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From the Editor

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From the Editor

The previous issue of the *Quarterly* focused on one man's impact on Huntsville through his varied building projects; this issue looks at one man's building project that affected many young, rural children of the South. Nancy Rohr interviewed many of the children who attended Rosenwald Schools in Alabama for her article. Now, as adults, they look back fondly on the simple days when a school was a place for community, education and the joy of learning.

Unlike the buildings of Oscar Hundley, most of the Rosenwald Schools are gone. So the ability to visit these structures, to touch the slate chalkboards, to sit in the wooden desks worn smooth by little hands and smell the smoke from the warm potbellied stove, is not possible. Likewise, existing photographs and plans provide only the briefest impressions of the schools as they were intended to be built, as they looked upon completion, or as they appeared after 40 years of use. Photographs and drawings do not echo with the yells of children at recess or the murmur of students reciting lessons.

The memories of the former students and educators, however, may at least suggest the emotion and experience of going to school in the simple wood architecture of the Rosenwald Schools.

These same students and educators who benefitted from the Rosenwald Fund were mostly African-Americans, living in the rural areas of the South in the early 1900s. The educational system was almost nonexistent at the time. In 1912, Wilcox County, AL, for example, spent \$17 per capita for white students and only \$0.37 per capita for black children. This money went for a teacher and a few books; classes met in homes or churches on a haphazard schedule. Once the Rosenwald Fund began providing for buildings, the states began to take action as well. In 1916, the Alabama legislature passed law providing for construction of black schools with state funding.

The care and involvement each community devoted to its school was apparent in the names given to the buildings. Most were named after the individual who donated the largest parcel of land or led the drive to obtain funding. Some communities took a more poetic approach and