The Rosenwald Schools GIS Mapping Project

John Hildreth and Ian Spangler

JANUARY 30, 2019
Agenda

• Historical Context of Rosenwald Schools
• Rosenwald Schools GIS Project with Video Demonstration
• Question and Answer Session
Speakers

John Hildreth
Senior Advisor for Special Projects at the National Trust

Ian Spangler
PhD student at the University of Kentucky and former NTHP intern
Rosenwald Schools
Preserve Rosenwald schools as centers of community and raise awareness of their legacy and potential by providing new tools, new funding, advocacy and training.
In 1912, Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute approached Julius Rosenwald with the idea to pilot a rural school building program for African American children in Alabama.
School Plans

- State-of-the-art school plans were published that became models for rural schools across the South.
- New plans incorporated some Tuskegee elements while relying on current research for rural school design.
- Gable roofs and one-story structures were some differentiating factors from Tuskegee plans.
- Banks of windows along one side of the building was a hallmark of Rosenwald plans.
By the end of the program in 1932, 4977 new schools, 163 shop buildings and 217 teachers homes had been constructed for African American students using seed grants from the Julius Rosenwald Foundation.
Changing times and needs led many school districts to abandon, sell or destroy older school buildings. Many reverted to the communities in which they were located.
Noble Hill-Wheeler Memorial Center, GA
Resources

Find a Rosenwald School

The most comprehensive listing of Rosenwald Schools can be found in the Rosenwald Fund records located in Special Collections at the John Hope and Aurelia Franklin Library, Fisk University, Nashville. A portion of these records has been digitized by Fisk University’s Franklin Library and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. A searchable database is available at the link below. While this is the most complete list of Rosenwald Schools, it is not exhaustive.

For best results, conduct your search by entering information in county and state fields only.

Note: This is a primary source record. Inaccuracies or inconsistencies are part of the historical record and may be found in this source. Occasionally a school record is not found in the cards. Cross-referencing with other portions of the Rosenwald Fund records at Fisk University, with state and county department of education records, oral history sources, topographical maps and other sources is highly recommended.

Forum.SavingPlaces.org/Rosenwald

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Find Preservation Funding

Last year, the National Trust for Historic Preservation awarded over $1 million in grant funding to 196 projects nationwide. Funding from the National Trust is awarded to nonprofit organizations and public agencies, and the majority of our funding is awarded for planning and education projects through our National Trust Preservation Funds grant program.

Grant Seekers
Find guidelines and deadlines about the various grants offered by the National Trust

Current Grantees
Find out more about the next steps for managing your preservation project

Upcoming Deadlines
- National Trust Preservation Fund: February 1
- Johanna Vanet Fund: March 1
- Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund: March 1
- Louis J. Apple Jr., Fund for Central Pennsylvania: March 15

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Preserving Rosenwald Schools
by Mary S. Hoffrichter

Forum.SavingPlaces.org/Rosenwald
Mapping the Rosenwald Schools

Using GIS as a tool for historic preservation
Project Goals

• Per the AACR Grant:

  – Create a cohesive dataset for a civil rights resource found across a wide geography
  – Use the dataset to interpret the Rosenwald Schools in new ways via maps
  – Raise awareness and foster public participation in preservation of these sites
  – Plan for and produce 1-2 initial story maps to introduce Rosenwald schools
  – Host webinars to educate key audiences on how to use this tool
  – Any audiovisual media products must meet NPS accessibility standards
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  – **Create** a framework for a comprehensive dataset of the Rosenwald schools at the national level
  – **Demonstrate** the feasibility of linking spatial and descriptive information using the National Park Service Cultural Resource Spatial Data Transfer Standards (NPSCRSSTDTS)
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Project Goals

• Beyond the scope of my time with the project:
  – Discovery of “new schools” (although some were “found”)
  – Ground-truthing the dataset
  – Incorporating recent (after 8/1/18) surveys into NTHP dataset
NPS Spatial Data Standards (SDS)

• SDS offers:
  – Standard format for organizing and maintaining spatial cultural data (i.e., NRHP)
  – Guidelines for cultural resource ID and metadata
  – *Not descriptive*, but allows descriptive data to be linked
NPS Spatial Data Standards (SDS)
NPS Spatial Data Standards (SDS)

A point on the map
NPS Spatial Data Standards (SDS)

CR_ID  SURVEY_ID  GEOM_ID  RESNAME  BND_TYPE  BND_OTHER  IS_EXTANT  EXTANT_OTH  CONTRIBRES  RESTRICT_  SOURCE  
SRC_DATE  SRC_SCALE  SRC_ACCU  VERT_ERROR  SRC_COORD  MAP_METHOD  MAP_MTH_OT  CREATEDATE  EDIT_DATE  EDIT_BY  ORIGINATOR  CONSTRAINT  CR_NOTES  ALPHA_CODE  UNIT_CODEO  UNIT  UNIT_OTHER  UNIT_TYPE  GROUP_CODE  REG_CODE  META_MIDF

Metadata about the school

Descriptive info about the school
Quick tour of a Geographic Information System (GIS)

- Zoom to full view
- Select features from map
- Select features from attribute table
- Isolate and explore attributes
- Create a quick map of Rosenwald schools by cost
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GIS should avoid being a solution looking for a problem!
So... what’s the problem?

• Knowledge is scattered:
  – State historic preservation office (SHPO) or equivalent surveys
  – National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) submissions
  – Academic projects
  – Individual research on the Rosenwald schools
So... what’s the problem?

### Oklahoma's Extant Rosenwald Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Year Built</th>
<th>Extant</th>
<th>National Register Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosenwald Hall</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>Seminole</td>
<td></td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Extant</td>
<td>Listed - Thematic Group Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglass School (Comanche County)</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>Comanche</td>
<td>Eight-Teacher</td>
<td>1930-1931</td>
<td>Extant</td>
<td>Listed - Individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Louisiana's Extant Rosenwald Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Year Built</th>
<th>Extant</th>
<th>National Register Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beauregard Parish Training School</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Beauregard</td>
<td>Ten-Teacher</td>
<td>1929-1930</td>
<td>Extant</td>
<td>Listed - Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Rosenwald School</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>DeSoto</td>
<td>Two-Teacher</td>
<td>1928-1929</td>
<td>Extant</td>
<td>Listed - Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longstreet Rosenwald School</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>DeSoto</td>
<td>Two-Teacher</td>
<td>1923-1924</td>
<td>Extant</td>
<td>Listed - Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaisance School</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>St. Landry</td>
<td>Four-Teacher</td>
<td>1920-1921</td>
<td>Extant</td>
<td>Listed - Individual</td>
</tr>
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General challenges

• Many Rosenwald schools:
  – Share a name or went by multiple names
  – Predated the building program and used Fund money for renovations or improvements
  – Are architecturally compromised*
General challenges

• NRHP: linking up cultural resource ID’s (CRID) with already existing resources
• Gathering original metadata (i.e., filling in the blanks)
• Synchronizing datasets at various scales (i.e., NTHP, SHPO, local)
Methodology

PHASE 1: DATA ACQUISITION
Collect Rosenwald school survey data from SHPO’s or equivalent organizations.

PHASE 2: PRE-PROCESSING

PHASE 3: "MERGE"
"Merge" data in ArcMap, retaining all fields uniquely. Create or identify join ID.

PHASE 4: EXPORT "TABLE TO EXCEL"
Export "Table to Excel." Save output as CSV.

PHASE 5: COMBINE COMMON FIELDS
Using Excel, narrow down Phase 4 output to necessary fields. Combine like fields.

PHASE 6: "DELETE" EXTRANEOUS FIELDS
Identify and batch "Delete" extraneous fields (other than join ID) from Phase 3 output.

PHASE 7: "JOIN"
"Join" Phase 5 output (CSV) to Phase 6 output (feature class, .shp) based on join ID. Export new output in desired data format (feature class, .shp).

PHASE 8: CLEAN WITH SCRIPT
Clean with script: "phase_8_clean.py"

PHASE 9: OBTAIN FISK DATA & ID'S
Scrape Fisk University’s database. Assign unique value to each school in Excel. Save output as CSV.

PHASE 10: "JOIN" FISK
"Join" Phase 9 output to Phase 8 output. Export new output in desired data format.

PHASE 11: CLEAN WITH SCRIPT
Clean with script: "phase_8_clean.py"

PHASE 12: MISCELLANY
Add extra schools manually. Cross-reference with NRHP through selection queries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHPO Surveys</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>VA*, NC, SC, AR, FL, KY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRHP Submissions and/or manual point creation</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>TX*, LA, OK, MO, TN*, AL*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Research</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>GA, MD, MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Projects</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Story map

The Rosenwald Schools

A Story of How Black Communities Across the American South Took Education into Their Own Hands
Conclusion

• As it stands:

  – The current NTHP dataset reflects most up-to-date knowledge on Rosenwald schools in the United States, and conforms to SDS
  – The story map is available through ArcOnline and available publicly as an educational resource
  – There is more work to be done – not because the project is “complete” or “incomplete,” but because it is a *living project*
Going forward...

• Many options:
  – 1) Maintain lines of communication – top-down & bottom-up
  – 2) Public-facing dataset and database
  – 3) Mapping projects – research opportunities, spatial analysis, story maps
  – 4) Summer 2019 GeoHumanities conference

• Ideal goal: consolidate locations of every Rosenwald school – existent or not – into a GIS dataset
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Thank you!

• A shout out to:
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  – Preservation Resources!

• Resources and contact
  – [Rosenwald Schools Story Map](#): includes hyperlinks to various references as well as a brief research bibliography
  – Contact me:
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    • [@itspangler](https://twitter.com/itspangler) (Twitter, GitHub)
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QUESTION AND ANSWER

Use the chat box on the bottom right to ask questions of the speakers.
Upcoming Webinars

• Ensuring Perpetuity: Effective Easement Monitoring
  March 13 | 3:00 p.m. ET

• Congressional Appropriations
  March 14 | 3:00 p.m. ET

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