

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Nicodemus National Historic Site
Kansas



Nicodemus National Historic Site

Kansas

General Management Plan



Cover Photos Identification



Nicodemus District No. 1 School



St. Francis Hotel



African Methodist Episcopal Church



Township Hall / NPS Visitor Contact Facility



Aerial Photograph of Nicodemus, Kansas



Old First Baptist Church

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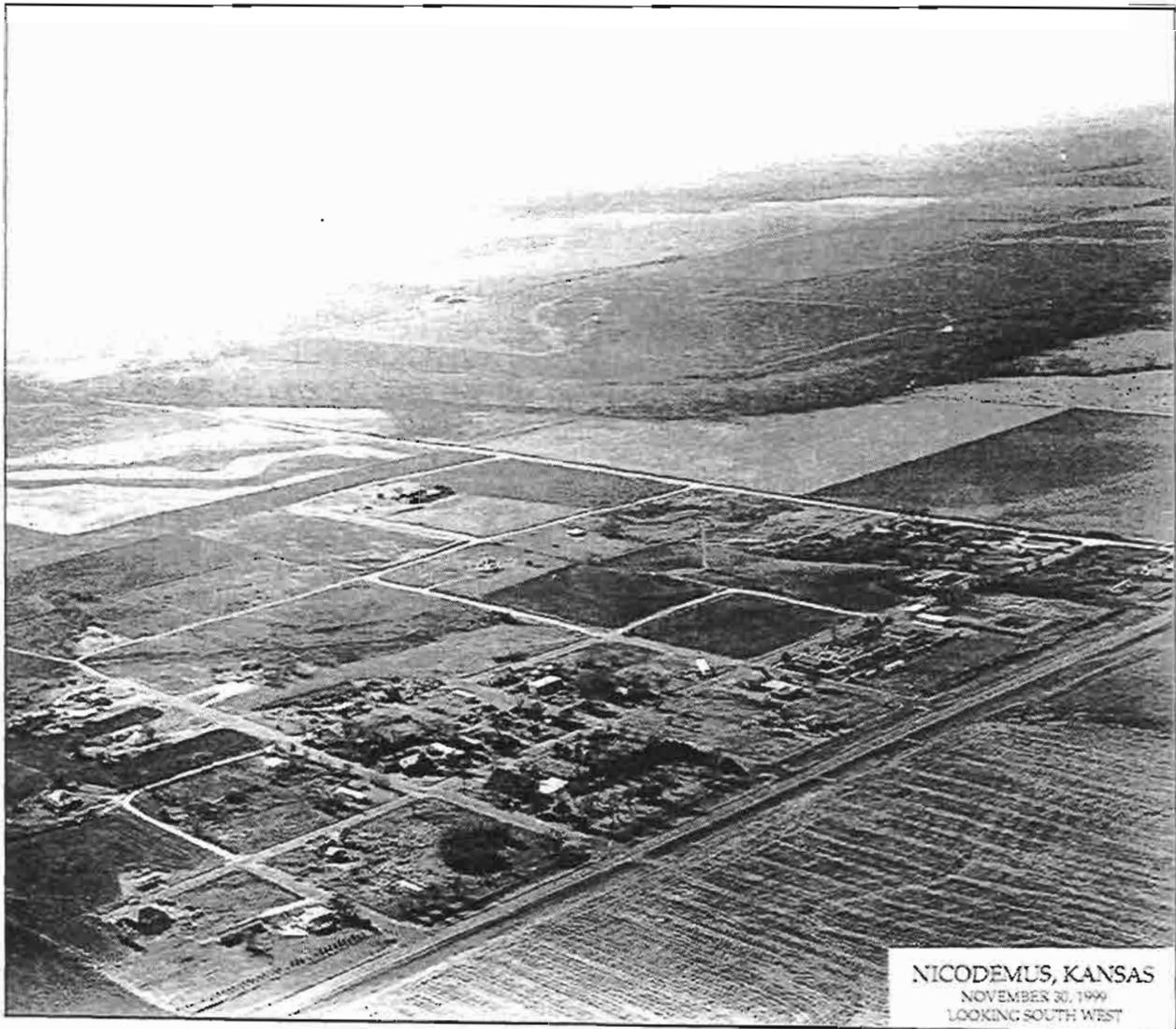
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Figure 1: Aerial View of Nicodemus, Kansas, 1999.



BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The unincorporated town of Nicodemus is in Graham County in the high plains of northwestern Kansas. Nicodemus, which is 304 miles west of Kansas City, Kansas, and 306 miles east of Denver, Colorado, sits on the south side of U.S. Highway 24. It is 39 miles north of Interstate 70. The nearest commercial air service is at Hays, Kansas, which is 60 miles southeast of Nicodemus (see Vicinity map).

Nicodemus lies open to the surrounding countryside, with little vegetation to obstruct vistas of the plains. As was typical of towns platted in the post Civil War period, Nicodemus assumed the grid pattern imposed by the General Land Office survey. Streets, roads, property lines, and fences were oriented along the compass directions, with only minor concessions to topography and watercourses.

Nicodemus is the only remaining western town established by African Americans during the Reconstruction period and represents the western expansion and settlement of the Great Plains.

Typical of western settlements of its time, most of those who came to Nicodemus in those first migrations (1877-1880) came to farm. The town of Nicodemus provided services to the outlying community as a center for worship, school, government, and commerce. The "core" of the historic community soon included the (Old) First Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E) Churches; Nicodemus District No 1 School; Township Hall; and the St. Francis Hotel/Fletcher-Switzer residence (which also served as the site of the town's

first Post Office and livery stable). Today, there are about 40 additional buildings within the town, including public facilities such as the fire station, the municipal garage, the Nicodemus Historical Society building, and a residential complex developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for low-income residents of Nicodemus. Most of the remaining structures are one- or 1½-story frame residences, simple in style, and with very little architectural detailing. Several of the residential structures are vacant. Farmsteads, cemeteries, and ruins are scattered throughout the township.

Historically, the Nicodemus community included members of the outlying agricultural area and those in town where they shared churches, a school, government, and commercial services. Today many people living within the outlying township and in other parts of Graham County, such as Hill City and Bogue, have family in Nicodemus. Kinship ties extend beyond the region to all areas of the nation, pulling family members back to Nicodemus for the Emancipation/ Homecoming celebrations, funerals, and other occasions. This association with the place continues as one of the strongest characteristics of the Nicodemus community.

The people of Nicodemus have observed the Emancipation/ Homecoming annually from 1878 to the present. Originally called the Emancipation Celebration, the observance celebrated the emancipation of slaves by the British in the West Indies in 1834. Over the intervening years the event

has evolved into a mass family reunion and is now more commonly referred to as Homecoming. Several hundred descendants return to Nicodemus on the last weekend of July each year to participate in this gathering. For the far-flung descendants, it has become an essential part of life, a way of renewing family ties and maintaining a physical connection with a proud heritage. Programmed activities include a parade, dances, carnival rides, spiritual songs, a fashion show, and much more.

HISTORY OF NICODEMUS

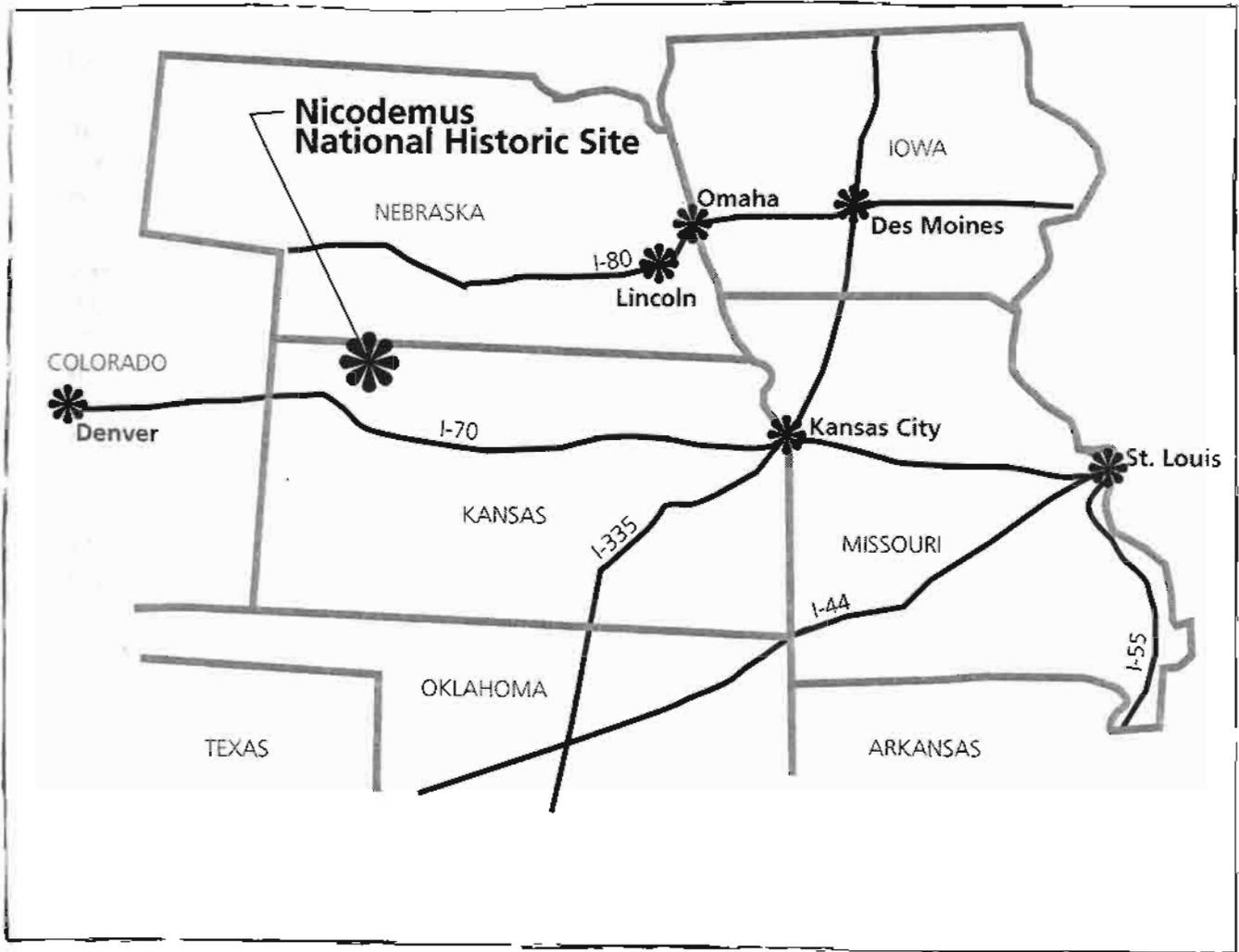
In the years following the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans throughout the South struggled to establish social, political, and economic equality. As years passed, however, they repeatedly rediscovered the sad truth that for most of them, the promised equality was elusive, if not impossible, in the South. When newly inaugurated President Rutherford B. Hayes fulfilled an election promise (1877) by withdrawing federal troops from the South, the Reconstruction era officially ended, and with it the hopes of many African Americans for equality in the South within their lifetimes. Believing they could only find economic, social, and political equality within a community of their peers, many traveled to the West in search of the American dream.

Among the first of the communities that these equality seekers established in the west was Nicodemus, Kansas. The first groups arrived in 1877; initially a small party arrived in July, followed two months later by a group of some 350 weary African American emigrants recruited

from Lexington, Kentucky. In stark contrast to the wooded hills of their native Kentucky, the emigrants found that the "promised land" was desolate and forbidding, with only a scattering of trees along the Solomon River. Disheartened, about 60 families immediately returned eastward in search of more familiar surroundings and better economic prospects. Yet most remained, and despite hardships, helped to establish Nicodemus, Kansas, one of the oldest and most famous African American communities in the Midwest. Ultimately, African American groups, primarily from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi, formed the Nicodemus community. According to the U.S. Census, there were 260 African American settlers living in Nicodemus Township by 1880.

The freedmen had a clear set of priorities as they sought their future in the years following emancipation. The first was the reestablishment of home and family. Many newly freed African Americans searched the country to locate loved ones separated by sale/ slavery or war. During the decades that followed, the establishment of strong family ties brought with it an attachment or association to the place where the family was centered.

The next priority for most 19th century African Americans during the post-emancipation period was participation in organized religious activities. Before emancipation, many slaveholders encouraged enslaved people to participate in religious services either in the rear of white churches or in separate services held in the slave quarters. These services, however, were generally designed to teach the slave that slavery was a proper and natural institution and that he or she was



NORTH

VICINITY MAP

NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / KANSAS
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to accept slavery and the dictums of the master. Finding such teachings unacceptable, African American ministers began to form congregations even before emancipation. In addition to ministering to the African Americans' spiritual needs, these nascent congregations became centers of African American social and political life; in fact, it was by way of the religious communities that many freedmen learned of the new African American communities being established in the West. Two religious congregations formed early in the Nicodemus community: the (Old) First Baptist Church formed shortly after the initial settlement, and the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church was organized in 1879.

After religion, education was another high priority for most African Americans. Some African Americans sought education as the means to create a better life for themselves and their children. Others saw education as a way to achieve the political equality promised by federal civil rights laws beginning with the Emancipation Proclamation, but enforced in the South only when backed by the presence of military forces. Still others simply wanted to read the Bible once before they died. As early as 1879, Mr. and Mrs. Zachary Fletcher provided schooling at their sod hotel in Nicodemus. The first dedicated schoolhouse was erected on Fourth Street in 1887. When that school burned, the current structure — Nicodemus District No. 1 School — was built in its place in 1918.

The need to earn a living and become self-sufficient was inextricably tied to the other African American values. Although studies of Reconstruction clearly detail the willingness of freedmen to work hard,

Southern freedmen were barely able to make ends meet, let alone save money. The plantation owners continued to dominate the Southern economic system, and ensured a new order in which freedmen were still dependent upon the landowning whites. In addition to codified economic inequities, African Americans were subject to terrorizing (or "bulldozing") inflicted by the Ku Klux Klan. When the developers of western towns encouraged freedmen to go to Kansas to establish their farms and businesses, many heard the call. Among the first were Reverend John Samuels, who made and repaired shoes for the residents of Nicodemus. Z.T. Fletcher opened a general store in the fall of 1877. By 1879, the town had a store, two livery stables, a real estate office, a drug store, and a hotel.

An undeniable attraction of Nicodemus was the opportunity to participate in local government. Discriminatory voting requirements and outright violence kept many free men and freedmen from the polls in the South. In contrast, Nicodemus residents were heavily involved in politics from the very beginning, and held township and county posts. In 1879, the township elected African Americans to be Justice of the Peace, Township Clerk, and Roads Overseer. County elections in 1880 installed African American men as court clerk, county attorney, and county commissioners.

PRIMARY RESOURCES

Nicodemus is an unincorporated town of about 20 residents. The entire platted town site is recognized as a national historic landmark (a national historic district). The town contains modest

residences and limited commercial services and is surrounded by an open farming landscape. The exposed location of the town is probably the most compelling and consistent characteristic.

The Nicodemus National Historic Site, established in 1996 (see appendix) and administered by the National Park Service (NPS), includes five historic structures (the Old First Baptist Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Nicodemus District No. 1 School, the St. Francis Hotel / Fletcher-Switzer Residence, and Township Hall) and their legally defined lots.

The Old First Baptist Church (figure 2). Several structures in succession, all at the same location, housed the congregation of the First Baptist Church from its founding in 1877 to the present. The group initially worshipped in a dugout, which was replaced by a soddie, another dugout, and eventually a small limestone structure. The current structure, an L-shaped building with intersecting gable roofs, was completed in 1907. The exterior walls are limestone, and the structure was coated with stucco circa 1940; a 1960 addition

features concrete unit masonry covered with stucco. The building has several irregularly spaced and shaped buttresses of limestone rubble coated with stucco. An articulated vestibule at the intersection of the ell segments marks the entrance to the church.

St. Francis Hotel / Fletcher-Switzer Residence (figure 3). Zachary Taylor Fletcher built the initial 1-½ story stone structure in 1880 and used it as a residence and a hotel/stagecoach station. The main portion features stucco-covered limestone bearing walls. The main entrance is on the northeast corner. There are wood frame additions on the north and south elevations. Windows are generally one-over-one double-hung with wood frames in various sizes. The first floor of the original structure included a living and dining area, and the second story provided two guest rooms. The 1924 addition (i.e., the east end of the structure) provided more living spaces, kitchen, and bathroom on the first floor, and a new staircase and bedroom on the second floor. Later additions provided additional bedroom and storage space and front and back porches.

Figure 2: The Old First Baptist Church as it appears today.



Figure 3: The St. Francis Hotel / Fletcher-Switzer residence has served many functions over the years.



Nicodemus District No. 1 School (figure 4). Nicodemus was the first community in Graham County, Kansas, to establish a school district and school. The existing school building was constructed in 1918 after a fire destroyed its predecessor. The single-story wood-frame school is square in plan with a wood-shingle hipped roof. A porch on the east elevation marks the main entry to the building. The school property also contains a one-story gable-roofed shed. The structures are surrounded by a large playground and open space. This property will be referred to as the Nicodemus School in this document.

The African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church (figure 5). Area residents founded this church in 1879. Members initially met in a sod structure; in 1885 the sod church was replaced with a limestone structure. In 1910 the congregation moved into an existing church structure in Block 11 that was previously owned by the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. In the 1920s the congregation changed a window to a doorway and added a vestibule to provide protection against the wind. They continued to use the structure as a church until circa 1940. Mr. Alvin Bates acquired the structure for storage purposes in the 1950s.

The A.M.E. Church has exterior limestone walls that, like other stone buildings in Nicodemus, were covered with stucco in the 1940s. Rectangular in plan, the single-story structure has a gabled roof, as does the vestibule with double doors on the east elevation. The south elevation has four regularly spaced windows; the north elevation was similar but collapsed and was replaced with plywood on stud walls.

Township Hall (figure 6). The Works Progress Administration constructed the single-story Township Hall of locally quarried limestone in 1939. The rectangular building is three bays wide and six bays long. The gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles and has exposed false rafter ends but no gutters. A gabled vestibule projects from the south (front) elevation. Nonhistoric doors are centered on the main entry, with a window on either side. Large metal-frame windows are along the east and west side elevations. The load-bearing walls are randomly sized rock-faced limestone with buttresses on the east and west. The roof has a steel scissors truss structure with wood beams, wood decking, and asphalt shingles. The Township Hall, owned by the Township Board, serves as the current NPS visitor contact facility.

Figure 4: Main entrance, Nicodemus District No. 1 School.



Figure 5: The African Methodist Episcopal Church.



BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Figure 6: The historic Township Hall is the temporary home of the NPS visitor contact facility.



PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the general management plan is to articulate a vision for Nicodemus National Historic Site that will guide decision making by current and future management teams during the next 10 to 15 years. The National Park Service is required to conduct comprehensive general management planning to guide specific projects, to base decisions on adequate information and analysis, and to track progress made toward goals. The plan addresses NPS responsibilities at the national historic site and provides guidance for the preservation and protection of the area's resources. In addition, it guides the development of the new park unit and suggests mechanisms to form partnerships for the long-term operation of the national historic site. The plan establishes the management direction for providing basic services, which include interpretation, resource preservation and protection, and visitor health and safety.

NEED FOR THE PLAN

Congress authorized Nicodemus National Historic Site on November 12, 1996, with the passage of Public Law 104-333. The law directed the National Park Service to "preserve, protect, and interpret . . . [the site's primary resources]" 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."

A variety of issues and concerns were identified by the general public, the NPS

staff, and other agencies during scoping for the *Draft General Management Plan*. Nicodemus descendants expressed a broad range of concerns, perceptions, and aspirations. The most prevalent concern expressed was the need to control telling their history in ways that respect their traditions, values, and beliefs.

Continued deterioration of historic structures seriously concerns the descendants, because this deterioration diminishes the community's sense of connection with a proud heritage.

Although legislation establishing Nicodemus National Historic Site explicitly protects their property rights, some property owners and nascent entrepreneurs remain concerned that the federal government will restrict their business opportunities through outright condemnation or by controlling development. The potential for unsought, undesirable influences on the annual Emancipation/Homecoming celebrations and other traditional activities by the National Park Service was also occasionally voiced.

On a positive note, many residents expressed their desire to work with the National Park Service to preserve Nicodemus in ways that reflect their aspirations and beliefs. Others hope that NPS development can be leveraged to enhance business opportunities in Nicodemus in ways leading to its renaissance.

On the basis of the public comments and agency concerns, the following decisions were addressed by this *General Management Plan*.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

Ways in which the National Park Service can respect the needs of the community for privacy, and balance it with the desires of visitors to explore the town site.

Treatment of historic structures due to their accelerated rate of deterioration, which in some cases poses serious health and safety concerns.

Infrastructure necessary to support national historic site management.

Appropriate and sustainable partnerships for resource protection and interpretation of the historic site.

The national historic site boundary does not include the entire national historic landmark district.

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE PURPOSE, SIGNIFICANCE, AND INTERPRETIVE THEMES

The reasons for which the national historic site was set aside as part of the national park system provide the most fundamental criteria against which the appropriateness of all plan recommendations, operational decisions, and actions are tested. The enabling legislation defined **two purposes for Nicodemus National Historic Site:**

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.

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.

Statements of significance clearly define the most important things about national historic site resources and values based on the site's purpose. They create a tool that managers can use in setting resource protection priorities and in identifying primary site interpretive themes and desirable visitor experiences. This helps managers and staffs focus their efforts and limited funding on the preservation and enjoyment of those attributes that directly contribute to the purpose of the site and that must be protected. **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

- 11 American communities, during the late 19th and 20th centuries: family/home, church, school, business, and traditions of mutual assistance that evolved into
- 12 local government.

A 1993 special resource study of Nicodemus concluded that the historic district represented six significant historic themes: "Ethnic Communities, Poverty Relief and Social Reform, Civil Rights Movements, Reconstruction Era, Farmer's Frontier, and Farming Communities." The following primary interpretive themes were developed to expand on the national themes and to guide public understanding of the site's significance:

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.

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.

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 environ-

ment to participate in the American Dream.

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.

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.

Figure 7. Part of an Emancipation/ Homecoming parade.



LAWS, POLICIES, AND MANDATES

Special Mandates and Administrative Commitments

The law that established Nicodemus National Historic Site (Public Law 104-333) contained special mandates and

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

authorities for administration of the historic site:

The National Park Service may enter into cooperative agreements with individuals, public or private agencies, organizations, or institutions in order to further the purposes of the historic site. Further, the National Park Service may provide technical assistance for the preservation of historic structures and maintenance of cultural landscapes in the historic site.

The National Park Service may acquire by donation, exchange, or purchase lands necessary for interpretation, preservation, or restoration of structures within the historic site with the following limitations: property owned by the State of Kansas or a political subdivision of the state may only be acquired by donation; no property may be acquired without the consent of the owner of that property.

Service-wide Laws and Policies

As with all units of the national park system, management of Nicodemus National Historic Site is guided by the 1916 act creating the National Park Service and other applicable laws and regulations, such as the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, as well as NPS management policies. The most pertinent of the mandates and policies address management of a variety of cultural resources (historic structures, cultural landscapes, archeological resources, and collections).

RECOMMENDED STUDIES NEEDED

Baseline research reports provide information that can serve a variety of purposes, from planning to interpretation. A cultural landscape report and a historic structures report have been completed for Nicodemus National Historic Site (Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects, Ltd. 2002 and 2003). The cultural landscape report focuses on identifying features that contribute to the historic significance of the national historic site properties and the national historic landmark, as well as providing guidelines on managing landscape change. The historic structures report provides stabilization recommendations for the five historic structures. The following studies are recommended for completion at Nicodemus National Historic Site:

Archeological Overview and Assessment: This report describes and assesses the known and potential archeological resources in a park unit area, assesses past work, and helps determine the need for and design of future studies.

Archeological Identification/ Evaluation Studies: These studies are more detailed and identify the locations and some of the characteristics of all or a sample of archeological resources in a particular area. These studies are frequently linked with archeological overviews and assessments to resolve management and interpretive concerns. At Nicodemus, these studies could greatly enhance professional scholarship nationwide by focusing on the analysis of material culture related to early Black pioneer settlement in the West and community development.

Recommended Studies Needed

Historic Resource Study (HRS): A historic resource study provides a historical overview of a park or region and identifies and evaluates a park unit's cultural resources within historic contexts.

Scope of Collection Statement: This is a museum management document required for all national park system units. Evolving from legislation and planning documents specific to each unit, it guides acquisition and preservation of those museum objects that contribute directly to interpretation

and understanding of the unit's themes, as well as any additional objects that the National Park Service is legally mandated to preserve.

Traditional Use and Ethnographic Landscape Study: This study looks at how the Nicodemus community historically used the landscape and the values they placed on different parts of the landscape. Personal interviews and oral histories will be useful in gathering this information.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

MANAGEMENT AREAS

The National Park Service considered a variety of management areas (or prescriptions) for portions of the national historic site. These management areas define the specific resource conditions that are to be achieved and maintained over time for each given parcel and identify the kinds and levels of visitor use, management activities, and development that are appropriate within each management area. Management areas are described in terms of the desired visitor experience, resource condition, and appropriate development to be accomplished within that portion of the site. Because the national historic site and the town of Nicodemus are deeply interrelated, the National Park Service also considered community experience as an aspect of each potential management prescription.

Four potential management areas for Nicodemus National Historic Site are described below.

Story Area

Resource Conditions. Resource management activities in this management area will be visible and accessible to the public. A moderate level of impact on the resources will be tolerated to accommodate a high level of visitor use. The structural resources and cultural landscape will be rehabilitated to support the interpretive program and in accordance

with NPS management policies. Their rehabilitation will ensure that they are able to withstand both the elements and a more intense level of visitation. Resources would be managed to retain their historic character, representing the five pillars of African American communities (see previous significance statements).

Visitor Experience Conditions. The story area will be devoted to the primary function of telling the story of Nicodemus and its significance to present-day Americans. Visitor interaction with resources will be highly managed, but visitors will enjoy direct contact with resources to encourage a sense of stewardship and to enhance overall resource preservation. In this area the National Park Service will attempt to inspire visitors with the Nicodemus story and provide them with opportunities to understand it in depth. Visitors will experience a high level of interpretation and a moderate to high level of interaction with staff. The relatively high use of this area will generate contact and interaction among visitors. Residents will be invited to participate in the interpretation program to the extent they desire, so visitors will also have a moderate opportunity to interact with them. The National Park Service will work closely with the Nicodemus community to research, prepare, and present the site's interpretive story.

Figure 8. Few structures obstruct the Kansas countryside.



Community Involvement. The community will be invited and encouraged to participate in interpreting the national historic site by assisting in developing and presenting exhibits, programs, and demonstrations. Residents and their descendants may participate in all aspects of the education/ research program by sharing oral histories and family traditions. There will be opportunities to teach and learn skills, perpetuate the tangible evidence of their heritage, and share artifacts, cultural materials, and expertise.

Appropriate Development. Compatible development could include workshop and training areas, exhibit space, research space, archive and collections space, curatorial facilities, and climate control and security features. New construction will be permitted in the story area to meet the necessary basic operational functions and could include visitor amenities such as indoor and outdoor exhibits, theater, bookstore, restrooms, and parking. All facilities will be fully accessible.

Orientation/Support Area

Resource Conditions. Resources in this management area will likely receive much visitor and/or staff use. The orientation and support area will be in locations with low resource integrity, and facilities will be designed and maintained so that they will not negatively impact the historical character of the national historic site.

Visitor Experience Conditions. The orientation area will provide visitors their first impression of Nicodemus National Historic Site. It will be the gateway; the welcome mat; the inspirational "hook" that will pique visitors' interests and set the tone for their visit. In the orientation/support area visitors will have a high level of interaction with national historic site staff as they seek information about services, the site, and other opportunities, but they are unlikely to encounter residents in this management area. In the portions of the area set aside for primarily

administrative functions, visitor and staff interactions will be minimal.

Community Involvement. The community will use the orientation facilities as a place of welcome and hospitality for visitors. The orientation information presented in this management area will serve the goals of the national historic site as well as build an economic relationship between Nicodemus and the national historic site by pointing out other community features, businesses, and services. The support area will have a low impact on the community and its lifestyle. In the portions of the area set aside for primarily administrative functions, a moderate level of interaction between residents and staff will be expected.

Appropriate Development. To successfully provide the desired visitor experience, development in this area must be inviting. The architectural design of the orientation facilities will be compatible with the architecture of the site at large. The orientation facilities could include a visitor contact station, informational exhibits, kiosks, wayside exhibits, administrative offices, parking, rest rooms, water, and shelter in addition to an area in which visitors and/or large family groups could assemble. Existing buildings within the town site may be used to house these facilities if they are appropriate for the intended use, are inviting, and do not detract from the cultural landscape. All facilities must comply with ADA standards of accessibility.

Spiritual Area

Resource Conditions. Within the spiritual management area the cultural

landscape and the historic structure(s) will be managed to provide a contemplative opportunity and allow for personal and fairly solitary reflection on the significance of Nicodemus. The resources will be preserved in close to their current conditions, but stabilized so they are safe for unmonitored visitation. Management activities will protect the existing integrity of the resources.

Visitor Experience Conditions. Designation of a spiritual area will provide visitors with a place for quiet solitude and personal introspection, thus providing an opportunity to reflect upon the Nicodemus story and its personal meaning for them. This area will be dedicated to self-discovery and will have a minimum of interaction among visitors or with national historic site staff. Any interpretation will be nonintrusive and designed to support the spiritual experience of visitors.

Community Involvement. This area will offer a place of spiritual reconnection for residents and their descendants.

Appropriate Development. To complement the preservation goals, new NPS development will be kept to a minimum and will not be allowed to interfere with the mood-setting aspects of the spiritual management area.

Traditional Use Area

Resource Conditions. Resources may evolve over time to suit new community goals, conditions, and situations in this management area. Modifications of the cultural landscape and historic structures could be undertaken to provide a safe visitor experience. Alterations could

include essential climate and humidity control improvements for the resources as well as necessary security measures. New uses may occur, allowing the cultural landscape to continue to evolve. Development impacting the resources (directly or indirectly) will be compatible with the general historic character, but a high degree of intervention and change will occur.

Visitor Experience Conditions. A traditional use area will present visitors with an essentially self-guided contextual and aesthetic experience of everyday life in Nicodemus. They will see the town continue to function as it always has, with no direct interpretation and only limited NPS influence. The potential for a variety of land uses, including agriculture, commercial, and residential, will continue to evolve. Residents will determine the level of interaction with visitors. Visitors will have low levels of contact with national historic site staff.

Community Involvement. The resident lifestyle will continue uninterrupted. The concept of local self-determination will continue unhindered.

Appropriate Development. Residents will determine the level of new development that is compatible with the character of the town.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The plan is consistent with other applicable laws, and NPS management policies. Although there are some similar situations in the national park system, Nicodemus National Historic Site is rather atypical of national park system

sites. At Nicodemus National Historic Site the National Park Service does not own, and may never own, much of the designated properties in the national historic site. The national historic site sits within a larger national historic landmark district, and NPS management activities and management activities by other property owners must be closely integrated. And, finally, the historical significance of the national historic site is embedded less in the physical resources and more in the perseverance and continuity of a community. Because of these factors, the following guiding principles were developed to guide NPS managers at the national historic site:

The National Park Service minimizes its influence on the character and continuity of the community and encourages community-initiated sustainable development, which preserves the qualities of the national historic landmark district.

Residents, property owners, and the National Park Service protect and preserve the five designated historic properties, the cultural landscape, material culture, and archeological resources. Residents, property owners, and descendants are encouraged to be involved with decision making at the national historic site.

The National Park Service, under existing policy, law, and regulation, may provide technical assistance (see glossary) to property owners and other interested parties to encourage preservation of significant resources within the national landmark district. Use of federal dollars would trigger

INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

requirements that projects meet NPS standards.

Visitors are provided opportunities to experience a sense of discovery as they learn about Nicodemus and the history of African Americans seeking a promised land in the West.

Residents and descendants have the opportunity to perpetuate their heritage by teaching and learning skills, demonstrating expertise, and sharing artifacts and other cultural materials. The community would be encouraged to participate in restoration and plan implementation decisions, to help determine the types of activities to be

provided, and to help develop exhibits, programs, and presentations.

The community retains its characteristic quiet and helps descendants reconnect spiritually with Nicodemus. Residents and descendants are aware of the importance of their evolved community and continue to cherish their physical connection to the past.

Management and interpretation of Nicodemus is based on exhaustive historical, sociological, anthropological, ethnographic, and archeological research and investigation. Oral history interviews use the most current academic methodology.

THE PLAN: JOINT STEWARDSHIP

OVERALL CONCEPT

Nicodemus will retain its character as a living, evolving community, and the public will be invited into the community at several areas where onsite interpretation will be provided and in-depth stories will be told. The National Park Service will present interpretive programs, workshops, and skill development opportunities in consultation with community residents and organizations.

MANAGEMENT AREAS

The National Park Service will lease or build a facility for administration and visitor contact as close to the historic site as possible. Orientation to the national historic landmark district and national historic site will be provided at this facility. If needed, the National Park Service may lease additional facilities to accommodate NPS operations. These facilities will be included in orientation/support management areas. The Roadside Park will remain in town ownership but will be included in the national historic site boundary to facilitate cooperative agreements with the Township Board for maintenance of the Roadside Park and appropriate access and use by visitors to the national historic site.

The St. Francis Hotel and Nicodemus School will be included in the story area to provide opportunities for in-depth interpretation of the Nicodemus story for visitors. This will represent the eventual NPS goal. Until properties are acquired by the National Park Service from willing

sellers/ donors, use of the structures will remain in the control of the owners.

The A.M.E. Church will be in the spiritual area.

The traditional use area will include the Township Hall and Old Baptist Church.

ORIENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

Orientation to the national historic landmark district and national historic site will be provided at the visitor contact facility. In-depth interpretation of the Nicodemus story will occur around and within the historic structures managed by the National Park Service in the story management areas. The National Park Service will strive to minimize disruption of the town and cultural landscape in design and implementation of facilities and services.

The National Park Service will consult with the community in preparing a long-range interpretation plan. Additionally, the National Park Service will coordinate with the community in exploring the wide variety of media and programs that could be offered by the National Park Service and/or jointly with residents and local organizations. If community members choose to provide interpretive services, the National Park Service will offer interpretation training and assistance to help develop their interpretive programs and skills.

THE PLAN: JOINT STEWARDSHIP

Figure 9. The Nicodemus Township Hall and NPS visitor contact facility.

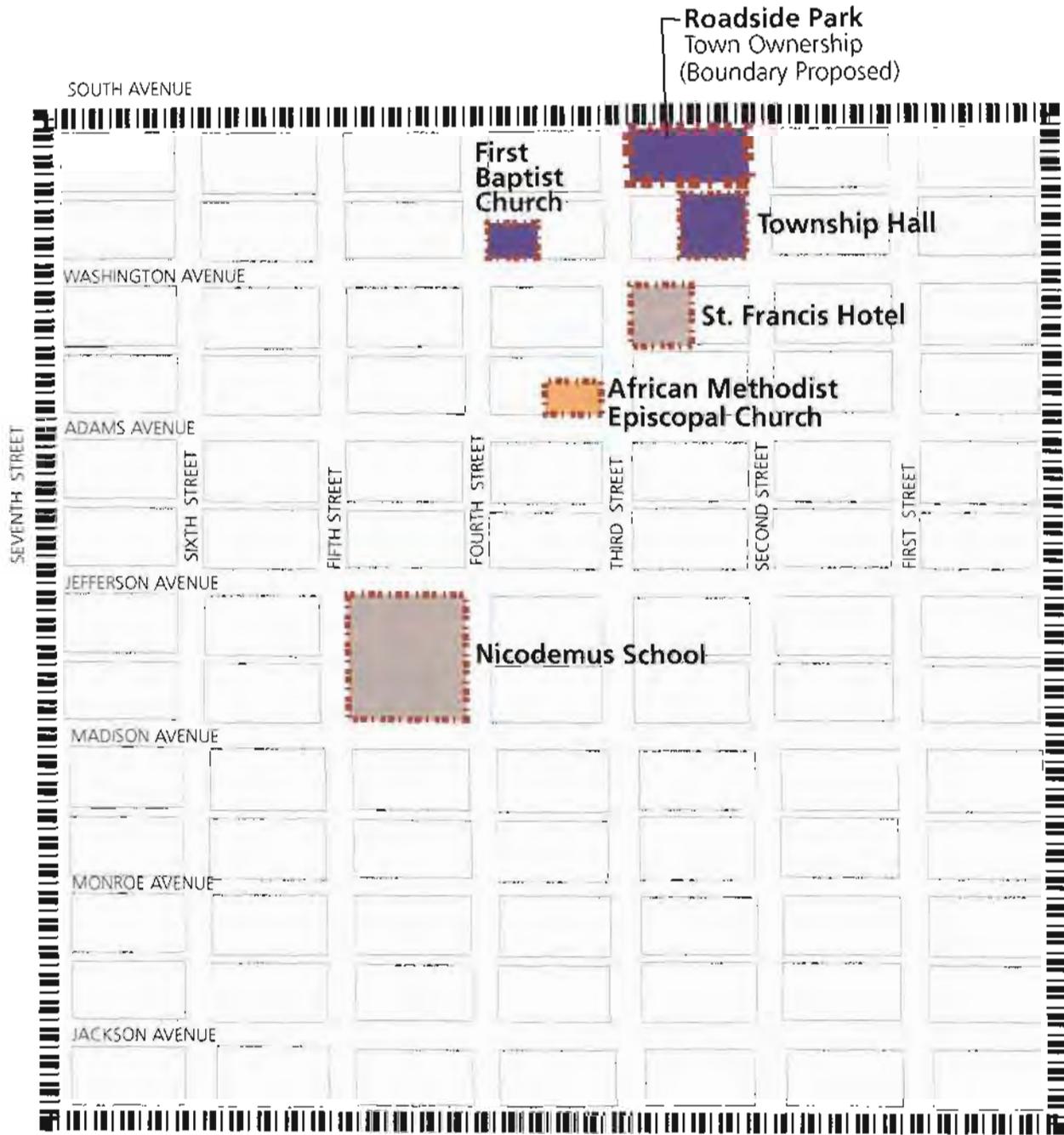


RESOURCE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

The National Park Service will continue to own the A.M.E. Church. A higher level of treatment than stabilization will be accomplished under this alternative for the church. The National Park Service will seek to acquire the St. Francis Hotel, and Nicodemus School from willing sellers/donors. The Old First Baptist Church will remain in private ownership, and the National Park Service will work with the Nicodemus First Baptist Church congregation to obtain grants to rehabilitate the building. The National Park Service will request a cooperative agreement from the Township Board to allow some public access to the Township Hall. The National Park Service will stabilize the Township Hall and Old First Baptist Church if they are in danger of being physically lost.

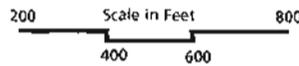
Until the National Park Service acquires historic site properties, it will seek façade preservation easements to preserve the integrity of the national historic site properties. Ultimate treatments for the national historic site properties under NPS management may encompass a range of options, including stabilization, preservation, and rehabilitation (see glossary). The most appropriate treatment option for each property will be that which maximizes its educational and interpretive value and will be consistent with the *Secretary's of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Under the Historic Sites Act and the legislation establishing the national historic site, the National Park Service has authority to enter into agreements with property owners to protect, preserve, and maintain the historic buildings that remain in private ownership. The National Park Service also will provide technical assistance (see glossary) to the community



-  Orientation / Support Area
-  Story Area
-  Spiritual Area
-  Traditional Use Area

-  National Historic Landmark District
-  National Historic Site



Note: Orientation / support area for administration functions to be determined

THE PLAN Joint Stewardship

NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / KANSAS
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DSC / MAY, 03 / 030 / 20,005



that will help guide long-term preservation of the cultural landscape within the national historic landmark district.

The National Park Service will provide appropriate curatorial storage for objects associated with Nicodemus and its residents, consistent with objectives of the national historic site's collection management program. Collections will be available to residents, researchers, and the general public for investigation and viewing, consistent with NPS policies.

The National Park Service will conduct archeological investigations in the national historic site and national historic landmark district. This information will assist in resources management and in the national historic site's interpretation program. Archeological materials will be catalogued, curated, and stored at the historic site.

FACILITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

Circulation and parking for residents of Nicodemus will remain as they are now. Dedicated visitor parking will be provided at orientation sites and some interpretive facilities. Visitor circulation around the sites will be directed to provide a cohesive interpretive story. Visitor circulation also will be directed in such a way that traditional circulation pathways will not be interrupted.

The National Park Service will adaptively use historic structures or lease properties within or near the landmark district to accommodate visitor contact, administrative, and support functions. If properties are not available, the National Park Service will purchase property for these facilities. A visitor contact facility will be developed to provide orientation/interpretation to visitors upon or soon after their arrival.

BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT

The National Park Service will propose a minor boundary adjustment (addition) through congressional action to include the Roadside Park in the national historic site boundary and possibly to provide a location for the visitor contact facility.

STAFFING AND OPERATIONS

Onsite staff will include a superintendent, administrative staff, maintenance staff to care for NPS-managed properties, and NPS rangers-interpreters to operate the visitor contact facility. Technical expertise related to preserving cultural properties, community planning, collections management, and archeology may be provided on or offsite, in cooperation with other nearby NPS areas, by NPS regional and central offices, or by contractors.

MITIGATION

The following measures have been incorporated into the plan to avoid or reduce impacts on national historic site resources, visitors, and the community:

The preservation of historic structures/buildings and cultural landscapes will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*.

All ground-disturbing activities will be preceded by site-specific archeological surveys, and, where appropriate, sub-surface testing to determine the existence of archeological resources. If archeological resources are discovered, the resources will be identified, evaluated, and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed — if necessary in consultation with the Kansas

state historic preservation office. In the unlikely event that human remains of any origin are discovered during construction, they and any associated objects will be treated respectfully in accordance with the beliefs of their cultural affiliation and according to applicable laws. If remains are of American Indian origin, provisions of the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act will be implemented.

The preservation of historic structures or construction of new facilities will involve some localized disturbance of soils and vegetation, although most work will occur within previously disturbed areas. Construction impacts will be mitigated by appropriate erosion control, site restoration techniques, and dust and emission controls.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public was notified that a general management plan for Nicodemus National Historic Site was getting underway by means of announcements in the media. The opening of the scoping process coincided with the Emancipation/ Homecoming Celebration held in July. Hundreds of people attend this special event every year, and many questions, comments and suggestions were gathered from the attendees. Progress reports on the general management plan were shared with the public at each of the subsequent Emancipation/ Homecoming celebrations.

After preliminary alternatives were crafted, members of the planning team met with each of the affected property

owners to discuss the planning process and address their specific concerns. Throughout the process, informal discussions were held with township, county, and state government officials as the plan progressed.

With the release of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Assessment*, meetings were held in Nicodemus to discuss the plan with the public and gather additional input. The plan was adjusted to reflect the ideas and concerns expressed, and the plan was finalized on September 30, 2003 with the signing of a "Finding of No Significant Impact."

APPENDIX: ENABLING LEGISLATION

PUBLIC LAW 104-333—NOV. 12, 1996

110 STAT. 4163

SEC. 512. NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.

16 USC 461 note.

(a) FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.—

(1) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(A) the town of Nicodemus, in Kansas, has national significance as the only remaining western town established by African-Americans during the Reconstruction period following the Civil War;

(B) the town of Nicodemus is symbolic of the pioneer spirit of African-Americans who dared to leave the only region they had been familiar with to seek personal freedom and the opportunity to develop their talents and capabilities; and

(C) the town of Nicodemus continues to be a valuable African-American community.

(2) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are—

(A) 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

(B) 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.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) HISTORIC SITE.—The term “historic site” means the Nicodemus National Historic Site established by subsection (c).

(2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(c) ESTABLISHMENT OF NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the Nicodemus National Historic Site in Nicodemus, Kansas.

(2) DESCRIPTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The historic site shall consist of the first Baptist Church, the St. Francis Hotel, the Nicodemus School District Number 1, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Township Hall located within the approximately 161.35 acres designated as the Nicodemus National Landmark in the Township of Nicodemus, Graham County, Kansas, as registered on the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to section 101 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470a), and depicted on a map entitled “Nicodemus National Historic Site”, numbered 80,000 and dated August 1994.

(B) MAP AND BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION.—The map referred to in subparagraph (A) and accompanying boundary description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Director of the National Park Service and any other office of the National Park Service that the Secretary determines to be an appropriate location for filing the map and boundary description.

(d) ADMINISTRATION OF THE HISTORIC SITE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer the historic site in accordance with this section and the provisions of law generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including the Act entitled “An Act to establish a National

110 STAT. 4164

PUBLIC LAW 104-333—NOV. 12, 1996

Park Service, and for other purposes", approved August 25, 1916 (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.), and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666, chapter 593; 16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

(2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—To further the purposes of this section, the Secretary may enter into a cooperative agreement with any interested individual, public or private agency, organization, or institution.

(3) TECHNICAL AND PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may provide to any eligible person described in subparagraph (B) technical assistance for the preservation of historic structures of, the maintenance of the cultural landscape of, and local preservation planning for, the historic site.

(B) ELIGIBLE PERSONS.—The eligible persons described in this subparagraph are—

(i) an owner of real property within the boundary of the historic site, as described in subsection (c)(2); and

(ii) any interested individual, agency, organization, or institution that has entered into an agreement with the Secretary pursuant to paragraph (2).

(e) ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary is authorized to acquire by donation, exchange, or purchase with funds made available by donation or appropriation, such lands or interests in lands as may be necessary to allow for the interpretation, preservation, or restoration of the First Baptist Church, the St. Francis Hotel, the Nicodemus School District Number 1, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, or the Township Hall, as described in subsection (c)(2)(A), or any combination thereof.

(2) LIMITATIONS.—

(A) ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY OWNED BY THE STATE OF KANSAS.—Real property that is owned by the State of Kansas or a political subdivision of the State of Kansas that is acquired pursuant to paragraph (1) may only be acquired by donation.

(B) CONSENT OF OWNER REQUIRED.—No real property may be acquired under this subsection without the consent of the owner of the real property.

(f) GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the last day of the third full fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall, in consultation with the officials described in paragraph (2), prepare a general management plan for the historic site.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In preparing the general management plan, the Secretary shall consult with an appropriate official of each of the following:

(A) The Nicodemus Historical Society.

(B) The Kansas Historical Society.

(C) Appropriate political subdivisions of the State of Kansas that have jurisdiction over all or a portion of the historic site.

(3) SUBMISSION OF PLAN TO CONGRESS.—Upon the completion of the general management plan, the Secretary shall submit a copy of the plan to the Committee on Energy and

APPENDIX: ENABLING LEGISLATION

PUBLIC LAW 104-333—NOV. 12, 1996

110 STAT. 4165

Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Interior such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.

GLOSSARY

The following definitions describe the meaning intended by the National Park Service in preparing this document.

Archeological Resources: The National Park Service defines archeological resources as "physical evidences of past human activity, including evidences of the effects of that activity on the environment" (DO-28, NPS *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, 1996).

Cultural landscape: A geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.

Cultural resource: An aspect of a cultural system that is valued by or significantly representative of a culture or that contains significant information about a culture. A cultural resource may be a tangible entity or a cultural practice. Tangible cultural resources are categorized as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects for the National Register of Historic Places and as archeological resources, cultural landscapes, structures, museum objects, and ethnographic resources for NPS management purposes.

Ethnographic Resource: Objects and places, including sites, structures, landscapes, and natural resources, with traditional cultural meaning and value to associated peoples. Ethnographic resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are called traditional cultural properties.

Interpretation: Educational services that provide opportunities for people to form their own intellectual and emotional connections to the park's/site's resources and thus come to a greater appreciation of the significant aspects of the country's natural or cultural heritage portrayed by those resources. At Nicodemus, interpretive services and programs will provide opportunities for visitors to make intellectual and emotional connections with the human stories represented by the site's buildings, landscape, and artifacts, and thus come to a greater understanding and appreciation of the historical context in which its founders and homesteaders came to Nicodemus, the perseverance and self-determination that characterized African Americans who contributed to the development of the American West, and how the Nicodemus community grew and changed in the context of late-19th and 20th century America.

Museum collection: An assemblage of objects, works of art, historic documents, and/or natural history specimens collected according to a rational scheme and maintained so they can be preserved, studied, and interpreted for public benefit. Museum collections normally are kept in park/site museums, although they may also be maintained in archeological and historic preservation centers.

National Historic Landmark (NHL): A district, site, building, structure, or object of national historical significance that possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and/or culture,

and is designated a national historic landmark district by the Secretary of the Interior under authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and entered in the National Register of Historic Places.

National Historic Site: A unit of the national park system authorized by the Secretary of the Interior (under authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935) or by Congress for the purpose of preserving and interpreting a location that is nationally significant due to its association with broad themes in American history or an individual or group who influenced the course of American history; or because it is a strong example of a major architectural style.

Preservation: The act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses on the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Rehabilitation: The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Stabilization: Action to render an unsafe, damaged, or deteriorated property stable while retaining its current form

State historic preservation officer (SHPO): An official within each state appointed by the governor to administer the state historic preservation program and carry out certain responsibilities relating to federal undertakings within the state.

Technical assistance: Technical expert advice on techniques related to preserving, stabilizing, repairing, or restoring cultural and, less frequently, natural resources. Cultural resources include historic structures, artifacts, archeological resources, and cultural landscapes. The assistance/advice might be provided when responding to individual requests and formally through special projects, workshops, courses, and similar efforts. Under some alternatives, assistance also includes assisting with writing grants for preservation and restoration work. In some alternatives that prescribe more substantial support from the National Park Service, assistance would also include the actual stabilization or preservation of resources.

Visitor contact facility: A visitor contact facility is a structure that contains staff and media interpreting the story of the national historic site. Interpretive media may include videos, exhibits, artifacts, and similar objects. See the definition of *interpretation* for a better understanding of the purpose of a visitor contact facility. Such facilities usually offer sales items, such as books, that provide visitors with opportunities to learn more about the history of the area. A visitor contact facility contains basic amenities, such as restrooms and drinking water, to support visitor comfort.

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.