Park News

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Flowering of Nicodemus

From the Superintendent

I can't believe the year is passing by so fast! Too much to do and so little time, eh? In any case, here's a recap on what the Park has been up to lately:

A new Visitor Center. Well, as they say, the wheels of government turn slowly, and this project will reinforce that concept quite well! The first phase of planning for a new Visitor Center has begun. The Park has asked all property owners within or adjacent to the Historic Landmark District if they would like to participate in this first evaluative phase to identify the best site for a new Visitor Center. No strings attached. A paid consultant will compare the properties, and if determined suitable, the property owner(s) will be asked if they would like to continue the process. Again, there is no compulsion to participate. The Park will work only with willing property owners. And the property owners can decline at any time. Keep in mind that funding for the new Visitor Center has yet to be identified or obtained- but this early investigative work must be done now to keep on schedule.

Recording Oral Traditions. The Park Service has entered into Cooperative Agreements with the Nicodemus Historical Society and the University of South Florida to implement an innovative approach to recording the community history of Nicodemus. Rather than the traditional approach where an ethnographer schedules interviews with selected individuals, the Society and the Florida ethnographer developed sessions to train descendants to interview their own family members. We anticipate over 20 interviews to be given in the next few months. And just last week, additional funding has been obtained to double the number of interviews! This project is scheduled for completion in September 2011.

Increasing Collections Accessibility of the Nicodemus Historical Society. The Society has been overwhelmed with donations to the point where it has been unable to keep up with it all. Since the photos and other archival information of the Society is so important to the history of Nicodemus, it was in the government's interests to ensure that this information is organized and made more easily available by all. Please stop by the Society and see what great progress has been made!

Land Protection Plan. This document collects information about the lands within the boundary of the Historic Site and lays out the strategy for the future. We are awaiting one more comment from an NPS regional specialist before we can call it complete. We will get a copy of the document to each in-park property owner.

Historic Resource Study. This study was discussed in a past newsletter. It will be complete in November of this year.

Historic Structures Report Update. This document was prepared by a paid consultant to identify structural concerns of the structures within the Historic Site. The Park will be contacting the property owners to review this document with them and if they are interested, help them develop a strategy for implementation.

The District No. 1 Schoolhouse. The painting of the Schoolhouse hit a snag, but we have high hopes that the Cooperative Agreement between the Park Service and the American Legion will be signed soon to allow NPS funded painting of the exterior of the School. Funding for additional stabilization of the school is scheduled for 2012 or 2013. Cross your fingers.

The AME Church. We have cleaned up the area around the AME church to allow placement of a third storage container. The stone stockpiled near the AME is now more discretely placed at the east end of the property.

Congratulations Robert! Robert Brogden received his ten years pin from the Park Service. Robert started as a part time maintenance worker 2000.

Welcome our new/old employees! Josh Sharon and Jamie Alexander, fixtures in the park for the past two summers, are back and providing the excellent service that we have come to know from them. Please give a warm "Hello" when you see them. Justin Helberg has joined our summer staff as well, helping Robert Brogden and Josh with maintenance duties at the park. Give him a warm "hello" as well. Finally, Sam Quakenbush of Liberty North Carolina has joined our staff as the Facility Operations Specialist. He will lead the Maintenance division and coordinate facilities activities for the Park. Sam has over 30 years experience as a general contractor on the east coast. His skills are greatly needed here and we are thrilled to have him join us.

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Changes: Michelle Huff has transitioned from Park Guide to Park Ranger. Annette White has completed her probationary first year as Park Administrative Technician. Congratulations to you both!

This summer we are hosting a **National Park Service/Student Conservation Association Junior Ranger Ambassador.** Andrew Watson from Baltimore, Maryland will research and develop a pair of Junior Ranger booklets for the park- one for elementary school age children and the other for middle school/high school students. Plans call for printing to occur in calendar year 2011.

And, note our offices are located in **Units 1A and 1B of the Villas.** Please feel free to come by and say hello.

FINALLY, visit us in the Township Hall during the Emancipation/Homecoming Celebration! On Friday July 30 at 3 pm we will be hosting a Visioning Session where we will brainstorm futures for Nicodemus. I will be facilitating, but the energy and ideas will come from the participants. It is hoped that this creative thinking session will inspire individuals or groups to become involved with a renaissance of Nicodemus. And, throughout the Emancipation/Homecoming Celebration, we will have a table displaying all the past and recent planning documents that guide the direction of National Park Service Activities. Please stop by and check them out.

Park News
New Look in the Bookstore

The bookstore has a new look. We have replaced the old bookshelves and replaced them with two new slatwall bookshelves along the South and West wall in the Southwest corner of the Township Hall. We have added two new chairs; one rocking chair and one soft cloth chair. Plans are to add a second soft cloth chair, two tables and two lamps. The goal is to give visitors a place to relax as they browse the bookstore. The new look opens up the area giving it a light and soft look.

Returning Seasonal Park Guide at Nicodemus National Historic Site

by Jamie Alexander

I have been very fortunate to be able to serve a third season as a Park Guide here at Nicodemus National Historic Site. I have learned numerous things by working here, not only about the Park Service but Nicodemus and its history. Also, being a descendent from Nicodemus, I have learned and connected more than ever with my ancestry.

I am a 2007 graduate of Hill City High School. I attended Colby Community College where I received my associates in Physical Education. I am currently a senior at Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina, Kansas and will obtain a bachelors degree in secondary Education and Health. Following graduation, I plan on Teaching and Coaching. I am on the women's basketball and track teams. When not playing sports, I love to watch movies, listen to music, dance, shop, and travel.

Park Ranger Jamie Alexander

Returning Seasonal Maintenance Worker at Nicodemus National Historic Site

by Josh Sharon

Josh Sharon has returned to Nicodemus National Historic Site for his third season as a Maintenance Worker. He attained his Bachelor of Science in Animal Sciences from Fort Hays State University this past December and is working on a second Bachelor's degree in Business Administration at FHSU. Josh is originally from Fowler, Colorado and has worked for his family's construction business and on the family farm/ranch his entire life. In his free time, Josh enjoys watching basketball, football, baseball and rodeo. He also plays ball in his free time in addition to riding horses, rodeo, camping, hiking, boating and fishing.

Maintenance Worker Josh Sharon

New Seasonal Maintenance Worker at Nicodemus National Historic Site

by Justin Helberg

My name is Justin Helberg. I am a seasonal maintenance worker at Nicodemus National Historic Site. I have learned many things about Nicodemus that I did not know, since working here. One thing that I find really cool is how much all the residents care about this town and its amazing history. I have recently graduated from Hill City High School. This fall I will be attending Oklahoma State University where I will major in Biochemistry.

Maintenance Worker Justin Helberg

Nicodemus National Historic Site Welcomes Junior Ranger Ambassador

by Andrew Watson

Hello, my name is Andrew Watson; you may know me as the kid with dreadlocks who bikes along Highway 24 every morning and afternoon between Bogue and Nicodemus. However, there is more to me than just bikes and dreads. I am a recent high school graduate from the Friends School, a Quaker School in Baltimore City, and a place where I have lived my whole life. In the fall, I will be attending Reed College in Portland, Oregon. Currently, I am working for the Nicodemus National Historic Site improving the Junior Ranger program. I really do like it here. Unlike the city where it's all locked doors and impersonal conversations, everyone here has been extremely friendly with me to the point of which I don't know how to react. The simple act of everyone waving at me as I bike around makes me feel right at home, so thank you. Anyway I have most likely exceeded my work limit, so I will finish by saying that I plan on going to school pre-medicine, majoring in chemistry and minoring in theater.

Junior Ranger Ambassador Andrew Watson

New Facility Operations Specialist at Nicodemus National Historic Site

Samuel Quakenbush was born in Burlington, North Carolina in 1959. He lived and worked as a contractor in Burlington, from 1980 to 2001 doing home renovations with some historical renovations. Sam lived and worked as a contractor in Northern Virginia from 2001 to 2007 was working in Northern Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C. doing commercial restaurants, engineered buildings, and renovations including work in the Smithsonian American History Museum. He returned to North Carolina in 2007 doing renovations. He has a strong interest in Historical preservation. He is married to Natalie, and they have three sons; Jacob 23, Michael 18 and Matthew 5. He enjoys camping, hiking, fishing and hunting.

Facility Operations Specialist
Sam Quakenbush

New Junior Rangers at Nicodemus

On June 23rd, 20 campers from the annual Veryl Switzer Back to History Camp earned their Junior Ranger certificates and badges. The campers consisted of 9 boys and 11 girls ranging from 11 to 15 years in age. They traveled to Nicodemus from Kansas, Colorado, California, and New Mexico for a week of learning about their heritage. Veryl Switzer and JohnElla Holmes along with several other descendants manage the camp to give young descendants the opportunity to learn firsthand about their culture and make personal connections with their ancestors. The campers spend a week in the Nicodemus area learning about the Buffalo Soldiers, farming, and life in the early years of Nicodemus history.

Building Common Ground Through the Quilts of Many Hands

After six months of collaboration between fourth-grade students, local artists, and park rangers from across Kansas, six student-designed quilts depicting stories of the five National Park Service sites in Kansas were unveiled at Fort Larned National Historic Site on May 28, 2010. The quilts will then tour the remaining four National Park Service sites of Kansas for the summer as a part of a travelling exhibit entitled: "Building Common Ground Through the Quilts of Many Hands."

Park Rangers from each of the five National Park Service sites in Kansas and local quilting guilds worked collaboratively with fourth and fifth- grade students. Students learned how stories are told through quilts. Each student then designed and fabricated a 12-inch quilt block with the assistance of local quilt guilds and Park Rangers. After visiting their local park site, students composed a one-page essay describing their quilt block and the story it represents. Once completed, the local guilds helped students tie the quilts together. The project was a collaboration between the five National Park Service units in Kansas, local elementary schools and quilting guilds within each park community and was funded in part by a National Park Foundation grant.

The exhibit will be displayed at the five National Park Service sites in Kansas on the following schedule:

Fort Scott National Historic Site: May 28 –June 9.

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve: June 11 – June 23.

Fort Scott National Historic Site: June 25 – July 7.

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site: July 9 – July 21.

Nicodemus National Historic Site: July 23 – August 4.

At each National Park Service site, visitors will be able to view the six quilts and read each student's essay describing the untold park story depicted in their individual quilt block. Visitors will then be able to vote for their favorite quilt. All participating students will receive prizes; however, the quilt receiving the most votes will be awarded a grand prize and honored with a formal presentation at the winning school in September. Mark Weaver, Superintendent at Nicodemus National Historic Site commented, "Children today are so hardwired for computers and

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electronic learning, that this opportunity to learn through the hands-on art of quilting will enrich their lives in many ways. I'm so very proud of them all."

In Nicodemus, 4th grade students at Hill City Grade School worked in conjunction with the National Park Service and local quilters Esther Clark and Rosa Stokes, to produce the park's quilt. Park Ranger Phyllis Howard from Nicodemus National Historic Site worked with elementary teachers Diana Parker and Lois Richmeier to implement the project.

Visit Fort Scott National Historic Site at http://www.nps.gov/fosc/planyourvisit/commonground.htm to view a slide show of students and quilters from four of the five parks assembling the quilts.

4th Grade Classes Hill City

Quilters Rosa Stokes and Esther Clark

Teacher Diana Parker and Lois Richmeier's classes

Free Mini Concert at Nicodemus National Historic Site

Nicodemus National Historic Site was pleased to host a free mini concert of spirituals by baritone Anthony Brown at the Township Hall on Friday, June 4, 2010 at 7:00pm as part of the Hesston College Alumni Association's ninth annual "Explore Kansas" trip. Approximately 70 visitors enjoyed the concert by Mr. Brown. He delighted the crowd by singing African American spirituals such as "Swing Low Sweet Chariot," and "Wade in the Waters."

Internationally acclaimed baritone Anthony Brown is a promoter of peace and goodwill around the world. Referred to by some music critics as a "warm and noble baritone," he has brought his music to audiences in The Rainbow Room in New York City, The Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove California, and The Chicago Historical Society, among others. Whatever the setting, Anthony Brown sings with passion and commitment. His musical repertoire includes Broadway show tunes, opera arias, art songs, folk ballads, and spirituals. Born in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, he now makes his home in Kansas at Hesston College.

Anthony's concert concluded the Hesston College "Explore Kansas" tour along Highway 24 and the Solomon River Valley on June 3rd and June 4th. Activities included a tour of Nicodemus National Historical Site, the town of Nicodemus, St. Joseph Church in Damar, and Cottonwood Ranch Kansas State Historic Site. Other stops included Money Chevrolet in Hill City, Prairie Junction of Moreland and Seven 2 Bar Ranch in Penokee.

Anthony Brown

NICODEMUS TOWNSHIP
by Sharyn Dowdell

The township board has begun doing some work on the Priscilla Art Center building. Scott Garcia from Hill City is the contractor. He has repaired the foundation and started working on sealing the walls in the basement. Currently, he is working on adding a porch area on the front of the building. Other projects will be replacing all windows; painting the building; overlaying the floor; and installing a bathroom stool. When all work is complete, the building will be used as office space for the township. It is hopeful that these projects will be completed before Homecoming. So stop by and check out the improvements.

Pricilla Art Center Building

We have also built a gazebo between the tennis court and the playground. We are extremely pleased with how this structure turned out. McWilliams Construction from Hill City built the gazebo and installed the landscaping. We are waiting for the electrician to install lighting and power and eventually, we will have a water faucet installed near the gazebo. There is also an outdoor grill nearby. The gazebo has already been used on several occasions and is a welcome addition being enjoyed by all.

Nicodemus Township Board's Gazebo

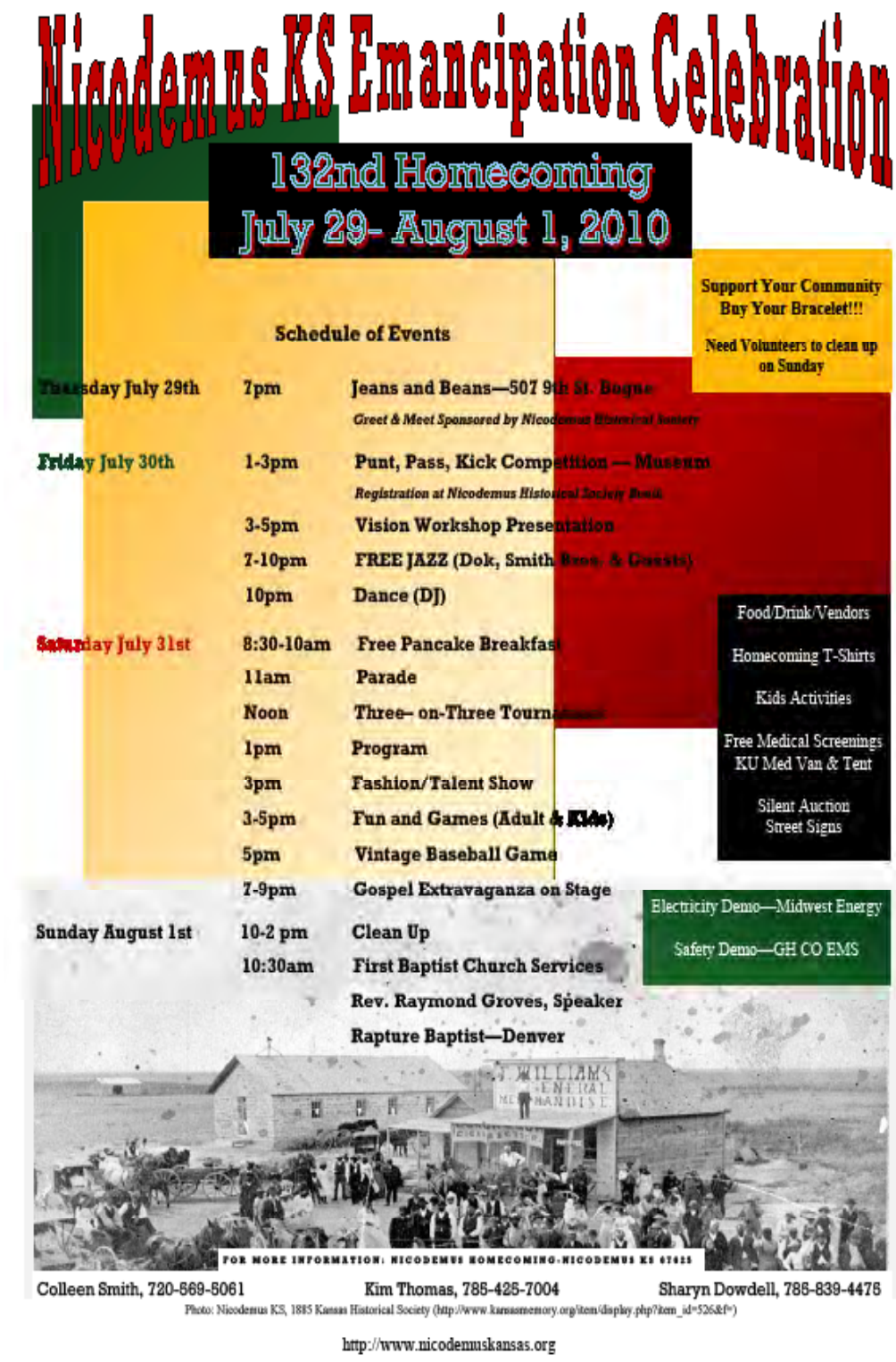
NICODEMUS FLOUR CO-OP
by Sharyn Dowdell

We are preparing for the annual Free Pancake Feed again this year. It will be from 8:30 – 10:30am on Saturday the 31st of July. This event seems to grow each year! We are appreciative to all volunteers who help with this event and VERY appreciative to all those who make donations. We will have our famous pancake mix at our tent and also some bags of our homegrown white wheat flour.

NICODEMUS HOMECOMING
by Sharyn Dowdell

Plans are coming along nicely for this year's Emancipation Celebration. The 'Faithful Few' continue to meet and pray for strength to make it happen one more year. We have sent out letters to descendants asking for help with specific projects. Very few have replied; but we appreciate those few who have responded. The Three-on-Three basketball tournament and the Old Timer Baseball Game promise to be two of the bigger events of the weekend. Please check out nicodemuskansas.org for a full schedule of events.

A reminder to all you Bogue High graduates – the class picture panels are available to be viewed in the basement of the township hall in Bogue.



Emancipation Celebration Flyer 2010

NICODEMUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

by Angela Bates

The Oral History Training Workshop conducted by Dr. Antoinette Jackson, Professor of Anthropology at University of South Florida was attended by ten descendents who will be conducting oral history interviews of other descendents during Homecoming. Dr. Jackson brought five students from the University of Florida who were here for two weeks conducting research and interviews for the Nicodemus Historical Society.

Graduate Assistant and student, Justin Hosbey will be staying until after Homecoming. He is doing research for his master thesis. His focus is on capturing how African American women and the women of Nicodemus are the keepers and teachers of the culture.

We are calling for all descendents to register their families with the Historical Society. We need your family trees and photos for the files. A data base with all Nicodemus family genealogy files and individual and family photos are maintained at the museum.

Angela Bates and Stephanie Weaver have worked diligently to organize the Nicodemus Blues II, a vintage baseball team who will be playing other vintage teams around the state. The new team will be playing their first game at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 31st during the Celebration at the baseball field. The team will be dressed in the 1880s period uniform and play the Hodgeman 9 vintage baseball club from Jetmore. Stephanie worked with Stitching Sisters of Hill City who volunteered to make the knickers. They will be looking quite smart for the game!

The planned October trip to Sadieville, Kentucky for a descendents re-enactment of leaving Kentucky for Kansas, has been cancelled due to a major water and sewer works project starting this summer in Sadieville. We will be planning the trip for next year.

Graduate Assistant Justin Hosbey

Cane River Creole National Historical Park

Meandering alongside plantations, the Cane River has provided transport, sustenance, and entertainment for area residents for many generations.

Visitors to the plantations marvel at the massive pecan and live oak trees that support lacey lengths of green-gray Spanish moss. A similar dynamic is seen in the way that the constancy and strength of the region's cultures support a contemporary population of residents who are resourceful, fun-loving, and family-oriented.

Both Oakland and Magnolia Plantations owe their physical integrity to the families that kept them intact for seven and eight generations.

Descendents of the plantations' owners and descendents of the plantations' laborers remained on the land through periods of prosperity and depression, war and peace, and dramatic changes in governments, agriculture, technology, and labor systems.

The French Prud'homme family began farming the land at Oakland in 1785. Magnolia traces its mid-18-th century origin to the French LeComte family, and also to the German Hertzog family.

The skills and strengths of enslaved African Americans are evident in the buildings they constructed on both Oakland and Magnolia Plantations. Descendents of many enslaved residents remained on the land as tenant farmers and sharecroppers. The vibrant African American communities in the Natchitoches region today trace two hundred years of cultural history to this fertile land surrounding the Cane River.

The term “Creole” means many things to many people. Creole, used in its original sense, is derived from the Portugese crioulo, meaning "native to this place". The architecture and landscapes of the Cane River region are enchantingly “Creole”.

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U. S. Department of the Interior

Nicodemus National Historic Site
304 Washington Avenue
Nicodemus, KS 67625

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Editor:
Phyllis Howard, Park Ranger

Contributors:
Mark Weaver, Superintendent
Jamie Alexander, Park Guide
Josh Sharon, MaintenanceWorker
Justin Helberg, Maintenance Worker
Andrew Watson, Junior Ranger Ambassador
Samuel Quakenbush, Facility Operations Specialist

Comments? Write or Call:
Superintendent
Nicodemus National Historic Site
510 Washington Avenue #1B
Nicodemus, Kansas 67625
785-839-4321

General Information
Nicodemus National Historic Site
Visitor Center
304 Washington Avenue
Nicodemus, Kansas 67625
785-839-4233

E-mail
NICO_Ranger_Activities@nps.gov

Federal Job Announcements
(USAJOBS)
www.usajobs.opm.gov

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Bike Across Kansas' Unscheduled Stop at Nicodemus

Early Monday morning on June 7, several hundred bikers who were participating in the annual Bike Across Kansas were caught off guard in a horrendous rainstorm as they left Hill City heading East. The weather forecast for that morning called for a 30 percent chance of rain. (Surprise!) Thanks to some quick thinking by Superintendent Mark Weaver, the bikers were able to seek shelter out of the cold and rain in the visitor center.

Park Guide Jamie Alexander talks with bikers