

Townsend School: A Public History Project Transformation in Winchester, Tennessee

By

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Abstract

The landscape of the African American South has rapidly diminished. These communities congregated around their churches, schools, and cemeteries. They had to create their own spaces with their own agency in order to create their own sense of community within their allotted spaces. The goal of this thesis is to highlight the importance of spaces within the community and preserve them for generations to come, so that they will be preserved into the Black landscape.

This project focuses on the Townsend School in Franklin County, Tennessee. This study is an excellent example of a Black community that has been overlooked by the White community and how it has flourished. By preserving memories, collecting artifacts, and serving as the heart of the community, the Townsend School still stands as a monumental feature for the community, shifting from being just an educational institution to a museum that holds the story of a community that is diminishing. This case study on the Townsend School will add to the history of historically Black communities in the South and provide an example to other public historians.

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Introduction: Why Historic African American Buildings are Important to the Black Landscape

The documentation of the life of African Americans in rural Tennessee is little understood. While certain periods of the history of Black American lives have been discussed, documented, and researched, such as the Civil Rights Movement and the impacts of slavery, there are also significant gaps in history that little recognized. As Walter Hood and Grace Mitchell Tada express in *Black Landscapes Matter*, from Reconstruction's end to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, only a few moments have been remembered, and this time period is a vast 155-year timeline, and many events and landscapes have been created, changed, and even erased. They assert: “We should be proactive, preserving, conserving, and making more landscapes that are for us - Black landscapes that are resilient and forward-looking.”¹

One property type in the rural African-American landscape that has received adequate attention in the past twenty years is the “Rosenwald” school. Through the partnership of Booker T. Washington of the Tuskegee Institute and Julius Rosenwald, the C.E.O. of Sears, Roebuck, & Company, these men were able to work with communities to establish “Rosenwald” schools for

¹ Walter Hood and Grace Mitchell Tada, *Black Landscapes Matter* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2020), 5.

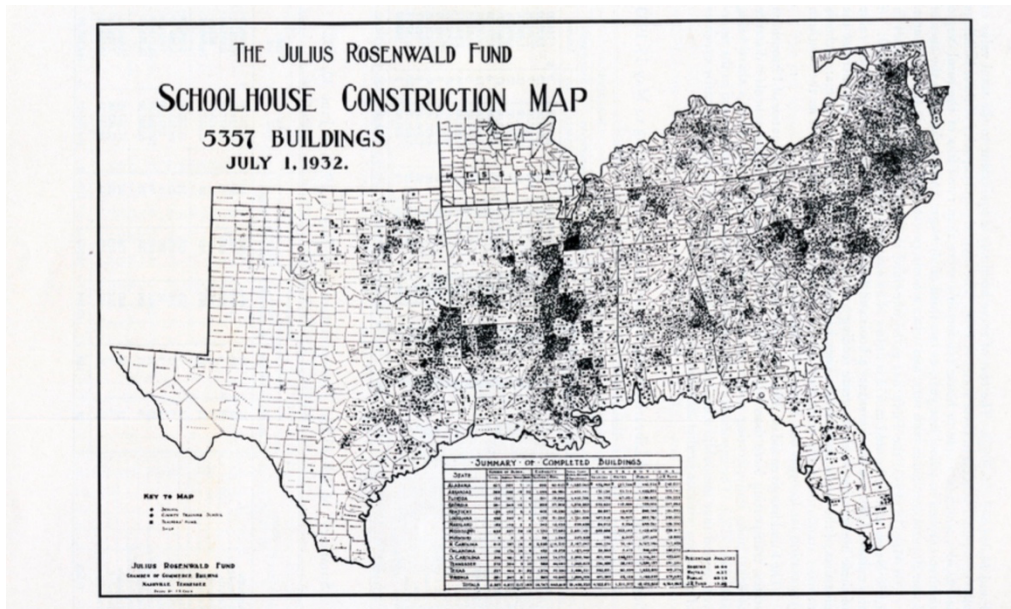


Figure 1. 1932 Julius Rosenwald Fund construction map. Photo provided by Fisk University, John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library Special Collection.

African Americans in the rural South. Through the years 1912 and 1932, the program supported the construction of 5,357 buildings, thus significantly improving the educational experiences of African Americans in the South. Figure one depicts where schools were constructed in the United States during the tenure of the Julius Rosenwald fund.

As Mary Hoffschwelle states in her book *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, "One of every five African American schools in the South was a Rosenwald school when the Rosenwald school-building program ended in 1932. By that time, Rosenwald schools alone outnumbered all the African American public school buildings that had stood in the South when the building program began twenty years earlier."² While at one time, there were over 5,000 buildings associated with the Rosenwald fund, the remaining buildings are becoming lost as the years progress. This thesis discusses the evolution of the Townsend School, which began as a Rosenwald school in Winchester, the seat of Franklin County. From those roots, the Black

² Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006), 1.

Community has created the Townsend Cultural Center Museum, a model public history project in a rural community.

Chapter One

The History of Townsend School

At 910 South Shephard Street in Winchester, Tennessee is the Townsend School. The school's initial name was "The Winchester Colored School," built with Rosenwald Fund support in 1924-1925.³ The Winchester newspaper announced in 1925, "The plant will comprise three classrooms 22 x 30 feet, one classroom 22 x 26 feet, one industrial room for girls, one shop for boys, four cloakrooms, a basement 18 x 30 feet. It will be heated by hot air pipe furnace."⁴

In 1924 when the interaction between the Julius Rosenwald Fund and the Franklin County Board of Education began, officials established a local fund to match the potential grant from the Rosenwald Fund. Attorney H.M. Templeton volunteered to serve as the treasurer of the local fund, and *The Truth and Herald* newspaper religiously reported to the public who had donated and how much they pledged towards this fund. The paper divided the contributions by race and then amount. The towns in Franklin County, which include Belvidere, Cowan, Decherd, Sewanee, and Winchester, were competing against each other for whoever raised the highest amount of funding, then the school would be placed in their town.⁵ *The Truth and Herald* reported monthly on the funding that the new school had received. In a report printed in September of 1924, the editor included, "I therefore appeal to every lover of education in the

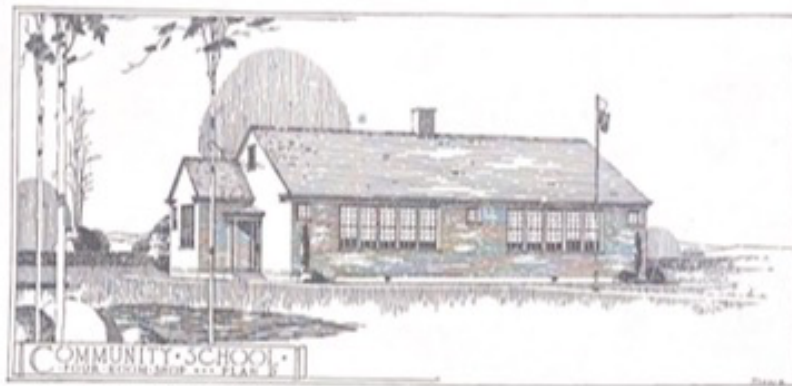
³ "Winchester Col. School," Rosenwald Database (Fisk University), accessed November 2021, http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search.details&set_v=aWQ9Mzg4Mw==&school_county=Franklin&school_state=TN&button=Search&o=0.

⁴ J. T. Ridley, "At Work on Colored High School Building," *The Truth and Herald*, March 12, 1925.

⁵ "A Colored High School for Winchester," *The Truth and Herald*, August 7, 1924.

county irrespective of race, and especially do I appeal to the teachers of the City and County to make a liberal contribution to this most worthy cause, for our present schoolhouse—a dilapidated old church structure, is not only inadequate, but is a reflection on the city. Help us to remedy this condition. I am sure you will."⁶

The total money that was raised for the school was \$6,695. Of that amount, local African Americans raised \$1,700, the "public" funded \$3,895, and the Rosenwald Fund allotted \$1,100.



PLAN D
FOUR ROOM SCHOOL FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Figure 2. Plan for a four-teacher school. Photo provided by Community School Plans: Suggestions for Improvement and Beautification School Plants.

⁶ "Report Colored School Fund," *The Truth and Herald*, September 4, 1924.

Additionally, the school was insured for \$4,000.⁷ The blueprints that were chosen were for a four-teacher plan. Figure two is a blueprint similar to what was built in Winchester.⁸ The wood frame building was painted white, which correlated to the rules of the Community School Plans booklet, issued by the Julius Rosenwald Fund's southern Office in Nashville, in the early 1920s. The booklet provides instructions on maintenance, improvement, and beautification of the buildings. ". . . the approved color schemes are: solid white, white trimmed in gray, light gray trimmed in white, and bungalow brown trimmed in white or cream."⁹

The school's location was on the edge of Winchester, on the road south of the Railroad Depot, across from a city cemetery. The Board of Education acquired four acres for the school.¹⁰ Monetary contributions were not the only way citizens could help build the school. Aside from the donated property, several men provided several days of labor in clearing the lands, digging the basement, and other unspecified jobs in the building of the school. In April 1925, an Educational Rally was held for the school. "Rev. D.A. Townsend will speak on what I saw thirty-two years ago. Prof. T. Wade Hampton of the A. & I. State Normal will speak on what a Rosenwald school means to a community. Mr. Roy J. Wilson will deliver an address on What the Board of Education stands for."¹¹ Of the speakers, Rev. D. A. Townsend or also known as "Doc" Townsend, was a pillar in the African-American community who valued early education in

⁷ "Winchester Col. School," Rosenwald Database (Fisk University), accessed November 2021, http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search.details&set_v=aWQ9Mzg4Mw==&school_county=Franklin&school_state=TN&button=Search&o=0.

⁸ "Community School Plans: Suggestions for Improvement and Beautification School Plants," *Community School Plans: Suggestions for Improvement and Beautification School Plants* (Nashville, TN: The Julius Rosenwald Fund and The Interstate School Building Service, 1935), 24.

⁹ "Community School Plans", 2.

¹⁰ J. T. Ridley, "Need of Colored School and Plans for Building," *The Truth and Herald*, September 25, 1924.

¹¹ "Educational Rally Colored High School," *The Truth and Herald*, April 2, 1925.

Winchester. It was not until June 1925 that the school was completed.¹² Figure three shows the finished school.¹³



Figure 3. Photo of Winchester Col. School. Photo provided by Fisk University, John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library Special Collection.

In December of 1932, *The Truth and Herald* reported three separate fires that had occurred in Winchester over four days. The first fire was a barn on the Drake Nurseries' property at 2:00 in the afternoon. The second fire occurred at 4:00 at the Townsend Training School. It was reported that the fire originated from the furnace flue, and "The building was a large frame structure and was valued at about \$6,000, with equipment. . . The building was partially covered by insurance carried by the county, and the school was constructed by county funds."¹⁴ An hour earlier than the fire at the Townsend Training School, a home was burned, located "on a strip of

¹² J. T. Ridley, "Colored School Completed," *The Truth and Herald*, June 11, 1925.

¹³ "Winchester Col. School," Rosenwald Database (Fisk University), accessed November 2021, http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search.details&set_v=aWQ9Mzg4Mw==&school_county=Franklin&school_state=TN&button=Search&o=0.

¹⁴ "Winchester Visited by Three Fires Last Week," *The Truth and Herald*, December 15, 1932.

road between the Belvidere pike and the railroad, on property formerly owned by the Southern Nurseries."¹⁵

Accidental fires were not uncommon, especially involving African American schools in Franklin County. In 1865, in Decherd, a Freedmen's Bureau school was burned as soon as the school was constructed. Newspapers across the United States published this event, as seen in figure four, in a newspaper located in Rutland, Vermont.¹⁶ With the school in Decherd, it is

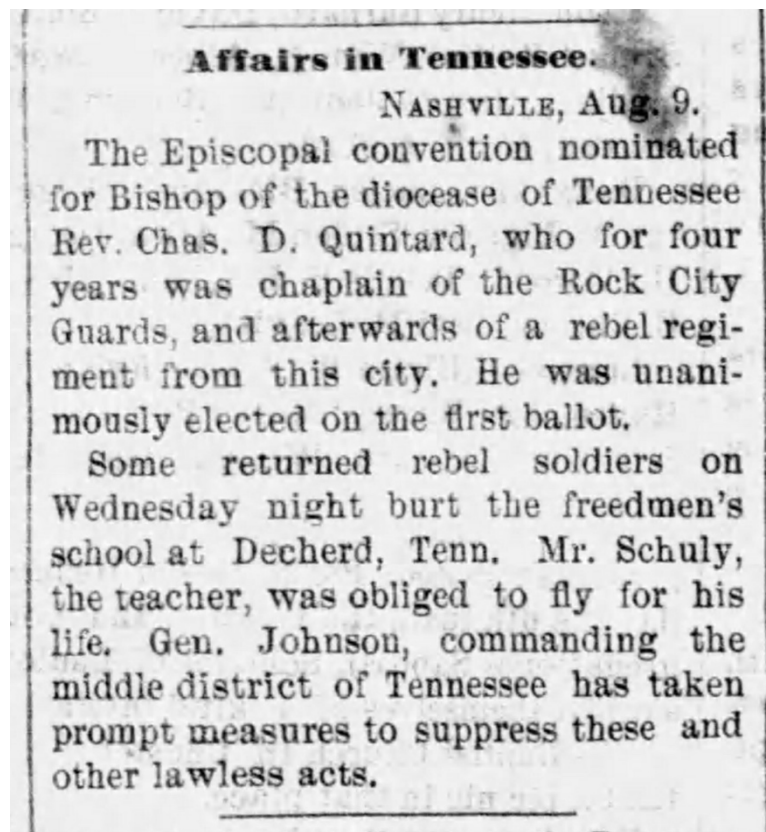


Figure 4. "Affairs in Tennessee" newspaper reporting the fire at the Freedmen's Bureau School in Decherd, Tennessee. Photo provided by the Rutland Weekly Herald.

known that local Confederate sympathizers started the fire, but with the fire to the Winchester school, the fire was said to have begun in the furnace. Franklin County was not new to groups

¹⁵ "Winchester Visited by Three Fires Last Week," *The Truth and Herald*, December 15, 1932.

¹⁶ "Affairs in Tennessee," *Rutland Weekly Herald*, September 14, 1865, 71 edition, sec. 37, p. 5, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/442898174>.

that wanted to promote white dominance, as the Ku Klux Klan originated in Pulaski, Giles County, Tennessee, which is only sixty-eight miles east of Franklin County. Therefore, it can be inferred that if the school was intentionally burned, then the insurance would not cover the costs of rebuilding the school. As Ronald Butchart discusses, African American education in the South post-emancipation was, “Southern opposition was rooted in fear of the educated Negro. Free, public southern education was the legacy of freedmen’s education.”¹⁷

By June of 1933, the Board of Education passed a motion for selecting the blueprints for the new "colored school building."¹⁸ The blueprints for this school are based on Rosenwald School plans for a four-teacher plan, but the school board adopted the plans. The next school is technically not a “Rosenwald school” because the Julius Rosenwald Fund’s school building program ended in 1932. But the Rosenwald imprint is clearly apparent. However, the photo below is what the school is roughly based on from the Julius Rosenwald Community Plans pamphlet.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ronald E. Butchart, “‘Outthinking and Outflanking the Owners of the World’: A Historiography of the African American Struggle for Education,” *History of Education Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (1988): pp. 333-366, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/369087>, 335.

¹⁸ Franklin County School Board minutes, June 1933, Franklin County Archives.

¹⁹ “Community School Plans,” 19.

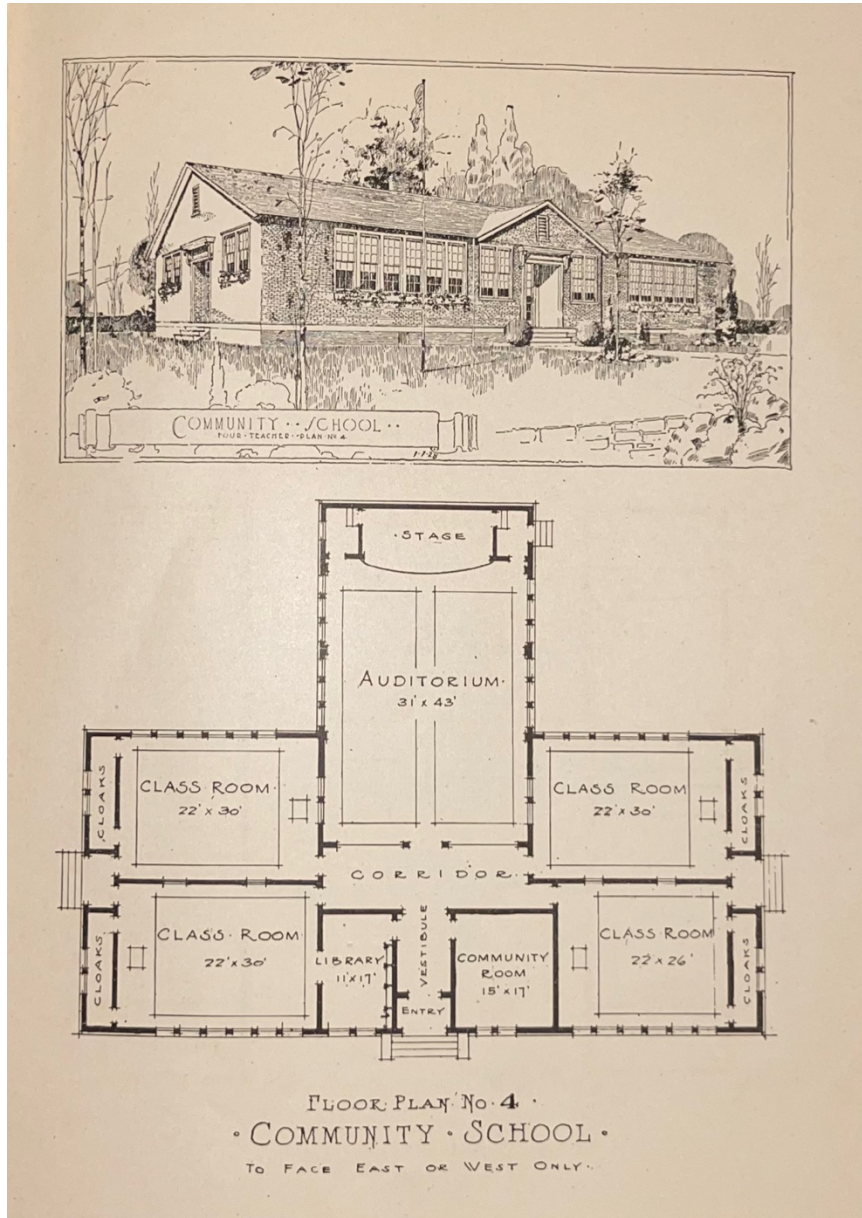


Figure 5 Four teacher schoolhouse. Photo provided by Community School Plans: Suggestions for Improvement and Beautification School Plants.

The local newspaper reported that the African American community furnished the brick.²⁰ In addition, the newspaper reported an increased enrollment, "The total enrollment of the school has increased over that of last year to a great extent. Last year's enrollment was only 190; this year, it is 243. Primary Department, 63; Intermediate, 60; Advanced Grammar, 29; High School, 91."²¹ A brick rally was also held to raise funds to diminish the debt from the bricks used in the new building. The bricks were ten cents each, and it was asked that each member of the community buy one or more bricks.²² Figure six is a photograph of the new brick Townsend School circa 1949 by John Hunt.²³



Figure 6. Photo of the brick Townsend School in 1949. Photo provided by John Hunt.

With the construction of the school completed, the community felt the need to rename their school. They named the building after the educator who fought for the education of African

²⁰ "Building Fund," *The Truth and Herald*, October 5, 1933.

²¹ "Townsend Training School Notes," *The Truth and Herald*, October 12, 1933.

²² "Townsend Training School Notes," *The Truth and Herald*, February 22, 1934.

²³ John H Hunt (1950), 68.

American children in Franklin County, “Doc” Anderson Townsend. Townsend was an advocate for African American education in the county, beginning teaching in 1869 and retiring in 1919. He emphasized the importance of training for Black teachers in order to receive certification and attend training workshops.²⁴

In October of 1946, it was reported that four hundred dollars were raised and submitted to the Board of Education to help fund the extension of classrooms to the original building.²⁵ In 1949, the McKissack Brothers of Nashville, Tennessee, an African American architectural firm, won the bid to remodel the Townsend High School and expand the building for \$70,000. The McKissack Brothers architectural firm started with Moses McKissack III, who grew up in Pulaski, Tennessee. Members of Moses’ family were also builders, but Moses began working in 1890 for a Pulaski architect, where he began refining his skills. In 1905 he started his own firm and his first major commission was the Carnegie Library at Fisk University in 1908. The majority of the projects that the firm assisted with are in the South, and are African American churches and educational buildings.²⁶

The original building would be rewired and include updated lighting fixtures and new heating plants. The latest addition, named "the annex," would be built with concrete blocks and "It will be used to house an auditorium, agriculture and science departments, and three classrooms, restrooms for boys and girls, and a shower."²⁷

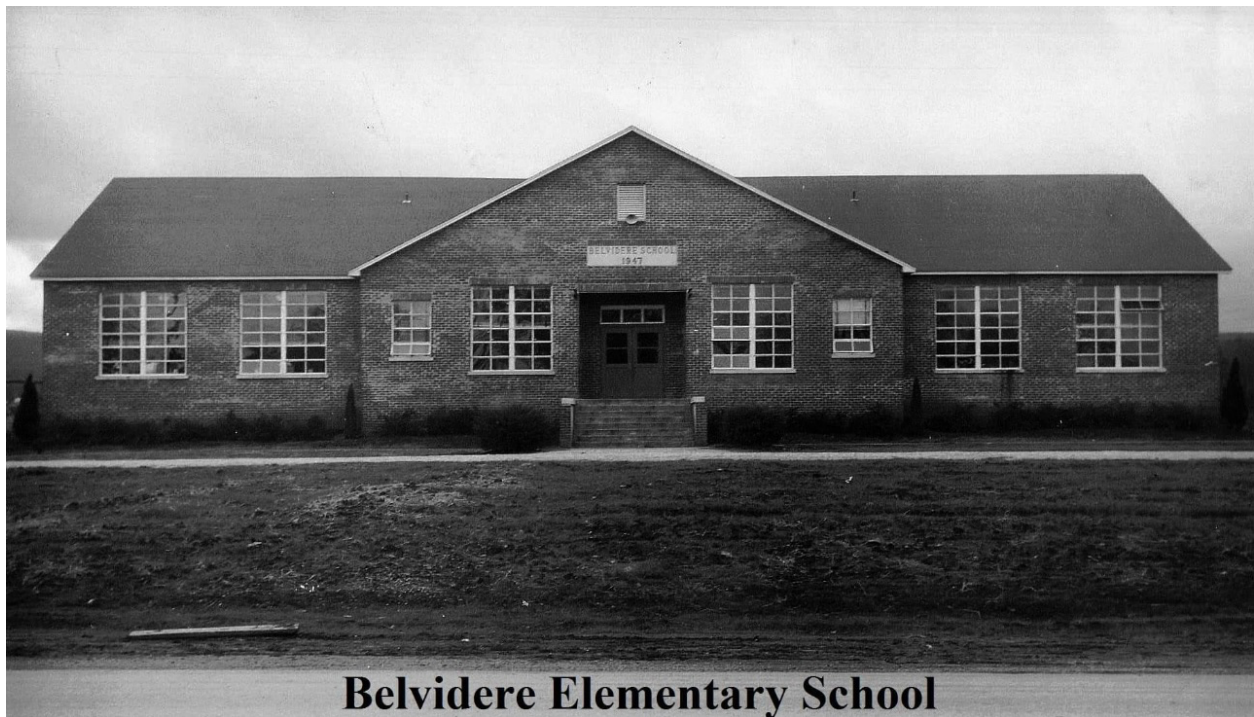
²⁴ Carroll Van West, Savannah Grandey, and Stefanie Haire, “Townsend School Heritage Development Plan - MTSU Center for Historic Preservation,” MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, 2019, <https://www.mtsuhistpres.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Townsend-School-Final-Draft.pdf> , 12.

²⁵ Frank L. Lynch, “Townsend Training School,” *The Truth and Herald*, October 9, 1946.

²⁶ Linda T. Wynn, “McKissack and Mckissack Architects,” *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (*Tennessee Historical Society*, March 1, 2018), <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/mckissack-and-mckissack-architects/>.

²⁷ “Townsend School Project,” *The Truth and Herald*, June 29, 1949.

Then in 1955, a year after *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)*, Westbrook Construction Company of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, was contracted to complete an addition to Townsend High School and make additional upgrades to the original buildings. The agreed-upon contract was for \$21,850. The new addition included "a new two-room addition, new floors throughout the existing building, ceilings in several rooms, improvements to the plumbing, addition to the heating plant, new doors, and other smaller items. Left out of the bid was (the) ceiling of the stage and painting the old building."²⁸ Later in the same passage, "Commissioners also discussed



Belvidere Elementary School

Figure 7. Photo of the Belvidere School in 1947. Photo provided by the Franklin County Historical Society.

and agreed to search for a solution to a sewage seepage problem in the vicinity of Townsend School."²⁹

²⁸ "Westbrook Firm Given Townsend School Contract," *The Winchester Herald-Times*, March 23, 1955, pp. 1-10.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Six miles southwest of the new brick Townsend school, the Belvidere school was constructed using similar, if not identical, plans for the white children in the county. The Belvidere school was completed in 1947. Figure seven is a photograph taken after the completion of the school in 1947.³⁰ Figure eight is a 1939 Sanborn Map Company Map of Winchester, Tennessee. Highlighted by the red box on the map is where the Townsend school is located. Note the road that the Townsend School is located on is not even on the map, nor is it on the maps of the closer districts.³¹

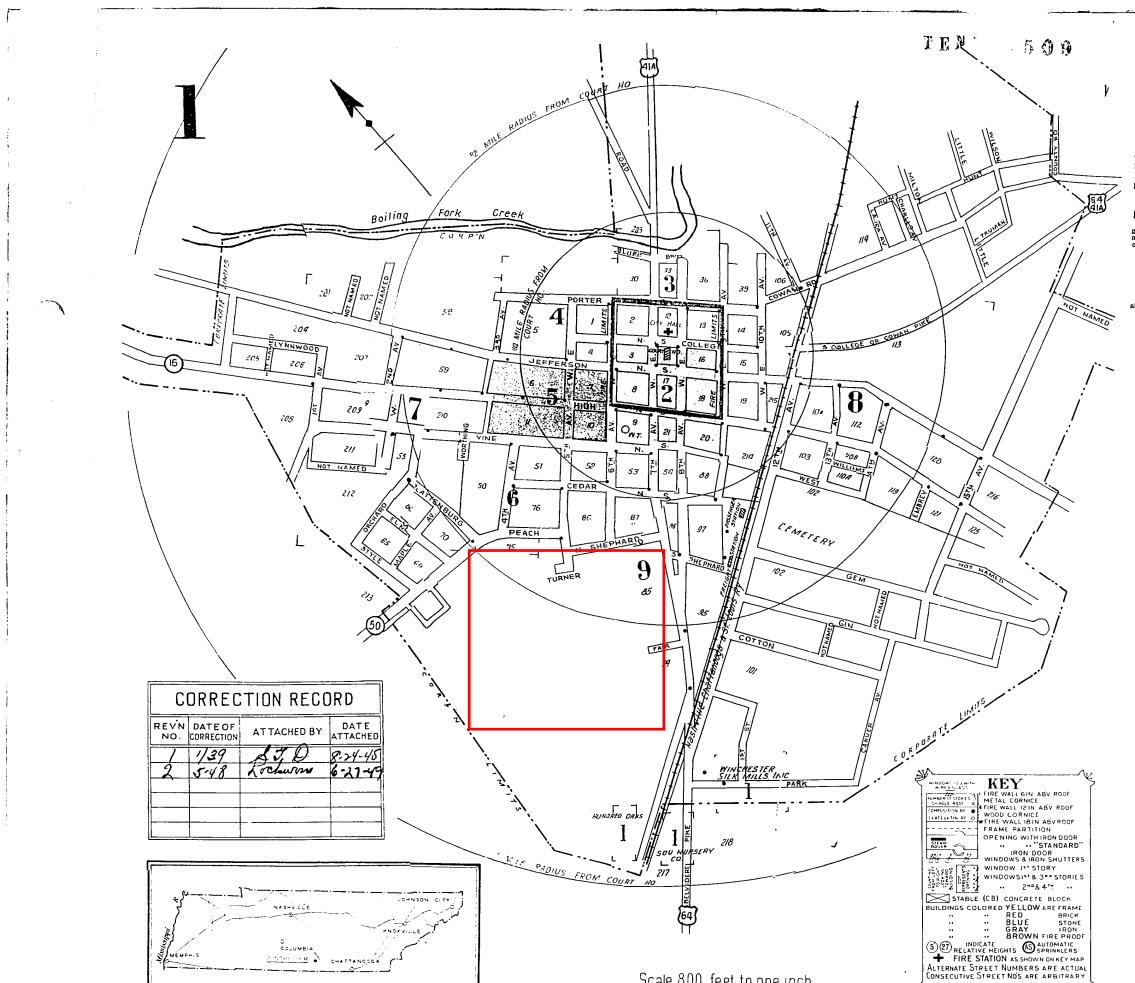


Figure 8. Winchester July 1930-May 1948 Sanborn Map. Photo provided by ProQuest. Scale 800 feet to one inch.

³⁰ Belvidere Elementary School, photograph (Belvidere, TN, n.d.), Franklin County Historical Society.

³¹ "Winchester July 1930-May 1948, Sheet 1," Digital Sanborn Maps (ProQuest), accessed May 2022, <https://digitalsanbornmaps.proquest.com/barcode?accountid=11192>.

In 1962, Nathaniel A. Crippens, professor of education at Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial University, Nashville, and coordinator of Instruction for the State Department of Education, dedicated a new addition. The school wanted citizens to view the new addition of "a gymnasium, science laboratory, physical education rooms, and a new kitchen for the lunchroom. Lighting and seating for the football field also have been added."³² Additionally, the newspaper reported that the cost of the addition at Townsend was \$238,000.³³ The addition to Townsend School was supposed to make the white and the black high schools "equivalent" to each other, so the schools would not have to integrate.

In June of 1964, the case of *Hill v. County Board of Education of Franklin County, Tennessee* resulted in the school desegregation plan for Franklin County. Four African American families and four white families pushed for the school system to have a "unified, nonracial educational system."³⁴ The Board of Education was then forced into desegregating the schools. The plan was set by the court for how the schools were to become integrated going grade by grade, so that no later than January 1, 1968, each of the existing elementary schools would have to accept all students that were in the school zone, no matter the student's race. Within the case, the court anticipated the hostility to the outcome of desegregation:

The Franklin County educational system has traditionally deprived Negro children of rights secured to them by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States... While the law has been stated by the Supreme Court, nevertheless, its application depends on the facts of each particular case... Full implementation of these constitutional principles require solution of varied local school problems... As the difference between

³² "Townsend Addition To Be Dedicated," *The Winchester Herald-Times*, February 21, 1962.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Hill v. County Board of Education of Franklin County, Tenn.*, 232 F. Supp. 671 (E.D. Tenn. 1964), Justia Law, accessed February 18, 2023, <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/232/671/1749015/>.

delay due to hostility and delay to allay hostility is indistinct, the Court will be sensitive to any overlapping of the two.³⁵

In January of 1965, the *Winchester Herald-Times* reported on the plan for desegregating the schools in Franklin County. The plan was for all county elementary schools to be desegregated by September 1965 and then the high schools to follow by desegregating by September 1966. "The new program is a compromise in a lawsuit filed about a year and a half

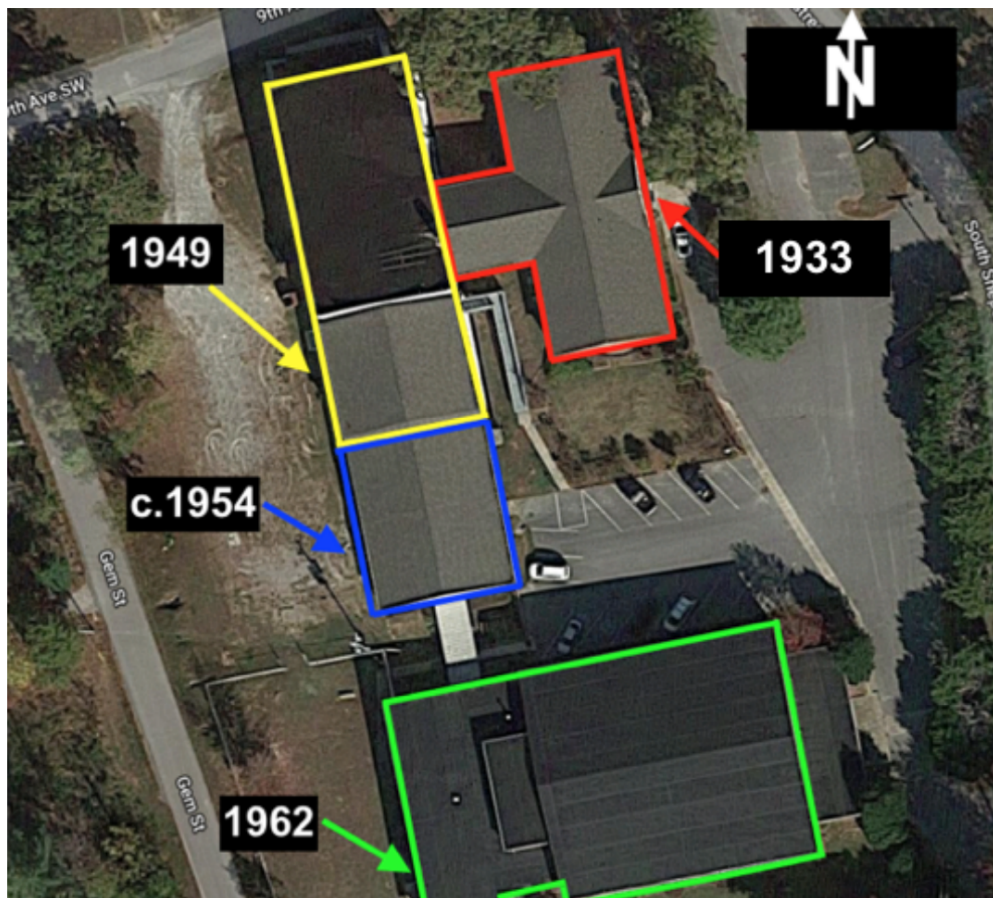


Figure 9. Aerial photo of the Townsend School campus with notes on the construction of the additions. Photo provided by MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation.

ago, asking for complete and immediate desegregation of the Franklin County schools."³⁶ Figure

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ "Compromise Plan On Desegregation Adopted by Board: Position Stated on Civil Rights Act," *The Winchester Herald-Times*, January 27, 1965.

nine depicts the construction of the different additions to the building and the years that they were constructed.³⁷

Today, Townsend's building remains essentially the same as when students last occupied the building. A few walls have been added, and some removed. The original gym has all its original features, including a stage, as seen to the left in figure ten, which Townsend Cultural Center hopes to utilize in the future. Minor cosmetic and structural updates need to be accomplished, but the center can still host events and become the heart of the community, as it previously did in the late 1960s.



Figure 10. Photo of the gym of the Townsend School that can be utilized as an event center. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

³⁷ Carroll Van West, Savannah Grandey, and Stefanie Haire, "Townsend School Heritage Development Plan - MTSU Center for Historic Preservation," MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, 2019, <https://www.mtsuhistpres.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Townsend-School-Final-Draft.pdf> , 5.



Figure 11. Photo of the front facade of the building. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

The exterior of the front of Townsend has had minor changes, as a door has been added to the front façade for an additional fire escape, along with steps below the door seen in figure eleven. In addition, the doors that were once on either side of the building have been bricked over, creating solid brick walls on the sides. The traditional large rows of windows are a characteristic of a Rosenwald-type school, allowing the largest amount of sunlight to pass through the classrooms. With adequate maintenance of the building and its grounds, the school should maintain its place in the community as a place for learning and for the community to gather.

Chapter Two

Building the Museum

The members of the Townsend School community knew they needed help to portray the story of the education of African Americans in Franklin County. They contacted Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation to ask for assistance in preserving their story and the school building. The Center prides itself on supporting students to receive their graduate degrees in public history by creating hands-on experiences working with communities, large and small. The director of the Center, Dr. Carroll Van West, ensures that the members of the community will be listened to and their history will be preserved in a way that the community deems fit. After the community members at Townsend School reached out, Dr. West funded a student internship to work with the community members for a summer to develop the interpretive spaces at the building. The graduate student would receive three hours of college credit for the internship.

Luckily, the Center chose me to be the graduate student intern. Even though I was raised in the same county as where Townsend was located, I knew very little about the school and how it began. I was intrigued as to why this story was not known and was not talked about in our county. I knew of what the building offered to the community, offering afterschool programs to children, a General Educational Development test (G.E.D.), and other programs that benefitted the community. What I did not know was how important the school itself was to the students but also to the surrounding neighborhood and African-American community.

The goal was simple for the Townsend Cultural Center board members: they wanted to make sure their story was documented and could be presented in a way that could be shared with people in our community who also did not know about the history of the school, its founders, and

why it is important to our history. We began working together at the end of May 2021 to establish goals that should be accomplished by the end of the summer, at the end of my internship. The first goal was to have the first room in the school be transformed into the Doc Anderson Townsend room and to describe his life, the impact he had on the school, and his role as a veteran in the Civil War.³⁸

During this first meeting, members set the goal to have the “Doc” Anderson Townsend room completed before the Juneteenth Celebration that was to be held in the Event Center (the original gym). We immediately began work in the room, touching up the freshly painted walls, which were in the school colors of the original school, patching the floors from a previous water leak, and generally organizing the artifacts that they had collected to use for the exhibit. In addition, this room needed to be finished and well-documented since the Townsend Cultural Center had received a grant from the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area for the “Doc” Townsend room.

Beginning with the first day I was at the Townsend Center; I began to read, learn, and listen about why its story was pivotal to the African American community. I also learned how the Townsend Cultural Center stands as a pillar in the community today. Members of the community were proud to have attended this school, been on the sports teams, and become influential residents of Franklin County. However, most of the people I engaged with did not attend Townsend School which had closed almost sixty years earlier, but had sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers, and other family members who attended the school. They wanted to make sure

³⁸ There are several different ways that Doc Anderson Townsend name appears in records. Occasionally, he is recorded at D.A. Townsend.

that the school's memory would not be lost and to be able to be reflected upon, not only for themselves but for the upcoming generation.

With the first room, the Reverend Doc Anderson Townsend Heritage Room, members wanted to highlight the story of the man for whom the school was named. Doc Townsend was born on September 27, 1846. Townsend's mother, Jane was enslaved on a plantation in Winchester, Tennessee, and his father, Solomon Coover, was the owner of the plantation. Due to his father, Townsend primarily worked inside the house and was taught how to read and write. When the Civil War began, Solomon sent Doc Townsend to live with his daughter Sarah and husband Park Townsend in Madison County, Alabama. After United States Troops entered Huntsville, Townsend enlisted in the United States Colored Troops (USCT) in February of 1864 and signed his name as Doc Townsend. In April of 1866, he mustered out of the Army and came home to Franklin County.

After the end of the war, he received an education at Roger Williams University in Nashville, Tennessee, and then moved back to Winchester. He then began advocating for a school to be built in Winchester for African Americans to attend and taught public school for fifty years, until 1919. Hunt states, "Apparently the greatest contribution to public education in Franklin County was made by the Reverend Doc Andrew [sic] Townsend."³⁹ Doc Townsend died on December 22, 1927. In his obituary, in *The Truth and Herald*, "In his passing there was closed a long career of usefulness, devotion, and service to his family, church, community, state, and country."⁴⁰

Fortunately, the Rosenwald School Fund was starting to change the original landscapes in the South by being the driving force behind African American education. While the African

³⁹ "Doc Townsend Biography," Townsend School Files, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.

⁴⁰ "Obituary- D.A. Townsend," *The Truth and Herald*, January 5, 1928.

American community raised a portion of the funds, with county tax dollars also being added, the Rosenwald Fund provided money and the building plans. While Townsend did not live to see the school he advocated for, he nonetheless impacted the community, which named the school after him and his legacy of promoting education to local African Americans.



Figure 12. Photo of the Doc Anderson Townsend room at the end of May 2021. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.


In June, I met with the members of Townsend to see what they wanted to see in the room and what materials they already had. They had several pictures of Doc Townsend and wanted to create a timeline of his life on the walls of this room. Additionally, in this room, the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area had created two interpretive panels of Doc Townsend's life and several of his accolades. The panels utilized images and descriptions of Townsend,

describing his Civil War service, his education, and his lasting impact of education for African Americans in Franklin County.

“Doc” Anderson Townsend

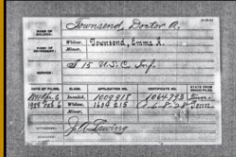
— Veteran, Educator, Leader —

With Emancipation, African Americans across the South rushed to create their own churches, cemeteries, and schools. Early on, their determined efforts met racial discrimination, but key leaders pushed ahead, laying new foundations for schools and communities across the region. Native son “Doc” Anderson Townsend—in whose honor and memory this school was named—led the successful charge for African American education in Franklin County.



Undated portrait of Townsend taken in Winchester. Courtesy of direct descendant Dr. Arthur M. Townsend III.

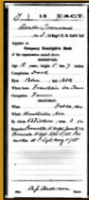
Civil War Transformations



A pension card documenting Townsend's military service and the dates he and later his widow, Emma, filed claims. Image courtesy of Ancestry.com. Original located at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.


Townsend was born enslaved in Franklin County in 1848. He lived in Franklin County until 1862 when his enslaver sent him to Sarah and Park Townsend near Huntsville, Alabama. It was from this family that Townsend took his surname.

In 1864, the Civil War gave Townsend and other men with whom he was enslaved the chance to fight for their freedom. They joined Company I, 15th Regiment, of the United States Colored Troops in Huntsville. Townsend received several promotions, eventually earning the rank of 1st Sergeant before his discharge in 1866.



Record of Townsend's enlistment in the United States Colored Troops. Image courtesy of Ancestry.com. Original document located at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

With his military service to the United States completed, Townsend sought opportunity through education. He enrolled in the Nashville Normal and Theological Institute (renamed Roger Williams University in 1883), a freedmen's college established by the American Baptist Home Mission Society of New York.



c.1887 sketch of Roger Williams University. The school acquired this campus in 1874, five years after Townsend attended. There are no known photographs of the earlier buildings used for the school. The Townsend family kept close ties to the university. In 1913, Townsend's son, Dr. A.M. Townsend, became president of the institution. Courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives.


A Tireless Champion for Education

After attending school for one year in Nashville, Townsend returned to Winchester and began teaching at Rocky Point. Soon after, he married Emma Alice Singleton, with whom he had three children. He continued to teach to support his family and led African American teaching institutes where local educators obtained training, certification, and networking opportunities. He also served as principal at Winchester's school for black children.

“Rev. D.A. is one of the county's most prominent and substantial citizens. ‘Doc,’ as he is sometimes familiarly called, has been principal of the city school ever since its conception. He possibly has educated more young men and women than any other single teacher in Tennessee. The reunions of ‘Townsend's scholars’ is an event that is yearly eagerly anticipated.”

—W.L. Miller, “Winchester and Franklin County” *Nashville Globe*, Aug. 26, 1910

Townsend appeared before the Franklin County Board of Education to advocate for better school facilities for local black children. But few voices were listening as the racist grip of Jim Crow segregation took hold of the South. His schools were never equally funded, nor did he receive the same salary as white educators. He kept his commitment until 1919, when he retired from teaching because of poor health at age 72. In 1925, two years before his death, Winchester citizens celebrated the opening of a new Rosenwald School for black children. They soon named it after Townsend, the Civil War veteran who returned home and served his community for 50 years.




Winchester's Rosenwald School, also known as the Winchester Colored School, built in 1925. The Rosenwald Fund was a philanthropic organization that helped black communities across the South build modern school buildings by providing matching grants. By the 1930s, the community renamed the school after Townsend. Courtesy of Fisk University, John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library, Special Collections.

Community Leader





Townsend's leadership reached beyond education. He helped establish the Mount Zion Baptist Church (known today as the First Missionary Baptist Church) in Winchester and served for a time as minister. He also played a large role in raising funds for erecting the congregation's new building in 1912.

Townsend is remembered as a pillar in his community. When he passed in 1927, the local newspaper boasted, “In his passing there was closed a long career of usefulness, devotion, and service to his family, church, community, state, and country.” Although buried alongside his wife in a family plot at the Winchester City Cemetery, his dedication to the development of African Americans in Winchester and Franklin County has been memorialized through the preservation of Townsend School and the community's commitment to honor his contributions.



Members of the Townsend Cultural Center Steering Committee pose with representatives from MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation near the school in 2018.

Exhibit Team: Savannah Grandey, Victoria Hensley, Keneisha Mosley, and Dr. Carroll Van West. Special thanks to the members of the Townsend Cultural Center Steering Committee. Sponsored by the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area.

100-955 / Middle Tennessee State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. See our full policy at www.mtsu.edu/afdc/.

Figure 13. Doc Anderson Townsend panels. Photos provided by MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation

The first photo, which originally was the only known photo of Doc Townsend, is displayed near the entrance of the room. The photo was in poor condition and was missing the top right corner of the photo; the company that the Townsend Board members used to frame the photo was able to digitally reconstruct the photo.



Figure 14. Photo of Doc Anderson Townsend. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

The community members believed that it was important to have an American flag, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Gettysburg Address also on the walls to document



Figure 15. Photo of the Doc Anderson Townsend room in September 2021. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

Townsend's service in the Civil War and to emphasize the importance of what the results of the Civil War meant to not only to the citizens of the United States but also local community members.

Continuing work in the Doc Townsend room, we decided to consult the local public library to see if they might have any additional information regarding Townsend and his family. After several trips to the library, we were able to find a new photograph of Doc Townsend and his family that we did not know existed. It was published in an article within the Franklin County Historical Review in 1986 titled “The Reverend Doctor Anderson Townsend.” Seen in the photo

from left to right are Emma Alice Townsend (wife), A.M. Townsend Jr. (grandson), D.A. Townsend, Willa A. Townsend (daughter-in-law), Leroy Bone (grandson), and Laura T. Moore (daughter). We immediately scanned, printed, and framed this photo and added it to the room to further document his life.



Figure 16 Photo of D.A. Townsend and Family. Photo provided by Emily Huffer



Figure 17. Photo of the Doc Anderson Townsend room in September 2021. Photo Provided by Emily Huffer.

We worked together on how the photos should be arranged in the room, in chronological order of Townsend's life. A community member graciously donated a display case for the museum, to which we displayed objects donated by the Center for Historic Preservation, local newspapers, and other impactful artifacts of the school. Above this display case, we framed the interpretive poster on Rosenwald Schools in Tennessee created by the Tennessee Division of Archaeology. We also framed an excerpt from a thesis by John Hunt, "Negro School History," which depicted the location of African American schools in Franklin County. We accomplished these tasks in time for the Juneteenth Celebration at the school. The public enthusiastically received the exhibit, with several people wanting to donate new objects, images, and papers to the museum.

Seeing this support from the community, the board and I discussed what should our next steps be for the museum, and we concluded that we wanted to have an open house to show what we had accomplished and share with the community future goals and objectives. The Townsend board members decided that the first weekend in September would be perfect for the open house, so we had our next deadline, to finish the memorabilia room and the education room.

In the memorabilia room that adjoined the Doc Townsend room, the Townsend board wanted to depict the rich sports history that occurred at Townsend High School. We had a trophy case and the trophies that community members had salvaged from dumpsters and later donated to the museum. Some of these trophies were in better condition than others, but we were fortunate to have trophies and could repair the broken pieces. When the schools became integrated, the school board cleaned out the Townsend School building and disposed of all the memorabilia, including photographs, trophies, and other relics of the school. Alumni salvaged what they could and have been saving these artifacts for nearly sixty years, since the school closed. Due to word of mouth in the community, members would come to the school to see what we were working on, and then they would return with photographs they let us scan to add to our collection. Soon,

we had enough photographs to hang an assortment of sports photos in the room, spanning through the 1940s into the 1960s. Additionally, we framed Townsend High School reunion t-shirts, reunion photographs, and other important memorabilia.



Figure 18. Photo of the memorabilia in the sports room. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.



Figure 19. Photo of the memorabilia and trophies in the sports room. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.



Figure 20. Photo of the Townsend High School trophies. Photo provided by MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.



Figure 21. Photo of the 1958 M.T.A.A. Championship Trophy. Photo provided by MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.



Figure 22. Photo of the trophy case used in the Memorabilia room. Photo provided by MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.

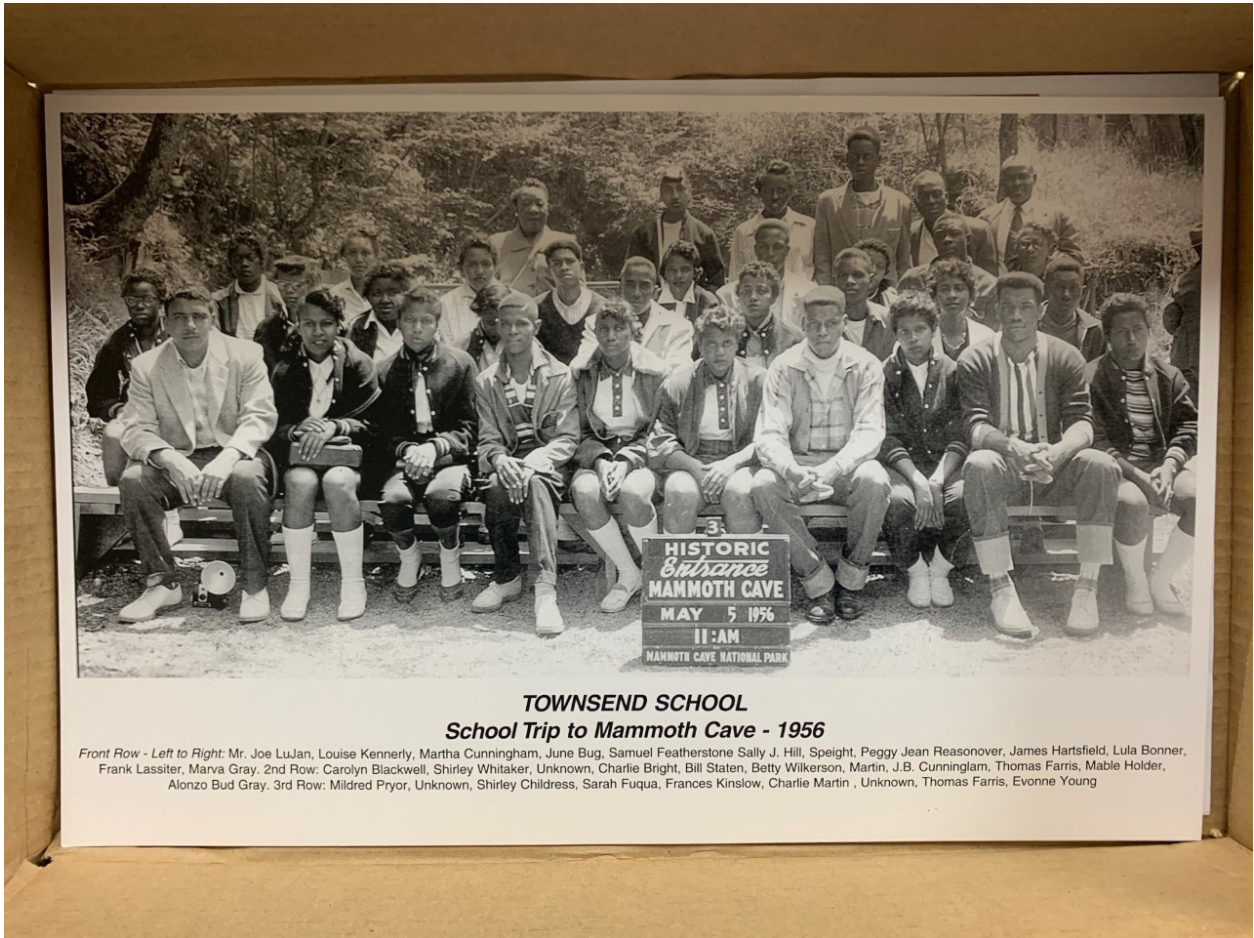


Figure 23. Photo of a 1956 Townsend School field trip to Mammoth Cave. Photo provided by MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.

The final and largest room was the education room. Farm equipment, antique desks, a sewing machine, photographs, and other artifacts were scattered across the room when we began working and trying to develop a plan for the room. In a conversation with Dr. West, I had asked how we should display these items, and he recommended creating a mock classroom and to utilize the existing counters that were mounted on the walls to display these items. With permission, I went to the existing basement of Townsend and found antique desks, a green chalkboard, a teacher's desk, and other items that could be useful for the mock classroom. I utilized a photograph from *A Better Life for Our Children* where the author photographed the Pine Grove School, a Rosenwald school in Richland County, South Carolina, to guide how the Townsend room should appear.⁴¹

Upon cleaning the desk, a receipt attached to the top of one of the desks was dated August of 1998. After further investigation, these desks were refinished in 1998 for the Clark Memorial kindergarten students housed in the Townsend School, while an addition was being constructed at the Clark Memorial School.

These desks are made of wood and steel, initially having a wooden desktop, but were replaced with a faux wood top when they were being refinished. It is believed that the desks are

⁴¹ Andrew Feiler and John Lewis, *A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools That Changed America* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2021), 49.



Figure 24. Photo of the desks in the Townsend school. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

from the Steel Furniture Company, later known as the Irwin Seating Company, located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The company was established in 1907 and still manufactures furniture today.⁴² Irwin Seating Company is known for its classroom furniture and auditorium seating. An ad from 1945 shows that the desks are adjustable for different heights, which was an essential



Figure 25. Photo of an advertisement for an Irwin Seating Company desk. Photo provided by the Grand Rapids Community Media Center.

⁴² Grand Rapids Community Media Center, "Irwin Seating Co.," Furniture City History by the Grand Rapids Historical Commission (Grand Rapids Historical Commission), accessed December 3, 2021, <http://www.furniturecityhistory.org/company/3641/irwin-seating-co.>



Figure 26. Specifications for an Irwin Seating Company desk. Photo provided by the Grand Rapids Community Media Center.

feature due to the age ranges in classrooms.⁴³ The desks are dated from the late 1940s to the 1950s, having few changes throughout the years, but the main frame of the desks is consistent.

According to “Community School Plans” the Julius Rosenwald Fund Office, “It is important that every child be provided with a seat and desk of the proper height. His feet should touch the floor, the desk should be at elbow height when the upper arm is vertical, and the seat should underlap the desk by about one or two inches.”⁴⁴

Six out of the eight desks used in the classroom came from the basement, while the remaining two desks were found in a storage room. These two desks had the original pressed wood desktops hidden by a layer of stickers. With elbow grease, the stickers were removed,

⁴³ “Artifact: Trade Catalog, Irwin Seating Company, Modern School Furniture [203546],” Grand Rapids Public Museum, accessed December 1, 2021, <https://www.grpmcollections.org/Detail/objects/91393>.

⁴⁴ “Community School Plans,” iii.



Figure 27. Photo of the wooden desks in a storage room at the Townsend school after the stickers had been removed. Photo by Emily Huffer.

showcasing the wood top. While we can only speculate what was in the original school before it was burned and when schools integrated, these desks can give us an idea of what the school desks were like in the late 1940s to the 1950s.

Another item that was salvaged from the basement was a dual-sided green chalkboard. When it was found, it was on a 2x4 wood stand that not only covered one of the sides of the chalkboard but was in poor condition. After closer examination, the stand appeared to be added later, and due to drainage problems in the basement, the wooden base had become



Figure 28. Photo of the chalkboard found in the basement of the Townsend School. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

rotten. There was a yellow post-it note on the chalkboard with the word "keep" on it, which could have been the only reason why this board had not been disposed of. The stand was then removed, and the board was moved upstairs to the classroom. Because the back was covered by wood, this protected the chalkboard layer from damage.

Before installing the chalkboard, the chalk tray and the cork strip were removed from the board, then the damaged side of the board was hung, facing the wall. Later, the tray and cork strip was added back to the frame. The original color of chalkboards was black and it eventually changed into the institutional green. An 1897 Sears, Roebuck & Company catalog shows where

black chalkboards could be purchased, along with chalk erasers.⁴⁵ We can assume that this chalkboard was not in the school's first building due to the Community School Plans, but is from the period of 1933-1947. It too reflects Rosenwald guidelines. "Each classroom should have from 20 to 40 linear feet of good blackboard."⁴⁶

356 SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO., (Incorporated), Cheapest Supply

Blackboard Erasers.

53508 Chicago Dustless Eraser, wool felt, cleans the board thoroughly, very durably made. Weight, packed, 4 ounces. Each 6c.

Per doz. \$0.65
Per gross. 6.95

53510 The Matchless Dustless Eraser, made of thin fancy colored felt, firmly secured, forming a substantial and perfect eraser.

Each..... \$0.05
Per doz.55
Per gross. 5.45

Youth's Companion and Reversible Blackboard.

53512 Combination Writing and Drawing Desk. Suitable for home, Sunday and private schools. Both sides slated, hard wood frame. 3 feet 11 inches high, 2 feet wide. The most complete, perfect and reliable blackboard made. Price..... \$3.00



Portable Blackboards.

53514 Portable Blackboard of cloth with best black liquid slating surface on both sides, mounted on rollers with hook and rings complete

Size.	Each.	Size.	Each.	Size.	Each.
2x2 ft.	\$0 54	3x5 ft.	\$1 90	4x5 ft.	\$2 30
3x4 ft.	1 14	3x6 ft.	2 30	4x6 ft.	2 85
3x4 ft.	1 50	4x4 ft.	1 90	4x7 ft.	3 30

With music lines, \$1.25 each, additional.

53516 Portable Blackboard of Hyloplate, slated both sides; with ash frame; for use on wall, easel or table.

2x3 ft.	\$2.60	3½x5	\$5.50
3x2 ft.	3.60	4 x 6	7.15
3x4½ ft.	4.55		

With music lines, \$1.25 each additional.

Reversible portable blackboards, same as No. 51516, mounted on hardwood standards, for private schools, Sunday schools, lecture rooms, etc. Prices

School Slates With Wood Frames.

53526 "Hyatt" Patent Wire Bound School Slates combine strength, lightness, durability, and uniformity of finish of surface; being wire bound, they cannot come apart, and machine smoothed they present an absolutely even writing surface, free from ridges.

Size.	Each.	Per doz.	Wt., Ea.
6x9	\$0.04	\$0.42	18 oz.
7x11	0.05	0.48	22 oz.
8x12	0.06	0.60	25 oz.
6x9, 12 doz. in case, per case			\$4.75
7x11, 10 doz. in case, per case			4.50
8x12, 8 doz. in case, per case			4.50

"Hyatt" Noiseless Slates.

53528 Strength, lightness and durability combined. Best quality slate with perfectly finished, even writing surface, free from ridges. Frame is wire bound (cannot come apart) and covered with fine bright red (fast color) wool felt, securely fastened.

"Hyatt" Noiseless Slate, single.

Size.	Each.	Per doz.	Wt., Ea.
6x9	\$0.08	\$0.80	18 oz.
7x11	0.10	1.00	23 oz.
8x12	0.12	1.20	26 oz.
6x9, 12 doz. in case, per case			\$9.00
7x11, 10 doz. in case, per case			9.00
8x12, 8 doz. in case, per case			8.40

53529 "Hyatt" Noiseless Slate, double, hinged with strong webbing, firmly riveted to frames.

Size.	Each.	Per doz.	Wt., Ea.
7x11	\$0.20	\$2.00	40 oz.
8x12	0.24	2.40	46 oz.
7x11, 5 doz. in case, per case			\$9.00
8x12, 4 doz. in case			8.40

Victor Slates.

53530 Best Quality Slates, with perfectly smooth surface; frame covered with bright red wool felt and securely fastened.

Size.	Each.	Per doz.
5x7	\$0.08	\$0.80
6x9	.09	.95
7x11	.10	1.05
8x12	.12	1.25

Silicate Book Slates.

Superior quality, strongly made, bound in fine black cloth covers. Superior slate surface for the slate pencil. For school or office use.

Size.	Each.
5x7	\$0.08
6x9	.09
7x11	.10
8x12	.12

Figure 29. Photo of a page from a 1897 reprint of a Sears, Roebuck & Company catalog for chalkboards and chalkboard supplies. Photo provided by Sears Roebuck Catalogue.

⁴⁵ 1897 Sears Roebuck Catalogue (New York, NY: Chelsea House Publishers, 1968), 356.

⁴⁶ "Community School Plans: Suggestions for Improvement and Beautification School Plants," *Community School Plans: Suggestions for Improvement and Beautification School Plants* (Nashville, TN: The Julius Rosenwald Fund and The Interstate School Building Service, 1935), iii.

Townsend School always had vocational programs. As historian Mary Hoffschwelle emphasized:

Industrial education-part and parcel of the building program's dual origins in the white-dominated southern educational reform movement and the racial uplift agenda promoted by Tuskegee Institute- was supposed to be an integral part of the Rosenwald school curriculum... the program offered no specific grants for vocational buildings until 1927, even though its administrators realized that many schools turned their industrial rooms into regular classrooms because of overcrowding, local preference for academic training, or the lack of resources for vocational equipment.⁴⁷



Figure 30. Photo of the mock classroom at Townsend. Photo provided by Emily Huffer

⁴⁷ Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South: New Perspectives on the History of the South*, ed. John David Smith (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006), 118.

At Townsend, educators offered a home economics class, drafting class, and a carpentry class, according to alumni and from objects found at the school. Underneath the gym, in the basement, is a roll-top door that was used to bring in and out pieces of wood into the basement. There are also remnants of sewing machines scattered around what would have been the home economics room. One of the machines was not damaged by the flooding in the basement, so it was installed in the exhibit. The sewing machine is a Free-Westinghouse, that can be concealed



Figure 31. Photo of the sewing machine corner. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

in its cabinet. The Free-Westinghouse brand made sewing machines around the years 1926 to 1954.⁴⁸ While manuals of this sewing machine were not found in the basement or with research, it is difficult to date this machine to an exact year. However, by comparing similar machines, it is believed that this machine was from the late 1940s to the early 1950s.

A child's pattern was framed and placed above the sewing machine to provide context for the sewing machine and to remind museum patrons that clothes had to be made unless one could afford to purchase new clothes at stores. The pattern is a Simplicity brand that includes the designs and instructions to a baby doll style dress, bloomers, and a bonnet. A quilt square was included in a shadowbox to show a connection to making everyday items. A calico print was used on the Sunbonnet Sue pattern to depict flour sacks that were used to make clothes, quilts, and everything in-between. While the design cannot be pinned to a specific year, the late 1800s and the early 1900s is when Sunbonnet Sue began to rise in popularity.⁴⁹ The distinctive feature in this pattern is that the girl's face is never showing, and it is a side profile of her with a sunbonnet on and an empire waist style dress. This pattern is easily recognizable today, as

⁴⁸ James V., "Dating a Free Westinghouse Sewing Machine (Value, History)," SewingIsCool.com, July 7, 2020, <https://sewingiscool.com/dating-a-free-westinghouse-sewing-machine-value/>.

⁴⁹ Jane Gilbert, "A Brief History of Sunbonnet Sue," Classic Sewing Magazine, February 23, 2016, <https://www.classicsewingmagazine.com/sunbonnet-sue/>.

different variations have altered Sue and added Overall Andy to some patterns or scenes with her, but she will always be recognizable by her hat.



Figure 32. Photo of the sewing notions shadow box. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

The other sewing machine in the museum is a Singer pedal machine that had been re-wired to run on electricity. It is housed in its oak treadle cabinet. The Singer brand sewing machine is known worldwide. The Singer Company began in 1850 and is continuing to produce machines today.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ “History,” The Singer Brand History - 160+ Years of Sewing | Singer.com (Singer), accessed December 2, 2021, <https://www.singer.com/history>.



Figure 33. Photo of a Singer sewing machine used in the sewing corner. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

It was important for high schools and training schools to provide opportunities for children to be taught a trade along with the academics. By providing the means for children to learn a trade, they would be able to find job opportunities. Conversely, vocational education then pigeon-holed students into becoming laborers, farmhands, seamstresses, and other domestic jobs. As Carter Woodson explains, “. . . schools are still teaching individual garment making, which offers no future today except in catering to the privileged and rich classes.”⁵¹ The boys who attended Townsend school could enroll in shop classes and learn how to build their

⁵¹ Carter Godwin Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Associated publishers, 1933), <https://search-ebscohost.com.ezproxy.mtsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat08646a&AN=mtsu.60203dfc.fc28.4f84.a196.2abf439f7c7a&site=eds-live&scope=site>, 188.

woodworking knowledge. Several agricultural and primitive tools supplement the materials used in documenting this story.



Figure 34. Photo of a swing blade. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

One of the tools that are on display is a swing blade. This tool has a wooden handle and a curved, double-sided metal blade. This tool was used to cut weeds or grass, similar to what we know today as a weed-eater. From a 1942 Sears and Roebuck Catalog, the company was selling tools similar to the one used in the museum. While the catalog names their Craftsman brand tool as a "weed cutter," the tools are very similar.⁵²

⁵² "Spring 1942 Sears, Roebuck and Company, Catalog 184L: All U.S., Historic Catalogs of Sears, Roebuck and Co., 1896-1993," Ancestry, 1942, <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/1670/?keyword=swing+blade>, 961.

Grass Shears
DUNLAP. Cuts with hand in natural position. Blade lies flat on ground. Tool steel blades. Coil spring in handle. Handle clip and stop. 11 inches long over-all. Shipping weight, 1 lb. 6 oz. **99 L 8661... 59c**

Level Cut Shears
CRAFTSMAN. High carbon steel blades. Hollow ground. Hold their edges and will stay sharp. Unbreakable handles made to fit the hand; comfortable level cut; has easy cutting motion. 12-in. overall. Shpg. wt., 1 lb. 6 oz. **99 L 8660... 95c**

Long Handle Shear
CRAFTSMAN. 36-inch handle. No need to bend over to trim grass, etc. Strong easy-action spring in handle; prevents blades from sticking. Tempered 5-in. tool steel blades lie flat on ground. Finger guard. Shpg. wt., 3 lbs. **99 L 08663... \$1.69**

Weed Cutter
FULTON. Cuts weeds and high grass with an easy back and forth stroke. Blade sharpened on both edges. 14 in. long; 2 1/4 in. wide. 3/4-in. half round iron brace; fastened to 30-in. handle. Shipping weight, 3 pounds. **99 L 08594... 55c**

Weed Cutter
CRAFTSMAN. Sharp-edged serrated edges. Cuts weeds and high grass with an easy back and forth stroke. Blade is 14 in. long; 2 1/4 in. wide. Half round iron brace fastened to 30-in. handle. Shipping weight, 3 lbs. **99 L 08596... 79c**

Weed Cutter
CRAFTSMAN. Super quality. For weeds or grass. Double edged 12-inch blade cuts full width at each swing. Forged from one piece of high carbon bar steel. 30-in. handle for easy handling. No bending. Shpg. wt., 3 lbs. **99 L 08595... 95c**

Grass Slicer
CRAFTSMAN. Cutting edge on both sides for easy back and forth stroke. Hardened 9x1 1/4-in. steel blade. Flex-steel shaft with comfortable wood handle. 36 in. over-all. Shpg. wt., 2 lbs. **99 L 08670... 63c**

Loop and Ring Snaths
 Selected second growth white ash. Bent and tapered. Ash nib handles. Malleable iron ferrules and loops. Shpg. wt., each, 6 lbs.
99 L 08700—No. 50, for grass scythes. Complete with wrench. **\$1.59**
99 L 08701—No. 105, for bush or weed scythes. Complete with wrench. **\$1.79**
99 L 08702—Two-Ring Bush or Weed Snath. No. 100. **\$1.70**

Save on Scythe Blades
FULTON. 1-piece scythes. High carbon steel. A dependable, serviceable scythe. Shpg. wt., each, 3 lbs.
99 L 08685—30-in. Grass Scythe. **\$1.15**
99 L 08686—28-in. Weed Scythe. **\$1.29**
99 L 08687—20-in. Bush Scythe. **1.29**
CRAFTSMAN. Our finest, 3 pieces of steel welded into 1. Tool steel edge. Soft steel body. Back and heel tough steel. Shipping weight, 3 pounds.
99 L 08690—30-in. Grass Scythe. **\$1.49**
99 L 08691—28-in. Weed Scythe. **\$1.59**
99 L 08692—20-in. Bush Scythe. **1.59**

Scythehook
FULTON. Light but strong. For light work in place of scythe. Oil-tempered 18-in. steel blade ribbed for stiffness; can be removed for grinding. 4 1/2-foot straight grained handle with hand hold nib. Shipping weight, 4 pounds. **99 L 08676... \$1.19**

You Save More at Sears on Quality Grass Hooks
FULTON. For high, heavy grass your mower can't reach. One-piece tempered tool steel blade. Shaped hardwood offset handle. Good quality; very low priced. Shipping weight, 1 pound 4 ounces. **99 L 8665... 21c**
CRAFTSMAN. We sincerely believe there is no finer grass hook made. Best tool steel blade, has super-sharp edge; polished. Knob-end, easy-grip, offset handle. Shipping weight, 1 pound 4 ounces. **99 L 8666... 59c**
CRAFTSMAN. Highest quality forged steel scythe blade easily removed for sharpening. Tough steel shank with strong hardwood handle. Shpg. wt., 1 lb. 6 oz. **99 L 8668... 59c**
 As above, with sturdy 40-in. handle. Shpg. wt., 2 lbs. **99 L 08669... 85c**

PAGE 961 GARDEN EQUIPMENT

Figure 35. Photo from a 1942 Sears, Roebuck and Company catalog advertising grass shears, weed cutters, and scythes. Photo provided by Ancestry.com.

From the same catalog, the scythe and scythe blades were available. A similarly shaped instrument was displayed in the museum, but it is believed to be a primitive version of a scythe or a type of cutting tool. Its handle is made of wood, and the metal part has been sharpened on the inside plane. It is believed that this instrument could have been used to cut tobacco or corn. The user of this instrument would have held this tool in their hand, with the wooden piece in their palm, and the metal neck of the tool would have gone in between the third and fourth fingers or their first and second fingers. It is assumed that once the tool is in your hand, the likely motion would be, for example, to hold corn, would be pulling the husks off the corn with this tool towards you. Another hypothesis is that this tool was used to cut tobacco plant stalks. Either

of these crops could have been grown in Winchester, Tennessee, and the surrounding areas.⁵³

Burley tobacco once was grown in sixty-six of Tennessee's ninety-five counties.⁵⁴

Another tool in the museum collections was a shovel. The shovel has a broad blade that sets itself apart from typical shovels. An 1895 Montgomery Ward & Company



Figure 36. Photo of a scoop shovel at Townsend School. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

Catalog shows a variation of the types of shovels offered.⁵⁵ The only differentiation between the types of shovels in the catalog and the one in the museum is the handle. The scoop shovel bears the most similarities in the blade, but the shafts are distinctively different. The ones in the catalog appear to be made of wood, and the museum example is steel. At one time, it could have had a

⁵³ "Tobacco," University of Tennessee: Institute of Agriculture (University of Tennessee, 2018), <https://ag.tennessee.edu/plantsciences/Pages/Tobacco.aspx>.

⁵⁴ Murray Miles, "Tobacco," Tennessee Encyclopedia (Tennessee Historical Society, March 1, 2018), <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/tobacco/>.

⁵⁵ *Montgomery Ward & Company: Catalogue and Buyers' Guide*, 1895 Spring and Summer, vol. No. 57 (Toronto, Canada: Dover Publications, 1969), 393.



Figure 38. Photo of a post-hole digger at Townsend School. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

An example of the post-hole digger is on the same Montgomery Ward catalog page as the shovels. It is clear that whoever owned these tools used them frequently and needed to use them for their job or their own tasks.

In conclusion, these agricultural implements represent a period when a school education for African Americans may not have been seen as worthy by white people by choosing their occupations for them. The thought behind this was, “to cut loose from academic learning and instead emphasized vocational training to keep black laborers on farms and in low-skill industrial jobs, where they would undergird the region's economic development without challenging whites for jobs or power.”⁵⁶ Seamstresses, cooks, farmers, and woodworkers became products of training schools until the emphasis of education changed from learning a trade to learning reading, writing, and arithmetic.

⁵⁶ Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006), 23.

Chapter Three

The African American Community at Townsend School

Surrounding Townsend School is a large African American neighborhood. Here are important community institutions, especially churches. Figure thirty-nine depicts the area where the black community congregates and has lived since after the Civil War.

Churches

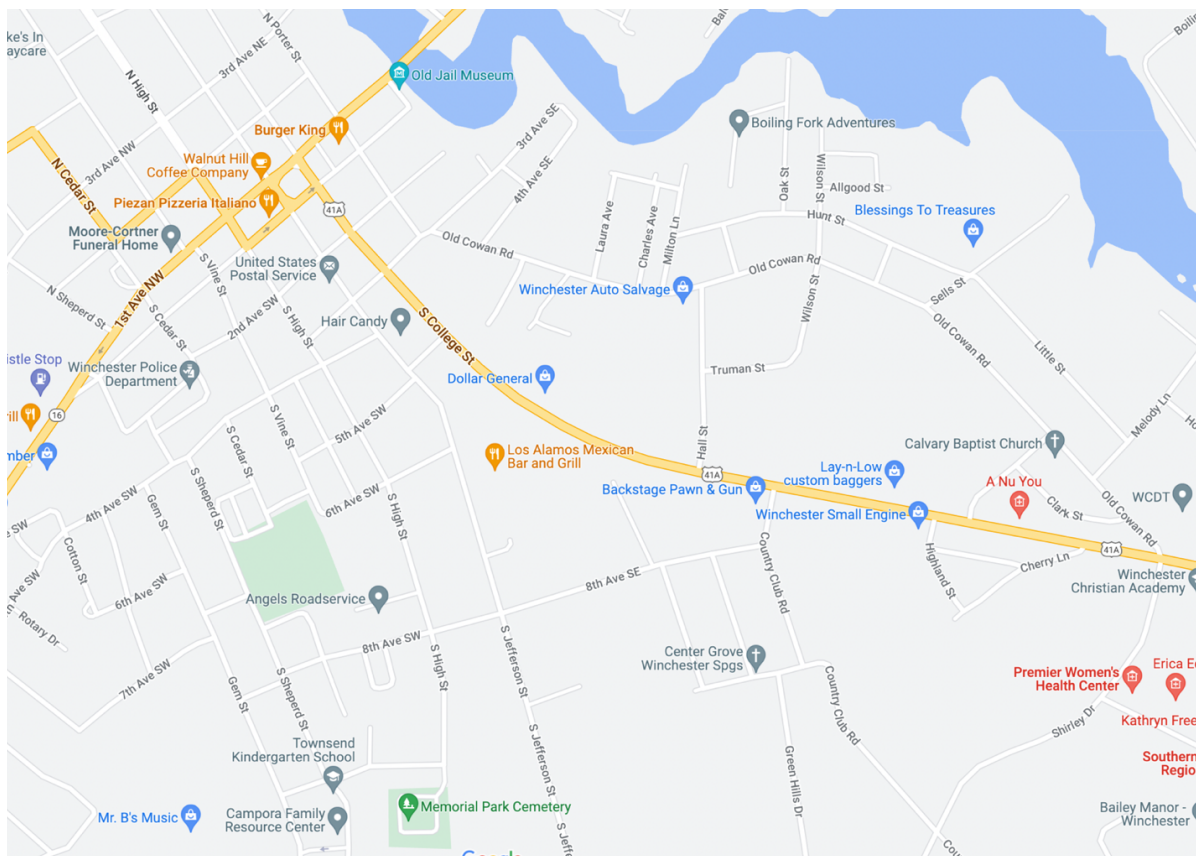


Figure 39. Photo of the historically Black community around Townsend School. Photo provided by Google Maps.

Churches in the African American community serve as a place for spiritual and social gatherings. On the Old Cowan Road, the area was previously known as Churchtown due to the

number of churches on the road and adjacent streets.⁵⁷ Winchester's oldest black church, located at 317 3rd Avenue Southeast, and was initially named Mount Zion Baptist Church. "In June of 1865, a small band of freed Negroes met under a brush arbor near the banks of Boiling Fork River in Winchester, Tennessee, and organized a church which they named Mount Zion Baptist Church."⁵⁸ They were originally members of the white First Baptist Church and asked to split to create their own congregation. Levi Trimble, previously enslaved by A.D. Trimble, who was the Reverend of the white Baptist Church, asked for the split from the original church, ". . . to disconnect the colored members of the Church from the white and recognize them as the First Colored Baptist Church in Winchester as they have already assumed themselves to be."⁵⁹

Until the church was built, the congregation met on the site of the future church, under a brush arbor tree, and in the homes of congregation members. In 1868, the congregations worked together to acquire the property where the current church sits. "Using the white pastor, A.D. Trimble, as an intermediary, they acquired a lot on the Boiling Fork Creek for one hundred dollars and promised to pay off an additional one-hundred-dollar lien on the property."⁶⁰ The original Church consisted of a bell tower, white frame building, and a "rather plain style that was common in church architecture in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century."⁶¹

It was not until 1911 that an even larger church was needed to accommodate the congregation and their needs. The construction of building the church was under the supervision

⁵⁷ Emily Huffer and Joy Gallagher, Franklin County Church Interview with Joy Gallagher. Notes in author's possession, April 22, 2022.

⁵⁸ "The History of the First Baptist Church (Negro) Winchester, Tennessee," *Franklin County Historical Review*, June 1972, pp. 24-29, 24.

⁵⁹ "Minutes of the First Baptist Church, Book 2" Winchester First Baptist Church Archives, (Winchester, n.d.), 8.

⁶⁰ Mary Osweiler Powers, *Let Them Work: The Freedmen's Bureau Labor Contracts of Franklin County, Tennessee* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2010), 48.

⁶¹ "The History of the First Baptist Church (Negro) Winchester, Tennessee," *Franklin County Historical Review*, June 1972, pp. 24-29, 25.

of Reverend Doctor Anderson Townsend. The church has two distinct towers on either side of the building, creating a dignified style of church, as seen in figure forty.⁶² Figure forty-one is a photo of the church today.



Figure 40. Photo of the First Baptist Church in 1972 in Winchester Tennessee. Photo provided by George W. Hopkins.

⁶² George W Hopkins, *First Baptist Church (Col) Formerly Mt. Zion*, photograph (Winchester, TN, n.d.), Franklin County Historical Society.

After the building's completion, members dedicated the new First Baptist Church on the first Sunday of March in 1912. In the past one hundred years, the church has added rooms for church education and community events. It has installed a baptismal pool under the pulpit, a basement equipped to make and serve meals, and replaced the roof when necessary. Figure forty-two depicts the cornerstone of the church.⁶³ Figure forty-three shows the additions made to the rear of the church.⁶⁴



Figure 41. Photo of the Winchester First Baptist Church. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

⁶³ Emily Huffer, photograph of First Baptist Church

⁶⁴ Emily Huffer, Photograph of First Baptist Church cornerstone.



Figure 43. Photo of the Winchester First Baptist cornerstone. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.



Figure 42. Photo of the side view of the Winchester First Baptist Church. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.



Figure 44. Photo of the Mt. View African Methodist Episcopal Church in Winchester in 1978. Photo provided by the Herald Chronicle.

The Mt. View African Methodist Episcopal Church is located at 406 4th Avenue Southeast in Winchester, Tennessee. The congregation began in 1871, named Ruscies Chapel A.M.E. Church initially due to the congregation receiving land from Mrs. Charlotte Russey. The difference in spelling is not known. The congregation changed the name to St. John in September of 1888 when they laid the cornerstone.⁶⁵ In 1890, the church membership boasted over one hundred members.⁶⁶ In 1968, a groundbreaking ceremony was held, and the Arunah Lodge #132 of Winchester laid the new cornerstone, for the present building.

Figure forty-four depicts a view of the left side of the building when the congregation paid off their mortgage. Between the years 1998 and 2022, several changes happened to the

⁶⁵ "Church to Burn Mortgage," *The Herald-Chronicle*, November 23, 1978, p. 3B.

⁶⁶ "History of Franklin County Churches: Saint John A.M.E. Church," *The Herald Chronicle*, 1970, pp. 7A-12A.



Figure 45. Photo of the Mt. View African Methodist Episcopal Church in Winchester in 1998. Photo provided by Carroll Van West.

church. Figure forty-five was photographed in 1998, and its name is St. John A.M.E. Church.⁶⁷ Then in figure forty-six, photographed in 2022, the name of the church changed to Mt. View A.M.E. Church.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Carroll Van West, "St. John AME Church: View of Front and Side," MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation (Middle Tennessee State University, 1998), <https://cdm15838.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15838coll4/id/6555/rec/6>.

⁶⁸ Emily Huffer photograph of Mt. View AME Church.



Figure 46. Photo of the Mt. View African Methodist Episcopal Church in Winchester. Photo provided by Emily Huffer.

The church's interior appears to have wood paneling on the walls, which is time appropriate since the church was built in the late 1960s. The pulpit is oval, with three upholstered cathedral chairs, as seen in figure forty-seven.⁶⁹

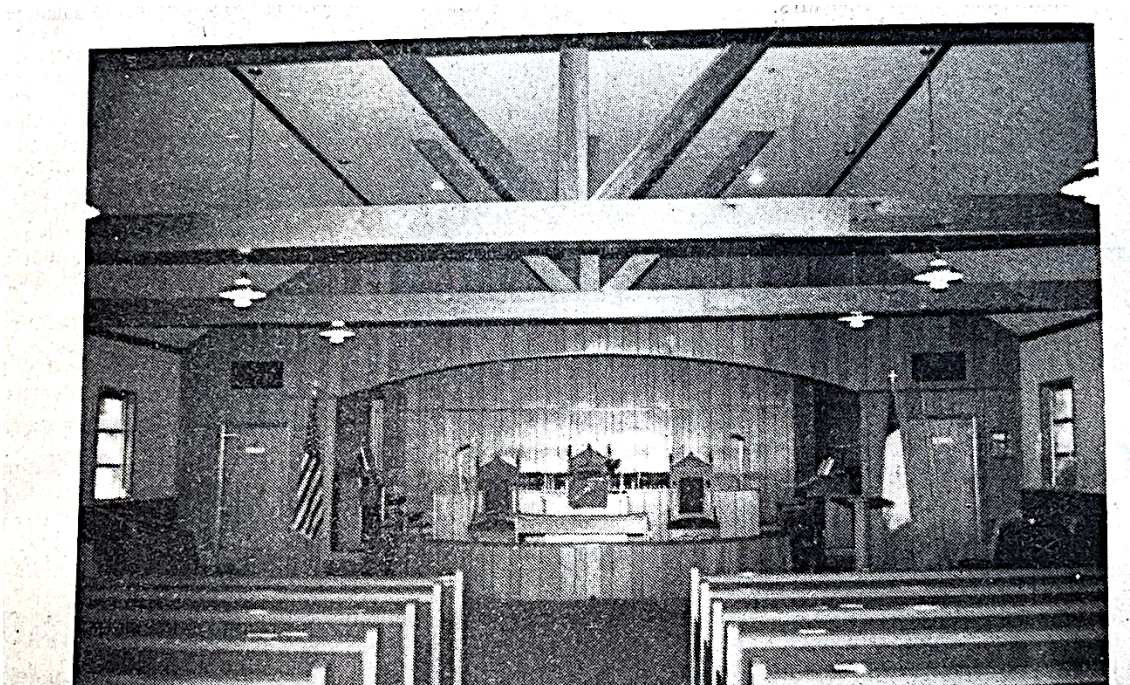


Figure 47. Interior of the Mt. View African Methodist Episcopal church in 1970. Photo provided by the Herald Chronicle.

⁶⁹ "History of Franklin County Churches: Saint John A.M.E. Church," *The Herald Chronicle*, 1970, pp. 7A-12A.

The First Baptist and the A.M.E. church both come from a plot of land once known as the Graves-Washington Park. Z.C. Graves was the president of the Mary Sharp School for girls for over forty years. Once he passed away, his land was passed down to family members and divided in May of 1917. Figure forty-eight depicts where the school was then starting on the road where Third Avenue and Old Cowan Road split.⁷⁰ Figure forty-nine shows the deed book page where the individual plots of land were for sale.⁷¹ The First Baptist Church is located on plots 31, 30, and 29 in block A. In 1993, the church acquired plots 28 and 27. The A.M.E. Church is either in block C or B.

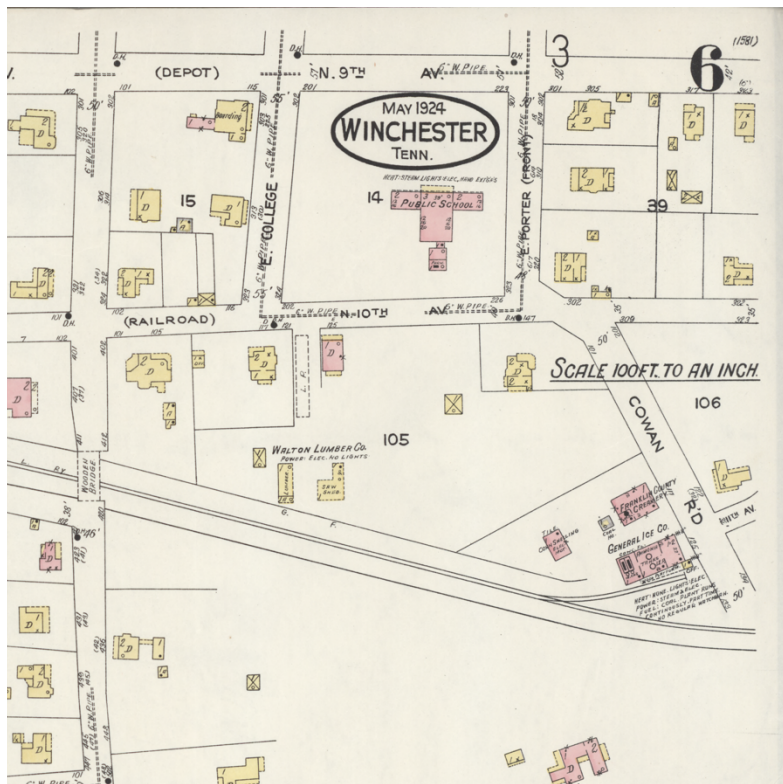


Figure 48. Photo of the 1924 Sanborn Map of Winchester, Tennessee. Photo provided by ProQuest.

⁷⁰ “Winchester July 1924 Sheet 6,” Digital Sanborn Maps (ProQuest), accessed May 2022, <https://digitalsanbornmaps.proquest.com/barcode?accountid=11192>.

⁷¹ *Franklin County Deed Book*, vol. 41 (Winchester, TN, 1917), 35.

Cemeteries

In the Franklin County Cemetery Records, there are records of enslaved household members being buried in the enslaver's family cemetery, thus continuing to assert their dominance and power even after they have passed. Historian Terri Williams noted, "The cemetery became the final resting place for loved ones who were now thought to be free of the cruelties of racism and injustice."⁷² After the Civil War, African Americans did not have to be buried in the family cemeteries of their white enslavers. With Jim Crow laws, public cemeteries continued to separate spaces for the dead, "with Jim Crow laws ensuring that the souls of whites and blacks were kept separate for eternity."⁷³ There are few written documents discussing the burials of African Americans until the first person with a headstone was buried in the "colored" section of the Winchester City Cemetery in 1879. The cemetery is still segregated today, as depicted in figure fifty.⁷⁴

The city cemetery is situated on Shepard Street, which is the street where the Townsend School is located. Further solidifying the status and belief that the Black community was not worthy of property with rich soil, ideal location, or valuable land. Charlotte King observed: "Graveyards were often located on land deemed too poor to be agriculturally productive."⁷⁵ Important pillars of the Black community are buried within the "Colored Section" of the cemetery, such as Rev. Doc Anderson Townsend and Rev. Frank Levi Trimble.

⁷² Terri Williams, "Jim Crow and African-American Cemeteries and Burial Practices," Higher Ground: Honoring Washington Park Cemetery, Its People and Place (Washington University in St. Louis), accessed February 25, 2023, <http://omeka.wustl.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/washington-park/about-cemetery/jimcrow>.

⁷³ Lynn Rainville, *Hidden History: African American Cemeteries in Central Virginia* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 2014), 65.

⁷⁴ *Cemetery Records of Franklin County, Tennessee* (Winchester, TN: Franklin County Publishing Company, 1986), 100.

⁷⁵ Charlotte King, "Separated by Death and Color: The African American Cemetery of New Philadelphia, Illinois," *Historical Archaeology* 44, no. 1 (2010): pp. 125-37, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27820824>.

Directly across the street from the Townsend School is the Memorial Park Cemetery, which was not deliberately designed as a segregated cemetery. The burials start in the late 1930s and continue through today. In figure fifty-one is a depiction of the Memorial Park Cemetery.⁷⁶

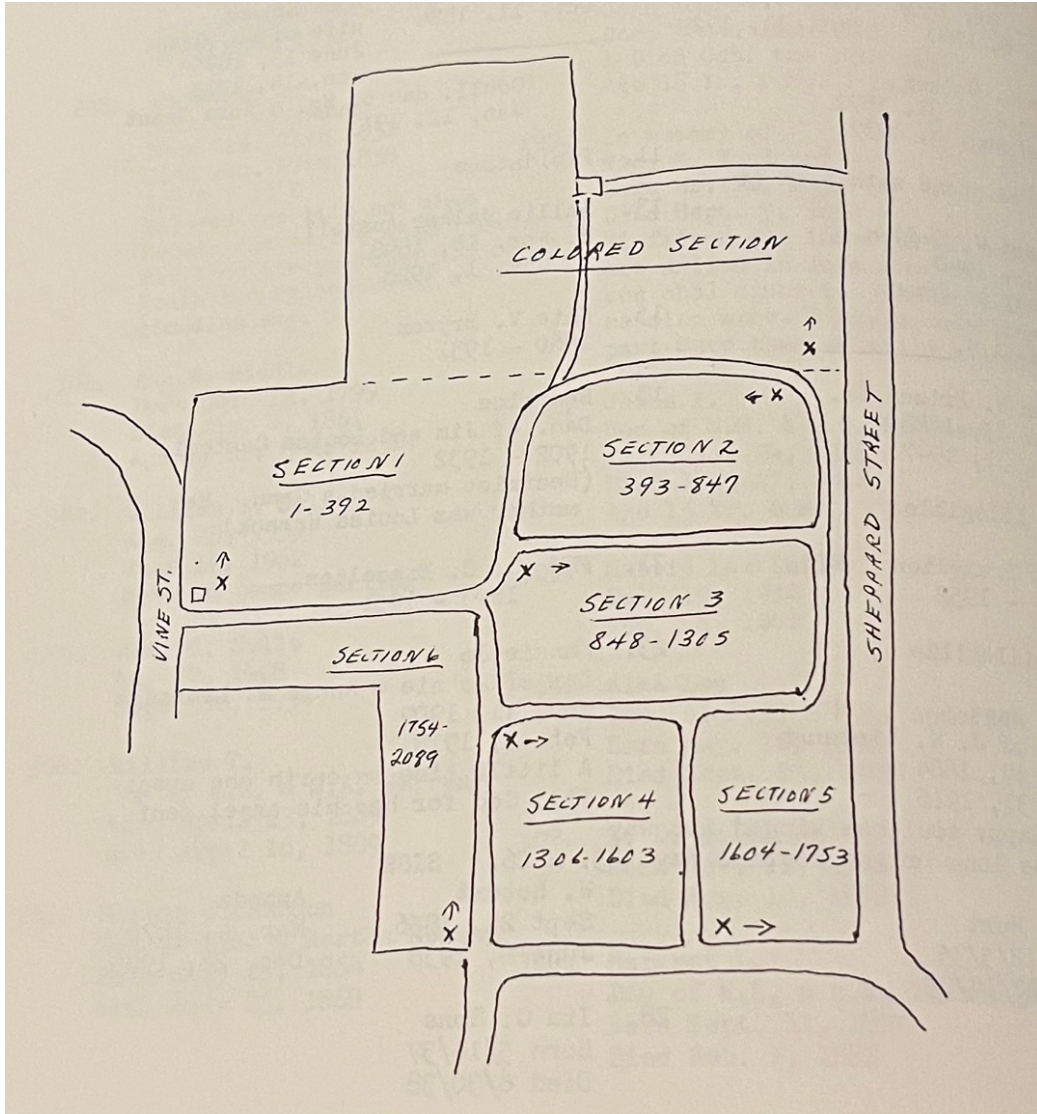


Figure 50. Photo of the cemetery layout by the Townsend School. Photo provided by the Cemetery Records of Franklin County.

⁷⁶ *Cemetery Records of Franklin County, Tennessee* (Winchester, TN: Franklin County Publishing Company, 1986), 192.

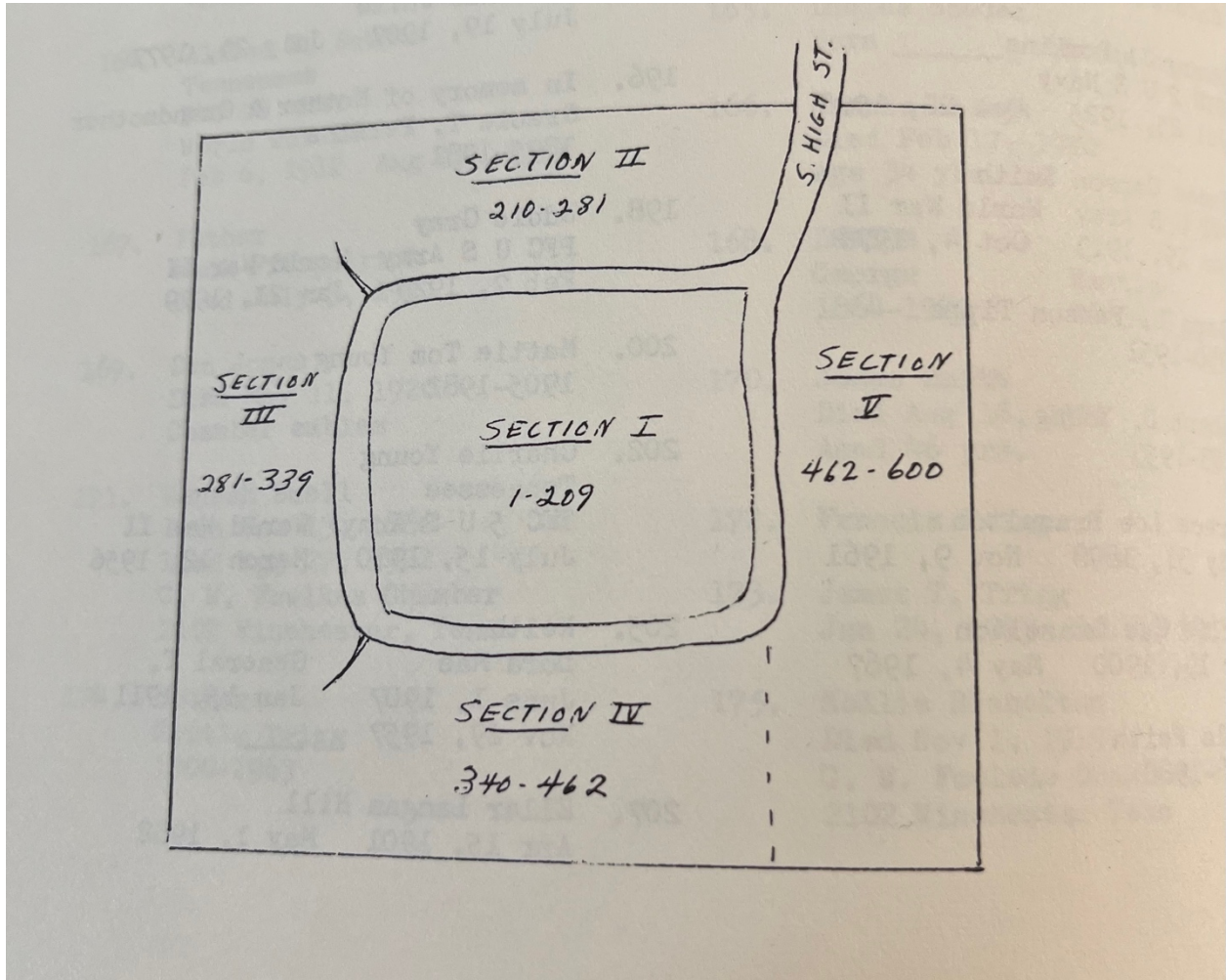


Figure 51. Photo of the cemetery layout at the Memorial Park Cemetery by the Townsend School. Photo provided by the Cemetery Records of Franklin County.

Chapter Four

Stepping Stones for Other Public Historians

The Julius Rosenwald Fund was created to help support "the well-being of mankind."⁷⁷ By this mission, the Rosenwald Fund was able to work with Black communities across the South, that would have potentially never have had the access to education when they did, without this support. Working with communities is the pivotal feature in public history. As Middle Tennessee State University states, "Public history refers to the pursuit of historical understanding and interpretation in the public realm."⁷⁸ Public historians should work with communities to see what is important to them, what they want to preserve, and how this history can be shared to others. The community, in other words, is driving the bus, not the scholar. By working with the members of the Townsend Cultural Center, we were able to preserve their history that was previously placed away in dresser drawers, in cedar chests, and other storage means. We were able to scan, collect, interpret, and display these historical items that could have never been seen again by community members. Once the community began to see how these items were being collected, to be preserved for many years to come in the museum, the community members began to bring their own objects to be added to the museum's collection.

A way that Townsend Cultural Center was able to outreach into the larger community was through the use of social media, especially Facebook. By the means of Facebook, we could post to show what we were working on in the museum, a new artifact's arrival, and any events

⁷⁷ Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, First (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1949), 28.

⁷⁸ "Public History, M.A.," Public History, M.A. | Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), accessed January 14, 2023, <https://www.mtsu.edu/programs/public-history-ma/#:~:text=Public%20history%20refers%20to%20the,%2C%20doctorate%2C%20and%20advanced%20certificate s..>

that were occurring at the Center. This method of communication allowed the Center to have a huge success in reaching past alumni not only locally but across the nation, reaching people who grew up in Winchester but now reside elsewhere.

Citizens within Franklin County also rely heavily on the newspaper and the radio stations to relay information to each other. Through advertising in the upcoming events section of the Herald Chronicle Newspaper, we were able to spread events to citizens who did not use social media.⁷⁹

The Townsend Cultural Center is an influential institution in Franklin County due to its rich history for students, citizens, and tourists. The Center already has had visits from classes from Sewanee: The University of the South and as well as local public and private schools. The Center was even able to host a STEM program, partnering with the Franklin County Board of Education, to promote science, technology, engineering, and math during the summer of 2022. As Townsend is the only public African American school building open for visitors in the county, it emphasizes the point of the building's impact on the twenty-first-century Black landscape.

Future steps that could be taken for Townsend Cultural Center's building, the surrounding Black churches, and the Black neighborhood, include applying for the Historic Rural African-American Churches in Tennessee, 1850 -1970, National Register of Historic Places nomination. This nomination would fall under the three categories that the nomination

⁷⁹ "Happenings in Aug. 26, 2021, Edition," *The Herald Chronicle*, August 27, 2021, https://www.heraldchronicle.com/entertainment/local/happenings-in-aug-26-2021-edition/article_c4a97934-05b9-11ec-9412-67e08dd52ad8.html.

covers, creating A tradition, 1850 -1890, maintaining tradition in an era of Jim Crow Segregation, 1890 -1945, and the modern era, 1945 -1970.⁸⁰

Preserving the Black landscapes of the South are crucial as they help tell the complete story of the lives of African Americans. The authors of *Black Landscapes Matter* emphasize how the erasure of Black landscapes takes away from the community and ". . . is a call to arms against concealment of the truth that some people don't want to know or see. Erasure is a call to arms to remember. Erasure allows people to forget, particularly those whose lives and actions are complicit."⁸¹ John Hunt's thesis, "Negro School History," documents where the location of

⁸⁰ Carroll Van West, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Historic Rural African-American Churches in Tennessee, 1850 -1970," United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, 1999, https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/64500618_text.

⁸¹ Walter Hood and Grace Mitchell Tada, *Black Landscapes Matter* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2020), 2.

eleven black schools in Franklin County in 1942. Today in 2023, there are two of these buildings remaining. Townsend is the only operable building open to the public, and the other building is the Asia school. The Asia school exists but is deteriorating at a rapid rate. In 2011, the Asia

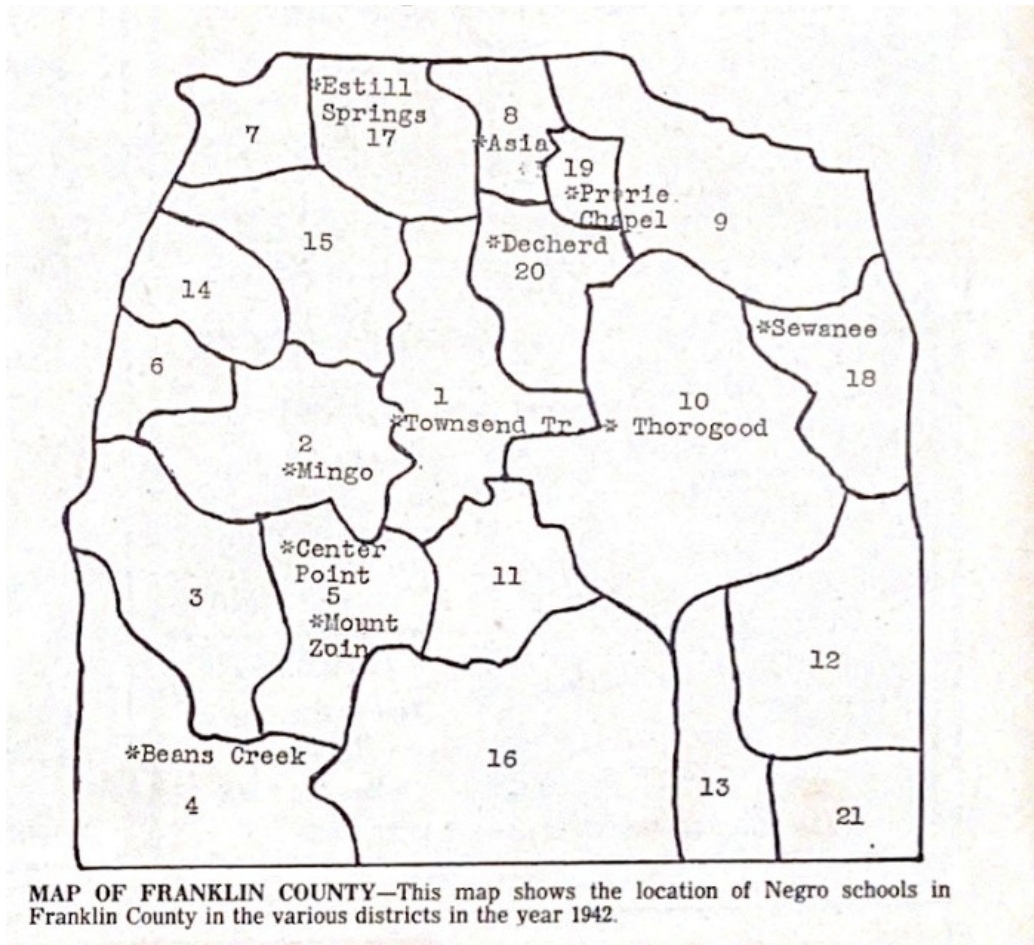


Figure 52. Photo of Black schools in Franklin County and their locations. Photo provided by John Hunt.

school was placed on the National Register for Historic Places, and the community hopes to restore the site, so it can become an interactive museum discussing African American Schools from post-slavery to integration in Franklin County.⁸² The community of Asia, and the United Primitive Baptist Church of Macedonia which now owns the schoolhouse, are eagerly trying to raise funds so that this building does not become another element of the Black historic landscape

⁸² “Eleven Tennessee Sites Added to the National Register of Historic Places,” Tennessee Historical Commission, August 17, 2011, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130715195233/https://news.tn.gov/node/7622>.

that is erased. Hoffschwelle observed: "Children still learn in Rosenwald buildings, and other people attend church and community gatherings in them, dwell inside their walls, or use them for storage. Churches and community-based social program agencies operate out of offices set up in former Rosenwald schools. Their survival – and their destruction – reflect the processes by which buildings gain and change meanings as people come together to build and use them."⁸³

The Townsend School has always been the heart of the African American community in Franklin County, and with the implementation of the museum, I am certain it will continue to evolve into an educational resource if not only for the county but for the South as well.

⁸³ Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*, 280.

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