

EXPEDITED
MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	4101 Muncaster Mill Road, Rockville	Meeting Date:	8/14/2019
Resource:	Master Plan Site #23/113-2 Norbeck Rosenwald School	Report Date:	8/7/2019
Applicant:	M-NCPPC (Montgomery Parks)	Public Notice:	7/31/2019
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	n/a
Case Number:	23/113-2-19A	Staff:	Dan Bruechert
PROPOSAL:	Interpretive Signage		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- ☒ **Approve**
☐ **Approve with conditions**

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Individually listed Master Plan Site
STYLE: Vernacular
DATE: 1927



Figure 1: 4101 Muncaster Mill Rd. is located near the intersection with Norbeck Rd.



Figure 2: *View of the historic building from the parking lot.*

The Norbeck Recreation Center is located at 4101 Muncaster Mill Road (Route 115) just west of the intersection of Norbeck Road (Route 28) in Norbeck. Situated on 21,780 square feet of land in the Norbeck-Muncaster Mill Park, the building is adjacent to the 1890s chapel of the Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church (today called Waves of Glory Church) and its associated cemetery. The Montgomery County-owned property consists of the recreation center and a parking lot.

The Norbeck Recreation Building was built in 1927 as a Rosenwald School, a segregated school for local African American children in the African American community known as Mount Pleasant. This particular two-teacher, two-room school was one of nine such facilities built in Montgomery County during that same timespan. The two teacher, two-room school architectural plan was the most common utilized in Maryland in the 14 years (1918-1932) the Julius Rosenwald Fund helped establish these schools. At Norbeck, one room functioned as a classroom for grades 1-6 (at one time housed as many as 85 students), while the other room served as a coat closet and storeroom for wood. Despite alterations, this structure still embodies the defining characteristics of a typical Rosenwald school found throughout the American South. It remains the only Rosenwald School in Montgomery County owned by the county (and managed by M-NCPPC via an MOU) and with public access.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to install interpretive signage on the site. All signage complies with the National Park Service guidelines.

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

The Expedited Staff Report format may be used on the following type of cases:

6. Signs that are in conformance with all other County sign regulations.

Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8

- (b) The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to insure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:
 - (1) The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site or historic resource within an historic district; or
 - (2) The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; or [...]

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, space and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) and (2) , having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with the purposes of *Chapter 24A*;

and with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #2*,

and with the general condition that the applicant shall present the **3 permit sets of drawings, if applicable, to Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) staff for review and stamping** prior to submission for the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) building permits;

and with the general condition that final project design details, not specifically delineated by the Commission, shall be approved by HPC staff or brought back to the Commission as a revised HAWP application at staff's discretion;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall notify the Historic Preservation Staff if they propose to make **any alterations** to the approved plans. Once the work is completed the applicant will **contact the staff person** assigned to this application at 301-563-3400 or dan.bruechert@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.

Location of Building/Premise

Norbeck Rosenwald School (Recreation Building)

Tax Account Number: 00702071

Address: 4101 Muncaster Mill Road

Nearest Cross Street: Norbeck Road and Georgia Avenue

Lot: n/a

Liber 29914 Folio 259

Part One:

Install sign

Part Two: N/A

Part Three: N/A

A. Description of existing structural and environmental setting, including historic features and significance.

The Norbeck Recreation Center is located at 4101 Muncaster Mill Road (Route 115) just west of the intersection of Norbeck Road (Route 28) in Norbeck. Situated on 21,780 square feet of land in the Norbeck-Muncaster Mill Park, the building is adjacent to the 1890s chapel of the Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church (today called Waves of Glory Church) and its associated cemetery.¹ The Montgomery County-owned property consists of the recreation center and a parking lot.

The Norbeck Recreation Building was built in 1927 as a Rosenwald School, a segregated school for local African American children in the African American community known as Mount Pleasant. This particular two-teacher, two-room school was one of nine such facilities built in Montgomery County during that same time-span. The two-teacher, two-room school architectural plan was the most common utilized in Maryland in the 14 years (1918-1932) the Julius Rosenwald Fund helped establish these schools.² At Norbeck, one room functioned as a classroom for grades 1-6 (at one time housed as many as 85 students), while the other room served as a coat closet and storeroom for wood. Despite alterations, this structure still embodies the defining characteristics of a typical Rosenwald school found throughout the American South. It remains the only Rosenwald School in Montgomery County owned by the county (and managed by M-NCPPC via an MOU) and with public access.

The Norbeck Rosenwald School (#23/113-1) was converted into a recreation building by M-NCPPC following desegregation in 1951. This resource is situated within a 21,780 s.f. acre environmental setting which is maintained to preserve the operational integrity of the site.

B. General Description of Project and its effect on the historic resource(s).

As part of the stated mission of the Cultural Resources Stewardship Section of M-NCPPC, Montgomery County Department of Parks, interpretive signage functions as an outreach tool to convey new research to patrons about our various heritage sites. Because the majority of our sites are unstaffed, we rely on such signage to identify a

¹ For more information on this church, see the MIHP form for the Norbeck Historic District at http://www.mdihp.net/dsp_county.cfm?search=county&criteria1=N&criteria2=MO&criteria3=&id=17447&viewer=true.

² There were 68 two-teacher, two-room Rosenwald schoolhouses in Maryland and six of them were in Montgomery County (Burnt Mills, Laytonsville, *Norbeck*, *Poolesville*, Spencerville and Washington Grove). Those schools italicized are the only structures still standing. This Rosenwald plan typically was one story, usually side-gabled, with two batteries of four, five, or six windows lighting the front or rear wall.

property and educate the public as to its intrinsic value and legitimize our commitment to stewardship of said building and/or archaeological site.

To date, there is no signage on the premise. The focus of the new sign will examine both the creation of the Norbeck Rosenwald School and a history of the community known as Mount Pleasant. The latter, in turn, allows Parks to discuss the historic resources that neighbor the school including the Mount Pleasant Methodist Episcopal Church and its cemetery. Guests will view a variety of photographic images and illustrations that supplement the historic text. It is hoped in the future more interpretive signage will be produced for this site.

Effect: No historic or archaeological resources will be touched during this project. The sign planned will not be attached to any standing structures nor will they obscure any views to or from them. It will be placed a few feet from the actual school structure because of the limited open space on this parcel and wanting to avoid tree roots and sap. We have concerns that parked cars will obscure the sign, so it will be placed at location where "no parking" is painted on the driveway. We will mulch the area to give the signage some landscaping to draw attention to the exhibit. The improvement is easily reversible. The project will have no adverse effect on the historic character defining features of the property. They will not alter or diminish the integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association. It will have a positive impact by providing historic information to Park visitors.

2. Site Plan: See attached

3. Plans and Elevations: See attached

4. Material Specifications: The sign is composed of a 24" X 36" durable embedded fiberglass panel mounted on an aluminum pedestal at a 45-degree angle. The cantilevered exhibit base is set into the ground at an ADA compliant waist height of 28"-32". Cement will be used to anchor the sign posts in the ground to prevent easy removal by vandals and heaving in the winter. The sign will be fabricated by Pannier Graphics, a National Park Service approved vendor. The design of the interpretive material follows a standard design for all historic markers being placed within the county's Parks system.

5. Photographs: See attached

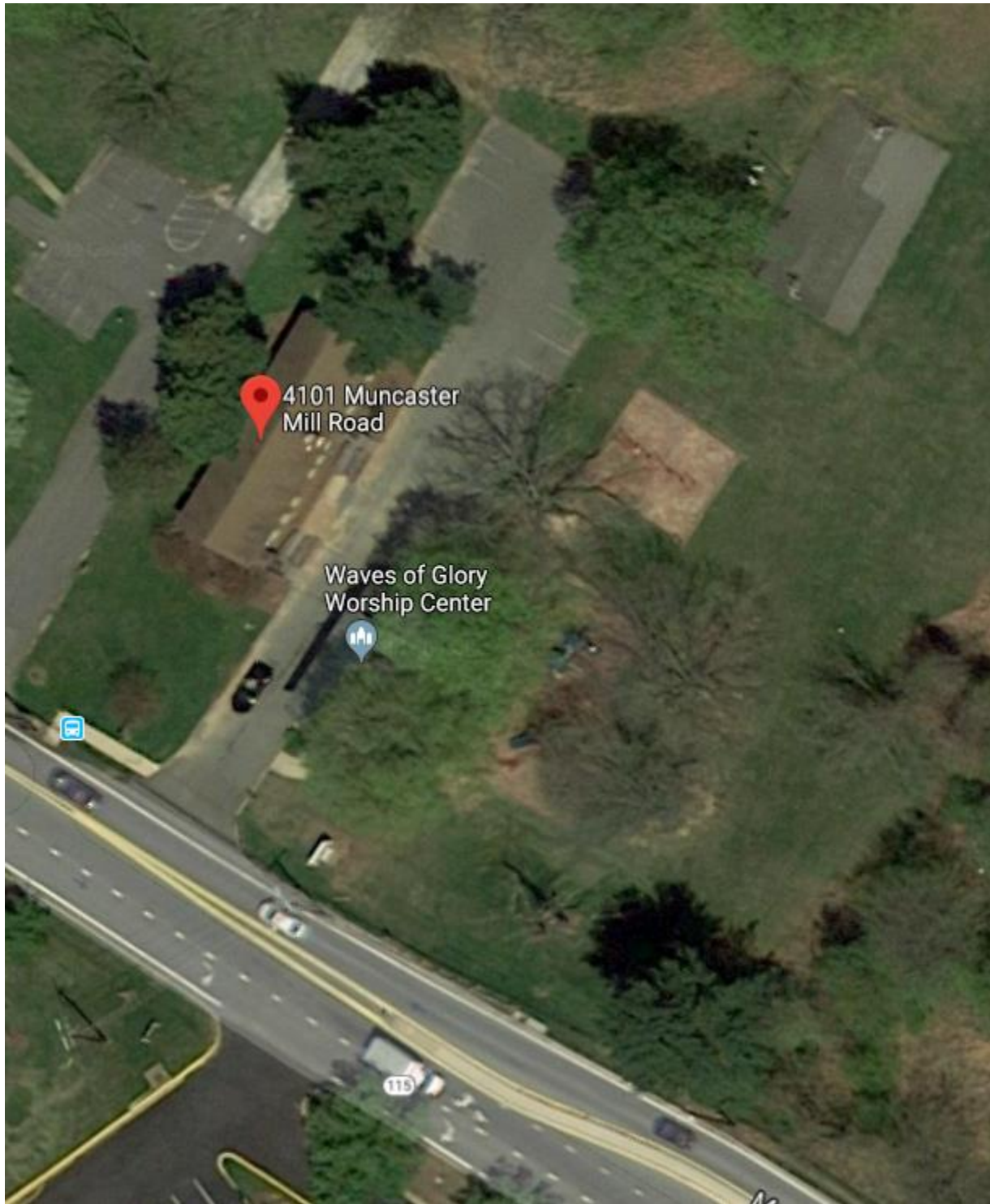
6. Tree Survey: No trees will be adversely affected by this installation. We are intentionally locating the sign away from the pine trees beside the building.

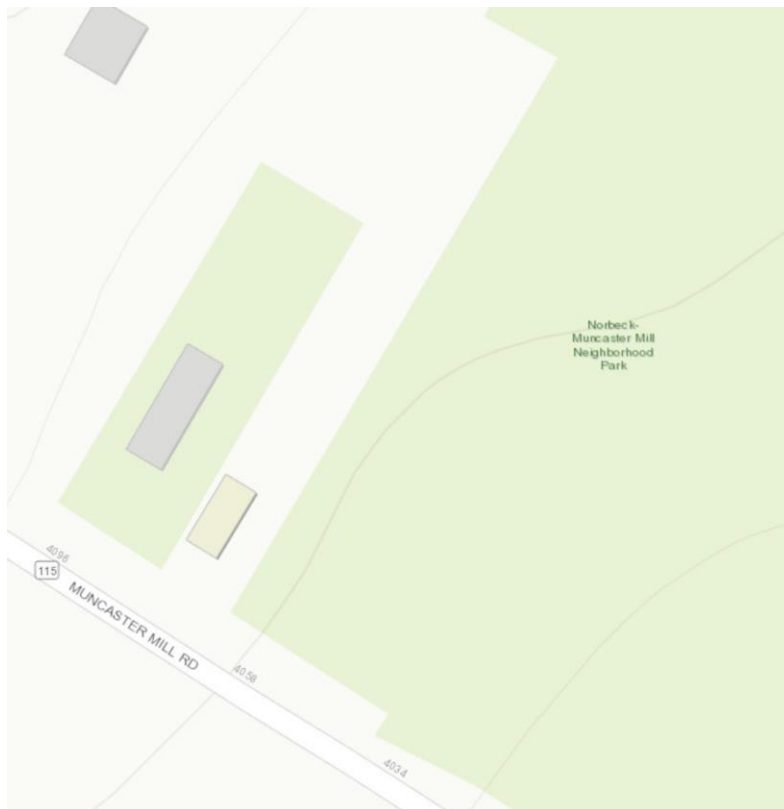
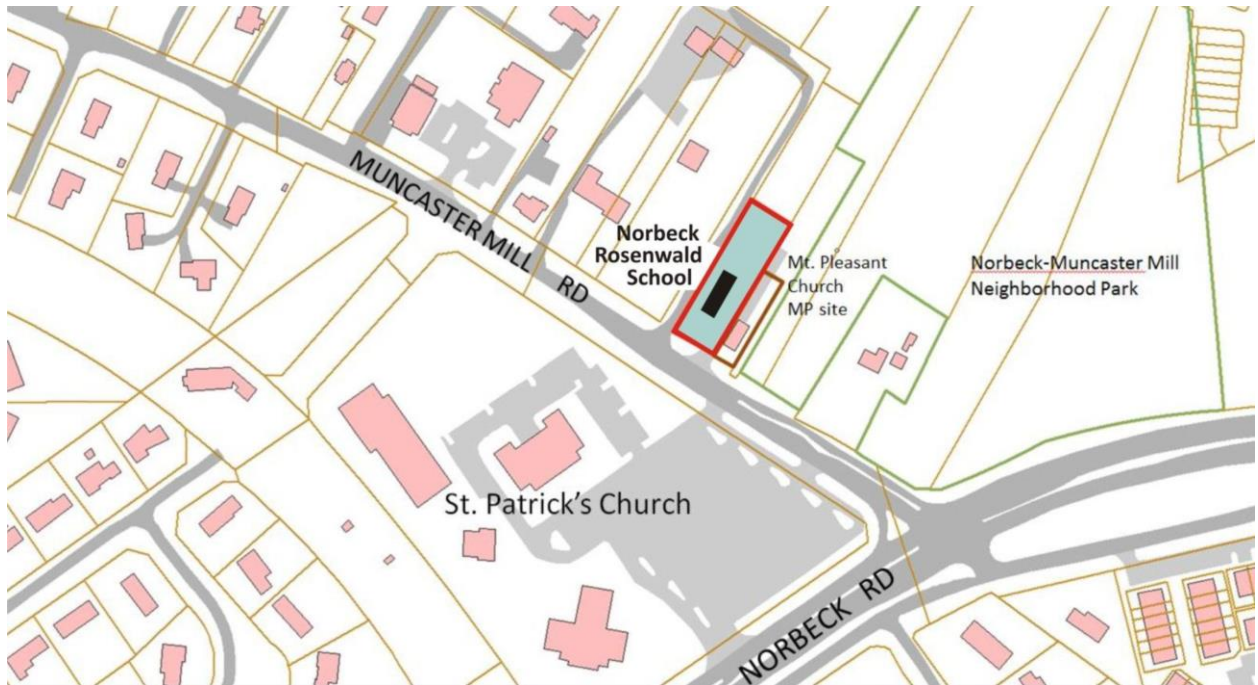
7. Addresses of Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners:

The environmental setting of the Norbeck Recreation Building encompasses the entire 21,780 s.f. parcel. There are two adjacent property owners:

*Waves of Glory, 4021 Muncaster Mill Road, Rockville, MD 20853

*Jerusalem-Mt. Pleasant ME Church (owns cemetery), 20850







Parta Cultural Resources, org

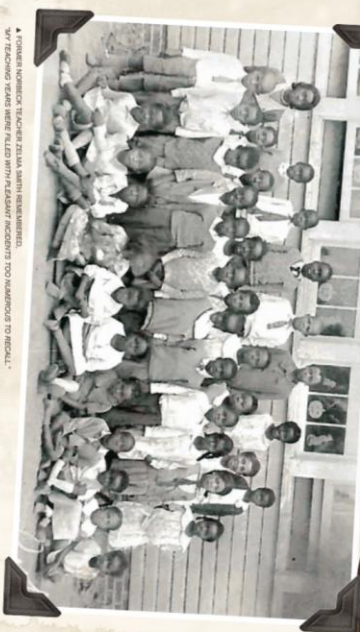
Mount Pleasant

Following Emancipation in 1864, freedmen communities developed throughout Montgomery County. Formerly enslaved laborers acquired small parcels of land, creating the community of Mount Pleasant. In 1872, A.D. Wadsworth sold 0.5 acres to help establish one of the first segregated schools in Montgomery County. The original two-room frame school built from

The seal of Montgomery County, Alabama, is circular. It features a central illustration of a cotton plant with leaves and bolls. The words "MONTGOMERY COUNTY" are written in a circle around the central image, and "ALABAMA" is written at the bottom.

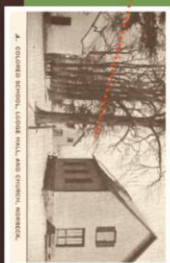
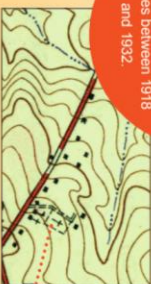
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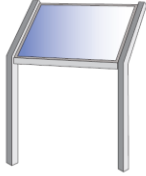


Norbeck
over
5,000
Rosen
Schools built in
American South,
and
156 schools exist
in twenty of Maryland's
counties between
1920
and 1932.

▲ THIS 1941 MAP OF NORRICK SHOWS THE NORTHWALD SCHOOL WITH A FLAG, AND BOTH THE CEMETERY AND THE CHURCH INDICATED BY A CROSS.
(Courtesy USGS)



Funding generously provided by:
Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation
www.jewish-american-society-for-historic-preservation.org



QTY. 16

Cantilevered Exhibit Base

F-CL-36X24

JOB # 35896

MD - National Capital
Park & Planning

Frame Size: 36.5"w x 24.5"h

Trim Size: 35.875"w x 24.875"h

Visual Area: 35"w x 23"h

Frame Color: ??

Finish: Satin

Date: 10/02/2009

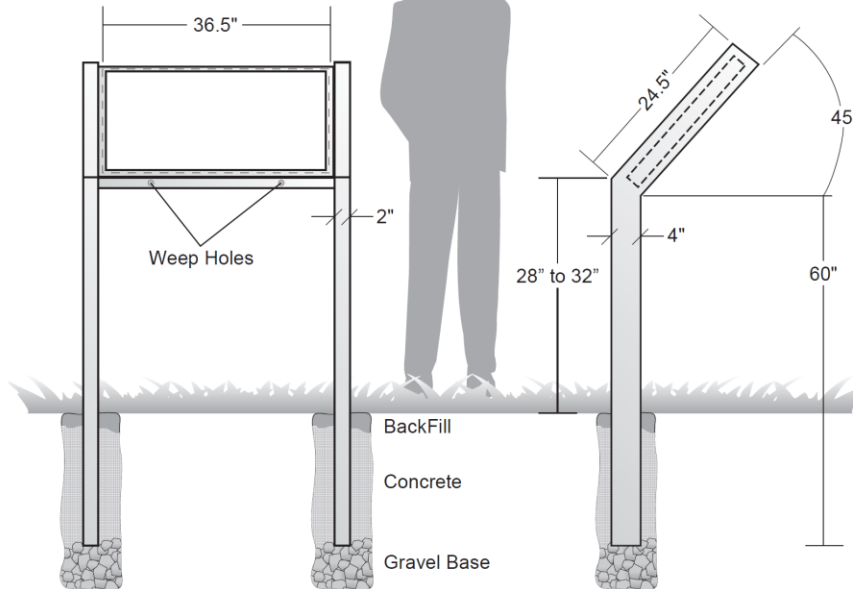
Drawn By: MLS

Customer Approval

Date



345 Oak Road
Gibsonia, PA 15044
Phone: 724-265-4900
1-800-544-8428
Fax: 724-265-4300
www.panniergraphics.com



- Post holes should be dug below the frost line depth
- Pannier recommends post height from ground to bottom of frame to be 28" - 32"

Norbeck Rosenwald School

ParksCulturalResources.org



County-funded elementary education for African American children did not exist until 1872. Until then, small black enclaves, like Mount Pleasant, pulled community resources to establish schools. A significant boost in financial assistance came in 1917 with the establishment of the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Between 1920 and 1929, **fifteen Rosenwald Schools were built in Montgomery County** – collectively covered by African American residents contributing \$7300 to match the \$8200 donated by Jewish philanthropist and Sears founder **Julius Rosenwald** (1862-1932). The remaining \$61,360 came from tax revenue. Nine schools, including Norbeck, were constructed between 1927-1928. This two-teacher, two-room, one-story structure cost \$5300 to build.



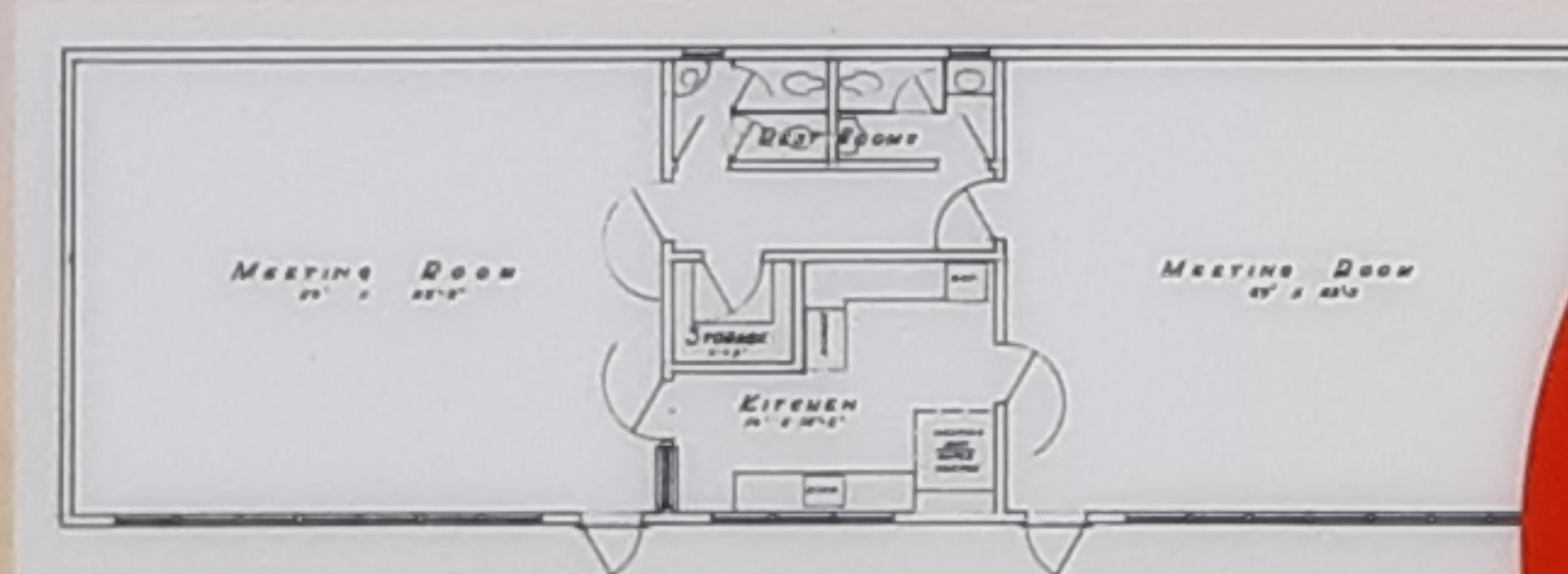
▲ JULIUS ROSENWALD AND BOOKER T. WASHINGTON (Courtesy: Archives - Tuskegee University)

Classroom instruction included the basics – reading, writing, and arithmetic, and followed the Tuskegee model established by educator **Booker T. Washington** (1856-1915). The emphasis was on self-help and gender-specific vocational training. Conditions inside were not always ideal for learning as former pupil Mabel D. Jackson recalled, *“There were no inside facilities, water, or central heat. We had free books but never any new ones. These books were dirty, ragged, marked in, and often had pages missing.”* These inequities only increased as the school entered the

Great Depression. During World War II, Norbeck had 85 students from 1st to 7th grades. Norbeck closed in 1951, three years before the 1954 Supreme Court ruling *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned school segregation. In 1957, M-NCPPC developed plans to convert the school into a recreational center, a function that continues today.



▲ FORMER NORBECK TEACHER ZELMA SMITH REMEMBERED, “MY TEACHING YEARS WERE FILLED WITH PLEASANT INCIDENTS TOO NUMEROUS TO RECALL.” TEACHERS WERE HIRED AND OBSERVED BY THE COUNTY-APPOINTED “SUPERVISOR OF COLORED SCHOOLS.” THIS POSITION WAS ORIGINALLY HELD BY A. D. OWENS FROM 1917 TO 1923, AND HIS REPLACEMENT, EDWARD U. TAYLOR, WHO HIRED MS. SMITH IN 1929. (Courtesy: Nina H. Clarke and Lillian B. Brown)



▲ THE ORIGINAL TWO-ROOM SCHOOL CONFIGURATION HAD ONE ROOM SET ASIDE FOR CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION, WHILE THE OTHER ROOM SERVED AS A COAT CLOSET AND STOREROOM FOR WOOD. M-NCPPC CONVERTED THE BUILDING INTO A COMMUNITY MEETING SPACE WITH INDOOR RESTROOMS AND A KITCHEN. (Courtesy: M-NCPPC)

Norbeck was one of over 5,000 Rosenwald Schools built in the American South, and one of 156 schoolhouses established in twenty of Maryland's counties between 1918 and 1932.

▼ THIS 1945 MAP OF NORBECK SHOWS THE ROSENWALD SCHOOL WITH A FLAG, AND BOTH THE CEMETERY AND THE CHURCH INDICATED BY A CROSS. (Courtesy: USGS)



Ken-Gar



Rockville



Sandy Spring



Norbeck (Courtesy: Montgomery History)



Scottland



River Road



Spencerville



▲. COLORED SCHOOL, LODGE HALL, AND CHURCH, NORBECK.

▲ THE INSTITUTIONS AT THE HEART OF THE MOUNT PLEASANT COMMUNITY AS SEEN IN 1913 (Courtesy: U.S. Department of Education)

▲ IN 1942-1943, SOME OF THE COUNTY ROSENWALD SCHOOLS WERE DOCUMENTED – SHOWING THE VARIATION BETWEEN A ONE-TEACHER (KEN-GAR, SCOTLAND), TWO-TEACHER (NORBECK, ROCKVILLE, SPENCERVILLE, TAKOMA PARK), AND THREE-TEACHER CONFIGURATION (RIVER ROAD, SANDY SPRING). (Courtesy: M-NCPPC)



Funding generously provided by:

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