



Flowering of Nicodemus

The official newsletter of Nicodemus National Historic Site

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From the Superintendent

As we enter the last few months of 2007, I would like to thank you for your continued support and interest in Nicodemus National Historic Site. The days and months seem to fly by and I am not sure whether that is a sign of the hectic times we live in or if it just means that I am getting older...or both.

We have been busy this summer. Park Ranger Phyllis Howard has increased the number of presentations she is making to classrooms, using our "distance-learning" station. Park Guide Michelle Huff made a rag rug demonstration. We sponsored a workshop in June on how to preserve historic papers and photographs. Dr. Margaret Wood and archeology students from Washburn University were back in town in May, looking for a dugout site behind the Schoolhouse. They did not locate a dugout site, but did explore what appeared to be several of the School's former privies, as well as an apparent trash midden. We appreciate that the American Legion Post (owners of the School property) gave their permission for these excavations. Then, for two weeks in June, 144 volunteers excavated probable house, dugout cellar, and trash midden sites at the Thomas and Zarena Johnson homestead as part of the Kansas Archeological Training Program (KATP). Sponsored by the Kansas State Historical Society and the Kansas Anthropological Association and led by Dr. Florie Bugarin (Howard University), the KATP introduced the participants to the people who settled Nicodemus. Finally, we are assisting with the stabilization of the St. Francis Hotel this winter. The St. Francis Hotel is one of the five properties designated by Congress as Nicodemus National Historic Site.

The number of visitors that came into the parks temporary Visitor Center (the Nicodemus Township Hall) was up slightly by the end of September. Visitation had dropped in 2005 and 2006, so we are glad that the trend appears to be reversing. Because we now have two people staffing the Visitor Center, we were able to keep the Visitor Center open seven days a week except during the ice storm over the New Years weekend. As usual, we will be closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Years Day so our employees may enjoy the holidays and spend time with their families.

We hope that your holiday season is safe and peaceful for you and your family! Drop in for visit at Nicodemus National Historic Site.

Sherda K. Williams, Superintendent

Moving Upward But Not Far

Nicodemus National Historic Site (NICO) congratulates Administrative Technician Betsy Crawford-Gore. She has accepted the position of Administrative Officer (AO) at Fort Larned National Historic Site (FOLS). She will serve as AO for both FOLS and NICO. She started working at Nicodemus in November of 2005.

Mrs. Crawford-Gore lives on a farm north of Fort Larned with her husband, Michael Gore. She has lived in the Larned, Kansas area for over 18 years. Betsy has spent her career in public history and libraries, serving as a seasonal ranger at Fort Larned National Historic Site for four years. She had the honor of being a member of the first team from Fort Larned to visit the newly legislated Nicodemus National Historic Site as several teams from around the National Park Service came to the site for the dedication in 1998.

With nine beautifully restored buildings, Fort Larned National Historic Site gives you a chance to experience military life on the Santa Fe Trail. Established on the vast prairie in western Kansas, troops stationed at Fort Larned protected mail coaches, freighters, and other Trail traffic. As the site of an Indian Agency, Fort Larned also was instrumental in maintaining friendly relations with Plains Indians. To learn more about Fort Larned National Site visit their website at <http://www.nps.gov/fols>.



(Picture provided by The Tiller & Toller of Larned, Kansas)



News From Our Park Partners

Nicodemus Flour Co-op



We are gearing up for the holiday season! Our next shipment of pancake mix will be in holiday bags! Hard to believe it's that time again already. We are still searching for funds to help us get into a home so we can provide flour again. Meanwhile, we still have pancake mix and continue to do research into growing the grain tef.

Nicodemus Township Board

For those of you who haven't heard, our treasurer (Esther Clark) resigned her position to take over the directorship at the Nicodemus Housing Authority. We were fortunate enough to get Becky Clark (Mrs. Wallace Clark) to take over those duties – at least until the election next year. The town site is looking pretty good with most property owners keeping up with maintenance of their lots. We are hoping to get the playground completed this fall before the ground freezes again. We have been told we need to upgrade the areas around the equipment and hope to get that done soon.

First Missionary Baptist Church

After many years of discussion, the church has finally purchased a replacement for the aging parsonage trailer. The church finally came to the realization that we are not able to build a new house or bring in a manufactured home as we had hoped – at least not in the immediate future. The trailer that has served as the temporary parsonage for over 10 years has served well. It is being replaced with a much newer unit that will be on site by the time this article is read. The old unit will remain on the town site, however, as a home-away-from-home for the Groves family.

Also the church fed the Hunters again this year for pheasant season opening weekend. Meals were served at the Villa on Friday evening and all day Saturday – breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The public was welcome to come to enjoy some good food and fellowship.

Nicodemus Historical Society

Pioneer Days were held on October 13, 2007 at the Nicodemus Historical Society Museum. The theme this year was **“It's All in the Family – Trees.”** A “Pioneer Family Tree” was planted and dedicated in front of the museum.

Four family trees were on display, along with historical photos of original pioneer settlers. Individual quilt blocks were decorated and signed by each in attendance. The quilt blocks will be used to make a Pioneer Day quilt.

VISITOR CENTER NEWS

Michelle Huff, Park Guide

With the passing of another Homecoming Celebration and another summer, things are beginning to slow down at the Visitor Center, but we are getting a steady flow of out-of-state visitors who prefer to vacation in the fall rather than in the summer. Many of our fall visitors planned a stop at Nicodemus after having heard or read about it, and others were pleasantly surprised to discover Nicodemus on their travels.

The August 25th program on making rag rugs was repeated on September 14th by special request from Bernita Gawith and Dalene Peters of Stockton. They had missed the program on August 25th and were very interested in learning to make braided rag rugs. Hopefully, their braided rag rug projects are proceeding nicely.

On September 26th we hosted a day, long seminar for some area students and their teachers. The teachers who brought students from Norton, Phillipsburg, Smith Center and Osborne area schools were Nancy Sebelius, Arlene Williams, Joe Burgardt, and Leigh Johnson. Superintendent Sherda Williams presented a power point program to the group on the Kansas Archaeological Training Program's archaeological investigation of the Johnson family dugout site that took place here in June, 2007. Leigh Johnson and her daughter, who had participated in the KATP investigation here last June shared some of their experiences with the group. The students then worked on their Junior Ranger activities before taking a driving tour of the Nicodemus historic buildings. After lunch, the students learned how different daily life was for 1800s settler children and their families and that almost everything was hand-made by settlers and that nothing was ever wasted. To drive home those concepts, the teachers led their students in making their own “Jacob's Ladders”, a popular settler children's toy. I also showed them how to make braided rag rugs from strips of worn out clothing like the settlers did. Before leaving, the students were presented with their Junior Ranger badges and certificates for completion of all Junior Ranger activities.

An unexpected pleasure on Saturday, October 13th was the arrival of a busload of Damar Homecoming attendees who were touring Nicodemus and Bogue. Some of them reminisced with us about growing up in Damar and their memories of Nicodemus and Nicodemans they had known.

50th Anniversary of the Little Rock Nine

On the morning of September 23, 1957, nine African American teenagers stood up to an angry crowd protesting integration in front of Little Rock's Central High as they entered the school for the first time. This event, broadcast around the world, made Little Rock the site of the first important test of the U.S. Supreme Court's historic Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decision. Cornerstone events marking the 50th anniversary of the occasion include the dedication of the new Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Visitor Center on September 24. To learn more about Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site visit their website at <http://www.nps.gov/chsc/index.htm>.

Remembering Little Rock: Crisis at Central High

On Sunday, November 11, 2007, Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site held a memorable presentation remembering the "Little Rock Nine."

Superintendent Dennis Vasquez in partnership with the Brown Foundation had invited the public to the site for a memorable presentation featuring Elizabeth Eckford, one of the "Little Rock Nine," and Ken Reinhardt, a classmate who defied segregation to befriend her. Elizabeth Eckford made history as a member of the Little Rock Nine, the nine African American students who desegregated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Elizabeth now speaks about what America was like in the past, the impact of language and lessons learned from the past. She reminds audiences that the dead can be buried, but not the past.

Ken Reinhardt is a 1958 graduate of Little Rock Central High School. It was in that school year that the previously all-white high school was integrated by nine African American students. His classroom friendship with Elizabeth, one of the nine students, came to light as a result of a National History Day project by students at Uniontown High School, Uniontown, Kansas. Ken is a retired Senior Vice President of National City Bank in Louisville, Kentucky.

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 plaintiff's 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. To learn more about

more about Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site visit their website at <http://www.nps.gov/brvb>.

The Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, Excellence, and Research was established in 1988 as a living tribute to the attorneys and plaintiffs in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1954 Brown v Board of Education. To learn more about the Brown Foundation visit their website at <http://brownvboard.org/foundation>.

African Burial Ground Dedicated

The African Burial Ground National Monument in New York City was dedicated on October 5. The ceremony marked the opening of a permanent memorial to the estimated 15,000 Africans buried at the original 7 acre site in the 17th and 18th centuries. The burial ground was re-discovered in 1991 during construction on a federal office building. The site was designated a national historic landmark in 1993, the remains were re-interred in 2003, and the area designated a National Monument by President Bush in 2006.

The October 5th ceremony included Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, New York Mayor Richard Bloomberg, and officials from the National Park Service, the General Services Administration, the African Burial Ground Monument Foundation, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Before taking part in a wreath laying ceremony at the entry to site's ancestral chamber, Kempthorne delivered the keynote address.

"Today, in dedicating this monument, we declare once again that this place is sacred. We pay tribute to the lives of those buried here. We celebrate their humanity, a humanity that tragically was not recognized in their lifetime," said Kempthorne. "We often think of history in terms of famous leaders and great battlegrounds. But what we remember here today – the people we commemorate – is truly our history."

From the 1690s until the 1790s, both free and enslaved Africans were buried in a 6.6 acre burial ground in Lower Manhattan, outside the boundaries of the settlement of New Amsterdam, later known as New York. Lost to history due to landfill and development, the grounds were rediscovered in 1991 as a consequence of the planned construction of a Federal office building. To learn more about the African Burial Ground National Monument visit their website at <http://www.nps.gov/afbg>. To read the news release about the dedication you may visit http://www.doi.gov/news/07_News_Releases/071005.html.



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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www.usajobs.opm.gov

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Bipartisan Historic Preservation Legislation Announced

At a Capitol Hill press conference on October 30, 2007, Mrs. Laura Bush, Honorary Chair of Preserve America and Save America's Treasures, announced the introduction of bipartisan legislation authorizing two complementary historic preservation grant programs – Preserve America established by the Bush Administration and Save America's Treasures established by the Clinton Administration. Mrs. Bush was joined by Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne and Senators Hillary Clinton (NY) and Pete Domenici (NM), who introduced the legislation (S.2262) in the Senate and by Congressional Historic Preservation Caucus Co-Chairs Representatives Brad Mill (NC) and Mike Turner (OH), who introduced the legislation (H.R. 3891) in the House. Originally drafted by the Department of the Interior, the legislation seeks to authorize both the Preserve America and Save America's Treasures programs, making them permanent tools for those engaged in historic preservation activities. To learn more and to read the news release visit http://www.doi.gov/news/07_News_Releases/071031a.html.