

Back to School

By Jody Brumage / Archivist, Heritage Frederick



The Oldfields School was built with the assistance of a matching grant provided by the Rosenwald Foundation, created by philanthropist Julius Rosenwald.

Families in Oldfields raised funds and secured a grant from the Rosenwald Foundation in 1918 to build a larger dedicated school building. The new school, pictured here, contained a classroom and two cloakrooms and was built using plans prepared at the famed Tuskegee Institute.

The population of Oldfields declined during the Great Depression and the school closed in 1935. Four years later, Frederick County Schools Superintendent Eugene W. Pruitt proposed using the Oldfields building to replace a century-old, segregated school in New Market. During the fall of 1939, contractor William Cookerly moved the structure from Oldfields to New Market and constructed an extension to accommodate a second classroom.

After the integration of New Market Elementary School in 1961, the former segregated schoolhouse was acquired by New Market United Methodist Church. Today, the structure is the only surviving Rosenwald School in the county. 

More than 5,000 schools for African American students were built between 1917 and 1931 across the southern United States through the collaboration of educator and author Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck, and Co. The Rosenwald Foundation provided matching grants to more than 150 school projects in Maryland, including the Oldfields School.

Oldfields is a historically Black community located at the intersection of New Windsor and Coppermine roads, east of Libertytown. Several families in Oldfields joined together to purchase land in 1871 “for the purpose of erecting a house thereon to be used for a school house and to worship in.” In 1883, Keys Chapel was dedicated on the site.