



Julius Rosenwald – Board of Trustees Portraits,  
Photographic Archive: The University of Chicago



July 2022

Bay Springs School – Andrew Feiler, from the book, *A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America*

## Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools Special Resource Study Newsletter

The National Park Service (NPS) is pleased to announce the launch of a special resource study of sites associated with the life and legacy of American businessman and philanthropist Julius Rosenwald. As directed by Congress in the Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-336), the study focuses on sites associated with Julius Rosenwald in the following locations:

- Sears Administration Building at Homan Square in Chicago, Illinois
- Rosenwald Court Apartments in Chicago, Illinois
- Museum of Science & Industry in Chicago, Illinois
- Rosenwald House (formerly the Lyon Home) at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, Illinois
- Cairo Rosenwald School, a one-teacher school in Sumner County, Tennessee
- Shady Grove School, a one-teacher school in Louisa County, Virginia
- Noble Hill School, a two-teacher school in Bartow County, Georgia
- Ridgeley School, a two-teacher school in Prince George's County, Maryland
- Bay Springs School, a two-teacher school in Forrest County, Mississippi
- Russell School, a two-teacher school in Durham County, North Carolina
- Shiloh Rosenwald School, a three-teacher school in Macon County, Alabama

- San Domingo School, a four-teacher school in Wicomico County, Maryland
- Elmore County Training School, a seven-teacher school in Elmore County, Alabama
- Dunbar Junior High, Senior High and Junior College in Little Rock, Arkansas

The four Illinois sites are associated with Rosenwald's life and philanthropy. The remaining ten sites are Rosenwald school sites in eight states.

As we begin the special resource study, we would like to engage the public in discussions about the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools as they relate to the sites listed above. Virtual town hall meetings are scheduled for July 6 (Illinois sites) and July 7 (Rosenwald Schools), from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

The National Park Service will evaluate the properties listed above, individually and collectively, using congressionally established criteria for national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for direct NPS management. Based on the analysis, the National Park Service will determine whether each site meets the criteria for inclusion in the national park system and will prepare the study for the Secretary of the Interior. (If a study site does not meet all four criteria, the study process usually concludes.) The study findings and any recommendations will then be submitted to Congress for consideration. **New NPS units can only be established by an act of Congress or by presidential proclamation.**

## How to Participate

We encourage you to learn more about the special resource study process and to share your ideas. Here are some ways to do so:

- Visit the study website:  
<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/Rosenwald>
- Share your thoughts and feedback by commenting on the study questions posted to this website during the open comment period of July 1-31. The study questions are listed on the last page of this newsletter.
- Attend a virtual public meeting on July 6 or 7 to learn about the study (see the study website for meeting information).



### About the National Park Service

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world. The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior and manages more than 400 park units that comprise the national park system. Administration of park units occurs in many ways, from traditional units that are federally managed to non-traditional units that rely on partnerships and may have little, if any, federal landownership.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a special resource study?

A special resource study evaluates the eligibility of an area to be designated as a national park or other special designation. The National Park Service collects and evaluates information about the resources in the study area. If the resources meet the criteria for national significance and suitability, the National Park Service evaluates the potential for visitor enjoyment and analyzes the feasibility and appropriateness of different management options compared to existing management. The study findings and any recommendations will then be submitted to Congress for consideration. Regardless of the outcome of the study, new units of the national park system can only be established by an act of Congress or by presidential proclamation.

### How will the sites associated with Julius Rosenwald be evaluated?

The National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (Title 54 United States Code 100507) established the process for identifying and authorizing studies of new national park units. Under the law, a study area must meet all four of the following criteria to be recommended as an addition to the national park system:

1. Contain nationally significant natural and/or cultural resources.
2. Represent a natural or cultural resource that is not already adequately represented in the national park system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another land-managing entity.

3. Must be: (a) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of the resources and visitor enjoyment, and (b) capable of efficient administration by the National Park Service at a reasonable cost; important feasibility factors include landownership, acquisition costs, life-cycle maintenance costs, access, threats to the resource, and staff or development requirements.
4. Require direct NPS management that is clearly superior to other management approaches.

NPS personnel will evaluate each study site identified in the legislation according to the above criteria for national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for NPS management.

### What are some of the possible outcomes of the study?

Over the last 20 years, approximately one in three special resource studies have resulted in a positive finding whereby the study resources evaluated met all four criteria required for inclusion in the national park system. About one in four completed congressionally authorized studies has resulted in both a positive finding and designation as a new unit of the national park system. Many studies conclude that the study resources do not meet all required criteria or find that existing management; technical or financial assistance; or local, state, or private initiatives are preferable to the establishment of a new national park unit.

If the special resource study results in a positive finding and a recommendation from the Secretary of the Interior that any of the study sites listed above should be added to the national park system, Congress may or may not act on or follow the recommendation. There is no timeframe for legislative action.





Rosenwald's Childhood Home, NPS photo

Julius Rosenwald was born in Springfield, Illinois, on August 12, 1862, to a middle-class family of German Jewish immigrants. As an early investor in Sears, Roebuck & Co., he oversaw the company during a time of tremendous growth and amassed a fortune of more than \$200 million, serving

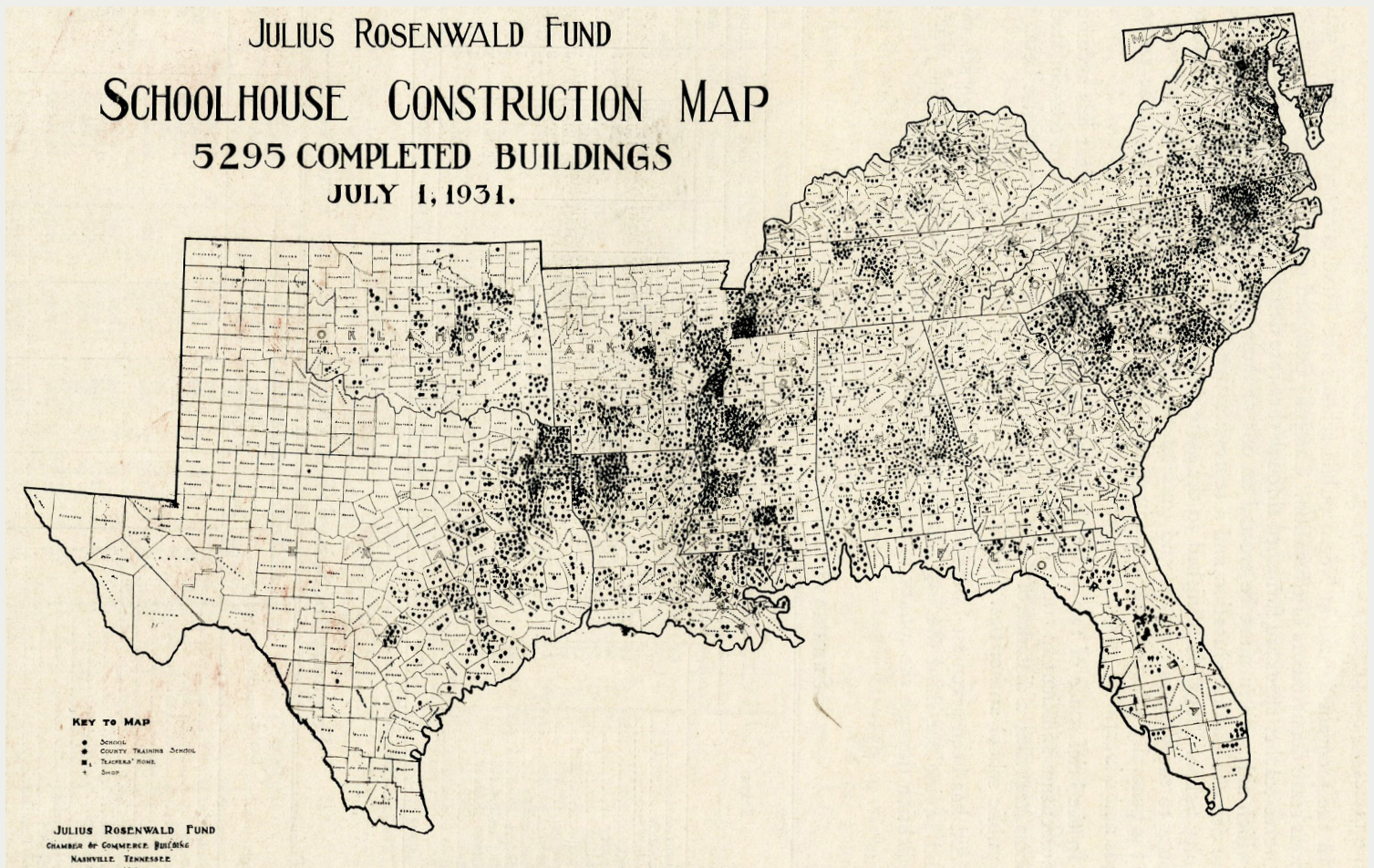
as company president from 1908 to 1924 and as chairman until his death in 1932. Four sites named in the legislation represent Rosenwald's life, career, and philanthropy in Chicago and Springfield: the Sears Administration Building, the Rosenwald Court Apartments, the Museum of Science and Industry, and Rosenwald's boyhood home in Springfield. The virtual public meeting on July 6 will focus on these four sites.

Julius Rosenwald focused much of his philanthropy on expanding opportunities available to African Americans during the time of Jim Crow segregation policies.

Encouraged by Booker T. Washington, Rosenwald provided "challenge grants" to build schools in areas where little if any educational opportunities were available to African Americans. Rosenwald agreed to pay a portion of the funds for building schools if communities and local governments funded the majority of the costs for construction. From 1912 to 1932, more than 5,000 Rosenwald Schools and supporting structures were built throughout the South.

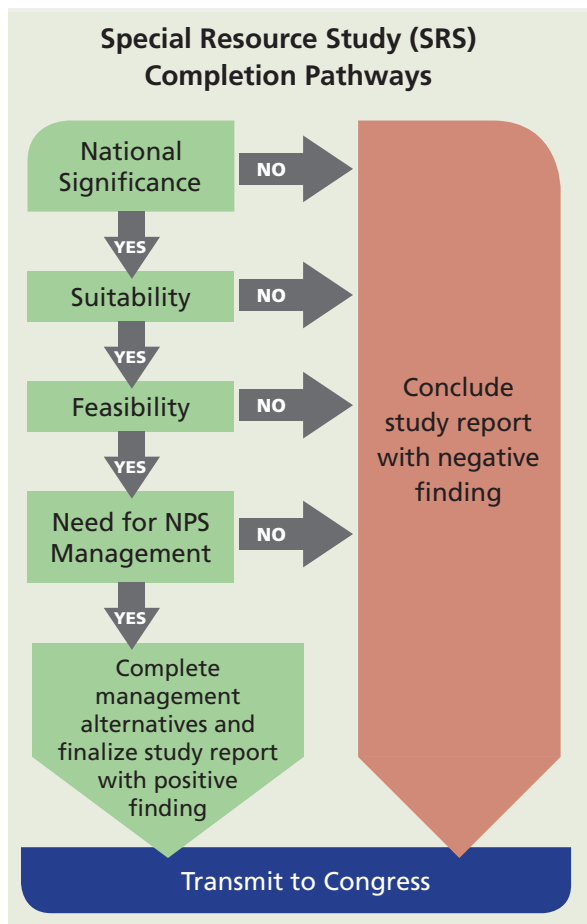
The schools were built with standardized plans developed by Robert R. Taylor with assistance from William A. Hazel and George Washington Carver at the Tuskegee Institute. Over the course of the school-building program, the design and orientation of the schools improved lighting, ventilation, and sanitation for Black schools in Southern states. By the time public schools became racially integrated following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, approximately one-third of African American students in the US South had attended a Rosenwald-funded public school. The virtual public meeting on July 7 will focus on the Rosenwald Schools identified in the study legislation.

Please see the study website, <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/Rosenwald>, for details about these virtual public meetings.





## The Study Process



## Share Your Thoughts and Comments

We are particularly interested to hear your thoughts and ideas about the following questions:

1. How would you feel about any of the sites listed above potentially becoming a national park unit that would focus on the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools?
2. Are there other nationally significant sites associated with Julius Rosenwald's life and legacy that the study should consider as a potential national park unit? Why?
3. What is your vision for the sites associated with Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools? What types of experiences and activities would you like to see there?
4. Do you have any other comments, concerns, and suggestions for this study?

You may submit feedback in the following ways:

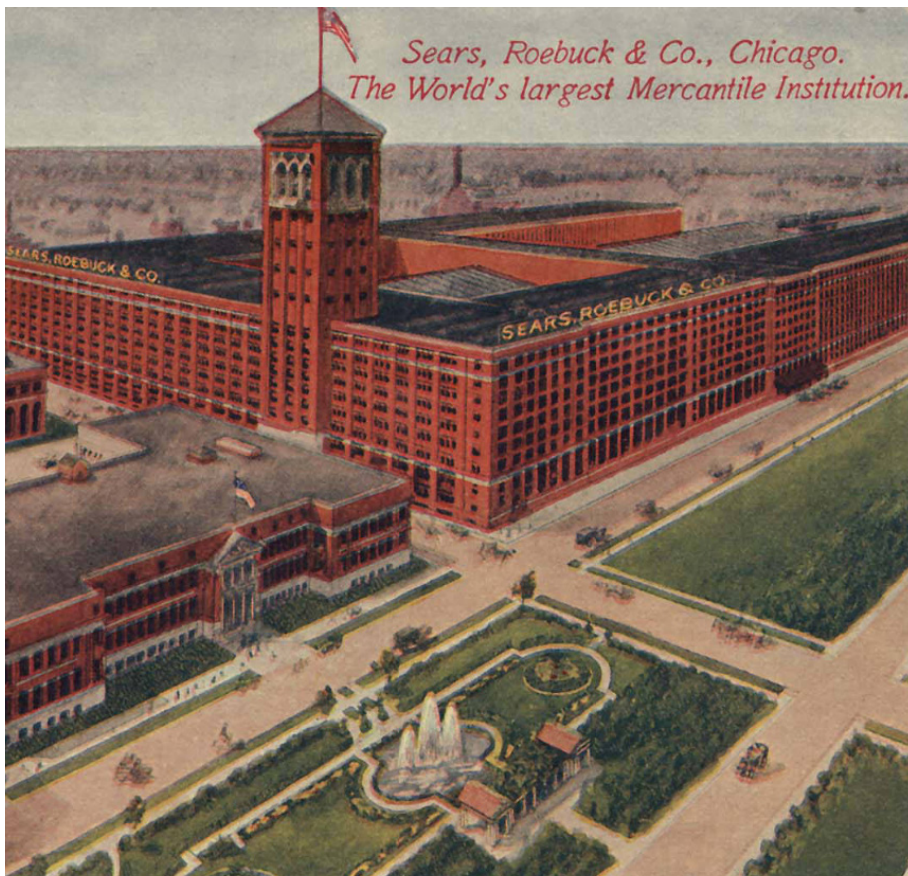
- **Online:** During the open comment period of July 1-31, 2022, visit the study website, <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/Rosenwald> and click the "Open for Comment" link to enter your responses to the above questions.
- **Email:** you may contact the study team at [rosenwaldstudy@nps.gov](mailto:rosenwaldstudy@nps.gov).

Point of contact: Cheri Espersen, Park Planning and Special Studies  
202.641.0876

**Thank you for your interest in this study!**



Rosenwald and Washington (University of Chicago) page 29 – Rosenwald, Julius: Photographic Archive: The University of Chicago



Sears, Roebuck & Co. (Newberry Library – Digital) page 13 – Sears, Roebuck & Co, Chicago, The World's largest Mercantile Institution - Curt Teich Postcard Archives Digital Collection (Newberry Library) – CARLI Digital Collections