Grades: 5th
Subjects: Social Studies, English/Language Arts
Time required: one 60 minute class period; Extension: one 30 minute class period
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Overview
This lesson plan is an adaptation of Katie Sutton Randall’s high school lesson, “Education Reform During the Progressive Era and the Rosenwald Schools of the American South,” and is tailored to 5th grade Tennessee History.

Students will learn about the Julius Rosenwald Fund and study images and drawings of the Cadentown Rosenwald School in Lexington, Kentucky. The school was constructed in 1922-23, and the images were created after 1933 as part of the Library of Congress’ Historic American Building Survey.

Students will analyze these sources to identify defining physical features of Rosenwald schools, develop historical research questions, and learn about the private-public partnerships that funded many Progressive Era reform efforts. An extension activity about Tennessee’s oldest Rosenwald School, West Bemis, is included.

Understanding Goal
Students will analyze photographs and drawings of a Rosenwald school in addition to secondary source material to gain a better understanding of reform efforts made in education during the Progressive Era.

Objectives
Students will learn to evaluate primary source materials as artifacts, develop an understanding of the importance of historical inquiry based on primary sources, gain a better understanding that political, economic, and social history are connected, and recognize that private-public partnerships often funded reform efforts during the Progressive Era.

Investigative Question
How can buildings be used as primary sources? What kind of relationship model did the Rosenwald initiative create for Progressive reform efforts?

Curriculum Standards
5th Grade Social Studies
- 5.06 Examine the impact of important entrepreneurs on American society, including: Andrew Carnegie, Henry T. Ford, and Cornelius Vanderbilt.
- 5.45 Identify how the rise of vigilante justice (e.g., Ku Klux Klan), black codes, and Jim Crow laws impacted Tennessee and the nation.

5th Grade English/Language Arts
- 5.RL.IKI.7 Explain how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or mood of a text, such as in a graphic novel, multimedia presentation, or fiction, folktale, myth, or poem.
- 5.W.TTP.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- 5.RI.CS.6 Analyze the similarities and differences in points of view of multiple accounts of the same event or topic.
- 5.RI.IKI.7 Locate an answer to a question or solve a problem, drawing on information from multiple print or digital sources.
- 5.RI.IKI.9 Integrate information from two or more texts on the same topic in order to build content knowledge.
Resources

- **Cadentown Rosenwald School, Caden Lane, Lexington, Fayette County, KY** [After 1933]
- [School house in Kirkland. Been used for several years and actually falling to pieces. Many rural schools in Georgia are in this condition.] Location: [Kirkland, Georgia], [1915 March]
- [Booker T. Washington, half-length portrait, seated] [ca.18995]
- “Negro Education Makes Progress,” *The Broad Ax*, [Aug. 5, 1922]
- **West Bemis Rosenwald School.** Courtesy of the Jackson Davis Collection of African American Photographs, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library
- **West Bemis Rosenwald School.** Courtesy of the Bemis Collection, Union University, Volunteer Voices Collection

Field Trip Extension Resources and Materials

- “Heritage Development Plan for West Bemis Rosenwald School,” [Spring 2014]
- West Bemis Rosenwald School Worksheet

Materials

- Primary Source Analysis Tool
- Analyzing Photographs and Prints Teachers Guide
- Paper/pencil

DAY 1

| Step 1 | Before beginning the lesson, students should have some contextual knowledge of the Progressive Movement and reform efforts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as the factors that led to reforms such as industrialization, urbanization, an influx of immigrant workers, and the push for racial equality. Play the “Booker T. Washington, Orator, Teacher, and Advisor Video,” to introduce students to Washington and connect his work to educational reforms of the Progressive Era. |
| Step 2 | Have students read the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* article on the Julius Rosenwald Fund, a philanthropic building fund for African American schools across the South between 1913 and 1920. Define philanthropic: *adjective, (of a person or organization) seeking to promote the welfare of others, especially by donating money to good causes; generous and benevolent.* Discuss the article with students. Who was Julius Rosenwald? What sort of projects did he fund? What impact did Rosenwald Schools have in Tennessee? Why do you think Rosenwald chose to spend his money this way? Can you think of modern-day examples of philanthropy? Are there any examples of philanthropy in our school? |
| Step 3 | Ask students to fill out the Primary Source Analysis Tool while searching the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record’s collection on the Cadentown Rosenwald School. If internet access is unavailable, consider printing the photographs and drawings found on pages 6-11 and posting them around the classroom. Divide students into groups and have them visit and analyze each printout. Teachers should refer to the Teacher’s Guide, Analyzing Photographs and Prints to prompt discussion and help students critically examine the source material. |
### Step 3 cont’d
Teachers can also reference “Negro Education Makes Progress,” an article from an African American Salt Lake City, Utah, newspaper, *The Broad Ax*. The 1922 article refers to Rosenwald schools as “modern rural schools for Negroes” and provides statistics and monetary information that may be interesting to mention during class discussion time.

### Step 4
Have students compare the images and drawings they studied in the HABS/HAER collection with the image of an early twentieth-century rural schoolhouse. What differences do they notice? Ask students to compare the construction and building materials used.

### Step 5
Divide students into groups and have each group develop a list of three possible research questions that do more than prompt simple “yes” or “no” answers based on the images. (i.e. What character defining features distinguish a Rosenwald School? How did building plans for Rosenwald schools use natural light? What do these buildings convey about the era in which they were built? Were Rosenwald schools truly “modern” for their day? How might African Americans in Tennessee have been impacted by these schools?)

### Step 6
Have students explore possible answers to their group’s set of research questions and present their questions and possible answers to the class.

### Step 7
For homework, have students write a one-paragraph response answering one of the following questions:
- How did the Rosenwald school building program change the lives of southern African American students?
- How did the schools impact Tennessee?
- What have you learned about the Progressive Era from analyzing Rosenwald Schools?

### Extension
- Play Verizon’s “Innovative Learning” TV Commercial, which references schools in Polk County, Tennessee, who received funds for new technology from Verizon. Why did Verizon choose to donate to these schools? What did the company gain in doing so? How was education at these schools impacted? How does this relate to Rosenwald Schools?
- Have students learn more about historic preservation efforts to save and restore Rosenwald schools by visiting the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s website.
- Ask students to search for Tennessee’s Rosenwald Schools and share what they find with the class.

### Evaluation
- Participation in group and class discussions - 50 pts
- One-paragraph Response (homework prompt) - 50 pts

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*School house in Kirkland. Been used for several years and actually falling to pieces. Many rural schools in Georgia are in this condition.* Location: [Kirkland, Georgia], [1915 March]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 2</th>
<th>FIELD TRIP EXTENSION: West Bemis Rosenwald School</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This extension is a 30-minute, site-specific activity that uses the interpretive panels located in the West Bemis Rosenwald School in Jackson, Tennessee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Ask students to first gather in the main classroom.</td>
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<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Students should have an understanding of Rosenwald Schools from the previous day’s lesson. Spend time focusing on the importance of this specific site, the oldest Rosenwald School remaining in Tennessee. Additional information for teachers can be found on pages 3-4 of the &quot;Heritage Development Plan for West Bemis Rosenwald School.&quot;</td>
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<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Have students analyze each interpretive panel inside the school while answering the questions on the West Bemis Rosenwald School Worksheet.</td>
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<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Ask students to reference the “Building a Rosenwald School at Bemis” interpretive panel once more. Have them pay close attention to the architectural drawings and compare the drawings to the physical structure. If the weather is suitable, have them walk around the school building and grounds. Ask students to make note of interesting things they learned and questions they may have about the school, its leaders, and the community.</td>
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<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Regroup in the classroom to go over the answers to the West Bemis Rosenwald School Worksheet. Ask students to share what they learned. What did you notice about the school’s architectural design? Why were Rosenwald Schools designed this way? What purpose does the school serve presently? How does the school’s present status as a community center compare to its original status as a school for African Americans?</td>
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<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Using the back of their worksheet as an exit ticket, have students summarize three things they learned today from visiting the West Bemis Rosenwald School.</td>
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The West Bemis Rosenwald School was built according to an early Clinton Calloway design, which came to be known as the Tuskegee plan. This particular model had two classrooms plus an auditorium.

*Courtesy of the Jackson Davis Collection of African American Photographs, Special Collections, University of Virginia*
Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU
West Bemis Rosenwald School

Student Name: _____________________________________________

Directions: Use the interpretive panels located in the West Bemis Rosenwald School to answer the following questions.

Building a Rosenwald School:
1. Describe the living situation for African Americans in the Bemis Brother mill town. ____________
____________________________________________________________

2. What happened to the Cane Creek school? ____________________________

3. What parties contributed funds to help build the Rosenwald School at Bemis? _________________
____________________________________________________________

Tennessee’s Oldest Rosenwald School
4. When was the West Bemis Rosenwald School constructed? ______________________________

5. Since the school was established after Booker T. Washington’s death, explain who continued to expand the program through the 1930s. ____________________________

A Community Center
6. In addition to education, what other purposes did the West Bemis School provide for the community?
____________________________________________________________

Restoration and New Futures
7. Why was restoring the West Bemis Rosenwald School so important to the community? ________

Observations
8. Describe the interior and exterior of the Rosenwald School. _________________________________
____________________________________________________________

9. How is the school different from yours? ______________________________
____________________________________________________________
Cadentown Rosenwald School, Caden Lane, Lexington, Fayette County, KY [After 1933]
School house in Kirkland. Been used for several years and actually falling to pieces. Many rural schools in Georgia are in this condition. Location: Kirkland, Georgia, 1915 March
[Booker T. Washington, half-length portrait, seated]
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*Courtesy of the Jackson Davis Collection of African American Photographs, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library*
The textile mill of the Bemis Brothers Bag Company can be seen in the background of this historic photograph of the West Bemis Rosenwald School.

*Courtesy of the Bemis Collection, Union University, Volunteer Voices Collection*