State Building Agent F. M. Wood recommended the community for funding, writing "… I believe we would do well to help Russellville, as it is largely rule in character."[47] Additional funds were raised by various means. Money to complete the school was raised at the Logan County Colored Chautauqua, yet another marker of the middle-class sensibilities of Blacks in Russellville. Chautauqua originated in the late nineteenth century as a series of revivals or religious camp meetings that centered on topics such as education, social justice, morality and the arts.[48] Such forums allowed Blacks greater control of their lives and their communities by not only stimulating intellectual growth and preparing them for full, first-class citizenship, but also allowing them to raise the funds necessary to build schools and institutions that supported Black's social and cultural well-being.

Working alongside Haddox were a cadre of Black teachers. This group, which was largely made up of women, were esteemed professionals and lifelong educators who shaped generations of Logan County students' minds. After schools were desegregated, these women represented the race and were some of the first to teach in desegregated schools and classrooms. Hettie B. Gonzales taught for nearly 40 years in Logan County and was known for being a "strict disciplinarian." Born January 26, 1910 in Logan

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[47] F. M. Wood to Prof. C. J. Calloway, Nov. 2, 1918, Series 18, Folder General Correspondence 1918, CJCC-TUA.

[48] Andrew C. Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment: Protestants, Progressives, and the Culture of Modern Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press 2003) 1-7.

County to Slaughter Lewis and Hettie E. Gotier, Gonzales attended the Knob City Rosenwald School. Afterward, she attended Kentucky State College and then returned to Logan County where she taught fourth and fifth grades. Upon her retirement in 1977, it was noted that "through the years, her ability to relate to students and instill confidence in her pupils has been one of her outstanding characteristics."[49]

Born in Russellville on April 9, 1898 to Mack Head and Minnie Lewis, Stella Head Gray was an "institution" at Knob City, where she both attended school and taught. Head graduated Knob City and then attended Kentucky State University. Afterward, she returned to her hometown briefly before moving to Muhlenberg County, where she founded and taught her own school. Such autonomy was uncommon for women during this period, but Gray and professional Black women like her used their education and careers to push boundaries and carve out a modicum of freedom for themselves. After Muhlenberg, Gray returned to Russellville, where she spent most of her career teaching first and second grades. Known for sponsoring various story contests and plays, Gray was considered "strict" in the classroom. She demanded competency in the classroom and would not "pass a child if he or she could not read or write. Instead, "she held many children back until they learned.[50]

High teacher expectations and community standards produced an elite group of graduates in 1923. Known as the "Royal Six" this cohort, which included famed journalist Alice Dunnigan, achieved both personal and professional success and embraced their school's legacy of "lifting as we climb." Most, in fact, returned to

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[49] Michael Morrow, "She Taught During Integration," December 12, 1997, *News-Democrat and Leader*; Jim Young,"Retiring," *News-Democrat and Leader*, April 14, 1977.
[50] Michael Morrow "Stella Gray Strict Teacher," *News-Democrat Journal,* September 12, 1997.

Russellville as teachers and community leaders. Mildred Orndorff Yokley both attended and later taught at Knob City. Born Feb. 21 in 1909, Yokley was an honor student who later graduated from A & I State University. She then earned a master's degree from Fisk University in 1954 where her thesis was entitled, "The Relationship Between Reading Ability and Study Skills in Three Areas of Eighth Grade Achievement."[51] After graduation, Yokley taught in Nashville for a period before returning home to teach in Russellville. There, she and her husband, Raytha L. Yokley, became a member of its upward striving Black community. Together, the couple personified early twentieth century middle-class sensibilities. Both were educated, active church members, and led spirited social lives rooted in uplift. Born in 1910 in East Bernstadt, Ky, R. L. Yokley, was a well-known sociologist with a distinguished career in college education. He graduated from Indiana University with an M.A. in 1941 before returning to earn his Ph.D. in 1952. His dissertation "The Development of Racial Concepts in Negro Children" was indicative of the politicized work both he and Mildred Yokley participated in Russellville. In addition to teaching at Fisk University, Meharry Medical School as well as both Kentucky State and Western Kentucky University, R. L. Yokely was a military man, a member of several organizations including the NAACP and Alpha Kappa Delta. He also wrote various articles and collaborated on the book, *The Black Church in America*. Later, Raytha Yokley was appointed to the Russellville Education Board where he served as a member, vice-chair and chairman and was credited with taking the school district to "higher heights including the designation of one of six "superior systems" in

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[51] "Yokley was a student and teacher at Knob City," *News-Democrat and Leade*r, Feb. 14, 1997; "Bibliography" The Journal of Negro Education 24, no. 4 (1955): 492. Accessed February 11, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/2293307.

Kentucky. Though her work was not as well-documented, Mildred Yokley led an active life as well. In addition to teaching, Mildred Yokely led a Red Cross membership drive in the Black community. She later became the first Black columnist in Russellville's local newspaper. Upon her death, her eulogist celebrated her life and commitment to her community noting that "America had its Mary McLeod Bethune, and Russellville had Mildred Yokley. When the nation had Coretta Scott King, Logan County had Mildred Yokley. When the nation had Ida Wells Barnett, Logan County had Mildred Yokley. [52]

William Gilbert was a second accomplished member of Knob City's 1923 graduate class who returned to the Russellville and dedicated his life to uplift and service. After graduating Knob City, Gilbert married Mamie First in 1928. He then attended Kentucky State College, and later earned his M.A. from Indiana University and did some work at the University of Kentucky as well. Like Mildred Yokely, Gilbert was a lifelong educator and an active member of Russellville's First Baptist Church where he served as an organist, deacon, and religious instructor.[53] He, too, taught at Knob City, but he also taught at the Adairville Training School and the Auburn Colored School, both Rosenwald Schools. The Adairville School, built under Tuskegee, was a four-teacher school that cost $8,000. Blacks donated $2,550 to the school, which was more than double Rosenwald's donation of $1,200. The Auburn School was a one-teacher school built in the 1926-27 school year at a cost of $2,500, which Blacks donated $225. Outside Logan County,

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[52] "Colored People Join in Red Cross Work" *News-Democrat and Leader*, November 28, 1940.; "Three on School Boards," The Courier-Journal, May 12, 1969.; Michael Morrow, "Yokley was a student and teacher at Knob City." *News-Democrat and Leade*r, Feb. 14, 1997; "Education and Equal Rights Leader R. L. Yokley dies in New York." *News Democrat and Leader*, July, 10, 2001. "Yokley, Raytha L.," *Notable Kentucky African Americans Database*, accessed February 11, 2020, http://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/476.

[53] "R-Ville Man Head of Prince Hall's Kentucky Lodge," August 12, 1965, *News Democrat and Leader;* "Receives Degree," June 17, 1948, *News Democrat and Leader.*

Gilbert also taught at the Trenton School, a Rosenwald School, built during the 1930-31 school year for $6,360. He was also professor at Western Kentucky University where he taught history.[54]

Though Gilbert was a well-known educator, he also made his mark as a longtime member of the Free Masons, and in 1965, he was elected Grand Master of the Prince Hall Masons of Kentucky at the 98th annual Communication of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F. & A. M. in Louisville.[55] Yokley's membership and leadership was an important marker of Black service and cultural life in Russellville. In the early twentieth century Jim Crow South, secret societies and mutual aid organizations played a critical role in not only the uplift, but survival of Black communities. Russellville was home to two such organizations that contributed to its overall growth and advancement. The first was the Knights of Pythias, a fraternity of Black men, that was chartered in Russellville in the 1920's. Members owned a hall in the center of town that was a site of both civic and social engagement. In the 1930's and 40's, Russellville boasted one of the largest lodges in the state and the hall, which stills stands, was home to the group' early state conventions. Beyond this, the hall was the center of social gatherings and known for its weekly dances. William Gilbert, however, was a member of the Fred Douglas Lodge #72. Named for the famed abolitionist Fredrick Douglass and chartered on August 6, 1908, the lodge had an elite membership. Members of the first lodge included numerous ministers, the local undertaker, a future city councilman, businessmen and a former Fisk Jubilee singer. These leading men of Russellville owned a hall located at the corner of 5th

[54] Rosenwald Database; "William T. Gilbert," February 22, 1988, *News Democrat and Leader.*
[55] Ibid.

and Spring Streets where the held banquets and celebrated their annual St. John and Prince Hall Days. During these events there were known to march through the streets from their lodge to one of the local churches demonstrating unity and cultural pride.[56]

Though the remaining members of "Royal Six" did not return home, they, too, led distinguished lives marked by professionalism and community services. Born in Russellville, Jesse T. Henderson graduated from Fisk University in 1949, then attended Howard University where he finished medical school in 1955. He then spent two years in the Airforce serving as both a captain and a medical officer before opening a private practice in New York.[57] John Cooper, the last member of the 1923 graduating class for whom biographical information was available, studied science and later chaired the biology department at Central State University. Born April 29, 1906, Cooper attended both Kentucky State University and the University of Chicago, where he earned a B.A. and M.A, respectively. He also spent time at both Ohio State and Harvard University pursuing a doctorate. In 1946, Cooper taught biology at Wilberforce University before moving on to Central State where he taught biology, coached basketball, and was a college Dean. He was also member of Alpha Phi Alpha and the Sigma Pi Phi fraternity, an early twentieth century Greek organization for Blacks who were excluded from other social, political, and professional organizations.[58]

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[56] Michael Morrow,"R'ville Man Head of Prince Hall's Kentucky Lodge." News-Democrat, August 12, 1965. "Knights of Pythias and Fred Douglas were Effective Lodges. Michael Morrow, "William Gilbert was busy in Logan County," July 11, 1997, *News-Democrat*; A. M. Todd, "A Word From Ford City, Penn" Michael Morrow Collection.

[57] "Dr. Jesse T. Anderson." Legacy.com, Accessed Feb. 12, 2020. https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dailygazette/obituary.aspx?n=jesse-t-henderson&pid=164022072

[58] Michael Morrow, "The history of Russellville's uncovered cabin*," March 24, 2009, News-Democrat Journal.*

The Royal Six were products of strong leaders, high standards and expectations, and community involvement with the school. After Haddox, this legacy continued under the leadership of Hannibal Eugene "H. E." Goodloe. Born in Pike County to Squire and Alice Goodloe, H. E. Goodloe not only served as principal of the Knob City School, but also president of the KNEA. He attended Bates High School in Danville, which he later became principal of, and received degrees from both Kentucky State and Fisk University. Statewide, he was known as an "efficient principal" and "a leader in his city" who took "an interest in all affairs pertaining to the development of youth." As principal of Knob City, Goodloe was especially active in the KNEA and he served as president of the Third District Teachers' Association. Under his leadership, Logan County school teachers boasted a 100 percent membership rate in the KNEA. As a leader in Black education, he was later instrumental in the merger of the KNEA with the all-White Kentucky Education Association.[59]

In 1935, Goodloe demonstrated that Black self-determination lay at the heart of Russellville's quest for both better schools and education. Local folklore contends that when the 1917 Rosenwald School fell into disrepair and a child fail through the second floor injuring herself, Goodloe burned the building to the ground. This forced county school officials to replace the school with a newer, safer, bigger school that included four years of high school education, a grossly neglected area of Black education. In 1908, state law mandated that each county provide a high school curriculum or contract with a nearby city to provide these services. The law resulted in explosive growth for White

[59] "Prof. Goodloe, City Educator, Dies at 77," March 16, 1969, *Messenger-Inquirer*, Owensboro, KY.; "Districts Association Meet," *KNEA Journal* 1, no. 2 (1930):15.; Michael Morrow, "Goodloe was either going to be teacher or preacher," Jan. 10, 1997, *News-Democrat Journal*.

high schools, especially in rural areas, but none for Blacks. In 1916, there were only nine Black high schools in the state of Kentucky – just two more than in 1890. Additionally, several of these schools were high schools in name only with six of the nine schools providing four years of education beyond the eighth grade. Beyond this, most focused almost solely on industrial education.[60]

Aware of their schools academic and structural deficiencies, Black educators like Goodloe led a sustained effort for improvement. And, though drastic, Goodloe's actions demonstrated Blacks' refusal to accept inferior, substandard facilities and supplies that jeopardized their children's education and well-being. It also demonstrated that Blacks appreciated outside funds such as those provided by the Rrsbp but their ultimate allegiance was to their goals of equality and protecting their children. In the end, the loss of the Rosenwald school building did nothing to destroy the community's commitment to education, and in 1936, a modern new facility opened its doors and was featured in the KNEA Journal, which hailed it as "another step in the educational progress of Kentucky."[61] The new Knob City High School was a brick, six-year school with eight classrooms, a domestic science room, an art room, administrative offices and a gym. With Goodloe at the helm, the faculty consisted of six teachers, four of which held four-year degrees and 211 students. Like the former Rosenwald school, the new, brick six-year high school was supported by local Blacks when White school authorities refused to fully fund and equip the new school. On September 25, 1936, the school hosted a kitchen shower, and more than three hundred "useful articles" were donated to the school.

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[60] Wright, *Blacks in Kentucky*, 114-116.
[61] "1936 Annual Proceedings," *KNEA Journal* 7, no. 1 (1936): 5-6. Accessed Feb. 12, 2020, https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt702v2cc07m.

Among the donors were both teachers and students from the local White high school who "exhibited a splendid attitude of interracial cooperation," which signaled Blacks willingness to cultivate allies across the color line to further their own goals.[62]

Building such relationships was a primary goal of the Rosenwald School Building Program, and it was yet another valuable tool Blacks made use of in their efforts to resist racial and systemic injustice. Beyond the kitchen shower, the school's alumni association launched a campaign to 'add to the library several hundred worthwhile books" demonstrating the Black community's continued efforts to champion education and support local, Black institutions.[63] They did so because they believed not only in the power of schools to educate their youths, but to also raise and influence the community's next leaders. This dedication and work ethic was rooted in their understanding of Black schools as both sacred and safe spaces of empowerment that could foment larger societal changes and ultimately change the trajectory of Black southern life. Black Russellville's ethic and capacity for promoting education persisted for over a century because of their wealth, institution-building, growth of an educated middle-class community. The result was Knob City, and unusual high school project supported by local Black people.

In Russellville, the sustained fight for equitable resources and quality education began with a group of free Blacks in 1840. Strengthened financially by the bequeath of Richard Bibb, these freedmen began a legacy of promoting education and institution-building that persisted for over a century and pre-dated the Rrsbp. In the nineteenth century, they built homes, schools, businesses and churches and they continued to do so

[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.

well into the mid-twentieth century. Despite their freedom and land-holding status, however, freed Blacks were not exempt from the racism, Jim Crow law, and White supremacy. They also struggled for better schools and their fair share of public taxes to pay for their schools. When the Rrsbp arrived in Kentucky, Blacks in Russellville quickly pooled their resources and sought to build one of the first Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky. This cultural capital and self-determination produced the Knob City School, the first high school for Blacks in Logan County, and a monument to Black self-help in the early twentieth century.

CHAPTER 7. EPILOGUE

On July 2, 1935, a brief, yet urgent telegram reached Julius Rosenwald in Chicago. Written by J. A, Webb, the mayor of Guthrie, Kentucky, it read "NEGRO SCHOOL BURNED EMERGENCY REQUEST" and it urged Rosenwald to write to them. Though the reason for the "emergency request" was not specified, more than likely the small city in Todd County sought aid to rebuild their school.[1] The request, however, was denied. Writing on behalf of Edwin Embree, president of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, his secretary lamented "I am very sorry, but we are entirely out of the program of building Negro schools and have been for several years." She then suggested that the people of Guthrie turn to the "various public work agencies" that "helped in the building of some schools." It was the "only suggestion" she had for them.[2]

As witnessed in Webb's letter, Blacks' interest and support for the Rrsbp – or southern school program as it was known in later years – never waned.[3] But in 1932, the program ceased operations. After allying with Southern Blacks in building, furnishing, equipping, and improving 5,357 schools, shops, and teacher cottages, the Rosenwald Fund slowly turned its attention away from school construction to focus on issues such as Black higher education, health, and studies on Black life. This shift to other interests began in 1930 when the program eliminated support for one-teacher schools. The following year, support for two-teacher schools was done away with and gradually all funding for school construction ceased.[4] Edwin Embree, a native Kentuckian and president of the Rosenwald Fund, questioned the program's effectiveness and he argued

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[1] J A Webb to Julius Rosenwald, July 2, 1935, Box 339, Folders 1-3, JRFA-FU.
[2] Secretary to Mr. Embree to Mrs. (Marguerite) Cecil, July 2, 1935, Box 339, Folders 1-3, JRFA-FU.
[3] Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 154.
[4] Ibid, 156-157. Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree*, 100.

that the program's initial goal was not only the construction of new schools, "but to dramatize educational needs and to establish understanding throughout the South that education of all its young citizens was a public duty, to be funded through taxation."[5] This idea was not a unique one. In fact, Booker T. Washington had expressed this same idea in his "Scheme for Helping Colored Schools" when he warned Rosenwald that "care should be taken to see that the county is not permitted to fall back on this fund and do less than it is now doing, but more in each case…"[6] So, the program was never meant to last forever. More so than this, it had strayed in many ways from Washington's original social design. First, the program was no longer Black-run institution. When northern philanthropist and their southern allies stripped Tuskegee of its authority in 1920, they effectively robbed it of its potency. Black educators aligned with Washington's original plan no longer had veto power over White County superintendents looking to rob Black school coffers to pay for White schools. There was no one to veto shoddy construction or hand-me-down school supplies, and the program lost its real power to foment systemic change. In the hands of White southerners, it took on the lackluster tones of Progressive Era rhetoric boasting superficial progress such as advanced lighting, sanitation, and design – but nothing that empowered or promoted Blacks as the program once had.

Because the Rrsbp in its earliest incarnation was a social machine with each level mutually reinforcing the other, changes at the head of the program necessarily meant changes at the heart of the program. The absence of Black leadership at the top destroyed the "… racial intimacy of Black professionals working with Black communities" and

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[5] Perkins, *Edwin Rogers Embree*, 100.

[6] *Booker* T. Washington to Julius Rosenwald, June 21, 1912, The Rosenwald Fund 1912, Folder A-C, Archives and Special Collections, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL.

brought changes at the state and local levels.[7] In Kentucky, F. M. Wood of Paris, a Black educator, served as the Rosenwald state building agent in Kentucky. This role in state leadership was created specifically by Washington's "scheme" and led to the placement of nine Black men in the position of Rosenwald building agent. These men won places in state government that were once unattainable for them because of their race and positioned them to improve not only their careers, but the lives of their families and those across their states. Wood laid the foundation for this work in Kentucky making use of both the K.N.E.A. and its meetings to spread news of the program and inform communities how to apply for aid. His monthly reports demonstrated his involvement with Black communities – their schools, their churches, their fundraisers, and their events – as well as his interactions with local Whites on behalf of these Black communities. Beyond this, the letters he exchanged with Clinton J. Calloway, Director of Extension services, demonstrate how he leveraged the power of the Black-run Rrsbp to hold local White authorities accountable to the tenants of the Rrsbp.

Wood helmed the Rrsbp for five years, before becoming president of Kentucky Industrial Institute in 1923. J. W. Bell, an outspoken "race man", briefly held this role after him, but it was short-lived. Just as White educators controlled the national program, they slowly took over the state program in Kentucky. In 1924, the state of Kentucky restructured its education department to include the Division of Negro Education. L. N. Taylor became Supervisor of Negro Rural Education. This eliminated the role of State Building Agent in Kentucky that Booker T. Washington created to desegregate the all-White education officials running the south and defrauding Black schools of equitable

[7] Weiss, *Robert Taylor* and Tuskegee, 122.

funding. Black women, however, continued in the role of Jeanes teachers or industrial supervisors throughout the life of the Rrsbp. As unofficial or assistant school superintendents in their counties these women continued to help shape Black minds both in the private and public sphere. In Black classrooms and homes, these women lifted their communities even as they lifted themselves and struggled against both racial and gendered oppression. Some like Florence G. Anderson Muir parlayed their work as Jeanes and industrial supervisors into state government roles. In 1915, Muir became the first Black State Supervisor of Colored Rural Schools. This opened the door for F. M. Wood in 1918, and later Mayme L. Copeland, who was appointed State Supervisor of Rural Schools in Kentucky in 1937.

While Blacks like Wood, Muir, and Copeland held leadership roles, their work was impotent without the commitment and support of Black communities across the state. In fact, working class men and women – laundresses, farmers, cooks, laborers, and miners – were the just as important as they were, if not more. Each individual community contributed finances, supplies, and materials. They donated their labor, opened their homes to teachers, bought land, and held endless fundraisers to support the school and its mission. Once the schools were built, Black communities rallied around them and continued their upkeep. Black PTAs were especially helpful in communicating the school's vision and its needs, and PTA meetings served as a communal space where parents, children, grandparents and community members coalesced around shared goals and strategized on how to achieve them. This cultural capital – resource development, extraordinary service or dedication by teachers and principals, and community leadership

that created a public will – produced not only Rosenwald Schools, but the schools that came both before and after the program's end.[8]

Despite their best efforts, however, Blacks' work with the Rrsbp in Kentucky was limited. At the start of the Rosenwald campaign, F. M. Wood boldly proclaimed, "one thousand Rosenwald Schools for Kentucky," but the Bluegrass fell woefully short of this goal. From 1917-1932, Black Kentuckians built 158 schools and teacher cottages – just ten percent of his earlier projection – during the Rrsbp's tenure in the state. The numbers were so low and disappointing that in 1919, Tuskegee officials considered using Kentucky's allotted funds to pay for schools in states with more successful building campaigns.[9] Though this did not happen, and the program continued in Kentucky until its demise in 1932, their disappointment with Kentucky's inability to build more schools pointed to larger issues plaguing the state.

A major factor in the state's limited use of the Rrsbp was the War. While the Rrsbp expanded to lower south states as early as 1914, Kentucky – though it tried earlier – was not admitted to the program until 1917 as the nation prepared for WWI. The meant resources were scarce, and the cost of materials were especially high. Blacks' time, attention, and resources were divided by their patriotism and commitment to serve their country. The following year, Kentucky schools were shuttered by a flu epidemic. Additionally, distance was yet another challenge. Black communities were spread out across the state, and those in the mountain areas proved especially hard to reach at times.

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[8] Carter Savage, "Cultural Capital and African American Agency: The Economic Struggle for Effective Education for African Americans in Franklin, Tennessee, 1890-1967" (The Journal of African American History, Vol. 87, Cultural Capital and African American Education (Spring, 2002), 206-235.
[9] C. J. Calloway to Dr. R. R. Moton, March 24, 1919, Collection 2, Folder Rosenwald Fund for Rural Schools, RRMC-TUA.

Both Wood and Button wrote to Tuskegee officials about the considerable time it took to reach some areas. Last, Kentucky's inability to make use of Progressive Era advancements may also have limited the movement. This area requires more research and cannot fully be understood until the state's department of education records are fully indexed and made public. Such records will give historians a fuller perspective on the Rrsbp in Kentucky, how it was viewed, and possibly the reason so few schools were built in the Bluegrass. Perhaps it was racism, paternalism, or both, but without these records, it is unclear.

Regardless of how many schools were built, Rosenwald schools were cherished structures that represented Black activism and agency. But this could be said of most Black schools throughout the south. Though Rosenwald Schools were architecturally superior to other schools and boasted advanced lighting and sanitation, students and teachers who remember the schools do not recognize or acknowledge these materials qualities. They also don't remember celebrating Rosenwald or having his picture hanging in their classrooms. Most, in fact, only have a rudimentary understanding of who Rosenwald was or they recite popular narratives about him building the schools *for* Black people. To be fair, not very many know about Washington's involvement with the schools either. Instead, what is most salient and clear for Rosenwald School alumni are memories of the people – their principals, teachers, cafeteria works, janitors, bus drivers, groundskeepers, and their classmates – and the atmosphere – smells from the cafeteria, the sound of the school bell, laughter on the playground, PTA meetings, the numerous plays and recitations. In their recollections, there was no spirit of poverty – despite the prevailing ideologies of Black inferiority and the material inequality of Black life. Most

important, however, was the cultural support, engagement, and standard. At the turn of the twentieth century, inferior Black schools symbolized the southern racial caste and sought to further reify messages of Black social, cultural, and political inferiority. Black students, however, were sheltered from such ideas by teachers who set high expectations, were "strict", and demanded excellence. In short, they did not injure Black children's minds or spirit. They instead created environments that allowed students to both expect and achieve more than previous generations, and it was within these settings that the nation's Civil Rights leaders and grassroots activist were produced. Additionally, the organizing, fund-raising, and institution-building that characterized the Rrsbp was a critical component of the mid-twentieth century fight for equality.

In 1954, the landmark United Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, desegregated schools throughout the country, and this was the beginning of the end for most Rosenwald Schools. The spirit that created them, however, lives on in numerous Rosenwald School reunions held annually across the state in the communities that built them, such as Middletown, Nicholasville, Paducah, Lebanon, and numerous others. One of the longest running reunions is held by alumni of the Harlan Rosenwald High school, which graduated its last class in 1963. In 1969, former students organized the Harlanites Club in Detroit, Michigan "to give scholarships and financial aid to students who have been accepted to institutions of higher learning." In 1976, the club organized nationally, and now meet biennially for the purpose of fundraising and aiding future generations in their higher education – just as the original organizers for the schools once did.[10]

[10] "Our History," Rosenwald Harlanites, Accessed May 3, 2019, https://www.rosenwaldharlanites.org/about-us/who-we-are.html.

This is the legacy of the Rrsbp: sustained Black agitation and organizing, self-help, self-determination, and community-building. In Kentucky, this work began organically with a desire for both mental and physical liberation during slavery, gained momentum during the Civil War, and exploded during Reconstruction. In the early twentieth century, the Rrsbp ignited the next great campaign for public schools across the South with Black self-help as its central platform. Black Kentuckians engaged in this work because they viewed it as yet another tool to foment the work, they had been doing all along. And when they celebrated the schools, they acknowledged not only the Rosenwald era, but their long history of sacrifice and organizing.

A school song for Louisville's South Park (Rosenwald) School composed in 1928 by Mrs. W. C. Weeden embraced this history and taught it to local youths. Entitled, "The South Park School and Its Founder, Mrs. Lillian Poignard," the song's lyrics spoke of the school's origins in 1918 with twelve students in a cabin, its move to a frame house, and its eventual expansion with help from the Rrsbp. The song then saluted both the leadership of Poignard, the school P.T.A., and work of the school superintendent and its board before ending with the notes of hope and high expectations that Black communities invested in their schools. "The New South Park School, just in its prime," wrote Weeden. "Oh, the heights it will reach in the course of time."[11]

[11] The South Park School and Its Founder, Mrs. Lillian Poignard," Rosenwald, Box 339, Folders 1-3, JRFA-FU.

APPENDICES

Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky by County

Appendix 1

Adair County

Columbia School
Elizabeth School
Flat Woods School
Knifely School
Pelleyton School

Allen County

Caney Fork School

Ballard County

Bandana School
LaCenter School
Lovelaceville School
Wickliffe School

Bath County

Bethel School
Owingsville School
Peeled Oak School

Bell County

Middlesboro School

Bourbon County

Amentsville School
Cumensville School
North Middletown School

Boyle County

Danville School

Breathitt County

Jackson School

Breckinridge County

Bewleyville School
Hardinsburg School
Home at Bewleyville School

Calloway County

Providence School
Murray School

Carroll County

Carrollton School

Christian County

Blue Spring School
Crofton School
Dyer's Chapel School
Garrottsburg School
Hensleytown School
LaFayette School
West Union School

Clark County

Goff School
Howard's Creek School
Jouett's Creek School

Crittendon County

Marion School

Daviess County

Green's Chapel School
Pleasant Ridge School

Fayette County

Avon School
Cadentown School
Coletown School
Douglass School
Ft. Springs School
Shop at Douglass School
Uttingertown School

Fleming County

Flemingsburg School (County Training)

Floyd County

Tram School

Franklin County

Frankfort School
Normal Hill School #1
Normal Hill School #2

Fulton County

Free Hill
Fulton School
Johnston Chapel
Lake Chapel
Sassafras Ridge School

Gallatin County

Park Ridge School

Garrard County

Scotts Fork School

Grant County

Dry Ridge Schools

Graves County

Maysville County Training School
Hickory School
Sedalia School
Water Valley School

Green County

Anderson School
Cedar Top School
Greensburg School
Greenup School
Gresham School
Hazel Ridge School
Meadow Creek School

Greenup County

Greenup School

Hardin County

Elizabethtown School
Perryville School
West Point School

Harlan County

Harlan School

Harrison County

Rosenwald School (It is listed this way in the database.)

Hart County

Horse Cave School
Munfordsville School

Henderson County

Corydon School (County Training School)
Henderson School

Henry County

Eminence School
Newcastle School
Smithfield School

Hickman County

Columbus School

Hopkins County

Madisonville School
Shop at Madisonville School

Jefferson County

Dorsey School
Eastwood School
Harris Kennedy School (Point)
Jacob School
Jeffersonville School
Newburg school
South Park School

Jessamine County

Nicholasville School

Knox County

County Training School

Laurel County

London School

Lawrence County

Louisa School

Lincoln County

Stanford School

Logan County

Adairville School (County Training School)
Auburn School
Cedar Grove School
Lewisburg School

New Hope School
Oakville School
Russellville School
Schochoh School
Union School

Madison County

Berea Consolidated School
Concord School
Pleasant Green School
Shop at Richmond School

Marion County

Lebanon School

Mason County

Mayslick School
Washington School

McCracken County

Grahamville School
Sanders School
Union Station School
Woodland School

Mercer County

Harrodsburg School
Harrodsburg School (Second school)
Mayo School

Montgomery County

County Training School
Mt. Sterling School

Muhlenburg County

Drakesboro School
Greenville School
Rhodesville School

Nelson County

Bardstown School

Ohio County

Beaver Dam School

Oldham County

County Training School

Owen County

New Liberty School

Perry County

Subdistrict A School
Vicco School

Powell County

Clay City School
West Ben School

Scott County

Boydtown School
Great Crossing School
New Zion School
New Zion School
Sadieville School
Watkinsville School
Zion Hill School

Shelby County

Buck Creek School
Chestnut Grove School
Christianburg School
Clarks School
Olive Branch School
Scott School

Taylor County

Durham School

Todd County

Trenton School

Union County

Sturgis School

Warren County

Bristow School

Delefield School
Rockfield School

Washington County

Springfield (County Training School)
Mt. Zion School

Wayne County

Frazee School
Monticello School

Webster County

Providence County Training County School
Dixon School
Teachers; Home Providence School, C. T. S.

Woodford County

Elm Bend School
Pinckard School

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Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Kentucky for the Two Years Ending December 31, 1919.

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Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Kentucky for the Two Years Ending June 30, 1923

Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Kentucky for the Two Years Ending June 30, 1927

Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Kentucky for the Two Years Ending June 30, 1929

Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Kentucky for the Two Years Ending June 30, 1931

Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Kentucky for the Two Years Ending June 30, 1933

VITA

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EDUCATION

Ph.D.

History, University of Kentucky expected 2021
Dissertation: "They Did This Work": Black Activism, Education, and the Rosenwald Rural School Building Program in Kentucky

M.A.

History, University of Kentucky 2011

B.A.

Journalism/Communications, Middle Tennessee State University 1995

PUBLICATIONS

Grimes, L. D., "Very Strong Colored Women": Black Women's Uplift, Activism and Contributions to the Rosenwald Building Program in Kentucky*," (RE) Visiting My Old Kentucky Home: Slavery and Freedom in the Bluegrass State* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press: 2022) peer-reviewed.

Grimes, L. D., "Annie Simms Banks," *Women in Social Movement in the United States*, (Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street: 2016)

Grimes, L.D., "Brooks Memorial Hospital," *The Kentucky African American Encyclopedia: Black Life and Culture in the Commonwealth*, (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2015.)

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Fall 2017 Bryan Dissertation Fellowship, University of Kentucky
2015-2016 Leslie K. Gilbert and Daniel E. Crowe Fellowship, University of Kentucky
2014-2015 Charles P. Rowland Fellowship, University of Kentucky
2014 Frances S. Summersell Center for the Study of the South, University of Alabama
2011-2014 Southern Regional Educational Board Doctoral Scholar Fellowship
2009-2011 Lyman T. Johnson Fellowship, University of Kentucky

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Kentucky State University, Frankfort KY
Visiting Professor of History, 2016-2017

University of Kentucky, **Lexington KY**
Teaching Assistant, History Department (Teacher of Record)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Present Co-producer, Co-writer,
Invented Before You Were Born -Documentary about based on the lives of three pre-Civil War free Black communities in Western Kentucky.
www.bibbfilm.com

2020 Oral Historian,
University of Kentucky Administrators, Faculty, and Staff of Color Oral History Project

2019 Oral Historian,
University of Kentucky Desegregation Oral History Project

2018 Oral Historian
Middletown Oral History Project

2015 Researcher,
The Struggle is Eternal: Gloria Richardson and Black Liberation
Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press.

2013-2014 Graduate Assistant,
Office of Development, University of Kentucky

2012-2013 Graduate Assistant,
History Department, University of Kentucky

2009-2012 Graduate Assistant
African American Studies and Research Program, University of Kentucky

Editor, Program Newsletter
Co-organizer, Annual Black Women's' Conference, 2009-2011
Guest Speaker/Moderator, UK Fall 2010 Dialogue on Race Series, "Sisters in the Struggle"