

# LP-MAJC-3

## AMEN! SCHOOLS IN!

*Sherie Sawyer*

Latta Elementary School, Dillon School District 3

**Properties:** Mt. Zion Rosenwald School (Florence)  
Mt. Zion Methodist Church (Florence)  
St. James Rosenwald School (Horry)  
Hope Rosenwald School (Newberry)  
Howard Jr. High School (Newberry)  
Great Branch Teacherage  
(Orangeburg)

**Standard Indicators:** 5-1.5; 8-5.1; 8-7.4

**Literacy Elements:** E, G, H, P

### Essential Questions

1. How did discriminatory laws affect the academic opportunities of African Americans in the Southeast?
  - a. How was the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision used to develop Jim Crow laws in the South and specifically South Carolina?
  - b. How did Jim Crow Laws affect educational opportunities for African Americans?
  - c. How did local churches and programs like the Rosenwald Fund attempt to improve African American education in the South and specifically South Carolina?
  - d. How did Rosenwald educational facilities compare to white educational facilities in the same area during Jim Crow segregation?

### Historic Content

In *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), the U.S. Supreme Court decided that a Louisiana law mandating separate but equal accommodations for blacks and whites on intrastate railroads was constitutional. This decision provided the legal foundation to justify many other actions by state and local governments to socially separate blacks and whites. This separation was evident in education throughout South Carolina.

From 1877 to the 1970s, several Southern states enacted and maintained formal and informal rules limiting the legal rights of African Americans. These rules were known as Jim Crow laws, named after a minstrel character (white musical performer who portrayed blacks negatively). The rules were meant to maintain white supremacy.

South Carolina had twenty-two formal Jim Crow laws and six specifically related to education. Separate schools meant that authorities did not have to guarantee an adequate education for blacks or have to maintain black schools at the same level. Segregated schools also reinforced feelings of inferiority among black children and superiority among whites.

Many South Carolina African American communities already had a legacy of providing educational opportunities for their children when others could not be found. Unfortunately, due to unequal funding, many of

these schools were either held in churches or one-room shanties that provided for neither adequate lighting nor ventilation. Because of the inadequacies of black public and private schools and the high value of education among African Americans, community and church leaders were always seeking better educational opportunities for their children.

In 1912, Julius Rosenwald, a northern philanthropist and president of Sears & Roebuck at the turn of the twentieth century, worked with Booker T. Washington to help fund the construction of five schools near Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Rosenwald was keenly aware of the deplorable state of educational facilities for African American children throughout the South and saw building quality schoolhouses as a way to supplement the monies spent on black education. From this small effort began a matching grant fund that launched a 20-year regional building program that encompassed 15 southeastern states and over 5,300 schools, shops, and teacher's homes. At a time when State support for educating African American children was woefully inadequate, Rosenwald Schools played a critical role in educating South Carolina's African American children.

Generally, to receive a Rosenwald Fund matching grant for the construction of a school, one-third of the funds had to come from the community. This one-third could be in the form of labor, land, money or any other monetary resource. The state and/or local government had to provide one-third of the money also. Once these requirements were met, the Rosenwald Fund provided the remaining one-third of the necessary funds.

Once 500 Rosenwald school buildings dotted the South Carolina landscape. They were built using mandated school plans created by an architect funded solely by the Rosenwald fund. The communities that built these schools were willing to work hard and sacrifice financially and in many other ways to build adequate schools for their children. Though African Americans paid taxes into the public school system, they were required to raise additional funds to build the schools and in some cases donate land to the public school system to have these schools built.

The Rosenwald Schools were greatly needed and appreciated, but often they still did not compare in size and equipment to their local white school counterparts. The Mars Bluff (white) and Mt. Zion (black) schools were a prime example of this inequality. It has taken many laws, the strength of great people and many years to improve education and educational facilities for all. The Rosenwald Schools were a step in the right direction to correct the inequality found in African American schools during segregation.

## Sources Needed

### Primary Sources (in addition to the historic sites)

Jim Crow History. "Jim Crow Laws: South Carolina."

[www.jimcrowhistory.org/scripts/jimcrow/insidesouth.cgi?state=South%20Carolina](http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/scripts/jimcrow/insidesouth.cgi?state=South%20Carolina) (accessed January 31, 2008).

Know It All. "Mt. Zion Rosenwald School." [www.knowitall.org/roadtrip/cr-flash/flash.cfm](http://www.knowitall.org/roadtrip/cr-flash/flash.cfm) (accessed January 31, 2008).

Pictures of Julius Rosenwald

South Carolina Department of Archives and History. "Mars Bluff School." [www.archivesindex.sc.gov/onlinearchives/Thumbnails.aspx?recordid=240196](http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/onlinearchives/Thumbnails.aspx?recordid=240196) (accessed February 2, 2008).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Mars Bluff Colored School." [www.archivesindex.sc.gov/onlinearchives/Thumbnails.aspx?recordid=240195](http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/onlinearchives/Thumbnails.aspx?recordid=240195) (accessed February 2, 2008).

### Secondary Sources

Anderson, James D. *Black Education in the South, 1860-1935*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

Ascoli, Peter M. *Julius Rosenwald: The Man Who Built Sears, Roebuck and Advanced the Cause of Black Education in the American South*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Hoffschwelle, Mary S. *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*. New Perspectives on the History of the South, ed. John David Smith, 2006.

"Jim Crow Laws." *Junior Scholastic*, 107(13) (Skills Master 1).

National Trust for Historic Preservation. "The Rosenwald Schools Initiative." [www.rosenwaldschools.com/index.html](http://www.rosenwaldschools.com/index.html).

Ourdocuments.org. "*Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)*." [www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=52](http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=52) (accessed January 31, 2008).

"Rosenwald, Julius." *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*. <http://gme.grolier.com/cgi-bin/article?assetid=0250550-0>.

"Rosenwald, Julius." *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed., reproduced in Kids InfoBits. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/KidsInfoBits>.

South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office.

"Great Branch Teacherage, Orangeburg County, South Carolina," National Register of Historic Places nomination. [www.nationalregister.sc.gov/orangeburg/S10817738039/index.htm](http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/orangeburg/S10817738039/index.htm).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Hope Rosenwald School, Newberry County, South Carolina," National Register of Historic Places nomination. [www.nationalregister.sc.gov/newberry/S10817736031/index.htm](http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/newberry/S10817736031/index.htm).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Howard Junior High School, Newberry County, South Carolina," National Register of Historic Places nomination. [www.nationalregister.sc.gov/newberry/S10817736030/index.htm](http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/newberry/S10817736030/index.htm).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Mt. Zion Rosenwald School, Florence County, South Carolina." National Register of Historic Places nomination. [www.nationalregister.sc.gov/florence/S10817721020/index.htm](http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/florence/S10817721020/index.htm).

Steamer, Robert J. "*Plessy v. Ferguson*." *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*. <http://gme.grolier.com/cgi-bin/article?assetid=0230580-0>.

Street Law and the Supreme Court Historical Society.

"Landmark Supreme Court Cases: *Plessy v. Ferguson*." [www.landmarkcases.org/plessy/home.html](http://www.landmarkcases.org/plessy/home.html) (accessed January 31, 2008).

## Lesson Procedures

1. Choose one of the historic sites above. Read and discuss its historical background. Check for prior knowledge and connect to past learning during the discussion time.
2. Share pictures and background information on the schools found on the South Carolina Department of Archives and History websites. The Mt. Zion Rosenwald School has a virtual tour on [www.knowitall.org/](http://www.knowitall.org/).
3. Give a brief but detailed description of the founder of the Rosenwald Fund and share his portrait and purpose for setting up the fund.
4. Give specific information about the community and church leaders that helped build Rosenwald Schools in your area. Example: pictures, church histories, newspaper articles.
5. Read the South Carolina Jim Crow Laws that effected education and led to the need for Rosenwald Schools. [www.jimcrowhistory.org/scripts/jimcrow/insidesouth.cgi?state=South%20Carolina](http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/scripts/jimcrow/insidesouth.cgi?state=South%20Carolina).
6. Compare white schools during the same time period with the Rosenwald Schools in the same area. Use a Venn diagram. Use the [knowitall.org](http://www.knowitall.org) website.
7. Discuss the need and importance of the Rosenwald School in your area.

## Assessment Ideas

1. The class will create a picture story of a Rosenwald School using [knowitall.org](http://www.knowitall.org) and/or South Carolina Department of Archives and History website. [www.archivesindex.sc.gov/onlinearchives/search.aspx](http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/onlinearchives/search.aspx)
2. Each student will use the pictures and historical background discussed and shared in class to write a summary of the history of a Rosenwald School.
3. The students will write about their experience as a student attending a Rosenwald School using their summary of the historical background information discussed and shared during the lesson. Each student or group of students will include pictures found on the [knowitall.org](http://www.knowitall.org) and South Carolina Department of Archives and History website.

## Lesson Activities

1. Use a Rosenwald School to create a diorama.
2. Create an Acrostic Poem describing a Rosenwald School.
3. Jim Crow Must Go! Rewrite the law or create a political cartoon (propaganda) showing why Jim Crow Must Go!
4. Create an advertisement showing the criteria that has to be met to build a Rosenwald school. Remember, it has to be inviting and simple.