The Flowering of Nicodemus is published three times a year by Nicodemus NHS.

Editor
Angela Wetz, Superintendent

NPS Contributors
Phyllis Howard, Park Ranger
Michelle Huff, Park Ranger
Will Pope, Park Guide

Partnering Contributors
Angela Bates, Nicodemus Hist. Society
Sharyn Doolen, Nicodemus Township

Comments? Write to:
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510 Washington Avenue, #B1
Nicodemus, Kansas 67625

Email: NICO_Ranger_Activities@nps.gov

Check out our website:
www.nps.gov/nico

Like us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/NicodemusNPS

Federal Job Announcements:
www.usajobs.gov

SPOTLIGHT ON “AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE FUND” PARKS

Martin Luther King Jr. NHS - Atlanta, Georgia

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lived with a vision of something greater than himself. In Atlanta, Georgia, the National Park Service works to preserve his legacy and continue that vision. Visitors to Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site can tour the house he was born in, the Church he attended as a child and preached at as a man, and the tomb where he’s buried. A modern visitor center interprets the impact that Dr. King has had on society, and the “I Have A Dream” World Peace Rose Garden promotes the power of nonviolent protest in the struggle against injustice.

Admission to Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site is free to the public, but there is limited space on the tour of his birth home, so reservations are advised. For more information visit:
www.nps.gov/mlku

From the Superintendent

I am very happy to be here in Nicodemus. It’s been great getting to know people, and I look forward to meeting more of the extended community in the coming months. I thank you for the warm welcome and encourage you to stop by the office or call if you have suggestions or comments.

Easements

We are progressing on façade and grounds easements for the Township Hall, Schoolhouse, First Baptist Church, and St. Francis Hotel. Title work was contracted, and we hope it will be completed expediently. The easements required the National Park Service to do Environmental Site Assessments on each of the properties. Phase I assessments were completed in January. Phase II testing for lead paint around the buildings was completed in early March on the Schoolhouse, Township Hall, and First Baptist Church. We should have final reports for each building soon and will provide these to the landowners upon request.

The final step is to work with the solicitor’s office to format the easements, and then they should be ready to sign pending title work completion. A copy of the draft easements was sent to the parties at the beginning of March.

If the easements are finished soon, work on the Schoolhouse will begin in May or June. Schoolhouse work will include stabilizing the building by replacing the foundation. Design work for the Township Hall has been funded and future work will include installation of storm windows, replacement of sidewalks, installation of drains, cleaning exterior limestone, repairing a leak around the chimney, and making the front doors ADA accessible. Within a month we should know if the Township Hall project will be funded and if work will begin this year or next.

Employment Opportunities

A temporary maintenance position was advertised for two weeks starting March 11, 2013. The new employee should arrive in April, and the other will be in maintenance, to assist with facility management, and the historic preservation projects.

Wayside Exhibits

Sequestration

As you may have heard, sequestration has impacted the National Park Service. At Nicodemus we expect this will mean a reduction in staffing and resources. The Township Hall project is a high priority, so we are proceeding with the project with our existing funding, but on a much reduced scale.

 Shapiro Doolen, Nicodemus Township

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The official newsletter of Nicodemus National Historic Site

March 2013

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Historical Society News
By Angela Bates
Nicodemus Historical Society

We are planning a great 2013, and will keep you abreast as we resume publication of our newsletter. If you are a member of the Historical Society, look for your copy in the mail soon. If not, please join. Dues are only $25 annually, and we need your support to keep the Nicodemus legacy alive!

On June 16th we are hosting the Nico-demus ‘Jazz, Blues, and a Little Coun-try Too’ festival. ‘The featured jazz group is Tee Dee Young and his band Scandalous. An “Ernestine’s BBQ Cook-Off” is also planned for that day. Anyone who would like to enter the competition should contact Ange-la Bates at 785-447-3311.

During the 135th Emancipation Celeb-ration, the descendant group that participated in the Sadieville, Ken-tucky, and Ellis, Kansas reparations, will be performing their arrival in Nicodemus for the afternoon program.

Work has been completed at the mu-seum and we are returning to our offices. The bathroom and kitchen were removed to create more storage and exhibit space. Please make ar-rangements to stop by when you are in the area. Call first (785-839-4280) to make sure that we are there!

Nicodemus Homecoming 2013
By Sharyn Dowdell
Nicodemus Township

Plans are underway to commence the 135th Annual Emancipation/ Homecoming Celebration here in Nicodemus July 25-28. The theme for this year is ‘150 Years of Emancipation – 135 Years of Emancipation Celebra-tion.’ This weekend will feature events that include Abraham Lincoln and the arrival of our descendants from Ken-tucky in the Fall of 1877. The parade will be led by Tom Story, and famous, Lincoln re-enactor who will also be on hand for other events Saturday. We are still working to secure a jazz group for Friday and Saturday even-ings and the dances. Also included during the weekend will be the wel-come reception/ice cream social, the pancake breakfast, vintage baseball games and the gospel extravaganza featuring the group ‘Heaven Bound’ from Denver. The t-shirt design this year is truly awesome! We plan to have shirts available for pre-sale at www.nicodemuskansas.org.

Church services will be provided by the Rev. Lawrence Clark, a descend-ant, and will be followed by a commu-nity dinner at the hall. As usual, hotel rooms will be in short supply, so make plans now for the last weekend in Ju-ly. We look forward to seeing you!

Junior Ranger Day
On Saturday, April 27, at 10:00 AM, Nicodemus National Historic Site will host a Junior Ranger Day. There will be programs highlighting some of the unique features that can be found in your National Parks, as well as several fun activities and the chance to create a panel for the Dream Rocket Project. The day will culminate in a ceremony to swear in America’s newest Junior Rangers. Lunch will be provided by the Western National Parks Associa-tion, and all youth are invited to at-tend. If you know of someone who might be interested in attending the event, or if you would like to receive more information, please contact us.

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We are celebrating Women’s History Month in Nicodemus! Did you know that Jennie (Francis) Fletcher was the only woman in the first group of thirty Nicodemus settlers that arrived in the summer of 1877?

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Kansas State University’s United Black Voices Gospel Choir visited Nicodemus in February. (Angela Wetz, NPS)

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Early African American Settlement in Graham County
By Michelle Huff
National Park Service

The 1879 state and the 1880 federal censuses of Graham County were conducted only six months apart and were only one number different in their total counts of African American settlers in five townships, (483 and 484). What was really going on with the changes in population numbers and with the 1880 census itself isn’t evident until a closer look is taken. There were actually 85 new African American settlers on the 1880 census, but 84 of the settlers on the 1879 cen-suses are unaccounted for on the 1880 census, either because they moved, married, died or were somehow not counted. The latter appears to be the case with Henry Williams, the Switzer brothers, the Sadler family, part of the Nape family, part of the Samuels family, Margaret Watts and her sons, and W.H. Smith (co-founder of NICO-demus), and his family. Lists of Afri-can American settlers in Graham County will be available shortly. De-scendant information concerning er-rors or omissions would be greatly appreciated. The lists will be posted on our website and will also be availa-ble by email or hard copy. Please con-tact Michelle Huff (785-839-4321, michelle_huff@nps.gov), for copies.

February Concert a Success
By Phyllis Howard
National Park Service

On Saturday February 16, the program “Make a Joyful Noise” was held in the Nicodemus Township Hall. Sincere thanks go out to the Hill City Chris-tian Praise Band, the Lighthouse Mass Choir, the First Missionary Baptist Choir, and our featured group, the United Black Voices Gospel Choir from Manhattan, Kansas. The United Black Voices Gospel Choir was estab-lished in 1971 by the Kansas State Black Student Union in Manhattan, Kansas. JohnElla Holmes, a descend-ant of Nicodemus, is the advisor for the choir. Approximately seventy peo-ple attended the program and enjoyed a wonderful afternoon of music. All of the groups did an outstanding job!

Nicodemus NHS is on Facebook
By William Pope
National Park Service

You are on our mailing list, so there is a good chance that you like to stay current with what goes on at Nicodemus Na-tional Historic Site. We send out newsletters three times a year, and host monthly Superintendent Coffees, but sometimes we need a faster means of conveying information to our friends and partners. Now there is a new way to keep up with us. We’re on Facebook! With this new platform we can share timely updates about com-ing events, exciting news about park planning, and interesting factoids of Nicodemus history. If you are on Fa-cebook, please consider liking our page! You can get there by typing the link into your browser, or by scanning this barcode with your smart phone.

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