

## Chapter Five

### Julius Rosenwald: Crusader for Southern Black Education

*My friends, it is unselfish effort, helpfulness to others that ennobles life, not because of what it does for others but more what it does for ourselves. In this spirit we should give not grudgingly, not niggardly, but gladly, generously, eagerly, lovingly, joyfully, indeed with the supremest [sic] pleasure that life can furnish.*

*Julius Rosenwald*

In analyzing the motivation for his largess to black southern education, it is critical that the researcher look at representative acts, words, and work (Edel, 1986) in the life of the philanthropist, Julius Rosenwald. The factors that influenced his concern for African Americans, his beliefs and how he gave shape to them in his life will reveal the reasons for and the results of one of Rosenwald's "grand consuming passions in life" (DeSalvo, 1997, p. 222): making quality education accessible to southern blacks during Jim Crow.

The new industrial age following the Civil War created vast sums of money for corporate, business, and manufacturing leaders (Anderson & Moss, 1999). The wealth was great and disproportionate so that by the beginning of the twentieth century eight percent of the nation's population held more than

seventy-five percent of the nation's property (Sealand, 1997). As there was effectively no income tax on these fortunes despite ratification of the Sixteenth Amendment in 1913 (Sealand, 1997), there was no federal provision for the "human wreckage of industrial exploitation" (Werner, 1939, p. 80).

Sealand (1997) argues that had fair labor practices and government controls on business been mandated, the tycoons of the early twentieth century could not have made so much money. In a more just and fair society, all the people would have enough money for schools for their children and foundations would not have had access to schools where, some say, they limited the opportunities for working class children. Donald Fisher (1993) argued that the control of society by the capitalists required more than control of business, banking, and industry; it also required the control of knowledge (Sealand).

Charity became more and more important as the nation's economy expanded at the expense of immigrants and the disfranchised. Philanthropy became the social design to care for the human flotsam of capitalism (Werner, 1939). The Rockefeller, Anna T. Jeanes, Peabody, and Slater families' foundations were actively involved in southern education by 1917 believing they should contribute to the improvement of the human state (Sealand, 1997). Charitable donations in the United States were increased by \$2,301,600,000 in the forty years from 1892 to 1932 (McCarthy, 1982). Very early on, capitalists developed a keen interest in

reformation of the South through education for blacks as well as for whites (Anderson and Moss 1999). Werner suggests that interest in education generally was a “natural pursuit of philanthropic energy, because, presumably, it would fit mankind for more effective life and remedy some of the social evils” (p. 80). Link (1986) countered that the foundation agendas for education emphasized continuation of the dominant class structure and could not serve as vehicle for ending inequality.

A second generation of foundations developed between 1903 and 1932. This new phase was built on the notion that scientific research would lead to efficient solutions to social problems. The General Education Board (GEB), funded by Rockefeller money, quickly became the leader of this generation, and it is argued that the GEB set the philanthropic agenda for southern black education. Church societies and other foundations that made great donations toward education for southern blacks gradually followed the lead of the GEB in turning private black schools over to local and state government control. This turnover of school control meant that white community leaders became the decision makers for black education and that the disfranchised black community had no voice in the governance of their children’s schools (Anderson & Moss, 1999).

Of the private philanthropic funding arms in this second generation, Julius Rosenwald was successful at evoking enthusiasm from the stakeholders in

southern black education at a level not previously seen. Based on his own convictions, he gave of himself and of his money because of his interests. The welfare of blacks was quite an unpopular national topic but it was Rosenwald's chief philanthropic interest and he insisted that his beneficence not be limited by geographical boundary, race, or religion (Embree & Waxman, 1949).

### *Rosenwald's Early Years*

Rosenwald was born in America to German Jewish immigrant parents. His father ran a clothing store. As a child, Rosenwald worked in the store, carried luggage for travelers, pumped the organ in the Congregational Church (even though he was a Jew), and worked for the circus when it was in his hometown, Springfield, Illinois (Werner, 1939). His deeply entrenched work ethic was evident when in 1874, the twelve-year-old Rosenwald sold brochures for the unveiling of the Abraham Lincoln monument for which he earned \$2.25. Three years later he worked in Springfield's Boston 99¢ Store for \$2.50 per week as an errand boy and salesman.

Both of Rosenwald's parents set an example of being actively involved in both the civic and Jewish community affairs. Rosenwald's life in the Jewish community as a child continued through his adulthood when he regularly

attended services and served in various positions of leadership in the Chicago Jewish community:

Even though not a student of the subject of religion--I might lay claim to being especially consecrated to the Jewish faith because not only was I *Barmitzvah*ed at 13, but it so happened a year later our congregation in Springfield, Illinois, dedicated a new reform Temple with confirmation exercises and I was also confirmed. (Werner, 1939, p. 12)

Rosenwald had an abbreviated formal education. After two years of high school in Springfield, he went to New York as an apprentice to his uncles, who were leading clothing merchants. The apprenticeship for a middle class teen was common at this time, as the young man would learn business from the bottom up (Lindermuth, 2002). He reflected on his fiftieth birthday, "I have often regretted that I was deprived of a college education" (Werner, 1939, p. 13). Throughout his life, the philanthropist exhibited great respect for those who could write well and who had formal education.

### *Building a Life through Business and Influences*

The Rosenwald family in America had risen from peddler to retailer to wholesale clothing manufacturer; the elder Rosenwald put up the financial

backing for his two sons, Julius and Morris, to continue in the trade by buying out a New York clothing business in 1884. Their successes allowed them to include their cousin in the business partnership and then they were able to expand their business with a manufacturing operation located in Chicago. At this time in the nation's history, clothing contractors employed immigrant men, women and children ten to eighteen hours per day to do piecework. The workers lived in the sweatshops where they worked; making beds on the floor after the day's work was done. As many as a dozen or more people lived and worked in these cramped, single rooms. Their wages ranged from ten dollars for men to two dollars for children per week. Sweatshop labor was widespread during the expansion of American capitalism when competition was intense and there is no reason to think the Rosenwalds were not involved in this exploitative labor practice for their Chicago manufacturing business (Werner, 1939).

About the time Rosenwald married Augusta Nusbaum, the daughter of a clothing manufacturer in Chicago, he expressed a life goal to a business partner, "The aim of my life is to have an income of \$15,000 a year--\$5,000 to be used for my personal expenses, \$5,000 to be laid aside, and \$5,000 to go to charity" (Werner, 1939, p. 30). He would meet this goal so many times over that by 1925 Rosenwald's personal holdings would be valued at \$150 million (Dalin, 1998).

Soon after his marriage, when Rosenwald attended a meeting about Jewish charities he was moved to make a \$2500 contribution. He did not have that much extra money but when he confessed his impulsive pledge to his wife, she demonstrated her concern for the needy and her support of his decision to donate money for worthy groups. Rosenwald later reflected that this had been the largest gift he ever made because he made it at a time when he had to stretch to meet his promise. His wife was actively influential in his philanthropic efforts throughout their thirty-nine year marriage (Werner, 1939).

In 1895, Rosenwald bought one-quarter of the stock in *Sears, Roebuck, and Company*. The mail order business was part of the accelerated commerce characteristic at the turn of the century (Werner, 1939). In 1908 when he was named president of the company he instituted conveyor belts, gravity chutes, and other mechanical devices to accelerate order processing. He focused on quality control and devised the money back guarantee and its marketing strategy. Within two years, Sears was the largest mail order catalogue company in the world with gross sales of \$50 million (Dalin, 1998). The company had garnered large portions of the rural retail areas and the volume of their trade enabled *Sears and Roebuck* to purchase in bulk and sell cheaper than other companies as well as to build new factories and buy out old factories (Werner, 1939).

Edwin Embree, who served as President of the Rosenwald Fund from 1928 through its closing, described Rosenwald as being quick to embrace new ideas and methods and as appreciating thoroughly planned budget proposals. He gave of himself, serving on boards, crusading for his causes, and working on the details of managing his philanthropic interests himself. Rosenwald was quick and astute and always denied that he was a business genius but that he had been lucky. He had a gift for judging the worth of other men and he gave responsibility to those he felt could carry out his expectations. Embree witnessed Rosenwald's rigorous honesty, his high energy level, and his rich work ethic. Rosenwald also had traits that were problematic; he was unpredictable and had sudden quick tempers. He tended to be unpleasant to colleagues and staff members over real or imagined faults or mistakes, and he carried his distaste for personal indulgence to the extreme. He was anxious that wealth not spoil his children (Embree & Waxman, 1949).

Rabbi Emil Hirsch of Chicago's Sinai Congregation, on whose board Rosenwald served, emphasized a deeply embedded principle in Jewish tradition. The teaching stressed the importance of giving to stimulate self-help. Hirsch interpreted this to mean that while immediate help to relieve distress was compassionate, it was better to help people get jobs than to give them alms (Dalin, 1998). He chided his rich congregation for neglecting their obligation to



society and urged them to live lives of practical idealism (Embree & Waxman, 1949).

Jane Addams, director of the settlement house, Hull House, in Chicago, was a close friend and inspiration to both Rosenwald and his wife. The mission of the Hull House was to provide cultural uplift for the city's flood of immigrants. Rosenwald made donations to the settlement house as early as 1902 and sat on the board of Hull House for many years after that until his death in 1932 (Werner, 1939). Addams routinely assessed programs and changed based on the evaluations, a technique Rosenwald also utilized. He was impressed by her use of a scientific approach of analyzing her work and of her use of statistics to prove her claims of social improvement to her benefactors (Lindermuth, 2002).

Rosenwald claimed that two books profoundly influenced his interest in the welfare of blacks, *Up from Slavery*, Booker T. Washington's autobiography, and *An American Citizen: the Life of William Henry Baldwin, Jr.* written by John Graham Brooks in 1910. Baldwin probably influenced Rosenwald because of his high level of commitment to reform, as it was understood in his lifetime. A New Englander, he was born to affluent parents and was president of a railroad but he felt strongly that the common good was a higher priority for companies than its stockholders. James D. Anderson, who argued that the Booker T. Washington model of higher education for blacks marginalized and situated them into menial

labor, criticized by W. E. B. DuBois and Rosenwald's association with Washington and the Tuskegee Institute later. Baldwin started with a simple belief in accommodationism, industrial training for ignorant southern blacks, but through Washington's tutelage he came to better understand the complexity of the black-white relationship. He believed that segregation could not be eradicated during his life and that attempts to forcibly change the practice would be injurious in the press toward social justice. He spoke about his belief,

The wrong kind of education may, and often does, produce poor results and discontented minds. Let us remember, however that there are two kinds of discontent. The one is based on dissatisfaction with one's condition without means of bettering it. The other is that healthy discontent that is the first sign of progress—it is the right kind of education in process of fermentation. It is our problem to create a discontent, but at the same time to equip that individual with the necessary tools to improve his condition. (as cited in Anderson & Moss, 1999)

### *Philosophy of Benevolence*

Rosenwald was different from the other philanthropists of his day in his sincere desire for a reversal of public policy insuring that less fortunate citizens could experience uplift through education. He was “far more liberal and

sympathetic than other philanthropists to black aspirations (Wormer, 2003, p. 133). It was his desire that governments should spend the same amount of money to educate children regardless of race (Sealand, 1997). He was willing to supply large sums of money to aid in the alleviation of racial injustices.

In the first place philanthropy is a sickening word. It is generally looked upon as helping a man who hasn't a cent in the world. That sort of thing hardly interests me. I do not like the "sob stuff" philanthropy. What I want to do is to try and cure the things that seem to be wrong. I do not underestimate the value of helping the underdog. That however, is not my chief concern, but rather the operation of cause and effect. I try to do the thing that will aid groups and masses rather than individuals. (Werner, 1939, p. viii)

It was Rosenwald's dream to "shame" (Sealand, 1997, p. 69) public authorities into improving schools through the thousands of sound, well-constructed schoolhouses built through his largess. Moreover, he harbored a desire to revolutionize public funding, disbursing equitable dollars for the education of urban, and rural, black and white children. Sealand argues that Rosenwald did not understand public officials and that he underestimated his ability to shame them.

Rosenwald's beliefs about philanthropy were not original but they were unusual when compared to the beliefs of other northern philanthropists of the day. He was opposed to perpetual perpetuity of trusts. He thought foundations should establish general guidelines for financial awards; restricting guidelines made no allowance for changes in times and circumstances. He set his own foundation up to end within his generation, to end no later than twenty-five years after his death. He theorized that this prevented developing a bureaucracy to administer funds; he also argued that the generation that contributed to one making vast amounts of money should be the ones to benefit from his generosity. His natural confidence in people affirmed his belief that succeeding generations could take care of their own needs (Werner, 1939).

Due to Rosenwald's ideology that people do not appreciate things that are given to them, he devised conditional donations for the Southern School Building grants. Rosenwald money would be contributed on condition that other funds were given through other sources. In advocating for conditional giving, Rosenwald sought to stimulate public agencies to accept greater social responsibility; this was the primary aim of his philanthropy. Rosenwald believed that human needs were human needs; he insisted that there was no place for religious and racial prejudice in bequeathing money to groups who needed it (Werner, 1939). Rosenwald made a pragmatic argument against racial prejudice:

Race prejudice is merely destructive; it offers nothing but a hopeless warfare and a blank pessimism. A nation divided against itself cannot stand: two nations cannot live side by side at dagger's point with one another, and maintain a healthy state of progress in either. Perpetual feud destroys what is best and most helpful in both. To my mind, no man can in any way render greater service to mankind than by devoting his energy toward removal of this mighty obstacle. (Sosland, 1995, p. 13)

Rosenwald loved America, cherished its democratic ideals, and saw its potential for greatness (Lindermuth, 2002). He could not envision the nation moving forward with a major portion of the population being left behind (Sosland, 1995).

Of particular interest to him was the success of the industrial training model instituted by former slave, Booker T. Washington, at the Tuskegee Normal and Training Institute. He imagined education in the skilled trades, artisanship, and scientific-based farming as a mechanism for alleviating current difficulties as well as a way to establish an African American business class that could be independent of whites. Washington's message to blacks to follow the model set by Jews was appealing to Rosenwald. "These people have clung together. Unless the Negro learns more and more to imitate the Jews in this manner, to have faith in himself, he cannot expect to have any high degree of success" (Washington, 1902).

Rosenwald introduced Washington to the world of Chicago philanthropy. In his introductory remarks to the luncheon audience, Rosenwald expressed his sincere interest in African Americans:

I belong to a people who have known centuries of persecution, or whether it is because I am naturally inclined to sympathize with the oppressed, I have always felt keenly for the colored race. . . .the two races must occupy one country. They have to learn probably the highest and hardest of all arts, the art of living together with decency and forbearance. Nothing will so test the sincerities of our religion, our moral obligation, or even our common self-respect, as will the exigencies of this which is among the greatest of all our problems. (Werner, 1939, p. 122)

Rosenwald agreed with Washington that financial donations would not eliminate black poverty but that blacks needed skills to insure them jobs which could, in turn, move them into the middle class.

Rosenwald was appointed to the board at Tuskegee and on his annual visits to the Alabama campus visited classrooms and attended student demonstrations. His annual visits were hailed with great fanfare from the Tuskegee family. His immediate support of the industrial training model at Tuskegee included making cash awards to faculty for distinguished teaching. He arranged with Sears for students to be given deep discounts on damaged or surplus hats and shoes.

### *Southern School Building Program*

The Southern School Building Program began through Rosenwald's relationship with Washington. Washington introduced Rosenwald to the deprecating situation in which southern rural black students were expected to obtain a formal education.

The schools, such as they were, were open for an average of four months a year, were presided over by teachers whose average training was that of an eighth grade student and whose annual salary in many states was less than \$150.00. (Embree & Waxman, 1949, p. 38)

In celebration of his fiftieth birthday, Rosenwald, now a Tuskegee trustee, gave the school \$25,000 to use in expanding private institutions that were modeled on the Tuskegee philosophy of industrial training. The grants were conditional on the institutions raising matching funds. After \$22,000 had been disbursed to higher education, Washington proposed continuing a project he had begun in 1904 with the remainder of Rosenwald's gift. At the inception of the project, H. H. Rogers of *Standard Oil Company* had supplied money for erecting several rural schools. The recipient communities were required to contribute to the school project (Werner, 1939). Washington proposed using a small amount of

the Rosenwald gift to build six elementary schools in six different counties for \$300 each on the condition that the school authorities or the community match the allotment. Washington's plan was framed around the fact that despite the fact that half of Alabama's population was black in 1912, only 20% of the state's black children attended school; 60% of the white children were enrolled in school in that year (Dalin, 1998).

Since each county determined the funding formula for white and black schools, Washington thought working within counties rather than at the state level would generate more money for black education. It was Washington's idea that by starting this project on a small scale, "the plan would attract attention and gradually spread throughout the South." In the same proposal, Washington, wrote, "It is the best thing to have the people themselves build houses in their own community" (As cited in Boom, 1949).

Rosenwald and Washington devised a scheme that was unique among foundations of the day. Rosenwald's grants required a matching grant from the community and from the school system. Rosenwald supported the matching contributions expecting the habits of self-help and the action that sprung from a sense of individual responsibility to be of further assistance in overcoming the blacks' cycle of despairing poverty (Brown, 1980). The total cost for the first Rosenwald School, a one-room frame building, raised in 1913 was \$942.50;



Rosenwald contributed \$300, local white citizens gave \$350 and local black citizens made a \$150 cash contribution and \$142.50 worth of labor. The local white school authorities did not help defray the building costs but they did agree to maintain the school (Embree & Waxman, 1949).

Between the fourth quarter of 1912 and 1914, the six one-room schoolhouses were built. Rosenwald promised another \$30,000 for one hundred schools to be built under the same conditions in five years. Three years later, Rosenwald promised backing for another one hundred schools. The demand for schools grew so large that Rosenwald had to consult with other professionals in black education after Washington's death in 1915. Upon his request for advice at the GEB's State Supervisors of Negro Rural Schools meeting in 1917, a committee was appointed to devise a plan that was approved by both Rosenwald as well as the Tuskegee Extension Department. Prominent educators of the day who were thought to be experts in schooling southern blacks, Jackson Davis, James L. Sibley, and S. L. Smith stipulated in their plan that other states could participate in the construction endeavor on the same conditions that the original practice had required in Alabama. They further stipulated that Tuskegee would continue to direct the project. They allotted \$400 for one-room schools and \$500 for two room buildings (Boom, 1949). The plan called for the land on which the school was built be deeded to the local school authorities so that the completed building

could be incorporated into the local school system. It was also part of the arrangement that the local authorities would equip and staff the school. A balance of interests was built into this original contract between Rosenwald and the school system. Rosenwald would make payment to the state superintendent of education after the state agents for Negro schools, representatives of the General Education Board, had inspected the facility and reported to Rosenwald. A dual curriculum consisting of both academics and practical training in gardening, cooking, sewing, and shop work had to be made available to students (Embree & Waxman, 1949). The school system had to commit to operating the school a minimum of five months per year (Sosland, 1995).

Community participation was engendered through “arousement” (Boom, 1949, p. 19) meetings held in black churches or other community centers. The school construction proposal would be made and community members would announce their contributions to the group. At this time in agricultural history, the boll weevil had decimated cotton crops in Alabama, most blacks were tenant farmers on large plantations (Boom, 1949) and they were in economic bondage to landowning whites without hope for or means of self-improvement. Clearly, money for life’s necessities was scarce; where would these poor disfranchised farmers find aid for school construction or when would they even find time to attend school?

Boon (1949) quotes a first hand description of the session held in Boligee, Alabama held to generate enthusiasm for school construction. A critical step in preparation for the meeting was the work of the local pastor. He went throughout the community for weeks before the session priming the people for the project and its benefits to them and their children. The citizens had walked miles to meet on that cold day in a ramshackle church without heat. The local teacher led the schoolchildren in singing plantation songs. The speeches were made and the call for offerings was made.

One old man, who had seen slavery days, with all of his life's earning in an old greasy sack, slowly drew it from his pocket, and emptied it on the table. I have never seen such a pile of nickles, [sic] pennies, dimes, and dollars, etc. in my life He put thirty eight dollars on the table, which was his entire savings (p. 30).

In another community, a lodge building also served as school building. A creative lodge member challenged each of the other lodge members to contribute one dollar at the next month's meeting to the building of a new school for their children and grandchildren. The challenge was accepted and over the month, families ate a little less, sold whatever surplus eggs, chickens, or corn they had, and cut corners wherever they could. Inside the lodge at the meeting the

president is said to have held an umbrella over the table where the money was laid to prevent it being soaked from the rain pouring in through the lodge's leaking roof. \$236 from the 236 members was given; almost enough for their share of a Rosenwald school. For the next two years, the black community raised money every way they could; children hired themselves for errands and odd jobs for whites, one man mortgaged his small farm, they offered their labor to the work of building the school. Their dedication to this common cause captured the entire community's interest, respect, and the school system's contribution (Embree & Waxman, 1949). Individuals in all of the receiving communities made great sacrifice; their willingness to scrimp in other areas to help with the school building construction demonstrates their unshakable belief in the uplifting nature of education.

#### *Impact of Rosenwald's Benevolence*

The Rosenwald Fund is ranked as the most influential benevolence of the time because of the corresponding assistance it generated from other sources (Bullock, 1967). From 1913 through 1932 when the school building program ended, the Rosenwald Fund had backed the construction of 5,357 school buildings in the south for a total cost of \$28,408,520. The buildings housed 663,615 students; there were 15,000 teachers working in the universally named Rosenwald Schools. Two-fifths of rural black children enrolled in schools were housed in Rosenwald-

funded facilities or one-third of all blacks, aged 5-20, in rural, urban, public, and private schools in the fifteen recipient states (Embree & Waxman, 1949).

Rosenwald contributions increased acknowledgement from state and local authorities of their responsibility for providing schools for black children (Building schools, 1923).

Government participation in providing school buildings for black children increased as well. The five thousandth school built by the Southern School Building Project was a six room brick building that cost \$20,000; eighty-two percent of the total cost was paid by tax funds, thirteen percent came from the Rosenwald Fund, and five percent was given by black and white citizens (Embree & Waxman, 1949).

Historian, Carter Woodson, reported to Rosenwald:

The striking result of the Julius Rosenwald rural school construction [is] the effect that it had on whites. The schools thus constructed for Negroes were in many cases superior to those for whites. In some instances, moreover, before there could be erected a comfortable building for the Negroes, one equally good or better had to be erected for the whites, inasmuch as race prejudice was so intense that the Negro building might otherwise be burned down. (as cited in Sealander, 1997, p. 72)

This unplanned result of the Rosenwald building program stimulated more than 10,000 schools built for white children. School authorities contacted the Rosenwald Fund administrators to obtain permission to use their building plans and in some communities the authorities even hired the same contractors to erect schools for white children. There were several reported cases of local authorities giving black students the existing white schoolhouses and using the Rosenwald School for white students (Boom 1949).

That the schools were wanted and needed is evidenced by the rapid growth of the building projects (Boom, 1949). The matching grant plan had results aside from the physical building. First, it gave the community reason for self-pride as they helped themselves through investment in their present as well as their future. It stimulated community improvement and encouraged blacks to build their own houses near the schools. Intangible results include racial cooperation that grew out of the understanding and helpfulness nurtured in whites and blacks working together. Literacy was heightened and blacks were made aware of new vistas and opportunities outside of their communities. Together with the Jeanes Foundation, the General Education Board, the Slater and the Phelps-Stokes Foundations, the Rosenwald Fund stimulated support of black education. They did not conquer the problem of disparate funding for schools or other inequalities between whites and blacks (Embree & Waxman, 1949).

The problem with local school authorities absorbing the black schools into their systems during Jim Crow was that the school constituents did not have a vote so had no voice in local government. The attention their schools received from local authorities was bound to be non-existent at best and inequitable at worst.

The Rosenwald team of planners and architects designed basic plans for highly practical, easily constructed, and cost efficient school buildings. These were not elaborate schools but they were great improvements over the existing school facilities (Boom, 1949). Public policy was changed by the Southern School Building Program when states began to mandate common school plans and adopted the Rosenwald plans (Sealand, 1997). The assistance stimulated by the Rosenwald donations ranked the Rosenwald Fund as the most influential philanthropic force that provided aid to blacks of the day (Soslund, 1995).

The Rosenwald Fund was the largest source of dollars invested in black schools through 1932 in South Carolina (Scardaville, 1989). In South Carolina, from the days of Tuskegee supervision through 1932, there were 500 schools, shops, and teacherages erected in 47 counties (Julius Rosenwald Fund) for a total expenditure of \$2,892,360 for 74,070 students (Embree & Waxman, 1949). The Fund contributions ranged from \$400 to \$6000 per building (South Carolina State

Department of Education, 1932). Table 2 identifies the number of Rosenwald schools built by year in South Carolina.

Table 2  
Rosenwald Schools Built Through Rosenwald Grants in South Carolina

Tuske- gee Period Before 1920	1920-	1921-	1922-	1923-	1924-	1925-	1926-	1927-	1928-	1929-	1930-	1931-
	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932
14	50	36	24	53	75	58	47	32	24	32	22	22

The need to concentrate on improvement of school buildings for use by blacks in South Carolina was first officially emphasized by W. K. Tate in 1911 despite the school officials' desire that Tate "remain silent and confine his activities to rural white schools"(Dabney, 1936, p. 7). In his report that year, Tate wrote:

The education of the Negro in South Carolina is in the hands of the white race.

In 1910 we expended \$349,834.60 in support of Negro schools. I never visit one of these schools without feeling that we are wasting a large part of this money and neglecting a great opportunity. The Negro schoolhouses are miserable beyond [sic] all description. Most of the teachers are untrained and have been



given certification by the County Board not because they have passed the examinations, but because it is necessary to have some kind of a Negro teacher. Among the Negro rural schools I have visited I have found only one in which the highest has known the multiplication table. (pp. 6-7)

The average school term in South Carolina rural schools was sixty-four days per year (Dabney, 1936). It was argued that before the state and its people could make any economic and social progress, South Carolina's literacy problem had to be solved. An educated citizenry of the state would be informed and could make strides to attaining a higher quality of life (Whitmire, 1997).

*Rosenwald's Purpose for the Southern School Building Program Encountered and Criticized*

The nearly six thousand schools that were built through Rosenwald's Southern School Building Program opened the doors of opportunity for masses of southern black children. What was the benefactor's purpose in providing educational access to this disfranchised population? Rosenwald indicated that the nation could not move forward, while leaving the black population behind. He also stood firmly against entitlement and insisted that communities who received aid through the Rosenwald Fund contribute to their own projects.

Seemingly, Rosenwald believed as William C. Bagley did that if adequate investment were made in education, the nation's social ills could be ameliorated, and the incidence of public corruption, racial, and religious divisiveness could be diminished as well (Kliebard, 1995). Bagley's essentialist theory was based on a sequential, systematic curriculum that covered a defined range of disciplines and methods of study. He further argued that the essentialist approach would develop productive American citizens who shared a common core of knowledge (Bagley, 1929).

In Rosenwald's worldview, the nation should continue to move forward in melding a common core of values based on the Judeo-Christian tradition. A common curriculum would generate a legacy of uniformity. Education would further prevent oppressed people from expecting entitlements as well as decrease the need for prisons and other public rehabilitation institutions.

Both southern white and black citizens waged opposition to northern philanthropy. Table 3 depicts basic arguments made by each group.

Table 3  
Arguments to Northern Philanthropy

Southern blacks opposed northern help because they thought: Philanthropists accepted and worked with the tradition of white supremacy Philanthropists patronized African	Southern whites opposed northern help because they thought: Philanthropists' agenda focused on subverting the tradition of white supremacy Philanthropists patronized
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Americans treating them as unable to help themselves

Philanthropists wanted central power to discourage black autonomy

southerners, treating them as inferior and backward

Philanthropists wanted monopoly on education to discourage southern self-reliance

Southern white opposition to northern philanthropy was intense at the beginning and even after it eased somewhat, the opposition flared from time to time forcing board power mongers to proceed with their plans cautiously. Fear of the power of southern white opposition to quell their work was a driving force in the General Education Board's decision to persuade governments to contribute to the costs of black education. Involving the community's white leadership in their planning became standard operating procedure for the benevolent corporations. By avoiding direct northern philanthropists gave opponents of black education veto power (Anderson & Moss, 1999).

Reasons for resistance to the Southern Schools Building Program were based on a desire to maintain the status quo. County superintendents were resistant to the Rosenwald plan for providing schools for blacks because there were too few facilities for whites and those in existence were in almost as poor shape as the ones for black in many areas. Education of rural blacks was not accepted in many white communities even with the institution of Washington's industrial training model. Black citizens were suspicious of a white outsider offering to give them something and distrustful that he would honor his promise. Others were hesitant

because they were so impoverished that the notion of raising a hundred dollar matching contribution was overwhelming (Boom, 1949).

Upon being told that he had been accused of making donations for self-advertisement, Rosenwald responded that he could buy publicity for a lot less money (Werner, 1939). Rosenwald insisted that he had not become so wealthy solely due to his own efforts. He did not believe that every boy in America could reach the same level of success without the same high level of luck that he had experienced. He further insisted that a wealthy man was not necessarily a great one (Werner). Rosenwald saw himself as a steward of the wealth entrusted to him and felt obligated to use his resources to make the world better (Dalin, 1998). His actions supported his belief that progress for any group hinges on the progress or backwardness of all other groups. His successes in raising the issues of parity and equity of funding public schools and in stimulating local and state school agencies to designate public dollars for the schooling of black children in the days of Jim Crow did make the South a better place.