



NEWSLETTER

October 2022

OCTOBER LECTURE SERIES

October 22, 2022

Maury County Archives

201 East 6th Street Columbia TN



OCTOBER SPEAKER

Rhonda Hooks, Esq.

“You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby”



Rhonda D. Hooks is a native of Maury County, Tennessee. Attorney Hooks has been practicing law for over twenty years in the Church, Criminal, & Juvenile Law arenas. Additionally, she has represented hundreds of churches and pastors in various capacities. She attended Columbia State Community College (A.S.) Middle Tennessee State University (B.A.) University of Memphis (Candidate for Masters in English –Professional Writing), and finally Thurgood Marshall School of Law –Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas (Juris Doctorate). Attorney Hooks was admitted to the Tennessee Bar passing the exam on her first attempt. She is licensed in the Middle & Western Districts of the US Districts Courts.

Attorney Hooks also has two publications, “Columbia Race Riot of 1946” – MTSU Gore Archives and “Has the Electoral College Outlived Its’ Stay?” – Thurgood Marshall Law Journal. She has written a handbook guide for churches entitled “The Shielded Church”. Attorney Hooks is also senior partner in Church Law Information Consultants (CLIC) and she travels around the country lecturing to audiences regarding by-laws, incorporated status, 501c3 status, etc. all the pitfalls that can occur within a church and how for churches to protect themselves from unwanted litigation, turmoil and dispute resolution. Visit her website at www.churchlawinfo.com.

Norkunas-McClellan Collection donated to the Maury Archives

By Tom Price, Director of the Maury County Archives

Middle Tennessee State University has had many graduate-level students over the years focus their thesis work on the African American history of Maury County, Tennessee. With the help of AAHSMC President Jo Ann McClellan, and the use of the Maury County Archives, the students of Dr. Martha Norkunas have spent countless hours conducting primary research on dozens of topics. Now those research papers are going to be available online for the first time!

Dr. Norkunas has collected this body of work, and with the help of a current graduate student, John Jones, has created an index and finding aids, all of which will be made available through the Maury County Archives' website.

The collection, which is called The Norkunas-McClellan African American History Collection, will comprise of about 25 Master's Theses which can be read and searched for specific information. The archives staff and contract archives technical support specialist Max Gilkey will prepare the collection and make them available to the public in September. Once the collection goes live, you can visit www.maurycounty-tn.gov/202/Archives to find a link to the collection.



Pictured (L-R): John Jones, Max Gilkey, Jo Ann McClellan, Dr. Martha Norkunas, and Tom Price.

New Exhibit Honoring History of African American Education and Rosenwald Schools in Tennessee

*By Miranda Fraley Rhodes, Assistant Curator
Tennessee State Museum*

The Tennessee State Museum and Fisk University's John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library are working in partnership to develop a community-focused temporary exhibit about the history of Rosenwald Schools in Tennessee. African American students in Tennessee faced obstacles posed by racial segregation, violence, and discrimination. Many Black communities participated in the Julius Rosenwald Fund's school building grant program as a strategy to provide better educations for their children. This 4,000 square foot temporary exhibit is scheduled to open in June 2023 and will feature multiple sections that focus on topics such as Black Education before 1912, Black Tennesseans and Rosenwald Schools from 1912 to the 1960s, and the Legacies of Rosenwald Communities.

The exhibit will trace the history of education for African Americans from Reconstruction to the early 1900s. It will explore how Black community and religious leaders worked to provide educational opportunities for African American children through partnerships between churches and schools and working with the Freedmen's Bureau and other groups.

The exhibit will also look to discuss how local communities worked to improve educational opportunities for African American students. Rosenwald School buildings provided one strategy for communities to use in contesting inequities in funding for schools serving Black students during this time of racial segregation. The exhibit will share information about parents and teachers who worked together to create schools that supported student achievement and success. The exhibit will highlight schools that have buildings that are currently public facing in some capacity as well as referencing schools for which the buildings no longer exist.

Preserving the important legacies of these schools is also a focus of this exhibit as well as offering communities a platform to tell their story. It will address the work of alumni, descendants, scholars, and the Franklin Library at Fisk University in researching and sustaining the historic records, stories, and buildings associated with Rosenwald Schools.

The histories of Rosenwald Schools in Maury County are an important part of this effort. We appreciate the work of the African American Heritage Society of Maury County in preserving the stories of Rosenwald Schools. We would be grateful to hear from society members who would be willing to share their memories of local schools like Godwin School, Theta School, Canaan Schools, and others. Please contact Miranda Fraley Rhodes by email at miranda.fraley@tn.gov or by phone at 615-253-0148 for more information.

Maury County Rosenwald Schools

Julius Rosenwald, businessman and member of the Tuskegee Institute Board of Trustees, persuaded other philanthropists to join him in setting aside a portion of the funds they donated to build schools for African Americans in rural Alabama. Six small schools were constructed and opened in 1913 and 1914. Pleased with the results, Rosenwald agreed to fund a larger program for schoolhouse construction based at Tuskegee.

In 1920, the Rosenwald Fund established an independent office for the school building program in Nashville, Tennessee. By 1928, one in every five rural schools for black students in the South was a Rosenwald school. The local African-American communities assisted by donating land and labor.

Built in 1917, the Godwin School was Maury County's first Rosenwald School. In 1918, the teacher at Godwin, Nola Bill, received a scholarship to attend the Tuskegee Institute Summer School for teachers in Rosenwald School. By 1949, Maury County had fifteen Rosenwald Schools.

Below are photographs of the schools with the names of the teachers assigned in the 1948-49 school year. If you attended one of these schools, and would like to participate in the oral history project sponsored by the Tennessee State Museum, please contact an AAHSMC Board member or Miranda Fraley Rhodes by email at miranda.fraley@tn.gov or by phone at 615-253-0148 for more information.



Canaan School
Beatrice Gordon, Teacher



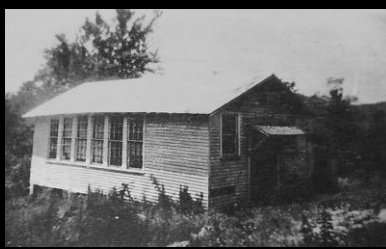
Center Star
Ruth Harlan, Teacher



Clarke Training School
W. R. Greenfield, Principal



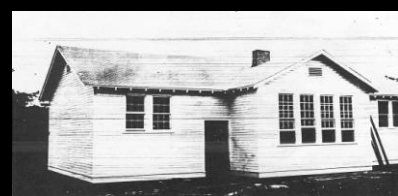
Culleoka School
Marie Webster, Teacher



Dry Fork School
Leola Redd, Teacher



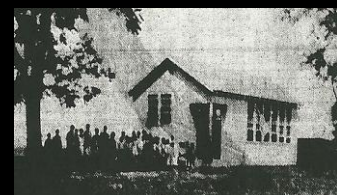
Godwin School
Annie Lee Bugg, Teacher



Harlan School
Bertha Amos, Teacher
Minnie Galloway, Teacher

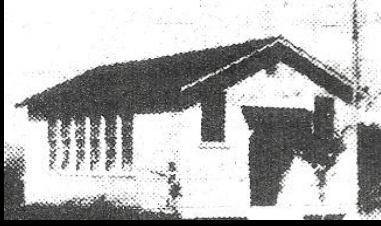


Park Station School
Ruth Whittaker, Teacher



Pisgah View School
Josephine Ashworth, Teacher

Maury County Rosenwald Schools (continued)



**Perry Hill School
Mattie Hatcher, Teacher**



**Rocky Glade School
Sadie Pillow, Teacher**



**Sandy Hook School
Marian Harlan, Teacher
Victoria Dawson, Teacher**



**Spring Hill School
Rosa McKissack, Teacher
Agnes Braden, Teacher**



**Theta School
Scottie Brown, Teacher**



**Westbrook School
Mary Webster, Teacher**