

NEWS RELEASE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL PARKS IN KANSAS HOLD “I, TOO, AM AMERICA” CONTEST

All five national parks in Kansas are sponsoring the “I, Too, Am America” student contest. The contest is an outgrowth of the Ken Burns PBS series, “The National Parks: America’s Best Idea”. The six-part, 12-hour series is scheduled to air on PBS stations nationwide this September. Both the contest and series are supported with grants from the National Park Foundation and Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.

The contest is open to all seventh and eighth grade students in Kansas. As a way of engaging youth with their national parks, student contestants will select one of three mediums to tell how their personal or family story relates to a central theme of the parks. All entries must be received by May 8, 2009. For additional information contact Linda Rosenblum at 785-354-4273 or go to the website <http://www.nps.gov/brvb/forkids/npskscontest.htm> for contest instructions.

The five National Park Service units in Kansas are Brown v. Board of Education in Topeka, Fort Larned National Historic Site near Larned, Fort Scott National Historic Site in Fort Scott, Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in the Flint Hills and Nicodemus National Historic Site in Nicodemus. Units in the National Park system are established by Congress or Presidential proclamation as superlative examples of our Nation’s natural or cultural heritage to preserve their resources and unique stories for future generations.

Just as other units of the National Park system, our parks in Kansas also preserve the stories of nationally significant cultural and natural resources. Brown v. Board commemorates, through the renovated Monroe Elementary School, the pivotal decision by the United States Supreme Court ending racial segregation in public schools. Fort Larned NHS, the best preserved Indian Wars era military post on the Santa Fe Trail, tells the story of the Santa Fe Trail and Plains Indian Wars. Fort Scott NHS, is the scene of some of the most dramatic episodes in our country’s growth... including Westward Expansion, “Bleeding Kansas” and the Civil War. Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve with its rolling hills and wide-open prairie vistas is the only unit of the National Park System dedicated to the rich natural and cultural history of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem. Nicodemus NHS interprets the historical role of the town of Nicodemus, with its several historic buildings, as the physical expression of African American participation in our Nation’s post Civil War westward expansion to achieve social and economic self-determination.

PBS station KTWU in Topeka and the Kansas State Department of Education are partnering with the five National Parks to support the contest. Digital video cameras will be donated to each winner’s school for the students use in telling their story on Kansas PBS stations, and other future school projects.