

**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 any 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 Ridge Hill High School other  
names/site number Ridge Spring Star Community Center

**2. Location**

street & number 206 Ridge Hill Drive not for publication  
city or town Ridge Spring vicinity  
state South Carolina code SC county Saluda code 081 zip code 29129

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide X locally. (   See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official                      Date

Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.  
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 commenting or other official                      Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

I, hereby certify that this 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):

Ridge Hill High School  
 Name of Property

Saluda County, South Carolina  
 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)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
 in the National Register  
 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Education

Subcategory: School

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Social

Subcategory: Meeting Hall

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Brick  
 Walls: Brick  
 Roof: Tin  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

Ridge Hill High School  
Name of Property

Saluda County, South Carolina  
County and State

**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)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C 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.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

- a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- b removed from its original location.
- c a birthplace or a grave.
- d a cemetery.
- e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- f a commemorative property.
- g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education  
Ethnic Heritage - Black

**Period of Significance**

1934-1957

**Significant Date**

1934

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Dressler, Fletcher B. (Julius Rosenwald Fund)  
Smith, Samuel L. (Julius Rosenwald Fund)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- 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:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.

Ridge Hill High School  
 Name of Property

Saluda County, South Carolina  
 County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 4.5 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1 17 439018 3745852	3 17
2 17 _____	4 17

\_\_\_ 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 J. Haley Grant  
 organization Public History Program, University of South Carolina date 22 April 2010  
 street & number Gambrell Hall, University of South Carolina telephone (803) 777-6398  
 city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29208

**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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Ridge Spring Star Center, c/o Mrs. Effie Martin, President of Star Center Committee  
 street & number 1809 Mount Calvary Road telephone (803) 685-5179 (Effie Martin)  
 city or town Ridge Spring state SC zip code 29129

**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 listings. 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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Page 5

Ridge Hill High School  
Name of Property  
Saluda County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

Ridge Hill High School is a large, one story building with a north/south orientation and is located on four and a half acres in the rural Saluda County town of Ridge Spring, South Carolina. The school is located within a residential area that contains a church and elementary school. The original 1923-1924 white clapboard six-teacher school, a Rosenwald-funded building, burned in 1934 and was rebuilt later that year using the same six teacher plan – the Six Teacher Community School Plan No. 6-A. These schools were to face north or south only. Ridge Hill High School is north facing. Keeping the center of the building for communal uses such as an auditorium, cafeteria, and school events, the six classrooms are situated on the outer perimeter of the plan.

The new school was built with brick instead of the original's wood siding. The school is built on a small hill and has a raised basement brick foundation. Ridge Hill has a multiple gabled tin roof that is in good repair and contains two brick chimneys on both ends. The exterior walls of unpainted red brick are sturdy and have no visible signs of disintegration. A decorative brick trim follows at the base of the building. The overall effect is symmetrical with the floor plan following an **H** shape. As such, the back resembles the front in form and materials.

Ridge Hill's façade consists of a lateral hipped roof intersected on each end by a front-facing gabled wing. In the connecting angle between the wings and the main center building are two shed-style porches that act as entrance bays. The east bay contains a paved ramp for wheelchair access, while the west bay retains the original concrete steps. Each bay contains front-facing double-leaf doors and side-facing doors, with each leaf consisting of five horizontal panels.

The central pavilion of the façade, between the two porches, contains three sets of white, wood framed nine-over-nine light windows. They appear to be original, though some side windows have been replaced. On the roof above the middle set is a triangular, louvered vent with Y-brace division. A pair of vertical rectangular vents is centered in the top of both front-facing gabled wings. Below the vents of each of the gabled wings is a tall, segmental arched panel that is stuccoed.

The Rosenwald Six Teacher Community School plan consists of three classrooms in each wing with the auditorium, stage, and various small offices in the middle of the **H**. The outer classrooms are 22 x 30 feet while the two middle classrooms are 22 x 23 feet. The auditorium, according to the official plans, is 34 x 48 feet in dimension.

The west facing side is set deeper than the east facing side of the school due to the position of the hill and basement. The right side contains several sets of windows. The main level windows on each side are identical in number with both sides possessing three sets of triple windows. The right [east] side also contains the basement level windows that are not found on the left [west] side. Running along the ground/basement level are two sets of four tall, boarded-up, segmental-arched windows. In each set, the fourth window is a door with a metal awning. The doors and awnings are original to the 1934 construction.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 6

Ridge Hill High School  
Name of Property  
Saluda County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

Ridge Hill High School is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Education and African American Ethnic Heritage. This school, built in 1934, replaced a Rosenwald school built on the same site in 1924 which burned ten years later. It greatly impacted the education of rural Saluda County's African American students from 1934 to 1954. The school is also architecturally significant as a brick version of the frame Six-Teacher Community School Plan No. 6-A of the 1924 school.

Education for southern African Americans was sorely lacking during the early twentieth century, just as it had been in the nineteenth century. Funding for black schools was nearly non-existent, and the actions of southern legislatures to keep it that way only contributed to the hardships in the African Americans' pursuit of education and equality. Though South Carolina enrollment in 1916 for rural or "country" black students was considerably more than for white students, the numbers were reversed for black "town" students.<sup>1</sup> The State Agent for Negro Schools reported in 1917 that progress for the overall public school system in South Carolina, for both black and white students, "has been steady, but slow."<sup>2</sup> Poor African-American education was, however, an issue that most were all too eager to blame on the "absolute incompetency and unfitness of negro teachers."<sup>3</sup> As such, the money spent on black education was "largely wasted" and in much need of improvement, especially towards the industrial education of African Americans. Even though the agent stated that "health, intelligence, industry, economy, and conservation among both races would be greatly promoted if the negro schools could be put on a better basis," equal opportunity in education of South Carolina's African Americans still faced a long road.

Evidence that improving the education system and standards for South Carolina's black students had not been a major concern is shown in a 1927 letter from the State High School Supervisor to the Superintendent of Education, James H. Hope. Mr. J. Daniel, Supervisor, wrote that he was "especially anxious to give the negro schools this year a rating and to keep a more accurate check than has heretofore been made."<sup>4</sup> Most efforts at giving black children a chance at going to school came in the form of donations from their own community or an outside fund. Most of what was needed was put towards a safe and comfortable school building, books, and a teacher's salary.

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<sup>1</sup> J.H. Brannon, "Report of the State Agent for Negro Schools," 1917, in *Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education of the State of South Carolina* (Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1918).. The 1916-1917 school year showed an enrollment of 163,125 black rural students compared to 112,443 rural white students. Also note 49,703 black town students compared to 82,669 white town students. As such, more rural black students attended than rural white, but more white town students attended than black town students.

<sup>2</sup> Brannon, 1917 Report.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> J. Daniel, State High School Supervisor, to James H. Hope, Superintendent of Education, October 13, 1927, High School Accreditation Applications, 1908-1941. South Carolina Department of Education Records, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C., repository hereafter referred to SCDAH.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8  

Page   7  

Ridge Hill High School  
Name of Property  
Saluda County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

Because South Carolina's white students and schools were afforded more, African American schools, especially in rural counties such as Saluda, were extremely important in the education they provided, the safe environment they gave, and the belief that if students studied and did their best, they could better their future and community. The history of the Ridge Hill High School shows its impact on Ridge Spring's educational and black heritage landscape for just such provisions and aspirations. As such, the Ridge Hill High School meets Criterion A, Education and African American Ethnic Heritage. Over time, these buildings were not only schools, but important community centers used by the black families and students for various area events.

**Criterion A: Education and African-American Ethnic Heritage**

The former Ridge Hill High School sits on the site of a Rosenwald School, built in 1924, that was primarily used as the area's African American industrial training school.<sup>5</sup> The Ridge Hill Rosenwald School was a wood-framed six teacher plan. In 1934, a fire destroyed the industrial school. No information concerning the cause for the burning has been found at this time, and it is generally believed by the community that it was an accident with one of the wood stoves. A new location for the industrial training school was found in the town of Saluda, and new plans were made for the school in Ridge Spring. It was rebuilt quickly in the fall of that same year and followed the Rosenwald School's six teacher floor plan.

The new Ridge Hill High School was constructed of brick, an expensive material in depression-era rural South. Indeed, the total building cost was around \$8000.00 in a particularly tough economic climate for Saluda County. In 1934, there were uncollected taxes in Saluda County that would add to the \$75,000 in previous years' uncollected taxes.<sup>6</sup> According to those associated with the school, the public banded together and provided both money and labor for the new school. A source of pride, the new Ridge Hill High School was considered "one of the finest school buildings in Saluda County."<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Ora Broadnax, a 1950 graduate of Ridge Hill High School and a retired teacher of thirty years, recognized the importance the school had on her life and those of her siblings. After her graduation from Ridge Hill, she was admitted to Voorhees College and became the first in her family to attend college.<sup>8</sup>

A 1935 report states that there were only two African American schools in Saluda County that offered a high school education, those two schools being in the towns of Saluda and Ridge Spring.<sup>9</sup> Ridge Hill High served grades ten to twelve.<sup>10</sup> In 1933, African American teachers were paid \$187.50 a year, in accordance with the School Act of 1933, however, white teachers were paid \$360.00 a year.<sup>11</sup> Teacher pay was somewhat better in

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<sup>5</sup> *Development of Negro Education in Saluda County 1865-1935*. [1935].

<sup>6</sup> South Carolina General Assembly, Ledgers of the Sinking Fund Committee, January 1935. These ledgers detail an Act creating the Sinking Fund Commission of Saluda County to help with the effects of tax delinquencies. South Carolina General Assembly Papers, SCDAH.

<sup>7</sup> *Development of Negro Education in Saluda County 1865-1935*. [1935].

<sup>8</sup> Ora Broadnax, interview by author, Ridge Spring, Saluda County, S.C., October 16, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> *Development of Negro Education in Saluda County 1865-1935*. [1935].

<sup>10</sup> Ora Broadnax, interview by author, October 16, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Saluda County State Aid Applications, 1933-1956, South Carolina Department of Education Records, SCDAH.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Page 8

Ridge Hill High School  
Name of Property  
Saluda County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

the 1944-1945 Saluda County school year; however, differences between white and black schools were still painfully obvious in the conditions of the school buildings. In 1944, Ridge Spring High, a white Saluda County school, was valued at \$229,000, while Ridge Hill was valued at only \$20,000. The two school's 1944 graduation and college rates were very close. Ridge Spring High graduated fifteen students with eight going to college. Ridge Hill High graduated thirteen students with seven going to college. That same year, Ridge Hill enrolled 118 students compared to the 83 white students of Ridge Spring.<sup>12</sup>

In 1944, Ridge Hill's school year began on October 9, which was over a month after the white Ridge Spring High opened on September 4. An average school day was five and a half hours long, and there were thirty six weeks in the school year. Ridge Hill contained 2448 books under the librarian, Miss Easter Witherspoon. Forty- eight books had been added since the previous year.<sup>13</sup> Mr. A.C. Hightower was the principal and had been educated at Benedict College in Columbia. He was eleven years into his position as principal and made an annual salary of \$1305.00. Mr. Hightower also taught algebra, geometry, and citizenship. Other 1944 faculty included Mrs. R.E. Hightower who taught English and history; Mr. M. A. Wilds who taught science, math, and agriculture; Mrs. V. R. McLaurin who taught home economics; and Miss T. V. Ables who taught French. Mr. Hightower's yearly salary was the highest with Miss T.V. Ables being the least at \$726.75.<sup>14</sup>

Ridge Hill was used as a high school until the 1956-1957 school year and is still in use today for Ridge Spring's vibrant black community. Years after its closing, it was re-used as a grammar school, but quickly closed down for the newer Ridge Spring Elementary/Middle School. Today, renamed the Ridge Spring Star Center, it functions as an area meeting hall and is a non-profit organization with active committee members. The name comes from the five African American Baptist churches that share in its upkeep. Ridge Hill, Pine Hill, Coleman Ridge, Jerusalem, and Monetta Baptist Churches make up the five points of a star.<sup>15</sup>

Ridge Hill was a very competent school that strove to have educated teachers and administrators who could provide their students with the most modern of educations, despite the lack of educational equality. Ridge Hill High School greatly impacted the education of Ridge Spring's rural African American students by creating an enriched environment that wove community and school together— an environment that instilled in the students the belief that they could have a better future than what their parents may have had.

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<sup>12</sup> Saluda County High School Applications, 1944-1945, South Carolina Department of Education Records, SCDAH.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Saluda County High School Applications, 1944-1945, South Carolina Department of Education Records, SCDAH.

<sup>15</sup> George Herrion, Interview by author, Ridge Spring, Saluda County, S.C., July 8, 2009. George Herrion was a 1947 graduate of Ridge Hill High School. He had three sisters who taught there, one of whom was Miss Salley L. Herrion.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9  

Page   9  

Ridge Hill High School  
Name of Property  
Saluda County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

**Major Bibliographical References**

**Primary**

“Among Colored Schools,” *Saluda Standard* (Saluda, S.C. ), January 4, 1934.

Bell, James. Interview by the author, Ridge Spring, Saluda County, S.C., September 25, 2008.

Brannon, J.H. “Report of the State Agent for Negro Schools,” 1917. In *Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Education of the State of South Carolina*. Columbia: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1919.

Broadnax, Ora. Interview by the author, Ridge Spring, Saluda County, S.C., October 16, 2008.

Herrion, George. Interview by the author, Ridge Spring, Saluda County, S.C., July 8, 2009.

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“Rosenwald Song Service Sunday,” *Saluda Standard* (Saluda, S.C.), March 8, 1934.

Saluda County, Ledgers of the Sinking Fund Committee, 1935. Saluda County Records, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Saluda County, Minutes of the Board of Education, 1899-1933. South Carolina Department of Education Records, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Saluda County, State Aid Applications, South Carolina Department of Education, 1933-1956. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9  

Page  10 

Ridge Hill High School  
Name of Property  
Saluda County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

**Secondary**

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*Development of Negro Education in Saluda County, 1865-1935.*

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Hoffschwelle, Mary S. *The Rosenwald Schools of the American South*. Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2006.

National Trust for Historic Preservation. "Rosenwald Schools Initiative."  
<http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/southern-region/rosenwaldschools/>  
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Weathers, Lindsay C.M. "The Rosenwald School Building Program in South Carolina, 1917-1932." Multiple Property Documentation Form, National Register of Historic Places, 2008.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 11

Ridge Hill High School  
Name of Property  
Saluda County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the heavy black line marked "Ridge Hill High School" on the accompanying portion of a Saluda County Tax Map, Parcel 145-08-02-009, drawn at a scale of 1" = 100'.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property is restricted to the historic Ridge Hill High School and its immediate setting.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photographs Page 12 Ridge Hill High School  
Name of Property  
Saluda County, South Carolina  
County and State

---

The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Ridge Hill High School  
Location of Property: 206 Ridge Hill Drive, Ridge Spring  
Saluda County, South Carolina

Name of Photographer: J. Haley Grant  
Date of Photographs: Photos 1-5: November 2008  
Photos 6-16: July 2009

Location of Original  
Digital Images: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

1. Façade, facing south
2. West elevation, facing east
3. Detail of southwest corner, facing northeast
4. South elevation (rear), facing north
5. East elevation in northeast corner, facing southwest
6. Interior northwest corner, present-day kitchen in original classroom
7. Present-day kitchen in original classroom, facing north, with original blackboards
8. Interior, facing east; Standing in middle classroom/auditorium towards the stage
9. Interior detail of windows of façade, facing north
10. Interior, facing east; Detail of stage
11. Stage right, staircase leading to east classrooms, facing east
12. Interior, facing east; Storage closet in original principal's office
13. East classroom detail of original blackboards
14. Interior of east classroom, facing northeast
15. East classroom, detail of original chimney features
16. Interior of southeast corner of auditorium, facing northwest