

# A REMARKABLE TRIPLE ALLIANCE: HOW A JEW IS HELPING THE NEGRO THROUGH ...

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## JULIUS ROSENWALD: MERCHANT, PHILANTHROPIST, HELPER OF MANY RACES

Mr. Rosenwald was born in Springfield, Illinois, in 1862; received a public school education; was in business for several years in New York City, then removed to Chicago, where he became President of the well-known firm of Sears, Roebuck & Co. Notwithstanding his absorbing business activities, he is a large contributor of time and money to many civic, educational, and philanthropic enterprises. He celebrated his fiftieth birthday in 1912 by making gifts aggregating \$687,000.

# A REMARKABLE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

## HOW A JEW IS HELPING THE NEGRO THROUGH THE Y. M. C. A.

BY BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

**I**N the spring of 1910 the Chicago Young Men's Christian Association, during a canvass to raise \$1,000,000 for its general purposes, approached Mr. Julius Rosenwald for a subscription. He inquired whether the objects for which the million-dollar fund provided included a building for colored men, and, on being informed that it did not, stated that as soon as the Association was ready to undertake such a project he would contribute \$25,000.

Later, encouraged by Mr. Rosenwald's offer, under the leadership of Dr. George C. Hall, the well-known colored surgeon, the Chicago Association undertook to raise a fund of \$100,000 for a building for colored men. More than this amount was raised, and there has been constructed a modern, well-equipped building, costing, with land and equipment, nearly \$200,000.

Shortly after the successful conclusion of the Chicago canvass Dr. J. E. Moorland, one of the colored International Secretaries of the Young Men's Christian Association, who with Dr. Hall had directed the canvass of the Chicago Association for subscriptions among colored people, in company with Mr. Messer and Mr. Parker, of the Chicago Association, called on Mr. Rosenwald to explain the successful conduct of the campaign. During the course of the luncheon Mr. Rosenwald made careful inquiry regarding the progress of Association work among colored men elsewhere in the country, and, on learning that the work was of small volume owing largely to inadequate equipment, he, in the most matter-of-fact way, stated that he would duplicate his Chicago offer to any city in America—that is to say, during a period of five years he would contribute \$25,000 to any city that raised \$75,000 toward a Young Men's Christian Association building for its colored men.

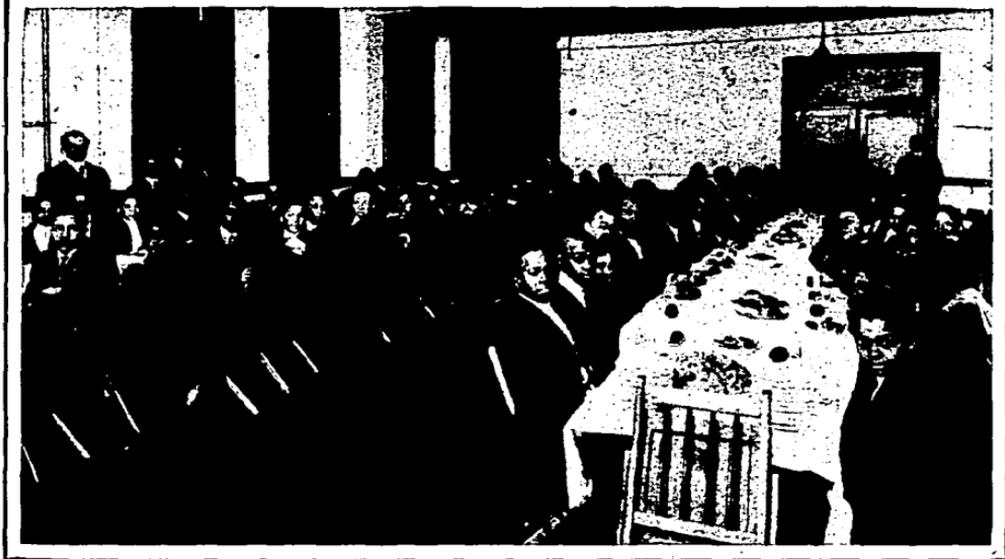
That, as I have heard the story, is the way in which the first announcement was made of Mr. Rosenwald's offer of \$25,000 to any city in the United States that could provide the remaining \$75,000 toward a \$100,000 building for the colored Young Men's Christian Association. This gift has proved to be

one of the wisest and best-paying philanthropic investments of which I have any knowledge. In fact, I doubt if there is any single gift to any public institution that has brought a greater return to the community than this one single benefaction, which is all the more interesting because it is the gift of a Jew to a Christian religious institution.

Since that time four buildings, each costing \$100,000 or more, have been erected. The one in Washington, D. C., was dedicated in May, 1912. Then followed the buildings in Chicago, Indianapolis, and Philadelphia. In addition to these, funds have already been subscribed for buildings costing upwards of \$100,000 each at Los Angeles, California; Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Kansas City, Missouri; Cincinnati, Ohio; and New York City. There are to be two Association buildings in the Eastern metropolis, the second being for colored women. In Nashville, Tennessee, the colored people have subscribed \$3,000 more than their allotment—\$33,000, instead of \$30,000—and the campaign ended one day ahead of time! The campaign is, as I write, under way among the white people of Nashville to subscribe \$45,000 allotted to them.

Mr. Rosenwald has paid out \$100,000 already; \$175,000 more will be paid at the proper time in the construction period, and, if Nashville completes its fund, \$25,000 more will be available there. Facing such a proposition, Mr. Rosenwald's only source of disappointment has been, as Dr. Moorland tells me, that the demands upon him were not more frequent.

First and foremost among the ways in which this gift has helped the Young Men's Christian Association and the colored people has been the giving them an opportunity to help themselves. Since January, 1911, in response to Mr. Rosenwald's offer, not less than \$411,500 has been subscribed by the colored people in the eleven cities I have named. In addition to this sum, \$53,513.33 has been raised by colored people for the Young Men's Christian Association organizations in smaller towns. This means that, altogether,



A BANQUET OF FATHERS AND SONS IN THE Y. M. C. A. OF WASHINGTON, D. C.

\$465,013.33 has been subscribed by the colored people thus far, mostly in the Northern cities, for the erection of these buildings in which the Christian young men of the race may find opportunities for wholesome recreation, Christian education, and moral guidance.

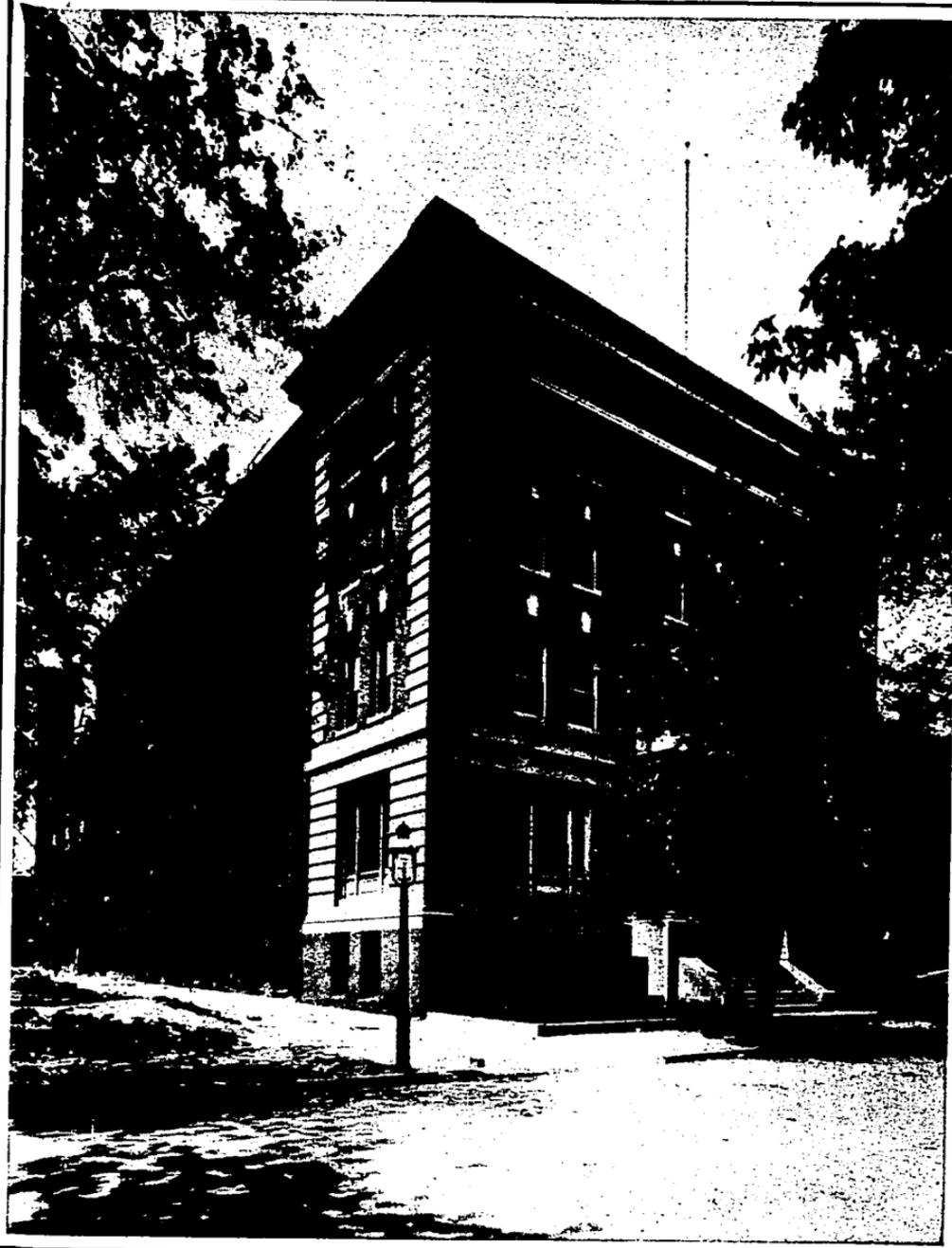
Some notion of the enthusiasm and interest with which the colored people have gone at this work may be gathered from the fact that, in the campaign to erect the first \$100,000 building in Washington, D. C., the campaign committee carried 4,500 different accounts with colored people. Practically one in every twenty of the Negro population of Washington contributed to the \$27,000 raised by them for this purpose. Of the remainder, \$25,000 was given by John D. Rockefeller, \$25,000 by Julius Rosenwald, and \$23,000 by the white people of Washington. In the campaign to erect a Young Men's Christian Association building in Chicago the sum of \$67,000 was subscribed by 10,000 colored people. This means that about one in every four of the colored population of Chicago, according to the last census, contributed to the erection of a building costing \$195,000.

In Philadelphia the colored people started out to raise \$25,000, and succeeded in getting subscriptions amounting to \$23,000 in six days. In Atlanta, Georgia, colored people raised among themselves \$50,000, and among the white people \$25,000. In Indian-

apolis colored people raised \$18,000, and among the whites \$60,000. In Baltimore the colored people started out to raise \$25,000, but finished their campaign with subscriptions amounting to \$31,000; the white people contributed \$50,000. In Kansas City colored people raised \$31,000, the whites \$50,000. In Cincinnati it was proposed that the white population raise \$60,000 and the colored \$15,000. As a matter of fact, the colored people raised \$25,000 in ten days. In New York City they subscribed \$40,000 toward a \$150,000 building. In Nashville, Tennessee, as I have said, they raised over \$33,000 among themselves, and they did it in nine days. In this campaign the Nashville "Globe," ordinarily published once a week, issued a daily edition announcing the amount of the day's subscription. This was one of the first daily papers ever published by and for colored people.

It is interesting to note the sources from which this money raised by colored people came.

It must be remembered that this is the first time in the history of the world that the Negro race has had an opportunity of handling and of contributing to so large an enterprise. Both those who handled the subscription lists and those who gave realized keenly that the whole race was on trial. Their gifts ran all the way from 25 cents to \$1,200 per contributor. The number who gave \$1,000 was both gratifying and surprising.



**Y. M. C. A. (COLORED) BUILDING AT WASHINGTON, D. C.**  
Completed in 1912 at a cost of \$120,000, part of which was contributed by Mr. Rosenwald  
and a larger amount by the colored people of the capital



**JAMES TILGHAM OF CHICAGO**

The first colored man to give \$1,000 for a Y. M. C. A. Building



**MRS. DAISY K. MERCHANT OF CINCINNATI**

An enterprising colored woman who gave \$1,200



**THOMAS W. TROY OF LOS ANGELES, CAL.**

Another contributor of \$1,000 to help the young men of his race.

**NEGRO WORKERS IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR**

Who were they, and how could they respond so liberally to this great cause? The first man to give \$1,000 was James H. Tilgham, of Chicago. Mr. Tilgham was born back in the days of slavery, 1844, in Washington, D. C.

For some fifteen years this man was driven hither and thither, seeking work, seeking some place to settle down and make good. Now he was in New Orleans working under the Reconstruction Government; now back in Washington, first in Government work, and then learning the trade of decorator; now in Boston as a waiter in the Harvard dining-room. Finally, in 1881, he went to Chicago and, after some struggle, began his work as messenger, first to Carter H. Harrison, Sr., then to Engineer Clark, of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern and Rock Island Railroad system, then to the Chicago Telephone Company, with which he has been employed since 1901.

In giving his \$1,000 Mr. Tilgham said: "Many years ago, when I left my Eastern home, a mere boy, I landed in Chicago without friends and hardly a dollar I could call my own. I began to search here and there for a home and a place to work. After a time I was successful, but even then I did not get a desirable place where a young man can feel homelike and happy. It was during

these times that my mind was formed to make it better for the 'wanderer' who would perchance leave a good home to battle in this broad world to make himself a man and become a respected citizen in the community in which he lived.

"Seeing the door of hope closed to me and to my people, and my hands tied to give millions, I vowed to God that I would take advantage of my disadvantages, and, if ever the opportunity presented itself, I would give largely of my hard-earned means, which were from the sweat of my brow, to the first call that came that was interdenominational, which would help to fully develop the boy and man to fit him, not only for the service of himself, but for his country as well."

Another man to give \$1,000 was David T. Howard, of Atlanta, Georgia. Mr. Howard started life as a slave. He, too, tried his hands at many kinds of work. Finally, in a humble way, he started the business of under-taking. During the later years of his success his means have been generously divided with the poor of his race. He takes the widows and children under his care and aids them in getting their business in order. He has financed and instructed many young men who wanted to begin a business of their own. Mr. Howard owns, not only much valuable city property, but a lot of farm land, on



DR. JESSE E. MOORLAND  
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY OF  
COLORED MEN'S DEPARTMENT  
OF THE Y. M. C. A.



THOMAS LASSITER  
OF ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.  
He started with nothing, is now worth  
\$50,000, and gave \$1,000 to the cause



DAVID T. HOWARD  
OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA  
Another colored man whose name is on  
the \$1,000 roll of honor

Y. M. C. A. BUILDINGS FOR COLORED PEOPLE

which, again, he makes opportunities for his race.

R. H. Boyd, of Nashville, Tennessee, was another ex-slave to contribute \$1,000 towards the Young Men's Christian Association in his city. Mr. Boyd owns one of the few big Negro publishing houses in the country. This man went to school—elementary school—after he was grown, married, and had a family of considerable size. To quote a part of his own story:

I went into Palestine, Texas, and formed a partnership with Dunlap and Smallwood and bought the first printing machinery furnishing Bible leaflets to the young people of the South. I went in partnership with Dunlap and Smallwood because they were white men and experienced printers. I had, at that time, \$500, possibly \$1,000. I invested it in machinery. I knew nothing of printing. I swindled both Dunlap and Smallwood. I swindled these men out of what they had. When we went into the business, they had the experience; I had the money. When we quit—we were finally burned out—they got all the money and I left Palestine with all the experience. I went to Nashville in 1896 for the purpose of devising some ways and means by which we could print all of the Bible leaflets, Sunday-school and Church literature used or required by our denomination. I secured a secretary, rented a room for \$5 a month, furnished it nicely with one or two split-bottom chairs and a second-hand table, which

served as my desk; then I bought a few pencils and some paper, opened my office, began business, and reported for work every morning promptly at or before nine o'clock. The first thing I did—my secretary and I—was to bow down by the side of that table and ask Almighty God to help me to succeed in this work. And I want to tell you that from that day until the present time there has never been a day in the National Baptist Publishing Board but what every employee working there has been ordered to shut down the presses, stop whatever they are doing, and at 9:30 each morning enter the chapel and thank God for his goodness and ask for guidance during that day. When I first started into this printing enterprise at Nashville, I lived in that little room; I had left my family in San Antonio, Texas. There, beside the open fireplace, I slept, I prayed to God for success, and laid my plans for the future. I was my own cook and servant girl. The problem of the Negro servant girl had not entered my household. My breakfast consisted of a cup of coffee, some rye bread toasted on the coals, and a nickel's worth of bologna sausage.

This is the type of life story back of nearly every large as well as small sum paid from the Negro purse in all those campaigns. So it has been with Thomas E. Lassiter, of Atlantic City, New Jersey, again a man who started with nothing, but who now, through hard work and self-control, is worth some \$50,000. His wife, a hairdresser, is, I am



LAYING THE CORNER-STONE OF THE Y. M. C. A. BUILDING FOR COLORED PEOPLE AT KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, LAST SPRING

Ten thousand people were present on this occasion, and the event was signalized by processions and addresses

told, worth in her own name almost as much as her husband.

Again, there is Mrs. C. J. Walker, of Indianapolis, who not many years ago left the farm in Louisiana for the wash-tub, left the wash-tub for the kitchen, and then left the kitchen for business. She, too, was in the \$1,000 class of donors. In all these instances of \$1,000 Negro donors—in that of Mr. Preston Taylor, a wealthy undertaker of the same city; of the Rev. William Beckam and Mr. Henry Allen Boyd, also of Nashville; of Mrs. Daisy Merchant, of Cincinnati, who gave \$1,200; of Dr. E. P. Roberts, of New York; of Mr. Henry T. Troy, of Los Angeles, California—in all these cases the money has been literally wrung from the respective occupations by hard work, under trying circumstances and the greatest amount of personal restraint.

That most of the showing in building Young Men's Christian Associations should have been made among Negroes of the North is to me a matter of marked significance. In the first place, these buildings themselves provide places of welcome where

they are most needed. Year by year our boys get into Northern cities. Often they are in schools and work on trains or steamboats in summer to earn their tuition for the next year. The Northern city gets attractive to them. They decide to stay there. But in too many cases this decision is the end of all that was hopeful in the young man's career. He misses the best people and gets among the easy-going. He gets into a hotel, where money comes easily and regularly. Coming easily, it goes easily. The Young Men's Christian Association in these cities will lead him among different companions and keep in him the ambition he set out with.

It is sometimes said that the Young Men's Christian Association weakens the influence of the church. This was not so in the case of the Negro. In many instances the persons who contributed the most in effort and money to make the erection of these buildings possible were men who had not been counted as particularly religious men. In a great number of cases, after the building campaigns were over, they connected themselves with the



**AUTOMOBILE CLASS FOR COLORED MEN AT THE INDIANAPOLIS Y. M. C. A.**

church again. Men and women who had previously taken little or no part in any organized effort to help themselves or the race were drawn into the movement. Men of all classes and all denominations united and pulled together for the common good as they had never done before. The result of this was that when the work was over and the finished building came to be dedicated, the people felt that it belonged to them to an extent that they could not have felt if it had cost them any less effort and sacrifice.

Another way in which this gift has helped the Negro people has been by enabling the Young Men's Christian Association to teach how it is possible to make religion touch practical life. That "old-time religion," from which the Negro got so much comfort in slavery, turned all attention to the next world. In the Young Men's Christian Association he learns to associate religion with cleanliness, with health, with pure living. He learns to associate religion with the reading of books, with opportunities for study and advancement in his trade or profession. In short, the young colored man learns in the Young Men's Christian Association how religion can and should be connected up with all the ordinary practical interests and wholesome natural pleasures of life.

Another direction in which, it seems to me, Mr. Rosenwald's gift and the Young Men's Christian Association have been a help to the members of my race is in what they are doing to convince the white people of this country that in the long run schools are cheaper than policemen; that there is more wisdom in keeping a man out of the ditch than in trying to save him after he has fallen in; that it is more Christian and more economical to prepare young men to live right than to punish them after they have committed crime.

Some years ago at Buxton, Iowa, where there is a community of about fifteen hundred Negro miners, the Consolidated Coal Company was persuaded to erect a colored Young Men's Christian Association building at a cost of \$20,000. For several years this Christian Association was about the only government that community had. So satisfactory did this investment prove that, after a short time, another building was erected for a boys' branch of the Association. When the manager of this company was asked his opinion as to the value of this work, he said: "The Association has made a policeman and a prison unnecessary in this community."

This work, begun at Buxton in 1903, has now become a regular feature of the Young Men's Christian Association's work. There are similar Associations among the lumber men at Vaughn, North Carolina, and Bogalusa, Louisiana. Recently an Association was started among the five thousand Negroes employed by the Newport Shipbuilding Company, at Newport News, Virginia. At this place night classes were established to give the boys and young men of the community a general education. In addition, there is a social room where members may play billiards, pool, and other games, and an athletic field where they have outdoor games and sports. Thousands of colored men are employed in mines, in lumber camps, iron mills, and construction camps, in which there are neither schools nor churches, nor any other influence that makes for better living. Under such conditions employers see that it is not only human and right, but sound economy, to provide some sort of welfare work for their employees, both white and black. The result is that these Associations are springing up more rapidly than the Association can find competent men to direct them. At Benham, Kentucky, an Association has recently been started for colored miners. At Birmingham, Alabama, the American Coal and Iron Company has recently fitted up a splendid plant for its employees, white and colored. This branch of the work illustrates how the Association has been able to adapt its work to all kinds and classes of men.

The organizing of the colored people for the gathering and collection of subscriptions, the inspiration that comes from labor in common for the common good—all this is in itself a character-building process, and has had a far-reaching influence upon the churches and other religious organizations throughout the country. These efforts have helped not merely the black man, but the white man as well, in bringing the best element of both races together in labor and counsel for the common good. To the South especially, where the best black and the best white people almost never meet and know each other, the struggles, the sacrifices, and the generous enthusiasm which the building campaign has brought out in the black man and white have served to reveal each race to the other and to bring about an understanding and community interest between them that could probably have come about in no other way.

Tuskegee Institute, Alabama.