



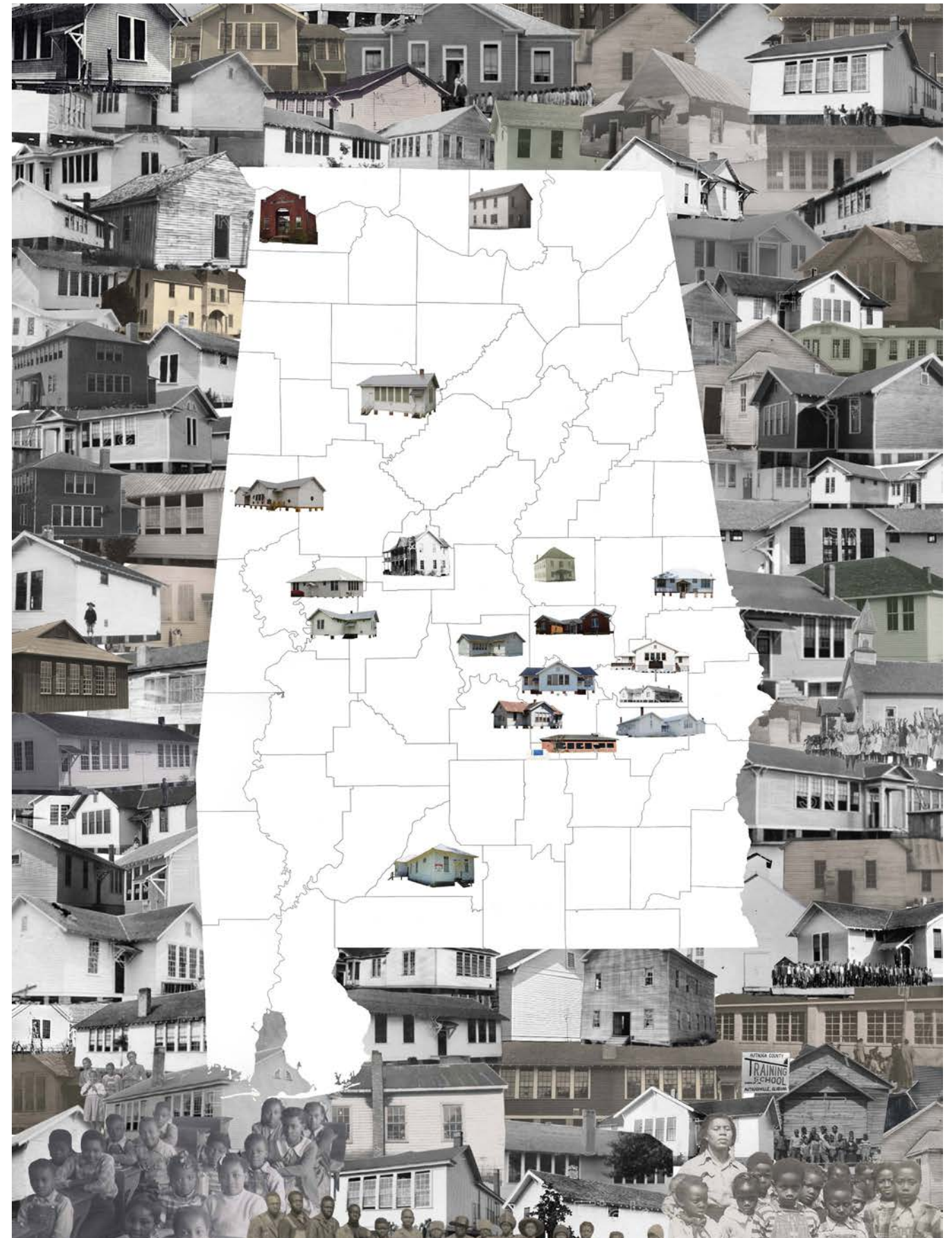
# CRITICAL CONSERVATION

Gorham Bird as Faculty - ARCH 3410 Methods + Processes  
 18 Students contributed to this project and received 3 credit seminar course.  
 2022 ACSA 110th Annual Conference "Architectural Agency in Digital Documentation"  
 2023 *Journal of Architectural Education* (JAE 77:1) "Conservation as Reparations"

The seminar based courses that Gorham Bird teaches center around the representation of architecture. These seminar's have been an opportunity to integrate Bird's scholarly program in the classroom and allow students to partner in his research efforts. Gorham has taught an architecture seminar on Methods and Processes centered around critical conservation, documentation, and representation of existing conditions. This course explores the difference between historic preservation and critical conservation and as well as their focus and methodology. Historic preservation concentrates on the physical and material aspects of heritage, following established standards

to maintain historical accuracy. In contrast, critical conservation adopts a holistic approach, considering social, cultural, and environmental factors and embracing a more flexible, interdisciplinary methodology. Critical conservation places greater emphasis on community engagement and inclusivity compared to traditional historic preservation. By involving communities in the conservation process, critical conservation ensures that heritage sites reflect diverse values and remain relevant to contemporary society. While both historic preservation and critical conservation aim to protect and manage cultural heritage, they do so through distinct approaches. Historic preservation

maintains a traditional focus on physical integrity and historical accuracy, whereas critical conservation adopts a broader, more inclusive, and sustainable approach to heritage conservation. Together, these fields contribute to a comprehensive understanding and management of our cultural heritage, ensuring its preservation for future generations.



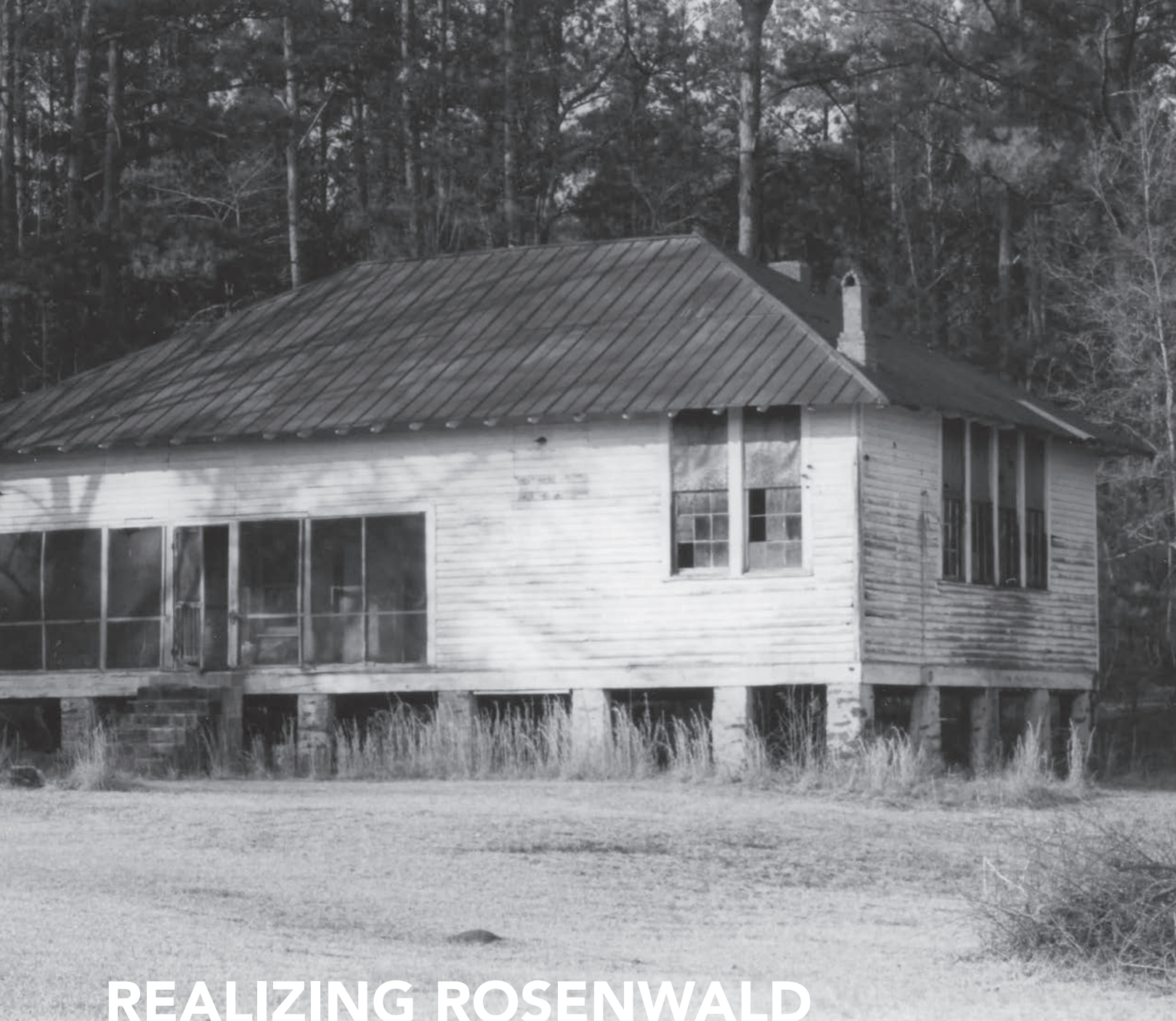
Student Work: Adan Youngblood



Students in the field documenting the Tankersley Rosenwald School in Hope Hull, Alabama using LiDAR Scanners, drone imagery and photogrammetry cameras.(above and right)

Student Work: Molly Campbell, Sydney Smith, and Elle Whitehurst (above left to right)





# REALIZING ROSENWALD

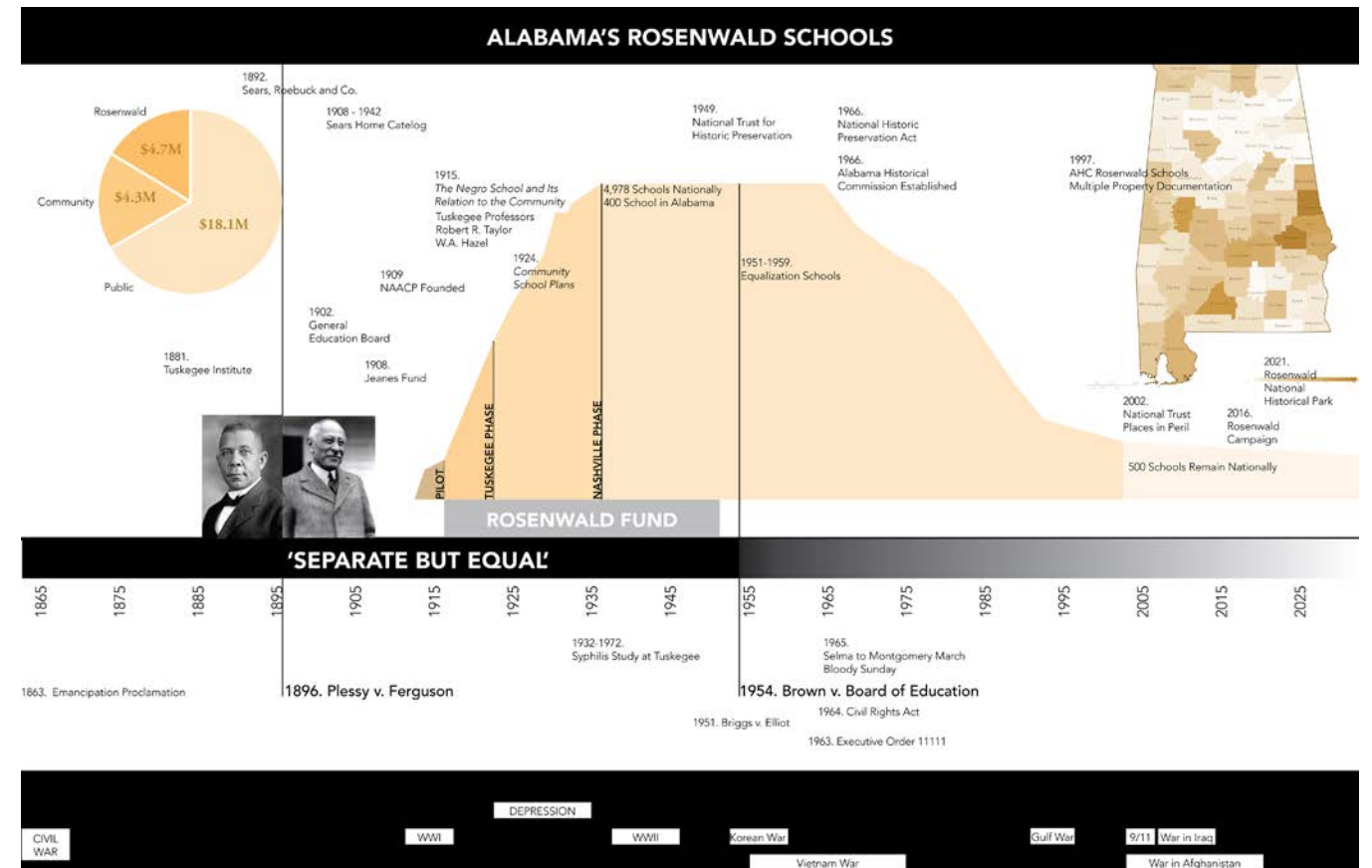
Gorham Bird as Architect with Building Science faculty Junshan Liu  
 Student Brysen Calvin contributed to this project as paid research assistant for 40 hours.  
 2020 McWhorter Fund for Excellence Grant, Phase II: BIM + Digitally Printed Modeling \$10,000  
 2020 Seed Grant, Phase I: Fieldwork + Digital Documentation \$5,000  
 2022 Tiger Giving Day "Preserve the Rosenwald Schools" \$10,354  
 2022 DCA Proceedings "Remembering Rosenwald: Line or LiDAR?"  
 2023 ISPRS Archives "Preserving the History of African American Education"

Between 1914 and 1932, more than 5,000 Rosenwald schools were built across the rural South, over 400 of these in the state of Alabama. Through the leadership of Booker T. Washington, founder of Tuskegee Institute, and the philanthropy of Julius Rosenwald, President of Sears & Roebuck, the Rosenwald Fund was created to build schools and improve education of African Americans in the largely segregated and rural South. During decades of racial segregation and

rampant public under-funding for African-American education, Rosenwald schools afforded educational opportunity to children throughout Alabama and across the South. In 1914, the very first of what would later be known as Rosenwald Schools were built in Alabama. Six schools were built in Lee, Macon, and Montgomery counties. Following the success of the initial schools, in 1917 Julius Rosenwald established the Rosenwald Fund to oversee the establishment of new

rural schools. Until 1920, the projects were managed by Tuskegee Institute, designed by W.A. Hazel, an architecture faculty member, and author of Tuskegee Community Design Guide. From 1920 on, management of new schools shifted to an independent Rosenwald Fund office in Nashville, where design of the schools was led by white architect Samuel L. Smith.

The design of the Rosenwald Schools was



Graphic timeline contextualizing social, political, and historical events surrounding the creation and expansion of the Rosenwald School program and the deterioration of the schools following the racial integration of Alabama schools in the late 1960s (above)

innovative for the time, including passive systems: natural daylighting, taking advantage of solar orientation, deep overhangs for shading, elevated on foundations for natural ventilation, and movable partitions for flexible classrooms. According to the plans, "The building should always be set with the points of the compass, and the plan so designed that every classroom will receive east or west light." Schools varied by different type- one, two, three teacher schools.

This project seeks to catalogue and document remaining Rosenwald schools. Grant funding support the documentation the current condition of a representative group of schools encompassing a broad swath across central Alabama. This project seeks to identify current physical condition, how the buildings been altered from the original, and the function or purpose did they presently serve.

- The methodology of this project includes:
- LiDAR scan: we propose to use laser scanners and supporting software to capture 3D point cloud and panoramic photographs of built structures. (see Figures 2 & 3 for point clouds captured on previous projects).
  - UAV Aerial Photogrammetry: this

- will be used to complement the LiDAR scans, especially to capture the condition and character of roofline.
- 360-Degree Photogrammetry: advanced technology will be used to capture 360-degree photos of the building and some of the existing conditions of the interior. Data will be used to generate a 3D point model of selected structures.
  - Mapping: over 400 Rosenwald schools across Alabama were mapped (based on data from the Fisk University Archive), including their vintage, demolition, and/or present condition.

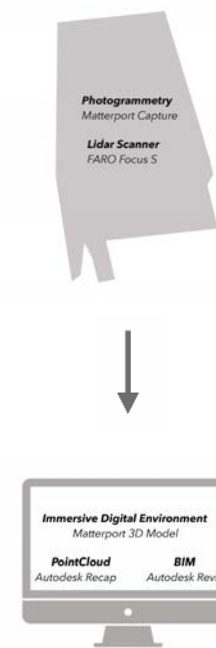
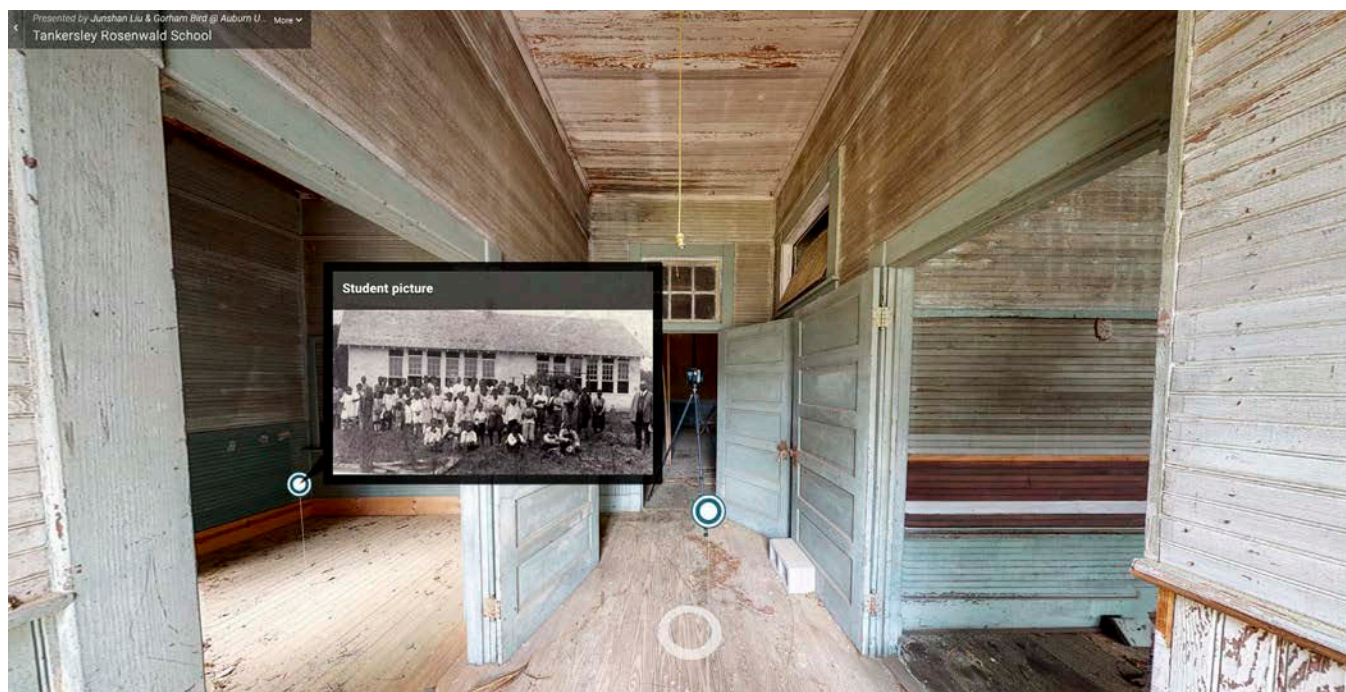
Completion of Phase I of this project, provides a foundation for future effort to seek out, identify, document and preserve survey remaining Rosenwald schools throughout the state, to improve the preservation efforts of the remaining schools, and potentially develop appropriate solutions for adaptive use of existing schools for active community use. Various efforts exist to document and catalog the Rosenwald schools, including one by the Alabama Historical Commission, several other states, and especially the Rosenwald Schools Initiative of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, all of which could be potential for additional future funding of this

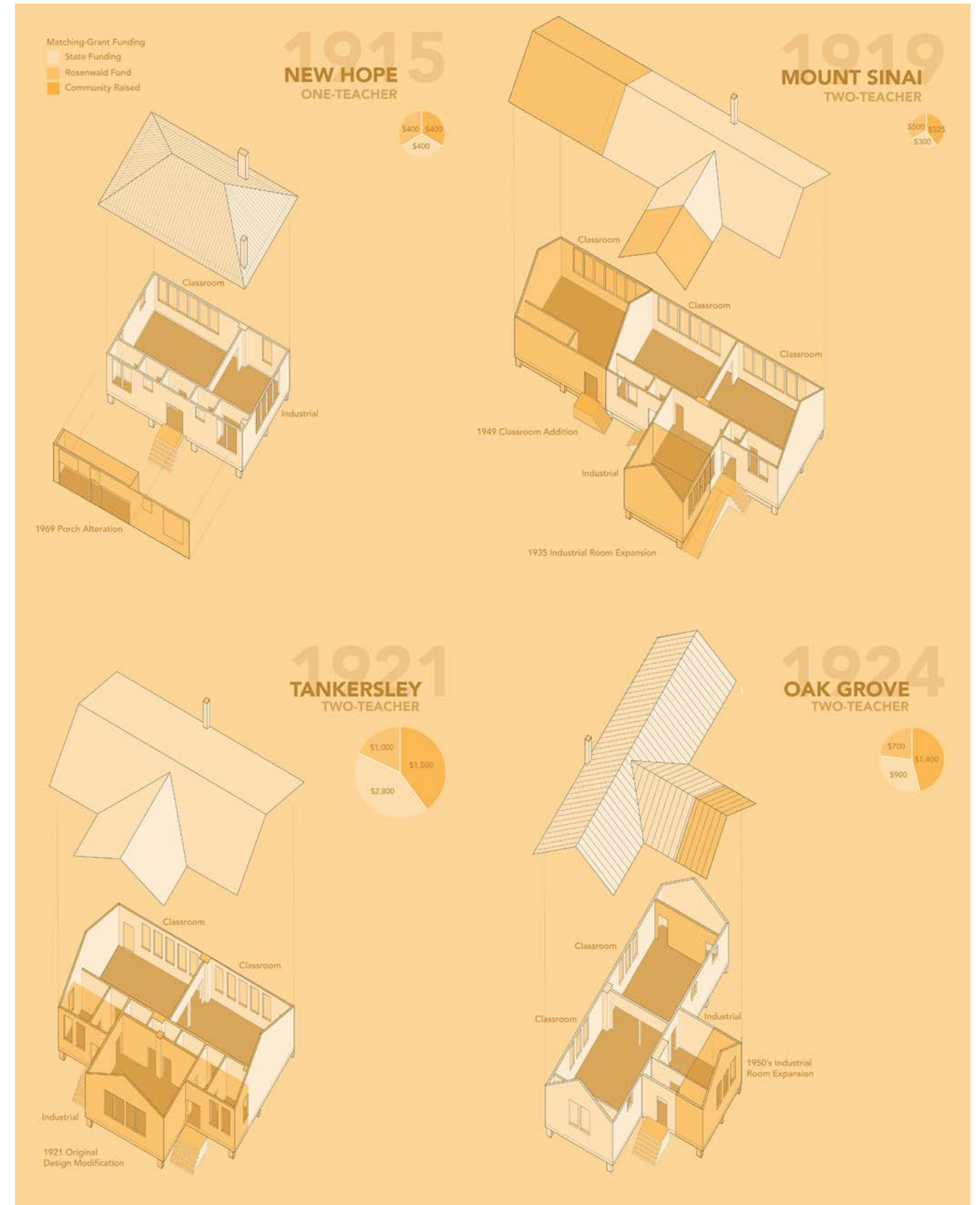
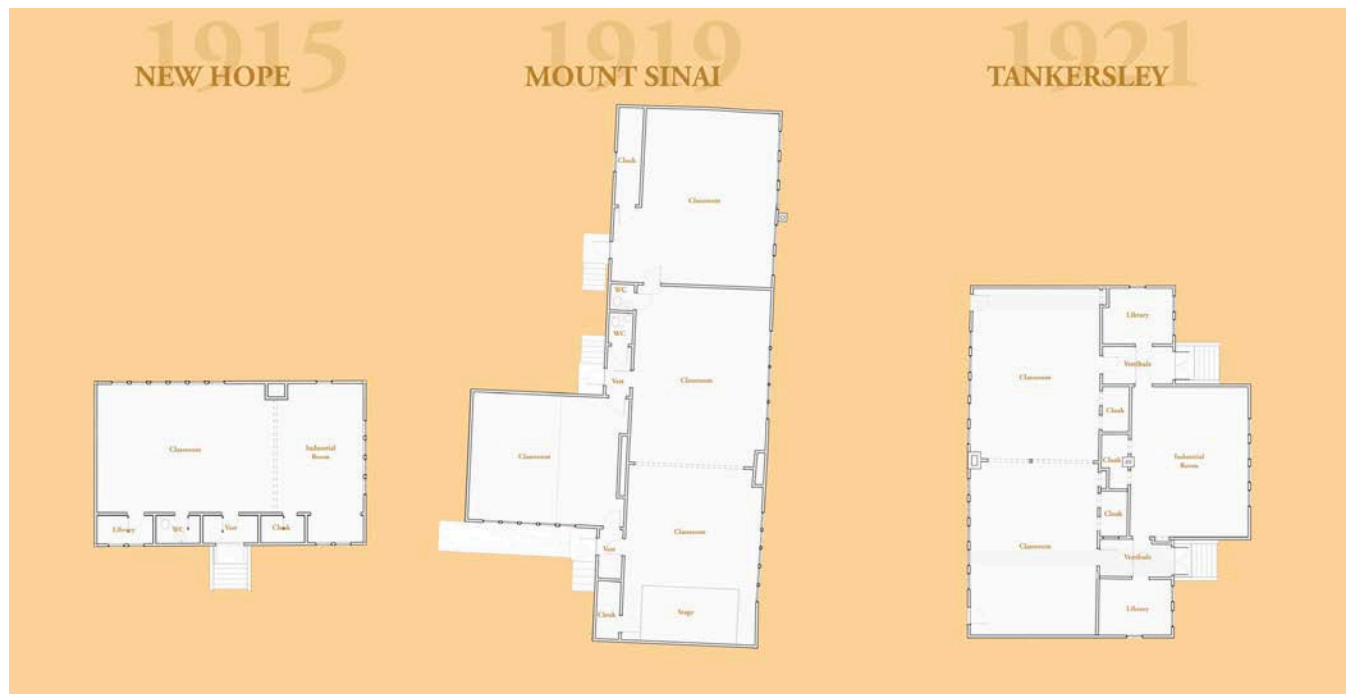
important work. The Rosenwald Schools serve as artifacts of the struggle for equality in education across Alabama and the South.



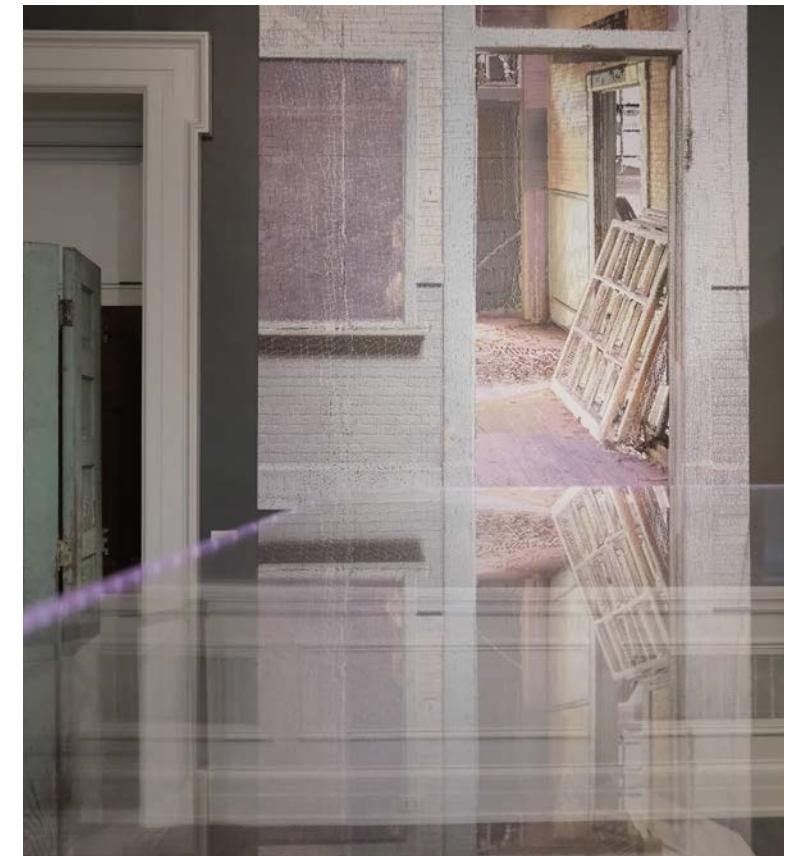
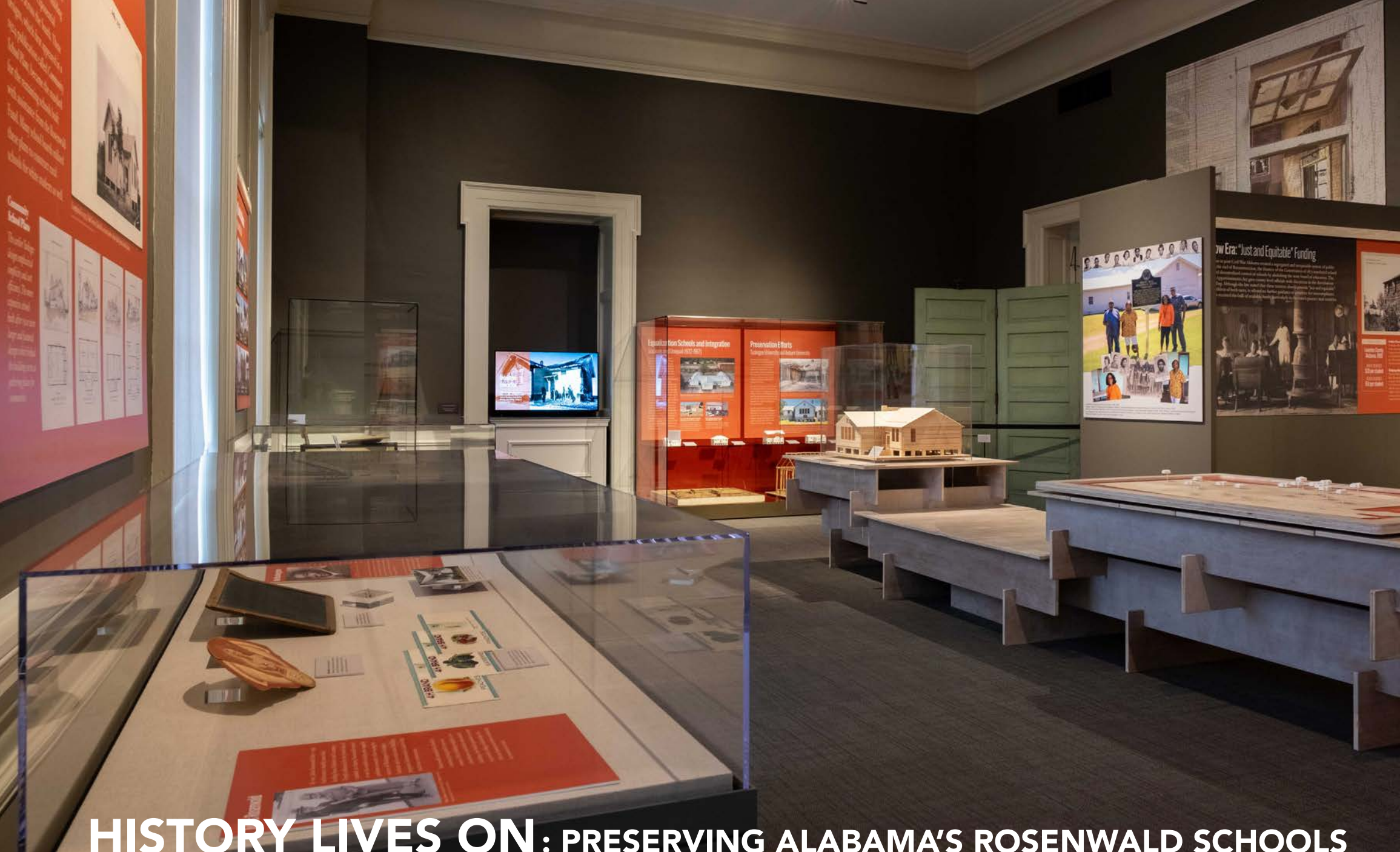
Section perspective view of PointCloud of the Tankersley Rosenwald School depicting the structural failure of the roof trusses and floor joists, due to water intrusion (above). LiDAR scanning technology is utilized to capture with high precision, the existing conditions of the historic schools. LiDAR technology within the iPhone 13 pro was also tested to determine the level of accuracy captured (left). Additional scans utilize photogrammetry to capture a virtual environment in which one can virtually tour the school from anywhere in the world (below).

Screen shot of the LiDAR Pointcloud of the interior of Tankersley Rosenwald School (above)  
In process 3D Printed models that translate the digital point clouds to physically printed models (below)





As-built floorplans of the four Rosenwald Schools based on LiDAR Scans/Point Cloud data (left)  
 Axonometric drawings depicting the alterations identified in four existing Rosenwald schools (above)



# HISTORY LIVES ON: PRESERVING ALABAMA'S ROSENWALD SCHOOLS

Gorham Bird as Exhibit Designer with Graphic Design faculty David Smith and Building Science faculty Junshan Liu. Students Tyler Layton, Brysen Calvin, and Ethan Edwards contributed to this project as paid research assistant for 675 hours. Museum of Alabama, Alabama Department of Archives and History  
 2021 Creative Work and Social Impact Scholarship (CWSIS), Phase III: Exhibition + Re-presentation \$20,000  
 2021 Seed Grant, Phase IV: Exhibition Design and Planning \$5,000  
 2021 McWhorter Fund for Excellence Grant, Phase V: Exhibition Fabrication \$10,000  
 2022 McWhorter Fund for Excellence Grant Phase VI: Traveling Exhibition \$16,569  
 2024 AHFE Proceedings "History Lives On: Interdisciplinary Design to Uplift Rural Communities"

In the early twentieth century, Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears Roebuck & Co., used his extensive financial resources to transform the landscape of public education in the rural, segregated South. Inspired by Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) President Booker T. Washington's efforts to expand Black education, Rosenwald collaborated with Washington to pilot a community-matched grant program to fund

the construction of six schools in central Alabama. The success of the program led Rosenwald to establish the Rosenwald Fund. Between 1917 and 1932, nearly 5,000 new schools were built in fifteen southern states, including more than 400 in Alabama. The exhibit is the culmination of an ongoing Auburn University research project entitled "Realizing Rosenwald". Visitors learn not only about the individuals

who started the Rosenwald Schools and the buildings themselves, but also about local communities across Alabama who worked to raise funds and to build and sustain these schools over generations. The exhibit will also explore today's efforts by community members and alumni to preserve Alabama's remaining historic Rosenwald buildings and the rich legacies they represent. After 8 months of the exhibit opening,

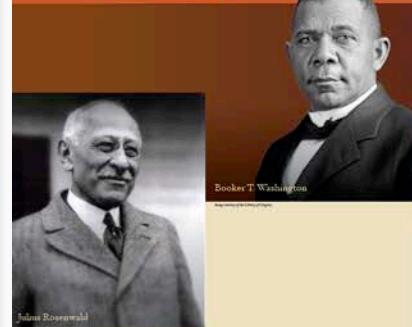
approximately 5,800 people have visited the exhibit, increasing public awareness of the history of the Rosenwald Schools and their legacy today. Photos of the exhibition (above and right) so the relationship of the cased archival material, graphic panels, and physical models, including the architectural model and map of Alabama.

# Jim Crow Era: "Just and Equitable" Funding

Policy decisions in post-Civil War Alabama created a segregated and inequitable system of public education. At the end of Reconstruction, the framers of the Constitution of 1875 mandated school segregation and decentralized control of schools by abolishing the state board of education. The 1891 Alabama Apportionments Act gave county-level officials wide discretion in the distribution of school funding. Although the law stated that these trustees should provide "just and equitable" funding for children of both races, it offered no further guidance or penalties for noncompliance. White schools received the bulk of available funds, particularly in the state's poorer rural counties.



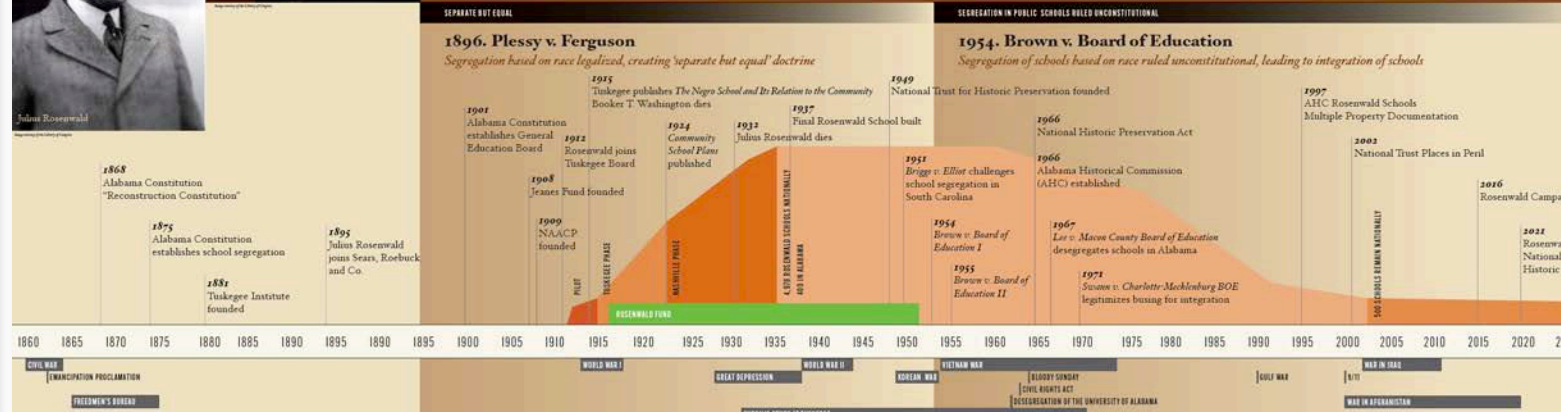
# Preserving Alabama's Rosenwald Schools



In 1913, Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald began an ambitious campaign to address the shortage of rural African American schools in the South. Working with the Tuskegee Institute and communities in three Alabama counties, Rosenwald matched donations made by local African Americans to finance new school buildings. Combined with funds secured from the state, the collective effort resulted in the construction of six modern schools.

This initial project established the blueprint for one of the largest philanthropic education campaigns in American history. Over the next 24 years, the Rosenwald Fund spent \$4 million to fund more than 5,000 rural Black schools in 15 states, including 389 in Alabama. The buildings became powerful symbols of African American education.

Following integration, most of the Rosenwald schools were demolished, abandoned, or repurposed. The same communities that built, maintained, and learned in these schools are now working to preserve the remaining schools and their legacy. As these buildings exceed a century of service, they are finding new life as community centers, museums, and church buildings.



## Tuskegee Community Schools Macon County Project (1900-1912)

Booker T. Washington's commitment to Black rural education began long before his alliance with Julius Rosenwald. Washington believed strongly that good schools were crucial for improving the lives of African Americans. Prior to collaborating with Rosenwald, Tuskegee Institute partnered with several Black communities in surrounding Macon County to build modern schoolhouses.

**Armstrong School, Macon County, ca. 1901**  
The Armstrong School is the earliest known remaining one-room schoolhouse in Macon County. It was designed by Tuskegee Institute architect Robert R. Taylor and built by John Tyler "T" Taylor, a Tuskegee-trained teacher from Macon County. The school is named for the surrounding community of Armstrong.

**Harris Barrett School, Macon County, 1903**  
Tuskegee architect built the two-room Harris Barrett School. The school is named after its benefactor Harris Barrett, a prominent African American banker.

**Dr. Booker T. Washington**  
Here included, Washington became an educator and a leading voice for African Americans after Reconstruction. In 1881, he became the founding principal of the Tuskegee Normal School.

## Tuskegee-Rosenwald Pilot Schools The First Six Schools (1912-1914)

At a 1911 meeting in Chicago, Washington and Rosenwald discussed their shared desire to combat educational inequity in the South. With subsequent funding from Rosenwald the following year, Tuskegee Institute constructed six rural schools in Lee, Macon, and Montgomery counties.

This initial funding resulted in schools that provided African American students with modern, well-fit, and purpose-built learning environments. In 1914, based on the success of the pilot program, Rosenwald agreed to donate an additional \$350,000 (equal to nearly \$1 million today) to build 100 more schools in Alabama.

**Leechpoko School, Lee County, 1913**  
This Lee County school was among the first built in Alabama with Rosenwald funds.

**Tuskegee-Rosenwald Pilot Schools**  
By 1914, six schools were built in Lee, Macon, and Montgomery counties with Rosenwald's initial grant. These facilities provided proof of concept for the larger school building campaign.

## Tuskegee-Rosenwald Community Schools Tuskegee School Designs (1914-1920)

Rosenwald's 1914 donation resulted in a more formal partnership with Tuskegee Institute, with clearly defined goals and parameters for project funding. In 1915, architect Robert R. Taylor and other members of the Tuskegee faculty wrote *The Negro Rural School and Its Relation to the Community*. The book described a key step in the construction and operation of a Rosenwald-funded rural school, from site selection to methods of community engagement. The book included ten designs for modern, cost-effective school buildings, all of which were implemented by the Rosenwald Fund.

**Robert R. Taylor, Architect**  
A native of North Carolina, Taylor was the first African American architect to be named to the Macon Institute Institute of Technology. When he graduated in 1895, he became the first accredited African American architect. Taylor joined the Tuskegee Institute faculty in 1915. Over the next few years, he designed more than 100 schools and plans in addition to the rural school building plans.

**Cornerstones of communities**  
Rural Black schools were purposefully funded and built by a variety of the community. In addition to the community support for the Central County Training School, more typically, well-attended.

**Our Teacher School, Chilton County, 1912**

## Tuskegee-Rosenwald Pilot Schools The First Six Schools (1912-1914)

At a 1911 meeting in Chicago, Washington and Rosenwald discussed their shared desire to combat educational inequity in the South. With subsequent funding from Rosenwald the following year, Tuskegee Institute constructed six rural schools in Lee, Macon, and Montgomery counties.

This initial funding resulted in schools that provided African American students with modern, well-fit, and purpose-built learning environments. In 1914, based on the success of the pilot program, Rosenwald agreed to donate an additional \$350,000 (equal to nearly \$1 million today) to build 100 more schools in Alabama.

**Leechpoko School, Lee County, 1913**  
This Lee County school was among the first built in Alabama with Rosenwald funds.

**Tuskegee-Rosenwald Pilot Schools**  
By 1914, six schools were built in Lee, Macon, and Montgomery counties with Rosenwald's initial grant. These facilities provided proof of concept for the larger school building campaign.

## Rosenwald Fund Schools Community School Plans (1920-1932)

In 1920, five years after Booker T. Washington's death, control of the school building program relocated to Nashville. The Rosenwald Fund established an office at Fisk University, where director Samuel L. Smith developed new building designs to meet exponential demand across the South. These designs, which first appeared in a 1924 publication called *Community School Plans*, became the standard for the remaining schools built with assistance from the Rosenwald Fund. Many school boards utilized these plans to construct rural schools for white students as well.

**Old Stone School, Hale County, Alabama**

**Community School Plans**  
The earlier Tuskegee designs emphasized simplicity and cost efficiency. The new designs were more complex and featured larger and natural building areas for publishing plans for communities.

## Remaining Schools in Alabama Documenting Rosenwald Schools



## Equalization Schools and Integration Separate and Unequal (1932-1967)

In an attempt to stall school integration efforts after World War II, southern states began investing in new schoolhouses and other educational facilities for Black students. These were known as "Equalization Schools." But in 1954, the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* declared segregated schools unconstitutional. Policymakers in Alabama delayed compliance with the ruling for several years through the passage of legislation and other initiatives. Integration of the state's school systems began in 1963, after successful lawsuits brought by Black plaintiffs from Macon and Mobile counties. Between 1965 and 1975, fifty thousand white students left Alabama's public schools, forcing a more than 100 percent increase in the number of private academies. During this era of great change, school boards derided many of the remaining Rosenwald Schools too small or otherwise unsuitable for continued use.

**Mezzell Elementary School, Andalusia, an equalization school built in the 1930s and 'Old Mezzell,' (renamed) a Rosenwald School in Bullock County. At these equalization school age, many are being torn down like the Rosenwald Schools they replaced.**

**Georgia Washington School, Montgomery County, 1930**  
The Georgia Washington School was an "equalization school" built in 1930. It was named in honor of a former school teacher who served as a teacher in the county from 1893 until 1930.

**Mt. Sinai School, Clarendon County, 1927**  
Following the integration of the Andalusia County school system, Mt. Sinai School closed its doors. Today, the former school serves as a community center.

## Preservation Efforts Tuskegee University and Auburn University

In the generations since integration, many Rosenwald Schools have been demolished. A select few were relocated or otherwise renovated to serve the needs of modern education. Throughout the South, only a fraction of Rosenwald Schools remain unaltered and in their original locations.

Because of their age and the types of materials used in construction, many of these structures are at risk of loss. In 2002, the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed the nation's Rosenwald Schools among "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places."

Faculty and students at both Auburn University and Tuskegee University have been working to preserve several of these historic schools, along with alumni and community groups with strong connections to the buildings.

**Auburn University**  
In 2002, Auburn University received a National Park Service preservation grant for the restoration of the Tankersley Rosenwald School in Montgomery County.

**Tuskegee University**  
In 2002, Tuskegee University led preservation efforts for the Old Grove Rosenwald School in Macon County, along with the Shelby County Historical Foundation, Auburn University, and Mobile Historical State University. The project efforts included listing the building on a National Historic Landmark and restoration work.

## Building Resilience Community Endeavors

The commitment to preserve these schools was laid into the Rosenwald program from the beginning. The Fund provided seed money to cover a portion of construction costs. The remainder came from a combination of community support and state funds. This funding structure grew from a core principle of Julius Rosenwald's philanthropy: He and Booker T. Washington believed this matching grant program would encourage cooperation between African American and white communities.

Rosenwald Schools were community endeavors. African Americans supplied much of the labor to construct the schools and oversee the maintenance of the buildings thereafter. Rural communities continued to invest resources in the schools long after their initial construction.

**Cecil School, Montgomery County, 1914**

**Community Fundraising**  
Communities worked to fund both the construction and maintenance of schools through job fairs, barbecues, and carnivals.

## A Lasting Legacy

By 1932, more than 5,000 schools were built across 15 southern states in the most ambitious school building program for African American children in the twentieth century. Alabamians constructed 389 schools with aid from the Rosenwald Fund.

The extant Rosenwald Schools are historic monuments to the greatest philanthropic effort for African American education in history. The structures connect the people who planned, designed, financed, and constructed the schools across time with former pupils, descendants, and community groups currently working to preserve them. The people engaged in this work are part of a long and resilient history, doing their part to ensure that the story of these rural schools lives on. That is their lasting legacy.

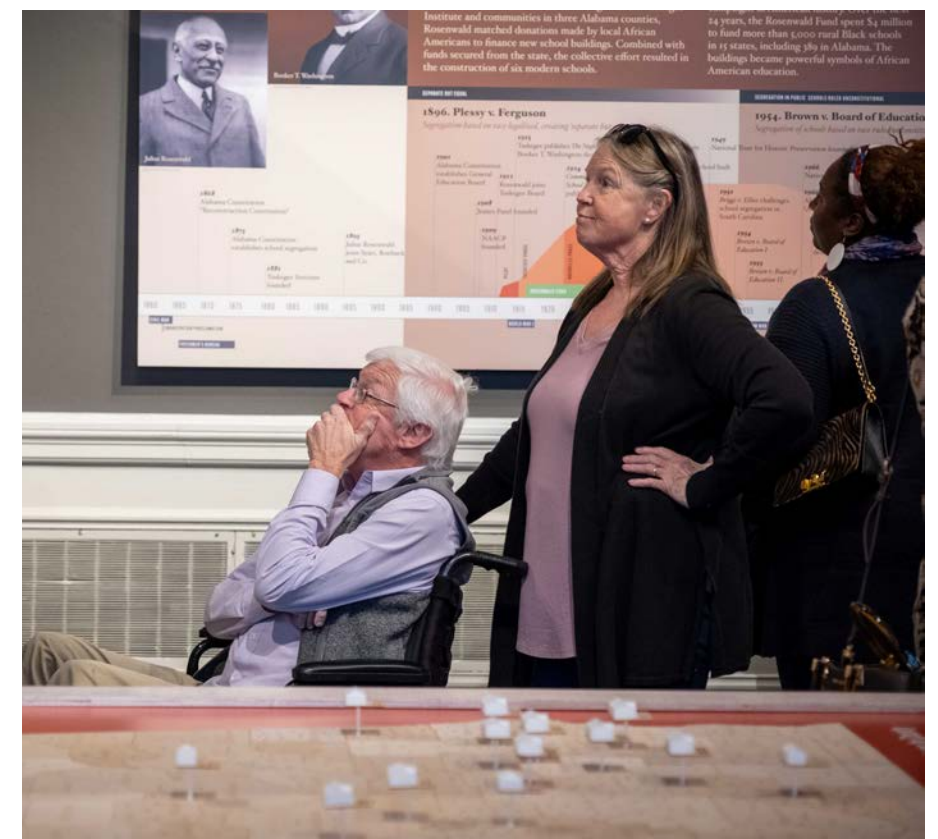
**THE JULIUS ROSENWALD FUND  
SCHOOLHOUSE CONSTRUCTION MAP  
STATE BUILDINGS  
JULY 8, 1932**

- By 1928, 1/5 of Black rural schools in the South were funded by the Rosenwald Fund.
- At the end of the program, about 40% of Black children in the South attended a Rosenwald School.
- Literacy levels for African Americans improved at 2x the rate in counties with at least one Rosenwald School.
- A 2011 study by the Federal Reserve attributes the Rosenwald Schools with helping grow the Black middle class during the twentieth century.

Exhibition panels discuss the history and legacy of the Rosenwald School Building program, and were designed to be a part of the traveling exhibit to hang within a variety of exhibit spaces (above).



**Jim Crow Era: Just and Equitable Funding**  
 Policy decisions in post-Civil War Alabama created a segregated and inequitable system of public education. At the end of Reconstruction, the framers of the Constitution of 1875 mandated school segregation and decentralized control of schools by abolishing the state board of education. The 1891 Alabama Apportionments Act gave county-level officials wide discretion in the distribution of school funding. Although the law stated that these trustees should provide "just and equitable" funding for children of both races, it offered no further guidance or penalties for noncompliance. White schools received the bulk of available funds, particularly in the state's poorer rural counties.



Photographs of the exhibit opening, including members of the public as well as Rosenwald School Alumni from across Alabama (above left).



# PRESERVATION ADVOCACY

Gorham Bird as Architect with Building Science faculty Junshan Liu + Hunter McGonagill and history faculty Keith Hebert + Elijah Gaddis. Students Tyler Layton and Brysen Calvin contributed to this project as paid research assistant for 325 hours.

Tankersley Rosenwald School, Hope Hull, Alabama

2022 National Park Service African American Civil Rights Preservation Grant: Exterior Rehabilitation \$499,799

2024 National Park Service African American Civil Rights Preservation Grant: Interior Rehabilitation \$750,000

Merritt Rosenwald School, Midway, Alabama

2022 CADDC Seed Grant Realizing Alabama's Rosenwald Schools, Phase VII: Digital Community Engagement \$5,000

2023 Alabama Historical Commission Preserving Alabama's Significant Sites Grant \$197,500

2024 James Marston Fitch Foundation Richard L Blinder Fellowship \$15,000

The Gorham Bird's expertise is in the preservation and conservation of historic places. This outreach program directly applies The Gorham Bird's research and creative work to benefit marginalized communities across Alabama with preservation expertise and consultation to preserve their physical history. The Realizing Rosenwald project is a form of

outreach that addresses the needs of rural minority community organizations that are caretakers of the former segregation schools that have limited capacity or expertise for preservation. The Gorham Bird's outreach works to raise funding by grant writing on behalf of the community organization. The Gorham Bird has hosted several community meetings with alumni of these schools to

help imagine a possible future for these spaces. The Gorham Bird's outreach efforts are collaborative and interdisciplinary with faculty from Building Science, Graphic Design, and Public History. To gain more public awareness of the history of the Rosenwald Schools in Alabama as well as the need for support, The Gorham Bird has utilized media outlets for help in the

outreach project. The most fruitful media engagement has been a radio interview on the National Public Radio's local station Troy Public Radio on Carolyn Hutchison's In Focus. In the interview, The Gorham Bird was able to discuss the outreach project and how the public could





The project team successfully completed a preliminary survey and digital documentation of the building in 2021 through Auburn University funded grants. The team received the 2022 National Park Service African American Civil Rights (AACR) grant to complete the preservation planning and stabilization of the Tankersley Rosenwald School exterior rehabilitation (Phase 1) and has completed the following items:

- Community meetings to discuss the future use of the Tankersley School as well as a visit to a preserved Rosenwald School (Shiloh School, Notasulga).
- Contracted with Engineers for a Civil survey and a Structural survey of the existing building
- Completed documentation for the

Historic Structures Report (HSR) and the preservation plan for rehabilitation of the Tankersley School (80% complete).

- Submitted to NPS / SHPO the design phase for the exterior rehabilitation which will include new roof and framing, repair of exterior wall framing and floor framing, refurbishment of existing clapboard siding, and restoration of the 22 historic windows and exterior doors; bidding is expected in Winter 2023/2024.

The research team was awarded the 2023 National Park Service African American Civil Rights (AACR) grant to complete the rehabilitation of the interior of the Tankersley School to function as a community center.



**National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund**  
Alabama 7th Congressional District

PAY TO THE ORDER OF **Auburn University** \$499,799.<sup>00</sup>

Four Hundred Ninety-Nine Thousand, Seven Hundred Ninety-Nine Dollars DOLLARS

FOR: Tankersley Rosenwald School in Hope Hill *Terri Sewell*  
U.S. Rep. Terri A. Sewell