



NHL Executive Summary



The Quindaro Brewery Ruin (archeological Feature 34), with steel stabilization and interpretive addition. Cellar visible to rear of building. Photo by Rachel Consolloy.

Name of Property: Quindaro Townsite

City, State: Kansas City, KS

Period of Significance: 1857-1865

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Theme: I. Peopling Places
Migration from Outside and Within
II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
Reform Movements
IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
Political Ideas, Cultures, and Theories

Previous Recognition: 1984, Quindaro and Western University Historic District (KC, KS
local historic district designation)
2002, Quindaro Townsite (NR# 02000547)
2002, Quindaro Townsite (Kansas State Historic Register)
2019, Quindaro Townsite National Commemorative Site



National Historic Context: Contact with the Indians
Westward Expansion and Extension of National Boundaries to the Pacific
Military and Indian Affairs (1959)
The Civil War
Underground Railroad Resources in the United States Theme Study (rev. 2000)

NHL Significance:

- The Quindaro Townsite is a rare example of a multiracial and multicultural free-state port established through cooperation among the Wyandot Tribe, European Americans, and African Americans during the mid-nineteenth century, leading up to and during the tumultuous period of U.S. history known as “Bleeding Kansas” (1854-1861).
- Quindaro represents a community created in response to the 1854 passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the ensuing Kansas Territory settlement rush that included antislavery and proslavery supporters intent on influencing whether slavery would be permitted in Kansas when it entered the Union.
- The townsite embodied nineteenth century social reforms not only in terms of antislavery but women’s rights, temperance, equal education, and suffrage for African Americans.
- Creation of the townsite required the willing participation of the Native American landowners, the Wyandot, who themselves had been forced to move to the area just over a decade earlier. The townsite was named after Nancy Quindaro Brown Guthrie, the Wyandot wife of one of the White town founders, whose name translates to “bundle of sticks” or “strength through union.”

Integrity:

- The Quindaro Townsite has an overall high level of integrity. The criteria of location and setting are particularly high as the lack of modern development has not obscured the site’s continued physical and visual connection to the Missouri River. The design of the townsite is retained through the spatial organization of identified archeological features and relationship to the townsite’s primary road: Kansas Avenue.
- While the townsite is not eligible under Criteria 6, its core area has undergone archeological investigations, and the presence of intact archeological features convey information about the pattern of settlement, construction materials and workmanship. Despite the historic loss of the commercial core during the mid-nineteenth century, the overall feeling of a settlement crowding on the banks of the river can still be ascertained, and the townsite continues to convey associations with important national historical principles and themes that shaped this country.

Owners of Property: AME Church, Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, KS, private

Acreage of Property: approx. 56.02 acres

Origins of Nomination: Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area undertook this nomination via contract in 2018.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Local residents continue to promote Quindaro’s preservation and legacy. Following a successful



groundswell of objection to the creation of a landfill on the site in the 1980s, Quindaro was designated as a Kansas City, Kansas, historic landmark district. This was followed by listing in both the Kansas State Historic Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

- Quindaro is designated as a site by the NPS National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program, and the Quindaro Overlook and the Quindaro Underground Railroad Museum are partner sites with Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area.
- The AME Church received a 2001 Save America's Treasures grant to preserve features of the site and support efforts for creating a park among the ruins.
- Congress designated the Quindaro Townsite as a National Commemorative Site in 2019.
- Completion of the NHL nomination has drawn the interests of Congressional Representatives.
- The history of Quindaro has been the subject of several academic research projects and local newspaper articles.
- The nomination addresses an underrepresented property type.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: Low

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of *Add Date*):

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

Advisory Board Recommendation: