

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Selma Rosenwald School

other names/site number Selma Junior High School, Site #DR0277

2. Location

street & number East side of Selma-Collins Road, approximately 1/4 mile south of U.S. 278 not for publication

city or town Selma vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Drew code 043 zip code 71670

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant

nationally statewide locally (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cecile M. ...
Signature of certifying official/Title

6/17/05
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Selma Rosenwald School
Name of Property

Drew County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing		Noncontributing	
1			buildings
2		2	sites
			structures
			objects
3		2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Plain Traditional

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- Criteria A-D: Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A-F: owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. removed from its original location. birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance. a cemetery. a reconstructed building, object, or structure. a commemorative property. less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

LOCAL

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black

Period of Significance

1924-1956

Significant Dates

1924-1956

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Samuel Smith, Architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Criteria: preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. previously listed in the National Register. Previously determined eligible by the National Register. designated a National Historic Landmark. recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #. recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #.

Primary location of additional data:

- Criteria: State Historic Preservation Office. Other State Agency. Federal Agency. Local Government. University. Other.

Name of repository:

Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee

Selma Rosenwald School

Name of Property

Drew County, Arkansas

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Area of Property Approximately 4.25 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	15	632934	3726859	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

date October 10, 2005

street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street

telephone

city or town Little Rock

state AR

zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SUMMARY

The Selma Rosenwald School is a one-story, wood-framed school built in 1924 in the Community of Selma, which is located approximately twelve miles east of Monticello, Arkansas. The building rests on a foundation of brick piers, and is sheathed in weatherboard. The gable roof is covered in asphalt shingles. Playground equipment is located in front of the building, and the original baseball diamond is located to its rear. Foundations for the cafeteria and bathroom are located to the north and northeast of the building, respectively.

ELABORATION

The Selma Rosenwald School is located in the community of Selma, approximately twelve miles east of Monticello, Arkansas. The one-story, wood-framed structure was built in 1924 following Floor Plan 20 from Samuel Smith's *Community School Plans* distributed by the Rosenwald Fund. It sits across Selma-Collins Road from the Sweet Hope Church, approximately ¼-mile south of U.S. 278.

The school sits on a brick pier foundation and the walls are sheathed in weatherboard. The roof, which is gabled, is covered in asphalt shingles. One brick chimney, which would have served the two classrooms and the industrial room, pierces the roof. Some of the large original windows remain while others have been replaced with much smaller, residential-style windows. The main entrance to the building is currently located in the center of the front façade.

In addition to the building, the property is occupied by playground equipment in front of the building, and the original baseball diamond to its rear. Foundations for the cafeteria and bathroom are located to the north and northeast of the building, respectively.

West/Front Façade

The front façade of the building is oriented symmetrically around the building's main entrance, which is located in the gable-fronted portion of the building that originally housed the Industrial Room. The main entrance has a modern six-panel door and is flanked on each side by sidelights and a set of concrete steps lead up to it. The entrance is also flanked on each side by a single one-over-one, double-hung, metal-framed window that is smaller than the original window. The top portion of each window opening is boarded up. A rectangular, louvered attic vent is located in the gable peak.

To each side of the front-gabled portion of the building is the side-gabled main part of the building. Each section was originally fenestrated by a pair of windows, located towards each end of the building. Currently, the right-hand window in each pair is boarded up and the left-hand window is occupied by a single one-over-one, double-hung, metal-framed window that is smaller than the original window. The top portion of each window opening is boarded up.

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South/Side Façade

The building's south façade has no fenestration although a window air-conditioning unit has been installed towards the center of the façade. In addition, a triangular, louvered attic vent is located in the gable peak.

East/Rear Façade

The building's rear façade was originally fenestrated by two groups of six, wood-frame, double-hung, nine-over-nine windows. Currently, the southern group of windows is comprised of alternating residential-style six-over-six, double-hung windows that are smaller than the original windows and boarded-up windows. The top portion of each window opening that contains the smaller windows is boarded up. The northern grouping of windows still retains its original wood-frame, double-hung, nine-over-nine windows.

North/Side Façade

The building's north façade has no fenestration although a window air-conditioning unit has been installed towards the center of the façade. In addition, a triangular, louvered attic vent is located in the gable peak.

Associated Site Features

In addition to the school, other features are located on the site that are associated with the building's role as a school. In front of the building, located in a grove of trees is a swing set associated with the school's playground, which was installed c.1950. To the rear of the building is a baseball diamond cleared in 1955 that still retains a portion of the backstop and at least one of the bases. Both the playground equipment and the baseball field contribute to the property's significance.

To the northeast of the building is the foundation of the bathroom, which was demolished sometime prior to 2003 when the building was documented by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program staff. In addition, the foundation of the cafeteria building, which had been moved to the site from a nearby sawmill in 1958 and demolished c.2004, is located to the north of the building. Due to the loss of integrity, these features do not contribute to the nomination.

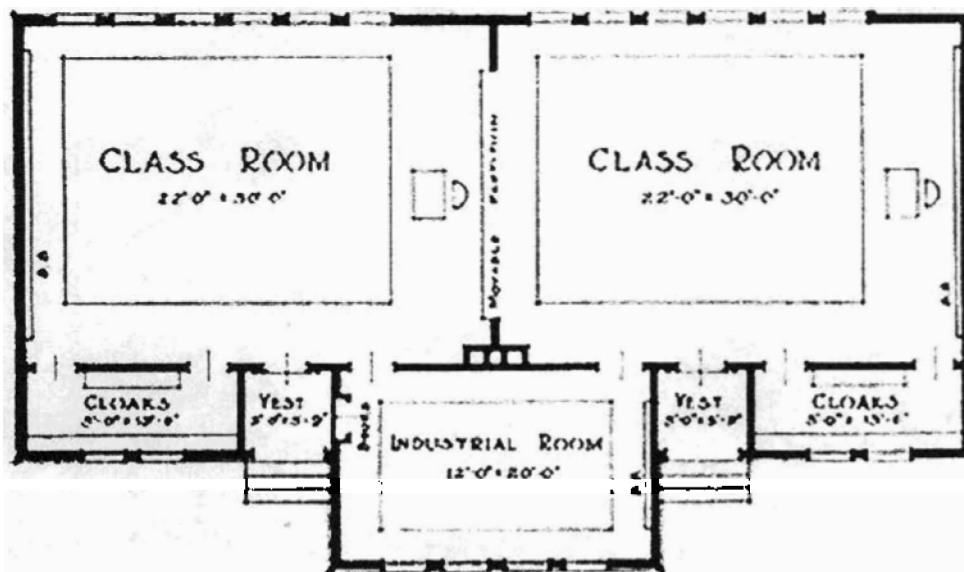
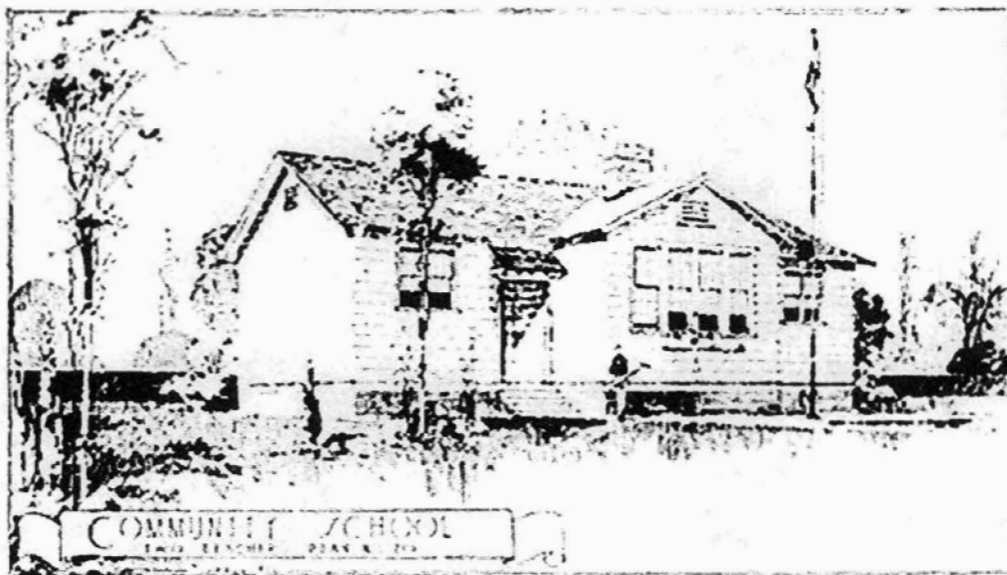
Integrity

The biggest compromises to the integrity of the Selma Rosenwald School's are the loss of the original windows, which were very characteristic of school windows of the period, and the modification of the front entrances. However, even with the modifications, the building has good integrity, and it is very easy to tell that the building follows Samuel Smith's original plan. In addition, there have been no additions to the building that have obscured the two classroom and industrial room plan of the building. The fact that Selma has always been in a rural part of Drew County, and remains so today, also allows the setting around the Selma Rosenwald School to reflect its period of significance.

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FLOOR PLAN No 20
TWO TEACHER COMMUNITY SCHOOL
TO FACE EAST OR WEST ONLY

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SUMMARY

The Selma Rosenwald School is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its association with education in the Selma area and Drew County. Additionally, it is significant as a part of Julius Rosenwald's legacy as the foremost benefactor to Negro education in the South, and as the only surviving Rosenwald school in Drew County.

ELABORATION

Contrary to common belief, the education of many southern black Americans took place on southern plantations while many were slaves. Some masters allowed a few of their slaves to become skilled workers or artisans by permitting them to be apprentices or employees of craftsmen outside the plantation. In fact, it was quite profitable for the plantation to have a number of skilled slaves in order to avoid having to hire expensive mechanics, craftsmen, machinists, seamstresses, etc. Education was also taking place among the children, often without the master's knowledge. Many of the children of the masters thought it quite amusing to play "school" and teach the slave children how to read and do math. To the children it was a game, but in actuality it was part of the beginning of the black education movement in the South after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. In fact, many slaves were able to use their talents and skills to gain their manumission, or to do enough work outside the plantation to buy their way out of slavery.

After the Emancipation Proclamation and the flight of the blacks to northern cities, many religious organizations and education-oriented groups realized the need for education among the black refugees. Plantation life had left many blacks unable to cope with life in the city or with finding jobs. Benevolent societies sprang up in cities such as Boston, Chicago, New York, Cincinnati, and Philadelphia in 1862-1863. Together with church organizations, they provided food, clothing, religious leaders, money, and teachers for the newcomers. Church organizations were the leaders in the freedman's school system in its beginning stages. At the forefront of the religious groups was the American Missionary Association, organized in 1849 to operate Christian missions and educational institutions at home and abroad. Other religious groups included The Baptist Church, North (or Home Mission Society), the Freedman's Aid Society, and the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church; a great deal of the money and supplies these groups provided were dispensed through the Union Army. In March 1862, the New England Freedman's Society, along with General Edward L. Pierce and numerous other educators, initiated the Port Royal Experiment. The Experiment involved developing the economy, directing blacks to economic independence, and organizing schools.

In 1863 the Freedman's Inquiry Commission suggested the creation of a government agency to deal specifically with the care of the freedmen. In 1865 Congress passed an act creating the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, otherwise known as the Freedmen's Bureau. The Bureau was useful because it committed the United States to the task of caring for the freedmen, and because it made that care a part of the official structure by which the South was being controlled. Even though the Freedmen's Bureau

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was able to remedy many of the flaws of the relief programs for the freedmen, it was the strongly motivated individuals of the religious groups and benevolent organizations that were mainly responsible for the education of the blacks. These individuals were for the most part devout Christians and well-trained teachers from New England.

One of the zealous individuals that became one of the most significant figures in southern black education was Julius Rosenwald. Rosenwald was quite successful as a businessman, but his philanthropic work has always overshadowed his financial success. He entered the clothing business in New York in 1878. In 1895 he invested \$35,000 in the stock of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, and in less than thirty years it grew into \$150,000,000. He became president of the mail-order firm in 1910 and then chairman in 1925. During the years Rosenwald was most active as a philanthropist, Sears and Roebuck expanded into the retail chain-store business, and he was actually absent from the company from 1916 to 1919. As early as 1910, Rosenwald was a trustee of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and made gifts on behalf of the rural school movement to the Institute, primarily through close contact with Booker T. Washington. His funds made possible the erection of sixteen YMCA buildings and one YMCA building for blacks. This stimulated gifts from others for similar projects in many cities in both the North and South, including the financial support for a large black housing project in Chicago. Rosenwald was active in a number of Jewish organizations and granted substantial financial support to the National Urban League. Also, he was appointed a member of the Council on National Defense and served as chairman of its committee on supplies.

In 1917 Rosenwald established the Julius Rosenwald Fund. This fund was destined to attract more money to the benefit of black education than any other philanthropic undertaking to this date. The fund's broad purpose was for the betterment of mankind irrespective of race, but it was aimed more specifically at creating more equitable opportunities for black Americans. Unlike many charity organizations, the Rosenwald Fund was to only help a school if the community, blacks and whites alike, had raised some of the money themselves; however, the black community usually provided the labor. Rosenwald and the directors of his trust first directed their attention toward building rural schools, later toward high schools and colleges, and finally toward the providing of grants and fellowships to enable outstanding blacks and whites to advance their careers. Not only did the Rosenwald Fund help to build rural schools, it was also responsible for a number of buildings and libraries on college campuses. The directors of the trust were also involved to a certain extent in the direction of the curriculum at all levels of education. Their emphasis was on the educational needs of country children. They maintained that some vocational skills were necessary, as were ability to do some math, to read and write clearly, to have some understanding of biological processes and farming, and to understand the fundamentals of sanitation and health.

State records indicate that when the fund ceased activity in 1948, it had aided in the building of 389 school buildings (schools, shops, and teachers' homes) in 45 counties in Arkansas. The total amount contributed by the fund was \$1,952,441. The state or counties owned and maintained all of the schools, and the land was

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usually donated by a white landowner. In Arkansas, R. C. Childress of Little Rock was the Rosenwald Building Agent. Childress was the first degree graduate of Philander Smith College and was the second black person to work for the state Education Department. He dedicated his life to education and, consequently, the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff has named Childress Hall for him, and the high schools in Wynne and Nashville were named for him.

The Selma Rosenwald School was built in 1924 when the Rosenwald Fund aided mainly small rural communities in Arkansas. A total of \$24,997 was allocated to Arkansas for the 1924-1925 budget year, which allowed the completion of 33 schools, one teachers' home, and three additions comprising five classrooms. Of the 33 schools completed during that period, 14 of them consisted of two rooms, including the Selma School.

The cost to construct the Selma School was \$2,275, and it was one of the cheapest two-room schools constructed during the 1924-1925 budget cycle. (The average cost of construction for a two-room school during the 1924-1925 budget cycle was \$3,201.) Of the \$2,275 cost of construction, \$500 came from black contributions, \$1,075 came from public funding, and the Rosenwald Fund gave a grant of \$700.

The Selma Rosenwald School was built using Floor Plan No. 20 for a "Two Teacher Community School" from Samuel Smith's *Community School Plans*. Smith was the General Field Agent for the Rosenwald Fund, and he developed a series of floorplans and specifications for a variety of schools that used the most up-to-date innovations in school design. The detailed blueprints and specifications could be obtained from the Rosenwald Fund through the state's education office. Smith felt that having a stock set of blueprints and specifications would allow any community to build a quality school without having to hire an architect, and the school plans turned out to be one of his greatest legacies.

Smith was very concerned with having the maximum amount of natural light get into the classrooms, especially since the rural areas where the buildings were built often did not have electricity. The Selma School, as specified in the plans, faces west in order to allow east-west sunlight into the rooms. East-west sunlight allowed a more comfortable light (as opposed to an all-day exposure to southern sunlight), and also allowed for better ventilation since shades would not be needed to cover the windows all day long.

The interior specifications for the buildings that Smith designed also helped to maximize the use of sunlight. Specifications required tan shades on the interior, instead of the more traditional green, and preferred that tan shades be installed per window, in order to allow more regulation of light. The schools were also designed so that seating arrangements placed the windows on the children's left sides so that their writing arms, at least for right-handed students, would not cast shadows on their papers. Smith's plans were meant to be simple and efficient, omitting corridors wherever it was possible, and Floor Plan No. 20 used in Selma reflects all of Smith's innovations.

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The design chosen for the Selma Rosenwald School, like the other school designs that Smith did for the Rosenwald Fund, also incorporates an industrial room. The inclusion of an industrial room reflected part of Booker T. Washington's Progressive-era educational philosophy. It allowed girls to be taught sewing and cooking, and boys to be taught farming and working with tools.

Smith also recognized that school buildings often served as community centers, and he incorporated that ideal into his designs. He once wrote that, "the best modern school is one which is designed to serve the entire community for twelve months in the year... whenever possible a good auditorium, large enough to seat the entire community, should be erected in connection with every community school. If there are not sufficient funds for an auditorium, two adjoining classrooms with movable partitions may be made to serve this purpose." As a result, all of Smith's school designs had an auditorium or movable partitions, as at the Selma School.

With respect to the exterior of frame buildings, Smith recommended that they be painted white and trimmed in gray or painted gray and trimmed in white. If the community wanted to use a wood preservative stain, he recommended using a nut-brown color and trimming it with white or cream. A photograph of the Selma Rosenwald School Class of 1924 indicates that the building was painted white with dark trim, likely gray, as Smith recommended.

The siting of the building was also considered to be very important, and Smith provided recommendations on that regard. It was recommended that buildings be built on at least a two-acre site, and be located near a corner of the site. This allowed enough space for the school, two privies, a teacher's home, playgrounds for the students, a space for agricultural demonstrations, and proper landscaping. At Selma, the privies were located to the northeast of the building while the playground equipment was located to the building's west and the baseball field was located to the east.

The Selma Rosenwald School had classes for students up through 10th grade and was used as a school until 1964. Once the school closed, the Masons bought the building in the late 1960s or early 1970s for use as their Masonic lodge, and they continue to use it today. There is also an effort currently ongoing to transfer the building from the Masons to the Selma Community so that it can be used for community events and functions.

Schools, especially Rosenwald schools, along with churches were often the centerpieces of a community, and there was no exception in Selma. Located across the road from the Sweet Hope Church, the Selma Rosenwald School was the center of life in this rural part of Drew County not only while it was a school, but for several years after. Even today, it serves as the Masonic Lodge for the area, and as the only Rosenwald building surviving in Drew County, the Selma Rosenwald School is a rare and tangible reminder of the philanthropic legacy of Julius Rosenwald.

Selma Rosenwald School
Name of Property

Drew County, Arkansas
County and State

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Selma Rosenwald School is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its association with education in the Selma area and Drew County. Additionally, it is significant as a part of Julius Rosenwald's legacy as the foremost benefactor to Negro education in the South, and as the only surviving Rosenwald school in Drew County.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Photograph of the 1924 class at Selma Rosenwald School. Courtesy of Sheilla Lampkin, Monticello, Arkansas.

Albright, Angela K. "Rosenwald School, Delight, Pike County, Arkansas." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1990.

Hoffschwelle, Mary. Address. National Trust for Historic Preservation National Conference. Cleveland, OH, October 9, 2002.

Mansell, Jeff, and Trina Brinkley. "The Rosenwald School Building Fund and Associated Buildings (1913-37)." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. From the files of the Alabama Historical Commission, 1997.

Porter, David. W. "A Brief History of the Julius Rosenwald Fund Building Program with Special Reference to Arkansas." Unpublished Master's thesis, Fisk University, Nashville, TN, 1951.

Ridgell, Wallace. Interview with the author. 10 June 2003.

Ware, Bob. Telephone conversation with the author. 11 October 2005.

Selma Rosenwald School

Name of Property

Drew County, Arkansas

County and State

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From the southeast corner of the U.S. 278 and Selma-Collins Road intersection, proceed southerly along the eastern side of the Selma-Collins Road for 1175 feet to the point of beginning. From the point of beginning, proceed easterly 700 feet, thence proceed southerly 270 feet, thence proceed westerly 700 feet, thence proceed northerly along the eastern side of the Selma-Collins Road for 270 feet to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary contains the land that is historically associated with the Selma Rosenwald School.

