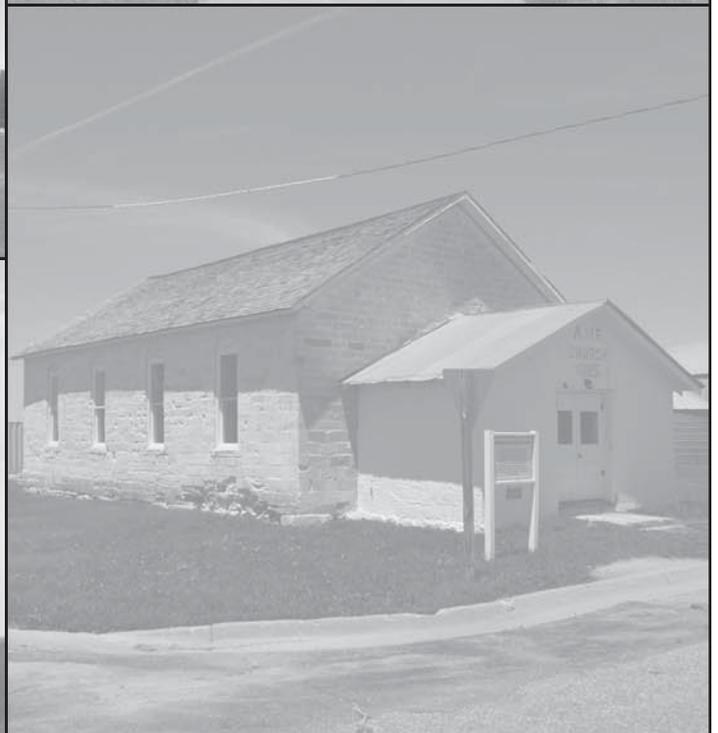




Nicodemus National Historic Site

Long-Range Interpretive Plan

September 2009



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Prepared by:

Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Nicodemus National Historic Site

Midwest Region

Harpers Ferry Center
Interpretive Planning

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Photo Credit: Kansas University Spencer Research Library/Nicodemus Collection

Nicodemus residents posing for a photograph in front of the Williams General Merchandise Store, late nineteenth century.

Message from the Superintendent

On November 12, 1996, Congress passed Public Law 104-333 (110 Statute 4163) establishing Nicodemus National Historic Site. The legislation authorized the National Park Service to “preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations, the remaining structures and locations that represent the history (including the settlement and growth) of the town of Nicodemus, Kansas;” and “to interpret the historical role of the town of Nicodemus at the end of and after the Reconstruction period in the context of the experience of westward expansion in the United States.”

The Long-Range Interpretive Plan is a document that sharpens our focus and pulls together all of the education and interpretation efforts of the township of Nicodemus, various non-profit organizations, for-profit enterprises, and Nicodemus National Historic Site. Part One defines the park themes, identifies the desired visitor experience, lists issues and challenges, and describes the existing condition of the interpretive services within the Nicodemus community. Part Two lists the specific actions the park, the Nicodemus descendants and our partners will take to meet our vision for the future of interpretation over the next seven to ten years.

Nicodemus National Historic Site is supported through partnerships with many local, regional, and national organizations. The park staff engaged descendants, partners, local community members, and many others throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort produced a more comprehensive and inclusive look at how we will interpret Nicodemus to visitors in the future.

On behalf of the park staff, Nicodemus descendants, and our partners, I hope you will take time to review this important plan and join us as we continue to move forward in our efforts to preserve and protect the values and resources of Nicodemus National Historic Site.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Peterson", written in a cursive style.

**Superintendent
Nicodemus National Historic Site**

Comprehensive Interpretive Planning

The National Park Service (NPS) has a unified planning approach for interpretation and education. This approach combines planning for interpretive media, personal services, and education programs. The Comprehensive Interpretive Planning (CIP) process is the basic planning document for interpretation and was incorporated into NPS guidelines in 1995. Responsibility for accomplishing the CIP process lies with each park's superintendent.

What is a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan?

The CIP process helps parks make choices, and this planning document is written to provide guidance to park staff. It helps them decide what their objectives are, who their audiences are, and what mix of media and personal services to use. Although the CIP as defined in Director's Order 6 is composed of specific elements, good planning is customized to meet an individual park's need and situations. The CIP is not a recipe; rather it is a guide to effective, goal-driven planning. While it considers past interpretive programming, it is primarily a forward-looking document that concentrates on actions needed to create or sustain a vigorous and effective interpretive program for the future. All CIPs have these three components: the Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP), a series of Annual Implementation Plans (AIP) and an Interpretive Database (ID).

What is a Long-Range Interpretive Plan?

The heart of the CIP is the Long-Range Interpretive Plan. The LRIP defines the overall vision and long-term (7 - 10 years) interpretive goals of the park. The process that develops the LRIP defines realistic strategies and actions that work toward achievement of the interpretive goals.

The Annual Implementation Plan and Interpretive Database

The completed LRIP is a critical part of the CIP, but it does not stand alone. Actions in the LRIP are divided into annual, achievable steps and reproduced in the Annual Implementation Plan, the second component of the CIP. Creating a series of these AIPs that implement the recommendations outlined in the LRIP simplifies the park's annual planning. The third component of the CIP is the Interpretive Database (ID), an ongoing compilation of information, reports, bibliographies, plans, and inventories that document the LRIP's ongoing progress.

Part One: The Foundation for Interpretive Planning

They finally reached their goal, a prairie quarter section, just north of the Solomon River – just a plain prairie country – no horses, no wells, no shelter of any kind, and winter setting in.
W. L. Sayers

Nicodemus. . .was originally settled by the colored race, and by their patience and untiring energy have succeeded in gaining a grand, glorious victory over nature and the elements, and what used to be the Great American Desert now blooms with waving grain.
Nicodemus Cyclone, June 15, 1886

Nicodemus, Kansas is of national significance because it is the only remaining western town established by blacks during the reconstruction period. . .[and]. . .is also symbolic of the pioneer spirit of blacks who dared to leave the only region they had been familiar with, in search for personal freedom and the opportunity to develop their talents and capabilities.
National Historic Landmark nomination, 1976

National Park Service Mission

A mission statement is a vision for the future and articulates, in broad terms, the ideas that the NPS strives to achieve.

The National Park Service mission is to preserve unimpaired natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

Enabling Legislation and Park Purpose

Each unit of the National Park System is created by Congress and the President of the United States. The following pieces of legislation created Nicodemus National Historic Site.

All park planning flows from the mission articulated in the park's enabling legislation. The enabling legislation is the specific piece of legislation through which Congress created the park and declared its intent for the park. Nicodemus National Historic Park's interpretive services and program must support this mission and help the public understand the significance of the park.

On November 12, 1996, Congress passed Public Law 104-333 (110 Stat. 4163) establishing Nicodemus National Historic Site. The legislation authorized the National Park Service to "preserve, protect and interpret for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations, the remaining structures and locations that represent the history (including the settlement and growth) of the town of Nicodemus, Kansas; and "to interpret the historical role of the town of Nicodemus in the Reconstruction period in the context of the experience of westward expansion in the United States."

This text is repeated in the 2003 General Management Plan as the **Park Purpose** statement describing why the area was set aside and what specific purposes exist for the park.

Park Significance

Statements of significance describe a National Park System unit's distinctive natural, cultural, and recreational resources and values that are the factual rationale for national recognition of the site.

According to the 2003 General Management Plan, Nicodemus is significant for the following reasons:

- At the end of Reconstruction, Nicodemus was platted as an African American community in rejection of the rampant racism of the post Civil War South and a key aspect of African Americans' struggle to overcome obstacles to social, economic, and political equality.
- Nicodemus is a symbol of the African American pioneer spirit. It is the only western town established by African Americans at the end of Reconstruction that still remains, it represents a largely untold aspect of the story of western expansion and the settlement of the Great Plains.
- Nicodemus is one of the oldest continuously occupied African American towns in the West.
- The resources of Nicodemus represent the five pillars of many African American communities during the late 19th and 20th centuries: family/home, church, school, business, and traditions of mutual assistance that evolved into local government.

Park Management Goals

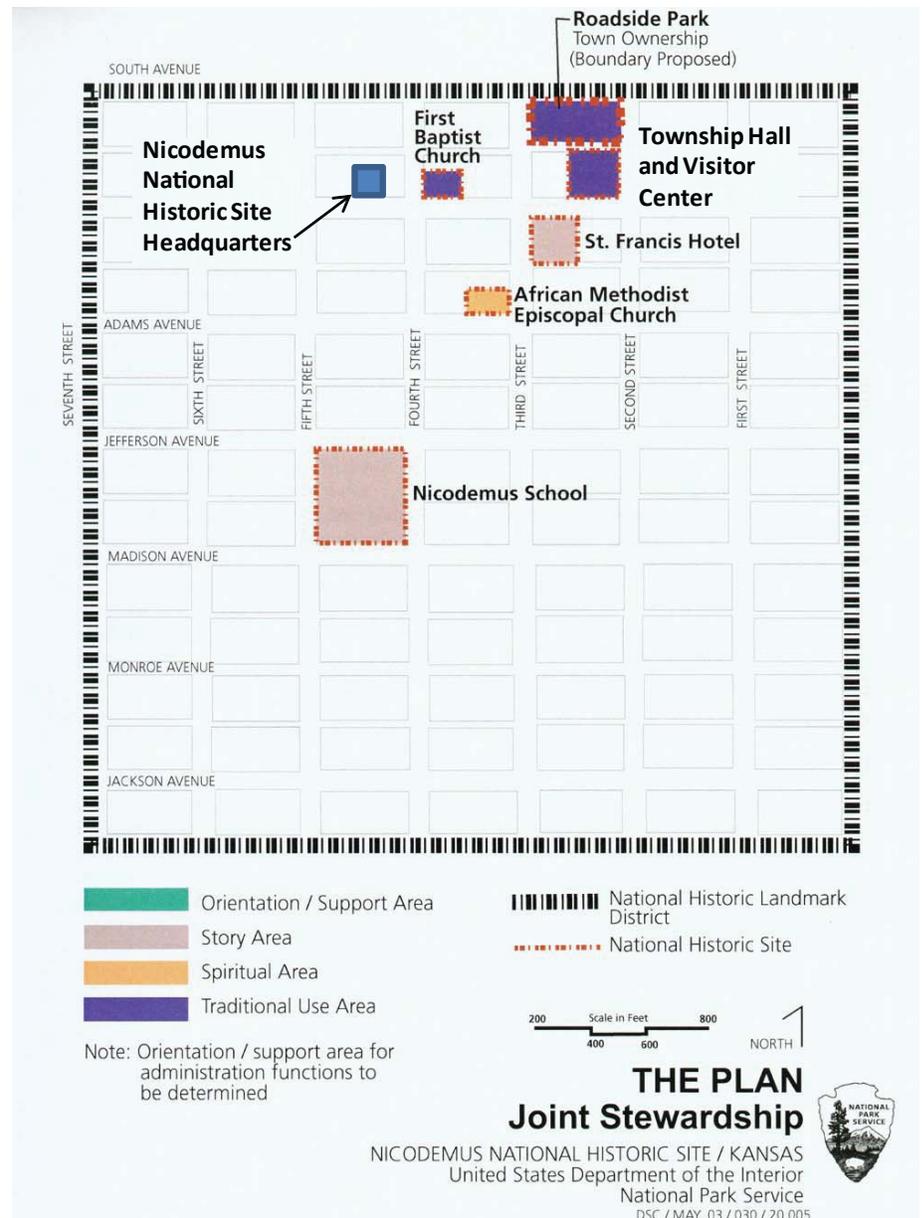
Park management goals articulate in broad terms the ideal conditions the park and its partners will strive to attain. The 1993 Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requires federal agencies to establish standards for measuring performance and effectiveness. The law requires federal agencies to develop strategic plans describing their overall goals and objectives, annual performance plans containing quantifiable measures of their progress, and performance reports describing their success in meeting those standards and measures. The following mission goals were prepared in 2008 as part of the planning process required by GPRA. In addition to goals related to resource and visitor protection, there are some goals specifically related to interpretation and visitor services.

Mission Goal IIa1:

By September 30, 2012, 84% of visitors to Nicodemus National Historic Site are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

Mission Goal IIb1:

By September 30, 2012, 68% of Nicodemus National Historic Site visitors understand the significance of the park.



Nicodemus Townsite map highlighting Nicodemus National Historical Site and Nicodemus Historical Society locations.

Accessibility

Every attempt will be made to provide full access to interpretive facilities, media, and programs to ensure people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to national parks. This is in compliance with the National Park Service policy:

“...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the qualities of the park experience for everyone.”
NPS Special Directive 83-3,
Accessibility for Disabled Persons

All interpretation will follow general standards for accessibility as described in the Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media (<http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/accessibility/access-guide-aug2009.pdf>).

Four young women and a Model T.



Photo Credit: Kansas University Spencer Research Library/Nicodemus Collection

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes capture the essence of Nicodemus National Historic Site's significance. They include the most important stories and represent core messages that every visitor should have the opportunity to experience.

While interpretation of any site could touch upon many stories, focused themes increase effectiveness. When well conceived, themes explore the meanings behind the facts. They open minds to new ideas and perhaps to multiple points of view. When linked to commonly held emotions or universal human experiences, themes encourage visitors to see themselves in Nicodemus' story and discover personal relevance.

A team of park staff, descendants, local citizens, and partners worked together to develop these themes during workshops held in 2005 and 2009. They are based on the themes identified in the 2003 General Management Plan. The stories and concepts associated with each theme are listed in Appendix D.

Theme 1 – The Five Pillars

Nicodemus arose from the efforts of an organized group of African Americans who wanted to create a supportive, viable, African American community, relying on the values of home life, education, religion, hard work and the social, religious, and political organizations that grew out of a tradition of mutual assistance.

Theme 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights

The settlement of Nicodemus represents a determination to escape rampant racism; the loss of federal support and protection for African American citizens in the South at the end of Reconstruction allowed and encouraged an increase in institutional racism, social injustice, and violence.

Theme 3 – Struggle for Community

The continuous occupancy of Nicodemus, Kansas, portrays African American perseverance and the struggle of African American emigrants as they

journeyed west into an unknown and often difficult physical environment to participate in the American Dream.

Theme 4 – Traditions, Culture, and Community

The annual Emancipation Celebration began in 1878 and continues today as the Homecoming Celebration. It is an African American traditional celebration that fosters the renewal of family and communities with the physical place of Nicodemus and with its residents, offsite descendants, and the African American community at large.

Theme 5 – Still Connected

Nicodemus represents far more than a physical place with historical significance. It serves as a focal point for all people to renew spiritual and emotional connections to family, community, and ancestors through this African American experience.

Desired Visitor Experience

Visitors come to parks seeking something of value and relevance. Desired visitor experiences describe what physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences should be available for visitors to Nicodemus National Historic Site. It is what visitors do, feel, think, and learn which includes knowledge, attitudes, behavior, and values. These experiences will be available to visitors of all abilities, including those with visual, auditory, mobility, or cognitive impairments.

Visitors to Nicodemus National Historic Site will have opportunities to:

- Discover why Nicodemus is an important historic site; descendants can research how their ancestors have contributed; and all can become inspired by the stories.
- Hear from a descendant, or at least a resident, about Nicodemus history and their personal experiences living in Nicodemus by using a variety of media.
- Experience an African American church service.



120th Nicodemus Emancipation/Homecoming celebration and National Historic Site dedication, 1998.

- Experience the vitality of the current and future community.
- Feel the Nicodemus family and community spirit during the Emancipation/Homecoming Celebration.
- Find solitude within the AME church.
- Participate in a range of events, programs, and activities in order to appreciate, respect, and experience the historic landscape and the activities that occurred within it.
- Experience an archeological dig.
- Experience a knowledgeable and helpful staff willing and eager to assist.
- Use facilities and have basic needs met including access to lodging, restaurants, restrooms, shade, and picnic areas.
- Have a safe and enjoyable visit.
- Read books written by or about local families, descendants, and community members.
- Volunteer with any of the local agencies, organizations, and committees.

Park Visitors

This is a broad description of park visitors and their needs – including current and potential visitors. “Visitor” describes anyone who uses a site’s interpretation and educational services whether in person or “virtually” through digital technologies.

Current Visitors

Various visitor surveys—including annual surveys and one in-depth survey—have been completed for Nicodemus National Historic Site. These surveys help the park judge the effectiveness of their interpretive programs as well as track visitor statistics. Two types of visitor profiles are presented here: annual visitation figures and results from a 2005 Visitor Survey Project.

Annual visitation counts are collected by park staff as visitors enter the main visitor contact area. Collection of this data began at Nicodemus National Historic Site in 1999, three years after establishment of the park, when the visitor center was regularly staffed. Prior to 2007, visitation counters were located at the rest area located between Highway 24 and the visitor center resulting in erroneously high counts (28,065 recorded in 2005). In 2007 the park began counting only those that enter the visitor center. Consequently, the numbers have been dramatically lower (2,434 recorded in 2008).

A comprehensive visitor survey was conducted at Nicodemus National Historic Site from July 23 to September 13, 2005, by the Park Studies Unit of

the University of Idaho. The survey took place during the Homecoming Celebration because the park wanted a sizable sample for the survey. Unfortunately that may have skewed the data because many people taking the survey had come to participate in Homecoming, not to experience the national historic site.

Survey questions helped determine the demographic make-up of park visitors, as well as what they did or did not like about their experience. The survey also addressed economic impacts to the region from park visitation. Of the 302 questionnaires distributed to visitors, 208 were returned for a 68.9% response rate. Some results noted in the survey’s summary concluded that:

- Family groups made up more than half of park visitors surveyed.
- First-time visitors made up seventy-eight percent of those surveyed.
- More than one-fourth of visitors surveyed had a college education
- Seventy-seven percent of visitors visited Nicodemus NHS for the first time in their lifetime and sixty-eight percent visited for the first time since 1996. Twenty-eight percent of visitors had a bachelor’s degree; twenty-eight percent had some college education; and twenty-four percent held a graduate degree.
- Resident U.S. visitors were from Kansas (46%), Nebraska (8%), Colorado (8%), and 28 other states. International visitors, comprising less

than one percent of the total visitation, had too few respondents to provide reliable data. More than half of the continental US states were represented in the park survey.

- Prior to this visit, visitor groups most often obtained information about Nicodemus NHS through friends/relatives/word of mouth (43%), newspaper/magazine articles (26%), and previous visits (26%). Nine percent of visitor groups did not obtain any information about the park before their visit. Most groups (82%) felt they had received the information they needed about the park.
- Of 201 visitor groups surveyed, the most used services/facilities included the visitor center (96%), indoor exhibits and information panels (87%), park history brochure (81%), and assistance from park staff (77%). The services/facilities that received the highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings included the visitor center (92%), assistance from park staff (89%), and indoor exhibits and information panels (86%). The services/facilities that received the highest combined proportions of “very good” and “good” quality ratings included assistance from park staff (96%), indoor exhibit and information panels (90%), and visitor center (87%).
- Sixty-five percent of respondents were white, thirty-seven percent African American

Targeted Visitor Groups

The park will continue to provide services to all audiences, but the following groups were identified as most important during a workshop held in March 2009. It is important to identify targeted visitor groups so that programming, media, and facilities can be shaped to address their interests and needs. Further, identifying visitor groups helps in evaluating the effectiveness of interpretive programming.

- Education – Teachers and school groups will be a primary audience.
- Organized Tour Groups – Local, regional, and out-of-state groups including: youth groups, church groups, civic groups, senior groups, and American Legion/Veterans of Foreign Wars.
- Nicodemus descendants - Local family members and those living either in- or out-of-state.
- Accidental tourists – Visitors who “accidentally” discover Nicodemus including: first time visitors, Highway 24 cruise-bys, retirees, family groups, and visitors encouraged by descendants to visit.
- NPS – Visitors who seek passport stamps and travel specifically to NPS sites.
- Heritage Tourism – Local business owners who will share the Nicodemus stories and encourage local customers and visitors to come to the site.

- Professional subject matter experts seeking knowledge about the history of Nicodemus including: archaeologists, scientists, historians and historical society members.
- Virtual visitors – The internet is often the first opportunity for visitors to learn about Nicodemus, and the park needs to meet the expectations of this ever-growing, technologically knowledgeable audience.
- Dignitaries - Local, state, and federal representatives and officials.
- Global Business Group – Nationally significant businesses and organizations with an economic interest in the region. Outreach to this group may include a suggestion to hold conferences in the area on topics relevant or related to Nicodemus, or a request for them to participate in a visioning workshop.
- General Public - Tourists or visitors whose travel plans include Nicodemus or Nicodemus serves as their destination site.

Young descendants of Nicodemus.



Photo Credit: NPS Photo

Issues and Challenges Affecting Interpretation

Nicodemus National Historic Site has many assets upon which to build an effective interpretive program, including evocative and compelling stories, outstanding natural and cultural resources, ongoing research, and dedicated staff and supporters. It also faces a number of challenges. Well-designed programs can build on interpretive strengths to help overcome the challenges.

Transition: With the arrival of the new Superintendent in September 2008, the Midwest Regional Director determined that Nicodemus National Historic Site should report directly to the Regional Office rather than through the Superintendent at Ft. Larned National Historic Site as it has done previously.

Communication: Limited communication between partner organizations and the park have resulted in poorly defined roles regarding interpretive services to the visitor. This limitation, in conjunction with the aging community, depressed economy, and population decline within northwest Kansas, makes increased and improved communication all the more important.

Structures: Rehabilitation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is anticipated to begin between 2011 and 2015, pending the availability of funding. This rehabilitation process can serve as the impetus for similar efforts on non-NPS-owned structures within the park boundary. Park staff will provide technical assistance and guidance to the residents, property owners, local organizations, partners, and descendants as they begin to plan a variety of projects that will protect and preserve the Nicodemus community.

Plan Implementation. Organizations associated with interpretation of the history of Nicodemus include the Nicodemus Historical Society, Kansas Black Farmers Association, the Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance, the Nicodemus Livery Company, and the Graham County Historical Society. The National Park Service does not have a monopoly on the interpretation of Nicodemus. This plan was developed in cooperation with these and other organizations and its implementation must also be accomplished in partnership with them. While this plan cannot require participation by these organizations, it is hoped that our mutual goals of preserving and presenting the history of Nicodemus will result in an amicable relationship for the benefit of future generations.

Existing Conditions

Communication, Marketing, Orientation and Access to Information and Interpretation

Marketing

The park informs the public of upcoming events and special programs through public service announcements sent to area newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and through postings on the park website.

Communication

The park receives information requests on a daily basis via letters, phone calls, and e-mail messages. Most requests are for basic information about the park and/or directions to the park. Requests related to genealogy

are presently forwarded to The Nicodemus Historical Society.

The superintendent holds monthly “coffee” to meet with the local community and to share news and information related to the park. These meetings serve as a tangible line of communication between the park and its most active residents and descendants.

Each descendant family, local organization, and agency associated with Nicodemus has their own phone list, mail list, and e-mail list. Each list is independently managed and accessed. There is some overlap between the lists; however, there is currently no easy or direct way to communicate information about events, programs, or activities to all of the people connected to Nicodemus.

Signs

A park usually has a hierarchy of signs. Directional signs include both the brown informational signs provided by state highway departments on major feeder highways and at interstate exits. These signs guide the visitor to the park. The park identity sign is generally a large sign located at a main entrance that presents the park name and the National Park Service emblem, so visitors know they have arrived at a national park. In addition, there are often other identifying signs placed at prominent way stations like the park’s visitor center or scenic overlooks. Directional signs within the park can guide visitors along a tour route. Small informational signs provide safety and orientation information at various locations.



One of two directional signs on U.S. Highway 24 located at the entrance to Nicodemus.

Photo Credit: NPS Photo

This complementary system of signs is planned ideally as a cohesive system to facilitate site visits and minimize the interference of signs with the enjoyment of the park.

In 2008, brown state highway department directional signs were installed on major feeder highways and at the I-70 exits at Hays and Colby, Kansas.

There is a large township-owned limestone welcome sign just off of U.S. Highway 24 to the west of the Township/Roadside Park. Directional signs are located on U.S. Highway 24, *immediately* before the turn onto Second Street directing visitors towards the Township Hall. There are no signs alerting visitors that they are approaching a unit of the National Park System. The park has an NPS sign in the Roadside Park, and a sign that identifies the visitor center. There are two different informational signs located in the Township/Roadside Park on the north side of the visitor center. These signs include safety information placed by the park or the Township Board, a National Historic Landmark plaque, a Kansas State marker, and a kiosk erected by the Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance. There are no marked tour routes within the town guiding visitors to the five historic properties. There are two signs to the Nicodemus Historical Society Museum; however, they are not placed to effectively direct visitors to the building. There are signs in front of each historic property that provides a brief history of the building, dates of construction, and known building use.

Currently the signs:

- Do not adequately alert visitors to arrival at a unit of the National Park System.
- Do not assist in the flow of visitors between the five historic properties or within the townsite.
- Are not a coordinated, planned system.
- Create a visually distracting scene in the Roadside Park.

Website

The park website is a very popular way to gain information about the park. Virtual visitors access the website to learn about park history, interpretive programs, hours of operation, and find directions to the park. The park recognizes the importance of the website as a tool to reach “armchair” visitors, long distance researchers, and as a pre-visit information opportunity.

Nicodemus National Historic Site’s website (<http://www.nps.gov/nico>) is linked to the NPS website. The park’s home page presents basic park information. The website takes on particular importance for Nicodemus National Historic Site due to its rather remote geographic location.

The park has a minimal amount of additional information on the website. A 2002 Black History Month PowerPoint is the only reference under history and culture and there are links to the Nicodemus Historical Society and the Nicodemus, Kansas websites.

Facilities

Nicodemus National Historic Site is a developing park, both physically and in terms of its interpretive opportunities. The park offers visitor services at the leased Township Hall and utilizes office space in two two-bedroom apartments at Nicodemus Villas. Within the lifespan of this plan, the park is scheduled to begin exploring alternatives for a permanent visitor center and park offices.

The park has five historic buildings within its boundary. Four of them have very limited or no associated interpretive services. Only the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church (owned by the park) and the Township Hall are maintained by park staff; the other three are maintained by their private owners.

Township Hall – Nicodemus National Historic Site Visitor Center

A visitor center provides visitors a place to obtain orientation material, learn about the significance of the park, and have an opportunity to interact with park staff and other visitors. Everyone who comes to the visitor center is welcomed and offered a 15- to 30-minute orientation talk on the history of Nicodemus. Interpretive programs are offered on an as-requested basis with special programs and guided tours offered to groups by reservation only.

The National Park Service presently leases the Township Hall from the Nicodemus Township Board to house the park’s temporary visitor center.

It is the only one of the five National Historic Site properties open to the public. The visitor center is open seven days a week, 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. except Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. Two interpretive staff members share staffing responsibilities.

There is a vestibule, an open auditorium space, an elevated stage with two bathrooms installed on the stage level, and a basement space under the stage. There is no private, enclosed office space. The park uses about one-third of the auditorium space for the visitor contact desk, a small Western National Parks Association bookstore. Free-standing interpretive panels and a video viewing area are located along the east side of the auditorium space.

Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse

The Nicodemus District No. 1 School is owned by the local American Legion Post No. 270. It is not currently open to the public.

African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church

The AME Church is owned by the National Park Service. It is not currently open to the public due to its condition.

First Baptist Church

The First Baptist Church is owned by the church congregation. It is not currently open to the public.

St. Francis Hotel (The Switzer House)

The St. Francis Hotel is owned by Veryl A. Switzer. It is not currently open to the public.

Roadside Park

The Roadside Park is leased by the National Park Service and offers restroom and picnic facilities and water. There is a Kansas State Historical Marker and a Solomon Valley Highway 24 Heritage Alliance bulletin board with some inaccurate and outdated information about Nicodemus and its historic and geographic context.

Nicodemus Historical Society and Museum

During the summer, the Museum is scheduled to be open Monday through Saturday 12:00p.m. until 5:00 p.m. During the winter, it is open by appointment.



Local descendants of Nicodemus in front of the visitor center – the only historic building open to the public.



Nicodemus Historical Society and Museum.

Interpretive Media

There is interpretive media located within the park, including:

Wayside Exhibits

Currently, there are no standard National Park Service wayside exhibits in the park. In 1992-93, the Nicodemus Historical Society installed wooden signs in front of four of the five historic structures. These exterior signs provided a brief history for each building, dates of construction, and known building use. In about 2002 the park replaced these signs, but made few, if any, changes to the narrative text. There are no photographs or graphic images on any of these signs. The signs represent an upright style, but are not the conventional National Park Service “upright” or “low-profile” style seen in modern wayside exhibits.

The current wayside exhibits:

- Provide basic information on the structure, but do not provide the meaning or significance of the property. They therefore do not address any of the park’s



Wooden signs provide a brief history of four of the five historic structures.

- interpretive themes.
- Contain minor inaccuracies.
- Were not designed using the NPS Graphic Identity standards.

Museum Exhibits

A set of 10 modular interpretive panels line the east wall of the Nicodemus Township Hall. These panels were designed to be disassembled and moved when necessary to accommodate the Township Hall as a temporary visitor center (still occasionally used by the community for special events, church dinners, and funeral dinners).

Five exhibit panels explain the broad story of the African American experience before, during, and after the American Civil War, from the “Bleeding Kansas” period of the mid-1850s, to the end of Reconstruction in 1877. The remaining five panels communicate some aspect of the story specifically focused on Nicodemus. Four of the panels provide the visitor with some understanding of the contextual history surrounding the establishment of Nicodemus, and one panel provides information on various prominent African

Americans in Western history. The displays comprise laminated digital prints and generally conform to NPS Graphic Identity standards.

The layout and temporary nature of the park’s occupation and use of the Township Hall present many problems for displaying exhibits. The existing exhibit panel disassembly and removal is time-consuming and labor intensive. Additionally, the panels are currently left in place so the structural integrity is not weakened. Because the Township Hall is one of the National Historic Site properties, the park must be sure that changes made to the interior do not obscure or change the historic character of the space. This limits the park’s ability to create attached, permanent exhibit panels on the exterior walls or permanent, non-mobile exhibit cases. Any exhibits placed within the large, long auditorium space of the Township Hall cannot interfere with safe exit routes for visitors, staff, and attendees at special events. And, because the building is still used by the community for special events, any exhibits installed by the park need to be temporary and movable.



Ten exhibit panels are located in the visitor center.

There are no exhibits in the other four National Historic Site structures, as none are open to the public at this time.

The park has exhibited a few traveling or temporary exhibits such as an exhibit from the Eiteljorg Museum in 2003 presented in conjunction with the “Black Cowboy Roundup” and sponsored by the Nicodemus Livery Company. Other temporary exhibits have included “Experience Your America” from the National Park Service in 2004; “Right on Time: Buck O’Neil” from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in 2004; a “Traveling Trunk” exhibit from the Kansas State Historical Society on African Americans in Kansas in 2007; and a Buffalo Soldier exhibit from Ft. Leavenworth in 2008. These free-standing exhibits were displayed in the Township Hall’s auditorium space.

The visitor center exhibits:

- Have a few illustrations that have been labeled offensive and/or inaccurate by the local residents, outside historians, and critics. This includes a historic Harper’s Weekly illustration of whites threatening African Americans trying to cast a vote at a polling place. Both the African Americans and the whites in the illustration appear to be drawn as caricatures. Many residents and descendants are concerned about the message this is sending to the public.
- Are not diverse in variety and do not reflect the complex stories of the site.
- Do not interpret current or past hardships and how people survived and made

a living (farming practices, home industry, agricultural tools and products, and smoked foods).

- Do not capture a complete chronology of the town’s history.
- Have no interactive elements, and therefore, do not attract children or the simply curious.
- Do not successfully address many of the primary interpretive themes for the park.

The current exhibit space:

- Has only two mobile exhibit cases available to display museum artifacts and other three-dimensional objects.
- Does not provide the climate control system or ultraviolet protection necessary to exhibit museum artifacts.
- Does not communicate the history of the outbuildings in the park.

Publications

Official Park Map and Guide

Until recently, the park had no formal park “Unigrid” brochure. Harpers Ferry Center produced an interim brochure in December 2006. This brochure is considered an interim product because it is not the full standard size. As a consequence, there is less room to convey interpretive information and the brochure does not include a park map. In recent years, the Harpers Ferry Center has been producing these interim products so that a larger number of parks will receive some sort of professional brochure product. The park has received comments that this temporary brochure is misleading in terms of photos selected for its cover.

“Historic Nicodemus” walking tour brochure

A walking tour brochure for the park was developed in 2000 by park staff. This brochure, along with the signs in front of each building, is the primary media that interpret the park’s physical resources to the visiting public. For the most part, the brochure repeats language already present on the signs in front of the town’s five historic structures. The brochure uses contemporary photographs of the historic structures to illustrate the text. The map used in the brochure shows a simple layout of the town’s streets and building locations. This brochure does not meet NPS Graphic Identity standards. While the opening section of the brochure indicates that the five historic buildings represent a physical expression of the five pillars, the text provides only a chronological timeline for each building. The meanings of church, self-government, and education may be implied because of the type of structure, however, there is no associated context within the discussion.

“Flowering of Nicodemus” park newsletter

The park began producing a quarterly newsletter in February 2004. In FY2009 the park went from printing four issues to three issues annually. The newsletter covers current issues within the park, future issues, and scheduled meetings that may be of interest to park stakeholders, some of whom live in Denver and California. It also provides information on topics related to Nicodemus history and includes some brief items from park partners. In just three years, the distribution list had grown

to over 500 people. The park attempted a monthly e-mail news brief for approximately one year, but production became labor intensive, causing the park to cease distribution. It does not address genealogy or family news of residents or descendants. Relative genealogical information and news is disseminated by the Nicodemus Historical Society newsletter. The park's newsletter serves both as an interpretive medium and as a tool for managers to inform stakeholders of activities, policies, and plans.

Buffalo Soldiers Site Bulletin

One site bulletin is under development, focusing on the history of the Buffalo Soldiers and their relationship with Nicodemus history. Park visitors and those visiting state of Kansas Visitor Information Centers often request information on or express interest in the Buffalo Soldiers and their role in settling the West.

Junior Ranger Program

The Junior Ranger program is for children ages 4 to 8 and 9 to 15. The package for the younger children consists of a two-page handout featuring drawing exercises. The 9 to 15 year old package has a matching exercise, five questions to answer about the park, two word searches a crossword puzzle, and a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation. All children that complete their assignment receive a badge, certificate, and honorary land certificate. Forty-eight junior rangers received their badges at Nicodemus in 2008.

Free Publications

The park staff distributes a variety of free publications that are produced by other national

parks and agencies including state and regional maps, rack cards, museum publications, and brochures. The information is arranged thematically: National Park Service units with African American themes; state and national parks in Kansas; and other parks in the Midwest Region. Other publications available on the racks include the Junior Ranger Gazette, Kansas highway maps and the official Kansas visitor guide.

Audiovisual Media

Nicodemus National Historic Site does not have a professionally produced audiovisual presentation available to the public. The park presently offers excerpts from three television broadcasts- CBS Sunday Morning, HGTV, and NBC. Each is approximately five minutes long. These programs are an excellent source of site orientation, including history of the site, visuals of the town's primary historic buildings, and interviews with townspeople and descendants. However, they all focus on the annual Nicodemus Homecoming event. Two of these video segments are also over 15 years old and present out-of-date information about the town's population, which has been in a steady decline for the last several decades. The park also has a PBS "Sunflower Journeys" program that contains a segment on Nicodemus and a segment on "America with the Top Down", but they are not shown regularly.

The visitor experience is further hampered by the viewing area, a small space in the southeast corner of the auditorium. The existing video programs minimally comply with Section

508 accessibility standards. This is chiefly due to the presentation medium. Currently, the videos are captioned, but are not audio-described.

The park had a Traveler's Information System (TIS) radio that broadcasted a short orientation message to automobile radios on an AM wavelength. It ceased functioning in the fall 2008. The park is considering replacement alternatives. The TIS range is less than 10 miles, and is located at the northeast corner of the Township Park/Rest Area. The message ran on a continual loop, unless interrupted by lightning strikes or other malfunctions. It was available to the public at all times of the day. Until its demise, the recording contained quite a lot of static. One portion of the TIS message was recorded in 1997 by actor Danny Glover. The Nicodemus Historical Society arranged the recording by Glover and provided it free-of-charge to the park. The script contains some content which has since been found to contain a few minor inaccuracies or now out-of-date information. A park staff member recited the poem "Wake, Nicodemus" and the hours of operation of the visitor center.

The park's audiovisual media:

- Do not include an audiovisual presentation that meets NPS accessibility standards.
- Are generally informative rather than interpretive.
- Are not audio-described, but the park does offer audio-assistive listening devices.
- Are shown on a large 46" flat screen television.
- Are of poor quality and worn out.

- Are subject to interruption by ambient noises such as ringing telephones or conversations within the visitor center.

Historic Furnishings

The park salvaged a few furnishings from the AME Church (such as a pulpit, a few pews, millwork, and hymnals) when the property was donated in 1998. Additionally, a brass candelabra believed to be from the AME Church was donated to the park in 2006. These

furnishings are inventoried and catalogued, but not conserved. There are a few furnishings in the Township Hall, including a lectern (reputed to be from the former Masonic Lodge) and two pianos, however, none of these Township Hall furnishings are owned by the park. None of the other furnishings associated with the other three National Historic Site properties are owned by the park. There are historic furnishings present in the First Baptist Church, the Nicodemus District No.1 School, and the St. Francis Hotel. The park does

not have a furnishings plan or a defined strategy for what types of artifacts (including furnishings) will be collected in the future.

A scope of collections statement has been completed.

Historic objects from the AME church are part of the park's museum collection.



Personal Services

Curriculum-based Education Program

The NPS offers general Nicodemus history through its distance learning program. The one- to one and a half-hour programs are informal, much like an expanded orientation presentation with vocabulary tailored to the age level. Student groups include kindergarteners to college students. No formal lesson plans and curricula using educational standards have been developed. The Southeast Nebraska Distance Learning Consortium donated the equipment used at Nicodemus and offers a direct link to southeast Nebraska schools; however, the opportunity for distance learning is open to all educational institutions.

Archeological field schools have been conducted in partnership with Washburn University, Howard University, Kansas State Historical Society, and Nicodemus Historical Society.

The Kansas Black Farmers Association members are periodically invited to present programs in local schools.

The Nicodemus Group is an educational company specializing in youth programs, teacher study tours and in-service programs, and curriculum-based educational materials. The company presents educational costumed programs including “Black Women in the West”, “Blacks in the West”, “Life and Times of the Buffalo Soldiers”, “African American Women and Their Church Hats”, “Nicodemus Historic Quilts and Quilters”, and “African American Cultural Differences”. Curricula have been developed for each program.

The Nicodemus Livery Company provides townsite horse drawn wagon tours and guided township tours which include cemeteries, homesteads and schools focusing on the history of Nicodemus and the African American experience in the

West. Tour types include group, individual and special interest tours with target groups focusing on schools and universities. A “Rites of Passage” tour is the most popular tour offered. It is typically an all day program for youth and adults. Interactive components include bread baking, canning, quilting, gardening, ice cream making, and agriculture-based activities such as farm practices and horseshoeing. A home cooked meal of Ernestine’s Bar-b-que is provided and participants get certificates of participation upon completion of the program.

Kansas State University American Ethnic Studies program offers an undergraduate and graduate level class that includes Nicodemus, KS and surrounding communities. It is taught once per year by a Nicodemus descendant.

Nicodemus Educational Camps provide a week-long, residential, all-inclusive camp for youth in sixth through ninth grade.



Photo Credit: NPS Photo

Nicodemus District No. 1 Schoolhouse is an important symbol of education, one of the five pillars.

Programs

The park staff consists of one Park Ranger and one Park Guide. Consequently, they can only provide a minimal level of interpretive programs including:

- 15- to 30-minute orientation presentations on the History of Nicodemus to walk-in visitors at the visitor center. All visitors are approached upon entry and offered this program.
- In recent years, the park has offered demonstrations of rug-making and home remedies.
- The park offers tours of the town and the five historic properties upon request of schools, social clubs, and family groups.
- The park sponsors presentations by local community members or organizations. In 2008, topics included “Buffalo Soldiers” and “African American Women and Their Church Hats”.
- Off-site special events such

as the Kansas State Fair, Juneteenth, and Black History Month events offer the opportunity to promote Nicodemus NHS to the general public.

Special Events

The annual Emancipation/ Homecoming Celebration, organized by the Nicodemus Township Board’s Nicodemus Homecoming Committee, is the primary special event that links to the history of Nicodemus. Beginning in 1878 the event was originally held on August 1 to celebrate the first date that slaves in the West Indies were emancipated. During the 1940s the Committee changed the event to the last weekend in July. Nicodemus descendants from across the nation are drawn to the celebration. Approximately 1000 people, descendants, friends, and the general public attend the three-day event that includes a parade featuring the Nicodemus Buffalo Soldiers, sport competitions, children’s activities, free pancake breakfast, food vendors, free health screenings, dances, fashion and talent shows, church services, and a gospel extravaganza.

The Nicodemus Historical Society sponsors history programs and special events including the annual Blues and Jazz Festival, the Christmas tree trimming party, and the Pioneer Day celebration. The Nicodemus Livery Company has also sponsored special events including the “African-American Cowboy Round-up”.

Other Programmatic Responsibilities Managed by Interpretation

The Nicodemus interpretive staff is responsible for the following: park website updates and maintenance (5% of staff time); WNPA bookstore management (15%); the three-times-per-year newsletter preparation (10%); maintenance and additions to resource files and library and research (20%); information requests (10%); emergency planning (10%); volunteer coordination and tracking (15%); and other responsibilities including collection and distribution of travel information; periodic janitorial and maintenance duties; book reviews; daily, monthly, and yearly visitor statistics; purchasing of interpretive-related materials and supplies; and property survey distribution and tracking (10%).



The annual Emancipation/ Homecoming Celebration features descendants of all ages.

Photo Credit: NPS Photo

Staffing

The park’s interpretive programs and staff include:

Position Title	Status	Grade	FTE
Park Ranger (Interp)	Permanent	GS-9	1.0
Park Guide	Permanent	GS-4	1.0
			Total FTEs: 2.0

During FY2008 and FY2009 summer one additional Centennial-funded STEP Park Guide has assisted with the day-to-day-activities at the Visitor Center. Having the assistance of the Park Guide allowed permanent staff time to develop educational materials and expand resource and library materials.

In 2006, Nicodemus converted a park ranger position to a park guide series position due to budget constraints at that time. Currently, the park can only operate interpretive and

educational programs marginally with one full-time park ranger and one full-time park guide. The park visitor center (i.e., currently the Township Hall) is open seven days a week, year-round, except for Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. If the park ranger or park guide is on leave or attends off-site training, other park employees, including the superintendent, must staff the visitor center. It is anticipated that position upgrades within the next two fiscal years will be seriously considered to allow the park greater flexibility in its interpretive services.

Partnerships

Partnerships provide the park with opportunities to reach and educate the public about the history and significance of Nicodemus. Meetings with partners presently occur individually and on an as-needed basis. In addition to residents and descendants, the park has established partnerships (informal or formal) with:

The Nicodemus Historical Society
The Historical Society was established in 1988 to solicit, collect, preserve, and interpret the history of Nicodemus. It was through their efforts that the site designation was accomplished. Its relationship with the park has been intimate from the early 1990s, with the park relying on the society for information, history and other resources. A cooperative agreement and two task agreements between the park and Historical Society have been signed and are in the implementation phase. The agreement will set the stage to define roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each organization regarding the collection and telling of the stories of Nicodemus.

Historic Nicodemus First Baptist Church Foundation, Inc. (owner of the historic First Baptist Church)
A Cooperative Agreement has facilitated the stabilization of the Old Church with NPS funds. Recently, the park has been asked to help with exploring alternative futures for the church and develop a strategy to restore it. Regarding interpretation, the 2003 General Management Plan calls for “no direct interpretation and only limited NPS influence” but it recommends an “essentially



Nicodemus First Baptist Church and congregation, 1949.

self-guided contextual and aesthetic experience of everyday life in Nicodemus.”

*Nicodemus Township Board
(a unit of Graham County
government, owner of the
Nicodemus Township Hall)*

The park will work in partnership with the Township (and others) to provide technical assistance and guidance for the design and siting of interpretive signs and wayfinding devices throughout the town. Until now, the relationship with the Township has been one primarily of landlord/tenant with the exception of recent preliminary discussions taken place to consider strategizing alternative visions for the future of the Town of Nicodemus.

*Nicodemus Homecoming
Committee*

Historically, the relationship between the Committee and the park has been one of operational issues--coordinating the rental of comfort stations, additional services, and coordinating and inviting guest speakers. But the Homecoming event offers great opportunities to link with the descendants and gather their stories for potential interpretation and to share the stories and projects that the park has prepared or been involved in.

*Solomon Valley Highway 24
Heritage Alliance*

The park is a member of the Alliance. The Alliance has an information board at the rest area in the Nicodemus Township Park. This organization works to promote heritage tourism in the area, as well as to research, preserve, and promote the history and resources of the Solomon Valley.

*Kansas Black Farmers Association
(Nicodemus Flour Co-op)*

This organization works to promote the activities of Black farmers across Kansas. Locally produced flour is packaged as pancake mix and sold at the visitor center as a “descendant-produced” product.

*Solomon Valley Resource and
Conservation Development Area
(SVRC&D)*

The park participates in regular meetings to remain updated on initiatives that may impact the park. SVRC&D supports the teff project in association with Gil Alexander and Gary Alexander, descendant farmers. Opportunities may exist for teff-based agri-tourism and the associated interpretive value such a program may offer, although no significant discussion on this subject has occurred recently. The park has made presentations on Nicodemus at annual meetings and assists with integrating tours of Nicodemus with events planned by the RC&D.

Graham County Historical Society

The Society is a repository for historic papers, photographs, archives, and objects from the Nicodemus community and descendants. The resource materials have been and will continue to be used to develop interpretive programs and services.

*Washburn University, Topeka,
Kansas, and Howard University,
Washington, D.C.*

Faculty and students from both universities have coordinated and led archeological digs in recent years near Nicodemus NHS. Products of their work are made available to the park for display in the visitor center.

The Nicodemus Group is a for profit educational company established in 1990, specializing in school educational programs and curriculum, with a primary focus on Nicodemus and the African American experience in the West.

The Nicodemus Livery Company was established in 1999 to provide for-profit townsite horse drawn tours and living history programs to tourists and visitors of historic Nicodemus.

The African American Experience Fund (an arm of the National Park Foundation) provided two grants: to develop a Nicodemus education trunk for use by local and regional schools and a grant to partially support the Archeological Field School of Howard and Washburn Universities.

*Southeast Nebraska Distance
Learning Consortium*

The consortium provided the distance learning equipment and offers links to Nebraska schools.

*American Legion Post No. 270
(owner of the Nicodemus District
No. 1 School)*

The park will discuss with the Legion its plans for the future of the school.

*Colorado Range Riders Youth
Corps (a public land corps
organization)*

Recently this group provided volunteer services to repaint the trim on the AME Church.

*Veryl Switzer (Owner of the St.
Francis Hotel)*

In FY2007-2008, with assistance from the NPS, stabilization of the hotel was completed.

Volunteers

The FY2008 NPS Volunteer-in-Parks report only identified 1 volunteer who donated 1 hour to Nicodemus National Historic Site. In FY 2009, an increase in volunteerism, due to the archeology field school projects, has resulted in approximately 350 hours of volunteer time to-date. Due to this relatively low level of activity, very limited funding is provided by the NPS annually to support the volunteer program.

Cooperating Association

Western National Parks Association (WNPA) is the cooperating association for the park. The WNPA bookstore sells books and Nicodemus-related items of interest. Book categories include children's books, slavery/reconstruction, the African American West, and National Parks. In addition, value-added products such as Ernestine's Bar-B-Que sauce, the Nicodemus Flour Co-op pancake mix and other Nicodemus related items

produced by descendants or local residents are sold and emphasized.

Annual sales for FY2008 were approximately \$1,400. Sales are low and do not reach the threshold for a percentage reimbursement from WNPA. Given the low sales, WNPA provides a small amount of funds to be used for store-related expenses.

A Scope of Sales will be drafted by the end of FY2009.



Photo Credit: NPS Photo

WNPA bookstore is located in the visitor center.

Part Two: Actions/ Recommendations

We're funny about [Nico]Demus. We're proud of what the people who came here did – just to survive. Demus is home to us all, even though now the kids head for the cities as soon as they're old enough to see this never has been or never will be anything more than a Kansas prairie town. But for us, its home.
Unknown woman quoted by “The Kansas City Times” in the mid-1960s

It is through ties that have bound generations together and kept them coming “home” that the life of Nicodemus has been sustained. It is hoped that National Historic Site status will further preserve this all-black pioneer town as well as go a long way toward ensuring a more culturally balanced National Park System.

Angela Bates, “New Promise for Nicodemus” National Parks, July/August 1992.



Ora Switzer and five generations of her family.

The Planning Process

In developing this Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) as part of the Comprehensive Interpretive Planning process, a series of workshops was conducted with NPS staff, descendants, local residents, and partners.

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) is the guiding document for planning and implementing visitor experiences, storytelling, and education at Nicodemus National Historic Site. It provides direction to park staff and partners for the next seven to ten years, although in many cases implementation of the plan continues for up to twenty years. This document follows the requirements of the National Park Service (NPS) as well as the realities of a small, rural Kansas farm community. The ultimate product will be cost-effective, tightly focused, and of high quality reflecting the standards of the NPS while showing great respect for the Nicodemus community.

The Project Agreement was signed in 2004. A Foundations workshop was held April 19-21, 2005 and a Recommendations workshop was held in November 29 – December 1, 2005. To provide opportunities for out-of-town descendants to have input during the planning process, open houses were held in Denver, Colorado October 25-26, 2005. Park staff, partners, regional NPS staff, and two media specialists from Harpers Ferry Center participated in the 2005 workshops. Due to changes in park management and

concerns raised by park partners, the project was put on hold in late 2007. The original planner accepted another position, and a new planner was assigned to the project in August 2008.

A confirmation workshop was held March 10-12, 2009. Thirty-two participants updated the interpretive themes and desired visitor experiences; identified the existing condition of interpretive services within Nicodemus; and developed recommendations for the next seven to ten years. Using a typical visit as a framework for the discussion, the participants all worked together to propose realistic and meaningful interpretive services. Lastly, the participants reviewed the recommendations, identified the priorities, and grouped the tasks into short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals. The participants included NPS staff, descendants, local residents and park partners.

To provide opportunities for out-of-town descendants and partners to participate in the planning effort, workshop notes were transcribed and posted on the park website

after the workshop each evening. From 7:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. on March 10 and 11, the Superintendent and Harpers Ferry Center planner were available via telephone conference line to review the progress on that day, answer questions, and receive comments. The comments received were then shared with the larger group the next day. If someone was unable to call in, he or she could still send an e-mail or contact the Superintendent on a later date with comments, questions, or suggestions.

Barring legislative changes or major new revelations, the foundational elements expressed in this LRIP – purpose, significance, themes, and visitor experience goals – will remain constant over the life of the plan. Specific recommendations about interpretive media and programs may need to be updated as staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. Further design documents must be produced to implement some of the goals and recommendations in this plan.



Thirty-two participants attended the March 2009 Long-Range Interpretive Plan confirmation workshop.

Photo Credit: NPS Photo

Goals for Interpretive Programming

After reviewing the contents of this LRIP's Part One, workshop participants described current and future "typical" visits to Nicodemus (Appendices B and C). Then they identified goals to enhance the effectiveness of the overall interpretive services within Nicodemus. These goals and associated actions are representative of many ideas and suggestions generated during the workshop. Action items are listed below each goal, and were used to create the Implementation Plan located in the next section of this document. Over the next 7 to 10 years Nicodemus National Historic Site and its partners will focus on the following goals:

Determine Scope of LRIP

Geographic Scope:
During the March 2009 workshop, the Superintendent and the participants determined that this Long-Range Interpretive Plan would include not only the five legislated properties, but all of Nicodemus Township including the town itself. Historic Homestead Land Claims, dugout locations, cemeteries, and other resources important to the story of Nicodemus are located within the township and will be included within the scope of this plan. The current and future "typical" visits to Nicodemus documented in Appendices B and C reflect this scope.

Participatory scope:
Additionally, the scope of this

plan is not confined to the National Park Service. Give the strong sense of ownership exhibited by the many descendants, organizations, and agencies that participated in this planning effort and the presence of nearly 1000 persons at the annual Homecoming Celebration, the scope of the implementation of this plan includes not only the national historic site, but also those organizations, agencies, and individuals that cherish the past, present, and future of this place called Nicodemus. All will be invited to participate in all annual planning meetings and processes, and contribute to the implementation of selected projects, if they so choose.

Those that do participate in the implementation of this plan need to recognize that it is the connection to family and kinship ties as well as geography that are important to the families of Nicodemus.

Improve Communication, Orientation, and Access to Information and Interpretation

No unified sign system exists to clearly identify Nicodemus farms, structures, and historic sites or provide information and clear directions to park sites. A Master Sign Plan needs to be created to unify the park, partners, and agencies within Nicodemus.

Communicating with the greater Nicodemus National Historic Site community about activities and events is an opportunity to create goodwill with local residents and descendants. Local agencies, organizations, and committees and the NPS will share information, to the extent possible, to improve communication and increase access to information about Nicodemus. It is also important that park identity be addressed



A unified sign system is recommended to provide consistent information and clear directions to Nicodemus sites.

Photo Credit: NPS Photo

comprehensively when working with the community to address the actual and thematic relationship between the park and descendants.

Local, state, and federal agencies and committees will work together to inform the people of Western Kansas about the importance and significance of Nicodemus. Methods will include: developing, printing, and providing rack cards to I-70 and I-80 visitor information centers and increasing communication and activities with the Kansas State Tourism Office; creating a package of Nicodemus-related materials and an activity “menu” for Tourism Offices and local merchants; and contacting other local associated sites.

An ever-increasing percentage of visitors are web users who visit Nicodemus National Historic Site (www.nps.gov/nico) seeking information. Many of these “virtual visitors” never actually come to the townsite, but have their needs met solely through the website. The website should highlight the opportunities and experiences that are available to both on-site visitors and virtual visitors. A Nicodemus “web team” will work together to connect all of the partners. Posting genealogical information online; establishing virtual tours of historic buildings and sites; videoconferencing through the distance learning portal; and providing opportunities for visitors to post their own Nicodemus stories will provide opportunities for local and global interaction. It should be noted that family genealogy is a personal, private subject with many Nicodemus descendants.

The web team will work closely with these individuals and groups to ensure that their privacy is respected and the information shared is approved for such use and complies with all laws regarding such actions.

Communication

- Improve communication within the greater Nicodemus National Historic Site community about activities and events (Theme 5):
 - Share addresses and phone numbers.
 - Create a newsletter or e-mail news.
 - Share feedback (e-mail, photos, and more) as it is received.

Orientation

- A master sign plan needs to be created to unify the park, partners and agencies within Nicodemus.
- Develop, print, and provide rack cards to I-70 and I-80 visitor information centers and Kansas State Tourism Office.
- Create a package of Nicodemus-related materials and an activity “menu” for Tourism Offices and local merchants.
- Contact other local associated sites to make them aware of what Nicodemus has to offer.
- Make the donation box more visible and attractive so that visitors are invited to donate to the park.

Website

- A Nicodemus “web team” will work together to connect all of the partners.
- Post genealogical information online, link to genealogy websites, and provide opportunities for genealogical research (Theme 5).
- Establish virtual tours of historic buildings and sites and groups on social networking sites such as Second Life, Facebook, and MySpace (Theme 1-4).
- Provide opportunities for visitors to post their own Nicodemus stories to increase opportunities for local and global interaction (Theme 5).

Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media

Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits tell the Nicodemus stories on location. They “caption the landscape” and help visitors make direct connections with resources and their meanings. Wayside exhibits provide round-the-clock information and interpretation, and with appealing high quality design, writing, and graphics, they can serve to instill and reinforce respect for important resources. In association with good graphics, waysides can show what a site looked like at different points in time. In addition, temporary waysides can be developed inexpensively to interpret construction and restoration/preservation projects. A wayside exhibit proposal is

recommended to ensure the development of a complete, high-quality, and unified system of waysides. The proposal will provide an in-depth assessment of all potential wayside exhibit sites. It includes both informational and interpretive exhibits. The document also can set priorities to guide wayside development in phases as funding allows. The proposal will describe the purpose of each wayside exhibit, identify graphics available for use, show thumbnail design concept drawings, and determine exact exhibit sizes, base styles, and locations. A detailed budget estimate would also be part of the document.

- Develop and implement a Nicodemus wayside exhibit plan that will include historic sites within the town and township (Theme 1-4).
- Develop a self-guided wayside-based walking tour (Theme 1-4).

Museum Exhibits

Exhibits provide both two- and three-dimensional displays of informational and/or interpretive material that may include text, maps, images, models, replicas, artifacts, or interactive components. Nicodemus National Historic Site and the Nicodemus Historical Society (NHS) have a spectrum of exhibits from professionally produced to in-house hand-made exhibits. Exhibit space is limited at both locations, however, it is extremely important for visitors to hear and read the stories of the people involved in the historic and contemporary community. Additional traveling and temporary exhibits are

needed and recommended for both the national historic site and the Nicodemus Historical Society. Visitors will learn about the national and regional perspectives at the NPS visitor center, and the settlers, descendents, and families at the Nicodemus Historical Society.

The exhibit currently located in the visitor center will be corrected and updated. Traveling and temporary exhibits will be used to reach out to visitors and connect people to Nicodemus. Examples such as temporary interactive exhibits of the United States census and comparing it to the present day census process, and a rotating exhibit schedule to offer a variety of displays through the year would engage the visitor with a variety of interpretive opportunities.

- Develop and install a temporary exhibit using the United States census that would engage the visitor at the NPS visitor center with a comparison of the 1890 census of Nicodemus and the 2010 census about to be undertaken. The visitor would start with a two-dimensional display and plat map; walk around town using the map and maybe a GPS unit to identify locations and families that participated in the census; and end at the NHS museum to hear the family's stories, and possibly see some family heirlooms and artifacts (Theme 2-3).
- Produce an exhibit on quilting in the NPS visitor center and allow visitors to add stitches to the Nicodemus quilt (Theme 3-4).

- Trace Nicodemus history chronologically through an exhibit at the Historical Society Museum featuring historical objects and furnishings (Theme 1-4).
- Correct and update the current exhibit on display in the visitor center (Theme 1, 2, 3).

Publications

Visitors typically use publications in two ways: for information and orientation during their visit, and for in-depth interpretation following their visit. Nicodemus' size, access issues, and number of stories to tell make publications an effective method of interpretive delivery. Publications are a means for getting information to diverse audiences through a variety of formats.

- Revise and print the current park unigrid brochure (Theme 1-5).
- Develop a park Publications Plan that would outline park needs for publications, their purposes, content, associated interpretive themes, and desired visitor experiences. Then evaluate publications annually in coordination with publications plan.
- Develop and print site bulletins on a variety of Nicodemus stories. Also post the site bulletins online (Theme 1-4).
- Add websites and e-mail addresses to brochures.
- Group subject matter site bulletins together.

- Develop and publish a self-guided driving tour of Nicodemus including historic sites within the town and township (Theme 1-4).
- Develop and publish a self-guided walking tour of Nicodemus including more than just the five historic structures (Theme 1-4).
- Reprint and sell the “Cyclone” newspaper (Theme 1-4).
- Develop and print a brochure detailing the chronological history of Nicodemus and features significant leaders and other influential citizens (Theme 1, 2, 3).

Audiovisual

Audiovisual media are well suited to the presentation of chronological and sequential material. They can capture realism, provide emotional impact, and create a mood or atmosphere. Also they can reach many visitors at one time and may be included in exhibits or posted onto the park website, in addition to being shown in dedicated auditorium spaces. Production of a park interpretive film will provide visitors with a broad but accurate story of the park, and organized around the five pillars. The film would focus on the historic and contemporary people of Nicodemus telling their own stories. There could also be a section related to the on-going path to civil rights and human rights that began with emancipation and continues today.

Audiovisual media can reach the many visitors who are now using



Recording the activities of Nicodemus teff farmers like Sharyn Dowdell and Gil Alexander will provide a better understanding of the challenges facing farmers in Nicodemus.

computers, cell phones, GPS units, iPods, MP3 players, and a variety of other technological systems for entertainment, information, orientation, and interpretation. In response to the growing demand for these services, Nicodemus needs to offer portable “individualized” audio and/or audio-visual opportunities. Using new technology will possibly create opportunities for a more diverse audience to experience park resources than ever before. These services will allow visitors to access more Nicodemus resources and meanings at their convenience.

In response to former NPS Director Mary Bomar’s memo of October 20, 2006 on the “Audiovisual Accessibility Initiative for Visitors with Disabilities,” staff should initiate steps to ensure that the historic site’s current and future audiovisual programs are meeting accessibility requirements.

For more information, see the website for *Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media* at <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/accessibility/access-guide-aug2009.pdf>. Audio provides intellectual access to visually impaired visitors and can be more effective for reaching visitors whose preferred learning style is auditory rather than visual. Audio descriptions could also be used to narrate the text of a wayside exhibit and describe the graphics seen on the panels as well as describe the surrounding view that prompted the need to tell the story.

- Produce a park interpretive film that will provide visitors with a broad but accurate story of the park, and organized around the five pillars. The film would focus on the historic and contemporary people of Nicodemus telling their own stories. There could also be

a section related to the on-going path to civil rights and human rights that began with emancipation and continues today (Theme 1-5).

- Produce a video that documents traditional activities (Theme 3).
- Develop an oral history project conducted by young descendants or students so they can learn about their heritage. Train students on best practices and professional standards to ensure high quality of recordings (Theme 1-5).
- Produce audio recordings and video recordings of first person accounts of Nicodemus experiences 1877 to today. Create audio- and video-casts of residents and descendants on location talking about a special part of Nicodemus. These recordings and vignettes can be posted online, used in exhibits, or incorporated in audio/cell tours (Theme 1-5).
- Produce an audio- or cell-phone tour of historic sites in the town and township including a driving tour to cemeteries, farmsteads, Mt. Olive, and more (Theme 1-5).
- Create a soundtrack that would play in the AME Church (Theme 1).

Periodic old time baseball game honors the men who played for the 1907 Nicodemus Blues.

Improve Personal Services

Interpreters are the best interactive tool in enabling visitors to experience, understand, appreciate, and make personal connections with the resource. The diversity of Nicodemus’ resources and themes presents almost limitless opportunities for both standard and innovative interpretive activities. As staffing levels permit, and in keeping within the parameters of the interpretive themes and visitor experience goals, docents, volunteers, and interpreters *throughout* Nicodemus should be given a high degree of creative freedom to explore and experiment with new programs. This will help to maintain a creative edge and attract new and returning audiences. NPS Centennial-funded seasonal employees should allow the park to increase the numbers of programs offered as well as diversify the programming.

The community is rich in oral tradition and first-person accounts. This information, along with that provided in a historic resource study that is being prepared, and the National Historic Landmark nomination could be useful in site interpretation.

There is great potential to experiment with the development of programs linking the historic buildings, town, cemeteries, farms, township, and dugouts. Guided walking, auto, wagon, van, and bus tours that provide context for Nicodemus and the experiences of the settlers are highly recommended. Since personal services and interpretive programs are relatively easy to change, activities should be evaluated on a regular basis to discontinue those that are not effective, modify or improve those that require it, and validate those that are successful.



Photo Credit: Kansas University Spencer Research Library/Nicodemus Collection

Demonstrations are also highly recommended as an interpretive service to provide visitors with the opportunity to best experience life in Nicodemus. Farming, building a dugout or soddie, canning, quilting, and gardening could be demonstrated by descendants, volunteers, and/or park staff.

Curriculum-based education programs and teacher resources will build upon the efforts of The Nicodemus Group. Multi-day Exploritas, formerly known as Elderhostel, courses and outdoor camps for urban youth will be developed. Increasing the number of distance learning programs will allow more students throughout the region, state, and country to learn about Nicodemus.

Special events, such as the Emancipation/Homecoming Celebration and the old time baseball game, will continue to be offered and new events will be added depending on available community support.

Programs

- Develop programs linking the historic buildings, town, cemeteries, farms, township, and dugouts (Theme 1-5).
- Provide guided walking, auto, wagon, van, and bus tours that provide context for Nicodemus and the experiences of the settlers (Theme 1-5).
- Offer a tour from Nicodemus from Ellis to understand the 35-mile “walk” that Nicodemus’ first settlers made (Theme 3).
- Offer a tour that emphasizes the impact that “Sundown” laws had on the community (Theme 2).
- Offer a tour of a farm owned and operated by a descendant focusing on the challenges endured by historic and contemporary Nicodemus farmers (Theme 3).

- Offer living history tours of the historic homes and businesses in Nicodemus (Theme 1, 3).
- Establish heritage tourism tours linking various ethnic-based sites such as Damar, Hays, Nicodemus, Cottonwood Ranch, and the Cathedral of the Plains (Theme 2).
- Continue to offer tours of the Kansas Black Farmer’s Association teff fields and mill (Theme 3).
- Have descendants, volunteers, and park staff demonstrate farming, building a dugout or soddie, canning, quilting, and gardening and allow visitors to participate (Theme 3).
- Explore the possibility of a National Register travel itinerary, linking Nicodemus National Historic Site with other Reconstruction-era communities, late 19th century homestead settlements on the Great Plains, or relevant African American resources that date to this period (Theme 2).



Photo Credit: NPS Photo

Tours offered during harvest season could focus on the challenges of historic and contemporary Nicodemus farmers.

Education

- Develop curriculum-based education programs and teacher resources that will build upon the efforts of The Nicodemus Group.
- Develop multi-day Exploritas, formerly known as Elderhostel, courses.
- Develop outdoor camps for urban youth.
- Develop and provide hands-on crafts and games for youth reflecting the history of Nicodemus (Theme 3).
- Expand distance learning opportunities to reach more students throughout the region, state, and country.



Fairview School class of 1915.



The former St. Francis Hotel, one of the five Nicodemus NHS historic structures, is currently owned by Veryl Switzer.

Special Events

- Establish “Friday Night in Nicodemus” and offer roller skating, “Dew Drop Inn”, and movies in the Township Hall (Theme 4).
- Organize an interpretive meal at a local restaurant (when restaurant exists as support facility).
- Offer overnight accommodations at the historic Nicodemus Switzer Hotel.
- Continue to hold Memorial Day, Martin Luther King Day, and Black History month remembrances (Theme 4).
- Continue to host a Buffalo Soldier re-enactment and encampment (Theme 3).

Expand Existing Partnerships

Interpretive partnerships play a key role in the delivery of essential programs and can also provide opportunities for enhanced interpretive products and services. Contact other formal and informal partner organizations to discuss how to best solidify the existing partnership or modify the partnership in response to current issues or opportunities.

The Western National Park Association (WNPA) bookstore/sales outlet needs review and renovation. New shelving and more efficient use of space will attract visitors and increase sales. The scope of sales needs to be reviewed to ensure that all of the park’s primary themes are being supported by the sales items

that are being offered. The sales items should provide an in-depth continuation of park stories and themes.

Establish a Nicodemus marketing team and developing a “Nicodemus-produced” campaign will promote a strong connection between the park and the local community. Develop interpretive exhibits using locally owned products and incorporate the exhibits into the sales area will create a strong thematic connection.

The *Volunteers-In-Parks* program could be enhanced with support from the Nicodemus Historical Society and other local committees and groups. Establishing a descendant skills or “talent” database and promoting volunteering opportunities will help all community groups, agencies, and organizations identify who from across the country might best be able to help work on a specific project or event. Recruiting, hiring, and training volunteers will benefit the entire community.

Many descendants and others are interested in volunteering; however, they do not know what opportunities are available. Setting up an online or newsletter “bulletin board” advertising volunteer opportunities would also help recruit volunteers.

Partners

- Continue to partner with Solomon Valley Heritage Alliance and emphasize the geographic and cultural context of Nicodemus.

- Send information about Nicodemus and extend invitations to visit to state and national organizations such as NAACP, Urban League, National Genealogy Organization, James Beckwourth Hiking Club, Hispanic groups, and Native American groups.

Cooperating Association

- Review and renovate the Western National Park Association (WNPA) bookstore/sales outlet.
- Review the scope of sales to ensure that all of the park’s primary themes are being supported by the sales items that are being offered. Consider genealogical resources on how to record your family stories and alternative histories such as *Lies My Teacher Told Me*.
- Establish a Nicodemus marketing team and develop a “Nicodemus-produced” campaign (Theme 4, 5).
- Expand sales of audio recordings including “Home to Nicodemus” which is currently only sold at the Nicodemus Historical Society. Record and create a CD of the First Baptist Church Choir sing music of Nicodemus. Sell a Williams Sisters CD (Theme 1, 3).
- Create interpretive exhibits using locally owned products and incorporate the exhibits into the sales area.

Volunteers

- Establish a descendant skill or “talent” database would help all community groups, agencies, and organizations recruit volunteers who might best be able to help work on a specific project or event.
- Set up an online or newsletter “bulletin board” advertising volunteer opportunities.
- Develop a volunteer plan.

Research and Evaluation Needs

In order to fully accomplish the actions included in this plan, the park needs to utilize the findings of the Historic Resource Study which will provide a focused framework for future Nicodemus-related research and evaluation of the research. The Historic Resource Study is scheduled to be completed in late 2010. Identification of needed interpretive services will arise as research progresses. Examples of needed research, pending the recommendations of the Historic Resources study, include:

- Oral histories.
- The Nicodemus Cyclone and Nicodemus Enterprise.
- Theses written on the community since the 1920s.
- All resources at the Spencer Research Library, Graham County Historical Society, Rooks County Historical

Society, and Nicodemus Historical Society.

- Settlement and land use patterns over time.
- The nature of enslavement in, and the connection to, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi.
- The history of the Emancipation/Homecoming Celebration.

Evaluation also is important in the development of specific media and programs and will be planned as part of all substantial media projects and special programming. Front-end evaluation will inform the project team about what visitors already know about the site before they come, what understandings they may have about the significance of the site, or how to fulfill the visitor's interest in visiting the site. This type of evaluative

study is targeted so that practical use can be made of the results. Formative evaluations allow the team to get feedback on project content before it is fabricated. Knowing how potential visitors react to stories and information or even how the message is displayed can inform and enhance the media product and the overall visitor experience. Summative evaluations are valuable in helping to determine the effectiveness of final media, facilities, and programs – i.e. whether the intended themes are being communicated, if people are actually making use of the information, or if visitor behavior is affected. Summative evaluation may even be a necessary follow-up for certain sources of funding such as foundation grants.

- Work with the Midwest Region Ethnography Program Office to conduct further analysis of the 2005 Visitor Survey Project.



The archeological field schools conduct research studies in and around Nicodemus.

Staffing and Training Needs

In FY2009 the park received a base funding increase to fund one or more unfunded positions, programs and/or operational improvements. The Core Operations process held in August 2009 analyzed the current and future needs and developed a strategy for action. A final report is anticipated by early 2010. Near-term actions will focus upon bringing trained discipline-specific leadership to Administration, Facilities, and Interpretation. With the addition of these positions, not only will park staff be offered opportunities for improved professional experiences, but that those experiences will be shared with the community to enhance their knowledge and skills base as well.

Additionally it should be recognized that the transfer of knowledge and skills is not a one-way street. The community, with its unique cultural perspective, offers great opportunities for

park staff, visiting researchers, and interested park visitors to become better informed, aware, and receptive toward the importance of the cultural sensitivities of the community. An “Orientation to Nicodemus” presented by the Nicodemus Historical Society would ensure that research and information sharing is not done in a vacuum or in an insensitive manner but rather in a manner that is fully respectful of the community and what it values.

Permanent Staff

- Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management and a Park Ranger position will be targeted through future base funding requests.

Volunteers

- Determine how this program will be different and/or gain support from other local volunteer organizations.
- Expand parkwide pool of interpretive volunteers.

Training

- Provide interpretive training.
- Provide resource-specific training.
- Agencies and organizations should co-sponsor training.
- Provide visitor services training.
- Training should be open to all within the Nicodemus community.
- Provide distance learning education training.
- Nicodemus Historical Society will develop and present an “Orientation to Nicodemus” to all new park employees and researchers.

Partnerships

- Roles and responsibilities of Nicodemus National Historic Site and Nicodemus Historical Society are outlined in a Cooperative Agreement (see Appendix A)

Implementation Plan

During the 2009 workshop, the participants agreed to divide the actions necessary to implement the recommendations into annual, short-term (1-3 years), mid-term (4-6 years), and long-term (7-10 years) goals. Some actions will be undertaken immediately and others will be on-going. Appendices E, F, and G are charted versions of these goals and actions and will be used during the annual work planning meetings.

It is important to note that this plan, while technically written as a guide for the National Park Service at Nicodemus, is intended as a guide for all who cherish and want the best for the future of Nicodemus. Organizations, agencies, and individuals all contributed to the development of this plan and undoubtedly have a stake in the successful implementation of this plan. It is the intention of Nicodemus National Historic Site to work with these partners to implement this plan as time and funding allows of each participating organization.

It should be noted that with the preparation of each Annual Work Plan, new opportunities may arise and must be incorporated into this Long-Range Interpretive Plan by means of addenda with consensus approval by all participating partners.

Annually

Improve communication within the greater Nicodemus National Historic Site community about activities and events:

- Share addresses and phone numbers.

- Create a newsletter or e-mail news.
- Share feedback (e-mail, photos, and more) as it is received.
- Add websites and e-mail addresses to brochures.

Post genealogical information online, link to genealogy websites, and provide opportunities for genealogical research.

Continue to hold Memorial Day, Martin Luther King Day, and Black History month remembrances.

Update the implementation plan.

1-3 Years

Improve Communication, Marketing, Orientation, and Access to Information and Interpretation Orientation

- Create a master sign plan to unify the park, partners and agencies within Nicodemus.
- Develop, print, and provide rack cards to I-70 and I-80 visitor information centers and Kansas State Tourism Office.
- Contact other local associated sites to make them aware of what Nicodemus has to offer.
- Establish a Nicodemus “web team” connecting all of the partners.
- Provide opportunities for visitors to post their own Nicodemus stories will provide opportunities for

local and global interaction.

- Make the donation box more visible and attractive so that visitors are invited to donate to the park.
- Develop and implement a “Take Pride in Nicodemus” public relations campaign.

Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media

- Develop an oral history project conducted by young descendants or students so they can learn about their heritage.
- Develop and print site bulletins on a variety of Nicodemus stories. Also post the site bulletins online.
- Develop and install a temporary exhibit using the United States census that would engage the visitor at the NPS visitor center with a comparison of the 1890 census of Nicodemus and the 2010 census about to be undertaken. The visitor would start with a two-dimensional display and Platt map; walk around town using the map and maybe a GPS unit to identify locations and families that participated in the census; and end at the NHS museum to hear the family’s stories, and possibly see some family heirlooms and artifacts.
- Develop a Nicodemus wayside exhibit plan that will include historic sites within the town and township.

Improve Personal Services

- Establish “Friday Night in Nicodemus” and offer roller skating, “Dew Drop Inn”, and movies in the Township Hall.
- Provide guided walking, auto, wagon, van, and bus tours that provide context for Nicodemus and the experiences of the settlers.
- Develop and publish a self-guided walking tour of Nicodemus including more than just the five historic structures.
- Develop curriculum-based education programs and teacher resources that will build upon the efforts of The Nicodemus Group.
- Contact Exploritas, formerly known as Elderhostel, about offering multi-day courses on Nicodemus.
- Develop outdoor camps for urban youth.
- Develop and provide hands-on crafts and games for youth reflecting the history of Nicodemus.

Expand Existing Partnerships

- Review and renovate the Western National Park Association (WNPA) bookstore/sales outlet.
- Establish a Nicodemus marketing team and develop a “Nicodemus-produced” campaign.
- Expand sales of audio recordings including “Home

to Nicodemus” which is currently only sold at the Nicodemus Historical Society. Record and create a CD of the First Missionary Baptist Church Choir singing music of Nicodemus. Sell a Williams Sisters CD.

- Establish a descendant skill or “talent” database would help all community groups, agencies, and organizations recruit volunteers who might best be able to help work on a specific project or event.
- Set up an online newsletter or “bulletin board” advertising volunteer opportunities.

4-6 YearsUpgrade and Improve Interpretive Media

- Produce a park interpretation film that will provide visitors with a broad but accurate story of the park, and organized around the five pillars. The film would focus on the historic and contemporary people of Nicodemus telling their own stories. There could also be a section related to the on-going path to civil rights and human rights that began with emancipation and continues today.
- Produce a video that documents traditional activities.
- Produce audio recordings and video recordings of first person accounts of Nicodemus experiences 1877 to today. Create audio- and video-casts of residents and descendants on location

talking about a special part of Nicodemus. These recordings and vignettes can be posted online, used in exhibits, or incorporated in audio/cell tours.

- Produce an audio- or cell-phone tour of historic sites in the town and township including a driving tour to cemeteries, farmsteads, Mt. Olive, and more.
- Fabricate and install Nicodemus wayside exhibits.
- Develop a self-guided wayside-based walking tour.

Improve Communication, Marketing, Orientation, and Access to Information and Interpretation

- Create a package of Nicodemus-related materials and an activity “menu” for Tourism Offices and local merchants.

Improve Personal Services

- Develop Exploritas, formerly known as Elderhostel, multi-day courses on Nicodemus.

7-10 YearsImprove Personal Services

- Create an activity “menu” for Tourism Offices and local merchants that will include expanded program opportunities including:
 - Programs linking the historic buildings, town, cemeteries, farms, township, and dugouts.
 - Tour from Nicodemus from Ellis to understand the 35-mile “walk” that

- Nicodemus' first settlers made.
- Tour that emphasizes the impact that "Sundown" laws had on the community.
- Tour of a farm owned and operated by a descendant focusing on the challenges endured by historic and contemporary Nicodemus farmers.
- Living history tours of the historic homes and businesses in Nicodemus.
- Heritage tourism tours linking various ethnic-based sites such as Damar, Hays, Nicodemus, Cottonwood Ranch, and the Cathedral of the Plains.
- Tour of the Kansas Black Farmer's Association teff fields and mill.
- Farming, building a dugout or soddie, canning, quilting, and gardening demonstrations.
- Present Exploritas, formerly known as Elderhostel, multi-day courses on Nicodemus.

Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media

- Produce an exhibit on quilting in the NPS visitor center and allow visitors to add stitches to the Nicodemus quilt.
- Trace Nicodemus history chronologically through an exhibit at the Historical Society Museum featuring historical objects and furnishings.
- Develop and publish a self-guided driving tour of Nicodemus including historic sites within the town and township.
- Reprint and sell the "Cyclone" newspaper.
- Develop and print a brochure detailing the chronological history of Nicodemus and features significant leaders and other influential citizens.
- Establish virtual tours of historic buildings and sites and groups on social networking sites such as Second Life, Facebook, and MySpace.

Planning Team

National Park Service

Nicodemus National Historic Site

Mark Weaver	Superintendent
Robert Brogden	Maintenance Worker
Betsy Crawford-Gore	Administrative Technician (transferred)
Phyllis Howard	Park Ranger
Michelle Huff	Park Guide
Reggie Murray	Park Ranger (transferred)
Sherda Williams	Superintendent (transferred)
Annette White	Administrative Technician

Midwest Regional Office

Tom Richter	Chief of Interpretation and Education
Roberta Wendel	Interpretive Media Specialist

Harpers Ferry Center

Toni Dufficy	Interpretive Planner
Katherine Brock	Interpretive Planner (transferred)
Ron Roos	Visual Information Specialist, retired
David T. Gilbert	Web Manager (transferred)

Fort Larned National Historical Site

William Chapman	Facility Manager
Kevin McMurry	Superintendent
Felix Revello	Chief Ranger, retired

Niobrara National Scenic River

Sandi Kinzer	Chief of Interpretation and Education
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Descendants

Alvena Alexander	Entrepreneur
Carol Alexander	Investor
Gillian Alexander III	Business Educator
Deb Alexander-Wilson	Consultant
	Writer/Photographer
	Scholar
Angela Bates	Executive Director, Nicodemus Historical Society
	Historian and Author
	CEO, The Nicodemus Group
	Owner/Operator, Nicodemus Livery Company
Bernard Bates	Township Trustee
Bertha Carter	Clerk, Nicodemus First Missionary Baptist Church
Sharyn Dowdell	President, Nicodemus Flour Co-op
	Secretary, Kansas Black Farmers Association
	Coordinator, Nicodemus Homecoming

JohnElla Holmes

Director, Nicodemus Educational Camps
Instructor, Kansas State University

Florence Howard

Amos Jackson

Jackie Jackson

Dennis Moore

Donald Moore

Rosa Stokes

Teresa Switzer

Veryl A. Switzer

Kim Thomas

Board Member, Nicodemus Historical Society

Board Member, Nicodemus Historical Society

Former Mayor of Stockton, Kansas

Board Member, Nicodemus Historical Society

President, Nicodemus Historical Society

Trustee, Nicodemus First Missionary Baptist Church

Officer, American Legion Post No. 270

Member, Kansas Black Farmers Association

Thomas H. Wellington II

Rosetta P. White

Descendants and Friends who attended the Open House Meetings in Denver, CO

Park Partners

Cass Bruton

Professional Writer

Publicist

Betty Elliott

Land Title Business, retired

Graham County Historical Society

James Manuel

Pastor, Nicodemus First Missionary Baptist Church

Regina Nicol

Finance and Visitor Services Manager, Kansas Travel and Tourism

Joan Nothern

President, Solomon Valley-Hwy 24 Heritage Alliance

Leo Oliva

Historian

Chris Petty

Graham County Extension Agent, K-State Research and Extension

Don Rowlinson

Manager, Cottonwood Ranch State Historic Site

Chick Selbe

Plainville, Kansas

John Ruder

Commissioner, Rooks County



The March 2009 workshop brought together NPS staff, descendants, and partners.

Appendix A: NICO-NHS Cooperative Agreement

(paraphrased from Agreement No. H6345-09-0012)

Overall purpose:

- To increase understanding and appreciation for the people, places and organizations that contributed materially to the creation and continued existence of Nicodemus as the only remaining western town established by African-Americans during the Reconstruction period following the Civil War.
- To assist the Service in the preservation of related resources and in the interpretation of Nicodemus for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations.

During the course of this agreement:

- The parties agree to share resources, information, and expertise to enhance the ability of the parties to interpret Nicodemus, Kansas.

Specific objectives of this agreement:

The parties will collaborate to achieve a program that includes the following:

The Service will:

- Provide funding and other assistance via associated Task Agreements as shown below in Article VI, Federal Assistance.
- Be substantially involved in management and execution of the project, as described in Article IV below.

The Society, in collaboration with the Service, will:

- Plan, coordinate, implement and archive the audio and/or videotaping of Nicodemus descendants and others.
- Contribute to the historical record through genealogy research.
- Increase the accessibility of the Society Museum collection.
- Develop educational programming.
- The Society will promptly notify in writing the NPS Contracting Officer should any conditions occur that will materially affect the attainment of project objectives, or meeting of planned timetables or preclude the completion of approved work; or the need for adjustment to the budget.
- The Society will permit substantial involvement of the Service in the management and execution of the project.
- The Society will provide human resources (i.e. volunteers, partners, or staff) to manage and carry out functions associated with the project(s) for each fiscal year under this agreement.

The Service will be substantially involved through collaboration and participation in management and execution of the project, as follows:

- The Service will review and monitor the objectives of the Society programs under this agreement to ensure that such programs meet NPS standards, policies, and guidelines, and if discrepancies occur, outline necessary corrections. The NPS will review objectives of this agreement every six months and meet monthly to review project status.

- The Service will provide oversight, monitoring, direction and assistance to the Society in the development of interpretive and curriculum materials and the cataloging of all objects, written materials and photographs. The Society and the Service will share their interpretive and curriculum materials to ensure non-duplication of effort.
- The Service will assist the Society in the selection of contractors to discharge the Society's responsibilities under this agreement.
- The Service will assist the Society in the selection of personnel to discharge the Society's responsibilities under this agreement. The Superintendent will be a member of any group designated to interview potential Society employees under this agreement.
- The Service will provide financial assistance for work mutually agreed to and performed as part of this agreement.

Appendix B: A Typical Visit to Nicodemus Today

A typical visit to Nicodemus in 2009 includes the following choices:

Virtual Visit

- Use Nicodemus National Historic Site website to obtain basic information.
- Use Nicodemus Historical Society website to obtain basic information.
- Use Nicodemuskansas.com website to obtain basic information.

Arrival and Orientation

- Use directional signs and distances located on Interstate 70 and State Highway 24 to get to Nicodemus.
- Use a Solomon Valley – Highway 24 Heritage Alliance map and brochure that shows where Nicodemus is in relationship to other local towns.

Quick Trip - less than 30 minutes

Do any or all of the following:

- Stop at the Roadside Park, read the historical markers, and use the restroom.
- Go to the Nicodemus NHS Visitor Center in Township Hall. Receive a friendly welcome and orientation to Nicodemus.
- Look at the exhibit.
- Watch the three short videos.
- Get a passport stamp.
- Purchase books, locally-produced crafts, food, and other Nicodemus-related sales items.

1-2 hours

Begin with Quick Trip options and add any one of the following:

- Visit Nicodemus Historical Society (NHS) museum.
- Read oral histories, newspapers, and publications at NHS.
- Request an NPS walking tour of the town.
- Walk to each of the five historic town sites using the self-guiding brochure.
- Have a picnic and relax at the Roadside Park.

2 – 4 hours

Begin with 1-2 hour experience and add any one of the following:

- Request a tour of the Kansas Black Farmers Association teff fields and mill.
- Request a Nicodemus Livery Company wagon tour of Nicodemus town site narrated by a resident or descendent.
- Conduct genealogical research at NHS.
- Request a Nicodemus Group education- or history-specific tour of Nicodemus town and township.
- Request a Nicodemus Group trip out to the Nicodemus, Mt. Olive, and/or Samuels cemeteries, visit some old settlers' graves, and hear their stories.

After Visiting

- Receive an NPS newsletter or NHS e-mail to stay connected.

Special Events

- Attend Pioneer Day in October.
- Attend the Nicodemus Blues and Jazz Festival in June.
- Attend the Emancipation Celebration including the Circle of Women in July.
- Attend the old time baseball games in the summer.
- Attend the Christmas Tree Trimming Party in December.

Appendix C: A Typical, Future Visit to Nicodemus

By 2020, a typical visit to Nicodemus may include the following choices:

Virtual Visit

- Find more detailed information on the Nicodemus National Historic Site website.
- Find more detailed information on the Nicodemus Historical Society website.
- Find more detailed information on the Nicodemus website.
- Take virtual tours of historic buildings and sites.
- Connect to Nicodemus through social networking sites such as Second Life, Facebook, and MySpace.
- Link to Nicodemus genealogy websites.
- Access a website feature where people can post their own stories about Nicodemus. A companion feature would also be set up where people can discuss the meanings and significance of Nicodemus.
- Read online site bulletins including a chronological history of Greater Nicodemus and features on significant leaders and other personalities.
- Use online teacher resources to incorporate Nicodemus into the classroom.
- Download audio recordings and video recordings of first person accounts of Nicodemus experiences 1877 to today.
- Download audio- and video-casts of residents and descendants on location talking about a special part of Nicodemus.

Arrival and Orientation

- Use improved and consistent directional signs and distances located on Interstate 70, Interstate 80, and State Highway 24 to get to Nicodemus.
- Use a Solomon Valley – Highway 24 Heritage Alliance map and brochure that shows where Nicodemus is in relationship to other local towns.
- Obtain Nicodemus rack cards at I-70 and I-80 visitor information centers.

Quick Trip - less than 30 minutes

Do any or all of the following:

- Stop at the Roadside Park, read the historical markers, and use the restroom.
- Go to the Nicodemus NHS Visitor Center in Township Hall. Receive a friendly welcome and orientation to Nicodemus. Meet and speak with Nicodemus residents or descendants who are staffing the information desk.
- Look at the exhibit.

- Watch the new park interpretive film.
- Get a passport stamp.
- Purchase books, locally-produced crafts, food, and other Nicodemus-related sales items from an updated and diversified Western National Parks Association sales area.
- Add stitches to a Nicodemus quilt located in the visitor center.
- Watch a film that would feature descendants and residents of Nicodemus sharing their stories.
- Obtain Nicodemus-related brochures that include website and email addresses.

1-2 hours

Begin with Quick Trip options and add any of the following:

- Visit Nicodemus Historical Society (NHS) museum.
- Read oral histories, newspapers, and publications at NHS.
- Request an NPS walking tour of the town.
- Walk to each of the five historic town sites using the self-guiding brochure.
- Have a picnic and relax at the Roadside Park.
- Trace Nicodemus history chronologically through an exhibit at the Historical Society Museum featuring historical objects and furnishings.
- Take a self-guided driving tour of Nicodemus including historic sites within the town and township.
- Watch a video that documents traditional activities.
- Take a self-guided wayside-based walking tour of Nicodemus.
- Using a brochure, take a self-guided walking tour of Nicodemus including more than just the five historic structures.
- Participate in curriculum-based education programs.
- Participate in hands-on crafts and games for youth reflecting the history of Nicodemus.
- Use AME church as a place of reflection while listening to soft sound track of music and personal stories of inspiration.

2 – 4 hours

Begin with 1-2 hour experience and add any of the following:

- Request a tour of the Kansas Black Farmers Association teff fields and mill.
- Request a Nicodemus Livery Company wagon tour of Nicodemus town site narrated by a resident or descendent.

- Conduct genealogical research at NHS.
- Request a Nicodemus Group education- or history-specific tour of Nicodemus town and township.
- Request a Nicodemus Group trip out to the Nicodemus, Mt. Olive, and/or Samuels cemeteries, visit some old settlers' graves, and hear their stories.
- Take an audio- or cell-phone tour of historic sites in the town and township including a driving tour to cemeteries, farmsteads, Mt. Olive, and more.
- Attend "Friday Night in Nicodemus" and offer roller skating, "Dew Drop Inn", and movies in the Township Hall.
- Have an interpretive meal at a local restaurant.
- Attend a teacher workshop.

4 – 6 hours - Spend a full day in Nicodemus.

Begin with 2-4 hour experience and add any of the following:

- Attend an outdoor camp.
- Arrive in the evening, have supper, stay overnight at the St. Francis/Switzer Hotel. and take a tour the next morning.
- Participate in Exploritas multi-day courses.
- Attend programs linking the historic buildings, town, cemeteries, farms, township, and dugouts.
- Take a tour from Nicodemus from Ellis to understand the 35-mile "walk" that Nicodemus' first settlers made.
- Take a tour that emphasizes the impact that "Sundown" laws had on the community.
- Take a tour of a farm owned and operated by a descendant focusing on the challenges endured by historic and contemporary Nicodemus farmers.
- Take living history tours of the historic homes and businesses in Nicodemus.
- Take a heritage tourism tour linking various ethnic-based sites such as Damar, Hays, Nicodemus, Cottonwood Ranch, and the Cathedral of the Plains.
- Observe and participate in farming, building a dugout or soddie, canning, quilting, and gardening demonstrations.

After Visiting

- Receive an NPS newsletter or NHS e-mail to stay connected.
- Sign up to be part of a Nicodemus mailing list to receive information about events, volunteering, fundraising, and more.

- Purchase Nicodemus-produced products online.
- Share what was discovered during a visit to Nicodemus online including written descriptions and photos.

Special Events

- Attend Pioneer Day in October.
- Attend the Nicodemus Blues and Jazz Festival in June.
- Attend the Emancipation Celebration including the Circle of Women in July.
- Attend the old time baseball games in the summer.
- Attend the Christmas Tree Trimming Party in December.
- Attend a cultural skills weekend to learn about cooking, canning, quilting, farming methods, and more.
- Attend a Buffalo Soldier demonstration and re-enactment.
- Attend more events associated with national holidays: Martin Luther King Birthday, 4th of July, Veterans Day, and Memorial Day.

Appendix D: Nicodemus National Historic Site Interpretive Themes

Theme	Stories included in the theme	People, meanings, concepts	Sites related to theme
<p>The Five Pillars</p> <p><i>Nicodemus arose from the efforts of an organized group of African Americans who wanted to create a supportive, viable, African American community, relying on the values of home life, education, religion, hard work and the social, religious, and political organizations that grew out of a tradition of mutual assistance.</i></p>	<p>The rural environment of Nicodemus differed from Topeka or other large cities.</p> <p>Who were the community leaders? Did religion tie people together?</p> <p>What land records remain which can identify or describe the original settlers and their parcels of land?</p> <p>What was the role of Nicodemus Township within the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To secure homesteads. • Rules of living in a town. • Economic center for many towns and new residents in area. <p>How Nicodemus Township promoted compared to Hill City, Stockton, and other nearby towns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On or prior to 1886. • Before and during the railroad era. • Newspapers used to promote town boom during railroad. • Effects of railroad promoting town creating (Bogue) and its affect on growth/decline. • Nicodemus Name/Song on flyers. <p>Identify the planning of Nicodemus Township and its complexities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near waterways 	<p>Abram Hall & E.B. McKay – business-minded people who came to help Nicodemus Township residents and eventually stayed and led the county.</p> <p>Zachary and Jenny Fletcher, postmasters.</p> <p>Rev. Daniel Hickman.</p> <p>The original homesteaders in Nicodemus and Nicodemus Township.</p> <p>Mutual Assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benevolent societies. • Masonic Lodge and its role in Nicodemus. • How residents helped each other. <p>The churches roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoky Hill district of 1st Missionary Baptist Church had a connection with other churches. • Role of the church 	<p>AME Church</p> <p>First Baptist Church</p> <p>Nicodemus Township and Township site</p>

Appendix D: Nicodemus National Historic Site Interpretive Themes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Township Exemption Act • Nicodemus was typical • Platted like other Midwestern towns in the 1870s. • All black township. • organized group settlement versus Exodusters. <p>When Nicodemus began the Church was a stable force in the community.</p> <p>The five historic buildings represent the mission of the five pillars of strength.</p> <p>School played a major role in communities due to their previous plights</p> <p>Leaving town site to settle on homestead claims.</p>	<p>and ministers in Kentucky in the promotion of the town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did early churches get started? • African Methodist Episcopal. • First Baptist Church (originated as the Mt. Olive First Baptist Church). • Georgetown First Baptist Church. • Churches in Fayette Co., Scott Co. Burbon Co. Mercer Co, KY. <p>Ministers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of ministers. <p>Township schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers. <p>All town organizers.</p> <p>Dry community/no saloons.</p> <p>Social activities in town and on weekend (dance</p>	
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Appendix D: Nicodemus National Historic Site Interpretive Themes

		<p>hall).</p> <p>Townsite selection (Solomon River).</p> <p>Migration groups, routes and transportation.</p> <p>Connections with black towns (Boley) and surrounding communities (Speed, Hodgeman Colony, Logan Co.).</p> <p>Slavery experience in Kentucky versus other southern states.</p> <p>Military settlers and descendants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil War veterans. • Buffalo Soldiers. • Equine experience. • Cowboys (Moses Dabney). <p>Fraternal organizations.</p> <p>Business/entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Attorneys were decision makers.</p>	
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Appendix D: Nicodemus National Historic Site Interpretive Themes

<p>Move Toward Civil Rights</p> <p><i>The settlement of Nicodemus represents a determination to escape rampant racism; the loss of federal support and protection for African American citizens in the South at the end of Reconstruction allowed and encouraged an increase in institutional racism, social injustice and violence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sundowner towns are an example of more subtle racism & injustice in Kansas (still in 1950s) • Nicodemus as success in achieving civil rights and exercising self-determination • Throughout its history, Nicodemus had militia for common defense-part of self-government/determination. • Being a “dry” town, and shared religion and values seemed to make Nicodemus a peaceful community, not a “Wild West” atmosphere. • Even though Nicodemus was settled more than 100 year ago, the community still is involved in an ongoing civil rights struggle. • African-American towns continued to be established even while there was intolerance and injustice towards black Americans. • Plight of black farmer and the influences and barriers to success. • Nicodemus as “incubator” for other African-American communities. • Residents were timid to exercise lawful rights due to exclusion and discrimination. • Judicial, legislative, and education barriers to overcome “institutionalized marginalization.” • Hill-Smith partnership to establish Nicodemus in the face of inequity. 	<p>Suffrage: Right to vote. Right to assemble.</p> <p>Abraham Hall and other leaders.</p> <p>Homestead Act and American Dream of land ownership.</p> <p>Homestead Act Union vets</p> <p>Any Nicodemus vets for relevance- Lula’s article at GCHS</p> <p>Nicodemus and early civil rights legislation: McCabe as legislator and political catalyst with start in Nicodemus</p> <p>What are these ties? More research needed?</p> <p>Housing/lending discrimination</p> <p>“Sins of Omission”: of information, assistance, and more for landowners and farmers.</p> <p>Organizing township (first west of Mississippi).</p>	<p>Nicodemus Township</p> <p>Graham County</p>
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Appendix D: Nicodemus National Historic Site Interpretive Themes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicodemus was seen as a solution to “African-American problem”. • Kansas as the focal point of the Homestead Act. • Jim Crow laws, racism, and its impact on the community. • How did the Trans-continental Railroad’s decision to locate the route of the railroad outside of Nicodemus impact the economy and community, and its ability to flourish? • Exemptions to farm and live on the land were granted to settlers. • Development of African-American towns (all black towns) in the United States and their significance: • Identify the large number of original African - American communities in Kansas. • How does Boley, Oklahoma directly link to Nicodemus, KS? • The history of Bill Pickett and 40 historically African American towns in Oklahoma parallels Nicodemus. 	<p>Political influence.</p>	
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Appendix D: Nicodemus National Historic Site Interpretive Themes

<p>Struggle for Community</p> <p><i>The continuous occupancy of Nicodemus, Kansas, portrays African American perseverance and the struggle of African American emigrants as they journeyed West into an unknown and often difficult physical environment to participate in the American Dream.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the droughts of the 1880s and 1930s affect farms and families in Nicodemus? • Identify trials and tribulations of ancestors • How agriculture shape the culture and community? • The impact of out-migration: the struggle to continue to be a community. • When supplies ran out Nicodemus solicited support and supplies from Eastern Kansas cities. • Three out of five families attempted and did not survive homesteading. • How did the town of Nicodemus survive? • How did residents form a militia to stop livestock rustling? • How did speculators control and affect Nicodemus? Rural Kansas? • Nicodemus has been continuously occupied since its founding as a town. • Nicodemus is the first and is one of the last historically African American towns remaining. • How has the town of Nicodemus continued to exist? • What is an African-American family experience? • Large families hired themselves out and worked toward the betterment of the town. 	<p>Settled west of Nicodemus along a belt to Hill City</p> <p>Emigrants started with nothing</p> <p>Found new food sources</p> <p>Foraged for wild lettuces, onions, and tomatoes</p> <p>Hunted wild game, jack rabbits, deer, turtles</p> <p>Lived in dugouts and built soddies</p> <p>Envisioned government</p> <p>In 1880, 4 out of 5 farmers went out of business: WPA & CCC</p> <p>America helping Nicodemus</p> <p>Built Town Halls across Kansas</p> <p>What other projects were built here besides Town Hall?</p> <p>Nicodemus residents moved from CCC project to CCC project</p> <p>The Great American Desert, when American Indians were pushed out of the West it was called this. When it was opened for settlement it was called</p>
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Appendix D: Nicodemus National Historic Site Interpretive Themes

	<p>something else.</p> <p>No establishment of modern transportation system.</p> <p>Had to travel great distances -Ellis was 35 miles away, men walked to get the mail and 10 pound bags of potatoes and sugar</p> <p>Settlers were skilled farmers</p> <p>How homes are/were built: Recycling of buildings</p> <p>Survival vs. coping.</p> <p>Formation of benevolent societies.</p>	
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Appendix D: Nicodemus National Historic Site Interpretive Themes

<p>Traditions, Culture, and Community</p> <p><i>The annual Emancipation Celebration began in 1878 and continues today as the Homecoming Celebration. It is an African American traditional celebration that fosters the renewal of family and communities with the physical place of Nicodemus and with its residents, offsite descendants, and the African American community at large.</i></p>	<p>The tradition of the Homecoming Celebration.</p> <p>The significance of the date, August 1.</p> <p>What does Homecoming represent to Nicodemus and others?</p> <p>How are the celebrations different and similar?</p> <p>What are the traditions and gatherings? What have been the challenges?</p> <p>Family and community working together: fellowship.</p> <p>How Homecoming is tied to the end of slavery.</p> <p>Experiencing and celebrating freedom.</p> <p>How the celebration was linked to the harvest.</p>	<p>Emancipation Proclamation Juneteenth Colored People's Fair</p> <p>Nicodemus Homecoming Committee</p> <p>Values: Tradition Rehabilitation Education Knowledge Oral histories Farming Reunions Spiritual Religion Friendship Family Helping others Freedom Emigration Expression Voting rights Jim Crow Trade/commerce Politics</p> <p>Sharing resources: Canning Quilts Gardening Food, butchered baked goods</p>	<p>Scruggs Grove Township Hall</p>
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Appendix D: Nicodemus National Historic Site Interpretive Themes

		<p>Crops and harvest</p> <p>Economics: Money-bartering Kansas forum Farmers market Business ideas Merchants network Human capital</p> <p>Sports: baseball pro-leagues boxers horse racing horseshoes football</p> <p>Entertainment: music dance fashion show forum-speakers</p> <p>Economic impact of descendants and non- descendants</p> <p>Vendors: producers and consumers</p> <p>Transportation/tours: charter buses from Denver, Kansas City, Missouri, Sacramento, Los Angeles</p>	
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Appendix D: Nicodemus National Historic Site Interpretive Themes

<p>Still Connected</p> <p><i>Nicodemus represents far more than a physical place with historical significance. It serves as a focal point for all people to renew spiritual and emotional connections to family, community, and ancestors through this African American experience.</i></p>	<p>Homecoming is a way for community to come together to share and sell produce, talents, and more.</p> <p>Homecoming renews family connections and shares family stories.</p> <p>Connections can be made to all people.</p> <p>How is history shared today?</p> <p>Special events and reunions connect children to the site.</p> <p>Descendant stories of how they have moved to and from Nicodemus.</p> <p>Families may live far away and yet are still connected to Nicodemus.</p> <p>Sharing between communities within and outside of Kansas.</p> <p>Sense of pride and respect for ancestors, family, and community.</p>	<p>Telling stories</p> <p>“Nicodemus West” group meetings</p> <p>The youth of Nicodemus and their future</p> <p>Descendents as ambassadors representing Nicodemus</p>	
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Appendix E: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Short-term (1-3 Years) Goals

Type of Visit: Virtual Visit			
Goal: Improve Communication, Orientation, and Access to Information and Interpretation			
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes	
Access to more detailed information on the Nicodemus National Historic Site, Nicodemus Historical Society, and Nicodemus websites.	Establish a Nicodemus “web team” connecting all of the partners.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected	
Connect to Nicodemus through social networking sites such as Second Life, Facebook, and MySpace.			
Access a website feature where people can post their own stories about Nicodemus. A companion feature would also be set up where people can discuss the meanings and significance of Nicodemus.	Create a webpage where visitors can post their own Nicodemus stories.	5 – Still Connected	
Share what was discovered during a visit to Nicodemus online including written descriptions and photos.			
Link to genealogy websites.	Post genealogical information online, link to genealogy websites, and provide opportunities for genealogical research.	5 – Still Connected	
Conduct genealogical research online.			
Goal: Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media			
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes	
Read online site bulletins including a chronological history of Greater Nicodemus and features on significant leaders and other personalities.	Post the site bulletins online.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected	

Appendix E: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Short-term (1-3 Years) Goals

<p>Watch a film that would feature descendants and residents of Nicodemus sharing their stories.</p>	<p>Develop an oral history project conducted by young descendants or students so they can learn about their heritage.</p>	<p>1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected</p>
<p>Goal: Improve Personal Services</p>		
<p>Desired Visitor Experience Use online teacher resources to incorporate Nicodemus into the classroom.</p>	<p>Recommended Action Develop curriculum-based programs and teacher resources that will build upon the efforts of The Nicodemus Group.</p>	<p>Relevant Themes 1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community</p>
<p>Goal: Expand Existing Partnerships</p>		
<p>Desired Visitor Experience Purchase Nicodemus-produced products online.</p>	<p>Recommended Action Establish a Nicodemus marketing team and develop a “Nicodemus-produced” campaign. Expand sales of audio recordings including “Home to Nicodemus.” Record and create a CD of the First Missionary Baptist Church Choir singing music of Nicodemus. Sell a Williams Sisters CD.</p>	<p>Relevant Themes 1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected</p>
<p>Sign up online to be part of a Nicodemus mailing list to receive information about events, volunteering, fundraising,</p>	<p>Establish a descendant skill or “talent” database.</p>	

Appendix E: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Short-term (1-3 Years) Goals

and more.	Set up an online newsletter or “bulletin board” advertising volunteer and fundraising opportunities.	
Type of Visit: Arrival/Orientation		
Goal: Improve Communication, Marketing, Orientation, and Access to Information and Interpretation		
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes
Use improved and consistent directional signs and distances located on Interstate 70, Interstate 80, and State Highway 24 to get to Nicodemus.	Create and implement a master sign plan to unify the park, partners, and agencies within Nicodemus.	
Obtain Nicodemus rack cards at I-70 and I-80 visitor information centers.	Develop, print, and provide rack cards to I-70 and I-80 visitor information centers and Kansas State Tourism Office.	
Use a Solomon Valley – Highway 24 Heritage Alliance map and brochure that shows where Nicodemus is in relationship to other local towns.	Contact other local associated sites to make them aware of what Nicodemus has to offer. Develop and implement a “Take Pride in Nicodemus” public relations campaign.	
Invite visitors to donate to the park.	Make the donation box more visible and attractive.	

Appendix E: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Short-term (1-3 Years) Goals

Type of Visit: Quick Trip			
Goal: Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media			
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes	
Obtain Nicodemus-related brochures that include website and email addresses.	Develop and print site bulletins on a variety of Nicodemus stories.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community	
Goal: Expand Existing Partnerships			
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes	
Purchase books, locally-produced crafts, food, and other Nicodemus-related sales items from an updated and diversified WNPA sales area.	Review and renovate the WNPA bookstore/sales outlet. Establish a Nicodemus marketing team and develop a “Nicodemus-produced” campaign. Expand sales of audio recordings including “Home to Nicodemus.” Record and create a CD of the First Baptist Church Choir singing music of Nicodemus. Sell a Williams Sisters CD.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected	
Type of Visit: 1-2 Hours			
Goal: Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media			

Appendix E: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Short-term (1-3 Years) Goals

Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes
Take a self-guided, wayside exhibit-based walking tour of Nicodemus.	Develop a wayside exhibit plan.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community
Using a brochure, take a self-guided walking tour of Nicodemus.	Develop and publish a self-guided walking tour of Nicodemus including more than just the five historic structures.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community
Participate in hands-on crafts and games for youth.	Develop and provide hands-on crafts and games for youth reflecting the history of Nicodemus.	3 – Struggle for Community
Participate in curriculum-based education programs.	Develop curriculum-based programs and teacher resources that will build upon the efforts of The Nicodemus Group.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community
Type of Visit: 2-4 Hours		
Goal: Improve Personal Services		
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes
Attend “Friday Night in Nicodemus.”	Offer roller skating, “Dew Drop Inn”, and movies in the Township Hall.	4 – Traditions, Culture, Community
Attend a teacher workshop.	Develop curriculum-based	1 – The Five Pillars

Appendix E: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Short-term (1-3 Years) Goals

	<p>programs and teacher resources that will build upon the efforts of The Nicodemus Group.</p>	<p>2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community</p>
<p>Type of Visit: 4-6 Hours</p>		
<p>Goal: Improve Personal Services</p>		
<p>Desired Visitor Experience Attend an outdoor camp.</p>	<p>Recommended Action Develop and provide outdoor camps for urban youth.</p>	<p>Relevant Themes 1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community</p>
<p>Participate in Exploritas multi-day courses.</p>	<p>Contact Exploritas about offering multi-day courses.</p>	<p>1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community</p>

Appendix F: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Mid-term (4-6 Years) Goals

Type of Visit: Virtual Visit			
Goal: Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media			
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes	
Download audio and video recordings of first person accounts of Nicodemus experiences 1877 to today.	Develop an oral history project conducted by young descendants or students so they can learn about their heritage. Produce audio and video recordings of first person accounts of Nicodemus experiences 1877 to today.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected	
Download audio- and video-casts of residents and descendants on location talking about a special part of Nicodemus.	Develop an oral history project conducted by young descendants or students so they can learn about their heritage. Create audio- and video-casts of residents and descendants on location talking about a special part of Nicodemus.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected	
Type of Visit: Arrival/Orientation			
Goal: Improve Communication, Marketing, Orientation, and Access to Information and Interpretation			
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes	
Obtain Nicodemus-related brochures that include website and e-mail addresses.	Create a package of Nicodemus-related materials and an activity “menu” for Tourism Offices and local merchants.		

Appendix F: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Mid-term (4-6 Years) Goals

Type of Visit: Quick Trip			
Goal: Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media			
Desired Visitor Experience Watch a park interpretive film.	Recommended Action Produce a park interpretive film that will provide visitors with a broad but accurate story of the park, and organized around the five pillars.	Relevant Themes 1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 5 – Still Connected	
Type of Visit: 1-2 Hours			
Goal: Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media			
Desired Visitor Experience Take a self-guided, wayside exhibit-based walking tour of Nicodemus.	Recommended Action Fabricate and install wayside exhibits. Develop a self-guided wayside exhibit-based walking tour.	Relevant Themes 1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected	
Watch a video that documents traditional activities.	Produce a video that documents traditional activities.	3 – Struggle for Community	
Type of Visit: 2-4 Hours			
Goal: Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media			
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes	

Appendix F: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Mid-term (4-6 Years) Goals

<p>Take an audio- or cell-phone tour of historic sites in the town and township.</p>	<p>Produce an audio- or cell-phone tour of historic sites in the town and township including a driving tour to cemeteries, farmsteads, Mt. Olive and more.</p>	<p>1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected</p>
<p>Type of Visit: 4-6 Hours</p>		
<p>Goal: Improve Personal Services</p>		
<p>Desired Visitor Experience</p> <p>Participate in Exploritas multi-day courses.</p>	<p>Recommended Action</p> <p>Develop Exploritas multi-day courses.</p>	<p>Relevant Themes</p> <p>1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community</p>

Appendix G: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Long-term (7-10 Years) Goals

Type of Visit: Virtual Visit			
Goal: Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media			
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes	
Purchase Nicodemus-produced products online.	Reprint and sell the “Cyclone” newspaper.	2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community	
Take a virtual tour of historic buildings and sites.	Establish virtual tours of historic buildings and sites and groups on social networking sites such as Second Life, Facebook, and MySpace.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community	
Type of Visit: Arrival/Orientation			
Goal: Improve Communication, Marketing, Orientation, and Access to Information and Interpretation			
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes	
Obtain Nicodemus-related brochures that include website and e-mail addresses.	Create an activity “menu” for Tourism Offices and local merchants that will include expanded program (4-6 hours) opportunities.		
Type of Visit: Quick Trip			
Goal: Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media			

Appendix G: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Long-term (7-10 Years) Goals

Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes
Add stitches to a Nicodemus quilt located in the visitor center.	Produce an exhibit on quilting in the NPS visitor center and allow visitors to add stitches to a Nicodemus quilt.	3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected
Purchase other Nicodemus-related items.	Reprint and sell the “Cyclone” newspaper.	2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community
Read a brochure detailing the chronological history of Nicodemus.	Develop and print a brochure detailing the chronological history of Nicodemus and features significant leaders and other influential citizens.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community
Type of Visit: 1-2 Hours		
Goal: Upgrade and Improve Interpretive Media		
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes
Trace Nicodemus history chronologically through an exhibit at the Historical Society Museum.	Develop and install a temporary exhibit.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community
Take a self-guided, driving tour of Nicodemus.	Develop and publish a self-guided driving tour of Nicodemus including historic sites within the town and township.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community

Appendix G: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Long-term (7-10 Years) Goals

Type of Visit: 4-6 Hours			
Goal: Improve Personal Services			
Desired Visitor Experience	Recommended Action	Relevant Themes	
Participate in Exploritas multi-day courses.	Present Exploritas multi-day courses.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected	
Attend programs linking the historic buildings, town, cemeteries, farms, township, and dugouts.	Develop and present programs linking the historic buildings, towns, cemeteries, farms, township, and dugouts.	1 – The Five Pillars 2 – Move Toward Civil Rights 3 – Struggle for Community 4 – Traditions, Culture, Community 5 – Still Connected	
Take a tour from Ellis to Nicodemus to understand the 35-mile walk that Nicodemus’ first settlers made.	Develop and present a tour from Ellis to Nicodemus.	3 – Struggle for Community 5 – Still Connected	
Take a tour that emphasizes the impact that “Sundown” laws had on the community.	Develop and present a tour that emphasizes the impact that “Sundown” laws had on the community.	2 – Move Toward Civil Rights	
Take a tour of a farm owned and operated by a descendent.	Develop and present a tour of a farm owned and operated by a descendant focused on the challenges endured by historic and contemporary Nicodemus farmers.	3 – Struggle for Community	
Take living history tours of the historic homes and businesses in Nicodemus.	Develop and present living history tours of the historic homes and businesses in	1 – The Five Pillars 3 – Struggle for Community	

Appendix G: Nicodemus National Historic Site Long-Range Interpretive Plan Long-term (7-10 Years) Goals

	Nicodemus.	
Take a tour that links various ethnic-based sites.	Develop and present heritage tours linking various ethnic-based sites including Damar, Hays, Nicodemus, Cottonwood Ranch, and the Cathedral of the Plains.	2 – Move Toward Civil Rights
Observe and participate in farming, building a dugout or soddie, canning, quilting, and gardening demonstrations.	Develop and present farming, dugout and soddie building, canning, quilting, and gardening demonstrations.	3 – Struggle for Community



Nicodemus National Historic Site

304 Washington Avenue
Nicodemus, KS 67625-3015

785-839-4233

www.nps.gov/nico