



Flowering of Nicodemus

From the Superintendent

The temperatures are dropping, the days are getting shorter, but let's remember what a great summer it was! Comparatively cool temperatures, rain, and a great harvest and I think, a pretty successful year here at Nicodemus National Historic Site.

ORAL HISTORIES: With a number of interviews under our belt – almost 100 since the inception of the Historic Site- it is time to investigate where the gaps are in our knowledge base and fill them. To accomplish this, the Site is partnering with the University of South Florida and Nicodemus Historical Society to identify and train potential descendant interviewers who will then interview willing friends and family members. We hope this personalized technique will draw out richer stories about the history of this wonderful place.

LONG RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN: In March we held a workshop with about 65 participant-days to review the data of previous workshops and build upon them. Of particular note, the workgroup recognized that this Plan is not solely a product by and for the National Park Service, rather it is a guiding document that all who cherish Nicodemus can participate in and contribute to. The workshop identified the types of visits to the Site- the virtual web-based visit, the short half-hour visit, the 1 to 2 hour visit, the half day visit, the overnight visit, etc. and brainstormed the various interpretive activities that could occur during those time frames. Then the group prioritized implementation of the activities within windows of time- years 1 thru 3, years 3 thru 5, and years 5 thru 10. The document is now completed and is at the graphic designer. Work Plan meetings with Site partners will occur every year to pull out the highest priority activities and strategize the means to implement them.

SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS: This document is was completed in September. It guides a park's acquisition and preservation of museum objects that contribute directly to interpretation and understanding of the Site's themes, as well as any additional objects that the NPS is legally mandated to preserve. It defines the purpose and significance of the park's museum and archival collections; sets limits on collection size and quality by defining subject matter, geographical location, and time period for additions; and considers uses of the collection. Given the similar mission of the Nicodemus Historical Society this document helps define and distinguish

the roles and responsibilities of the two groups.

THE LARNED-NICODEMUS CONNECTION: As you may be aware, until last year, Nicodemus National Historic Site operated under the management of Fort Larned National Historic Site. Now Nicodemus answers to the Regional Office as do most other parks in the system. This new independence for Nicodemus will offer us great opportunities (once all the wrinkles are ironed out). Our first step- establishing our own electronic record keeping system- was put in place later this summer. The new server and linked computers will allow the Site to have records easily accessible by all staff at all times. This will mean quicker answers to your requests and more efficient operations for us. New copiers will allow staff to efficiently prepare press releases and other information for distribution- more timely communications for you and less stress for us (our old copier was a nightmare). A linked phone system will allow one phone number to reach all staff. No more will you have to hang up and redial because I'm not where I should be.

I have informally dubbed 2010 as "The Year of Getting our Ducks in a Row". It means big challenges for the staff and undoubtedly a bit of confusion and "down time" while things get rearranged and restructured. So, please bear with us as we make this next big step forward.

MARK

New Hours and New Address

Hours for the visitor center are now 9:00am – 4:30 pm CST daily expect Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year Day. The office address is now 510 Washington Avenue 1B, and soon will be 1A with hours of 8:00 am – 5:00pm. Please feel free to stop by if you have any questions or would like to chat.

PARK NEWS

Long Range Interpretive Plan Annual Planning Workshop:

The Long Range Interpretive Plan is complete! My sincere thanks to all of you who participated in its development. The final graphic version will be printed in late December and I would like to schedule an Annual Implementation Planning workshop for one day in late January. Those attending the workshop will have reviewed the LRIP beforehand (we'll get a copy to you) and the majority of the day will be spent identifying which tasks need to be accomplished in the fiscal year 2010 (Oct 2009 thru Sep 2010), and how they will be accomplished.

If you have an interest in history, interpretation, or the ways Nicodemus' stories can or should be told, WE NEED YOUR PARTICIPATION AT THE WORKSHOP. Please give me a call (785-839-4321) or email me (mark_weaver@nps.gov) so we can reserve a spot for you. Thanks M.

MONTHLY COFFEE

Every month, the Site hosts a coffee with local residents and descendants. Recent topics of discussion have included the potential for a future Visitors Center and results of the Long Range Interpretive Planning process. On July 10 we began our discussion about the plans to improve the furnishings of the bookstore area in the Visitor's Center. The bookstore is managed by the Western National Parks Association, but operated by the Nicodemus National Historic Site staff. Plans call for reducing our book title inventory to focus more clearly on topics relating to Nicodemus, its people and its circumstances. In response to a tighter book title selection, we will have a simpler arrangement of books and other items for sale. We are looking at three "slat-wall" type displays of about 4 feet wide by 6 feet high, one or two comfortable chairs, one or two spinning displays and most importantly a central display table that will highlight items that have a direct relationship to the community of Nicodemus. In addition we hope to add a matching sales desk, display modules, donations box and panels to separate the office space from the central public space.

The central display table would hold such items currently for sale as the Co-op's Pancake mix, Ernestine's bar-b-que sauce, the Nicodemus mugs and the children's book Nicodemus Annie. Then the discussion got really interesting. The question was posed, "What else could be on this Central display table"? Here's what the group came up with:

Clothing and fabric: quilts, period dress such as aprons/

pinafors and bonnets, Buffalo Soldier hats and regimental badges, cowboy clothing and equipment.

Traditional toys: tops, slingshots/bean-shooters, can-hoppers.

Woodworking: carvings of Buffalo soldiers, coasters, teaching the traditional art of whittling.

Food products: baked goods, canned and preserved locally grown foods from community gardens and orchards, classes to teach youth and others of traditional agricultural/cooking/baking and canning practices.

Local art: Have descendant artists present their work and offer courses in painting and drawing with Nicodemus being the subject.

Other ideas included note cards, wheat straw sculptures, board games with a Nicodemus theme and CD's of traditional music.

...And in a really creative moment of thought and a take-off on the pet rock craze of the 70's, a traditional fire starting kit consisting of a dried cow patty and a match in a decorative box. OK. Maybe this one isn't such a good idea....

We welcome your ideas as well. Give the Superintendent a call at 785 839 4321 or email him at mark_weaver@nps.gov. Products would be required to be reviewed by the park and the Western National Parks Association before they would be acquired for display and sale. We will investigate the specifics and legalities to this process. But in the meantime, put on your thinking caps...

I, Too, Am America: Untold Stories / Student Narratives Contest

The contest was designed to provide middle school students an opportunity to research and retell untold stories of the diverse peoples of Kansas. Entries were submitted in several formats ranging from essays and short stories to drawings and PowerPoint presentations. The students were provided five themes interpreted by the Kansas National Park units that they could connect with their own family, community, and cultural histories. These themes include: "Living between two worlds," "Building communities," "Overcoming hardship," "Migration stories," and "Seeking fairness and justice." Many student entries told some compelling stories representing each of the five themes making the judging process a difficult one. After hours of deliberation, the final narratives selected came from the following students:

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Joe Cheng- 8th grader at Roosevelt Middle School in Coffeyville, Kansas

Anne DeArmond- 7th grader at Westridge Middle School in Overland Park, Kansas

Becky Loepky - 8th grader at Satanta Junior High School in Satanta, Kansas

David Spivak - 7th grader at Mission Valley Middle School in Prairie Village, Kansas

Ryan Kelly-8th grader at Seaman Middle School in Topeka, Kansas

Joe Cheng- 8th grader at Roosevelt Middle School in Coffeyville, Kansas was Nicodemus' special guest. He spent a few days filming his experience in Nicodemus and was the guest of honor at the community dinner on Thursday, June 18 that was held in the Township Hall. Cheng was escorted by Artonza Martin, Technology Leadership teacher; Chris Gibbs, a classmate; Adam Turner of Washburn University, KTWU-TV representative; and Scott Williams, KTWU-TV representative. Williams was recording Cheng visit to Nicodemus for an upcoming Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) program.



NPS Photo

Left to right: Mark Weaver, Superintendent; Joe Cheng 8th grader; Chris Gibbs, a classmate

NICODEMUS, KANSAS – ALLENSWORTH, CALIFORNIA CONNECTION

By Michelle M Huff, Park Guide

Recently I discovered an important connection between Nicodemus and another all African-American agricultural settlement in California named Allensworth. Allensworth was founded in 1908 by Colonel Allen Allensworth, a retired Buffalo Soldier and Chaplain for the 24th Infantry, U.S. Army. News of this new African-American community spread and

attracted settlers not only from California, but other states as well, including Kansas.

Sometime in the late 1800s or early 1900s some Nicodemans relocated to the agricultural area of Russell Springs, Kansas. Some of the family names of those that made the move were Wellington, Clark, Washington, Wilson and Archer. One of those families, the George Washington and Lucy Jane Archers heard about the Allensworth settlement from a Russell Springs neighbor in 1911 and moved there in 1912.

I have not discovered yet where George Washington Archer was born or grew up, but I do know that Lucy Jane Archer had strong Nicodemus and Graham County roots. She came to the Nicodemus area with her parents and four siblings in 1878 from Kentucky. She was born Lucy Jane Jackson circa 1868 to John and Amanda Jackson. Her father homesteaded near Hill City and it would appear that Lucy and her siblings were raised on that homestead, as her father still owned that land, plus another one quarter section by 1906 when those land ownerships of John Jackson and a photo of John and Amanda Jackson appear in the 1906 Graham County Atlas.

Lucy Jane Jackson was married to George Washington Archer in 1896 in Hill City, Kansas by Justice of the Peace C. H. Tillotson. According to Graham County records, this was a second marriage for both of them, Lucy having been previously married to a Mr. Hall, and George having been previously married to Maria E., (Lidah), Hickman, (daughter of Rev. Daniel and Willina Hickman). I am not sure when the couple settled in Russell Springs, Kansas, but it is known that they left there and settled near the new community of Allensworth, California in 1912 with their five youngest children. You can learn more about George and Lucy Archer and the Allensworth, California colony in a book about the settlement titled Allensworth, The Freedom Colony, A California African American Township by Alice C. Royal with Mickey Ellinger and Scott Braley, (Heyday Books, Berkeley, California, 2000).

Allensworth is now a popular state park in California, (Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park). You can learn more about the site by visiting their website at http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=583.

As for what happened to Lucy Jackson's family after they settled on the homestead near Hill city, some information has been found, but there is still more to be uncovered. John and Amanda Jackson had at least four more children after 1879, evidenced by burial plots being purchased by John Jackson for those children born in the 1880s and 1890s who died before maturity. Those four children and a teenaged daughter are buried by John and Amanda in Block

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9, Lot 18 of the Hill City Cemetery. Also believed to be related to John and Amanda are John Benjamin Jackson, (1875-1956), and Everett Hershel Jackson, (1908-1963), who are both buried in the Hill City Cemetery.

If you have any information you would like to share about John and Amanda Jackson and their descendents and George Washington and Lucy Jackson Archer and their descendents, please contact me at Nicodemus National Historic Site, 304 Washington Avenue, Nicodemus, Kansas or 785-839-4233 or

Michelle_Huff@nps.gov.

Welcome To Nicodemus National Historic Site

Nicodemus National Historic Site (NICO) welcomes Administrative Technician Annette White. She joined our team in February 2009 as a permanent full employee working in Nicodemus. Annette is new to the National Park Service and comes from Brookville, Kansas. She has worked and lived in Kanopolis, Kansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. She has worked as a volunteer coordinator for AmeriCorps VISTA and has volunteer as a performer in living history productions.



Annette White NPS Photo

Exoduster Towns in Kansas

By Phyllis Howard, Park Ranger

After the Civil War freed, African Americans started leaving the South in mass numbers. This migration was known as the Exoduster Movement (1877 to 1881). Since Kansas had been a sanctuary for runaway slaves during the Civil War, it continued to a haven for freed men and women. Former slaves sought a new life on the western frontier. They felt that true freedom could be gained by migrating out of the South. They were willing to risk everything to move west and begin a new life in the “promised land” of Kansas. It is estimated

that during the Exodus Movement that over 60,000 African Americans entered into Kansas. The exodus had no leader, no Moses who urged them to emigrate westward. There were two men however who were important to the general emigration of African Americans westward from the Louisiana and Tennessee regions. They were Henry Adams and Benjamin “Pap” Singleton. Singleton started the Tennessee Real Estate and Homestead Association in 1869 had the most success in starting colonies in Kansas. Best known as Pap Singleton, he was also known as the Father of the Exodus Movement (self proclaimed). Nicodemus the most famous Black settlement in Kansas was established before the Exodus of 1879.

Singleton’s Colony was the first colony established by “Pap” Singleton. Settled in 1874 and would be the most successful colony. It had an initial population of 300 people and was located on 1000 acres near Baxter Springs in Cherokee County.

Dunlap Colony was another colony established by Singleton’s Tennessee-based colonization group in May of 1878 on the eastern border of Morris County near Council Grove. The colony was located adjacent to the white town of Dunlap.

Morton City was located about three miles northeast of present-day Jetmore. It was established in September 1877, by Africans emigrating from Lexington and Harrodsburg, Kentucky.

Rattlebone Hollow was located near Jersey Creek and now a part of Kansas City.

Mississippi Town was located near Kansas City. It was settled in 1887 and continued to exist until 1927. Today, it has been integrated into Kansas City.

Hoggstown was located near Kansas City. It is now part of West Heights Manor, an exclusive white residential area in Kansas City.

Wabusee Colony was located about 50 miles northwest of Topeka and was sponsored by the Kansas Freedmen’s Relief Association in 1879.

Quindaro was settled by freed African Americans in 1856 near Kansas City in Wyandotte County. Today, Old Quindaro is a living community part of Kansas City.

Tennessee Town was located in the vicinity of North Topeka and established by an estimation of 500 African American from Tennessee.

The Bottoms was established in the 1850’s and located on the southern bank of the Kansas River in the Topeka area.

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Summit Township was established by African Americans headed for Nicodemus that settled near the Swedish community of Falun.

Daniel Votaw Colony was founded in 1879 by Daniel Votaw, a freed Quaker social worker and other African Americans from Texas is north of Coffeyville in Montgomery County.

Little Coney Colony located in Chautauqua County in Southeastern Kansas. It was settled by former slave Rev. Alfred Fairfax and 200 families.

Reference: Nell I. Painter, "Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction" (1988); Morris Turner III, "America's Black Towns and Settlements A Historical Reference Guide" Volume One (1998).

Teff Field Day

Solomon Valley RC&D – September 4, 2009

On August 29, 2009, the Solomon Valley Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area, Inc. and the Kansas Black Farmers Association (KBFA) hosted a Teff Field Day at and near Nicodemus, Kansas. The Field Day began at the Nicodemus National Historic Site Visitor's Center. Thirty Field Day participants from across the states of Kansas and Nebraska car pooled to Gary Alexander's teff field west of Nicodemus where the Flail Vac Harvester was exhibited. RC&D Teff Project Coordinator, Josh Coltraine explained how the Flail Vac Harvester worked. Gil Alexander assisted Gary with the demonstration for the participants. The group returned to the Visitor's Center for presentations by Dr. Bruce Anderson, Dr. Dipak Santra, and Mr. Brad Shank.

Teff, a grain native to Ethiopia, has been grown in Graham County since 2005. In 2007, the Solomon Valley RC&D was awarded a three year Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) to grow and market teff. There are currently 95 acres of teff being grown in Osborne, Rooks, Graham and Phillips Counties. Teff is gluten free and known to be both flood and drought tolerant.

The Teff Field Day was funded in part by the Farm Service Agency. For more information about the Field Day and other RC&D projects please contact the RC&D at 785-425-6647 or go to their website at www.solomonvalleyrcd.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

Boston African American National Historic Site

The site is comprised of the largest area of pre-Civil War black owned structures in the U.S. It has roughly two dozen sites on the north face of Beacon Hill. These historic buildings were homes, businesses, schools, and churches of a thriving black community that, in the face of great opposition, fought the forces of slavery and inequality.

The Abiel Smith School and the African Meeting House are open to the public year round, six days a week, Monday-Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. *Note: The African Meeting House is currently closed for major restoration. Please call 617-742-5415 for updates on the building's reopening.*

Black Heritage Trail - The Black Heritage Trail explores the history of the 19th century free Black community of Boston. The trail consists of 14 sites and begins at the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial on Beacon Street. Self-guided tours can be conducted at any time, Monday through Sunday. Maps and site brochures can be obtained at the Abiel Smith School during site hours.

Ranger guided tours of the Black Heritage Trail are conducted as follows:

Summer Season (Memorial Day - Labor Day): Monday-Saturday; 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m.; for groups of 5 people or more, please call 24 hours in advance for reservations. Group Size Limit: 30 people.

Winter Season (Labor Day - Memorial Day): Monday-Saturday; 2:00 p.m. tours are open to the public. Please call 24 hours in advance to schedule a tour. Group Size Limit: 30 people.

NOTE: The Robert Gould Shaw Memorial is owned by the City of Boston, is located on the Boston Common and is open 24 hours, 7 days a week. The African Meeting House and the Abiel Smith School are owned by the Museum of African-American History. The Abiel Smith School is open to the public during site hours only and houses the National Park Service visitor area. All of the other sites on the Black Heritage Trail are privately owned and are not open to the public.



National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior

Nicodemus National Historic Site
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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

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NEWS ABOUT TOWN

TOWNSHIP

By Sharyn Dowdell

The playground improvements have finally been completed. We offer our sincere thanks to Tom Wellington for all of his hard work and supervision of the inmate crew from Norton. A special thanks to David Dowdell for all of his many hours of hard work moving the heavy, and sometimes wet, sand. It looks great and we know the children will enjoy the improvements.

NICODEMUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A successful “Pioneer Days” was held at the Nicodemus Township Hall on October 10, 2009. The theme this year was Nicodemus through film. Gil Alexander showed some of his home movies and Angela Bates showed the documentary film of the interview with actor William Marshall, Harry Bates, and several descendents and the documentary by John Mann (1993). The small group of family and friends enjoyed free chili with baked potatoes, corn bread, and other tasty treats.

Due to the cold weather a “Pioneer Family Tree” will be planted at a later day.