



# Flowering of Nicodemus

## From the Superintendent

## Park News

Ah, spring might just be around the corner. I hope you made it through the winter weather without incident.

There are a number of items to update you on:

**Nicodemus Visioning Planning.** The Park is working with the Township, the Historical Society and Kansas State University to convene a meeting or series of meetings to develop a picture for the future of Nicodemus. We will hold at least one of the meetings during Homecoming. Stay tuned.

**The Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) Annual planning meeting** was held on Feb 20. We reviewed the LRIP and identified those projects and tasks that are most in need of accomplishing in this fiscal year and the next two years as well. This Plan identifies not only elements that the Park is responsible for accomplishing, but also looks at the bigger picture that needs input and involvement by the Nicodemus community as well. If you have an interest in this, please contact us.

**The Historic Structures Report Amendment team** visited the park in November 2009 to update the condition assessment of the historic structures within the park boundary. The results of this visit will help the park and partners develop strategies for necessary repairs and rehabilitative efforts.

**The Mission Critical Report** identifies the staffing needs of the park and verifies what can be afforded over the short term. The park anticipates hiring a Facilities Operations Specialist in this Fiscal year, and an intermittent park ranger and maintenance worker during the fall of this year. Again, stay tuned.

**The Land Protection Plan** will be complete this year. It pulls together the guidance from previous documents such as the Enabling Legislation and the General Management Plan and clarifies the direction to go in terms of protecting the lands within the park boundaries.

Our Library has moved and we welcome you to check it out at our office in the Nicodemus Villas.

Thanks. Mark.

## Summer Job

Student employment opportunity  
with the National Park Service

Nicodemus National Historic Site, a unit of the National Park Service, anticipates opportunities for a Maintenance Worker (\$16.98/hour) and Park Guide (\$11.95 per hour) for the summer 2010 season.

You **MUST BE** a student and at least 18 years old to meet minimum qualifications. Other qualifications apply.

These positions have the potential to extend as part-time positions through the school year.

Submit your application (Form OF 612, found at [www.usajobs.gov/of612.asp](http://www.usajobs.gov/of612.asp)) to:

Mark Weaver, Superintendent,  
304 Washington Avenue,  
Nicodemus KS 67625  
or  
[mark\\_weaver@nps.gov](mailto:mark_weaver@nps.gov).

To request a paper application call 785 839 4321.

Deadline for receipt of applications April 9, 2010.

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## Vision Workshop Presentation

Everyone is invited to join the Park, the Historical Society and the Township to help with the first steps toward developing a strategy for the future of the community. On the Friday of Homecoming (July 30), from 3 to 5 pm at the Township Hall / Visitor Center there will be a brainstorming session to gather your thoughts and ideas regarding the past, present and future of Nicodemus. Join us. The Park will serve iced coffee, ice tea and lemonade.

## The First African American Superintendent of a National Park

Black History and the National Park Service share a common link in history. It was the practice of the National Park Service before 1916 to station United States Army mounted cavalry troops to maintain, patrol, and improve National Parks. The first African American Superintendent of a National Park arrived at Sequoia National Park in the summer of 1903. The park welcomed Captain (later Colonel) Charles Young and companies L and M of 9th Cavalry of all black troops. The Cavalry was a segregated all black company stationed at the Presidio of San Francisco. The Military was responsible for blazing trails, constructing roads, creating maps, evicting grazing livestock, extinguishing fires, monitoring tourists, and keeping poachers and loggers at bay. Captain Young and his troops traveled 16 days to their new assignment in the Sequoia from San Francisco. Under Young's supervision the soldiers would extend the wagon road to the Giant Forest, the home of the world's largest trees. Work on the wagon road was a long and slow process. By the end of the summer, wagons could travel to the mountain top forest for the first time. Young and his troops not only extended the wagon road they also took the road to the base of the famous Moro Rock. Young and his troops achieved more success in the summer of 1903 than any other military troops.

Born in May's Lick, Kentucky on March 12, 1864, one year before the end of the Civil War, Young was raised in Ripley, Ohio, where he graduated from high school in 1880. He was the first black to graduate from the white high school there. When he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1884 through competitive examination, Young was the ninth African-American to be admitted, and the third and last to graduate until nearly half a century later. In 1894, he was assigned by the War Department to teach military science, mathematics and tactics at Wilberforce University in Ohio. As an accomplished linguist, he taught Latin, Greek, French, Spanish and German. Young served on the home front during the Spanish-American War (1898), but served two tours in the Philippines during the Insurrection (1901-03).

Young would continue to make history. In 1906, he became military attaché to Haiti, the first African-American military attaché in United States history. In addition to making maps, Young reported to the Army War College on Haitian society and government, and wrote a book entitled "Military Morale of Nations and Races" (1912).

From 1912 to 1915 Young served as military attache

to Liberia, where he helped to reorganize the National Military Constabulary. In 1916, he was awarded the Spingarn Medal from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for his work in Liberia. Young established a school for African-American soldiers at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Colonel Charles Young was the highest ranking African-American officer in the army when WW1 began and was the first African-American to reach that rank in the army. During his career, Young would command the 10th Cavalry. Under General George Pershing's "punitive expedition" which attempted to capture Mexican rebel leader Francisco "Pancho" Villa in 1916.

Young died in Lagos, Nigeria on January 8, 1922 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

To learn more about Colonel Charles and the Buffalo Soldiers in the National Park Service visit.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park - <http://www.nps.gov/seki>

Presidio of San Francisco - <http://www.nps.gov/prsf>

Yosemite National Park - <http://www.nps.gov/yose>



NPS Photo

Col. Charles Young was the first African-American superintendent of a national park.



Sequoia National Park Archives

Captain Young (front row, fourth from right) and his road building crew

### Nicodemus Township

by Sharyn Dowdell

It's finally beginning to look like winter is giving up, for now. We can probably count on at least one more colder spell before we start complaining about the heat!! Of course, that means the weeds of spring and summer are not far away. Let's all start preparing for the upcoming mowing season. It seems that we will have Tom Wellington taking care of the cemeteries and town site mowing again this season. He did such an outstanding job last year. The storm alert siren is to be installed on the 17th of March. We will let you know as soon as we are told what the test schedule will be. It will probably take several months before everyone gets accustomed to the sound it will make. We have plans to do some maintenance work on the Pricilla Arts Building this spring including repairing the floor, sealing the basement walls and painting the outside. And finally by Homecoming, the new gazebo should be constructed.

### Nicodemus Flour Co-op

by Sharyn Dowdell

We are still working with the local Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NCRS) groups to further the efforts of the Kansas Black Farmers Association. We have been meeting each month to work on our five-year plan. One of our many objectives is to get more descendants involved with our efforts. Watch your mail and check our website (<http://nicodemuskansas.com>) for further developments. Our long-term goal is to have a facility built in Nicodemus to produce our flour and pancake mix. Won't that be an exciting day!!

### Emancipation Celebration

(Homecoming 2010)

by Sharyn Dowdell

Plans are developing nicely for this year's event. Dates are July 30, 31 and August 1. Everyone is encouraged to get involved with the planning and execution of homecoming. As always, we are looking for volunteers. One highlight this year will be the Vintage Baseball Game on Saturday. The Historical Society has stepped up to coordinate this event and will be looking for baseball players for the Nicodemus team. If you have suggestions, questions or are ready to volunteer your time in any area, please get in touch ASAP! ([Dowdell@ruraltel.net](mailto:Dowdell@ruraltel.net))

### Brown v. Board of Education

The story of Brown v. Board of Education, which ended legal segregation in public schools, is one of hope and courage. When the people agreed to be plaintiffs in the case, they never knew they would change history. The people who make up this story were ordinary people. They were teachers, secretaries, welders, ministers and students who simply wanted to be treated equally.

In December 1952, the United States Supreme Court had on its docket cases from Kansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, South Carolina, and Virginia, all of which challenged the constitutionality of racial segregation in public schools. The Court had consolidated these five cases under one name, "Oliver Brown et al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka."

The U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education (1954) is one of the most pivotal opinions ever rendered by that body. This landmark decision highlights the U.S. Supreme Court's role in affecting changes in national and social policy. Often when people think of the case, they remember a little girl whose parents sued so that she could attend an all-white school in her neighborhood. In reality, the story of Brown v. Board is far more complex.

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site is located in the former Monroe Elementary School, one of four African American elementary schools involved in the case. The school has recently been rehabilitated to its 1954 appearance at 1515 SE Monroe Street in Topeka, Kansas.

A ranger greets visitors at the front entrance for a brief orientation to the site. The exhibits are self-guided, and visitors should allow approximately 90 minutes to view all of the exhibits.

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site is open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM daily. The site is closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. To learn more about the site visit their website at <http://www.nps.gov/brvb/>.



Photo: Library of Congress

Mrs. Nettie Hunt and daughter on the steps of the Supreme Court, Washington, D.C., November 1954



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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Federal Job Announcements  
(USAJOBS)  
[www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)

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

## Honoring Black History Month

Nicodemus National Historic Site and Homestead National Monument partnered to honor Black History Month by hosting speaker and Buffalo Soldier re-enactor Barrie Tompkins on Sunday February 21 at 2pm. Our intention was to provide a distance learning connection with Homestead while Mr. Tompkins presented at Nicodemus. Unfortunately bad weather kept Mr. Tompkins from making it to Nicodemus. In his stead, Park Guide Michelle Huff gave a presentation on Nicodemus to the five attendees at Homestead on Nicodemus national Historic Site.

We are working to set up a new date for this event. Stay tuned.