

PROCESS PAPER

Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington: How Their Investment in People Led From Tragedy to Triumph

My website describes the life of Julius Rosenwald and how his remarkable philanthropic work supported African-Americans in the 1900s. I heard about Rosenwald in 2016 and was immediately fascinated by his story. What interested me most was Rosenwald's unique approach to philanthropy and his profound generosity, particularly towards African-Americans. I wanted to understand the origins of his desire to help his fellow women and men, his collaboration with Booker T. Washington, and how that influenced his philanthropic choices. I was waiting for the opportunity to do a project on his life, and the "Triumph and Tragedy" theme was ideal.

I understood Rosenwald's charitable work was wide-reaching, so I would have to manage the scope of my research. This was the most difficult aspect of the project - culling the masses of information I collected. I knew I wanted to emphasize Rosenwald's relationship with the African-American community, but even there I had to exclude some of his philanthropic endeavors. I decided to focus on the Rosenwald Schools and Fellowships because I believe they had the biggest impact on American history. I also had to consider how to incorporate the life of Booker T. Washington, who had a significant influence on Rosenwald as the person who suggested he invest in schools.

Managing all the photos and sources was a challenge; I used NoodleTools for my bibliography and Google Drive to keep everything organized. Assembling the website was also challenging for me. I had never worked on a website and was unfamiliar with

Weebly. I felt a website would be an excellent medium to tell the story, since photos of the South, Rosenwald schools, and the many artists who received Rosenwald Fellowships would add a lot of depth for the viewer. I started by creating sitemaps based on a content outline to determine the sections and titles. I wanted to guide the visitor through the narrative, so I carefully planned my navigation scheme. For design, I used the clean look of a news website, and the color palette I observed at the Ridgely Rosenwald School, with white and earthy tones predominating. Trial-and-error, and YouTube, helped me learn Weebly.

I reached out for as many interviews as possible, and was fortunate to get six. These proved very useful because they provided the insights and opinions of Rosenwald School graduates, experts, and family members I used to validate my thesis and to support, or counter, other aspects of my research. I felt strongly that the Rosenwald Fund had a major impact on civil rights, and I was looking for as much evidence as I could to support this thesis. My interviews led me to information that provided the evidence I was seeking. My interview with Mildred Ridgeley, whose grandmother was a slave, was particularly moving.

The work of Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Fund - in African-American arts, politics, education, medicine - is an important part of American history, and should not be forgotten. We are all beneficiaries of his legacy of unprecedented philanthropy.