



Flowering of Nicodemus

The official newsletter of Nicodemus National Historic Site

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From the Superintendent

Last month the nation celebrated the birth and life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. And this month our nation celebrates Black History Month...but we celebrate important American history every month of the year! Nicodemus National Historic Site is all about the history of Nicodemus and acknowledging the role of African Americans in settling the West. That is our mission and reason for being part of America's National Park system. There are now twenty national parks that focus on African American history. Besides the **Nicodemus** and **Brown v. Board of Education** national historic sites in Kansas, these twenty include other national historic sites like **Martin Luther King Jr. NHS** (Georgia), **Carter G. Woodson NHS** (Washington, D.C.), **Maggie L. Walker NHS** (Virginia); several national monuments including **African Burial Ground NM** (New York); and assorted other parks like the **Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail** (Alabama) and the **National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom** (multiple states). You can learn about these parks on two websites: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aahistory/> (National Park Service) and <http://www.aaexperience.org/> (African American Experience Fund/National Park Foundation). An interesting state park similar to Nicodemus NHS is Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park, north of Bakersfield, California. Allen Allensworth was born in Louisville, Kentucky and joined the Union Army in 1862. He retired a lieutenant colonel in 1906 (the first African American to reach such high rank) and founded Allensworth, California in 1909. While it is better to experience these national and state parks through an actual visit, a "virtual" website visit can be interesting too. We offer another way for school students to make a "virtual" visit – our distance-learning station. Teachers can call Park Ranger Phyllis Howard (785-839-4233) to schedule an in-class lesson using this interactive internet technology. Celebrate the Black History preserved in our parks this month, and throughout the year!

Here in northwest Kansas, we are dealing with a "real" (not a "virtual") winter! We've closed the National Historic Site twice, three days due to a power outage caused by a severe ice storm and one day due to deep snow. Power was out in Nicodemus for 52 hours over the New Year's weekend. I'm beginning to look forward to spring!

One very exciting project to look forward to this spring is the Kansas Archeology Training Program (KATP) field school to be held in Nicodemus, Kansas in June. An article on the field school and information for registering is included in this newsletter. Although KATP is sponsored by the Kansas Anthropological Association and the Kansas State Historical Society, we are helping with the KATP field school as a partner. We hope that you will either participate in the field school or that you are able to visit while archeologists are working here in town. Wonderful clues about the earliest years of Nicodemus can be found underground! Come for a visit in June...or sooner.

Sherda K. Williams

Tip for Identifying People in Photographs

When I want to identify people in a photo, I lay a piece of tracing paper over the top and note their identities there, rather than on the back of the photo. The tracing paper can be folded back to view the picture and folded down to find out who it is. This protects the photo and makes it easy to correct if I have misidentified anyone. Writing on the back of a photo causes it to eventually bleed through and ruins the picture. I have also used this method to send photos to relatives so they can identify the people they recognize and mail the tissue paper back to me, keeping the photo.

Provided by S. Hirschfeld, Longmont, CO in the Geneology.com electronic newsletter, 1/23/2007.



NPS: Photo

"It is not the style of clothes one wears, neither the kind of automobile one drives, nor the amount of money one has in the bank, that counts. These mean nothing. It is simply service that measures success."

– George Washington Carver

Places to visit: George Washington Carver National Monument in Diamond, Missouri
(www.nps.gov/gwca)

Medicinal Remedies at Nicodemus

Researched and written by Michelle M. Huff, Park Guide

Asafoetida, quinine, skunk oil and snakeroot. What do these things have to do with Nicodemus? Nicodemus history tells us that the settlers used these things as medicinal remedies. Possibly the most interesting of these remedies, for a variety of reasons, is asafoetida.

Asafoetida is a resin obtained from the root of a plant belonging to the same plant family as carrots, fennel, parsley, dill and caraway. Sounds good. However, translated from Latin, asafetida means smelling or fetid resin. This translation certainly explains why one of the popular nicknames for this resin is “devil’s dung”. The smell is supposed to be quite obnoxious and is likened to the smell of rotten onions, rotten garlic or rotten, smelly feet.

In spite of its foul smell, asafetida was used as a medicinal remedy, not only by Nicodemus pioneers, but by different cultures in different parts of the world for centuries. It was used as a remedy for throat and chest congestion, headaches, stomach ailments, flatulence and as a repellent for insect bites and snake bites, particularly if combined with onions or garlic. It was also thought to be an effective prevention for colds and fevers worn about the neck in a bag. If you think about it, that just might have worked, considering that if the odor was strong enough to repel snakes and insects, it would certainly have kept sick, contagious people away.

Although asafoetida’s traditional use in this country and by Nicodemus pioneers appears to have been only medicinal, it is also used as a cooking herb in India, particularly in lentil dishes, and has gained popularity in other areas as a flavor additive to soups, vegetables and meats. Very small amounts of the strong herb are used in cooking and the foul odor fades with cooking and is said to taste like a combination of earthy truffles and strong onions.

Nicodemus descendants who remember the use of asafetida will probably not be able to identify with its cooking qualities, but if asked about it, they will be able to recall and describe very well how bad it smelled and to probably punctuate the description with a wrinkled nose or a frown.

LEARN MORE--Check these research sources that Michelle consulted:

[Nicodemus National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report](#) (January, 2003). Also see the following websites: [Wikipedia.org](#); [Planetherbs.com](#); [Holistic-Online.com](#); [Wisageek.com](#); [Herbco.com](#); and [Harvestfields.net](#)

More Freedmen’s Bureau Records Soon To Be Placed Online

Records the Freedmen’s Bureau used to reconnect former slave families – from battered work contract to bank forms – will be placed on line in part of a new project linking modern-day Blacks with their ancestors.

Twenty-four years removed from slavery in rural Virginia, Hawkins Wilson had established himself as a respected Texas minister. But there was something missing from his life as a free man: the mother and sister he left behind.

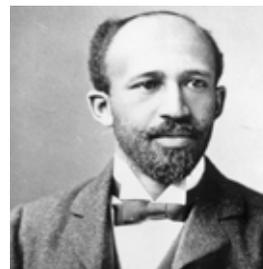
In a letter dated 11 May 1876, he offered bureau officials details of his family’s old home in Caroline County, and urged them to pass along a note to his sister, Jane.

“Your little brother Hawkins is trying to find out where you are and where his poor old mother is,” reads the letter, which will be included in the database. “Your advice to me to meet you in Heaven has never (lapsed) from my mind.” Historians don’t know if he ever found his family.

The Virginia Freedmen Project plans to digitize more than 200,000 images collected by the Richmond bureau, one of dozens of offices established throughout the South to help former slaves adjust to free life. The Genealogical Society of Utah (<http://www.gensocietyofutah.org>) is a partner in the project.

Researchers will eventually transfer data from all of the southern states to an online database. Records from Virginia should be ready to go online by the middle of next year.

Excerpted from an Associated Press article, “Online project will Digitize More than 200,000 Records of Free Blacks After Slavery,” by Dionne Walker.



“There is in this world no such force as the force of a person determined to rise. The human soul cannot be permanently chained.”
– W. E. B. Du Bois

NPS: Photo

*Black History is celebrated in February.
Black history is every month.*

*Remember the past and look forward to
the future.*

NICODEMUS

[The below article by Angela Bates about the history of Nicodemus appeared in the Winter 2006-2007 issue of the [Solomon Valley Anthology](#). A second article written by Melvina Williams will be featured in a future newsletter. The [Anthology](#) is the official publication of the Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance, Inc. This article is fourteenth in a series featuring the 24 communities along U.S. Highway 24 that form the Alliance.]

In the fall of 1877 a group of 350 former slaves arrived on the High Plains of Kansas with a dream of experiencing true “freedom,” a freedom they were kept from experiencing in their former home in central Kentucky. After the Civil War ended, the war-torn South spent the next ten years rebuilding. This time period became known as Reconstruction. During this time, recently-freed slaves were almost immediately subjected to a new form of slavery through control by Jim Crow laws. These laws prohibited them from experiencing political, social, and economical freedom. They could not even meet in large groups unless a White was present. Life during Reconstruction for the African American meant social re-enslavement.

With the Homestead Act providing the means for land ownership; the stage was set for those who were brave enough to stake out a new life in the wilds of the West. Town speculators W. R. Hill (White) and W. H. Smith (African American) formed a partnership in Graham County that resulted in the establishment of two towns, Nicodemus and Hill City. They formed a partnership and created the Nicodemus Town Company with four ministers, who then returned to their former homes in Kentucky where they recruited potential settlers.

When the initial group of settlers arrived in September 1877, they were disappointed in what they saw. Those who had arrived earlier that spring were living in primitive dugouts. About 60 of these new arrivals had seen enough to know that they did not want to remain, so they turned around and went back to Ellis, and some even all the way back to Kentucky. The ones who saw a vision of what Nicodemus could be and saw themselves making a home on the new land, remained. After winter set in they soon found themselves starving and destitute, having brought only what they could carry. The Osage Indians were returning from their annual hunt when they stumbled upon this group of destitute settlers. Alarmed at the sight of Indians and fearing for their lives, they ran and hid themselves in caves along the banks of the Solomon River. Soon it was clear that they wanted only to share their game. If it were not for these compassionate souls, Nicodemus settlers would have perished on the open plains.

Over the next several years Nicodemus continued to be settled by African Americans, with the last group arriving in 1880 as

a part of the official mass “exodus” of African Americans out of the South and into the state of Kansas. A year after settlement a plow was brought to the town site and settlers started building soddies. The first stone structure built was the St. Francis Hotel and post office. When the Sayers general store was built across the street it was considered the “most handsome building in Graham County.” As stone structures started to line Washington Street, the town began to look like a bustling western town. At its zenith, Nicodemus had several mercantile stores, livery stables, hotels, a bank, doctor’s office, two newspapers, and boasted a population of nearly 700. These African Americans began to realize the real meaning of freedom and self government. In 1885, the hope of the railroad laying track through Nicodemus was blighted when it bypassed the town just south of the Solomon River on its way toward the county seat of Hill City. The Missouri Pacific encouraged the railroad workers to create a town that they would support and they did, thus the railroad town of Bogue. White merchants who had established businesses in Nicodemus, such as the bank, moved their businesses to Bogue. This caused an economic rift that resulted in the first major decline in Nicodemus. In the years that followed with the Great Depression and dust bowl years of the 1930s, Nicodemus continued to decline. Decline continued until today with less than 40 people living on the town site.

On August 1, 1878, Nicodemus hosted its first Emancipation Celebration. It was held until the early 1940s at what was called Scruggs Grove, south of Nicodemus on the 160-acre R. B. Scruggs farm. In the 1950s the celebration date was moved to the last weekend in July. In 2006, Nicodemus celebrated its 128th celebration and the 10th anniversary as a National Park.

Some of the initial groups of settlers from Georgetown, Kentucky, were former slaves of Vice-President Richard M. Johnson under President Martin Van Buren. Most of the settlers were skilled workers and brought with them skills useful in establishing their new homes. Many were blacksmiths, cobblers, seamstresses, cooks, etc. All worked on farms at their former homes in Kentucky and were equipped with skills used immediately to work the land.

Although Nicodemus has never been a big town, it proudly claims many prominent individuals. Nicodemus settlers were the first to fill county offices as commissioners, clerk, coroner, attorney, and census taker. The settlers became some of the most politically active African Americans in the state. W. L. Sayers became one of the most prominent African American county attorneys. Edward P. McCabe became the Nicodemus Town Company Secretary in 1878 and later became the first clerk of Graham County. He became Kansas State Auditor

for two terms and then went on to do the same in Oklahoma. He was the first African American to be elected to a state office. Many settlers were former Civil War Veterans and Buffalo Soldiers. Buffalo Soldier Sam Garland participated in the rescue at the Battle of Beecher Island on the Colorado-Kansas border. Nicodemus proudly claims a long line of professional athletes that include Gale Sayers – LA Rams, Veryl Switzer – Green Bay Packers, Marvin Switzer – Buffalo Bills, and Gerald Wilhite – Denver Broncos. Ernestine VanDuvall, former caterer to Walt Disney, operated Ernestine’s Bar-B-Que for years and became known all over the state for her tasty bar-b-que and her famous bar-b-que sauce can still be purchased at various places along Highway 24 and throughout the state. Kim Thomas, current mayor of Stockton, is a Nicodemus descendent and is the first African American female mayor in the state. Angela Bates founder, past president, and present executive director of the Nicodemus Historical Society, received National recognition in 2005 when she was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award for her work on establishing Nicodemus National Historical Site.

In 1976 Nicodemus was declared a National Historic Landmark District and on November 12, 1996, President William Clinton signed the Nicodemus Bill, designating Nicodemus a National Historic Site, a unit of the National Park Service. It is the only remaining all African American town, settled at the end of Reconstruction, west of the Mississippi. With its unique history, Nicodemus symbolizes the African American experience and settlement in the West. Currently there are no businesses in Nicodemus, but the constant presence of the National Park Service, receiving visitors at the Township Hall – Visitor Center, is a reminder that it is not “dead” or a ghost town. The Historical Society and Museum on the south side of town receives visitors throughout the spring and summer and showcases the “people’s story” at Nicodemus. The newest residents in town are the Alexander and Rew families, including their school-age children. Nicodemus hasn’t had a population of school-age children since the 1980s, and the Alexander family built the first house in Nicodemus in recent years.

Although just a tiny town on the High Plains of Kansas, Nicodemus is today the most nationally significant community along Highway 24, and people use to say “If you blink you might miss it.” Today the large, well lit limestone sign will make you stop and pay attention, as you might want to stop and see what this tiny town that is big on history at the national level has to offer.

Places to visit: Booker T. Washington National Monument in Hardy, Virginia (www.nps.gov/bowa)

How To Start A Genealogy Search

The best place to start a genealogy search is in your own backyard! Start by writing down your immediate family. Because genealogy and family tree searches are both horizontal and vertical in nature, you are best to place yourself, as well as your brothers and sisters, on the same line (literally or figuratively).

Start by asking questions, if the relatives are available. If you know of some living relatives, such as aunts and uncles, cousins, etc., call or write to them and ask if they can provide you with the information for themselves and for each relative they remember; even incomplete details are better than none.

Information that will be helpful to you in your genealogy search will be first and last names, dates, and places of birth and death, names of children and dates of their birth and death. The information is invaluable; if you receive a letter with the information, keep it forever—it will become a family heirloom document for later generations.

Sometimes it’s quite interesting to type your own name (first or last) in the search engine on the Internet. You’ll bring up articles about other people with your first or last name—(or both). It’s more of a temporary diversion, since most people with your first name (unless it’s particularly unusual or passed down through generations) won’t be related to you.

Keep in mind that the information that you need for your personal research is different than what your best friend or the next person will need. Then on top of that, we are all at different levels with our skills of the research process itself and with computer use.

The Internet has an abundant source of on-line resources, but you will not find everything that you will need to complete your search. With a little planning and organization, combined with some basic genealogy research and computer skills, anyone, at any level, can maximize the time that they do spend on the Internet working on their family tree.

Take your time, have fun and remember to take it one step at a time.

Excerpted from freegenealogysearch.net.



“Success is measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.”
— Booker T. Washington

NPS: Photo

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911)

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a 19th century African American woman teacher, writer, poet, and abolitionist, was born to a free black family in a slave state, Maryland. In 1853, she started traveling as a lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society. She was also a strong supporter of prohibition and woman's suffrage. Her writing often was focused on racial justice, equality, and freedom. On February 22, 1891, she spoke before the National Council of Women of the United States in Washington.

"I deem it a privilege to present the negro, not as a mere dependent asking for Northern sympathy or Southern compassion, but as a member of the body politic who has a claim upon the nation for justice, simple justice, which is the right of every race, upon the government for protection, which is the rightful claim of every citizen, and upon our common Christianity for the best influences which can be exerted for peace on earth and goodwill to man.

Our first claim upon the nation and government is the claim for protection to human life. That claim should lie at the basis of our civilization, not simply in theory but in fact. Outside of America, I know of no other civilized country, Catholic, Protestant, or even Mahometan, where men are still lynched, murdered, and even burned for real or supposed crimes.

A government which has power to tax a man in peace, and draft him in war, should have power to defend his life in the hour of peril. A government which can protect and defend its citizens from wrong and outrage and does not is vicious. A government which would do it and cannot is weak; and where human life is insecure through either weakness or viciousness in the administration of law, there must be a lack of justice, and where this is wanting nothing can make up the deficiency.

The strongest nation on earth cannot afford to deal unjustly towards its weakest and feeblest members. I claim for the Negro protection in every right with which the government has invested him. Whether it was wise or unwise, the government has exchanged the fetters on his wrist for the ballot in his right hand, and men cannot vitiate his vote by fraud, or intimidate the voter by violence, without being untrue to the genius and spirit of our government, and bringing demoralization into their own political life and ranks. Am I here met with the objection that the Negro is poor and ignorant, and the greatest amount of land, capital, and intelligence is possessed by the white race, and that in a number of States Negro suffrage means Negro supremacy?

It is said the Negro is ignorant. But why is he ignorant? It comes with ill grace from a man who has put out my eyes to make a parade of my blindness, - to reproach me for my poverty when he has wronged me of my money. If the Negro

is ignorant, he has lived under the shadow of an institution which, at least in part of the country, made it a crime to teach him to read the name of the ever-blessed Christ. If he is poor, what has become of the money he has been earning for the last two hundred and fifty years? Years ago it was said cotton fights and cotton conquers for American slavery. The Negro helped build up that great cotton power in the South, and in the North his sigh was in the whirl of its machinery, and his blood and tears upon the warp and woof of its manufactures.

But there are some rights more precious than the rights of property or the claims of superior intelligence: they are the rights of life and liberty, and to these the poorest and humblest man has just as much right as the richest and most influential man in the country. Ignorance and poverty are conditions which men 'outgrow. Since the sealed volume was opened by the crimson hand of war, in spite of entailed ignorance, poverty, opposition, and a heritage of scorn, schools have sprung like wells in the desert dust. It has been estimated that about two millions have learned to read. Colored men and women have gone into journalism. Some of the first magazines in the country have received contributions from them. Learned professions have given them diplomas. Universities have granted them professorships. Colored women have combined to shelter orphaned children. Tens of thousands have been contributed by colored persons for the care of the aged and infirm. Millions of dollars have flowed into the pockets of the race, and freed people have not only been able to provide for themselves, but reach out their hands to impoverished owners.

Instead of taking the ballot from his hands, teach him how to use it, and to add his quota to the progress, strength, and durability of the nation.

Underlying this racial question, if I understand it aright, is one controlling idea, not simply that the Negro is ignorant; that he is outgrowing; not that he is incapable of valor in war or adaptation in peace. On fields all drenched with blood he made his record in war, abstained from lawless violence when left on the plantation, and received his freedom in peace with moderation. But he holds in this Republic the position of an alien race among a people impatient of a rival. And in the eyes of some it seems that no valor redeems him, no social advancement nor individual development wipes off the ban which clings to him. It is the pride of Caste which opposed the spirit of Christ, and the great work to which American Christianity is called is a work of Christly reconciliation."

Sources: <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASharper.htm> and http://womenshistory.about.com/od/quotes/a/frances_harper.htm

News From Our Park Partners

NICODEMUS FLOUR CO-OP

The NFC, in conjunction with their parent organization Kansas Black Farmers Assoc., Solomon Valley RC&D and the NCRS office in Hill City, sponsored a meeting on Friday December 15th. The focus of the morning meeting held at the Frontier Theatre in Hill City was 'Moisture Management'. Merle Vigil of USDA's Agricultural Research Service at Akron, Colorado was the key speaker for this well attended event. The Co-op and KBFA continue to sponsor these types of events to make as much information as possible available to farmers in the area. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions for topics, please feel free to contact one of our members.

NICODEMUS TOWNSHIP BOARD

Projects for the township are still in winter hibernation. However, the contractor is making some progress on the rehabilitation projects to homes in Nicodemus. We are starting to think about possible improvements we can focus on when the weather gets closer to spring. The recent ice and wind took its toll on many of the trees in the park and at the Villa. Those trees will be worked on in the near future. Attendance at our monthly meetings has been dismal this winter. The weather has not been conducive to attendance; but we expect more interest as we approach spring.

CAN YOU DIG IT?? Yes, You Really Can!!

The Kansas Archeology Training Program Field School is Coming to Nicodemus, Kansas in June!!

Have you dreamed of being an archeologist? Are you thinking about archeology as a career? Or, do you just like to dig in the dirt and have an interest in history? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then we have a fun opportunity for you during the first two weeks of June!!

The Kansas Archeology Training Program will be held in Nicodemus, Kansas from June 2 through June 17, 2007. This annual field school is designed for anyone interested in learning about archeology. You get to work right alongside archeologists on an actual excavation of an early dugout. You can volunteer for just one day, several days, or for the whole two weeks – whatever fits your schedule. Think what a great learning experience this would make for students...particularly those descended from Nicodemus families! However, note that volunteers between 10-14 years old have to have a parent or sponsoring adult to work alongside

them at the excavation—so, why not make this a family learning vacation?

This field school is sponsored every year by the Kansas Anthropological Association and the Kansas State Historical Society. KATP field schools attract between 100-200 volunteers (we expect approximately 30-40 per day to be working in Nicodemus). You can learn more about the KATP field school at <http://www.kshs.org/resource/katphome.htm>. More details and a registration packet will soon be available on this Kansas State Historical Society website.

In June, field school volunteers will be working on dugout sites dating from the earliest settlement of Nicodemus, 1877-1920s. Pictures from last years excavations by Washburn University of the Thomas Johnson family dugouts north of Nicodemus may be viewed at our website, www.nps.gov/nico. The excavation of these Johnson family dugouts will be completed during the KATP field school this summer. The Thomas Johnson family homesteaded on what is now known as the Henry Williams place, a property now owned by Mr. Veryl Switzer. Johnson's daughter Emma married Charles Williams and their son, Henry, was the first baby born in Nicodemus.

While only partially excavated, the two Johnson dugouts appear to be a house and a smaller cellar dugout. Dr. Margaret Wood and the students from Washburn University had time to excavate only one wall of the lower house dugout—a nicely finished stone wall with some plastering on the interior side. It is not clear whether the stone wall was original or if an entirely earthen dugout was improved at a later date by the family. Perhaps this year's excavations can answer that question for us!

Several Nicodemus residents and descendents visited the excavations last May and were able to tell students about their memories of the place and the Johnson and Williams families. Mr. James Bates remembers carrying water from the spring below the dugout to families nearby. Mr. Harold Switzer remembers visiting the house nearby and being told not to play around the former dugouts, as they were dangerous by that time. Mrs. Yvonne Sayers' said her mother, Verna [Williams] Napue, was born in the Johnson dugout in 1903, so it was in use after the turn of the Century. There are a lot of Nicodemus families connected through the Johnson and Williams families of these dugouts. KATP volunteers may also investigate another dugout site, lying behind the Nicodemus District No. 1 School. Members of the American Legion Post have given permission for this excavation.

So, think about joining the fun in June! Get a real HANDS ON experience and explore Nicodemus history. Maybe **you** can become an archeologist for a few weeks this summer?!

Kids Can DIG IT TOO – Be an Archeologist!



Can you picture yourself being an *archeologist*? Do you like mysteries and detective work? This summer, there's fun right here in Kansas—help *excavate* the *dugout* that once served as a home for Mr. Thomas Johnson and his wife and children. You can help find out what clues (*artifacts* and *features*) people from almost 130 years ago left behind in dugouts in Nicodemus. Learn what it is like to be a member of a real *field crew* and work beside real archeologists. However, this is not a kid's archeology camp. It is a serious field project—if you are between the ages of 10-14, you must have a parent or other sponsoring adult working alongside you at the excavation.

Last May, students from Washburn University excavated part of the Johnson dugout. They found pieces of canning jar glass, pieces of plates and pottery dishes, a metal spoon, shell buttons and metal snaps from clothing, and even bones from food eaten by the family. There were a lot of frog leg bones found...not surprising since the dugout was built near a good spring and creek. Can you imagine the Johnson children catching frogs for dinner? What else will be found this summer? If you are between 10 to 18 years old, bring a parent or other adult and join in the fun! For how to register, see the article on the opposite page.

Kids, find out more about archeology in general on the National Park Service website, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/archeology/public/kids/index.htm>.



All pictures taken at an Alexandria, Virginia field school by Roger Friedman for Federal Archeology Report, vol. 6, no. 3 (fall 1993), NPS website.

What Does That Word Mean?

Archeologist: A person who studies people and how they lived. Archeologists look at old things and places where people used to live or work or play to figure out how people lived in the past. Archeologists are a hardy bunch. They dig everywhere, including in old garbage piles and toilets. They seem to know something about everything people in the past did: how they made tools, why they moved around, and what kinds of foods they ate.

Artifacts: Objects that show evidence of use or alteration by people and that they accidentally or on purpose left behind by in past times. These objects can be any size and can be made of any material, like wood, metal, and pottery.

Dugout: A below-ground structure built by many early pioneers because there were few trees growing in northwestern Kansas. Settlers first dug a large hole into the side of a hill. Then they used cottonwood poles to create roof rafters and covered these poles with chunks of sod (dirt blocks held together by the grass roots). The dugouts were hard to keep clean, but they did not take long and were easy to build. They also were fairly warm, because they were built into the earth.

Excavate: Digging holes very carefully to find artifacts and features left by earlier people.

Feature: In archeology, these are not artifacts but are things that provide evidence of use or alteration by people that are worth noting within an archeological site, such as a hearth, posthole, or cluster of artifacts.

Field crew: A team of people trained to dig up archeological sites.





National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior

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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

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785-839-4233 Visitor Center
785-839-4321 Office

Federal Job Announcements
(USAJOBS)
www.usajobs.opm.gov

*The **Flowering of Nicodemus** is a quarterly publication of Nicodemus National Historic Site.*

Nicodemus, Kansas – 130 years Old!

On April 18, 1877, a week prior to the formal end of Reconstruction, seven men--six Black and one White--registered the Nicodemus Town Company with the Kansas Secretary of State at the General Land Office in Kirwin, Kansas.

This year the town of Nicodemus will be 130 years old – 1877-2007!

Excerpt from Cultural Landscape Report, 2003

NPS: Photo

